

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

tantō, mumei: Rai Kunitoshi (来国俊)

Measurements

nagasa 27.1 cm, *uchizori*, *motohaba* 2.45 cm, *nakago-nagasa* 10.0 cm, hardly any *nakago-sori*

Description

Keijō: *hira-zukuri*, *mitsu-mune*, large dimensioned, thick *kasane*, *uchizori*

Kitae: very densely forged *ko-itame* that is mixed with a little bit of *nagare* and that features *ji-nie* and a *nie-utsuri*

Hamon: *suguha* in *ko-nie-deki* with a rather dense, bright, and clear *nioiguchi* that shows a *yakikomi* protrusion at the *machi*

Bōshi: *sugu* with a *ko-maru-kaeri* and some *hakikake*

Horimono: *gomabashi* on the *ura* side

Nakago: *ubu*, shallow *kurijiri*, *kiri-yasurime*, two *mekugi-ana*, *mumei*

Explanation

According to tradition, Kunitoshi was the son of Rai Kuniyuki (来国行). The question of if Niji Kunitoshi and Rai Kunitoshi were the same smith has yet not been settled. As far as extant dated works are concerned, the active period of "both" smiths ranges from Kōan one (弘安, 1278) to Genkō one (元亨, 1321), which corresponds to roughly fourty years and that does by no means rule out that we are facing here the career of a single smith. However, we see differences in the style of Niji Kunitoshi and Rai Kunitoshi works. The former show a magnificent *sugata* combined with a flamboyant *chōji-midare hamon* and the latter a more normal to slender *sugata* that is mostly combined with an elegant *suguha-chō hamon*. That is, we also distinguish between Niji Kunitoshi and Rai Kunitoshi on a mere stylistic level. Incidentally, there is only one signed *tantō* by Niji Kunitoshi and relatively many such by Rai Kunitoshi extant.

This is *tantō* is *ubu* but *mumei*. It is relatively large dimensioned and shows an *uchizori*. The *kitae* is a fine and beautifully forged *ko-itame* with *ji-nie* and the *hamon* is a classical *suguha* in *ko-nie-deki* with a bright *nioiguchi*. The *bōshi* displays an elegant *ko-maru-kaeri* and a *yakikomi* protrusion can be seen at the *machi* whereupon we recognize the characteristic features of Rai Kunitoshi. The blade is of an excellent *deki*.