



ITEM# UJDI013

A TADAYOSHI/TADAHIRO DAISHÔ

SIGNED, SHINTÔ PERIOD (KEIAN: 1648~1652 & GENROKU: 1688~1704)

- Swordsmith (k):** *Hizen no Kuni jû nin Tadayoshi (4th gen, Hizen province)*
Swordsmith: (w): *Hizen no Kuni jû Fujiwara Tadahiro (2nd gen, Hizen province)*
Measurements (k): **Length:** 70.4cm (*ubu*) **Curvature:** 2.1cm **Moto-haba:** 2.93cm
Measurements (w): **Length:** 40.3cm (*ubu*) **Curvature:** 1.2cm **Moto-haba:** 2.9cm
Jihada: *Vibrant mix of itame-hada and konuka-hada with ji-nie and plentiful chikei*
Hamon: *Spectacular gunome-chôji-midare with kinsuji, sunagashi, ashi in nie-deki*
Certificate #1: **3 x NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon (both swords & daisho koshirae)**
Fujishiro rank: **Jôjo-saku (nidai) & Jô-saku (yondai)**
Sharpness: **Ô-Wazamono (nidai is a maker of extremely sharp swords)**
Authentication: **Sayagaki by Nozomi-san (shodô artist)**
Included: **Shirasaya, daishô-koshirae, fabric bags, stand, kit, printed description**

SOLD

This remarkable *daishô* pairs a katana by fourth generation *Tadayoshi* with a wakizashi by second generation *Tadahiro*, both masters of the renowned *Tadayoshi* school of Hizen province. The blades display graceful curvature, adorned with a vivid *gunome-chôji-midare hamon*, which, on the wakizashi, extends brilliantly towards the *shinogi* line. Outstanding *horimono* also evokes deep spiritual power. An exquisite *daishô koshirae* with a split-lacquer design and an incredible pair of dragonfly *tsubas* along with rain dragon motifs and *cloisonné* enamel is a *samurai* tour de force. Both swords and the *daishô koshirae* have been awarded NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon certification.

^
Saki-kasane: 4.8mm
Moto-kasane: 6.6mm

Kissaki: 3.51cm
Saki-haba: 2.15cm

Nagasa: 70.4cm

Nakago: 22.0cm

Sori: 2.1cm

Omosa: 740g

Moto-haba: 2.93cm

Mekugi-ana: 1





Saki-kasane: 4.7mm

Moto-kasane: 6.2mm

Kissaki: 3.72cm

Saki-haba: 2.02cm

Nagasa: 40.3cm

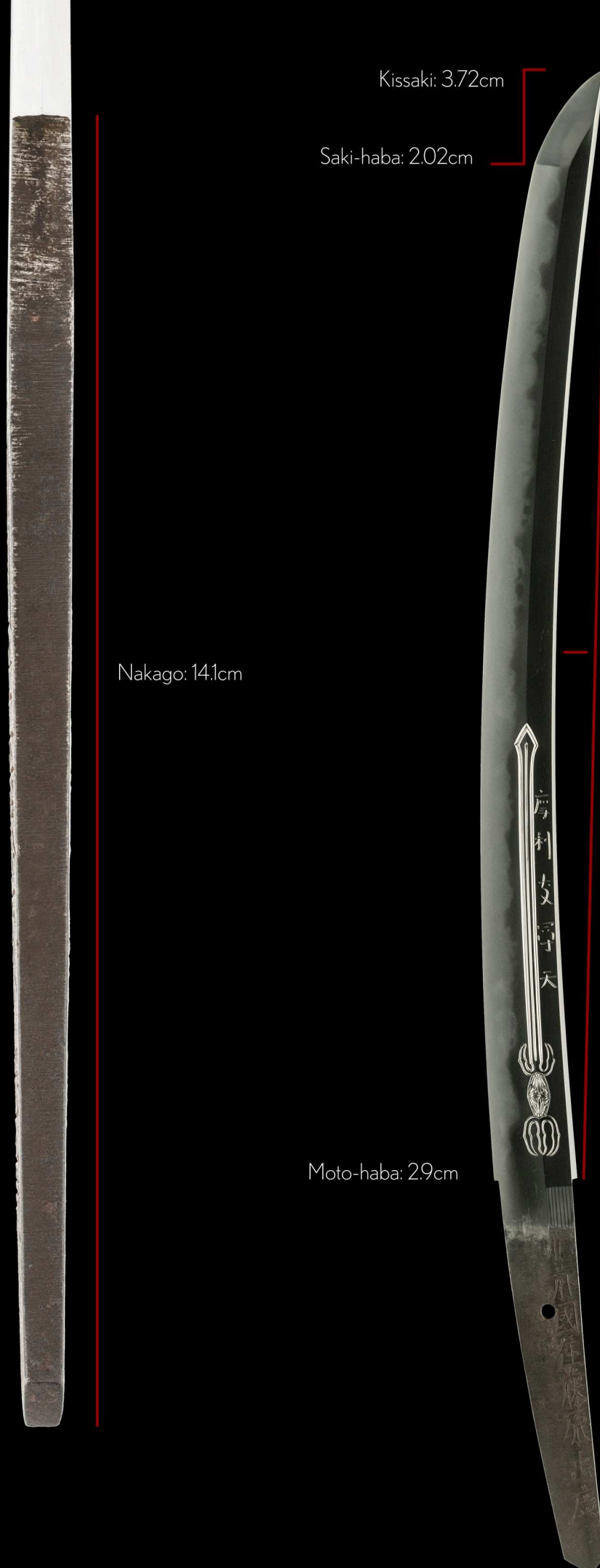
Nakago: 14.1cm

Sori: 1.2cm

Omosa: 405g

Moto-haba: 2.9cm

Mekugi-ana: 1



This remarkable *daishô* pairs a katana by the fourth generation *Tadayoshi* with a wakizashi by the second generation *Tadahiro*, both masters of the renowned *Tadayoshi* school of *Hizen* province in *Kyûshû*. Let us examine the swordsmiths' lineage, followed by a synopsis of the blades and their *daishô koshirae*.

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

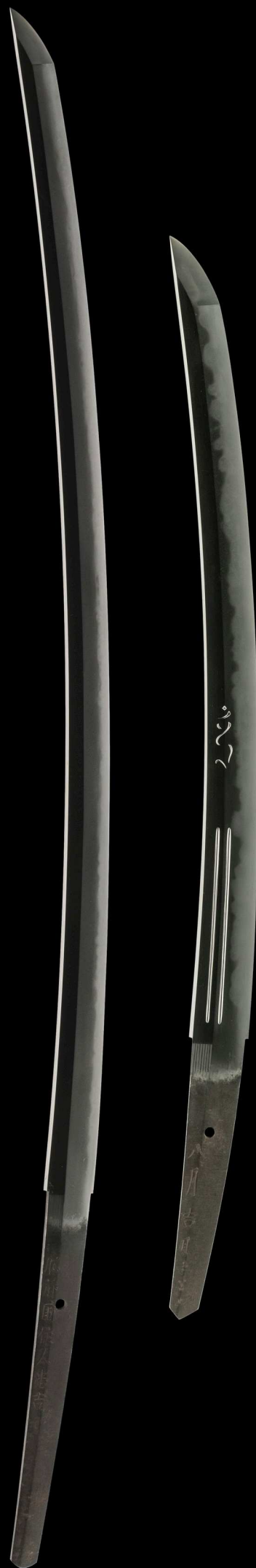
He received the honorary title of *Ômi no Daijô* on March 10, 1700 and after the untimely death of his father (who was just fifty years old), he then trained under his grandfather, *nidai* (second generation) *Tadahiro* for whom he also made *daisaku* (swords made in the name of his master). He *Tadayoshi*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

Born *Hashimoto Heishiro* in 1614, second generation *Tadahiro* began working with his father, maestro *shodai* (first generation) *Tadayoshi* at the tender age of ten. Guided by his father and other great smiths such as *shodai Masahiro* and *Yoshinobu*, *Tadahiro* took over leadership of the school at the age of nineteen when his father died in 1632.

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

The blades display graceful curvature, adorned with a vivid *gunome-chôji-midare hamon* pattern, which, on the wakizashi, extends brilliantly across the *jihada* reaching to the *shinogi* line. Fine *horimono* on the *Tadahiro* wakizashi evokes deep spiritual power.

An exquisite *daishô koshirae* with a unique split-lacquer design and an incredible pair of dragonfly *tsubas* along with rain dragon motifs and cloisonné enamel dotted throughout is a samurai treat for the senses. Both swords AND the *daishô koshirae* have been awarded with NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon certification.



Location: *Hizen province*

Swordsmith: *Tadayoshi* (fourth generation)

ubu-nakago (original, unaltered tang)

kiri-yasurime (horizontal file marks)

(Hi) 肥

(zen, no) 前

(kuni) 國

(jû) 住

(nin) 人

(Tada) 忠

(yoshi) 吉





one smooth hole in *nakago*

(*ura*, reverse)

kuirjiri
(chestnut shaped *nakago-jiri*)

特選
06202406

No 1023114

鑑定書

一刀 銘 肥前国住人忠吉(四代)

長 二尺三寸二分強

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

令和六年八月二十三日

公益財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協會



肥前国住人忠吉

埼玉県 教育委員会
第 4044 号
昭和26年10月5日

NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon
Certificate of Designation

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

Issued in the 6th year of Reiwa (2024), August 23rd

One, Katana

Mei (signature)

Hizen no kuni jûnin Tadayoshi (Yondai)

Nagasa (length)

2-shaku 3-sun 2-bu kyô (70.4 cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai
(NBTHK)

肥前国住人忠吉(四代)

肥前国住人忠吉(四代)

Hizen no kuni jûnin Tadayoshi (yondai)

Tadayoshi, a resident of Hizen province (the 4th generation)

時代元禄頃

時代元禄頃

Jidai Genroku-goro

Around Genroku period (1688~1704)

二代忠廣ト大小ヲ成ス

二代忠廣ト大小ヲ成ス

Nidai Tadahiro to daishô o nasu

Daishô with 2nd generation Tadahiro

刃長貳尺三寸二分強有之

刃長貳尺三寸二分強

Hachô 2-shaku 3-sun 2-bu kyô

Blade length 70.4 cm

令和七乙巳年正月吉日誌之

令和七乙巳年正月吉日誌之

Reiwa nana kinoto-midoshi Shôgatsu kichijitsu kore o shirusu

Written on a lucky day in the first month in the seventh year of

Reiwa era during the Year of the Snake (January 2025)

Location: *Hizen province*

Family name: *Fujiwara*

Swordsmith: *Tadahiro* (second generation)

ubu-nakago (original, unaltered tang)

kiri-yasurime (horizontal file marks)

肥 (Hi)

前 (zen, no)

國 (kuni)

住 (jû)

藤 (Fuji)

原 (wara)

忠 (Tada)

廣 (hiro)



Hachigatsu kichijitsu

Dated on a lucky day in the eighth month

(Hachi) 八

(gatsu) 月

(kichi) 吉

(jitsu) 日

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

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



06202406

No 1023115



公益財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協会



令和六年八月二十三日

右は當協會に於て審査の結果特別保存刀剣と
鑑定しこれを証する

一 脇指 銘 肥前国住藤原忠広(二代)
八月吉日
長一尺三寸三分

鑑定書

埼玉県教育委員会
第 4045 号
昭和26年10月5日

NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon Certificate of Designation

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

Issued in the 6th year of Reiwa (2024), August 23rd

One, Wakizashi

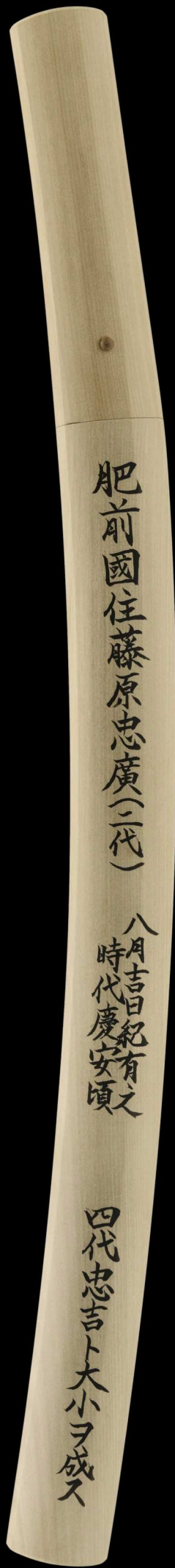
Mei (signature)

Hizen no kuni jû Fujiwara Tadahiro (nidai)
Hachigatsu kichijitsu

Nagasa (length)

1-shaku 3-sun 3-bu (40.3 cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai
(NBTHK)



肥前國住藤原忠廣(二代)

Hizen no kuni jû Fujiwara Tadahiro (nidai)

Fujiwara Tadahiro, a resident of Hizen province
(2nd generation)

八月吉日紀有之

時代慶安頃

Hachigatsu kichijitsu ki kore ari jidai Keian goro

Dated on a lucky day in the eighth month, around Keian
period (1648~1652)

四代忠吉ト大小ヲ成ス

Yondai Tadayoshi to daishô o nasu

Daishô with 4th generation Tadayoshi

刃長壹尺參寸三分有之

Hachô 1-shaku 3-sun 3-bu kore ari

Blade length 40.3 cm

令和七乙巳年正月吉日誌之

*Reiwa nana kinoto-midoshi Shôgatsu kichijitsu kore o
shirusu*

Written on a lucky day in the first month in the seventh
year of Reiwa era during the Year of the Snake
(January 2025)

肥前國住藤原忠廣(二代)

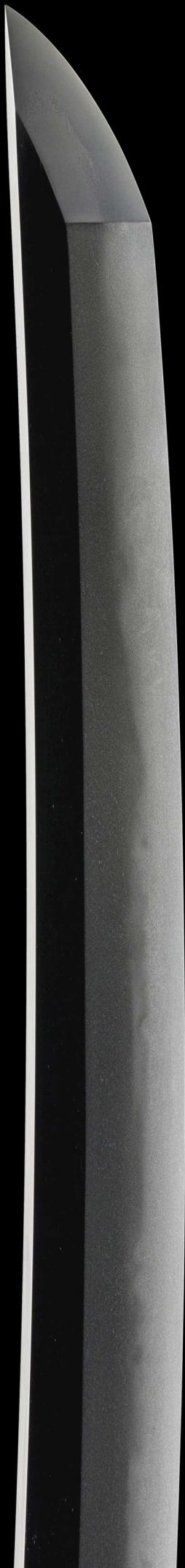
八月吉日紀有之
時代慶安頃

四代忠吉ト大小ヲ成ス

刃長壹尺參寸三分有之

令和七乙巳年
正月吉日誌之







hada-ware

An opening in the jihada that follows a fold, a flaw, but it's stable.

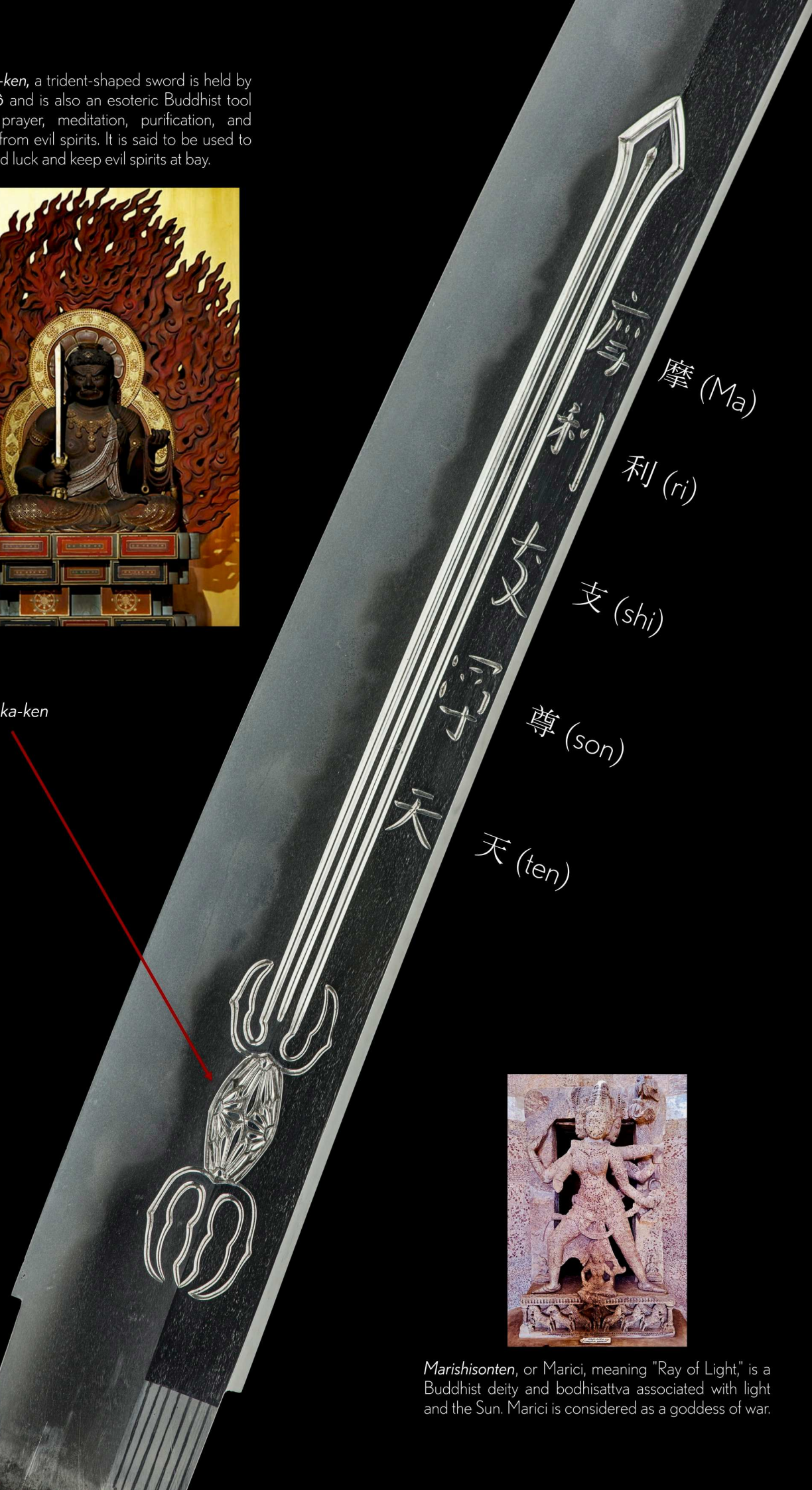


摩利支天

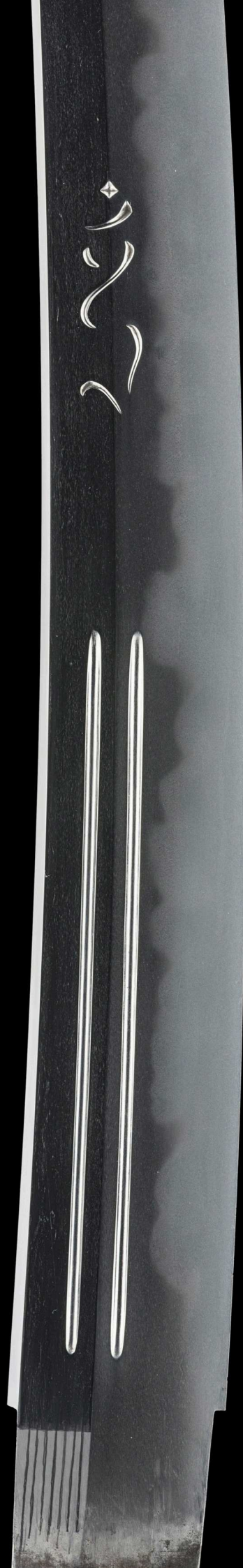
Sankozuka-ken, a trident-shaped sword is held by *Fudō Myōō* and is also an esoteric Buddhist tool used for prayer, meditation, purification, and protection from evil spirits. It is said to be used to ward off bad luck and keep evil spirits at bay.



Sankozuka-ken



Marishisonten, or *Marici*, meaning "Ray of Light," is a Buddhist deity and bodhisattva associated with light and the Sun. *Marici* is considered as a goddess of war.



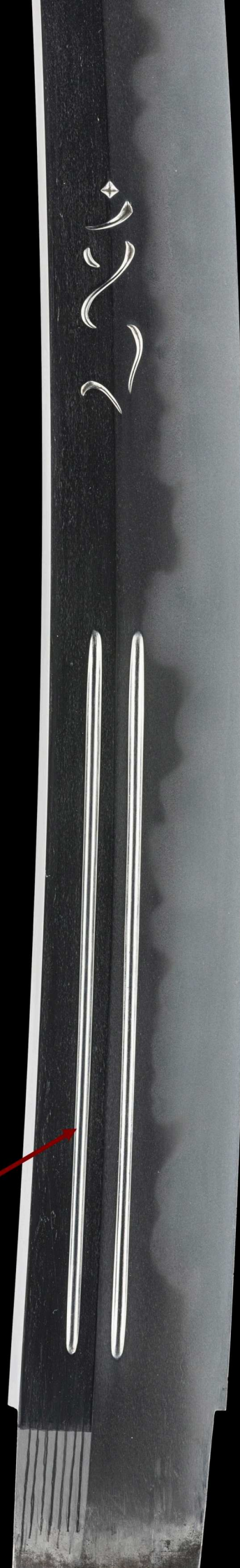


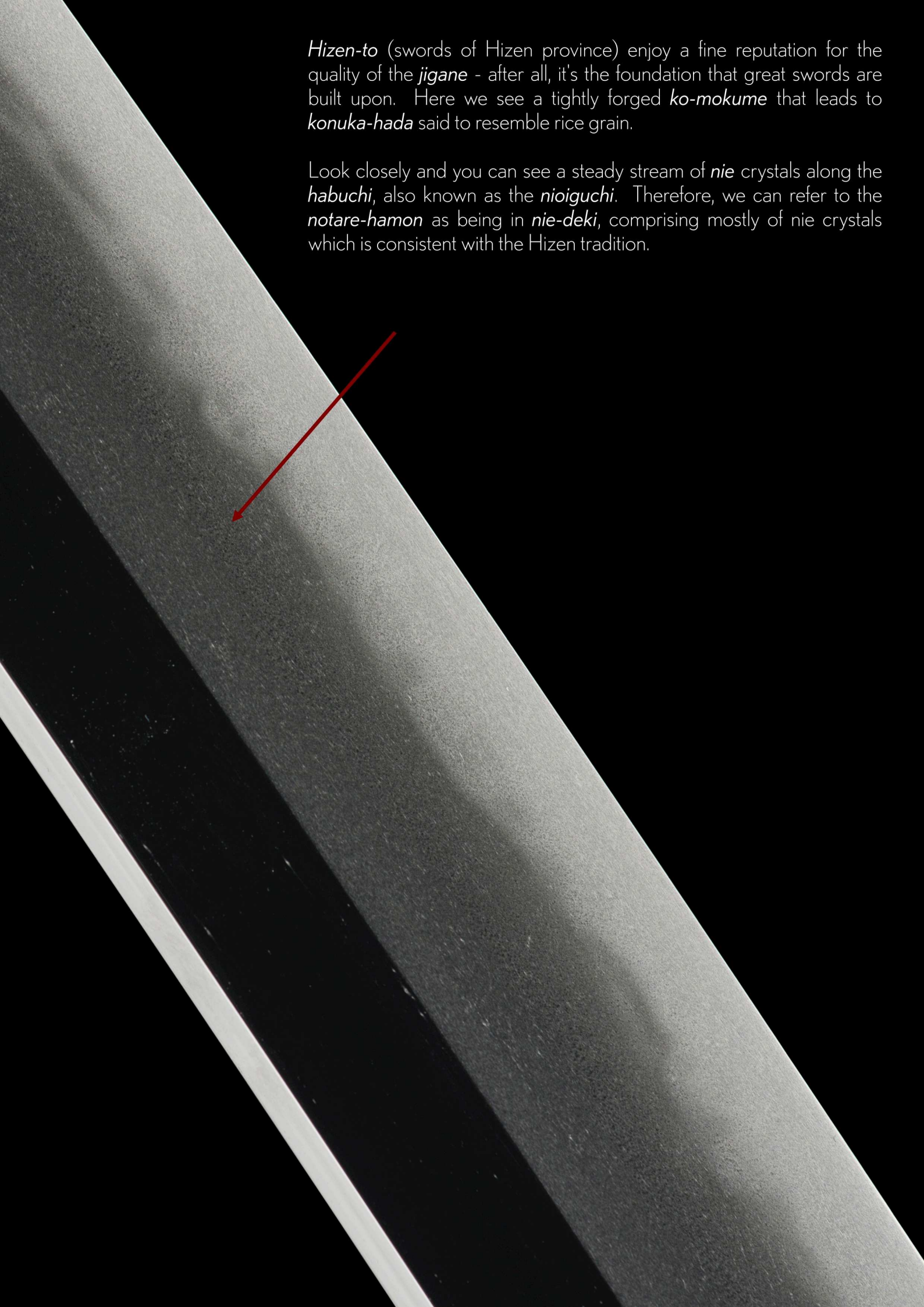
This *bonji* symbolizes *Gundari Myôô* - a Buddhist wisdom king who is often depicted with three eyes and flame-like hair (à la 80s fashion!).

Of his eight arms, two are crossed on his chest in a *mudra*; the rest hold implements of war and of Buddhist devotion. His headdress is adorned with a human skull, sometimes multiple, while his armlets, anklets, and occasionally other decorum take the form of snakes.



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



A close-up photograph of a sword blade, showing a diagonal line of fine, shimmering crystals (nie) along the edge. A red arrow points to this line. The blade is dark and has a textured surface. The background is black.

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.

Look closely and you can see a steady stream of *nie* crystals along the *habuchi*, also known as the *nioiguchi*. Therefore, we can refer to the *notare-hamon* as being in *nie-deki*, comprising mostly of nie crystals which is consistent with the Hizen tradition.



A close-up photograph of the tip of a katana blade. The blade is dark and has a sharp, curved edge. A red arrow points to a small, roundish turn back at the tip, which is a komaru-kaeri boshi. The blade has a brushed texture, known as hakikake, and a late-starting edge, known as tsukiage. The background is black.

katana

A *komaru-kaeri boshi* (a small roundish turn back) with rather *tsukiage* (late-starting). Plenty of *nie-deki*.

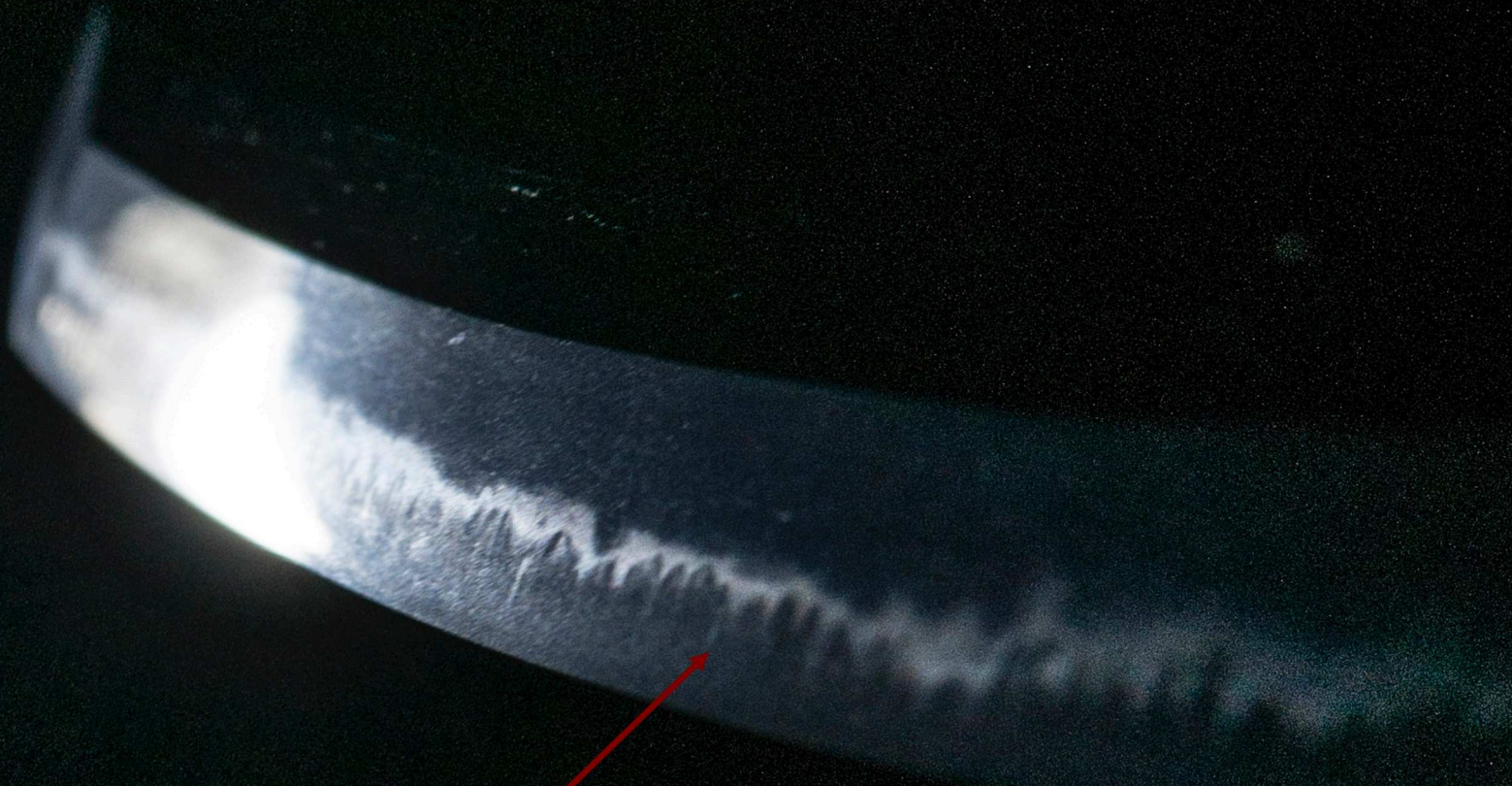
Wakizashi is in *hakikake* (brushed) form, also in *nie-deki*.



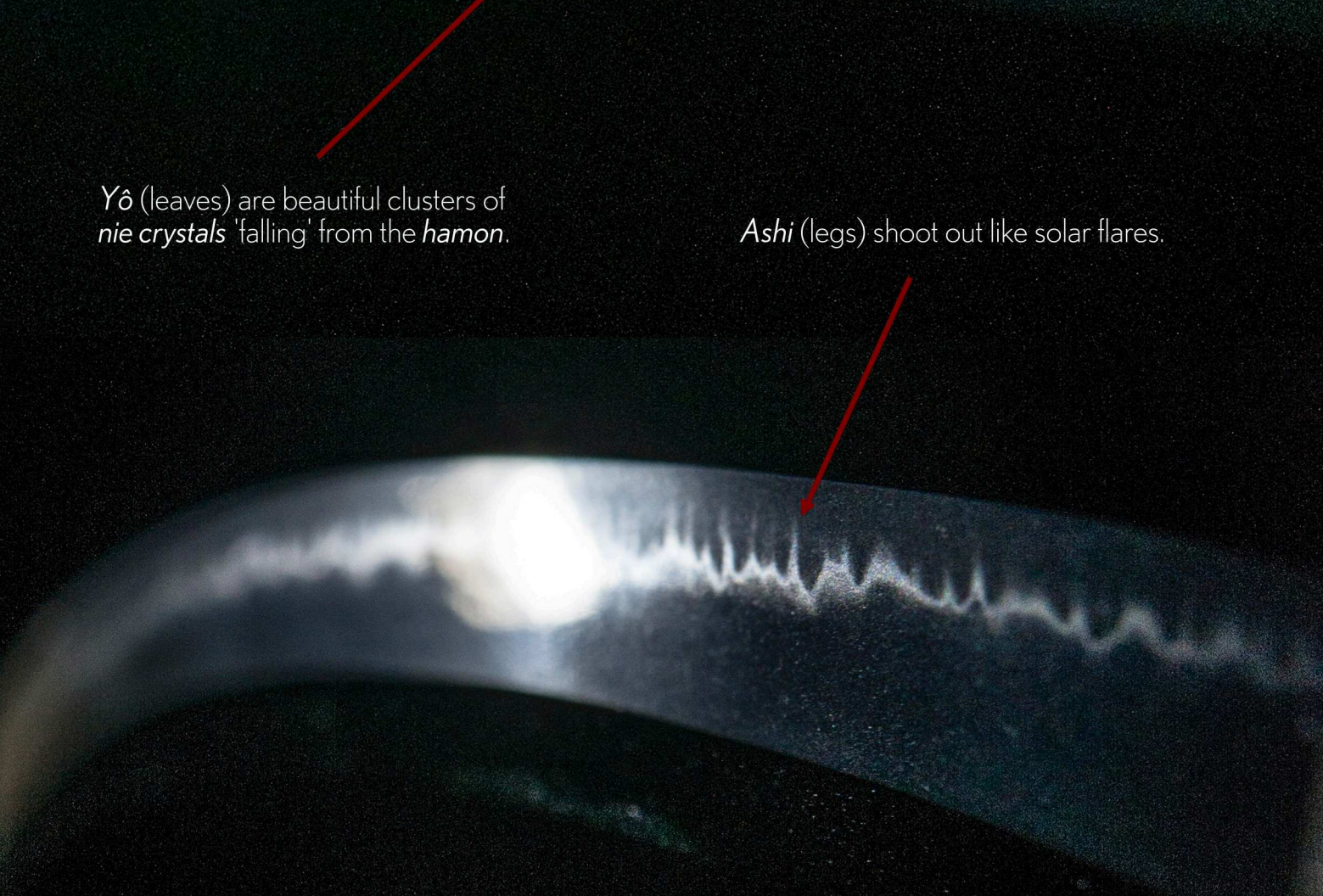
A photograph of a wakizashi blade. The blade is dark and has a curved edge. It is shown in a brushed form, known as hakikake, and has a late-starting edge, known as tsukiage. The background is black.

wakizashi

A bright *gunome-chôji hamon*, resembling clove blossom buds cascades the length of the blade in style.



Yô (leaves) are beautiful clusters of *nie crystals* 'falling' from the *hamon*.



Ashi (legs) shoot out like solar flares.



The hamon flows beautifully with
the elegant curvature of the katana.



A spectacular *gunome-chôji-midare hamon* with streams of *sunagashi*.

An impressive golden line of *kinsuji* rips through the hamon



The *hamon* stretches the width of the blade, kissing the *shinogi* line in places.



A higher power.





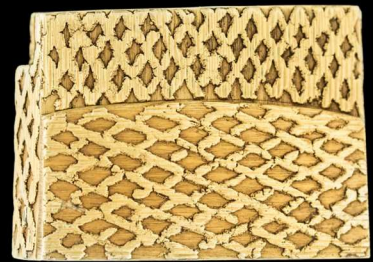
Shirasaya
(protective scabbard)



gold *nijû-habaki* with
botan-yasuri (peony) file marks



Shirasaya
(protective scabbard)



gold *nijû-habaki* with
diamond-shaped pattern

*Kuro-ishime hana-karakusa
kiran waritsugi-nuri saya
daishô-koshirae*
(黒石目花唐草金襴割継塗鞘大小拵)

Daishô-koshirae featuring scabbards with a split lacquer design of black stone-surface and gold brocade with a floral and arabesque pattern

Late Edo to very *early Meiji* period
circa 1867~1870.

The *daishô*, restricted to samurai class wear, emerged as a defining symbol of their status. This paired-sword tradition gained prominence near the close of the Muromachi period (1336-1573), with surviving examples dating to the late sixteenth century. A 1629 edict formalized the *daishô* requirement for samurai on official duties. However, this tradition ended during the Meiji period when an 1871 edict removed the samurai's obligation to wear *daishô*, followed by an 1876 public sword ban.

These reforms effectively ended both the *daishô* tradition and the samurai class itself.



NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon
Certificate of Authenticity

06202405

No 2010840




鑑定書
 一、黒石目花唐草金欄割継塗鞘大小拵
 大の総金真 剣花菱殺因 無銘
 小の録頭 殺取結袋因 無銘
 小の目貫 獅子雲獸因
 大小鐔 二匹勝虫透 大銘 双山住則亮之 嘉永壬申九月
 小の柄 二疋半因 棟銘 殺宗兼人則亮作
 大小柄 白魚着 暗緑色糸諸撮卷 光孝花押

右は當協會に於て審査の結果特別保存刀装具と
 鑑定しこれを証する

令和六年七月二日

公益財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協會



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 6th year of Reiwa (2024), July 2nd

One,

Kuro-ishime hana-karakusa kinran waritsugi-nuri saya daishō-koshirae

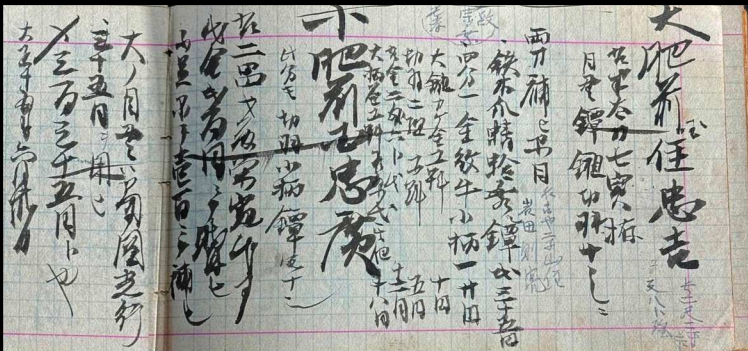
Daishō-koshirae featuring scabbards with a split lacquer design of black stone-surface and gold brocade with a floral and arabesque pattern

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai (NBTHK)



This stunning *daishô-koshirae* features scabbards with a split lacquer design of black *ishime* (stone) and *hana-karakusa kinran* (gold brocade of floral pattern).

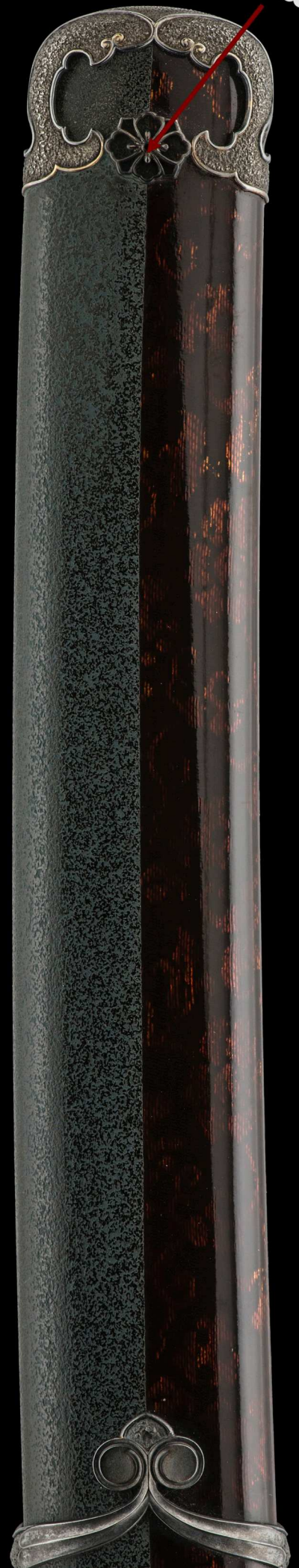
It has been conveyed to Unique Japan that this *daishô koshirae* was thoughtfully commissioned by a samurai from the late Edo period during the very early Meiji period. We even have a copy of the handwritten note from the former samurai owner who itemized both swords and all fittings, even with prices that he paid.



Former samurai owner's written log of the *daishô* swords and fittings



wakizashi



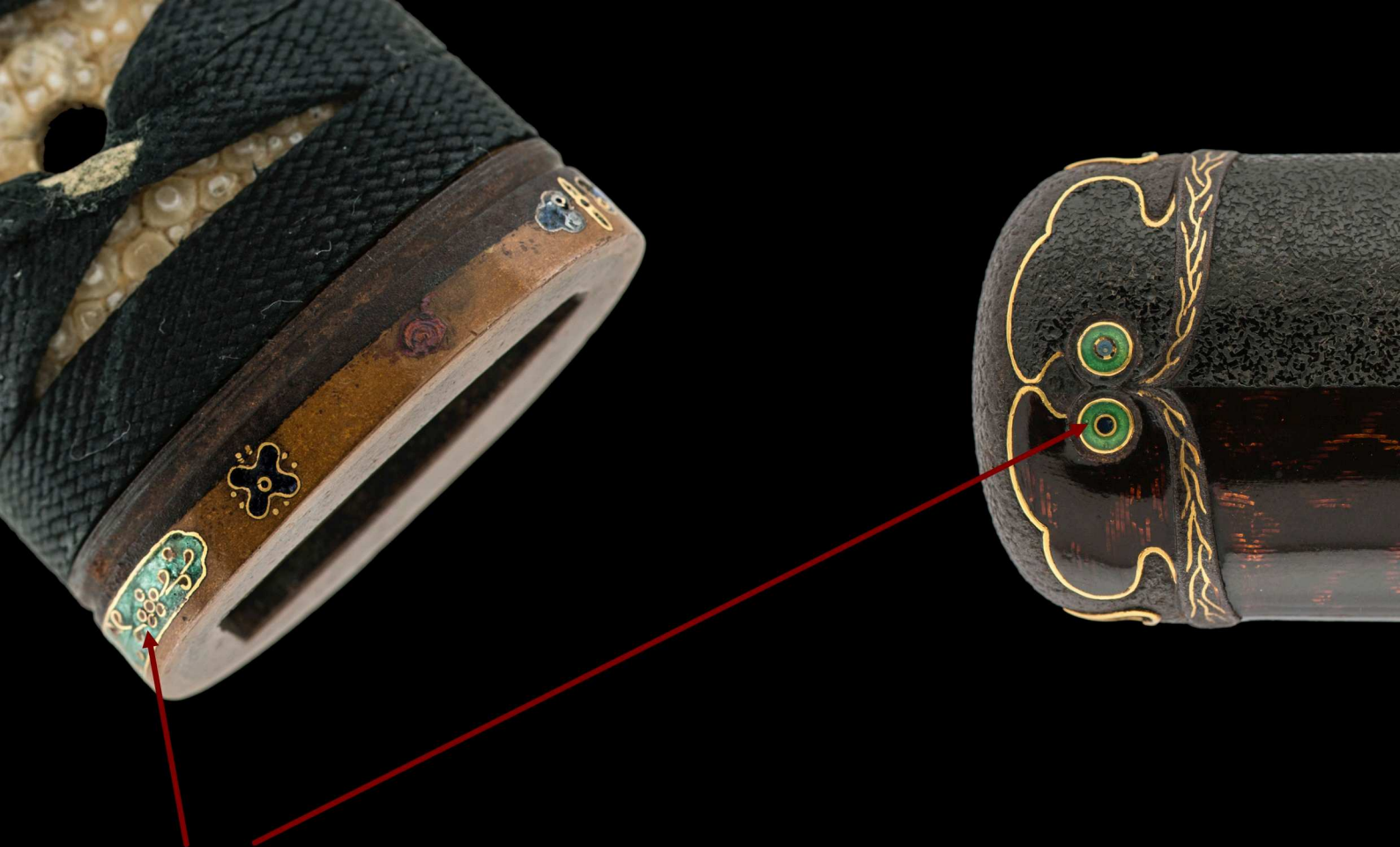
katana



While the traditional image of a *daishō* is of a katana and wakizashi crafted by the same maker, with identical sets for all fittings, the reality back in the Edo period normally paints a much different story. For example, some *daimyō* lords provided a single sword to their samurai and the samurai was then expected to source the other to form a daishō. This would explain the fact on some daishō koshirae, the *fuchi-kashira* and *menuki* may not matching but they contain common elements between them. *Tsubas* are fairly straightforward to replace and thus we often see matching tsuba on daishō koshirae.

The fact that the NBTHK has awarded this beautiful daishō koshirae with Tokubetsu Hozon certification is a testament to not only the overall quality of the daishō, but also to the personal samurai journey involved in this creation.





Shippō-yaki (cloisonné ware) is a refined craft where coloured glass enamel powder is fired at high temperatures onto copper bases to create vibrant designs. From the 17th to 19th centuries, the techniques of shippō masters serving the shogunate were closely guarded secrets. The craft evolved into *Tokyo Shippō* in the late 19th century when Western badge-making techniques were introduced, leading to its widespread use in school and organisational emblems.

While traditional cloisonné manufacturing has declined elsewhere, Japanese artisans maintain this distinctive tradition. Tokyo Shippō craftsmen exclusively use glass materials for their superior finish and transparency. Through meticulous layering and polishing of each color, they create intricate patterns with remarkable depth by combining transparent and opaque enamels. This versatile art adorns various accessories from tiepins and cuff links to earrings and necklaces, and can even incorporate *ukiyo-e* motifs in custom pieces.





Dai



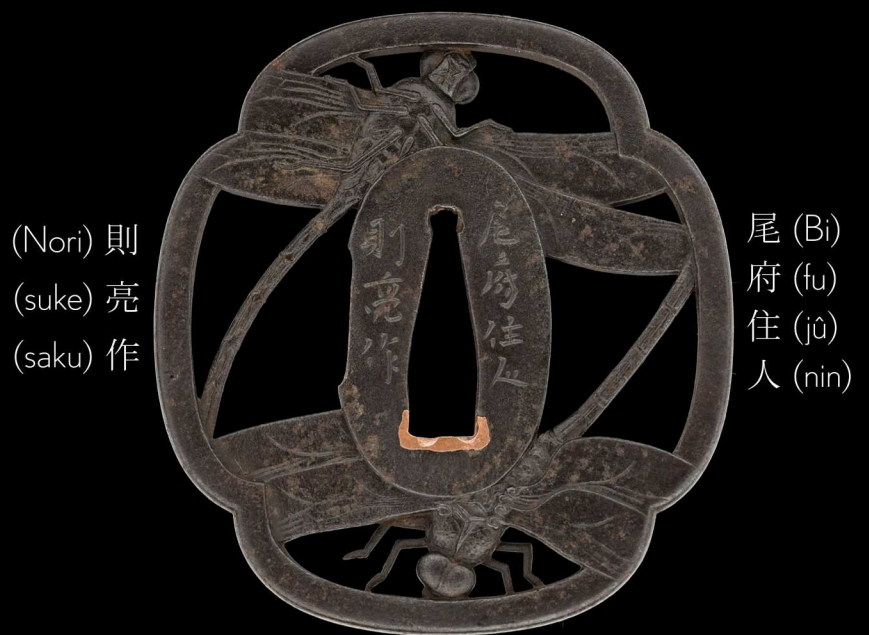
(Nori) 則
(suke) 亮
(tsukuru) 造
(kore) 之

二 (Futa)
子 (go)
山 (yama)
住 (jû)

Futagoyama jû Norisuke kore o tsukuru
Crafted by *Norisuke*, a resident of *Futagoyama*

A stunning pair of *daishô tsubas* displaying a life-like design of *tombo* (dragonflies) by premier metalsmith *Iwata Norisuke* (岩田則亮). *Norisuke* - an *Owari tsuba* craftsman active during the late Edo period.

There are two generations of *Norisuke*, and from the signature style, this work appears to be by the first generation who died in in the 5th year of *Kaei* era (1852).



(Nori) 則
(suke) 亮
(saku) 作

尾 (Bi)
府 (fu)
住 (jû)
人 (nin)

Bifu jûnin Norisuke saku
Norisuke, a resident of *Owari* province

Kaei no saru kugatsu

The *dai* (large) tsuba for the katana is dated to the ninth month in the Year of the Monkey during the *Kaei* era (September 1848).

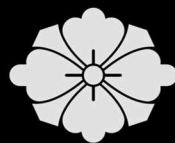




Fuchi-kashira

Ken-hanabishi (sword and flower) pays respect to the *Nabeshima* family, which ruled *Saga* domain in *Hizen* province where both swords were crafted.

The name *hanabishi* originates from the arrangement of four *hishi*-like (water chestnut-like) leaves as petals into a flower.



Nabeshima Naoshige (鍋島直茂, 1538~1618)

The second son of *Nabeshima Kiyofusa* (鍋島清房). After the death of *Ryuzôji Takanobu* (龍造寺隆信), he laid the foundation of the *Nabeshima* family as the lord of *Saga* domain in *Hizen* province.



The katana's *tsuka* (hilt) features *menuki* depicting *amaryû* (rain dragons) beneath its silk wrapping. These youthful dragons, harbingers of rain and fortune, were said to eventually ascend skyward and mature into fully-horned, scaled dragons.

This symbolism of transformation and ascendance made them powerful imperial emblems, representing the path to greatness.



shô





Rain dragon on
the wakizashi *kurikata*

We will give the new owner of
this *daishô koshirae* the option of
having matching *sageo* (cord that
is laced through the *kurikata*)
sourced for the two scabbards.

Additional cost may apply.



Stylised *amaryû*
(rain dragon)

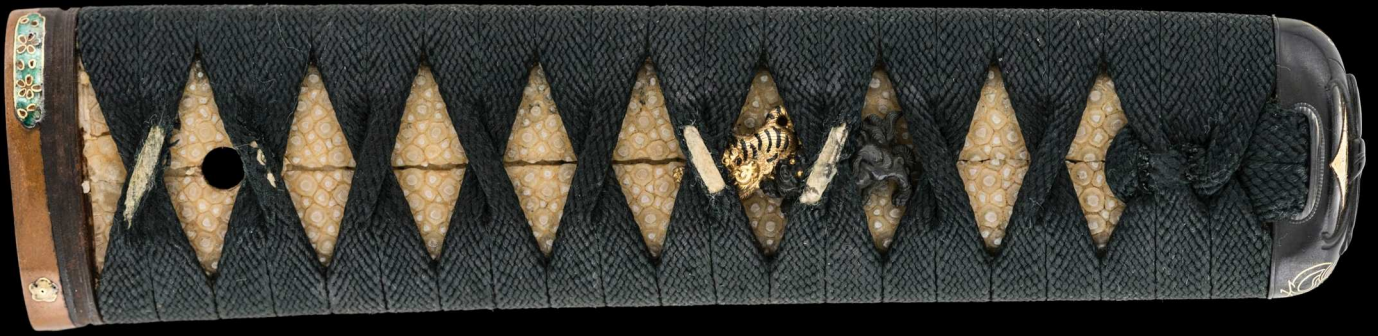


The *fuchi-kashira* on the *wakizashi (shô)* showcases a motif of *musubi-bukuro* (tied bag) with gold flower crests and a stylised *amaryû* (rain dragon) motif that ties into *katana tsuka* that has *amaryû menuki*.

The *fuchi* is decorated with beautiful *shippô* (cloisonné).



Shippô (cloisonné enamel)



The silk is fraying in parts, which is normal as this is a veritable antique. Definitely savour the age and handle with care. Unique Japan can assist with a re-wrap in the future should the need arise.



Menuki on the *shô-koshirae* carry sacred *shishi* (shisa lions).

In Buddhism, the *Monju Bosatsu* is depicted sitting on a sacred lion. During the *Heian* period, shrines and temples started placing a pair of sacred lions (*komainu*) at the gate to ward off evil spirits.





A *kozuka* is a samurai utility knife that is fastened into a special notch built inside the *saya* (scabbard) and drawn through the *hitsu-ana* (hole) of the wakizashi *tsuba*.

The artwork was created by two famous craftsman from *Gotô* family of metalsmiths. The oxen motif is by *Gotô Sôjô Takemitsu* (後藤宗乗武光), the second head of the family, and the rest by *Gotô Enjô Mitsutaka* (後藤延乗光孝), the 13th generation.

Unlike horses, oxen are slower on their feet, but their sturdy physique allows them to move forward with strength. This *kozuka* expresses the desire to have unshakable determination.



Kozuka is signed:
Seki Magoroku kyûdai Sue Zenjô Kanemoto

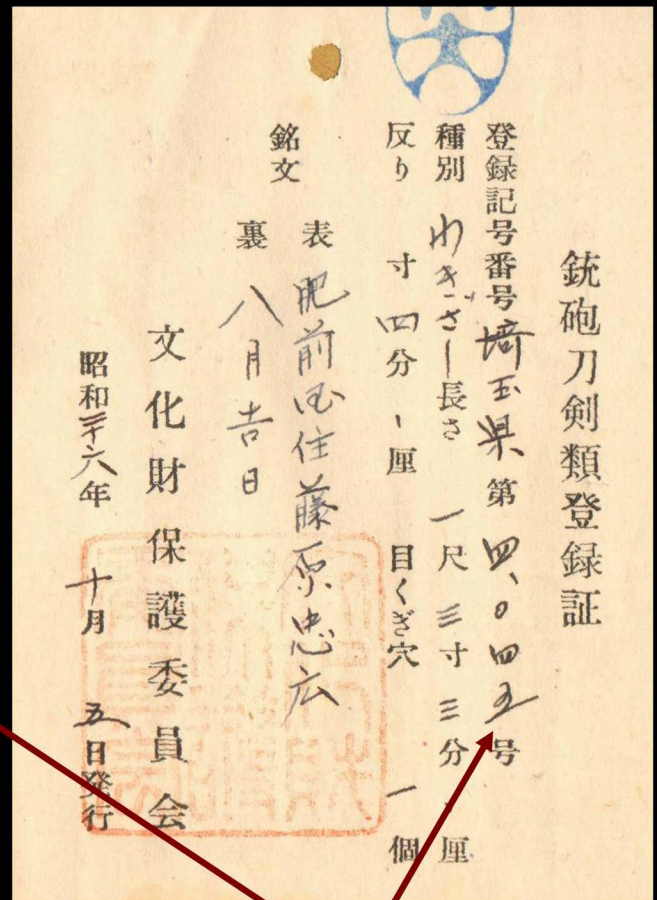
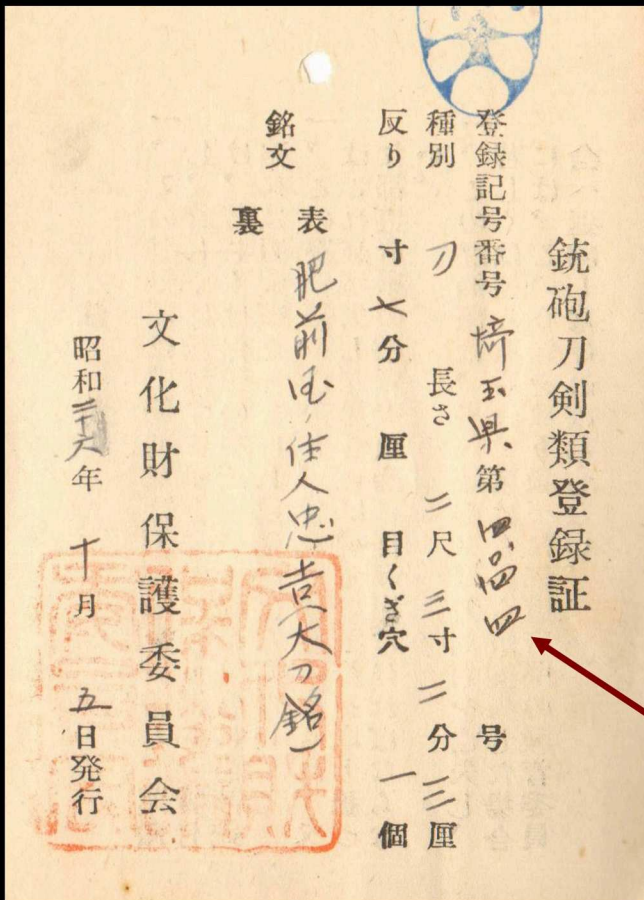
Sue Zenjô Kanemoto,
9th generation of Seki Magoroku

(Mon) 紋
(Sô) 宗
(jô) 乗

関 (Seki)
孫 (Mago)
六 (roku)
九 (kyû)
代 (dai)
末 (Sue)
善 (Zen)
定 (jô)
兼 (Kane)
元 (moto)

(Mitsu) 光
(taka) 孝
(kaô) 花押

The signatures of *Gotô Sôjô Takemitsu* and *Gotô Enjô Mitsutaka* placed discreetly on the side of the *kozuka* handle.



4044, 4045

These are the original *torokusho* (registration cards) for the *Tadayoshi/Tadahiro daishō*.

These cards were both registered on the same day in the 26th year of *Showa era* (Oct 5, 1951) AND they were in sequential order, numbering 4044 (katana) and 4045 (wakizashi).

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

These swords were among the very first swords registered in Japan, a rare treat to see!



Daishô koshirae bags
with phoenix and arabesque pattern

I believe I can fly.





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

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

Enjoy your trip!