



ITEM# UJKA394

A NIÔ TACHI

UNSIGNED, LATE KAMAKURA PERIOD (CIRCA GENTOKU ERA 1329~1331)

- Swordsmith:** *Niô School (ubu nakago)*
Measurements: **Length:** 81.2cm **Curvature:** 2.58cm **Moto-haba:** 2.85cm
Jihada: *Itame mixed with mokume, fine ji-nie and plentiful chikei*
Hamon: *Hosô-suguha with ko-nie deki, tight nioguchi*
Certificate 1: **NBTHK Jûyô Tôken** (a sword designated as *Profound and Important*)
Certificate 2-3: **NTHK-NPO Kanteisho** (tachi fittings and koshirae designated as authentic)
Authentication: **Sayagaki by Dr. Sato Kanzan**
Included: Shirasaya, fabric bag, stand, kit, booklet, description

SOLD

This absolute gem of a *tachi* has been attributed to the *Niô school* way back seven centuries to the late Kamakura period. This is an *ubu-nakago tachi* that has been proudly preserved for some 700-plus years. It is immensely rare to come across a sword from this time period that has not been shortened at the *nakago* – either *suriage* or *ô-suriage*. Standing tall at 81.2cm in *nagasa* (cutting edge length) and a glorious curvature of over 2.5cm these are precisely the dimensions of a sword wielded on horseback by a warring samurai. A huge *kirikomi* battle scar in the top third of the blade attests to the battles fought with this sword – a reminder to when life was truly tough. The gorgeous swirling pools of *chikei* in the steel speak to generations of old. Oh the stories that can be told with this blade... A spectacular set of *tachi koshirae* accompanies the sword with matching *kamon* (crests) that appears to be the "*Tosa-kashiwa-mon* (oak crest from Tosa Province). This *kamon* was used by *Yamauchi* family with the most famous *daimyô* being *Yamauchi Kazutoyo* who worked for *Toyotomi* family. The family became the feudal lords of Tosa Province during the Edo Period, and later aristocracy within the Meiji Era. This *tachi* is truly history in your hands.



Saki-kasane: 4.0mm

Moto-kasane: 7.4mm

Kissaki: 2.51cm
Saki-haba: 1.67cm

Nagasa: 81.2cm

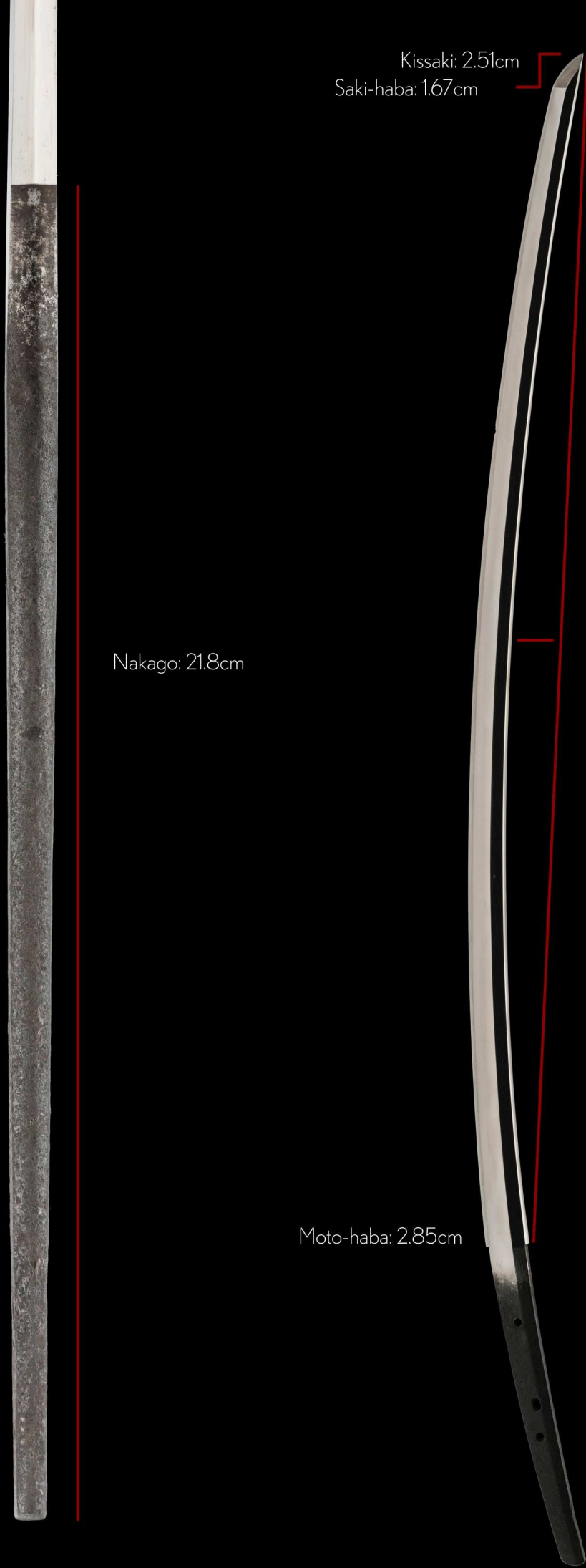
Nakago: 21.8cm

Sori: 2.58cm

Omosa: 885g

Moto-haba: 2.85cm

Mekugi-ana: 3



Traditional sources list either the *Hôen* era (1135~1141) smith *Kiyozane* or the *Bun'ô* era (1260~1261) smith *Kiyohira* as founder of the *Suô* province-based *Niô* School. However, there are no works of these two smiths extant and therefore *Kiyotsuna* is today regarded as the actual founder of the school.

The *Itsukushima-jinja* preserves a tachi that is signed and dated *kakikudashi*-style *Bun'ei ninen sangatsu Kiyotsuna* (third month of *Bun'ei* two, 1265) and the second oldest dated work, a *tantô* from the former possessions of the *Tanzan-jinja* that passed *jûyô* at the 45th *jûyô* shinsa, is from the second year of *Kenmu* (1335) and is signed *Bôshû Kuga-jû Kiyotsuna*. The *Kiyotsuna* name was then handed down throughout the *Muromachi* period and was in continuous use up to the *shintô* era.

A theory says that the name of the school goes back to the *Niho* manor of *Suô* province. *Suô* was home to many properties owned by the *Tôdaiji* and as *Niô* School blades have a strong resemblance to *Yamato* works, it is assumed that there has been a technical exchange between the two places. *Niô* blades show *shirake* along the *kitae* and have a *hamon* that is rather subdued and therefore we can recognize individual features that distinguish them from *Yamato* works.

This tachi *kitae* is formed of *ko-itame* and *mokume* with shining *ji-nie* and plenty of *chikei* to enjoy. The *hamon* is *hosô-suguha* with *shirake utsuri*. This *ubu* (unshortened) tachi holds all the fine qualities of the *Niô* School and the all the glory of the *Kamakura* period in one making it remarkably collectible.





Impressively rare, the *nakago* of this 700-year-old tachi is *ubu*, meaning that has retained its original shape since it was crafted.

The province of Yamato was the heart of Japanese culture during the Nara period before the capital shifted to *Yamashiro* (Kyôto).

Yamato had many powerful Buddhist temples that armed themselves with swords to guard their property. As a matter of protocol, most swords of the Yamato tradition were not signed as seen on this Niô tachi.



重要第四三五號

指定書

太刀 無銘 二王 一口

長八二二釐 反り三二釐 鋒長三六釐

鎬造 庵棟 鍛小板目に本交じり
又文細直又茎生不先又上栗尻
釦目勝手下り 目釘孔三

右者當協會に於て審査の結果
重要刀劍に指定する

昭和四六年三月一日

盛況日本美術刀劍保存協會

會長 本間順治



Jûyô Certificate No. 4265
Shiteisho (指定書) Certificate of Designation
Tachi, mumei: Niô (二王)

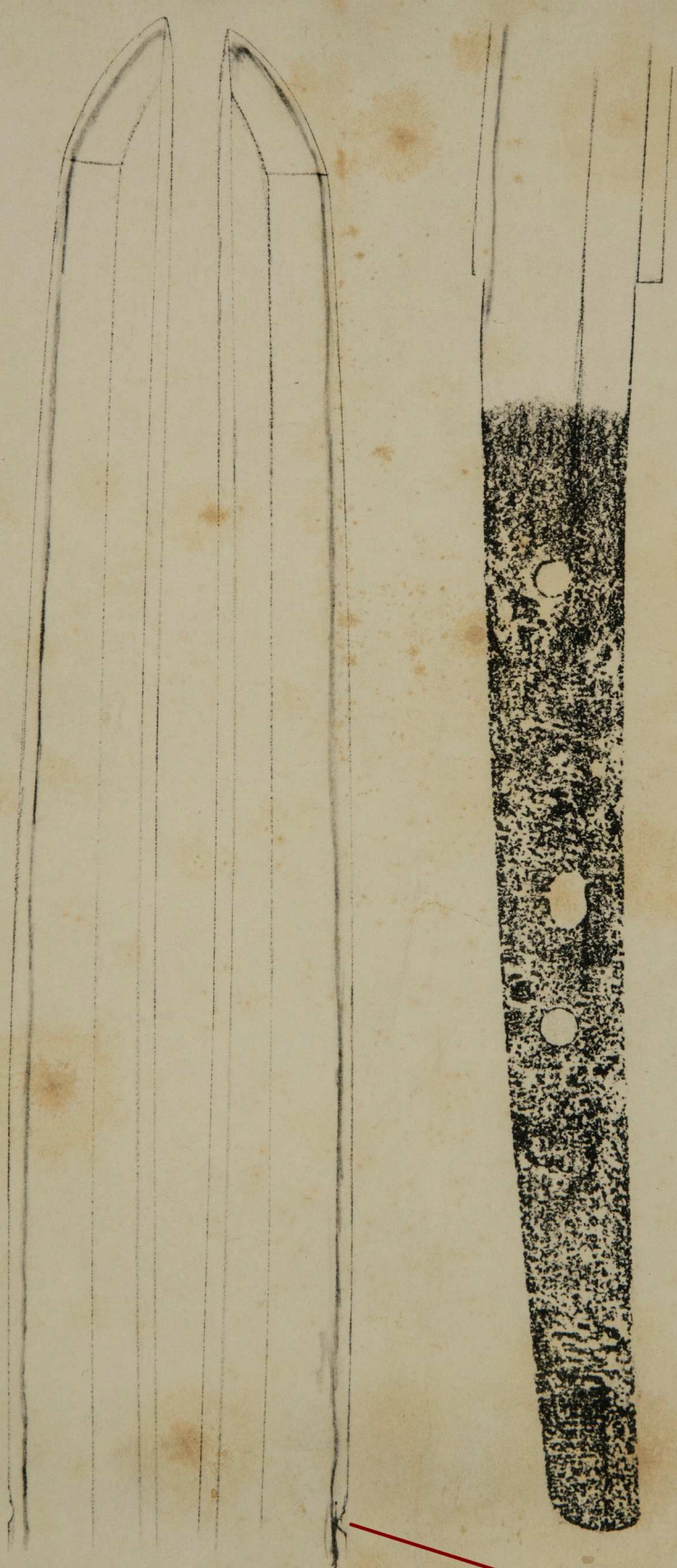
Measurements
nagasa 81.2 cm, sori 2.58 cm, kissaki-nagasa 2.85 cm

Description
Keijo: shinogi-zukuri, iori-mune
Kitae: ko-itame that is mixed with mokume
Hamon: hoso-suguha
Nakago: ubu, ha-agari kurijiri, katte-sagari yasurime, three mekugi-ana

According to the result of the shinsa committee of our society we judged this work as authentic and rate it as jûyô-tôken.

March 1, 1973
[Foundation] Nihon Bijutsu Tôken Hozon Kyôkai, NBTHK
[President] Honma Junji (本間順治)

太刀 無銘 二王



kirikomi

Vintage Jûyô Token white paper from 1973
(note the gash in the cutting edge)



但生莖無銘也

Tadashi ubu-nakago mumei nari

Ubu-nakago, mumei

刃長貳尺七寸〇分有之

Hachô 2-shaku 7-sun 0-bu kore ari

Blade length ~81.2cm

昭和癸丑年新春寒山誌（花押）

Shôwa mizunoto-ushi doshi shinshun Kanzan shirusu + kaô

Written by Kanzan in early spring of Shôwa

Year of the Ox (1973) + monogram





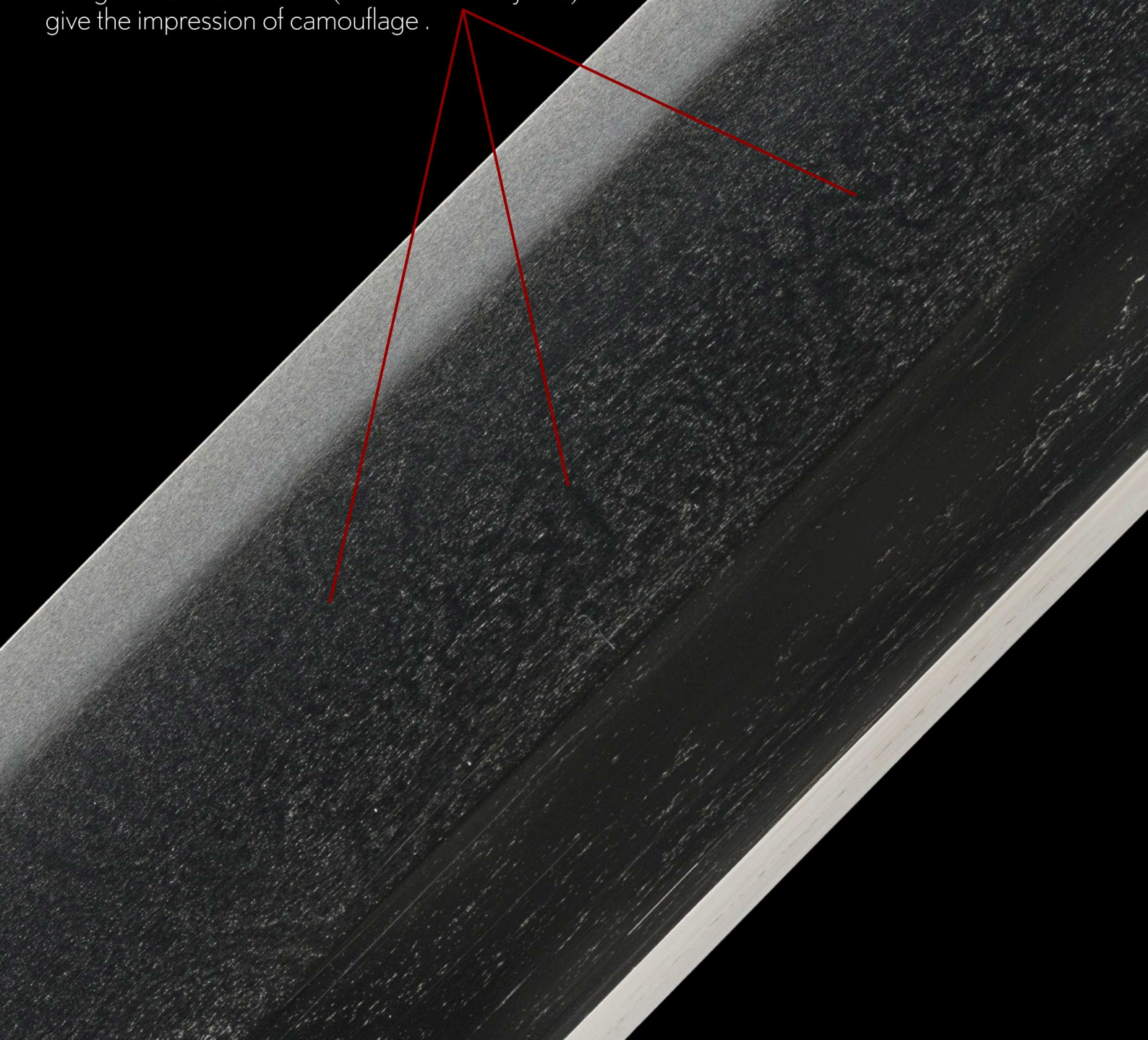
A monumental *kirikomi* (gash in the cutting edge) was inflicted in battle at some point in the lifetime of this centuries old tachi.

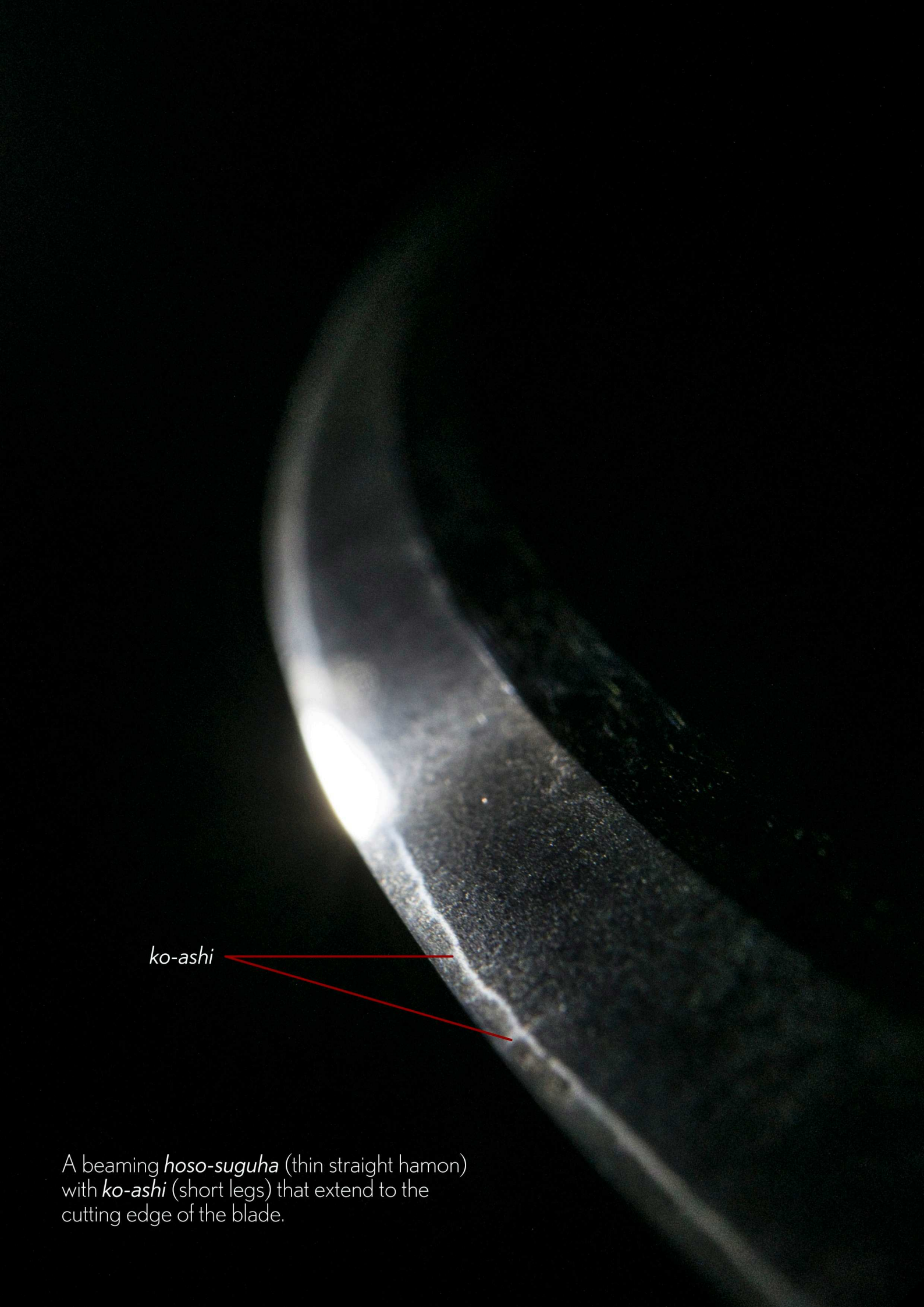
An honourable wound such as this one should never be corrected in a polish. It is to be preserved and contemplated upon.





Gorgeous swirls of *chikei* (dark lines *nie* crystals) give the impression of camouflage .



A close-up photograph of a sword blade, focusing on the hamon (temper line). The blade is dark, and the hamon is a lighter, thin line. The hamon is straight and has a beaming effect. There are short, thin legs extending from the hamon towards the cutting edge of the blade. The background is black.

ko-ashi

A beaming *hoso-suguha* (thin straight hamon) with *ko-ashi* (short legs) that extend to the cutting edge of the blade.



The blade shimmers a bluish tint of *ji-nie*
over the trademark dark hue of *Niô jigane*.



Minamoto Yoritomo (1147~1199)
on horseback attacking an enemy

Artist: Taiso Yoshitoshi (1839 - 1892)

Pierce through the darkness.



Shirasaya
(protective scabbard)



gold wrapped *habaki* with
vertical file marks

*Shakudô migaki-ji
kebori kamon no zu kaigu
shu-urushinuri saya
tachi-koshirae*
(赤銅磨地毛彫家紋図皆具
朱漆塗太刀拵え)

*Tachi-koshirae
lacquered in vermilion with
matching fittings of
polished shakudô with
motif of family crest
engraved in linear manner*

Crafted during the
Late Edo period
(1780~1867)



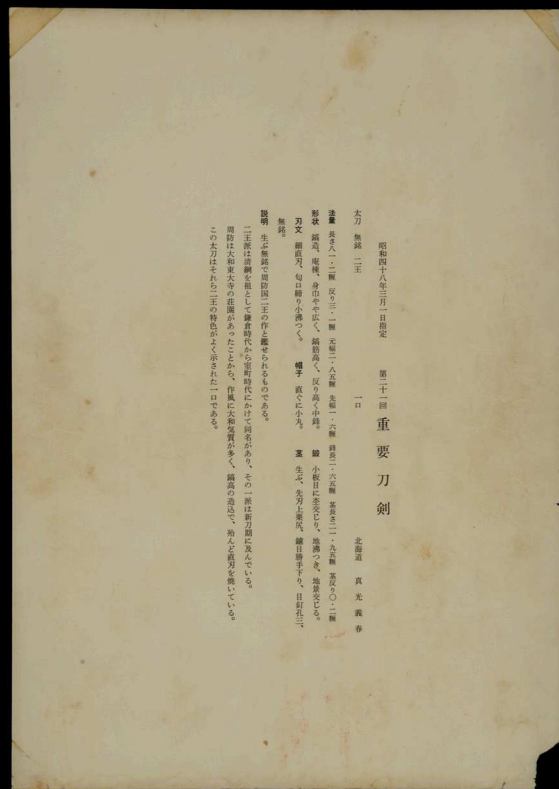
NTHK-NPO Kanteisho
Certificate of Authenticity



Tosa-kashiwa-mon



*Matching tachi fittings
(from Late Edo period)*



21st NBTHK Juyo Token Certificate
Traditionally rolled in protective tube.

All information will be precisely translated for the new caretaker. A printed and bound description of the sword from this catalogue will also be included along with a sword stand and a Unique Japan maintenance kit.



You can't break me.