

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.