



ITEM# UJKA157

A KURIHARA NOBUHIDE KATANA

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

Swordsmith: *Taira NOBUHIDE*
Location: Musashi province (modern-day Tokyo)
Measurements: **Length:** 74.9cm (ubu) **Curvature:** 1.7cm **Moto-haba:** 3.1cm
Saki-haba: 2.5cm **Moto-kasane:** 6.8mm **Saki-kasane:** 5.0mm
Weight of blade: 875 grams

Hamon: *Gunome-midare with sunagashi, kinsuji, ashi*
Jihada: *Beautiful ko-itame hada*
Published: **Shinshinto Taikan by Iimura** (sword is listed on page 348)
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 #2,3,4: **NTHK-NPO Kanteisho** (full koshirae & tsuba & fuchi-kashira all designated as *Important by the Society for the Preservation of the Japanese Sword*)
Fujishiro: *Jojo-saku* (ranked as a highly superior swordsmith)
Included: Edo period koshirae, shirasaya, sword fabric bag, sword stand, etc.

SOLD

Kurihara (Taira) Nobuhide

Nobuhide was born *Kurihara Kenji* in Echigo province on the shores of the Sea of Japan north central to the country. His first apprenticeship was that of a sickle smith in *Tsukigatamura* in Echigo.

Nobuhide travelled to Kyoto to become a mirror-maker (*kagami-shi*) in 1829. In 1850, at age of 35, he became a student of legendary Shinshinto swordsmith master Kiyomaro.

His apprenticeship was to last only two years, when normally five or ten years was the average. Striking it out on his own so soon was a reflection of his familiarity of forging steel as a sickle smith that he had acquired prior to his tenure under Kiyomaro's tutelage.

In 1865, Nobuhide received the title *Chikuzen no Kami* in Kyoto. He made a few blades in Osaka two years later signing Nobutaka in his early years.

Blades of Nobuhide have been found from 1855 to 1878. He was the most celebrated student of Kiyomaro and his skill is regarded as equal to his sensei. His *hataraki* (activity in the hamon) is even considered to be superior.

Kurihara Nobuhide was also one of the finest *horimono* engravers of the Shinshinto period. A number of his swords have gone on to achieve Juyo Token status.

Nobuhide died on January 25th 1880 at the age of just 66. It is said that he returned to Echigo province to continue crafting mirrors after the *Haitorei Edict* of 1876.

The sword

It brings us great pleasure to introduce one of Nobuhide's greatest sword-making accomplishments. A katana of heroic proportions, this is a sword that exhibits a cutting edge of 74.9cm fully adorned in a beautiful Edo-period koshirae. It dated to August 1863.

So magnificent is this signed sword by *Taira Nobuhide* that it is featured in the highly esteemed *Shinshinto Taikan* reference book of the finest swords from the time period.

From *nakago* to *kissaki*, this is a katana of sheer brilliance. First and foremost, the *jigane* is a gorgeous densely packed *ko-mokume*. It's clear why Nobuhide was such an accomplished mirror maker. It gives the sword a profound sense of strength and vitality to its core.

The *hamon* is a dazzling *gunome midare* made in the style that Nobuhide was known to create. On the pages that follow note the bluish tinge on the steel of the sword. This is a mark of the highest quality. Everything about this sword was made to exacting standards. The graceful *nakago* alone is a work of art, with its precise file marks confidently rendered.

The splendid *koshirae* sword fittings sing in harmony with the katana. The *fuchi-kashira* crafted by *Mino Mitsushige* carries an elaborate carving in the design of *kamakiri*, the praying mantis, symbolizing the moral duty of the Samurai to maintain peace in the Edo period.

Along with NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon certification for the blade, there are a further *three* certificates of authenticity by the NTHK-NPO for the koshirae. This is a Samurai sword.

Saki-kasane: 5.0mm

Moto-kasane: 6.8mm

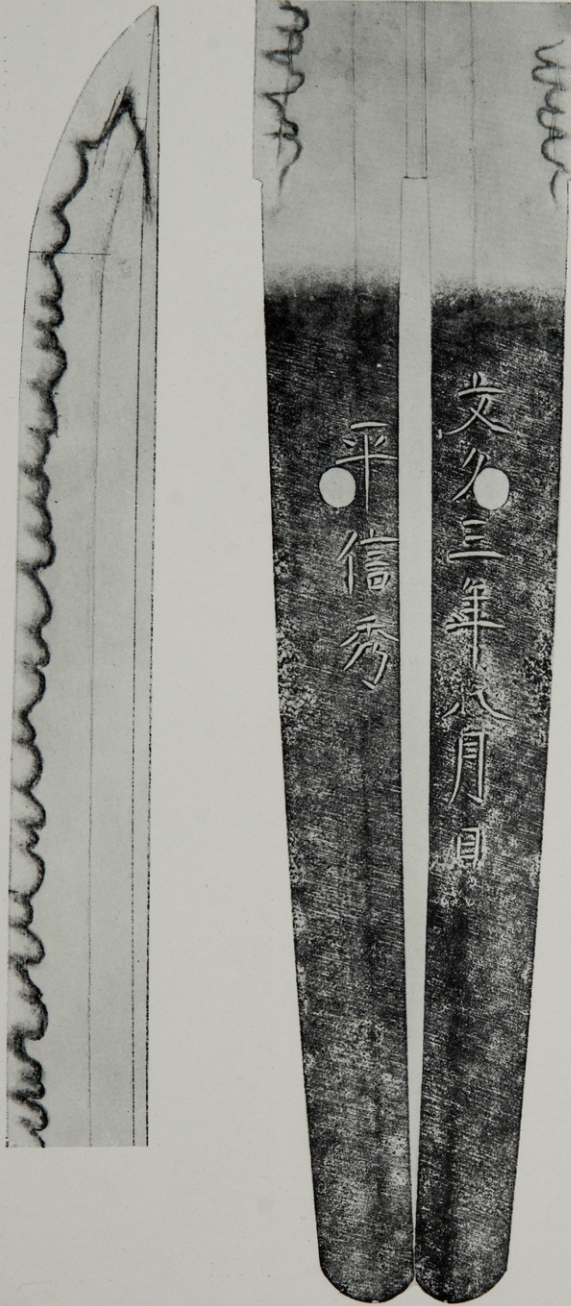
Saki-haba: 2.5cm

Length: 74.9cm

Curvature: 1.7cm

Moto-haba: 3.1cm





(一) 信秀

平 信

秀 (文久三年八月日)

刃長二尺四寸七分(七四・九センチ)反り六分強先反り心元巾一寸重ね二分五厘重量二二〇匁本造り麻棟中鋒延びる、地鉄小板目肌良く練れて美しく約む、刃文互の目乱小鈍良く付いて刃中働き足良く入る、銚子乱込み尖り心に返る、地刃共に健全にして出来よろしい。

This katana masterpiece by *Taira (Kurihara) Nobuhide* is featured in the prestigious *Shinshinto Taikan* reference book by *limura Yoshifume*, first published in the 1960s. The book contains coveted works by notable smiths from the Shinshinto period with *oshigata* and blade details.

This katana was crafted
by *Taira Nobuhide*.
An elegant 3-character
signature.



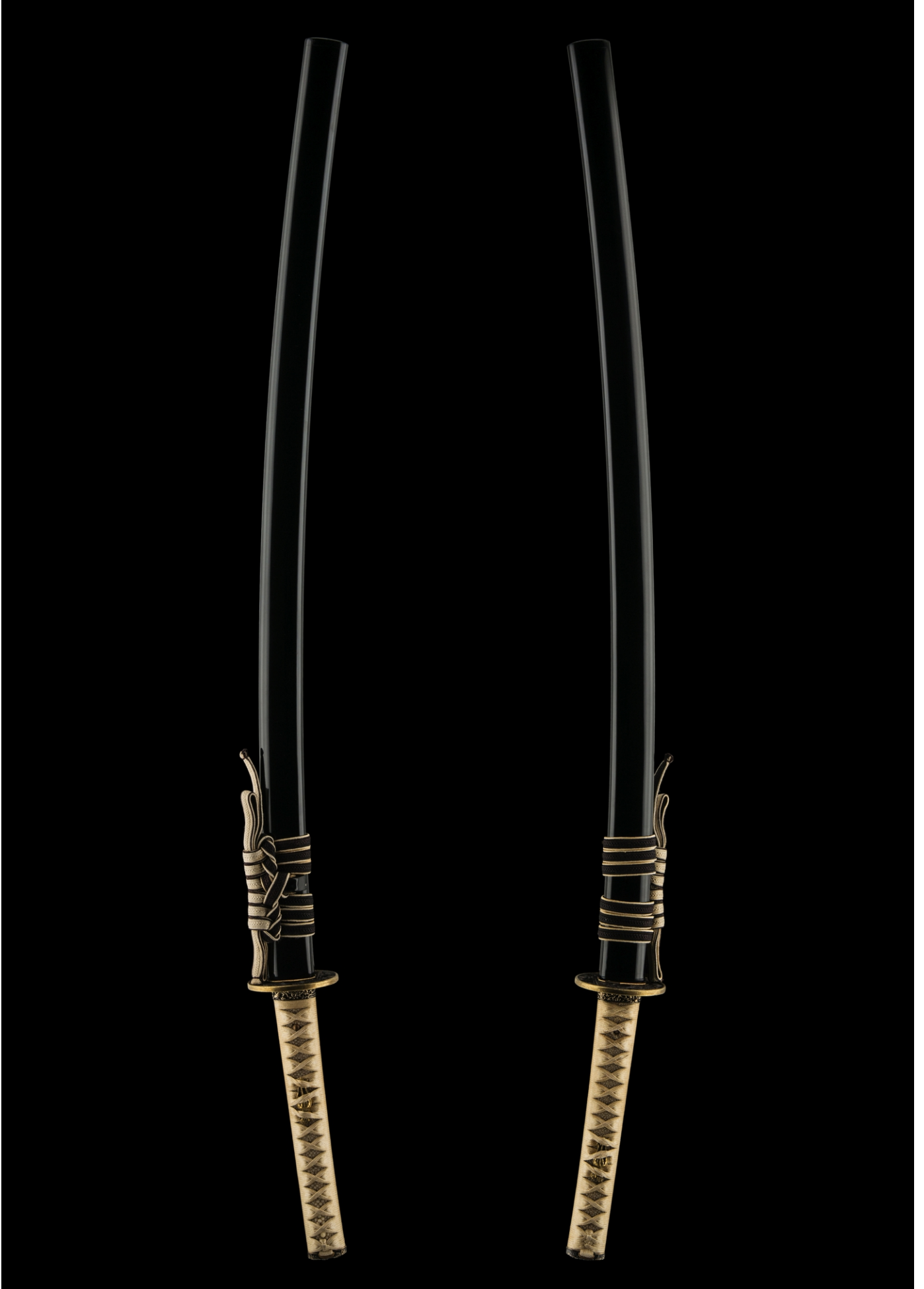
Taira
Nobu
hide

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

This translates to
August 1863.

Bun
kyu
3
nen
8
gatsu
hi







Traditional brocade *katana bukuro* (bag) that is signed on the lining



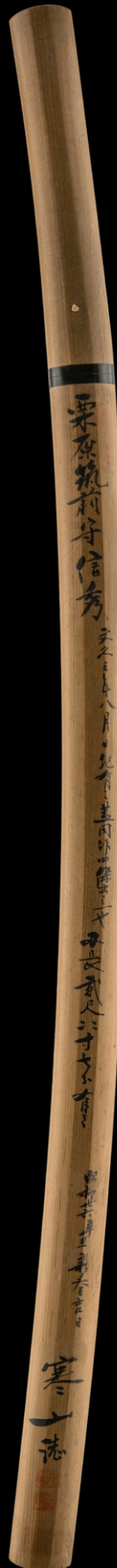
Soft protective leather cover for the *saya* (scabbard)





A Hikone Bori Soten School Tsuba
circa Mid-Edo Period (1700s)
NTHK-NPO Kanteisho Certification





Sayagaki

The Taira Nobuhide Katana features an ink-written authentication by Dr. Kanzan Sato on its shirasaya - a process known as sayagaki.

The characters chiseled on the nakago (smith and date), length of the sword in traditional measurement, date of inscription and Kanzan sensei's signature are hand-written on the shirasaya.

Dr. Kanzan was a former director of the NBTHK (The Society for the Preservation of the Japan Art Sword). A highly respected scholar, he has written numerous books and articles on the Japanese sword.



The Praying Mantis

The *kashira* (pommel) depicts a *kamakiri* (praying mantis).

The brave mantis within the insect world is a predator and at the top of the food chain.

The role of the mantis is to protect crops from harmful insects, such as the cricket.

In this fabulously artistic *kashira* carving by *Mitsushige* of Mino province in the late Edo period, the *kamakiri* is nestled authoritatively amongst flowers and other insects.

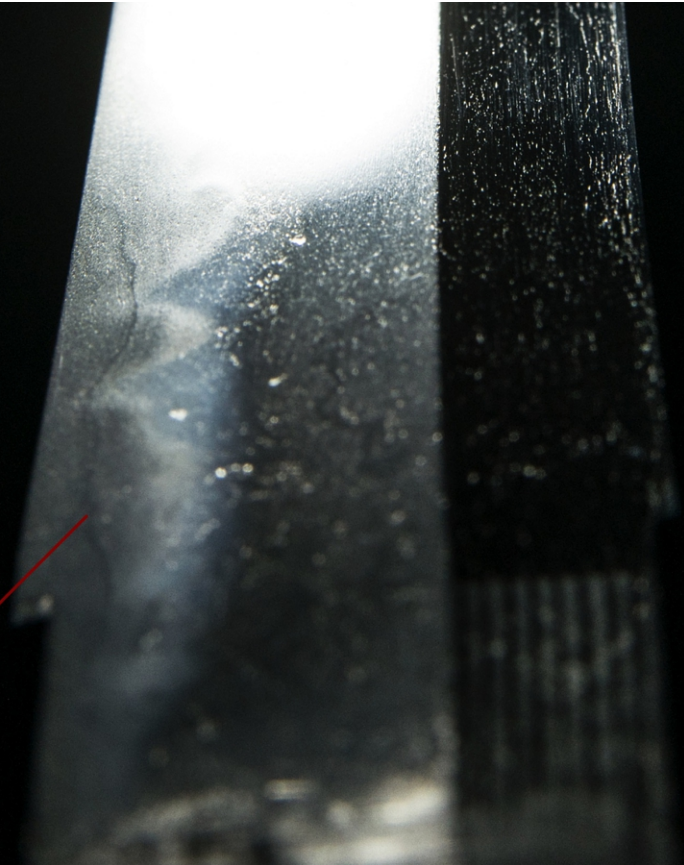
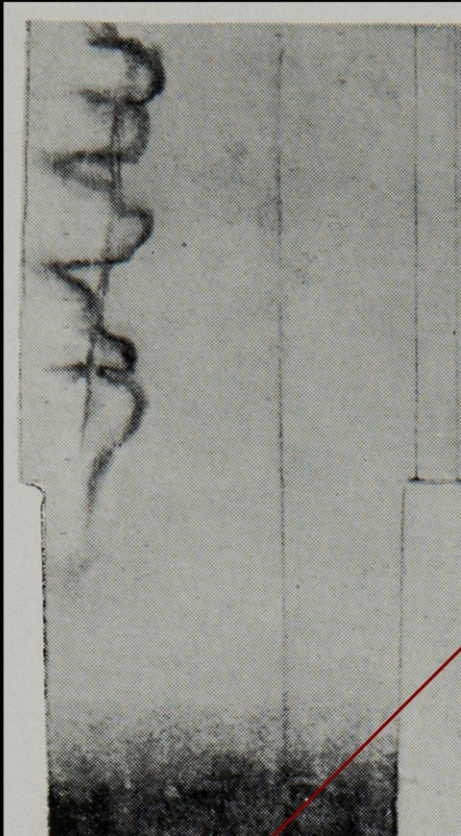
The *kamakiri* thus symbolises the Samurai's moral duty to protect Japanese society during the Edo Period.



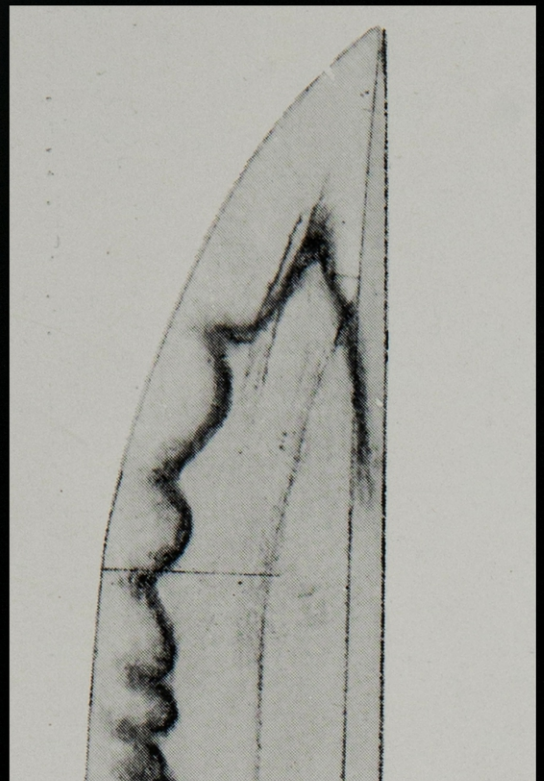
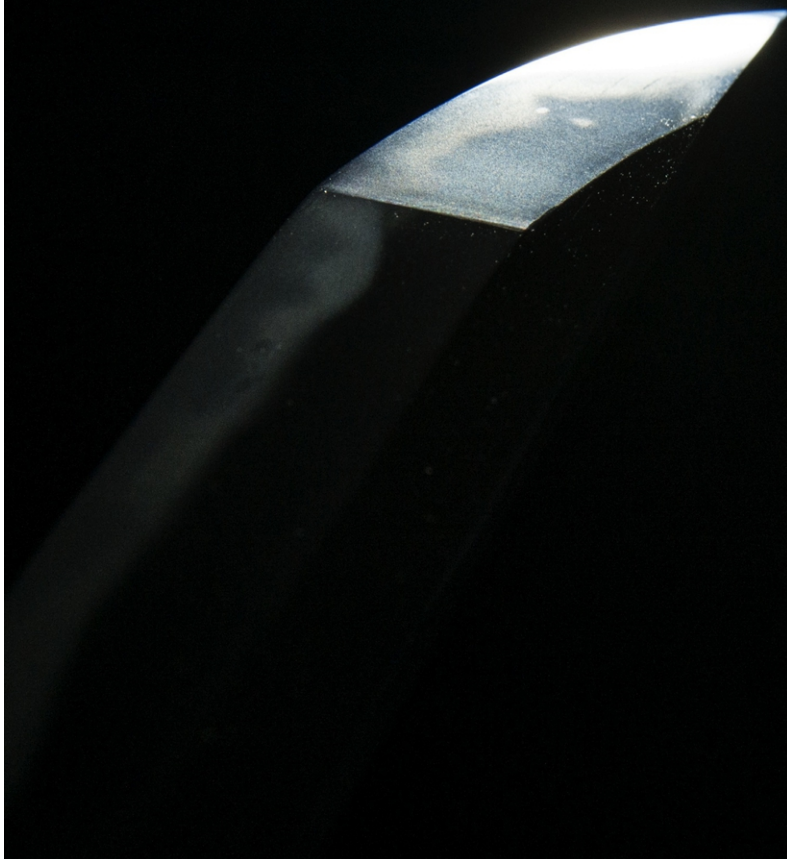
Mitsushige
(artist)

Mino ju
(living in Mino)

The *kamakiri* theme is portrayed throughout the entire *fuchi-kashira*.
The *fuchi-kashira* comes with NTHK-NPO Kanteisho certification
thus authenticating the work and signature as genuine by Mitsushige.




Note the *kinsuji* (black line) channelling its way through the *gunome hamon*.
The *boshi* (hamon in the tip) is pointed and curled back like a burning candle.



Jihada

Kurihara Nobuhide forged an extremely dense and beautiful *ko-itame hada*.

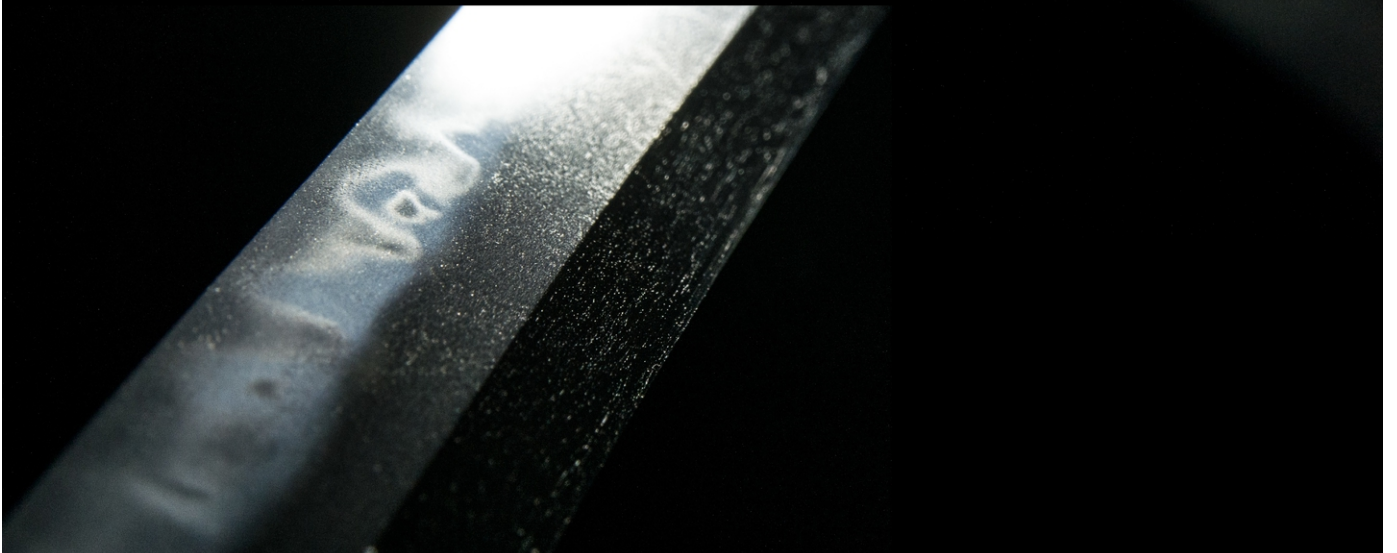
The *jigane* (steel) is relatively soft yet strong and powerful. He learned forging techniques from his grandmaster sensei, *Kiyomaro*, becoming his most prolific student.

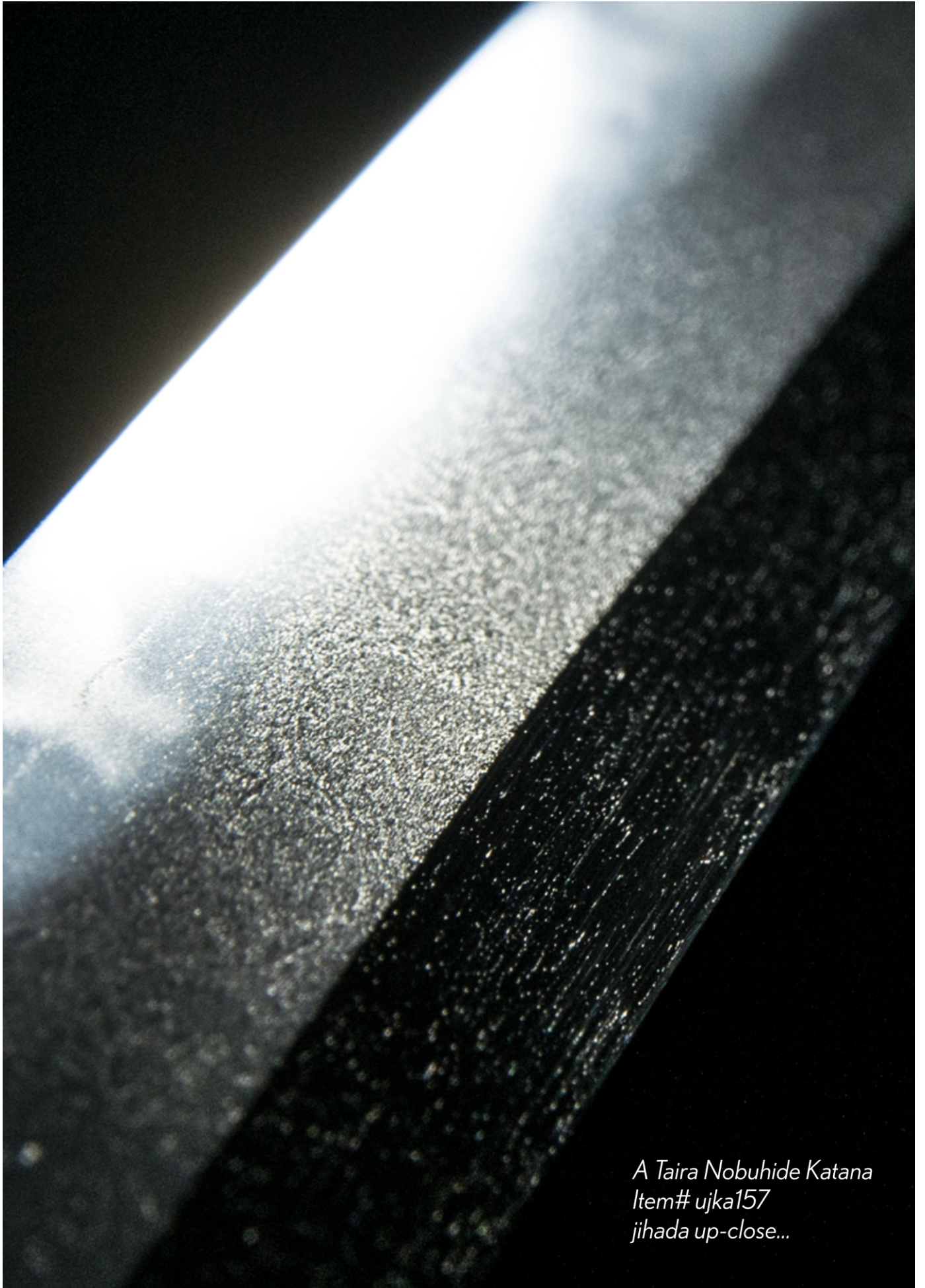


ashi (legs)

Hamon

The temper line is a striking *gunome midare* with *ashi* (legs) that features *koshi-no-hiraita* that widens towards the base, similarly to Kiyomaro's work.





*A Taira Nobuhide Katana
Item# ujka157
jihada up-close...*



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 Showa (1985), May 29th

One, Katana

Mei (signature)

Taira Nobuhide (omote, front)

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

Nagasa (length)

2-shaku 4-sun 6-bu (74.9cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai
(NBTHK)