

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

tachi, shu-mei: Kuniyoshi (国吉) (Enju, 延寿)

Measurements

nagasa 64.3 cm, *sori* 1.0 cm, *motohaba* 2.7 cm, *sakihaba* 1.85 cm, *kissaki-nagasa* 2.95, *nakago-nagasa* 16.7 cm, no *nakago-sori*

Description

Keijō: *shinogi-zukuri*, *iori-mune*, normal *mihaba*, noticeable taper, high *shinogi*, thick *kasane*, shallow *sori*, *chū-kissaki*

Kitae: dense *ko-itame* that features plenty of *ji-nie*, fine *chikei*, a little bit of *jifu*, and a faint *shirake-utsuri*

Hamon: *hoso-suguha* in *ko-nie-deki* with a rather tight *nioiguchi* that is mixed with some small *notare* sections along the lower half of the blade, a few *ko-ashi* in places, rather prominent *nie* along the center of the blade on the *haki-ura* side that spill into the *ji*, *yubashiri*, and some faint *nijūba* on the *haki-omote* under the *yokote* and on the *ura* along the lower half of the blade

Bōshi: *sugu* with a *ko-maru-kaeri*, *nijūba*, and *hakikake* at the tip

Nakago: *ubu*, *kirijiri*, *ō-sujikai yasurime* with *keshō*, two *mekugi-ana*, *mumei*, the *haki-omote* side bears above of the second *mekugi-ana* and on the *hira-ji* of the tang a red-lacquer attribution

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.

It is said that Kuniyoshi was the son or a student of Kunimura. He was a representative Enju master and there were several generations active under this name.

This *tachi* has an *ubu-nakago* and shows a dense *itame* that features plenty of *ji-nie*, fine *chikei*, and a faint *shirake-utsuri*. The *hamon* is a *hoso-suguha* in *ko-nie-deki* with a rather tight *nioiguchi* that is mixed with *ko-ashi* and we see *nijūba* along the *ha* and in the *bōshi*. Thus, we clearly recognize the characteristics of the Enju School. Highlights of the blade are its fine and excellently forged *ko-itame* that features plenty of *ji-nie* and fine *chikei*, and its calm *suguha* with prominent *nijūba*. The *nakago* bears a *shu-mei* attribution to Kuniyoshi, with which we are in agreement, but which does not go back to the Edo period Hon'ami family, appearing to be post-Edo.