

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

wakizashi, mumei: Kenchō (兼長)

Measurements

nagasa 53.75 cm, *sori* 1.2 cm, *motohaba* 2.9 cm, *sakihaba* 2.55 cm, *kissaki-nagasa* 7.25 cm, *nakago-nagasa* 15.4 cm, no *nakago-sori*

Description

Keijō: *shinogi-zukuri*, *iori-mune*, wide *mihaba*, no noticeable taper. relatively thin *kasane*, shallow *sori*, *ō-kissaki*

Kitae: standing-out *itame* that is mixed with *mokume* and that features *ji-nie*

Hamon: *ko-nie*-laden *ko-notare* that is mixed with *gunome*, *ko-gunome*, *koshi no hiraita* and angular elements, *ashi*, *yō*, many fine *kinsuji* and *sunagashi*, *yubashiri* (in a particularly prominent manner on the upper half of the blade), and much *muneyaki*

Bōshi: on the *omote* side *midare-komi* with a somewhat pointed *kaeri*, on the *ura* side *sugu-chō* with a little bit of *midare-komi* and running out in *yakitsume* manner, with both sides featuring *yubashiri*

Horimono: on the *omote* side a *sankozuka-ken* which extend along the *shinogi* from the base into the tang, with the bottom half of the hilt no longer present

Nakago: *ō-suriage*, *kurijiri*, *sujikai-yasurime* on the *omote* and *kiri-yasurime* on the *ura* side, two *mekugi-ana*, *mumei*

Explanation

According to tradition, Bizen Osafune Kenchō, whose name can also be read Kanenaga, was a student of Chōgi (長義). Extant signed blades of him are extremely rare. There is a *jūyō-bijutsuhin wakizashi* which is dated Jōji five (貞治, 1366) and which is hardened in a *hitatsura*. Apart from that, there is a *jūyō tantō* dated Shitoku four (至徳, 1387) and a *tokubetsu-jūyō tantō* dated Kakyō two (嘉慶, 1388). The *wakizashi* is very *nie*-laden and its *jiba* displays an abundance of *hataraki* which makes it come close to the workmanship of Chōgi but whose *deki* is overall even more leaning towards the Sōshū tradition than that of his master. That said, almost all unsigned blades attributed to Kenchō are basically similar to Chōgi but feature more *nie* and more *hataraki* within the *ha* and there are some works which are of a relatively large dimensioned *midareba* that is mixed with *chōji*-like elements.

This *wakizashi* shows a standing-out *itame* that is mixed with *mokume* and that features *ji-nie*. The *hamon* is a *ko-nie*-laden *ko-notare* that is mixed with *gunome*, *ko-gunome*, *koshi no hiraita* and angular elements, and *ashi* and *yō*. The *bōshi* is *midare-komi* with a somewhat pointed *kaeri* (on the *omote* side) and so we recognize overall the characteristic features of the Chōgi group. The fact that the *ha* is *ko-nie*-laden, the prominent *kinsuji*, *sunagashi* and other *hataraki*, and the abundance of *muneyaki* then attribute the work to Kenchō from within this group. The blade is with its wide *mihaba* and *ō-kissaki* of a powerful and impressive shape, both *ji* and *ha* are very healthy, and the *deki* is outstanding among all blades attributed to this smith.