



ITEM# UJKA114

A NAOE SHIZU KATANA

UNSIGNED, MIDDLE OF THE NAMBOKUCHO PERIOD
(CIRCA 1338 – 1367)

Swordsmith: The Naoe Shizu School (attribution)
Location: Mino province
Length: 72.0cm (cutting edge)
Curvature: 1.8cm
Moto-haba: 3.2cm
Saki-haba: 2.7cm
Length of kissaki: 8cm
Motogasane: 4mm
Sakigasane: 3mm
Jihada: Nagaregokoro (masame mixed with masame), chikei
Hamon: Notare, gunome, koashi, sunagashi, ko-nie
Nakago: O-suriage
Certificate: NBTHK 19th Juyo Token (a sword designated as Important by the Society for the Preservation of the Japan Art Sword. Certificate issued in 1970.)
Included: Shirasaya, silk carry bag, sword stand, maintenance kit, DVD, printed care guide, registration and all exportation paperwork to home country

SOLD

It gives us great pleasure to offer an NBTHK 19th Juyo Token katana (*Important Sword*) attributed to *The Naoe Shizu School*.

In a word, the sword is spectacular. Her remarkable *o-kissaki* (long extended tip) and majestic shape captures the imagination. This sword was once a tachi of course, a formidable sword surely carried during the warring mid-Nambokucho period (1338-1367).

According to historical records swordsmiths populated Mino province in the *Hogen era* (1156-1159) during the Heian period. However, it's only once the very late Kamakura period (early 1300s) appeared that works by *Shizu Saburo Kaneuji* and *Kinju* have been confirmed.

To give a sense of context, Kaneuji is said to have moved from *Yamato* (Nara) to study under the great Masamune to become one of his ten finest pupils (*Masamune Jutetsu*).

Kaneuji eventually moved to Shizu district in Mino province and is largely considered the founder of the Mino tradition. Incidentally, *Shizu* means 'still' or 'calm' in Japanese.

As one would have expected, Kaneuji's works carry a strong mixture of *Yamato Tegai School* qualities (*a jihada of mokume hada with straight grain masame hada*) and the *Soshu tradition* with a *hamon* displaying *nie-deki* with plenty of *hataraki* such as *sunagashi* (streaks of sand), *kinsuji* (stripes of gold) and *inazuma* (crooked lightning bolts).

A noteworthy difference is that is that the *hamon* carries some *togari* (tapered peaks) in the *hamon*. As a basic rule, all Mino tradition swords have *togari* in the *hamon*.

Unsigned swords attributed to Kaneuji are known as *Yamato Shizu* (*Shizu* meaning 'Kaneuji').

The Naoe Shizu School

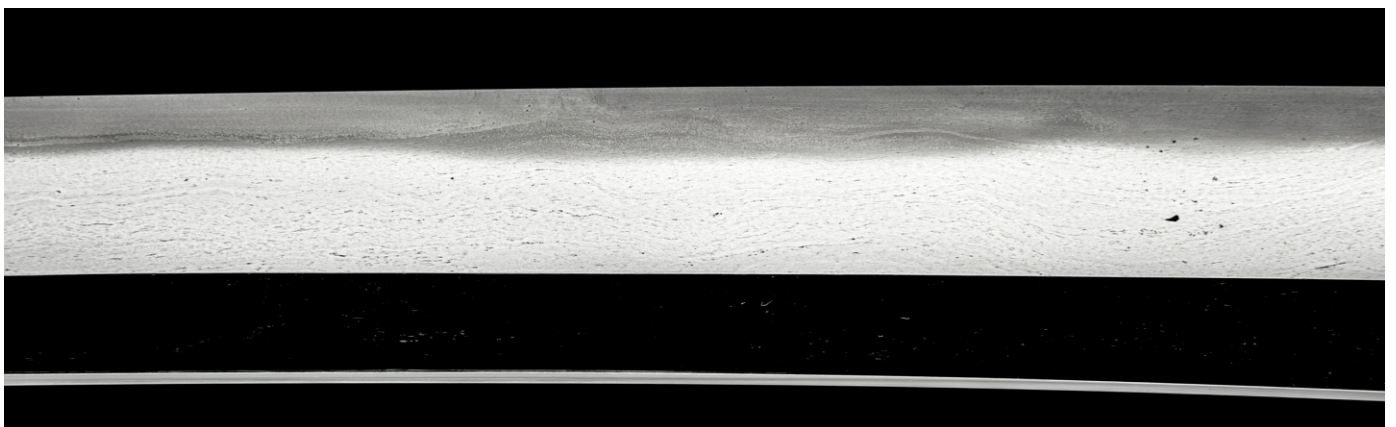
In the beginning, students of the *O-Shizu School* (founded by Kaneuji) and of the *Naoe Shizu School* moved to *Naoe* district also in Mino province to differentiate themselves.

Notable students include *Kaneyuki* (son of *Kaneshige*), *Tametsugu* (a disciple of either *Go Yoshiro* or *Norishige*), *Kanetoshi*, *Kanetsugu*, *Kanenobu* and later generations of *Kaneuji*.

What makes the *Naoe Shizu School* different from that of *O-Shizu* is that the *sugata* (shape) is superior; key traits being that of a wide *mihaba* and *o-kissaki*. Both of which, according to *Nagayama Kokan* of the *Connoisseurs Book of Japanese Swords*, "lend to a grand appearance".

Of equal importance to note is that the *jihada* has *mokume-hada* with generous amounts of flowing *masame* (straight grain). This is especially evident near the *hamon* or in the *shinogi-ji*.

The folding pattern in the steel has a direct influence on the *hamon* - displaying *sunagashi* (parallel streaks of sand) in a wavy *notare hamon*. A close-up of the sword's *jihada* (grain)...



All such qualities of the *Naoe Shizu School* can be seen and enjoyed in this magnificent katana. It should be pointed out that the sword was awarded its vintage Juyo Token certificate in 1970. This is significant as there was no greater achievement at the time. Only the finest swords in Japan could have hoped to attain this level of prestige.

