

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

*katana*, *mumei*: Unji (雲次)

## Measurements

*nagasa* 73.4 cm, *sori* 1.6 cm, *motohaba* 3.2 cm, *sakihaba* 2.0 cm, *kissaki-nagasa* 3.2 cm, *nakago-nagasa* 18.2 cm, only very little *nakago-sori*

## Description

*Keijō*: *shinogi-zukuri*, *iori-mune*, wide *mihaba*, relatively noticeable taper, deep *koshizori*, *chū-kissaki*

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

*Hamon*: *suguha-chō* in *ko-nie-deki* with a rather tight and bright *nioiguchi* that is mixed with angular *gunome*, *ko-gunome*, some slanting elements, *ashi*, *yō*, *kinsuji*, and *sunagashi*

*Bōshi*: on the *omote* side *sugu*, on the *ura* a gently undulating *notare-komi*, on both sides featuring a *ko-maru-kaeri* with *hakikake*

*Horimono*: on both sides a *bōhi* that runs as *kaki-nagashi* into the tang

*Nakago*: *ō-suriage*, *ha-agari kurijiri*, on the *omote* side *kiri-yasurime*, on the *ura* side *katte-sagari yasurime*, two *mekugi-ana*, *mumei*

## Explanation

The Ukan manor (宇甘庄) of Bizen province was home to a group of swordsmiths which was active from the end of the Kamakura to the Nanbokuchō period. The smiths of this group, for example Unshō (雲生), Unji (雲次), and Unjū (雲重), shared the character for “Un” whereupon they are referred to as “Un group.” One theory says that Unji was the son of Unshō. Extant dated blades go back to the eras Shōwa (正和, 1312-1317), Bunpō (文保, 1317-1319), and Kenmu (建武, 1334-1338) and so his active period is relatively clear. The workmanship of the Un group differs from that of the contemporary Osafune School as Un blades are mixed with Yamashiro elements and as they were also significantly influenced by the style of the Ao (青江) School from neighboring Bitchū province. Thus, it can be said that the Un blades are somewhat of an outlier within Bizen works.

This blade shows an overall finely standing-out *itame* that is mixed with *mokume* and that features *ji-nie* and fine *chikei*. The *hamon* is a *suguha-chō* in *ko-nie-deki* with a rather tight *nioiguchi* that is mixed with angular *gunome*, *ko-gunome*, *ashi*, and *yō* and so we recognize Aoe elements being mixed with the Bizen tradition and the characteristic features of the Un group, in particular those of Unji. The blade is a masterwork among all works attributed to this smith and is of both an excellent *deki* and condition and due to its magnificent *sugata* highly impressive.