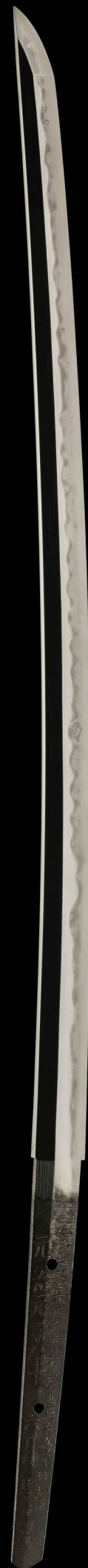


Swordsmith *Tosmohige* was born *Fujishima Jinsuke* and worked in *Iwakitaira* in *Ōshū* and temporarily in *Edo* (Tokyo) where this powerful katana was crafted in 1864.

A year later on January 25th, 1865, this katana underwent a rare *tameshigiri* (cutting test) in which sword tester *Yamada Genzō* severed deliberately and exactly 90% through the convicted body at the height of his collarbone in order not to hit the underlying mound.

This weighty and ruthless samurai sword demonstrates what happens when you marry formidable sword-smithing skills with precision swordsmanship prowess.

The collectible katana is certified with both vintage **NBTHK Tokubetsu Kicho** and **NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon** papers.





Saki-kasane: 5.5mm

Moto-kasane: 7.7mm

Kissaki: 4.26cm

Saki-haba: 2.20cm

Nagasa: 71.2cm

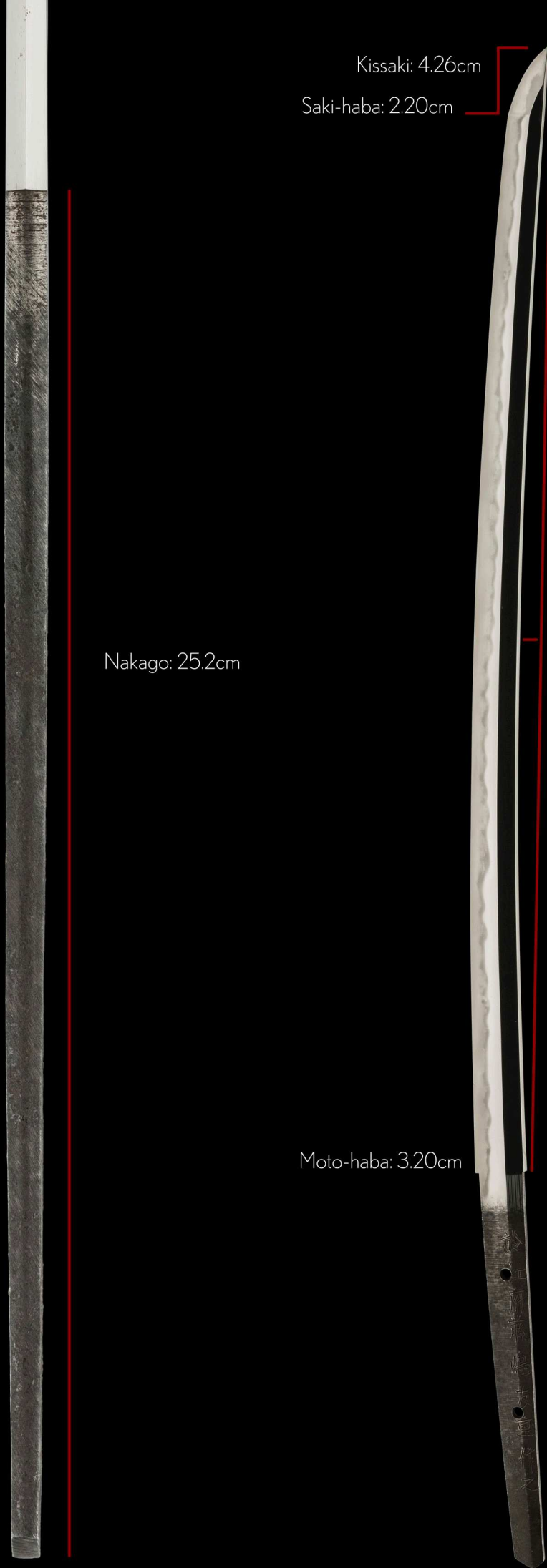
Nakago: 25.2cm

Sori: 0.9cm

Omosa: 985g

Moto-haba: 3.20cm

Mekugi-ana: 2



Location: *Edo*

Family/school name: *Fujishima*

Swordsmith: *Tomoshige*

ubu-nakago (original, unaltered tang)

kiri-yasurime (straight file marks)

於

於 (Oite)

江

江 (Gô)

府

府 (fu)

藤

藤 (Fuji)

嶋

嶋 (shima)

友

友 (Tomo)

重

重 (shige)

作

作 (tsukuru)

之

之 (kore)

An extra hole was added to the nakago almost certainly to provide reinforcement for the cutting test given the huge weight of the sword.



The shape of the *nakago-jiri* (butt-end of the tang) is called *iriyama-gata*. *Iri* means 'enter' and *yama* is 'mountain', suggesting at the 'base of a mountain.'

This short, flat area moving into an acute angle is typically seen on swords from *Kashû* (Kaga) province, thus referred to as *Kashû nakago-jiri*.

Genji gan nezumidoshi rokugatsu hi

This sword was crafted on a day in the sixth month of Genji one (June 1864) during the Year of the Rat.

Genji ni ushidoshi shôgatsu nijûgonichi Senju ni oite taitai kubu-kiri kirite Yamada Genzô

With this blade, sword tester *Yamada Genzô* severed deliberately and exactly 90% through the body at the height of the collarbone [in order not to hit the underlying mound]. Test was performed on the 25th day of the first month of Genji two (January 1865) during the Year of the Ox, in *Senju* [north Tokyo].

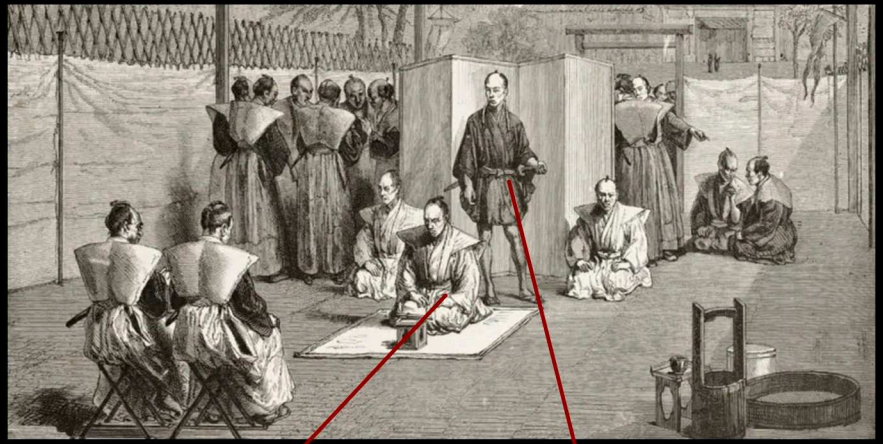


The executed body was intentionally severed just a fraction before the katana hit the mound below. This act serves to both preserve the integrity of the sword and demonstrates the tremendous skill level of *Yamada Genzô* who officially succeeded as head of the Yamada sword-testing family in 1869.

This is an extremely rare cutting test and one of the last performed in Japan as the Edo period drew to a close just years later.

(Gen) 元	元 (Gen)
(ji) 治	治 (ji)
	二 (ni)
	丑 (ushi)
	年 (doshi)
(gan) 元	正 (shô)
(ne) 子	月 (gatsu)
	廿 (nijû)
	五 (go)
(doshi) 年	日 (nichi)
	於 (oite)
	千 (Sen)
	住 (ju)
(roku) 六	太 (tai)
	々 (tai)
(gatsu) 月	九 (ku)
	分 (bu)
	切 (kiri)
(hi) 日	切 (kiri)
(Yama) 山	手 (te)
(da) 田	
(Gen) 源	
(zô) 蔵	





samurai

kaishakunin (assistant)

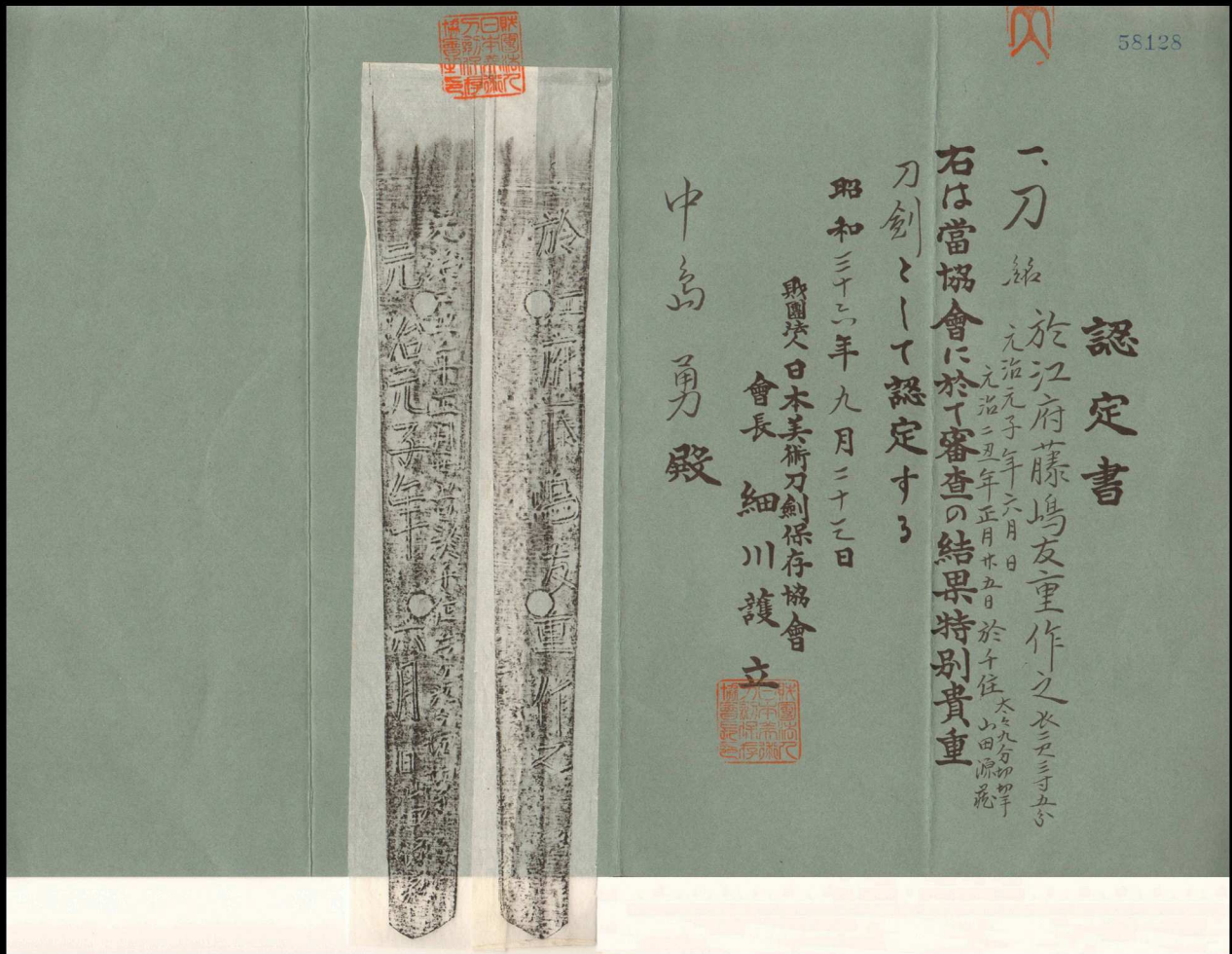
Seppuku is honourable death or ritualistic suicide by disembowelment conducted by a *samurai*.

The importance of the Kaishakunin

Upon completing *seppuku* (voluntary cutting of the stomach), the samurai's faithful assistant (*kaishakunin*) would step forward to issue the killing strike to the exposed neck of the samurai.

However, if honour was to be preserved in the act, it was expected that this cut would not sever the neck completely, but allow just enough flesh attached for the head to fall naturally forward into the executed man's arms. In this way, not only the viewers' clothes are not stained with the blood but also the head drops among the two hands of the samurai as if he was holding his head.

A formidable amount of trust was thus instilled in the precise skill and calmness under pressure of the *kaishakunin*. *Yamada Genzô* echoes such qualities regarding this katana's *tameshigiri* cutting test.



NBTHK Tokubetsu Kicho Certificate of Designation

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

Issued in the 36th year of Showa (1961), September 26th

One, Katana

Mei (signature)

*Gôfu ni oite Fujishima Tomoshige kore o tsukuru
Genji gan nezumidoshi rokugatsu hi
Genji ni ushidoshi shôgatsu nijûgonichi
Senju ni oite taitai kubu-kiri kirite Yamada Genzô*

Nagasa (length)

2-shaku 3-sun 5-bu (71.2cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai
(NBTHK)

鑑定書

二刀 銘

於江府藤嶋友重作之(陸奥)
元治元子年六月日

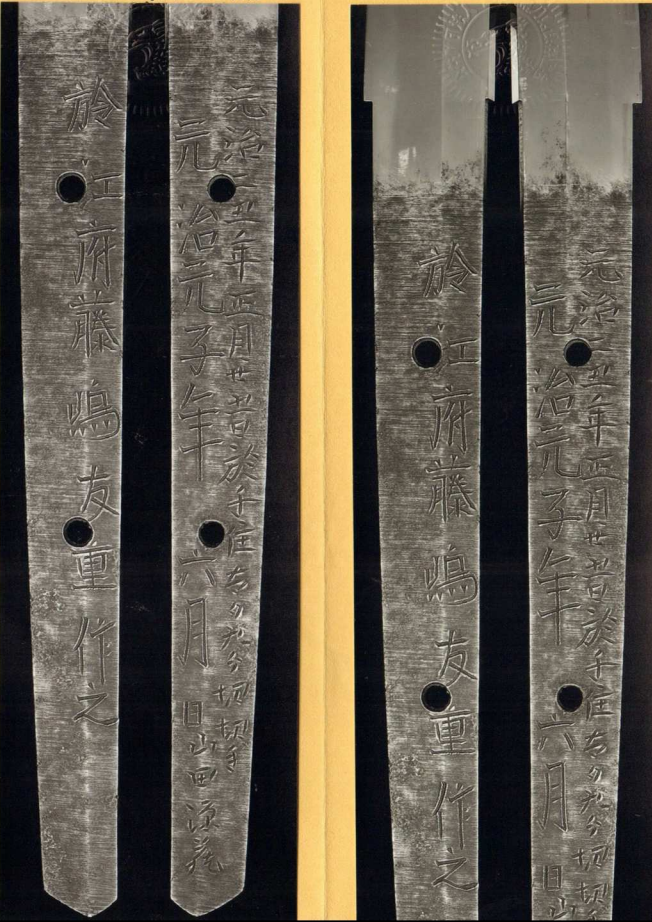
(留銘)元治五年正月廿五日於千佳冬丸分切手山田源藏

長 二尺三寸五分

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

令和元年十二月二日

公益財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協會



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 63rd year of Shōwa (1988), May 6th

One, Katana

Mei (signature)

Gōfu ni oite Fujishima Tomoshige kore o tsukuru

Genji gan nezumidoshi rokugatsu hi

(Mutsu)

(Kiritsuke-mei)

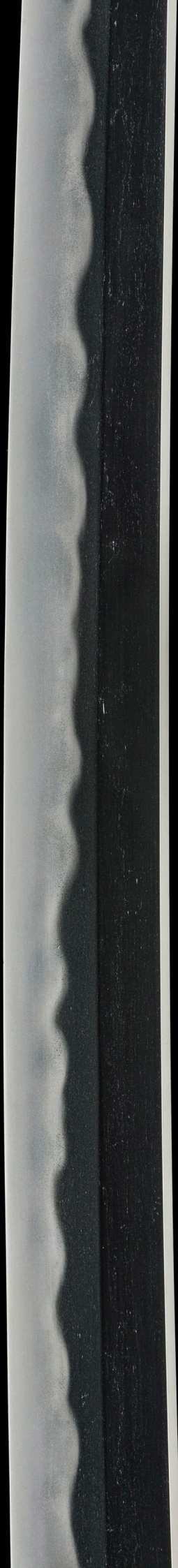
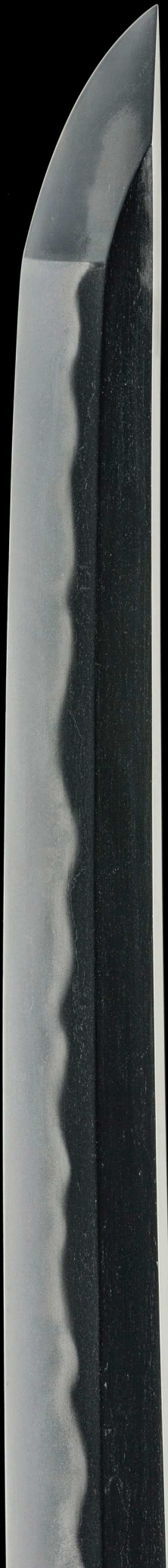
Genji ni ushidoshi shōgatsu nijūgonichi

Senju ni oite taitai kubu-kiri kirite Yamada Genzō

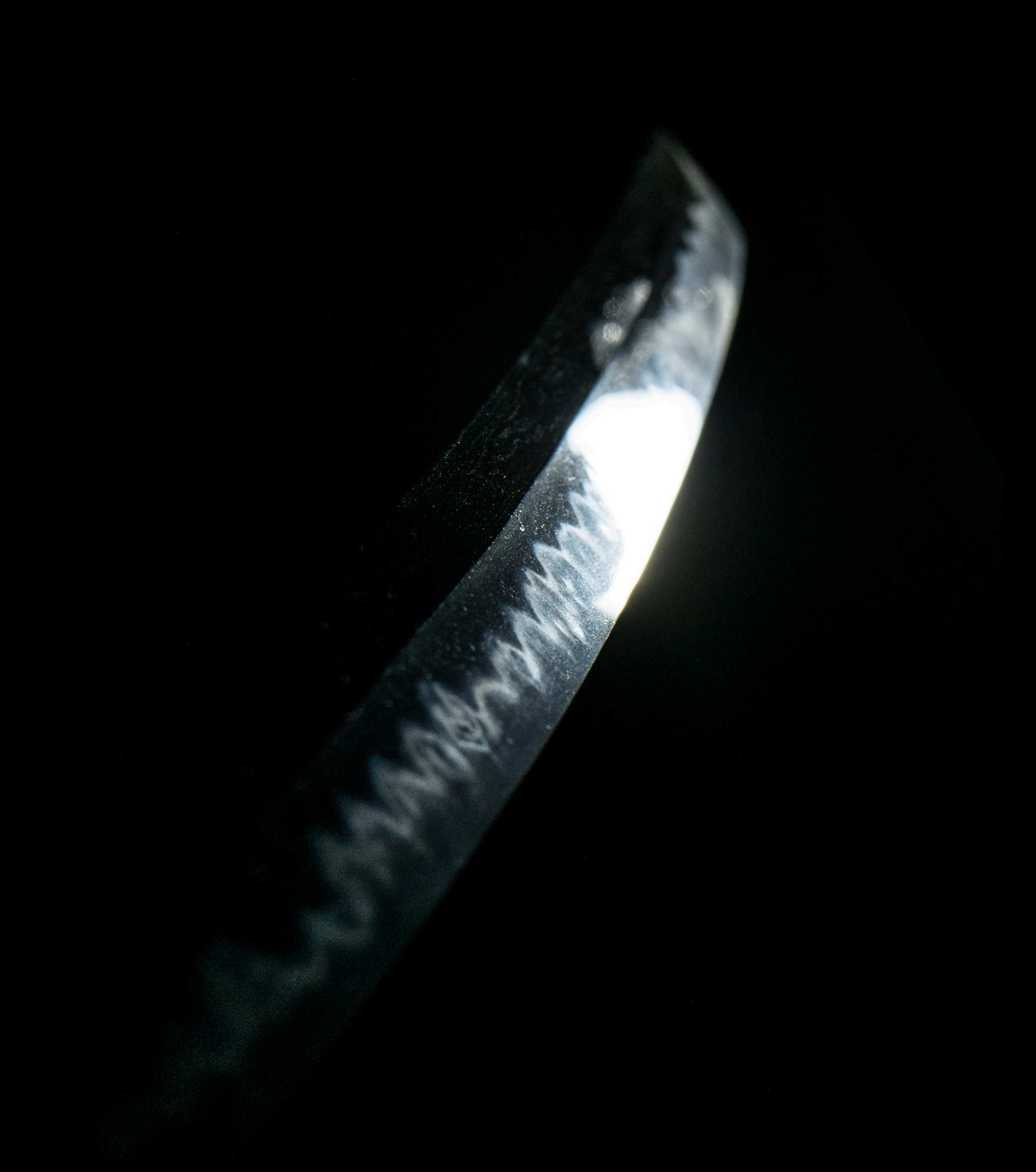
Nagasa (length)

2-shaku 3-sun 5-bu (71.2cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai
(NBTHK)







The origins of the *Fujishima school* date back to the early Muromachi period in *Kaga province* on the *Hokurikudo trade route* in the northern territory that faces the Sea of Japan. Along with the *Sanindo* route, this area was known as *Ura Japan*.

The winters in Ura Japan are harsh and last much longer than other regions of the country. This required swordsmiths to produce blades that would perform well in frigid temperatures.



gunome-midare (rounded, wavy pattern)

The eclectic hamon is a *feast for the eyes* mixing semi-circled *gunome-midare* with spiking *togari-gunome* and loads of *yô* (leaves) falling to the edge of the blade.




yô (leaves)

togari (peaks)

This katana has been freshly polished and shines magnificently. Its bright hamon and bluish tinge is reminiscent of freshly fallen snow captured at twilight.



photo: *Giacomo Meneghello*

A close-up, diagonal view of a katana blade. The blade is dark and shows a fine, mirror-like grain pattern. A red line points from the text 'muji-hada' to a specific area on the blade's surface.

muji-hada

This katana weighs nearly 1kg (2.17lbs).

This impressive mass is derived from the density of the folded steel that is so well-packed that the surface grain pattern has a mirror-like finish referred to as *muji-hada*.

A close-up photograph of a sword blade, likely a katana, showing the hamon (temper line) and nie elements. The blade is dark and polished, with a visible hamon line running along its length. The nie elements are visible as shimmering, rounded shapes along the hamon. Red lines point from the text to these features.

Visible *nie-crystals* shimmer along the hamon line.

Unique *rounded nie* elements similar to *Hizen Yukihiro's abunomefu* (horsefly eye).



Shirasaya
(protective scabbard)



gold-wrapped *habaki* with exquisite
botan yujō (peony) design