

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

wakizashi, mei: Shūri no Suke Morimitsu - Ōei sanjūninen hachigatsu hi (修理亮盛光・応永卅二年八月日) - “Shūri no Suke Morimitsu, on a day in the eighth month of Ōei 32 (1425)”

Measurements

nagasa 36.4 cm, *sori* 0.2 cm, *motohaba* 2.55 cm, *nakago-nagasa* 11.2 cm, only very little *nakago-sori*

Description

Keijō: *hira-zukuri*, *iori-mune*, wide *mihaba*, *sun nobi*, normal *kasane*, very shallow *sori*

Kitae: standing-out *itame* that is mixed with *mokume* and that features *ji-nie*, fine *chikei*, and parallel to the *ha* a prominent *sugu-utsuri*

Hamon: *hoso-suguha* in *nioi-deki* with *ko-nie* and a bright and clear, rather tight *nioiguchi* that is mixed with fine *hotsure*

Bōshi: *sugu* with a brief *ko-maru-kaeri* on the *omote* and a brief smallish, pointed, somewhat constricted *kaeri* on the *ura* side

Horimono: on the *omote* side *gomabashi* which end in *marudome*, on the *ura* side a *koshi-bi* with *soebi* which also both end in *marudome*

Nakago: *ubu*, bulbous *kurijiri*, *katte-sagari yasurime*, one *mekugi-ana*, the *sashi-omote* side bears centrally under the *mekugi-ana* a relatively small and thinly chiseled five character signature, the *ura* side bears an identically positioned date

Explanation

The smiths who flourished around the early Muromachi-period Ōei era (応永, 1394-1428) in Osafune are summarized under the term Ōei-Bizen (応永備前). The two most representative masters of this group were Morimitsu (盛光) and Yasumitsu (康光) and the Ōei-Bizen workmanship features either a flamboyant *midareba* in *koshi no hiraita-gunome* mixed with *chōji* or a calm *suguha* and with their high-class *deki*, some Ōei-Bizen works reminds us at first glance of Kamakura-period Ichimonji or Osafune School blades.

This *wakizashi* is a work by Morimitsu in *suguha* and is one of these above mentioned blades that looks *prima facie* like a Kamakura-period Osafune School work. It shows a standing-out *itame* that is mixed with a prominent amount of *mokume* which reflects the characteristic *kitae* of Ōei-Bizen works. A clearly visible *sugu-utsuri* appears parallel to the *ha* which is, like the hardening in *nioi-deki* and *bōshi* with its the smallish and pointed *kaeri* (on the *ura* side) very typical for that group as well. The blade is in *hira-zukuri*, is *sun nobi* in relation to its *mihaba*, and has a little bit of *sori*, following so the typical short sword style of the Ōei era. Morimitsu did not harden as much in *suguha* as Yasumitsu did but the *ha* of this blade is of an excellent quality and of a classical elegance. The *nakago* is in a very good condition and the long signature with the prefix Shūri no Suke makes this blade an important reference.