

JAPANESE
SWORD
CATALOGUE 23.5

FIRST RELEASED:
NOV. 20/2015



(COVER PHOTO)

ITEM# UJDI001

A BITCHU AOE SADATSUGU /
KASHU NAGATSUGU DAISHO

KAMAKURA MEETS EDO PERIOD

FIVE CERTIFICATES OF AUTHENTICITY
ACCOMPANY THE SWORDS

ANTIQUE JAPANESE SWORDS (VOLUME 23.5)

RELEASED: NOVEMBER 20, 2015 TO VIP CLIENTS ONLY
UPDATED: DECEMBER 1, 2015

THE FOLLOWING PAGES CONTAIN DESCRIPTIONS AND IMAGES OF GENUINE ANTIQUE JAPANESE SWORDS THAT WERE SOLD IN CATALOGUE 23.

THIS IS A REFERENCE DOCUMENT.

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Konnichiwa!

We recently spotlighted a *Shodai Masanori Daisho* on our website that received great interest and attention. A *daisho* is the official sword attire of a Samurai during the Edo period when on duty. It comprises of a *katana* (*dai*, big) and a *wakizashi* (*sho*, small) with matching *koshirae* (fittings).

I am pleased to report that *there are two daishos with Edo-period fittings* in this catalogue on offer.

While a *pure daisho* may comprise of swords by the same swordsmith with exactly matching *saya*, *tsuba*, *fuchi kashira*, and *menuki*, the reality was different for the majority of Samurai.

Just as with the *Masanori Daisho* that was created for our client, a *daisho* can start with a particular sword (*wakizashi* or *katana*) already in beautiful *koshirae*. Then, soon after or years later, a Samurai may acquire another sword by the very same swordsmith that becomes his own.

What does he do if he wants to form a *daisho*? Does he discard the perfectly good set of sword fittings that he already has? That would be wasteful. The result is what we have with the gorgeous *Matsuba Motoyuki Daisho* (ujdi002) listed in this catalogue. He builds a *koshirae* for the second sword 'to match' as best he can to the first sword.

The second *daisho* is a set of spectacular fittings in black with gold accents that pays tribute to snowflakes, dragons and shisa lions. What a fabulous combination! The blades are equally unique with a gorgeous Kamakura period beauty attributed to *Bitchu Aoe Sadatsugu* and *Kashu Nagatsugu*.

On display at home or in an office setting, there is nothing quite like the grandeur of a genuine *daisho*. It becomes a reminder that symbolized the Samurai - of loyalty and commitment.

Other fabulous swords in the catalogue include a highly collectible 73.9cm *katana* by Osaka maestro *Kobayashi Kuniteru* and a dynamite dragon *wakizashi* by fellow Settsu superstar, *Sukenao*.

Further swords include a *sunobi tanto* by *Chikanori* that honours the selfless heroism of farming peasant *Sakura Sogoro* and a *500-year-old katana* attributed to the *Zenjo School* which I made a short introductory video of.

It's the festive season once again - a time to celebrate life with all the magic it offers. While in Canada, my family and friends celebrated Thanksgiving in mid-October, just south of the border my family and friends in the US will tuck in next week for great food and conversation.

I wish you happy, safe and optimistic times ahead.

Thank you to all who have joined our VIP email list and to the many who claimed swords in Tokyo via a private meeting. Contact us at service@uniquejapan.com for all inquiries.

Feel the history and create your history.

Warm regards,



Pablo Kuntz
November, 2015



Hello Zenjo! At home with a 500-year-old katana.

INDEX OF JAPANESE SWORDS & FITTINGS

ITEM#	SWORDSMITH & TYPE	CM	CERTIFICATE	ERA / PERIOD	PRICE
ujdi001	AN AOE/KASHU DAISHO	-	NTHK Kanteisho	(~1332 & ~1684)	SOLD
ujdi002	A MOTOYUKI DAISHO	-	NTHK Yushusaku	Shoho (~1721)	SOLD
ujka167	A ZENJO SCHOOL KATANA	67.8	NBTHK Hozon	Muromachi (~1500)	SOLD
ujwa184	CHIKANORI SUNNOBI TANTO	30.6	Tokubetsu Kicho	Kaei (1848-1864)	SOLD
ujka172	A KUNITERU KATANA	73.9	Tokubetsu Hozon	August 1675	SOLD
ujwa190	A SUKENAO WAKIZASHI	54.0	Tokubetsu Hozon	Genroku (1688-1704)	SOLD

ALL PRICES ARE IN US DOLLARS

To access previously sold swords in Catalogue 22, please copy and paste this link:

<http://tinyurl.com/uj-catalogue-22-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

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ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.



53rd NBTHK Juyo Token

Recently sold...

*A signed Aoe Bitchu Koku Junnin Sadatsugu
Naginata Naoshi (circa 1362)*

A custom koshirae is being produced
for this sword. Congratulations JL.

Hello *Daisho*.





ITEM# UJDI001

AOE SADATSUGU / KASHU NAGATSUGU DAISHO LATE KAMAKURA PERIOD & EARLY EDO PERIOD

KATANA (DAI)

Swordsmith: *Den Bitchu, Aoe SADATSUGU (unsigned, attribution)*
Period: Kamakura, early Genko era (1331-1333)
Location: Bitchu province (Okayama prefecture)
Measurements: **Length:** 66.8cm (o-suriage) **Curvature:** 1.3cm
Certificate: NTHK-NPO Kanteisho (a sword designated as Important by the Non-Profit Japanese Sword Appraisal Association)

WAKIZASHI (SHO)

Swordsmith: *Kashu ju Fujiwara NAGA [TSUGU] (largely signed)*
Period: Jokyo era (1684-1688)
Location: Kashu province (Kaga prefecture)
Measurements: **Length:** 49.8cm (suriage) **Curvature:** 1.2cm
Certificate: NTHK-NPO Kanteisho (a sword designated as Important by the Non-Profit Japanese Sword Appraisal Association)

Certificate 3,4,5: NTHK-NPO Kanteisho (a daisho koshirae, daisho fuchi-kashira and daisho tsuba all designated as Important by the Non-Profit Japanese Sword Appraisal Association)

SOLD

The NTHK-NPO Kanteisho certificate attributes the katana to [second generation] *Chu-Aoe School [Osumi Gonnosuke] Sadatsugu* from the early *Genko era* (1331-1333) in the late Kamakura period.

Gonnosuke is credited with *Jojo-saku* status by *Fujishiro* (a highly superior swordsmith) and produced good sharp swords with a sharpness rank of *Ryo-Wazamono*.

The Aoe School has long had a reputation for quality sword making since the 1200s. Several pieces from the Aoe School have achieved prestigious NBTHK Juyo Token certification and are extremely valuable. The school can be divided in the *Ko-Aoe* (late Heian period to mid-Kamakura) *Chu-Aoe* (late Kamakura to Nambokucho) and *Sue-Aoe* (Muromachi period).

Swords from the early Koto-period have a definitive look and feel - very different to swords from the Edo period post 1600. The steel, the balance, the overall energy-level is unique.

Many scholars such as *WM Hawley* believe that it came down to the quality of the sand iron found in stream beds where the grinding action of rocks for countless ages had reduced the ore to almost pure iron. This was considered the best material for swords and the Bizen area was famous for such raw material.

One aspect in Koto-period swords made in the Bizen area is the presence of *utsuri* (a shadow-like reflection) above the *hamon* (temper line). The katana is blessed with such *midare utsuri* running along the attractive *tsumari itame-hada* (tight wood grain steel pattern).

As with the majority Aoe School swords the *hamon* of the katana is based on *suguha* (straight temper line) with an added dimension of *ko-midare* (small undulations) and *ko-ashi* (small legs) extending out to the cutting edge. There is an air of elegance to admire in the sword.

The wakizashi is was crafted and signed during the Shinto period, in approximately 1684. Swordsmith *Nagatsugu* was from *Kaga province*, which was the richest domain after the Tokugawa family in all of Japan. *Nagatsugu* was clearly inspired by Koto-period forging techniques and it shows in the *hataraki* (activity) of the steel.

Both swords share a general commonality in their appearance, which gives the two swords sense of visual unity. It's no accident why these swords were paired up with one another.



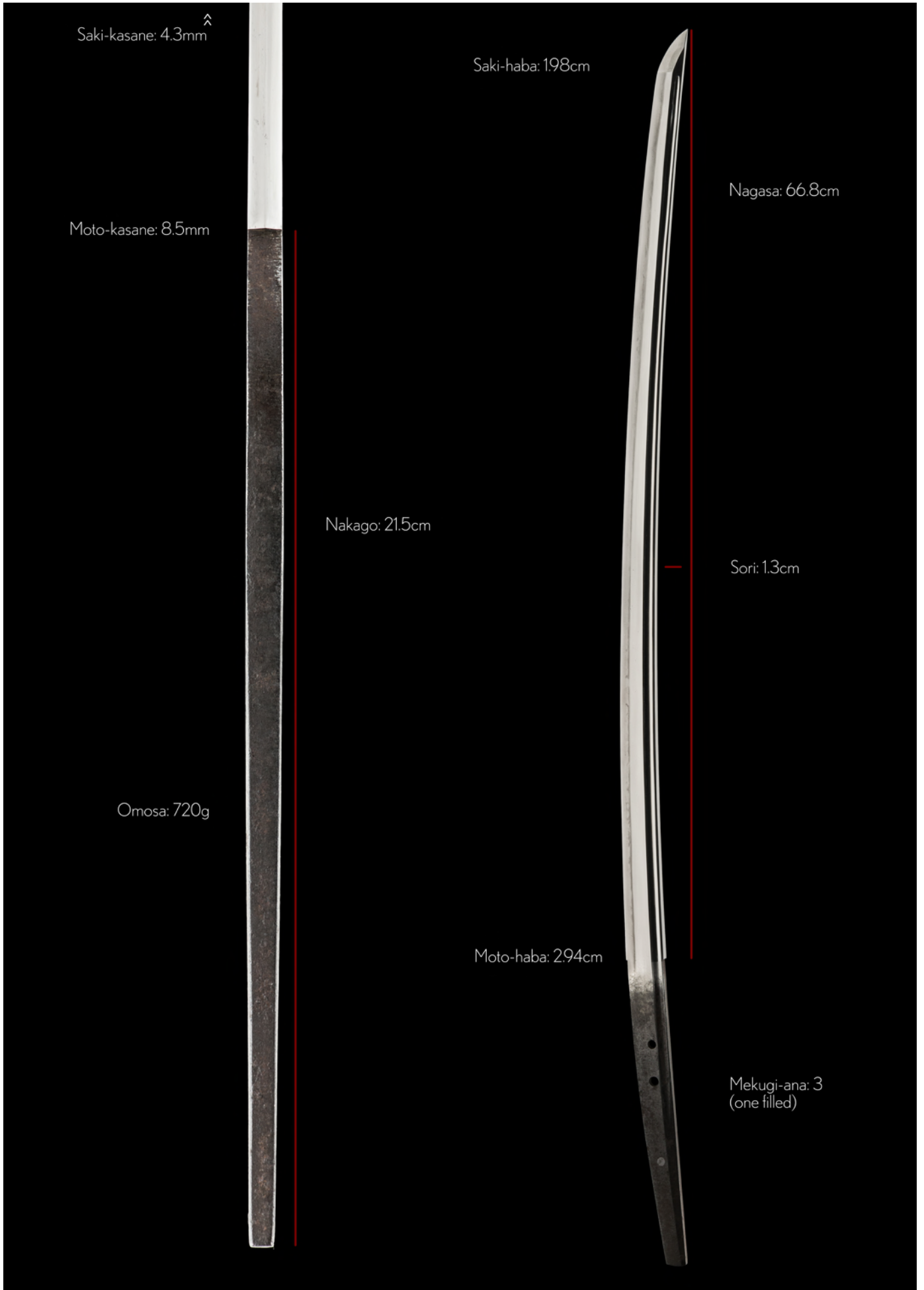
Samurai with Daisho

An exquisite set of matching fittings forms the *daisho*. From snarling dragons on the *tsubas*, to beautiful falling snowflakes under the night sky wrapping the *fuchi-kashiras*, and protective *shisa lions* on the *menuki*, *kozuka* (utility knife) and *kogai* (hair pick) - everything works in splendid harmony. The gold trim on the *tsubas* is a particularly smart touch.

On display, these swords look absolutely incredible...

Along with the two certificates of authenticity for the swords, three additional certificates for the *daisho tsubas* (guards), the *daisho fuchi-kashira* (collar/pommel) and the *daisho koshirae* will accompany the lot.

Photos and information follow. Please inquire for further details.



Saki-kasane: 4.3mm[^]

Saki-haba: 1.98cm

Nagasa: 66.8cm

Moto-kasane: 8.5mm

Nakago: 21.5cm

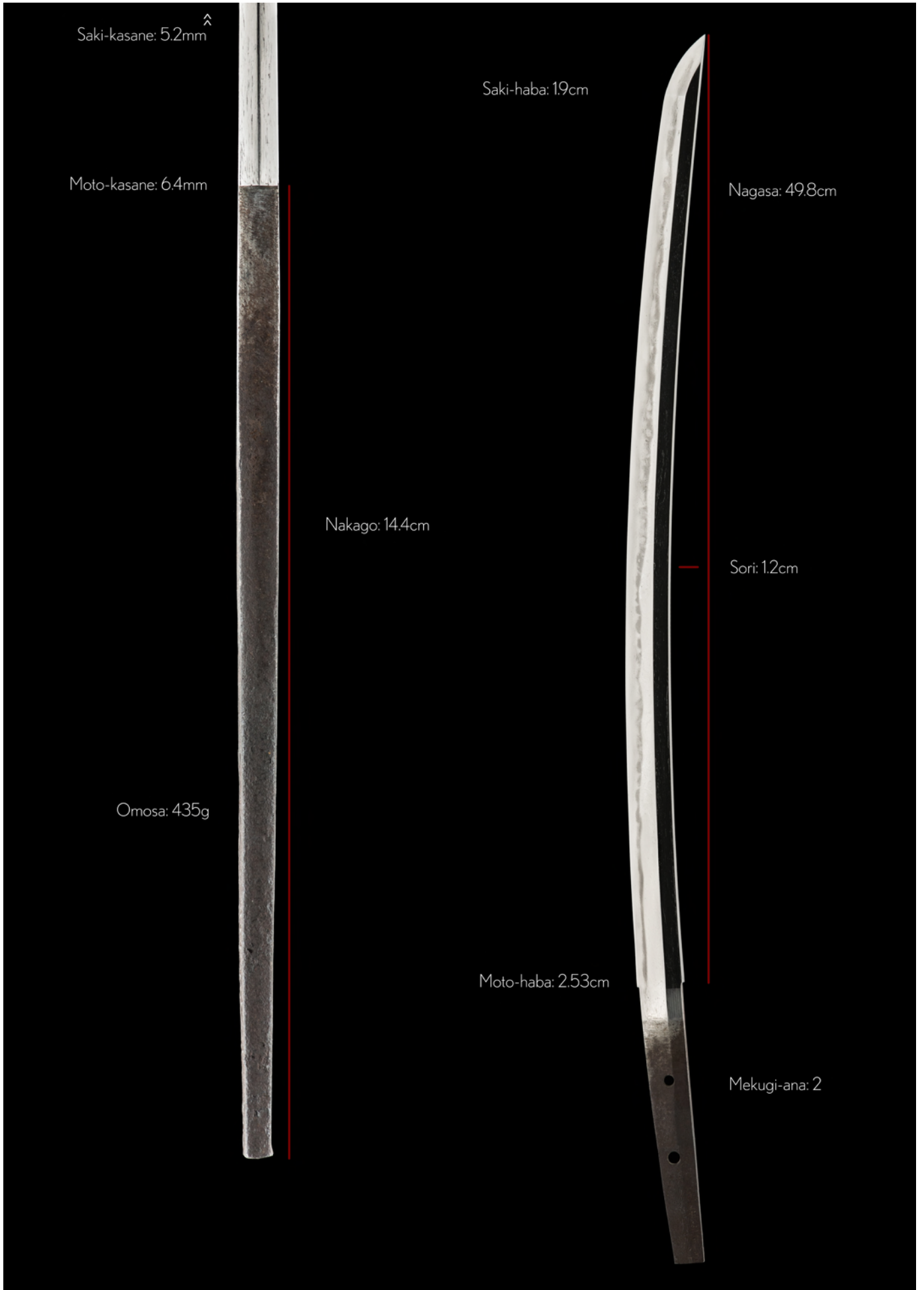
Sori: 1.3cm

Omosa: 720g

Moto-haba: 2.94cm

Mekugi-ana: 3
(one filled)





Saki-kasane: 5.2mm[^]

Moto-kasane: 6.4mm

Omosa: 435g

Saki-haba: 1.9cm

Nakago: 14.4cm

Moto-haba: 2.53cm

Nagasa: 49.8cm

Sori: 1.2cm

Mekugi-ana: 2





A *suriage* (shortened) *nakago* with most of the signature still in tact.

A sword crafted by *Nagatsugu* of the *Fujiwara* clan, while living in *Kashu province* (Kaga prefecture).

Circa *Jokyo era*, (1684-1688)

Ka
shu
Ju
Fuji
wara
Naga (cut off)

Utsuri

Literally meaning "reflection", *utsuri* is a beautiful, misty reflection appearing in the *ji* (body of sword) above the *hamon*).

The type of *utsuri* is called *midare-utsuri* - meandering the length of the Sadatsugu katana, hugging the *mune* (spine).




ko-ashi

Hamon

Oscillating along a thick *suguha* (straight temper line), this wonderfully complex hamon features *ko-ashi* (tiny legs) extending towards the blade's edge.

Dai: (Sadatsugu Katana)

Ko-ashi is a characteristic found on many well-crafted Koto period, pre-1600 swords.



Ashi are "legs" - thin lines of *nioi* crystals (very fine crystals that resemble the Milky Way) that extend from the *hamon* to the cutting edge.

Ashi serve the purpose of limiting the size of lateral cracks at the edge of the blade should damage occur.

Ko-ashi are literally small legs.

Hamon

An active *gunome midare*
(irregular wavy temper line)
that "points" towards the back
of the blade.

Note the lovely *sunagashi*
(brushed sand) within the
hamon.



Sho: (Nagatsugu Wakizashi)

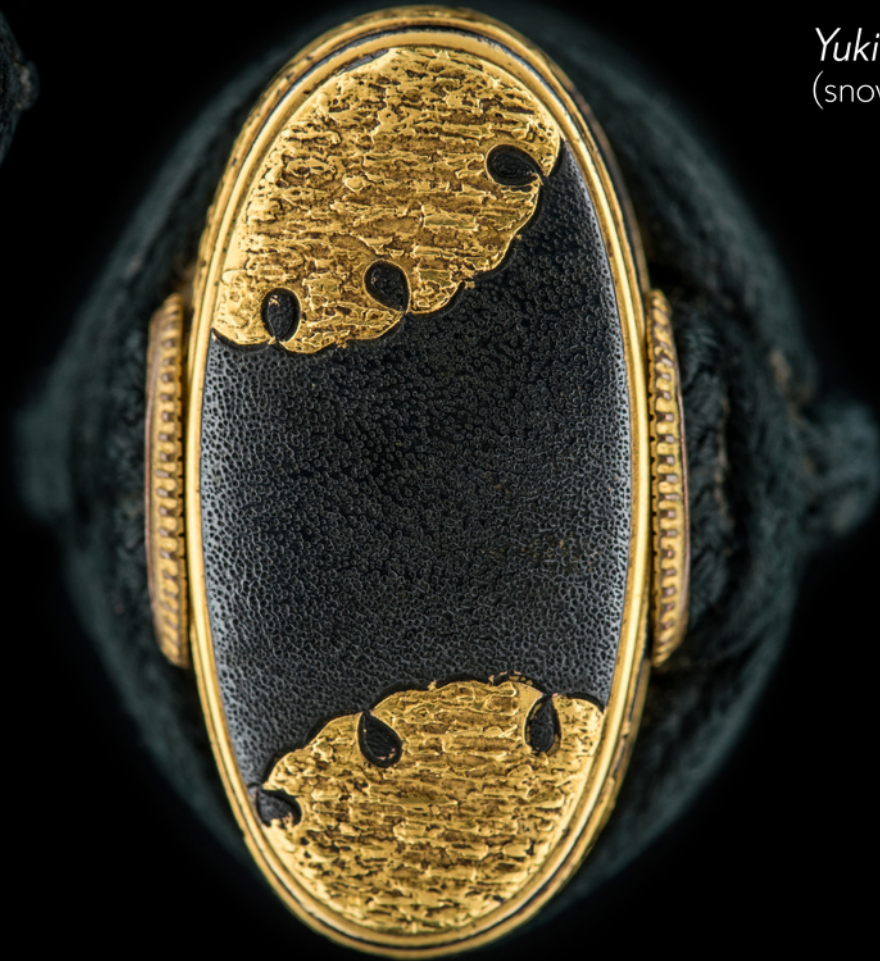
Matching Shirasaya



Matching Habaki







Yuki
(snowflakes)

Snowflakes

Handsome *kamon* (crests) depicting snowflakes falling in moonlight adorn the *fuchi-kashira*. A daisho certificate of authenticity to *Sendai Kiyosada* accompanies.

During the late Edo period Japanese *daimyo* (feudal lord) *Doi Toshitsura* (1789-1848), the 4th Daimyo of Koga Domain, started observing snowflakes as his hobby with his own microscope which was imported from Netherlands.

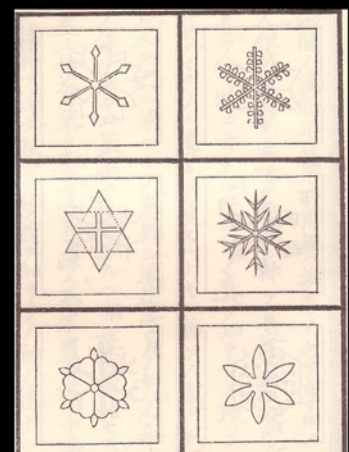
It was certainly a frigid past-time, as Toshitsura needed to work in -10°C to -15°C for the flakes to hold their shapes!

In 1832, he published 183 of his drawings in a book called *Sekka Zusetsu* (A Pictorial Explanation of Snowflakes).

This book launched a huge fashion trend for snowflake designs in artwork and clothing of all kinds.



Sekka Zusetsu





Daisho Dragon Tsuba

Attributed to *Den Hizen, Jakushi*
Mid-Edo Period (1700s)

NTHK-NPO Kanteisho Certificate



Bonji
(Protection)





Kogai (hair pick)



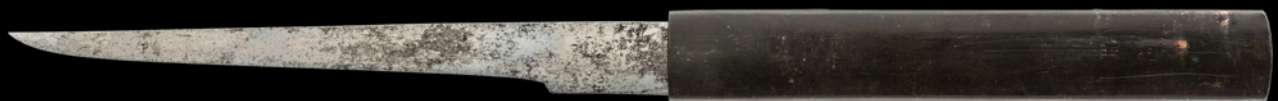
Shisa Lions

Shisa lions have their roots in Okinawan mythology. Often in pairs, resembling a cross between a lion and a dog, shisa are wards believed to serve as protectors from certain kinds of evil.

Shisa are placed on rooftops or flanking the gates of homes, shrines and temples. When in pairs, the left shisa traditionally has a closed mouth, the right one an open mouth. The open mouth wards off evil spirits, while the closed mouth as depicted keeps good spirits in.



Kozuka (utility knife)



"There is no fire like passion."

- Gautama Buddha





Matsuba
Motoyuki
Daisho



ITEM# UJDI002

A MATSUBA MOTOYUKI DAISHO

SIGNED, MID-EDO, BUNGO PROVINCE (KYOHO ERA: 1716-1736)

KATANA (DAI)

Swordsmith: *Kawachi no Kami MOTOYUKI*

Period: Middle Edo Period, Kyoho era (~1721)

Measurements: **Length:** 69.8cm (ubu nakago) **Curvature:** 1.8cm

Certificate: **NBTHK Tokubetsu Kicho** (*a sword designated as Especially Precious by the Society for the Preservation of the Japan Art Sword*)

WAKIZASHI (SHO)

Swordsmith: *Ki Shindaibu Sue Takada Kawachi no Kami MOTOYUKI*

Measurements: **Length:** 49.8cm (ubu nakago) **Curvature:** 1.2cm

Certificate: **NBTHK Tokubetsu Kicho** (*a sword designated as Especially Precious by the Society for the Preservation of the Japan Art Sword*)

Certificate #3: **NTHK-NPO Yushuto** (*a daisho designated as Highly Excellent by the Non-Profit Japanese Sword Appraisal Association*)

Certificate #4,5: **NTHK-NPO Kanteisho** (*a katana koshirae and wakizashi koshirae designated as Important by the Non-Profit Japanese Sword Appraisal Association*)

SOLD

[Information sourced from Markus Sesko's *Nihon Shinto-shi*.]

Swordsmith **Motoyuki** (本行) was born in 1642 in Takada, Bungo province in Kyushu. He was the son of Shodai (first generation) **Naoyuki**. Motoyuki claims to be the successor of the famous Koto-period Bungo smith **Yukihira** (行平).

In the 5th year of Enpo (1677) he moved to Karatsu in Hizen province.

Motoyuki received the title **Kawachi no Daijo** in June 1677 and signed at that time **Yukiharu**. Shortly thereafter he changed his name to **Yukihira** and in later years he also signed with the honorary title **Kawachi no Kami** (河内守), which both these swords carry.

In the seventh year of the Genroku era (1694), he went to Kyoto where the **Hon'ami family** bestowed upon him the character for **Hon** (本, Japanese reading 'Moto'). He began to sign with the name **Motoyuki**.

Motoyuki studied **Soshu** techniques from **Tsunahiro** (綱広) and returned to his home province where he took the name **Bungo Taro** [**Ki-Shindaibu**] (豊後太郎).

In his later years he signed the the character for **Moto** in such a way that looked like pine needles (**matsuba**) earning him yet another nickname, **Matsuba-Motoyuki**.

Both swords in this daisho are signed in this unique fashion.

While a pure daisho may comprise of swords by the same swordsmith with exactly matching saya, tsuba, fuchi kashira, and menuki, the reality was different for the majority of Samurai.

This particular daisho started with one of the swords, likely the wakizashi, already stored in beautiful koshirae.

Then, years later, the same Samurai acquired another sword by Motoyuki and built a complimenting koshirae for the second sword 'to match' as best he could to form his very own unique **Motoyuki Daisho**.



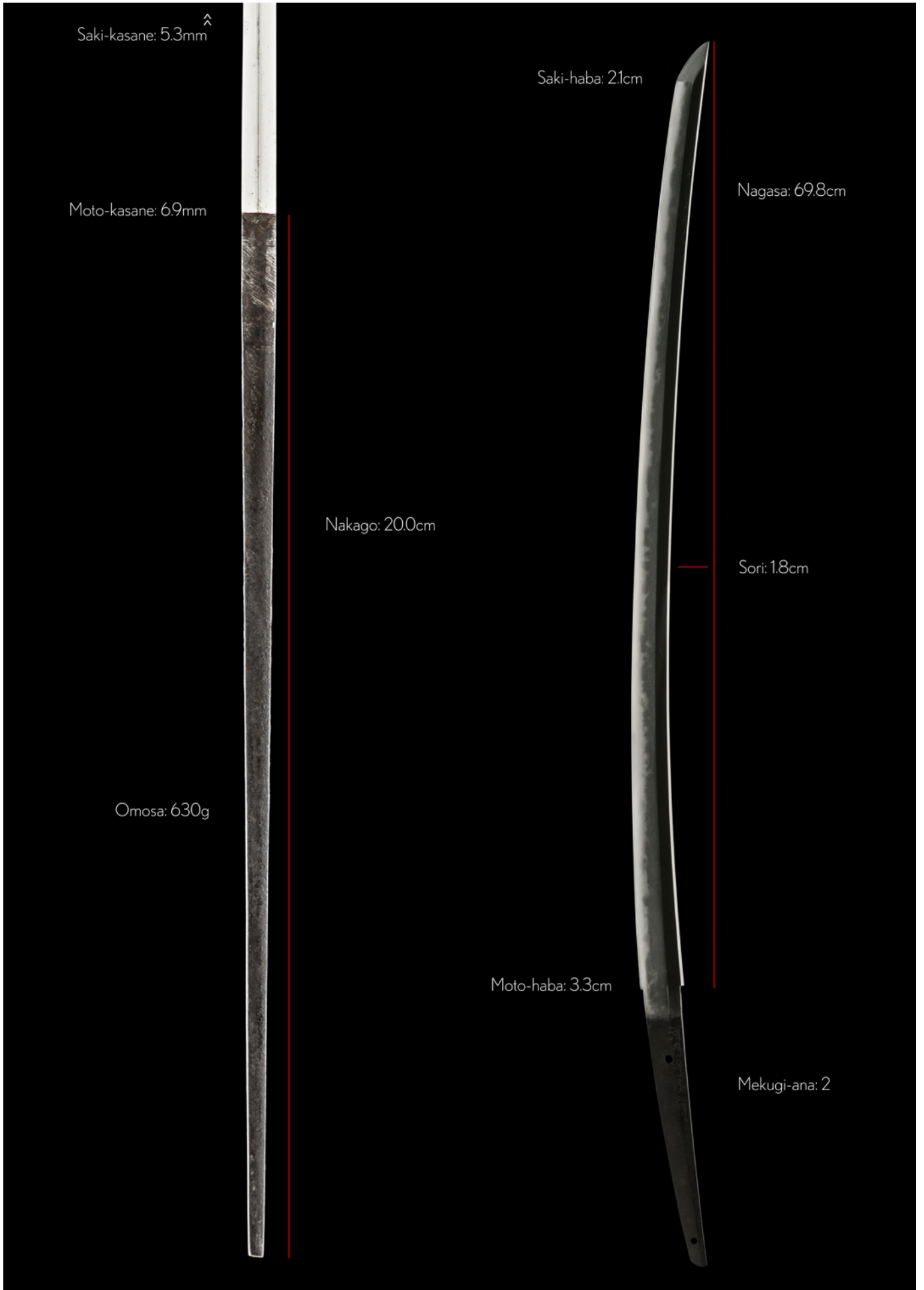
A Samurai with his Daisho

It is a most splendid **daisho** by a remarkably free-spirited man who spent a lifetime of adventure in constant pursuit of knowledge and personal betterment.

Now, it's up to the next family to safeguard this exceptional piece of Japanese history for the many years ahead.

The following pages contain images and background information of the Matsuba Motoyuki daisho and the many stories and hidden messages contained within the fittings themselves.

There is much to treasure and enjoy.





Katana

Swordsmith: *Motoyuki*
Title: *Kawachi no Kami*
(Lord of Kawachi province)

Kawa

chi (no)

Kami

Moto

yuki

Motte

Masa

mune

Zou

kei

Crafted in tribute of the
14th century swordsmith
Masamune of Kamakura



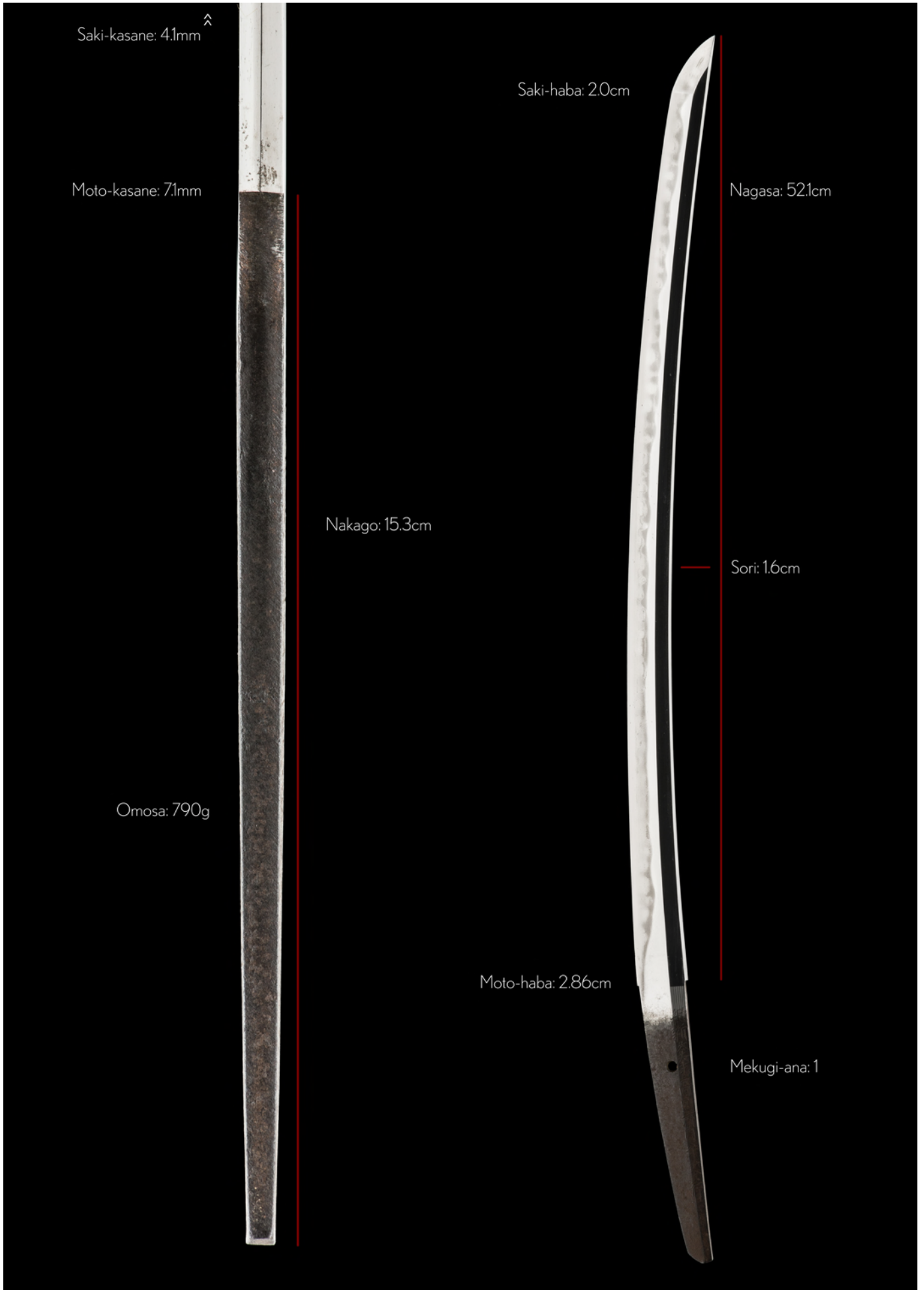


In his later years Motoyuki signed the character for *Moto* in a way that resembles pine needles (*matsuba*, 松葉).

For this reason he is affectionately called '*Matsuba Motoyuki*'



Utagawa Hiroshige
One Hundred Famous Views of Edo:
Five Pines on Konagi River
1797-1858







Ki
Shindaibu
Sue
Takada
Kawachi
no Kami
Moto
yuki

Kyoho
6-nen
11-gatsu
hi

Swordsmith Motoyuki
Lord of Kawachi province
of the late Takada School
dated this wakizashi
on a day in the 11th month of
the 6th year of the Kyoho era
(November 1721)

Hamon (on katana)

A bubbling brew of crystals form a sublime *hitatsura* (full temper) *hamon* that delights the eye.

Motoyuki learned *Soshu tradition* techniques from *Tsunahiro* and applied his knowledge in full force on this katana.

Hamon (on wakizashi)

An electric *gunome choji midare hamon*

Irregular temper line with semi-circles and depictions of clove blossoms. Note the beautiful visible nie crystals.





Yujo-habaki
(gold on copper base)



Botan-like habaki
(silver on copper base)

*"The cosmos is within us.
We are made of star-stuff.
We are a way for the universe
to know itself."*
- Carl Sagan



Aoi-gai
(crushed mother-of-pearl)

— Wakizashi

Katana —

Both *saya* (scabbards) are beautifully decorated with crushed limpet and mother-of-pearl. The *sayas* were produced at different times in the Edo period, hence the finish is non-identical, yet complimentary.

It takes several weeks and a huge number of layers of lacquer to complete such a project.

The cost to re-produce a scabbard today with such level of detail would be significant.

Daisho Tsuba



"Nature holds the key to our aesthetic, intellectual, cognitive, and even spiritual satisfaction."

- E.O. Wilson



Fuchi (on katana)



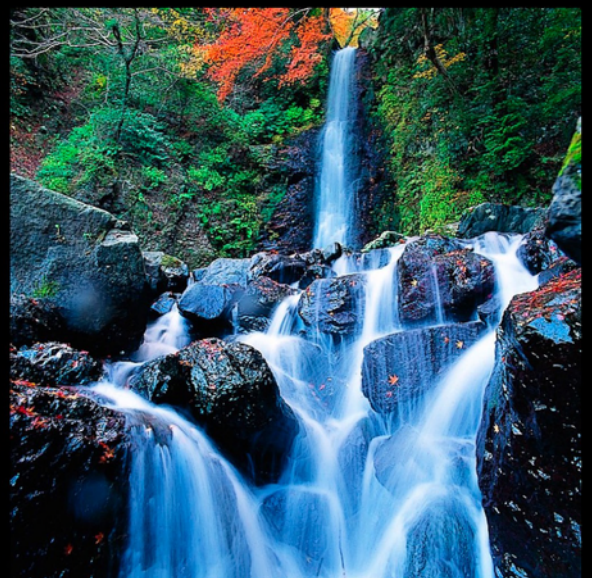
Yoro Falls: The Magical Waterfall

Legend has it that during the 8th century, a poor woodcutter who had a sick father went to the forest to find firewood and in his search he stumbled upon the falls.

Suddenly the woodcutter discovered that the spring's water turned into *sake* (rice wine).

He immediately filled his *hyotan* (gourd) with the magical sake and brought it home to his sick father who without delay drank the sake and miraculously got well.

It is believed that the water transformation was a reward for the man's piousness and dedication to his father.



Story and image:
<http://jpninfo.com/17180>

Yoro falls in Yoro, Gifu prefecture

Kashira (on katana)



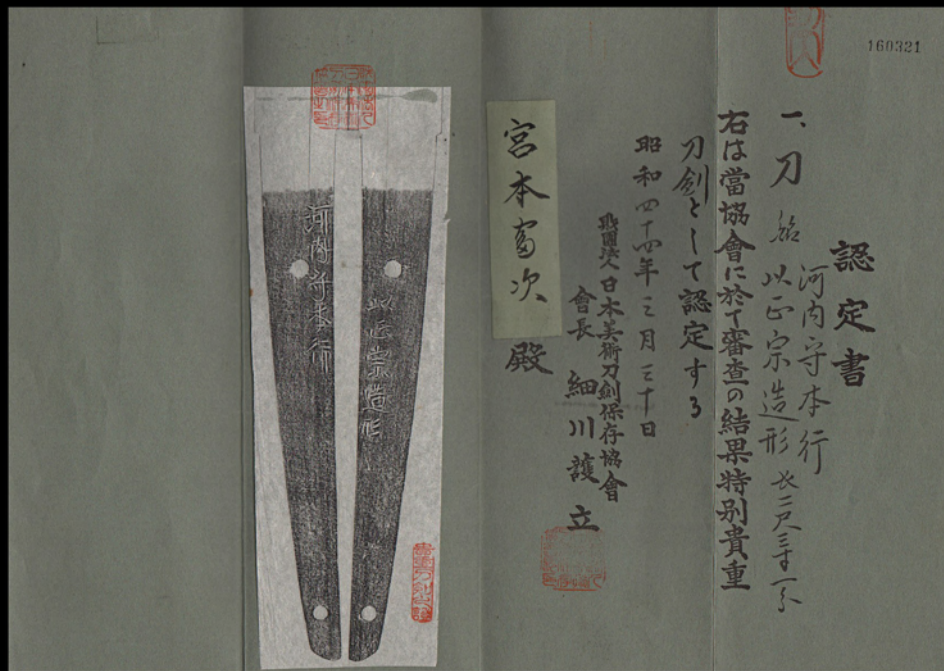
Liu Bei

Liu Bei (161-223) was a warlord in the late Eastern Han dynasty who founded the state of Shu Han in the Three Kingdoms period and became its first ruler.

Romance of the Three Kingdoms is a 14th-century historical novel based on the events that occurred before and during the Three Kingdoms era.

Written by Luo Guanzhong more than a millennium after the said period, the novel incorporated many popular folklore and opera scripts into the character of *Liu Bei*, portraying him as a *compassionate* and *righteous leader*, endowed with charismatic potency.





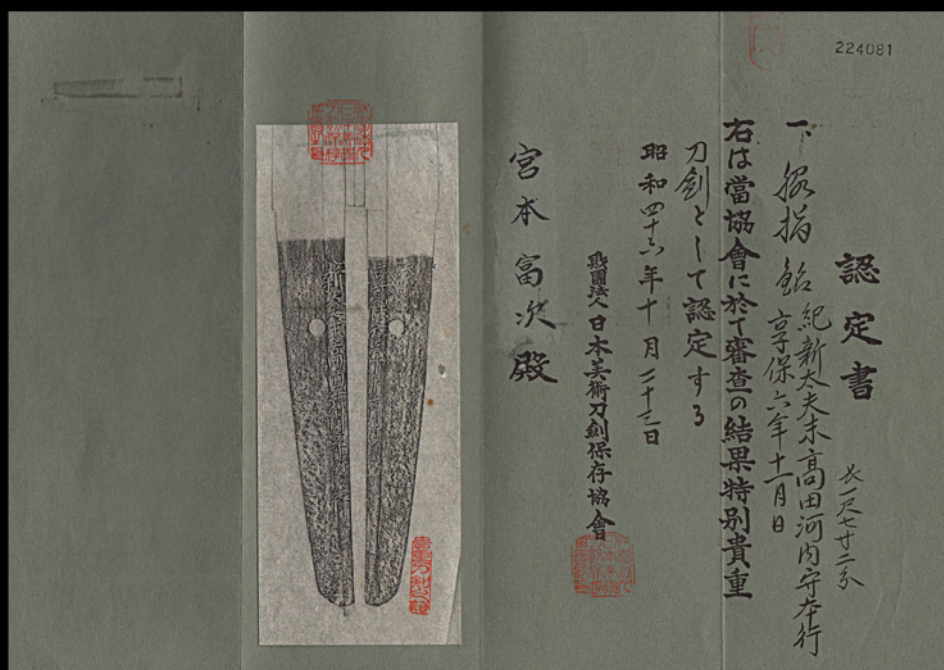
NBTHK Tokubetsu Kicho Certificates of Designation

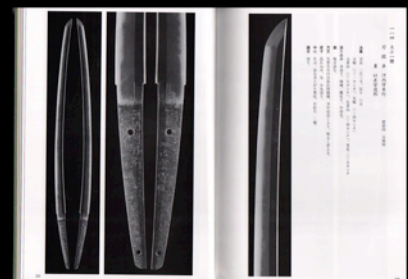
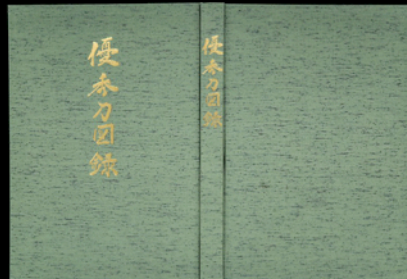
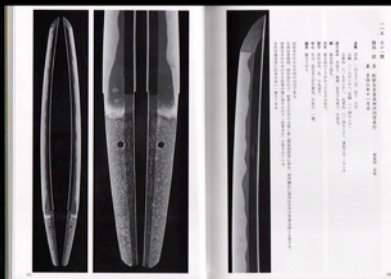
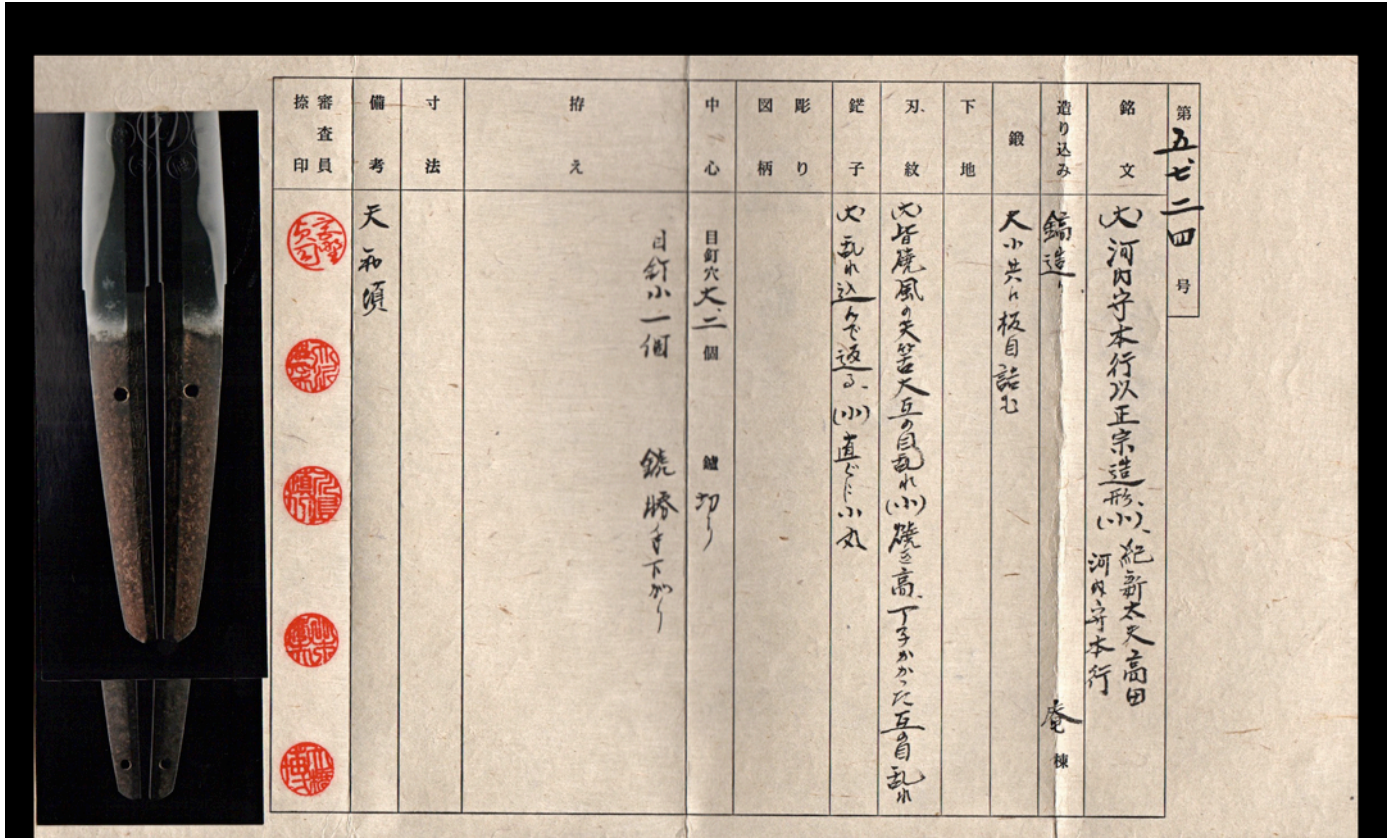
Both swords have been designated as *Epecially Precious* by the Society for the Preservation of the Japan Art Sword

Issued in the 44th and 46th year of Showa (1969 & 1971)

These vintage certificates are highly prized as *Juyo Token* was the only rank above at the time

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai (NBTHK)





NTHK-NPO Yushusaku Certification

This daisho was designated as *Yushusaku* (Highly Excellent) by the Society for the Preservation of the Japanese Sword.

It has been published in a catalogue issued by the NTHK-NPO with other *Yushusaku* awarded swords. Book included with sword.

Kawachi no Kami Motoyuki

Issued in 26th year of Heisei (2014), July 23rd

Nihon Token Hozon Kai
(NTHK-NPO)



ITEM# UJKA167

A ZENJO SCHOOL KATANA

UNSIGNED, MID-MUROMACHI PERIOD (CIRCA 1500)

Swordsmith: *Zenjo School (attribution)*

Location: Mino province (Gifu prefecture)

Measurements: **Length:** 67.8cm (o-suriage)

Curvature: 1.2cm

Moto-haba: 2.9cm

Jihada: *Itame tsumu (tight wood grain pattern)*

Hamon: *Beautiful Hoso-suguha (very thin straight temper line)*

Certificate: **NBTHK Hozon** (*a sword designated as Worthy of Preservation by the Society for the Preservation of the Japan Art Sword*)

Included: Edo-period koshirae, brocade carry bag, sword stand, maintenance kit, DVD, booklet, export paperwork from the UK

SOLD

Sword is currently in the UK, recently polished.



As this katana is in the UK, I made a 10-minute video introduction on the sword and her fittings. Please access the YouTube video link below (copy and paste in your web browser), thank you.

<http://tinyurl.com/zenjo-katana>



ITEM# UJWA184

A CHIKANORI SUNNOBI TANTO

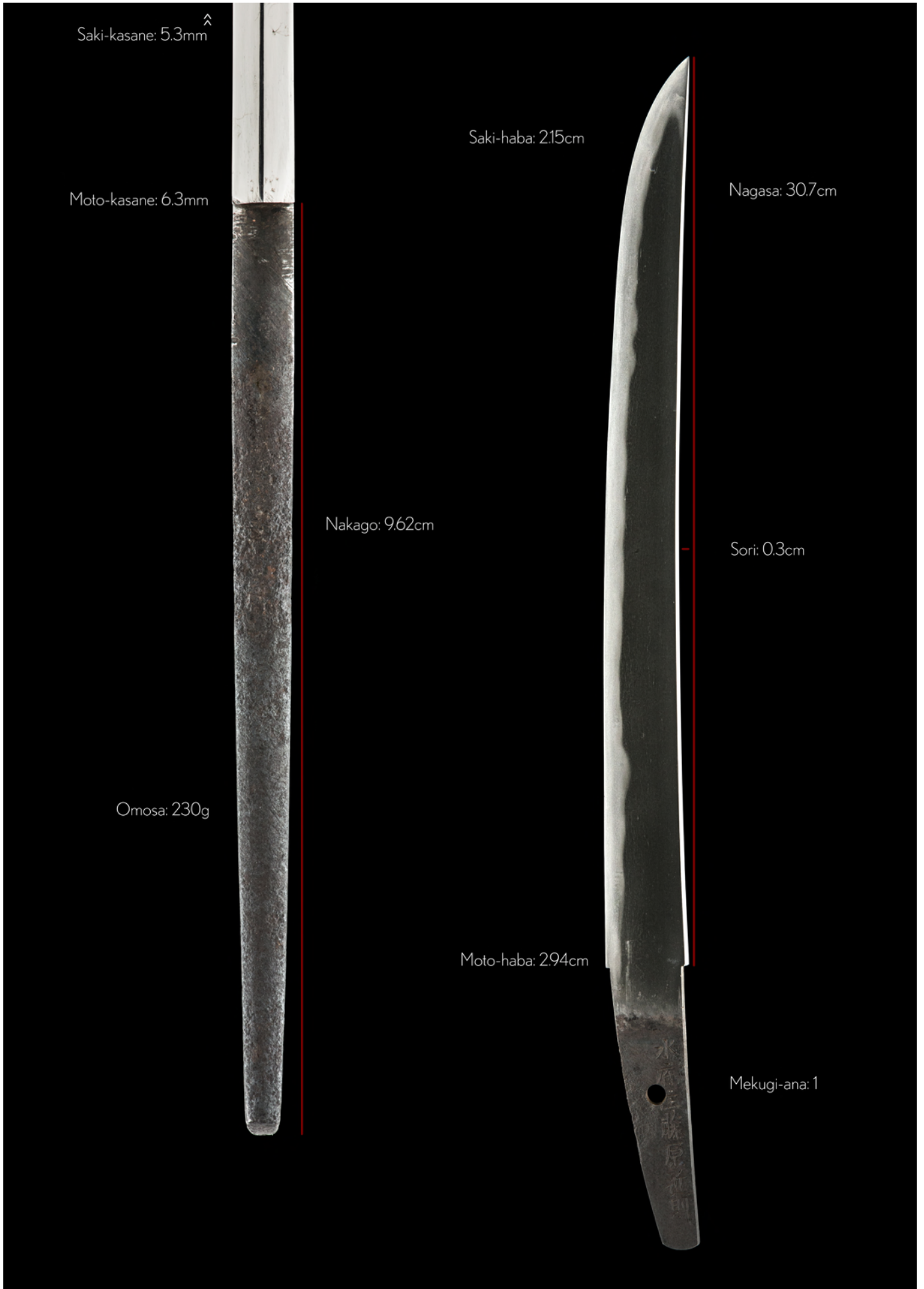
SIGNED, SHINSHINTO PERIOD (KAEI ERA: 1848-1864)

- Swordsmith:** *Suifu Ju Fujiwara CHIKANORI (first generation)*
Location: Hitachi province
Length: 30.7cm (ubu) **Curvature:** 0.3cm **Moto-haba:** 2.8cm
Hamon: *Gunome & notare midare*
Jihada: *Itame, part masame, jinie*
Certificate #1: **NBTHK Tokubetsu Kicho** (a sword designated as Especially Precious by the Society for the Preservation of the Japan Art Sword)
Certificate #2,3: **NTHK-NPO Kanteisho** (a koshirae and tsuba designated as Important by the Non-Profit Japanese Sword Appraisal Association)
Fujishiro: *Chu-Josaku* (ranked as an above average swordsmith)
Included: Edo-period koshirae, shirasaya, sword fabric bag, sword stand, maintenance kit, DVD, printed care guide, registration and legal export paperwork

Here is a powerful sword with a heroic story. Swordsmith *Chikanori* is a descendant of *Zenjo School*. He began as a student of the great *Taikei Naotane* in Edo (Tokyo) and moved back to his home town of Suifu to become a retained smith of the Mito Domain.

Technically a wakizashi as it measures just over *1-shaku* (30.3cm), this sword is to be regarded as a *sunnobi tanto* (extended tanto). The *hirazukuri* (flat-shaped) blade is active with *sunagashi* and *kinsuji*. The *koshirae* fittings pay tribute to peasant farmer *Sakura Sogoro* who, in the mid-1600s, challenged feudal lords for high taxes when his fellow villagers were suffering from a terrible drought. In wake of such confrontation, Sogo-san may have lost his life, but he is not forgotten.

SOLD



Saki-kasane: 5.3mm[^]

Moto-kasane: 6.3mm

Omosa: 230g

Saki-haba: 2.15cm

Nakago: 9.62cm

Moto-haba: 2.94cm

Nagasa: 30.7cm

Sori: 0.3cm

Mekugi-ana: 1



This *wakizashi* was crafted by swordsmith *Chikanori* of the *Fujiwara* clan while living in *Suifu* (village) in Mito province, present day Ibaraki prefecture.



Sui

fu

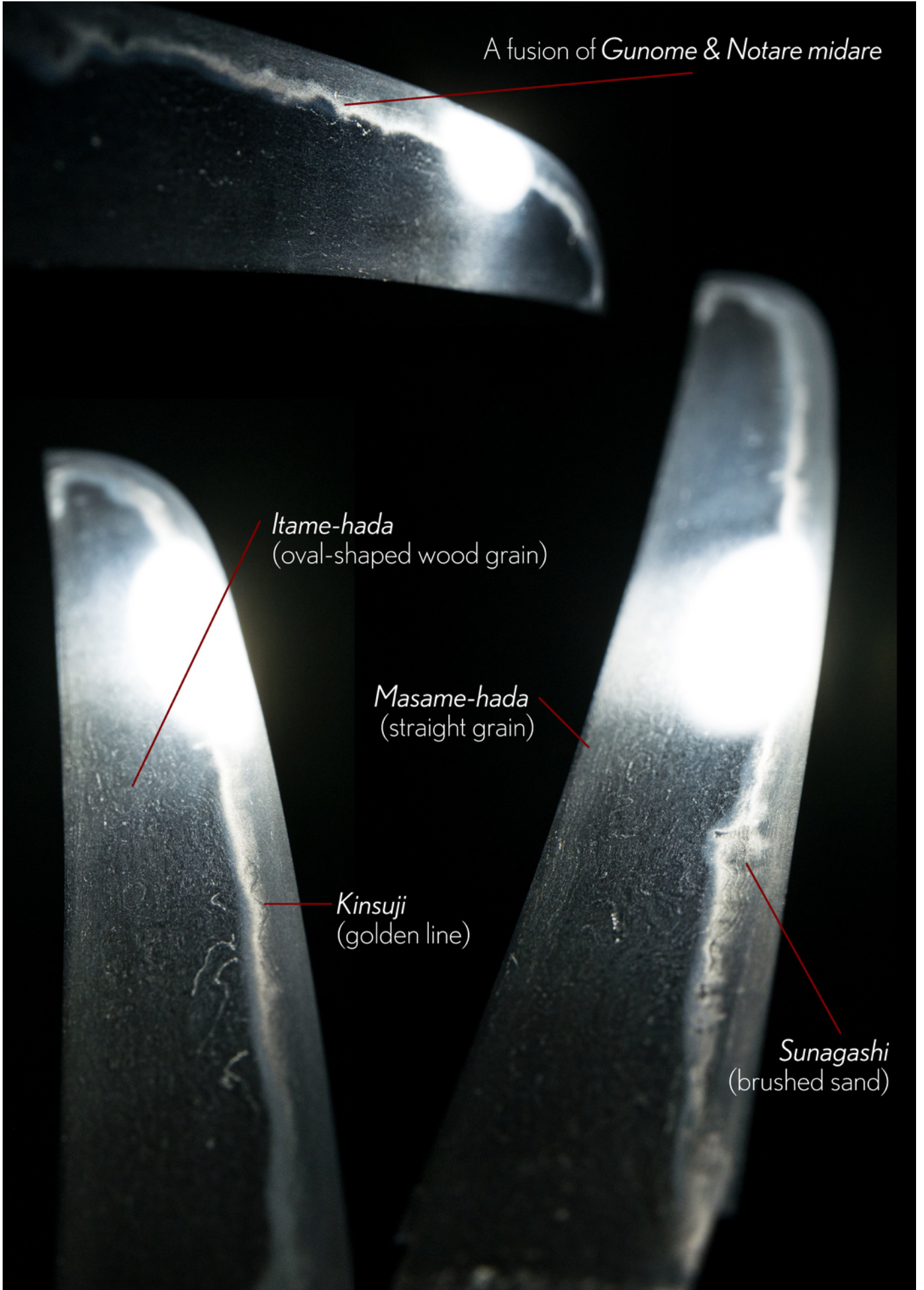
ju

Fuji

wara

Chika

nori





zoom in
to view the
gorgeous lacquer
pattern.



The Story of Sakura Sogoro

According to legend, peasants of the *Sakura domain* in the mid-1600s experienced extreme hardships and starvation due to poor crops coupled by rising taxes by the daimyo.

After the refusal of their petition to local officials for tax relief, a group of peasants petitioned the shogunate directly but their demands were denied once again.

As a result, local hero *Sakura Sogoro* (1605-1653), the unofficial leader of these peasants, approached the shogun independently.

Since direct appeals to the *bafuku* were illegal, Sogoro was arrested and subsequently executed.

The legend of Sakura Sogoro has been made into numerous stories and plays. He is enshrined in *Sogo-reido* of Toshoji temple in Narita city.

Admired by many today as a selfless *gimin* (martyr), on September 2nd (the day before the execution) all night gatherings take place at the Toshoji temple in remembrance.



Sakura Sogo bids farewell to his wife and children

Woodblock print by *Tsukioka Yoshitoshi*
Meiji Era (1885-1886)



Yoki (broad axe)

The heroism of *Sakura Sogoro* for his fellow peasant farmers is depicted on a copper *tsuba* inlaid with common farming tools used in the 17th century. The *tsuba* comes with a certificate of authenticity from the NTHK-NPO.



Kama (sickle)

Kozuka (utility knife)

A scene of a peasant looking up in hope at the birds above is portrayed on the *kozuka*.

Noshu Ju Kaneharu Saku



224521

認定書

一 振指 銘 水府住 藤原近則

右は當協會に於て審査の結果特別貴重

刀劍として認定す

昭和四十六年十月二十七日

財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協會

日宝美術 殿



長 三〇.六
センチメートル

NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon Certificate of Designation

(a sword designated as *Especially Precious*
by the Society for the Preservation of the Japan Art Sword)

Issued in the 46th year of Showa (1968), October 28th

One, Wakizashi

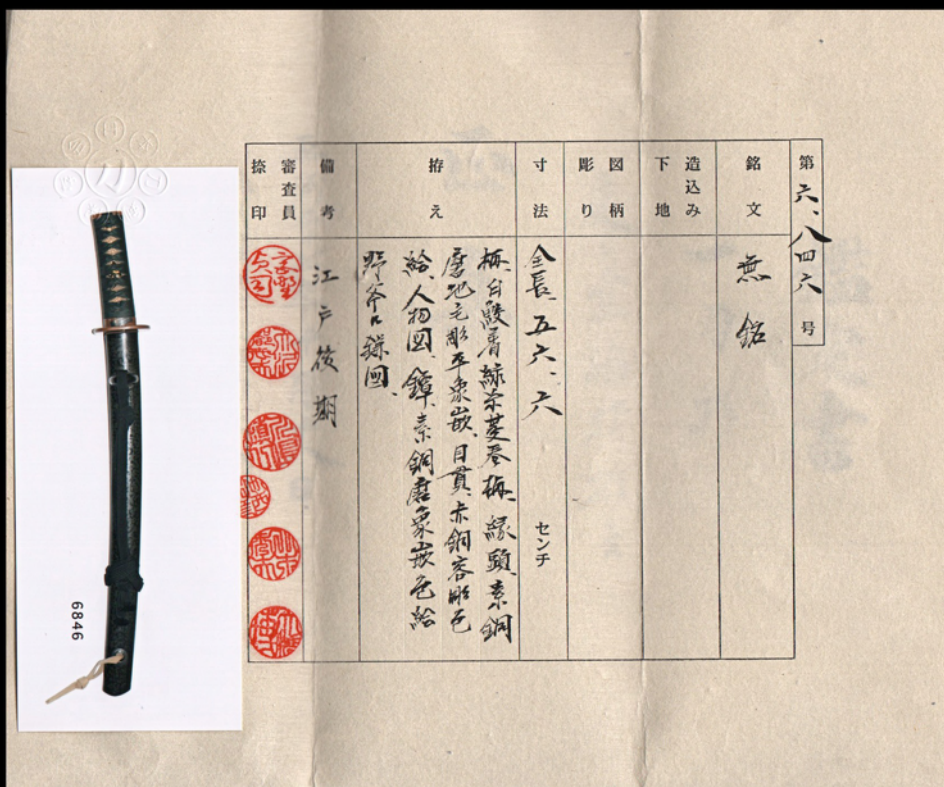
Mei (signature)
Suifu Ju Fujiwara Chikanori

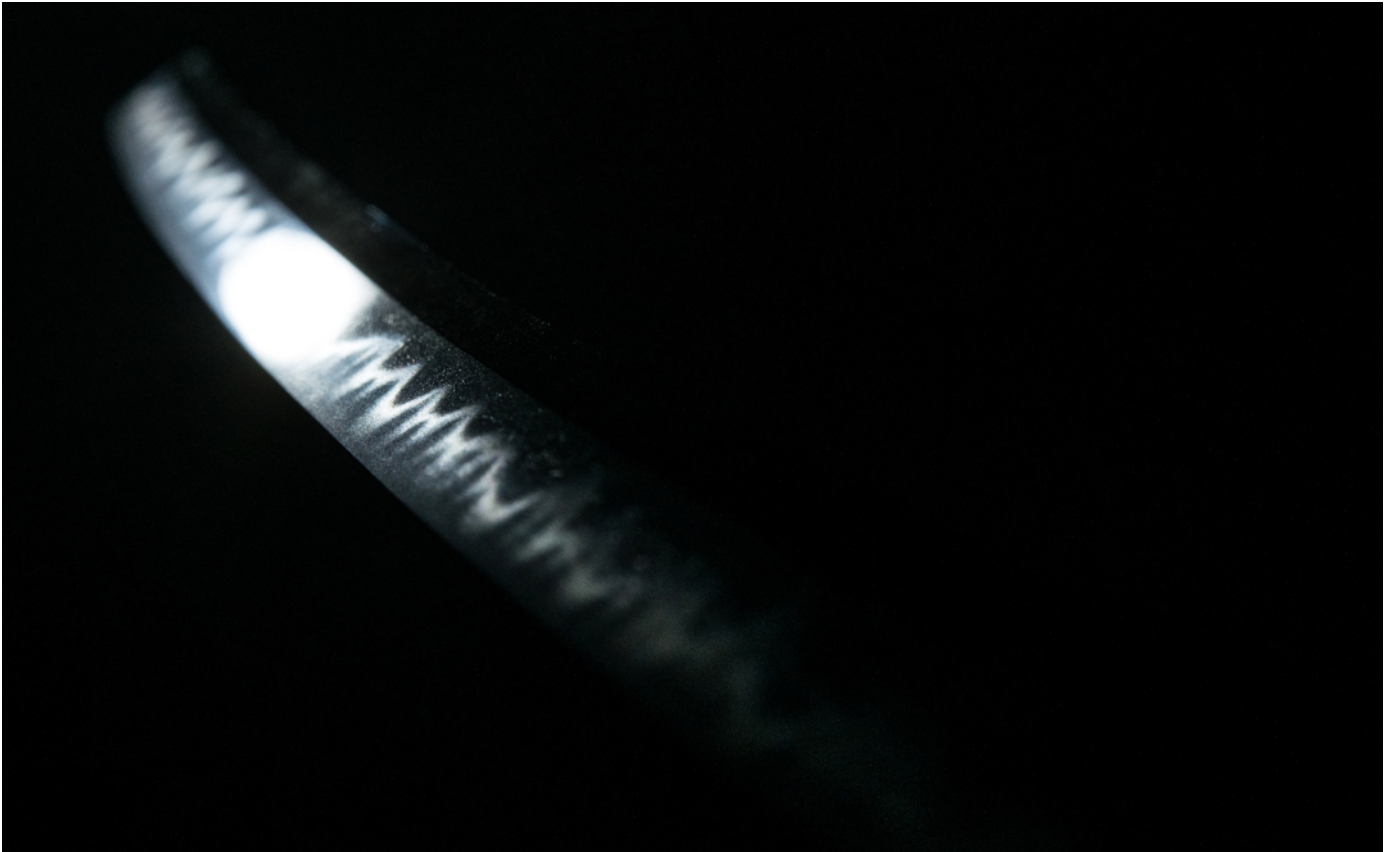
Nagasa (length)
30.6cm

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai
(NBTHK)



Tsuba attributed to the *Umetada School*
Koshirae and Tsuba certified as crafted from the Late-Edo Period





ITEM# UJKA172

A KOBAYASHI KUNITERU KATANA SIGNED & DATED, 3RD YEAR OF ENPO (AUGUST 1675)

Swordsmith: *Kobayashi Ise no Kami KUNITERU (first generation)*
Location: Settsu province (Osaka)
Length: 73.9cm (ubu) **Curvature:** 1.5cm **Moto-haba:** 2.94cm
Hamon: *Dai gunome midare*
Jihada: *Beautiful dense itame, part masame on shinogi, sunagashi, kinsuji*
Certificate #1: **NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon** (a sword designated as Especially Worthy of Preservation by the Society for the Preservation of the Japan Art Sword)
Certificate #2: **NTHK-NPO Yushusaku** (a sword designated as Highly Excellent by the Non-Profit Japanese Sword Appraisal Association)
Fujishiro: *Jo-saku* (ranked as a superior swordsmith)
Cutting Ability: *Wazamono* (maker of sharp swords)
Included: Shirasaya, sword fabric bag, sword stand, maintenance kit, DVD, etc.

SOLD

Behold a magnificent katana by *Shodai (first generation) Kobayashi Ise no Kami Kuniteru*. Born *Kobayashi Hayanoshin*, Kuniteru studied under first-generation *Shodai Kunisuke* of the *Kunisuke School*. He became not only one his star students, but also his adopted son-in-law by marrying his sensei's daughter.

Kuniteru was granted the title of *Ise Daijo* in 1671, and upgraded it to *Ise no Kami (Lord of Ise province)* in spring 1672. Once becoming Ise no Kami until the Tenna era (1684), Kuniteru was considered the finest swordsmith after *Tsuda Sukehiro* and *Inoue Shinkai* in Osaka.

The *ubu-nakago* (original length) katana is from his glory days as it is dated to the third year of Enpo, August 1675.

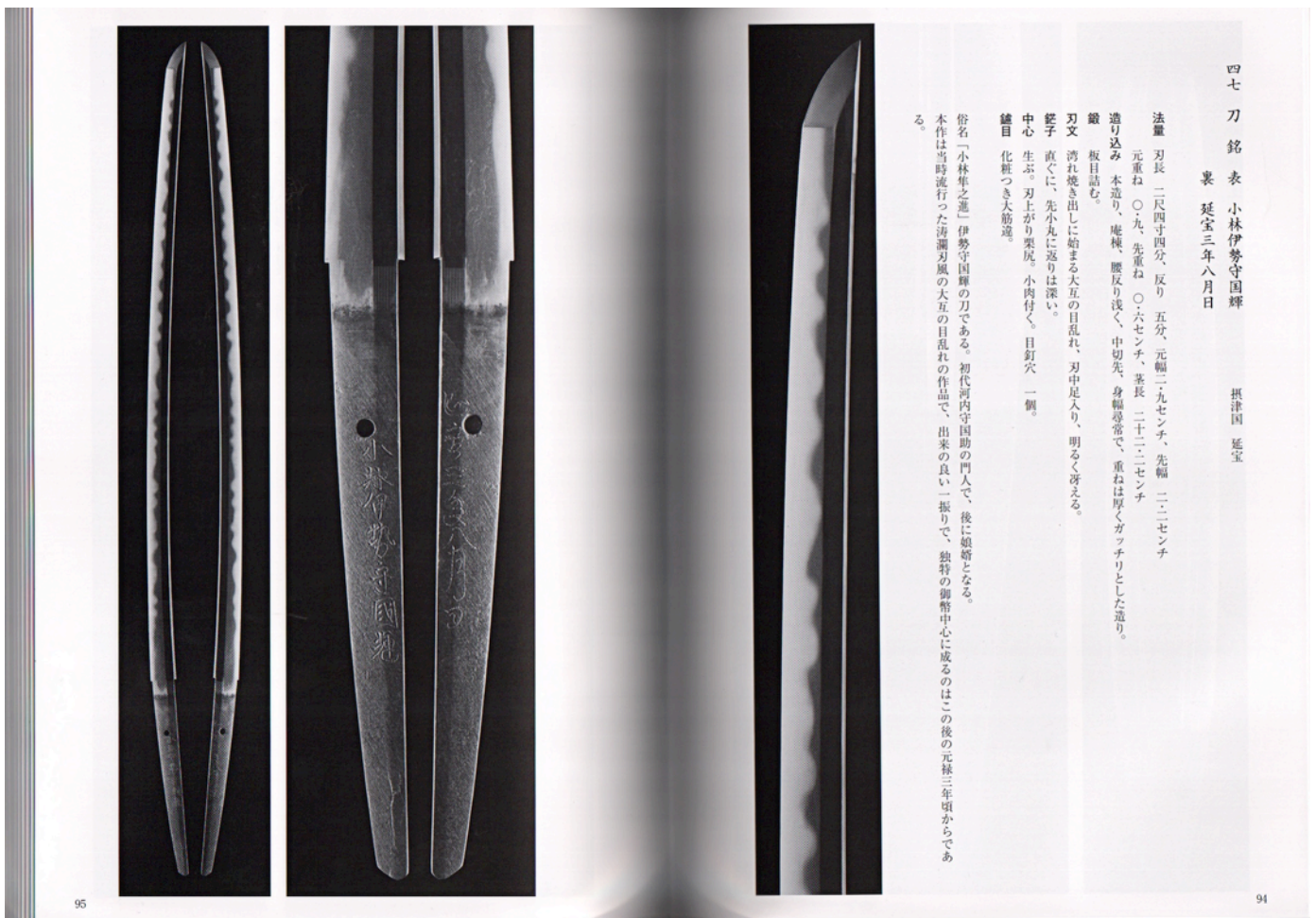
The sword is prime example of what made Kuniteru so well-respected. A long, beautifully forged *jigane*, a gorgeous *dai-gunome midare hamon* of surging waves and long *ashi* (legs) reminiscent of fellow Settsu province grandmaster *Sukehiro*.

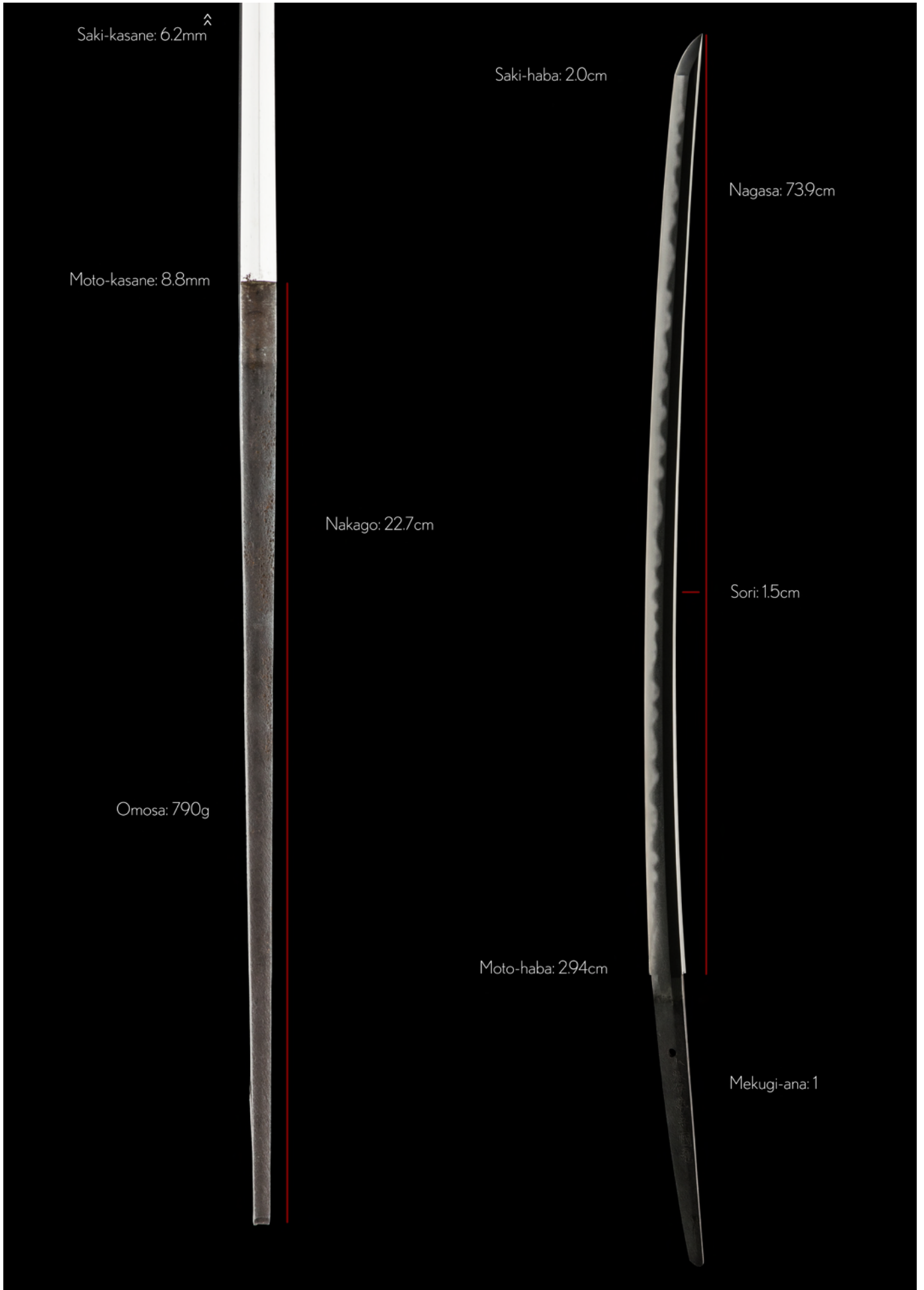
The sword has two highly-desired certificates of authenticity, *NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon* and *NTHK-NPO Yushusaku*, the sword preservation society's highest level of honour.

The sword has also been published in the *NTHK-NPO's Book of Yushuto swords* (see image below). A complimentary copy of the book will be included for the new caretaker of this mighty sword.

This is a classic Samurai sword of the early Edo period. Like many top swords of it's time, the sword is housed in a *shirasaya* only.

A custom *koshirae* is therefore being crafted for this remarkable katana.









A beautifully tapered *nakago* (tang) with acutely angled file marks and a calligraphy-inspired signature.

Kuniteru was a true artist - attention to every layer of detail.

This katana, crafted by
Kobayashi Kuniteru, has been
dated to a day in the 8th month
of the 3rd year of the Enpo era.

August, 1675.

Enpo

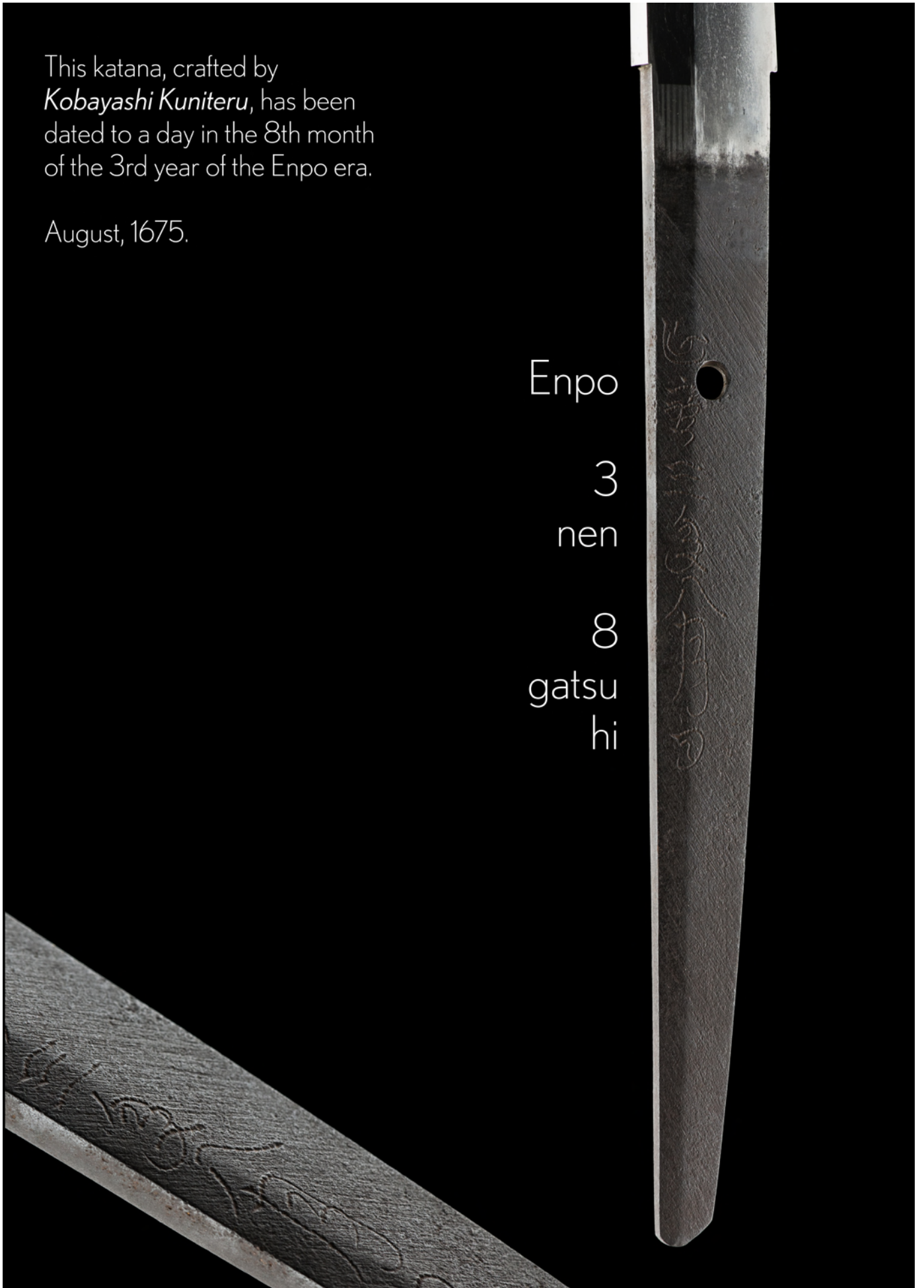
3

nen

8

gatsu

hi

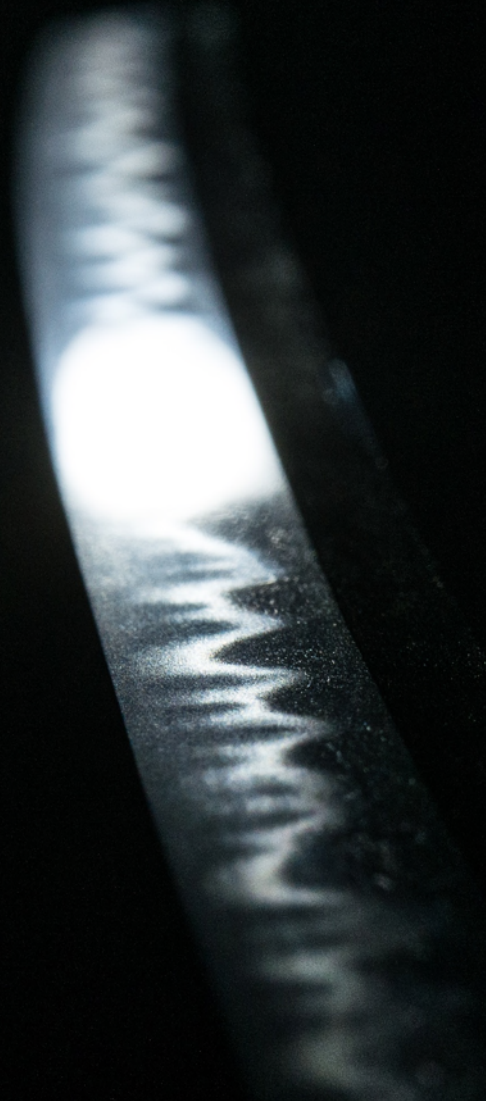


Hamon

A most impressive *dai gunome midare* (large irregular wavy temper line).

The hamon is bright and has consistency in width of the band of crystals forming the hamon called the *nio-guchi*.

Note the long *ashi* (legs) flaring out to the blade's edge.



Yakidashi

The beginning of a *hamon* (temper line) where the cutting edge starts is called the *Yakidashi*.

The *Osaka-yakidashi*, is a term that describes the *yakidashi* pattern for swords coming from the Settsu region (Osaka) in the Edo period.

In *Osaka-yakidashi*, the hamon widens slightly at the base and flows naturally into the hamon.







In some cases, such as with the Kuniteru katana here, the yakidashi is a gentle *notare* (undulating wave) which blossoms into a grand *dai gunome midare*.

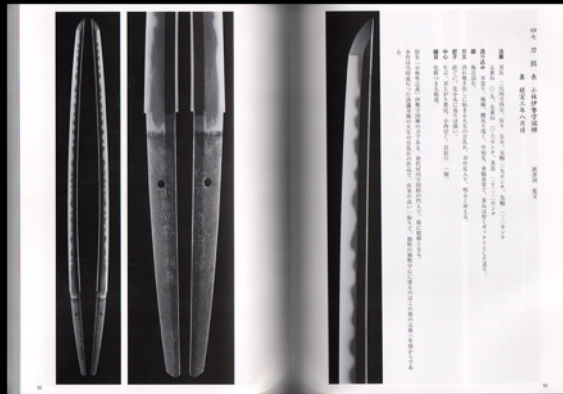


widens



Niju-habaki
(gold on copper base)

捺 査 印 員	備 考	寸 法	拵 え	中 心	図 影 柄 り	鑑 子	刃 紋	下 地	鍛	造 り 込 み	銘 文	第 五 七 五 九 号
				目釘穴 一個		道下小丸返り横手込	浅水庵忠、大五の目札刀作是良し		板目詰	鑄造	小林伊勢守國輝 延宝三年八月日	
				鐵 化極付之入竹助達								
												
												
												
												



NTHK-NPO Yushusaku Certification

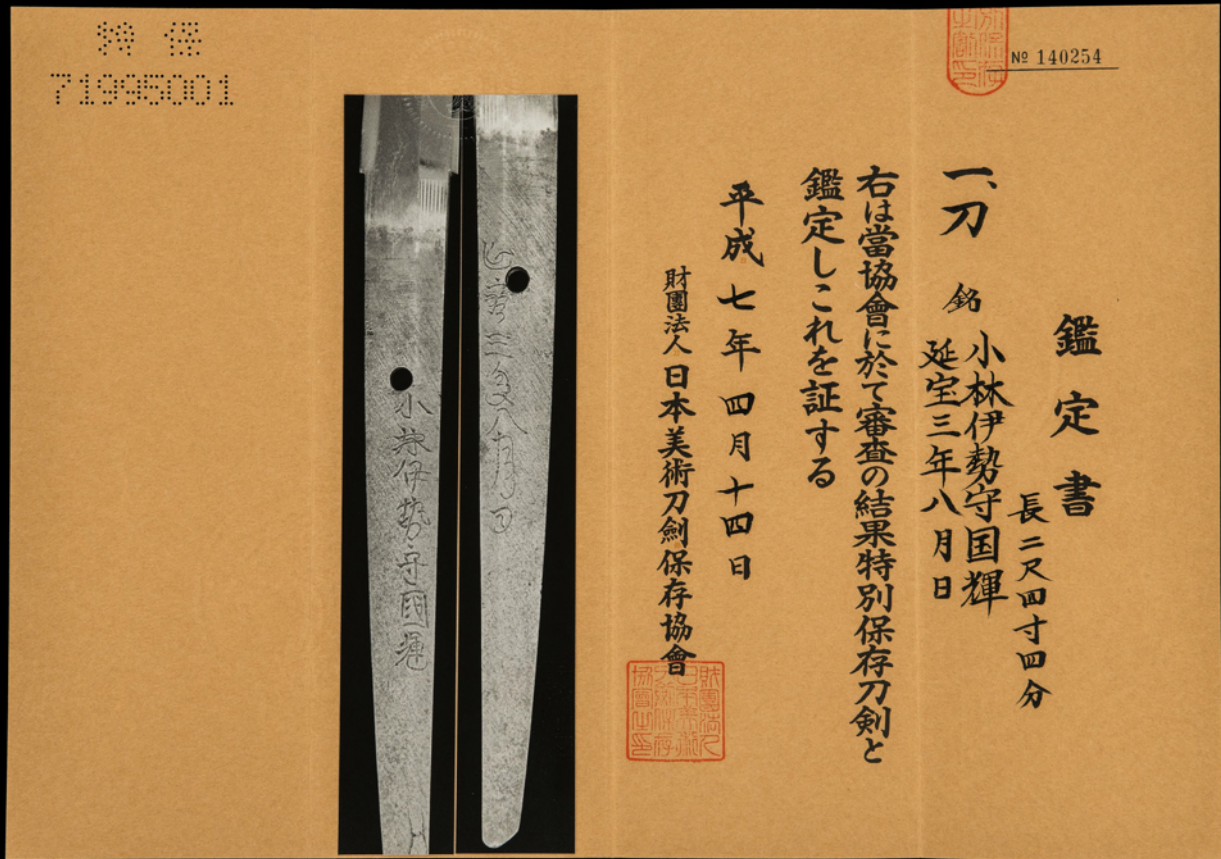
This wakizashi was designated as *Yushusaku* (Highly Excellent) by the Society for the Preservation of the Japanese Sword.

It has been published in a catalogue issued by the NTHK-NPO with other *Yushusaku* awarded swords. Book included with sword.

Kobayashi Ise no Kami Kuniteru

Issued in 26th year of Heisei (2014), July 23rd

Nihon Token Hozon Kai
(NTHK-NPO)



NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon Certificate of Designation

(a sword designated as *Especially Worthy of Conservation*
by the Society for the Preservation of the Japan Art Sword)

Issued in the 7th year of Heisei (1995), April 10th

One, Katana

Mei (signature)
Kobayashi Ise no Kami Kuniteru
Enpo 8-gatsu hi

Nagasa (length)
2-shaku 4-sun 4-bu (73.9cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai
(NBTHK)

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# UJWA190

A SUKENAO WAKIZASHI

SIGNED, MID-EDO PERIOD (GENROKU ERA: 1688-1704)

Swordsmith: *Omi no Kami Takagi ju SUKENAO*
Location: Settsu province (Osaka)
Length: 54.0cm (ubu) **Curvature:** 1.0cm **Moto-haba:** 3.0cm
Hamon: *Dai gunome midare with sunagashi, kinsuji, the works...*
Jihada: *Well-forged itame, part masame on shinogi*
Certificate #1: **NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon** (a sword designated as Especially Worthy of Preservation by the Society for the Preservation of the Japan Art Sword)
Certificate #2,3,4: **NTHK-NPO Kanteisho** (a tsuba, fuchi-kashira, and koshirae designated as Important by the Non-Profit Japanese Sword Appraisal Association)
Fujishiro: *Jojo-saku* (ranked as a highly superior swordsmith)
Included: Koshirae, shirasaya, sword fabric bags, sword stand, DVD, kit, etc.

SOLD

Maestro Sukenao was born in *Omi Takagi*, his common name is *Magodayu*. He entered as an apprentice of *Echizen no Kami Sukehiro*, one the greatest smiths in the early Edo Period.

He later married Sukehiro's younger sister and became his most prolific student.

Sukenao lived in *Osaka Soya-cho*. His works are seen up until about *Genroku Rokunen* (1693) (55 years of age), and perhaps this is the year he died.

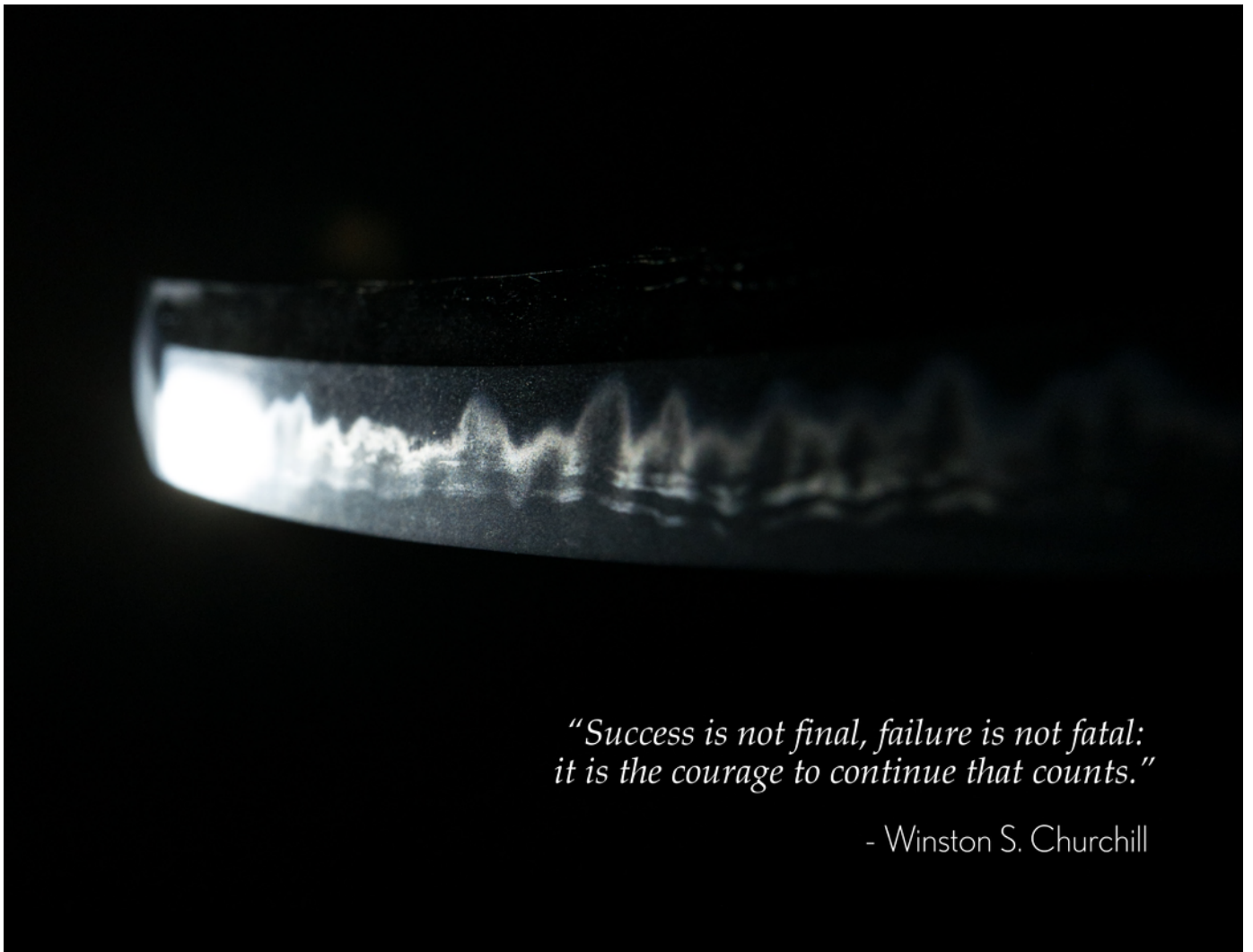
His works are an eye-catching symphony of *gunome ashi iri* (surging wave temper line with long legs extending to the blade's edge). This impressively long wakizashi holds all the beautiful qualities that Sukenao and his sensei were famous for.

There will always be something new and exciting to see in this bright *hamon*. The *sunagashi* and *kinsuji* are so pronounced. This is a temper line that uplifts the spirit.

The detailed Mid-Edo period *tsuba* is signed by *Mogarashi Nyudo Souten Sei*. It is in the design of Samurai warriors, gorgeously carved re-enacting the great Genpei War between the Taira and Minamoto clans that culminated in the commencement of the Kamakura period in 1185.

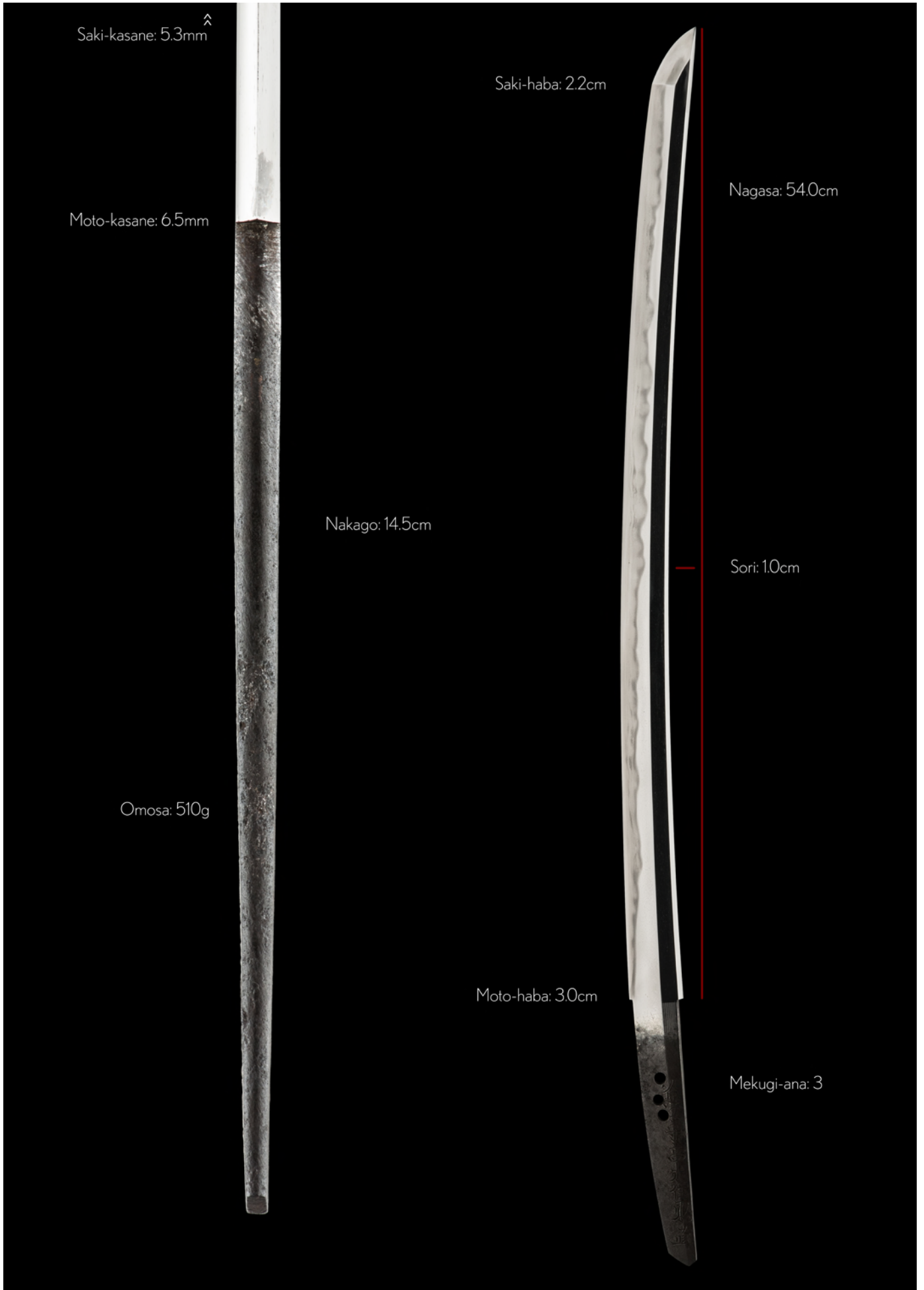
The *Mino Goto School fuchi-kashira* and *menuki* are of protective dragons guarding the life and bringing spiritual protection of the sword's owner. The *koshirae* is dated to the Taisho period.

Four (4) certificates of authenticity accompany this wakizashi including prestigious NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon. This is a marvelous sword by a gifted artist seemingly taken too young.



*"Success is not final, failure is not fatal:
it is the courage to continue that counts."*

- Winston S. Churchill



Saki-kasane: 5.3mm[^]

Moto-kasane: 6.5mm

Omosa: 510g

Saki-haba: 2.2cm

Nakago: 14.5cm


Moto-haba: 3.0cm

Nagasa: 54.0cm

Sori: 1.0cm

Mekugi-ana: 3





Omi no Kami

Lord of Omi province (title)

Takagi ju

From Takagi village (in Omi province)

Sukenao

Swordsmith

○

mi (no)

Kami

Taka

gi

ju

Suke

nao

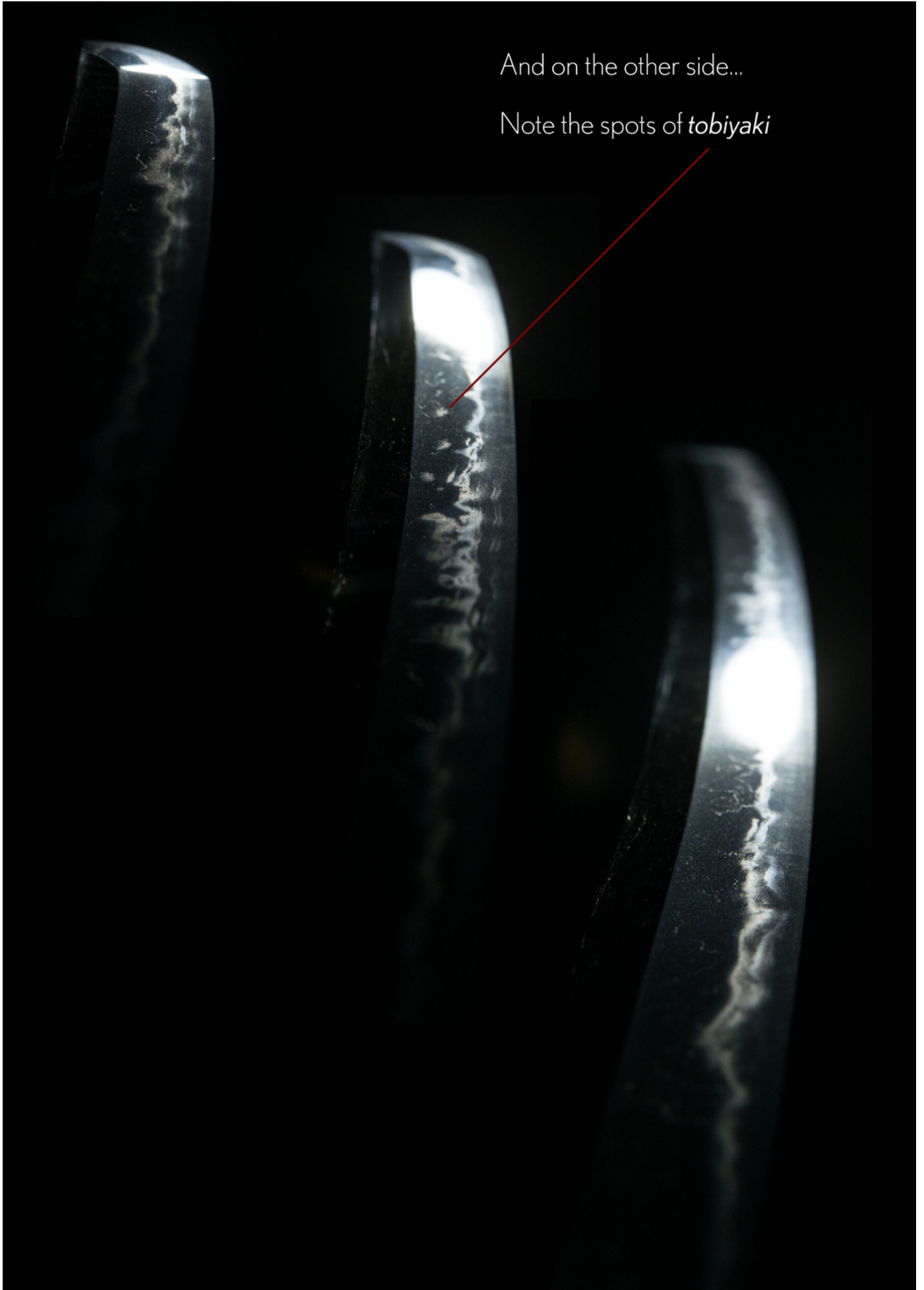
Hamon

A symphony of billowing *o-gunome* (large semi-circular waves), sweeping sands of striating *sunagashi*, long *ashi* (legs), *kinsuji* (black shiny lines) - steel paradise.



And on the other side...

Note the spots of *tobiyaki*





Shirasaya



Habaki
(rock pattern in gold
on copper base)





A signed Goshu, Mogarashi Souten tsuba (guard)
Mid-Edo Period (~1700s), NTHK-NPO Kanteisho Certification





The Genpei War

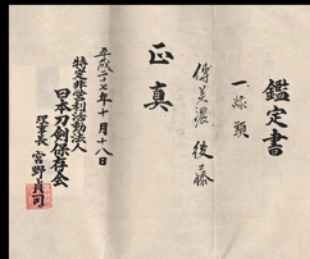
The design on the *tsuba* depicts Japan's pivotal *Genpei war* of 1180-1185 during the late *Heian period*.

It was an immense conflict between the *Taira* and *Minamoto* clans.

In the end the Taira clan fell. Thus began the establishment of the *Kamakura Shogunate* under *Minamoto Yoritomo* in 1192 in Kamakura.



Minamoto no Yoritomo. From a hanging scroll by *Fujiwara no Takanobu* (1179)

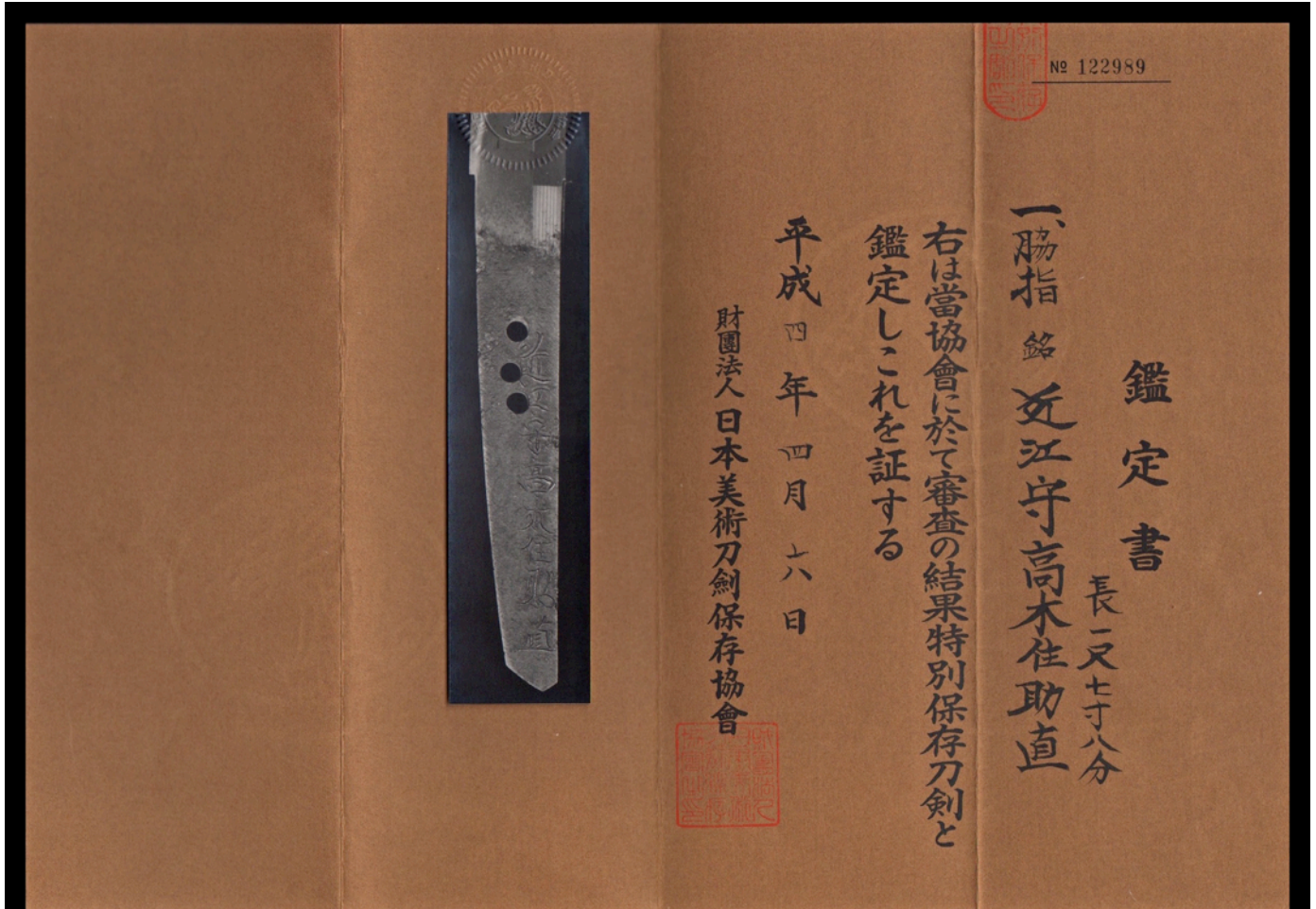


Fuchi-kashira in cloud dragon theme
Mid-Edo Period (1700s)
Den, Mino Goto (NTHK-NPO Certificate)





Unryu
(cloud dragon)



NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon Certificate of Designation

(a sword designated as *Especially Worthy of Conservation*
by the Society for the Preservation of the Japan Art Sword)

Issued in the 4th year of Heisei (1992), April 6th

One, Katana

Mei (signature)

Omi no Kami Takagi Ju Sukenao

Nagasa (length)

1-shaku 7-sun 6-bu (54.0cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai
(NBTHK)

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*I believe I can fly...
Congratulations A.S.*

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*Man, it doesn't show signs of stoppin',
And I've brought me some corn for poppin',
The lights are turned way down low...*

Let it snow...let it snow...let it snow..!