



ITEM# UJKA190

AN UNJI KATANA

SIGNED, LATE KAMAKURA PERIOD (TOKUJI~GENKO ERA: 1306-1323)

- Swordsmith:** *Ukan Ju Unji (signed with gakumei framed inlay on tachi side)*
- Measurements:** **Length:** 65.4cm (*suriage*) **Curvature:** 1.8cm **Moto-haba:** 2.9cm
- Jihada:** *Ko-itame nagareru*
- Hamon:** *Suguha with wavy ko-notare*
- Certificate #1:** **NTHK-NPO Yushuto** (a sword designated as Highly Excellent by the Society for the Preservation of the Japanese Sword)
- Certificate #2-4:** **NTHK-NPO Kanteisho** (a sword, tsuba and koshirae designated as Authentic by the Society for the Preservation of the Japanese Sword)
- Fujishiro:** **Jo-saku** (ranked as a superior swordsmith)
- Included:** Shirasaya, koshirae, fabric bags, stand, kit, DVD, booklet, description

SOLD

The majority of *tachi* that exist from the golden Kamakura period (1185-1333) have been altered to present-day katana and wakizashi. In the shortening process, the original *mei* (signature) is often lost. With this unique sword, the *mei* was respectfully preserved and inlaid on the new *nakago* - a procedure known as *gakumei* (framed signature). Superior swordsmith *Unji* is of the famed *Ukai school*, pupil of *Unsho*. Based in Ukai village in Bizen, their roots are from the Yamashiro tradition and thus the blade exhibits such rich qualities. This is a beautifully polished sword with a handsome set of koshirae fittings that compliments this rare and interesting piece.

Saki-kasane: 4.4mm [^]

Moto-kasane: 6.1mm

Omosa: 540g

Saki-haba: 2.0cm

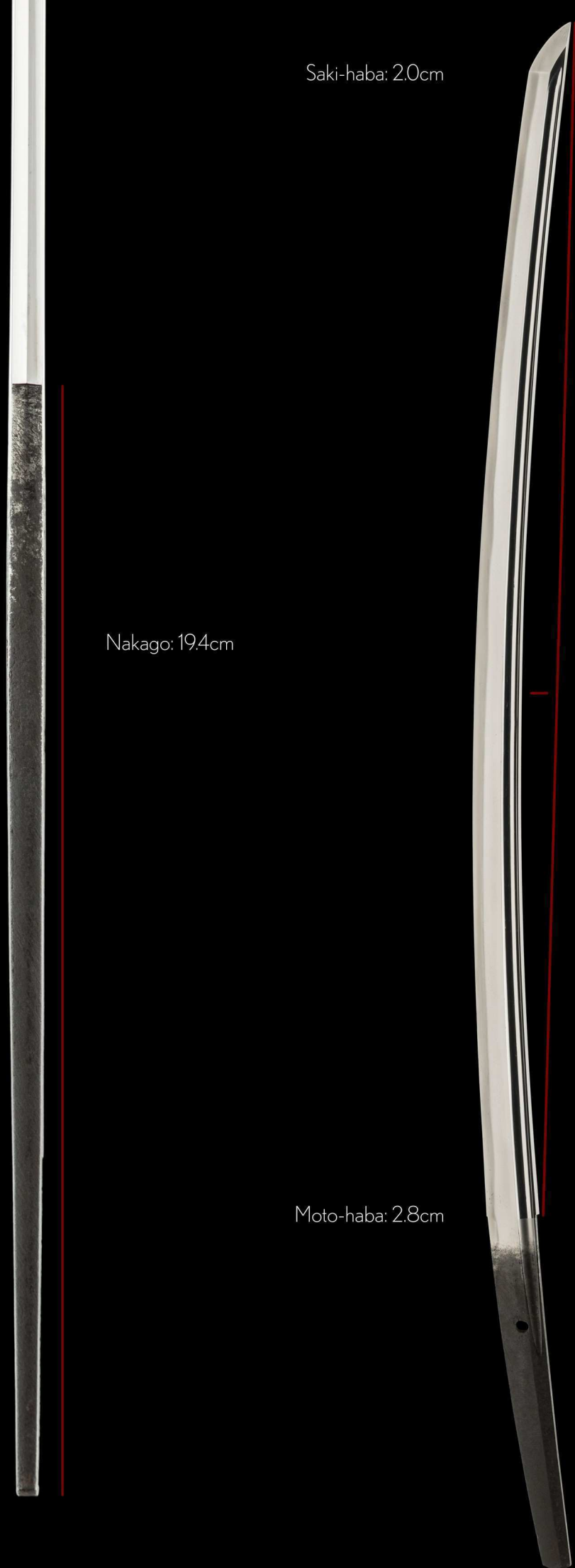
Nakago: 19.4cm

Moto-haba: 2.8cm

Nagasa: 65.4cm

Sori: 1.8cm

Mekugi-ana: 1





The graceful curvature of the Kamakura period

Location: *Ukan Ju* (living in Ukai, Bizen province)
Swordsmith: *Unji*



Minamoto Yoshitsune

This sword was once a long tachi that a samurai carried on horseback. It was shortened to a more practical katana length (from a standing position) during the late Muromachi to early Edo period.

The original *mei* (signature) is normally lost during the shortening process becoming an *o-suriage nakago*.


In this unique situation, out of respect for the sword and smith, the *mei* was preserved and inlaid as *gaku-mei* meaning 'framed signature' after the new *nakago* was formed.

Ukan or Ukai was a village in Bizen province where swordsmith Unji lived and worked.

U
kan
Ju
Un
ji

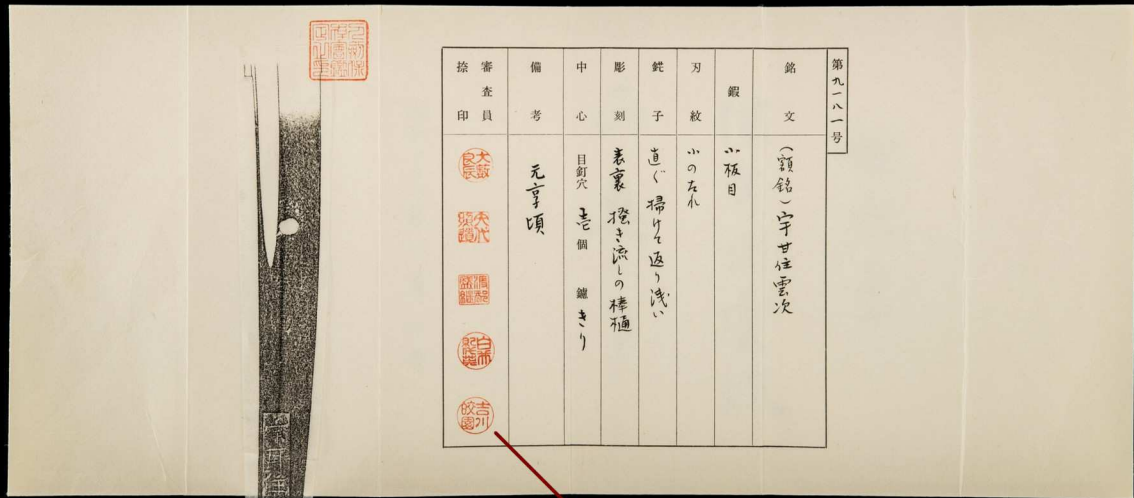
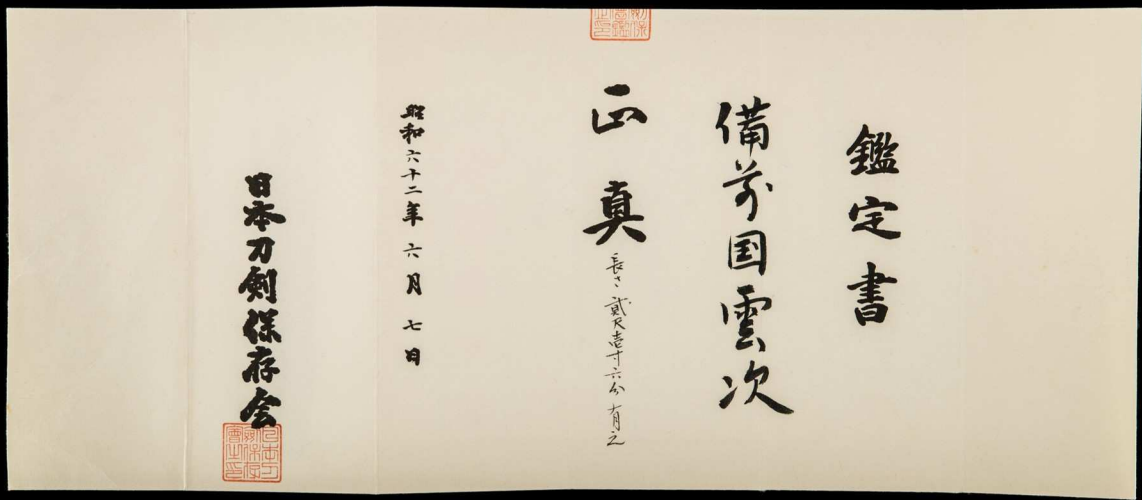
Gaku-mei
(framed signature)



A close-up photograph of a sword's nakago (tang) against a black background. The metal is dark and textured, with a rectangular area in the center containing a signature in raised characters. The signature is a 'gaku-me' signature, which is a traditional way of marking the tang of a sword. The characters are arranged in a vertical column, with a small circular mark at the bottom right of the signature area.

Note that the *gaku-me* signature was inlaid on the *tachi* side of the nakago as this sword was once a tachi, carried on horseback by samurai 700-plus years ago during the Kamakura period.

Interestingly, all smiths from the Ukai School carried the prefix of *Un*, meaning "cloud". The leading smiths are *Unjo*, *Unji* and *Unju*, collectively known as *Unrui* (Un family).



personal seal of Yoshikawa Koen sensei, respected scholar of the Japanese sword.

Vintage NTHK Kanteisho Certificate of Authenticity

This katana was designated as *Authentic* by the Society for the Preservation of the Japanese Sword

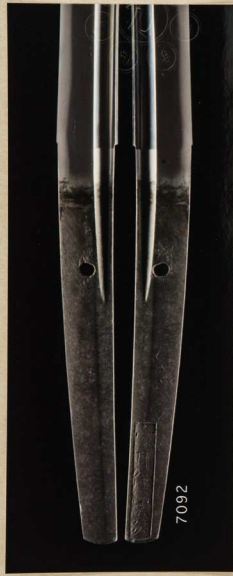
One, Katana

Mei (signature)
(Gaku-mei) Ukan Ju Unji

Nagasa (length)
2-shaku 1-sun 6-bu (65.4cm)

Issued in 62nd year of Showa (1987), June 7th

Nihon Token Hozon Kai
(NTHK)



捺 査 印 員	備 考	寸 法	拵 え	中 心	図 柄	形 り	鈍 子	刃 紋	下 地	鍛	造 り 込 み	銘 文	第 七 〇 九 二 号
	徳 治 頃			目釘穴 一個			掃 け て 返 る	直 刀 浮 れ る		板 自 流 れ る		額 銘、 辛 甘 任 云 次	
				鑑 切 り			表 裏、 拵 柄 中 心 に 縁 を 流 し					庵 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 27th year of Heisei (2015), December 13th

One, Katana

Mei (signature)
(*Gaku-mei*) Ukan ju Unji

Nagasa (length)
2-shaku 1-sun 5-bu (65.4cm)

Nihon Token Hozon Kai
(NTHK-NPO)

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

This katana will likely be published in a future book showcasing a collection of Yushuto awarded swords released by the organization.



kaki-nagashi

A *hi* (pronounced "hee") is a groove engraved on the *shinogi-ji*, the surface between the *mune* (spine) and the *shinogi* (ridge line) or the *hira-ji* (area between the *hamon* and *shinogi*).

A groove helps to make a sword lighter and aids in the cutting performance by taking on i-beam construction properties of absorbing energy.

On this sword, there is a *bo-hi* on the *omote* (front) and *ura* (back) of the blade.

The groove then becomes pointed and tapers about halfway down the *nakago* (tang). This is known as *kaki-nagashi*.



The *boshi* (hamon in the tip of the sword) has a brushed appearance thus referred to as *hakikake* meaning 'sweeping'.



The blade is polished beautifully.

Notice how the *hada* (steel skin) is crisp above and below the hamon.



mokume-hada, close up.



Light *utsuri*, whitish reflective areas
in the *jihada* near the *shinogi*.

ko-ashi
(legs, Yamashiro tradition-like)



A close-up photograph of a sword blade, likely a katana, showing the hamon (temper line). The blade is dark and polished, with a bright light reflecting off its surface. Two specific areas are highlighted with red boxes and lines pointing to text labels. The first label, 'kuichigaiba', points to a small rectangular area at the top of the blade where the hamon has been nibbled away. The second label, 'nijuba', points to a larger rectangular area on the blade where a second line runs parallel to the main hamon.

kuichigaiba, where the hamon is intentionally nibbled away.

nijuba, where a second line runs parallel to the main hamon

The founder of the *Ukai School* travelled to Bizen province from *Yamashiro* (Kyoto) thus the workmanship displays Yamashiro characteristics rather than those of the Bizen tradition.

The traits include *mokume-hada* (circular burl grain) mixed with *chikei* (dark swirls of nie crystals) with a hamon that is *chu-suguha* with *ko-gunome* or *ko-choji*. *Nijuba* (double hamon) also appears.

chikei

beautiful stream of *nie*

mokume-hada (burl grain)





Shirasaya
(protective scabbard)



Niju-habaki
(brass)



The *saya* (scabbard) is lacquered with a rich chocolate-brown colour. The *sageo* (cord) is made out of suede.





This is a splendid example of a *Ko-katchushi School* tsuba. It is hammered, polished iron with a raised rim.

Katchushi tsubas were made by armour makers and are highly collectible.

On the top there is a comma-shaped heraldic design along with three silhouettes of water mills or wheels.

This wonderful piece was crafted during *middle Muromachi period, 1400's*.



This tsuba is certified with NTHK-NPO Kanteisho certification



*Hokusai - Haiku and Happiness
(note the water mill/wheel)*





Menuki (decorative grips on the hilt) carry a *hyotan* (gourd) theme under a tightly wrapped smoked leather *tsuka* (hilt). The *samekawa* (ray skin) is lacquered black.

The gourd symbolizes happiness and success. *Hideyoshi Toyotomi* (1537-1598), former general and daimyo used a gourd motif as his battle marker. He would add further gourd motifs after each winning confrontation.



The *kashira* (pommel), carved and polished from horn, is wrapped elegantly.





Ukan
Unji