

ANTIQUE JAPANESE SWORDS

CATALOGUE 38
RELEASED: JULY 8, 2022


THE FOLLOWING PAGES CONTAIN DESCRIPTIONS AND IMAGES OF GENUINE ANTIQUE JAPANESE SWORDS THAT WERE SOLD IN CATALOGUE 38. THIS IS A REFERENCE DOCUMENT.

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PABLO KUNTZ
FOUNDER, UNIQUE JAPAN

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Thank you as always for downloading the Unique Japan sword catalogue. I would like to dedicate this catalogue to my wife Donna. Tomorrow, July 9th, will mark our 20th wedding anniversary. We actually got married in Tokyo, at the local *Minato-ku* ward office, just the two of us. No witnesses apart from the people working at the desk. It was cute and perfect. We rode off on my 90cc Honda scooter from the rather dreary looking office building full of hopes and dreams. Now with three great kids, we have many chapters to look forward to. I love you babe.

Catalogue 38 is our biggest catalogue to date with fifteen pieces inside, including three wonderful *tantôs*. We start off with an exceptional *katana* by third generation *Shirô'emon Kanewaka*. The family's trademark *hako-midare* with plentiful *kinsuji* can be thoroughly enjoyed. Sword comes with an elegant, fully matching Edo period *koshirae*, attributed to the *Kumagai school* in *Higo* province. The following piece is the first sword of many remarkable blades in this catalogue with *Yamashiro* (*Kyôto*) heritage. It is a slender, shortened *tachi* crafted by *Ryôkai* over 700 years ago. The *hamon* features an eclectic mix of *suguha* with *ko-gunome* and *ko-chôji* and plenty of *ko-ashi*, *kinsuji* and *sunagashi*. It comes with a gorgeous *aoi-gai uchigatana koshirae* from the Edo period that shines like bright stars in the night sky.

The third sword is a *Jûyô Tôken* masterpiece by first generation *Nobukuni*. This is a signed, museum-worthy *tantô* that is simply spectacular. It is an important reference piece that unifies the *Nambokuchô* period in terms of its wide commanding shape and *horimono*, *Ryôkai* lineage via its *nagare-hada* within the *Rai* school and eye-catching *Sôshû* qualities with *kinsuji* and *sunagashi* by way of his *sensei Sadamune*. It comes house in a beautiful *aikuchi-koshirae*. Next up is a *katana* crafted in August 1850 by *Masatsugu*. This elegantly curved *katana* shows a strong *Yamashiro-den* influence; forged in a bright *chû-suguha* with a wonderful amount of channeling *chikei*. Its Edo period *koshirae* combines the beauty of *aoi-gai* buttressed with muscular iron fittings with a silver arabesque design.

We travel back to the *Nambokuchô* period for the next two swords, the first being a powerful *katana* by *Nakajima-Rai* that holds a vicious character. It has a wide body with slight curvature giving the sword a brutal stabbing temperament. Comes with a handsome matching antique *handachi-koshirae*. Following this piece is a glorious *tantô* by *Bitchû no Kuni jû Tsuguyoshi*, considered to be the finest swordsmith of the *Chû-Aoe* school. The sword is beautifully forged in *itame* and *mokume-hada* with a snow-white *hamon* that glistens with *ji-nie*. A spectacular *aikuchi-koshirae* with matching silver fittings in a rolling wave theme signed by metalsmith *Anjû* accompanies the *tantô*.

Morihiro, son of *Rai Kuniyasu*, who worked at the very start of the *Muromachi* period is the following *katana*. The swirling *chikei* is so beautiful on this sword. Rare gold inlaid characters on the *nakago* states that this *katana* has been handed down from one generation to the next. This is an ancestral sword that is most worthy of collecting and preserving. For those who love dragons and an edge that is extra sharp, the next *wakizashi* by *saijô-ôwazamono* swordsmith *Miyoshi Nagamichi* is worth checking out seriously. *Nagamichi* was nicknamed *Aizu-Kotetsu*, as some of his masterworks rivalled that of grandmaster *Kotetsu*. Our ninth sword is rare *tachi* by *Bizen Osafune Ietsugu* that is signed and dated to August 1408. The *jihada* has deep swells of *nagare-hada* that borders on *ayasugi-hada* in style. It comes with a beautiful *koshirae* that rejoices in the natural world with flowers, spiders, ants and aged wood.

The third *tantô* in the catalogue is a marvelous piece by the *Ko-Gassan* school that features a dazzling display of *ayasugi-hada*. Its exquisite *aikuchi-koshirae* pays a meaningful tribute to the *Yamabushi* mountain monks and contains a base layer of rare *kinkarakawa* decorated leather - a crafting technique that originated with the *Medici* family in Italy, circa 1400s. It is further decorated with the *Chiba* family *kamon* that depicts a moon and star. The final available sword an extra-long, freshly polished muscular *katana* by *Masamori* of the famed *Hosokawa* family of smiths. This meaty sword has been battle-ready since the autumn of 1862 for the *Tsuyama* domain of *Matsudaira shôgunate*. Its handsome *koshirae* showcases prosperous *koi* (carp), a beautiful nature scene of bees pollinating on a *sakura* tree by the *Ishiguro* school and *menuki* depictions of a set of bow and arrows. The last three reference pieces comprise of a superb *Naoe-Shizu* custom *daishô koshirae* with a rabbit/moon theme produced by Unique Japan, a 'No Enemy' *katana* by maestro *Koyama Munetsugu*, also with custom *koshirae*, and an excellent *Muromachi katana* by *Wakasa Tsuguyoshi*.

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

We look forward to serving you. Have a great summer!



Warm regards,

Pablo Kuntz

July 2022



with Donna in Tokyo, ~1999

INDEX OF JAPANESE SWORDS

ITEM#	SWORDSMITH & TYPE	CM	CERTIFICATE	ERA / PERIOD	PRICE
ujka130	A KANEWAKA III KATANA	66.8	Tokubetsu Hozon	Enpô (1673~1681)	SOLD
ujka395	A RYÔKAI KATANA	68.7	Tokubetsu Hozon	Einin (1292~1309)	SOLD
ujta054	A NOBUKUNI TANTÔ	28.7	NBTHK Jûyô Tôken	Enbun (1356~1368)	SOLD
ujka399	A MASATSUGU KATANA	70.2	Tokubetsu Hozon	Kaei era (Aug 1850)	SOLD
ujka400	A NAKAJIMA RAI KATANA	69.5	Tokubetsu Hozon	Shôhei (1346~1370)	SOLD
ujta055	A TSUGUYOSHI TANTÔ	26.2	Tokubetsu Hozon	Karyaku (1326~1338)	SOLD
ujka405	A MORIHIRO KATANA	68.8	Tokubetsu Hozon	Ôei era (1394~1428)	SOLD
ujwa118	A NAGAMICHI WAKIZASHI	53.9	Tokubetsu Hozon	Kanbun (1661~1673)	SOLD
ujka409	AN IETSUGU TACHI	71.6	Tokubetsu Hozon	Ôei era (Aug 1408)	SOLD
ujta056	A KO-GASSAN TANTÔ	22.1	NBTHK Hozon	Muromachi (~1500)	SOLD
ujka410	A MASAMORI KATANA	75.8	Tokubetsu Hozon	Bunkyû (Autumn 1862)	SOLD
ujka320	A NAOE SHIZU DAISHÔ	71.2/53.9	Tokubetsu Hozon	Nambokuchô (1368~75)	SOLD
ujka374	A MUNETSUGU KATANA	72.7	Tokubetsu Hozon	Bunkyû era (Feb 1864)	SOLD
ujka408	A TSUGUHIRO KATANA	69.7	Tokubetsu Hozon	Muromachi (1550~70)	SOLD

ALL PRICES ARE IN US DOLLARS

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

TO ONLINE VISITORS AROUND THE WORLD...

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

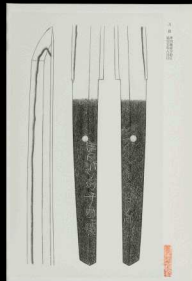
DOMO ARIGATO,
PABLO



Tsuba crafted by *Chôshû Masatomo*
NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon

Recently Completed *Uchigatana Koshirae*
A *Tsuda Echizen Sukehiro Katana*
60th *Jûyô Token*, dated August 1677
With *Raden Fuemaki saya* in wave design

世 世
 26.20.1460
 主 持 三 五 三 三 氏
 二 刀 銘 津 田 越 前 守 助 庄
 指 定 吉
 延 享 五 年 八 月 八 日
 右 者 香 嶋 屋 於 下 香 堂 結 束
 主 持 刀 劍 指 定 吉
 享 和 三 年 十 月 十 六 日
 公 益 財 団 天 白 宗 義 前 刀 劍 保 存 協 會





ITEM# UJKA130

A SHIRÔ'EMON KANEWAKA KATANA SIGNED, EARLY EDO PERIOD (ENPÔ ERA: 1673~1681)

Swordsmith: *Kashu Ju Kanewaka (Shirô'emon, 3rd generation, ubu nakago)*
Measurements: **Length:** 66.8cm (*ubu*) **Curvature:** 1.3cm **Moto-haba:** 3.1cm
Jihada: *Tight ko-itame hada, ji-nie and chikei*
Hamon: *Gorgeous nie-deki gunome-midare with hako-midare, kinsuji and sunagashi*
Certificate #1: **NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon** (*designated as Especially Worthy of Preservation*)
Certificate #2: **NTHK-NPO Yûshûsaku** (*a sword designated as Masterwork*)
Certificate #3: **NBTHK Hozon** (*koshirae designated as Worthy of Preservation*)
Certificate #4-5: **NTHK-NPO Kanteisho** (*a tsuba and matching fittings designated as Authentic*)
Fujishiro rank: **Jô-saku** (*ranked as a superior swordsmith*)
Included: Shirasaya, Edo koshirae, fabric bags, stand, kit, booklet, description

SOLD

The *Kanewaka* family held close ties with the *Maeda Daimyô* family in *Kaga* province as the castle town grew to immense prominence and wealth during the Edo period. Top samurai held great admiration for swords from the Kanewaka family. First generation Kanewaka was so highly esteemed that he was referred to as *Kaga Masamune*.

This exceptional katana was crafted by *third generation Kanewaka* who was born *Tsujimura Shirô'emon*. The brilliant and iconic Kanewaka family *hako-midare* (square shaped hamon) with plentiful *kinsuji hataraki* (activity) can be thoroughly enjoyed. Sword comes with an elegant, fully matching Edo period koshirae, attributed to the *Kumagai school* in *Higo* province. This splendid samurai sword has recently been polished and lifts the spirits in a very, very big way.



Saki-kasane: 5.3mm

Moto-kasane: 7.0mm

Kissaki: 3.51cm

Saki-haba: 2.07cm

Nagasa: 66.8cm

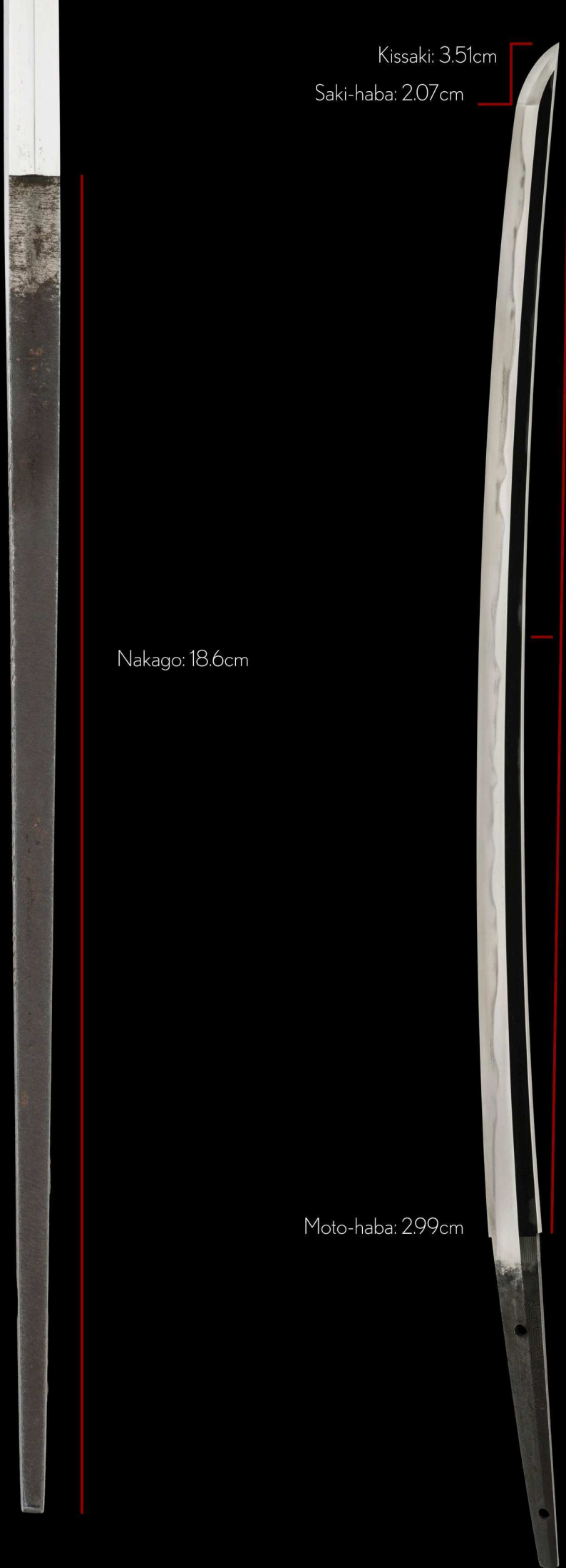
Nakago: 18.6cm

Sori: 1.40cm

Omosa: 745g

Moto-haba: 2.99cm

Mekugi-ana: 2



The Kanewaka family held close ties with the *Maeda Daimyô* family in *Kaga* province as the castle town grew to immense prominence and wealth during the Edo period. Traditional Japanese gold leaf production was made famous in Kaga among numerous high-quality crafts.

Top samurai held great admiration for swords from the Kanewaka family. First generation Kanewaka was so highly esteemed that he was referred to as *Kaga Masamune* - in tribute to one of Japan's most celebrated swordsmiths.

This exceptional katana was crafted by third generation Kanewaka who was born *Tsujimura Shirô'emon*. He was the oldest son of the second generation Kanewaka and died in the fifth month in the eighth year of *Hôei* era (May 1711).

The brilliant and iconic Kanewaka family *hako-midare* (square shaped *hamon*) with plentiful *kinsuji hataraki* (activity) can be thoroughly enjoyed on this katana.

Shirô'emon was rated *jô-saku* (superior swordsmith) and it's clear to see why. Sword comes with a fully matching Edo period koshirae attributed to the *Kumagai* school in *Higo* province.





Location: *Kaga* (resident of Kaga province)
Swordsmith: *Kanewaka* (third generation)

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

賀 (Ga)

州 (shû)

住 (jû)

兼 (Kane)

若 (waka)

造 (tsukuru)

tsukuru means "made/crafted by"

elegantly tapered *nakago*



(*ura*, reverse)

特保
26201405

No 1002495



鑑定書

一 刀 銘 賀州住兼若造(四郎右衛門)

長 二尺二寸〇半

右は當協會に於て審査の結果特別保存刀劍と
鑑定しこれを証する

平成二十六年七月九日

公益財団法人日本美術刀劍保存協會



新潟 教育委員会
第 56568 号
昭和 59 年 6 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 26th year of Heisei (2014), July 9th

One, Katana


Mei (signature)

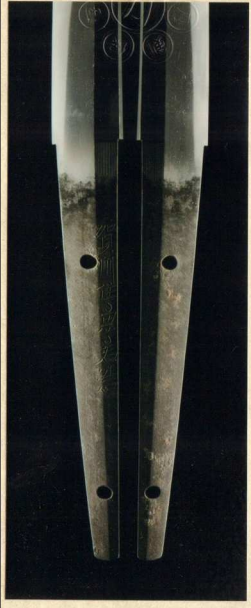
Gashû-jû Kanewaka tsukuru
(*Shirouemon*)

Nagasa (length)

2-shaku 2-sun 0 han (66.8cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai
(NBTHK)

捺 審 査 員 印	備 考	寸 法	拵 え	中 心	図 影 柄 り	銚 子	刃 紋	下 地	鍛	造り 込み	銘 文	第 六 〇 二 号
	延宝頃 四郎古衛門尉			目釘穴 二個 鍔 竹 澤		深心先掃けて返る	深の間々焼き高一回り大五の目乱交り棟焼頻り かかろ			板目、板心交えて能む	賀州住業若造	
										巻棟		



NTHK-NPO Yûshû-saku Certificate of Authenticity

This katana was designated as *Yûshû-saku* (Highly Excellent) by the Non-Profit Society for the Preservation of the Japanese Sword

One, Katana

Mei (signature)

Gashû-jû Kanewaka tsukuru

Nagasa (length)

2-shaku 2-sun amari kore ari (66.8cm)

Issued in 26th year of Heisei (2014), December 14th

Nihon Token Hozon Kai
(NTHK-NPO)

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



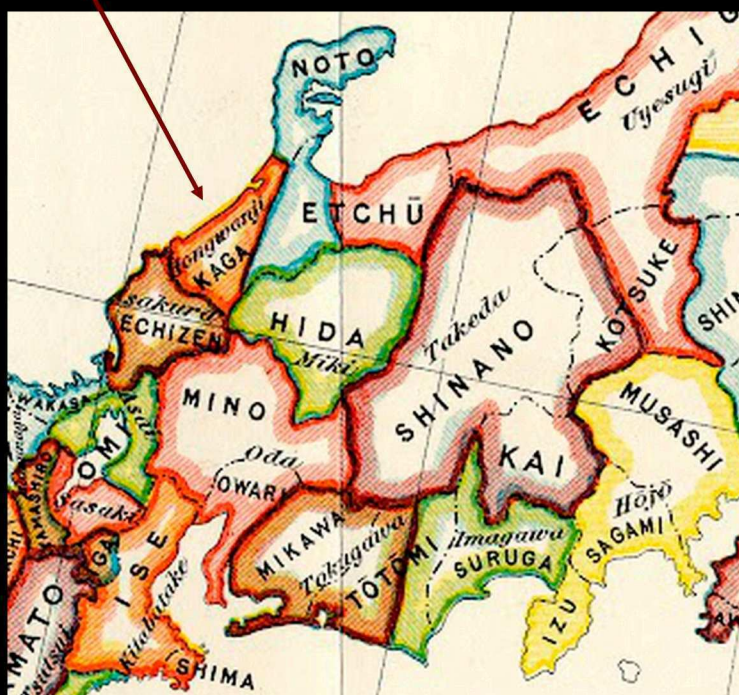
The *Kaga* Domain, also known as the *Kanazawa* Domain or *Kanazawa-han*), was a domain of the *Tokugawa shogunate* of Japan during the Edo period from 1583 to 1871.

The Kaga Domain was based at Kanazawa Castle in Kaga Province, in the modern city of Kanazawa, located in the *Chûbu* region of the island of *Honshu*. The Kaga Domain was ruled for its existence by the *Tozama daimyô* of the Maeda, and covered most of *Kaga* Province and *Etchû* Province and all of *Noto* Province in the *Hokuriku* region.

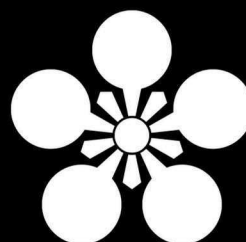
The Kaga Domain had an assessed *kokudaka* of over one million *koku*, making it by far the largest domain of the Tokugawa shogunate. The Kaga Domain was dissolved in the abolition of the *han* system in 1871 by the *Meiji* government and its territory was absorbed into *Ishikawa* Prefecture and *Toyama* Prefecture.

Maeda Toshiie (above) was a distinguished military commander, a retainer of *Oda Nobunaga* and a close friend of *Toyotomi Hideyoshi*. A member of the Council of Five Elders who ruled Japan during the *Sengoku* period, he was granted the Kaga Domain in 1583.

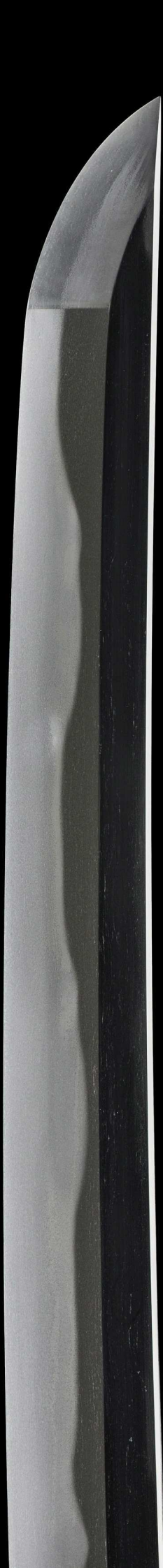
His eldest son, *Maeda Toshinaga* (below) supported *Tokugawa Iyasu* in his rise to power and was rewarded by an increase in his lands to 1.25 million *koku*.

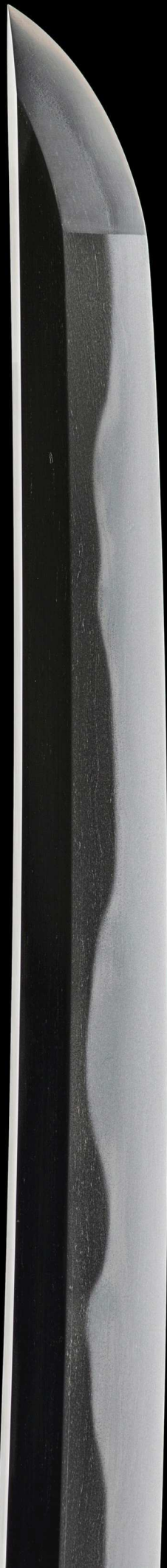


Above is a portion of the *Feudal map of Japan* during the Edo period, *Kaga* borders the Sea of Japan.



Kaga kamon (family crest)





The image shows a close-up of a sword blade, likely a katana, with a focus on the grain patterns. The blade is oriented diagonally, with the tip pointing towards the top right. The upper portion of the blade, which would be the blade's edge, shows a dark, wavy grain pattern known as itame-hada. Below this, there is a distinct transition to a lighter, straight grain pattern known as masame-hada. The background is a solid, deep black, which makes the metallic surface of the blade stand out. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the texture and grain of the metal.

Healthy, expertly forged *itame-hada*
combined with straight grain *masame-hada*.


Like a *sumi-e* master's brushstroke, the *hakikake* (sweeping) *bôshi* conveys a sense of freedom.





This katana is a shining example of *hako-midare* (square-like) hamon pattern that is synonymous with the *Kanewaka school*.

Massive bolts of *kinsuji* tear through the hamon with a vengeance.



Mid-section of the blade the hamon takes on a vibrant *gunome-midare* with rounded areas that are reminiscent of Yukihiro's *abu-nomefu* (horsefly eyes).

muneyaki
(tempered along the spine of blade)

Hako-midare resembles a mountain top.



masame-hada (straight grain)



Shirasaya
(protective scabbard)



copper *habaki* with
Kaga-style file marks



This handsome *Kaga-style* copper *habaki* with its unique deeply grooved criss-cross design became synonymous with Kaga province.

As *Shirouemon Kanewaka* lived and worked in Kaga, it makes perfect sense that this antique habaki still faithfully secures this katana.

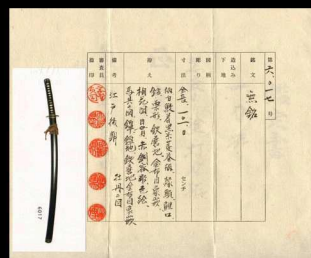
*Kuro kawari-nuri
uchigatana-koshirae*
(黒変わり塗打刀拵)

*Uchigatana-koshirae
lacquered in black
with unique texture*

Crafted during the
Late Edo period
(1780~1867)



*NBTHK Hozon
Certificate of Authenticity*



*NTHK-NPO Kanteisho
Certificate of Authenticity*

03202103

No. 4019309



公益財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協会



令和三年九月十七日

右は當協會に於て審査の結果保存刀装具と
鑑定しこれを証する

鑑定書

一 黒漆塗唐草文鞘打刀拵

総金具花桐唐草図無銘
目貫馬具図
鐔左右松透牡丹図無銘
柄白鮫着黒色糸諸捻卷

NBTHK Hozon Certificate of Designation

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

Issued in the 3rd year of Reiwa (2021), September 17th

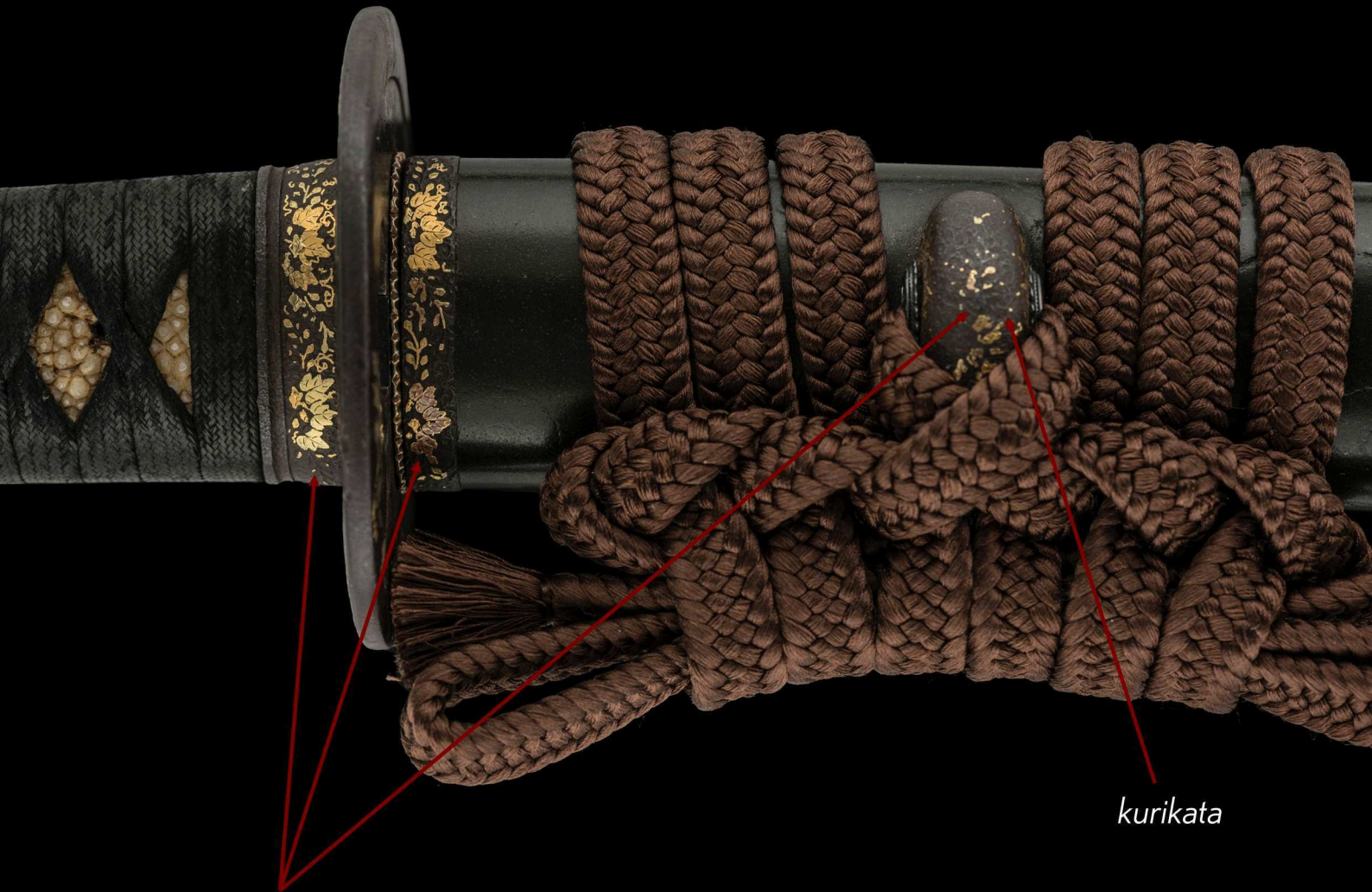
One, Koshirae

Uchigatana-koshirae lacquered in black with arabesque pattern

*Matching set of fittings depicting paulownia flower
and arabesque design, unsigned
Menuki depicting horse gear*

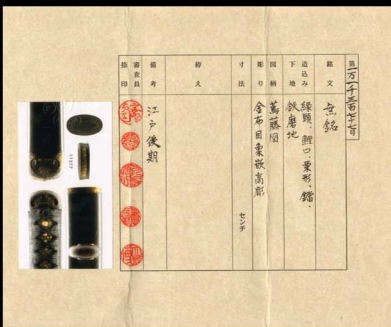
*Tsuba depicting peony with openwork of pine tree shape, unsigned
Hilt covered with white same and wrapped morohineri-maki style with
black braids*

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai
(NBTHK)



kurikata

All matching fittings depicting *kiri* (paulownia) entwined within an arabesque design.



Den Edo Higo Kumagai-ha

These matching antique fittings (*sori kanagu*) have been attributed to the *Kumagai* school of *Higo* group in Edo (Tokyô).

NTHK-NPO Kanteisho Certificate of Authenticity dating the fittings to the late Edo period.





These beautifully crafted *menuki* feature gear that a samurai would carry on his horse.



Haigô Gozaemon Hisamitsu
Mounted, armoured, but bareheaded,
he rides upon his galloping steed.

Utagawa Kuniyoshi (1797~1861)



Kurabane
Japanese saddle tree
Late Edo period



A close-up of the *kashira* (pommel).

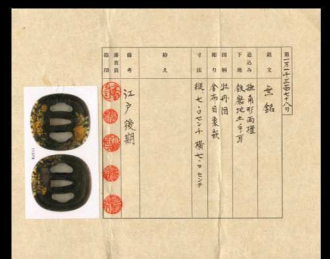
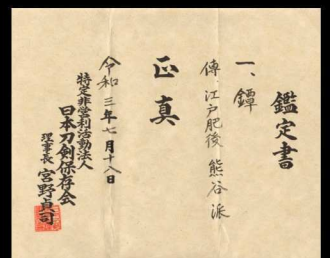
Much of the gold may have been worn down over time, but its history lives on.



The striking *kin-nunome-zôgan* (crosshatched gold inlay) design on this splendid iron *tsuba* is that of peonies.

In Japan, *botan* (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.

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



To appreciate Japanese art, is to appreciate detail.
Upon closer inspection the peony comes alive...



(reverse)





Koshirae bag (vintage)



ITEM# UJKA395

A RYÔKAI KATANA

UNSIGNED, KAMAKURA PERIOD (SHÔÔ~ENKYÔ ERAS: 1292~1309)

Swordsmith: *Ryôkai (attribution, o-suriage mumei)*
Measurements: **Length:** 68.7cm **Curvature:** 0.8cm **Moto-haba:** 2.55cm **Weight:** 585g
Jihada: *Ko-itame mixed with ji-nie, masame-hada and shirake utsuri*
Hamon: *Suguha with ko-gunome, ko-ashi, kinsuji and sunagashi*
Horimono: *Short bôhi on both sides with kaki-toshi running through the nakago (tang)*
Certificate #1: **NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon** (designated as Especially Worthy of Preservation)
Certificate #2-4: **NTHK-NPO Kanteisho** (tsuba, koshirae & fittings designated as Authentic)
Fujishiro rank: **Jô-saku** (ranked as a superior swordsmith)
Included: Shirasaya, Edo koshirae, fabric bags, stand, kit, booklet, description

SOLD

Ryôkai is said to be the son of grandmaster **Rai Kunitoshi**. He left the celebrated Rai family at the age of 16 taking the priest name *Ryôkai*. Existing dated signatures range between the 5th year of *Shôô* era (1292) and the 2nd year of *Enkyô* era (1309) - these dates support his relation to Rai Kunitoshi whose active period was around *Kôan* era (1278~1288). This is a slender shortened tachi crafted over 700 years ago that is full of vibrancy to study and admire. The *jigane* is a dense *ko-itame* with fine *ji-nie* with some clear *masame-hada* and *shirake-utsuri*. The *hamon* features an eclectic mix of *suguha* with *ko-gunome* and *ko-chôji* and plenty of *ko-ashi*, *kinsuji* and *sunagashi*. A gorgeous *aoi-gai* (mother-of-pearl) *uchigatana koshirae* from the Edo period shines like stars in the night sky. Samurai weaponry and armour are featured on the *fuchi-kashira*. Feel the history...



Saki-kasane: 3.3mm

Moto-kasane: 5.5mm

Omosa: 585g

Kissaki: 1.71cm
Saki-haba: 1.41cm

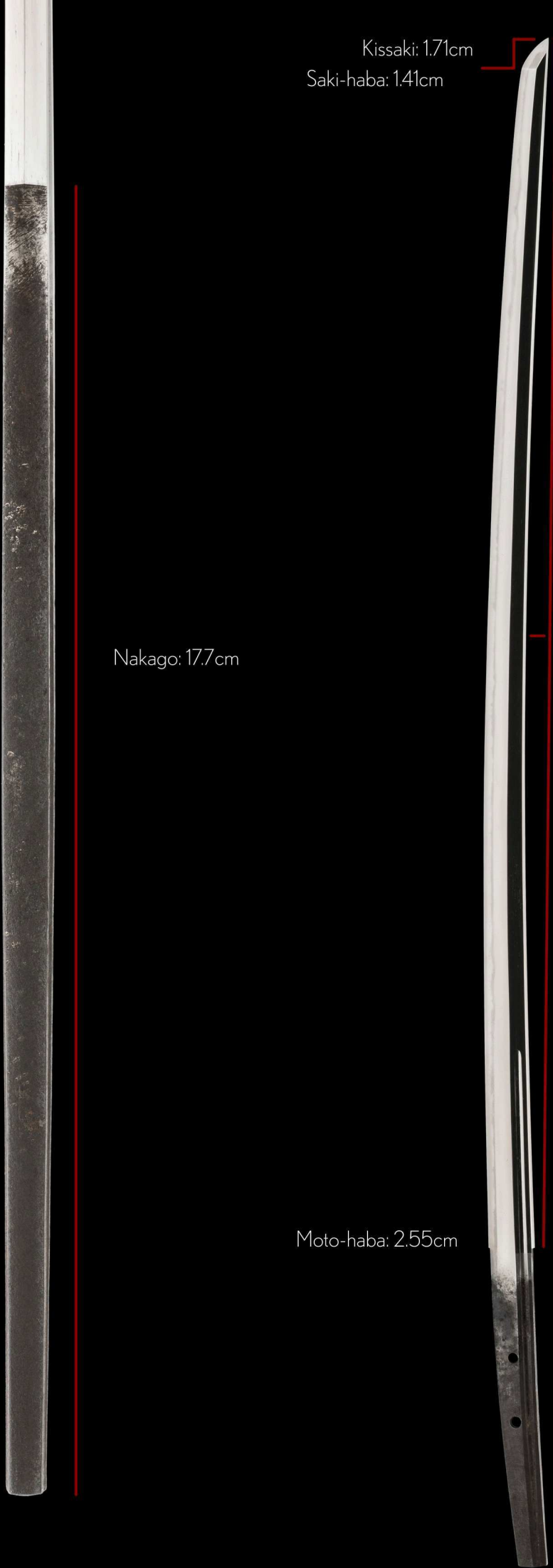
Nakago: 17.7cm

Moto-haba: 2.55cm

Nagasa: 68.7cm

Sori: 0.80cm

Mekugi-ana: 2




Ryôkai is said to be the son of grandmaster *Rai Kunitoshi* having left the Rai family at the age of 16 taking the priest name *Ryôkai*.

Existing dated signatures range between the fifth year of *Shôô* era (1292) and the second year of *Enkyô* era (1309) - these dates support his relation to Rai Kunitoshi whose active period was around *Kôan* era (1278~1288).

Ryôkai was known to produce rather slender *tachi*, which we see here in this sword. The *jigane* is a dense *ko-itame* with fine *ji-nie* which shows some *masame* and *shirake-utsuri*. The *hamon* has a bluish tint that features an eclectic mix of *suguha* with *ko-gunome* and *ko-chôji* - we also see plenty of *ko-ashi*, *kinsuji* and *sunagashi*. The upper *kissaki* area is rather gorgeous with layers of straight grain *masame-hada* uniquely folded and preserved for us to enjoy 700 years later.

Ryôkai is ranked as *jô-saku* - a superior swordsmith - an impressive achievement given the class of smiths that were also at the top of their respective games at the end of the golden Kamakura period.



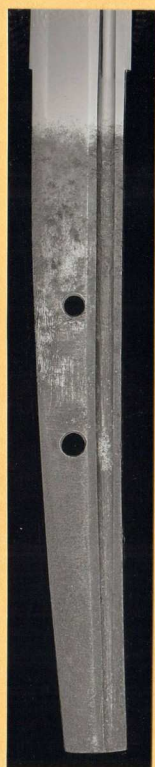


This sword was once a long *tachi* during the late *Kamakura period*. In approximately the late *Muromachi* to early *Edo* period (late 1500s ~ early 1600s), it was greatly shortened to its *ô-suriage nakago* and lost its *mei* (signature).

The *nakago* features *kaki-tôshi* - grooves that extend right through the butt end of the tang.

特 保
30201812

No 1010406



鑑定書

一 刀 無 銘 (了 戒)

長 二 尺 二 寸 六 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

平成三十一年 二月二十五日

公益財団法人 日本美術刀剣保存協會



和歌山県 教育委員会
第 24831 号
平成8年9月5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

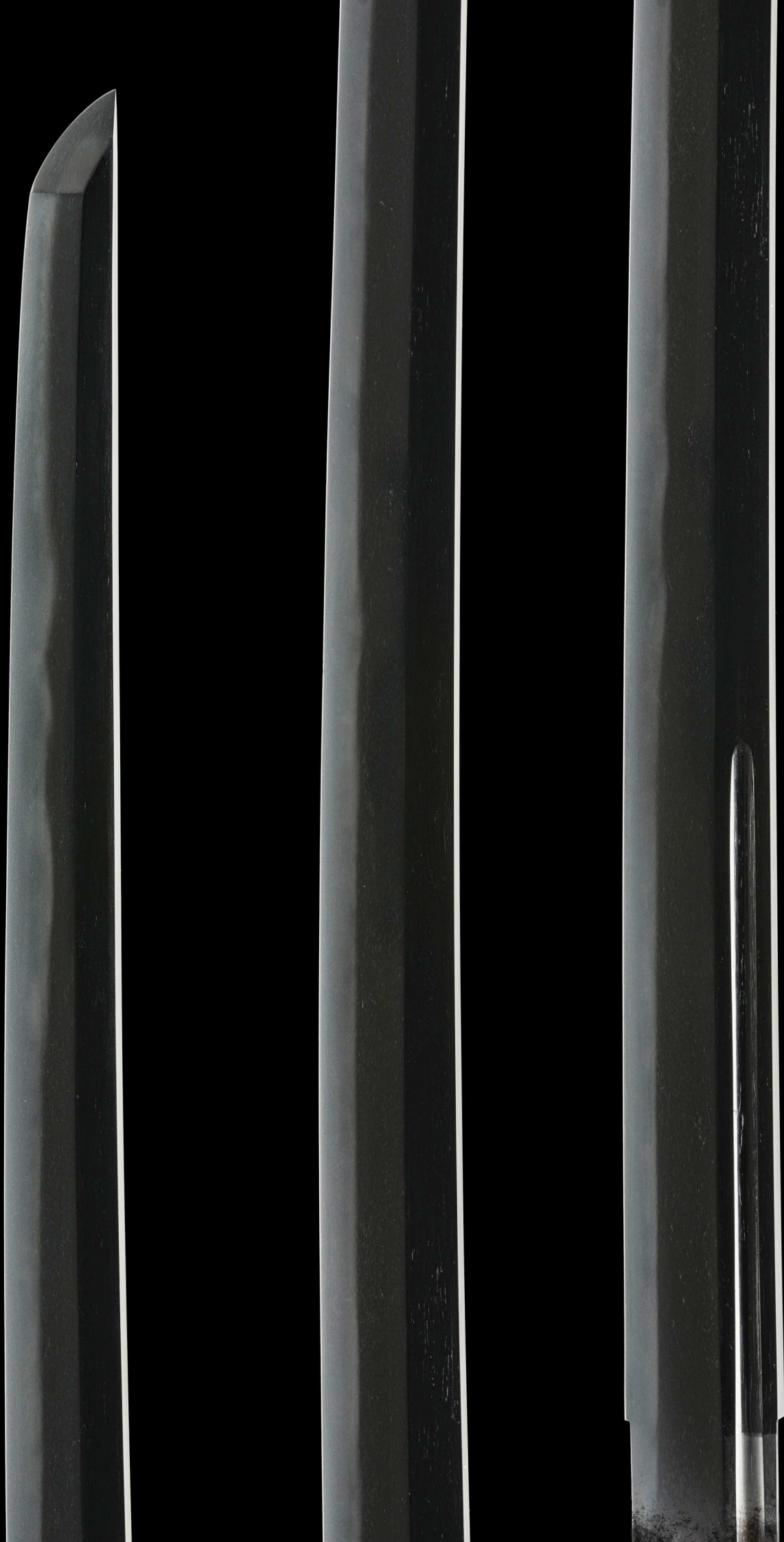
Issued in the 31st year of Heisei (2019), February 25th

One, Katana

Mumei (unsigned)
Ryôkai

Nagasa (length)
2-shaku 2-sun 6-bu kyô (68.7cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai
(NBTHK)

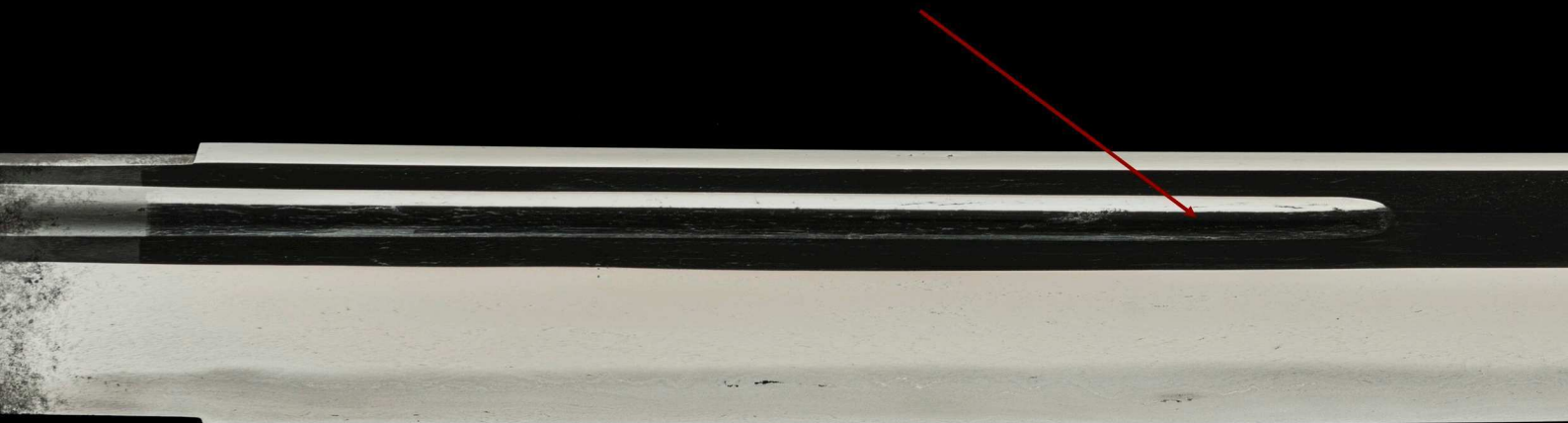


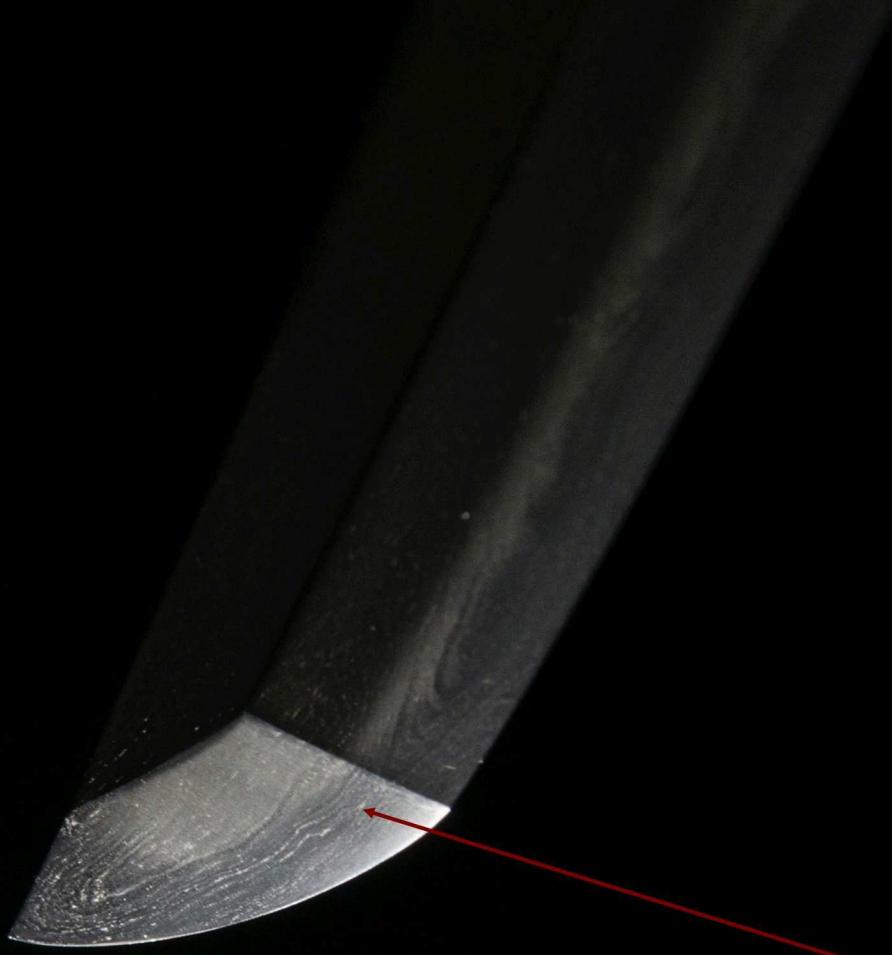




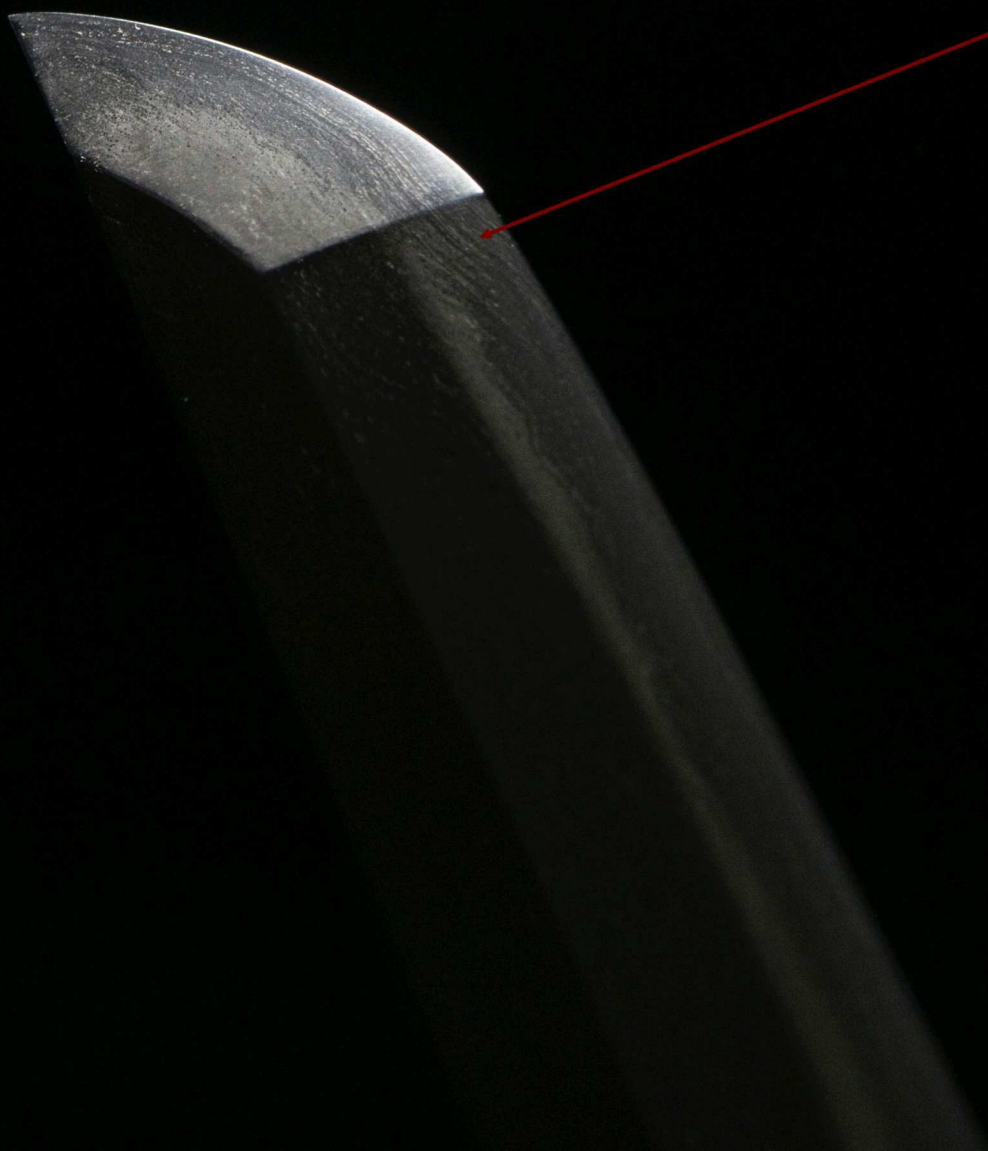
The katana has a *hi* (groove) that fills the centre of the *shinogi* (ridge line) on the lower section on both sides of the blade.

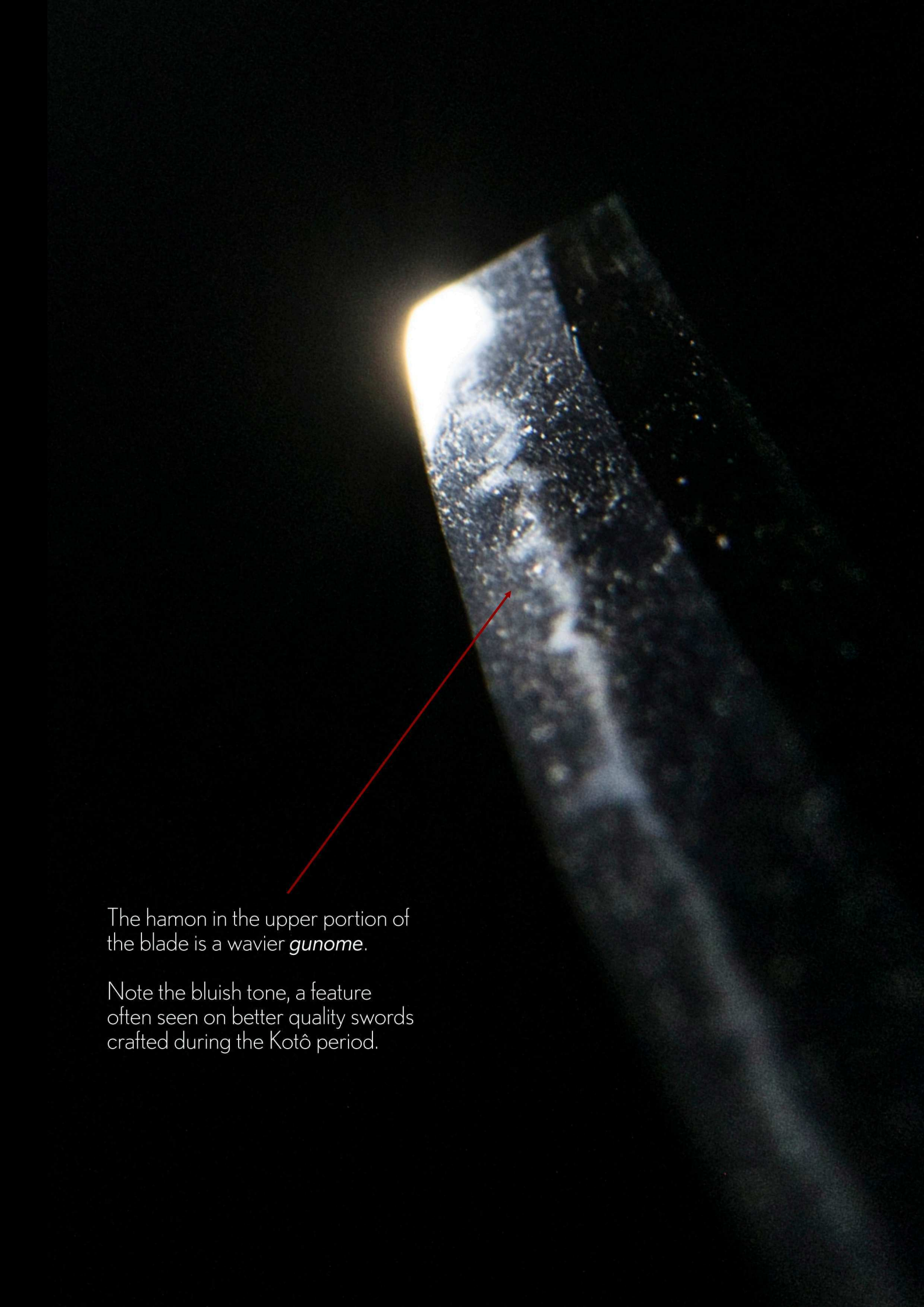
The top end of the grooves are referred to as *maru-dome* (rounded).






Beautifully forged layers of free-flowing straight grain *masame-hada*.





The hamon in the upper portion of the blade is a wavier *gunome*.

Note the bluish tone, a feature often seen on better quality swords crafted during the Kotô period.

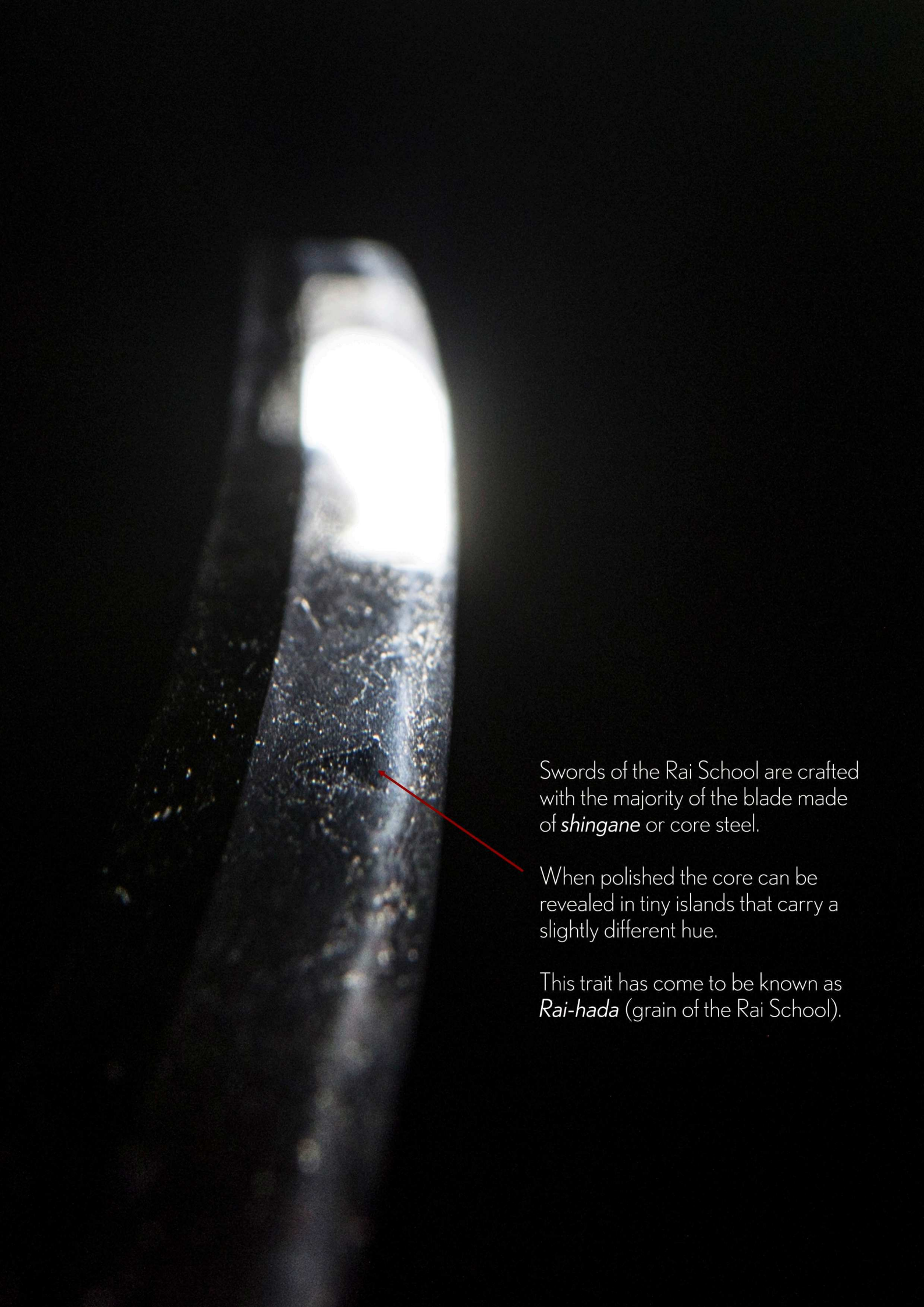
A close-up photograph of a sword blade, likely a katana, showing the hamon (temper line) and ko-ashi (small legs). The blade is dark and textured, with a bright, glowing edge. Three red arrows point from the text labels to specific features on the blade. The top arrow points to the upper part of the hamon, the middle arrow points to the lower part of the hamon, and the bottom arrow points to the serrated ko-gunome.

ko-ashi (small legs)

As we travel down the blade, the hamon tightens and a serrated *ko-gunome* appears.




A long stream of *sunagashi*
brushing its way through the hamon.

A close-up photograph of a sword blade, showing the grain pattern (Rai-hada) on the surface. The blade is dark and textured, with a bright, circular highlight at the top. A red arrow points from the text to a specific area on the blade's surface.

Swords of the Rai School are crafted with the majority of the blade made of *shingane* or core steel.

When polished the core can be revealed in tiny islands that carry a slightly different hue.

This trait has come to be known as *Rai-hada* (grain of the Rai School).

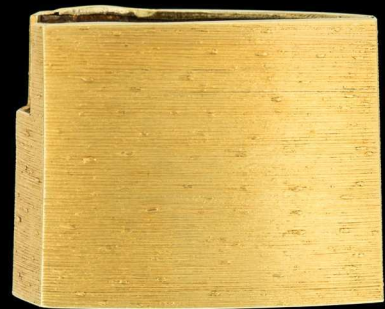
A close-up photograph of a sword blade, likely a katana, showing the shirake-utsuri (white frost) patterns. The blade is dark and textured, with a bright, glowing edge. A red arrow points to a specific area on the blade. The background is dark, making the blade stand out.

Light shadows of *shirake-utsuri*
can be seen on the blade.

giant bolt of *kinsuji*



Newly crafted *shirasaya*
(protective scabbard)

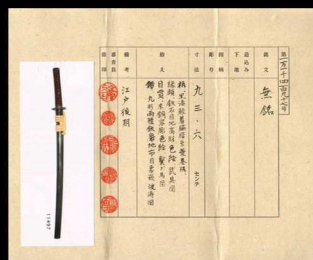


gold-wrapped
habaki with crisp
horizontal file marks

*Aogai-mijin-nuri saya
uchigatana-koshirae*
(青貝微塵塗鞘打刀拵え)

*Uchigatana-koshirae
decorated with
mother-of-pearl*

Crafted during the
Late Edo period
(1780~1867)



NTHK-NPO Kanteisho
Certificate of Authenticity



sprinklings of mother-of-pearl dance like stars of the night sky...

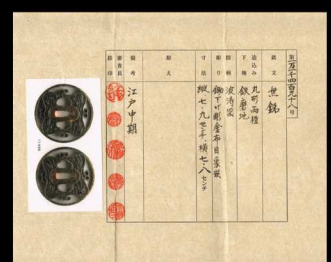
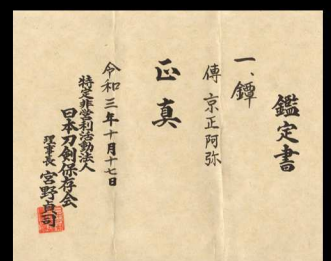




This stunning polished iron tsuba has been attributed to the *Kyô-Shôami school* dating back to the middle Edo period - circa 1700~1780.

Its quadratic design within a circular shape depict powerful, rolling waves. It appears to encompass a nautical reference - the exploration to all corners of the globe via the high seas. An impressively preserved gold *nunome-zogan* design carving pattern has been etched around the rim of the tsuba.

Tsubas were made in Kyotô carry the prefix "*Kyô*". They were generally crafted by artists from the *Kyô-Shoami* and *Awa-Shoami* groups. A NTHK-NPO Kanteisho certificate of authenticity accompanies the piece.



Nunome-zôgan - lit. "fabric/texture" describes a technique where the surface of the ground metal is prepared by rough crosshatching with a file or a fine chisel. Afterwards, soft gold or silver fragments or wires are hammered into these depressions.

This technique was in use during the late Muromachi period among *Shôami* artists and is mainly seen during the subsequent Edo period on *Nanban-tsuba* and work of the *Higo Hayashi* and *Shimizu schools*.

The actual ornamentation is not as firmly connected to the surface, so we frequently find works where parts of the nunome design is lost due to rust or abrasion, leaving only the preparative file mark pattern.

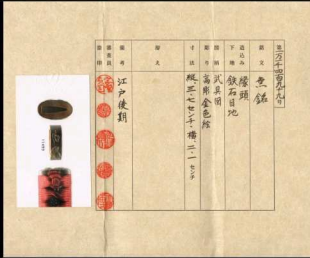
Markus Sesko
Encyclopedia of Japanese Swords



nunome-zôgan



The iron *fuchi-kashira* features elements of samurai weaponry and armour. It has been certified to the *Tōryūsei* school based in *Edo* (Tokyo) from the late Edo period.



NTHK-NPO Kanteisho certificate of authenticity.



tachi



Kobayashi Kiyochika: Samurai with Iron Mask



mempo (mask) and dō (cuirass)

Saihai

A baton carried by *samurai* commanders. It was both a sign of rank and a signal device.



Kabuto (helmet)



Tethered horses made of black *shakudô* and gold form the *menuki* on the *tsuka* (hilt). Tachi were once carried on horseback thus paying a historical reference.

The *menuki* were recently secured onto black-lacquered *samekawa* (ray skin) and expertly braided over with silk in a wine-red colour.





Koshirae bag



ITEM# UJTA054

A SHODAI NOBUKUNI TANTÔ TACHI

SIGNED, NAMBOKUCHÔ PERIOD (CIRCA ENBUN~JÔJI ERAS 1356~1368)

- Swordsmith:** *Nobukuni* (shodai, first generation, almost ubu nakago)
Location: *Yamashiro* (Kyôto)
Measurements: **Length:** 28.7cm **Curvature:** 0.2cm **Moto-haba:** 2.75cm
Jihada: *Itame mixed with mokume, standing-out nagare-hada, ji-nie, chikei, and nie-utsuri*
Hamon: *Ko-nie-laden and gently undulating notare-chô with a wide, bright, and clear nioiguchi that is mixed with some gunome, ko-ashi, many kinsuji and sunagashi, with hotsure in places*
Certificate 1: **55th NBTHK Jûyô Tôken** (a sword designated as *Profound and Important*)
Certificate 2-4: **NTHK-NPO Kanteisho** (*koshirae, kozuka and menuki designated as Authentic*)
Fujishiro: **Jôjô-saku** (ranked as a highly superior swordsmith)
Included: Shirasaya, Edo-period *aikuchi koshirae*, fabric bags, stand, kit, description

SOLD

Unique Japan is pleased to introduce a museum-worthy *tantô* by *shodai* (first generation) *Nobukuni*, one of the preeminent swordsmiths of the *Nambokuchô* period (mid-1300s) who led to the establishment of the *Sôshû* tradition within *Kyôto*. This *tantô* is an important reference piece that unifies the *Nambokuchô* period in terms of its wide commanding shape and *horimono*, *Ryôkai* lineage via its *nagare-hada* within the *Rai* school and eye-catching *Sôshû* qualities with *kinsuji* and *sunagashi* by way of his *sensei Sadamune*. The sword comes with a beautiful *aikuchi-koshirae* from the late Edo period that features *menuki* depicting *nezumi* (mouse/rat) symbolizing intelligence, creativity and effective leadership. This is true samurai history in your hands.

Moto-kasane: 5.4mm

Omosa: 170g

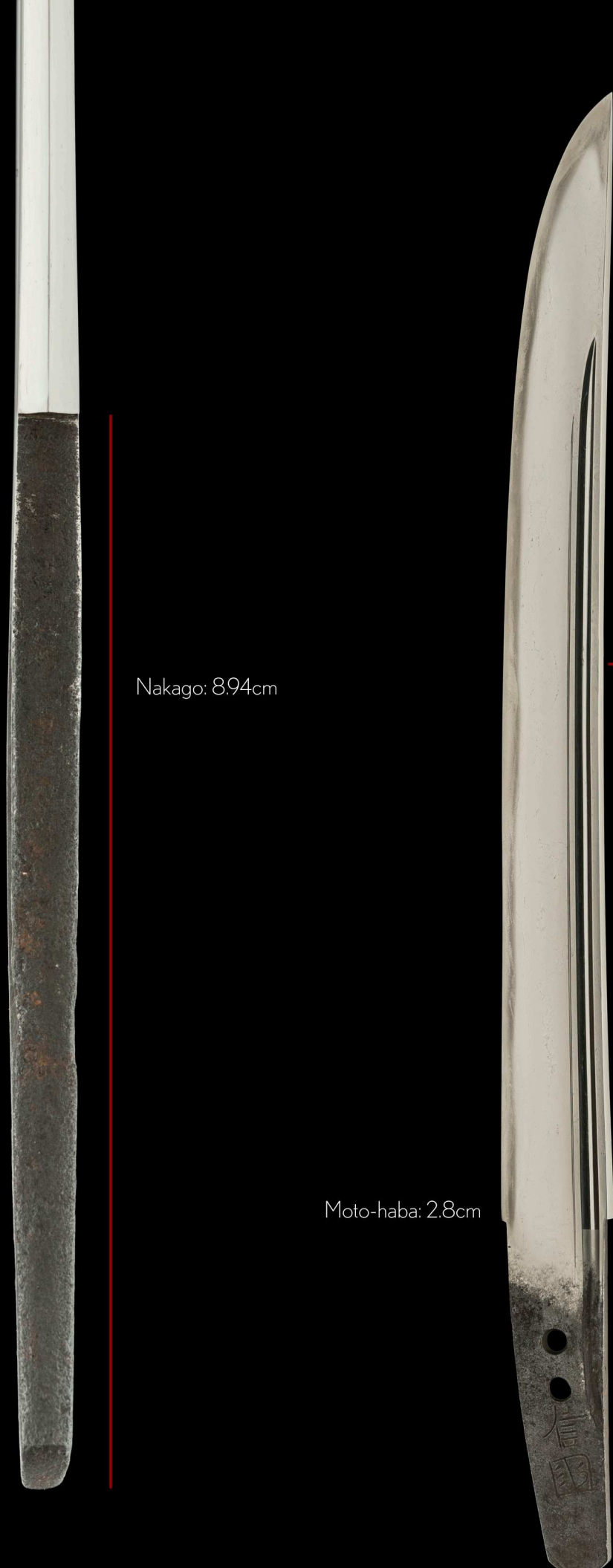
Nakago: 8.94cm

Moto-haba: 2.8cm

Nagasa: 28.7cm

Sori: 0.20cm

Mekugi-ana: 2



According to period sword texts, the *shodai* (first generation) *Nobukuni* was either the son, grandson or even great-grandson of *Ryôkai* of the prestigious *Rai* school. Dated works include the third year of *Enbun* era (1358), the first year of *Kôan* era (1361), and the fifth year of *Jôji* (1366).

Nobukuni is listed as one of the “*Three Students of Sadamune*,” a national treasure swordsmith who was the student and adopted son of the great *Masamune*.

Nobukuni is rated *jôjô-saku*, a highly superior swordsmith and master engraver (*horimono*) whose works have been certified *Juyô Bunkazai* - an Important Cultural property of Japan - only one level away from *kokuhô* (National Treasure).

As written on the NBTHK white paper for this sword:

Regardless of being hardened in *suguha* or *midareba*, the *kitae* (forging) always shows some *nagare* (running grain). Thus, from a stylistic point of view, we can accept the tradition that *Nobukuni* descended from the *Ryôkai* lineage...and that his works display a direct stylistic connection to *Sadamune*.

This is a signed *tantô* by the first generation Nobukuni that displays the typical large *Enbun-Jôji* shape - *hira-zukuri*, *iorimune*, wide *mihaba*, *sunnobi*, thin *kasane*, shallow *sori*. The *kitae* is an *itame* that is mixed with *mokume*, that tends to a rather standing-out *nagare* along the *ha*, and that features plenty of fine *ji-nie*, *chikei*, and a *nie-utsuri*.

The *hamon* is a *ko-nie*-laden and gently undulating *notare-chô* with a wide, bright, and clear *nioiguchi* that is mixed with some *gunome*, *ko-ashi*, several *kinsuji* and *sunagashi*, and with *hotsure* in places. The *ha* shows an abundance of *hataraki* (activity) and is rich in variety and *horimono* (engraving) that is typical of Nobukuni.

Thus, we have here a masterwork that truly reflects all the stylistic highlights of the first generation Nobukuni.



Location: *Yamashiro* (resident of Kyôto)
Swordsmith: *Nobukuni* (first generation)

ubu-nakago (near original shaped tang)
katte-sagari-yasurime (sloping file marks)

original *mekugi-ana* (hole)

信 (Nobu)

国 (kuni)

The characters of *Nobu* and *Kuni*,
translate to "trust in country."



信 (*Nobu*, trust)

國 (*Kuni*, country)



(*ura*, reverse)

21200955

重要第一三八八號

指定書


一 短刀銘 信国(初代) 一口

法量 長さ三八・七種 反り〇三種
 形状 平造 庵棟 身幅広く寸延か 重ね薄め 反り浅くつく
 鍛 板目に交互じり刃寄り流れて肌立ちこころとなり地沸細かに
 よくつき地景へ沸映り立つ
 刃文 浅いたれを基調に交互目こころ交じり小足入り句深く小沸よく
 つき金筋・砂流しかり処々ほつれ句口明るく冴える
 帽子 表は直ぐ裏は乱れこころ共にさかん掃きかけ先小丸に返る
 彫物 表は刀樋に漆樋を掻き流し裏は刀樋の下半は細く
 葛蒲樋風となり掻き流す
 茎 殆ど生ぶ鏡身勝手下かり目釘孔二

右者當協會に於て審査の結果
 重要刀劍に指定する

平成三年十月廿日

財団法人日本美術刀劍保存協會
 會長 佐々淳行



Jûyô Certificate No. 12988
 Shiteisho (指定書) Certificate of Designation
 Tantô mumei: Nobukuni (信国) Shodai (初代)

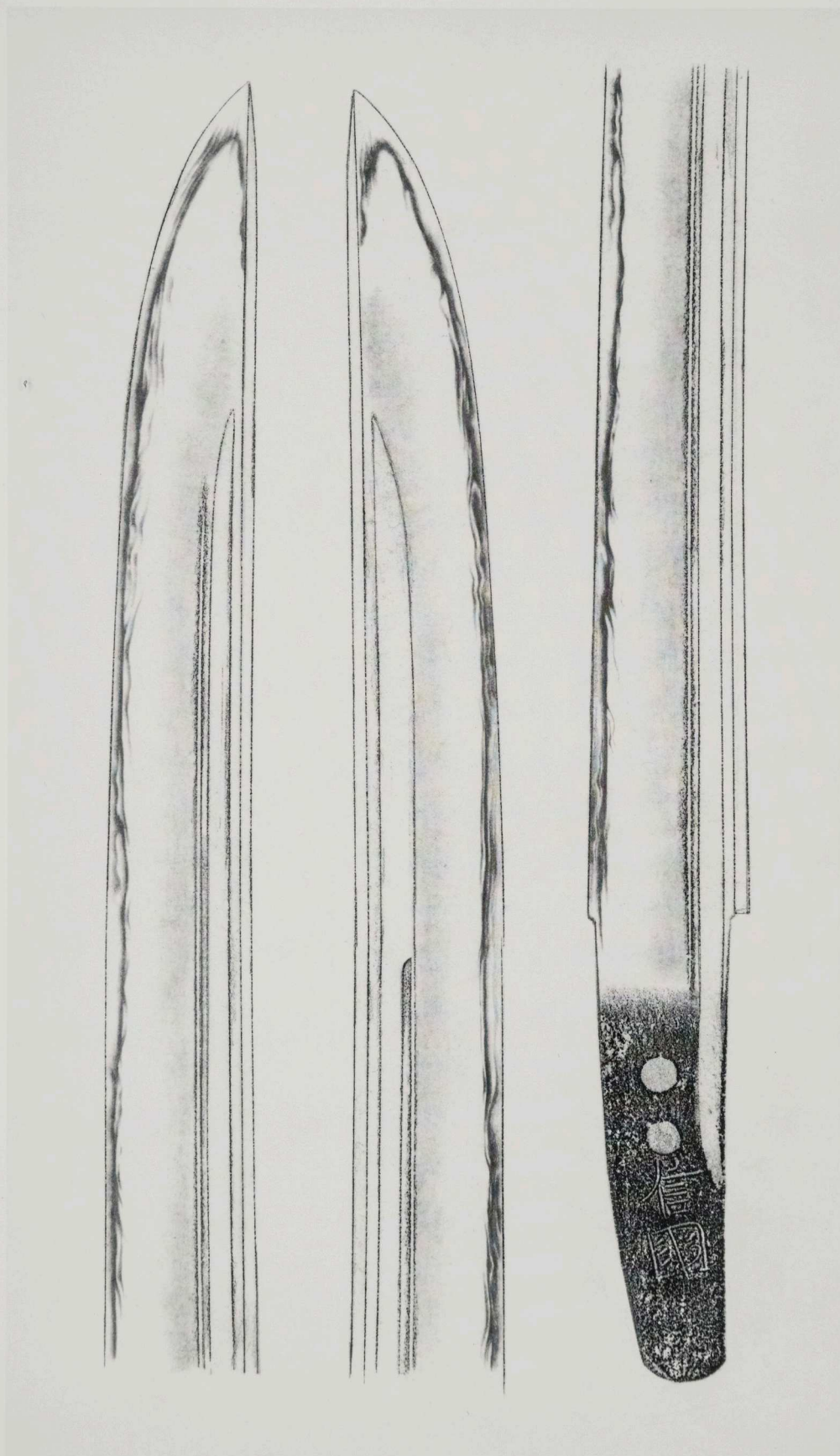
Measurements
 nagasa 28.7 cm, sori 0.2 cm

Description
Keijo: hira-zukuri, iori-mune, wide mihaba, sunnobi, thin kasane, shallow sori
Kitae: itame that is mixed with mokume, that tends to a rather standing-out nagare along the ha, and that features plenty of fine ji-nie, chikei, and a nie-utsuri
Hamon: ko-nie-laden and gently undulating notare-chô with a wide, bright, and clear nioiguchi that is mixed with some gunome, ko-ashi, many kinsuji and sunagashi, and with hotsure in places
Bôshi: on the omote side sugu, on the ura side with some midare, both sides feature much hakikake and a ko-maru-kaeri
Horimono: on the omote side a katana-hi with soebi that runs as kaki-nagashi into the tang, on the ura side a katana-hi that features along its bottom half a shôbu-hi-like element and that runs as kaki-nagashi into the tang as well
Nakago: almost ubu, katte-sagari yasurime, two mekugi-ana

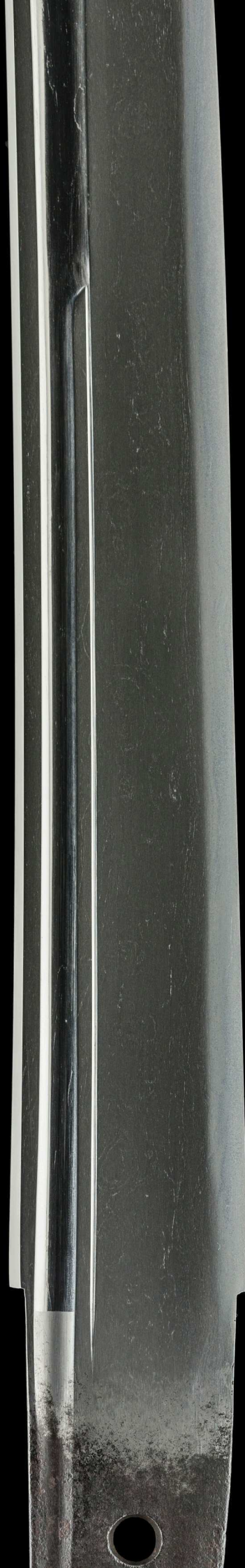
According to the result of the shinsa committee of our society we judged this work as authentic and rate it as jûyô-tôken.

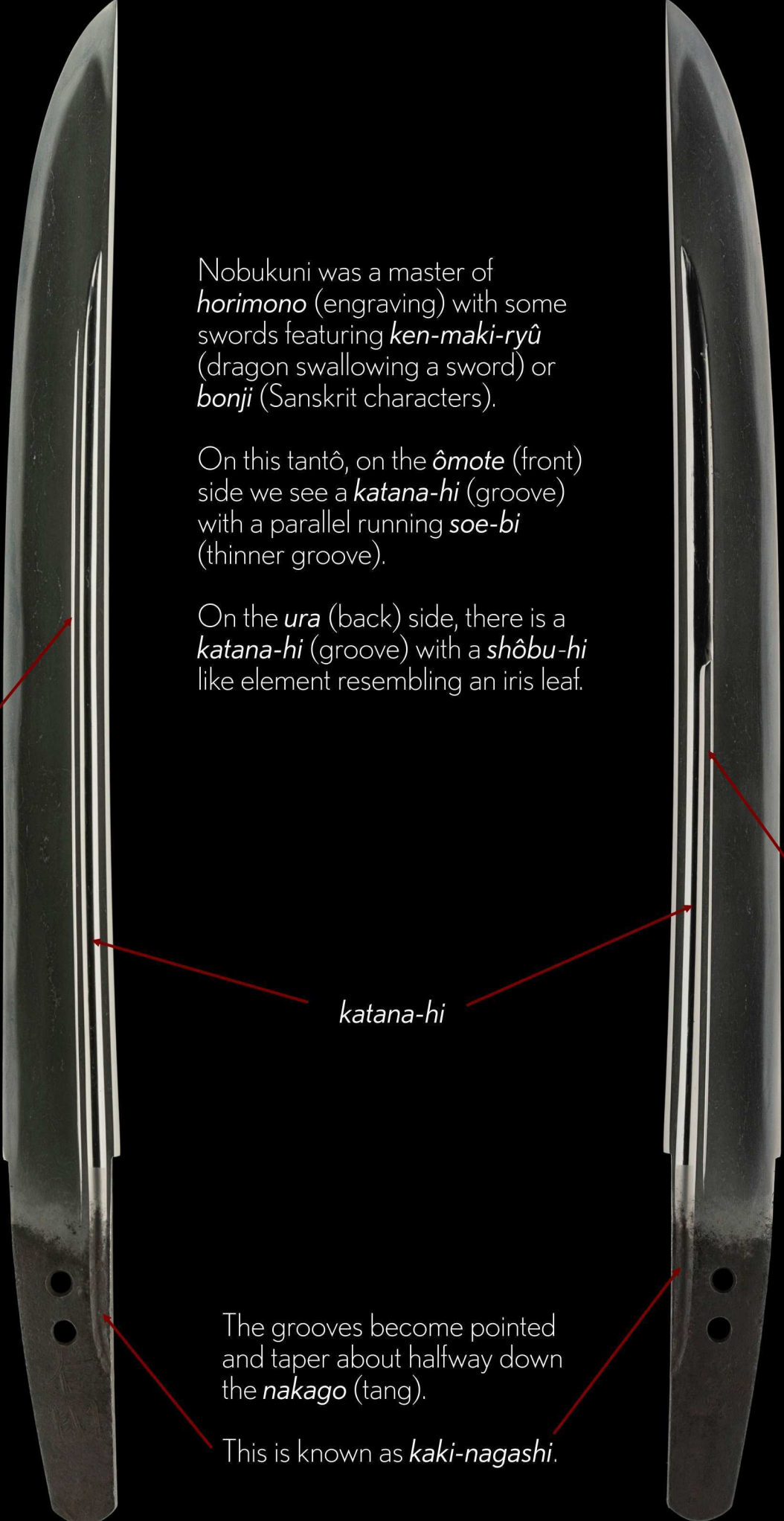
October 16, 2009
 [Foundation] Nihon Bijutsu Tôken Hozon Kyôkai, NBTHK

短刀 銘 信国(初代)









Nobukuni was a master of *horimono* (engraving) with some swords featuring *ken-maki-ryû* (dragon swallowing a sword) or *bonji* (Sanskrit characters).

On this tantô, on the *ômete* (front) side we see a *katana-hi* (groove) with a parallel running *soe-bi* (thinner groove).

On the *ura* (back) side, there is a *katana-hi* (groove) with a *shôbu-hi* like element resembling an iris leaf.

soe-bi

katana-hi

shobu-hi

The grooves become pointed and taper about halfway down the *nakago* (tang).

This is known as *kaki-nagashi*.



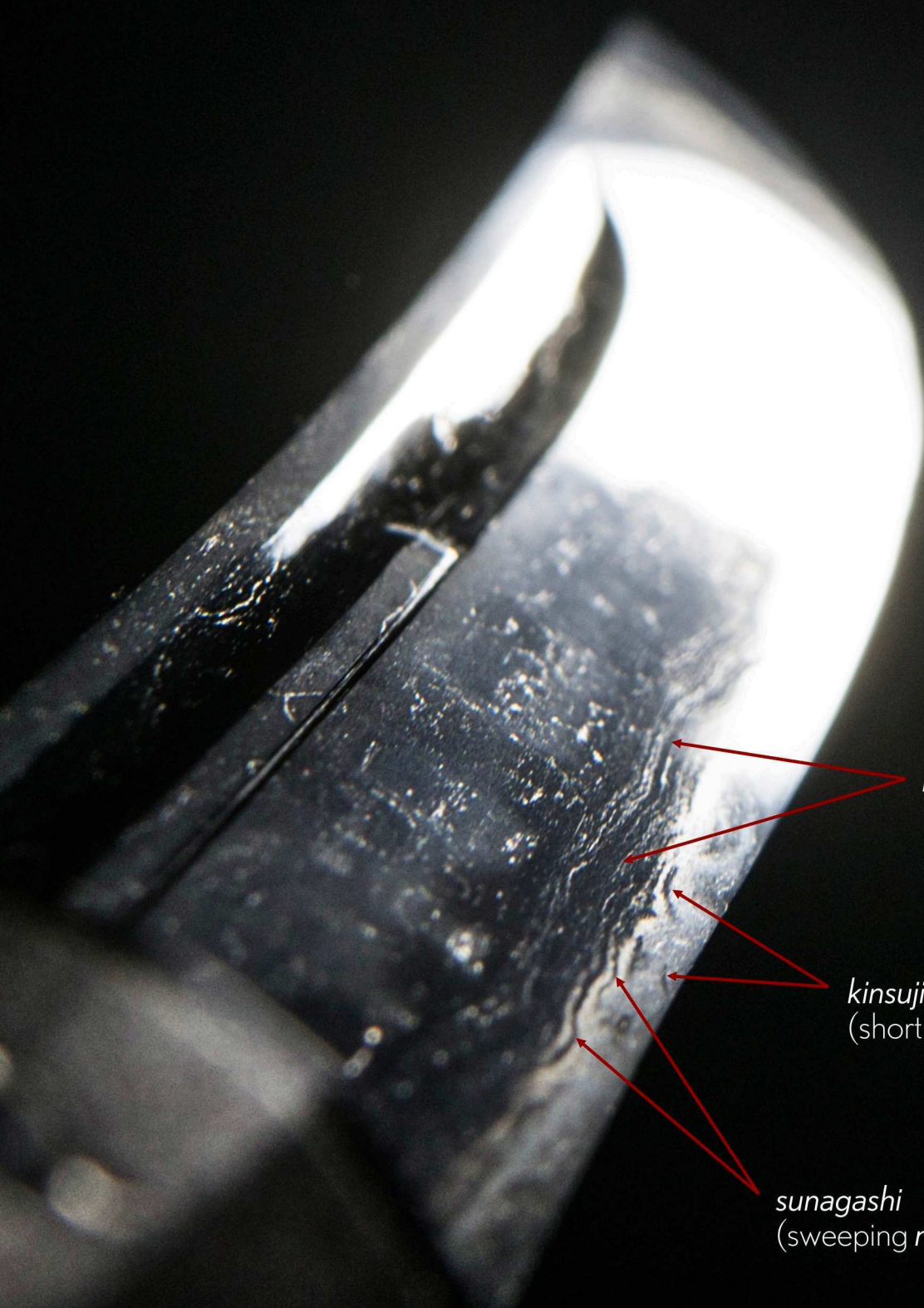
Bright and bold *suguha hamon*

Nobukuni is listed as one of the “*Three Students of Sadamune*,” a national treasure swordsmith who was the student and adopted son of the great *Masamune*.

This *tantô* is an important reference piece that unifies the *Nambokuchô period* in terms of its wide commanding shape and *horimono*, *Ryôkai* lineage via its *nagarehada* within the *Rai* school and eye-catching *Sôshû* qualities with *kinsuji* and *sunagashi* by way of his sensei *Sadamune*.

Feel the history...





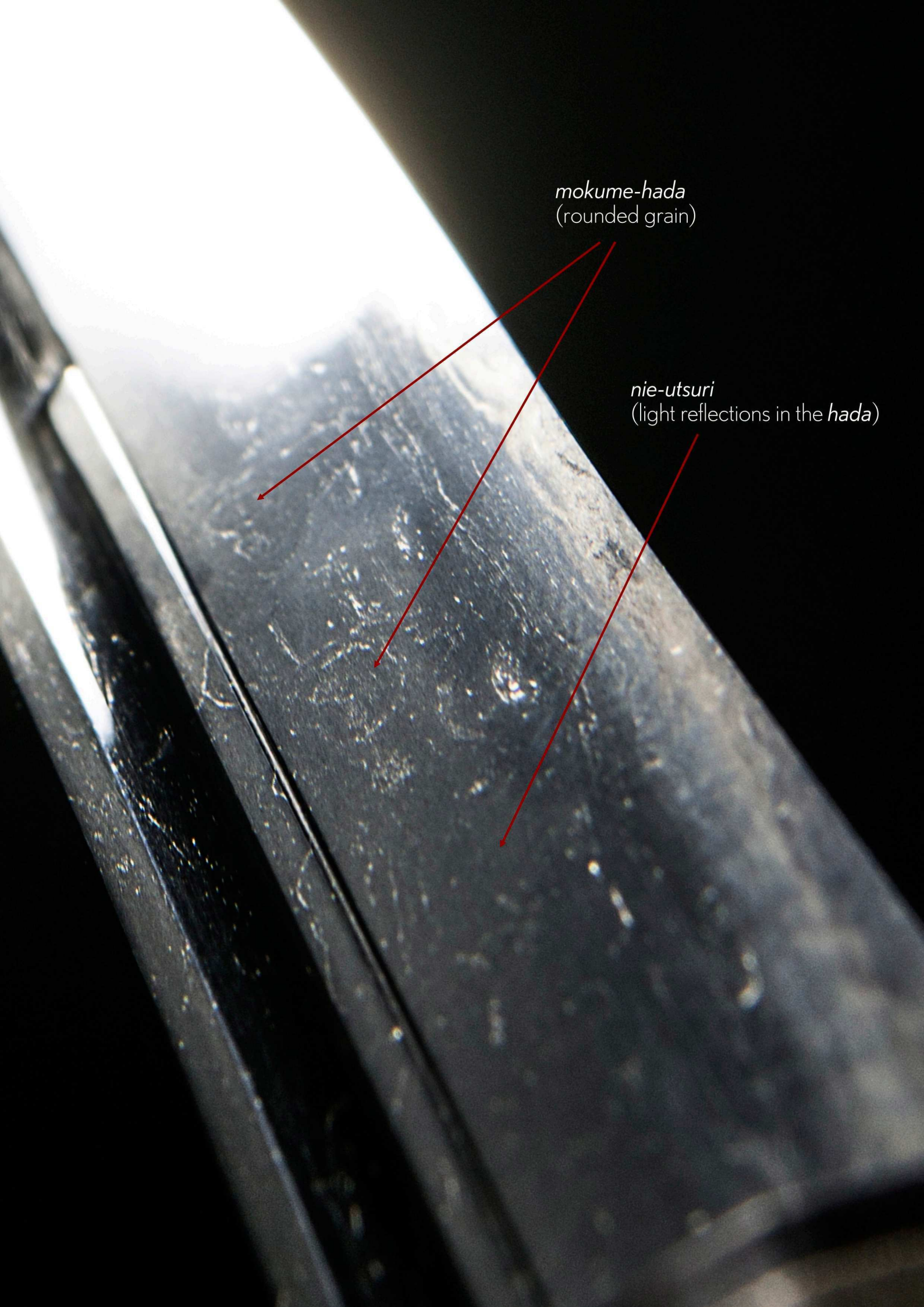
nagare-hada
(flowing hada)

kinsuji
(short dark lines of *nie* crystals)

sunagashi
(sweeping *nie* crystals)



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



mokume-hada
(rounded grain)

nie-utsuri
(light reflections in the *hada*)



Shirasaya
(protective scabbard)

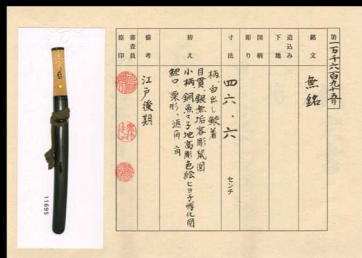


gold and shakudo
habaki with connected
sayagata decor

*Kuro-ishime-ji-nuri
aikuchi-koshirae*
(黒石目地塗合口拵え)

*Aikuchi-koshirae
lacquered in black with
stone-like surface*

Crafted during the
Late Edo period
(1780~1867)



NTHK-NPO Kanteisho
Certificate of Authenticity



The *menuki* feature depictions of mice made of pure silver that were crafted during the late Edo period (early 1800s). *Nezumi* (mouse/rat) is the *first* of the twelve animals in the Japanese zodiac calendar - just as *shôdai Nobukuni* was the first generation of the *Nobukuni* school. It is likely that this commonality was the reason why the mouse *menuki* had been selected for the *tsuka* (hilt).

People born in the Year of Nezumi are said to be intelligent, passionate and persuasive - making them creative and effective leaders.



Top-quality *samekawa* (ray skin). Note the huge *oya-tsubu* (parent nodule).

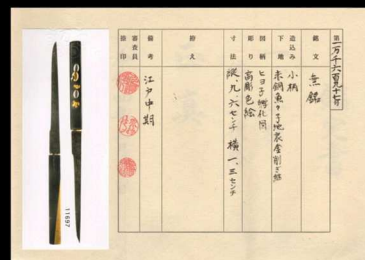
Nibble away at life...
Savour as many moments as you can.



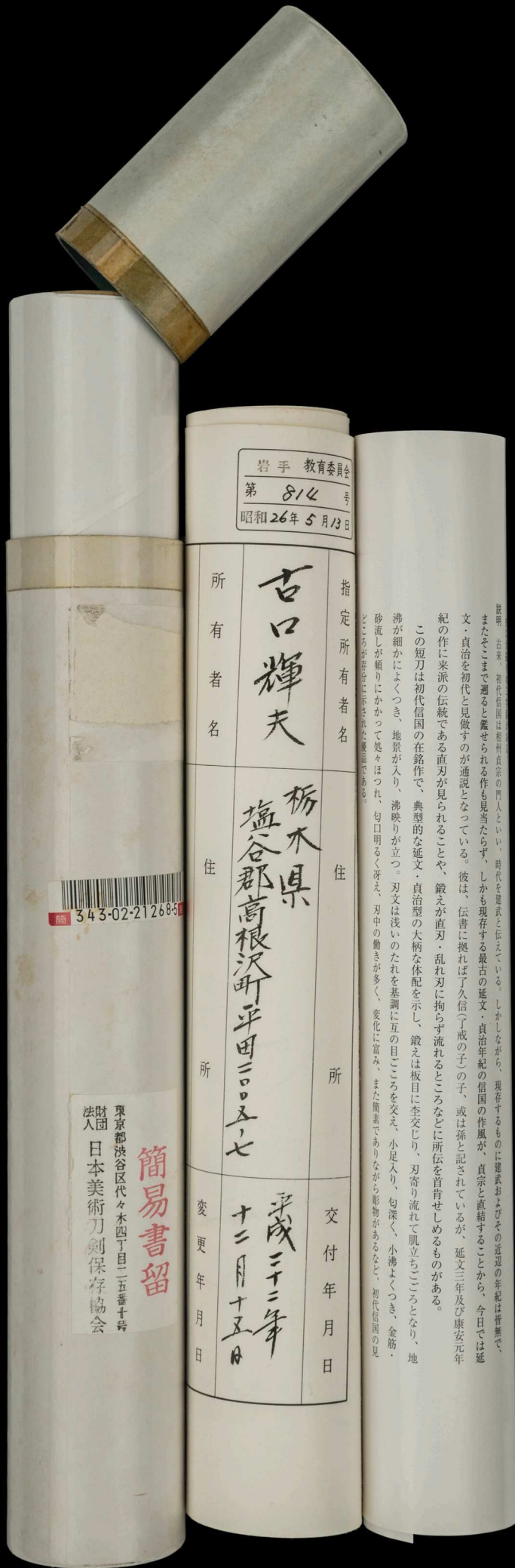
Menuki have been certified to
the *Kyô-Ôtsuki* school from
Kyotô circa 1780~1867.



The design on the kozuka is that of hatching chicks symbolizes 'brand new life', or in this case, the start of a new multi-generational school. The kozuka has been attributed to the famed Gotô school in Kyôto.



kozuka (utility knife)

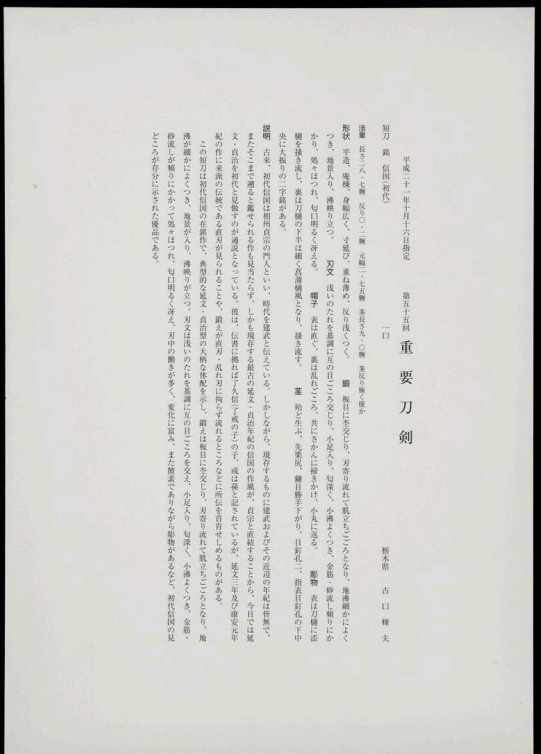


岩手 教育委員会
第 814 号
昭和26年5月13日

所有者名	古口輝夫	指定所有者名	古口輝夫
住所	栃木県 塩谷郡高根沢町平田三〇五七	住所	栃木県 塩谷郡高根沢町平田三〇五七
交付年月日	平成三十三年三月十五日	変更年月日	平成三十三年三月十五日

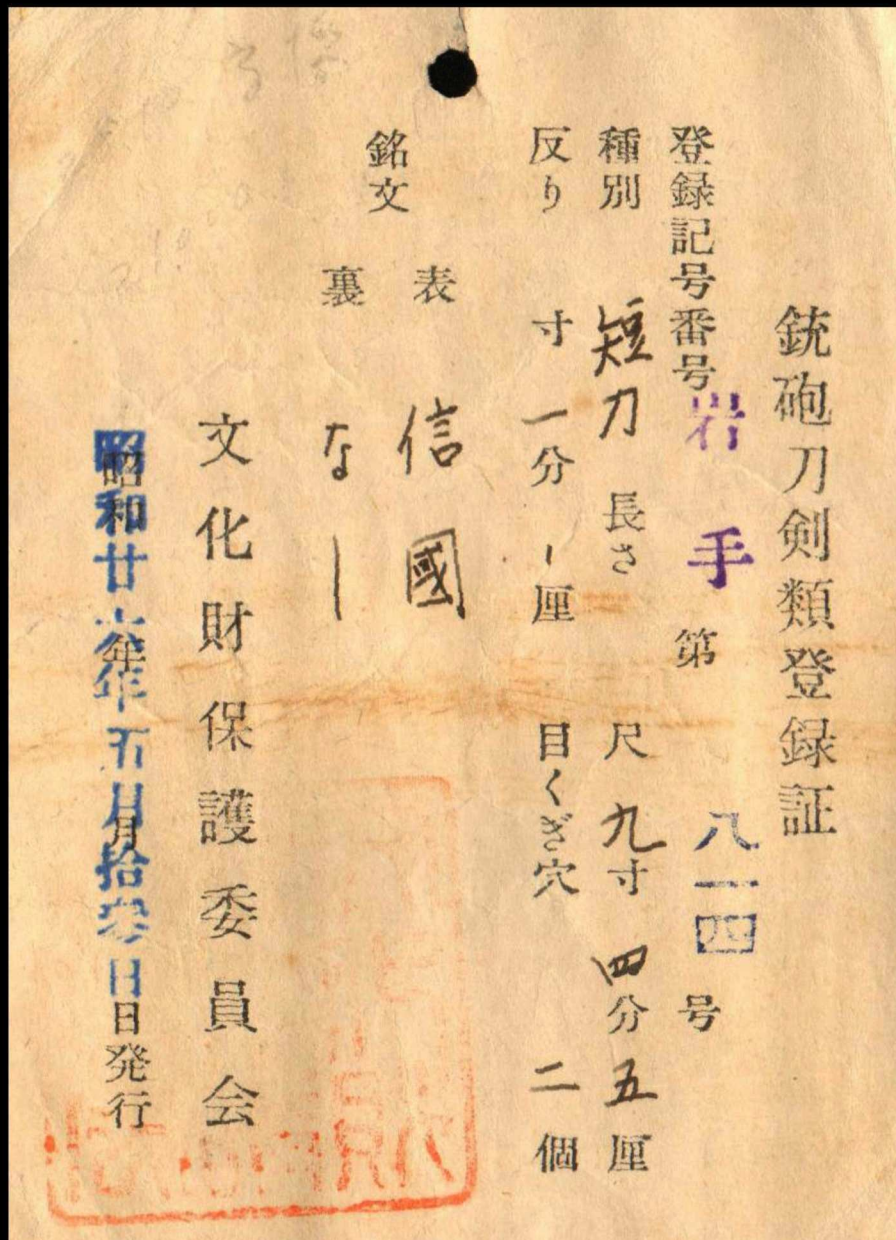
343-02-21268-3

東京都渋谷区代々木四丁目二五番十号
財団法人 日本美術刀剣保存協会
簡易書留



55th 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.



This is the original *torokusho* (registration card) for the *Nobukuni tantô*.
The card was registered in the 26th year of Showa (1951).

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

The serial number is just **814**, one of the very first swords registered in Japan.

The spirit of *nihonto*.



Photo:
Eric Bossick for Unique Japan



ITEM# UJKA399

A MASATSUGU KATANA

SIGNED & DATED, LATE EDO PERIOD (KAEI ERA: AUGUST 1850)

Swordsmith:	<i>Suishinshi Masatsugu (3rd generation, ubu nakago)</i>
Measurements:	Length: 70.2cm Curvature: 1.8cm Moto-haba: 2.92cm Weight: 680g
Jihada:	<i>Ko-itame and mokume-hada mixed with utsuri and abundant chikei</i>
Hamon:	<i>Suguha-chô in bright nioguchi, hotsure mixed with ko-ashi</i>
Horimono:	<i>Bôhi on both sides with kaki-toshi running through the nakago (tang)</i>
Certificate #1:	NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon (designated as Especially Worthy of Preservation)
Certificate #2-3:	NTHK-NPO Kanteisho (tsuba and koshirae designated as Authentic)
Fujishiro rank:	Jô-saku (ranked as a superior swordsmith)
Included:	Shirasaya, Edo koshirae, fabric bags, stand, kit, booklet, description

SOLD

Born *Kawabe Hokushi*, *Masatsugu* was the son of the 2nd generation *Masahide* and grandson to arguably the most important swordsmith in the *shinshinto* period, *Suishinshi Masahide*. *Masatsugu* is thus referred to as the 3rd generation *Masahide*. Due to the early passing of his father *Masatsugu* completed his studies with grandmaster swordsmith *Taikei Naotane*. This elegantly curved katana shows a strong *Yamashiro-den* influence; forged in a bright *chû-suguha* with a wonderful amount of channeling *chikei*. Its Edo period *koshirae* combines the beauty of *aoi-gai* (mother-of-pearl) lacquer work buttressed with muscular iron fittings with a silver arabesque design. The *Higo Shimizu Jingo sukashi tsuba* carries an interesting motif of a *nata* – a hatchet or machete. This is a well-crafted ‘last samurai’ katana with loads of character and personality.



Saki-kasane: 4.7mm

Moto-kasane: 6.7mm

Omosa: 680g

Kissaki: 3.07cm
Saki-haba: 1.86cm

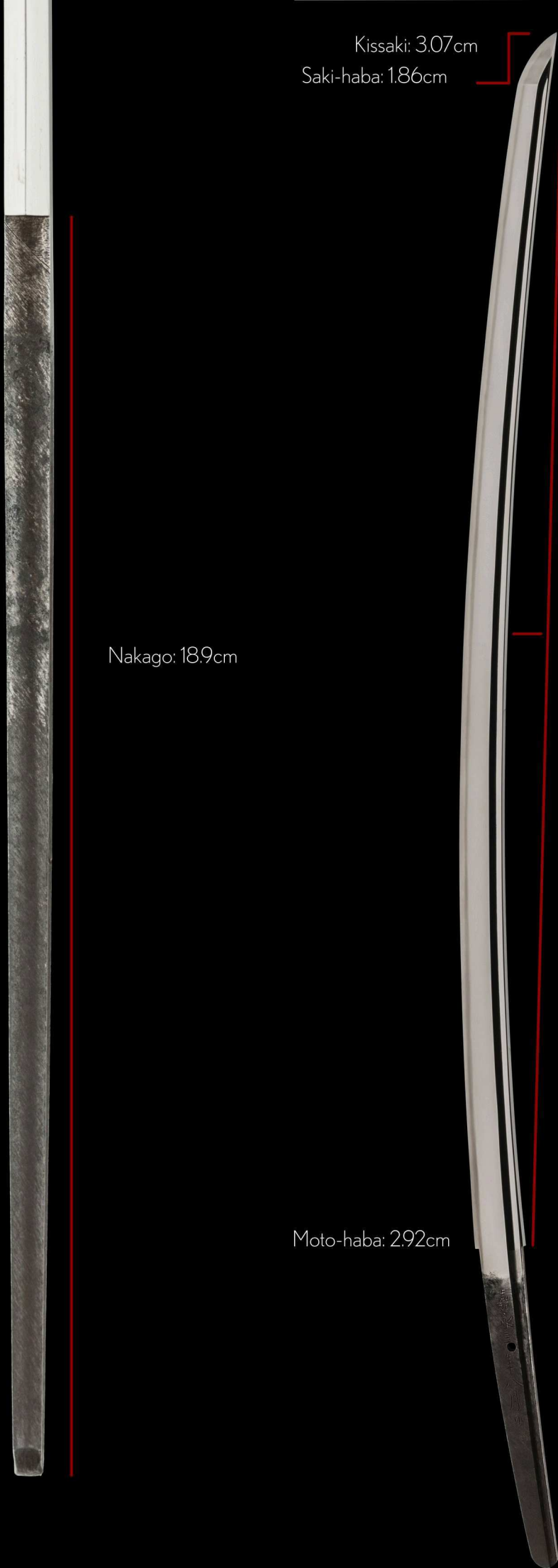
Nakago: 18.9cm

Moto-haba: 2.92cm

Nagasa: 70.2cm

Sori: 1.80cm

Mekugi-ana: 1



Born *Kawabe Hokushi, Masatsugu* was the son of the 2nd generation Masahide and grandson to arguably the most important swordsmith in the *shinshinto* period, *Suishinshi Masahide*. Masatsugu is thus referred to as the 3rd generation Masahide.

Masahide mourned the disappearance of the old traditional Koto methods and advocated for their restoration. This seed blossomed into the *fukkoto* movement in the *shinshinto* period.

The force of his claim was so influential that numerous sword smiths within the country came to study under Masahide. There were at least 200 students during the lifetime of the school including his star student *Taikei Naotane*.

Due to the early passing of his father he completed his studies with grandmaster swordsmith *Naotane*. He would eventually marry his daughter. Masatsugu died on March 11, 1860.

Masatsugu is rated *jô-saku* (a superior smith) by *Fujishiro* and was highly skilled in the *Bizen*, *Yamashiro* and *Sôshû* traditions. A handful of swords by Masatsugu have attained prestigious NBTHK Jûyô Token status, which speaks to his level of skill.

This elegantly curved katana shows a strong *Yamashiro-den* influence; forged in a bright *chû-suguha* with a wonderful amount of *chikei* channeling through the *jihada*. Its Edo period koshirae combines the beauty of *aoi-gai* (mother-of-pearl) buttressed with muscular iron fittings that serve as formidable weapons in their own right.



Kaei sannen hachigatsu hi

This katana is dated to a day in the eighth month of the third year of Kaei era (August 1850)

嘉 (Ka)

永 (ei)

三 (san)

年 (nen)

八 (hachi)

月 (gatsu)

日 (hi)

One clean *mekugi-ana* (hole) with sharp angled file marks and an evenly aged patina.

The *nakago* is in excellent condition.

Sword is signed on the tachi side,
opposite to most katana.

This is in line with *Taikei Naotane*
(Masatsugu's *sensei*) who often
signed tachi-mei.

A close-up photograph of a sword blade, likely a tachi, showing the tachi side. The blade is dark and has a hole near the center. The characters are engraved in a traditional style. A red arrow points to the first character.

水心
正次
酒

Location: *Musashi Province*

Pen name, pseudonym: *Suishinshi*

Swordsmith: *Masatsugu* (third generation Masahide)

ubu-nakago (original, unaltered tang)

keshô-yasurime (decorative file marks)

(Sui) 水

(shin) 心

(shi) 子

(Masa) 正

(tsugu) 次

(kaô) 花押

bo-hi (groove) runs *kaki-toshi*
(right through the nakago) →



特 保
22201003

154629



鑑定書

長二尺三寸二分強

一刀 銘

水心子正次(花押)
嘉永三年八月日

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

平成二十二年 五月 七日

財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協會



NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon Certificate of Designation

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

Issued in the 22nd year of Heisei (2010), May 7th

One, Katana

Mei (signature)

Suishinshi Masatsugu (kaô)

Kaei sannen hachigatsu hi

Nagasa (length)

2-shaku 3-sun 2-bu kyô (70.2cm)


Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai
(NBTHK)





A close-up photograph of a sword blade, showing the intricate details of the chikei channels. The blade is dark and polished, with a bright light reflecting off its surface. Two red arrows point from the text to the channels on the blade. The background is black, making the blade stand out.


Wonderful channels of *chikei* cascading down the blade like a flowing river.



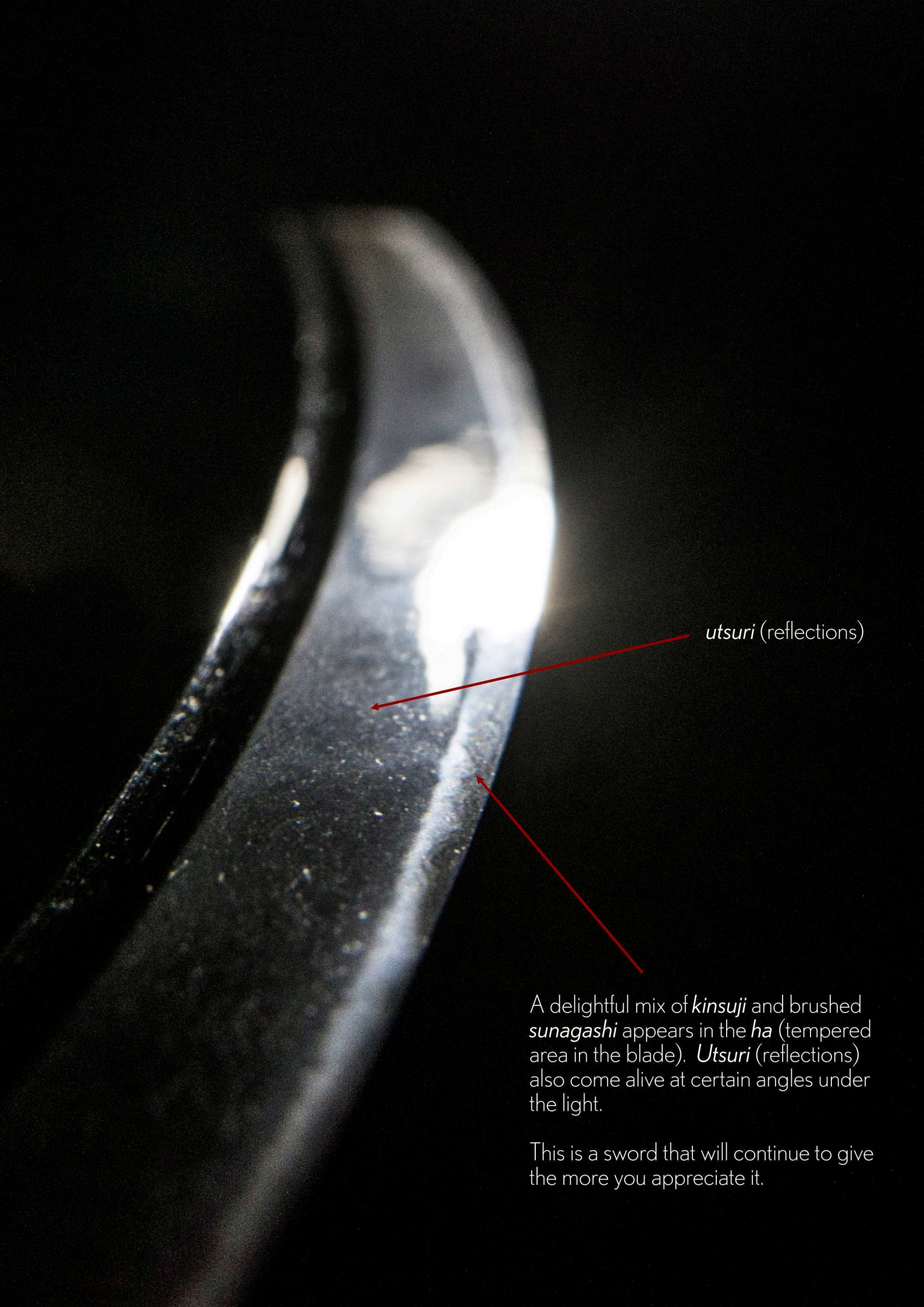
And we're rollin' [rollin'] rollin' down the river...



A *chû-suguha* (mid-size) straight temper line that is bright, clean and consistent, qualities found on well made swords.

A close-up photograph of a sword blade, showing the hamon (temper line) and the hotsure (frayed look). The blade is dark and polished, with a bright light reflecting off the edge. A red arrow points to a specific area on the blade.

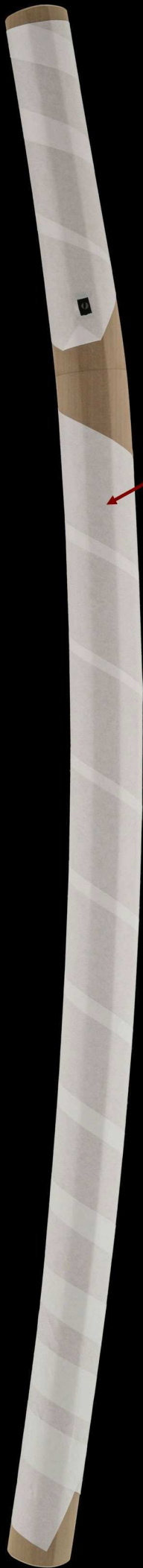
A *Yamashiro-den* influence can be observed in the *chû-suguha hamon* with *hotsure* (frayed look).



utsuri (reflections)

A delightful mix of *kinsuji* and brushed *sunagashi* appears in the *ha* (tempered area in the blade). *Utsuri* (reflections) also come alive at certain angles under the light.

This is a sword that will continue to give the more you appreciate it.



newly crafted

Shirasaya
(protective scabbard)



gold-wrapped *habaki* with
cloud and rain design

Aogai-mijin-nuri saya
uchigatana-koshirae
(青貝微塵塗鞘打刀拵)

Uchigatana-koshirae
decorated with
mother-of-pearl particles

Crafted during the
Late Edo period
(1780~1867)



NTHK-NPO Kanteisho
Certificate of Authenticity

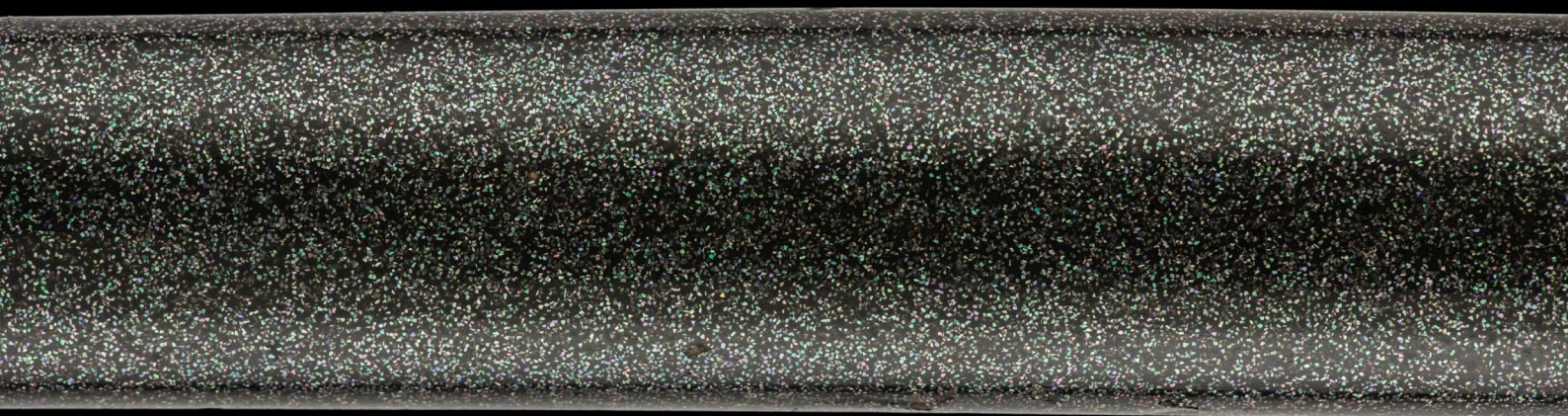
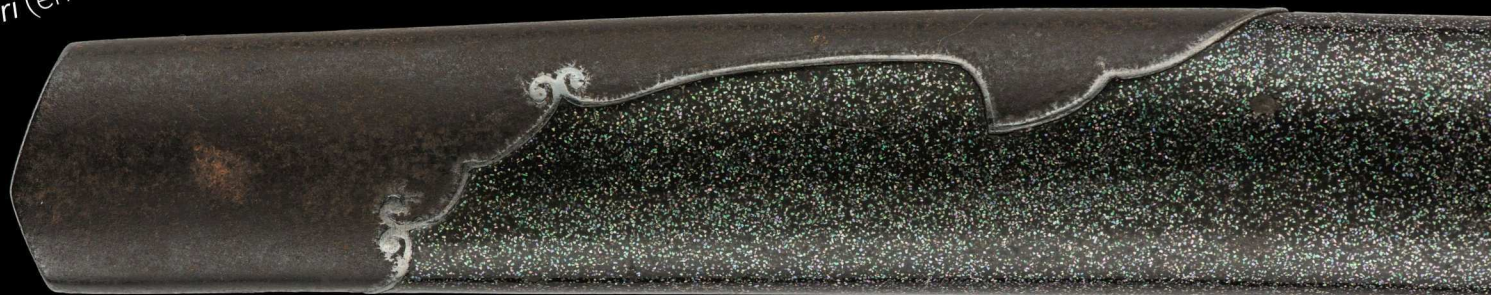


kozuka
(utility knife)

kôgai
(hair pick)

kozuka & kôgai
(crawling dragon motif)

kojiri (end cap)



The *saya* (scabbard) has been beautifully lacquered and protected with *aoi-gai* (mother-of-pearl). The *koshirae* is further secured on either end with no-nonsense iron fittings with a silver arabesque design. The samurai would often use the butt-ends of the *koshirae* as a form of self-defense rather than actually drawing the sword. This powerful *koshirae* is equipped exactly for such a purpose.



kashira (pommel)

kin-iroe (gold accents)

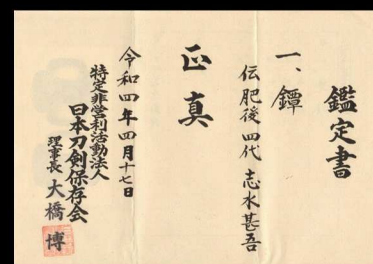


This impressive multi-lobed hammered *sukashi* iron tsuba has been attributed to the fourth generation of the notable *Shimizu Jingo* school from *Higo* province. Crafted during the late Edo period, circa 1800.

The motif on either side of the tsuba is that of a *nata* - a sharp hatchet/machete that was used for a variety of tasks during the Edo period. Depictions of everyday, useful tools such as a *nata* is rather refreshing to see.

Note the small gold accents dotted around the tsuba, this subtle artwork is to be cherished.

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



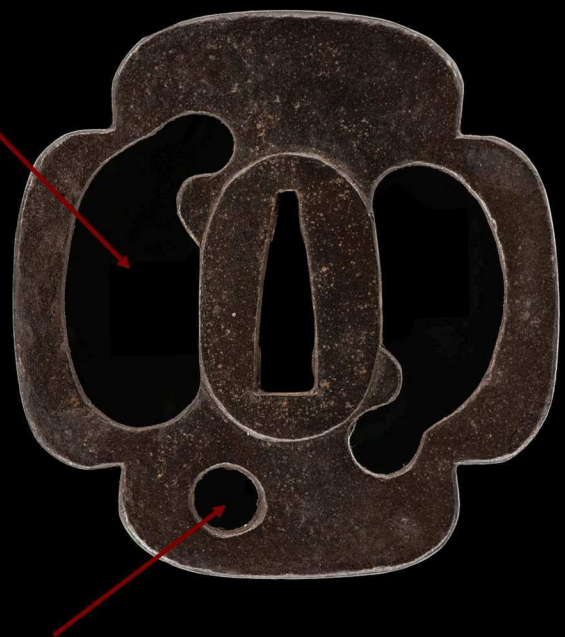


Nata ("mountain sword", 鉞) come in many sizes and shapes, but most fit the description of a light brush hatchet or heavy camp knife.

Common characteristics include thick spines and heavy blades, often with single beveled edges similar to Japanese wood chisels. This type are used for medium duty camp tasks, carving hatchet work, roughing and shaping, green wood work, forestry, gardening, and bamboo splitting.

Antique Japanese *nata* (hatchet/machete)
Source: <http://islandblacksmith.ca>

motif of a *nata* depicted on the tsuba



Note the extra hole in the tsuba. This is called *tsuba-dome-ana* or *udenuki*.

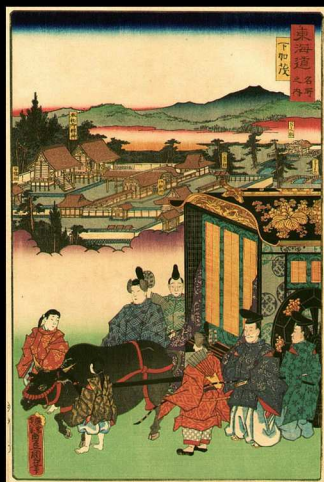
A fine wire was laced through this hole(s) and affixed to the *kurikata* knob on the *saya* (scabbard).

This wire reminds the *samurai* to not to draw his sword unnecessarily.



The *menuki* feature the design of a traditional ox-drawn carriage that was traditionally reserved for nobility and high ranking *samurai*.

black lacquered
samekawa (ray skin)



Ox Cart - *The Scenic Places of Tokaido* (1863)



Koshirae bag

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

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



safe, extra large cloth for adding oil to the blade



ITEM# UJKA400

A NAKAJIMA-RAI KATANA

UNSIGNED, NAMBOKUCHÔ PERIOD (SHÔHEI ERA: 1346~1370)

Swordsmith:	<i>Nakajima-Rai (attribution, o-suriage mumei)</i>
Measurements:	Length: 69.5cm Curvature: 1.2cm Moto-haba: 2.90cm Weight: 660g
Jihada:	<i>Vivid mokume mixed with ji-nie and abundant chikei</i>
Hamon:	<i>Suguha-chô in bright nioguchi, ko-nie-deki mixed with ko-gunome, ashi and yô</i>
Horimono:	<i>Bôhi on both sides with kaki-nagashi running partway through the nakago (tang)</i>
Certificate #1:	NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon (designated as Especially Worthy of Preservation)
Certificate #2-4:	NTHK-NPO Kanteisho (tsuba, koshirae & fittings designated as Authentic)
Fujishiro rank:	Jô-saku (ranked as a superior swordsmith)
Authentication:	Sayagaki by Tanzan-sensei (Tanobe Michihiro)
Included:	Shirasaya, Edo koshirae, fabric bags, stand, kit, booklet, description

SOLD

The *Nakajima-Rai* school emerged as a distinguished branch of the *Rai* tradition under the leadership of master swordsmith *Rai Kuninaga*, who studied under *Rai Kunitoshi*, a designated national treasure. During the *Gentoku* era (1329-1331), Kuninaga relocated from Kyôto to the Nakajima region of *Settsu* province, which led to his moniker "*Nakajima-Rai*." This exceptional katana exemplifies the turbulent *Nambokuchô* period of the 14th century, featuring a broad, sturdy construction with striking *mokume* burl-wood-grain pattern in the steel. The blade showcases quintessential *Rai* craftsmanship through its prominent *ashi* (legs) and *yô* (leaf-like) patterns. The sword is further enhanced by an elegant Edo-period *handachi-koshirae* and *Tanobe-sensei sayagaki* that highlighted the blade's "exquisite steel quality" and "refined *suguha* hamon."



Saki-kasane: 3.8mm

Moto-kasane: 6.3mm

Kissaki: 3.59cm

Saki-haba: 2.10cm

Nagasa: 69.5cm

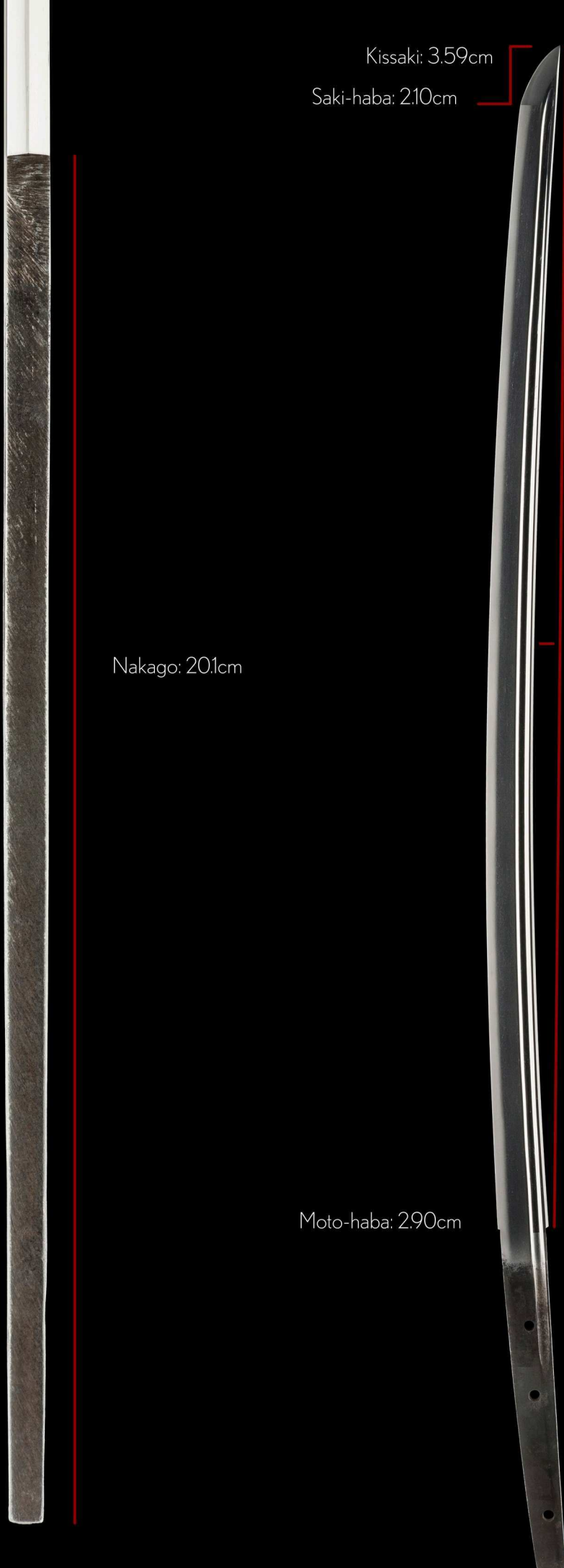
Nakago: 20.1cm

Sori: 1.20cm

Omosa: 660g

Moto-haba: 2.90cm

Mekugi-ana: 3



The *Kamakura period* (1185-1333) was marked by a gradual shift in power from the nobility to landowning military men in the provinces. This era was a time of dramatic transformation in the politics, society, and culture of Japan. The *bakufu*, or government led by *samurai* (warrior chieftains) controlled the country from their base in Kamakura, near modern Tokyo. Because the emperor remained the head of state in his capital in Kyoto, a binary system of government, whereby *emperors reigned but shoguns ruled*, was established and endured for the next seven hundred years.

In 1333, a coalition of supporters of *Emperor Go-Daigo* (1288-1339), who sought to restore political power to the throne, toppled the Kamakura regime. Unable to rule effectively, however, this new royal government was short-lived.

In 1336, a member of a branch family of the *Minamoto* clan, *Ashikaga Takauji* (1305-1358), usurped control and drove Go-Daigo from Kyoto. Takauji then set a rival on the throne and established a new military government in Kyoto. Meanwhile, Go-Daigo traveled south and took refuge in *Yoshino* district in *Nara*. There he established the *Southern Court*, in contrast to the rival *Northern Court* supported by Takauji.

The whole country was in turmoil. Kyoto was ravaged time and time again. This time of constant strife that lasted from 1336 to 1392 is known as the *Nanbokucho period* (Period of Southern and Northern Courts).

Swordmaking flourished during this period. Many notable swordsmiths moved outside of war torn Kyoto to supply the high demand for blades. *Rai Kuninaga* was one of these swordsmiths that left Kyoto for *Nakajima* in *Osaka*. Eventually *Ashikaga Yoshimitsu* merged victorious and the northern dynasty was confirmed. The Muromachi period thus ensued.




Ashikaga Takauji (Northern Court)



Emperor Go-Daigo (Southern Court)



The image shows two views of a sword's nakago (tang) against a black background. The tang is a long, tapered metal piece with three circular holes. A red line points from the text to a groove on the right side of the tang.

This sword was once a very long tachi during the *mid-1300s* of the *Nambokuchô period*. The sword is now *ô-suriage nakago* - greatly shortened at least twice since then to suit the battle requirements of the subsequent time periods.

The nakago features *kaki-nagashi* - grooves that extend to the middle of the butt end of the tang.

The nakago tells a story. Notice how the patina changes slightly, darker and more rusty are older shortenings.

The *hi* (groove) did not originally extend into the nakago. It was only after several shortenings that it ended where it is today.

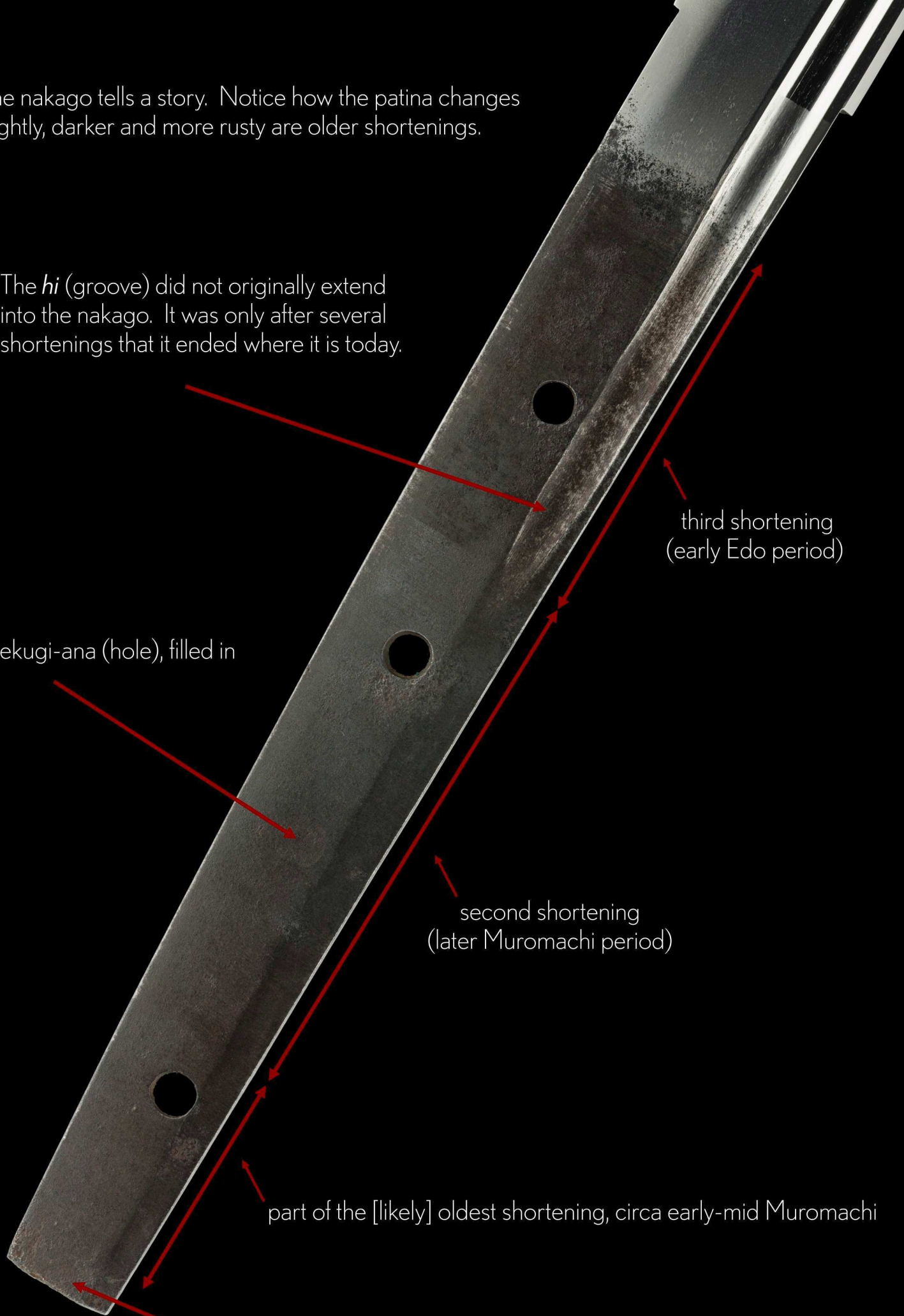
old mekugi-ana (hole), filled in

third shortening
(early Edo period)

second shortening
(later Muromachi period)

part of the [likely] oldest shortening, circa early-mid Muromachi

original deep rust to when the sword was first forged



01201909

No 1012533



鑑定書

一刀 無銘 (中島来)

長二尺二寸九分強

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

令和元年十二月二日

公益財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協會



長崎県 教育委員会
第 9109 号
昭和34年2月12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 1st year of Reiwa (2019), December 2nd

One, Katana

Mumei (unsigned)
Nakajima Rai

Nagasa (length)
2-shaku 2-sun 9-bu kyô (69.5cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai
(NBTHK)



中島来

Nakajima Rai

Nakajima Rai

大磨上無銘也来国俊門人ナル国長ハ後ニ撰州中島ニ移住シ鍛刀シタルニ因リ中島来ト通称セラル本刀ハ精妙ナル地鉄ニ鍛へ小沸出来ノ端正ナ直刃ヲ焼キ足・葉頻リニ入り帽子ヲ丸ク纏メルナド身幅廣目デ稍延心ノ鋒ノ形状ト併セテ同工ト鑿スベキガ妥當ナル優品哉

Ô-suriage mumei nari Rai Kunitoshi monjin naru Kuninaga wa nochi ni Sesshû Nakajima ni ijû shi tantô shitaruni yori Nakajima Rai to tsûshô seraru. Hontô wa seimyô naru ji-gane ni kitae ko-nie deki no tansei naru sugu-ha o yaki ashi yô shikirini hairi bôshi o maruku matomeru nado mihaba hirome de yaya nobi-gokoro no kissaki no keijô to awasete dôkô to kansubeki ga datô naru yûhin kana.

Kuninaga, student of Rai Kunitoshi, later moved to Nakajima in Sesshû Province and earned the nickname Nakajima Rai. This ô-suriage blade shows exquisite jigane with elegant suguha in ko-nie deki, and plenty of ashi and yô. The bôshi is round, with a rather wide mihaba, and a slightly extended kissaki - qualities that point to a masterwork of Kuninaga.

長貳尺二寸九分余

Nagasa 2-shaku 2-sun 9-bu amari

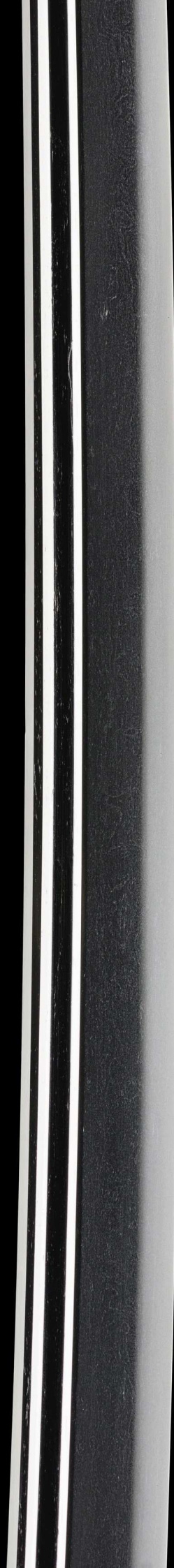
Blade length ~69.5cm

時在己亥林鐘探山識 (花押)

Jizai tsuchinoto-i Rinshô Tanzan shirusu + kaô

Written by Tanzan [Tanobe Michihiro] in the sixth month of the year of the boar (June 2019) + monogram

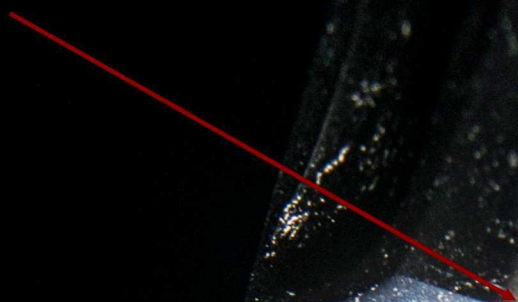




Gorgeous swirls of dark *chikei* form rounded islands of *mokume-hada*.



Impressive line of *kinsuji*
piercing through the hamon.



Smooth *ko-maru* (rounded) *bôshi* (hamon in the tip area).





The *hamon* along the lower third of the blade features long *ashi* (legs) that are particularly attractive.



Clean *suguha* (straight) hamon that carries a sense of pride.

Note the bluish tint to the blade, a sign of a well-crafted sword.

Yô (leaves) are delightful clusters of *nie* crystals inside the hamon.

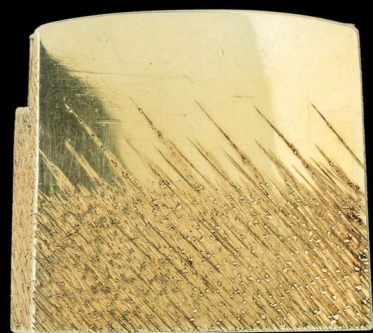


Take no prisoners.





Shirasaya
(protective scabbard)

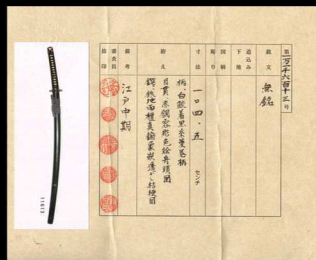


gold-wrapped *habaki* with
rain pattern file marks

*Shibuichi-ji mumon-kaigu
handachi-koshirae*
(四分一地無紋皆具半太刀拵え)

*Handachi-koshirae
with a matching set of
shibuichi fittings without motif*

Crafted during the
Middle Edo period
(1700~1780)



NTHK-NPO Kanteisho
Certificate of Authenticity



all matching fittings

Soroi Kanagu (matching fittings)

Certified by the NTHK-NPO to a tachi craftsman circa mid-Edo period (1700~1780)

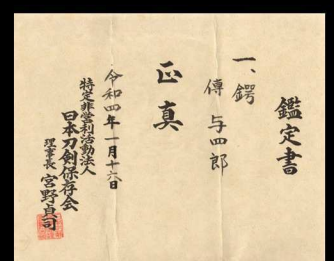




This polished iron tsuba has been attributed to the *Yoshihiro school*, which originated from the *Heianjo-zôgan* school. From the middle part of the 16th century the majority of high relief inlay along with *mon sukashi* (open work with family crests) made around *Kaga* province and *Kyotô* was considered the work of the Yoshiro.

Well-preserved openwork was done in brass inlay. The star-shaped motif is that of the cherished bellflower (*kikyô no zu*).

An NTHK-NPO Kanteisho certificate of authenticity attributing the piece to the *early-Edo period* circa 1603~1700 has been attained.



The star-shaped Japanese bellflower, *kikyô*, is a vivid purple five petal flower which is the symbol of unchanging *love*, *honesty*, and *obedience*. *Kikyô* is often used as patterns in *kimonos* and *obi*, the kimono belt, and also used as *kamon* (family crests), known as *kikyô-mon*.

The flower blooms at the end of summer and is intimately associated with the autumn season in Japanese culture. *Kikyô* is considered one of Japan's "*Seven Flowers of Autumn*," and a popular theme in *haiku* and other Japanese literature. During the *Heian* era (794 -1185), these flowers were common in the gardens of the aristocracy.



Bellflower and Dragonfly
from an untitled series known as *Large Flowers*

Artist: *Katsushika Hokusai*
circa 1833-1834





The *menuki* depicts a man on a boat, likely a fisherman.
A peaceful scene.





Koshirae bag



ITEM# UJTA055

A TSUGUYOSHI TANTÔ

SIGNED, LATE KAMAKURA TO NAMBOKUCHÔ PERIOD (1326~1368)

Swordsmith:	<i>Bitchû no Kuni jû Tsuguyoshi (4th generation, near ubu-nakago)</i>
Measurements:	Length: 26.2cm Curvature: 0cm Moto-haba: 2.33cm Weight: 125g
Jihada:	<i>Beautifully forged itame & mokume-hada with namazu-hada, ji-nie, plentiful chikei</i>
Hamon:	<i>Snow white suguha-chô mixed with ko-ashi and sunagashi</i>
Horimono:	<i>Koshi-bi on both sides running kaki-nagashi through the nakago</i>
Certificate #1-2:	NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon (sword & koshirae Especially Worthy of Preservation)
Certificate #3-4:	NTHK Yushûsakû (sword & koshirae designated as MasterWork)
Certificate #5-7:	NTHK Kanteisho (soroi kanagu, kôgai/kozuka, koshirae designated as Authentic)
Fujishiro rank:	Jôjô-saku (ranked as a highly superior swordsmith)
Sharpness:	Ô-wazamono (excellent cutting ability)
Authentication:	Sayagaki by Kanzan-sensei (Satô Kan'ichi)
Included:	Shirasaya, Edo aikuchi koshirae, fabric bags, stand, kit, booklet, description

SOLD

This remarkable signed 650-year-old *tantô* was crafted by fourth generation *Tsuguyoshi*, who is considered the finest swordsmith of the *Chû-Aoe* school. *Tsuguyoshi's* given name was *Genjirô* and he received honorary title *Sakon Shôgen*. The sword is beautifully forged in *itame* and *mokume-hada* with a snow-white *hamon* that glistens with *ji-nie*. It comes housed in a spectacular *aikuchi-koshirae* with matching silver fittings in a rolling wave theme signed by metalsmith *Anjû*. There is also a profound sense of authority to this blade as it is as sharp as any blade will come. *Tsuguyoshi* is rated *ô-wazamono* for his excellent cutting ability and it's clear to see why.

Moto-kasane: 4.8mm

Omosa: 125g

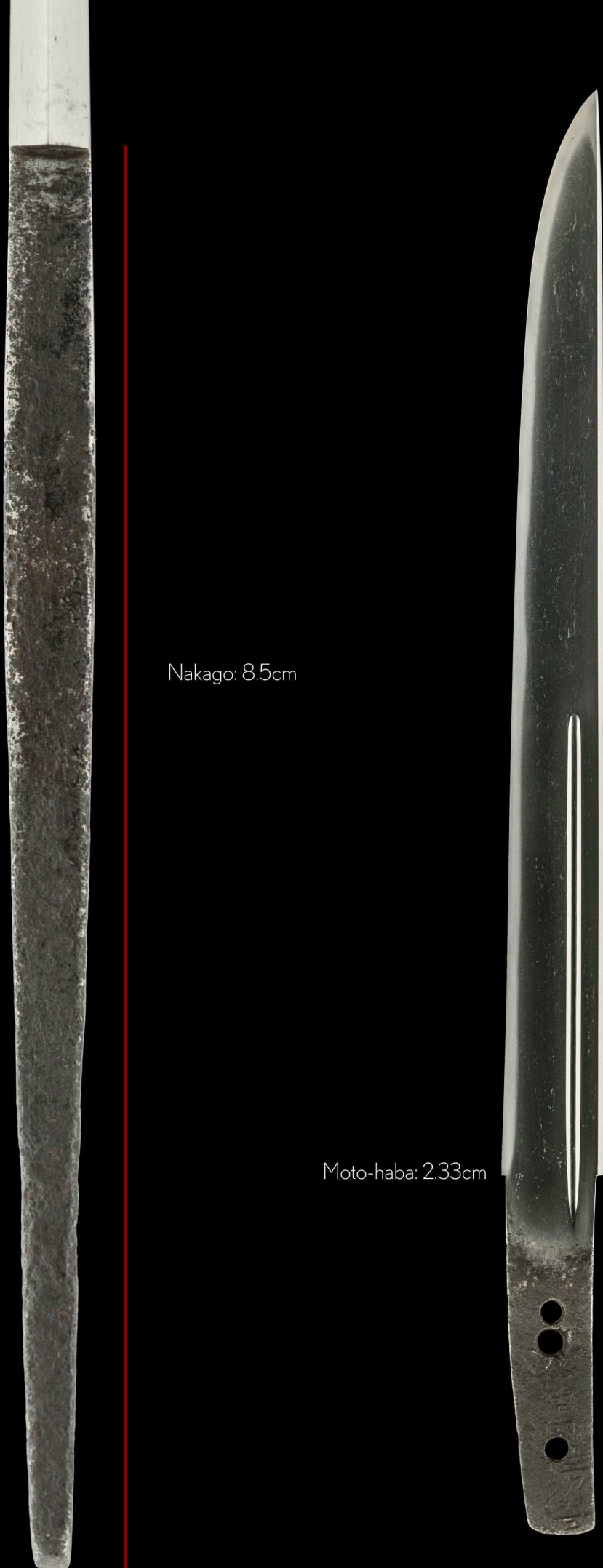
Nakago: 8.5cm

Moto-haba: 2.33cm

Nagasa: 26.2cm

Sori: 0.0cm

Mekugi-ana: 3



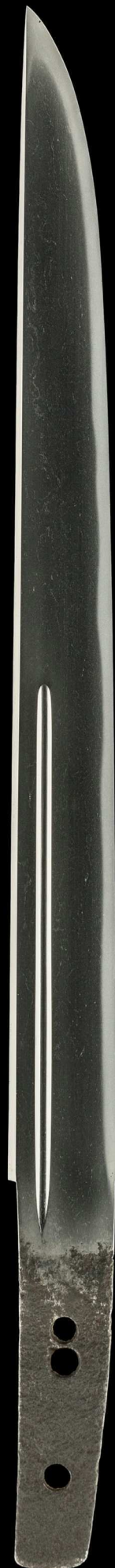
Fourth generation Tsuguyoshi of the famed *Aoe* school is considered the finest swordsmith of the *Chû-Aoe* school that ran from mid-*Kamakura* (~1240) to the end of the *Nambokuchô* period (~1393). Tsuguyoshi given name was *Genjirô* and received honorary title *Sakon Shôgen*.

The *uchi-zori* shaped sword is beautifully forged in *itame* and *mokume-hada* with a snow-white hamon that glistens with *ji-nie*. Dark 'catfish-like' spots swimming in the steel known as *namazu-hada* can also be seen - a unique trait of the *Aoe* school that is an enjoyable study.

The tantô comes in a spectacular *aikuchi-koshirae* from the late Edo period with matching silver fittings in a rolling wave theme signed by metalsmith *Anjû*. It also has a matching *kôgai* and *kozuka* set signed by *Masamitsu*. The *koshirae* speaks of quality in every way.

Tsuguyoshi is ranked *jôjô-saku*, (highly superior) as well as *ô-wazamono* for excellent cutting ability of his blades. The sharpness is clearly evident in this tantô. Please handle this beauty with care and attention, if not, she'll bite back. ;)

Enjoy.



Location: *Bitchû* (resident of Okayama)
Swordsmith: *Tsuguyoshi* (fourth generation)

ubu-nakago (near original, unaltered tang)

original *mekugi-ana* (hole)

備 (Bi)

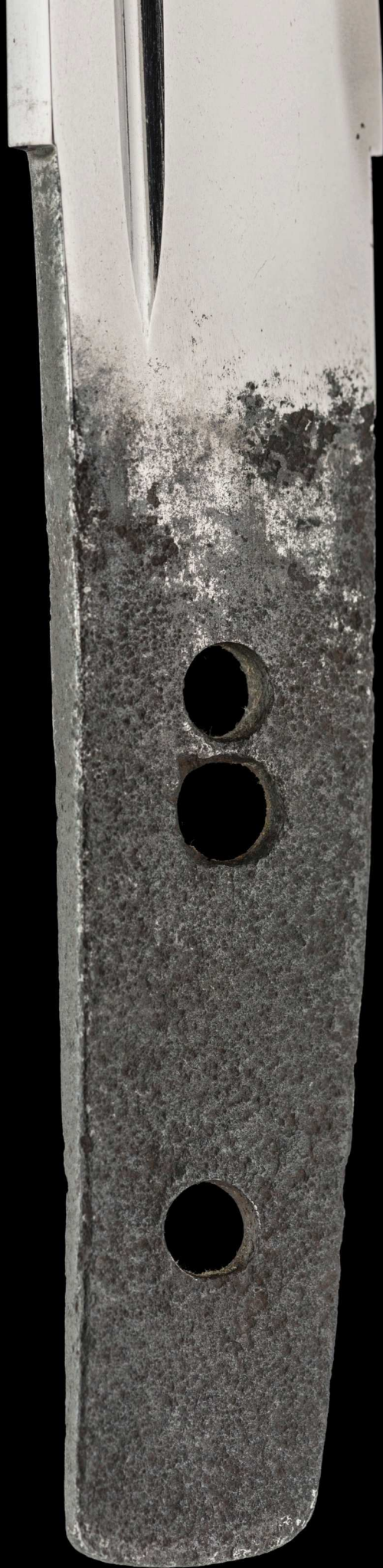
中 (tchû, no)

國 (Kuni)

住 (jû)

次 (Tsugu)

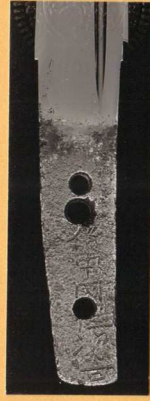
吉 (yoshi)



(*ura*, reverse)

特選
26201411

№ 1003100



鑑定書

一、短刀 銘 備中国住次吉
長八寸六分

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

平成二十七年二月五日

公益財団法人日本美術刀劍保存協會



欄 教育委員会
第 13008 号
昭和26年 4月 29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 27th year of Heisei (2015), February 5th

One, Tantô

Mei (signature)
Bitchû no Kuni jû Tsuguyoshi

Nagasa (length)
8-sun 6-bu (26.2cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai
(NBTHK)



備中國住次吉

Bitchû no Kuni jû Tsuguyoshi

Tsuguyoshi, a resident of Bitchû Province

嘉曆頃

Karyaku-goro

Around Karyaku era (1326~1329)

長八寸六分五厘有之

Nagasa 8-sun 6-bu 5-rin kore ari

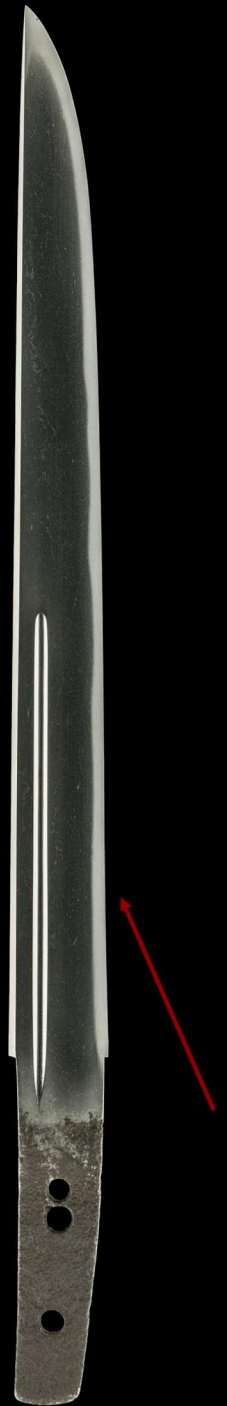
Blade length ~26.2 cm

昭和甲寅年夏寒山誌（花押）

Shôwa kinoe-tora doshi natsu Kanzan shirusu + kaô

Written by *Kanzan* [Satô Kan'ichi]

Summer of the Year of the Tiger (1974) of Shôwa period
plus his personal monogram

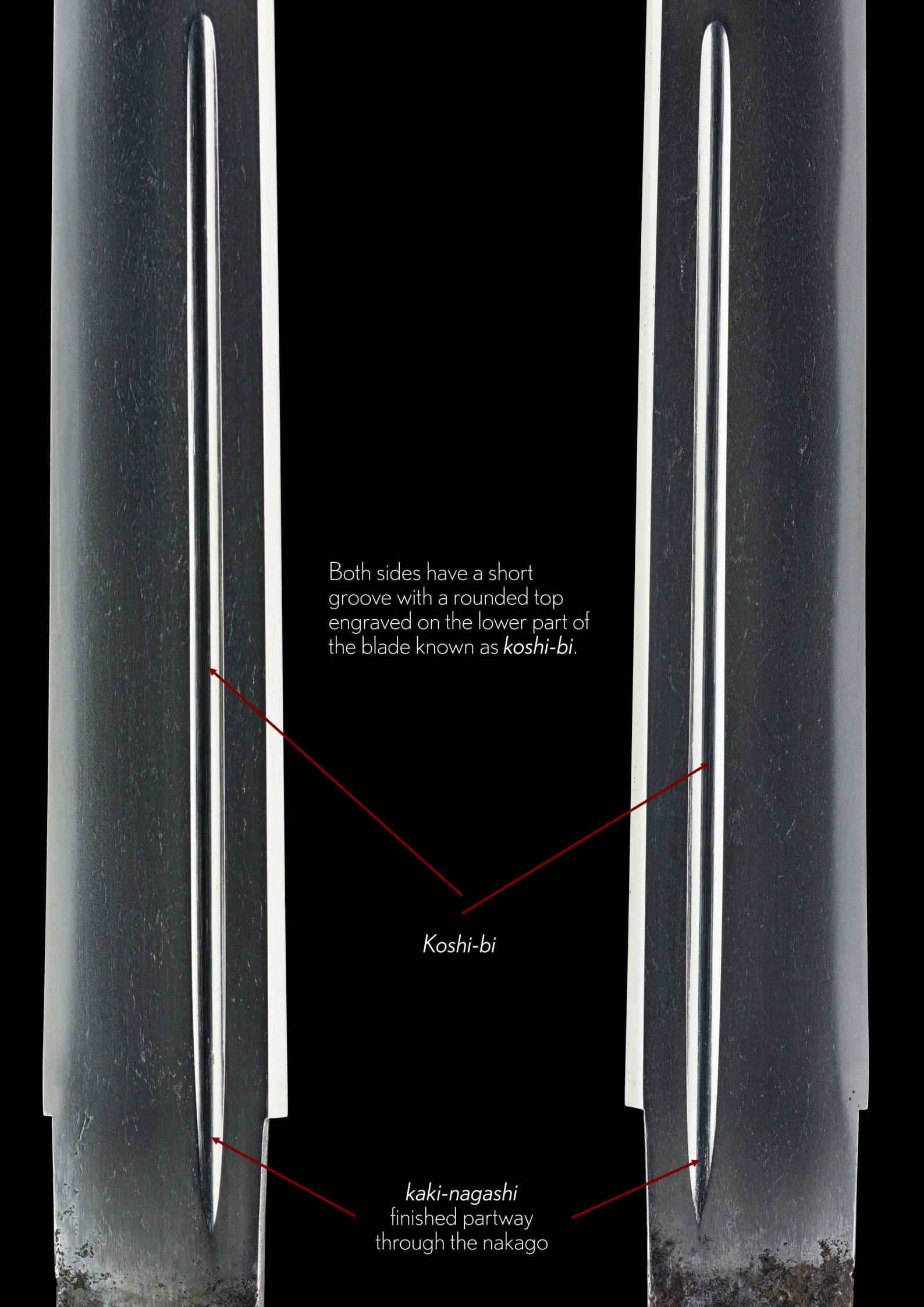


Uchizori

An *uchizori* blade curves in the opposite direction, towards the cutting edge. Seen on tantô and primarily in tantô produced during the Kamakura period.








Both sides have a short groove with a rounded top engraved on the lower part of the blade known as *koshi-bi*.

Koshi-bi

kaki-nagashi
finished partway
through the nakago



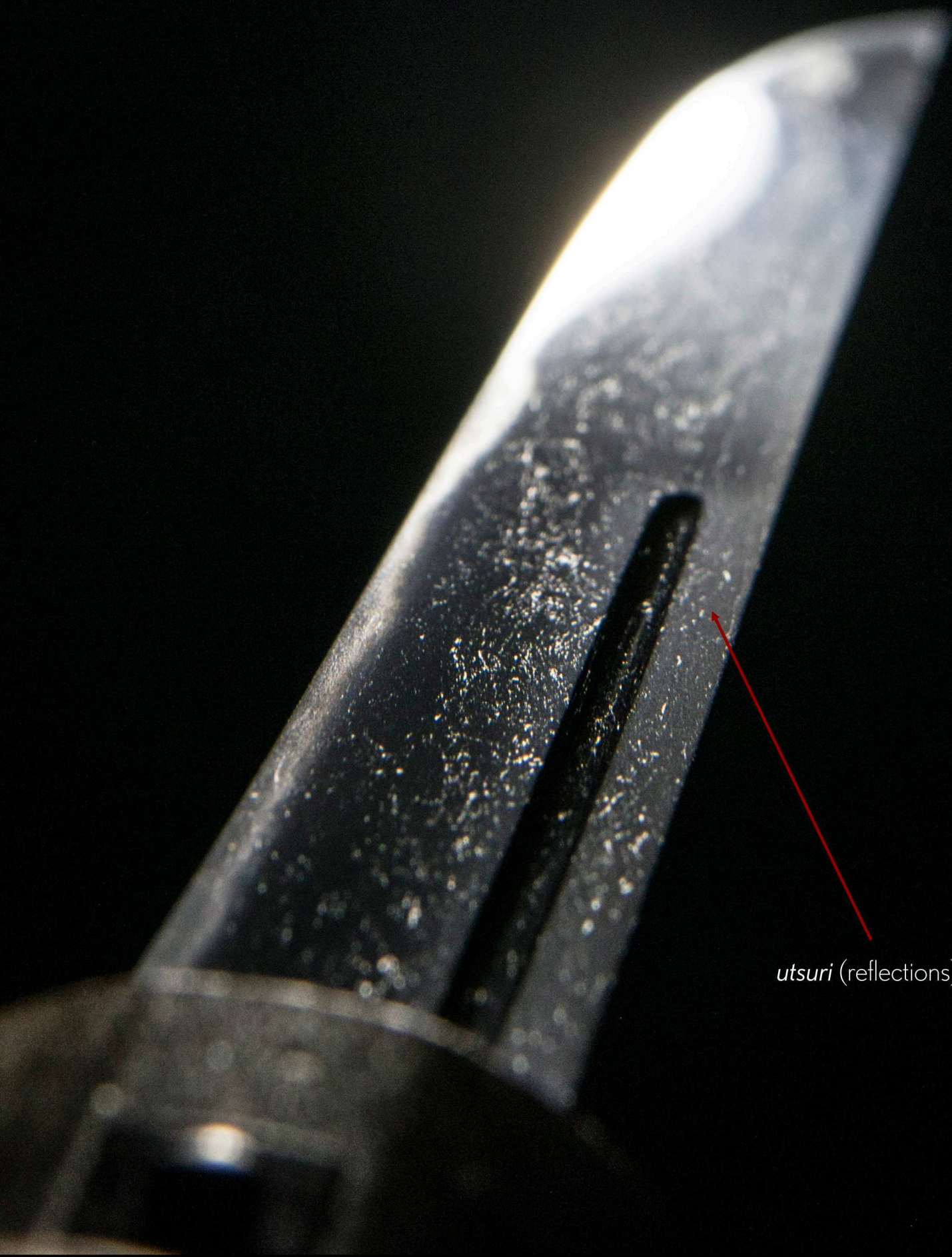
Beautifully forged mix of *itame-hada* and *mokume-hada* that speaks to the magic of the *kotô* period.

This is also one *seriously sharp sword*. Tsuguyoshi is rated *ô-wazamono* for the excellent sharpness of his blades.

Fancy a bit of viciousness?

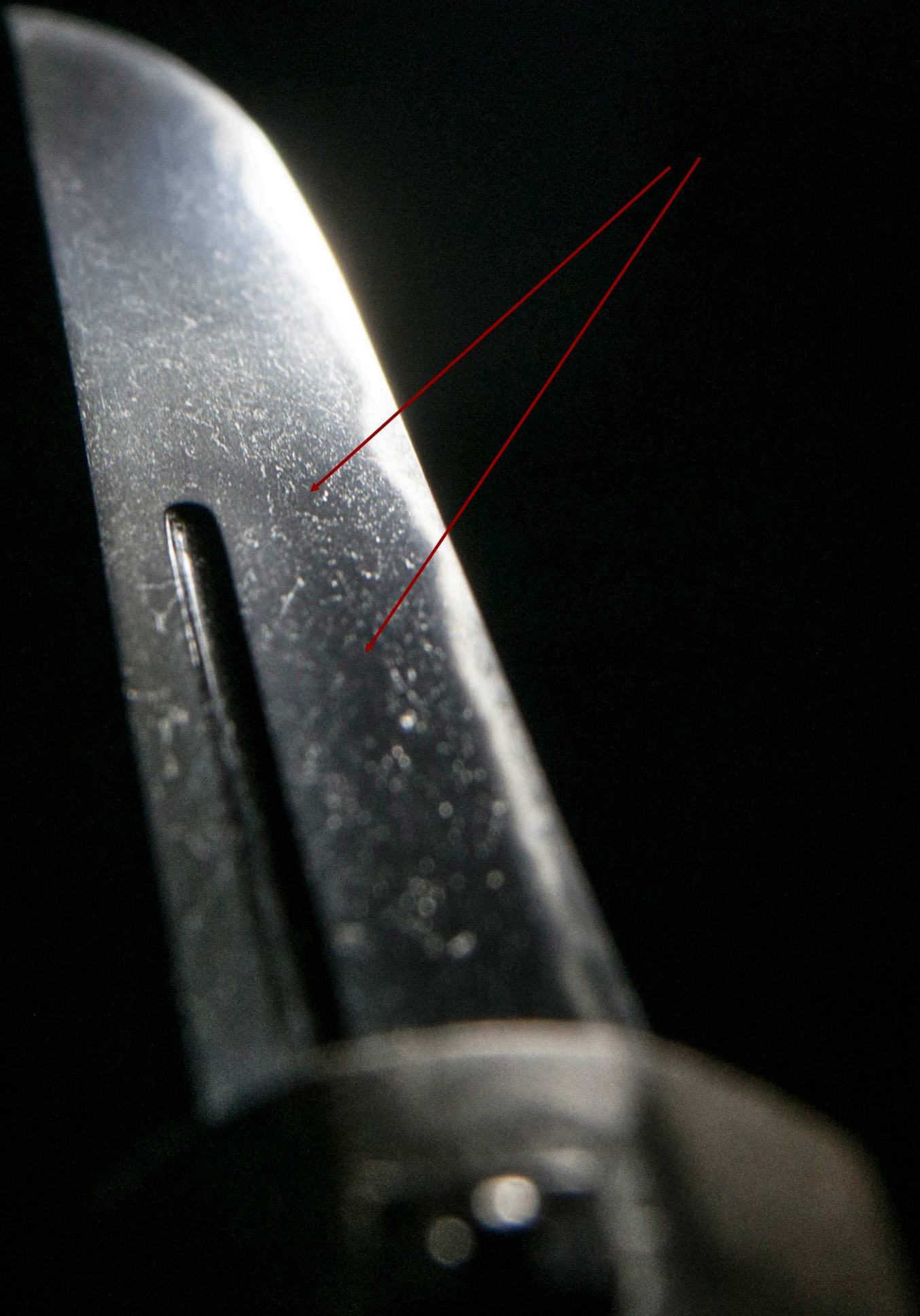
Under the light, the *tantô* shines brightly with *ji-nie*.

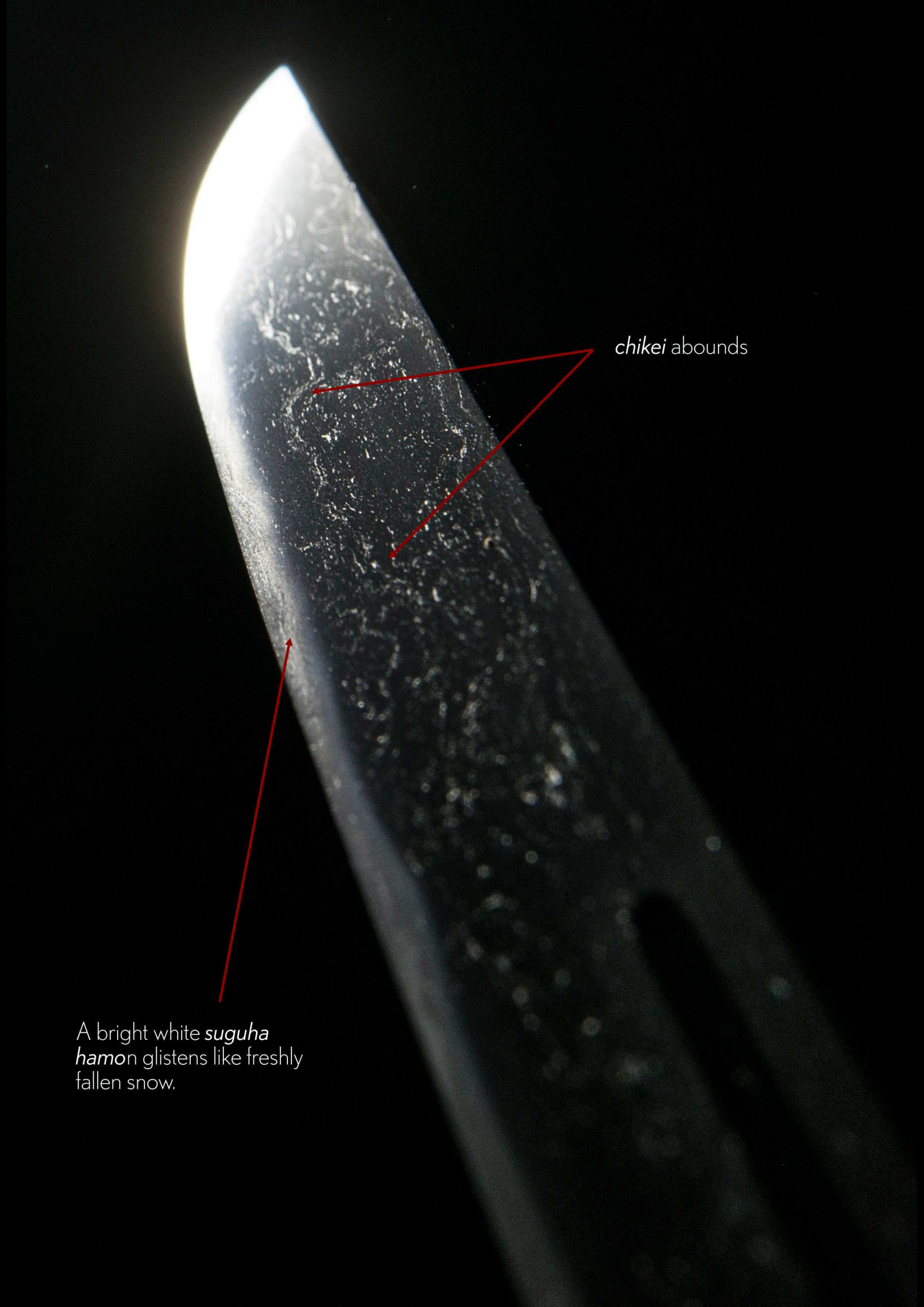
Swordsmiths in the *Aoe* school appear to have used a unique grade of iron sand that resulted in qualities such as *namazu-hada* and *utsuri*.



utsuri (reflections)

Here we see *namazu-hada*, dark spots of nie crystals that resemble the skin of a catfish (*namazu*), a unique feature of the *Aoe* school.





chikei abounds

A bright white *suguha hamon* glistens like freshly fallen snow.



Shirasaya
(protective scabbard)



gold-wrapped *niju-habaki*
with crisp marks

特 保
04202208



No 2009013



鑑定書

一、黒漆青海波文塗鞘合口短刀拵

総金具 波千鳥図 鯉口銘 安寿
目貫 舞鶴図
小柄割筭 波千鳥図 銘 政光(花押)
柄 白紙着 茶色糸諸撮巻

右は當協會に於て審査の結果特別保存刀装具と
鑑定しこれを証する

令和四年十月七日

公益財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協會



NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon Certificate of Designation

An *aikuchi-koshirae* designated as *Especially Worthy of Conservation*
by the Society for the Preservation of the Japan Art Sword

Issued in the 4th year of Reiwa (2022), October 7th

One, *aikuchi koshirae*

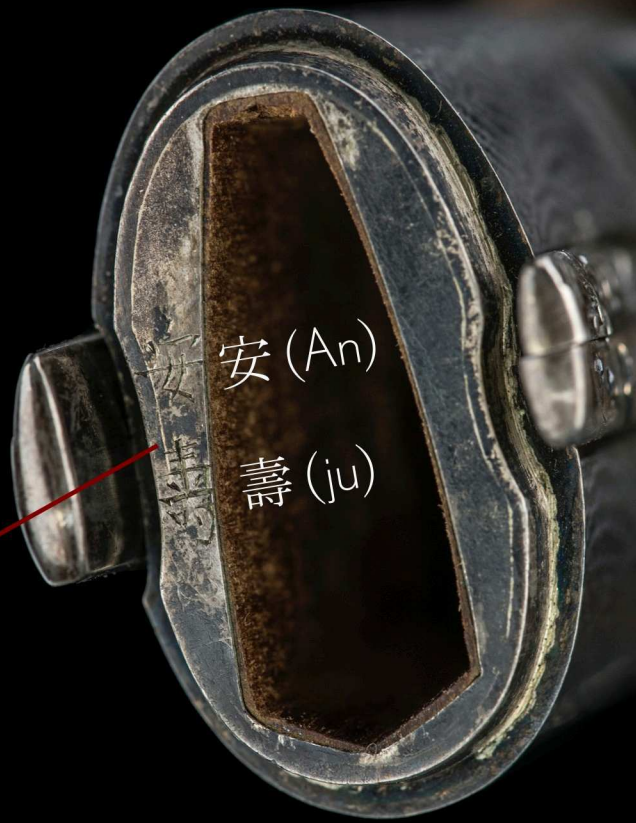
*Matching set of fittings depicting birds on the waves,
signed Anju on the koiguchi*

Menuki depicting a flying crane

*Kozuka and split kôgai depicting birds on the waves
signed Masamitsu + monogram*

*Hilt covered with white same and wrapped
mototsumami-maki style with brown braids*

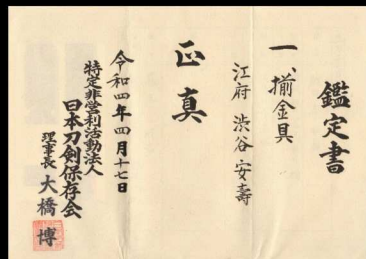
Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai
(NBTHK)

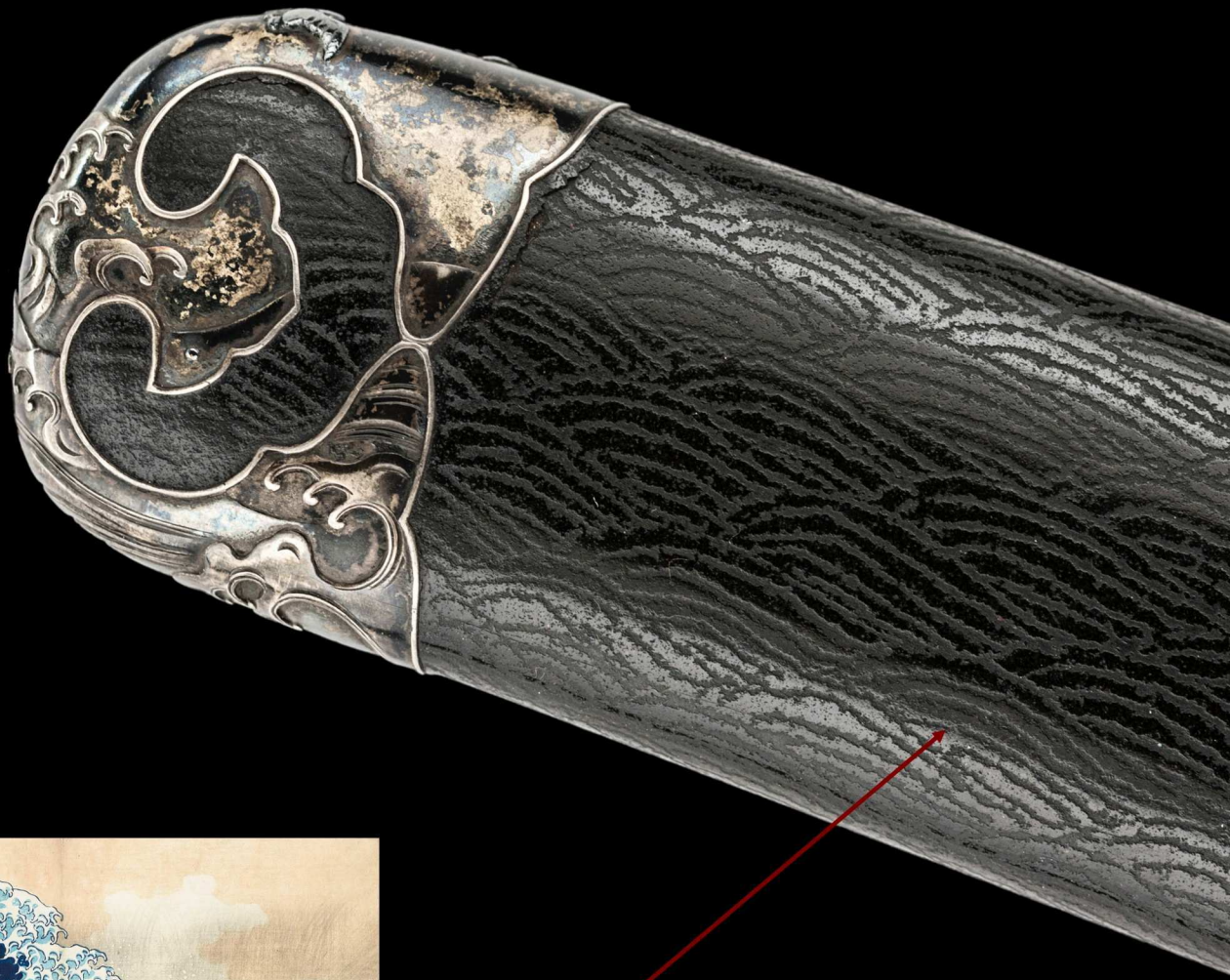


Master metalsmith *Efu Shibuya Anju* from Edo (Tokyo) crafted all of the spectacular silver work featuring birds and waves. The *kôgai* and *kozuka* was completed and signed by *Masamitsu*.

Anju's engraved signature is located on the left side of the *koiguchi* (mouth of the scabbard). He worked from very late Edo to the Meiji era, circa 1853~1912.

An NTHK-NPO *Soroi Kanagu Kanteisho* certificate of authenticity for its matching fittings has been acquired.





nami (waves) lacquered on the *saya*

Kanagawa oki nami ura
The Great Wave off Kanagawa
Katsushika Hokusai (1760~1849)



kojiri (end cap)



Kashira
(pommel)

Breaking waves in all its glory.

Kogai is signed *Masamitsu* and forms a set with the signed *kozuka*.
Certified *Kanteisho* (Authentic) by the NTHK-NPO.



A *kogai* is a thick blunt needle that was primarily used as a hair arranging tool by the samurai.

It is fastened into a special notch built inside the *saya* (scabbard).





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





政 (Masa)
光 (mitsu)
花押 (kaô)

政光
呼

Masamitsu + kaô
Masamitsu + monogram



NTHK-NPO Kanteisho
Certificate of Authenticity



Gorgeous depictions of *tsuru* (cranes) form the *menuki*.

The crane is considered a national treasure in Japan, appearing in art, literature, and folklore. It is a symbol of good fortune and longevity because of its fabled life span of a thousand years. It also represents fidelity, as Japanese cranes are known to mate for life.





Koshirae bag



ITEM# UJKA405

A MORIHIRO KATANA

UNSIGNED, EARLY MUROMACHI PERIOD (ÔEI ERA: 1394~1428)

Swordsmith:	<i>Morihiro (2nd generation, ô-suriage nakago)</i>
Measurements:	Length: 68.8cm Curvature: 1.4cm Moto-haba: 2.78cm Weight: 640g
Jihada:	<i>Beautiful mokume-hada mixed with ô-hada, nagare-hada with plentiful chikei</i>
Hamon:	<i>Bright suguha with kaen-boshi,</i>
Certificate #1:	NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon (designated as 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)
Gold inlay:	Senzo kore hairyô (my ancestor received this sword)
Included:	Shirasaya, Edo koshirae, fabric bags, stand, kit, booklet, description

SOLD

The *Chiyo-zuru* school began in *Echizen* province in approximately 1337 by way of *Chiyo-zuru Kuniyasu* of the distinguished *Rai school*. This expertly-crafted katana is likely that of second generation superior swordsmith *Morihiro*, son of *Rai Kuniyasu*, who worked during the *Ôei era*, circa 1394~1428. The *jihada* is so beautiful, displaying both *mokume-hada*, some *ô-hada*, *nagare-hada* and plenty of *chikei*. The *hamon* is a clear *suguha* that contrasts nicely against the darkish *jigane*. It's handsome Edo-period *koshirae* features a carved *kizami-saya* and a theme of wind-swept bamboo trees coupled with the tiger and spider predators. Rare gold inlaid characters on the *nakago* states that this katana has been handed down from one generation to the next. This is an ancestral sword that is most worthy of collecting and preserving for the generations to come.



Saki-kasane: 4.2mm

Moto-kasane: 6.2mm

Omosa: 640g

Kissaki: 3.15cm
Saki-haba: 2.00cm

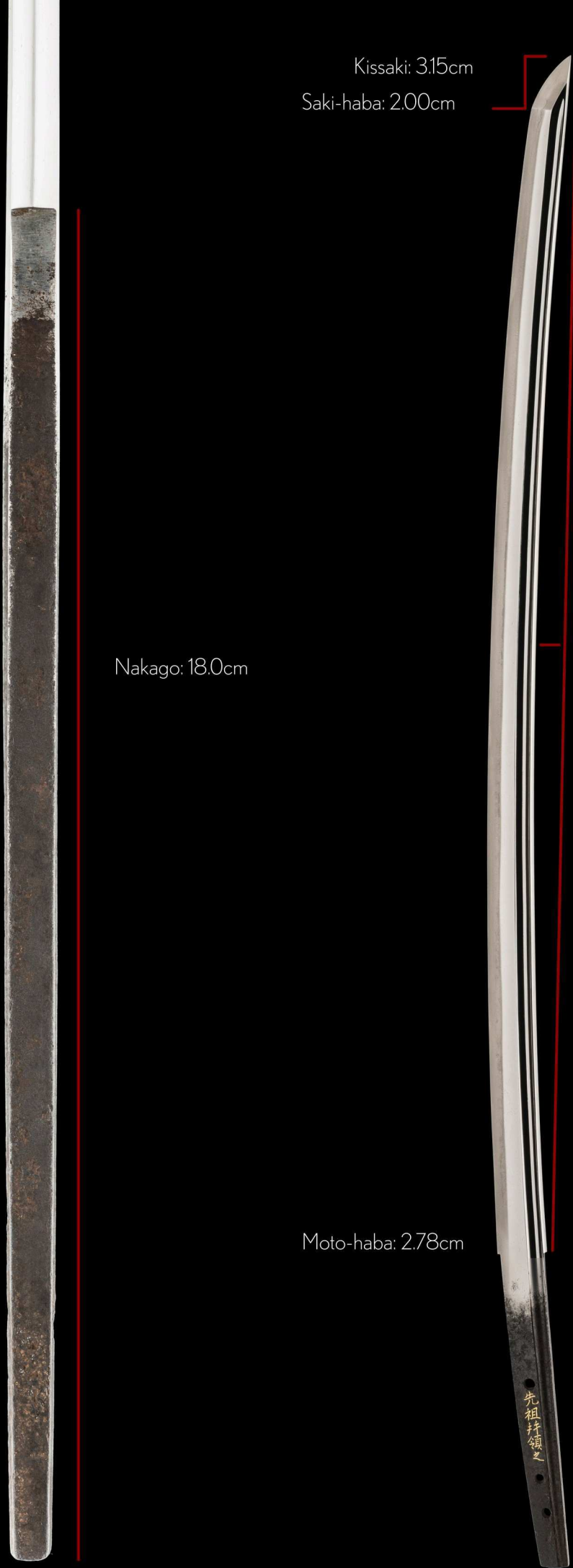
Nakago: 18.0cm

Moto-haba: 2.78cm

Nagasa: 68.8cm

Sori: 1.40cm

Mekugi-ana: 3



The *Chiyozuru* school began in *Echizen* province in approximately 1337 by way of *Chiyozuru Kuniyasu*. Kuniyasu was in search of the right spring water to forge his swords. He subsequently settled in *Takefu* in *Echizen* and a premier steel crafting industry was born and never looked back.

The *Morihiro* name lasted for about four generations until the early Muromachi period. The first generation Morihiro was the son (or adopted son) of Rai Kuniyasu. This strong and expertly-crafted katana is likely that of second generation Morihiro who worked during the *Ōei* era, circa 1394~1428. Morihiro is ranked as *jō-saku*, a superior swordsmith, and his talents are on full spectacle in this katana.

The *jihada* is beautiful, displaying *mokume-hada*, *ô-hada* and *nagare-hada*. There is plenty of *chikei* to enjoy as well. The *hamon* is a clear *suguha* that contrasts nicely against the darkish *jigane*.

Its handsome Edo-period *koshirae* features a carved *kizami-saya* and a theme of wind-swept bamboo trees coupled with the tiger and spider predators. An underlying message of courage and flexibility that leads to prosperity is embedded within.

Rare gold inlaid characters on the *nakago* states that this katana has been handed down from one generation to the next. And it's clear to see why. This is an ancestral sword that is most worthy of collecting and preserving for the generations to come.



Location: *Echizen Province*

School: *Chiyozuru*

Swordsmith: *Morihiro* (2nd generation)

o-suriage-nakago (greatly shortened tang)

先祖并領之

先 (Sen)

祖 (zo)

并 (hai)


領 (ryô)

之 (kore)

Senzo kore hairyô

Literal translation:

My ancestor received this [sword].



先祖并領之

Whilst the *gold-inlay* translation reads:
"my ancestor received this [sword]..."

The deeper, underlying message is that this katana has been passed down from generation to generation - from one ancestor to the next.

Will your family be the next to care for this sword?

A well-tapered nakago with a dark patina and three visible *mekugi-ana* (holes).



(*ura*, reverse)

02202003

No 1013330



鑑定書

一刀 無銘

(千代鶴守弘)
(金象嵌) 先祖拝領之

長二尺二寸六分

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

令和二年六月二十五日

公益財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協會



静岡県 教育委員会
第 60463 号
昭和61年2月19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

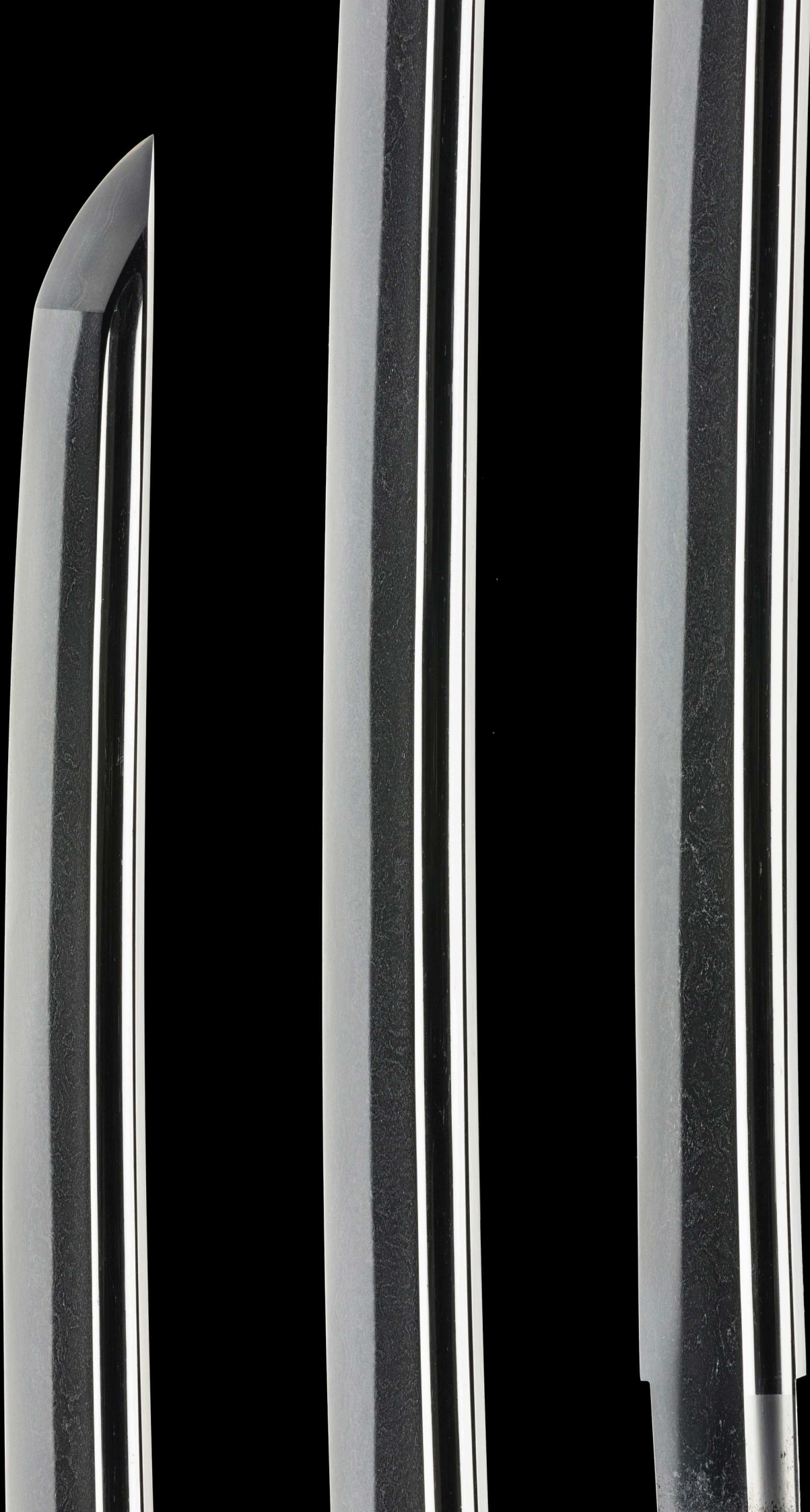
Issued in the 2nd year of Reiwa (2020), June 25th

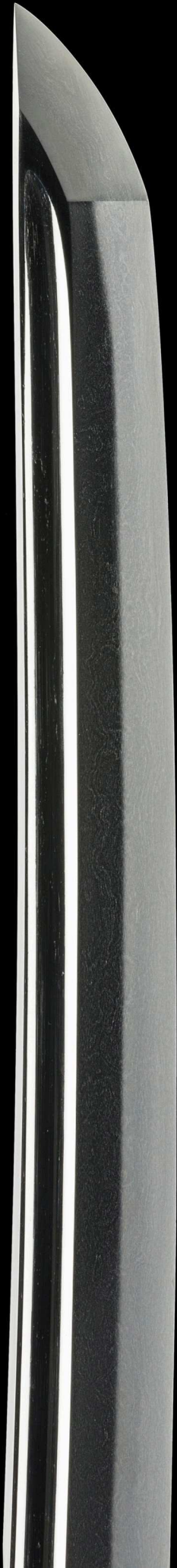
One, Katana

Mumei (unsigned)
Chiyozuru Morihiko
(*kinzôgan*) *Senzo kore hairyô*

Nagasa (length)
2-shaku 2-sun 6-bu (68.8cm)

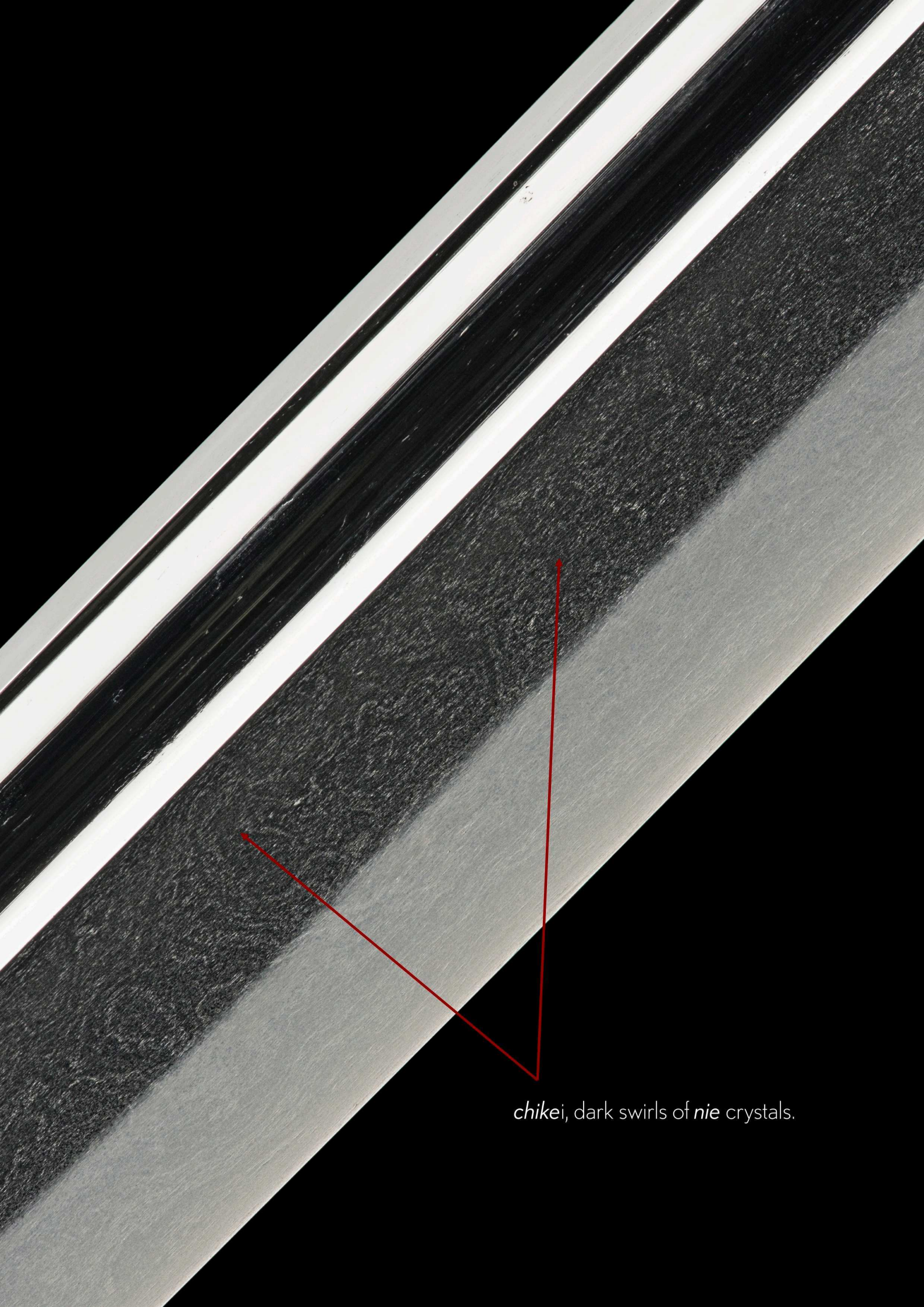
Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai
(NBTHK)



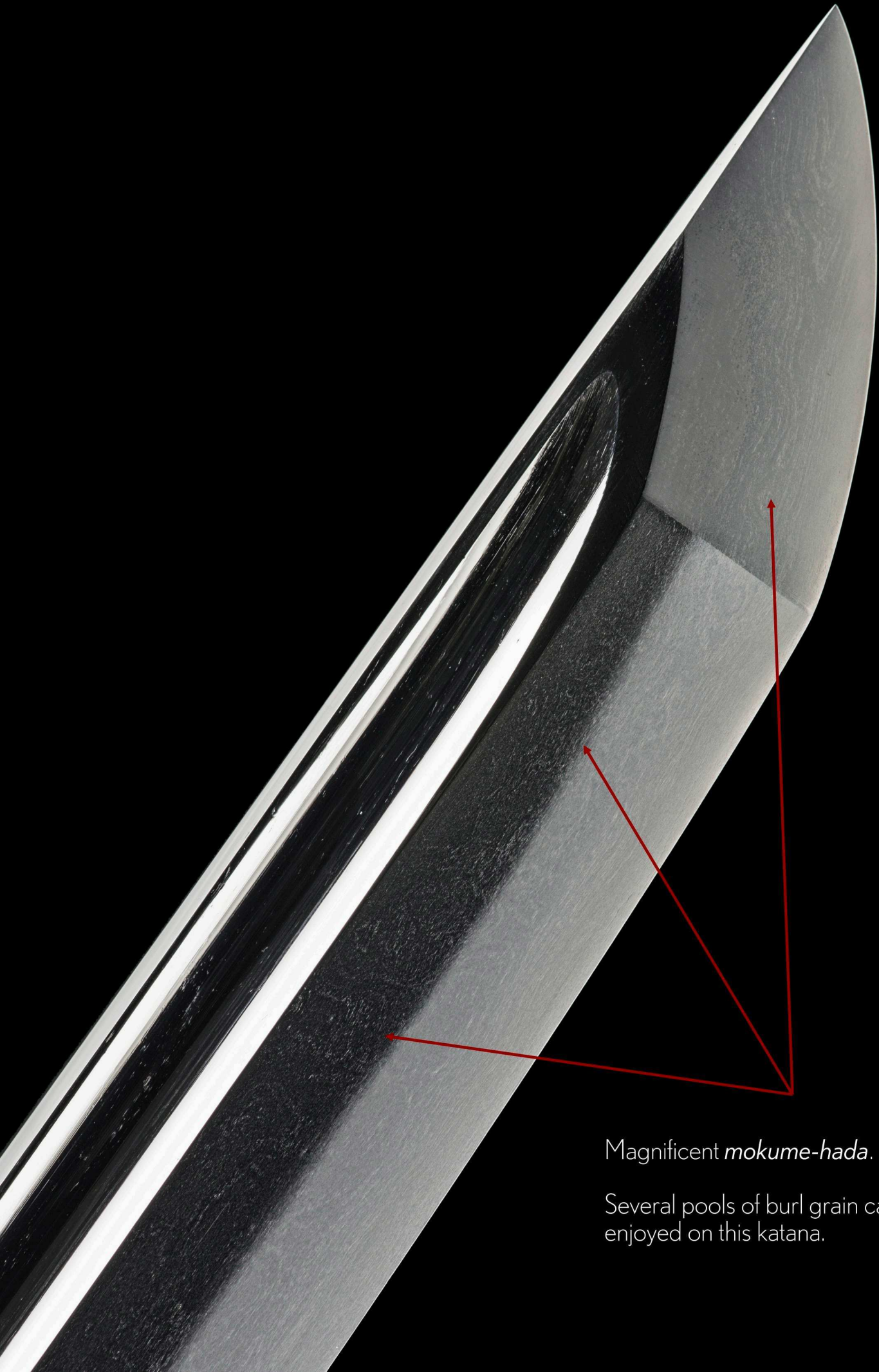




Kaen-boshi where the tip's hamon resembles a flame.



chikei, dark swirls of *nie* crystals.



Magnificent *mokume-hada*.

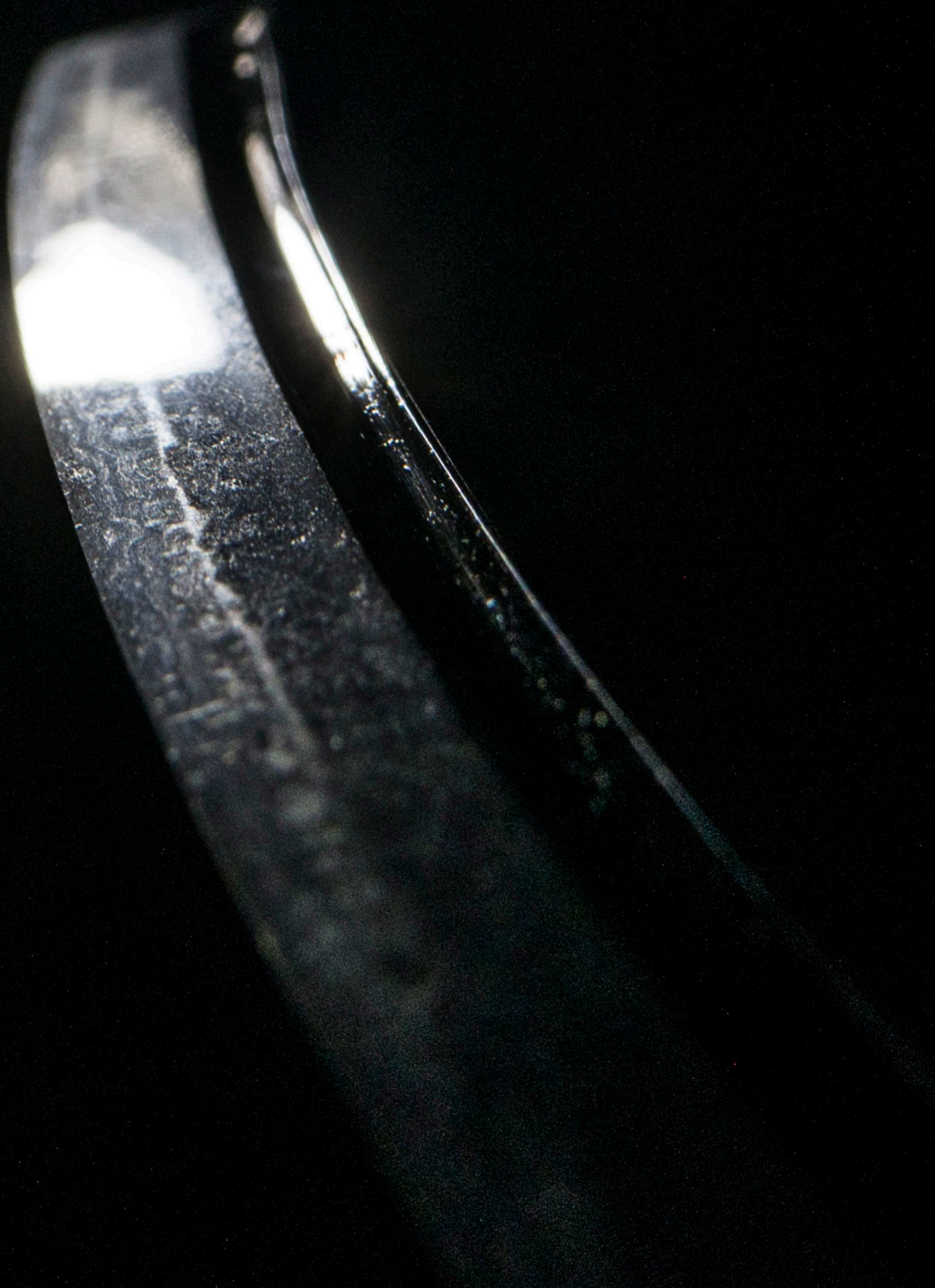
Several pools of burl grain can be enjoyed on this katana.

Close-up on the *jihada* (grain pattern in the body of the sword).

Notice how the *mokume-hada* leads to a wavy *nagare-hada* closer to the edge of the blade.



A straight *suguha-hamon* over a darkish *jigane* that is typical of swords from Echizen province along the Sea of Japan.

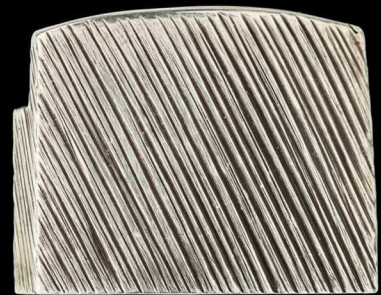




Hamon bursting through the clouds.



Shirasaya
(protective scabbard)

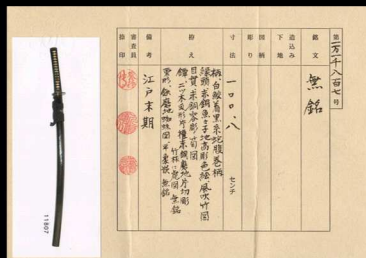


silver *habaki* with
diagonal file marks

Naname-kizami
 kuro-ro-nuri saya
 uchigatana-koshirae
 (斜め刻黒呂塗鞘打刀拵)

Uchigatana-koshirae
 with slantingly carved scabbard
 lacquered in glossy black

Crafted during the
 Late Edo period
 (1780~1867)



NTHK-NPO Kanteisho
 Certificate of Authenticity

Kizami-saya

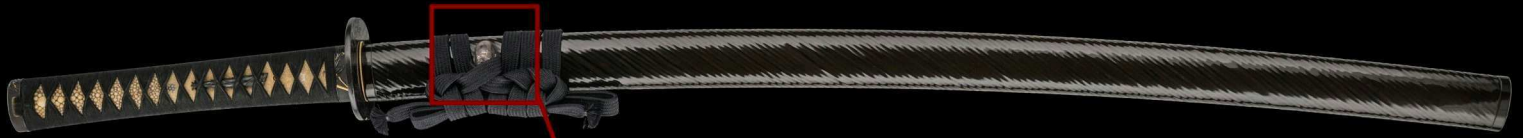
Hand-carved angled spirals that casts
unique zig-zag shadows.



A spider and its web depicted on the iron *kurigata*, where the *sageo* cord is secured to.

The spider is known for being an intelligent arachnid who is capable of strategizing and planning. Weaving an intricate web is painstaking work that requires dedication and patience for its prey to arrive. And even when the web is done, a strong wind (which we see illustrated in the swaying bamboo trees on the *fuchi-kashira*) can come along and break it. Thus the web must be repaired. The spider is not deterred, though.

The spider reminds us that good things come for those who wait.

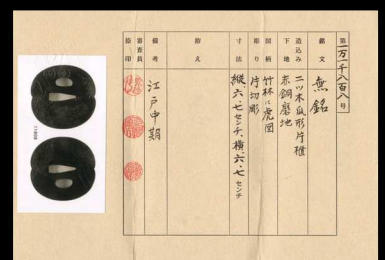
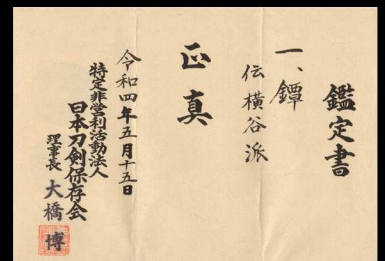




This enticing polished *shakudô tsuba* (guard) features a tiger in a bamboo grove. The tiger represents the spiritual force necessary to confront life's adversities. Of moon and fire, full moon and new moon, light and darkness, orange with black stripes, the tiger is at once *Yin* and *Yang*. **

However brave, a valiant warrior must show humility. Hence the tiger embraces the flexibility of bamboo. *"The strength, courage and determination of the tiger are not enough to overcome the challenges to which nature submits us; we must also have the flexibility of bamboo"*.

An NTHK-NPO Kanteisho certificate of authenticity has been attained attributing the tsuba to the school from the mid-Edo period circa 1700~1780.

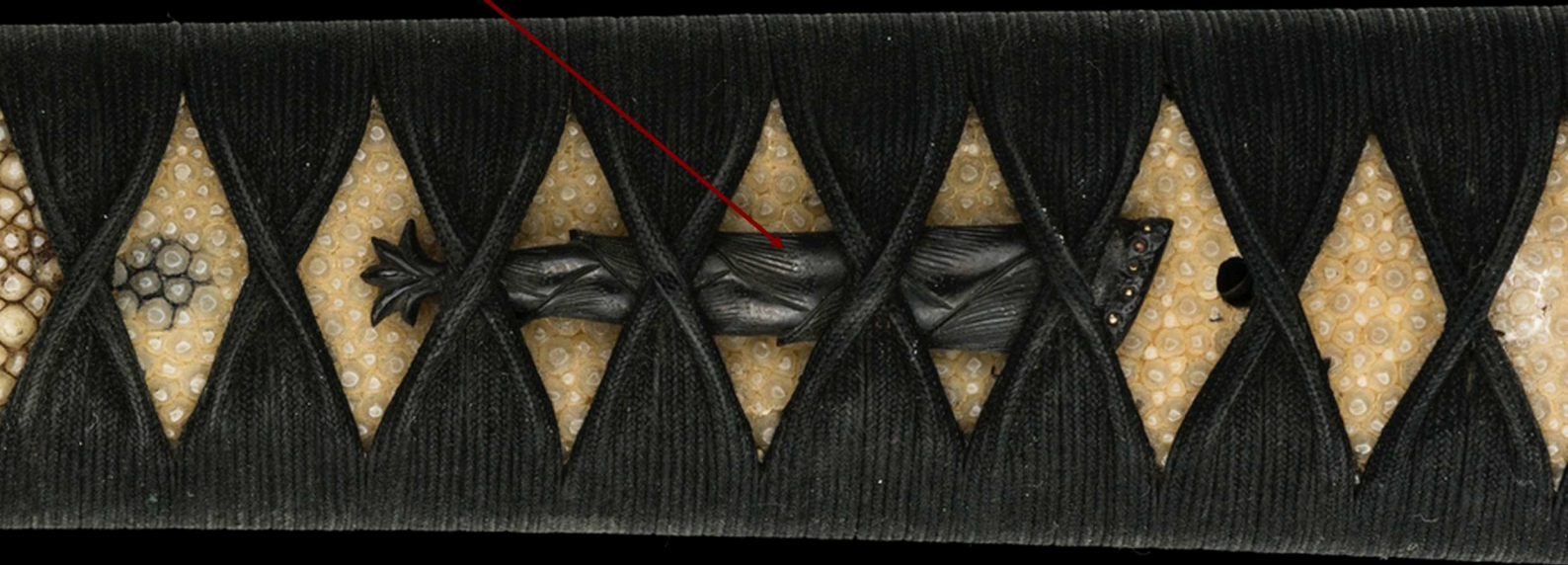




(reverse)



bamboo stalk as menuki



Durable yet incredibly flexible, *take* (pronounced *ta-keh*, bamboo) it is a symbol of prosperity in Japan. For generations, people were told to run into the bamboo groves in the event of an earthquake, as the bamboo's strong root structure would hold the earth together.

Simple and unadorned, the bamboo is also symbolic of purity and innocence.





Fuchi-kashira
 attributed to
Kikuoka school
 (1780~1867)

Bamboo trees swaying in the wind



NTHK-NPO Kanteisho
 Certificate of Authenticity





Koshirae bag



ITEM# UJWA118

A SHODAI NAGAMICHI WAKIZASHI

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

Swordsmith:	<i>Mutsu Daijô Miyoshi Nagamichi (1st generation, ubu-nakago)</i>
Measurements:	Length: 53.9cm Curvature: 1.21cm Moto-haba: 2.83cm Weight: 535g
Jihada:	<i>Expertly forged itame-nagare with ji-nie, plentiful chikei</i>
Hamon:	<i>Surging gunome-midare mixed with long ashi and brushed sunagashi</i>
Certificate #1:	NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon (designated as Especially Worthy of Preservation)
Certificate #2:	NTHK Kanteisho (a koshirae designated as Authentic)
Fujishiro rank:	Jô-saku (ranked as a superior swordsmith)
Sharpness:	Saijô-ôwazamono (grandmaster, supreme cutting ability)
Included:	Shirasaya, dragon koshirae, fabric bags, stand, kit, booklet, description

SOLD

Miyoshi Nagamichi was born *Miyoshi Tôshirô* in Iwashiro province, modern-day Fukushima. Nagamichi is a celebrated swordsmith ranked *saijo-ôwazamono*, producing the sharpest of swords with the highest level of cutting ability. He was nicknamed *Aizu-Kotetsu*, as some of his masterworks rivalled that of grandmaster *Kotetsu*. This long wakizashi has been freshly polished and beams a bright, wavy *gunome-midare hamon* with long *ashi* and brushed *sunagashi* resembling the snow-capped mountains of *Mutsu* province. The sword's custom produced koshirae features powerful dragons that are staking out their prey both deep in the forest and within turbulent waters. The koshirae matches the sheer intensity of this very sharp, collectible wakizashi.

^
Saki-kasane: 3.8mm

Moto-kasane: 6.1mm

Omosa: 535g

Kissaki: 3.38cm

Saki-haba: 1.97cm

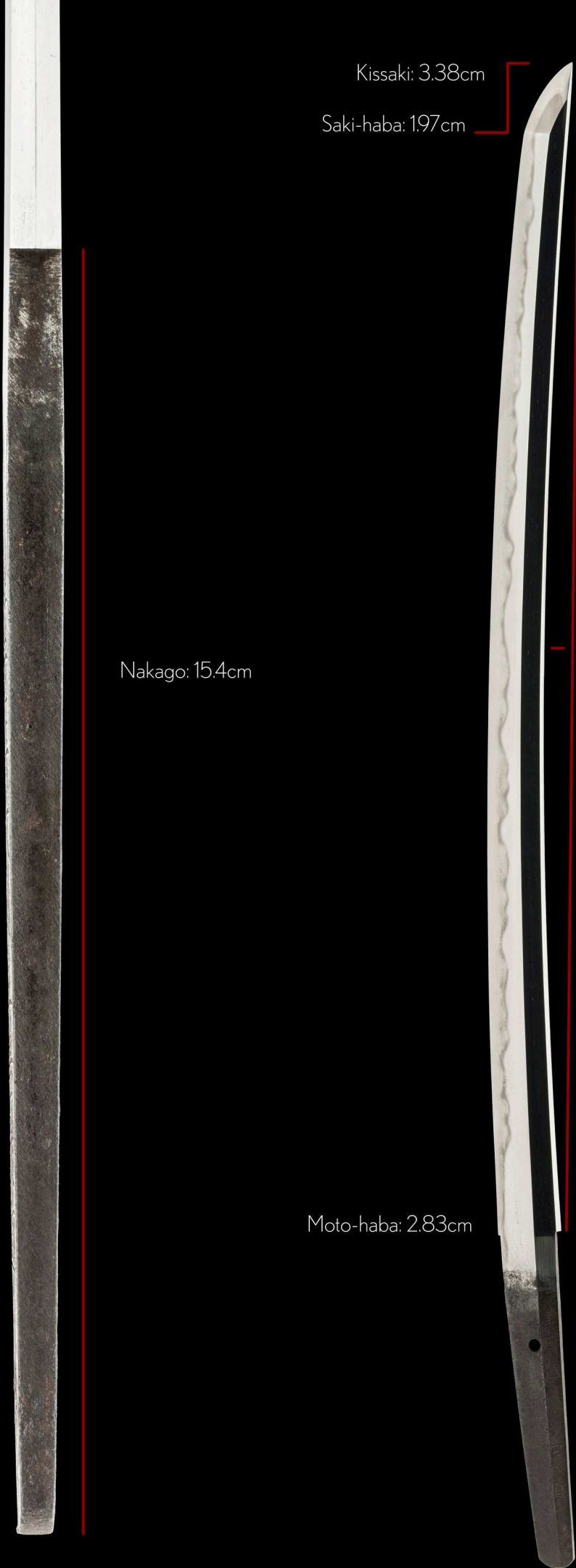
Nakago: 15.4cm

Moto-haba: 2.83cm

Nagasa: 53.9cm

Sori: 1.21cm

Mekugi-ana: 1



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

His father *Masanaga* was retained by *Daimyo Lord Kato Yoshiaki*. He originally signed his name as *Michinaga*, changed to *Nagamichi* in 1659 when he received his title of *Mutsu Daijô* at the age of 27.

Nagamichi is a celebrated swordsmith ranked *saijo-ôwazamono*, a grandmaster in producing the sharpest of swords with the *highest level of cutting ability*. He is further rated *jô-saku* (superior smith) and considered one of finest smiths of the 17th century, early Edo period.

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

This long wakizashi has been freshly polished and beams a bright, wavy *gunome-midare hamon* with long *ashi* and brushed *sunagashi* resembling the snow-capped mountains of *Mutsu* province.

The sword is housed in a Unique Japan produced custom *koshirae* with powerful dragons that are staking out their prey both deep in the forest and within turbulent waters. The *koshirae* matches the sheer intensity of this very sharp, collectible wakizashi.





Location: *Mustu province*

Title: *Mutsu Daijô* (Lord of Mutsu province)

Family name: *Miyoshi*

Swordsmith: *Nagamichi* (first generation)

ubu-nakago (original, unaltered tang)

sujikai-yasurime (diagonal file marks)

陸 (Mu)

奥 (tsu)

大 (Dai)

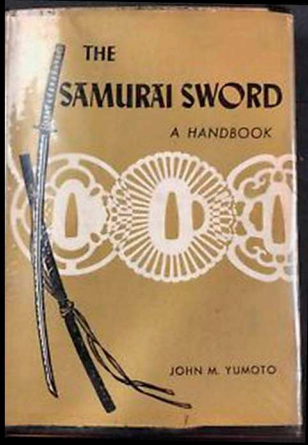
掾 (jô)

三 (Mi)

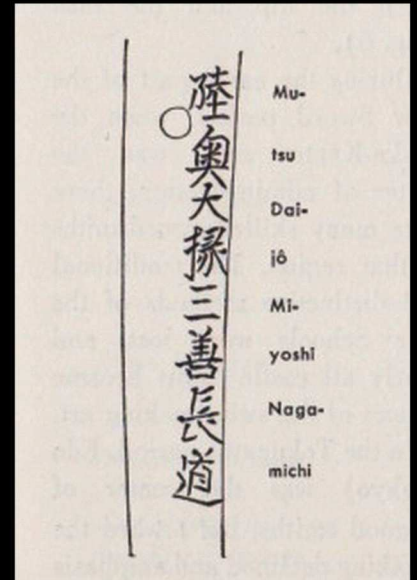
善 (yoshi)

長 (Naga)

道 (michi)



THE SAMURAI SWORD
by John M. Yumoto is a classic
handbook to the study of Japanese
swords. First published in 1958.



A reference *nakago* inscription for
Miyoshi Nagamichi, page 35.

The following list shows some of the leading smiths of the early (Azuchi-Momoyama) part of this period. Titles or surnames are enclosed in parentheses:

Yamashiro Province	(Umetada) Myōju, (Shinano no Kami) Kunihiro, Kuniyasu, (Deba Daijō) Kunimichi, (Echigo no Kami) Kunitomo, (Ōsumi no Jō) Masahiro, (Iga no Kami) Kanamichi, (Tamba no Kami) Yoshimichi, (Etchū no Kami) Masatoshi, (Izumi no Kami) Kunisada, (Kōchi no Kami) Kunisuke
Settsu Province	(Izumi no Kami) Kunisada, (Kōchi no Kami) Kunisuke, (Soboro) Sukehiro, (Tamba no Kami) Yoshimichi, (Omi no Kami) Tadatsuna, (Mutsu no Kami) Kanemori
Mino Province	(Sagami no Kami) Masatsune, (Mino no Kami) Masatsune, (Hōki no Kami) Nobutaka, (Hidachi no Kami) Ujifusa
Musashi Province	Hankei, Yasutsugu, (Musashi Daijō) Korekazu
Ōmi Province	Ippō
Iwashiro Province	Nagakuni, <u>(Mutsu Daijō) Nagamichi</u>
Rikuzen Province	(Yamashiro Daijō) Kunikane, (Yamato Daijō) Yasusada

Miyoshi Nagamichi listed as a leading smith during the early Edo period, page 37.



(*ura*, reverse)

特 保
12200001



No 145274



鑑定書

長一尺七寸九分

一脇指 銘 陸奥大掾三善長道

右は當協會に於て審査の結果特別保存刀剣と
鑑定しこれを証する

平成十二年二月九日

財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協會



NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon Certificate of Designation

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

Issued in the 12th year of Heisei (2000), February 9th

One, Wakizashi

Mei (signature)

Mutsu Daijō Miyoshi Nagamichi

Nagasa (length)

1-shaku 7-sun 9-bu (53.9cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai
(NBTHK)







There is an electrifying intensity found in *shodai* Nagamichi swords. In this close-up we see a bright, beaming *gunome-midare hamon* that illuminates the rolling *itame* forming dark swirls of *chikei*.



mune-yaki
hardend spine

interesting outline of *itame* in
the *ha*, hardened edge.

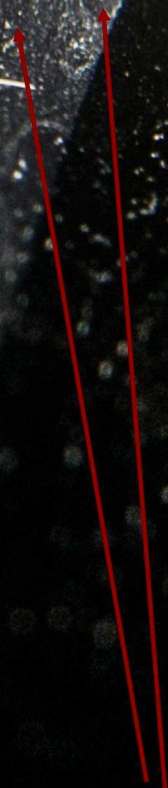
gorgeous brushed *sunagashi*

oo la la... that is sharp...



itame-nagare

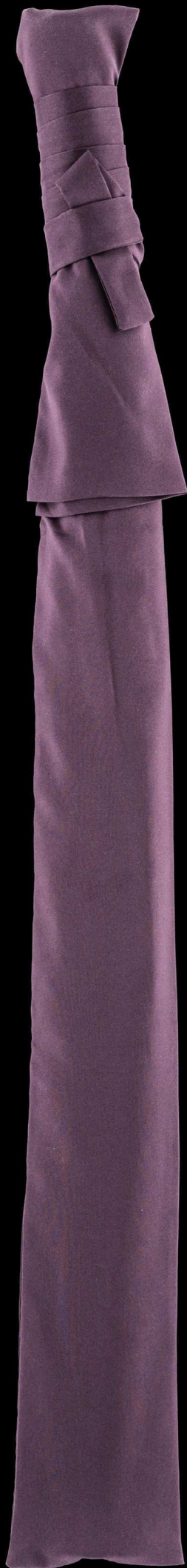
A beautiful flowing plank grain that resembles teardrops.



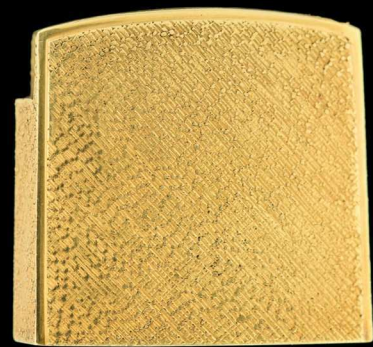


Noda Jewel River in Mutsu Province
Artist: *Utagawa Hiroshige*

The *gunome-midare hamon* reflects the rugged snow-swept mountains of *Mutsu province*.



Shirasaya
(protective scabbard)

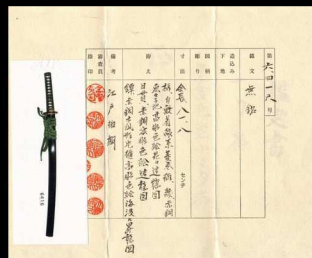


gold-wrapped *habaki* with
criss-cross file marks

*Kuro-roiro-nuri
chîsagatana-koshirae*
(黒呂色塗小さ刀拵え)

*Chîsagatana-koshirae
lacquered in glossy black*

Crafted during the
Modern era



NTHK-NPO Kanteisho
Certificate of Authenticity



A dragon on the hunt within rough seas...

We'll help the next caretaker of this wakizashi to attain a Kanteisho certificate from the NTHK-NPO to learn more about this striking tsuba.



(reverse)



Crawling dragon *menuki* crafted from black *shakudô* with fabulous golden eyes and whiskers.

Green was used in the koshirae production to reflect the fact the dragons appear hiding in a forest.





A dragon slithering its way along an *ume* (*plum*) blossom branch. Plum blossoms are a symbol of spring and protection against evil.





An intricately carved crawling dragon
on a branch, eyeing its prey.



Koshirae bag



ITEM# UJKA409

SOLD

AN IETSUGU TACHI

SIGNED & DATED, EARLY MUROMACHI PERIOD (ÔEI ERA: AUGUST 1408)

- Swordsmith:** *Bizen no Kuni jû Ietsugu (ubu nakago)*
Location: **Bizen province** (Okayama prefecture)
Measurements: **Length:** 71.6cm **Curvature:** 1.8cm **Moto-haba:** 2.73cm **Weight:** 560g
Jihada: *Itame-hada mixed with nagare-hada bordering on ayasugi with chikei and bô-utsuri*
Hamon: *Suguha mixed with hints of uchinoke and nezumi-ashi*
Certificate #1: **NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon** (designated as Especially Worthy of Preservation)
Certificate #2-4: **NTHK-NPO Kanteisho** (tsuba, fuchi-kashira & koshirae designated as Authentic)
Included: Shirasaya, Edo koshirae, fabric bags, stand, kit, booklet, description

SOLD

Ietsugu was a swordsmith from the *Bizen Osafune* school that worked in the *Ôei* era, circa 1394~1428. Records state that he was the student of swordsmith *Yukiyoshi* who flourished during the *Kôei* era from 1342~1345. The *jihada* on the sword is quite interesting to study. Nearer the edge of the blade is a running *nagare-hada*, which borders on *ayasugi-hada* in appearance, traditionally associated with the *Naminohira* and *Gassan* schools. This curvy and slender sword is dated to **August 1408** – soon celebrating its 614th birthday. It comes protected in a beautiful *koshirae* that rejoices in the wonders of the natural world with a middle Edo period *Sôten* school *fuchi-kashira* featuring autumn flowers along with depictions of spiders and ants for *menuki*, chrysanthemums and waves on the *tsuba* and a *saya* (scabbard) that takes on the distinct form of aged wood via its lacquer work. A fine, collectible piece of unique Japanese history.

^
Saki-kasane: 3.5mm

Moto-kasane: 5.6mm

Omosa: 560g

Kissaki: 2.23cm
Saki-haba: 1.59cm

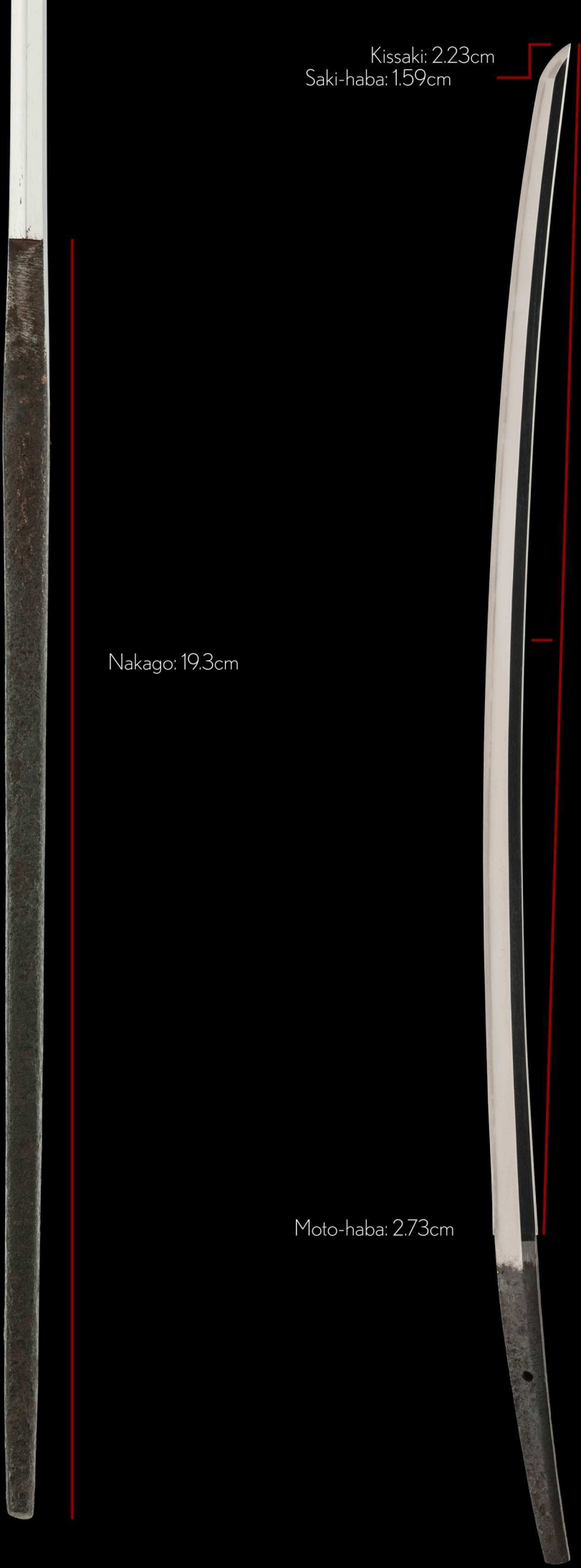
Nakago: 19.3cm

Moto-haba: 2.73cm

Nagasa: 71.6cm

Sori: 1.8cm

Mekugi-ana: 1



Ietsugu was a swordsmith from *Bizen Osafune* school that worked in the *Ōei* era, circa 1394~1428.

Records state that he was the student of swordsmith *Yukiyoshi* who flourished during the *Kōei* era from 1342~1345. The *jihada* on the sword is quite interesting to study and admire. Nearer the edge of the blade is a running *nagare-hada*, which borders on *ayasugi-hada* in appearance, traditionally associated with the *Naminohira* and *Gassan* schools.

This beautiful, slender sword is dated to **August 1408**, nearly 614-years-old. Clear *bō-utsuri* reflects beautifully on the blade in classic Bizen fashion. It comes protected in a *koshirae* that rejoices in the natural world with a *Sōten* school *fuchi-kashira* in autumn flowers along with depictions of spiders, ants and a *saya* (scabbard) that takes on the distinct form of aged wood via its long brush strokes of expertly finished lacquer work.



Ietsugu was a swordsmith from *Bizen Osafune* school that worked in the *Ōei* era, circa 1394~1428.

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Ôei jûgonen hachigatsu hi

Dated on a day in the eighth month in the
15th Year of the *Ôei* era (August 1408).

應 (Ô)

永 (ei)

十 (jû)

五 (go)

年 (nen)

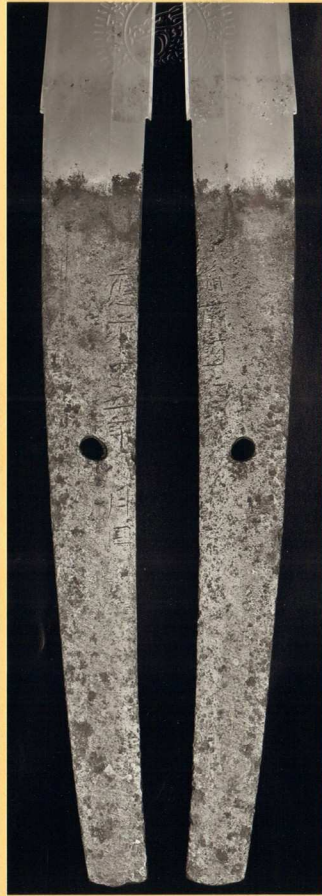
八 (hachi)

月 (gatsu)

日 (hi)



特 選
03202103



No 1015549

鑑 定 書

一太刀 銘

備前国住家次
応永十五年八月日

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劍と
鑑定しこれを証する

令和三年五月二十四日

公益財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協會



茨城県 教育委員会
第 1436 号
昭和26年3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 3rd year of Reiwa (2021), May 24th

One, Tachi

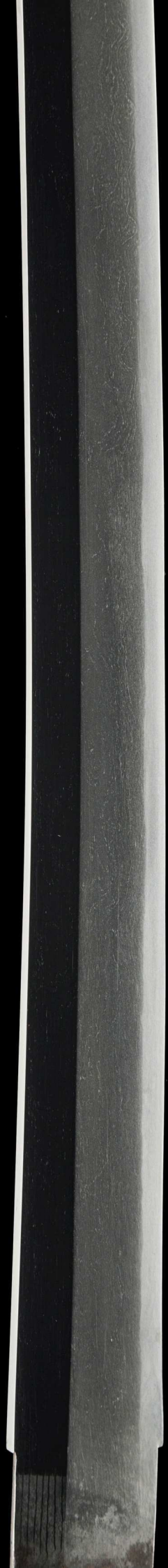
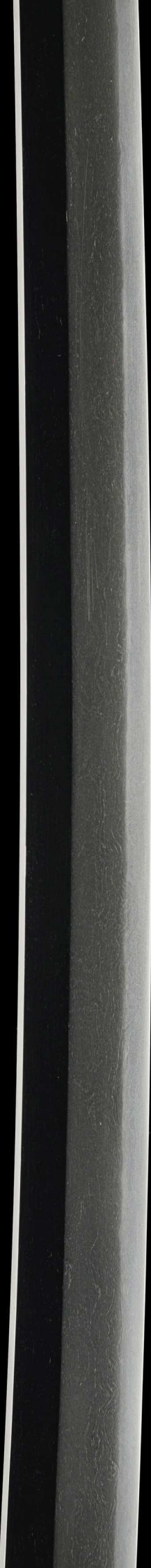
Mei (signature)

Bizen no Kuni jû letsugu
Ôei jûgonen hachigatsu hi

Nagasa (length)

2-shaku 3-sun 6-bu (71.6cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai
(NBTHK)





itame-hada

nagare-hada

A lovely flow to the *jihada*, grain pattern that mixes *itame* (oval plank grain) with deep swells of *nagare-hada*.




Good view of the wavy *nagare-hada*
that is very similar to *ayasugi-hada*.

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

It is an appreciated feature of swords, particular those made in the Bizen tradition in the Kotô period (pre 1600).

The type of *utsuri* is called *bô-utsuri* - a smokey pattern that is more straight in appearance.

A close-up photograph of a sword blade, showing the hamon and the utsuri patterns. The blade is dark, and the hamon is a bright, curved line. The utsuri patterns are visible as misty, smoky reflections above the hamon. Two red arrows point from the text to specific areas of the blade.



An attractive *suguha* (straight) *hamon* (temper line) with tiny *zezumi-ashi* (legs) that gives the blade an 'old soul' feel.



Shirasaya
(protective scabbard)

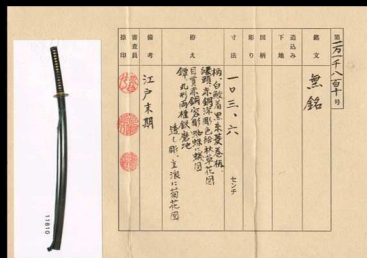
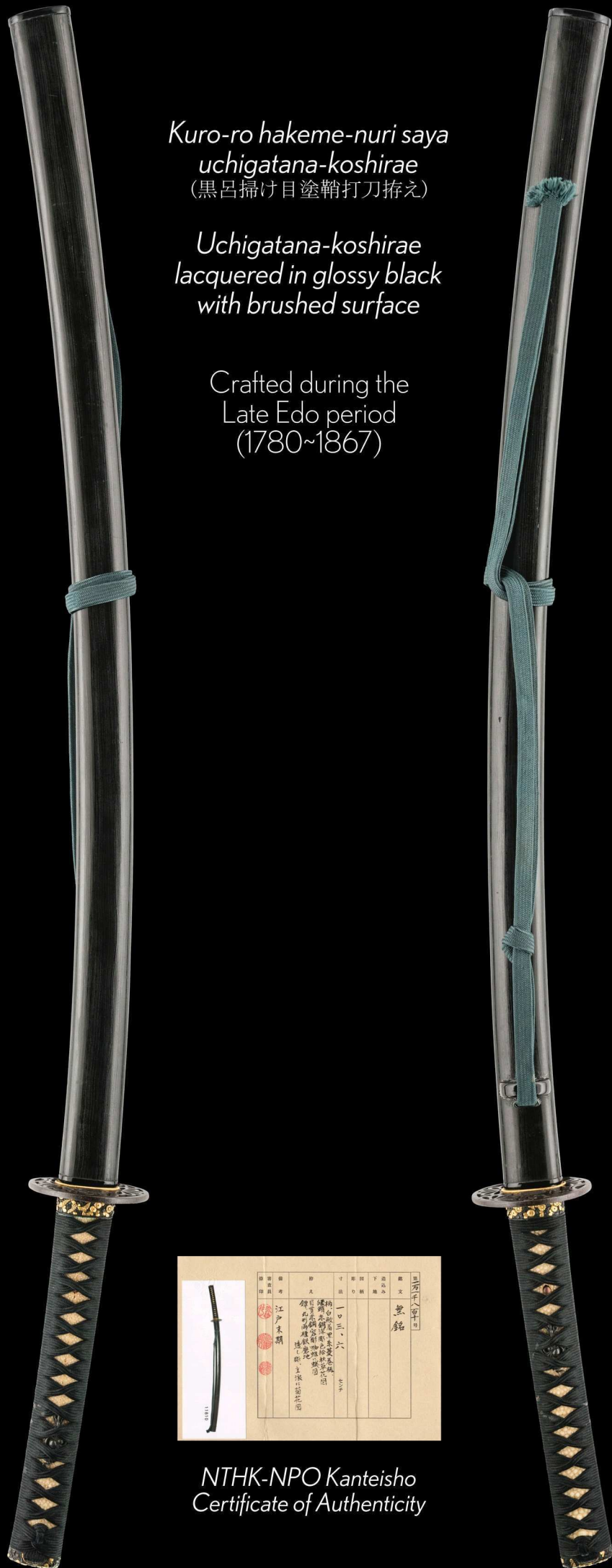


silver *habaki* with
horizontal file marks

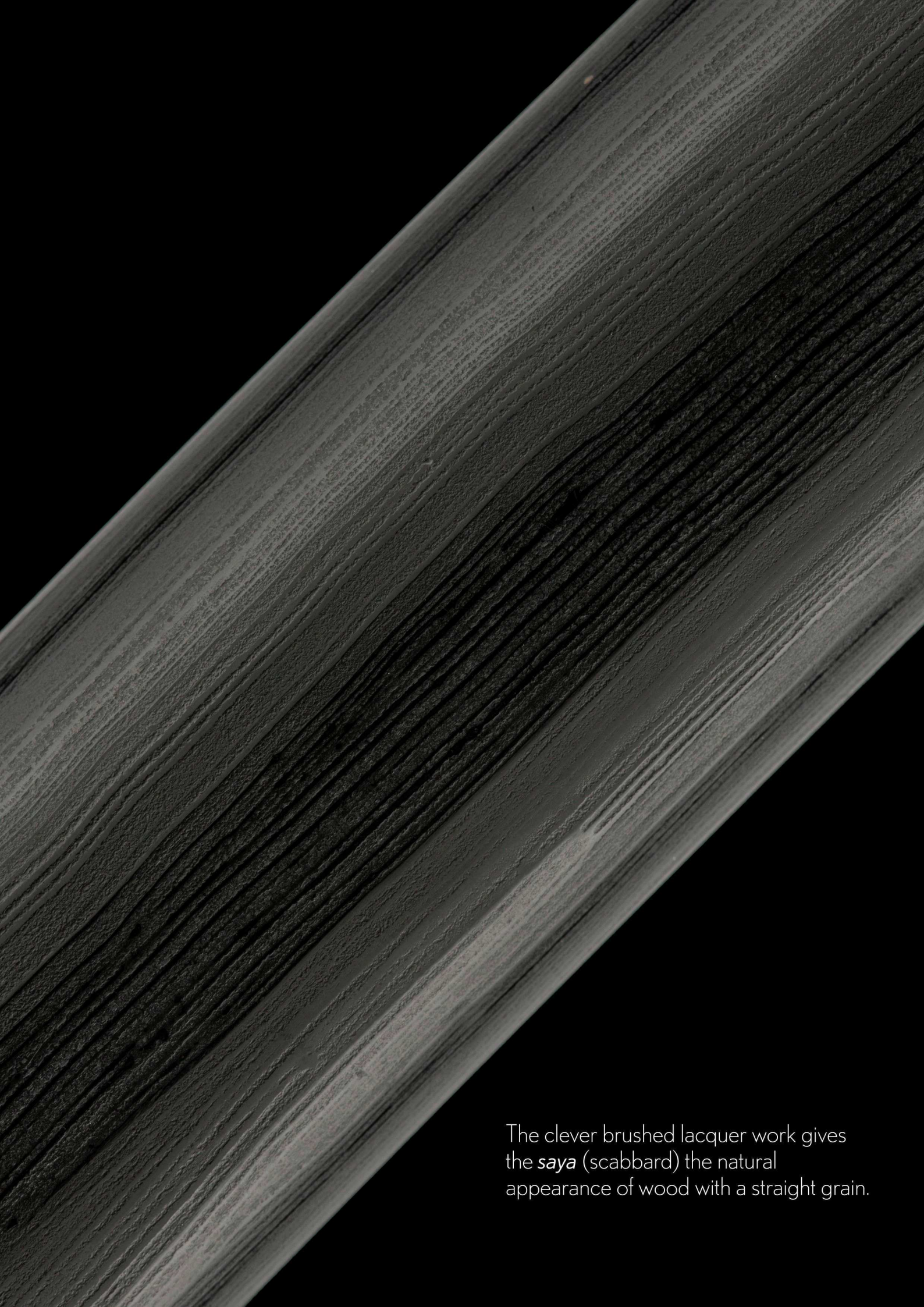
*Kuro-ro hakeme-nuri saya
uchigatana-koshirae*
(黒呂掃け目塗鞘打刀拵え)

*Uchigatana-koshirae
lacquered in glossy black
with brushed surface*

Crafted during the
Late Edo period
(1780~1867)



NTHK-NPO Kanteisho
Certificate of Authenticity

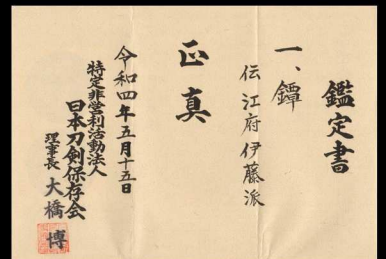


The clever brushed lacquer work gives the *saya* (scabbard) the natural appearance of wood with a straight grain.



A *kiku* (chrysanthemum) and *nami* (wave) motif is depicted here on this beautiful, round polished iron *sukashi* (openwork) *tsuba*.

Its NTHK-NPO Kanteisho certificate of authenticity attributes the piece to the *Itô* school from Edo province circa 1780~1867.



(reverse)

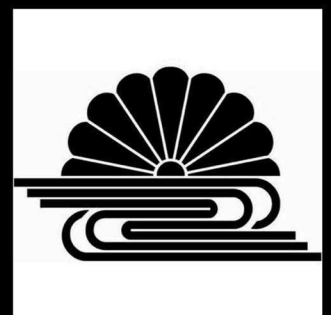


kikusui mon

Combining *kiku* (chrysanthemum) and *sui* (water) is known as *kikusui kamon* (family crest). The kikusui mon was used by *Masashige Kusunoki*, the samurai lord who contributed to the overthrow of the Kamakura shogunate and stayed loyal to *Emperor Godaigo* until his death.

It is said that Emperor Godaigo gave Kusunoki the kiku-crest for his loyalty and honour, however, Kusunoki thought he was unworthy and added floating water below it to show his modesty.

An ukiyo-e print from *Utagawa Yoshikazu* in 1856, entitled *Jingi hachigyo no uchi, Kusunoki Masashige* illustrates large kikusui crests on Kusunoki's clothing.





Spiders and ants form the *menuki* that continues the celebratory nature theme of this splendid antique koshirae.





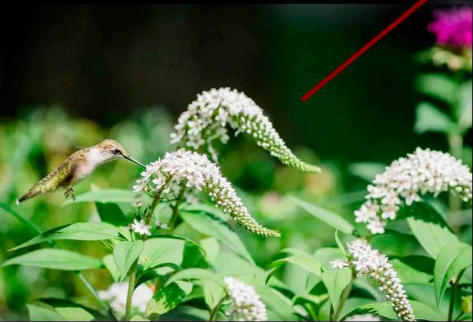
spiders and ants crawling their way to the garden...



kiku (chrysanthemum)



hama-giku (Japanese daisy)



kuzu (arrow root)



kashiwa (Japanese oak)

kashira (pommel)

A beautiful arrangement of autumn leaves and flowers skilfully carved into a *shakudô* base.

Gôshû Hikone jû Mogarashi Sôten tsukuru

The *fuchi-kashira* was crafted by Mogarashi Sôten, a resident of Gôshû province



NTHK-NPO Kanteisho certificate of authenticity

Dating the piece to the middle Edo period (circa 1700~1780)



(Mo) 藻

(gara) 柄

(shi) 子

(Sô) 宗

(ten) 典

(tsukuru) 製

江 (Gô)

州 (shû)

彦 (Hiko)

根 (ne)

住 (jû)



"Life is like a garden, you reap what you sow."
Paulo Coelho





Koshirae bag



ITEM# UJTA056

A KO-GASSAN TANTÔ

SIGNED, MIDDLE MUROMACHI PERIOD (EARLY 1500s)

- Swordsmith:** *Gassan school (ubu-nakago)*
Measurements: **Length:** 22.1cm **Curvature:** 0cm **Moto-haba:** 1.95cm **Weight:** 125g
Jihada: *Spectacular ayasugi-hada, ô-hada and plentiful chikei*
Hamon: *Crisp chû-suguha mixed with uchinoke and nezumi-ashi*
Certificate #1-2: **NBTHK Hozon** (sword and koshirae designated as Worthy of Preservation)
Certificate #3: **NBTHK Tokubetsu Kicho** (sword designated as Especially Precious)
Certificate #4: **NTHK Kanteisho** (aikuchi koshirae designated as Authentic)
Included: Shirasaya, Edo aikuchi koshirae, fabric bags, stand, kit, booklet, description

SOLD

The *Gassan school* is one of the most prestigious and successful lines of sword-forging in Japan and enjoys a close relationship with the imperial family. This marvelous *tantô* dates back to approximately 1500, during the middle *Muromachi period*. A straight, shining *suguha hamon* serves as a riverbank as the streams of its vibrant and iconic *ayasugi-hada* cascade down the blade. An exquisite *aikuchi-koshirae* pays tribute, in part, to the *Yamabushi* (mountain monks) that live in the three sacred mountains known as *Sanzan* of *Dewa* province. The *saya* (scabbard) is formed of a base layer of rare *kinkarakawa* decorated leather - a crafting technique that originated with the *Medici* family in Italy, circa 1400s. It is further decorated with the *Chiba* family *kamon* that features a moon and star, a wooden *kôzuka* with a pair of star-laden *Watanabe* clan *kamon* and mantra scrolls as *menuki*. This *tantô* exudes a spiritual energy that was most certainly treasured by a former samurai. It deserves a home that will honour it immensely.



Moto-kasane: 6.7mm

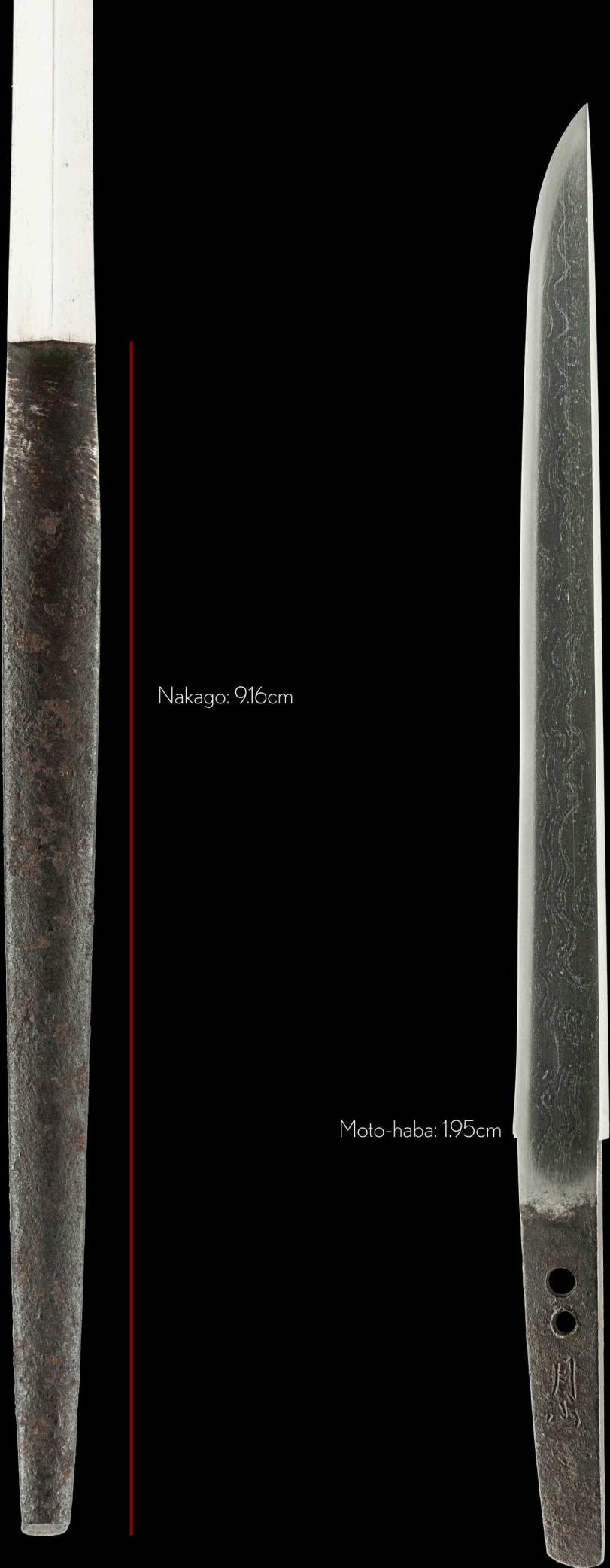
Omosa: 125g

Nakago: 9.16cm

Moto-haba: 1.95cm

Nagasa: 22.1cm

Mekugi-ana: 2



The *Gassan school* is one of the most prestigious and successful lines of sword-forging in Japan and enjoys a close relationship with the imperial family. Their iconic *ayasugi-hada* continues to this very day by current *Gassan* head a *Gassan Sadatoshi*.

This marvelous *tantô* dates back to approximately 1500, during the middle *Muromachi* period. As it was made prior to the Edo period, it is referred to as *Ko* (ancient) *Gassan*. Its vibrant and iconic *ayasugi-hada*, resembling a pulsing sound wave, immediately catches the eye. A straight *suguha* hamon knits its way neatly through the *ayasugi* forming a gentle wavy braid.

An exquisite *aikuchi-koshirae* pays tribute, in part, to the *Yamabushi* (mountain monks) that live in the three sacred mountains of *Dewa* province known as *Sanzan*. The *saya* (scabbard) is formed of a base layer of rare *kinkarakawa* decorated leather - a crafting technique that originated with the *Medici* family in Italy, circa 1400s. It is further decorated with the *Chiba* family *kamon* that features a moon and star, a wooden *kôzuka* with a pair of *Watanabe* clan *kamon* and mantra scrolls as *menuki*.

This *tantô* exudes a spiritual energy that was most certainly treasured by a former samurai. It deserves a home that will honour it immensely.





Location: *Dewa* province (Yamagata)

Family name: *Gassan*

ubu-nakago (original, unaltered tang)

katte-sagari yasurime (sloping file marks)

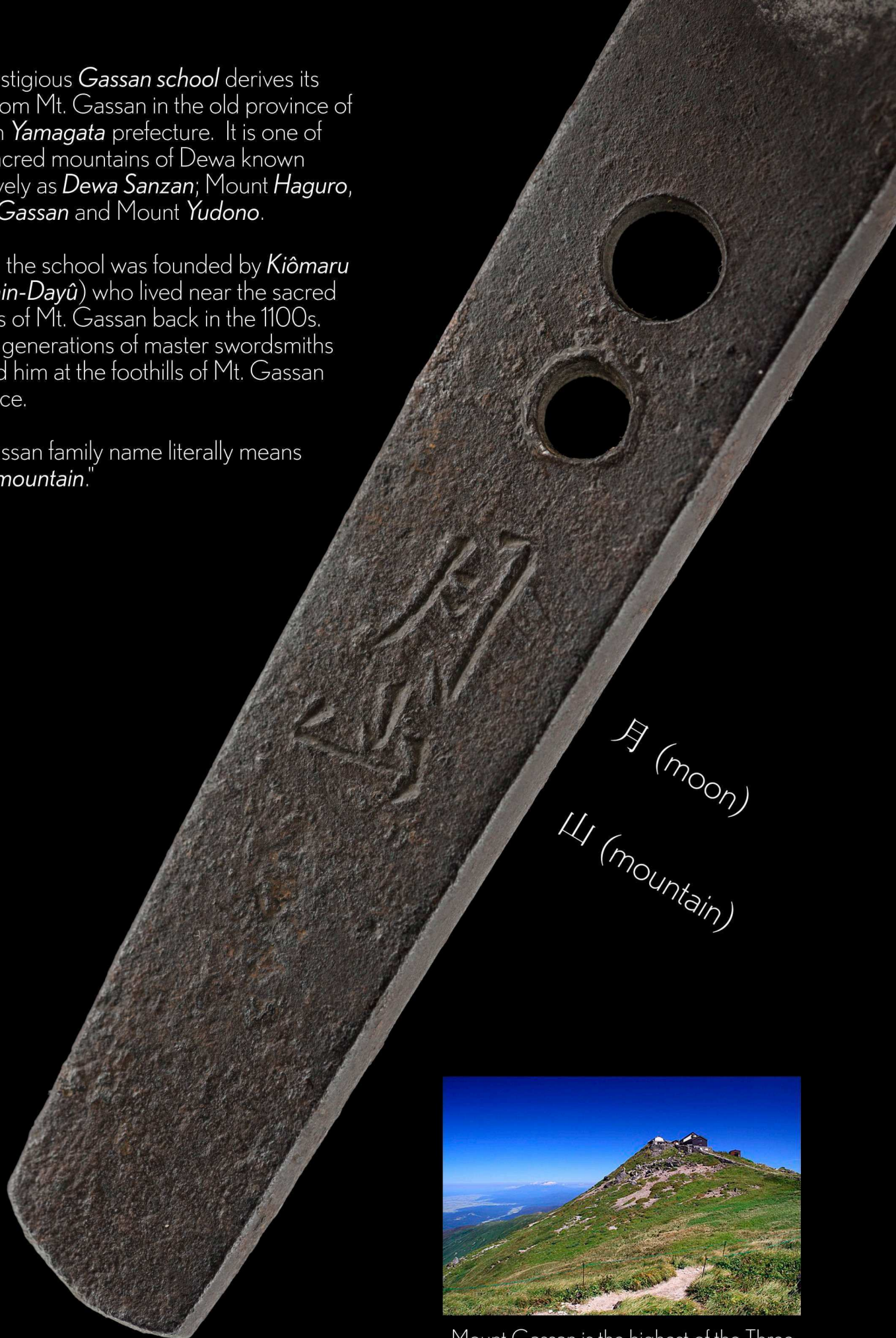
月 (Ga)

山 (ssan)

The prestigious *Gassan school* derives its name from Mt. Gassan in the old province of *Dewa* in *Yamagata* prefecture. It is one of three sacred mountains of Dewa known collectively as *Dewa Sanzan*; Mount *Haguro*, Mount *Gassan* and Mount *Yudono*.

It is said the school was founded by *Kiômaru* (or *Kishin-Dayû*) who lived near the sacred grounds of Mt. Gassan back in the 1100s. Several generations of master swordsmiths followed him at the foothills of Mt. Gassan ever since.

The Gassan family name literally means "*moon mountain*."



Mount Gassan is the highest of the Three Mountains of Dewa. The Gassan Shrine stands at the mountain's summit at 1,984 metres above sea level.

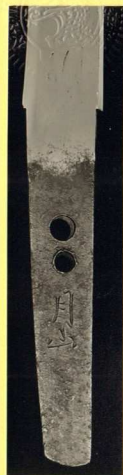


katte-sagari gentle sloping file marks

(*ura*, reverse)

01201909

No 3022673



鑑定書

一、短刀 銘 月山

右は當協會に於て審査の結果保存刀剣と
鑑定しこれを証する

長七寸三分強

令和元年十二月二日

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 68304 号
昭和30年4月12日

昭和三〇. 4. 12.

NBTHK Hozon Certificate of Designation

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

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

One, Tantô

Mei (signature)
Gassan

Nagasa (length)
7-sun 3-bu kyô (22.1cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Tôken Hozon Kyôkai
(NBTHK)

認定書

一 短刀 銘月山 長七寸三分五厘弱

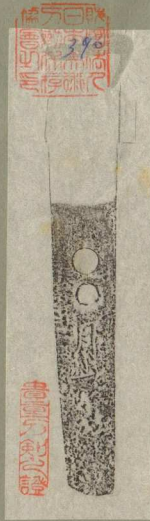
右は當協會に於て審査の結果特別貴重

刀劍として認定す

昭和四十六年十一月二十七日

財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協會

殿



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 46th year of Showa (1971), November 27th

One, Tantô

Mei (signature)
Gassan

Nagasa (length)
7-sun 3-bu 5-rin jaku (22.1cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Tôken Hozon Kyôkai
(NBTHK)

Gassan nanasun nibu
(月山七寸二分)
Gassan 22.1cm

Jidai Ôei-goro
(時代應永頃)
Around Oei Period
(1394-1428)

This *tsunagi* (wooden blade) holds the koshirae together when the sword is in the shirasaya.

A previous owner wrote that this Gassan tantô was crafted around the Ôei era, however, this is probably a bit ambitious.

The sword was likely crafted about 500 years ago, around the year 1500.

(Ga) 月
(ssan) 山
(nana) 七
(sun) 寸
(ni) 二
(bu) 分



時 (Ji)
代 (dai)
應 (Ô)
永 (ei)
頃 (goro)

月 (Ga)
山 (ssan)
七 (nana)
寸 (sun)
二 (ni)
分 (bu)





This unique wavy grain pattern in the steel is called *ayasugi-hada*. Also known as *Gassan-hada* (月山肌), this forging structure has remained the trademark of this iconic school for centuries.

Interestingly, this pattern is named after the special wavy carving pattern on certain *koto* or *shamisen* music instruments which enhances its resonance.



Koto
traditional Japanese musical instrument

A stream of *ayasugi-hada* courses its way
alongside a riverbank of *chû-suguha hamon*.



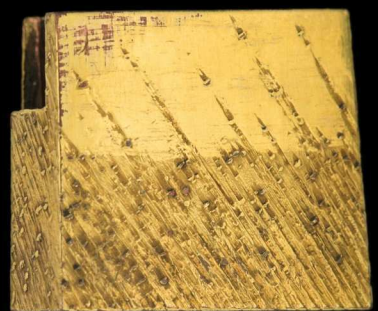


月
山





Shirasaya
(protective scabbard)



gold-wrapped *habaki* with
diagonal file marks

Kinkarakawa-tsutsumi
 gesseimon-chirashi saya
 aikuchi-tantô-koshirae
 (金唐草包月星紋散鞘合口短刀拵え)

Aikuchi style tantô-koshirae
 wrapped with kinkarakawa
 decorated leather
 with gessei crests

Crafted during the
 Late Edo period
 (1780~1867)



NBTHK Hozon Certificate



NTHK-NPO Kanteisho
 Certificate of Authenticity

01201910



No 4016479



鑑定書

一金唐革包月星紋散鞘合口短刀拵

目貫巻物二巻図
小柄渡辺星紋二双図無銘
柄根岸色蛇腹糸片手千段巻

右は當協會に於て審査の結果保存刀装具と
鑑定しこれを証する

令和元年十一月二十六日

公益財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協會



NBTHK Hozon
Certificate of Designation

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

Issued in the 1st year of Reiwa (2019), November 26th

One,

*Aikuchi style tantô-koshirae wrapped with
kinkarakawa decorated leather with gessei crests*

Nihon Bijutsu Tôken Hozon Kyôkai
(NBTHK)

Yamabushi are the mountain dwellers of Japan, practitioners of the ancient belief of *Shugendo*, the way (do) of attaining divine natural powers (gen) through ascetic practices (shu).

Mountains, or nature in general, is believed to be covered in knowledge incomprehensible to humans through written or spoken means, and spending time in the mountains is seen as a way to absorb this knowledge. Buddhist mantras are believed to be projected onto mountains, and some places on the mountains are named after specific places seen in mantras. Thereby walking on the mountains is akin to walking through these mantras and again to absorb the knowledge.

It was *Prince Hachiko*, the son of Emperor *Sushun*, who first made the *Dewa Sanzan* mountains a religious site back in 593.

Over the years, these mountains have become a popular pilgrimage site and the famous monk *Kobo Daishi* (also known as *Kukai*), the founder of *Shingon Buddhism*, visited them.

The pilgrimage begins on *Mount Haguro* which represents the present or birth. Then comes the ascent of *Mount Gassan* which represents the past or death. It ends at *Mount Yudono* which represents the future or rebirth.



colour match



A 600-year-old cedar tree guards the majestic 5-storey pagoda, built in 1372, on Mount Haguro, classified as a national treasure since 1966. The colour of the silk appears to have been inspired by the mossy landscape.



Yamabushi with trumpet shell used to communicate over distant mountain tops.

Sources:

<https://www.sugoi-japan.com/yamabushi-dewa-sanzan-yamagata>
<https://timbunting.com/home/yamabushi/>

The Chiba clan (*Chiba-shi*) was a Japanese *samurai* family descending from the *Taira* clan. The clan was founded by *Chiba Tsunetane*, the son of *Taira no Tadatsune*.

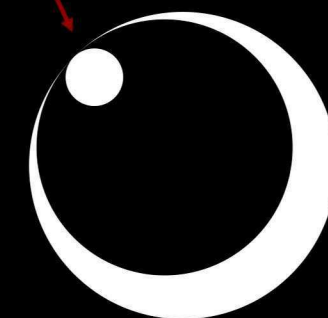
During the *Genpei War* (1180~1185) the Chiba clan, as well as the *Hôjô*, *Miura*, and *Doi* clans, opposed the greater 'core' Taira clan and supported *Minamoto no Yoritomo*. Chiba Tsunetane won Yoritomo's trust and helped establish the *Kamakura* shogunate.

It's evident that the *moon*, which is seen in both the *kanji* of the *Gassan* family name and within the *kamon* of the *Chiba* family crest served as heavenly inspiration for this spiritual *koshirae*.



star

moon



Gessei (moon and star)
kamon of the *Chiba* clan



Kinkarakawa is a type of leather prepared according to a method first developed by the *Medici* family in Italy. This technique was later learned by the Japanese from the Dutch in the 17th century. Essentially, *cow hide is impressed with floral patterns and a thin gold sheet*. By 1668, such items had become so popular in Japan that the emperor placed a ban on further imports, which lasted until the *Meiji* period (~1912). Nowadays, kinkarakawa is rarely found, especially in such excellent condition. The kinkarakawa has been lacquered for posterity in this exquisite *aikuchi koshirae*.



Japanese late Edo period Kinkarakawa purse with kabuto (helmet) metal detail.

Source:

<https://www.maitreyaantiques.com/blog/2018/5/26/kinkarakawa>





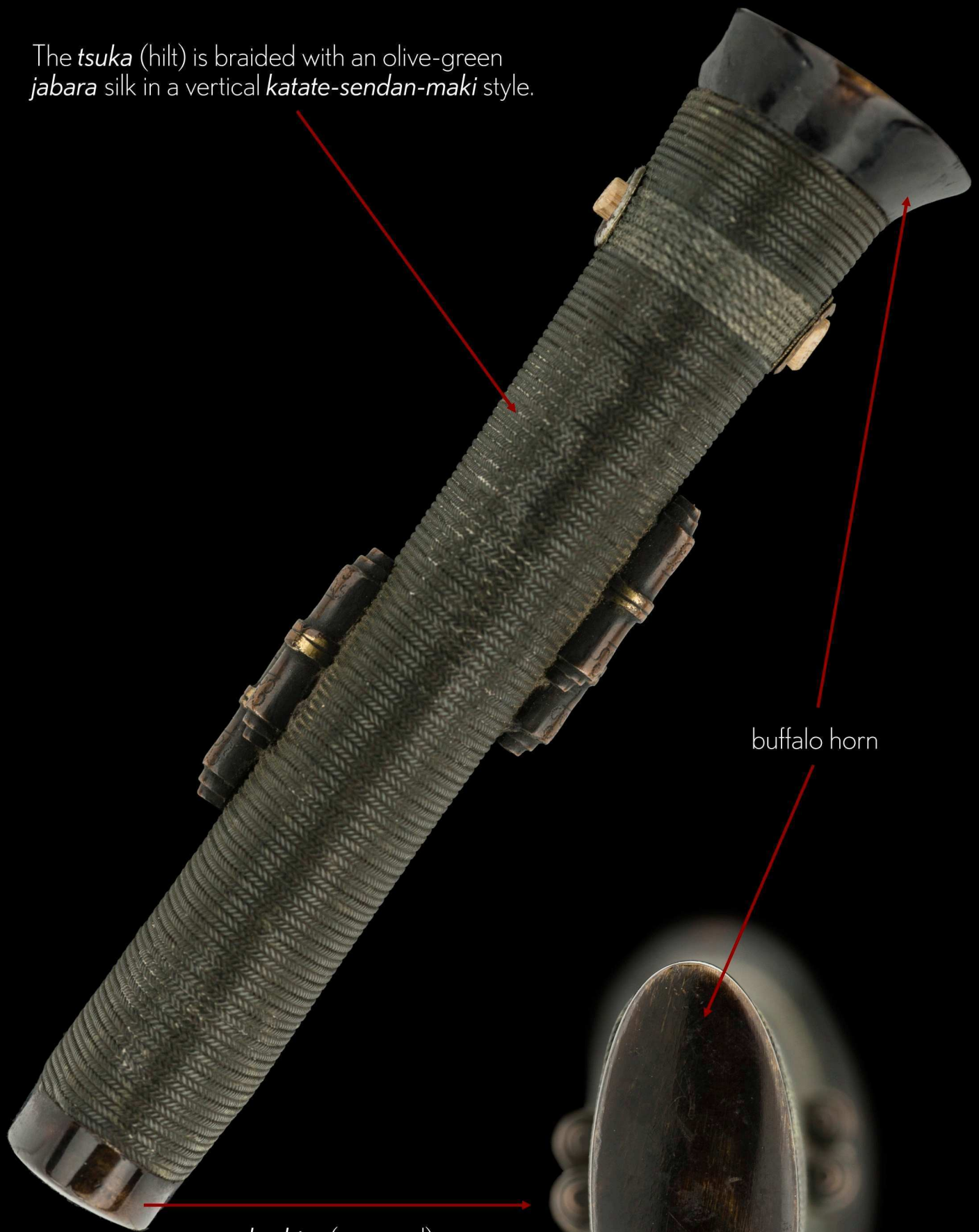
Thoughtfully selected *menuki* depict two *makimono* (scrolls) that symbolize the Buddhist mantras that the *yamabushi* (mountain monks) would carry and recite over mountains.



antique *makimono*



The *tsuka* (hilt) is braided with an olive-green *jabara* silk in a vertical *katate-sendan-maki* style.



buffalo horn

kashira (pommel)





This unique *kôzuka* (utility knife) features two family crests of the *Watanabe* clan, a branch of the *Minamoto* clan that descended from the *Emperor Saga* (786~842), Japan's 52nd emperor. The name's origination refers to a location called '*Watanabe no tsu*' which was settled by the *Watanabe* clan in the medieval period near the mouth of the *Yodogawa* River in *Settsu* Province, in present-day city of *Ôsaka*.



The *Watanabe kamon* features *three stars over a straight line* known as *Mitsuboshi ni ichimonji*.





Mount *Ayasugi*



Koshirae bag



ITEM# UJKA410

A MASAMORI KATANA

SIGNED & DATED, LATE EDO PERIOD (BUNKYŪ ERA: AUTUMN 1862)

Swordsmith: *Hosokawa Shume no Suke Minamoto Masamori (3rd generation, ubu nakago)*
Measurements: **Length:** 75.8cm **Curvature:** 1.6cm **Moto-haba:** 3.18cm **Weight:** 1095g
Jihada: *Ko-itame leading to muji-hada and bô-utsuri*
Hamon: *Gunome-chôji-midare in nioi-deki with long ashi*
Certificate #1: **NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon** (designated as Especially Worthy of Preservation)
Certificate #2-4: **NTHK-NPO Kanteisho** (*tsuba, fuchi-kashira & koshirae* designated as Authentic)
Fujishiro rank: **Chujô-saku** (ranked as an above-average swordsmith)
Included: Shirasaya, koshirae, fabric bags, stand, kit, booklet, description

SOLD

Born *Hosokawa Sennosuke* in 1822, *Masamori* was the son of the *nidai* (second generation) *Hosokawa Masayoshi* who, along with his grandfather *shodai Masayoshi*, studied under grandmaster *Suishinshi Masahide*. *Masamori* gained tutelage not only under his father but also master swordsmith *Taikei Naotane*. His career lasted from about 1844 through to the *Meiji* era (1868~1912), specializing primarily in the *Bizen* tradition. This extra-long, freshly polished muscular katana features an impressive 7cm *ô-kissaki* and a dazzling *gunome-chôji-midare hamon*. Weighing over one kilogram, this meaty sword has been battle-ready since it was crafted in the autumn of 1862 for the *Tsuyama* domain of *Matsudaira shôgunate*. Its handsome *koshirae* showcases prosperous *koi* (carp), a beautiful nature scene of bees pollinating on a *sakura* tree by the *Ishiguro* school and depictions of a set of bow and arrows in the form of oversized *menuki*.



Saki-kasane: 5.9mm

Moto-kasane: 8.5mm

Kissaki: 7.24cm

Saki-haba: 2.34cm

Nagasa: 75.8cm

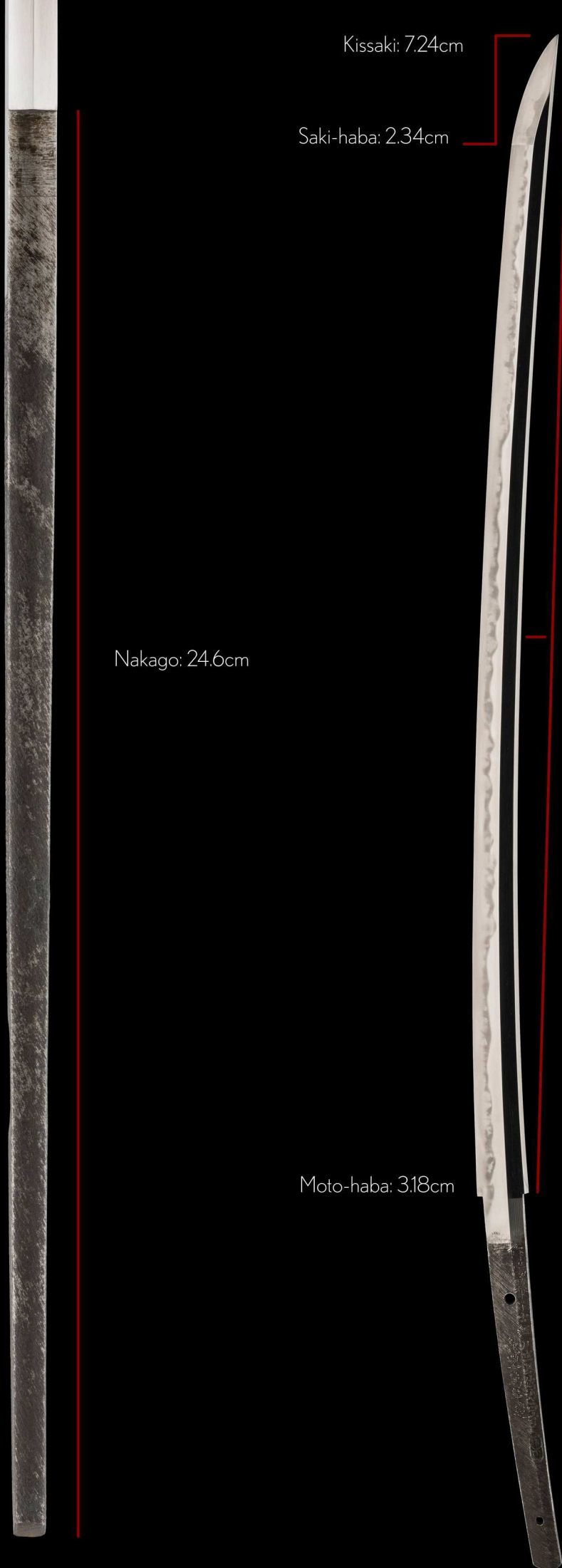
Nakago: 24.6cm

Sori: 1.60cm

Omosa: 1095g

Moto-haba: 3.18cm

Mekugi-ana: 2



To gain full appreciation of the work of talented swordsmith *Masamori*, we start with an exploration into his family history.

Born *Hosokawa Sennosuke* in 1822, *Masamori* was the son of the *nidai* (second generation) *Hosokawa Masayoshi* who, along with his grandfather *shodai* Masayoshi and founder of the *Hosokawa Masayoshi* school, studied under grandmaster *Suishinshi Masahide*.

Nidai Masayoshi started to serve the powerful *Matsudaira daimyô* family of *Tsuyama* domain in 1817. In 1841, the family moved to *Fukagawa* to help establish the Tsuyama Edo (Tokyo) branch as many foreign ships were arriving to the nation's capital and Edo needed to be protected by decree of the ruling *shôgunate*.

Masamori gained tutelage not only under his father but also master swordsmith *Taikei Naotane*. His career lasted from about 1844 through to the *Meiji* era (1868~1912), specializing primarily in the Bizen tradition.

This extra-long, muscular katana features an impressive 7cm *ô-kissaki* and a dazzling *gunome-chôji-midare hamon*. Weighing over one kilogram, this meaty sword has been battle-ready since it was crafted in the autumn of 1862.

Its handsome koshirae showcases prosperous *koi* (carp), a beautiful nature scene on the *fuchi-kashira* of bees pollinating on a *sakura* tree by the *Ishiguro* school and depictions of a set of bow and arrows in the form of oversized *menuki*.





(Ki) 龜
 (hō) 峯
 (Ban) 萬
 (nen) 年
 (tsukuru) 造

作 (Saku)
 陽 (yô)
 幕 (Bak)
 下 (ka)
 士 (shi)
 細 (Hoso)
 川 (kawa)
 主 (Shu)
 馬 (me, no)
 佐 (Suke)
 源 (Minamoto)
 正 (Masa)
 守 (mori)

← *koku'in* personal stamp/seal

Location: *Musashi Province*
 Title: *Shume no Suke*
 Family name: *Hosokawa*
 Swordsmith: *Masamori* (3rd generation Masayoshi)

ubu-nakago (original, unaltered tang)
kesho-yasurime (decorative file marks)

Kihô Bannen tsukuru
 Crafted wishing eternal prosperity



Masamori certified his *nakago* with the same *koiku'in* (personal stamp/seal) as his father, *nidai Masayoshi*.

Bunkyû ni mizunoe-inudoshi chûshû bi
Dated on a day in the middle of autumn
in the 2nd year of *Bunkyû* era during the
Year of the Dog (1862)

(Bun) 文
(kyû) 久
(ni) 二
(mizunoe) 壬
(inu) 戌
(doshi) 年
(chû) 仲
(shû) 秋
(bi) 日

Translation of the *nakago* (in plain English):

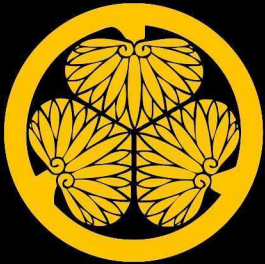
[This sword was crafted by] swordsmith
Hosokawa Shume no Suke Minamoto
Masamori, a retainer in the west *Sakushû*
province working for the [*Tsuyama* domain
of the *Matsudaira*] *shôgunate* and certified
with his personal stamp.

Dated while wishing eternal prosperity on a
day in the middle of autumn in the second
year of *Bunkyû era*, 1862.





Matsudaira Yoshitomo was leader of the *Tsuyama domain* when *Masamori* crafted this katana in autumn 1862.



Maru ni Mitsuba-aoi kamon



A vintage photo of *Tsuyama castle*.

03202109

No. 1017098



鑑定書

一刀 銘

作陽幕下士細川主馬佐源正守(刻印)
龜峯万年造
文久二壬戌年仲秋日

長二尺五寸強

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

令和三年十二月三日

公益財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協會



東京都教育委員会
第 224524 号
昭和56年10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 3rd year of Reiwa (2021), December 3rd

One, Katana

Mei (signature)

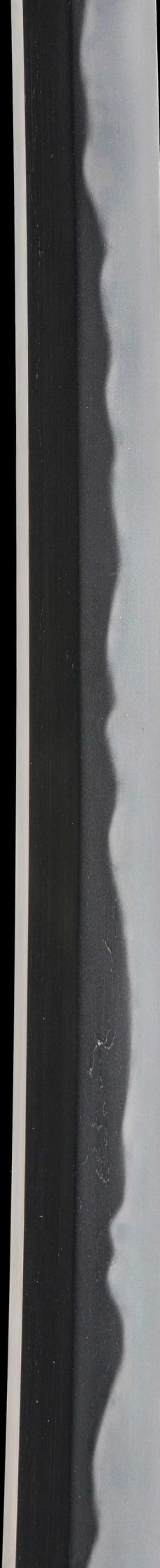
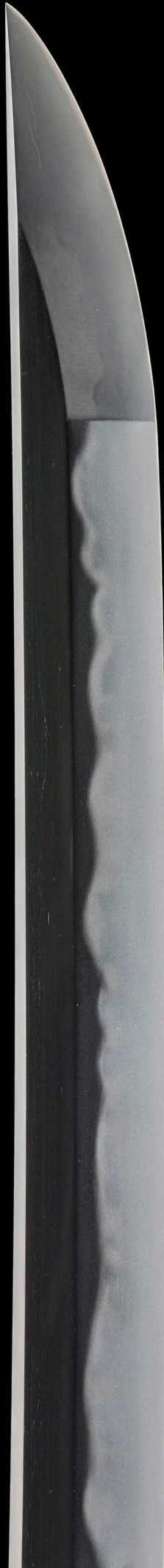
Sakuyô bakka-shi Hosokawa Shume no Suke Minamoto Masamori (kokuin)
Kihô Bannen tsukuru
Bunkyû ni mizonoe-inudoshi chûshû bi

Nagasa (length)

2-shaku 5-sun kyô (75.8cm)

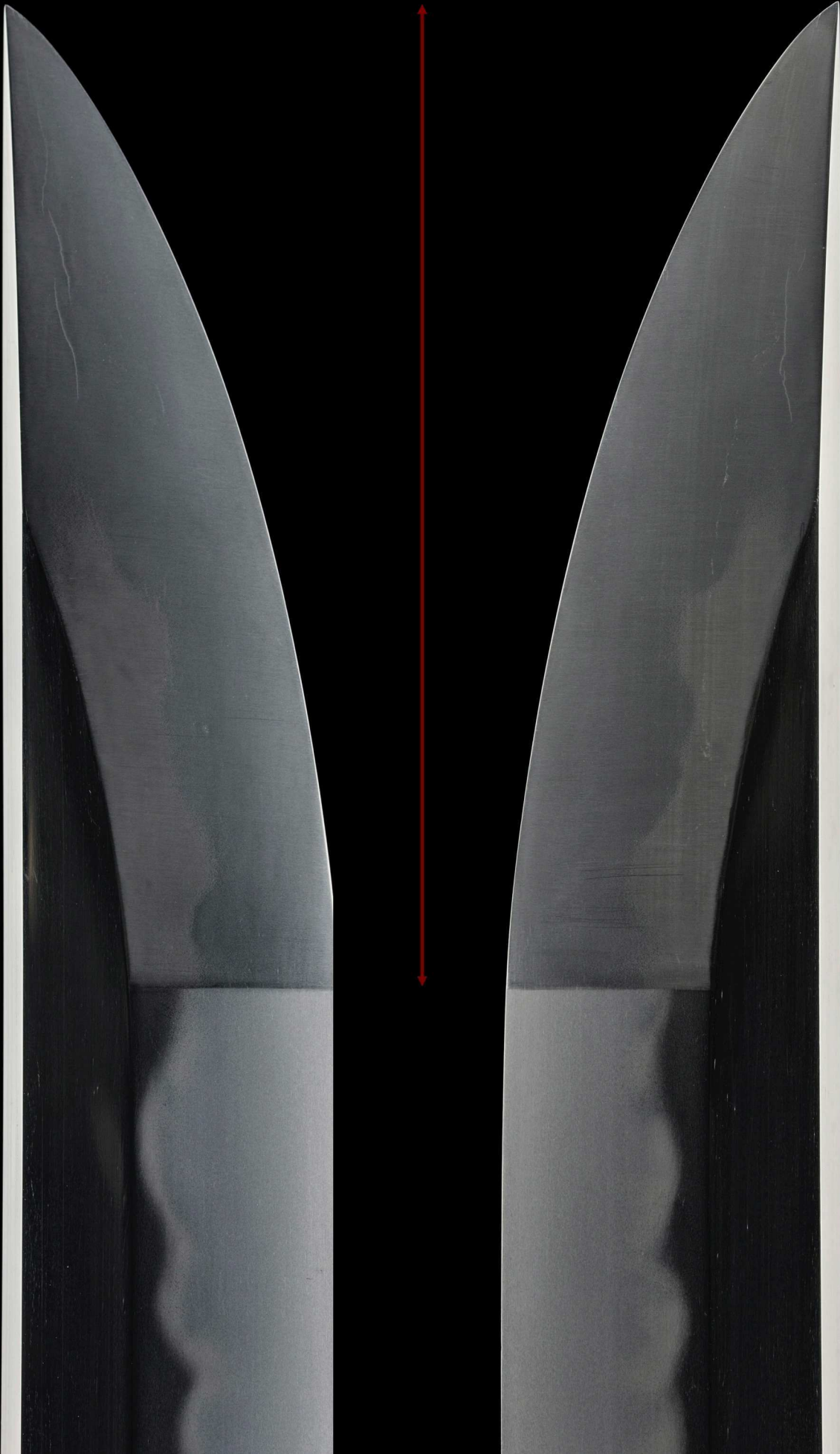
Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai
(NBTHK)



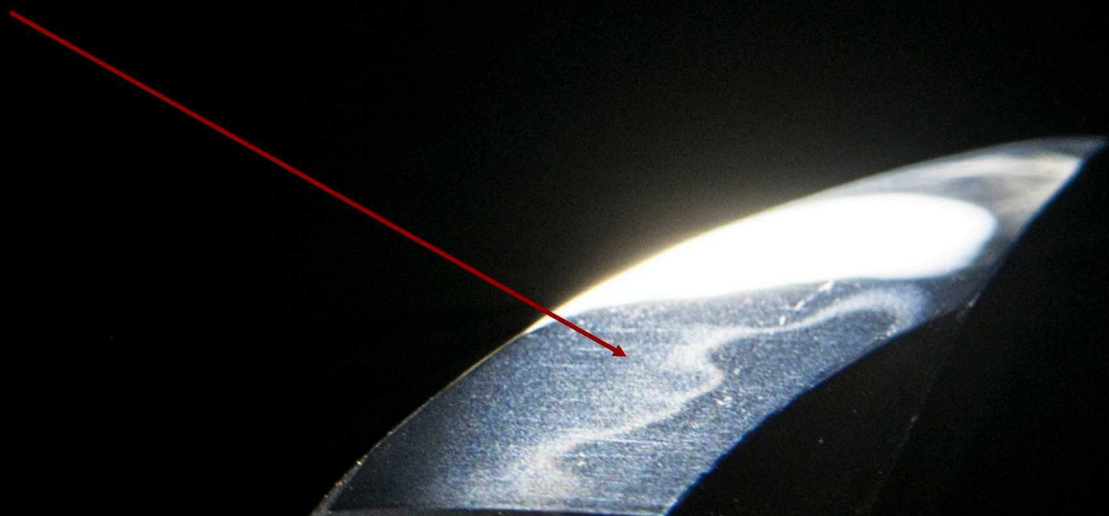


ô-kissaki
(extra-long tip)

7.24cm



Midare-komi boshi
(wavy hamon in the *kissaki*)



The steel is so densely forged that there is little discernible grain pattern, thus referred to as *muji-hada*, without grain pattern. Dense *jigane* almost always leads to an extra-heavy sword.

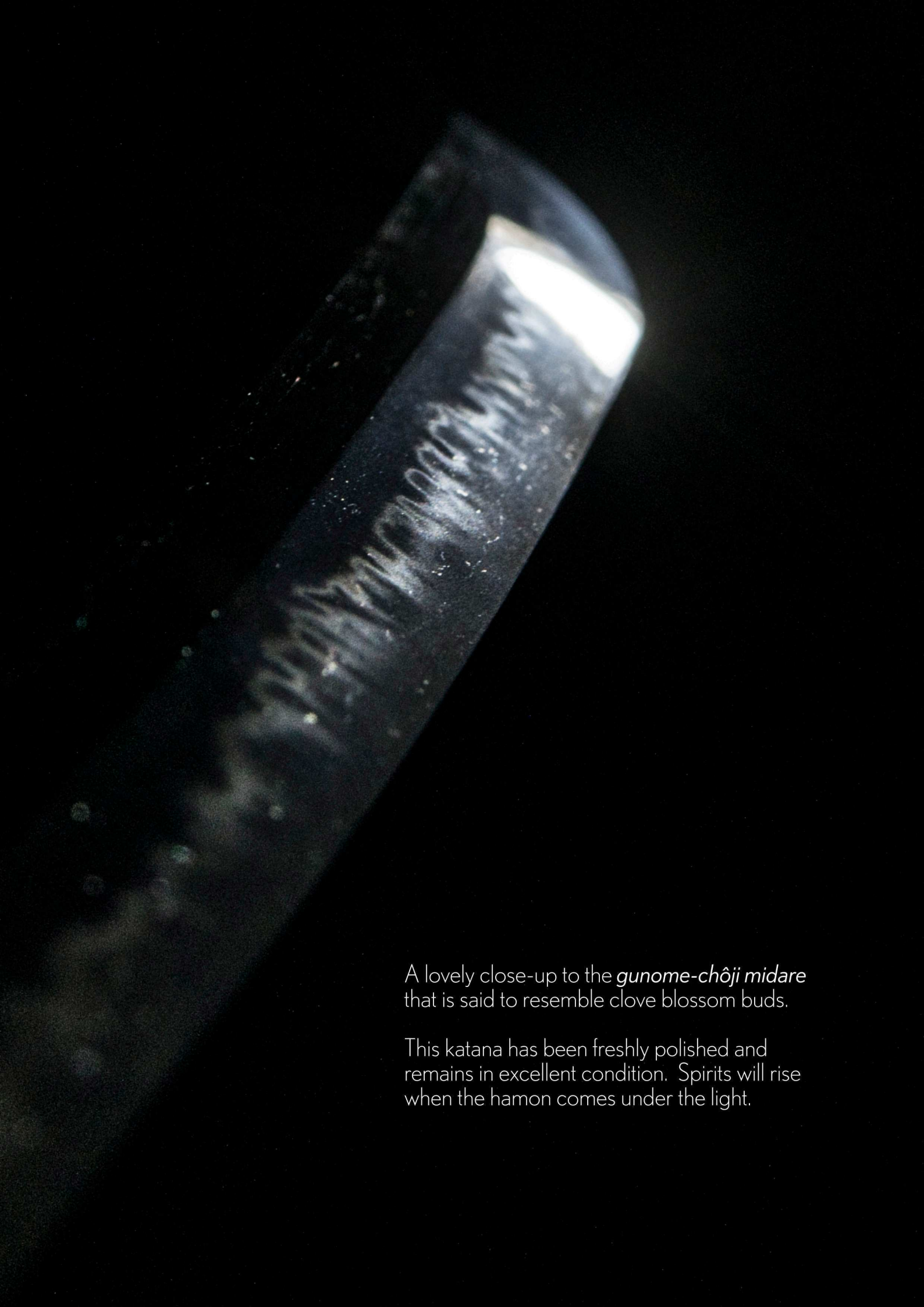
Note the extra-fine *nio* crystals that form milky way Masamori galaxy.



galactic *nio* crystals



The *hamon* pattern at base of the blade looks like it's on fire.
Let the last *samurai* games begin...



A lovely close-up to the *gunome-chôji midare* that is said to resemble clove blossom buds.

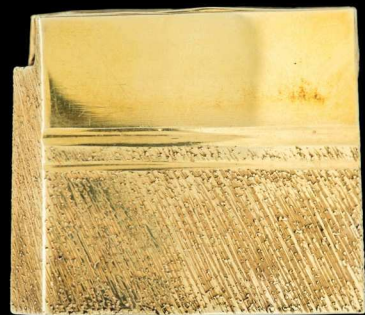
This katana has been freshly polished and remains in excellent condition. Spirits will rise when the hamon comes under the light.

Masamori recreated *bô-utsuri*
being faithful to the *Bizen* tradition.





Shirasaya
(protective scabbard)



gold-wrapped *habaki* with
diagonal file marks

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

*Uchigatana-koshirae
lacquered in glossy black*

Crafted during the
Modern period



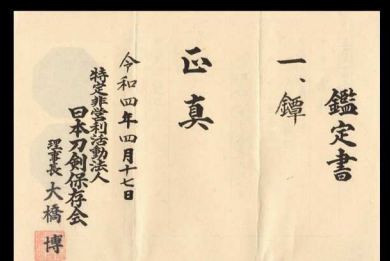
NTHK-NPO Kanteisho
Certificate of Authenticity



This beautiful octagon-shaped polished iron *tsuba* features a design of *koi* (carp) swimming within an arabesque backdrop. The carp symbolizes strength of character and prosperity due to its determination to climb up a waterfall and transforming into a dragon.

The octagon shape has been used in *Taoist* culture to represent the universal elements such as fire, sky, wind, water in a supreme *yin/yang* energy balance. This *tsuba* represents the meaningful struggle to achieve such balance leading to a long, healthy and prosperous life.

An NTHK-NPO Kanteisho certificate of authenticity attributing the piece to the *modern era* has been attained.





(reverse)



NTHK-NPO Kanteisho Certificate
Fuchi-kashira attributed to the famed
Ishiguro school, late Edo period

Bees pollinating on *sakura*
 (cherry blossoms)



A splendid nature scene is captured
 in terrific detail on the *fuchi-kashira*
 where bees are busy pollinating
 round a *sakura* (cherry blossom) tree.

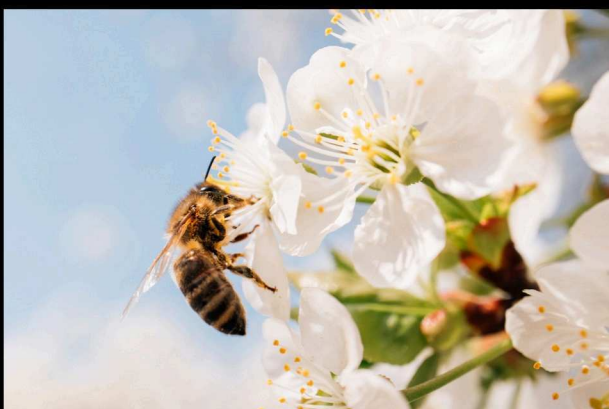


Image: Ivan Radic (Flickr)



Oversized *menuki* in the form of a *yumi* (bow) and a case of arrows fits nicely on this extra long *tsuka* (hilt). Purple silk colour gives the koshirae a regal appearance.



Is that a bug crawling on the hilt?
Not quite...see below!



Late Edo period *samurai* bow, arrows and case



Koshirae bag



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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.

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

SOLD
(FOR REFERENCE PURPOSES ONLY)

ujka320 & ujwa240
A Naoe Shizu Daishô
Nambokuchô period, circa 1368~1375
Mino province

Length: 71.2cm & 53.9cm
NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon & Kicho certification
Complete custom *daishô* production in Japan



According to historical records swordsmiths populated Mino province in the *Hôgen* era (1156-1159) during the *Heian* period. However, its only once the very late Kamakura period (early 1300s) appeared that works by *Shizu Saburo Kaneuji* and *Kinju* have been confirmed.

To give a sense of context, Kaneuji is said to have moved from *Yamato* (Nara) to study under the great *Masamune* to become one of his ten finest pupils (*Masamune Jutetsu*).

Kaneuji eventually moved to Shizu district in Mino province and is largely considered the founder of the Mino tradition. Incidentally, shizu means 'still or 'calm in Japanese.

As one would have expected, Kaneujis works carry a strong mixture of *Yamato Tegai school* qualities (a jihada of mokume hada with straight grain masame hada) and the *Soshu* tradition with a hamon displaying *nie-deki* with plenty of hataraki such as *sunagashi* (streaks of sand), *kinsuji* (stripes of gold) and *inazuma* (crooked lightning bolts).

A noteworthy difference is that is that the hamon carries some *togari* (tapered peaks) in the hamon. As a basic rule of thumb, all Mino tradition swords have togari in the hamon.

Unsigned swords attributed to Kaneuji are known as Yamato Shizu (Shizu meaning 'Kaneuji). In the beginning, students of the ô-Shizu school (founded by Kaneuji) and of the Naoe Shizu School moved to Naoe district also in Mino province to differentiate themselves.

Notable students include *Kaneyuki* (son of *Kaneshige*), Tametsugu (a disciple of either one of the greats *Gô Yoshiro* or *Norishige*), *Kanetoshi*, *Kanenaga* (which the NTHK-NPO attributed this sword to in their *Yushusaku* certificate), *Kanetsugu*, *Kanenobu* and later generations of *Kaneuji*.

What makes the Naoe Shizu School different from that of ô-Shizu is that the *sugata* (shape) is superior; key traits being that of a *wide mihaba* and *ô-kissaki*. Both of which, according to Nagayama Kokan of the *Connoisseurs Book of Japanese Swords*, "*lend to a grand appearance*".

Of equal importance to note is that the jihada has swirling pools of *itame* mixed with *mokume*. The folding pattern in the steel has a direct influence on the hamon displaying *sunagashi* (streaks of sand).



Saki-kasane: 3.8mm [^]

Moto-kasane: 5.2mm

Omosa: 685g

Nakago: 19.8cm

Kissaki: 4.14cm

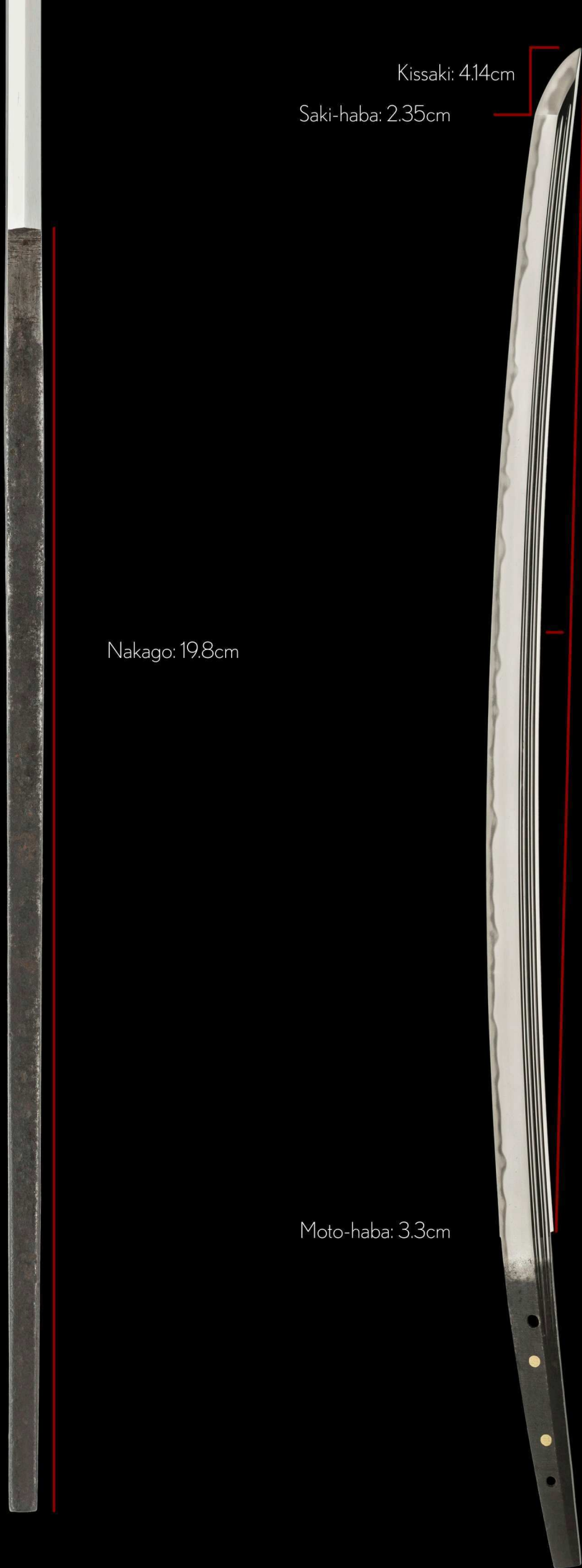
Saki-haba: 2.35cm

Moto-haba: 3.3cm

Nagasa: 71.2 cm

Sori: 1.6cm

Mekugi-ana: 2



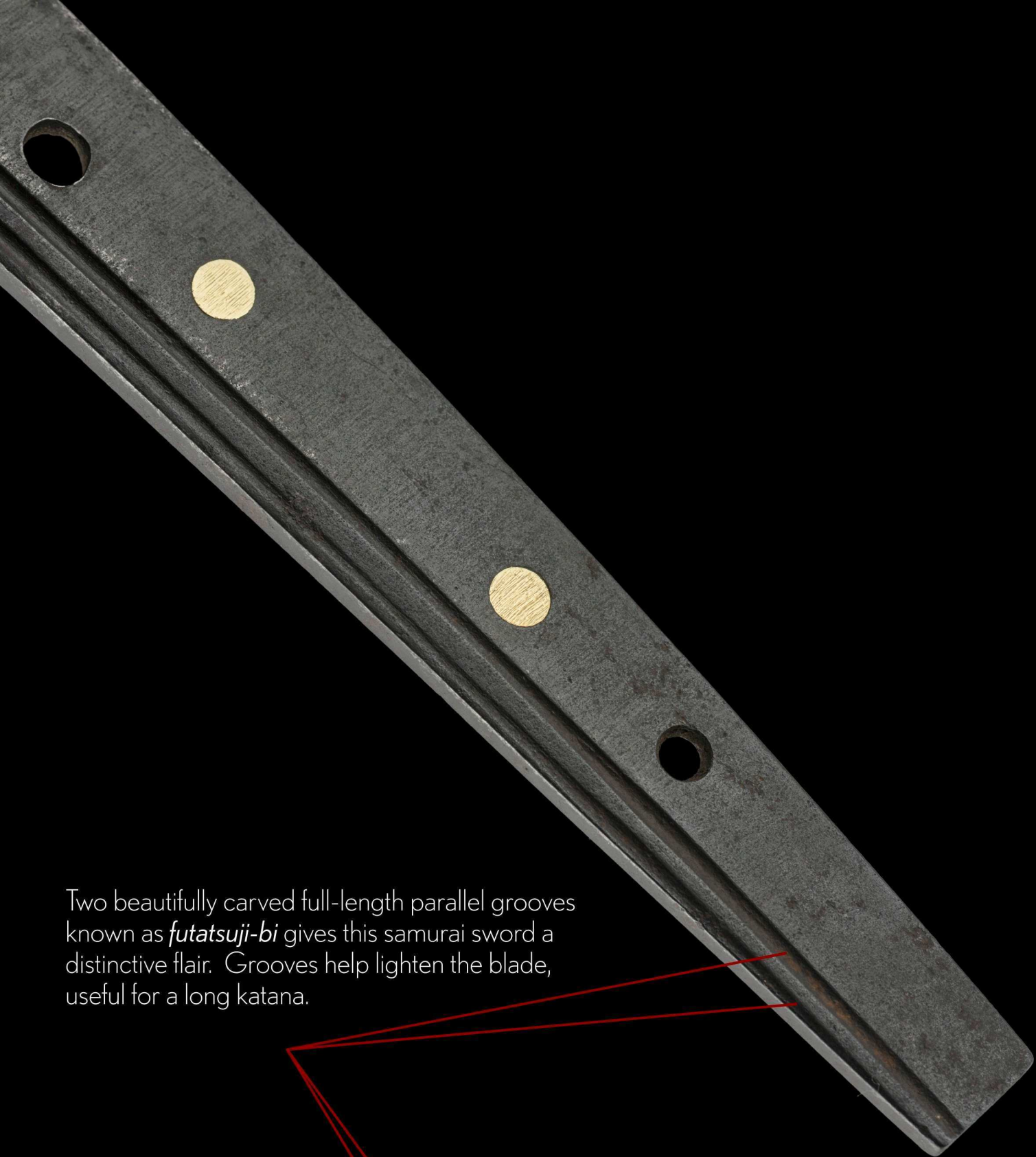
Location: *Mino province* (Gifu prefecture)

o-suriage-nakago (greatly shortened tang)

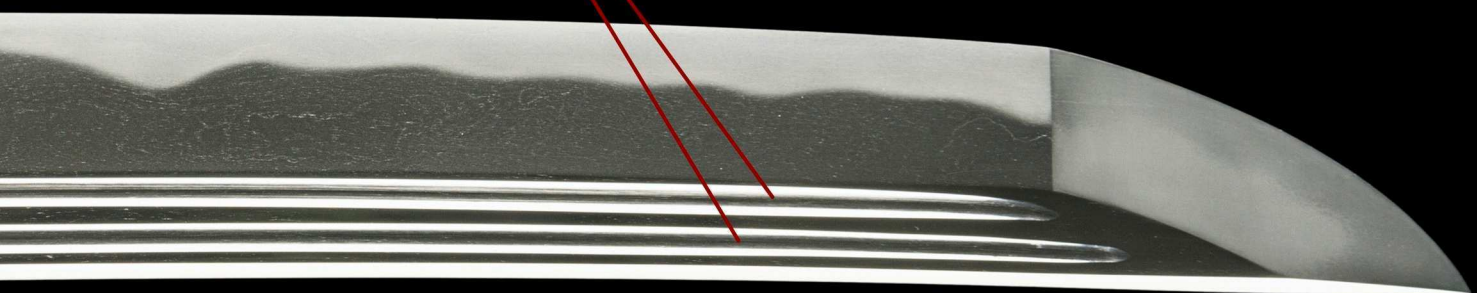
kiri-yasurime (straight file marks)



gold-filled *nakago-ana* (holes)



Two beautifully carved full-length parallel grooves known as *futatsuji-bi* gives this samurai sword a distinctive flair. Grooves help lighten the blade, useful for a long katana.



特保
25201305



No 1001376



鑑定書

一刀 無銘 (直江志津)

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剣と
鑑定しこれを証する

平成二十五年六月二十八日

公益財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協會



愛知 教育委員会
第 32494 号
昭和42年12月12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

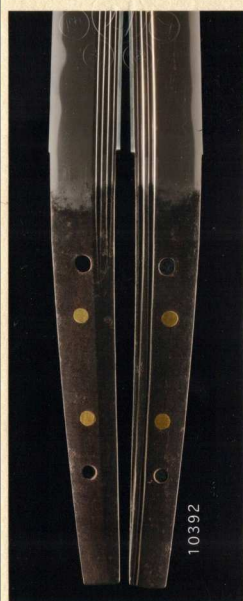
Issued in the 25th year of Heisei (2013), June 28th

One, Katana

Mei (signature)
Mumei
(Naoe Shizu)

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

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai
(NBTHK)



捺 査 査 印 員	備 考	寸 法	拵 え	中 心	図 柄	影 り	鋒 子	刃 紋	下 地	鍛	造 り 込 み	銘 文	第 一 万 三 百 九 十 二 号
	心 安 頃			目釘穴 四 個 内 三 埋 め 鏝 勝 手 下 が り	裏、二筋樋中心中程で掻き流し	表、二筋樋掻き通し	浅く乱れ込み、小丸返り	処々突出した刃を交える互の目乱れ		板目詰む	鎚造り	大磨り上げ無銘	
											庵 棟		

NTHK-NPO Yushusaku Certificate of Authenticity

This katana was designated as *Yushusaku* (Highly Excellent) by the Non-Profit Society for the Preservation of the Japanese Sword

One, Katana

Mumei (unsigned)
Den Nôshû Naoe Shizu Kanenobu

Nagasa (length)
2-shaku 3-sun 5-bu kore ari (71.2cm)

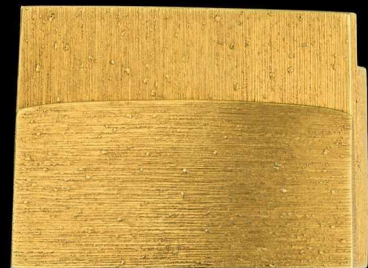
Issued in 1st year of Reiwa (2019), December 15th

Nihon Token Hozon Kai
(NTHK-NPO)

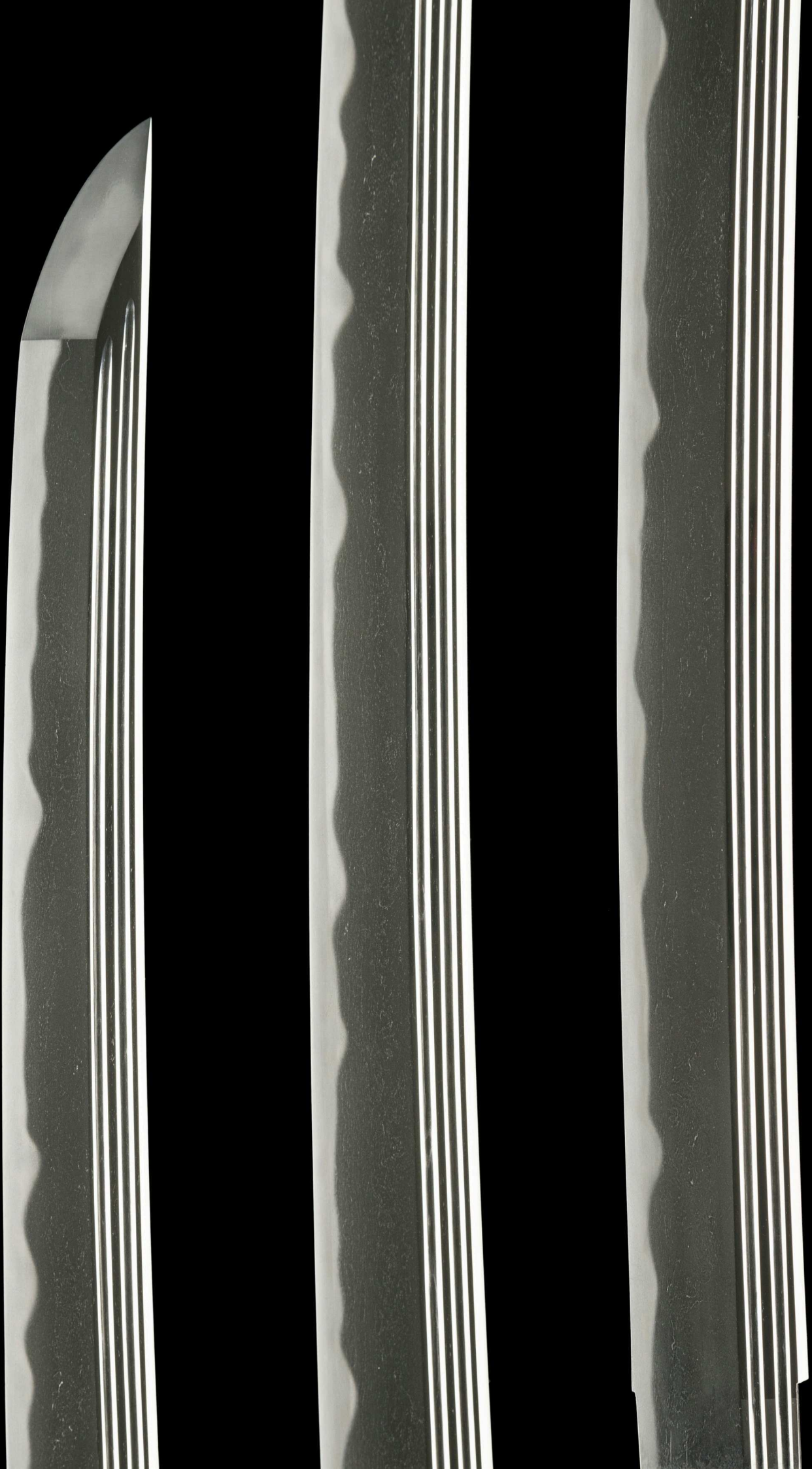
This sword has reached the highest level of honour at the NTHK-NPO.
Five judges have stamped their names to the certificate.

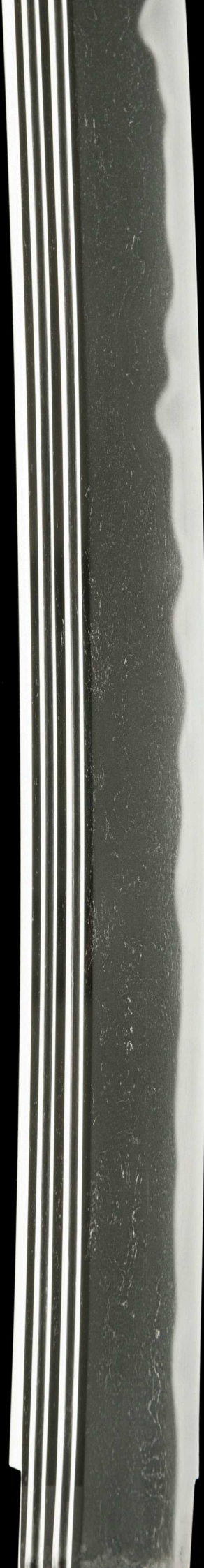
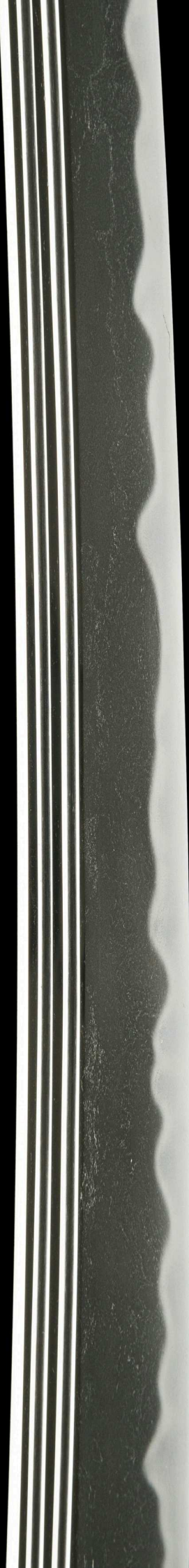
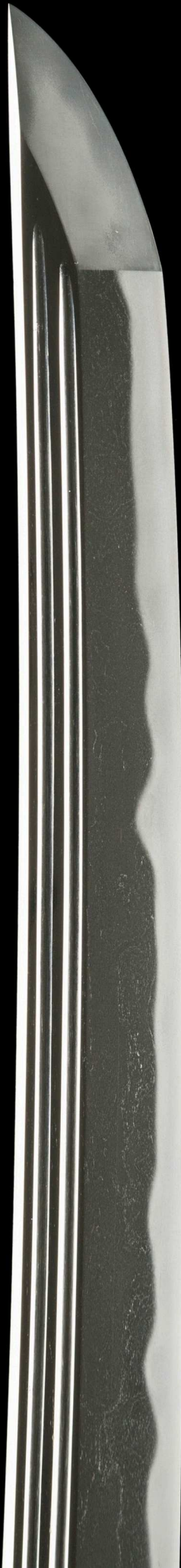


Shirasaya
(protective scabbard)

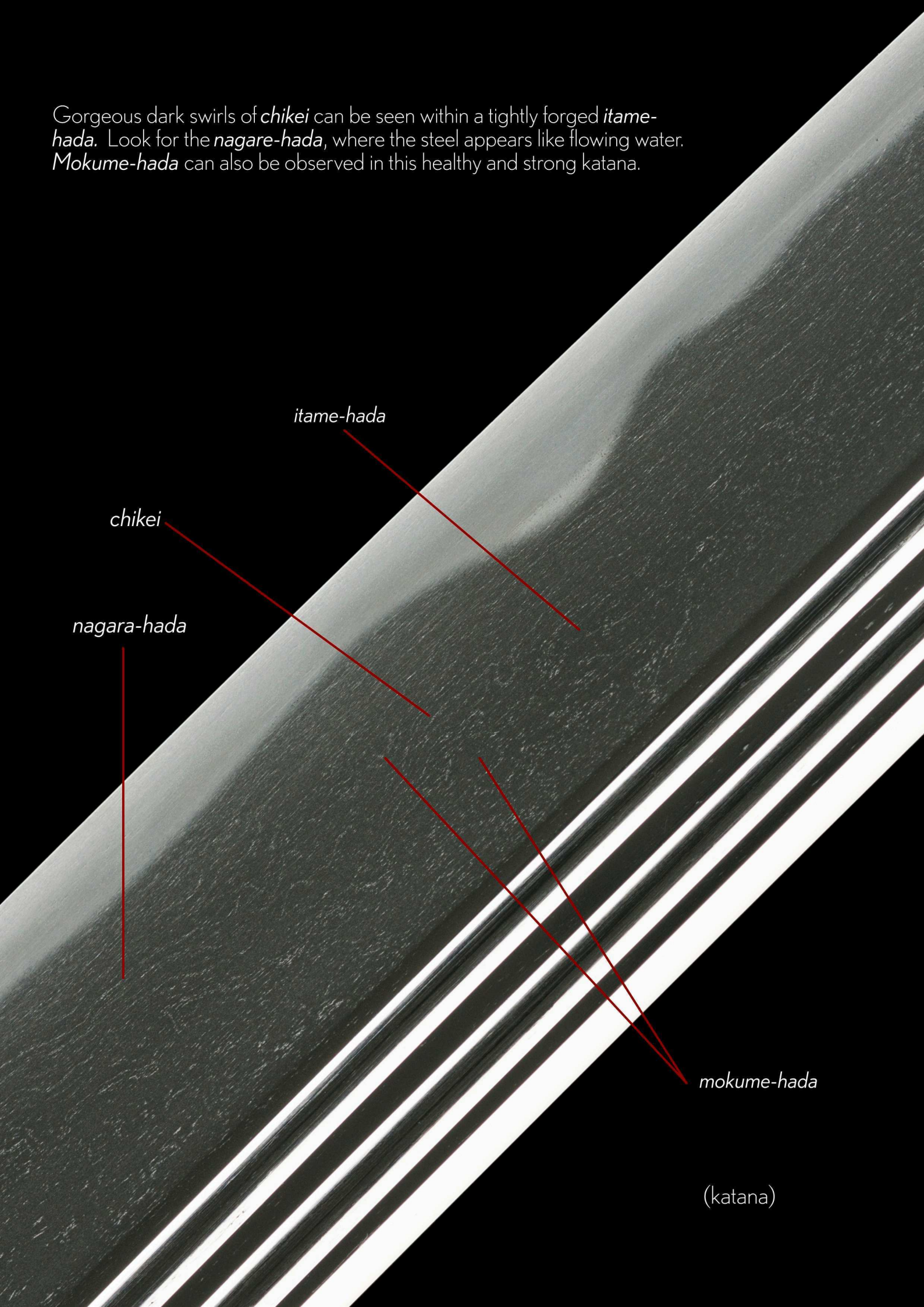


gold *habaki*
with crisp file marks





Gorgeous dark swirls of *chikei* can be seen within a tightly forged *itame-hada*. Look for the *nagare-hada*, where the steel appears like flowing water. *Mokume-hada* can also be observed in this healthy and strong katana.



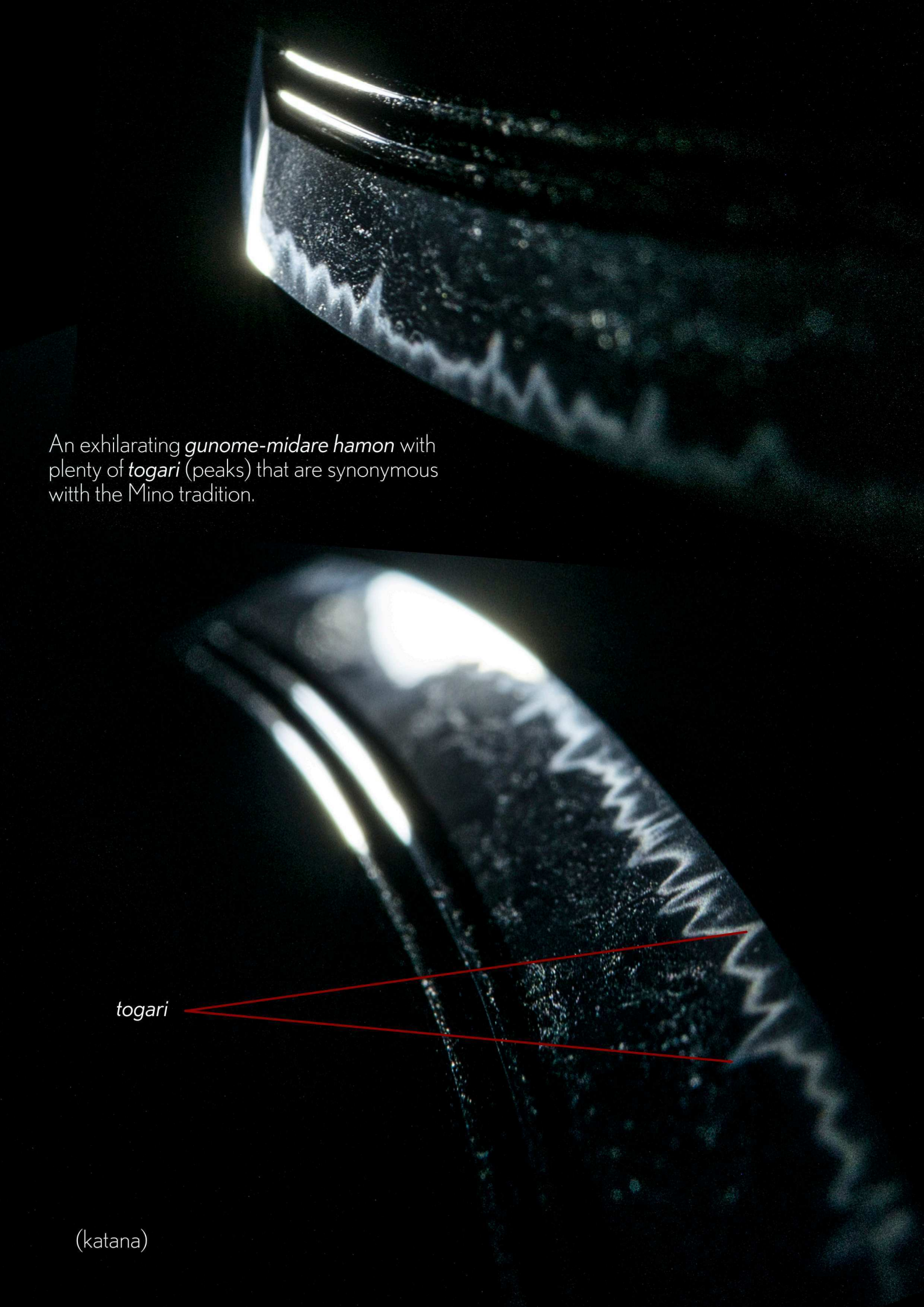
itame-hada

chikei

nagara-hada

mokume-hada

(katana)



An exhilarating *gunome-midare hamon* with plenty of *togari* (peaks) that are synonymous with the Mino tradition.

togari



(katana)

The *shô* (wakizashi) of the daishô has been attributed to the Naoe Shizu school by an early team at the NBTHK (1963) that included the former founder/director Dr. Satô Kanzan.

The recent team at the NBTHK has attributed the sword to *Echizen Kanenori* who smithed during the late Muromachi period, circa the Tenbun period (1532~1555).

Kanenori was a student of a *Seki Kanenori* but moved in the fifth year of Tenbun (1536) at the invitation of *Asakura Takakage* - the shugo military governor of Echizen province - from *Uruma* to *Matsuoka* in Echizen province. With the downfall of the Asakura family, he was employed by *Shibata Katsuie* whereupon he moved to Ichijôdani.





Saki-kasane: 3.8mm

Moto-kasane: 4.2mm

Omosa: 475g

Kissaki: 4.23cm

Saki-haba: 2.33cm

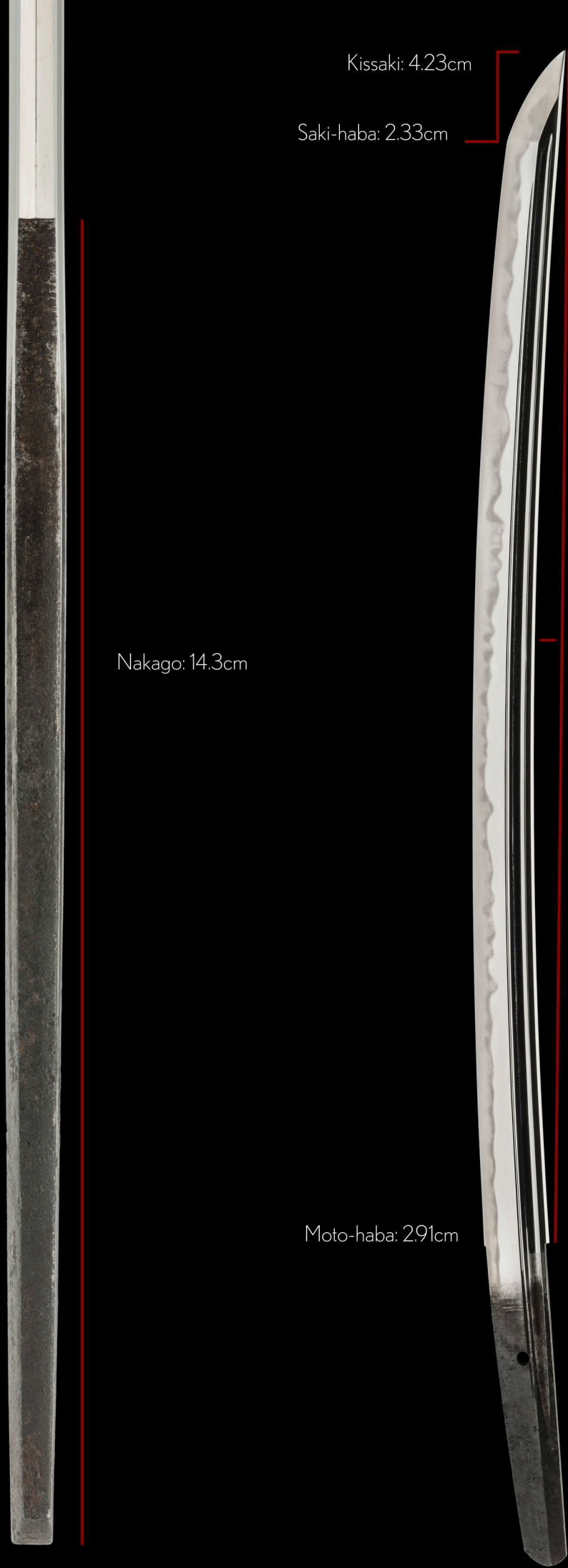
Nakago: 14.3cm

Moto-haba: 2.91cm

Nagasa: 53.9cm

Sori: 1.00cm

Mekugi-ana: 1





Nakago
(mumei, unsigned)

認定書

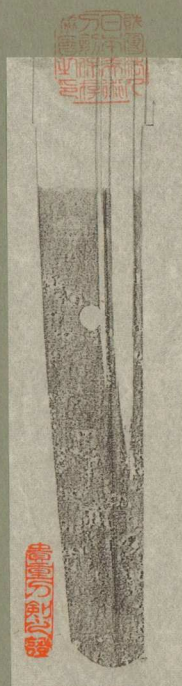
一脇指 無銘（直江志津）一口
長一尺七寸八分

右は當協會に於て審査の結果特別貴重
として認定す

昭和三十八年十一月二十四日

財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協會

梶谷俊夫 殿



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 38th year of Showa (1963), November 24th

One, Wakizashi

Mumei (unsigned)
Naoe Shizu

Nagasa (length)
1-shaku 7-sun 8-bu (53.9cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai
(NBTHK)

01201909

No 3022359



鑑定書

一、脇指無銘（越前兼法）

右は當協會に於て審査の結果保存刀剣と
鑑定しこれを証する

長一尺七寸八分弱

令和元年十二月二日

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 126455 号
平成26年12月18日

NBTHK Hozon Certificate of Designation

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

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

One, Wakizashi

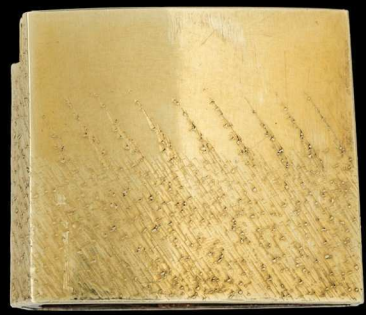
Mumei (unsigned)
Echizen Kanenori

Nagasa (length)
1-shaku 7-sun 8-bu jaku (53.9cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai
(NBTHK)



Shirasaya
(protective scabbard)



gold *habaki* with
diagonal file marks



伝 尾張徳川家

Den Owari Tokugawa-ke

Inherited through the Tokugawa Family from Owari Province

無銘 志津

Mumei Shizu

Unsigned, Shizu

刃長一尺七寸七分余有之

Hachô 1-shaku 7-sun 7-bu amari kore ari

Blade length ~53.9 cm

(reverse side reads *Nakagawa ke*)

Property of the Nakagawa family

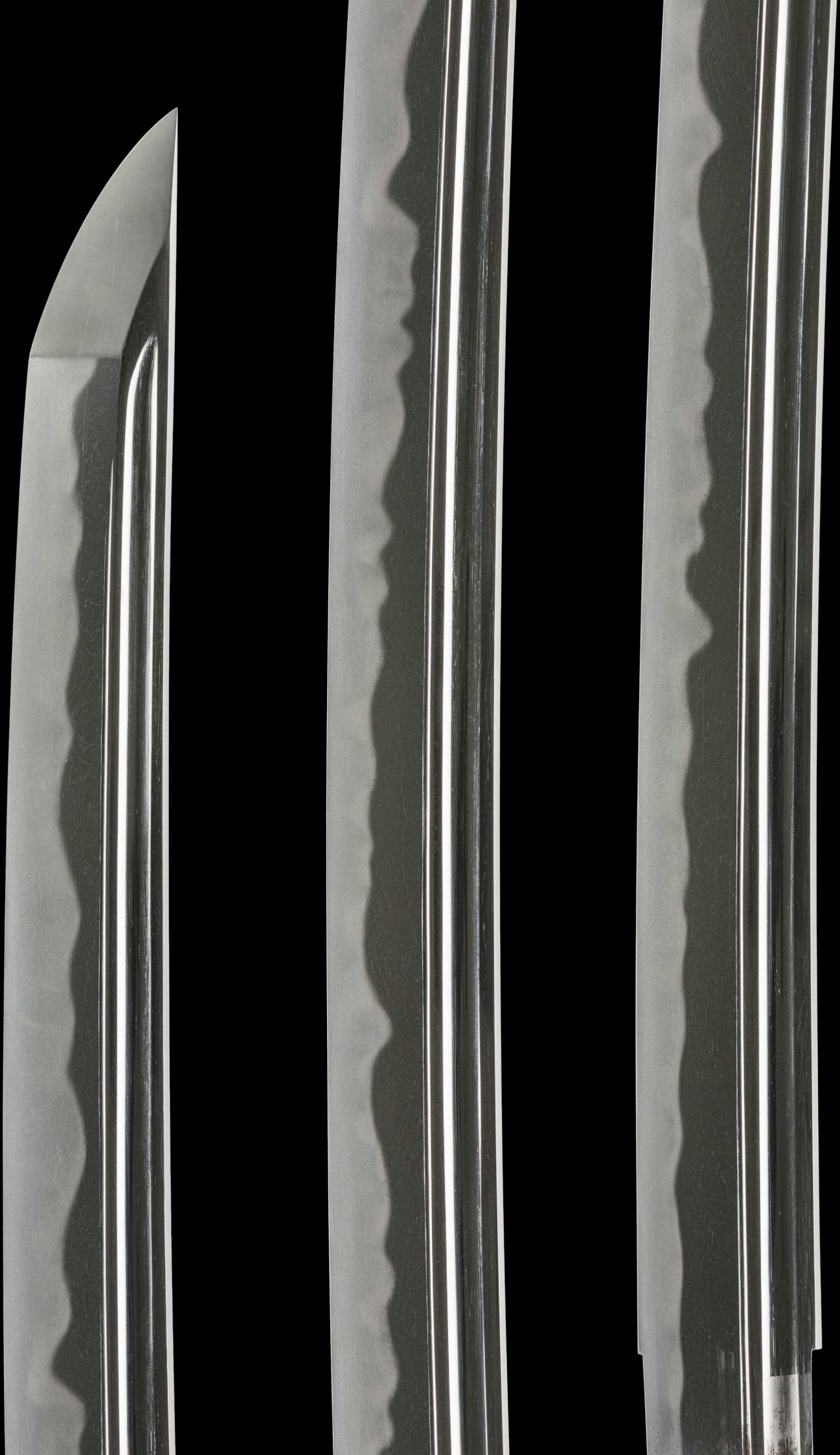


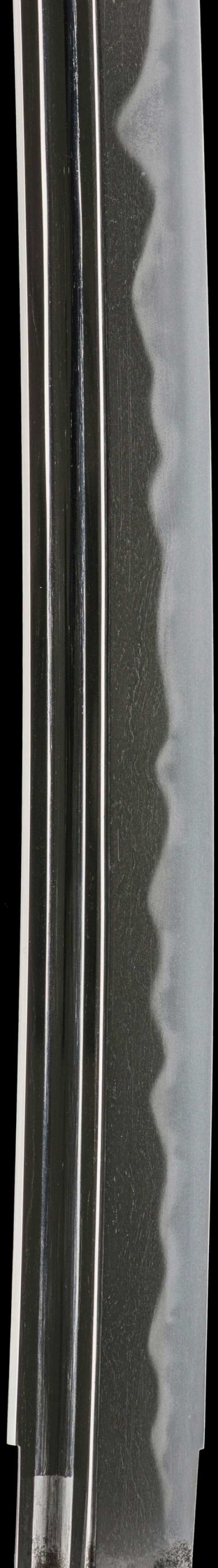
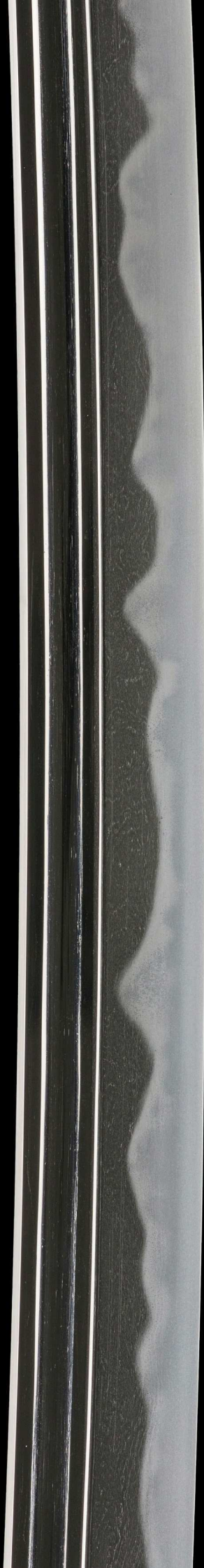
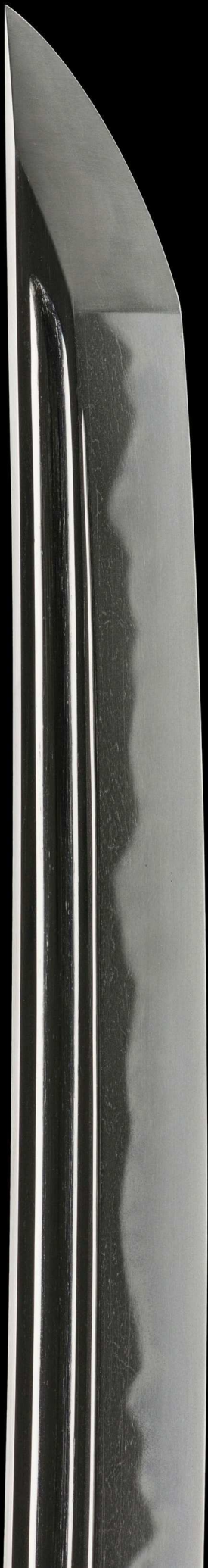
直江志津
Naoe Shizu
Naoe Shizu

但大磨上無銘也
Tadashi Ô-suriage Mumei nari
Ô-suriage, unsigned

刃長壹尺七寸七分有之
Hachô 1-shaku 7-sun 7-bu kore ari
Blade length ~53.9 cm

昭和壬子年卯月吉日寒山誌(花押)
Shôwa Mizunoe-Ne doshi uzuki kichijitsu Kanzan shirusu + kaô
Written by Kanzan on a lucky day in the second month of
Shôwa, the year of the mouse (1972)







A bright *gunome midare hamon* also with Mino tradition *togari* peaks brings unity to the *daisho*.

(wakizashi)

Aogai-mijin-nuri saya
daishô-koshirae
(青貝微塵塗鞘大小拵え)

Daishô-koshirae
decorated with
sprinklings of mother-of-pearl

Daisho crafted exclusively in
Japan from 2020 to 2022.

A Unique Japan production.



NTHK-NPO Kanteisho
Certificate of Authenticity



Wakizashi Koshirae





The exquisite mother-of-pearl dustings on the *saya* (scabbards) appear like the majestic night sky.





This gorgeous *daisho tsuba* set is attributed to the work of the *Mito school* and pays tribute to *Ono no Michikaze* (894 ~ 966) - a prominent *shodōka* (Japanese calligrapher) during the *Heian* period (794-1185). Michikaze is considered the founder of Japanese style calligraphy or *wayōshodō*.

As the story goes, one day when Michikaze was feeling inadequate about his calligraphy he took a walk outside in the rain. Seeing a frog trying to jump on a willow branch, again and again missing its mark, he thought to himself "*Stupid frog! No matter how many times you try you will never be able to reach the willow*". Upon thinking this, the willow curved in a big breeze allowing the frog to jump onto the willow. Michikaze then realized "*I myself am the stupid one. The frog created this chance with his determination. Up until now I haven't been as diligent as this frog*".



NBTHK Hozon Kanteisho
Daisho certification



Reach out, and be determined.



No 4001679

鑑定書

一、小野道風図大小鐔 無銘 水戸

豎丸形 鉄地 鋤出高彫
金布目象嵌 象嵌色絵 打返耳

右は當協會に於て審査の結果保存刀装具と
鑑定しこれを証する

平成二十五年一月九日

公益財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協會



NBTHK Hozon
Certificate of Designation

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

Issued in the 25th year of Heisei (2013), January 9th

One, Daishō Tsuba

Depicting Ono Michikaze

Mumei (unsigned)
Mito

*Elongated round shape, iron, relief carved from ground plate,
superficial gold inlay, inlay and color accents, hammered rim*

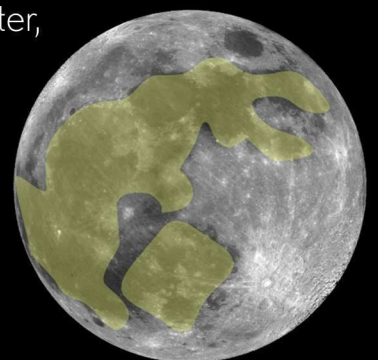
Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai
(NBTHK)



How a rabbit reached the moon, a Japanese folk tale...

One night, the Man on the Moon came down to earth disguised as a beggar. He chanced upon a Fox, a Monkey, and a Rabbit (*usagi*) and asked for some food. The Fox brought him fish from a stream, and the Monkey brought fruit from the trees, but the Rabbit could only offer grass. So he told the beggar to build a fire, and when it was built, threw himself onto the flames to offer himself to the Man. Amazed by the Rabbit's generosity, the beggar transformed back into the Man on the Moon and pulled the Rabbit from the fire. To honour the Rabbit's kindness, the Man on the Moon carried the Rabbit back to the moon to live with him. Now, if you look at the full moon, you can see the outline of the *Rabbit pounding mochi on the moon*. The tale even goes on to explain why the moon is grey: it's seen through the smoke of the fire that fateful night.

On the night of the *Harvest Moon* (the 15th day of the 8th lunar month), people gather to enjoy the beauty of the full moon for *Otsukimi* (literally "looking at the moon"). This moon festival, some-times called the Mid-Autumn Festival, is a popular holiday for all classes to pray for a good harvest. Many foods are a part of the celebrations, but most iconic are the *tsukimi dango*. Made simply by steaming a dough of rice flour and water, these little mochi-like balls are white and round like a full moon.



30201810



No 2005245

鑑定書

一月波図大小縁頭 無銘 河野派

四分磨地 鋤出高彫 金銀象嵌色絵

右は當協會に於て審査の結果特別保存刀装具と
鑑定しこれを証する

平成三十年十一月十六日

公益財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協會



NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon Certificate of Designation

A tsuba 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), November 16th

One, Daishō Fuchigashira

Depicting the moon and waves

*Mumei (unsigned)
Kôno-ha*

*Polished shibuichi, relief carved from ground plate,
inlay with gold and silver accents*

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai
(NBTHK)

hira-maki



This style of wrap is called *ikkan-maki*, a combination of *jabara-maki* on the outsides and *hira-maki* (flat) in the center.



Menuki (decorative grips on the hilt) depict Japanese Marlberry evergreen trees covered in snow. Marlberry's abundant fruit is enjoyed by birds and small animals and is also edible to humans. Its dense foliage provides significant cover for wildlife. This set of matching *daishō* menuki have been attributed to the prestigious *Gotō school* from the Edo period and come with NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon certification papers.



31201904



No 2005690

鑑定書

一、雪持藪柑子図大小目貫 無銘 後藤

赤銅地 容彫 色絵

右は當協會に於て審査の結果特別保存刀装具と
鑑定しこれを証する

令和元年五月二十八日

公益財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協會



NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon Certificate of Designation

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

Issued in the 1st year of Reiwa (2019), May 28th

One, Daishô Menuki

Depicting a Japanese Marberry tree with snow

*Mumei (unsigned)
Gotô school*

Shakudô, three dimensional with motif forming the outline, color accents

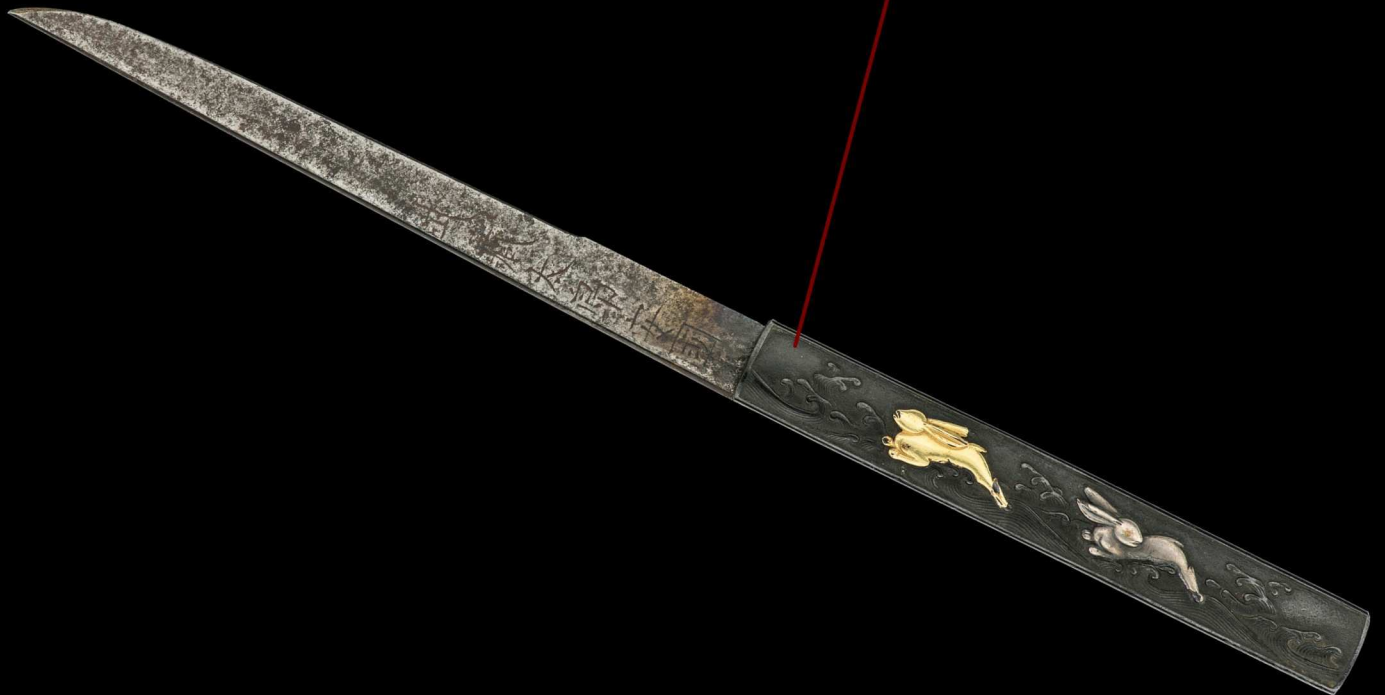
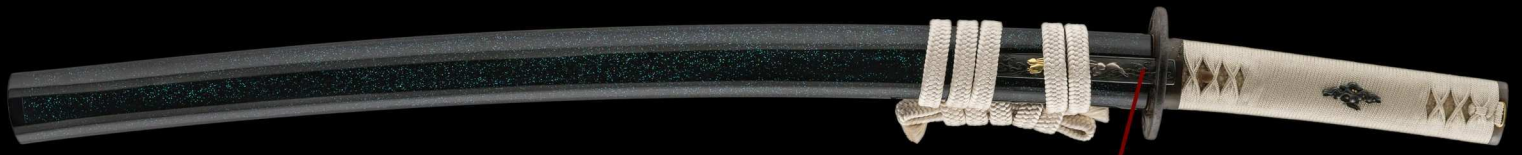
Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai
(NBTHK)



A *kogatana* is a thick blunt needle that was primarily used as a hair arranging tool by the samurai. It is fastened into a special notch built inside the *saya* (scabbard) and drawn through the 'bumpy' hole in the tsuba.

A rabbit among waves is the featured design.





kozuka (utility knife)



Congratulations Robert.

Warm regards,
Pablo



SOLD
(FOR REFERENCE PURPOSES ONLY)

ujka374
A Koyama Munetsugu Katana
4th year of Bunkyū era (Feb 1864)
An "Unequaled/Peerless" Katana

Length: 72.7cm
NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon
& NTHK-NPO certificates
Complete custom koshirae production in Japan

Saki-kasane: 5.4mm[^]
Moto-kasane: 7.7mm

Kissaki: 4.30cm
Saki-haba: 2.35cm

Nagasa: 72.7cm

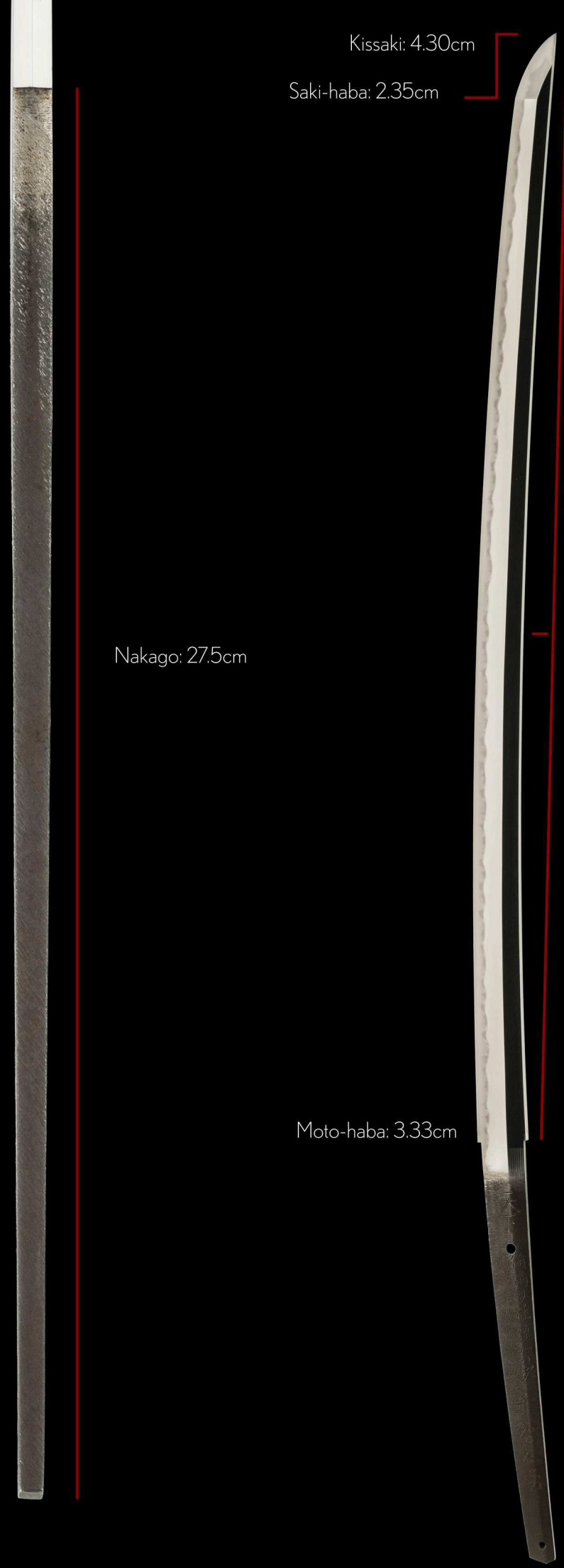
Nakago: 27.5cm

Sori: 1.36cm

Omosa: 1030g

Moto-haba: 3.33cm

Mekugi-ana: 2



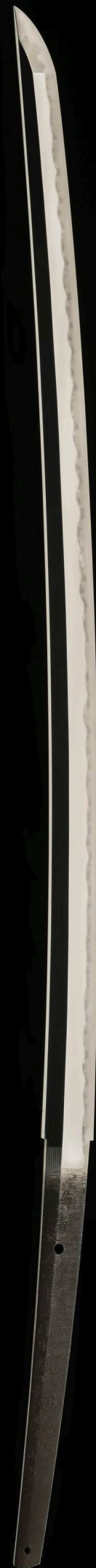
This unique and powerful katana was crafted by one of the great maestros of the *shinshinto* period, *Koyama Munetsugu*. *Fujishiro* ranks Munetsugu as *jôjô-saku*, a highly superior swordsmith.

Koyama Munetsugu was born in the castle town of *Shirakawa* in *Mutsu* Province and was retained by Lord *Matsudaira Sadanobu (Rakuô)*. In 1830 he moved to *Kuwana* in *Ise* Province, a year or two later to Edo (modern-day Tokyo), where he lived as a retainer of the ruling clan of Ise.

It is believed that *Koto Tsunahide* was his sensei during his time in Edo. Munetsugu is known to have had a good relationship with the sword tester *Yamada Asaemon*. A number of his blades have *tameshigiri* (test cuts) recorded on their *nakago* by Yamada san.

Like other smiths of his time Munetsugu experimented in the *Soshû* style, however he is best known for his Bizen style *chôji hamon* (clove blossom temper line) in *nioi-deki* and finely forged *mokume-hada* (burl grain), which this katana represents.

The nakago of this katana contains several proverbs and inscriptions that all leads to the benevolent spiritual protection of the blade. This grand sword truly has 'no enemy'.



Location: *Musashi* (resident of Edo)
Title: *Bizen no Suke* (Lord of Bizen province)
Clan: *Fujiwara*
Swordsmith: *Munetsugu* (first generation)

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



天 (Ten)

下 (ka)

備 (Bi)

前 (zen, no)

介 (Suke)

藤 (Fuji)

原 (wara)

宗 (Mune)

次 (tsugu)

智 (Chi)

仁 (Jin)

勇 (Yû)

(Rin) 臨
(Byô) 兵
(Tô) 鬪
(Ja) 者
(Kai) 皆
(Jin) 陣
(Retsu) 列
(Zai) 在
(Zen) 前

*Rin Pyô Tô Sha Kai Jin Retsu Zai Zen
Chi Jin Yû*

May the presiders over warriors be
my vanguard and may I have wisdom,
benevolence and valour!

Bunkyû yonen nigatsu hi

Dated on a day in the 2nd month of the
4th year of *Bunkyû* era (February 1864)

Tenka-muteki

Unequaled / peerless

*Kiri-musubu yaiba no shita wa jigoku nari
mi o sutete koso ukabu se mo ari*

To be under crossed swords is hell, but only if
you are prepared to sacrifice your life, will you
be able to get out of the situation!

(Mu) 無
(teki) 敵

(Bun) 文

(kyû) 久

(yo) 四

(nen) 年

(ni) 二

(gatsu) 月

(hi) 日

(sute) 捨

(te) て

(koso) 社

(uka) 浮

(bu) む

(se) 瀬

(mo) も

(a) あ

(ri) り

切 (Kiri)
む (mu)
す (su)
ふ (fu)
刃 (yaiba)
の (no)
下 (shita)
ハ (wa)
地 (ji)
こ (ko)
く (ku)
なり (na)
り (ri)
身 (mi)
を (o)





Muteki
No enemy



No 1004546

二刀

鑑定書

銘

備前介藤原宗次
文久四年二月日

(切刃銘) 天下無敵
職兵衛者曾與別在曾智佐勇
切むすふ刃の下地はくろなり身を捨てて存せし瀬もあり

長二尺三寸九分半

右は當協會に於て審査の結果特別保存刀劍と
鑑定しこれを証する

平成二十八年二月四日

公益財団法人日本美術刀劍保存協會



NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon Certificate of Designation

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

Issued in the 28th year of Heisei (2016), February 4th

One, Katana

Mei (signature)

Bizen no Suke Fujiwara Munetsugu

Bunkyû yonen nigatsu hi

(Kiritsuke-me) Tenka-muteki

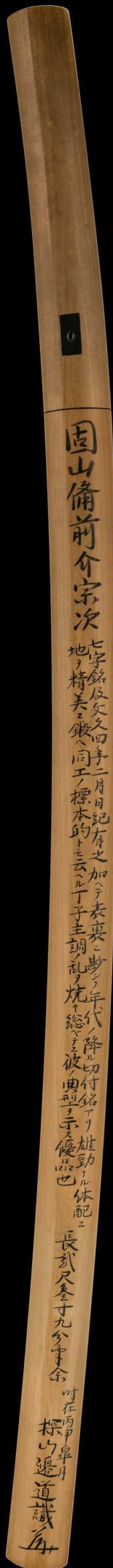
Rin Pyô Tô Sha Kai Jin Retsu Zai Zen Chi Jin Yû

Kiri-musubu yaiba no shita wa jigoku nari mi o sutete koso ukabu se mo ari

Nagasa (length)

2-shaku 3-sun 9-bu han (72.7cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai
(NBTHK)



固山備前介宗次

Koyama Bizen no Suke Munetsugu

Koyama Bizen no Suke Munetsugu

七字銘及文久四年二月日紀有之加へテ表裏ニ勘シク年代ノ降ル切付銘アリ雄勁ナル体配ニ地ヲ精美ニ鍛へ同工ノ標本的トモ云ヘル丁子主調ノ乱ヲ焼キ総ベテニ彼ノ典型ヲ示ス優品也

Shichiji-mei oyobi Bunkyû yonen nigatsu hi no ki kore ari, kuwaete hyôri ni sukoshiku nendai no kudarû kiritsuke-mei ari, yûkei naru taihai ni ji o seibi no kitae dôkô no hyôhon-teki to mo ieru chôji shuchô no midare o yaki subete ni kare no tenkei o shimesu yûhin nari.

The blade bears a seven-character signature, is dated with a day in the second month of Bunkyû four (1864), and bears an inscription that was added not much later than the blade was made. The blade is of a magnificent shape, shows a fine and beautiful kitae, and is hardened in the chôji-based midare that is so typical for this smith whereupon this masterwork represents a textbook example of Koyama Munetsugu's work.

長貳尺參寸九分半余

Nagasa ni-shaku san-sun kyû-bu han yo

Blade length ~ 72.7 cm

時在丙申臯月探山邊道識「花押」

Jizai hinoe-saru satsuki Tanzan Hendô shirusu + kaô

Written by Tanzan Hendô (Tanobe Michihiro) in May of the Year of the Monkey of this era (2016) + monogram

This katana was featured in the NBTHK Journal in November 2016
Translation is as follows:

Tôken-Bijutsu No. 718

#5 (Katana)

mei: Bizen no Suke Fujiwara Munetsugu Bunkyû yonen nigatsu hi
Bizen no Suke Fujiwara Munetsugu, crafted on a day in the second
month of Bunkyû four (February 1864)"

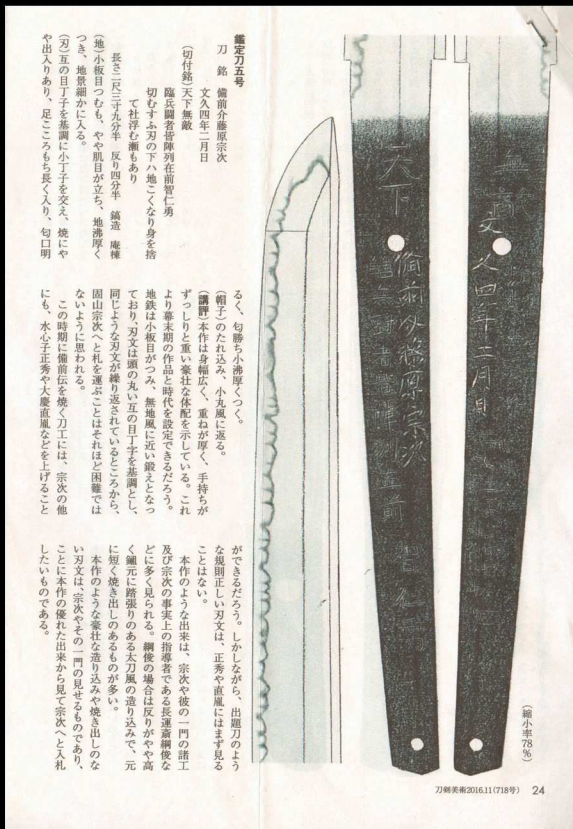
kiritsuke-mei:

Tenka-muteki

"Unequaled"

Rinpyô tôsha kai jinretsu zaizen chijinyû

This is the nine-syllable *kujiin* mantra reads:
"May the presiders over warriors be my vanguard
from esoteric Buddhism plus the three characters for the virtues of
wisdom, benevolence, and courage."



Kirimusubu-ha no shita wa jigoku nari mi o sutete koso ukamu se mo are
"To be under crossed swords is hell, but only if you are prepared to sacrifice your life,
will you be able to get out of the situation!"

nagasa 72.7cm
sori: 1.35 cm
shinogi-zukuri, iori-mune

ji: dense but somewhat standing-out *ko-itame* that features plenty of *ji-nie* and fine *chikei*

ha: *gunome-chôji-chô* in *nioi-deki* but with plenty of *ko-nie* that shows noticeable downs and a bright *nioiguchi*
and that is mixed with *ko-chôji* and long *ashi*

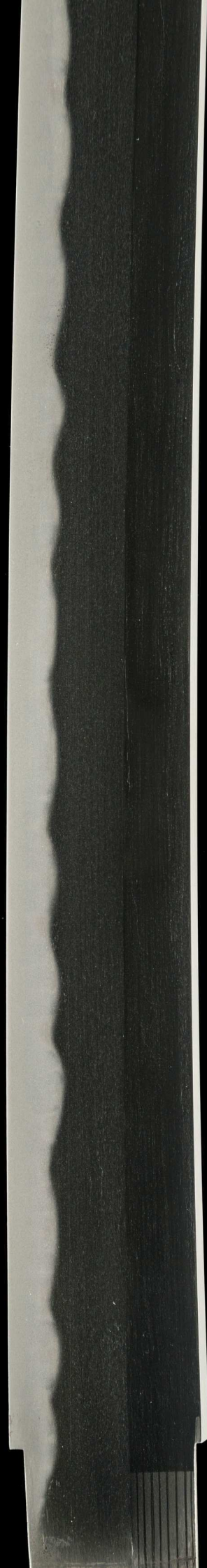
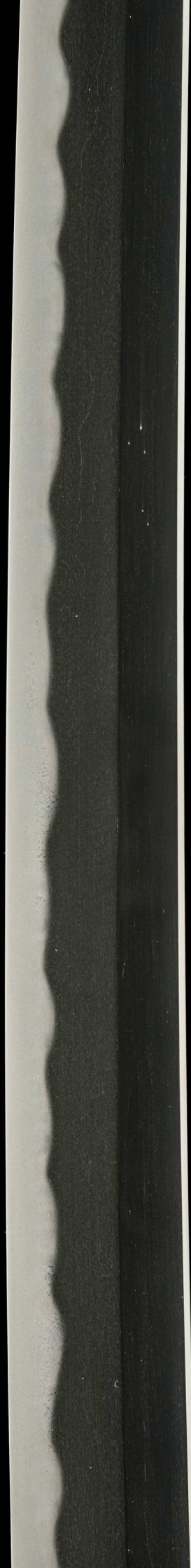
bôshi: *notare-komi* with a *ko-maru*-like *kaeri*

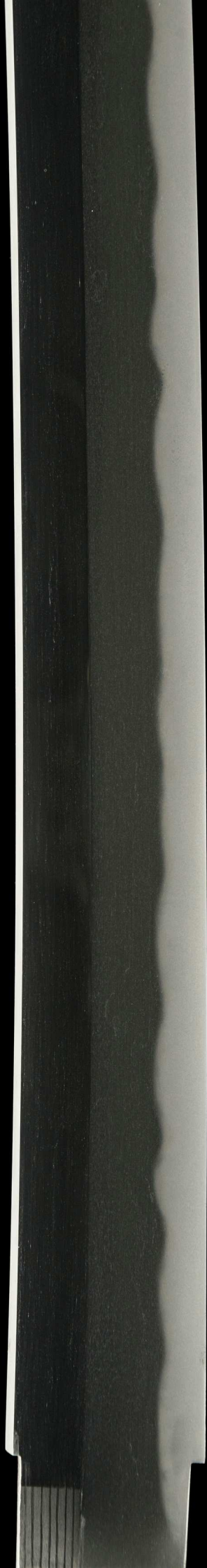
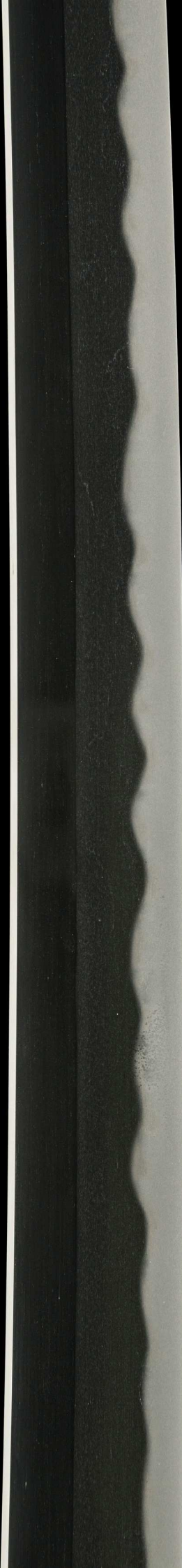
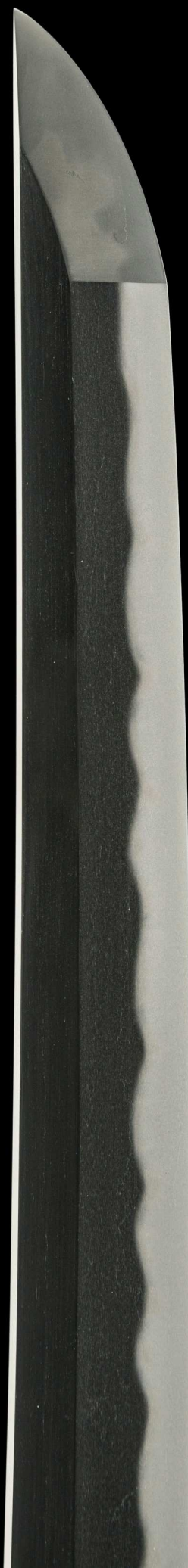
Summary:

This blade has a wide *mihaba*, a thick *kasane*, feels massive and substantial in hand, and is of a powerful *sugata*, which brings us in terms of production time to the bakumatsu era. The *jigane* is a dense *ko-itame* that is almost *muji-fû* and the hamon bases on a *gunome-chôji* with roundish *yakigashira* whose elements rhythmically repeat themselves, and all that combined it should not be too difficult to arrive at *Koyama Munetsugu*.

Masters who worked in the Bizen tradition were, besides from Munetsugu, for example *Suishinshi Masahide* and *Taikei Naotane*, but such a rhythmic composition of the hamon is atypical for both of them. An interpretation as here is often seen across all of Munetsugu's students and also at Munetsugu's de facto master, *Chôunsai Tsunatoshi*. Tsunatoshi's blades, however, tend with their somewhat deeper *sori* and *funbari* more towards a *tachi-sugata* and many of his works show a short *yakidashi*.

As this sword is powerfully shaped, expertly forged and does not feature *yakidashi*, a bid to master Munetsugu is most appropriate.





The hamon of the *kissaki* (tip) is called the *boshi*, which literally means "hat". The quenching of the *boshi* requires great skill and timing.

The shape of this *boshi* is a combination of two patterns, *midare komi* (irregular wavy pattern) to the *rounded head of Jizo* at the very tip, or *saki*. These words are combined to become "*saki-Jizo*".

Jizo derives itself from *Jizo Bosatsu* - an important *deity* seen as a saviour for both pregnant women and children.



outline resembles the profile of *Jizo*.



statues of Jizo

A brilliant *gunome-chôji-midare hamon*.
Note the clusters of clove blossom buds.





Shimmering *ji-nie* over an expertly forged *jigane*.

Bright *nioguchi* in *nioi-deki* that resembles a glistening snowbank.

Long *ashi* extend to the *ha-saki* (edge).

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

*Uchigatana-koshirae
lacquered in glossy black*

Crafted during the
Modern period



NTHK-NPO Kanteisho
Certificate of Authenticity

A rabbit carrying mochi to the temple/shrine.



A spectacular tsuba crafted by *Jugakusai Katsufumi*.
The level of detail is to be cherished.



NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon

Jugakusai Katsufumi horu
Signed by Jugakusai Katsufumi

(reverse)



(○) 勝
(mo) 文
(kage) 鐫

壽 (Ju)
岳 (gaku)
齋 (sai)

31201904



No 2005660

鑑定書

一月兎図鐔 銘 寿岳齋勝文鐫

障泥形四分一磨地 鋤出高彫
象嵌色絵 打返耳

右は當協會に於て審査の結果特別保存刀装具と
鑑定しこれを証する

令和元年五月二十八日

公益財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協會



NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon Certificate of Designation

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

Issued in the 1st year of Heisei (2019), May 28th

One, Tsuba

Depicting rabbits on the moon

Mei (signature)
Jugakusai Katsufumi horu

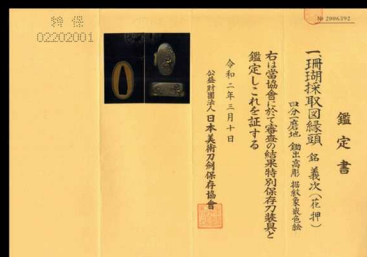
*Square shape with rounded corners, polished shibuichi, motif carved
from the ground plate, inlay with color accents, hammered rim*

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai
(NBTHK)



Fuchi-kashira
crafted by
Yoshitsugu

Depicting coral collectors
[South Sea Islanders]



NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon

Yoshitsugu + kaô

Metalsmith Yoshitsugu signed this *fuchi-kashira* with his monogram



義 (Yoshi)

次 (tsugu)

(花押) (kaô)



Metalsmith *Yoshitsugu* during the early 1800s would have had little or no contact with islanders outside of Japan. This image would have been inspired by a painting from those that had visited these faraway lands or by way of a verbal description of some sort.

This is a rare, beautifully collectible and rather fascinating work of art.

02202001



No 2006392

鑑定書

一珊瑚採取図縁頭 銘義次(花押)

四分一磨地 鋤出高彫 据紋象嵌色絵

右は當協會に於て審査の結果特別保存刀装具と
鑑定しこれを証する

令和二年三月十日

公益財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協會



NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon Certificate of Designation

A fuchi-kashira 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), March 10th

One, Fuchi-kashira

Depicting coral collectors

Mei (signature)
Yoshitsugu + kaô

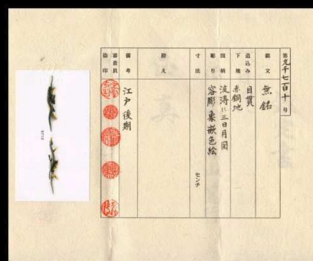
*Polished shibuichi, motif carved from the ground plate,
set-in inlay with color accents*

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai
(NBTHK)



Long, impressive *menuki* strengthen the beautiful moon and wave theme.

This set of *menuki* has been attributed to *Kyô-Sasayama Tokuyuki* who lived in *Kyotô* at the end of the Edo period (1780~1867). NTHK-NPO Kanteisho certificate accompanies.





Congratulations Rahim.

Warm regards,
Pablo



SOLD
(FOR REFERENCE PURPOSES ONLY)

ujka408
A Tsuguhiro Katana
Late Muromachi period (1550~1570)

Length: 69.7cm
NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon
& NTHK-NPO certificates
In Middle Edo-period koshirae



Saki-kasane: 3.3mm

Moto-kasane: 5.6mm

Omosa: 615g

Kissaki: 2.94cm

Saki-haba: 1.83cm

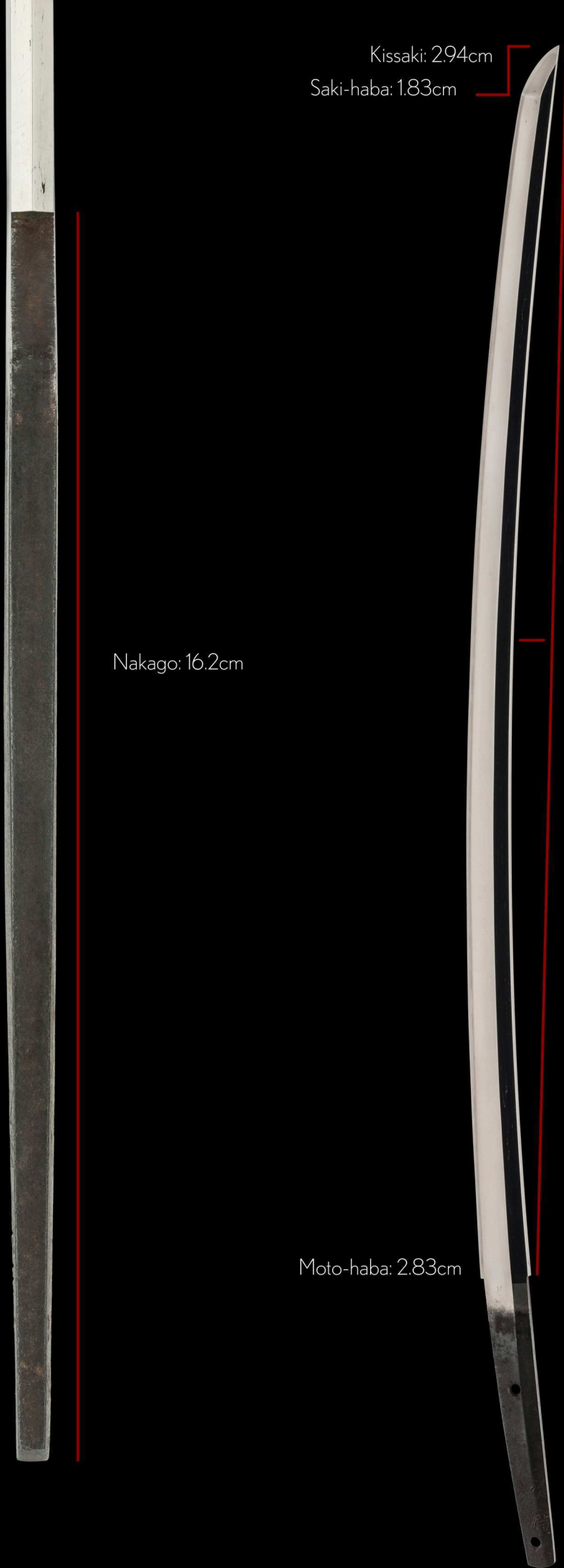
Nakago: 16.2cm

Moto-haba: 2.83cm

Nagasa: 69.7cm

Sori: 1.97cm

Mekugi-ana: 2



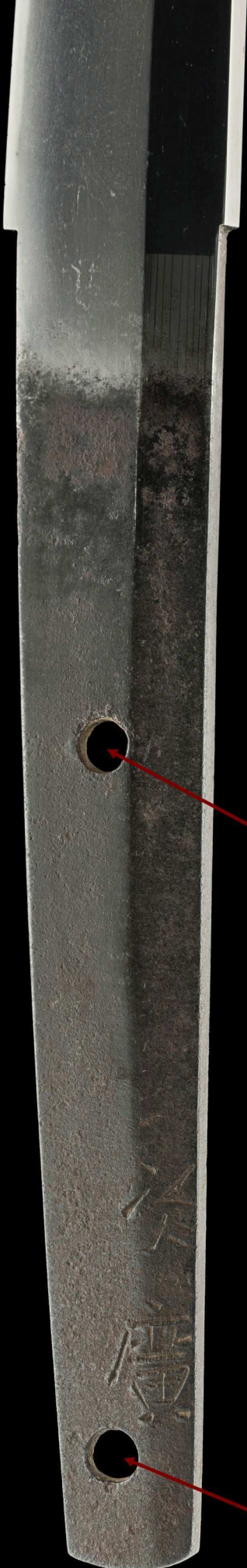
First generation *Tsuguhiro* is said to be the student or son of first generation *Fuyuhiko*. Both Fuyuhiko and Tsuguhiro are said to have travelled from *Sagami* province (Kamakura area) to *Wakasa* province bringing with them the *Sôshû* tradition of sword-making.

This katana was likely crafted by third generation Tsuguhiro who was born *Saemon no Jô* and son of the second generation Tsuguhiro. Records show that he crafted swords from the end of the *Tenbun* era (~1550) until the *Eiroku* era (1558~1570) at the very end of the *Muromachi* period.

Tsuguhiro received the honorary title *Iga no Kami* on October 21, 1559 but it appears that there are no blades extant that are signed with this title.

A beaming *suguha hamon* with a slight wave shines over impressive pools of *o-hada*, *itame* and *mokume-hada* known as *hadamono* on this blade. This is a strength and dependability to this Muromachi period katana, war stories can definitely be told. Comes with a lovely Mid-Edo period koshirae with a leather-wrapped tsuka and a masterfully carved *kizami* saya.





Location: *Wakasa* province (Fukui prefecture)
Swordsmith: *Tsuguhiro* (3rd generation)
suriage-nakago (shortened tang)
katte-sagari-yasurime (sloping file marks)

This blade would have originally had an impressive *nagasa* (cutting length) of approximately 78cm if we add 8.5cm to the current length of 69.7cm.

New *mekugi-ana* after the sword was shortened in early Edo period - a distance of about 8.5cm between the two holes.

次 (Tsugu)

廣 (hiro)

original *mekugi-ana*



(*ura*, reverse)

特 保
28201607

No 1006100



鑑定書

一 刀 銘 次 広 (若 狭)

長 二 又 三 寸

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

平成二十八年 八月二十六日

公益財団法人 日本美術刀剣保存協會



大阪 教育委員会
第 9550 号
昭和27年 9 月 2 日

NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon Certificate of Designation

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

Issued in the 28th year of Heisei (2016), August 26th

One, Katana

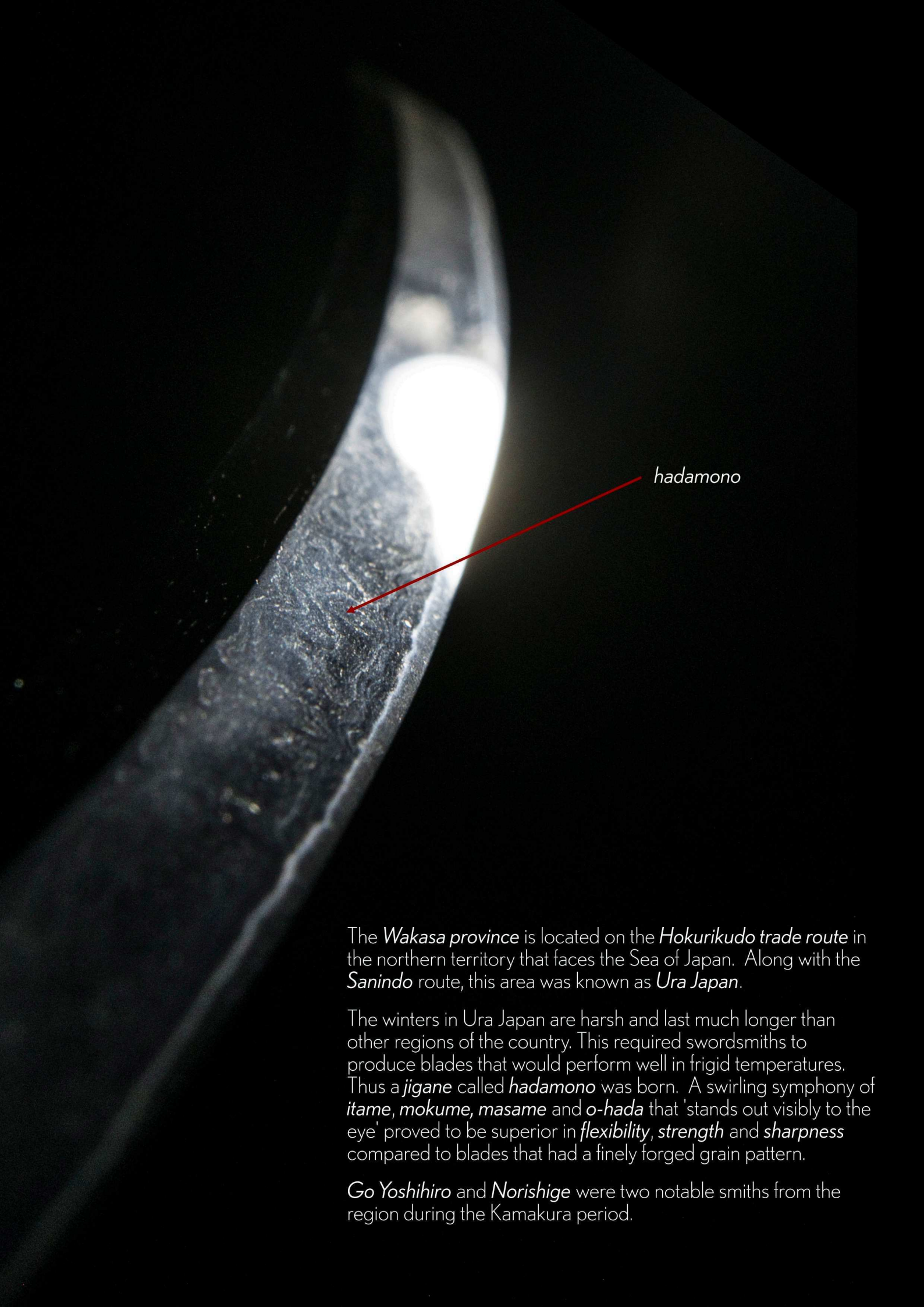
Mei (signature)
Tsuguhiro (Wakasa)

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

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai
(NBTHK)







hadamono

The *Wakasa province* is located 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. Thus a *jigane* called *hadamono* was born. A swirling symphony of *itame*, *mokume*, *masame* and *o-hada* that 'stands out visibly to the eye' proved to be superior in *flexibility*, *strength* and *sharpness* compared to blades that had a finely forged grain pattern.

Go Yoshihiro and *Norishige* were two notable smiths from the region during the Kamakura period.



chikei

o-hada

mokume-hada



A bright *suguha* with a hint of
a *ko-midare* wave pattern.

nijuba - area of the hamon where it splits and runs parallel.

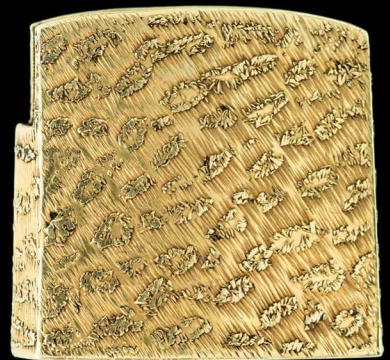
This is a characteristic of top blades traditionally forged in *suguha* (straight temper line).



nijuba



Shirasaya
(protective scabbard)

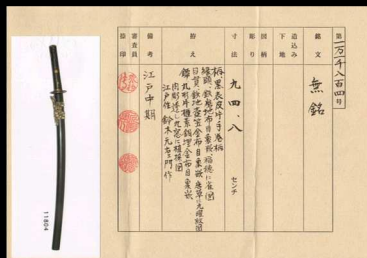


gold-wrapped *habaki* with
cloud and rain design

*Sendan-kizami kuro-nuri saya
uchigatana-koshirae*
(千段刻黒塗鞘打刀拵)

*Uchigatana-koshirae
with finely carved scabbard
lacquered in black*

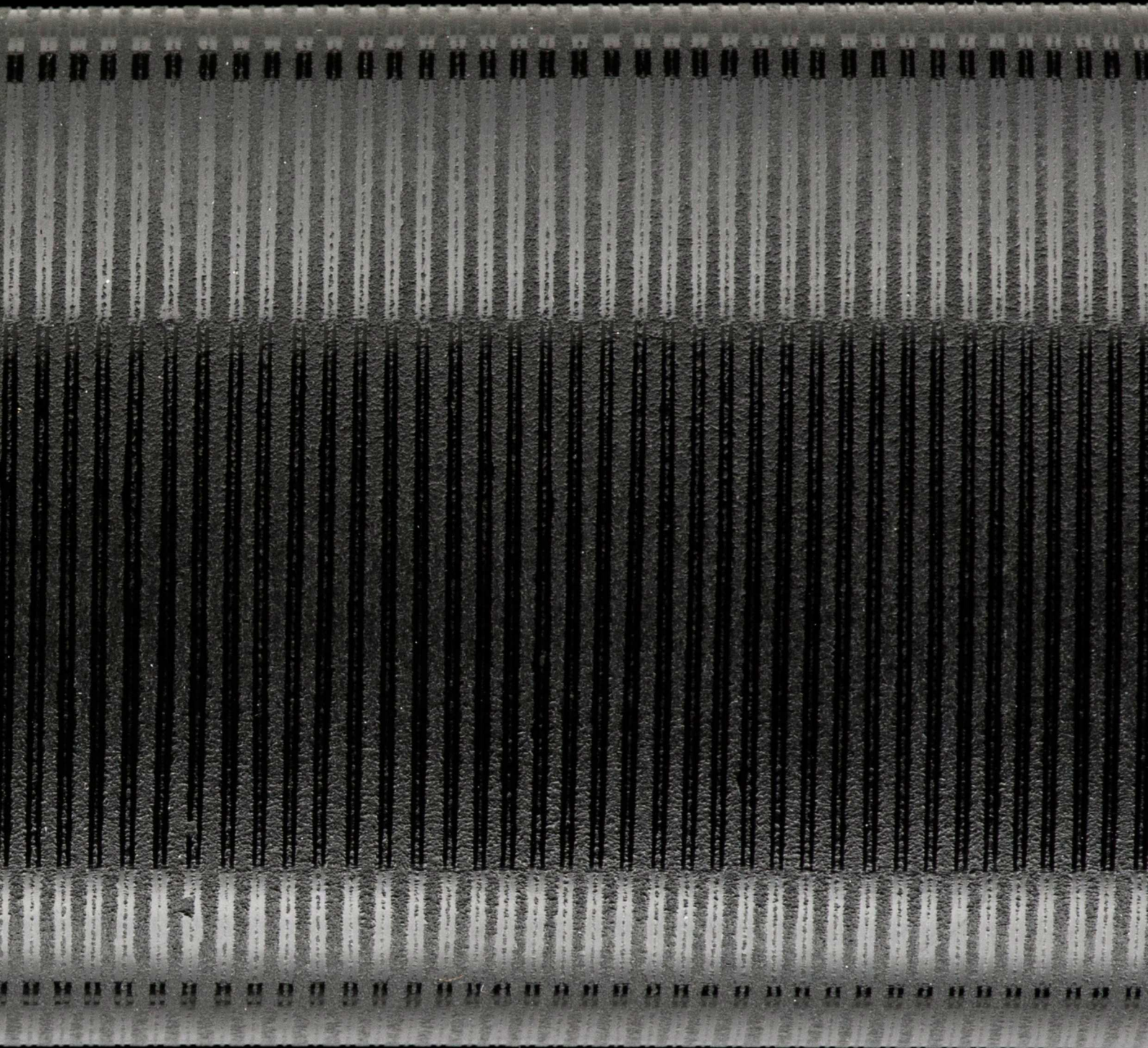
Crafted during the
Middle Edo period
(1700~1780)



NTHK-NPO Kanteisho
Certificate of Authenticity

sendan-kizami-saya (scabbard)
sendan means "a thousand steps" - in other words: "lots of!"

Each groove was finely carved by a master carpenter in the 1700s.
He likes to groove it, groove it.



Edo-jû Suzuki Moto'emon saku
Crafted by Suzuki Moto'emon, a resident of Edo



(Suzu) 鈴
(ki) 木
(Moto) 元
(e) 右
(mon) 衛門
(saku) 作

江 (E)
戸 (do)
住 (jû)



ura (reverse)





As the lucky sparrow thrives on discarded grains of rice, the theme on the *fuchi-kashira* is that of *prosperity*, denoting a bountiful harvest.

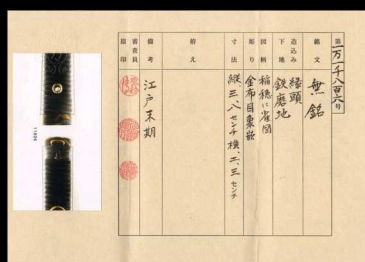




Fuchi-kashira
 attributed to
Den Aizu Shōami

Late Edo period
 (1780~1867)

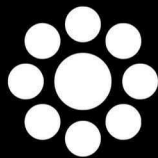
Motif of sparrows and ears of rice



NTHK-NPO Kanteisho
 Certificate of Authenticity

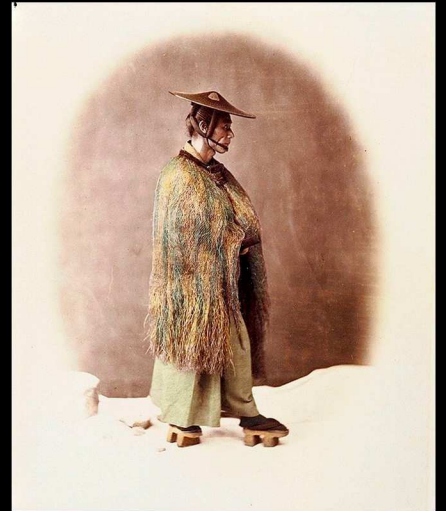


Menuki on the leather-wrapped tsuka carry *Kuyô-mon*, the nine-planet family crest that was first adopted by the powerful *daimyô* family leader *Hosokawa Tadaoki* (1563-1646).





The design inspiration of menuki is known as *tsubogasa*, meaning pot-hat.



Beautifully wrapped leather *tsuka* (hilt).
Locked in time...



Congratulations Gene.

Warm regards,
Pablo

ARIGATO!

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*Photo taken at the "Man and His World" geodesic dome in Montréal.
Designed by Buckminster Fuller as part of the American Pavilion at Expo '67.*

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