

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

katana, *mumei*: Rai Kunimitsu (来国光)

Measurements

nagasa 71.8 cm, *sori* 2.6 cm, *motohaba* 2.85 cm, *sakihaba* 2.2 cm, *kissaki-nagasa* 3.2 cm *nakago-nagasa* 18.9 cm, *nakago-sori* 0.1 cm

Description

Keijō: *shinogi-zukuri*, *iori-mune*, about normal wide *mihaba*, thick *kasane*, deep *toriizori*, *chū-kissaki*

Kitae: fine, dense, and beautifully forged *ko-itame* with *ji-nie*

Hamon: *ko-nie*-laden *suguha-chō* that tends somewhat to a gently undulating *notare* and that is mixed with *ko-gunome*, *ko-chōji*, many *ashi* and *yō*, *hotsure*, *uchinoke*, some *nijūba*, and fine *kinsuji* and *sunagashi* within the *ha*

Bōshi: *sugu* with *hakikake* and *yakitsume*

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

Nakago: *ō-suriage*, *kirijiri*, gently slanting *katte-sagari yasurime*, four *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. Apart from a classical *suguha*, Kunimitsu also hardened a *suguha-chō* that is mixed with *ko-gunome* and *ko-chōji*, a *suguha-chō* that is mixed with *ko-midare*, a *notare-chō* that is mixed with *gunome*, and a *midareba* that bases on *gunome-chō*, i.e. he displayed a great stylistic variety.

This blade is *ō-suriage mumei* and its *sugata* still shows a prominent *toriizori*. The *kitae* is a fine and densely forged *ko-itame* and the *hamon* a *suguha-chō* that is mixed with *ko-gunome* and *ko-chōji* and whose *ha* features all sorts of *hataraki*. Thus we clearly recognize the characteristic features of Rai Kunimitsu and the blade is in perfect condition (*kenzen*).