

JAPANESE
SWORD
CATALOGUE 35

RELEASED:
NOV 17/2020

ALL SOLD

(COVER PHOTO)

ITEM# UJWA242

A KANEYASU O-WAKIZASHI
EARLY EDO PERIOD (CIRCA 1644)
WITH UNIQUE LEFT-HANDED
SIGNATURE & 'SAKURA TREE' SAYA

NBTHK HOZON TOKEN



ANTIQUÉ JAPANESE SWORDS

CATALOGUE 35
RELEASED: NOVEMBER 17, 2020

THE FOLLOWING PAGES CONTAIN DESCRIPTIONS AND IMAGES OF GENUINE ANTIQUÉ JAPANESE SWORDS THAT WERE SOLD IN CATALOGUE 35. THIS IS A REFERENCE DOCUMENT.

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EACH SWORD CAN BE LEGALLY OWNED AND EXPORTED OUTSIDE OF JAPAN. ALL SWORDS HAVE CERTIFICATION PAPERS (ORIGAMI) SUCH AS FROM NBTHK AND/OR THE NTHK-NPO.

THANK YOU,



PABLO KUNTZ
FOUNDER, UNIQUE JAPAN

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+44 7954 102 277 (MOBILE & ON THE 'SIGNAL' APP - BRITISH TIME)

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Hello everyone,

Well, the 2020 year is soon coming to a close. It has certainly been one to remember, and for reasons we all know why. For me personally, it's highlighted the vital importance of having meaning in one's life. Without a definitive direction, without a guiding purpose, getting blown off course in times of confusion will inevitably ensue. Most of us have dug deep these past few months and have unearthed many discoveries, some dark, some filled with treasure. It is critical to keep digging to build the foundations necessary to battle the forceful winds of change that always come. It's acceptable to struggle, that's good, it shows that we're marching forward, however hard. To suffer is not. When that occurs, we must be honest with the source of pain and make the required adaptations to bring order to our lives and to the lives we are responsible for. Let's press forth with open eyes in 2021.

Ten swords make up this, our 35th sword catalogue. I've thoroughly enjoyed exploring the artistic dimensions that make up each piece. In truth, more than I ever have. Great art, in all forms, never ceases to amaze me. The profundity in message behind each creative expression opens up the world in ways we may not have seen before. These moments of awakening fuels me to share with you what I feel the art is trying to communicate and how we can use the message to help inspire and learn from. These talented swordsmiths, metalsmiths, carpenters, artists of all types were (and are) operating at tremendous depths of skill and imagination. These works of art serve as a guiding force allowing us to build meaningful lives filled with creative purpose.

We commence the catalogue with a long *ô-wakizashi* by *Mutsu no Kami Kaneyasu*. He is known as *Hidari-Mutsu* or 'lefty' *Kaneyasu* as he was left-handed. He chiseled his signature in a uniquely mirrored fashion. The set of *koshirae* is absolutely brilliant, the *saya* looks like a *sakura* tree. Its harmonious nature message is uplifting. Next up, we have a katana by *Ômiya Morikage* from the violent *mid-Nambokuchô* period circa the Enbun era 1356~1361. This a wide, impressive katana with an *ô-kissaki* built for battle. A dragon-themed *koshirae* with matching *Kyô-Kinko* fittings challenges us to confront our personal demons and retrieve the 'gold' that awaits us when we prevail.

The third sword is a terrific katana from the early Edo period by *Bizen* superstar *Ishido Yasuhiro*. The *gunome-chôji-midare hamon* is pure delight. As this sword is in *shirasaya* only, we can assist the new owner in building a custom *koshirae*, should he or she desire. Following on is a shorter length katana that was produced in *Kaga* province, also in the mid-1600s by swordsmith *Kiyomitsu*. There is an old-world charm to this bright *suguha* blade that few Shinto period blades possess. The *ume* (plum) and *sakura* themed *koshirae* give the sword an attractive balance. Jumping to February 1746, we come to a super healthy katana by *Kawachi Sukesada*. This beefy blade carries a most dramatic curve (over 3cm), that was evidently inspired by the one-handed *katate-uchi* masterpieces from his *Sukesada* family predecessors from the mid-1500s. The armored crab-themed *koshirae* pulls from the fact we can see *kanitsune* (crab claws) in the *hamon*. This creative synchronicity is admirable and enjoyable.

A glinting katana by *shodai* (first generation) *Nagamichi* is the sixth samurai sword. Ranked as *saijô-ôwazamono* for the indelibly sharp swords he produced, this collectible Shinto period katana has been freshly polished along with a newly crafted *habaki* and *shirasaya*. The Edo period *koshirae* celebrating *matsu* (pine) and *ikebana* flowers give a prosperous message into the new year. Travelling back to the middle Muromachi period, we have a beautiful signed and dated katana to February 1470 by *Niô* school swordsmith *Sanekiyo*. The velvety textured *jihada* of this *Yamato-den* sword shines in sheer Koto period glory. The *koshirae* with its gorgeous ripple design on the *saya*, playful spirit on the *fuchi-kashira* and fortune telling *Hakke tsuba* conveys inspirational wisdom.

Shodai Tadakuni is next with a katana that encapsulates everything that a samurai sword should be. Exceptional steel, a crisp signature and an Edo period *koshirae* of the highest quality. It comes with a rare origami certificate from 1839 by *Hon'ami Kôkan* valuing it to 10 gold pieces. The final available katana is a long, ruthless katana by *Kunisada* that underwent a two-body cutting test at *Mt. Nijuhachi*. The serene set of Edo period *koshirae* captures the mood in which justice was served. The last sword is a reference piece that was sold recently - a museum-grade *tachi* by *Ko-Ichimonji* swordsmith *Suke[yasu]*. I hope you enjoy the time travel experience of this truly remarkable blade.

Thank you as always for your genuine support and passion for life.
We look forward to serving you.



Warm regards,

Pablo Kuntz
November 2020



Taken from a 50th birthday video message for my friend Kyle. I'm joining the club soon too!

INDEX OF JAPANESE SWORDS

ITEM#	SWORDSMITH & TYPE	CM	CERTIFICATE	ERA / PERIOD	PRICE
ujwa242	A KANEYASU Ô-WAKIZASHI	59.1	NBTHK Hozon	Shôhō era (1644~1648)	SOLD
ujka332	A MORIKAGE KATANA	69.7	Tokubetsu Hozon	Enbun era (1352~1356)	SOLD
ujka335	A YASUHIRO KATANA	67.5	Tokubetsu Hozon	Kanbun (1661~1673)	SOLD
ujka336	A KIYOMITSU KATANA	63.9	NBTHK Hozon	Jōhō era (1652~1655)	SOLD
ujka337	A SUKESADA KATANA	64.1	Tokubetsu Hozon	Enkyō era (Feb 1746)	SOLD
ujka352	A NAGAMICHI KATANA	69.1	Tokubetsu Hozon	Kanbun (1661~1673)	SOLD
ujka357	A NIÔ SANEKIYÔ KATANA	69.4	Tokubetsu Hozon	Bunmei era (Feb 1470)	SOLD
ujka366	A TADAKUNI KATANA	68.9	Tokubetsu Hozon	Keian era (1648~1652)	SOLD
ujka375	A KUNISADA KATANA	74.5	NBTHK Hozon	Hōei era (1704~1711)	SOLD
ujka380	A SUKEYASU TACHI	69.0	NBTHK Jūyō Tōken	Kamakura (1184~1222)	SOLD

To access current and previous catalogues, please visit:

<http://new.uniquejapan.com/currently-available-swords-at-unique-japan>

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.

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ALSO, BE SURE LET US KNOW IF YOU ARE TRAVELLING TO TOKYO AS WE CAN BOOK A PRIVATE MEETING TOGETHER AT OUR STUDIO IN EBISU.

DOMO ARIGATO,
PABLO

UNIQUE JAPAN, FINE ART DEALER
ANTIQUES LICENSE ISSUED BY MEGURO CITY
TOKYO, JAPAN (NO.303291102398)



ujka373
Recently sold...

A Hankei Katana (繁慶)
23rd NBTHK Tokubetsu Jûyô Token

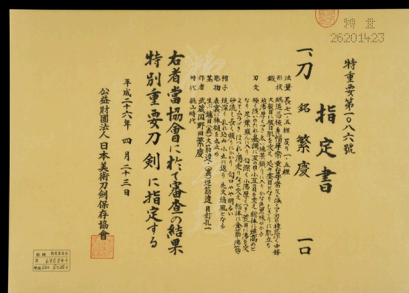
Momoyama period, Keichô era (1596~1615)

Length: 71.5cm (ubu)
Sori: 1.5cm

A masterpiece from the shinto grandmaster who was initially a gunsmith working for the *Tokugawa* family. It is one of four Tokubetsu Jûyô Tôken swords awarded to Hankei and the only one with his iconic *ru-mata* signature.

This blade shows a standing-out *ô-itame* that features plenty of *ji-nie* and *chikei*. The *hamon* is a *nie*-laden *notare* emulating his idol *Norishige*.

A custom-koshirae is in process. Further details will be shared in a future catalogue.





ITEM# UJWA242

SOLD

A KANEYASU Ô-WAKIZASHI

SIGNED WITH LEFT HAND, EARLY EDO PERIOD (SHÔHÔ ERA: 1644~1648)

Swordsmith:	<i>Mutsu no Kami Kaneyasu (shodai, ubu nakago)</i>
Measurements:	Length: 59.1cm Curvature: 0.5cm Motohaba: 2.64cm
Jihada:	<i>Well forged mokume-hada and masame-hada with chikei</i>
Hamon:	<i>Bright gunome-midare hamon with kinsuji, ko-ashi, sunagashi and tōgari</i>
Certificate1:	NBTHK Hozon (sword designated as Worthy of Preservation)
Certificate 2-4:	NTHK-NPO Kanteisho (a koshirae, tsuba and fk designated as Authentic)
Fujishiro:	<i>Jō-saku</i> (ranked as a superior swordsmith)
Sharpness:	<i>Ryō-wazamono</i> (rated as a maker of very sharp swords)
Included:	Shirasaya, Edo koshirae, stand, kit, DVD, booklet, printed description

SOLD

Shodai Mutsu no Kami Kaneyasu was a talented swordsmith that chiseled his *mei* (signature) in a uniquely mirrored fashion, earning the nickname *Hidari-Mutsu* ('lefty' Kaneyasu).

A distinctive Yamato quality can be admired in this extra-long wakizashi giving it an older appearance - this is due to his *Yamato-Tegai* school roots from the late 1500s. There is plenty of *kinsuji* and *sunagashi* intertwined with a rolling *gunome-midare* that reminds one of *Sukehiro's tōran-midare*. Kaneyasu had a reputation for crafting sharp swords and is thus ranked as a *ryō-wazamono*. The *koshirae* (fittings) follows a nature-inspired theme with a marvellous *saya* (scabbard) resembling a *sakura* tree and a *satoyama* designed *tsuba* that pays tribute to the importance of working in harmony with nature. A one-of-a-kind sword with a wonderful story.

^
Saki-kasane: 3.6mm

Moto-kasane: 5.4mm

Omosa: 430g

Kissaki: 2.72cm
Saki-haba: 1.73cm

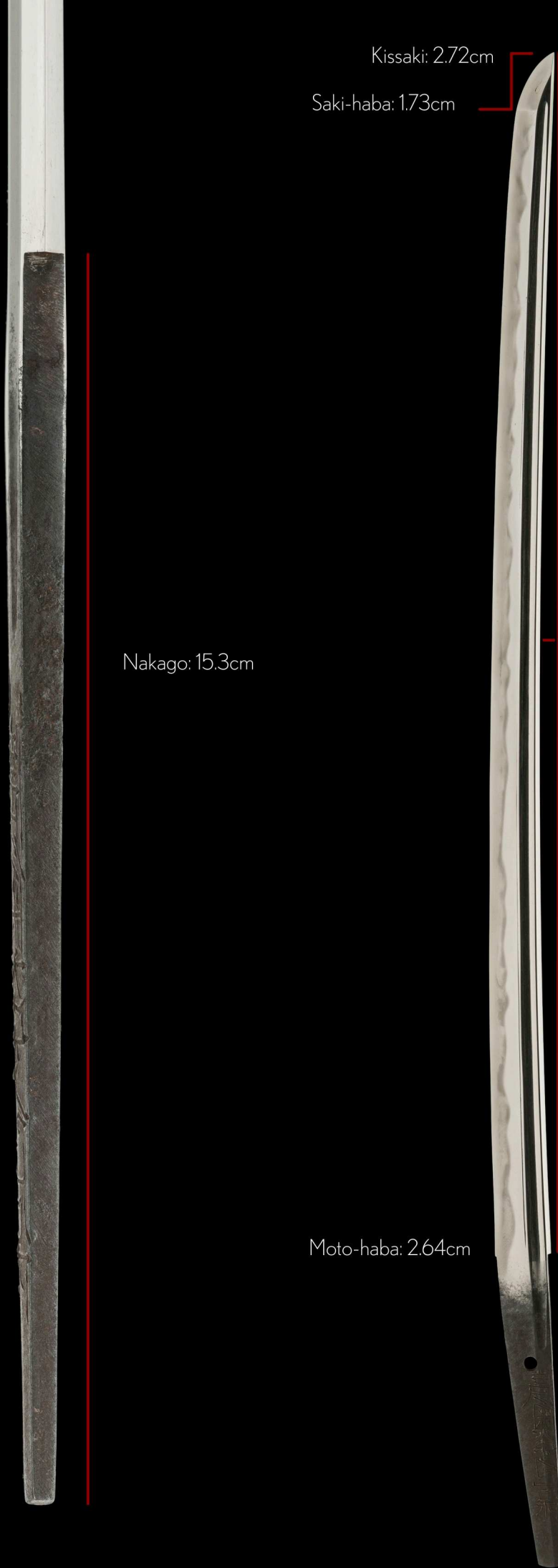
Nakago: 15.3cm

Moto-haba: 2.64cm

Nagasa: 59.1cm

Sori: 0.50cm

Mekugi-ana: 1



Mutsu no Kami Kaneyasu is ranked as a *jô-saku* (superior smith) who first moved from *Yamato* (Nara) to *Ôsaka* in *Settsu* province.

What makes this southpaw smith truly unique is that he chiseled his *mei* (signature) in a *mirrored fashion*, therefore earning the nickname *Hidari-Mutsu* ('lefty' Kaneyasu).

Dated signatures exist from the 6th year of *Kan'ei* era (1629) and the 2nd year of *Jôô* era (1653).

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Location: *Settsu* (resident of Osaka)

Title: *Mutsu no Kami* (Lord of Mutsu province)

Swordsmith: *Kaneyasu* (first generation)

ubu-nakago (original, unaltered tang)

gyaku-sujikai-yasurime (diagonal file marks in opposite manner)

陸 (Mu)

奥 (tsu, no)

守 (Kami)

包 (Kane)

保 (yasu)

'Lefty' signature

Flip the image horizontally...et voilà,
a mirrored standard right-handed
signature that becomes 'legible.'

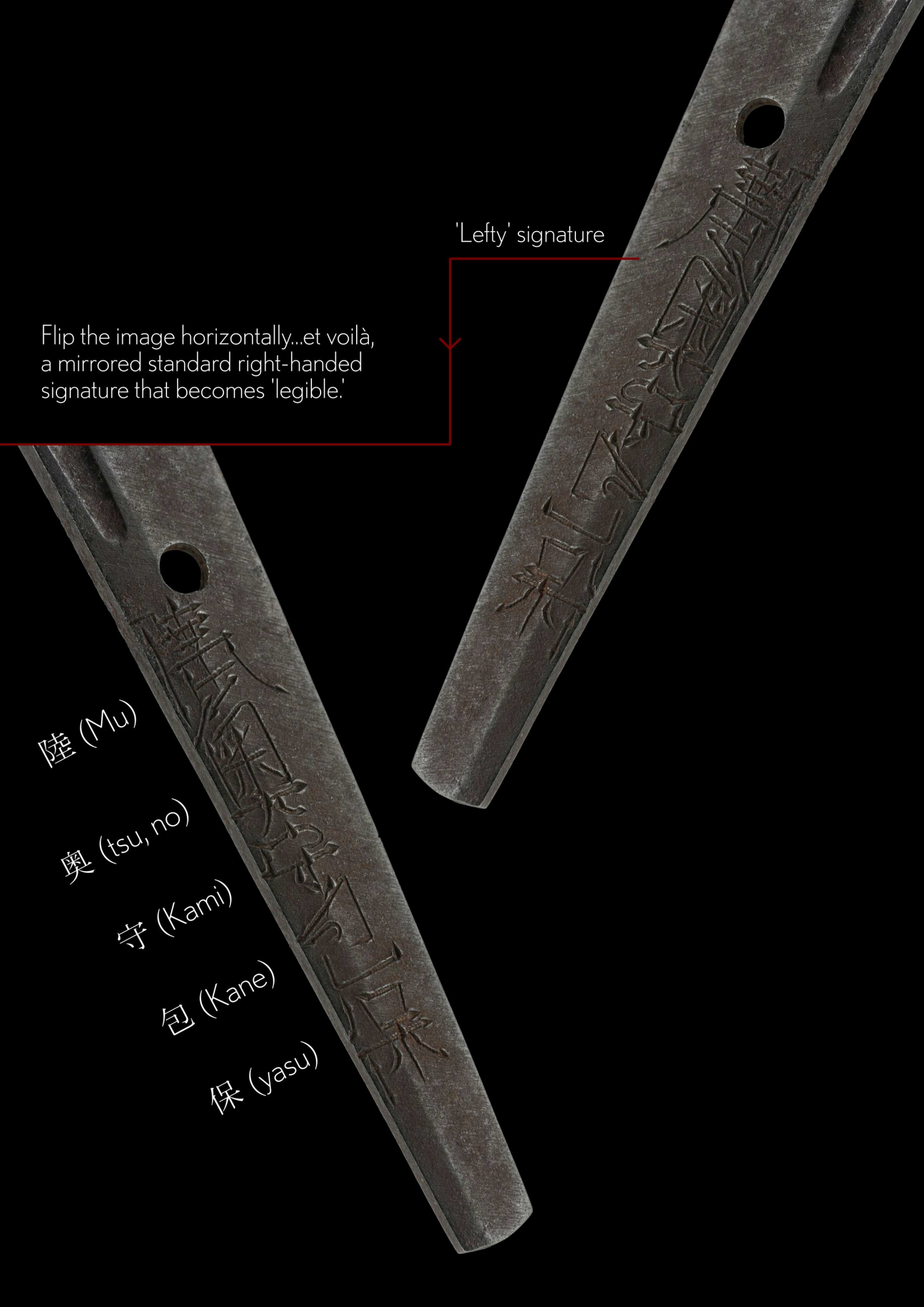
陸 (Mu)

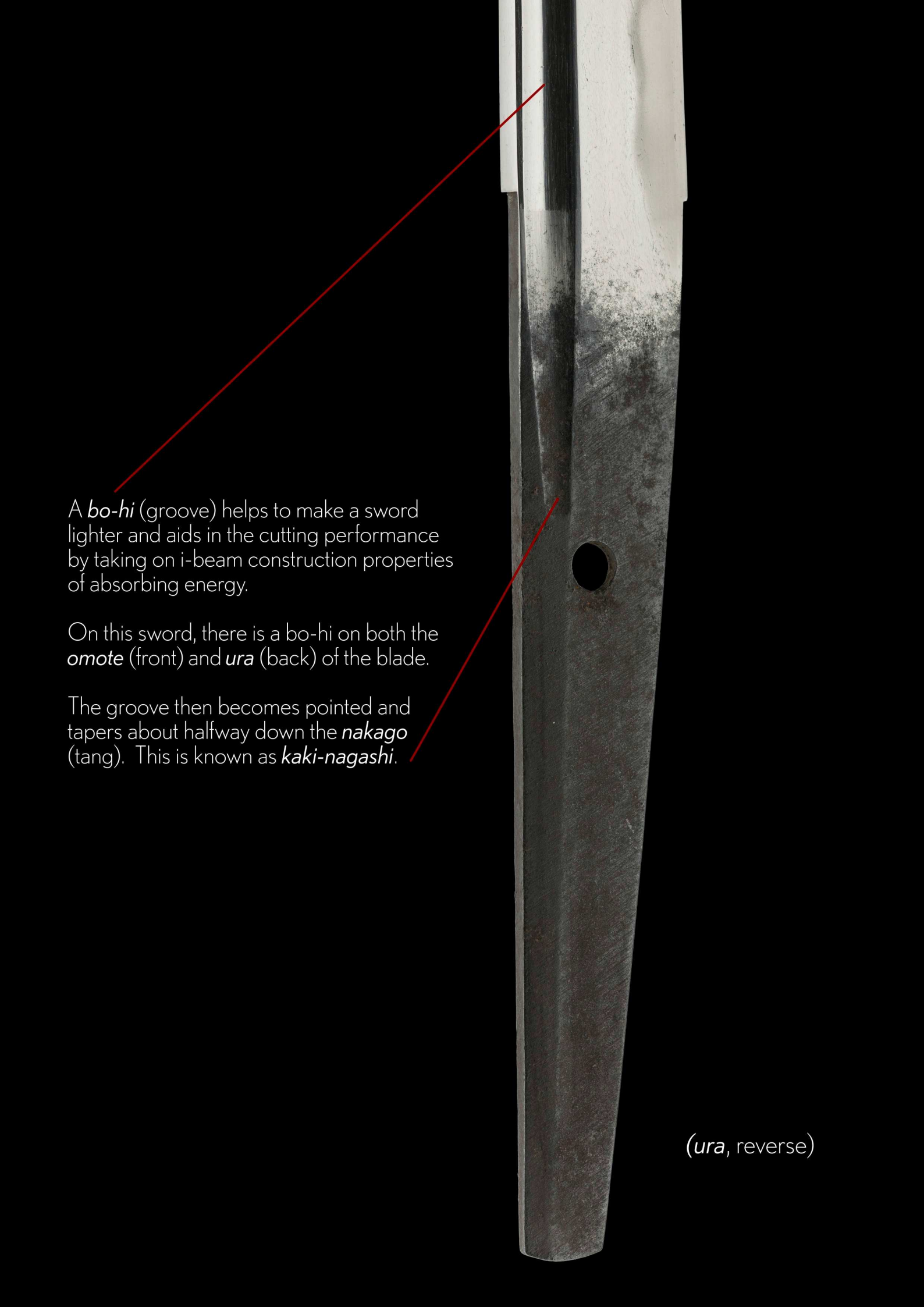
奥 (tsu, no)

守 (Kami)

包 (Kane)

保 (yasu)





A *bo-hi* (groove) helps to make a sword lighter and aids in the cutting performance by taking on i-beam construction properties of absorbing energy.

On this sword, there is a *bo-hi* on both the *omote* (front) and *ura* (back) of the blade.

The groove then becomes pointed and tapers about halfway down the *nakago* (tang). This is known as *kaki-nagashi*.

(*ura*, reverse)

保 存
27201505

No 3009225



鑑 定 書

一、脇指 銘 陸奥守包保

長一尺九寸五分

右は當協會に於て審査の結果保存刀剣と
鑑定しこれを証する

平成二十七年七月十四日

公益財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協會



東京 教育委員会
第 269207号
平成 6 年 11 月 8 日

NBTHK Hozon Certificate of Designation

A sword designated as *Worthy of Conservation*
by the Society for the Preservation of the Japan Art Sword

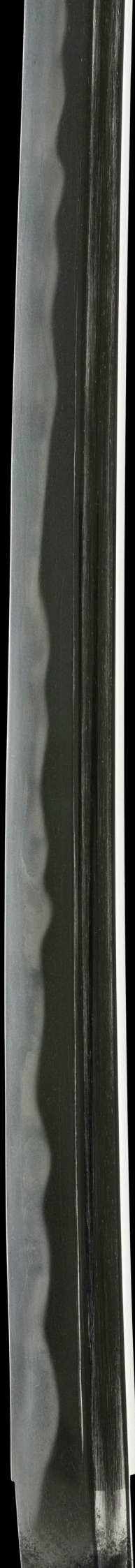
Issued in the 27th year of Heisei (2015), July 14th

One, Wakizashi

Mei (signature)
Mutsu no Kami Kaneyasu

Nagasa (length)
1-shaku 9-sun 5-bu (59.1cm)

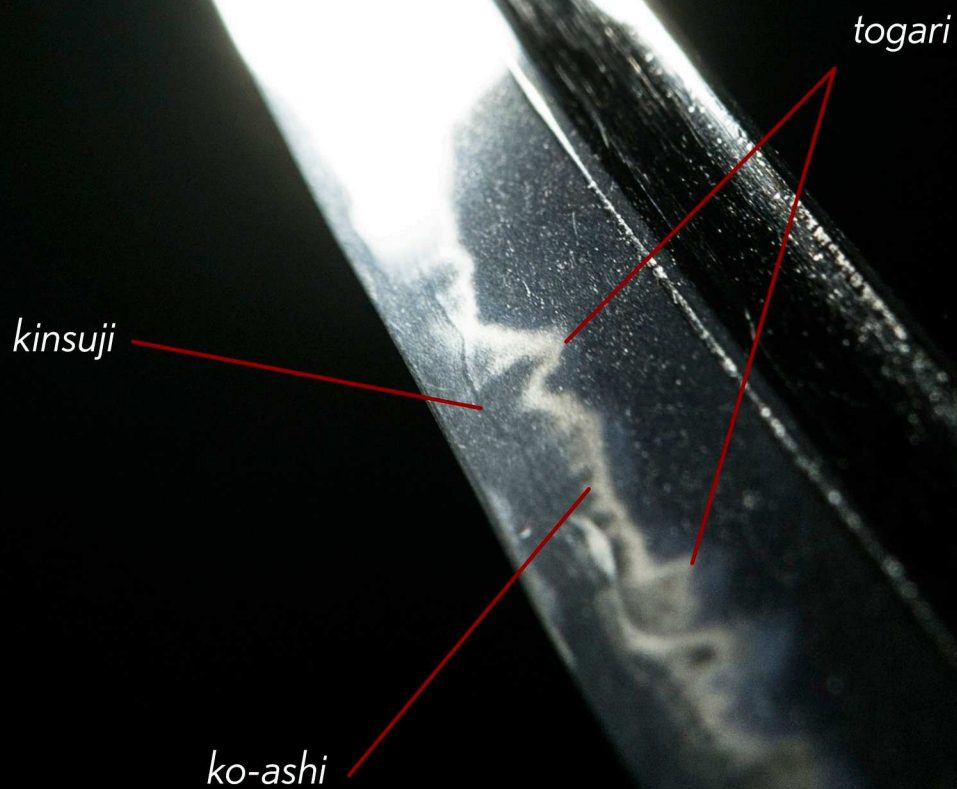
Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai
(NBTHK)

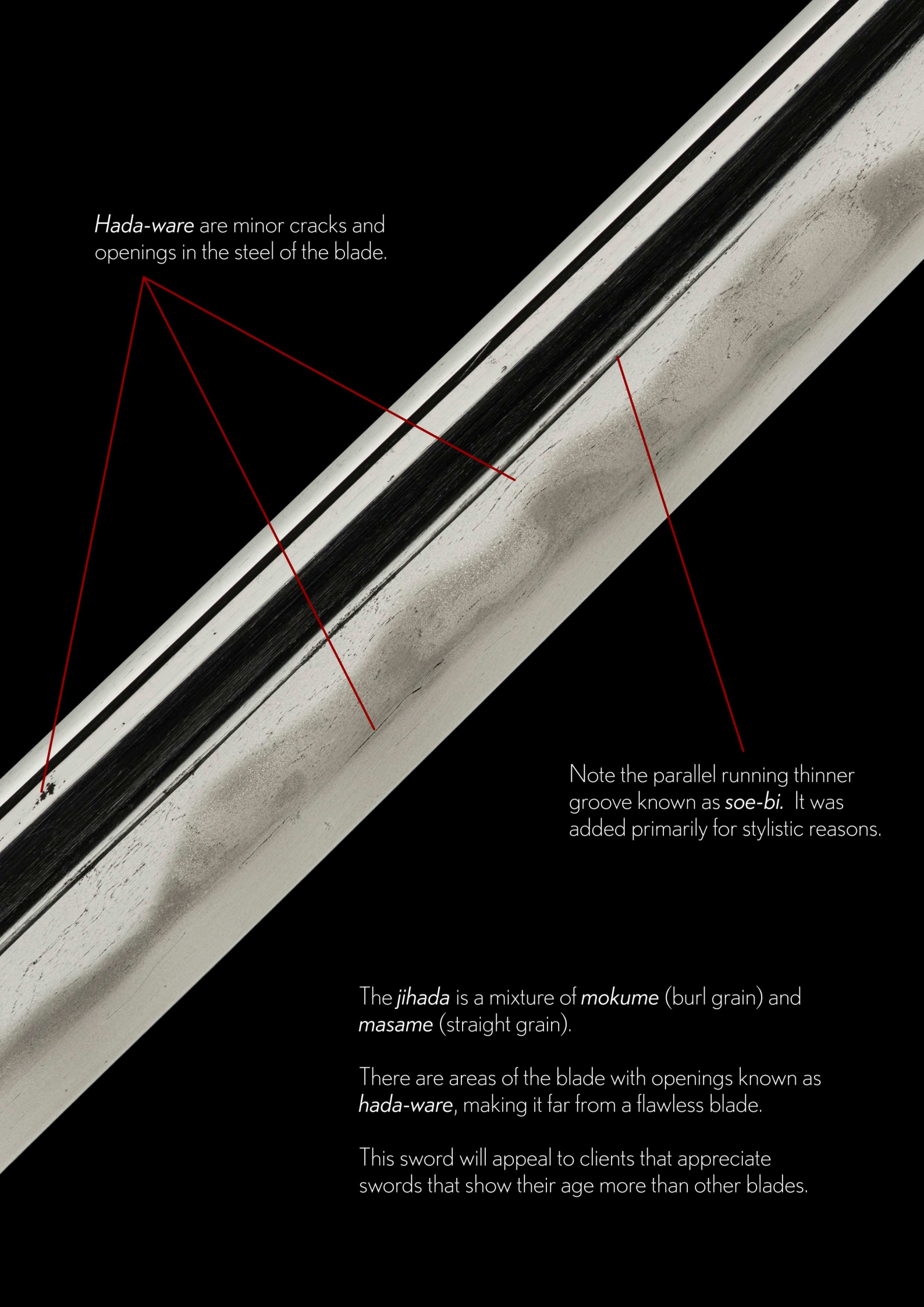




There is an admirable complexity in the hamon that Kaneyasu produced.

Here we can see *togari* (peaks), *ko-ashi* (small legs), and clear *kinsuji* (dark lines of *nie*). There is a 'koto-esque' quality to his work.





Hada-ware are minor cracks and openings in the steel of the blade.

Note the parallel running thinner groove known as *soe-bi*. It was added primarily for stylistic reasons.

The *jihada* is a mixture of *mokume* (burl grain) and *masame* (straight grain).

There are areas of the blade with openings known as *hada-ware*, making it far from a flawless blade.

This sword will appeal to clients that appreciate swords that show their age more than other blades.

Beautiful brushed streams of *sunagashi* and flowing *kinsuji*.



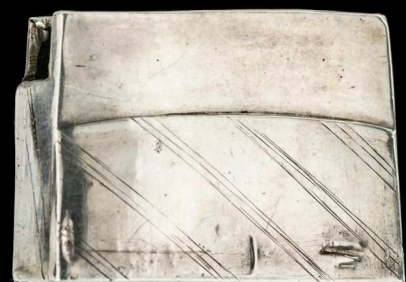


Powerful waves of a *gunome-midare hamon* soar along the pure steel blade. Note the brush strokes of *sunagashi*.



A brand new *shirasaya* was crafted to best protect the sword. It has been wrapped in white *washi* paper.

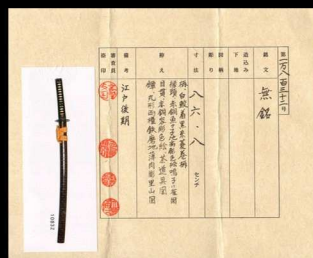
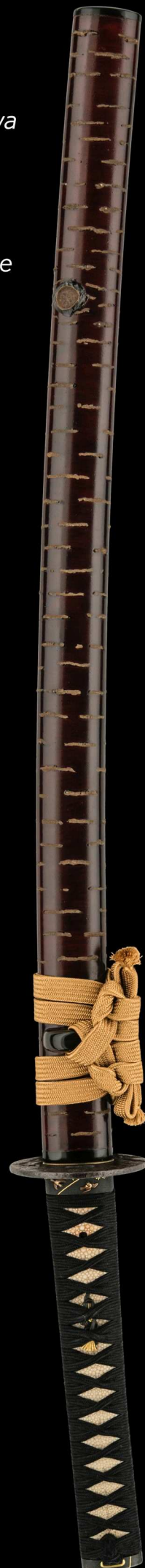
Next to the shirasaya is the koshirae brocade bag and below is the silver wrapped copper *habaki* that secures the sword inside the *saya* (scabbard).



*Cha sakuragi-fû kawarinuri saya
uchigatana-koshirae*
(茶桜木風変り塗鞘打刀拵え)

*Uchigatana-koshirae
lacquered in brown with unique
texture like cherry tree*

Crafted during the
Late Edo period
(1780~1867)



NTHK-NPO Kanteisho
Certificate of Authenticity



The realistic lacquer work depicting the bark of the beloved *sakura* (cherry tree) speaks to a deep appreciation of nature.

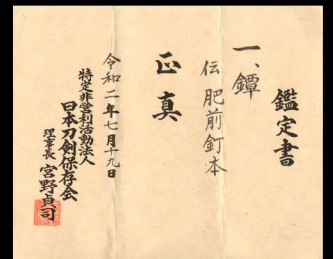




This polished iron tsuba has been attributed to the *Kugimoto School* in *Hizen* province.

It's linear, carved design depicts the concept of *satoyama* - harmony between nature and its co-inhabitants.

A Kanteisho certificate of authenticity from the NTHK-NPO accompanies the sword.





Satoyama is the combination of the Japanese word for 'villages' (*sato*) and the 'mountains' (*yama*). It represents a centuries old mindset to foster rich, harmonious biodiversity within the vicinity of a populated area.

Interestingly, a Satoyama initiative was made some ten years ago by Japan's Ministry of the Environment and the United Nations University Institute of Advanced Studies (UNU-IAS) in an attempt to promote traditional Japanese land conservation around the world.

Click link below to read more about the initiative:

<https://edition.cnn.com/2010/WORLD/asiapcf/11/28/satoyama.initiative.japan.biodiversity/index.html>



Menuki (decorative grips on the hilt) feature the special utensils used for the Japanese tea ceremony.





These dancers from *Yosakoi Festival* in Kochi prefecture are carrying *naruko*, a traditional wooden clapper that makes a 'click-clack' sound. During the Edo period, people in Kochi used these *naruko* to scare *sparrows* away from their farm fields.

The naruko/sparrow scene provided inspiration for this exquisitely produced *fuchi-kashira* art work.



NTHK-NPO Kanteisho certified
Late Edo period (1780~1867)

naruko





ITEM# UJKA332

SOLD

AN ÔMIYA MORIKAGE KATANA

UNSIGNED, NAMBOKUCHÔ PERIOD (ENBUN ERA: 1352~1356)

Swordsmith:	<i>Bizen no Kuni Ômiya Morikage (o-suriage nakago)</i>
Measurements:	Length: 69.7cm Curvature: 2.1cm Motohaba: 3.16cm
Jihada:	<i>Well forged itame and nagare-hada with ji-nie, chikei and light midare utsuri</i>
Hamon:	<i>Rhythmic koshibiraki with gentle valleys</i>
Certificate 1:	NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon (designated as <i>Especially Worthy of Preservation</i>)
Certificate 2:	NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon (set of matching <i>kôgai, kôzuka & menuki</i>)
Certificate 3-5:	NTHK-NPO Kanteisho (a <i>koshirae, tsuba and fk</i> designated as <i>Authentic</i>)
Fujishiro:	<i>Jô-saku</i> (ranked as a superior swordsmith)
Sharpness:	<i>Ryô-wazamono</i> (rated as a maker of very sharp swords)
Authentication:	<i>Sayagaki by Hon'ami Nisshu</i> (former Japan Living National Treasure)
Included:	Shirasaya, dragon koshirae, stand, kit, DVD, booklet, printed description

SOLD

This graciously curved powerhouse katana by Ômiya Morikage reflects its near 700-year-old Nambokuchô time period. Morikage worked during the Enbun era (1356~1361) and his swords have reached Jûyô status as well as prestigious Jûyô Bunkazai and Jûyô Bijitsuhin. This is a wide and valiant sword with a full-length *bo-hi* (groove) and an imposing *ô-kissaki*. The *hamon* is a symmetrical *koshibiraki* with *midare-utsuri* to enjoy in the background amongst the dark swirling *chikei*. An outstanding custom koshirae was built for the sword that includes a matching set of dragon fittings from the Kyô-Kinko school with NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon certification.

Saki-kasane: 4.5mm [^]

Moto-kasane: 6.8mm

Omosa: 740g

Kissaki: 4.30cm
Saki-haba: 2.36cm

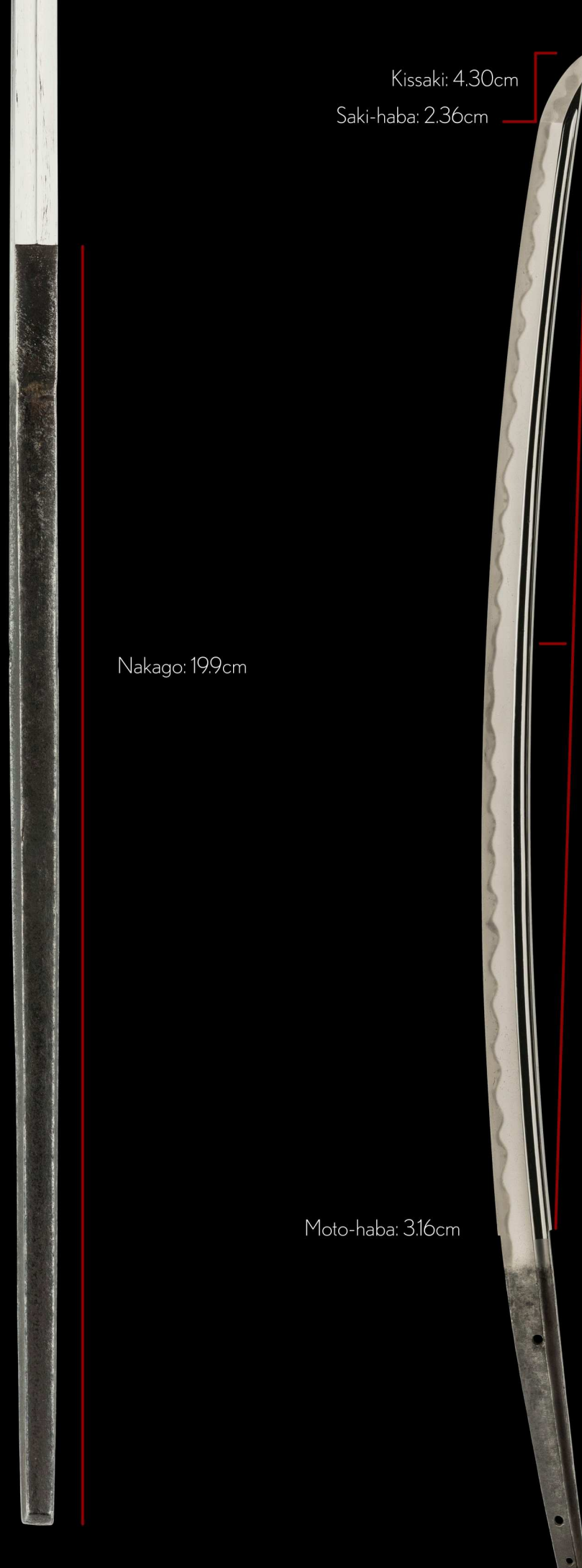
Nakago: 19.9cm

Moto-haba: 3.16cm

Nagasa: 69.7cm

Sori: 2.10cm

Mekugi-ana: 3



Swordsmith Kunimori is regarded as the founder of the *Bizen Ômiya School*. He was active circa 1260 during the mid-Kamakura period. Two theories exist on origins of the name; one suggests that Kunimori came from *Inokuma Ômiya* in *Yamashiro province* - the other states that he travelled to the Ômiya district of Bizen.

The majority of the swords we find today from this school are unsigned and attributed to a specific smith or simply to the *Ômiya School*. *Morikage*, *Morishige* and *Morokage* are some of the more prominent swordsmiths.

The NBTHK has attributed the katana to the Ômiya school. The rather precious *sayagaki* by the late *Hon'ami Nisshu* - Former Japan Living National Treasure - went a step further and attributed the sword to *Ômiya Morikage*.

Morikage worked during the *Enbun era* (1356~1361) in the heart of the warring Nambokuchô period. His swords have reached Jûyô status as well as prestigious *Jûyô Bunkazai* and *Jûyô Bijitsuhin*.

This powerhouse katana by Morikage reflects its near 700-year-old Nambokuchô time period. This is a wide and thick sword with an *ô-kissaki* that would have meant business on the battlefield.

The *hamon* is a rhythmic *koshibiraki* that flows *symmetrically* down the steel. There is also a faint *midare-utsuri* to enjoy in classic Bizen tradition.

An outstanding custom koshirae was built for the sword that includes a valuable matching set of dragon fittings from the *Kyô-Kinko* school with Tokubetsu Hozon certification from the NBTHK.

Morikage is ranked as *jô-saku* (superior smith) and *ryô-wazamono* for the enviably sharp reputation his swords enjoyed.





This katana has an *o-suriage nakago*, where the *nakago* (tang) was greatly shortened, and thus the signature lost.

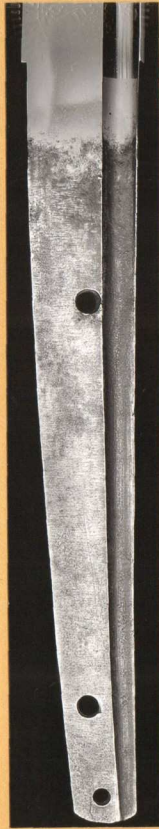
The shortening procedure was carefully performed as the overall condition of the *nakago* is clean and gently filed.

A *bô-hi* (groove) that runs right through the *nakago* is called *kaki-ôtoishi*.

27201511



No 1004736



鑑定書

一刀 無銘（大宮）

長二尺三寸

右は當協會に於て審査の結果特別保存刀劍と
鑑定しこれを証する

平成二十八年二月四日

公益財団法人日本美術刀劍保存協會



東京 教育委員会
第 219929号
昭和55年 8月14日

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 28th year of Heisei (2016), February 4th

One, Katana

Mumei (unsigned)
Ômiya School

Nagasa (length)
2-shaku 3-sun (69.7cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai
(NBTHK)



備前國大宮盛景

Bizen no Kuni Ômiya Morikage

[Swordsmith] Ômiya Morikage from Bizen province

大磨上無銘也時代延文頃

Ô-suriage mumei nari jidai Enbun goro

[The blade is] ô-suriage mumei (unsigned), crafted during the Enbun period (1356~1361)

長サ貳尺參寸壹分有之

Nagasa 2 shaku 3 sun 1 bu kore ari

Blade length ~ 70.0 cm

昭和五拾六歳酉長月誌之本阿弥日洲

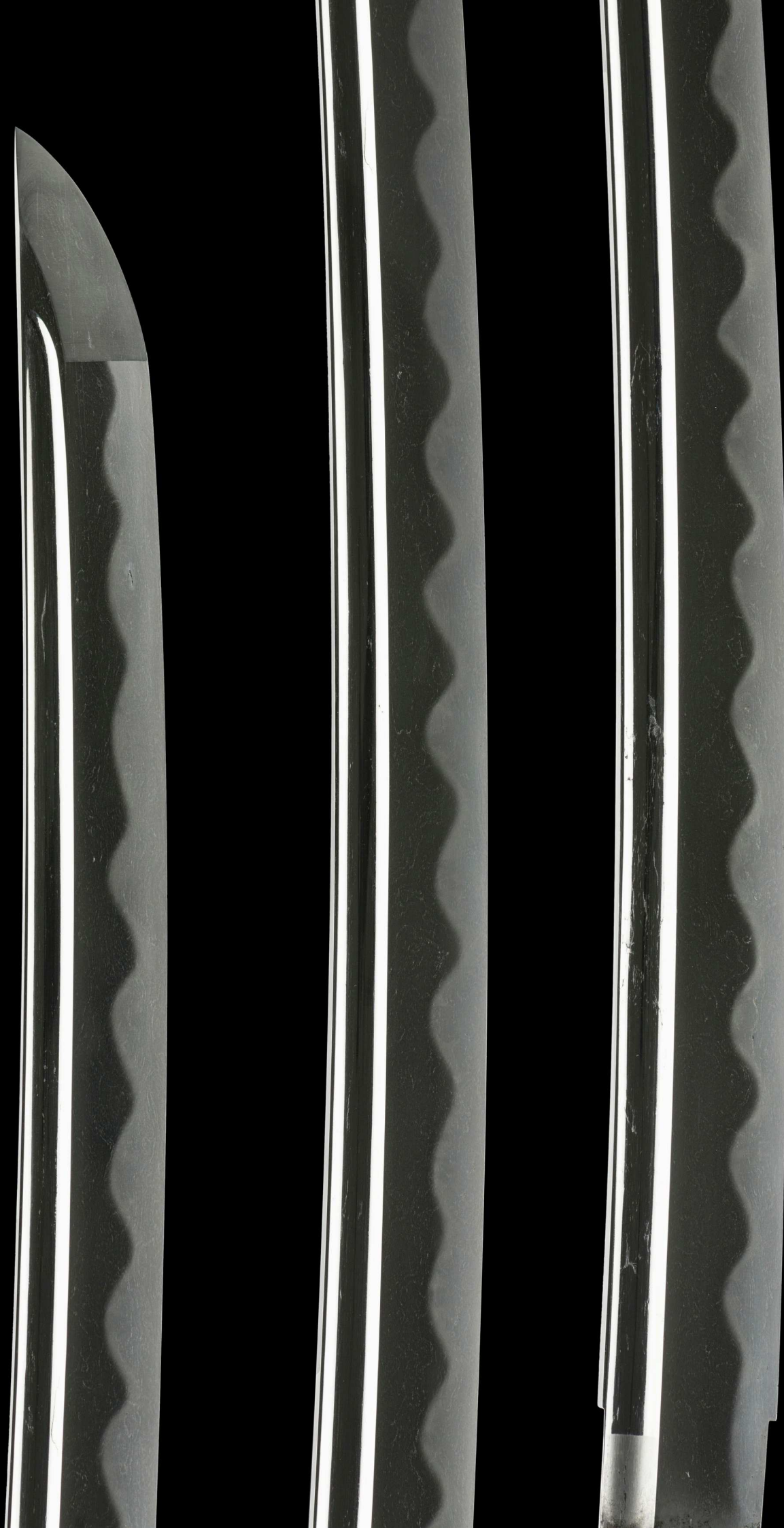
Shôwa gojûroku-toshi tori Nagatsuki kore o shirusu

Honami Nisshû + kaô

Written by *Honami Nisshû* [former Living National Treasure] in September during the 56th year of Shôwa era (1981)

Year of the Rooster plus his personal monogram





An imposing *ô-kissaki* (large tip) measuring 4.3cm dominates the profile of the blade. Swords produced during particularly turbulent periods of time in japan's history tended to feature large kissaki.

This katana has certainly seen its fair share of battles over the centuries.




Nagare-hada mixed with a *itame* and *mokume-hada* that stands out to the eye.

Dark swirls of *chikei* can be admired in the *jihada*. This blade takes you back.



chikei

A close-up photograph of two Japanese sword blades, likely from the Bizen tradition. The blades are curved and show a dark, wavy pattern known as hamon. Above the hamon, there is a misty, smoky reflection called midare-utsuri. A red line points from the text 'midare-utsuri' to this specific feature on the blade. The background is dark, making the metallic surfaces and patterns stand out.

midare-utsuri

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

It is much loved and appreciated feature of swords, particular those made in the Bizen tradition in the Koto period (pre 1600).

The type of *utsuri* is called *midare-utsuri* - a smokey pattern that billows towards the *shinogi* (ridge line).

Koshibiraki hamon

Koshi means 'waist'. This temper line widens like a valley towards the edge of the blade with gentle peaks.

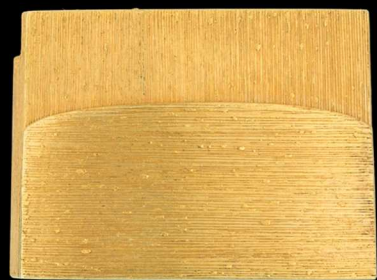
Note how the blade 'shines' with a bluish tinge under the light, this is *ji-nie*.





Shirasaya
(protective scabbard)

strips of bamboo (elegant touch)

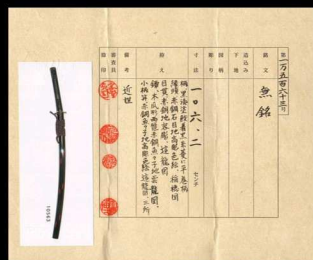


beautiful gold *niju-habaki*

*Kuro-ro ni
aka bokashi-nuri saya
uchigatana-koshirae*
(黒呂に朱ぼかし塗鞘打刀拵え)

*Uchigatana-koshirae
lacquered in glossy black
with blurred red accents*

Crafted during the
Modern period

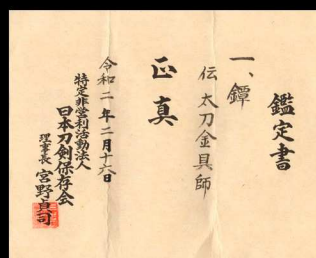


NTHK-NPO Kanteisho
Certificate of Authenticity



This multi-lobed *shakudo-nanako tsuba*, with raised rim and design of a cloud dragon has been attributed to a craftsman specialising in tachi fittings.

It was crafted during the *middle-Edo period* circa 1700~1780 and comes with an NTHK-NPO Kanteisho certificate of authenticity.



The dragon symbolizes supernatural power, wisdom, strength, and hidden knowledge. It is the embodiment of *chaos* and *untamed nature*.

Dragons live in the shadows, within the depths of our unconscious mind. They represent what we most *fear*. In samurai artwork, dragons were depicted in the unknown sea, mountain tops, and on this *tsuba* within dark clouds.

The samurai prepares himself to confront the dragon, in whatever form, to attain the symbolic treasure it is guarding - be it gold or knowledge.

Slaying the dragon is the resolution between light and darkness, overcoming chaos and establishing order. To grow one's character, we must *leap into battle* against the hidden dragons that we fear, channeling the *warrior spirit* in all of us.



This stunning custom *koshirae* was produced using an extremely valuable 3-piece matching set of *menuki*, *kôgai* and *kozuka* in a crawling dragon theme. This set has been attributed to the *Kyô-Kinkô school* which is a broad term for metal smiths that worked in *Kyôto* during the Edo period (post-1600).

The three pieces are intricately carved out of *shakudô* and have deservedly attained NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon certification (see next page).



kôgai (hair pick)



menuki (decorative grips)



kozuka (utility knife)



19200704



No 452151

鑑定書

一、這龍圖三所物

無銘 京金工
小柄筭 赤銅魚子地(小柄)高彫(持握紋)
目貫 赤銅地 容彫

右は當協會に於て審査の結果保存刀装具と
鑑定しこれを証する

平成十九年 四月十九日

財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協會



NBTHK Hozon Certificate of Designation

A tsuba designated as *Worthy of Conservation*
by the Society for the Preservation of the Japan Art Sword

Issued in the 19th year of Heisei (2007), April 19th

One, the matching set of menuki, kozuka and kôgai

Depicting crawling dragons

*Mumei (unsigned)
Kyô-Kinkô*

*Kozuka and kôgai of shakudô with nanako ground,
relief on kozuka, set-in motif on kôgai,
menuki of shakudô, three dimensional with motif forming the outline*

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai
(NBTHK)



This special type of wrap on the *tsuka* (hilt) is called *katate-maki* whereby it can be gripped comfortably with one hand.



Rice has been an agricultural fixture in Japan for more than 2,000 years.

It is a symbol of the country's spiritual connection with nature, the gods and gifts within the community.

Rice has always been valued highly in Japan. In fact, during the Edo period, salaries and daily wages were calculated in rice.

Rice is sometimes called *chikara* (a homonym for "strength"), meaning "divine grain." This *fuchi-kashira* is certified with NTHK-NPO Kanteisho papers.



kashira depicting an ear of rice

The image features a black background with several parallel, diagonal, semi-transparent grey lines running from the top-left towards the bottom-right. Interspersed along these lines are small, elongated, red, teardrop-shaped elements. The corners of the image are filled with solid red color, creating a high-contrast, geometric aesthetic.

Live intensively.



ITEM# UJKA335

SOLD

A YASUHIRO KATANA

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

Swordsmith:	<i>Bicchû no Kami Tachibana Yasuhiro - (Kikumon) (ubu nakago)</i>
Measurements:	Length: 67.5cm Curvature: 1.0cm Motohaba: 3.07cm
Jihada:	Expertly forged <i>itame-hada</i> with <i>midare utsuri</i>
Hamon:	Brilliant <i>gunome-choji-midare</i> with long <i>ashi</i>
Certificate:	NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon (designated as <i>Especially Worthy of Preservation</i>)
Fujishiro:	<i>Chûjô-saku</i> (ranked as an above-average swordsmith)
Sharpness:	<i>Wazamono</i> (rated as a maker of sharp swords)
Included:	Shirasaya, stand, kit, DVD, booklet, printed description

SOLD

Swordsmith Yasuhiro was one of the finest smiths working in Bizen tradition recreating the master works of the renowned *Ichimonji* school during the early Edo period. This katana carries a beautiful *gunome-choji midare hamon* with a *midare-utsuri* that brilliantly reflects both his talent and skill. The *nakago* has the prestigious mark of the chrysanthemum, known as the *kiku-mon*. The chrysanthemum symbolizes the sun and light giving this sword a sense of immortality. Yasuhiro is rated *wazamono* for his sharp swords and this blade lives up to this reputation.

This katana is currently in *shirasaya* only and represents a glorious opportunity to build a striking custom *koshirae* should the new caretaker desire.



Saki-kasane: 5.1mm

Moto-kasane: 7.5mm

Omosa: 710g

Kissaki: 3.13cm

Saki-haba: 1.96cm

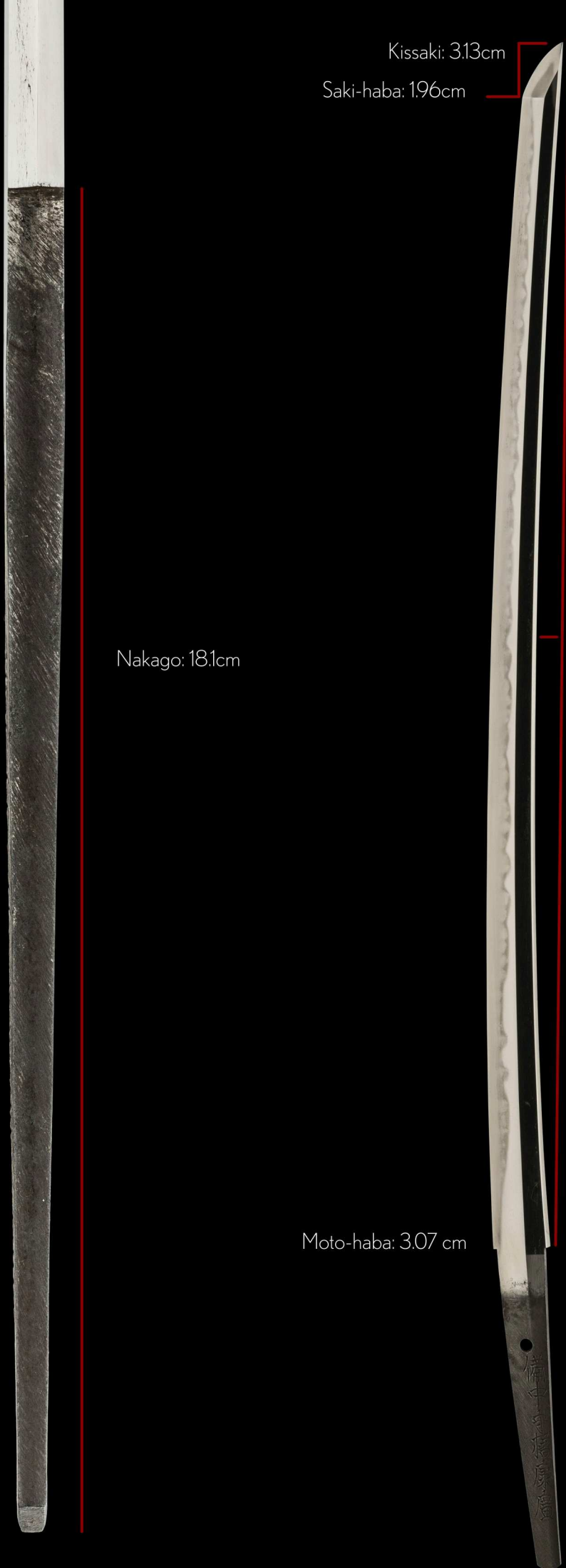
Nakago: 18.1cm

Moto-haba: 3.07 cm

Nagasa: 67.5cm

Sori: 1.10cm

Mekugi-ana: 1



Swordsmith Yasuhiro was one of the finer smiths working in Bizen tradition during the early Edo (*shinto*) period, circa the *Kanbun era* 1661-1673.

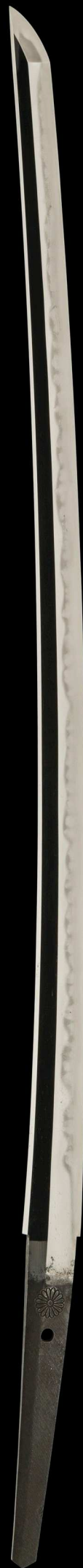
He was born *Tomita Gorôzaemon* in *Ômi province*, the second son of *Tosa Shôgen Tameyasu*. He moved to *Ôsaka* and eventually founded the *Ôsaka-Ishidô school*. His purpose was clear: recreate the master works of the renowned *Ichimonji school* as best as he could.

This katana was made to a length that is quick and easy to manoeuvre. The steel carries a beautiful *gunome-choji midare hamon* with a light *midare-utsuri* that reflects both his talent and skill.

The *nakago* has the mark of the chrysanthemum, known as the *kiku-mon* and remains in *ubu*, unaltered state. The chrysanthemum symbolizes the *sun* and *light*, giving this sword a sense of immortality.

This katana is in *shirasaya* only and represents an opportunity to build a meaningful custom *koshirae* should the new caretaker desire.

Yasuhiro is ranked *wazamono* for his sharp swords and *Fujishiro* ranked his work as *chûjô-saku* - an above average swordsmith - although his work is more in line with *jô-saku* (superior) smiths.





Location: *Settsu* (resident of Osaka)

Title: *Bitchû no Kami* (Lord of Bicchû province)

Clan name: *Tachibana*

Swordsmith: *Yasuhiro* (first generation)

ubu-nakago (original, unaltered tang)

sujikai-yasurime (diagonal file marks)

備 (Bi)

中 (tchû, no)

守 (Kami)

橋 (Tachibana)

康 (Yasu)

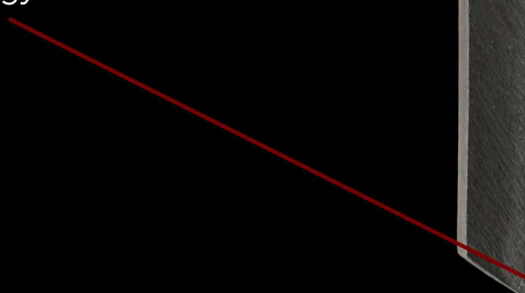
廣 (hiro)

A vertical metal tang, likely made of steel, is shown against a black background. The tang is tapered, being wider at the top and narrowing towards the bottom. Near the top, there is a circular hole. Below the hole, there is a raised, circular crest featuring a chrysanthemum flower design. The surface of the tang has a fine, diagonal texture.

Kiku-mon
(crest of a chrysanthemum)

The *nakago-jiri* (butt-end) of the tang comes to a sharp point at the center.

This type of finish is called *kengyo* or sword-shaped.

A red arrow originates from the text 'This type of finish is called kengyo or sword-shaped.' and points towards the sharp, pointed tip of the metal tang.



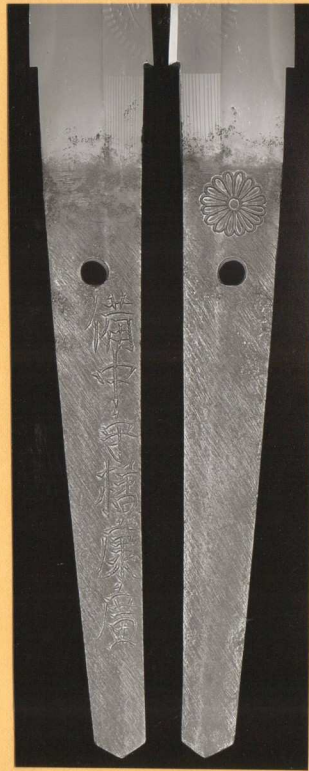
As the sword carries the *kiku-mon*, a custom koshirae with *chrysanthemum* themed fittings would be an option to consider building for the sword.

The chrysanthemum flower symbolises the *sun* and the *light*, thus reflecting a sense of immortality.

Please inquire for more information on building a custom koshirae that you and your family can be proud of.

28201511

No 1006724



鑑定書

一刀銘

備中守橘康広
(菊紋)

長二尺二寸三分

右は當協會に於て審査の結果特別保存刀剣と
鑑定しこれを証する

平成二十九年二月二日

公益財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協會



熊本 教育委員会
第 37882 号
昭和 57 年 6 月 17 日

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 29th year of Heisei (2017), February 2nd

One, Katana

Mei (signature)

Bitchû no Kami Tachibana Yasuhiro
(Kikumon)

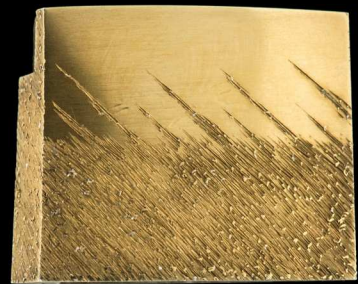
Nagasa (length)

2-shaku 2-sun 3-bu (67.5cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai
(NBTHK)



Shirasaya
(protective scabbard)



gold wrapped *habaki*
with diagonal file marks






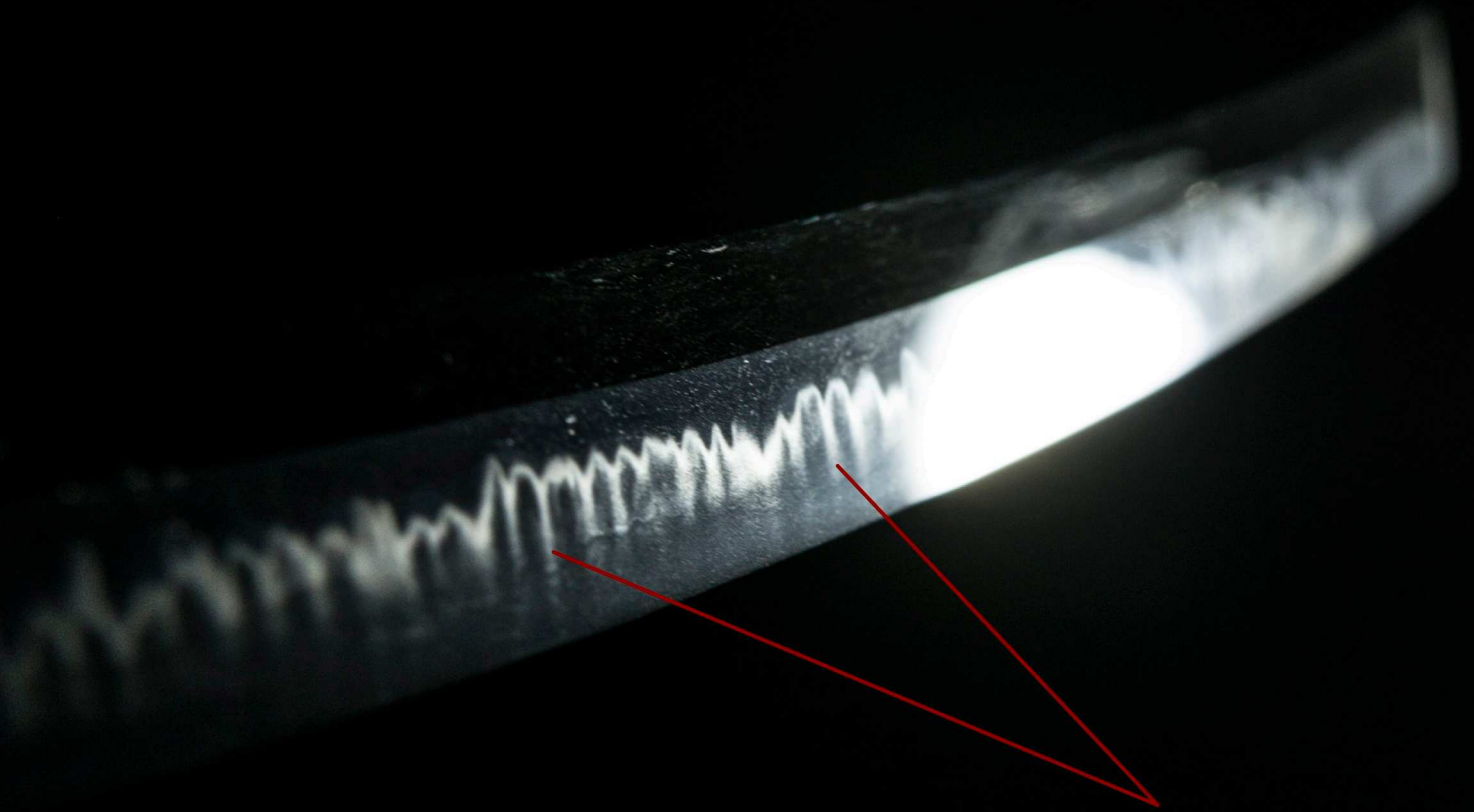
Muneyaki (tempering on the *mune*, spine).

Classic *Bizen chôji*
(clove blossom buds)

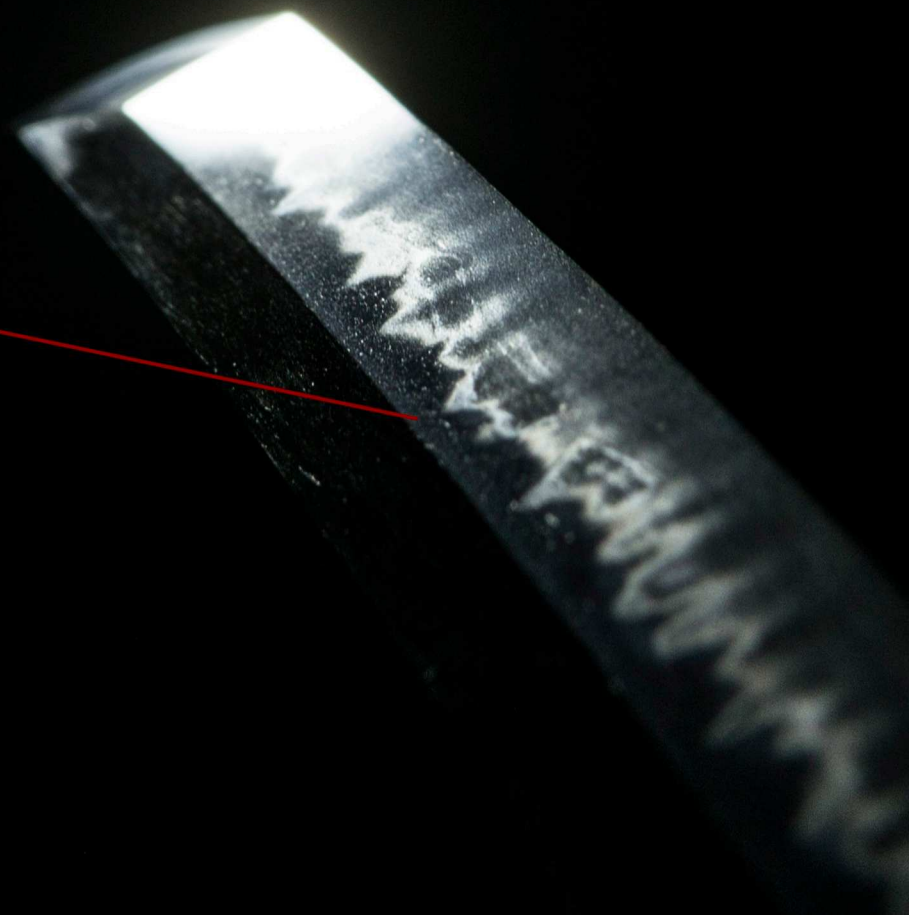




A stellar *gunome-chôji-midare hamon* captivates the eye under the light.



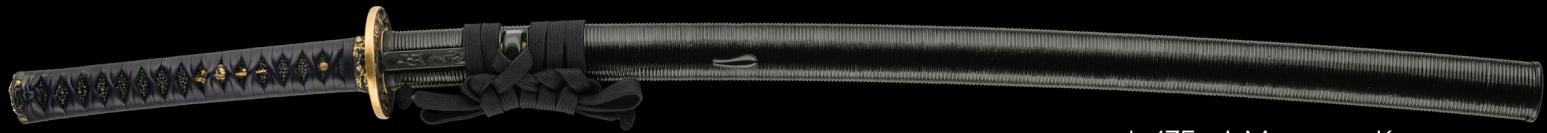
A marvellous cluster of *chōji* with long *ashi* (legs).



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

This type of *utsuri* is called *midare-utsuri*. A light, smokey pattern billows in a gentle wavy formation following the hamon pattern.

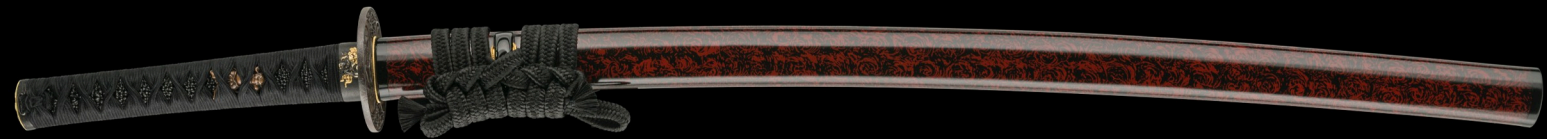
Recently completed custom koshirae projects



ujka175 - A Masatsugu Katana
Traditional *Kizami Uchigatana* Koshirae (3mm tracks)



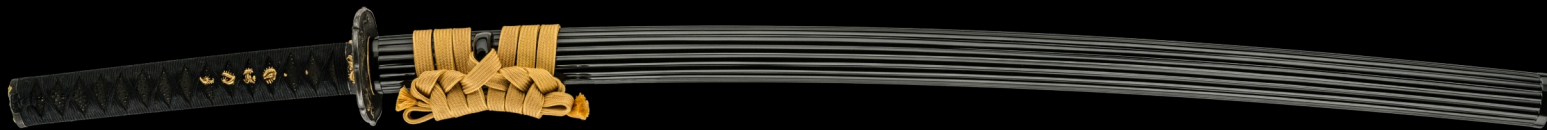
ujka252 - A Jûyô Hatakeda Sanemori Tachi
Gorgeous *Handachi* Koshirae with deep red *ishime* finish



ujka322 - A Jûyô Niô School Katana
Benevolent guardian kings theme with *zen* whirlpool design



ujka350 - A Jûyô Shigezane Katana
Longevity *matsu* (pine) theme with *Naitô* family *kamon*



ujka291 - A Norikatsu Katana
Long straight grooves celebrating *masame-hada*



ujka275 - A Suketaka Katana
Deep space *aoi-gai* (mother-of-pearl) theme



ujka298 & ujwa191 - A Jûyô Yamato Shizu Daisho
Rising phoenix theme with *Hoso fuemaki* (thin strips) lacquerwork



ujka279 & ujwa121 - A Hizen Masahiro/Yukihiro Daisho
Samurai and *Kagura* (dance) theme with rustic iron lacquerwork





ITEM# UJKA336

SOLD

A KIYOMITSU KATANA

SIGNED, EARLY EDO PERIOD (JÔÔ ERA: 1652~1655)

Swordsmith:	<i>Kashû-ju Harima no Daijo Kiyomitsu (ubu nakago, 2-character signature)</i>		
Measurements:	Length: 63.9cm	Curvature: 0.9cm	Motohaba: 2.97cm
Jihada:	<i>Itame and nagare-hada with chikei</i>		
Hamon:	<i>Clear suguha in ko-nie deki with kuichigaiba</i>		
Certificate 1:	NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon (<i>designated as Especially Worthy of Preservation</i>)		
Certificate 2-3:	NTHK-NPO Kanteisho (<i>a koshirae, tsuba and fk designated as Authentic</i>)		
Included:	Shirasaya, koshirae, stand, kit, DVD, booklet, printed description		

SOLD

Born in *Kaga* province with the name *Chôzaemon* and later changing to *Jirôkurô*, swordsmith *Kiyomitsu* worked during the *Jôô era*, circa 1652~1655. He signed his swords *Kashû-jû Harima no Daijô Fujiwara Kiyomitsu* or simply *Kiyomitsu* such as we find on this katana.

This katana has a distinctive Koto-period charm even though it was crafted during the Shinto period that the NBTHK Hozon certificate makes clear. The bright *suguha hamon* over a standing out *itame* and *nagare-hada* with Yamato-esque *kuichigaiba* gives the eye plenty of admirable qualities. The unique *Kashû-nakago-jiri* makes it clear this is a proud *Kaga* province katana, one of the wealthiest areas of Japan during the Edo period. This sword comes with a full set of nature-inspired *koshirae* with depictions of *ume* (plum) and *sakura* (cherry blossom) and a proud peacock. The uniquely lacquered *saya* (scabbard) compliments the blade magnificently well.



Saki-kasane: 4.2mm

Moto-kasane: 5.9mm

Omosa: 620g

Kissaki: 3.06cm

Saki-haba: 2.00cm

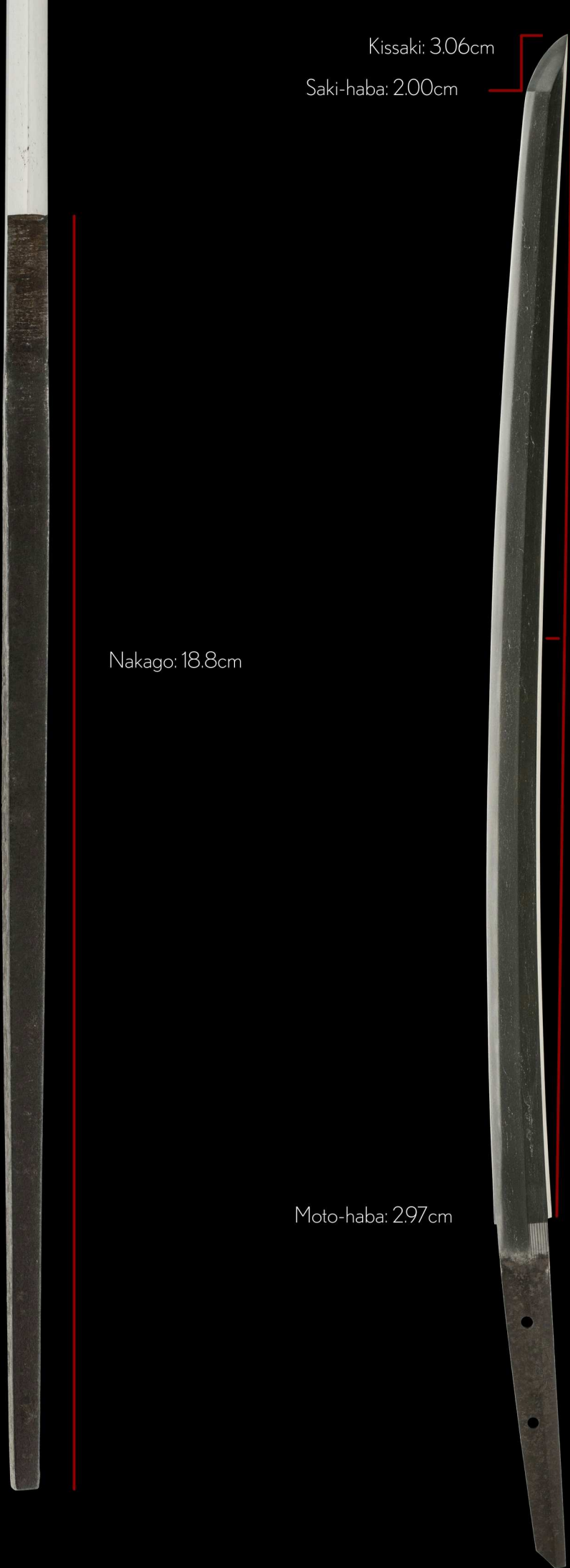
Nakago: 18.8cm

Moto-haba: 2.97cm

Nagasa: 63.9cm

Sori: 0.90cm

Mekugi-ana: 2



Born in *Kaga province* with the name *Chôzaemon* and later changing to *Jirôkurô*, swordsmith *Kiyomitsu* worked during the *Jôê era* (pronounced like the name 'Joe'), circa 1652~1655 .

He signed his swords *Kashû-jû Harima no Daijô Fujiwara Kiyomitsu* or simply *Kiyomitsu* such as we find on this katana.

The word *Kashû* is an alternative way of saying *Kaga* (province).

His blades feature a hamon with either *suguha* or *ô-notare*, in *ko-nie deki* with a standing out *itame* with *nagare-hada* that gives the sword an older Koto feel. The unique *Kashû-nakago-jiri* can also be seen.

This katana comes with a full set of koshirae that has an *ume* (plum) and *sakura* (cherry blossom) and peacock theme with a nature-inspired lacquered *saya* (scabbard).





Location: *Kaga* (resident of Ishikawa)
Swordsmith: *Kiyomitsu*

ubu-nakago (original, unaltered tang)
kiri-yasurime (straight file marks)

清 (Kiyo)

光 (mitsu)

An extra hole in the *nakago* was created in the past for the likely purpose of further securing the katana into a particular hilt.

This second hole was *not* a result of shortening the sword.

(*ura*, reverse)



The shape of the *nakago-jiri* (butt-end of the tang) is called *iriyama-gata*. *Iri* means 'enter' and *yama* is 'mountain', suggesting at the '*base of a mountain*'.

This short, flat area moving into an acute angle is typically seen on swords from *Kashû* (Kaga) province, thus referred to as *Kashû nakago-jiri*.

23201111

No 389883



鑑定書

長三尺一寸一分

一刀 銘 清光 (加州・新刀)

右は當協會に於て審査の結果保存刀剣と
鑑定しこれを証する

平成三四年一月二十七日

財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協會



NBTHK Hozon Certificate of Designation

A sword designated as *Worthy of Conservation*
by the Society for the Preservation of the Japan Art Sword

Issued in the 24th year of Heisei (2012), January 27th

One, Katana

Mei (signature)

Kiyomitsu

(*Kashû* province, *Shintô* period)

Nagasa (length)

2-shaku 1-sun 1-bu (63.9cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai
(NBTHK)





A flowing *nagare-hada* mixed with an *itame-hada* that stands out to the eye.

There is an old-world charm to the *jihada*.





kuichigai-ba is the area of the *hamon* where the *nioguchi* overlaps for a noticeable distance.

This unique feature is generally seen on swords crafted in the Yamato tradition.

A clear *suguha hamon* embeds the blade like an old soul.





Shirasaya
(protective scabbard)



silver *habaki* with
mixed file marks



The lacquered texture on the *saya* suggests an abstract tribute of natural elements; fire, clouds, frost, water...



The antique protective *kojiri* (end cap) holds a design of *karakusa* (vines) symbolizing health and longevity.



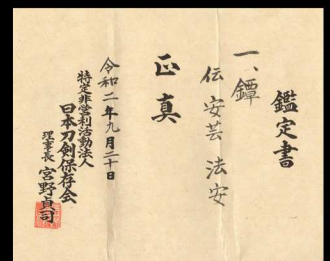


This lovely antique iron *tsuba* (guard) has been attributed to the *Hôan school* from the *early Edo period* (1600~1700).

The design features a motif of *ume* (plum blossoms) that serve as a symbol of winter and a forerunner to spring as they bloom earlier than the *sakura* (cherry blossom). Plum blossoms represent perseverance and hope, as well as beauty, purity, and the transitoriness nature of life.

Amida yasuri (file-marked lines) originating from the centre to the edge of can be seen and symbolize limitless light.

An NTHK-NPO Kanteisho certificate of authenticity has been attained.





Amida Nyorai, the Buddha of Limitless Light, sits upon a lotus pedestal with his hands forming the mudra of meditation.

Amida presides over his own paradise, the Western Pure Land, to which he welcomes any being who calls upon his name.

His benevolent gaze, directed toward the viewer below, is symbolic of this boundless compassion.

Originally installed at a temple in the vicinity of *Mount Kôya*.

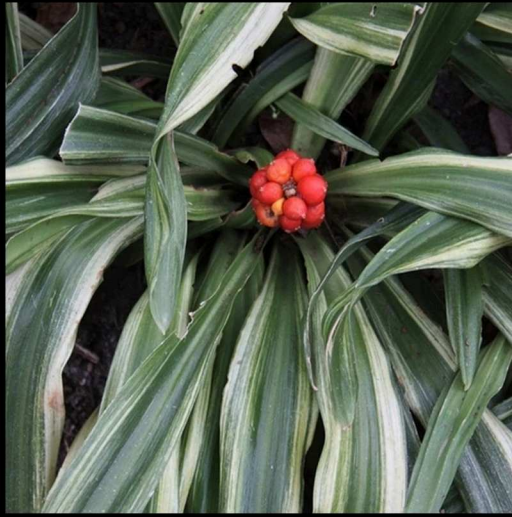
Amida Nyorai (Buddha of Limitless Light)
Circa 1250 - The Metropolitan Museum of Art (MET)

Amida-yasuri (file marks)





The fuchi (collar) depicts the floating *sakura* petals along the *Yoshino* river on *Shikoku* island.



The *menuki* are artistic representations of *omoto* (*Rohdea japonica*), highly prized plants in Japan. They are wrapped over with black silk.

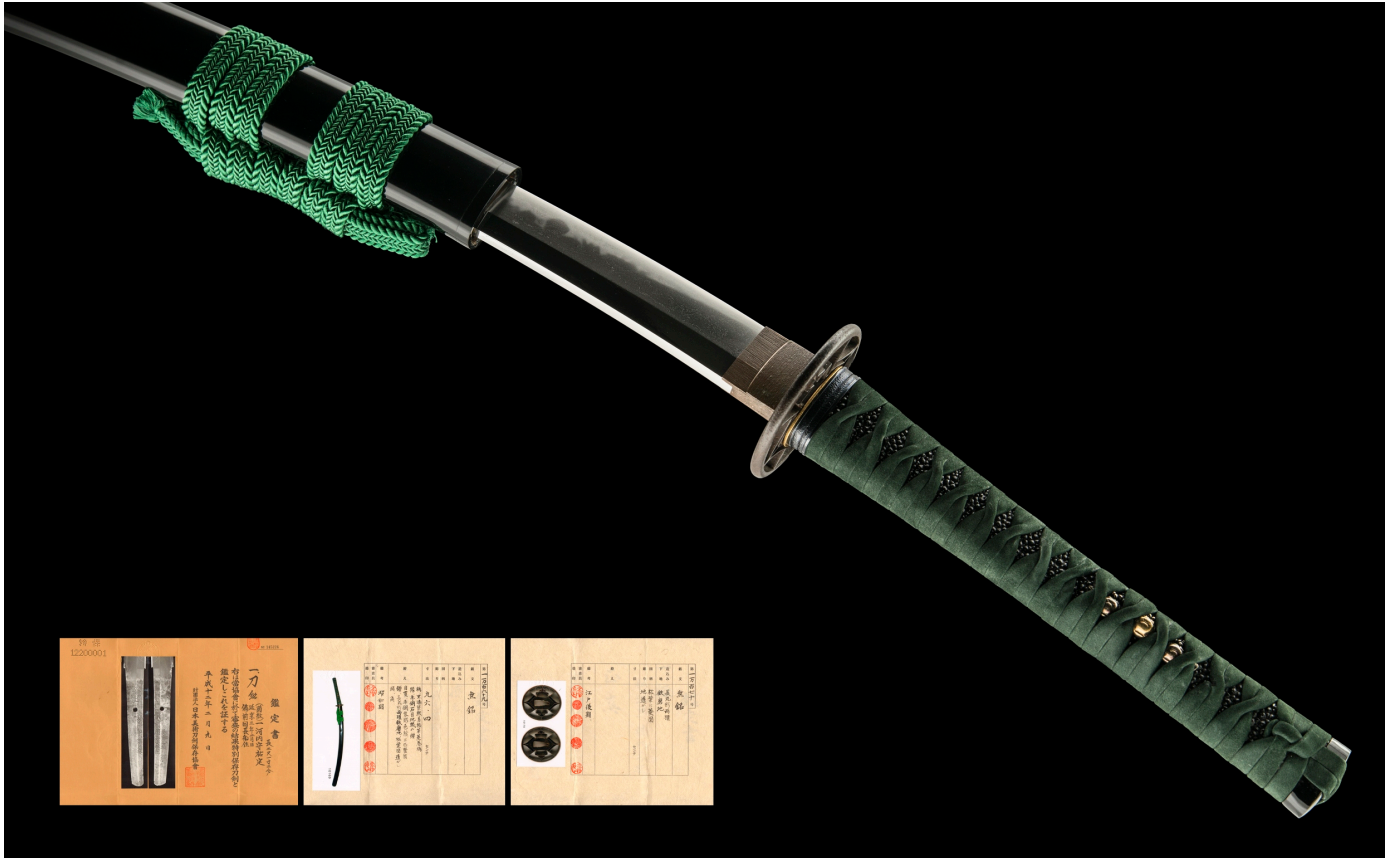




Kashira (pommel)

The *kiji* (peacock) is associated with the deity called *Kannon* in Japan. It is a symbol of compassion and kind-heartedness.

It is believed to have the power to counteract poison and invoke rain ensuring good health.



ITEM# UJKA337

SOLD

A KAWACHI SUKESADA KATANA

SIGNED & DATED, EDO PERIOD (3RD YEAR ENKYÔ ERA: FEBRUARY 1746)

Swordsmith:	<i>(Kikumon) Ichi Kawachi no Kami Sukesada (ubu nakago)</i>
Measurements:	Length: 64.2cm Curvature: 3.2cm(!) Motohaba: 2.9cm
Jihada:	<i>Well-forged ko-mokume hada with chikei and tobiyaki</i>
Hamon:	<i>Wide gunome-midare-hamon with kanitsune, kinsuji, sunagashi and yô (leaves)</i>
Certificate 1:	NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon (designated as Especially Worthy of Preservation)
Certificate 2-3:	NTHK-NPO Kanteisho (a koshirae and tsuba designated as Authentic)
Fujishiro:	<i>Chûjô-saku</i> (ranked as an above average swordsmith)
Included:	Shirasaya, longevity koshirae, stand, kit, DVD, booklet, printed description

SOLD

This strong and broadly curved katana, dated to February 1746, by *Kawachi no Kami Sukesada* was evidently inspired by the powerful *katate-uchi* (one-handed katana) masterpieces from the mid-1500s during the turbulent late *Muromachi period*. It is a weighty, healthy and muscular piece that has remained essentially unchanged after nearly 300 years.

The *jihada* is a well-forged *ko-mokume hada* with a bright and complex *gunome-choji hamon* with areas that show *kanitsune* (crab claws). A handsome set of *koshirae* carries a theme of longevity in the form of *matsu* (pine) as depicted on the *Akasaka tsuba* with armed crabs as *menuki* preparing for battle. *Sukesada* is ranked as *chujô-saku*, an above-average swordsmith. This collectible katana represents one of his finer achievements and is unique to its time period.



Saki-kasane: 6.1mm

Moto-kasane: 8.4mm

Omosa: 865g



Nakago: 17.5cm

Kissaki: 3.23cm
Saki-haba: 2.15cm

Nagasa: 64.2cm

Sori: 3.2cm

Moto-haba: 2.9cm

Mekugi-ana: 1



Born *Yokoyama Nizaemon*, *Kawachi Sukesada* was a talented swordsmith and the son of the first generation *Sôzaemon Sukesada*.

He lived in Bizen province, loyal in his pursuit to re-establish the centuries-old Bizen sword-making traditions after the area was ravaged by the disastrous flooding of the *Yoshii* river in 1590.

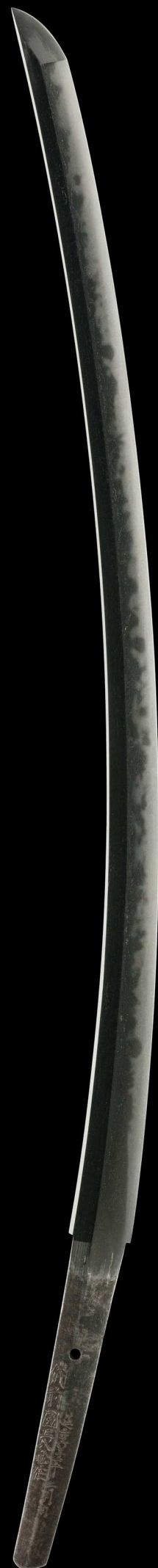
Sukesada received the honorary title *Kawachi no Kami* in May 1701 and added the imperial 16-petal chrysanthemum plus the character for "*Ichi*" to his *nakago*. Sukesada had an exploratory nature and worked in both *Settsu province* (Osaka) and *Mimasaka* (Okayama).

Kawachi Sukesada died on December 19th, 1777.

This strong and broadly curved katana, dated to February 1746, was evidently inspired by the powerful *katate-uchi* (one-handed katana) masterpieces from the mid-1500s during the turbulent late Muromachi period. It is a weighty, healthy and muscular piece that has remained essentially unchanged after nearly 300 years.

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This collectible katana represents one of his finer achievements and is unique to its time period.



Title: *Kawachi no Kami* (Lord of Kawachi province)
Swordsmith: *Sukesada* (second generation)

ubu-nakago (original, unaltered tang)



Kikumon - crest of the chrysanthemum
(by permission of imperial family)

一 (Ichi)

河 (Kawa)

内 (chi, no)

守 (Kami)

祐 (Suke)

定 (sada)

The "Ichi" mark pays homage to the great *Ichimonji-school* smiths that started in the early 1200s at the start of the golden Kamakura period.

Enkyô sannen nigatsu bi
Bizen no Kuni Osafune-jû

This sword was dated on a day in the second month in the third year of *Enkyô era* (February 1746) while Sukesada was a resident of *Osafune* village in *Bizen* province.



(Bi) 備
(zen, no) 前
(Kuni) 國
(Osa) 長
(fune) 船
(jû) 住

延 (En)
享 (kyô)
三 (san)
年 (nen)
二 (ni)
月 (gatsu)
日 (bi)



kiku-mon, up close

12200001



No. 145224



鑑定書

長二尺一寸三分

一刀銘

(菊紋) 河内守祐定
延享三年二月日
備前國長船住

右は當協會に於て審査の結果特別保存刀剣と
鑑定しこれを証する

平成十二年二月九日

財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協會



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 12th year of Heisei (2000), February 9th

One, *Katana*

Mei (signature)

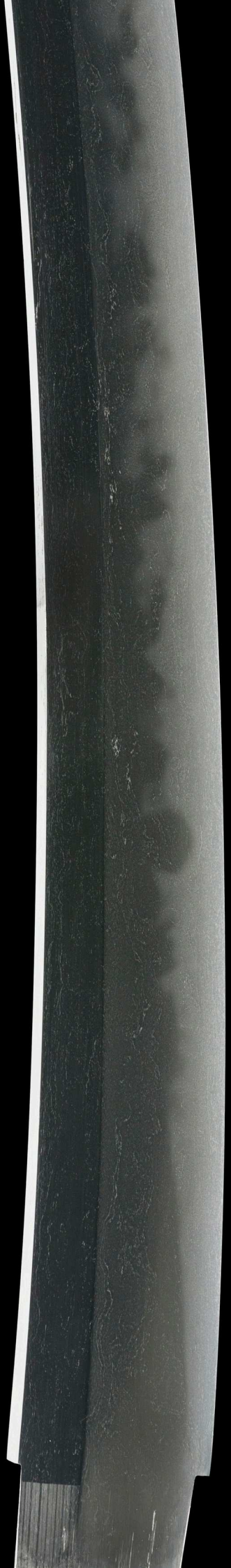
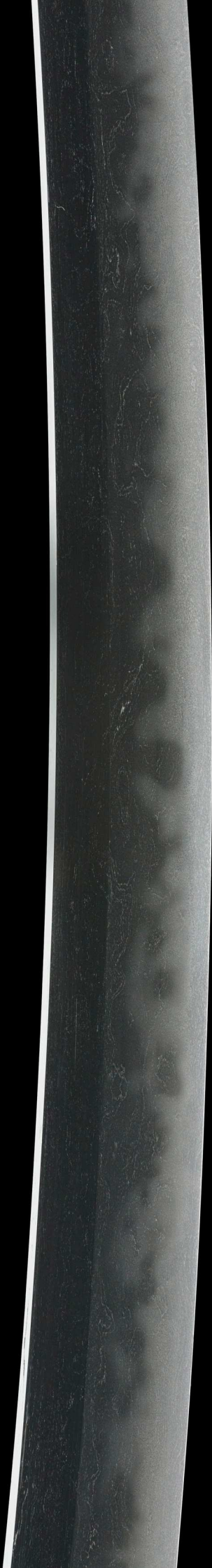
(*Kikumon*) *Ichi Kawachi no Kami Sukesada*
Enkyô sannen nigatsu bi
Bizen no Kuni Osafune-jû

Nagasa (length)

2-shaku 1-sun 2-bu (64.2cm)

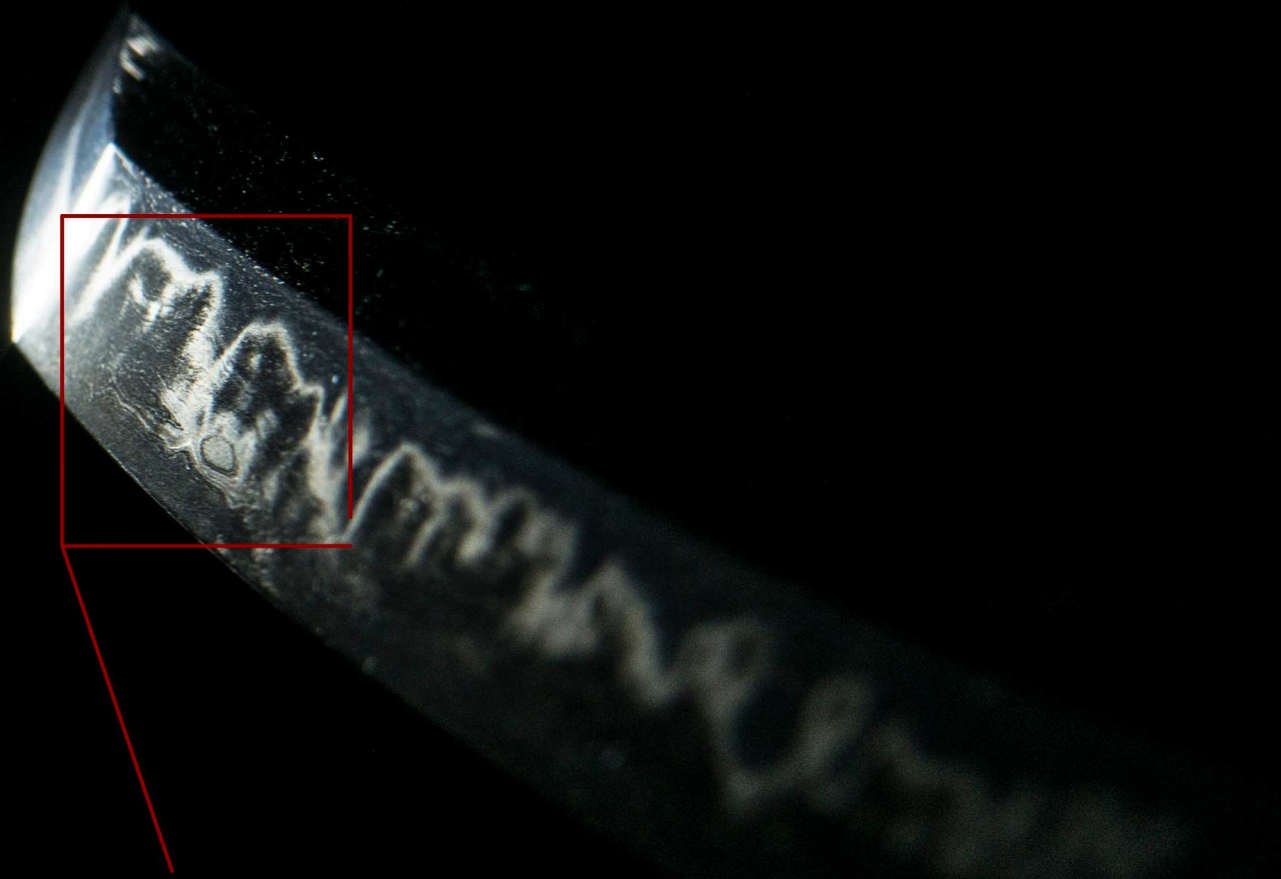
Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai
(NBTHK)







A vivid and complex *gunome-chôji midare hamon* comes alive percolating toward the *shinogi* ridge line with terrific energy.



Multiple lines of *sunagashi* sweep through the *hamon*. Note the unique whirlpool formation.



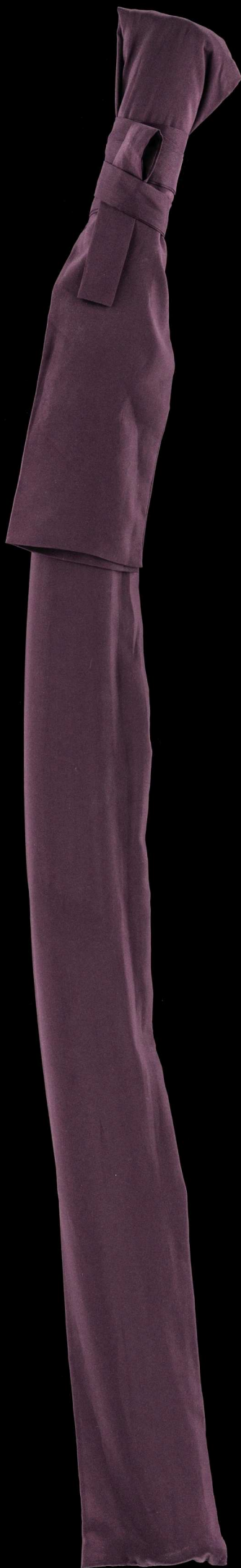
yô (leaves)

Black lines of *nie* crystals known as *kinsuji*.



The *hamon* delights us with a pattern of *kanitsume* or "crab claws".

Crabs are symbolic of ninja warriors for they both move sideways, silently approaching their target.



Shirasaya
(protective scabbard)

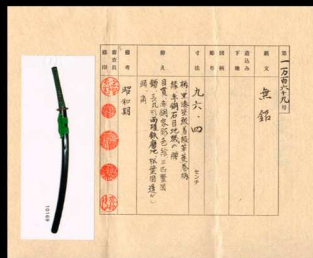


copper *habaki* with
straight file marks

*Kuro-ro-iro-nuri saya
uchigatana-koshirae*
(黒呂色塗鞘打刀拵え)

*Uchigatana-koshirae
lacquered in glossy black*

Crafted during the
Shôwa period
(1926~1989)



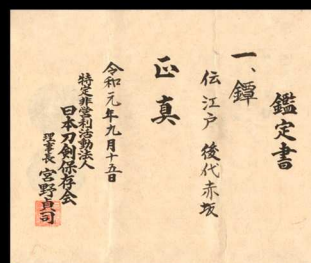
*NTHK-NPO Kanteisho
Certificate of Authenticity*



This is an impressive late-generation polished iron tsuba from the *Akasaka* school in Edo province (Tokyo).

This unique, geometric design is that of pine needles and diamonds. The pine tree represents longevity, good fortune and steadfastness. It is commonly linked with virtue and long life, even immortality.

An NTHK-NPO Kanteisho certificate of authenticity attributing the piece to the *late-Edo period* circa 1780~1867 has been attained.

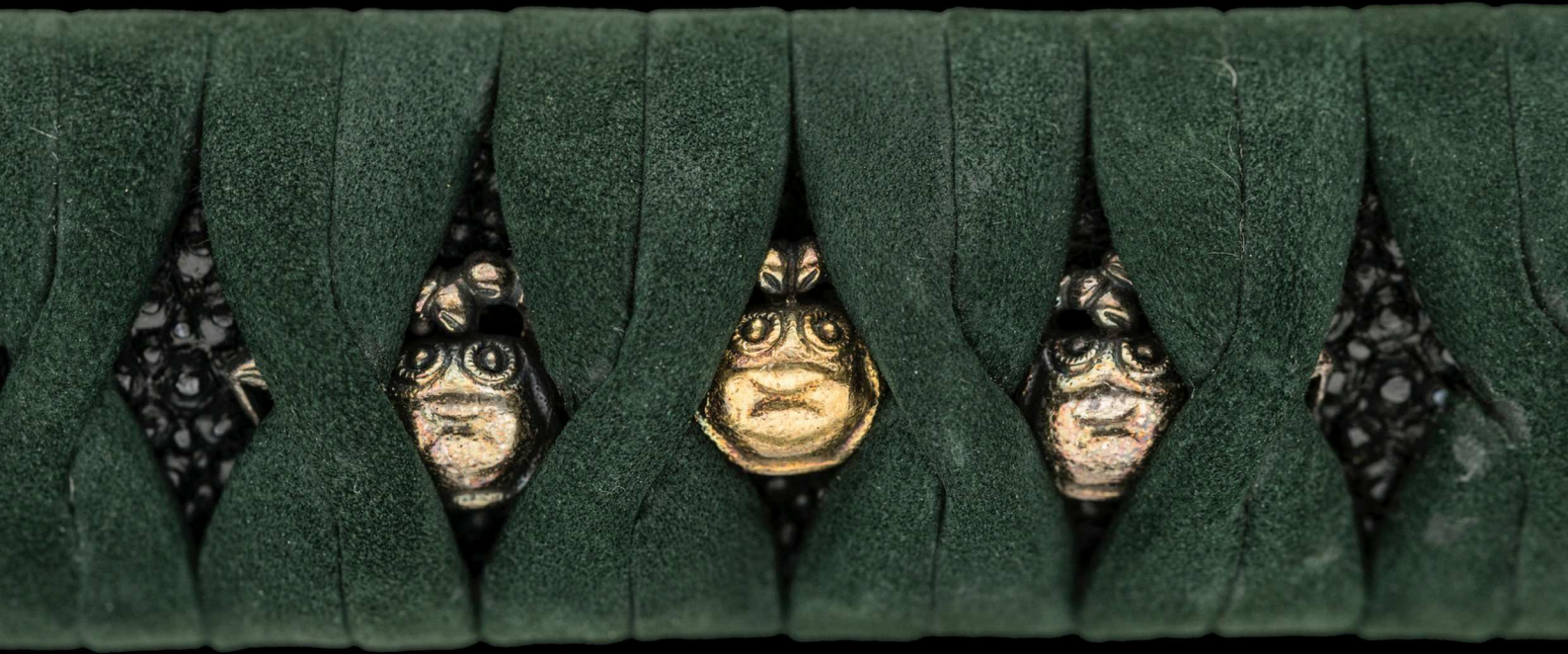




Drawing from the pine theme of the *tsuba*, both the *sageo* and *tsuka* are in shades of green.



ura, reverse



Menuki (decorative grips on the hilt) depicts two sets of three crabs nestled under the olive green leather-wrapped *tsuka* (hilt).

These menuki are a clever reference to the *kanitsune* (crab claw) elements found in the *hamon* (temper line) pattern. Crabs have long been admired by samurai for their impressive *endurance* and their *hard shells* representing loyal warriors in *suited armour*.





Armed and ready for battle.

The *kashira* is lacquered and braided over known as *makikake no kashira*.



On the lookout.





Koshirae bag

A complimentary sword maintenance kit with *mekugi-nuki* and a bottle of *Fujishiro* sword oil (trusted by the Japanese sword museum) is included with all sword purchases.

A printed and bound copy of the sword's full description from the catalogue is also included!



safe, extra large cloth for adding oil to the blade



ITEM# UJKA352

SOLD

A MIYOSHI NAGAMICHI KATANA

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

Swordsmith:	<i>Mutsu Daijō Miyoshi Nagamichi (shodai - first generation, ubu nakago)</i>
Measurements:	Length: 69.1cm Curvature: 1.7cm Motohaba: 2.77cm
Jihada:	<i>Expertly forged itame-hada and nagare-hada with chikei and shirake utsuri</i>
Hamon:	<i>Bright gunome-midare hamon with long, beautiful ashi</i>
Certificate 1:	NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon (designated as <i>Especially Worthy of Preservation</i>)
Certificate 2-4:	NTHK-NPO Kanteisho (a <i>koshirae</i> , <i>tsuba</i> and <i>fk</i> designated as <i>Authentic</i>)
Fujishiro:	<i>Jō-saku</i> (ranked as a superior swordsmith)
Sharpness:	<i>Saijō-owazamono</i> (rated as a maker of the very sharpest of swords)
Included:	Shirasaya, Edo <i>koshirae</i> , stand, kit, DVD, booklet, printed description

SOLD

Shodai (first generation) *Nagamichi* is ranked *saijō-owazamono*, a grandmaster in producing the sharpest of swords with the highest level of cutting ability. He was nicknamed *Aizu-Kotetsu*, as some of his masterworks rivalled that of grandmaster *Kotetsu*. *Nagamichi* is further ranked by *Fujishiro* as a *jō-saku* (superior) smith, and considered one of finest smiths of the 17th century.

This striking katana is blessed with classic *Nagamichi* qualities with a bright, wavy *gunome-midare hamon* with long *ashi* resembling the snow-capped mountains of *Mutsu* province. The sword is housed in a beautiful late Edo period *koshirae* with a pine-needle designed *saya* (scabbard) with bountiful depictions of flowers and sea life on the *tsuba* and *fuchi-kashira*.

^
Saki-kasane: 4.4mm

Moto-kasane: 6.5mm

Omosa: 665g

Kissaki: 2.63cm
Saki-haba: 1.77cm

Nakago: 20.7cm

Moto-haba: 2.77cm

Nagasa: 69.1cm

Sori: 1.70cm

Mekugi-ana: 2



Shodai (first generation) *Miyoshi Nagamichi* was born *Miyoshi Toshiro* in *Iwashiro* province, modern-day *Fukushima*.

His father *Masanaga* was retained by *Daimyo Lord Kato Yoshiaki*. He originally signed his name as *Michinaga*, changed to *Nagamichi* in 1659 when he received his title of *Mutsu Daijo*.

Nagamichi is ranked *saijo-owazamono*, a grandmaster in producing the sharpest of swords with the *highest level of cutting ability*.

He was nicknamed *Aizu-Kotetsu*, as some of his masterworks rivalled that of grandmaster *Kotetsu*.

Nagamichi is further ranked by *Fujishiro* as a *jô-saku* (superior) smith, and considered one of finest smiths of the 17th century.

This striking katana was freshly polished in 2020 to bring out the classic Nagamichi qualities that abound such as a bright, wavy *gunome-midare hamon* with long *ashi* resembling the snow-capped mountains of Mutsu province.

This energetic sword is housed in a beautiful late Edo period *koshirae* with a pine-needle designed *saya* (scabbard) with bountiful depictions of flowers and sea life on the *tsuba* and *fuchi-kashira*.

A new *shirasaya* and a handsome copper *habaki* have also been crafted to best preserve the katana for the many decades to come.





Location: *Aizu* (resident of Fukushima)
Title: *Mutsu Daijô* (Lord of Mutsu province)
Family name: *Miyoshi*
Swordsmith: *Nagamichi* (first generation)

ubu-nakago (original, unaltered tang)
kiri-yasurime (straight file marks)

陸 (Mu)

奥 (tsu)

大 (Dai)

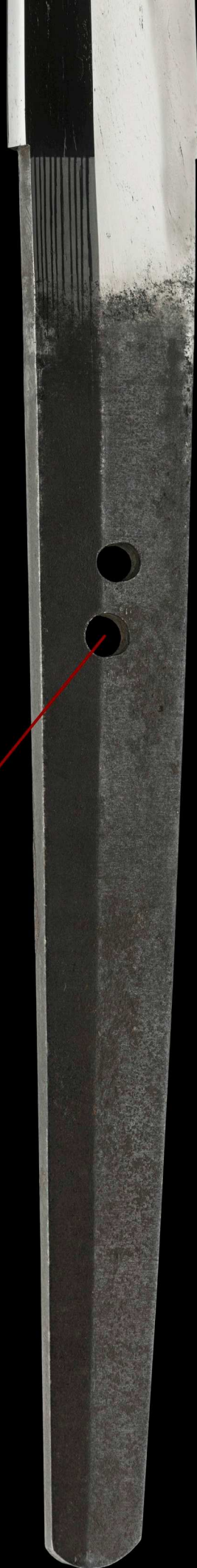
掾 (jô)

三 (Mi)

善 (yoshi)

長 (Naga)

道 (michi)



In the sword's past, an extra hole was created to fit into a particular hilt - rather than making the hilt fit the *nakago*.

This is a fairly common occurrence on Japanese swords performed purely for practical purposes, especially if the sword was required urgently by the samurai.

Had the sword been shortened, it likely would not have achieved NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon certification.

The original hole is the upper one.

(*ura*, reverse)

特 特
29201701

No 1007065



鑑定書

一 刀 銘 陸奥大掾三善長道

長二尺二寸八分弱

右は當協會に於て審査の結果特別保存刀劍と
鑑定しこれを証する

平成二十九年三月二十四日

公益財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協會



東京 教育委員会
第 316579 号
平成29年1月10日

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 29th year of Heisei (2017), March 24th

One, Katana

Mei (signature)

Mutsu Daijô Miyoshi Nagamichi

Nagasa (length)

2-shaku 2-sun 8-bu jaku (69.1cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai
(NBTHK)








The *hamon* curls magnificently into the *boshi*.
Pure sharpness shines through.





A bright *gunome-midare hamon*
weaves its way along the blade.



The *hamon* resembles snow-capped peaks and valleys reflecting the rolling topography of *Mutsu province*.



Noda Jewel River in Mutsu Province, *Utagawa Hiroshige*



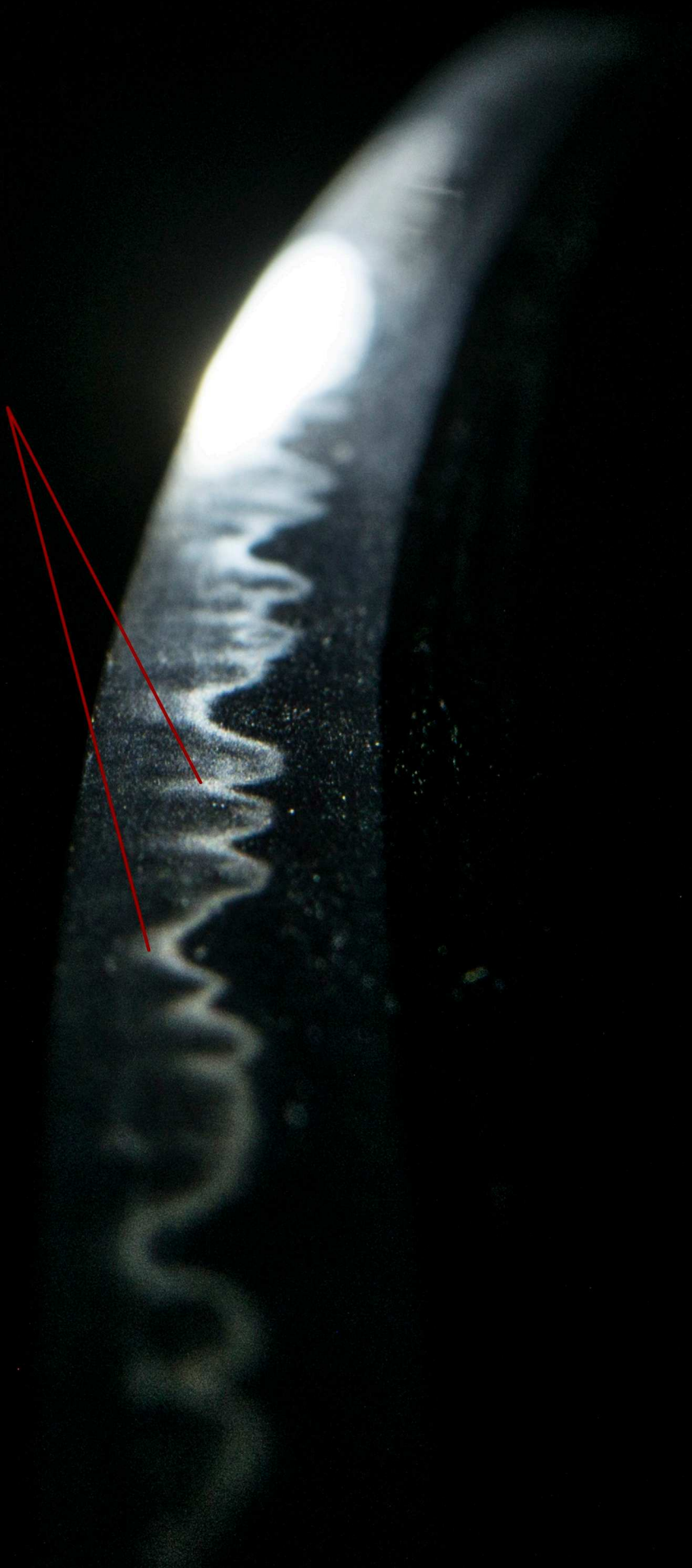
A delightful *shirake-utsuri* reflecting the hamon inside the *ji* (body) of the sword.

It's especially noticeable when the light is reflected on the *shinogi-ji*.

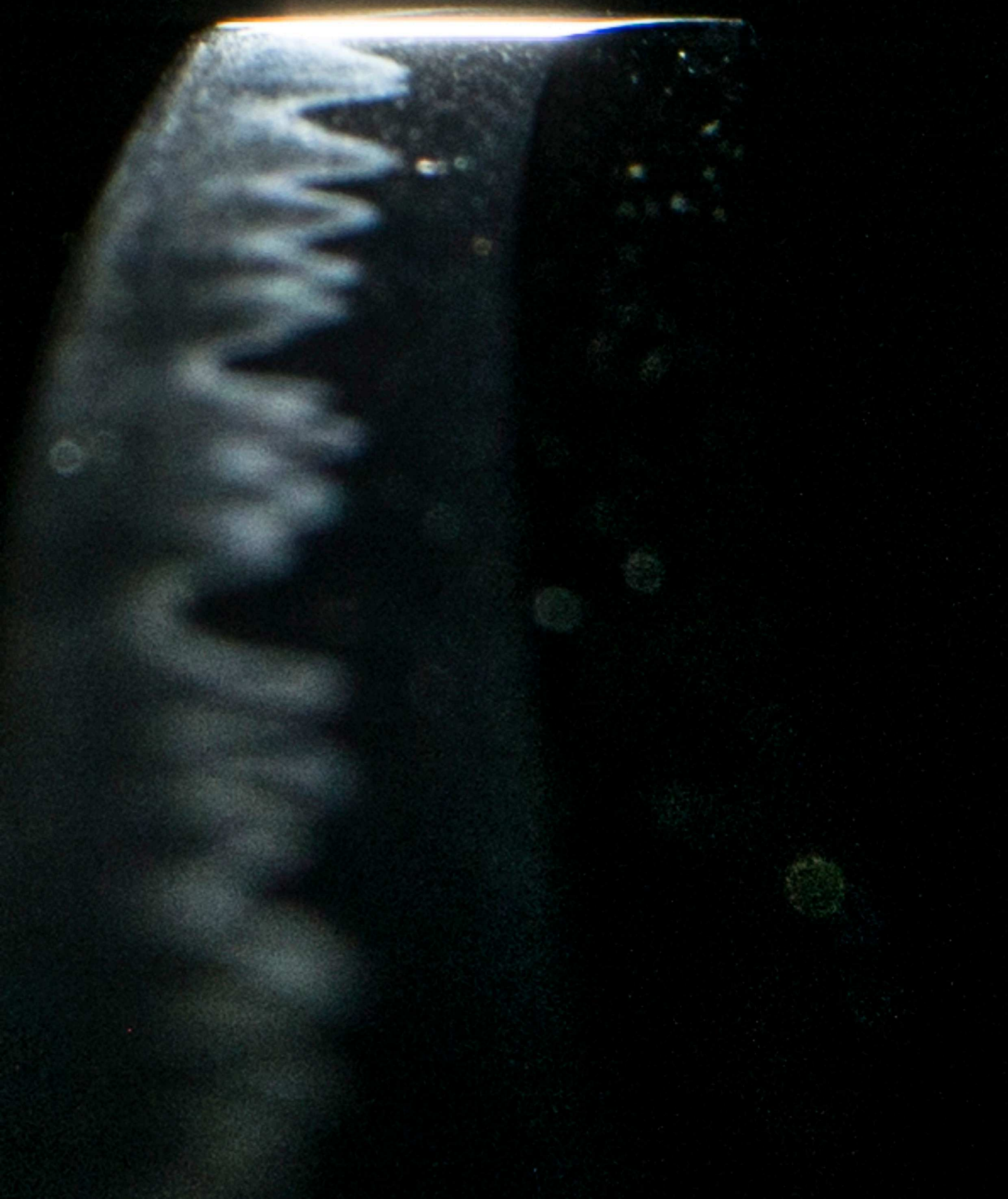


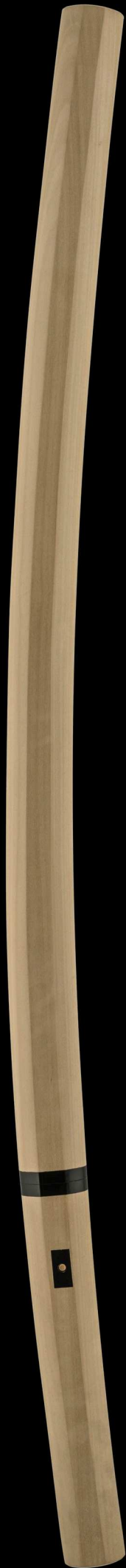
Sharpness matters.

Long *ashi* (legs) extend out towards the cutting edge.



I see the light.





Shirasaya
(protective scabbard)

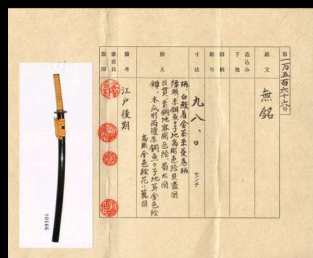


new copper *habaki* with
wood grain file marks

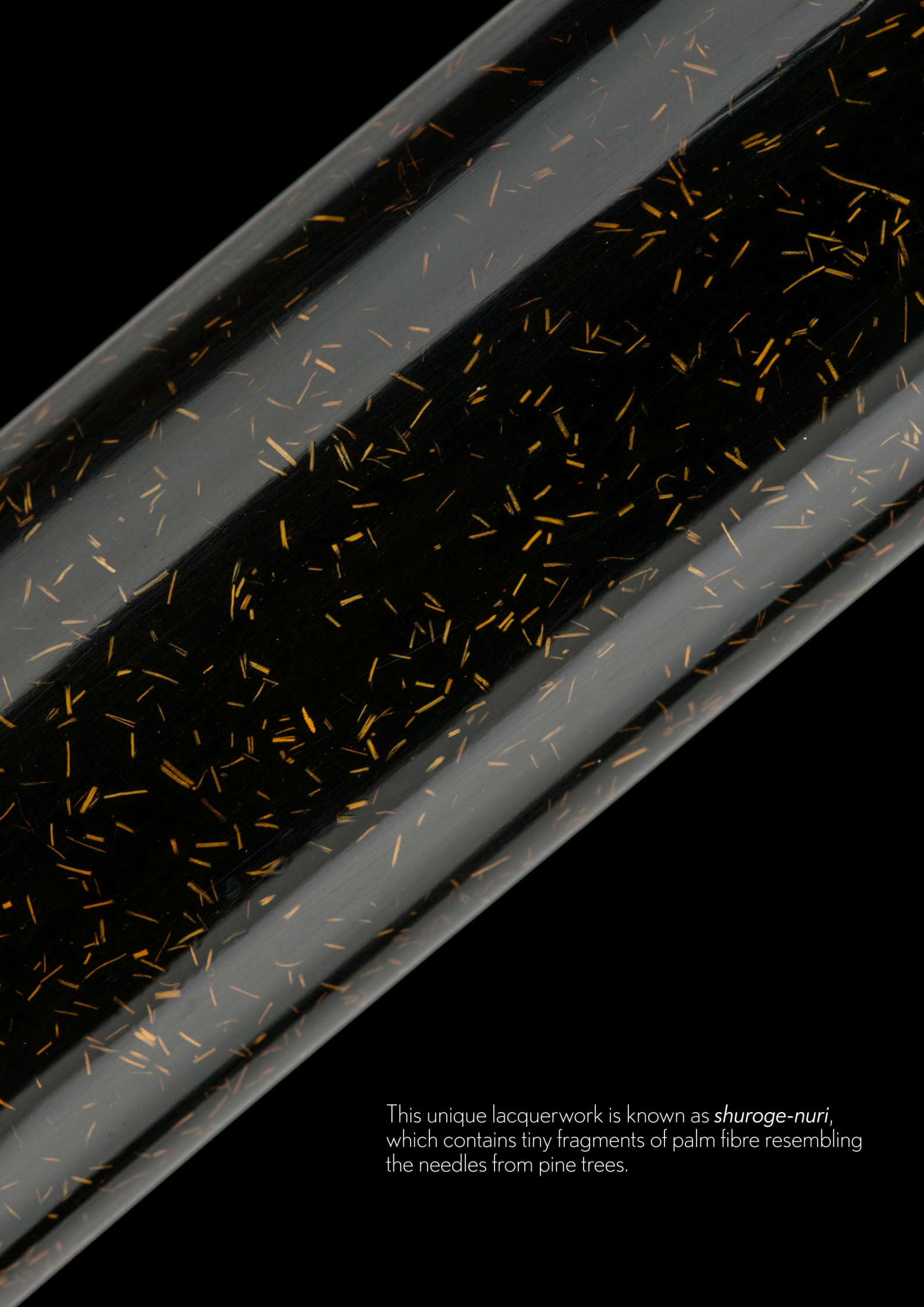
*Shuroge-nuri saya
uchigatana-koshirae*
(棕欄毛塗鞘打刀拵え)

*Uchigatana-koshirae
lacquered with shuroge
(palm fibre)*

Crafted during the
Late Edo period
(1780~1867)



NTHK-NPO Kanteisho
Certificate of Authenticity



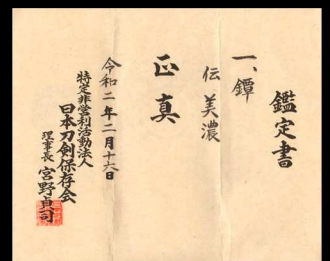
This unique lacquerwork is known as *shuroge-nuri*, which contains tiny fragments of palm fibre resembling the needles from pine trees.



This is lovely *mokkô-gata* (multi-lobed) tsuba is made from *shakudo* with a *nanako* (dotted-grain pattern) and a folded rim accented in gold.

The design is that of flowers overflowing in a basket. The artist exhibits wonderful attention to detail - note the tiny chisel marks that make up the fibres in the basket.

The tsuba is attributed to the work of the *Mino school*. An NTHK-NPO Kanteisho certificate of authenticity attributing the piece to the *late Edo period* circa 1780~1868 has been attained.





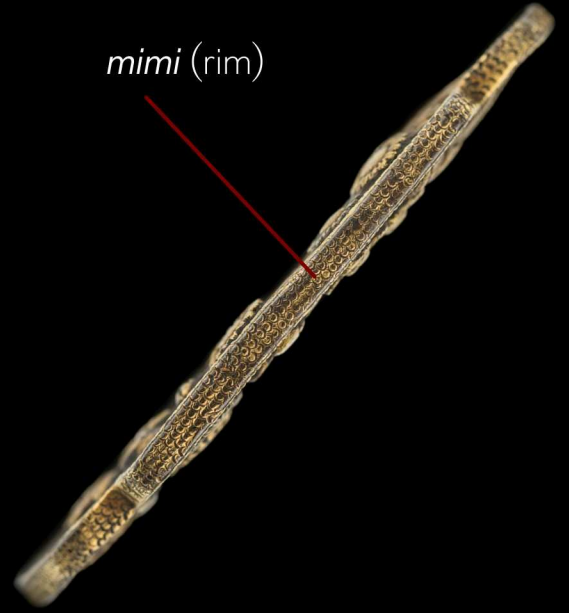
(reverse side)

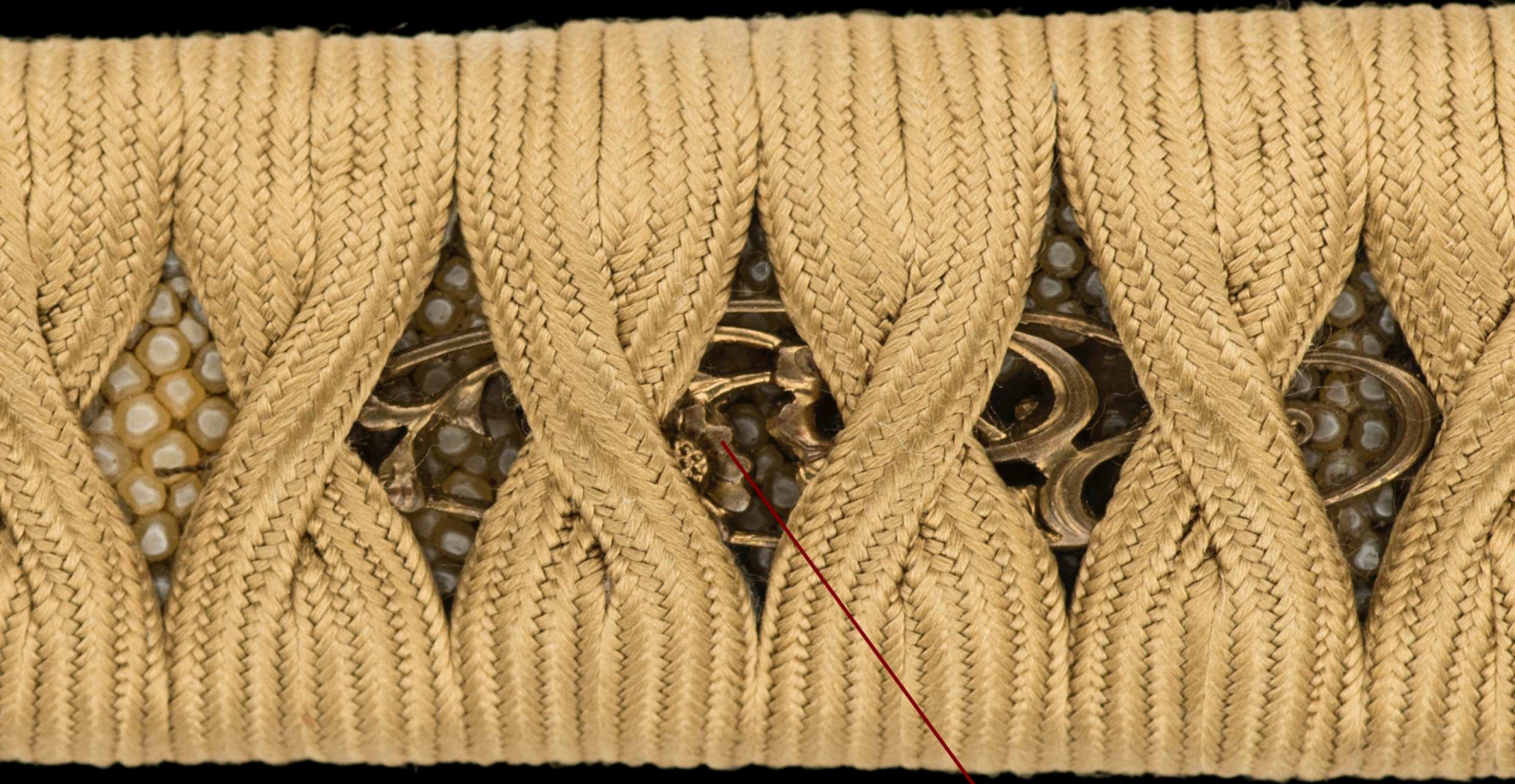
Wakashu (young person) with a flower basket and cart.

Ukiyo-e woodblock print by *Ishikawa Toyonobu* (1711~1785).

Note the *wakizashi* sword in the print.

mimi (rim)





Menuki (decorative grips on the hilt) carry *kikusui* theme.
Chrysanthemums floating on water.





Fuchi-kashira
attributed to
Mino school
(1780 - 1867)

Depicting seashells and sea life.
Fabulous detail, in pristine condition.



Awarded NTHK-NPO Kanteisho
Certificate of Authenticity

A sea life treasure trove.





Koshirae Bag



ITEM# UJKA357

SOLD

A NIÔ SANEKIYO KATANA

SIGNED & DATED, MIDDLE MUROMACHI (BUNMEI ERA: FEBRUARY 1470)

- Swordsmith:** *Niô Sanekiyo (machi-okuri nakago)*
Measurements: **Length:** 69.4cm **Curvature:** 1.0cm **Motohaba:** 2.72cm
Jihada: *Expertly forged itame-hada and nagare-hada with chikei and shirake utsuri*
Hamon: *Laser beam suguha hamon with ko-ashi and uchinoke*
Certificate 1-2: **NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon** (sword and fk are Especially Worthy of Preservation)
Certificate 3-4: **NTHK-NPO Kanteisho** (a koshirae and tsuba designated as Authentic)
Included: Shirasaya, custom koshirae, stand, kit, DVD, booklet, printed description

SOLD

The *Niô* name is said to originate to the *Niho* manor of *Suô* province. *Suô* was home to many properties owned by the *Todaiji* (Great Eastern Buddhist Temple) in *Yamato* (Nara), the former capital of Japan. As *Niô* School blades have a strong resemblance to *Yamato* works, it is assumed that there was a technical exchange between the two places.

This rare and special katana by *Niô Sanekiyo* has been signed and dated to February 1470 and exudes a palpable sense of history. The complex *jihada* is a sublime mixture of *itame-hada*, *mokume-hada* and *nagare-hada*. It casts a velvety glow that lifts the spirit. The bright *suguha hamon* on this freshly polished 550-year-old katana encourages the heart to walk a higher path.

An exquisite set of custom koshirae with an eye-catching ripple design on the *saya* celebrates the journey and struggle towards leading a more virtuous life. This is a gem of a samurai sword.



Saki-kasane: 4.4mm

Moto-kasane: 6.8mm

Omosa: 745g

Kissaki: 2.73cm
Saki-haba: 1.82cm

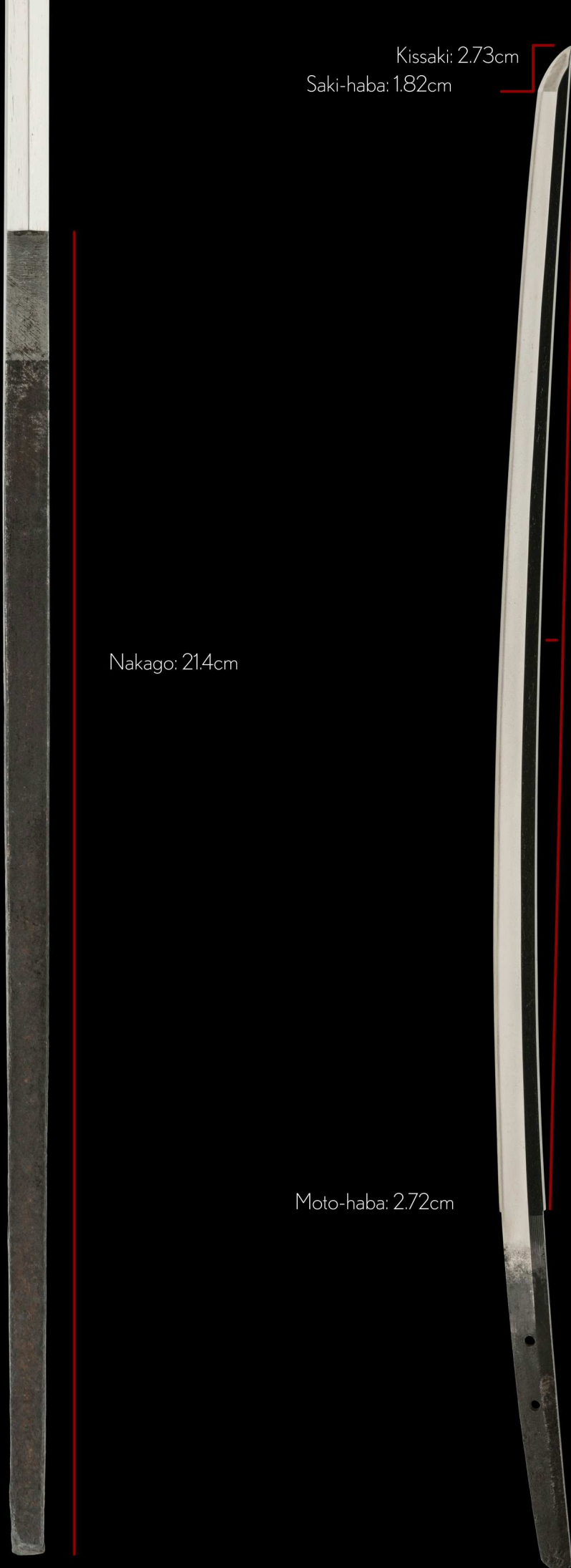
Nakago: 21.4cm

Moto-haba: 2.72cm

Nagasa: 69.4cm

Sori: 1.00cm

Mekugi-ana: 2



The *Niô* name is said to originate to the *Niho manor* of *Suô province*. *Suô* was home to many properties owned by the *Todaiji* (Great Eastern Buddhist Temple) in *Yamato* (Nara), the former capital of Japan.

As *Niô School* blades have a strong resemblance to Yamato works, it is assumed that there was a technical exchange between the two places.

Kiyotsuna is the founder of the school. A tachi that was dated to *March 1265* is being preserved at the famous *Itsukushima-jinja*.



This rare and special katana by *Niô Sanekiyo* has been signed and dated to February 1470 and exudes a palpable sense of history.

The complex *jihada* is a sublime mixture of *itame-hada*, *mokume-hada* and *nagare-hada*. It casts a velvety glow that lifts the spirit. The bright *suguha hamon* on this freshly polished 550-year-old katana encourages the heart to walk a higher path.

An exquisite set of custom koshirae with an eye-catching ripple design on the *saya*, a unique *Hakke*-inspired *tsuba* and artistically playful *fuchi-kashira* celebrates the journey and struggle towards leading a more virtuous life.

This is a gem of a samurai sword.





Location: *Suô* (resident of Yamaguchi)

School name: *Niô*

Swordsmith: *Sanekiyo*

machi-okuri-nakago (shortened tang)

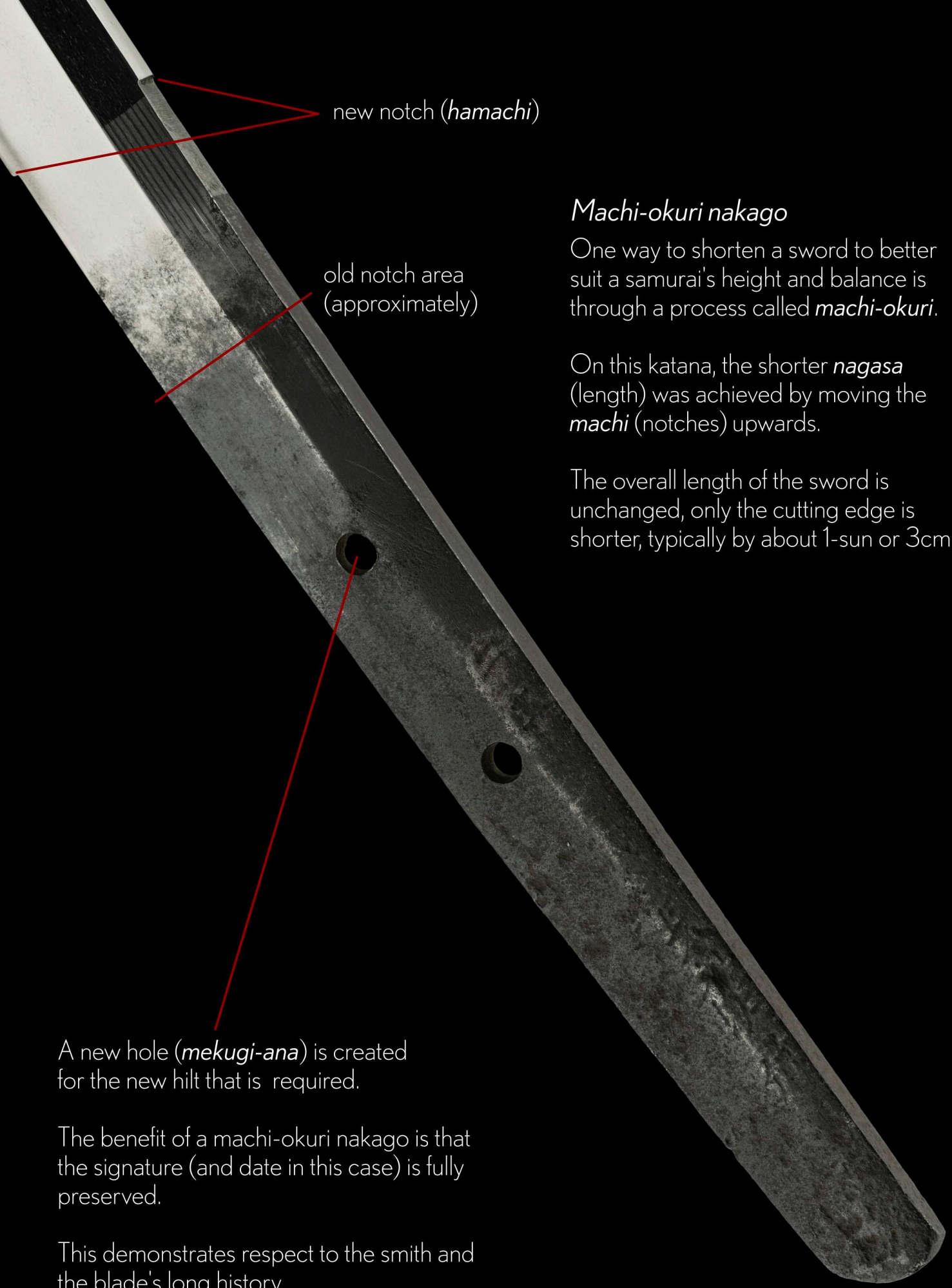
二 (Ni)

王 (ô)

実 (Sane)

清 (kiyo)

作 (saku)



new notch (*hamachi*)

old notch area
(approximately)

Machi-okuri nakago

One way to shorten a sword to better suit a samurai's height and balance is through a process called *machi-okuri*.

On this katana, the shorter *nagasa* (length) was achieved by moving the *machi* (notches) upwards.

The overall length of the sword is unchanged, only the cutting edge is shorter, typically by about 1-sun or 3cm.

A new hole (*mekugi-ana*) is created for the new hilt that is required.

The benefit of a *machi-okuri nakago* is that the signature (and date in this case) is fully preserved.

This demonstrates respect to the smith and the blade's long history.

Bunmei ni toshi nigatsu

This *katana* was dated to a day in the second month during the second year of *Bunmei era* (February 1470).

(Bun) 文
(mei) 明
(ni) 二
(toshi) 歲
(ni) 二
(gatsu) 月





This sword celebrated its 550th birthday in February 2020.

30201803

No 1008820



鑑定書

一刀 銘

二王実清作
文明二歳二月

長二尺二寸九分弱

右は當協會に於て審査の結果特別保存刀剣と
鑑定しこれを証する

平成三十年六月十三日

公益財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協會



東京都教育委員会
第 318470 号
平成30年 2 月 13 日

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 30th year of Heisei (2018), June 13th

One, Katana

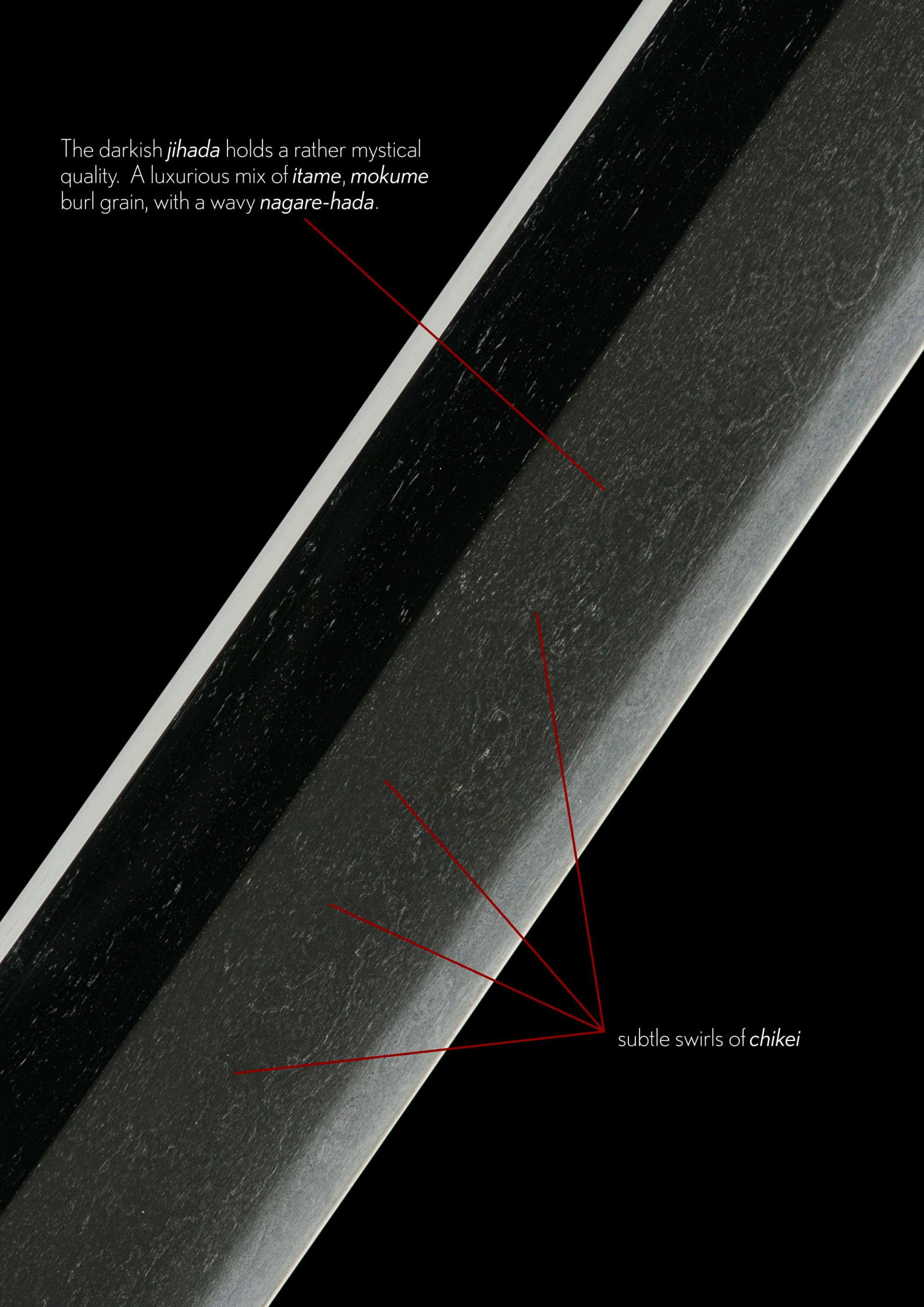
Mei (signature)
Niô Sanekiyo saku
Bunmei ni toshi nigatsu

Nagasa (length)
2-shaku 2-sun 9-bu jaku (69.4cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai
(NBTHK)









The darkish *jihada* holds a rather mystical quality. A luxurious mix of *itame*, *mokume* burl grain, with a wavy *nagare-hada*.


subtle swirls of *chikei*



The *suguha hamon* eclipses
into a rounded *komaru-boshi*.



The magnificent, complex texture of
the *jihada* comes alive under the light.



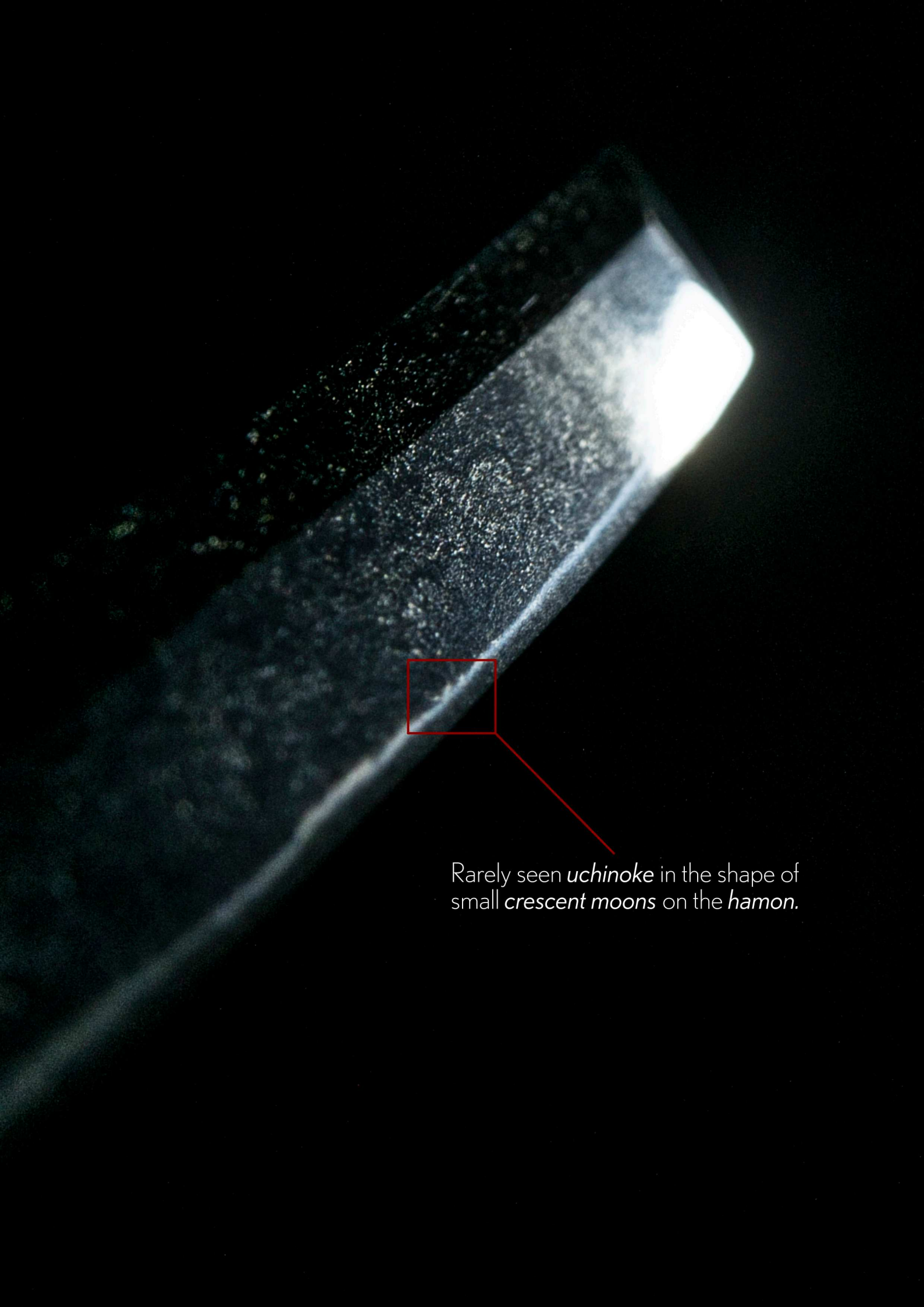
A bright beam of *suguha hamon*
illuminates the *Niô Sanekiyô* katana.

Ko-ashi (tiny legs) can be seen
marching below the temper line.

shirake-utsuri



Gently rotating the blade under the light
will reveal a gorgeous *shirake-utsuri*.



Rarely seen *uchinoke* in the shape of small *crescent moons* on the *hamon*.



Shirasaya
(protective scabbard)



silver *habaki* with
horizontal file marks

The signature of the maker, *Mizuo*.

瑞者
白





Ripples represent the potential influence and effect of wisdom in our hearts and minds, and the hearts and minds of others.

It describes symbolically that an action once completed cannot be reversed.

The cause-effect chain that results from it goes out and out as more effects result from the causes. Your actions have consequences.



Skilfully laid dustings of gold and silver *maki-e* create the ripple effect.

A deep green lacquered saya.



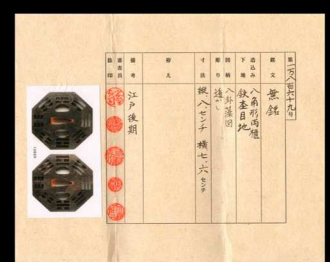
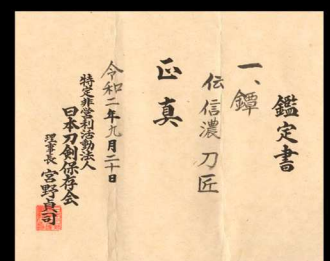
Koi Ripples
by Darice Machel McGuire

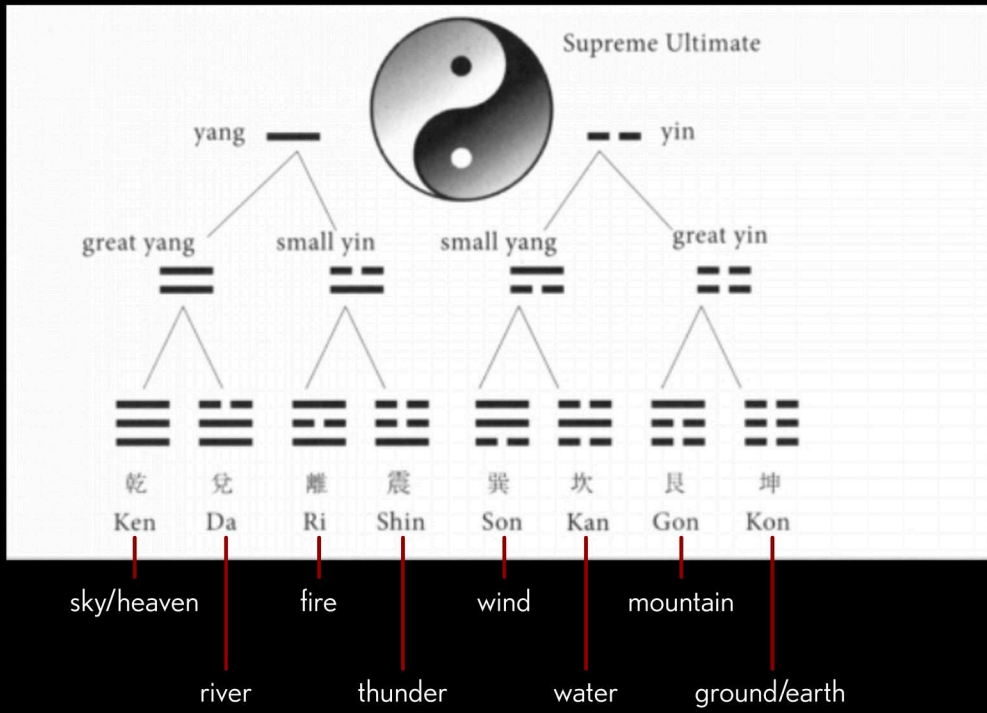


This remarkable polished iron octagonal-shaped *tsuba* in the form of eight *trigrams* known as *Hakke*. These *trigrams* were thought to originate from the two poles (*ying* and *yang*) - a symbolic expression of the creation of the cosmos itself made up of elements of nature such as fire, wind, sky, etc.

Hakke originated from China and was used extensively during the Edo period as a fortune-telling guide towards spiritual enlightenment.

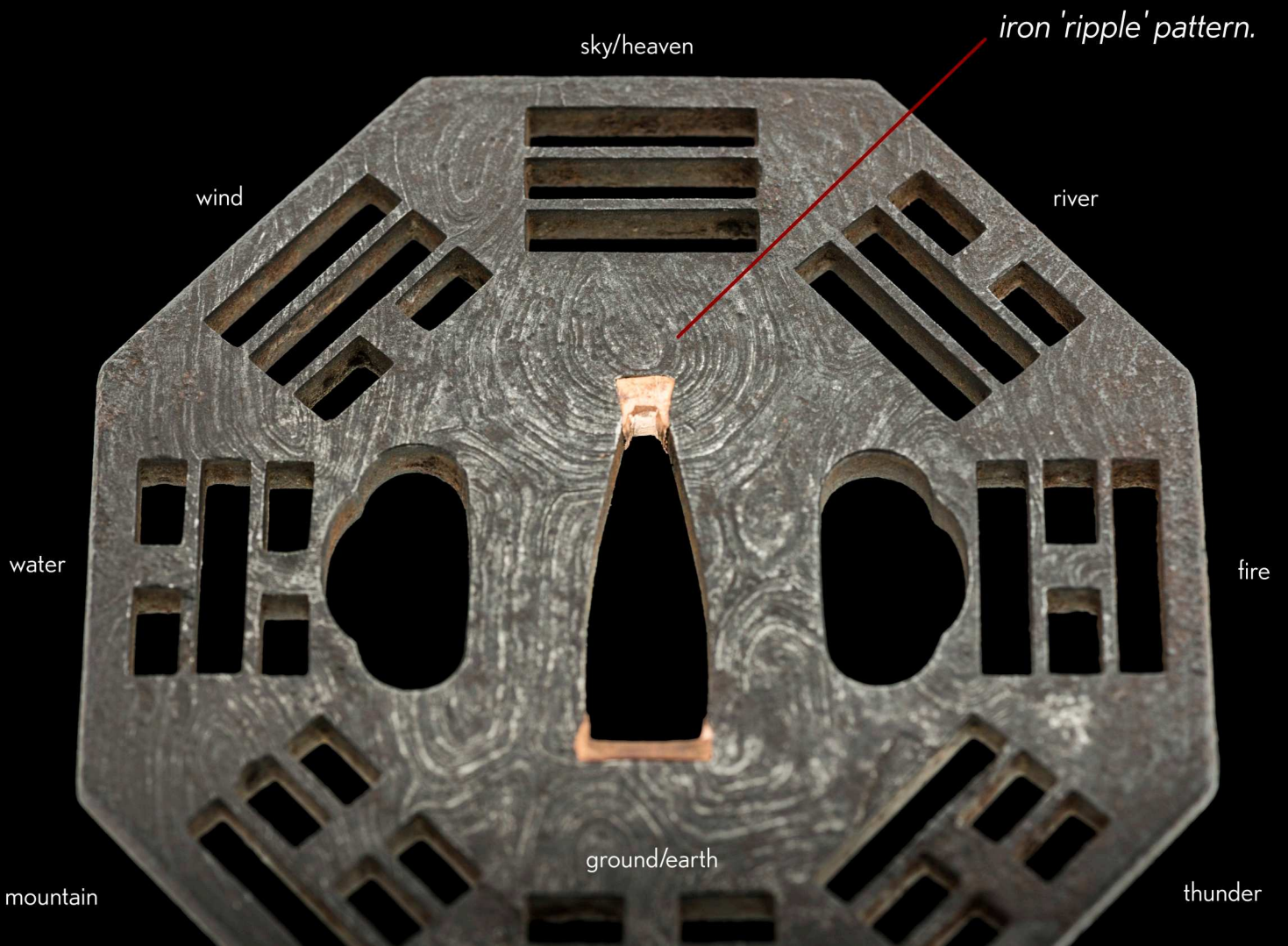
An NTHK-NPO Kanteisho certificate of authenticity has been attained attributing the piece to *Shinano Tôshô* - the work of a swordsmith during the *late-Edo period* circa 1780~1867.





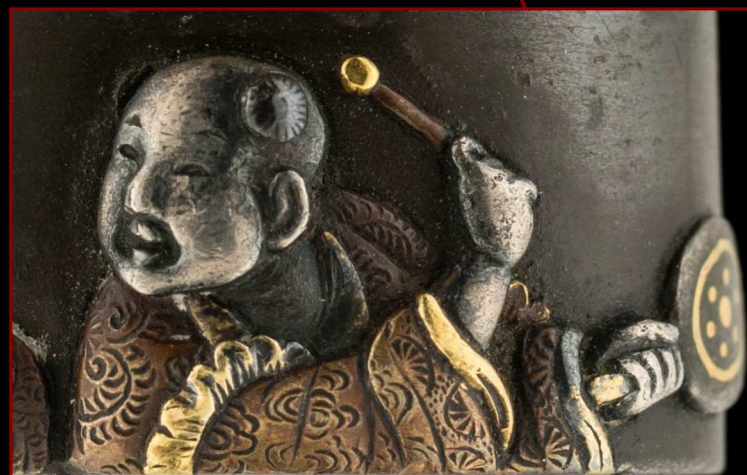
Universal elements that lead us to shine in supreme life balance (maturity).

Notice the burl grain rippled pattern in the iron that comes from folded steel at the hands of a swordsmith.





The *fuchi* (collar) captures a joyful scene of two boys playing a decorative glass flute and drum.



The *fuchi-kashira* is signed:
Jounsai Hirotoishi + *kaô* (his personal monogram)

The calligraphic feel of this artist's signature is most impressive.

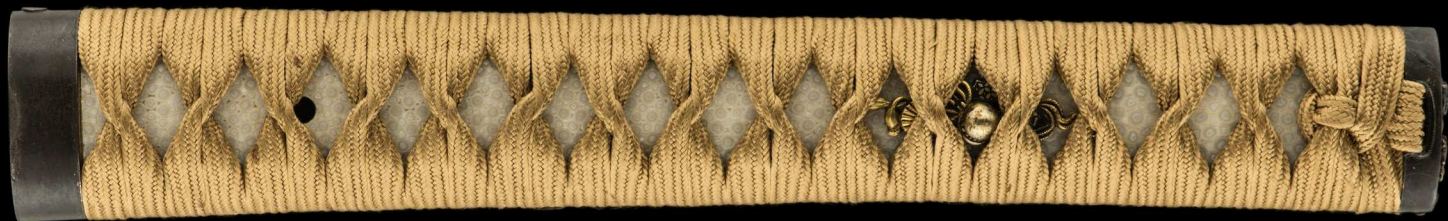




A young boy play gallops with his stick horse.

Given the quality of this chap's clothing and the toy itself, he must certainly belong to an aristocratic family.

The attention to detail in the artwork is to be admired.



Menuki (decorative grips on the hilt) are of *hōju-no zu* (a precious orb). This jewel is concealed under the gold-braided silk as the prize of enlightenment.



A katana that evokes a sense of balance,
mystery, joy, wisdom and personal treasure.

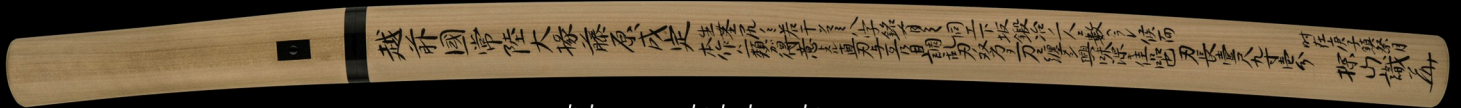


Submit, Repair, Sell & Create!

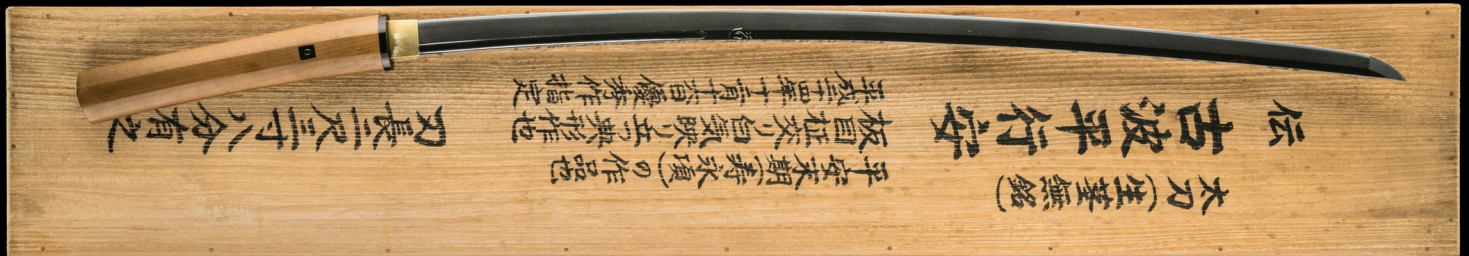
Unique Japan offers a *full-service menu* to assist clients with their Japanese swords and fittings. All services are performed in Japan with top quality craftsmen and women.

Services include (non exhaustive):

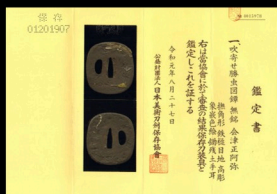
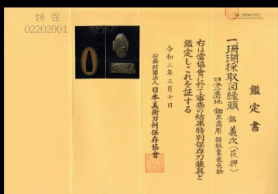
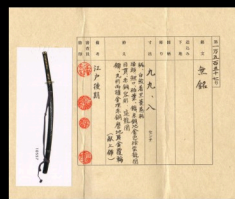
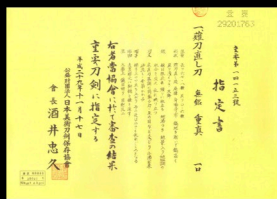
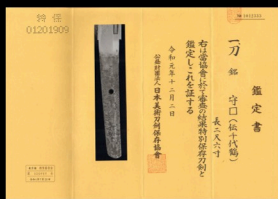
- * NBTHK and NTHK-NPO *shinsa* certification (swords and fittings)
- * polishing for all types of Japanese swords (standard to Jûyô-level quality polish)
- * *shirasaya* making (standard to high quality with horn fittings)
- * *habaki* making (gold, silver, copper in most any design pattern)
- * fix wobbly koshirae, repair cracked scabbards, new lacquer work, etc.
- * *otoshi* presentation boxes for your beautiful *tsuba*, *menuki*, *fuch-kashira*, etc.
- * *tsuka-maki* (re-wrap your hilts in silk or leather in most any colour, weave or braid)
- * *oshigata* (sword/hamon tracing on a scroll with a large choice of background)
- * *sayagaki* services with *Tanobe-sensei* (qualifying conditions apply)
- * sword boxes with *hakogaki* (with humidifying options for dry climates)
- * custom koshirae projects (see separate page)
- * sell your sword(s) on consignment (qualifying conditions apply)



polish, sayagaki, hakogaki



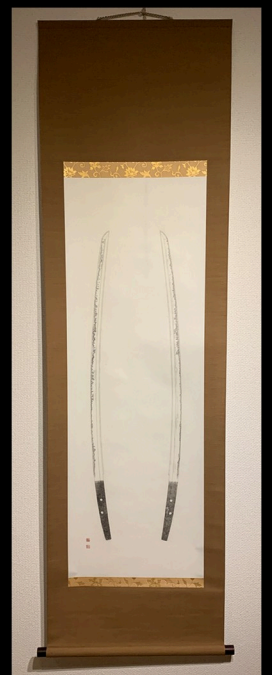
tsuka-maki



habaki creations



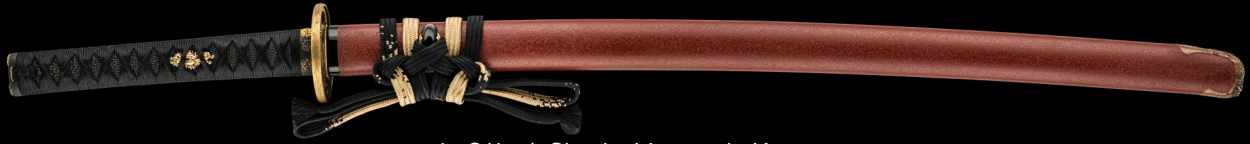
otoshi boxes



oshigata scrolls

All NBTHK and NTHK-NPO Shinsa authentication services

Building Your Own Custom Koshirae



ujka211 - A Shodai Hisamichi Katana
'Red dragon' Koshirae



ujwa130 - A Tadashige o-Wakizashi
'Ray skin' Koshirae

Many top quality samurai swords that Unique Japan acquires come stored in a *shirasaya* only. A *shirasaya* acts like a humidifier, protecting the steel for the long term.

Just as the samurai would have ordered a custom *koshirae* (outdoor mounts) during the Edo period, you too can have a traditional set of *koshirae* crafted for your sword (or *daisho*) like a tailored suit in a theme that connects with your spirit.

At Unique Japan, we have proudly created dozens of custom *koshirae* projects for our clients over the years - each with their own style and energy.

The *tsuka* (hilt), *saya* (scabbard), *samekawa* (ray skin), silk, and lacquer is all handcrafted by skilled craftspeople in Japan. The *tsuba*, *fuchi-kashira*, *menuki* and other fittings are carefully sourced samurai antiques largely from the Edo period.

This unique blend of modern life meeting traditional history is what makes each creation so personally rewarding for every client.

The investment required ranges from \$4,000 to over \$10,000 depending on the quality of the fittings and the complexity of the lacquerwork. Each project also demands patience as many will take one year to complete (but it's well worth it).

Please contact Unique Japan for further details.



ujka173 - A Sadatsugu Juyo Katana
'Wave theme' Koshirae



ITEM# UJKA366

SOLD

A TADAKUNI KATANA

SIGNED, EARLY EDO PERIOD (KEIAN ERA: 1648~1652)

- Swordsmith:** *Hizen jû Harima Daijô Fujiwara Tadakuni (shodai, ubu nakago)*
Measurements: **Length:** 68.9cm **Curvature:** 2.0cm **Motohaba:** 2.93cm
Jihada: *Superbly forged konuka-hada with sparkling ji-nie and chikei*
Hamon: *Crisp chû-suguha hamon with kinsuji, ashi and yô*
Certificate 1: **NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon** (designated as Especially Worthy of Preservation)
Certificate 2: **NBTHK Hozon** (tsuba designated as Worthy of Preservation)
Certificate 3-4: **NTHK-NPO Kanteisho** (a koshirae and fk designated as Authentic)
Fujishiro: *Jô-saku* (ranked as a superior swordsmith)
Sharpness: *Wazamono* (rated as a maker of sharp swords)
Authentication: Rare origami valuing the sword to 10 gold pieces by *Hon'ami Kôkan* in 1839
Included: Shirasaya, Edo koshirae, stand, kit, DVD, booklet, printed description

SOLD

Respecting the esteemed *Hizen* tradition, *shodai Tadakuni* forged a dense *konuka-hada* (pear skin finish) that shines with *ji-nie*. On rare occasions, he tempered a *chû-suguha* (straight temper line) as represented on this remarkable katana. The sword is complimented by an exceptional Edo-period *koshirae* that echoes the *kinsuji* (lightning) *hataraki* on the blade while setting a stormy scene with billowing clouds on the *saya* and a long ruthless hook as its *kashira* (pommel) inspired by master swordsman *Miyamoto Musashi*. Comes with rare *origami* certification from 1839 by *Hon'ami Kôkan* valuing the katana to ten gold pieces. This is a samurai sword to treasure.

^
Saki-kasane: 3.9mm

Moto-kasane: 6.4mm

Kissaki: 3.16cm
Saki-haba: 1.94cm

Nagasa: 68.9cm

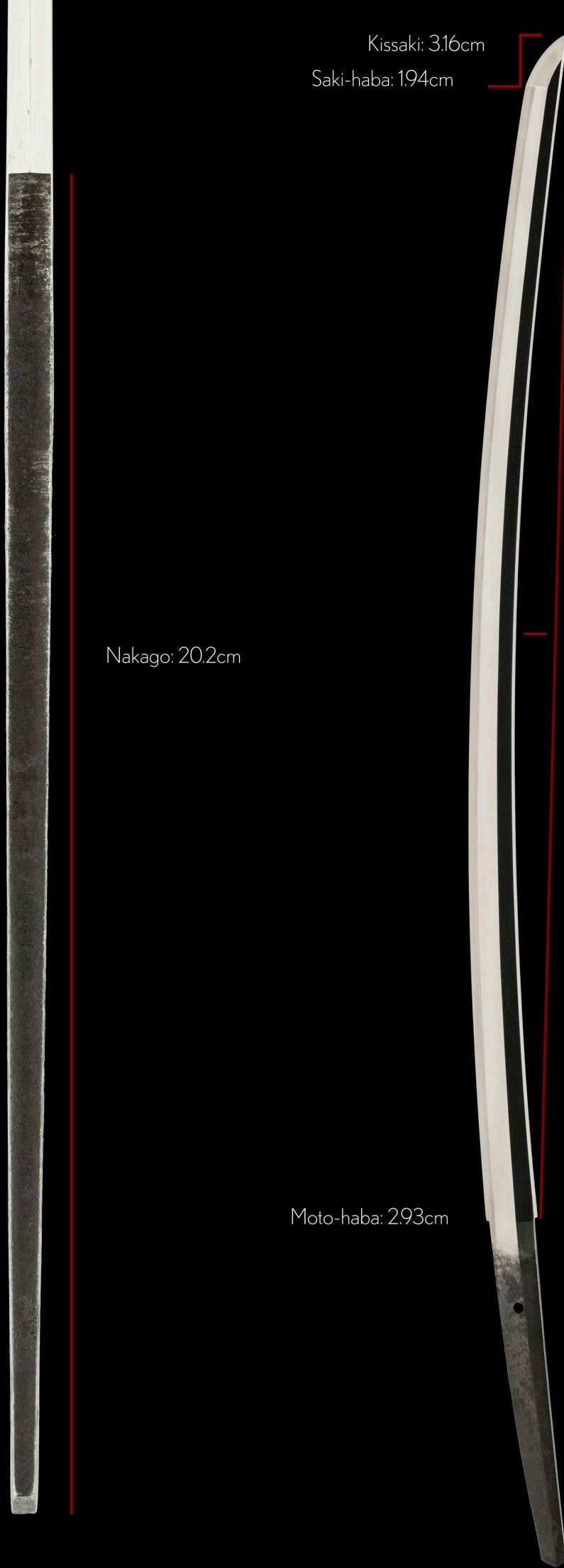
Nakago: 20.2cm

Sori: 2.00cm

Omosa: 685g

Moto-haba: 2.93cm

Mekugi-ana: 1



First generation Tadakuni was born *Hashimoto Rokurôzaemon* - the second son of *Hirosada* - in the third year of *Keichô era* (1598).

He first signed *Hironori* but changed his name to *Tadakuni* after receiving the honorary title *Harima no Daijô* in the eleventh year of *Kan'ei era* (1634).

Towards the end of his long and celebrated career he became a *Nyûdô* (priest) with the name *Kyûtetsu*. Tadakuni died at the age of 94 on April 22, 1691 during the *Genroku era*.

Respecting the esteemed Hizen tradition, Tadakuni forged a dense *ko-itame hada* with sparkling *ji-nie* that appears as *konuka-hada* (pear skin finish).

Most often seen is a flamboyant *chôji-midare* or *gunome-chôji hamon*, however, on rare occasions he tempered a *chû-suguha* (straight temper line) as depicted on this elegant katana.

This deliberate act of restraint creates an indelible impression when the sword is held in hand.

The sword is complimented by an exceptional Edo-period *koshirae* that echoes the *kinsuji* (lightning) *hataraki* on the blade while setting a stormy scene with billowing clouds on the *saya* and a long ruthless hook as its *kashira* (pommel).

Tadakuni is ranked *jô-saku* (superior sword smith) and *wazamono* for the notable sharpness of his blades.

This highly collectible katana comes with rare origami certification from 1839 by *Hon'ami Kôkan* valuing the sword to ten gold pieces.



Location: *Hizen province*

Title: *Harima Daijô* (Title)

Family name: *Fujiwara* (Clan name)

Swordsmith: *Tadakuni* (first generation)

ubu-nakago (original, unaltered tang)

sujikai-yasurime (diagonal file marks)

(Hi) 肥
(zen) 前
(jû) 住
(Hari) 播
(ma) 磨
(Dai) 大
(jô) 掾
(Fuji) 藤
(wara) 原
(Tada) 忠
(kuni) 國

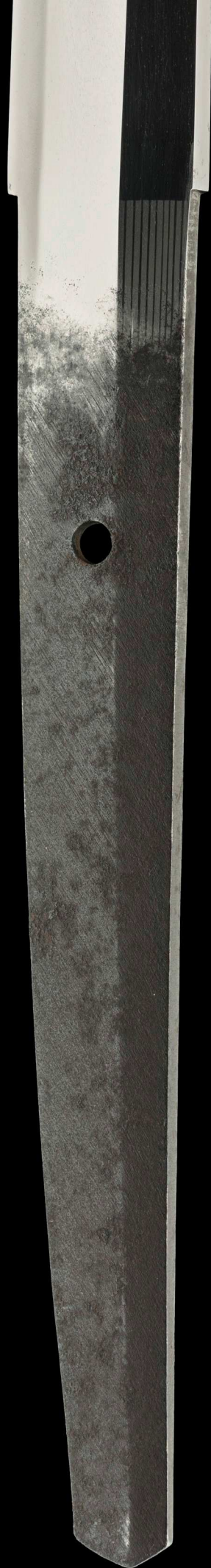
signed tachi side of nakago





A precisely chiseled signature.

The work of a master artist.



(reverse)

22201011

154941



鑑定書

長二尺三寸七分半

一、刀銘 肥前住播磨大掾藤原忠国

右は當協會に於て審査の結果特別保存刀剣と
鑑定しこれを証する

平成二十三年一月二十八日

財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協會



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 23rd year of Heisei (2011), January 28th

One, *Katana*

Mei (signature)

Hizen jû Harima Daijô Fujiwara Tadakuni

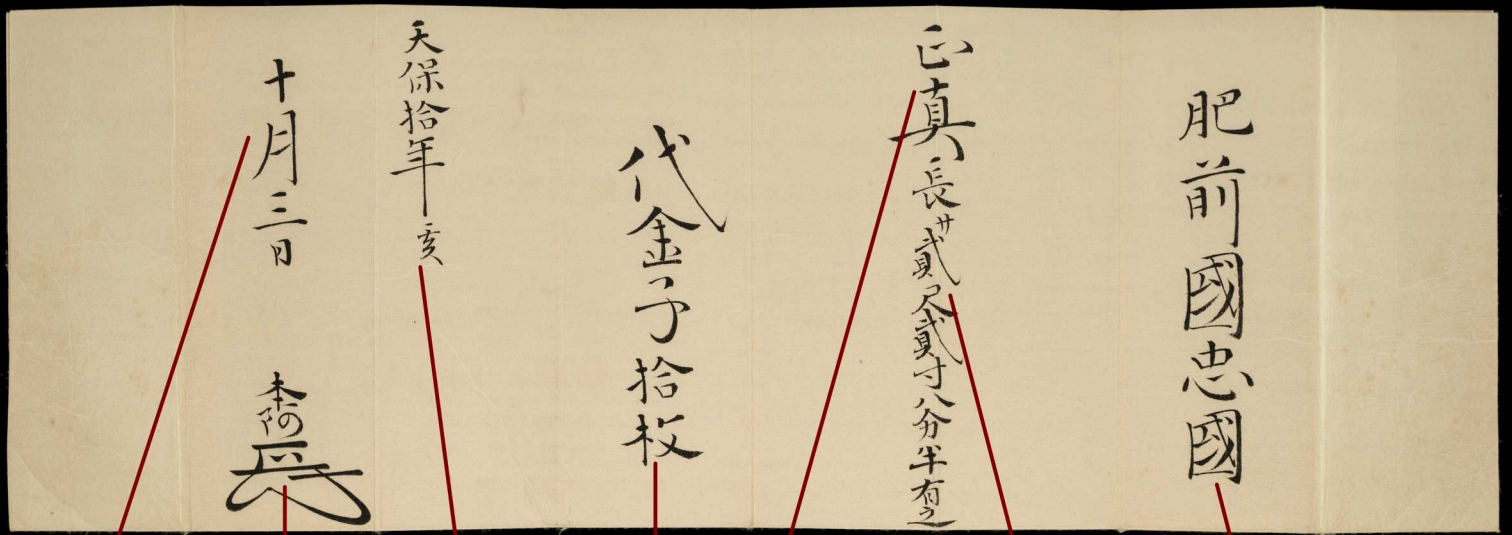
Nagasa (length)

2-shaku 2-sun 7-bu (68.9cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai
(NBTHK)

河内物紙

Ontô Origami
(sword certificate)



Hon'a + kaô
[Kôkan 光鑑]

Shōshin
(正真, authentic)

Hizen no Kuni Tadakuni
(肥前国忠國)

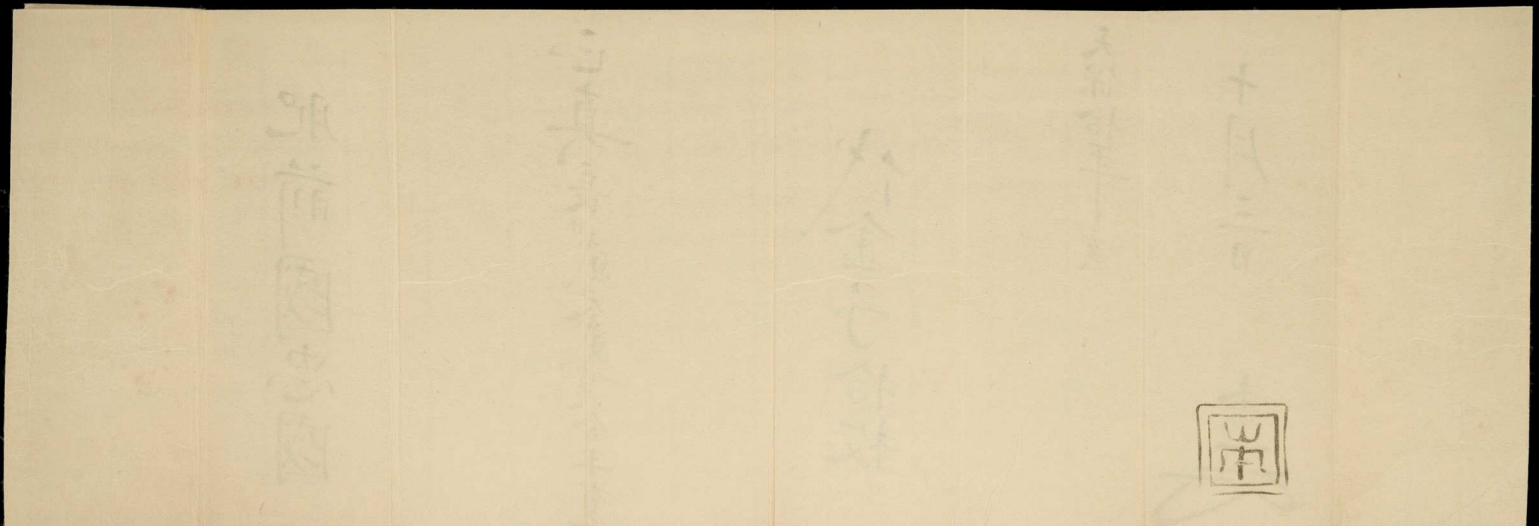
Jūgatsu mikka Hon'a + kaô
(十月三日 本阿「花押」)
tenth month, third day

Dai-kinsu jū-mai
(代金子拾枚)
Value of sword: 10 gold pieces

Nagasa 2-shaku 2-sun 8-bu han kore ari
(長貳尺貳寸八分半有之)
Blade length (69.2cm)

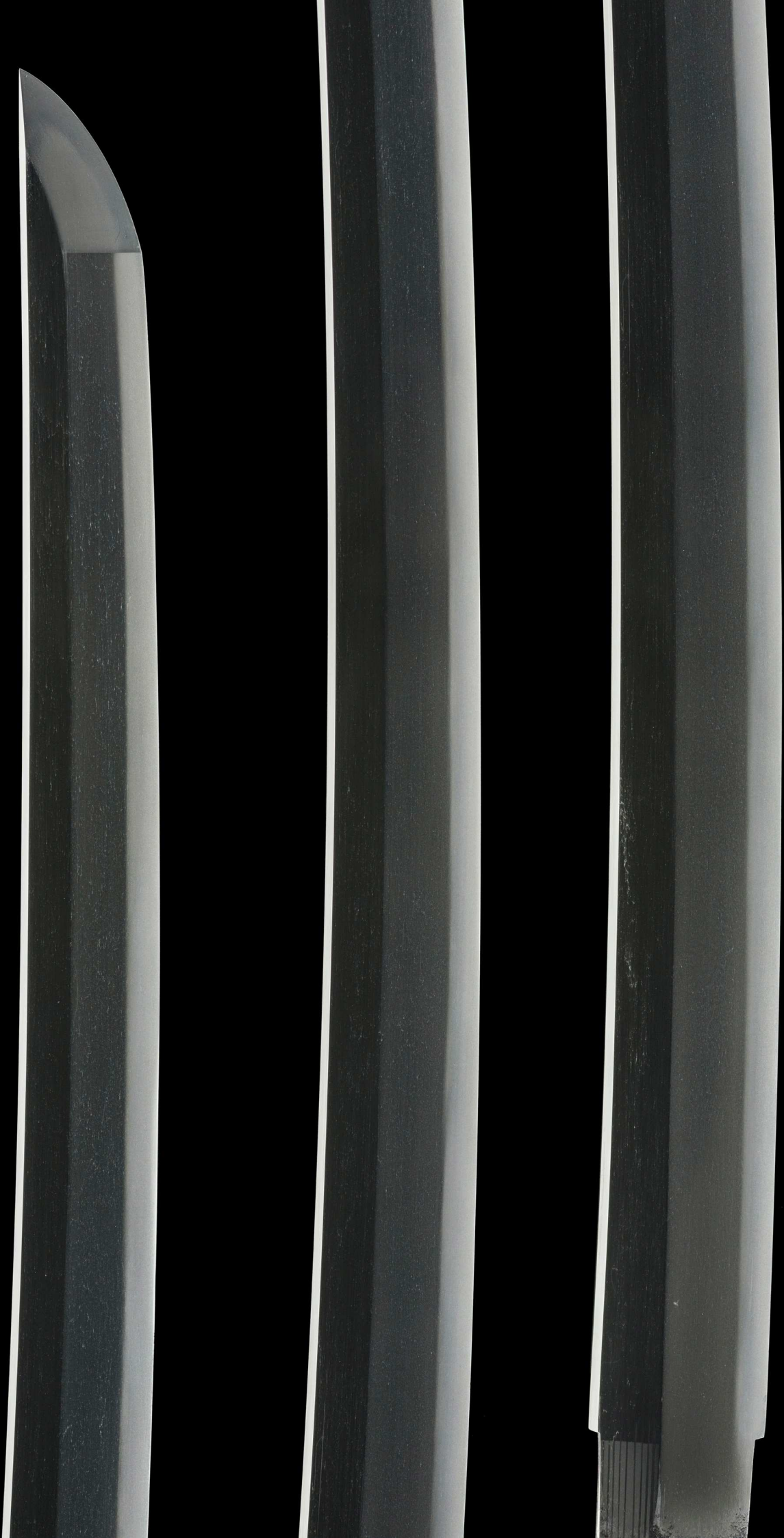
Tenpō jūnen inoshishi (天保拾年亥)
Tenpō ten (1839), Year of the Boar

The *Hon'ami family* were the official sword appraisers and polishers of the shogunate. They also issued origami appraisals for blades. This highly prized origami certificate was written and signed by *Hon'ami Kôkan* on October 3, 1839 during the Year of the Wild Boar (*inoshishi*). He valued this katana to 10 gold pieces (coins). It is a small miracle that this certificate has survived with the sword after all these years.

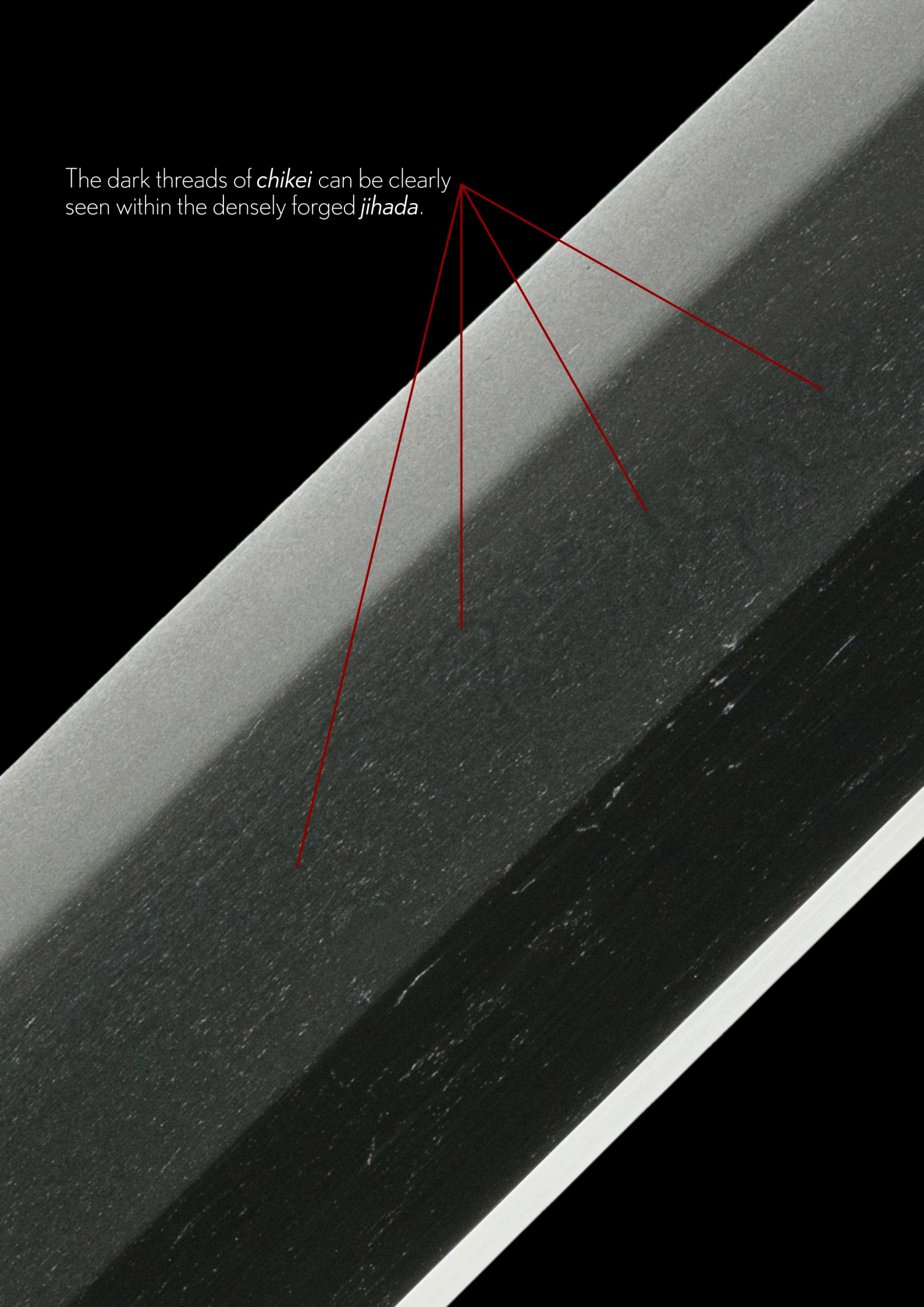


back of the certificate





The dark threads of *chikei* can be clearly seen within the densely forged *jihada*.



The image shows two Japanese blades, likely tantos, against a black background. The blades are positioned diagonally, one above the other. Both blades exhibit a kinsuji pattern, which consists of fine, wispy lines of light-colored metal (likely iron) that cross the darker metal (likely steel) of the blade. The upper blade's tip is more rounded, while the lower blade's tip is more pointed. Two red lines originate from the text and point to specific areas on the blades: one points to the tip of the upper blade, and the other points to the middle section of the lower blade. The lighting highlights the texture and the contrast between the different metal layers.

Wisps of *kinsuji* cross the *boshi*
(*hamon* in the *kissaki*, tip of blade)

A close-up photograph of a sword blade, likely a katana, showing a hamon (temper line). The blade is dark and textured, with a bright, straight line of light running along its edge. Two red lines are drawn on the image: one points from the text 'ji-nie shines brilliantly' to the upper part of the blade, and the other points from the text 'Chû-suguha hamon' to the hamon line itself.

ji-nie shines brilliantly

Chû-suguha hamon

A straight temper line of medium width.

This bright and consistent hamon is the result of a solidly forged foundation. If the steel was folded by an average swordsmith, the hamon would show inconsistencies in the width and overall brightness.

In short, it takes skill and confidence to forge a good, clean *suguha hamon*.

Tiny *ashi* (legs) can be seen running for the *hasaki* (edge of the blade).

Yô or leaves are white clusters of nie seen in the hardened *yakiba* outside of the hamon.



A close-up, low-angle shot of a sword blade against a black background. The blade is curved and shows a dark, textured surface. A bright, glowing line runs along the edge, representing the hamon. Three red lines point from the text below to specific features on the blade.

Here we see *kinsuji*, bolts of *nie* 'lightning' charging through the *hamon*.

Raimon, the traditional lightening pattern seen on the *fuchi-kashira* reflects this unique feature.

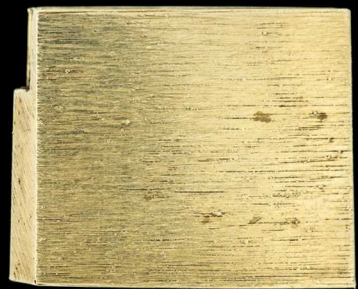


Another lightening bolt of *kinsuji*.

The *ji-nie* shimmers like rain in the background.



Shirasaya
(protective scabbard)

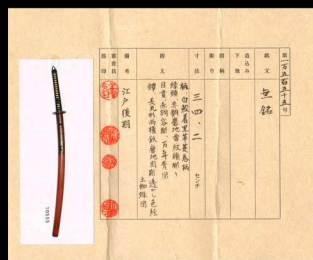


gold-wrapped *habaki*
with straight file marks

*Akacha kanshitsu-nuri
koshi-issun-kizami saya
uchigatana-koshirae*
(赤茶乾漆塗腰一分刻鞘打刀拵え)

*Uchigatana-koshirae
lacquered in dry red brown
and ribbed in every 3cm
on the koshi*

Crafted during the
Late Edo period
(1780~1867)

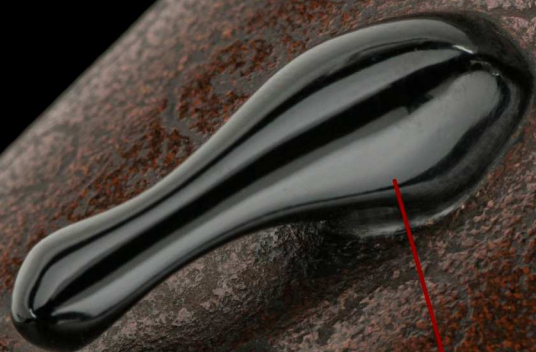


NTHK-NPO Kanteisho
Certificate of Authenticity

A cloud patten sets the stormy scene.

This beautifully lacquered artwork on the *saya* (scabbard) sits at the hip area of the samurai.

The multi-sectioned ribs provide extra stability on the body.



This decorative hook on the saya is called *kaerizuno*. It secures the sword in the belt and stops it from slipping out or being pulled out by an opponent.



Tsuchigomu

Yorimitsu

Kintoki

Sadamitsu

Pictured above is a remarkable *Hikone school tsuba* that plays out a scene from the famous *tsuchigumo* story.

Tsuchigumo (the demon ground spider) is dressed up as a monk holding a scepter at the mansion of the *Heian-period Fujiwara clan* commander *Minamoto no Yorimitsu*, who lies sick in bed (far right). Two of his bodyguards, *Usui Sadamitsu* (bottom right) and *Sakata no Kintoki*, play the game of *Go*. They are both tired as they are on the night shift.

When *tsuchigumo* hurls his web, *Yorimitsu* (also read *Raikô*), cuts through the evil being with his celebrated *hiza-maru* sword, and *tsuchigumo* flees.

The sword is renamed *kumokiri* (spider slasher).



(reverse)



Yorimitsu's trusted warriors follow a trail of blood the spider's mound.

Tsuchigumo again casts his web but it's of no use. The monster and his sceptre are surrounded and killed. Peace is triumphantly restored.



The famous Tsuchigomu Noh play

image: the-noh.com

the-noh.com



The zigzag geometric formation is known as *raimon* - a design pattern thought to be based on *flashes of lightning*.



This unique pattern with origins from China has been used more than 3,000 years. It can also be seen on architecture, sculptures, ceramics, metalwork, wood sculpture and on dyed and printed fabrics.

The pattern is considered to be a symbol of *fertility and auspiciousness* due to its association with thunder rain, which fertilizes everything including farming fields.

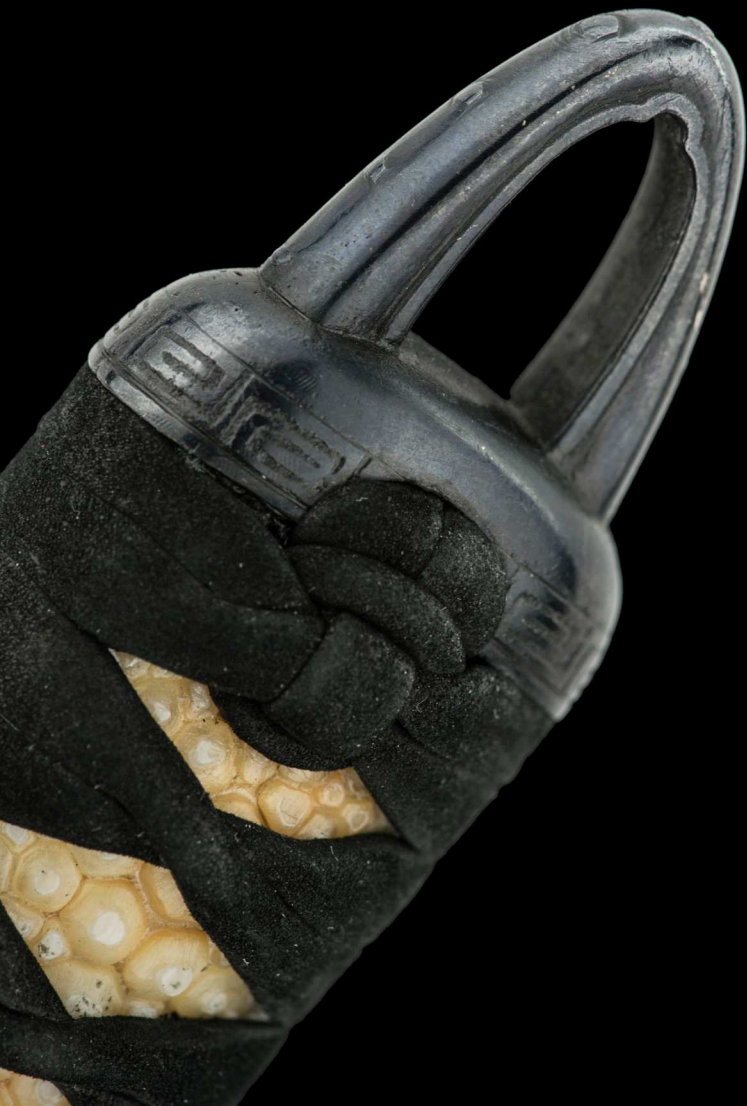


Traditional sake cups with *raimon*

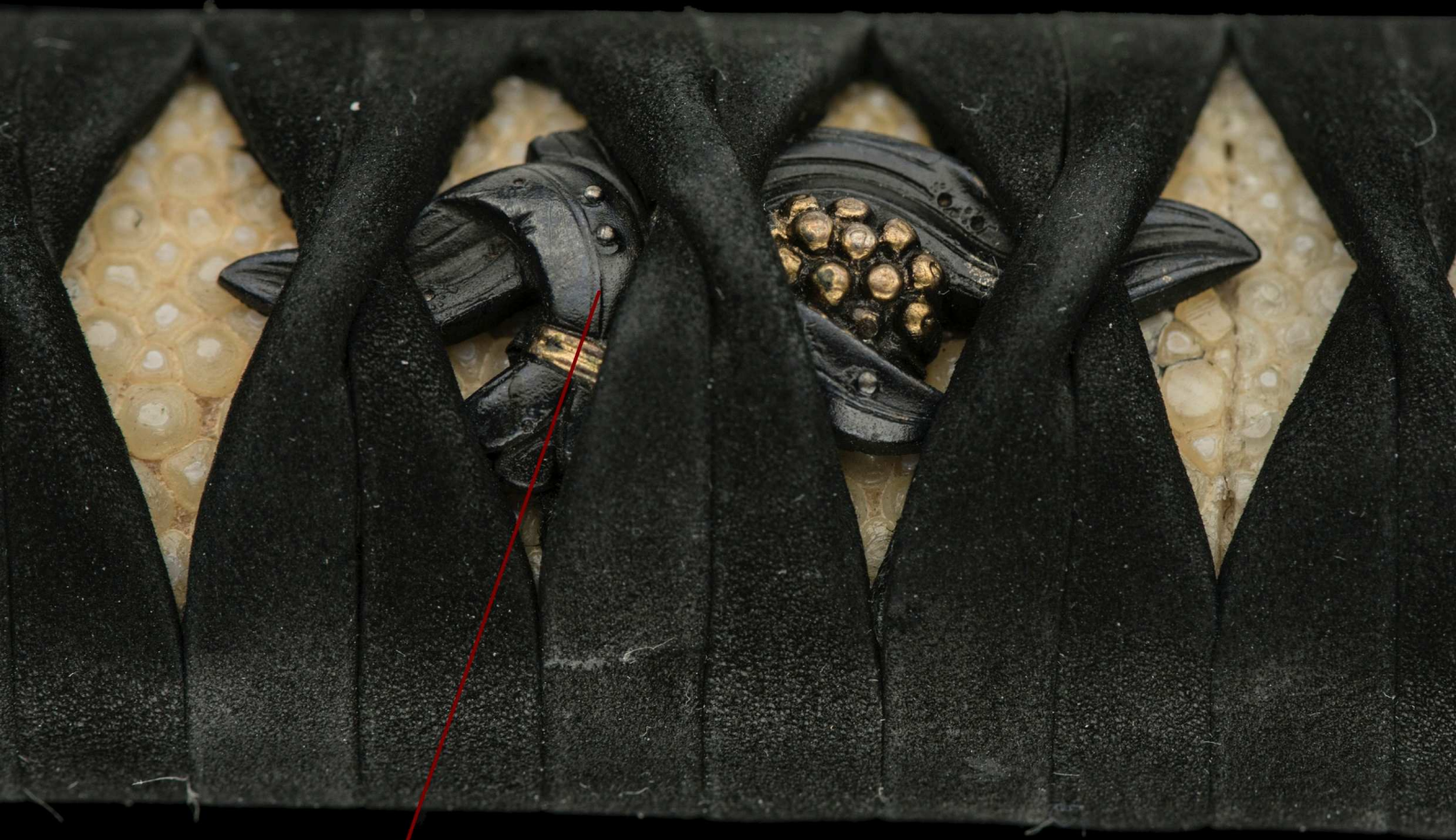




This imposing hook-shaped *kashira* acted as a useful weapon. Rather than drawing the sword, a duelling samurai could thrust his *tsuka* (hilt) forward as a surprise attack on his opponent. The famous *rônin* *Miyamoto Musashi* was said to be fond of such reinforced *kashira* for this reason.



Miyamoto Musashi
ukiyo-e by Utagawa Kuniyoshi (1797-1861)



The *menuki* depict *omoto* (Japanese Sacred Lily). The menuki are wrapped over with black leather and sit on white *samekawa* (ray skin).

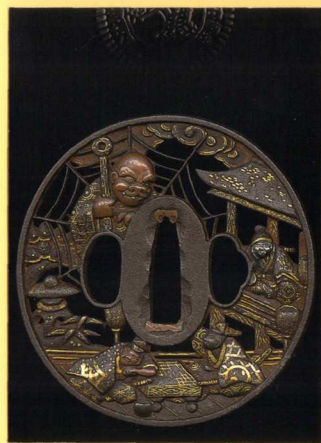
Omoto is one of the most cherished plants used as an ornamental display in traditional *ikebana* (flower arranging).



Kinka Ikenobô school using *omoto* (*rohdea japonica*)

25201312

No 4003993



鑑定書

一土蜘蛛透鐔 無銘 彦根

豎丸形 鉄地 肉彫地透

象嵌 角耳小肉

右は當協會に於て審査の結果保存刀装具と
鑑定しこれを証する

平成二十六年 一月十七日

公益財団法人 日本美術刀剣保存協會



NBTHK Hozon Certificate of Designation

A tsuba designated as *Worthy of Conservation*
by the Society for the Preservation of the Japan Art Sword

Issued in the 26th year of Heisei (2014), January 17th

One, *Tsuba*

Depicting tsuchigumo

Mumei (unsigned)
Hikone school

Elongated round shape, iron, openworks further curved in a more three-dimensional manner, inlay, angular rim with a little roundness

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai
(NBTHK)



Traditional brocade koshirae bag



ITEM# UJKA375

SOLD

A KUNISADA 'TAMESHIGIRI' KATANA SIGNED, MIDDLE EDO PERIOD (HÔEI ERA: 1704~1711)

Swordsmith: *Kunisada (ubu nakago)*
Measurements: **Length:** 74.5cm **Curvature:** 1.0cm **Motohaba:** 2.72cm
Jihada: *Mixed itame-hada and mokume-hada with chikei*
Hamon: *Thick notare-ba in nie-deki with kinsuji, sunagashi thick clawing ashi*
Certificate 1: **NBTHK Hozon** (*sword and fk are Especially Worthy of Preservation*)
Certificate 2-4: **NTHK-NPO Kanteisho** (*a koshirae, tsuba and fk designated as Authentic*)
Included: Shirasaya, Edo koshirae, stand, kit, DVD, booklet, printed description

SOLD

Swordsmith *Kunisada* was active during the mid-Edo period circa the *Hôei* era (1704~1711) and worked in *Musashi* province, the nation's capital. Few swords exist by *Kunisada* who is said to hail from *Nakamura* city in *Ôshû* province. His known signatures were *Ôshû Uda-gun Nakamura jû Kunisada* or simply his name *Kunisada*.

This long, powerful katana underwent a *tameshigiri* (cutting test) having successfully severed through two stacked bodies in one sweeping stroke. Chiseled into the *ura* (reverse side) of the nakago, the test was performed by *Murakami Hikozaemon* at *Nijûhachiyama*, translated literally as 'Mount Twenty-eight.' Inspired by the location of the test, a thoughtful, antique Edo period koshirae with a serene mountainous landscape theme remains faithful to the sword. This is a rare katana that holds a serious, contemplative presence.



Saki-kasane: 4.1mm

Kissaki: 3.20cm

Saki-haba: 2.00cm

Moto-kasane: 6.6mm

Nagasa: 74.5cm

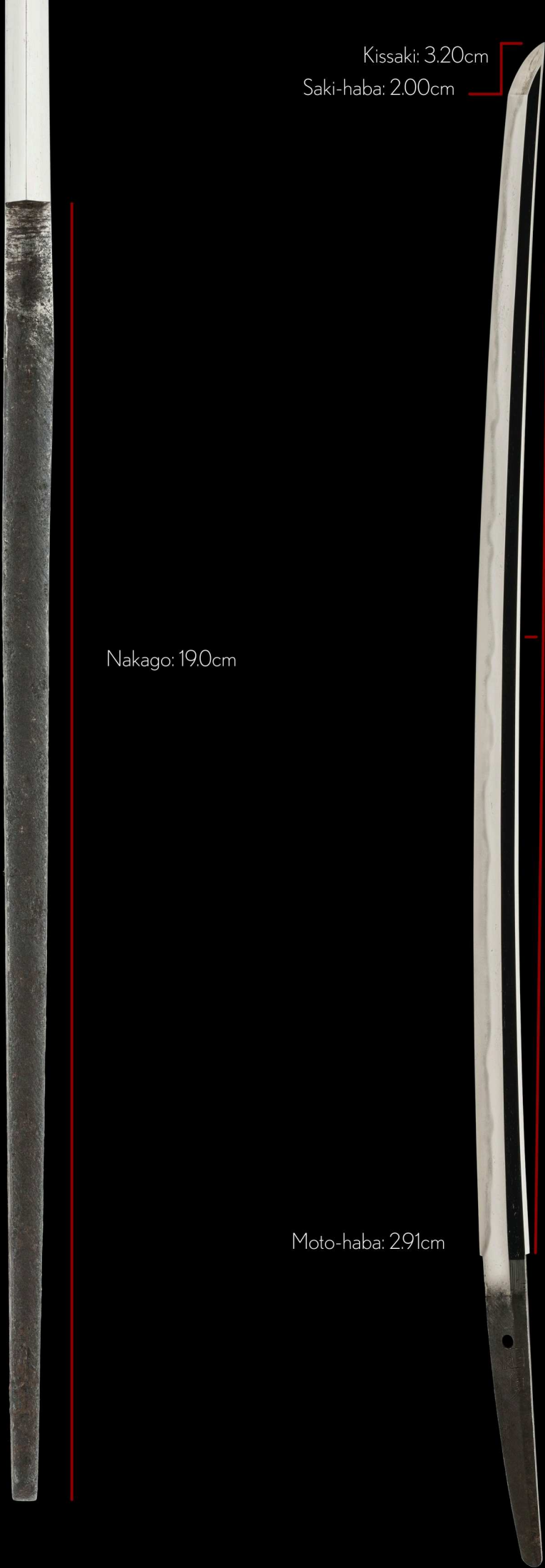
Nakago: 19.0cm

Sori: 1.0cm

Omosa: 740g

Moto-haba: 2.91cm

Mekugi-ana: 1



Swordsmith *Kunisada* was active during the mid-Edo period circa the *Hôei era* (1704~1711) and worked in *Musashi* province, the nation's capital.

Few swords exist by Kunisada who is said to hail from *Nakamura* city in *Ôshû* province.

His known signatures were *Ôshû Uda-gun Nakamura jû Kunisada* or simply his name *Kunisada*.

This long, powerful katana underwent a *tameshigiri* (cutting test) having successfully severed through two stacked bodies in one sweeping stroke.

The test was performed by *Murakami Hikozaemon* at *Nijûhachiyama*, translated literally as 'Mount Twenty-eight.'

Inspired by the location of the test, a thoughtful Edo period koshirae with a serene mountainous landscape theme remains faithful to the sword.

This a rare katana that holds a serious presence.



Location: *Musashi*
Swordsmith: *Kunisada*

ubu-nakago (original, unaltered tang)
sujikai-yasurime (diagonal file marks)

国 (Kuni)

貞 (sada)

Ha agari kurijiri

Chestnut shape *nakago-jiri* with the cutting edge side slanting more steeply.

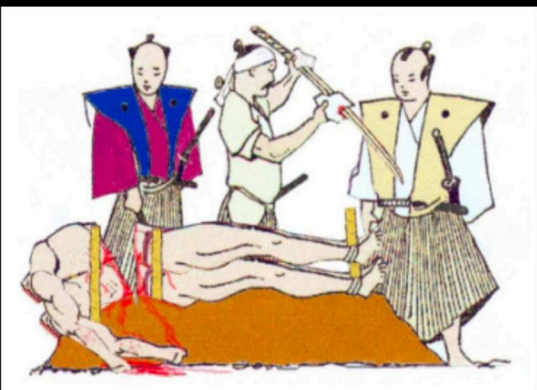
Ryôdô

Murakami Hikozaemon nijûhachiuama ni kore o utsu

[With this katana] *Murakami Hikozaemon* severed through two bodies [in one stroke] at *Mt. Nijûhachi*



before



after

(Mura) 村
(kami) 上
(Hiko) 彦
(za) 左
(e) 右
(mon) 門
(Nijû) 廿
(hachi) 八
(yama) 山
(ni) 二
(utsu) 打
(kore o) 之



両 (Ryô)
洞 (dô)

村 上 彦 左 右 門 廿 八 山 二 打 之

保 存
01201909

№ 3022248



公益財団法人 日本美術刀剣保存協会



令和元年十二月二日

鑑定しこれを証する
右は當協會に於て審査の結果保存刀剣と

一、刀銘 国貞（武蔵・新刀）

（切付銘）

両胴

村上彦左衛門共八山二打之
長二尺四寸六分

鑑定書

東京都 教育委員会
第 264325 号
平成5年6月15日

NBTHK Hozon Certificate of Designation

A sword designated as *Worthy of Conservation*
by the Society for the Preservation of the Japan Art Sword

Issued in the 1st year of Reiwa (2019), December 2nd

One, *Katana*

Mei (signature)

Kunisada (*Musashi Shintô*)

(*Kiritsukemei*)

Murakami Hikozaemon nijûhachiyama ni kore o utsu

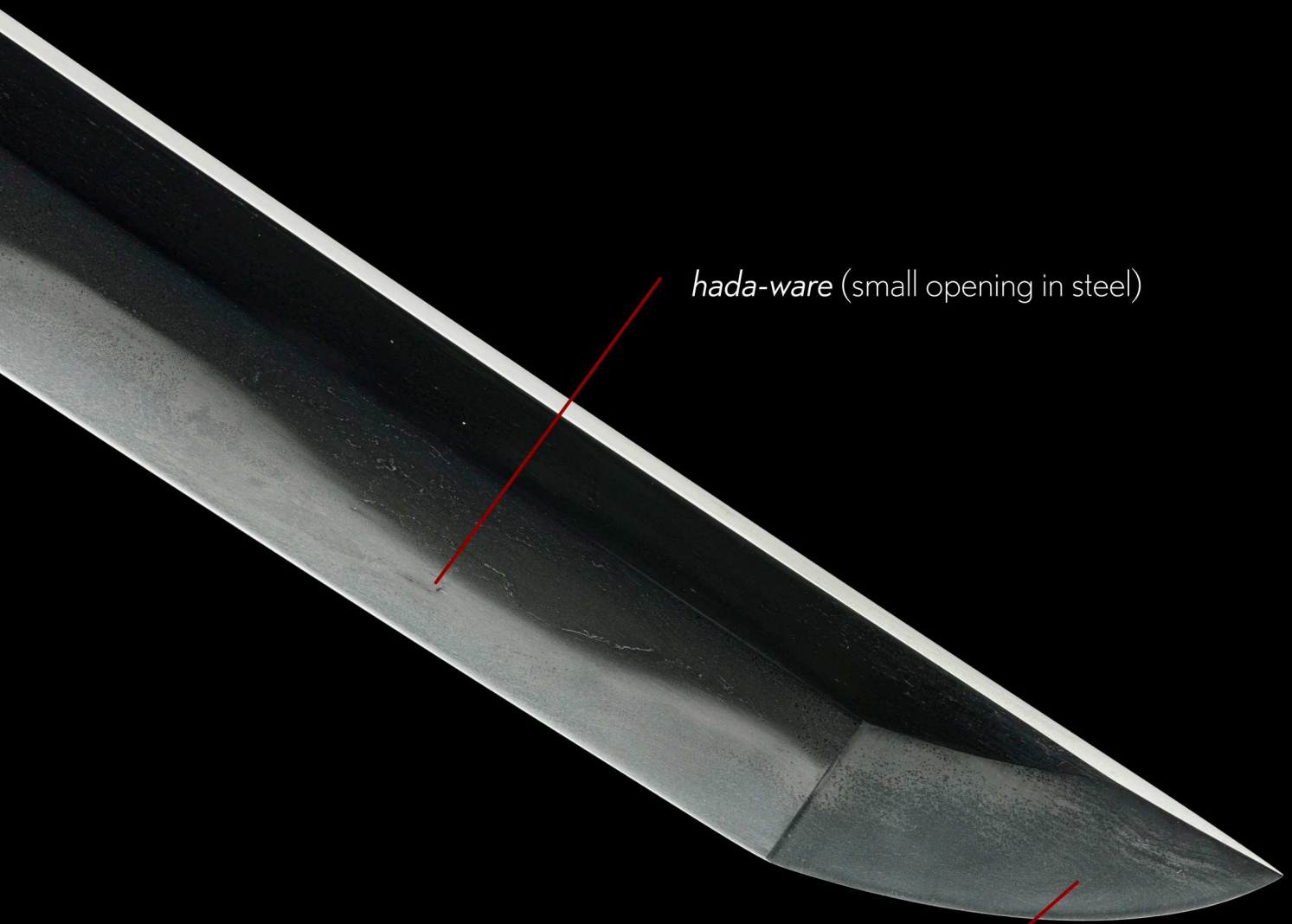
Nagasa (length)

2-shaku 4-sun 6-bu (74.5cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai
(NBTHK)




a close-up of the *boshi*



hada-ware (small opening in steel)

Fantastic concentrations of *nie crystals* inside the *boshi* form unique fingerprint-like patterns.



A close-up, diagonal view of a sword blade against a black background. The blade's surface is dark and shows various textures. A wavy line of light-colored crystals, known as hamon, runs along the length of the blade. Below this, there are areas with a burl grain pattern, which is a mixture of itame and mokume-hada. At the bottom, a bright white line indicates the inner core steel (shingane). Red lines connect the text labels to the corresponding features on the blade.

a gentle *notare* (wave) *hamon* in *nie-deki*
(visible crystals)

mixture of *itame* and *mokume-hada*
(oval and rounded burl grain pattern)

This sword has been polished a few
times over its life and shows some
areas of *shingane* (inner core steel).

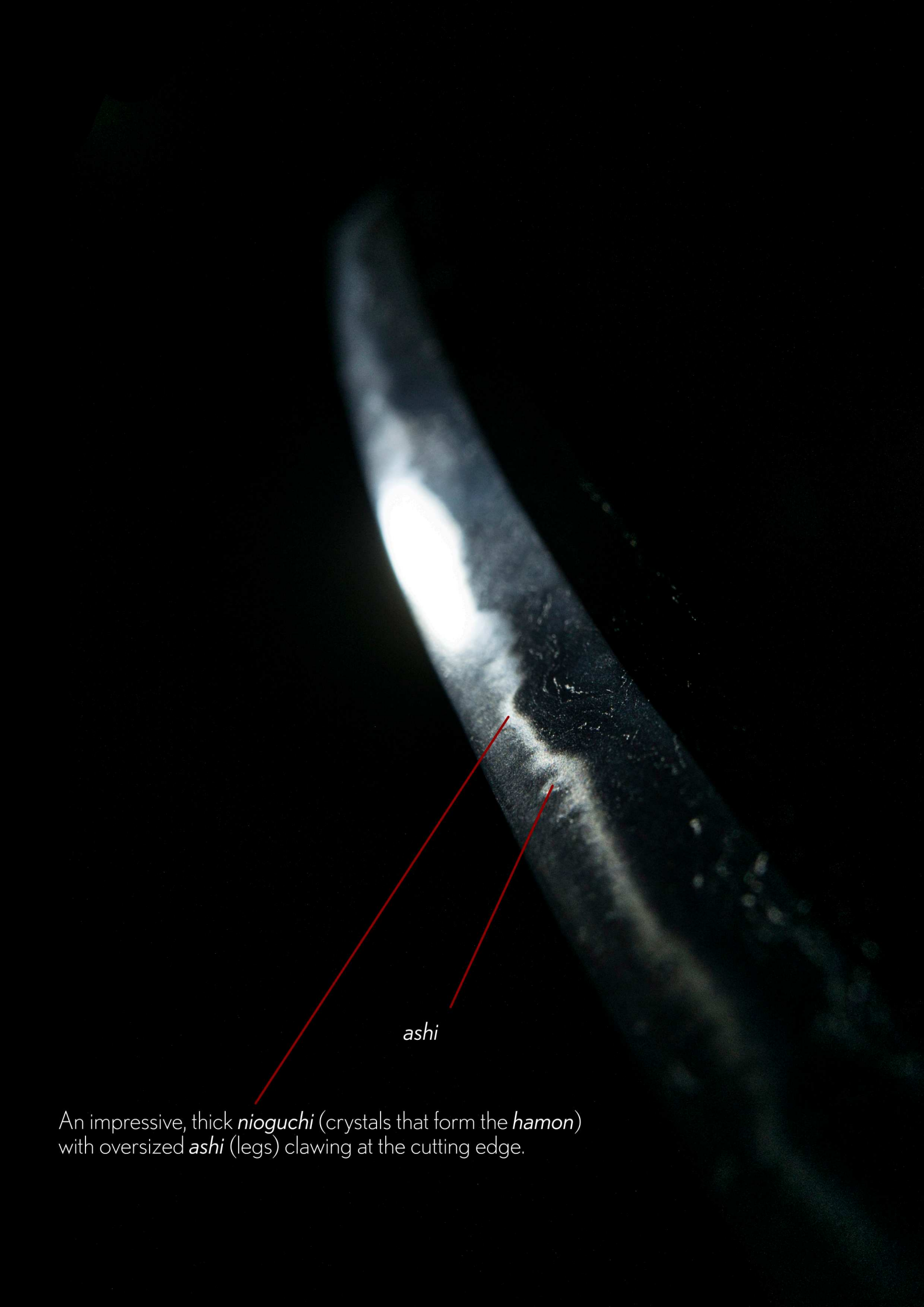
The *hamon* has a mysterious quality, unlike most swords from the early to middle Edo period.

It encapsulates the powerful presence of the sword.



sunagashi (sweeping formation)

kinsuji (dark lines in the hamon)



ashi

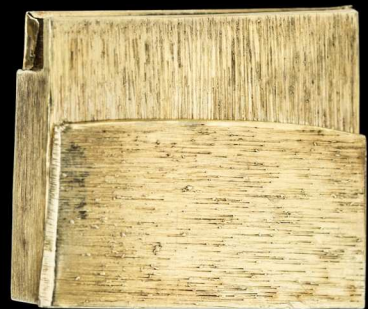
An impressive, thick *nioguchi* (crystals that form the *hamon*) with oversized *ashi* (legs) clawing at the cutting edge.

A mountain formation brings figurative unity to the location of the cutting test and the theme of the iron fittings.





Shirasaya
(protective scabbard)



gold-wrapped *habaki*
with straight file marks

kojiri (end cap)



The *saya* (scabbard) has a reinforced *kojiri* (end cap) with a faded gold inlay *kumo-raimon* (thunder and cloud) design.

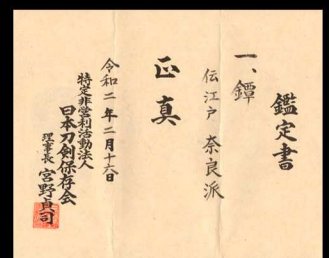


This polished iron *tsuba* with a serene setting of a rocky landscape features birds flying high above a person (priest) praying on a bridge, with temples, *matsu* (pine) trees, mountains and clouds in the background.

It was produced by a metalsmith from the *Nara school* during the Mid-Edo period, circa 1700~1780.

As the cutting test was performed at *Mt. Nijuhachi*, a rather serious scene such as the one artfully captured on this *tsuba* was likely to have been experienced.

A Kanteisho certificate of authenticity from the NTHK-NPO has been awarded to the *tsuba*.



(reverse)



As these holes were not needed to pass through a *kôzuka* or *kôgai*, a previous samurai owner (with financial means) decided to fill them in with *shakudô*.

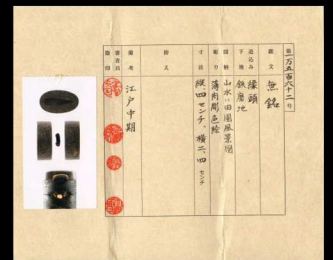
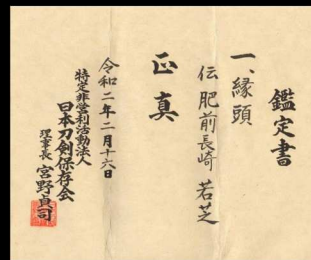
Shakudô literally means 'red copper'. It is an alloy of gold and copper, with the gold content varying between 3% and 5%. As it has a beautiful contrasting effect with gold, it was a widely used and prized raw material for sword fittings.

It's a subtle, yet significant touch to be appreciative of.



The contemplative mountainous landscape scene is further carved into the iron *fuchi-kashira* that has been attributed to the *Jakushi* school from *Nagasaki* in *Hizen* province.

This *fuchi-kashira* was also made during the middle Edo period (1700-1780) and is certified with NTHK-NPO Kanteisho.



iron *menuki* of a landscape scene





Brocade koshirae bag



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A Ko-Ichimonji Suke[yasu] Tachi

Early Kamakura period
circa (1184~1222)

nagasa: 69.0cm
sori: 2.4cm

62nd NBTHK Jûyô Tôken
October 18, 2016



ITEM# UJKA380

SOLD, FOR REFERENCE PURPOSES ONLY

A KO-ICHIMONJI SUKE-YASU TACHI

SIGNED, EARLY-KAMAKURA PERIOD (1184~1222)

Swordsmith:	<i>Suke-yasu (signed 助 Suke with 安 yasu difficult to decipher, suriage nakago)</i>
Measurements:	Length: 69.0cm Curvature: 2.4cm Motohaba: 2.90cm
Jihada:	<i>Itame mixed with mokume, nagare, ji-nie, chikei, and jifu-utsuri</i>
Hamon:	<i>Nie-laden ko-midare-chô, mixed with ko-chôji that widens along the monouchi area, plus ample ko-ashi and yô, kinsuji and sunagashi, and yubashiri that appears parallel to the yakigashira</i>
Bôshi:	<i>Suguha with a short ko-maru-kaeri, the haki-ura side shows nijûba</i>
Certificate:	62nd NBTHK Jûyô Tôken (a sword designated as Profound and Important)
Authentication:	Sayagaki by Tanobe Michihiro (Tanzan-sensei in May 2020)
Included:	Shirasaya, sword bag, stand, kit, description

This extremely precious 800-year-old *tachi* from the *Ko-Ichimonji school* marks the transition point from the workmanship of the *Ko-Bizen school* that began in the Heian period (938~1184) to the more exuberant swords of the *Fukuoka-Ichimonji school* (1184~1293).

Early works of the Fukuoka-Ichimonji School from the start of the Kamakura period (1184~1222) are referred to collectively as *Ko-Ichimonji*. Blades in this classification reflect Ko-Bizen characteristics in terms of shape, body and hamon, but are enriched with novel elements such as *ko-chôji* (small clove blossom buds).

This *tachi* has retained its two-character signature *Sukeyasu* (note: the second character for *yasu* is difficult to read), a seemingly unknown smith who likely worked with *Ko-Ichimonji Sukenari*. The blade has a wide, healthy, masculine shape with a *jifu-utsuri* and *ko-gunome hamon* that together radiate an icy-blue hue. This sword is meant for the connoisseur who will forever appreciate its understated elegance and the rare, historical reference piece that it represents.



Saki-kasane: 3.4mm

Kissaki: 2.50cm

Saki-haba: 1.80cm

Moto-kasane: 5.4mm

Nagasa: 69.0cm

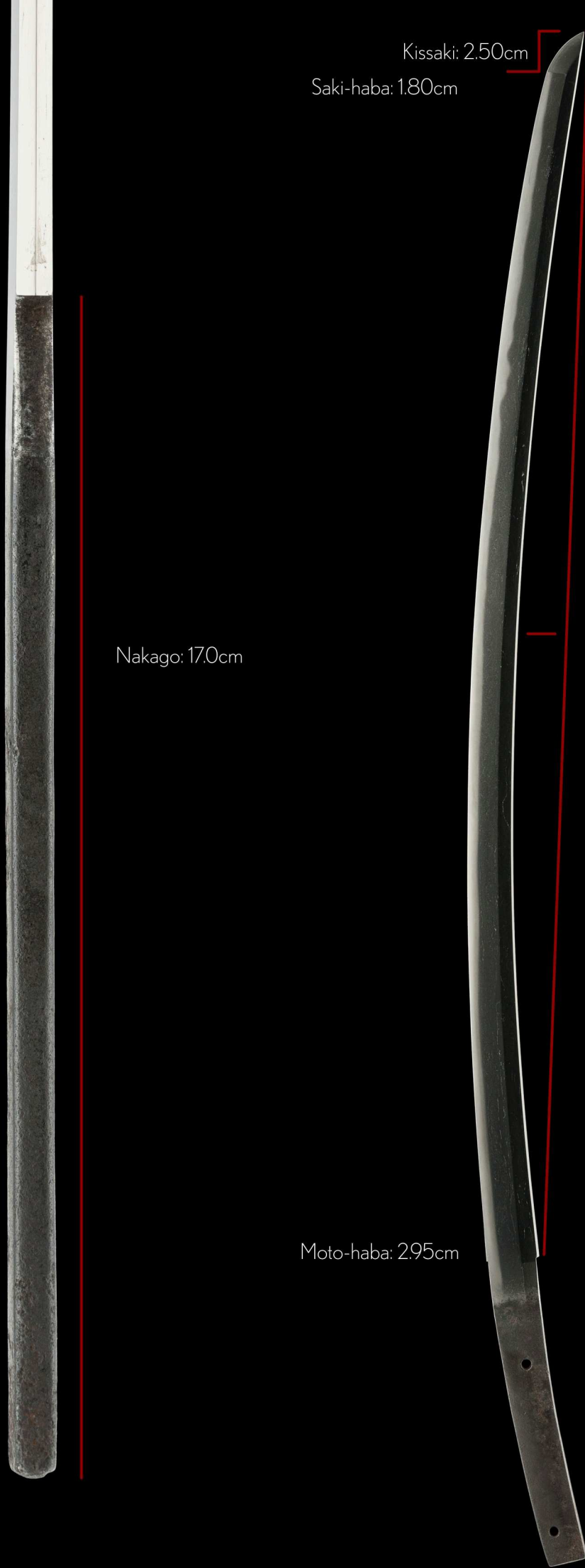
Nakago: 17.0cm

Sori: 2.40cm

Omosa: 635g

Moto-haba: 2.95cm

Mekugi-ana: 2



This tachi is a magnificent example from the *Ko-Ichimonji school*, circa 1184~1222.

Unlike the vast majority of swords from this era that have been greatly shortened (thus losing the signature), this sword has retained its two-character signature *Sukeyasu* (although the second character for *yasu* is difficult to decipher).

There are no documented records of Sukeyasu of the Ko-Ichimonji school, thus this may be the only example of its kind. Given the characteristics of the blade, it is likely he worked closely with *Ko-Ichimonji Sukenari*.

The sword is remarkably healthy, retaining a wide, strong shape and the condition of the *jiba* (body) is outstanding.

Koshizori

(curvature at the waist)

This term is used to describe swords with its deepest point towards the base of the blade, designed to be carried on horseback. It is the iconic shape of swords from the late Heian to mid-Kamakura period.

Note how the curvature flows deeply into the nakago because the sword has only been moderately shortened, retaining the signature of swordsmith, Suke-yasu.



Location: *Bizen province*

School: *Ko-Ichimonji*

Swordsmith: *Suke [yasu]*

suriage-nakago (shortened tang)

katte-sagari

(right-handed, downward slanting file marks)

This upper hole was created after the sword shortened from a long horse-back ridden tachi to a katana that could be drawn from a standing position. As the signature was retained, this process is called *suriage-nakago*.

The distance between these two holes is about 9cm. Adding this number to the current length of the cutting edge (69cm), we can deduce that this sword originally had a cutting edge of about 78cm. This was a typical length of tachi during the early Kamakura period.

This is very likely the original *mekugi-ana* (hole).

助 (Suke)

[安] (yasu)

~9cm





The first character of the signature is 助 (*Suke*). The second character, although looks likely to be 安 (*yasu*), is more challenging to read thus the NBTHK has left it open to interpretation.



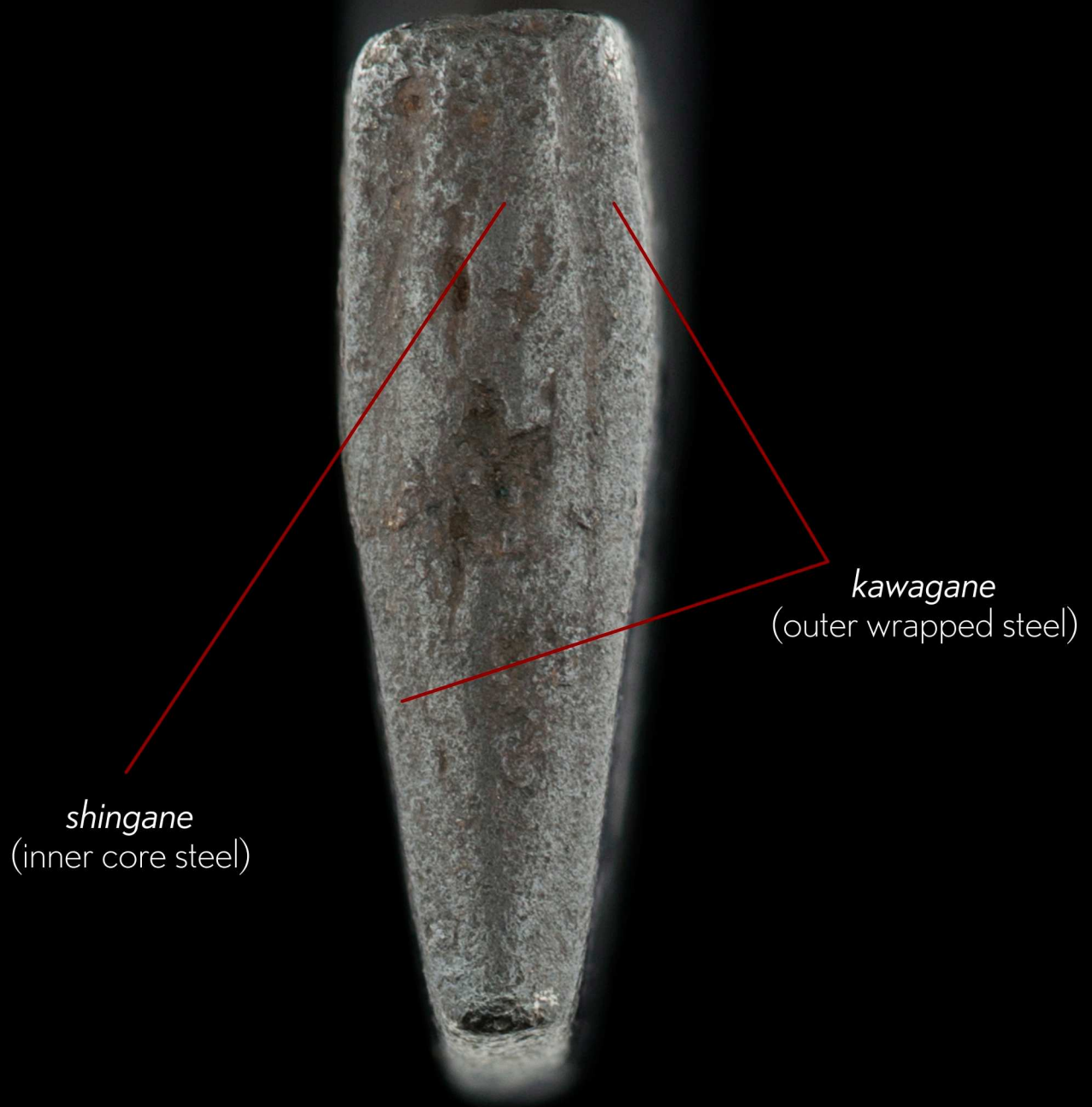
The graceful *koshi-zori* curvature of the sword extends rather dramatically into the stout nakago.

This is an aspect to cherish as most *o-suriage* (greatly shortened) tachi lose their base curvature.

2mm curvature

There is great meatiness to the *nakago*. For a sword that is 800 years old, it's impressively thick, healthy and strong.

(*ura*, reverse)



shingane
(inner core steel)

kawagane
(outer wrapped steel)

Cross section of the *nakago*, view from butt end.

20201662

重要第一三九五二號

指定書

一太刀 銘 助□(古一文字)

一口

法量 長さ六九〇程 反り二四程

形状 鎗造庵棟 身幅広め 元先の幅差ミ 反り高め 小鋒

鍛 板目に杵・流れ肌 交じり 地沸ツミ 地景入り 地斑映り 立フ

刃交 小乱れ主調に小丁子 交じり 小足・葉入り 沸ツミ

金筋・砂流しかかる

帽子 直ぐに小丸 短く返る

茎 磨上 鑢目勝手 下がり 目釘孔二

右者當協會に於て審査の結果

重要刀劍に指定す

平成二十八年十月十八日

公益財団法人日本美術刀劍保存協會

會長 酒井忠久



大蔵 教育委員会
第 124424 号
平成23年10月18日

Jûyô Certificate No. 13952
Shiteisho (指定書) Certificate of Designation

One Tachi

Mei (signature): Suke □ (助□) (Ko-Ichimonji School 古一文字)

Measurements

nagasa 69.0 cm, sori 2.4 cm

Description

Keijo: *shinogi-zukuri*, *iori-mune*, wide *mihaba*, noticeable taper, deep *sori*, *ko-kissaki*

Kitae: *itame* that is mixed with *mokume* that features plenty of *ji-nie*, much *chikei*, and a *jifu-utsuri*

Hamon: *nie-laden ko-midare-chô* that is mixed with *ko-chôji*, many *ko-ashi*, *yô*, *kinsuji*, *sunagashi*

Bôshi: *sugu* with a short *ko-maru-kaeri*

Nakago: *suriage*, *katte-sagari yasurime*, two *mekugi-ana*

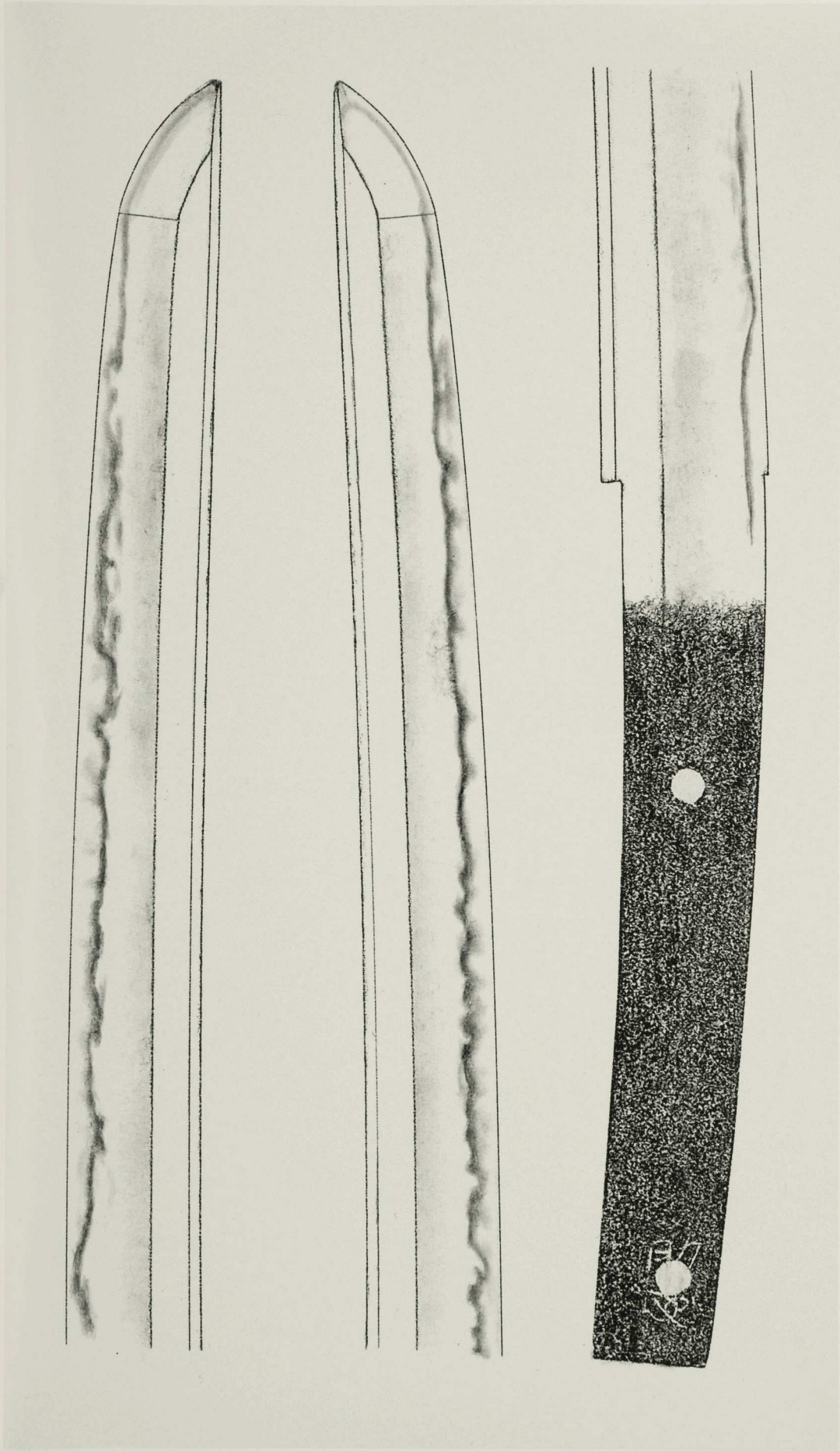
According to the result of the shinsa committee of our society we judged this work as authentic and rate it as *jûyô-tôken*.

October 18, 2016

[Foundation] Nihon Bijutsu Tôken Hozon Kyôkai, NBTHK

[President] Sakai Tadahisa (酒井忠久)

太刀 銘 助□(古一文字)



Designated as *Jūyō-Tōken* (a profound and important sword)
at the 62nd *jūyō shinsa* held on October 18, 2016

Tachi, mei: Suke- 助 (助)
Ko-Ichimonji School, (古一文字)

Measurements

nagasa: 69.0cm

sori: 2.4cm

motohaba: 2.95cm, *sakihaba*: 1.8cm

kissaki-nagasa 2.5cm, *nakago-nagasa* 17.0cm, *nakago-sori* 0.2 cm

Description

Keijo: *shinogi-zukuri*, *iori-mune*, wide *mihaba*, noticeable taper, normal *kasane*, deep *sori*, *ko-kissaki*

Kitae: *itame* that is mixed with *mokume* and *nagare* and that features plenty of *ji-nie*, much *chikei*, and a *jifu-utsuri*

Hamon: *nie-laden ko-midare-chō* that is mixed with *ko-chōji* and that widens along the *monouchi* area, in addition we see many *ko-ashi* and *yō*, *kinsuji* and *sunagashi*, and *yubashiri* that appear parallel to the *yakigashira*

Bōshi: *sugu* with a short *ko-maru-kaeri*, the *haki-ura* side shows *nijūba* that appear parallel to the *fukura*

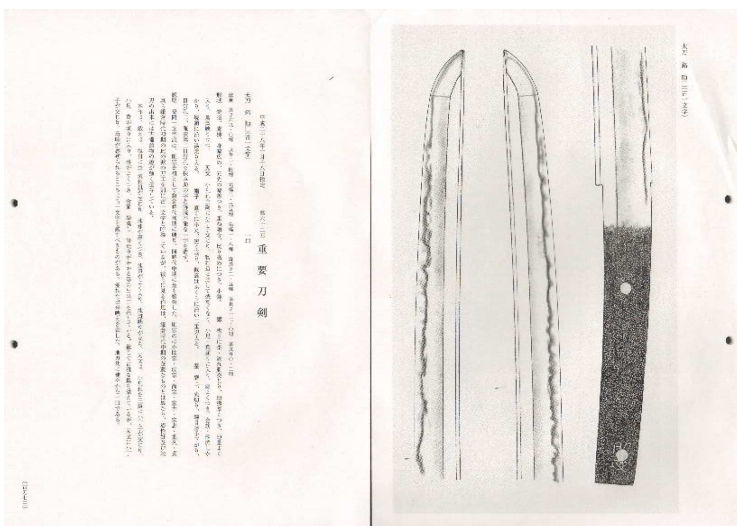
Nakago: *suriage*, *kirijiri*, *katte-sagari yasurime*, two *mekugi-ana*, the *haki-omote* side bears in between the *mekugi-ana* the character for *Suke* but the second character is illegible

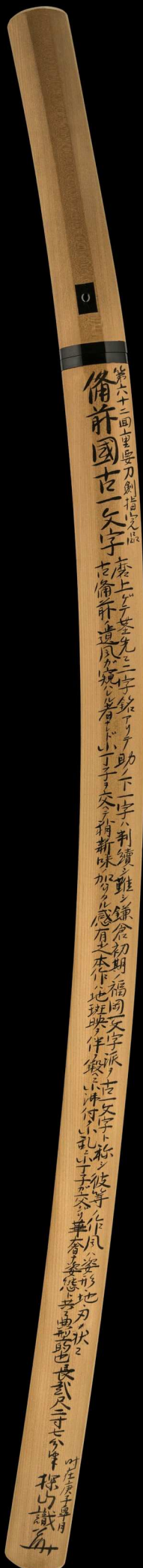
Remarks

The *Fukuoka-Ichimonji School* was founded by *Norimune* (則宗) in the early Kamakura period and experienced its prime during the mid-Kamakura period. Apart from *Norimune*, other notable early Kamakura period *Ichimonji* smiths were *Sukemune* (助宗), *Narimune* (成宗), *Naomune* (尚宗), *Muneyoshi* (宗吉), *Munetada* (宗忠), *Shigehisa* (重久), and *Sadazane* (貞真), and collectively are referred to as *Ko-Ichimonji*. Their workmanship differs from the more flamboyant mid-Kamakura period *Ichimonji* style and both the blade structure and *jiba* interpretations are by trend noticeably closer to the *Ko-Bizen* style of workmanship.

This blade shows a *kitae* in *itame* that is mixed with *mokume* and *nagare*. It contains plenty of *ji-nie*, considerable amounts of *chikei*, and *jifu-utsuri*. The *hamon* is a *nie-laden ko-midare-chō* that is mixed with *ko-chōji*, numerous *ko-ashi* and *yō* and features *kinsuji*, *sunagashi*, and *yubashiri*. That is, we clearly recognize a classical interpretation [of the *Ko-Bizen* school] but at the same time due to the presence of *ko-chōji*, we recognize an innovative approach whereupon we find ourselves between *Ko-Bizen* and *Ichimonji*. Thus, the attribution must be to the *Ko-Ichimonji school*.

The blade is of an excellent *deki* (workmanship) and has a very healthy *jiba*; *ji* (body) and *yakiba* (hardened area).





第六十二回重要刀剣指定品
Dai rokujûni-kai jûyô-tôken shiteihin
Designated as jûyô-tôken at the 62nd jûyô-shinsa

備前國古一文字
Bizen no Kuni Ko-ichimonji
Ko-ichimonji from Bizen province

磨上ゲテ茎ニ二字銘アリテ助ノ下一字ハ判讀シ難シ鎌倉初期ノ福岡一文字派ヲ古一文字ト称シ彼等ノ作風ハ姿形・地・刃ノ状ニ古備前ノ遺風ガ窺ハレル者ナレド小丁子ヲ交ヘテ稍新味ノ加ハリタル感有之本作ハ地斑映ヲ伴フ鍛ヘニ小沸付ク小乱ニ小丁子ガ交ジリ華奢ナ姿態ト共々典型的也

Suriagete nakago-saki ni niji-mei arite Suke no shita ichiji wa handoku shi gatashi Kamakura shoki no Fukuoka-chimonji ha o Ko-ichimonji to shôshi karera no sakufû wa sugata-katachi, ji, ha no jô ni Ko-Bizen no ifû ga ukagawareru mono naredo ko-chôji o majiete yaya shinmi no kuwawaritaru kan kore ari honsaku wa jifu-utsuri o tomonau kitae ni konie tsuku ko-midare ni ko-chôji ga majiri kyasha na shitai to tomo ni tenkeiteki nari

This blade is *suriage* (shortened), however, it retains a two-character signature at the tip of its tang, although the second character below that of *Suke* is difficult to decipher. Early works of the *Fukuoka-Ichimonji School* from the early Kamakura period are referred to as *Ko-Ichimonji*. Blades in this classification reflect Ko-Bizen characteristics in terms of *sugata, ji*, and *ha*, but are enriched with novel elements such as *ko-chôji*. The kitae of this blade is accompanied by a *jifu-utsuri*, and shows a *ko-midare* in *ko-nie-deki* that is mixed with *ko-chôji*. It is thus an exquisite example of the *Ko-Ichimonji school*.

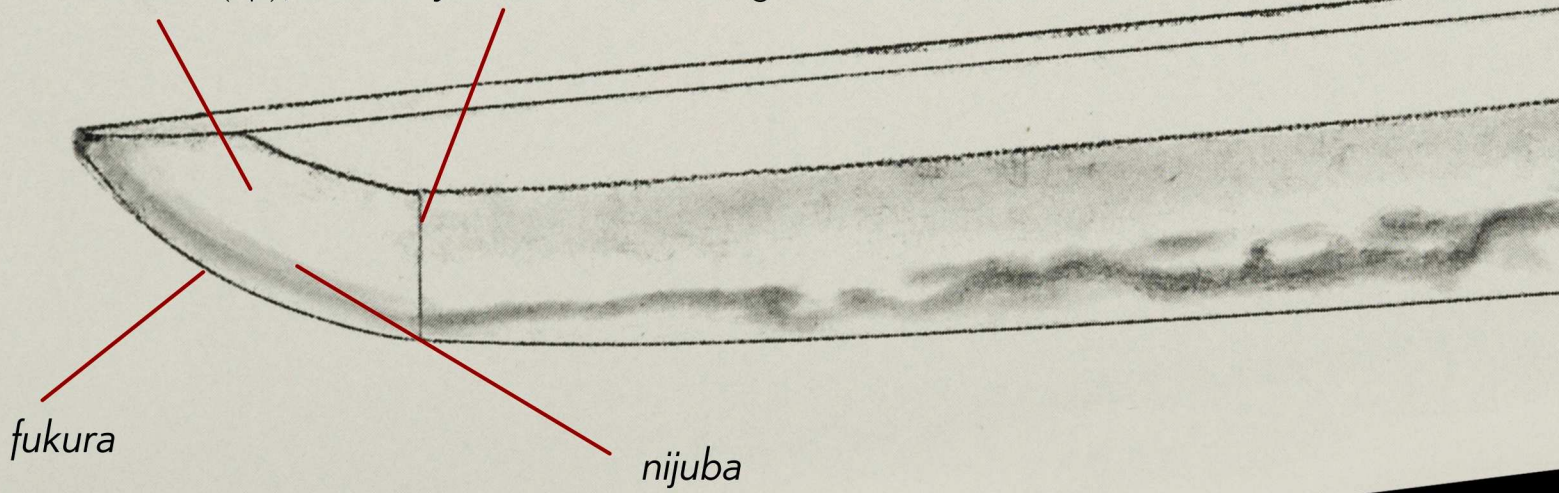
長貳尺二寸七分半
Nagasa 2-shaku 2-sun 7-bu han
Blade length ~ 69.0cm

時在庚子臯月探山識「花押」
Jizai kanoe-ne satsuki Tanzan shirusu + kaô
Written by Tanzan [Tanobe Michihiro] in May in the Year of the Rat of this era (2020) + monogram





kissaki (tip), starts at *yokote* - the dividing line where *kissaki* starts



On the *haki-omote* side of the blade (the opposite of where this tachi is signed), the *boshi* (temper line in the *kissaki*) displays *nijuba*, a rare treat in which a second line runs parallel not only to the main hamon but also runs parallel to the *fukura* (the curved portion of the *kissaki*).

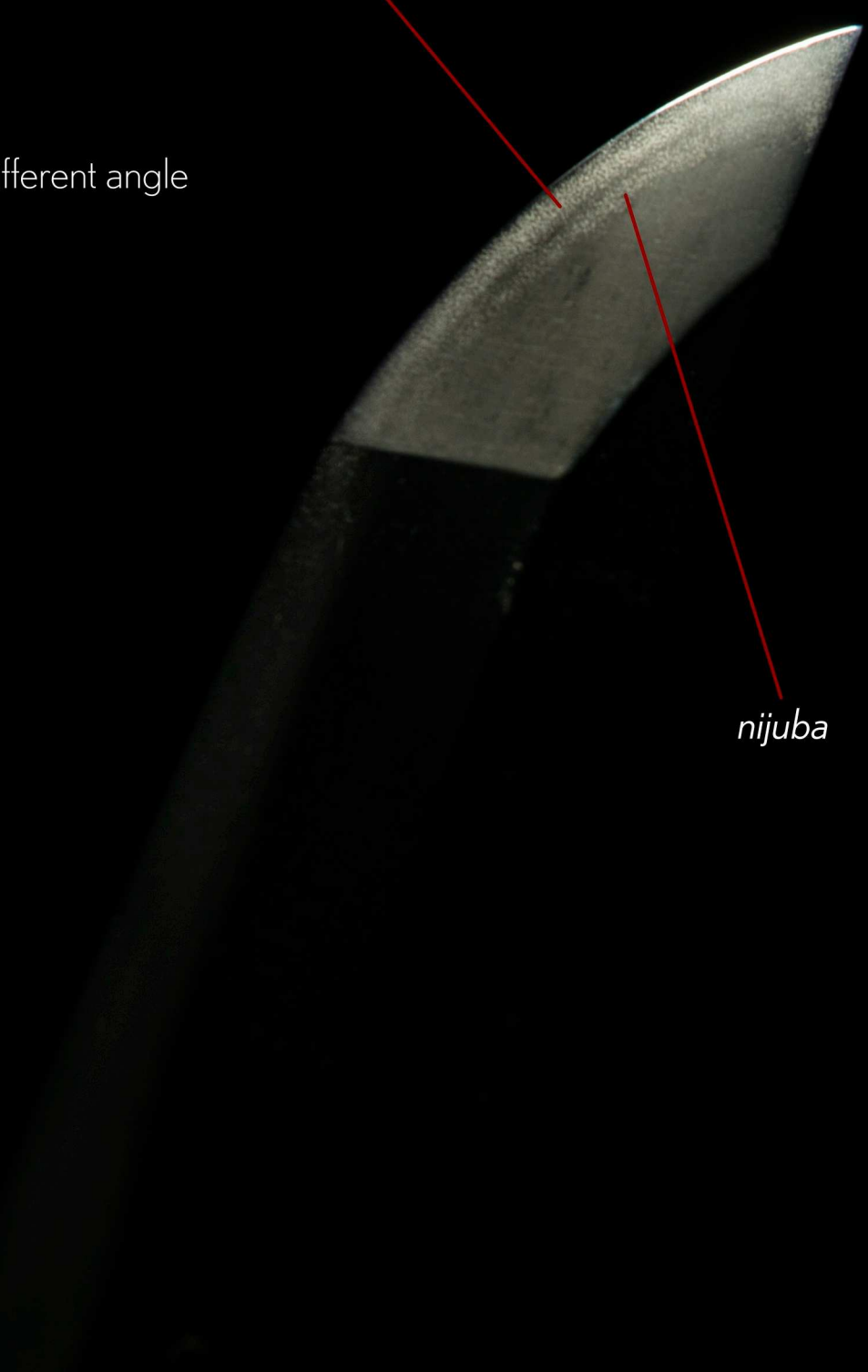
nijuba - a bright *suguha* that curls back in *ko-maru* formation)



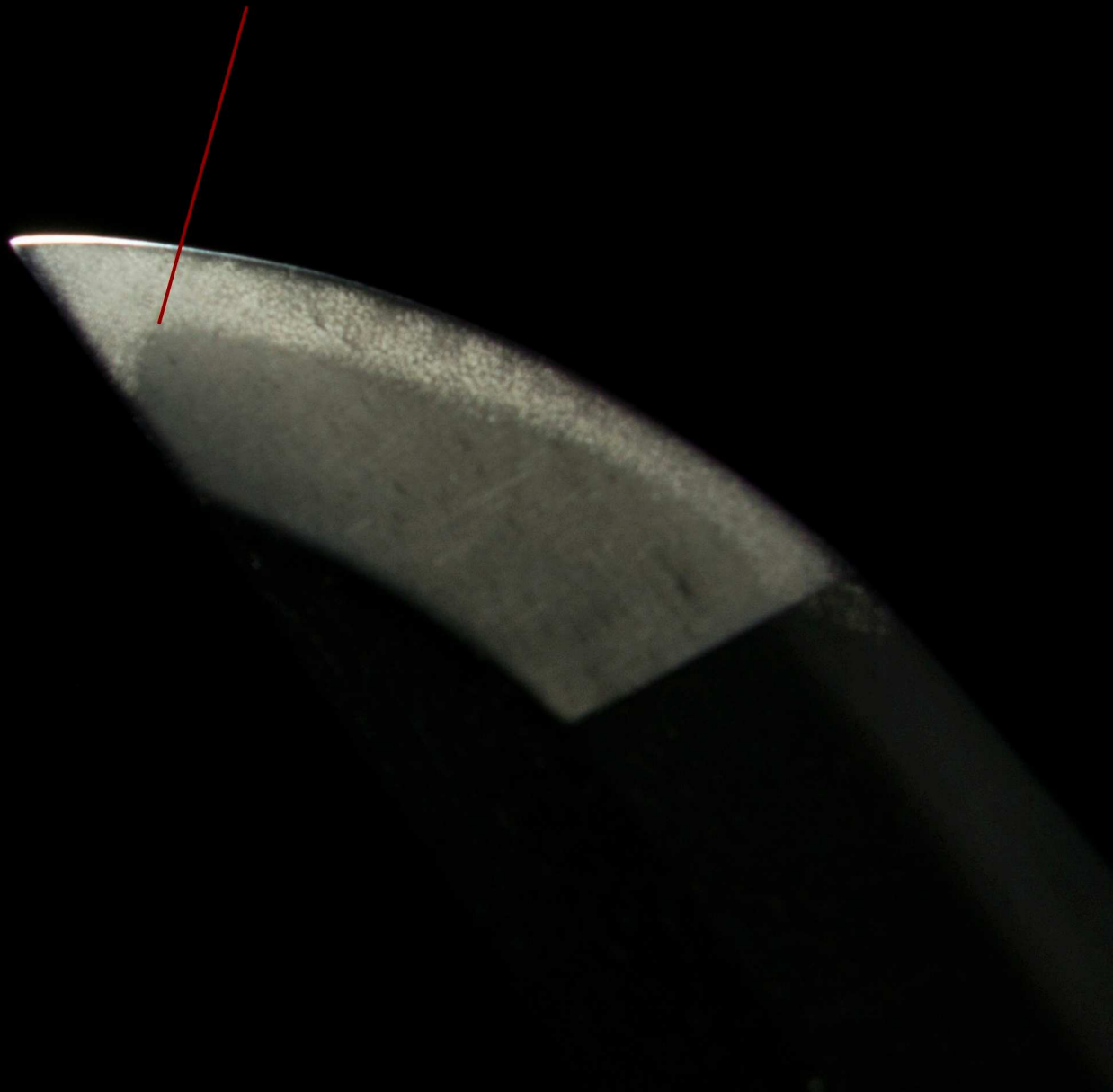
hamon line

nijuba from a different angle

nijuba

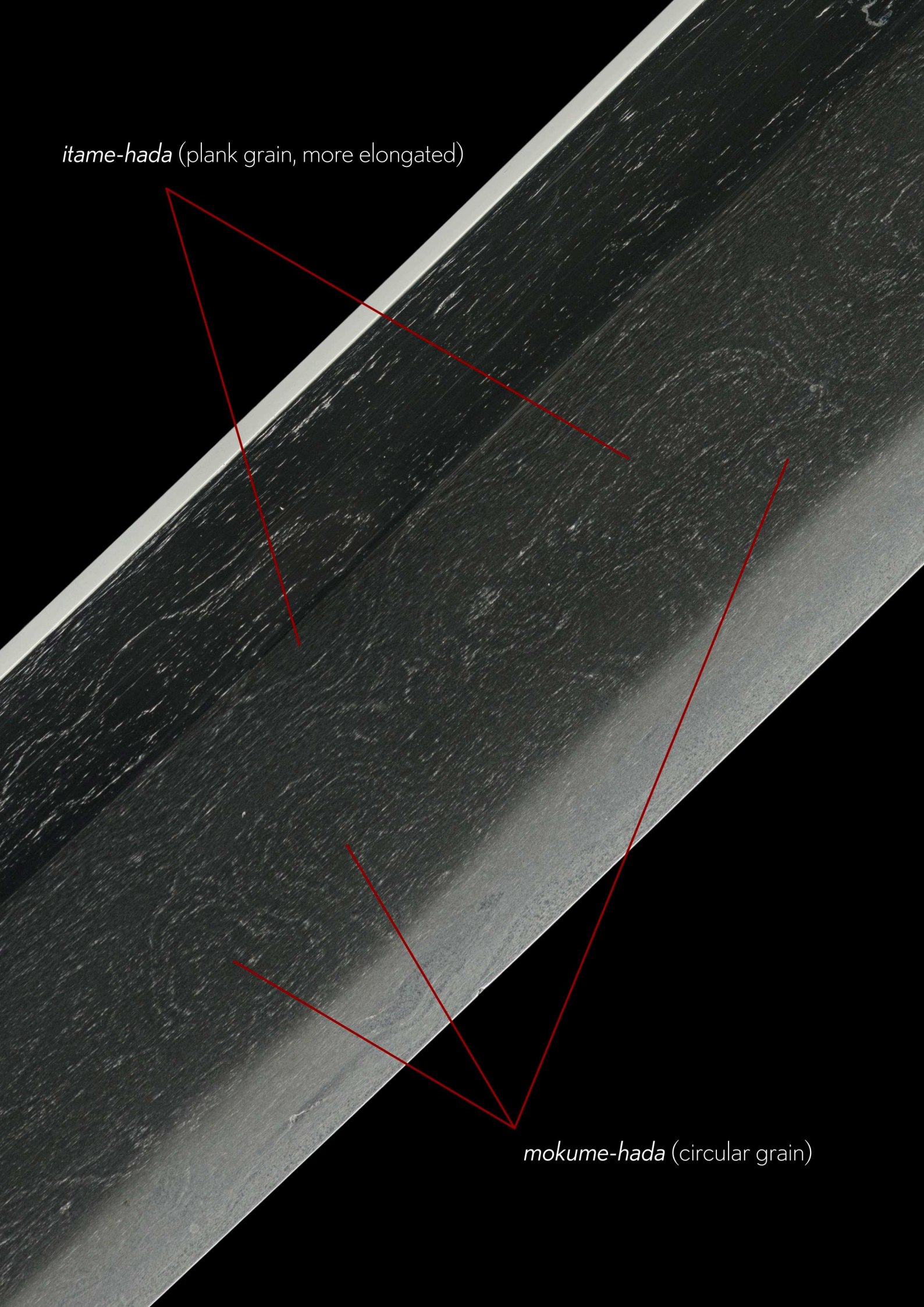


On the *omote* (signed side of the blade), the *boshi* is *suguha* (straight) with *ko-maru kaeri* (short return/curl back).



itame-hada (plank grain, more elongated)

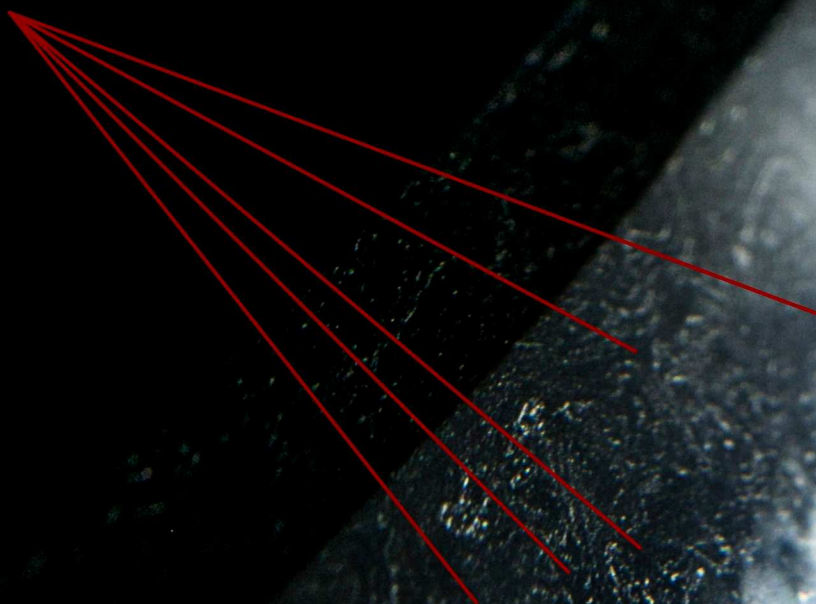
mokume-hada (circular grain)

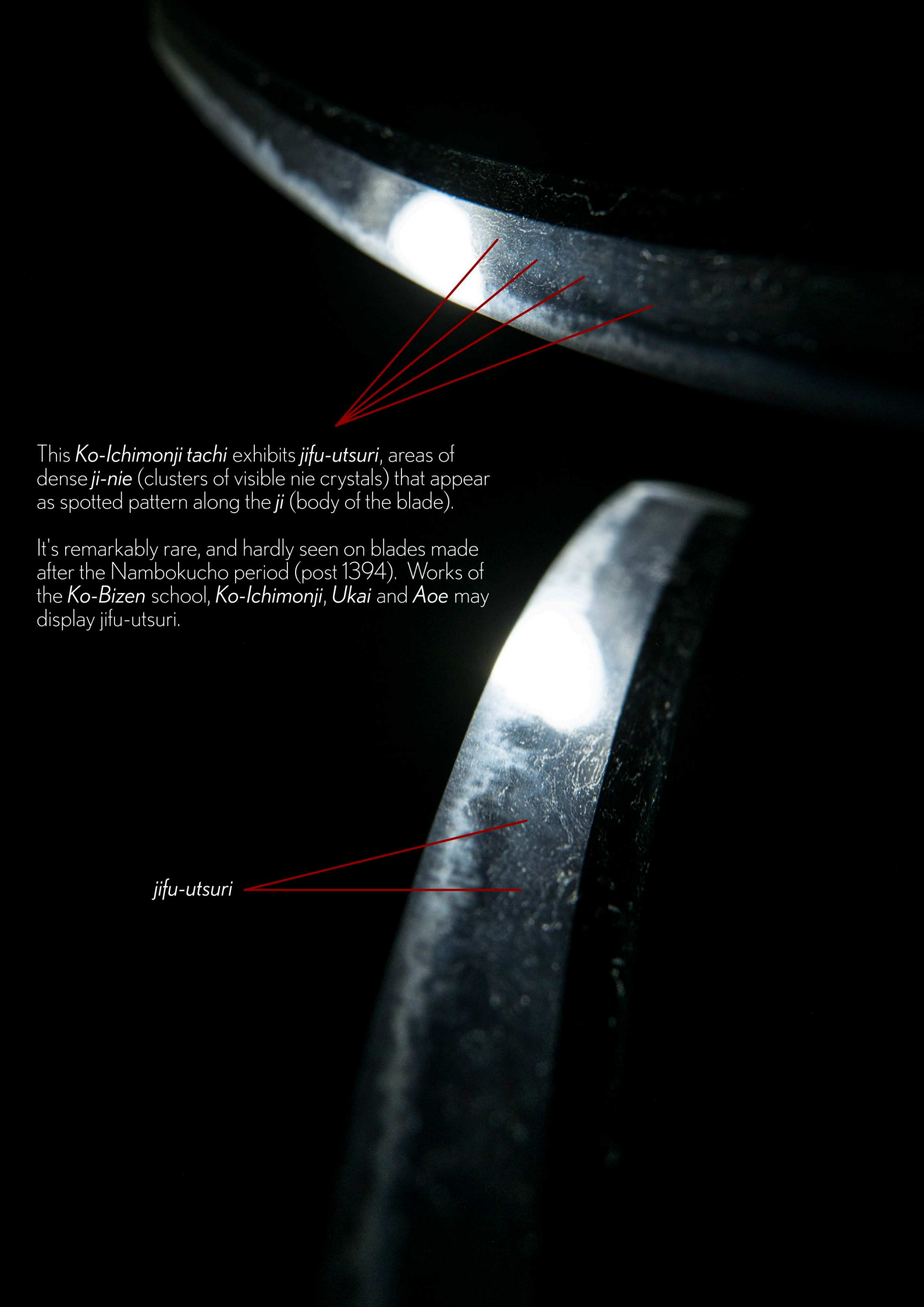


Flowing *nagare-hada*
(wavy wood grain pattern)

Beautiful rounded burl grain
mokume-hada in the *shinogi-ji*.

Marvellous dark swirling lines of crystallised
nie known as *chikei* weave effortlessly
through the body of the sword.



A close-up photograph of a sword blade, showing the curved edge and the textured surface. The blade is dark, with a bright, circular highlight reflecting light. Several red lines point from the text to specific areas on the blade's surface, highlighting the jifu-utsuri patterns.

This *Ko-Ichimonji tachi* exhibits *jifu-utsuri*, areas of dense *ji-nie* (clusters of visible nie crystals) that appear as spotted pattern along the *ji* (body of the blade).

It's remarkably rare, and hardly seen on blades made after the Nambokucho period (post 1394). Works of the *Ko-Bizen* school, *Ko-Ichimonji*, *Ukai* and *Aoe* may display *jifu-utsuri*.

jifu-utsuri



The presence of *jifu-utsuri*, which is deep in colour and has an interesting hardening effect, coupled with the rich blue hues of the *jigane* (surface steel) gives the blade an *icy appearance* as the above magnified image illustrates.

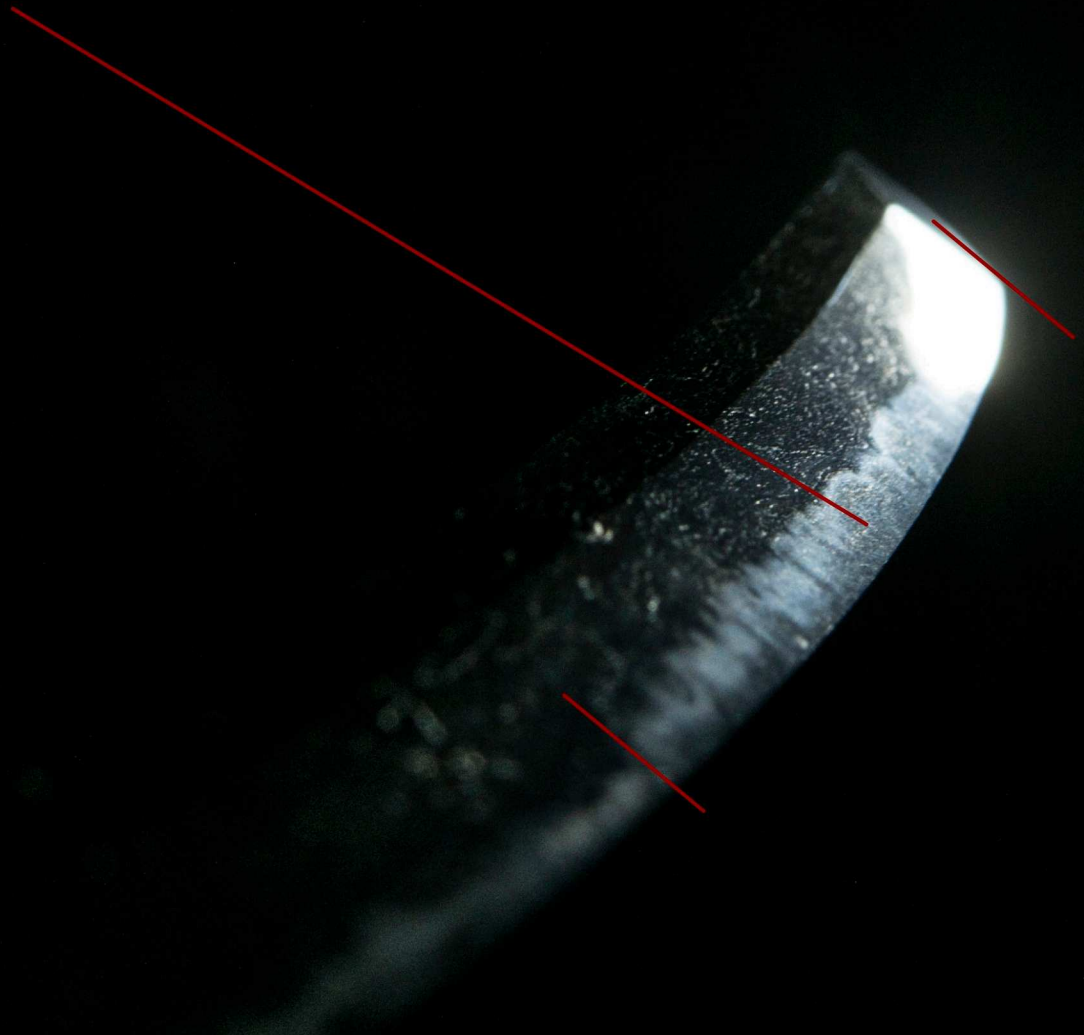


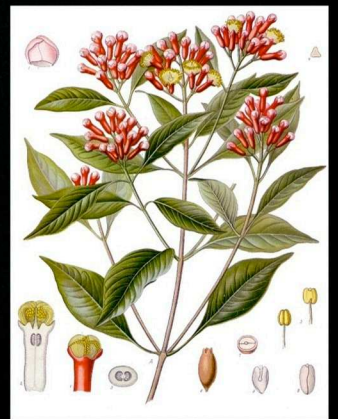
A close-up photograph of a curved metal surface, likely a hamon, showing a dark, textured surface with numerous small, bright, irregular spots. A red line points from the text to a specific area of these spots. A red rectangular box highlights a section of the surface below the text.

A close-up of *jifu*, dense spots of *ji-nie*, which can be seen resting on top of the *hamon*.



In the *monouchi* (the hitting area of the blade), which is about 10-15cm below the *yokote* line, the hamon noticeably widens creating a larger *yakiba* (hardened area of the blade). This hard portion of the blade has a higher density of carbon atoms that allow it to become sharper with a skilled polisher.





clove blossom buds

ko-choji

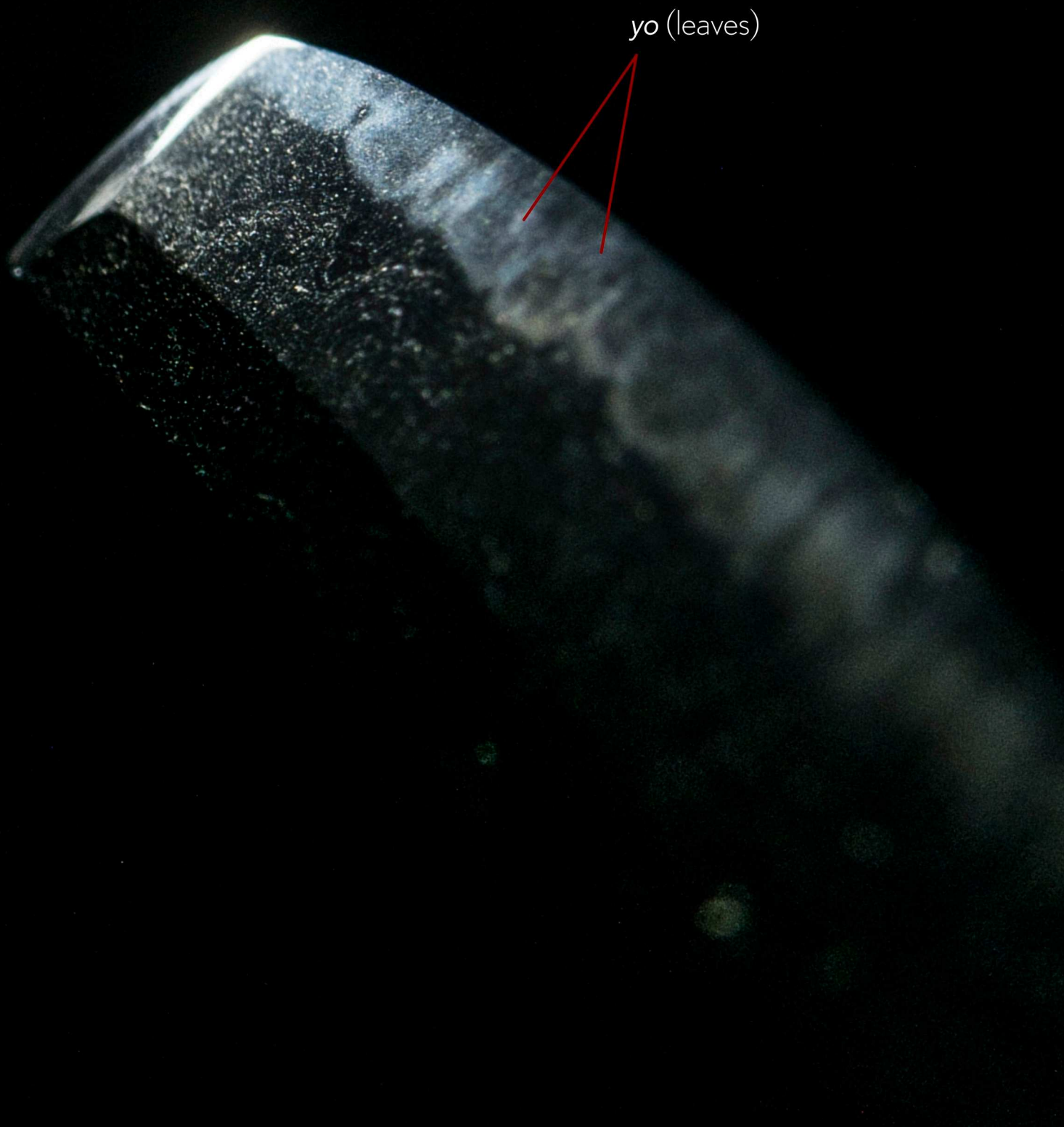
The presence of *ko-choji* (small clove blossom buds) in the hamon marks a subtle yet important transition point from the *Ko-Bizen school* to the *Ichimonji school*, whereby the hamon became more exuberant in nature.

In the Ko-Ichimonji (early Ichimonji) stage, the hamon still shows a degree of restraint in comparison to later Ichimonji works by (for example) the *Hatakeda school*.

This tachi is a wonderful reference piece marking the evolution of the Bizen tradition.

Yo (leaves) are beautiful clusters of nie crystals inside the *yakiba* (hardened area), falling toward the cutting edge.

When these spots are in the *ji* (body) they are referred to as *tobiyaki*.






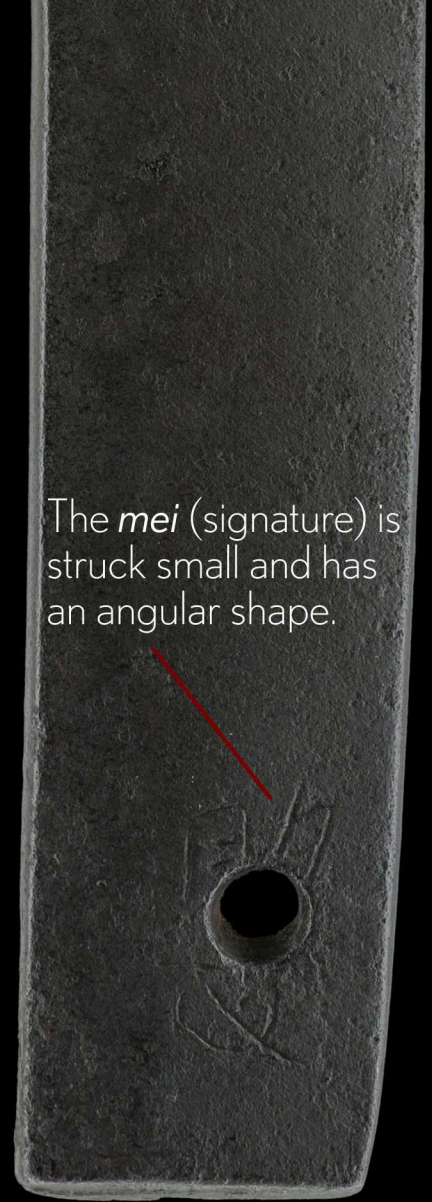
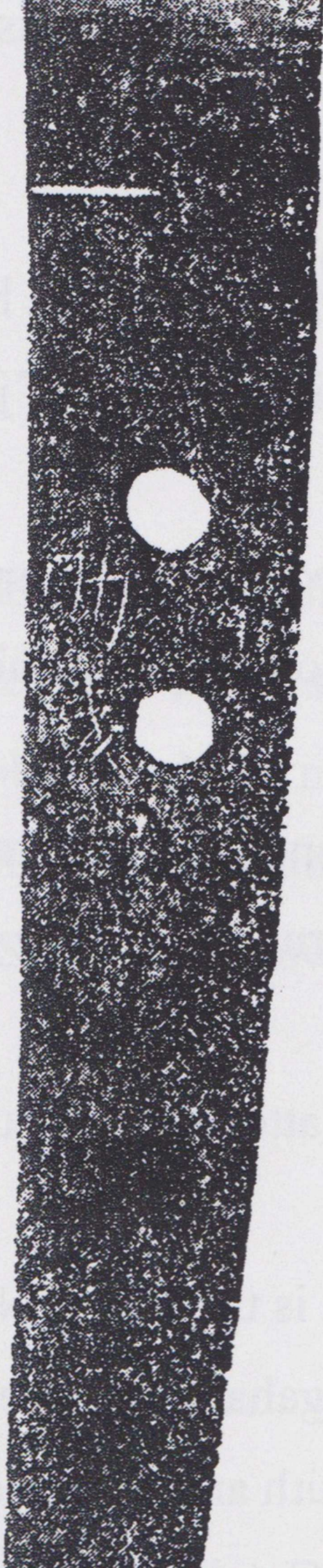
A serrated line of *kinsuji* cracks through the hamon.



A large number of *ko-ashi* (small legs) extend out towards the *ha-saki* (edge of the blade).



These droplets of nie crystals are collectively called *yubashiri*, which literally means '*running hot water*'. They are very similar to *tobiyaki*, however, they have a more transparent look, thus the hot water (*yu*) analogy.

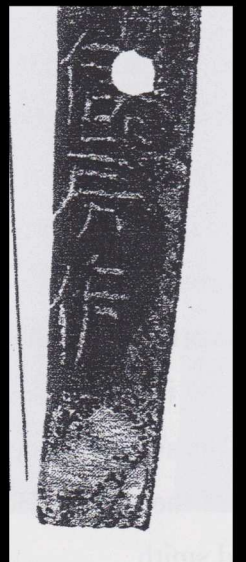


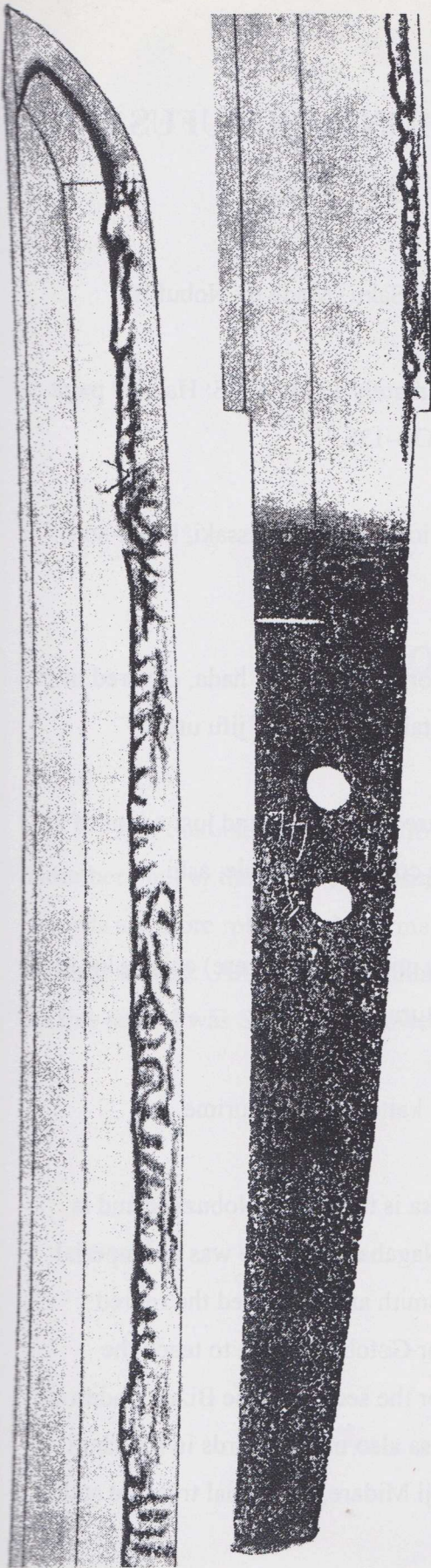
The *mei* (signature) is struck small and has an angular shape.

A close-up of the two signatures of Sukenari and Suke[yasu].

The Ko-Ichimonji group tends to have *mei* that are struck small (such as these) or struck large. Ko-Ichimonji *mei* are also more *angular* when compared with works of the Ko-Bizen school.

Example of a large *mei* by *Ko-Ichimonji Nobufusa*. The angular style can also be recognised.





KO-ICHIMONJI SUKENARI

1184 - 1219

- Tachi Mei: Sukenari
- Date: Approximately 1207. CCE: Hawley page 658 - SUK-1227.
- Length: 76cm iori mune koshi-sori, ko-kissaki.
- Jitetsu: Tightly forged ko-itame hada, covered in jinnie, chikei and contains midare utsuri.
- Hamon: Sugu based ko-choji midare, containing nie, kinsuji sunagashi, yo and nioi ashi.
- Boshi: Sugu ending ko-maru with short return.
- Nakago: Slight suriagi machi-okuri.
- Remarks: Sukenari is the son of Sukeyuki. His original name was Sukeshide. He is a "Bankaji" one who was called to assist and teach the retired Emperor. This slender but shortened sword has a graceful, high koshi-sori that falls off as the curvature moves toward the point. This feature is seen in both Ko-Bizen and Ko-ichimonji work. You will also note the stroke ichi carved into the nakago above the mekugi-ana. The signature is carved on the tachi mei side of the sword. He was also an Imperial Guard smith.

Date of registration:
October 18, 2011

tachi

Suke

'yasu'

平成貳拾參年拾月拾八日交付
大阪府教育委員会
登録記号番号 大阪第 124424 号
銃砲刀剣類登録証

備考	銘文	目くぎ穴	反り	長さ	種別	刀
	(裏) な (表) 助 し	2	2	68	た ち	剣類
		個	メ イト ルチ	メ イト ルチ	全 長	種 別
		口 径	銃 身 長	全 長	種 別	銃
			メ イト ルチ	メ イト ルチ		砲

員会

This is the legal *torokusho* (registration card) for the *Sukeyasu tachi* in Japan.

There are a few points of interest on this card. First, this card was registered fairly recently in 2011. This suggests it was likely a long lost family property or potentially re-imported from abroad.

The recorded signature on the card is *Sukeyasu* with 'yasu' in a box. In this instance, the official registrar could read the kanji character 安, although it is not completely clear.

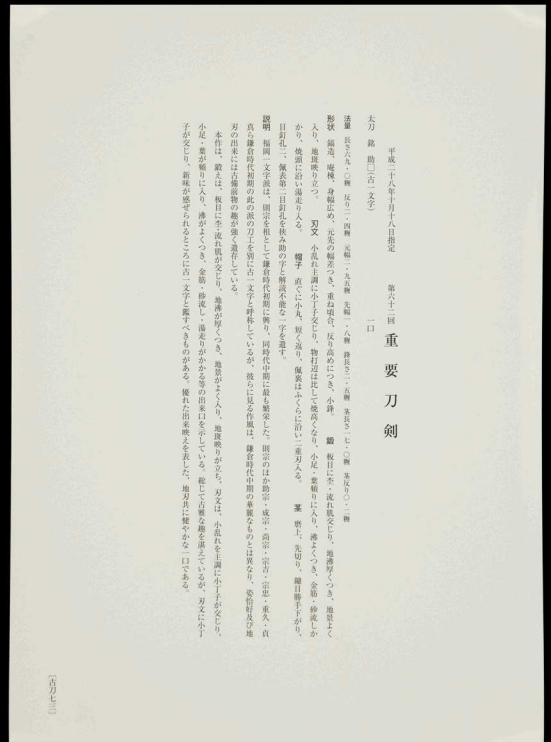
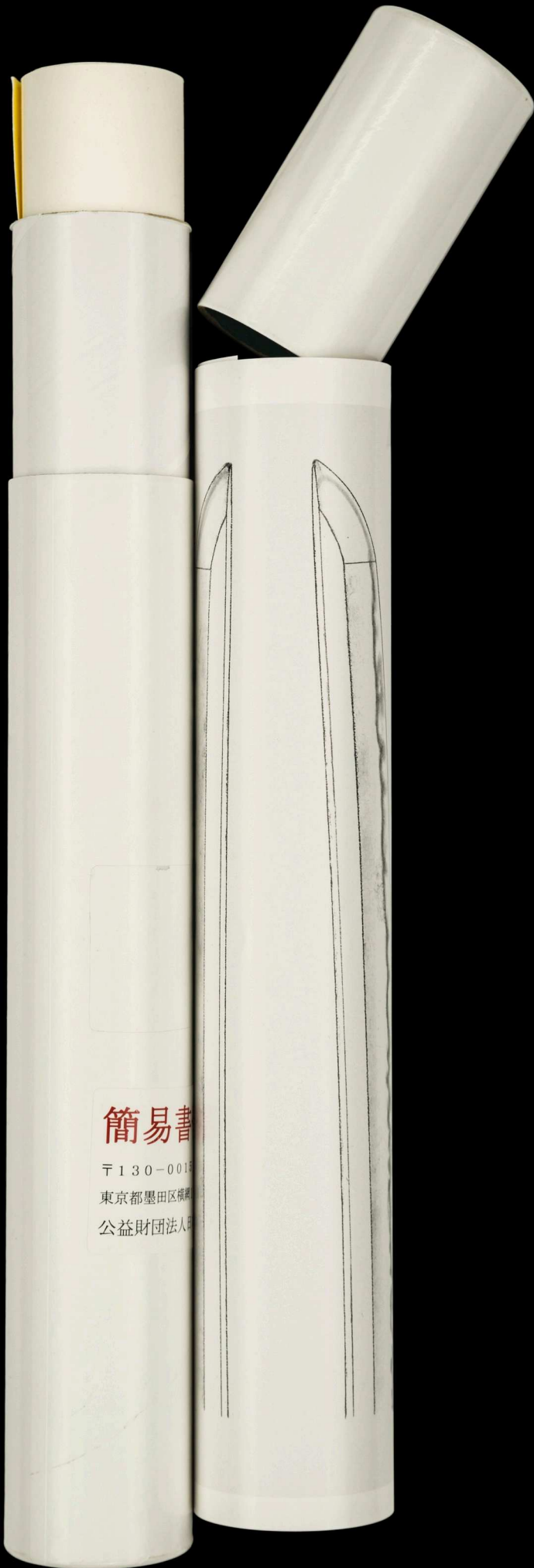
In instances where the remnants of a character exists on a *nakago* but is illegible, the registrar will draw an empty box.



Shirasaya
(protective scabbard)



gold-wrapped *habaki* with
straight file marks

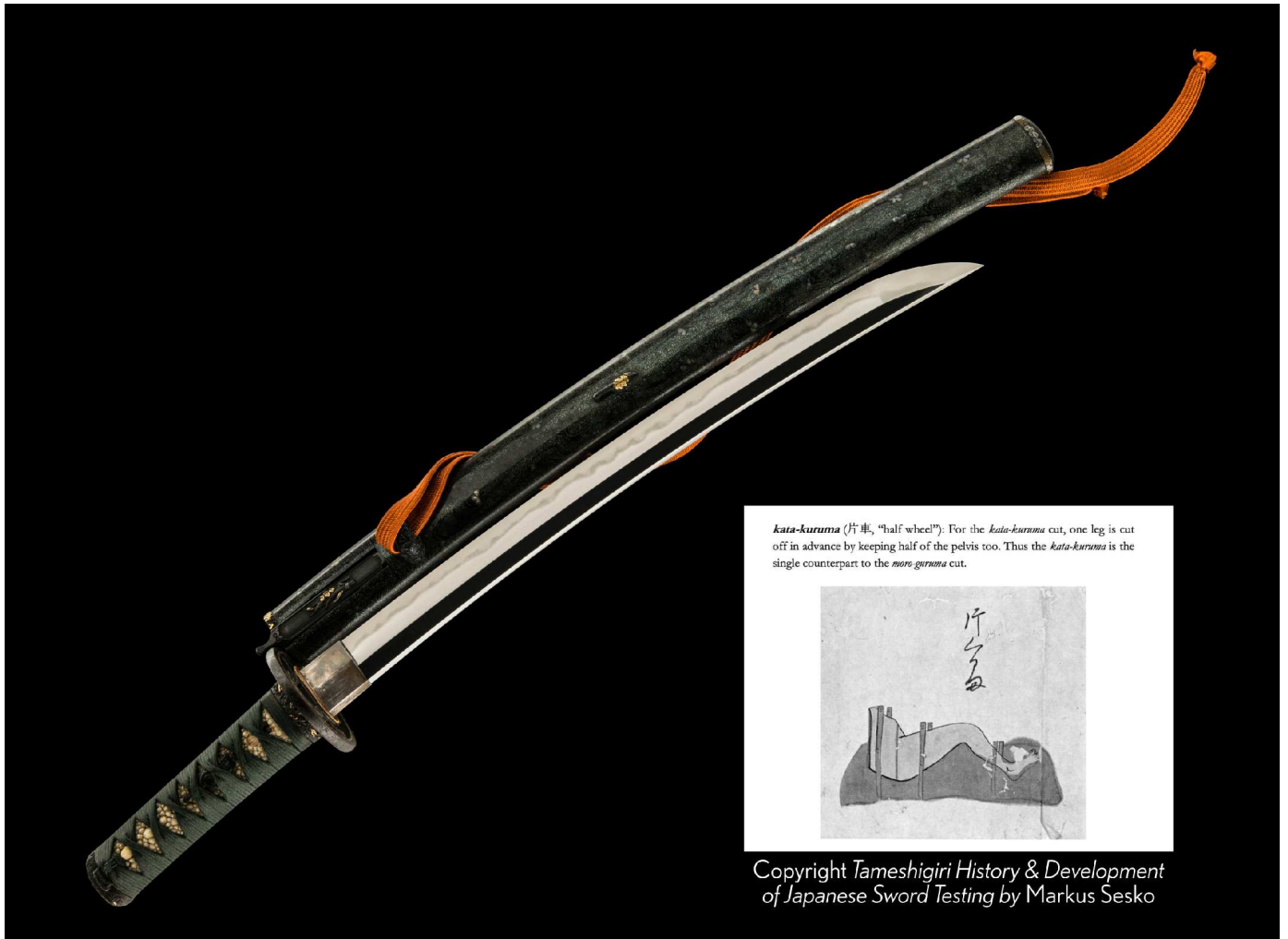


62nd NBTHK Juyo Token Certificate Traditionally rolled in protective tube.

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