

Jūyō-tōken at the 48th *jūyō shinsa* held on October 11, 2002

wakizashi, mei: Bizen no Kuni Yoshii Shigenori - Bun'an rokunen hachigatsu hi (備前国吉井重則・文安六年八月日) - "Yoshii Shigenori from Bizen province, on a day in the eighth month of Bun'an six (1449)"

Measurements

nagasa 35.8 cm, *sori* 0.4 cm, *motohaba* 2.9 cm, *nakago-nagasa* 11.5 cm, no *nakago-sori*

Description

Keijō: *hira-zukuri*, *iori-mune*, wide *mihaba*, *sun nobi*, normal *kasane*, shallow *sori*

Kitae: overall dense *ko-itame* that is mixed with *ko-mokume* and *nagare* and that features *ji-nie*, fine *chikei*, and a *sugu-utsuri*

Hamon: *hoso-suguha-chō* in *ko-nie-deki* with a tight *nioiguchi* that is mixed with some gently undulating *ko-notare* in places, a little bit of *ko-gunome* around the center of the blade, and fine *kinsuji*

Bōshi: *sugu* with a *ko-maru-kaeri* and a tight *nioiguchi* in the *bōshi* as well

Horimono: on the *omote* side a *koshibi* with *soebi* which both end in *marudome*, on the *ura* side *gomabashi* which run as *kaki-nagashi* into the tang

Nakago: *ubu*, bulbous *kurijiri*, *katte-sagari yasurime*, two *mekugi-ana*, the *sashi-omote* side bears centrally, and running across the second *mekugi-ana*, a thickly chiseled *naga-mei*, the *ura* side bears centrally under the second *mekugi-ana* and also thickly chiseled date

Explanation

It is said that the Bizen Yoshii School was founded in the Kamakura period by Tamenori (為則). Yoshii works that date back to the Kamakura period are very rare and such made up to the subsequent Nanbokuchō period are classified as Ko-Yoshii (古吉井), i.e. "early Yoshii," and those made from the Muromachi period onwards just as Yoshii. The workmanship of this school features a uniformly conneted *ko-gunome*, which is the most prominent Yoshii feature, combined with an *utsuri* that mirrors this uniform *hamon* in the *ji*, which is seen on a majority of Yoshii works.

This is a large and magnificent *hira-zukuri wakizashi* with a wide *mihaba*, a *sun nobi-sugata*, and a shallow *sori*. The *kitae* is an overall quite dense *ko-itame* that is mixed with *ko-mokume* and that features a *suji-utsuri* and the *hamon* is a *hoso-suguha-chō* in *ko-nie-deki* with a tight *nioiguchi* that is mixed with a little bit of a gently undulating *ko-notare* in places. Thus, the interpretation differs somewhat from the usual Yoshii School blades but the school did occasionally produce such calm works in *suguha* during the Muromachi period. For example, there exists a *tantō* by Yoshii Morinori (吉井盛則) that is dated Ōei 24 (1417) (*jūyō* at the 22nd *jūyō shinsa*) that is very similar to this blade. The *kitae* seen here is particularly excellent and features a densely forged *hada* with *ji-nie* and fine *chikei* interwoven into the forging structure, and the *yakiba* is quite classical. A masterwork by Yoshii Shigenori with a perfectly healthy (*kenzen*) *jiba* and which is due to the the rarity of extant signed, and in particular dated blades by this smith a very valuable reference.