



**ITEM# UJKA359**

## A MORIKANE KATANA

SIGNED, LATE MUROMACHI PERIOD (CIRCA EIROKU ERA: 1558-1570)

**Swordsmith:** *Morikane of the Kongôbyôe School (ubu-nakago)*  
**Location:** *Chikuzen province (Fukuoka on Kyushu island)*  
**Measurements:** **Length:** 68.5cm **Curvature:** 2.4cm **Moto-haba:** 2.2cm **Weight:** 640g  
**Jihada:** *Mokume, itame meeting masame-hada, with ji-nie, chikei and light shirake utsuri*  
**Hamon:** *Hoso-suguha (thin straight temper line) with tight nioguchi*  
**Certificate #1:** **NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon** (designated as Especially Worthy of Conservation)  
**Certificate #2-3:** **NBTHK Hozon** (tsuba & fuchi-kashira designated as Worthy of Conservation)  
**Certificate #4:** **NTHK-NPO Kanteisho** (koshirae designated Authentic)  
**Included:** Shirasaya, custom koshirae with antique fittings, 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. At their core, these are swords built with functionality in mind. They are dependable weapons that comprise of a grain pattern that is a mix of *o-itame-hada* and *masame-hada*. The *hamon* is a precise beam of *suguha*. A subtle *shirake utsuri* appears in the steel with plentiful swirls of *chikei*. A full-length *bo-hi* (groove) helps to lighten the sword. This is a quick-wielding one or two-handed katana that has been battle-ready since the mid-16th century of the *Koto* period.

A beautiful set of *uchigatana-koshirae* was built for the sword using antique fittings. The *saya* (scabbard) has been lacquered in a *aoi-gai fuemaki* technique, where symmetrical flute-like stripes of mother-of-pearl decorate the piece. The *fuchi-kashira* compliments the theme with a depiction of a drum and flute. The *tomoe* tsuba was crafted by an armor-maker circa *Muromachi* period.

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 quick and curvy katana has been signed by Morikane who worked during the warring Late Muromachi period, circa the Eiroku era, 1558~1570.





Location: *Chikuzen* (resident of Fukuoka)

Family name: *Minamoto*

Swordsmith: *Morikane* (first generation)

*ubu-nakago* (original, unaltered tang)

源 (Minamoto)

盛 (Mori)

包 (kane)

作 (saku)

The *nakago-jiri* (shape of bottom of the nakago) is based on the wooden tomb plaques known as *sotoba* used in burial grounds in Japan. The shape is said to reference a five-tiered pagoda representing the five elements of the Buddhist universe.

These slabs could be seen as the five-tiered pagoda of the common man - those who could not afford more elaborate monuments.

Sotoba act as a traditional *Shinto yorishiro* - an antenna to attract *kami* (spirits) of the deceased back to the grave.



特 保  
28201511

№ 1006759



鑑定書

一刀 銘 源盛包作(金剛兵衛)

長二尺二寸五分弱

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

平成二十九年二月二日

公益財団法人日本美術刀劍保存協會



東京 教育委員会  
第 174201 号  
昭和47年 11 月 30 日

## 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 29th year of Heisei (2017), February 2nd

One, Katana

Mei (signature)

Minamoto Morikane saku (Kongôbyôe)

Nagasa (length)

2-shaku 2-sun 5-bu jaku (68.2cm)


Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai  
(NBTHK)





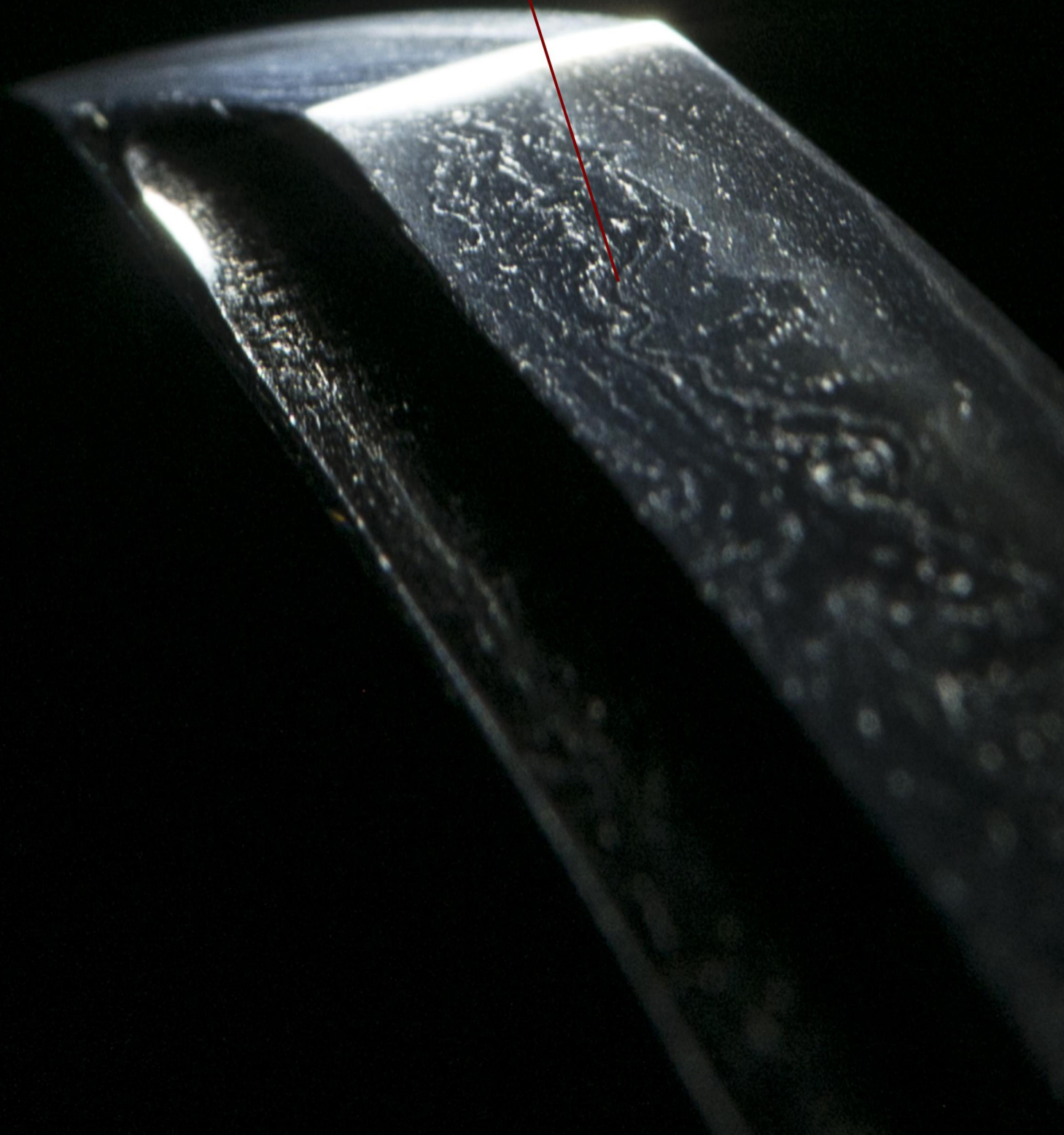


An exacting *hoso-suguha* (thin straight hamon) shines like a laser beam along the freshly polished steel.



Gorgeous swirling patterns of *chikei*  
(dark lines of *nie* crystals) are beautifully  
interwoven within the *ji* (body).

*Masame-hada* (straight grain) that flows like a river referred to as *nagare-hada*.



A subtle *shirake utsuri* (a type of shadow hamon) appears on the blade at certain angles under the light.





*Shirasaya*  
(protective scabbard)



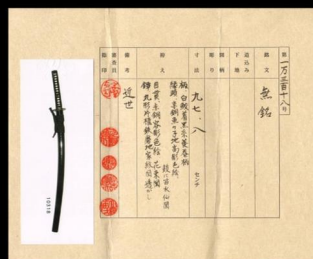
silver *habaki* with  
diagonal file marks

*Kuro ro-iro aogai-mijin nuriwake  
fuemaki-nuri saya  
uchigatana-koshirae*

黒呂色青貝微塵塗分笥巻塗鞘打刀拵え

*Uchigatana-koshirae lacquered  
in glossy black with tiny particles  
of blue shell embedded on the  
unique striped saya*

Crafted during the  
Modern era

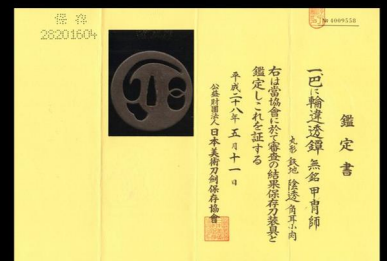


NTHK-NPO Kanteisho  
Certificate of Authenticity



This iron tsuba was crafted by a *kacchû-shi* (armor-maker), circa the very late Muromachi period when the sword was crafted.

The central design is that of *Tomoe* - believed to depict the threefold division of *Man, Earth, and Sky* at the heart of the Shinto belief system of universal life balance.



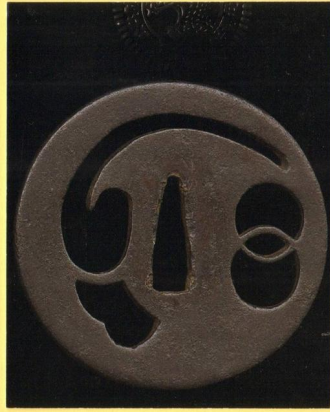
NBTHK Hozon  
certificate of authenticity



(reverse)

28201604

No 4009558



鑑定書

一巴に輪違透鐔 無銘甲冑師

丸形鉄地陰透角耳小肉

右は當協會に於て審査の結果保存刀装具と  
鑑定しこれを証する

平成二十八年五月十一日

公益財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協會



## NBTHK Hozon Certificate of Designation

A fuchi-kashira designated as *Worthy of Conservation*  
by the Society for the Preservation of the Japan Art Sword

Issued in the 28th year of Heisei (2016), May 11th

One, Tsuba

*Depicting tomoe and crossed circles*

*Mumei (unsigned)  
An armour craftsman*

*Round shape, iron, openwork forming negative silhouette,  
angular rim with a little roundness*

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai  
(NBTHK)

*Raden fuemaki*  
the unique striped design pattern resembles  
a traditional Japanese flute called *fue*.





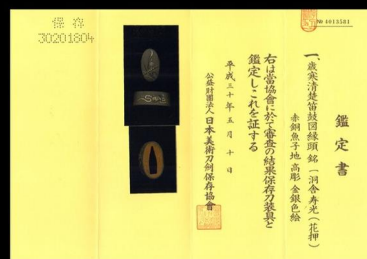
The *fuchi* (hilt collar) is signed by *Ichidôsha Toshimitsu* (Edo period).



一 (Ichi)  
洞 (dô)  
舎 (sha)  
寿 (Toshi)  
光 (mitsu)



*Kashira* (pommel)  
A flute and flower design.



Certified as NBTHK Hozon  
(worthy of conservation)

30201804



No 4013581

鑑定書

一、歳寒清楚笛鼓図縁頭銘（洞舎寿光（花押）

赤銅魚子地 高彫 金銀色絵

右は當協會に於て審査の結果保存刀装具と  
鑑定しこれを証する

平成三十年五月十日

公益財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協會



NBTHK Hozon  
Certificate of Designation

A fuchi-kashira designated as *Worthy of Conservation*  
by the Society for the Preservation of the Japan Art Sword

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

One, Fuchi-kashira

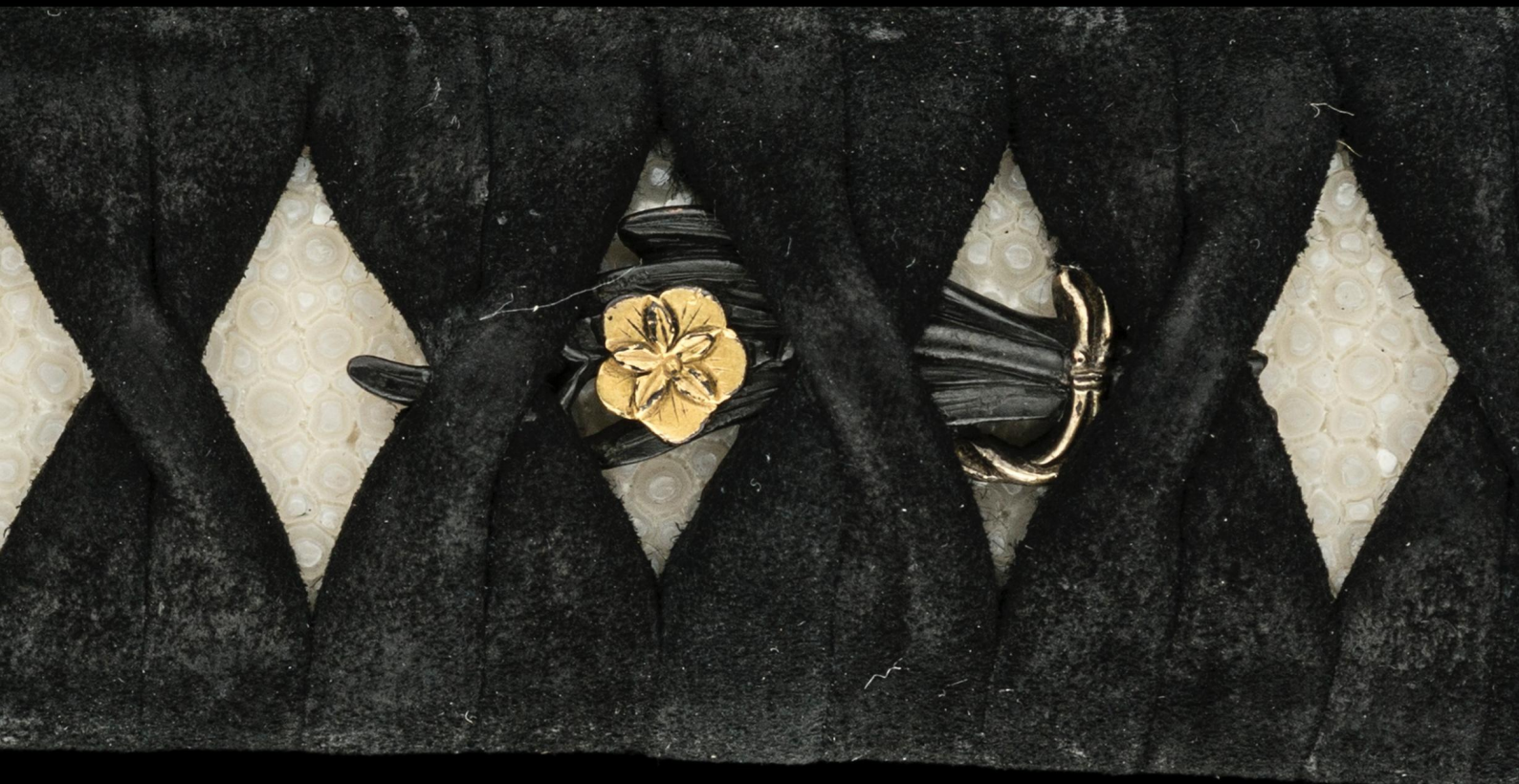
*Depicting drum and fife with plum and narcissus*

*Mei (signature)*

*Signed via seal: Ichidôsha Toshimitsu*

*Shakudô with nanako ground, relief with gold and silver accents*

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai  
(NBTHK)



*Menuki* (decorative grips on the hilt) depicts a bouquet of flowers. The menuki are fastened on *same-kawa* (ray skin) and wrapped over with leather.





Koshirae bag