

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

tachi, mei: Rai Kunimitsu (来国光)

Measurements

nagasa 78.0 cm, *sori* 2.3 cm, *motohaba* 3.05 cm, *sakihaba* 2.4 cm, *kissaki-nagasa* 3.9 cm *nakago-nagasa* 20.2 cm, *nakago-sori* 0.2

Description

Keijō: *shinogi-zukuri, iori-mune, wide mihaba, long nagasa, high shinogi, deep toriizori, chū-kissaki, magnificent sugata*

Kitae: *ko-itame* that is partially mixed with *ō-itame* and *nagare-masame* and that features plenty of *ji-nie*, fine *chikei*, and a prominent *nie-utsuri*

Hamon: *ko-nie-laden suguha-chō* that is mixed with *ko-notare, ko-gunome, ko-ashi, hotsure, kinsuji*, and *sunagashi*, the *ha* widens somewhat from the *monouchi* to the *bōshi* and the *nioguchi* is bright and clear

Bōshi: widely hardened *notare* with *hakikake* and a brief *ko-maru-kaeri* that continues as *muneyaki*
Nakago: *suriage, kirijiri*, gently slanting *katte-sagaru yasurime*, three *mekugi-ana*, the *haki-omote* side bears under the third, the *ubu-mekugi-ana* and towards the *nakago-mune* a relatively small but thickly chiseled *sanji-meい*

Explanation

According to tradition, Yamashiro Rai Kunimitsu was the son of Rai Kunitoshi (来国俊) and he is the Rai smith of whom the most works are extant today. His workmanship was quite diversified and his known dated works range from Karyaku one (嘉暦, 1326) to Kan'ō two (觀応, 1351).

This *tachi* is *suriage* but preserves its *sanji-meい* towards the bottom of the tang. The blade has a wide *mihaba*, a long *nagasa*, a deep *toriizori*, and is of a magnificent *sugata*. The *kitae* is a *ko-itame* with plenty of *ji-nie*, *chikei*, and a prominent *nie-utsuri*. The *hamon* is a *ko-nie-laden suguha-chō* that is mixed with *ko-notare, ko-gunome, hotsure, kinsuji*, and *sunagashi* and features a bright and clear *nioguchi*. Due to the *mei* being thickly chiseled, the angular way the outer box of the "Kuni" character is executed, and the mentioned interpretation of *sugata* and *jiba*, the blade can be dated to the early Nanbokuchō period, i.e. around Jōwa (貞和, 1345-1350). Signed Rai Kunimitsu *tachi* from that time are rare and it is very interesting that the way the hardening in *suguha-chō* is mixed with *ko-notare* and *ko-gunome* is similar to *tantō* of his smith. The *deki* is excellent.