



ITEM# UJKA351

A KO-AOE KATANA
END OF HEIAN ~ EARLY KAMAKURA
(LATE 1100S TO EARLY 1200S)

46TH NBTHK JÛYÔ TÔKEN

Saki-kasane: 4.8mm [^]

Moto-kasane: 6.8mm

Omosa: 790g

Kissaki: 2.88cm
Saki-haba: 1.87cm

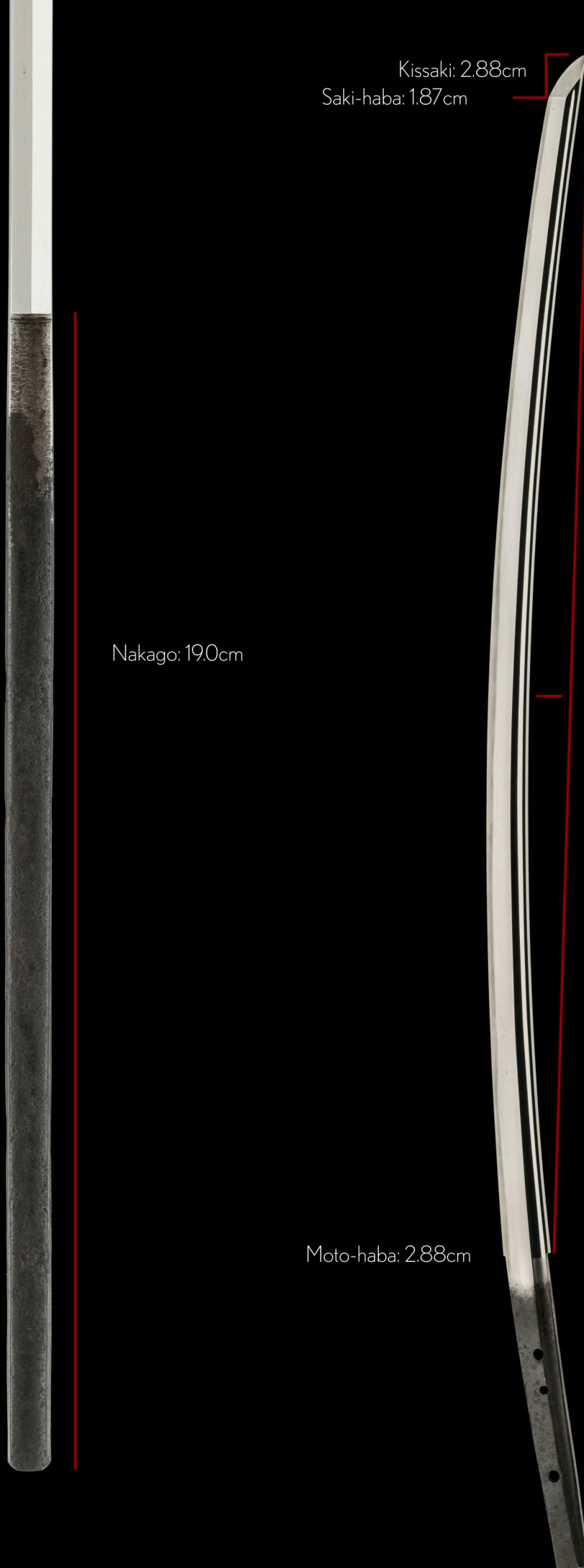
Nakago: 19.0cm

Moto-haba: 2.88cm

Nagasa: 74.2cm

Sori: 2.6cm

Mekugi-ana: 3



From the 46th Juyo Token certificate:

Bitchû province is known for being a center for the production of iron since earliest times and the swordsmiths of the local Aoe Schools were residing in the areas of Koi (子位) and Masu (万寿).

Within this schools, smiths and works from the *end of the Heian period to the mid-Kamakura period* are classified as Ko-Aoe (古青江).

The Ko-Aoe workmanship is similar to that of neighboring Ko-Bizen, with the difference that Ko-Aoe blades are a hint more simple, a fact which gives them their unique austere taste.



DETERMINING A SWORD'S PERIOD FROM THE SUGATA

Sugata refers to the shape of the sword as a whole. The sugata changes according to the period, and therefore is always an indicator of the period in which a sword was produced.

1. Late Heian period (987–1181)

Shinogi-zukuri tachi, a ha-watari of about 85 cm, a slightly narrow mihaba, a ko-kissaki, a wide motohaba, entirely torii-zori but tending toward koshi-zori. The shinogi-zukuri tachi has not only elegance but stability and dignity.

Leading swordsmiths: The Sanjo (三条) school (Munechika [宗近], Yoshiie [吉家], Gojo Kanenaga [五条兼永], Gojo Kuninaga [五条国永]), the Yasutsuna (安綱) school (Hoki Yasutsuna [伯耆安綱], Ohara Sanemori [大原真守]), the Ko-Bizen (古備前) school (Tomonari [友成], Masatsune [正恒]), the Ko-Aoe school (古青江) (Moritsugu [守次], Masatsune [正恒]), the Naminohira (波平) school (Yukiyasu [行安], Yukimasa [行正]), etc.

2. Early Kamakura period (1182–1231)

The basic sugata differs little from that of swords of the late Heian period, but there is an overall sense of increased grandeur. Specifically, the kissaki is a bit larger, and the sakihaba a little wider.

Leading swordsmiths: The Awataguchi (粟田口) school (Kunitomo [国友], Hisakuni [久国], Kuniyasu [国安], Kunikiyo [国清]), the Ko-Ichimonji (古一文字) school (Norimune [則宗], Sukemune [助宗], Narimune [成宗], Sukeshide [助茂]), the Ko-Aoe (古青江) school (Sadatsugu [貞次], Suketsugu [助次], Yasutsugu [康次], Nobutsugu [延次]), Bungo Yukihira (豊後行平), etc.

3. Mid-Kamakura period (1232–1287)

Shinogi-zukuri tachi with a mihaba that is a bit wide, a sakihaba that is not as narrow as in previous periods, and a chu-kissaki. Torii-zori, tending toward koshi-zori, with a wide motohaba, hira-niku, and appropriate kasane. The sugata is even more magnificent than in earlier periods.

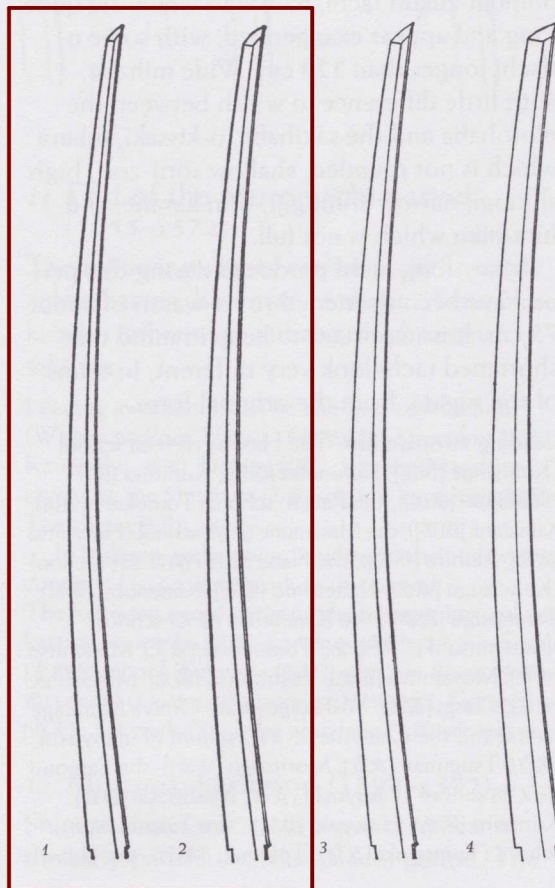
Leading swordsmiths: The Awataguchi (粟田口) school (Kuniyoshi [国吉], Kunitsuna [国綱], Yoshimitsu [吉光]), the Rai (来) school (Kuniyuki [国行], Niji Kunitoshi [二文字国俊]), Ayanokoji Sadatoshi (綾小路定

利), Shintogo Kunimitsu (新藤五国光), the Ichimonji (一文字) school (Yoshifusa [吉房], Sukezane [助真], Suketsuna [助綱], Norifusa [则房]), Saburo Kunimune (三郎国宗), the Ko-Osafune (古長船) school (Mitsutada [光忠], Nagamitsu [長光], Kagehide [景秀]), Hatakeda Morie (畠田守家), the Chu-Aoe (中青江) school (Suketsugu [助次], Shigetsugu [重次]), etc.

4. Mid-Kamakura period (1232–1287)

One more sugata—the grandest of all—appears in this period. Shinogi-zukuri tachi, torii-zori, ikubi-kissaki, wide mihaba, with little difference between the width of the motohaba and that of the sakihaba, hamaguri-ba with full hira-niku between the hamon and the hasaki (sharpened edge), kasane which are rather thick, high shinogi, and narrow shinogiji.

Leading swordsmiths: The Ichimonji (一文字) school, Osafune Mitsutada (長船光忠), Niji Kunitoshi (二文字国俊), etc.



This page is from the *Connoisseurs Book of Japanese Swords* by Nagayama Kokan. The Ko-Aoe school flourished in the late Heian to early Kamakura periods.

The majestic *koshi-zori* shape of this katana dates this Ko-Aoe katana conservatively to the early 1200s.



Ura side
The groove ends into the
nakago (*kaki-nagashi*)

Omote side
The groove extends through
the nakago (*kaki-tôshi*)



12200046

重要第一〇八五號

指定書

一、刀 無銘 古青江 一口

鑿 長七四・二釐 反二・四釐
形 縮造庵棟身幅尋常 反り深く 腰反りさ 中鋒
鐵 板目つみ 地沸細かたつき 地景入り 深く映りこころがある
刃文 直刃調に小乱れ・小丁子交わり 足・葉類りに入り
小沸よくつき 金筋・砂流しかかる
帽子 浅くのたれ込み 焼きづめ風となる
彫物 表裏に袴樋 表は掻き通し 裏は掻き流す
茎 大磨上 鏡目 勝手下がり 目釘孔三

右者當協會に於て審査の結果
重要刀劍に指定す

平成十二年十月五日

財団法人日本美術刀劍保存協會
會長 山中貞則



Jûyô Certificate No. 10825
Shiteisho (指定書) Certificate of Designation
Katana, mumei: Ko-Aoe (古青江)

Measurements
nagasa 74.2 cm, sori 2.4 cm

Description

Keijo: shinogi-zukuri, iori-mune, normal mihaba, deep koshizori chû-kissaki
Kitae: dense itame that features fine ji-nie, chikei, and a faint utsuri
Hamon: ko-nie-laden suguha-chô that is mixed with ko-midare, ko-chôji, many ashi and yô, and kinsuji and sunagashi
Bôshi: undulating notare-komi and running out in yakitsume fashion
Horimono: on both sides a bôhi which runs on the omote side as kaki-tôshi through and on the ura side as kaki-nagashi into the tang
Nakago: ô-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.

October 5, 2000
[Foundation] Nihon Bijutsu Tôken Hozon Kyôkai, NBTHK
[President] Yamanaka Sadanori (山中貞則)



古青江
但大磨上無銘也

Ko-Aoe

Tadashi ô-suriage mumei nari

Ko-Aoe [school]

This sword is greatly shortened and unsigned

刃長貳尺二二寸五分有之

Hachô ni-shaku yon-sun go-bu kore ari.

Blade length: ~74.2cm

昭和乙卯年初夏吉日

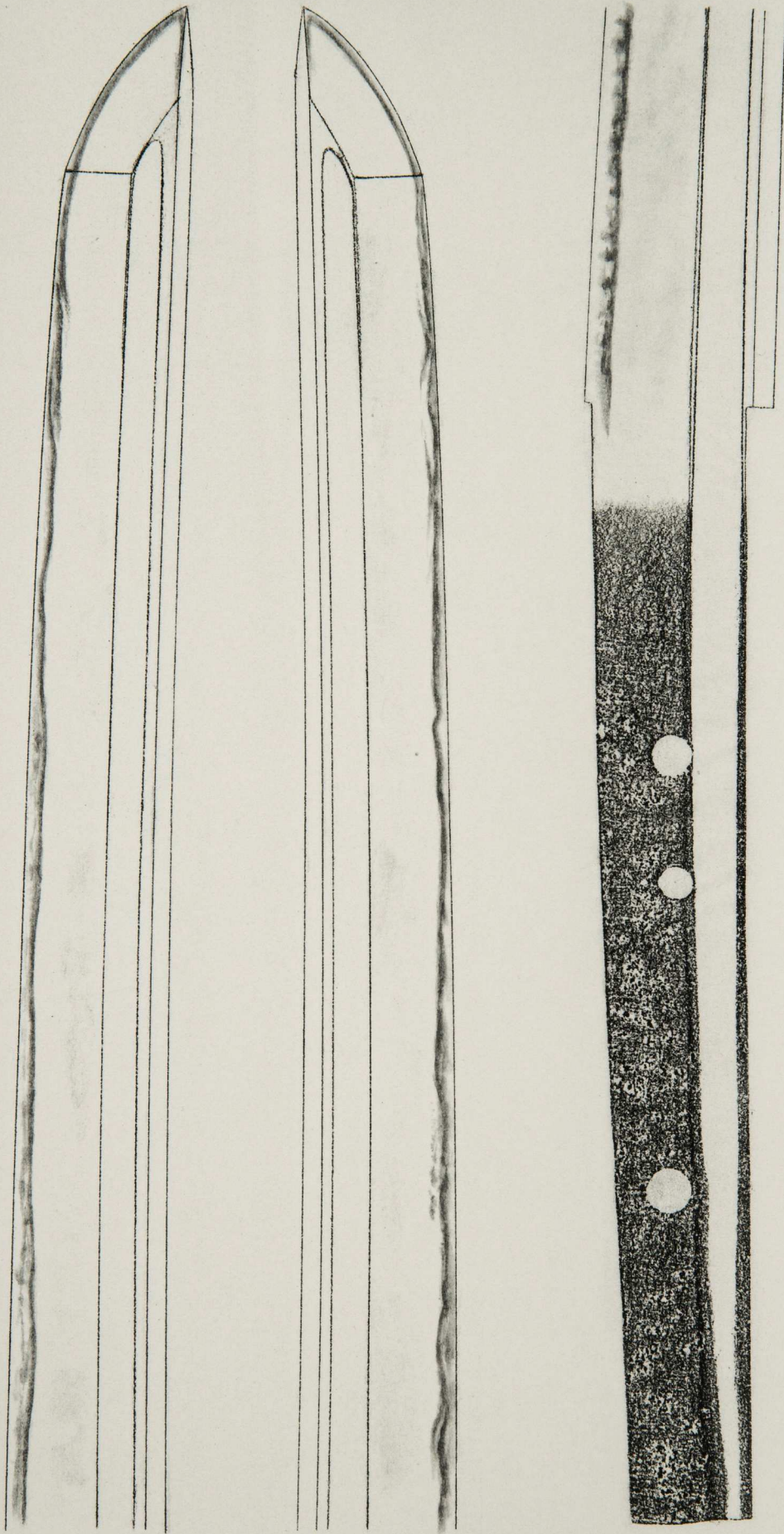
Shôwa kinoto-usagidoshi shoka kichijitsu

寒山誌「花押」

Kanzan shirusu + kaô

Written and certified with monogram by Satô
Kanzan on a lucky day in the early summer of the
year of the hare of the Showa era (1975)

刀 無銘 古青江





平成十二年十月五日指定 第四十六回 重要刀剣

刀 無銘 古青江 一口

熊本県 道喜増喜

法量 長さ七四・二種 反り二・四種 元幅二・七五種 先幅一・九種 鋒長さ二・九五種 茎長さ一九・二種 茎反り僅か

形状 鑄造、庵棟、身幅尋常、元先の幅差さまでつかず、大磨上ながらも反り深く、腰反りつき、中鋒。 鍛 板目つき、地沸細かにつき、地景入り、淡く映り風が立つ。 刃文 直刃調に小乱れ・小丁子交じり、足・葉頰りに入り、小池厚

平成十二年十月五日指定 第四十六回 重要刀剣

刀 無銘 古青江 一口

熊本県 道喜増喜

法量 長さ七四・二種 反り二・四種 元幅二・七五種 先幅一・九種 鋒長さ二・九五種 茎長さ一九・二種 茎反り僅か

形状 鑄造、庵棟、身幅尋常、元先の幅差さまでつかず、大磨上ながらも反り深く、腰反りつき、中鋒。 鍛 板目つき、地沸細かにつき、地景入り、淡く映り風が立つ。 刃文 直刃調に小乱れ・小丁子交じり、足・葉頰りに入り、小池厚

この刀は、板目のつんだ割れに、地沸が細かにつき、地景入り、淡く映り風が立つ。中鋒の中、平刃時代末期より鎌倉時代前期までのものを古青江と称している。その作風は、隣国の古備前物に類似し、それに比してやや地味ではあるが、独特の渋い味を有する所は特色である。

この刀は、板目のつんだ割れに、地沸が細かにつき、地景入り、淡く映り風が立つ。中鋒の中、平刃時代末期より鎌倉時代前期までのものを古青江と称している。その作風は、隣国の古備前物に類似し、それに比してやや地味ではあるが、独特の渋い味を有する所は特色である。

刃文は小池厚くついて、古調な小乱れを施し、刃先は葉を金筋・砂流し等の飾りを見せ、味わい深い姿を顯現している。腰に出している。ガタリとした茎は造込に加工して、肉厚が厚くあり、同程度の世でも抜群の出来栄を示している。

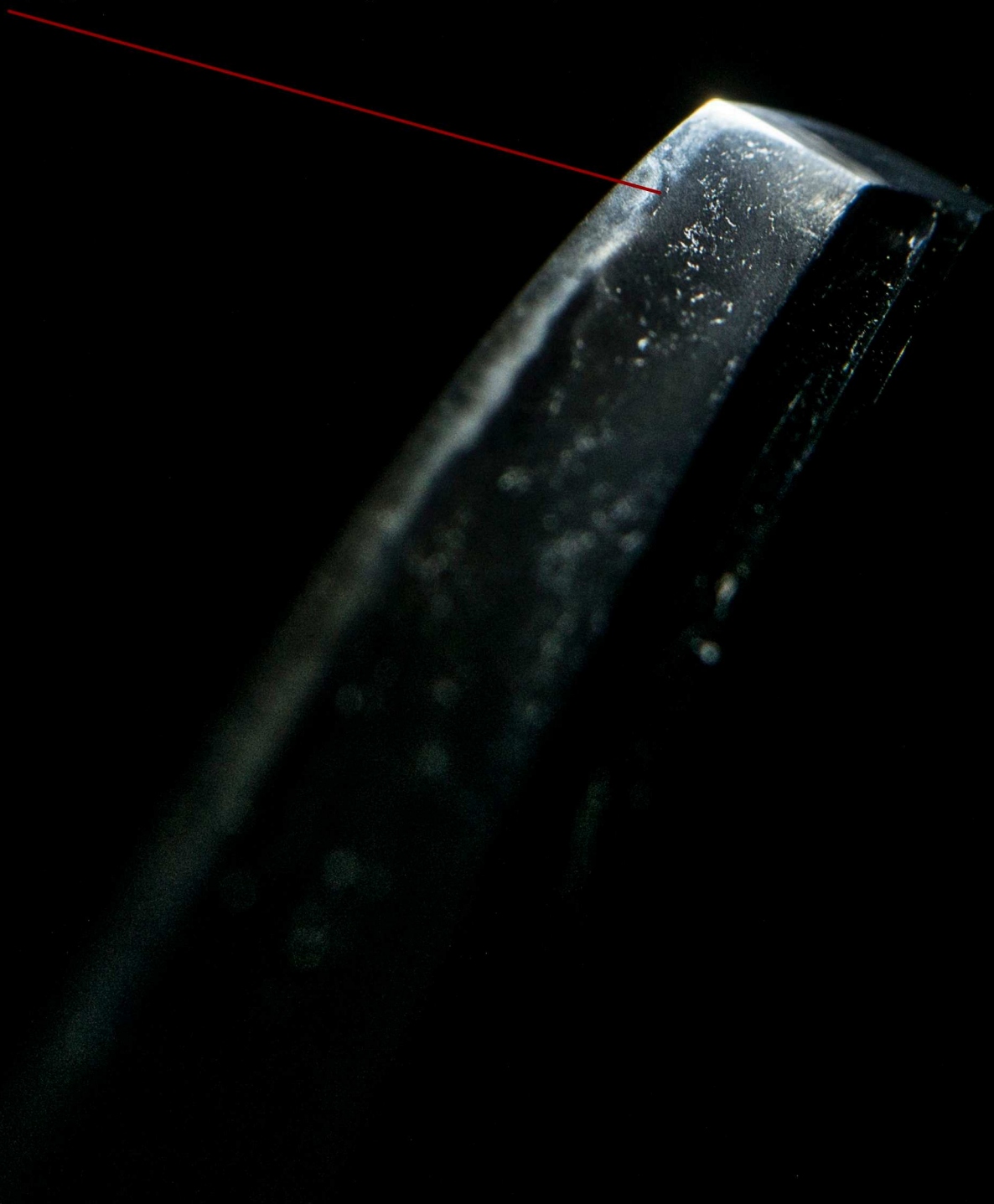
46th NBTHK Juyo Token Certificate
Traditionally rolled in protective tube.

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.





kinsuji (golden line cuts through the hamon)



Utsuri emerges...

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



A close-up photograph of a curved blade, likely a katana, showing the hamon (edge line) patterns. The blade is dark and polished, with a bright highlight along the top edge. Two red lines point from text labels to specific features on the blade's surface. The background is black.

ko-midare
(small wavy hamon oscillates)

dark, bold line of *kinsuji*



ko-ashi
(small legs) that protect the cutting edge

outstanding *midare-utsuri*, the essence of koto-period.

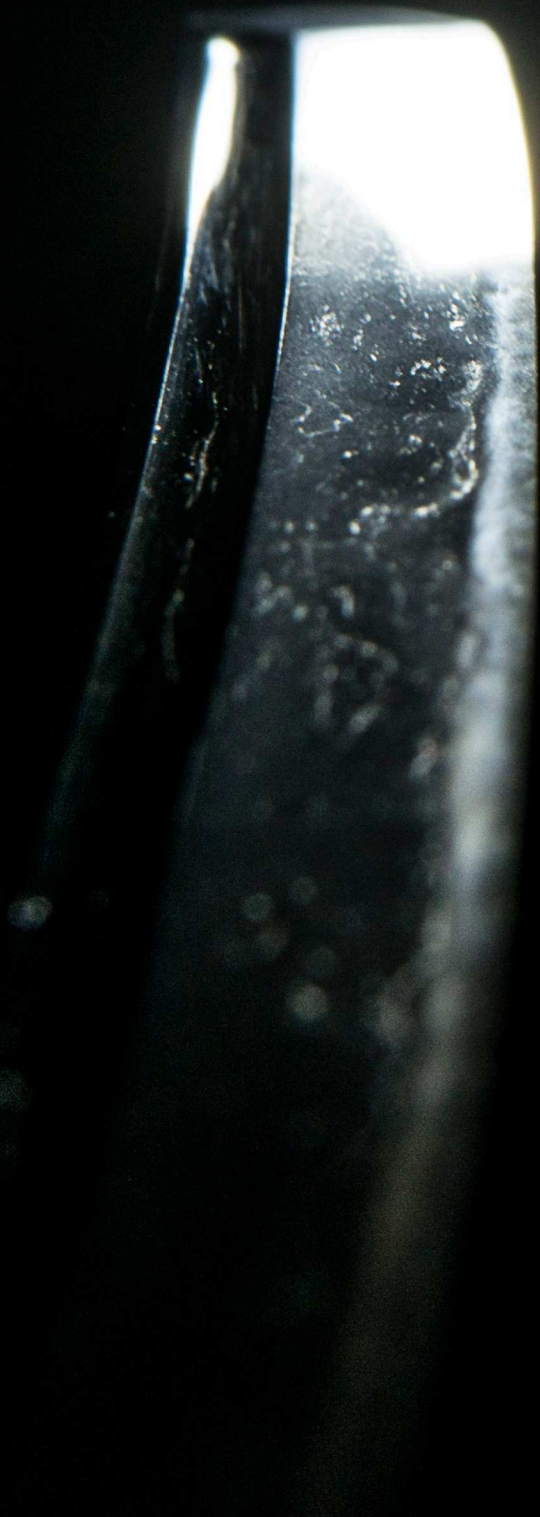



A close-up photograph of a curved metal blade, likely a katana, showing a hamon pattern. The blade is dark and textured, with a bright, glowing edge. A red line points to a specific section of the blade. The background is black.

ko-midare hamon
(more rhythmic waves in this section)

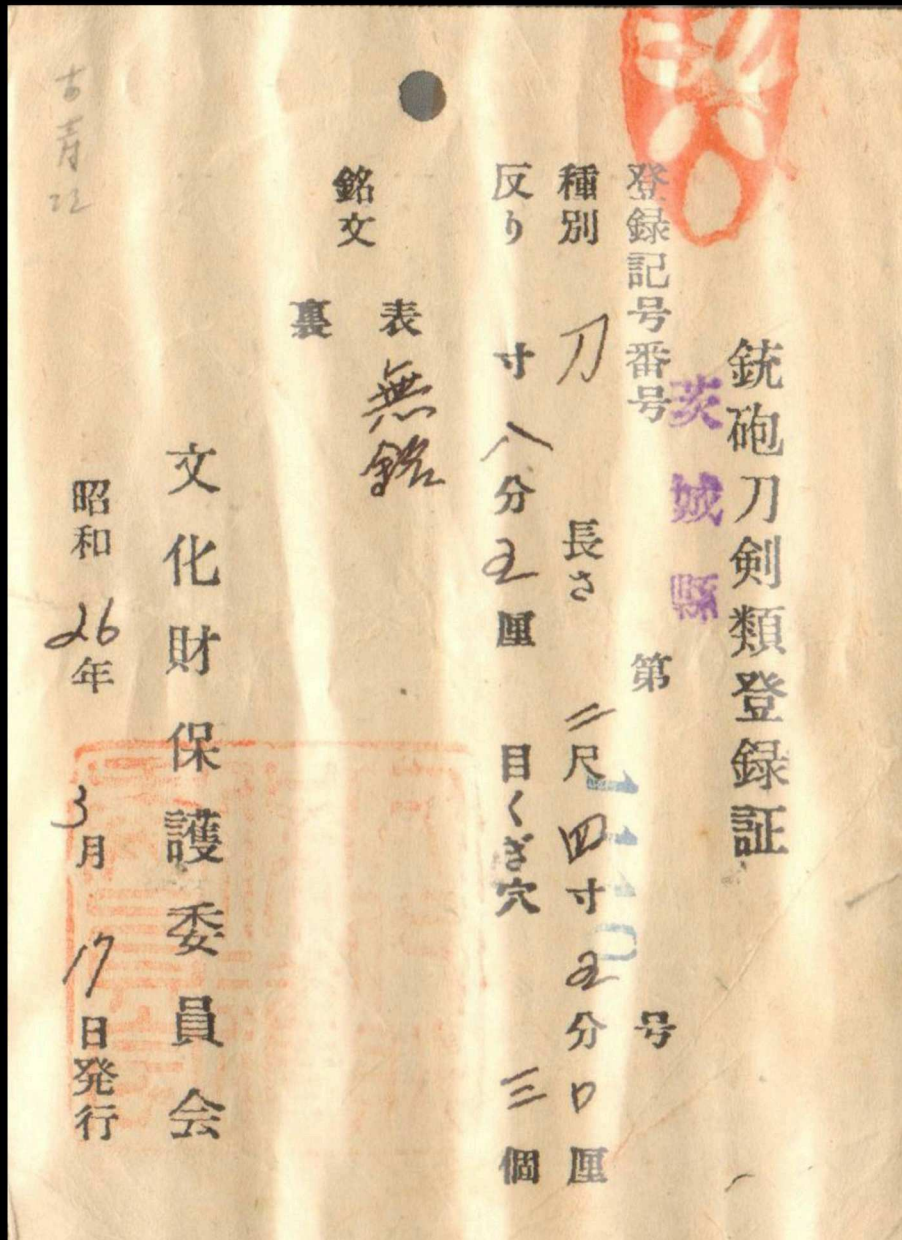
a bright, austere presence.

a serious samurai sword.





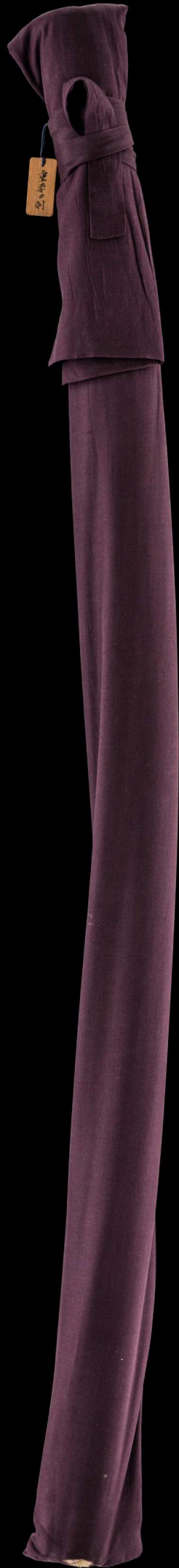
Yo (leaves) are beautiful
clusters of nie crystals
inside the hamon.



This is the original *torokusho* (registration card) for the *Ko-Aoe katana*.
The card was registered in the 26th year of Showa (1951).

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 1140, one of the very first swords registered in Japan.



special wooden tag



Ko-Aoe School
2-shaku 4-sun (~74.2cm)