

JAPANESE
SWORD
CATALOGUE 36

RELEASED:
APRIL 29/2021

ALL SOLD

(COVER PHOTO)

ITEM# UJKA384

A BIZEN KATSUMITSU KATANA
DATED AUGUST 1505 WITH
'COUNTLESS BODIES CUTTING TESTED'
APRIL 28, 1656 BY YAMANO NAGAHISA



ANTIQUÉ JAPANESE SWORDS

CATALOGUE 36
RELEASED: APRIL 29, 2021

THE FOLLOWING PAGES CONTAIN DESCRIPTIONS AND IMAGES OF GENUINE ANTIQUÉ JAPANESE SWORDS THAT WERE SOLD IN CATALOGUE 36. THIS IS A REFERENCE DOCUMENT.

PLEASE CONTACT ME AT SERVICE@UNIQUEJAPAN.COM TO BECOME INFORMED ON OUR LATEST ACQUISITIONS AND YOUR NAME WILL BE ADDED TO OUR VIP EMAILING LIST.

WE HAVE SERVICE OFFICES IN TOKYO, JAPAN AND NEAR LONDON, ENGLAND.

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

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

Hello everyone,

I hope you are all in fine spirits. Well, 2021 has been an eventful year thus far. At the end of January, Donna and I contracted Covid-19 and spent much of February regaining energy levels. I had this weird vinegar taste/smell that took a while to shake off, Donna had more of a persistent tickling cough. We had prepared ourselves for this virus possibility by eating even better, getting good rest, going for walks and daily cold showers in the morning (well only I do that!). The old adage that *the best defense is a good offense*. It all helped, and we have both essentially recovered. Then on March 4th I hit 50 years of age, ouch! No matter what anyone says, this is a big year mentally. I shall strive to keep healthy, enjoy family and friends and serving you all with evermore love and appreciation.

Ten swords that make up Catalogue 36, and each one of them means business. No weak swords here my friends. I think with all this 'be scared narrative' that the media tends to project on us, I am fighting back with collectible swords that marry exquisite form with *serious* function. *When a sword calls your name, reach out to me to claim it.*

We start off with a katana by *jô-saku* swordsmith Kiyomitsu from *Etchû* province, crafted during the mid-1600s. This handsome katana features a bright *chû-suguha* with the unique Yamato-den characteristic of *kuichigaiba*. Its antique koshirae encourages *personal rebirth through the fiery phoenix* and the *value of perseverance* via the four gentlemen depicted on the tsuba. This sword has a wise and inspirational message that resonates particularly well today.

Tantô crafted during the shinto period (1600~1780) are extremely rare. Crafted by *Hizen* maestro *shôdai* Masahiro, the next sword is a tantô forged with a magnificent *gunome-choji-midare hamon* over a tightly forged *konuka-hada*. This is a highly collectible tantô housed in a gorgeous matching wave-themed *Late Edo koshirae* with its *tsuka* (hilt) wrapped in *baleen* representing the high social status of the samurai that it once belonged to. Don't miss this chance.

Sword number three is a powerful and prized *Jûyô Tôken katana* by explorer *Rai Kuniyasu*, originally from *Yamashiro province (Kyotô)* who founded the *Chiyojuru school* in beautiful *Echizen province* in 1337. Its wide *mihaba* (width) that extends the full length of the blade and the substantial *koshizori* gives an overall sense of grandeur. The *jigane* has a mysteriously darkish tone with a beaming *suguha hamon* that is ready for action. This is a healthy katana approaching 700-years-of-age that's ripe for collectability. A great potential custom koshirae project.

The next piece is a meaty katana by *Katsubei Kunishige*, the final working smith of the *Mizuta school's Ôtsuki branch*. The aggressive *hamon* exudes a grittiness that contains plenty of *sunagashi* and *kinsuji* that can best be described as *Mizuta Soshu*. The new caretaker of this katana will be given the option to select the lacquer finish on the new scabbard that we're going to custom build for the sword. A personal touch for a terrific samurai sword.

A fearless katana signed and dated to *August 1505 by Bizen Katsumitsu* is the sword featured on the cover of this catalogue. On April 28, 1656 master sword tester *Yamano Ka'emon no Jô Nagahisa*, with this very katana, *severed through countless bodies with ease*. The blade features a bright *suguha hamon* with razor-like *ko-ashi* and illuminating *midare-utsuri*. The sword is further housed in a splendid *handachi koshirae* with matching fittings from the late Edo period. This is a super sharp and wickedly rare *tameshigiri* (cutting test) samurai sword that takes no prisoners.

For those looking for a Kamakura period classic, look to the *Jûyô Tôken ô-wakizashi* attributed to the famed *Fukuoka-Ichimonji school*, circa mid-1200s. The NTHK-NPO took the attribution a step further to that of *Ichimonji Norifusa* – a national treasure swordsmith. This sword features a beautiful swirling *itame-hada* overlaid with *midare-utsuri* and an icy blue *jigane*. Holding the sword quietly under the light captures both the heart and imagination.

The following sword switches gears to June 1995 by *Akamatsu Taro Kanetsugu* with a faithful *Bizen utsushi* of maestro *Minamoto Kiyomaro*. It's a big, healthy sword with a huge *kissaki* and attractive *koshirae* with a spider *tsuba*. The final available sword is a wakizashi crafted by *shôdai Tadayuki* who worked in *Bungo province* during the *Hôei era* (1704~1711). The sword is housed in a unique 300-year-old *Inrô-kizami koshirae*. The last two swords are *sold reference pieces* by superstar *Hizen Yukihiko* and a splendid *shinshinto* cutting test katana by *Fujishima Tomoshige*.

Thank you as always for your genuine support and passion for life.

We look forward to serving you.

Pablo

Warm regards,

Pablo Kuntz
April 2021



With Hannah (my daughter) on my 50th!

INDEX OF JAPANESE SWORDS

ITEM#	SWORDSMITH & TYPE	CM	CERTIFICATE	ERA / PERIOD	PRICE
ujka386	A KIYOMITSU KATANA	70.5	Tokubetsu Hozon	Kanbun (1661~1673)	SOLD
ujta051	A MASAHIRO TANTO	26.9	Tokubetsu Hozon	Kan'ei era (1624~1644)	SOLD
ujka389	A RAI KUNIYASU KATANA	71.2	NBTHK Jûyô Tôken	Jôji era (1362~1368)	SOLD
ujka387	A KUNISHIGE KATANA	71.5	Tokubetsu Hozon	Kanbun (1661~1673)	SOLD
ujka384	A KATSUMITSU KATANA	62.3	Tokubetsu Hozon	Eishô era (Aug 1505)	SOLD
ujwa248	ICHIMONJI Ô-WAKIZASHI	57.5	NBTHK Jûyô Tôken	Kenchô era (1249~1246)	SOLD
ujka342	A KANETSUGU KATANA	74.0	N/A	Heisei era (June 1995)	SOLD
ujwa251	A TADAYUKI WAKIZASHI	44.0	Tokubetsu Hozon	Hôei era (1704~1711)	SOLD
ujka385	A TOMOSHIGE KATANA	71.2	Tokubetsu Hozon	Genji era (June 1864)	SOLD
ujka367	A YUKIHIRO KATANA	70.0	Tokubetsu Hozon	Kanbun (1661~1673)	SOLD

ALL PRICES ARE IN US DOLLARS

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.

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

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

WE ACQUIRE SWORDS ON A REGULAR BASIS AND CAN SOURCE SWORDS FOR COLLECTORS SEEKING A SPECIFIC SMITH AND/OR SCHOOL. PLEASE INQUIRE ABOUT OUR LATEST ARRIVALS THAT MAY NOT BE LISTED IN THE CATALOGUE.

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



Recently Completed Custom Daisho Koshirae
A Daimichi Katana (circa 1573)
A Tsuguhira Wakizashi (circa 1741)

A gorgeous matching theme with swimming *koi* (carp) and *Hokusai*-esque crashing waves.



ITEM# UJKA386

SOLD

AN ETCHÛ KIYOMITSU KATANA

SIGNED, EARLY EDO PERIOD (KANBUN TO ENPÔ ERA: 1661~1681)

- Swordsmith:** *Etchû Kiyomitsu* (清光)
Measurements: **Length:** 70.5cm (*ubu*) **Curvature:** 1.3cm **Moto-haba:** 2.98cm
Jihada: *Well-forged mokume hada with pronounced chikei within a darkish jigane*
Hamon: *Bright and consistent chû-suguha with kuichigaiba and ko-ashi*
Certificate #1: **NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon** (Especially Worthy of Preservation)
Certificate #2-4: **NTHK-NPO Kanteisho** (*tsuba, fuchi-kashira & koshirae designated as Authentic*)
Fujishiro rank: **Jô-saku** (ranked as a superior swordsmith)
Cutting ability: **Wazamono** (maker of sharp swords)
Included: Shirasaya, Edo koshirae, fabric bags, stand, kit, booklet, description

SOLD

Superior swordsmith Kiyomitsu was the son of *Koshirô Shigekiyo* and given the name *Gorôzaemon* with some sources listing his first name as *Yaroku*. He lived in Etchû province, modern-day Toyama prefecture - a picturesque coastal city on Japan's main island, Honshu. His swords have a lovely darkish *jigane* (steel hue), often seen on swords crafted on the Sea of Japan.

This katana features a bright and consistent *chû-suguha* (straight hamon) with the unique Yamato-den characteristic of *kuichigaiba* on the upper third of the blade. Its antique koshirae from the late Edo period is most inspirational; through the rebirth tale of the fiery phoenix, the valiant importance of perseverance via the four gentlemen that all leads to the good luck omen of *nasu* (eggplants). This is a shinto period samurai sword with a wise, old soul.



Saki-kasane: 3.8mm

Moto-kasane: 6.4mm

Omosa: 655g

Kissaki: 2.92cm

Saki-haba: 1.89cm

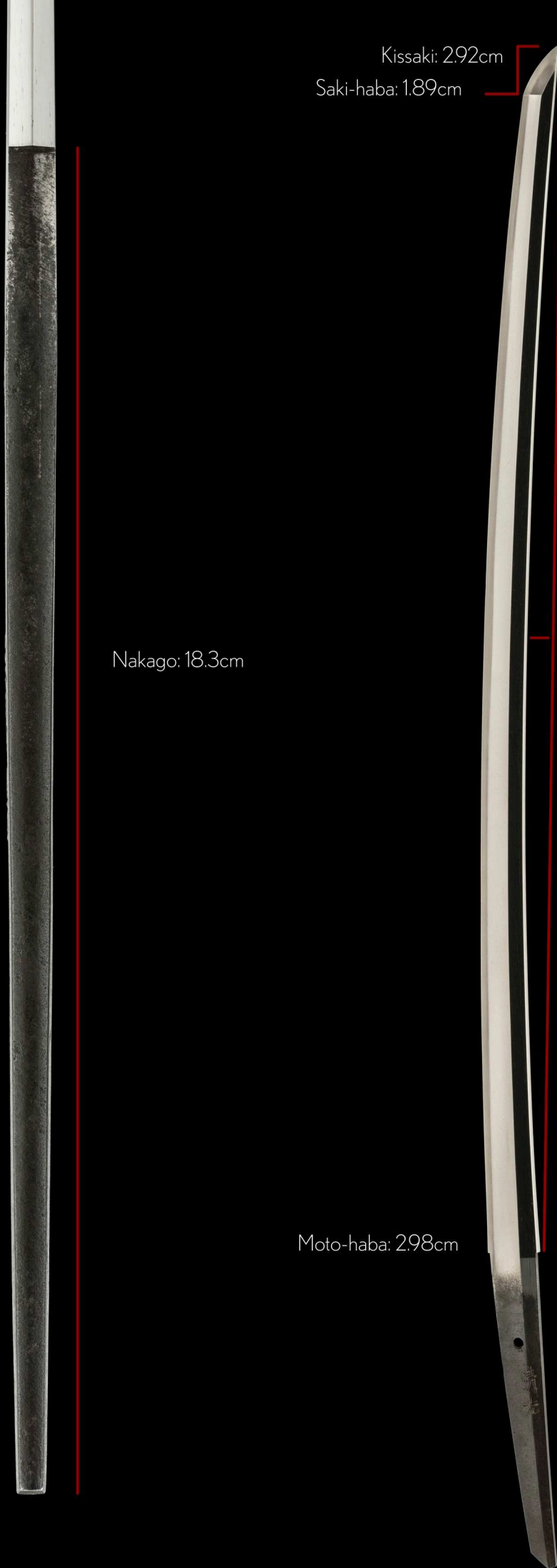
Nakago: 18.3cm

Moto-haba: 2.98cm

Nagasa: 70.5cm

Sori: 1.30cm

Mekugi-ana: 1



Swordsmith Kiyomitsu was the son of *Koshirô Shigekiyo* and was given the name *Gorôzaemon* with some sources listing his first name as *Yaroku*.

Kiyomitsu was active from *Kanbun* to *Enpô* eras (1663-1681) and the structure of his swords reflect this time period. He lived in *Etchû province*, modern-day Toyama prefecture - a picturesque coastal city on Japan's main island, Honshu.

His swords have a lovely darkish *jigane* (hue of the steel), which is seen of swords crafted on the Sea of Japan. The wood-grain quality *jihada* (skin) stands out particularly towards the base of the blade.

This katana features a bright and consistent *chû-suguha* (straight hamon) that was forged with skill. The bottom of the nakago is shaped with the unique *Kashû-nakago-jiri*, paying tribute to *Kaga* (Kashû) province that neighbours Etchû. Kiyomitsu must surely have produced many swords for elite samurai from the wealthy Kaga province.

Kiyomitsu is aptly ranked as *jô-saku* (a superior swordsmith) and *wazamono* for his strong reputation for producing extra sharp swords.





Location: *Etchû* (resident of Toyama)
Swordsmith: *Kiyomitsu* (first generation)

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

清 (Kiyō)

光 (mitsu)



(*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*.

02202006

No. 1013802



鑑定書

一刀 銘 清光 (越中・新刀)

長 二又三寸二分半

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

令和二年八月二十八日

公益財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協會



大阪府 教育委員会
第 62267 号
昭和46年2月2日
(再)平成2年3月31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 2nd year of Reiwa (2020), August 28th

One, Katana

Mei (signature)
Kiyomitsu
(*Etchû/Shintô*)

Nagasa (length)
2-shaku 3-sun 2-bu han (70.5cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai
(NBTHK)



加州住清光
Kashû jû Kiyomitsu

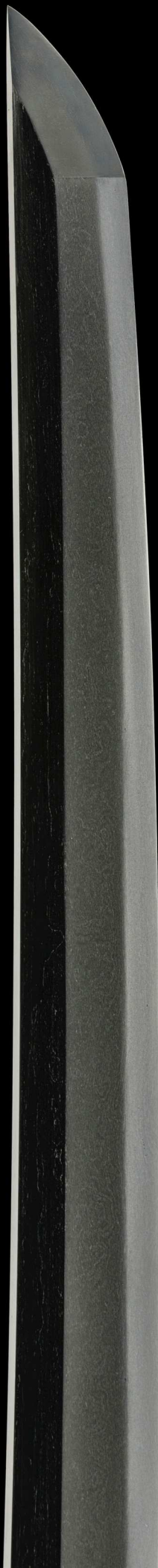
Kiyomitsu, a resident of Kashû Province



crisp *mei* (signature), well preserved








A close-up, diagonal view of a sword blade against a black background. The blade exhibits a complex, layered texture. A prominent feature is a dark, wavy band of *chikei* (cherry bark) pattern, which is woven into the lighter, rounded burl grain pattern of the *mokume-hada*. Red lines are drawn from the text labels to point to these specific features on the blade's surface.

mokume-hada (rounded burl grain pattern)

Dark lines of *chikei* woven beautifully into the expertly forged *mokume-hada* that has a rounded burl grain pattern.



A beautiful and bright *suguha-hamon* (straight temper line) that is consistent throughout, the mark of a well-crafted sword.



kuichigai-ba

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

This unique and sophisticated feature is generally seen on swords with a *suguha hamon* crafted in the Yamato tradition.



Shirasaya
(protective scabbard)



silver *habaki* with
diagonal file marks

*Hôô mon nshiki-zutsumi saya
uchigatana-koshirae*
(鳳凰紋錦包鞘打刀拵え)

*Uchigatana-koshirae wrapped
in brocade with phoenix pattern*

Crafted during the
Late Edo period
(1780~1867)



*NTHK-NPO Kanteisho
Certificate of Authenticity*

peeled areas [think: *rebirth*]



The antique *saya* (scabbard) from the late 1700s, early 1800s has a brocade pattern depicting the phoenix. The mythical phoenix (*hou*) was adopted as a symbol of the Japanese imperial household. The phoenix represents fire, the sun, justice, obedience and fidelity.

A prosperous civilization requires the foundations of tradition to give it a bedrock, a base to build upon and continue through the ages. However, if it's too rigid, too tyrannical, it dries out. A successful culture understands that it needs to burn off the old in order to rejuvenate and become born again, ie new king, new ideas, new technology.

The old phoenix burns to make way for the new phoenix to emerge. This poignant mythological story has been retold throughout the ages in various artistic forms.



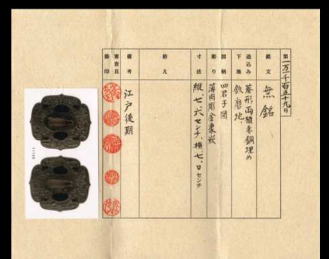
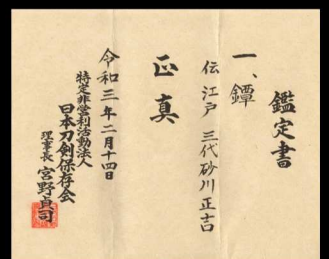
Rather fittingly, there are areas of the brocade phoenix pattern that have peeled (ie burned) away over time exposing the base wood of the scabbard.



This glorious tachi style polished iron tsuba has been attributed to the work of third generation *Sunagawa Masayoshi* from nation's capital *Edo* (Tokyo prefecture).

Looking closely, motifs of *ran* (orchids, spring), *take* (bamboo, summer), *kiku* (chrysanthemums, autumn) and *ume* (plum blossoms, winter) can be admired. Collectively, these plants are known as *shikunshi* ('four gentlemen') and represent the four seasons.

A certificate of authenticity from the NTHK-NPO states the tsuba was crafted during late Edo period, circa 1780~1867.



Resonating with Confucian and Zen ideals, the four gentlemen have been a meaningful subject amongst artists Chinese and Japanese for centuries.

These seasonal plants have come to symbolise purity, humility and perseverance even within the harshest of conditions.

The heart-shaped motifs in the four corners are called *inome* - referring to the *eye of a wild boar*. The samurai greatly admired the *inoshishi*, known for its single-minded focus.

Note how the holes of the tsuba have been filled in by *shakudô*. Only a samurai with financial means would be able to afford such a luxury. The *gold dotted inlay* on the plum blossoms and other areas are an example of the understated elegance of Japanese art.



ume (plum blossoms)

ran (orchids)

take (bamboo)

kiku (chrysanthemums)



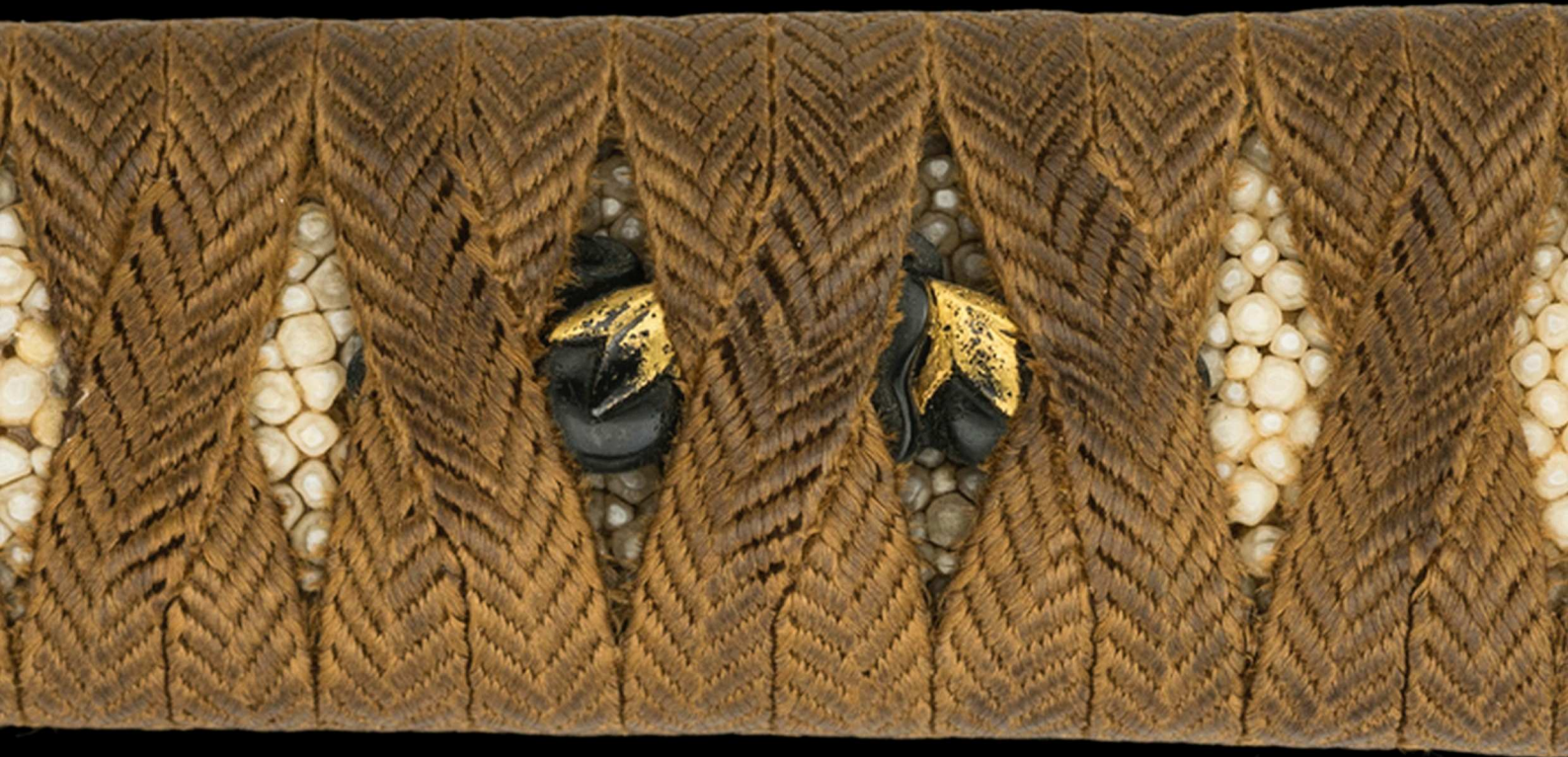
This lovely *fuchi-kashira* strengthens the harmony of the *kiku* (chrysanthemum) motif as seen on the tsuba. Notice the intricate detail of each petal.

This beautiful artwork has been certified and attributed to *Kikukawa Chōbei* who also worked in *Edo province* during the late Edo period.





The *menuki* (decorative grips) are depictions of *nasu* (eggplant), which carry interesting significance in Japan as illustrated in the story below.



Hatsuyume is the first dream one has in the new year. The contents of such a dream would traditionally, foretell the luck of the dreamer in the ensuing year.

It is considered to be particularly *good luck to dream of Mount Fuji, a hawk, and an eggplant*. This belief has been in place since the early Edo period.

One theory suggests that this combination is lucky because Mount Fuji is Japan's highest mountain, the hawk is a clever and strong bird, and the word for eggplant (*nasu* or *nasubi*) suggests achieving something *great* (*nasu*).

Another theory suggests that this combination arose because Mount Fuji, falconry, and early eggplants were favourites of the shogun *Tokugawa Ieyasu*.



Mount Fuji, a hawk, and an eggplant



Koshirae bag.



ITEM# UJTA051

SOLD

A SHÔDAI MASAHIRO TANTÔ

SIGNED, EARLY EDO PERIOD (KAN'EI ERA: 1624~1644)

Swordsmith:	<i>Hizen no Kuni Saga Ju Masahiro (shôdai, first generation)</i>
Measurements:	Length: 26.9cm (ubu) Curvature: 0.2cm Moto-haba: 2.78cm
Jihada:	<i>Ko-mokume leading to Hizen konuka-hada, thick nie-deki</i>
Hamon:	<i>Gorgeous gunome choji-midare with kinsuji and sunagashi</i>
Certificate #1:	NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon (Especially Worthy of Preservation)
Certificate #2-3:	NTHK-NPO Kanteisho (matching fittings and koshirae designated as Authentic)
Fujishiro rank:	Jo-saku (ranked as a superior swordsmith)
Authentication:	Sayagaki by Kanzan-sensei (Dr. Satô Kanzan)
Cutting ability:	Wazamono (maker of sharp swords)
Included:	Shirasaya, Edo koshirae, fabric bag, stand, kit, DVD, booklet, description

SOLD

Master swordsmith *Kawachi Masahiro* was born *Sadenjiro* in 1607 and is the son of *Yoshinobu* who was the adopted son of the great first generation *Shodai Tadayoshi*. He began signing as *Masanaga* and even signed for grandmaster *Shodai Tadayoshi* when he became ill (*dai-mei*).

Tantô crafted during the shinto period (1600~1780) are extremely rare. As the formal *daishô* (matching katana/wakizashi) became the official dress code for the samurai, demand for tantô subdued dramatically. The blade is forged with a magnificent *gunome-choji-midare hamon* over a tightly forged *konuka-hada* that captures the heart and imagination. This is a highly collectible tantô housed in a gorgeous matching wave-themed Late Edo period *koshirae* with its *tsuka* (hilt) wrapped in baleen representing the high social status of the samurai that it once belonged to.

Moto-kasane: 6.7mm

Omosa: 210g

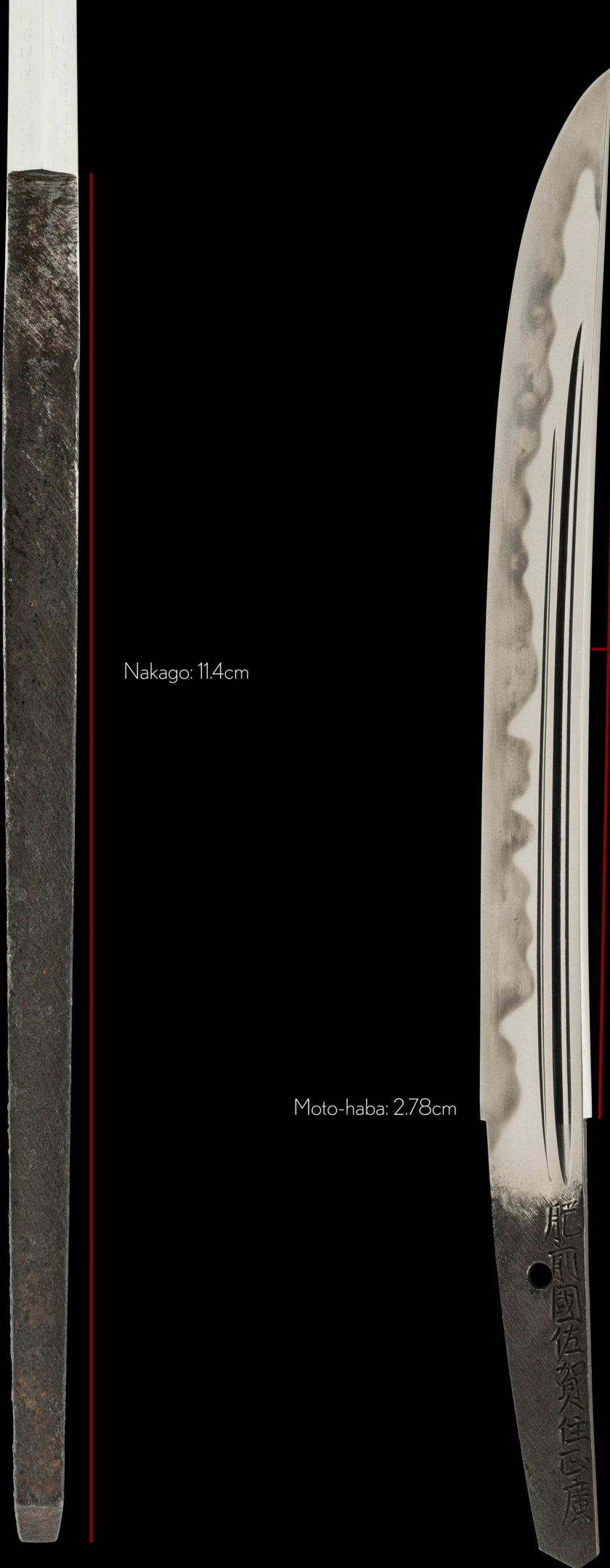
Nakago: 11.4cm

Moto-haba: 2.78cm

Nagasa: 26.9cm

Sori: 0.20cm

Mekugi-ana: 1



Kawachi Masahiro was born *Sadenjiro* in 1607 and died at only 59 in 1665. He is the son of *Yoshinobu* who was the adopted son of the great *Shodai* (first generation) *Tadayoshi*.

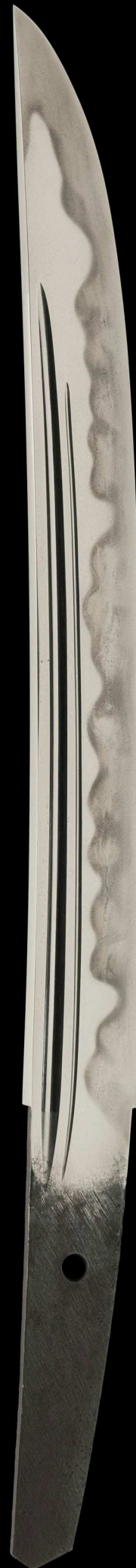
He began signing as *Masanaga* and even signed for *Shodai Tadayoshi* when he became ill (known as *dai-mei*). Recognizing his clear talent, his employer *Lord Nabeshima Katsushige* suggested he change his name to *Masahiro*, thus becoming *Shodai Masahiro*.

Tanto crafted during the *shinto* period (1600~1780) are extremely rare. As the formal *daisho* (matching katana/wakizashi) became the official dress code for the samurai, demand for tanto subdued dramatically. Tanto rebounded in demand in the *shinshinto* period.

A magnificent *gunome-choji-midare hamon* over a tightly forged *konuka-hada* captures the heart and imagination. This is a timeless samurai tanto from the early Edo period with a gorgeous matching wave-themed *koshirae* from the early 1800s.




Shodai (1st generation) Hizen Masahiro



Location: *Hizen* (resident of Saga)
Swordsmith: *Masahiro* (first generation)

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



肥 (Hi)

前 (zen, no)

國 (kuni)

佐 (Sa)

賀 (ga)

住 (jû)

正 (Masa)

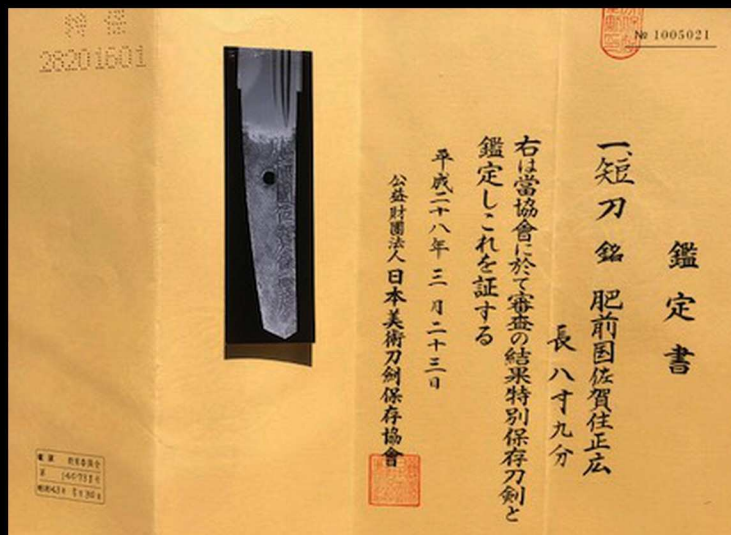
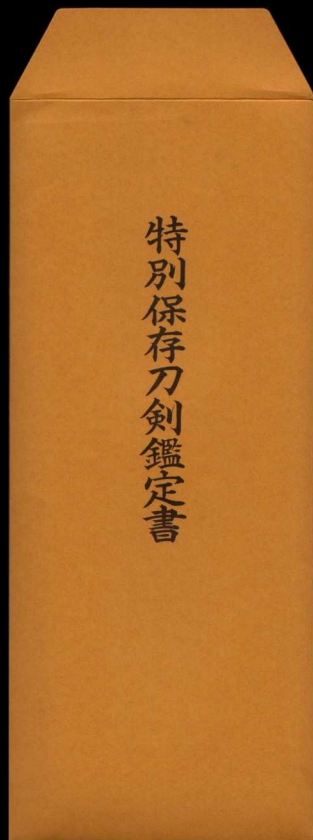
廣 (hiro)



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

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

(*ura*, reverse)



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

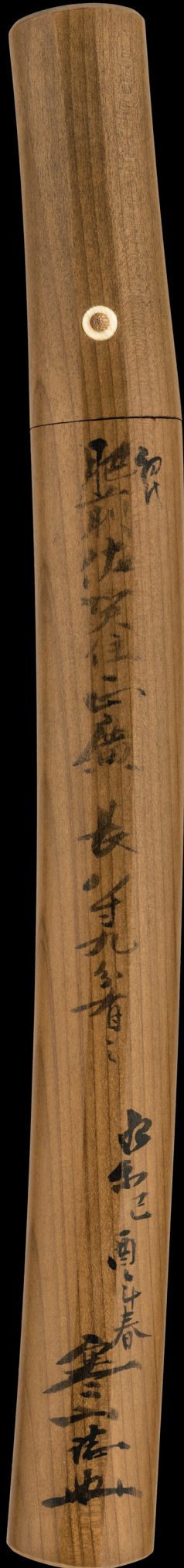
Issued in the 28th year of Heisei (2016), March 23rd

One, Tanto

Mei (signature)
Hizen no Kuni Saga Ju Masahiro

Nagasa (length)
8-sun 9-bu (26.9 cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai
(NBTHK)



初代肥前佐賀住正廣
Shodai Hizen Saga jû Masahiro
The first generation of Masahiro,
Resident of Saga in Hizen Province

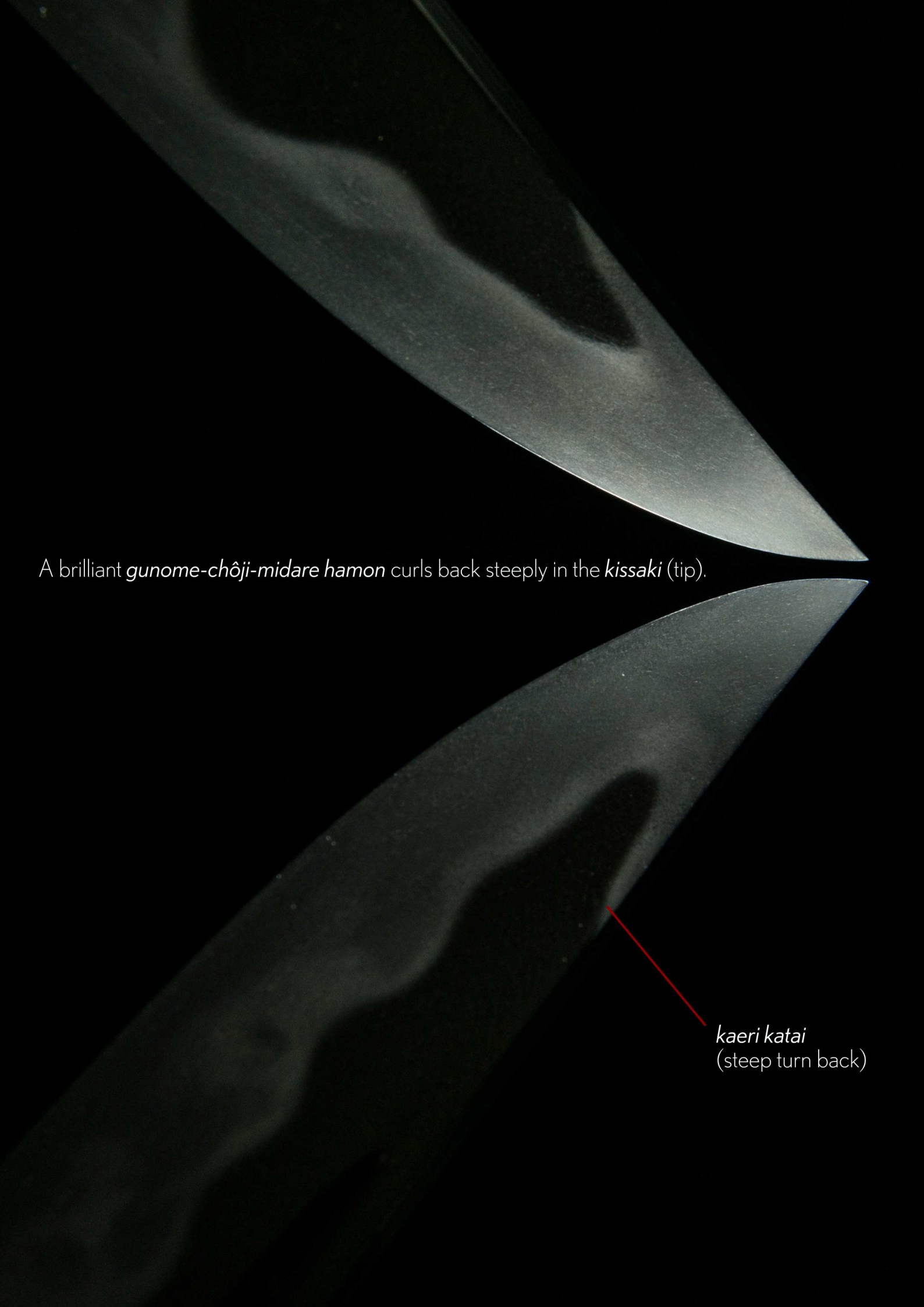
長八寸九分有之
Nagasa 8-sun 9-bu kore ari
Blade length ~26.9 cm

昭和己酉中春寒山誌（花押）
Shôwa tsuchinoto tori chûshun Kanzan shirusu + kaô

Written and authenticated by *Dr. Satô Kanzan* in
mid-Spring during the Year of the Hen of the Shôwa
period (1969) plus his personal monogram



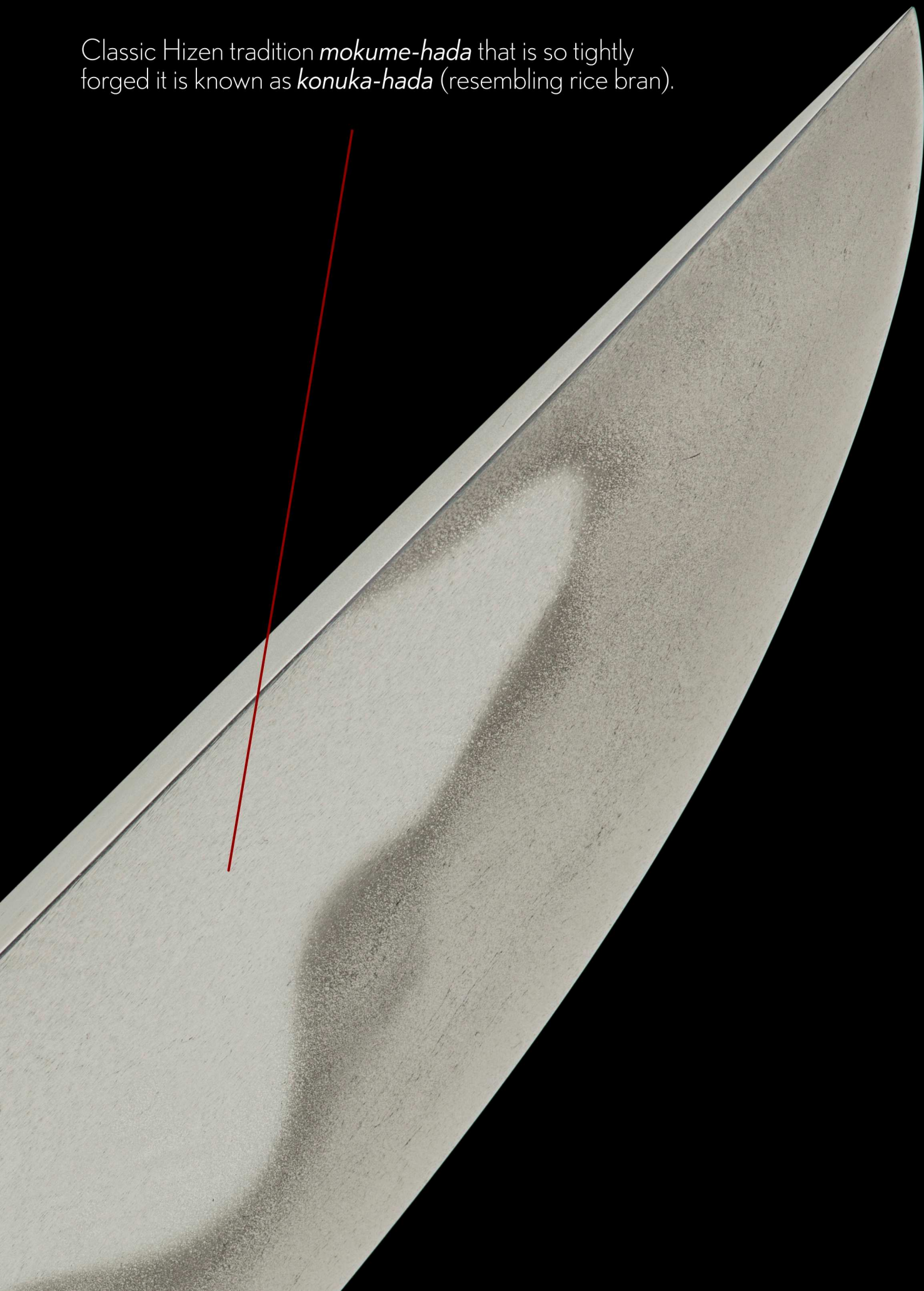


The image shows two Japanese swords, likely katana, positioned diagonally against a black background. The blades are dark, and the hamon (temper line) is visible as a lighter, wavy pattern. The top sword's hamon is described as gunome-chôji-midare, which is a complex, multi-lobed pattern. The bottom sword's hamon is described as kaeri katai, which is a simpler, more regular pattern. A red line points from the text 'kaeri katai' to a specific part of the bottom sword's hamon.

A brilliant *gunome-chôji-midare hamon* curls back steeply in the *kissaki* (tip).

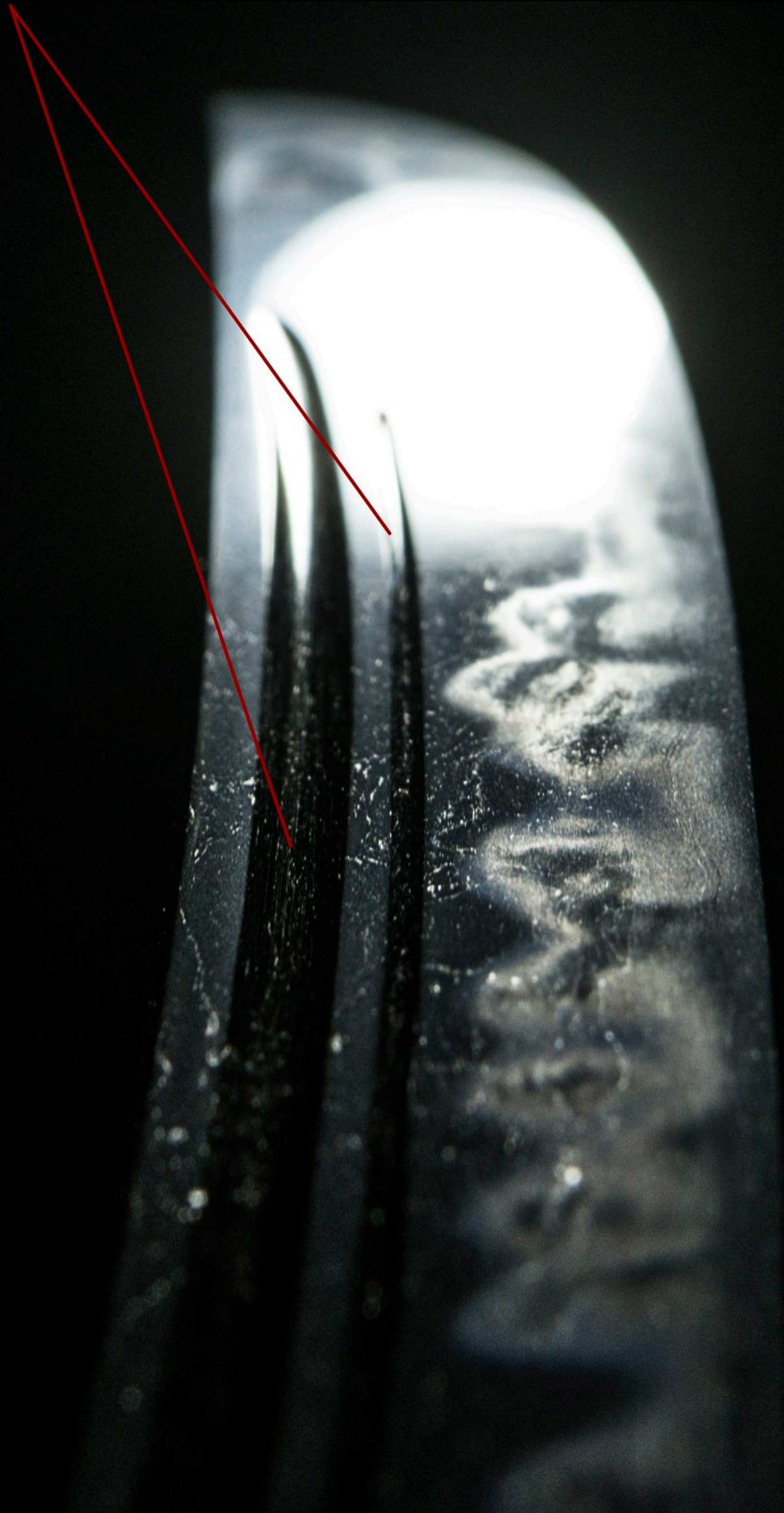
kaeri katai
(steep turn back)

Classic Hizen tradition *mokume-hada* that is so tightly forged it is known as *konuka-hada* (resembling rice bran).





The tanto features two slightly arching parallel grooves, one thicker than the other, known as *bo-bi* and a thinner *soe-bi*.





A bright, billowing *gunome-chôji midare hamon* with a wide *nioguchi* (crystals that make up the hamon).


This is the creative genius of *shodai Masahiro*.

wide nioguchi —————

To the casual observer, the tanto might appear as simply a big knife - holding not quite the allure of the katana. However, this could not be further from the truth. The tanto is an immensely personal amulet, guarding the spirit of the samurai. It was, of course, also used in *seppuku* (ritualistic suicide) if ever such action deemed appropriate.

Any serious Japanese sword collection will hold at least one tanto.

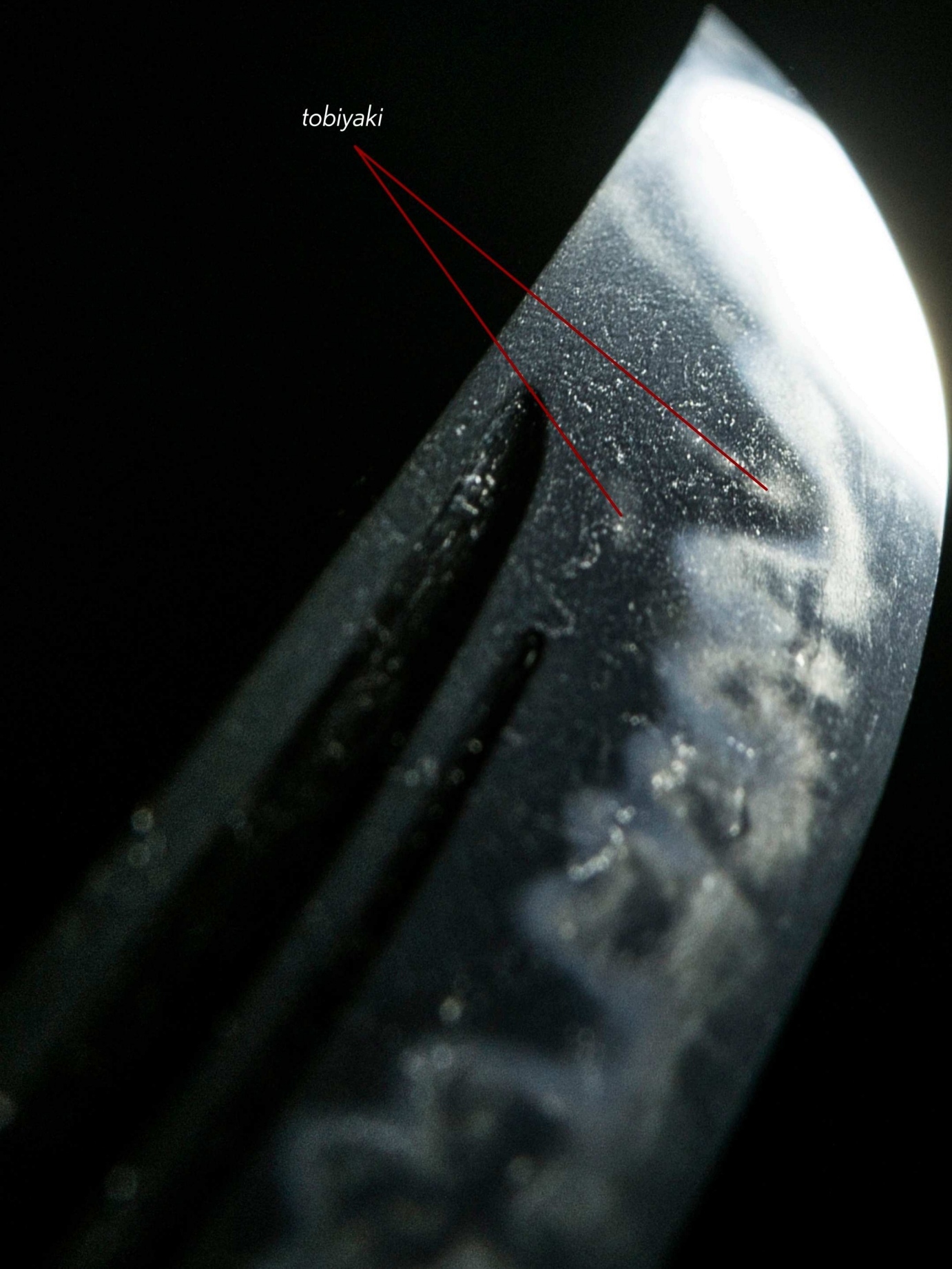
With so few tanto having been crafted during the shinto period (1600~1780), this piece with a full matching tanto koshirae, is one such collectible to cherish.



Brushed strokes of *sunagashi*
with 'golden' lines of *kinsuji*.

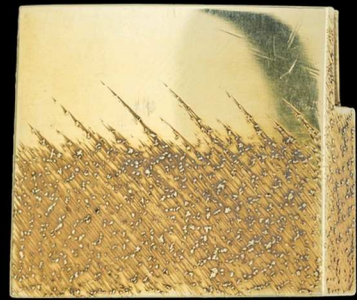
Glimmering silver nuggets of *tobiyaki*, tempered spots of *nie crystals* in the *ji* (body) of the sword.

tobiyaki





Shirasaya
(protective scabbard)



gold-wrapped *habaki*
with diagonal file marks



*Kuro-ro-nuri naname-kizami
saya tantô-koshirae*
(黒呂塗斜刻鞘短刀拵え)

*Tantô-koshirae with
spiral-carved saya
lacquered in gloss black*

*Crafted during the
Late Edo period
(1780~1867)*



*NTHK-NPO Kanteisho
Certificate of Authenticity*



Soroi kanagu (all matching fittings) from the Edo period signed by metalsmith *Nagamasa*



NTHK-NPO Kanteisho
Certificate of Authenticity



(Naga) 長
(masa) 正



Matching wave carvings in *shibuichi* (1/4 silver and 3/4 copper).

The navy blue *sageo* brings harmony to the natural water theme.



The twisted wood pattern known as *naname-kizami* resembles a rhythmic wave pattern as well.



As Japan is an island country, waves hold great spiritual meaning. A wave pattern is a symbol for peace and represents surging good fortune and boundless potential from the vast ocean.

This splendid tanto koshirae was crafted using *high quality matching shibuichi in a wave theme*. It has remained as a faithful set for about 200 years, dating back to the Late Edo period (1780~1867).

This is a koshirae to cherish, especially for someone with an affinity for the open seas.





Kujira-maki (lit 'whale wrapping') is a hilt wrapped using *baleen* - the tough material that hangs down from the upper jaw of certain whales to filter small ocean animals out of seawater.

Due to its rich, glossy appearance and high price tag, baleen became a status symbol of well-to-do samurai, particularly during the late Edo period. The use of baleen in Japan dates back to the 7th century Nara period, coveted for centuries by aristocracy.





The *menuki* carry depictions of *tora* (tigers) which symbolise, willpower, courage, and personal strength.

Tigers also serve to protect against evil spirits, wind, disease, and bad luck.



A *kozuka* (utility knife) used by the samurai to open letters, cut fruit, etc. It was not a weapon per se.

A custom-made groove on the tsuba allowed the *kozuka* to slide fluidly into a special slot on the side of the *saya* (scabbard).



mokko-shaped wood *tsuba* with slotted groove and specially lacquered with sprinkles of *maki-e*



kozuka (utility knife)



Koshirae bag



ITEM# UJKA389

SOLD

A RAI KUNIYASU KATANA

UNSIGNED, MID-NAMBOKUCHÔ PERIOD (JÔJI ERA: 1362~1368)

Swordsmith:	<i>Chiyozuru Kuniyasu</i> (shôdai, founder of Chiyozuru school)		
Measurements:	Length: 71.2cm (ô-suriage)	Curvature: 2.45cm	Moto-haba: 3.15cm
Jihada:	Standing-out itame mixed with mokume & nagare and chikei over a dark jigane		
Hamon:	Bright chû-suguha with ko-gunome, nie-hotsure, ko-ashi, fine kinsuji & sunagashi		
Certificate:	NBTHK Jûyô Tôken (a sword designated as Profound and Important)		
Fujishiro rank:	Chûjô-saku (ranked as an above average swordsmith)		
Included:	Shirasaya, fabric bag, stand, kit, booklet, description		

SOLD

This powerful katana is the work of *Rai Kuniyasu*, originally from the Rai school of *Yamashiro province* (Kyotô). Kuniyasu is said to be the grandson of *Rai Kunisue*. In 1337, Kuniyasu moved from Kyoto in search of a pure water source to forge his blades. He eventually settled in beautiful *Echizen province* (modern-day Fukui prefecture) along the Sea of Japan and founded the *Chiyozuru school* meaning 'a thousand generations of cranes', symbolizing longevity.

The wide *mihaba* (width) that extends the full length of the blade and the substantial *koshizori* gives an overall sense of grandeur. The *jigane* has a mysteriously darkish tone juxtaposed with a beaming *suguha hamon* that serves as a beacon of light - ready for action. This is a healthy katana approaching 700-years-of-age that is ripe for collectability. Potential custom koshirae project.

^
Saki-kasane: 4.8mm

Moto-kasane: 7.5mm

Omosa: 790g

Kissaki: 4.25cm
Saki-haba: 2.25cm

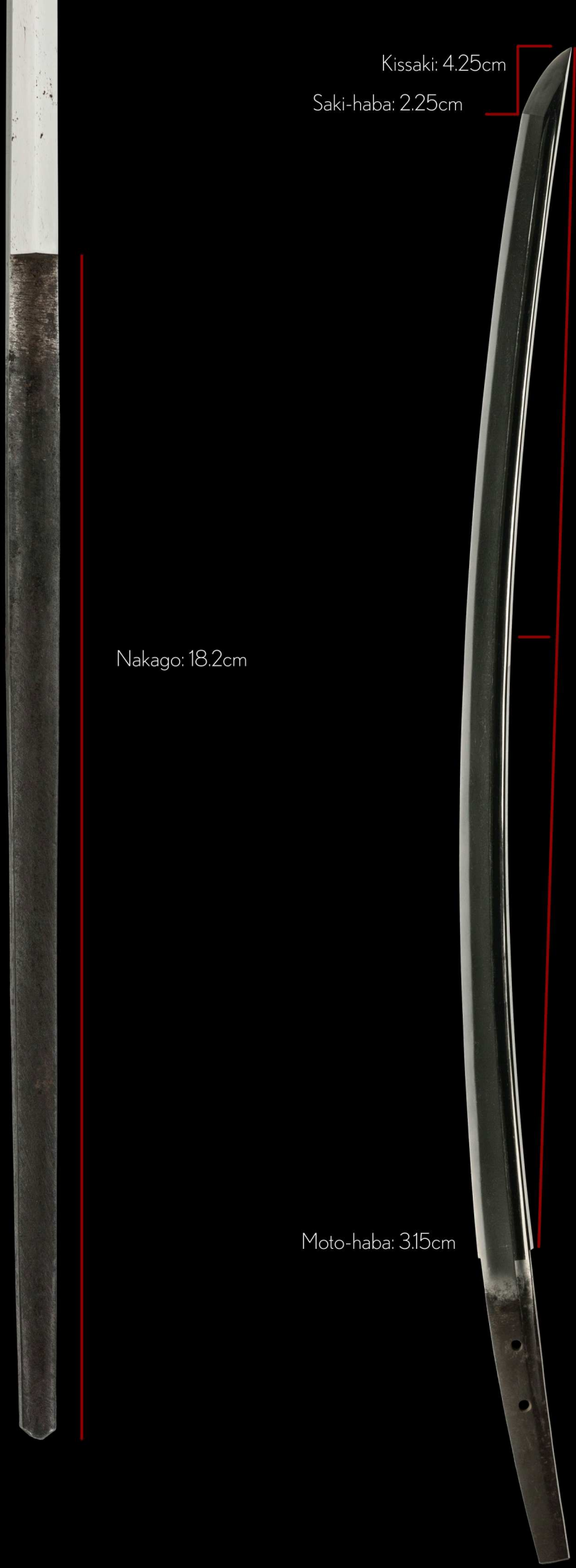
Nakago: 18.2cm

Moto-haba: 3.15cm

Nagasa: 71.2cm

Sori: 2.45cm

Mekugi-ana: 2



This powerful katana is the work of *Rai Kuniyasu*, originally from the *Rai school* of *Yamashiro province* (Kyotô). Kuniyasu is said to be the grandson of *Rai Kunisue*.

In 1337, at the start of the *Nambokucho period* where Kyoto was embroiled in a vicious war, Kuniyasu moved from Kyoto in search of a pure water source to forge his blades. He eventually settled in *Echizen province* (modern-day Fukui prefecture) and founded the *Chiyozuru school*.

The wide *mihaba* (width) that extends the full length of the blade is what immediately hits the eye. This katana also has substantial *koshizori* that gives it an overall majestic shape.

The *jigane* has a mysteriously darkish tone juxtaposed with a beaming *suguha hamon* that serves as a beacon of light - ready for action. This is a healthy, near 700-year-old katana that's ripe for collectibility.

Koshizori
(curvature at the waist)

This term is used to describe swords with its deepest point towards the base of the blade.





Even though this katana has an *ô-suriage nakago* (greatly shortened), the blade has retained most of its impressive curvature that extends even into the nakago.

26201460

重要第一三五〇三號

指定書

一、刀 無銘 来国安 一口

法量 長さ七一・二種 反り二・四五種
形状 鑄造庵棟 身幅広く元先の幅差殆ど開かず 磨上げながらも
腰反り高く先へも反り加わり大鋒

鍛 板目に淬目、流れ肌を交え肌立ちごころとなり地沸厚くつき
地景頻りに入り銚色やや黒みかかる

刃文 中直刃に僅かに小互の目が交じり刃縁細かに沸はつれ小定入り
沸厚くつき金筋砂流し細かにかかり匂口明るい

帽子 浅くのたれ込み小丸掃きかける

彫物 表裏に椿桶を掻き流す
茎 大磨上 鏡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

平成二十六年十月十六日

公益財団法人日本美術刀劍保存協會



和歌山 教育委員会
第 28057号
平成25年 9月 5日

Jûyô Certificate No. 13503
Shiteisho (指定書) Certificate of Designation
Katana, mumei: attributed to Rai Kuniyasu (来国安)

Measurements
nagasa 71.2 cm, sori 2.45 cm

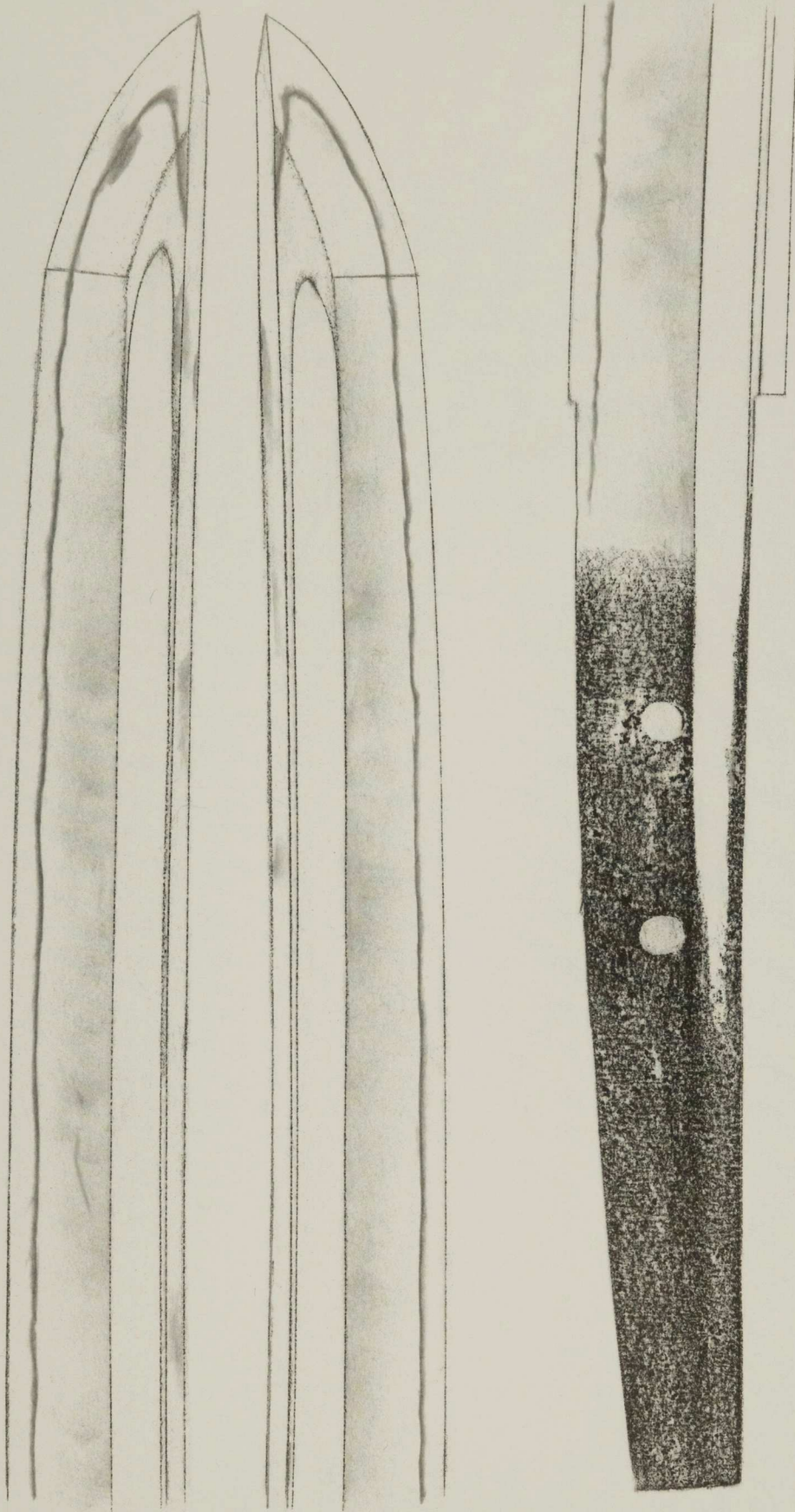
Description:

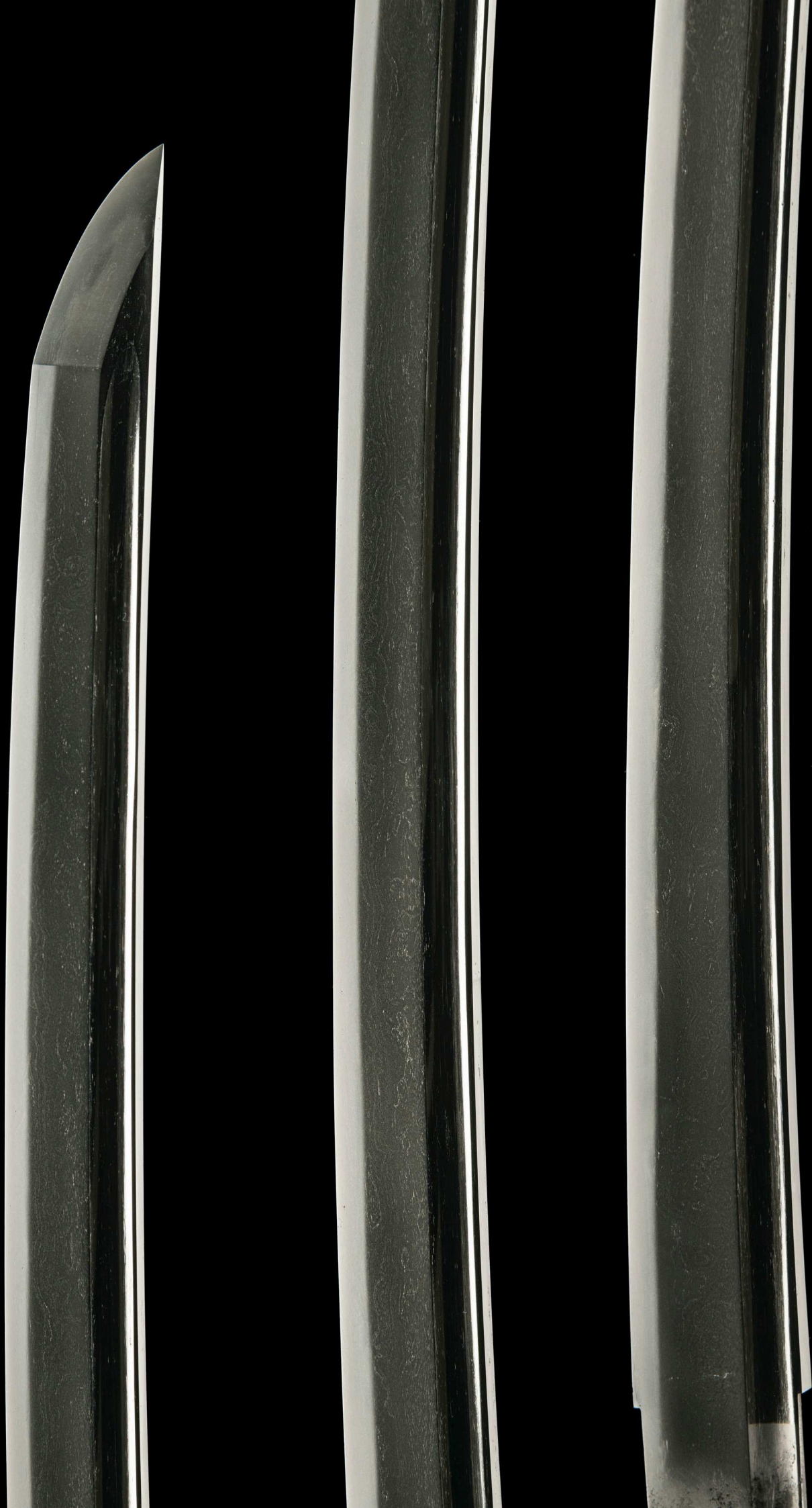
Keijo: *shinogi-zukuri*, *iori-mune*, wide *mihaba*, no noticeable taper, despite the *suriage* a deep *koshizori* that increases again towards the tip, *ô-kissaki*
Kitae: rather standing-out *itame* that is mixed with *mokume* and *nagare* and that features plenty of *ji-nie* and much fine *chikei*, the steel is somewhat blackish
Hamon: *nie-laden chû-suguha* with a bright *nioiguchi* that is mixed with a little bit of *ko-gunome*, fine *nie-hotsure*, *ko-ashi*, and fine *kinsuji* and *sunagashi*
Bôshi: gently undulating *notare-komi* with a *ko-maru-kaeri* that features *hakikake*
Horimono: on both sides a *bôhi* which runs as *kaki-nagashi* through the tang
Nakago: *ô-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 16, 2014
[Foundation] Nihon Bijutsu Tôken Hozon Kyôkai, NBTHK

刀 無銘 来国安

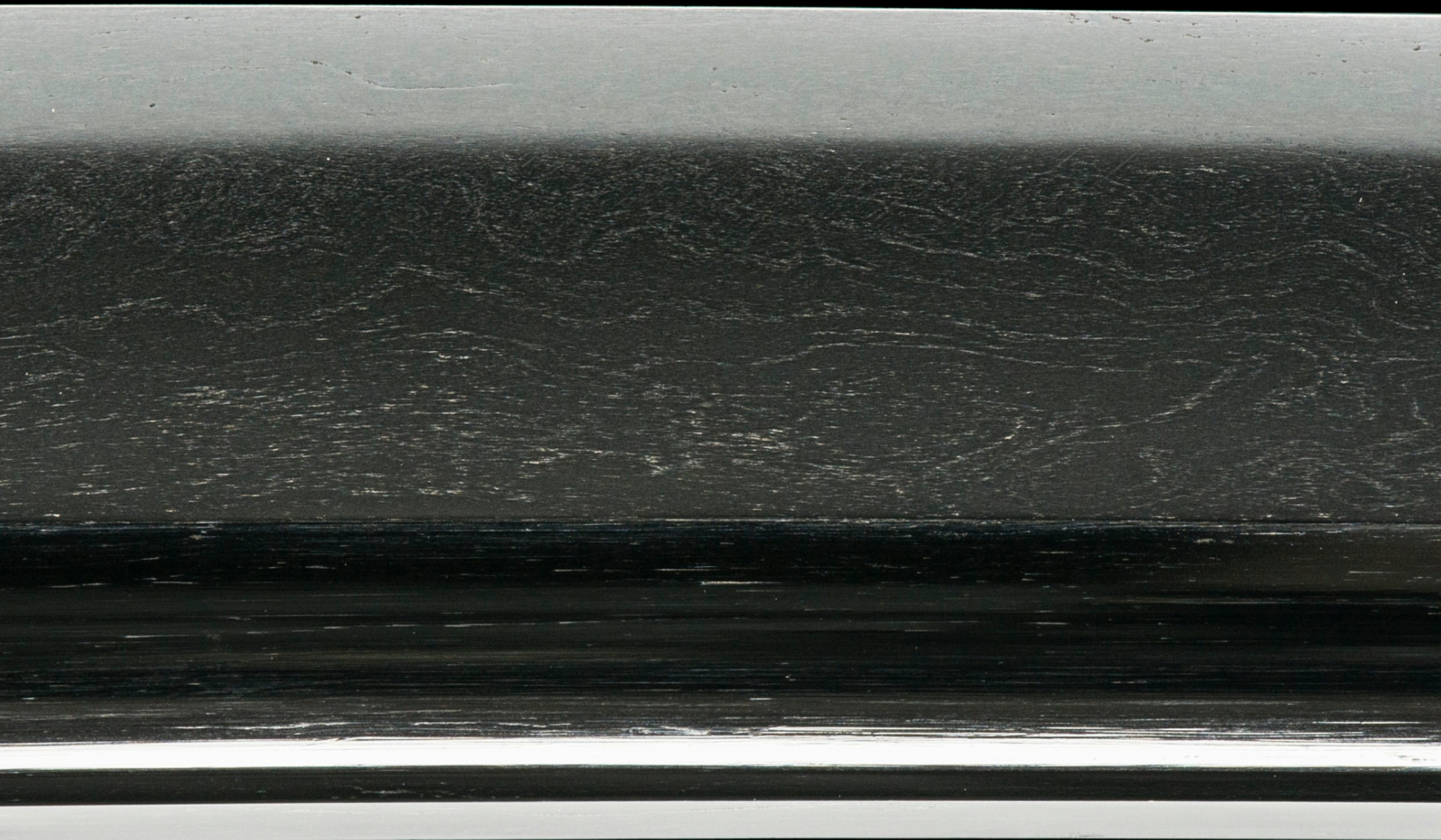








An *o-kissaki* (oversized tip) dominates the katana. This kissaki is typical of the size seen during the vicious *Nambokucho period* (circa 1333~1392) where the Kyoto region was engulfed in war. Many swords fighting at this time became chipped in battle and thus the tips are reshaped smaller. This sword, however, has retained its original shape thus making it all the more collectible.



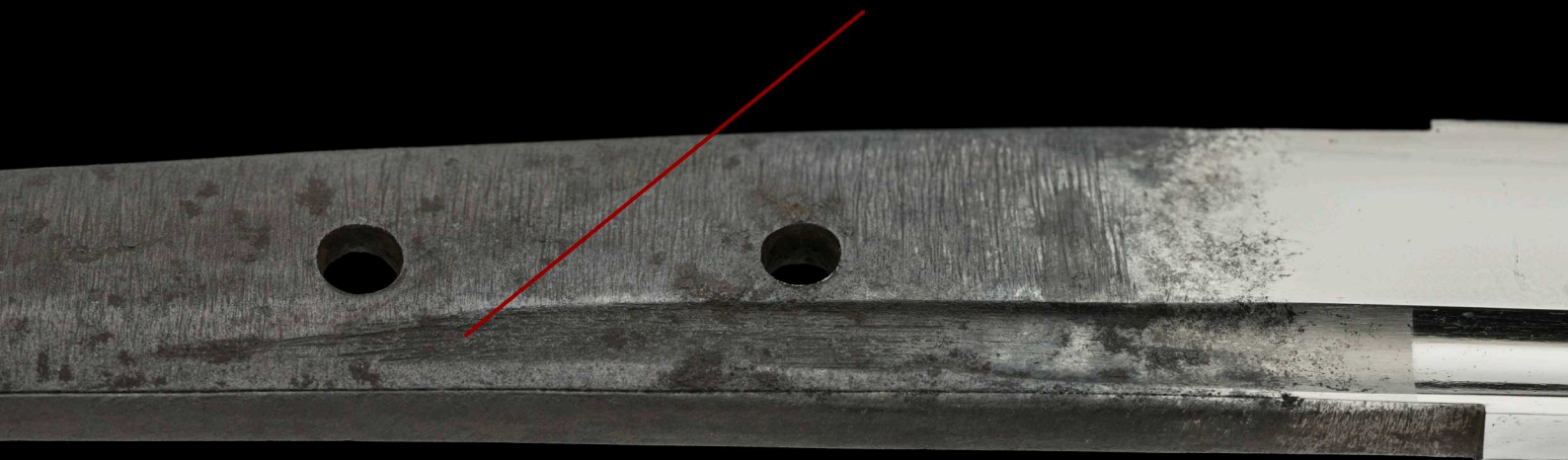


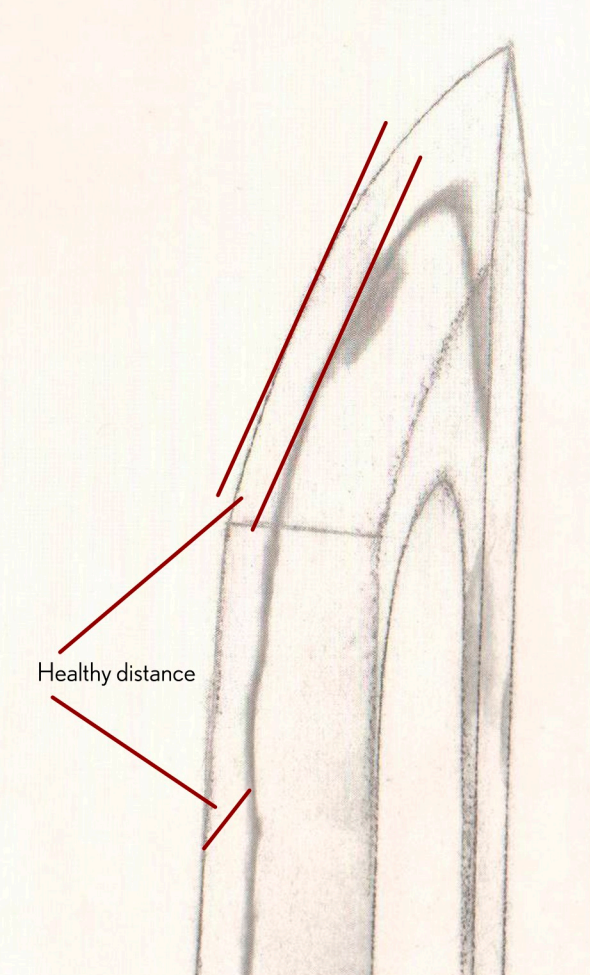
A *hi* (pronounced "hee") is a groove engraved on the *shinogi-ji*, the surface between the *mune* (spine) and the *shinogi* (ridge line) or the *hira-ji* (area between the *hamon* and *shinogi*).

A 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 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*.



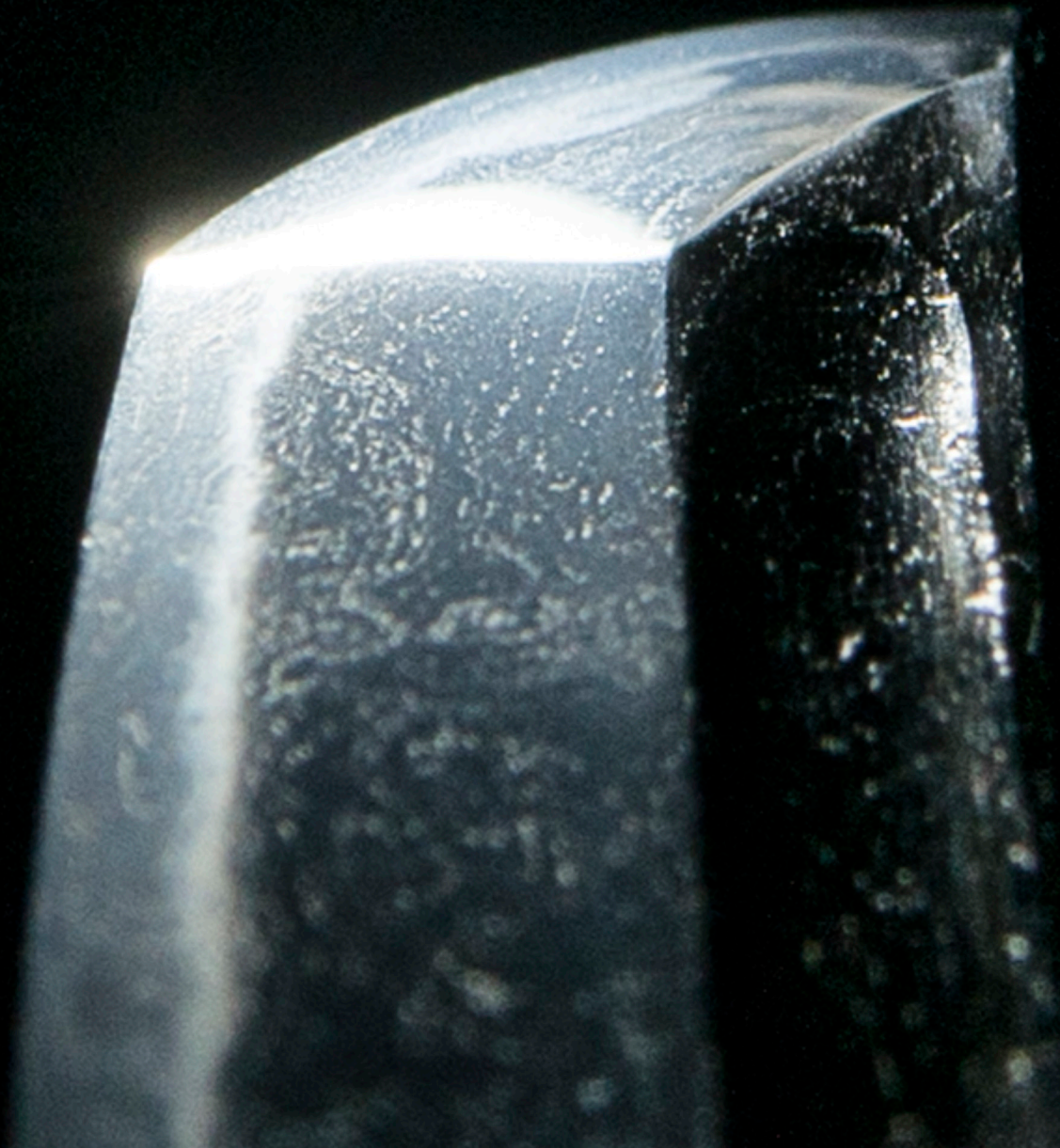


An important point to pay attention to when assessing the health of a Japanese sword is to see *how much distance* there is from the *hamon* to the cutting edge.

Very often on swords older than 600 years, from the *Kamakura* and *Nambokucho* periods, a blade is narrowed significantly due to its numerous polishes. More polishes means the blade narrows and the hamon begins to "hug" the cutting edge. This narrowing is especially noticeable in the *kissaki* (tip) area that is often reshaped after battle altercations.


It's a beautiful thing when we see ample distance such as on this *Rai Kuniyasu* katana. A wide sword is a healthy sword suggesting it is in similar condition from when it was first made.

This is a primary reason why this katana was awarded prestigious NBTHK Jûyô Tōken.



The *hamon* in the tip of the sword is called the *boshi*. It takes great skill by the swordsmith. The boshi on this sword is *hakikake*, literally 'sweeping'.



A close-up photograph of a sword's tip, showing a curved blade with a dark, textured surface. A red line points from the text to a specific area on the blade's edge. The background is black.

A beautiful birthmark of clustered *nie* crystals forms on the *boshi, hamon* in the *kissaki* (tip).

The NBTHK Jûyô certificate describes the *jihada* (skin of the sword) as having a "rather standing-out *itame* that is mixed with *mokume* and *nagare*..."

We can explore these three elements in this image.

Nagare-hada
flowing grain pattern

Mokume-hada
rounded grain pattern

Itame-hada
plank grain, elongated shaped
standing out (noticeable)



elegant curvature

Clean, consistent *suguha hamon*.

A bright *nioguchi* of the straight and exacting *suguha hamon*.

The *jigane* (surface steel) exudes a dark hue - characteristic of swords that were crafted along the Sea of Japan. The old province of *Echizen* is now named *Fukui prefecture*.





Here we see *nie-hotsure* - a section of nie crystals along the hamon line that together appear like a frayed piece of cloth.

The history of *Echizen-uchihamono* (Echizen-forged knives) dates back to 1337 when renowned swordsmith *Chiyo-zuru Kuniyasu* moved from Kyoto to the Fukui area in search of a pure water source to forge his blades. After settling in Echizen, he continued to make swords but also began making sickles and other implements for local farmers, shifting his focus from weaponry to domestic tools.

In 1979 Echizen was the first area in Japan to be officially recognized for these traditional blade crafts by the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry.



On a personal note, my first sword is an *o-wakizashi* by *Echizen Narisada*. I selected the sword because of my fond memories of having travelled to Echizen (Fukui province) where I toured and subsequently represented (through Unique Japan) some of the very finest kitchen knife makers. Echizen is a lovely part of Japan that I recommend travelling to.



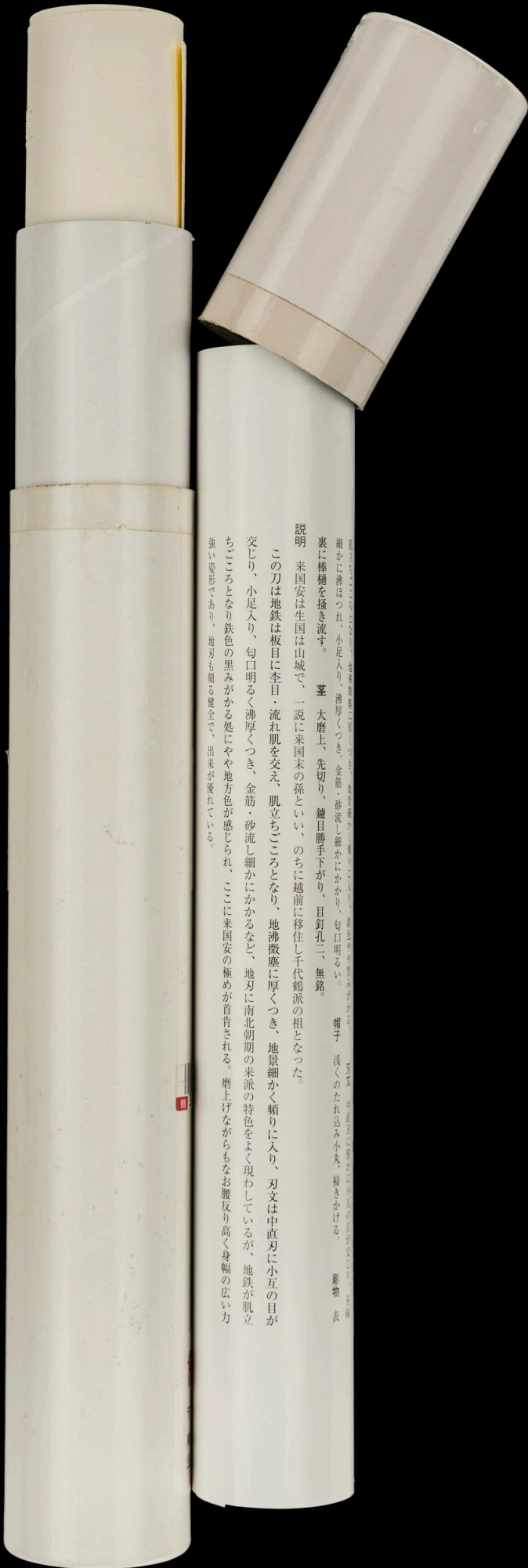
Pablo Kuntz at a kitchen knife factory in Takefu, Echizen (Fukui province)
Photographer: *Yasu Nakaoka* (January 2010)



Shirasaya
(protective scabbard)



gold-wrapped *niju-habaki*
with perpendicular file marks

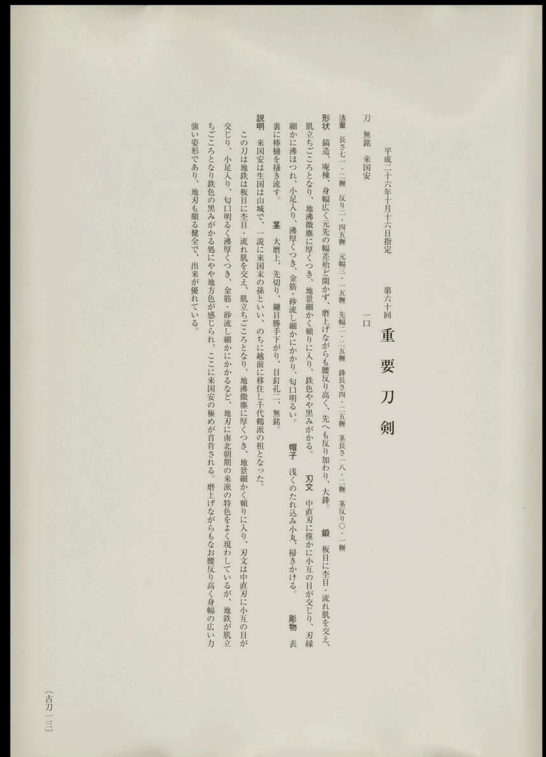


細かに沸はつれ、小足入り、沸厚くつき、金筋、砂流し細かにかかり、匂口明るい。 帽子 浅くのたれ込み小丸、掃きかける。 彫物 表裏に棒樋を掻き流す。

茎 大磨上、先切り、鍔目勝手下がり、目釘孔二、無銘。

説明 来国安は生国は山城で、一説に来国末の孫といひ、のちに越前に移住し千代鶴派の祖となった。

この刀は地鉄は板目に柵目・流れ肌を交え、肌立ちころとなり、地沸微塵に厚くつき、地景細かく頼りに入り、刃文は中直刃に小互の目が交じり、小足入り、匂口明るく沸厚くつき、金筋・砂流し細かにかかると、地刃に南北朝期の来派の特色をよく現わしているが、地鉄が肌立ちころとなり鉄色の黒みがかる処にやや地方色が感じられ、ここに来国安の極めが首肯される。磨上げながらも腰反り高く身幅の広い力強い姿形であり、地刃も頗る健全で、出来が優れている。



60th NBTHK Juyo Token Certificate
Traditionally rolled in protective tube.

All information will be precisely translated for the new caretaker. A printed and bound description of the sword from this catalogue will also be included along with a sword stand and a Unique Japan maintenance kit.

The *Chiyozuru school* name was inspired from Kuniyasu's nickname as a child *Chiyozurumaru*.

The Japanese kanji for *Chi-yo-zuru* (千代鶴) means "*a thousand generations of cranes.*"

The crane symbolizes longevity. In Japan, a famous saying goes, *tsuru wa sennen, kame wa mannen* meaning '*a crane lives for a thousand years, a turtle lives for 10 thousand years.*'

As an option, the new caretaker may wish to embark on a custom *koshirae* project with Unique Japan using a **theme of cranes** thus paying tribute to not only Chiyozuru and the school he founded, but also to invite love and longevity to his or her home.



An example of a *fuchi-kashira* with a crane design (inspiration only).

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 matching *daishô*) 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.

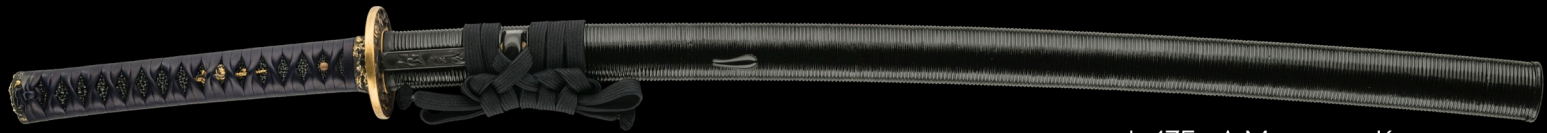
The investment required ranges from \$5,000 to over \$10,000 depending on the quality of the fittings and the complexity of the lacquerwork. Each project also demands patience as many will take one year to complete (but it's well worth it).

Please contact Unique Japan for further details.



ujka173 - A Sadatsugu Juyo Katana
'Wave theme' Koshirae

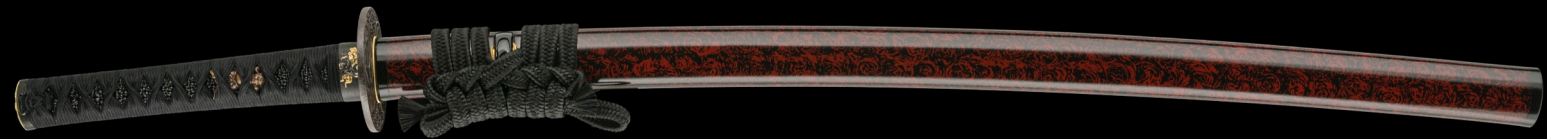
Recently completed custom koshirae projects



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



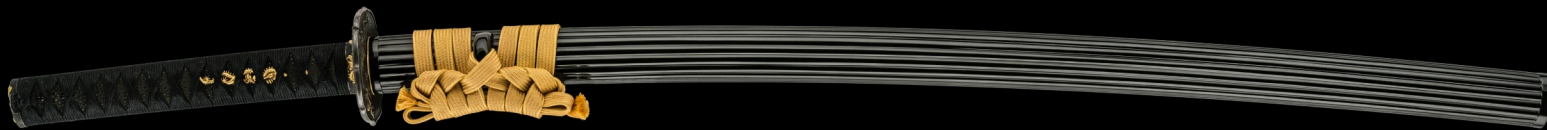
ujka252 - A Jûyô Hatakeda Sanemori Tachi
Gorgeous *Handachi* Koshirae with deep red ishime finish



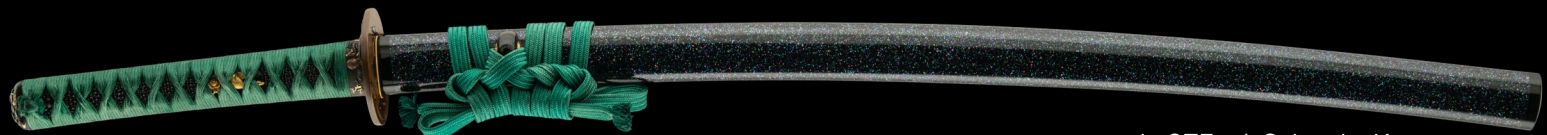
ujka322 - A Jûyô Niô School Katana
Benevolent guardian kings theme with *zen* whirlpool design



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/Yukihiko Daisho
Samurai and *Kagura* (dance) theme with rustic iron lacquerwork



ITEM# UJKA387

SOLD

A MIZUTA KUNISHIGE KATANA

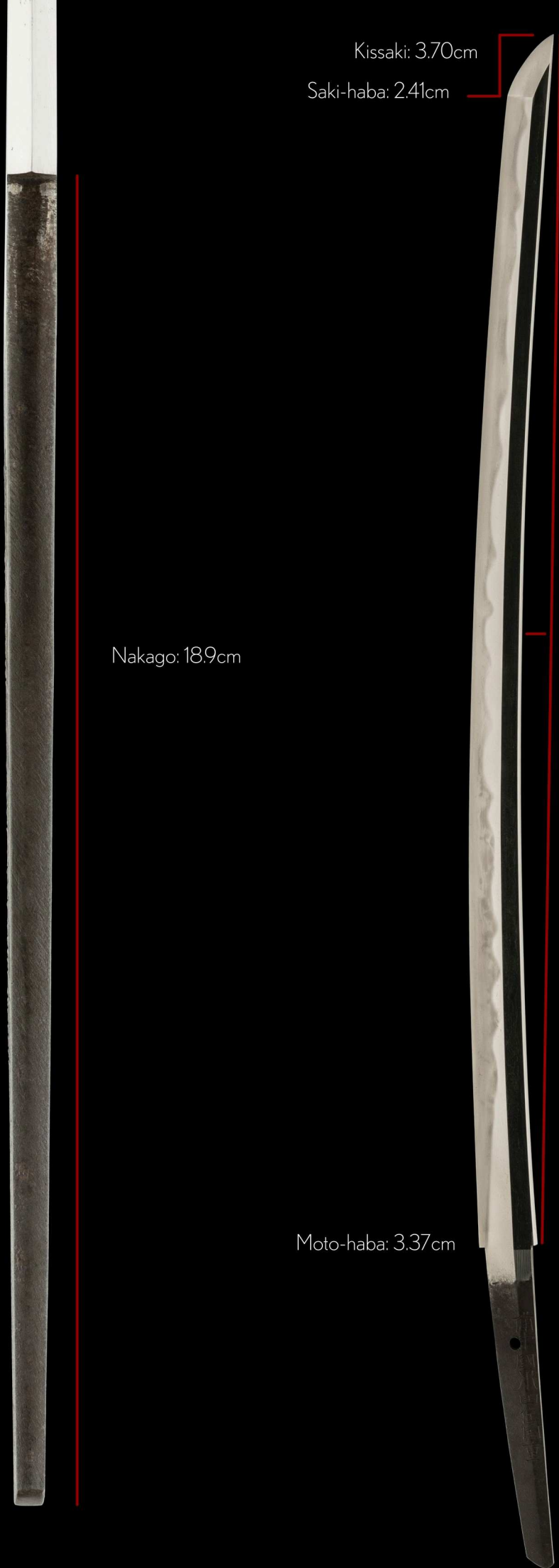
SIGNED, EARLY EDO PERIOD (KANBUN ERA: 1661~1673)

- Swordsmith:** *Bitchû no Kuni Mizuta jû Kunishige* (6th generation)
Measurements: **Length:** 71.5cm (*ubu*) **Curvature:** 1.21cm **Moto-haba:** 3.37cm
Jihada: *Gritty mokume hada with pronounced chikei*
Hamon: *Surging waves of gunome-midare with sunagashi and plentiful kinsuji*
Certificate #1: NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon (Especially Worthy of Preservation)
Certificate #2-4: NTHK-NPO Kanteisho (*tsuba, fuchi-kashira & tsuka* designated as Authentic)
Fujishiro rank: Chû-jôsaku (*ranked as an above average swordsmith*)
Cutting ability: Wazamono (*maker of sharp swords*)
Included: Shirasaya, Edo koshirae, fabric bags, stand, kit, booklet, description

SOLD (*with custom-lacquered scabbard included in price*)

The Mizuta school derived its name from a group of swordsmiths that lived at Mizuta village in Bitchu province. Members of this school are said to be the descendants of *Ko-Aoe Tametsugu* and the smith *Kunishige*, known as *Ko-Mizuta*. The most famous smith of the Shinto Mizuta school was Ôtsuki Yogoro Kunishige, also known as 5th generation Ôyogo Kunishige.

This wide, muscular katana is the work of his son *Katsubei*, the final working smith of the Ôtsuki branch of the *Mizuta* school. The aggressive *hamon* exudes a grittiness that contains plenty of *sunagashi* and *kinsuji hataraki* that can best be described as *Mizuta Soshu*. The new caretaker of this katana will be given the option to select the lacquer finish on the new scabbard that we're going to custom build for the sword. A personal touch for a terrific samurai sword.



Saki-kasane: 5.0mm

Kissaki: 3.70cm

Saki-haba: 2.41cm

Moto-kasane: 7.0mm

Nagasa: 71.5cm

Nakago: 18.9cm

Sori: 1.21cm

Omosa: 845g

Moto-haba: 3.37cm

Mekugi-ana: 1

The *Mizuta school* derived its name from a group of swordsmiths that lived in *Mizuta village* in *Bitchu province*. Members of this school are said to be the descendants of *Ko-Aoe Tametsugu* and the smith *Kunishige* who lived during the *Kyoroku era* (1528~1532) was known as *Ko-Mizuta*.

In the Shinto period, their craftsmanship altered completely from *Sue-Bizen* and *Sue-Mihara* to a more electric *Soshu* influence with loads of visible *nie* crystals, a surging *gunome-midare hamon* and plentiful *hataraki* that includes *sunagashi* and *kinsuji*.

The most famous smith of the Shinto Mizuta school was *Ôtsuki Yogoro Kunishige*, also known as 5th generation *Ôyogo Kunishige*. Unfortunately *Ôyogo* died early leaving his son, 6th generation *Katsubei*, under the care of his younger brother, swordsmith *Ichizô*.

This muscular katana is the work of *Katsubei*, the final working smith of the *Ôtsuki* branch of the Mizuta school. The *jihada* and aggressive *hamon* exudes a grittiness that that can best be described as *Mizuta Soshu*.

When this sword was acquired the *saya* (scabbard) was damaged and unsafe for clients. Thus, we at Unique Japan are giving the new caretaker the option to *select the lacquer finish* on the new scabbard that we'll build for the sword. A personal touch for a rather personal katana.





Location: *Mizuta in Bitchû Province*
Swordsmith: *Kunishige* (first generation)

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

備 (Bi)

中 (tchû, no)

國 (Kuni)

水 (Mizu)

田 (ta)

住 (jû)

国 (Kuni)

重 (shige)



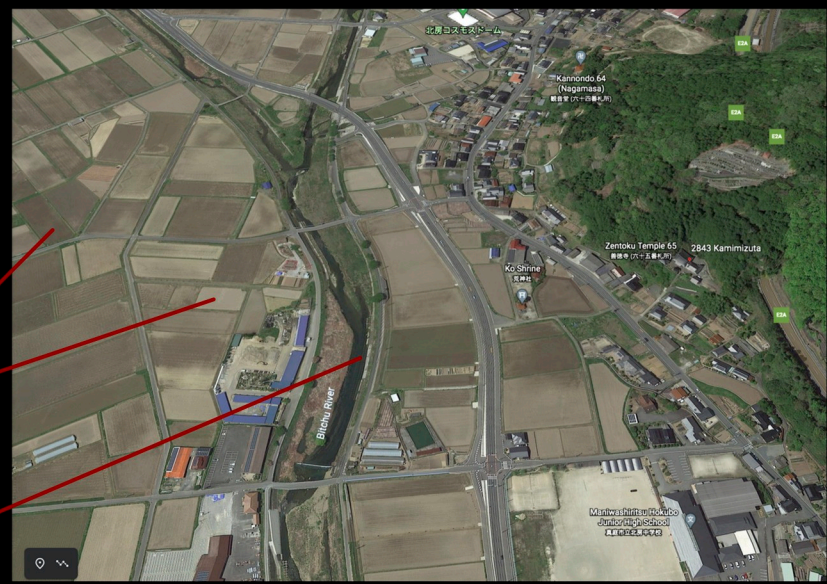
水 (Mizu, water)

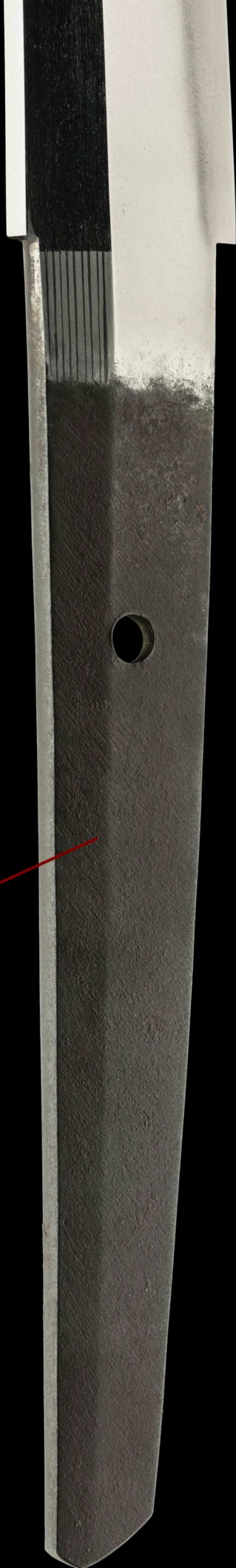
田 (ta, rice field)

Mizu means 'water', and *ta* is 'rice field'. The kanji characters are abstractions that resemble flowing water and neatly sectioned rice fields. Mizuta village, now rests in Maniwa city in *Okayama prefecture*. It's a rural setting where the *Bitchû river* runs through with large areas of nearby forestry. An ideal setting to set up a forge...

sectioned fields

Bitchû river





Note the lovely even patina, the sword and *nakago* have aged well.

(*ura*, reverse)

29201711



No 1007895



鑑定書

一刀 銘 備中国水田住国重

長二尺三寸六分

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

平成三十年三月十五日

公益財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協會



山形 教育委員会
第 2283 号
昭和 26年 5月 23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), March 15th

One, Katana

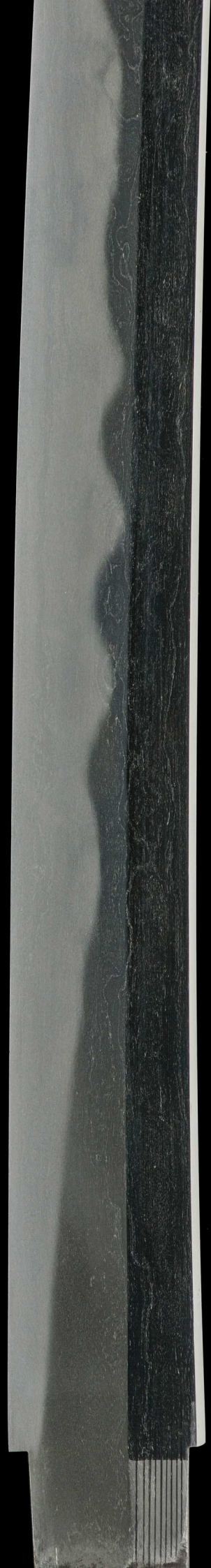
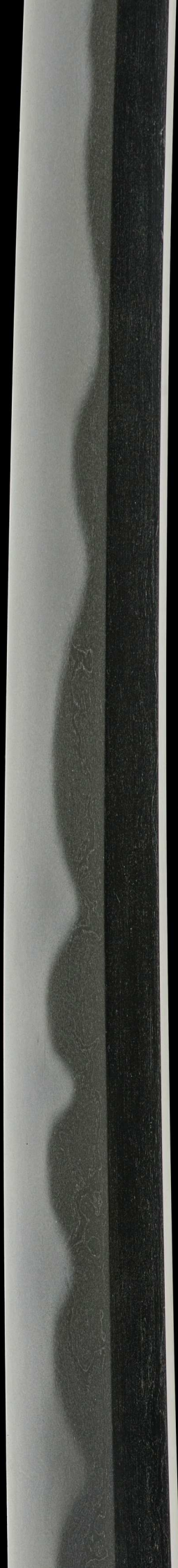
Mei (signature)

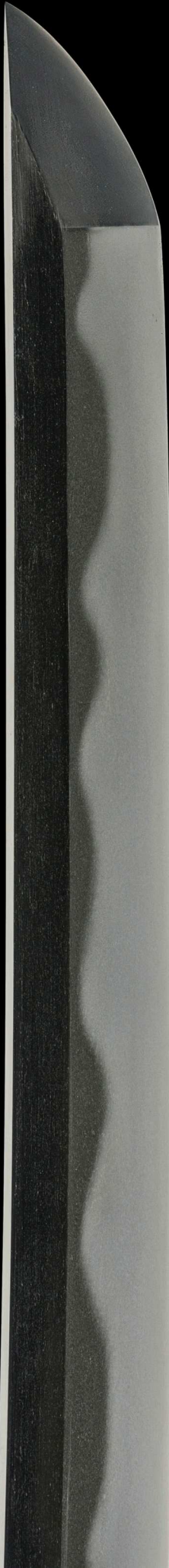
Bitchû no Kuni Mizuta jû Kunishige


Nagasa (length)

2-shaku 3-sun 6-bu (71.5cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai
(NBTHK)

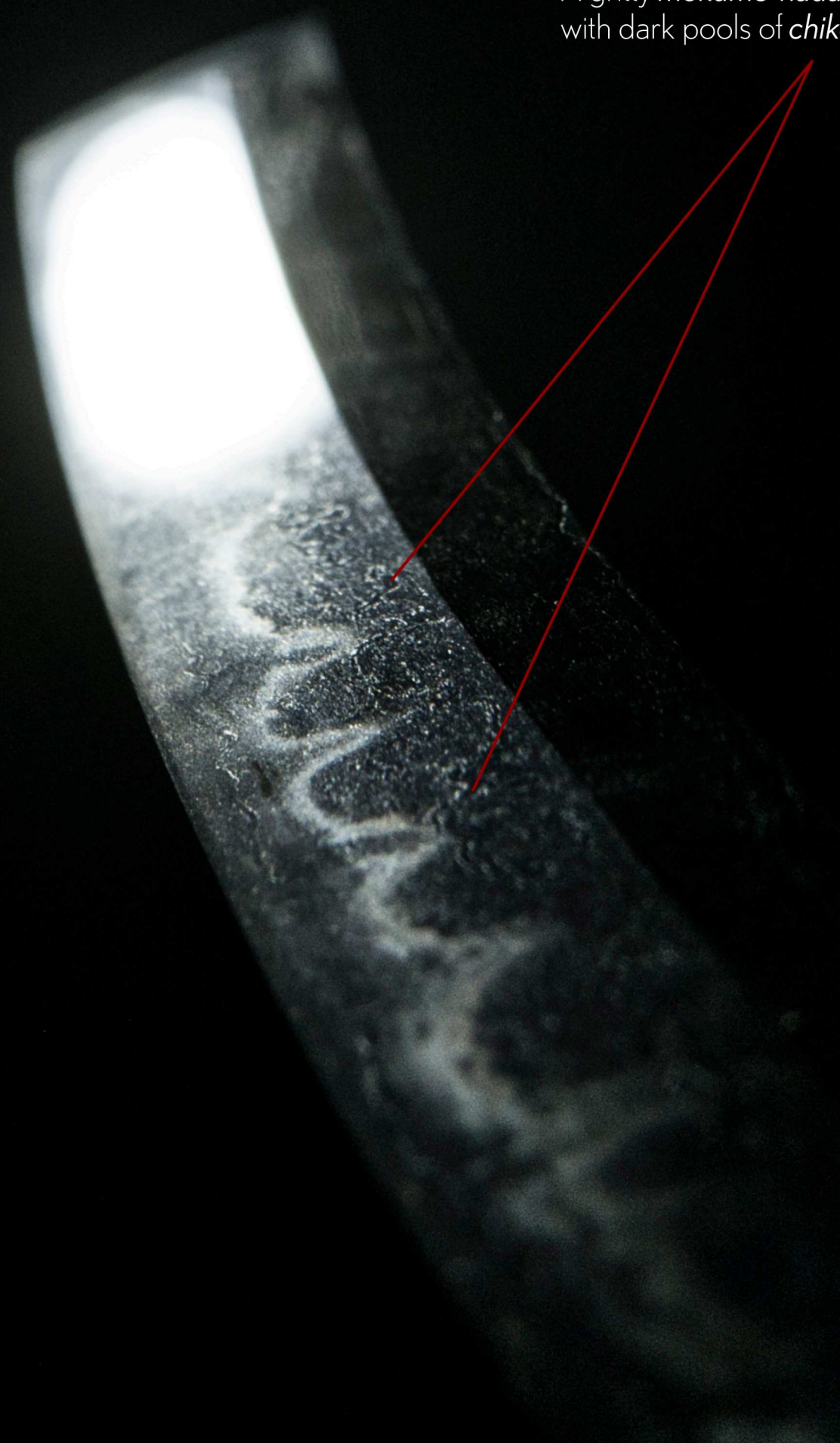




The image features two close-up views of a curved metal blade, likely a hamon. The top view shows a curved section of the blade with a dark, textured surface and a bright, glowing area on the right side. The bottom view shows a similar curved section, but with a more pronounced wavy pattern on the surface and a bright, glowing area on the left side. The background is dark, making the metallic surfaces stand out.

A stunning *gunome-midare hamon*
clearly inspired by ocean waves.

A gritty *mokume-hada* interlaced with dark pools of *chikei*.



A cauldron of *Mizuta Soshu hataraki* featuring rivers of *kinsuji*, boiling through the *hamon*.

kinsuji





Shirasaya
(protective scabbard)

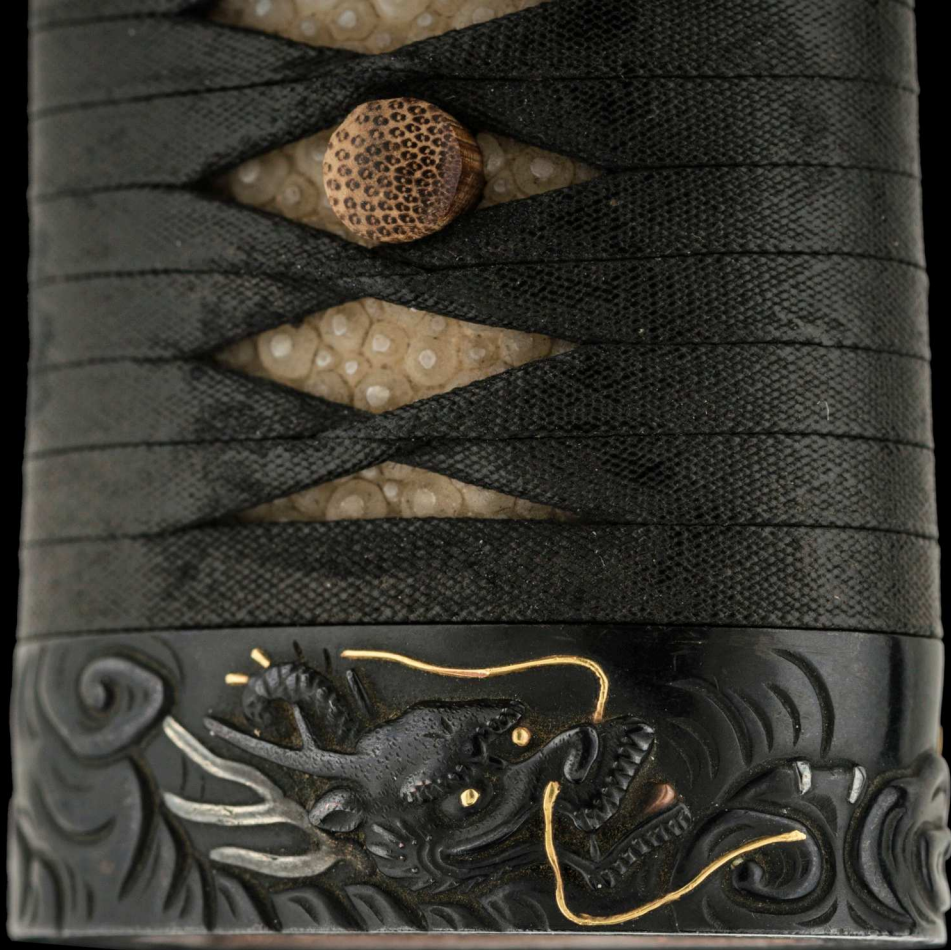


silver *habaki* with
diagonal file marks



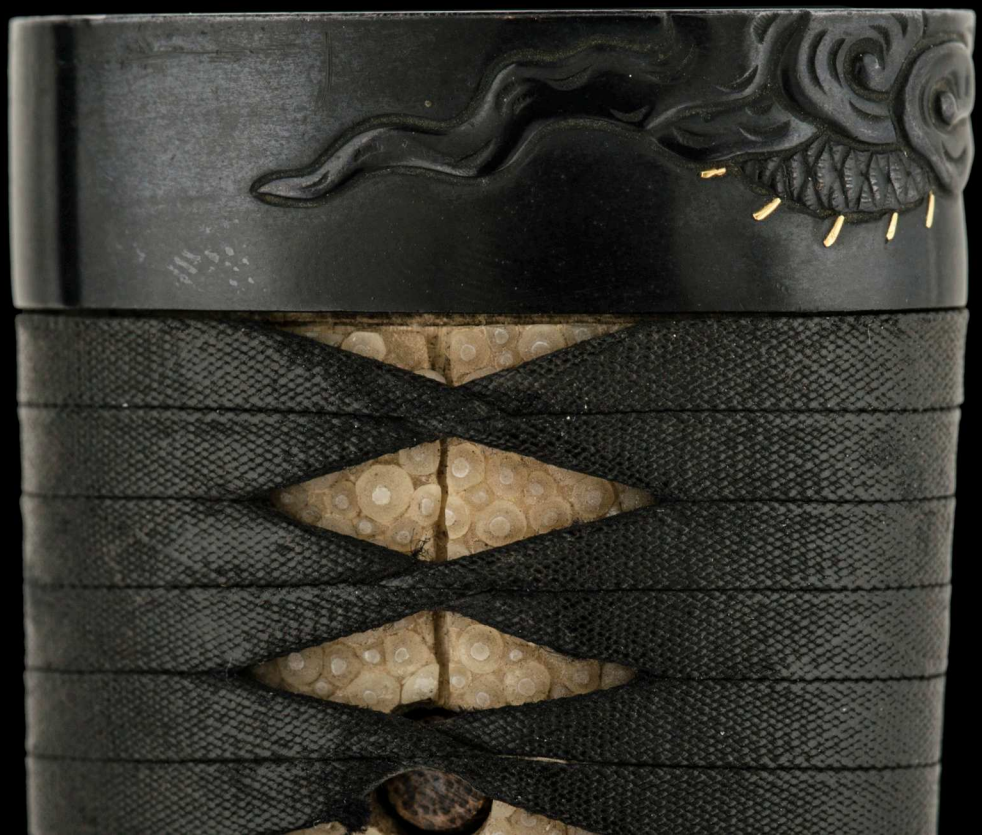
The new caretaker will be able to select the lacquer finish on the new *saya* (scabbard) and the type of *sageo* (cord) he or she would like. Above are three ideas to get the ideas flowing.

Note that certain, more specialised lacquer finishes will incur an additional cost.



This fierce polished *shakudô fuchi-kashira* has been attributed to *Shôami Denshichi* from *Akita province*, circa the middle Edo period (1700~1780).

Comes with NTHK-NPO Kanteisho certificate of authenticity.





A close up of the *kashira* (pommel)
depicting *Unryû* - the cloud dragon.

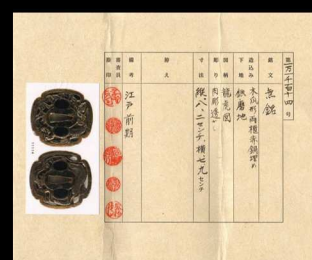
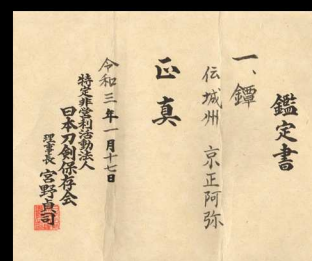
According to Japanese mythology, the breath of the dragon
changes into clouds from which comes either rain or fire.



Here is a old tsuba to cherish. Attributed to the *Jôshû Kyô-Shôami school*, this multi-lobed, polished iron guard that depicts a tiger and a dragon.

Both the dragon and the tiger are Buddhist symbols, with the tiger lunging straight ahead to bulldoze through his opponents, while the dragon is revered for its patience and wisdom. Harnessing both these energies in balance is where true power connects with the soul.

The NTHK-NPO Kanteisho certificate of authenticity dates the piece to the *early Edo period* circa 1600~1700.





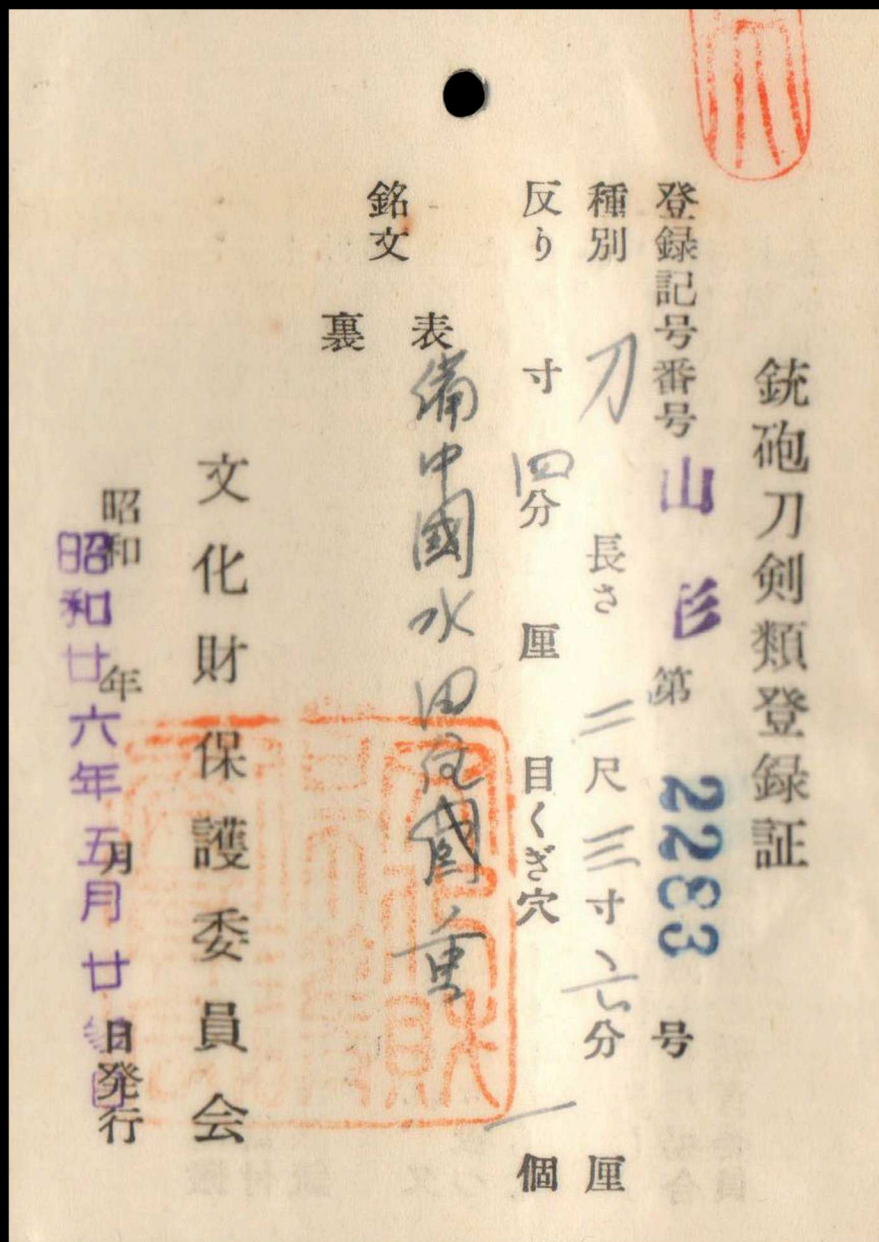




This long *tsuka* (hilt) is wrapped in black *nuno* (linen) *hishimaki* style over *samekawa* (ray skin). The *menuki* are depictions of a pair of horses.

For centuries in Japan, the horse has been worshipped as a god given its strength, speed and beauty. It is believed that the "divine spirit" appeared in the human world on horseback, and horses were offered at shrines for the coming of the gods.





This is the original *torokusho* (registration card) for the *Kunishige katana*. The card was registered in the 26th year of *Showa period* (May 1951).

This is significant as 1951 was the very first year that swords were formally registered in Japan. Many former Daimyô families were invited to submit their collections suggesting this blade was once held by a prominent family.

The serial number is just **2283**, one of the very first swords registered in Japan (current serial numbers are in the hundreds of thousands). This sword was registered in *Yamagata prefecture*, previously known as *Dewa province*.



ITEM# UJKA384

SOLD

A KATSUMITSU 'COUNTLESS BODIES TESTED' KATANA SIGNED & DATED, MUROMACHI PERIOD (EISHÔ ERA, AUGUST 1505)

Swordsmith:	<i>Bishû Osafune Katsumitsu</i>
Gold inlay (test):	<i>Yamano Ka'emon no Jô Nagahisa + kaô - Dôdô tara taka ri bakari kore</i>
Measurements:	Length: 62.3cm (<i>ubu-nakago</i>) Curvature: 1.5cm Moto-haba: 2.66cm
Jihada:	<i>Ko-itame hada, chikei and vibrant midare-utsuri</i>
Hamon:	<i>Bright suguha with kinsuji and ko-ashi</i>
Certificate #1:	NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon (<i>a sword Especially Worthy of Conservation</i>)
Certificate #2-4:	NTHK-NPO Kanteisho (<i>a koshirae, soroi-kanagu, tsuba designated as Authentic</i>)
Fujishiro rank:	Saijô-saku (<i>Jirôzaemon ranked as a grandmaster swordsmith</i>)
Authentication:	Sayagaki by Kanzan (<i>Satô Kanzan</i>) <i>and</i> Tanzan-sensei (<i>Tanobe Michihiro</i>)
Included:	Shirasaya, Edo period koshirae, fabric bags, stand, kit, booklet, description

SOLD

This fearless katana has been signed and dated to **August 1505**, during the 2nd year of *Eishô era* (1504~1521). This time period coincides best with 5th generation *Bizen no Kuni-jû Osafune Jirôzaemon no Jô Katsumitsu* that flourished throughout the Eishô era. Jirôzaemon Katsumitsu is ranked *saijô-saku* (grandmaster) and *ô-wazamono* for the extreme sharpness of his swords.

On April 28, 1656 master sword tester *Yamano Ka'emon no Jô Nagahisa*, with this very sword, *severed through countless bodies with ease*. The blade features a bright *suguha* hamon with razor-like *ko-ashi* and illuminating *midare-utsuri*. The sword is further housed in a splendid *handachi koshirae* with matching fittings from the late Edo period. This is a wickedly rare samurai sword.

↑
Saki-kasane: 3.2mm

Moto-kasane: 5.8mm

Omosa: 440g

Kissaki: 2.64cm
Saki-haba: 1.73cm

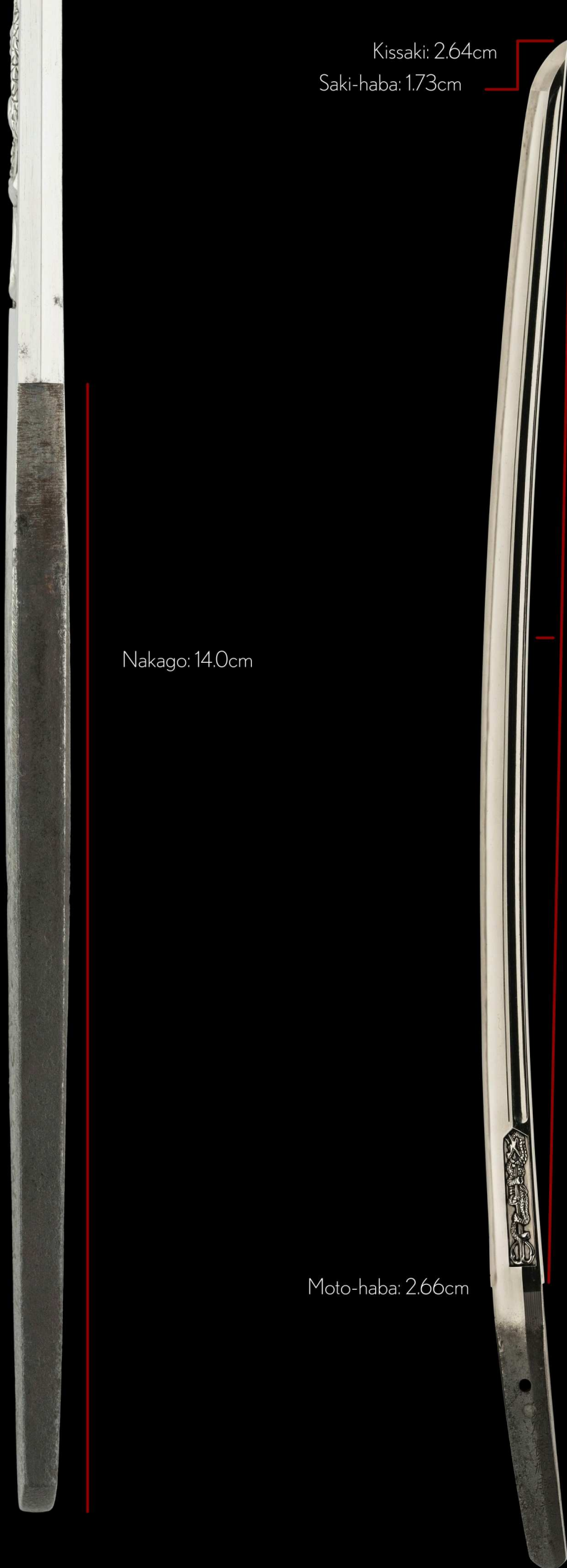
Nakago: 14.0cm

Moto-haba: 2.66cm

Nagasa: 62.3cm

Sori: 1.50cm

Mekugi-ana: 1



The *Katsumitsu* family of smiths from *Bizen province* began in the *Ōei era* (1394~1428) after vicious Nambokucho period came to and end. Just after the *sengoku jidai* (the warring states period) broke out with the *Onin war* in 1467 is when 4th generation Katsumitsu took centre stage in 1487 and took the school to the next level.

This fearless katana has been signed and dated to August 1505, during the 2nd year of *Eishō era* (1504~1521). This time period coincides best with 5th generation *Bizen no Kuni-jū Osafune Jirōzaemon no Jō Katsumitsu* that flourished throughout the Eishō era. Jirōzaemon Katsumitsu is ranked *saijō-saku* (grandmaster) and *ō-wazamono* for the extreme sharpness of his swords.

What makes this katana extra special is that on April 28, 1656 master sword tester *Yamano Ka'emon no Jō Nagahisa*, with this very sword, **severed through countless bodies with ease**. This blade is signed in gold inlay with *Nagahisa's kaō* (insignia).

The rarity of this sword test must be made clear. While single and multiple body cutting tests can be found, to have a blade that explicitly states that it confidently severed through numerous bodies is incredibly rare. There is sharp, and then there is *sharp*.

The blade features a bright *suguha hamon* with razor-like *ko-ashi* and illuminating *midare-utsuri*. The sword is further housed in a splendid *handachi koshirae* with matching fittings from the late Edo period.

As this katana was not signed with *Jirōzaemon's* personal name, it's protocol to restrain from definitively attributing the sword to this smith. However, given the sharpness reputation that 5th gen. Katsumitsu has earned, similarities in signature, the exquisite *midare-utsuri* and the fact he is known to have created *horimono* of *kenmaki-ryū*, there is strong evidence to support this to be his work.





Province: *Bishū* (Okayama prefecture)

Village: *Osafune*

Swordsmith: *Katsumitsu*

ubu-nakago (original, unaltered tang)

備 (Bi)

州 (shū)

長 (Osa)

船 (fune)

勝 (Katsu)

光 (mitsu)

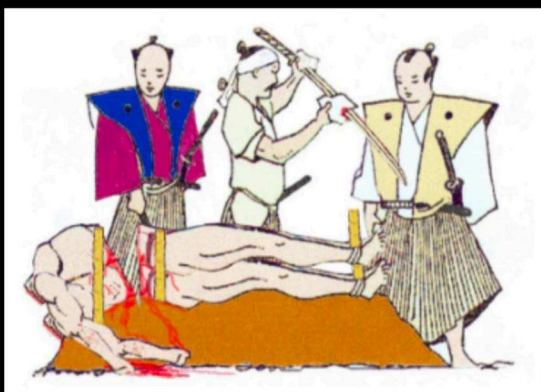
Eishô ninen hachigatsu hi
Meireki ninen urû shigatsu nijûhachinichi
Yamano Ka'emon no Jô Nagahisa + kaô
Dôdô tara taka ri bakari kore

This sword was crafted on a day in the 8th month during the 2nd year of *Eishô era* (August 1505).

On the 28th day of the 4th month of the 2nd intercalary year of *Meireki era* (April 28, 1656) with this blade master sword tester *Yamano Ka'emon no Jô Nagahisa* severed through countless bodies with ease. This blade is signed in gold inlay with Nagahisa's *kaô* (insignia).



before



after (and repeat)

(Dô)	洞	明 (Mei)
(dô)	洞	曆 (reki)
(ta)	多	貳 (ni)
(ra)	良	年 (nen)
(ta)	た	閏 (urû)
(ka)	か	四 (shi)
(ri)	里	月 (gatsu)
(bakari)	計	廿 (nijû)
(kore)	之	八 (hachi)
(Ei)	永	日 (nichi)
(shô)	正	山 (Yama)
(ni)	二	野 (no)
(nin)	年	加 (Ka)
(hachi)	八	右 (')
(gatsu)	月	衛 (e)
(hi)	日	門 (mon no)
		尉 (jō)
		永 (Naga)
		久 (hisa)
		花押 (kaô)



A dark, textured metal tameshigiri cutting test, likely made of iron or steel, is shown against a black background. The metal has a rough, weathered appearance with several circular holes. Gold-colored Japanese calligraphy is inscribed on the surface. The text, read from top to bottom, includes '天保八年' (Tenpo 8th year, 1837), '加右衛門尉' (Kaiyemon no Jūji), and '永公' (Ei-kō). The calligraphy is in a cursive style. The metal is slightly curved and has a hole near the top.

The rarity of this tameshigiri cutting test of having *severed countless bodies* cannot be overstated.

Having consulted with *Markus Sesko*, author of *Tameshigiri - The History and Development of Japanese Sword Testing*, he confirmed that he has not come across a similar test.

特 選
26201611

№ 1006594



鑑定書
備州長船勝光
銘 永正二年八月日
明暦貳年閏四月廿八日
(金象嵌) 山野如右衛門尉永久(花押)
胴多良大か里計之
長二尺〇五分強
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

広島 教育委員会
第 31001 号
昭和 44 年 2 月 20 日
平成 28 年 9 月 15 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)

*Bishû Osafune Katsumitsu - Eishô ninen hachigatsu hi
Meireki ninen urû shigatsu nijûhachinichi
Yamano Ka'emon no Jô Nagahisa + kaô
Dôdô tara taka ri bakari kore*

Nagasa (length)

2-shaku 0-sun 5-bu kyô (62.3cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai
(NBTHK)



備州長船勝光
Bishû Osafune Katsumitsu
Osafune Katsumitsu from Bisshû Province

永正二年八月日
明曆貳年截断銘入
Eishô ninen hachigatsu hi
Meireki ninen setsudan-mei iri

This blade was crafted on a day in the eighth month during the 2nd year of *Eishô era* (August 1505), with the date of cutting test done in the second year of *Meireki era* (1656)

刃長貳尺五分五厘有之
Hachô 2-shaku 5-bu 5-rin kore ari
Blade length ~ 62.1 cm

仲秋日寒山識「花押」
 chûshû bi Kanzan shirusu + kaô

Sayagaki written and certified by *Kanzan Satô* on a day in middle of autumn with his personal monogram



備前國長船勝光

Bizen no Kuni Osafune Katsumitsu

Bizen no Kuni Osafune Katsumitsu

六字銘及永正二年八月日紀有之而更ニ明曆二年四月山野加右衛門尉永久ガ截断ヲ行ヒテ利刃デアリシ旨ノ金象嵌有之俗名無キト誰モ入念作而穩健ナル直刃出来ヲ示シ浮彫モ味ワイ深矣

Rokuji-mei oyobi Eishô ninen hachigatsu hi no ki kore ari, shikamo sara ni Meireki ninen shigatsu Yamano Kaemon no Jô Nagahisa ga setsudan o okonaite rijin de ari shi mune no kinzôgan kore ari, zokumyô naki to dare mo nyûnensaku shikamo onken-naru suguha deki o shimeshi ukibori mo ajiwai-fukai.

The blade has a six-character signature that is dated on a day in the 8th month in the 2nd year of *Eishô era* (1505). In addition, it bears a cutting test performed by *Yamano Kaemon no Jô Nagahisa* in the 4th month of the 2nd year of *Meireki era* (1656) which is inlaid in gold and testifies to the sharpness of the blade. The signature does not contain an individual name but regardless of which Katsumitsu made this sword, it is carefully forged and the *deki* holds a calm *suguha* and the *horimono* (engraving) is tastefully executed.

長貳尺寸五分余

Nagasa 2-shaku 5-bu kyô

Blade length ~ 62.3 cm

戊戌曆松風月

Tsuchinoe-inudoshi matsukaze-zuki

Certified in June during the Year of the Dog (2018)

探山識「花押」

Tanzan shirusu + kaô


Written by Tanzan [Tanobe Michihiro] + monogram





This powerful *horimono* (engraving) is called *Kenmaki-ryu*. It depicts a dragon winding around a sword.

Legend dictates that the guardian deity *Fudo-Myou* had to fight a deity from another religion, the dragon king *Kurikara*.



In the battle, *Fudo-Myou* changed himself into a flaming sword but *Kurikara* did the same and the fighting went on without a victor.

In a manner of ingenuity, *Fudo-Myou* transformed into the dragon *Kurikara*, wound himself around the opponent's sword and devoured him from atop.

Hence, the dragon *Kurikara* wrapped around a sword is, in fact, another representation of *Fudo-Myou*.

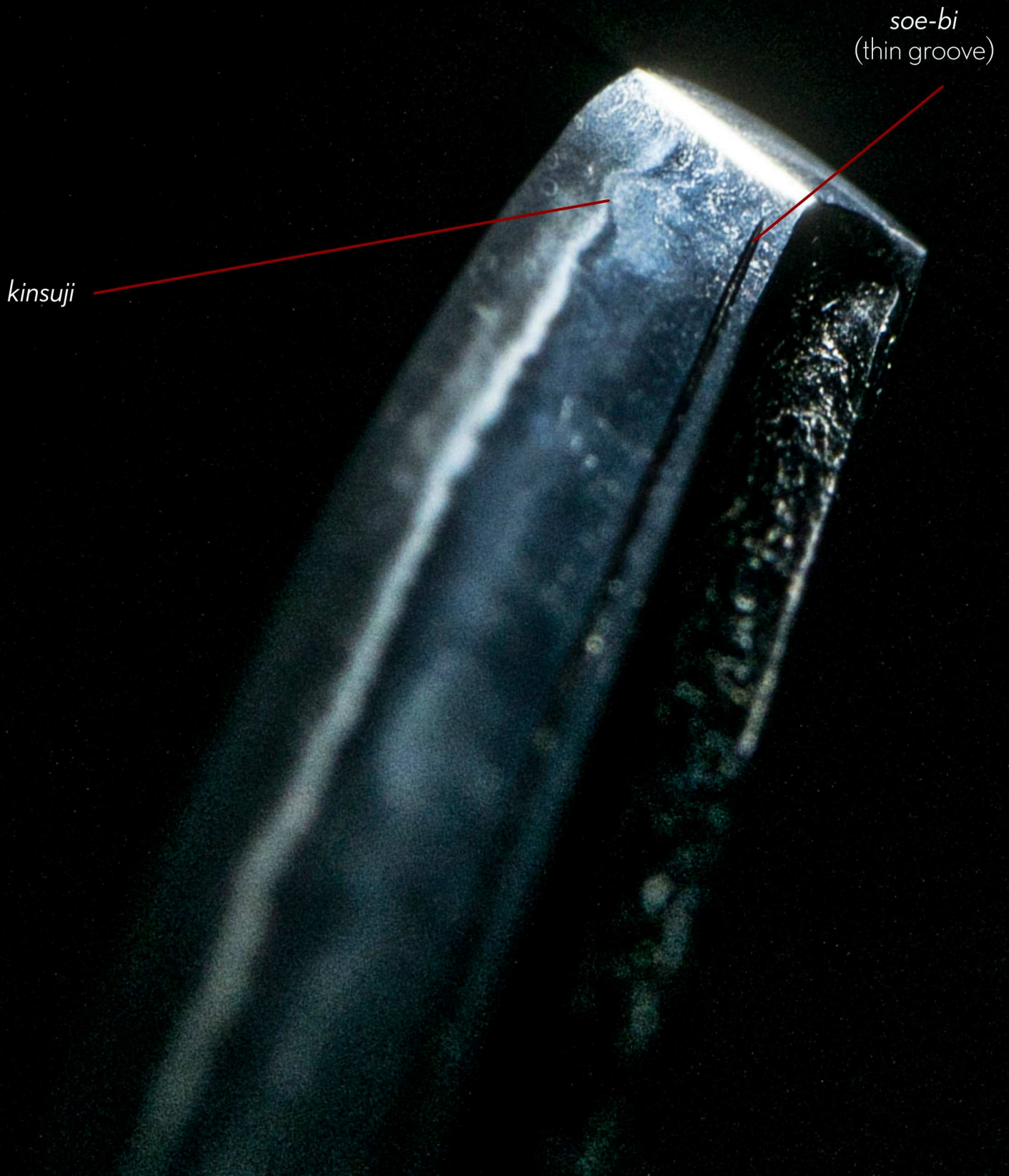


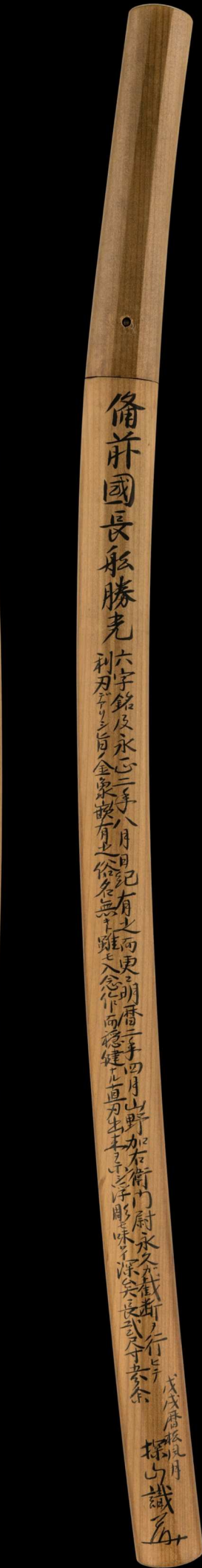
The *ko-ashi* (short legs) vibrating along the *suguha* (straight hamon) resemble razor-sharp teeth awaiting dinner.

midare-utsuri
iconic shadow hamon of the Bizen tradition

Just as the deep-sea anglerfish use bioluminescence as a lure to attract prey, the equally vivid *midare-utsuri* on this *Katsumitsu katana* speaks to its authority within the most hostile of environments.

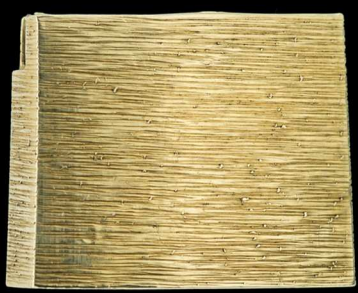
A wicked line of *kinsuji* (dark line of *nie*) wraps itself around the hamon at the apex of the *soe-bi*.





Shirasaya
(protective scabbard)

Note there is *sayagaki* authentication on both sides of the shirasaya.



gold *habaki* with horizontal file marks



*Soroi-kanagu-tsuki
cha-ishime-ji-nuri saya
handachi-koshirae*
(揃金具付茶石目地塗鞘半太刀拵え)

*Handachi-koshirae
lacquered in brown
with stone-like surface and
matching set of the fittings*

Crafted during the
Late Edo period
(1780~1867)



NTHK-NPO Kanteisho
Certificate of Authenticity

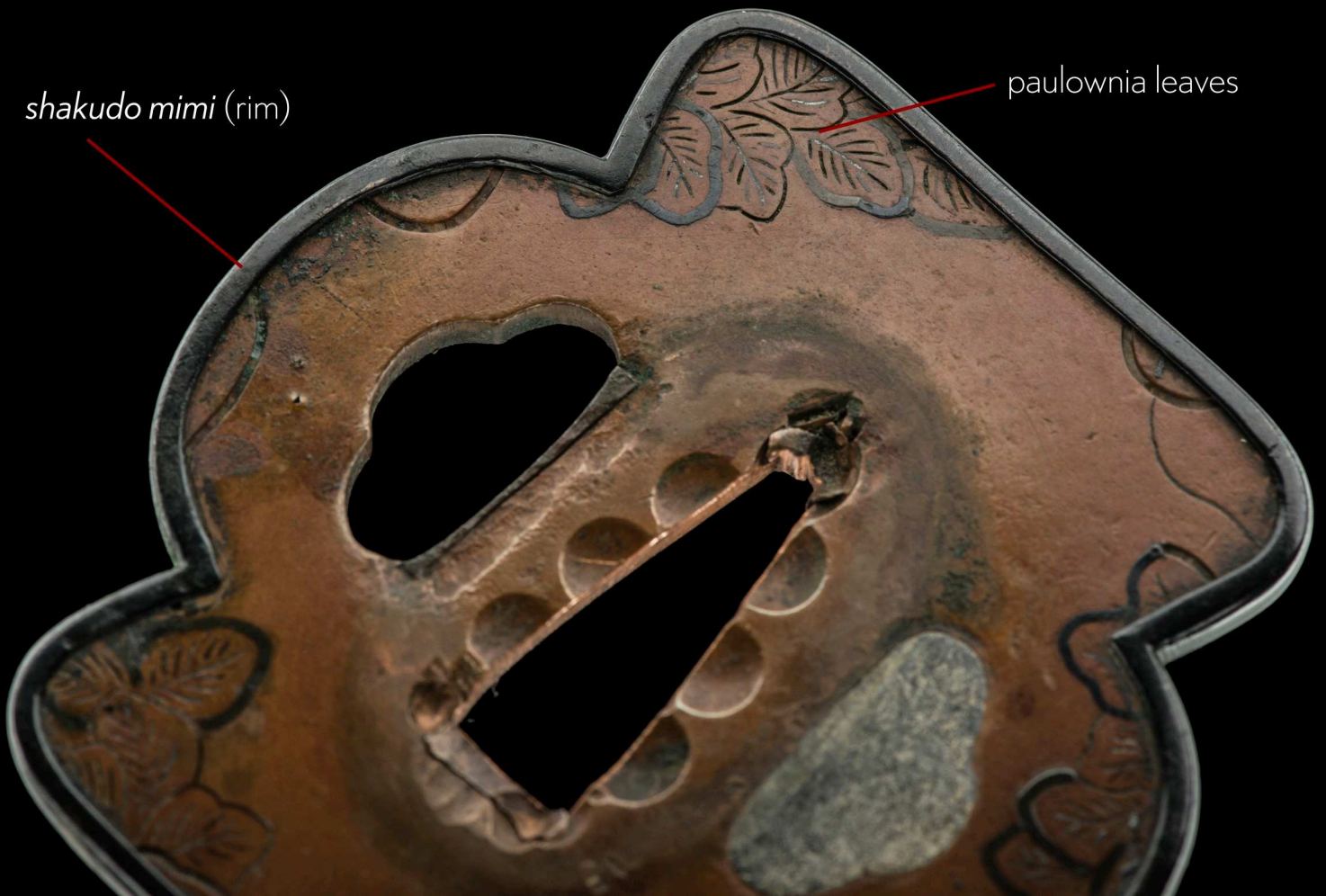


鑑定書
一、鐙
伝火刀金具師
正真
令和三年一月十七日
特定非営利活動法人
日本刀剣保存会
理事長 宮野昌司

品名	材質	形状	寸法	備考
鐙	銅	鐙	縦長六分、横六分	江戸初期
鐙	銅	鐙	縦長六分、横六分	江戸初期

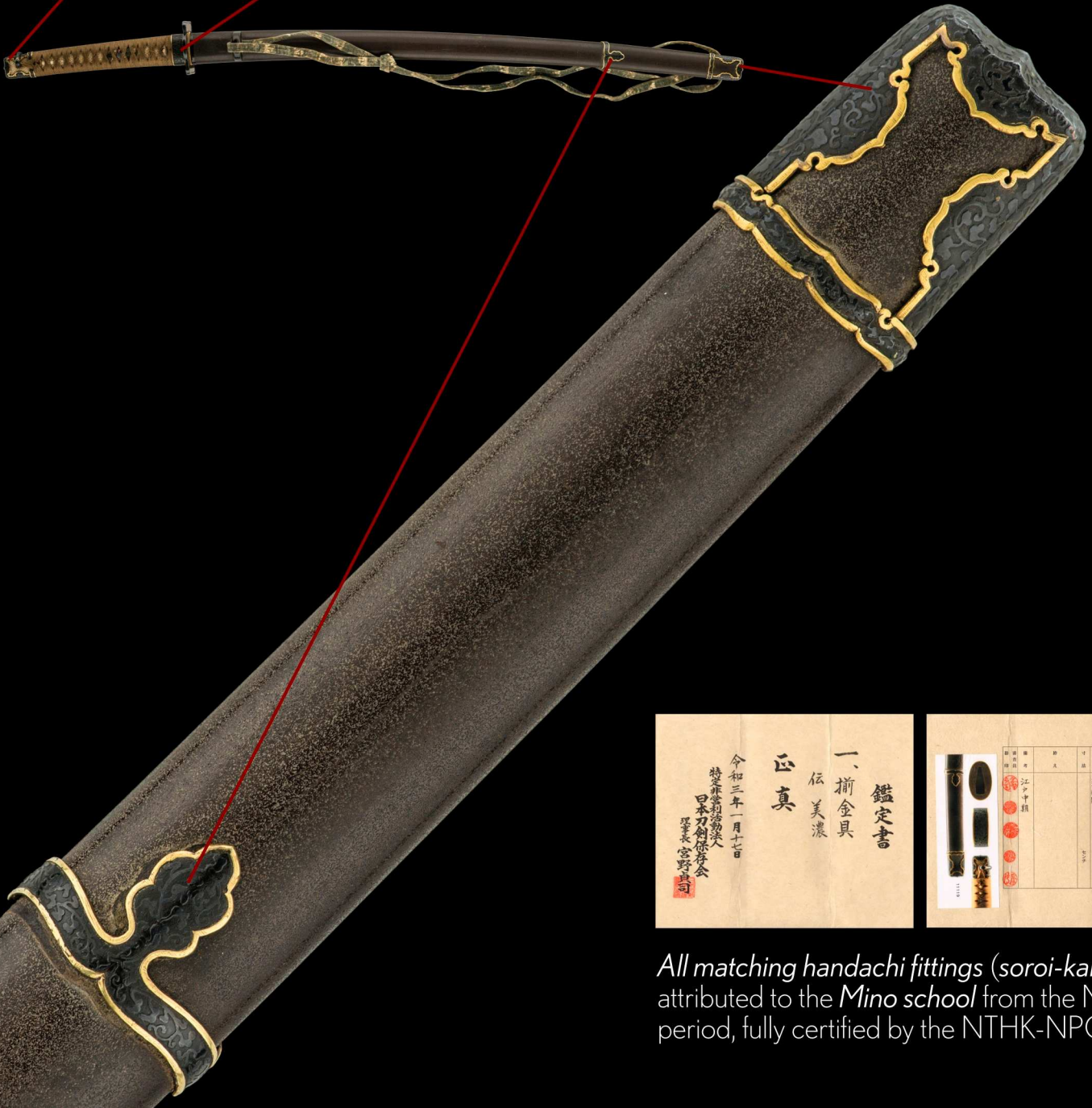
NTHK-NPO Kanteisho
Certificate of Authenticity

This rare polished copper *mokko* (lobe) shaped *tsuba* with *shakudo* rim was crafted during the early Edo period (circa 1600-1700) by a craftsman specialising in *tachi* fittings.





polished *shakudo* with gold trim



令和三年一月十日
鑒定書
一、拵金具
伝美濃
正真
鑒定者 宮野 晋
日本刀剣保存会

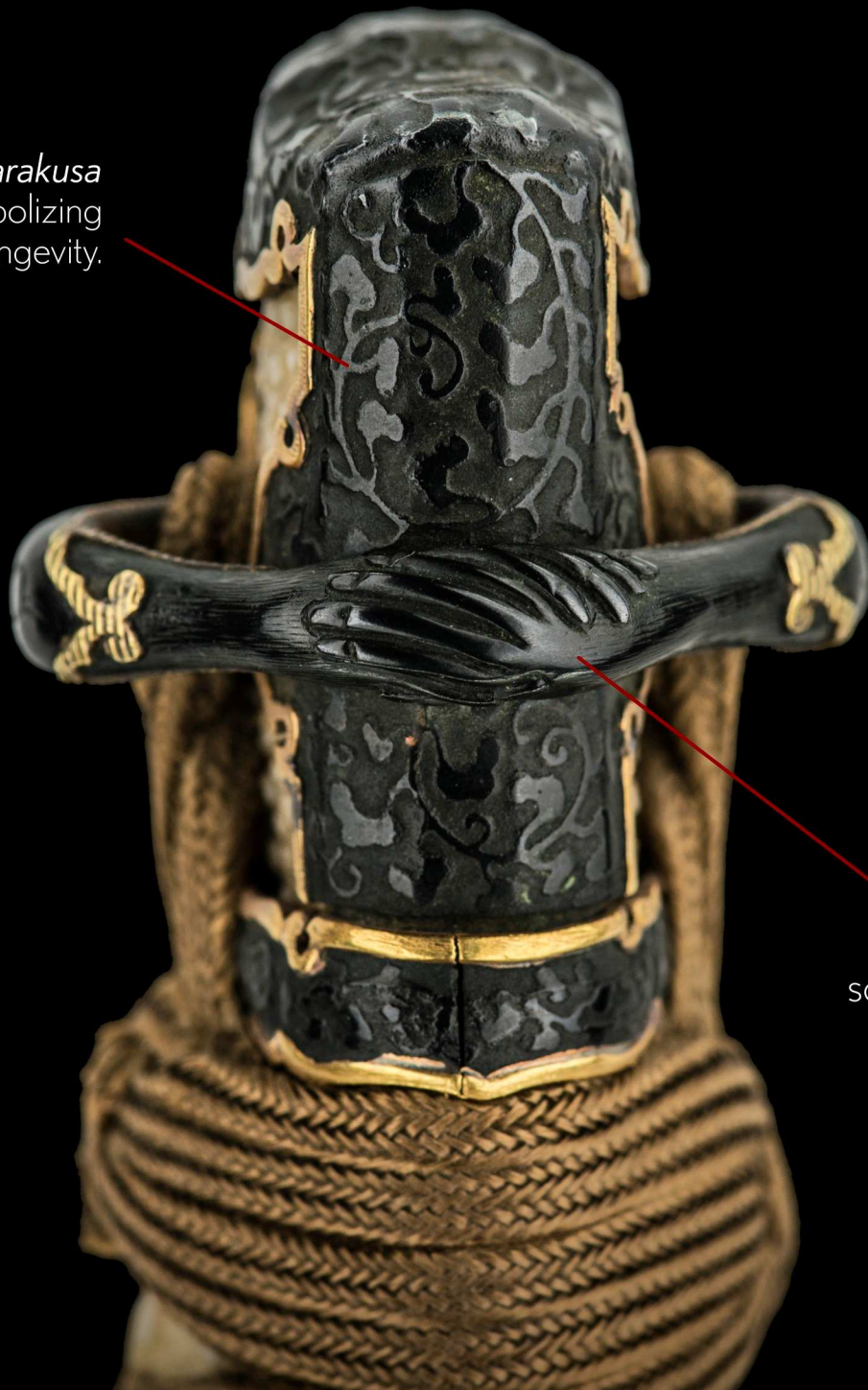
品名	材質	寸法	備考
拵金具	金具	全長 10.0cm	美濃伝
拵金具	金具	全長 10.0cm	美濃伝
拵金具	金具	全長 10.0cm	美濃伝
拵金具	金具	全長 10.0cm	美濃伝

All matching *handachi* fittings (*soroi-kanagu*) attributed to the *Mino* school from the Mid-Edo period, fully certified by the NTHK-NPO.

At peace

The unique clasp on the kashira is a carved depiction of the merciful holding of hands.

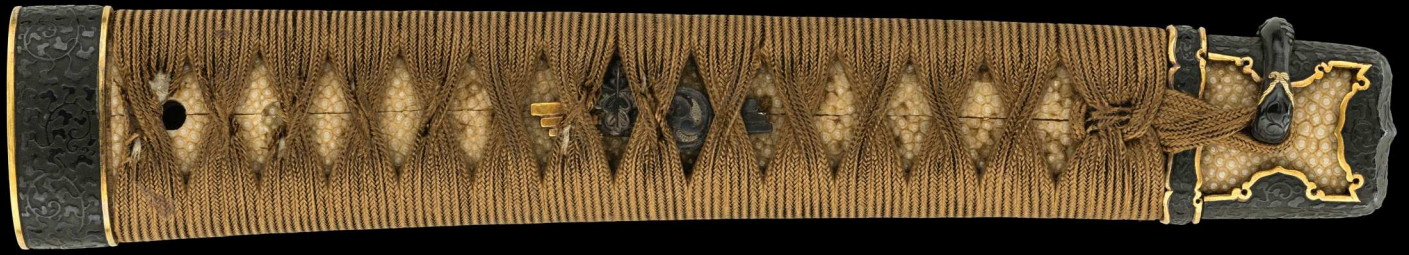
A design of *karakusa*
(vines) symbolizing
health and longevity.



sculpted hands



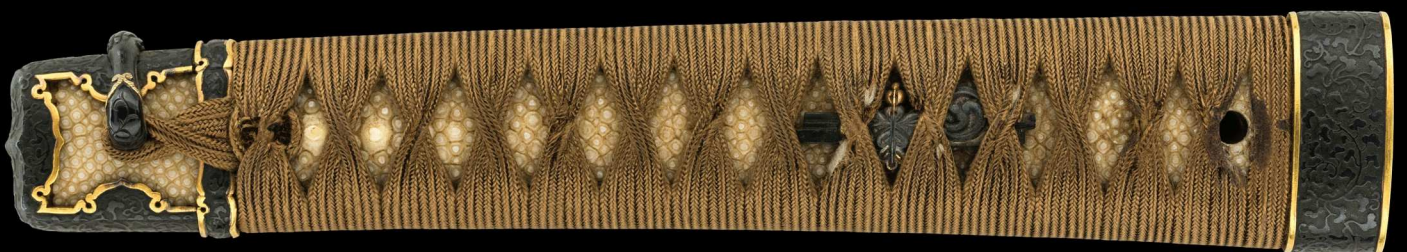
From above, the kashira takes the abstract form of a warrior meditating in deep thought.



Menuki (decorative grips) are a combination of *kiri* (paulownia) and the *tomoe* symbol.



The *menuki* incorporates the *Tomoe* symbol - depicting the threefold division of *Man, Earth, and Sky* at the heart of the Shinto belief system of universal life balance.





No prisoners.

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.



safe, extra large cloth for adding oil to the blade



ITEM# UJWA248

SOLD

A FUKUOKA-ICHIMONJI NORIFUSA Ô-WAKIZASHI UNSIGNED, MID-KAMAKURA PERIOD (KENCHÔ ERA: 1249~1256)

Swordsmith:	<i>Bizen no Kuni Ichimonji Norifusa</i>		
Measurements:	Length: 57.5cm (<i>ô-suriage</i>)	Curvature: 1.6cm	Moto-haba: 2.45cm
Jihada:	<i>Ko-itame hada with ko-nie deki and</i>		
Hamon:	<i>Gorgeous gunome choji-midare with kinsuji and sunagashi</i>		
Certificate #1:	NBTHK Jûyô Tôken (<i>a sword designated as Profound and Important</i>)		
Certificate #2:	NTHK-NPO Yûshûsaku (<i>a sword designated as Masterwork</i>)		
Fujishiro rank:	Jôjô-saku (<i>ranked as a highly superior swordsmith</i>)		
Authentication:	Sayagaki by Hon'ami Nisshû (<i>former Living National Treasure</i>)		
Authentication:	Sayagaki by Tanzan-sensei (<i>Mr. Tanobe Michihiro</i>)		
Included:	Shirasaya, fabric bag, stand, kit, booklet, description		

SOLD (*custom koshirae in process*)

This rare ô-wakizashi (long wakizashi) has been attributed by the NBTHK to the famed *Fukuoka-Ichimonji* school of the golden Kamakura period. The NTHK-NPO took the attribution a step further to that of *Ichimonji Norifusa* – a national treasure swordsmith. Norifusa was born *Takazu Umanosuke* and flourished during *Kenchô era* (1249~1256). Along with his brothers *Yoshifusa* and *Sukezane*, *Norifusa* is considered one of the three most important *Ichimonji* smiths.

This sword features a beautiful swirling *itame-hada* overlaid with *midare-utsuri* and an icy blue *jigane*. Holding the sword quietly under the light is where the blade truly comes to its own. Glorious variations in its *chôji-midare hamon* captures both the heart and imagination. The world has come a long way in 800 years - it's enjoyable to relive them through this blade.

↑
Saki-kasane: 3.3mm

Moto-kasane: 4.8mm

Omosa: 495g

Kissaki: 2.8cm
Saki-haba: 1.85cm

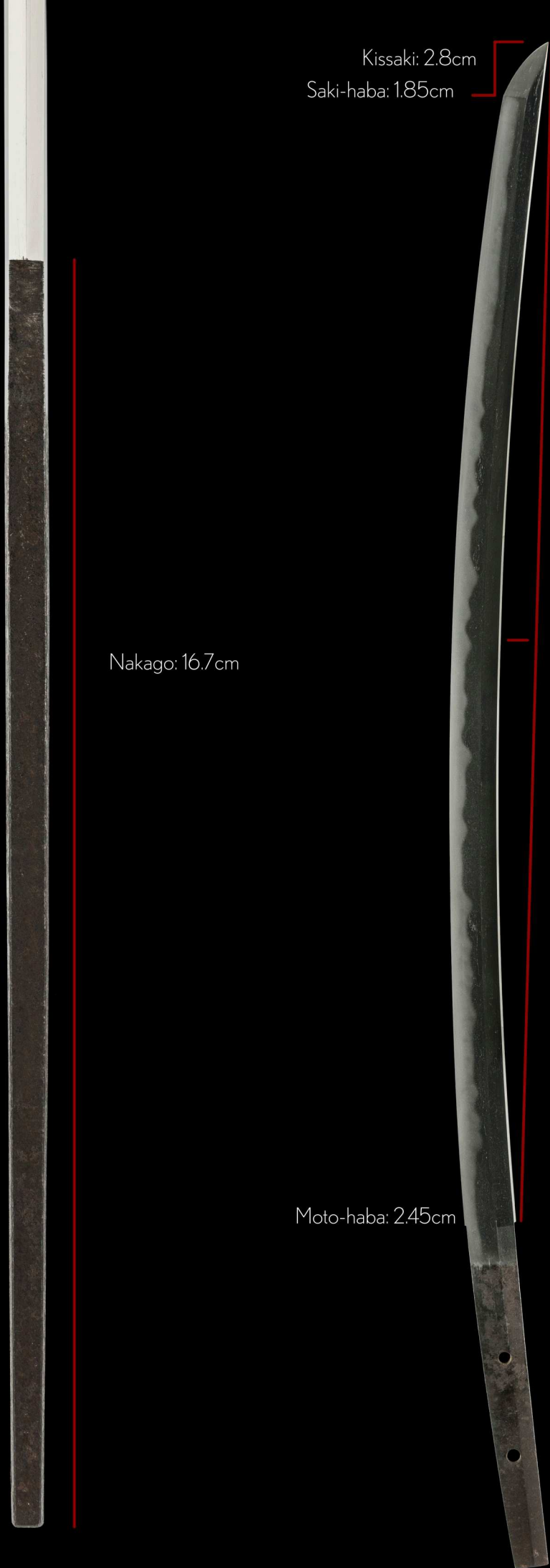
Nakago: 16.7cm

Moto-haba: 2.45cm

Nagasa: 57.5cm

Sori: 1.6cm

Mekugi-ana: 2



This rare *ô-wakizashi* has been attributed by the NBTHK to the famed *Fukuoka-Ichimonji school*. The NTHK-NPO sword organisation took the attribution a step further and designated this work to that of *Ichimonji Norifusa* - one of the most important Ichimonji swordsmiths.

The Fukuoka-Ichimonji school derived its name from the village of Fukuoka in Bizen province these talented smiths worked within. Their iconic chiseled '*ichi*' (number one) on the *nakago* will forever stand in annals of history.

Norifusa was born *Takazu Umanosuke* at the start of the Kamakura period, circa 1200 and flourished during *Kenchô era* (1249~1256). Along with his older brother *Yoshifusa* and his younger brother *Sukezane*, *Norifusa* is considered one of the three most important Ichimonji smiths to have lived.

Two swords by *Norifusa* have reached the highest honour of *Kokuhô* (National Treasure). He is rated *jôjô-saku* (highly superior) by *Fujishiro*.

This sword is a time traveller. The *jihada* with its beautifully swirling *itame-hada* overlaid with *midare-utsuri* transports us instantly to the 13th century Bizen Kamakura period. The *jigane* has a bluish tinge, a characteristic of finer swords shining with *ko-nie* crystals.

Holding the sword quietly under the light is where the blade truly comes to its own. Exuberant variations in its *chôji-midare hamon* captures both the heart and imagination. The world has come a long way in 800 years - it's enjoyable to relive them through this blade.





重要第6446号

指定書

脇指 無銘 福岡一文字 一口

長さ五五厘 反り三厘 元幅二釐 先幅一釐

鑄造庵棟 中鋒 鍛板目肌乱孔映り文

刃丈丁子乱足 葉入り小沸付砂流かり金筋入り

帽子僅かに沸が残り 茎大磨上先切り

釘目切り、目釘孔二

右者當協會に於て審査の結果

重要刀剣に指定する

昭和五十四年三月二日

財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協会

会長 本間順治



Jûyô Certificate No. 6446
Shiteisho (指定書) Certificate of Designation
Wakizashi, mumei: Fukuoka Ichimonji (福岡一文字)

Measurements
nagasa 57.5 cm, sori 1.6 cm

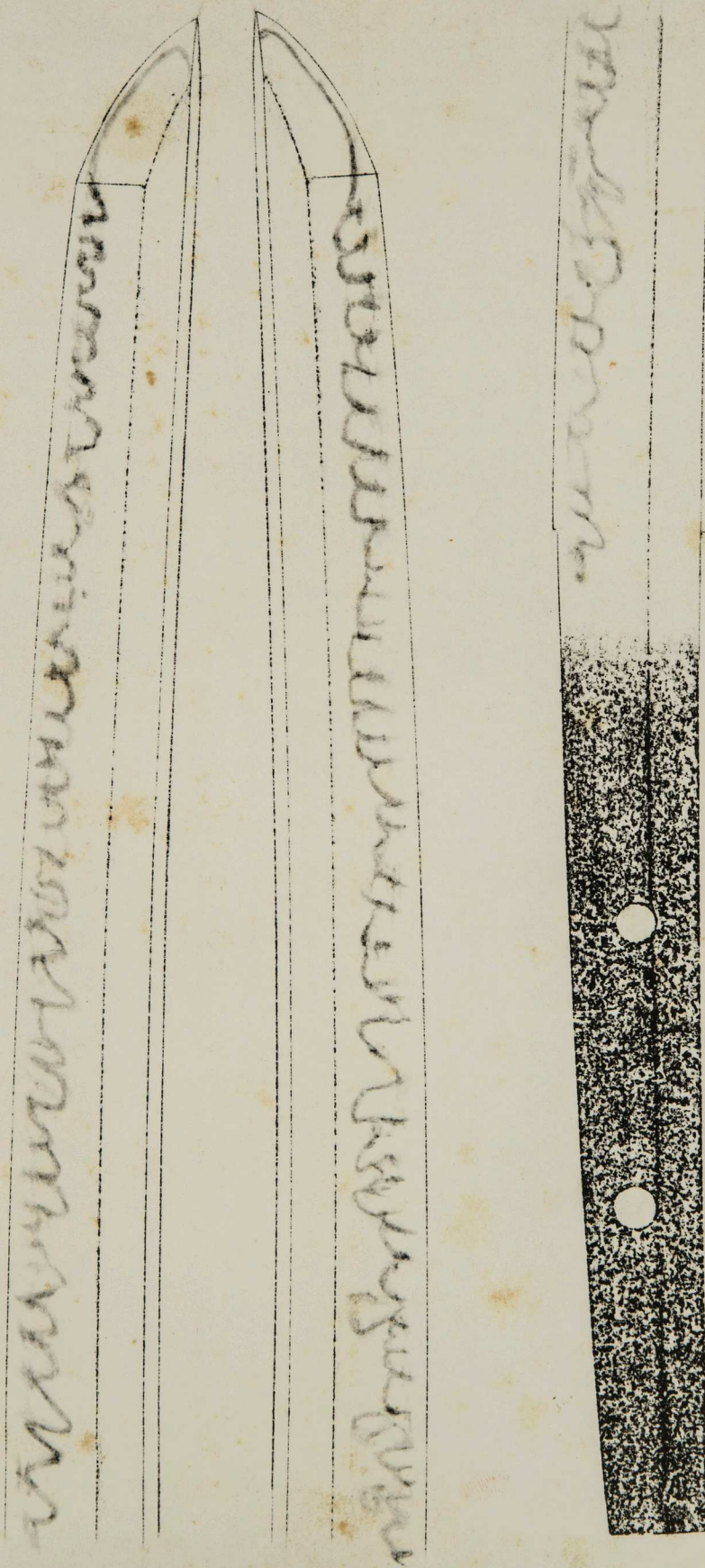
Description
Shinogi-zukuri, iori-mune, chû-kissaki
Kitae: *itame-hada* with *midare-utsuri*
Hamon: *chôji* (clove blossoms) in *ko-nie-deki* that is mixed with *ashi, yô, sunagashi*, and *kinsuji*
Bôshi: a few *nie* remaining
Nakago: *ô-suriage, kirijiri, kiri-yasurime*, two *mekugi-ana*

According to the result of the shinsa committee of our society we judged this work as authentic and rate it as *Jûyô-tôken* (a profound and important sword).


March 2, 1979

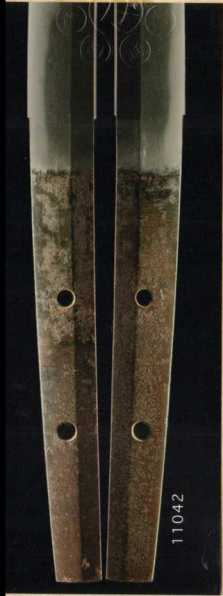
[Foundation] Nihon Bijutsu Tôken Hozon Kyôkai, NBTHK
[President] Honma Junji (本間順治)

脇指 無銘 福岡一文字



Jûyô tôken oshigata (tracing of blade and hamon)

捺 審 査 印 員	備 考	寸 法	拵 え	中 心	図 柄 り	鍔 子	刃 紋	下 地	鍛	造り込み	銘 文	第 一 万 一 千 四 十 二 号
	建長頃			目釘穴 二個 鍔切り		一文字返り	華麗な丁子乱れ		板目詰む	鎗造り 庵棟	大磨り上げ無銘	
										棟		



NTHK-NPO Yushusaku Certificate of Authenticity

This wakizashi was designated as *Yushusaku* (Masterwork) by the Non-Profit Society for the Preservation of the Japanese Sword

One, Wakizashi

Mumei (unsigned)
Den Bizen no Kuni Ichimonji Norifusa

Nagasa (length)
1-shaku 9-sun kore ari (57.5cm)

Issued in 2nd year of Reiwa (2020), December 13th

Nihon Token Hozon Kai
(NTHK-NPO)

This sword has reached the highest level of honour at the NTHK-NPO.
Four judges have stamped their names to the certificate.



Master sword polisher *Hon'ami Nisshû* was given the title of *Living National Treasure (ningen-kokuhô)* on April 23rd, 1975. He died on July 13, 1996 at the age of 88. Although we have no records to prove so, it is possible that Hon'ami Nisshû polished this sword. Note that he dated the blade to the *Jôkyû* era circa 1219~1222, exactly 800-years ago.

重要刀剣

Jûyô-tôken

Jûyô-tôken

福岡一文字

Fukuoka-Ichimonji

Fukuoka-Ichimonji

大磨上無銘

時代承久之頃

Ô-suriage mumei

Jidai Jôkyû no goro

This blade is *ô-suriage mumei* (unsigned) and dates to approximately the *Jôkyû* era (1219~1222)

佳品也

Kahin nari

Masterwork

長サ壹尺九寸有之

Nagasa isshaku kyû-sun kore ari

Blade length ~ 57.5 cm

昭和己未歳水無月誌之

本阿弥日洲「花押」第廿六回重要刀剣指定品

Shôwa tsuchinoto-hitsujidoshi minazuki kore o

shirusu, Hon'ami Nisshû + kaô

Written by *Hon'ami Nisshû* in June during the Year of the Sheep in the *Shôwa* era (1979) + monogram

第廿六回重要刀劍指定品
備前國福岡一文字

大磨上無銘闊達ナ丁子乱ヲ焼キ地映ヲ顯ハシ鎌倉
中期同派ノ艶ヤカナ美シサヲ湛ヘル典型的優品也
珍々重々
現シ鎌倉中期同派
刃長壹尺九寸弱有之

時在丙申曆蘭月
後學探山邊道識
花押

第廿六回重要刀劍指定品

Dai nijûrokkai jûyô-tôken shitei-hin

Designated as *Jûyô-tôken* at the 26th *Jûyô-shinsa*

備前國福岡一文字

Bizen no Kuni Fukuoka-Ichimonji

Fukuoka-Ichimonji school from *Bizen* province

大磨上無銘闊達ナ丁子乱ヲ焼キ地映ヲ顯ハシ鎌倉
中期同派ノ艶ヤカナ美シサヲ湛ヘル典型的優品也
珍々重々

*Ô-suriage mumei kattatsu na chôji-midare o yaki ji utsuri o
awarashi Kamakura-chôki dôha no tsuyayaka na utsukushisa
o tataeru tenkei-teki yôhin nari - chinchin-chôchô*

This blade is *ô-suriage mumei*. It is an archetypal masterwork that reflects the alluring beauty and bold hardening in *chôji-midare* that is synonymous of works from this school from the middle Kamakura period. Very rare and very precious.

刃長壹尺九寸弱有之

Hachô isshaku kyû-sun jaku kore ari

Blade length ~ 57.5 cm

時在丙申曆蘭月

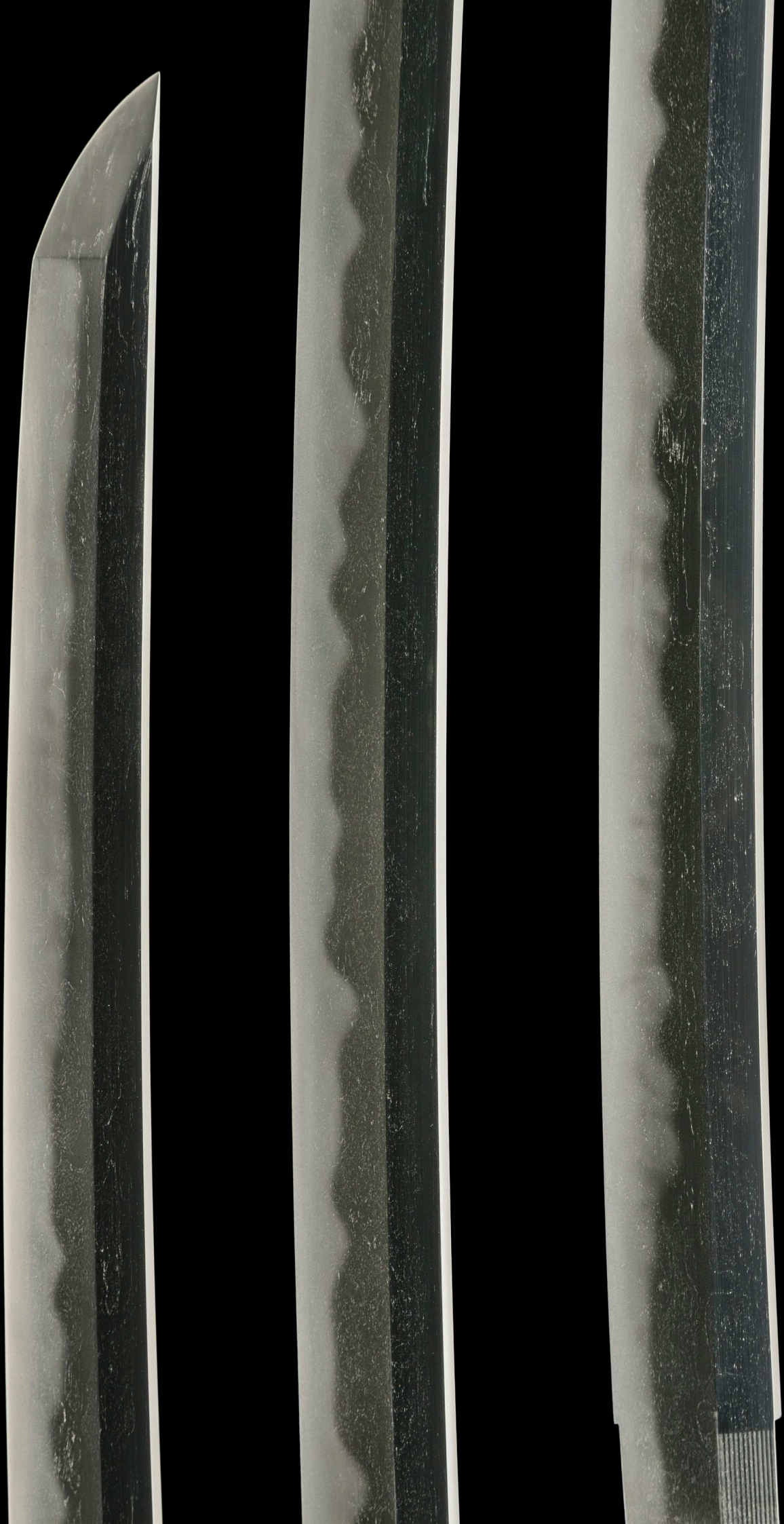
後學探山邊道識「花押」

Jizai hinoe-sarudoshi rangetsu

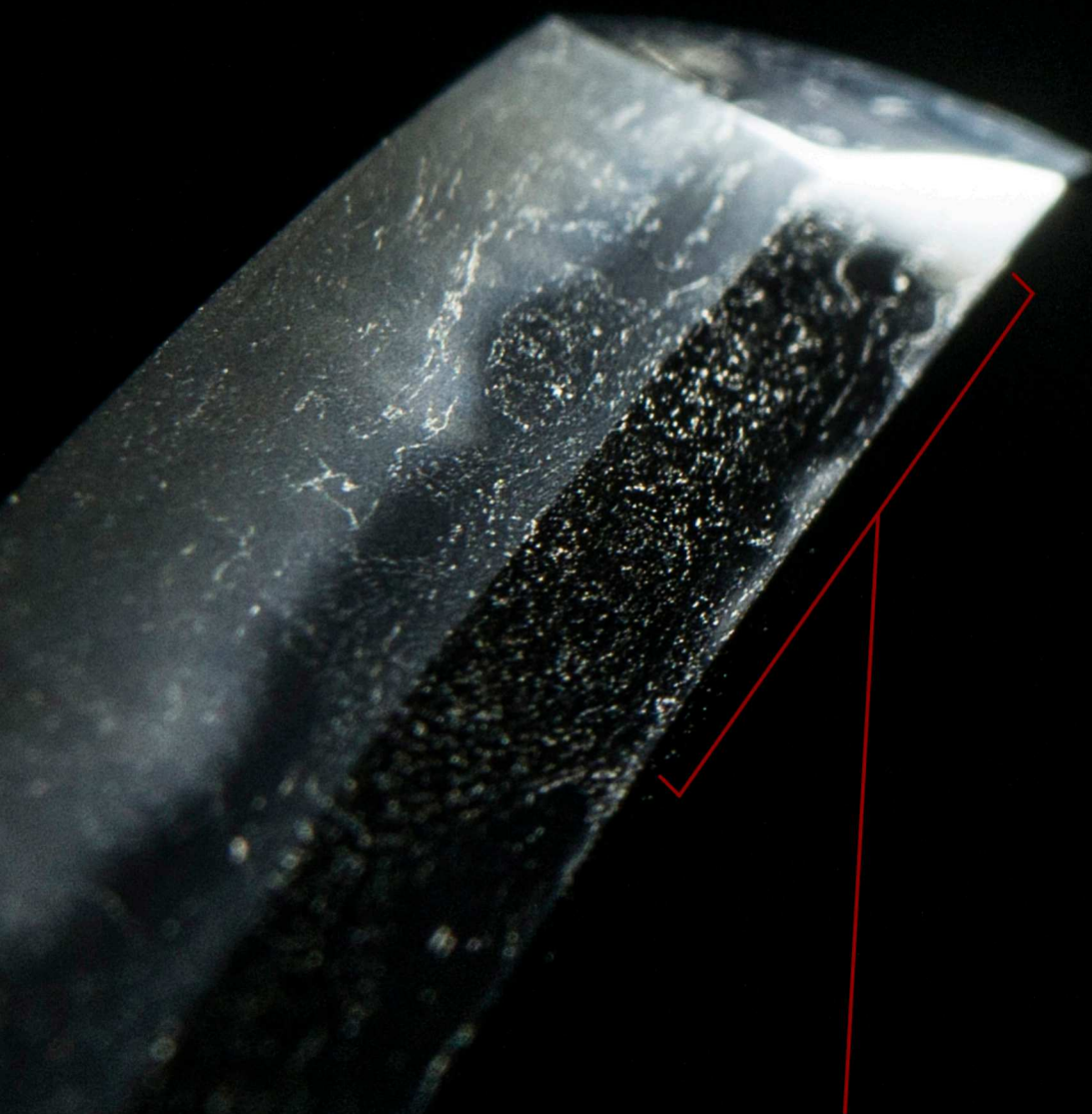
Kôgaku Tanzan Hendô shirusu + kaô

Additional assessment added by *Tanzan Hendô*

[*Tanobe Michihiro*] in July during the Year of the Monkey of this [Heisei] era (2016) + monogram







Muneyaki
tempering along the *mune*, spine of the blade.

The *jigane* (surface of the steel) shines an icy blue hue that is characteristic of swords crafted at the highest level. This is how great history speaks.



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

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

The type of *utsuri* is called *midare-utsuri* - a smokey pattern that billows in a wavy formation following the hamon pattern.




A close-up photograph of a sword blade, likely a katana, showing the hamon (temper line) patterns. The blade is curved and has a dark, textured surface. A bright, glowing area of light is visible on the blade, indicating the hamon. Red lines point from text labels to specific features on the blade. The background is dark, making the blade stand out.

ô-chôji

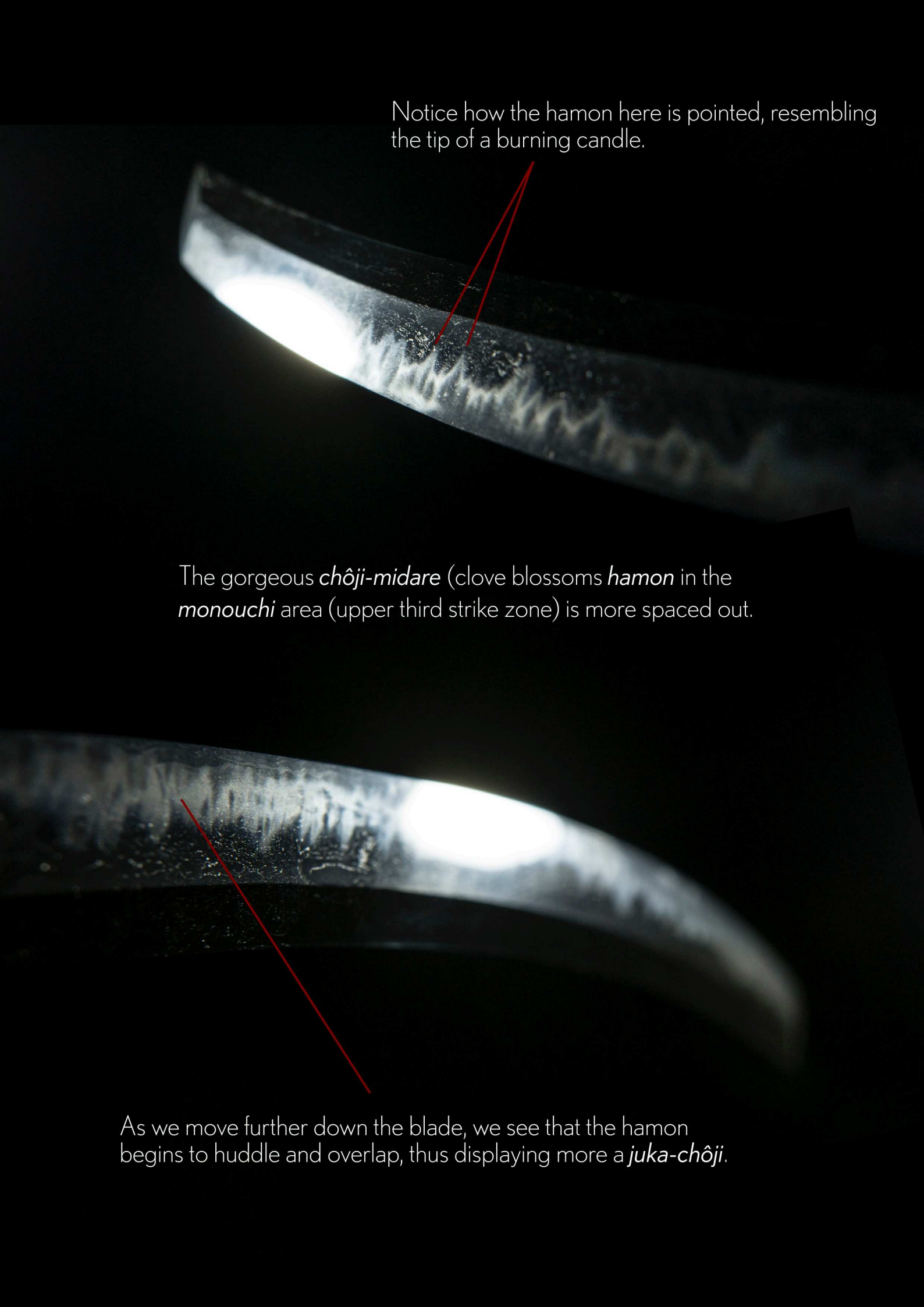
kinsuji

The spectacular hamon light show continues to the very base of the blade where the choji hamon stretches the full width of the *ji* (body), this is known as *ô-chôji*.

Swordsmith Norifusa, a representative smith of the Fukuoka Ichimonji school was known for his choji variations, thus the NTHK-NPO made such an attribution.

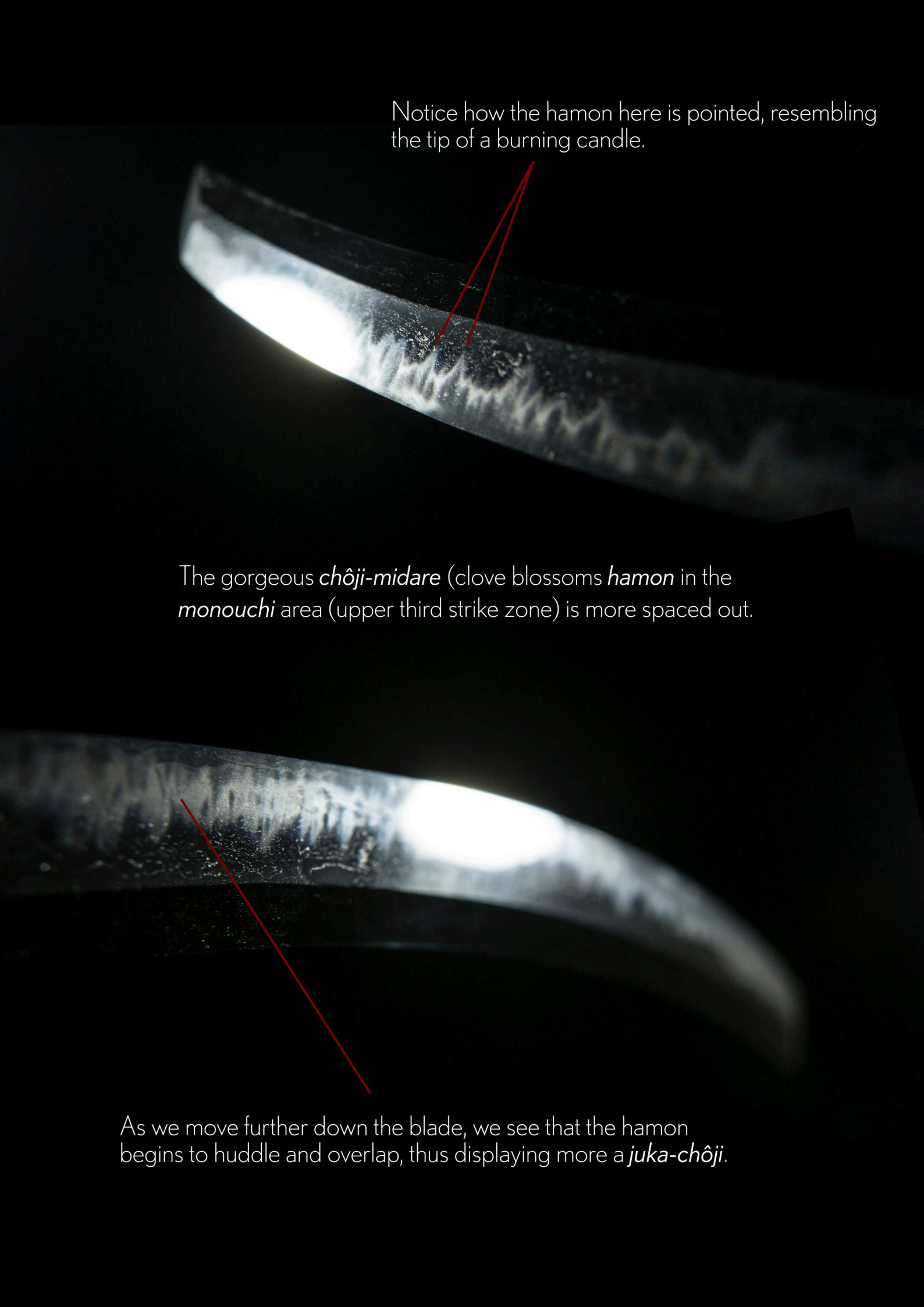
A close-up photograph of a sword blade, similar to the one above, showing the hamon patterns. The blade is curved and has a dark, textured surface. A bright, glowing area of light is visible on the blade. A red line points from the text label to a specific feature on the blade. The background is dark, making the blade stand out.

ô-chôji

A close-up photograph of a curved sword blade, likely a katana, showing a hamon (temper line) pattern. The blade is dark, and the hamon is a lighter, wavy line. The pattern is described as 'pointed' and resembling the tip of a burning candle. A red line points to the tip of the hamon.

Notice how the hamon here is pointed, resembling the tip of a burning candle.

The gorgeous *chôji-midare* (clove blossoms *hamon* in the *monouchi* area (upper third strike zone) is more spaced out.

A close-up photograph of a curved sword blade, likely a katana, showing a hamon (temper line) pattern. The blade is dark, and the hamon is a lighter, wavy line. The pattern is described as 'huddle and overlap' and displaying more of a *juka-chôji*. A red line points to the huddle and overlap of the hamon.

As we move further down the blade, we see that the hamon begins to huddle and overlap, thus displaying more a *juka-chôji*.

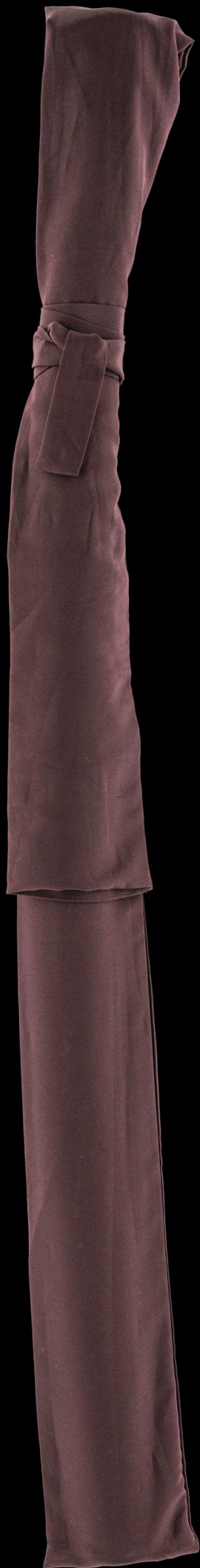


sunagashi

A beautiful example of *sunagashi*, where the hamon exhibits a brushed appearance.



Long *ashi* (legs) form a set of dramatic cliffs that tower over the cutting edge of the blade.



Shirasaya
(protective scabbard)

Note there is *sayagaki* authentication on both sides of the shirasaya.



gold *habaki* with straight file marks

History tells a story.
It's time to create yours.





ITEM# UJKA342

SOLD

A KANETSUGU KATANA

SIGNED & DATED, 6TH MONTH OF THE 7TH YEAR OF HEISEI (JUNE 1995)

Swordsmith:	<i>Higo no Kuni Jû Akamatsu Tarô Kanetsugu saku (ubu nakago)</i> <i>Utsushi Minamoto Kiyomaro</i>		
Measurements:	Length: 74.0cm	Curvature: 2.0cm	Weight: 895g
Jihada:	<i>Dense ko-itame with ji-nie</i>		
Hamon:	<i>Wavy gunome choji-midare with sunagashi and long streaks of kinsuji</i>		
Authentication:	Sayagaki by the swordsmith himself		
Included:	Shirasaya, koshirae, bags, kit, printed description		

SOLD

Born *Kimura Kanesada* in 1951, living swordsmith *Kanetsugu* is of the *Akamatsu Tarô School* having studied under his father *Kimura Kaneshige*. *Kanetsugu* is a greatly admired modern-day swordsmith who currently lives in *Yatsushiro* in *Kumamoto prefecture* on *Kyushu island*.

The *Akamatsu Taro school* uses its own *tamahagane* giving their *jigane* a unique quality. This sword is a faithful *utsushi* (recreation) of a katana by maestro *Minamoto Kiyomaro*. The sword was dated in June of 1995 with a huge *kissaki* and a bright, bold *hamon* with a wavy *gunome-choji-midare* pattern with long streaks of *kinsuji*. It was commissioned by a husband and wife as written by *Kanetsugu* on the *shirasaya sayagaki*. A modern-day *koshirae* was crafted with an alluring theme of flowers, spiders and a pair of *menuki* depicting a dragon swallowing a sword.

Saki-kasane: 4.6mm



Moto-kasane: 6.9mm

Kissaki: 10.17cm

Saki-haba: 3.09cm

Nagasa: 74.0cm

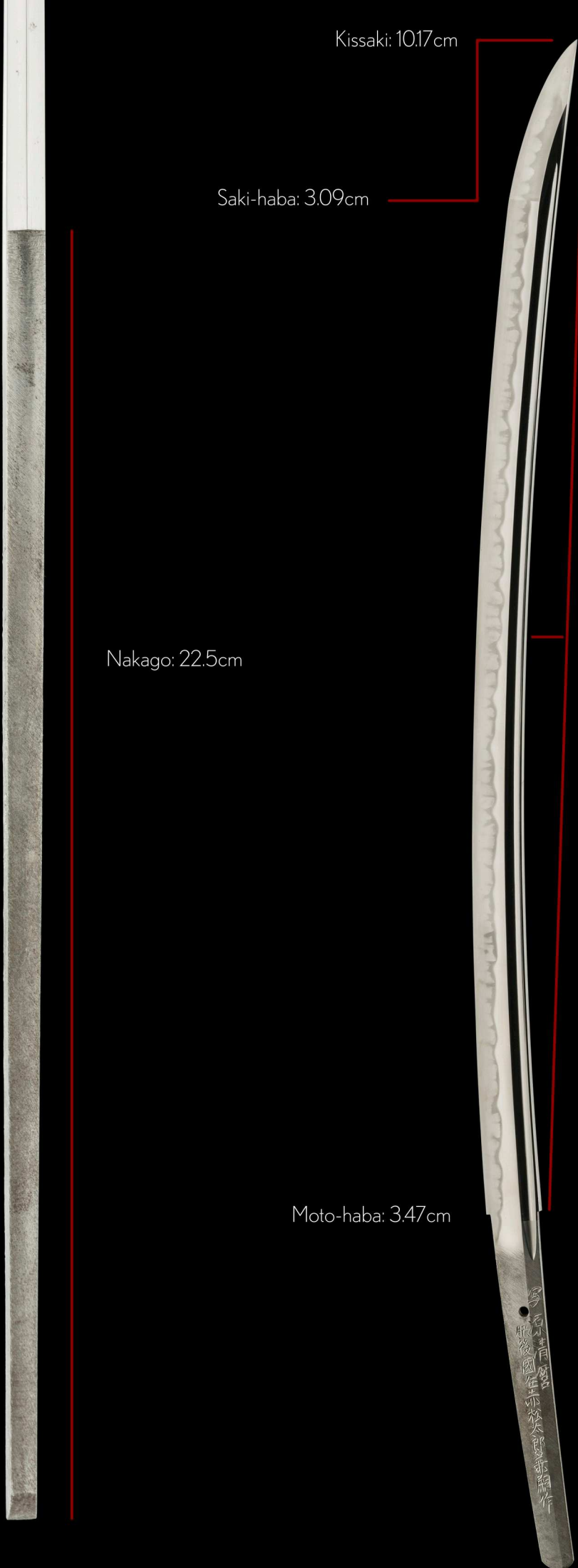
Nakago: 22.5cm

Sori: 2.0cm

Omosa: 895g

Moto-haba: 3.47cm

Mekugi-ana: 1



Kiyomaro is arguably the finest sword smith of the shinshinto era on par with the likes of shinto period's *Kotetsu*, *Horikawa Kunihiro* and *Hizen Tadayoshi*.

Kiyomaro committed suicide at the age of 42 in 1854 after years of battling alcohol and likely mental illness.

He is the most sought after sword smith of the late Edo period and a number wonderful *utsushi* (recreations) such as this katana exist in his honour.

Kiyomaro's work can be classified as working in three major traditions, the *Sôshu tradition*, the *Mino tradition*, and the *Bizen tradition* which this particular katana is forged in.



Location: *Higo* (resident of Kumamoto)

School: *Akamatsu Tarô*

Swordsmith: *Kanetsugu*

ubu-nakago (original, unaltered tang)

sujikai-yasurime (diagonal file marks)

A faithful recreation of Minamoto Kiyomaro katana

写 (Utsushi)

源 (Minamoto)

清 (Kiyô)

磨 (maro)

(Hi) 肥

(go, no) 後

(Kuni) 國

(jû) 住

(Aka) 赤

(matsu) 松

(Ta) 太

(rô) 郎

(Kane) 兼

(tsugu) 嗣

(saku) 作

写
源
清
磨
肥
後
國
住
赤
松
太
郎
兼
嗣
作

Heiei nananen rokugatsu kichijitsu
Dated on a lucky day in June in the
7th year of Heisei era (1995)

(Hei) 平
(sei) 成
(nana) 七
(nen) 年
(roku) 六
(gatsu) 月
(kichi) 吉
(jitsu) 日




An intimidating *o-kissaki*
of over 10cm (~4inches)





a gorgeous *gunome-choji midare hamon* with long streaks of *kinsuji*

A close-up, high-contrast photograph of a curved blade, likely a katana, showing a hamon pattern. The blade is dark and metallic, with a bright, glowing line of light along its edge, highlighting the intricate, crystalline structure of the hamon. The background is black, making the blade stand out prominently.

The hamon is equally consistent on both sides of the blade - it is extremely healthy and full of life.



御夫妻の御注文で作刀

Gofusai no gochûmon de sakutô

This sword was crafted for a husband and wife

刀匠兼嗣木村兼定

Tôshô Kanetsugu Kimura Kanesada

Swordsmith Kanetsugu

(born: Kimura Kanesada)

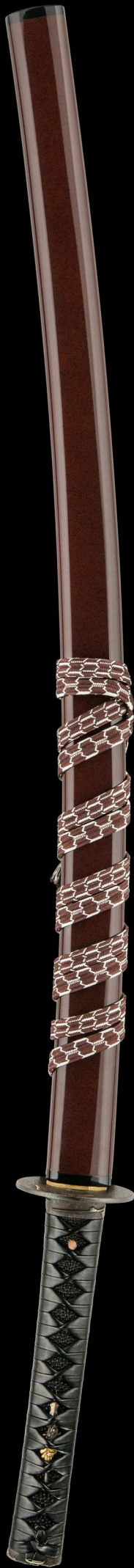


Shirasaya
(protective scabbard)



silver *habaki* with
diagonal file marks

A traditionally crafted
Uchigatana Koshirae





A spider and its web depicted on the iron tsuba.

"Let spiders live in the morning, kill spiders at night" is a popular Japanese superstition stating that seeing a spider in the morning brings good luck while such an occurrence brings bad luck at night.

One theory is that the spider's morning visit symbolizes a guest during the day, while the nightly encounter implies a thief.



Fuchi-kashira with a carved floral design





Menuki (decorative grips) depict a dragon swallowing a sword known as *Kenmaki-ryû*.
The tsuka (hilt) is traditionally wrapped with high-quality black leather.



Watch Pablo's video presentation of ujka342 Kanetsugu Katana

Access on YouTube:
<https://youtu.be/yeNVON9jxfs>





ITEM# UJWA251

SOLD

A TADAYUKI WAKIZASHI

SIGNED, MIDDLE EDO PERIOD (HÔEI ERA: 1704~1711)

- Swordsmith:** *Yamato no Kami Fujiwara Tadayuki (shôdai, first generation)*
Measurements: **Length:** 44.0cm (*ubu*) **Curvature:** 1.6cm **Moto-haba:** 2.89cm
Jihada: *Itame-hada with chikei and a darkish jigane*
Hamon: *Bright notare with ko-gunome and kinsuji*
Certificate #1: **NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon (Especially Worthy of Preservation)**
Certificate #2-4: **NTHK-NPO Kanteisho (tsuba, fuchi-kashira & koshirae designated as Authentic)**
Fujishiro rank: **Chû-saku (ranked as an average swordsmith)**
Cutting ability: **Ryô-Wazamono (maker of very sharp swords)**
Included: Shirasaya, Mid-Edo koshirae, fabric bags, stand, kit, booklet, description

SOLD

This sharp wakizashi was crafted by *Yamato no Kami Fujiwara Tadayuki*, a first-generation swordsmith that worked in *Bungo province* during the *Hôei era* (1704~1711). Born *Nakama Banpei*, he changed his name to *Nakama Shingobei* and later received a stipend that could support ten people from the powerful *Hosokawa Daimyô* family. This wide blade has impressive curvature for a wakizashi. Its flowing *notare hamon* mixed in with *ko-gunome* that gives it an appearance of snowy mountain tops. Tadayuki is rated *ryô-wazamono* for the excellent sharpness of his blades.

The sword is housed in a unique *Inrô-kizami koshirae* that also dates back to the mid-Edo period. There is a good chance that this koshirae is original to the blade itself, resting together faithfully for 300 years. There is a cheerful vibe that permeates this piece of Japanese history.



Saki-kasane: 4.1mm

Moto-kasane: 5.8mm

Omosa: 390g

Kissaki: 2.84cm

Saki-haba: 1.93cm

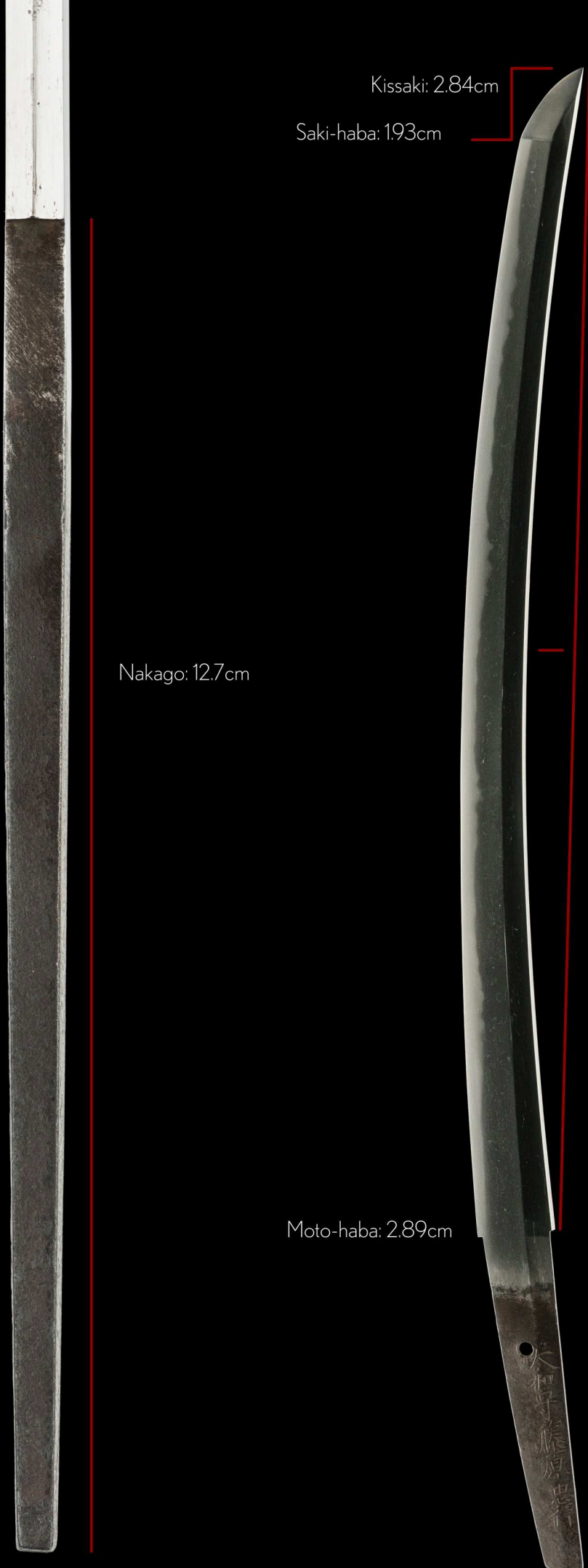
Nakago: 12.7cm

Moto-haba: 2.89cm

Nagasa: 44.0cm

Sori: 1.60cm

Mekugi-ana: 1



This solid wakizashi was crafted by *Yamato no Kami Fujiwara Tadayuki*, a first-generation swordsmith that worked in *Bungo province* during the mid-Edo period circa the *Hôei era* (1704~1711).

Born *Nakama Banpei*, he changed his first name later to *Shingobei* and later received a stipend that could support ten people from the notable *Hosokawa Daimyô family*.

Tadayuki crafted swords in *Tsurusaki Takada* and in *Kumamoto* in *Higo province*.

This relatively wide blade has impressive curvature for a wakizashi. The *jigane* has a dark hue and features a flowing *notare hamon* mixed in with *ko-gunome* that gives it an appearance of snowy mountain tops.

The sword is housed in a lovely and unique *Inrô-kizami koshirae* that also dates back to the mid-Edo period. There is a good chance that this koshirae is original to the blade itself.

Tadayuki is rated *ryô-wazamono* for the excellent sharpness of his blades, and *chû-saku* by *Fujishiro*, but this blade is more inline with *chûjô-saku*, above average smiths.





Location: *Bungo* (resident of Ôita prefecture)
Title: *Yamato no Kami* (Lord of Yamato province)
Clan: *Fujiwara*
Swordsmith: *Tadayuki* (first generation)

ubu-nakago (original, unaltered tang)
katte-sagari yasurime (slanting file marks)

大 (Ya)

和 (mato, no)

守 (Kami)

藤 (Fuji)

原 (wara)

忠 (Tada)

行 (yuki)

特選
01201912

No. 1013101



鑑定書

一脇指 銘 大和守藤原忠行

長一尺四寸五分弱

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

令和二年二月十九日

公益財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協會



大阪府 教育委員会
第 27850 号
昭和34年6月16日
(再)令和1年9月20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 2nd year of Reiwa (2020), February 19th

One, Wakizashi

Mei (signature)

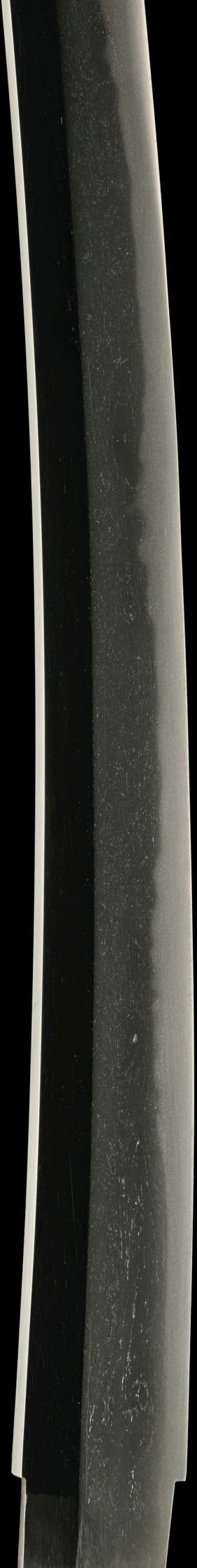
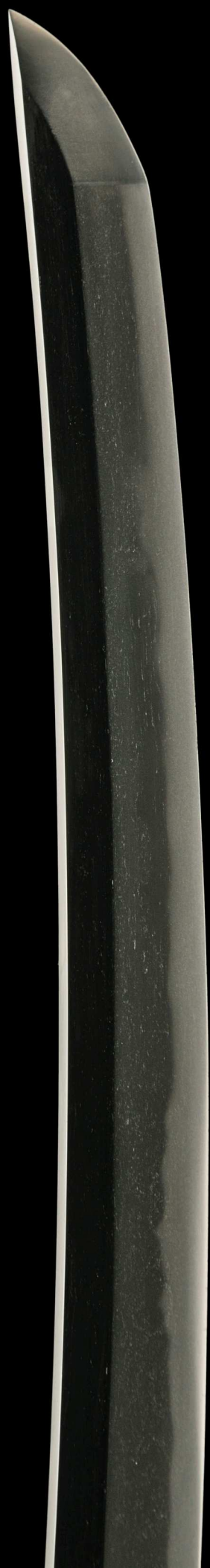
Yamato no Kami Fujiwara Tadayuki

Nagasa (length)

1-shaku 4-sun 5-bu jaku (44.0cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai
(NBTHK)





A close-up, high-contrast photograph of a curved blade, likely a katana, showing a wavy hamon pattern. The blade is dark, and the hamon is a lighter, wavy line that resembles a snowy mountain range. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the texture and the curve of the blade against a black background.

A gentle wavy *notare hamon* that resembles a snowy mountain range.



Snowy Mountain, source: SEEKPNG





Shirasaya
(protective scabbard)



copper & silver *habaki* with
kiri (paulownia leaf) design

*Koshi-sambu-kizami
shita-issun -kizami kuro-ro-nuri
saya chîsagatana-koshirae*
(腰三分刻下一寸刻黒呂塗鞘小き刀拵え)

*Chîsagatana-koshirae
lacquered in gloss black with
3-bu (0.9 cm) ribs on the lower
part, and 1-sun (3.0 cm) ribs on
the upper part*

Crafted during the
Middle Edo period
(1700~1780)



NTHK-NPO Kanteisho
Certificate of Authenticity



The individual segments featured on the *saya* (scabbard) are an abstraction of *Inrô* - small decorative containers cherished by aristocracy during the Edo period.

This design is called *Inrô-kizami koshirae*.



Inrô meaning 'seal-basket' are quaint decorative containers that hang from the waist. They originated at the end of the sixteenth century and were worn by men to hold seals and herbal and other medicine.

They were considered a particularly good way of keeping the contents sealed and fresh. By the eighteenth century they had become decorative accessories and were commissioned by the merchant class, provincial rulers and their samurai, and those that could afford them.



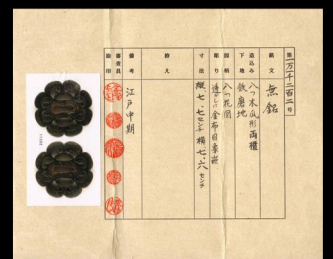
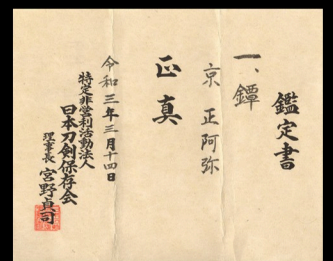
Examples of *Inrô*, including *ukiyo-e* artwork by *Totoya Hokkei* circa 1817



Dated to the same age of the koshirae (1700~1780), this unique and attractive polished iron tsuba from the *Shôami school* appears to have remained faithful to the koshirae for over 300 years.

The rhythmic eight lobed-design features eight flowers. The number 8 in Japan is considered lucky because of the way the kanji for eight (八) widens at the bottom (like Mount Fuji) inviting prosperity to grow over time.

This tsuba comes with NTHK-NPO Kanteisho certification as illustrated on the right.





Menuki (decorative grips on the hilt) carry guarding *shisa* lions.

Shishi (or shisa lions) traditionally stand guard outside the gates of Japanese shinto shrines and buddhist temples. Shishi are depicted in pairs, one with mouth open and one with mouth shut. The shisa with the open mouth is said to scare off demons, and the closed mouth to shelter and keep in the good spirits.





Koshirae bag.

Excited about your next trip to Japan?

If you are travelling to Tokyo and are serious about acquiring an authentic Japanese sword, be sure to book a **private meeting** with us in advance.

Many swords from Unique Japan are sold privately every year to proud clients around the world. Contact service@uniquejapan.com where we'll discuss the type of sword, age and other special qualities you are seeking along with budget parameters.

Meetings are held at our studio near JR Ebisu or Meguro station - only minutes away from all major hotels in downtown Tokyo.





Tameshigiri Body Cutting Test



ujka385

A Fujishima Tomoshige Katana

Dated: June 1864

Cutting test: January 25th, 1865

Length: 71.2cm

NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon & Kicho Certificates

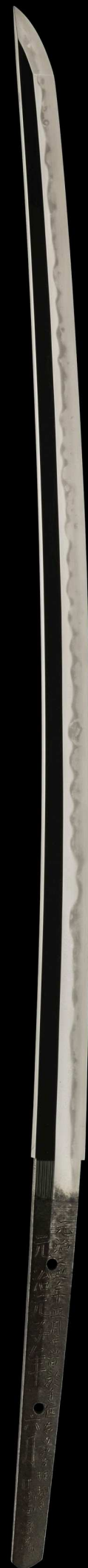
SOLD (for reference & educational purposes)

Swordsmith *Tomoshige* was born *Fujishima Jinsuke* and worked in *Iwakitaira* in *Ōshū* and temporarily in *Edo* (Tokyo) where this powerful katana was crafted in 1864.

A year later on January 25th, 1865, this katana underwent a rare *tameshigiri* (cutting test) in which sword tester *Yamada Genzō* severed deliberately and exactly 90% through the convicted body at the height of his collarbone in order not to hit the underlying mound.

This weighty and ruthless samurai sword demonstrates what happens when you marry formidable sword-smithing skills with precision swordsmanship prowess.

The collectible katana is certified with both vintage NBTHK Tokubetsu Kicho and NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon papers.





Saki-kasane: 5.5mm

Moto-kasane: 7.7mm

Kissaki: 4.26cm

Saki-haba: 2.20cm

Nagasa: 71.2cm

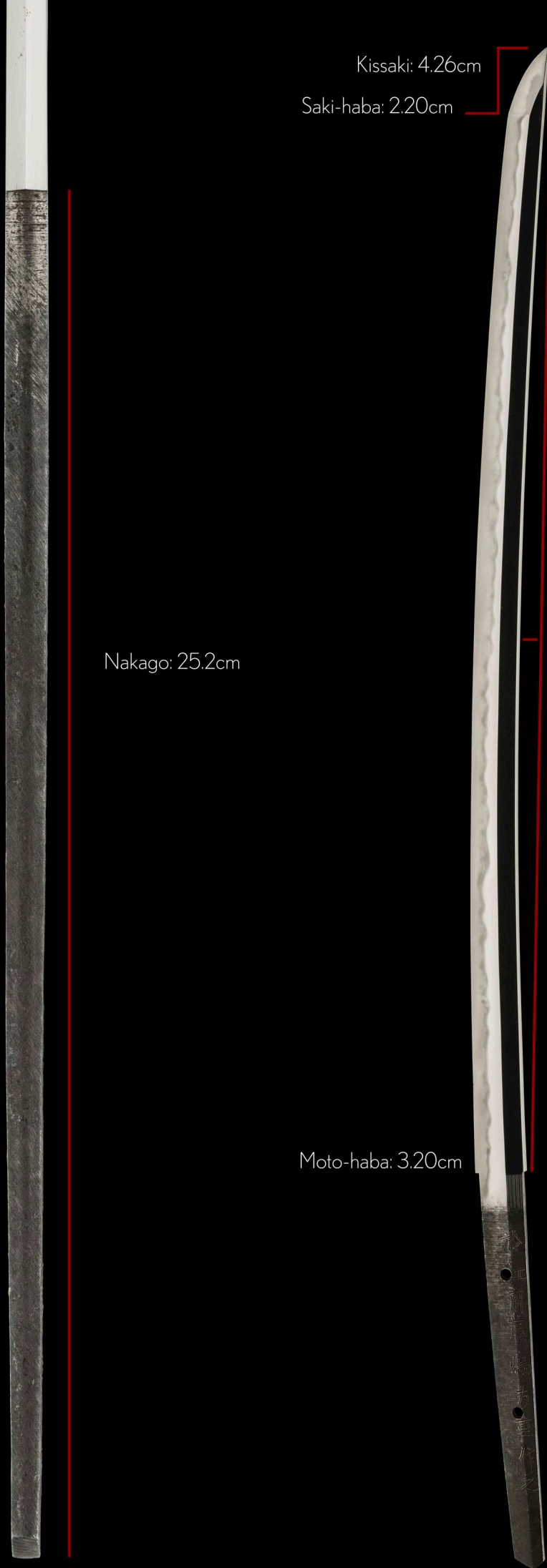
Nakago: 25.2cm

Sori: 0.9cm

Omosa: 985g

Moto-haba: 3.20cm

Mekugi-ana: 2



Location: *Edo*

Family/school name: *Fujishima*

Swordsmith: *Tomoshige*

ubu-nakago (original, unaltered tang)

kiri-yasurime (straight file marks)

於

於 (Oite)

江

江 (Gô)

府

府 (fu)

藤

藤 (Fuji)

嶋

嶋 (shima)

友

友 (Tomo)

重

重 (shige)

作

作 (tsukuru)

之

之 (kore)

An extra hole was added to the nakago almost certainly to provide reinforcement for the cutting test given the huge weight of the sword.



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*.

Genji gan nezumidoshi rokugatsu hi

This sword was crafted on a day in the sixth month of Genji one (June 1864) during the Year of the Rat.

Genji ni ushidoshi shôgatsu nijûgonichi Senju ni oite taitai kubu-kiri kirite Yamada Genzô

With this blade, sword tester *Yamada Genzô* severed deliberately and exactly 90% through the body at the height of the collarbone [in order not to hit the underlying mound]. Test was performed on the 25th day of the first month of Genji two (January 1865) during the Year of the Ox, in *Senju* [north Tokyo].

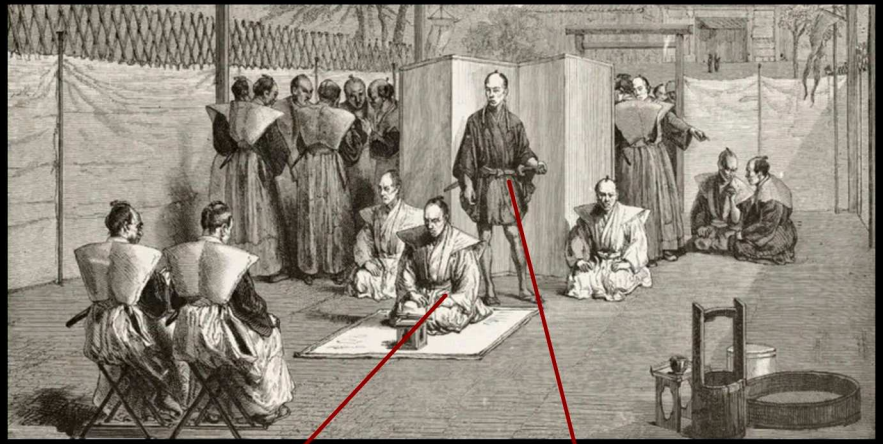


The executed body was intentionally severed just a fraction before the katana hit the mound below. This act serves to both preserve the integrity of the sword and demonstrates the tremendous skill level of *Yamada Genzô* who officially succeeded as head of the Yamada sword-testing family in 1869.

This is an extremely rare cutting test and one of the last performed in Japan as the Edo period drew to a close just years later.

(Gen) 元	元 (Gen)
(ji) 治	治 (ji)
(gan) 元	二 (ni)
(ne) 子	丑 (ushi)
(doshi) 年	年 (doshi)
(roku) 六	正 (shô)
(gatsu) 月	月 (gatsu)
(hi) 日	廿 (nijû)
(Yama) 山	五 (go)
(da) 田	日 (nichi)
(Gen) 源	於 (oite)
(zô) 蔵	千 (Sen)
	住 (ju)
	太 (tai)
	々 (tai)
	九 (ku)
	分 (bu)
	切 (kiri)
	切 (kiri)
	手 (te)





samurai

kaishakunin (assistant)

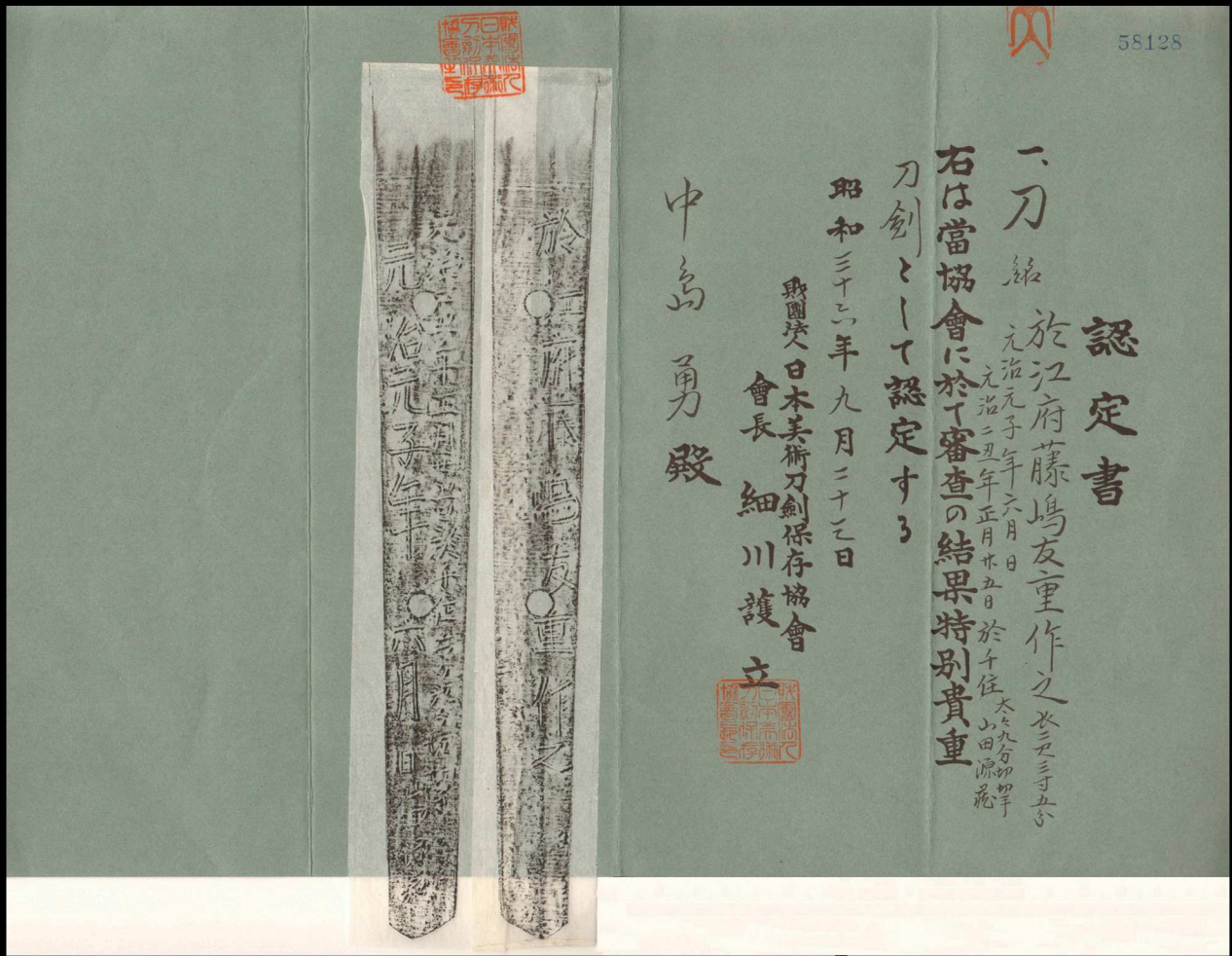
Seppuku is honourable death or ritualistic suicide by disembowelment conducted by a *samurai*.

The importance of the Kaishakunin

Upon completing *seppuku* (voluntary cutting of the stomach), the samurai's faithful assistant (*kaishakunin*) would step forward to issue the killing strike to the exposed neck of the samurai.

However, if honour was to be preserved in the act, it was expected that this cut would not sever the neck completely, but allow just enough flesh attached for the head to fall naturally forward into the executed man's arms. In this way, not only the viewers' clothes are not stained with the blood but also the head drops among the two hands of the samurai as if he was holding his head.

A formidable amount of trust was thus instilled in the precise skill and calmness under pressure of the *kaishakunin*. *Yamada Genzô* echoes such qualities regarding this katana's *tameshigiri* cutting test.



NBTHK Tokubetsu Kicho Certificate of Designation

A sword designated as *Especially Precious*
by the Society for the Preservation of the Japan Art Sword

Issued in the 36th year of Showa (1961), September 26th

One, Katana

Mei (signature)

*Gôfu ni oite Fujishima Tomoshige kore o tsukuru
Genji gan nezumidoshi rokugatsu hi
Genji ni ushidoshi shôgatsu nijûgonichi
Senju ni oite taitai kubu-kiri kirite Yamada Genzô*

Nagasa (length)

2-shaku 3-sun 5-bu (71.2cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai
(NBTHK)

鑑定書

二刀 銘

於江府藤嶋友重作之(陸奥)
元治元子年六月日

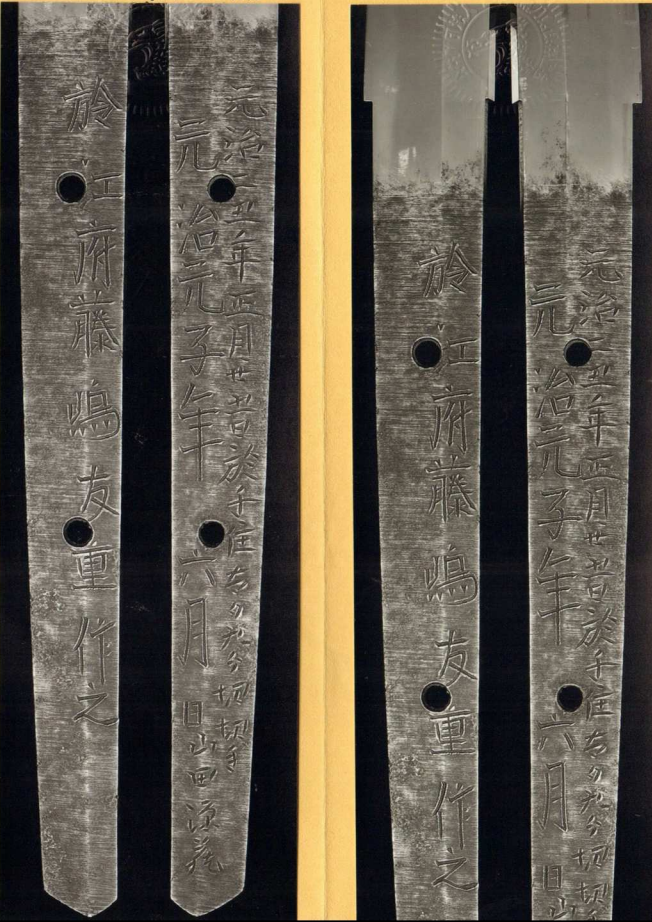
(留銘)元治五年正月廿五日於千佳冬丸分切手山田源藏

長 二尺三寸五分

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

令和元年十二月二日

公益財団法人日本美術刀劍保存協會



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 63rd year of Shōwa (1988), May 6th

One, Katana

Mei (signature)

Gōfu ni oite Fujishima Tomoshige kore o tsukuru

Genji gan nezumidoshi rokugatsu hi

(Mutsu)

(Kiritsuke-mei)

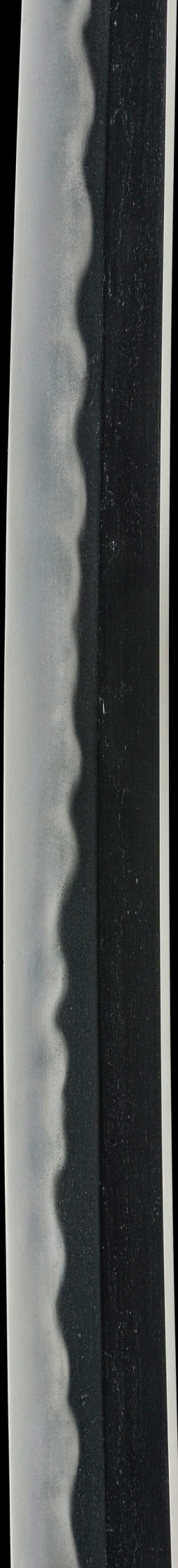
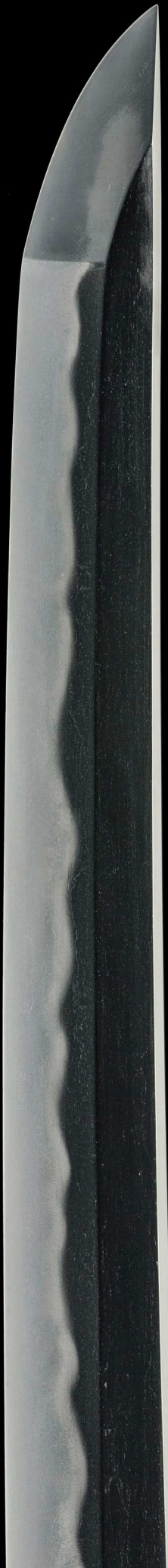
Genji ni ushidoshi shōgatsu nijūgonichi

Senju ni oite taitai kubu-kiri kirite Yamada Genzō

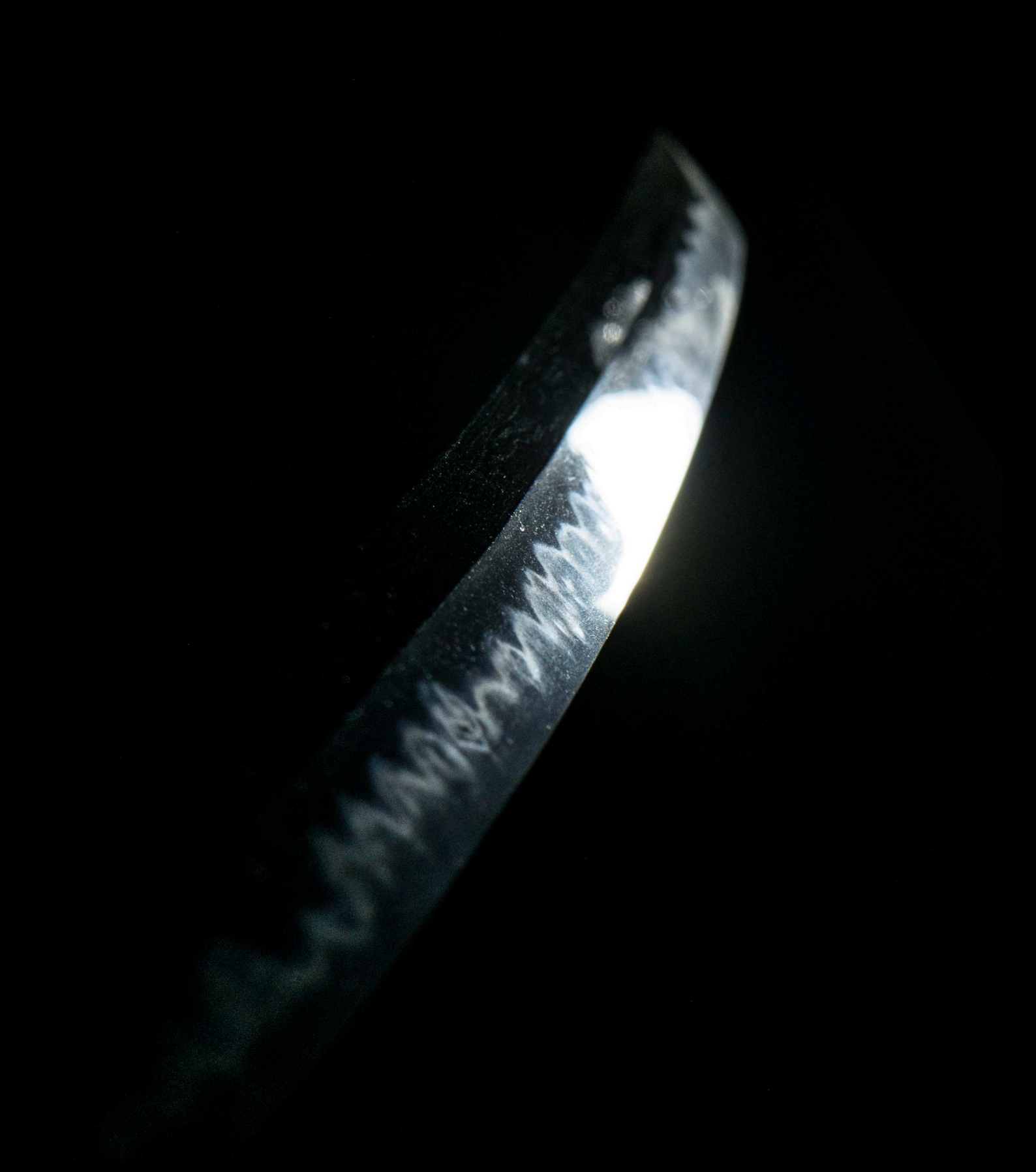
Nagasa (length)

2-shaku 3-sun 5-bu (71.2cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai
(NBTHK)







The origins of the *Fujishima school* date back to the early Muromachi period in *Kaga province* on the *Hokurikudo trade route* in the northern territory that faces the Sea of Japan. Along with the *Sanindo* route, this area was known as *Ura Japan*.

The winters in Ura Japan are harsh and last much longer than other regions of the country. This required swordsmiths to produce blades that would perform well in frigid temperatures.

gunome-midare (rounded, wavy pattern)

The eclectic hamon is a *feast for the eyes* mixing semi-circled *gunome-midare* with spiking *togari-gunome* and loads of *yô* (leaves) falling to the edge of the blade.


yô (leaves)

togari (peaks)

This katana has been freshly polished and shines magnificently. Its bright hamon and bluish tinge is reminiscent of freshly fallen snow captured at twilight.



photo: *Giacomo Meneghello*

A close-up, diagonal view of a katana blade. The blade is dark and shows a fine, mirror-like grain pattern. A red line points from the text 'muji-hada' to a specific area on the blade's surface.

muji-hada

This katana weighs nearly 1kg (2.17lbs).

This impressive mass is derived from the density of the folded steel that is so well-packed that the surface grain pattern has a mirror-like finish referred to as *muji-hada*.

A close-up photograph of a sword blade, likely a katana, showing the hamon (temper line) and nie (secondary hardening) elements. The blade is dark and polished, with a visible hamon line running along its length. The background is black. Two red lines point from the text to specific features on the blade: one points to the hamon line, and the other points to a rounded nie element.

Visible *nie-crystals* shimmer along the hamon line.

Unique *rounded nie* elements similar to *Hizen Yukihiro's abunomefu* (horsefly eye).



Shirasaya
(protective scabbard)



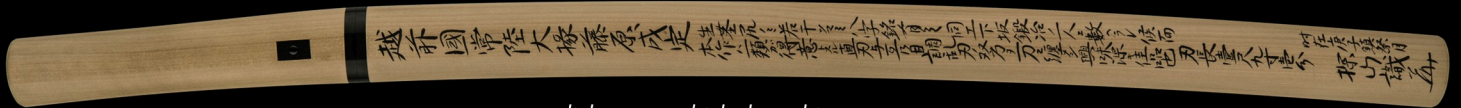
gold-wrapped *habaki* with exquisite
botan yujō (peony) design

Submit, Repair, Sell & Create!

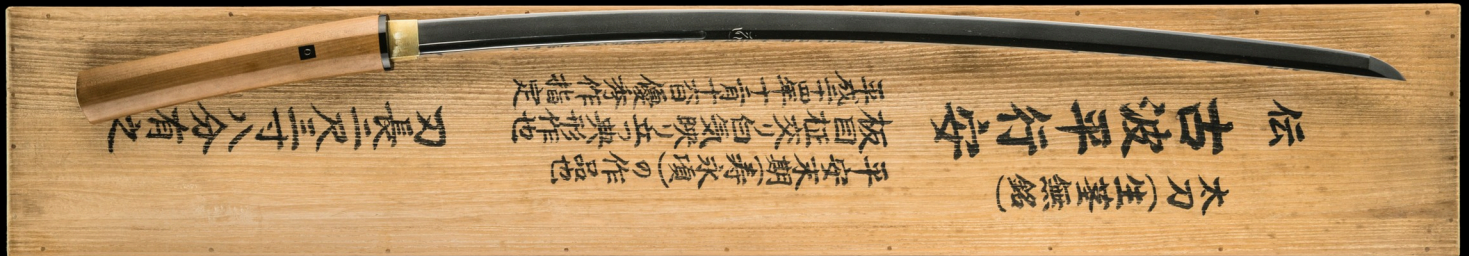
Unique Japan offers a *full-service menu* to assist clients with their Japanese swords and fittings. All services are performed in Japan with top quality craftsmen and women.

Services include (non exhaustive):

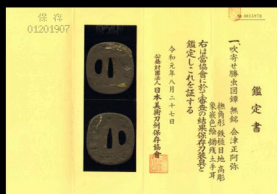
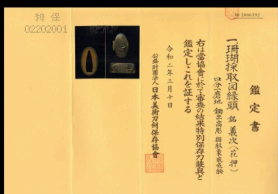
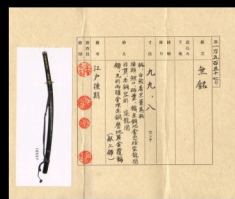
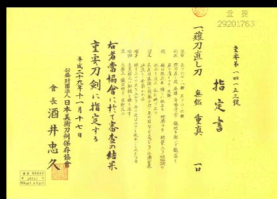
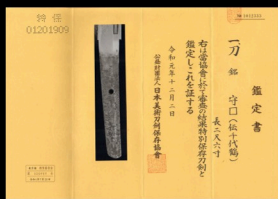
- * NBTHK and NTHK-NPO *shinsa* certification (swords and fittings)
- * polishing for all types of Japanese swords (standard to Jûyô-level quality polish)
- * *shirasaya* making (standard to high quality with horn fittings)
- * *habaki* making (gold, silver, copper in most any design pattern)
- * fix 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



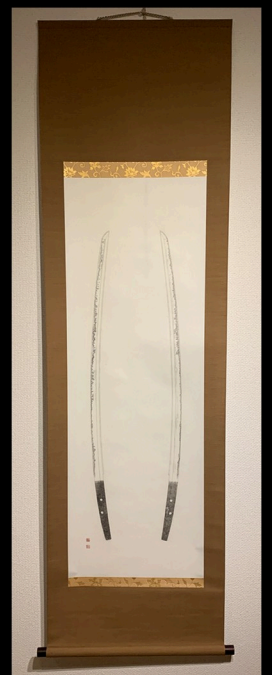
tsuka-maki



habaki creations



otoshi boxes



oshigata scrolls

All NBTHK and NTHK-NPO Shinsa authentication services



ujka367

A Shodai Yukihiro Katana

Circa Kanbun era (1661~1673)

Length: 70.0cm

NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon Certificate

SOLD (for reference & educational purposes)

^
Saki-kasane: 4.3mm

Moto-kasane: 6.1mm

Omosa: 710g

Kissaki: 4.14cm
Saki-haba: 2.23cm

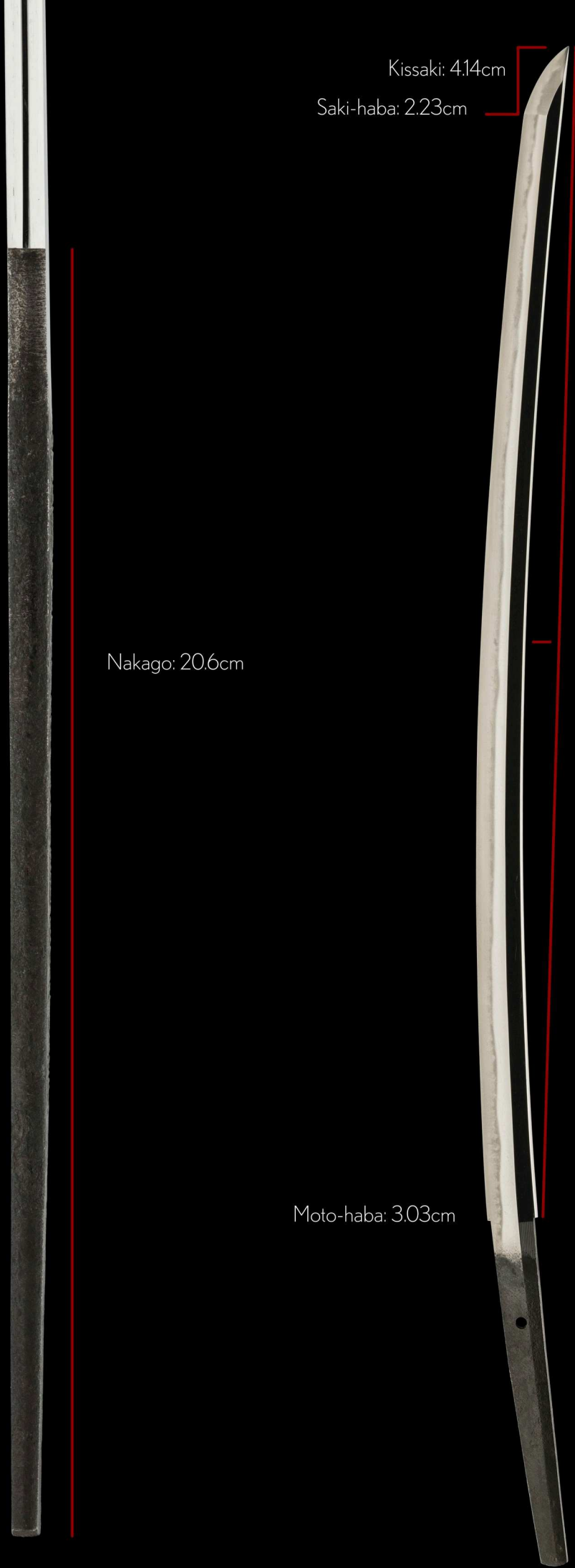
Nakago: 20.6cm

Moto-haba: 3.03cm

Nagasa: 20.6cm

Sori: 1.60cm

Mekugi-ana: 1



Maestro Yukihiro, son of *Yoshinobu*, younger brother to *shodai Masahiro* was born in 1617. He received his *Dewa no Daijo* title in 1648 and his *Dewa no Kami* title in 1663. This katana was made after he received his “no Kami” title.

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

Swords produced by *Yukihiro* display all the hallmarks that make the Hizen tradition sought after.

The *hamon* (temper line) on this spectacular katana is an exquisite example of *choji-midare* with his trademark *abu nomefu* – an iconic horsefly eye appearing as circular dots in the *ashi*.

Yukihiro died on May 27, 1683, 3rd year of *Tenna*. Six generations of Yukihiro followed in their master's footsteps. Yukihiro is ranked as *jô-saku* (a superior swordsmith).



(Ichi) 一
(Hi) 肥
(zen, no) 前
(Kuni) 國
(De) 出
(wa, no) 羽
(Kami) 守
(Fuji) 藤
(wara) 原
(Yuki) 行
(hiro) 廣



Location: *Hizen* (resident of Saga)

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

Clan name: *Fujiwara*

Swordsmith: *Yukihiko* (first generation)

ubu-nakago (original, unaltered tang)

sujikai-yasurime (diagonal file marks)



(reverse)

特 保
30201806

No 1009460



鑑定書

一刀銘一肥前国出羽守藤原行広(初代)

長二尺三寸一分

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

平成三十年八月二十日

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 318794 号
平成30年4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 30th year of Heisei (2018), August 20th

One, Katana

Mei (signature)

Ichi Hizen no Kuni Dewa no Kami Fujiwara Yukihiro
(*shodai*, first generation)

Nagasa (length)

2-shaku 3-sun 1-bu (70.0cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai
(NBTHK)



肥前國出羽守藤原行廣

Hizen no Kuni Dewa no Kami Fujiwara Yukihiro

Dewa no Kami Fujiwara Yukihiro from Hizen Province

初代

Shodai

1st generation

刃長二尺三寸三分

Hachô 2-shaku 3-sun 3-bu

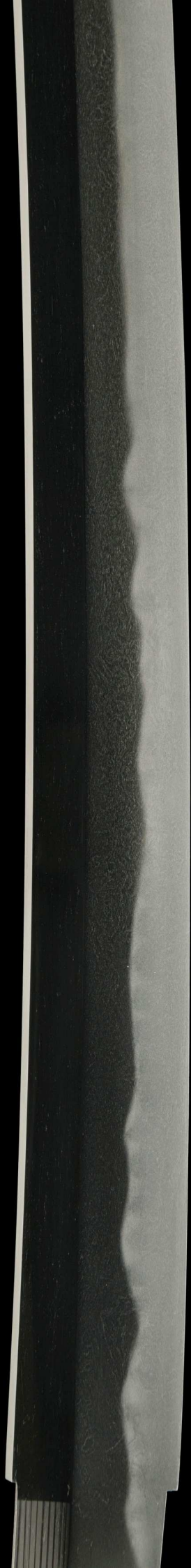
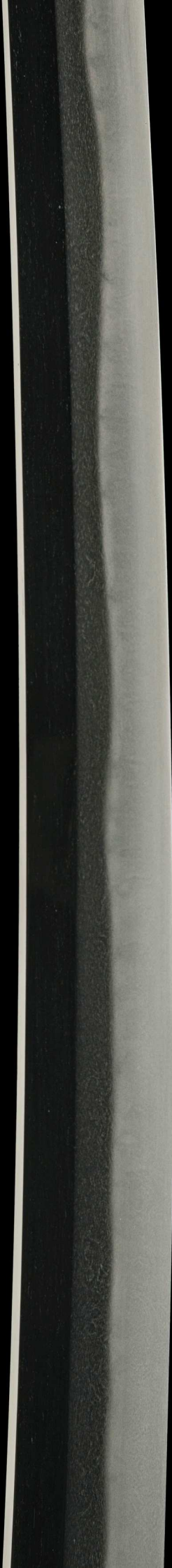
Blade length ~70.0cm

反り五分五厘

Sori 5-bu 5-rin

Curvature ~1.6cm

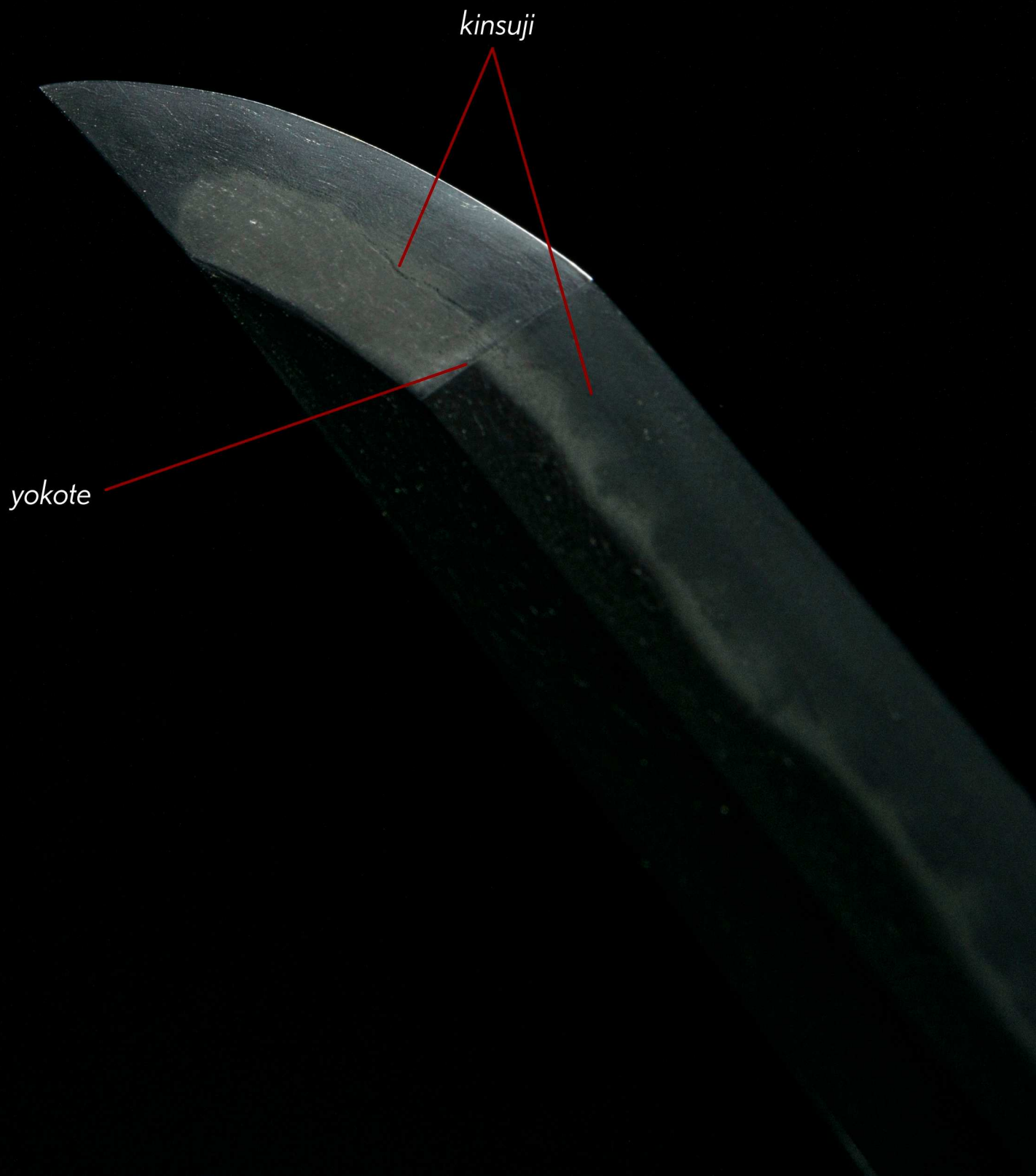







Dark lines of *chikei* woven beautifully into the expertly forged *konuka-hada* that's known to resemble rice bran.

A magnificent long black line of *kinsuji* (*nie crystals*) rips through the *yokote* (the dividing line between the *kissaki*, tip, and the blade) and well into the *boshi* (hamon in the tip of the sword).



The image shows two swords, likely katana, positioned diagonally against a black background. The blades are highly reflective, showing bright highlights. On the lower edge of each blade, there is a series of small, circular indentations or dots, which are the 'horsefly eyes' (abu nomefu). Two red lines originate from the text 'abu nomefu or 'horsefly eyes'' and point to these features on both swords.

abu nomefu or 'horsefly eyes'

Swords by *Yukihiro* have a unique feature called *abu nomefu* or 'horsefly eyes' where circular dots of *nie* appear in the *ashi* (legs).

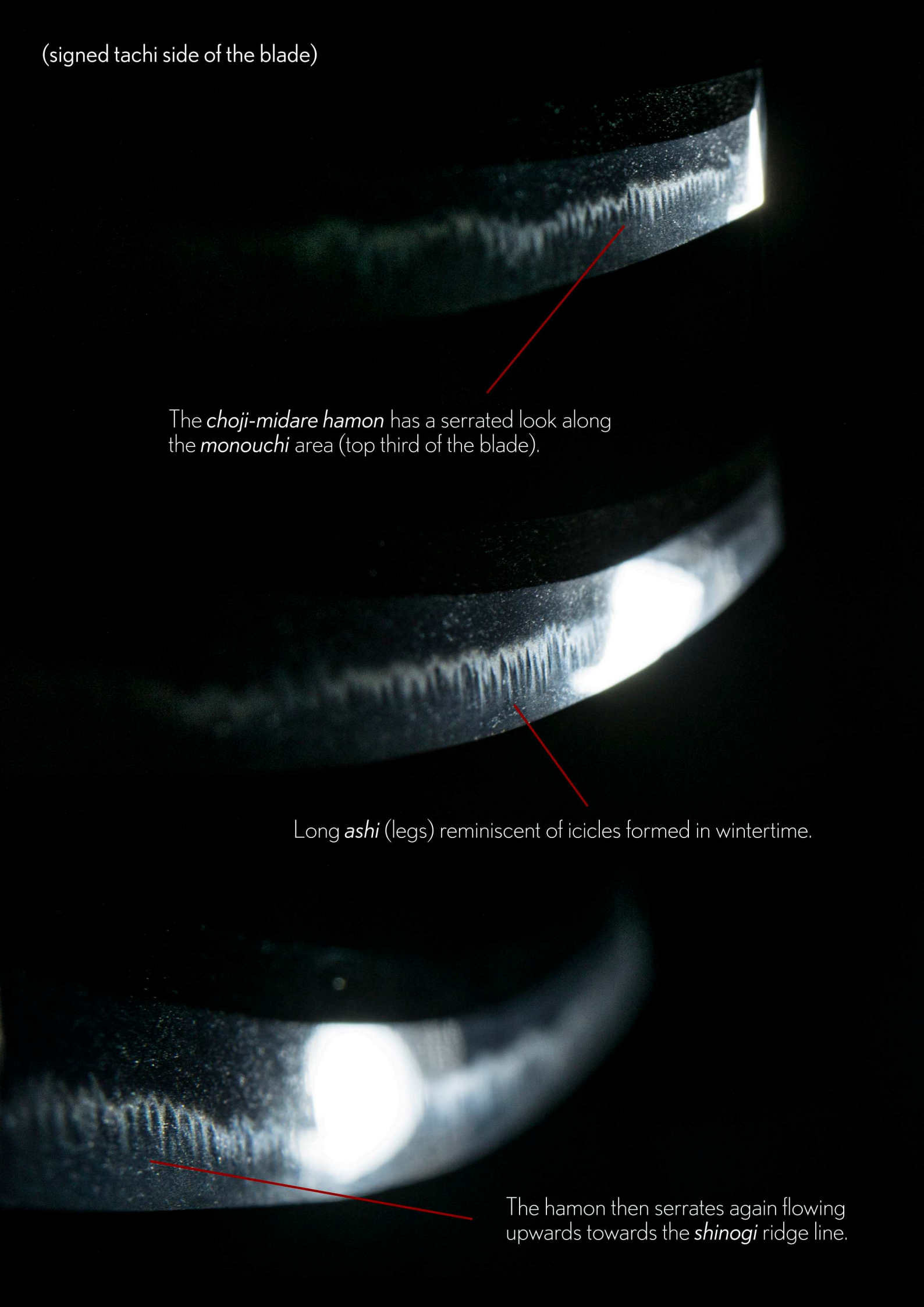
(signed tachi side of the blade)

A close-up photograph of a sword blade, showing the hamon (temper line) pattern. The blade is dark, and the hamon is highlighted by a bright light source. The pattern is serrated, with long, thin, icicle-like projections. A red line points from the text to the top part of the blade.

The *choji-midare hamon* has a serrated look along the *monouchi* area (top third of the blade).

A close-up photograph of a sword blade, showing the hamon (temper line) pattern. The blade is dark, and the hamon is highlighted by a bright light source. The pattern is serrated, with long, thin, icicle-like projections. A red line points from the text to the middle part of the blade.

Long *ashi* (legs) reminiscent of icicles formed in wintertime.

A close-up photograph of a sword blade, showing the hamon (temper line) pattern. The blade is dark, and the hamon is highlighted by a bright light source. The pattern is serrated, with long, thin, icicle-like projections. A red line points from the text to the bottom part of the blade.

The hamon then serrates again flowing upwards towards the *shinogi* ridge line.

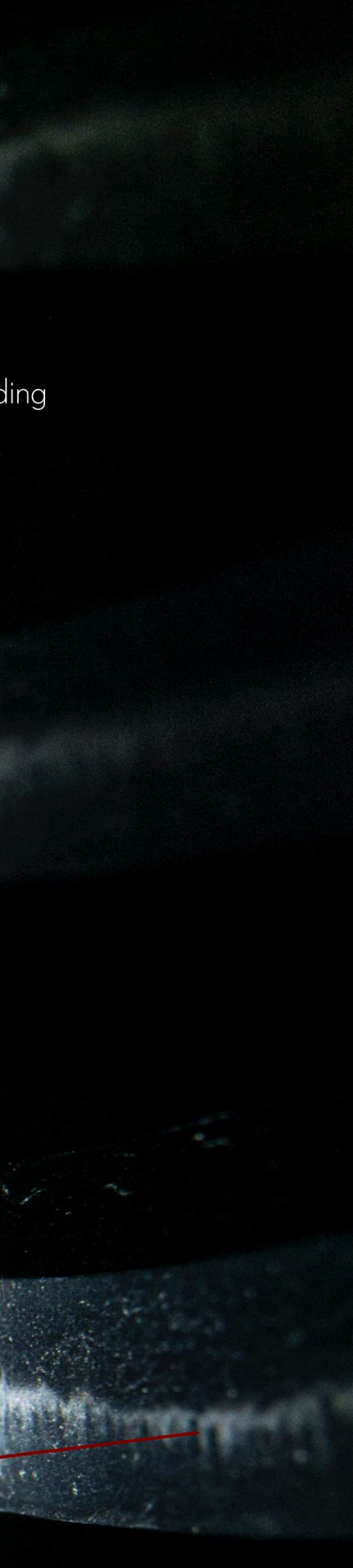
(unsigned ura side of the blade)



Interestingly, the *ura* side's *monouchi area* is less serrated tending to an undulating wave *notare* with sporadic '*ashi* icicles'.



A more classic *choji-midare* in the mid-area.



Here the hamon shows *ko-choji*, small clove blossom buds.



Pac-Man fever in the 17th century?





Shirasaya
(protective scabbard)

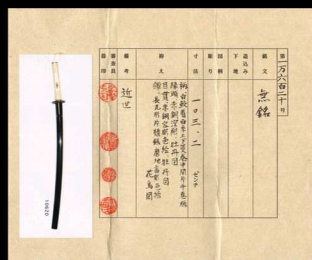


gold *habaki* with
horizontal file marks

*Kuro-roiro aogai-mijin
fuemaki nuri saya
uchigatana-koshirae*
(黒呂色青貝微塵笛卷塗鞘打刀拵え)

*Uchigatana-koshirae
lacquered in striped glossy black
with unique texture of
mother-of-pearl*

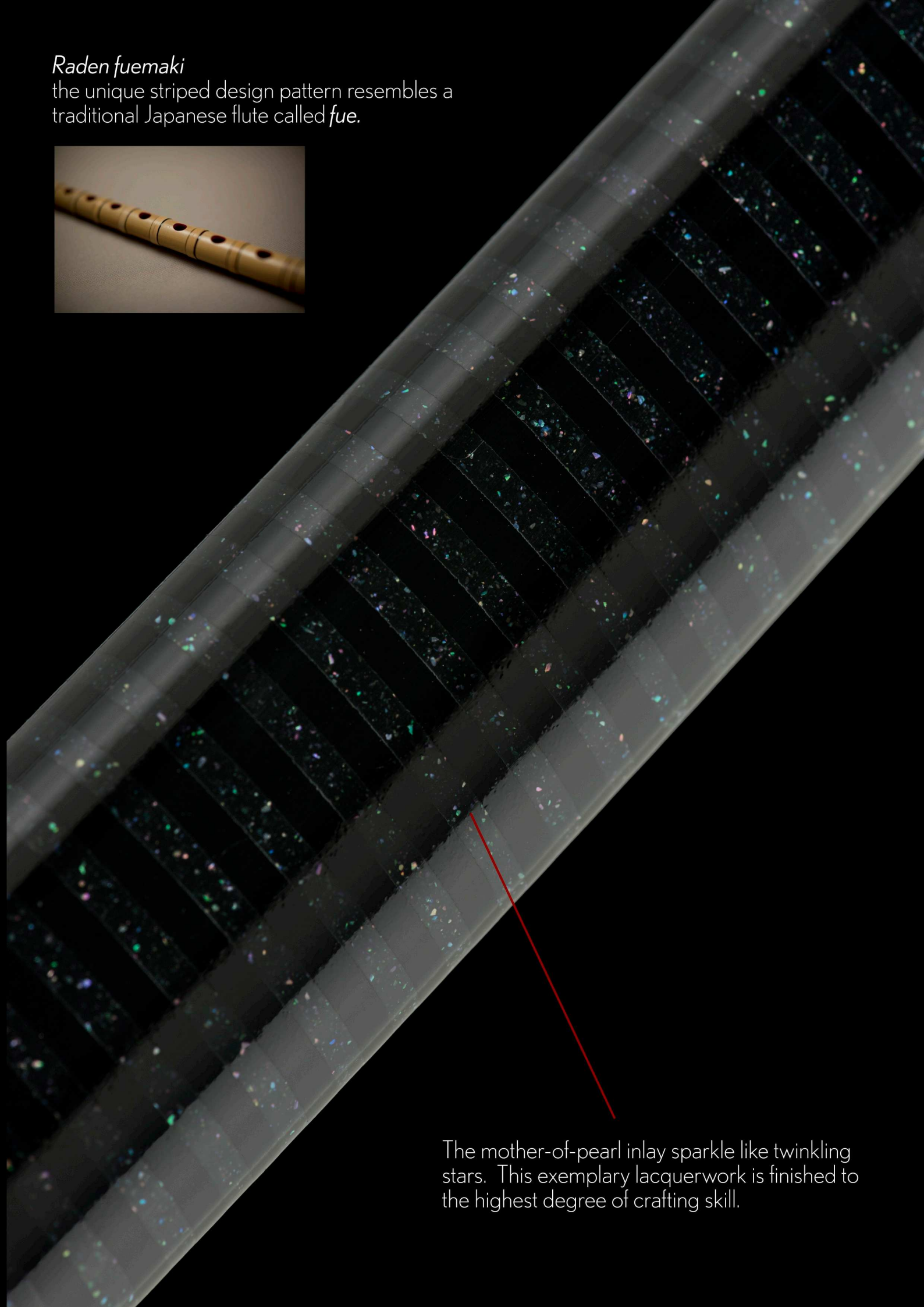
Crafted during the
Modern period



NTHK-NPO Kanteisho
Certificate of Authenticity

Raden fuemaki

the unique striped design pattern resembles a traditional Japanese flute called *fu*.

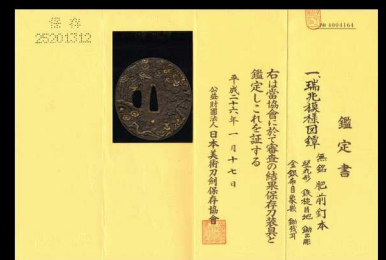
A large, detailed view of the raden fuemaki lacquerwork. The image shows a striped design pattern with mother-of-pearl inlay that sparkles like twinkling stars. The lacquerwork is finished to the highest degree of crafting skill. A red line points from the text below to the inlay.

The mother-of-pearl inlay sparkle like twinkling stars. This exemplary lacquerwork is finished to the highest degree of crafting skill.



This is a beautiful polished iron tsuba with attractive depictions of flowers, birds, bamboo and clouds in silver and gold inlay. The motif itself is said to bring good fortune.

The tsuba has been attributed to the work of the *Kugimoto school* of *Hizen province*. Crafted circa the middle Edo period (1700~1780).



NBTHK Hozon
Certificate of Authenticity



(reverse)



Menuki (decorative grips on the hilt) celebrating the peony. In Japan, the peony is referred to as the "king of flowers" and a symbol of good fortune, bravery, and honour.

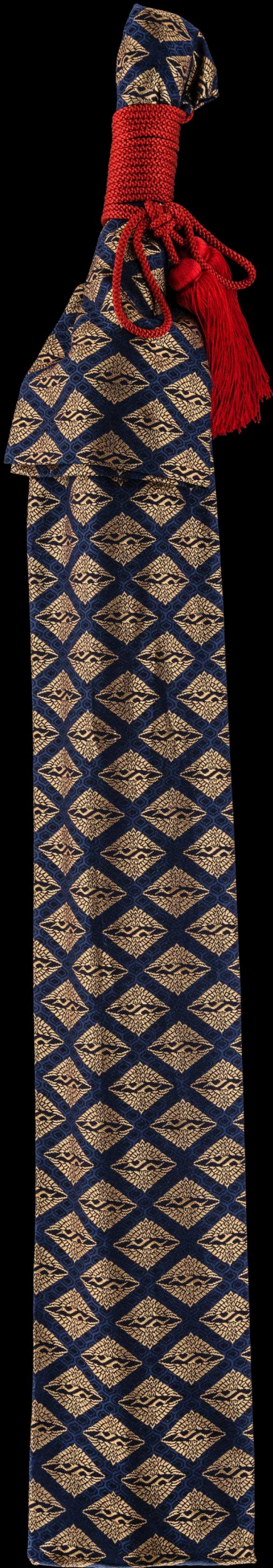
As such, it has been cherished by the samurai class for centuries.





Kashira (pommel)

Shisa lion with peonies



Congratulations François.

Warm regards,
Pablo

ARIGATO!

THANK YOU FOR DOWNLOADING OUR CATALOGUE.
WE LOOK FORWARD TO SERVING YOU.

PLEASE JOIN OUR VIP MAILING LIST TO BE INFORMED OF RECENTLY
ACQUIRED SWORDS. EMAIL US AT SERVICE@UNIQUEJAPAN.COM



*ujka350 - A Shigezane Katana (63rd Jûyô Tôken)
Enbun era (1356~1361)*

*Custom-made paulownia wood sword box with hakogaki
Congratulations Marc!*