

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

*naginata-naoshi wakizashi*, *mumei*: Tanshū Hōjōji (但州法城寺)

## Measurements

*nagasa* 47.2 cm, *sori* 0.85 cm, *motohaba* 2.8 cm, *sakihaba* 2.45 cm, *kissaki-nagasa* 15.2 cm, *nakago-nagasa* 14.15 cm, only very little *nakago-sori*

## Description

*Keijō*: *naginata-naoshi-zukuri*, *iori-mune*, normal *mihaba*, no noticeable taper, high *shinogi*, relatively thin *kasane*, shallow *sori*, *ō-kissaki*

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

*Hamon*: *ko-nie*-laden *chōji-midare* that is mixed with *gunome*, *ko-gunome*, *manu ashi*, *yō*, *hotsure*, *sunagashi* all over the blade, and many long *kinsuji*, the elements of the *ha* are rather small dimensioned

*Bōshi*: *yakitsume* with *kinsuji* and *hakikake* at the tip

*Nakago*: *ō-suriage*, very shallow *kurijiri*, deeply slanting *katte-sagari yasurime*, two *mekugi-ana*, *mumei*

## Explanation

Hōjōji (法城寺) was a place in Tajima province (Tanshū) and as the famous Nanbokuchō-period *naginata* smith Kunimitsu (国光) lived and worked there, the name became a synonym for this smith. The *meikan* list two generations Kunimitsu, the first around Jōji (貞治, 1362-1368) and the second around Ōei (応永, 1394-1428). Extant unsigned works that are attributed to Hōjōji are mostly comprised of *naginata-naoshi katana* and *wakizashi* which show a flamboyant *chōji-midare* that reminds us at first glance of Bizen-Ichimonji works. However, their *jiba* is more *nie*-laden, the *kitae* of a larger forging structure with *chikei*, the *hada* stands out, and the *ha* features many *kinsuji* and *sunagashi*. Signed works by Kunimitsu are very rare and only such *tantō* and *hira-zukuri wakizashi* are known. These signed blades show a relatively busy *midareba* that is mixed with *chōji*, a *suguha* in *ko-nie-deki*, or a *nie*-laden *ko-notare* that is mixed with *gunome* and prominent *sunagashi*. That is, there is a noticeably difference between the interpretations of unsigned works traditionally attributed to Hōjōji and signed Kunimitsu blades.

This blade was originally a *naginata* which has been shortened and reworked into a *wakizashi*. The *kitae* is a rather standing-out *itame* that is mixed with *mokume* and that features plenty of *ji-nie*, fine *chikei*, and a *midare-utsuri*. The *hamon* is a *ko-nie*-laden *chōji-midare* that is mixed with *gunome*, *ko-gunome*, *ashi*, *yō*, and many *kinsuji* and *sunagashi*. Thus, we recognize the characteristic features of Tanshū Hōjōji whereupon we are in agreement to the period attribution. The *jiba* is rich in *hataraki* and of a truly ambitious interpretation.