



ITEM# UJKA334

## A RAI KUNIZANE KATANA

UNSIGNED, LATE KAMAKURA PERIOD (SHÔWA ERA: 1312~1317)

**Swordsmith:** *Rai Kunizane (attribution, o-suriage mumei)*  
**Measurements:** **Length:** 68.5cm    **Curvature:** 1.9cm    **Moto-haba:** 3.24cm  
**Jihada:** *Ko-itame mixed with mokume, nagare and some jifu, plenty of ji-nie, and chikei*  
**Hamon:** *Suguha-chô in ko-nie-deki with tight nioiguchi, ko-chôji, ko-gunome, many ashi*  
**Horimono:** *On both sides a bôhi (groove) that ends in kaku-dome (square-ended) in the nakago*  
**Certificate:** **44th NBTHK Jûyô Tôken** (a sword designated as *Profound and Important*)  
**Fujishiro:** **Jo-saku** (ranked as superior smith)  
**Included:** Shirasaya, Edo koshirae, fabric bags, stand, kit, DVD, booklet, description

## SOLD

*Rai Kunizane* of the esteemed *Rai school* was the son of national treasure swordsmith *Rai Kunitoshi* with national treasured swordsmith *Rai Kunimitsu* being his older brother and *Rai Tomokuni* his younger brother. *Kunizane* flourished in *Yamashiro* (Kyoto) during the late Kamakura period and likely worked into the warring *Nambokucho* period that started in circa 1333.

This wide and powerful katana projects a stately confidence. This is a sword that has been well-cared for. The densely forged *ko-itame-hada* has plenty of *ji-nie* and dark swirls of *chikei* to enjoy. The *hamon* is a bright *suguha-chô* with many *ashi* in typical *Rai* style. The vermilion *saya* and *Hosokawa kuyo-mon* (9 planets) *menuki* under the lacquered, leather wrapped hilt with a pure gold *kiri habaki* and a signed *Tadatoki Akasaka tsuba* respectfully preserve this splendid samurai sword.



Saki-kasane: 4.3mm

Moto-kasane: 5.5mm

Omosa: 715g

Kissaki: 4.71cm

Saki-haba: 2.46cm

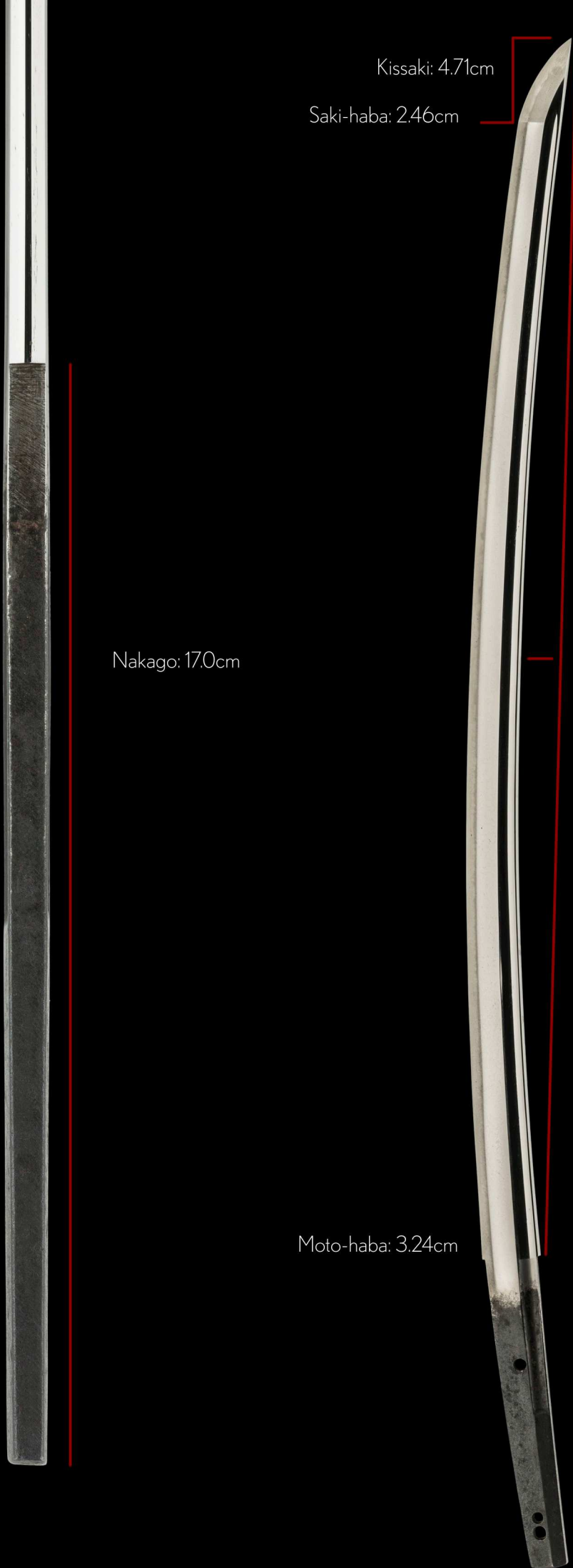
Nakago: 17.0cm

Moto-haba: 3.24cm

Nagasa: 68.5cm

Sori: 1.9cm

Mekugi-ana: 3



*Rai Kunizane* is said to be the son [or student] of grandmaster *Rai Kunitoshi*, with national treasure swordsmith *Rai Kunimitsu* being his older brother and *Rai Tomokuni* his younger brother.

This wide, muscular katana was crafted during the late *Kamakura period*, circa 1312-1317.

It features a grand *torii-zori* shape, where the curvature is found in the middle of the blade. The original cutting edge of this impressive sword would have been about 80cm.





~10cm

*ha-machi* (notch at blade)  
*mune-machi* (notch at spine)

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

As there is a *kaku-dome* (square ended groove) in the middle of the nakago, we can deduce that the sword was shortened by about 10cm.

A kaku-dome groove generally ends within 3cm of the *machi*, thus making the original length of the cutting edge of the blade approximately 78~80cm.



*Mitsu* (three) *mune* (spine/ridge) is a rare construction whereby the spine has three surfaces (the top is flat, not pointed).

It is generally found in the blades of smiths working in the *Sosho tradition* as well as the *Yamashiro school* of the Koto period such as this katana.



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重要第一〇九二號

指定書

刀 無銘 来国真 一口

法量 長さ六八・五釐 反り一・九釐  
形状 鑄造 三ツ棟 身幅広く 元先の幅差少なく 反り深く 大鋒  
鍛 小板目処々流肌 空交じり 地斑調の肌合入り 地沸つき 地景合る  
刃文 直刃調にすず 小交の目交じり 足頼りに入り 匂口締まり ころ出沸つく  
帽子 乱れ込み 表は丸く 裏は尖って返る  
彫物 表裏に棒樋を角止め  
茎 大磨上 籠目勝手下がり 目釘孔三

右者當協會に於て審査の結果  
重要刀剣に指定す

平成十年十一月十二日

財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協會

會長 山中貞則



Jûyô Certificate No. 10292  
Shiteisho (指定書) Certificate of Designation  
Katana, mumei: Rai Kunizane (来国真)

Measurements  
nagasa 68.5 cm, sori 1.9 cm

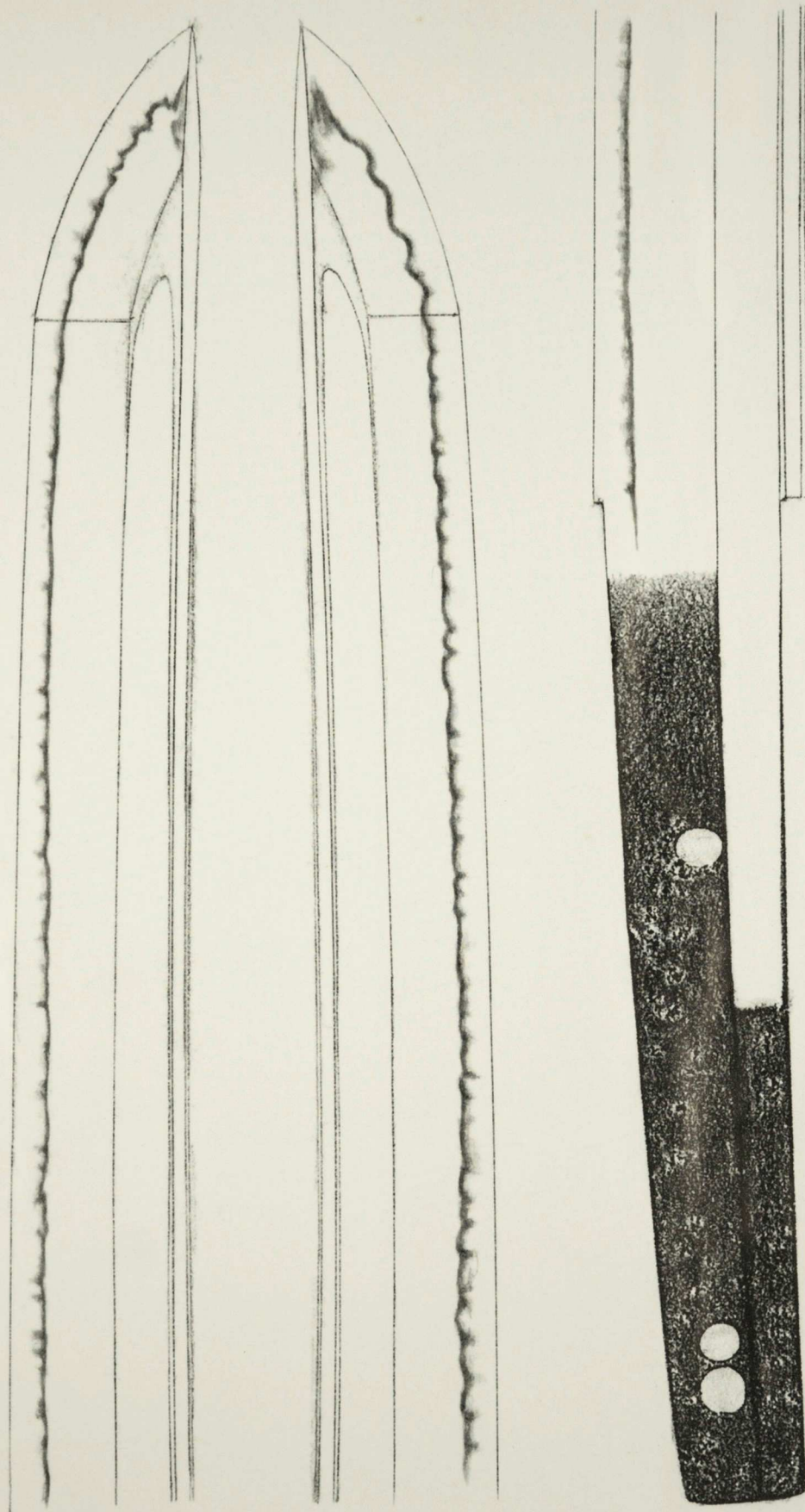
Description

Keijo: *shinogi-zukuri*, *mitsu-mune*, wide *mihaba*, no noticeable taper, deep *sori*, *ô-kissaki*  
Kitae: *ko-itame* that is mixed with *mokume* and *nagare* in places and that features some *jifu*,  
plenty of *ji-nie*, and *chikei*  
Hamon: *suguha-chô* in *ko-nie-deki* with a rather tight *nioiguchi* that is mixed with *ko-chôji*,  
*ko-gunome*, and many *ashi*  
Bôshi: *midare-komi* with a *maru-kaeri* on the *omote* and a pointed *kaeri* on the *ura* side  
Horimono: on both sides a *bôhi* that ends in *kakudome*  
Nakago: *suriage*, *katte-sagari yasurime*, three *mekugi-ana*

According to the result of the shinsa committee of our society we judged this work as authentic and rate it as *jûyô-tôken*.

November 12, 1998  
[Foundation] Nihon Bijutsu Tôken Hozon Kyôkai, NBTHK  
[President] Yamanaka Sadanori (山中貞則)

刀 無銘 米国真

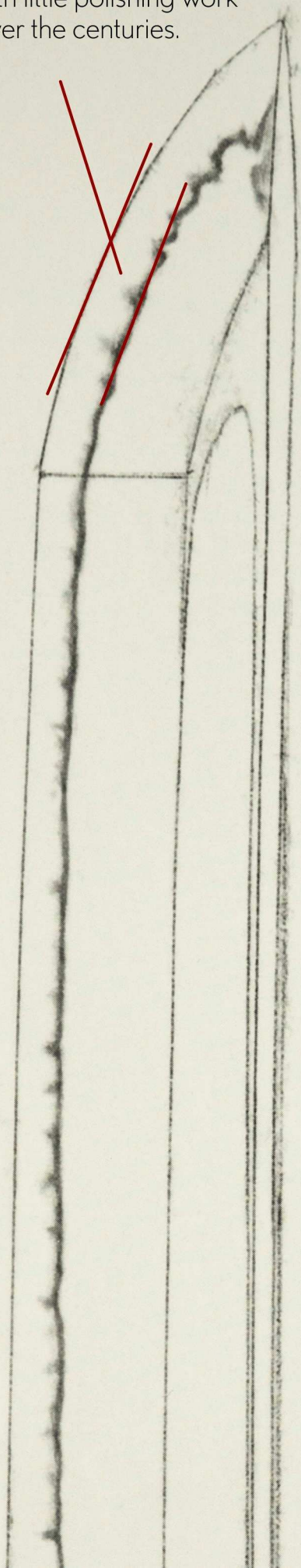


NBTHK Juyo Token White Paper  
The *oshigata* provides a clear tracing of the *hamon* pattern with the structure of the *nakago*.





Notice the ample distance between the hamon and cutting edge in the *kissaki*. This shows the sword is healthy with little polishing work applied over the centuries.



The *boshi* is a tight-weaving *midare-komi* that resembles a burning candle.

The powerful *o-kissaki* (tip) is almost 5cm in length, typically found in swords of the late Kamakura period to the warring years of the Nambokucho period (mid-1300s).



A close-up, high-contrast photograph of two curved blades, likely a sword, set against a black background. The blades are positioned diagonally, with the upper blade curving more sharply than the lower one. The lighting highlights the metallic texture and the sharp edges of the blades, emphasizing their strong curvature and magnificient shape.

Strong curvature gives the sword a magnificent shape.



A beautiful tight *nioguchi* with sharp *ashi* (legs) extend from *hamon* like the teeth of a saw.

Generous pools of *chikei* abound in the *ji* (body).



droplets of *ko-choji*, small  
clove blossom buds.

*sunagashi* - sweeping  
effect through the hamon

*mokume-hada*  
- rounded burl grain

*ji-nie* shines brightly





*Shirasaya*  
(protective scabbard)



A solid gold *habaki* with *kiri-mon*  
and arabesque patterned design



This most impressive solid gold *ni-ju habaki* can separate in two pieces.

Note how the *kiri-mon* appears to float within the circled window.

*Shuiro-kanshitsu-nuri saya  
uchigatana-koshirae*  
(朱色乾漆塗鞘打刀拵え)

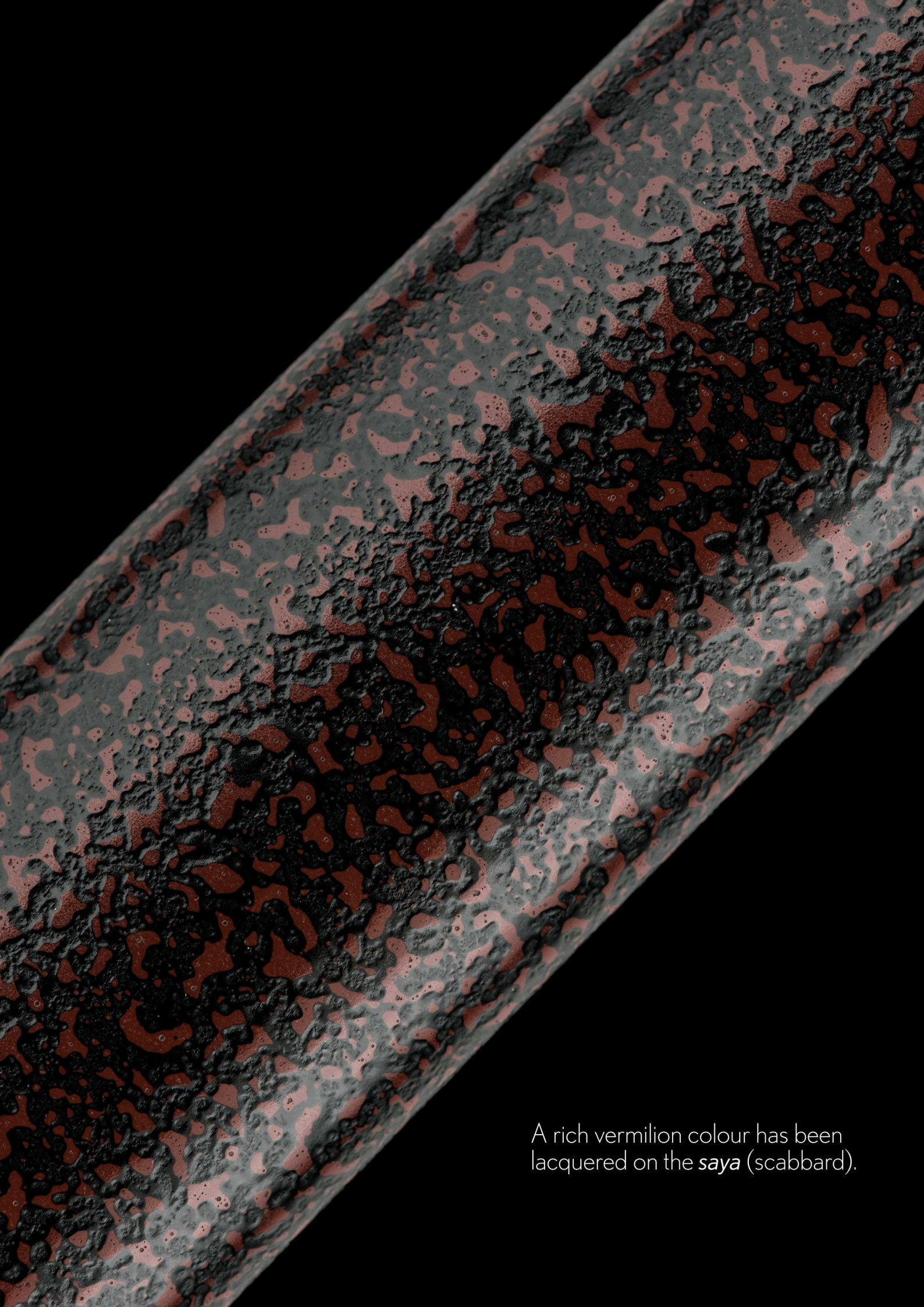
*Uchigatana-koshirae  
lacquered in vermilion  
with dry lacquer powder*

All fittings are Edo period  
antiques crafted pre-1867.

The *saya* (scabbard) was  
crafted/re-lacquered  
during the 20th century.



NTHK-NPO Kanteisho  
Certificate of Authenticity

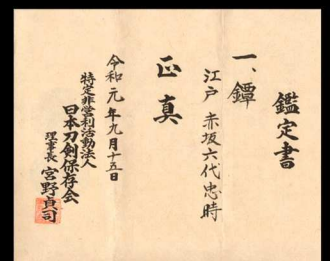


A rich vermilion colour has been lacquered on the *saya* (scabbard).



This lovely polished iron *sukashi* (openwork) *tsuba* was crafted by *Tadatoki* (忠時), 6th generation master of the famed *Akasaka school* in Edo. The level of precision in the the carving work is to greatly appreciated.

An NTHK-NPO Kanteisho certificate of authenticity attributing the piece to the *late-Edo period* circa 1780~1867 has been attained.



(Tada) 忠

(toki) 時

(saku) 作

(Aka) 赤

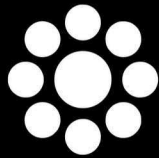
(saka) 坂



(reverse)



*Menuki* (decorative grips on the hilt) carry *Kuyô-mon*, the nine-planet family crest that was first adopted by the powerful daimyo family leader *Hosokawa Tadaoki* (1563-1646).



The *tsuka* (hilt) has been wrapped in leather and lacquered for long-term conservation.

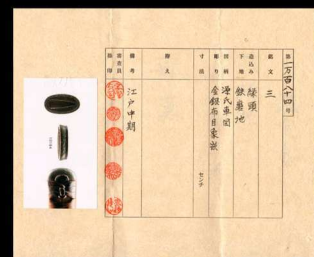
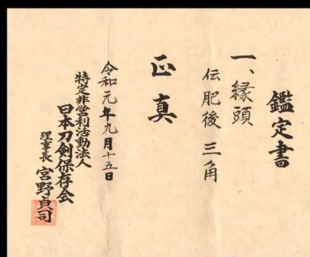
True Edo period charm.





*Fuchi-kashira*  
 Attributed to the *Misumi* school  
 Higo province (1700s)

Motif of *Genji guruma*  
 Wheels of an oxcart that carried nobility



NTHK-NPO Kanteisho Certificate of Authenticity



Cross section of the *nakago*.  
History that's divine.