



ITEM# UJKA399

A MASATSUGU KATANA

SIGNED & DATED, LATE EDO PERIOD (KAEI ERA: AUGUST 1850)

Swordsmith:	<i>Suishinshi Masatsugu (3rd generation, ubu nakago)</i>
Measurements:	Length: 70.2cm Curvature: 1.8cm Moto-haba: 2.92cm Weight: 680g
Jihada:	<i>Ko-itame and mokume-hada mixed with utsuri and abundant chikei</i>
Hamon:	<i>Suguha-chô in bright nioguchi, hotsure mixed with ko-ashi</i>
Horimono:	<i>Bôhi on both sides with kaki-toshi running through the nakago (tang)</i>
Certificate #1:	NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon (designated as Especially Worthy of Preservation)
Certificate #2-3:	NTHK-NPO Kanteisho (tsuba and koshirae designated as Authentic)
Fujishiro rank:	Jô-saku (ranked as a superior swordsmith)
Included:	Shirasaya, Edo koshirae, fabric bags, stand, kit, booklet, description

SOLD

Born *Kawabe Hokushi*, *Masatsugu* was the son of the 2nd generation *Masahide* and grandson to arguably the most important swordsmith in the *shinshinto* period, *Suishinshi Masahide*. *Masatsugu* is thus referred to as the 3rd generation *Masahide*. Due to the early passing of his father *Masatsugu* completed his studies with grandmaster swordsmith *Taikei Naotane*. This elegantly curved katana shows a strong *Yamashiro-den* influence; forged in a bright *chû-suguha* with a wonderful amount of channeling *chikei*. Its Edo period *koshirae* combines the beauty of *aoi-gai* (mother-of-pearl) lacquer work buttressed with muscular iron fittings with a silver arabesque design. The *Higo Shimizu Jingo sukashi tsuba* carries an interesting motif of a *nata* – a hatchet or machete. This is a well-crafted ‘last samurai’ katana with loads of character and personality.



Saki-kasane: 4.7mm

Moto-kasane: 6.7mm

Omosa: 680g

Kissaki: 3.07cm
Saki-haba: 1.86cm

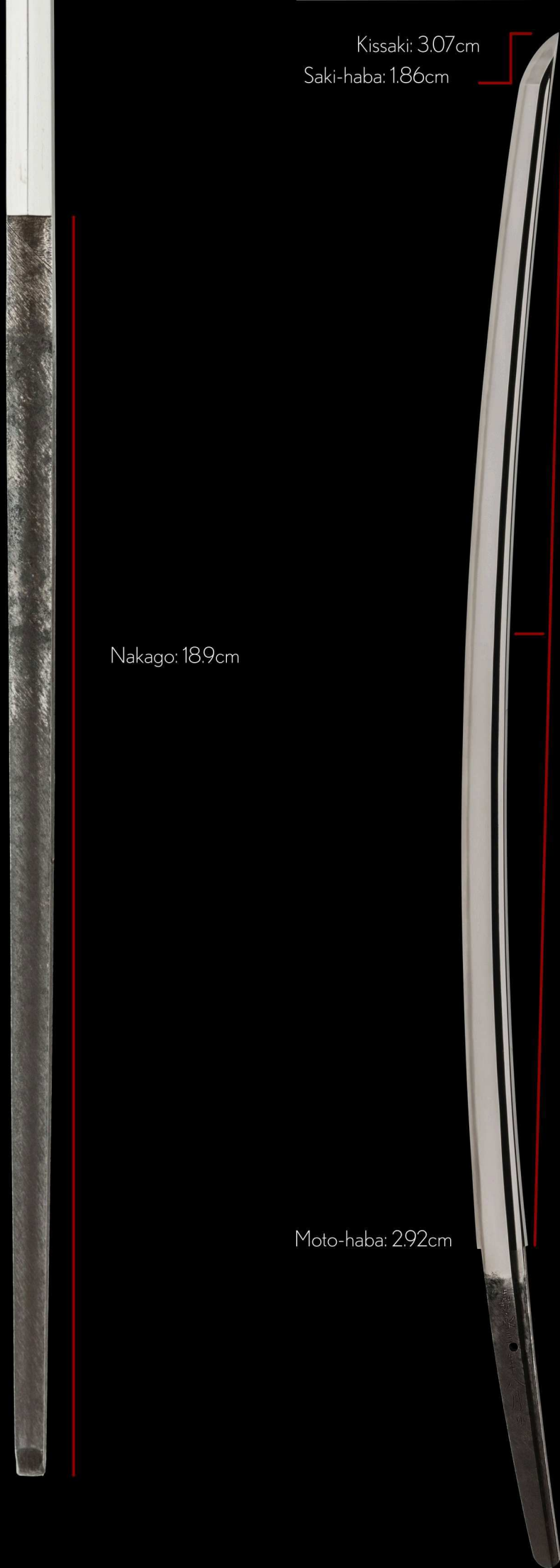
Nakago: 18.9cm

Moto-haba: 2.92cm

Nagasa: 70.2cm

Sori: 1.80cm

Mekugi-ana: 1



Born *Kawabe Hokushi, Masatsugu* was the son of the 2nd generation Masahide and grandson to arguably the most important swordsmith in the *shinshinto* period, *Suishinshi Masahide*. Masatsugu is thus referred to as the 3rd generation Masahide.

Masahide mourned the disappearance of the old traditional Koto methods and advocated for their restoration. This seed blossomed into the *fukkoto* movement in the *shinshinto* period.

The force of his claim was so influential that numerous sword smiths within the country came to study under Masahide. There were at least 200 students during the lifetime of the school including his star student *Taikei Naotane*.

Due to the early passing of his father he completed his studies with grandmaster swordsmith *Naotane*. He would eventually marry his daughter. Masatsugu died on March 11, 1860.

Masatsugu is rated *jô-saku* (a superior smith) by *Fujishiro* and was highly skilled in the *Bizen*, *Yamashiro* and *Sôshû* traditions. A handful of swords by Masatsugu have attained prestigious NBTHK Jûyô Token status, which speaks to his level of skill.

This elegantly curved katana shows a strong *Yamashiro-den* influence; forged in a bright *chû-suguha* with a wonderful amount of *chikei* channeling through the *jihada*. Its Edo period koshirae combines the beauty of *aoi-gai* (mother-of-pearl) buttressed with muscular iron fittings that serve as formidable weapons in their own right.



Kaei sannen hachigatsu hi

This katana is dated to a day in the eighth month of the third year of Kaei era (August 1850)

嘉 (Ka)

永 (ei)

三 (san)

年 (nen)

八 (hachi)

月 (gatsu)

日 (hi)

One clean *mekugi-ana* (hole) with sharp angled file marks and an evenly aged patina.

The *nakago* is in excellent condition.

Sword is signed on the tachi side,
opposite to most katana.

This is in line with *Taikei Naotane*
(Masatsugu's *sensei*) who often
signed tachi-mei.

A close-up photograph of a sword blade, likely a tachi, showing the tachi side. The blade is dark and has a hole near the center. The characters are engraved in a traditional style. A red arrow points to the first character.

水心
正次
酒

Location: *Musashi Province*

Pen name, pseudonym: *Suishinshi*

Swordsmith: *Masatsugu* (third generation Masahide)

ubu-nakago (original, unaltered tang)

keshô-yasurime (decorative file marks)

(Sui) 水

(shin) 心

(shi) 子

(Masa) 正

(tsugu) 次

(kaô) 花押

bo-hi (groove) runs *kaki-toshi*
(right through the nakago)



特 保
22201003

154629



鑑定書

長二尺三寸二分強

一刀 銘

水心子正次(花押)
嘉永三年八月日

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

平成二十三年五月七日

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 22nd year of Heisei (2010), May 7th

One, Katana

Mei (signature)

Suishinshi Masatsugu (kaô)

Kaei sannen hachigatsu hi

Nagasa (length)

2-shaku 3-sun 2-bu kyô (70.2cm)


Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai
(NBTHK)





A close-up photograph of a sword blade, showing the intricate details of the chikei channels. The blade is dark and polished, with a bright light reflecting off the edges. Two red arrows point from the text to the channels on the blade. The background is dark, making the blade stand out.

Wonderful channels of *chikei* cascading down the blade like a flowing river.



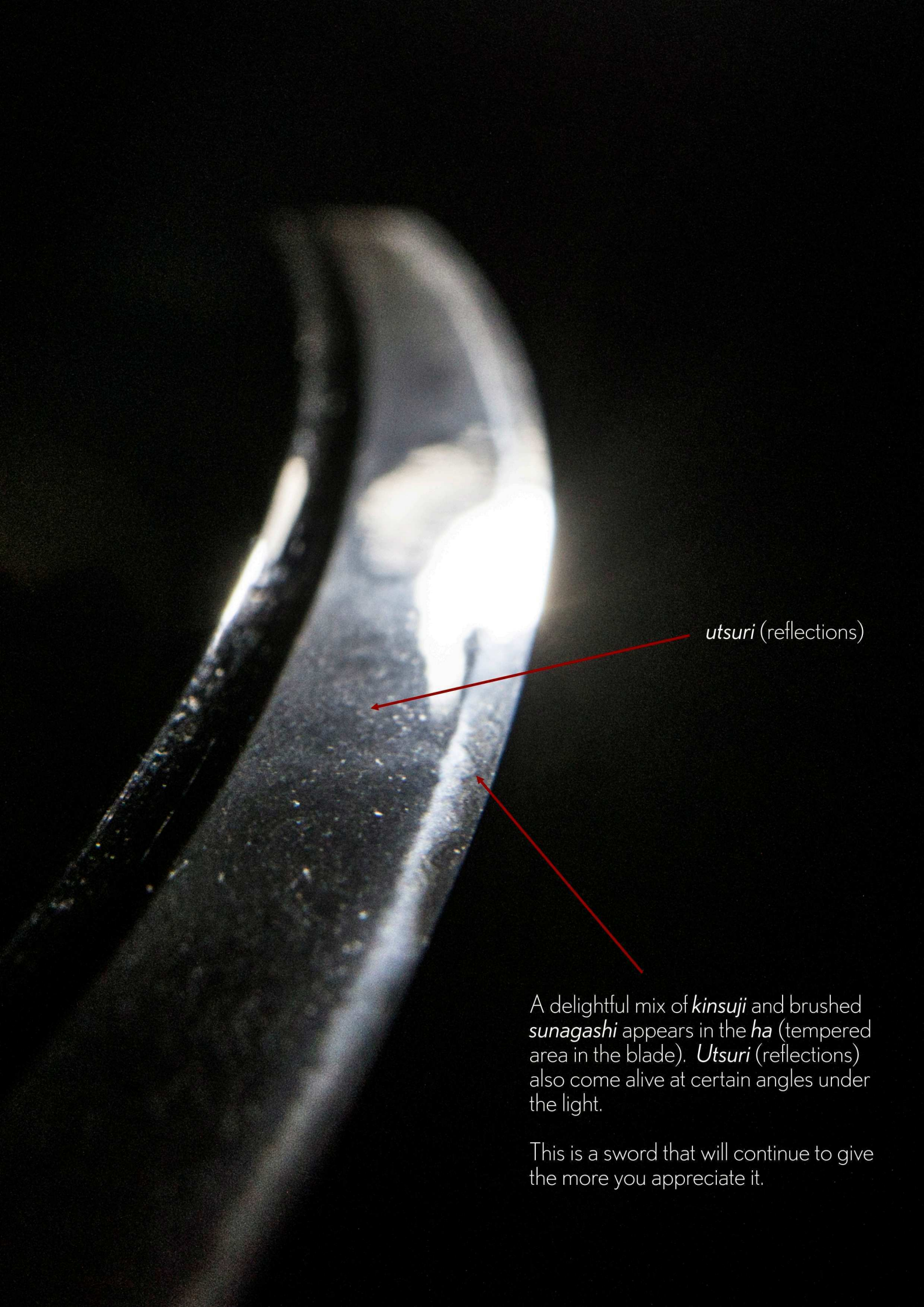
And we're rollin' [rollin'] rollin' down the river...



A *chû-suguha* (mid-size) straight temper line that is bright, clean and consistent, qualities found on well made swords.

A close-up photograph of a sword blade, showing the hamon (temper line) and the hotsure (frayed look). The blade is dark and polished, with a bright light reflecting off the edge. The hamon is a dark, wavy line that runs along the length of the blade. The hotsure is a frayed, irregular appearance along the hamon, which is highlighted by a red arrow. The background is dark, making the blade stand out.

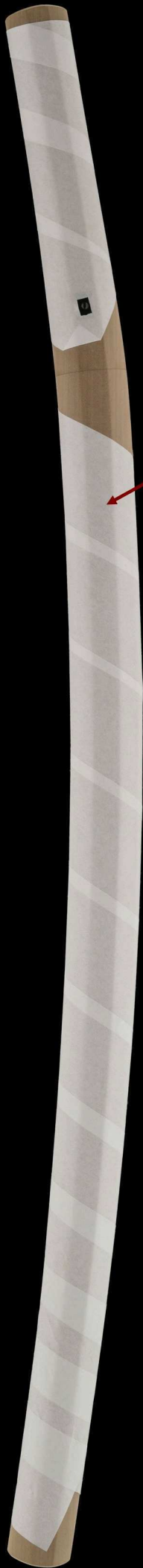
A *Yamashiro-den* influence can be observed in the *chû-suguha hamon* with *hotsure* (frayed look).



utsuri (reflections)

A delightful mix of *kinsuji* and brushed *sunagashi* appears in the *ha* (tempered area in the blade). *Utsuri* (reflections) also come alive at certain angles under the light.

This is a sword that will continue to give the more you appreciate it.



newly crafted

Shirasaya
(protective scabbard)



gold-wrapped *habaki* with
cloud and rain design

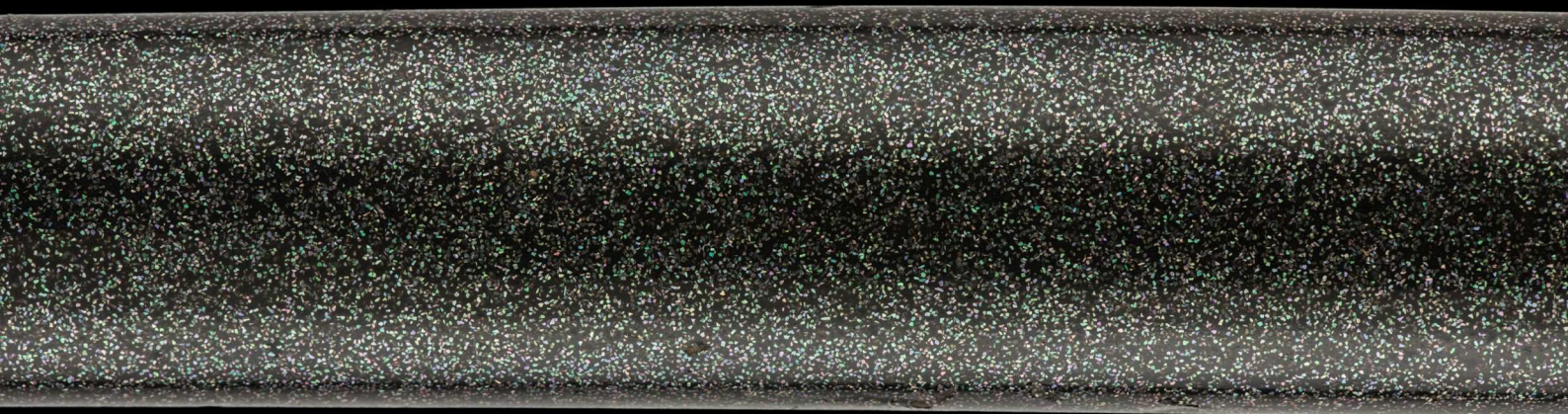


kozuka
(utility knife)

kôgai
(hair pick)

kozuka & kôgai
(crawling dragon motif)

kojiri (end cap)



The *saya* (scabbard) has been beautifully lacquered and protected with *aoi-gai* (mother-of-pearl). The *koshirae* is further secured on either end with no-nonsense iron fittings with a silver arabesque design. The samurai would often use the butt-ends of the *koshirae* as a form of self-defense rather than actually drawing the sword. This powerful *koshirae* is equipped exactly for such a purpose.



kashira (pommel)

kin-iroe (gold accents)

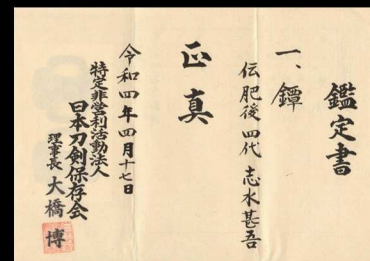


This impressive multi-lobed hammered *sukashi* iron tsuba has been attributed to the fourth generation of the notable *Shimizu Jingo* school from *Higo* province. Crafted during the late Edo period, circa 1800.

The motif on either side of the tsuba is that of a *nata* - a sharp hatchet/machete that was used for a variety of tasks during the Edo period. Depictions of everyday, useful tools such as a *nata* is rather refreshing to see.

Note the small gold accents dotted around the tsuba, this subtle artwork is to be cherished.

An NTHK-NPO Kanteisho certificate of authenticity has been attained for this piece.



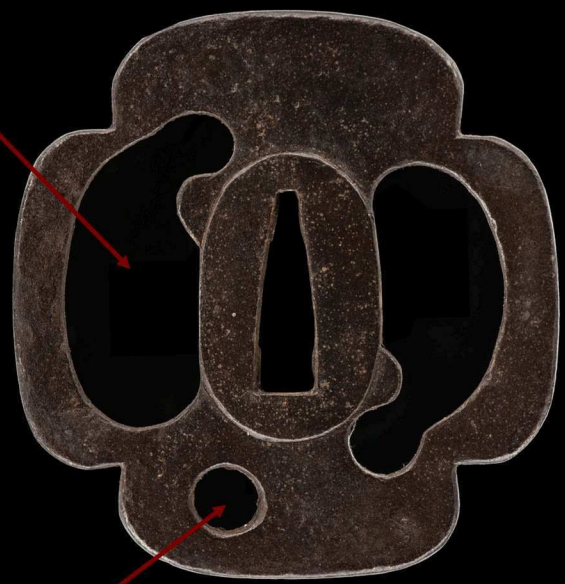


Nata ("mountain sword", 鉞) come in many sizes and shapes, but most fit the description of a light brush hatchet or heavy camp knife.

Common characteristics include thick spines and heavy blades, often with single beveled edges similar to Japanese wood chisels. This type are used for medium duty camp tasks, carving hatchet work, roughing and shaping, green wood work, forestry, gardening, and bamboo splitting.

Antique Japanese *nata* (hatchet/machete)
Source: <http://islandblacksmith.ca>

motif of a *nata* depicted on the tsuba



Note the extra hole in the tsuba. This is called *tsuba-dome-ana* or *udenuki*.

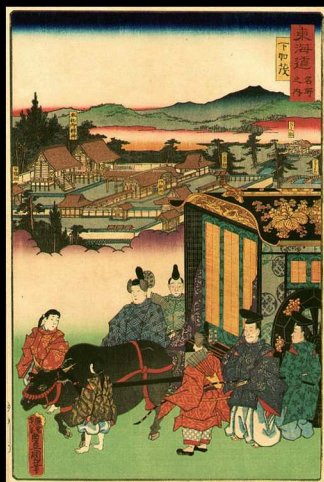
A fine wire was laced through this hole(s) and affixed to the *kurikata* knob on the *saya* (scabbard).

This wire reminds the *samurai* to not to draw his sword unnecessarily.



The *menuki* feature the design of a traditional ox-drawn carriage that was traditionally reserved for nobility and high ranking *samurai*.

black lacquered
samekawa (ray skin)



Ox Cart - The Scenic Places of Tokaido (1863)



Koshirae bag

A complimentary sword maintenance kit with *mekugi-nuki* and a bottle of *Fujishiro* sword oil (trusted by the Japanese sword museum) is included with all sword purchases.

A printed and bound copy of the sword's full description from the catalogue is also included!



safe, extra large cloth for adding oil to the blade