



ITEM# UJKA358

A KO-KONGÔBYÔE SCHOOL KATANA

UNSIGNED, LATE KAMAKURA TO NAMBOKUCHO PERIOD (MID-1300S)

Swordsmith:	<i>Ko-Kongôbyôe School (o-suriage-nakago)</i>
Location:	<i>Chikuzen province (Fukuoka on Kyushu island)</i>
Measurements:	Length: 70.2cm Curvature: 1.0cm Moto-haba: 3.2cm Weight: 790g
Jihada:	<i>Mokume, itame meeting masame-hada, with ji-nie and light shirake utsuri</i>
Hamon:	<i>Hoso-suguha (thin straight temper line) with tight nioguchi</i>
Certificate #1:	NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon (designated as Especially Worthy of Conservation)
Certificate #2-4:	NTHK-NPO Kanteisho (tsuba, kamon fittings & koshirae designated Authentic)
Authentication:	<i>Sayagaki to Naminohira Saneyasu</i>
Included:	Shirasaya, Satsuma gunto koshirae, bags, stand, kit, etc.

The *Kongôbyôe school* dates back to the *Kamakura period* in *Chikuzen province* (modern day *Fukuoka*) where warrior monks battled the Mongol invasions with these powerful swords.

This meaty katana comes with a superb set of *Satsuma gunto handachi-koshirae* with matching Edo-period *kamon* (family crest) that is a variation of the *Shimazu daimyo kamon*. It also has *sayagaki* attributing the piece to *Naminohira Saneyasu*, who worked in the *Nambokucho period*, circa 1352.

This katana was likely carried by an Imperial Navy Officer that had this special gunto koshirae built in tribute the warrior culture of the Satsuma domain, as both the *Shimazu kamon* and katana (*Naminohira school*) are from Satsuma. Note the rare *Yamakichibei tsuba* from the *Momoyama period* with its unique *kukurizaru* design and solar rays that are akin the *Rising Sun Flag*.

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Saki-kasane: 3.6mm

Moto-kasane: 4.5mm

Omosa: 790g

Kissaki: 4.11cm

Saki-haba: 2.27cm

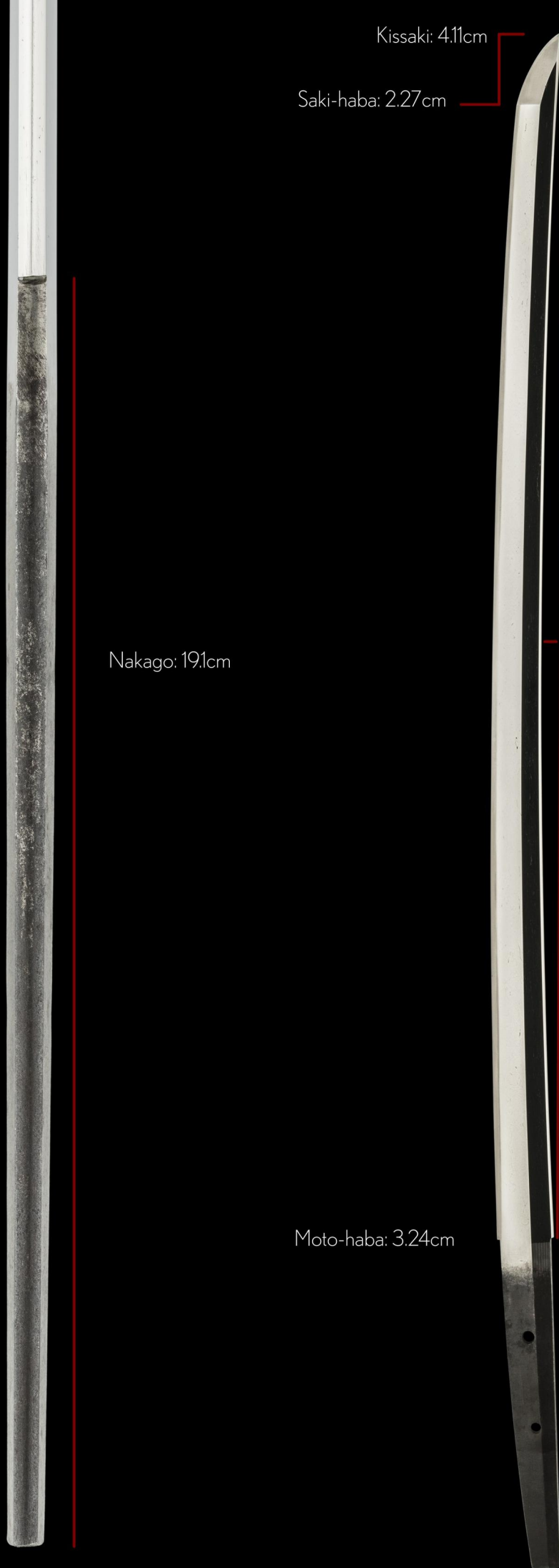
Nakago: 19.1cm

Moto-haba: 3.24cm

Nagasa: 70.2cm

Sori: 1.0cm

Mekugi-ana: 2



The Kongobyoe school hails from Chikuzen province in the Kyushu region. The founder, *Moritaka*, dates back to the Kamakura period.

There are several generations of the school that used the name Moritaka, along with Moritoshi, Morikane, Moriyoshi, Morikuni, all with the prefix "Mori". The school thrived until the end of the Muromachi period.

There is an influence from both the Yamato and Yamashiro traditions, with the workmanship best described as conservative and highly functional. These are swords ready for battle.

Kongobyoe-made swords were carried by samurai and warrior monks during the Mongol invasions of the Kamakura period.

This powerful katana has been attributed to the *Ko-Kongobyoe school* (*Ko* meaning 'early'), thus being made from the Kamakura period (circa mid 1200s) to the Nambokucho period that ended in 1393.



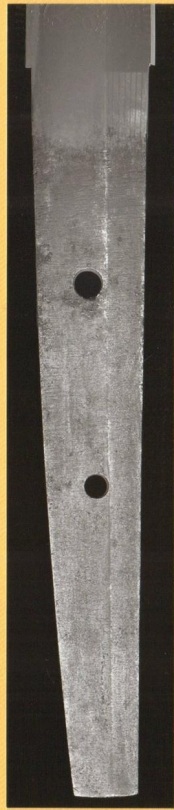


This katana has an *o-suriage nakago*, where the *nakago* (tang) was greatly shortened, and thus the signature lost.

The shortening procedure was carefully performed as the overall condition of the *nakago* is clean and gently filed.

30201809

No 1010057



鑑定書

一刀 無銘 (古金剛兵衛)

長二尺三寸一分半

右は當協會に於て審査の結果特別保存刀劍と
鑑定しこれを証する

平成三十年十二月十日

公益財団法人日本美術刀劍保存協會



東京都教育委員会
第 91532 号
平成24年7月13日

(再)

NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon Certificate of Designation

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

Issued in the 30th year of Heisei (2018), December 10th

One, Katana

Mumei (unsigned)
Ko-Kongôbyôe

Nagasa (length)
2-shaku 3-sun 1-bu han (70.1cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai
(NBTHK)



薩摩國波平實安

Satsuma no Kuni Naminohira Saneyasu

Naminohira Saneyasu in Satsuma province
[1352~1356]

長サ貳尺參寸壹分余有之

Nagasa 2-shaku 3-sun 1-bu amari kore ari

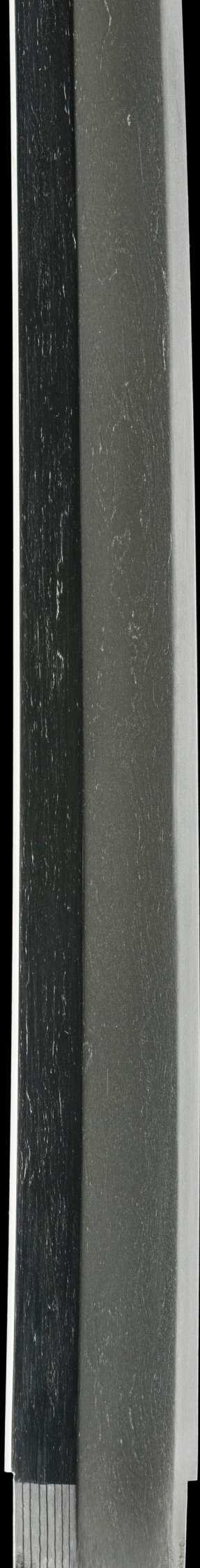
Blade length ~70.2 cm

The *Naminohira school* and *Kongobyoe school*, both located on Kyushu island, share similar *Yamato-den* characteristics.

It is reasonable that the sword has vintage *sayagaki* to the Naminohira school.

Incidentally, '*Nami*' means 'wave', *hira* means 'flat'. This translates to "*sail on calm seas*". Naminohira swords made by Satsuma swordsmiths were very popular among the Japanese Imperial Navy for the swords brought with them a positive omen.

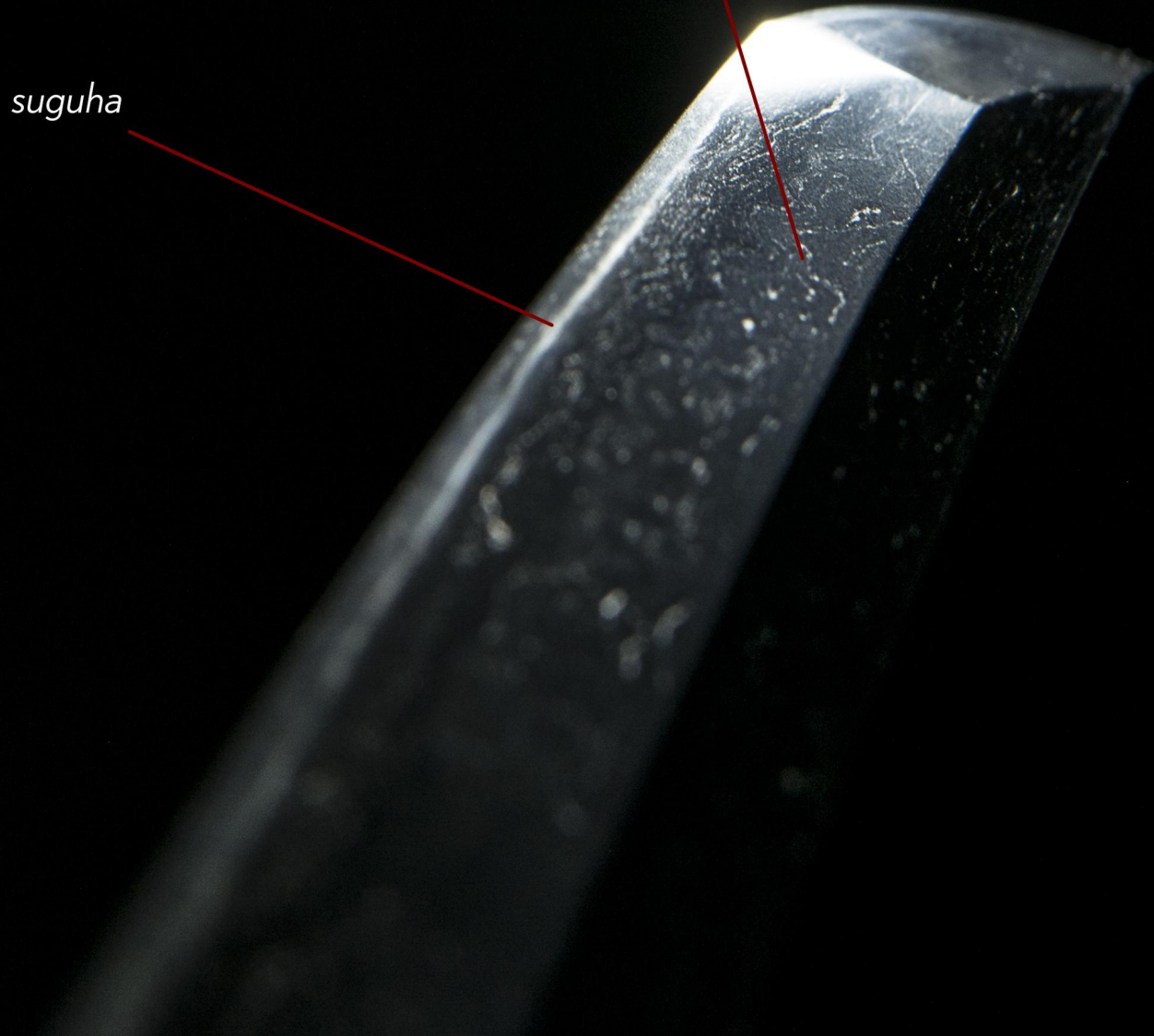





The bright *suguha hamon* juxtaposes the darkish grain of the sword.

A light *shirake utsuri* (shadow hamon) appears in the *hiraji* (body of the blade above the hamon).

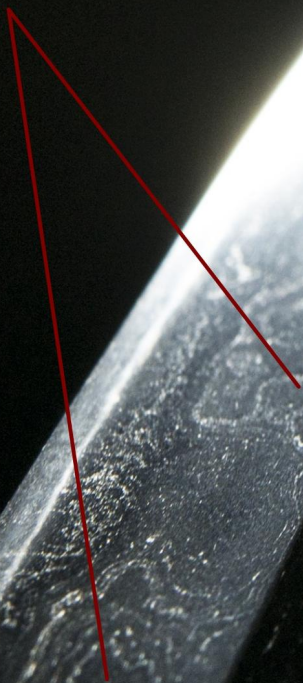
suguha

A close-up, low-angle shot of a sword blade against a black background. The blade is illuminated from the side, highlighting its metallic texture and the hamon patterns. A bright, glowing line of light, the *suguha hamon*, runs along the edge of the blade. Above this line, a lighter, more diffuse pattern, the *shirake utsuri*, is visible. Two red lines point from the text to these specific features: one points to the bright *suguha hamon* and the other points to the *shirake utsuri* pattern.



This area looks similar to *ayasugi-hada*, a wavy variation of straight grain *masame-hada* that is seen with the *Gassan* and *Naminohira* schools.

Pools of circular *mokume-hada*
are clearly seen here.

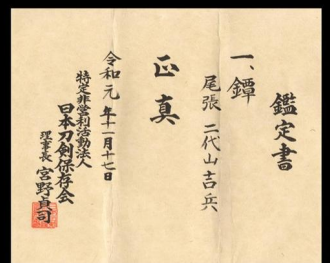




This is a wonderfully rare iron tsuba that is signed by the second generation *Yamakichibei* who worked way back in the *Momoyama period* (circa 1573~1603). 1st and 2nd second generation *Yamakichibei* were professional tsuba makers with an armorsmith background. They were employed by the feudal lord of Owari Province.

The design motif is called *kukurizaru* (くくり猿) which are hanging monkeys of Kyoto - a round ball-shaped talisman made of cloth that represents a monkey with hands and feet tied to the back - a symbol of self-control and triumph over desires.

An NTHK-NPO Kanteisho certificate of authenticity has been awarded to this tsuba.



(reverse)



At the well-known *Kongo-ji* temple in Kyoto many spherical talismans made of coloured fabric, called *kukurizaru*, or "hanging monkey".

The idea is that you put your wish inside *kukurizaru*, *Kôshin* the deity of the temple, will help you forget that particular desire and make the other come true.



It is believed that *Kôshin*-san helps all those who struggle in their lives, with all their efforts to be good people. It is believed that he punishes the bad guys too.

山 (Yama)

吉 (Kichi)

兵 (bei)





The tsuba depicts rays of sunshine, akin to the *Rising Sun Flag* that was originally used by feudal warlords in Japan during the Edo period.

On October 7, 1889, it was adopted as the naval ensign of the Imperial Japanese Navy.

The flag depicts a stylized sun in the form of red circle with 16 rays, and it has its origins in the idea that Japan's easterly location makes it "the land of the rising sun."

Imperial Japan flaunted the Rising Sun flag throughout Asia before and up through World War II, the flag came to take on another meaning. Military victories were celebrated with the Rising Sun flag, and it was included in most of the Japanese propaganda that was distributed at the time.

Today the flag has been adopted by some right-wing ultra nationalists, who are unapologetically nostalgic for the glory days of Japanese imperialism.

in part from grunge.com



Matching fittings for a *handachi koshirae* with a *kamon* (family crest) that is a variation of the famous *Shimazu daimyo family kamon* in Satsuma province on Kyushu island.



NTHK-NPO Kanteisho attributing the fittings to the late Edo period (early 1800s)





The Shimazu clan were the daimyô of the Satsuma han, which spread over Satsuma.

The *Shimazu* were identified as one of the *tozama* or outsider daimyô families in contrast with the *fudai* or insider clans which were hereditary vassals or allies of the Tokugawa clan.





Menuki (decorative grips on the hilt) carry crawling dragon theme.

These impressively detailed copper menuki have gold accents and hand-wrapped under a *hishimaki-style* leather weave.





Koshirae bag