



ITEM# UJKA417

A MASATOSHI KATANA

SIGNED, SUE-KOTÔ PERIOD (KÔJI ERA: 1555~1558)

Swordsmith:	<i>Masatoshi (nidai, 2nd gen.)</i>
Measurements:	Length: 67.0cm (<i>suriage</i>) Sori: 1.4cm Moto-haba: 2.96cm Weight: 780g
Jihada:	<i>Beautiful masame-nagare-hada and itame-hada with ji-nie and chikei</i>
Hamon:	<i>Vibrant gunome-midare with tobiyaki, yô, togari, sunagashi and kinsuji, jizô-boshi</i>
Certificate #1:	NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon (<i>Especially Worthy of Preservation</i>)
Certificate #2-4:	NTHK-NPO Kanteishô (<i>koshirae, fk and tsuba certified as Authentic</i>)
Fujishiro rank:	Chûjô-saku (<i>ranked as an above average swordsmith</i>)
Sharpness:	Ryô-wazamonô (<i>rated as a maker of highly sharp swords</i>)
Authentication:	Sayagaki by Nozomi-san (<i>shodô artist</i>)
Included:	Shirasaya, Edo-koshirae, fabric bags, stand, kit, printed description

SOLD

This muscular katana was crafted by *Sakakura no Seki* swordsmith **Masatoshi** who flourished at the end of the warring *Muromachi* period circa *Kôji* era (1555~1558). The chiselled character 'Masa' of Masatoshi is similar to the *Masa* character found on blades of the *Sengo Muramasa* school, thus there is a theory he was trained by *Masazane*. A powerful warrior energy pulses through this sharp, freshly polished blade - showcasing both *Sôshû* and *Mino* influences. Brilliant *hataraki* such as *tobi-yaki*, *yô*, *sunagashi*, *kinsuji* and pointed *togari* are all present with a handsome set of *koshirae* depicting snowflakes, hats, *shisa* lions, peonies and courageous plovers over a braided *naka katate-maki*. This is a katana that embodies the samurai spirit with tremendous character and intensity.

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Saki-kasane: 4.3mm

Moto-kasane: 6.1mm

Omosa: 780g

Kissaki: 4.89cm

Saki-haba: 2.18cm

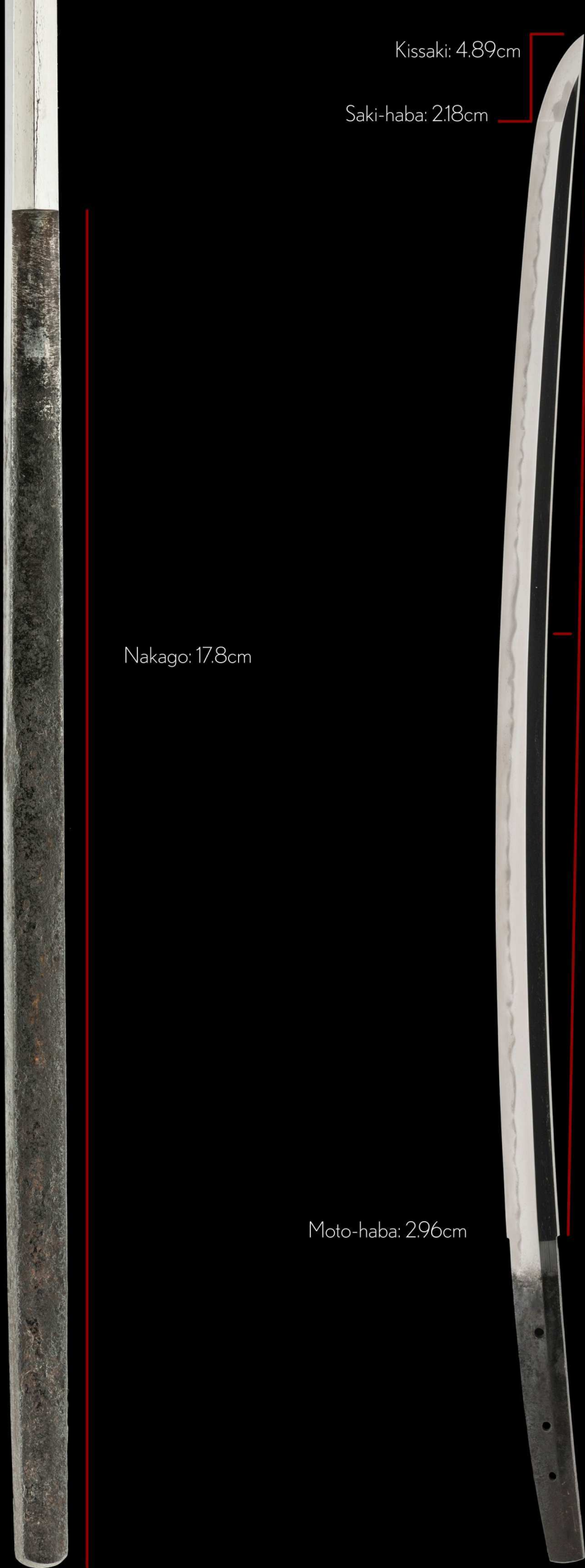
Nakago: 17.8cm

Moto-haba: 2.96cm

Nagasa: 67.0cm

Sori: 1.4cm

Mekugi-ana: 3



This fine, muscular katana was crafted by second generation swordsmith *Masatoshi* who flourished at the end of the warring *Muromachi* period circa *Kôji* era (1555~1558) as Japan was engulfed in a civil war known as the *Sengoku-jidai* (warring period).

Masatoshi was part of the *Sakakura no Seki* school which derived its name from the *Sakakura* region of Mino province. His father, *shodai* Masatoshi, was the son of second generation *Masayoshi* who founded the school in the late 1400s.

The signed character '*Masa*' of Masatoshi is similar to the *Masa* character found on blades of the *Sôshû Sengo Muramasa* school. Thus there is a theory that Masatoshi was the son of *Masazane* of the school.

There is a warrior energy pulsing through this freshly polished blade - showcasing both *Sôshû* and *Mino* influences. Brilliant *hataraki* (activity) such as *tobiyaki*, *yô*, *sunagashi*, *kinsuji* and pointed *togari* are all present to soak in. Even though the sword may have been shortened to a 67cm cutting edge (a length that many fighting samurai preferred in reality), this blade weighs a beefy near-800grams. It should also be noted that Masatoshi is ranked *ryô-wazamono* for the terrifically sharp swords he produced. Therefore, what we have here is a dependable samurai katana that, without a shadow of a doubt, saw plenty of use on the battlefield.

We've had this sword at Unique Japan for a good amount of time, giving it the attention it deserved. As stated above, we professionally polished the blade, and assembled a splendid group of antique fittings that includes depictions of snowflakes, woven hats, *shisa* lions, peonies and courageous plover birds flying over waves. The *tsuka* (hilt) was re-wrapped over black lacquered *samekawa* and wonderfully braided in *naka katate-maki* that allows for a one-handed grip to the sword's koshirae.

All told, this is a katana that embodies the samurai spirit with tremendous character and intensity.





Location: *Mino province*

School: *Sakakura no Seki*

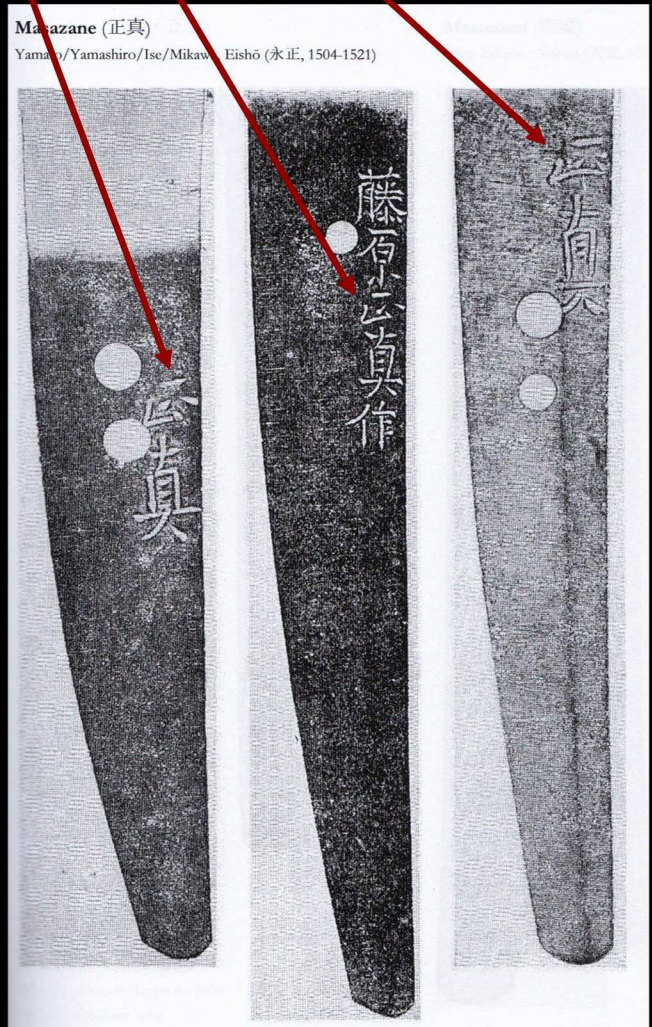
Swordsmith: *Masatoshi* (second generation)

suriage-nakago (shortened tang)

katte-sagari yasurime (sloping file marks)

正 (Masa)

利 (toshi)



The chiselling of the character for “*Masa*” and the entire workmanship of the katana in general is similar to that of the *Sengo* school. Therefore a recognized theory exists that *Masatoshi* was actually the son of the *Eishō-era* (1504~1521) *Masazane* who worked in *Ise* too or that he was a direct student of *Sengo Muramasa*.



A good chunky nakago that slightly protrudes suggesting that Masatoshi's roots lay with the *Sôshû Sengo* school that featured a *funagata* (boat-shaped) nakago.

(*ura*, reverse)

15200301



No 148018



鑑定書

長二尺三寸一分

一刃 銘 正利 (坂倉関)

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

平成十五年 二月二十七日

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 15th year of Heisei (2003), February 27th

One, Katana

Mei (signature)
Masatoshi (Sakakura no Seki)

Nagasa (length)
2-shaku 3-sun 1-bu (67.0cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai
(NBTHK)



坂倉関正利
Sakakura no Seki Masatoshi
Sakakura no Seki Masatoshi

時代弘治頃
Jidai Kôji-goro
Around Kôji period (1555-1558)

刃長貳尺二寸一分有之
Hachô 2-shaku 2-sun 1-bu kore ari
Blade length 67.0 cm

令和六甲辰年葉月吉日誌之
Reiwa roku kinoe-tatsudoshi Hazuki kichijitsu kore o shirusu
Written on a lucky day in the eighth month in the sixth year of
Reiwa era during the Year of the Dragon (August 2024)






The *jihada* is a fine mixture of *nagare-hada* (streaming) and *itame-hada*, plank grain.

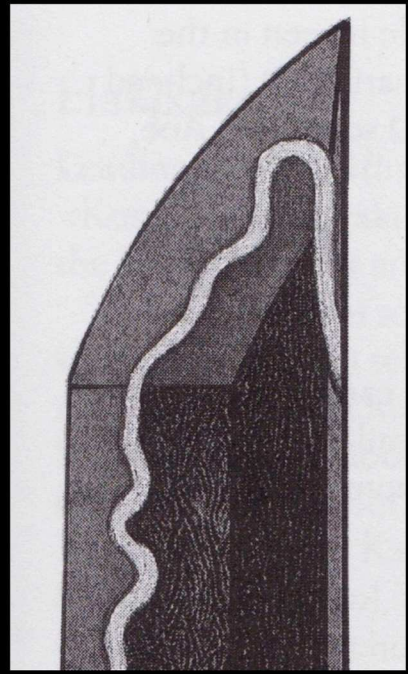
nagare-hada

itame-hada





An imposing *kissaki* (tip) of nearly 5cm gives the katana a warrior appearance that reflects swords made during the violent *Nambokuchô* period of the mid-1300s.



Jizo boshi
(illustration by Nagayama Kokan)

Bôshi pattern resembles the profile of *Jizo*.

The hamon of the *kissaki* (tip) is called the *boshi*, which literally means "hat". The quenching of the *boshi* requires great skill and timing.

The shape of this *boshi* is a combination of two patterns, *midare komi* (irregular wavy pattern) to the *rounded head of Jizo* at the very tip, or *saki*. These words are combined to become "*saki-Jizo*".

Jizo derives itself from *Jizo Bosatsu* - an important *deity* seen as a saviour for both pregnant women and children.

Sengo Muramasa crafted swords with a *Jizo-boshi* - perhaps his influence is at play here.



statues of *Jizo*

Tempered 'flying' spots that appear above the *gunome-midare hamon* line in the *ji* (body) are referred to as *tobiyaki*.

Hardened elements that are inside the *yakiba* (below the hamon) are *yô* (leaves).

This katana is filled with *Sôshû* powered activity to really sink your teeth into. The sword was recently polished so all *hataraki* is on full display.

tobiyaki

yô





togari

With *Mino*-den workmanship, there will be portions of the hamon that will be 'pointed' known as *togari*. It's enjoyable to keep an eye out for these heartbeats.



Streaming sands of *sunagashi*
captured nicely here.



Shirasaya
(protective scabbard)

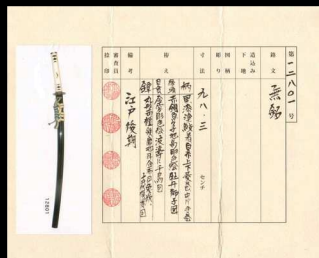


silver *habaki* with
falling rain file marks

*Kuro-ronuri saya
uchigatana-koshirae*
(黒呂塗鞘打刀拵)

*Uchigatana-koshirae
lacquered in glossy black*

Crafted during the
Late Edo period
(1780~1868)



NTHK-NPO Kanteisho
Certificate of Authenticity

snowflake

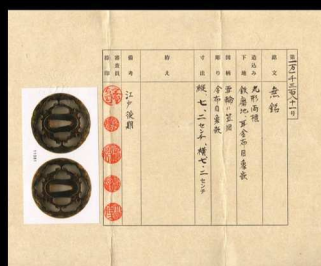
woven hats



Polished iron tsuba with crosshatched gold inlay on the rim
Sho-ami school from *Kyôto*

The design is of a snowflake encircled by a silhouette of woven hats

Late Edo period (1780~1867)



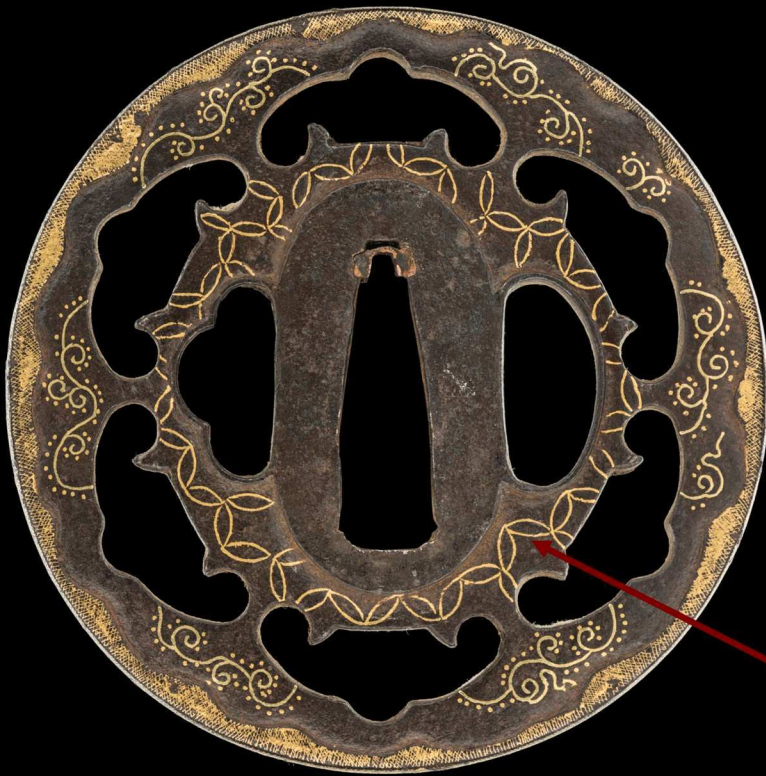
NTHK Kanteisho certificate



A close-up of the meticulous gold cross-hatched work on the rim of the tsuba.



Going out in the snow
(Edo period)



A samurai wonderland.





Expertly braided in Japan in *naka katatemaki* (pure white silk wrap with middle positioning)



Chidori (plover birds) flying over waves form the beautiful *menuki*.

Chidori translates to "one thousand birds" as they which typically migrate in huge groups to Japan at the end of the rainy season battling head winds, rain and waves. Thus these little forces of nature are often depicted over waves symbolising gritty determination.

For many centuries, it has also been an omen for longevity because the sound of its call (*chiyo*) means "a thousand generations" in Japanese.



black-lacquered *samekawa* (skin of a ray fish)



Koshirae bag