



ITEM# UJKA298

A YAMATO SHIZU KATANA

UNSIGNED, LATE KAMAKURA PERIOD (CIRCA 1319~1330)

Swordsmith: *Yamato Shizu (attribution, o-suriage mumei)*
Measurements: **Length:** 72.05cm **Curvature:** 1.1cm **Moto-haba:** 2.9cm **Weight:** 700g
Jihada: *Pronounced itame and nagare-hada with o-itame, ji-nie and chikei*
Hamon: *Ko-nie-laden shallow notare-cho mixed with gunome, togariba, ko-gunome, ko-ashi, and hotsure, kuichigai-ba, uchinoke, yubashiri, sunagashi and kinsuji*
Horimono: Full length *bo-hi* (groove) on both sides with *kaki-nagashi* into the tang
Certificate: **50th NBTHK Juyo Token** (a sword designated as *Profound and Important*)
Included: Shirasaya, fabric bag, stand, kit, DVD, booklet, printed description

SOLD

Kaneuji is one of the ten disciples of the great swordsmith *Masamune*, known collectively as *Masamune no Juttetsu*. He is thought to have migrated from Yamato province (Nara). *Kaneuji's* first sensei was *Kanenaga* of the *Tegai school* and inherited the kanji character for 'Kane' from him.

After studying with *Masamune*, his work took on a mixture *Soshu* and *Yamato* traditions. Of all the students, he is considered to have most closely replicated the style of *Masamune*. When *Kaneuji* left *Masamune* in *Kamakura*, he settled in the town of *Shizu* in *Mino* province. His blend of *Soshu* and *Yamato* traditions was so unique that he is become known as the founder of the *Mino* tradition, the fifth *Koto* tradition. He later became known by the nickname "*Shizu*".

After Kaneuji died, his students moved the forge to the village of *Naoe* in Mino. Their school became known as *Naoe Shizu*. Swords made when Kaneuji was in Yamato are given the name *Yamato Shizu*, though it precedes his time in Shizu. Yamato Shizu is also used for the school he left behind in Yamato that faithfully carried on into the late Nambokucho period (mid-1300s).

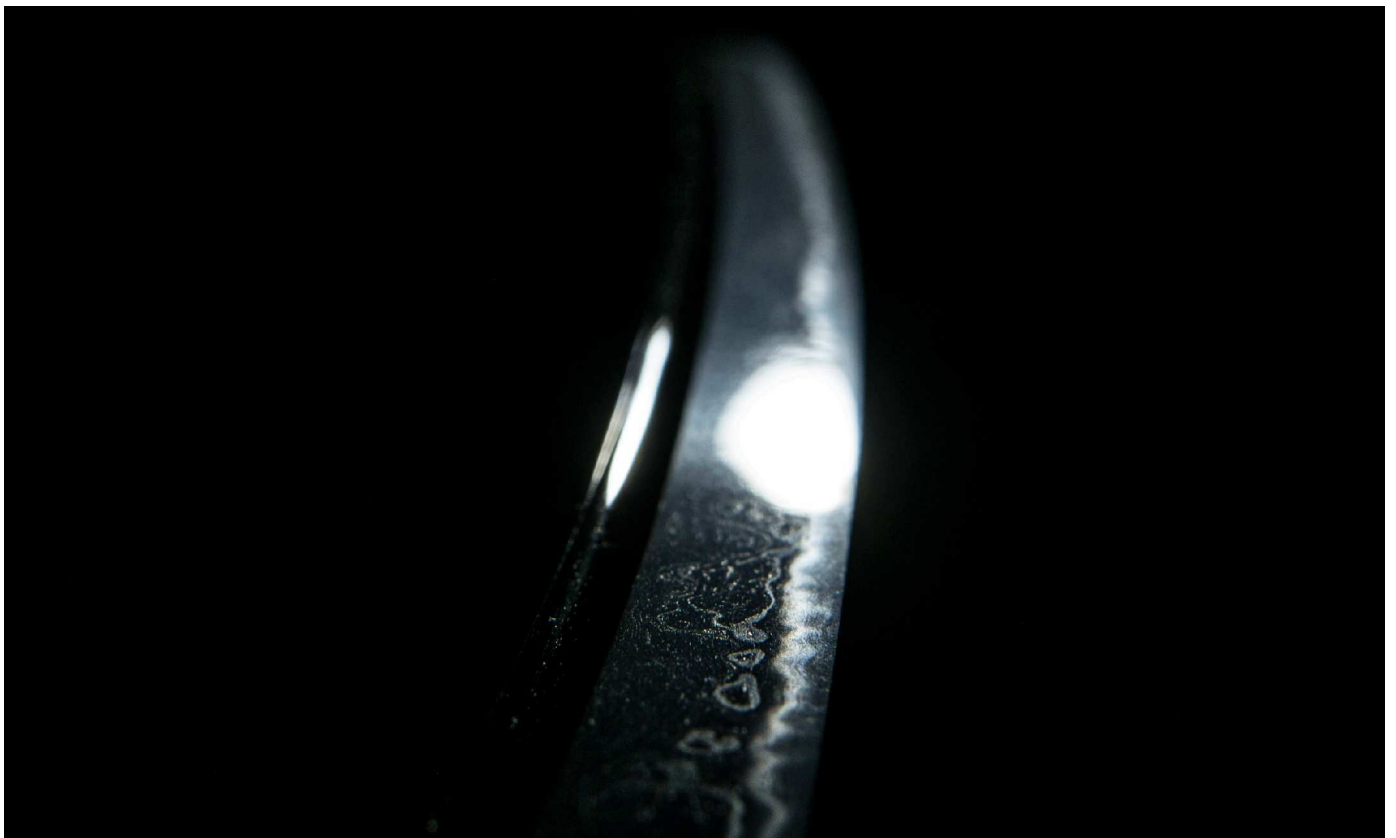
This long and vibrant katana epitomizes the work of Kaneuji and his students in Yamato province. Take first the imposing structure of the katana, which is muscular and awe-inspiring. The thick *kasane* (spine) with high *shinogi* (ridge) and plenty of *niku* (meat) speaks emphatically to the Yamato tradition and the late Kamakura period. This is a sword that has stood the test of time. Quite literally, seven centuries of warring experience under its *obi* (belt).

Moving one's eye to the body of the blade showcases a magnificent blend of the brilliant *Tegai school* and the energy of the Soshu tradition. Vivid spirals of *o-itame* burl grain jump out of the blade. The *jihada* also takes on a waviness in places called *nagare-hada*. Beautiful dark lines of *chikei* are infused in the steel. Like all great swords, it shines with *ji-nie*.

As Kaneuji is a father to the Mino tradition, we see parts of the *hamon* that are *togari* (pointed) - an important characteristic to pick up on. There is an overall flowing *notare* (wave) tight semi-circular undulations called *ko-gunome*.

If there ever was a blade to study *hataraki* (activity) in a blade, this is one such piece. Everything from *kinsuji* (golden lines) to *sunagashi* (brushed sand), to half-moon *uchinoke* (very Tegai) and gorgeous *yubashiri* that look like droplets of water (see image below). There is even *kuichigaiba*, a classic Yamato trait where the hamon overlaps, forming parallel lines for a certain distance.

Every time a sword of this quality is examined, a new bit of sensory treasure will reveal itself. The NBTHK describes this katana as "*Masterwork of the Yamato Shizu school*". It's clear to see why. There is a magic within this steely creation that is most worthy of any serious collection.



droplets of *yubashiri* ('running hot water')

Saki-kasane: 6.1mm [^]

Moto-kasane: 7.4mm

Omosa: 700g

Kissaki: 2.8cm

Saki-haba: 2.1cm

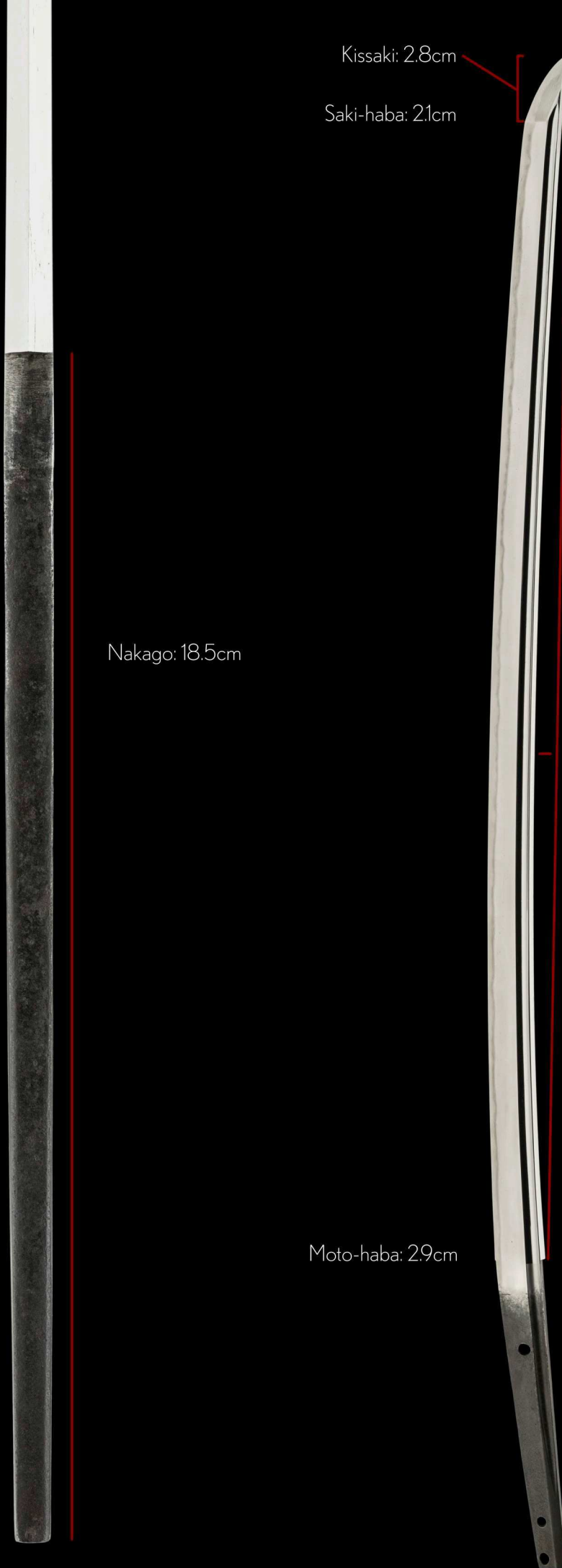
Nakago: 18.5cm

Moto-haba: 2.9cm

Nagasa: 72.05cm

Sori: 1.1cm

Mekugi-ana: 3



The NBTHK Juyo Token certificate highlights the *keijo* or 'shape of the blade' as having a wide *mihaba* (width), and a thick *kasane* (spine area).

These characteristics make a sword 'healthy' - a quality that the NBTHK sword museum prizes on older pieces, such as on this Yamato Shizu katana.

This katana was crafted in the early 1300s during the late Kamakura period - the golden era of Japanese sword making over 700 years ago.

It radiates a strong and powerful presence.



This katana carries an *o-suriage nakago*, where the *nakago* (tang) is greatly shortened. The new nakago is formed from what was originally part of the blade.

In o-suriage blades the original *mei* (signature) is lost, although sometimes preserved as an *orikaeshi* (folded-over signature) or *gakumei* (framed signature).

This bottom *mekugi-ana* (hole) is likely original to the blade.





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 katana, 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*.

16200450

重要第一九三九號

指定書

一、刀 無銘 伝大和志津 一口

法量 長さ七二・〇五種 反り一・二種
形状 鑄造 庵棟 身筒 広め 反り浅くつき 中鋒 延かこころ
鍔 板目 総体に流れこころに 天板目 交わり 肌立 立ちこころに
地沸つき 地景入り

刃文 浅いたれを基調に互の目・夾り刃 交わり 小足入り 小沸よく
つき 総体にほつれ 喰違刃・打のけ・湯走りなどを交え
砂流し かり 金筋入り
帽子 直ぐ調に先ふんに掃きかりて 焼かめ風
彫物 表裏に 柃樋を 掻き流す
茎 天磨上 鑢目筋違 目釘孔三

右者當協會に於て審査の結果
重要刀劍に指定す

平成十六年十月十五日

財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協會
會長 橋本龍太郎



NBTHK Juyo Token Certificate of Designation

A sword designated as *Profound and Important* by the Society for the Preservation of the Japan Art Sword

Issued in the 16th year of Heisei (2004), October 15th

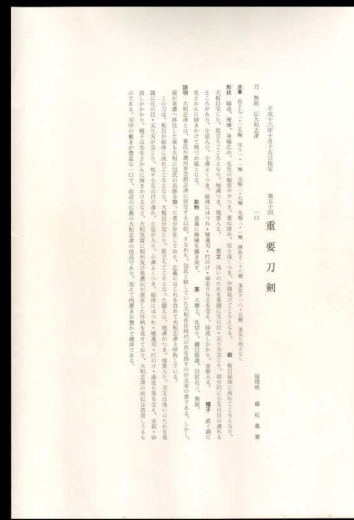
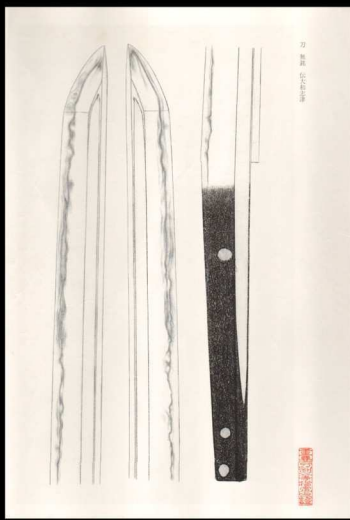
Katana, mumei

Den Yamato-Shizu (伝大和志津)

Length: 72.05cm Curvature: 1.1cm

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai (NBTHK)

[President] Hashimoto Ryutarō (橋本龍太郎)



Below is a translation of the Juyo Token 'white paper'.

Designated as Juyo Token (a profound and important sword)
50th juyo shinsa held on October 15, 2004

Katana, *mumei*: **Den Yamato-Shizu** (伝大和志津)

Measurements:

nagasa 72.05cm sori 1.1cm motohaba 2.9cm sakihaba 2.1cm kissaki-nagasa 2.8cm
nakago-nagasa 18.5 cm, only very little nakago-sori

Description:

Keijo: *shinogi-zukuri*, *iori-mune*, wide *mihaba*, rather noticeable taper, thick *kasane*, shallow *sori*, somewhat elongated *chu-kissaki*

Kitae: rather standing-out *itame* that tends overall to *nagare* and that is mixed with *o-itame*, in addition, *ji-nie* and *chikei* appear

Hamon: *ko-nie-laden* shallow *notare-cho* that is mixed with *gunome*, *togariba*, some connected *ko-gunome* in places, and *ko-ashi*, and all over the blade with *hotsure*, *kuichigai-ba*, *uchinoke*, *yubashiri*, *sunagashi* and *kinsuji*

Boshi: *sugu-cho* which runs out in *yakitsume* manner and which features plenty of *hakikake*

Horimono: on both sides a *bohi* that runs with *kaki-nagashi* into the tang

Nakago: *o-surige*, *kirijiri*, *sujikai-yasurime*, three *mekugi-ana*, *mumei*

Remarks

Initially, the term *Yamato-Shizu* referred to *Kaneuji's* (兼氏) time in Yamato, i.e. before he moved to Shizu in the Taki district of Mino province and when he still signed his name with the characters (包氏). However, there were some smiths remaining in Yamato who continued the Kaneuji (包氏) name so in the wider sense, the classification *Yamato-Shizu* can include these smiths too.

This blade shows a rather standing-out *itame* that tends to *nagare* all over, that is mixed with *o-itame*, and that features *ji-nie* and *chikei*. The *hamon* is a *ko-nie-laden notare-cho* that is mixed with *gunome*, *togariba*, some connected *ko-gunome* in places, and *ko-ashi*, and all over the blade with *hotsure*, *kuichigai-ba*, *uchinoke*, *yubashiri*, *sunagashi* and *kinsuji*. The *boshi* shows plenty of *hakikake* and when we combine all this, we recognize characteristics of the Yamato tradition that are mixed with *Soshu* and *Mino* elements whereupon we were in agreement to attribute this blade to *Yamato-Shizu*.

The *ha* is rich in *hataraki* and we have here a masterwork from the wider sense of the above-mentioned *Yamato-Shizu* classification. In addition, the blade has plenty of *niku* and very healthy.

itame hada (standing out)

hakikake (sweeping sand in boshi)

yakitsume (hamon has no turn-back, goes to mune)

刀
無銘
伝大和志津

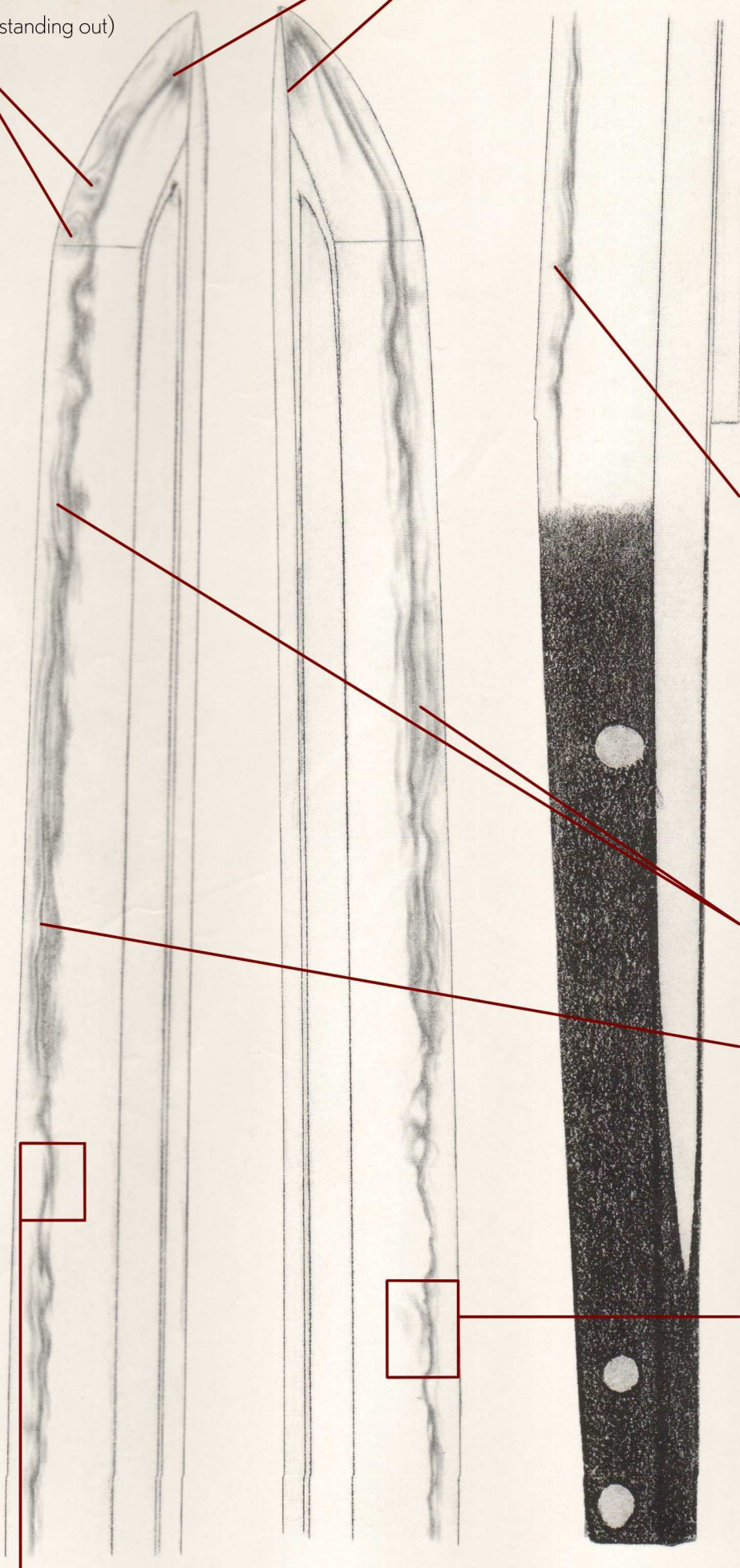
togari (pointed area of hamon)

sunagashi (sweeping sand)

kinsuji (black 'golden lines')

uchinoke (crescent moon)

kuichigai-ba (hamon splits and overlaps)

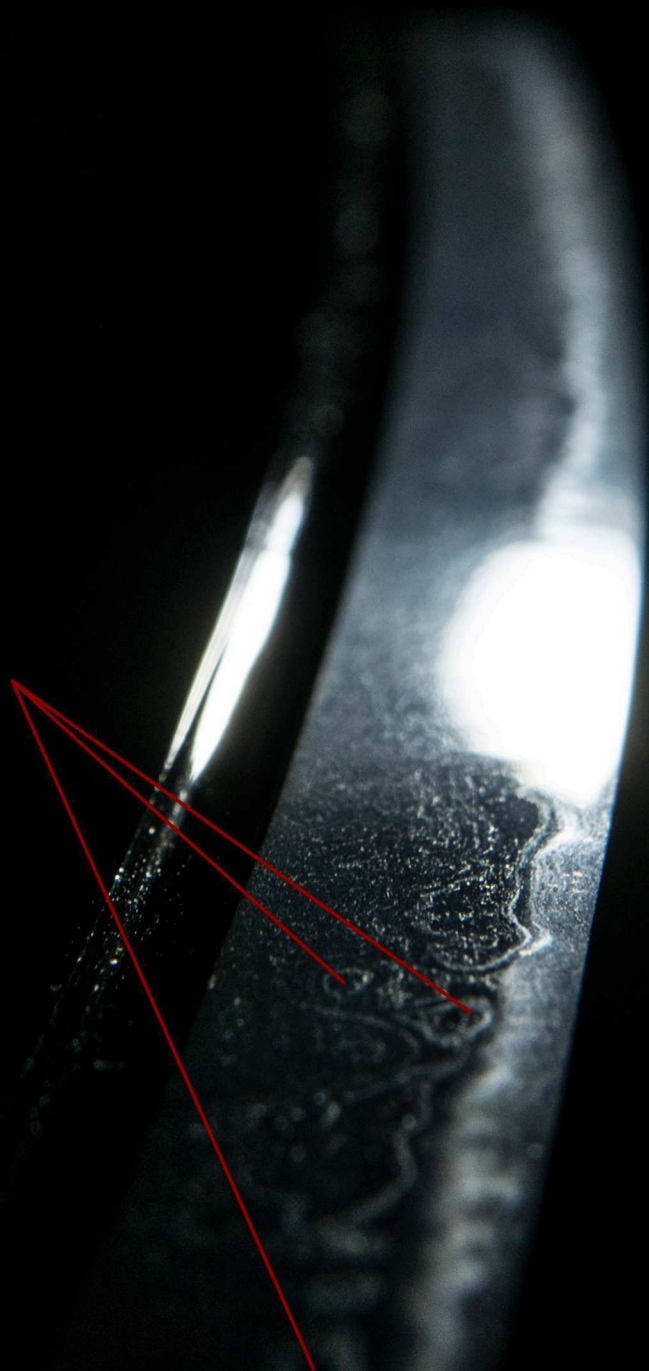



"The *ha* is rich in *hataraki*...a masterwork from the wider sense of the Yamato-Shizu classification."

50th NBTHK Juyo Token
October 15, 2014

yubashiri - concentrated spots of *nie* crystals that resemble droplets of water.

Yubashiri is seen in the *jihada* of swords made in the Yamato Tegai school in which Kaneuji initially trained within.





The Juyo Token certificate describes the sword as having rather "standing-out" *itame* (wood grain) that tends overall to *nagare* (wavy grain) and mixed with *o-itame* (large swirls).

Note the channels of dark *chikei* that gently weaves through the body of the blade.

Welcome to steel heaven.

kinsuji

black 'golden' lines that slice through the hamon, Soshu style.



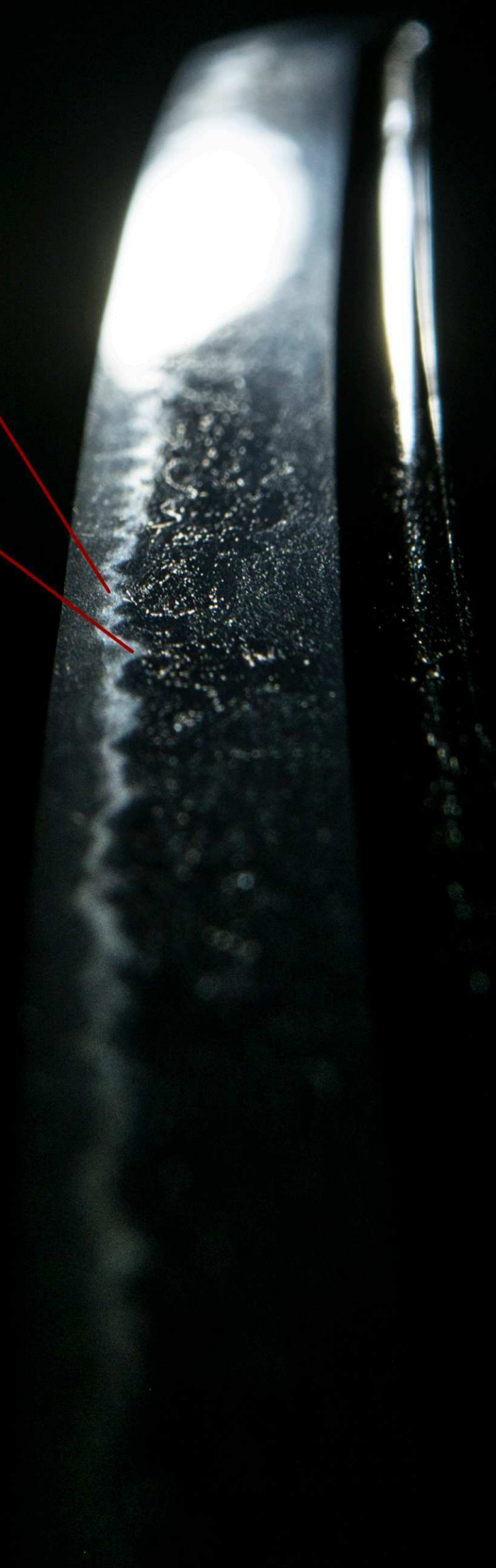
Note the beautiful whirlpools of *itame-hada* inside the *kissaki* (tip)

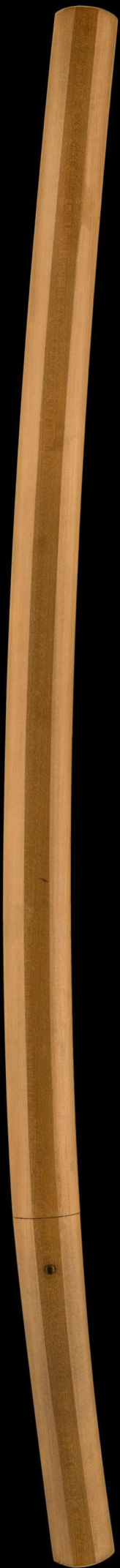


The *hamon* in the tip of the sword is called the *boshi*. It takes great skill by the swordsmith.

The boshi on this sword is *hakikake*, literally 'sweeping'.

a tightly oscillating *ko-gunome hamon* connects with pointed peaks of *togari-ba*





Shirasaya
(protective scabbard)



ni-ju habaki



stories to tell.