



ujka374

A Koyama Munetsugu Katana

4th year of Bunkyū era (Feb 1864)

An "Unequaled/Peerless" Katana

Length: 72.7cm

NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon

& NTHK-NPO certificates

Complete custom koshirae production in Japan

Saki-kasane: 5.4mm[^]

Moto-kasane: 7.7mm

Kissaki: 4.30cm

Saki-haba: 2.35cm

Nagasa: 72.7cm

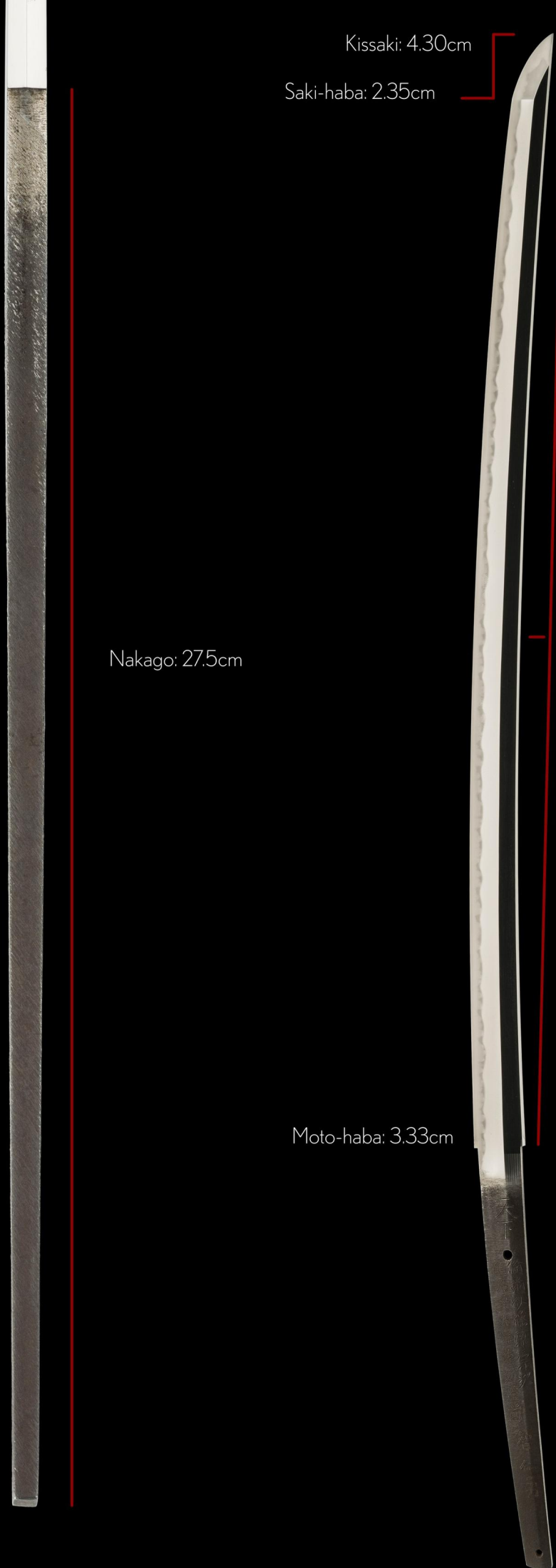
Nakago: 27.5cm

Sori: 1.36cm

Omosa: 1030g

Moto-haba: 3.33cm

Mekugi-ana: 2



This unique and powerful katana was crafted by one of the great maestros of the *shinshinto* period, *Koyama Munetsugu*. *Fujishiro* ranks Munetsugu as *jôjô-saku*, a highly superior swordsmith.

Koyama Munetsugu was born in the castle town of *Shirakawa* in *Mutsu* Province and was retained by Lord *Matsudaira Sadanobu (Rakuô)*. In 1830 he moved to *Kuwana* in *Ise* Province, a year or two later to Edo (modern-day Tokyo), where he lived as a retainer of the ruling clan of Ise.

It is believed that *Koto Tsunahide* was his sensei during his time in Edo. Munetsugu is known to have had a good relationship with the sword tester *Yamada Asaemon*. A number of his blades have *tameshigiri* (test cuts) recorded on their *nakago* by Yamada san.

Like other smiths of his time Munetsugu experimented in the *Soshû* style, however he is best known for his Bizen style *chôji hamon* (clove blossom temper line) in *nioi-deki* and finely forged *mokume-hada* (burl grain), which this katana represents.

The nakago of this katana contains several proverbs and inscriptions that all leads to the benevolent spiritual protection of the blade. This grand sword truly has 'no enemy'.



Location: *Musashi* (resident of Edo)
Title: *Bizen no Suke* (Lord of Bizen province)
Clan: *Fujiwara*
Swordsmith: *Munetsugu* (first generation)

ubu-nakago (original, unaltered tang)
kiri-yasurime (horizontal file marks)



天 (Ten)

下 (ka)

備 (Bi)

前 (zen, no)

介 (Suke)

藤 (Fuji)

原 (wara)

宗 (Mune)

次 (tsugu)

智 (Chi)

仁 (Jin)

勇 (Yû)

(Rin) 臨
(Byô) 兵
(Tô) 鬪
(Ja) 者
(Kai) 皆
(Jin) 陣
(Retsu) 列
(Zai) 在
(Zen) 前

*Rin Pyô Tô Sha Kai Jin Retsu Zai Zen
Chi Jin Yû*

May the presiders over warriors be
my vanguard and may I have wisdom,
benevolence and valour!

Bunkyû yonen nigatsu hi

Dated on a day in the 2nd month of the
4th year of *Bunkyû* era (February 1864)

Tenka-muteki

Unequaled / peerless

*Kiri-musubu yaiba no shita wa jigoku nari
mi o sutete koso ukabu se mo ari*

To be under crossed swords is hell, but only if
you are prepared to sacrifice your life, will you
be able to get out of the situation!

(Mu) 無
(teki) 敵

(Bun) 文

(kyû) 久

(yo) 四

(nen) 年

(ni) 二

(gatsu) 月

(hi) 日

(sute) 捨

(te) て

(koso) 社

(uka) 浮

(bu) む

(se) 瀬

(mo) も

(a) あ

(ri) り

切 (Kiri)
む (mu)
す (su)
ふ (fu)
刃 (yaiba)
の (no)
下 (shita)
ハ (wa)
地 (ji)
こ (ko)
く (ku)
なり (na)
り (ri)
身 (mi)
を (o)





Muteki
No enemy



No 1004546

二刀

鑑定書

銘

備前介藤原宗次
文久四年二月日

(切刃銘) 天下無敵
職兵衛者曾津別左前智左勇
切刃すよ刃の下の地はくろなり身を捨てて保存せし瀬もあり

長二尺三寸九分半

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

平成二十八年二月四日

公益財団法人日本美術刀劍保存協會



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 28th year of Heisei (2016), February 4th

One, Katana

Mei (signature)

Bizen no Suke Fujiwara Munetsugu

Bunkyû yonen nigatsu hi

(Kiritsuke-me) Tenka-muteki

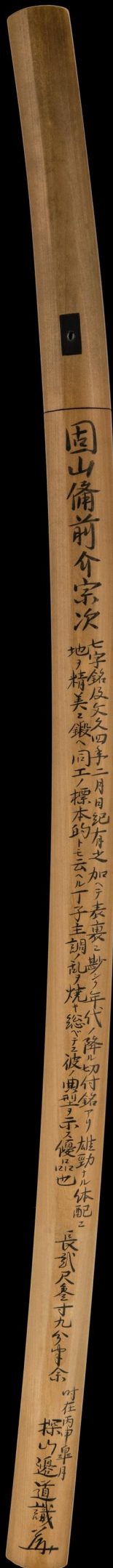
Rin Pyô Tô Sha Kai Jin Retsu Zai Zen Chi Jin Yû

Kiri-musubu yaiba no shita wa jigoku nari mi o sutete koso ukabu se mo ari

Nagasa (length)

2-shaku 3-sun 9-bu han (72.7cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai
(NBTHK)



固山備前介宗次

Koyama Bizen no Suke Munetsugu

Koyama Bizen no Suke Munetsugu

七字銘及文久四年二月日紀有之加へテ表裏ニ勘シク年代ノ降ル切付銘アリ雄勁ナル体配ニ地ヲ精美ニ鍛へ同工ノ標本的トモ云ヘル丁子主調ノ乱ヲ焼キ総ベテニ彼ノ典型ヲ示ス優品也

Shichiji-mei oyobi Bunkyû yonen nigatsu hi no ki kore ari, kuwaete hyôri ni sukoshiku nendai no kudarû kiritsuke-mei ari, yûkei naru taihai ni ji o seibi no kitae dôkô no hyôhon-teki to mo ieru chôji shuchô no midare o yaki subete ni kare no tenkei o shimesu yûhin nari.

The blade bears a seven-character signature, is dated with a day in the second month of Bunkyû four (1864), and bears an inscription that was added not much later than the blade was made. The blade is of a magnificent shape, shows a fine and beautiful kitae, and is hardened in the chôji-based midare that is so typical for this smith whereupon this masterwork represents a textbook example of Koyama Munetsugu's work.

長式尺参寸九分半余

Nagasa ni-shaku san-sun kyû-bu han yo

Blade length ~ 72.7 cm

時在丙申年探山邊道識「花押」

Jizai hinoe-saru satsuki Tanzan Hendô shirusu + kaô

Written by Tanzan Hendô (Tanobe Michihiro) in May of the Year of the Monkey of this era (2016) + monogram

This katana was featured in the NBTHK Journal in November 2016
Translation is as follows:

Tôken-Bijutsu No. 718

#5 (Katana)

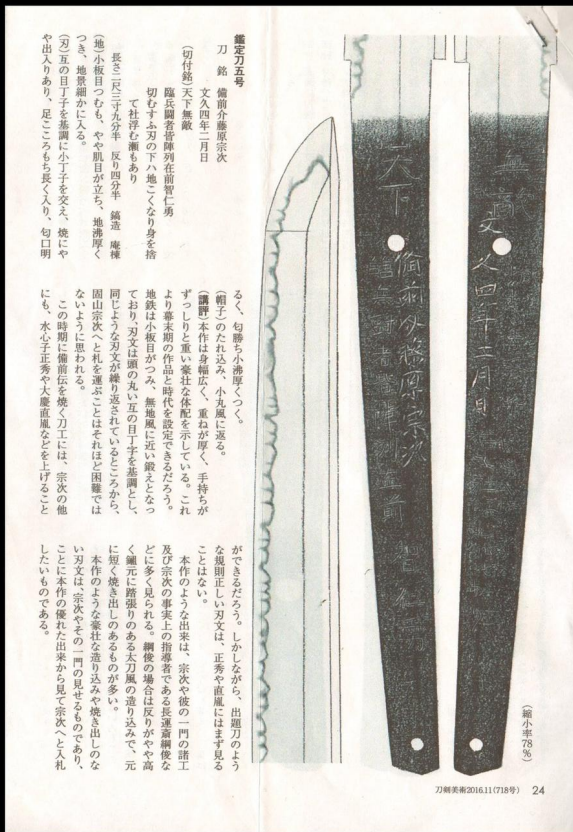
mei: Bizen no Suke Fujiwara Munetsugu Bunkyû yonen nigatsu hi
Bizen no Suke Fujiwara Munetsugu, crafted on a day in the second
month of Bunkyû four (February 1864)"

kiritsuke-mei:

Tenka-muteki
"Unequaled"

Rinpyô tôsha kai jinretsu zaizen chijinyû

This is the nine-syllable *kujiin* mantra reads:
"May the presiders over warriors be my vanguard
from esoteric Buddhism plus the three characters for the virtues of
wisdom, benevolence, and courage."



Kirimusubu-ha no shita wa jigoku nari mi o sutete koso ukamu se mo are
"To be under crossed swords is hell, but only if you are prepared to sacrifice your life,
will you be able to get out of the situation!"

nagasa 72.7cm
sori: 1.35 cm
shinogi-zukuri, iori-mune

ji: dense but somewhat standing-out *ko-itame* that features plenty of *ji-nie* and fine *chikei*

ha: *gunome-chôji-chô* in *nioi-deki* but with plenty of *ko-nie* that shows noticeable downs and a bright *nioiguchi*
and that is mixed with *ko-chôji* and long *ashi*

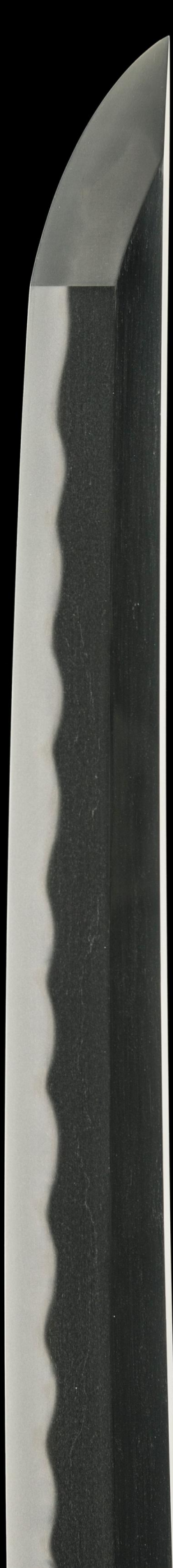
bôshi: *notare-komi* with a *ko-maru*-like *kaeri*

Summary:

This blade has a wide *mihaba*, a thick *kasane*, feels massive and substantial in hand, and is of a powerful *sugata*, which brings us in terms of production time to the bakumatsu era. The *jigane* is a dense *ko-itame* that is almost *muji-fû* and the hamon bases on a *gunome-chôji* with roundish *yakigashira* whose elements rhythmically repeat themselves, and all that combined it should not be too difficult to arrive at *Koyama Munetsugu*.

Masters who worked in the Bizen tradition were, besides from Munetsugu, for example *Suishinshi Masahide* and *Taikei Naotane*, but such a rhythmic composition of the hamon is atypical for both of them. An interpretation as here is often seen across all of Munetsugu's students and also at Munetsugu's de facto master, *Chôunsai Tsunatoshi*. Tsunatoshi's blades, however, tend with their somewhat deeper *sori* and *funbari* more towards a *tachi-sugata* and many of his works show a short *yakidashi*.

As this sword is powerfully shaped, expertly forged and does not feature *yakidashi*, a bid to master Munetsugu is most appropriate.

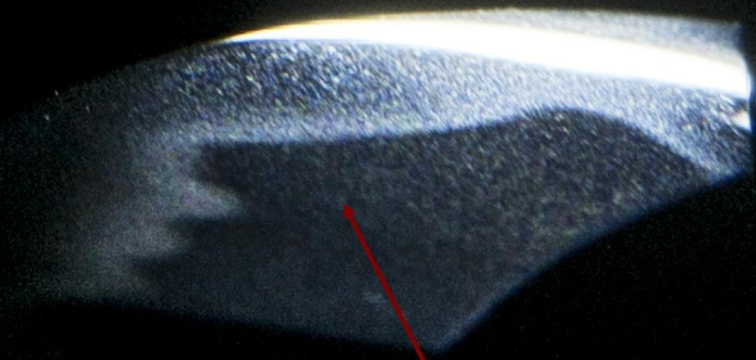




The hamon of the *kissaki* (tip) is called the *boshi*, which literally means "hat". The quenching of the *boshi* requires great skill and timing.

The shape of this *boshi* is a combination of two patterns, *midare komi* (irregular wavy pattern) to the *rounded head of Jizo* at the very tip, or *saki*. These words are combined to become "*saki-Jizo*".

Jizo derives itself from *Jizo Bosatsu* - an important *deity* seen as a saviour for both pregnant women and children.



outline resembles the profile of *Jizo*.



statues of Jizo

A brilliant *gunome-chôji-midare hamon*.
Note the clusters of clove blossom buds.





Shimmering *ji-nie* over an expertly forged *jigane*.

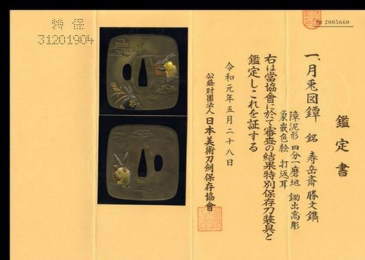
Bright *nioguchi* in *nioi-deki* that resembles a glistening snowbank.

Long *ashi* extend to the *ha-saki* (edge).

A rabbit carrying mochi to the temple/shrine.



A spectacular tsuba crafted by *Jugakusai Katsufumi*.
The level of detail is to be cherished.



NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon

Jugakusai Katsufumi horu
Signed by Jugakusai Katsufumi

(reverse)



(○) 勝
(mo) 文
(kage) 鑊

壽 (Ju)
岳 (gaku)
齋 (sai)

31201904

No 2005660



鑑定書

一月兎図鐔 銘 寿岳齋勝文鐫

障泥形 四分一磨地 鋤出高彫
象嵌色絵 打返耳

右は當協會に於て審査の結果特別保存刀装具と
鑑定しこれを証する

令和元年五月二十八日

公益財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協會



NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon Certificate of Designation

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

Issued in the 1st year of Heisei (2019), May 28th

One, Tsuba

Depicting rabbits on the moon

Mei (signature)
Jugakusai Katsufumi horu

*Square shape with rounded corners, polished shibuichi, motif carved
from the ground plate, inlay with color accents, hammered rim*

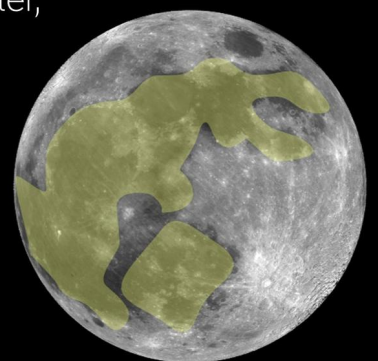
Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai
(NBTHK)



How a rabbit reached the moon, a Japanese folk tale...

One night, the Man on the Moon came down to earth disguised as a beggar. He chanced upon a Fox, a Monkey, and a Rabbit (*usagi*) and asked for some food. The Fox brought him fish from a stream, and the Monkey brought fruit from the trees, but the Rabbit could only offer grass. So he told the beggar to build a fire, and when it was built, threw himself onto the flames to offer himself to the Man. Amazed by the Rabbit's generosity, the beggar transformed back into the Man on the Moon and pulled the Rabbit from the fire. To honour the Rabbit's kindness, the Man on the Moon carried the Rabbit back to the moon to live with him. Now, if you look at the full moon, you can see the outline of the *Rabbit pounding mochi on the moon*. The tale even goes on to explain why the moon is grey: it's seen through the smoke of the fire that fateful night.

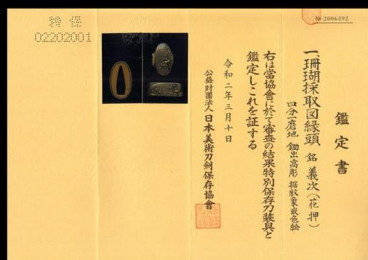
On the night of the *Harvest Moon* (the 15th day of the 8th lunar month), people gather to enjoy the beauty of the full moon for *Otsukimi* (literally "looking at the moon"). This moon festival, sometimes called the Mid-Autumn Festival, is a popular holiday for all classes to pray for a good harvest. Many foods are a part of the celebrations, but most iconic are the *tsukimi dango*. Made simply by steaming a dough of rice flour and water, these little mochi-like balls are white and round like a full moon.





Fuchi-kashira
crafted by
Yoshitsugu

Depicting coral collectors
[South Sea Islanders]



NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon

Yoshitsugu + kaô

Metalsmith Yoshitsugu signed this *fuchi-kashira* with his monogram



義 (Yoshi)

次 (tsugu)

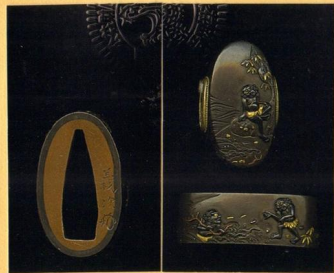
(花押) (kaô)



Metalsmith *Yoshitsugu* during the early 1800s would have had little or no contact with islanders outside of Japan. This image would have been inspired by a painting from those that had visited these faraway lands or by way of a verbal description of some sort.

This is a rare, beautifully collectible and rather fascinating work of art.

02202001



公益財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協会



令和二年三月十日

右は當協會に於て審査の結果特別保存刀装具と
鑑定しこれを証する

一珊瑚採取図縁頭 銘義次(花押)
四分一磨地 鋤出高彫 据紋象嵌色絵

鑑定書

No 2006392

NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon Certificate of Designation

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

Issued in the 2nd year of Reiwa (2020), March 10th

One, Fuchi-kashira

Depicting coral collectors

Mei (signature)

Yoshitsugu + kaô

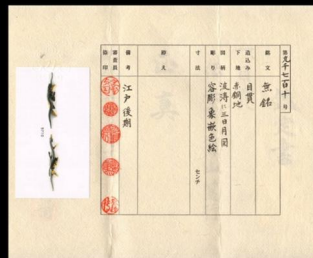
*Polished shibuichi, motif carved from the ground plate,
set-in inlay with color accents*

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai
(NBTHK)



Long, impressive *menuki* strengthen the beautiful moon and wave theme.

This set of *menuki* has been attributed to *Kyô-Sasayama Tokuyuki* who lived in *Kyotô* at the end of the Edo period (1780~1867). NTHK-NPO Kanteisho certificate accompanies.





Koshirae bag