

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

*katana, mumei*: Rai Kunimitsu (来国光)

## Measurements

*nagasa* 82.5 cm, *sori* 2.2 cm, *motohaba* 3.2 cm, *sakihaba* 2.3 cm, *kissaki-nagasa* 3.4 cm *nakago-nagasa* 24.0 cm, only very little *nakago-sori*

## Description

*Keijō*: *shinogi-zukuri*, *iori-mune*, wide *mihaba* long *nagasa*, despite the *ō-suriage* a deep *toriizori*, *chū-kissaki*

*Kitae*: fine, dense, and beautifully forged *ko-itame* that features *ji-nie* and fine *chikei*, the steel is very clear, a *nie-utsuri* appears towards the *shinogi* which is particularly prominent in the *monouchi* area

*Hamon*: *ko-nie*-laden *suguha-chō* with a bright and clear *nioiguchi* that is mixed with some *ko-gunome*, *ashi*, *yō*, *Kyō-saka-ashi*, and small *yubashiri*

*Bōshi*: on the *omote* side a little *midare-komi* and *yakitsume*, on the *ura* side about *sugu* with a brief *maru-kaeri*

*Horimono*: on both sides a *bōhi* that runs with *kaki-tōshi* through the tang

*Nakago*: *ō-suriage*, *kirijiri*, old *yasurime* were *katte-sagari*, new *yasurime* are *kiri*, three *mekugi-ana*, *mumei*

## Explanation

According to tradition, Yamashiro Rai Kunimitsu was the son of Rai Kunitoshi (来国俊). Extant dated works range from Karyaku one (嘉暦, 1326) to Kan'ō two (観応, 1351), i.e. the smith was active from the end of the Kamakura to the early Nanbokuchō period. Kunimitsu worked in various styles and made blades with different shapes, that is, he displayed the widest stylistic variety of all Rai smiths and was apart from that highly skilled.

This blade is *ō-suriage mumei* and shows a wide *mihaba*, a *chū-kissaki*, a long *nagasa*, and a deep *toriizori*, resulting in a truly magnificent *sugata*. The *jiba* is *nie*-laden, the *kitae* is fine and beautifully forged and features a prominent *nie-utsuri*, and the *hamon* is a *suguha-chō* with a very clear *nioiguchi* that is mixed with some *ko-gunome*, *ashi*, *yō*, and *yubashiri*. Thus we recognize the characteristic features of Rai Kunimitsu and due to the fact that the blade is in a very good condition, we have here a masterwork that stands out among all blades that are attributed to this smith.