

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

katana, kinpun-mei: Rai Kunizane (来国真)

Measurements

nagasa 67.7 cm, *sori* 2.1 cm, *motohaba* 3.0 cm, *sakihaba* 2.05 cm, *kissaki-nagasa* 3.5 cm, *nakago-nagasa* 17.2 cm, *nakago-sori* 0.1 cm

Description

Keijō: *shinogi-zukuri*, *iori-mune*, wide *mihaba*, rather thick *kasane*, despite the *ō-suriage* a deep *toriizori*, *chū-kissaki*

Kitae: *ko-itame* that tends a little bit towards *masame* on both sides and that features *ji-nie* and a *nie-utsuri*

Hamon: *suguha-chō* in *ko-nie-deki* that is mixed with *ko-gunome*, *ko-chōji*, *ko-midare*, many *ko-ashi*, and with fine *kinsuji* and *sunagashi*

Bōshi: gently undulating *notare* with *nie-zukure* on the *omote* and with a brief *ko-maru-kaeri* on the *ura* and both sides feature some *hakikake* at the tip

Horimono: on the *omote* side a *bōhi* and below a *suken* and the tang shows remnants of what was a *koshi-bo* below that *suken*, the *ura* side features a *bōhi* that runs with *kaki-nagashi* into the tang

Nakago: *ō-suriage*, *kirijiri*, *sujikai-yasurime*, two *mekugi-ana*, the *sashi-omote* side bears under the second *mekugi-ana* the three character *kinpun-mei* "Rai Kunizane"

Explanation

This *ō-suriage mumei katana* is attributed via a *kinpun-mei* to Rai Kunizane. Kunizane was a student of Rai Kunitoshi (来国俊) and a tradition says that he was Kunitoshi's son and so the younger brother of Rai Kunimitsu (来国光) and the older brother of Rai Kunitomo (来国倫). Signed works of Kunizane are rare but a few signed *tachi*, *tantō*, and *ko-wakizashi* have survived, whereas we learn that blades of the latter category show a workmanship that tends to *hitatsura* and that thus shows similarities to the Hasebe School.

This blade has a wide *mihaba* and a relatively deep *toriizori*. The *jiba* is *nie*-laden and the *hamon* is a *suguha-chō* that is mixed with *ko-gunome*, *ko-chōji*, and *ko-midare* and thus the blade looks overall at first glance like a work of Rai Kunimitsu. However, the *midare* elements are somewhat small dimensioned in comparison and the quality is just a hint below of that of Rai Kunimitsu whereupon we are in agreement with the period attribution to Rai Kunizane.