



ITEM# UJKA171

## A HOSHO KATANA

UNSIGNED, LATE KAMAKURA PERIOD (CIRCA 1300~1333)

- Swordsmith:** *The Hosho School (ubu-nakago)*  
**Location:** *Yamato province (present-day Nara prefecture)*  
**Measurements:** **Length:** 73.2cm **Curvature:** 1.4cm **Moto-haba:** 3.0cm **Weight:** 750g  
**Jihada:** *Pure masame-hada in nie-deki with chikei*  
**Hamon:** *Bright suguha, wide nioguchi with nijuba, kuichigai-ba, kinsuji and sunagashi*  
**Boshi:** *Hakikake (brushed)*  
**Certificate #1:** **NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon** (*designated as Especially Worthy of Conservation*)  
**Certificate #2-3:** **NTHK-NPO Kanteisho** (*koshirae and tsuba designated as authentic*)  
**Authentication:** *Sayagaki by Tanobe sensei*  
**Included:** *Shirasaya, koshirae, bags, stand, kit, DVD, booklet, printed description*

## SOLD

This magnificent katana has been attributed to the greatly admired *Hosho School*, which produced swords during the *mid-Kamakura* to the end of the *Nambokucho period*. Of the five major schools of the Yamato tradition, the Hosho School holds a special place amongst them by forging exclusively in their iconic straight-grain pattern known as *masame-hada*.

Masterful work in every sense, this is a rare *ubu-nakago* katana to cherish deeply. The infinite layers of visible steel flow like a river and bubble in a multitude of *hataraki* that includes *sunagashi* and brilliant *kinsuji*. Its *uchigatana koshirae* lacquered with Zen pools of red and black with an *Izutsu kamon* hilt and a noble *Heianjo* wheel *tsuba* add extra dimensions of character to enjoy.

Saki-kasane: 4.7mm <sup>^</sup>

Moto-kasane: 7.4mm

Omosa: 750g

Kissaki: 3.26cm  
Saki-haba: 1.93cm

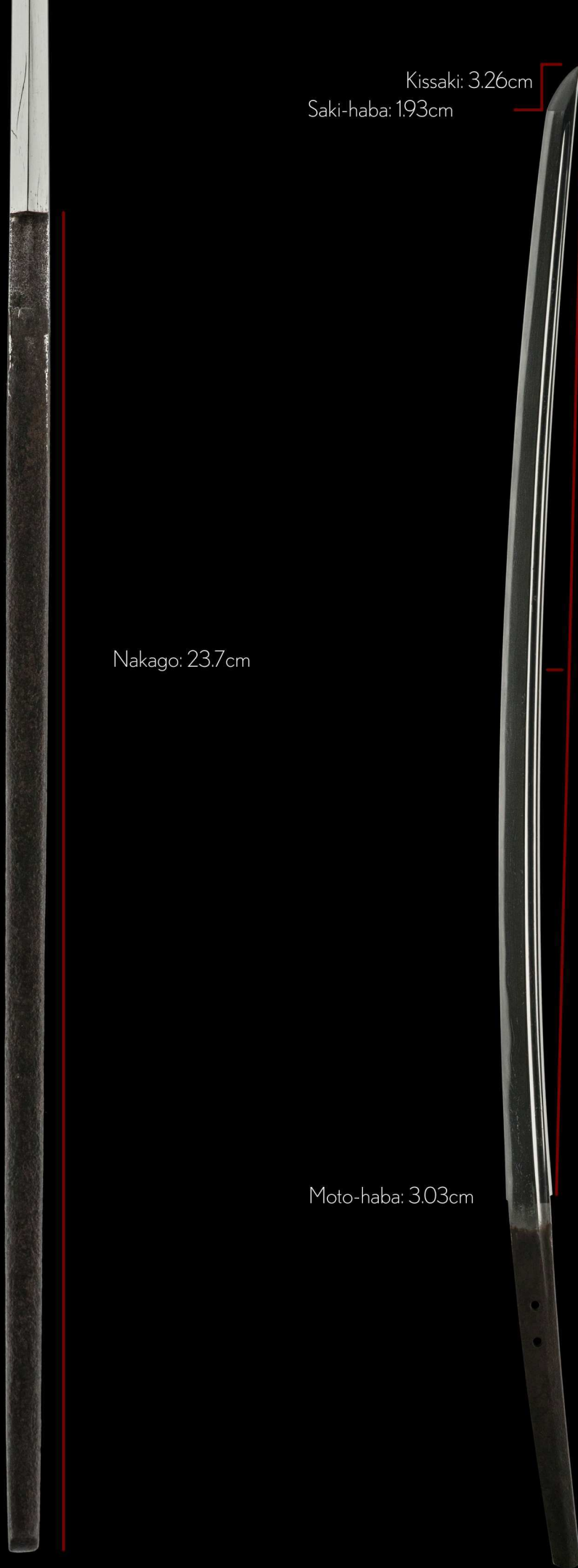
Nakago: 23.7cm

Moto-haba: 3.03cm

Nagasa: 73.2cm

Sori: 1.4cm

Mekugi-ana: 2



This katana was crafted by the *Hosho school* which began in the middle-late Kamakura period (~1280) and extended to the end of the Kamakura period, circa 1333.

Swords attributed to the *Sue-Hosho school* are those blades made in the *Nambokucho period*, circa 1333-1392.

Notable swordsmiths of the Hosho School include *Sadamune*, *Sadayoshi* & *Sadatsugu*.





Impressively rare, the *nakago* of this 700-year-old katana is *ubu*, meaning that has retained its original shape since it was crafted.

The province of Yamato was the heart of Japanese culture during the Nara period before the capital shifted to Yamashiro (Kyôto).

Yamato had many powerful Buddhist temples and armed themselves with swords to guard their property. As a matter of protocol, most swords of the Yamato tradition were not signed as seen on this Hoshô katana.

特 選  
27201501

№ 1003558

鑑定書

一刀 無銘 (保昌)

長二尺四寸一分半

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

平成二十七年三月二十六日

公益財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協會



贈與 教育委員会  
第 70375 号  
平成 26 年 12 月 9 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 27th year of Heisei (2015), March 26th

One, Katana

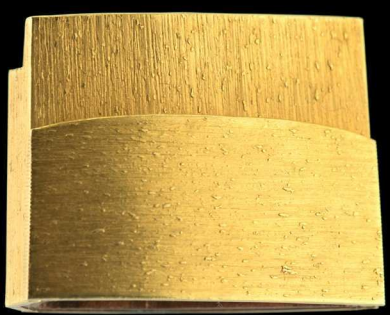
*Mumei* (unsigned)  
*Hosho* [school]

*Nagasa* (length)  
2-shaku 4-sun 1-bu han (73.2cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai  
(NBTHK)



*Shirasaya*  
(protective scabbard)



gold *ni-ju habaki* with  
perpendicular file marks



和及保昌

生基無銘也 証目凡合差我考調直刃ヲ焼白深ノ序良付鍛入肌終ニテ喰違ニ重刃ニテ  
刃中砂流念防働ノ類ノ鐵成ニ大和立派中同派ノ特色ヲ明シテ優品也

刃長貳尺四寸五分中有

時在丁酉春月

探山邊道識ノ



Straight-grain layers of *masame-hada*, knead through the *kissaki* (tip) with admirable skill and confidence.

Only the Hosho School forged their swords with pure masame-hada.

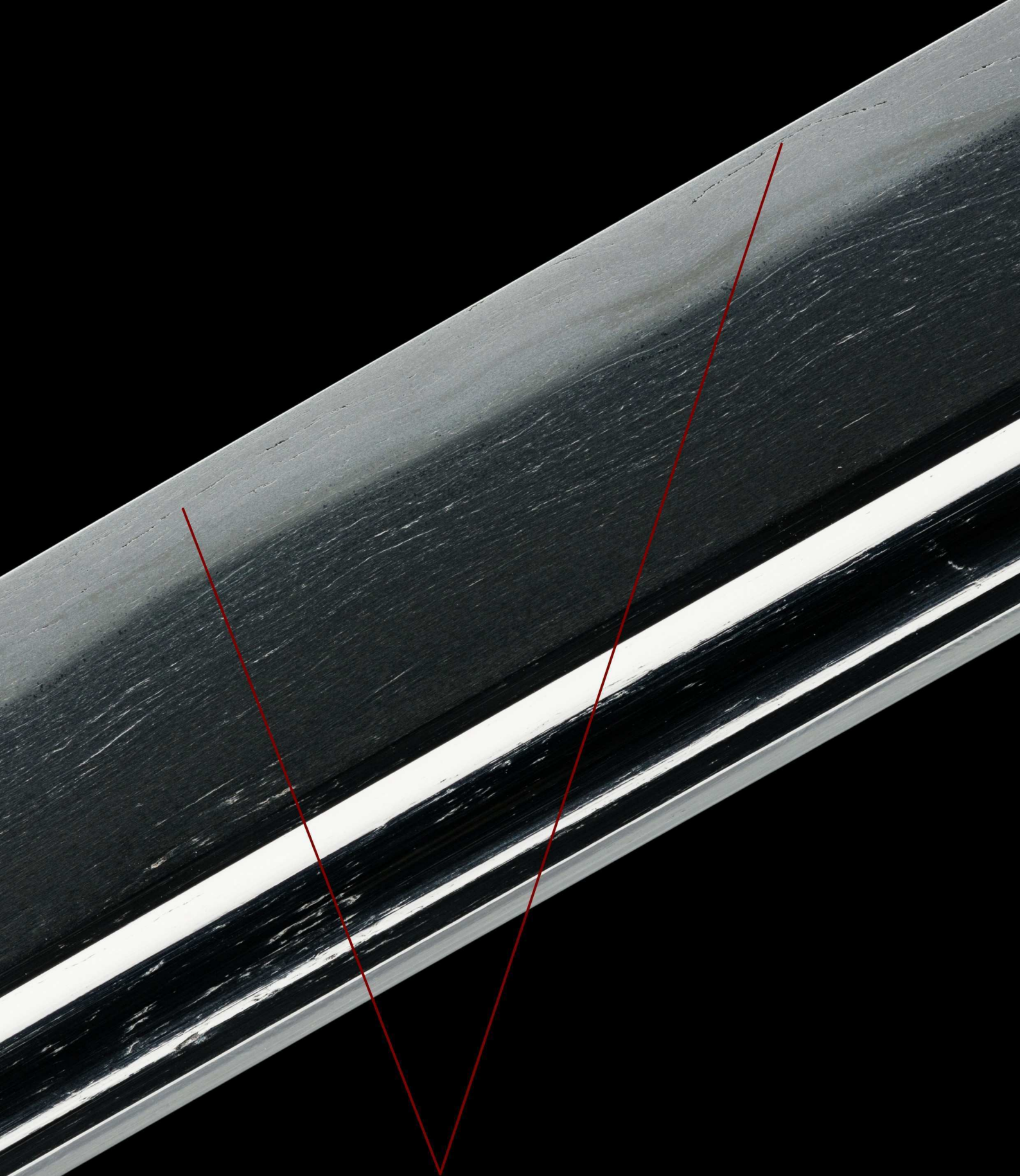
Welcome to the Yamato tradition.

Beautifully brushed *hakikake boshi*.






A bright *suguha* with a wide *nioguchi*,  
crystals that make up the hamon.



*Hada-ware* (crevices along the forging pattern) are very common and to be expected given the unique way the steel is forged with Hoshō-crafted swords.

A close-up, diagonal view of a sword blade. The blade is dark, almost black, with a bright, reflective edge. Two red lines point from text annotations to specific features on the blade's surface. The first line points to a dark, textured line, and the second line points to a smoother, more reflective line.


Gorgeous dark lines of *nie crystals*  
in the body are called *chikei*.

Tiny *nie crystals* shine  
evenly along the *hamon*.

A flowing river of steel.



The sword carries a full-length *bo-hi* (groove) to help lighten the sword and improve cutting ability.

A close-up, low-angle photograph of a sword's blade, focusing on the hamon (the edge of the blade). The blade is dark and textured, with a prominent, wavy pattern of light-colored metal (kensuji) running along the edge. The background is black, making the blade stand out. A red line points from the text below to a specific area of the hamon.

Masterful beams of *kinsuji* forge  
dark channels in the *hamon*.

A close-up, diagonal view of a sword blade. The blade is dark and shows a complex, swirling pattern known as sunagashi, which is formed by sweeping sand over the steel. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the texture and the curve of the blade against a black background.

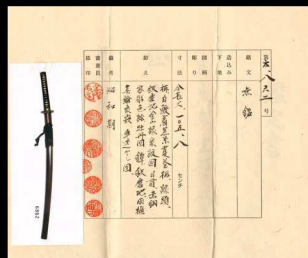
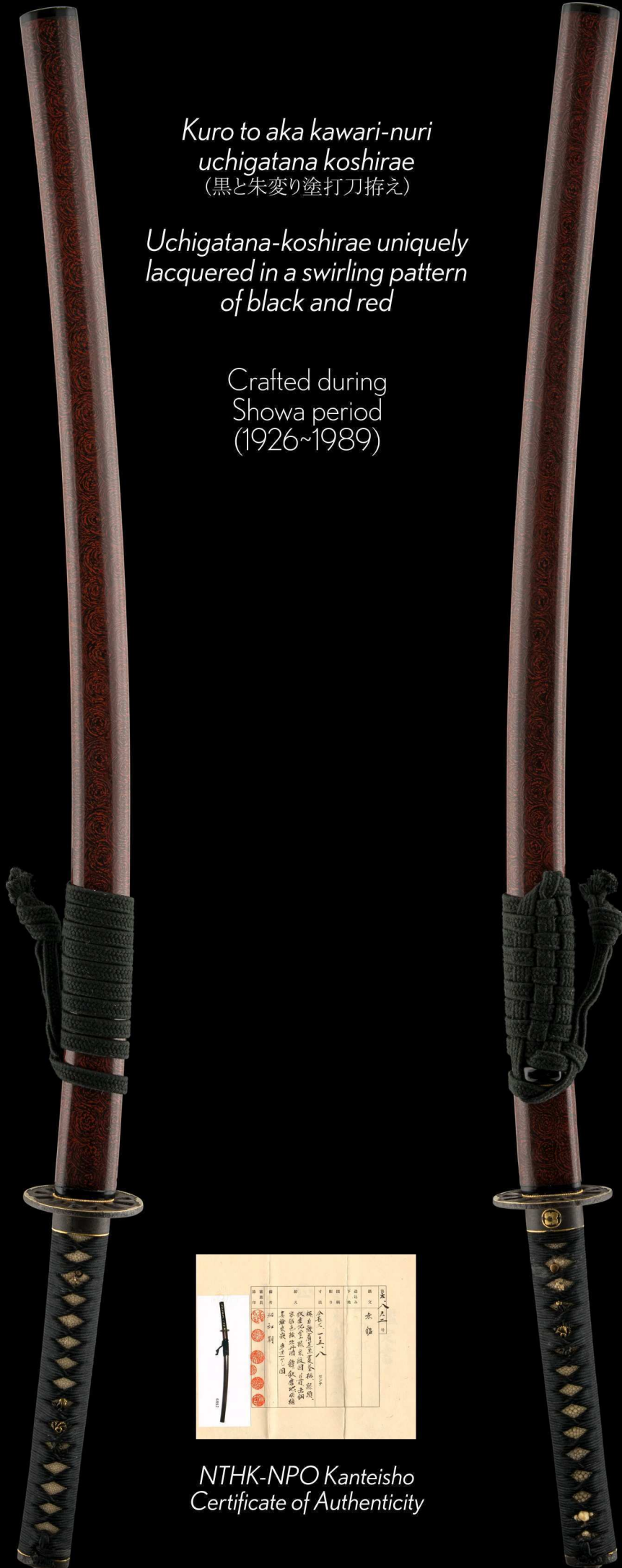
Sweeping sands of *sunagashi* dance with  
*masame-hada* to form joyous patterns in the steel.

This sword was polished by *Sasaki-sensei* in 2016  
- one of Japan's most respected sword polishers.

*Kuro to aka kawari-nuri  
uchigatana koshirae*  
(黒と朱変り塗打刀拵え)

*Uchigatana-koshirae uniquely  
lacquered in a swirling pattern  
of black and red*

Crafted during  
Showa period  
(1926~1989)



NTHK-NPO Kanteisho  
Certificate of Authenticity

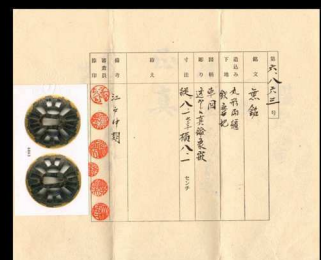
Vibrant whirlpools of black and red lacquer.  
A traditional Japanese Zen Buddhist rock  
garden comes to mind.



Komyozen-ji rock garden  
(Fukuoka, Japan)



A beautiful *Heianjo school zogan tsuba* in the openwork shape of a *kuruma* (cart wheel). Made of polished iron with brass inlay, this 300-year-old tsuba exudes sophistication, reminiscent of noble ox-drawn carriages known as *gosho-kuruma*.



NTHK-NPO Kanteisho  
Certificate of Authenticity  
crafted circa 1700-1780.



The *menuki* (decorative grips) carry a *botan* (peony) theme.  
In Japan, the peony is known as the "king of flowers".

The polished iron *fuchi-kashira* depicts the gold *Izutsu kamon* family crest.





The bold *Izutsu kamon* centred on the *kashira* (pommel).

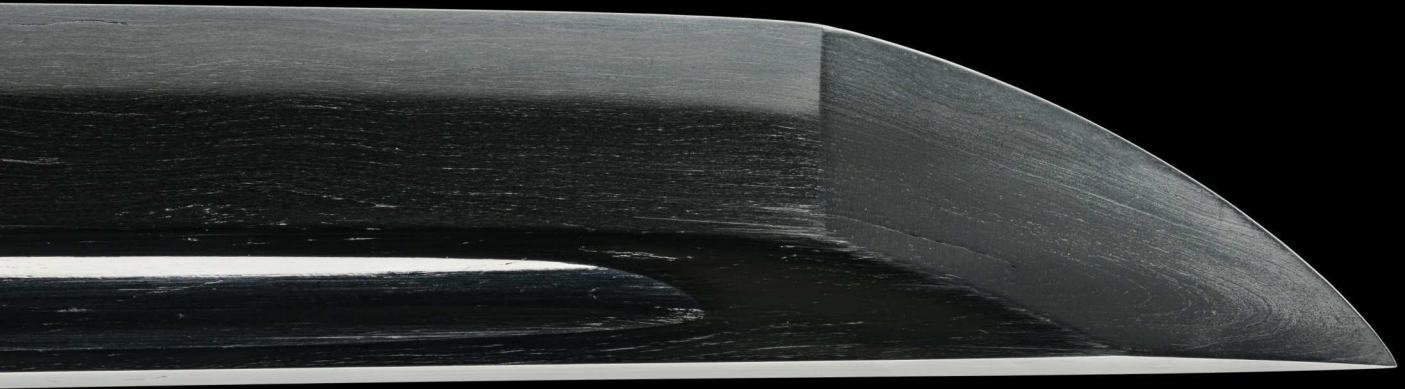
This *kamon* (crest) was used by *Sakai, Imai, Kitamura, Yamashita* families from *Seiwa Genji* stream, and *Ino, Hosoido, Kawai, Kakibe, Sueyoshi* from *Utagawa* family.

The shape is said to be inspired from the wooden frame placed on top of a well.



Parody of the *Tsutsu Izutsu* Story from the *Tales of Ise*

by *Hosoda Eishi* (1793)



Layers of history.  
Time to forge your own.

