



ITEM# UJDI001

AOE SADATSUGU / KASHU NAGATSUGU DAISHO LATE KAMAKURA PERIOD & EARLY EDO PERIOD

KATANA (DAI)

Swordsmith: *Den Bitchu, Aoe SADATSUGU (unsigned, attribution)*
Period: Kamakura, early Genko era (1331-1333)
Location: Bitchu province (Okayama prefecture)
Measurements: **Length:** 66.8cm (o-suriage) **Curvature:** 1.3cm
Certificate: **NTHK-NPO Kanteisho** (a sword designated as Important by the Non-Profit Japanese Sword Appraisal Association)

WAKIZASHI (SHO)

Swordsmith: *Kashu ju Fujiwara NAGA [TSUGU] (largely signed)*
Period: Jokyo era (1684-1688)
Location: Kashu province (Kaga prefecture)
Measurements: **Length:** 49.8cm (suriage) **Curvature:** 1.2cm
Certificate: **NTHK-NPO Kanteisho** (a sword designated as Important by the Non-Profit Japanese Sword Appraisal Association)

Certificate 3,4,5: **NTHK-NPO Kanteisho** (a daisho koshirae, daisho fuchi-kashira and daisho tsuba all designated as Important by the Non-Profit Japanese Sword Appraisal Association)

SOLD

The NTHK-NPO Kanteisho certificate attributes the katana to [second generation] *Chu-Aoe School [Osumi Gonnosuke] Sadatsugu* from the early *Genko era* (1331-1333) in the late Kamakura period.

Gonnosuke is credited with *Jojo-saku* status by *Fujishiro* (a highly superior swordsmith) and produced good sharp swords with a sharpness rank of *Ryo-Wazamono*.

The Aoe School has long had a reputation for quality sword making since the 1200s. Several pieces from the Aoe School have achieved prestigious NBTHK Juyo Token certification and are extremely valuable. The school can be divided in the *Ko-Aoe* (late Heian period to mid-Kamakura) *Chu-Aoe* (late Kamakura to Nambokucho) and *Sue-Aoe* (Muromachi period).

Swords from the early Koto-period have a definitive look and feel - very different to swords from the Edo period post 1600. The steel, the balance, the overall energy-level is unique.

Many scholars such as *WM Hawley* believe that it came down to the quality of the sand iron found in stream beds where the grinding action of rocks for countless ages had reduced the ore to almost pure iron. This was considered the best material for swords and the Bizen area was famous for such raw material.

One aspect in Koto-period swords made in the Bizen area is the presence of *utsuri* (a shadow-like reflection) above the *hamon* (temper line). The katana is blessed with such *midare utsuri* running along the attractive *tsumari itame-hada* (tight wood grain steel pattern).

As with the majority Aoe School swords the *hamon* of the katana is based on *suguha* (straight temper line) with an added dimension of *ko-midare* (small undulations) and *ko-ashi* (small legs) extending out to the cutting edge. There is an air of elegance to admire in the sword.

The wakizashi is was crafted and signed during the Shinto period, in approximately 1684. Swordsmith *Nagatsugu* was from *Kaga province*, which was the richest domain after the Tokugawa family in all of Japan. *Nagatsugu* was clearly inspired by Koto-period forging techniques and it shows in the *hataraki* (activity) of the steel.

Both swords share a general commonality in their appearance, which gives the two swords sense of visual unity. It's no accident why these swords were paired up with one another.



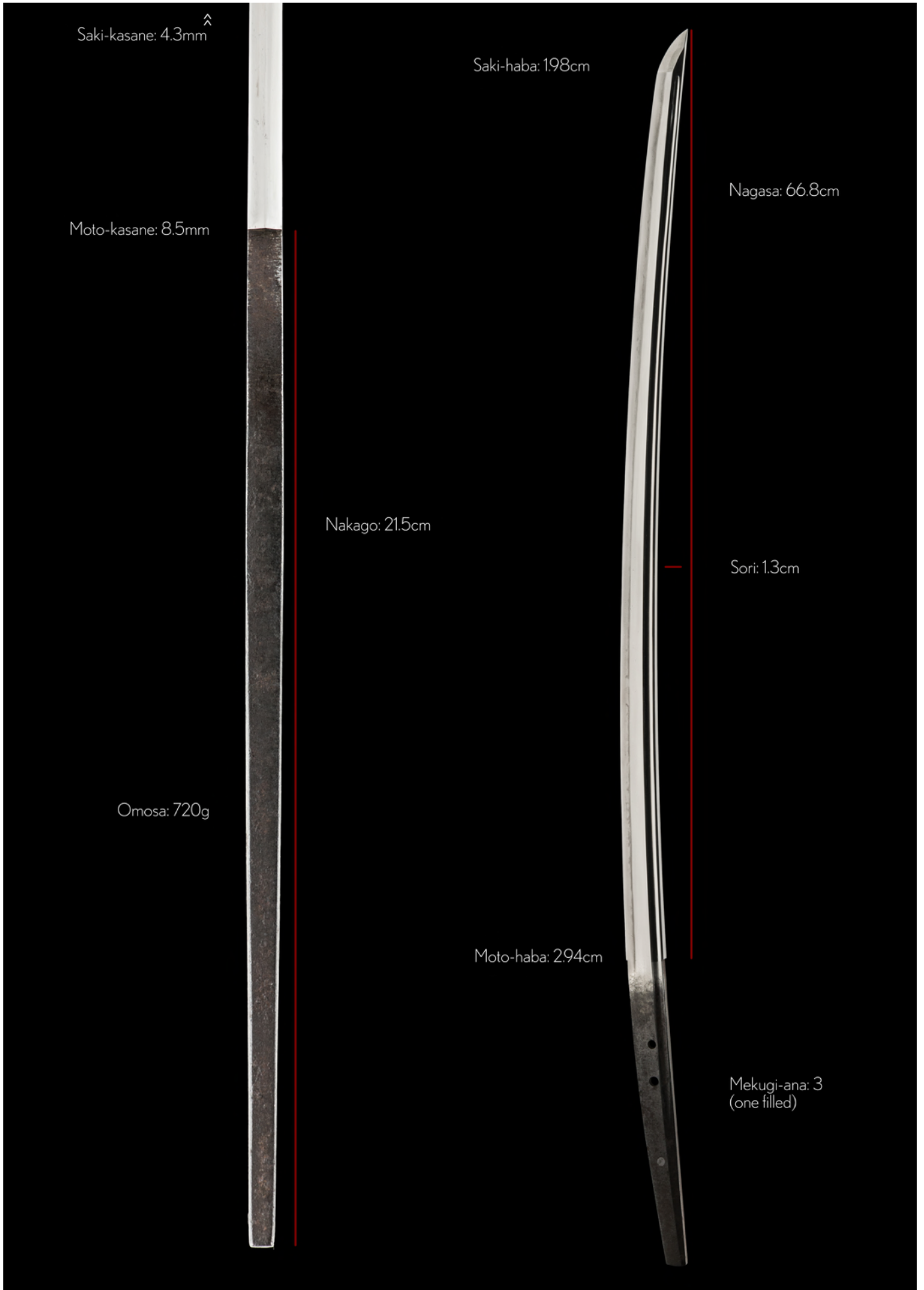
Samurai with Daisho

An exquisite set of matching fittings forms the *daisho*. From snarling dragons on the *tsubas*, to beautiful falling snowflakes under the night sky wrapping the *fuchi-kashiras*, and protective *shisa lions* on the *menuki*, *kozuka* (utility knife) and *kogai* (hair pick) - everything works in splendid harmony. The gold trim on the *tsubas* is a particularly smart touch.

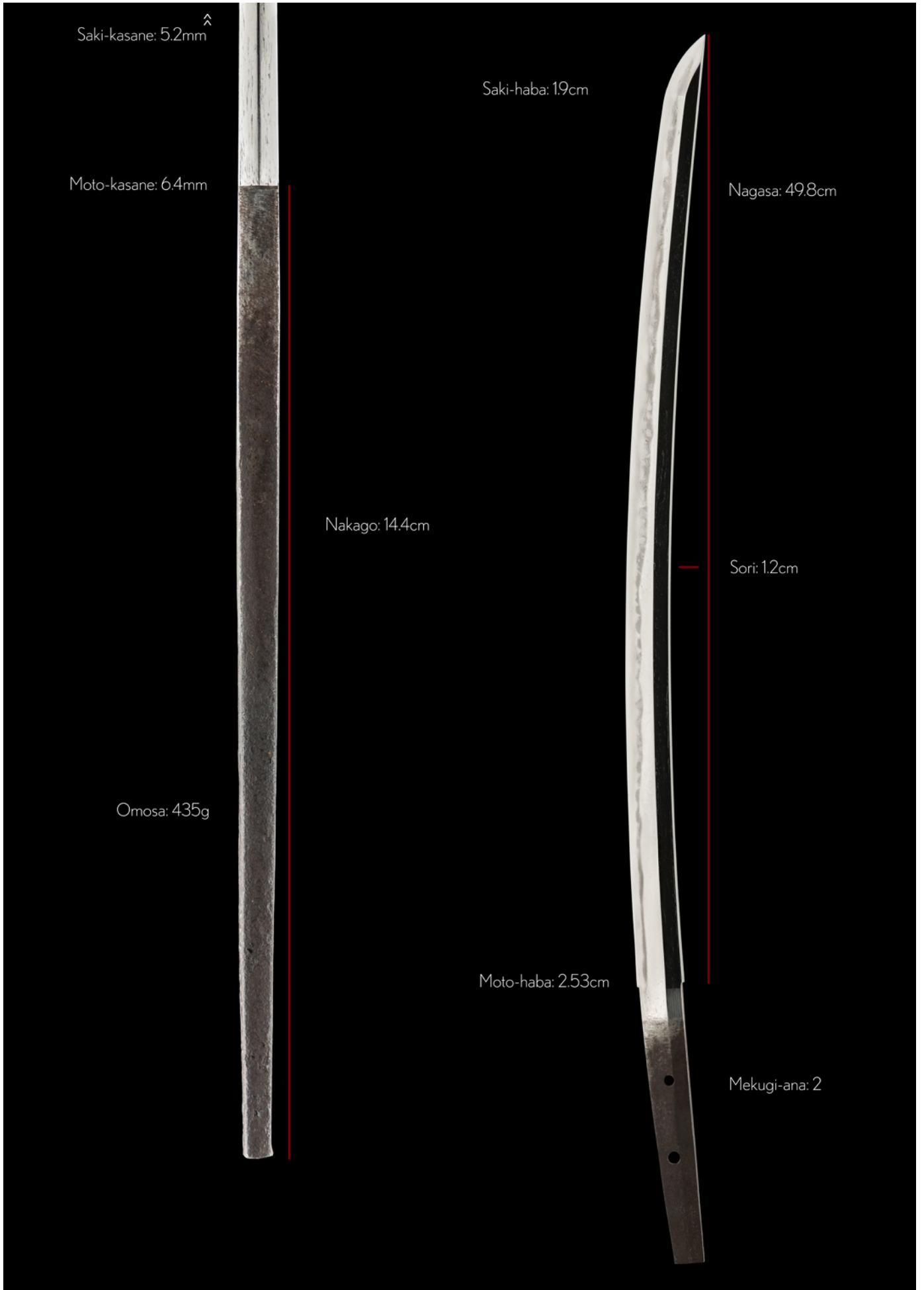
On display, these swords look absolutely incredible...

Along with the two certificates of authenticity for the swords, three additional certificates for the *daisho tsubas* (guards), the *daisho fuchi-kashira* (collar/pommel) and the *daisho koshirae* will accompany the lot.

Photos and information follow. Please inquire for further details.











A *suriage* (shortened) *nakago* with most of the signature still in tact.

A sword crafted by *Nagatsugu* of the *Fujiwara* clan, while living in *Kashu province* (Kaga prefecture).

Circa *Jokyo era*, (1684-1688)

Ka
shu
Ju
Fuji
wara
Naga (cut off)

Utsuri

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

The type of *utsuri* is called *midare-utsuri* - meandering the length of the Sadatsugu katana, hugging the *mune* (spine).




ko-ashi

Hamon

Oscillating along a thick *suguha* (straight temper line), this wonderfully complex hamon features *ko-ashi* (tiny legs) extending towards the blade's edge.

Dai: (Sadatsugu Katana)

Ko-ashi is a characteristic found on many well-crafted Koto period, pre-1600 swords.



Ashi are "legs" - thin lines of *nioi* crystals (very fine crystals that resemble the Milky Way) that extend from the *hamon* to the cutting edge.

Ashi serve the purpose of limiting the size of lateral cracks at the edge of the blade should damage occur.

Ko-ashi are literally small legs.

Hamon

An active *gunome midare*
(irregular wavy temper line)
that "points" towards the back
of the blade.

Note the lovely *sunagashi*
(brushed sand) within the
hamon.



Sho: (Nagatsugu Wakizashi)

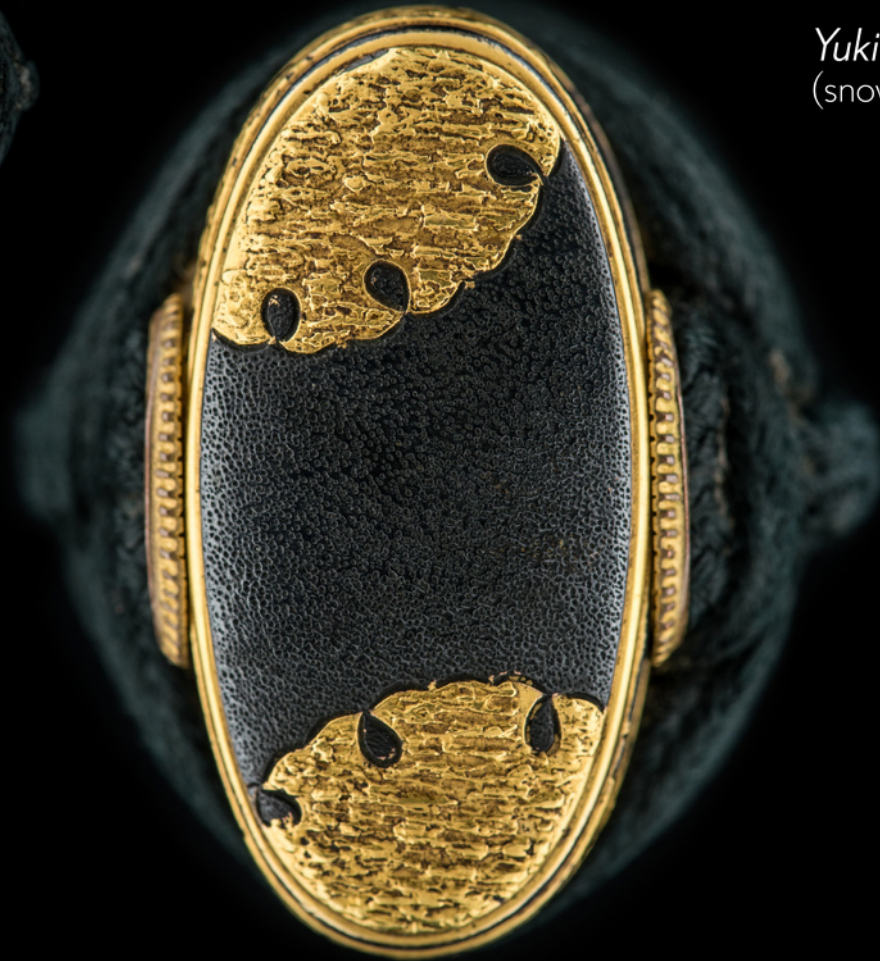
Matching Shirasaya



Matching Habaki







Yuki
(snowflakes)

Snowflakes

Handsome *kamon* (crests) depicting snowflakes falling in moonlight adorn the *fuchi-kashira*. A daisho certificate of authenticity to *Sendai Kiyosada* accompanies.

During the late Edo period Japanese *daimyo* (feudal lord) *Doi Toshitsura* (1789-1848), the 4th Daimyo of Koga Domain, started observing snowflakes as his hobby with his own microscope which was imported from Netherlands.

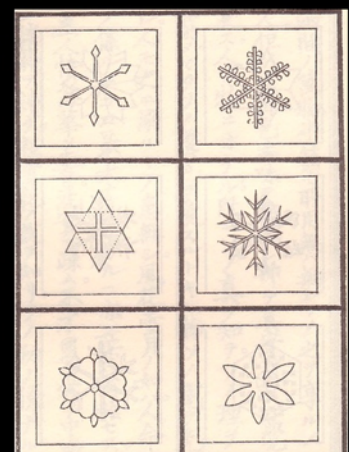
It was certainly a frigid past-time, as Toshitsura needed to work in -10C to -15C for the flakes to hold their shapes!

In 1832, he published 183 of his drawings in a book called *Sekka Zusetsu* (A Pictorial Explanation of Snowflakes).

This book launched a huge fashion trend for snowflake designs in artwork and clothing of all kinds.



Sekka Zusetsu





Daisho Dragon Tsuba

Attributed to *Den Hizen, Jakushi*
Mid-Edo Period (1700s)

NTHK-NPO Kanteisho Certificate



Bonji
(Protection)





Kogai (hair pick)



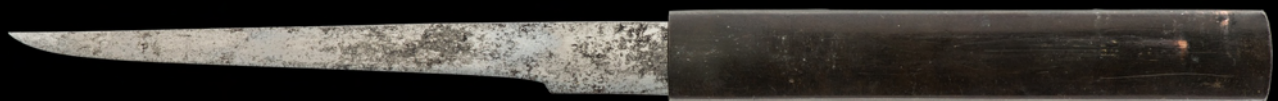
Shisa Lions

Shisa lions have their roots in Okinawan mythology. Often in pairs, resembling a cross between a lion and a dog, shisa are wards believed to serve as protectors from certain kinds of evil.

Shisa are placed on rooftops or flanking the gates of homes, shrines and temples. When in pairs, the left shisa traditionally has a closed mouth, the right one an open mouth. The open mouth wards off evil spirits, while the closed mouth as depicted keeps good spirits in.



Kozuka (utility knife)



"There is no fire like passion."

- Gautama Buddha





Matsuba
Motoyuki
Daisho