



ITEM# UJKA384

SOLD

A KATSUMITSU 'COUNTLESS BODIES TESTED' KATANA SIGNED & DATED, MUROMACHI PERIOD (EISHÔ ERA, AUGUST 1505)

Swordsmith:	<i>Bishû Osafune Katsumitsu</i>
Gold inlay (test):	<i>Yamano Ka'emon no Jô Nagahisa + kaô - Dôdô tara taka ri bakari kore</i>
Measurements:	Length: 62.3cm (<i>ubu-nakago</i>) Curvature: 1.5cm Moto-haba: 2.66cm
Jihada:	<i>Ko-itame hada, chikei and vibrant midare-utsuri</i>
Hamon:	<i>Bright suguha with kinsuji and ko-ashi</i>
Certificate #1:	NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon (<i>a sword Especially Worthy of Conservation</i>)
Certificate #2-4:	NTHK-NPO Kanteisho (<i>a koshirae, soroi-kanagu, tsuba designated as Authentic</i>)
Fujishiro rank:	Saijô-saku (<i>Jirôzaemon ranked as a grandmaster swordsmith</i>)
Authentication:	Sayagaki by Kanzan (<i>Satô Kanzan</i>) <i>and</i> Tanzan-sensei (<i>Tanobe Michihiro</i>)
Included:	Shirasaya, Edo period koshirae, fabric bags, stand, kit, booklet, description

SOLD

This fearless katana has been signed and dated to **August 1505**, during the 2nd year of *Eishô era* (1504~1521). This time period coincides best with 5th generation *Bizen no Kuni-jû Osafune Jirôzaemon no Jô Katsumitsu* that flourished throughout the Eishô era. Jirôzaemon Katsumitsu is ranked *saijô-saku* (grandmaster) and *ô-wazamono* for the extreme sharpness of his swords.

On April 28, 1656 master sword tester *Yamano Ka'emon no Jô Nagahisa*, with this very sword, *severed through countless bodies with ease*. The blade features a bright *suguha hamon* with razor-like *ko-ashi* and illuminating *midare-utsuri*. The sword is further housed in a splendid *handachi koshirae* with matching fittings from the late Edo period. This is a wickedly rare samurai sword.

↑
Saki-kasane: 3.2mm

Moto-kasane: 5.8mm

Omosa: 440g

Kissaki: 2.64cm
Saki-haba: 1.73cm

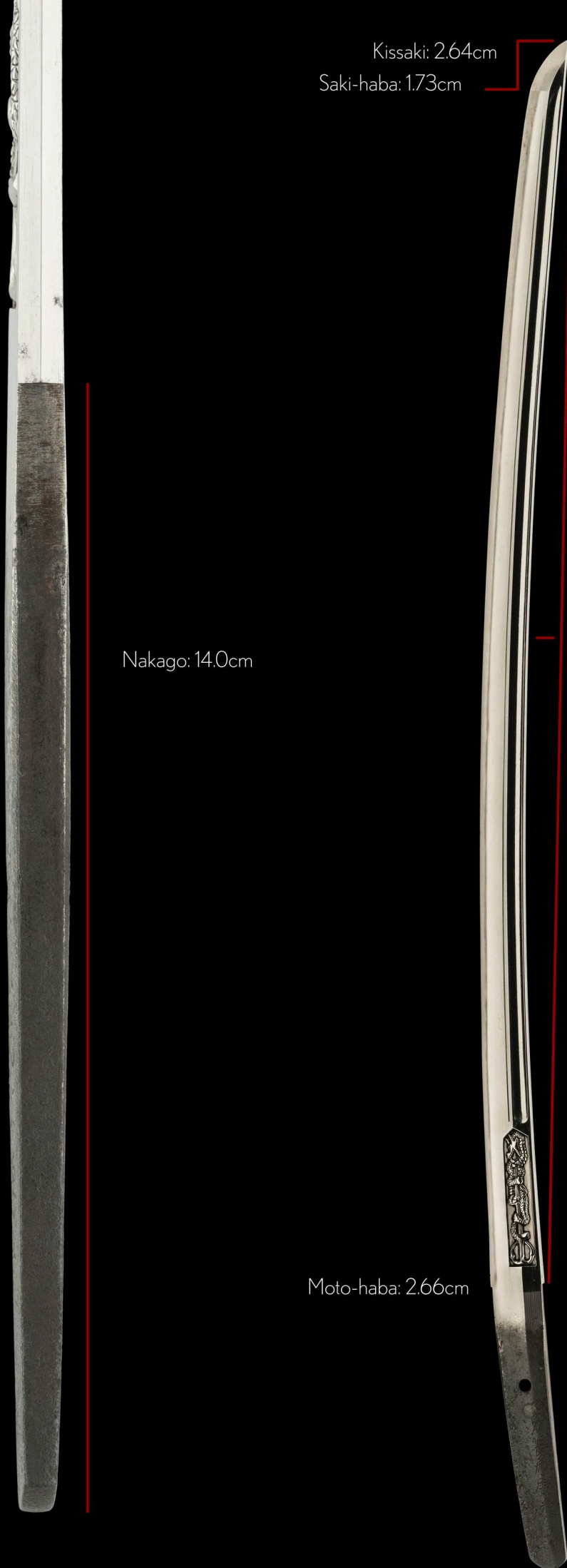
Nakago: 14.0cm

Moto-haba: 2.66cm

Nagasa: 62.3cm

Sori: 1.50cm

Mekugi-ana: 1



The *Katsumitsu* family of smiths from *Bizen province* began in the *Ōei era* (1394~1428) after vicious Nambokucho period came to and end. Just after the *sengoku jidai* (the warring states period) broke out with the *Onin war* in 1467 is when 4th generation Katsumitsu took centre stage in 1487 and took the school to the next level.

This fearless katana has been signed and dated to August 1505, during the 2nd year of *Eishō era* (1504~1521). This time period coincides best with 5th generation *Bizen no Kuni-jū Osafune Jirōzaemon no Jō Katsumitsu* that flourished throughout the Eishō era. Jirōzaemon Katsumitsu is ranked *saijō-saku* (grandmaster) and *ō-wazamono* for the extreme sharpness of his swords.

What makes this katana extra special is that on April 28, 1656 master sword tester *Yamano Ka'emon no Jō Nagahisa*, with this very sword, **severed through countless bodies with ease**. This blade is signed in gold inlay with *Nagahisa's kaō* (insignia).

The rarity of this sword test must be made clear. While single and multiple body cutting tests can be found, to have a blade that explicitly states that it confidently severed through numerous bodies is incredibly rare. There is sharp, and then there is *sharp*.

The blade features a bright *suguha hamon* with razor-like *ko-ashi* and illuminating *midare-utsuri*. The sword is further housed in a splendid *handachi koshirae* with matching fittings from the late Edo period.

As this katana was not signed with *Jirōzaemon's* personal name, it's protocol to restrain from definitively attributing the sword to this smith. However, given the sharpness reputation that 5th gen. Katsumitsu has earned, similarities in signature, the exquisite *midare-utsuri* and the fact he is known to have created *horimono* of *kenmaki-ryū*, there is strong evidence to support this to be his work.





Province: *Bishū* (Okayama prefecture)

Village: *Osafune*

Swordsmith: *Katsumitsu*

ubu-nakago (original, unaltered tang)

備 (Bi)

州 (shū)

長 (Osa)

船 (fune)

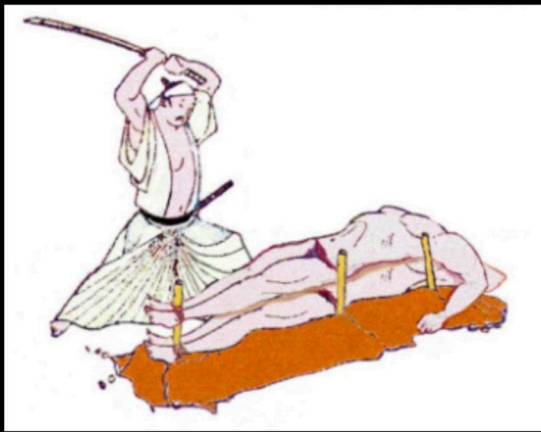
勝 (Katsu)

光 (mitsu)

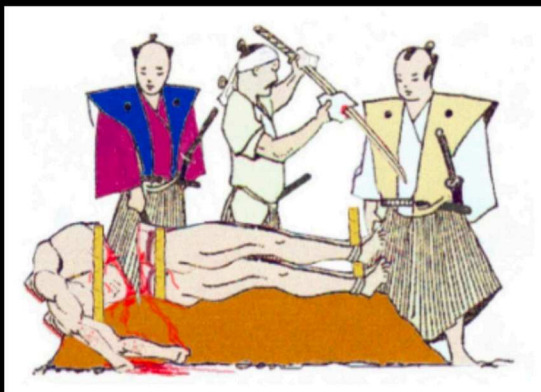
Eishô ninen hachigatsu hi
Meireki ninen urû shigatsu nijûhachinichi
Yamano Ka'emon no Jô Nagahisa + kaô
Dôdô tara taka ri bakari kore

This sword was crafted on a day in the 8th month during the 2nd year of *Eishô era* (August 1505).

On the 28th day of the 4th month of the 2nd intercalary year of *Meireki era* (April 28, 1656) with this blade master sword tester *Yamano Ka'emon no Jô Nagahisa* severed through countless bodies with ease. This blade is signed in gold inlay with Nagahisa's *kaô* (insignia).



before



after (and repeat)

- | | | |
|----------|---|------------|
| (Dô) | 洞 | 明 (Mei) |
| (dô) | 洞 | 曆 (reki) |
| (ta) | 多 | 貳 (ni) |
| (ra) | 良 | 年 (nen) |
| (ta) | た | 閏 (urû) |
| (ka) | か | 四 (shi) |
| (ri) | 里 | 月 (gatsu) |
| (bakari) | 計 | 廿 (nijû) |
| (kore) | 之 | 八 (hachi) |
| (Ei) | 永 | 日 (nichi) |
| (shô) | 正 | 山 (Yama) |
| (ni) | 二 | 野 (no) |
| (nin) | 年 | 加 (Ka) |
| (hachi) | 八 | 右 (') |
| (gatsu) | 月 | 衛 (e) |
| (hi) | 日 | 門 (mon no) |
| | | 尉 (jō) |
| | | 永 (Naga) |
| | | 久 (hisa) |
| | | 花押 (kaô) |



The rarity of this tameshigiri cutting test of having *severed countless bodies* cannot be overstated.

Having consulted with *Markus Sesko*, author of *Tameshigiri - The History and Development of Japanese Sword Testing*, he confirmed that he has not come across a similar test.



特 選
28201611

No 1006594



鑑定書
備州長船勝光
銘 永正二年八月日
明暦貳年閏四月廿八日
(金象嵌) 山野如右衛門尉永久(花押)
胴多良大か里計之
長二尺〇五分強
右は當協會に於て審査の結果特別保存刀剣と
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 日本美術刀剣保存協會

広島 教育委員会
第 31001 号
昭和 44 年 2 月 20 日
平成 28 年 9 月 15 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)

*Bishû Osafune Katsumitsu - Eishô ninen hachigatsu hi
Meireki ninen urû shigatsu nijûhachinichi
Yamano Ka'emon no Jô Nagahisa + kaô
Dôdô tara taka ri bakari kore*

Nagasa (length)

2-shaku 0-sun 5-bu kyô (62.3cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai
(NBTHK)



備州長船勝光
Bishû Osafune Katsumitsu
Osafune Katsumitsu from Bisshû Province

永正二年八月日
明曆貳年截断銘入
Eishô ninen hachigatsu hi
Meireki ninen setsudan-mei iri

This blade was crafted on a day in the eighth month during the 2nd year of *Eishô era* (August 1505), with the date of cutting test done in the second year of *Meireki era* (1656)

刃長貳尺五分五厘有之
Hachô 2-shaku 5-bu 5-rin kore ari
Blade length ~ 62.1 cm

仲秋日寒山識「花押」
 chûshû bi Kanzan shirusu + kaô

Sayagaki written and certified by *Kanzan Satô* on a day in middle of autumn with his personal monogram



備前國長船勝光

Bizen no Kuni Osafune Katsumitsu

Bizen no Kuni Osafune Katsumitsu

六字銘及永正二年八月日紀有之而更ニ明曆二年四月山野加右衛門尉永久ガ截断ヲ行ヒテ利刃デアリシ旨ノ金象嵌有之俗名無キト誰モ入念作而穩健ナル直刃出来ヲ示シ浮彫モ味ワイ深矣

Rokuji-mei oyobi Eishô ninen hachigatsu hi no ki kore ari, shikamo sara ni Meireki ninen shigatsu Yamano Kaemon no Jô Nagahisa ga setsudan o okonaite rijin de ari shi mune no kinzôgan kore ari, zokumyô naki to dare mo nyûnensaku shikamo onken-naru suguha deki o shimeshi ukibori mo ajiwai-fukai.

The blade has a six-character signature that is dated on a day in the 8th month in the 2nd year of *Eishô era* (1505). In addition, it bears a cutting test performed by *Yamano Kaemon no Jô Nagahisa* in the 4th month of the 2nd year of *Meireki era* (1656) which is inlaid in gold and testifies to the sharpness of the blade. The signature does not contain an individual name but regardless of which Katsumitsu made this sword, it is carefully forged and the *deki* holds a calm *suguha* and the *horimono* (engraving) is tastefully executed.

長貳尺寸五分余

Nagasa 2-shaku 5-bu kyô

Blade length ~ 62.3 cm

戊戌曆松風月

Tsuchinoe-inudoshi matsukaze-zuki

Certified in June during the Year of the Dog (2018)

探山識「花押」

Tanzan shirusu + kaô

Written by Tanzan [Tanobe Michihiro] + monogram





This powerful *horimono* (engraving) is called *Kenmaki-ryu*. It depicts a dragon winding around a sword.

Legend dictates that the guardian deity *Fudo-Myou* had to fight a deity from another religion, the dragon king *Kurikara*.



In the battle, *Fudo-Myou* changed himself into a flaming sword but *Kurikara* did the same and the fighting went on without a victor.

In a manner of ingenuity, *Fudo-Myou* transformed into the dragon *Kurikara*, wound himself around the opponent's sword and devoured him from atop.

Hence, the dragon *Kurikara* wrapped around a sword is, in fact, another representation of *Fudo-Myou*.



The *ko-ashi* (short legs) vibrating along the *suguha* (straight hamon) resemble razor-sharp teeth awaiting dinner.

midare-utsuri
iconic shadow hamon of the Bizen tradition

Just as the deep-sea anglerfish use bioluminescence as a lure to attract prey, the equally vivid *midare-utsuri* on this *Katsumitsu katana* speaks to its authority within the most hostile of environments.

A wicked line of *kinsuji* (dark line of *nie*) wraps itself around the hamon at the apex of the *soe-bi*.





Shirasaya
(protective scabbard)

Note there is *sayagaki* authentication on both sides of the shirasaya.



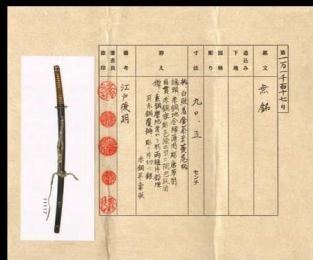
gold *habaki* with horizontal file marks



*Soroi-kanagu-tsuki
cha-ishime-ji-nuri saya
handachi-koshirae*
(揃金具付茶石目地塗鞘半太刀拵え)

*Handachi-koshirae
lacquered in brown
with stone-like surface and
matching set of the fittings*

Crafted during the
Late Edo period
(1780~1867)



NTHK-NPO Kanteisho
Certificate of Authenticity

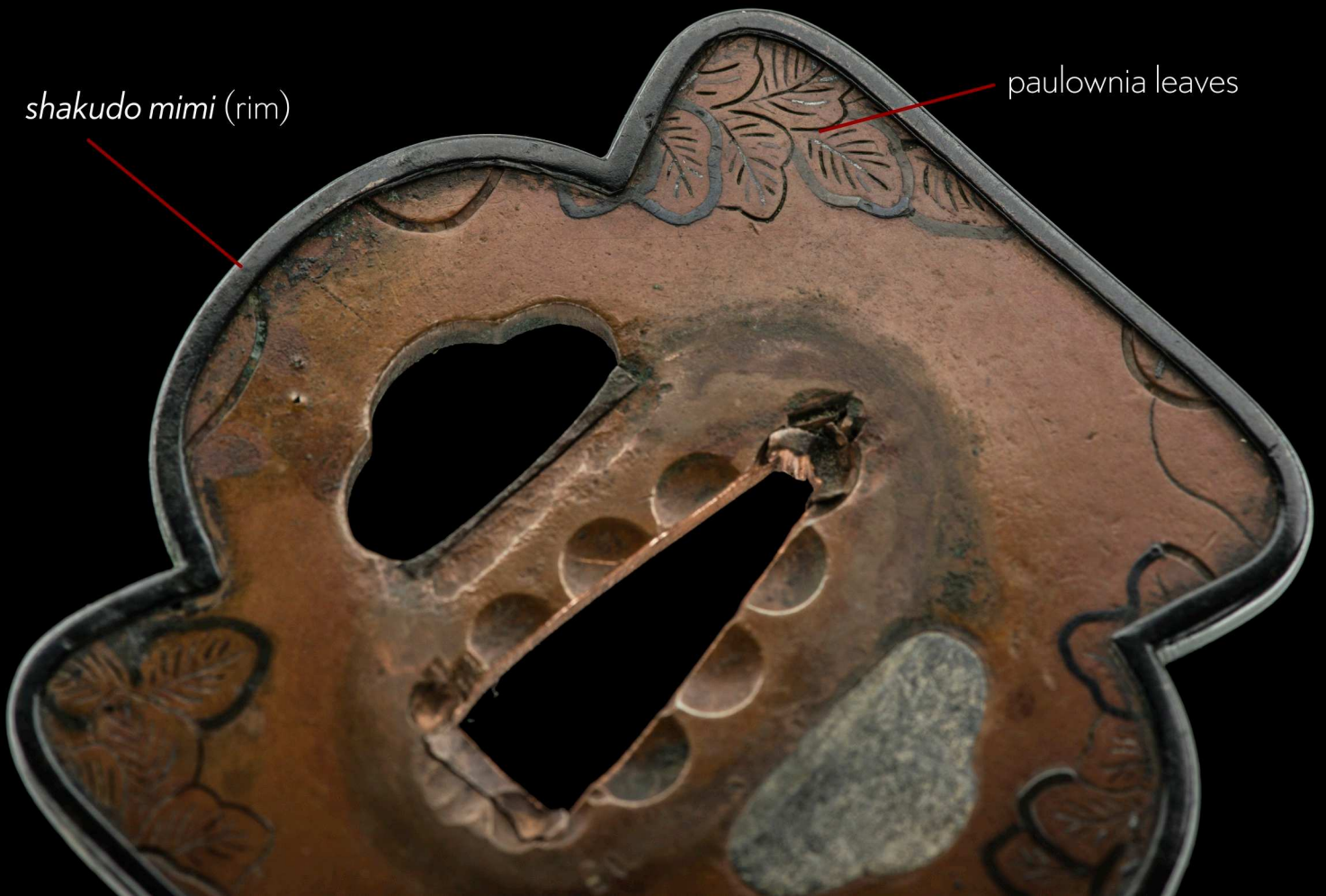


鑑定書
一、鐙
伝火刀金具師
正真
令和三年一月十七日
特定非営利活動法人
日本刀剣保存会
理事長 宮野 昌司

品名	材質	形状	寸法	備考
鐙	銅	鐙	縦長六分、横六分	江戸初期
鐙	銅	鐙	縦長六分、横六分	江戸初期

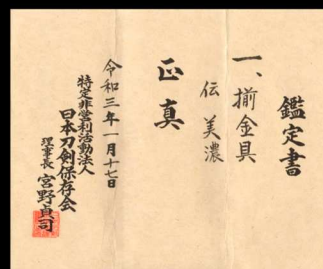
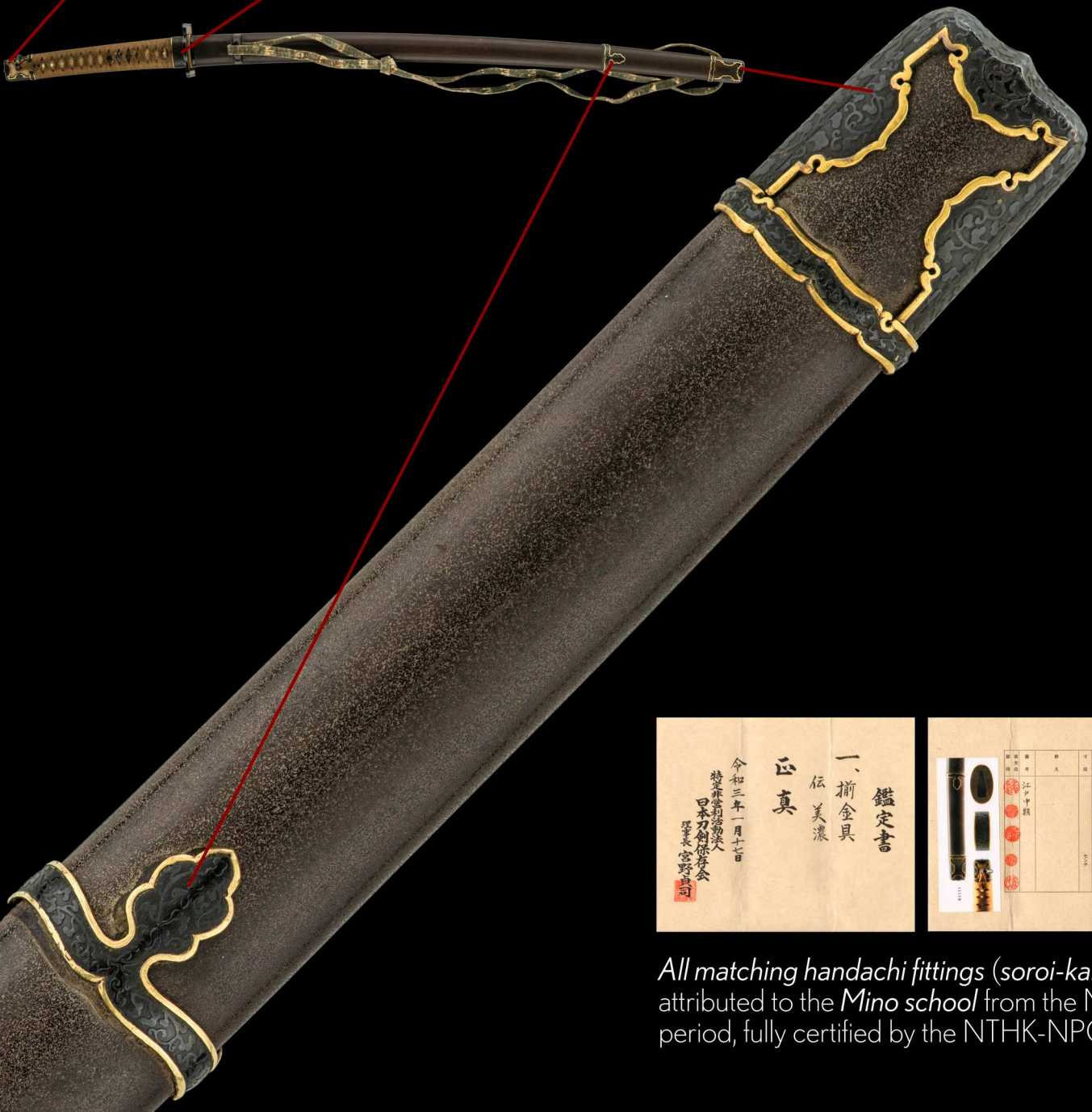
NTHK-NPO Kanteisho
Certificate of Authenticity

This rare polished copper *mokko* (lobe) shaped *tsuba* with *shakudo* rim was crafted during the early Edo period (circa 1600-1700) by a craftsman specialising in *tachi* fittings.





polished *shakudo* with gold trim



All matching *handachi* fittings (*soroi-kanagu*) attributed to the *Mino* school from the Mid-Edo period, fully certified by the NTHK-NPO.

At peace

The unique clasp on the kashira is a carved depiction of the merciful holding of hands.

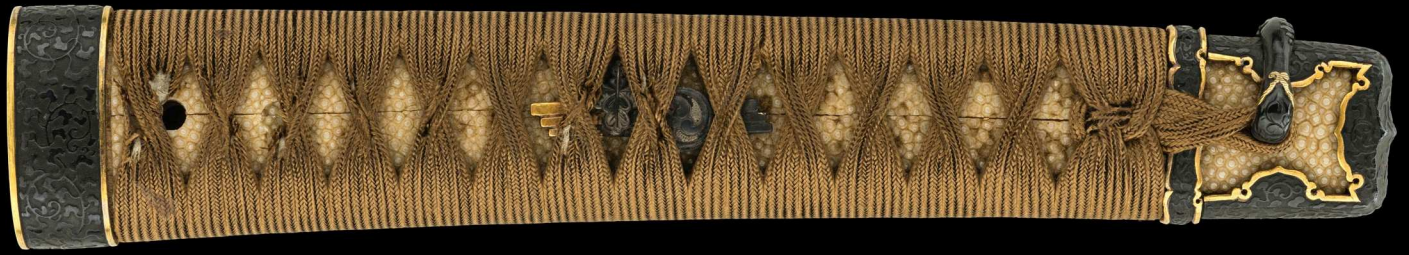
A design of *karakusa*
(vines) symbolizing
health and longevity.



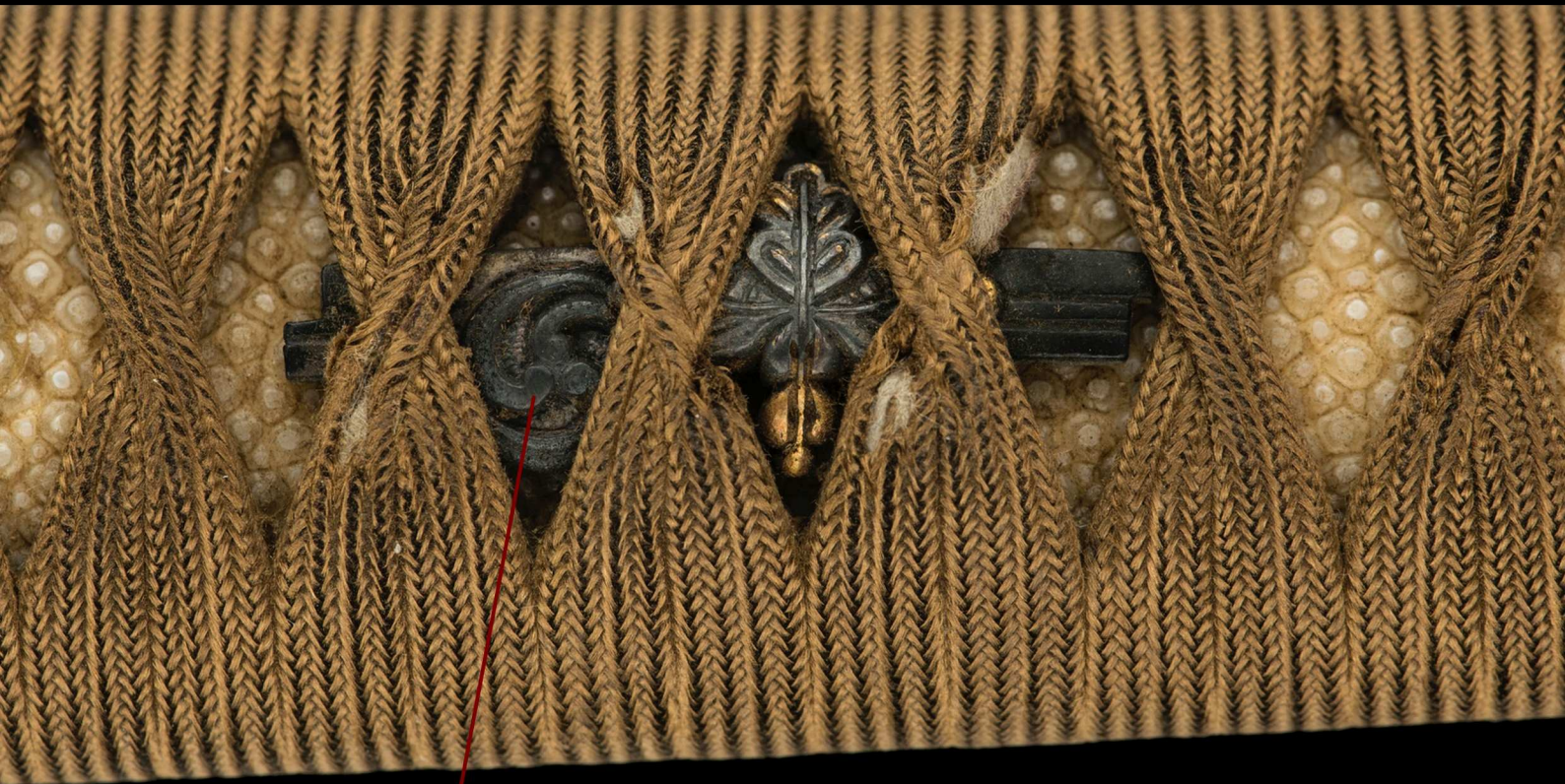
sculpted hands



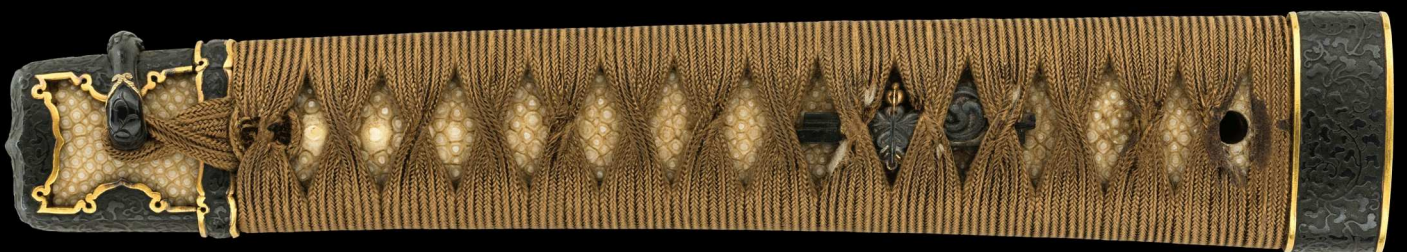
From above, the kashira takes the abstract form of a warrior meditating in deep thought.



Menuki (decorative grips) are a combination of *kiri* (paulownia) and the *tomoe* symbol.



The *menuki* incorporates the *Tomoe* symbol - depicting the threefold division of *Man, Earth, and Sky* at the heart of the Shinto belief system of universal life balance.





No prisoners.

A complimentary sword maintenance kit with *mekugi-nuki* and a bottle of *Fujishiro* sword oil (trusted by the Japanese sword museum) is included with all sword purchases.



safe, extra large cloth for adding oil to the blade