



ITEM# UJKA154

A SHIMIZU HISAYOSHI KATANA

SIGNED, SHINSHINTO PERIOD (3RD YEAR OF BUNKYU, AUGUST 1863)

Swordsmith: *Sagami Kunihito Minamoto HISAYOSHI*
Location: Musashi province (modern-day Tokyo)
Measurements: **Length:** 72.9cm (ubu) **Curvature:** 1.6cm **Moto-haba:** 3.2cm
Saki-haba: 2.3cm **Moto-kasane:** 8.2mm **Saki-kasane:** 6.1mm
Weight of blade: 995 grams

Hamon: *Ko-gunome, ko-choji, with beautiful sunagashi and chikei*
Jihada: *Pure masame hada (straight grain)*
Certificate #1: **NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon** (a sword designated as Especially Worthy of Preservation by the Society for the Preservation of the Japan Art Sword)
Certificate #2: **NTHK-NPO Yushusaku** (a sword designated as Highly Excellent by the Society for the Preservation of the Japan Art Sword)
Fujishiro: *Chujo-saku* (ranked as an above average swordsmith)
Included: Shirasaya, sword fabric bag, sword stand, maintenance kit, DVD, etc.
Koshirae: Potential custom koshirae project

SOLD (a custom koshirae is being built for this sword)

Shimizu Hisayoshi

To fully appreciate swordsmith Hisayoshi is to first travel back to his roots of noted sensei, *Hosokawa Masayoshi*. First generation (Shodai) Masayoshi was, in fact, an accomplished armourer from the lineage of the Saotame School.

It comes to no surprise that Masayoshi studied under the grandmaster *Suishinshi Masahide*. Next to *Taikei Naotane*, Masayoshi is Masahide's best student and also trained a large number of students. Hisayoshi was one of his very finest students.

Hisayoshi's civilian name was *Shimizu Sogoro*. He originally travelled from Odawara of Sagami province. He worked mostly in the Soshu tradition and often exhibited an *o-midare* (large wavy temper line) to the swords he crafted.

Many of his blades also display *horimono*. They are always robust with a thick *kasane* and full *hira-niku* (the meat of the surface of the cutting edge). This foundation was created to penetrate harder targets such as armor – a clear influence of sensei Masayoshi.

Two of Hisayoshi's greatest personal accomplishments came as a master himself having trained both the great *Sa Yukihide* and *Kawai Hisayuki*. He died on September 15th, 1868.

The sword

Although Hisayoshi is officially ranked a respectful *Chu-josaku* (above average) smith, one look at this katana will blow away any preconceived notions of his forging ability.

Never judge a book by its cover or a smith by his Fujishiro rank. This katana is an awesome reminder that genius is embedded in all of us. We just have to dig deep to channel it.

This is our first work by Shimizu Hisayoshi at Unique Japan. On a personal note, when I was introduced to the blade, I confessed on having never heard of the artist. I lifted the katana and was immediately struck on how beefy this blade is. It's actually 1kg in weight with a whopping *moto-kasane* of 8.2mm.

Powerful only begins to describe her. I was then completely overwhelmed by the sublime straight-grain *masame* pattern in the jihada. Wow. It reminded me immediately of our recent Hosho School katana with Juyo certification, yet about a third heavier! Every Japanese sword lover must respect a flawless *masame*. It's the stuff dreams are made of.

It's perplexing that all *hamon* and *jigane* characteristics normally associated with Hisayoshi are completely different in this katana. A tighter temper line, Yamato tradition forging in its *masame-hada* - a glorious accomplishment that rightly deserves to share pages with the grandmasters listed in this special Shinshinto Edition catalogue.

In very deserving fashion, this katana has achieved NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon certification and the highest rank at the NTHK-NPO called *Yushusaku*. Yushusaku swords are the NTHK-NPO's equivalent of NBTHK Juyo Token. It's an amazing sword that would look incredible with a thoughtful koshirae built around her.

Or, as stated earlier, enjoyed just as she is.

PVK

Saki-kasane: 6.1mm

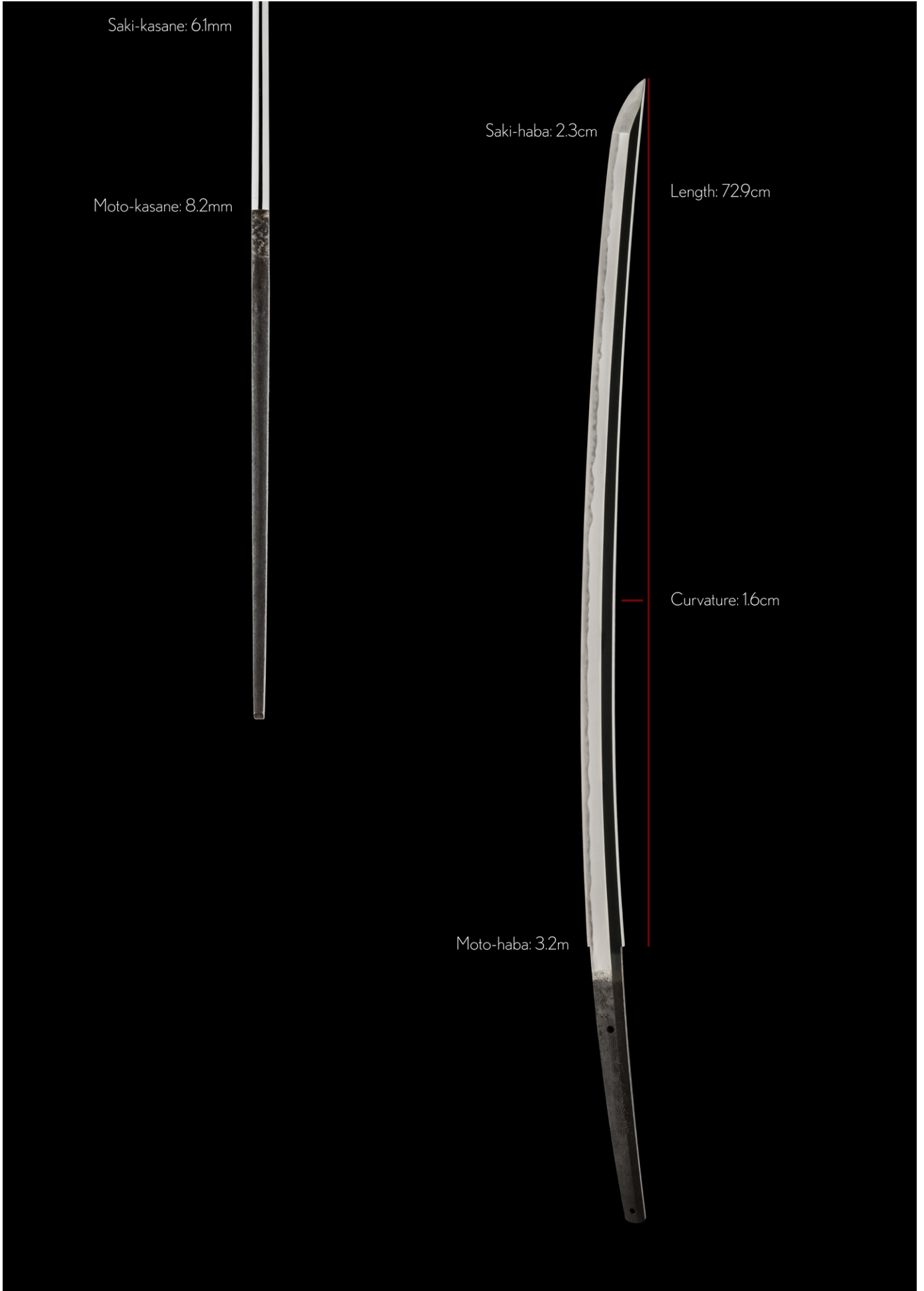
Moto-kasane: 8.2mm

Saki-haba: 2.3cm

Length: 72.9cm

Curvature: 1.6cm

Moto-haba: 3.2m





This katana was crafted and signed by swordsmith Hisayoshi of the Minamoto clan living in Sagami province.



相模國
人源久義

*Saga
mi
Kuni
hito
Minamoto
Hisa
yoshi*

A lucky year

This katana was signed by *Hisayoshi* in the 8th month during the 3rd year of the Bunkyu era.

This translates to August 1863.

This is the exact same month and year as the *Taira Nobuhide* katana featured in this catalogue.

As it happens, this is a very special year...

Note that Hisayoshi added the characters "*Kigai*" on the nakago.

Kigai represents the completion of a full 60-year calendar cycle.

Each year is represented with an 12-year animal cycle: Year of the Rat, Ox, Tiger, Rabbit, Dragon, Snake, Horse, Sheep, Monkey, Rooster, Dog, and Wild Boar.

Each year is also paired up with an element, in which there are 5; *wood, fire, earth, metal, water*

The pattern repeats itself every 60 years. The 3rd year of Bunkyu era was the last year of the "Heavenly Stem" (1804-1863).

The next *sexagenary* (yes, this is a word) *cycle* will commence in 2044. Enjoy ;)

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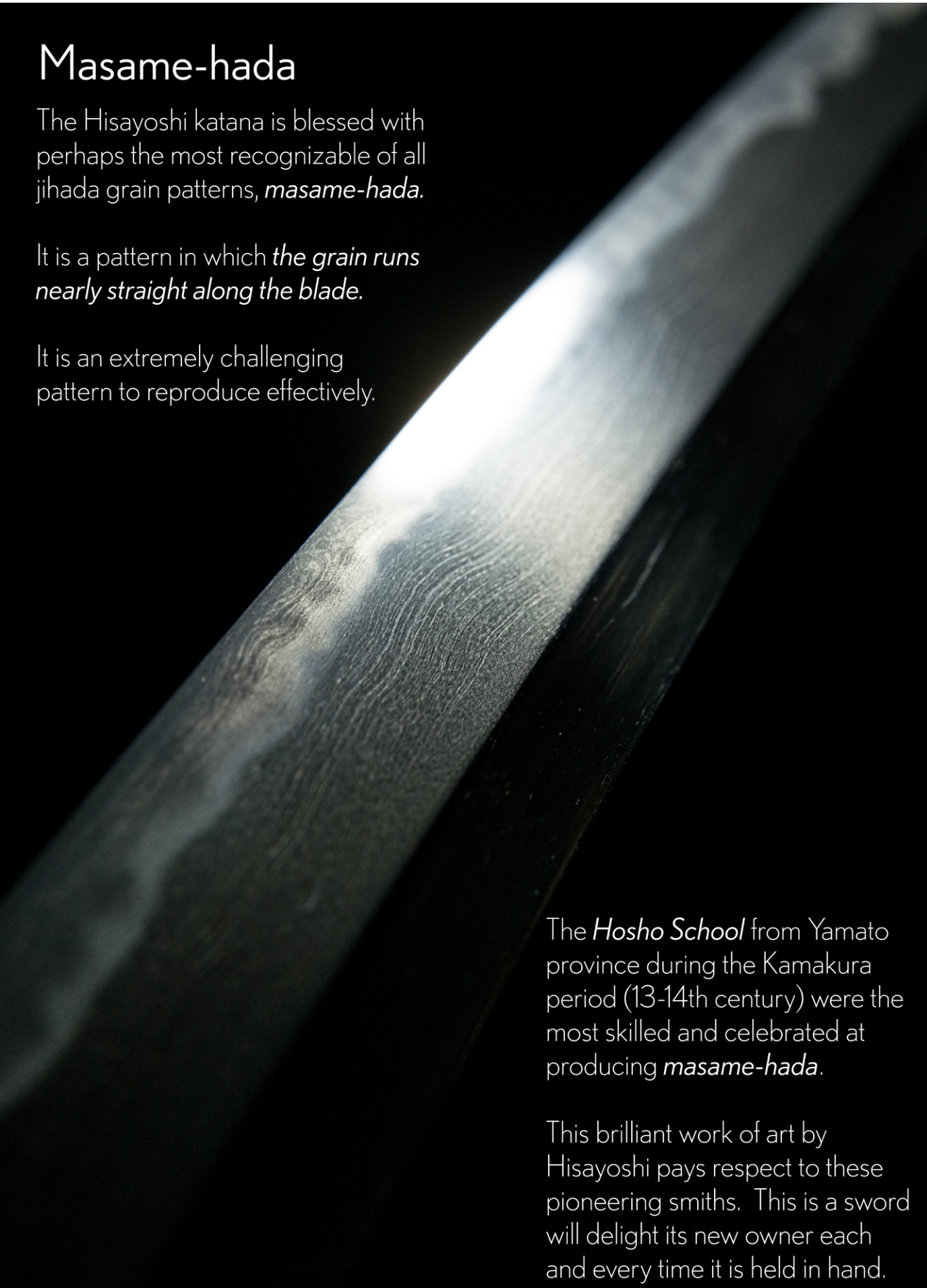


Masame-hada

The Hisayoshi katana is blessed with perhaps the most recognizable of all jihada grain patterns, *masame-hada*.

It is a pattern in which *the grain runs nearly straight along the blade*.

It is an extremely challenging pattern to reproduce effectively.



The *Hosho School* from Yamato province during the Kamakura period (13-14th century) were the most skilled and celebrated at producing *masame-hada*.

This brilliant work of art by Hisayoshi pays respect to these pioneering smiths. This is a sword will delight its new owner each and every time it is held in hand.

Hamon


The temper line (*hamon*) on the blade is a vibrant *ko-gunome* (tight undulating wave pattern) with *ko-choji* (small clove blossoms).

Glorious *hataraki* (activity) inside the hamon can be found such as *kinsuji* (black golden lines) and generous amounts of *sunagashi*, brushes of sand.

kinsuji

Hataraki such as *sunagashi* follows the parallel grain pattern in the steel.

A Japanese sword is holistic in nature. A good quality *hamon* can only be achieved if the *jigane* is well-forged to exacting standards. It's harmony at play.



Mitsu-mune

Mitsu (three) *mune* (spine/ridge) has three surfaces and is generally found in the blades of smiths working of the Soshu (Kanagawa prefecture) and related schools as well as in the tanto of the Yamashiro school such as Rai Kunitoshi from the Kamakura period.

Hisayoshi was a smith known to forge in the Soshu tradition. *Mitsu-mune* is relatively rare sight and always a treat.



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 9th year of Heisei (1997), June 9th

One, Katana

Mei (signature)

Sagami no Kunibito Minamoto Hisayoshi (omote, front)






Bunkyu 3 Kigai nen 8-gatsu bi (ura, back)

Nagasa (length)

2-shaku 4-sun (72.9cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai
(NBTHK)



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				鍔化 松竹三 大竹助 三郎								三 棟

NTHK-NPO Yushusaku Certificate of Designation

(a sword designated as *Highly Excellent* by the
Society for the Preservation of the Japanese Sword)

Issued in the 26th year of Heisei (2014), July 23rd

One, Katana

Mei (signature)

Sagami no Kunibito Minamoto Hisayoshi (omote, front)
Bunkyu 3 Kigai nen 8-gatsu bi (ura, back)

Nagasa (length)

2-shaku 4-sun (72.9cm)

Nihon Token Hozon Kai
(NTHK-NPO)

**This certificate is the highest level of honour at the NTHK-NPO

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