



ITEM# UJKA387

SOLD

A MIZUTA KUNISHIGE KATANA

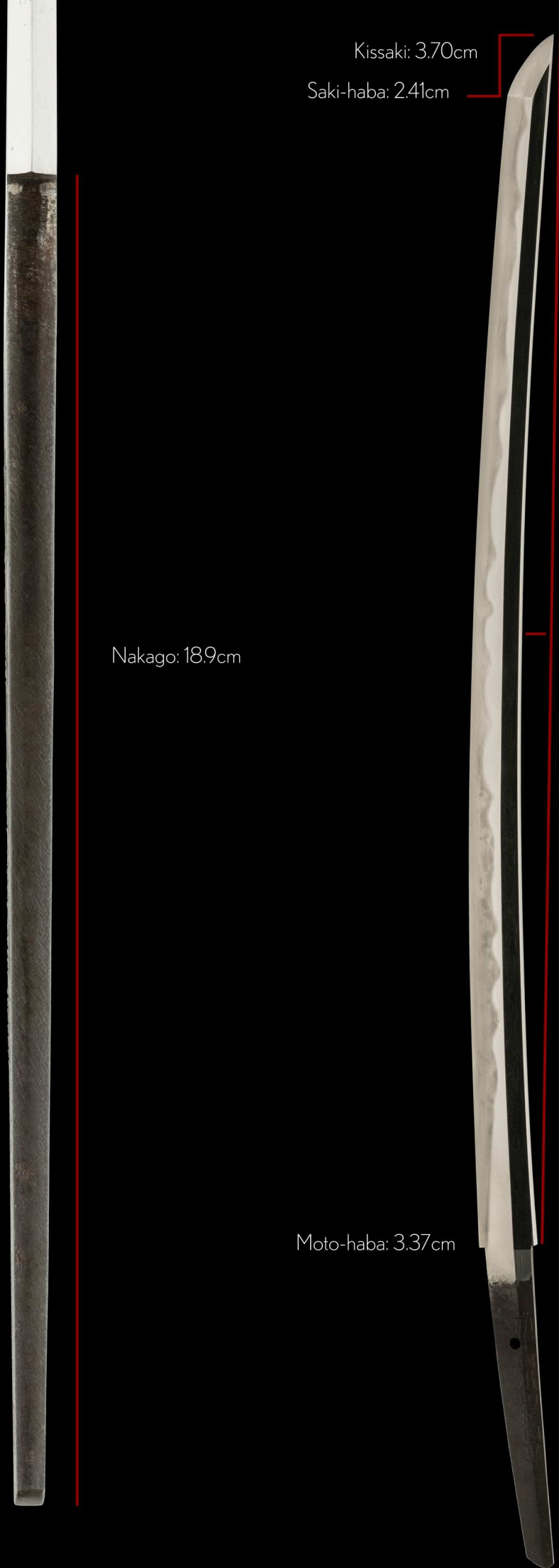
SIGNED, EARLY EDO PERIOD (KANBUN ERA: 1661~1673)

- Swordsmith:** *Bitchû no Kuni Mizuta jû Kunishige* (6th generation)
Measurements: **Length:** 71.5cm (*ubu*) **Curvature:** 1.21cm **Moto-haba:** 3.37cm
Jihada: *Gritty mokume hada with pronounced chikei*
Hamon: *Surging waves of gunome-midare with sunagashi and plentiful kinsuji*
Certificate #1: **NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon** (Especially Worthy of Preservation)
Certificate #2-4: **NTHK-NPO Kanteisho** (*tsuba, fuchi-kashira & tsuka* designated as Authentic)
Fujishiro rank: **Chû-jôsaku** (ranked as an above average swordsmith)
Cutting ability: **Wazamono** (maker of sharp swords)
Included: Shirasaya, Edo koshirae, fabric bags, stand, kit, booklet, description

SOLD (with custom-lacquered scabbard included in price)

The Mizuta school derived its name from a group of swordsmiths that lived at Mizuta village in Bitchu province. Members of this school are said to be the descendants of *Ko-Aoe Tametsugu* and the smith *Kunishige*, known as *Ko-Mizuta*. The most famous smith of the Shinto Mizuta school was Ôtsuki Yogoro Kunishige, also known as 5th generation Ôyogo Kunishige.

This wide, muscular katana is the work of his son *Katsubei*, the final working smith of the Ôtsuki branch of the *Mizuta* school. The aggressive *hamon* exudes a grittiness that contains plenty of *sunagashi* and *kinsuji hataraki* that can best be described as *Mizuta Soshu*. The new caretaker of this katana will be given the option to select the lacquer finish on the new scabbard that we're going to custom build for the sword. A personal touch for a terrific samurai sword.



Saki-kasane: 5.0mm

Kissaki: 3.70cm

Saki-haba: 2.41cm

Moto-kasane: 7.0mm

Nagasa: 71.5cm

Nakago: 18.9cm

Sori: 1.21cm

Omosa: 845g

Moto-haba: 3.37cm

Mekugi-ana: 1

The *Mizuta school* derived its name from a group of swordsmiths that lived in *Mizuta village* in *Bitchu province*. Members of this school are said to be the descendants of *Ko-Aoe Tametsugu* and the smith *Kunishige* who lived during the *Kyoroku era* (1528~1532) was known as *Ko-Mizuta*.

In the Shinto period, their craftsmanship altered completely from *Sue-Bizen* and *Sue-Mihara* to a more electric *Soshu* influence with loads of visible *nie* crystals, a surging *gunome-midare hamon* and plentiful *hataraki* that includes *sunagashi* and *kinsuji*.

The most famous smith of the Shinto Mizuta school was *Ôtsuki Yogoro Kunishige*, also known as 5th generation *Ôyogo Kunishige*. Unfortunately *Ôyogo* died early leaving his son, 6th generation *Katsubei*, under the care of his younger brother, swordsmith *Ichizô*.

This muscular katana is the work of *Katsubei*, the final working smith of the *Ôtsuki* branch of the Mizuta school. The *jihada* and aggressive *hamon* exudes a grittiness that that can best be described as *Mizuta Soshu*.

When this sword was acquired the *saya* (scabbard) was damaged and unsafe for clients. Thus, we at Unique Japan are giving the new caretaker the option to *select the lacquer finish* on the new scabbard that we'll build for the sword. A personal touch for a rather personal katana.





Location: *Mizuta in Bitchû Province*
Swordsmith: *Kunishige* (first generation)

ubu-nakago (original, unaltered tang)
sujikai-yasurime (diagonal file marks)

備 (Bi)

中 (tchû, no)

國 (Kuni)

水 (Mizu)

田 (ta)

住 (jû)

国 (Kuni)

重 (shige)



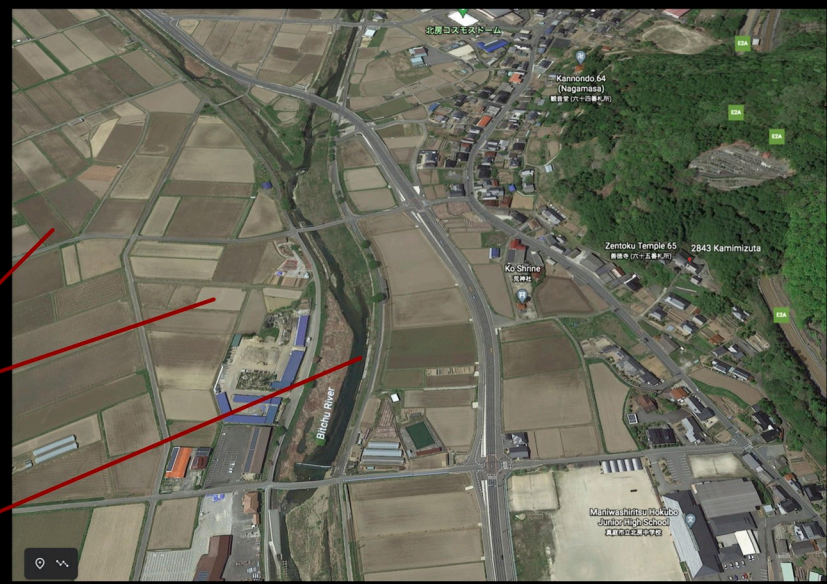
水 (Mizu, water)

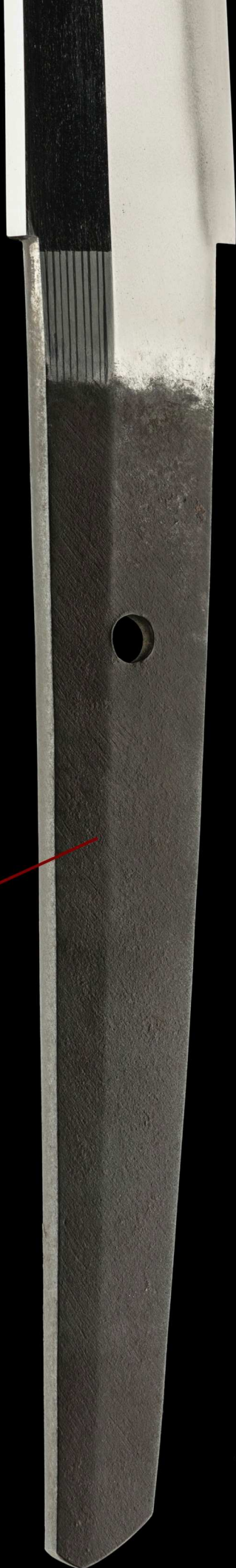
田 (ta, rice field)

Mizu means 'water', and *ta* is 'rice field'. The kanji characters are abstractions that resemble flowing water and neatly sectioned rice fields. Mizuta village, now rests in Maniwa city in *Okayama prefecture*. It's a rural setting where the *Bitchû river* runs through with large areas of nearby forestry. An ideal setting to set up a forge...

sectioned fields

Bitchû river





Note the lovely even patina, the sword and *nakago* have aged well.

(*ura*, reverse)

29201711



No 1007895



鑑定書

一刀 銘 備中国水田住国重

長二尺三寸六分

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

平成三十年三月十五日

公益財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協會



山形 教育委員会
第 2283 号
昭和 26年 5月 23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 30th year of Heisei (2018), March 15th

One, Katana

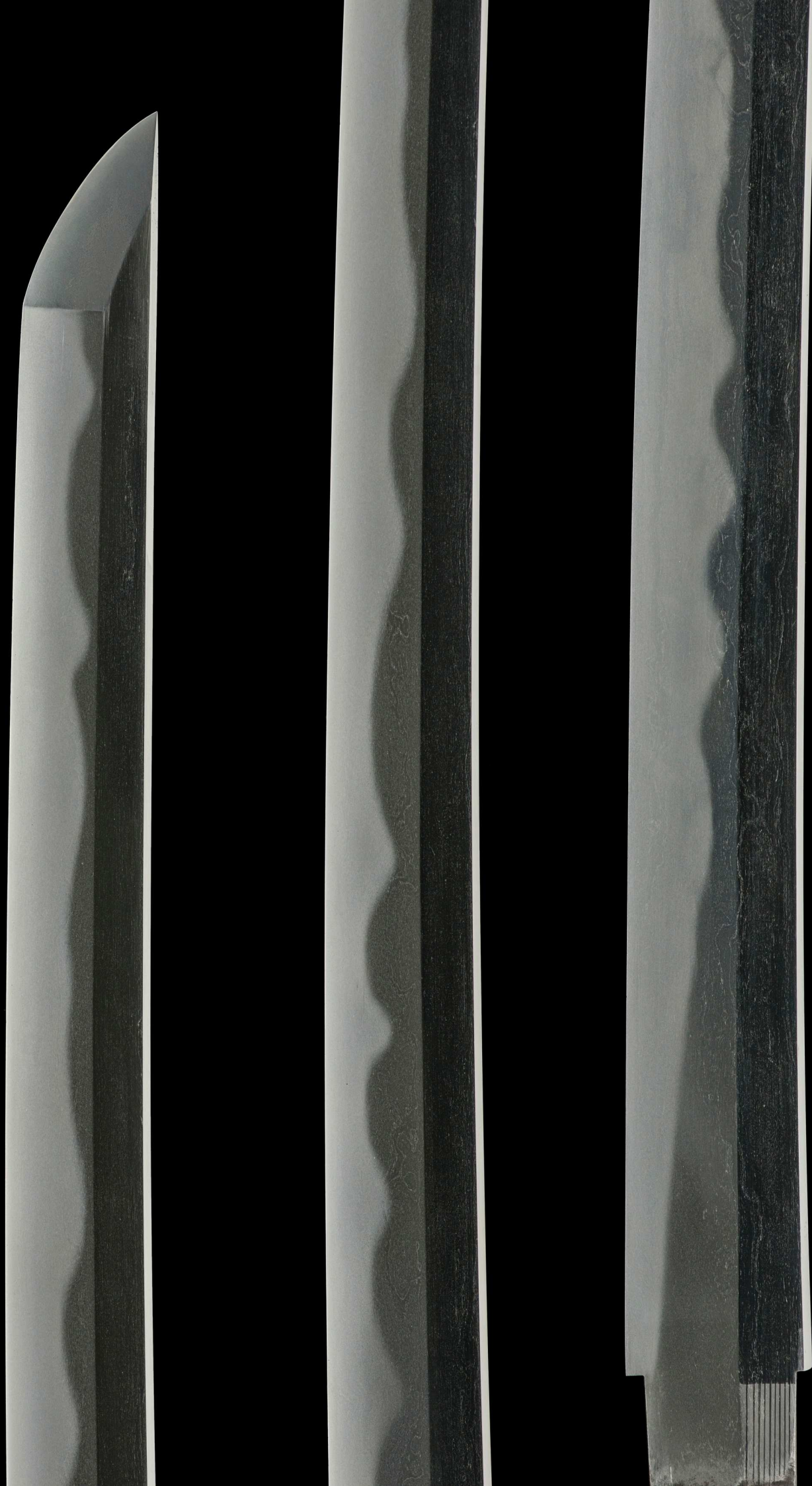
Mei (signature)

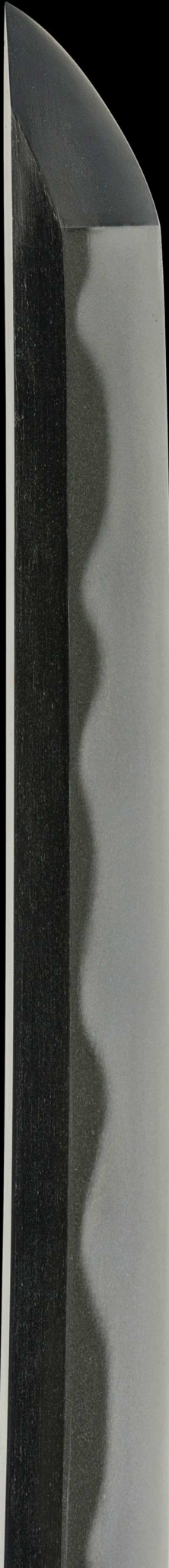
Bitchû no Kuni Mizuta jû Kunishige


Nagasa (length)

2-shaku 3-sun 6-bu (71.5cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai
(NBTHK)

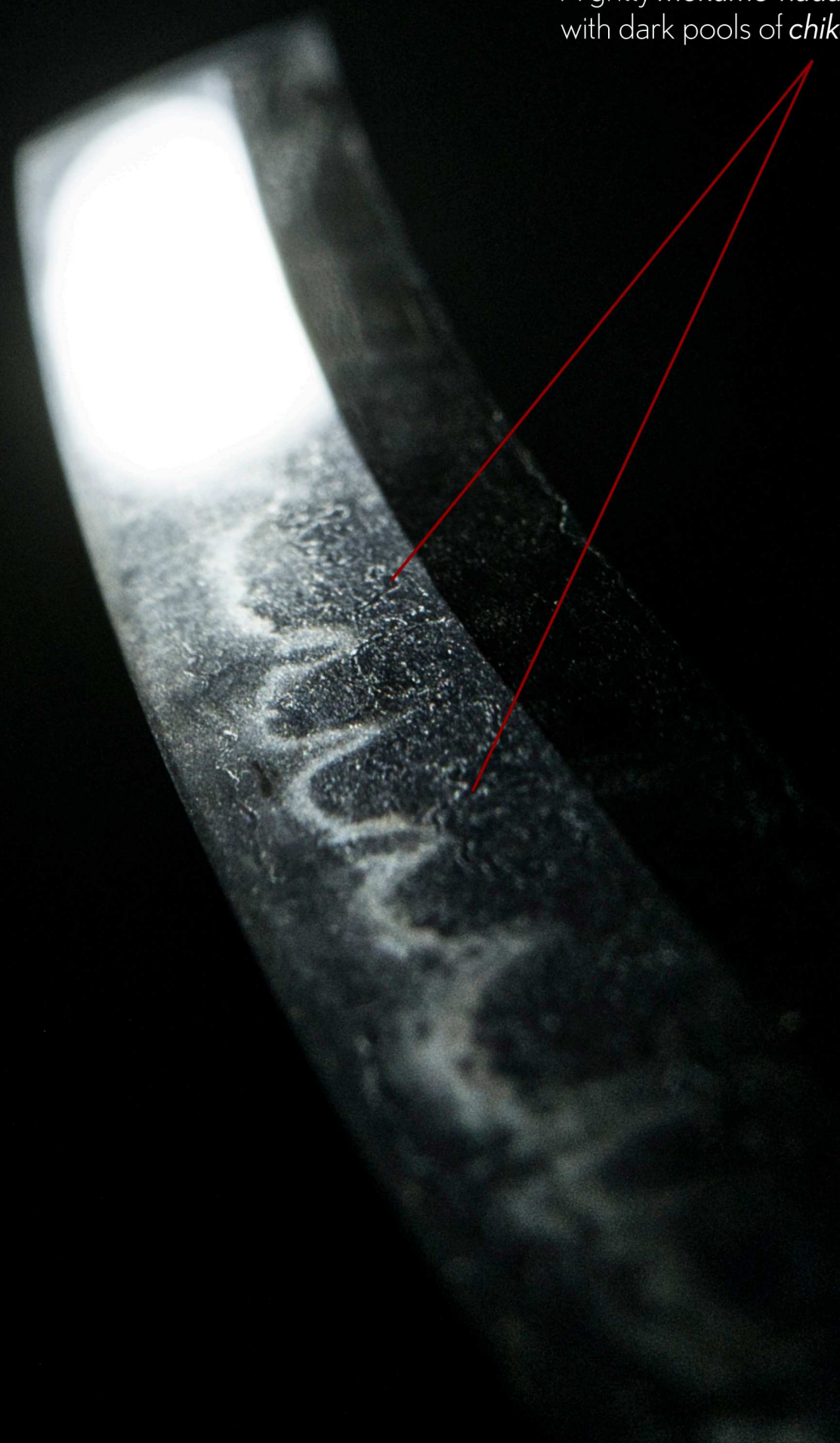




The image features two close-up views of a curved metal blade, likely a hamon. The top view shows a curved section of the blade with a dark, textured surface and a bright, glowing area on the right side. The bottom view shows a similar curved section, but with a more pronounced, wavy pattern on the surface, illuminated by a bright light source from the left. The background is dark, making the metallic surfaces stand out.

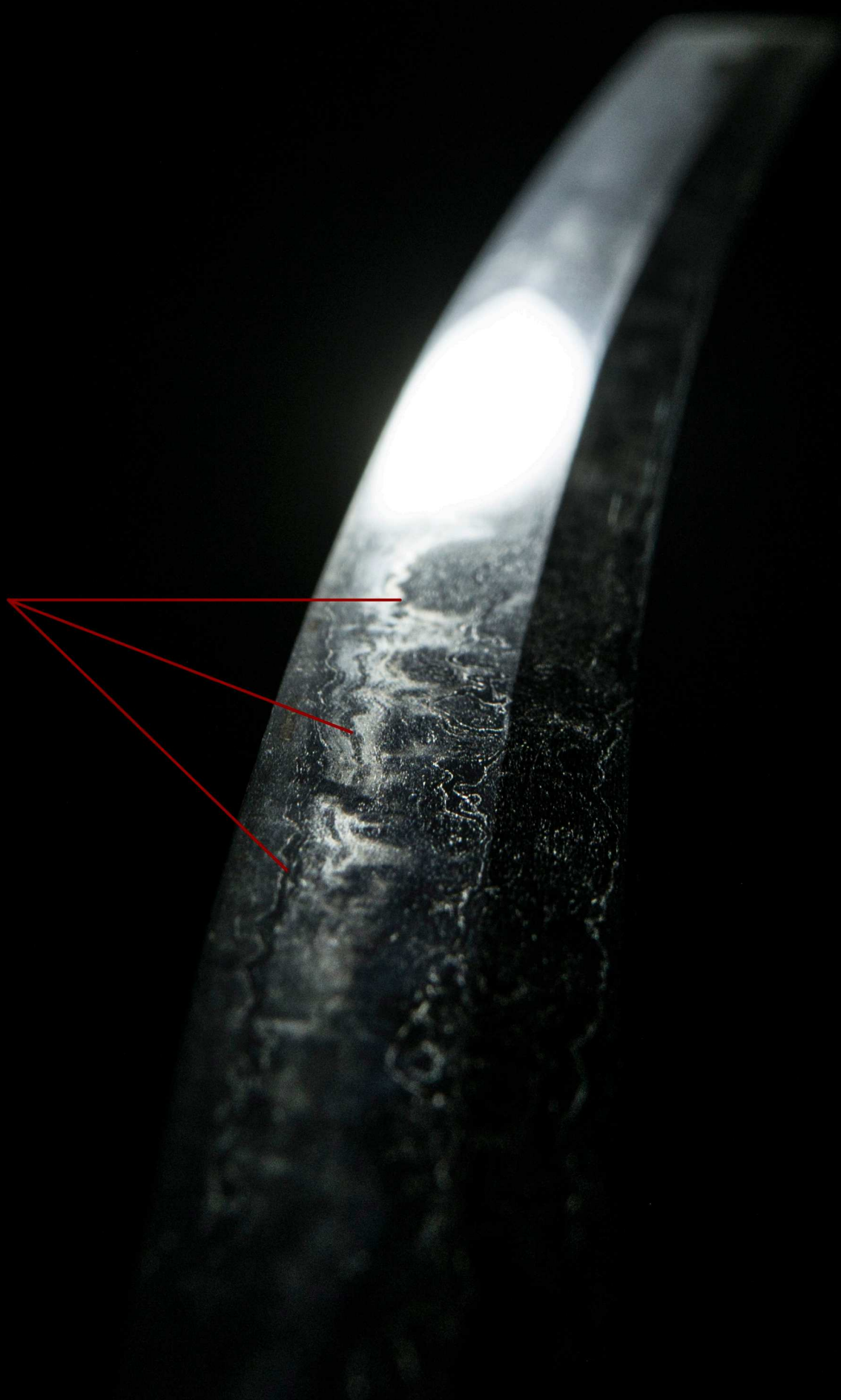
A stunning *gunome-midare hamon*
clearly inspired by ocean waves.

A gritty *mokume-hada* interlaced with dark pools of *chikei*.



A cauldron of *Mizuta Soshu hataraki* featuring rivers of *kinsuji*, boiling through the *hamon*.

kinsuji





Shirasaya
(protective scabbard)

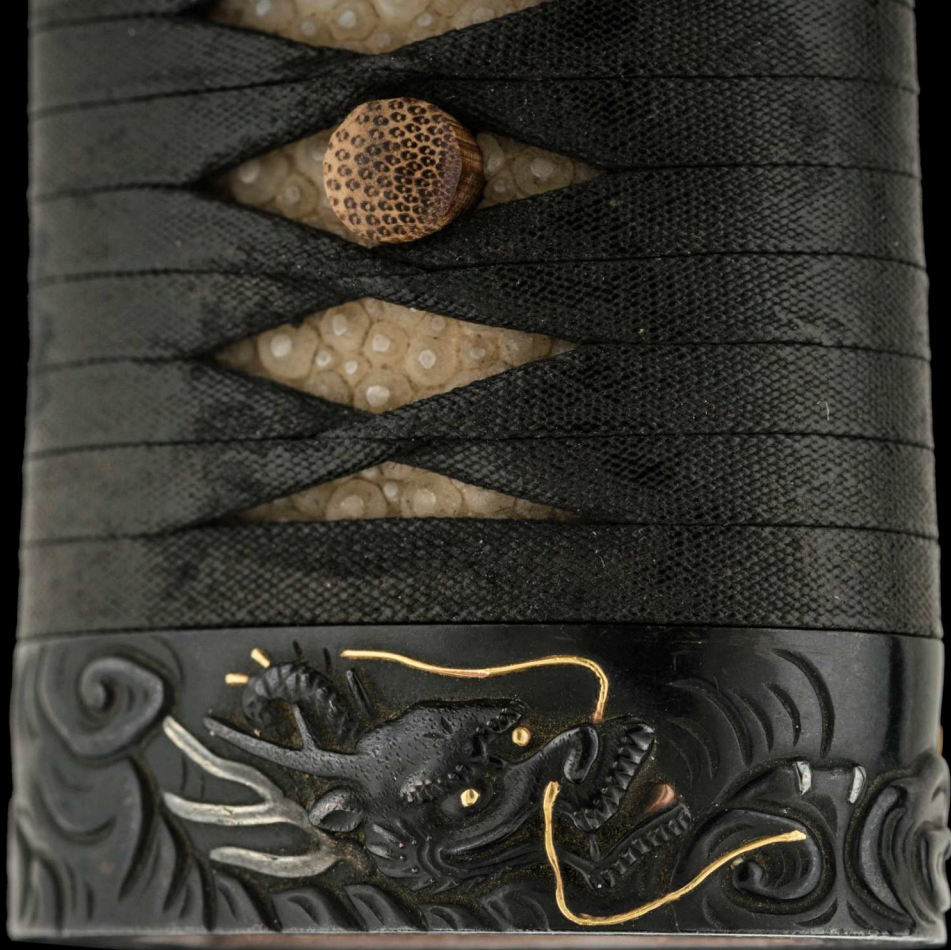


silver *habaki* with
diagonal file marks



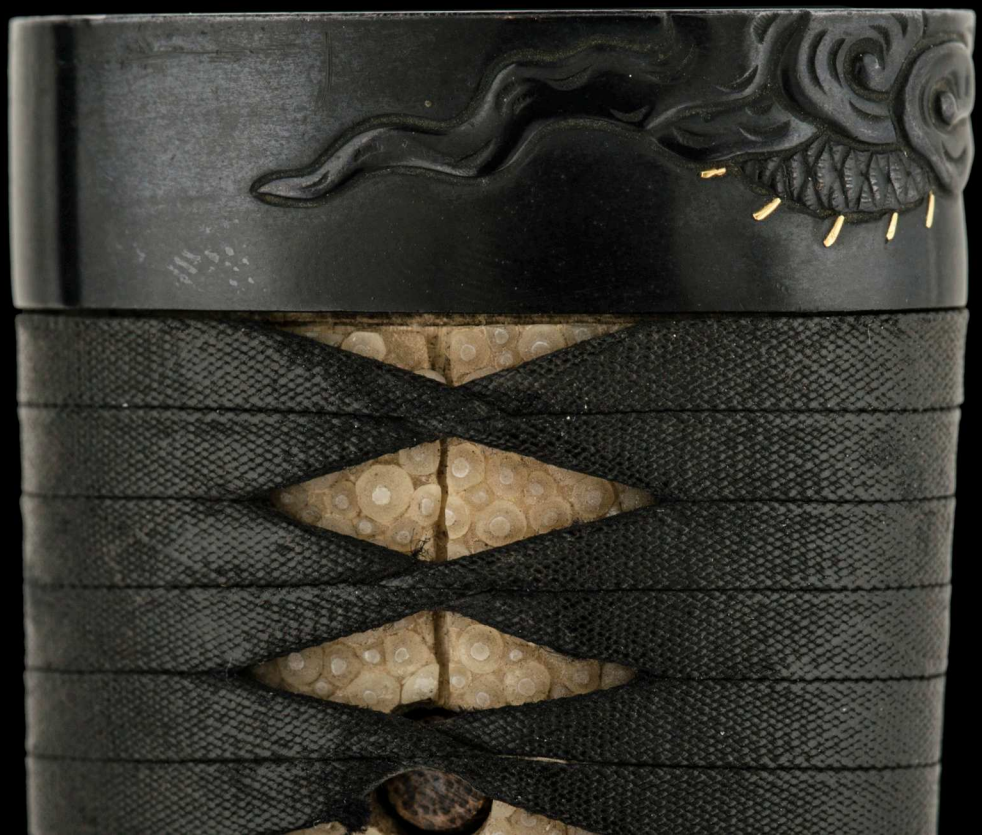
The new caretaker will be able to select the lacquer finish on the new *saya* (scabbard) and the type of *sageo* (cord) he or she would like. Above are three ideas to get the ideas flowing.

Note that certain, more specialised lacquer finishes will incur an additional cost.



This fierce polished *shakudô fuchi-kashira* has been attributed to *Shôami Denshichi* from *Akita province*, circa the middle Edo period (1700~1780).

Comes with NTHK-NPO Kanteisho certificate of authenticity.





A close up of the *kashira* (pommel) depicting *Unryû* - the cloud dragon.

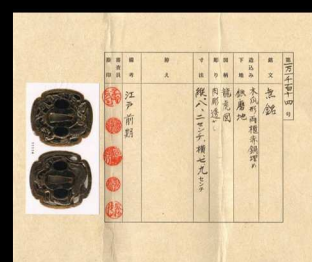
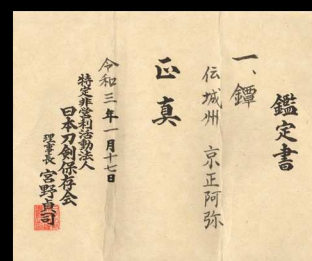
According to Japanese mythology, the breath of the dragon changes into clouds from which comes either rain or fire.



Here is a old tsuba to cherish. Attributed to the *Jôshû Kyô-Shôami school*, this multi-lobed, polished iron guard that depicts a tiger and a dragon.

Both the dragon and the tiger are Buddhist symbols, with the tiger lunging straight ahead to bulldoze through his opponents, while the dragon is revered for its patience and wisdom. Harnessing both these energies in balance is where true power connects with the soul.

The NTHK-NPO Kanteisho certificate of authenticity dates the piece to the *early Edo period* circa 1600~1700.





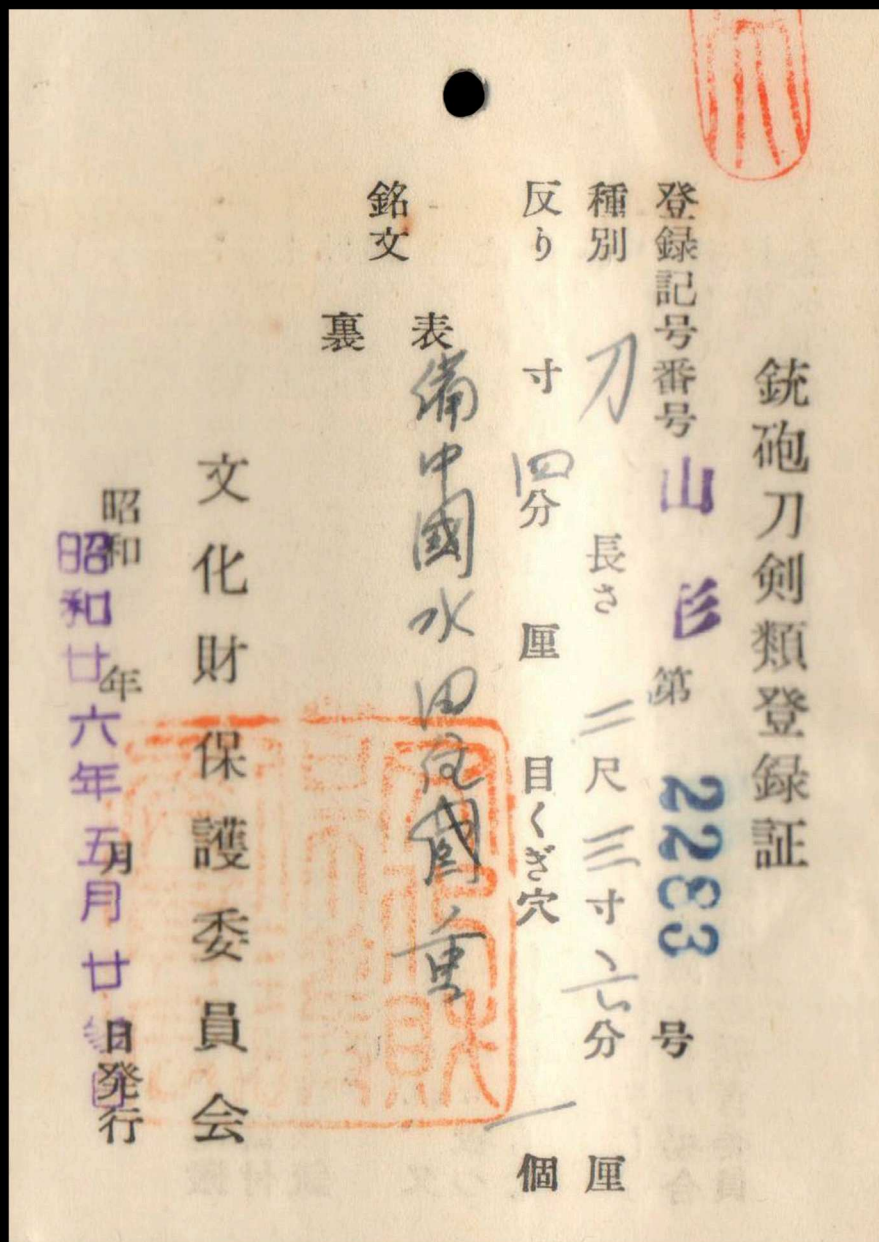




This long *tsuka* (hilt) is wrapped in black *nuno* (linen) *hishimaki* style over *samekawa* (ray skin). The *menuki* are depictions of a pair of horses.

For centuries in Japan, the horse has been worshipped as a god given its strength, speed and beauty. It is believed that the "divine spirit" appeared in the human world on horseback, and horses were offered at shrines for the coming of the gods.





This is the original *torokusho* (registration card) for the *Kunishige katana*. The card was registered in the 26th year of *Showa period* (May 1951).

This is significant as 1951 was the very first year that swords were formally registered in Japan. Many former *Daimyô* families were invited to submit their collections suggesting this blade was once held by a prominent family.

The serial number is just 2283, one of the very first swords registered in Japan (current serial numbers are in the hundreds of thousands). This sword was registered in *Yamagata prefecture*, previously known as *Dewa province*.