

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

wakizashi, mei: Hasebe Kunishige (長谷部国重)

Measurements

nagasa 33.5 cm, *sori* 0.3 cm, *motohaba* 2.7 cm, *nakago-nagasa* 9.0 cm, hardly any *nakago-sori*

Description

Keijō: hira-zukuri, mitsu-mune, wide mihaba, sunnobi, thin kasane, some sori

Kitae: standing-out *itame* that is mixed with *nagare* in places and that features *chikei* and plenty of *ji-nie*

Hamon: *nie-laden ko-notare-chō* with a wide and bright *nioiguchi* that is mixed with *gunome*, angular elements, *sunagashi*, and along the upper hal with *yubashiri* and *tobiyaki*

Bōshi: widely hardened *ko-maru-kaeri*

Horimono: on both sides a *katana-hi* that ends in *marudome*

Nakago: *ubu*, the tang tapers abruptly towards the tip and ends in a *kurijiri*, the *yasurime* are *kiri*, there are three *mekugi-ana*, and the *sashi-omote* side bears centrally a thinly and characteristically chiselled *goji-meい* with densely arranged characters that starts at the second *mekugi-ana*

Explanation

The Yamashiro-based Hasebe School was apart from the Sōshū smiths Hiromitsu (広光) and Akihiro (秋広) the most representative group of swordsmiths that spezialized in the mid-Nanbokuchō period in a flamboyant *hitatsura*, with its most well-known masters being Kunishige (国重) and Kuninobu (国信). The *hitatsura* of the Sōshū smiths bases on a *chōji* and *gunome* mix that features *tobiyaki* and *yubashiri* and a late starting and rather pointed *kaeri* whereas the Hasebe *hitatsura* bases on a *notare* that is mixed with *gunome* and that features *tobiyaki* and *yubashiri* and a more roundish *kaeri* which runs back in a long fashion and connects with *muneyaki*. In addition, the *kitae* of Hasebe blades shows a tendency towards *masame*, in particular towards the *ha* and towards the *mune*, which is rarely the case at Sōshū works and which can thus be regarded as one of the school's characteristic features. Another characteristic feature of Hasebe blades is that they show a *kasane* that is even a hint thinner than the thin *kasane* that is common for that time.

This *wakizashi* differs somewhat from the usual gorgeous workmanship of the Hasebe School as it does not show many *tobiyaki* and *yubashiri* and as it is hardened in a relatively calm *ko-notare-chō*. The *deki* is excellent, the signature is executed in the typical manner, and the *jiba* is clear and vivid and therefore we have here a masterwork that demonstrates one specific style of this school and of this smith.