

JAPANESE SWORD CATALOGUE 20.5

FIRST RELEASED:
APRIL 8/2015

(COVER PHOTO)

ITEM# UJKA148

A HOSHO SCHOOL KATANA
WITH UNIQUE KIZAMI SAYA

YAMATO PROVINCE (NARA)
KAMAKURA PERIOD, CIRCA ~1316

48TH NBTHK JUYO TOKEN
CERTIFICATE OF AUTHENTICITY



ANTIQUE JAPANESE SWORDS FOR SALE (VOLUME 20.5)

FIRST RELEASED ON APRIL 8, 2015
UPDATED ON JUNE 8, 2015

THE FOLLOWING PAGES CONTAIN DESCRIPTIONS AND IMAGES
OF GENUINE ANTIQUE JAPANESE SWORDS THAT WERE SOLD IN
CATALOGUE 20.

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Hello Everyone!

Wow, what a time of year... Sakura has been blooming beautifully in Japan while children (and adults alike) around the world are coming down from an Easter chocolate treat bonanza. I hope this message finds you well!

First of all, I'd like to extend hearty congratulations to those who inquired and claimed essentially all swords that were listed in our past 19.0 catalogue. On the next page, there will be a link to review the swords that have been sold for reference only. Arigato!!

This catalogue is filled with gems that I am very proud to offer you all. The crown jewel is, of course, a Yamato Tradition Hosho School katana from the Kamakura period with NBTHK Juyo Token certification. Everything about this sword is remarkable - words are hard to express.

Other miracles of human craftsmanship to own is a powerful wakizashi by second generation Hizen Tadahiro with rarely seen horimono (engraving), a Shozen Masatomi katana with a delightful choji-midare hamon and ocean-inspired sword fittings.

Be sure to review an award-winning katana from 1937 that commemorates the 2600th anniversary of the Emperor Jimmu and a Shizuhiro katana that has the name *and* rank of a previous owner chiseled on the nakago. There is also an incredible 75cm Tomotsugu katana with a massive curvature of 3cm. It is one of the most impressive katanas I've ever laid eyes on.

Many swords sold in Catalogue 19 are currently having a custom koshirae being created for them. Custom koshirae projects are always exciting and personally rewarding for clients. There are a number of swords in this catalogue fit for a koshirae projects that I encourage you to consider embarking upon. It takes some time, but the rewards are priceless.

I consider myself very fortunate to work with clients who live at the top of their game. Committing oneself to continuous growth spiritually, creatively, professionally, emotionally, financially - this is what life's all about. I consider us all modern-day warriors. I feel strongly that the Japanese sword is a symbol of such life appreciation and commitment.

Please contact me at service@uniquejapan.com to become informed on our latest acquisitions and your name will be added to our VIP emailing list.

Thank you all who have joined our list.

Feel the history and create your history.
Promise to make the most of each day.

Warm regards,



Pablo Kuntz
April 2015



Sharing a laugh with a client...this is Benkei the Warrior Monk menuki on this custom made koshirae. I love how his big bald head breaks through the silk! He is tough!

INDEX OF JAPANESE SWORDS & FITTINGS

ITEM#	SWORDSMITH & TYPE	CM	CERTIFICATE	ERA / PERIOD	PRICE
ujgu018	TERUHIDE ARMY KATANA	66.5	NTHK Kanteisho	Showa era (~1930)	SOLD
ujka011	A TOMOTSUGU KATANA	75.0	Tokubetsu Hozon	Muromachi (~1450)	SOLD
ujka122	A YUKIHIRO KATANA	69.0	NBTHK Hozon	Kanbun (1661-1673)	SOLD
ujka140	A MASATOMI KATANA	60.4	Tokubetsu Hozon	Jokyo (1684-1688)	SOLD
ujka143	A TOMOYOSHI KATANA	68.4	NTHK Kanteisho	Showa (August 1937)	SOLD
ujka148	HOSHO SCHOOL KATANA	68.1	JUYO TOKEN	Kamakura (~1316)	SOLD
ujwa165	A TADAHIRO WAKIZASHI	54.8	Tokubetsu Hozon	Kanbun (1661-1673)	SOLD
ujka146	A MUNEYUKI KATANA	70.7	NTHK Kanteisho	Keicho (1596-1615)	SOLD
ujwa164	A KANENAKA WAKIZASHI	49.0	NTHK Kanteisho	Tenna (1681-1684)	SOLD
ujwa166	A KANEMICHI WAKIZASHI	52.7	Tokubetsu Kicho	Kanbun (1661-1673)	SOLD

ALL PRICES ARE IN US DOLLARS

To access previously sold swords in Catalogue 19, please copy and paste this link:

<http://tinyurl.com/uj-catalogue-19-sold>

TO ONLINE VISITORS AROUND THE WORLD...

WELCOME! WE COMPLETELY RESPECT THE FACT IT TAKES A HUGE LEAP OF PERSONAL FAITH IN US TO COMMIT TO A PARTICULAR SWORD(S) GIVEN THE RELIANCE ON PHOTOS AND DESCRIPTIONS FOR SUCH A HIGHLY VALUED ITEM.

IT IS OUR PROMISE TO ADDRESS ALL YOUR QUESTIONS TO THE BEST OF OUR ABILITY. IT'S IMPORTANT TO US THAT YOU FEEL COMPLETELY CONFIDENT THAT THE SWORD YOU CHOOSE (AND CHOOSES YOU) IS DESTINED FOR YOUR FAMILY TO CHERISH AND PRESERVE.

PLEASE TAKE REASSURANCE THAT ALL SWORDS FROM UNIQUE JAPAN ARE GUARANTEED AUTHENTIC AND COME WITH A 3-DAY WORRY FREE INSPECTION PERIOD UPON ARRIVAL TO YOUR HOME.

WE ACQUIRE SWORDS ON A REGULAR BASIS AND CAN SOURCE SWORDS FOR COLLECTORS SEEKING A SPECIFIC SMITH AND/OR SCHOOL.

PLEASE INQUIRE ABOUT OUR LATEST ARRIVALS THAT MAY NOT BE LISTED IN THE CATALOGUE.

DOMO ARIGATO!
PABLO

A RECENTLY CREATED DAISHO KOSHIRAE PROJECT...



ITEM# UJKA115 AND #UJWA139

A MUNETSUGU DAISHO KATANA

SIGNED, EARLY EDO PERIOD (JOKYO ERA: 1661-1673)

Swordsmith: *Iyo no jo MUNETSUGU* (2nd generation)
Location: Hizen province (Saga prefecture)
Length: 71.6cm (katana), 52.0cm (wakizashi)
Jihada: *Itame, matsukawa-fu, chikei*
Hamon: *Gunome midare, sunagashi, kinsen in hachu*
Certificate: NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon and NTHK-NPO Kanteisho

First generation Shodai Munetsugu is the founder of the Hizen Shinto Group. He began his career in the Koto period (16th century), creating swords in Yamashiro province (Kyoto) for the wars during the late Muromachi period. From the start of the Edo period, Munetsugu travelled to Nagase and was appointed to lead all swordsmiths in the Hizen.

The swords are attributed to Munetsugu's son, 2nd generation Munetsugu. The Munetsugu group worked in the styles that emulated Bizen, Soshu and Enju schools. This gives their swords a distinct flavor of those made in the 13th century.

A fabulous daisho koshirae was produced for a client in Europe that features birds resting on branches that wrap around their respective *tsukas*. Love how the orange sageos pop out!



ITEM# UJGU018

CURRENTLY AVAILABLE

A TERUHIDE ARMY OFFICER KATANA

SIGNED, EARLY SHOWA PERIOD (CIRCA WWII)

- Swordsmith:** TERUHIDE
Location: Musashi province (modern-day Tokyo)
Measurements: **Length:** 66.6cm (ubu) **Curvature:** 0.8cm **Moto-haba:** 2.95cm
Jihada: Ko-itame (wood grain pattern)
Hamon: Gunome midare
Certificate #1: NTHK-NPO Kanteisho (a sword designated as Important by the Society for the Preservation of the Japanese Sword)
Certificate #2: NTHK-NPO Kanteisho (a sword koshirae (fittings) designated as Important by the Society for the Preservation of the Japanese Sword)
Included: Army Officer fittings, silk carry bag, sword stand, maintenance kit, DVD, printed care guide, registration and all exportation paperwork to home country

SOLD

Ishido Teruhide (1900~1982) was the 10th and last generation of the prestigious *Ishido Korekazu* line of swordsmiths in Edo/Musashi Province (Tokyo). An excellent swordsmith, Teruhide was the descendant of the highly ranked *Musashi Daijo Fujiwara Korekazu*.

During WWII, he produced many quality swords for high-ranking military officers and also made blades for civilians. *The Nihon Token Tanrenjo* and the *Nihon Token Shinbunshi* specially ranked Ishido Teruhide as **BETSUKI** in the 1943 list of top *Gendai Swordsmiths*.

On this particularly sword Teruhide chiseled his name with a classic two-character signature that he used early on in his career. As in all Ishido swords the construction is sublime. Sword is blessed with a fine *ko-itame jihada* and *muji-hada* with a prominent *gunome midare* wavy hamon.

Blade is housed in *WWII Japanese Army Officer Shin-Gunto Koshirae* that includes a protective cover for its unusual lightweight wooden scabbard that is signed by the craftsman (a happy

discovery when we peeled back the cover!). There are matching serial number ㄨ 3 on all fittings and proudly carries the blue and brown Company Officer tassel suspended from the hilt.

Sword is accompanied with NTHK-NPO Kanteisho certification that validates this sword as being a quality gendaito made by traditional folding methods.



scabbard is signed by craftsman



ITEM# UJKA011

CURRENTLY AVAILABLE ON CONSIGNMENT

A TOMOTSUGU KATANA

SIGNED, MUROMACHI PERIOD (CIRCA 15TH CENTURY)

Swordsmith: *Uda School TOMOTSUGU*
Location: Etchu province (modern-day Toyama)
Measurements: **Length:** 75.0cm (ubu) **Curvature:** 3cm(!) **Moto-haba:** 3.2cm
Jihada: *Itame* (wood grain pattern)
Hamon: *Gunome midare*
Certificate: **NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon** (a sword designated as *Especially Worthy of Conservation by the Society for the Preservation of the Japanese Art Sword*)
Included: Custom koshirae, shirasaya, brocade carry bags, sword stand, maintenance kit, DVD, printed care guide, sword is currently in the United States

SOLD

Some katanas radiate invincibility. This is one such Samurai sword. Behold a two-character, ubu nakago, signed by Uda School Tomotsugu katana with a cutting edge of 75cm and a wicked 3cm in curvature. It is a sword that captures the imagination, and holds it.

There were a number of talented swordsmiths signing Tomotsugu from the Uda School in Etchu province nestled on the Sea of Japan. They can be traced back to the 14th century Nambokucho period with influences deriving from Yamato and Soshu traditions. This is clearly one of the finest swords ever produced by the school during the Muromachi period, circa 15th century.

The katana carries a wonderful *gunome midare hamon* that surfs itself the length of the blade and a robust *itame* hada. It's hard not to be in awe of its energy when holding this sword.

The katana was initially housed only in its protective shirasaya. As such, a custom koshirae was built for the client. This was one of the first katanas ever sold at Unique Japan and our first major custom koshirae project that pays tribute to the sea and of good fortune. The sword is now available on consignment and currently resides in the United States.

Please review images below and here: <http://new.uniquejapan.com/a-tomotsugu-katana/>





A Tomotsugu Katana

Uda School, Etchu Province
Length: 75cm / Curvature: 3cm

Signed, Muromachi Period (circa 15th century)
Custom koshirae depicting waves, cranes and loyal geese



ITEM# UJKA122

CURRENTLY AVAILABLE

A SHODAI YUKIHIRO KATANA

SIGNED, EARLY EDO PERIOD (KANBUN ERA: 1664-1673)

- Swordsmith:** *Hizen No Kuni Dewa No Kami YUKIHIRO (1st generation)*
Location: Hizen province (Saga prefecture)
Measurements: **Length:** 69.0cm **Curvature:** 2.0cm **Moto-haba:** 2.9cm
Jihada: *Ko-itame (wood grain pattern)*
Hamon: *Gunome midare (lovely wavy clove blossoms), long ashi, sunagashi*
Nakago: Ubu, Ha-agari Kurishiri, Sujikai Yasuri
Certificate #1: **NBTHK Hozon** (a sword designated as Worthy of Preservation by the Society for the Preservation of the Japanese Art Sword)
Certificate #2: **NTHK Kanteisho** (a sword designated as Important by the Society for the Preservation of the Japanese Sword)
Fujishiro: **Jo-saku** (ranked as a superior swordsmith)
Included: In shirasaya, carry bag, stand, maintenance kit, DVD, printed care guide, registration and all exportation paperwork to home country

SOLD

Here is a katana by one of my favourite swordsmiths, Maestro Yukihiro, son of Yoshinobu and younger brother to Masahiro who was born in 1617.

He received his Dewa no Daijo title in 1648 and his Dewa no Kami title (Lord of Dewa province) in 1663. This katana was made after he received his "no Kami" title, which is always desirable.

In 1650 Yukihiro moved to Nagasaki to study Dutch forging techniques with Hisatsugu and Tanenaga. It is assumed that he also studied the Bizen Ichimonji in Edo (Tokyo) with Noriyoshi.

Swords produced by Yukihiro display all the excellence that makes the Hizen tradition so sought after. As this particular sword is of classic Edo-period Samurai sword length and curvature, it was evidently depended upon in past battles. It's taken a couple knocks on the chin.

A few very minor flaws to the body allow it to be offered at a very reasonable price for a genuine original length Shodai Yukihiro katana. Yukihiro was such a skilled swordsmith that six generations of talented smiths followed in their master's footsteps.

This sword is an excellent candidate for a custom made koshirae to rest her in. Please enquire for further information and details. Two certificates of authenticity accompany this fine katana.





ITEM# UJKA140

CURRENTLY AVAILABLE

A MASATOMI KATANA

SIGNED, EARLY EDO PERIOD (JOKYO ERA: 1684-1688)

Swordsmith: *Bungo no Kami MASATOMI*
Location: Owari province (Nagoya area)
Measurements: **Length:** 60.4cm (ubu) **Curvature:** 1.4cm **Moto-haba:** 3.2cm
Jihada: *Ko-itame* (wood grain pattern)
Hamon: *Choji midare, sunagashi, yakidaka and hakeru*
Certificate #1: **NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon** (*a sword designated as Especially Worthy of Conservation by the Society for the Preservation of the Japanese Art Sword from 1987!*)
Certificate #2,3,4: **NTHK-NPO Kanteisho** (*sword and sword koshirae and tsuba designated as Important by the Society for the Preservation of the Japanese Sword*)
Included: Edo period koshirae, shirasaya, brocade carry bag, sword stand, maintenance kit, DVD, printed care guide, registration and all exportation paperwork

SOLD

This is a brilliant katana by swordsmith Minamoto Masatomi (Shozen) who moved to Owari Nagoya from Mino province. His swords have a similar feel to Hoki no Kami Nobutaka. From *kissaki* to *kashira*, there are many qualities to this sword that will delight its new owner.

The *hamon* is a bright *choji-midare* that jumps off the blade. All *hamon* patterns are inherently unique, however, this temper line is one rarely seen on a sword. It's very beautiful.

A marvelous set of *koshirae* accompanies the katana too. It pays tribute to the ocean with an Echizen Kinai School clamshell-design as a *tsuba*, waves on the *fuchi-kashira* and the Heike warrior crab on the *menuki*! Four certificates of authenticity come with this Samurai sword.



A Masatomi Katana

Length: 60.4cm

Curvature: 1.4cm

Edo-period *koshirae* (sword fittings) that pays tribute to the majestic ocean. The *fuchi-kashira* (pommel) has skilfully carved waves with gold accents. The *tsuba* (guard) depicts shells or clams and the *menuki* (grips on the hilt) are of the Heike warrior crab.





source: ancient-origins.net

The legend of Heikegani: Samurai ghost crabs

Heikegani is a species of crab native to Japan, with a shell that bears a pattern resembling a human face. According to Japanese folklore, the Heikegani crabs contain the souls of the Heike Samurai warriors of the Taira clan who were slain at the Battle of Dan-no-ura in 1185 AD by Minamoto clan thus commencing the Kamakura period.

For the Heike Samurai, surrender was never an option. Those that were not slain in battle, committed suicide by drowning themselves along with their 7-year-old emperor.

Their bodies became food for the heikegani crabs who lay in wait on the sea floor. The ghosts or souls of the Heike samurai were reincarnated into the Heikegani crabs who ate their remains. Their angry faces now shown on the shells of the crabs.

To this day, it is said that the Heikegani crabs roam the depths of the oceans around Japan, searching for the lost heirlooms of their empire.

Ikebana Artistry by Donna Canning

“A collective performance of spirit, materials, space and light.

Inspired by nature and the fascinating culture of Japan.”



*Narrow columns
intersect.*

*Atop
a statuesque
umbel
Green Mist...*

*Wings
of a
Dragonfly
at rest*

Tombo

*Ammi Visnaga 'Green Mist', Plum branch, Gerbera stem, Decorative stone, Ceramic vessel
Item# ujik335*

A momentary depiction of the dragonfly 'Tombo'. Statuesque *Green Mist* is the focal point of this arrangement. The compound umbel bearing tiny green flowers lends a delicate airiness. Atop, slender branches of blossoming plum intersect. The characteristic wings of *tombo* at rest appear.

The dragonfly is dear to the Japanese heart. In fact, Japan was once called *Akitsu-shima* meaning 'The Island of the Dragon-fly'. **According to legend, Jimmu, the first divine emperor of Japan, stood on the top of a mountain surveying all of Yamato (the old name for Japan) and remarked that the land resembled the shape of a ring of tombo (dragonflies). It is from this phrase that Yamato also became known as Akitsu-shima.**

Tombo are highly revered and respected, being **symbolic of strength, courage and success**. Representing the subconscious mind and deeper thoughts, the presence of a dragonfly reminds us to pay attention to our dreams and inner feelings, to 'open one's eyes'.

Tombo are also known as "**victory insects**" or *kachimushi* due to their hunting prowess. They are fast agile fliers, quick to attack in mid-air, known to never retreat. For these reasons, *tombo* became a motif favoured among the warrior class. Hilts of swords and arrow quivers were commonly emblazoned with the image of the fearless, swift and courageous dragonfly.

*moments captured
to share...*



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"The greater danger for most of us is not that our aim is too high and we miss it, but that it is too low and we reach it."

MICHELANGELO



ITEM# UJKA143

A TOMOYOSHI KATANA

SIGNED & DATED (12TH YEAR OF SHOWA, AUGUST 1937)

Swordsmith: *Osaka Ju Izumi TOMOYOSHI*

Location: Izumi city, Osaka

Measurements: **Length:** 68.4cm (ubu) **Curvature:** 1.5cm **Moto-haba:** 3.3cm

Jihada: *Masame* (straight grain) and *ko-itame* (wood grain pattern)

Hamon: *Naka-suguha* (straight) with tight wavy *ko-midare* and *ashi-iri*

Certificate: **NTHK-NPO Kanteisho** (a sword designated as Important by the Society for the Preservation of the Japanese Sword)

Designation: This blade was awarded the "*Recommendation Work*" prize at the Kigen 2600th memorial ceremony Art Show in commemoration of Emperor Jimmu

Included: Shirasaya, brocade carry bag, sword stand, maintenance kit, DVD, printed care guide, registration and all exportation paperwork

SOLD

Switching gears to the 20th century, it comes with great pleasure to introduce a gendaito katana with an imperial story.

Swordsmith Tomoyoshi from Izumi city in Osaka produced this katana for an Art Show in the summer of 1937 that commemorated the 2600th enthronement anniversary of Japan's first emperor, Emperor Jimmu. This sword was so well received that it won the *Recommendation Work* prize. This honour was subsequently chiseled onto the nakago.

In paying proper respect to the life of Emperor Jimmu who is said to have captured Yamato (Nara city), this sword was produced in the Yamato tradition with free-flowing *masame hada* (straight grain) mixed with *itame hada*. It is, above all, an excellent work of art.

The *hamon* is a beautifully made straight *suguha* - the iconic temper line of the Yamato tradition of course. The construction is wide, healthy and strong with a formidable *moto-haba* of 3.3cm.

It is interesting to note that in 1940, a Peace Tower was built in Miyazaki in honour Emperor Jimmu. On the front of the tower reads "*Hakko Ichiu*" (eight crown cords, one roof), which is attributed to the emperor meaning, "*United under one roof*".

This was often used as a rallying cry for imperialists who believed that peace would reign once Asia was united under Japanese leadership. This is a sword that was likely carried in WWII.



大阪住和泉朝吉作

○ saka
Ju
Izu
mi
Tomo
yoshi
saku

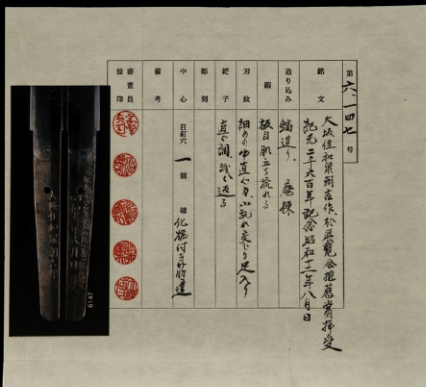
紀元二千六百年記念於展覽會推薦賞
昭和十二年八月日拜受

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Swordsmith Tomoyoshi of Izumi city in Osaka, crafted this sword

This blade was awarded the "Recommendation Work" prize at the Kigen 2600th memorial ceremony Art Show in commemoration of Emperor Jimmu
Dated 8th month in 12th year of Showa (August, 1937)





Emperor Jimmu

According to legend, Emperor Jimmu was the first emperor of Japan. His accession is traditionally dated as 660 BCE.

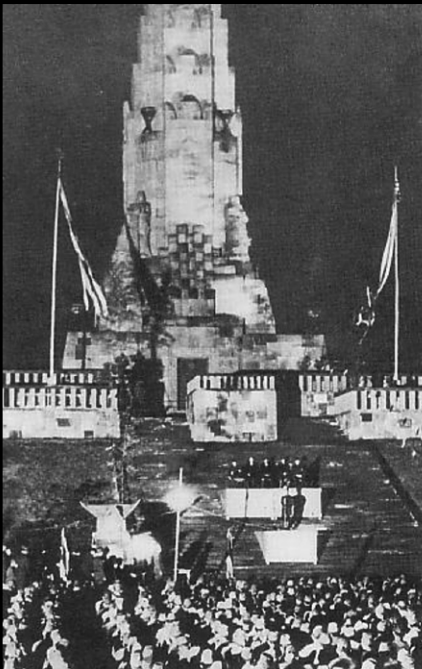
He was seen as a descendant of both the sun goddess Amaterasu through her grandson *Ninigi*, and the storm god *Susanoo*. He launched a military expedition from Hyuga near the Inland Sea, captured Yamato (Nara), and established this as his center of power.

Official homage of Emperor Jimmu began in 1872-73 with a new holiday called *Kigensetsu* (National Foundation Day) commemorating the anniversary of Jimmu's ascension to the throne 2,532 years earlier.

Peace Tower

Heiwadai or Peace Tower Park, was built by the imperialist Showa regime in 1940 to celebrate the 2600th anniversary of the ascension of Emperor Jimmu. The focal point was the construction of a 37 meter Hakkō Ichiū pillar upon the legendary site of Emperor Jimmu's palace.

On the front of the tower reads "*Hakko Ichiū*" (eight crown cords, one roof), which is attributed to Emperor Jimmu and means "United under one roof". This was often used as a rallying cry for imperialists who believed that peace would reign once Asia was united under Japanese leadership. *Bottom left: Prewar 10-sen Japanese banknote, illustrating the Hakko ichiu.*



Steps to Building Your Own Koshirae

Many fine antique Samurai swords today come stored only in a shirasaya. A shirasaya acts like a humididor, protecting the steel for the long term. Just as the Samurai would have custom ordered during the Edo Period we can build a traditional set of outdoor koshirae (sword mounts) for your sword.

Step 1: Choose your sword (find the sword that chooses you)



Step 2: Select your antique fittings & colours (decide on a theme that speaks to you and your sword)



Step 3: Patience...

(it takes about 3-6 months to build as it is handmade by master craftsmen in Japan)

Total production cost ranges from \$2,500 ~ \$5,000

Please speak to a member of the Unique Japan team to get started!



ITEM# UJKA148

A HOSHO SCHOOL KATANA UNSIGNED, KAMAKURA PERIOD (~1317)

- Swordsmith:** The Hosho School (attribution)
Location: Yamato province (Nara prefecture)
Certificate: 48th NBTHK Juyo Token (a sword designated as a Profound Sword by the Society for the Preservation of the Japan Art Sword. Certificate issued in 2002, serial no. 11330.)
Nagasa (length): 68.1cm **Curvature:** 1.7cm
Moto-haba: 2.7cm **Saki-haba:** 1.7cm
Kissaki: 2.8 cm **Nakago length:** 16.5cm **Nakago curvature:** 0.2cm
Jihada: Pure masame-hada, thick ji-nie, good chikei and sharp
Boshi: Sugu-gokoro (straight line) and curled back at the tip
Hamon: Hosu-suguba (narrow straight line), komidare-gokoro, ko-ashi, nioi-fukaku, habuchi-hotsurete, uchi-noke, sunagashi, and sharp
Shape: Shinogi-zukuri, iori-mune, hosomi (narrow blade), shinogi-hirome/takame (shinogi is wide and high), O-suriage, chukissaki (mid-size nakago)
Nakago: O-suriage, saki-kiri, sujikai, four holes
Included: Edo-period koshirae, shirasaya, brocade carry bags, sword stand, maintenance kit, DVD, printed care guide, exportation paperwork to home country

SOLD

continue for details >



Before the capital was transferred to Kyoto in Yamashiro province, Nara in Yamato province was the center of Japanese culture. This was known as the Nara period, from 710-794AD.

The mural on the left is of a group of women in continental jackets and long skirts from this time.

Nara has a greatly coveted history in Japan. It is said that Amakuni who lived in Yamato during the Nara period was the earliest Japanese swordsmith.

Although no signed blades of his exist today, the origins of the Japanese sword can be traced back to Yamato.

According to Kokan Nagayama, author of the *Connoisseurs Book of Japanese Swords*:

"The development of the swordsmiths' trade in Yamato was closely linked to the area's proximity to the capital at Nara. Furthermore, swordsmiths' prosperity depended on their relationship with the temples with which they were affiliated.

From the end of the Heian period (794~1185AD), temples in Yamato province acquired vast manors and many branch temples, and strove to arm themselves in order to guard their rights and property. The five major Yamato schools – the Senjuin, Tegai, Taima, Hosho and Shikkake – were groups of swordsmiths who supplied the temples, and the Yamato tradition thus became known over a wide area through the nationwide organizations of these temples."

Of the five major schools of the Yamato Tradition mentioned above, the Hosho School holds a special place amongst them. For it is within the Hosho School that the iconic straight-grain forging pattern known as *masame-hada* was born onto long swords.

When one learns about the general characteristics of the Yamato tradition, the general rule is that the *jihada* (surface skin of the steel) is that it is forged in *masame*. However, when one looks closely at the five Yamato schools, **only** the Hosho School forges exclusively in *masame*. They are the most conservative school and arguably, the most revered.

Interestingly, Hosho is the only school that is not named after a temple or a location, but likely that of a family name, Hosho. According to Japanese sword scholar Han Bing Siong this is a very significant point and directly relates to their prominence:

"The Japanese sources do not mention any temple to which the Hosho belonged. Could it perhaps be that the Hosho were the very few swordsmiths in Yamato working independently from the temples? Then their swords presumably were made for samurai and not for war monks."

総じて古色の趣を醸し出しており、地刃共によく冴えている。
同派極の中でも特に秀でた一口である。

*"It exudes an old traditional atmosphere and is in a healthy state.
This sword is an extraordinary work that even surpasses
other great swords from the Hosho School."*

A Hosho School Katana
48th NBTHK Juyo Token Certificate

It gives us great pleasure to introduce a masterpiece from the Kamakura period.
A remarkable katana attributed to the Hosho School with NBTHK Juyo Token certification.

As previously illustrated, the Hosho School specialized in producing *masame-hada*. A straight grain forging technique that only the Hosho School perfected and religiously adhered to. One must admire their strict code of conduct, such immense pride they carried.

The simple reason that all other schools did not forge swords this way: *it's difficult*. The welds form long seams thus it is common for the sword to split along the seams. In fact, most Hosho School swords show such *hada-ware* of this variety. It's accepted as a charm point.

Except on this katana...the *pure masame hada* is essentially flawless. It is a very rare and pristine example of the work that made this school so greatly treasured.

This sword's *sayagaki* (a sword appraisal opinion) takes the attribution a step further to *Hosho Sadayoshi* one of the founders of the school and a National Treasured swordsmith.

The NBTHK Juyo Token certificate strongly re-affirms the importance of this katana as *"an extraordinary work that even surpasses other great swords from the Hosho School."*

The sword holds another masterclass of craftsmanship, her *koshirae*. The eye is instantly drawn to the black-lacquered *straight* grooved lines of the saya known as *"Tate Kizami Saya"*. This design is no accident. This is complimentary Japanese art at the highest level.

Other parts of the *koshirae* include an outstanding *tsuba* (guard) that is from the Goto School from the early Edo period and a *fuchi-kashira* with delightful depictions of the moon. In fact, both the *koshirae* and *tsuba* comes with NTHK-NPO Kanteisho Certificates of Authenticity.

As stated in Catalogue 19, the words "Juyo Token" are often translated as being an 'Important Sword'. However, a closer, more suitable choice of swords would be *"Profound"*.

This katana is a very rare and valuable piece of Japanese history with profound significance. The next owner must ensure that it continues its inspiring journey in a faithful manner.

Six pages of insight follow regarding this Samurai katana that only scratch the surface of this masterclass. Please contact me, Pablo, at service@uniquejapan.com for further information and interest in ownership. Thank you.



A Hosho School
Katana

Length: 68cm
Curvature: 1.7cm

48th NBTHK Juyo Token
Certificate of Authenticity



Sayagaki

The shirasaya features *sayagaki* (a sword appraisal)
It reads as follows:

Hosho Sadayoshi (attributed swordsmith)
Yamato No Kuni Hosho Katana Saijo Kiju Yuhin
(most rare and important work by Hosho School)

Kore Saku Migoto Nari (this is a great work)
48th Juyo Token designated
Nagasa (length): 2 shaku 2-sun 5-bu arikore (68cm)
14th year of Heisei (2002) October

Kamakura Jidai No Meisaku Nari
(This blade is a masterpiece from the Kamakura period)

Masame-hada

The steel from which Japanese swords are made is known as the *jigane*. The term *jihada* refers to the pattern of the surface grain produced by the swordsmith's forging.

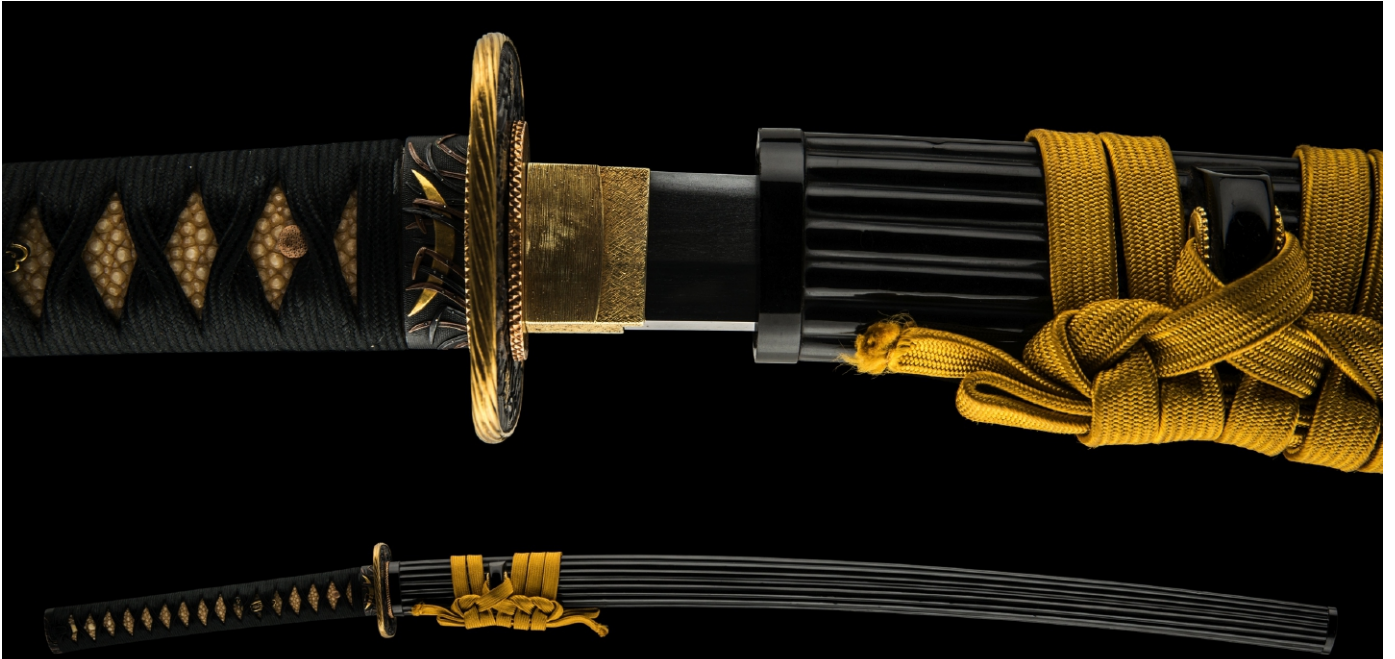
Since this pattern varies with each individual swordsmith and school, the *jihada* is useful in determining the age and school.

Masame-hada is a *jihada* pattern in which *the grain runs nearly straight along the blade*. It is a defining trait of the Yamato tradition.

This katana is a rare and outstanding example of pure *masame-hada*.

The Hosho School is recognized as being the only school in Japanese sword making history to forge exclusively in *masame*.

These talented swordsmiths worked during the Kamakura to Nambokucho periods (13-14th century).



'Tate' Kizami-saya

The Hosho School katana is blessed with a very rare and wonderful *saya* (scabbard) known as *tate* (tah-tei) *kizami* (kee-za-mee) *saya*. Crafted in the late Edo period, this saya has symmetrically grooved lines flowing the length of the piece.

One can see that this unique scabbard design pays tribute the straight grain *masame-hada* seen on the surface skin of the sword itself. Perfect harmony.



The Hosho School katana's koshirae features an early Edo Period tsuba by the Goto School. It is of shakudo base rimmed in gold with skilfully carved waves and gold kiri-mon. This is a top class tsuba surely held by an elite Samurai.





*'On the Musashi plain
There is no mountain
Behind which the moon disappears.
It rises and sinks among the grass.'*

Minamoto Michikata (1189-1238)





ITEM# UJWA165

A HIZEN TADAHIRO II WAKIZASHI

SIGNED, EARLY EDO PERIOD (KANBUN ERA: 1661~1673)

Swordsmith: *Omi Daijo Fujiwara TADAHIRO (second generation)*
Location: *Hizen province*
Measurements: **Length:** 54.8cm **Curvature:** 1.0cm **Moto-haba:** 3.2cm
Jihada: *Very tight itame leading to konuka hada*
Hamon: *Classic suguha with ko-ashi*
Nakago: *Ubu nakago, kiri yasuri*
Boshi: *Ko-maru*
Certificate: **NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon** (*a sword designated as Especially Worthy of Conservation by the Society for the Preservation of the Japan Art Sword*)
Fujishiro: **Jojo-saku** (*ranked as a highly superior swordsmith*) and **o-Wazamono**
Included: *Shirasaya, silk carry bag, sword stand, maintenance kit, DVD, printed care guide, registration and all exportation paperwork to home country*

SOLD

Born Hashimoto Heishiro in Saga, Hizen in 1614, renowned swordsmith second generation (Nidai) Tadahiro began working with his father, maestro Shodai (first generation) Tadayoshi at the tender age of ten.

Guided by his father and other great smiths such as Shodai Masahiro and Yoshinobu, Tadahiro took over leadership of the school at the age of nineteen when his father died in 1632. He then changed his name from Hashimoto Heishiro to Hashimoto Shinsaemon.

Curiously, it is understood that his new name appears on a family document pledging to the Shogunate that the Hashimoto family would not sell swords for export to foreign countries.

As head of the Tadayoshi School, second generation Tadahiro always signed his name Tadahiro and never Tadayoshi. In July of 1641, after only nine years after taking over the Tadayoshi School, he was given the honorific title of "Omi Daijo". He was only 28. Nidai Tadahiro died at the age of 81 in the sixth year of Genroku or 1693.

His works span an incredible 60 years. The sheer quantity and quality of his work makes him one of the most prized artisans, legendary among Hizen smiths.

This signed and very healthy wakizashi (moto-haba of 3.2cm) was made in the Kanbun era (circa 1661-1673) during the twilight era of his career. We can deduce this by referring to his signature at the time and the way the nakagojiri is made to a more gradual point.

The sword has recently been polished and encompasses all one would hope for in a Tadahiro II sword. It features his masterful and iconic *suguha hamon* like a laser beam coupled with a flawless body packed so tightly resulting in the much-desired *konuka hada*.



What makes the sword extra special is the presence of *horimono*, engraving.

On one side of the blade there is a depiction of "Ken with sankozuka" (sword with vajra thunderbolt hilt) seen on the left here.

The other is *goma hashi* (chopsticks used on the altars of Shinto shrines) with a *bonji* character for good fortune.

Of particular note, Fujishiro discusses the rarity of *horimono* on Tadahiro Nidai forged blades in *Nihon Shinto Jiten*:

"Rarely, there is horimono of kenmakiryu, and these were made by Yoshinaga"

All told, this is a long and highly collectible Hizen wakizashi by one of the greats of the school certified NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon.

A thoughtful custom koshirae would compliment this sword very well indeed.



近江大掾藤原忠成

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鑑定書

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平成二十五年一月二十八日

財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協會



NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon Certification

A Tadahiro Nidai Wakizashi

Edo Period (circa 1661)

Length: 54.8cm

Curvature: 1.0cm

Classic *suguha hamon*
(straight temper line)



ITEM# UJKA146

CURRENTLY ON HOLD

A MUNEYUKI KATANA

UNSIGNED, MOMOYAMA PERIOD (CIRCA 1596)

- Swordsmith:** *Takada Fujiwara MUNEYUKI (attribution)*
Location: Bungo province (Oita prefecture)
Length: 70.7cm (ubu) **Curvature:** 2.3cm **Moto-haba:** 2.8cm
Hamon: *Nie-suguha, with gunome waves*
Jihada: *Ko-itame*
Certificate: **NTHK-NPO Kanteisho** (a sword designated as Important by the Society for the Preservation of the Japanese Sword)
Fujishiro: **Chujo-saku** (ranked as an above average swordsmith)
Included: Shirasaya, sword fabric bags, sword stand, maintenance kit, DVD, printed care guide, registration and export paperwork

SOLD

This graceful and powerful katana is attributed to swordsmith Muneyuki of the Takada School from Bungo province in Kyushu.

Muneyuki Takada was known as *Nakama Shingoro*. He began crafting swords during the Azuchi Momoyama Period – a remarkable and turbulent 30-year window of time that transitioned into the long and relatively peaceful Edo Period.

Possessing skill and leadership, Muneyuki became the founder of the Shinto Takada School.

Muneyuki is rated *Wazamono* for producing swords with excellent cutting ability. The Takada School carries a reputation for producing dependable swords that will excel in battle. This fine katana is one such classic Samurai sword.

The *hamon* is a unique combination of long stretches of straight *suguha* that burst into pockets of wild *gunome* waves. The blade carries a sense of composure and excitement. A custom koshirae project will be an enjoyable adventure to build upon this katana.



ITEM# UJWA164

CURRENTLY ON HOLD

A KANENAKA WAKIZASHI

UNSIGNED, EARLY EDO PERIOD (TENNA ERA: 1681-1684)

Swordsmith: *Musashi no Kami KANENAKA (attribution)*
Location: Echizen province (Fukui prefecture)
Measurements **Length:** 49.0cm (o-suriage) **Curvature:** 1.0cm **Moto-haba:** 2.2cm
Hamon: *Gunome kurikaishi* **Jihada:** *Itame*
Certificate: NTHK-NPO Kanteisho (a sword designated as Important by the Society for the Preservation of the Japanese Sword)
Fujishiro: **Chujo-saku** (above average swordsmith) & **Wazamono** (good cutting)
Included: Vintage koshirae, sword fabric bag, sword stand, maintenance kit, DVD, printed care guide, registration and export paperwork

SOLD

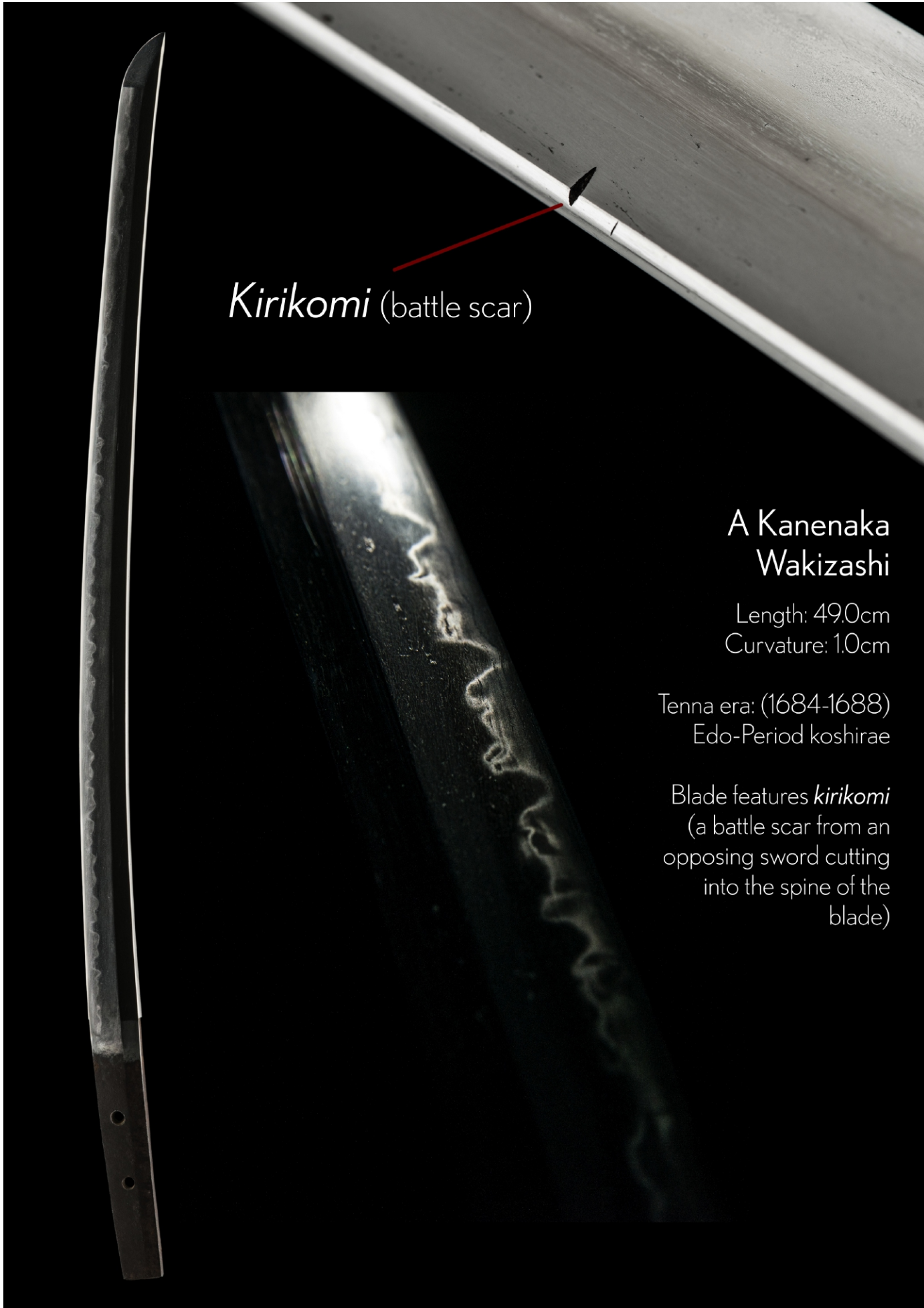
Looks can certainly be deceiving...this little puppy packs a serious punch. First of all, this sword has a battle scar called *kirikomi* on the *mune* (spine) of the blade. This is a mark of distinction as it comes from blocking the sword of an opponent in battle.

The sword has been attributed to *Wazamono* swordsmith Kanenaka from Echizen province, a well-regarded swordsmith who lived in this growing castle town during the late 1600s.

The sword is housed in Edo-period *koshirae* featuring *menuki* with golden dragons, a matching *tsuba* and *fuchi-kashira* carrying a refined arabesque design. The black lacquered scabbard is reinforced with an iron *kojiri* (tip). There is also a *kozuka* (utility knife) depicting birds in flight.

The blade contains a very active *hamon* with plenty of activity to enjoy such as *kinsuji* (black lines of nie crystals) and *sunagashi* (sweepings of sand) twisting through the hamon with authority.





Kirikomi (battle scar)

A Kanenaka
Wakizashi

Length: 49.0cm
Curvature: 1.0cm

Tenna era: (1684-1688)
Edo-Period koshirae

Blade features *kirikomi*
(a battle scar from an
opposing sword cutting
into the spine of the
blade)



ITEM# UJWA166

CURRENTLY AVAILABLE

A KANEMICHI WAKIZASHI

SIGNED, EARLY EDO PERIOD (TENNA ERA: 1681-1684)

- Swordsmith:** *Mishina Tango no Kami KANEMICHI (second generation)*
Location: Settsu province (Osaka)
Measurements **Length:** 52.7cm (ubu) **Curvature:** 1.0cm
Hamon: *Sudare-ba* **Jihada:** *Itame*
Certificate #1: **NBTHK Tokubetsu Kicho** (a sword designated as Especially Precious by the Society for the Preservation of the Japanese Art Sword)
Certificate #2: **NTHK-NPO Kanteisho** (a sword designated as Important by the Society for the Preservation of the Japanese Sword)
Fujishiro: **Chujo-saku** (above average swordsmith)
Included: Shirasaya, sword fabric bag, sword stand, maintenance kit, DVD, etc.

SOLD

Kanemichi Nidai is the son of first generation Kanemichi of Settsu province who traveled originally from Kyoto to begin the Osaka branch of the Mishina School. What a gorgeous sword this is! Blessed with the eye-catching signature *sudare-ba hamon* and note the *moon and sun* cleverly depicted on either side of the *kissaki*. A minor flaw exists in the *jihada*. A custom koshirae awaits this lovely wakizashi that is papared with two certificates of authenticity.



A Sudare-ba Hamon

This unique temper line of the Mishina School is said to resemble the blinds of a bamboo curtain and the rolling waves of the ocean.

嘉永後守魚道

"This is a most auspicious dream.

*You, Lord, will pacify the land as the
Barbarian-Subduing General. The sun
signifies the sovereign, and the moon the
retired sovereign.*

*That they are shining from both sides of you
means that the Lord of the land (*kokuo*)
supports you as general (*shogun*)."*

**Kageyoshi's interpretation of a dream
regarding General Yoritomo.**

**Swords, Oaths, And Prophetic Visions:
Authoring Warrior Rule in Medieval Japan
by Elizabeth Oyler**



Sun



Moon

**A Kanemichi
Wakizashi**

Length: 52.7cm
Curvature: 1.0cm

Featuring the sun and moon
reflecting on both sides of
the *kissaki* (tip).

ARIGATO!

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Unbearably cute...

*A Hamano School Fuchi-kashira of a bear cub in a cave
signed by Nakamura Naoyuki, Edo period*