



ITEM# UJKA322

A NIÔ KIYOTSUNA KATANA

UNSIGNED, LATE KAMAKURA PERIOD (CIRCA GENTOKU ERA 1329~1331)

Swordsmith: *Kiyotsuna of the Nio School (o-suriage, mumei nakago)*
Measurements: **Length:** 70.5cm **Curvature:** 1.2cm **Moto-haba:** 2.83cm **Weight:** 740g
Jihada: *Itame mixed with mokume, nagare and masame, fine ji-nie and shirake-utsuri*
Hamon: *Suguha in ko-nie-deki, tight nioiguchi, ko-gunome, ko-ashi, yubashiri and tobiyaki*
Certificate #1: **52nd NBTHK Juyo Token** (attributed to Niô School designated as Important)
Certificate #2: **NTHK-NPO Kanteisho** (a katana authenticated to Nio Kiyotsuna)
Certificate #3: **NTHK-NPO Kanteisho** (a set of Nio menuki authenticated to Yokoya school)
Fujishiro: **Jo-saku** (third generation Nio Kiyotsuna is ranked as a superior smith)
Included: Shirasaya, set of menuki, bag, stand, kit, DVD, booklet, printed description

SOLD

The Niô School was founded in Suo province (Yamaguchi prefecture) on the south-western tip of Japan's Honshu island in the mid-1200s by swordsmith Kiyotsuna. Swords of the Nio tradition have a convincing Yamato-den influence that radiate strength, wisdom and sophistication.

This admirable katana was crafted 700 years ago at the end of the Kamakura period and has been awarded prestigious NBTHK **Juyo Token**. The jihada stands out beautifully - a delightful mixture of itame, mokume, flowing nagare and classic Yamato straight-grain masame. A clean suguha hamon undulates to form a tight ko-gunome. To admire this sword is to appreciate the strong, quiet character. Residing deep within this sword is a self-assured power awaiting to be discovered.

^
Saki-kasane: 5.1mm

Kissaki: 3.67cm
Saki-haba: 2.2cm

Moto-kasane: 6.2mm

Nagasa: 70.5cm

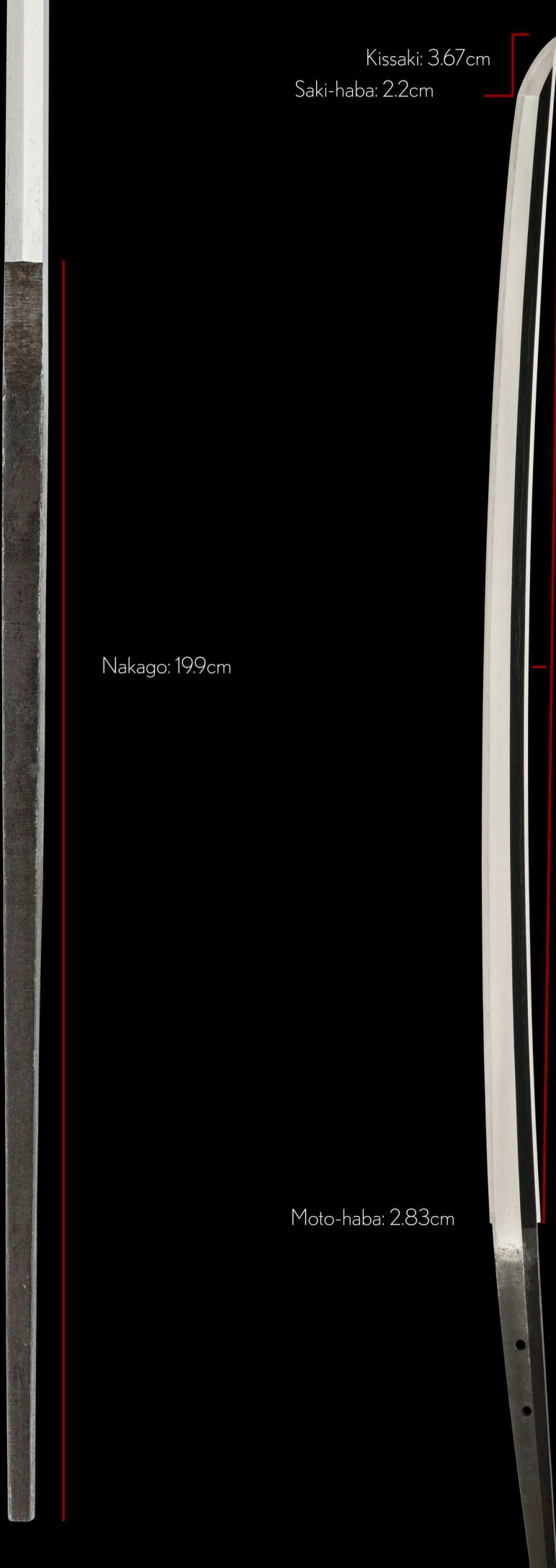
Nakago: 19.9cm

Sori: 1.2cm

Omosa: 740g

Moto-haba: 2.83cm

Mekugi-ana: 2



The Nio name is said to originate to the *Niho manor* of *Suo province*. Suo was home to many properties owned by the *Todaiji* (Great Eastern Buddhist Temple) in *Yamato* (Nara), the former capital of Japan.

As *Nio School* blades have a strong resemblance to Yamato works, it is assumed that there was a technical exchange between the two places.

Kiyotsuna is the founder of the school. A tachi that was dated to *March 1265* is being preserved at the famous *Itsukushima-jinja*.



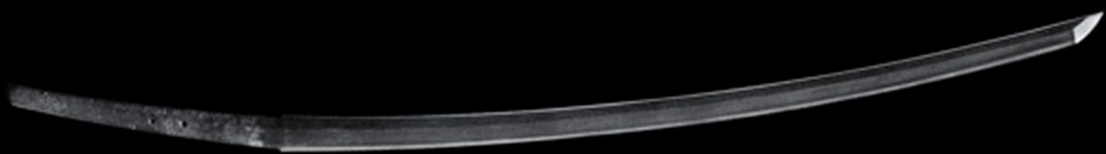
This gracefully shaped katana by the Nio School was crafted at the end of the Kamakura period, circa 1300-1330.



A more dramatic tale on the origin of the Nio name states that a *tachi* by Kiyotsuna was used to cut the chain of a locked door of the Nio-do temple and helped to rescue a pair of Nio guardians from a raging fire.

Nio guardians guard and protect temples from evil spirits and demons, and deter would be modern-day burglars.

The vast majority of Nio are made out of wood and are usually housed in their own gate houses to shield them from the weather.



Tachi by Kiyotsuna, 1265



clean and evenly filed
o-suriage nakago
(*mumei*, unsigned)



18200652

重要第三五七號

指定書

一、刀 無銘 二、主 一口

清量 長さ七〇、四種 反り一、三程

形状 鑄造庵棟 身幅やや細身で反り浅い。口鋒延び、

鍛 板目に本交じり、総体は流れ、口には刃を任気させ、肌立

刃文 焼刃、底直刃、小互目交じり、小足入り、口締まって、小沸、

物打辺に湯走り、飛焼交じり。

帽子 表は直ぐ調、裏は直ぐ調、丸、口には返り

茎 天磨上、鎧目、表切り、(裏上半浅、膝手、下がり、(裏下半)切り

目釘孔二

右者當協會に於て審査の結果

重要刀劍に指定す

平成十八年十月十二日

財団法人日本美術刀劍保存協會

會長 佐々淳行



NBTHK Juyo Token Certificate of Designation

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

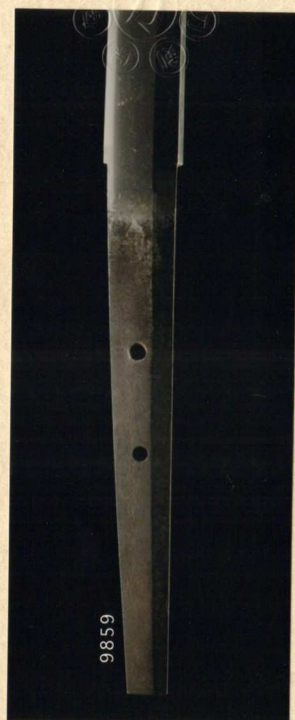
Issued in the 18th year of Heisei (2006), October 12th

One, Katana

Mei (signature)
Mumei [Niô School]

Nagasa (length)
70.4cm

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai
(NBTHK)



捺 審 査 員 印	備 考	中 心	彫 刻	銚 子	刃 紋	鍛	造 り 込 み	銘 文	第九千八百五十九号
	元徳頃	目釘穴 二個		直ぐに 尖り心に 小丸返り	中直ぐ刃調	板目詰み 錬れる。	鎚造り、 庵棟	大磨り上げ無銘	

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 Suô province, Niô Kiyotsuna

Nagasa (length)
2-shaku 3-sun 3-bu kore ari (70.5cm)
o-suriage mumei

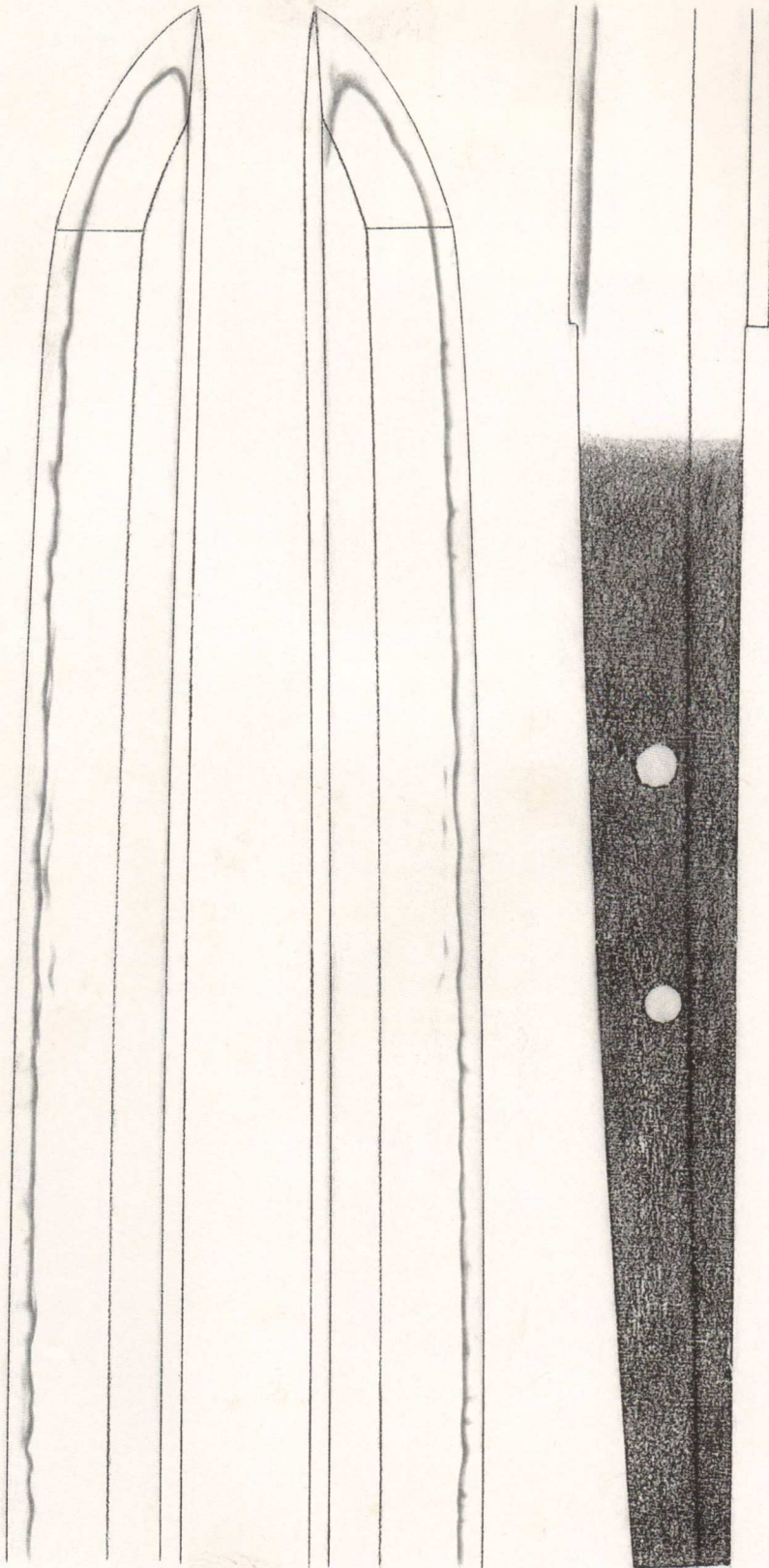
Crafted circa *Gentoku era* (1329-1331)

Shinsa judging panel:
six hanko seals of authenticity

Issued in 31st year of Heisei (2019), April 14th

Nihon Token Hozon Kai
(NTHK-NPO)

刀 無銘 二王



NBTHK Juyo Token White Paper
This *oshigata*, tracing of the *hamon* pattern, illustrates the skillful consistency and *hataraki* (activity) in the hamon.

東京教育
第2951号
平成18年6月

所有者
氏名

飯田智一



平成十八年十月十二日指定 第五十二回 重要刀剣

東京部 飯田智一

刀 無銘 二丁 一口
刀身 長七寸、四釐 反り一、二釐 元幅一、八釐 元幅二、五釐 元幅三、六釐 元幅四、七釐 元幅五、八釐 元幅六、九釐 元幅七、一、〇釐 元幅八、九釐 元幅九、八釐 元幅十、七釐 元幅十一、六釐 元幅十二、五釐 元幅十三、四釐 元幅十四、三釐 元幅十五、二釐 元幅十六、一釐 元幅十七、〇釐 元幅十八、九釐 元幅十九、八釐 元幅二十、七釐 元幅二十一、六釐 元幅二十二、五釐 元幅二十三、四釐 元幅二十四、三釐 元幅二十五、二釐 元幅二十六、一釐 元幅二十七、〇釐 元幅二十八、九釐 元幅二十九、八釐 元幅三十、七釐 元幅三十一、六釐 元幅三十二、五釐 元幅三十三、四釐 元幅三十四、三釐 元幅三十五、二釐 元幅三十六、一釐 元幅三十七、〇釐 元幅三十八、九釐 元幅三十九、八釐 元幅四十、七釐 元幅四十一、六釐 元幅四十二、五釐 元幅四十三、四釐 元幅四十四、三釐 元幅四十五、二釐 元幅四十六、一釐 元幅四十七、〇釐 元幅四十八、九釐 元幅四十九、八釐 元幅五十、七釐 元幅五十一、六釐 元幅五十二、五釐 元幅五十三、四釐 元幅五十四、三釐 元幅五十五、二釐 元幅五十六、一釐 元幅五十七、〇釐 元幅五十八、九釐 元幅五十九、八釐 元幅六十、七釐 元幅六十一、六釐 元幅六十二、五釐 元幅六十三、四釐 元幅六十四、三釐 元幅六十五、二釐 元幅六十六、一釐 元幅六十七、〇釐 元幅六十八、九釐 元幅六十九、八釐 元幅七十、七釐 元幅七十一、六釐 元幅七十二、五釐 元幅七十三、四釐 元幅七十四、三釐 元幅七十五、二釐 元幅七十六、一釐 元幅七十七、〇釐 元幅七十八、九釐 元幅七十九、八釐 元幅八十、七釐 元幅八十一、六釐 元幅八十二、五釐 元幅八十三、四釐 元幅八十四、三釐 元幅八十五、二釐 元幅八十六、一釐 元幅八十七、〇釐 元幅八十八、九釐 元幅八十九、八釐 元幅九十、七釐 元幅九十一、六釐 元幅九十二、五釐 元幅九十三、四釐 元幅九十四、三釐 元幅九十五、二釐 元幅九十六、一釐 元幅九十七、〇釐 元幅九十八、九釐 元幅九十九、八釐 元幅一百、七釐

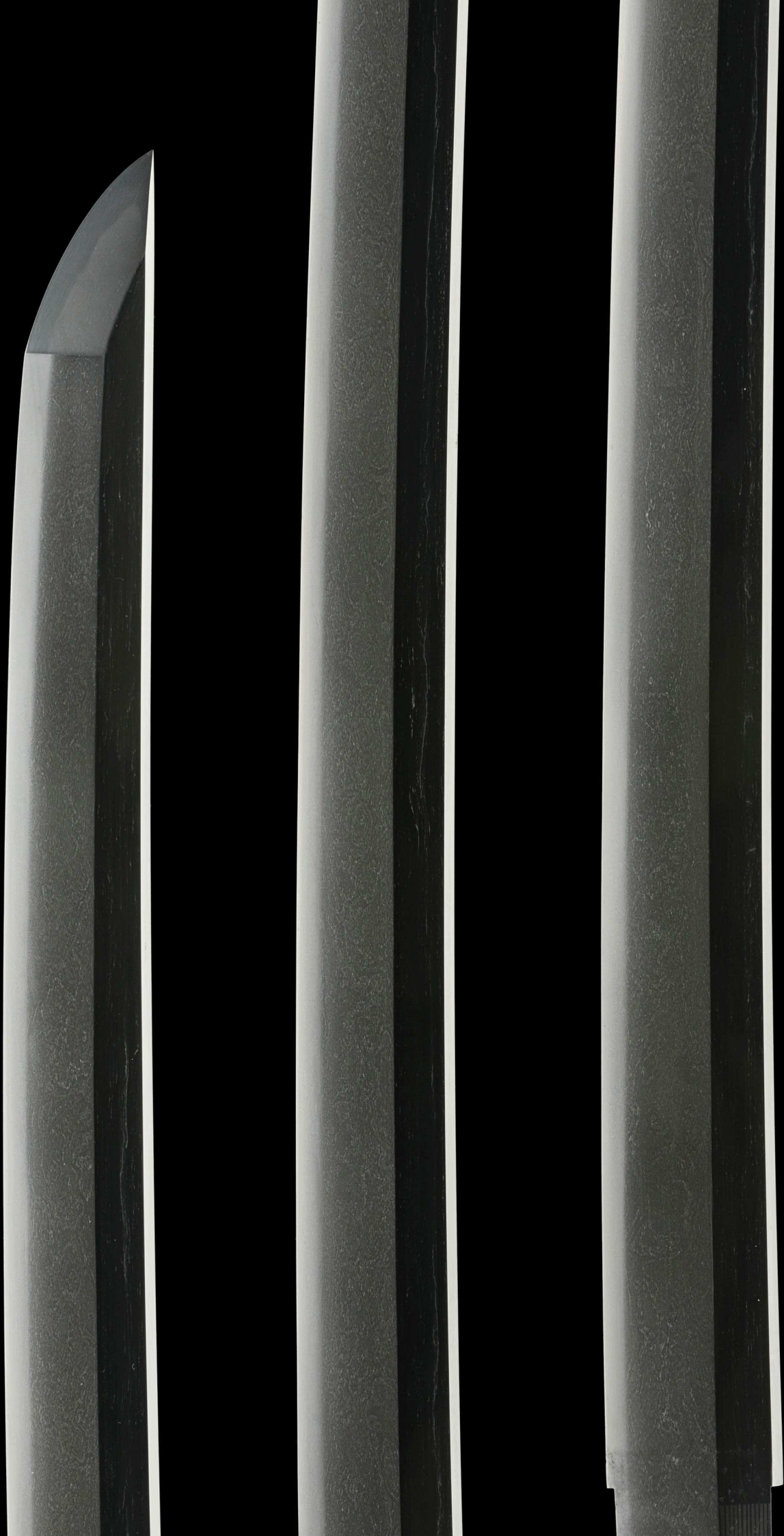
形状 鍔造、庵棟、身幅やや細身で、鍔や高く、反り浅めにつき、中鋒延びころ。 鍔 板目に全交しり、総体に流れころとなり、魁々
証氣を交え、肌立ちきみとなり、地滑細かにつき、白け映り立つ。 刃文 焼の低い直刃に、小五の目交しり、小足入り、匂口締まって、小
沸つき、物打辺にささやかな湯走り、飛焼交じり、腰元辺はうるむ。 帽子 表は直ぐ調に小丸、裏は直ぐ調に小丸ころに返る。 茎
大磨上、先切り、鐔目表切り・(裏上半)浅い勝手下り・(裏下半)切り、目釘孔二、無銘。
説明 周防国三王派は、保延頃の清具、または文心頃の清平を祖として始まると伝えるが、確実な遺例を見ず、今日では清綱を事実上の祖として
いる。清綱の現存する作例では、「文永二年三月 清綱」と書き下し、銘のある太刀が数島神社に存在し、次いで建武二年紀の「防州玖珂庄清綱」
銘の短刀(飯田智一蔵・第四十五回重要刀剣指定)が知られ、以後同銘は室町時代、さらに新刀期にまで遺留と映っている。「三王の呼称の由来」
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簡易書留

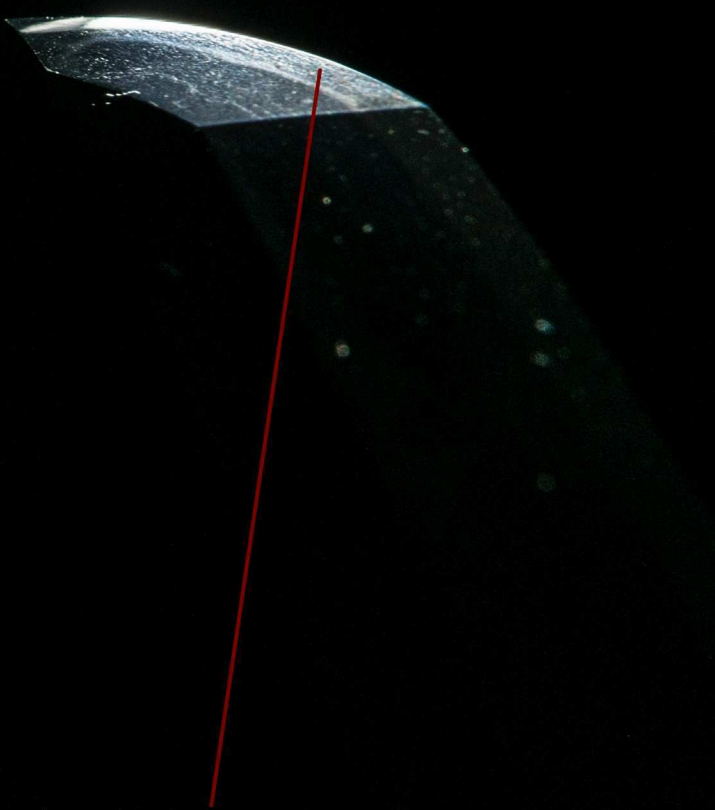
財団法人 日本美術刀剣保存協会
〒100-0001 東京都千代田区千代田一丁目二番十号

52nd NBTHK Juyo Token Certificate Traditionally rolled in protective tube.

All information will be precisely translated for the new caretaker. A printed and bound description of the sword from this catalogue will also be included along with a sword stand and a Unique Japan maintenance kit.







Ample distance from the cutting edge to the gleaming *boshi hamon* in the *kissaki* shows that the sword is healthy and in similar condition from when it was first made 600 years ago.

This is a significant reason why this katana was awarded prestigious NBTHK Juyo Token.



lovely *ko-maru* (turn-back)



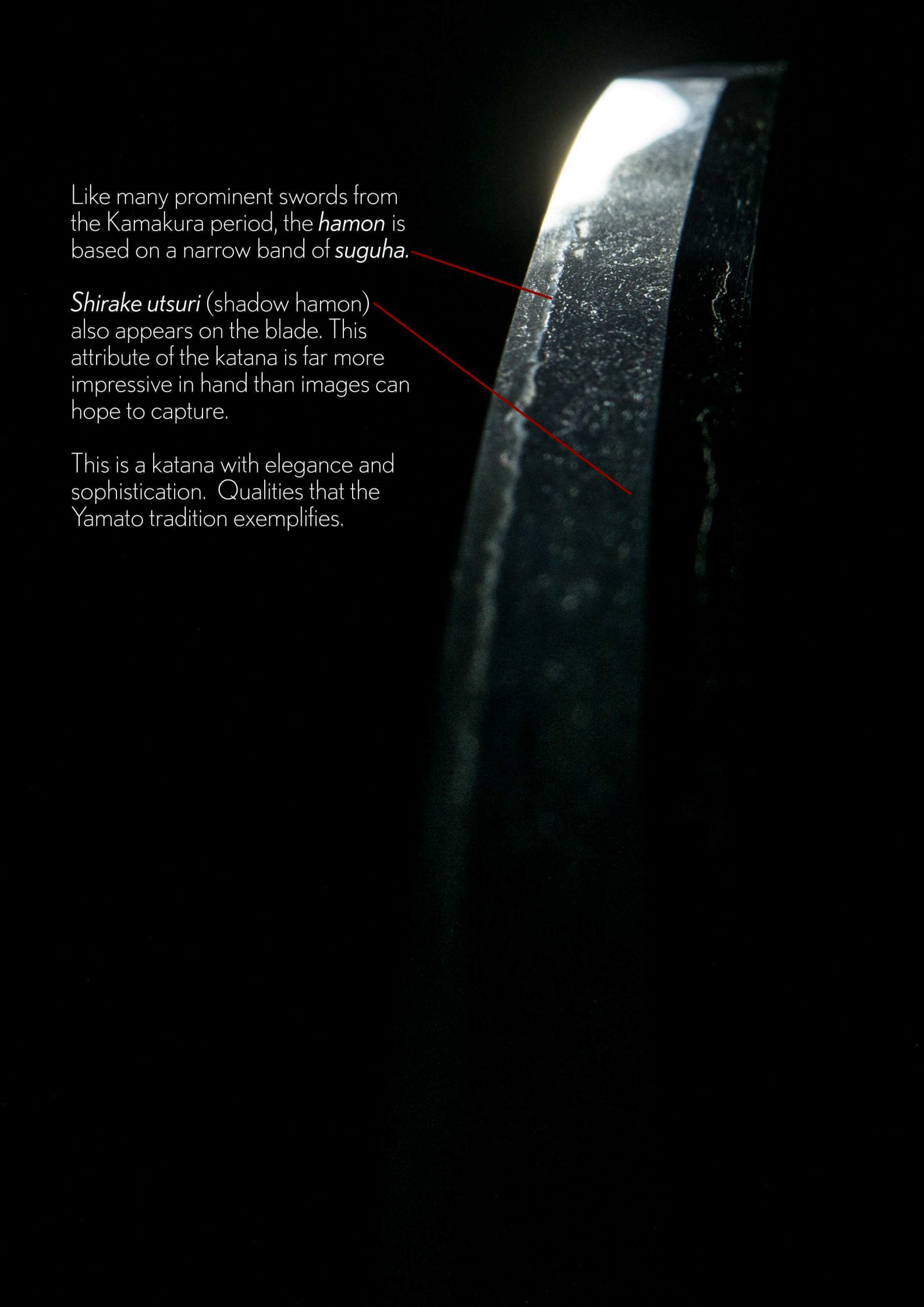
The *NBTHK Juyo Token* certificate praises the *ji* (body) and *ha* (hardened edge) for being in very good condition.

The certificate highlights the fact that the wood grain patterns of *ko-itame* and *ko-mokume* "stand out" to the eye.

ko-itame (elongated wood grain)

ko-mokume (more rounded)

masame (straight grain)

A close-up, low-angle shot of a katana blade. The blade is dark and textured, with a bright, curved highlight along its top edge. The background is black. Two red lines originate from the text on the left and point to specific features on the blade: one points to a narrow band of light-colored metal (suguha) and the other points to a shadowed area (shirake utsuri).

Like many prominent swords from the Kamakura period, the *hamon* is based on a narrow band of *suguha*.

Shirake utsuri (shadow hamon) also appears on the blade. This attribute of the katana is far more impressive in hand than images can hope to capture.

This is a katana with elegance and sophistication. Qualities that the Yamato tradition exemplifies.




good healthy distance from edge to hamon

body shines with *ji-nie*

A saw-tooth *ko-gunome hamon* rips through the steel with precision.

The *shinogi* is wide and thick. This is in line with meaty, powerfully made Yamato tradition blades that this Nio katana faithfully adheres to.



shirake utsuri



Shirasaya
(protective scabbard)



a fine gold *ni-ju habaki*
with straight file marks



bamboo strips

buffalo horn fittings

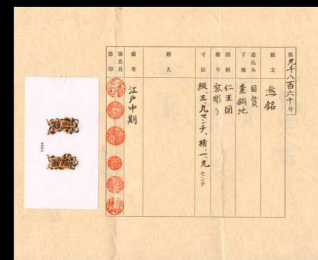
This is a first-class shirasaya. A rich wood-grain pattern secured with bamboo strips and a mekugi fastener that is made from buffalo horn.

Sayagaki by *Tanobe-sensei* can be arranged if desired by the new caretaker.



In celebration of the protective nature of Nio, meaning "*Benevolent Guardian Kings of Buddhism*" - Unique Japan has arranged for a special gift set of a pair of *Nio menuki* to accompany the katana.

These menuki have been attributed to the *Yokoya school* from Edo province and date to the Mid-Edo period (1700-1780).

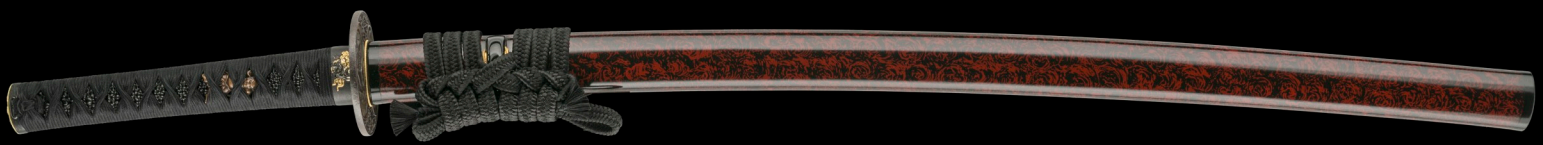


NTHK-NPO Kanteisho

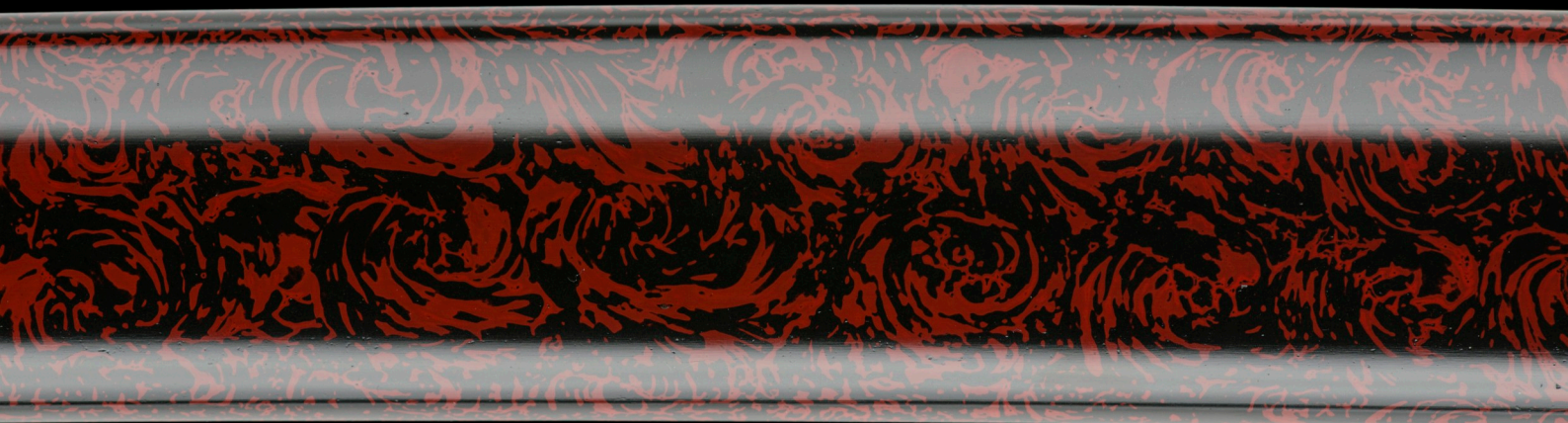




on guard



This *custom koshirae* was built for *ujka322* - A Nio katana with Juyo Token certification. As the Nio school derives their name from the *benevolent guardian kings of Buddhism*, we built a koshirae with *Nio guardians* and *Shoki* (the demon slayer) protecting the owner from such evil spirits. The saya is lacquered in a unique *zen whirlpool* design. Congratulations Elliot!



Building Your Own Custom Koshirae



ujka211 - A Shodai Hisamichi Katana
'Red dragon' Koshirae



ujwa130 - A Tadashige o-Wakizashi
'Ray skin' Koshirae

Many top quality samurai swords that Unique Japan acquires come stored in a *shirasaya* only. A *shirasaya* acts like a humidior, protecting the steel for the long term.

Just as the samurai would have ordered a custom *koshirae* (outdoor mounts) during the Edo period, you too can have a traditional set of *koshirae* crafted for your sword (or daisho) like a tailored suit in a theme that connects with your spirit.

At Unique Japan, we have proudly created dozens of custom *koshirae* projects for our clients over the years - each with their own style and energy.

The *tsuka* (hilt), *saya* (scabbard), *samekawa* (ray skin), silk, and lacquer is all handcrafted by skilled craftspeople in Japan. The *tsuba*, *fuchi-kashira*, *menuki* and other fittings are carefully sourced samurai antiques largely from the Edo period.

This unique blend of modern life meeting traditional history is what makes each creation so personally rewarding for every client.

The investment required ranges from \$4,000 to over \$10,000 depending on the quality of the fittings and the complexity of the lacquerwork. Each project also demands patience as many will take one year to complete (but it's well worth it).

Please contact Unique Japan for further details.

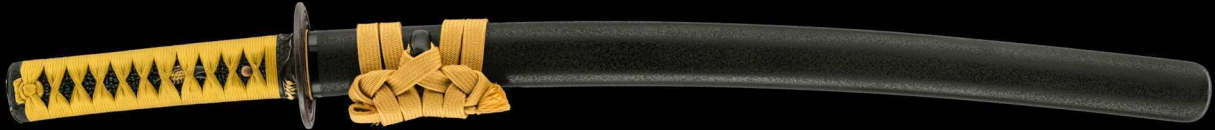


ujka173 - A Sadatsugu Juyo Katana
'Wave theme' Koshirae

Recently completed custom koshirae projects



ujka270 - A Ko-Naminohira Katana
Traditional Akechi Mitsuhide Koshirae



ujwa154 - A Kanekuni Wakizashi
Rice & harvest theme, stone lacquered finish



ujwa244 - A Yasustugu Wakizashi
Chrysanthemum theme, stone & gloss lacquered finish



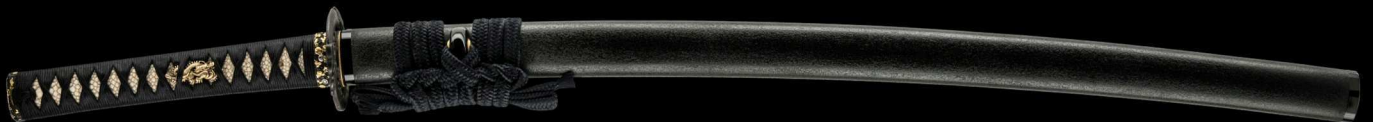
ujwa234 - A Sadahide/Masahide Wakizashi
Goto dragon theme, gloss lacquered finish



ujka271 - A Korehira Katana
Celebration theme, gloss lacquered finish



ujka179 - A Kanenaga Juyo Katana
'Gazing at the stars' theme, gloss lacquered finish



ujdi001 - A Hizen Yukihiro Daisho
Dragon & chrysanthemum theme, stone lacquered finish