

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

katana, mumei: Enju (延寿)

Measurements

nagasa 69.75 cm, *sori* 2.15 cm, *motohaba* 2.9 cm, *sakihaba* 1.65 cm, *kissaki-nagasa* 2.65 cm, *nakago-nagasa* 17.9 cm, only very little *nakago-sori*

Description

Keijō: *shinogi-zukuri*, *mitsu-mune*, relatively wide *mihaba*, noticeable taper, high *shinogi*, thick *kasane*, deep *toriizori*, *chū-kissaki*

Kitae: rather standing-out *itame* that is mixed with *mokume* and that features plenty of *ji-nie*, fine *chikei*, and some *jifu*

Hamon: *ko-nie*-laden *chū-suguha* with a wide and bright *nioiguchi* that is mixed with a little bit of *ko-gunome*, *ko-ashi*, fine *sunagashi*, and on both sides along the center of the blade with faint *nijūba*

Bōshi: *sugu* with a long running-back *ko-maru-kaeri* and *hakikake* at the tip of the *ura* side

Nakago: *ō-suriage*, *kirijiri*, on the upper half of the tang *kiri-yasurime*, on the lower half *katte-sagari yasurime*, two *mekugi-ana*, *mumei*

Explanation

The Enju School of Higo province was founded by Tarō Kunimura (太郎国村) who is said to have been a grandson (from a daughter married into another family) of the Yamashiro master Rai Kuniyuki (来国行). The school then flourished from the end of the Kamakura to the Nanbokuchō period in the town of Waifu (隈府) which was located in the Kikuchi district (菊池郡) of Higo province. The school gave rise to many greatly skilled smiths, like for example Kuniyoshi (国吉), Kunitoki (国時), Kuniyasu (国泰), Kunitomo (国友), Kunisuke (国資), Kuninobu (国信), and Kunitsuna (国綱). The workmanships of these smiths is very similar and it can be said that the Enju style basically resembles the style of the Rai School with the difference that Enju blades show a more prominent amount of *masame* in the *kitae*, a *shirake-utsuri*, a *hamon* with a somewhat subdued *nioiguchi*, calmer *hataraki* within the *ha*, and a *bōshi* with a relatively large and round *kaeri* that runs back in a brief manner.

This blade retains depiste the *ō-suriage* a deep *toriizori*. The *kitae* is a rather standing-out *itame* that is mixed with *mokume* and that features plenty of *ji-nie*, fine *chikei*, and some *jifu*. The *hamon* is a *ko-nie*-laden *chū-suguha* with a wide *nioiguchi* that is mixed with a little bit of *ko-gunome*, *ko-ashi*, fine *sunagashi*, and on both sides with *nijūba* along the center of the blade, which is a characteristic feature of the Enju School. Thus, we clearly recognize the style of the school and are in agreement with the period attribution of the blade to Enju. With the *ko-nie*-laden *suguha* and its wide and bright *nioiguchi* we have here an Enju masterwork that is with its presence of *hira-niku* on top of that in a perfectly healthy condition.