

JAPANESE  
SWORD  
CATALOGUE 39

RELEASED:  
FEB 22/2023

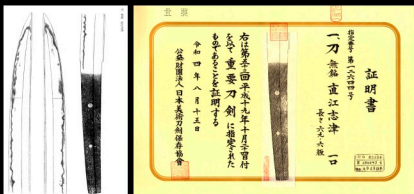
**ALL SOLD!**

(COVER PHOTO)

ITEM# UJKA413

A NAOE SHIZU KATANA  
NAMBOKUCHÔ PERIOD (CIRCA 1338~1367)

MASSIVE Ô-KISSAKI AND KAMON KOSHIRAE  
53RD NBTHK JÛYO TÔKEN



# ANTIQUÉ JAPANESE SWORDS

CATALOGUE 39  
RELEASED: FEBRUARY 22, 2023

THE FOLLOWING PAGES CONTAIN DESCRIPTIONS AND IMAGES OF GENUINE ANTIQUÉ JAPANESE SWORDS THAT WERE SOLD IN CATALOGUE 39. THIS IS A REFERENCE DOCUMENT.

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

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

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

THANK YOU,



PABLO KUNTZ  
FOUNDER, UNIQUE JAPAN

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Hello! For as long as I remember, I have loved word play, especially coming up with puns. My teenage friends would thwack my shoulder every time I'd come up with another (groan) pun and despite the constant beatings, I would annoy them any time I could! Well, this penchant for puns did not stop when I lived in Japan. To my delight, I met a few people (especially older men) that loved to horse around with words and phrases too. Anyway, one such play on words was the number 39. 'Three' in Japanese is *san* and 'nine', is *kyū*. Put them together and you have *san-kyū*, which sounds like "thank you." Well, I can assure you, this was gold when I first clocked into this one! And so my friends and clients, this catalogue 39 is dedicated to *you*. Thank you for your trust. Thank you for your confidence. We have worked together on hundreds of quality antique Japanese samurai swords together over the years and it's been an absolute privilege serving you all. And we shall continue to march forth together. *San-kyū* for all your support!

We kick off the catalogue with a superb katana by *Mizuta Kunishige* with a gritty, soulful *sōshū-den* influence and striking *horimono* work. This sword beams with confidence. I am very proud of the magnificent custom *koshirae* that we built for the sword in Japan with a guiding theme revolving around Japan's most beloved symbol, the *sun*. This inspiring katana unites lethal sharpness with creative traditions from the past to present. Next up, is a 700-year-old *daishō* (katana and wakizashi) by the *Shikkake school*. The swords represents a fine opportunity for the new caretaker to build a personal custom *daishō koshirae* with our help or enjoy them as they are in *shirasaya*. *Yamato-den* swords embody a calm mystique that grows on you. The wavy *nagare-hada* and *kinsuji* exudes a timeless beauty.

For those looking for a katana with a long *ō-kissaki*, then look no further than the fabulous *Naoe-Shizu* katana. This NBTHK *jūyō* piece is stunning in every way. The *jihada* is a fantastic mixture of *itame*, *mokume* and *nagare-hada*, lots of *chikei* and *ji-nie* to gaze over. The *hamon* pumps along like a heartbeat, churning out *Mino* tradition *togari* with copious amounts of *tobiyaiki*, *yo*, *sunagashi* and *kinsuji*. A terrific set of *koshirae* with countless family *kamon* decorates the piece with eye-catching class. Not all *Naoe-Shizu* swords are created equal, this one is a keeper! The following katana is by *shodai Katsukuni* which literally means 'victorious country/province' – a name bestowed upon by the powerful *Maeda daimyo* family of the Edo period. The sword is listed in the prestigious *shintō-jiten* by *Fujishiro* and its own set of striking Edo period *koshirae*, a vintage storage box with *hakogaki* and *sayagaki* by *Kanzan sensei*. It's also extremely sharp.

Our next sword is the most historically significant piece of the catalogue, a *tantō* by one of Japan's greatest ever swordsmiths *Rai Kunitoshi*. Ranked *saijō-saku* (grandmaster), there are four swords protected as *kokuhō* (Japanese National Treasures) that were crafted by *Rai Kunitoshi*, two of which are *tantō*s. The sword was certified as NBTHK *jūyō-tōken* in 1982 and has *sayagaki* by former NBTHK chairman *Honma Junji* (*Kunzan sensei*) from the same year. This remarkable *tantō* bears *Kunitoshi's* iconic three-character signature on a beautifully curved *furisode-nakago*. The sword was polished by renowned sword polisher *Sasaki Takushi* in 2016. Please ask me for details on this very special sword. *Rai Kunitoshi's* son *Ryōkai* is the maker of the graceful wakizashi that follows his father's *tantō*. What ties this sword together so brilliantly is the fully matching dragon-themed *koshirae* crafted during the middle-Edo period (1700s). This is a terrific first sword for those starting a collection and will also appeal to seasoned *nihonto* enthusiasts as well.

Shifting gears back to the early Edo period, we have a magnificent katana by *Echigo no Kami Kanesada* - the adopted son of *shodai Kanesada* - later taking the name *Sakakura Gennoshin Terukane*. *Kanesada II* is one of the most important swordsmiths from *Settsu province* (Osaka) with some eighty swords having achieved the prestigious certification of *jūyō tōken* or *tokubetsu jūyō*. This perfectly healthy katana has a spectacular *toran-ba* (surging wave) *hamon* bursting with presence. *Dr. Satō Kanzan sayagaki states that this katana is a masterwork among all works by Kanesada.*

For collectors seeking a sword with a gorgeous grain pattern then be sure to consider the *Shigezane* katana of the *Motoshige school*. Quite literally hours can be spent gazing into the vivid textures of *itame* (plank grain), *mokume* (burl grain) and *nagare-hada* (running wavy grain) that this katana possesses. The tight razor-saw-tooth *hamon* with falling leaves (*yo*) is delightful as well, that compliments rather than over-taking. This is *jūyō-token* quality. An outstanding set of matching iron-laden Edo-period *koshirae* featuring *Kumagai school* rain and sand dragons gives the entire sword a dark and mysterious feel. *Sayagaki* by *Tanobe-sensei* states that this sword is a masterwork of *Shigezane*. Indeed it is.

We complete the catalogue with a cutting test wakizashi by *Hizen Tadahiro* that was recently sold. If you would like to own a cutting test sword of your own, be sure to reach out to me directly as these swords are often sold privately.

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

Let's have a great year ahead!



Warm regards,

Pablo Kuntz  
February 2023



*San-kyū very much!*

## INDEX OF JAPANESE SWORDS

ITEM#	SWORDSMITH & TYPE	CM	CERTIFICATE	ERA / PERIOD	PRICE
<a href="#">ujka365</a>	A KUNISHIGE KATANA	74.2	Tokubetsu Hozon	Kanbun (1661~1673)	<b>SOLD</b>
<a href="#">ujdi010</a>	A SHIKKAKE DAISHÔ	71.2/53.6	Tokubetsu Hozon	Late Kamakura period	<b>SOLD</b>
<a href="#">ujka413</a>	A NAOE-SHIZU KATANA	69.6	NBTHK Jûyô Tôken	Nambokuchô (1338~67)	<b>SOLD</b>
<a href="#">ujka406</a>	A KATSUKUNI KATANA	69.7	Tokubetsu Hozon	Kanbun (1661~1673)	<b>SOLD</b>
<a href="#">ujta032</a>	A RAI KUNITOSHI TANTÔ	24.1	NBTHK Jûyô Tôken	Shoô era (1288~1292)	<b>SOLD</b>
<a href="#">ujwa255</a>	A RYÔKAI WAKIZASHI	51.5	Tokubetsu Hozon	Enkyô era (1292~ 1309)	<b>SOLD</b>
<a href="#">ujka300</a>	A KANESADA KATANA	70.7	NBTHK Jûyô Tôken	Enpo era (1673~1681)	<b>N/A</b>
<a href="#">ujka414</a>	A SHIGEZANE KATANA	68.2	NBTHK Jûyô Tôken	Enbun (1356~1361)	<b>SOLD</b>
<a href="#">ujwa256</a>	A TADAHIRO WAKIZASHI	54.8	Tokubetsu Hozon	Keian era (1648~1652)	<b>SOLD</b>

**ALL PRICES ARE IN US DOLLARS**

To access current and previous catalogues, please visit:

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

## TO ONLINE VISITORS AROUND THE WORLD...

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

IT IS OUR PROMISE TO ADDRESS ALL YOUR QUESTIONS TO THE BEST OF OUR ABILITY. IT'S IMPORTANT TO US THAT YOU FEEL COMPLETELY CONFIDENT THAT THE SWORD YOU CHOOSE (AND CHOOSES YOU) IS DESTINED FOR YOUR FAMILY TO CHERISH AND PRESERVE. PLEASE TAKE REASSURANCE THAT ALL SWORDS FROM UNIQUE JAPAN ARE GUARANTEED AUTHENTIC AND COME WITH A **3-DAY WORRY FREE INSPECTION PERIOD** UPON ARRIVAL TO YOUR HOME.

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

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

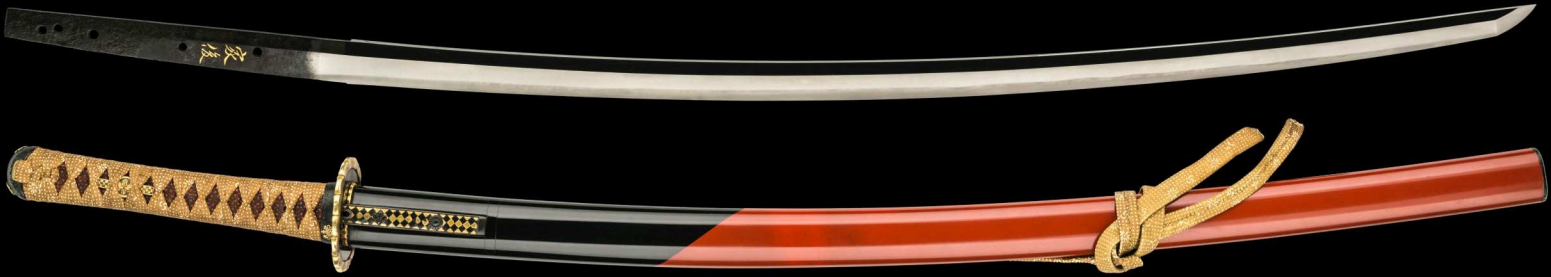
DOMO ARIGATO,  
PABLO

PABLO KUNTZ  
FOUNDER, UNIQUE JAPAN

PHOTOS TAKEN BY ERIC BOSSICK FOR UNIQUE JAPAN.  
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## Newly Available Swords

The following swords have just come available that were featured in previous Unique Japan catalogues. Click to view catalogue descriptions and contact Pablo ([service@uniquejapan.com](mailto:service@uniquejapan.com)) for purchase inquiries.



### A Ko-Bizen letoshi Tachi (ujka189)

A fabulous signed tachi circa 1247~1249 with gold inlay and first-class koshirae. 62nd NBTHK Jûyô Tôken (72cm)

ASK

Catalogue 31  
pages 169~186  
[click for catalogue >>](#)



### A Hôshô Katana (ujka171)

A rare ubu-nakago katana from the Kamakura period forged purely in *masame-hada*. NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon with Tanobe-sensei sayagaki (73.2cm)

SOLD

Catalogue 31  
pages 28~49  
[click for catalogue >>](#)

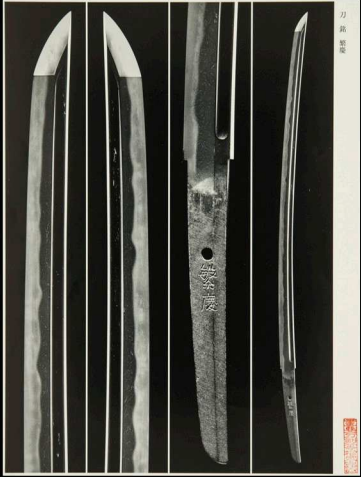


### A Tadahiro Daishô (ujdi006)

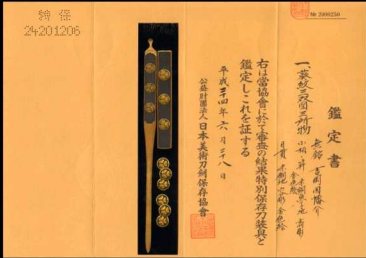
A genuine Edo period daishô by Nidai Hizen master swordsmith. NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon (72.3cm / 53.8cm)

ASK

Catalogue 28  
pages 60~87  
[click for catalogue >>](#)



Recently Completed Uchigatana Koshirae  
 A Hankei Katana (ujka373)  
 Momoyama period (Keichō era, 1596~1615)  
 23rd Tokubetsu Jūyō Tōken  
 with Yoshioka school aoi-mon mitokoromono





Recently Completed Uchigatana Koshirae  
 A Rai Kuniyasu Katana (ujka389)  
 Nambokuchō period (Jōji era, 1362~1368)  
 60th Jūyō Tōken  
 with Owari Nobuie tsuba & Ishiguro Masayoshi FK



Owari Nobuie tsuba part of the Walter A. Compton collection



• 5 AN OWARI NOBUIE TSUBA  
 EDO PERIOD (CIRCA 1750), SIGNED NOBUIE

The thick iron plate has a nearly tubular rim carved in a wide rope pattern over the outer edge, and with parallel lines from the rim toward the web. The center of the plate has a wide, slightly raised carved cross design in a surface of pinpoint hammering. The design repeats on the reverse. The rim has iron bones, and the *hitsu-ana* have very heavy *shakudo* inserts (*sekigane*)—height and width 7.8cm., thickness at center 5.0mm., at edge 1.2cm.

This unusual design shows the independent spirit of some of the later Nobuie masters such as Owari Nobuie and Akasaka Nobuie.



ITEM# UJKA365

## A KUNISHIGE 'HORIMONO' KATANA SIGNED, EARLY EDO PERIOD (KANBUN ERA: 1661~1673)

<b>Swordsmith:</b>	<i>Bitchû no Kuni Mizuta jû Kunishige</i> (6th generation)
<b>Measurements:</b>	<b>Length:</b> 74.2cm ( <i>ubu</i> ) <b>Curvature:</b> 1.4cm <b>Moto-haba:</b> 3.14cm
<b>Jihada:</b>	<i>Gritty mokume hada with pronounced chikei</i>
<b>Hamon:</b>	<i>Surging waves of gunome-midare with sunagashi and plentiful kinsuji</i>
<b>Certificate #1:</b>	<b>NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon</b> (a sword Especially Worthy of Preservation)
<b>Certificate #2-3:</b>	<b>NBTHK Hozon &amp; NTHK-NPO Kanteisho</b> (for the tsuba and koshirae)
<b>Fujishiro rank:</b>	<b>Chû-jôsaku</b> (ranked as an above average swordsmith)
<b>Cutting ability:</b>	<b>Wazamono</b> (maker of sharp swords)
<b>Included:</b>	Shirasaya, custom koshirae, fabric bags, stand, kit, booklet, description

**SOLD**

The Mizuta school derived its name from a group of swordsmiths that lived at Mizuta village in Bitchu province. Members of this school are said to be descendants of Ko-Aoe Tametsugu and the smith Kunishige, known as Ko-Mizuta. The most famous smith of the Shinto Mizuta school was Ôtsuki Yogoro Kunishige, also known as Ôyogo Kunishige. This long, muscular katana is the work of his son Katsubei, the final smith of the Ôtsuki branch of this respected school. This is a sword blessed with spiritual significance. Striking *horimono* (engravings) form the all-powerful *Tokkosho* and *Vaisravana*, one of four heavenly kings. Its dazzling *hamon* exudes a soulful, protective grittiness that contains plenty of *sunagashi* and *kinsuji hataraki* that can best be described as *Mizuta Sôshû*. A magnificent custom koshirae was built in Japan over a 2-year period with a guiding theme revolving around the land's most beloved symbol, the sun. From beautiful *maki-e drawings* on the *saya* to guardian *shisa* lions for *menuki* to a tipsy eccentric immortal god that loves wine(!), this inspiring katana unites lethal sharpness with creative traditions from the past to present.



Saki-kasane: 4.9mm

Moto-kasane: 7.4mm

Omosa: 825g

Kissaki: 3.64cm

Saki-haba: 2.03cm

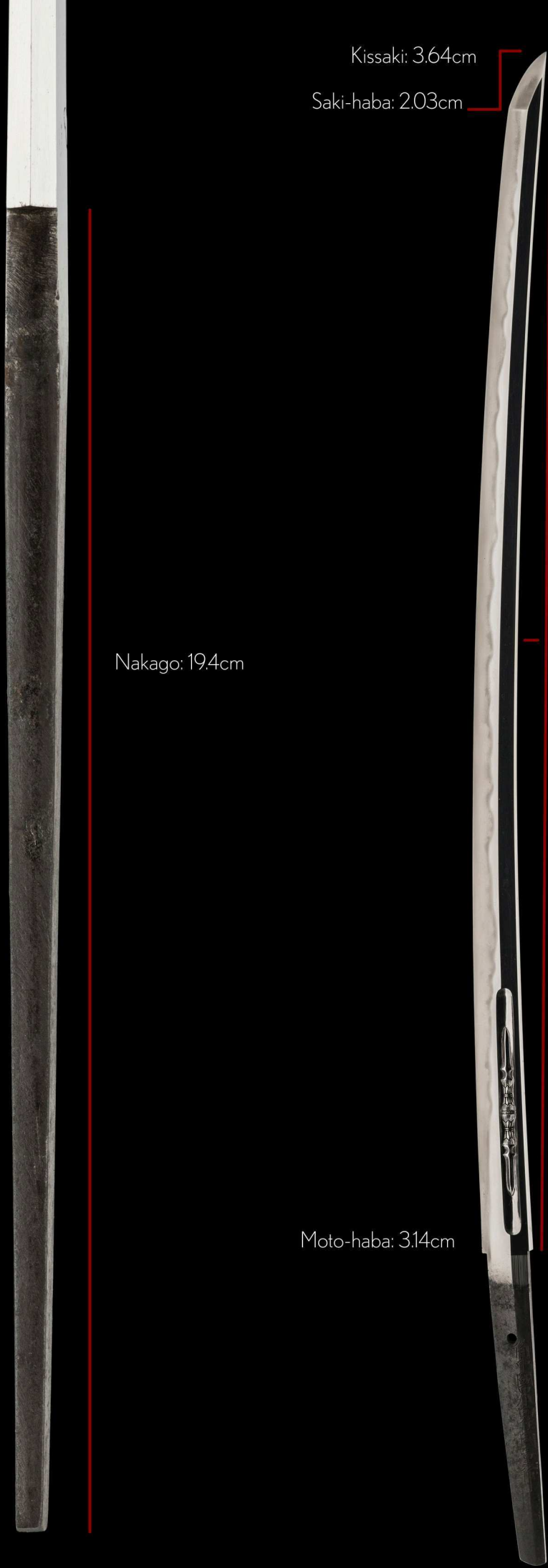
Nakago: 19.4cm

Moto-haba: 3.14cm

Nagasa: 74.2cm

Sori: 1.40cm

Mekugi-ana: 1



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

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

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

Given the curvature of this long katana, we can attribute the work to *Katsubei*, who flourished during the *Kanbun* era (1661~1673). *Katsubei* was the final working smith of the *Ôtsuki* branch of the Mizuta school., ranked *chû-jôsaku* and *wazamono* for the sharpness that his swords possess.

The *surging Mizuta Soshû ô-gunome-midare hamon* dazzles under the light showcasing clusters of *nie* crystals. This is a sword that will energize the new caretaker each and every time it is unsheathed.

A brilliant custom koshirae was built by Unique Japan for the sword over a 2-year period. The set of *shisa* lion *menuki* was the inspiration for the enlightened sun design on the *saya* (scabbard) which radiates spiritual protection. Coupled with impressive *horimono* (engraving) at the base of the blade, we have here a katana that fully embodies the artistic and courageous spirit of a samurai.

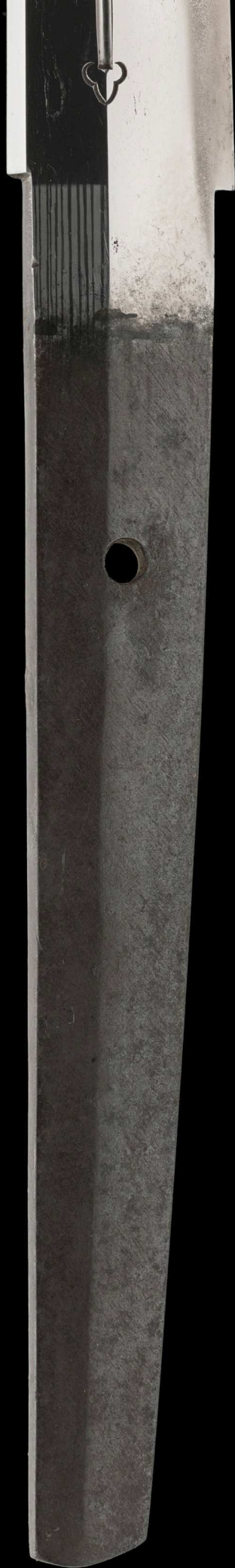




Location: *Mizuta, Bitchû Province*  
Swordsmith: *Kunishige*

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

備 (Bi)  
中 (tchû, no)  
国 (Kuni)  
水 (Mizu)  
田 (ta)  
住 (jû)  
国 (Kuni)  
重 (shige)  
作 (saku)



The *nakago* (tang) exhibits a clean, well-aged patina with crisp diagonal (*sujikai*) file marks.

(*ura*, reverse)

28201601



No 1005031



鑑定書

一刀 銘備中国水田住国重作

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右は當協會に於て審査の結果特別保存刀剣と  
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東京都教育委員会  
第 33666 号  
昭和36年 12月 18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), March 23rd

One, Katana

*Mei* (signature)

*Bitchû no Kuni Mizuta jû Kunishige saku*

*Nagasa* (length)

2-shaku 4-sun 5-bu jaku (74.2cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai  
(NBTHK)



This *horimono* (engraving) depicts *tokkosho* (独鉈杵) or simply *dokko*. A single-prong *vajra* hilt that is used as a ritual object to symbolize both the properties of a diamond (indestructibility) and a thunderbolt (irresistible force).

According to Markus Sesko, this *horimono* is sometimes found on blades of the *Sue-Sôshû* school, aligning perfectly with this Kunishige katana.



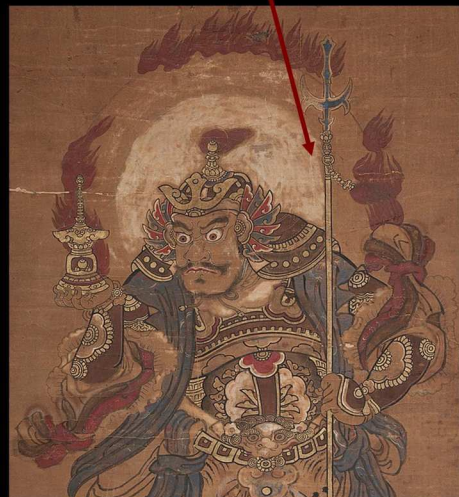
A tokkosho held in the Nara National Museum.

A symbol of the indestructible nature of Buddhist law and the power to defeat evil in its many forms. Tokkosho was made for the singular purpose of striking down evil in the name of good.



The *horimono* on the reverse side depicts *Hatahoko* (独鉤杵), a banner spear.

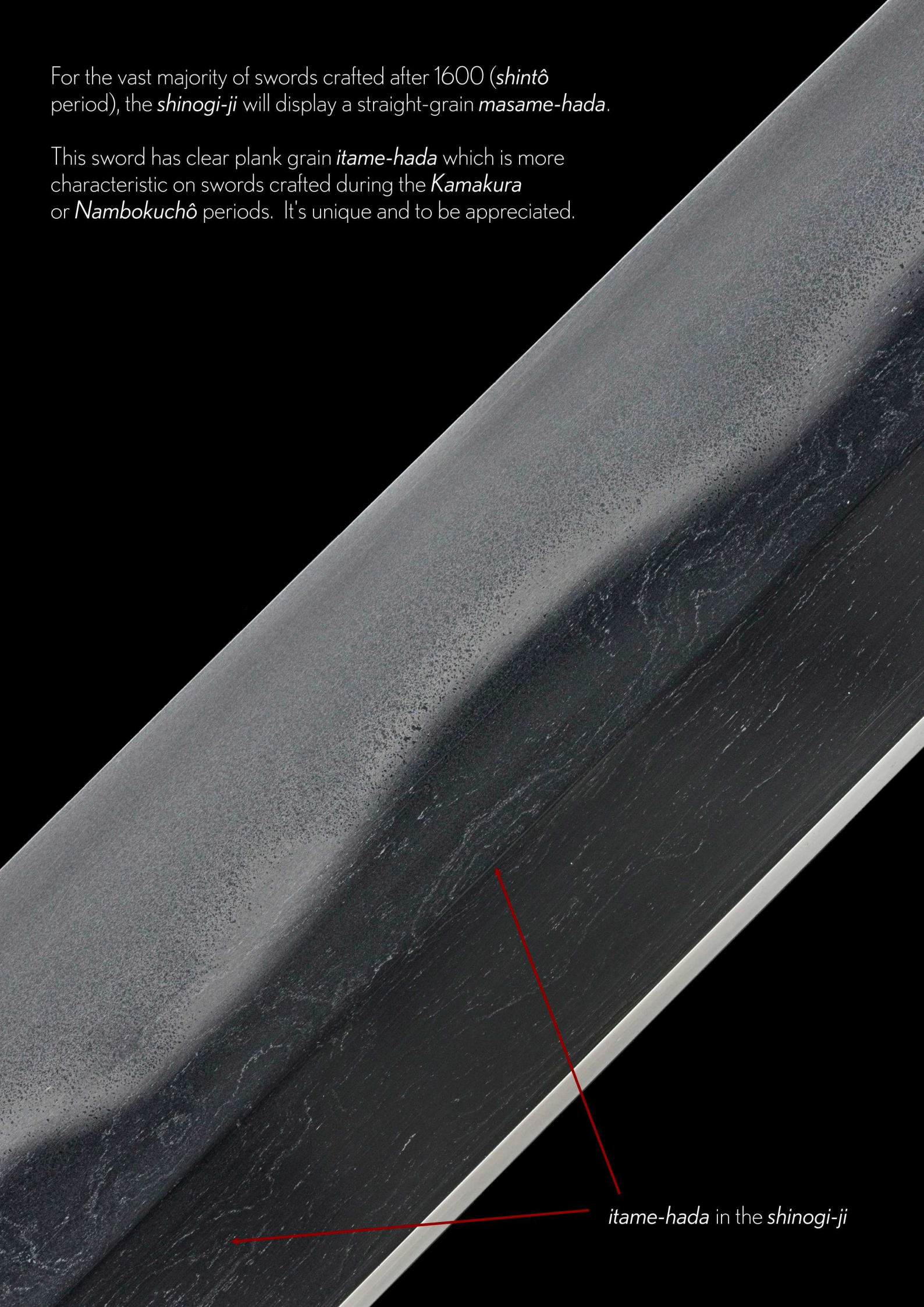
According to scholar Markus Sesko:  
*A hatahoko is a symbolic weapon used in esoteric Buddhism to decorate an altar place. The spear or lance is sometimes also referred to as Bishamon-ken (Sword of Bishamon) or just hoko. A hatahoko engraving is pretty rare."*



The hatahoko is the weapon of *Vaisravana* or *Tamoten* in Japan - the God of War. *Vaisravana* is the regent of the North, Lord of Yakshas. He is one of the Four Heavenly Kings, each associated with a cardinal

For the vast majority of swords crafted after 1600 (*shintô* period), the *shinogi-ji* will display a straight-grain *masame-hada*.

This sword has clear plank grain *itame-hada* which is more characteristic on swords crafted during the *Kamakura* or *Nambokuchô* periods. It's unique and to be appreciated.



*itame-hada* in the *shinogi-ji*



A dazzling wavy *gunome-midare hamon* with a deep, deep *soshû-esque nioguchi* powers through the steel of this long katana.



Sharp, very sharp.



A close-up, low-angle shot of a sword blade, likely a katana, set against a dark background. The blade is illuminated from the side, highlighting its curved edge and the intricate patterns of the hamon (temper line). The hamon is a 'sôshû hamon', characterized by its 'fiery' appearance with bright, irregular, flame-like shapes. Below the hamon, the 'hatahoko horimono' (sashiko) is visible, consisting of a series of small, repeating geometric patterns. The lighting creates a strong contrast between the bright, reflective metal and the deep shadows, emphasizing the texture and craftsmanship of the blade.

A fiery *sôshû hamon* in perfect  
harmony with the *hatahoko horimono*.



Feel the power.



*Shirasaya*  
(protective scabbard)

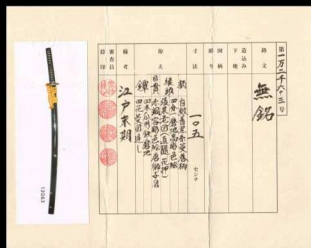


shakudô and gold *habaki*  
criss-cross file marks

*Kuro-ronuri  
kin sumi maki-e saya  
uchigatana-koshirae*  
(黒呂塗金墨蒔絵鞘打刀拵)

*Uchigatana-koshirae  
lacquered in glossy black  
with gold and black maki-e*

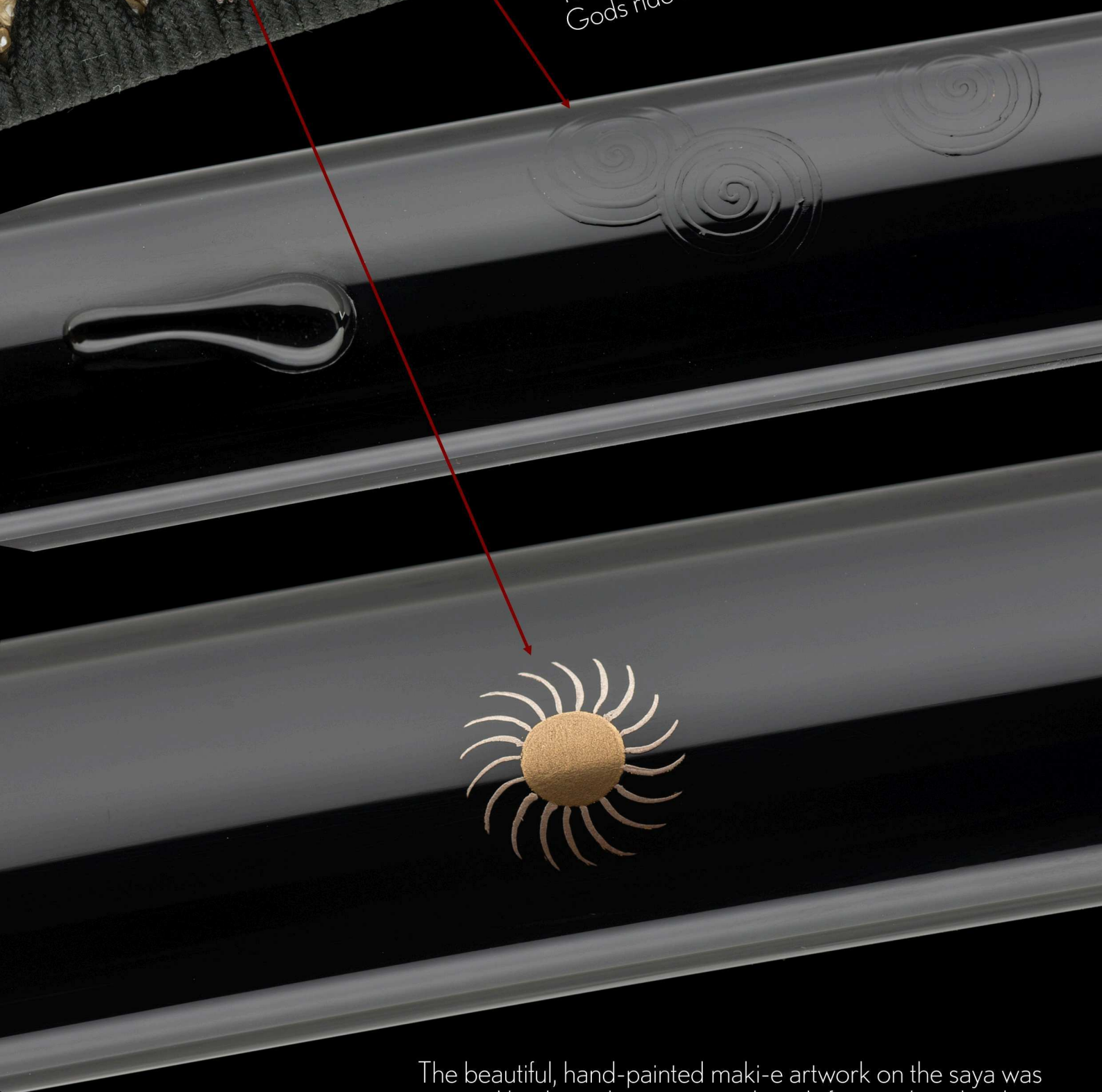
Crafted during the  
Modern period



NTHK-NPO Kanteisho  
Certificate of Authenticity



The shisa lion symbolizes the **sun** in Buddhism. Gods ride on shisa as messengers of vital news.



The beautiful, hand-painted maki-e artwork on the saya was inspired by the radiating sun and swirls featured on the shisa.



In *shintoism*, this solar symbolism centres around the figure of *Amaterasu*, the *sun deity*.

The most honoured *kami* (god) in the shinto pantheon, she is the daughter of the couple, *Izanagi* and *Izanami*.

Her name is derived from *amateru* meaning 'shining in heaven'. Her full name, *Amaterasu no Okami* translates to "*great divinity who lights up the sky*".

Divinity occupies an essential place in the history of Japan. In fact, all ancient texts specify that the *emperors of Japan are to be considered direct descendants of Amaterasu*.

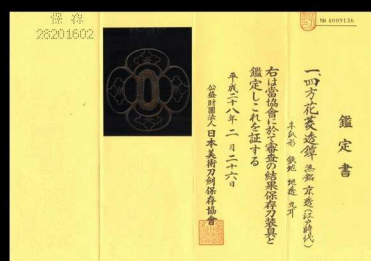
The maki-e artwork pays respect to Amaterasu and asks for her spiritual blessing.



*Kyô-sukashi tsuba*, a multi-lobed iron tsuba crafted in Kyôto during the Edo period.

The openwork depicts diamond shapes coupled with a petal motif known as *hanabishi*. Unsigned, crafted in Edo period.

This tsuba has been awarded an NBTHK Hozon certificate of authenticity as worthy of preservation.





The *menuki* (decorative grips on the hilt) showcase two beautiful *shisa* lions skillfully wrapped over aged *samekawa* (ray skin) as if they are leaping out to protect the owner.





High quality antique  
*samekawa* (skin of a ray fish).

Notice how the shisa lion appears to be jumping  
out from the beautifully braided black silk.

A happy immortal!

wine

phoenix feather



This brilliant *fuchi-kashira* depicts the eccentric *Zhang Guolao*, one of the *Eight Immortals* in the Taoist pantheon. In art he is depicted carrying a phoenix feather and the peach of immortality. He rides on a marvellous white mule that is capable of being folded like paper when not in use.

Zhang had a love for wine and winemaking as we can see in the expressive artwork on the *kashira* (pommel). Other members of the Eight Immortals drank his wine, which they believed to have healing or medicinal properties. Agree!

With his right hand he ties up his long beard and with his left arm he holds his emblem, a bamboo drum in the shape of a tube with two iron rods or mallets representing immortality.





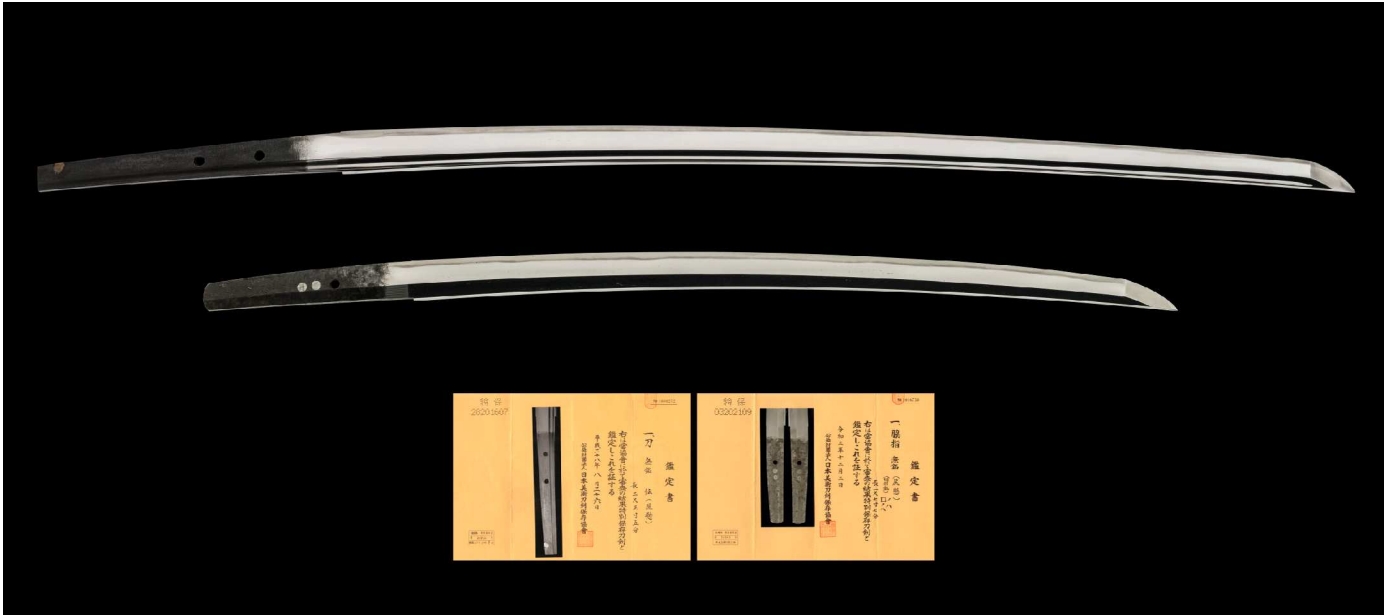
辛 (Kanoto)

丑 (Ushi)

Discreetly stamped on the inside of the *koiguchi* (mouth of the scabbard), record that this custom koshirae was crafted starting in the Year of the Ox of this *Kanoto* era (2021).



Koshirae bag



ITEM# UJDI010

## A SHIKKAKE SCHOOL DAISHÔ

UNSIGNED, LATE KAMAKURA ~ NAMBOKUCHÔ PERIOD (1288~1342)

KATANA (DAI)

**Swordsmith:** *Attributed to the Shikkake school*

**Measurements:** **Length:** 71.2cm (*ô-suriage*) **Curvature:** 1.4cm **Moto-haba:** 3.01cm

WAKIZASHI (SHÔ)

**Swordsmith:** *Attributed to the Shikkake school*

**Measurements:** **Length:** 53.6cm (*ô-suriage*) **Curvature:** 1.1cm **Moto-haba:** 2.8cm

**Certificates x 2:** **NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon** (*designated as Especially Worthy of Preservation*)

**Included:** Shirasaya x 2, fabric bags, stand, kit, booklet, printed description

**SOLD** (*custom daishô koshirae in process*)

During the *Nara* period (710~794), before the capital was transferred to *Yamashiro* (*Kyôto*), the province of *Yamato* was the center of Japanese culture. The development of swordsmith's trade in *Yamato* depended on the relationship with temples as they needed to protect their rights and property. The five major *Yamato* schools - *Senjuin*, *Tegai*, *Taima*, *Hôshô* and *Shikkake* were groups of swordsmiths that had a huge influence on temples throughout the country.

The *Shikkake school* was founded by swordsmith *Norinaga*, born in 1272. The very name was then continued by successive *Norinaga* generations until the *Muromachi* period. Other smiths of this school are *Norihiro*, *Norizane*, *Norinari*, *Norisada*, and *Norinao*. Signed works are rare.

We are pleased to offer both a *katana* and *wakizashi* that have been attributed to the *Shikkake school* exhibiting the centuries-old mystique of the school with a wavy *nagare-hada*, a weaving *ko-gunome* hamon and plenty of *kinsuji* activity. This is a fine opportunity to build a personal custom *daishô koshirae* for the swords or enjoy them as they are in *shirasaya*. Please contact Unique Japan for further information and guidance on the *daishô* creation process.



Saki-kasane: 4.2mm

Moto-kasane: 5.9mm

Kissaki: 3.22cm

Saki-haba: 1.90cm

Nagasa: 71.2cm

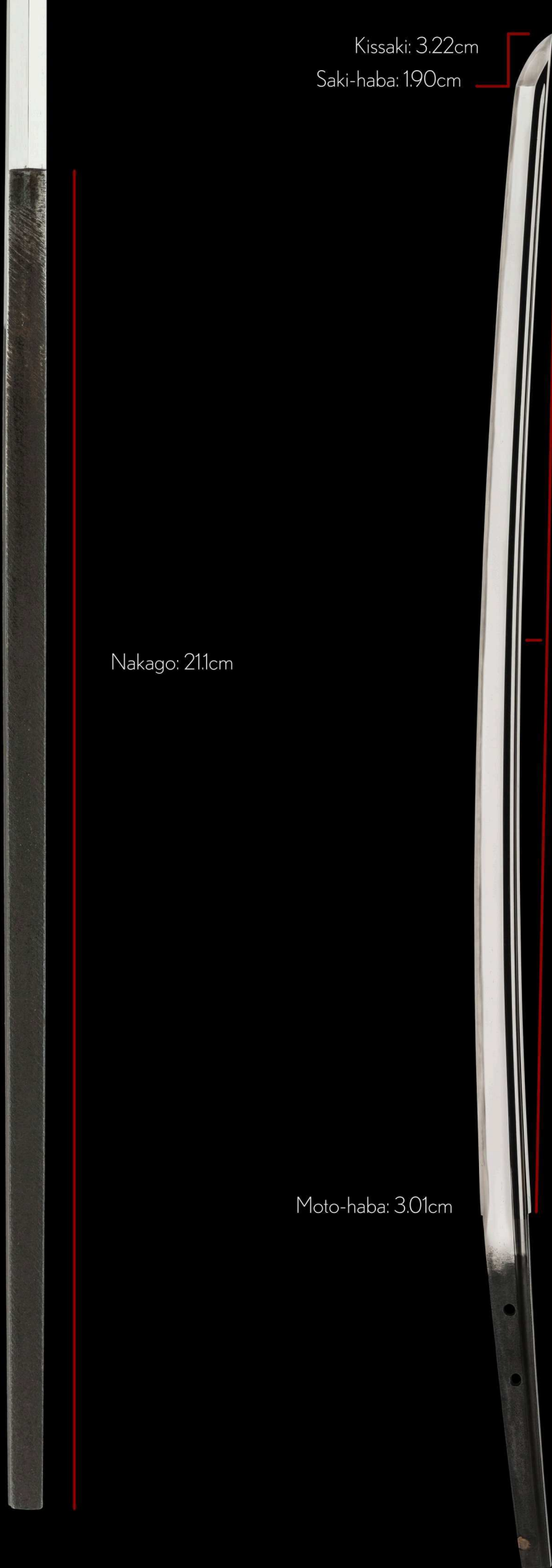
Nakago: 21.1cm

Sori: 1.40cm

Omosa: 585g

Moto-haba: 3.01cm

Mekugi-ana: 2





Saki-kasane: 4.1mm

Moto-kasane: 5.7mm

Kissaki: 3.64cm

Saki-haba: 1.92cm

Nagasa: 53.6cm

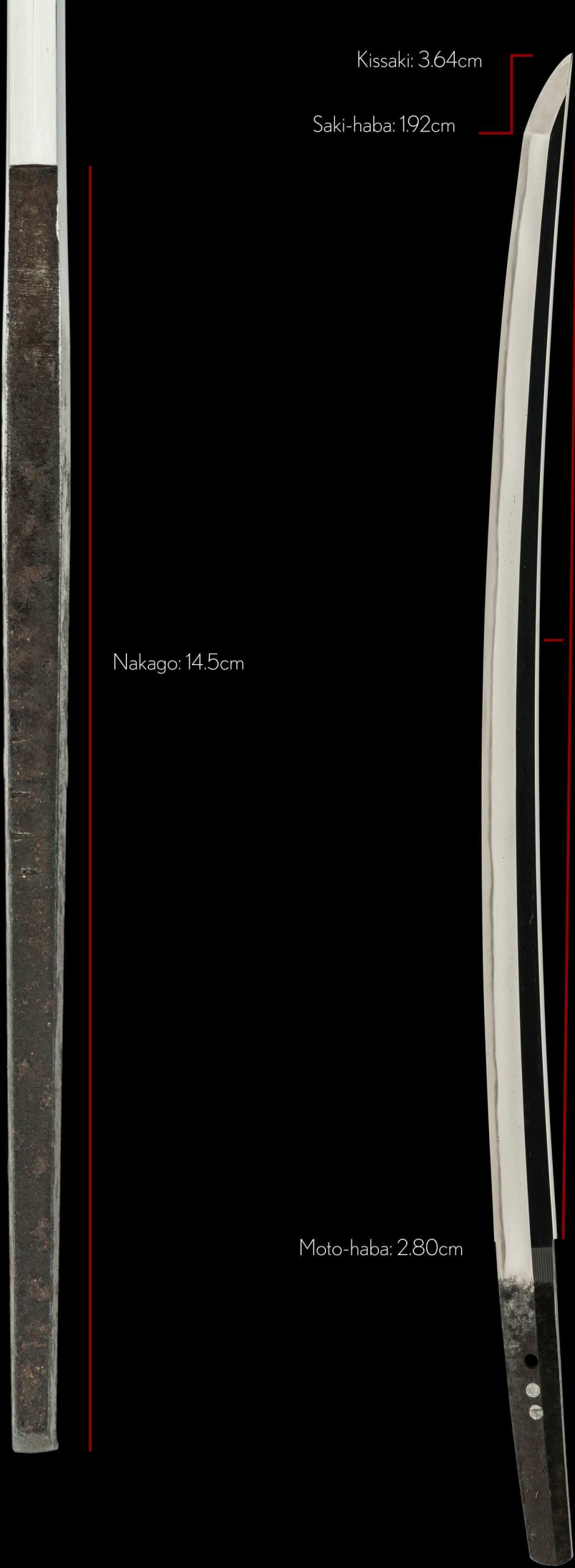
Nakago: 14.5cm

Sori: 1.10cm

Omosa: 555g

Moto-haba: 2.80cm

Mekugi-ana: 1



During the *Nara* period, before the capital was transferred to *Kyôto* in Yamashiro province, the province of *Yamato* was the center of Japanese culture.

The development of swordsmith's trade in Yamato depended on the relationship with temples as they needed to protect their rights and property.

The five major Yamato schools - *Senjuin*, *Tegai*, *Taima*, *Hôshô* and *Shikkake* were groups of swordsmiths that had a huge influence on temples throughout the country. Characteristics of the Yamato tradition can be seen in the works of *Yamato Shizu*, *Akasaka Senjuin*, *Uda*, *Ino*, *Mihara* and *Niô* to name just a few schools.


The Shikkake school was founded by swordsmith *Norinaga*. There exist two *tantô* which are dated with the third year of *Bunpô* (1319) and the third year of *Ryakuô* (1340) and which are additionally signed with the information "made at the age of 48" and "*made at the age 69*" respectively, what calculates *Bun'ei* nine (1272) as *Norinaga*'s year of birth. The very name was then continued by successive *Norinaga* generations until the Muromachi period.

The workmanship of the school features a high *shinogi*, a wide *shinogi-ji*, a kitae in *itame* that tends to *nagare*, and a hamon that based on *suguha*. The style shares the common features of the Yamato tradition but a unique characteristic of the Shikkake School is a connected *ko-gunome* being mixed into the *ha*, although blades in pure *suguha* were also made.

Both the katana and wakizashi exhibit the centuries-old mystique of the Shikkake school with a wavy *nagare hada*, a weaving *ko-gunome hamon* and plenty of *kinsuji* activity. This is a fine opportunity to build a personal custom *daishô koshirae* for the swords or enjoy them as they are in shirasaya.

Contact Unique Japan for more information on the *daishô* creation process. Please note it will take a minimum of 18 months to complete a traditional *daishô koshirae*, your patience is appreciated and will be rewarded.






This sword was once a long tachi  
crafted during the 1300s - late  
*Kamakura to Nambokuchô* 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.



28201607

No 1006252



鑑定書

一刀 無銘 伝(尻懸)

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

平成二十八年八月二十六日

公益財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協會



鹿児島 教育委員会  
第 31812 号  
昭和 61 年 12 月 9 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

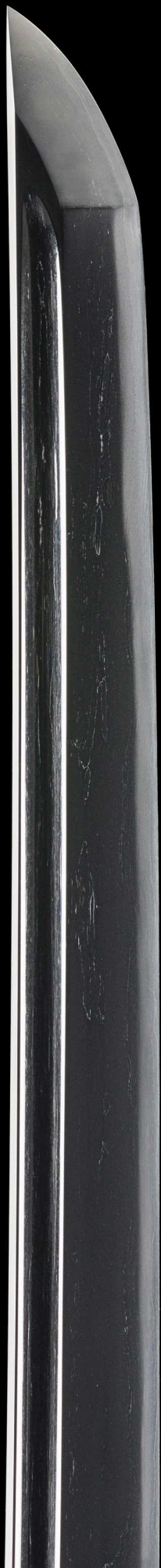
One, Katana

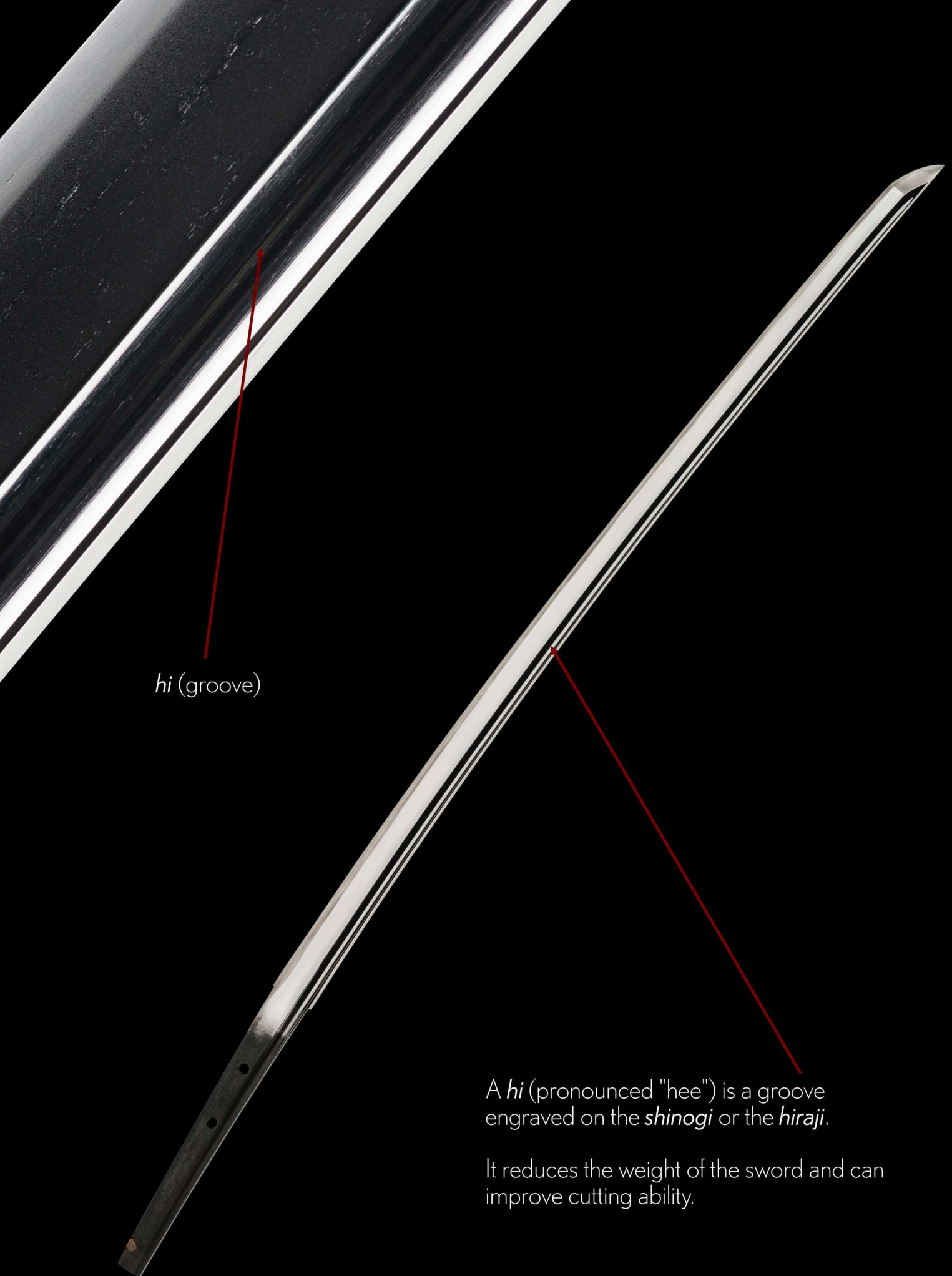
*Mumei* (unsigned)  
*Den Shikkake*

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

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai  
(NBTHK)







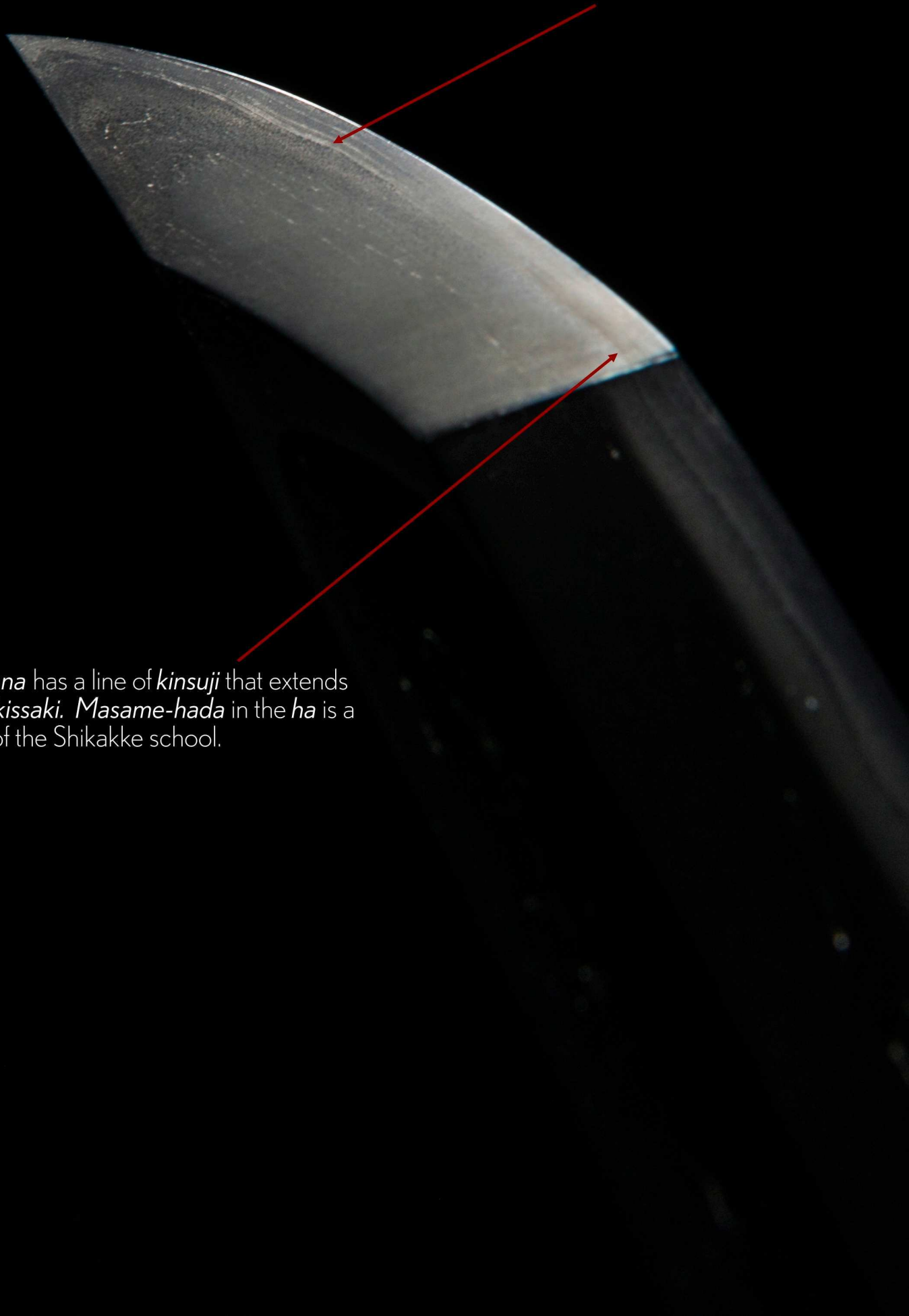
*hi* (groove)

A *hi* (pronounced "hee") is a groove engraved on the *shinogi* or the *hiraji*.

It reduces the weight of the sword and can improve cutting ability.

*Masame-hada* (straight grain) in the tempered area of the sword.

The *katana* has a line of *kinsuji* that extends into the *kissaki*. *Masame-hada* in the *ha* is a feature of the Shikakke school.





A terrific look at the straight grain *masame-hada* along the *ha* (tempered area of the sword).

This is *Shikkake*.

The *nagare-hada* is in full flow.

This katana has seen countless battles over its vast lifetime and thus there are areas where the core steel is exposed. The *daishô* will appeal to the collector who appreciates a bit of wear and tear.

The grittiness of life captured in steel.



*nagare-hada*



An icy blue tint appears from the *suguha* hamon, a sign of a well-made sword.

Come to the light.



*Shirasaya*  
(protective scabbard)



gold-wrapped *habaki* with  
horizontal file marks

*No Ha* is 'the third of ~'

During the *Shōwa* era (1926~1989) there were sword rental shops for men who were too poor to afford their own swords when going to war.

Thus the characters "*No Ha*" meaning 'the third of' chiseled onto both sides of the nakago was done by one of these shop owners purely for internal stock management.

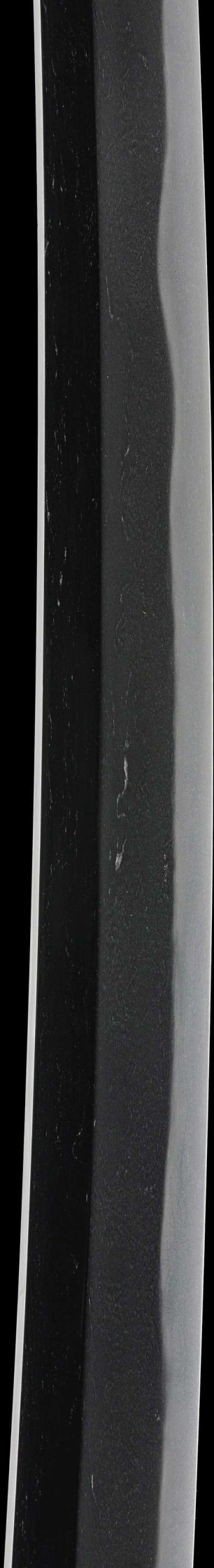
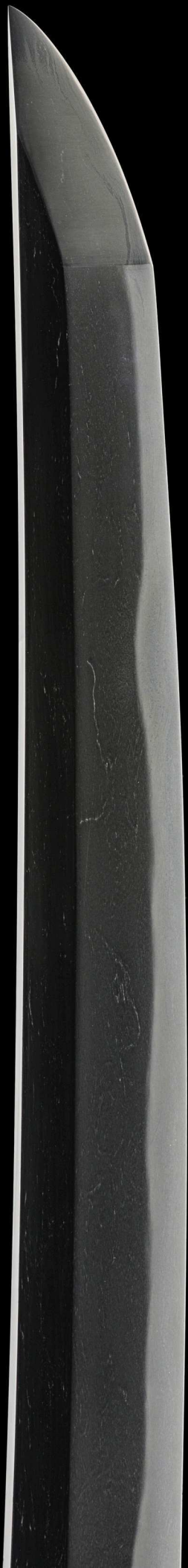
ノ (No)

ハ (Ha)

(No) ノ

(Ha) ハ






A close-up photograph of the tip of a wakizashi blade against a black background. The blade is curved and shows a fine, brushed texture. Two red arrows point to specific features: one points to the tip, and the other points to a long, thin line of kinsuji running through the blade.

*Hakikake* (beautiful brushed boshi)

A magnificent long line of *kinsuji* ripping through the *kissaki* (tip) of the wakizashi.

Swords of the Shikkake school has a wide *shinogi-ji* as seen on this wakizashi



The image shows a close-up of a wakizashi blade, highlighting its distinctive features. The blade is dark and polished, with a prominent wide shinogi-ji (ridge) running along its length. The inazuma (bolts of nie crystal lightning) is visible as a bright, jagged line near the edge. The ko-ashi (small legs extending to the edge) is also visible as a small, dark mark near the edge.

*shinogi-ji*

*inazuma*  
(bolts of nie crystal lightning)

*ko-ashi*  
(small legs extending to the edge)



The darkish *jihada* speaks of history.

We can see *mokume-hada* (rounded) burl grain, wavy *nagare-hada*, and *itame-hada* as well.

channels of *chikei*

A tightly waving *ko-gunome hamon* based on *suguha*.



A close-up look at the wonderful *nagare-hada*  
(flowing grain pattern) as seen on the wakizashi.

*nagare-hada*

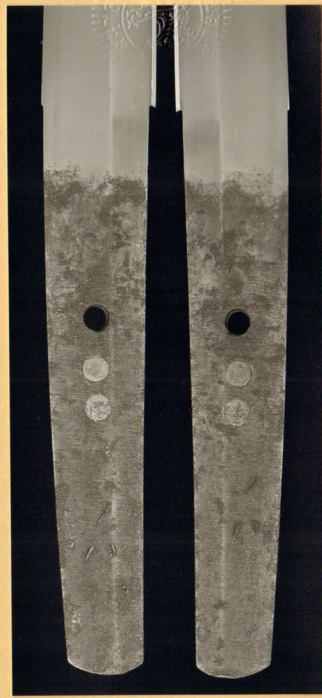


*Shirasaya*  
(protective scabbard)



silver *habaki* with  
horizontal file marks

03202109



公益財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協会



令和三年十二月三日

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

長一尺七寸七分

一脇指 無銘 (尻懸)

(切符銘) □ノハ

鑑定書

No. 016750

京都府 教育委員会  
第 58043 号  
平成26年5月23日

## NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon Certificate of Designation

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

Issued in the 3rd year of Reiwa (2021), December 3rd

One, Wakizashi

*Mumei* (unsigned)  
*Shikkake*

*(kiritsukemei) No hachi □ no hachi*

*Nagasa* (length)  
1-shaku 7-sun 7-bu (53.6cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai  
(NBTHK)

Here are some of the custom *daishô* creations we have created in the past for our valued clients all over the world.

Let this be inspiration for yours!



*Naoe Shizu* (rabbit & night sky)



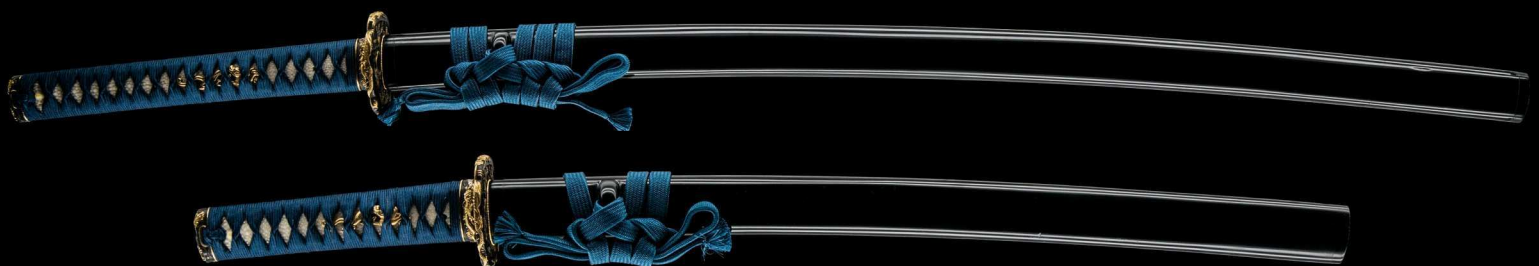
*Morikage* (dragonfly)



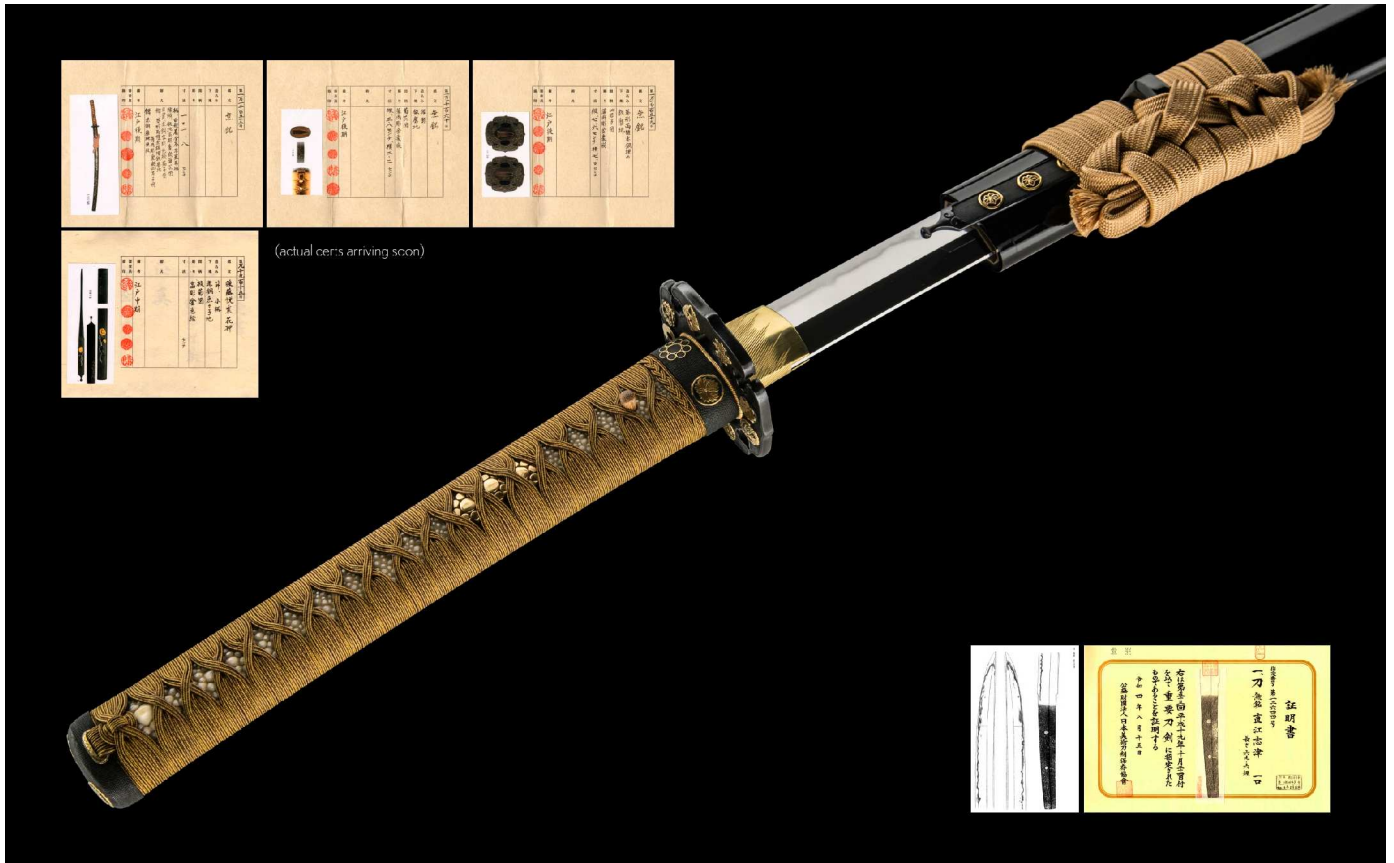
*Yasutsugu* (autumn flowers)



*Yukihiro/Masahiro* (samurai)



*Koyama Munetsugu* (dragons)



ITEM# UJKA413

## A NAOE-SHIZU KATANA

UNSIGNED, NAMBOKUCHÔ PERIOD (CIRCA 1338~1367)

- Swordsmith:** *The Naoe Shizu School (attribution, ô-suriage nakago)*
- Measurements:** **Length:** 69.6cm    **Curvature:** 1.55cm    **Motohaba:** 2.83cm
- Jihada:** *Vivid itame-nagare that tends to masame and features chikei and plenty of ji-nie*
- Hamon:** *Ko-nie-laden notare, wide nioiguchi, mixed with gunome, togari-gunome, ashi, some small roundish tobiyaki, kinsuji, and fine sunagashi*
- Certificate:** **53rd NBTHK Jûyô Tôken Shômeisho** (*designated as Profound and Important*)
- Certificate #2-5:** **NTHK-NPO Kanteisho** (*koshirae, tsuba, fitting, kogai designated as Authentic*)
- Fujishiro:** **Jô-saku** (*superior swordsmith quality*)
- Included:** *Shirasaya, kamon koshirae, stand, kit, booklet, printed description*

**SOLD**

Imposing. Impressive. Important. This magnificent *Naoe Shizu* katana captures the raw warring emotions of the *Nambokuchô* period. It is a 650-year old shortened *ôdachi* (long tachi) that would have originally had a cutting edge of about 80cm, potentially longer. One's eyes are drawn immediately to the blade's *o-kissaki* (long extended tip) that measures whopping 11.5cm in length. The *jihada* is a fantastic mixture of *itame*, *mokume* and *nagare-hada*, lots of *chikei* and *ji-nie* to gaze over. The *hamon* pumps along like a heartbeat, churning out Mino tradition *togari* with copious amounts of *tobiyaki*, *yô*, *sunagashi* and *kinsuji*. A terrific set of *koshirae* with countless family *kamon* decorates the piece with eye-catching class. Not all *Naoe-Shizu* swords are created equal, this one is a keeper. Read on for its history and details.



Saki-kasane: 2.2mm

Moto-kasane: 2.5mm

Kissaki: 11.62cm

Saki-haba: 2.47cm

Nagasa: 69.6cm

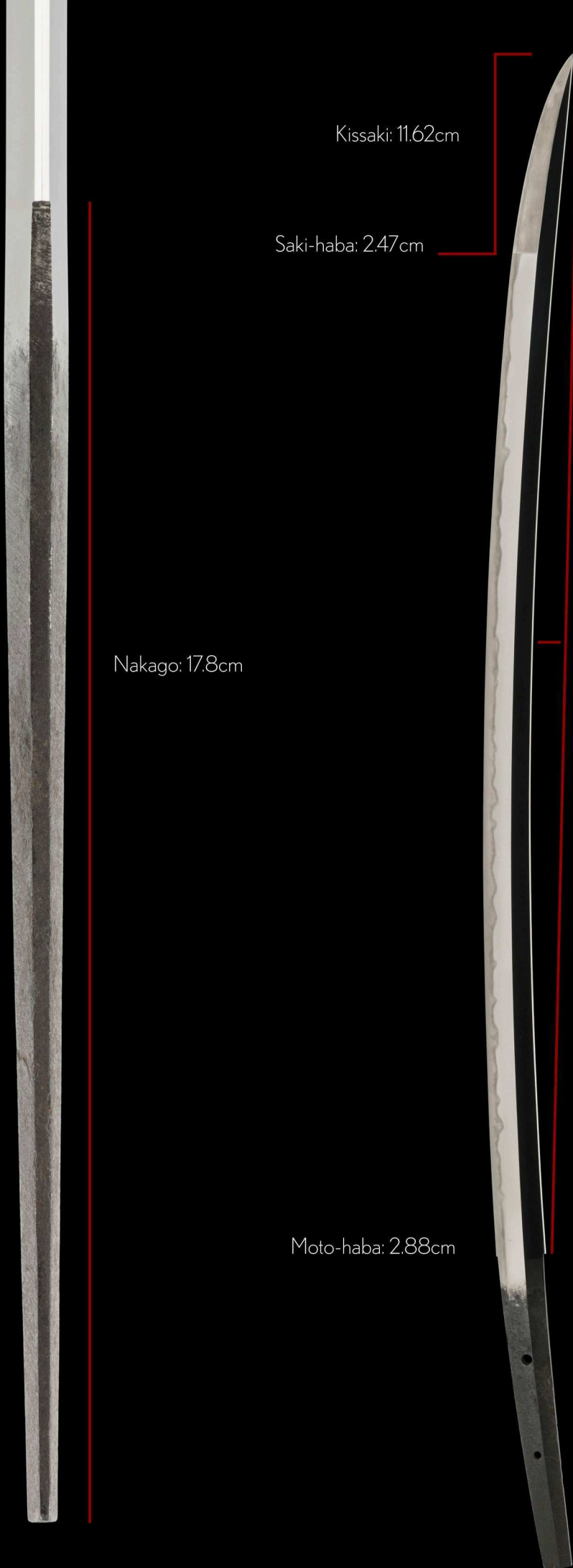
Nakago: 17.8cm

Sori: 1.55cm

Omosa: 735g

Moto-haba: 2.88cm

Mekugi-ana: 2



According to historical records swordsmiths populated Mino province in the *Hôgen* era (1156-1159) during the *Heian* period. However, it is only towards 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, Kaneuji's 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 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).





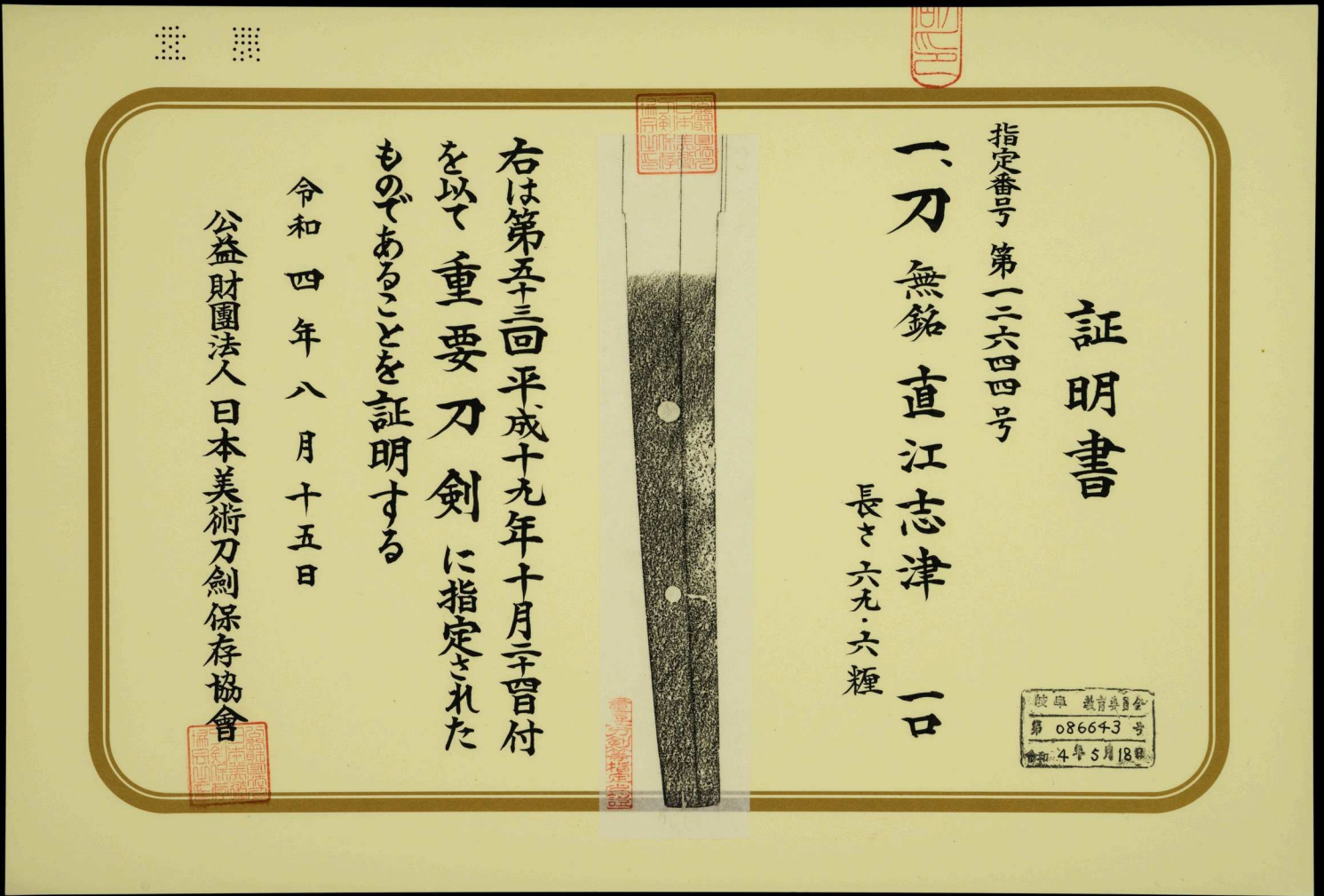
This sword was a formidable *ôdachi* during the *Nambokuchô* period.

It may have lost its signature 500 or so years ago when it was greatly shortened to its *ô-suriage nakago* but the blade still retains its bold posture.

There is a chisel mark at the *nakago-jiri*, butt end. It appears to the remnants of the initial signature.



Old chisel stroke.  
A trace of history.



Jûyô Certificate No. 12644  
Shômeisho (証明書) Certificate  
Katana, mumei: Naoe Shizu (直江志津)

Nagasa: 69.6 cm

The sword was registered on May 18th in 2022 by the Board of Education of Gifu prefecture

This is to certify that above sword had been designated as *Juyô-Tôken* on October 24th, 1997 at the 53rd session

August 15th, 2022  
[Foundation] Nihon Bijutsu Tôken Hozon Kyôkai, NBTHK

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\*\* Note: the original *Jûyô Tôken* certificate was lost. By policy, rather than issuing a new certificate, the NBTHK issues a *shômeisho* (a certificate of acceptance) after they carefully review the sword in person ensuring the authenticity and condition of the item.



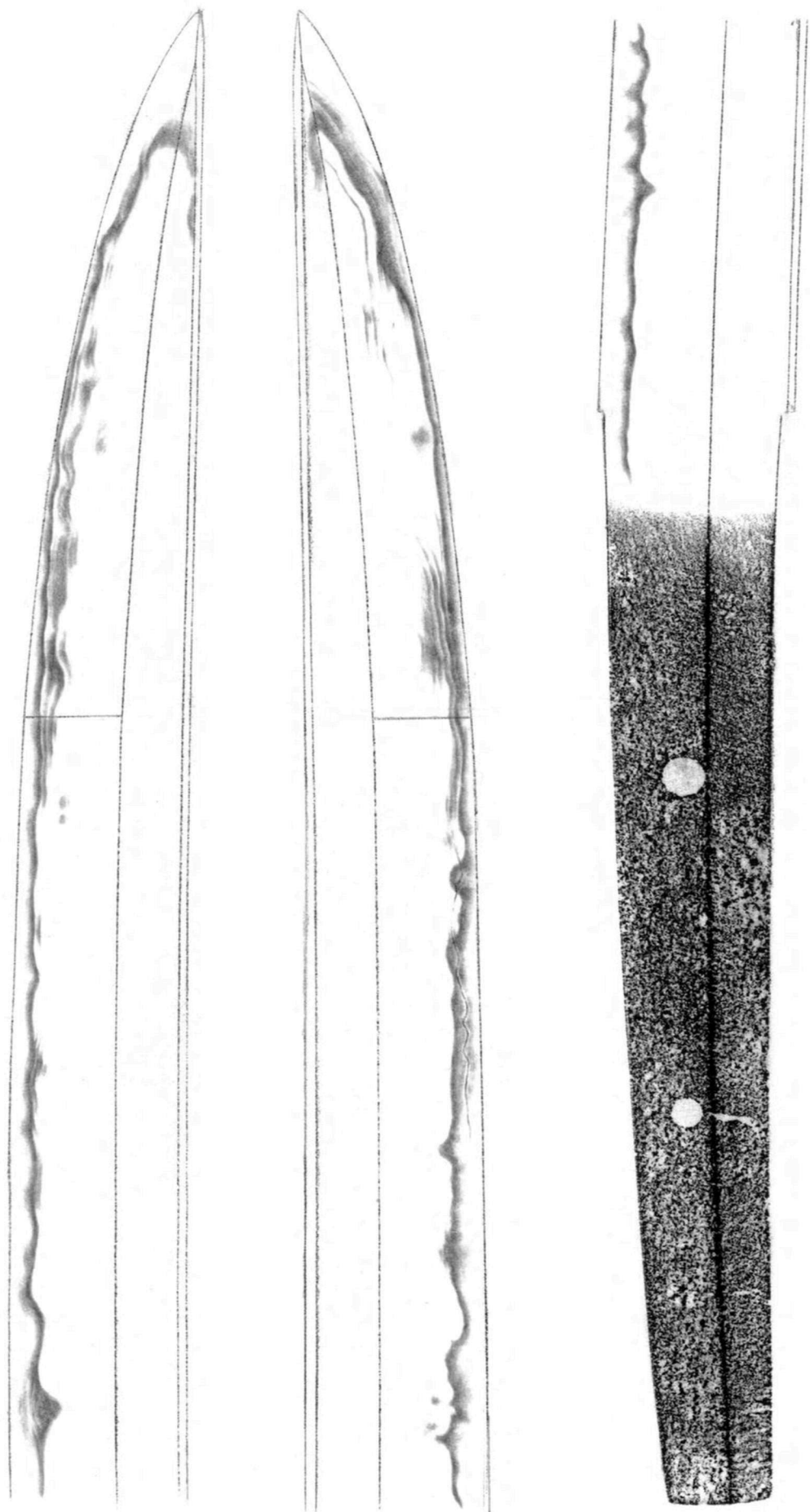
The NBTHK Jûyô summary of this katana reads as follows:

Some time after *Kaneuji*, one of the *Ten Students of Masamune*, had settled in *Shizu* in *Mino* province and had established a thriving school there, some of his students, e.g., *Kanetomo*, *Kanetsugu*, *Kaneshige*, and *Kanenobu*, moved to *Naoe*, also located within *Mino*. Collectively, these smiths are known as *Naoe-Shizu*.

This katana is *ô-suriage mumei*. It has a relatively slender *mihaba* and an *ô-kissaki* whereupon we can identify it in terms of shape as a shortened *ôdachi* from the *Nanbokuchô* period. The *kitae* is a standing-out *itame-nagare* that tends overall to *masame* and that features *chikei* and plenty of *ji-nie*.

The *hamon* bases on a gently undulating *notare* that is mixed with *gunome*, *ko-gunome*, *togari-gunome*, fine *sunagashi*, and *ara-nie* in places. Due to this interpretation of the *jiba*, which is also very healthy, the blade can be attributed to *Naoe-Shizu*.

刀 無銘 直江志津



The Jûyô Token white paper  
(copy)



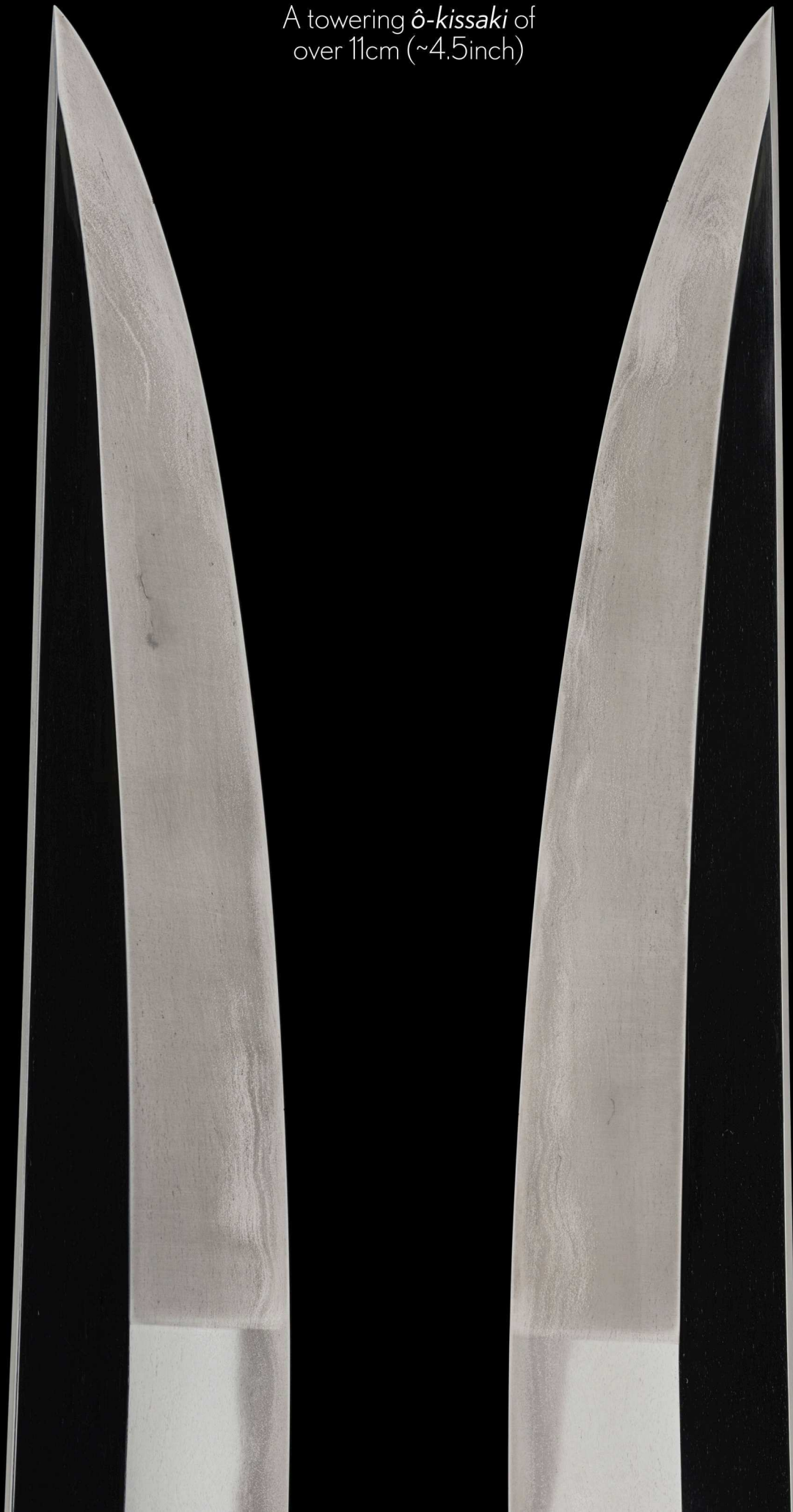



These droplets of *nie* crystals are collectively called *yubashiri*, which literally means '*running hot water*'. Similar to *tobiyaki*, however, they have a more transparent look, thus the hot water (*yu*) analogy.



*yubashiri*

A towering *ô-kissaki* of  
over 11cm (~4.5inch)





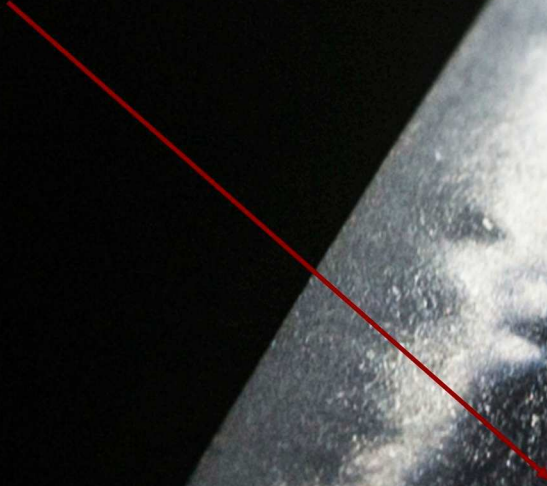
A marvellous mix of itame-hada, mokume and nagare-hada.



*kinsuji* cracking through the hamon.

*togari-gunome* pulses like a heart beat.

Fabulous look at the running *nagare-hada*.



A close-up photograph of a sword's body, showing a dark, textured surface with lighter, irregular patches. The sword is oriented diagonally from the top-left to the bottom-right. The background is black. Two red arrows point from the text above to specific areas on the sword's body. Two other red arrows point from the text below to different areas on the sword's body.

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

Clusters of *nie* crystals called *yô* (leaves) 'falling off' the hamon. A beautiful sight.

A close-up photograph of a Japanese sword blade, likely a katana, showing the hamon (temper line). The blade is dark and polished, with a bright light reflecting off the edge. The hamon is a wavy, irregular line that runs along the length of the blade. Two red arrows point to specific features: one points to a deep, narrow groove in the hamon, and the other points to a sharp, pointed section of the hamon.

deep rivers of *chikei*

*togari*

This is a classic *Naoe-shizu hamon* with a strong *gunome* along with clear-cut *togari* (pointed) sections that speak to the Mino tradition.

What a way to spend some quiet time.

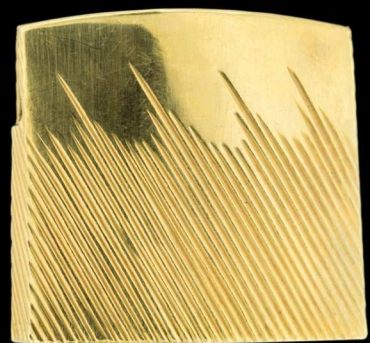
Study the steel.



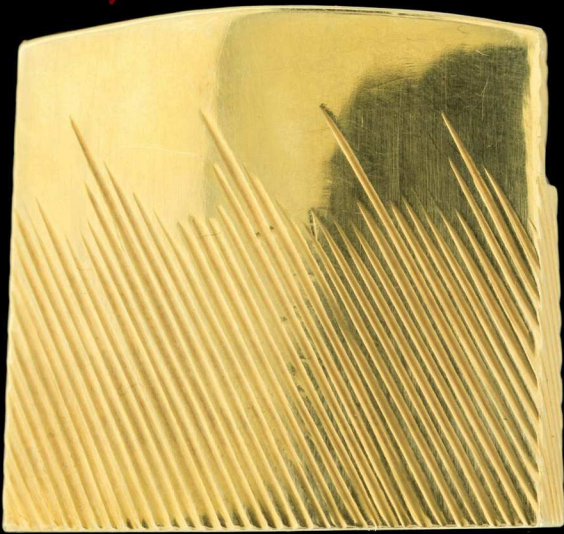
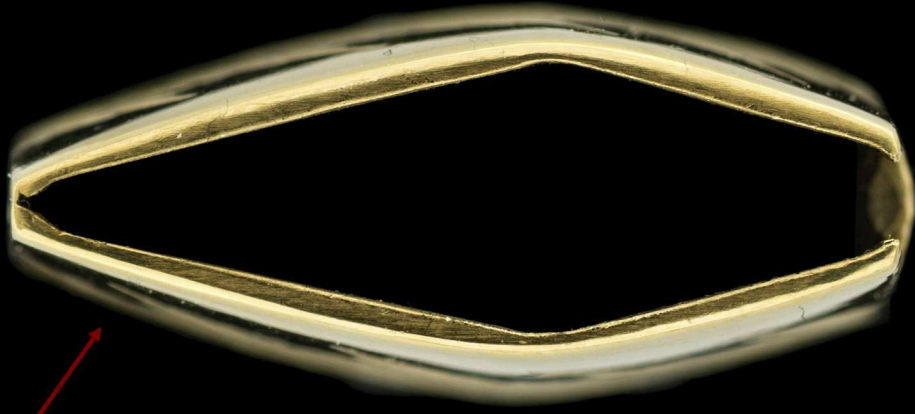


finished off with buffalo horn

*Shirasaya*  
(protective scabbard)



gold-wrapped *habaki* with  
diagonal file marks



The *habaki* from all angles.



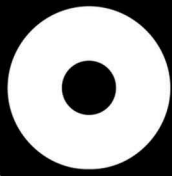
*Kuro-ro-nuri saya  
uchigatana-koshirae*  
(黒呂塗鞘打刀拵)

*Uchigatana-koshirae  
lacquered in glossy black*

Crafted during the  
Modern period



*NTHK-NPO Kanteisho  
Certificate of Authenticity*



*Ja-no-me mon*  
(snake eye)



*Botan mon*  
(peony)



*Ageha-chô mon*  
(butterfly)



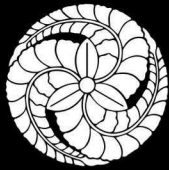
*Mukai-zuru mon*  
(pair of cranes)



*Hô mon*  
(phoenix)

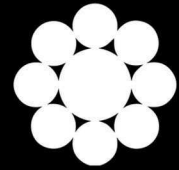


*Go san kiri mon*  
(paulownia)

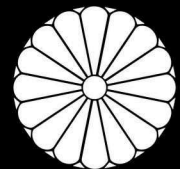


*Fuji-maru mon*  
(circle of wisteria)

Major *kamon* (family crests) are depicted on the *tsuba* in such an impressive manner. Certified to a tachi metalsmith working in the mid-Edo period (1700~1780).



*Kuyô mon*  
(nine planet/stars)



*Kiku mon*  
(chrysanthemum)



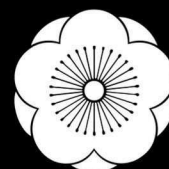
*Daki-kashiwa mon*  
(oak leaves)



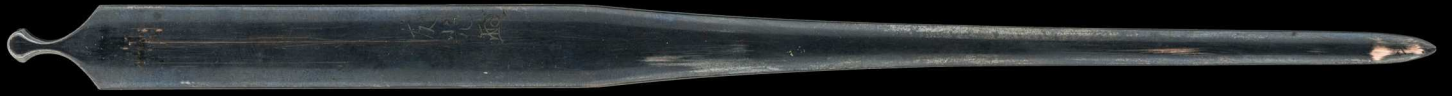
*Hô mon*  
(phoenix)



*Amaryû mon*  
rain dragon)

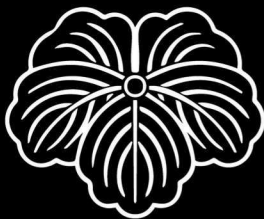


*Yae-ume mon*  
(plum blossom)



A kôgai 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.



*Kage-tsuta mon*  
(A crest of ivy leaves)





glorious *fuchi-kashira* depicting *kuyô-mon* and ivy.



weaved to perfection.

Metalsmith *Naoyoshi* + monogram



NTHK-NPO Kanteisho  
Certificate of Authenticity



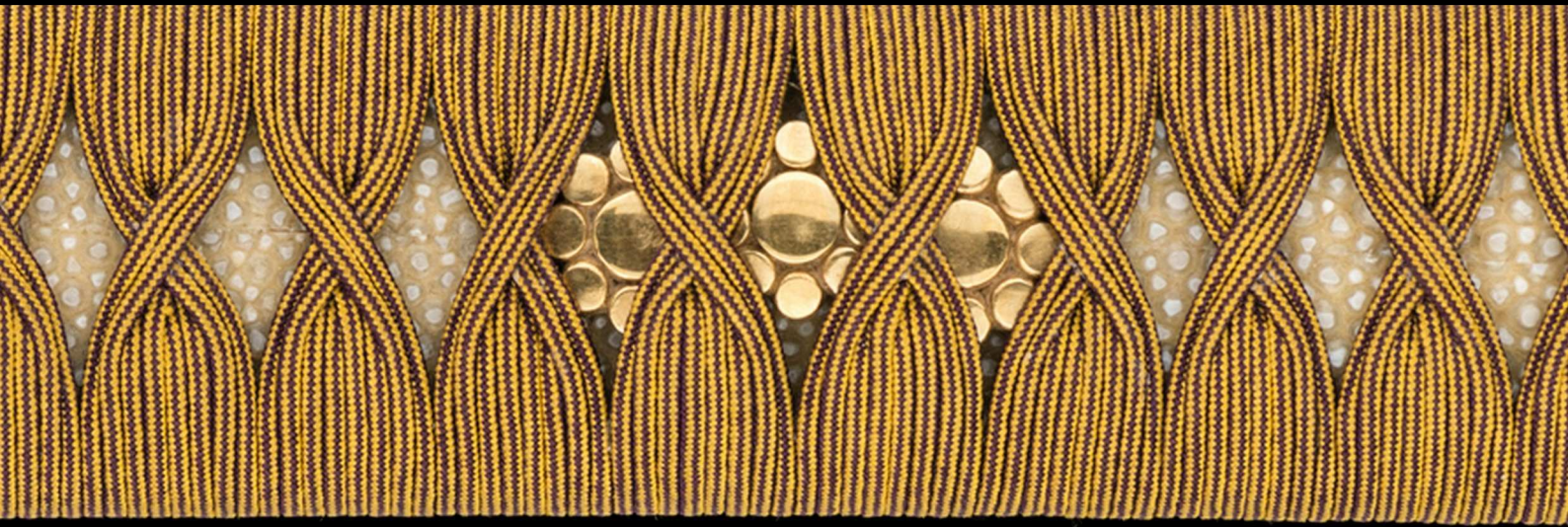
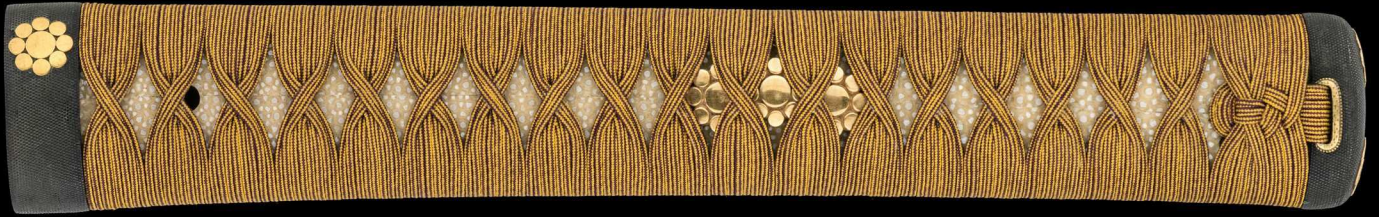
(Nao) 直

(yoshi) 好

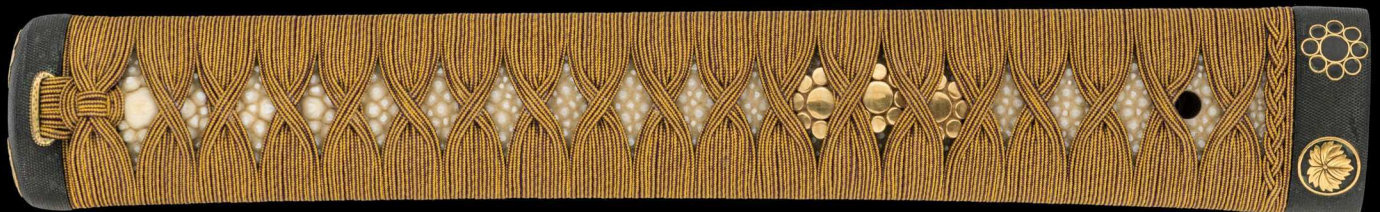
(kaô) 花押



The *kamons* continue on the *kashira* (pommel).



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





Koshirae bag



ITEM# UJKA406

## A KATSUKUNI KATANA

SIGNED & DATED, EARLY EDO PERIOD (KANBUN ERA: OCTOBER 1670)

<b>Swordsmith:</b>	<i>Iyo Daijô Tachibana Katsukuni saku (shodai, first generation)</i>		
<b>Measurements:</b>	<b>Length:</b> 69.7cm ( <i>ubu</i> )	<b>Curvature:</b> 1.3cm	<b>Moto-haba:</b> 2.93cm
<b>Jihada:</b>	<i>Itame with with masame hada with swirling chikei</i>		
<b>Hamon:</b>	<i>Kanemoto-like sambonsugi with sunagashi and kinsuji</i>		
<b>Certificate #1-2:</b>	NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon & Kichô ( <i>Especially Worthy of Preservation</i> )		
<b>Certificate #3-5:</b>	NTHK-NPO Kanteisho ( <i>for the tsuba, fuchi-kashira and koshirae</i> )		
<b>Fujishiro rank:</b>	Jô-saku ( <i>ranked as a superior swordsmith</i> )		
<b>Cutting ability:</b>	ô-Wazamono ( <i>maker of extremely sharp swords</i> )		
<b>Included:</b>	Shirasaya, Edo koshirae, storage box, fabric bags, stand, kit, description		

**SOLD**

*Katsukuni* literally means '*victorious country/province*' – a name bestowed upon by the powerful *Maeda daimyo* family of the Edo period. First generation *Katsukuni* of the *shintô Darani* school excelled in a *sanbonsugi-hamon* modelled upon the *Seki-Kanemoto* school and forged his blades with a distinctive mix of *itame* and straight grain *masame-hada*. *Katsukuni* blades were also famous for their superior sharpness (he is ranked *ô-wazamono*) and the line existed for seven generations until the *Meiji* era. This highly collectible katana has been dated to October 1670, during the *Kanbun* era at the end of *Katsukuni*'s celebrated career. The sword is listed in the prestigious *shintô-jiten* reference book by *Fujishiro* and comes with its own set of striking Edo period *koshirae*, a vintage storage box with *hakogaki* and *sayagaki* by *Kanzan sensei*. It has been cared for by generations of families and is now looking for the next caretaker to carry the torch.



Saki-kasane: 4.2mm

Kissaki: 3.28cm

Saki-haba: 2.03cm

Moto-kasane: 5.9mm

Nagasa: 69.7cm

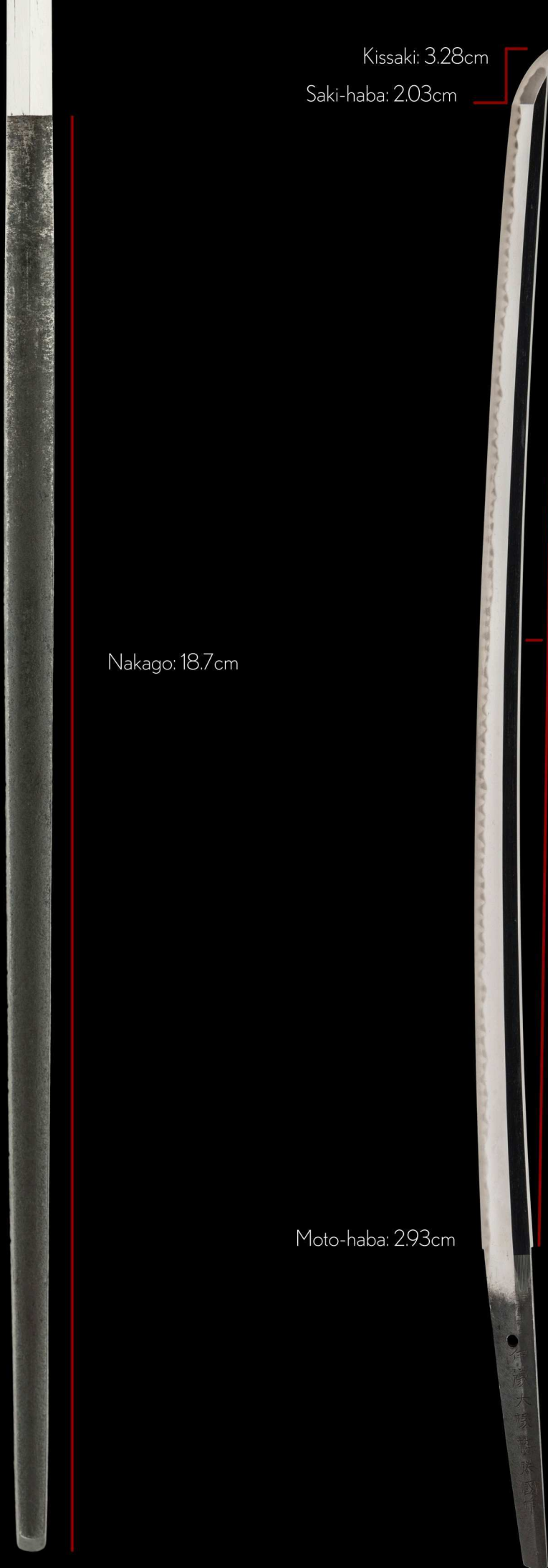
Nakago: 18.7cm

Sori: 1.30cm

Omosa: 630g

Moto-haba: 2.93cm

Mekugi-ana: 1



The history leading up to first generation *Katsukuni* is a rather interesting one. Below is a summary of events.

The ancestor of the *Darani* school was swordsmith *Katsuie*, active around the *Ōei* era (1394~1428). According to transmission he was the son or a student of *Kunitsugu*, who in turn came from the *Echizen Chiyozuru* school and moved to the neighbouring *Kaga* province around the *Ōan* era (1368~1375). The first to use the school name '*Darani*' was the 5th generation *Katsuie* during the *Tenshō*-era (1573~1592).

The third son of the fourth generation *Katsuie* was the first generation *leshige* who was considered as the actual ancestor of the shintō-era *Darani* school. His second son received the honorary title *Iyo no Daijō* from chancellor *Yotsuji Yoshiie* through the recommendation of his employer, the powerful *Maeda daimyō* family. Furthermore, the clan name of *Fujiwara* was changed to *Tachibana* and the smith's name became *shodai* (first generation) *Katsukuni*.

The *Katsukuni* name has an auspicious connotation as it literally means '*victorious country/province*'. *Katsukuni* counted himself, on whatever basis, as the 17th generation *Rai Kuniyoshi*, the legendary founder of the *Rai* school.

*Katsukuni* excelled in a *sanbonsugi-hamon* modelled upon the *Seki-Kanemoto* school with a key difference being that the *Kaga* smiths applied *nie* in the valleys of the *sanbonsugi* elements. *Katsukuni* blades were also famous for their superior sharpness (he is ranked *ō-wazamono*) and the line existed for altogether seven generations up to the Meiji era.

This highly collectible katana is listed in the prestigious *shintō-jiten* reference book by *Fujishiro* and comes with its own vintage storage box with *hakogaki* and *sayagaki* by *Kanzan sensei*. It has been clearly cared for by generations of families and now it's looking for the next caretaker to carry the torch.

Historical research source: *Nihon-shintō-shi* by Markus Sesko



Location: *Kanazawa* (resident of Ishikawa)

Title: *Iyo Daijō* (Lord of Iyo province)

Clan name: *Tachibana*

Swordsmith: *Katsukuni* (first generation)

*ubu-nakago* (original, unaltered tang)

*sujikai-yasurime* (diagonal file marks)

伊  
豫  
大  
掾  
橘  
勝  
國  
作

伊 (I)

豫 (yo)

大 (Dai)

掾 (jō)

橘 (Tachibana)

勝 (Katsu)

國 (kuni)

作 (saku)

*Kanazawa jû - Kanbun jûnen hachigatsu kichijitsu*

This katana was dated to a *lucky day* in the eighth month of the tenth year of *Kanbun* era (August 1670) while Katsukuni was living in Kanazawa.

(Kan) 寛  
(bun) 文  
(jû) 十  
(nen) 年  
(hachi) 八  
(gatsu) 月  
(kichi) 吉  
(jitsu) 日

寛文十年八月吉日  
金澤住

金 (Kana)  
澤 (zawa)  
住 (jû)



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

This style of *nakago-jiri* is typically seen on swords from *Kashû* (Kaga) province, thus referred to as *Kashû nakago-jiri*.



Fujishiro Nihon Shintô Jiten



Bannen mei (signature of his latter years)

This katana is listed on page 34 in the prestigious *Fujishiro Nihon Shintô Jiten* reference book. The two volume set contains detailed *oshigata* and information of the most important smiths from the Kotô and Shintô periods.

Owning a katana listed by Fujishiro is naturally very special, adding to the authenticity and collectibility of the sword.

04202203

No. 1017865



二刀 銘

鑑定書

伊予大掾橋勝国作  
寛文十年八月吉日  
金沢住

長二尺三寸強

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

令和四年六月三日

公益財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協會



兵庫県教育委員会  
第 46110 号

昭和40年12月8日

(再)平成19年11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 4th year of Reiwa (2022), June 3rd

One, Katana

Mei (signature)

Iyo Daijō Tachibana Katsukuni saku  
Kanbun jūnen hachigatsu kichijitsu  
Kanazawa jū

Nagasa (length)

2-shaku 3-sun kyō (69.7cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai  
(NBTHK)



一、刀 銘

伊豫大掾橋勝國作

寛文十年八月吉日金澤子住

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

昭和四十一年十月二十三日

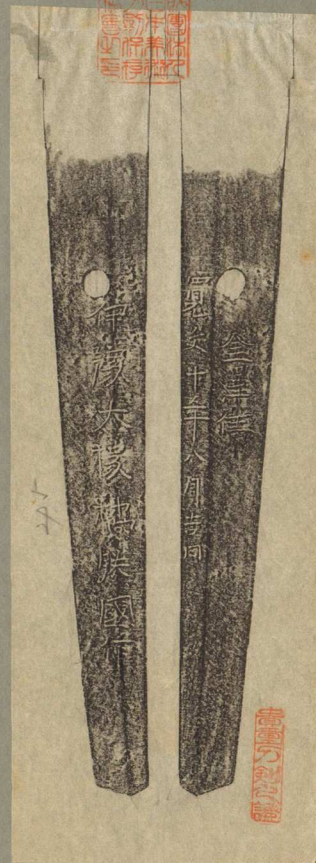
財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協會

會長 細川護立

立



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 41st year of Showa (1966), October 23rd

One, Katana

*Mei* (signature)

*Iyo Daijô Tachibana Katsukuni saku*  
*Kanbun jûichinen hachigatsu kichijitsu*  
*Kanazawa jû*

*Nagasa* (length)

2-shaku 3-sun (69.7cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai  
(NBTHK)



金澤住伊勢大掾橘勝國作

*Kanazawa-jû Ise Daijô Tachibana Katsukuni saku*

Crafted by Ise Daijô Tachibana Katsukuni, resident of Kanazawa.

寛文十年八月吉日紀有之

*Kanbun jûnen hachigatsu kichijitsu no ki kore ari*

Dated to a lucky day in the eighth month of the tenth year of Kanbun era (August 1670).

蓋同作中之典型且良資料也

*Kedashi dôsaku-chû no tenkei katsu yoi shiryô nari*

This blade's workmanship is typical for the smith and is also an important reference piece.

刃長貳尺參寸有之

*Hachô ni-shaku san-sun kore ari*

Blade length ~ 69.7 cm

藤代刀工辞典所載

*Fujishiro Tôkô Jiten shosai*

Published in Fujishiro's Tôkô Jiten.

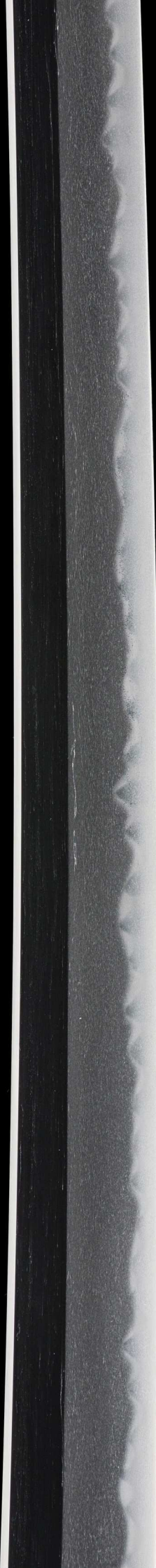
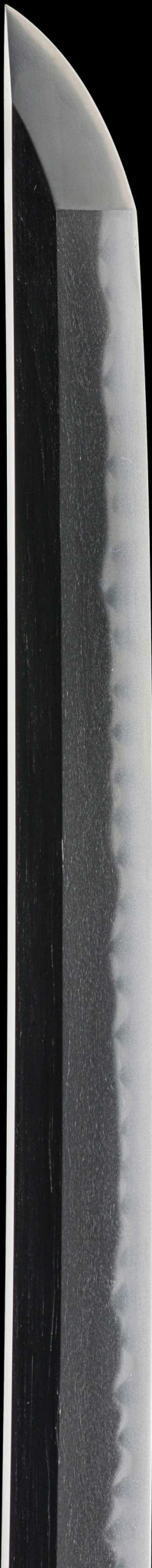
昭和壬子年○月日寒山誌「花押」

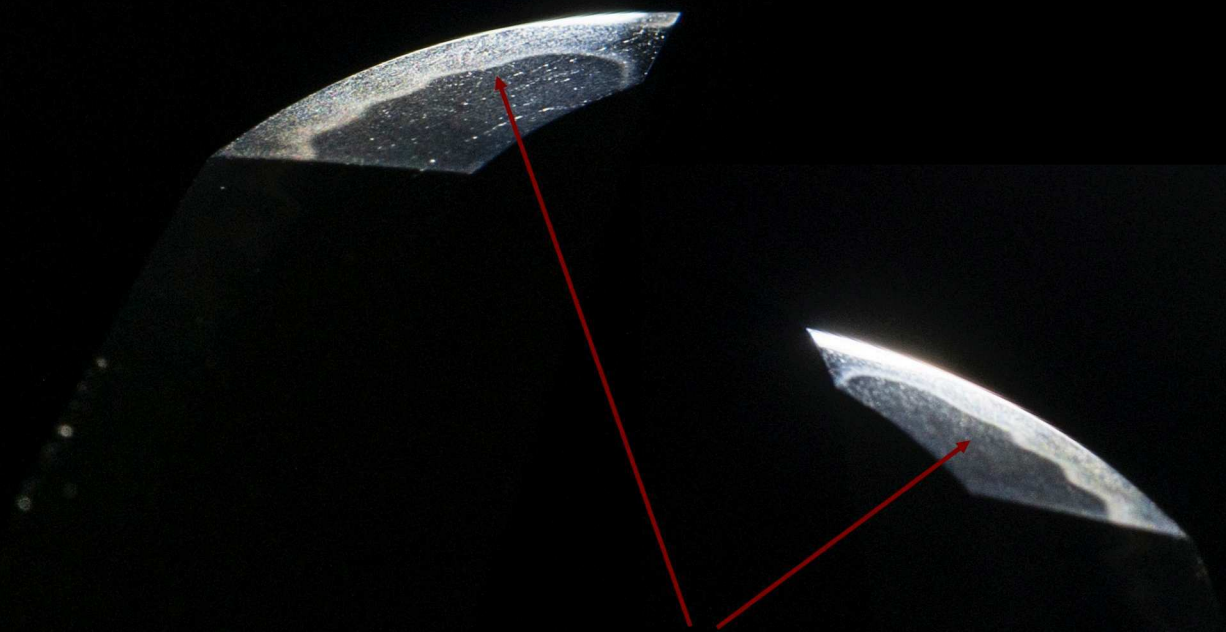
*Shôwa mizunoe-nezumidoshi ?-getsu hi*

*Kanzan shirusu + kaô*

Appraised by Dr. Kanzan Satô on a day of the [unclear] month in the Year of the Rat during the Shôwa era (1972) plus his monogram.







*Boshi* pattern resembles the profile of *Jizo*.

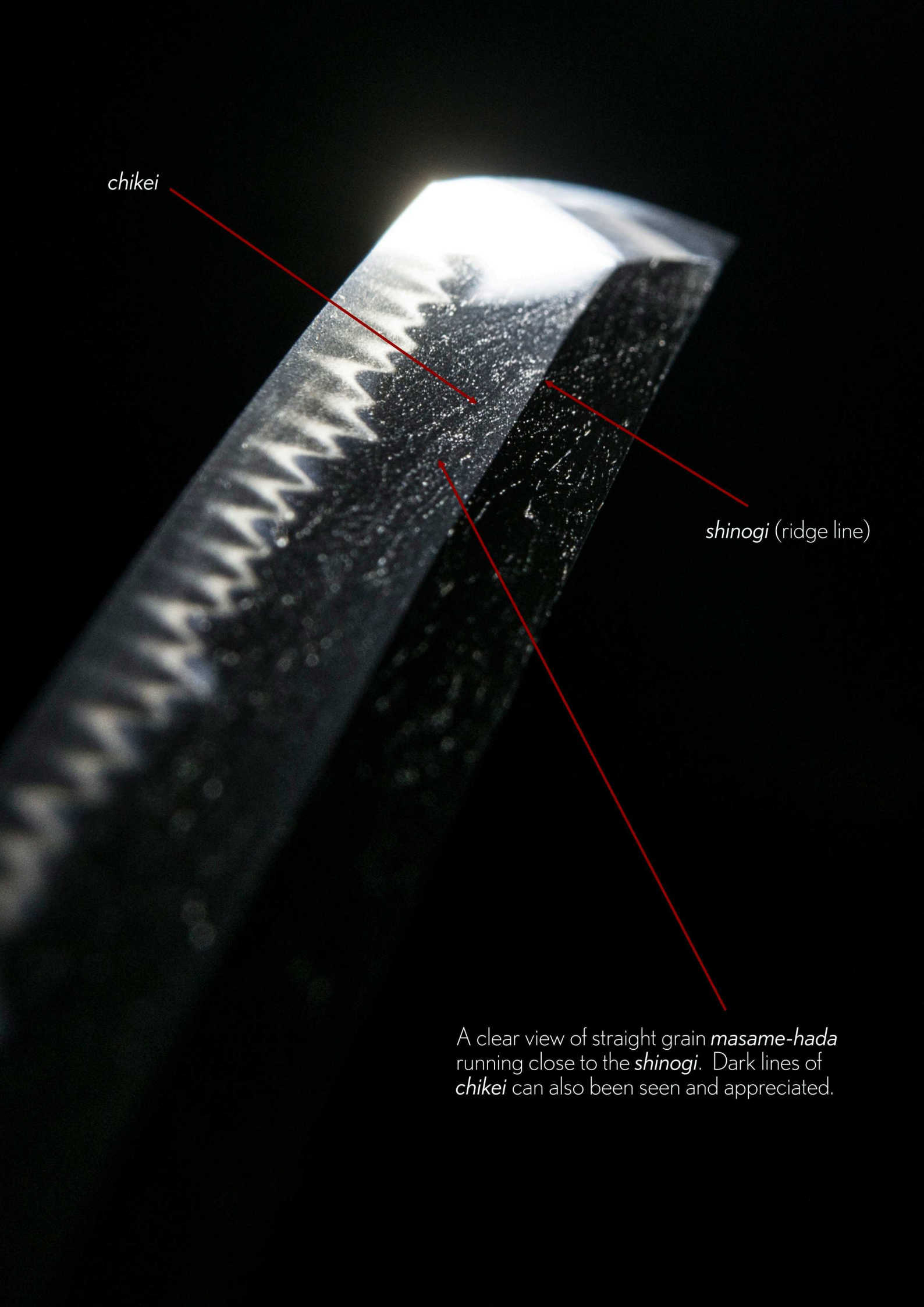


statues of *Jizo*

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.



*chikei*

*shinogi* (ridge line)

A clear view of straight grain *masame-hada* running close to the *shinogi*. Dark lines of *chikei* can also be seen and appreciated.



The unique *sanbonsugi hamon* (lit. three cedars) derives its name from resembling a line of cedar trees. Notice how the pointed *togari* peaks at about every third 'tree'.

This hamon was originated by second generation *Magoroku Kanemoto* circa 1530 and loyally replicated by subsequent generations in the Mino tradition.



cedar tree inspiration



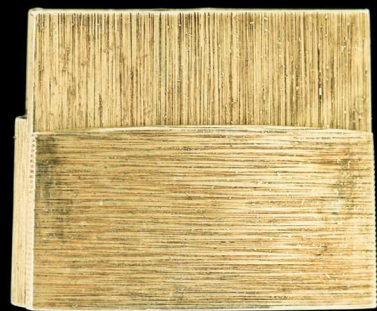
Here are clusters of *nie* crystals in the valley of the *sambonsugi hamon* - a trait that distinguishes *Darani* from the *Seki-Kanemoto* school.

A close-up, low-angle shot of a bright, glowing steel rod with a serrated edge, set against a dark background. The rod is the central focus, extending from the bottom left towards the top right. It has a bright, circular glow at its base, and the serrated edge is clearly visible. The background is dark and out of focus.

A rolling river of steel...



*Shirasaya*  
(protective scabbard)



gold *niju habaki* with  
crisp file marks



(Ichi) 一

(Katsu) 勝

(kuni) 国

(kaô) 花押

昭  
和  
六  
十  
一  
年  
一  
勝  
國  
花  
押

昭 (Shô)

和 (wa)

六 (roku)

十 (jû)

一 (ichi)

年 (nen)

研 (togu)



*Shôwa rokujûichi nen togu - Ichi, Katsukuni + kaô*

[This sword was] polished in the 61st year of Showa era (1986)

One, Katsukuni + monogram

*Kuro-ro-nuri  
kirimon maki-e saya  
uchigatana-koshirae*  
(黒呂塗桐紋蒔絵鞘打刀拵)

*Uchigatana-koshirae  
lacquered in glossy black  
with kirimon of maki-e*

Crafted during the  
Late Edo period  
(1780~1867)



NTHK-NPO Kanteisho  
Certificate of Authenticity



Absolutely gorgeous *maki-e* lacquerwork of *kiri-mon* crests





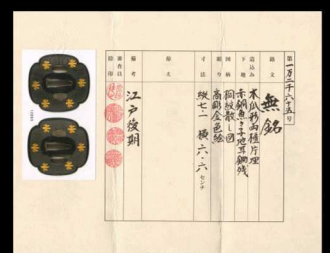
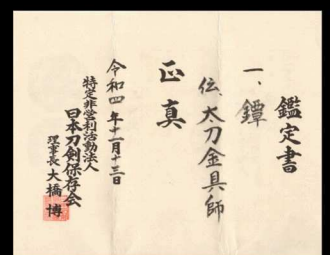
fill 'er up!



This handsome multi-lobed *tsuba* made of pure *shakudô* (a desired bullion of gold and copper) and features a raised shakudô rim, plenty of *nanako* (hand-punched dotted pattern) and several gold *kiri-mon* (paulownia crests).

The work has been attributed to craftsmen that specialized in producing fittings for *tachi koshirae*. Notice how the hole that would normally have a *kôgai* slip through has been filled in - samurai with extra disposable income would fill these holes - it's a notable point of interest.

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





*Fuchi-kashira*  
 attributed to  
*Inaba no Suke Yoshioka*  
 (middle-Edo 1700s)

*Kiri-mon* (paulownia design)  
 with ivy signifying longevity



NTHK-NPO Kanteisho certification



A skilfully braided *jabara-maki* forms crisp diamond shapes in the silk securing a pair of *kiri-mon menuki* on either side of the *tsuka* (hilt).



御

御 (one)

刀

刀 (katana)

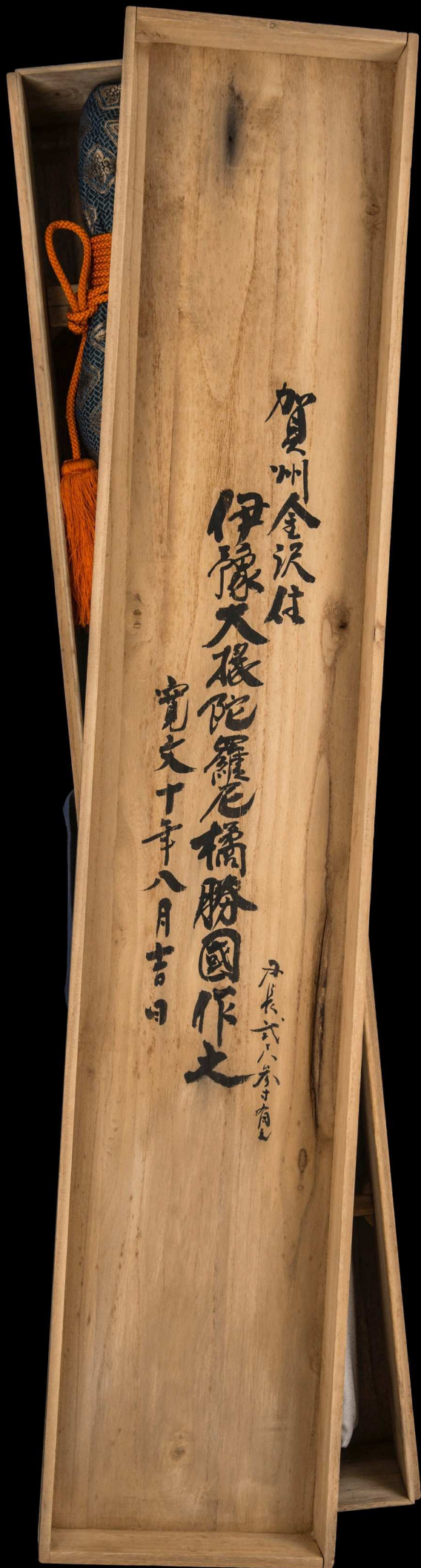


壹

壹 (hito)

振

振 (furi)



Preserved and cared for many years, this katana comes in its own box with *hakogaki* (writing).

The inside cover reads:

賀州金沢住伊豫大掾陀羅尼橘勝國作之  
*Gashû Kanazawa jû Iyô Daijô Darani Tachibana Katsukuni kore o tsukuru*

Crafted by Iyô Daijô Tachibana Katsukuni from Darani school, a resident of Kanazawa of *Gashû* province

寛文十年八月吉日

*Kanbun jûnen hachigatsu kichijitsu*

Dated on a lucky day in the eighth month of the tenth year of *Kanbun* era (August 1670)

刃長貳尺參寸在之

*Hachô 2-shaku 3-sun kore ari*

Blade length ~ 69.7cm

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



safe, extra large cloth for adding oil to the blade



ITEM# UJTA032

## A RAI KUNITOSHI TANTÔ

SIGNED, KAMAKURA PERIOD (SHOÔ ERA, 1288~1292)

<b>Swordsmith:</b>	<i>Rai Kunitoshi (three-character signature)</i>
<b>Measurements:</b>	<b>Length:</b> 24.1cm ( <i>uchizori shape with ubu, furisode-nakago</i> )
<b>Jihada:</b>	<i>Nagare-hada with o-hada, ji-nie and nie-utsuri</i>
<b>Hamon:</b>	<i>Tight hoso-suguha with bright nioguchi</i>
<b>Certificate #1:</b>	<b>29th NBTHK Jûyô Tôken</b> ( <i>a sword designated as Profound and Important</i> )
<b>Certificate #2:</b>	<b>NTHK-NPO Yûshutô</b> ( <i>a sword designated as Masterwork and published</i> )
<b>Fujishiro:</b>	<i>Saijô-saku</i> ( <i>ranked as a grandmaster swordsmith</i> )
<b>Sayagaki:</b>	<i>Kunzan</i> ( <i>Honma Junji</i> ) dated May 1982
<b>Included:</b>	Shirasaya, storage box, fabric bags, stand, kit, description

**SOLD**

This remarkable *tantô* by *Rai Kunitoshi* is a masterpiece from one of Japan's greatest ever swordsmiths. It was made during the heart of the *Kamakura Period*, the golden age of sword-making. A sword that would have surely been passed down through the very highest levels of *daimyô* aristocracy for generations. Ranked *saijô-saku* (grandmaster), there are four swords (out of just 110) protected as *Kokuhô* (Japanese National Treasures) that were crafted by *Rai Kunitoshi*, two of which are *tantos*. This elegant sword carries a distinct similarity to them. The blade features a gorgeous *uchi-zori* (inward curvature), characteristic of the period, and *Rai Kunitoshi's* iconic three-character signature on a beautifully curved *furisode-nakago*. The *hamon* is a tight *hoso-suguha* with *nie-utsuri* that beams along the *ji-nie* surface. The sword was certified as NBTHK Jûyô Token at the 29th session in 1982 and has *sayagaki* by former NBTHK chairman *Honma Junji* (*Kunzan sensei*) from the same year. This *tantô* was polished by renowned sword polisher *Sasaki Takushi* in 2016.

Moto-kasane: 5mm



Nakago: 11.3cm

Saki-haba: 1.6cm

Moto-haba: 2.0cm

Mekugi-ana: 2



Nagasa: 24.1cm

Sori: 0cm

Nakago-sori: 0.3cm



This blade features *uchi-zori*, meaning "inward curvature". The sword curves very slightly toward the cutting edge.

It is a unique construction characteristic of tanto produced in the Kamakura period, circa 1185~1333.

played in exhibitions, you should try to take note of the shape. Also, whenever you see good photography of swords, look carefully at both the curvature of the blade and the nakago, or tang. The curvature of the blade continues through the nakago. However, please take into consideration that nakago from seven to eight hundred years ago have inevitably aged somewhat, and that there are differences in nakago shape according to province and school. Unfortunately, it was not possible to supply examples of every single type in this book.

The first tanto were produced by Rai Kunitoshi and the Rai school (Rai Kunitoshi was a smith active in the later mid-Kamakura period into the Nanboku-cho period in the Yamashiro province of Japan, or modern-day Kyoto prefecture). The Awataguchi school of Kyoto and the smith Kagemitsu of Osafune (in Bizen province, modern-day Okayama prefecture) were also producing tanto around this time. However, there are not many extant examples. As noted above, the word “tanto” is a modern term. During the Edo period these blades were referred to as “ko-wakizashi” (short wakizashi).

There are many tanto with a standard length of 8 sun 5 bu (25.7 cm). They now exhibit take-no-ko-zori (bamboo-shoot curvature)—i.e., the back side of the blade curves toward the cutting edge, and the point section is not very full—but at the time of production they may have had some curvature. Not many tanto from around this era remain, as generally before the Muromachi period one would have had to be of a fairly high social standing in order to be able to wear a tanto. Consequently, these blades would have been specially ordered. This is evident in the quality of the workmanship. For this reason, we can assume that there were many good-quality tanto in this period.

It is assumed that during the Kamakura period tachi were worn suspended from the waist. However, it seems that in battle they were worn thrust through the sash. To sum up, naturally warriors would have had to wear blades like o-wakizashi, but without extant fittings (scabbard, hilt, etc.) or data, the evidence as to how they were worn is unclear and unreliable.

Although it is thought that tanto (then called ko-wakizashi) may have been worn in peacetime, it is safe to assume that this was a privilege of the highly ranked. During this time, people of lower standing also wore blades that were thrust through the sash like a wakizashi so they could be drawn immediately. However, it is very unlikely that these blades were of good quality.

### The Nanboku-cho Period: 1331–1392

(For additional examples of blades from this period, please refer to figs. 159–161 in appendix 1.)

Tachi of this period were usually long and broad, with shallow curva-

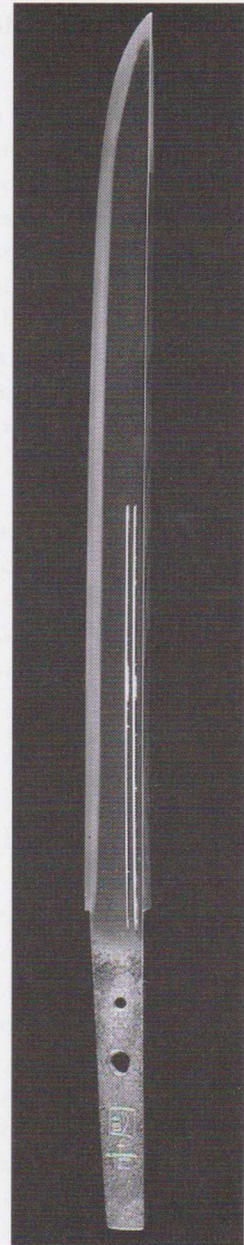


Fig. 24  
短刀 銘 国吉  
(栗田口)  
Kamakura-period tanto.  
Mei (inscription): *Kuniyoshi*  
(Awataguchi). Length:  
1 shaku 1 bu (30.6 cm).

Note that the blade of this tanto has some curvature, but the nakago is almost straight.

From the book:  
*Facts and Fundamentals of Japanese Swords*  
by *Nobuo Nakahara* with translation by *Paul Martin*

This passage states that Rai Kunitoshi was among the very first swordsmiths to forge tantô. It also illustrates the rarity, quality and overall prestige of such tantô.



The character Rai 来 means "come".

This relates to the founder (Kuniyoshi) coming from overseas (Korea) to Japan. As there are no extant works by Rai Kuniyoshi, Rai Kuniyuki is considered the founder.

Rai Kunitoshi is thought to be the grandson of Kuniyuki.

This tanto was crafted circa the *Shou era* (1288-1293), during the heart of the Kamakura period.

Rai

Kuni

toshi



重要第七三七號

# 指定書



## 短刀 銘 来国俊

一口

長三四・二程 内及リ

形状 平造 三ッ棟 内及リ  
鍛 板目流れ 大肌 三ッ交 地沸つく  
刃文 直可し 小沸つき 匂口 明るい  
帽子 小丸 二重刃 三ッ程 がある  
彫物 表裏に 刀樋  
茎 生ぶ 鏡目 切り  
目釘孔 二

### 右者當協會に於て審査の結果 重要刀剣に指定する

昭和五十七年十二月八日

監法人日本美術刀剣保存協会

会長 富士川金二



Juyo Certificate No. 7207  
Shiteisho (指定書)

Certificate of Designation  
Tanto, mei: Rai Kunitoshi (来国俊)

Measurements:  
nagasa 24.1 cm, uchizori

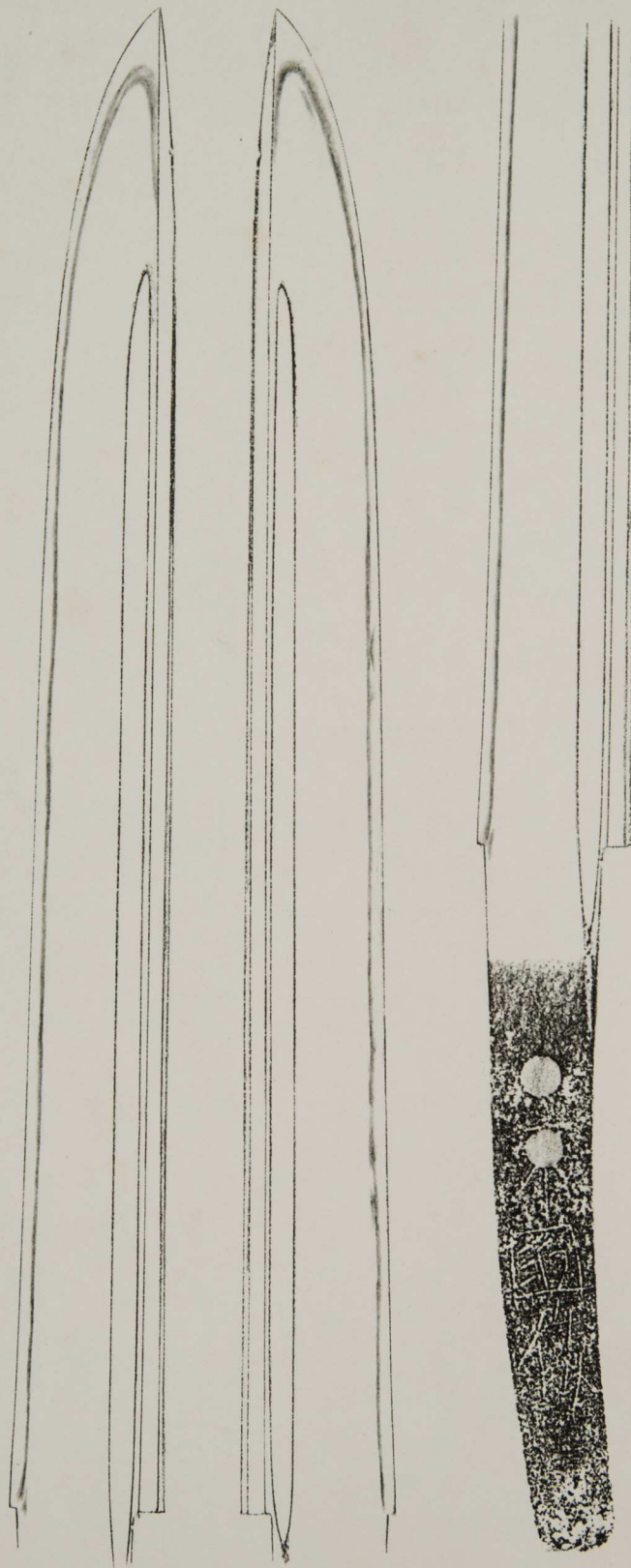
Description:  
Keijo: hira-zukuri, mitsu-mune, uchizori  
Kitae: itame-nagare that is mixed with some o-hada and that features ji-nie  
Hamon: tight suguha in ko-nie-deki with a bright nioiguchi  
Boshi: ko-maru and some nijuba  
Horimono: on both sides a katana-ji  
Nakago: ubu, kiri-yasurime, two mekugi-ana

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

December 8, 1982

[Foundation] Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai, NBTHK  
[President] Fujikawa Kinji (富士川金二)

短刀 米国俊



NBTHK Juyo Token (white paper, oshigata)

Designated as Juyo-Token  
(a profound and important sword)  
at the 29th Juyo shinsa held on  
December 8, 1982

tanto, mei:  
Rai Kunitoshi (来国俊)

Measurements  
nagasa 24.1 cm  
uchizori  
motohaba 2.1 cm  
nakago-nagasa 11.3 cm  
nakago-sori 0.3 cm

Shizuoka Prefecture, Nagata Yoshitatsu  
(永田良達)

昭和五十七年十二月八日指定  
第二十九回 重要刀剣  
短刀 銘 来国俊  
一口  
静岡縣 永田良達  
法量 長さ三・四、一厘 内反り 元幅二、一厘 茎長さ二・三厘 茎反り〇、三厘  
形状 平造、三ツ棟、内反り尋常。 鍔 板目流れ、大肌ころ交じり、地沸つき、沸映り立つ。 刃文 直刃じり、  
小沸つき、匂口明るい。 帽子 小丸、二重刃ころがあり一段と沸が強い。 彫物 表裏に刀種。 茎 生ぶ、  
先栗尻、鍔目切り、目釘孔一、表に三字銘がある。  
説明 来国俊の生ぶ在銘の短刀である。内反り尋常の上品な産で、鍔は板目に流れ肌交じり沸映り立ち、刃文は小沸出来  
の直刃で匂口がよく締って明るく、帽子は小丸を福よく焼き、二重刃ころがあり、来国俊の特色をよく示した作である。

### Description:

Keijo: hira-zukuri, mitsu-mune, uchizori, standard tanto dimensions

Kitae: itame-nagare that is mixed with some o-hada and that features ji-nie and a nie-utsuri

Hamon: tight suguha in ko-nie-deki with a bright nioiguchi

Boshi: ko-maru-kaeri with some nijuba and more nie than in the hamon

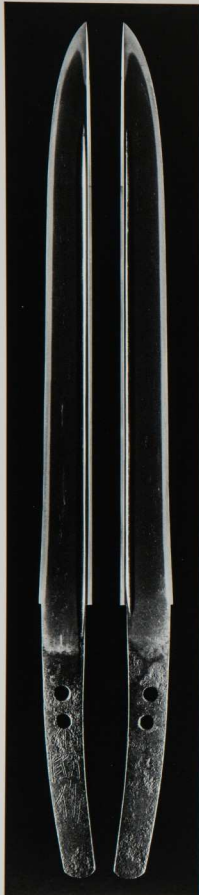
Horimono: on both sides a katana-hi

Nakago: ubu, kurijiri, kiri-yasurime, two mekugi-ana, the omote side bears a sanji-mei

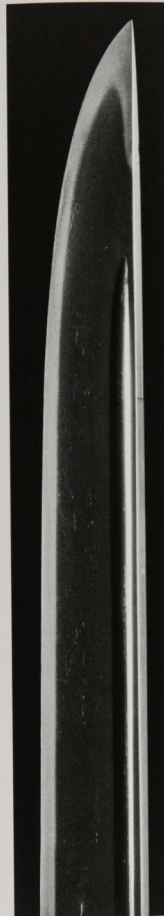
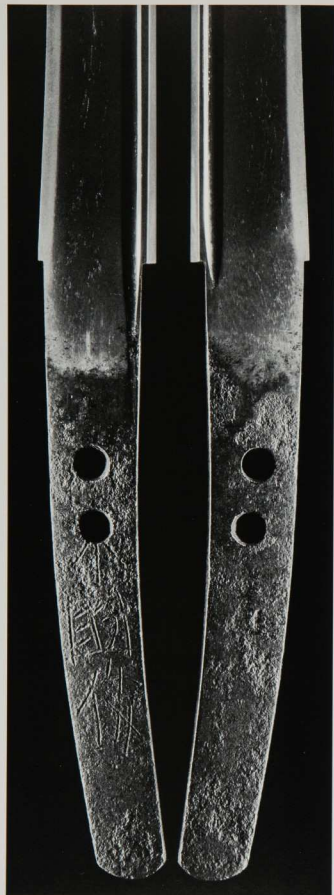
### Remarks:

This is an *ubu* signed tanto by Rai Kunitoshi. It is with the *uchizori* and its standard tanto dimensions of a highly elegant shape. The *kitae* is an *itame* that is mixed with *nagare* and that features a *nie-utsuri* and the hamon is a *suguha* in *ko-nie-deki* with a very tight and bright *nioiguchi*.

The *boshi* shows an elegantly hardened *ko-maru-kaeri* and some *nijuba* and thus we see very well all the characteristic features of Rai Kunitoshi.



5



二 短刀 銘 未国俊

山城国 正応頃

法量 長さ 八寸二分、反り無し  
 造り込み 平造り、真様 元幅 二センチ、先幅 一・六センチ、元重ね 五ミリ  
 鍛 小坂目に少し疵交じり、地沸よくつき、沸映り立つ  
 刃文 細直刃小沸よくつきやえる  
 銚子 直に小丸長めに返る  
 彫物 表裏に刀樋を区下に掻き流し  
 中心 生ぶで区送り、振袖中心となり、粟尻 目釘穴 二個  
 鑢目 切り

4

This tanto was published in the inaugural NTHK-NPO Yushuto Catalogue in 2015.

Tanto: *Rai Kunitoshi*

Yamashiro no Kuni, Shouou era (1288-1292)

Houryou (measurements)

Nagasa (length): 8-sun 2-bu (~24.1cm)

Motohaba: 2cm / Sakihaba: 1.6cm

Motokasane: 5mm

Tsukurikomi (style of forging): *Hirazukuri*

Kitae (forge): *Ko-itame Masa Majiri Jinie Yokutsuki Nie Utsuritatsu*

Wood grain pattern with straight grain pattern, gorgeous jinie, and nie is vivid

Hamon (temper line): *Hoso Suguha Konie Yokutsuki Saeru*

Sharp straight temper line with good small nie

Boshi (temper line at tip): *Suguni Komaru Nagame ni Kaeru*

Straight, small round shape, and curled back

Horimono (engraving): *Omote Ura ni Hi wo Kakinagashi*

Groove on both sides, the edge of grooves sharpen.

Chushin (nakago): *Ubu de Chushin Kurijiri Mekugi ana ni ko*

Original shape nakago, kurijiri shape, and two holes

Yasurime (file mark): *Kiri*

Ridged style

The *boshi* (hamon in the tip), curls back (*ko-maru*).  
Note the impressive cluster of nie-crystals.



The sword is forged with a flowing *nagare-hada* and *o-itame-hada*.




*utsuri* (shadow hamon)



This tang carries an elegant curvature, known as a *furisode-nakago*, which refers to a long-sleeved kimono. This type of nakago is said to look like the way these long sleeves gently drape on a woman. A curved nakago is another important characteristic of tanto from the Kamakura period.






*Mitsu* (three) *mune* (spine/ridge) is a relatively rare construction whereby the spine has three surfaces.

It is generally found in the blades of smiths working in the *Sôshû tradition* as well as tanto of the Yamashiro school of the Koto period.

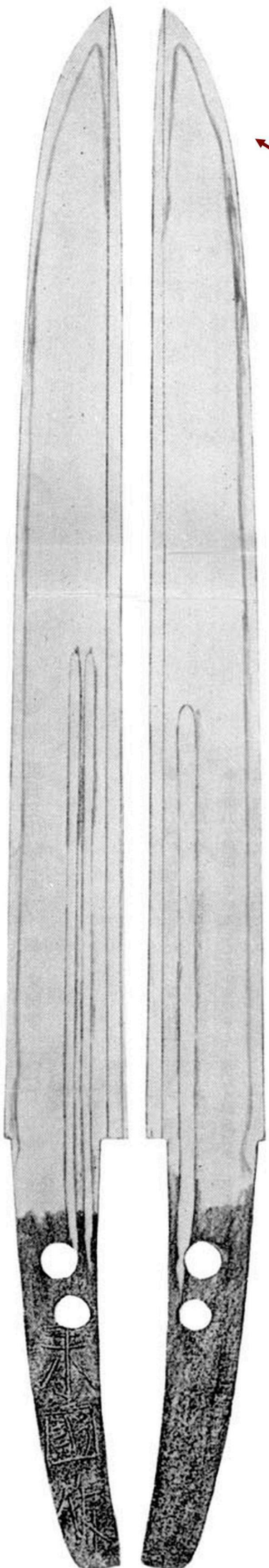
Note the powerful thickness of the *nakago* (tang).

A close-up, diagonal view of a sword blade against a black background. The blade's edge is highly reflective and shows a fine, crystalline texture. The main body of the blade is dark and has a slightly matte finish. The lighting highlights the sharpness and texture of the edge.

A tight and bright *nioiguchi* - crystals that make up the *suguha* (straight) hamon.



Out of the 110 swords that are designated Japanese national treasures, four of them are by Rai Kunitoshi that includes one tanto that has remarkable similarity to this sword.



A Rai Kunitoshi Tantô  
National Treasure (Kokuhô)

Length: ~24.5cm  
Uchizori

A side by side comparison  
of a certified National  
Treasure tantô by Rai  
Kunitoshi (left) and the Rai  
Kunitoshi being offered by  
Unique Japan (right).

The similarities are clear to  
be seen - the curved  
*furisode nakago*, two holes  
in nakago, grooves on both  
swords and the inward  
*uchizori* curvature.

The lengths of the two  
swords are nearly identical:  
24.1cm and 24.5cm

ujta032  
Rai Kunitoshi Tantô

Length: 24.1cm  
Uchizori





Rai Kunitoshi (swordsmith)

Blade length: ~ 24.1cm

Sayagaki written by *Kunzan* (Mr. Honma Junji)

Dated in May of the Year of the Dog (1982)  
+ kao (personal seal)

来國俊

Rai Kunitoshi

刃長七寸九分半

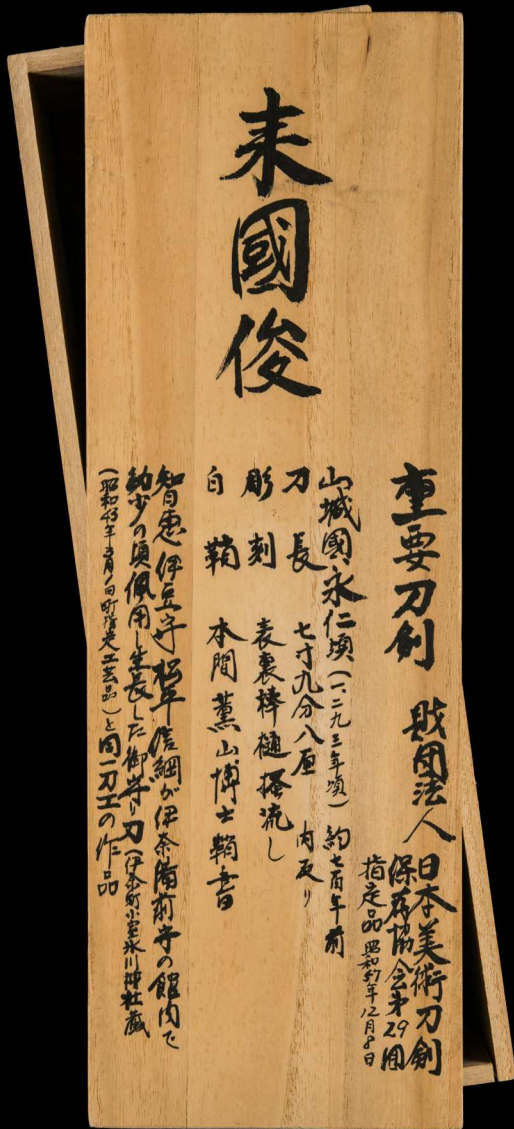
Hachō 7-sun 9-bu han

壬戌年

Mizunoe-inu satsuki

薰山誌「花押」

Kunzan shirusu + kaō



Hakogaki (writing on box)

### Rai Kunitoshi

Jûyô-tôken Zaidan-hojin  
Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai 29-kai shitei-hin  
Showa 57-nen 12-gatsu 8-nichi

Yamashiro no Kuni, Einin goro (1,294 goro) yaku  
nanahyakunen mae

Hacho: 7-sun 9-bu 8-rin

Chokoku  
hyori bohi kaki-nagashi

Shirasaya  
Honma Kunzan hakase sayagaki

Chie Izu no Kami Matsudaira Nobutsuna ga Ina Bizen no  
Kami no kannai de yo sho no goro haiyo-shi seicho-shita o-  
mamorigatana (Inamachi Kumuro Hikawa-jinja zo, Showa  
43-nen 3-gatsu 1-nichi machi-shitei kôgei-hin) to doitsu toko  
no sakuhin.

### Rai Kunitoshi

Jûyô-tôken, designated by the NBTHK at the 29th jûyô-shinsa held on December 8, 1982.

Yamashiro province, around Einin (~ 1293), circa 700 years ago

Blade length:  
24.1 cm

Engraving:  
on both sides a bôhi that runs with kaki-nagashi into the tang

Shirasaya:  
sayagaki by Dr. Honma Kunzan

This blade was made by the same smith who made the *o-mamorigatana* (talisman/protective sword) worn by *Chie Izu ni Kami Matsudaira Nobutsuna* (1596-1662) when he was young and stayed at the residence of *Ina Bizen no Kami Tadatsugu* (1550-1610), which is owned by the *Hikawa-jinja in Komuro, Inamachi*, and was designated by the town in March 1, 1968 as an important craftwork.



Koshirae bag



ITEM# UJWA255

## A RYÔKAI WAKIZASHI

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

**Swordsmith:** *Ryôkai* (attribution, o-suriage mumei)  
**Measurements:** **Length:** 51.5cm **Curvature:** 1.0cm **Moto-haba:** 2.46cm **Weight:** 395g  
**Jihada:** *Ko-itame mixed with ji-nie, masame-hada, yô, shirake utsuri*  
**Hamon:** *Suguha with ko-gunome, ko-ashi, sunagashi*  
**Horimono:** *Bôhi on both sides with kaki-tôshi running through the nakago*  
**Certificate #1:** **NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon** (designated as Especially Worthy of Preservation)  
**Certificate #2-5:** **NTHK-NPO Kanteisho** (*koshirae, tsuba, fitting, kozuka* designated as Authentic)  
**Fujishiro rank:** **Jô-saku** (ranked as a superior swordsmith)  
**Included:** Shirasaya, Edo dragon 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 graceful wakizashi holds true the clear *kôto* period qualities that *Ryôkai* is known for producing. The *jigane* is a dense *ko-itame* with fine *ji-nie* and the *hamon* features a mix of *suguha* with *ko-gunome* and plenty of *ko-ashi*, *sunagashi* and falling leaves (*yô*). What ties this sword together so brilliantly is the fully matching dragon-themed koshirae crafted during the middle-Edo period (1700s). This is a terrific first sword for those starting a collection and will also appeal to seasoned *nihonto* enthusiasts as well.



Saki-kasane: 3.4mm

Moto-kasane: 5.9mm

Omosa: 395g

Kissaki: 2.35cm  
Saki-haba: 1.57cm

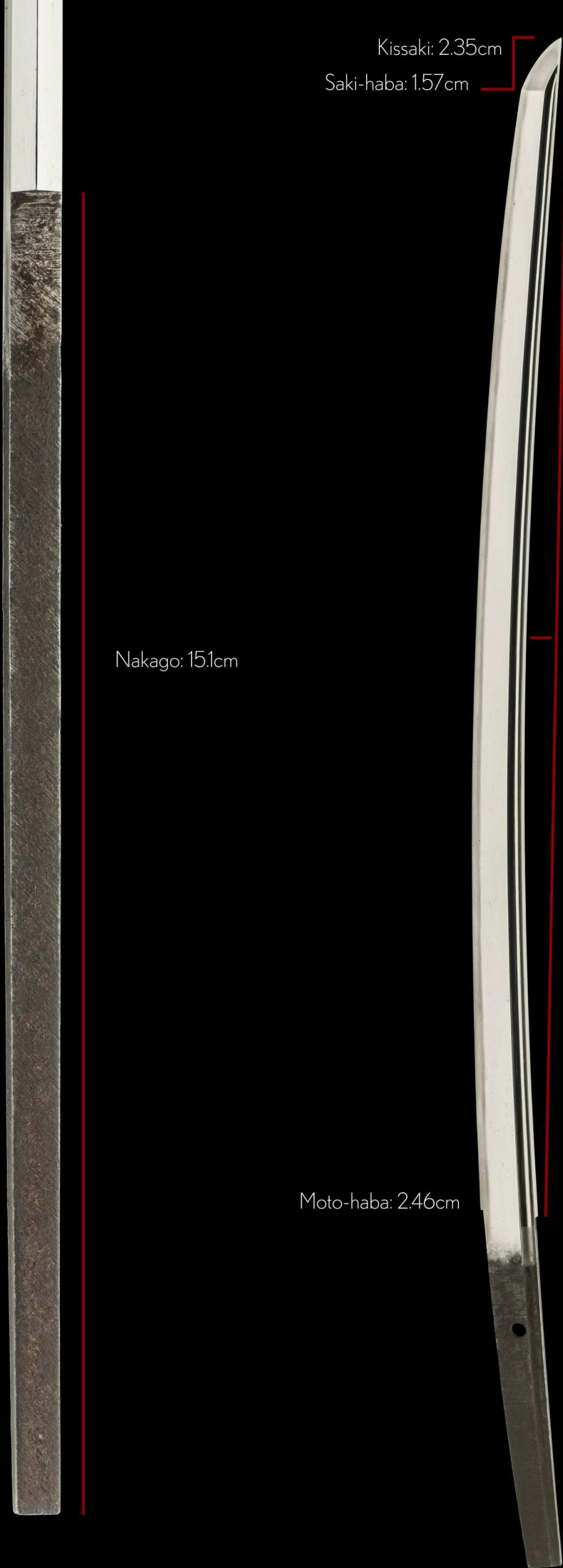
Nakago: 15.1cm

Moto-haba: 2.46cm

Nagasa: 51.5cm

Sori: 1.00cm

Mekugi-ana: 1



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 is ranked as *jô-saku* (superior swordsmith), which is an impressive achievement given the class of smiths working at the end of the Kamakura period.

This graceful wakizashi has an old soul. It has a lovely curvature and long grooves extending through the *nakago*. It features a beaming *suguha*-based *hamon* with *ko-ashi* and lots of *ji-nie*.

The sword is complimented by a fine set of middle-Edo period *koshirae* (circa 1700-~1780) in a cloud and crawling dragon theme.



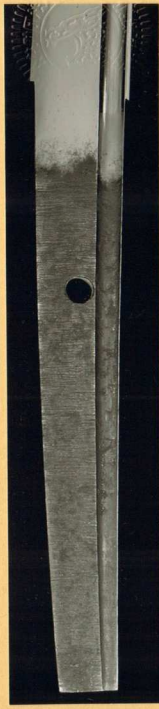
The image shows two views of a sword tang (nakago) against a black background. The tang is a long, narrow, rectangular piece of metal with a hole near the top and a groove running down its length. The metal has a dark, weathered appearance with some lighter patches. The hole is circular and located about one-third of the way down from the top. The groove is a shallow channel that runs parallel to the length of the tang, starting from the top and extending towards the bottom. The two views are positioned on the left and right sides of the frame, showing the same object from slightly different angles.

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.

04202203

No. 1017977



鑑定書

一脇指 無銘 伝(了戒)

長一尺七寸強

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

令和四年六月三日

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 324262 号  
令和3年12月14日

## NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon Certificate of Designation

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

Issued in the 4th year of Reiwa (2022), June 3rd

One, Wakizashi

*Mumei* (unsigned)  
*Den Ryôkai*

*Nagasa* (length)  
1-shaku 7-sun kyô (51.5cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai  
(NBTHK)





A bright, *suguha*-based *hamon* with unique brush strokes of *sunagashi*. *Utsuri* (shadow pattern) in the *ji* (body) can also be seen and appreciated. History speaks through the steel.



light *utsuri*

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

*ko-ashi* (tiny legs)

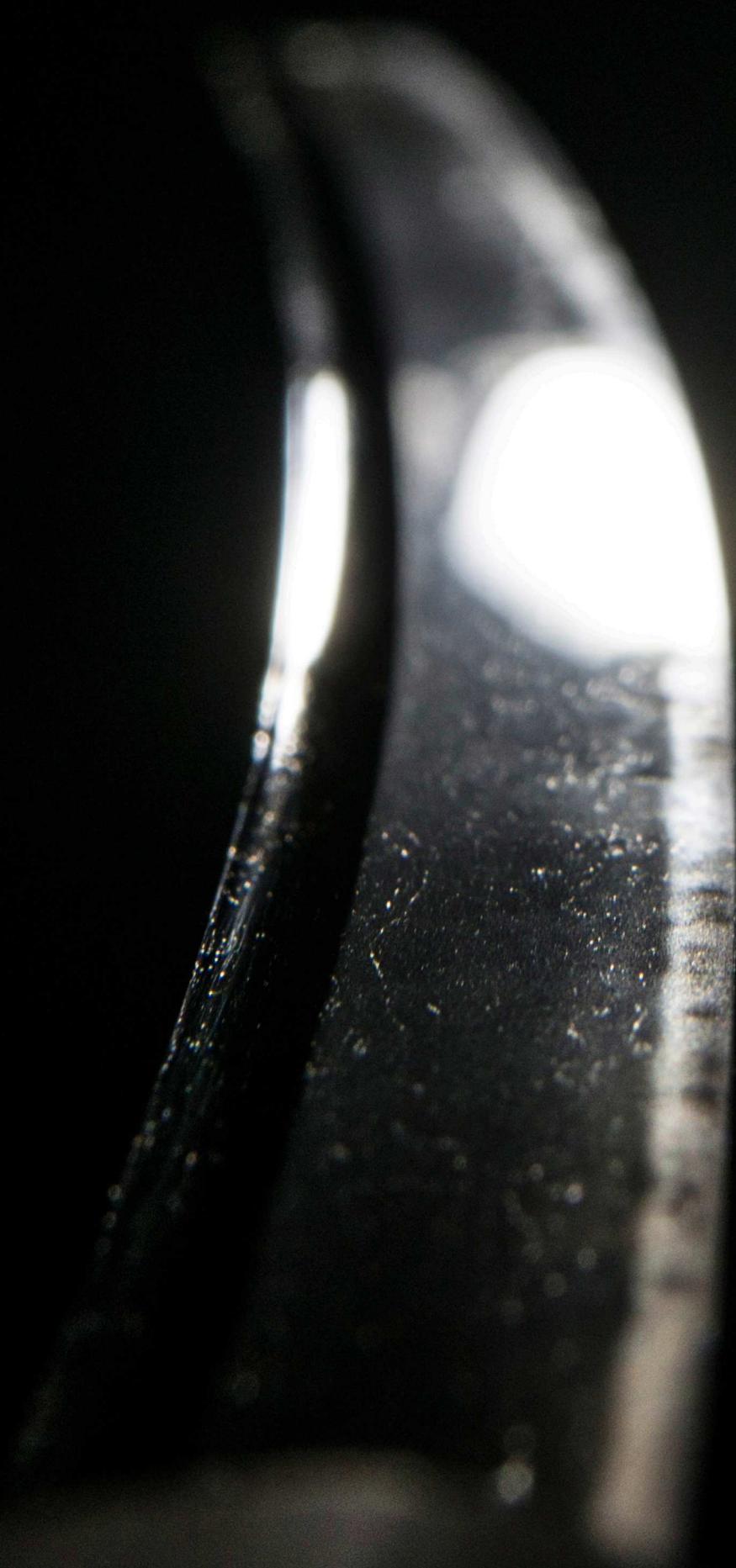


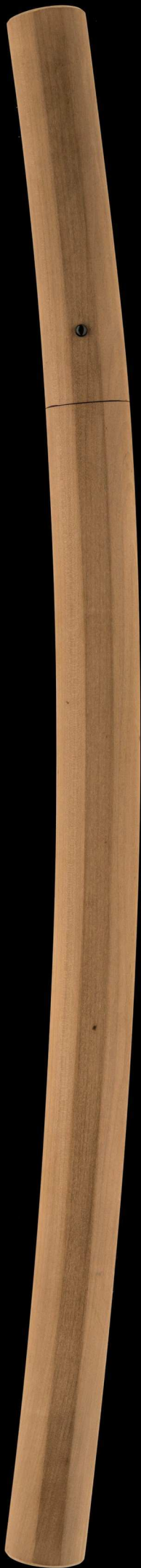


Clean lines, sharp sword.

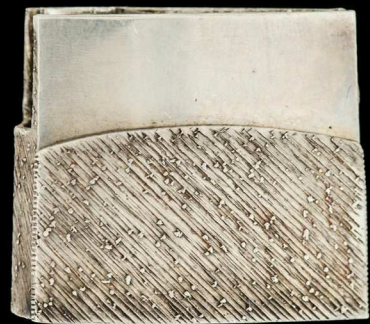


Graceful.





*Shirasaya*  
(protective scabbard)



silver *habaki* with  
diagonal file marks

*Kuro-roiro-nuri saya  
chiisagatana-koshirae*  
(黒呂色塗鞘小さ刀拵)

*Chiisagatana-koshirae  
lacquered in glossy black*

Crafted during the  
Middle Edo period  
(1700~1780)



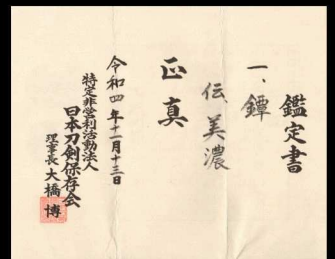
NTHK-NPO Kanteisho  
Certificate of Authenticity



This is a *hamidashi-tsuba*, meaning "protruding tsuba" - a small *tsuba* (guard) that is not much bigger than the *fuchi* (collar) or the *koiguchi* (mouth) of the *saya* (scabbard).

The tsuba has been certified by the NTHK-NPO attributing the work to the *Mino school*, circa the *mid-Edo period* (1700~1780).

The material is *shakudô* with *nanako* ground and features a motif of a cloud dragon cleverly circling the rim.





gold accent on the *kurigata*

The profile on this wakizashi is very attractive with subtle gold accents on cloud-dragon *tsuba*, *fuchi-kashira* and the *kurigata*.

There is a classiness to this sword.



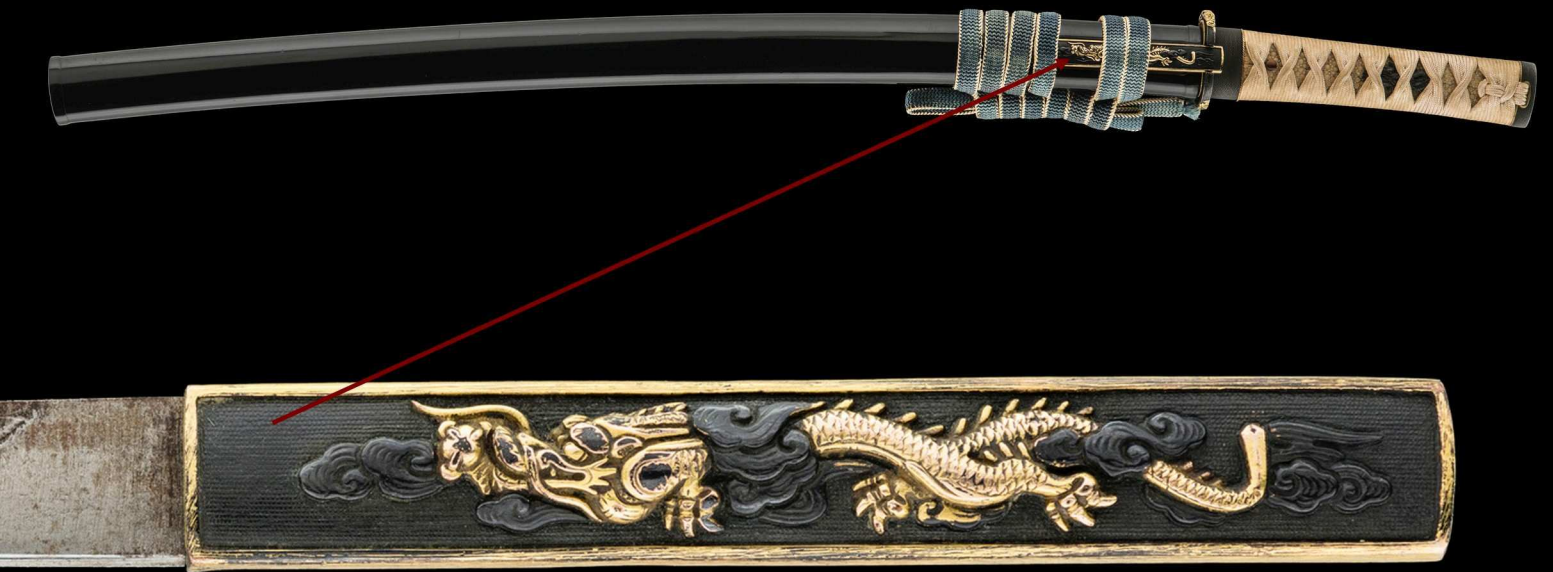
cloud

head

claw



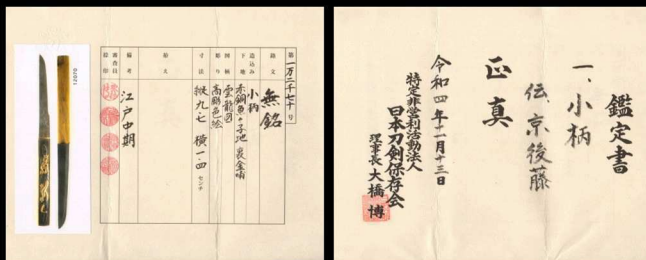
*mimi* (rim) view of the tsuba



*Kozuka* (utility knife)

Fastened into a special notch built inside the *saya* (scabbard) and drawn through the slotted space of the *hamidashi tsuba*.

Motif of a cloud dragon. Certified to the prestigious *Kyô-Gotô* school of *Kyôto* circa the middle Edo period (1700~1780).



了 (Ryô)

戒 (kai)

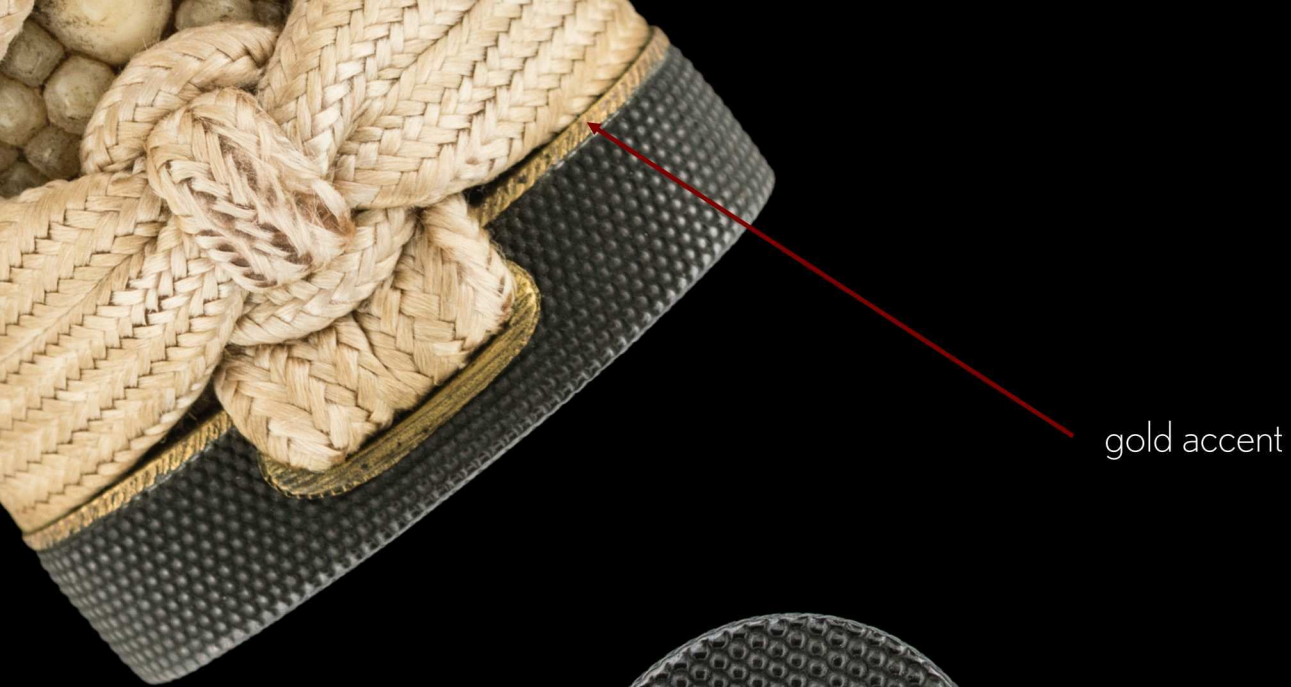


It's almost certainly *gimei* (false signature) but the *kogatana* (short blade) that nestles into the *kozuka* is signed 'Ryôkai'. A neat touch.



Respecting the overall dragon theme, these beautifully detailed *shakudô menuki* wrapped under antique silk are of crawling dragons.





gold accent



*Kashira* (pommel)  
pure *shakudô* with *nanako* ground and  
gold accents on the outer edge

*Kanagu-shi*  
(tachi fittings craftsman)

Mid-Edo period  
(1700~1780)



Koshirae bag



## Travelling to Japan?

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

Many swords from Unique Japan are sold privately every year to proud clients around the world. Private meetings are held at our studio near **JR Meguro station** - only minutes away from all major hotels in downtown Tokyo.

Contact Pablo at [service@uniquejapan.com](mailto:service@uniquejapan.com) where we'll discuss the special qualities you are seeking: type of sword, era, hamon pattern, level of certification, cutting test, etc. along with budget parameters in order to best serve you.



ITEM# UJKA300

## A KANESADA KATANA

SIGNED, EARLY EDO PERIOD (ENPO ERA: 1673~1681)

<b>Swordsmith:</b>	<i>Echigo no Kami Kanesada (2nd generation, Terukane)</i>
<b>Measurements:</b>	<b>Length:</b> 70.7cm <b>Curvature:</b> 1.1cm <b>Moto-haba:</b> 3.15cm <b>Weight:</b> 720g
<b>Jihada:</b>	<i>Ko-itame hada with ji-nie and chikei</i>
<b>Hamon:</b>	<i>Spectacular ko-nie-laden ô-gunome in tôran mixed with ashi and sunagashi</i>
<b>Certificate:</b>	<b>29th NBTHK Jûyô Token</b> (a sword designated as <i>Profound and Important</i> )
<b>Fujishiro rank:</b>	<b>Jôjô-saku</b> (ranked as a highly superior smith)
<b>Cutting Ability:</b>	<b>Ô-wazamono</b> (maker of swords with great sharpness)
<b>Authentication:</b>	<b>Sayagaki by Dr. Satô Kanzan</b>
<b>Included:</b>	Shirasaya, fabric bag, stand, kit, booklet, description

### *Enquire for availability*

*Echigo no Kami Kanesada* was adopted by *shodai Kanesada*. In 1666, his *sensei* died. *Kanesada* continued to sign with the family name but in 1680 relinquished the *Echigo no Kami* title to *shodai Kanesada*'s biological son. From this point, he signed with the name *Sakakura Gennoshin Terukane*. *Kanesada II* is one of the most important swordsmiths from *Settsu province* (Osaka) with some eighty swords that have achieved the prestigious certification of *jûyô tôken* or *tokubetsu jûyô*. **Dr. Satô Kanzan states on the sayagaki that this katana is a masterwork among all works by Kanesada**, a substantial statement. A spectacular *toran-ba* (surging wave) *hamon* bursts with presence along the exquisitely forged *ko-itame hada*. This sword is *kenzen* (perfectly healthy).

Saki-kasane: 5.7mm <sup>^</sup>

Moto-kasane: 6.9mm

Omosa: 705g

Kissaki: 3.21cm  
Saki-haba: 2.11cm

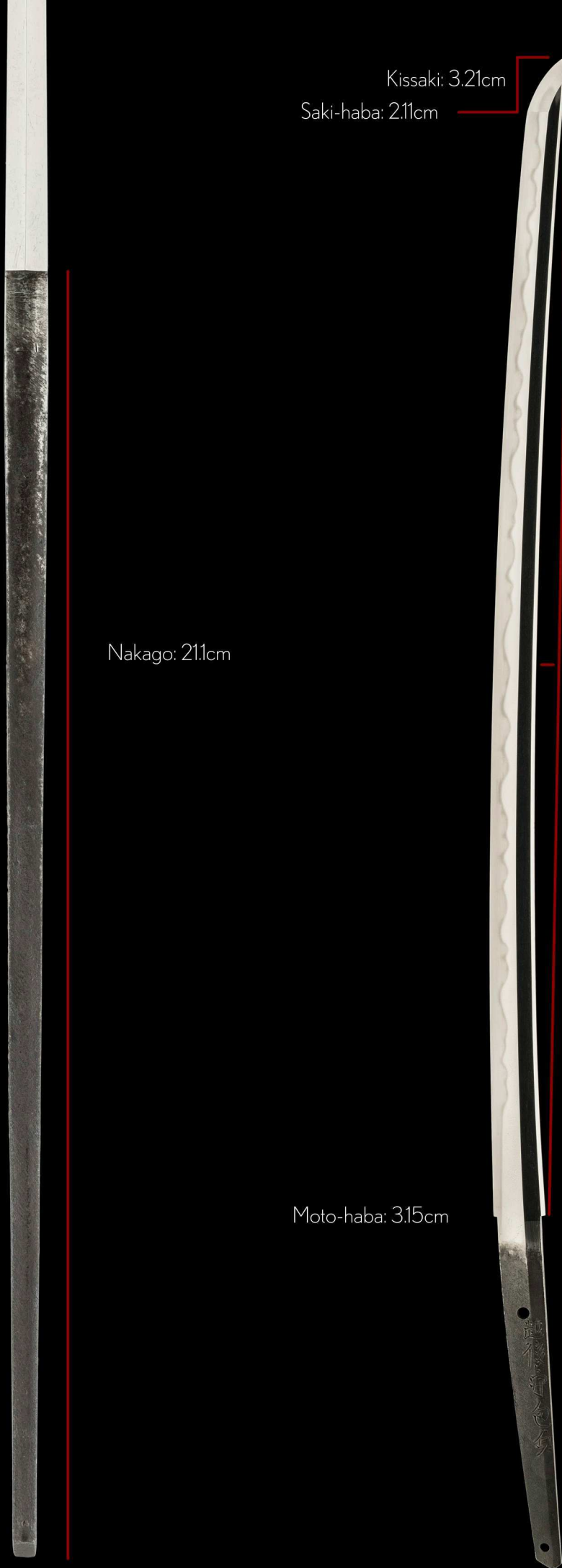
Nakago: 21.1cm

Moto-haba: 3.15cm

Nagasa: 70.7cm

Sori: 1.1cm

Mekugi-ana: 2



*As written on the jûyô token white paper:*

The second generation Kanesada studied with the first generation Kanesada and succeeded his master, taking over the name *Echigo no Kami Kanesada*.

However, when the first generation's natural son *Iwamatsu* came of age, he passed on the Echigo no Kami Kanesada name to him and signed henceforth with his real name *Sakakura Gonnoshin Terukane*.

Regarding the time of the name change from Kanesada to Terukane, there exists a blade which is signed "Sakakura Gonnoshin Terukane, retired Echigo no Kami" and dated with a lucky day of the second month of Enpô eight (February 1680) on the *ura* side whereupon it is assumed that the name change took place around that year.

Kanesada/Terukane worked in *gunome-midare* and in *suguha* but his strongest point was a *nie-laden tôran-midare* with a wide and bright *nioiguchi* that aims at *Sukehiro*. There are no works with a non-uniform quality of Kanesada/Terukane and thus he is regarded as one of the most outstanding *Ôsaka-shintô* masters.

This blade truly reflects the strong points of the smith and both its *ji* (body) and *ha* (tempered edge) are *kenzen* (perfectly healthy). [end]

-----

This sword marks an opportunity to own one of the finest swords that Kanesada produced in his lifetime.



Location: *Settsu province* (Ôsaka)  
Title: *Echigo no Kami* (Lord of Echigo province)  
Swordsmith: *Kanesada* (Gonnoshin Terukane)

*ubu-nakago* (original, unaltered tang)  
*iriyamagata-jiri* (butt end of nakago is acutely angled from the bottom of the shinogi line)  
*sujikai-yasurime* (diagonal file marks)



越 Echi

後 go (no)

守 Kami

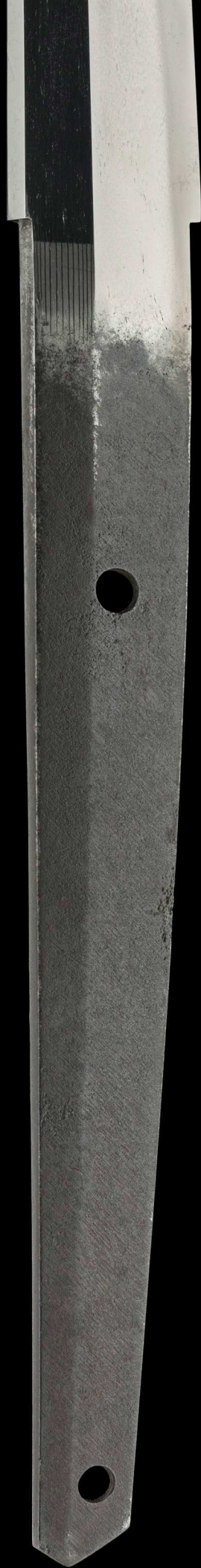
包 Kane

貞 sada



confident chisel marks forming cursive kanji characters.

beautiful *goji-mei*  
(large character signature)



(*ura*, reverse)



重要第七三七號

指定書

刀銘越後守包貞 一口

長七〇・六種 及び一〇一種

形状 鑄造 庵棟  
鍛 小極目肌よくつみ地沸つく  
刃文 大互の目 濤瀾風となり足入り匂深い  
帽子 小丸掃きかたじろとなる  
茎 生ぶ 鑢目筋道 僅かに花粧つく  
目釘孔 二

右者當協會に於て審査の結果  
重要刀剣に指定する

昭和五十七年十二月八日

鑒定人 日本美術刀剣保存協会

会長 富士川金三



NBTHK Jûyô Tôken  
Certificate of Designation

a sword designated as *Profound and Important*  
by the Society for the Preservation of the Japan Art Sword

Issued in the 57th year of Shôwa (1982), December 8th

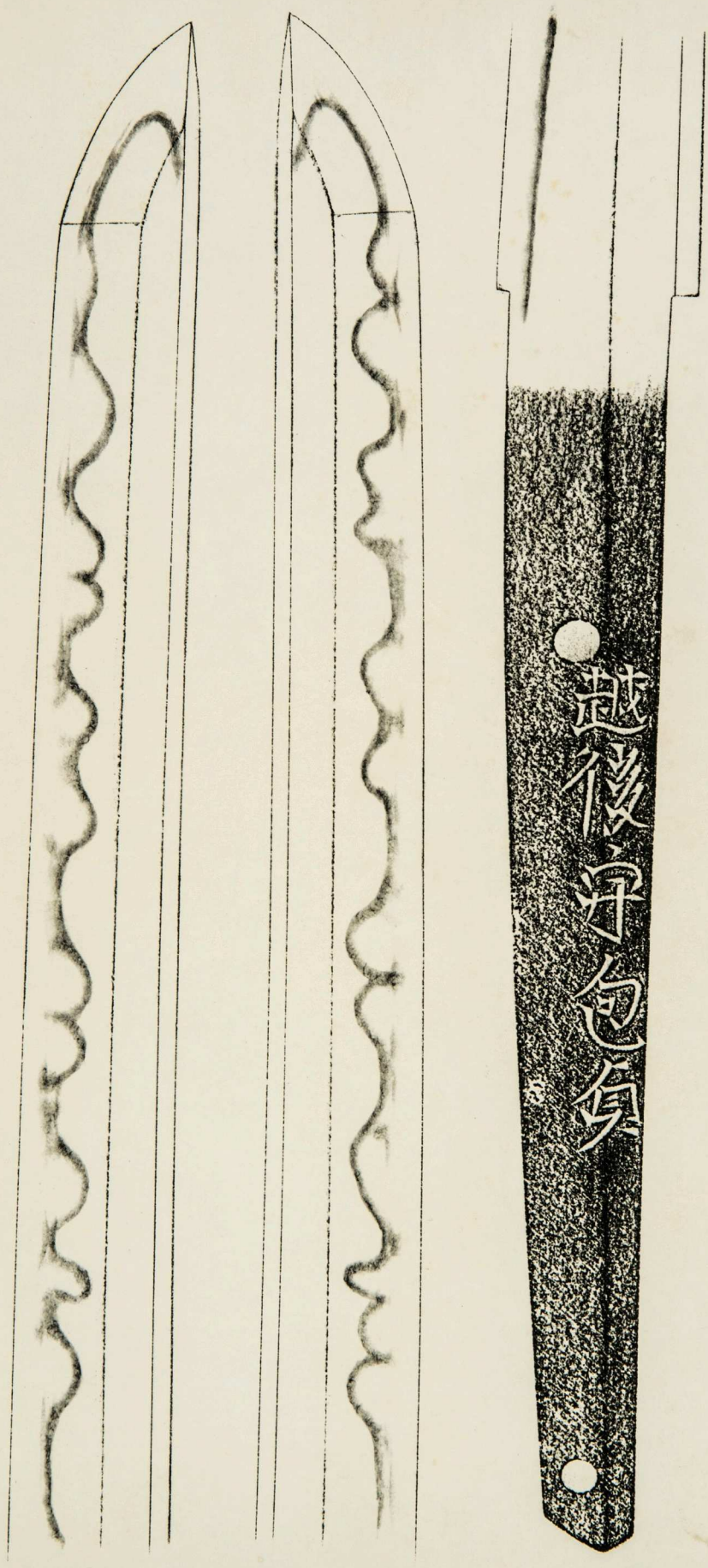
One, Katana

Mei (signature)  
*Echigo no Kami Kanesada*

*Nagasa* (length)  
70.6cm

Nihon Bijutsu Tôken Hozon Kyôkai  
(NBTHK)

刀  
越後守包貞



NBTHK Juyo Token White Paper  
This *oshigata*, tracing of the *hamon* pattern, illustrates the beauty of the temper line, and signature on the *nakago*



Echigo

(no) Kami

Kanesada

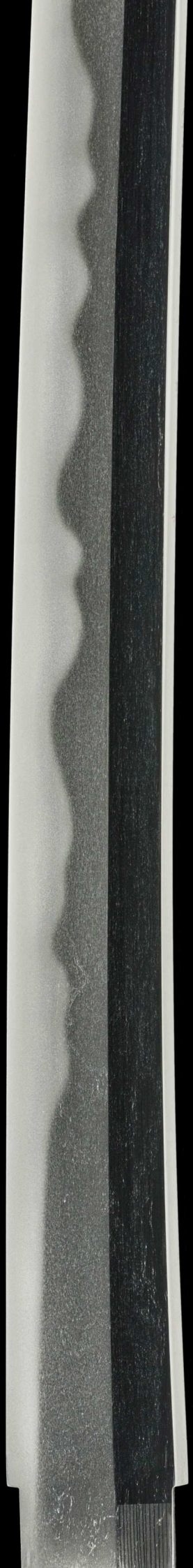
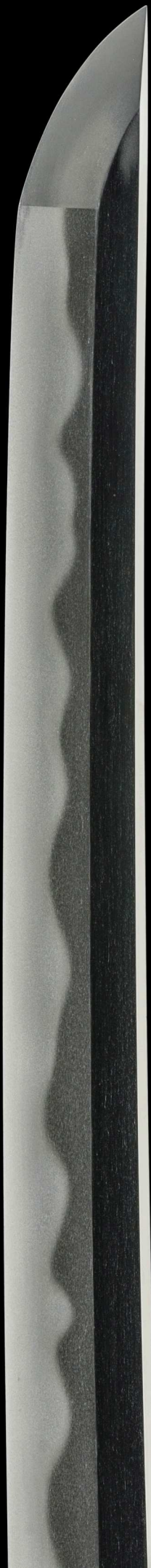
*Ubu nakago zaimei kore  
Dosaku-chu no yuhin nari*

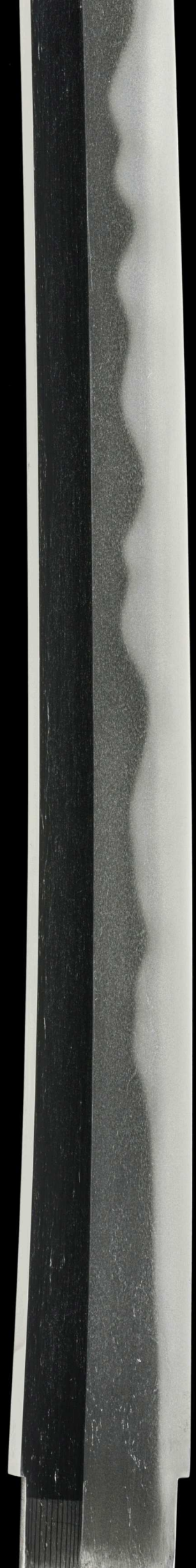
Ubu nakago, signed  
Masterwork among all works of this smith

*Hacho 2-shaku 3-sun 2-bu han kore ari*  
Length: 70.7cm

*Heisei mizunoto-umadoshi uzuki no hi*  
A day in April 1973, Year of the Ox

*Kanzan shirisu + (kao)*  
signed by Dr. Kanzan Sato sensei with his personal seal







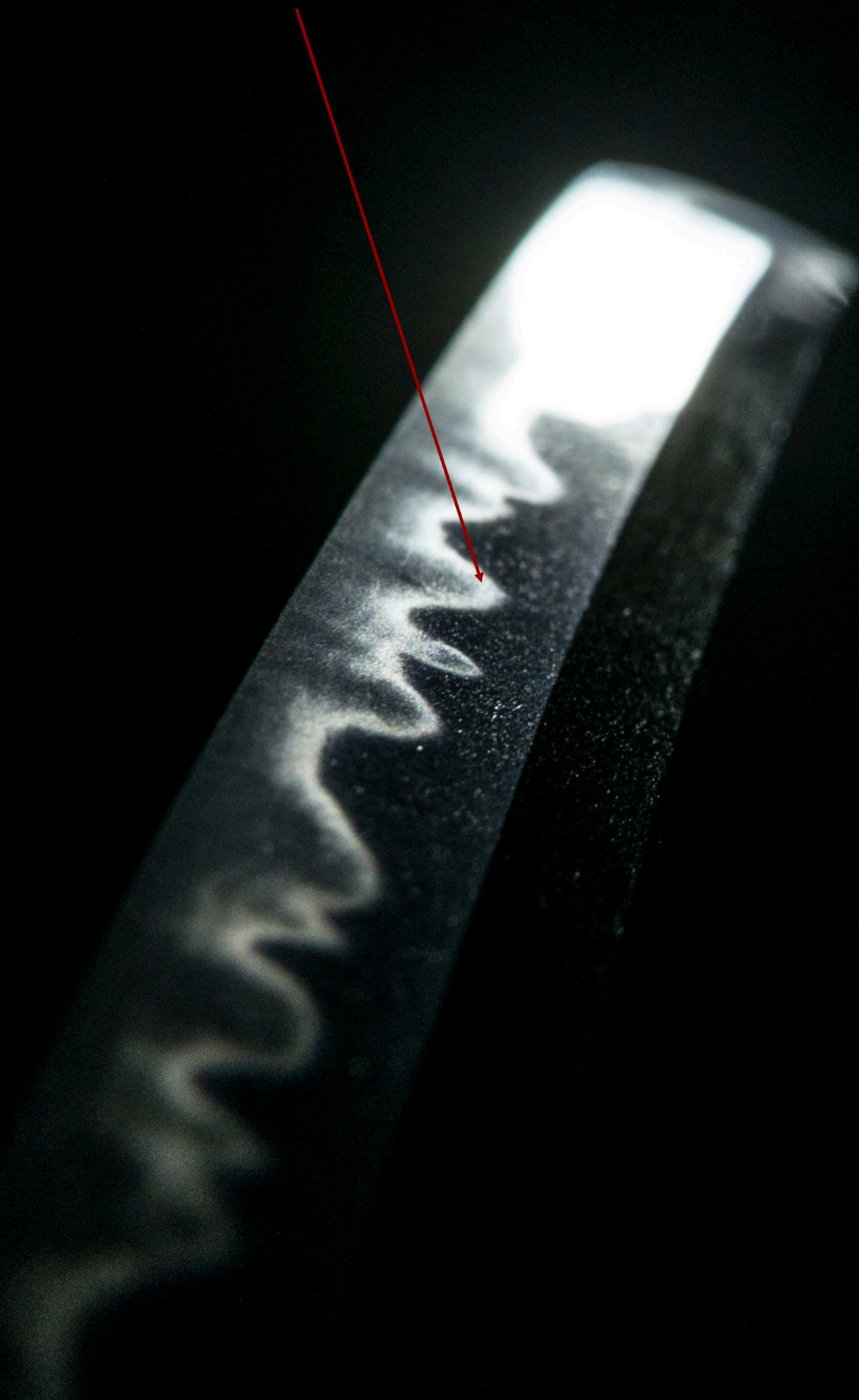
Fellow Ôsaka master swordsmith *Sukehiro* pioneered the *tôran* (surging wave) *hamon*.

The power and vitality of the rolling seas can be felt within the sword. Natural elements, be it waves, flowers, trees, cloud formations, etc. all served as inspiration for hamon patterns.



a vibrant *gunome-midare hamon* with long *ashi* (legs) extending to the cutting edge.

A wide, clean and consistent *nioguchi* - crystals that make up the hamon.  
This in the work of a master smith.



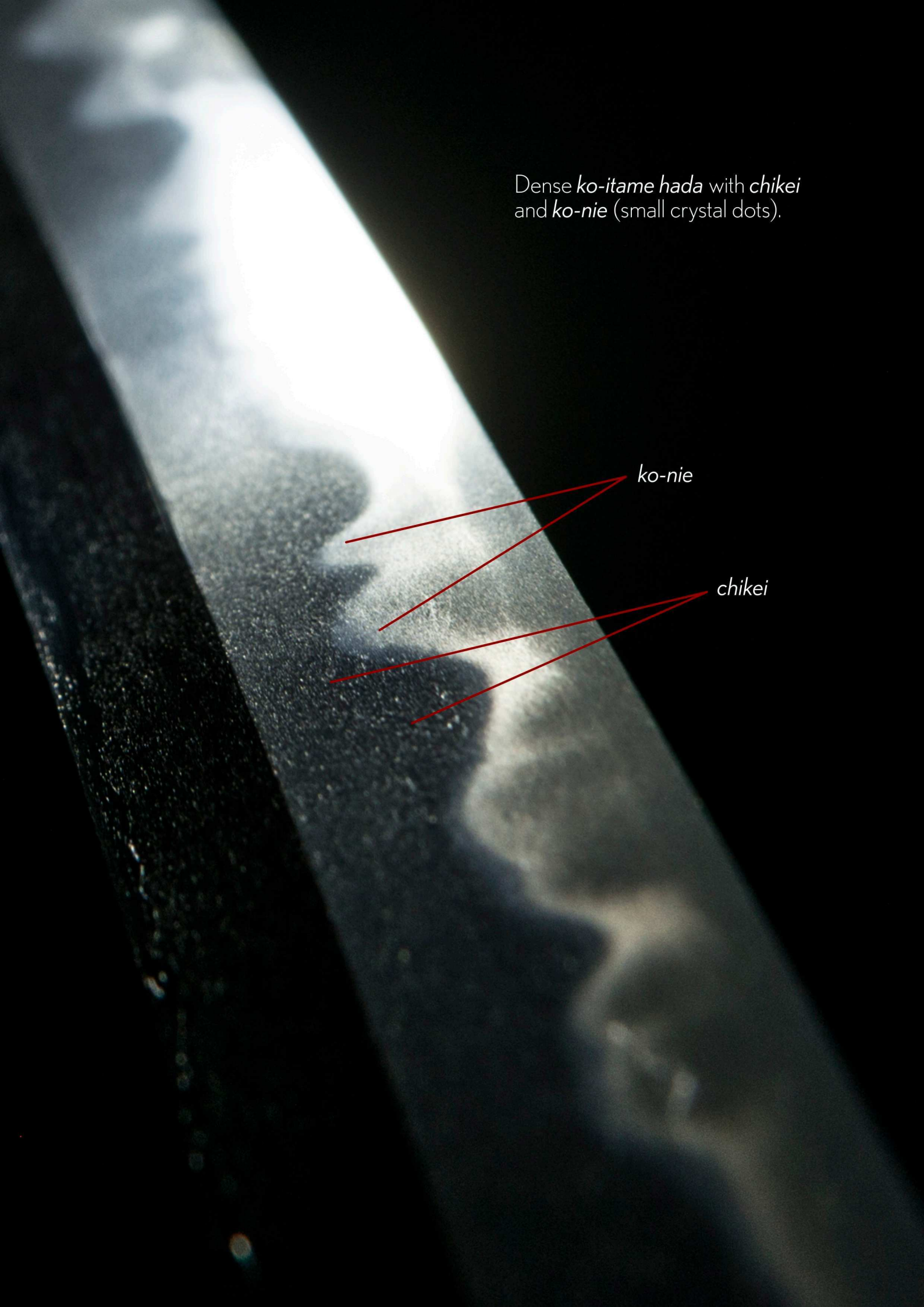
brushed *sunagashi* up close.



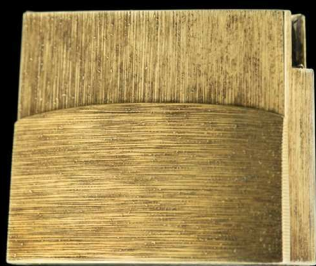
Dense *ko-itame hada* with *chikei* and *ko-nie* (small crystal dots).

*ko-nie*

*chikei*



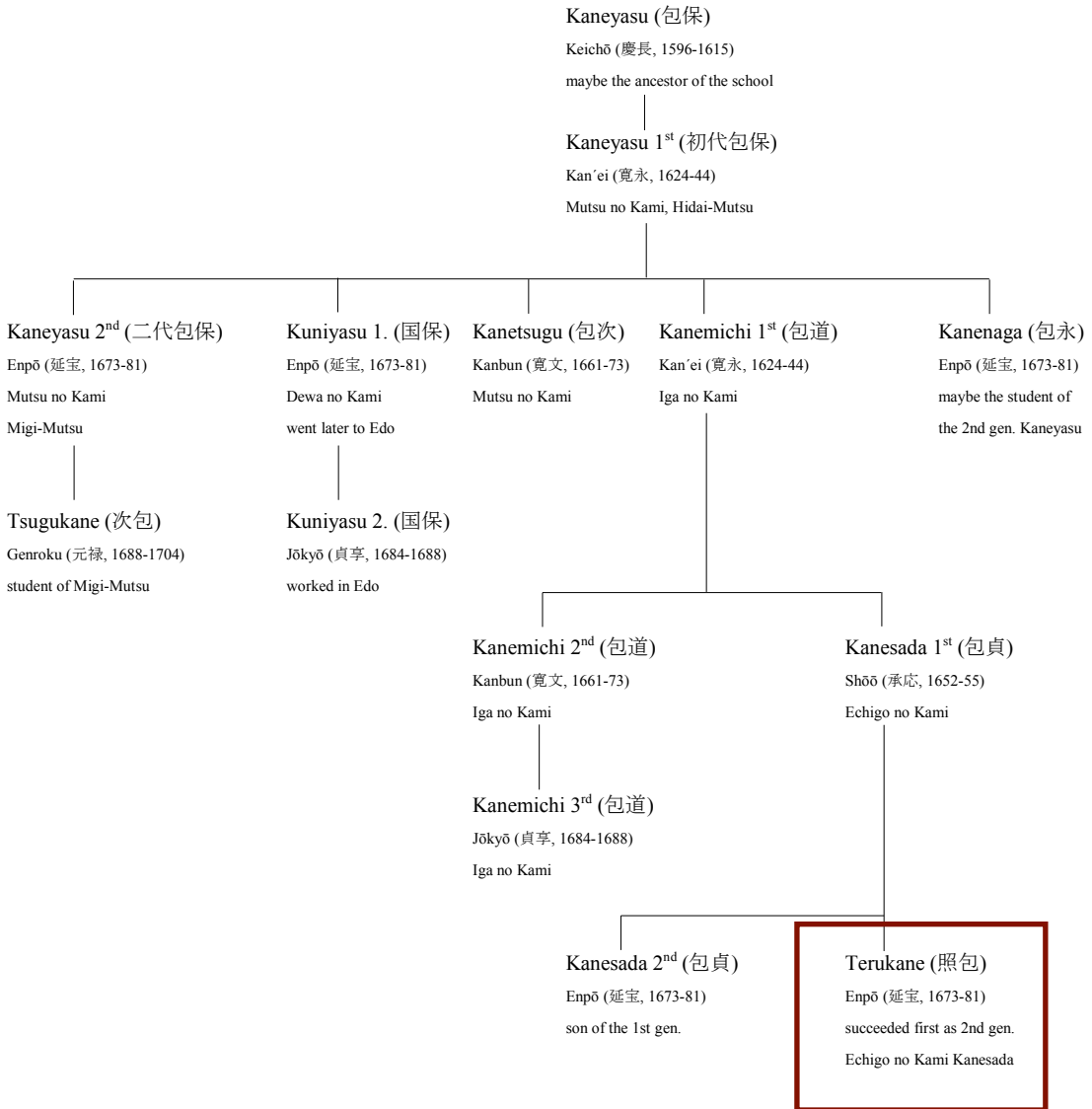
*Shirasaya*  
(protective scabbard)



copper & gold  
*niju habaki*



Genealogy of the Kaneyasu school:

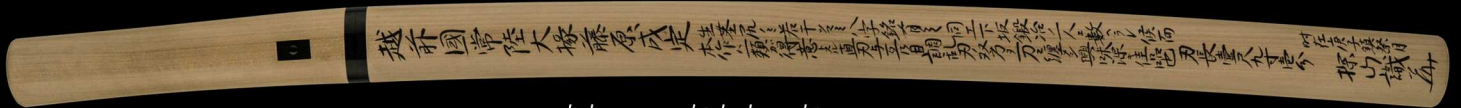


# Submit, Repair, Sell & Create!

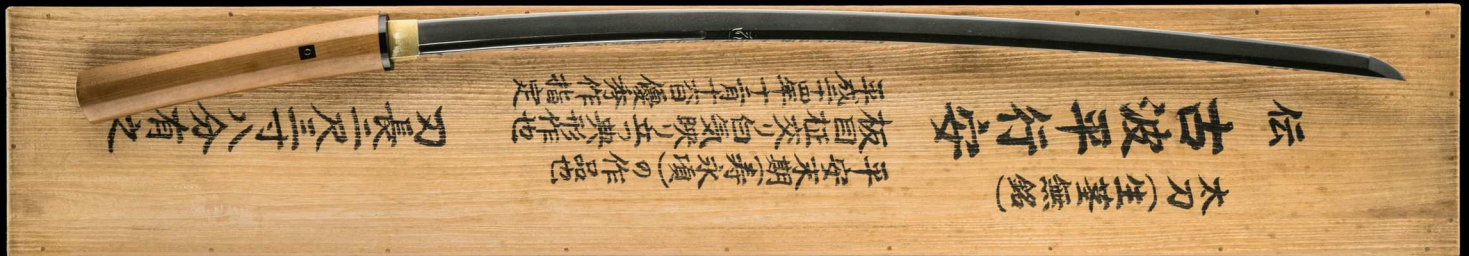
Unique Japan offers a *full-service menu* to assist clients with their Japanese swords and fittings. All services are performed in Japan with top quality craftsmen and women.

## Services include (non exhaustive):

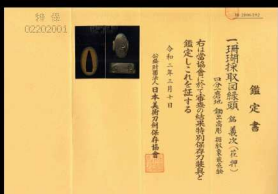
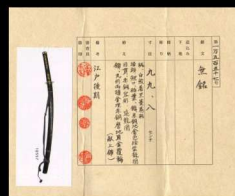
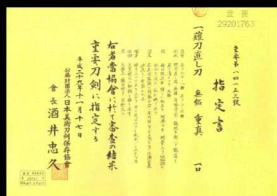
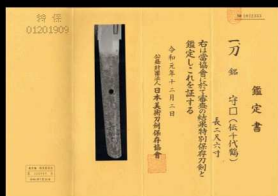
- \* NBTHK and NTHK-NPO *shinsa* certification (swords and fittings)
- \* polishing for all types of Japanese swords (standard to Jûyô-level quality polish)
- \* *shirasaya* making (standard to high quality with horn fittings)
- \* *habaki* making (gold, silver, copper in most any design pattern)
- \*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



polish, sayagaki, hakogaki



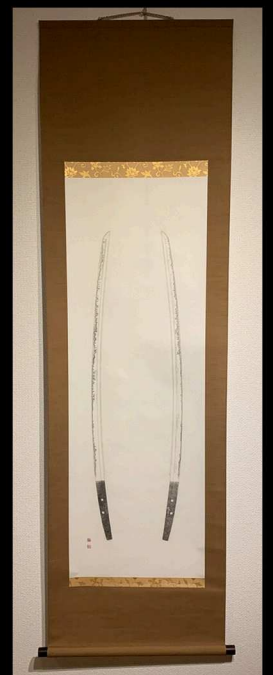
tsuka-maki



habaki creations



otoshi boxes



oshigata scrolls

All NBTHK and NTHK-NPO Shinsa authentication services



ITEM# UJKA414

CURRENTLY AVAILABLE ON CONSIGNMENT

## A SHIGEZANE KATANA

UNSIGNED, NAMBOKUCHO PERIOD (ENBUN ERA: 1356~1361)

<b>Swordsmith:</b>	<i>Shigezane</i> (attribution, <i>ô-suriage nakago</i> )		
<b>Measurements:</b>	<b>Length:</b> 68.2cm	<b>Curvature:</b> 1.4cm	<b>Motohaba:</b> 2.78cm
<b>Jihada:</b>	Gorgeous mixture of <i>itame</i> , <i>mokume</i> and <i>nagare</i> with <i>ji-nie</i> , <i>chikei</i> , light <i>utsuri</i>		
<b>Hamon:</b>	<i>Chû-suguha</i> in <i>nioi-deki</i> with angularity, <i>ashi</i> , <i>yô</i> and <i>sunagashi</i>		
<b>Certificate:</b>	62nd NBTHK <i>Jûyô Tôken Shômeisho</i> (designated as <i>Profound and Important</i> )		
<b>Fujishiro:</b>	<i>Jô-saku</i> (ranked as a superior swordsmith)		
<b>Sharpness:</b>	<i>Ryô-Wazamonô</i> (rated as a maker of highly sharp swords)		
<b>Authentication:</b>	Sayagaki by <i>Tanobe-sensei</i> ( <i>Tanobe Michihiro</i> )		
<b>Included:</b>	Shirasaya, Edo koshirae, stand, kit, booklet, printed description		

**\$29,000**

This exceptional katana crafted by *Shigezane* of the *Motoshige* school, presents a mesmerizing display of various steel textures - from *itame* and *mokume* to the wave-like grain pattern known as *nagare-hada*, offering endless visual fascination for those that love and appreciate great *jihada*. The blade features an elegant razor-tooth *hamon* with distinctive falling leaf *yô* patterns that enhance the overall aesthetic. This sword has been awarded prestigious *jûyô-tôken* and is mounted in matched Edo-period koshirae from the *Kumagai* school, featuring iron-rich metalwork decorated with rain and sand dragons, lending the sword a compelling, austere character. The accompanying *sayagaki* (inscription) by *Tanobe-sensei* confirms this blade as one of *Shigezane*'s masterpieces.

^  
Saki-kasane: 4.1mm

Moto-kasane: 5.4mm

Omosa: 615g

Kissaki: 3.23cm  
Saki-haba: 1.97cm

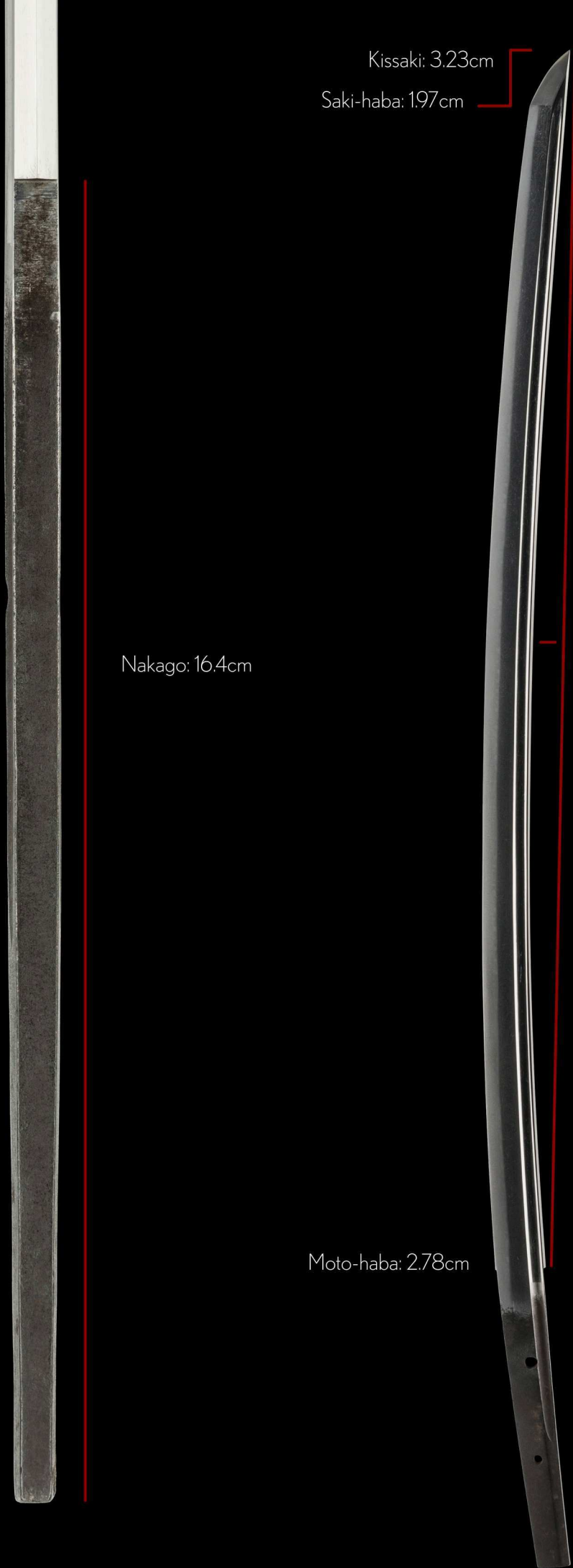
Nakago: 16.4cm

Moto-haba: 2.78cm

Nagasa: 68.2cm

Sori: 1.40cm

Mekugi-ana: 2



Shigezane's family name is *Jirôbei* and is said to be the son of the first generation *Hatakeda Morishige* and the younger brother of *Motoshige* of the Motoshige school.

His work dates from *Karyaku* era (1326~1329) to *Enbun* era (1356~1361), culminating in an active period of about 35 years.


In the later years, during the warring *Nanbokuchô period*, Shigezane's creations took the form of a wide *mihaba*, a thick *kasane*, and an elongated *kissaki*.

The *jihada* features a completely eye-catching mix of *itame*, *mokume* and flowing *itame-nagare* and *utsuri*.

The NBTHK certificate states:  
"The *jiba* (steel) is perfectly healthy and so we have here a masterwork among all blades attributed to Shigezane."

Shigezane is rated *jô-saku* (superior smith) with a *ryô-wazamono* rank for the intense sharpness of his swords.



The image shows two views of a sword tang (nakago) against a black background. The tang is dark, possibly blackened or heavily patinated, and has a slightly tapered shape. It features two circular holes, one near the top and one near the bottom. A red arrow points to a groove on the right side of the tang, which is mentioned in the text as 'kaki-nagashi'.

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.

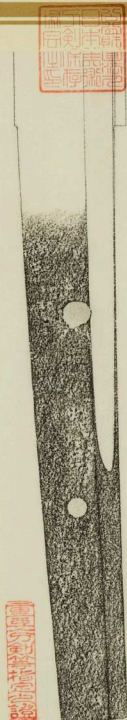
The nakago features *kaki-nagashi* - grooves that extend to the middle of the butt end of the tang.

証明書

指定番号 第一三九七二号

一 刀 無銘 重真 一 口

長さ 六八・二 釐



右は第百六十二回平成二十八年十月十八日付  
を以て重要刀剣に指定された  
ものであることを証明する

令和四年八月十五日

公益財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協会

岐阜教育委員会  
第 086644 号  
令和 4 年 5 月 18 日

Jûyô Certificate No. 13972  
Shômeisho (証明書) Certificate  
Katana, mumei: Shigezane (重真)

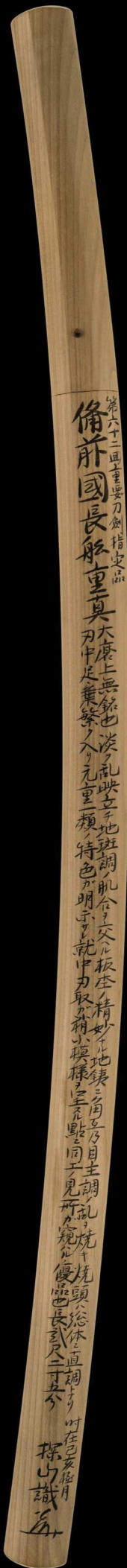
Nagasa 68.2 cm

The sword was registered on May 18th in 2022 by the Board of Education of Gifu prefecture

This is to certify that above sword had been designated as *Juyô-Tôken* on October 18th, 2016 at the 62nd session

August 15th, 2022  
[Foundation] Nihon Bijutsu Tôken Hozon Kyôkai, NBTHK

\*\* Note: the original *Jûyô Tôken* certificate was lost. By policy, rather than issuing a new certificate, the NBTHK issues a *shômeisho* (a certificate of acceptance) after they carefully review the sword in person ensuring the authenticity and condition of the item.



第六十二回重要刀剣指定品

*Dai rokujûni-kai jûyô-tôken shitei-hin*

Designated as jûyô-tôken at the 62nd jûyô-shinsa

備前國長船重真

*Bizen no Kuni Osafune Shigezane*

Osafune Shigezane from Bizen Province

大磨上無銘也淡ク乱映立チ地斑調ノ肌合ヲ交ヘル板空ノ精妙ナル地鍔ニ角互乃目主調ノ乱ヲ焼き焼頭ハ総体ニ直刃トナリ刃中足・葉繁ク入り元重一類ノ特色ガ明示サレ就中刃取ガ稍小模様ヲ呈スル點ニ同工ノ見所ガ窺ハル優品也

*Ô-suriage mumei nari awaku midare-utsuri tachi jifu-chô no hada-ai o majjeru ita-moku no seimyô naru jigane ni kaku-gunome shuchô no midare o yaki yaki-gashira wa sôtai ni suguha to nari hachû ashi yô shigeku hairi Motoshige ichirui no tokushoku ga meiji sare nakanzuku hadori ga yaya ko-moyô o teisuru ten ni dôkô no midokoro ga ukagawaru yûhin nari*

[The blade is] *ô-suriage mumei*. It features a faint *midare-utsuri*, and its finely forged *jigane* appears as *itame-mokume* mix with a tendency towards *jifu*. The hardening of the blade is based on an angular *gunome* whose *yakigashira* are overall aligned as *suguha*. The *ha* is mixed with connected *ashi* and *yô*, and thus we recognize the typical characteristics of the *Motoshige* group. Within this group, the relatively small elements of which the *ha* is composed of is synonymous with *Shigezane* and the blade is a masterwork of his.

長貳尺二寸五分

*Nagasa 2 shaku 2 sun 5 bu*

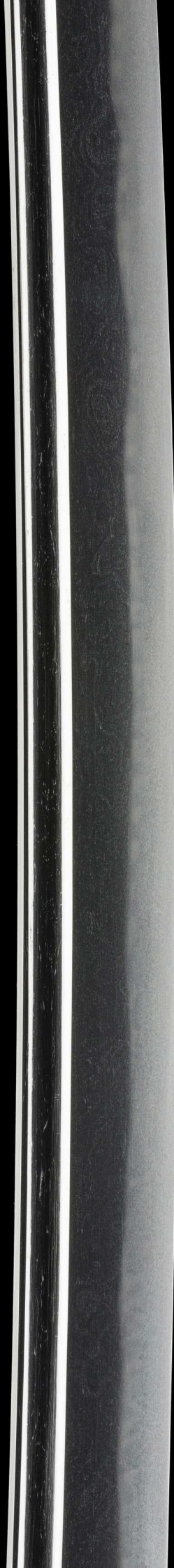
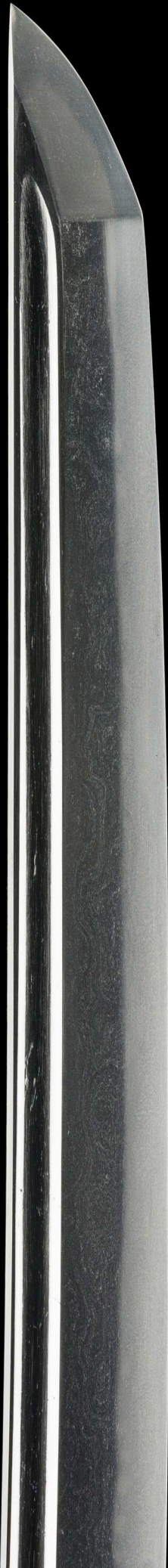
Blade length ~ 68.2 cm

時在己亥極月探山識「花押」

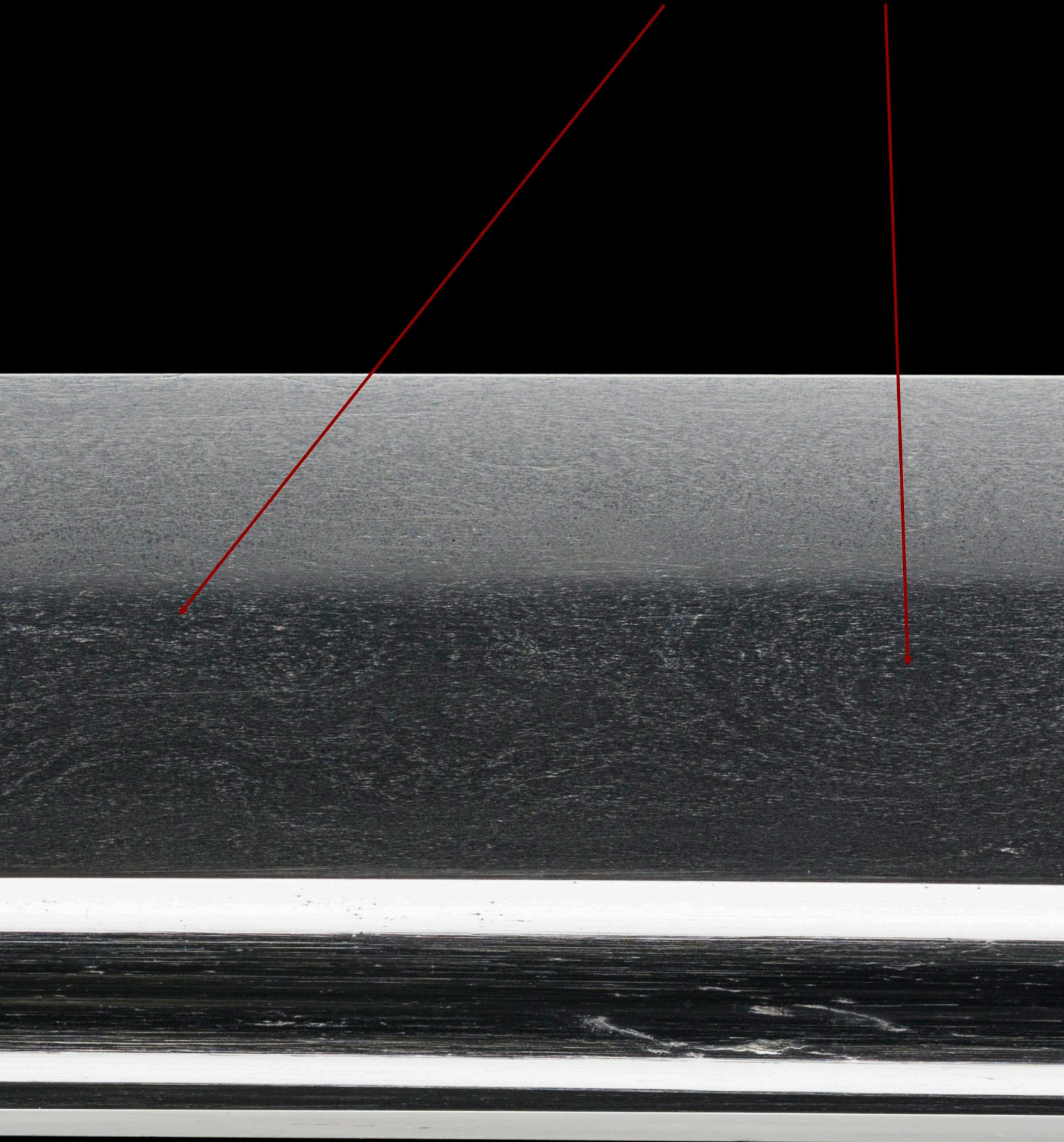
*Toki ari tsuchinoto-i gokugetsu Tanzan shirusu + kaô*

Written by Tanzan [Tanobe Michihiro] in December of the Year of the Boar of this era (2019) + monogram

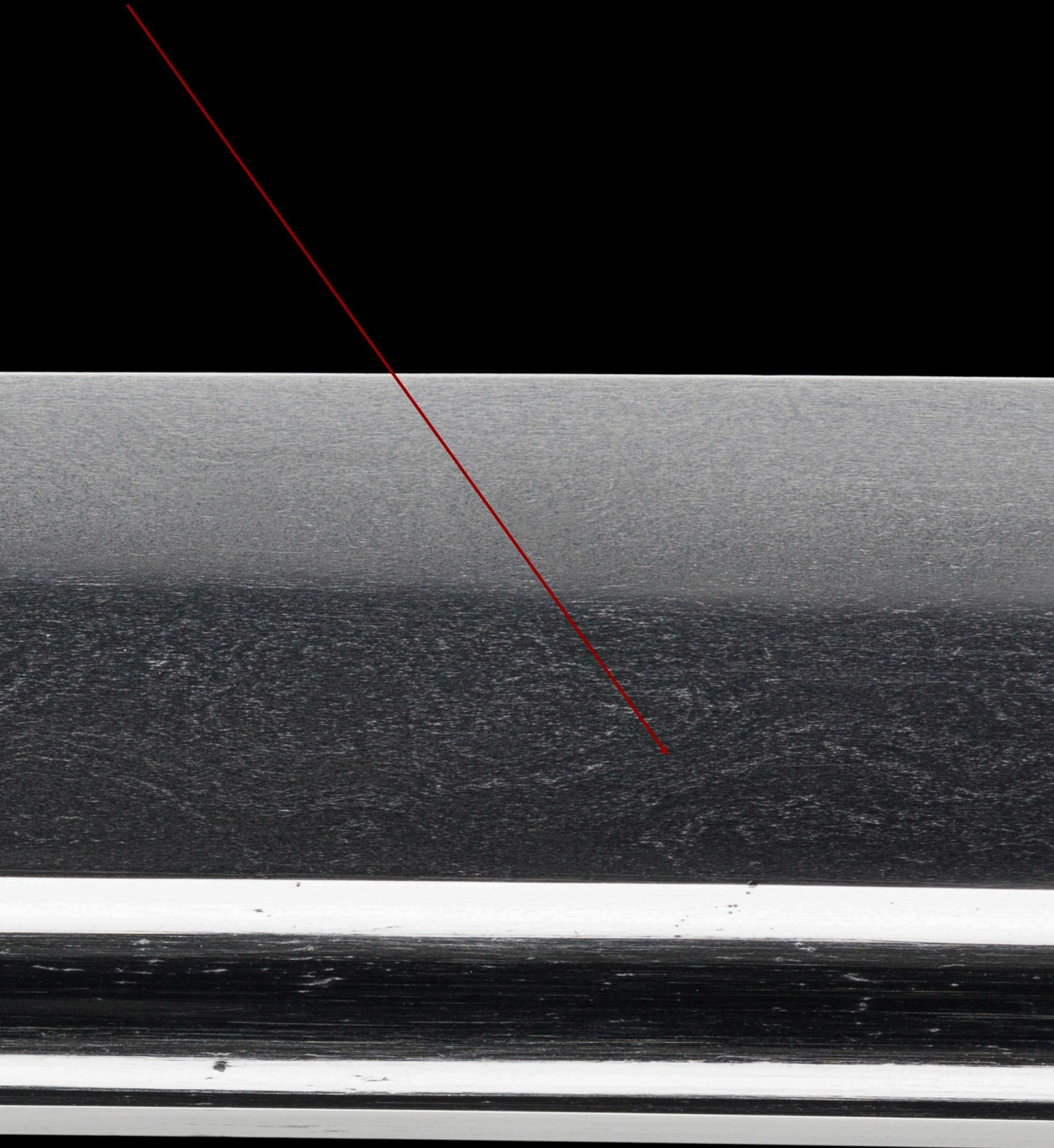




The *jihada* (grain pattern) is a sublime mix of *itame* (plank grain), *mokume* (burl grain)



and *nagare-hada* (running, wavy). This is steel artanship.




Stand tall.

The *bôshi* (hamon in the *kissaki*, tip) features brushed *hakikake*.






A beautiful tight *nioguchi* with sharp, angular sections of *gunome* and *ashi* (legs) that resemble the teeth of a saw.

A close-up, low-angle photograph of a katana blade against a black background. The blade is illuminated from the side, highlighting its curved edge and the hamon (temper line). The hamon is a straight line of light-colored metal. Along this line, there are several small, dark, irregular spots. Three red arrows point from the text below to these spots. The blade's surface has a fine, repeating pattern of small ridges and grooves.

*chû-suguha*

The *hamon* is *chû-suguha* (straight) and these 'spots' are clusters of *nie* crystals called *yô* (leaves) as they appear to 'fall off' the hamon.

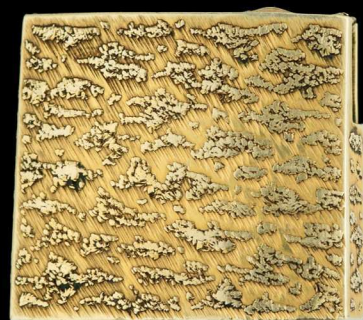
A close-up, diagonal view of a sword blade. The blade is dark with intricate, light-colored patterns. A prominent feature is a series of light, wavy, horizontal bands that resemble a mountain range or a series of peaks, known as mokume-hada. Below these bands, there are darker, more complex, swirling patterns. The lighting is dramatic, with a bright, curved highlight along the top edge of the blade, creating a strong contrast with the dark background.

An island of *mokume-hada* beacons.

chocolatety swirls of *chikei*.



Shirasaya  
(protective scabbard)



gold habaki with  
Botan-Yûjô file marks

*Kuro-ishime-ji-nuri saya  
uchigatana-koshirae*  
(黒石目地塗鞘打刀拵)

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

Crafted during the  
Late Edo period  
(1780~1867)

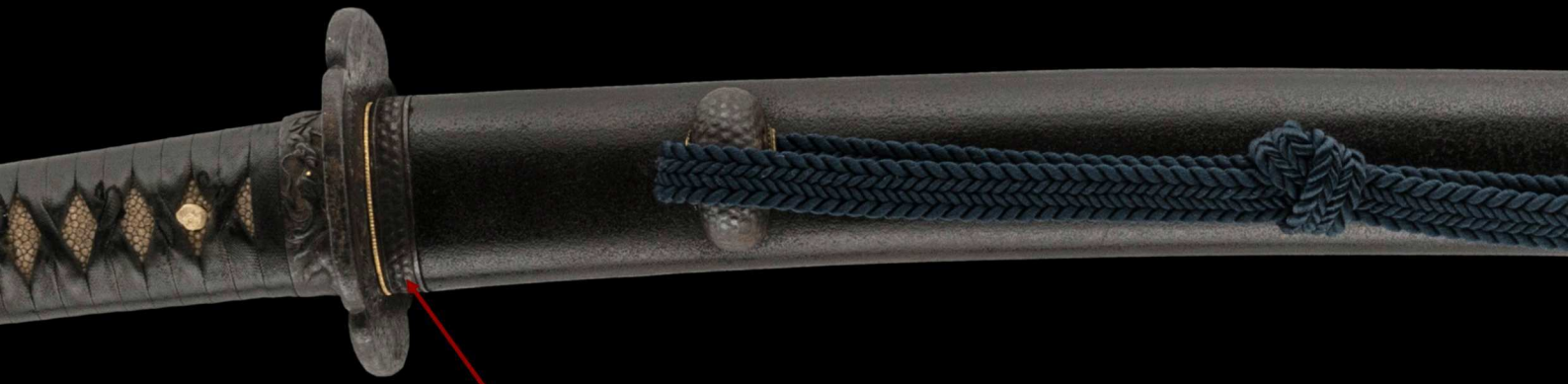


NTHK-NPO Kanteisho  
Certificate of Authenticity

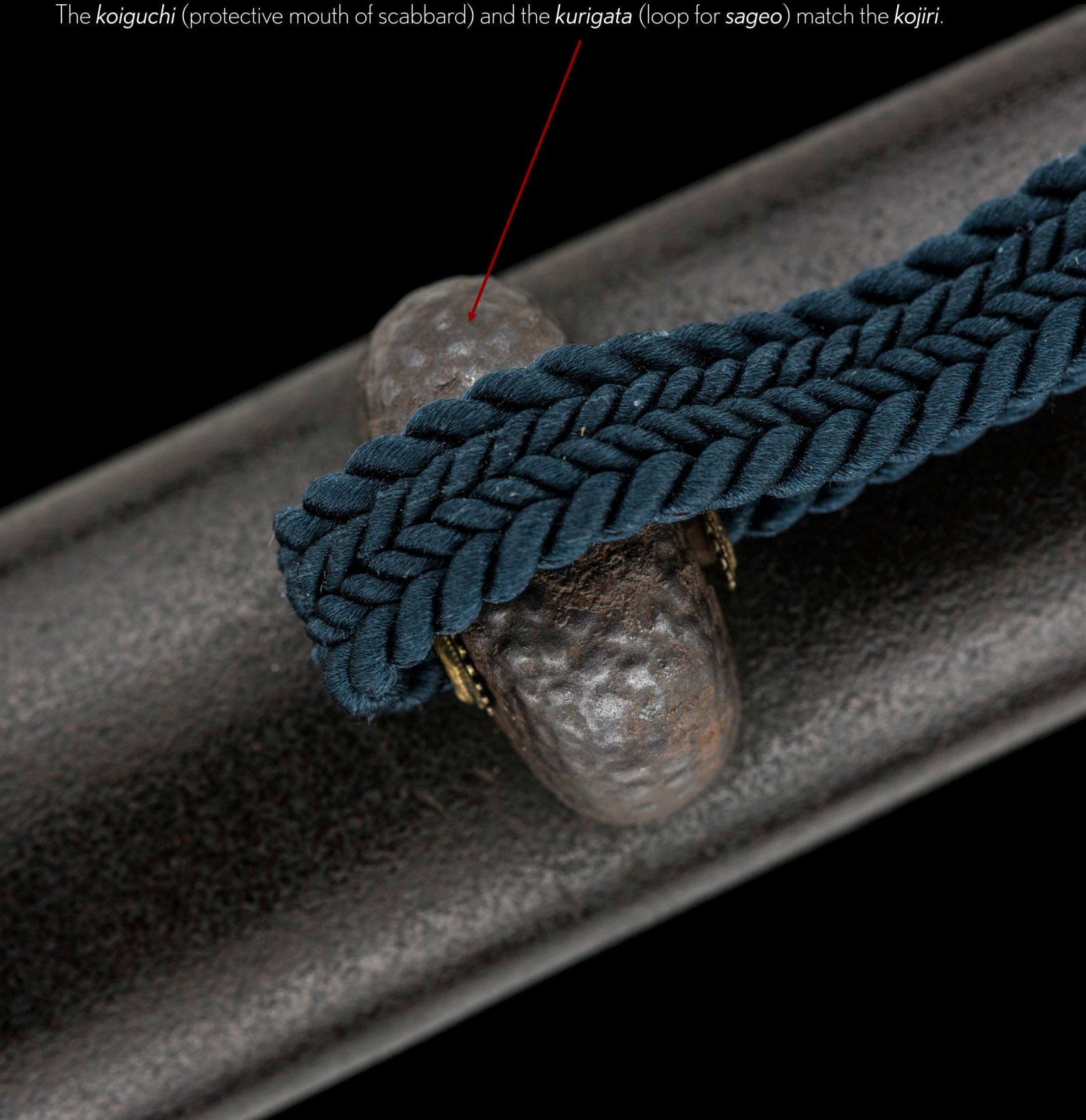


A protective solid iron *kojiri* (butt end scabbard).  
A weapon in its own right.





The *koiguchi* (protective mouth of scabbard) and the *kurigata* (loop for *sageo*) match the *kojiri*.



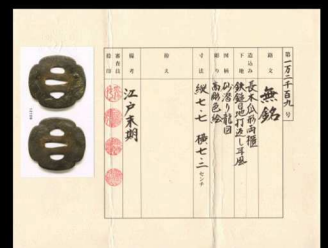
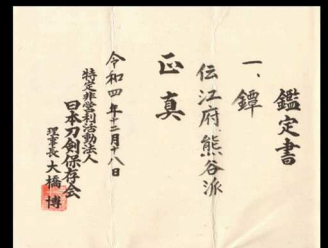


Behold a rather mysterious *mokkô-gata* (multiple lobed) hammered iron tsuba with gold accents that features a *sunamoguri-ryû* theme by which a dragon lurks in the sand.

This tsuba personifies the quintessential rustic *wabi-sabi* essence of Japanese art.

*Kumagai* school from Edo (Tokyo).

NTHK-NPO Kanteisho certification  
Late Edo period, circa 1780~1867





Through the darkness, I emerge.



*fuchi* (hilt collar)



*kôryû no zu* (water dragon)



*Kashira* (pommel)

The water dragon is hungry...

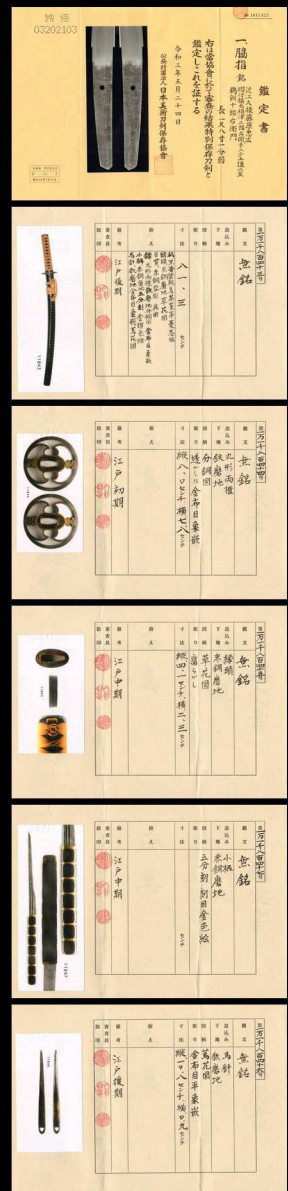


Rain dragon *menuki*, on the lookout.  
Uniquely wrapped in linen over a base of antique *samekawa* (ray skin).





Koshirae bag



SOLD, reference only

ujwa256  
*A Tadahiro Wakizashi*  
 with body cutting test

Length: 54.8cm  
 NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon  
 & NTHK-NPO certificates



Saki-kasane: 3.4mm

Moto-kasane: 6.3mm

Omosa: 500g

Kissaki: 3.52cm

Saki-haba: 2.08cm

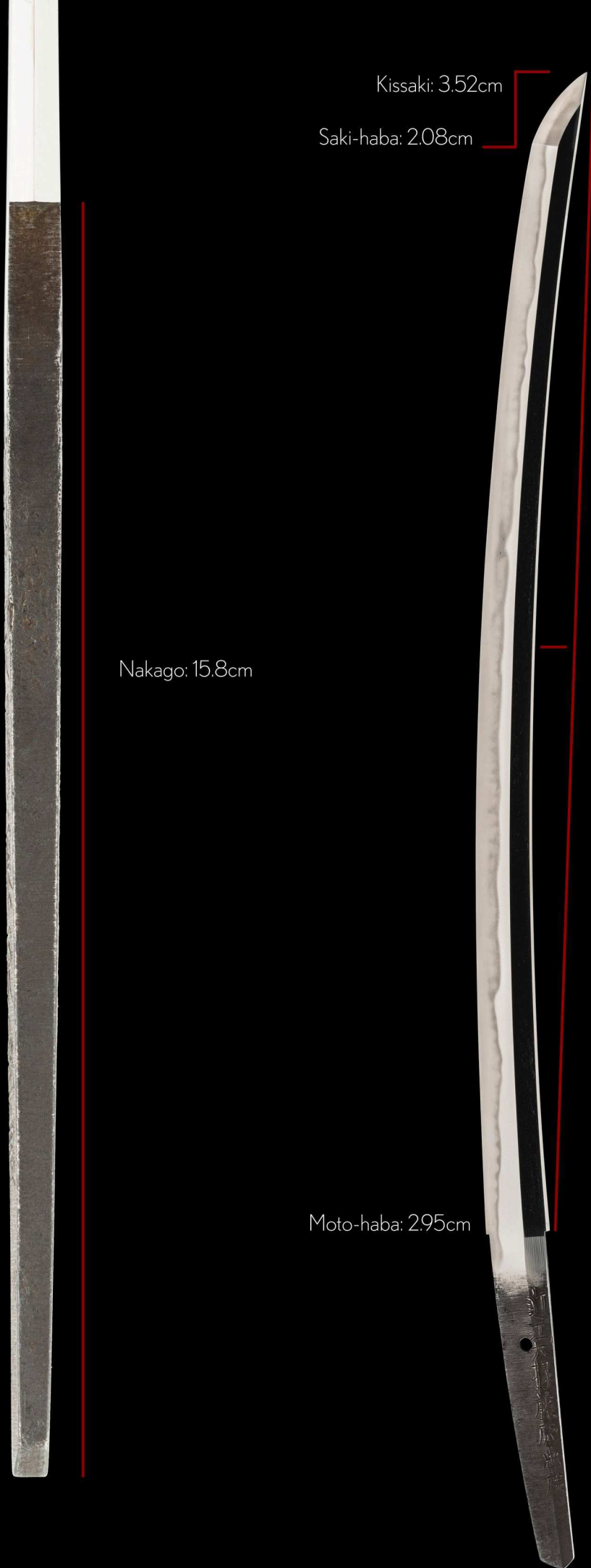
Nakago: 15.8cm

Moto-haba: 2.95cm

Nagasa: 54.8cm

Sori: 1.67cm

Mekugi-ana: 1



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

Guided by his father and other great smiths such as shodai *Masahiro* and *Yoshinobu*, Tadahiro took over leadership of the school at the age of nineteen when his father died in 1632.

Tadahiro then changed his name from *Hashimoto Heishiro* to *Hashimoto Shinsaemon*. Curiously, it is understood that his new name appears on a family document pledging to the shogunate that the Hashimoto family would not sell swords for export to foreign countries.

As head of the Tadayoshi school, second generation Tadahiro always signed his name Tadahiro and never Tadayoshi. In July of 1641, only nine years after taking over the Tadayoshi School, he was given the honorific title of *Omi Daijō*. He was only 28.

Nidai Tadahiro died at the age of 81 in the sixth year of Genroku era or 1693. His works span an incredible 60 years. The sheer quantity and quality of his work makes him one of the most prized artisans, legendary among Hizen smiths. He is ranked *jōjō-saku*, a highly superior smith.

This long wakizashi features a rare *tameshigiri* cutting test in which two testers were involved, severing through the clavicle and chest of a convicted criminal and into the mound below.

The *hamon* (temper line) on the blade is a delightful *gunome choji-midare* and is housed in a fabulous Edo period koshirae that will light up any room. Sayagaki authentication by Dr. Satō Kanzan accompanies this unique piece of history.





Location: *Hizen province*

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

Family name: *Fujiwara*

Swordsmith: *Tadahiro* (second generation)

*ubu-nakago* (original, unaltered tang)

*sujikai-yasurime* (diagonal file marks)

近 (Ô)

江 (mi)

大 (Dai)

掾 (jô)

藤 (Fuji)

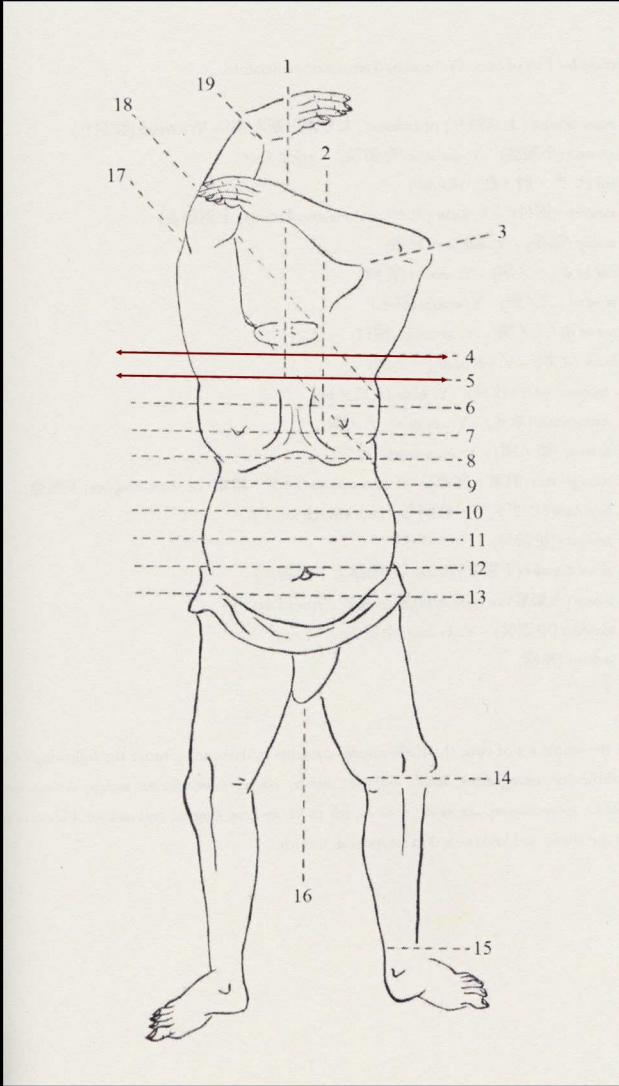
原 (wara)

忠 (Tada)

廣 (hiro)

Suritsuke wakige Nezu Saburôbei tenite dodan ni itaru Ukai Jûrôemon

Sword testers *Nezu Saburôbei* and *Ukai Jûrôemon* tested this blade severing [in one stroke] both through the clavicle and the chest of a human body into the mound below.



(waki) 脇	摺 (Suri)
(ge) 毛	付 (tsuke)
(U) 鶺鴒	
(kai) 飼	根 (Ne)
(jû) 十	津 (zu)
(rô) 郎	三 (Sabu)
(') 右	郎 (rô)
(e) 衛	兵 (be)
(mon) 門	衛 (i)
(te) 手	
(ni) 二	
(te) テ	
(do) 土	
(dan) 壇	
(ni) 二	
(itaru) 至	



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No 1015425



公益財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協会

令和三年五月二十四日

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

一脇指 銘

近江大掾藤原忠広  
摺付脇毛根津三郎兵衛手ニテ土壇ニ至  
鵜飼十郎右衛門

長一尺八寸一分弱

鑑定書

兵庫県 教育委員会  
第 151 号  
昭和26年7月27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, Wakizashi

Mei (signature)

Ômi DaijÔ Fujiwara Tadahiro

Suritsuke wakige Nezu Saburôbei tenite dodan ni itaru

Ukai Jûrô'emon

Nagasa (length)

1-shaku 8-sun 1-bu jaku (54.8cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai  
(NBTHK)



肥前国近江大掾藤原忠廣

*Hizen no Kuni Ômi Daijô Fujiwara Tadahiro*

Ômi Daijô Fujiwara Tadahiro from Hizen province

摺付脇毛根津鵜飼某々兩人截断切付銘丁子乱見事也

*Suritsuke wakige Nezu Ukai daresore ryônin setsudan*

*kiritsuke-mei chôji-midare migoto nari*

[This blade was] tested by Nezu and Ukai severing through the clavicle and the chest and has great *chôji-midare hamon*

刃長壹尺八寸壹分有之

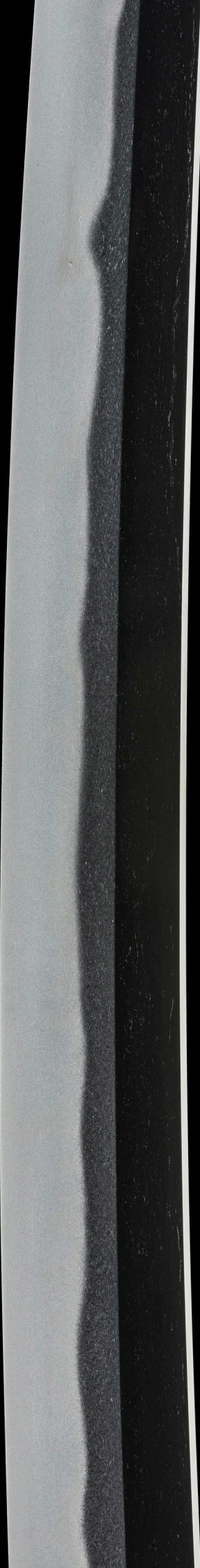
*Hachô 1-shaku 8-sun 1-bu kore ari*

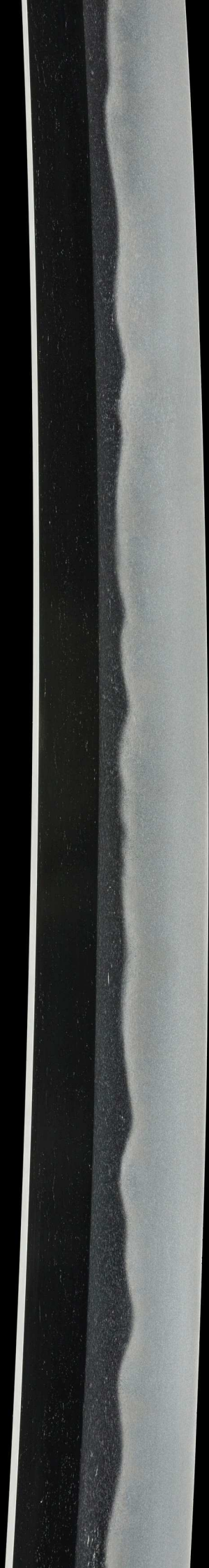
Blade length ~ 54.8 cm

昭和辛亥年夏日寒山誌「花押」

*Shôwa kanoto-idoshi natsubi Kanzan shirusu + kâô*

Written by Kanzan [Satô Kan'ichi] in a summer day of the year of the boar of Shôwa era (1971) + monogram





Gorgeous view of the *konuka-hada*.


The steel on well-crafted swords have a 'wet' appearance as we see here.





An absolutely brilliant  
*gunome chôji-midare hamon*  
illuminates the blade.

The majority of swords  
crafted by nidai Tadahiro  
feature a straight (*suguha*)  
hamon making this piece a  
veritable treat for the eyes.

A close-up photograph of two curved blades, likely made of metal, set against a dark background. The blades are positioned diagonally, with one in the foreground and another slightly behind it. Both blades exhibit a distinct, textured surface that resembles a fine, repetitive pattern, possibly a decorative or functional finish. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the curves and the texture of the blades, while the rest of the scene is in deep shadow.

The *omote* side of the blade features a slightly thicker *nioguchi* that resembles freshly fallen snow.



*Shirasaya*  
(protective scabbard)



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

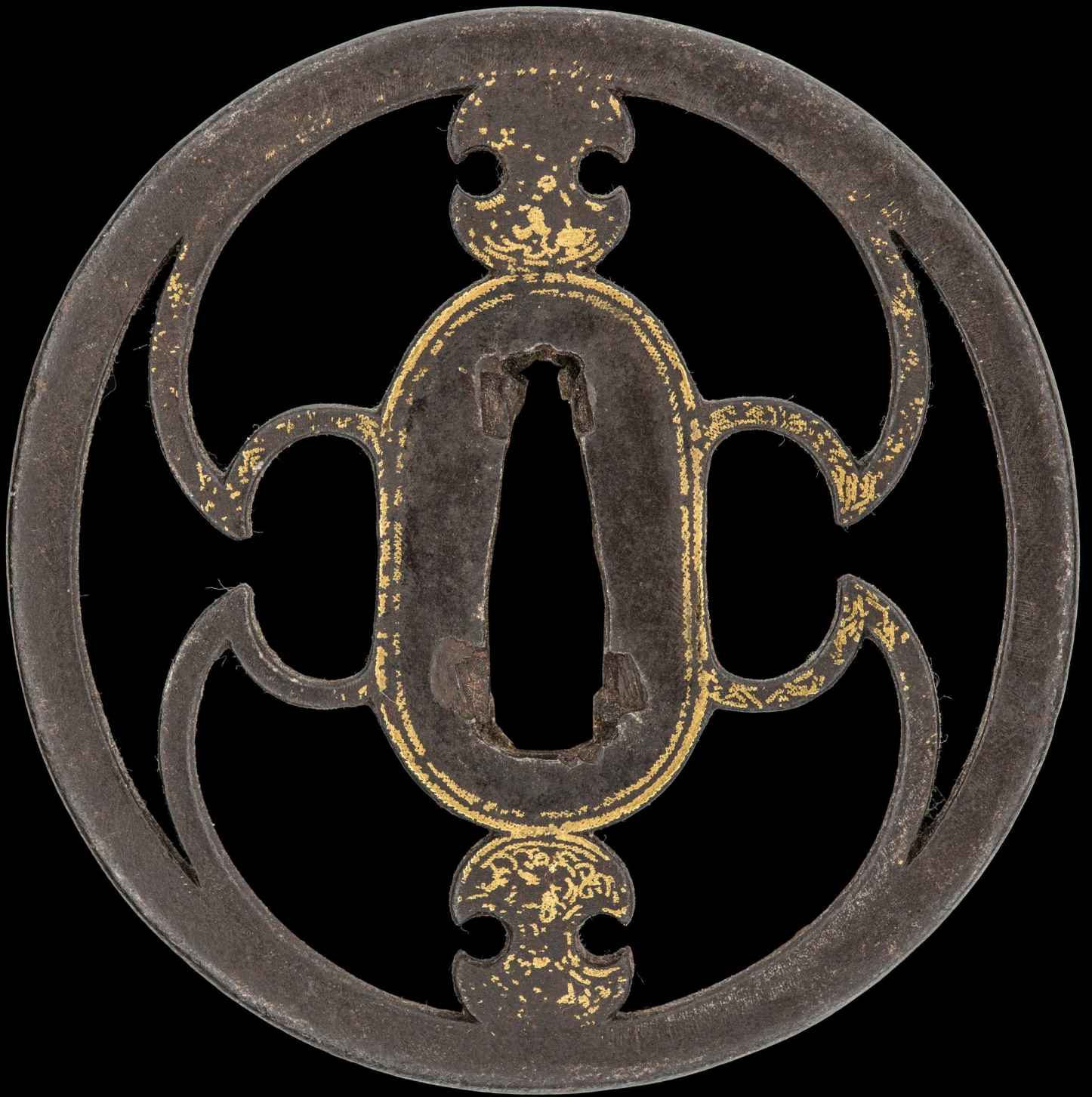
*Gobu-kizami kuro-ro-nuri saya*  
*Higo uchigatana-koshirae*  
(五分刻黒呂塗鞘肥後打刀拵)

*Higo style uchigatana-koshirae*  
*with saya ribbed every 5-bu*  
*lacquered in glossy black*

Crafted during the  
Late Edo period  
(1780~1867)



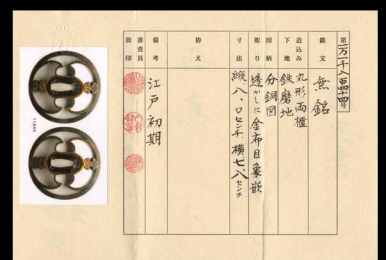
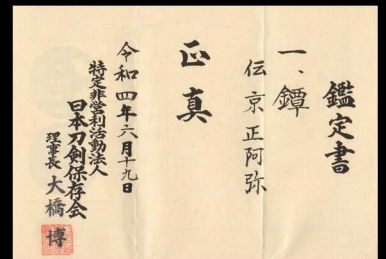
NTHK-NPO Kanteisho  
Certificate of Authenticity



This is a wonderful polished iron tsuba attributed to the *Shôami* school, crafted some 350-400 years ago.

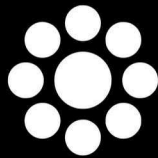
The unique design depicts an old-fashioned scale to measure weight. Traces of gold criss-cross *nunome-zogan* design pattern can be seen on the iron.

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





(Edo period scale)



The kashira features *kuyô-mon*, the nine-planet family crest that was first adopted by the powerful daimyô family leader *Hosokawa Tadaoki* (1563-1646).



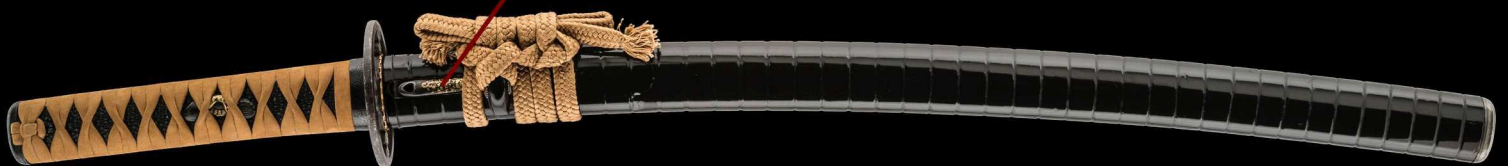
*Fuchi-kashira*  
attributed to  
*Misumi school* from *Higo province*  
(1700s)

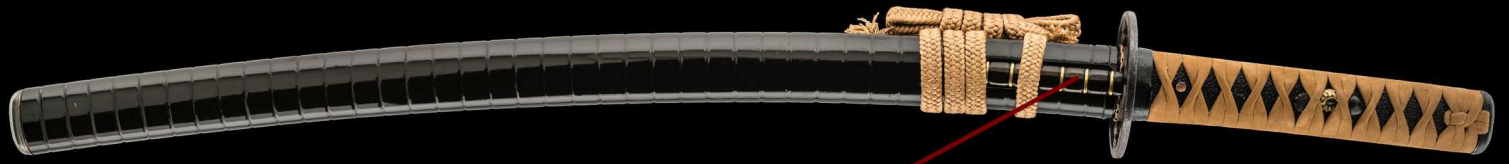


## *Bashin*

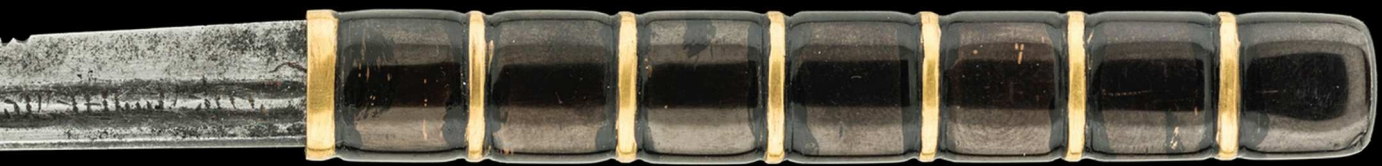
Lit. "horse needle." Was worn - if at all - instead of a *kozuka* or *kôgai* on the saya; the bashin was originally designed to ease a horses' blood congestion after a very long ride by *bloodletting*; later the bashin had more an ornamental character and were mostly worn to a *Higo-koshirae*.

The term bashin can also be read as *umabari*.





ribbed design, in polished *shakudô*



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

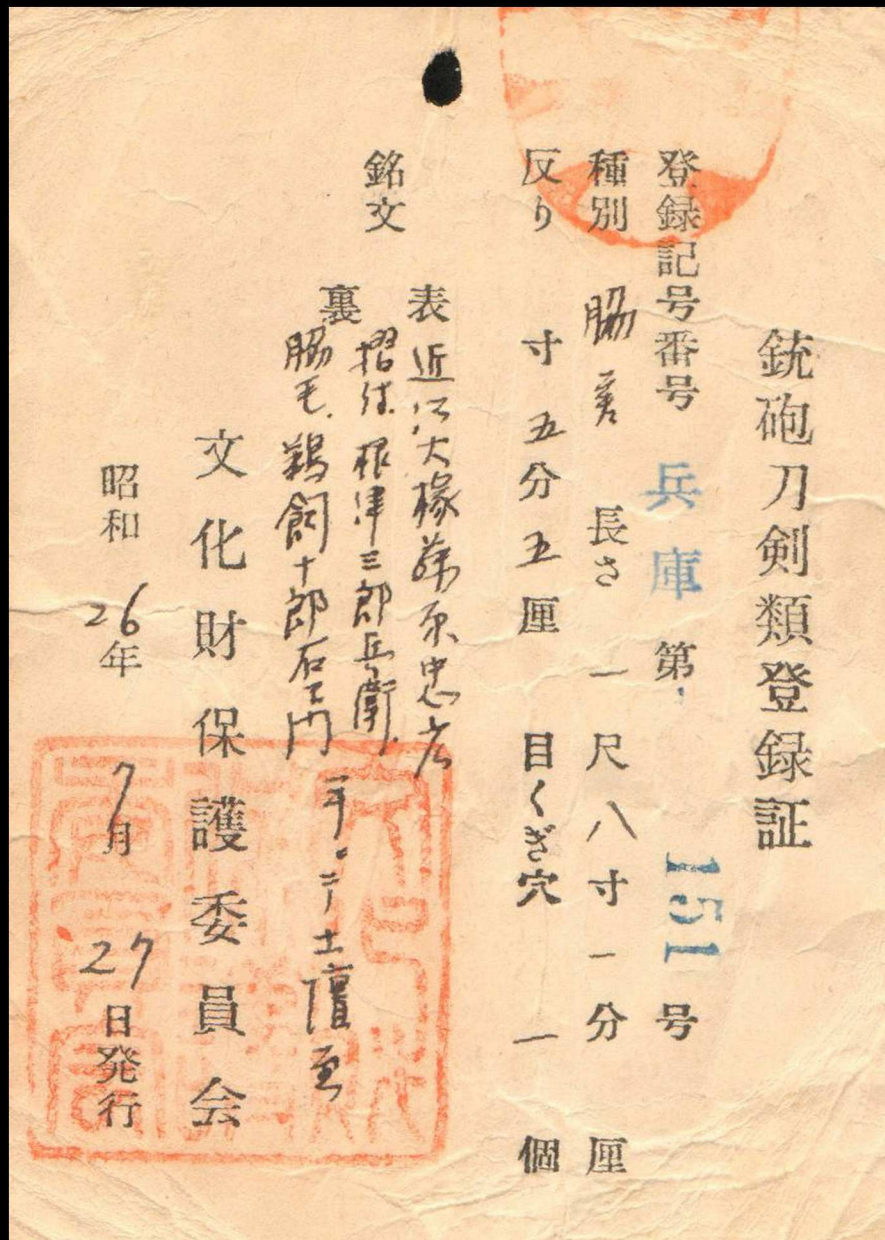
It is fastened into a special notch built inside the *saya* (scabbard) and drawn through the 'bumpy' hole in the *tsuba*.





*Menuki* (decorative grips on the hilt) carry seashell theme. This choice of *menuki* pays homage to the open sea as *Hizen* province is one of nine islands in *Kyûshû*.





This is the original *torokusho* (registration card) for the *Tadahiro wakizashi*.  
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 **151**, one of the very first swords registered in Japan.



Congratulations Jonathan.

Warm regards,  
Pablo

# ARIGATO!

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



*Nelson (6) and his sister Hannah who turns 16 on March 2nd (time flies!)  
Photo taken at the Tower Hill tube station, London.*

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