



ITEM# UJKA388

## A SHODAI IPPÔ KATANA

SIGNED, EARLY EDO PERIOD (KAN'EI ERA: 1624~1644)

<b>Swordsmith:</b>	<i>Ippô (shodai, first generation, ubu nakago)</i>
<b>Measurements:</b>	<b>Length:</b> 61.2cm <b>Curvature:</b> 1.2cm <b>Motohaba:</b> 3.11cm
<b>Jihada:</b>	<i>Beautifully forged itame-hada and masame-hada, plentiful chikei</i>
<b>Hamon:</b>	<i>Bright suguha mixed with ko-midare, ko-ashi, uchinoke, kinsuji and sunagashi</i>
<b>Certificate #1:</b>	<b>NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon</b> (designated as Especially Worthy of Preservation)
<b>Certificate #2:</b>	<b>NTHK-NPO Yûshû-saku</b> (designated as Highly Excellent Masterwork)
<b>Fujishiro:</b>	<b>Jô-saku</b> (ranked as a superior swordsmith)
<b>Sharpness:</b>	<b>Wazamono</b> (rated as a maker of good sharp swords)
<b>Authentication:</b>	<b>Sayagaki by Dr. Sato Kanzan</b>
<b>Included:</b>	Shirasaya, bag, stand, kit, booklet, printed description

**SOLD**

*Shôdai* (first generation) *Ippô* was the founder of the *Ômi branch* (modern-day *Shiga prefecture*) of the *Ishidô school*. Swords crafted by *Ippô* are rare - more commonly seen are blades by his son *Sasaki Ippô*, making this piece highly collectible and a great pleasure to study. The beautiful consistency of the *jihada* and outstanding *chikei* confirms what a talent *Ippô* truly was. The *hamon* is a bright, snowy *suguha* that embodies the sophisticated qualities of the *Yamato school* such as *uchinoke*. This is a sharp, fighting-length katana that includes *sayagaki* by *Dr. Sato Kanzan*.



Saki-kasane: 5.1mm

Moto-kasane: 8.2mm

Omosa: 710g

Kissaki: 3.74cm

Saki-haba: 2.14cm

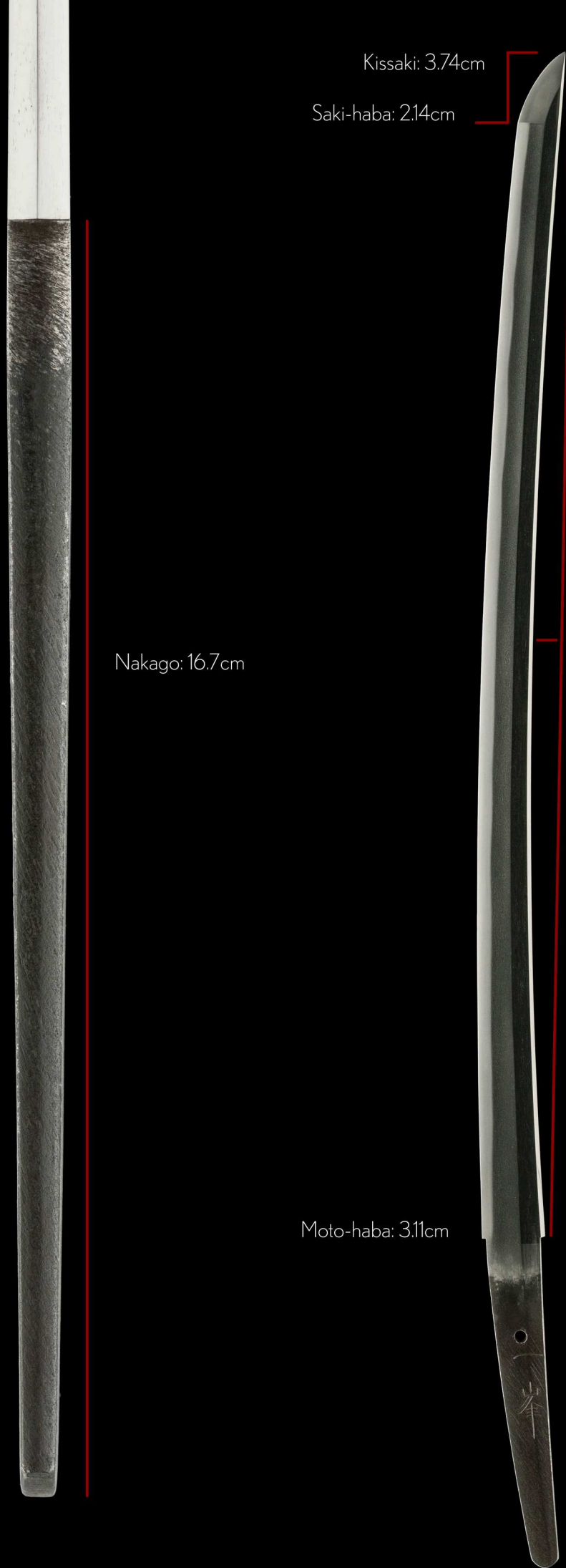
Nakago: 16.7cm

Moto-haba: 3.11cm

Nagasa: 61.2cm

Sori: 1.20cm

Mekugi-ana: 1



*Shôdai* (first generation) *Ippô* was the founder of the *Ômi* branch (modern-day *Shiga* prefecture) of the *Ishidô* school.

As the *Ishidô* school originated at the *Sekido temple* in *Ômi* Province around the start of the *Kanei* period (1624) *Ippô* can be considered the first smith of the school. From there the smiths travelled to various parts of the country and founded branch *Ishidô* schools in *Kii* Province and came to be known as the *Kishû Ishidô*. Later *Tameyasu* led this group to *Ôsaka*. Other smiths went to *Edo* (Tokyo), the most famous of these being *Ishidô Korekazu* and the *Fukuoka-Ishidô* branch was led by *Moritsugu* and *Koretsugu*.

The *Ishidô* school smiths were best known for their ability to make swords in the *Bizen* tradition of the *Ichimonji* school. This piece, however, is more in line with the *Yamato* tradition making this blade quite rare and a valuable reference piece.

There is an undeniable air of sophistication with this katana. It's perfectly preserved in every way, essentially flawless. This is the kind of sword that would suit a custom *koshirae* should the next owner be interested. Or simply enjoyed in *shirasaya*.

In any case, let the journey continue...





Location: *Ômi* (resident of Shiga)

Family name: *Sasaki*

Swordsmith: *Ippô* (first generation)

*ubu-nakago* (original, unaltered tang)

*sujikai-yasurime* (diagonal file marks)

→ (I)

峯 (ppô)

A close-up, vertical view of a sword blade. The blade is dark and has a fine, textured grain. Near the top, there is a circular hole. Below the hole, there is a shallow, curved groove or mark. The blade tapers towards the bottom.

一 (one)

峯 (summit, peak)

A close-up, vertical view of a sword blade, similar to the one above. It features a hole and a curved mark. Below these, there is a large, stylized character carved into the blade. A red line points from the character to the text below.

山 (mountain)

The direct translation of the name *Ippô* is "one mountain top / summit / peak".

This inspiring name suggests the swordsmith is constantly striving for perfection - a quest towards the pinnacle of crafting excellence.





The condition of the nakago is spectacular.  
This is a sword that has been well looked after.

(*ura*, reverse)

25201311



No 1001753



鑑定書

一刀 銘 一峯

長 二尺〇二分

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

平成二十六年 一月三十一日

公益財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協會



福岡 教育委員会  
第 033393 号  
昭和34年 7 月 28 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 26th year of Heisei (2014), January 31st

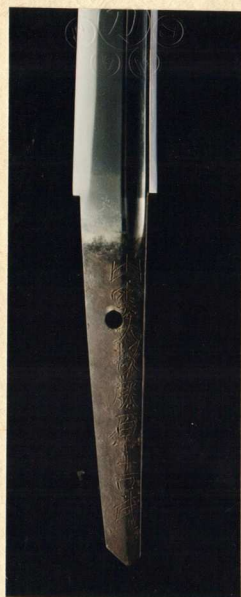
One, Katana

*Mei* (signature)  
*Ippô*

*Nagasa* (length)  
2-shaku 2-bu (61.2cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai  
(NBTHK)

捺 審 査 員 印	備 考	寸 法	拵 え	中 心	図 柄	彫 り	錠 子	刃 紋	下 地	鍛	造り 込み	銘 文	第 五 七 三 六 号
    	延宝頃			目釘穴 一個  鍔 文少ゆき		表裏 俵樋 已下 下拵 流	真 小丸	太 茂 子 巾 の 真 調 浅 小 灣 水 走 じ り		板 自 詰 七	端 造	出雲人 藤原言武	
											卷 棟		



## NTHK-NPO Yûshû-saku Certificate of Authenticity

This katana was designated as *Yûshû-saku* (Highly Excellent Masterwork) by the Non-Profit Society for the Preservation of the Japanese Sword

One, Katana

*Mei* (signature)  
*Ippô*

*Nagasa* (length)  
2-shaku 2-bu kore ari (61.2cm)

Issued in 3rd year of Reiwa (2021), December 12th

Nihon Token Hozon Kai  
(NTHK-NPO)

This sword has reached the highest level of honour at the NTHK-NPO.  
(Sword just passed, certificate arrives middle of January 2022)



近江國一峯  
*Ōmi no Kuni Ippō*  
Ippō, a resident of Ōmi Province

直刃出来  
*Suguha deki*  
Straight style hamon

刃長貳尺貳分強有之  
*Hachō 2-shaku 2-bu kyō kore ari*  
Blade length ~61.2 cm

昭和乙卯年弥生吉日  
*Shōwa kinoto-udoshi yayoi kichijitsu*  
Signed on a lucky day in the second month during the  
Year of Hare in Showa period (February 1975)

寒山誌 (花押)  
Written by Kanzan + monogram

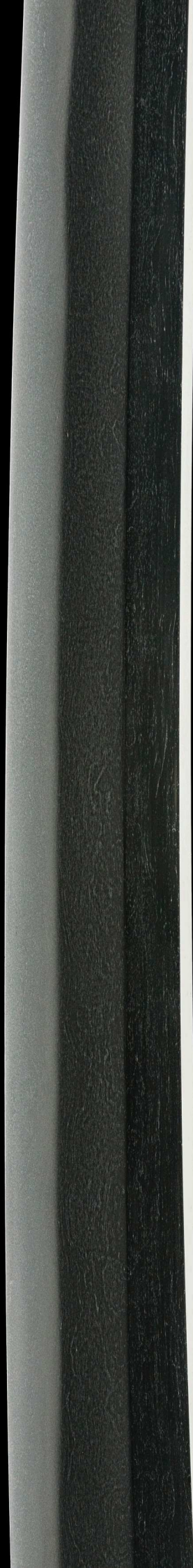


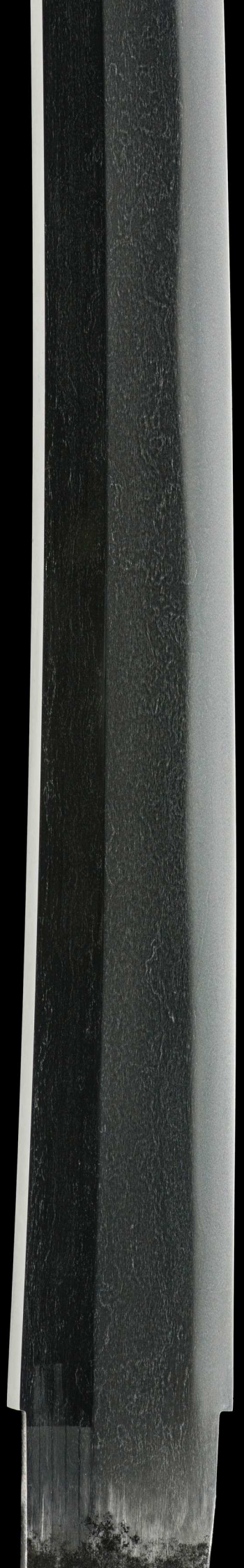
Samurai with sword  
Kunisada Utagawa (1786-1865)



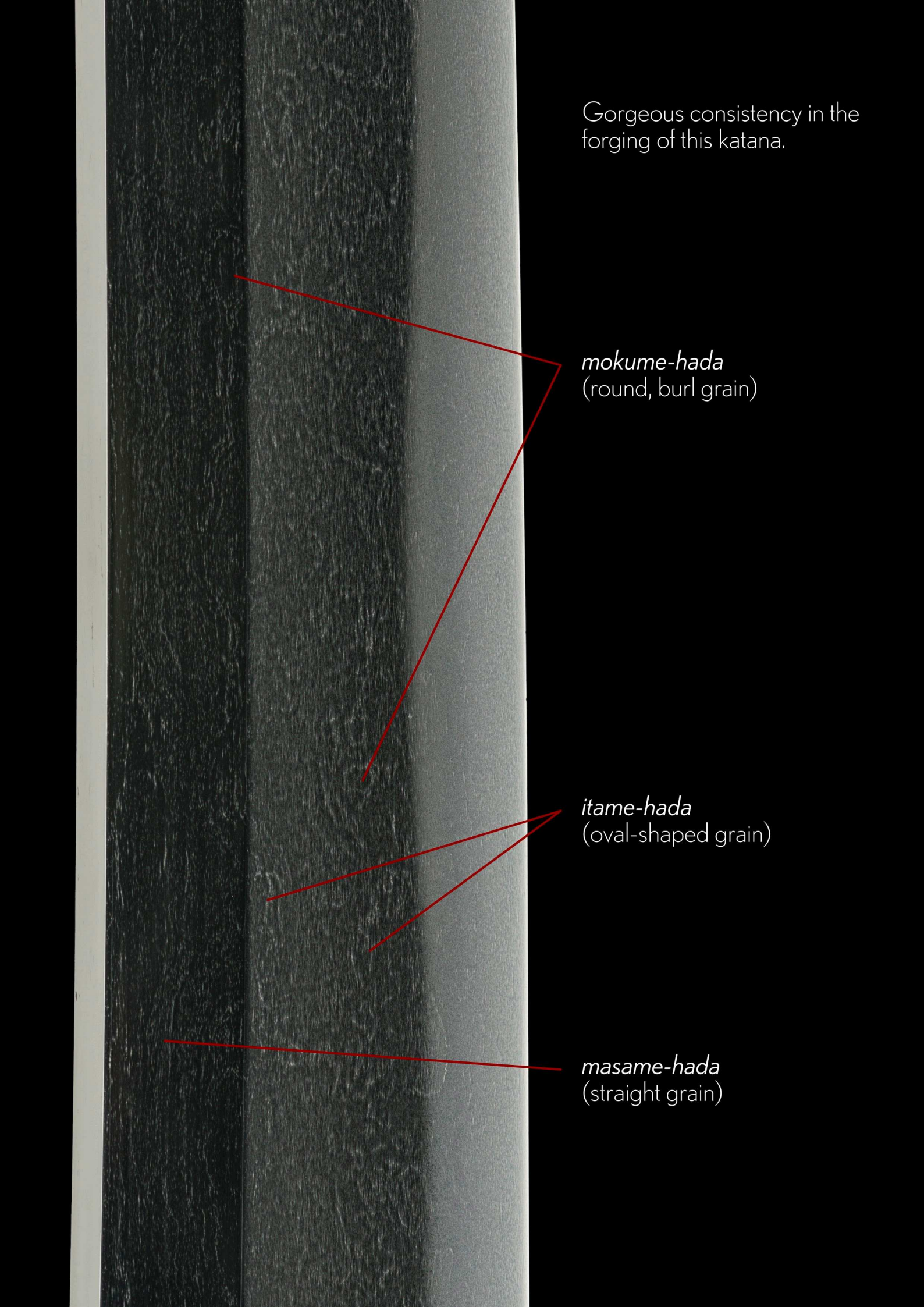
This sword's cutting edge of **61.2cm** is just over the baseline requirement for a blade to be recognized as a katana which is *2-shaku* or **60.6cm**.

This is clearly a custom-ordered katana by a samurai from the early 1600s. One reason for the length may be simply because he was not very tall and the length suited him best. Another, and equally plausible reason is that *a short katana is much easier to use in close-combat situations, such as fighting indoors*. Even in outdoor battle, a shorter, extremely sharp katana is quick, easy to manoeuvre and deadly. It's no secret that the o-wakizashi (long wakizashi) and short katanas were often preferred in the hands of capable swordsmen.





Gorgeous consistency in the forging of this katana.



*mokume-hada*  
(round, burl grain)

*itame-hada*  
(oval-shaped grain)

*masame-hada*  
(straight grain)

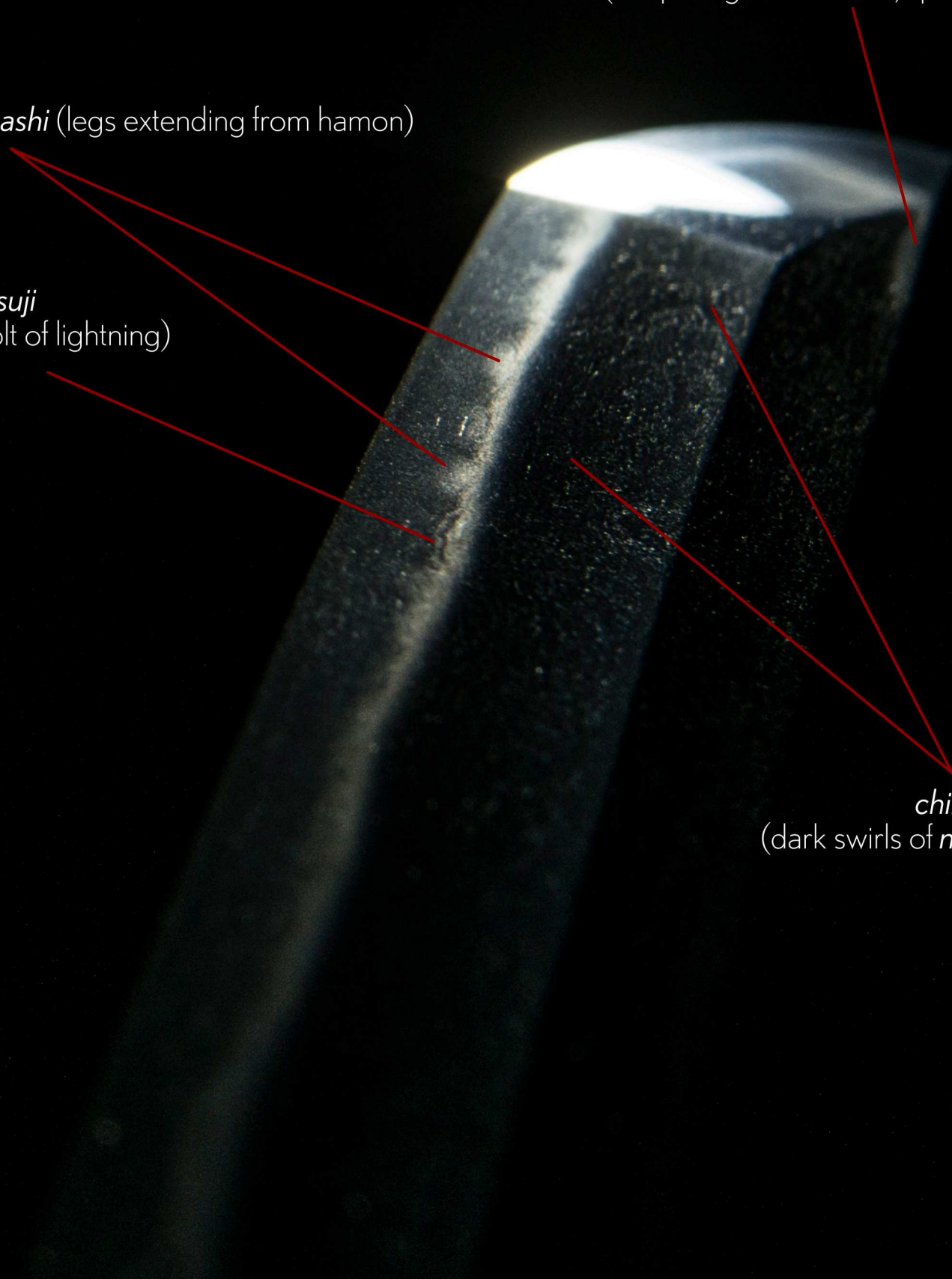
Upon close inspection, the sword reveals itself to the eye that pays attention...  
Note the following elements: *kinsuji*, *ko-ashi*, *muneyaki* and *chikei*.

*muneyaki*  
(tempering of the *mune*, spine)

*ko-ashi* (legs extending from hamon)

*kinsuji*  
(bolt of lightning)

*chikei*  
(dark swirls of *nie*)



A gleaming line *suguha hamon* that is as white as a snow leopard.

Notice the visible *nie*-crystals in the *nioguchi* (crystals that make up the hamon).  
A tinge of blue shimmers from the blade - the mark of top-class work.

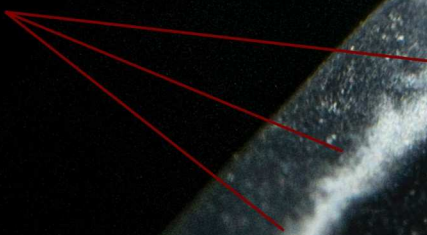




These unique elements are called *uchinoke* - short *nijûba* (second hamon line) that resembles a *crescent moon*.

Uchinoke is a rare, visual treat in the Japanese sword universe - particularly seen in the Yamato tradition on a *suguha hamon* over well-forged *masame-hada*.

*uchinoke*



*uchinoke* on the *ura* (reverse side)



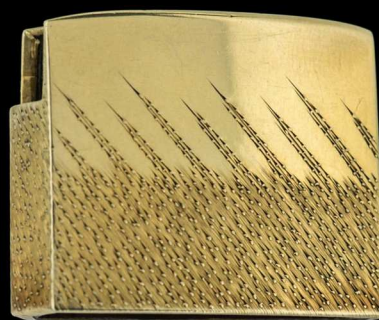


Master craftsmanship.  
Let it inspire you.

Become a master.



*Shirasaya*  
(protective scabbard)



gold wrapped *habaki* with  
diagonal file marks

# Building Your Own Custom Koshirae



ujka211 - A Shodai Hisamichi Katana  
'Red dragon' Koshirae



ujwa130 - A Tadashige o-Wakizashi  
'Ray skin' Koshirae

Many top quality samurai swords that Unique Japan acquires come stored in a *shirasaya* only. A *shirasaya* acts like a humidifier, protecting the steel for the long term.

Just as the samurai would have ordered a custom *koshirae* (outdoor mounts) during the Edo period, you too can have a traditional set of *koshirae* crafted for your sword (or matching *daishô*) like a tailored suit in a theme that connects with your spirit.

At Unique Japan, we have proudly created dozens of custom *koshirae* projects for our clients over the years - each with their own style and energy.

The *tsuka* (hilt), *saya* (scabbard), *samekawa* (ray skin), silk, and lacquer is all handcrafted by skilled craftspeople in Japan. The *tsuba*, *fuchi-kashira*, *menuki* and other fittings are carefully sourced samurai antiques largely from the Edo period.

This unique blend of modern life meeting traditional history is what makes each creation so personally rewarding for every client.

The investment required ranges from \$5,000 to over \$10,000 depending on the quality of the fittings and the complexity of the lacquerwork. Each project also demands patience as many will take one year to complete (but it's well worth it).

Please contact Unique Japan for further details.



ujka173 - A Sadatsugu Juyo Katana  
'Wave theme' Koshirae