



JAPANESE  
SWORD  
CATALOGUE 41

**ALL SOLD!**

(COVER PHOTO)

ITEM# UJKA431  
A TADAYOSHI KATANA (4TH GEN.)  
MID-EDO PERIOD (1700~1704)  
NBTHK TOKUBETSU HOZON TÔKEN  
WITH KESA-OTOSHI BODY CUTTING TEST  
& SPIDER FUCHI DEVOURING A HORNET

RELEASED:  
JUNE 20/2024

# ANTIQUE JAPANESE SWORDS FOR SALE (VOLUME 41)

RELEASED: JUNE 20, 2024

THE FOLLOWING PAGES CONTAIN DESCRIPTIONS AND IMAGES OF GENUINE ANTIQUE JAPANESE SWORDS THAT WERE SOLD IN CATALOGUE 41. THIS IS A REFERENCE DOCUMENT.

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

THANK YOU,



PABLO KUNTZ  
FOUNDER, UNIQUE JAPAN

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Hi everyone, all good?

Thank you for downloading Catalogue 41. I hope all dads out there had a memorable Father's Day. I spent a good portion of the day working out at the gym with my son Lennon (he is now 15 and about 6'1), and getting stronger by the minute. The thing about YouTube is that he can research his favourite gurus and build this full-on routine with surgeon-like knowledge of all the muscle groups, etc. When I was younger (and I'm sure many of you can relate), we just picked up weights and just hacked away. Well I'm still sore, but we had a great time!

I wish to thank my assistants *Ayumu Ogusu* and *Yuki Ando* and my keen proofreader *Yvan* plus our killer photographer *Eric Bossick* for their hard work and dedication in the production of this catalogue.

We kick off the catalogue with a katana by *nidai Kunisuke* who is known as *Naka-Kawachi*. The NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon certificate dates this katana to the *Shôhô* era (1644~1648), making it one of Kunisuke's very earliest works to collect. Lovely *jihada*, great *hataraki*, and a charming *koshirae* featuring a gorgeous *Owari tsuba* and the thieving demon *Shôshitsuki* and the speedy deity *Idaten!*

Next we have a katana by *Hôjôji Masateru* that is dated to August 1682 during the *Tenna* era. Masateru first studied under *shodai Hôjôji Masahiro* and then second generation swordsmith *Kinmichi* in *Kyôto* granting him permission to sign with a chrysanthemum on the *nakago*. The *hamon* has thick comet-like *nioguchi* that is impressive under the light. It also comes brilliant theme of rain and cloud dragons on the *koshirae*, perfectly timed as 2024 is the Year of the Dragon. I think this is a terrific sword for a first time (or seasoned) collector.

An incredibly long *ubu-nakago* katana by *Shizumoto* from the *Taira-Takada* school follows. I love this piece. It has a cutting edge of, wow, 81cm. It dates back nearly 500-years ago to August 1533 and we know that the blade was originally created for patron *Gotô Tôgorô* of the powerful *Ôtomo* clan. This is a masterwork among the known works of Shizumoto - a rare and collectible katana from the late Muromachi period with a terrific set of Edo-period *koshirae*.

We then move on to the most prestigious sword of the catalogue a *naginata-naoshi* katana attributed to *Bizen Osafune Yoshikage*, master of the *naginata*. It was crafted in the early 1300s and later preserved into a katana, a process known as *naginata-naoshi*. This katana is certified *Tokubetsu Jûyô Tôken*, the highest rank at the NBTHK. What makes this sword quite remarkable, is that it serves as transition-point in the career of Yoshikage. On the *ura* side of the blade is Yoshikage's early works (similar to *Chikakage*) in that it is composed of smaller elements, a more-exacting *midare-ba* and with hardening in *ko-nie deki*. However, the *omote*-side displays a forging structure in *itame* that is accompanied by a *midare-utsuri* and a flamboyant hardening in a *chôji*-based *midareba*, and plenty of *kinsuji* and *sunagashi* in the *Chôgi* and *Sôden-Bizen* tradition. It is a wonderful sword to study and one where Yoshikage pays respect to his previous style while embracing a new chapter in his working life as a smith. This is a sword worthy of display in any museum.

For those seeking a *tameshigiri* (cutting-test) sword, look to the *yondai Tadayoshi* who was a superior swordsmith from the prestigious *Tadayoshi* school in Hizen province. This is an extremely sharp and powerful katana that was tested on December 19, 1800 by *Nagasaka Miki Katsuhide* severing diagonally through a human body from the base of the shoulder through to the opposite armpit - a vicious test known as *kesa-otoshi*. A brilliant middle Edo-period *kizami* (sectioned) *koshirae* accompanies the sword with a wickedly attractive *fuchi-kashira* and *menuki* set from the *Tetsugendo* school that features a predatory spider devouring his hornet nemesis. This sword gets the juices flowing!

Our sixth sword is by *Hizen Masashige* who after studying under grandmaster swordsmith *Inoue Shinkai* returned home in Hizen with the name *Shinryô*. This rare and handsome katana is forged with a mixture of *masame* and *ko-itame-hada*. Under the light, the sword bursts open with a beautifully bright *gunome-midare hamon* with eye-catching *sunagashi*.

A long and powerful katana attributed to *Kanabô Masatsugu* shows exactly why *Kanabô* swords were prized among samurai warriors as dependable battle-tested blades. Its hefty and impressive *nagasa* of 74.7cm is dominated with a *ô-kissaki* that is just shy of 10cm (4 inches) in length. Wonderful straight-grain *masame-hada* with wood-grain pools of *mokume-hada* and loads of *sunagashi* fill this dynamic blade. This is a sword that will stand tall in anyone's *nihonto* collection.

The next piece is a brilliant katana attributed to *Kashû Sanekage* from *Kaga* province who was inspired by grandmaster *Norishige*. It is a wide, stout and very sharp sword with a definite *Soshû* energy that abounds with a vibrant *gunome-midare hamon* incorporating plenty of *ji-nie*, glorious *chikei* and spectacular amounts of *sunagashi*.

Our final two swords are sold reference pieces that includes an extremely rare *Tokubetsu Jûyô naginata-naoshi* katana attributed to the illustrious Kamakura period *Fukuoka-Ichimonji school* with *origami* from 1714 by *Hon'ami Kôchû* and a cutting test katana by *Koyama Munetsugu* with a special custom *koshirae* that we built for the client. By the way, for those seeking shorter swords, we have some *tantos* and *wakizashis* coming up, please inquire to learn about them.

Thank you for all your passion, trust and confidence. We look forward to serving you.

Have a great summer!



Pablo Kuntz  
June 2024



*Nelson's 2024 Father's Day card!*

## INDEX OF JAPANESE SWORDS

ITEM#	SWORDSMITH & TYPE	CM	CERTIFICATE	ERA / PERIOD	PRICE
<a href="#">ujka435</a>	A KUNISUKE KATANA	70.0	Tokubetsu Hozon	Shôhō (1644~1648)	<b>SOLD</b>
<a href="#">ujka436</a>	A MASATERU KATANA	70.7	Tokubetsu Hozon	Tenna (Aug 1682)	<b>SOLD</b>
<a href="#">ujka437</a>	A SHIZUMOTO KATANA	81.0	Tokubetsu Hozon	Tenbun (Aug 1533)	<b>SOLD</b>
<a href="#">ujka430</a>	A YOSHIKAGE KATANA	69.5	Tokubetsu Jûyô	Kenmu (1334~1338)	<b>SOLD</b>
<a href="#">ujka431</a>	A TADAYOSHI KATANA	66.7	Tokubetsu Hozon	Genroku (1688~1700)	<b>SOLD</b>
<a href="#">ujka443</a>	A MASASHIGE KATANA	70.5	Tokubetsu Hozon	Enpô (1673~1679)	<b>SOLD</b>
<a href="#">ujka444</a>	A MASATSUGU KATANA	74.7	NBTHK Hozon	Eiroku (1558~1570)	<b>SOLD</b>
<a href="#">ujka446</a>	A SANEKAGE KATANA	64.8	Tokubetsu Hozon	Jôji (1362~1368)	<b>SOLD</b>
<a href="#">ujka425</a>	A FUKUOKA-ICHIMONJI N/N	70.1	Tokubetsu Jûyô	Kamakura (mid-1200s)	<b>SOLD</b>
<a href="#">ujka404</a>	A MUNETSUGU KATANA	63.3	Tokubetsu Hozon	Tempo (Aug 1841)	<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>

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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.

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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

What could be finer than a *daishô*? How about a *tri-shô*!

Featured here is a katana by *Nidai Tadatsuna*, a wakizashi by *shintô* grandmaster *Shigekuni* and a *tantô* by *Aoe Sadatsugu* that is dated to August 1333. Unique Japan built a matching set of gorgeous koshirae with *Byakudan-nuri* (peony-design) for the client with *sayagaki* services from *Tanobe-sensei*.



Recently completed custom koshirae project by Unique Japan!



# CURRENTLY AVAILABLE JAPANESE SWORDS

RELEASED: JUNE 20, 2024 TO VIP CLIENTS ONLY

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PLEASE CONTACT ME AT [SERVICE@UNIQUEJAPAN.COM](mailto:SERVICE@UNIQUEJAPAN.COM) FOR FURTHER IMAGES AND INFORMATION INTO ITEMS OF INTEREST.

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SWORDS MAY BE PURCHASED OVER A NUMBER OF MONTHS IF REQUIRED, PLEASE INQUIRE FOR DETAILS. DESCRIPTIONS AND AVAILABILITY ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE.

THANK YOU,



PABLO KUNTZ  
FOUNDER, UNIQUE JAPAN

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ITEM# UJKA435

## A KUNISUKE KATANA

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

<b>Swordsmith:</b>	<i>Kawachi no Kami Fujiwara Kunisuke (2nd gen, Settsu province)</i>		
<b>Measurements:</b>	<b>Length:</b> 70.0cm ( <i>ubu</i> )	<b>Curvature:</b> 1.52cm	<b>Moto-haba:</b> 3.03cm
<b>Jihada:</b>	<i>Vibrant mix of itame-hada and mokume-hada with ji-nie and plentiful chikei</i>		
<b>Hamon:</b>	<i>Bright suguha with a gentle wave with sunagashi, kinsuji and hakikake bôshi</i>		
<b>Certificate #1:</b>	<b>NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon</b> (Especially Worthy of Preservation)		
<b>Certificate #2-4:</b>	<b>NTHK-NPO Kanteishô</b> ( <i>koshirae, fk and tsuba certified as Authentic</i> )		
<b>Fujishiro rank:</b>	<b>Jô-saku</b> ( <i>ranked as a superior swordsmith</i> )		
<b>Authentication:</b>	<b>Sayagaki by Nozomi-san</b> ( <i>shodô artist</i> )		
<b>Included:</b>	Shirasaya, Edo-koshirae, fabric bags, stand, kit, printed description		

**SOLD**

This katana is the work of second generation swordsmith *Kawachi Kunisuke*, the biological son of *shodai Kunisuke*. Known as *Naka-Kawachi*, the NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon certificate dates this katana to the *shôhō* era (1644~1648), making it one of Kunisuke's very earliest works and collectible for this reason alone. The blade features a hamon based on *suguha* with a tight wave with loads of shining *ji-nie* and *hataraki* such as *sunagashi* and *kinsuji*. There is a certain calm quality exuding from this blade, encouraging one to take time with it. Its formal *uchigatana* black-lacquered Edo-period *koshirae* carries depictions of armour parts on the *fuchi-kashira* and the playful *menuki* features the thieving demon *Shôshitsuki* and the speedy deity *Idaten* chasing him with all his might! The *koshirae* also mounts a precious *tsuba* from the *Owari* school dating back four hundred years.



Saki-kasane: 4.3mm

Kissaki: 3.03cm

Saki-haba: 1.88cm

Moto-kasane: 7.1mm

Nagasa: 70.0cm

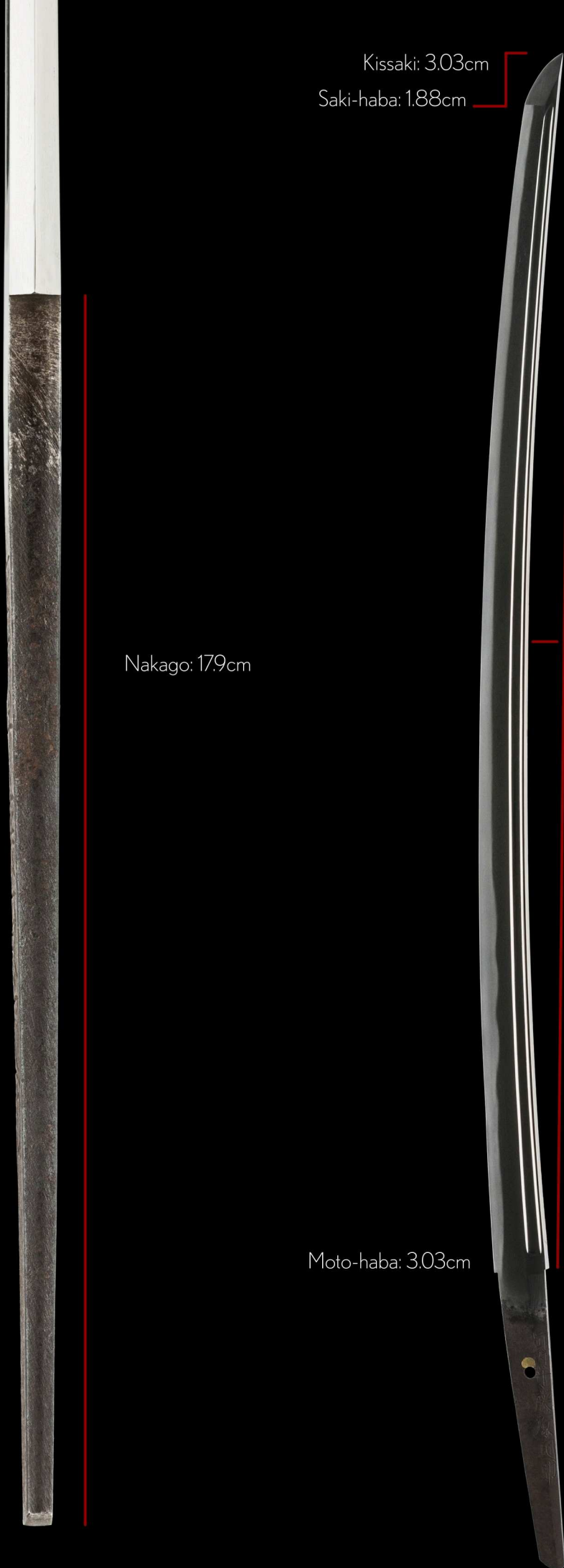
Nakago: 17.9cm

Sori: 1.52cm

Omosa: 635g

Moto-haba: 3.03cm

Mekugi-ana: 1



Born *Kobayashi Hachirô'emon*, this katana is the work of the highly talented second generation swordsmith *Kawachi Kunisuke*, the biological son of *shodai Kunisuke*. Known as *Naka-Kawachi* (middle Kawachi), he first signed as *Kunitora*, and enjoyed a long and celebrated career spanning over five decades in which he would go on to master the *Ko-Bizen* and *Ishido* school styles earning him the nickname *Shintô Ichimonji*. Kunisuke died in August 1698 in *Settsu* province, modern-day *Ôsaka*.

The NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon certificate dates this katana to the *shôhō* era (1644~1648), making it one of Kunisuke's very earliest works and collectible for this reason alone. The blade with two long *bo-hi* (grooves) that further lighten the blade features a *hamon* based on *suguha* with a tight wave with loads of shining *ji-nie* and *hataraki* such as *sunagashi* and *kinsuji*. This hamon pattern was normally seen in his younger years. What's beautiful to see are the large chisel strokes that make up his signature on the *nakago* - it shows such confidence for such a young man. Gorgeous dark lines of *chikei* are to be admired in the steel with a *bôshi* that sweeps with *hakikake*. There is a certain calm quality exuding from this blade, encouraging one to take time with it.

Its formal *uchigatana* black-lacquered Edo-period *koshirae* carries depictions of armour parts on the *fuchi-kashira* and the playful *menuki* showcase the thieving demon *Shôshitsuki* and the speedy deity *Idaten* chasing him with all his *vitesse* (!) - a fun story that will be explained later in this description.

The *koshirae* also proudly mounts a precious *tsuba* from the *Owari* school dating back four hundred years to the very early Edo period, maybe even original to the sword itself. This *tsuba* has been featured in the latest NTHK-NPO sword magazine and a copy of the article will be presented to the new owner.





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

Clan name: *Fujiwara*

Swordsmith: *Kunisuke* (second generation)

*ubu-nakago* (original, unaltered tang)

*sujikai-yasurime* (diagonal file marks)

河 (Kawa)

内 (chi, no)

守 (Kami)

藤 (Fuji)

原 (wara)

国 (Kuni)

助 (suke)

Thickly chiseled *mei* (signature).  
Shows confidence.



*Mei* stands out from above.



This extra hole on the nakago was filled in with gold.

The *nakagojiri* (butt-end of the tang) is rounded, similar to that of *kurijiri* (chestnut shaped) but the cutting edge side slants more steeply than the back (*mune* side).

*ha agari kurijiri nakagojiri*

特 保  
03202109

No 1017051



鑑定書

一 刀 銘 河内守藤原国助(三代正保頃)

長 二 尺 三 寸 一 分

右は當協會に於て審査の結果特別保存刀剣と  
鑑定しこれを証する

令和三年十二月三日

公益財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協會



奈良県 教育委員会  
第 3818 号  
昭和27年2月13日

## NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon Certificate of Designation

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

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

One, Katana

Mei (signature)

*Kawachi no Kami Fujiwara Kunisuke*  
(Nidai - Shôhō goro)

Nagasa (length)

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

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai  
(NBTHK)

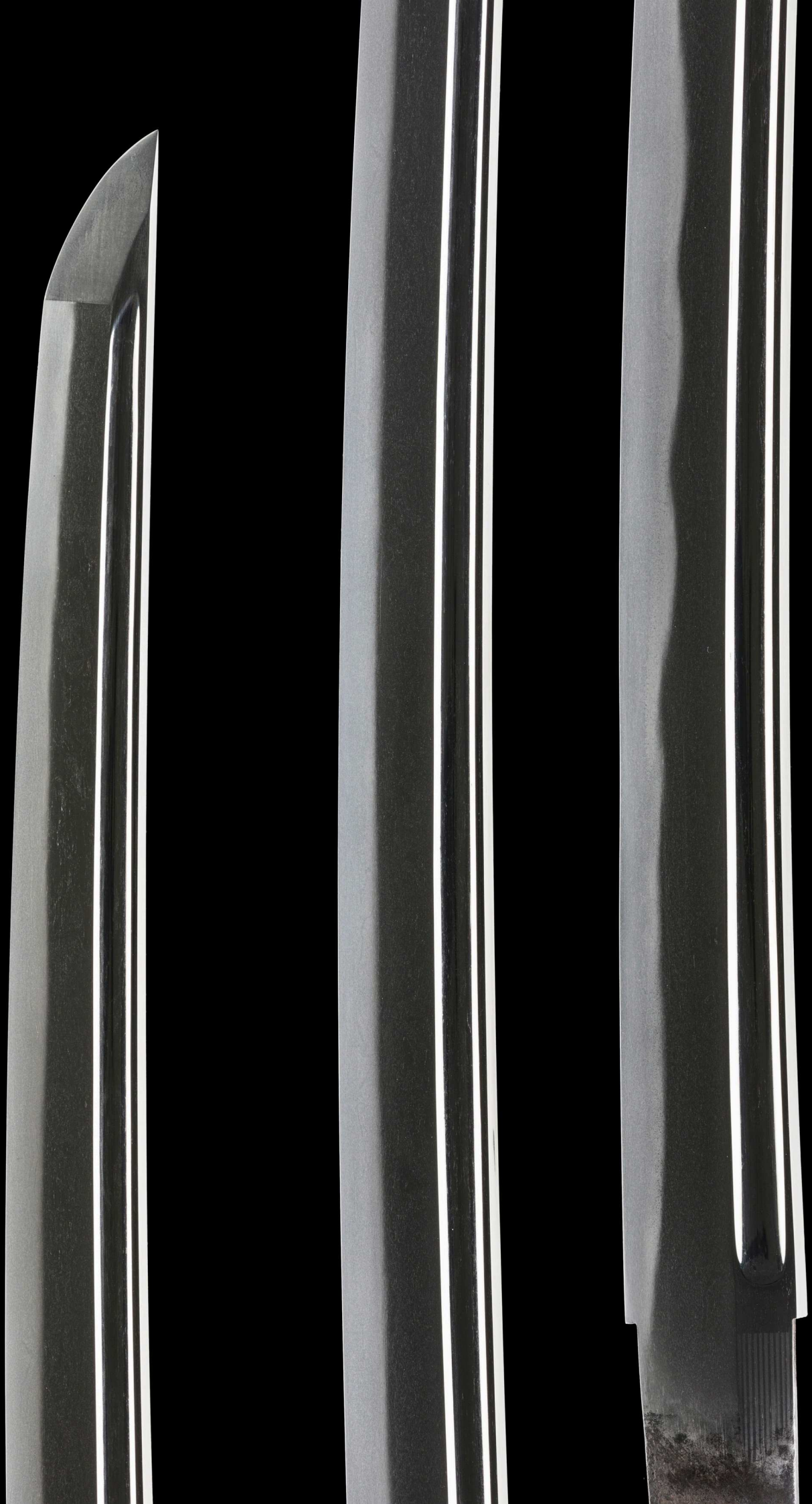


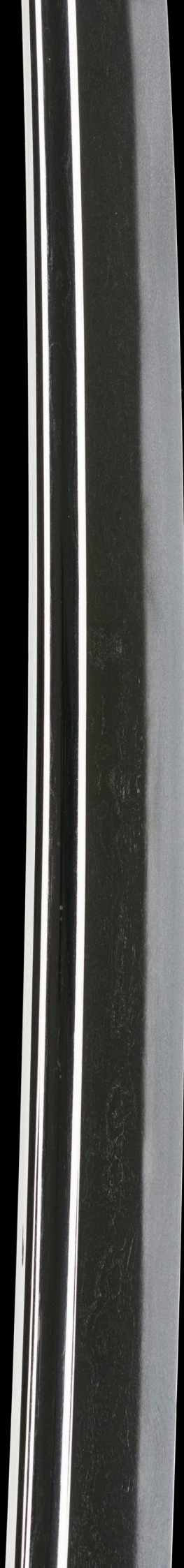
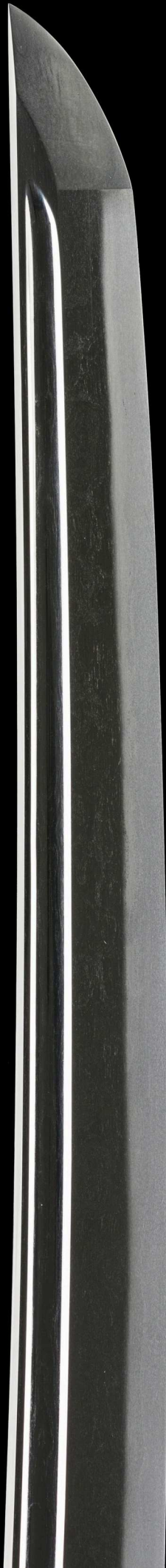
二代河内守藤原国助  
*Nidai Kawachi no Kami Fujiwara Kunisuke*  
Kawachi no Kami Fujiwara Kunisuke (second generation)

時代正保頃  
*Jidai Shôhō-goro*  
Circa Shôhō period (1644~1648)

刃長貳尺參寸一分有之  
*Hachô 2-shaku 3-sun 1-bu kore ari*  
Blade length 70.0 cm

令和六甲辰年弥生吉日誌之  
*Reiwa roku kinoe-tatsudoshi Yayoi kichijitsu kore o shirusu*  
Written on a lucky day in the third month in the sixth year of  
Reiwa era during the Year of the Dragon (March 2024).





The image shows two calligraphy brushes against a black background. The brushes are positioned diagonally, with their tips pointing towards the top right. The brush heads are made of dark hair and have a distinctive 'Hakikake boshi' tip, which is a wide, flat, and slightly curved shape. The metal ferrules are visible, connecting the brush heads to the dark wooden handles. The lighting highlights the texture of the hair and the metallic sheen of the ferrules.

*Hakikake boshi* (sweeping)

The hamon is based on *suguha* (straight) with a finely tuned wave giving the blade an air of prestige.



*kinsuji* ripping through the hamon



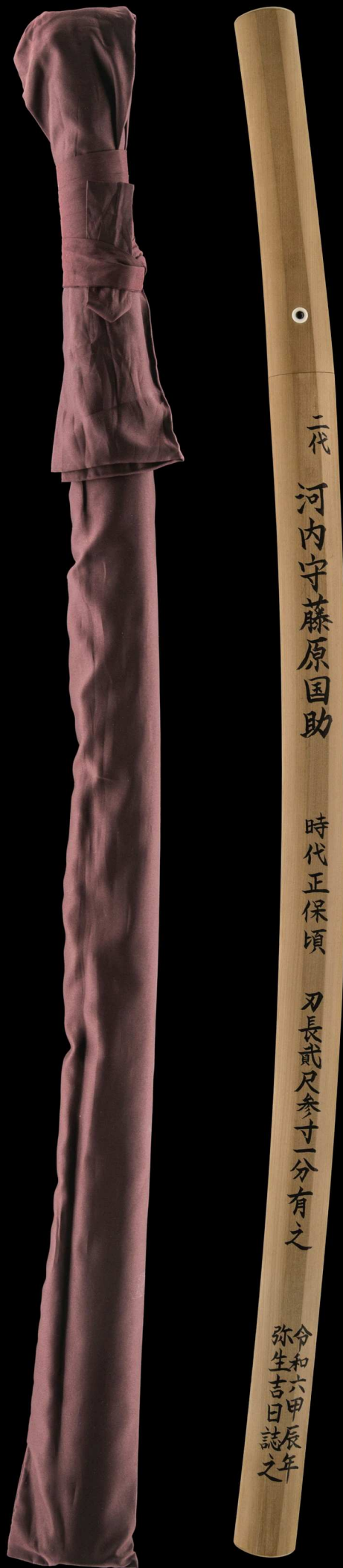
Good view of the *chikei* that  
carves its way through the body.



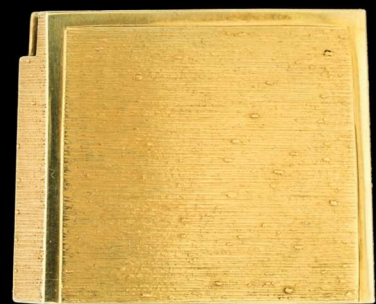
Glittering *ji-nie*.  
Shine on.



Appreciate life's moments.



*Shirasaya*  
(protective scabbard)

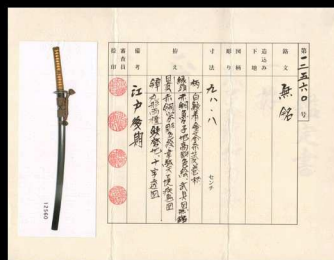


gold *habaki* with  
horizontal file marks in a  
picture frame motif

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

*Uchigatana-koshirae  
lacquered in glossy black*

Crafted during the  
Late Edo period  
(1780~1868)



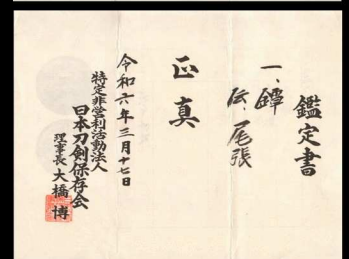
NTHK-NPO Kanteisho  
Certificate of Authenticity

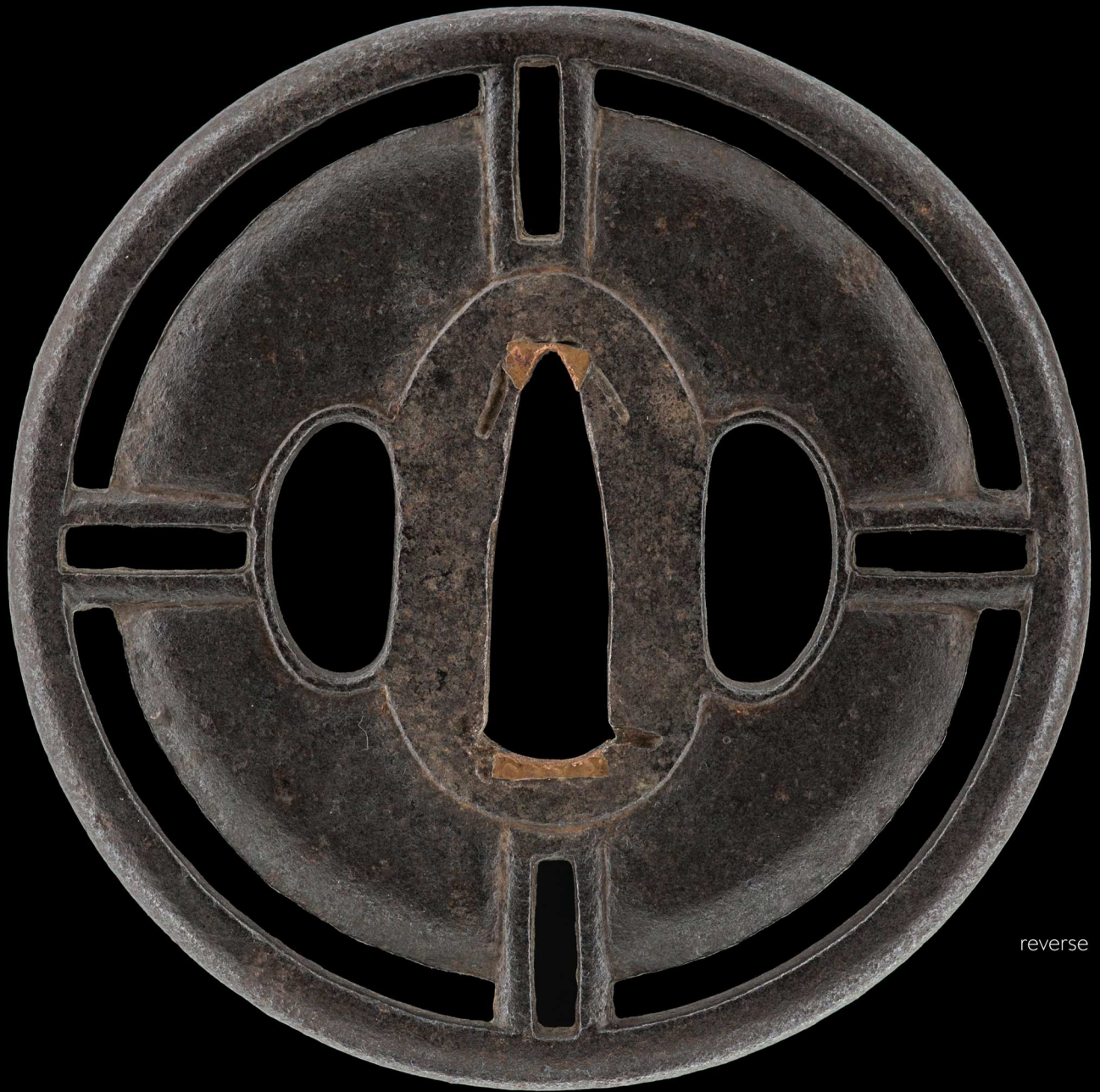


This wonderful tsuba has been attributed to the *Owari* school crafted in the early 1600s Edo period. It has been featured in the June 2024 NTHK-NPO magazine with the following remarks:

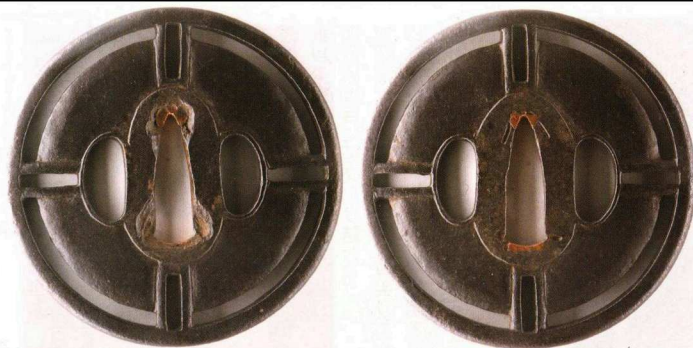
This *tsuba* has a thin openwork between the ground and the rim, a cross in the centre, and a border on both *hitsu-ana*. The ground is soft and rounded. The center is thick and thins towards the outside, which is the typical style of swordsmith tsuba loved by *bushi* (samurai). The base iron is well-forged and the openwork is carefully executed.

Even mounted on a *koshirae*, it is a piece of [art]work that never tires to the eye and has been carefully passed down through the generations.





reverse



一、鐺、無銘、伝、刀匠

造込み、丸形両櫃、下地、鉄磨地、彫り、地透かし、図柄、丸に十字図  
縦、6.7cm、横、6.5cm、耳、0.4cm 時代 江戸初期

此の鐺は地と耳の間に細い透かし、中央には十字透かし、両櫃に縁地残し、鍛地は柔らかそうで肉を持ち丸みがある。如何にも刀匠らしく中央あたりは肉を持ち、耳に向かって肉を落とす造込み、十字図を透かし、櫃の縁取りをして、耳と地の境目を細い輪透かしに造っている。武士好みの鐺で、地鉄も良く鍛えられ、透かしも丁寧。拵えに付けても、厭味が無く飽きの来ない作品で、大事に伝えられて来た事が窺えます。

NTHK-NPO June 2024 magazine article featuring this tsuba  
(a copy will be presented to the new owner of this sword)

*Fuchi-kashira*  
attributed to  
*Kaga Kuwamura Katsuhisa*  
(mid-Edo period 1700s)

Depicting samurai armour.



*kabuto* (helmet)

*do* (cuirass) &  
*kusazuri* (thigh covers)



*sode* (shoulder protection)

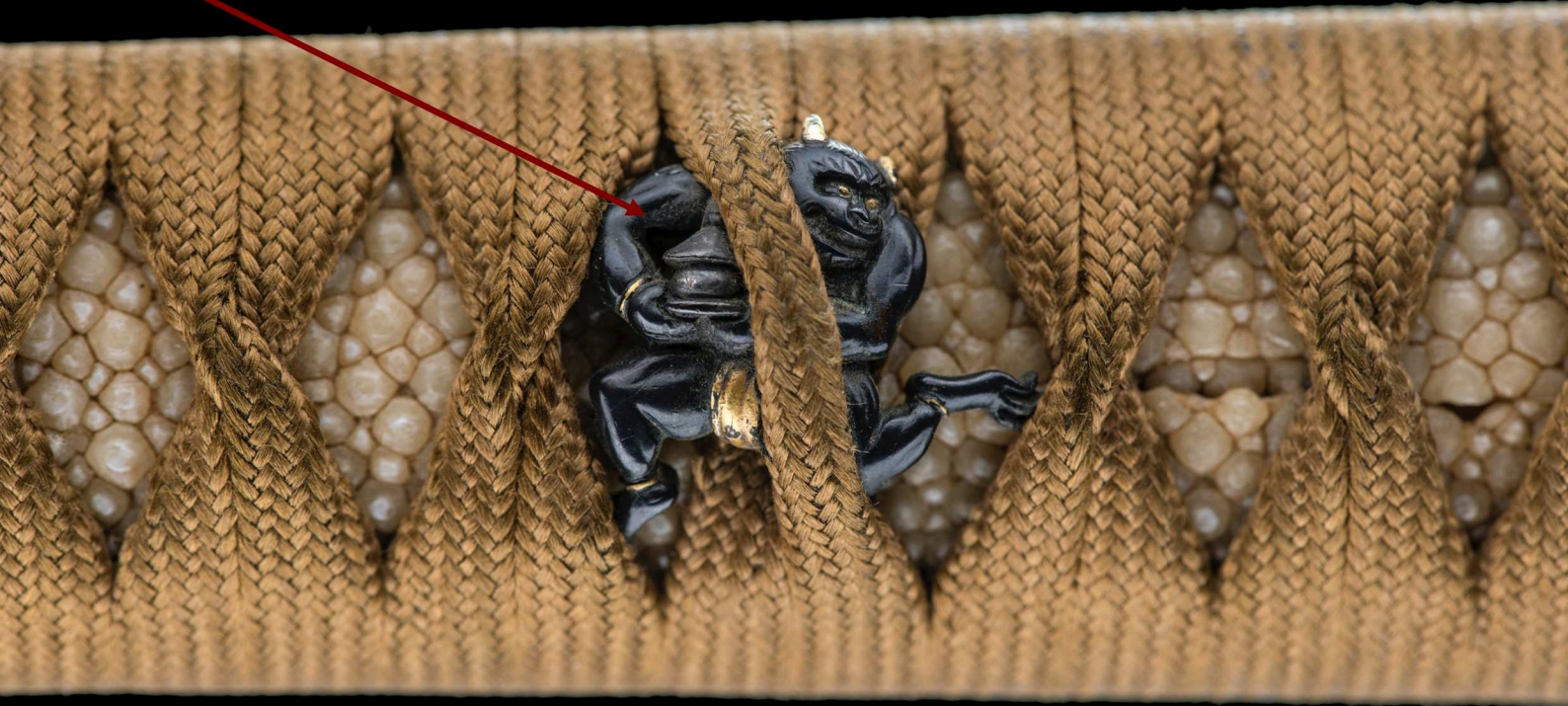




The thieving demon *Shôshitsuki* (below) and the speedy deity *Idaten* (above) are depicted wonderfully as *menuki*. Turn to the next page to learn the background story!



*Shôshitsuki* (evil demon)



When Lord Buddha died, a swift-footed demon called *Shôshitsuki* took the remains of Lord Buddha and fled to *Mount Shumi. Idate*, seeing this, chased it to the top of the mountain and in an instant, retrieved the remains without incident. Since he ran so far so fast, Idate became famous for his quickness on foot, giving rise to the term *Idaten run*. Due this origin story, Idate is said to run to remove evil obstacles whenever obstruction comes to spiritual progress, and is thus worshipped as a guardian deity at places of worship.



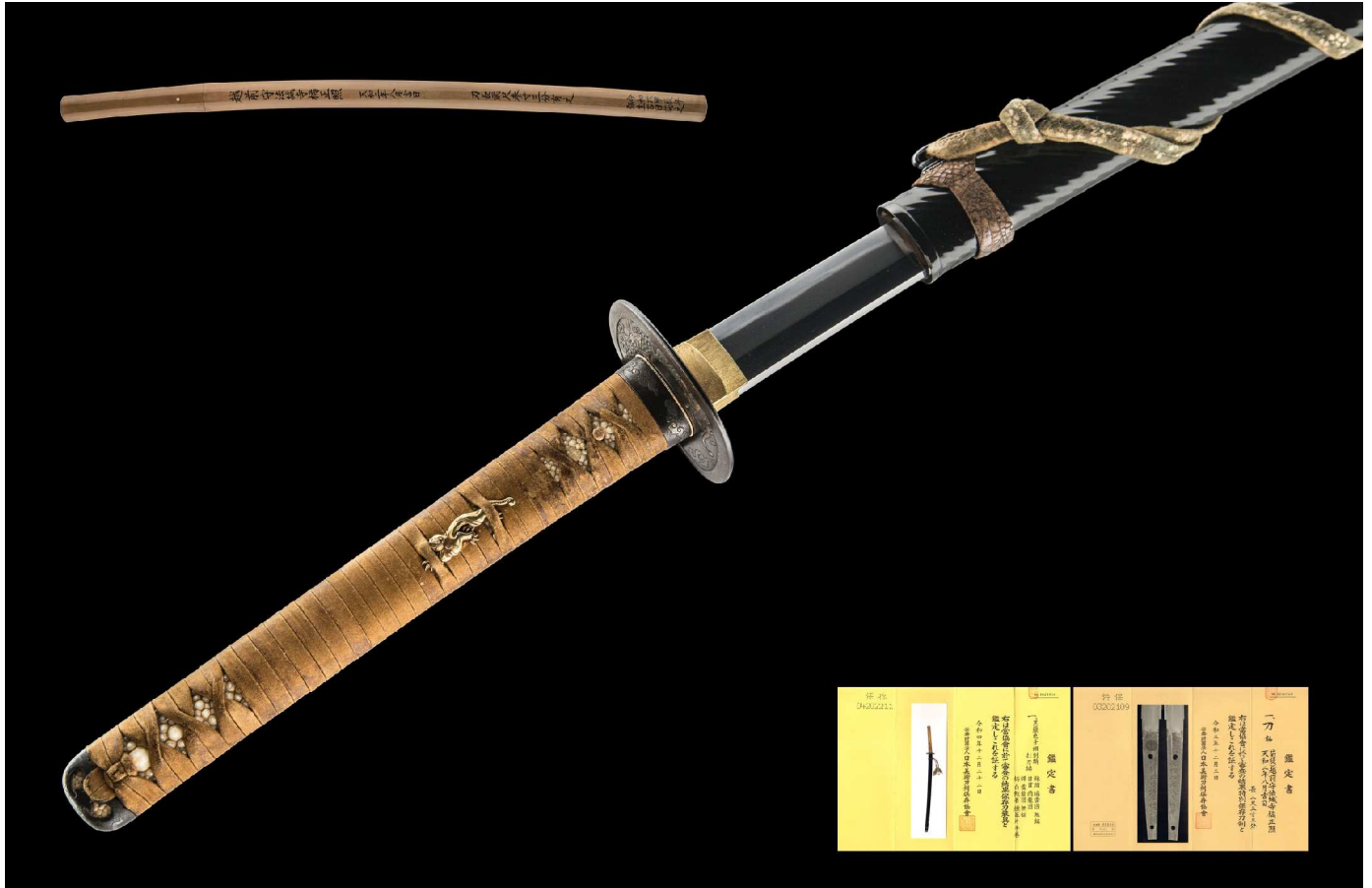
Quick-footed *Idaten* (good guy)



Catch me if you can!



Koshirae bag



ITEM# UJKA436

## A MASATERU KATANA

SIGNED & DATED, EARLY EDO PERIOD (TENNA ERA: AUGUST 1682)

<b>Swordsmith:</b>	<i>Echizen no Kami Hôjôji Masateru (Kyôto province)</i>
<b>Dated:</b>	<i>Tenna ninen hachigatsu kichijitsu</i>
<b>Measurements:</b>	<b>Length:</b> 70.7cm ( <i>ubu trimmed nakago-jiri</i> ) <b>Sori:</b> 0.9 cm <b>Moto-haba:</b> 2.76cm
<b>Jihada:</b>	<i>Ko-itame-hada with ji-nie</i>
<b>Hamon:</b>	<i>Hira-suguha and notare with thick nioguchi in nie-deki</i>
<b>Certificate #1:</b>	<b>NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon</b> ( <i>Especially Worthy of Preservation</i> )
<b>Certificate #2:</b>	<b>NBTHK Hozon</b> ( <i>a koshirae Worthy of Preservation</i> )
<b>Fujishiro rank:</b>	<b>Chûjô-saku</b> ( <i>ranked as an above average swordsmith</i> )
<b>Authentication:</b>	<b>Sayagaki by Nozomi-san</b> ( <i>shodô artist</i> )
<b>Included:</b>	Shirasaya, Edo-koshirae, fabric bags, stand, kit, printed description

**SOLD**

Swordsmith *Masateru* first studied under *shodai Hôjôji Masahiro* and then second generation swordsmith *Kinmichi* in *Kyôto*. This quick-drawing katana, signed with a chrysanthemum crest, has been dated to August 1682 during the second year of *Tenna* era, at the peak of *Masateru's* career. It holds a unique hamon that combines a straight *suguha* with a gentle wave of *notare* wrapped up a thick blanket of *nioguchi* that lights up like a streaming comet in the night sky. Its Edo-period *koshirae* has acquired NBTHK Hozon and features a brilliant theme of rain and cloud dragons, perfectly timed as 2024 is the Year of the Dragon. This is an ideal sword for a new *nihonto* collector.

^  
Saki-kasane: 4.8mm

Moto-kasane: 6.7mm

Omosa: 715g

Kissaki: 2.57cm  
Saki-haba: 1.66cm

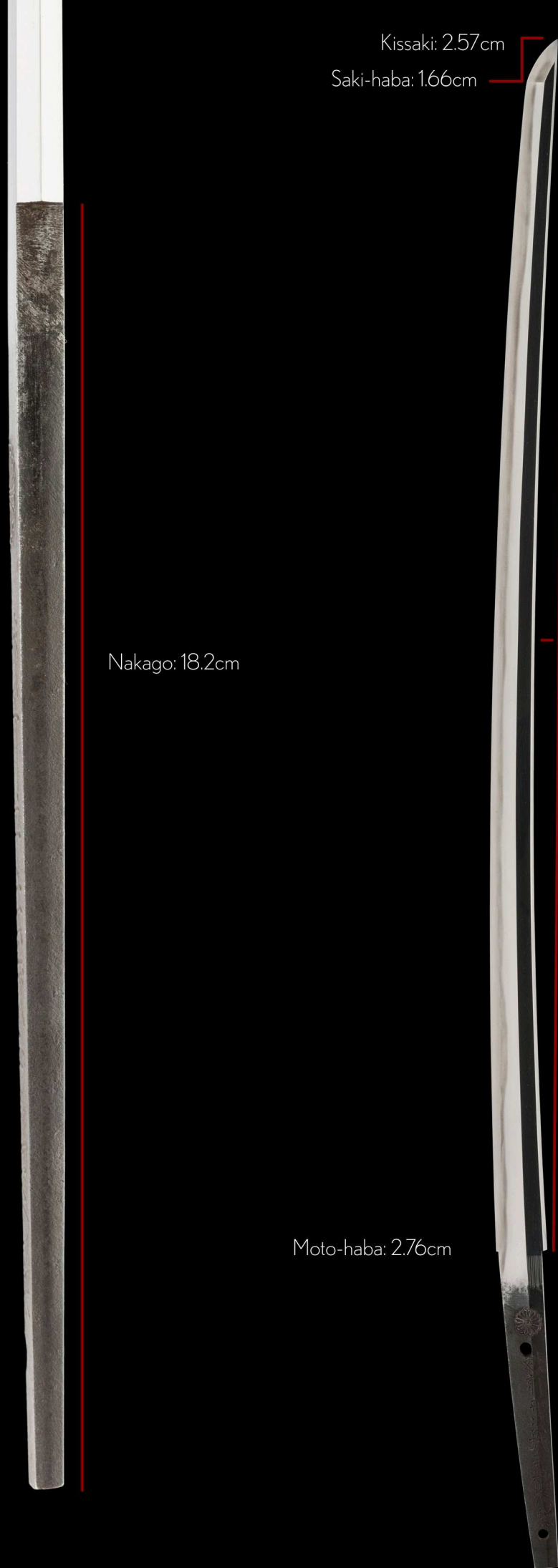
Nakago: 18.2cm

Moto-haba: 2.76cm

Nagasa: 70.7cm

Sori: 0.9cm

Mekugi-ana: 2



Swordsmith *Masateru* first studied under *shodai Hôjôji Masahiro* founder of the *shintô* era Edo *Hôjôji* school in the early 1650s, originally founded by *Kunimitsu* in the *Hôjôji* district of *Tajima* province circa 1362.

After studying with Masahiro, Masateru travelled to *Kyôto* and furthered his studies under the second generation swordsmith *Kinmichi* of the famed *Mishina* school. Masateru was granted permission to carve a *kiku-mon* (imperial chrysanthemum crest) onto his nakago given the master-student relationship with Kinmichi.

This light and slender katana with shallow curvature was crafted to give its samurai owner the ability to draw the sword quickly from a standing position. The blade has also been dated to August 1682 during the second year of *Tenna* era, at the peak of Masateru's career. It displays a unique hamon that combines a straight *suguha* with a gentle wave of *notare* wrapped up a thick blanket of *nioguchi* that lights up like a streaming comet in the night sky. This is a relatively rare hamon that is impressive to the eye under the light.

Masateru is ranked as a *chûjô-saku* (an above average smith) and this sword has rightfully attained NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon certification. Its Edo-period koshirae has also acquired NBTHK Hozon certification and features a brilliant theme of rain and cloud dragons, perfectly timed as 2024 is the Year of the Dragon.

This is an ideal katana for a new collector, welcoming them into the world of *nihonto* (Japanese swords).





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

Clan name: *Tachibana*

Swordsmith: *Masateru* (first generation)

*ubu-nakago* (original, unaltered tang cut at bottom)

*sujikai-yasurime* (diagonal file marks)

(Crysanthemum crest)

越 (Echi)

前 (zen, no)

守 (Kami)

法 (Hô)

城 (jô)

寺 (ji)

橘 (Tachibana)

正 (Masa)

照 (teru)

*Masateru* first studied under *Hôjôji Masahiro* but went later to Kyôto and studied there under the second generation *Kinmichi*.

Given the master-student relationship he was granted permission to carve a *kiku-mon* (chrysanthemum) onto his tangs.



This additional hole at the bottom suggests that it went through some cutting tests in the past and an extra peg hole was made for reinforcement.

Also, the *kiri* (straight) *nakago-jiri* would have originally been shaped to a round *kurijiri*. It was likely cut at some point to fit a particular *tsuka* (hilt).

*Tenna ninen hachigatsu kichijitsu*

This katana was dated by Masateru to a lucky day in the eighth month in the second year of Tenna era (February 1862).

(Ten) 天  
(na) 和  
(ni) 二  
(nen) 年  
(hachi) 八  
(gatsu) 月  
(kichi) 吉  
(jitsu) 日



特保  
03202109

No. 1016568



秋田県 教育委員会  
第 7622 号  
昭和34年6月22日

鑑定書

二刀 銘  
(菊紋)越前守法城寺橘正照  
天和二年八月吉日  
長二又三寸三分

右は當協會に於て審査の結果特別保存刀剣と  
鑑定しこれを証する

令和三年十二月三日

公益財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協會

## NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon Certificate of Designation

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

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

One, Katana

Mei (signature)

(Kikumon) Echizen no Kami Hôjôji Tachibana Masateru  
Tenna ninen hachigatsu kichijitsu

Nagasa (length)

2-shaku 3-sun 3-bu (70.7cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai  
(NBTHK)



越前守法城寺橋正照

越前守法城寺橋正照  
*Echizen no Kami Hôjôji Tachibana Masateru*  
Echizen no Kami Hôjôji Tachibana Masateru

天和二年八月吉日

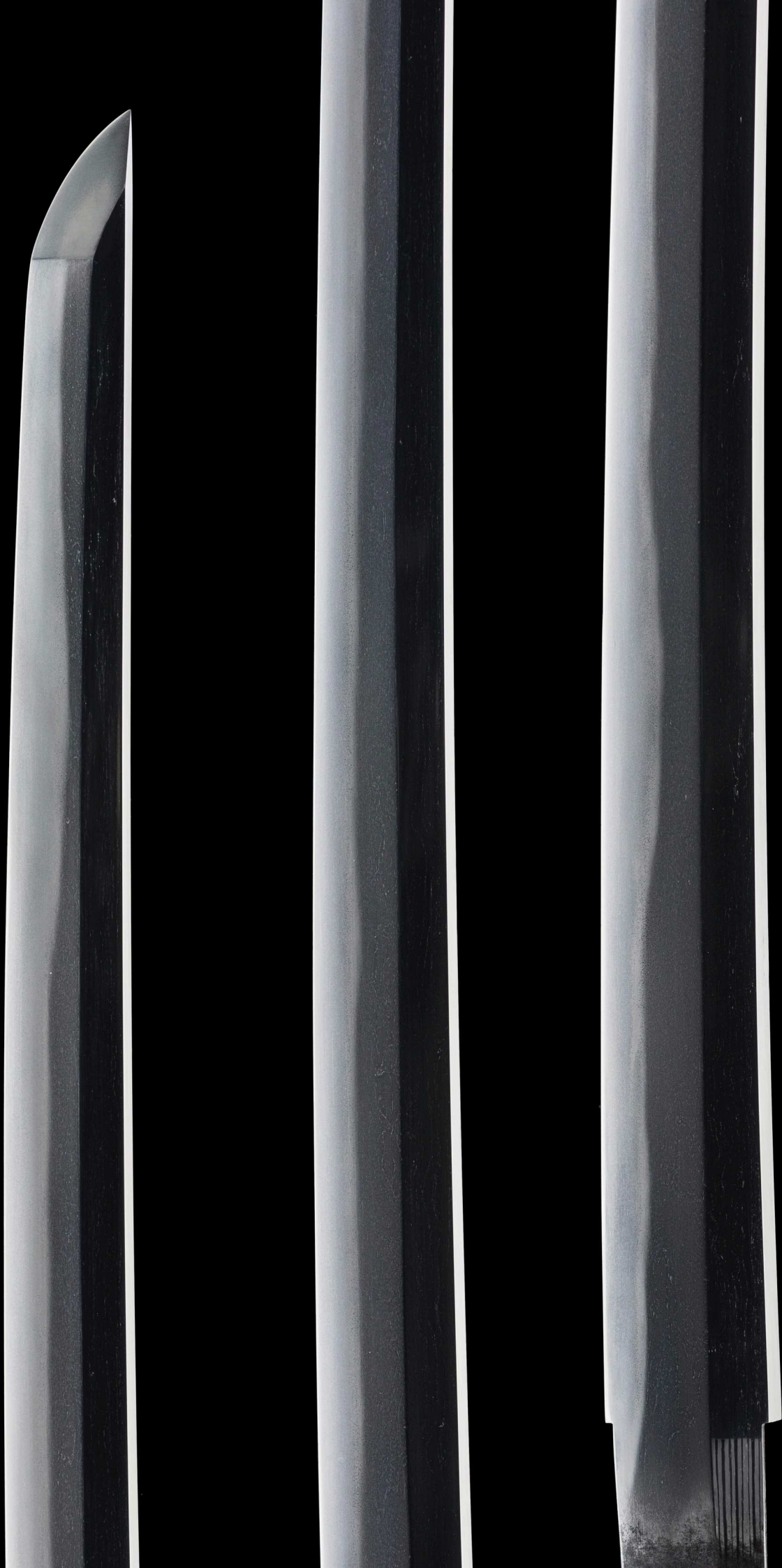
天和二年八月吉日  
*Ten'na ninen hachigatsu kichijitsu*  
On a lucky day in the eighth month in the second year of  
Ten'na era (August 1682)

刃長貳尺參寸三分有之

刃長貳尺參寸三分有之  
*Hachô 2-shaku 3-sun 3-bu kore ari*  
Blade length 70.7 cm

令和六甲辰年  
弥生吉日誌之


令和六甲辰年弥生吉日誌之  
*Reiwa roku kinoe-tatsudoshi Yayoi kichijitsu kore o shirusu*  
Written on a lucky day in the third month in the sixth year of  
Reiwa era during the Year of the Dragon (March 2024).





*Hiro-suguha* (wide hamon) that gently waves in the form of *notare* in *nie-deki*.





A thick *nioguchi* streams through the blade like a comet in the night sky.



A crisp, consistent hamon.  
This is quality sword-making.



*Shirasaya*  
(protective scabbard)

越前守法城寺橋正照

天和二年八月吉日

刃長貳尺參寸三分有之

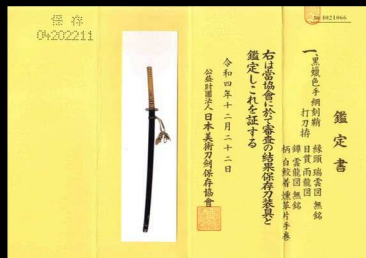
今和六甲辰年  
弥生吉日誌之



gold *niju habaki* with  
kiri file marks

*Kuro-roiro  
tazuna-kizami saya  
uchigatana-koshirae*  
(黒蠟色手綱刻鞘打刀拵)

*Uchigatana-koshirae  
with slantingly carved saya  
lacquered in glossy black*



*NBTHK Hozon  
Certificate of Authenticity*

保存  
04202211

№ 4021066



右は當協會に於て審査の結果保存刀装具と  
鑑定しこれを証する

令和四年十二月二十二日

公益財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協會



鑑定書

一、黒蠟色手綱刻鞘  
打刀拵  
縁頭瑞雲図 無銘  
目貫雨龍図  
鐔雲龍図 無銘  
柄白絞着燻革片手巻

## NBTHK Hozon Certificate of Designation

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

Issued in the 4th year of Reiwa (2022), December 22nd

One,

*Uchigatana-koshirae with slantingly carved saya  
lacquered in glossy black*

*Fuchigashira: Auspicious cloud motif, unsigned*

*Menuki: Rain dragon motif*

*Tsuba: Cloud dragon motif, unsigned*

*Tsuka: White same wrapped in katatemaki style with smoked leather*

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai  
(NBTHK)



An iron tsuba with a  
cloud dragon design



2024 is the Year of the Dragon.  
Be the dragon. Get fierce.





Rain dragon *menuki* cleverly wrapped on smoked leather.





criss cross pattern

*Fuchi-kashira*  
(*zuiun*, happy omen)

Clouds are associated positively in Japanese culture as they produce rain which moistens all things, bringing good fortune to people.

(England must have lots of good fortune then. :)



武蔵國  
正照  
*Musashi no Kuni*  
*Masateru*  
Masateru from Musashi province

Koshirae bag

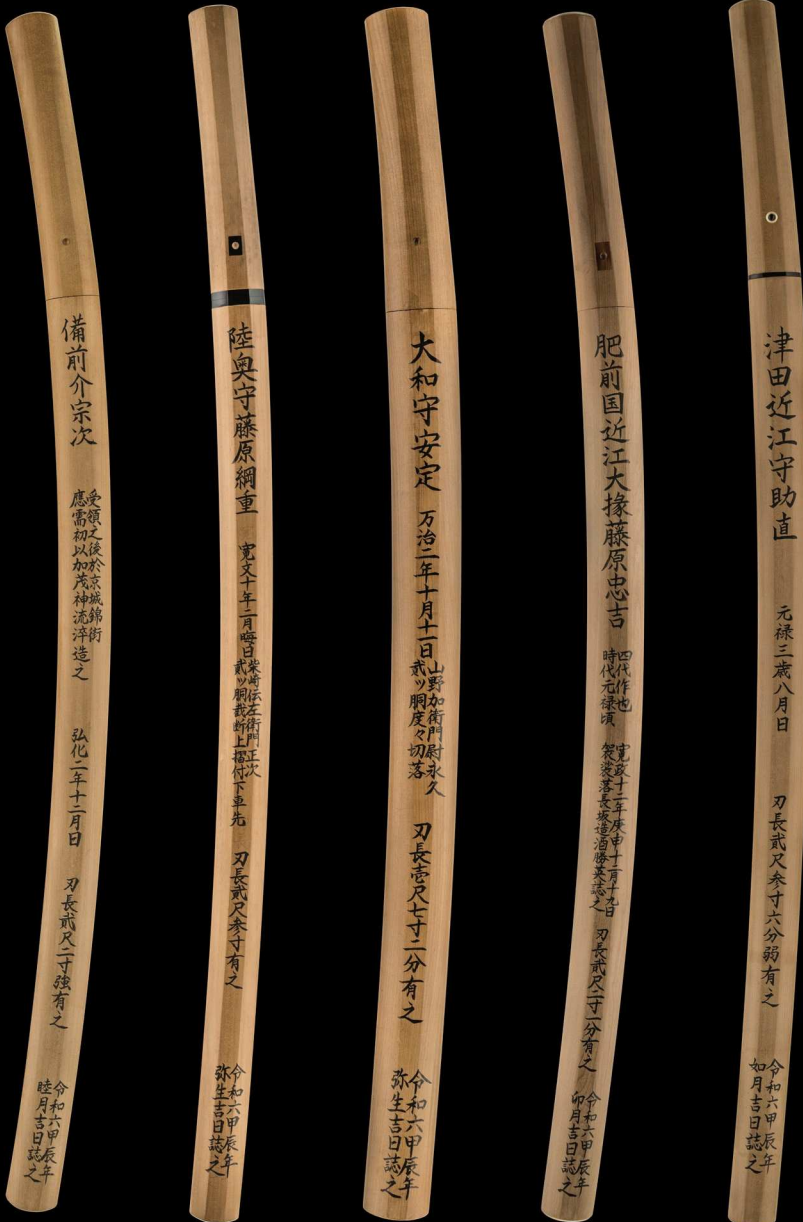
Meet *Nozomi-san*, *sayagaki shodô* artist!

Inside this catalogue you will notice that many of the shirasaya have *sayagaki* by our new *shodô* (calligraphy artist) Nozomi-san. Her artwork is splendid and most definitely spruces up the shirasaya. If you are interested in this *sayagaki* service reach out to UJ by email. We can also produce a beautiful sword box with *hakogaki* as well.

Of course, we still offer *sayagaki* services with *Tanobe-sensei*, but because of his age and time required, we submit primarily *Jûyô* and *Tokubetsu Jûyô* swords to him.



Nozomi-san & UJ's Ayumu Ogusu appeared together on the YouTube channel called *Shigoto Rich!*





ITEM# UJKA437

## A SHIZUMOTO KATANA

SIGNED & DATED, MUROMACHI PERIOD (TENBUN ERA: AUGUST 1533)

<b>Swordsmith:</b>	<i>Hôshu Takada jû Taira Shizumoto saku (Bungo province)</i>
<b>Dated:</b>	<i>Tenbun ninen hachigatsu hi – Aruji Gotô Tôgorô</i>
<b>Measurements:</b>	<b>Length:</b> 81.0cm ( <i>ubu</i> ) <b>Curvature:</b> 2.2 cm <b>Moto-haba:</b> 3.21cm
<b>Jihada:</b>	<i>Tightly forged ko-itame-hada that leads to muji-hada with ji-nie and midare-utsuri</i>
<b>Hamon:</b>	<i>Ko-gunome with chôji and ko-notare and plenty of ko-ashi</i>
<b>Certificate #1:</b>	<b>NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon</b> ( <i>Especially Worthy of Preservation</i> )
<b>Certificate #2-4:</b>	<b>NTHK-NPO Kanteishô</b> ( <i>koshirae, fukuro and tsuba certified as Authentic</i> )
<b>Fujishiro rank:</b>	<b>Jô-saku</b> ( <i>ranked as a superior swordsmith</i> )
<b>Authentication:</b>	<b>Sayagaki by Dr. Honma Junji</b> ( <i>Kunzan sensei</i> )
<b>Included:</b>	<i>Shirasaya, Edo-koshirae, fabric bags, stand, kit, printed description</i>

**SOLD**

This incredibly long *ubu-nakago*(!) katana by *Shizumoto* from the *Taira-Takada* school has a cutting edge of, get this, 81cm. In every way it stands proudly like a *tachi* from the Kamakura period. It is a small miracle that this sword has managed to retain its length since it was signed and dated back nearly 500-years ago in August of 1533. Interestingly, we know that the blade was originally created for patron *Gotô Tôgorô* of the powerful *Ôtomo* clan in *Kyûshû*. This is a masterwork among the known works of *Shizumoto* - a rare and collectible katana from the late Muromachi period with a terrific set of Edo-period *koshirae* that will add to its impressiveness on display.

^  
Saki-kasane: 4.8mm

Moto-kasane: 8.6mm

Omosa: 1015g

Kissaki: 4.32cm  
Saki-haba: 1.96cm

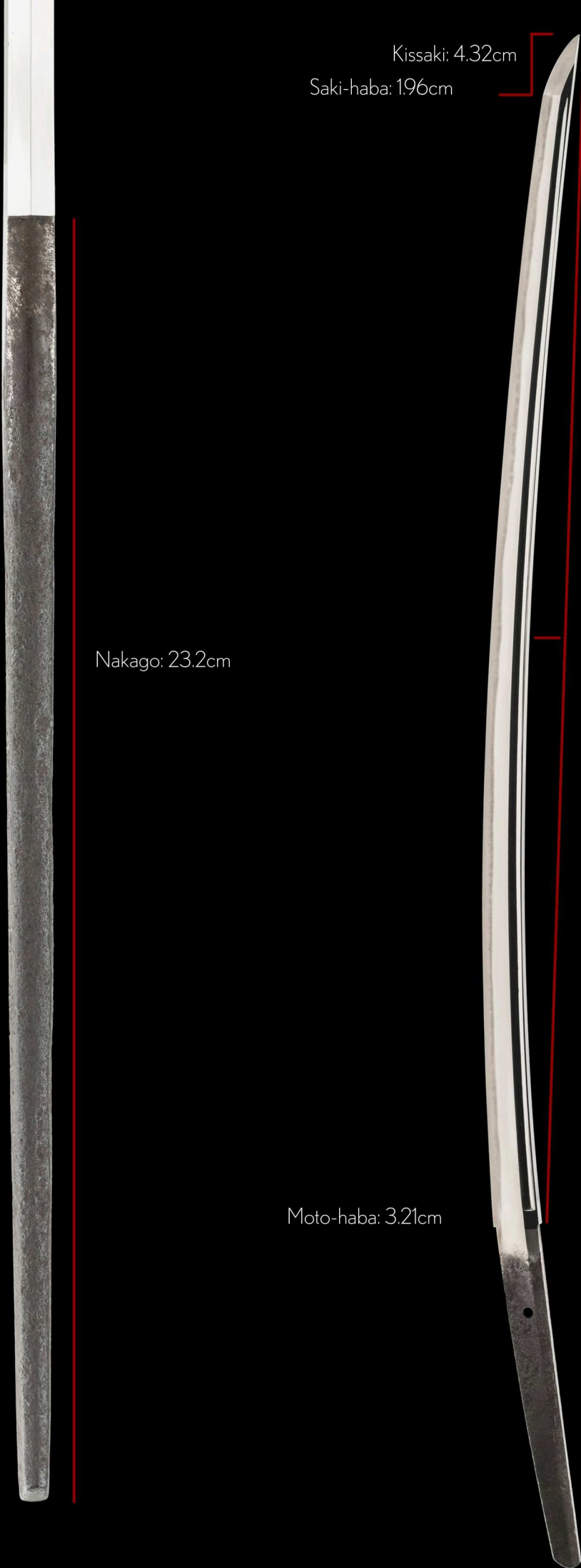
Nakago: 23.2cm

Moto-haba: 3.21cm

Nagasa: 81.0cm

Sori: 2.2cm

Mekugi-ana: 1



The *Takada* school located in *Bungo* province in *Kyûshû* was originally founded by *Tomoyuki* circa 1334~1338 at the start of the Nambokuchô period. It has an impressive history of dependable sword-making that lasted into the *shintô* period (1600s).

Smiths of the *Nagamori* lineage of the Takada school used the clan name of '*Taira*' in their signature, thus becoming known as the *Taira-Takada* school. *Shizumoto* was a skilled smith (rated *jô-saku*) and one of about a dozen smiths from this school that all shared the character for *Shizu*. Other swordsmiths included *Shizumori*, *Shizutaka* and *Shizunori*.

As a whole, all these smiths flourished as caterers to the local ruler, the *Ôtomo* family. This powerful clan throughout the warring *Sengoku* period (1467-1573), were especially notable as one of the first clans to make contact with Europeans, particularly the Portugese, and established a close trade relationship with them for years.

This incredibly long *ubu-nakago* katana by Shizumoto (also read as *Shigetomo*) has a cutting edge of 81cm. In every way it stands proudly like a *tachi* from the Kamakura period. It is a small miracle that this sword has managed to retain its length since it was signed and dated back nearly 500-years ago in August of 1533. Interestingly, we know that the blade was originally created for patron *Gotô Tôgorô* as chiseled onto its *nakago*.

In a diary submission by former director of the NBTHK, Dr. Honma Junji describes the sword as a long *uchigatana* that has a wide *mihaba* that tapers noticeably and that has an elongated *kissaki*, a standard *koshizori*, and *funbari*. The *kitae* is a very densely forged *ko-itame* that tends to *muji* and its *midareba hamon* is rare for *Sue-Kotô Takada* works and features and a very finely forged *kitae* that appears to be *muji* at first glance is also seen with the smith *Nagamori* from the same school.

All told, this is a masterwork among the known works of Shizumoto - a rare and collectible katana from the late Muromachi period with a terrific set of Edo-period *koshirae* that will add to its impressiveness on display.





Location: *Hoshû province* (resident of Takada)

Clan name: *Taira*

Swordsmith: *Shizumoto* (first generation)

*ubu-nakago* (original, unaltered tang)

*katte-sagari-yasurime* (slanting file marks)

豊 (Hô)

州 (shû)

高 (Taka)

田 (da)

住 (jû)

平 (Taira)

鎮 (Shizu)

元 (moto)

作 (saku)

Note: the *kanji* characters for *Shizumoto* can also be read as '*Shigetomo*'.

*Tenbun ninen hachigatsu hi - Aruji Gotô Tôgorô*

This sword has been dated to a day in the eighth month in the second year of *Tenbun* era (August 1533)  
It was crafted for master *Gotô Tôgorô*.



(Ten) 天  
(bun) 文  
(ni) 二

(nen) 年  
(hachi) 八  
(gatsu) 月  
(hi) 日

主 (Aruji)  
後 (Go)  
藤 (tô)  
藤 (Tô)  
五 (go)  
郎 (rô)

*Gotô Tôgorô* would have been a member of the *Ôtomo* clan. The Jesuit missionary *Francis Xavier* arrived in Japan in 1549, and soon afterwards met with *Sôrin* (Yoshishige), *shugo* of *Bungo* and *Buzen* provinces. He would later be described by Xavier as a "king" and converted to Roman Catholicism in 1578. *Ôtomo* was eager to secure for his clan further trade and contact with the Portuguese, seeing the technological and, more importantly perhaps, economic benefits that could be derived.

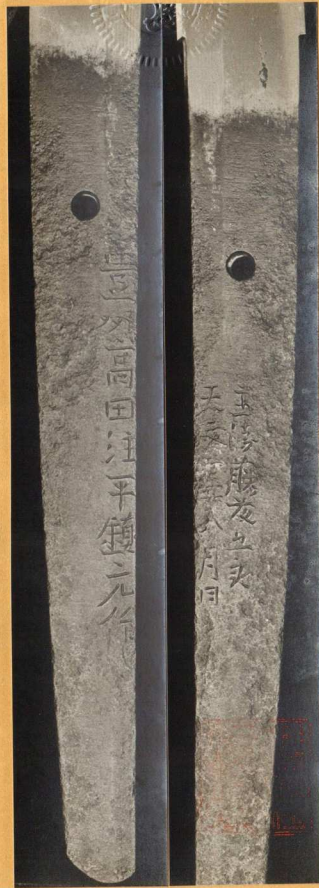
In 1552, emissaries from the *Ôtomo* clan traveled to *Goa* with Xavier, to meet with the Portuguese Governor of India. Xavier and other Jesuit missionaries would return to *Kyûshû*, traveling and proselytising; the *Ôtomo* were always well-disposed towards them, and they saw some success in *Bungo* as a result, converting many Japanese to Christianity.



特 保  
11199901



No 143969



鑑定書

長三尺六寸七分半

一、刀銘

豊州高田住平鎮元作

天文曰年八月日 主後藤藤五郎

右は當協會に於て審査の結果特別保存刀劍と  
鑑定しこれを証する

平成十一年二月五日

財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協會



## NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon Certificate of Designation

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

Issued in the 11th year of Heisei (1999), February 5th

One, Katana

Mei (signature)

*Hôshû Takada-jû Taira Shizumoto  
Tenbun ninen hachigatsu hi  
Aruji Gotô Tôgorô*

Nagasa (length)

2-shaku 6-sun 7-bu han (81.0cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai  
(NBTHK)



豊州高田住平鎮元

*Hôshû Takada-jû Taira Shizumoto*

Taira Shizumoto, a resident of Takada in Hoshû Province

天文二年紀

*Tenbun ninen ki*

Dated in the second year of *Tenbun* era (1533)

刃長二尺六寸七分

*Hachô 2-shaku 6-sun 7-bu*

Blade length ~81.0 cm

昭和壬戌年長月依清田泰臣氏囑薰山誌「花押」  
*Shôwa Mizunoto-Idoshi Nagatsuki Kiyota Yasuomi-shi no*  
*tanomi ni yori Kunzan shirusu + kaô*

Written by Kunzan at the request by Mr. Kiyota Yasuomi in  
September in Shôwa, the Year of the Dog (1982).





This very katana was featured in Kunzan sensei's diary, towards the very end of the series that was never published in book form, only in magazine format.

Sword researcher *Markus Sesko* managed to find this article and translated as follows:



Series Kantô Hibi Shô by Dr. Honma Kunzan Junji  
*Tôken Bijutsu* No. 387 (April, 1989), p. 40

Katana, mei:  
*Hôshû Takada-jû Taira Shizumoto saku*  
*Tenbun ninen hachigatsu hi, shu Gotô Tôgorô*



Dr. Honma Kunzan Junji

Crafted by Taira Shizumoto, resident of Takada in Bungo province, dated on a day of the eighth month in the second year of Tenbun era (August 1533), for patron *Gotô Tôgorô*

Nagasa 80.9 cm, one *mekugi-ana*

This is a long *uchigatana* with a wide *mihaba* that tapers noticeably and that has an elongated *kissaki*, a standard *koshizori*, and *funbari*. The *kitae* is a very densely forged *ko-itame* that tends to *muji* and that features plenty of fine *ji-nie* and some faint *midare-utsuri*. The hamon is a densely arranged *ko-gunome* in *ko-nie-deki* that is mixed with *ko-ashi*, a few *chôji*, and on the *omote* side from the mid-blade section upwards with a little bit of *ko-notare*. The *ha* appears overall as a *gyôsô no midare* (about "semi-freely to freely interpreted midare"), and the *bôshi* is *midare-komi* with *kuzure* at the tip.

A *bôhi* is engraved on both sides that ends in *hisaki-sagaru* and at the base in *kakudome*. The *nakago* is *ubu* and has a *ha-agari-kurijiri*, a roundish *nakago-mune* and cutting edge side, fine *yasurime* that are almost entirely *kiri*, and bears towards the *nakago-mune* the above quoted *naga-mei* and date, which are executed in a close to semi-cursive manner. Next to the date the name of the patron is recorded, which is inscribed by partially using a cursive script.

This blade is hardened in a small-dimensional *midareba*, which is rare for *Sue-Kotô Takada* works, and a very finely forged *kitae* that appears to be *muji* at first glance is also seen with the smith *Nagamori* from the same school.


September 5th  
Sayagaki written for Tôkyô member *Kiyota Yasuomi*

The *kakudome bo-hi* (squared end groove) stretching the full length of the sword forms an '*I-beam*' construction.


These grooves serve to lighten the sword (even though it still weighs 1015g (2.24lbs!)) while helping to absorb energy loads efficiently.

A close-up, high-contrast photograph of a sword blade, showing the characteristic 'I-beam' construction. The blade is dark and polished, with a prominent groove running along its length. A red arrow points to this groove, which is labeled as 'kakudome bo-hi'. The background is black, making the blade stand out.

*kakudome bo-hi*

A close-up photograph of a curved metal blade, likely a Japanese sword, showing a midare utsuri finish. The blade is dark and highly reflective, with a bright, shimmering band of light reflecting off its surface. The background is dark, making the blade stand out. A red arrow points from the text below to the shimmering band on the blade.

A beautiful *midare utsuri* shines under the light.

A close-up photograph of a curved metal blade, likely a Japanese sword, showing a ko-ashi finish. The blade is dark and highly reflective, with a bright, shimmering band of light reflecting off its surface. The background is dark, making the blade stand out. A red arrow points from the text below to the shimmering band on the blade.

*ko-ashi* (small legs) flare out to the cutting edge.

A close-up, artistic photograph of a sword blade. The blade is dark and curved, with a prominent, bright, wavy line of light running along its length, known as a hamon. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the texture and the sharp edge of the blade against a dark background. The hamon pattern is described as 'tight oscillating' in the text.

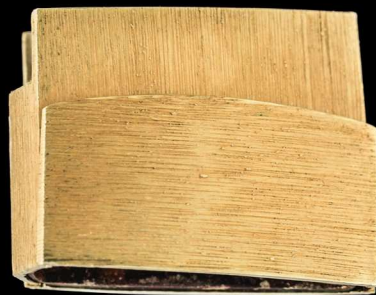
A tight oscillating *midare-ba hamon* beams brightly across this impressively long sword.



Known as *muji-hada*, swordsmith *Shizumoto* folded the steel so densely that no discernible grain pattern can be seen. Muji-hada or *kagami-hada* (mirror like) is generally seen on swords made during the *shinshintô* period or on modern *gendaitô* swords. It is quite rare for a Muromachi period sword to show such a trait. This is one of the reasons why the sword weighs over a kilogram, coupled of course, with its incredible length.



*Shirasaya*  
(protective scabbard)

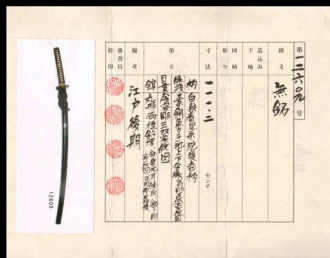


gold *niju habaki* with  
*kiri* file marks

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

*Uchigatana-koshirae  
lacquered in glossy black*

Crafted during the  
Middle Edo period  
(1700~1780)



*NTHK-NPO Kanteisho  
Certificate of Authenticity*

(Shô) 正  
(a) 阿  
(mi) 弥

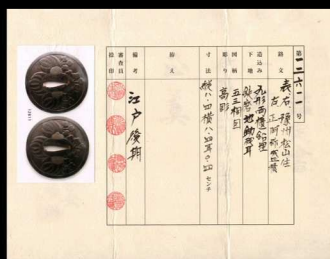
(Mori) 盛  
(zumi) 積

豫 (Aruji)  
州 (Go)

松 (tô)  
山 (Tô)  
住 (go)



Signed, *Shôami Morizumi*  
Resident of Matsuyama in Yoshû province.  
Iron ground tsuba with *kirimon* (paulownia) design.  
Late Edo Period (1780~1868)



(reverse)



*hitsu-ana* (holes) filled with lead.



There is great satisfaction to see a full set of koshirae with a matching theme. The tsuba, fuchi-kashira and menuki all carry a kirimon theme. The use of copper with gold accents gives a fine touch of class.





*Fuchi-kashira*  
 attributed to  
**Masamitsu**  
 the 7th head of the Nomura Family  
 (Late Edo period)

*Kiri-mon* (paulownia design)





Koshirae bag

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



safe, extra large cloth for adding oil to the blade



ITEM# UJKA430

## A YOSHIKAGE NAGINATA-NAOSHI KATANA

UNSIGNED, NAMBOKUCHÔ PERIOD (KENMU ERA: 1334~1338)

<b>Swordsmith:</b>	<i>Bishû Osafune Yoshikage</i> (Bizen province)
<b>Measurements:</b>	<b>Length:</b> 69.5cm ( <i>ô-suriage</i> ) <b>Curvature:</b> 1.5cm <b>Moto-haba:</b> 2.95cm
<b>Jihada:</b>	<i>Standing-out itame mixed with mokume, ji-nie, chikei and midare-utsuri</i>
<b>Hamon:</b>	<i>Gunome in nioi-deki with ko-nie mixed with ko-gunome, chôji, kinsuji, &amp; sunagashi</i>
<b>Certificate #1:</b>	26th NBTHK Tokubetsu Jûyô Tôken (An Especially Important Sword)
<b>Certificate #2-4:</b>	NTHK-NPO Kanteishô ( <i>koshirae, fk and tsuba certified as Authentic</i> )
<b>Fujishiro rank:</b>	Jô-saku ( <i>ranked as a superior swordsmith</i> )
<b>Sharpness:</b>	Ô-wazamono ( <i>maker of extremely sharp swords</i> )
<b>Authentication:</b>	Sayagaki by Tazan-sensei ( <i>Tanobe Michihiro</i> )
<b>Included:</b>	Shirasaya, koshirae, fabric bags, stand, kit, printed description

**SOLD**

This special sword that has been attributed to *Bizen Osafune* swordsmith *Yoshikage*, master of the *naginata*. It was crafted in the early 1300s and later preserved into a katana, a process known as *naginata-naoshi*. This katana is certified *Tokubetsu Jûyô Tôken*, the highest rank at the NBTHK.

The polearm type of the *naginata* (薙刀) emerged in the late *Heian* period (794~1185) and then later in the *Genpei War* (1180~1185). High-ranking warriors recognized the efficacy of the *naginata* and made it their weapon of choice when fighting on foot. Many famous figures of that time period being recorded as fighting preferably with the *naginata* have become a fixture of Japanese lore, e.g., *Minamoto no Tsunemitsu* (源経光, died 1146), the warrior monk *Benkei* (弁慶, 1155-1189), female

warrior *Tomoe-Gozen* (巴御前, late 12th century). The *naginata* henceforth remained much in use until the *Muromachi* period, when *yari* and firearms became the decisive weapons on the battlefield. By the end of the *Muromachi* period and entering the *Momoyama* period (1574~1600) changes in the way battles were fought and significant changes among the warrior class itself took place. This was the time when *samurai* took over land ownership on a large scale and were no longer more or less armed guardians of someone else's land as they had been in previous periods.

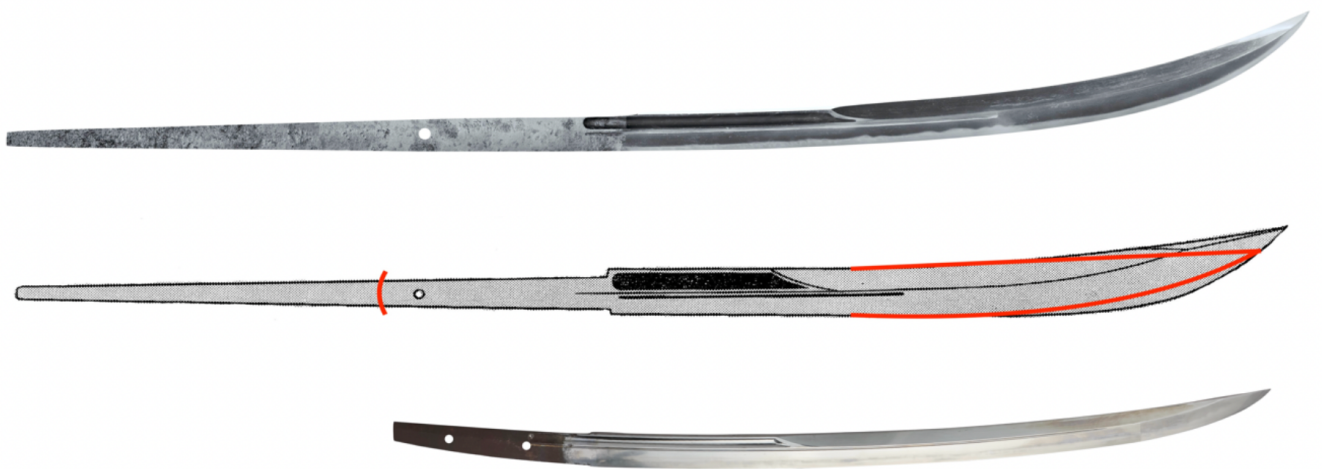
As a result, local *samurai* rulers now also had to administer the lands under their rule, which was of course not done in full armour wearing a *tachi*, but in a "civilian *samurai* attire" so to speak wearing the iconic *daishō* pair of swords consisting of a *katana* and a *wakizashi*. In other words, was the sword worn to the civilian or casual attire earlier mostly for reasons of self-defence, it had now become the *visible symbol of rank and authoritative power*, and eventually the status symbol of the entire warrior class.

The *shōgun*, the *daimyō*, and highest ranking *samurai* were of course seeking to wear the best blades possible. And as the qualitative and aesthetic zenith of Japanese sword making is often considered to have been the Kamakura and early to mid-Nanbokuchō period by connoisseurs and experts alike, this of course means that the body of work to select from was *tachi*, *tantō*, and *naginata*. Thus, reworking a *naginata*, if it was one's best blade, into a *katana* was not considered a sacrilege, but was understood as making it become a part of one's life rather than having it sit in a treasury or storehouse. Presenting and receiving a gift of a blade made by a smith renowned for having produced the finest examples of its type was very much desired. In this sense, *naginata-naoshi* by *Hōjōji Kunimitsu* or *Osafune Yoshikage* were by no means regarded second-rate to *tachi* by these smiths, rather in the contrary, i.e., as superior cutters and more desirable than their *tachi*.

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Accordingly, the following saying developed among warriors:

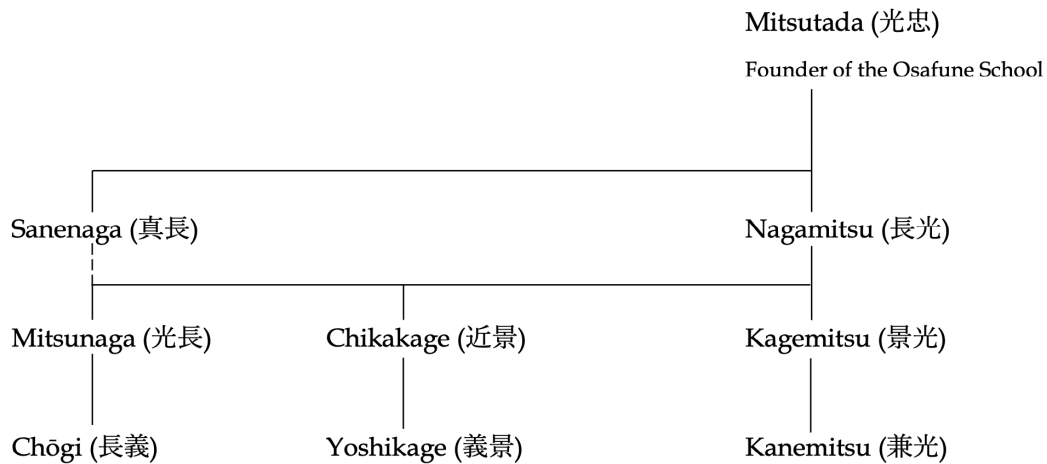
*Naginata-naoshi ni namakura nashi* (薙刀直しに鈍刀なし)  
"No sword made from a *naginata* is dull!"



(process of reshaping a *naginata* into a *katana*)

---

*Yoshikage* (義景) is said to be the son or a student of national-treasure swordsmith *Chikakage* (近景) and the son-in-law of *Chôgi* (長義). Thus he belonged to one of the then influential collateral branches of the large *Osafune* (長船) School, which was closely connected to the main line, led at that time by *Kagemitsu* (景光), see genealogy below.



In terms of workmanship, *Yoshikage's* early works tended to be hardened in *suguha* with *ko-ashi*, an approach that bears semblance to the style of *Chikakage*. Later on though, *Yoshikage* adopted elements of the *Sôshû* tradition in the style of *Chôgi*, which had been very much thriving at that time, influencing swordsmiths all across Japan. This mix of the *Sôshû* and *Bizen* traditions is referred to as *Sôden-Bizen*, and having been an early adopter, ***Yoshikage can be regarded as one of the forerunners of this trend.*** Existing dated works of *Yoshikage* range from the second year of *Kenmu* era (建武, 1335) to the third year of *Enbun* era (延文, 1358).

What makes this sword quite remarkable, is that it serves as transition-point in the career of *Yoshikage*. On *ura* (reverse) side of the blade is *Yoshikage's* early works (similar to *Chikakage*) in that it is composed of smaller elements, a more-exacting *midare-ba* and with hardening in *ko-nie-deki*. However, the *omote*-side displays a forging structure in *itame* that is accompanied by a *midare-utsuri* and a flamboyant hardening in a *chôji*-based *midareba*, and plenty of *kinsuji* and *sunagashi* in the *Chôgi* and *Sôden-Bizen* tradition. It is a wonderful sword to study and one where *Yoshikage* pays respect to his previous style while embracing a new chapter in his working life as a smith.

As the NBTHK *Tokubetsu Jûyô Tôken* concludes in their description summary:

***The ha is nie-laden and displays plenty of kinsuji and sunagashi and therefore we recognize along the jiba the characteristic features of the Sôden-Bizen style... The blade is of a gallant naginata-naoshi shape and coupled with kinsuji, sunagashi, and other hataraki we have here an outstanding masterwork among all blades known by this smith.***





Saki-kasane: 3.7mm

Moto-kasane: 5.3mm

Omosa: 835g

Kissaki: 8.38cm

Saki-haba: 2.48cm

Nakago: 20.1cm

Moto-haba: 2.95cm

Nagasa: 69.5cm

Sori: 1.50cm

Mekugi-ana: 2



The NBTHK Tokubetsu Jûyô Certificate description for this magnificent Yoshikage katana translates as follows:

Several traditions exist regarding *Osafune Yoshikage* - for example, one states that he was a student of *Kanemitsu* and another that he was a student of *Chôgi*.

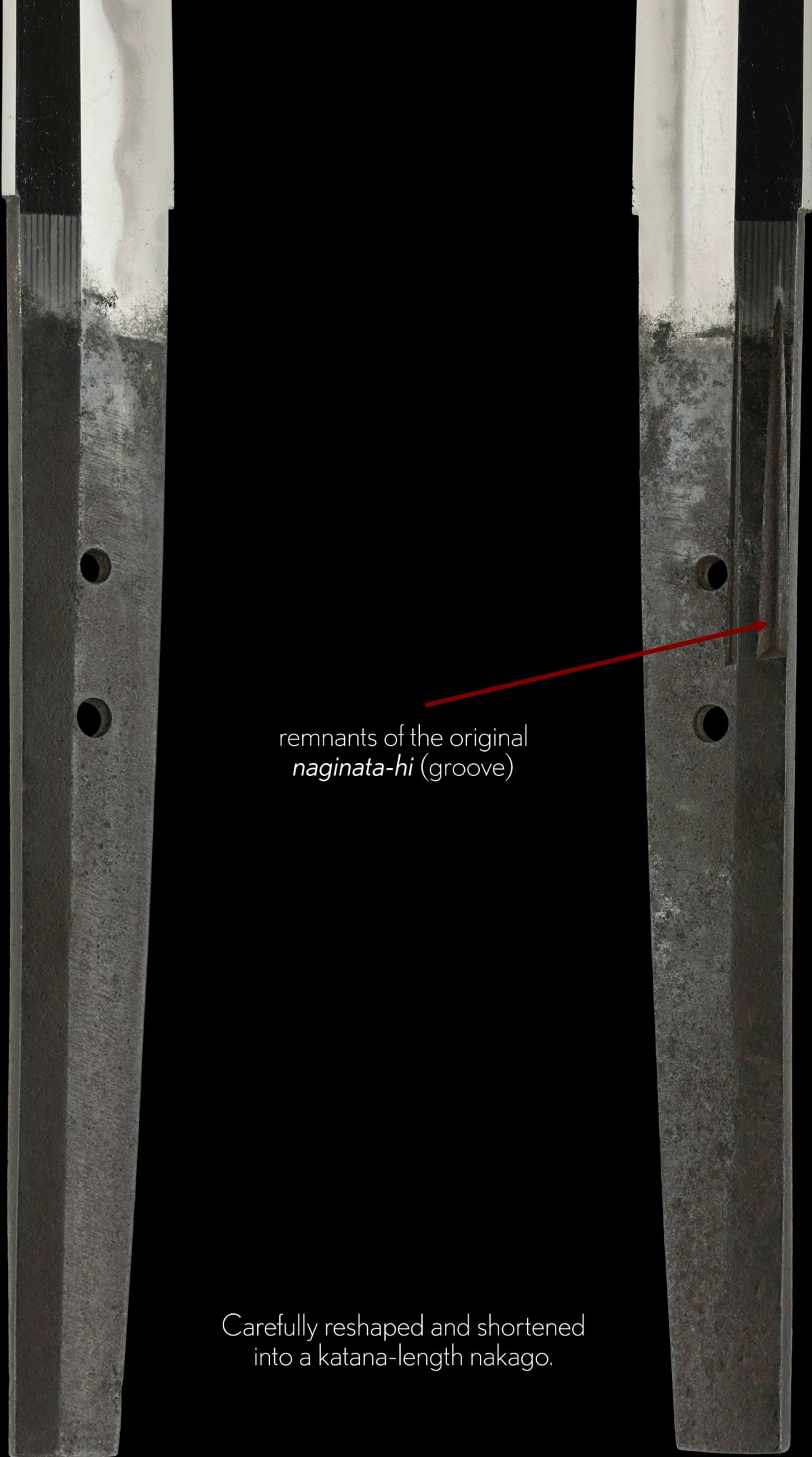
However, more recent studies suggest that based on similarities in workmanship and a unique signature that makes use of *gyaku-tagane* (certain strokes of the signature being chiseled the opposite way as written by brush), he may have been an *Osafune* side line smith from the groups surrounding *Chikakage* or *Morikage*.

This blade was originally a *naginata* which has been greatly shortened and which had material removed from the *mune* side along the tip section to rework it into a *katana*. The *kitae* is an *itame* that is mixed with much *mokume* and some *nagare* and that features plenty of *ji-nie*, much thick *chikei*, and a *midare-utsuri*. The *ha* is *nie*-laden and displays plenty of *kinsuji* and *sunagashi* and therefore we recognize along the *jiba* the characteristic features of the *Sôden-Bizen* tradition.

The *hamon* is a *gunome* that is mixed with *chôji*, *togariba*, and a variety of other elements, in particular with prominently pointed elements all across the ha. All this and the fact that the *midare* sections are relatively densely arranged and small made us conclude that the attribution to *Yoshikage* is appropriate.

The blade is of a *gallant naginata-naoshi* shape and coupled with *kinsuji*, *sunagashi*, and other *hataraki* we have here an outstanding masterwork among all blades known by this smith.





remnants of the original  
*naginata-hi* (groove)

Carefully reshaped and shortened  
into a katana-length nakago.

02202026

特重要第一二八〇號

指定書

一薙刀直し刀無銘 義景 一口

法量 長さ六九・六櫃 反り一・六櫃  
 形状 薙刀直し造庵棟 身幅広め 元先の幅差やつぎ反り浅く 大鋒  
 銀 板目に委を交え 肌立ちころ 地沸き 地景入り 乱れ映り立つ  
 刃文 互の目に小互の目・丁子などを交え 匂勝ち小沸つき 全筋・  
 砂流しかかる  
 帽子 乱れ込み 先焼詰め風  
 彫物 表茎上半に 薙刀樋と添樋の痕跡  
 茎 大磨上 鑑目勝手下がり 目釘孔二  
 備前國長船義景  
 南北朝時代

右者當協會に於て審査の結果  
特別重要刀剣に指定する

令和二年五月二十八日

公益財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協會

會長 酒井忠久

東京 教育委員会  
 第 321708 号  
 令和 2 年 5 月 28 日

Tokubetsu Jûyô Certificate No. 1280  
 Shiteisho (指定書) Certificate of Designation  
 Naginata-Naoshi Katana, mumei: Yoshikage (義景)

Measurements  
 nagasa 69.6 cm, sori 1.6 cm

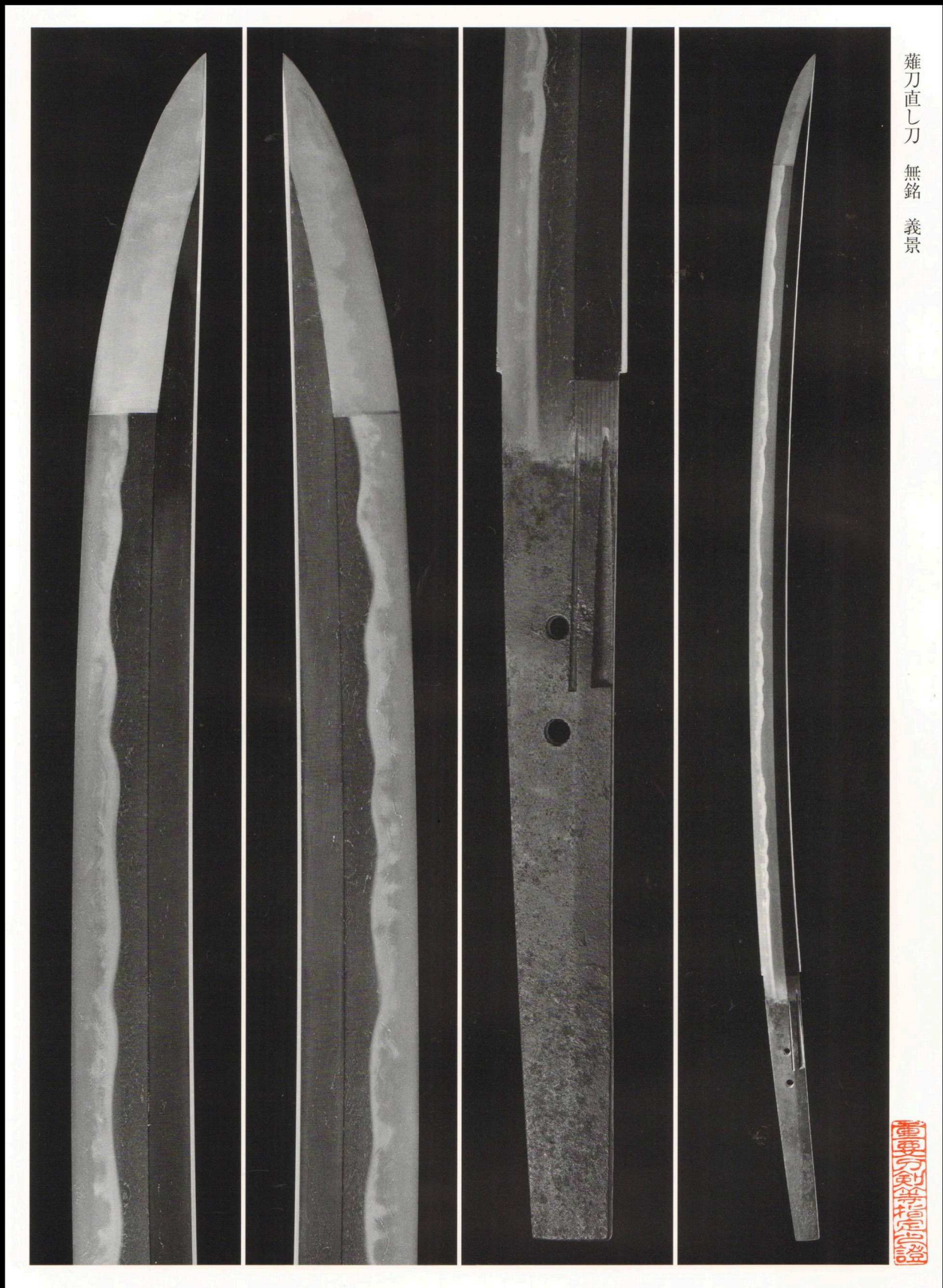
Description

Keijo: naginata-naoshi-zukuri, iori-mune, wide mihaba, noticeable taper, shallow sori, ô-kissaki  
 Kitae: rather standing-out itame mixed with mokume and features ji-nie, chikei, and midare-utsuri  
 Hamon: gunome in nioi-deki with ko-nie mixed with ko-gunome, chôji, kinsuji, and sunagashi  
 Bôshi: midare-komi and running out in yakitsume fashion  
 Horimono: on the omote side on the upper half of the tang traces of a naginata-hi and soebi  
 Nakago: ô-suriage, katte-sagari yasurime, two mekugi-ana

Osafune Yoshikage from Bizen province  
 Nanbokuchô period

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

May 28, 2020  
 [Foundation] Nihon Bijutsu Tôken Hozon Kyôkai, NBTHK  
 [President] Yamanaka Sadanori (山中貞則)



薙刀直し刀 無銘 義景

*A Bishû Osafune Yoshikage Naginata Naoshi Katana  
Nambokuchô period, Kenmu era (1334~1338)*

A brilliant *Sôden-Bizen* powerhouse described in its NBTHK Tokubetsu Jûyô Tôken certificate as having a gallant *naginata-naoshi* shape with *kinsuji*, *sunagashi*, and other *hataraki* and an outstanding masterwork among all blades known by *Osafune Yoshikage*.

Designated as *Tokubetsu-Jūyō-Tōken* (an especially profound and important sword)  
at the 26th *tokubetsu jūyō shinsa* held on May 28, 2020

### ***naginata-naoshi katana, mumei: Yoshikage* (義景)**

Unique Japan

#### **Measurements**

*nagasa* 69.6 cm

*sori* 1.6 cm

*motohaba* 2.95 cm, *sakihaba* 2.5 cm

*kissaki-nagasa* 8.5 cm, *nakago-nagasa* 20.1 cm, only very little *nakago-sori*

#### **Description**

*Keijo*: *naginata-naoshi-zukuri*, *iori-mune*, wide *mihaba*, noticeable taper, thin *kasane* and *shinogi-ji* drops off noticeably towards *mune*, shallow *sori*, *ō-kissaki*

*Kitae*: rather standing-out *itame* that is mixed with much *mokume*, some *ō-mokume* in places, and a little bit of *nagare*, and that features plenty of *ji-nie*, much thick *chikei*, and a *midare-utsuri*

*Hamon*: *gunome* in *nioi-deki* with *ko-nie* and a bright *nioiguchi* that is mixed with plenty of *ko-gunome*, *chōji*, prominent *togariba* along the *monouchi*, many *ashi* and *yō*, and with an abundance of thin *kinsuji* and *sunagashi*

*Bōshi*: prominently *midare-komi* with some *hakikake* and running out in *yakitsume* fashion

*Horimono*: on the *omote* side on the upper half of the tang traces of a *naginata-hi* and *soebi*

*Nakago*: *ō-suriage*, very shallow *kurijiri*, *katte-sagari yasurime*, two *mekugi-ana*, *mumei*

#### **Artisan**

Osafune Yoshikage from Bizen province

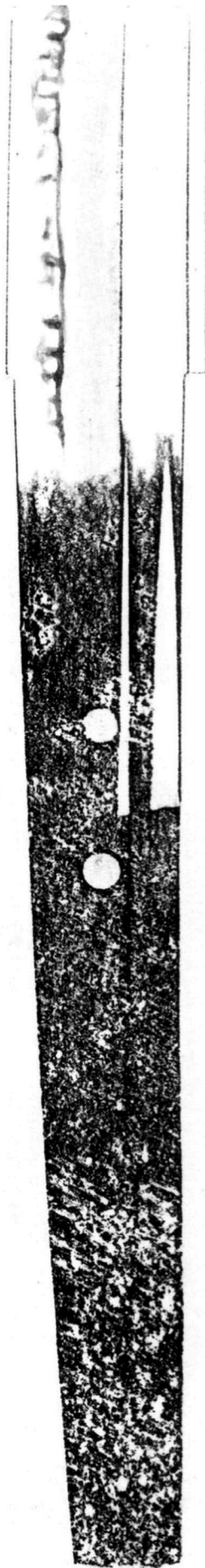
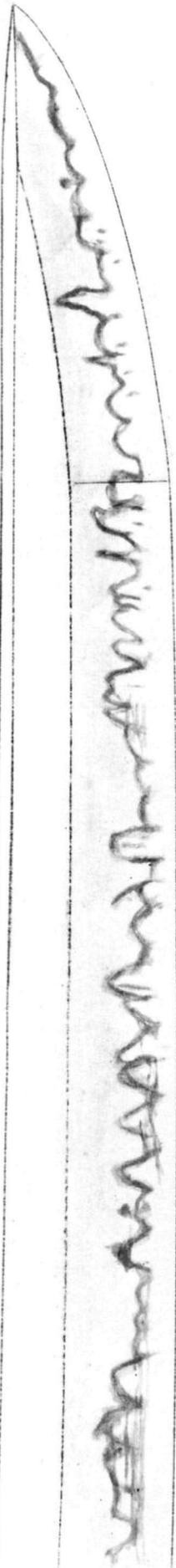
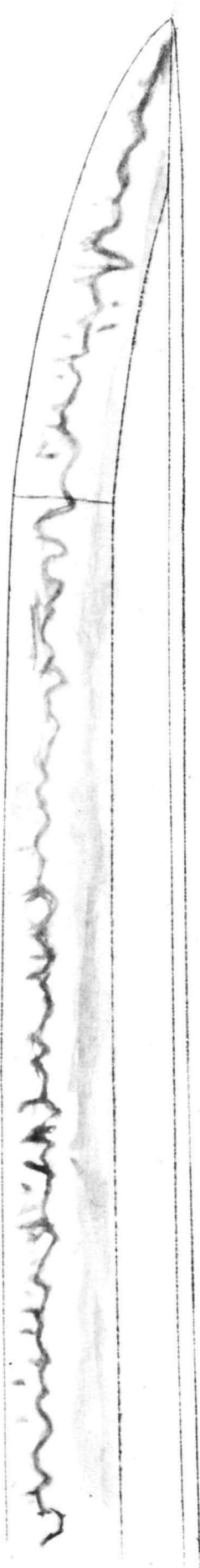
#### **Era**

Nanbokuchō period

#### **Remarks**

Several traditions exist regarding Osafune Yoshikage, for example, one saying that he was a student of Kanemitsu (兼光) and another that he was a student of Chōgi (長義). However, recent studies rather suggest that on the basis of similarities in workmanship and a unique signature style that makes use of *gyaku-tagane* (certain strokes of the signature being chiseled the opposite way as written with a brush), he may have been an Osafune side line smith from the groups surrounding Chikakage (近景) or Morikage (盛景).

This blade was originally a *naginata* which has been greatly shortened and which had material removed from the *mune* side along the tip section to rework it into a *katana*. The *kitae* is an *itame* that is mixed with much *mokume* and some *nagare* and that features plenty of *ji-nie*, much thick *chikei*, and a *midare-utsuri*. The *ha* is *nie*-laden and displays plenty of *kinsuji* and *sunagashi* and therefore we recognize along the *jiba* the characteristic features of the Sōden-Bizen style. The *hamon* is a *gunome* that is mixed with *chōji*, *togariba*, and a variety of other elements, in particular with prominently pointed elements all across the *ha*. All this and the fact that the *midare* sections are relatively densely arranged and small made us conclude that the attribution to Yoshikage is appropriate. The blade is of a gallant *naginata-naoshi* shape and with the *kinsuji*, *sunagashi*, and other *hataraki* we have here an outstanding masterwork among all blades known by this smith.



第十七回重要刀剣指定品

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

Designated as jûyô-tôken at the 17th jûyô-shinsa

備前國長船義景

*Bizen no Kuni Osafune Yoshikage*

Osafune Yoshikage from Bizen province

大磨上無銘而薙刀直也裏ハ乱映ヲ伴フ板目ノ肌合ニ丁子主調ノ華ヤカナ乱ヲ焼キ一見吉岡一文字風ナレド表ガ乱ノ間詰マリ小模様トナリ小沸付ク點ヤ薙刀直ノ遺例ハ同工ニ多キコトナドヨリ所傳ハ首肯シ得ル者ナラン同工ハ近景ノ流ヲ汲ミ盛景トハ同族也本作ハ同工極中屈指ノ優品哉

*Ô-suriage mumei shikamo naginata-naoshi nari. Sashiura wa midare-utsuri o tomonau itame no hada-ai ni chôji-shuchô no hanayaka na midare o yaki ikken Yoshioka-Ichimonji-fû naredo omote ga midare no aida tsumari ko-moyô to nari ko-nie tsuku ten ya naginta-naoshi no irei wa dôkô ni ôki koto nado yori shoden wa shukô-shi eru mono naran. Dôkô wa Chikakage no ryû o kumi Morikage to wa dôzoku nari. Honsaku wa dôkô kiwame-chû kusshi no yûhin kana.*

This blade is ô-suriage mumei and is a naginata-naoshi. The sashi-ura side displays a forging structure in itame that is accompanied by a midare-utsuri and a flamboyant hardening in a chôji-based midareba, which bears semblance to the Yoshioka-Ichimonji style at first glance. The midare of the ura side, however, is more densely arranged and composed of smaller elements, and with the hardening in ko-nie-deki, and the fact that many naginata-naoshi exist by Yoshikage, I am in agreement with the attribution to this smith. Yoshikage belonged to the family of Morikage, who came from the lineage of Chikakage, and we have here a particularly outstanding masterwork among all blades with period attributions to this smith.

長式尺二寸九分

*Nagasa ni-shaku ni-sun kyû-bu*

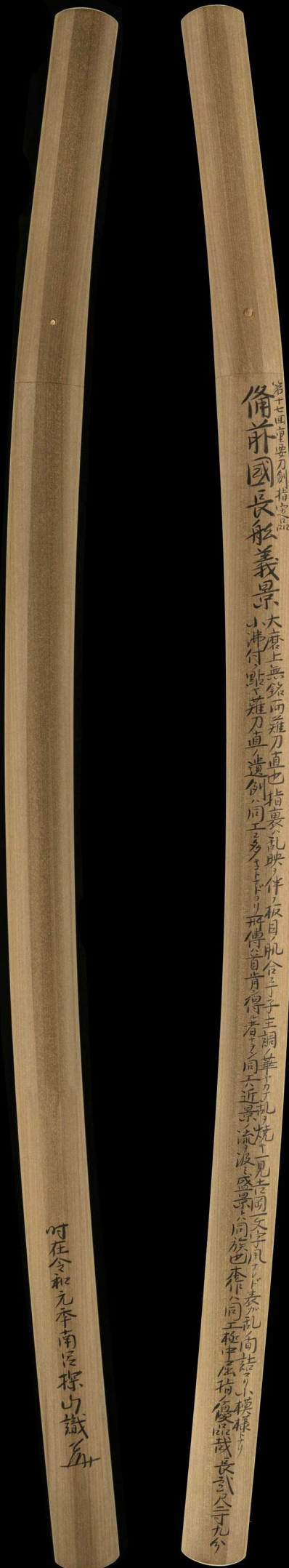
Blade length ~ 69.6 cm

時在令和元年季南呂探山識「花押」

*Jizai Reiwa gannen nanryô Tanzan shirusu + kaô*

Written by Tanzan [Tanobe Michihiro]

First year of Reiwa era (August 2019) + monogram.









When it comes to quantities of works that hold the highest ranking statuses issued by the NBTHK and designations by the Agency for Cultural Affairs, we have the following numbers for the *Osafune Yoshikage* (as per March 2024):

2 blades have been designated as a *Jûyô-Bunkazai* (Important Intangible Cultural Property)  
1 tachi, 1 wakizashi; both signed

2 blades have been designated as a *Jûyô-Bijutsuhin* (Important Art Object)  
both are katana and unsigned

3 blades have passed *Tokubetsu-Jûyô* (Especially Important Sword)  
2 katana, 1 naginata-naoshi katana)

65 blades have passed *Jûyô* (Important Sword)  
5 tachi, 52 katana [of which 17 are naginata-naoshi]  
6 wakizashi [of which 2 are naginata-naoshi], and 2 naginata

Of only four blades having been designated by the Agency of Cultural Affairs and of only three blades that passed *Tokubetsu-Jûyo*, the naginata-naoshi in question belongs to an elite group of less than ten objects that represents the greatest masterworks known by *Osafune Yoshikage*.

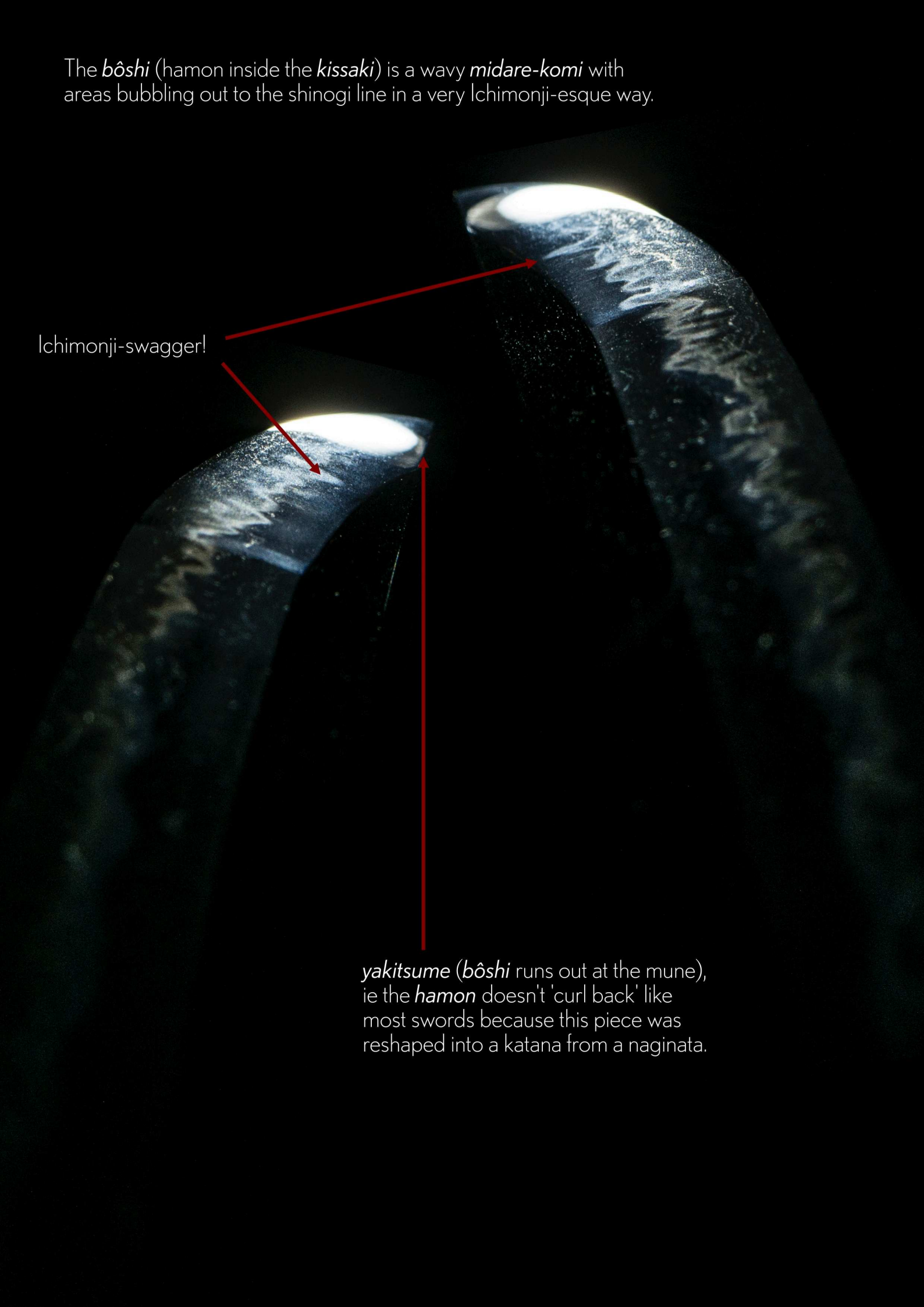
Moreover, this sword is the only *naginata-naoshi* that holds the *Tokubetsu-Jûyô* status, and as no blade of this type by Yoshikage has yet been designated a *Jûyô-Bijutsuhin*, *Jûyô-Bunkazai*, or *Kokuhô* (national treasure), this is arguably the finest *naginata-naoshi* by Yoshikage in existence.

Yoshikage is rated *ô-wazamono* for the supreme sharpness of his swords.  
This large *ô-kissaki* tapers to a razor-tip point that clearly means business.



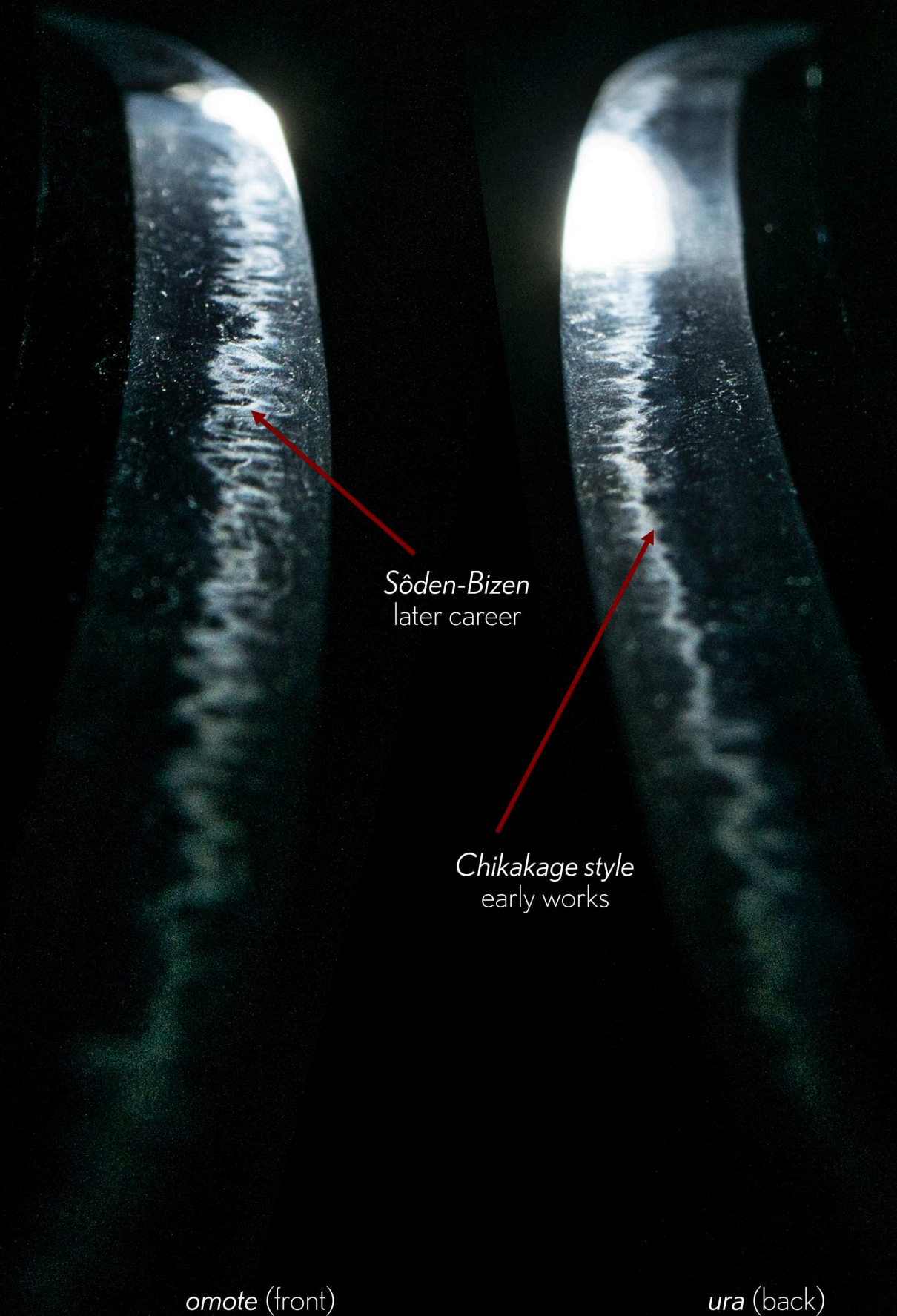
The *bôshi* (hamon inside the *kissaki*) is a wavy *midare-komi* with areas bubbling out to the shinogi line in a very Ichimonji-esque way.

Ichimonji-swagger!

A close-up photograph of a sword's hamon (wavy pattern) against a dark background. The hamon is illuminated, showing a complex, wavy pattern. Three red arrows point to specific features: one points to a 'bubbling' area near the top, another points to a 'swagger' area near the bottom, and a third points to a vertical line on the right side.

*yakitsume* (*bôshi* runs out at the mune), ie the *hamon* doesn't 'curl back' like most swords because this piece was reshaped into a katana from a naginata.

What's quite remarkable about this sword is that it personifies the life's work of Yoshikage. Early in his career, Yoshikage under the tutelage of *Osafune Chikakage*, forged a hamon that was more tightly arranged, based on *suguha* with *ko-ashi*, exactly what one sees on the *ura* (back) of this blade. Later on, Yoshikage was inspired by the energy and power of the *sôshu* tradition and hardened a hamon in *gunome-chôji* with plenty of *hataraki*, with *midare-utsuri* all characteristic of the *sôden-bizen* tradition. And this is what is delivered on the *omote* (front) side. In this unique way, Yoshikage connects the dots on a fine career.



*Sôden-Bizen*  
later career

*Chikakage style*  
early works

*omote* (front)

*ura* (back)

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

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

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





*togari*

The NBTHK certificate mentions the presence *togari* (pointed) areas, which is a feature of Mino tradition crafted swords.

This is a truly fascinating sword for its sheer range of attributes.

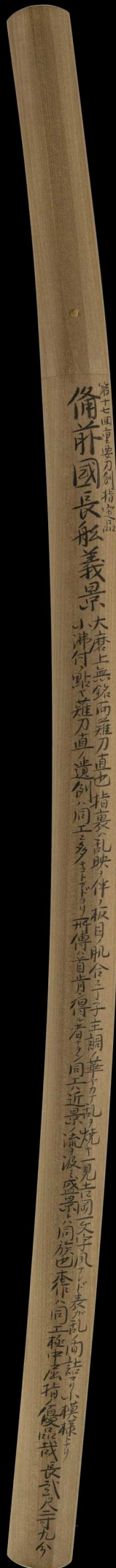
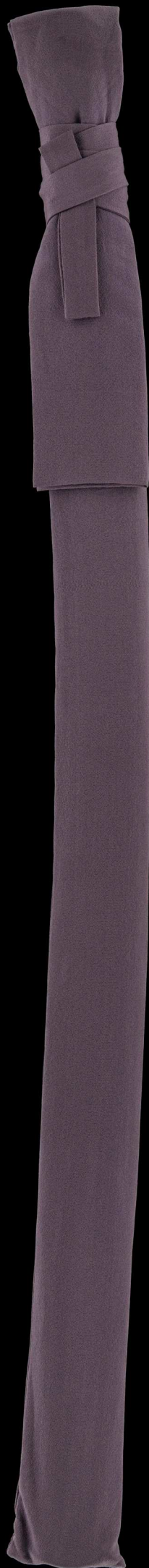
So much *hataraki* to enjoy. Swords like this will reveal something new each time you pick it up.



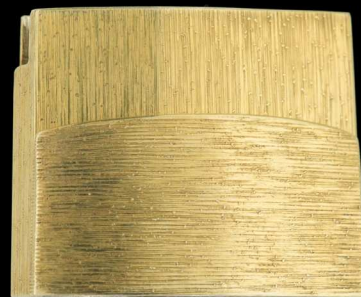
*mokume*  
rounded burl grain

*sunagashi* (flowing sands)

*kinsuji* ('golden' lines of *nie*)



Shirasaya  
(protective scabbard)

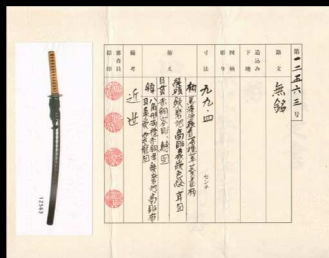


gold *ni-ju habaki* with  
crisp file marks

*Shu-kuro botan-mon nuri saya  
uchigatana-koshirae*  
(朱黒牡丹紋塗鞘打刀拵)

*Uchigatana-koshirae  
lacquered in red and black  
with peony pattern*

Crafted during modern times



NTHK-NPO Kanteisho  
Certificate of Authenticity



Beautifully lacquered red and black zen-like swirls depicting peonies adorn the *saya*. Note the antique floral pattern on the *kojiri* (cap).



This polished iron tsuba in octagonal shape in a cloud dragon design. It has been attributed to the *Nanban* school from *Nagasaki* and crafted in the middle Edo period, circa 1700s. Eight is a lucky number in Japan, and thus the shape of the tsuba is meant to bring good fortune.

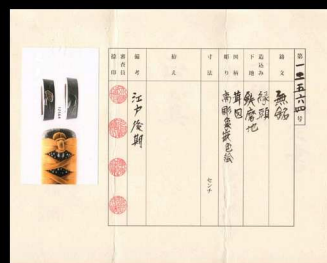


NTHK-NPO Kanteisho  
certificate of authenticity



(reverse)





NTHK-NPO Kanteisho  
Certificate of Authenticity



*Fuchi-kashira*  
attributed to  
*Late generation of Shimizu Jingo*  
(Higo province, Late Edo period)

Motif of mushrooms  
Polished iron

Mushrooms hold a special place in Japanese culture, symbolizing prosperity and the changing seasons. They're featured in festivals, art, and literature, reflecting the deep bond between the Japanese people and nature.

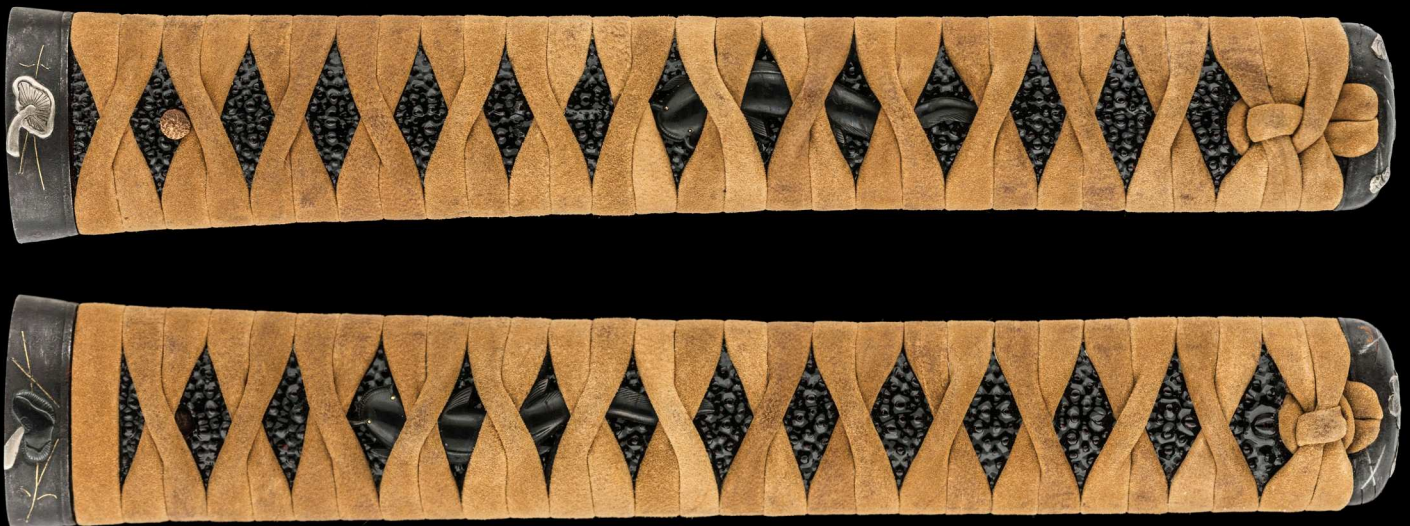


suede-leather wrap



The *menuki* display two impressively large catfish (*namazu*) swimming over the black-lacquered *samekawa* (ray skin). In Japanese mythology, the *Namazu* or *Ōnamazu* is a giant underground catfish that lives under the islands of Japan guarded by the god *Takemikazuchi* enshrined at *Kashima*, and who restrains the catfish with a stone. When the *Kashima-god* lets his guard down, *Namazu* thrashes about, causing violent earthquakes.

Interestingly, prior to the 1855 Edo earthquake, an eel fisherman reportedly spotted unusually active catfish in a river, which he took as a predictor of an earthquake. Later that night, the earthquake struck. The anecdote, recorded in an 1856 chronicle of journalistic reporting on the earthquake, is the earliest known claim that catfish can naturally predict earthquakes.





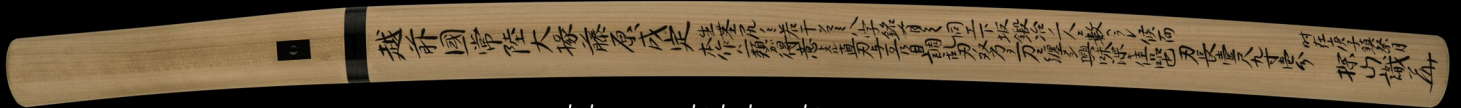
Koshirae bag with floral pattern.

# Submit, Repair, Sell & Create!

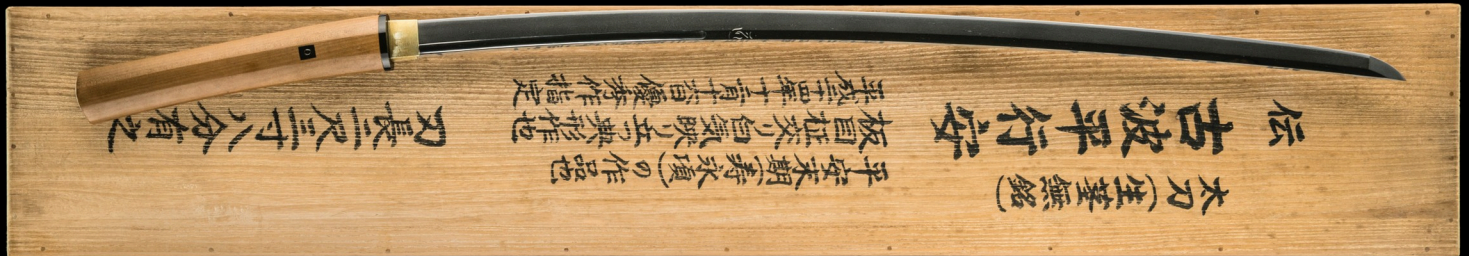
Unique Japan offers a *full-service menu* to assist clients with their Japanese swords and fittings. All services are performed in Japan with top quality craftsmen and women.

## Services include (non exhaustive):

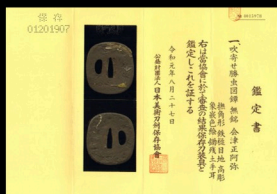
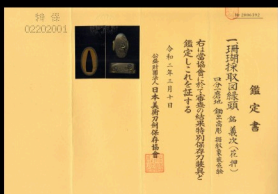
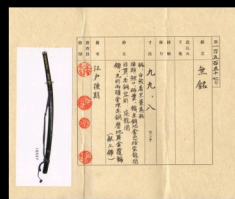
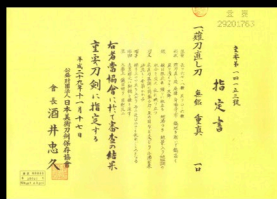
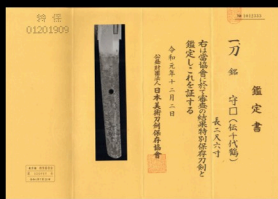
- \* NBTHK and NTHK-NPO *shinsa* certification (swords and fittings)
- \* polishing for all types of Japanese swords (standard to Jûyô-level quality polish)
- \* *shirasaya* making (standard to high quality with horn fittings)
- \* *habaki* making (gold, silver, copper in most any design pattern)
- \*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



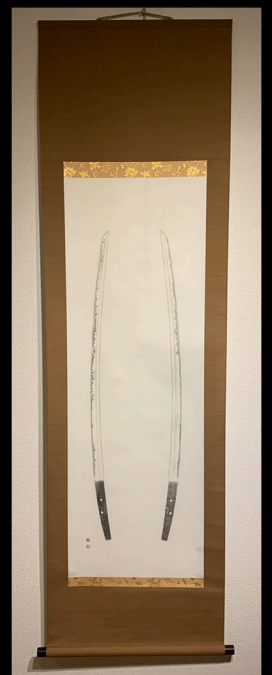
tsuka-maki



habaki creations



otoshi boxes



oshigata scrolls

All NBTHK and NTHK-NPO Shinsa authentication services



ITEM# UJKA431

## A TADAYOSHI 'CUTTING TEST' KATANA

SIGNED, EARLY EDO PERIOD (GENROKU ERA: 1700~1704)

<b>Swordsmith:</b>	<i>Hizen no Kuni Ômi Daijô Fujiwara Tadayoshi (4th gen, Hizen province)</i>
<b>Date of cut:</b>	<i>Kansei jûninen kanoe-saru jûnigatsu jûkunichi kesa-otoshi (Dec 19, 1800)</i>
<b>Measurements:</b>	<b>Length:</b> 66.7cm ( <i>ubu, machi-okuri</i> ) <b>Curvature:</b> 1.8cm <b>Moto-haba:</b> 3.2cm
<b>Jihada:</b>	<i>Vibrant mix of itame-hada and mokume-hada with ji-nie and plentiful chikei</i>
<b>Hamon:</b>	<i>Ko-gunome midare with many ko-ashi</i>
<b>Certificate #1:</b>	<b>NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon (Especially Worthy of Preservation)</b>
<b>Certificate #2-4:</b>	<b>NTHK-NPO Kanteishô (koshirae, fk and tsuba certified as Authentic)</b>
<b>Fujishiro rank:</b>	<b>Jô-saku (ranked as a superior swordsmith)</b>
<b>Authentication:</b>	<b>Sayagaki by Nozomi-san (shodô artist)</b>
<b>Included:</b>	<i>Shirasaya, Edo-koshirae, fabric bags, stand, kit, printed description</i>

**SOLD**

*Yondai (fourth generation) Tadayoshi* was a superior swordsmith from the prestigious *Tadayoshi* school in Hizen province that received the honorary title of *Ômi no Daijô* on March 10, 1700. This is an extremely sharp and powerful katana that was tested on December 19, 1800 by *Nagasaka Miki Katsuhide* severing diagonally through a human body [in one thrust] from the base of the shoulder through to the opposite armpit. A brilliant middle Edo-period *kizami* (sectioned) *koshirae* accompanies the sword with a wickedly attractive *fuchi-kashira* and *menuki* set from the *Tetsugendo* school that features a predatory spider devouring his hornet nemesis. This is a samurai sword.



Saki-kasane: 4.8mm

Moto-kasane: 7.2mm

Kissaki: 3.66cm

Saki-haba: 2.22cm

Nagasa: 66.7cm

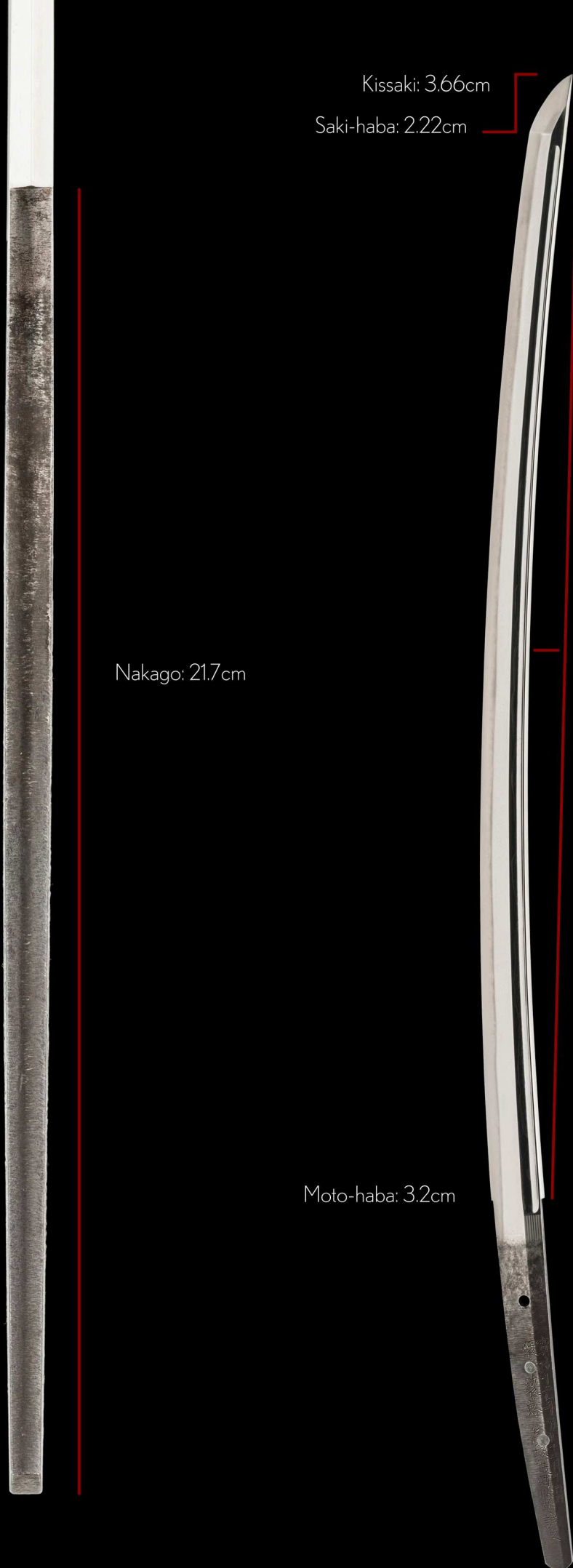
Nakago: 21.7cm

Sori: 1.80cm

Omosa: 780g

Moto-haba: 3.2cm

Mekugi-ana: 1



Born *Hashimoto Gensuke* and later known as *Shinzaburô, Yondai* (fourth generation) Tadayoshi was a superior swordsmith from the prestigious Tadayoshi school in Hizen province and the oldest son of talented *sandai* (third generation) Tadayoshi.

He received the honorary title of *Ômi no Daijô* on March 10, 1700 and after the untimely death of his father (who was just fifty years old), he then trained under his grandfather, *nidai* (second generation) Tadahiro for whom he also made *daisaku* (swords made in the name of his master). Yondai Tadayoshi died on September 9, 1747 at the age of 80.

This is an extremely sharp and powerful katana that was tested by *Nagasaka Miki Katsuhide* severing diagonally through a human body [in one thrust] from the base of the shoulder through to the opposite armpit. This *kesa-otoshi tameshigiri* cutting test was performed on December 19, 1800 and the target (a convicted criminal) may have been alive at the time of the cut. Tester *Katsuhide* was retained by the *Aizu* clan that was a domain of the *Tokugawa Shogunate* during the Edo period.

A bright *ko-gunome hamon* with a huge number of *ashi* (legs) appear like razor sharp teeth along this curvy blade with full-length grooves. A vibrant mix of *itame* and *mokume-hada* with loads of *chikei* and other *hataraki* can also be enjoyed when admiring the steel. The cutting edge has been carefully shortened by about one *shaku* (~3cm), which was done almost certainly to better accommodate the height of a previous master samurai swordsman.

A brilliant middle Edo-period *kizami* (sectioned) koshirae accompanies the sword with a wickedly attractive *fuchi-kashira* and *menuki* set from the *Tetsugendo* school that features a predatory spider devouring his hornet nemesis. This is a katana that gets the juices flowing.

Enjoy!



Location: *Hizen province*

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

Clan name: *Fujiwara*

Swordsmith: *Tadayoshi* (fourth generation)

*machi-okuri-nakago* (shortened blade length)

*kiri-yasurime* (straight file marks)

(Hi) 肥  
(zen) 前  
(Kuni) 國  
(Ô) 近  
(mi) 江  
(Dai) 大  
(jô) 掾  
(Fuji) 藤  
(wara) 原  
(Tada) 忠  
(yoshi) 吉



These two holes have been filled within the past 20 years by a previous owner.

It looks more presentable this way.

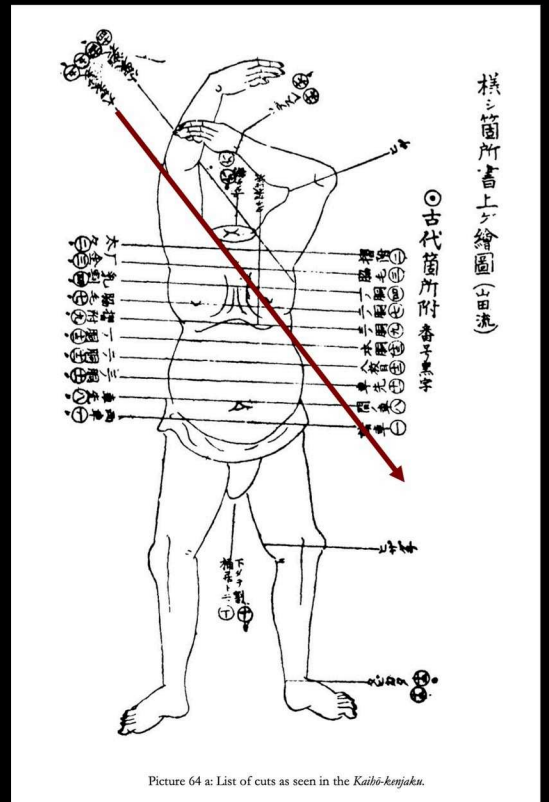
*Kansei jûninen Kanoe-Saru jûnigatsu jûkunichi Kesa-otoshi Nagasaka Miki Katsuhide kore o tamesu*

On December 19th in twelfth year of Kansei era in the Year of the Monkey (1800), this sword was tested by *Nagasaka Miki Katsuhide* severing from the base of the shoulder through to the opposite armpit.

(Ke) 袈  
 (sa) 裟  
 (otoshi) 落  
 (Naga) 長  
 (saka) 坂  
 (Mi) 造  
 (ki) 酒  
 (Katsu) 勝  
 (hide) 英  
 (tamesu) 試  
 (kore) 之



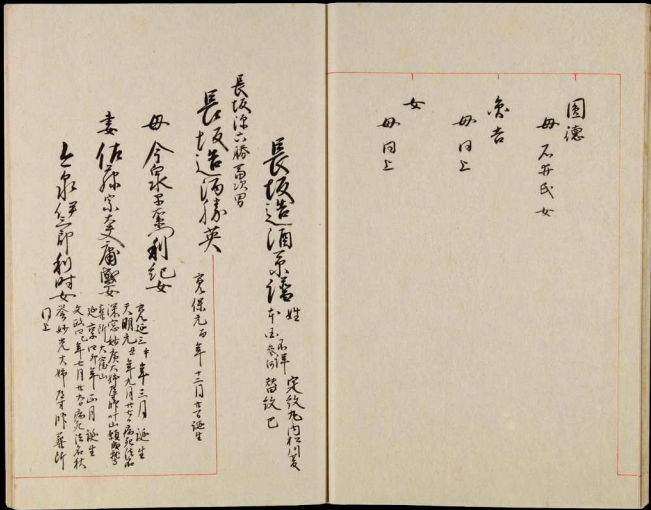
寬 (Kan)  
 政 (sei)  
 十二 (jû)  
 二 (ni)  
 年 (nen)  
 庚 (Kane)  
 申 (Saru)  
 十二 (jû)  
 月 (ni)  
 十九 (gatsu)  
 九 (jû)  
 日 (ku)  
 (nichi)



Picture 64 a: List of cuts as seen in the *Kaitô-kenjaku*.

The red diagonal line shows the trajectory of the cut. This cut can be performed on a live or dead 'target'.

Test cutter *Nagasaka Miki Katsuhide* was retained by the *Aizu* clan that was a domain of the *Tokugawa Shogunate* during the Edo period.



Above is the first page of a multi-page biography of *Nagasaka Miki Katsuhide* that has been preserved by *Aizu Wakamatsu* city. This book records each and every *Aizu* clan member from the *Edo* period.



Although a challenging read for any native Japanese speaker, we learned the following about *Nagasaka Miki Katsuhide*:

- Born in *Kanpō* era (1741)
- Salary information (he was not rich)
- Taught at a sword combat school
- Proficient at handling firearms (guns)
- Lived at least until 2nd year of *Bunsei* (1819)

15200407

No 149702



鑑定書

長二尺二寸一分

一刀銘

肥前国近江大掾藤原忠吉

(切付銘) 寛政十二年庚申十二月十九日  
袈裟落長坂造酒勝英試之

右は當協會に於て審査の結果特別保存刀劍と  
鑑定しこれを証する

平成十六年八月十三日

財団法人日本美術刀劍保存協會



# NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon Certificate of Designation

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

Issued in the 16th year of Heisei (2004), August 3th

One, Katana

Mei (signature)

*Hizen no Kuni Ômi Daijô Fujiwara Tadayoshi*  
(Kiritsuke-mei) *Kansei jûninen Kanoe-Saru jûnigatsu jûkunichi*  
*Kesa-otoshi Nagasaka Miki Katsuhide kore o tamesu*

Nagasa (length)

2-shaku 2-sun 1-bu (66.7cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai  
(NBTHK)



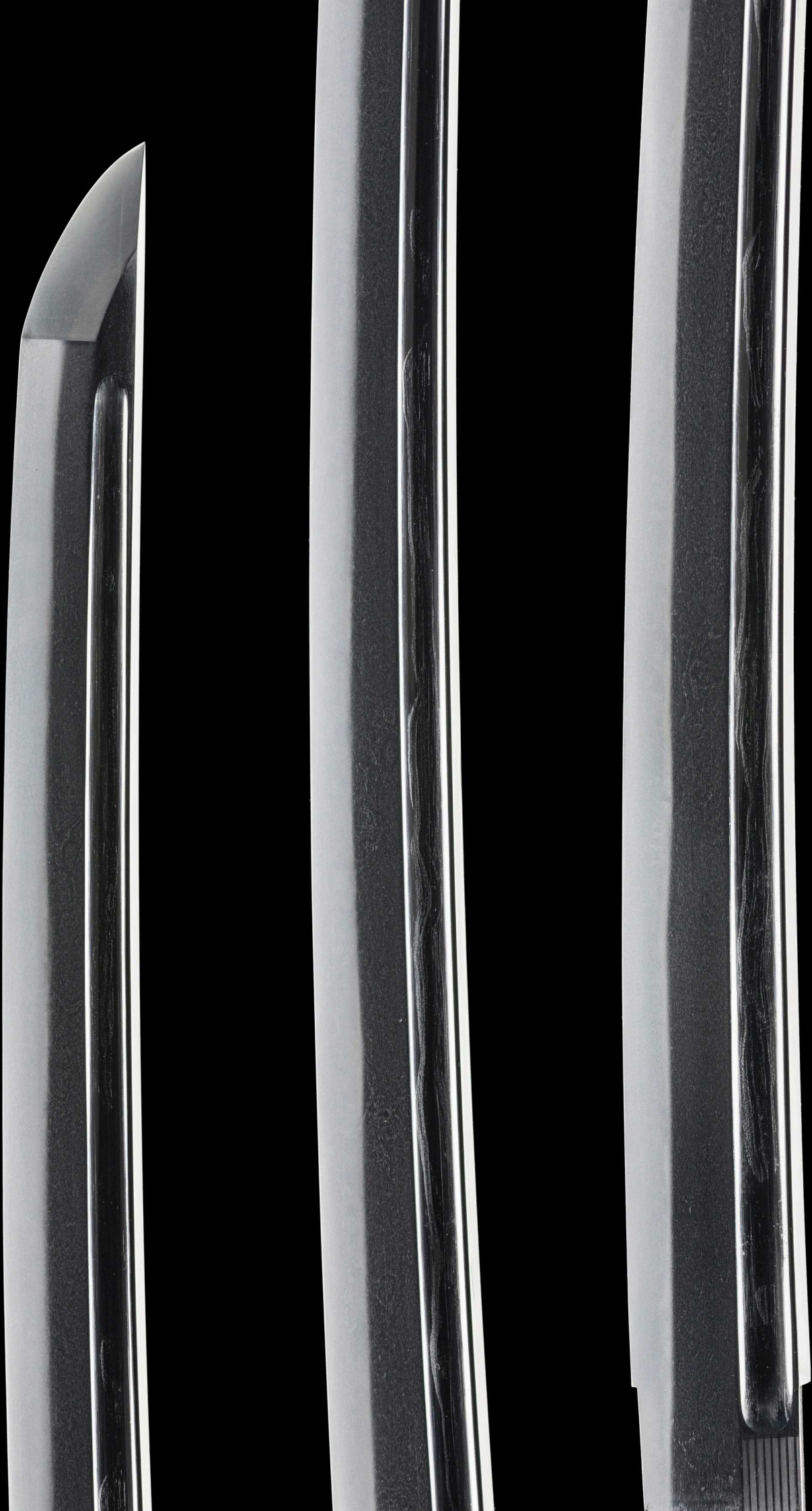
肥前国近江大掾藤原忠吉  
*Hizen no Kuni Ōmi Daijō Fujiwara Tadayoshi*  
Ōmi Daijō Fujiwara Tadayoshi from Hizen Province

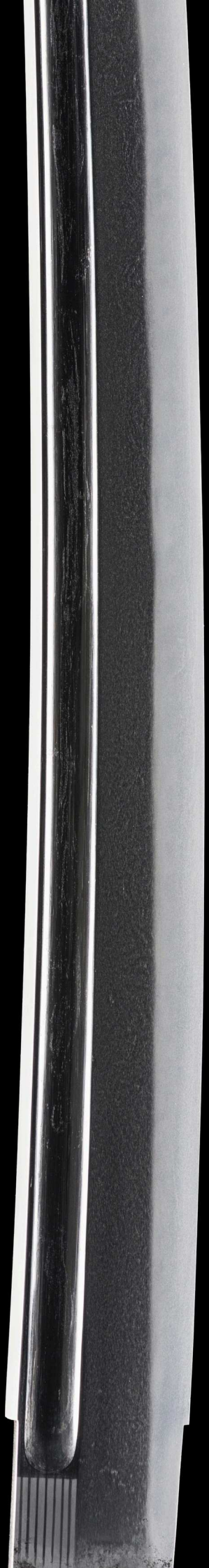
四代作也時代元禄頃  
*Yondai saku nari jidai Genroku-goro*  
Crafted by the 4th generation around Genroku era  
(1688~1704)


寛政十二年庚申十二月十九日袈裟落長坂造酒勝  
英試之  
*Kansei jūninen kanoe-saru jūnigatsu jūkunichi kesa-otoshi*  
*Nagasaka Miki Katsuhide kore o tamesu*  
On December 19th in Kansei 12, the Year of the Monkey  
(1800), the sword was tested by Nagasaka Miki Katsuhide  
severing from the base of the shoulder through to the armpit  
of the opposite arm.

刃長貳尺二寸一分有之  
*Hachō 2-shaku 2-sun 1-bu kore ari*  
Blade length 66.7 cm

令和六甲辰年卯月吉日誌之  
*Reiwa roku kinoe-tatsudoshi Yayoi kichijitsu kore o shirusu*  
Written on a lucky day in the fourth month in the sixth year of  
Reiwa era during the Year of the Dragon (April 2024).





A close-up photograph of a sword's blade, showing the intricate hatched pattern (jihada) on the surface. The blade is dark and metallic, with a bright reflection of light along its edge. A red rectangular box highlights a specific section of the blade, and a red line points from the text to this box.

A close-up of the *jihada*.

*Itame-hada*, *mokume-hada*,  
an abundance of *chikei*, all  
expertly forged in every sense.

Here is a good view of the dark lines of interwoven *chikei* inside the *ji* (body) of the sword. This jihada is not the typical tightly forged *konuka-hada* that one sees on many Hizen blades. This piece has a bit more 'character' in that there is wood grain patterns of *itame* and *mokume* that can be enjoyed.



*chikei*

A bright *ko-gunome hamon* with a huge number of *ashi* (legs) appear like razor sharp teeth.



*ashi* attack!

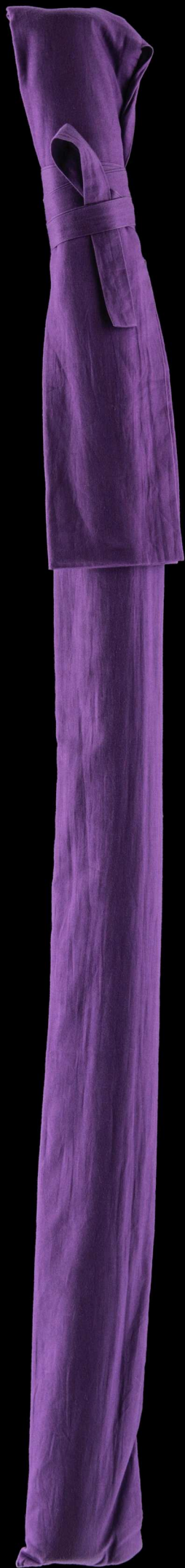




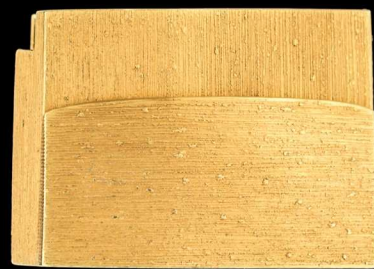
This sword holds a predatorial power. It's weighty, and oh so sharp...



yo (leaves)



*Shirasaya*  
(protective scabbard)

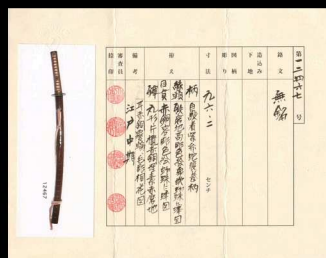


gold *niju habaki* with  
kiri file marks

*Cha-urushi-nuri  
issun-kizami saya  
uchigatana-koshirae*  
(茶漆塗一寸刻鞘打刀拵)

*Uchigatana-koshirae  
lacquered in brown  
notched in every 3 cm*

Crafted during the  
Middle Edo period  
(1700~1780)



NTHK-NPO Kanteisho  
Certificate of Authenticity

(Shô) 正  
 (a) 阿  
 (mi) 弥  
 (Kane) 金  
 (naga) 永

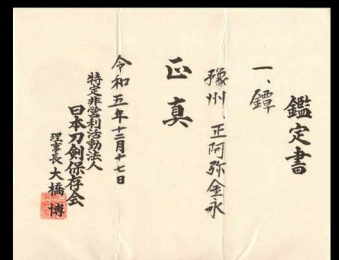
豫 (Yo)  
 州 (shû)  
 松 (Matsu)  
 山 (yama)  
 住 (jû)



This weighty copper tsuba was crafted and signed by metalsmith *Kanenaga* from *Iyo* province from the *Shôami* school. He was a resident of *Matsuyama*, present-day *Ehime* prefecture on the island of *Shikoku*.

The design is that of *kiri* (paulownia). Paulownia is the upper-class *mon* (seal) of the office of prime minister, and also serves as the government seal of Japan used by the cabinet and the government of Japan.

The rim is reinforced with *fukurin* and one *hitsu-ana* hole is filled with *shakudô*.





(reverse)



*Fuchi-kashira*  
attributed to  
*Tetsugendô school*  
Late Edo period

A spider devouring a hornet.



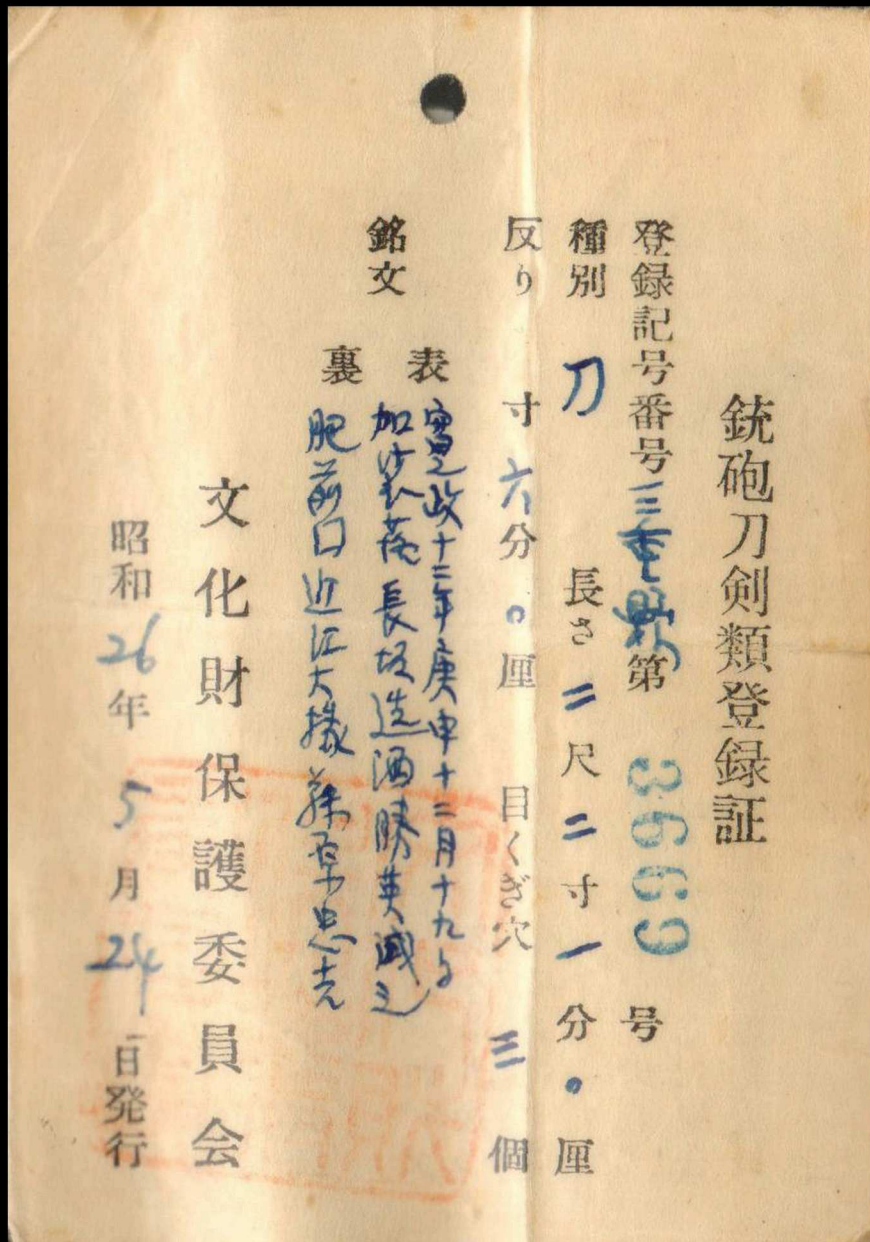


Dinner time.



*The menuki* continues the theme of a spider making a meal of the hornet. Note the beautifully braided *tsuka* (hilt) wrapped in traditional *jabara-maki*.





This is the original *torokusho* (registration card) for the *Tadayoshi katana*. The card was registered in the 26th year of Showa (May 24, 1951).

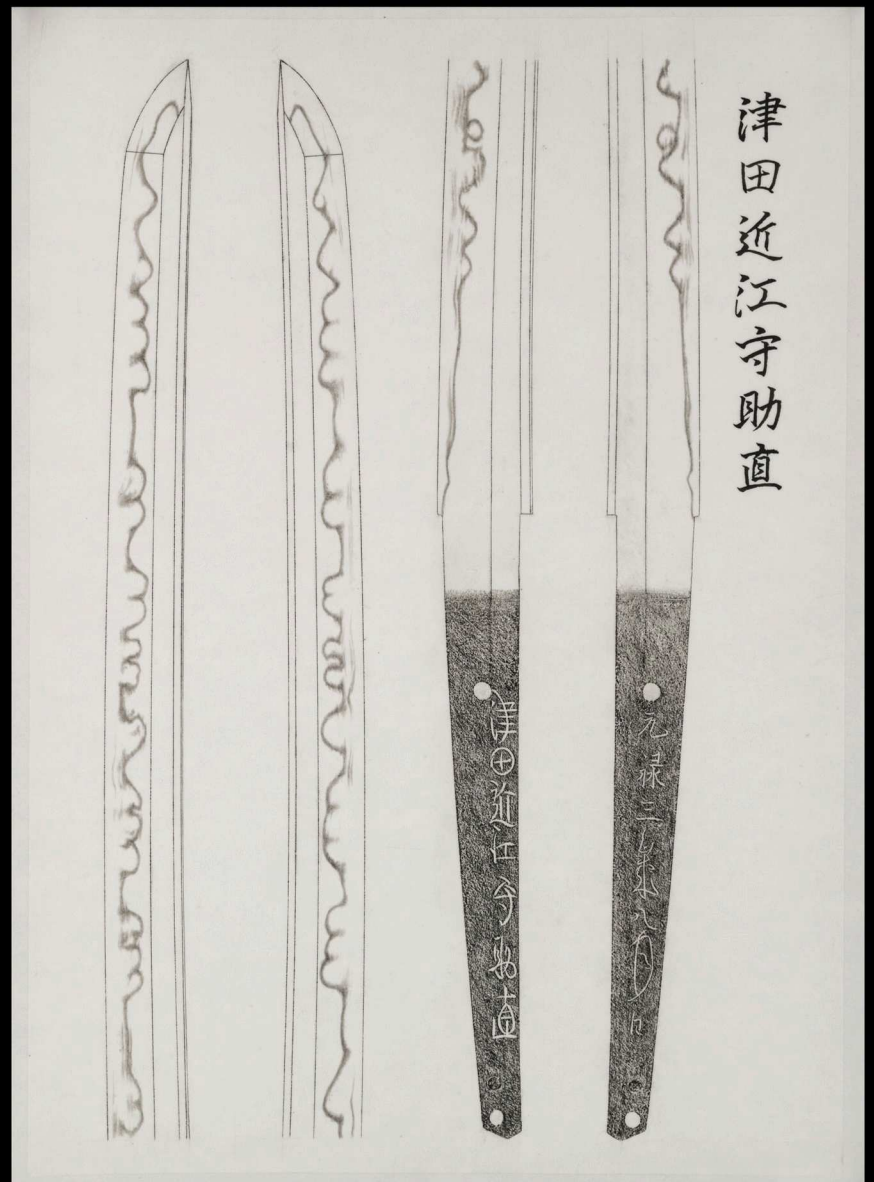
This is significant as 1951 was the very first year that swords were formally registered in Japan. Many former *daimyō* (powerful lord) families were invited to submit their collections suggesting this blade was once held by a prominent family.

The serial number is just 3669, one of the very first swords registered in Japan.



Koshirae bag

We have a new service offering at Unique Japan! Below is an A3 size hand-drawn *oshigata* (tracing) of the *hamon* and *nakago* for the ujka427 *Sukenao katana* dated to August 1690. Professionally produced and the perfect size to frame as you like at your home or office. Makes an impact! Email Unique Japan ([service@uniquejapan.com](mailto:service@uniquejapan.com)) for further information.





ITEM# UJKA443

## A HIZEN MASASHIGE KATANA

SIGNED, EARLY EDO PERIOD (ENPÔ ERA: 1673~1679)

<b>Swordsmith:</b>	<i>Hizen no kuni Saga jû Masashige (Shodai Shinryô, Hizen province)</i>
<b>Measurements:</b>	<b>Length:</b> 70.5cm ( <i>ubu</i> ) <b>Curvature:</b> 1.2 cm <b>Moto-haba:</b> 2.96cm
<b>Jihada:</b>	<i>Well forged ko-itame-hada with masame-hada and plentiful chikei</i>
<b>Hamon:</b>	<i>Bright gunome-midare with sunagashi and kinsuji</i>
<b>Certificate #1:</b>	<b>NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon</b> (Especially Worthy of Preservation)
<b>Certificate #2-4:</b>	<b>NTHK-NPO Kanteishô</b> ( <i>koshirae, fk and tsuba certified as Authentic</i> )
<b>Fujishiro rank:</b>	<b>Chûjô-saku</b> ( <i>ranked as an above-average swordsmith</i> )
<b>Sharpness:</b>	<b>Wazamono</b> (maker of sharp swords)
<b>Included:</b>	Shirasaya, Edo-koshirae, fabric bags, stand, kit, printed description

## SOLD

Born *Doi Sakuzaeon*, in 1680 swordsmith *Masashige* made the voyage from his home in *Hizen* province to *Ôsaka* to study under grandmaster swordsmith *Inoue Shinkai*. Two years later, he returned to *Hirado* in *Hizen* with the name *Shinryô* adopting *Shinkai*'s style of sword making. This handsome katana is forged with a mixture of *masame* and *ko-itame-hada*. Under the light, the sword bursts open with a beautifully bright *gunome-midare hamon* with eye-catching brush strokes of *sunagashi*. A classic black-lacquered Edo period samurai *koshirae* houses the sword with an elegant chrysanthemum designed *sukashi tsuba*, a lovely *fuchi-kashira* with an oak leaf *kamon* by the famed *Yoshioka* school and terrific set of *menuki* that feature a snake entwined around seashells. This is a rather rare opportunity to acquire a sword very early in an influential swordsmith's career.



Saki-kasane: 4.4mm

Moto-kasane: 6.9mm

Omosa: 780g

Kissaki: 2.66cm  
Saki-haba: 1.75cm

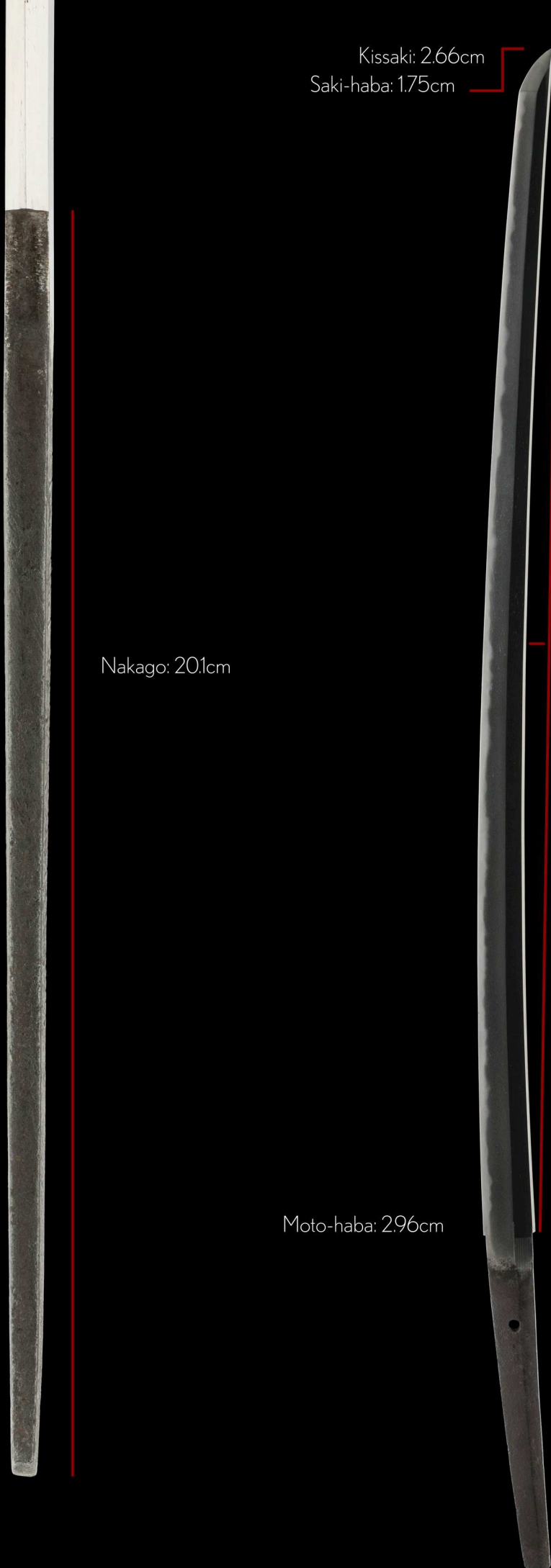
Nakago: 20.1cm

Moto-haba: 2.96cm

Nagasa: 70.5cm

Sori: 1.20cm

Mekugi-ana: 1



Born *Doi Sakuzaemon*, swordsmith *Masashige* was son of *Hizen Hirado Doi Masanori*, and first signed swords with the name Masashige. In 1680 Masashige made the big trip from Hirado in Hizen province in southern *Kyûshû* to *Settsu (Ôsaka)*, a journey of over 700 km (435 miles), to study under grandmaster swordsmith *Inoue Shinkai* to further sharpen his skills.

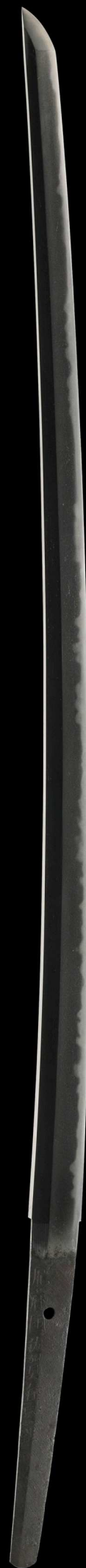
Two years of formal apprenticeship later, Shinkai (nicknamed *Ôsaka Masamune*) died unexpectedly at the age of 53 in the second year of *Tenna* era (1682). That same year, in honour of his teacher, Masashige took the name *Shinryô* and returned to *Hirado* and adopted Shinkai's style of sword workmanship. Six generations of swordsmiths followed in his footsteps in Hizen each passing on the Shinryô name.

This handsome katana is forged with an interesting mixture of *masame* and *ko-itame-hada*. Under the light, the sword bursts open with a beautifully bright *gunome-midare hamon* with eye-catching brush strokes of *sunagashi*. Masashige's young skills were clearly all there, ready to be strengthened by Shinkai.

A classic black-lacquered Edo period samurai koshirae houses the sword with an elegant chrysanthemum designed *sukashi tsuba*, a lovely *fuchi-kashira* with an oak leaf *kamon* by the famed *Yoshioka* school and a terrific set of *menuki* that feature a snake entwined around seashells.

Masashige (*Shinryô*) is ranked as a *chûjô-saku* (an above average smith) by *Fujishiro* and gained *wazamono* status for his sharp sword-making prowess.

This is a rather rare opportunity to acquire a sword very early in a swordsmith's career. One could further enhance such a collection with a sword when he later signed Shinryô or even go large with a Shinkai katana.



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

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

肥 (Hi)  
前 (zen, no)  
國 (Kuni)  
佐 (Sa)  
賀 (ga)  
住 (jū)  
正 (Masa)  
重 (shige)

Signature on tachi side of the nakago,  
typical of swords from Hizen province.





An illustration said to be of 5th generation *Shinryô*.

This katana is signed *Masashige* when he was living in the city of *Saga* in *Hizen* province and before *Masashige* travelled to *Ôsaka* to train under grandmaster *Inoue Shinkai* in 1680, subsequently changing his name to *Shinryô*. He later returned to *Hizen* in *Kyûshû* to live in the coastal area of *Hiradô*.

A vertical, tapered metal blade, likely a traditional Japanese sword component, shown against a black background. The blade is wider at the top and tapers to a rounded, chestnut-shaped tip. A small circular hole is visible on the left side of the blade. The surface has a textured, slightly mottled appearance. A red arrow points from the text 'crisp hole in nakago' to the hole, and another red arrow points from the text 'kurijiri nakagojiri (chestnut shaped)' to the tip. The text '(ura, reverse)' is located to the right of the blade.

crisp hole in nakago

(*ura*, reverse)

*kurijiri nakagojiri* (chestnut shaped)

特 保  
03302103

№ 1015816



鑑定書

一 刀 銘 肥前国佐賀住正重

長 二又三寸三分弱

右は當協會に於て審査の結果特別保存刀剣と  
鑑定しこれを証する

令和三年五月二十四日

公益財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協會



京都府 教育委員会  
第 54447 号  
平成16年8月3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, Katana

*Mei* (signature)

*Hizen no Kuni Saga jû Masashige*

*Nagasa* (length)

2-shaku 3-sun 3-bu jaku (70.5cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai  
(NBTHK)



土肥真了前銘

*Doi Shinryô zenmei*

The former signature of *Doi Shinryô*

肥前國佐賀住正重

*Hizen no Kuni Saga jû Masashige*

Masashige, a resident of Saga in Hizen Province

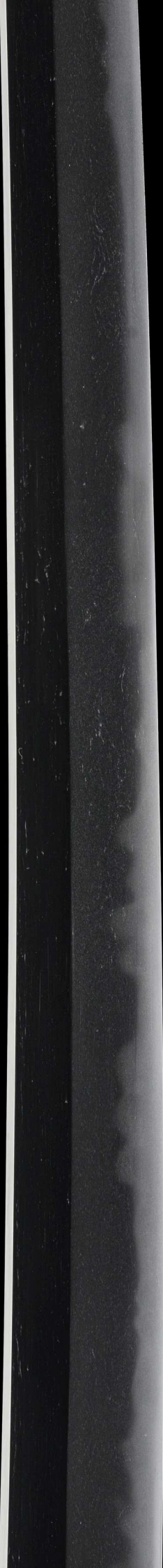
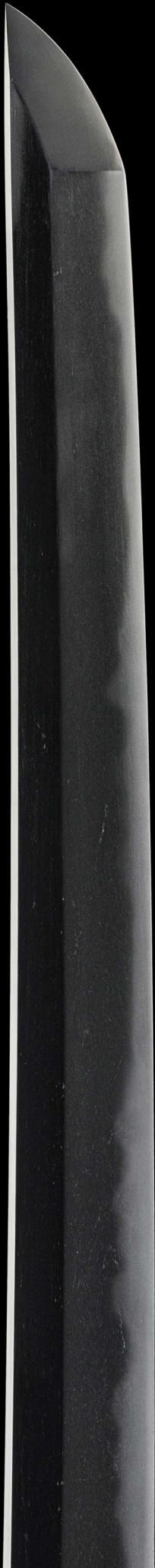
二尺三寸二分

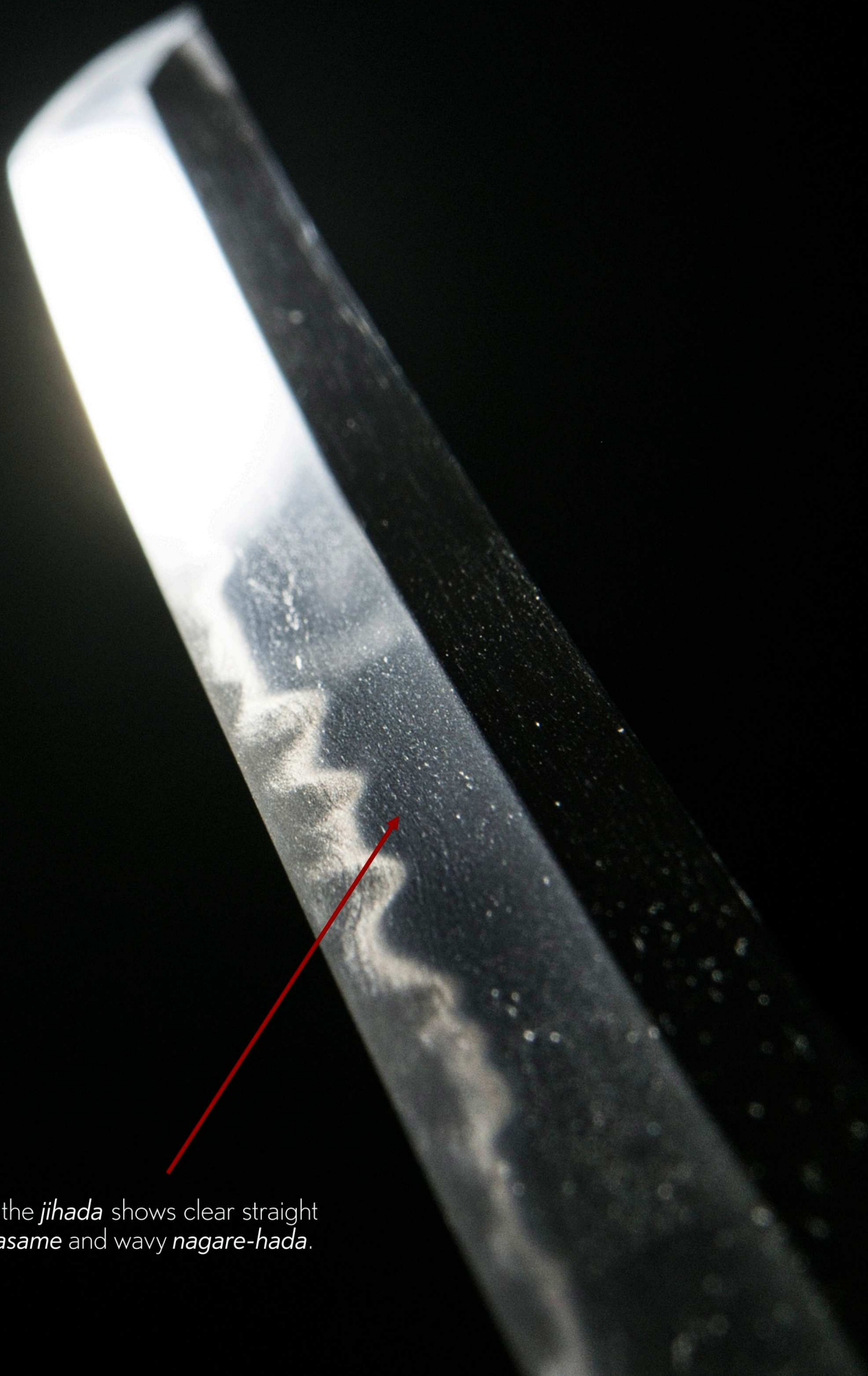
二尺三寸二分

*2-shaku 3-sun 2-bu*

Blade length ~70.5 cm







Parts of the *jihada* shows clear straight grain *masame* and wavy *nagare-hada*.



*Ko-itame hada* with dark lines of *chikei*.



No evidence of *Ôsaka-yakidashi*, thus prior to working under *Shinkai*.

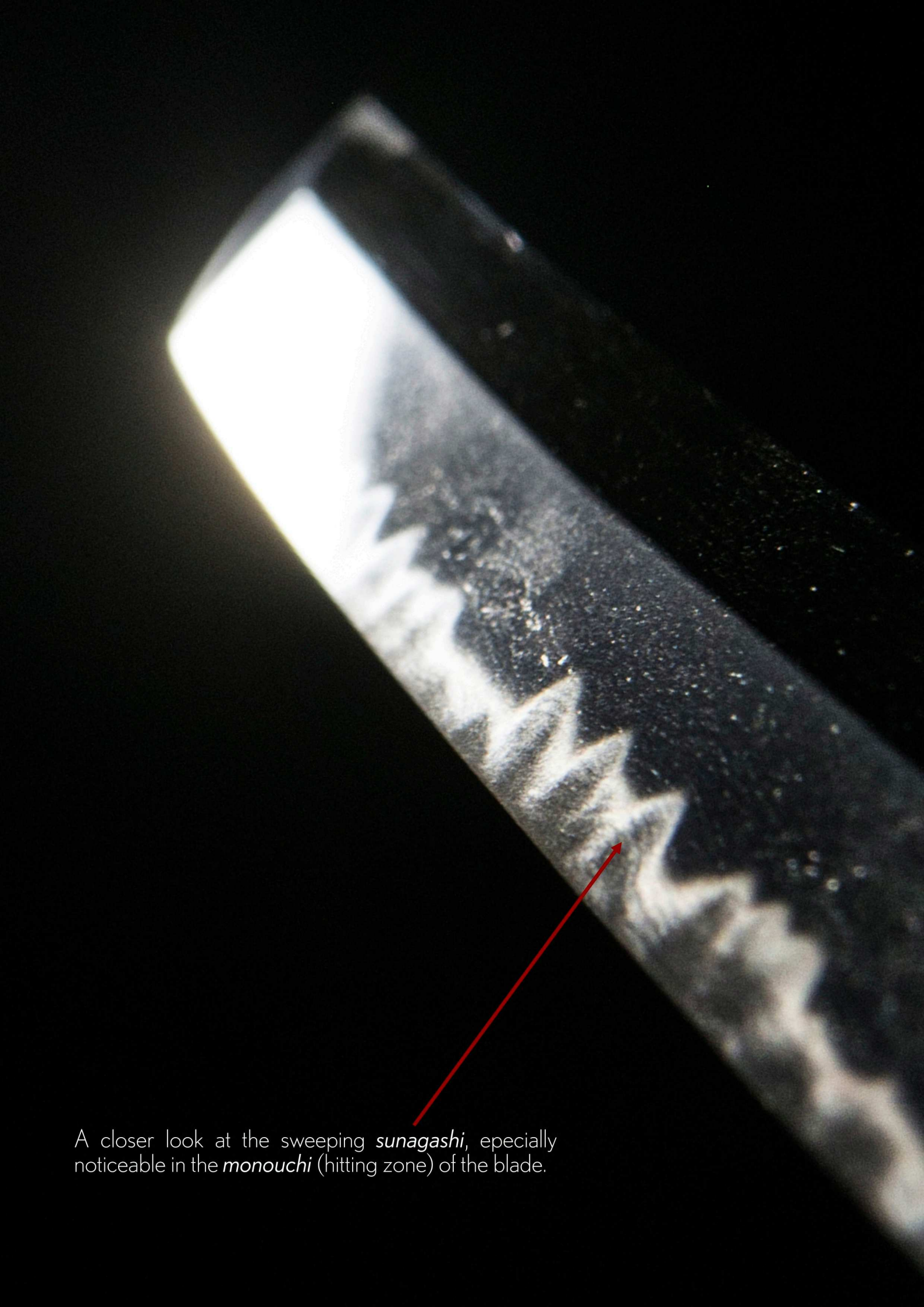


super *sunagashi*



A vibrant *gunome-midare hamon* with surging peaks and valleys.

*kinsuji* 



A closer look at the sweeping *sunagashi*, especially noticeable in the *monouchi* (hitting zone) of the blade.



*Shirasaya*  
(protective scabbard)



gold *habaki* with  
falling rain file marks

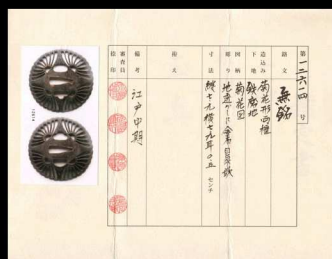




This attractive polished iron tsuba has been attributed to the *Kyô-Shôami* school from *Yamashiro (Kyôto)* province.

Its unique *sukashi* (openwork) design features elegantly arranged motifs of chrysanthemums.

Middle Edo period  
circa 1700s





*Fuchi-kashira*  
attributed to  
*Yoshioka Shigetsugu*

Late *Edo* period  
(1780-1867)

This beautiful *fuchi-kashira* displays the *Mitsukashiwa-mon* (oak leaves), a popular motif with *daimyô* families during the Edo period such as the *Yamauchi family* from *Tosa* clan, *Makino family* from *Nagaoka* clan.



This rare set of *shakudô menuki* depicts a snake wrapping itself around a shell. Masashige worked in coastal Hizen province so these menuki work with his story.



History in your hands.





Koshirae bag  
with fan design



ITEM# UJKA444

## A KANABÔ MASATSUGU KATANA

UNSIGNED, LATE MUROMACHI PERIOD (EIROKU ERA: 1558~1570)

<b>Swordsmith:</b>	<i>Kanabô Masatsugu (Yamato province)</i>
<b>Measurements:</b>	<b>Length:</b> 74.7cm ( <i>ubu</i> ) <b>Curvature:</b> 1.6cm <b>Moto-haba:</b> 3.29cm <b>Weight:</b> 800g
<b>Jihada:</b>	<i>Masame-hada with mokume-hada with ji-nie and chikei</i>
<b>Hamon:</b>	<i>Bright mixture of ko-midare, ko-chôji, togari-ba with sunagashi and kinsuji</i>
<b>Certificate #1:</b>	<b>NBTHK Hozon (Worthy of Preservation)</b>
<b>Certificate #2-4:</b>	<b>NTHK-NPO Kanteishô (koshirae, fk and tsuba certified as Authentic)</b>
<b>Authentication:</b>	<b>Sayagaki by Nozomi-san (shodô artist)</b>
<b>Included:</b>	<i>Shirasaya, Edo-koshirae, fabric bags, stand, kit, printed description</i>

**SOLD**

The *Kanabô* school began producing swords in the *Daiei* era (1521~1528) with their origins stemming from the *Yamato Sue-Tegai* school. They enjoyed a reputation for being expert makers of spears, including the *jumonji-yari*. This long, powerful katana has been attributed to *Kanabô Masatsugu* and shows exactly why *Kanabô* swords were prized among samurai warriors as dependable battle-tested blades. Its hefty and impressive *nagasa* of 74.7cm is dominated with a *ô-kissaki* that is just shy of 10cm (4 inches) in length. Wonderful straight-grain *masame-hada* with wood-grain pools of *mokume-hada* and loads of *sunagashi* fill this dynamic blade. The hamon is a wild mix of *Sue-Bizen* and *Mino* traditions with a number of spiking *togari-ba* (peaks). A handsome set of *koshirae* from the late Edo period further compliments the sword with an elegant *sukashi tsuba* with flying geese in the rain, a charming *shakudô* wave dragon *fuchi-kashira* and oversized *menuki* with *shisa* lions and peonies. This is a sword that will stand tall in anyone's *nihonto* collection.



Saki-kasane: 2.9mm

Moto-kasane: 5.00mm

Omosa: 800g

Kissaki: 9.93cm

Saki-haba: 2.88cm

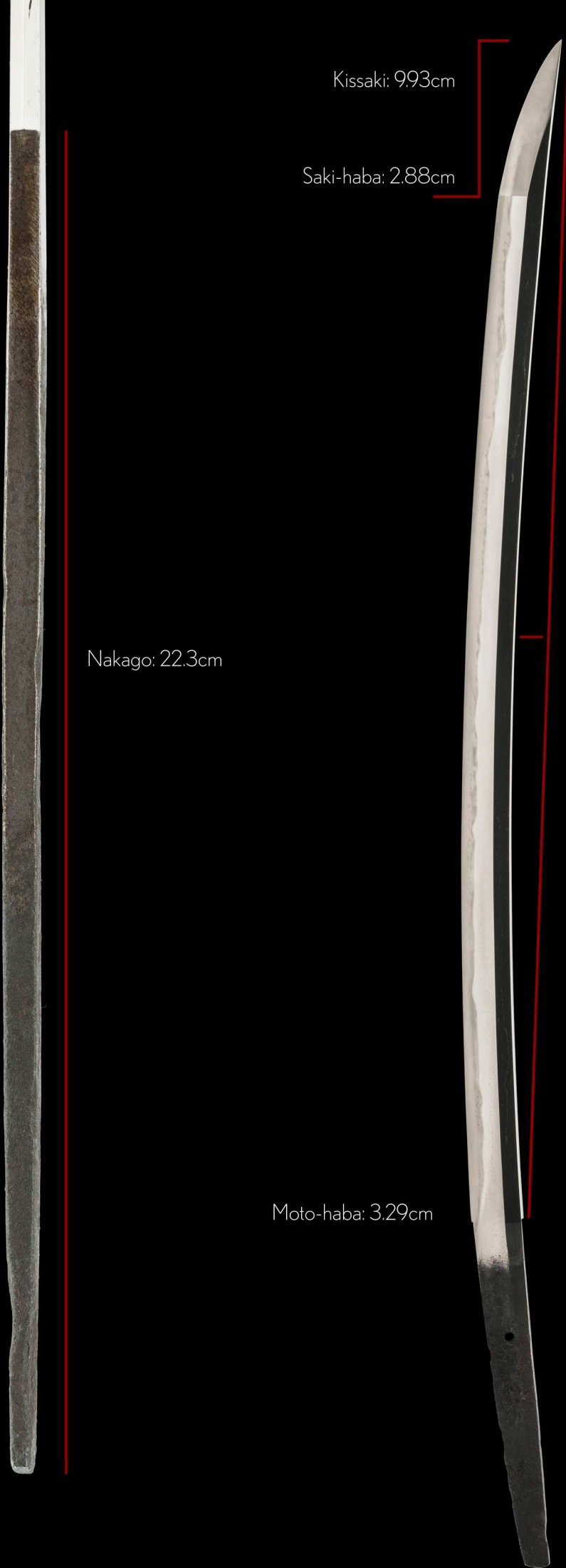
Nakago: 22.3cm

Moto-haba: 3.29cm

Nagasa: 74.7cm

Sori: 1.60cm

Mekugi-ana: 1



The *Kanabô* school is said to have begun producing swords in the *Daiei* era (1521~1528) and its smiths seem to have used "*Kanabô*" as their family name. The origins of the school point to *Shinya Masanaga* and *Fujiwara Masanaga* of the Yamato *Sue-Tegai* school. Leading smiths of the Kanabo school included *Masashige*, *Masasada*, *Masakiyo* and *Masatsugu*. The Kanabô smiths had a reputation for being expert makers of spears, including the *jumonji-yari*.


This big boy of a katana is a textbook example of why Kanabô swords enjoyed a reputation with samurai warriors as dependable battle-tested blades. A shape that is strong and stout, shallow in curvature, wonderfully sharp, a wide *mihaba* (width), thick *kasane*, and a massive *ô-kissaki* that means business.

The long and powerful katana has been attributed to Masatsugu that worked in the *Eiroku* era (1558~1570). Its impressive *nagasa* of 74.7cm is dominated with a *ô-kissaki* that is just shy of 10cm (4 inches) in length. Wonderful straight-grain *masame-hada* with *nagare-hada* and loads of *sunagashi* fill the blade. The *hamon* is a mix of styles, which is typical of Kanabô swords, but closest to Sue-Bizen and Mino in flavour with a number of spiking *togariba* (peaks) in the temper line.

As the sword is unsigned and from the late Muromachi period, it can only ever be granted NBTHK Hozon. However, make no mistake, this hefty well-aged *ubunakago* katana has plenty of character and pizzazz of any Tokubetsu Hozon level sword.

This sword comes with a handsome set of koshirae from the late Edo period with a fine *sukashi tsuba* featuring flying geese in the rain, a charming *shakudô* wave dragon *fuchi-kashira* and oversized *menuki* depicting *shisa* lions and peonies. This is a very cool katana that will stand proudly in any *nihonto* collection.



The image shows two vertical views of a sword blade, likely a nakago, against a black background. The blade is dark, heavily rusted, and has a hole near the base. The top part of the blade is lighter, showing some texture and possibly a signature area that has been rusted away. The blade is positioned on the left and right sides of the frame, with a central area containing text.

By the look and condition of this nakago, one might conclude that it is a very old sword, potentially from the mid-1300s *Nanbokuchō* period. However, the NBTHK has deemed it from the 1500s *Kanabo* school from the late Muromachi period, and the blade itself certainly showcases all such attributes. Still this nakago sure does look older!

Although not signed, there may have been a signature at some point that has been rusted away. This is certainly an *ubu-nakago* sword given the one hole and the overall long length of the sword.

All told, this nakago shows age and character, it's great to see.

02202009

No 3025058



鑑定書

一刀無銘（金房政次）

右は當協會に於て審査の結果保存刀剣と  
鑑定しこれを証する

令和二年十一月九日

公益財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協會



長野県 教育委員会  
第 92022 号  
令和2年7月8日

## NBTHK Hozon Certificate of Designation

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

Issued in the 2nd year of Reiwa (2020), November 9th

One, Katana

*Mumei* (unsigned)  
*Kanabô Masatsugu*

*Nagasa* (length)  
2-shaku 4-sun 7-bu jaku (74.7cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai  
(NBTHK)



無銘  
*Mumei*  
Unsigned

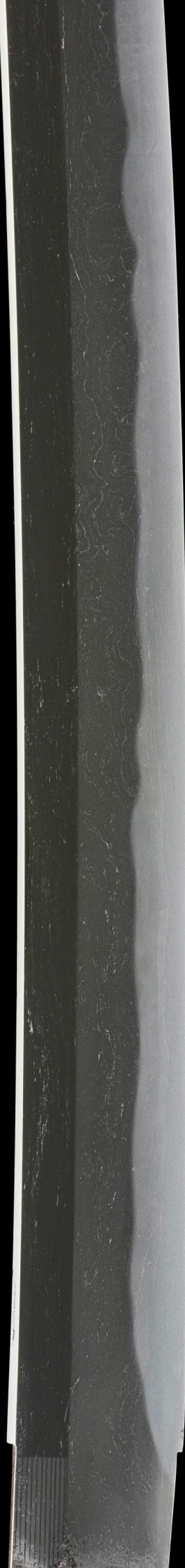
金房政次  
*Kanabô Masatsugu*  
Kanabô Masatsugu

時代永禄頃  
*Jidai Eiroku goro*  
Crafted circa Eiroku period (1558~1570)

刃長貳尺四寸七分弱有之  
*Hachô 2-shaku 4-sun 7-bu jaku kore ari*  
Blade length 74.7 cm

令和六甲辰年卯月吉日誌之  
*Reiwa roku kinoe-tatsudoshi Uzuki kichijitsu kore o shirusu*  
Written on a lucky day in the fourth month in the sixth year of  
Reiwa era during the Year of the Dragon (April 2024).





*Oh-kissaki!*



9.93cm

Great view of the straight grain *masame-hada* with the *ko-chôji* like hamon that is similar to Sue-Bizen works of the late Muromachi period.



*masame-hada*

The Mino-tradition is synonymous with *togari-ba*, where the hamon comes to points or peaks. We certainly see such an influence in this blade.

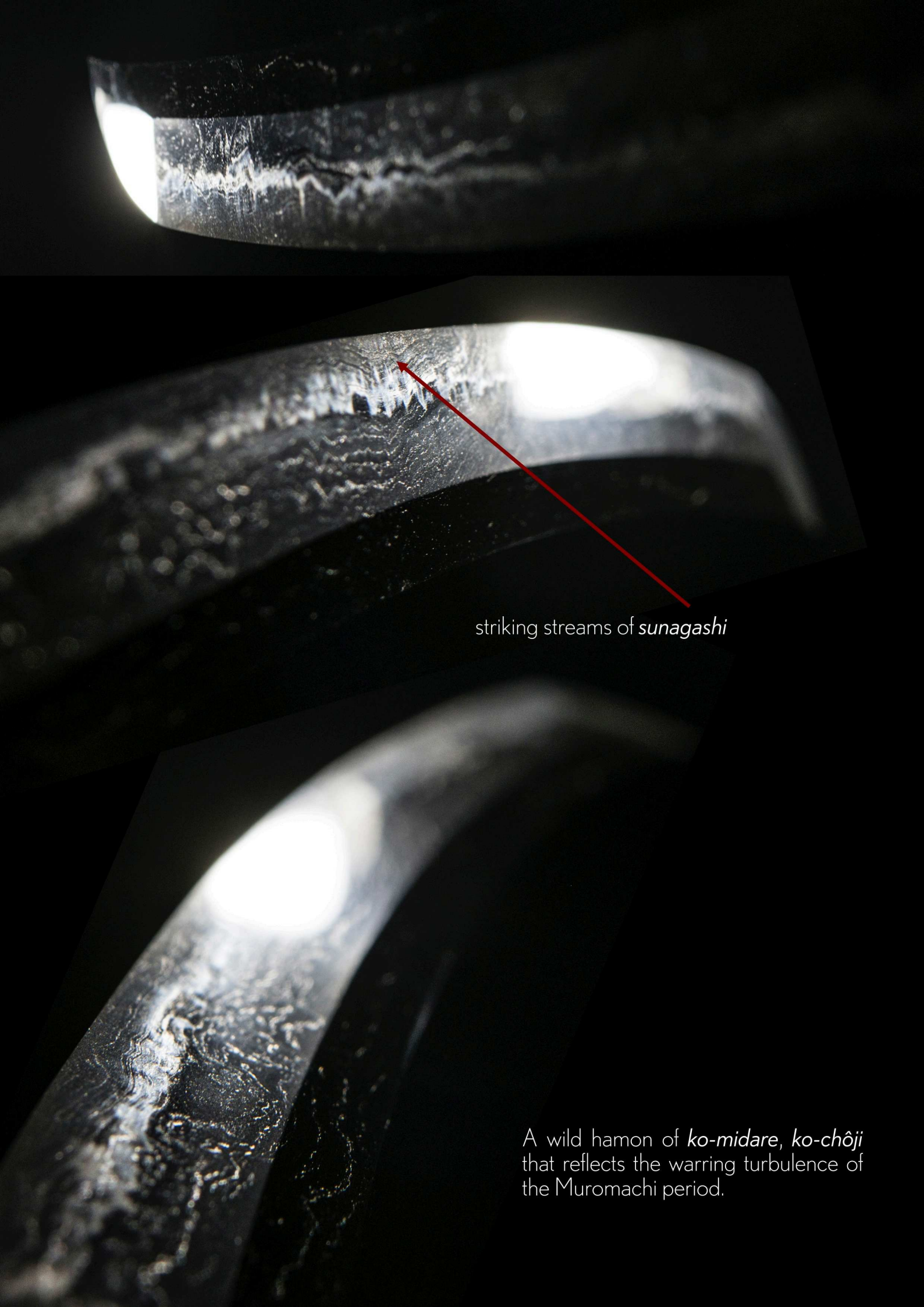
*togari-ba*





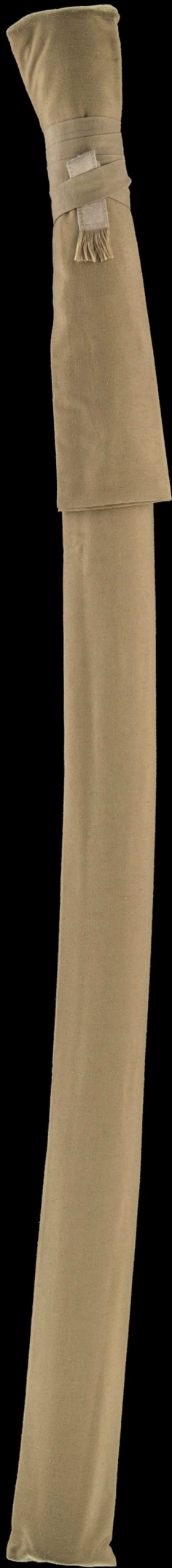
The light show continues.

Rounded *mokume-hada*  
resembling rings of a tree.



striking streams of *sunagashi*

A wild hamon of *ko-midare*, *ko-chôji* that reflects the warring turbulence of the Muromachi period.



*Shirasaya*  
(protective scabbard)

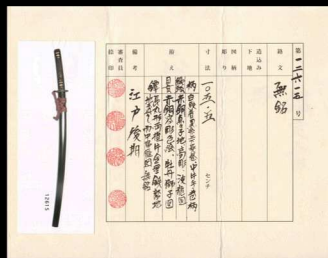
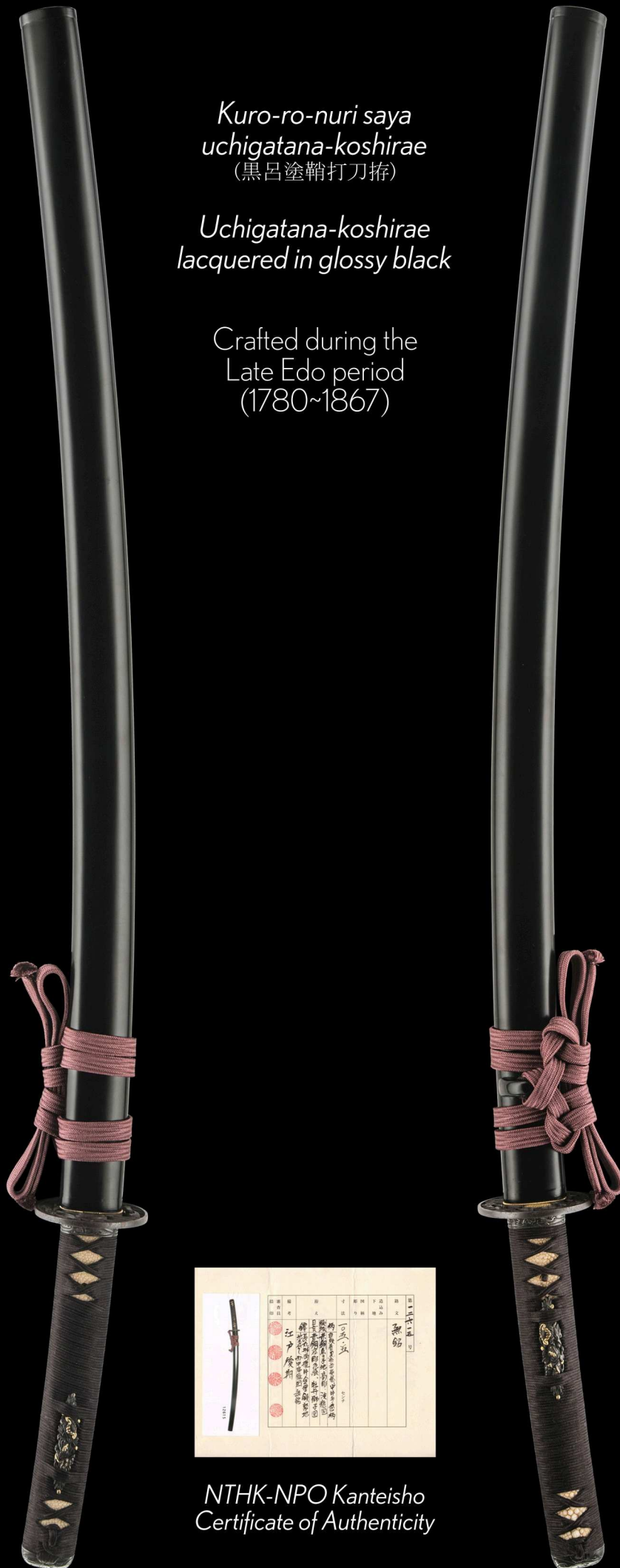


gold *habaki* with  
diagonal file marks

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

*Uchigatana-koshirae  
lacquered in glossy black*

Crafted during the  
Late Edo period  
(1780~1867)



NTHK-NPO Kanteisho  
Certificate of Authenticity



Here is a splendid polished iron *sukashi tsuba* that depicts a flock of geese flying in the rain. This artwork has been attributed to *Sunagawa Masachika* from *Edo* province. One *hitsu-ana* (hole) is filled in gold with an exquisite floral design that adds an extra touch of class.



NTHK-NPO Kanteisho  
Late Edo period: 1853~1868



Keep flying.



NTHK-NPO Kanteisho



*Fuchi-kashira*  
attributed to  
*Bizen Shôami school*

A superb *shakudô fuchi-kashira* with  
a dragon swimming in waves motif.

Middle Edo period  
(1700-1780)



The *menuki* showcases protective *shishi* lions enveloped with lovely peonies. The peony symbolizes wealth, prosperity, and honour and the shisa lion is seen as a spiritual guardian. The oversized *menuki* have been wrapped in a *katate-maki* so they can be fully appreciated.





Koshirae bag



ITEM# UJKA446

## A SANEKAGE KATANA

UNSIGNED, NANBOKUCHÔ PERIOD (JÔJI ERA: 1362~1368)

<b>Swordsmith:</b>	<i>Den Kashû Sanekage (Kaga province)</i>
<b>Measurements:</b>	<b>Length:</b> 64.8cm ( <i>ô-suriage</i> ) <b>Curvature:</b> 0.76 cm <b>Moto-haba:</b> 2.94cm
<b>Jihada:</b>	<i>Prominent pools of itame and mokume-hada with ji-nie and chikei</i>
<b>Hamon:</b>	<i>Vibrant gunome-midare with plenty of sunagashi and kinsuji</i>
<b>Certificate #1-2:</b>	<b>NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon</b> ( <i>sword &amp; fk Especially Worthy of Preservation</i> )
<b>Certificate #3:</b>	<b>NBTHK Tokubetsu Kichô</b> ( <i>Especially Precious, vintage certificate</i> )
<b>Certificate #4-5:</b>	<b>NBTHK Hozon</b> ( <i>a tsuba and menuki Worthy of Preservation</i> )
<b>Certificate #6:</b>	<b>NTHK-NPO Kanteishô</b> ( <i>koshirae certified as Authentic</i> )
<b>Fujishiro rank:</b>	<b>Jô-saku</b> ( <i>ranked as a superior swordsmith</i> )
<b>Sharpness:</b>	<b>Ryô-wazamono</b> ( <i>maker of very sharp swords</i> )
<b>Authentication:</b>	<b>Sayagaki by Nozomi-san</b> ( <i>shodô artist</i> )
<b>Included:</b>	<b>Shirasaya, Edo-koshirae, fabric bags, stand, kit, printed description</b>

**SOLD**

Inspired by grandmaster *Norishige*, this brilliant katana has been attributed to *Kashû Sanekage* from *Kaga* province. It is a wide, stout and very sharp sword that proudly stands tall in attention. Large pools of *itame* and *mokume-hada* catch the eye immediately. There is a definite *soshû* energy that abounds with a vibrant *gunome-midare hamon* incorporating plenty of *ji-nie*, glorious *chikei* and spectacular amounts of *sunagashi* and golden lines of *kinsuji*. The sword is housed in a terrific custom *koshirae* with a dynamic set of NBTHK certified fittings in a theme of rolling waves.



Saki-kasane: 5.3mm

Moto-kasane: 4.8mm

Omosa: 690g

Kissaki: 5.78cm

Saki-haba: 2.42cm

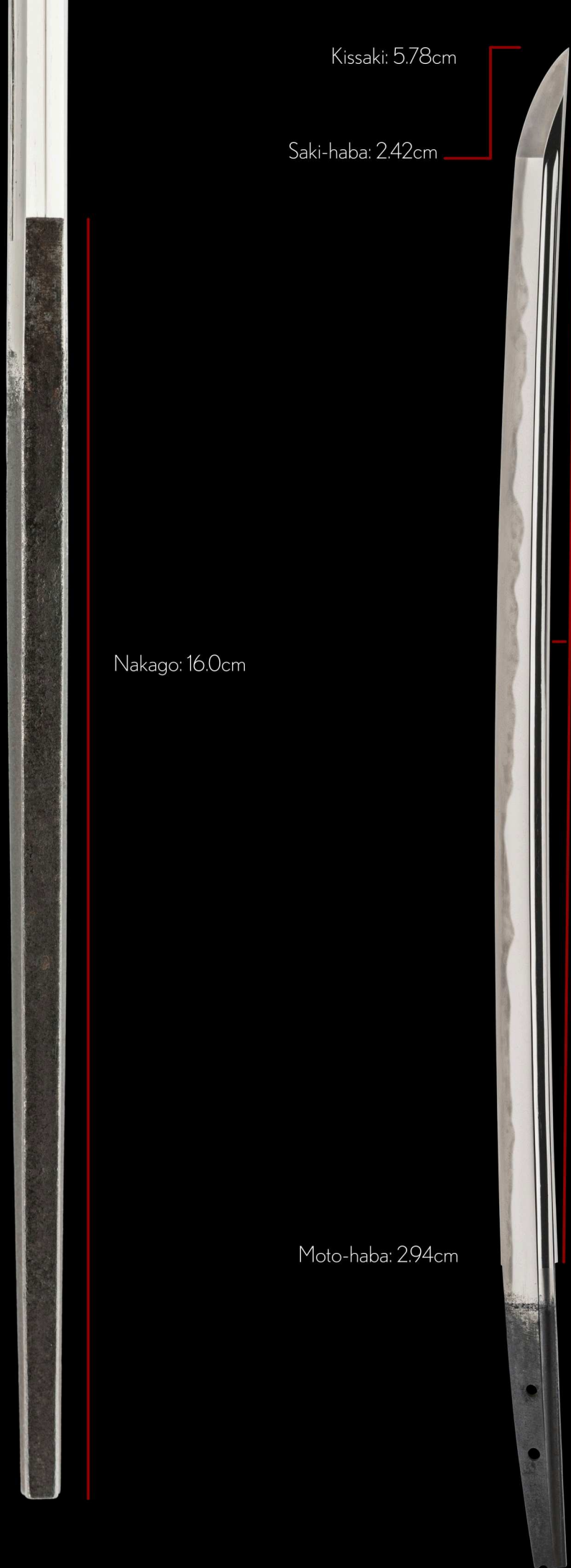
Nakago: 16.0cm

Moto-haba: 2.94cm

Nagasa: 64.8cm

Sori: 0.76cm

Mekugi-ana: 2



*Kashû Sanekage* was said to be a student of grandmaster swordsmith *Etchû Norishige*, however, given that there are dated works by Norishige from the *Shôwa* (1312~1317) and *Gen'ô* eras (1319~1321), and those by Sanekage appear from the *Jôji* era (1362~1368), there is a too large a gap between the active periods of the two smiths for a master-student relationship. It is much more likely that Sanekage was indirectly influenced by Norishige.

This brilliant katana with its dark, rather mysterious steel, reflects the characteristics of northern blades in provinces such as *Etchû* and *Kaga* that nestle along the Sea of Japan known as *Hokkoku-mono*. It is a wide and stout sword with little curvature that proudly stands tall in attention. Large pools of *itame* and *mokume-hada* catch the eye immediately, clearly paying homage to the work of Norishige. There is definite *soshû* energy with a vibrant *gunome-midare* with plenty of *ji-nie*, glorious *chikei* and spectacular amounts of *sunagashi* and golden lines of *kinsuji*. This is a blade that will lift spirits each and every time it is admired under the light.

Sanekage is ranked as a *jô-saku* (superior) swordsmith and rated *ryô-wazamono* for the excellent cutting ability of his finely crafted swords.

The sword is housed in a terrific custom koshirae with a dynamic set of fittings in a theme that incorporates water and waves, all of which have been certified by the NBTHK. The vermilion scabbard speaks to the adage that only sharp swords are held in a red saya.





Ô-suriage nakago with a groove running through the tang, known as *kaki-toshi*.



01201906

No. 1011635



鑑定書

一刀 無銘 伝(加州真景)

長二尺一寸四分

右は當協會に於て審査の結果特別保存刀剣と  
鑑定しこれを証する

令和元年八月二十六日

公益財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協會



秋田県 教育委員会  
第 384 号  
昭和26年4月22日

## NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon Certificate of Designation

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

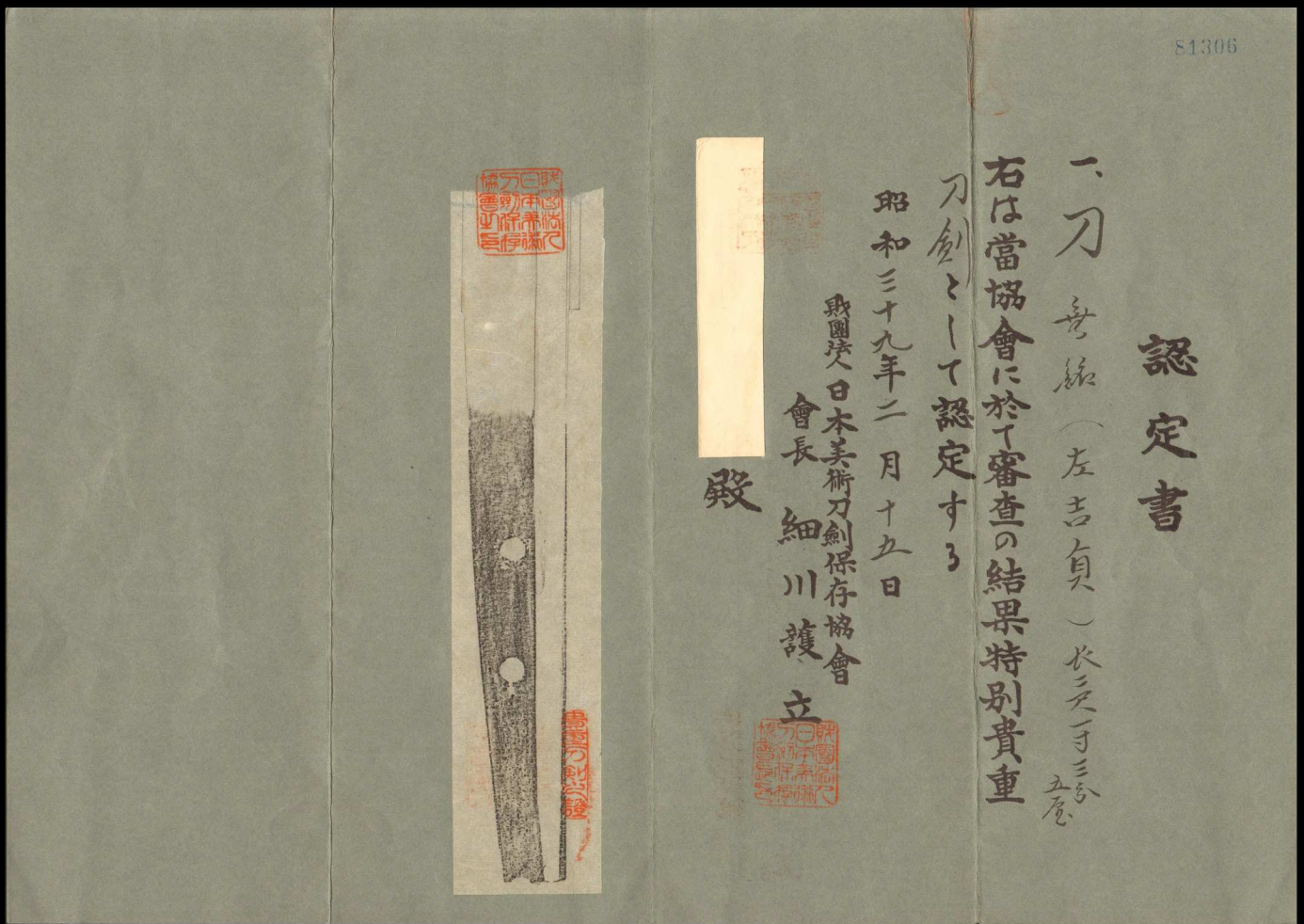
Issued in the 1st year of Reiwa (2019), August 26th

One, Katana

*Mumei* (unsigned)  
*Den Kashû Sanekage*

*Nagasa* (length)  
2-shaku 1-sun 4-bu (64.8cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai  
(NBTHK)



## 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 39th year of Showa (1964), February 15th

One, Katana

*Mumei* (unsigned)  
*Sa Yoshisada*

*Nagasa* (length)  
2-shaku 1-sun 3-bu 5-rin (64.8cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai  
(NBTHK)



無銘  
*Mumei*  
Unsigned

加州真景  
*Kashû Sanekage*  
Sanekage from Kashû province

時代貞治頃  
*Jidai Jôji goro*  
Crafted circa Jôji period (1362~1368)

刃長貳尺一寸四分有之  
*Hachô 2-shaku 1-sun 4-bu kore ari*  
Blade length 64.8 cm

令和六甲辰年卯月吉日誌之  
*Reiwa roku kinoe-tatsudoshi Uzuki kichijitsu kore o shirusu*  
Written on a lucky day in the fourth month in the sixth year of  
Reiwa era during the Year of the Dragon (April 2024).







An elongated *kissaki*, speaks to the warring *Nanbokuchô* period.

The *mokume* and *itame-hada* stands out beautifully on the sword.

The image features two curved blades of a katana, positioned diagonally from the top-left to the bottom-right. The blades are highly polished, showing a dark, reflective surface with bright highlights along their edges. The background is a solid, deep black, which makes the metallic blades stand out prominently. The text is centered between the two blades.

Swirling *jihada*. Welcome to *nihonto*.

Sensational view of the oversized  
pools of *mokume* and *itame-hada*.





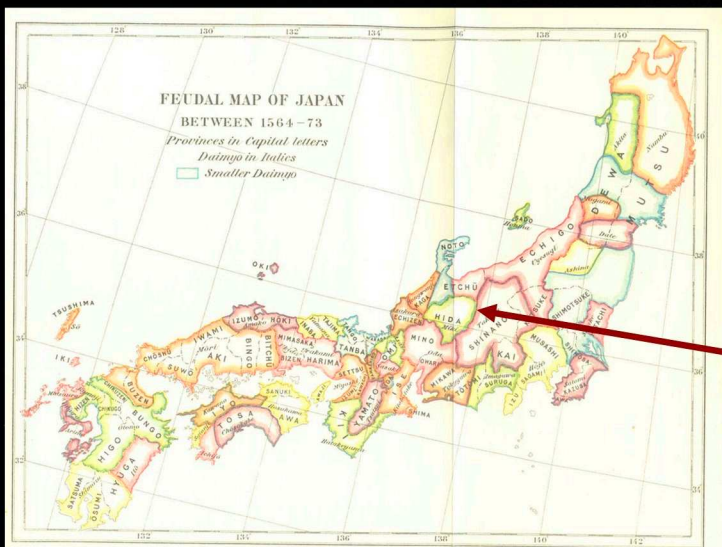
Gorgeous streams of *sunagashi* flow brilliantly on a bedrock of *gunome-midare*. The *sôshû* tradition speaks loud and clear in the steel.



*Ji-nie* shines in all its glory.

The dark *jigane* is an attribute of swords  
crafted in northern regions of Japan.

Although said to be a student of *Etchû Norishige* we can say that *Sanekage* was not a direct student of Norishige given that he worked a half a century later but was surely influenced by him. Sanekage's *nie-laden gunome-chô* mixed with *ko-midare* and *sunagashi* displays the local characteristic features of the northern *Etchû* and *Kaga* smiths.



*Etchû* and *Kaga* provinces  
on northern Sea of Japan side.



*Shirasaya*  
(protective scabbard)

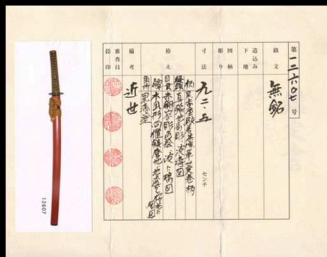


gold *habaki* with  
slanting file marks

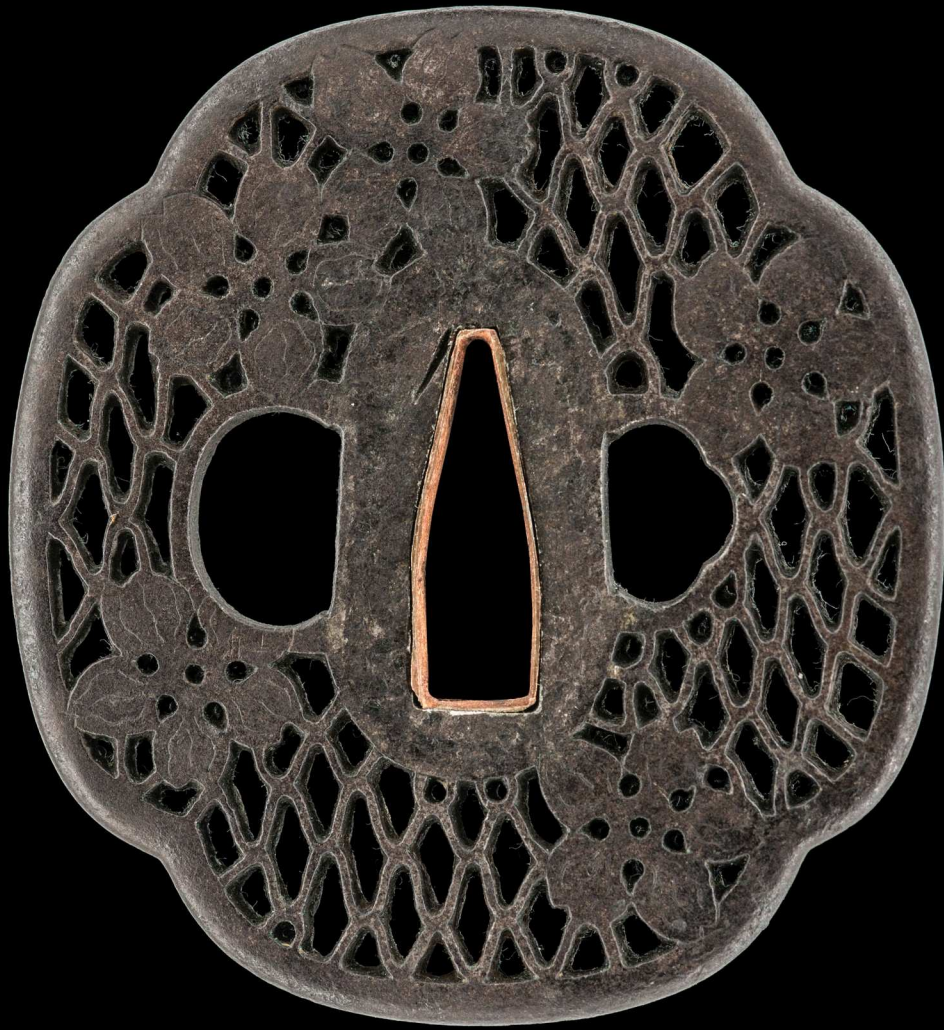
*Aka-ishime-nuri saya  
uchigatana-koshirae*  
(朱石目塗鞘打刀拵)

*Uchigatana-koshirae lacquered  
in vermilion with stone texture*

Crafted during the  
modern era



NTHK-NPO Kanteisho  
Certificate of Authenticity



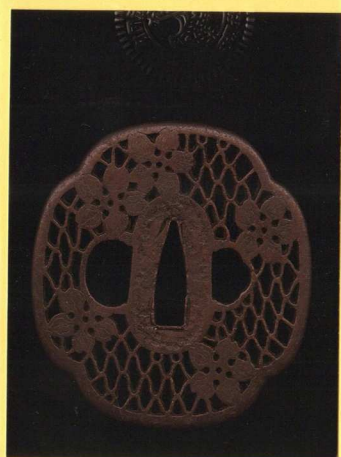
This beautiful polished multi-lobed iron tsuba depicts a *sakura-gawa* motif where sakura petals float along a river. It comes Hozon certified by the NBTHK.



Cherry blossom petals float along the *Shingashi* river

23201106

No 463091



鑑定書

一、桜川透鐔 無銘 肥後  
木皿形 鉄磨地 地透毛彫 丸身

右は當協會に於て審査の結果保存刀装具と  
鑑定しこれを証する

平成三十三年七月一日

財團法人日本美術刀剣保存協會



# NBTHK Hozon Certificate of Designation

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

Issued in the 23rd year of Heisei (2011), July 1st

One, Tsuba

*Depicting Sakura-gawa  
(Cherry blossoms on a river stream)*

*Mumei (unsigned)  
Higo school*

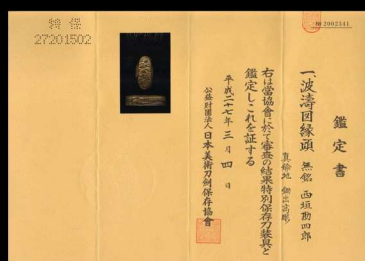
*Multiple lobed round shape, polished iron,  
openworks with linear carvings, rounded edge*

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai  
(NBTHK)



*Fuchi-kashira*  
attributed to  
*Nishigaki Kanshirô*  
(1600s)

Rolling, rolling, rolling waves...



NBTH Tokubetsu Hozon  
certificate of authenticity

特 選  
27201502



No 2002341

鑑定書

一、波濤図縁頭 無銘 西垣勘四郎

真鍮地 鋤出彫

右は當協會に於て審査の結果特別保存刀装具と  
鑑定しこれを証する

平成二十七年三月四日

公益財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協會



## NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon Certificate of Designation

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

Issued in the 27th year of Heisei (2015), March 4th

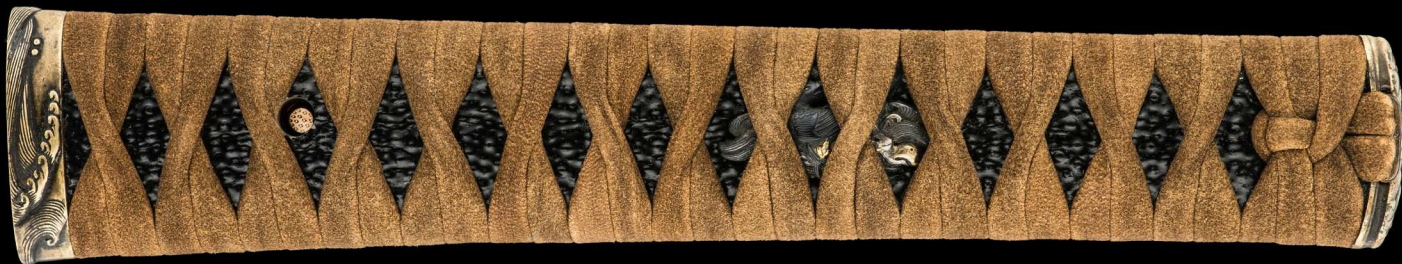
One, fuchi-kashira

*Depicting waves*

*Mumei (unsigned)  
Nishigaki Kanshirô*

*Brass ground, relief carved from the ground plate*

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai  
(NBTHK)



smoked leather wrap



This enjoyable set of *menuki* sport a raven frolicking in waves set onto glossy black-lacquered *samekawa* (ray skin) that serves as a realistic backdrop of water. These *menuki* have been attributed to the *Gotô* school and certified Hozon by the NBTHK.



30201802



No 4012943

鑑定書

一濡烏凶目貫 無銘 後藤

赤銅地 容彫 金銀色絵

右は當協會に於て審査の結果保存刀装具と  
鑑定しこれを証する

平成三十年三月十六日

公益財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協會



## NBTHK Hozon Certificate of Designation

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

Issued in the 30th year of Heisei (2018), March 16th

One, menuki

*Depicting a wet raven*

*Mumei (unsigned)  
Gotô school*

*Shakudô ground, three dimensional with motif forming the outline,  
gold and silver accents*

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai  
(NBTHK)



Koshirae bag



## Making footsteps to Japan?

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

Many swords from Unique Japan are sold privately every year to proud clients around the world. 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.

Enjoy your trip!

SOLD  
(for reference purposes only)



ujka425  
*A Fukuoka-Ichimonji Naginata-Naoshi Katana*

Length: 70.1cm  
16th NBTHK Tokubetsu Jūyo Tōken  
Hon'ami Kōchū origami dated September 3rd, 1714  
Tanobe-sensei sayagaki

The *Ichimonji School* (一文字派) emerged in the early *Kamakura* period and subsequently thrived throughout the mid to late *Kamakura* until the early *Nanbokuchô* period in places like *Fukuoka* (福岡), *Yoshioka* (吉岡), *Katayama* (片山), and *Iwato* (岩戸), and gave rise to many excellent smiths.

The name of the school goes back to the fact that some of the smiths signed with the character (Japanese: *monji*) for “one” (Japanese: *lchi*). That is, there were *Ichimonji* smiths who just signed with said character, those who signed below with their individual names, and some swordsmiths that only signed with their names and without the character *lchi*. The most flamboyant style within the *Ichimonji* school was the *ôbusa-chôji-midare* hamon that was produced by the *Fukuoka-Ichimonji* group.

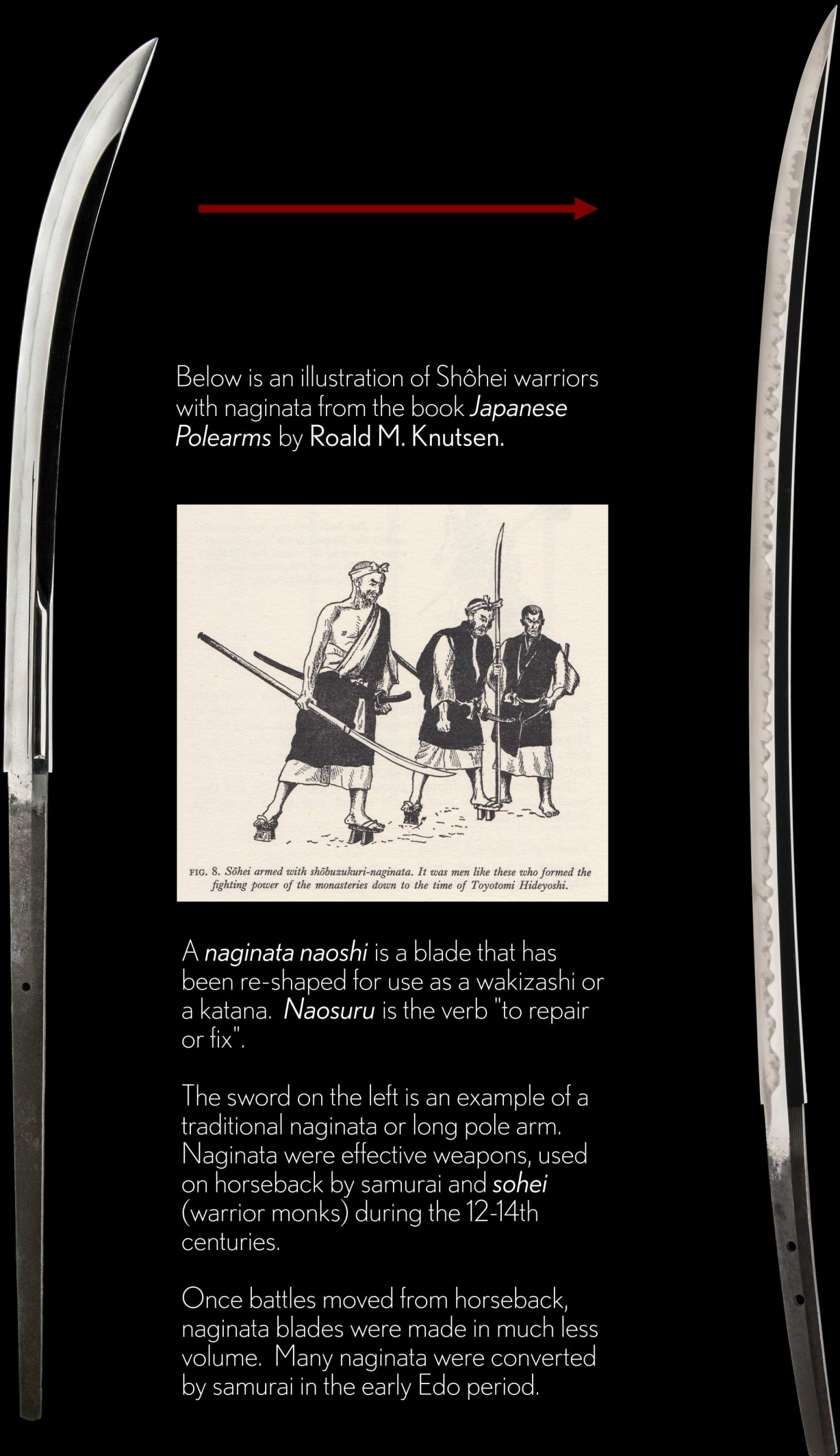
This remarkable blade has been attributed to the *Fukuoka-Ichimonji* school from the middle *Kamakura* period (early to mid 1200s). Although it carries a *shinogi-zukuri* structure, this katana was originally crafted as a powerful *naginata* and subsequently reshaped into a katana a couple centuries later in a practice referred to as *naginata-naoshi*.

The sword has attained the highest distinction at the NBTHK (the sword museum of Japan) *Tokubetsu Jûyô Tôken* (a highly profound and important sword). There are only four *Ichimonji* school *naginata-naoshi* swords that have reached such distinction and two of them are from the *Fukuoka Ichimonji* school. And this sword being the very first of the four to be awarded prestigious NBTHK *Tokubetsu Jûyô*.

The body of the katana displays a wonderfully-forged *itame-hada* (grain pattern) and features a lovely reflective *midare-utsuri*. Its gorgeous hamon is a brilliant mixture of *ôbusa-chôji* and *juka-chôji* with some parts of the hamon bleeding over the *shinogi* line in a dazzling fashion.

All told, this is a magnificently rare and significant reference sword that faithfully reflects the flamboyant interpretation approach of the mid-*Kamakura* period *Fukuoka-Ichimonji* school.





Below is an illustration of Shōhei warriors with naginata from the book *Japanese Polearms* by Roald M. Knutsen.

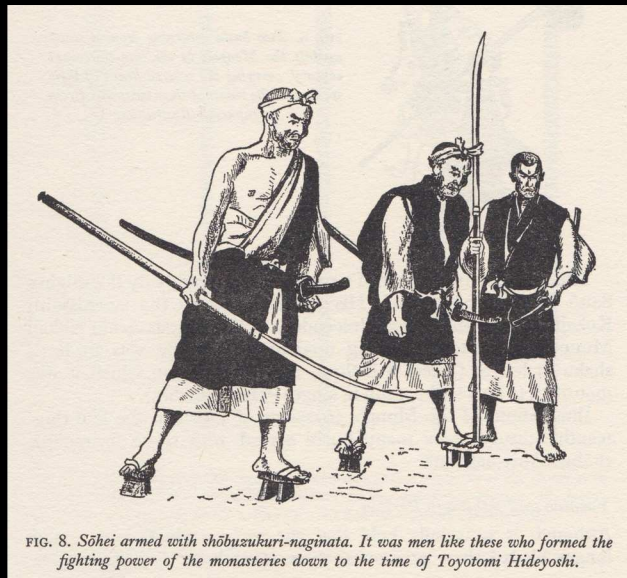


FIG. 8. *Sōhei* armed with *shōbuzukuri-naginata*. It was men like these who formed the fighting power of the monasteries down to the time of Toyotomi Hideyoshi.

A *naginata naoshi* is a blade that has been re-shaped for use as a wakizashi or a katana. *Naosuru* is the verb "to repair or fix".

The sword on the left is an example of a traditional naginata or long pole arm. Naginata were effective weapons, used on horseback by samurai and *sohei* (warrior monks) during the 12-14th centuries.

Once battles moved from horseback, naginata blades were made in much less volume. Many naginata were converted by samurai in the early Edo period.

## Background of the *naginata*

The polearm type of the *naginata* emerged in the *Heian* period, likely as a further development from the ancient *hoko* spear. As early as by the end of this period and the then occurring *Genpei* War, high-ranking warriors recognized the efficacy of the *naginata* and made it their weapon of choice when fighting on foot. Accordingly, famous figures of that time period being recorded as fighting preferably with the *naginata* have become a fixture of Japanese lore, e.g., *Minamoto no Tsunemitsu* (died 1146), the warrior monk *Benkei* (1155-1189), female warrior *Tomoe-Gozen* (late 1100s).

The *naginata* henceforth remained much in use until the Muromachi period, when *yari* and firearms became the decisive weapons on the battlefield. By the end of the Muromachi period and entering the Momoyama era, this trend and changes in the way swords were worn and appreciated by the Bushi in civilian life as well ushered in significant changes. In a nutshell, long *tachi* mostly used on horseback were often shortened to be more effective when worn on foot as a *katana*, and *naginata* were facing a similar, yet slightly different fate. That is, mostly designed to be durable and highly effective cutters on the battlefield, their apparent function remained unchanged when being shortened to wear them as a *katana*.

Accordingly, the following saying developed among warriors:

*Naginata-naoshi ni namakura nashi* (薙刀直しに鈍刀なし)  
"No sword made from a *naginata* is dull!"





Saki-kasane: 4.8mm

Moto-kasane: 6.2mm

Kissaki: 14.57cm

Saki-haba: 2.64cm

Nagasa: 70.1cm

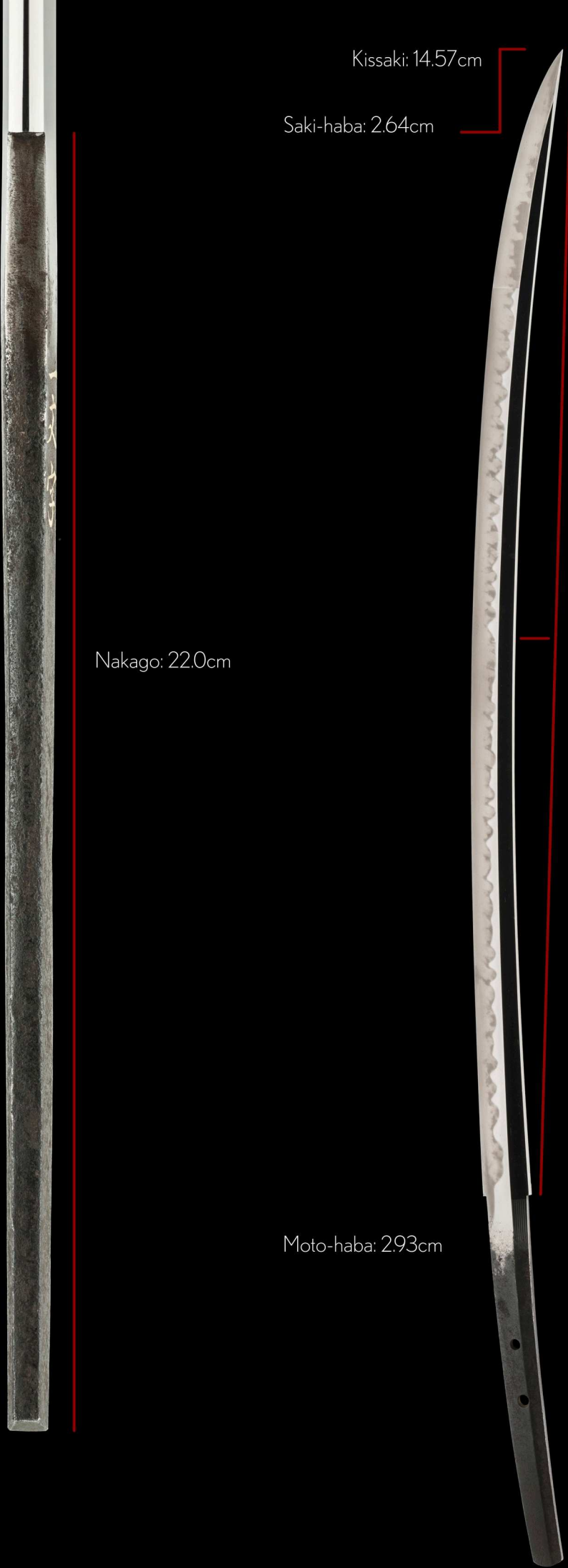
Nakago: 22.0cm

Sori: 2.0cm

Omosa: 960g

Moto-haba: 2.93cm

Mekugi-ana: 2



(lchi) 一  
(mon) 文  
(ji) 字



Location: *Bizen province*  
School name: *Fukuoka Ichimonji*

*ubu-nakago* (ô-suriage)  
with slanting file marks



(*ura*, reverse)



特 定  
12200016

特重要第六六號

指 定 書

薙刀直し刀 (金象嵌銘) 一文字 一口

法量 長さ七〇・二釐 反り二・〇釐  
形状 薙刀直し造 三ノ棟 身幅やや広く 重厚め 先反りつき 大鋒  
鍔 板目肌 地沸つき 乱れ映り立つ  
刃文 丁子乱れに大房丁子交じり 焼幅広く 出入りがある華やかであり  
足・葉入り 匂ひ揃まりこころに小沸つき 飛跳かかる  
帽子 乱れ込み 落ど焼詰め 僅かに返る  
茎 大磨上 鑿目筋造 目釘孔二  
作者 備前国福岡一文字派  
時代 鎌倉時代中期

右者當協會に於て審査の結果  
特別重要刀剣に指定する

平成十二年四月三日

財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協會  
會長 山中貞則



Tokubetsu-Jûyô Certificate No. 686  
Shiteisho (指定書) Certificate of Designation  
Naginata-naoshi-katana, kinzôgan-mei: Ichimonji (一文字)

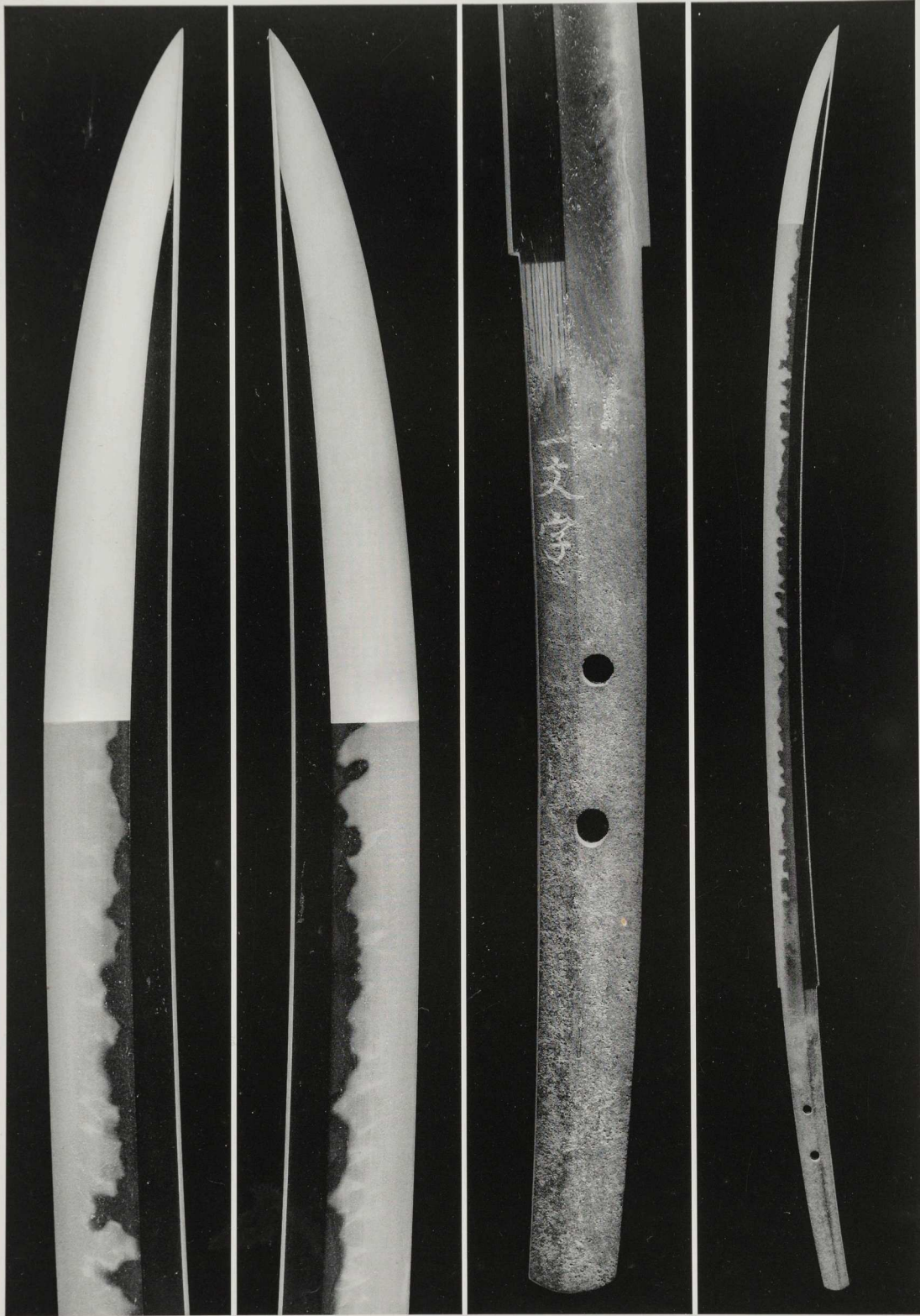
Measurements  
nagasa 70.1 cm, sori 2.0 cm

Description

Keijo: naginata-naoshi-zukuri, mitsu-mune, rather wide mihaba, thick kasane, sakizori, ô-kissaki  
Kitae: itame with ji-nie, featuring midare-utsuri  
Hamon: chôji-midare that is mixed with ôbusa-chôji, wide yakihaba, noticeable undulations, ashi and yô rather tight nioi-guchi with ko-nie and tobiyaki  
Bôshi: midare-komi, almost no turnback  
Nakago: ô-suriage, , slanting file marks, two peg holes  
Sakusha: Fukuoka Ichimonji school from Bizen province  
Jidai: Middle Kamakura period

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

April 28, 2000  
[Foundation] Nihon Bijutsu Tôken Hozon Kyôkai, NBTHK  
[President] Yamanaka Sadanori (山中貞則)



薙刀直し刀 (金象嵌銘) 一文字



Designated as *Tokubetsu-Jûyô-Tôken* (a profound and important sword)  
at the 16th *tokubetsu-jûyô shinsa* held on April 28, 2000

### *Naginata-naoshi-katana, kinzôgan-mei: Ichimonji* (一文字)

#### Measurements

*nagasa* 70.1 cm

*sori* 2.0 cm

*motohaba* 2.9 cm, *sakihaba* 2.6 cm

*kissaki-nagasa* 14.7 cm, *nakago-nagasa* 22.0 cm, *nakago-sori* 0.3 cm

#### Description

*Keijo*: *naginata-naoshi-zukuri*, *mitsu-mune*, rather wide *mihaba*, thick *kasane*, *sakizori*, *ô-kissaki*

*Kitae*: *itame* with *ji-nie*, featuring *midare-utsuri*

*Hamon*: *chôji-midare* that is mixed with *ôbusa-chôji*, wide *yakihaba*, noticeable undulations, *ashi* and *yô*, rather tight *nioi-guchi* with *ko-nie* and *tobiyaki*

*Bôshi*: *midare-komi*, almost no turnback

*Nakago*: *ô-suriage*, slanting file marks, two peg holes, gold signature of 'Ichimonji' just above the peg hole on the front side.

#### Artisan

Fukuoka Ichimonji school from Bizen province

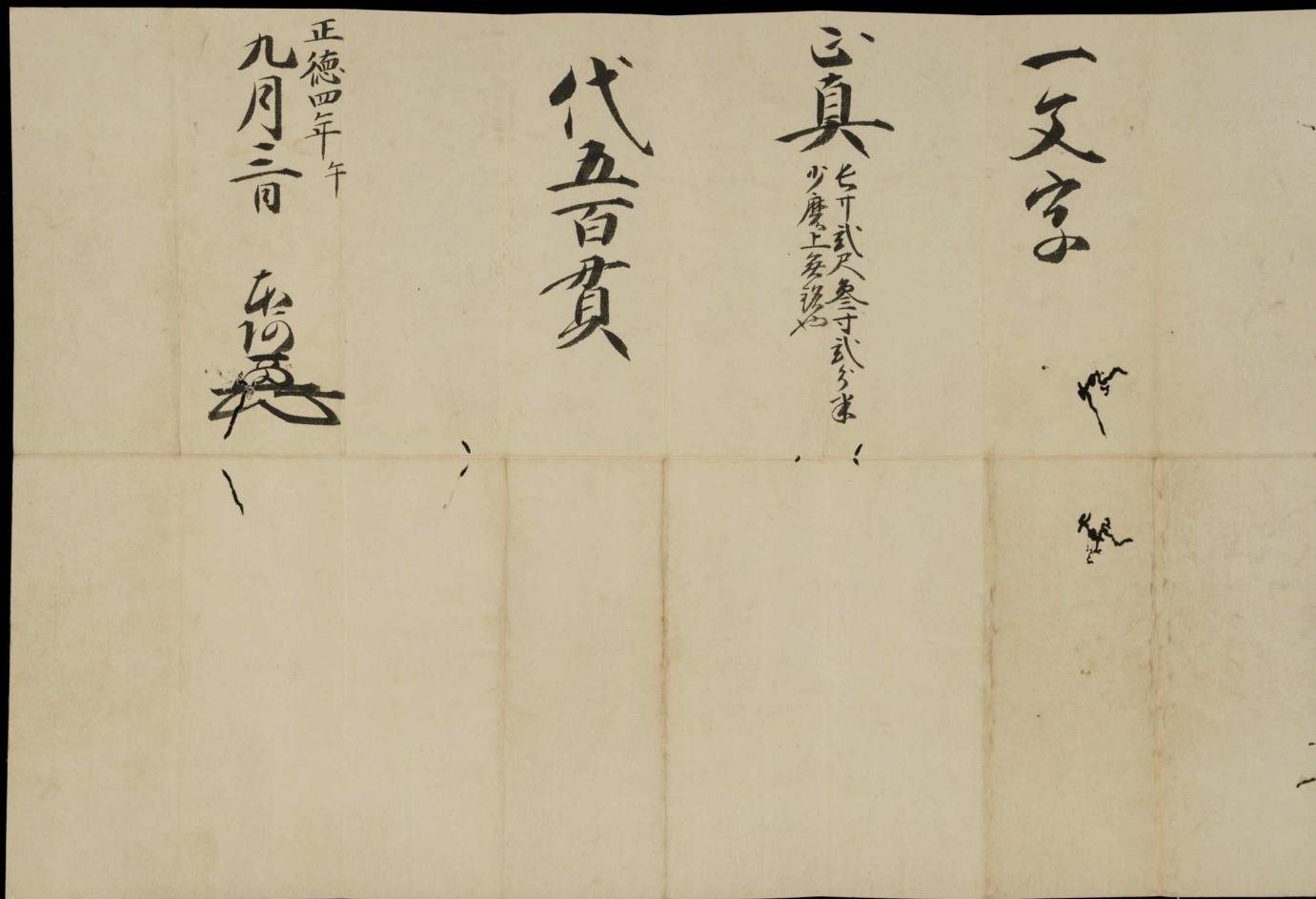
#### Era

Mid-Kamakura period

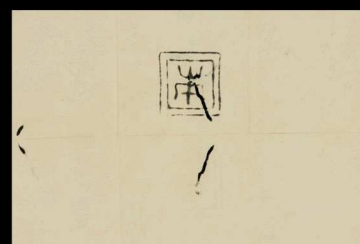
#### Remarks

The Ichimonji School (一文字派) emerged in the early Kamakura period, subsequently thrived throughout the mid and late Kamakura until the early Nanbokuchô period in places like Fukuoka (福岡), Yoshioka (吉岡), Katayama (片山), and Iwato (岩戸), and gave rise to many excellent smiths. The name of the school goes back to the fact that some of the smiths signed with the character (Japanese: *monji*) for "one" (Japanese: *Ichi*). That is, there were Ichimonji smiths who just signed with said character, such who signed below with their individual names, and such who only signed with their names and without the character *Ichi*. The most flamboyant style within the Ichimonji School was the *ôbusa-chôji-midare* that is so rich in variety that was produced in the mid-Kamakura period by the Fukuoka-Ichimonji group.

This blade is in *shinogi-zukuri* and was originally a *naginata*, which was reshaped into a *katana*, a practice referred to as *naginata-naoshi*. It displays a *kitae* in *itame* that features a *midare-utsuri* and a widely hardened *hamon* in *chôji-midare* that is mixed with *ôbusa-chôji*. Some parts of the *hamon* reach the *shinogi*, and the *ha* exhibits overall noticeable undulations, resulting so in a very flamboyant interpretation. Thus, we have here a magnificent and gorgeous work that reflects the typical approach of the mid-Kamakura period Fukuoka-Ichimonji School, which is also in excellent condition.



This precious traditional *washi* paper *origami* (折紙) certificate of appraisal by *Hon'ami Kōchū* has been preserved for over three hundred years. The Hon'ami family were the official sword appraisers and polishers of the *Tokugawa shogunate*. They also issued *origami appraisals* for blades.



The *origami* appraises the sword to the *Ichimonji* school and values the blade to 500 kan - an amount that only *daimyō* or near *daimyō* ranks could realistically afford. Consider that a samurai with no rank would earn about 12 kan per year in the mid-Edo period.

Translation as follows:

*Ichimonji*

Authentic

Blade length: ~70.2 cm, shortened and unsigned

Value 500 *kan*

Dated in the sixth year of *Shōtoku* era, Year of the Horse

Ninth month, third day (September 3rd, 1714)

Hon'ami + *kaō* [Kōchū, 光忠]





第二〇号

# 指定書

太刀

一口

無銘金象嵌一文字

長卷直し、鋳造

長さ二尺三寸一分五厘

70.1

右を静岡縣指定文化財に  
指定する

昭和三十三年四月十五日

静岡縣教育委員会



H26.1.22 拜受

## Certificate of Designation

One, Tachi

Mumei kinzôgan "Ichimonji"  
Nagamaki-naoshi shinogi-zukuri

Unsigned with gold inscription "Ichimonji"  
Reshaped from nagamaki, *shinogi-zukuri*

Nagasa 2-shaku 3-sun 1-bu 5-rin  
Blade length (70.1 cm)

This sword has been designated as a *Shizuoka Prefecture's Shitei Bunkazai*  
(a Cultural Property)

Issued in 33rd year of Shôwa (1958), April 15th

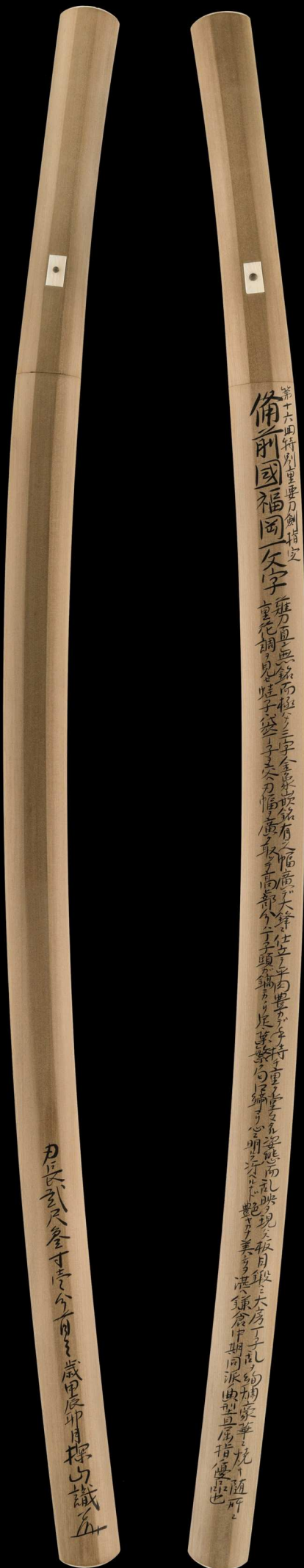
Shizuoka-ken Kyôiku linkai  
The Board of Education in Shizuoka Prefecture

\*\*This sword was held in Shizuoka for many years as a cultural property of the prefecture.  
This is a copy of the certificate.



Judging by how the *kinzogan* (gold inlaid characters) has aged, it was likely written/created circa the late Edo period (early 1800s).

These characters were probably not done by the original sword appraiser *Hon'ami Kôchû* who lived during the late 1600 to early 1700s.



第十六回特別重要刀劍指定

*Dai jûroku-kai tokubetsu-jûyô-tôken shitei*

Designated as Tokubetsu-Jûyô Tôken at the 16th Tokubetsu-Jûyô shinsa

備前國福岡一文字

*Bizen no Kuni Fukuoka-Ichimonji*

Fukuoka-Ichimonji from Bizen Province

薙刀直シ無銘而極ハメノ三字金象嵌銘有之幅廣デ大鋒ニ仕立テ平肉豊カデ手持チ重ク堂々タル姿態而乱映ヲ現ハス板目鍛ヘニ大房丁子乱ヲ絢爛豪華ニ焼キ随所ニ重花調ヲ見セ蛙子・袋丁子ヲ交ヘ刃幅ヲ廣ク取ッテ高ヒ部分ハ丁子頭ガ鑄ニカヽリ足・葉繁ク匂口締マリ心ニ明ルク冴ヘルナド艶ヤカナ美シサヲ湛ヘ鎌倉中期同派ノ典型且屈指ノ優品也

*Naginata-naoshi mumei shikamo kiwame no sanji kinzôgan-mei kore ari. Haba-hiro de ô-kissaki ni shitate hira-niku yutaka de temochi omoku dôdô-taru shitai shikamo midare-utsuri o arawasu itame-gitae ni ôbusachôji-midare o kenran-gôka ni yaki zuisho ni jôka-chô o mise kawazu no ko, fukuro-chôji o majie ha-haba hiroku totte takai bubun wa chôji-gashira ga shinogi ni kakari ashi, yô shigeku nioiguchi shimarugokoro ni akaruku saeru nado tsuyayaka na utsukushisa o tatae Kamakura-chûki dôha no tenkei katsu kusshi no yûhin nari.*

This blade is a *naginata-naoshi* and is *mumei*, but bears a gold-inlaid attribution comprising of three characters. With its wide *mihaba*, shaped *ô-kissaki*, and plenty of *hira-niku*, the blade feels heavy in hand and is of a magnificent shape. The forging is in *itame* with a *midare-utsuri*, and the hardening is a flamboyant *ôbusa-chôji-midare* that tends to *jûka-chôji* in many places that also features *kawazu no ko* and *fukuro-chôji*. The *ha* is wide and the tops of the *chôji* reach the *shinogi* in places. It has plenty of *ashi* and *yô* and the somewhat tight and a bright and clear *nioiguchi*, the blade is truly an enchanting beauty. Thus, we have here a masterwork of outstanding quality that is textbook for the mid-Kamakura period works of this school.

刃長貳尺參寸壹分有之

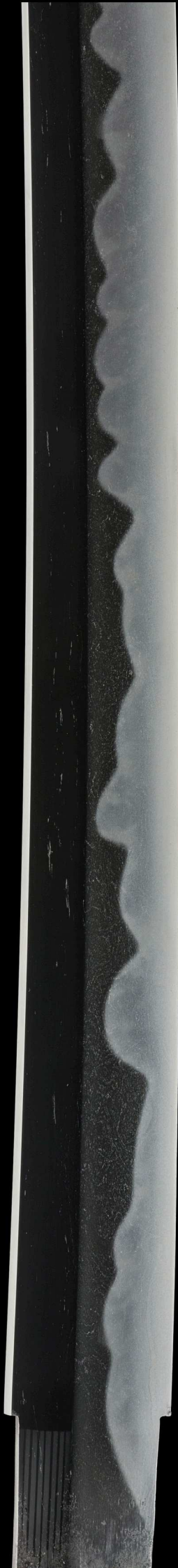
*Hachô ni-shaku san-sun ichi-bu kore ari*

Blade length ~ 70.0 cm


歳甲辰卯月探山識「花押」

*toki ni kinoe-tatsu uzuki Tanzan shirusu + kaô*

Written by Tanzan [Tanobe Michihiro] in April during the Year of the Dragon (2024) + monogram.







*Mitsu* (three) *mune* (spine/ridge) is a rare construction whereby the spine has three surfaces (the top is flat, not pointed).

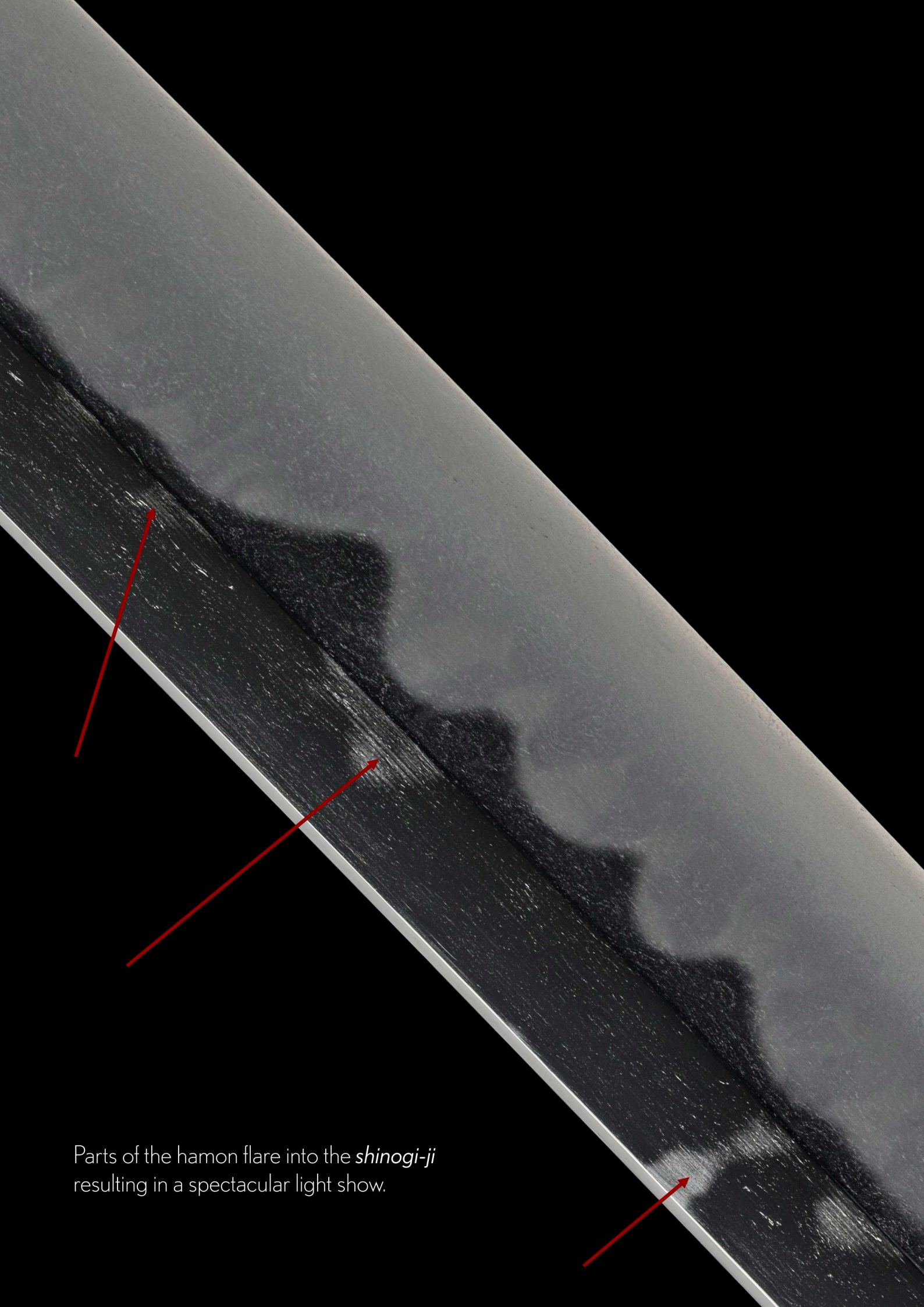
It is generally found in the blades of smiths working in the *Sosho tradition*, but can also be seen on other *Koto* period swords such as from the *Yamashiro* and *Bizen* schools.



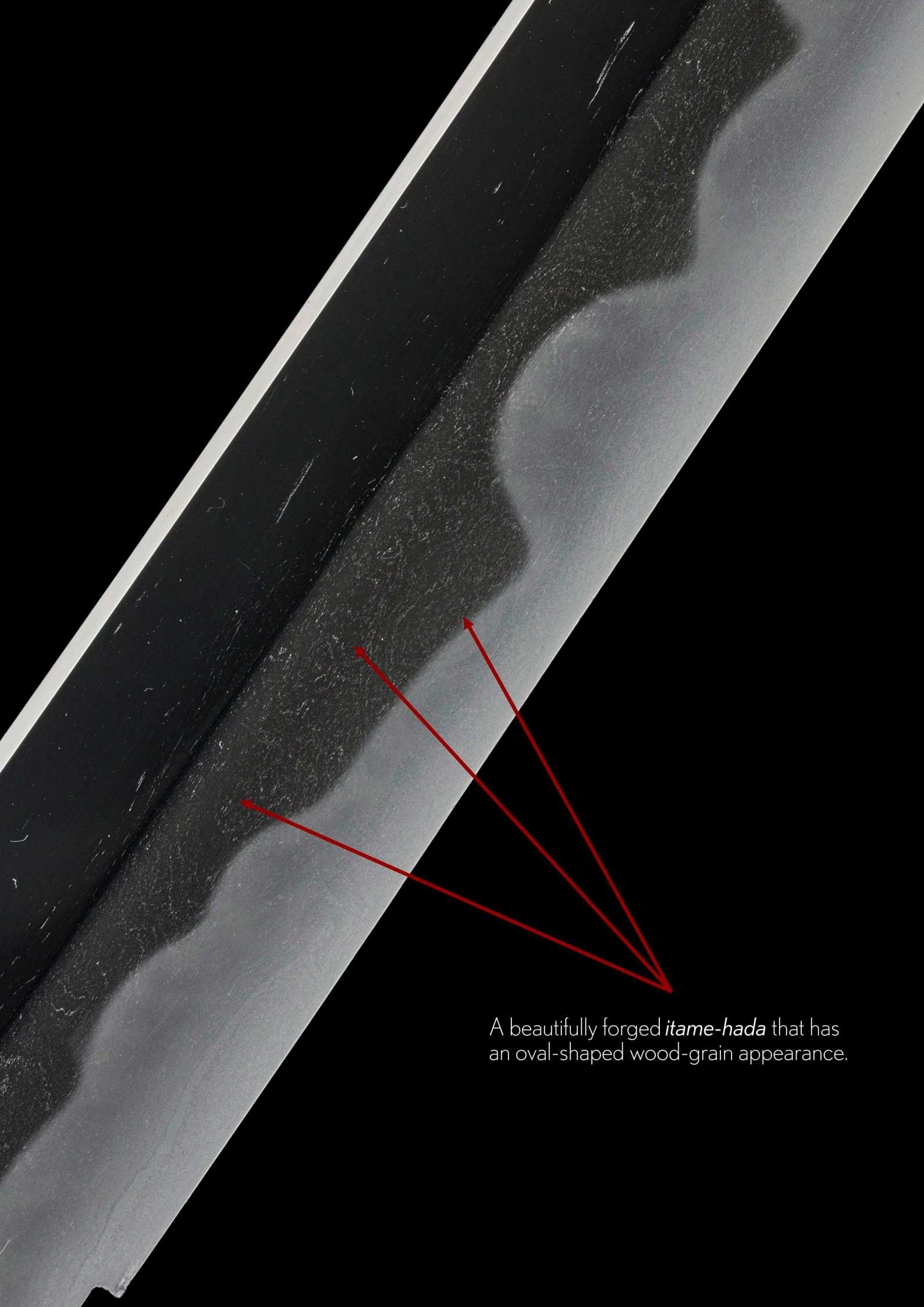
From this cross-section at the *nakago-jiri* (base of tang) and top view of the nakago, we can appreciate the overall "meat" of the sword - referred to as *niku* in Japanese sword terminology. *Hira-niku* essentially means a thick, bulging blade and it directly translates to the healthiness of a sword - one that has maintained close to its original shape and not been polished down too many times over the centuries.



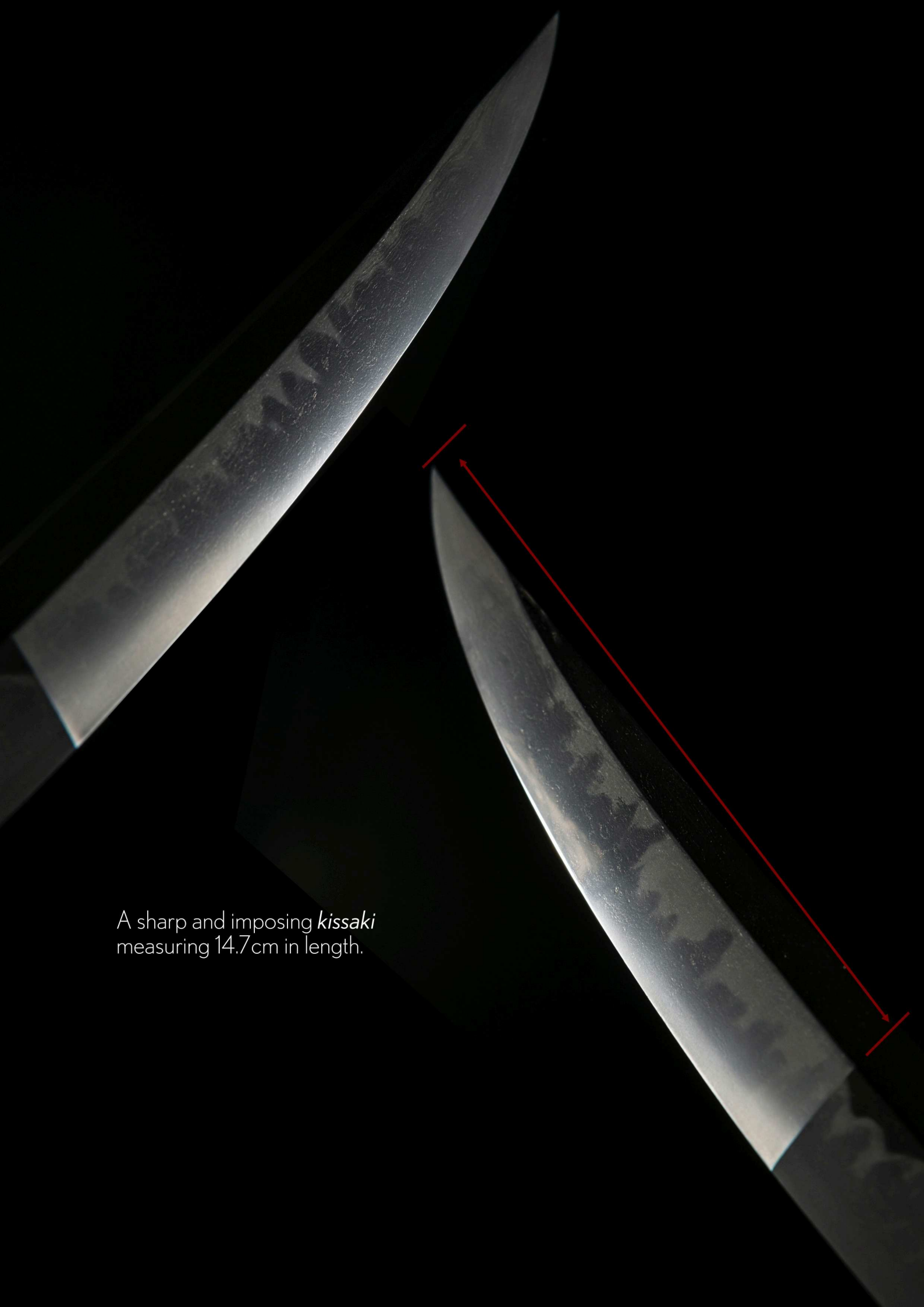
A magnificent *mihaba* (width of blade).



Parts of the hamon flare into the *shinogi-ji* resulting in a spectacular light show.



A beautifully forged *itame-hada* that has an oval-shaped wood-grain appearance.



A sharp and imposing *kissaki* measuring 14.7cm in length.



*kissaki* brilliance



*ôbusa-chôji*

This section of the hamon features *ôbusa-chôji*, long tasseled *chôji* (cloves) that bunch up to form gorgeous *juka-chôji* (overlapping).

This sword has been polished in *sashikomi* tradition, which delivers a more 'classical finish' without the use of hadori that can exaggerate the contrast of the hamon and body of the blade.



*ôbusa-chôji*

*juka-chôji*

hamon bleeds through the *shinogi* line.



Mid-Kamakura mastery. Profound energy.

Literally meaning "reflection", *utsuri* is a beautiful, rather magical, misty reflection appearing in the *ji* (body of sword) above the *hamon* and generally ends at the *shinogi* ridge line.

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

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

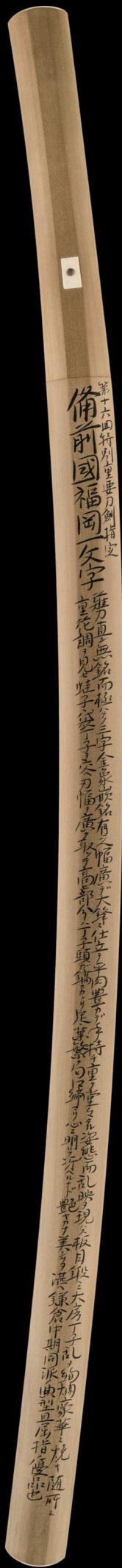
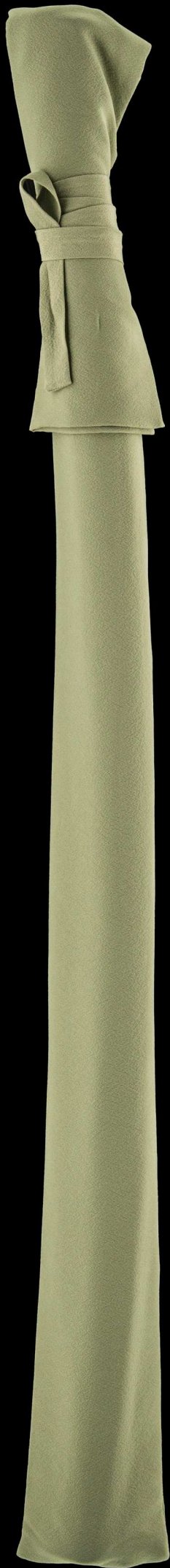
A close-up photograph of a sword blade, showing the hamon (edge line) and the utsuri (misty reflection) pattern. The blade is dark, and the hamon is a lighter, wavy line. The utsuri is a misty, smoky pattern that follows the hamon. Red arrows point from text labels to the corresponding features on the blade.

*shinogi* (ridge line)

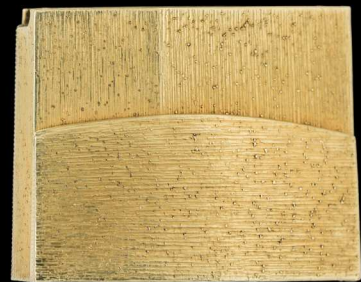
*midare-utsuri*

To the heavens.



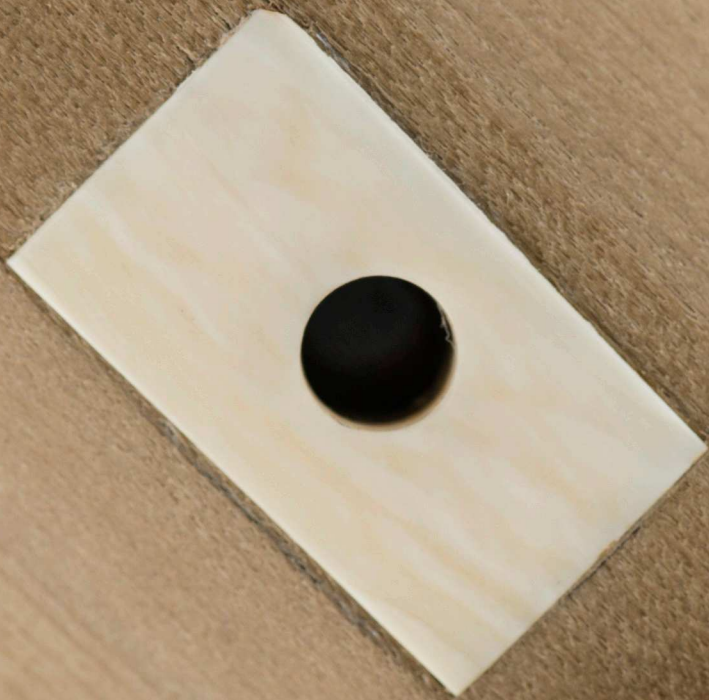


Shirasaya  
(protective scabbard)



gold *ni-ju habaki* with  
crisp file marks

Close-up of the  
shirasaya's *mekugi-nuki*.





Congratulations Anthony.

Warm regards,  
Pablo

ujka404  
 A Koyama Munetsugu Katana  
 11th year of Tenpô era (Aug 1841)

Length: 63.3cm  
 NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon  
 & NTHK-NPO certificates  
 Complete custom koshirae production in Japan

SOLD (for reference purposes only)



鑑定書  
27201502

一 墨嶽新打拵  
此拵は、享和元年（1811）に墨嶽新打拵師、  
右は、墨嶽新打拵師、  
鑑定し、これを証明する。  
平成二十七年三月十四日  
宝珠堂 大日本美術刀剣保存協会

鑑定書  
02202003

一 刀  
此刀は、天保十二年八月、  
於江戶、  
右は、墨嶽新打拵師、  
鑑定し、これを証明する。  
令和二年六月二十五日  
宝珠堂 大日本美術刀剣保存協会

鑑定書  
江戸中期

刀名	一文字
刀身	凡可高麗
下拵	銀拵
拵師	今川格也
場所	京都
年代	寛政九郎

鑑定書  
九五五

刀名	一文字
刀身	凡可高麗
下拵	銀拵
拵師	今川格也
場所	京都
年代	寛政九郎

鑑定書  
江戸後期

刀名	一文字
刀身	凡可高麗
下拵	銀拵
拵師	今川格也
場所	京都
年代	寛政九郎

鑑定書  
江戶後期

刀名	一文字
刀身	凡可高麗
下拵	銀拵
拵師	今川格也
場所	京都
年代	寛政九郎



Saki-kasane: 5.5mm

Moto-kasane: 7.9mm

Kissaki: 4.64cm

Saki-haba: 2.20cm

Nagasa: 63.3cm

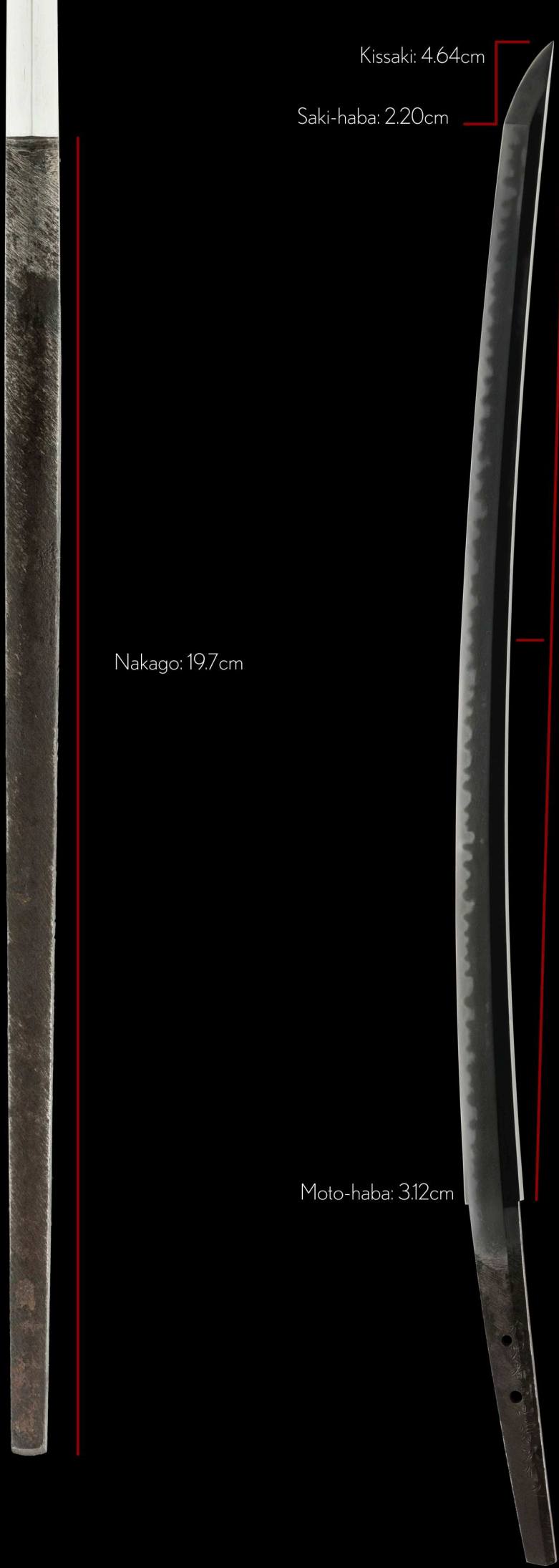
Nakago: 19.7cm

Sori: 1.30cm

Omosa: 785g

Moto-haba: 3.12cm

Mekugi-ana: 2



This formidable katana was crafted in Edo (Tokyo) in 1841 by one of the great maestros of the *shinshinto* period, *Koyama Munetsugu*. *Fujishiro* ranks Munetsugu as *jôjô-saku*, a highly superior swordsmith.

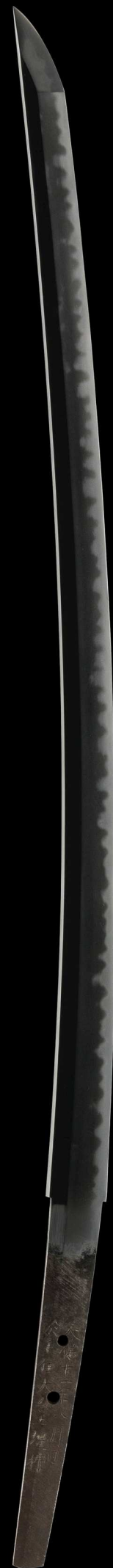
Koyama Munetsugu was born in the castle town of *Shirakawa* in *Mutsu* Province and was retained by Lord *Matsudaira Sadanobu (Rakuô)*. In 1830 he moved to *Kuwana* in *Ise* Province, a year or two later to Edo (modern-day Tokyo), where he lived as a retainer of the ruling clan of Ise.

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

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

Crafted with a length of 63.3cm, this thick, robust katana was inspired by the tough one-handed *katate-uchi* (one-handed) swords of the late Muromachi period (early 1500s) when Japan was engulfed in a country-wide civil war known as the *Sengoku-jidai*.

The *nakago* contains a chiseled *tameshigiri* cutting test in which this sword severed cleanly through the body at chest-level of a convicted criminal in one stroke and into the earthen mound in which it lay upon. The test took place at *Senju*, a well-known execution site in which about 200,000 criminals were executed from 1651 to 1873.





Location: *Totô* (Edo, modern-day Tokyo)  
Family name: *Koyama*  
Swordsmith: *Munetsugu* (first generation)

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

於 (oite)

東 (Tô)

都 (to)

固 (Ko)

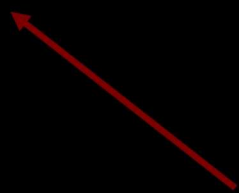
山 (yama)

宗 (Mune)

次 (tsugu)

作 (tsukuru)

之 (kore, o)

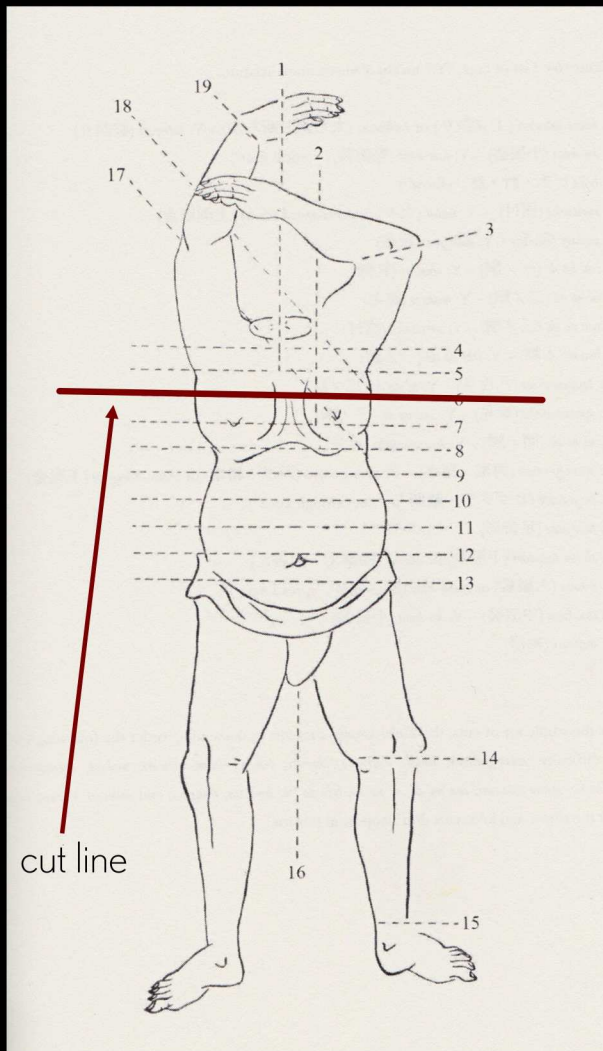


*tsukuru kore* (this was crafted by)

*Tenpô jûichinen hachigatsu hi  
Senju ni oite taitai dotan barai*

Dated on a day in the eighth month in the 11th year of *Tenpô* era (August 1840).

This sword was tested in *Senju*, severing through the chest [of a convicted criminal] below the armpits and into the earthen mound.

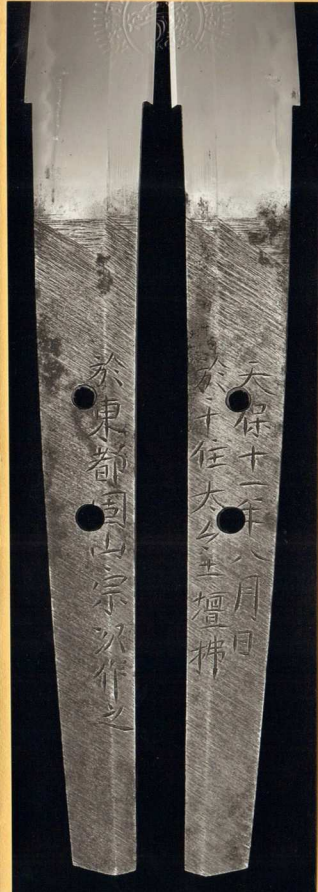


(oite) 於	天 (Ten)
(Sen) 千	保 (pô)
(ju) 住	十 (jû)
(tai) 太	一 (ichi)
(tai) 々	年 (nen)
(do) 土	八 (hachi)
(tan) 壇	月 (gatsu)
(barai) 拂	日 (hi)



02202003

No 1013233



公益財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協会



令和二年六月二十五日

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  
刀  
銘

鑑定書

於東都固山宗次作之  
天保十一年八月日  
於千住太々土壇拂

長二尺〇九分弱

愛知県 教育委員会  
第 2405 号  
昭和26年3月16日

## NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon Certificate of Designation

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

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

One, Katana

Mei (signature)

*Tôto ni oite Koyama Munetsugu kore o tsukuru  
Tenpô jûichinen hachigatsu hi  
Senju ni oite taitai dotan barai*

Nagasa (length)

2-shaku 9-bu jaku (63.3cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai  
(NBTHK)





A *kaen-boshi* (flames)  
burning like a candle.

*kaen*

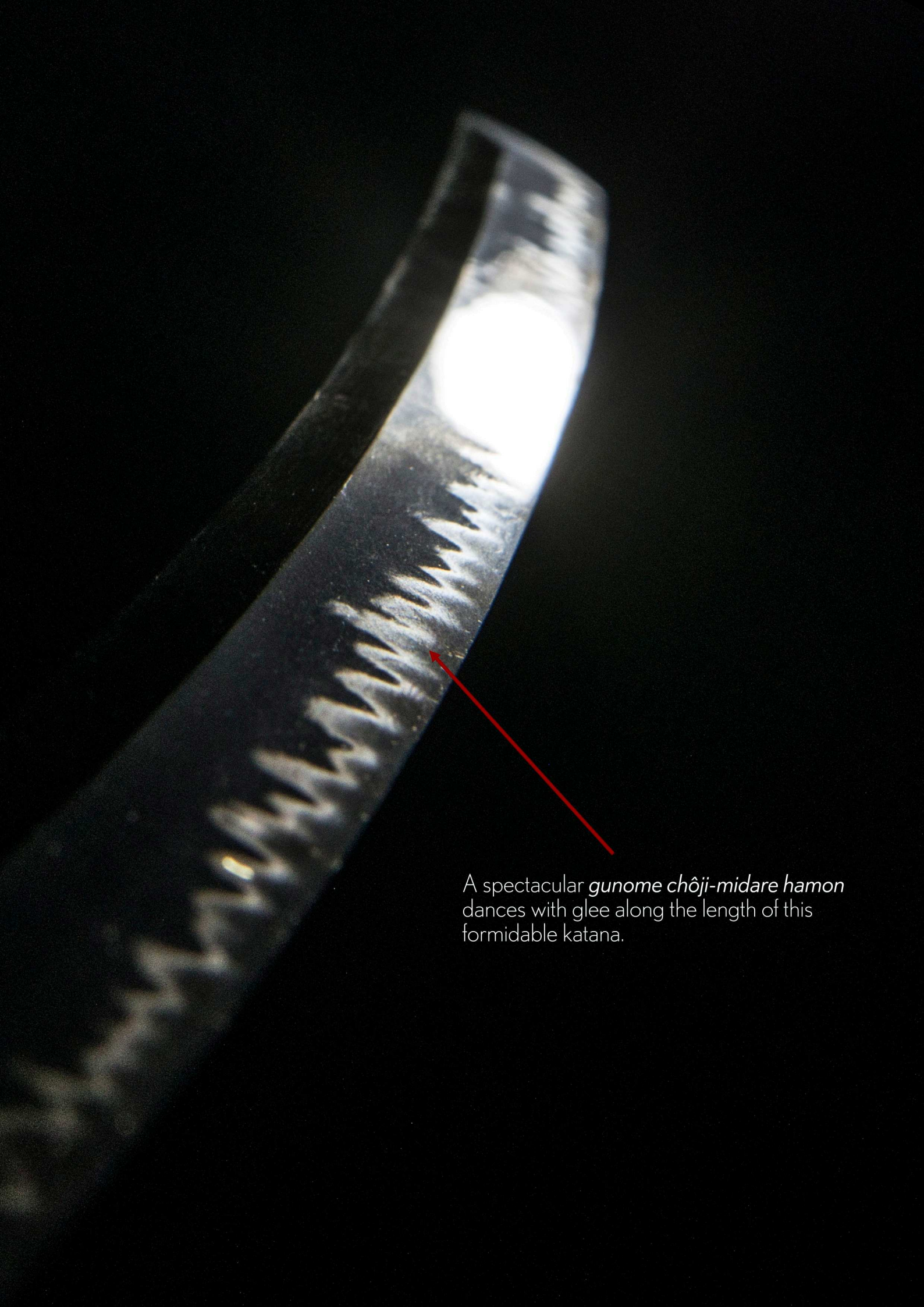


burn, baby burn.





A beautiful *nagare-hada*, wavy *jihada*.



A spectacular *gunome chôji-midare hamon* dances with glee along the length of this formidable katana.

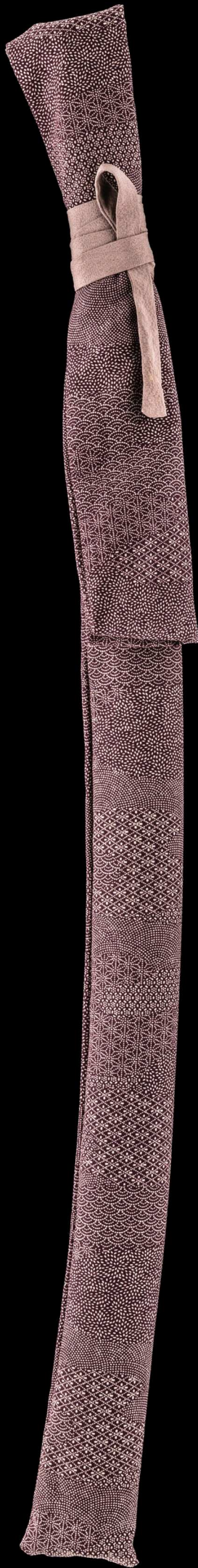
*tobiyaki* (tempering on the body of the sword)



shine on.



Several lines of *kinsuji* tear their way through the hamon with conviction.

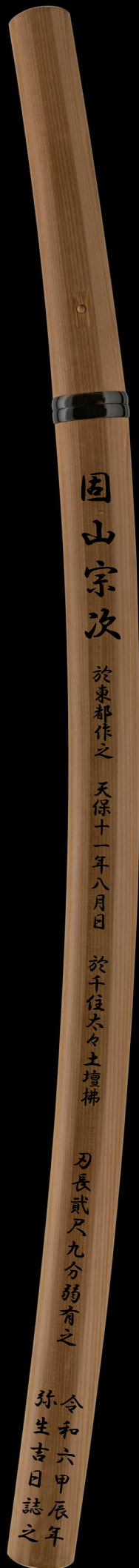


pre-sayagaki with *shodô*  
(calligraphy artist)

*Shirasaya*  
(protective scabbard)



antique copper *habaki*



固山宗次

固山宗次  
*Koyama Munetsugu*  
Koyama Munetsugu

於東都作之

於東都作之  
*Tôto ni oite kore o tsukuru*  
Crafted in Tôto (Edo)

天保十一年八月日

天保十一年八月日  
*Tenpô jûichinen hachigatsu hi*  
On a day in the eighth month of Tenpô 11 (1840)

於千住太々土壇拂

於千住太々土壇拂  
*Senju ni oite taitai dotan barai*  
Tested in Senju, cutting through the chest below the armpits to the mound

刃長貳尺九寸弱有之

刃長貳尺九寸弱有之  
*Hachô 2-shaku 9-sun jaku kore ari*  
Blade length 63.3 cm

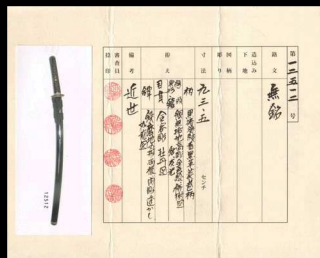
令和六甲辰年  
弥生吉日誌之

令和六甲辰年弥生吉日誌之  
*Reiwa roku kinoe-tatsudoshi Yayoi kichijitsu kore o shirusu*  
Written on a lucky day in the third month of Reiwa 6, the year of the dragon (2024)

*Kuro-ro aogai-mijin-nuri saya  
uchigatana-koshirae*  
(黒呂青貝微塵塗鞘打刀拵)

*Uchigatana-koshirae  
lacquered in glossy black  
with particles of mother-of-pearl*

Crafted during the  
Modern period



NTHK-NPO Kanteisho  
Certificate of Authenticity

The *saya* sparkles like the sky...



*aoigai* (mother-of-pearl) lacquerwork.



A lovely *kojiri* (end cap) representing a plum tree.



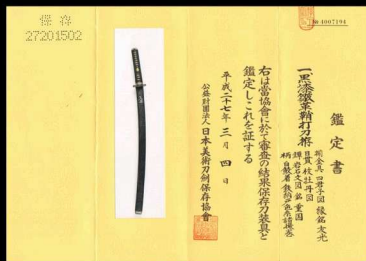


An NTHK-NPO Kanteisho certificate of authenticity attributes this handsome polished iron openwork tsuba of a three-dimensional dragon to the *Echizen* school from the *late-Edo period* circa 1780~1868.





(reverse)



NBTHK Hozon  
Certificate of Authenticity



(Tomo) 友

(mitsu) 光



The matching fittings for the custom koshirae was sourced from an antique koshirae that was signed by *Tomomitsu*. The theme contains orchids, bamboo, chrysanthemums and plums.



*Fuchi-kashira*  
crafted by *Tomomitsu*  
from *Hitotsuyanagi* school

Depicting four elegant plants.  
Orchid, bamboo,  
chrysanthemum and plum.



The *tsuka* (hilt) was specially wrapped in deer leather and lacquered for long term preservation. Gorgeous golden peony *menuki* set on black lacquered *samekawa* (ray skin) shines through with grace and elegance.





Two custom *otoshi* tsuba boxes were produced, courtesy of Unique Japan. The top tsuba signed by *Umetada* features a design of a lotus, a symbol of purity, grace and beauty. The tsuba below depicts a powerful scene of a dragon and tiger in a raincloud and waves.

Both tsubas come with certification from the NTHK-NPO.





Congratulations Leon.

Warm regards,  
Pablo