

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

tachi, *mei*: Tomoshige (友重) (Fujishima)

Measurements

nagasa 67.1 cm, *sori* 1.4 cm, *motohaba* 2.7 cm, *sakihaba* 1.7 cm, *kissaki-nagasa* 2.6 cm, *nakago-nagasa* 16.1 cm, *nakago-sori* 0.2 cm

Description

Keijō: *shinogi-zukuri*, *iori-mune*, rather slender *mihaba*, noticeable taper, shallow *sori* that appears as *sakizori*, *chū-kissaki*

Kitae: *itame* that is mixed with *mokume* and that features *ji-nie*, fine *chikei*, and a faint *shirake-utsuri*, the steel is blackish

Hamon: *gunome* in *ko-nie-deki* with a wide and bright *nioiguchi* that is mixed with various elements like *togariba*, angular sections, *ko-notare*, some double elements in places, *ashi*, *yō*, *kinsuji*, *sunagashi*, small *tobiyaki*, and *muneyaki*

Bōshi: *midare-komi* which runs back in a long fashion and connects with the *muneyaki*, the tip features some *hakikake*

Nakago: *ubu*, pronounced *ha-agari kurijiri*, *kiri-yasurime*, two *mekugi-ana*, the *haki-omote* side bears above of the first, the *ubu-mekugi-ana*, and towards the back of the tang a small and finely chiseled *niji-mei*

Explanation

This is an *ubu* and signed *tachi* by Tomoshige, the most representative smith of the Kaga-based Fujishima (藤島) School. The earliest extant dated work of the Tomoshige lineage is from the Ōei era (応永, 1394-1428) but we know blades whose workmanship suggests an earlier production time. Apart from that, there are also Tomoshige works from later periods extant. The workmanship of the Fujishima School can be described as featuring a rather standing-out and blackish *jigane* and a *hamon* in *midareba* which is a mix of *gunome*, *hakoba*, and *togariba* and which therefore looks like as a mix of Bizen and Mino elements. There are also relatively long *ashi* and most Fujishima works base on *nie*. There exist on the other hand *tantō* which are interpreted in *hososuguha* and in *ko-nie-deki*.

This *tachi* shows an *itame* that is mixed with *mokume* and that features *ji-nie*, fine *chikei*, and a faint *shirake-utsuri*, with the steel being of a blackish nature. The *hamon* is a *gunome* in *ko-nie-deki* that is mixed with *togariba*, angular elements, *ko-notare*, some double elements in places, *ashi*, *yō*, *kinsuji*, *sunagashi*, and small *tobiyaki*. Therefore, we recognize a mix of Bizen and Mino elements, a stylistic approach which is, as described above, a major characteristic feature of the Fujishima School. Highlights of this blade are the angular elements of its *ha*, the prominent *sunagaashi*, and the *hakikake* in the *bōshi*. Thus we have here a typical work of Fujishima Tomoshige that can be dated to the Nanbokuchō period or to the subsequent Ōei era. A masterwork with a *jiba* in perfect condition (*kenzen*).