



ITEM# UJKA397

A YOSHIMASA KATANA

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

Swordsmith: *Minamoto Nobukuni Yoshimasa (second generation, shortened nakago)*
Measurements: **Length:** 63.9cm **Curvature:** 2.12cm **Motohaba:** 2.87cm
Jihada: *Densely forged ko-mokume hada resembling konuka-hada with ji-nie and chikei*
Hamon: *Ko-chôji midare in ko-nie deki with kinsuji, saka-ashi and sunagashi*
Certificate 1-2: **NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon** (*sword & koshirae Especially Worthy of Preservation*)
Certificate 3-4: **NTHK-NPO Kanteisho** (*a tsuba and fk designated as Authentic*)
Fujishiro: **Jô-saku** (*ranked as a superior swordsmith*)
Included: Shirasaya, Edo period koshirae, bag, stand, kit, booklet, printed description

SOLD

This katana is a radiating example of perfectly balanced *ying/yang* energy. Crafted by talented second swordsmith *Yoshimasa* of the *Chikuzen Nobukuni* school, the quality of the steel is immediately apparent; a densely forged *ko-mokume hada* with shimmering *ji-nie* and a bright, tightly coiled *ko-chôji* hamon. Complimenting the sword is a most spectacular set of koshirae that is said to have been inherited from the ruling *Owari Tokugawa* family. The exquisite fittings carry a unified *aoi-mon* presence, the official *kamon* (seal) of the Tokugawa clan. The *fuchi-kashira* was signed by *Akishige* who studied under master *Konô Haruaki*. Both the sword and the koshirae have been awarded NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon certification. If you are seeking a katana to proudly display in a home or office environment, this is certainly one to consider.



Saki-kasane: 4.0mm

Moto-kasane: 6.4mm

Omosa: 555g

Kissaki: 2.59cm
Saki-haba: 1.83cm

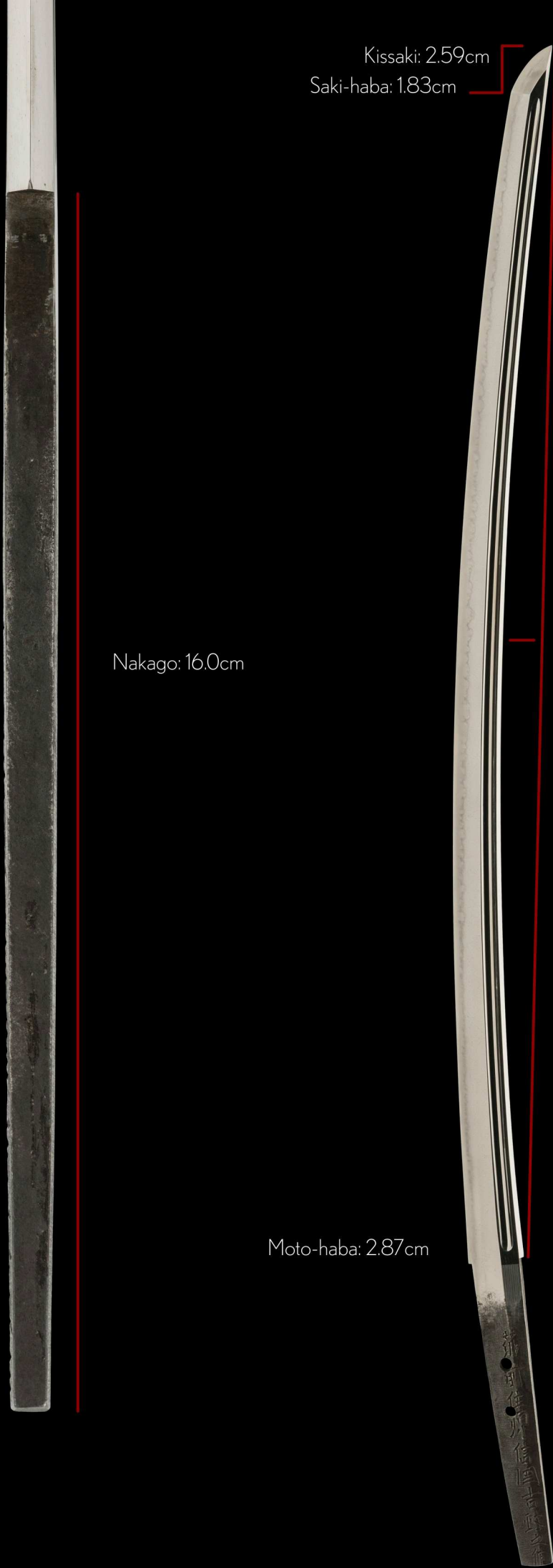
Nakago: 16.0cm

Moto-haba: 2.87cm

Nagasa: 63.9cm

Sori: 2.12cm

Mekugi-ana: 2



Chikuzen province has a long and distinguished history dating back to the Warrior *Kongobyoe* Monks over 1,000 years ago.

Nobukuni Yoshisada is the founder of the Shinto-era *Chikuzen Nobukuni School* and referred to himself as the 12th generation descendant of *Yamashiro Nobukuni* and *Tsukushi Nobukuni*.

Yoshisada's eldest son *Yoshimasa* (first generation) was meant to succeed the school however his father "disinherited" him when he packed up his bags at the age of 26 to study the Bizen tradition of the *Ichimonji* school under *Sukemune*. Succession thus went to his younger brother, second generation *Yoshimasa* (maker of this katana) and *Yoshitsugu*.

Fujishiro ranks *Yoshimasa* as a *jô-saku* (superior) smith. *Yoshimasa* was born *Nobukuni Heishirô* in 1622 and died in August 1688.





Location: *Chikuzen Province*

Family name: *Minamoto Nobukuni*

Swordsmith: *Yoshimasa* (first generation)

suriage-nakago (cut nakago at *nakagojiri*)

kiri-yasurime (straight file marks)

筑 (Chiku)

前 (zen)

住 (jû)

源 (Minamoto)

信 (Nobu)

国 (kuni)

吉 (Yoshi)

政 (masa)

之 (kore, o)

作 (tsukuru)

Yoshimasa (吉正)

signature variant of the 2nd generation

Nobukuni Yoshimasa (吉政)



Here is a reference *oshigata* of a nakago crafted by Yoshimasa. As you can see the top hole would have been the original to the blade as they line up perfectly.

In the past, the nakago of this sword was chopped off at the bottom in order to fit a desired *tsuka* (hilt) - rather than having a new hilt made for the nakago.

Sometimes in life a quick solution is demanded!

It's important to note that the edge of the blade has *not* been modified at all.

*nakago
chopped
off here*

Chikuzen-jū Minamoto Nobukuni

Yoshimasa (筑前住源信国吉正)



(*ura*, reverse)

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No 1009915



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
平成三十年十二月十日
公益財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協會



一
刀

銘 筑前住源信国吉政之作

長二尺一寸〇半

鑑定書

東京都教育委員会
第 11260 号
昭和26年3月24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), December 10th

One, Katana

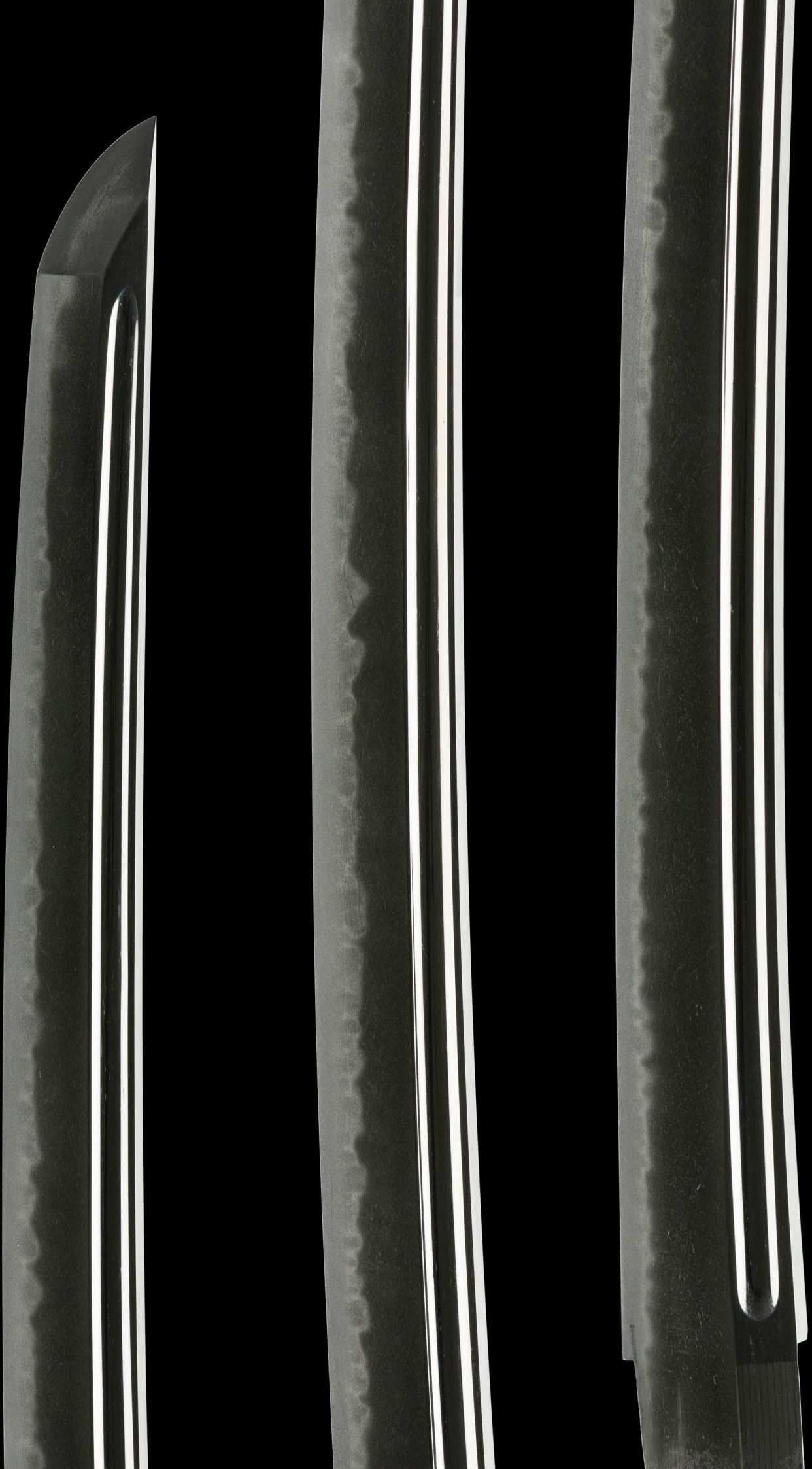
Mei (signature)

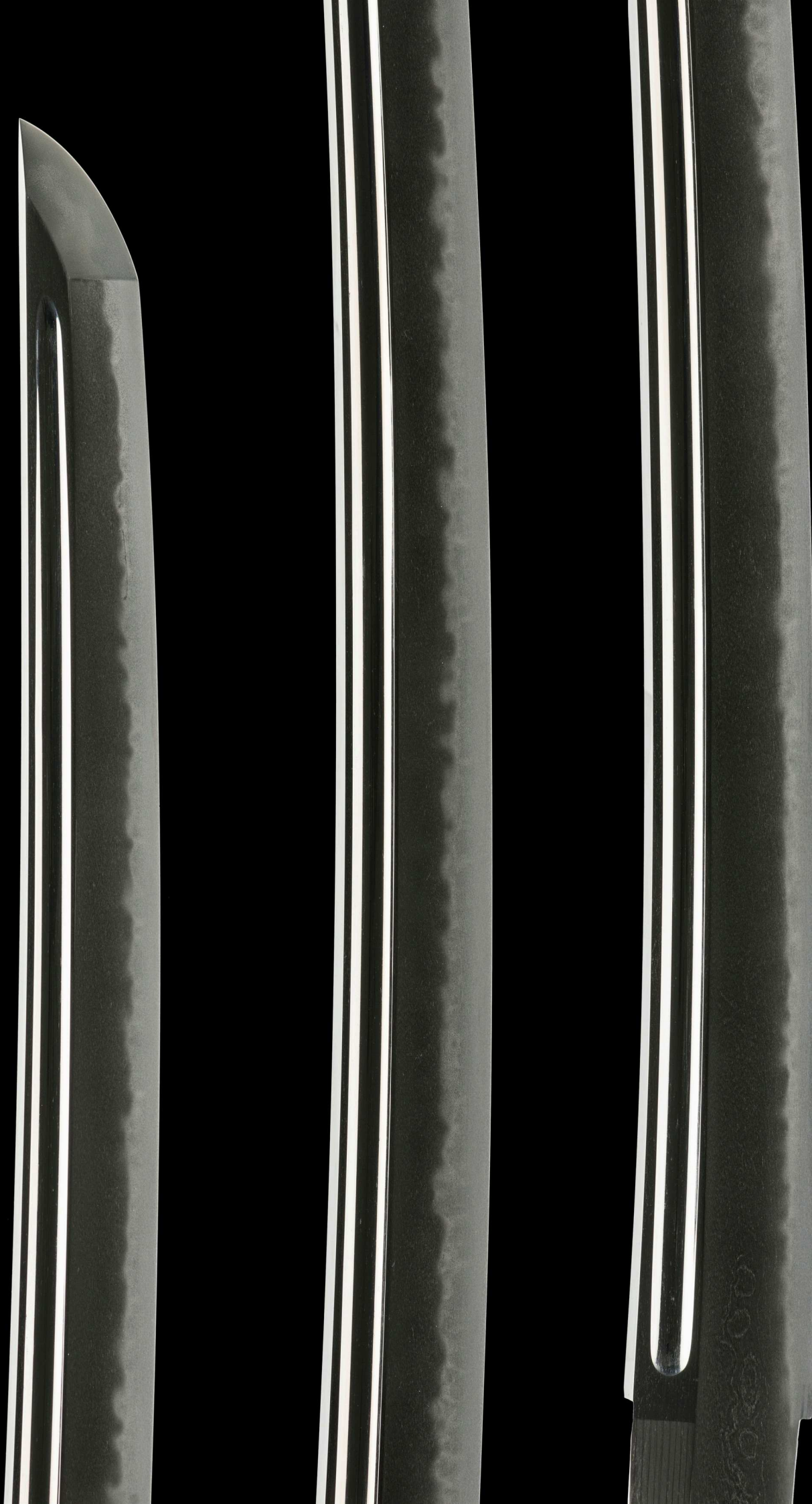
Chikuzen-jû Minamoto Nobukuni Yoshimasa kore o tsukuru

Nagasa (length)

2-shaku 1-sun 0 han (63.9cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai
(NBTHK)



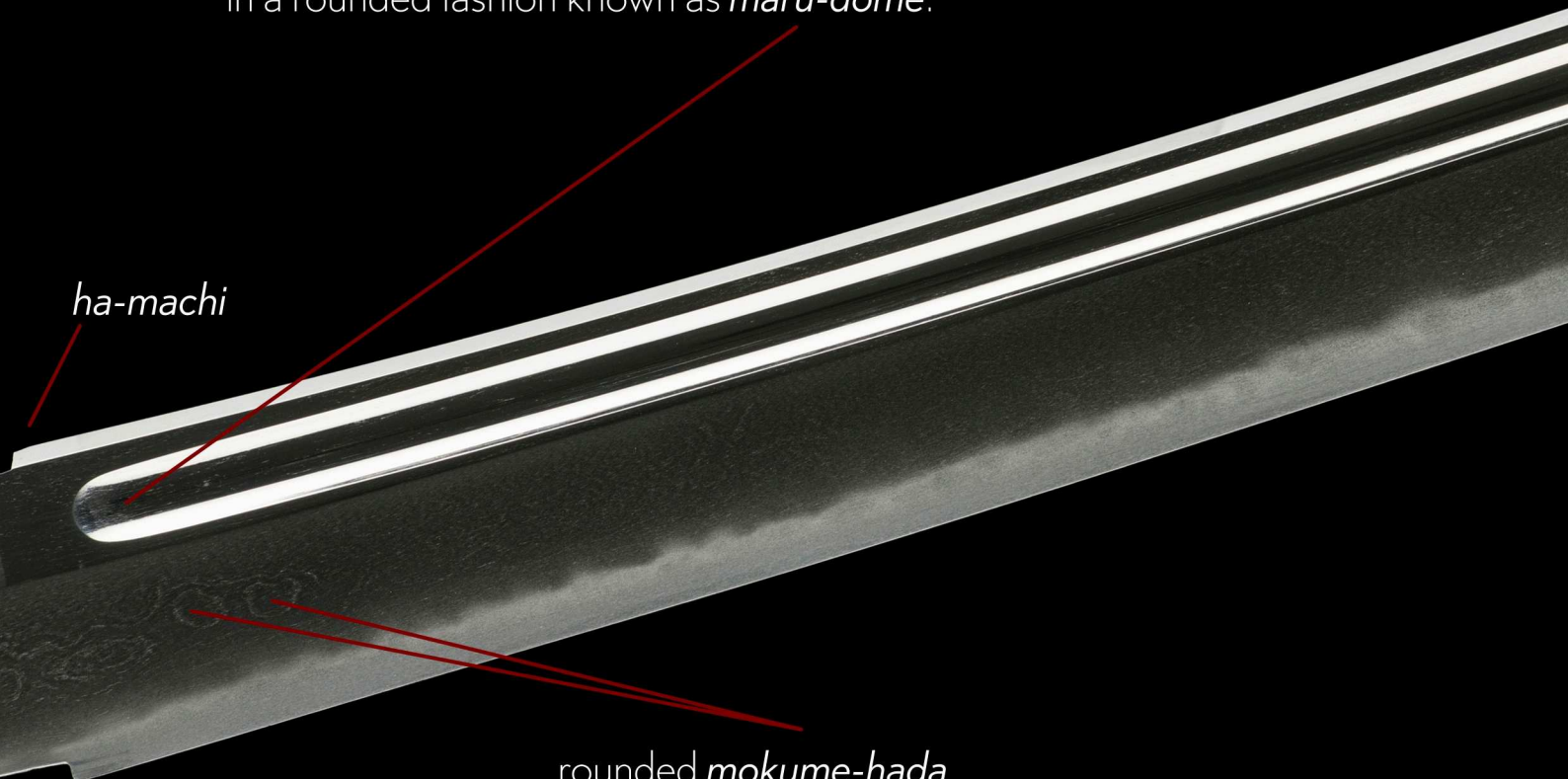




bo-bi

This katana features a *bo-bi* (wide groove). This groove helps to lighten the blade ever so slightly for extra quickness and agility.

The groove ends just above the *ha-machi* (notch at the cutting edge) in a rounded fashion known as *maru-dome*.



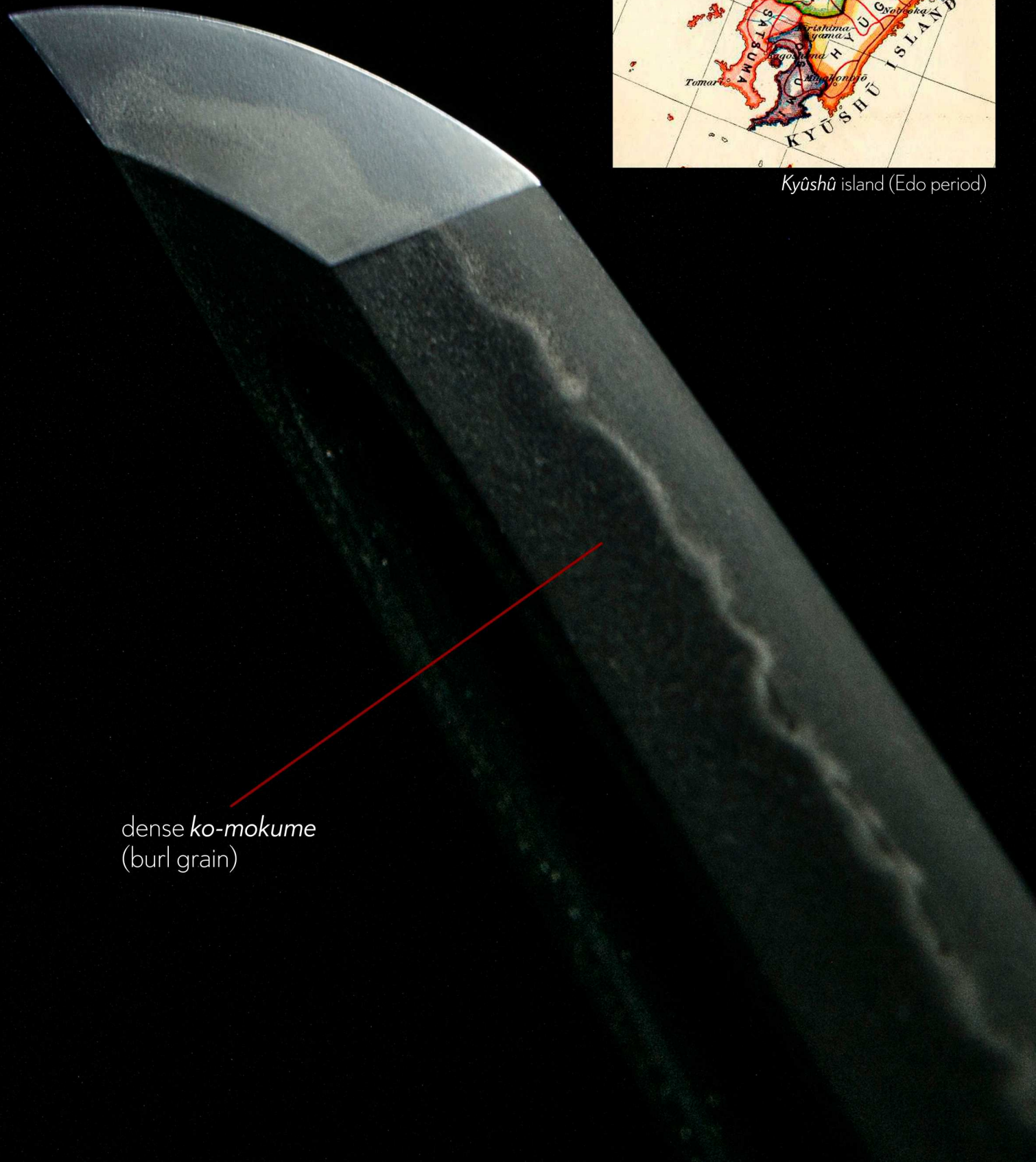
ha-machi

rounded *mokume-hada*

The expertly forged *jihada* is a dense *ko-mokume* that resembles *konuka-hada* (rice bran) of the *Hizen* tradition. *Chikuzen* and *Hizen* were neighbouring provinces on the north side of *Kyûshû* island during the Edo period, so there was likely some skill-sharing.



Kyûshû island (Edo period)



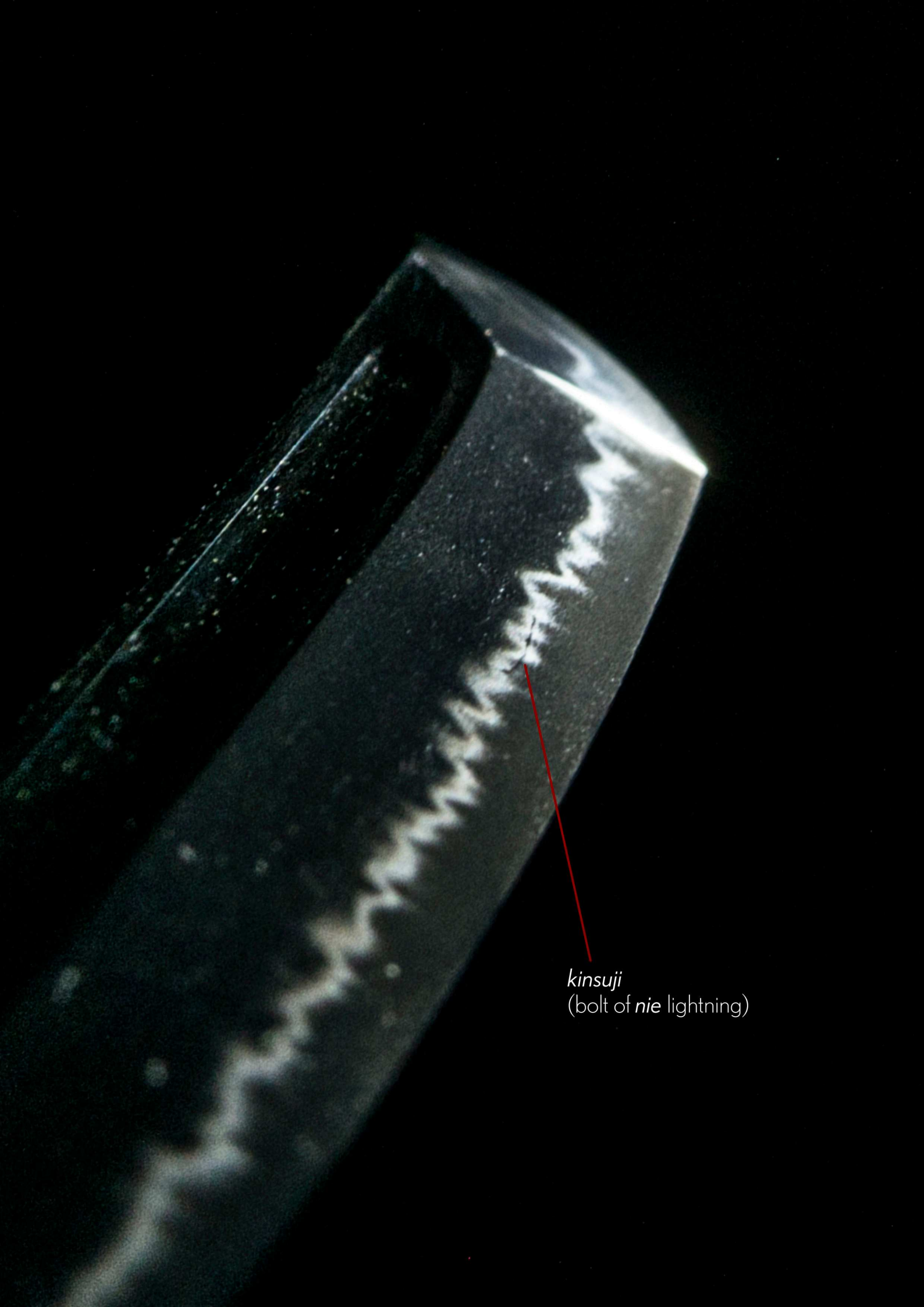
dense *ko-mokume*
(burl grain)

The image shows two blades of a Japanese sword, likely a katana, set against a dark background. The blades are illuminated from the side, highlighting their curved shape and the intricate patterns on their surfaces. A prominent feature is the hamon, a decorative edge pattern that resembles small clove blossoms (ko-chôji). A wide, dark band of yakiba (hardened area) runs along the length of the blades. Red lines point from the text labels to these specific features on the blades.

yakiba

A striking *ko-chôji hamon* (small clove blossom buds) coils itself brilliantly along the blade. Notice how the *yakiba* (hardened area) is quite wide - a unique feature of the *Chikuzen Nobukuni school*.

Remember you need steel that is extra hard in order for it to become extra sharp.



kinsuji
(bolt of *nie* lightning)

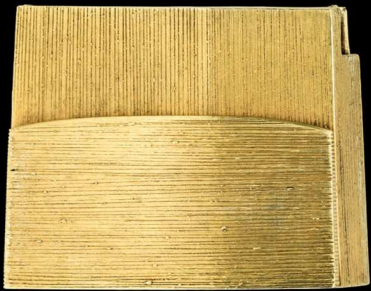
Whatever journey you are on, make it count.



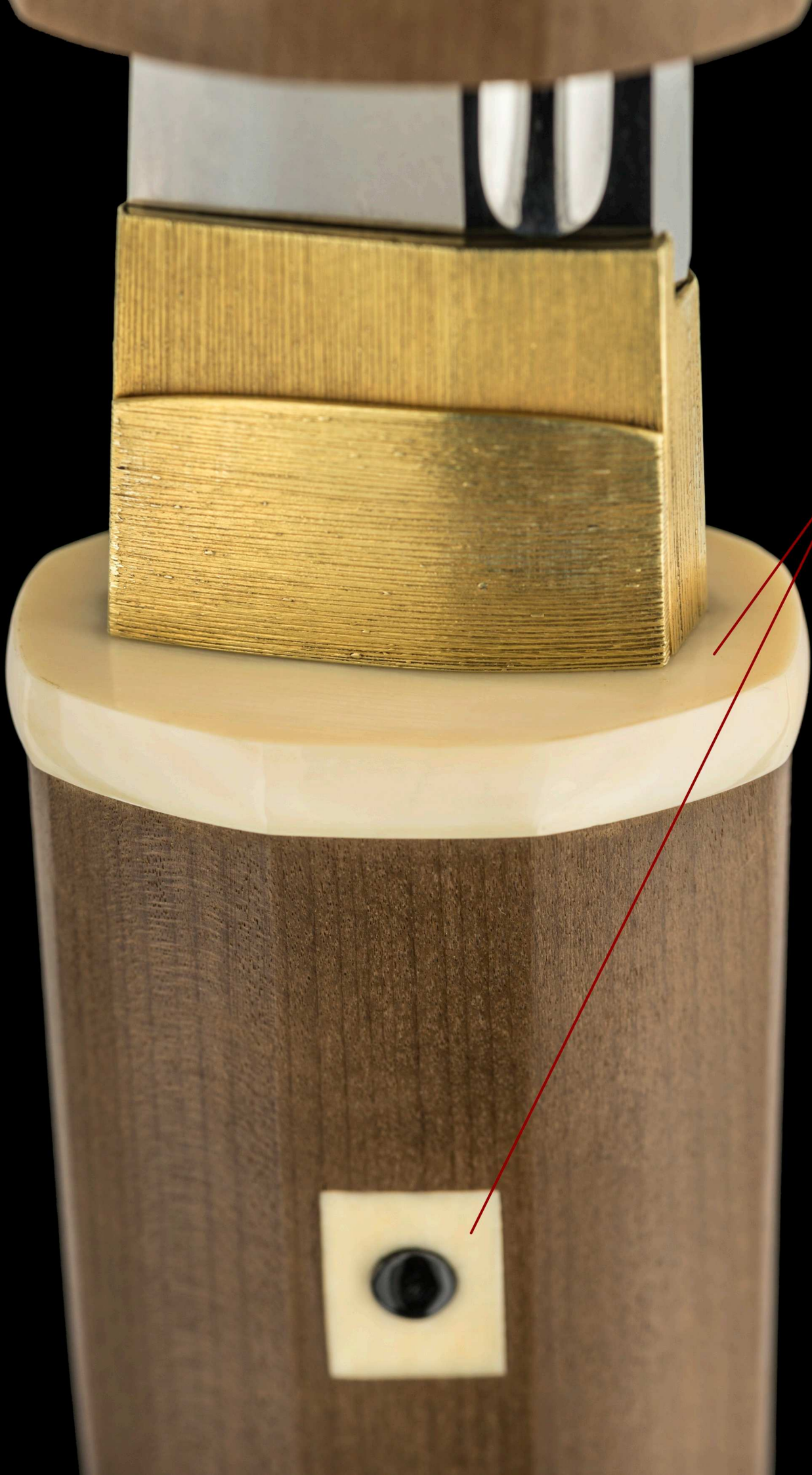


This special shirasaya was created using ivory several years ago. Due to CITES restrictions on the export of ivory in any shape or form, these parts made of ivory will be replaced with buffalo horn prior to export from Japan.

Shirasaya
(protective scabbard)



gold wrapped *ni-ju habaki*
with crisp file marks



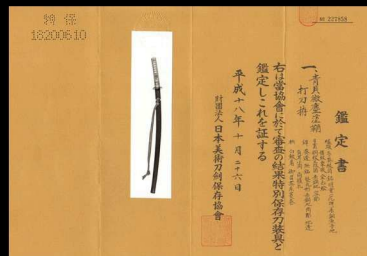
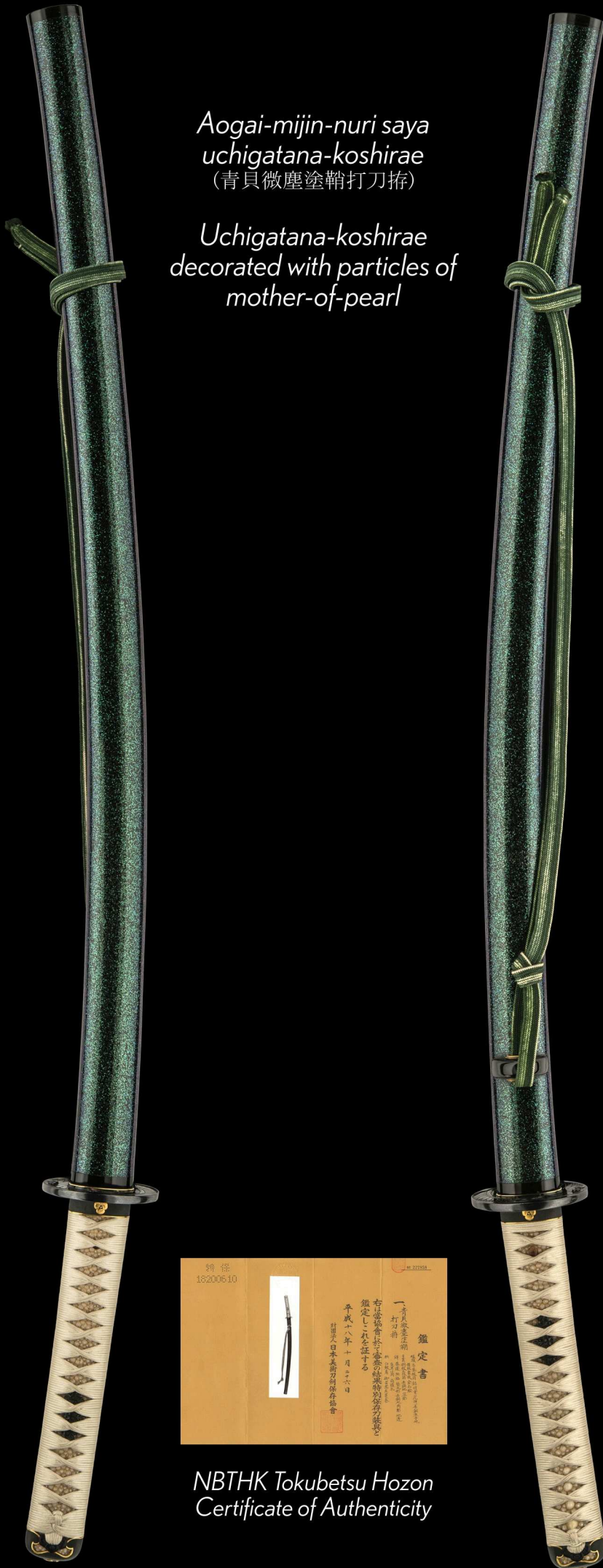
Ivory



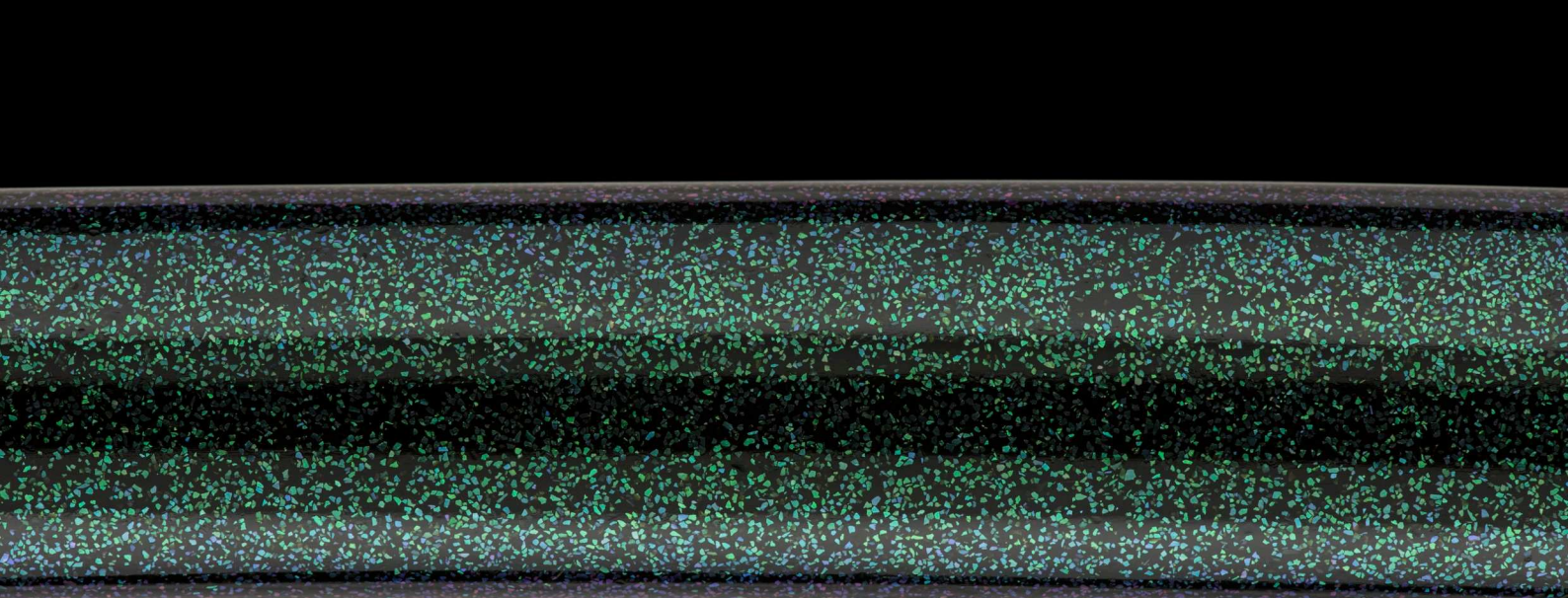
Ivory *fuchi* (collar) and black buffalo horn *mekugi* (peg).
The ivory will be replaced with buffalo horn prior to export.

Aogai-mijin-nuri saya
uchigatana-koshirae
(青貝微塵塗鞘打刀拵)

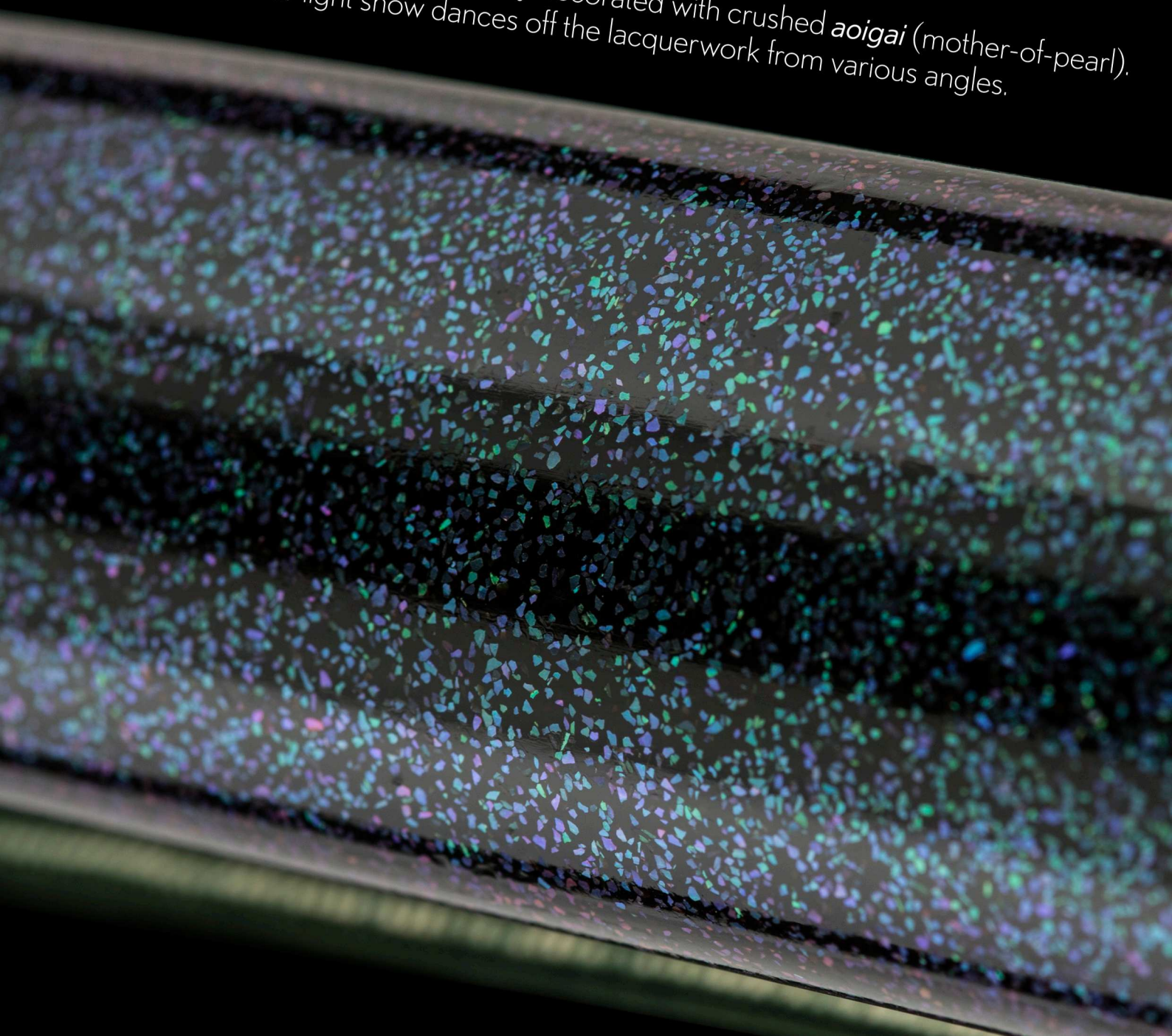
Uchigatana-koshirae
decorated with particles of
mother-of-pearl



NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon
Certificate of Authenticity



The *saya* (scabbard) is beautifully decorated with crushed *aoigai* (mother-of-pearl).
A spectacular light show dances off the lacquerwork from various angles.





Trusted sources have relayed to Unique Japan that this *koshirae* was inherited through the *Owari Tokugawa family*. This is supported, of course, through the many depictions of the *aoi-mon* (hollyhock) - the official *kamon* (crest) of the ruling *shogunate*, the Tokugawa family.



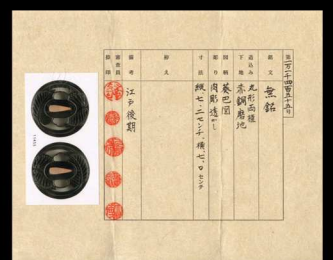
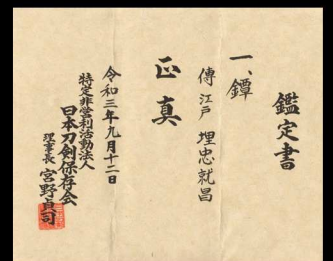
Tokugawa Iyasu (1543-1616)
First shōgun of the Tokugawa shogunate



This absolutely stunning pure, polished *shakudô tsuba* in an interlocked *aoi-mon* (hollyhock) design has been attributed to *Umetada Narimasa* who worked in *Edo* (Tokyo) during the late *Edo period* (1780~1820).

Narimasa was born in 1742 and lived at least until 1814 as there is signed work from that year.

The tsuba comes with NTHK-NPO Kanteisho certificate of authenticity. The quality and class is immediately evident.





A blue and purple tone shines on the *shakudô aoi-mon* petals.

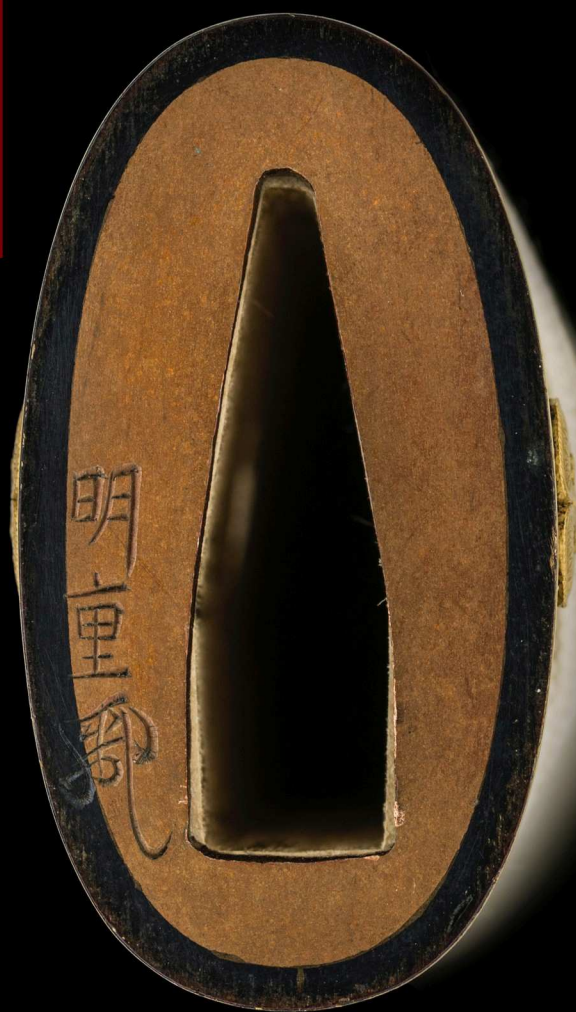




This *fuchi-kashira* was signed by *Akishige*, who was a student of master *Kôno Haruaki*, founder of the prestigious *Kôno school*.

The quality of the *nanako*, gold and *shakudô* work is absolutely first class.

(Aki) 明
(shige) 重
(kaô) 花押





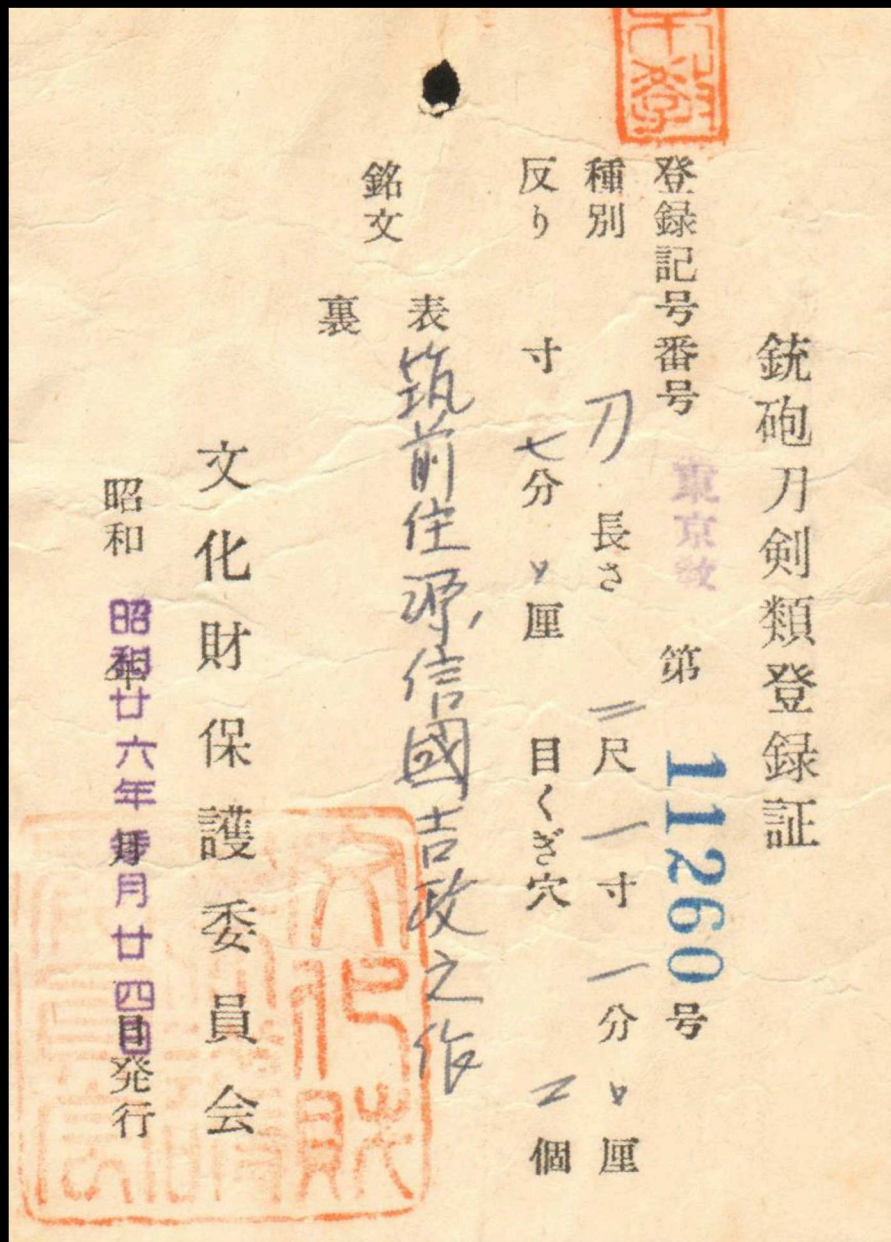
kashira (pommel)



Menuki (decorative grips on the hilt) display three *kiri-mon* in *shakudô*. Originally the *kiri-mon* (paulownia flower crest/seal) was the private symbol of the Japanese imperial family, from as early as the twelfth century.

After the Meiji Restoration in 1868, the seal was eventually adopted as the emblem of the Japanese government.





This is the original *torokusho* (registration card) for the *Yoshimasa katana*. The card was registered in the 26th year of *Showa period* (March 24, 1951).

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

The serial number is just 11260, one of the very first swords registered in Japan (current serial numbers are in the hundreds of thousands). This sword was registered in *Tokyo*, the nation's capital.



Koshirae bag