

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

*naginata-naoshi katana, mumei: Aoe (青江)*

## Measurements

*nagasa* 68.6 cm, *sori* 2.0 cm, *motohaba* 2.7 cm, *sakihaba* 2.4 cm, *kissaki-nagasa* 8.9 cm, *nakago-nagasa* 20.0 cm, no *nakago-sori*

## Description

*Keijō: naginata-naoshi-zukuri, iori-mune, wide mihaba, no noticeable taper, thick kasane, deep sori, ō-kissaki*

*Kitae: rather standing-out itame that is mixed with mokume and that features plenty of ji-nie and fine chikei*

*Hamon: chū-suguha-chō in ko-nie-deki with bright and clear and rather tight nioiguchi that is mixed with gunome, ko-gunome, ko-ashi, a few hotsure, and fine kinsuji*

*Bōshi: sugu-chō with a little bit of midare and running out as yakitsume*

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

*Nakago: ō-suriage, kirijiri, kiri-yasurime, four mekugi-ana (of which three are plugged), mumei*

## Explanation

This *naginata-naoshi katana* can be attributed to the mid-Nanbokuchō period Aoe School. *Naginata* are mentioned in early historic records but the vast majority of extant specimen dates later than mid-Kamakura, with some of them having been later reworked into *katana* or *wakizashi*. There are a few signed Aoe *naginata* extant which date back as early as to the end of the Kamakura period, e.g. by smiths like Tsuguyoshi (次吉) and Tsugunao (次直).

It is likely that this *naginata-naoshi katana* was originally a classical *naginata* with little bulbousness towards the tip. The *kitae* is a rather standing-out *itame* that is mixed with *mokume* and the *hamon* is a *chū-suguha-chō* with a tight *nioiguchi* that is mixed with *gunome*, *ko-gunome*, and *ko-ashi* and therefore we recognize the characteristic features of the Aoe School. The *kitae* is excellent and shows plenty of *ji-nie* and fine *chikei* interwoven into the forging structure and with the *suguha* with its bright and clear and rather tight *nioiguchi*, the blade truly reflects the Aoe style. The *sugata* displaying a wide *mihaba* and an *ō-kissaki* is magnificent and impressive. There is still plenty of *hira-niku* extant and also the *jiba* is of a very healthy condition and so we have here a masterwork among all blades attributed to the Aoe School.