

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

*katana, mumei:* Rai Kunitoshi (来国俊)

## Measurements

*nagasa* 72.5 cm, *sori* 2.0 cm, *motohaba* 2.7 cm, *sakihaba* 1.6 cm, *kissaki-nagasa* 2.1 cm, *nakago-nagasa* 19.1 cm, *nakago-sori* 0.1 cm

## Description

*Keijō:* *shinogi-zukuri, iori-mune*, slender *mihaba*, noticeable taper, high *shinogi*, despite the *ō-suriage* a deep *koshizori, ko-kissaki*

*Kitae:* dense *ko-itame* that is partially mixed with some *ō-hada* and that features *ji-nie*

*Hamon:* *suguha-chō* in *ko-nie-deki* that is mixed with *ko-chōji, ko-gunome*, plenty of *ashi* and *yō*, and prominent *Kyō-saka-ashi*, the *nioiguchi* is somewhat subdued in places

*Bōshi:* gentle *tarumi-bōshi* with a *ko-maru-kaeri*

*Nakago:* *ō-suriage, kirijiri, kiri-yasurime*, two *mekugi-ana*, *mumei*

## Explanation

According to tradition, Kunitoshi was the son of Rai Kuniyuki (来国行). The question of if Niji Kunitoshi and Rai Kunitoshi were the same smith has yet not been settled. As far as extant dated works are concerned, the active period of "both" smiths ranges from Kōan one (弘安, 1278) to Genkō one (元亨, 1321), which corresponds to roughly fourty years and that does by no means rule out that we are facing here the career of a single smith. However, we see differences in the style of Niji Kunitoshi and Rai Kunitoshi works. The former show a magnificent *sugata* combined with a flamboyant *chōji-midare hamon* and the latter a more normal to slender *sugata* that is mostly combined with an elegant *suguha-chō hamon*. That is, we also distinguish between Niji Kunitoshi and Rai Kunitoshi on a mere stylistic level. Incidentally, there is only one signed *tantō* by Niji Kunitoshi and relatively many such by Rai Kunitoshi extant.

This blade is *ō-suriage mumei* and shows an elegant *sugata* with a slender *mihaba* and a *ko-kissaki* that is combined with a *suguha-chō* that is mixed with *ko-chōji, ko-gunome*, and prominent *Kyō-saka-ashi*. The *kitae* is a dense *ko-itame* and the *bōshi* features a rather later starting *ko-maru-kaeri* whereupon we clearly recognice the characteristic workmanship of Rai Kunitoshi. A masterwork among all blades that are attributed to this smith.