

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

katana, mumei: Den Norishige (伝則重)

Measurements

nagasa 69.6 cm, *sori* 2.0 cm, *motohaba* 2.8 cm, *sakihaba* 1.85 cm, *kissaki-nagasa* 3.0 cm, *nakago-nagasa* 18.4 cm, only very little *nakago-sori*

Description

Keijō: *shinogi-zukuri*, *iori-mune*, relatively slender *mihaba*, deep *sori*, *chū-kissaki*

Kitae: *itame* that is mixed with *mokume*, *nagare*, and standing-out *ō-hada* and that features plenty of *ji-nie*, many thick *chikei*, and *jifu*, the steel is blackish

Hamon: *nie-laden suguba-chō* with a wide *nioiguchi* that tends a little bit to a gently undulating *notare* and that is mixed with *ko-gunome*, *ko-ashi*, *hotsure*, *yubashiri*-based *nijūba*, *sunagashi*, and *kinsuji*

Bōshi: *sugu* which almost runs out as *yakitsume* and which features *hakikake*

Nakago: *ō-suriage*, shallow *kurijiri*, *kiri-yasurime*, three *mekugi-ana*, *mumei*

Explanation

In the *Kokon Mei Zukushi* (古今銘尽) and other Edo-period sword publications, Norishige is listed as one of the Ten Disciples of Masamune, but taking into consideration his *tachi* and *tantō* shapes and date signatures from the Shōwa (正和, 1312-1317) and Gen'ō (元応, 1319-1321) eras, it seems more likely that the Muromachi-period documents are closer to the truth with assuming that Norishige was rather a fellow student of Masamune (正宗) under Shintōgo Kunimitsu (新藤五国光). As for Norishige's workmanship, he is among the top Sōshū smiths close to Masamune but lays mostly more emphasis on varied *nie* than the latter. Also, the *kitae* stands out and is larger structured, namely in a very peculiar manner which is referred to as *matsukawa-hada*.

This blade has a relatively slender *mihaba* and a *chū-kissaki* and shows a *kitae* in *itame* that is mixed with *mokume*, *nagare*, standing-out *ō-hada*, and that features plenty of *ji-nie* and many thick *chikei*. That is, the *hada* appears as *matsukawa-hada* and the steel is blackish and of a somewhat dull appearance. The *hamon* is a *nie-laden suguba-chō* with a wide *nioiguchi* that tends a little bit to a gently undulating *notare* and that is mixed, among other elements, with *ko-gunome*, *hotsure*,

sunagashi, and *kinsuji*. Thus, we clearly recognize the characteristic features of Norishige in the *jiba*. The *ha* displays with mixed-in elements like the *yubashiri*-based *nijūba* an exquisite variety and is overall of a calm and sober taste. The blade is in perfect condition (*kenzen*) and with its excellent *deki*, we have here a masterwork among all blades attributed to this smith.