

ALL SOLD!

**JAPANESE
SWORD
CATALOGUE 42**

**RELEASED:
NOV 20/2025**



(COVER PHOTO)

ITEM# UJTA059

A FUYUHIRO TANTÔ
SHINTÔ PERIOD (1596~1615)

FUCHI-KASHIRA BY MIYATA NOBUKIYO
TOKUBETSU HOZON (SWORD & KOSHIRAE)

ANTIQUÉ JAPANESE SWORDS

CATALOGUE 42
RELEASED: NOVEMBER 20, 2024

THE FOLLOWING PAGES CONTAIN DESCRIPTIONS AND IMAGES OF GENUINE ANTIQUÉ JAPANESE SWORDS THAT WERE SOLD IN CATALOGUE 42. THIS IS A REFERENCE DOCUMENT.

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Hi everyone, all good?

It's a cool yet sunny and crisp morning here in Southend-On-Sea. I've just come home after taking Nelson to school, stopping by my local 'Dog Café' for a flat white and now fairly warm at home, cheeks slightly aglow. Everyone was bundled up this morning. British people, in general, don't do cold very well. One person at the café joking said this is 'Pablo weather'. True, it does remind me of mornings in Canada, waking up to deliver the morning paper on my route that I had as a tween and teenager. Some mornings were so cold, though, that my eyelashes would freeze together. While those days were pretty brutal, once you get through the uncomfortable pain, there is eventual salvation. That's really what life's all about, isn't it? No pain, no gain. So let's charge into this winter season all guns blazing (and all swords polished,) ready to take on challenges and make a positive difference in this world.

The team and I have been hunkered down in a massive way for Catalogue 42. And boy what a treat of twelve swords we have for you - most of which are katanas, with also a couple great wakizashi and a superb tantô. The vast majority are NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon certified, all with great stories, very reasonably priced, and ready to be claimed. As far as we can see, no other art dealer comes close to the time, the photographic detail and background research that we unpack for each and every sword. We do it because the swords deserve to be presented right. And you, our trusted clients, deserve to know as much as possible so you can appreciate all the fascinating details that makes each piece unique. So with that said, here we go with the swords!

We kick off the catalogue with a muscular katana that was crafted by *Sakakura no Seki* swordsmith **Masatoshi** who flourished at the end of the warring *Muromachi* period circa *Kôji* era. The chiselled character 'Masa' of Masatoshi is similar to the *Masa* character found on blades of the *Sengo Muramasa* school, thus there is a theory he was trained by *Masazane*. A powerful warrior energy pulses through this sharp, freshly polished blade - showcasing both *Sôshû* and *Mino* influences. This weighty katana embodies the samurai spirit with tremendous character and intensity.

Next up, we head on over to *Kyôto*, for a brilliant katana that was crafted by *nidai Iga no Kami Kinnichi* who flourished during the early Edo period's *Manji* era. The *Mishina* school was a prestigious and powerful family with deep connections to the ruling *Tokugawa* family and the imperial court. Everything about this sword is collectible; from the overall structure and qualities of the sword, to its impressive history, the mark of the chrysanthemum on the *ubu nakago*, its wonderful *kizami koshirae*, and the excellent fittings that will be incredible on display.

We stay in the *shintô* period with an outstanding katana by *nidai Kunishige*, born *Ôtsuki Denshichirô*, and student of *Ichizô Kunishige* - both of whom were known as *Edo Mizuta*. For those that love *jihada*, look no further - gorgeous whirlpools of *ô-itame* and *mokume-hada* illuminate this long 74cm samurai sword with a thick blanket of winding *suguha* in *nie-deki*. A set of late Edo period *koshirae* tastefully compliments the blade featuring a leather wrapped *tsuka*, a late *Higo fuchi-kashira* and a beautiful *Heianjô tsuba*. Next is the superb *tantô* featured on the cover of the catalogue crafted by *Fuyuhiko* who worked during the *Momoyama* period in *Wakasa* province. This long and wide *tantô* in *hirazukuri* shape carries a bright, shining *ko-gunome hamon* and an assertive *funagata nakago* that pays respect to its *Sôshû* heritage. A spectacular set of *koshirae* focused around a *fuchi-kashira* crafted by master artisan *Miyata Nobukiyo* gloriously depicts a family of tigers and leopards.

Maestro *Hizen* swordsmith *shodai Masahiro* crafted the ensuing katana featuring an absolutely gorgeous *gunome-chôji-midare hamon* that creates a *nihontô* light show like few other blades can. The *shirasaya* is blessed with *sayagaki* by *Kunzan* that he made for his sword friend *Moriyasu Isao*. A magnificent set of *koshirae* comprising of a marvellous *kage-makie* lacquered theme of dragonflies, a unique geometric *tsuba* and a lovely *fuchi-kashira* speaks of the heavenly courtesan *Tennyô* and the captivating *Noh* play called *Hagoromo*. Gold *shisa* lions further guard this spiritual treasure.

We move to the *shinshintô* period for a terrific samurai sword by **Yasuuji**, who counted himself as the 60th generation of the famed thousand-year-old *Naminohira school* from *Satsuma* on *Kyûshû* island. This katana was crafted with pure *Yamato-den* characteristics with a bright *suguha-hamon* in sparkling *nie-deki* with *ashi* that look like solar flares. A splendid *Meiji* period *koshirae* houses the sword with gorgeous fittings that include insects crawling over a realistic woodgrain *tsuba* and a *fuchi-kashira* featuring a chilled hermit and a jubilant scene of birds flying over waves.

We travel back in time to February 1498 near when Christopher Columbus was sailing the ocean blue with the creation of a fiery *tachi* by **Kanezumi** who worked in *Seki* during the tumultuous *Muromachi* period. This is a classic Mino-tradition creation with a *Kanesada* school influence featuring a dazzling *gunome-midare hamon* with *ôbusha-chôji* reminiscent of the great *Bizen Fukuoka-Ichimonji* school. The sword is housed in a tasteful set of *koshirae* that imbues pure class. This is a rare 526-year-old dated reference piece that will touch your soul on several levels.

We zip forward to February 1866 for a magnificent katana by **Katsumura Norikatsu**, one of the most accomplished smiths of the *shinshintô* period, when he was working at the *Koishikawa* residence of the *Mito* domain. The workmanship on this powerful katana is sublime, with a beaming *suguha hamon* over glorious straight grain *masame-hada* and *sunagashi* that is truly impressive. An excellent set of Edo period *koshirae* captures the beauty of a crisp autumn day and wonderful set of *menuki* depicts a predatory hawk stalking a bear cub. This is a first-class, highly collectible sword crafted for the prominent *Mito* family in the final years of the *Tokugawa shogunate*.

Looking for a cutting test sword? This very sharp Japanese sword was originally crafted as a curvy *katate-uchi* at the height of the *Sengoku-jidai* by *jô-saku Jûrôzaemon Tadamitsu*, who flourished during the *Tenbun* era (1532~1555). This sword underwent *suriage* to its now *ô-wakizashi* length of 54.9cm with a carefully preserved signature called *orikaeshi-mei*. Inscribed in bright, well-preserved gold inlay on the *nakago*, it states that this sword was tested *twice* [on a human body] severing through **both** the centre of the chest (*Ichino dô*) and diagonally through the body from the base of the neck to the opposite armpit - a rather vicious test cut known as *ô-kesa*.

Our next katana is by the **Yamato Tegai school** and a prime example of the splendour of *kotô* period swords from the *Kamakura* period. The sword's elegant shape is indicative of its origins as a *tachi* - typically made for horseback warfare. A splendid iron-based dragon *koshirae* with a signed *Sôten* school *fuchi-kashira* houses this sword in such a spirited manner. This is a refined and gracious sword from one of the most respected schools in Japanese sword history. It deserves a fine home.

We wind up the catalogue with two swords from *Hizen* province starting with talented swordsmith **Yukihiro**. This katana has such terrific energy carrying Yukihiro's trademark *abu nomefu*. Its set of *koshirae* features a mother-of-pearl lacquered saya called *fuemaki*. This magnificent type of lacquer work is extremely demanding and requires exacting standards. And finally, we conclude with another beauty by *shodai Masahiro*, this time a dated *wakizashi* to August of 1643. It is classic Masahiro in every way and comes with rare certificate by *Fujishiro Matsuo*. Enjoy it in *shirasaya* or consider building a custom *koshirae* or even *daishô* *koshirae* with a well-suited katana.

Thank you for all your passion, trust and confidence. We look forward to serving you. I wish you a great winter period, and to my American friends, a happy and safe Thanksgiving holiday.



Pablo Kuntz
November 2024

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ujka433	31	A KINMICHI KATANA	72.0	Tokubetsu Hozon	Manji (1658~1661)	SOLD
ujka447	57	A KUNISHIGE KATANA	74.3	Tokubetsu Hozon	Jôkyô (1684~1688)	SOLD
ujta059	79	A FUYUHIRO TANTÔ	29.8	Tokubetsu Hozon	Keichô (1596~1615)	SOLD
ujka429	103	A MASAHIRO KATANA	70.6	Tokubetsu Hozon	Kan'ei (1624~1644)	SOLD
ujka442	127	A YASUUI KATANA	69.7	Tokubetsu Hozon	Kansei (1789~1801)	SOLD
ujka448	151	A KANEZUMI TACHI	69.6	Tokubetsu Hozon	Meiô (Feb 1498)	SOLD
ujka449	176	A NORIKATSU KATANA	71.3	Tokubetsu Hozon	Keiô (Feb 1866)	SOLD
ujwa261	203	A TADAMITSU WAKIZASHI	54.9	NBTHK Hozon	Tenbun (1532~1555)	SOLD
ujka453	220	A TEGAI KATANA	71.3	Tokubetsu Hozon	Kotô (1300~1350)	SOLD
ujka367	244	A YUKIHIRO KATANA	69.7	Tokubetsu Hozon	Enpô (1667~1675)	SOLD
ujwa252	269	A MASAHIRO WAKIZASHI	45.7	Tokubetsu Hozon	Kan'ei (Aug 1643)	SOLD

ALL PRICES ARE IN US DOLLARS

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

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DOMO ARIGATO,
PABLO

RECENTLY SOLD...



12th NBTHK Tokubetsu Jûyô



ujka454
A Chikakage Naginata-Naoshi Katana

Length: 74.6cm
12th NBTHK Tokubetsu Jûyo Tôken
Orikaeshi-mei dated to Jôwa 5 (1349)
Kunzan-sensei sayagaki



CURRENTLY AVAILABLE JAPANESE SWORDS

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ITEM# UJKA417

A MASATOSHI KATANA

SIGNED, SUE-KOTÔ PERIOD (KÔJI ERA: 1555~1558)

Swordsmith:	<i>Masatoshi (nidai, 2nd gen.)</i>
Measurements:	Length: 67.0cm (<i>suriage</i>) Sori: 1.4cm Moto-haba: 2.96cm Weight: 780g
Jihada:	<i>Beautiful masame-nagare-hada and itame-hada with ji-nie and chikei</i>
Hamon:	<i>Vibrant gunome-midare with tobiyaki, yô, togari, sunagashi and kinsuji, jizô-boshi</i>
Certificate #1:	NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon (<i>Especially Worthy of Preservation</i>)
Certificate #2-4:	NTHK-NPO Kanteishô (<i>koshirae, fk and tsuba certified as Authentic</i>)
Fujishiro rank:	Chûjô-saku (<i>ranked as an above average swordsmith</i>)
Sharpness:	Ryô-wazamonô (<i>rated as a maker of highly sharp swords</i>)
Authentication:	Sayagaki by Nozomi-san (<i>shodô artist</i>)
Included:	Shirasaya, Edo-koshirae, fabric bags, stand, kit, printed description

SOLD

This muscular katana was crafted by *Sakakura no Seki* swordsmith **Masatoshi** who flourished at the end of the warring *Muromachi* period circa *Kôji* era (1555~1558). The chiselled character 'Masa' of Masatoshi is similar to the *Masa* character found on blades of the *Sengo Muramasa* school, thus there is a theory he was trained by *Masazane*. A powerful warrior energy pulses through this sharp, freshly polished blade - showcasing both *Sôshû* and *Mino* influences. Brilliant *hataraki* such as *tobi-yaki*, *yô*, *sunagashi*, *kinsuji* and pointed *togari* are all present with a handsome set of *koshirae* depicting snowflakes, hats, *shisa* lions, peonies and courageous plovers over a braided *naka katate-maki*. This is a katana that embodies the samurai spirit with tremendous character and intensity.

^
Saki-kasane: 4.3mm

Moto-kasane: 6.1mm

Omosa: 780g

Kissaki: 4.89cm

Saki-haba: 2.18cm

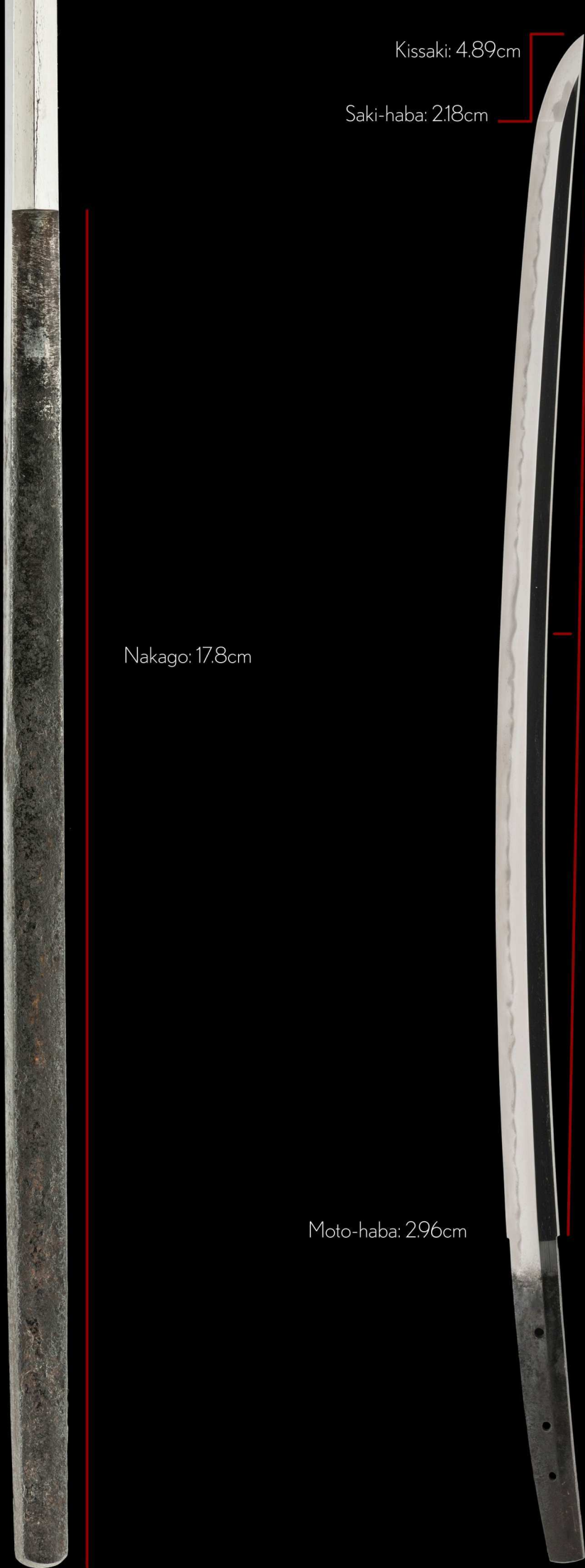
Nakago: 17.8cm

Moto-haba: 2.96cm

Nagasa: 67.0cm

Sori: 1.4cm

Mekugi-ana: 3



This fine, muscular katana was crafted by second generation swordsmith *Masatoshi* who flourished at the end of the warring *Muromachi* period circa *Kôji* era (1555~1558) as Japan was engulfed in a civil war known as the *Sengoku-jidai* (warring period).

Masatoshi was part of the *Sakakura no Seki* school which derived its name from the *Sakakura* region of Mino province. His father, *shodai* Masatoshi, was the son of second generation *Masayoshi* who founded the school in the late 1400s.

The signed character '*Masa*' of Masatoshi is similar to the *Masa* character found on blades of the *Sôshû Sengo Muramasa* school. Thus there is a theory that Masatoshi was the son of *Masazane* of the school.

There is a warrior energy pulsing through this freshly polished blade - showcasing both *Sôshû* and *Mino* influences. Brilliant *hataraki* (activity) such as *tobiyaki*, *yô*, *sunagashi*, *kinsuji* and pointed *togari* are all present to soak in. Even though the sword may have been shortened to a 67cm cutting edge (a length that many fighting samurai preferred in reality), this blade weighs a beefy near-800grams. It should also be noted that Masatoshi is ranked *ryô-wazamono* for the terrifically sharp swords he produced. Therefore, what we have here is a dependable samurai katana that, without a shadow of a doubt, saw plenty of use on the battlefield.

We've had this sword at Unique Japan for a good amount of time, giving it the attention it deserved. As stated above, we professionally polished the blade, and assembled a splendid group of antique fittings that includes depictions of snowflakes, woven hats, *shisa* lions, peonies and courageous plover birds flying over waves. The *tsuka* (hilt) was re-wrapped over black lacquered *samekawa* and wonderfully braided in *naka katate-maki* that allows for a one-handed grip to the sword's koshirae.

All told, this is a katana that embodies the samurai spirit with tremendous character and intensity.





Location: *Mino province*

School: *Sakakura no Seki*

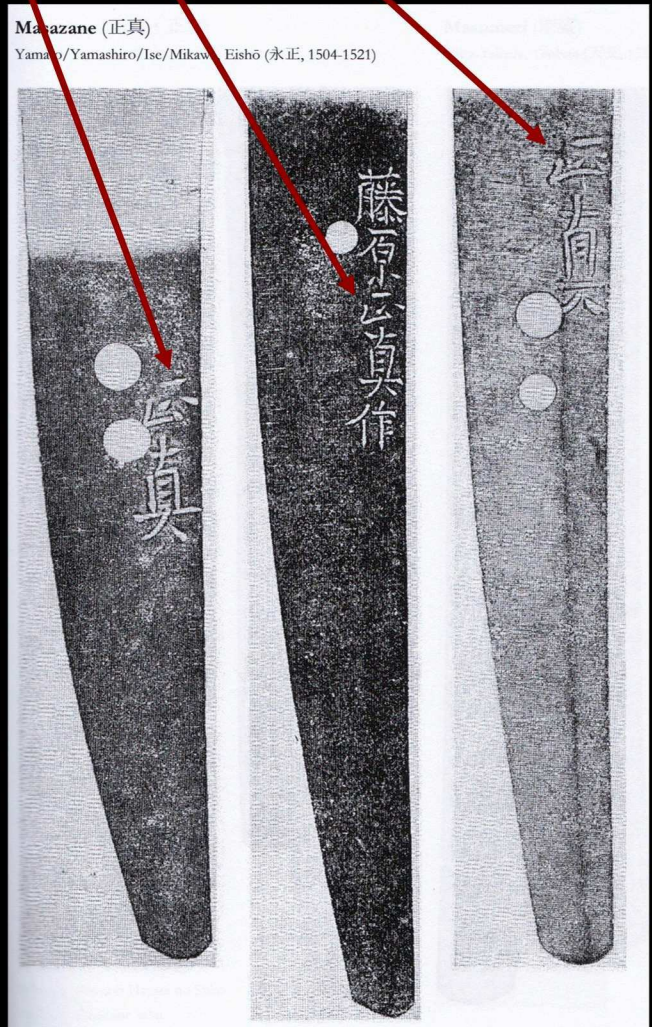
Swordsmith: *Masatoshi* (second generation)

suriage-nakago (shortened tang)

katte-sagari yasurime (sloping file marks)

正 (Masa)

利 (toshi)



The chiselling of the character for “*Masa*” and the entire workmanship of the katana in general is similar to that of the *Sengo* school. Therefore a recognized theory exists that *Masatoshi* was actually the son of the *Eishō-era* (1504~1521) *Masazane* who worked in *Ise* too or that he was a direct student of *Sengo Muramasa*.



A good chunky nakago that slightly protrudes suggesting that Masatoshi's roots lay with the *Sôshû Sengo* school that featured a *funagata* (boat-shaped) nakago.

(*ura*, reverse)

15200301



No 148018



鑑定書

長二尺三寸一分

一刀 銘 正利(坂倉関)

右は當協會に於て審査の結果特別保存刀剣と
鑑定しこれを証する

平成十五年 二月二十七日

財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協會



NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon Certificate of Designation

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

Issued in the 15th year of Heisei (2003), February 27th

One, Katana

Mei (signature)
Masatoshi (Sakakura no Seki)

Nagasa (length)
2-shaku 3-sun 1-bu (67.0cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai
(NBTHK)



坂倉関正利

坂倉関正利
Sakakura no Seki Masatoshi
Sakakura no Seki Masatoshi

時代弘治頃

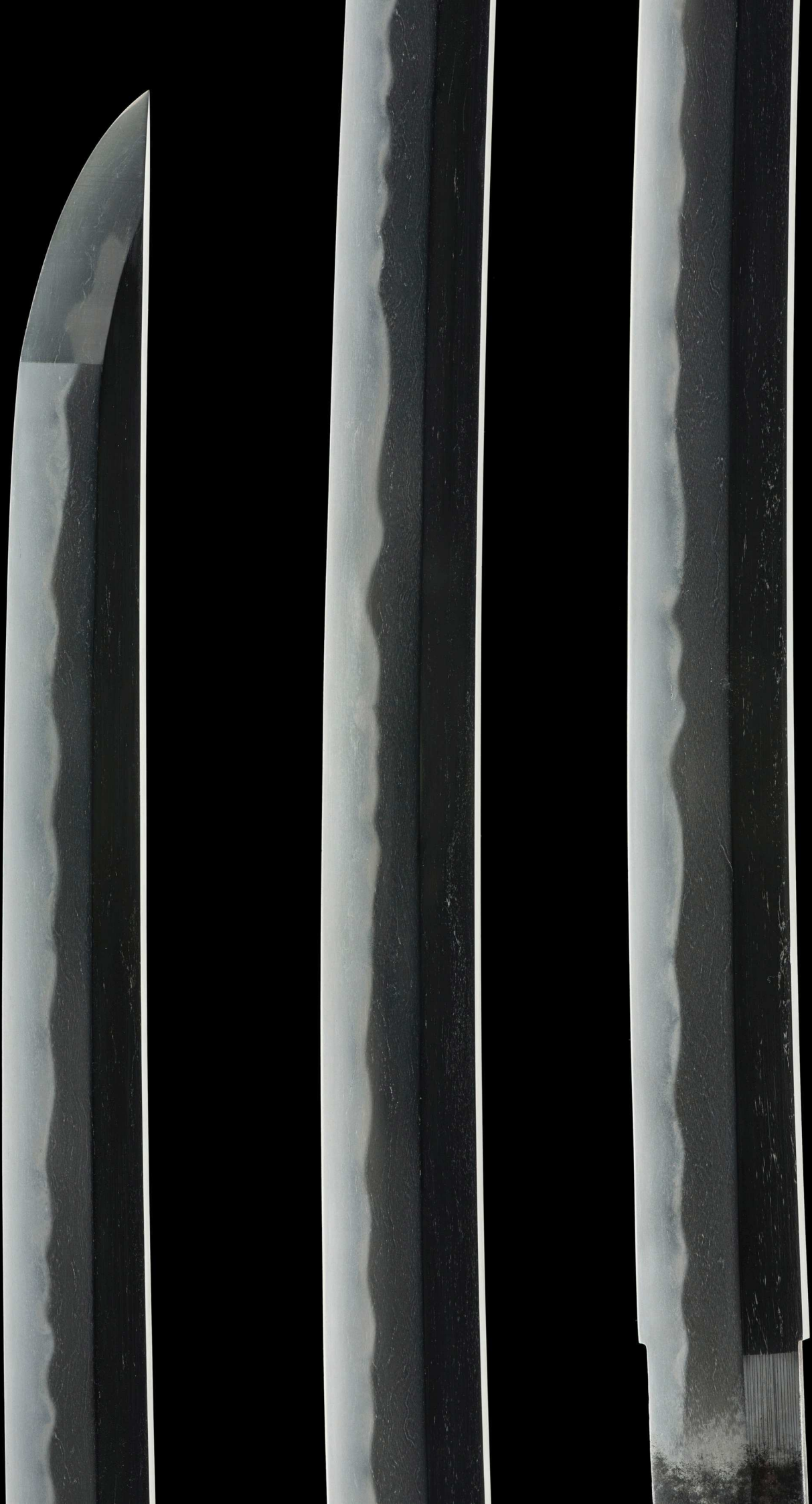
時代弘治頃
Jidai Kōji-goro
Around Kōji period (1555-1558)

刃長貳尺二寸一分有之

刃長貳尺二寸一分有之
Hachō 2-shaku 2-sun 1-bu kore ari
Blade length 67.0 cm

令和六甲辰年
葉月吉日誌之

令和六甲辰年葉月吉日誌之
Reiwa roku kinoe-tatsudoshi Hazuki kichijitsu kore o shirusu
Written on a lucky day in the eighth month in the sixth year of
Reiwa era during the Year of the Dragon (August 2024)






The *jihada* is a fine mixture of *nagare-hada* (streaming) and *itame-hada*, plank grain.

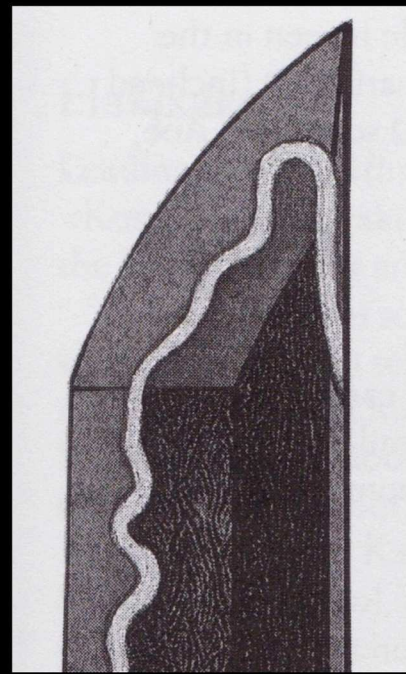
nagare-hada

itame-hada

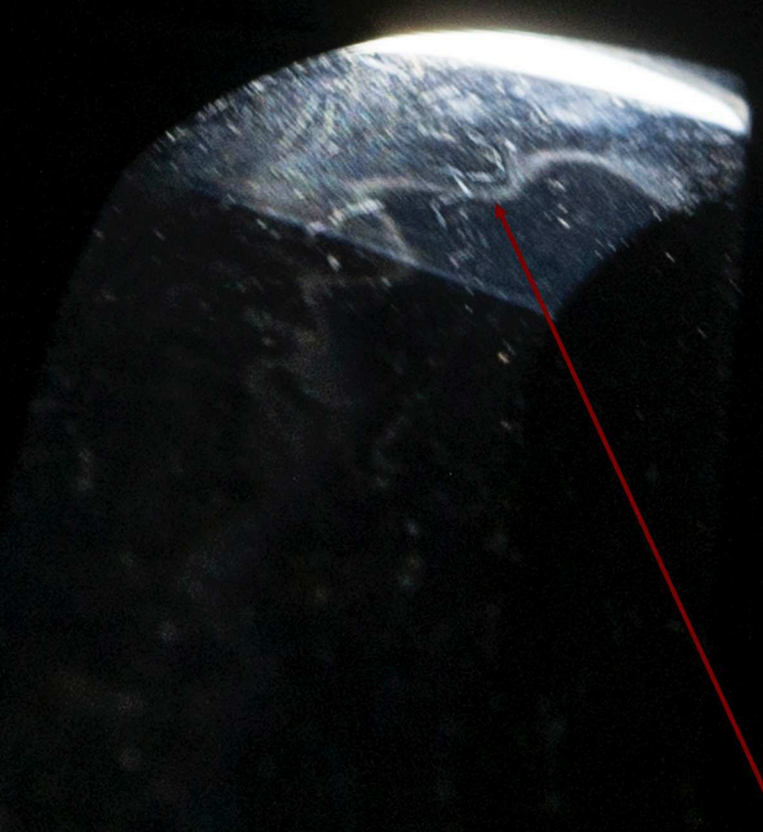




An imposing *kissaki* (tip) of nearly 5cm gives the katana a warrior appearance that reflects swords made during the violent *Nambokuchô* period of the mid-1300s.



Jizo boshi
(illustration by Nagayama Kokan)



Bôshi pattern resembles the profile of *Jizo*.

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

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

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

Sengo Muramasa crafted swords with a *Jizo-boshi* - perhaps his influence is at play here.



statues of *Jizo*

Tempered 'flying' spots that appear above the *gunome-midare hamon* line in the *ji* (body) are referred to as *tobiyaki*.

Hardened elements that are inside the *yakiba* (below the hamon) are *yô* (leaves).

This katana is filled with *Sôshû* powered activity to really sink your teeth into. The sword was recently polished so all *hataraki* is on full display.

tobiyaki

yô





togari

With *Mino*-den workmanship, there will be portions of the hamon that will be 'pointed' known as *togari*. It's enjoyable to keep an eye out for these heartbeats.



Streaming sands of *sunagashi*
captured nicely here.



Shirasaya
(protective scabbard)

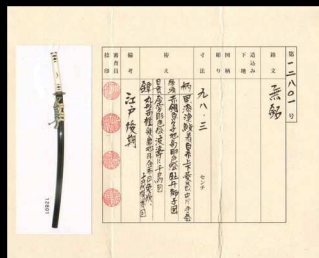


silver *habaki* with
falling rain file marks

*Kuro-ronuri 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

snowflake

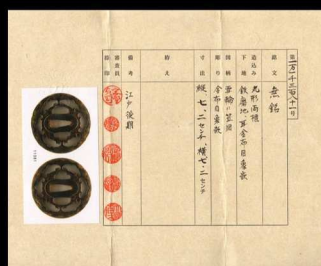
woven hats



Polished iron tsuba with crosshatched gold inlay on the rim
Sho-ami school from *Kyôto*

The design is of a snowflake encircled by a silhouette of woven hats

Late Edo period (1780~1867)



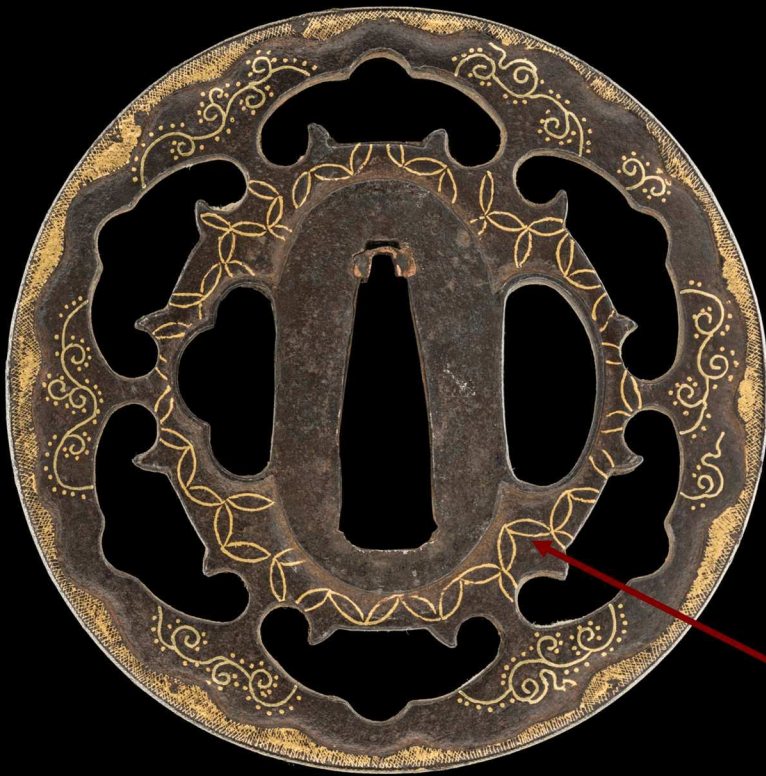
NTHK Kanteisho certificate



A close-up of the meticulous gold cross-hatched work on the rim of the tsuba.



Going out in the snow
(Edo period)



A samurai wonderland.





Expertly braided in Japan in *naka katatemaki* (pure white silk wrap with middle positioning)



Chidori (plover birds) flying over waves form the beautiful *menuki*.

Chidori translates to "one thousand birds" as they which typically migrate in huge groups to Japan at the end of the rainy season battling head winds, rain and waves. Thus these little forces of nature are often depicted over waves symbolising gritty determination.

For many centuries, it has also been an omen for longevity because the sound of its call (*chiyo*) means "a thousand generations" in Japanese.

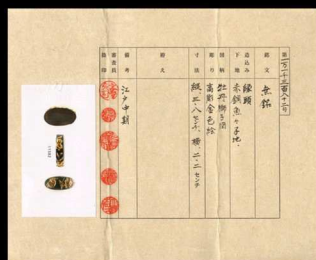


black-lacquered *samekawa* (skin of a ray fish)



Fuchi-kashira attributed to
Shōnai Shōami school
Mid-Edo period (1700~1780)

Shishi and peony motif



NTHK-NPO Kanteisho certificate



Koshirae bag



ITEM# UJKA433

A KINMICHI KATANA

SIGNED, SHINTÔ PERIOD (MANJI ERA: 1658~1661)

Swordsmith: *Iga no Kami Kinmichi (nidai, 2nd gen.)*
Measurements: **Length:** 72.0cm (*ubu*) **Curvature:** 1.7cm **Moto-haba:** 3.00cm **Weight:** 790g
Jihada: *Well-forged itame and mokume-hada with ji-nie and plenty of chikei*
Hamon: *Gunome-midare with hako-midare with sunagashi ashi, and hakikake-bôshi*
Certificate #1: **NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon** (*Especially Worthy of Preservation*)
Certificate #2: **NBTHK Hozon** (*Fuchi-kashira Worthy of Preservation*)
Certificate #3-6: **NTHK-NPO Kanteishô** (*koshirae, fk, menuki and tsuba certified as Authentic*)
Fujishiro rank: **Chûjô-saku** (*ranked as an above average swordsmith*)
Sharpness: **Wazamono** (*maker of sharp swords*)
Authentication: **Sayagaki by Nozomi-san** (*shodô artist*)
Included: *Shirasaya, Edo-koshirae, fabric bags, stand, kit, printed description*

SOLD

Born *Mishina Kanbei*, this brilliant katana was crafted by *nidai Iga no Kami Kinmichi* who flourished in *Yamashiro* province (*Kyôto*) during the *Manji* era. The *Mishina* school was a prestigious and powerful family with deep connections to the ruling *Tokugawa* family and the imperial court. There is so much to cherish in this structurally sound and most lively katana containing a string of rich cultural elements that the following pages happily expand upon. This is a sharp, and definitive samurai sword from the early Edo period to collect and admire for generations to come.

Saki-kasane: 4.9mm [^]

Moto-kasane: 71mm

Kissaki: 3.75cm

Saki-haba: 2.11cm

Nagasa: 72.0cm

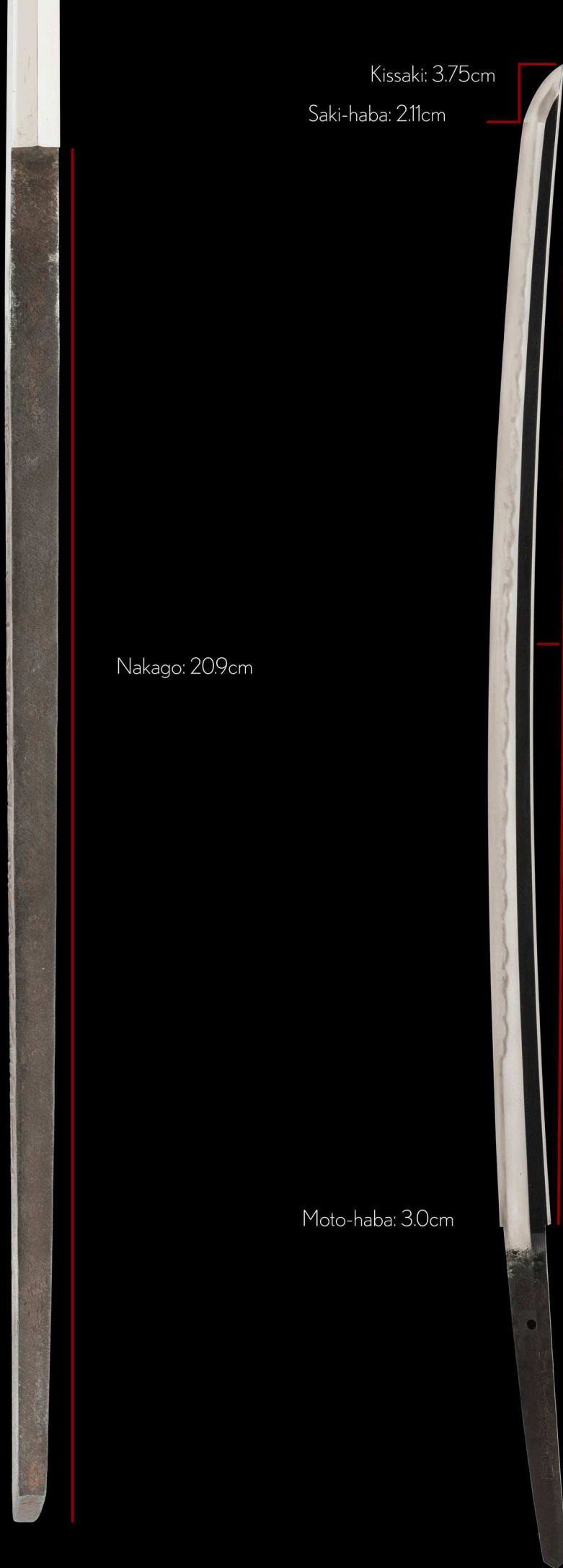
Nakago: 20.9cm

Sori: 1.70cm

Omosa: 790g

Moto-haba: 3.0cm

Mekugi-ana: 1



This stately katana is crafted by *nidai* (2nd gen.) *Iga no Kami Kinmichi* who worked in *Yamashiro (Kyôto)* - Japan's old cultural capital. Known as *Mishina Kanbei*, he is the first son of *shodai* (first gen.) *Kinmichi* and the elder brother of *Izu no Kami Fujiwara Kinmichi*.

The *Mishina* school was a prestigious and powerful family with deep connections to the ruling *Tokugawa* family and the imperial court. Several generations of swordsmiths worked throughout the Edo period.

Japan's largest and arguably most important event in its feudal history was the *Battle of Sekigahara* that took place on October 21, 1600 in Mino province. Prior to the battle, *Tokugawa Ieyasu* ordered no less than 1,000 tachi from shodai Kinmichi. Due to the skilful management of all workers involved in this mission, and Tokugawa's eventual victory, Kinmichi was granted with the honorary title *Nihon-kaji-sôshô* meaning "*Master swordsmith of Japan*".

This title gave Kinmichi the unique authority to register swordsmiths and award them with titles. Second generation Kinmichi assumed these responsibilities from his father and was actually the first smith to sign *Nihon-kaji-sôshô* on his swords adding a special chrysanthemum in a stylized cartwheel design.

Structurally, this impressive katana is fairly long and wide with a *nagasa* of 72cm, exhibiting a lovely curvature and robust weight of nearly 800grams. A straight *kyô-yakidashi* starts the hamon off and then explodes into a wavy *gunome midare* with beautiful *sunagashi* resembling sweeping strokes over sand. This brushed effect continues into the *Mishina bôshi* in the form of *hakikake*.

The character "*Kin*" of *Kinmichi* means 'gold' as thus the gold elements found on this stunning Mid-Edo period koshirae brings this work of art all together. Look for the *kenjô* presentation *tsuba* from *Kyôto* and marvellous rooster and chick themed *fuchi-kashira* signed by *Ômori Terutsugu*. Its *kizami saya* (ribbed scabbard) is completely brilliant as is the hilt with impressive *gunbai menuki* attributed to *Gotô Unjô*.

Kinmichi is respectfully ranked as *chûjô-saku* and *wazamono* for the excellent sharpness of his swords. Kinmichi died on October 21, 1680.





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

Family name: *Fujiwara*

Location: Yamashiro (Kyôto)

Swordsmith: *Kinmichi* (second generation)

ubu-nakago (original, unaltered tang)

sujikai-yasurime (diagonal file marks)

(*Kiku-mon*, chrysanthemum crest)

伊 (I)

賀 (ga, no)

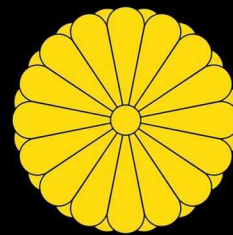
守 (Kami)

藤 (Fuji)

原 (wara)

金 (Kin)

道 (michi)



The Imperial Seal of Japan.

Called *kiku-mon* or 'chrysanthemum seal', it is a *mon* or crest used by members of the Japanese Imperial family.

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

Kinmichi and other swordsmiths of the *Mishina* school were granted permission from the Imperial family to place the 16-petal *kikumon* and variations on their swords.

It was an honour and privilege.



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

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

(*ura*, reverse)

特 保
05202303

No 1020574



鑑定書

一 刀 銘 (菊紋) 伊賀守藤原金道 (二代)

長二尺三寸七分半

右は當協會に於て審査の結果特別保存刀剣と
鑑定しこれを証する

令和五年五月三十一日

公益財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協會



兵庫県教育委員会
第 210 号
昭和26年7月27日

NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon Certificate of Designation

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

Issued in the 31st year of Reiwa (2019), May 31st

One, Katana

Mei (signature)
(Kikumon)

Iga no Kami Fujiwara Kinmichi (nidai)

Nagasa (length)
2-shaku 3-sun 7-bu han (72.0cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai
(NBTHK)



二代伊賀守金道

Nidai Iga no Kami Kinmichi

Iga no Kami Kinmichi, the 2nd generation

時代萬治頃

Jidai Manji-goro

Around Manji period (1658~1661)

刃長貳尺參寸七分半有之

刃長貳尺參寸七分半有之

Hachô 2-shaku 3-sun 7-bu han kore ari

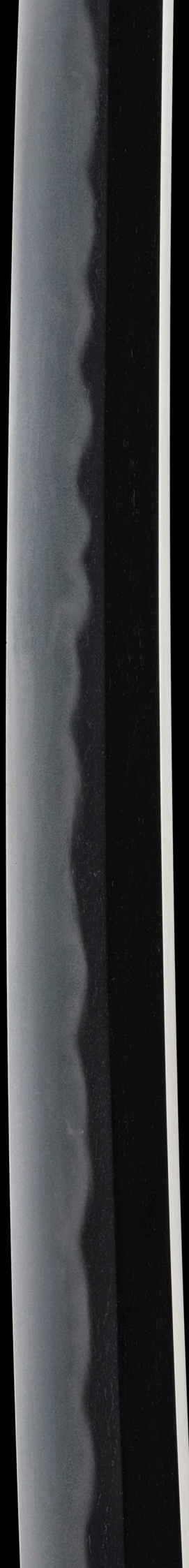
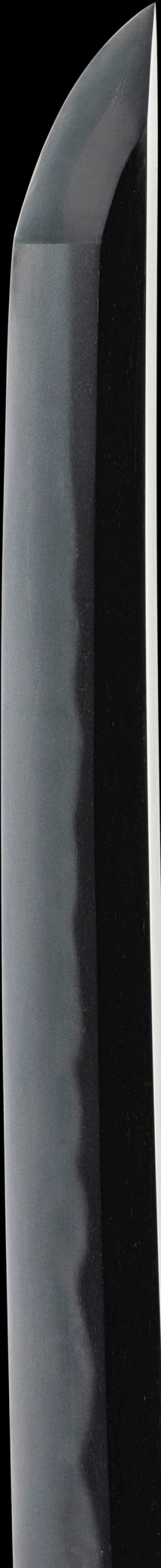
Blade length 72.0 cm

令和六甲辰年
皐月吉日誌之

令和六甲辰年皐月吉日誌之

Reiwa roku kinoe-tatsudoshi Satsuki kichijitsu kore o shirusu

Written on a lucky day in the fifth month in the sixth year of
Reiwa era during the Year of the Dragon (May 2024)





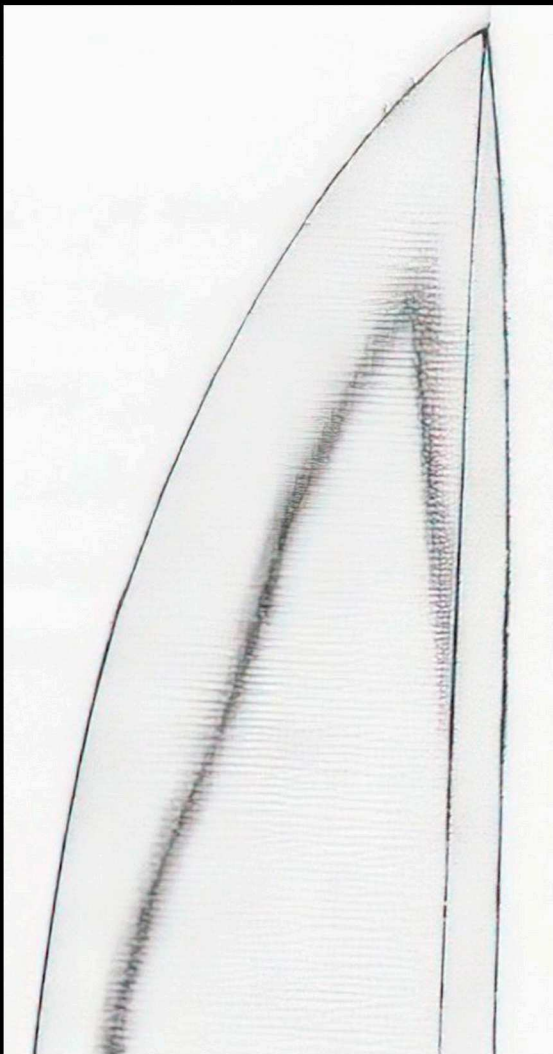
Mishina bôshi



Mishina bôshi

The line of the *bôshi* runs straight from the *yokote* towards a point, and the *kaeri* (return) is slightly wider.

It was often used by swordsmiths within the Mishina school, thus the name.



Mishina-bôshi
source: Markus Sesko



A *hakikake* (sweeping effect) harmonizes with the vast amount of *sunagashi* on this blade.



kyô-yakidashi



gunome-midare

suguha

The *hamon* commences in *suguha* (straight line) and then transitions into a wavy *gunome-midare* shape.

This unique hamon pattern is known as *kyô yakidashi* - iconic to swords made in *Kyôto* (*Yamashiro*).

As seen on swords by his father, *shodai Kinmichi*, there are interesting areas of the hamon that are somewhat box shaped, known as *hako-midare*.



hako-midare (box shaped)



Textbook examples of *sunagashi* (streams of sand) showcasing a broom line effect inside the hamon.

sunagashi

A crisp *gunome-midare hamon* with *ashi* (legs)
billowing out towards the cutting edge of the blade.

ashi

A close-up photograph of a sword blade, likely a katana, showing a hamon (temper line) with a gunome-midare pattern. The hamon is characterized by a series of small, rounded, billowing shapes called ashi (legs) that extend towards the cutting edge. A red arrow points from the word 'ashi' to one of these billowing shapes. The blade is dark and has a metallic sheen, with a bright light reflecting off the top edge.



Shirasaya
(protective scabbard)

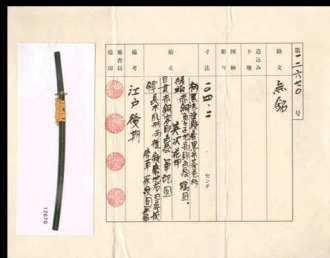
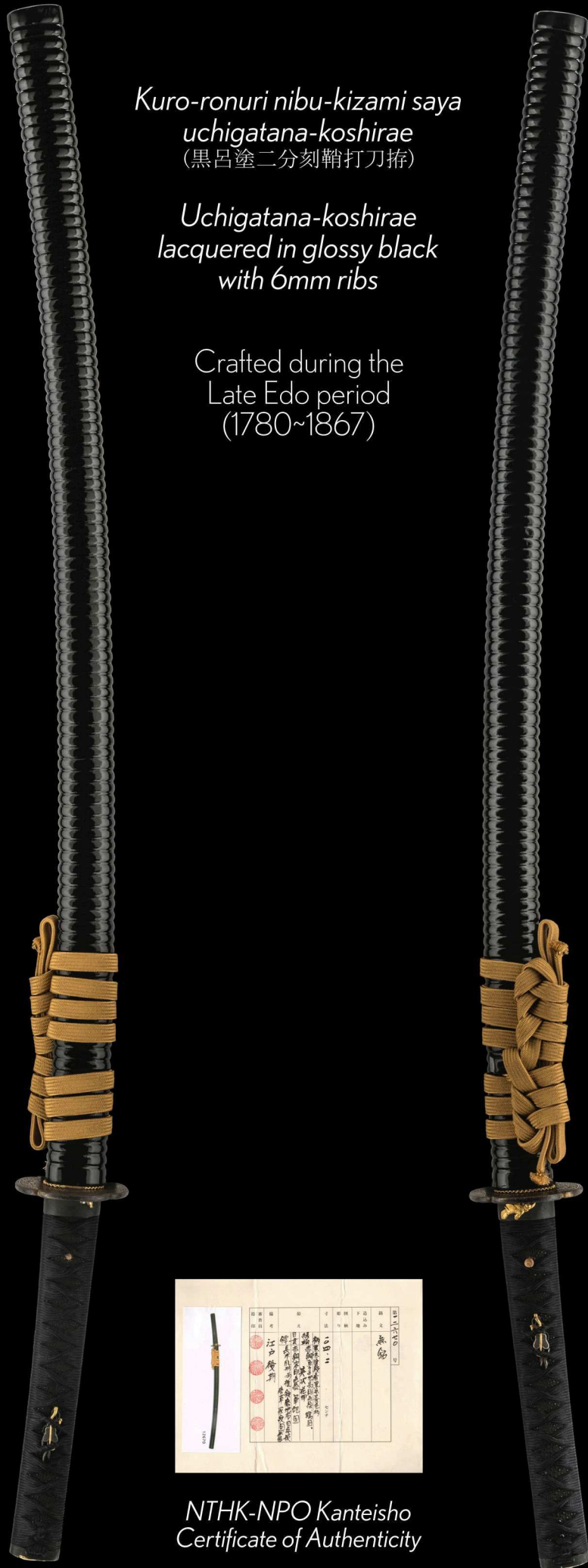


silver *habaki* with
horizontal file marks

*Kuro-ronuri nibu-kizami saya
uchigatana-koshirae*
(黒呂塗二分刻鞘打刀拵)

*Uchigatana-koshirae
lacquered in glossy black
with 6mm ribs*

Crafted during the
Late Edo period
(1780~1867)



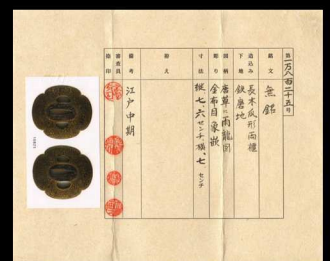
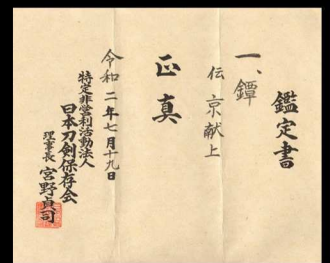
NTHK-NPO Kanteisho
Certificate of Authenticity



This is a *Kyô-kenjô tsuba*, meaning “presentation tsuba from Kyôto.” The *sankin-kotai* system of *daimyô* (great family) attendance is Edo (Tokyo) created special products that were sold along the main travel routes as souvenirs.

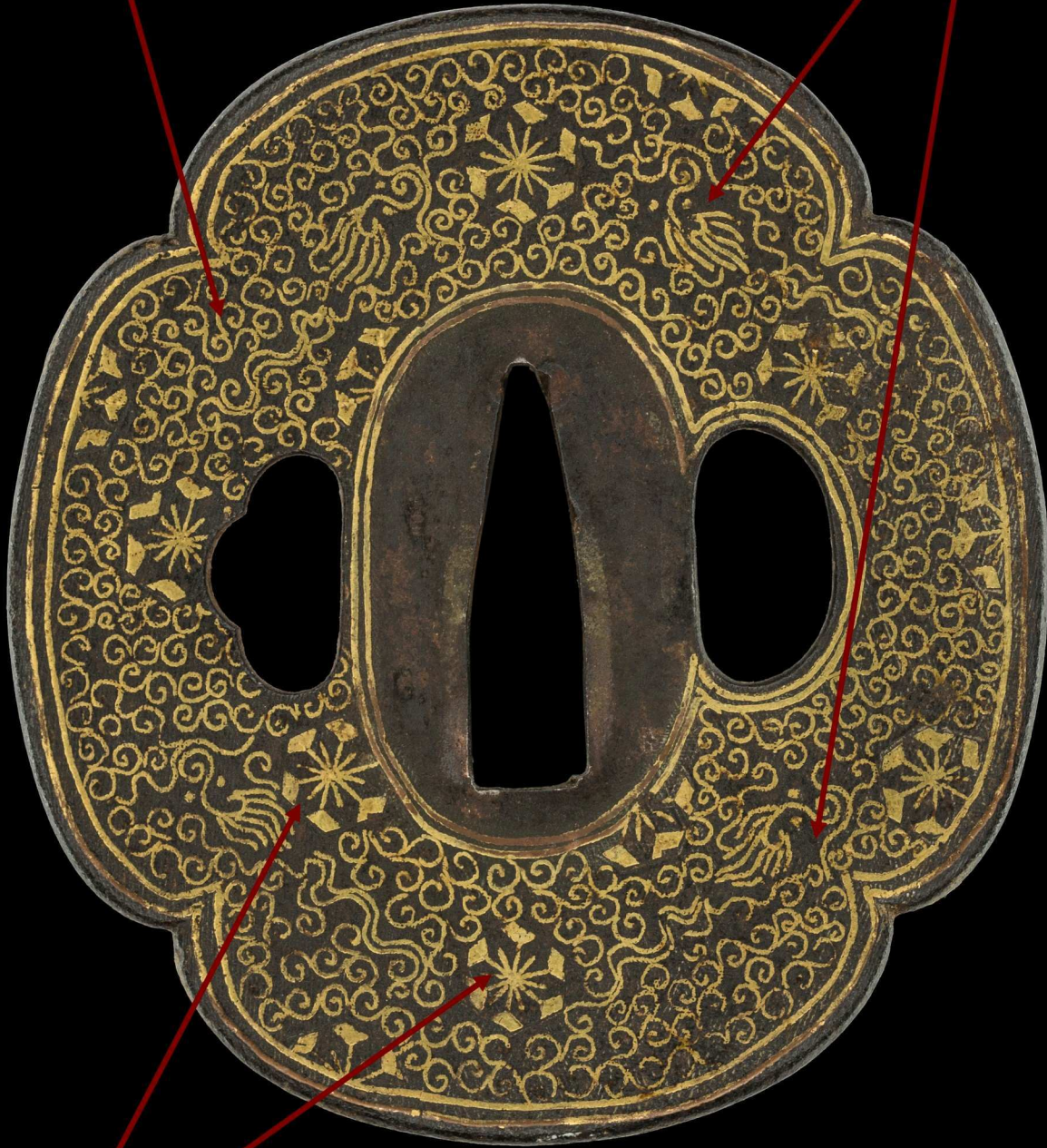
One such souvenir were highly decorative *kenjô-tsuba*. This four-lobed polished iron tsuba features a gold *nunome-zôgan* (gold cross-hatched) design motif of *karakusa* (arabesque) and *unryû* (rain dragons).

Many of these tsubas were made in Kyôto, thus the prefix “Kyô”. They were generally crafted by artists from the *Kyô-Shoami* and *Awa-Shoami* groups. An NTHK-NPO Kanteisho certificate of authenticity attributing the piece to the *mid-Edo period* circa 1700~1780 has been attained.



decorative arabesque (floral figures)

rain dragons



snowflakes

ura (reverse)



another chick...and an egg



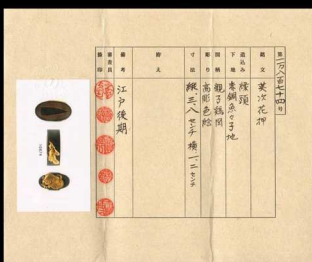
a hen and her chick



英 (Teru)

次 (tsugu)

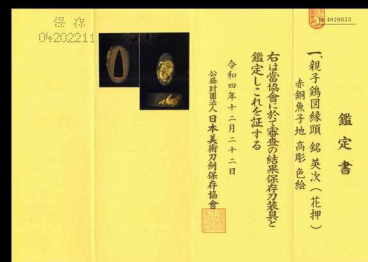
花押 (Kaô)



NTHK-NPO Kanteisho

A gorgeous signed *fuchi-kashira* by *Terutsugu* who was trained by *Teruhide* of the very famous *Ômori* school in *Edo*.

Two certificates of authenticity accompany this piece that depicts a rooster, hen and chicks.



NBTHK Hozon Certification



Fuchi-kashira
crafted by
Ômori Terutsugu
(Late Edo period)

A rooster

04202211



4020833

鑑定書

一、親子鶏図縁頭 銘 英次（花押）
赤銅魚子地 高彫 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

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



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

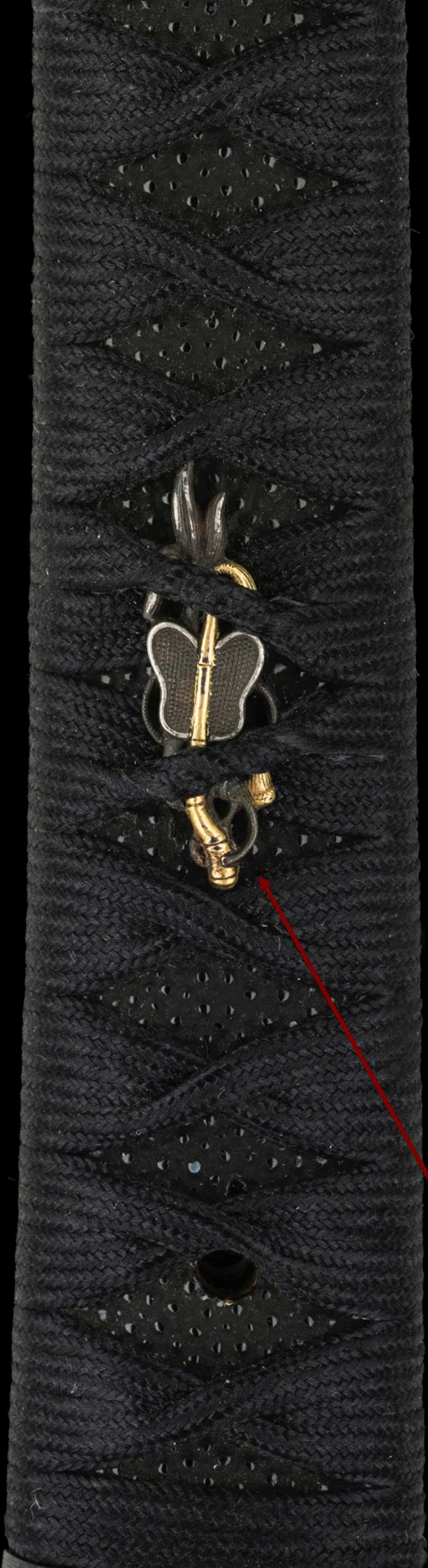
One, Fuchi-kashira

Depicting a rooster, hen and chicks

*Mei (signature)
Terutsugu + kaô*

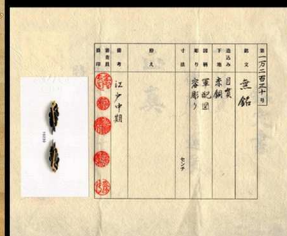
Shakudô with nanako ground, relief with color accents

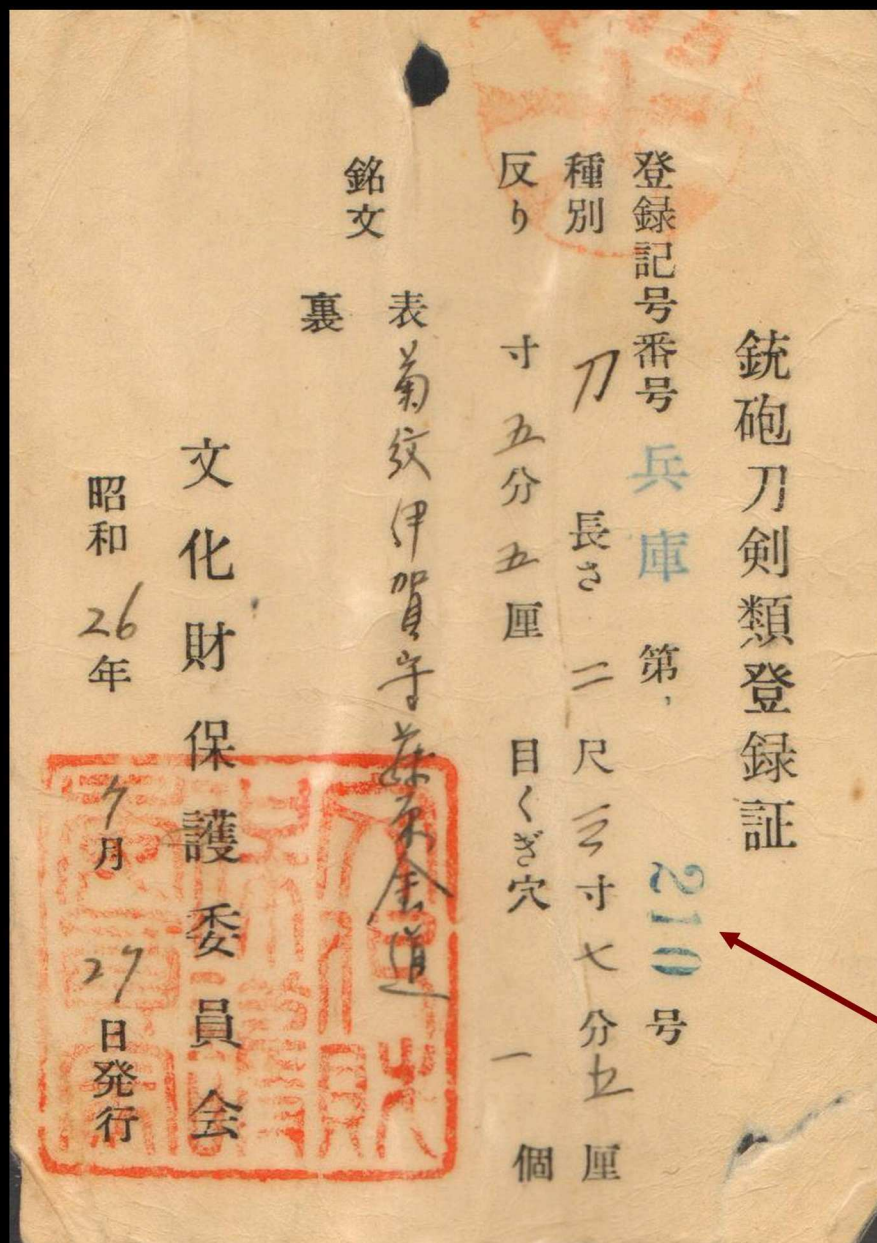
Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai
(NBTHK)



The menuki depict *gunbai*, short for *gunbai-uchiwa*, a type of signal baton and Japanese war fan. Once held by military leaders (such as daimyô) and priests in the past. It is used in the modern day by umpires in sumo wrestling.

Certified with NTHK-NPO Kanteisho attributing the menuki to *Gotô Unjô* circa the middle Edo period.





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

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

The serial number is just **210**, one of the very first swords registered in Japan. Interestingly, it was registered in *Hyôgo* prefecture, which borders *Kyôto*. It's possible this sword had remained in the *Kyôto* region for most of its life.



Koshirae bag



ITEM# UJKA447

A KUNISHIGE KATANA

SIGNED, SHINTÔ PERIOD (JÔKYÔ ERA: 1684~1688)

Swordsmith:	<i>Yamashiro Daijô Minamoto Kunishige (nidai, 2nd gen.)</i>
Measurements:	Length: 74.3cm (<i>ubu</i>) Curvature: 1.5cm Moto-haba: 2.98cm Weight: 720g
Jihada:	<i>Outstanding ô-itame and mokume-hada with ji-nie and chikei</i>
Hamon:	<i>Thick suguha in nie-deki, kuichigaiba with ko-ashi, kinsuji and kaen-bôshi</i>
Certificate #1:	NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon (<i>Especially Worthy of Preservation</i>)
Certificate #2-4:	NTHK-NPO Kanteishô (<i>koshirae, fk and tsuba certified as Authentic</i>)
Fujishiro rank:	Chûjô-saku (<i>ranked as an above average swordsmith</i>)
Authentication:	Sayagaki by Nozomi-san (<i>shodô artist</i>)
Included:	Shirasaya, Edo-koshirae, fabric bags, stand, kit, printed description

SOLD

This outstanding katana is the work of *nidai Kunishige*, born *Ôtsuki Denshichirô*, and student of *Ichizô Kunishige* - both of whom were known as *Edo Mizuta*. The *Mizuta* school derives its name from a group of swordsmiths that lived at *Mizuta* village in *Bitchû* province. Members of this school are said to be descendants of *Ko-Aoe Tametsugu* and *shodai Kunishige*, known as *Ko-Mizuta*. This blade is a splendid example of the wonderful grain patterns that make Japanese swords so divine. Gorgeous whirlpools of *ô-itame* and *mokume-hada* illuminate this long samurai sword with a thick blanket of winding *suguha* in *nie-deki*. A set of late Edo period *koshirae* tastefully compliments the blade featuring a leather wrapped *tsuka*, a late *Higo fuchi-kashira* and a beautiful *Heianjô* school *tsuba*.



Saki-kasane: 4.2mm

Moto-kasane: 6.5mm

Omosa: 720g

Kissaki: 2.74cm

Saki-haba: 1.83cm

Nakago: 20.1cm

Moto-haba: 2.98cm

Nagasa: 74.3cm

Sori: 1.5cm

Mekugi-ana: 1



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

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

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

This fabulous katana is the work of *Ichizô's* star student, *Ôtsuki Denshichirô*, who signed the nakago of his swords in the same manner as his *sensei*, *Yamashiro Daijô Minamoto Kunishige*.

For those looking for a sword with a pronounced *hada* (grain pattern), then this katana has to be seriously shortlisted. The sword lights up like a Christmas tree under the light with dazzling burl and plank wood grain patterns (*ô-itame* and *mokume hada*) that will delight each and every time it is unsheathed.

Its thick *nioguchi* of *suguha* twists its merry way down the blade with visible *nie* crystals glittering in *Soshû* tradition. Complimenting the sword is a handsome set of *koshirae* with a lovely *Heianjo* tsuba and a firm leather wrap. All told, this is a terrific (and long) katana with a spiritual force that will delight any new or seasoned collector of Japanese nihontô swords.

Enjoy!





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

Clan: *Minamoto*

Swordsmith: *Kunishige* (second generation)

ubu-nakago (original, unaltered tang)

sujikai-yasurime (diagonal file marks)

山 (Yama)

城 (shiro)

大 (Dai)

掾 (jô)

源 (Minamoto)

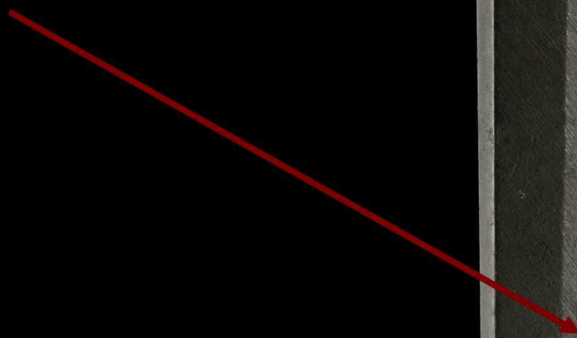
國 (Kuni)

重 (shige)



A close look at the precise chisel work that goes into a sword that Kunishige was proud to sign.

Well-chiseled *sujikai* (diagonal file marks)



(*ura*, reverse)

特 保
26201411

No 1002923



鑑定書

一 刀 銘 山城大掾源国重

長 二尺四寸五分

右は當協會に於て審査の結果特別保存刀剣と
鑑定しこれを証する

平成二十七年 二月 五日

公益財団法人 日本美術刀剣保存協會



山形 教育委員会
第 20854号
昭和34年 5月18日

NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon Certificate of Designation

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

Issued in the 27th year of Heisei (2015), February 5th

One, Katana

Mei (signature)

Yamashiro Daijō Minamoto Kunishige

Nagasa (length)

2-shaku 4-sun 5-bu (74.3cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai
(NBTHK)



山城大掾源国重

山城大掾源国重

Yamashiro Daijô Minamoto Kunishige

Yamashiro Daijô Minamoto Kunishige

時代貞享頃

時代貞享頃

Jidai Jôkyô-goro

Around Jôkyô era (1684~1688)

刃長貳尺四寸五分有之

刃長貳尺四寸五分有之

Hachô 2-shaku 4-sun 5-bu kore ari

Blade length 74.3 cm

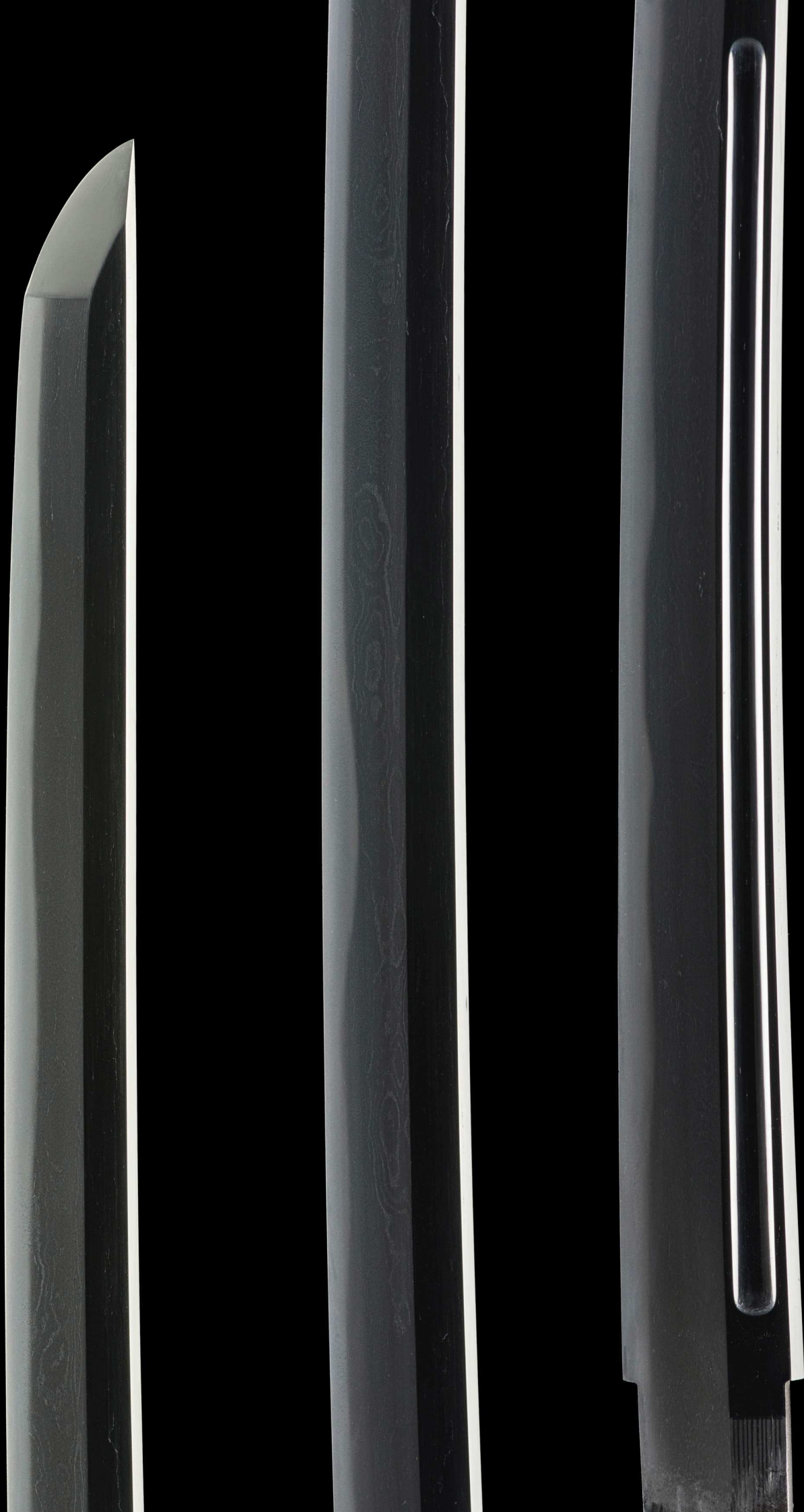
令和六甲辰年
葉月吉日誌之

令和六甲辰年葉月吉日誌之

Reiwa roku kinoe-tatsudoshi Hazuki kichijitsu kore o shirusu

Written on a lucky day in the eighth month in the sixth year of

Reiwa era during the Year of the Dragon (August 2024)





Goma (or "Homa" in Sanskrit) means "to burn".
Hashi means "chopsticks".

These double narrow short grooves with the same length and rounded top are symbolic of chopsticks used during *Goma* - a deeply spiritual Buddhist ceremony.

The officiating priest, who has performed the self-purification rites for both his mind and body, burns the goma wood in the center of the fireplace of the goma platform, which is in front of the principal holy image of *kôbo daishi*.



gomabashi - pair of parallel grooves running partway up the blade resembling chopsticks used for the spiritual Buddhist *goma* fire ritual.

a short *bo-hi* (rounded groove) is featured on the opposite side.

A beautiful *kaen boshi* that resembles a candle flame.



Crazy beautiful grain pattern...

Visible nie-crystals can be seen dotted along the thick, abright *suguha* hamon.



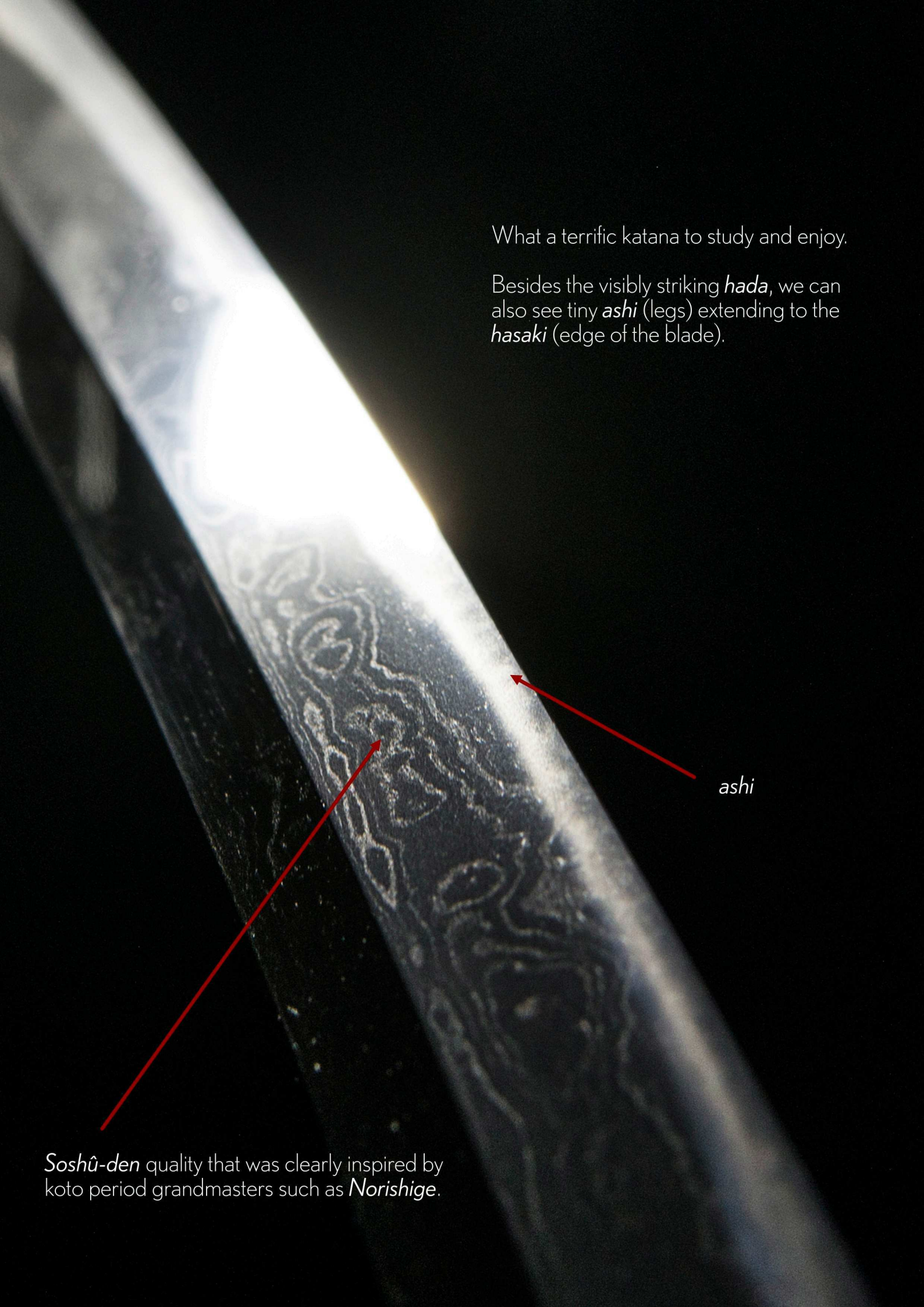
kuichigaiba
(an overlap in the hamon creating a gap.)





ô-itame and *mokume-hada*
(wood grain formations)

Fantastic whirlpools of *ô-itame* and *mokume-hada* form an absolutely brilliant light show.

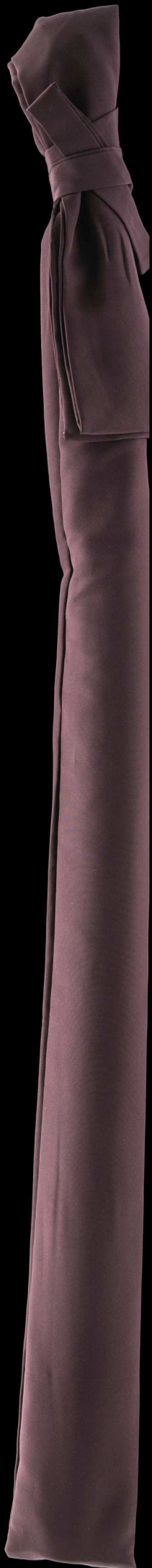


What a terrific katana to study and enjoy.

Besides the visibly striking *hada*, we can also see tiny *ashi* (legs) extending to the *hasaki* (edge of the blade).

ashi

Soshû-den quality that was clearly inspired by koto period grandmasters such as *Norishige*.



Shirasaya
(protective scabbard)



gold wrapped *niju habaki*

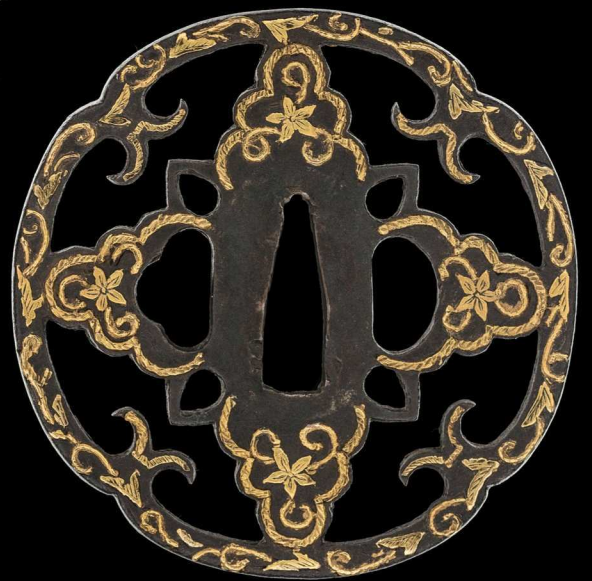
*Kuro-ro-nuri saya
uchigatana-koshirae*
(黒呂塗鞘打刀拵)

*Uchigatana-koshirae
lacquered in glossy black*

Crafted during the
Late Edo period
(1780~1867)



NTHK-NPO Kanteisho
Certificate of Authenticity



Heianjô-tsuba crafted in Yamashiro province.
 Polished iron, motif of ivy and bellflowers.
 Crafted in early Edo period, early 1600s.





leather wrap



An antique leather wrapped *tsuka* (hilt) with *menuki* that depict *jimbata* (samurai war flags).
Note how the *samekawa* (ray skin) has aged nicely - like a bottle of fine whiskey.



polished iron



An elegant *fuchi-kashira* attributed to the
Edo-Higo school
 Late Edo period (1780-1867)

Gold motif of ivy and *kirimon* (paulownia crest)





Koshirae bag



ITEM# UJTA059

A FUYUHIRO TANTÔ

SIGNED, SHINTÔ PERIOD (KEICHÔ ERA: 1596~1615)

Swordsmith: *Wakasa no Daijô Fuyuhiro (godai, 5th gen.)*
Measurements: **Length:** 29.8cm (*ubu*) **Curvature:** 0.2cm **Moto-haba:** 2.82cm **Weight:** 265g
Jihada: *Ko-itame and mokume-hada with ji-nie and chikei*
Hamon: *Bright ko-gunome midare with ko-ashi and pointed Jizo-like bôshi*
Certificate #1-2: **NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon** (*sword & koshirae Especially Worthy of Preservation*)
Fujishiro rank: **Chûjô-saku** (*ranked as an above average swordsmith*)
Included: *Shirasaya, Edo-koshirae, fabric bags, stand, kit, printed description*

SOLD

This rare and splendid tantô was crafted by 5th generation *Fuyuhiro* who worked during the *Momoyama Keichô* period, circa 1596~1615 in *Wakasa* province. Born *Takahashi Gorôzaemon*, *Fuyuhiro* was the son of *Sôshû Hirotsugu* and although being granted the honorary title *Wakasa no Kami* in 1598, he respectfully took the more modest rank of *Wakasa no Daijô* because *Kyôgoku Takatsugu*, lord of the *Obama* fief, also bore the title of *Wakasa no Kami*. This long and wide tantô in *hirazukuri* shape carries a bright, shining *ko-gunome hamon* and an assertive *funagata nakago* that pays respect to its *Sôshû* heritage. A spectacular set of *koshirae* focused around a *fuchi-kashira* crafted by master artisan *Miyata Nobukiyo* gloriously depicting tigers and leopards houses the blade. The *saya* is beautifully lacquered showcasing the glory and resilience of bamboo rustling in the wind. Both the sword and *koshirae* have been awarded NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon certification.



Moto-kasane: 1.7mm

Omosa: 265g

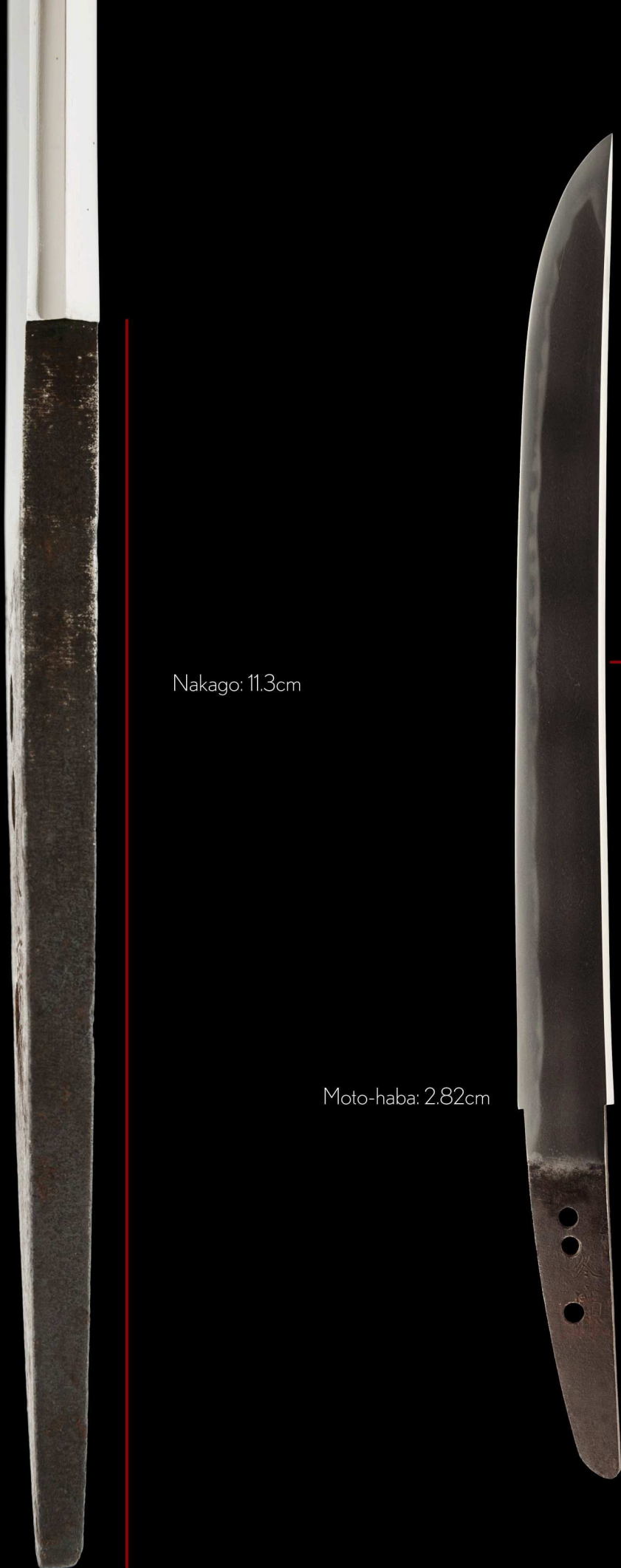
Nakago: 11.3cm

Moto-haba: 2.82cm

Nagasa: 29.8cm

Sori: 0.2cm

Mekugi-ana: 3



This terrifically collectible *tantô* was crafted by 5th generation *Fuyuhiko* who worked during the *Momoyama Keichô* period (1596~1615) in *Wakasa* province which today occupies the southwestern portion of *Fukui* prefecture on the Sea of Japan.

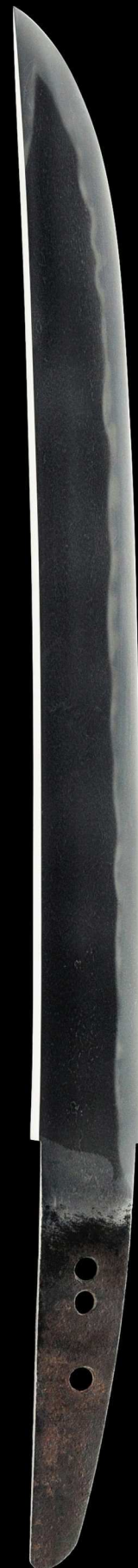
Born *Takahashi Gorôzaemon*, Fuyuhiko was the son of *Sôshû Hirotsugu*, who took over the *Fuyuhiko* school when the 4th generation moved to *Bitchû* province. The honorary title *Wakasa no Kami* was granted to him on December 10, 1598 but because *Kyôgoku Takatsugu* - lord of the *Obama* fief - also bore the honorary title of *Wakasa no Kami*, Fuyuhiko later refrained out of respect from using this title and took on the more modest rank of *Wakasa no Daijô*. Fuyuhiko is rated as *chûjô-saku*, an above average swordsmith.

Standing tall at nearly 30cm, this long and wide *tantô* in *hirazukuri* shape carries a bright, shining *ko-gunome hamon* on a darkish jigane and a pointed *bôshi* that flickers like a candle. The bulbous *funagata nakago* speaks to the famed *Sôshû* background of the school.

It should be stated that *tantô* crafted in the *shintô* period are rare, as most *tantô* seen today are either made in the *Muromachi* period (and earlier) or during the *shinshintô* period in the final decades of the *Tokugawa* shogunate of the *Edo* period.

What makes this sword truly sing is its spectacular set of *koshirae* that is focused around a *fuchi-kashira* crafted by *Miyata Nobukiyo* gloriously depicting parent and cubs of tigers and leopards. The *saya* (scabbard) is beautifully lacquered with artwork showcasing the glory of bamboo rustling in the wind.

Both the sword *and* *koshirae* have been awarded *NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon* certification.





Title: *Wakasa Daijô* (Lord of Wakasa province)
Swordsmith: *Fuyuhiro* (fifth generation)

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

冬 (Fuyu)

廣 (hiro)



(*ura*, reverse)



funagata

Hôchô Masamune Tantô
14th century Kamakura period
Japanese National Treasure

The shape of the *nakago* (tang) is called *funagata* (boat-shaped), as the line of the cutting edge reminds one of the bottom of a boat. "Funa" or "fune" means boat.

The *funagata nakago* is traditionally associated with the *Masamune Hôchô* masterpiece and the many generations of smiths in the *Fuyuhiko* school that faithfully worked in the *Sôshû* tradition from late *Muromachi* and into the *shintô* and *shinshinto* periods.

特選
04-2022-12

No 1020052



鑑定書

一短刀 銘 冬広(若狭大掾・新刀)

長九寸八分半

右は當協會に於て審査の結果特別保存刀剣と
鑑定しこれを証する

令和五年三月十日

公益財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協會



東京都教育委員会
第 125539 号
昭和40年7月1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 5th year of Reiwa (2023), March 10th

One, Tantô

Mei (signature)

Fuyuhiko (*Wakasa Daijô - Shintô*)

Nagasa (length)

9-sun 8-bu han (29.8cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai
(NBTHK)

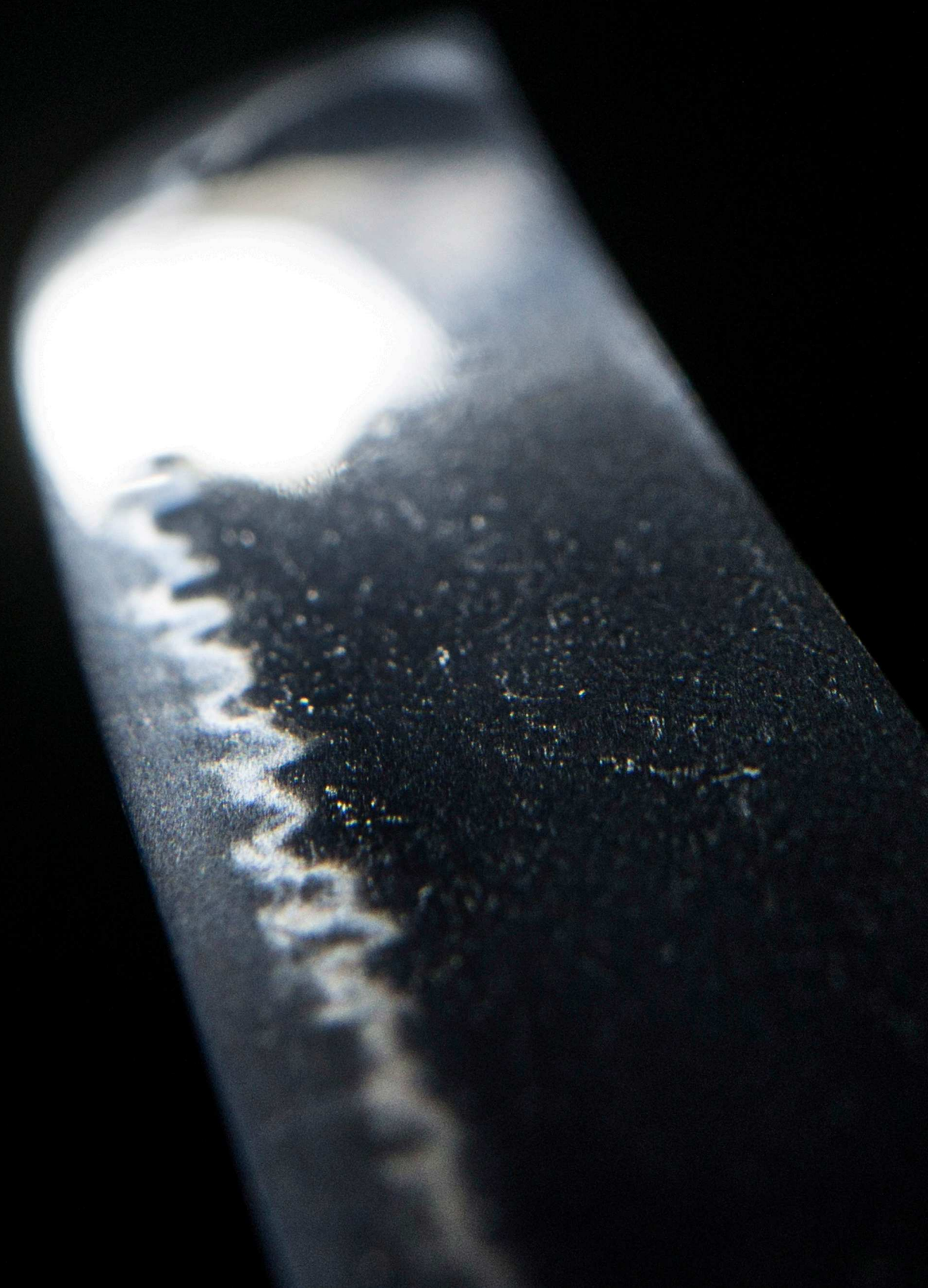


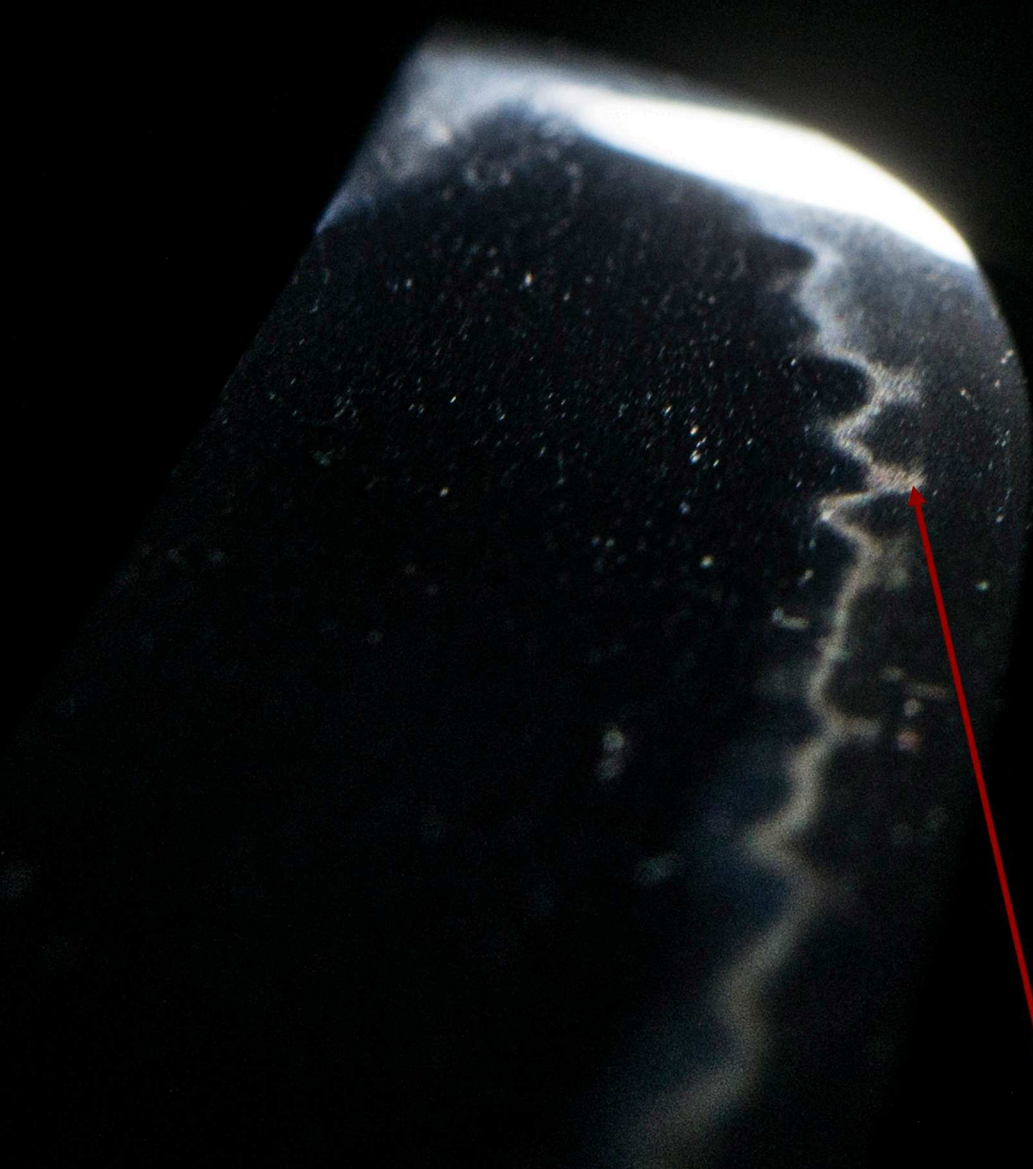


A pointed *bôshi* burns like the flame of a candle.

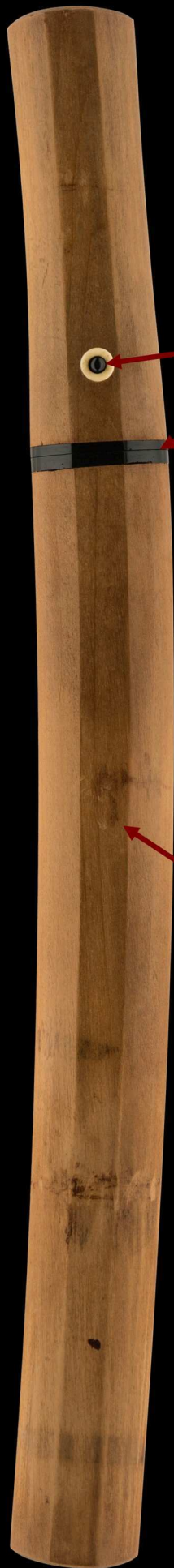


A bright *ko-gunome hamon* resembling a stream of water shines upon the steel.





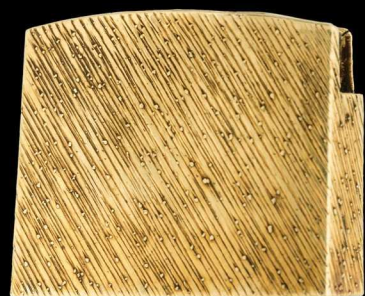
ashi (legs) spray out
to the cutting edge



buffalo horn

Shirasaya
(protective scabbard)

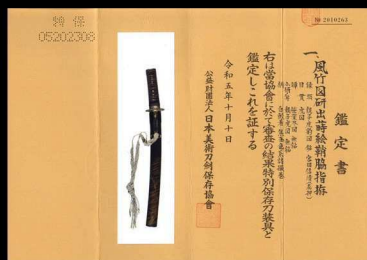
sayagaki by *Nozomi-san* can be arranged



gold *habaki* with
diagonal file marks

*Fûchiku no zu
togidashi-makie saya
wakizashi-koshirae*
(風竹図研出蒔絵鞘脇指拵)

*Wakizashi-koshirae
with polished maki-e
depicting bamboo trees
rustling in the wind*



NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon
Certificate of Authenticity

05202306

No 2010263



公益財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協会



令和五年十月十日

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

縁頭 親子虎豹図 銘 宮田信清(龙押)
目貫 虎図
鐺 笹葉尽図 無銘
小柄穿 親子虎図 無銘
柄 白鯨着 焦茶色糸詩撮卷

一、風竹図研出蒔絵鞘脇指拵

鑑定書

NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon Certificate of Designation

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

Issued in the 5th year of Reiwa (2023), October 10th

*Wakizashi-koshirae with polished maki-e depicting
bamboo trees rustling in the wind.*

*Fuchigashira depicting parent and cub of tiger and leopard
signed Miyata Nobukiyo + monogram*

Menuki depicting a tiger

Tsuba depicting bamboo leaves, unsigned

Kozuka and kôgai depicting tiger parent and cub, unsigned

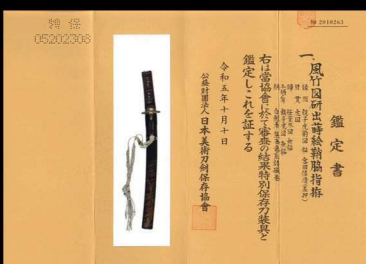
Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai
(NBTHK)



baby tiger

leopard

(Miya) 宮
 (ta) 田
 (Nobu) 信
 (kiyo) 清
 (kaô) 花押



Entire koshirae was awarded NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon

This brilliant *fuchi-kashira* was signed by the talented metalsmith Miyata Nobukiyo. His full biography is listed on the next page.



This glorious *fuchi-kashira* depicting a parent and cub of a tiger and leopard was crafted by *Miyata Nobukiyo*. Nobukiyo was born in *Kyôto* on December 22, 1817 in the fourteenth year of *Bunka era* as the third son of *Kinoshita Yahachi*, a retainer of the *Inaba* family. In the fourth year of *Tenpô era* (1833), when he was just fifteen years old, he was adopted by *Miyata Yûzen*, a *Shintô* priest of *Kyôto's Kamo-jinja*. His first name was initially *Tetsunosuke* and later *Orie*. At sixteen he entered apprenticeship with *Gotô Mitsuyasu*, the fifth generation of the *Hanzaemon* line.

When Nobukiyo turned twenty one he received a stipend from the *Inaba* family and spent two years refining his craft. Two years later in 1843 he went to Edo (Tokyo) and opened up his business in *Kayaba-chô* in the *Nihonbashi* district. He subsequently worked for a small Edo branch of the *Hosokawa* family and also for *Mutsu's Nanbu* family who both granted him a stipend for the support of twelve persons. *Nobukiyo* used the *gô* (pen name) *Kakumeisai* and *Jurakusai*. In his later years he moved to *Kanasugi* in Edo's *Nippori* district where he died on December 3, 1884 in the seventeenth year of Meiji period at the age of sixty eight.



tsuba depicting bamboo leaves





Menuki continue the tiger theme, guarding the koshirae with ferocity.





mumei (unsigned)

A kogai is a thick blunt needle that was primarily used as a hair arranging tool by the samurai. It is fastened into a special notch built inside the *saya* (scabbard) and drawn through the 'bumpy' hole in the tsuba. The design is that of *tora* (tigers) - parent and cub - with rolling waves in *shakudô* in the background.



parent and cub (tigers)

powerful waves gripping their way to shore





bamboo blade
(in harmony with the bamboo-theme on the saya)



kozuka (utility knife)



bamboo beauty



Reference piece



Pictured here is a lovely *tantô koshirae* that was crafted by *Miyata Nobukiyo* that is on display in Gallery 380 at the The MET Fifth Avenue in New York.

<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/21907>





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# UJKA429

A SHODAI MASAHIRO KATANA

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

Swordsmith:	<i>Hizen no Kuni Kawachi Daijô Fujiwara Masahiro (shodai, first generation)</i>
Measurements:	Length: 70.6cm (<i>ubu</i>) Curvature: 1.5cm Motohaba: 2.94cm
Jihada:	<i>Ko-mokume leading to Hizen konuka-hada, thick nie-deki and ji-nie</i>
Hamon:	<i>Gorgeous gunome chôji-midare with kinsuji, sunagashi, yô, ashi, tama</i>
Certificate:	NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon (Especially Worthy of Preservation)
Fujishiro:	Jô-saku (a superior swordsmith)
Authentication:	Sayagaki by Kunzan-sensei (for his sword friend Moriyasu Isao)
Sharpness:	Wazamonô (rated as a maker of sharp swords)
Included:	Shirasaya, dragonfly koshirae, stand, kit, booklet, printed description

SOLD

Maestro *Hizen* swordsmith *Kawachi Masahiro* was born *Sadenjiro* in 1607 and died at only 59 in 1665. He is the son of *Yoshinobu* who was the adopted son of the great first generation *shodai Tadayoshi*. This wonderful katana features an absolutely gorgeous *gunome-chôji-midare hamon* that creates a *nihontô* light show like few other blades can. So much to see in the form of *hataraki*; *kinsuji*, *sunagashi*, *yô*, long *ashi*, even *tama*, jewel-like balls appear high up in the *ji* (body). The *shirasaya* is blessed with *sayagaki* by *Kunzan* that he made for his sword friend *Moriyasu Isao*. A magnificent set of *koshirae* comprising of a marvellous *kage-makie* lacquered theme of dragonflies, a unique geometric *tsuba* and a lovely *fuchi-kashira* speaks of the heavenly courtesan *Tennyô* and the captivating *Noh* play called *Hagoromo*. Gold *shisa* lion menuki further guard this spiritual treasure.



Saki-kasane: 4.2mm

Moto-kasane: 5.8mm

Kissaki: 3.38cm

Saki-haba: 2.12cm

Nagasa: 70.6cm

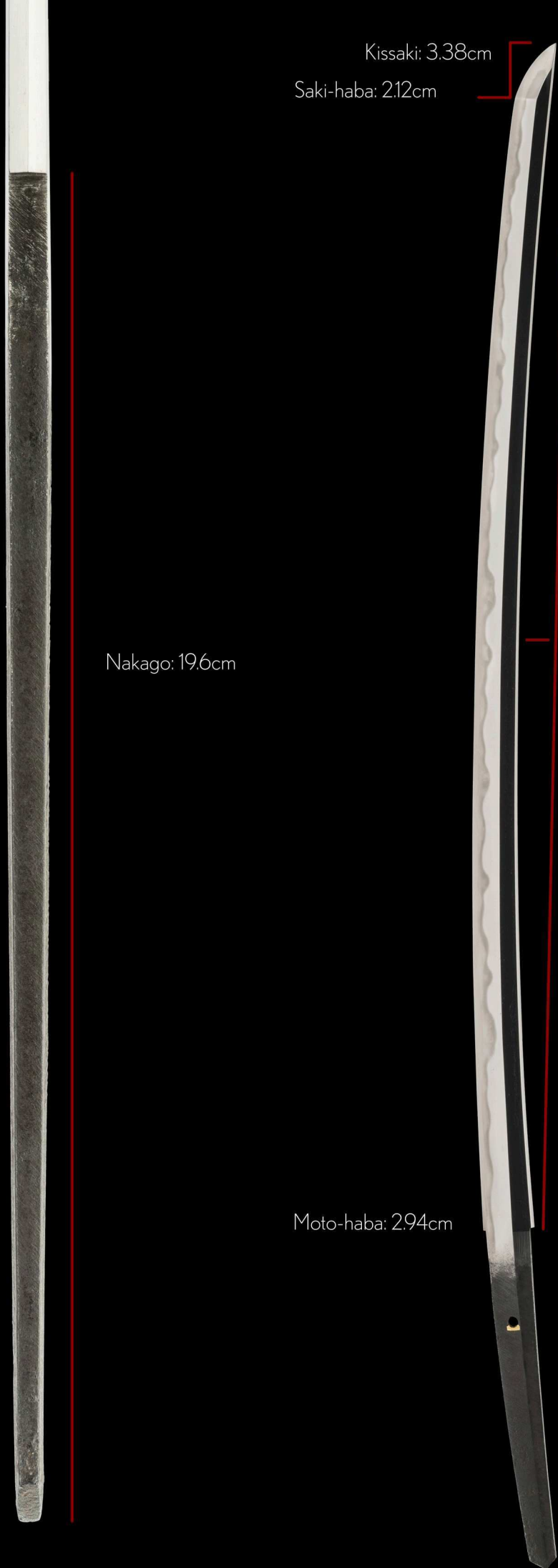
Nakago: 19.6cm

Sori: 1.5cm

Omosa: 690g

Moto-haba: 2.94cm

Mekugi-ana: 1



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

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

This truly wonderful katana features an absolutely gorgeous *gunome-choji-midare hamon* that creates a *nihontô* light show like few other blades can. The genius of *shodai Masahiro* is on full display in this fine sword. So much to see in the form of *hataraki*; *kinsuji*, *sunagashi*, *yô*, long *ashi*, even *tama*, jewel-like balls appear high up in the *ji* (body). Naturally, all these visual treats can be seen over a tightly forged *konuka-hada* that sets the foundations right.

The *shirasaya* of this sword is blessed with *sayagaki* by *Kunzan* (Dr. Honma Junji) that he made in his workshop in 1989 for his swordsman friend *Moriyasu Isamu*. *Kunzan* was the former director of the NBTHK and a profound scholar of Japanese swords.

A magnificent set of *koshirae* accompanies the sword with a marvellous *kage-makie* lacquered theme of dragonflies within in a garden. For those with a love of geometry will appreciate the unique gold-inlay obtuse triangles on the *tsuba* and the lovely *fuchi-kashira* speaks of the heavenly courtesan *Tennyô* and the captivating Japanese *Noh* play called *Hagoromo*. Gold *shisa* lions roar as *menuki* guarding the spiritual treasures of this samurai sword.



Location: *Hizen province*

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

Clan name: *Fujiwara*

Swordsmith: *Masahiro* (first generation)

ubu-nakago (original, unaltered tang)

sujikai-yasurime (diagonal file marks)

(Hi) 肥

(zen, no) 前

(kuni) 国

(Kawa) 河

(chi) 内

(Dai) 大

(jô) 掾

(Fuji) 藤

(wara) 原

(Masa) 正

(hiro) 廣



As per tradition on *Hizen* katana, the sword is signed on the *ura, tachi* side.



Bottom of the *mekugi-ana* is filled with gold to round it off.

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

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

(*omote*, front)

No 120383

鑑定書

長三尺三寸三分

一、刀 銘 肥前国河内大掾藤原正広

右は當協會に於て審査の結果特別保存刀剣と
鑑定しこれを証する

平成元年八月八日

財團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 1st year of Heisei (1989), August 8th

One, Katana

Mei (signature)

Hizen no kuni Kawachi Daijō Fujiwara Masahiro

Nagasa (length)

2-shaku 3-sun 3-bu (70.6cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai
(NBTHK)

This sword was appraised by *Dr. Honma Junji* (1904-1991) also known as *Kunzan*, the former director of the NBTHK.

It is a highly trusted form of authentication known as *sayagaki* (writing in ink on the shirasaya).



Dr. Honma Kunzan Junji

肥前国河内大掾藤原正広

Hizen no kuni Kawachi Daijô Fujiwara Masahiro

Kawachi Daijô Fujiwara Masahiro from Hizen province

平成元年長月

Heisei gannen Nagatsuki

In September of Heisei 1st (1989)

為森安勇劍兄

Tame Moriyasu Isao kenkei

For my sword friend, *Moriyasu Isao*

於久我山房

Kugayama-bô ni oite

At the Kugayama workshop (Kunzan's house)

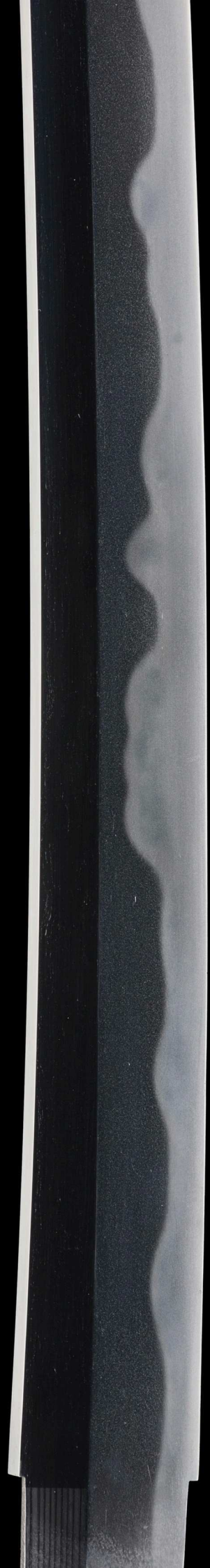
薫山誌「花押」

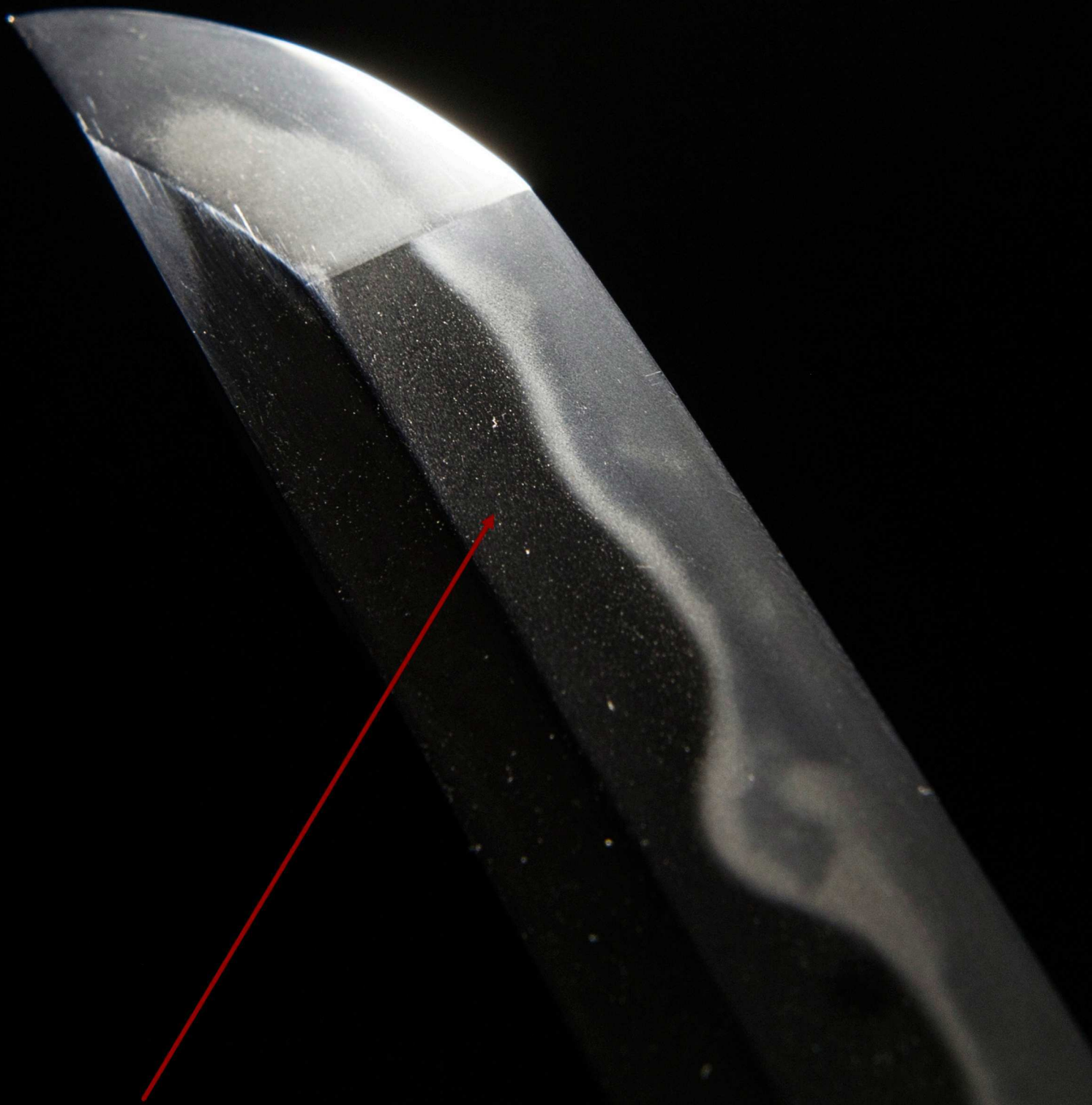
Kunzan shirusu + kaô

Written by Kunzan + monogram









Hizen-to (swords of Hizen province) enjoy a fine reputation for the quality of the *jigane* - after all, it's the foundation that great swords are built upon.

Here we see a tightly forged *ko-mokume* that leads to *konuka-hada* said to resemble rice grain.

tightly forged *konuka-hada*

The surging brilliance pulsating through the *gunome-chôji midare hamon* is palpable.

This is the magnificence of *Hizen*.



The gift of hamon...

Welcome to the shodai Masahiro hataraki light show...

abu nomefu

ashi

ôbusa-chôji


sunagashi

tama (jewel/ball)

kinsuji

yô

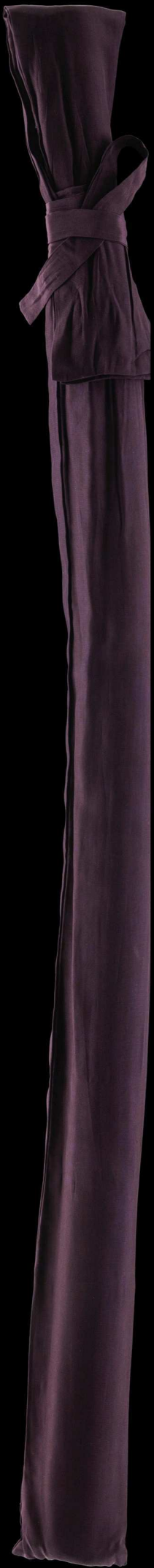




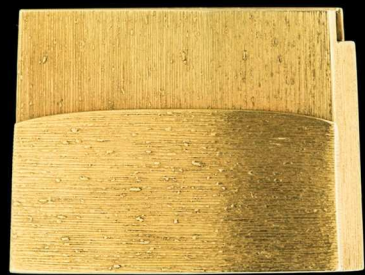
Tama (balls) can be seen curled up in the *hamon*.

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

This is the creative genius of *shodai Masahiro*.



Shirasaya
(protective scabbard)

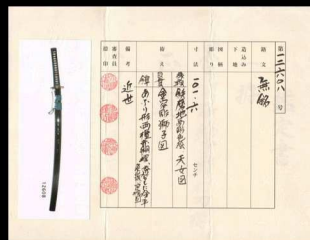
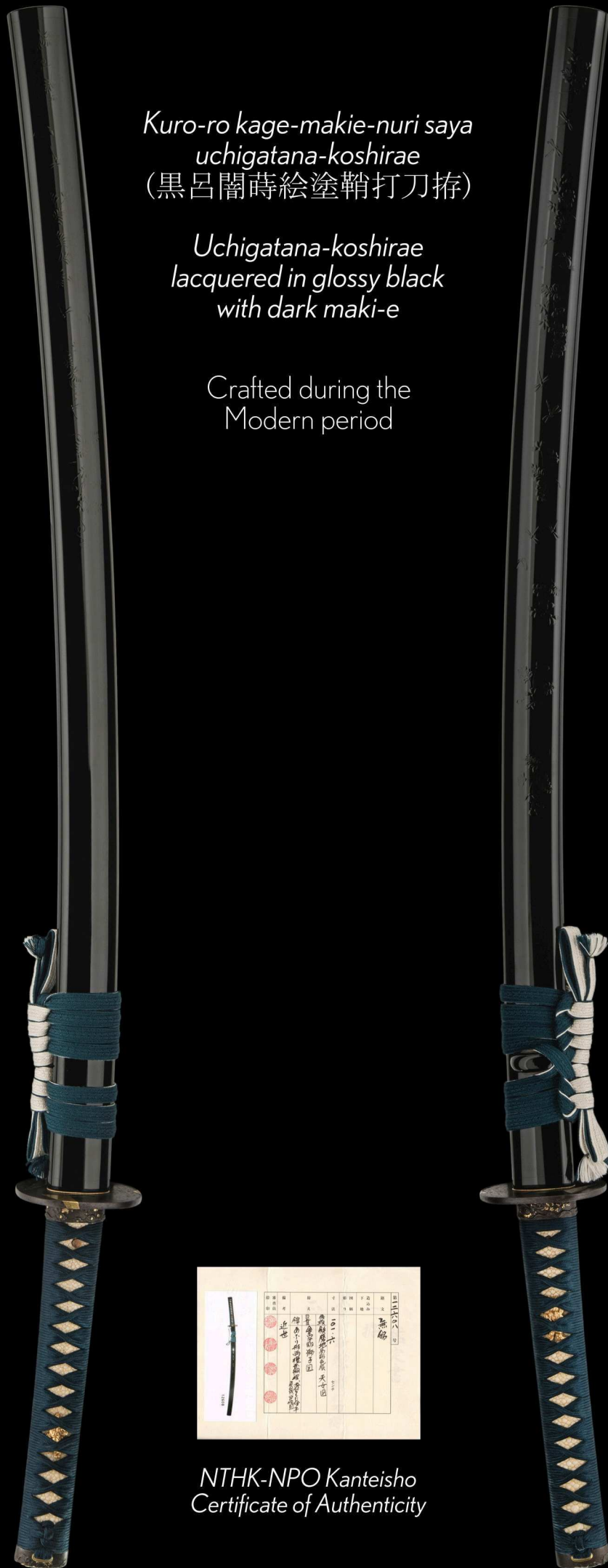


gold *ni-ju habaki* with
crisp file marks

*Kuro-ro kage-makie-nuri saya
uchigatana-koshirae*
(黒呂闇蒔絵塗鞘打刀拵)

*Uchigatana-koshirae
lacquered in glossy black
with dark maki-e*

Crafted during the
Modern period



NTHK-NPO Kanteisho
Certificate of Authenticity



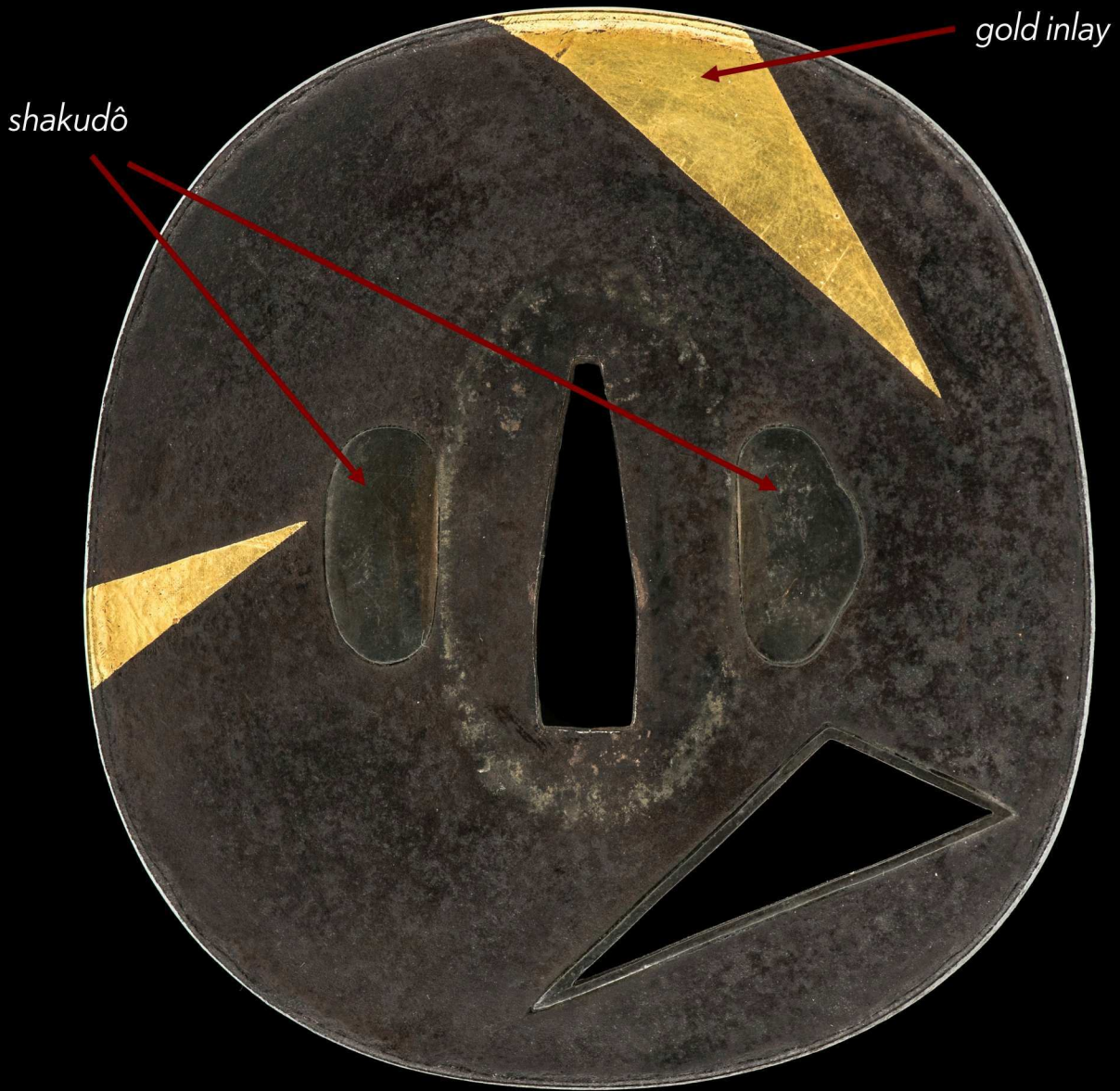
This refined type of Japanese lacquerwork is called *kage-makie* where objects appear like shadows.



The *tombo* (dragonfly) has been revered by the samurai for centuries.

When a *tombo* flies, it flies forward, and never retreats.
It symbolizes bravery, agility and victory.

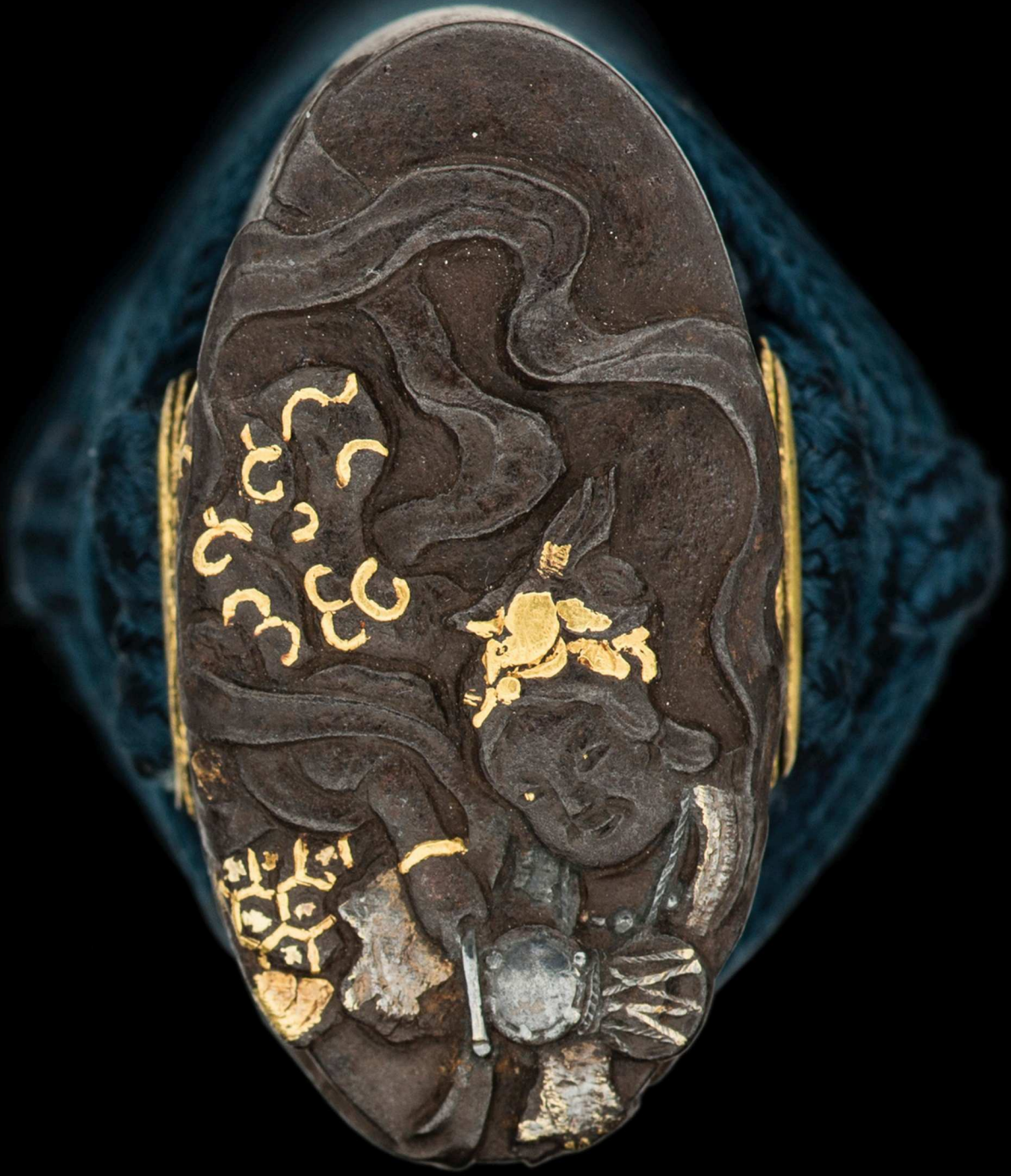




Polished iron *tsuba* with *hitsu-ana* (holes) filled with *shakudô*.

Openwork in the unique design of flat gold inlay forming the shape of obtuse triangle rulers.





Fuchi-kashira

Polished iron with relief and color accents.

Depicting *Tennyo*,
a heavenly, celestial woman.



Tennyo

Translation: heavenly woman, celestial woman
Habitat: *Tendô*, the realm of heaven in Buddhist cosmology
Diet: as a human

Appearance: *Tennyo* are extraordinarily beautiful creatures who resemble human women. Aside from their unparalleled grace and elegance, and supernaturally attractive faces and figures, there is little way to differentiate them from ordinary women. They wear beautiful gowns called *hagoromo* (literally “feather cloth”), which allow them to fly.

Behaviour: *Tennyo* are servants and courtesans for the emperor of heaven, and companions of buddhas and bodhisattvas. They sing, dance, play music, recite poetry, and do much of the same things as their earthly counterparts in human imperial courts; though they do them all with more grace, refinement, and beauty. They aid and entertain the other inhabitants of heaven, and they even occasionally fly down to earth to visit.

Origin: *Tennyo* are a female-only subgroup of tennin, one of many celestial races native to *Tendô*. They are based on the Indian apsaras, celestial nymphs from Hindu and Buddhist mythology. They were brought to China from India along with Buddhism, where they developed into the *tennyo* we know today. The Chinese Buddhist *tennyo* was later brought over to Japan.

Legends: *Tennyo* are a popular subject of folklore throughout all of Japan. Legends often involve love stories and marriage between *tennyo* and human men. The most famous story is the *Noh* play *Hagoromo*.

Hagoromo

Long ago, in what is today Shizuoka, a fisherman named *Hakuryô* was walking along the pine-covered beaches of the *Miho* peninsula. It was a beautiful spring morning, and *Hakuryô* stopped for a moment to admire the beautiful white sand, the sparkling waves, the fluffy clouds, and the fishing ships on the bay. A pleasant fragrance filled the air, and it seemed that ethereal music was dancing on the winds. Something caught his eye; draped over a nearby pine branch was a robe of the most splendid fabric he had ever seen. It was made of a soft, feathery material, and was woven in fantastic colours, so he decided to take it home and keep it as a family heirloom.

Just as *Hakuryô* was preparing to leave, a young woman of breathtaking beauty appeared in the nude before him. She had flowers in her hair, and smelled just as beautiful as she looked. She said that he was holding her *hagoromo* robe, and asked him to return it. *Hakuryô* realized that this beautiful maiden was a *tennyo*. He refused to return the robe, saying it would bring good luck and fortune to his village.

The woman grew sad, and lamented that she would not be able to fly home to heaven without her robe. She dropped to her knees and cried, her tears falling like beautiful pearls into the sand. The flowers in her hair wilted. She looked up at the clouds above, and heard a flock of geese flying by, which only saddened her more as they reminded her of the celestial *karyôbinga* birds back home in heaven.

Hakuryô was moved by the beautiful maiden’s sadness. He told her that he would return her robe, but first she must perform a celestial dance for him. She agreed to perform the dance, but told *Hakuryô* that she needed her *hagoromo* to perform the dance. *Hakuryô* refused to return the robe. He thought she would just fly off to heaven without performing for him. The *tennyo* replied to him that deception was a part of his world, not hers, and that her kind do not lie. *Hakuryô* felt shame, and returned the dress to her.

The *tennyo* donned her *hagoromo* and performed the dance of the *Palace of the Moon*. She was accompanied by celestial music, flutes, koto, and the wind in the pines. The moon shown through the trees and sweet fragrances filled the air. The waves grew calm and peaceful. Her long sleeves danced upon the wind, and she danced in sheer joy. As she danced, she slowly floated up into the sky. She flew over the beach, higher and higher, above the pines, through the clouds, and beyond the top of Mt. Fuji. She disappeared into the mists of heaven.



Shishi menuki stand on guard.



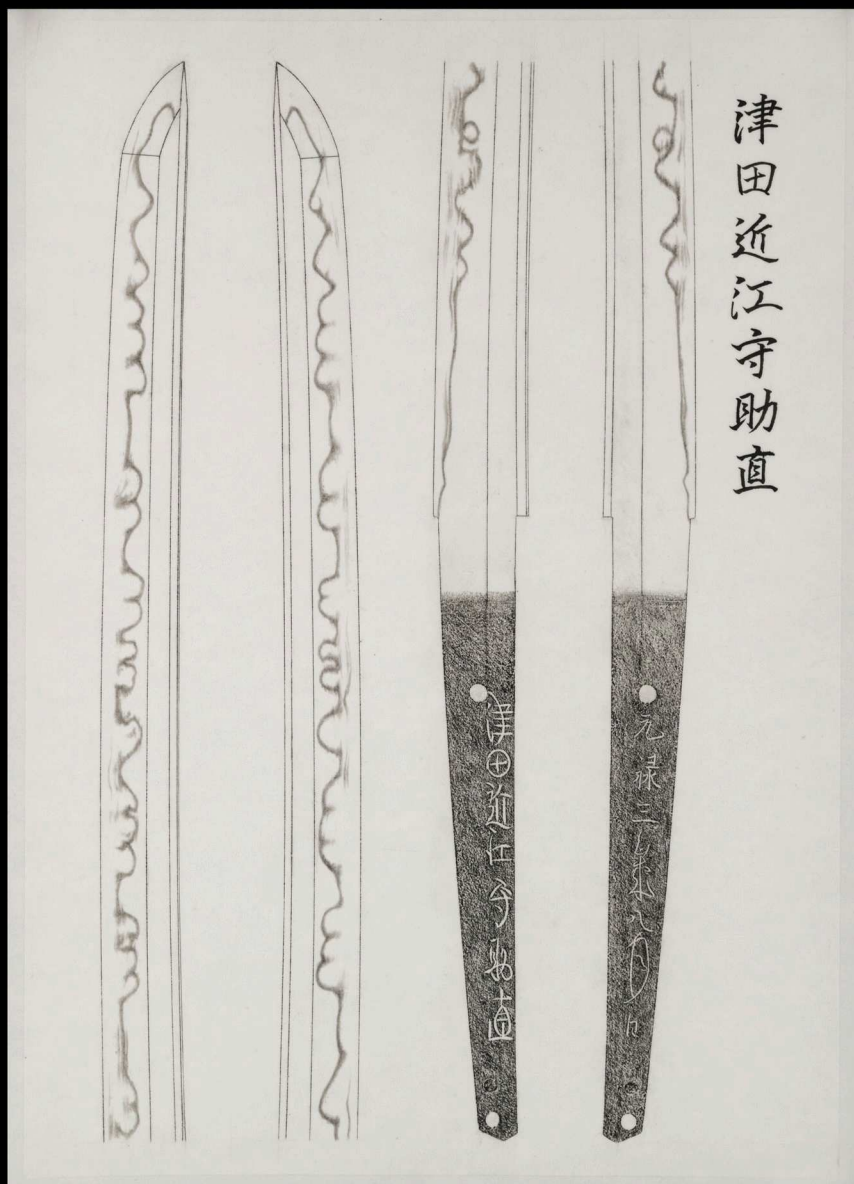
Get a grip of history.





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) for further information.





ITEM# UJKA442

A YASUUJI KATANA

SIGNED, SHINSHINTÔ PERIOD (KANSEI ERA: 1789~1801)

Swordsmith:	<i>Naminohira Yasuuji</i> (60th Naminohira generation)
Measurements:	Length: 69.7cm (<i>ubu</i>) Curvature: 1.5cm Moto-haba: 3.14cm Weight: 875g
Jihada:	<i>Densely-forged ko-itame and masame-hada with ji-nie</i>
Hamon:	<i>Thick suguha in nie-deki with flaring ashi and a komaru-bôshi</i>
Certificate #1:	NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon (Especially Worthy of Preservation)
Certificate #2-4:	NTHK-NPO Kanteishô (<i>koshirae</i> , <i>fk</i> and <i>tsuba</i> certified as Authentic)
Fujishiro rank:	Chû-saku (ranked as an average swordsmith)
Authentication:	Sayagaki by Nozomi-san (<i>shodô</i> artist)
Included:	<i>Shirasaya, Meiji-koshirae, fabric bags, stand, kit, printed description</i>

SOLD

This formidable *shinshintô* period katana was crafted by *Yasuuji*, the early name of *Yasuyuki*, who represented the 60th generation of the prestigious *Naminohira* school from *Satsuma* province in *Kyûshû*. Created during the *Kansei* era, this katana is particularly noteworthy for its adherence to pure *Yamato* tradition characteristics. The steel displays a fine combination of *ko-itame* and *masame-hada* patterns, complemented by a brilliant *suguha-hamon* executed in sparkling *nie* crystals with *ashi* formations reminiscent of solar flares. The *nakago* features the distinctive *higaki* file marks, another *Yamato-den* hallmark. The sword rests in an elegant *Meiji-period* *koshirae* with remarkable fittings that include a *tsuba* depicting insects crawling across realistic wood grain, while the polished brass *fuchi-kashira* contrast scenes of a pensive hermit with joyful birds soaring over waves.

⤴
Saki-kasane: 4.9mm

Moto-kasane: 7.5mm

Omosa: 875g

Kissaki: 3.86cm

Saki-haba: 2.04cm

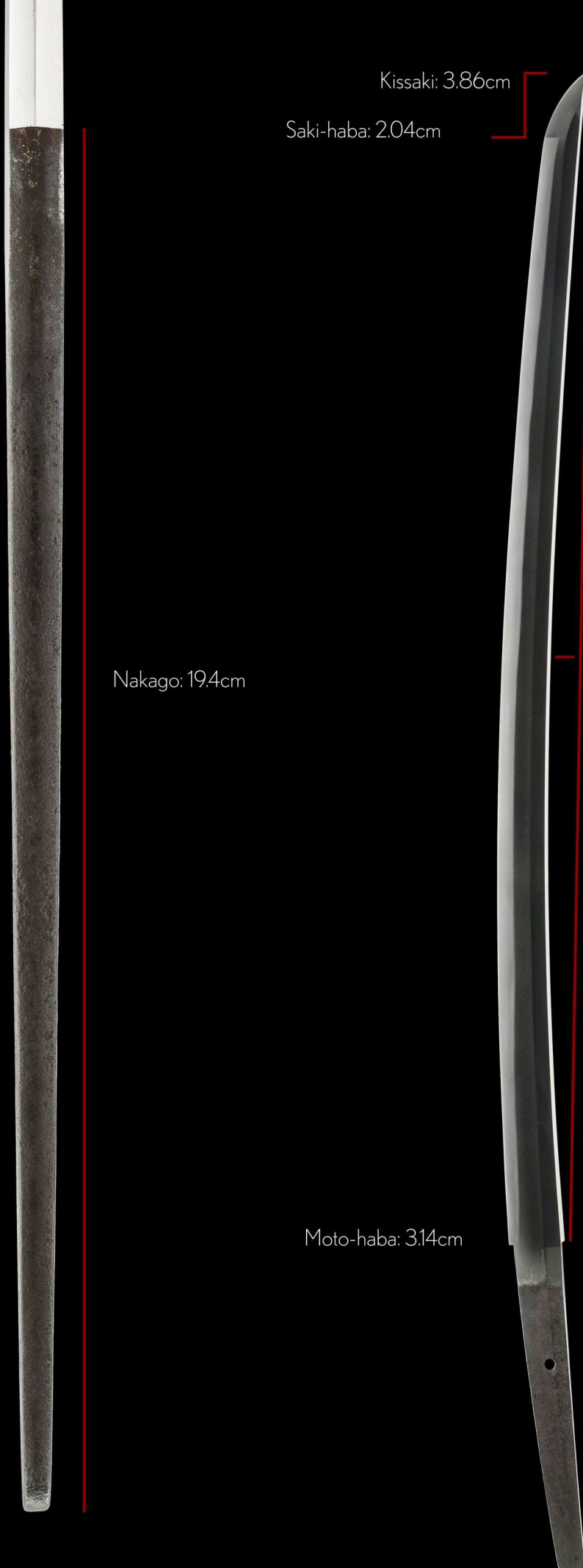
Nakago: 19.4cm

Moto-haba: 3.14cm

Nagasa: 69.7cm

Sori: 1.50cm

Mekugi-ana: 1



The *Naminohira* school is one of the oldest sword-making traditions said to have begun working in *Satsuma* province way back in 987AD. *Satsuma* province is located at the southern end of Japan's southernmost island *Kyûshû*. The island is known for its high-quality sand iron that was found on its rivers and beaches.

The pioneering smiths of the *Naminohira* school originally travelled from Japan's old capital *Yamato* province, present-day *Nara* prefecture, and most impressively, this school worked uninterrupted right up to the end of the Edo-period 1868.

The two *kanji* characters that form *Naminohira* are *Nami*, meaning 'wave', and *hira* being 'flat', thus translating to *calm seas*. Swords of the *Naminohira* school were said to have been prized by the Japanese navy for their name carried such a good omen.

This strong and valiant katana is the work of *Yasuuji*, the early smithing name of *Yasuyuki* who counted himself as the 60th generation [wow] of the *Naminohira* school. Its NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon certificate states the sword was made during the *Kansei* era (1789~1801) during the *shinshintô* period.

Born *Hashiguchi Kannojô*, *Yasuuji* was the son of the 59th *Naminohira*-gen *Yasutsune*. In the early years of his career, *Yasuuji* also signed *Yasukuni*, but moved on to *Yasuyuki*, the most iconic name of the school, in the first year of *Kyôwa* (1801). *Yasuuji* died on the May 10, 1808 during the *Bunka* era at the age of just 66.

Yasuuji was immensely faithful to his *Yamato-den* roots which makes this sword rather special indeed. The blade is densely forged in *ko-itame* and *masame-hada* with a bright and generous *suguha-hamon* in sparkling *nie-deki* with *ashi* that look like solar flares. Look out for the unique *higaki yasurime* on the *nakago* which another centuries-old trait of its *Yamato* heritage.

A splendid *Meiji*-period leather-wrapped *koshirae* houses the sword with gorgeous fittings that include insects crawling over a highly realistic woodgrain *tsuba* and a polished brass *fuchi-kashira* featuring a chilled-out hermit and jubilant scene of birds flying over waves.



Location: *Satsuma province*

School: *Naminohira*

Swordsmith: *Yasuuji* (60th generation)

ubu-nakago (original, unaltered tang)

higaki-yasurime (diagonal file marks)



波 (Nami, no)

平 (hira)

安 (Yasu)

氏 (uji)

higaki



The unique criss-cross *yasurime* (file marks) on this nakago is called *higaki*. The name is derived from a fence made of thin, crossed Japanese cypress boards.

Higaki yasurime can be seen on swords from Yamato province, Mino province and as we see here, the *Naminohira* school.



Noh play: *Higaki* (cypress wood fence)

(*ura*, reverse)



特選
05202306

№ 1021084



鑑定書

一刃 銘 波平安氏(寛政頃)

長 二尺三寸

右は當協會に於て審査の結果特別保存刀剣と
鑑定しこれを証する

令和五年八月二十五日

公益財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協會



愛知県 教育委員会
第 6822 号
昭和27年12月21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 5th year of Reiwa (2023), August 25th

One, Katana

Mei (signature)
Naminohira Yasuji (Kansei-goro)

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

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai
(NBTHK)



波平安氏

波平安氏
Naminohira Yasuuji
Naminohira Yasuuji

時代寛政頃

時代寛政頃
Jidai Kansei-goro
Around Kansei period (1789~1801)

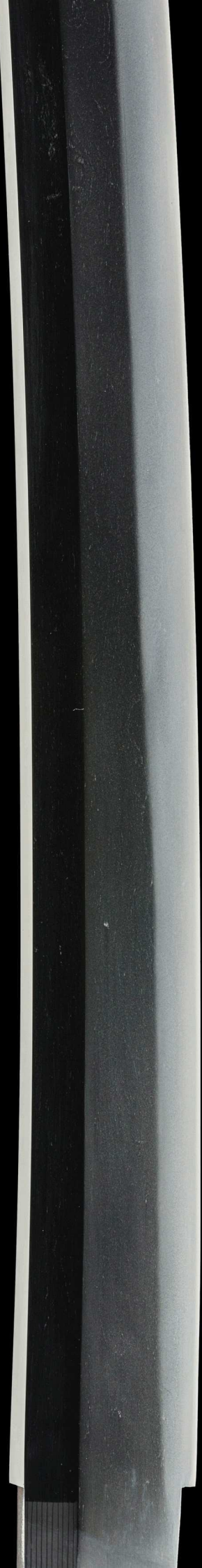
刃長貳尺參寸有之

刃長貳尺參寸有之
Hachô 2-shaku 3-sun kore ari
Blade length 69.7 cm

令和六甲辰年
葉月吉日誌之

令和六甲辰年葉月吉日誌之
Reiwa roku kinoe-tatsudoshi Hazuki kichijitsu kore o shirusu
Written on a lucky day in the eighth month in the sixth year of
Reiwa era during the Year of the Dragon (August 2024)





A close-up photograph of two sharp knives. The blades are dark and highly reflective, with a bright highlight along the cutting edge. The knives are positioned diagonally, with their tips pointing towards each other in the center of the frame. The background is a solid, deep black, which makes the metallic surfaces of the blades stand out prominently. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the texture and sharpness of the blades.

This is a sharp *'kiss'aki* ;)

This clear and serene *hamon* is *suguha* in *nie-deki*.

The *nioiguchi* (crystals that make up the *hamon* line) are densely concentrated *nie* particles that one can differentiate on an individual level by the naked eye.

When the crystals are so fine that it looks like the milky way galaxy, it is *nioi-deki*. Yamato-den blades are generally forged in *nie-deki*.



nie-deki

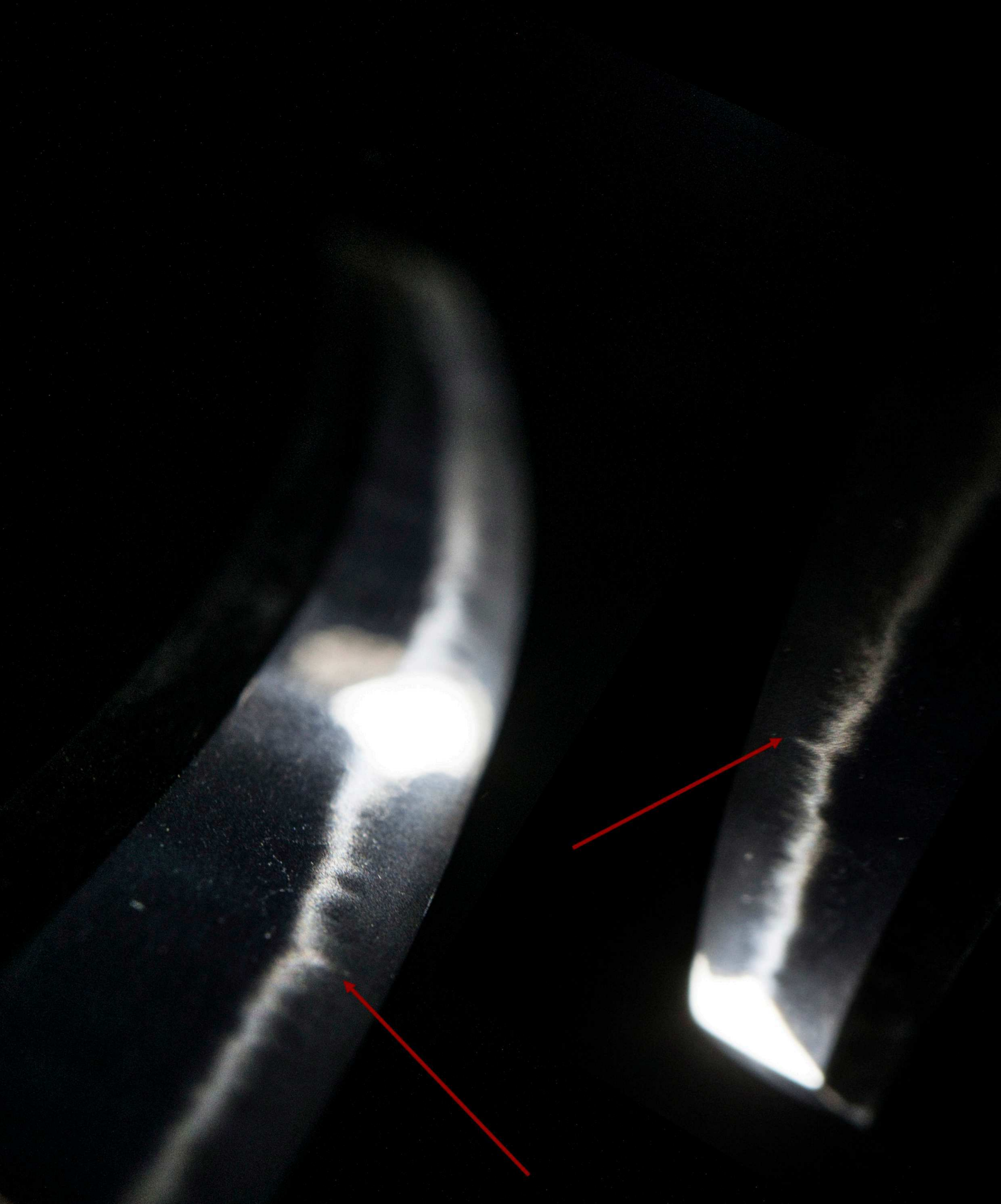
This katana is densely forged in *ko-itame* and *masame-hada* exuding an aura of power.



ko-itame with a wavy *masame-hada*

A curious 'bump in the road' can be seen in the *monouchi* (upper third) hitting area of the sword. This katana is filled with little nuggets to be savoured.

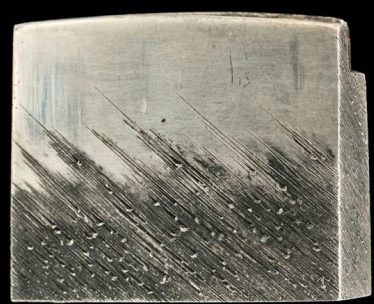




Solar flares of *ashi* (legs) shoot out to the cutting edge.



Shirasaya
(protective scabbard)

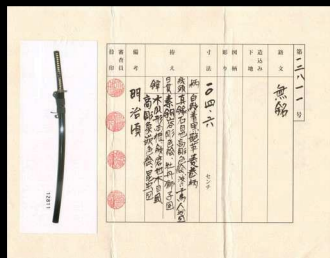


silver *habaki* with
diagonal rain file marks

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

*Uchigatana-koshirae
lacquered in glossy black*

Crafted during the
Meiji period
(1868~1912)



*NTHK-NPO Kanteisho
Certificate of Authenticity*

Udenuki ana



Udenuki ana (two small holes) were common on older tachi tsuba serving the purpose of a safety wrist strap when the sword is used on horseback. The holes are of different sizes and generally close together.

During the Edo period this design enjoyed a resurgence as seen here.





Fuchi-kashira
attributed to
Nara Tsuneshige
Late Edo period (1780~1868)

A hermit is depicted on the *kashira*.
Crafted from polished brass.

Edo Japan was a rigidly stratified society, where one's role was pre-determined and an individual's movements were both limited and regulated. Unsurprisingly, the longing to escape the tensions inherent in living in such an environment manifested itself in visual art as well as in literature, poetry, drama, and music. Artists found parallels for their current circumstances in the Chinese traditions of centuries before, as well as in the long tradition of Japanese recluses and exiles in poetry, literature and history.

The ideals of reclusion and retirement were visualized in a number of ways. Most commonly, painters created mountain landscapes sparsely populated by diminutive figures and minimal signs of human habitation. The pavilions, cottages and huts nestled in the cliffs and coves provide shelters wherein gentlemen and their friends could engage in scholarly pursuits or the contemplation of nature. Here, one could escape the worries and cares of everyday life, either permanently, through retirement; or temporarily, through an excursion to the mountains or a visit to a retired friend.

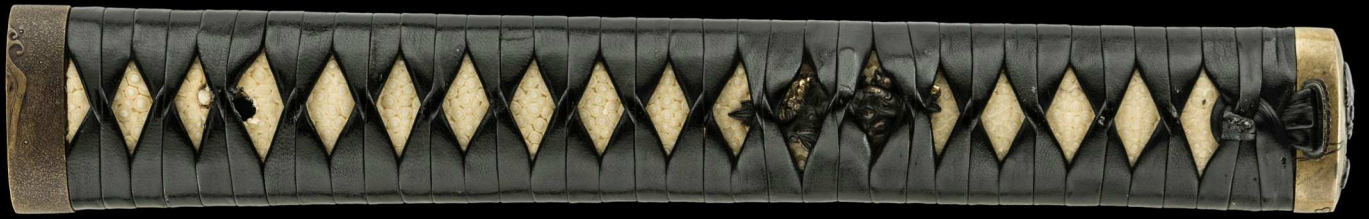
By following the paths, walkways and footbridges as they wind past rivers and cliffs, we too can momentarily retreat into this idealized world.



The two kanji characters that form *Naminohira* are *Nami* meaning 'wave' and *hira* being 'flat', thus translating to *calm seas*. This beautiful brass-inlaid *fuchi* pays tribute the school with birds flying high above waves with great delight.

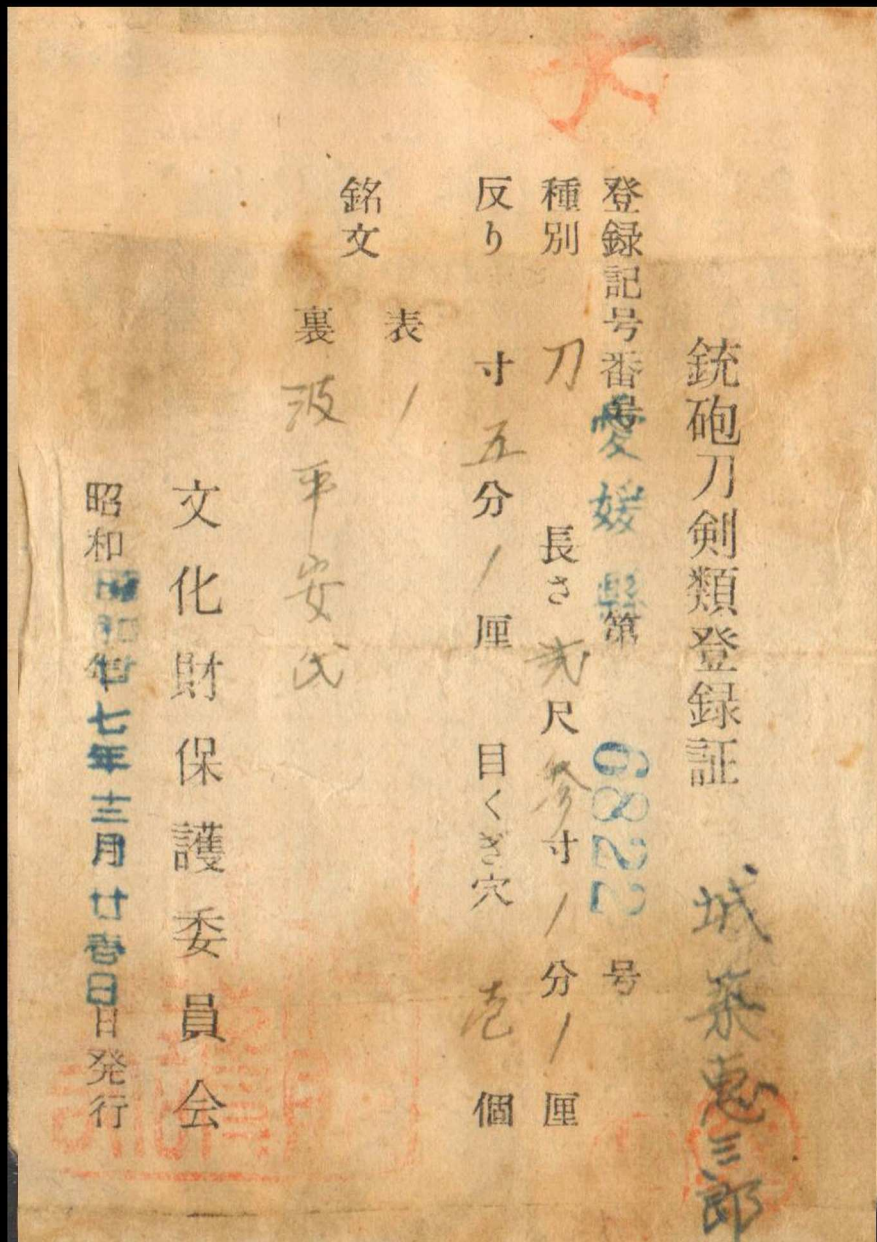


NTHK-NPO Kanteisho
certificate of authenticity



A tightly wrapped black-leather *tsuka* (hilt) provides enhanced grip for the samurai swordsman. The menuki are spiritually protective *shisa* lions and peonies made from copper with gold accents.





This is the original *torokusho* (registration card) for the *Yasuuji katana*. The card was registered in the 27th year of Showa (1952).

This is significant as 1952 was the second year that swords were formally registered in Japan. Many former *daimyô* (great) families were invited to submit their collections early suggesting this blade was once held by a prominent family.

The serial number is **6822**, one of the very first swords registered in Japan. It was registered in *Ehime* prefecture on the island of *Shikoku*.



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# UJKA448

A KANEZUMI KATANA

SIGNED & DATED, SUE-KOTÔ PERIOD (MEIÔ ERA: FEBRUARY 1498)

Swordsmith: *Kanezumi (Seki)*
Measurements: **Length:** 69.6cm (*machi-okuri*) **Curvature:** 1.2cm **Moto-haba:** 2.82cm
Jihada: *Finely-forged itame-nagare, mokume, masame-hada with ji-nie and chikei*
Hamon: *Dazzling gunome-chôji-midare with tobiyaki, yô and Jizo-bôshi*
Certificate #1: **NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon** (*Especially Worthy of Preservation*)
Certificate #2-4: **NTHK-NPO Kanteishô** (*koshirae, fuchi and tsuba certified as Authentic*)
Included: *Shirasaya, koshirae, fabric bags, stand, kit, printed description*

SOLD

We time travel back to February 1498 with the creation of this fiery *tachi* by *Kanezumi* (also read *Kanesumi*) who worked in *Seki* during the tumultuous *Muromachi* period. Born *Jûrôzaemon*, *Kanezumi* was the younger brother of *Kaneyuki* who is said to have worked in the *Nara* school. This is a classic Mino-tradition creation with a *Kanesada* school influence featuring a *jihada* that is a finely forged mixture of *itame-nagare* and also straight grain *masame-hada*. Its dazzling *gunome-midare hamon* is reminiscent of *ôbusa-chôji* from the great *Fukuoka-Ichimonji* school. There are also spots of *tobi-yaki* and *yô* that further adds to its charm. The sword is housed in a tasteful set of *koshirae* that imbues class. The *tsuba* features three family *kamon*, each with its own unique story and the wonderful *fuchi-kashira* carries a cross-design that pays a thoughtful tribute to the swordsmith. This is a rather rare, 526-year-old dated reference piece that touches the soul on several levels.

Saki-kasane: 3.0mm [^]

Moto-kasane: 5.7mm

Kissaki: 2.78cm

Saki-haba: 1.75cm

Nagasa: 69.6cm

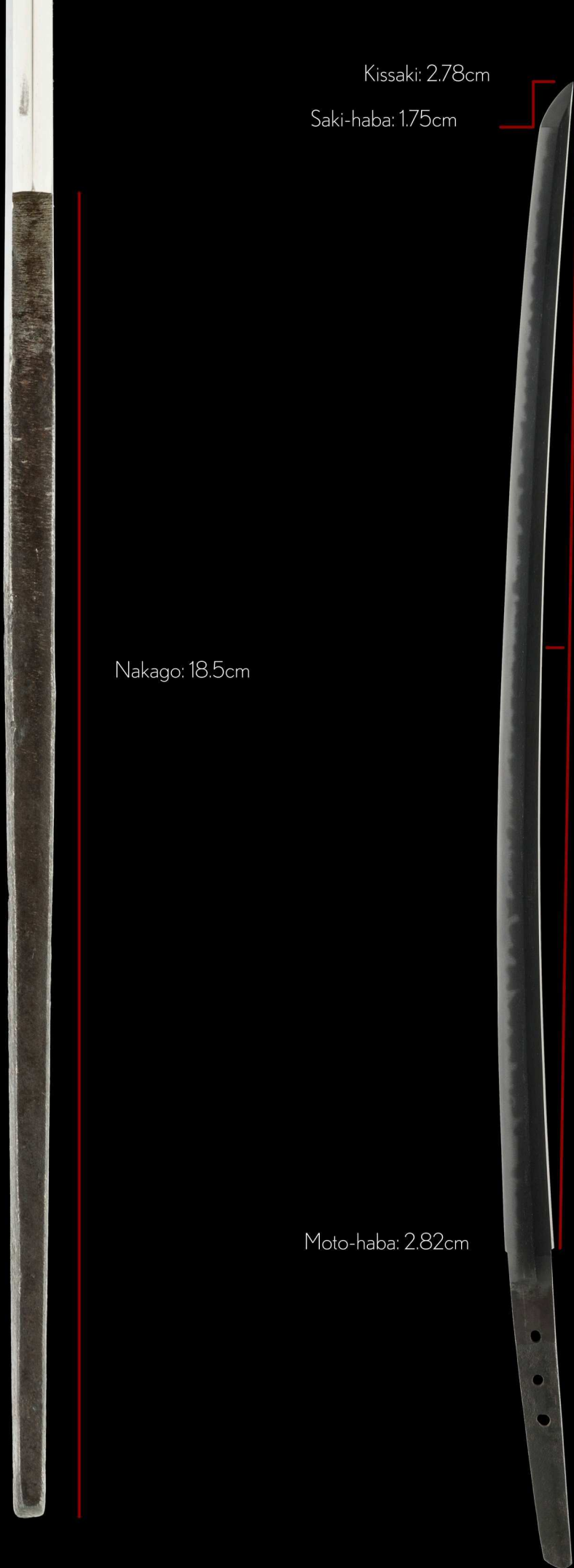
Nakago: 18.5cm

Sori: 1.2cm

Omosa: 620g

Moto-haba: 2.82cm

Mekugi-ana: 3



Let's travel back in time to February 1498 with the creation of this fiery *tachi* by *Kanezumi* (also read *Kanesumi*) who worked in *Mino* province during the tumultuous *Muromachi* period. Born *Jûrôzaemon*, *Kanezumi* was the younger brother of *Kaneyuki* who is said to have worked in the *Nara* school. Historically speaking, not a lot more is known of *Kanezumi*, making this sword a rather rare, dated reference piece.

When we examine this sword, we come to see a classic *Mino*-tradition creation with a *Kanesada* school influence that is superior to traditional *Sue-Seki* blades of the 1500s. The *jihada* is a finely forged mixture of *mokume*, *itame-nagare* and also straight grain *masame-hada*. And its dazzling *gunome-midare hamon* features areas that are reminiscent of *ôbusa-chôji* (long tasselled buds) that stretch high up to the *shinogi* linemade famous by the great *Fukuoka-Ichimonji* school. There are also spots of *tobiyaki* and *yô* that furthers the appeal of this 526-year-old blade.

The sword is housed in a tasteful set of *koshirae* that was lacquered by a master artist in modern Japan. Its subtle deep shades of red imbues a sense of class. The *tsuba* features three family *kamon*, each with its own unique story and the wonderful *fuchi-kashira* carries a *jûji* design of crosses with diamond shapes. This is a clever tip-of-the-hat gesture that pays tribute to *Jûrozameon*, the swordsmith.

This is a sword that touches the soul on many levels. And being dated to the late 1400s is a wonderful thing.



Location: *Mino province*

School name: *Seki*

Swordsmith: *Kanezumi*

machi-okuri-nakago (shortened nagasa)

sujikai-yasurime (diagonal file marks)

This sword has a whole lot of history as it once was carried on horseback as a tachi, therefore it needed to be long and curvy.

As warfare changed over the centuries, swords needed to be drawn from a standing position. Therefore the *nagasa* (length) had to be physically viable given the height of the warrior. In most cases, a longer blade needed to be shortened, often times by several centimetres.

A way to shorten a sword is through a process called *suriage* where the sword is cut from the nakago and a new nakago is formed where the cutting edge used to be.

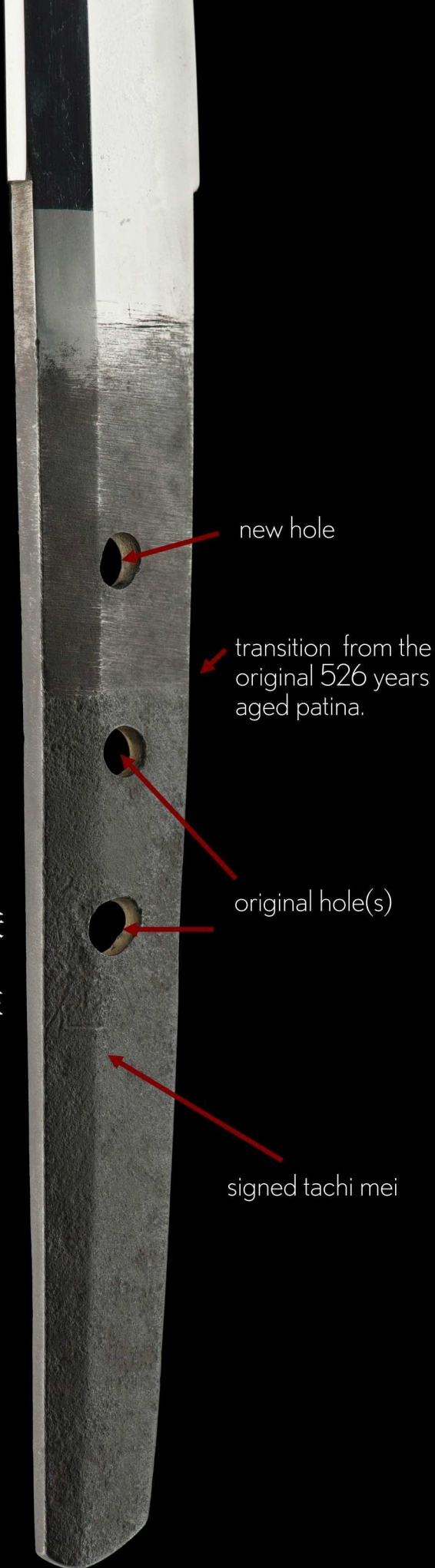
In other cases, such as on this tachi, the shorter nagasa is achieved by simply moving the *machi* (notch) upwards. This process is called *machi-okuri*.

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

A new hole (*mekugi-ana*) is created for the new hilt that is required. It should also be noted that with *machi-okuri* the *mei* (signature and date) has been left intact and preserved, a true blessing.

(Kane) 兼

(zumi) 住



Meiô nananen nigatsu hi

This sword has been dated to a day in the second month in the seventh year of *Meiô* era (February 1498).

明 (Mei)

應 (ô)

七 (nana)

年 (nen)

二 (ni)

月 (gatsu)

日 (hi)



In 1492, Christopher Columbus sailed the ocean 'blue'.
In 1498, Seki Kanezumi crafted this tachi 'great'.

Feel the history captain.

特 保
05202303

№ 1020296



鑑定書

一太刀 銘

兼住(関)

明応七年二月日

長二尺二寸九分強

右は當協會に於て審査の結果特別保存刀剣と
鑑定しこれを証する

令和五年五月三十一日

公益財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協會



東京都 教育委員会
第 267690 号
平成6年6月21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 5th year of Reiwa (2023), May 31st

One, Tachi

Mei (signature)

Kanezumi (Seki)

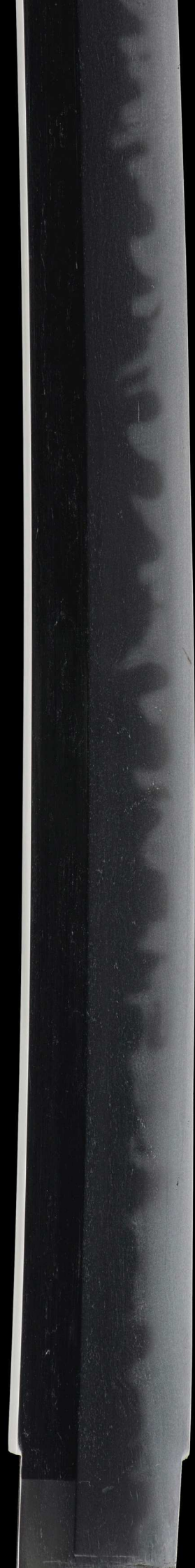
Meiô nananen nigatsu hi

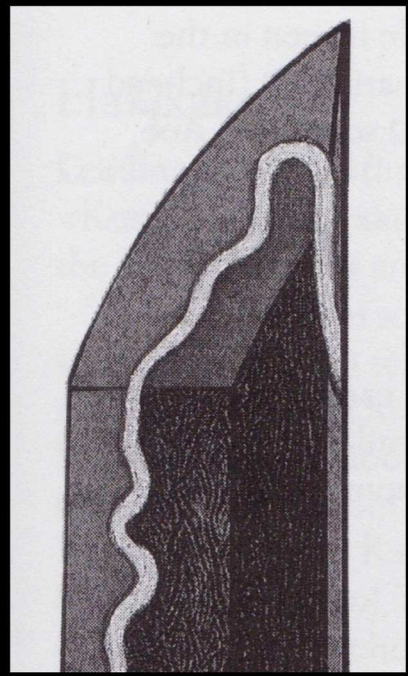
Nagasa (length)

2-shaku 2-sun 9-bu kyô (69.6cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai
(NBTHK)







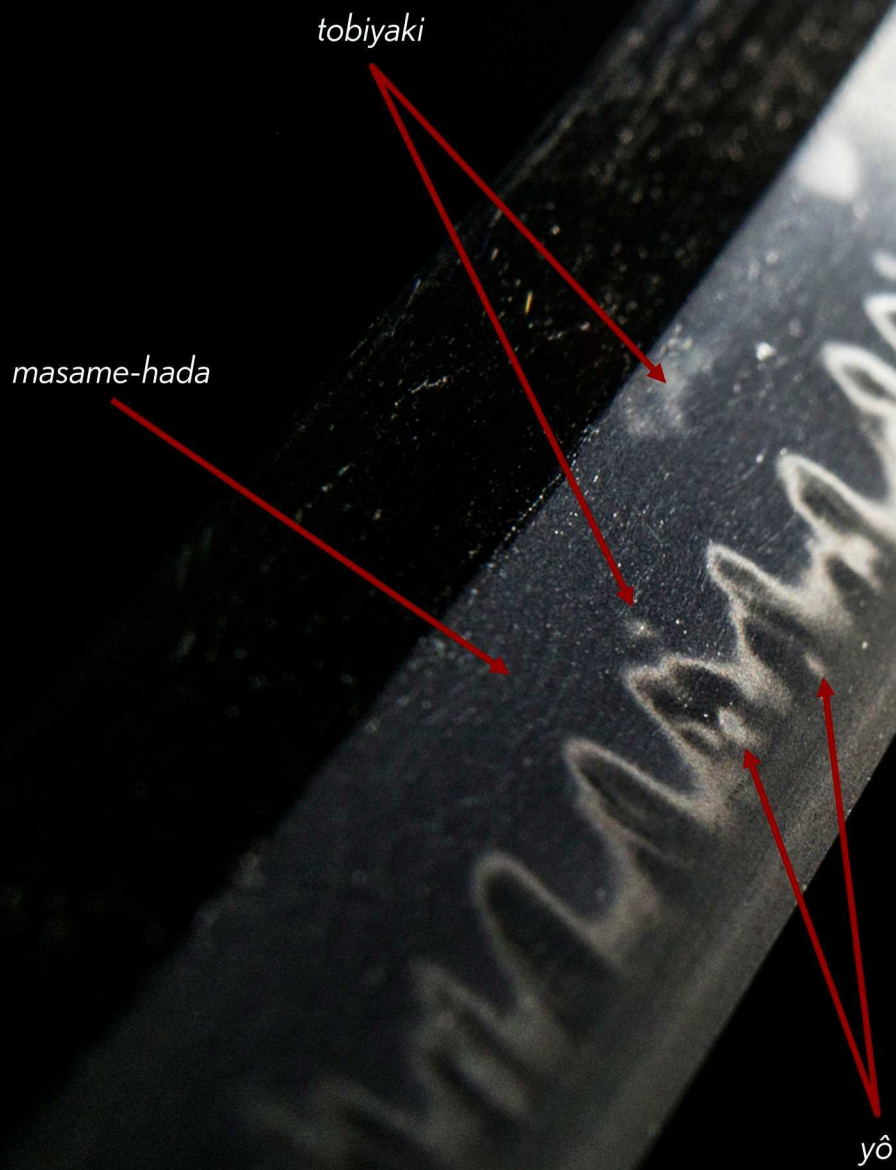
Jizo boshi
(illustration by Nagayama Kokan)

A *boshi* resembling the deity *Jizo*, heads its way through the *kissaki*.

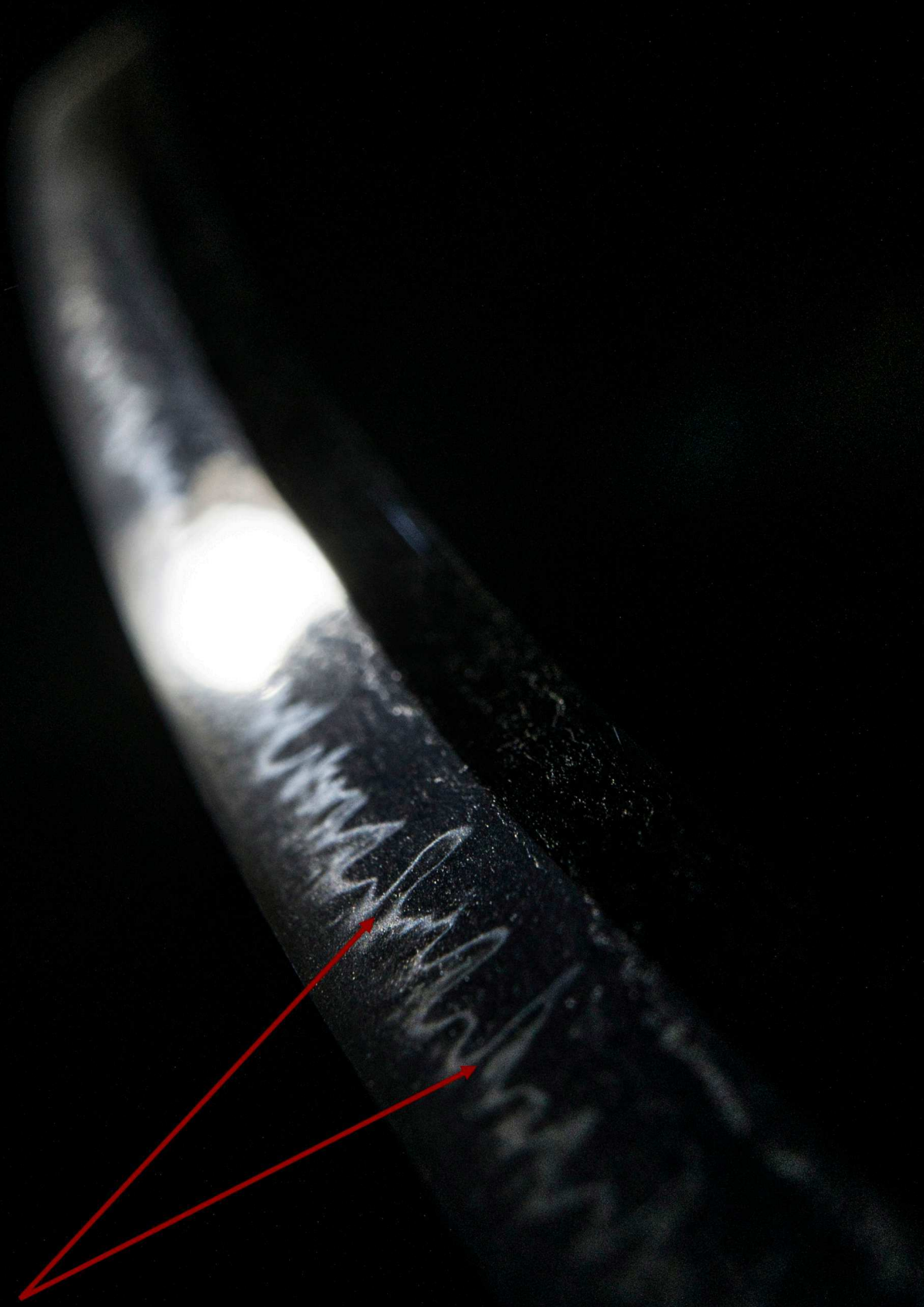




A beautiful *itame-nagare* weaves its way through the body of the sword.



This katana is filled with *nihontô* goodies. Here we see spots of *tobiyaki* in the *ji, yô* (leaves) that fall below the *hamon* line and there is even straight grain *masame-hada*, which is a textbook example of quality *Mino-den* work.

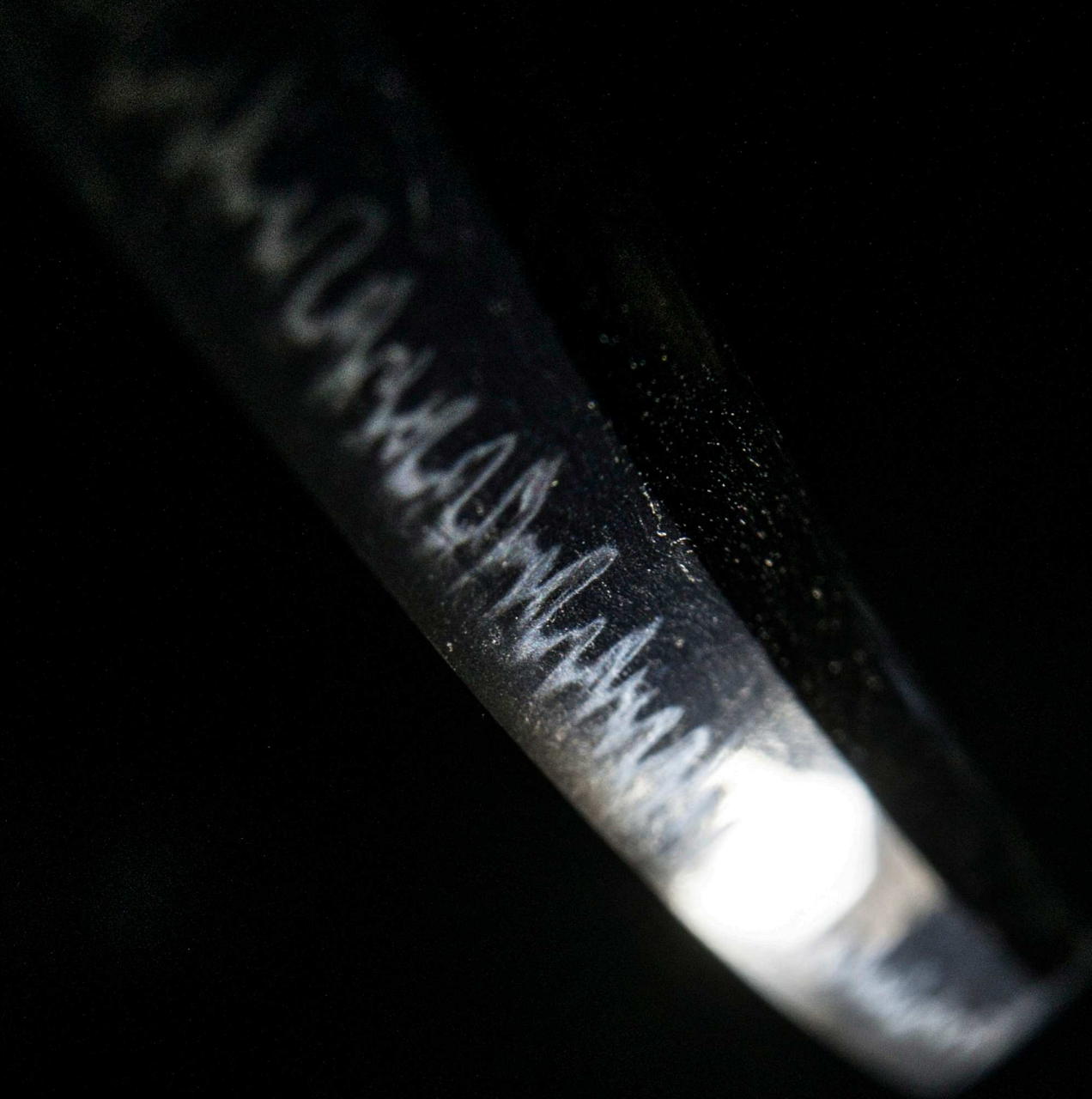


A gorgeous *gunome-midare* stretches dramatically to the *shinogi* line that is reminiscent of *ôbusa-chôji* - tall bubbly clove buds produced by the masterful swordsmiths of the *Fukuoka-Ichimonji* school.



The upper *monouchi* (hitting zone) features a tight *gunome-midare* that's ready for action.

It's great to be alive.





Shirasaya
(protective scabbard)

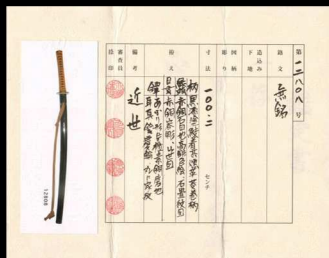


gold *ni-ju habaki* with
straight file marks

*Kuro-shu bokashi-nuri saya
uchigatana-koshirae*
(黒朱ぼかし塗鞘打刀拵)

*Uchigatana-koshirae
lacquered in
blurred black and red*

Crafted during the
Modern period



NTHK-NPO Kanteisho
Certificate of Authenticity



kaeri-tsuno

Exquisite lacquerwork of a master Japanese artisan.



This chic *tsuba* has been attributed to the *Nishigaki* school from *Higo* province. It features the following *mon* (family crests):

- kuyô-mon* (nine planets)
- sumitate-yotsume* (diagonal four eyes in a ring)
- shihô-hanabishi* (four petals)



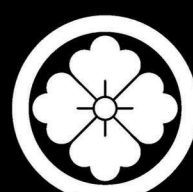
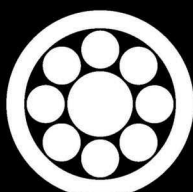
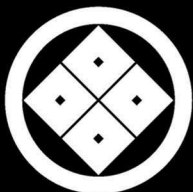
(reverse)



Kuyo-mon (nine planets) the family crest of the *Hosokawa* family, represents nine planets, which are the seven luminaries (the sun, moon, Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn) and *Rahu* and *Ketu* (planets that are associated with eclipses and comets).

Sumitate-yotsume (diagonal four eyes in a ring), from a symbolic perspective, the number four is often associated with balance, stability, and completeness. It represents the four cardinal directions (north, south, east, west), the four elements (earth, air, fire, water), and the four seasons (spring, summer, autumn, winter). When combined with the symbolism of eyes, this signifies a holistic view that encompasses all aspects of existence.

Shihô-hanabishi (four petals) originates from the arrangement of four *hishi-like* (water chestnut-like) leaves as petals into a flower. During the *Heian* period, *hanabishi* was used as traditional design motifs of court nobles for furnishing goods and costumes of court nobles. It is said that *hanabishi* was first used as a family crest by the *Kai-Takeda* clan.

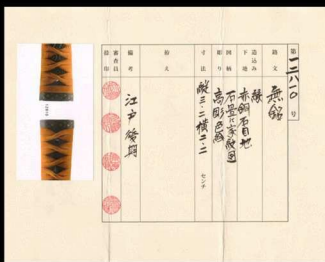




This eye-catching *fuchi* (collar) has been attributed to the Edo branch of the *Yoshioka* school, crafted Late Edo period (1780~1867).

The unique cross diamond design pattern is called *jûji-mon* as the Japanese character for *jû* (ten) is a cross. This is a 'fitting' choice as this *tachi* was crafted by *Jûrozaemon* (十郎左衛門) - the first character of his name being *Jû*. It thoughtfully pays tribute to him in a clever way.

The *Shimazu* clan was the most prominent family to have a cross *kamon* (family crest) albeit rounded.



Shimazu kamon



Kashira is crafted from buffalo horn and lacquered to match the *saya*.



Illustration by John Sims
(1749~1831)

The *menuki* depict *omoto no zu* (*Rohdea japonica*), a species of plant known as the Japanese sacred lily.

Paired with the generic lily, it means *a long-lasting peaceful union* thus a popular wedding gift.

Time to pass the baton.
Yours for the next 500 years.





Koshirae bag



ITEM# UJKA449

A NORIKATSU KATANA

SIGNED & DATED, SHINSHINTÔ PERIOD (KEIÔ ERA: FEBRUARY 1866)

Swordsmith:	<i>Tôbu Koishikawa-kan ni oite Suifu-jû Katsumura Norikatsu (shodai)</i>
Measurements:	Length: 71.3cm (<i>ubu</i>) Curvature: 1.6cm Moto-haba: 3.04cm Weight: 915g
Jihada:	<i>Outstanding masame-hada with ji-nie and chikei</i>
Hamon:	<i>Bright suguha with sunagashi, ko-ashi, kinsuji, uchinoke and hakikake-bôshi</i>
Certificate #1:	NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon (Especially Worthy of Preservation)
Certificate #2-4:	NTHK-NPO Kanteishô (<i>koshirae, fk and tsuba certified as Authentic</i>)
Fujishiro rank:	Jô-saku (<i>ranked as a superior swordsmith</i>)
Authentication:	Sayagaki by Nozomi-san (<i>shodô artist</i>)
Included:	<i>Shirasaya, Edo-koshirae, fabric bags, stand, kit, printed description</i>

SOLD

This splendid samurai sword was crafted in February 1866 by *Katsumura Norikatsu*, one of the most accomplished smiths of the *shinshintô* period, when he was working at the *Koishikawa* residence of the *Mito* domain. The workmanship on this weighty, powerful katana is sublime, with a beaming *suguha hamon* over glorious straight grain *masame-hada* and *sunagashi* that is truly impressive. This is *Yamato-den* quality to cherish at the very highest level. An excellent set of Edo period *koshirae* captures the beauty of a crisp autumn day with fallen sun-drenched pine needles and bell crickets happily foraging in a garden. The wonderful set of *menuki* depicts a predatory hawk stalking a bear cub. This is a first-class sword crafted exclusively for the prominent *Mito daimyô* family in the final years of the formidable *Tokugawa shogunate*. It's history in your hands.



Saki-kasane: 5.6mm

Moto-kasane: 7.6mm

Kissaki: 3.76cm

Saki-haba: 2.16cm

Nagasa: 71.3cm

Nakago: 23.0cm

Sori: 1.67cm

Omosa: 915g

Moto-haba: 3.04cm

Mekugi-ana: 1



This formidable katana was crafted by one of the great smiths to collect from the *shinshintô* period. Norikatsu, born as *Katsumura Hikoroku* in *Mito* in 1809, began his sword-making journey by apprenticing under local smith *Kannai Norimune* in 1838. During his early career, he signed his works as *Norikazu* and eventually secured employment with the Mito domain, working in their *Hakamatsuka* and *Shirahatayama* arsenals.

In 1858, he sought to enhance his skills under two masters: first studying with *Unju Korekazu* in July, then with *Hosokawa Masayoshi* in November. Following his adoption by *Hosokawa Masayoshi*, he began signing his works as *Hosokawa Masanori*. Near the end of the *Bun-kyû* era (1861-1864), *Norikatsu* relocated with his entire school to the Mito domain's Edo residence in the *Koishikawa* district. He continued his craft there until his death in *Hakamatsuka*, Mito, on February 29, 1872 during the Meiji period, at age 64.

Norikatsu's work evolved significantly over his career. His early pieces reflected *Kannai Norimune*'s style, featuring *ko-chôji-midare* and *gunome-chôji*. Later, he shifted toward the *Yamato* tradition, creating a first-class *masame-hada* combined with *sunagashi-laden suguha*. Due to the Sino-Japanese reading of the character for Nori, he is also known as *Tokkatsu*.

This splendid samurai sword was crafted by *Norikatsu* when he was working at the *Koishikawa* residence of the Mito domain and has been dated to February 1866. The workmanship is sublime, with a beaming *suguha hamon* over glorious straight grain *masame-hada* that is truly impressive. This is *Yamato-den* quality at the very highest level, vying to replicate the master works of the *Hôshô* school from the Kamakura period.

The first-class set of *koshirae* that comes with the sword has been dated to the Edo period, thus the *saya* is likely original to the sword. The *tsuba* and *fuchikashira* capture the beauty of a crisp autumn day with sun-drenched pine needles and bell crickets happily foraging. While the wonderful set of *menuki* depicts a hawk sizing up a bear cub illustrating the predatory spirit of nature that the samurai deeply admired.

This is a sword crafted for a ruling *daimyô* family in the final years of the last samurai. It's history in your hands.





Location: *Mito province*

Family name: *Katsumura*

Swordsmith: *Norikatsu* (first generation)

ubu-nakago (original, unaltered tang)

sujikai-yasurime (diagonal file marks)

於 (oite)

東 (Tô)

武 (bu)

小 (Ko)

石 (ishi)

川 (kawa)

館 (kan)

水 (Sui)

府 (fu)

住 (jû)

勝 (Katsu)

村 (mura)

徳 (Nori)

勝 (katsu)

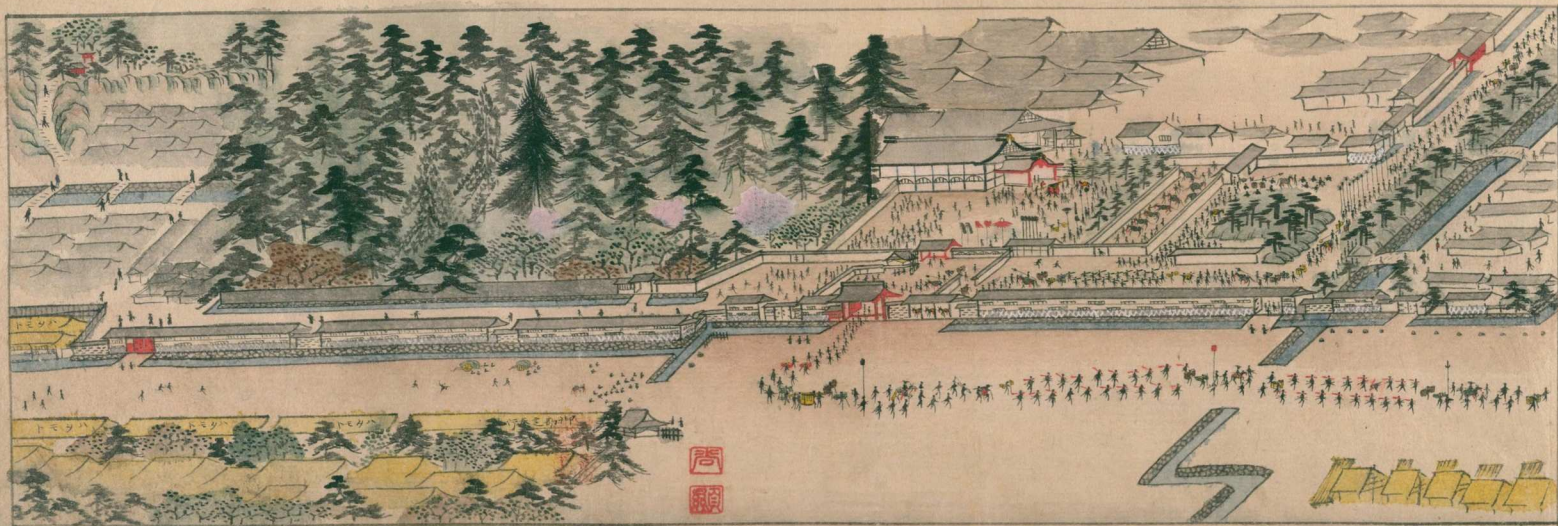
作 (tsukuru)

之 (kore, o)

Tôbu Koishikawa-kan ni oite Suifu-jû Katsumura Norikatsu kore o tsukuru

Crafted by Katsumura Norikatsu in the sword workshop residence of the Mito Domain in the Koishikawa district of Edo province.

About the Koishikawa Residence



Leaving party at the Koishikawa residence for *Tokugawa Yoshiatsu* in 1863

This katana was crafted by *Katsumura Norikatsu* in the sword workshop residence of the *Mito* domain in the *Koishikawa* district of *Edo* province. The Koishikawa residential area is now a sizeable park where Tokyo Dome is located.

Koishikawa-park was founded in 1629 by *Tokugawa Yorifusa*, the first leader of Mito domain. And it was completed during the leadership of *Tokugawa Mitsukuni*, a.k.a. *Mito Kômon*, the second leader.

In 1866, when *Norikatsu* crafted the sword, the tenth leader of the Mito domain was *Tokugawa Yoshiatsu*, successor of *Tokugawa Nariaki* and brother of *Tokugawa Yoshinobu*, the final *shogun* of Japan's Edo period.

Not afraid of getting his hands dirty, *Yoshiatsu* crafted swords just like *Nariaki* (whose smith name of *Rekko*), and Norikatsu was Yoshiatsu's *sensei* (teacher)!

Unfortunately Yoshiatsu died of a severe disease in 1868 at the age of 37. Due to his short life, there are no photos or paintings of Yoshiatsu. Above is a painting of the *Koishikawa* residence, the park, and of a leaving party for *Yoshiatsu* in 1863, making his way to *Kyôto*.



Tokugawa Nariaki
1800-1860



Tokugawa Yoshinobu
1837-1913



Tokyo Dome

Keiô ni Hinoe-Toradoshi Nigatsu-hi

Dated on a day in the second month in the second year of *Keiô* era in the Year of the Tiger (February 1866)

(Kei) 慶

(ô) 應

(ni) 二

(Hinoe) 丙

(Tora) 寅

(doshi) 年

(Ni) 二

(gatsu) 月

(hi) 日



特 選
01201912

№ 1012655



鑑定書

一刃 銘

於東武小石川館水府住勝村徳勝作之
慶應三丙寅年二月日

長二尺三寸五分半

右は當協會に於て審査の結果特別保存刀剣と
鑑定しこれを証する

令和二年二月十九日

公益財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協會



東京都 教育委員会
第 37134 号
昭和27年7月15日

NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon Certificate of Designation

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

Issued in the 2nd year of Reiwa (2020), February 19th

One, Katana

Mei (signature)

*Tobu Koishikawa-kan ni oite Suifu-ju Katsumura Norikatsu kore o tsukuru
Kei-ô-ni Hinoe-Toradoshi Nigatsu-hi*

Nagasa (length)

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

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai
(NBTHK)



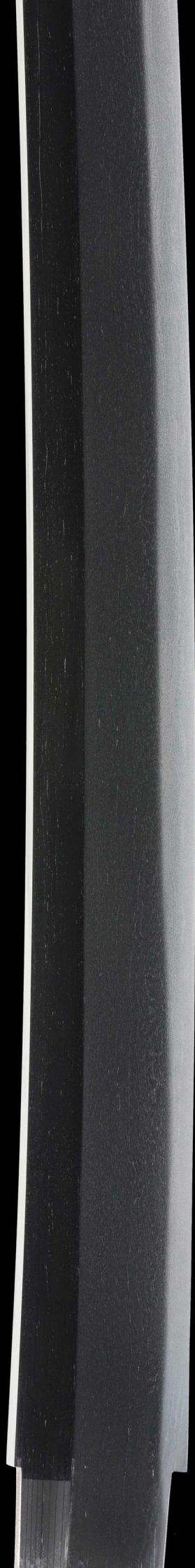
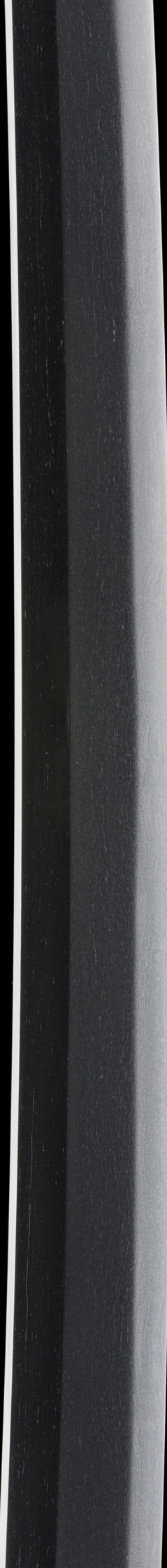
於東武小石川館水府住勝村德勝作之
*Tôbu Koishikawa-kan ni oite Suifu jû Katsumura Norikatsu
kore o tsukuru*
Crafted by Katsumura Norikatsu in the sword workshop
residence of the Mito Domain (daimyô) in the Koishikawa
district of Edo province

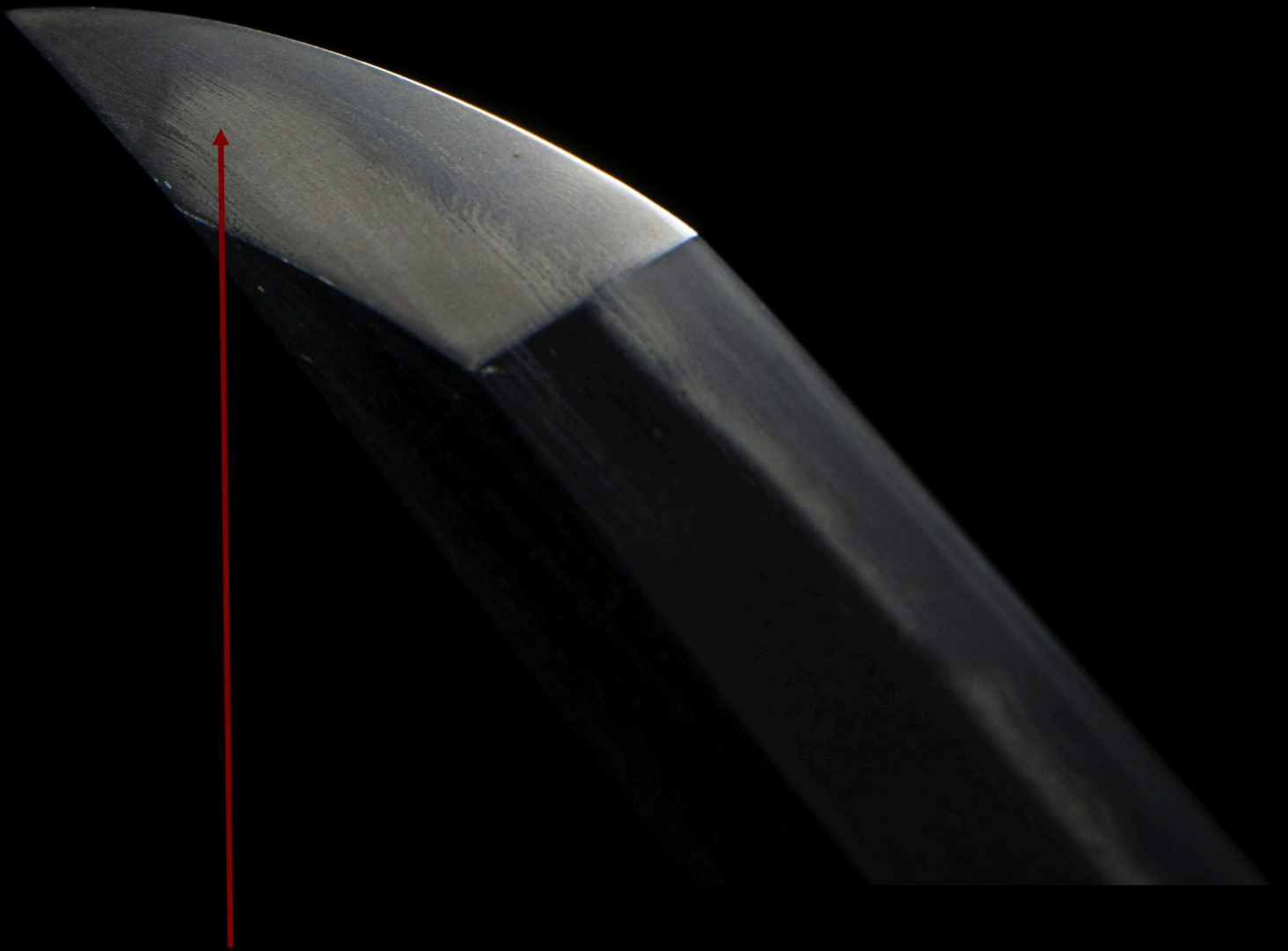
慶應二丙寅年二月日
Keiô ni hinoe-toradoshi nigatsu hi
Dated on a day in the second month in the second year of Keiô era
Year of the Tiger (February 1866)

刃長貳尺參寸五分半有之
Hachô 2-shaku 3-sun 5-bu han kore ari
Blade length 71.3 cm

令和六甲辰年葉月吉日誌之
Reiwa roku kinoe-tatsudoshi Hazuki kichijitsu kore o shirusu
Written on a lucky day in the eighth month in the sixth year of
Reiwa era during the Year of the Dragon (August 2024)







A brilliant *hakikake* (sweeping) *boshi* in the *kissaki* (tip) that gently turns back (*kaeri*).



A close-up photograph of a sword blade, showing the intricate patterns of the metal. The blade is dark and polished, with a bright light reflecting off its surface. Two red arrows point to specific features: one points to a fine, wavy pattern labeled 'sunagashi (sweeping sands)', and the other points to a straight, parallel grain pattern labeled 'masame-hada (straight grain)'.

sunagashi (sweeping sands)

The impressiveness of *masame-hada* cannot be overemphasized. As a sword smith, it takes remarkable skill (and frankly) guts to do it. Unless the blade is forged perfectly, the blade can easily separate at one of the hundreds of tiny parallel layers, thus forming *hada-ware*.


Masame elegance. Cherish it.

masame-hada (straight grain)

masame-hada
go with the flow

A beaming *suguha hamon* lights
the way forward.

Take charge.



ashi (legs)



Symmetry is excellence.

Small crescent moons that appear above the *hamon* are called *uchinoke*.

Uchinoke is a rare *hataraki* (activity) that is generally found on swords from the Ko-Naminohira school, *Rai family*, *Yamashiro Sanjo* and *Yamato Tegai* schools.

It's a wonderful achievement to replicate this during the shinshinto period.

uchinoke





Shirasaya
(protective scabbard)

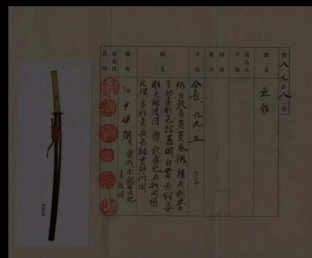
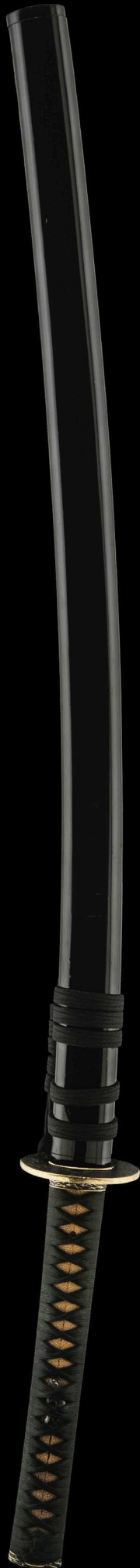


A silver-wrapped *habaki* with vertical file marks that echoes the straight-grain of the sword.

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

*Uchigatana-koshirae
lacquered in glossy black*

Crafted during the
Late Edo period
(1866~1868)



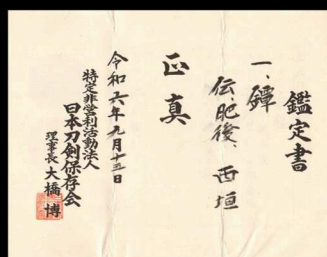
*NTHK-NPO Kanteisho
Certificate of Authenticity*



bell cricket

This lovely *tsuba* depicts an autumn scene with foraging bell crickets in a leafy garden scene. The bell cricket (*suzumushi*) holds a special place in Japanese culture, where it has historically been kept as a cherished pet. These insects were housed in ornate cages that their owners would carry with them. The *suzumushi* is particularly renowned for its melodious chirping.

The *tsuba* has been attributed to *Kôgo Yoshitoshi* circa the *Taishô* period (1912~1926).





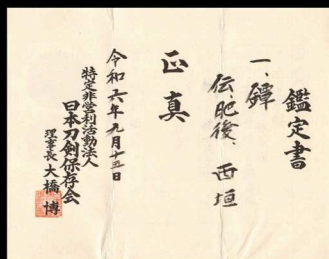
This stunning *fuchi-kashira* captures the subtle beauty of fallen, sun-drenched pine needles. It is likely that this design was selected due to the many pine trees in nearby *Koishikawa* park where this sword was crafted.





Kashira
(depicting fallen pine needles)

Attributed to *Kusakari Kiyosada* from *Mutsu* province



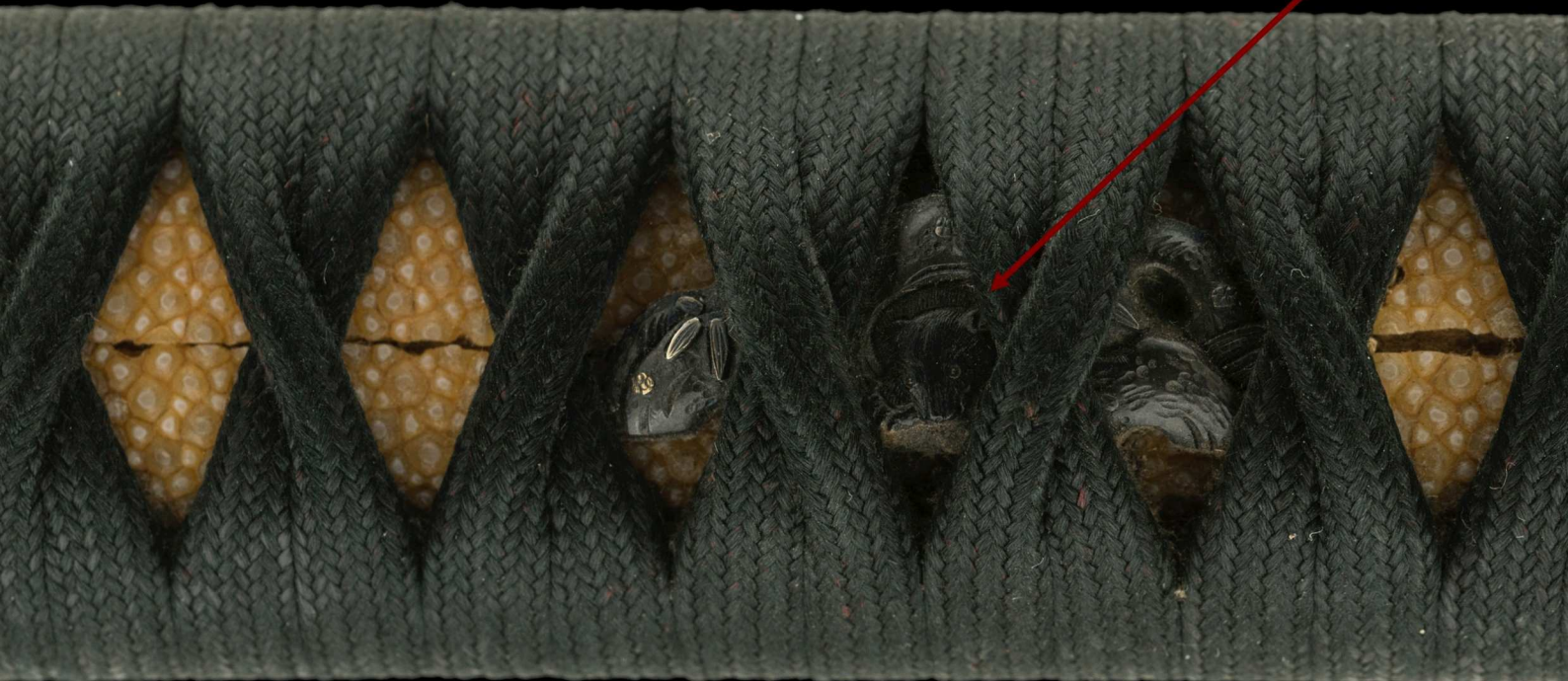


The *menuki* depict a predatory hawk hunting down a bear cub sheltering itself in a cave.



hawk

bear cub

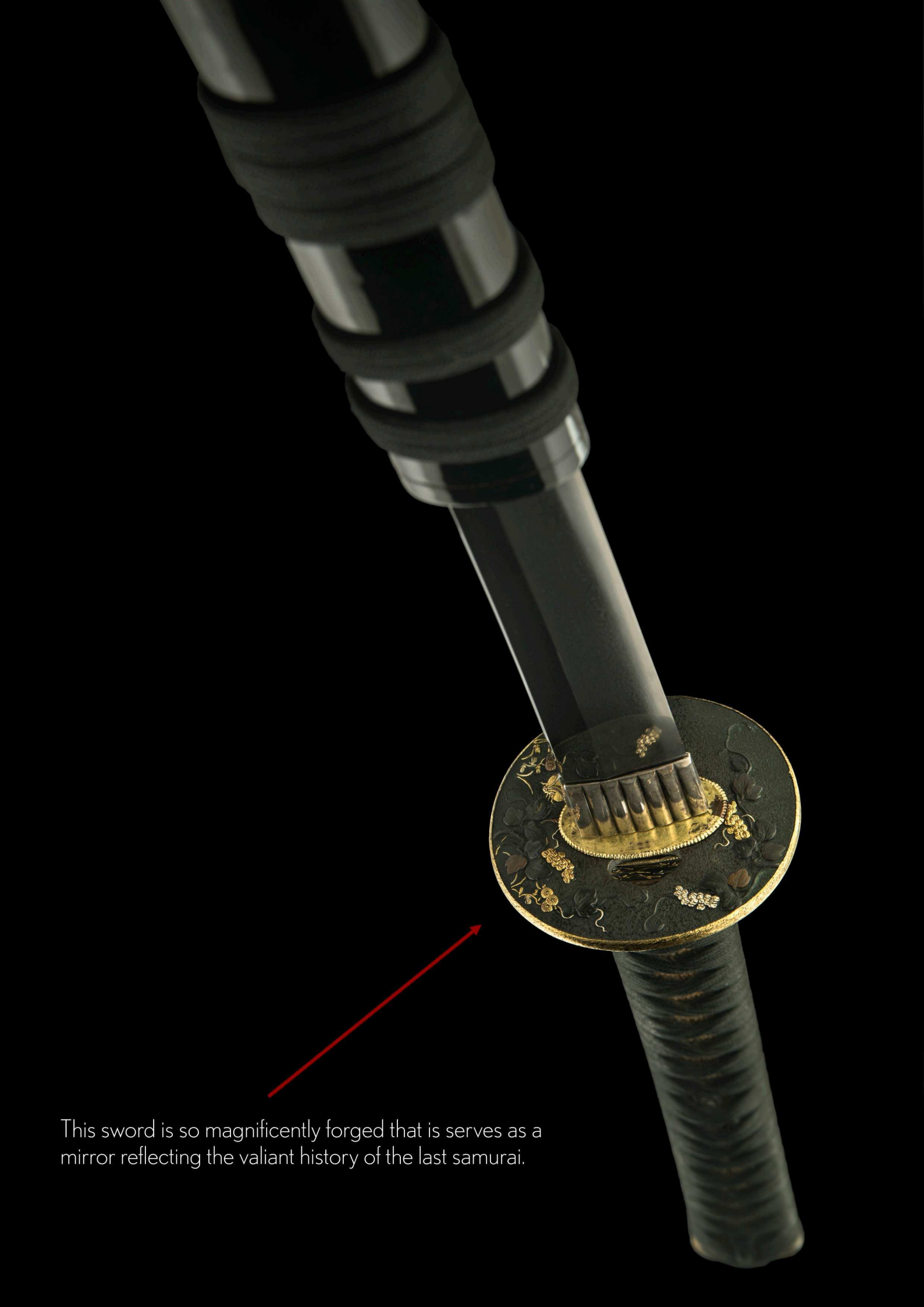




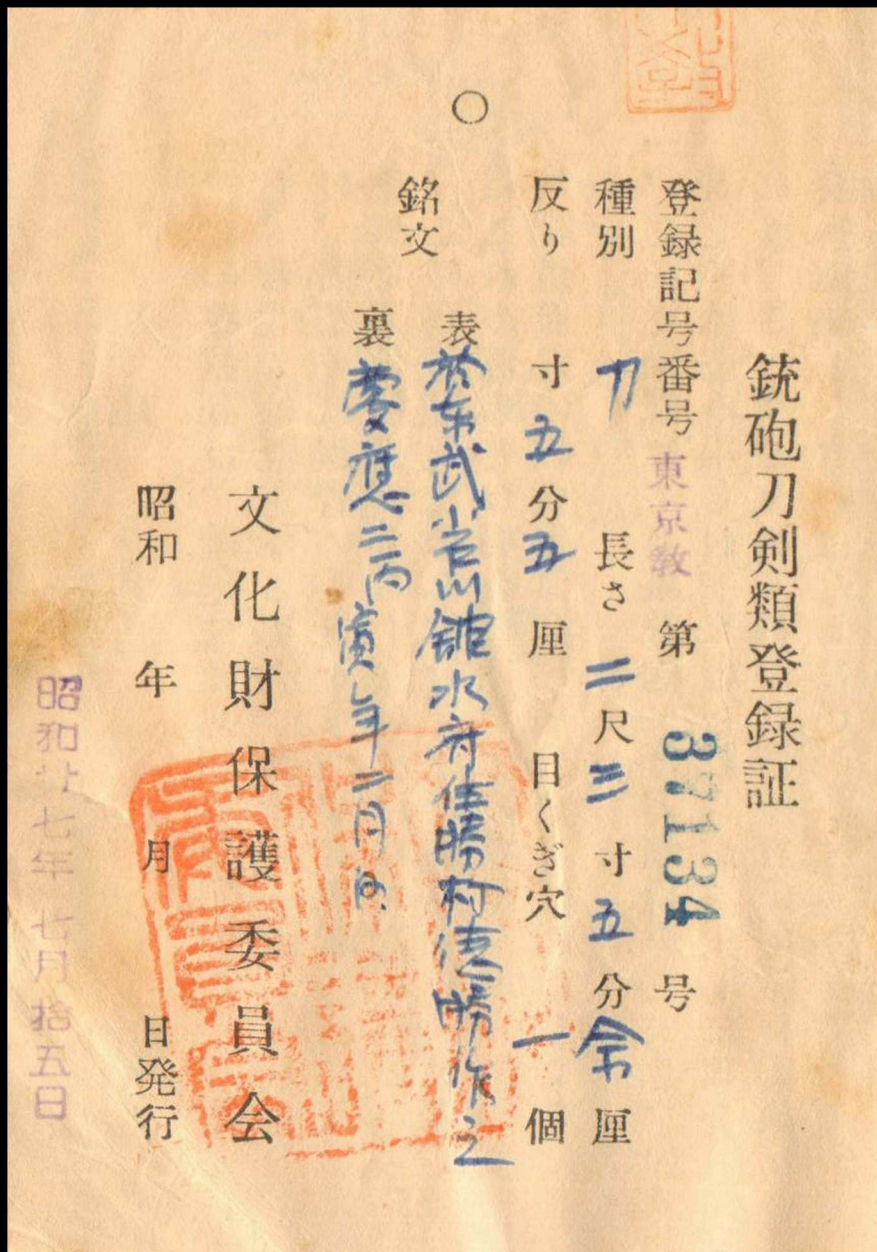
Well-aged *samekawa* (ray skin) is wrapped over with a classic *hishimaki* braid.

And the hawk looks on...





This sword is so magnificently forged that it serves as a mirror reflecting the valiant history of the last samurai.



This is the original *torokusho* (registration card) for the *Norikatsu katana*. The card was registered in the 27th year of Showa (1952).

1952 was the second year that swords were formally registered in Japan. Many former *daimyō* (great) families were invited to submit their collections and we know by the *nakago* that this sword was once the property of the *Mito* domain of the *Tokugawa* family.

The serial number is 37134 and was registered in *Tokyo* where the sword was originally crafted.



Koshirae bag



Recently Completed Custom Koshirae

ujwa173

A Hankei Wakizashi

Shintô Saijô-saku (grandmaster)

NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon

NTHK-NPO Yûshûsaku

Antique fittings from the Mino school



91997010



鑑定書
一秋堂同録
古江崎藩内字盛房様特別保存刀装具
鑑定し之を証す。
平成九年十月八日
日本刀剣保存会 鑑定部 鑑定士 山本 義典



ITEM# UJWA261

A TADAMITSU 'CUTTING TEST' Ô-WAKIZASHI SIGNED, SUE-KOTÔ PERIOD (TENBUN ERA: 1532~1555)

Swordsmith: *Bishû Osafune Tadamitsu (Jûrôzaemon)*
Measurements: **Length:** 54.9cm (*orikaeshi-mei*) **Curvature:** 1.6cm **Moto-haba:** 2.46cm
Jihada: *Ko-mokume and nagare-hada with ji-nie and midare-utsuri*
Hamon: *Bright suguha with ko-gunome midare, ko-ashi and kinsuji*
Certificate #1-2: **NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon** (*sword & koshirae Especially Worthy of Preservation*)
Fujishiro rank: **Jô-saku** (*ranked as a superior swordsmith*)
Included: *Shirasaya, fabric bags, stand, kit, printed description*

SOLD

This very sharp Japanese sword was originally crafted as a curvy *katate-uchi* (one handed katana) at the height of the *Sengoku-jidai* (warring states period) by *jô-saku* *Jûrôzaemon Tadamitsu*, who flourished during the *Tenbun* era (1532~1555). At some point in the late 1500s, early 1600s, this sword underwent *suriage* (shortening) to its now *ô-wakizashi* length of 54.9cm. In the shortening process, rather than cutting off and losing the *mei*, the signature was carefully preserved on the *nakago* by a folding over process called *orikaeshi-mei*. Swords with *orikaeshi-mei* are rather rare and thus a veritable talking point of the sword. A *bo-hi* (groove) was added to the sword after the *suriage* process in order to lighten and aid in the cutting performance of the piece as well. Inscribed in bright, well-preserved gold inlay on the *nakago*, it states that this sword was tested *twice* [on a human body] severing through both the centre of the chest (*Ichino dô*) and diagonally through the body from the base of the neck to the opposite armpit - a rather vicious test cut known as *ô-kesa*.



Saki-kasane: 4.3mm

Moto-kasane: 6.4mm

Omosa: 470g

Kissaki: 2.97cm

Saki-haba: 1.69cm

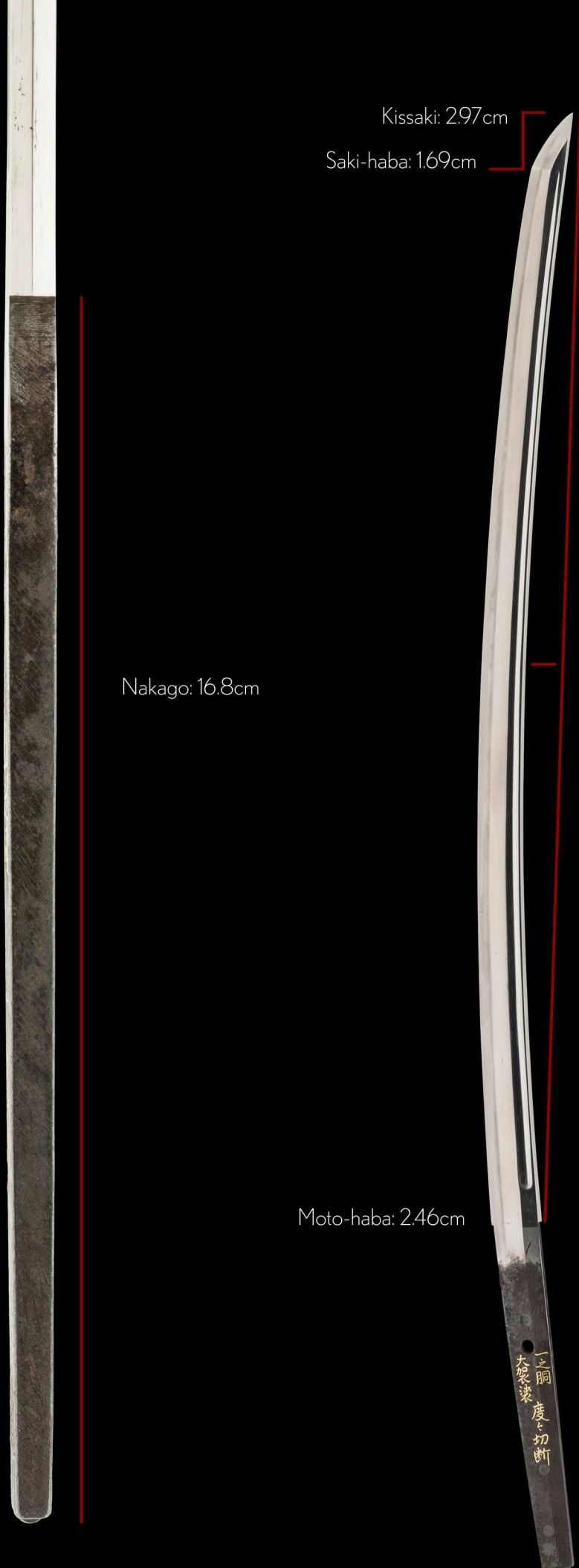
Nakago: 16.8cm

Moto-haba: 2.46cm

Nagasa: 54.9cm

Sori: 1.6cm

Mekugi-ana: 1



一之胴
本家
度々切断

This very sharp Japanese sword was originally crafted as a curvy *katate-uchi* (one handed katana) at the height of the *Sengoku-jidai* (warring states period) during the mid-1500s in late *Muromachi*.

It is signed *Bishû Osafune Tadamitsu*, which was a *mei* (signature) used by a number of smiths in *Osafune* village in Bizen province at that time. Upon careful analysis of the signature and with advice from a trusted source, we can state that this sword was made by *jô-saku* (superior smith) *Jûrôzaemon Tadamitsu*, younger brother of second generation *Kurôzaemon*, and worked during the *Tenbun* era (1532~1555).

There are a few interesting points to expand upon. First, at some point in the late 1500s, early 1600s, this sword underwent *suriage* (shortening) to its now *ô-wakizashi* (long wakizashi) length of 54.9cm. Its original length was likely around 63cm, which was typical of *katate-uchi* in the late Muromachi period. In the shortening process, rather than cutting off and losing the *mei* - which is the case of many *Kotô* period swords - the signature was preserved on the *nakago* by a folding over process called *orikaeshi-mei*. Swords with orikaeshi-mei are rather rare and thus a veritable talking point of the sword.

A *bo-hi* (groove) was added to the sword after the *suriage* process in order to lighten and aid in the cutting performance of the piece as well. Which now leads us to the major treat of this feisty number and that is the *tameshigiri* (cutting test) on this blade.

Inscribed in bright, well-preserved gold inlay on the *nakago*, it states that this sword was tested *twice* [on a human body] severing through both the centre of the chest (*ichi no dô*) and diagonally through the body from the base of the neck to the opposite armpit - a rather vicious test cut known as *ô-kesa*.

This *ô-wakizashi* is housed in *shirasaya* only. It's perfectly fine to collect the sword as it is, however, if the new owner wishes to build a cool custom *koshirae*, we're here to serve and make this journey possible.



(Osa) 長
(funo) 船
(Tada) 忠
(mitsu) 光
(saku) 作

切
断

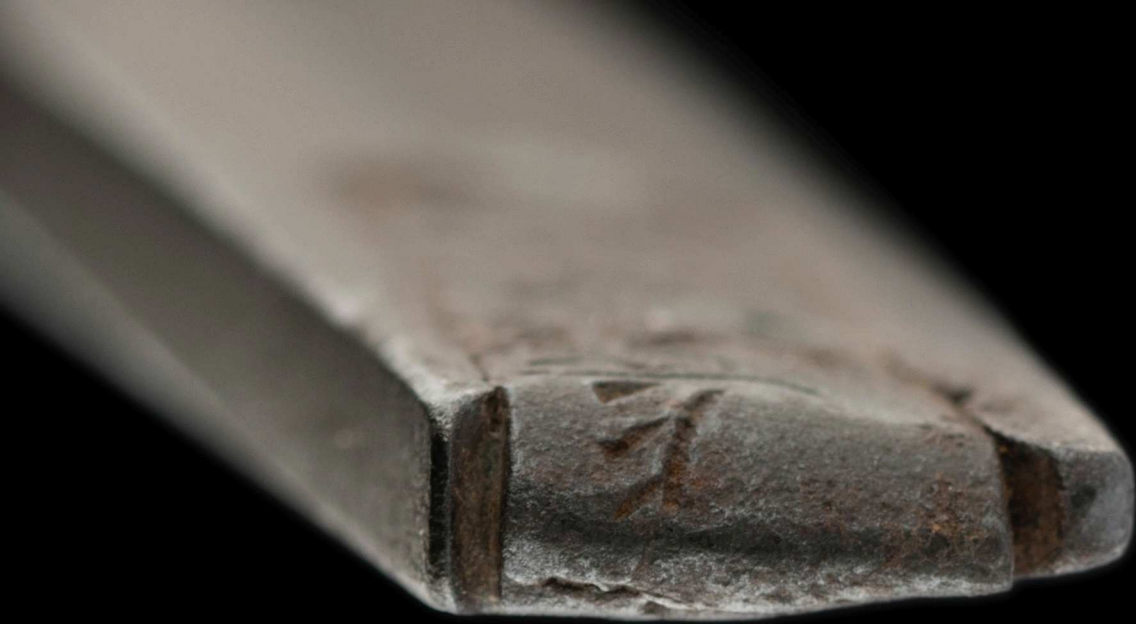
備 (Bi)
州 (shû)

mei (signature) folds over
and continues on reverse

Location: *Bishû province*
Village: *Osafune*
Swordsmith: *Tadamitsu*

orikaeshi-mei (folded-over signature)
kiri-yasurime (straight file marks)





folded over close-ups



A blade with *orikaeshi-mei* is *suriage* (shortened). The original *mei* (signature) has been carefully preserved, bent back, and inserted into a slot cut in the opposite side of the *nakago*.

It is quite rare to find a sword with *orikaeshi-mei* and although there are a number of fakes that exist, the NBTHK (sword museum of Japan) has confirmed that this is a genuine example and thus awarded the sword with NBTHK Hozon (a sword worthy of preservation).



slot

Ichinodô ô-kesa tabitabi setsudan (in gold inlay)

This sword was tested twice [on a human body] severing through both the centre of the chest (*lchi no dô*) and diagonally through the body from the base of the neck to the opposite armpit (*ô-kesa*).

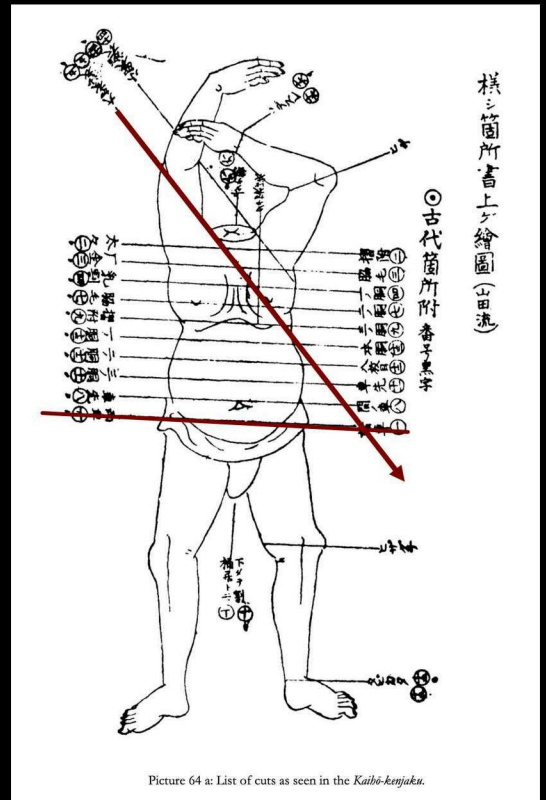
(Ô) 大
(ke) 袈
(sa) 裟

一之洞
大加衣裟
度々切斷

一 (lchi)
之 (no)
洞 (dô)

度 (tabi)
々 (tabi)
切 (setsu)
斷 (dan)

備 (Bi)
州 (shû)



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

The red diagonal line shows the trajectory of the *ô-kesa* cut. This cut can be performed on a live or dead 'human target'. The more horizontal line is the *lchi no dô* test cut.

This is probably the original *mekugi-ana* (hole) which would make the cutting length around 63cm when it was first crafted, a typical one-handed *katate-uchi* katana of 16th century Japan.

04202212

No 3030855



鑑定書

一、脇指銘備州（以下折返）長船忠光作
（金象嵌）一之胴大袈裟度々切断

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

令和五年三月十日

公益財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協會



福岡県教育委員会
第 91802 号
平成2年6月21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 5th year of Reiwa (2023), March 10th

One, Wakizashi

Mei (signature)

*Bishû (ika orikaeshi) Osafune Tadamitsu saku
(Kinzôgan) ichinodô ô-kesa tabitabi setsudan*

Nagasa (length)

1-syaku 8-sun 1-bu kyô (54.9cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai
(NBTHK)



備州長船忠光
Bishû Osafune Tadamitsu
Osafune Tadamitsu from Bishû Province

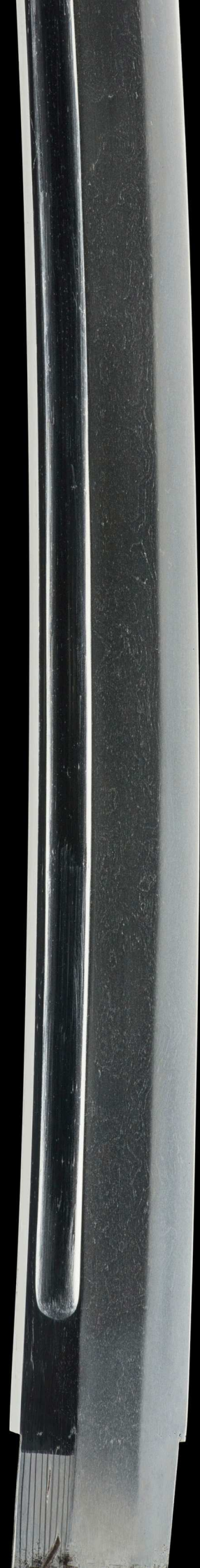
時代天文頃
Jidai Tenbun-goro
Around Tenbun period (1532~1555)

一之胴大袈裟度々切断
Ichinodô ô-kesa tabitabi setsudan
Tested twice severing through the centre of the chest and diagonally through the body from the base of the neck to the opposite armpit

刃長壹尺八寸一分強有之
Hachô 1-shaku 8-sun 1-bu kyô kore ari
Blade length 54.9 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).





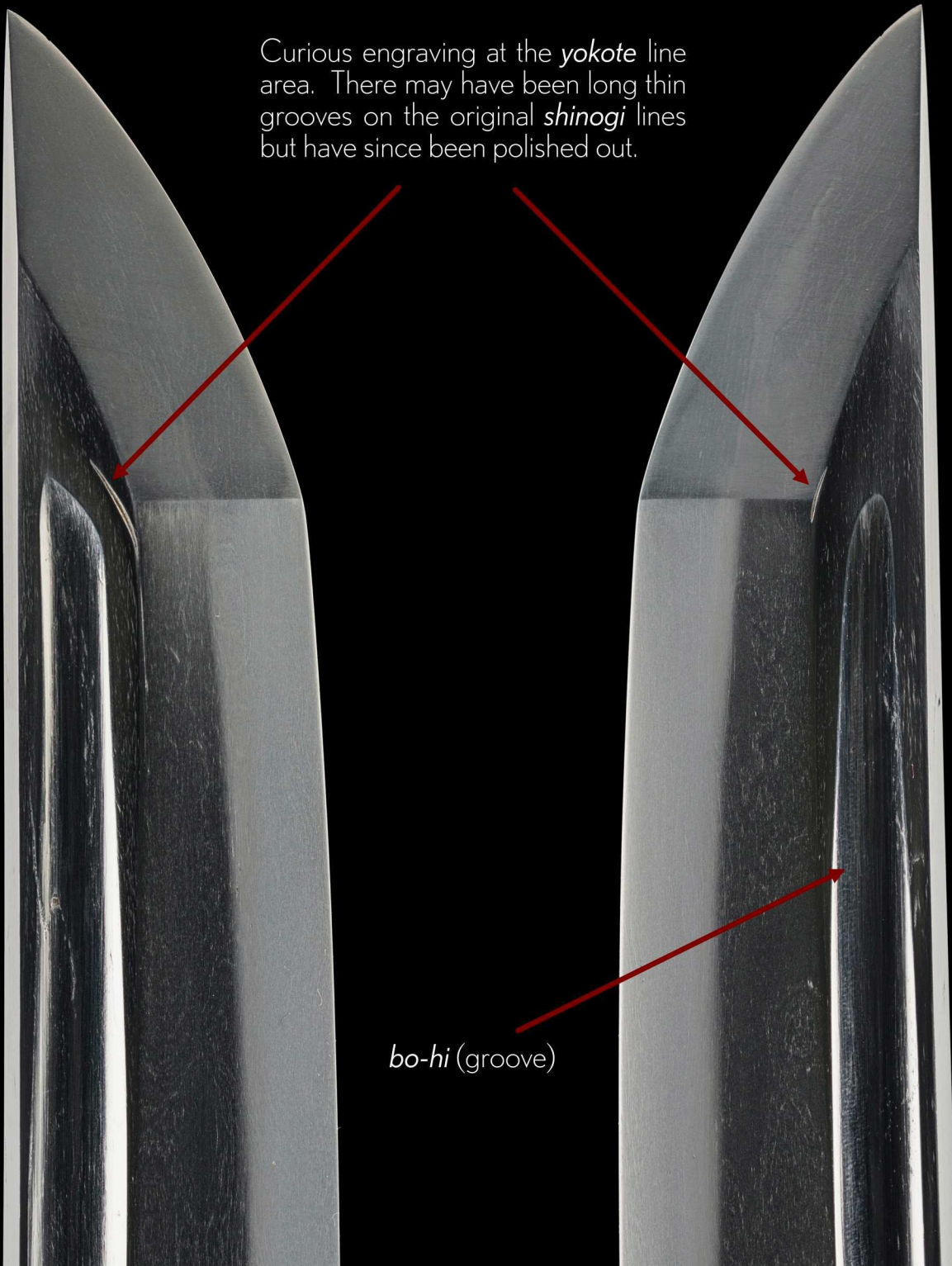
bo-hi (groove)



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

A groove helps to make a sword *lighter* and aids in the *cutting performance* by taking on *i-beam* construction properties of absorbing energy. On this sword, there is a full-length *bo-hi* on the *omote* (front) and *ura* (back) of the blade. These grooves would have been added after the sword was shortened.

Curious engraving at the *yokote* line area. There may have been long thin grooves on the original *shinogi* lines but have since been polished out.



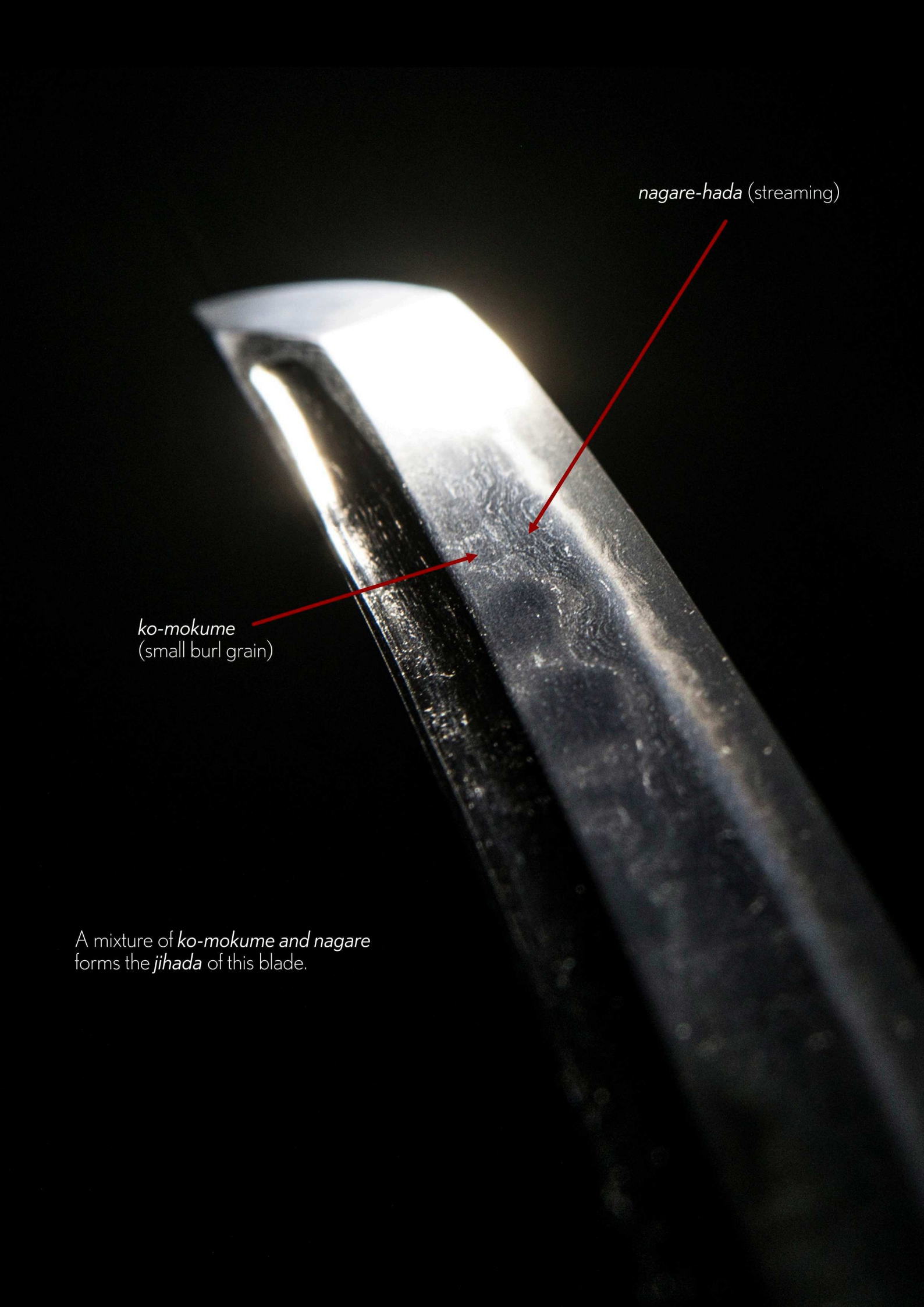
bo-hi (groove)



Harumitsu horimono close-up

On the top of the *nakago* are remnants of a *horimono* (engraving) that was placed on the original (pre-shortened) blade.

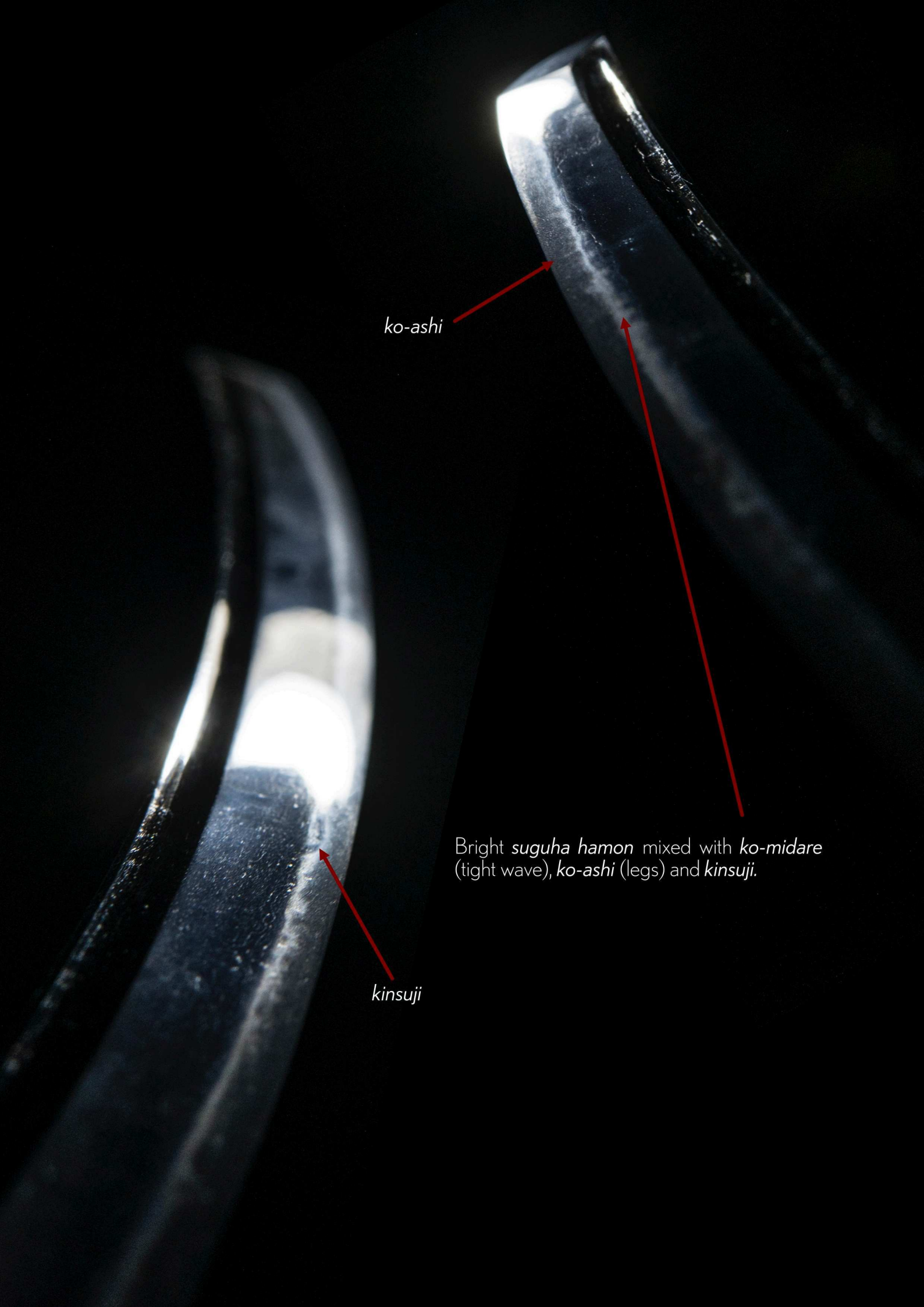
It's unclear what the original *horimono* exactly was, but it likely would have been similar to this *Sue-Bizen* stylised example from *Harumitsu* crafted in 1582 of a *kurikara* (dragon winding around a sword).



nagare-hada (streaming)

ko-mokume
(small burl grain)

A mixture of *ko-mokume* and *nagare* forms the *jihada* of this blade.



ko-ashi


Bright *suguha hamon* mixed with *ko-midare* (tight wave), *ko-ashi* (legs) and *kinsuji*.

kinsuji

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

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

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



midare-utsuri



A long, terrific line of *kinsuji*
(black 'golden line' of nie crystals)



Shirasaya bag



gold-wrapped *habaki* with
horizontal file marks



ITEM# UJKA453

A TEGAI KATANA

UNSIGNED, KOTÔ PERIOD (KAMAKURA~NAMBOKUCHÔ 1300~1350)

Swordsmith:	<i>Tegai school</i> (手搔)
Measurements:	Length: 71.3cm (<i>o-suriage</i>) Sori: 1.8cm Moto-haba: 2.97cm Weight: 700g
Jihada:	<i>Well-forged ko-mokume, nagare-hada with chikei with sparkling ji-nie</i>
Hamon:	<i>Bright suguha in nie-deki with uchinoke, kinsuji and kaen-bôshi</i>
Certificate #1:	NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon (Especially Worthy of Preservation)
Certificate #2-4:	NTHK-NPO Kanteishô (<i>koshirae, fk and tsuba certified as Authentic</i>)
Authentication:	Sayagaki by Nozomi-san (<i>shodô artist</i>)
Included:	Shirasaya, Edo-koshirae, fabric bags, stand, kit, printed description

SOLD

The handsome katana by the *Yamato Tegai school* is a prime example of the splendour of *kotô* period swords. The Tegai school was named after its workshop's location in front of the glorious *Tengai-mon* gate of *Todaiji* temple in *Nara*, the former capital of Japan. The sword's elegant shape is indicative of its origins as a *tachi* - the early Japanese long sword design that was typically made for horseback warfare. The *ji* beams brightly with *ji-nie* highlighting a well-forged *nagare-hada, ko-mokume*, loads of *chikei* and the presence of *uchinoke*, small 'crescent-shaped moons' along the hamon. A splendid iron-based dragon *koshirae* with a signed *Sôten* school *fuchi-kashira* houses this sword in such a spirited manner. This is a refined and gracious sword from one of the very oldest, most respected schools in Japanese sword history. It deserves a secure place to call home.



Saki-kasane: 5.0mm

Moto-kasane: 5.6mm

Omosa: 700g

Kissaki: 3.30cm
Saki-haba: 2.01cm

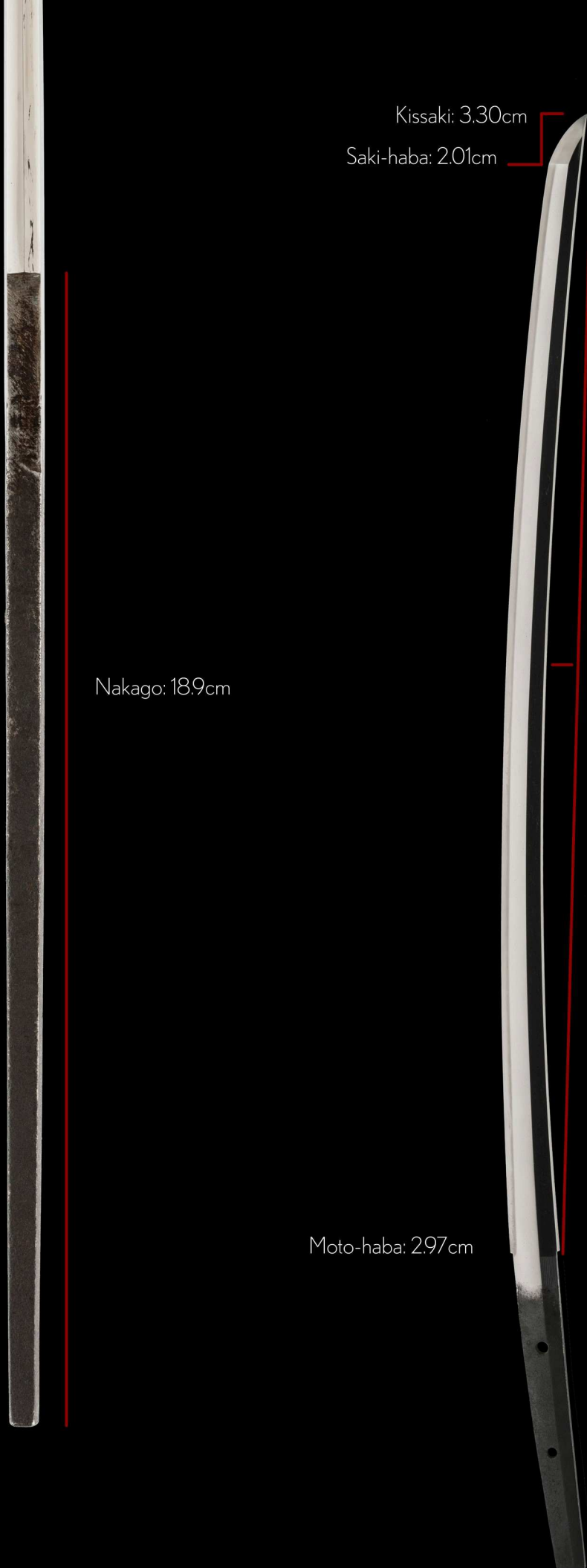
Nakago: 18.9cm

Moto-haba: 2.97cm

Nagasa: 71.3cm

Sori: 1.8cm

Mekugi-ana: 2



During the *Nara* period, before the capital was moved to *Yamashiro* province (*Kyôto*), *Yamato* province was the centre of Japanese culture. According to legend, Yamato was home to some of Japan's earliest swordsmiths, including *Amakuni* and *Amakura* in the late *Heian* period, however the earliest confirmed Yamato-made sword with a maker's signature dates back to the middle of the Kamakura period.


The growth of the Yamato sword-making tradition was closely tied to the region's proximity to the capital in Nara. Smiths' prosperity depended on their relationships with the powerful temples in Yamato, which had acquired vast estates and sought to arm themselves to protect their rights and property. Five major Yamato schools emerged - *Senjuin*, *Tegai*, *Taima*, *Hôshô*, and *Shikkake* - supplying these temples and their *sôhei* (warrior monks) with quality weapons.

The Tegai school was named after its workshop's location in front of the *Tengai-mon* gate of *Todaiji* temple in Nara. Its founder, *shodai* (first gen.) *Kanenaga*, worked around 1288~1293. Other well-known Tegai smiths included *Kanekiyo*, *Kanetsugu*, *Kanetoshi*, and *Kanemitsu*. The Yamato Tegai school continued to produce swords from the *Kamakura* through the *Nanbokuchô* eras. At the end of the Nanbokuchô period, the school ceased to be active. However with the start of the Muromachi period, it once again became active and began to prosper. The revived school is called *Sue-Tegai*.

The handsome katana is a prime example of the splendour of *kotô* period swords. The sword's elegant shape is indicative of its origins as a *tachi* - the early Japanese long sword design that was made for horseback-ridden warfare. The *ji* beams brightly with *ji-nie* highlighting a well-forged *nagare-hada*, *komokume* and loads of *chikei*. A wonderful trait found on *Tegai* swords is the presence of *uchinoke*, small 'crescent-shaped moons' along the hamon. Many have been highlighted in the pages that follow.

A splendid iron-based dragon koshirae with a signed *Sôten* school *fuchi-kashira* houses this sword in such a marvellous manner. This is a refined and gracious sword filled with history that quietly speaks of eras long past. Take care of it well.





The *ura* (reverse) of the *nakago* tends to get filed down more when performing a shortening, thus we see less patina.

This sword was once a long *tachi* crafted during the late *Kamakura* to *Nambokuchō* period. This is when the *Tegai* school flourished.

As there are two holes in the *nakago*, it appears to have been shortened twice in its lifetime to its present *ō-suriage nakago*.

Its current length of 71.3cm (2-*shaku* 3-*sun*, 5-*bu*) is no accident. This length is known as *jo-sun* - 'the *katana benchmark*' size that was standardized during the early Edo period. Top-ranked samurai adored Yamato-den katana such as this piece and would have had this katana paired with a wakizashi to form a *daishō*.

鑑定書

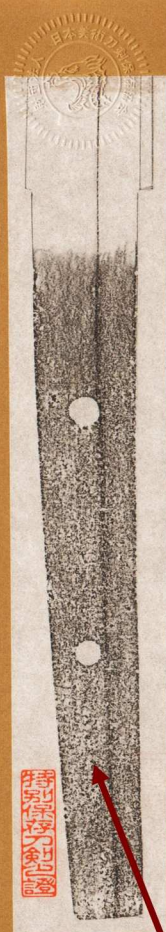
長三八三寸五分半

一刀 無銘 (字掻)

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

昭和六十年五月二十九日

財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協會



It's great to see an *oshigata* (rubbing) of the nakago, rather than the standard photographs that we see today. This sword passed Tokubetsu Hozon way back in 1985, just three years after this certificate was introduced by the NBTHK.

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 60th year of Shōwa (1985), May 29th

One, Katana

Mumei (unsigned)
Tegai

Nagasa (length)
2-shaku 3-sun 5-bu han (71.3cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai
(NBTHK)

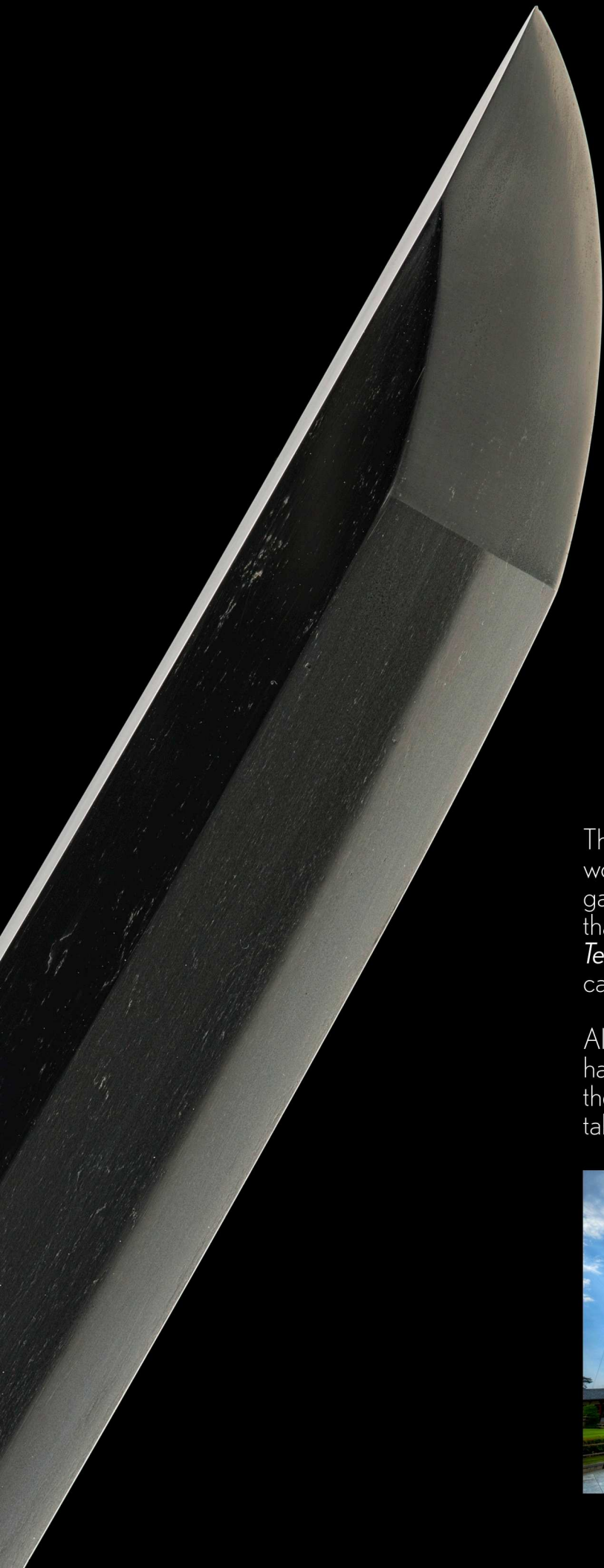


無銘
Mumei
Unsigned

手搔
Tegai
Tegai school

刃長貳尺參寸五分半有之
Hachô 2-shaku 3-sun 5-bu han kore ari
Blade length 71.3 cm

令和六甲辰年坤月吉日誌之
Reiwa roku kinoe-tatsudoshi Kongetsu kichijitsu kore o shirusu
Written on a lucky day in the tenth month in the sixth year of
Reiwa era during the Year of the Dragon (October 2024)



The *Tegai* school was named after its workshop's location in front of the *Tengai*-mon gate of *Todaiji* - a Buddhist temple complex that was once one of the powerful *Seven Great Temples*, located in the city of Nara, the former capital of Japan.

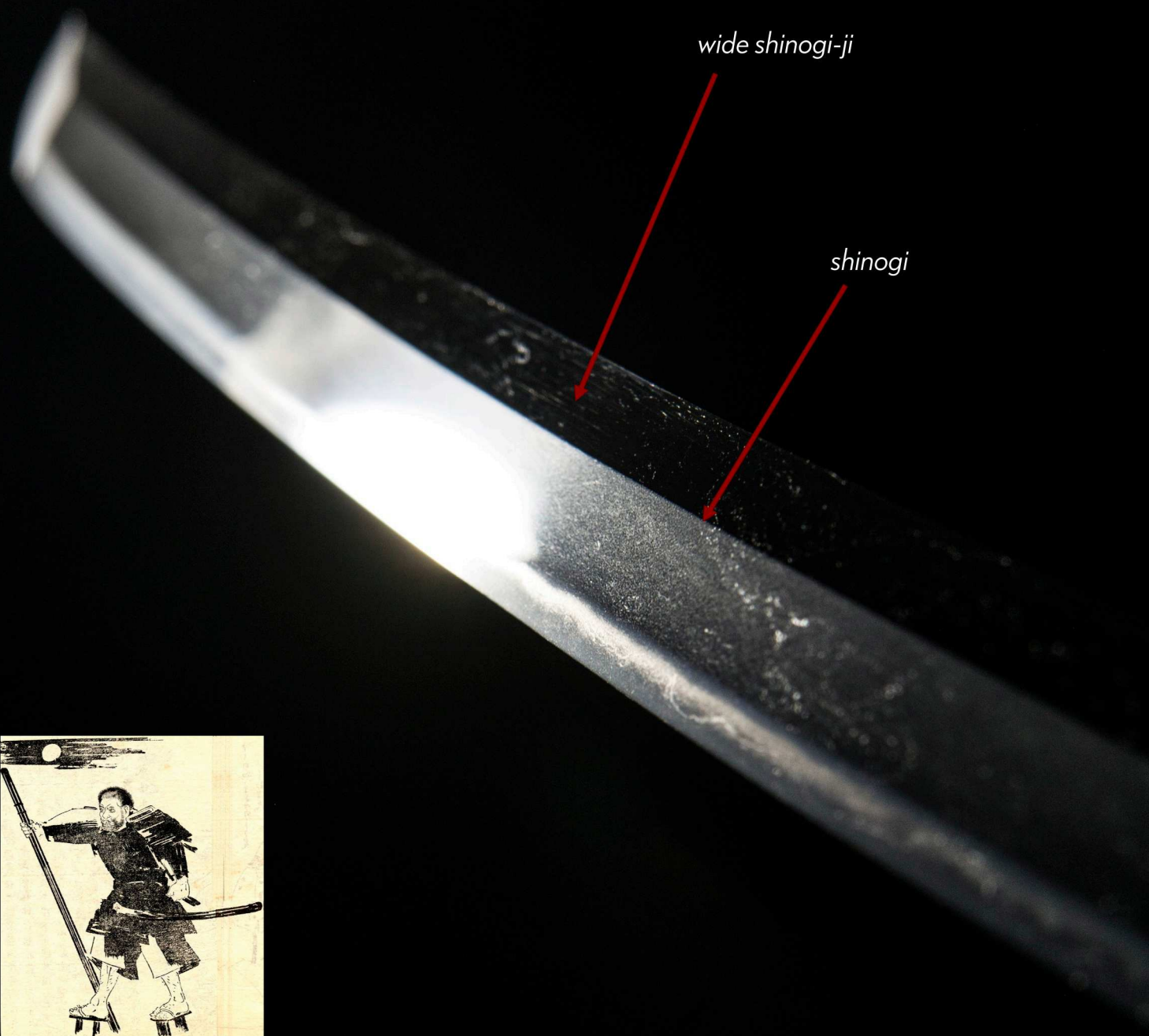
Although the temple was opened in 752AD, it has undergone several reconstructions since then, with the most significant reconstruction taking place in 1709.



Todaiji temple







wide shinogi-ji

shinogi



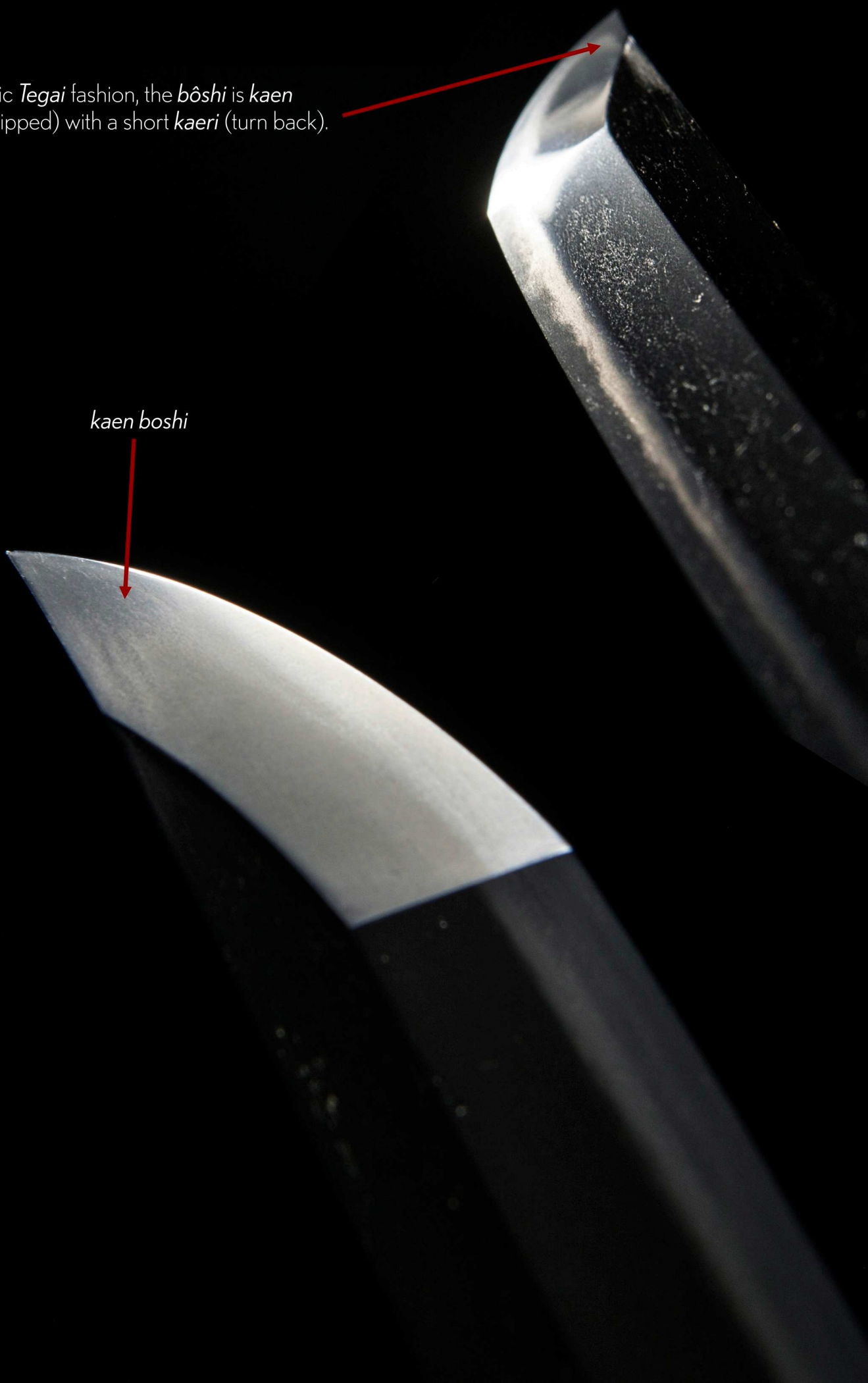
sōhei warrior monk

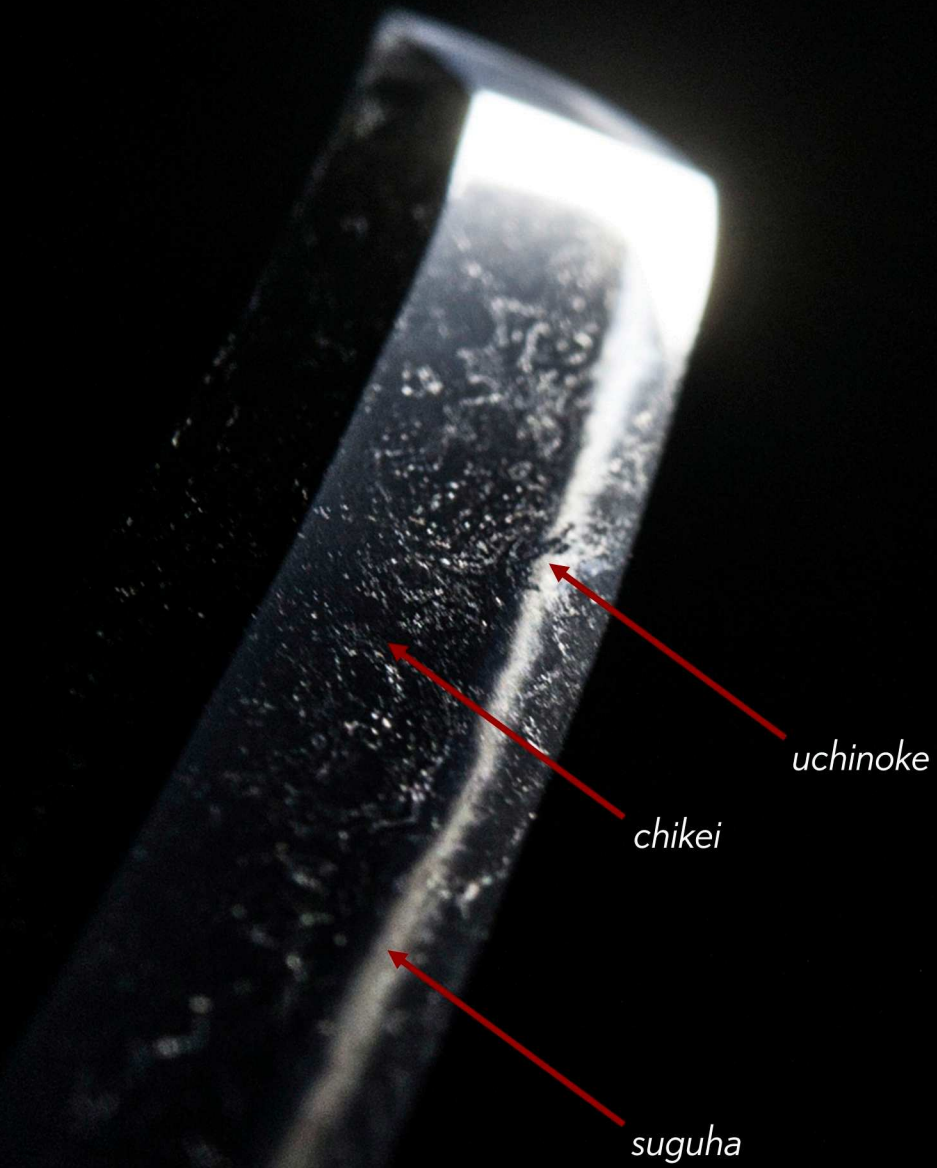
Swords of the *Yamato* tradition have a wide *shinogi-ji* (the flat surface between the *shinogi* line and the *mune*, spine) of the sword. This tends to make the sword thick, powerful and full of *niku* (meat).

Swordsmiths from the five major Yamato schools - *Taima*, *Tegai*, *Hōshō*, *Senjuin* and *Shikkake* armed the major Buddhist temples in *Nara* (and their warrior monks known as *sōhei*) with exquisite, highly dependable swords to guard their rights and property.

In classic *Tegai* fashion, the *bôshi* is *kaen*
(flame tipped) with a short *kaeri* (turn back).

kaen boshi





Shining with a bright and consistent *suguha-hamon*, there is a refined beauty in this *Tegai* school katana.

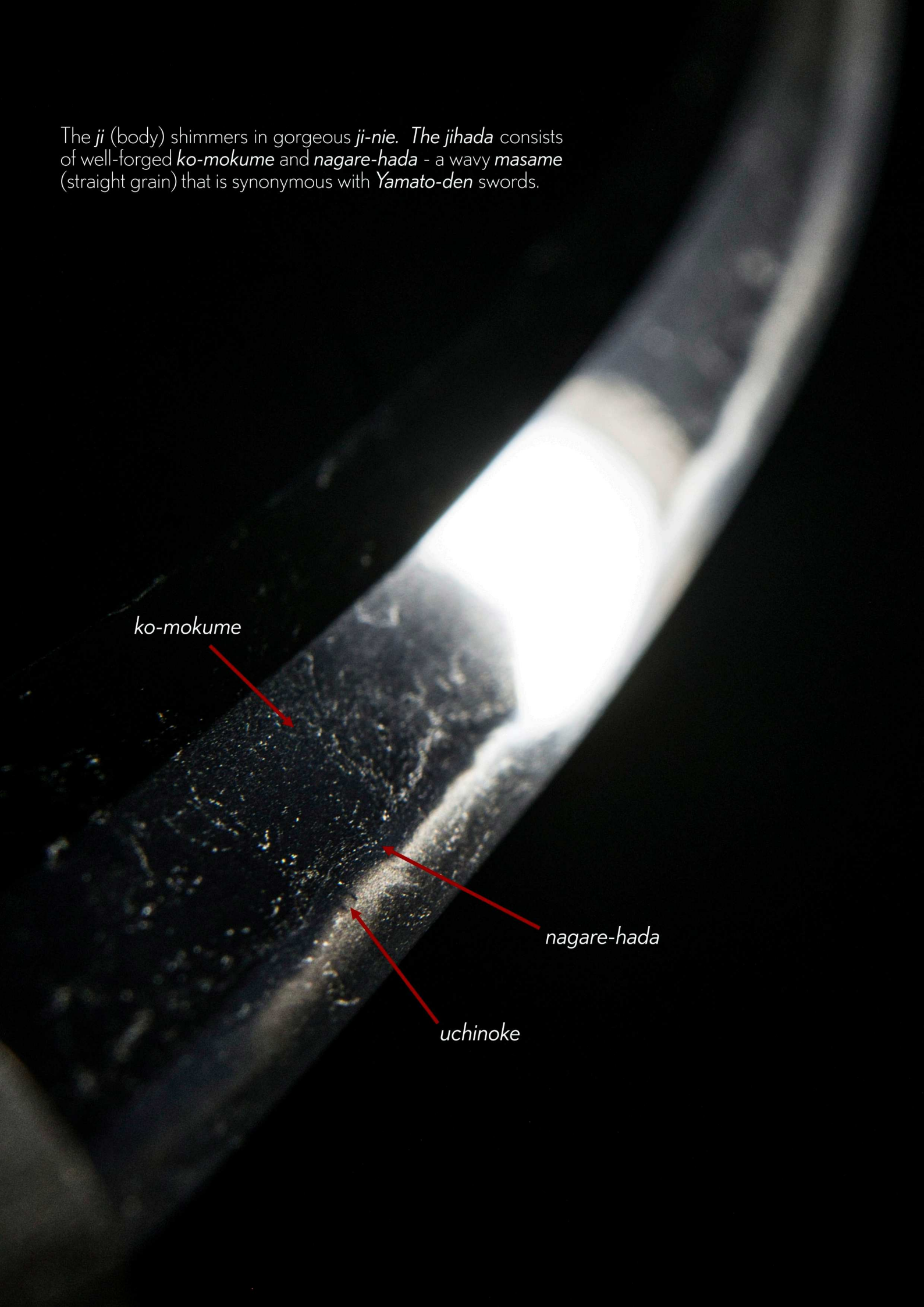
Subtle gifts of *uchinoke* and dark swirls of *chikei* that abound in the *jigane* are to be cherished. Such is the allure of swords from the Kotô period.

The *ji* (body) shimmers in gorgeous *ji-nie*. The *jihada* consists of well-forged *ko-mokume* and *nagare-hada* - a wavy *masame* (straight grain) that is synonymous with *Yamato-den* swords.

ko-mokume

nagare-hada

uchinoke





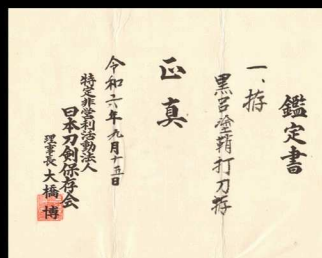
These wonderful crescent moons that appear just above the *hamon* are called *uchinoke*.

Uchinoke is a rare and coveted *hataraki* (activity) that is normally found on swords from the *Yamato Tegaï* school and also on blades from *Ko-Naminohira* and *Rai* schools, and *Yamashiro Sanjo*.

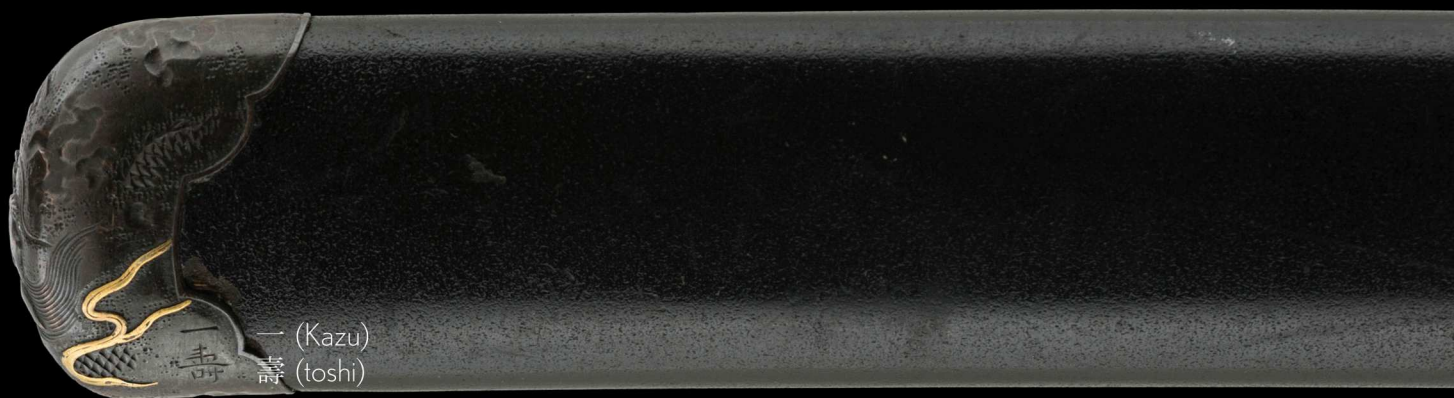
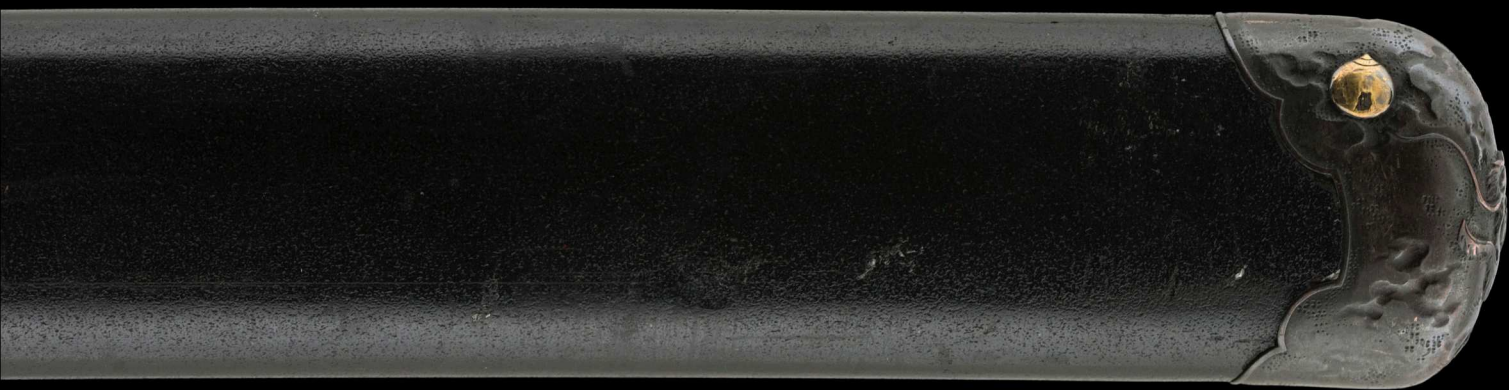
*Kuro-ishime-ji-nuri saya
uchigatana-koshirae*
(黒石目地塗鞘打刀拵)

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

Crafted during the
Late Edo period
(1780~1868)



NTHK-NPO Kanteisho
Certificate of Authenticity



Signed by metalsmith *Kazutoshi*, this *kojiri* (end cap) in the form of a ferocious dragon reinforces the *saya* (scabbard). And forming a weapon in its own right.



jewel



This spirited polished iron *tsuba* with carvings of a cloud dragon clenching onto a jewel amongst crashing waves has been attributed to *Kanetane* from the *Chishiki* school in *Satsuma* province.





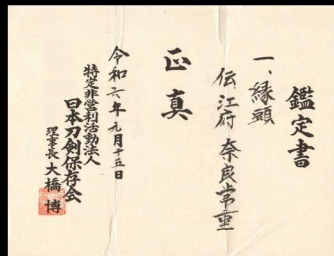
Feel the energy.





This brilliant polished iron *fuchi-kashira* of a crawling dragon is signed by *Mogarashi Sôten*, a resident of *Hikone* in *Gôshû* province and crafted during the late Edo period, circa early 1800s.

The dragon's intense golden eyes add a spiritual dimension to the piece.



NTHK-NPO Kanteisho

(○) 藻
(mo) 柄
(kage) 子
(○) 宗
(mo) 典
(kage) 製



江 (Gô)
州 (shû)
彦 (Hiko)
根 (ne)
住 (jû)



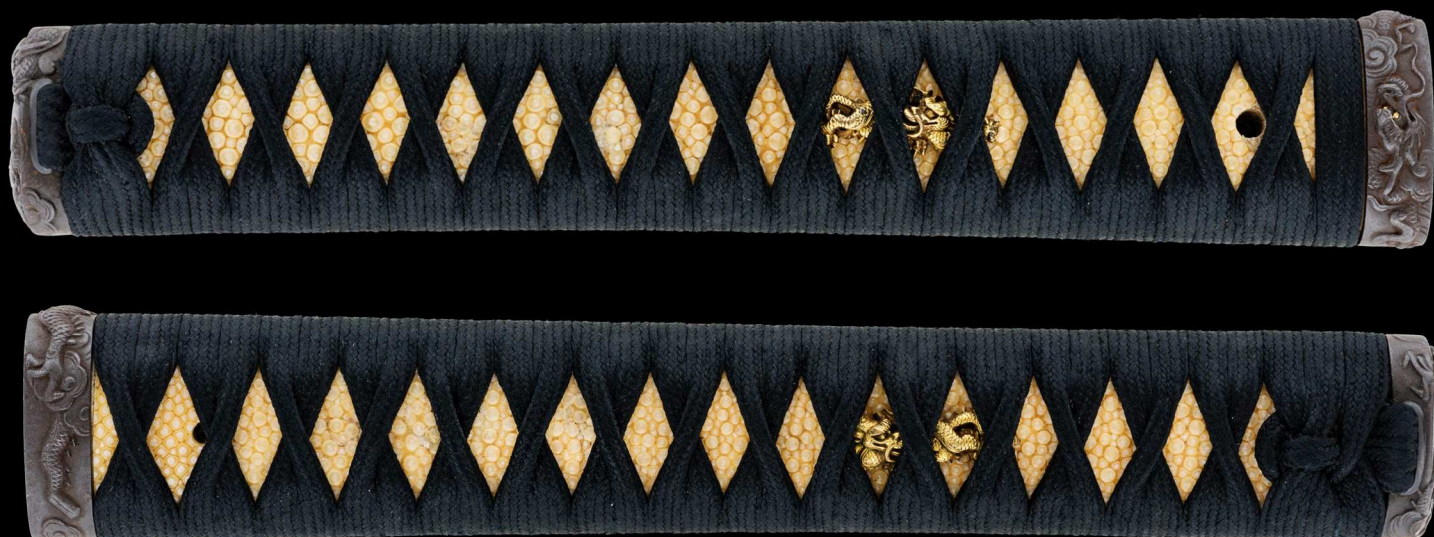
ENTER the DRAGON





Gold crawling dragon *menuki* guard the koshirae.

The *tsuka* (hilt) is braided in deep navy blue silk with aged white *samekawa* (ray skin).



再

手搦

登録記号番号 新潟 1498 号

銃砲刀剣類登録証

備考	銘文(表) 無銘	目くぎ穴 式一八 個	反り	長さ	種別 刀	刀 剣 類
			セ メ ー ト ル チ	セ メ ー ト ル チ		
		口 径	銃 身 長	全 長	種 別	銃 砲
		メ ー ト ル チ	メ ー ト ル チ	メ ー ト ル チ	銃 砲	

昭和 60 年 5 月 21 日 再交付

新潟県教育委員会

新 潟 県 教 育 委 員 会 印

This is the *torokusho* (registration card) for the *mumei Tegai katana*. The card was originally registered in the 26th year of Showa (May 21, 1951). Sometimes old *torokusho* cards get refreshed (as seen here) if they are worn out, but the original registration date is always kept.

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

The serial number is just **1498**, one of the very first swords registered in Japan. It was registered in *Niigata* prefecture.



Koshirae bag



Flying 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 clients around the world. Contact service@uniquejapan.com where we'll discuss the type of sword, age and other qualities you are seeking along with budget parameters.

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



ITEM# UJKA367

A YUKIHIRO KATANA

SIGNED, SHINTÔ PERIOD (LATE KANBUN~ENPÔ ERA: 1667~1675)

Swordsmith: *Ichi Hizen no Kuni Dewa no Kami Fujiwara Yukihiro (shodai)*
Measurements: **Length:** 69.7cm (*ubu*) **Curvature:** 1.6cm **Motohaba:** 2.98cm **Weight:** 705g
Jihada: *Ko-mokume leading to Hizen konuka-hada, thick nie-deki, ji-nie and lots of chikei*
Hamon: *Beautiful gunome chôji-midare with kinsuji, sunagashi, and abu nomefu*
Certificate: **NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon (Especially Worthy of Preservation)**
Fujishiro: **Jô-saku (a superior swordsmith)**
Authentication: **Sayagaki by unknown artist**
Included: *Shirasaya, fuemaki koshirae, stand, kit, booklet, printed description*

SOLD

Talented *Hizen* swordsmith **Yukihiro**, son of *Yoshinobu*, and younger brother to *shodai Masahiro* was born in 1617 and received his *Dewa no Daijo* title in 1648. His *Dewa no Kami* title was awarded to him in 1663. This superb katana has terrific energy - a fine example of a brilliant *chôji-midare* with *Yukihiro's* trademark *abu nomefu* - an iconic horsefly eye appearing as circular dots in the *ashi*. Those that appreciate a quality *jihada* will be pleased soak in the finely forged *ko-mokume-hada* with an incredible amount of swirling pools of *chikei* that stand out beautifully to the naked eye. Its set of *koshirae* features a mother-of-pearl lacquered *saya* called *fuemaki*. This magnificent type of lacquer work is extremely demanding and requires exacting standards. The NBTHK Hozon certified *tsuba* comes from *Hizen's* neighbouring province *Higo* by the *Kugimoto* school celebrates motifs that bring good fortune. Peonies further abound on the lovely *katate-maki* braided hilt.

^
Saki-kasane: 4.5mm

Moto-kasane: 6.1mm

Omosa: 705g

Kissaki: 4.04cm
Saki-haba: 2.09cm

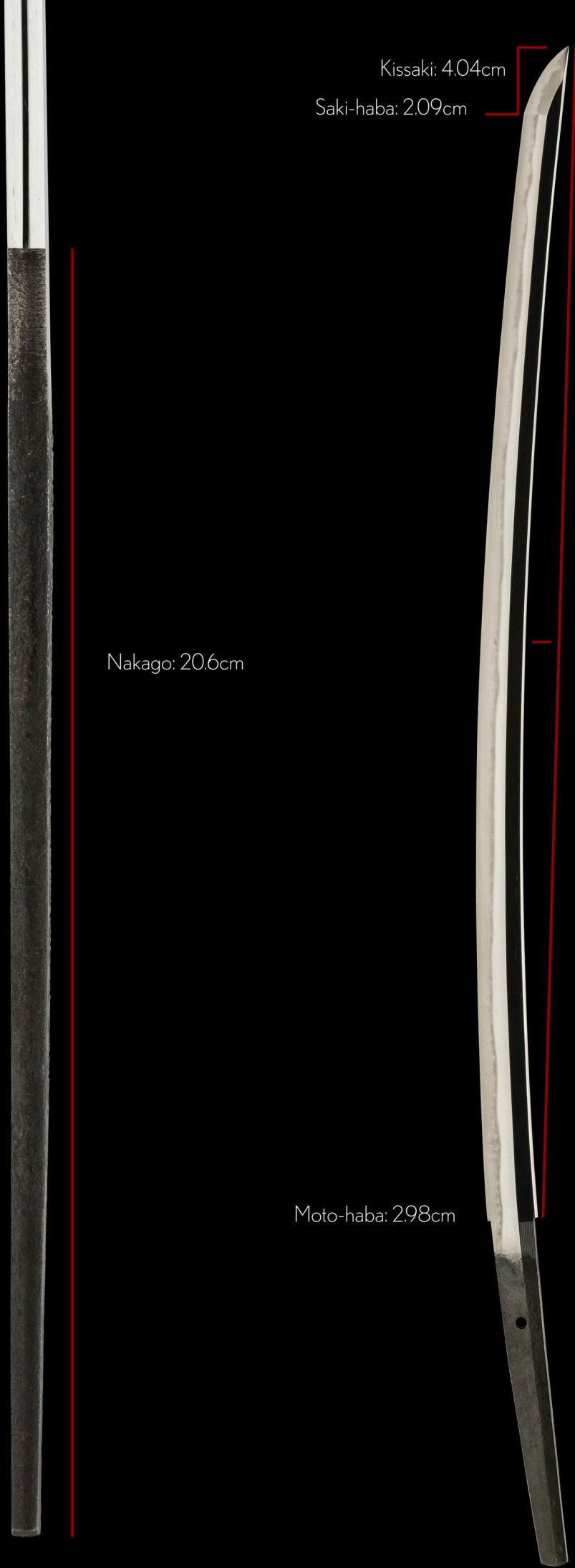
Nakago: 20.6cm

Moto-haba: 2.98cm

Nagasa: 69.7cm

Sori: 1.60cm

Mekugi-ana: 1



Talented *Hizen* swordsmith *Yukihiro*, son of *Yoshinobu*, and younger brother to *shodai Masahiro* was born in 1617 and received his *Dewa no Daijo* title in 1648. His *Dewa no Kami* title was awarded to him in 1663. This katana was made after he received his "no Kami" title.

In 1650 *Yukihiro* moved to *Nagasaki* to study Dutch forging techniques with *Hisatsugu* and *Tanenaga*. It is assumed that he also studied the *Bizen Ichimonji* in *Edo* (Tokyo) with *Noriyoshi*. Swords produced by *Yukihiro* display all the hallmarks that make the *Hizen* tradition sought after.

This superb katana has terrific energy - a fine example of a brilliant *chôji-midare* with *Yukihiro*'s trademark *abu nomefu* - an iconic horsefly eye appearing as circular dots in the *ashi*. Those that appreciate a quality *jihada* will be pleased with the finely forged *ko-mokume-hada* and the incredible amount of swirling pools of *chikei* that stand out beautifully to the naked eye.

Given the elegant, curvy shape of the sword and also through examination of the signature, it is likely this sword was crafted at the end of the *Kanbun* era or into the early *Enpô* era years making it one of the final swords *Yukihiro* made in his storied career.

Its set of *koshirae* features a mother-of-pearl lacquered saya called *fuemaki*. This magnificent type of lacquerwork is extremely demanding and requires exacting standards. The NBTHK Hozon certified tsuba comes from *Hizen*'s neighbouring province *Higo* by the *Kugimoto* school celebrates motifs that bring good fortune. Peonies further abound on the lovely *katate-maki* braided hilt.

Yukihiro died on May 27, 1683 and no less than six generations of *Yukihiro* followed in their master's footsteps. *Yukihiro* is ranked as *jô-saku* - a superior swordsmith - and is one of the most celebrated smiths in the *Hizen* arsenal of Japanese swords.



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



Location: *Hizen* (resident of Saga)

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

Clan name: *Fujiwara*

Swordsmith: *Yukihiro* (first generation)

ubu-nakago (original, unaltered tang)

sujikai-yasurime (diagonal file marks)



(reverse)

06202406

No 1022890



鑑定書

一 刀 銘 一 肥前国出羽守藤原行広

長二尺三寸

右は當協會に於て審査の結果特別保存刀剣と
鑑定しこれを証する

令和六年八月二十三日

公益財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協會



東京都 教育委員会
第 327073 号
令和5年9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 6th year of Reiwa (2024), February 23rd

One, Katana

Mei (signature)

Ichi Hizen no Kuni Dewa no Kami Fujiwara Yukihira

Nagasa (length)

2-shaku 3-sun (69.7cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai
(NBTHK)



肥前國出羽守藤原行廣

Hizen no Kuni Dewa no Kami Fujiwara Yukihiro

Dewa no Kami Fujiwara Yukihiro from Hizen Province

初代

Shodai

1st generation

刃長二尺三寸三分

Hachô 2-shaku 3-sun 3-bu

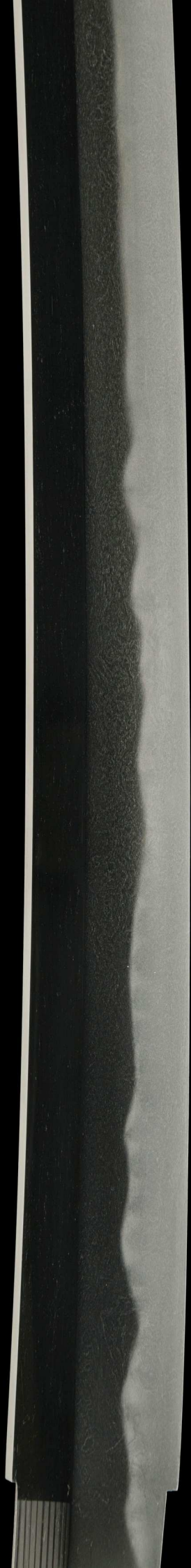
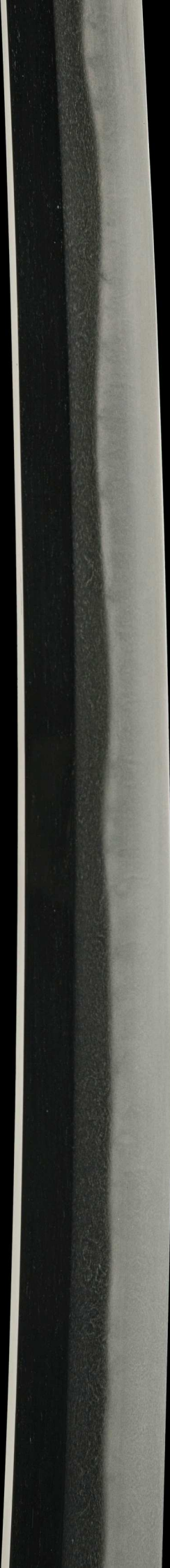
Blade length ~70.0cm

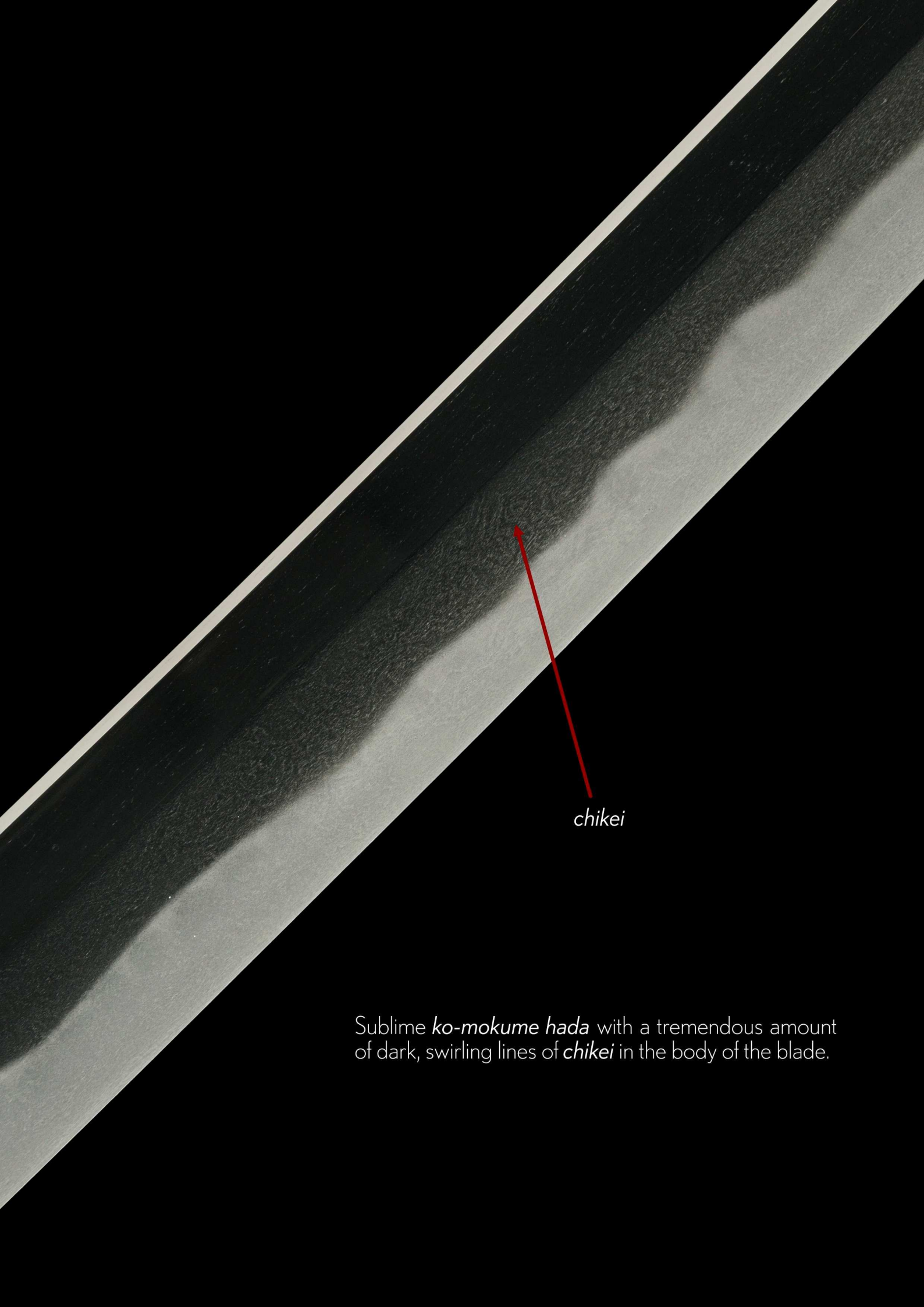
反り五分五厘

Sori 5-bu 5-rin

Curvature ~1.6cm







chikei


Sublime *ko-mokume hada* with a tremendous amount of dark, swirling lines of *chikei* in the body of the blade.

A magnificent long black line of *kinsuji* (*nie* crystals) channels through the *yokote* (the dividing line between the *kissaki* tip and the blade) and well into the *bôshi*.





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

The image shows two blades of a sword, likely a katana, set against a dark background. The blades are positioned diagonally, with the top blade pointing towards the upper right and the bottom blade pointing towards the lower right. Both blades exhibit a unique pattern of circular dots, known as 'horsefly eyes' or 'abu nomefu', which are embedded in the metal. The lighting highlights the texture of the metal and the sharp edges of the blades. Two red lines originate from the text 'abu nomefu or 'horsefly eyes'' and point to the specific areas on the blades where the pattern is visible.

abu nomefu or 'horsefly eyes'

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

(signed tachi side of the blade)

A close-up photograph of a sword blade, showing the hamon pattern. The blade is dark, and the hamon is a lighter, serrated line. The serrations are long and thin, resembling icicles. The blade is curved, and the hamon follows the curve. A red line points from the text to the hamon.

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

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

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

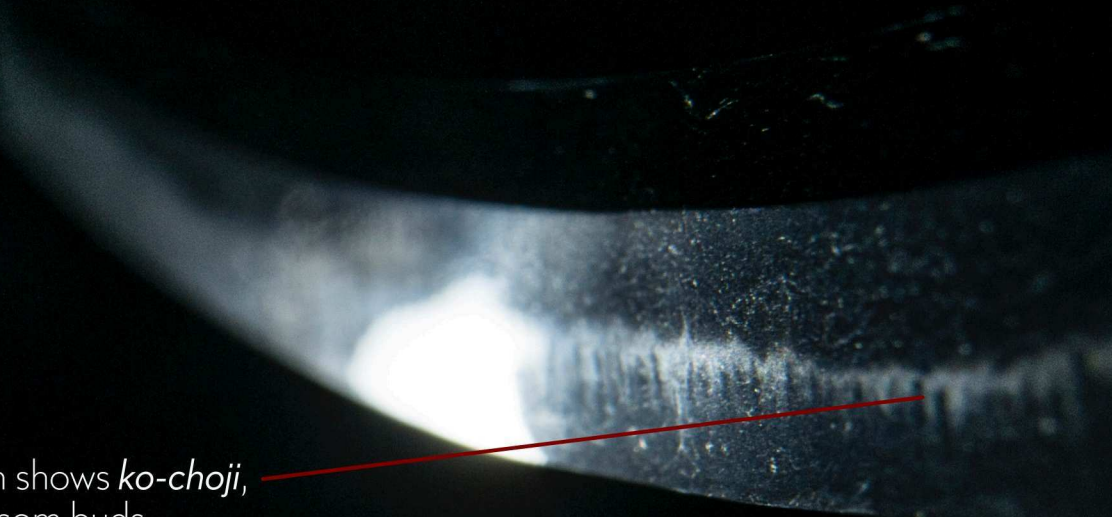
(unsigned ura side of the blade)



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



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



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



Pac-Man fever in the 17th century?





Shirasaya
(protective scabbard)



gold *habaki* with
horizontal file marks

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

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

Crafted during the
Modern period



NTHK-NPO Kanteisho
Certificate of Authenticity

Raden fuemaki

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

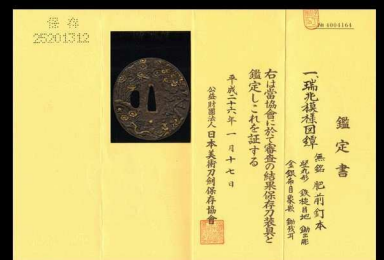


The mother-of-pearl inlay sparkle like twinkling stars. This exemplary lacquerwork is finished to the highest degree of crafting skill.



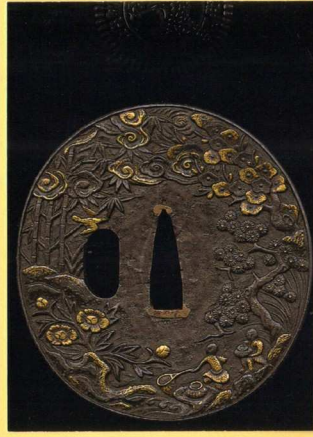
This is a beautiful polished iron tsuba with attractive depictions of flowers, birds, bamboo and clouds in silver and gold inlay. The motif itself is said to bring good fortune.

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



NBTHK Hozon
Certificate of Authenticity

保 存
25201312



No 4004164

鑑 定 書

一 瑞兆模様 圓鐔

無銘 肥前釘本

堅丸形 鉄槌目地 鋤出彫

金銀布目象嵌 鋤残耳

右は當協會に於て審査の結果保存刀装具と
鑑定しこれを証する

平成二十六年一月十七日

公益財団法人 日本美術刀剣保存協會



NBTHK Hozon
Certificate of Designation

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

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

One, Tsuba

Motif of zuichô-moyô (lucky motifs)

*Mumei (unsigned)
Hizen Kugimoto school*

*Elongated round shape, hammered iron, relief carved from ground plate,
superficial gold and silver inlay, rim left raised after carving*

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai
(NBTHK)



(reverse)



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

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





Kashira (pommel)

Shisa lion with peonies



Koshirae bag.



ITEM# UJWA252

A SHODAI MASAHIRO WAKIZASHI

SIGNED & DATED, SHINTÔ PERIOD (KAN'EI ERA: AUGUST 1643)

Swordsmith:	<i>Hizen no Kuni Kawachi Daijô Fujiwara Masahiro (shodai, first generation)</i>
Measurements:	Length: 45.7cm (<i>ubu</i>) Curvature: 1.2cm Motohaba: 2.7cm
Jihada:	<i>Ko-mokume leading to Hizen konuka-hada, thick nie-deki and ji-nie</i>
Hamon:	<i>Gorgeous gunome chôji-midare with excellent kinsuji, sunagashi</i>
Certificate #1:	NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon (<i>Especially Worthy of Preservation</i>)
Certificate #2:	Yûryô Naru Saku Nari (<i>rated Excellent Work by Fujishiro Matsuo</i>)
Fujishiro:	Jô-saku (<i>a superior swordsmith</i>)
Authentication:	Sayagaki by Nozomi-san (<i>shodô artist</i>)
Sharpness:	Wazamonô (<i>rated as a maker of sharp swords</i>)
Included:	Shirasaya, stand, kit, booklet, printed description

SOLD

Maestro *Hizen* swordsmith **Kawachi Masahiro** was born *Sadenjiro* in 1607 and died at only 59 in 1665. He is the son of *Yoshinobu* who was the adopted son of the great first generation *shodai Tadayoshi*. This beautiful wakizashi is a wonderful reference piece as it has been dated to August of 1643, when Masahiro was 36 years old. It is classic Masahiro in every way with a gorgeous *gunome-chôji-midare hamon* with dramatic *tani* (valleys) and plenty of *hataraki* to enjoy such as *kinsuji*, *sunagashi* and *tobiyaki*. Comes with rare certificate of authenticity by *Fujishiro Matsuo*. Enjoy in *shirasaya* or consider building a custom *koshirae* or even *daishô koshirae* with a well-suited katana.



Saki-kasane: 4.8mm

Kissaki: 3.00cm

Saki-haba: 1.91cm

Moto-kasane: 5.7mm

Nagasa: 45.7cm

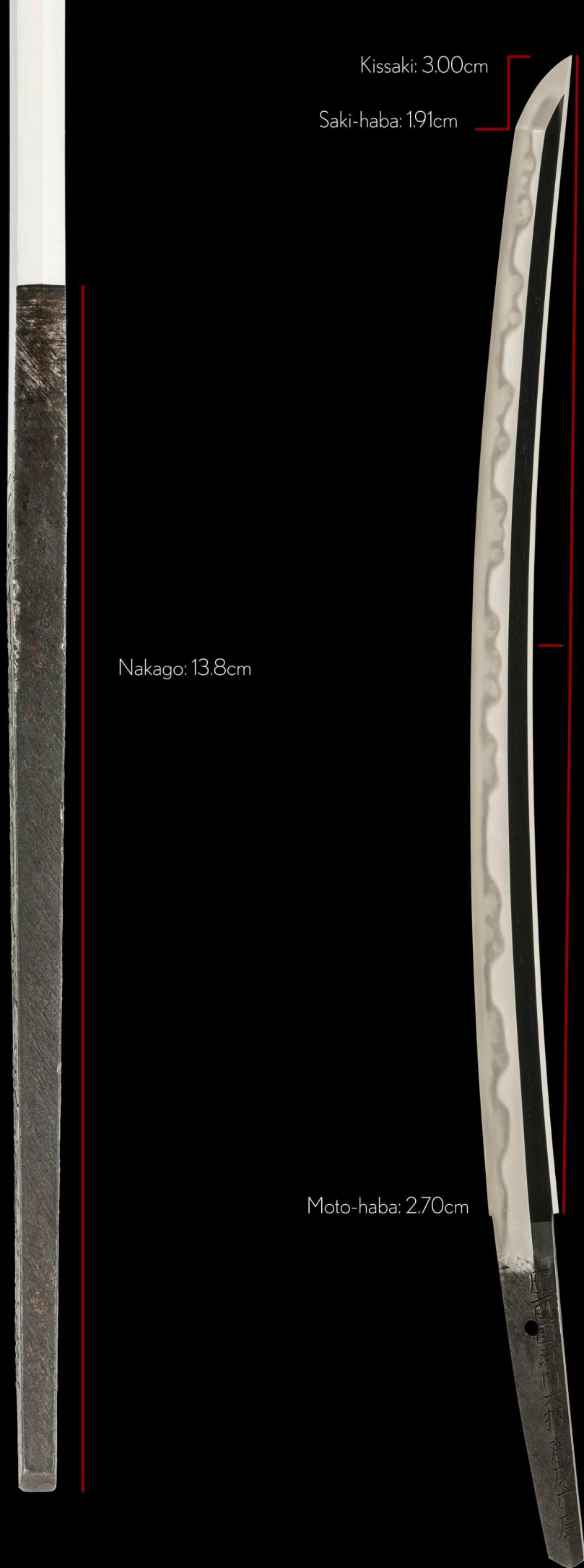
Nakago: 13.8cm

Sori: 1.20cm

Omosa: 440g

Moto-haba: 2.70cm

Mekugi-ana: 1



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

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

A magnificent *gunome-choji-midare hamon* over a tightly forged *konuka-hada* captures the heart and imagination. This is a classic wakizashi that is dated during the early Edo period to August 1643 making it an excellent reference piece.



Location: *Hizen Province*

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

Family name: *Fujiwara*

Swordsmith: *Masahiro* (first generation)

ubu-nakago (original, unaltered tang)

sujikai-yasurime (diagonal file marks)



肥 (Hi)

前 (zen, no)

國 (kuni)

河 (Kawa)

内 (chi)

大 (Dai)

掾 (jô)

藤 (Fuji)

原 (wara)

正 (Masa)

廣 (hiro)

Kan'ei nijûnen hachigatsu kichijitsu

Blade is dated to a lucky day in the eighth month
in the 20th year of *Kan'ei* era (August 1643)

(Kan) 寛
(ei) 永
(nijû) 廿
(nen) 年
(hachi) 八
(gatsu) 月
(kichi) 吉
(jitsu) 日





Dated works of *shodai Masahiro* are not often found making this a great reference piece.

Masahiro was 36 when he crafted this wakizashi, about midway through his smithing time span.

03202106

No 1016179



公益財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協会



令和三年八月二十七日

右は當協會に於て審査の結果特別保存刀剣と
鑑定しこれを証する

長一尺五寸一分強

一脇指 銘 肥前国河内大掾藤原正広
寛永廿年八月吉日

鑑定書

東京都 教育委員会
第 323367 号
令和3年5月11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), August 27th

One, Wakizashi

Mei (signature)

Hizen no Kuni Kawachi Daijō Fujiwara Masahiro
Kan'ei nijūnen hachigatsu kichijitsu
(Dated 8th month in 20th year of Kan'ei era, August 1643)

Nagasa (length)

1-shaku 5-sun 1-bu kyō (45.7cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai
(NBTHK)



Yûryô Naru Saku Nari Certificate of Designation

A sword designated as *Excellent Work*

Issued in the 7th year of Heisei (1995), December 25th

One, Wakizashi

Mei (signature)

Hizen no Kuni Kawachi Daijô Fujiwara Masahiro

Kan'ei nijûnen hachigatsu kichijitsu

(Dated 8th month in 20th year of Kan'ei era, August 1643)

Nagasa (length)

1-shaku 5-sun 1-bu 3-rin (45.7cm)

Signed with stamped by
Fujishiro Matsuo



肥前国河内大掾藤原正広

肥前国河内大掾藤原正広
Hizen no Kuni Kawachi Daijô Fujiwara Masahiro
Kawachi Daijô Fujiwara Masahiro from Hizen Province

寛永廿年八月吉日

寛永廿年八月吉日
Kan'ei nijûnen hachigatsu kichijitsu
On a lucky day in the eighth month of Kan'ei 20 (1643)

刃長壹尺五寸一分強有之

刃長壹尺五寸一分強有之
Hachô 1-shaku 5-sun 1-bu kyô kore ari
Blade length 45.7 cm

令和六甲辰年
臯月吉日誌之

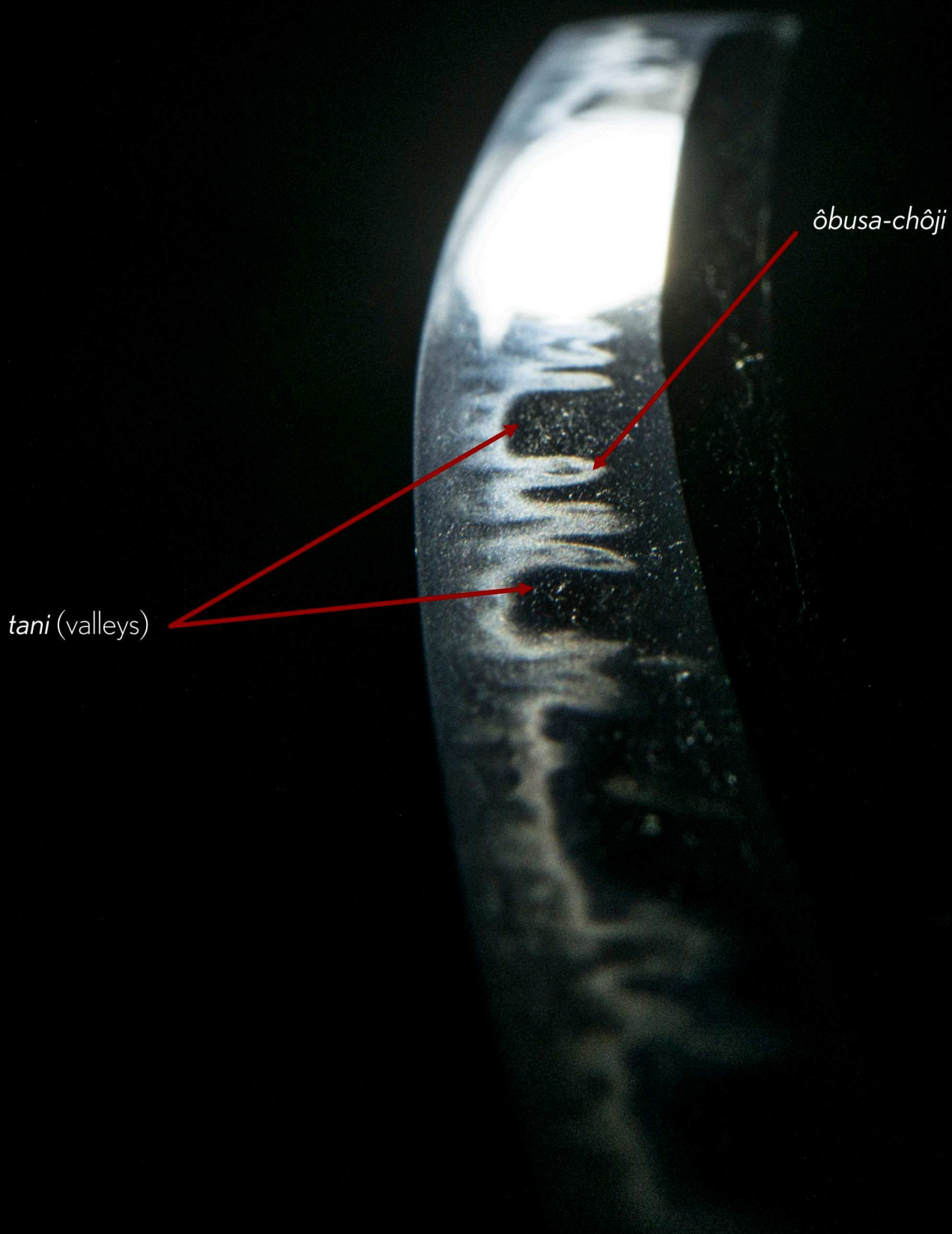
令和六甲辰年臯月吉日誌之
Reiwa roku kinoe-tatsudoshi Satsuki kichijitsu kore o shirusu
Written on a lucky day in May of Reiwa 6, the year of the dragon (2024)





A bright, booming *gunome-chôji midare hamon* dramatic valleys called *tani*.

Clusters of long tasselled *chôji* reminiscent of the *Fukuoka-Ichimonji* school also feature prominently.



tani (valleys)

ôbusa-chôji

Tama, a jewel-like ball forms a spot of *tobiyaki*.



Long spectacular *nie* lines of *kinsuji* rip through the hamon.

kinsuji





The sheer quality of this wakizashi shines through.

Enjoy this sword in shirasaya, or consider creating a custom koshirae which Unique Japan can assist you with.



Shirasaya
(protective scabbard)



gold wrapped *niju-habaki*
with crisp file marks

ARIGATO!

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Nelson and his karate sensei, Ozel Osman

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