



ITEM# UJKA418

A NIDAI NOBUTAKA KATANA

SIGNED, SHINTÔ EARLY EDO PERIOD (KEIAN ERA: 1648~1652)

Swordsmith: Zen Haku (*ika kire*) (*Hakushû Nobutaka Nyûdô* (2nd gen.)
Measurements: Length: 65.9cm (*suriage*) Sori: 1.1cm Moto-haba: 3.04cm Weight: 700g
Jihada: Well-forged itame-hada with *ji-nie*, *chikei*
Hamon: Gorgeous *gunome-chôji-midare* with *kinsuji*, *sunagashi*, *yô* and *togari*
Certificate: NBTHK Hozon (*sword Worthy of Preservation*)
Fujishiro rank: Jô-saku (*ranked as a superior swordsmith*)
Included: Shirasaya, fabric bag, stand, kit, printed description

SOLD (*building custom daishô koshirae with ujwa258*)

Born in *Kiyosu* in 1603, second generation *Nobutaka* became official swordsmith to *Tokugawa Yoshinao*, founding lord of *Owari* and son of the great *Tokugawa Ieyasu*. Granted the title of *Hôki no Kami* in 1633, *Nobutaka* was celebrated as one of the finest smiths in service to the *Tokugawa* family. Acquired in the UK during the spring of 2023, the wonderful katana was initially in dreadful condition, but over a period of two years the sword was restored by top craftsmen in Japan to reveal a soaring *gunome-choji* and *notare-midare hamon* displaying brilliant *yô*, elegant *sunagashi*, and striking *togari-ba* formations. This is a sword with an encouraging message that brighter days lay ahead, even if we find ourselves in the most challenging of circumstances. Treasure this katana in *shirasaya* only, or potentially consider building a *daishô koshirae* with the *ujwa258 shodai Nobutaka wakizashi* inside this catalogue that also went through a similar transformative journey.



Saki-kasane: 4.6mm

Moto-kasane: 6.7mm

Kissaki: 3.61cm

Saki-haba: 2.02cm

Nagasa: 65.9cm

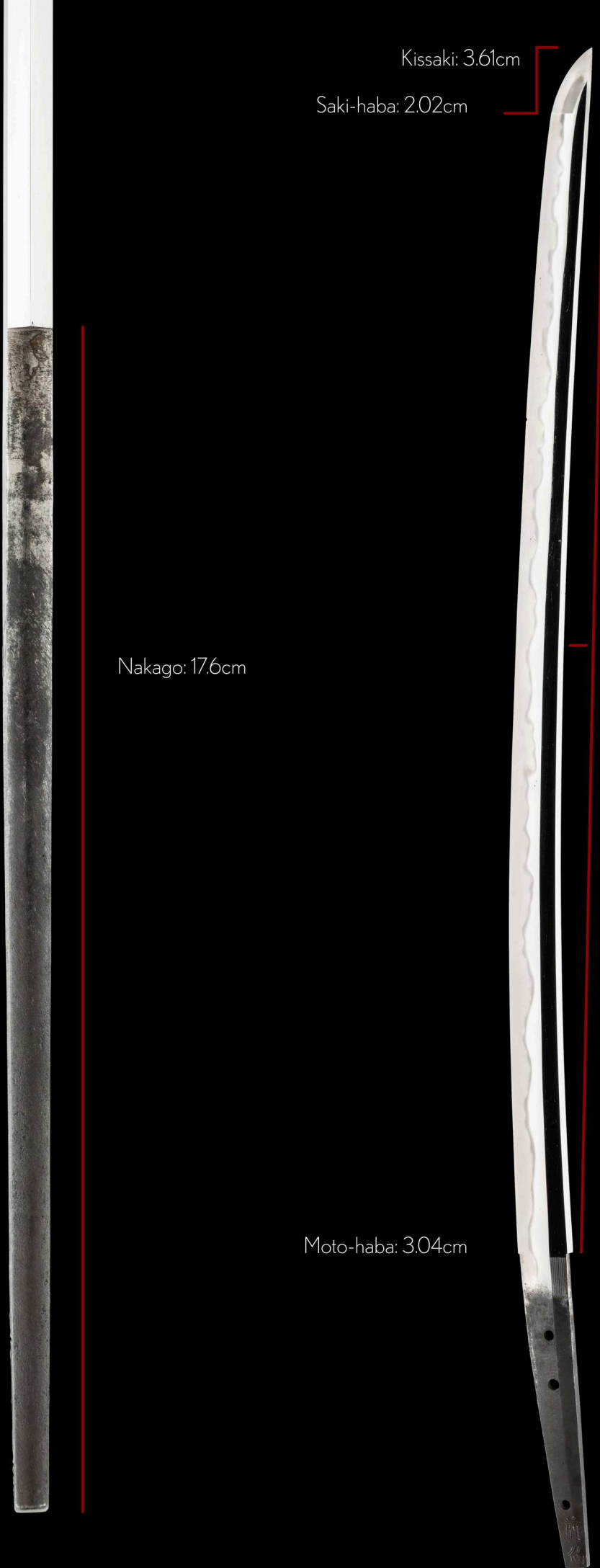
Nakago: 17.6cm

Sori: 11cm

Omosa: 700g

Moto-haba: 3.04cm

Mekugi-ana: 3



The lineage of *Hôki no Kami Nobutaka* represents one of the most captivating chapters in the rise of the *Owari Tokugawa* domain during the formative years of the Edo period. While the first *Nobutaka*, emigrated from *Mino* Province to establish roots in *Owari*, it was his son, *nidai Nobutaka* who would elevate their family name to acclaim.

Born in *Kiyosu* in 1603, second generation *Nobutaka* became official swordsmith (*goyô kaji*) to *Tokugawa Yoshinao*, founding lord of *Owari* and son of the great *Tokugawa Iyasu*. Granted the prestigious title of *Hôki no Kami* in 1633, *Nobutaka* was celebrated as one of the finest smiths in service to the *Tokugawa* family.

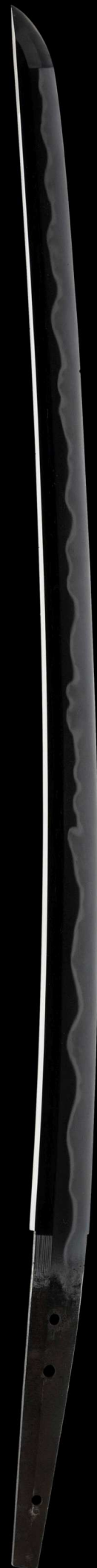
Nobutaka's works capture the aesthetic transitions of early Edo craftsmanship, brilliantly fusing *Mino*-den structural foundations with *Sôshû*-den flamboyance.

This wonderful katana has been on a transformative journey. Acquired in the UK during the spring of 2023, the sword was initially in dreadful condition, but alas the blade stood promise. Over a period of two years the sword was shipped to Japan, re-shaped and polished by expert craftsmen. A new shirasaya was also crafted for the sword and it was then submitted to the NBTHK, achieving Hozon certification.

The transformative restoration of this katana reveals truly breathtaking results - a magnificently soaring *gunome* and *notare-midare hamon* displaying brilliant *yô*, elegant *sunagashi*, and striking *togari-ba* formations. What profound satisfaction comes from preserving such a quality sword for future generations to admire.

The *nakago* bears the partial signature "*Zen Haku...*", likely abbreviated from "*Zen Hakushû Nobutaka Nyûdô*" suggesting creation during his final spiritually charged years when he was a Buddhist monk.

This katana can be enjoyed in shirasaya, or consider building a *daishô* koshirae with the *ujwa258 shodai Nobutaka* wakizashi that also went through a similar transformative journey. Preference will go to the client who wants to keep these swords together, and a father/son discount will be offered as such.



Location: *Owari province*

Title name: *Hôki no Kami* (Lord of Hôki province)

Swordsmith: *Nobutaka* (second generation)

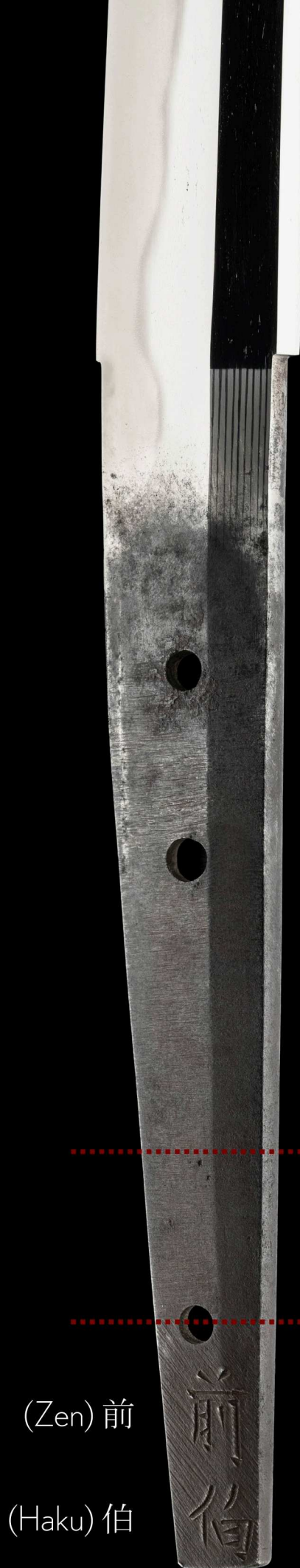
suriage-nakago (shortened tang)

sujikai-yasurime (slanting file marks)

Evidence of *Suriage* (Blade Shortening)

The blade's cutting edge was originally longer, probably just over 70cm.

This area shows clear traces of *sujikai-yasuri* that remain on the bottom of the tang, offering visual evidence of the blade's former length and the *suriage* process it underwent.



(Zen) 前

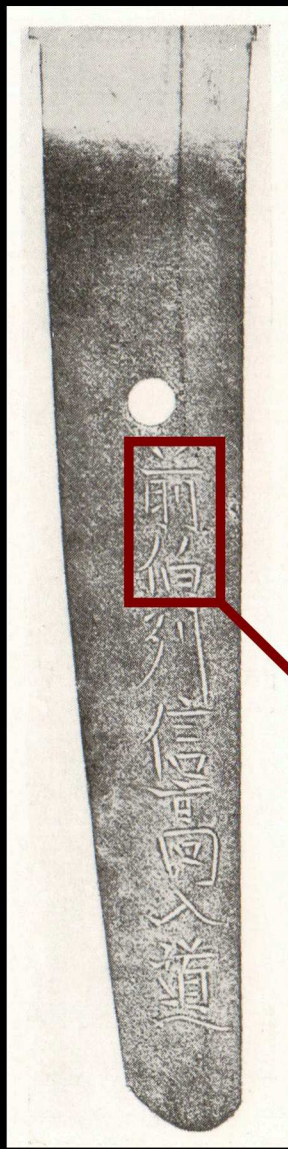
(Haku) 伯



Original cutting edge
started here

Original *yasurime* line

尾



(Zen) 前
(Haku) 伯
(shû) 州
(Nobu) 信
(taka) 高
(Nyû) 入
(dô) 道



Though the signature has been partially lost due to *suriage* (shortening), it was likely originally inscribed as “*Zen Hakushû Nobutaka Nyûdô* (前伯州信高入道).”

This name reflects Nobutaka’s later-life status as a retired smith and lay monk. *Zen Hakushû* (“former governor of *Hoki* province”) acknowledges his prior title, while *Nyûdô* signifies his religious transition. Such inscriptions denote rare, late-period works forged at the height of his spiritual awareness.



(*ura*, reverse)

保存
062024-12

№ 3036248



鑑定書

一、刀銘前伯（以下切）（伯州信高入道）

長二尺一寸八分弱
右は當協會に於て審査の結果保存刀剣と
鑑定しこれを証する

令和七年二月二十一日

公益財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協會



東京都教育委員会
第 326143 号
令和5年4月11日

NBTHK Hozon
Certificate of Designation

A sword designated as *Worthy of Conservation*
by the Society for the Preservation of the Japan Art Sword

Issued in the 7th year of Reiwa (2025), February 21st

One, Katana

Mei (signature)
Zen Haku (*ika kire*)
Hakushû Nobutaka Nyûdô

Nagasa (length)
2-shaku 1-sun 8-bu jaku (65.9cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai
(NBTHK)



前伯州信高入道

前伯州信高入道

Zen Hakushû Nobutaka Nyûdô

Zen Hakushû Nobutaka Nyûdô

貳代作也

貳代作也

Nidai saku nari

Crafted by the second generation

時代慶安頃

時代慶安頃

Jidai Keian goro

Circa Keian period (1648~1652)

長貳尺壹寸八分弱有之

長貳尺壹寸八分弱有之

Nagasa 2-shaku 1-sun 8-bu jaku kore ari

Blade length 65.9 cm

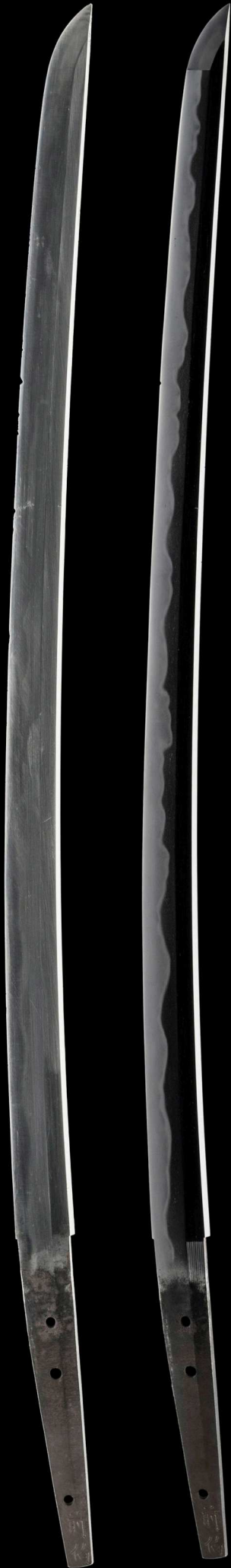
令和七乙巳年
葉月吉日誌之

令和七乙巳年葉月吉日誌之

Reiwa nana kinoto-midoshi Hazuki kichijitsu kore o shirusu

Written on a lucky day in the eighth month in the seventh year of Reiwa era during the Year of the Snake (August 2025)

Pablo first acquired this sword in the spring of 2023 in the UK. Despite its distressed state, potential could be seen! After a long and careful polishing process with expert craftsmen in Japan, the blade was restored to the fine condition that it rightfully deserves. The katana was subsequently attributed to 2nd gen. Nobutaka by the NBTHK.



before polish

after polish



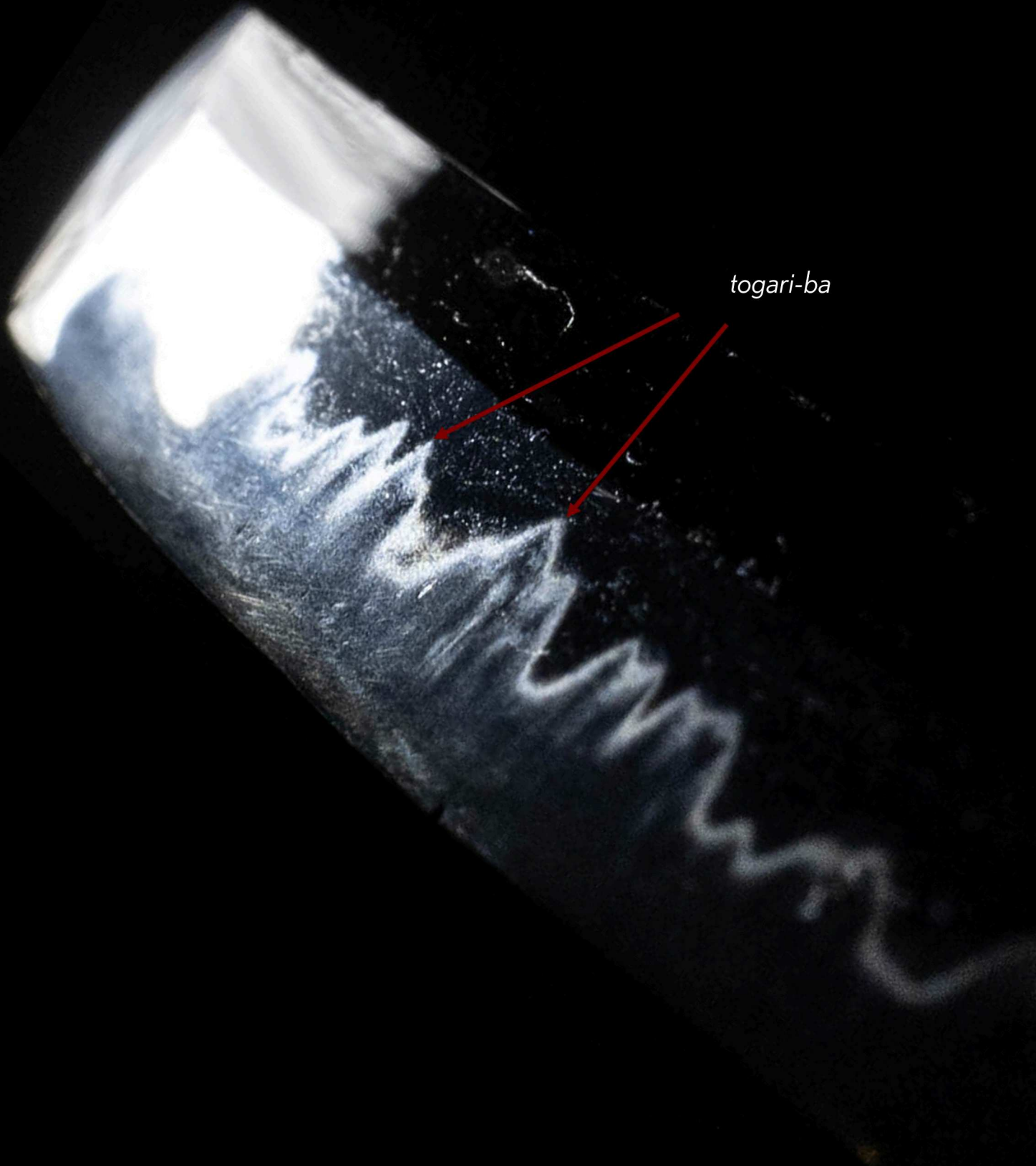







Scars remain, such as a cut in the edge and some pitting in the hardened area, however, they are in stable condition.

This is a sword with an encouraging message that brighter days lay ahead, even if we find ourselves in the most challenging of circumstances. And our battle scars serve as a necessary reminder of times gone, and how much we have grown since then.

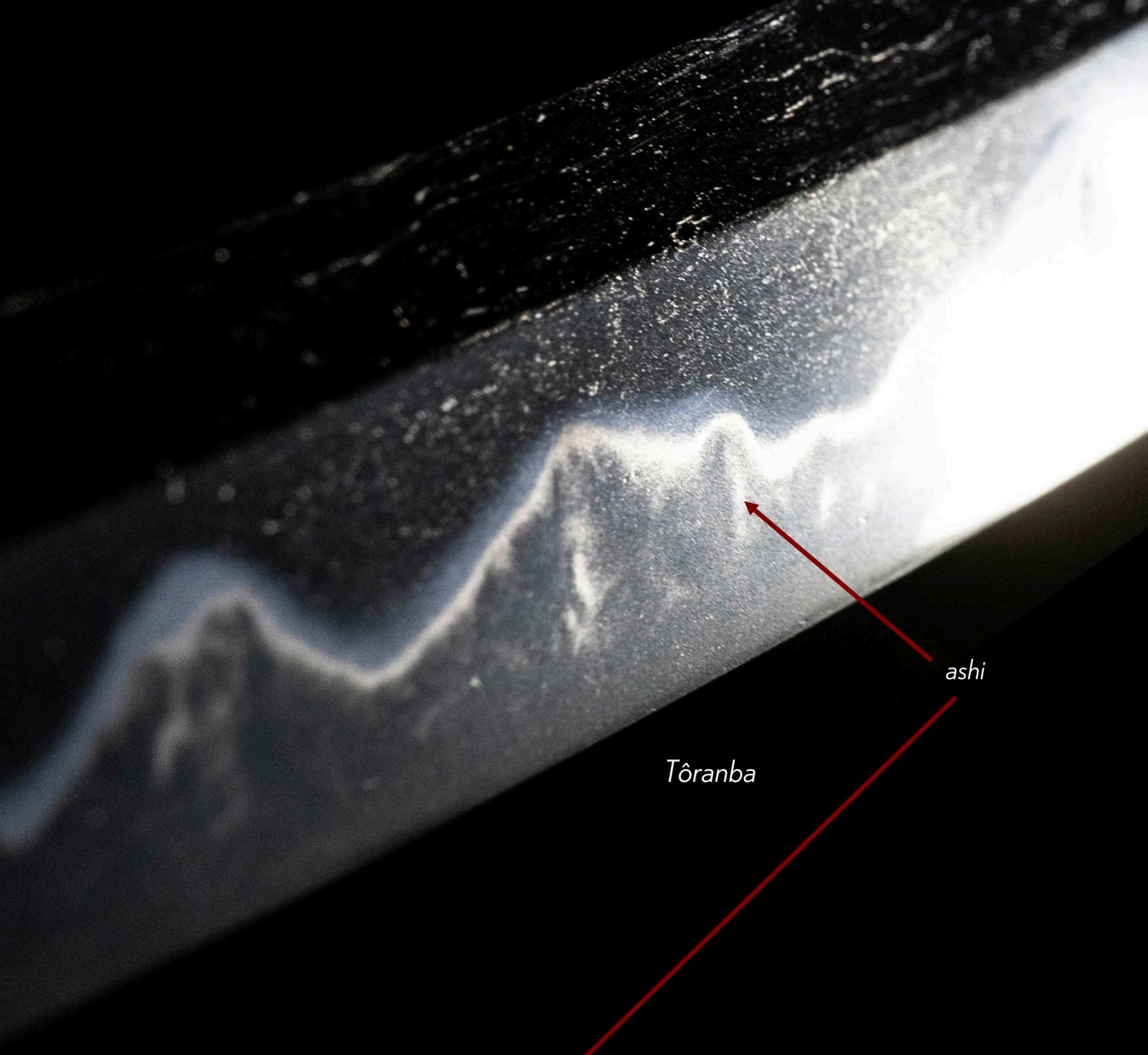


togari-ba

Keeping true with the *Mino* tradition, *togari* (pointed) sections of the *hamon* are readily seen in full force.

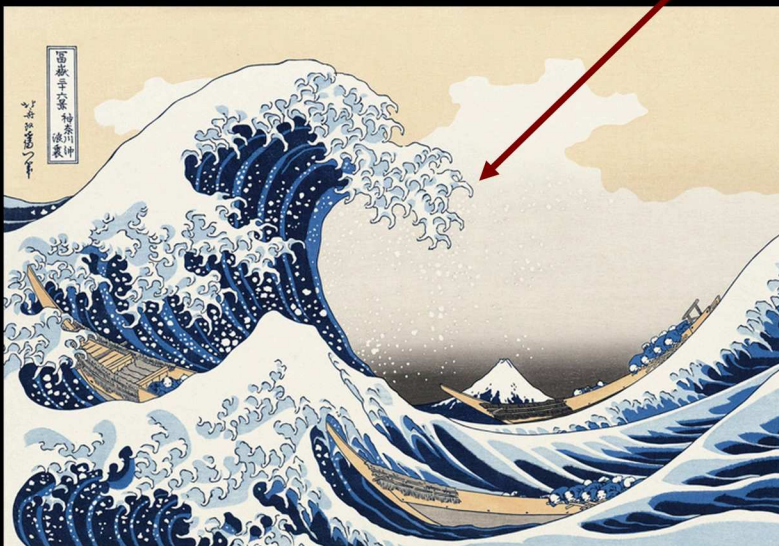
The image displays two blades of a Japanese sword, likely a katana, against a dark background. The blades are positioned diagonally, with the top blade above the bottom one. Both blades exhibit a prominent hamon (temper line) and a yo (leaf) pattern. The hamon is a wavy, light-colored line that runs along the length of the blade, while the yo is a darker, more irregular pattern that follows the hamon. Red arrows point to specific features on the blades: two arrows on the top blade point to the hamon and yo, and two arrows on the bottom blade point to the hamon and yo. The text is written in a white, sans-serif font and is positioned between the two blades.

Gorgeous amounts of *yo* (leaves) that fall between the hamon and the cutting edge.



ashi

Tôranba

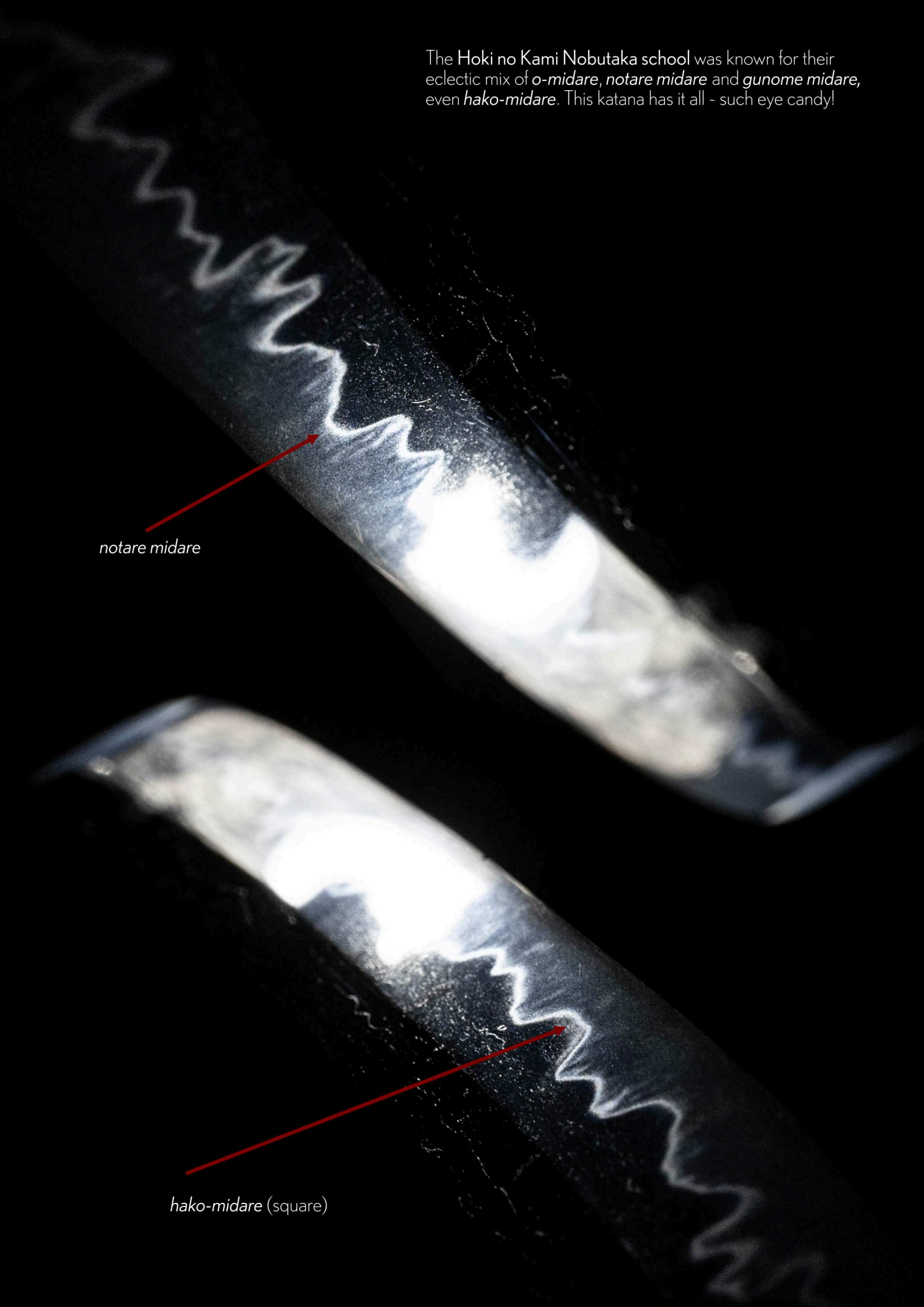


The bold, undulating *tôranba hamon* evokes the dynamic energy of crashing waves - its rhythm rising and falling like the sea in perpetual motion.

Much like Hokusai's iconic *Great Wave off Kanagawa*, the pattern captures both power and elegance, frozen in a moment of time. The crest of the waves are like fingertips, similar to the *ashi* (legs) that extend from the hamon towards the cutting edge.

Great Wave off Kanagawa
by Katsushika Hokusai

The Hoki no Kami Nobutaka school was known for their eclectic mix of *o-midare*, *notare midare* and *gunome midare*, even *hako-midare*. This katana has it all - such eye candy!



notare midare

hako-midare (square)



Shirasaya
(protective scabbard)



Traditional *Owari*-style *Habaki*

Known as the *Owari habaki*, it features a classic combination: horizontal file marks on the outer piece and a diagonal crosshatch resembling cypress fencing on the inner. It is distinguished by its shallow notch and refined, functional aesthetic rooted in the traditions of Owari.

The unique criss-cross *yasurime* (file marks) is called *higaki*. The name is derived from a fence made of thin, crossed Japanese cypress boards.



Noh play: *Higaki* (cypress wood fence)





The sky is the limit.