



ITEM# UJKA206

A CHIKUZEN MORITSUGU KATANA

SIGNED, EARLY EDO PERIOD (KANBUN ERA: 1673~1681)

- Swordsmith:** *Chikuzen no Kuni Fukuoka Ju Moritsugu saku (ubu nakago)*
- Measurements:** **Length:** 71.0cm **Curvature:** 2.0cm
- Jihada:** *Ko-itame hada with beautiful utsuri*
- Hamon:** *Gunome choji midare with sunagashi, kinsuji in nioi-deki*
- Certificate:** **22nd NBTHK Juyo Token** (a sword designated as *Profound and Important* by the Society for the Preservation of the Japanese Art Sword)
- Certificate #2:** **NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon** (a *fuchi-kashira* designated as *Especially Worthy of Preservation* by the Society for the Preservation of the Japan Art Sword)
- Certificate #3-4:** **NBTHK Hozon** (a *tsuba* and *menuki* designated as *Worthy of Preservation* by the Society for the Preservation of the Japan Art Sword)
- Ranking:** **Jo-saku** (a superior swordsmith)
- Sayagaki:** *Tanobe sensei, former director of the NBTHK*

This brilliant katana is the work of one of the finest smiths working in the Bizen tradition during the early Edo period, *Chikuzen Moritsugu*. Moritsugu is the younger cousin of founder of the Fukuoka Ishido school, *Koretsugu*, who studied under *Ishido Korekazu*.

The sword has rightfully achieved prestigious NBTHK Juyo Token status for this katana is a masterclass. The blade's hamon gives it the appearance that it is on fire. Moritsugu died in 1701 at the age of 89. A recently completed koshirae pays tribute to birds of prey - with NBTHK certifications for the *fuchi-kashira* and *menuki* (Nomura school) and the *tsuba* (Ishiguro school).

Saki-kasane: 5.0mm [^]

Moto-kasane: 7.2mm

Omosa: 835g

Saki-haba: 2.2cm

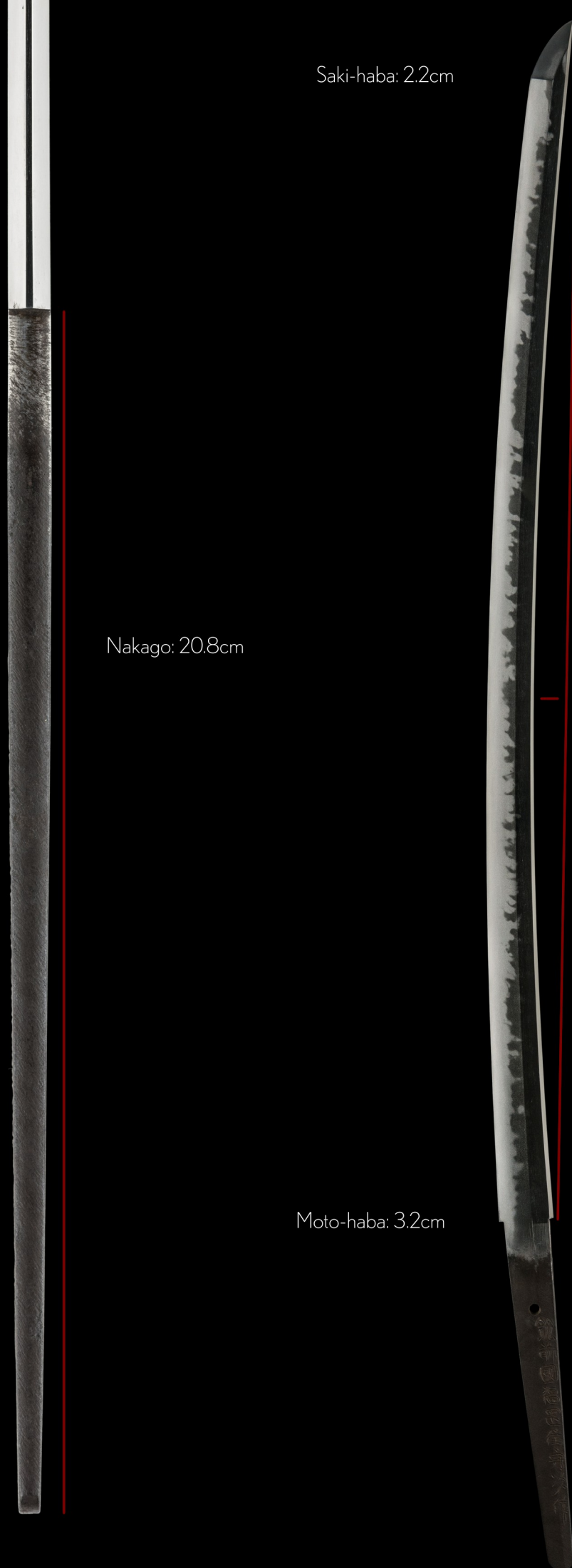
Nakago: 20.8cm

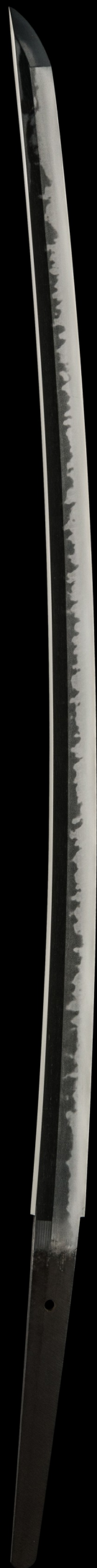
Moto-haba: 3.2cm

Nagasa: 71.0cm

Sori: 2.0cm

Mekugi-ana: 1







Province: *Chikuzen* (no kuni)

City: *Fukuoka*

Swordsmith: *Moritsugu*

Swordsmith Moritsugu crafted this katana while living in Fukuoka city in Chikuzen province.

Chiku

zen

(no) kuni

Fuku

oka

ju

Mori

tsugu

saku



重要第四七三號

指定書

刀銘筑前国福岡住守次作一口

長七〇〇釐 反り一七五釐 鋒長三六釐

鎬造三ッ棟中鋒 鍛小板目肌

つみ流れ証交じり乱れ映り立つ

刃文丁子乱れ小丁子小互の目交じり

茎生ぶ先栗尻 釘目筋違

目釘孔一

右者當協會に於て審査の結果

重要刀剣に指定する

昭和四十九年六月一日

鑒定人日本美術刀剣保存協会

会長 本間 順治



NBTHK Juyo Token
Certificate of Designation

a sword designated as *Important (profound)*
by the Society for the Preservation of the Japan Art Sword

Issued in the 49th year of Showa (1974), June 1st

One, Katana

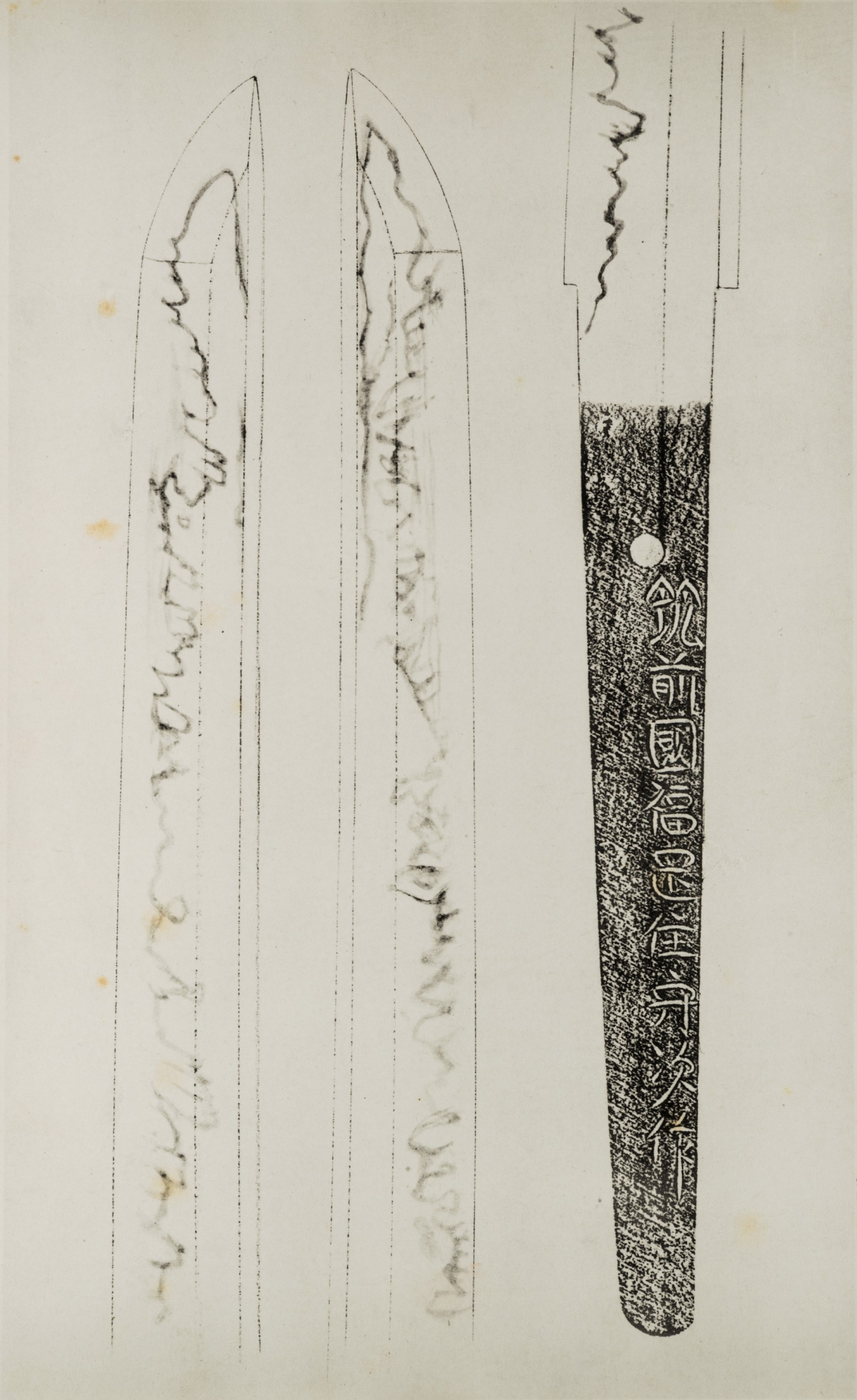
Mei (signature)

Chikuzen no Kuni Fukuoka ju Moritsugu Saku

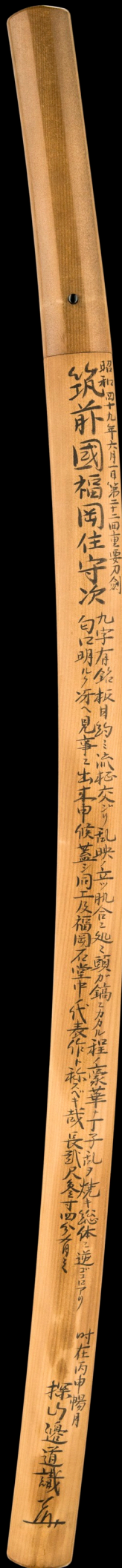
Nagasa (length)
71.0cm

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai
(NBTHK)

刀 筑前守次



Juyo Token White Paper (oshigata)



Showa 49-nen 6-gatsu 1-chi Dai 22 kai Juyo Token

Designated as 22nd Juyo Token on June 1st, 1974

**Chikuzen
(no) kuni
Fukuoka
ju
Moritsugu**

*9 Ji Ari Mei Itame Tsumi Nagare Masa Majiri Midare
Utsuri no Tatsu Hadaai ni Tokorodokoro Atama ga
Shinogi ni Kakaru Hodo no Gouka na Choji Midare
wo Yaki Soutai ni Saka Gokoro Ari Nioiguchi Akaruku
Sae Migoto na Deki Naran Doukou Oyobi Fukuoka
Ishido Chu no Daihyousaku to Syousu beki Nari
Nagasa 2 shaku 3 sun 4 bu arikore*

9 character signature. Tight wood grain pattern, mix of wavy and straight grain patterns, utsuri, gorgeous Choji midare temper line that is high as shinogi line, bright and sharp nioiguchi, well made, and representative work of Moritsugu and Fukuoka Ishido school. Length: 71.0cm

Jizai Heishin Chogetsu (2016 November)

Tanzan Hendoushiki (Kaou)

signed by Tanobe sensei with seal

A close-up, vertical view of a sword blade. The blade is dark and polished, with a prominent hamon (temper line) running down its length. The hamon is characterized by a series of irregular, wavy, whitish reflective areas that create a shadow-like pattern. The background is black, making the blade stand out. Two red lines point from the text on the right to specific parts of the hamon: one points to a section of the hamon, and another points to a section where the hamon's tip resembles the head of a squid.

Utsuri

Whitish reflective areas in the jihada forming a shadow-like pattern.

Moritsugu and his cousin *Koretsugu* of the *Chikuzen Ishido School* were known to produce a hamon in which the tip of the choji hamon resembled the *heads of squid*.



A sophisticated mix of *choji midare*,
ko-choji, *kogunome hamon*.

Parts of the *yaki* (temper) spill into
the *shinogi-ji*.



The *boshi* (temper line in the *kissaki*)
curls beautifully into the *mune* (spine).

A close-up, vertical photograph of a sword blade. The blade is dark and shows a distinct three-surface feature (mitsu-mune) near the tip. The surfaces are separated by sharp ridges. The blade is set against a light, textured background, possibly a wall or a wooden surface. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the texture of the metal and the sharp edges of the blade.

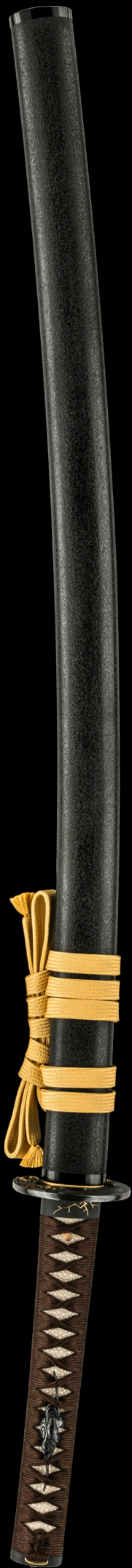
Mitsu-mune

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.

Mitsu-mune is relatively rare sight and always a treat.



kinsuji
golden (black) line cuts
through the hamon.





Tsuba

A remarkable tsuba attributed to the *Ishiguro School* - one of the most respected *tosougu* (fitting makers) in Edo period Japan.

The design is that of a raptor. The school was famous for their detailed depictions of birds of prey.

It was crafted during the late Edo period. Tsuba has NBTHK Hozon certificate of authenticity.



reverse



A pheasant in full flight.

This *fuchi-kashira* has achieved
NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon
attributing the work to the *Nomura School*.





Menuki (decorative grips on the hilt) carry heron/flowing water theme.



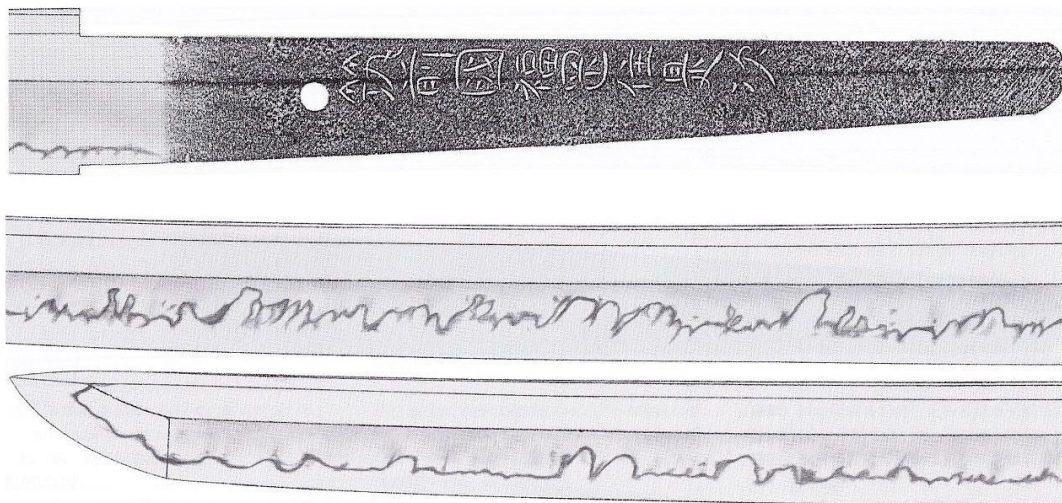
feel the fire.



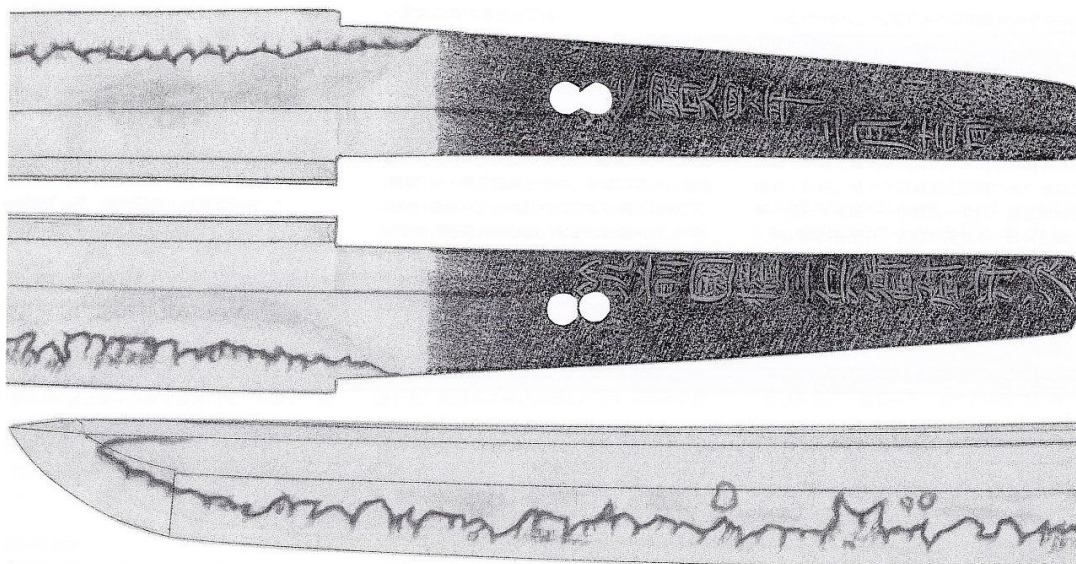
21.2 The Fukuoka Ishidō school (福岡石堂)

The founder of the Fukuoka-Ishidō school was **Koretsugu** (是次), the son of the Kan'ei-era (寛永, 1624-1644) Toshihide (利英) who in turn had moved from Chikugo to Chikuzen. Koretsugu signed with „Kazuhide“ (一英) and „Tomokuni“ (友国) at the beginning of his career and went to Edo in the first year of Meireki (明曆, 1655-1658) to study under Ishidō Korekazu (是一). Back in his home province he was hired by the Kuroda family (黒田) which meant the start for his own branch of the Ishidō school. Koretsugu counted himself as the 15th generation Bizen Norimune (備前則宗) and he was one of the best *shintō* smiths working in the Bizen tradition. Many of his blades show a clear *utsuri*. He forged a dense *itame* with *ji-nie* whereas some blades also show *masame*. His *hamon* is a *chōji* which tends to slant and is therefore a trademark of the Fukuoka-Ishidō school. The *bōshi* is a somewhat pointed *midare-komi* but appears also as *sugu* combined with a *ko-maru-kaeri*. His tangs have a *ha-agari-kurijiri* and *sujikai-yasurime*. Koretsugu died on the third day of the third month of Tenna one (天和, 1681) at the age of 53 without any heir and so his cousin **Moritsugu** (守次) succeeded as the 2nd generation Fukuoka Ishidō. Moritsugu was the son of the Kan'ei-era Chikuzen-smith Toshihira (利平) of whom hardly any details are known. Moritsugu in turn counted himself as the 17th generation which let us assume that Korekazu might have had a son after all. Some speculate that this son, who was counted as the 16th generation Norimune, died before his father. However, Moritsugu died on the sixth day of the fifth month of Genroku 14 (元禄, 1701) at the age of 69. He forged a dense *itame* with some *masame* and also applied an *utsuri* from time to time. His *hamon* is a *gunome-chōji* or *chōji* in *nioi-deki* whereas the individual elements are mostly slanting. But he also tempered a *nie*-laden *jūka-chōji*, *saka-chōji* or *suguha* and he made a name for himself as an excellent *horimono* carver.

Moritsugu's son forged for the Fukuoka fief under the name „**Morimasa**“ (守昌) and Morimasa's son **Moritsugu** (守次) was active around Meiwa (明和, 1764-1772). Morimasa's younger brother signed with „**Morikatsu**“ (守勝) and worked around Genbun (元文, 1736-1741). It is also said that the Kanbun-era (元文, 1736-1741) **Toshitsugu** (利次) belonged to the lineage of the 1st generation Moritsugu but only very few works are known from him. It is assumed that Toshitsugu was maybe the son of Koretsugu who died young.



Picture 295: *katana*, *mei*: „Chikuzen no Kuni Fukuoka-jū Koretsugu“ (筑前国福岡住是次), *nagasa* 70,3 cm, *sori* 1,5 cm, *shinogi-zukuri*, *mitsu-mune*



Picture 296: *wakizashi*, *mei*: „Chikuzen no Kuni Gonzōbei no Jō Moritsugu“ (筑前国権三兵衛尉守次) – „Enpō yonnen ni-gatsu-kichijitsu (延宝四年二月吉日, „on a lucky day of the second month of Enpō four [1676]“), *nagasa* 54,1 cm, *sori* 1,25 cm, *shinogi-zukuri*, *mitsu-mune*