

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

*wakizashi, mumei*: Rai Kunimitsu (来国光)

## Measurements

*nagasa* 31.0 cm, *sori* 0.1 cm, *motohaba* 3.05 cm, *nakago-nagasa* 9.0 cm, *nakago-sori* 0.2 cm

## Description

*Keijō*: *hira-zukuri*, *mitsu-mune*, wide *mihaba*, *sunnobi*, very little *sori*, the *mihaba* is wide in relation to the *nagasa* and so the blade is of a somewhat stout shape

*Kitae*: *itame* that is mixed with *mokume*, that tends to *nagare* in places, and that features plenty of *ji-nie*, *chikei*, and a *nie-utsuri*

*Hamon*: *ko-notare* in *ko-nie-deki* with a wide and bright *nioiguchi* that is mixed with *gunome*, *ashi*, *yō*, and *sunagashi*

*Bōshi*: *notare* with a *ko-maru-kaeri* that runs back in a long fashion

*Horimono*: on the *omote* side a *suken* and on the *ura* side a *katana-hi*

*Nakago*: *ubu*, *kurijiri*, gently slanting *katte-sagari yasurime*, two *mekugi-ana*, *mumei*

## Explanation

Yamashiro Rai Kunimitsu and his somewhat junior colleague Rai Kunitsugu (来国次) constituted the next generation of Rai smiths after Rai Kunitoshi. Extant dated works of Kunimitsu range from Karyaku one (嘉暦, 1326) to Kan'ō two (觀応, 1351), i.e. the smith was active from the end of the Kamakura to the early Nanbokuchō period. Kunimitsu worked in various styles, i.e. we see various interpretations from *suguha* to *midareba* and wide and slender and long and short *tachi* and *tantō*, and as all of them are excellently executed, he is regarded by some as the most skillful of all Rai smiths. In general we learn that Kunimitsu's *tantō* and *ko-wakizashi* are usually hardened in a *midare*-based *hamon* and that their *jiba* is more *nie*-laden than that of his *tachi*. That is, these kinds of blades lean more towards Sōshū and the same can be seen with Rai Kunitsugu.

This *wakizashi* is *mumei* but clearly shows the *midare*-based style of Rai Kunimitsu. It is of an excellent *deki* and was once a heirloom of the Matsudaira (松平) branch that ruled the Takamatsu fief (高松藩).