

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

*wakizashi, mumei*: Niji Kunitoshi (二字国俊)

## Measurements

*nagasa* 59.8 cm, *sori* 1.5 cm, *motohaba* 2.85 cm, *sakihaba* 2.3 cm, *kissaki-nagasa* 4.5 cm, *nakago-nagasa* 16.7 cm, only a hint of *nakago-sori*

## Description

*Keijō*: *shinogi-zukuri*, *iori-mune*, wide *mihaba*, despite the *ō-suriage* a deep *sori* that tends to *toriizori*, elongated *chū-kissaki*

*Kitae*: excellently forged *ko-itame* that is mixed with a little bit of *ō-hada* and that features plenty of *ji-nie*

*Hamon*: widely hardened, active, and *nie*-laden *chōji-chō* with a bright *nioiguchi* that is mixed with many *ashi* and *yō*, *sunagashi*, and *yubashiri*

*Bōshi*: *midare-komi* over the *yokote* and then a gently undilating *notare* which runs out in *yakitsume* manner

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

*Nakago*: *ō-suriage*, shallow *kurijiri*, *katte-sagari yasurime*, three *mekugi-ana*, *mumei*

## Explanation

According to tradition, Kunitoshi was the son of Rai Kuniyuki (来国行), Works that lack of the preceding character for "Rai" in the *mei* are referred to as "Niji Kunitoshi" (lit. "two character Kunitoshi") whereas those signed with the three characters, i.e. "Rai" plus "Kunitoshi," are referred to as "Rai Kunitoshi." In terms of extant dates of both categories, it is perfectly possible that we are facing the work of a single smith. The mentioned two terms are used to distinguish between the different artistic phases of the smith, although they may also be used to refer to two different smiths. That is, this question of one or two Kunitoshi smiths has not yet been answered.

This *wakizashi* is *ō-suriage mumei* but maintains despite the shortening a *torrizori*-style curvature. The *kitae* is excellently forged and features plenty of *ji-nie* and the *hamon* is a widely hardened and active *chōji-midare* in *nie-deki*. Thus, this gorgeous interpretation reflects very well the prominent points of Niji Kunitoshi's workmanship. A masterwork among all blades that are attributed to this smith.