

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

*tachi*, *kinpun-mei*: Ryōkai - Hon'a + *kaō* (了戒・本阿「花押」) (Kōson, 光遜)

## Measurements

*nagasa* 71.6 cm, *sori* 2.1 cm, *motohaba* 2.6 cm, *sakihaba* 1.4 cm, *kissaki-nagasa* 1.95 cm *nakago-nagasa* 20.3 cm, *nakago-sori* 0.3 cm

## Description

*Keijō*: *shinogi-zukuri*, *iori-mune*, slender *mihaba*, noticeable taper, deep *koshizori* that increases again towards the tip, *ko-kissaki*

*Kitae*: partially somewhat standing-out *ko-itame* that is mixed with *mokume* and with some *nagare* towards the *ha*, there is fine *ji-nie* and a *nie-utsuri*

*Hamon*: *ko-nie*-laden and narrow *suguha-chō* that is mixed with *ko-gunome*, *ko-chōji*, *ko-ashi*, *yō*, and some small *yubashiri* along the *habuchi*, the *nioiguchi* is rather subdued at the base

*Bōshi*: *sugu* with a long running-back *ko-maru-kaeri*

*Nakago*: *ubu*, *kurijiri*, gently slanting *katte-sagari yasurime*, two *mekugi-ana*, the *haki-omote* side bears centrally on the lower half the *kinpun-mei* "Hon'a + *kaō* (by Kōson) and the *ura* side the partially peeled off and thus not clearly legible *kinpun-mei* attribution to Ryōkai

## Explanation

According to tradition, the Yamashiro smith Ryōkai was a student of Rai Kunitoshi (来国俊). Extant dated blades go back to the eras Shōō (正応, 1288-1293), Kagen (嘉元, 1303-1306), and Enkyō (延慶, 1308-1311) what suggests that that he was rather a colleague (fellow student) than a student of Kunitoshi. His workmanship is very close to Rai Kunitoshi but his *jigane* shows more tendency towards *masame* and a *shirake-utsuri* and his *hamon* is a more calm *suguha* whose *nioiguchi* is rather subdued in places.

This *tachi* is *ubu* but *mumei*. It was attributed by Hon'ami Kōson (本阿弥光遜, 1879-1955) to Ryōkai via a *kinpun-mei*. The blade shows a beautiful *ubu tachi-sugata* that reminds us at first glance of Rai Kunitoshi but the *jigane* does display *nagare* and the *yakiba* is partially subdued whereupon we can rather see the characteristic features of Ryōkai than those of Rai Kunitoshi and so we are in agreement with the period attribution. The blade is in its entirety very elegant.