

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

katana, mumei: Den Niō Kiyotsuna (伝二王清綱)

Measurements

nagasa 67.3 cm, *sori* 2.0 cm, *motohaba* 3.1 cm, *sakihaba* 1.9 cm, *kissaki-nagasa* 3.15 cm, *nakago-nagasa* 16.8 cm, *nakago-sori* 0.1 cm

Description

Keijō: *shinogi-zukuri*, *iori-mune*, wide *mihaba*, relatively noticeable taper, narrow *shinogi-ji*, high *shinogi*, somewhat thick *kasane*, deep *sori*, *chū-kissaki*

Kitae: rather standing-out *itame* that is mixed with *mokume* and that features *ji-nie*, fine *chikei*, and a *shirake-utsuri*

Hamon: *hoso-suguha-chō* in *nioi-deki* with *ko-nie* that is mixed with connected *ko-gunome*, some small angular elements in places, *ko-ashi*, fine *sunagashi* all over the blade, and mall *kinsuji*, the *ha* is partially somewhat subdued

Bōshi: on the *omote* side a little bit *midare* with a rather pointed *kaeri* and on the *ura* side *sugu-chō* with a *ko-maru-kaeri*, *hakikake* appears at the tip on both sides

Horimono: on both sides a *bōhi* with *soebi* that end in *kakudome*

Nakago: *ō-suriage*, *ha-agari kurijiri*, *kiri-yasurime*, two *mekugi-ana*, *mumei*

Explanation

Traditional sources list either the Hōen era (保延, 1135-1141) smith Kiyozane (清真) or the Bun'ō era (文応, 1260-1261) smith Kiyohira (清平) as founder of the Suō province-based Niō School. However, there are no works of these two smiths extant and therefore Kiyotsuna (清綱) is today regarded as the actual founder of the school. The Itsukushima-jinja (厳島神社) preserves a *tachi* that is signed and dated *kakikudashi*-style "Bun'ei ninen sangatsu Kiyotsuna" (文永二年三月清綱, "third month of Bun'ei two, 1265") and the second oldest dated work, a *tantō* from the former possessions of the Tanzan-jinja (談山神社) that passed *jūyō* at the 45th *jūyō shinsa*, is from the second year of Kenmu (建武, 1335) and is signed "Bōshū Kuga-jū Kiyotsuna" (防州玖珂住清綱). The Kiyotsuna name was then handed down throughout the Muromachi period and was in continuous use up to the *shintō* era. A theory says that the name of the school goes back to the

Niho manor (仁保庄) of Suō province. Suō was home to many properties owned by the Tōdaiji (東大寺) and as Niō School blades have a strong resemblance to Yamato works, it is assumed that there has been a technical exchange between the two places. Niō blades show *shirake* along the *kitae* and have a *hamon* that is rather subdued and therefore we can recognize individual features that distinguish them from Yamato works.

This blade shows a rather standing-out *itame* that is mixed with *mokume* and that features *ji-nie*, fine *chikei*, and a *shirake-utsuri*. The *hamon* is a *hoso-suguha-chō* in *nioi-deki* with *ko-nie* that is mixed with *ko-gunome*, small angular elements, and *ko-ashi* and that is partially somewhat subdued. Thus, we not only recognize the characteristic features of the Niō School in general but that of the smith Kiyotsuna in particular. The shape with the high *shinogi* and the somewhat thick *kasane* and the *bōshi* with its *hakikake* at the tip reflect Yamato characteristics. The blade is in perfect condition (*kenzen*), is of a very good *deki*, and shows fine *hataraki* within its *ha*.