

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

tantō, mei: Hasebe Kuninobu (長谷部国信)

Measurements

nagasa 20.7 cm, only very little *sori*, *motohaba* 1.95 cm, *nakago-nagasa* 8.8 cm, no *nakago-sori*

Description

Keijō: *hira-zukuri*, *mitsu-mune*, small dimensioned but wide *mihaba* in relation to the *nagasa*, thin *kasane*, some *sori*

Kitae: standing-out *itame-nagare* with plenty of *ji-nie*

Hamon: *nie*-laden *ko-notare* with a bright and clear *nioiguchi* that is mixed with *gunome*, *chōji*, *kinsuji*, *sunagashi*, and plenty of *tobiyaki* and *yubashiri*, and with the *muneyaki* running all the way down to the *machi*, we have here a hardening in *hitatsura*

Bōshi: *ko-maru-kaeri* that connects with the *muneyaki* which runs back all the way down to the *machi*

Nakago: *ubu*, the tang tapers and ends in a *kurijiri*, the *yasurime* are *kiri*, there are three *mekugi-ana*, and the *sashi-omote* side bears centrally a fine and thinky chiselled *goji-mei* with densely arranged characters

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 specialized in the mid-Nanbokuchō period in a flamboyant *hitatsura*, with its most well-known masters being Kunishige (国重) and Kuninobu (国信). According to the *Kōsei Kotō Meikan* (校正古刀銘鑑), Kuninobu was the son of the first Hasebe generation Kunishige and the younger brother of the second generation Kunishige. The *hitatsura* of the Sōshū smiths bases on a *chōji* and *gunome*, and that of the Hasebe smiths on a *notare* and *gunome* mix. In the case of Kuninobu, the *notare* is more angular and may be mixed with *yahazu* elements, with another characteristic of him being the *kaeri* of the *bōshi* connecting with the *muneyaki* and running down all the way to the base. Kuninobu made both large dimensioned short swords that measure over 1 *shaku* (30.3 cm) and smaller ones which measure around 6 and 7 *sun* (18~21 cm). This *tantō* is a good example from the latter category, clearly shows the above mentioned characteristics along its *jiba*, and has apart from that a textbook example of Kuninobu's signature.