

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

tantō, *mei*: Kunimitsu (国光) (Shintōgo)

Measurements

nagasa 25.8 cm, *uchizori* , *motohaba* 2.3 cm, *nakago-nagasa* 8.65 cm, *nakago-sori* 0.2 cm

Description

Keijō: *hira-zukuri*, *mitsu-mune*, normal *mihaba*, *uchizori*

Kitae: *itame* that is mixed with *mokume* and that features plenty of *ji-nie*, much *chikei*, and a *nie-utsuri*

Hamon: *ko-nie*-laden *hoso-suguha* with a wide, bright, and clear *nioiguchi* that starts with a *yakikomi* over the *machi*, that widens at the *monouchi*, and that is mixed with fine *hotsure* and *kinsuji*

Bōshi: *sugu* with a relatively wide *ko-maru-kaeri*

Horimono: on the *omote* side a *bonji* and a *suken* which runs as *kaki-nagashi* into the tang, on the *urta* side a *koshi-bi* which also runs as *kaki-nagashi* into the tang

Nakago: *ubu* but with the tip slightly cut off, *kirjiiri*, *katte-sagari yasurime*, two *mekugi-ana*, the *sashi-omote* side bears centrally under the first *mekugi-ana* a thinly chiseled *niji-mei* of which the character for *Kuni* is affected by the second *mekugi-ana*

Explanation

Shintōgo Kunimitsu (新藤五国光) is regarded as the de facto founder of the Sōshū tradition and he trained the three famous and outstanding master students Yukimitsu (行光), Masamune (正宗), and Norishige (則重). Kunimitsu's workmanship reminds us of Awataguchi works at first glance but what differs him are the prominent *chikei* and *kinsuji* along the *jiba* of his blades. He focused on a *suguha* which he hardened in various ways, e.g. as *ito*, *hoso*, *chū*, and *hiro-suguha*. Together with Tōshirō Yoshimitsu (藤四郎吉光), Kunimitsu is regarded as best *tantō* maker of all times.

This *tantō* shows an *itame* that is mixed with *mokume* features plenty of *ji-nie*, much *chikei*, and a *nie-utsuri*. The *hamon* is a *ko-nie*-laden *hoso-suguha* with a wide, bright, and clear *nioiguchi*. The *ha* widens somewhat at the *monouchi* and is mixed with fine *hotsure* and *kinsuji*. Thus, we clearly recognize the characteristic features of Shintōgo Kunimitsu and a *yakikomi* over the *machi* as seen here is also a common stylistic element of this smith. A work by Shintōgo Kunimitsu with an excellent *deki*.