

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

wakizashi, mumei: Nobukuni (信国)

Measurements

nagasa 36.5 cm, *sori* 1.0 cm, *motohaba* 3.1 cm, *nakago-nagasa* 9.7 cm, *nakago-sori* 0.1 cm

Description

Keijō: *hira-zukuri*, *mitsu-mune*, wide *mihaba*, *sunnobi*, the *kasane* is in relation to the *mihaba* rather thin and the blade has a noticeable *sori*

Kitae: standing-out *itame* that features *chikei* and plenty of *ji-nie*

Hamon: *nie-laden gunome-midare* with a bright and clear *nioiguchi* that is mixed with *ko-notare*, angular elements, plenty of *kinsuji* and *sunagashi*, and with *yubashiri*

Bōshi: *kaen*-style with much *hakikake* and *nie-kuzure*

Horimono: on the *omote* side a *bonji* and a *ken* with *tsume*, on the *ura* a *bonji* with *gomabashi* and a *tsume*

Nakago: *ubu*, *kenyō-jiri*, *katte-sagari yasurime*, three *mekugi-ana*, *mumei*

Explanation

The Yamashiro smith Nobukuni came from the Ryōkai (了戒) lineage and a theory says that he was the grandson of Ryō Hisanobu (了久信), whereas there is also the old tradition that he had studied with Sōshū Sadamune (貞宗). Nobukuni blades that are dated with the eras Enbun (延文, 1356-1361), Kōan (康安, 1361-1362), and Jōji (貞治, 1362-1368) are attributed to the first generation. A generation change then took place at the end of the Nanbokuchō period and the Nobukuni smiths from the early Muromachi period who signed with names like Saemon no Jō (左衛門尉) and Shikibu no Jō (式部丞) are summarized under the term Ōei-Nobukuni (応永信国). These generations had in common that they all mostly hardened a *notare* or a *suguha*.

This *wakizashi* has an *ubu-nakago* and is unsigned but it shows the typical shape from the Nanbokuchō-period eras Enbun and Jōji whereupon it can be attributed to the first generation. Both sides feature skillfully engraved *horimono* which is a characteristic feature of the Nobukuni School. The *kitae* is an *itame* with *chikei* and plenty of *ji-nie* and the *hamon* is a *nie-laden gunome-midare* that is mixed with *ko-notare* and that shows an abundance of *hataraki* like *kinsuji*, *sunagashi*, and *yubashiri*. The *bōshi* tends with its *hakikake* to *kaen* and the *nioiguchi* is bright and clear and so we have here a masterwork among all blades that are attributed to this smith.