



ITEM# UJKA363

A GASSAN SADAKATSU KATANA

SIGNED & DATED BY GASSAN SADAKATSU, RESIDENT OF OSAKA
DATED A LUCKY DAY IN DECEMBER 1933 IN COMMEMORATION OF THE
BIRTH OF HIS IMPERIAL HIGHNESS THE CROWN PRINCE [AKIHITO]

Swordsmith: *Gassan Sadakatsu* (月山貞勝)
Dated: *8th year of Showa era (December 1933)*
Measurements: **Length:** 68.7cm (ubu) **Curvature:** 1.9cm **Moto-haba:** 2.82cm
Jihada: *Exquisite ayasugi-hada with chikei and sunagashi*
Hamon: *Clear and bright chu-suguha with plentiful kinsuji and ko-ashi*
Authentication: **Sayagaki by Gassan Sadatoshi** (grandson of Gassan Sadakatsu)
Hakogaki by Gassan Sadakatsu (writing on original box)

SOLD

Gassan Sadakatsu (1869-1943) was the first son of the *Meiji era's* master swordsmith *Gassan Sadakazu*. He was a dedicated student and tireless assistant during his father's productive years. He succeeded the headship of the *Osaka Gassan School* in 1918 upon the death of Sadakazu. In 1921, Sadakatsu became acquainted with *Baron Kitokuro Itsuki*, then Minister of the Imperial Household, that brought him the opportunity to create swords for the Emperor, the Imperial Army, the Imperial Navy and the Imperial Family. He was the swordsmith of Emperor Hirohito's Grand Field Marshal Sword (大元帥刀) as well as his enthronement *tachi* plus imperial military swords (恩賜の軍刀) given to top graduates of the elite Imperial War College upon graduation.

This rare and elegant katana was crafted in commemoration of the birth of his Imperial Highness, the *Crown Prince Akihito*, dated December 1933. It is a sword that personifies the class and generosity of Prince Akihito. The Gassan school's iconic *ayasugi-hada* has been captured with pure crafting brilliance. His grandson, *Sadatoshi*, head of the Gassan family, authenticated this katana in *sayagaki* as being *shōshin yūsaku nari* (正真優作也) - an authentic and masterful work of art.



Saki-kasane: 5.2mm

Moto-kasane: 6.6mm

Kissaki: 3.05cm
Saki-haba: 1.91cm

Nagasa: 68.7cm

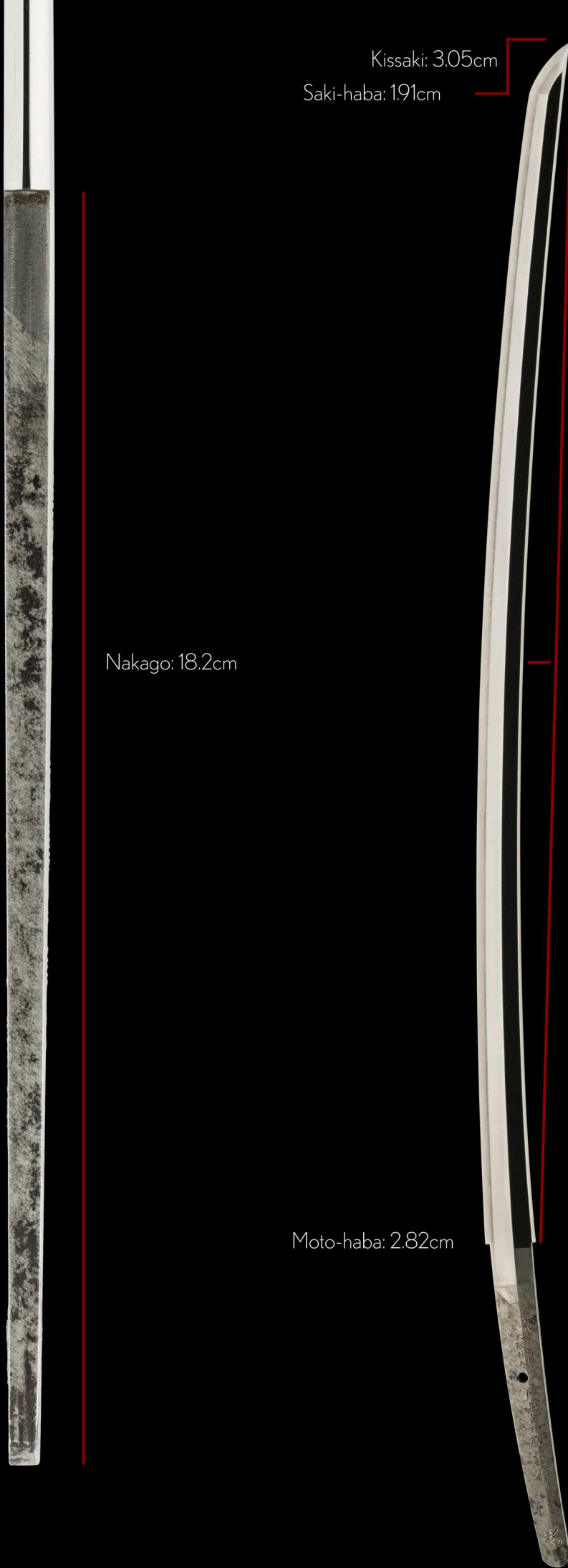
Nakago: 18.2cm

Sori: 1.6cm

Omosa: 670g

Moto-haba: 2.82cm

Mekugi-ana: 1



This graceful katana was crafted by *Gassan Sadakatsu* and dated to a lucky day in December 1933 in commemoration of the birth of his Imperial Highness the *Crown Prince Akihito*.

Akihito became Emperor on January 7, 1989 after the death of his father, *Emperor Hirohito*.

Akihito was enthroned on November 12, 1990. His reign was designated the *Heisei period*, or "Achieving Peace."

Swords crafted for such an important occasion were normally *tanto* (short sword).

A katana marking this celebratory event was extremely rare, only a handful were made.



Newly born Crown Prince Akihito
EPA/Imperial Household Agency





昭 (Shô)
和 (wa)
八 (hachi)
年 (nen)
大 (Ô)
阪 (saka)
住 (jû)
人 (nin)
十 (jû)
二 (ni)
月 (gatsu)
吉 (kichi)
日 (jitsu)

月 (Ga)
山 (ssan)
貞 (Sada)
勝 (katsu)
謹 (kin)
作 (saku)

Location: *Ôsaka*
Family name: *Gassan*
Swordsmith: *Sadakatsu*

ubu-nakago (original, unaltered tang)
kessho-yasurime (artistic file marks)

Shôwa hachinen jûnigatsu kichijitsu - Ôsaka jûnin
Gassan Sadakatsu kinsaku + kaô
Respectfully made by Gassan Sadakatsu, resident of
Ôsaka, on a lucky day in December of 1933
+ stylized Gassan signature

Kôtaishi-denka go-tanjô kinen

On commemoration for the birth of His
Highness the Crown Prince [Akihito].

(Kô) 皇
(tai) 太
(shi) 子
(den) 殿
(ka) 下

(go) 御
(tan) 誕
(jô) 生
(ki) 記
(nen) 念

皇太子殿下

御誕生記念





Sadakatsu's stylized signature, note the numerous strokes of his chisel to produce this effect.



Gassan Sadakatsu's character can be best described with the Japanese term '*majime*'.

It means one who is serious, diligent, hard-working - a perfectionist. His personality is reflected in his tidy, exacting signature.

This is a sword that culminates decades of patience and devotion to the craft. Sadakatsu was 64 years of age when this katana was forged - at his prime, brimming with confidence, .



Gassan Sadakatsu (月山貞勝)

Born as the first son of maestro *Gassan Sadakazu* in Yariyamachi, Osaka in 1869, *Sadakatsu* was privately named *Eitarô* and started his professional training under his father in early childhood.

Sadakatsu's first signed work came in 1921, an *ayasugi-hada* wakizashi preserved in *Dewa Sanzan Shine*.

Gassan Sadakatsu became a master of the school's emblematic *ayasugi-hada*, which this katana so exquisitely embodies.

After the death of Sadakazu, Gassan Sadakatsu crafted numerous swords for the imperial household, royal families and for the Emperor himself.

The Gassan school derives from Mt. Gassan in the old province of Dewa (present-day Yamagata prefecture).

Mt. Gassan had been a training area of mountain priests since olden times and swordsmiths who used the smith name of Gassan existed there since the Heian Period, though, there is no signed work of Gassan before the end of the Nanbokucho Period (1394).

Now abdicated Emperor Akihito was, and continues to be, a highly respected symbol of post-war (peaceful) Japan.

His first son, Emperor Naruhito leads the new *Reiwa era*, meaning 'beautiful harmony.'



Emperor Naruhito and his father, Akihito



protective traditional *washi* paper

正真優作也
Shôshin yûsaku nari
Authentic & Masterful Artistry

先祖傳來綾杉以鍛法
Senzo denrai ayasugi o motte tanpô-su
Forged in the traditional Ayasugi technique unique to the Gassan family

大阪住人月山貞勝謹作花押
Ôsaka-jûnin Gassan Sadakatsu kinsaku kaô
Respectfully made by Gassan Sadakatsu, resident of Ôsaka
+ stylized Gassan signature

刃長貳尺貳寸七分有
Hachô ni-shaku ni-sun shichi-bu ari
Blade length ~ 68.7 cm



皇太子殿下御誕生記念

Kôtaishi-denka go-tanjô kinen

Commemoration of the birth of his Imperial Highness the Crown Prince [Akihito]

昭和八年十二月吉日

Shôwa hachinen jûnigatsu kichijitsu

On a lucky day in December of 1933

平成寿年季春

Heisei junen kishun

Written in March of 1998

嫡孫貞利誌「花押」

Chakuson Sadatoshi shirusu + kaô

Authenticated by the legitimate grandson Sadatoshi
+ stylized Gassan signature



一皇太子殿下御誕生記念
先祖傳來綾杉以秘術
昭和八年十二月吉日
長貳尺貳寸五分謹作

御刀匠

月山貞勝



皇太子殿下御誕生記念
Kôtaishi-denka go-tanjô kinen

Commemoration of the birth of his Imperial
Highness the Crown Prince [Akihito]

先祖傳來綾杉以秘術

Senzo denrai ayasugi hijutsu o motte

Forged in the traditional secret ayasugi technique
unique to the Gassan family

長貳尺貳寸五分謹作

Nagasa ni-shaku ni-sun go-bu no kinsaku

Respectfully made in the length ~ 68.7cm

昭和八年十二月吉日

Shôwa hachinen jûnigatsu kichijitsu

On a lucky day in December of 1933

御刀匠 月山貞勝

On tôshô Gassan Sadakatsu

By swordsmith Gassan Sadakatsu
with red *hanko* (official seal)

Inside, one katana...

inner box

刀

刀 (Katana)

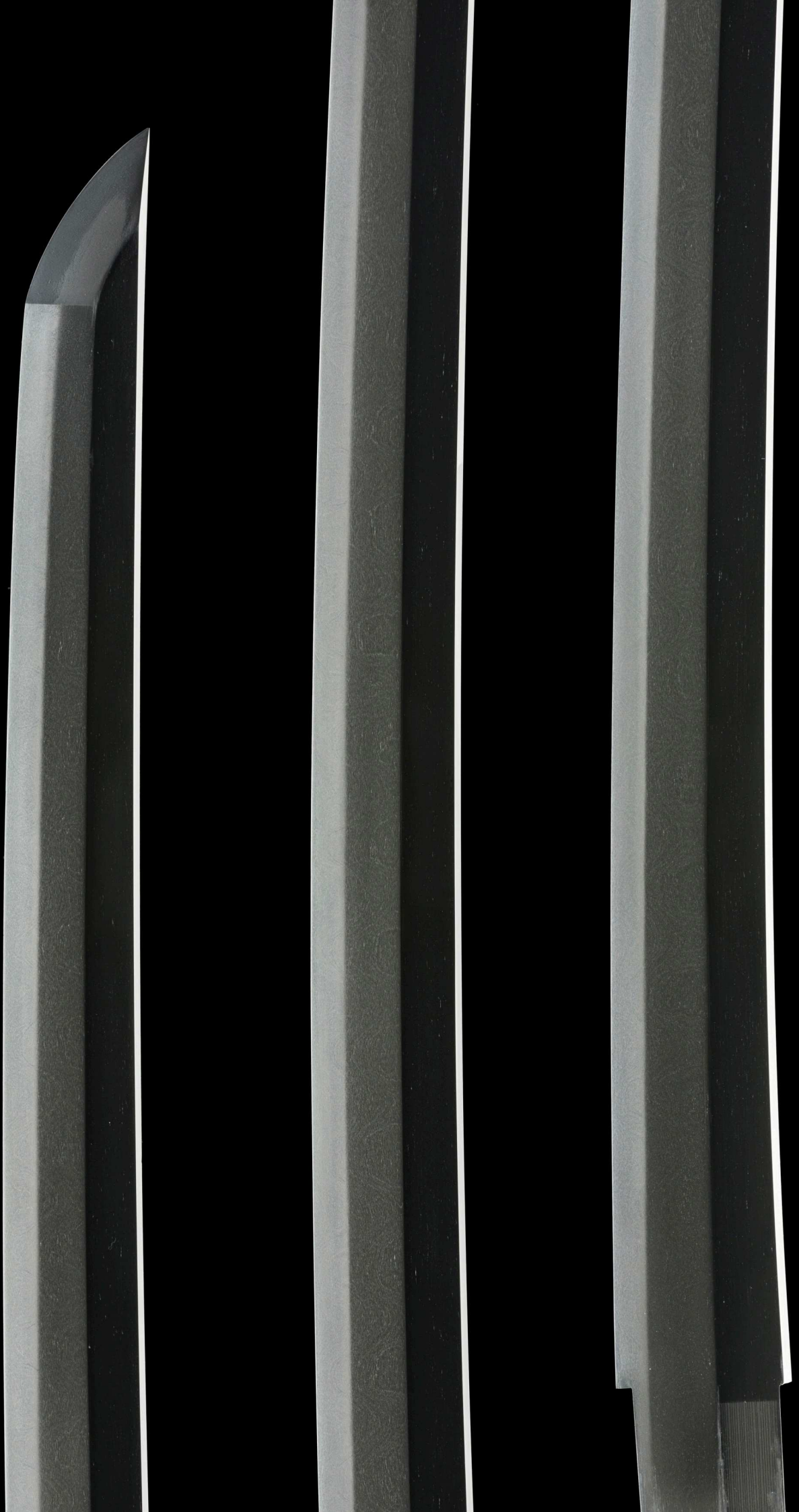
outer protective shell

壹
振

壹 (hito)

振 (furi)







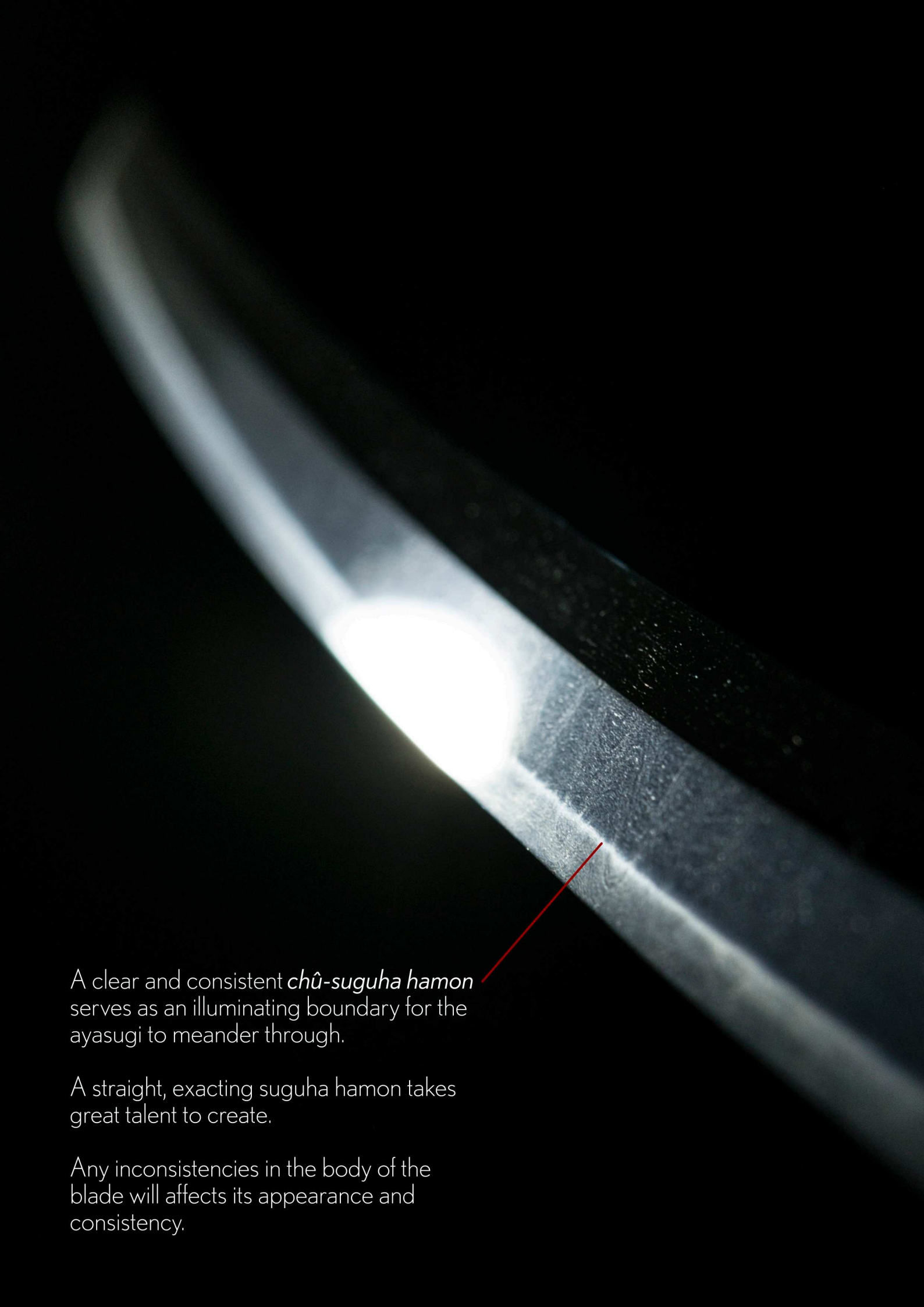
This unique wavy grain pattern in the steel is called *ayasugi-hada*. Also known as *Gassan-hada* (月山肌), this forging structure has remained the trademark of this iconic school for centuries.

Interestingly, this pattern is named after the special wavy carving pattern on certain *koto* or *shamisen* music instruments which enhances its resonance.



Koto
traditional Japanese musical instrument

ayasugi-hada

A close-up, low-angle photograph of a sword blade against a black background. The blade is illuminated from the side, highlighting its curved shape and the fine details of its surface. A prominent, bright, slightly wavy line runs along the edge, representing the hamon. Below this line, a darker, more textured area is visible, which is the ayasugi. A thin red line points from the text below to a specific section of the blade's edge.

A clear and consistent *chû-suguha hamon* serves as an illuminating boundary for the ayasugi to meander through.

A straight, exacting suguha hamon takes great talent to create.

Any inconsistencies in the body of the blade will affect its appearance and consistency.

There is a timeless quality embedded within this katana.

The *ayasugi* flows effortlessly within the *yakiba* (hardened area) and into the *ji* (body) displaying both *sunagashi* and *chikei*.

chikei
dark swirls of nie crystals



sunagashi
sweeping sands



The owner of the sword is a long standing acquaintance of Mr. Gassan Sadatoshi. Due to the owner's overseas posting, until recently, this katana was kept under the entrusted care of Mr. Gassan. Sadatoshi sensei had mentioned to the owner in the past that this sword was crafted using the *very finest grade of tamahagane*.

This stock was most likely from the Gassan family's special inventory of high quality tamahagane dating back to the Edo period, which has been completely depleted since then.


The *jigane* (steel surface) exhibits a beautiful, bluish hue and appears 'wet', as seen on the finest swords from all eras in Japan's swordmaking past.






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.



A sweeping *hakikake boshi* that curls back (*ko-maru*) beautifully.






kinsuji (golden lines slice through the hamon)



Rarely seen *uchinoke* in the shape of small *crescent moons* appear above the *hamon*.

Uchinoke is an admirable quality on Koto period swords from the *Rai family*, *Yamashiro Sanjo* and *Yamato Tegai* schools.

The Gassan name (月山) means "*moon mountain*."

A close-up, high-contrast photograph of a woven fabric. The image is dominated by a strong diagonal line of light, transitioning from a bright, almost white glow at the top right to deep shadows at the bottom left. The texture of the fabric is highly detailed, showing individual threads and the intricate weave pattern. The lighting creates a sense of depth and highlights the tactile quality of the material.

weaved to perfection