

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

katana, mumei: Enju (延寿)

Measurements

nagasa 69.4 cm, *sori* 1.7 cm, *motohaba* 2.9 cm, *sakihaba* 1.9 cm, *kissaki-nagasa* 3.2 cm, *nakago-nagasa* 18.0 cm, *nakago-sori* 0.1 cm

Description

Keijō: shinogi-zukuri, iori-mune, wide mihaba, only little taper, thick kasane, relatively deep toriizori, chū-kissaki

Kitae: dense itame that is mixed with mokume, at the base of the ura side with nagare-masame, and that features ji-nie, fine chikei, some jifu, and a shirake-utsuri

Hamon: hoso-suguha in ko-nie-deki with a bright and rather tight nioiguchi that is mixed with some kuichigai-ba, hotsure, yubashiri, and on both sides along the monouchi with nijūba

Bōshi: sugu with an ō-maru-style kaeri and a little bit of hakikake at the tip, the kaeri is very brief on the omote side

Horimono: on both sides a bōhi with soebi that run as kaki-nagashi into the tang

Nakago: ō-suriage, kirijiri, sujikai-yasurime on the omote and katte-sagari yasurime on the ura side, one mekugi-ana, mumei

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.

This blade shows a dense *itame* that is mixed with *mokume* and *nagare* and that features *ji-nie*, fine *chikei*, some *jifū* in places, and a *shirake-utsuri*. The *hamon* is a *hoso-suguha* in *ko-nie-deki* with a bright and rather tight *nioiguchi* that is mixed with some *kuichigai-ba*, *hotsure*, and *yubashiri*, and the *bōshi* shows an *ō-maru*-style *kaeri* whereupon we clearly recognize the characteristic features of the Enju School. Also typical for this school are the *nijūba* that appear along the *monouchi* of both sides. The *itame* of this blade is excellently forged and is with its *ji-nie* and fine *chikei* very beautiful and also the *ha* in *hoso-suguha* with its bright and rather tight *nioiguchi* is highly tasteful. Thus, we have here a masterwork among all blades attributed to this school and delightful is that the blade is of a perfectly healthy shape, retaining despite the *ō-suriage* a deep *toriizori*-style curvature and a thick *kasane*.