



ITEM# UJKA259

A KO-GASSAN KATANA

UNSIGNED, EARLY MUROMACHI PERIOD (OEI ERA: 1394-1428)

Swordsmith: *Ko-Gassan School (attribution, mumei)*
Measurements: **Length:** 74.8cm (*ubu*) **Curvature:** 2.1cm **Moto-haba:** 2.7cm
Jihada: *Classic Gassan ayasugi-hada with utsuri*
Hamon: *Chu-suguha (straight) with slight undulations following the ayasugi wave*
Certificate: **NBTHK Hozon** (a sword Worthy of Preservation)
Certificate #2-4: **NTHK-NPO Kanteisho** (sword, tsuba and koshirae designated as Authentic)
Fujishiro: **Chujo-saku** (ranked as above average)
Included: Shirasaya, Edo koshirae, fabric bag, stand, kit, DVD, booklet, description

SOLD

The Gassan school is one of the most prestigious and successful lines of sword-forging in Japan and enjoys a close relationship with the imperial family. Their iconic *ayasugi-hada* continues to this very day by current Gassan head and Living National Treasure, *Gassan Sadatoshi*.

This katana has been dated to the first era of the Muromachi period, circa 1400. As it was made before the Edo period, it is referred to as *Ko (ancient) Gassan*. It is a long and graceful sword with classic *ayasugi-hada*, that resembles a pulsing soundwave. A straight *suguha hamon* knits its way neatly through the ayasugi forming a gentle wavy braid. It's a pleasure to handle and admire.

A very handsome 250-year-old *handachi-koshirae* with a mother-of-pearl flute pattern on the *saya* (scabbard) crowns this jewel admirably. There is history entrenched within this piece, its palatable. An influential family surely held this katana in their private collection for generations.

Saki-kasane: 4.0mm [^]

Moto-kasane: 6.5mm

Saki-haba: 1.6cm

Nagasa: 74.8cm

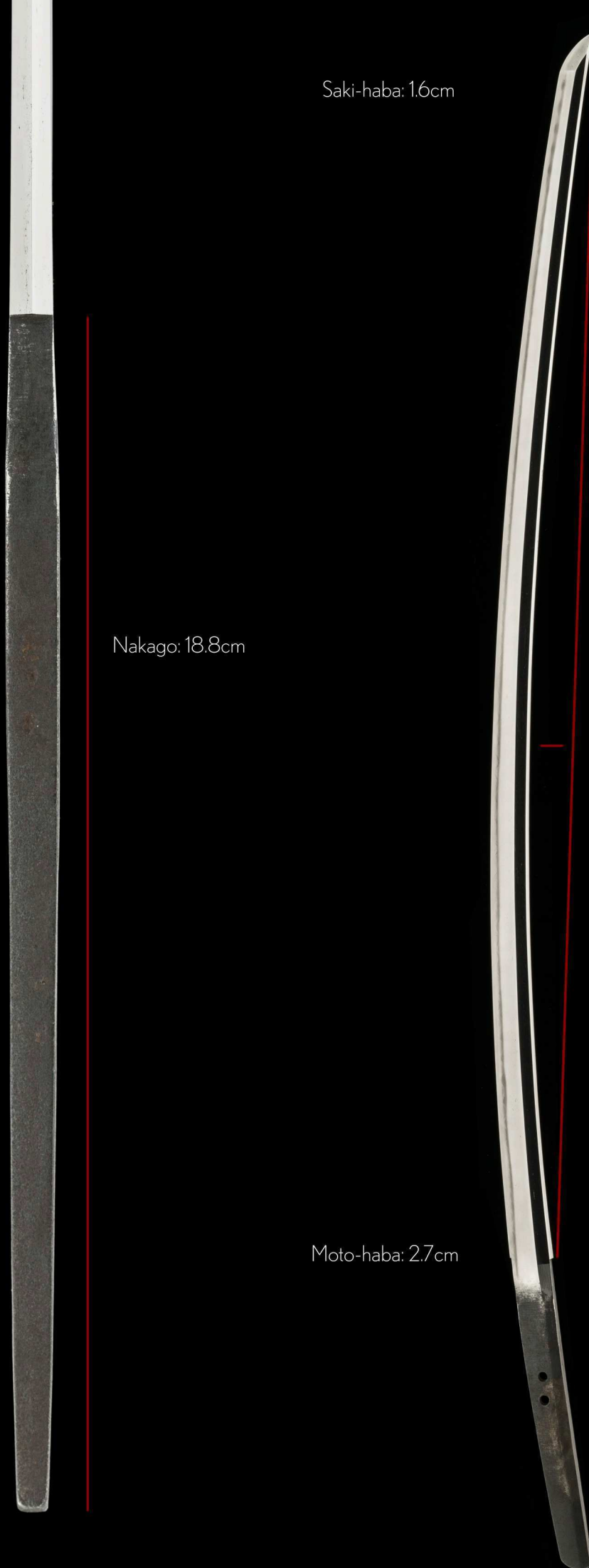
Nakago: 18.8cm

Sori: 2.1cm

Omosa: 650g

Moto-haba: 2.7cm


Mekugi-ana: 2



Elegant *torii-zori* shape, where the evenly distributed *sori* (curvature) resembles a *torii* (archway to a Shinto shrine).

The deepest point resting near the middle of the blade.





This katana was originally left unsigned by the swordsmith. Long after it was crafted, a Gassan signature was added to the *nakago* - an inscription known as *ato-mei*.

Many blades have inscriptions added later, however, as it is not by the original smith it will be judged as *gimei* (false inscription).

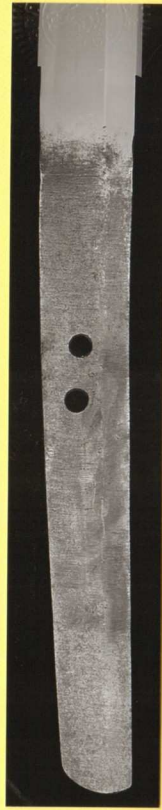
Therefore the signature was carefully removed and submitted to the NBTHK, which formally certified the blade to the *Gassan school*.

This is an *ubu-nakago* - original and unaltered tang length.

特 許
29201711



No 3016434



鑑 定 書

一 刀 無 銘 (月 山)

長 二 尺 四 寸 七 分

右は當協會に於て審査の結果保存刀剣と
鑑定しこれを証する

平成三十年三月十五日

公益財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協會



東京 教育委員会
第 317367 号
平成29年 6 月 17 日

NBTHK Hozon Certificate of Designation

A sword designated as *Worthy of Conservation*
by the Society for the Preservation of the Japan Art Sword

Issued in the 30th year of Heisei (2018), March 15th

One, Katana

Mei (signature)
Mumei, Gassan

Nagasa (length)
2-shaku 4-sun 7-bu (74.8cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai
(NBTHK)



捺 審 査 印 員	備 考	中 心	彫 刻	錠 子	刃 紋	鍛	造り 込 み	銘 文	第 八 三 五 九 号
	永 永 頭	目釘穴 二個	継 切 り	真作 先 銘 止 之 心 丸 返 り	中直 心 刃	板 目 鍛 之 証 み 綾 杉 肌 映 り 立 り	瑞 造 下 庵 棟	生 心 無 銘	

NTHK-NPO Kanteisho Certificate of Authenticity

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

One, Katana

Den Dewa, Ko-Gassan

Nagasa (length)
2-shaku 4-sun 7-bu (74.8cm)
ubu nakago, mumei

Crafted during *Ouei Era* (1394-1427)

Shinsa judging panel:
six hanko seals of authenticity

Issued in 29th year of Heisei (2017), April 17th

Nihon Token Hozon Kai
(NTHK-NPO)



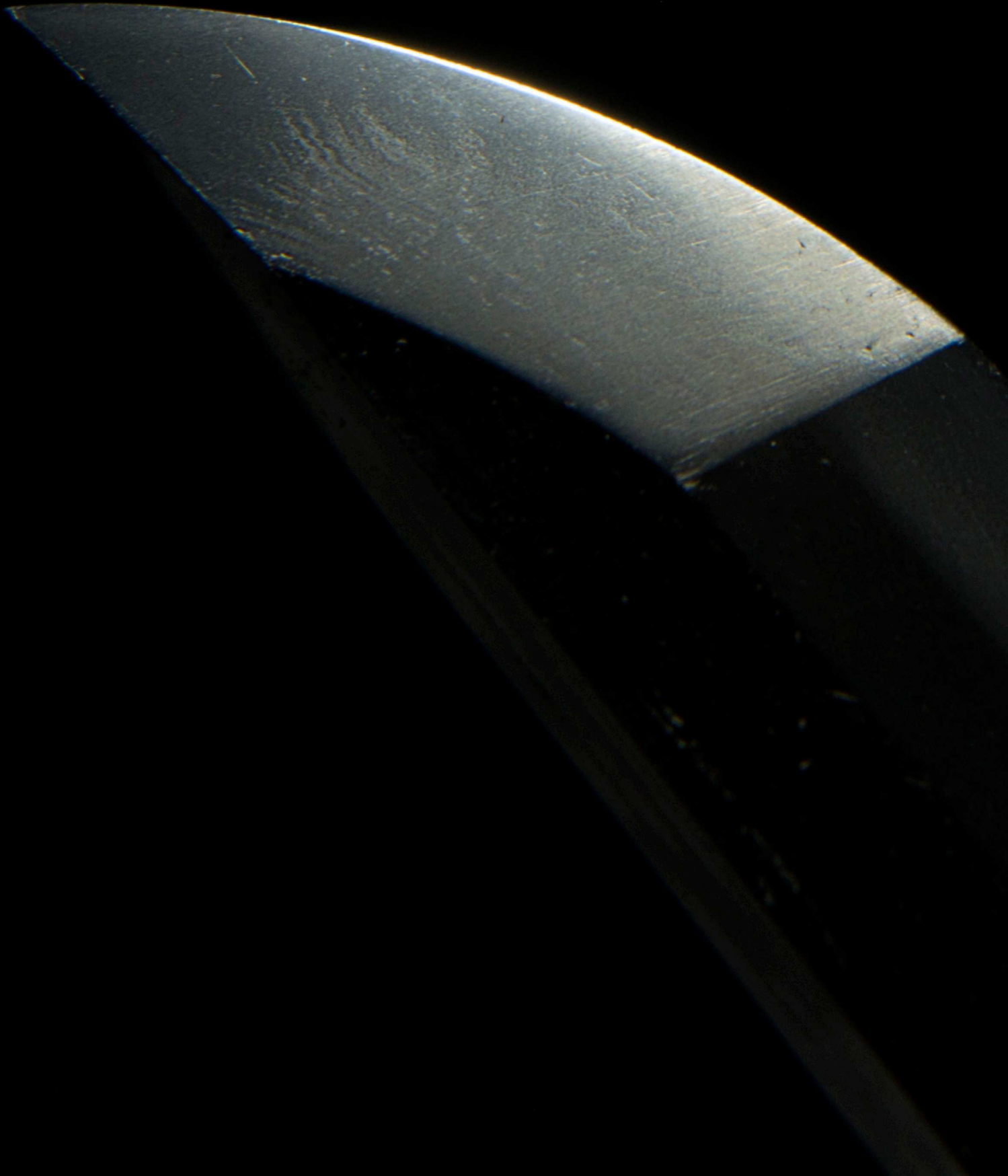
This unique wavy grain pattern in the steel is called *ayasugi-hada*. Also known as *Gassan-hada* (月山肌), this forging structure has remained the trademark of this iconic school for centuries.

Interestingly, this pattern is named after the special wavy carving pattern on certain *koto* or *shamisen* music instruments which enhances its resonance.



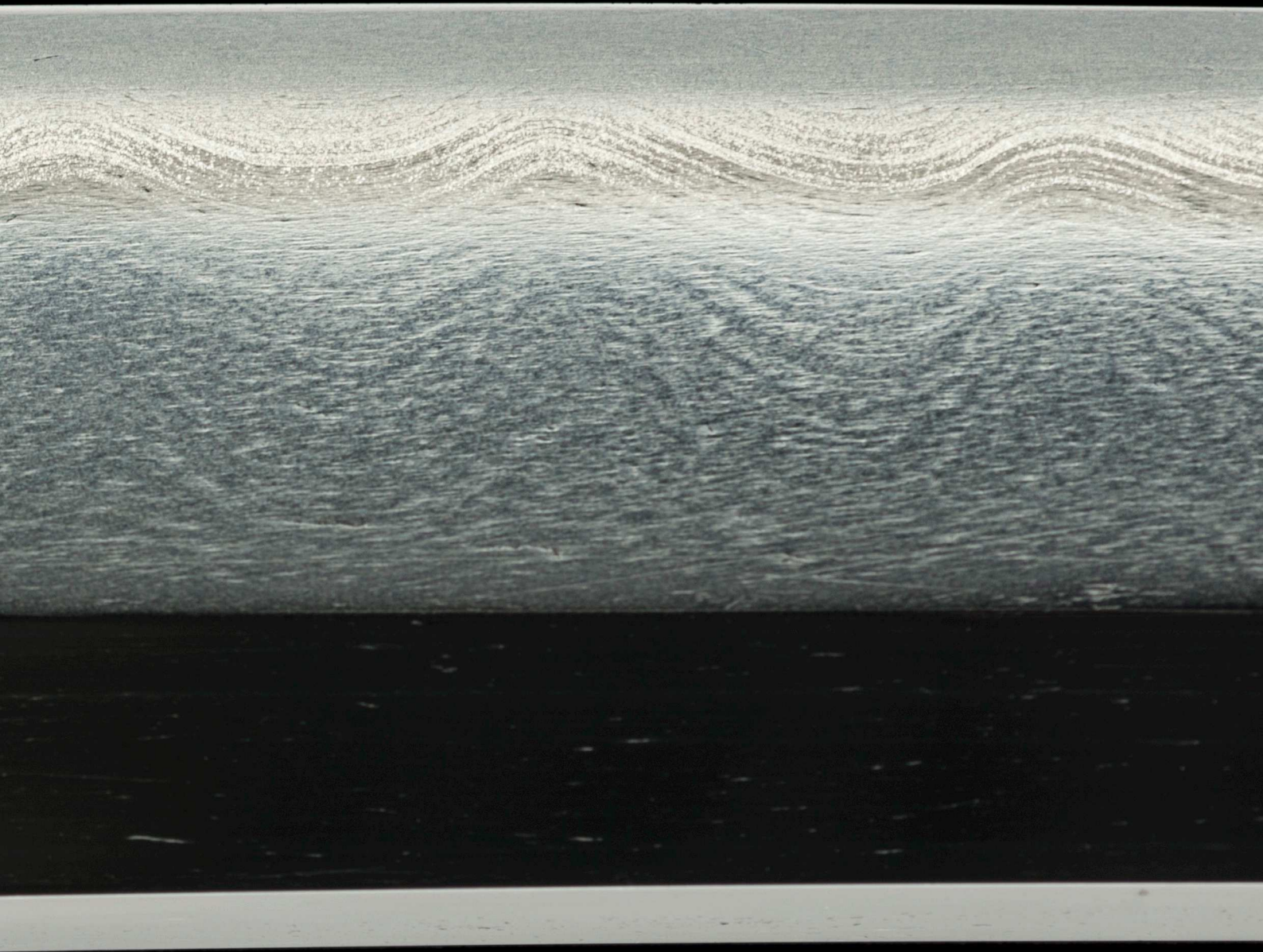
Koto
traditional Japanese musical instrument

Hakikake boshi (brushed tip)



The Gassan school derives from Mt. Gassan in the old province of Dewa (present-day Yamagata prefecture).

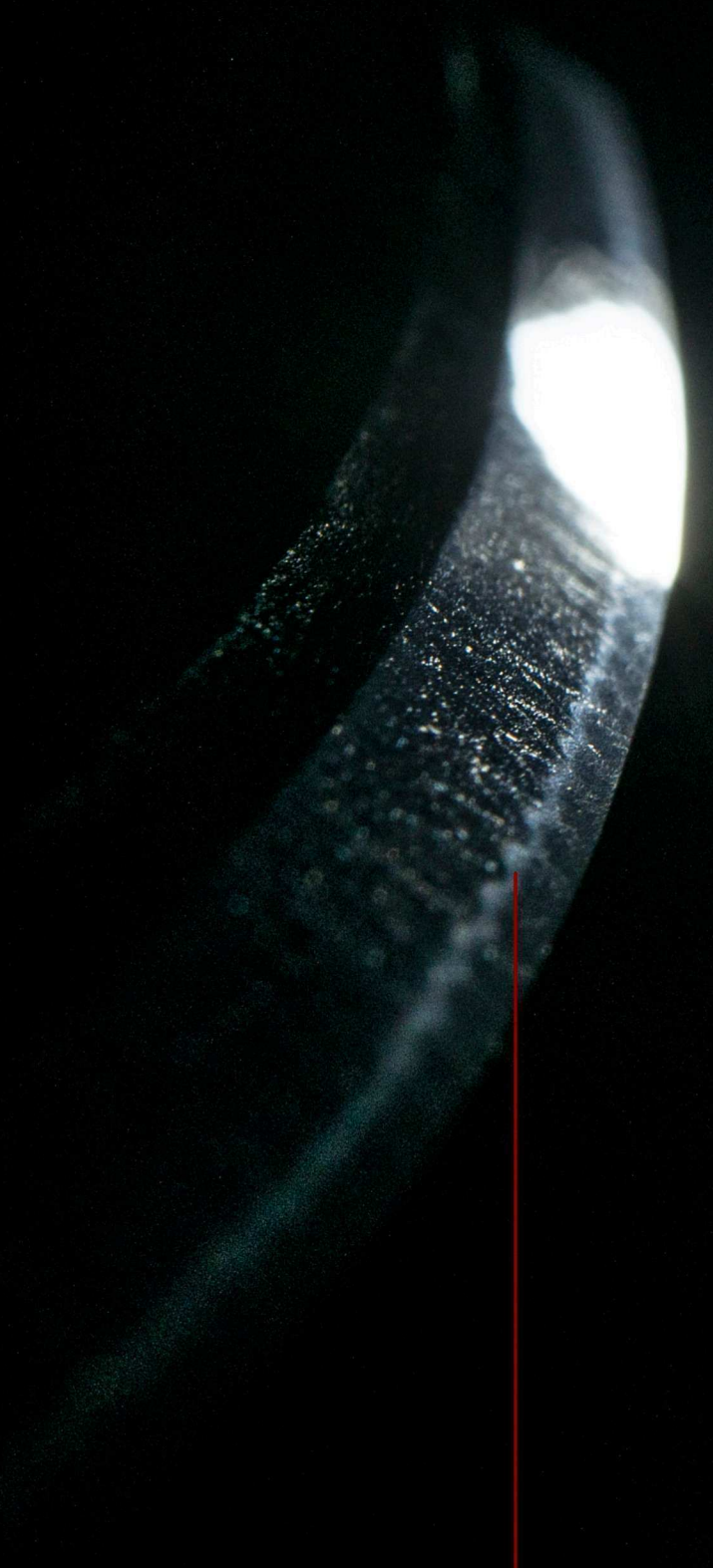
Mt. Gassan had been a training area of mountain priests since olden times and swordsmiths who used the smith name of Gassan existed there since the Heian Period, though, there is no signed work of Gassan before the end of the Nanbokucho Period (1394).





Meaning "reflection", a misty *utsuri* appears almost magically in the body of sword.

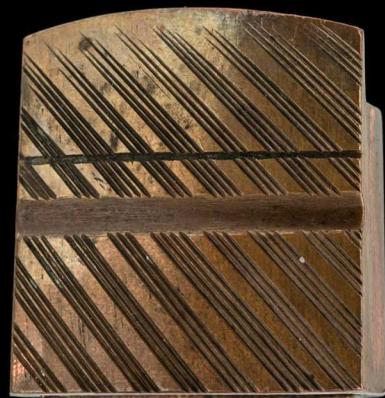
chu-suguha hamon
(mid-size straight temper line)



the *ayasugi-hada* places a
ripple effect on the hamon



Shirasaya
(protective scabbard)



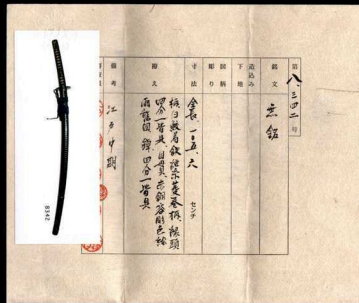
copper habaki

*Kuro Aogai Nuri Wake Fue Maki Saya
Shibuichi Kaigu Handachi Koshirae*

A gorgeous *handachi koshirae* with a black lacquer and crushed mother pearl striped design resembling a *fue* (bamboo flute).

The matching fittings are made of *shibuichi*, an alloy of 3/4 copper and 1/4 silver.

This is an antique set of *koshirae* certified to the end of the Edo period (1780-1867).



NTHK-NPO Kanteisho Certificate



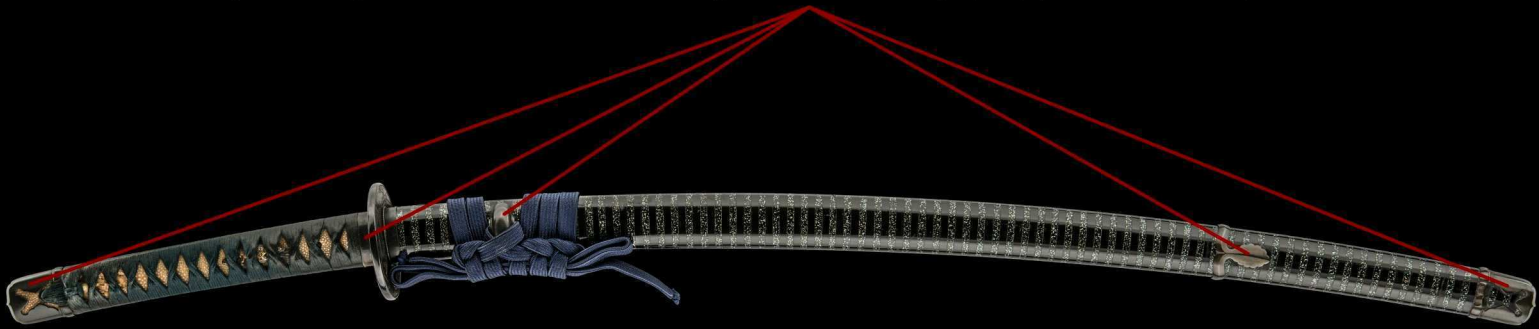
Raden fuemaki
the unique striped design pattern resembles
a traditional Japanese flute called *fue*.





This handachi koshirae has remained essentially unchanged since the last samurai of the Edo period who owned this piece (early 1800s). Even the *samekawa* (ray skin), while damaged in parts, is original, and should be left to age gracefully.

All major fittings are made of matching *shibuichi* alloy (copper/silver mix).



Handachi koshirae (literally “half tachi”) is a hybrid form of the *tachi koshirae* carried on horseback and the *uchigatana koshirae* which drew the sword from a standing position. The handachi originated as semi formal attire of the *bushi* (samurai class) during the Kamakura period, circa 13th century.





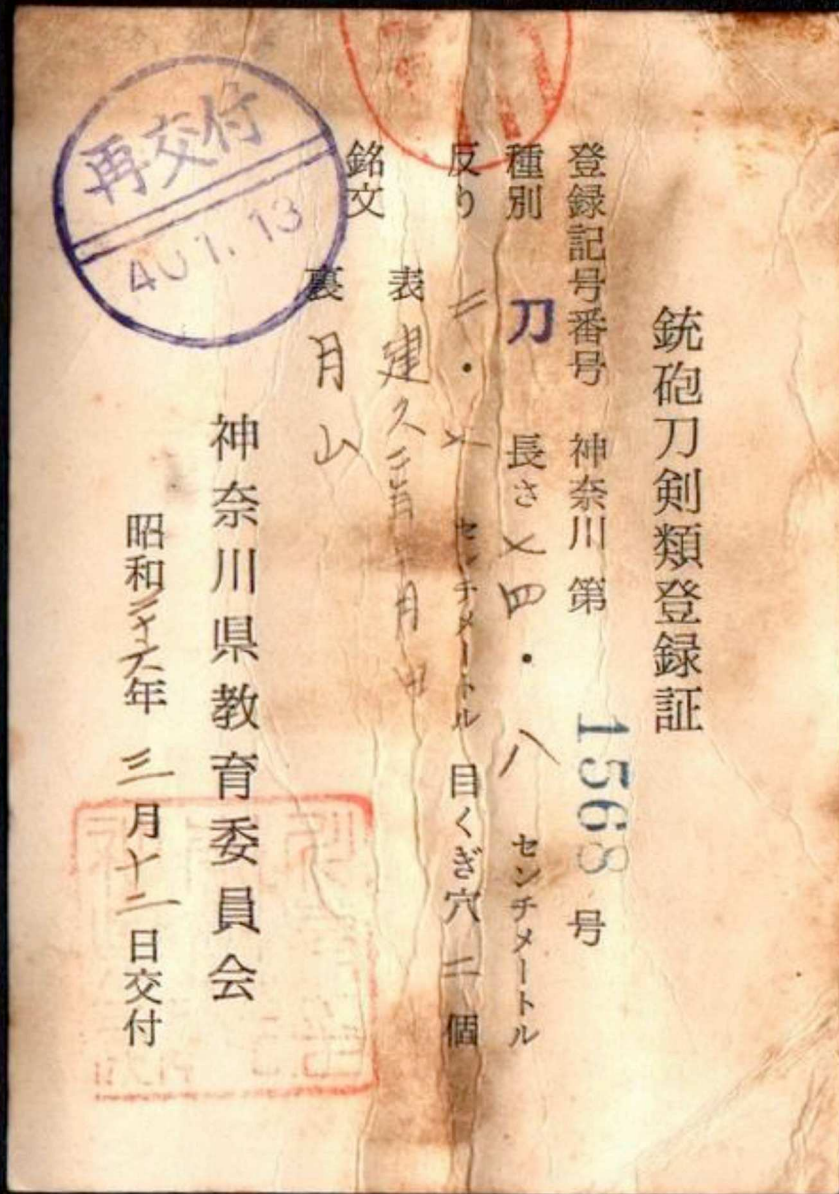
carved by Zoko

A polished iron tsuba from the *Kishu school* from the late Edo period, 1780-1867. The work is signed by *Zoko* and features a *inoshishi* (wild boar) relaxing under a tree. Light relief engravings of peony flowers decorate the scene.





Menuki in the form of rain dragons spiritually protect the sword and owner.



This is the original *torokusho* (registration card) for the Gassan katana. The card was registered in the 26th year of Showa (March 12, 1951) in Kanagawa.

This is significant as 1951 was the very first year that swords were formally registered in Japan. Many former Daimyo families were invited to submit their collections suggesting this blade was once held by a prominent family.

The serial number is just 1568, one of the very first swords registered in Japan.

Feel the music.

