

杖道

NAGINATA



ABOUT NAGINATA

The *naginata* is a glaive-like weapon with a curved, single-edged blade fixed to one end. The weapon itself has a history spanning roughly 1000 years, and gave rise to a fighting art that has managed to adapt to the times over the centuries. In modern times, naginata has evolved into a unique and progressive martial way which is both competitive and educational. Originally used by soldiers on the battlefield, the *naginata* came to be adopted by women of warrior families as a weapon of self-defence, and became popular as a vehicle for personal cultivation.

The *naginata*, being longer than the standing height of an average person, has a long wooden grip, and can be swung freely in many directions. Wielding the weapon with grace requires a high level of handling and footwork proficiency. Both the right and left sides of the body can be used interchangeably, so practitioners are able to develop balanced physiques and coordination.

There are two main types of competition in naginata. The

first is *engi*, where two partners perform set patterns of attack and defence against each other. Another pair of competitors simultaneously perform the same patterns, and referees decide which pair's performance was superior in terms of technique and presence. The second type of competition is *shiai*, in which competitors don armour and attempt to score points by striking designate body targets.

Naginata has a wide following; its practitioners include men and women of all ages. Its popularity overseas led to the formation of the International Naginata Federation in 1990, and the World Naginata Championships are held every four years.

