



ITEM# UJKA426

A KUNIYASU KATANA

SIGNED, SHINTÔ PERIOD (KANBUN ERA: 1661~1673)

Swordsmith:	<i>Higo no Kami Kuniyasu</i> (肥後守国康, <i>shodai</i>)
Measurements:	Length: 70.3cm (<i>ubu</i>) Sori: 1.5cm Moto-haba: 3.14cm Weight: 820g
Jihada:	<i>Well-forged itame-hada with ji-nie, chikei</i>
Hamon:	<i>Gorgeous gunome-chôji-midare with kobushigata chôji, kinsuji and komaru-bôshi</i>
Certificate #1-4:	NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon (<i>sword, tsuba, fk & menuki</i>)
Certificate #5:	NTHK-NPO Yûshûsaku (<i>a sword designatesed as Masterwork</i>)
Certificate #6:	NTHK-NPO Kanteishô (<i>a koshirae designated as Authentic</i>)
Fujishiro rank:	Jô-saku (<i>ranked as a superior swordsmith</i>)
Sharpness:	Ô-wazamonô (<i>rated as a maker of supremely sharp swords</i>)
Authentication:	Sayagaki by Tanzan-sensei (<i>Tanobe Michihiro</i>)
Included:	Shirasaya, custom koshirae, fabric bag, stand, kit, printed description

This is a highly collectible *shintô* period katana by first generation *Higo no Kami Kuniyasu* from *Settsu* province. Kuniyasu is the third son of *shodai Kunisuke* who first studied under the great *Horikawa Kunihiro* in *Kyôto*. A traditional *sashikomi* polish was given to this fine sword to deliver a more classical finish which brought out the full beauty of its absolutely gorgeous *gunome-choji-midare* with *kobushigata chôji hamon* and long *ashi* that stretch magnificently toward the cutting edge. The blade was also sharpened to an exceptionally keen edge affirming Kuniyasu's well-deserved *ô-wazamono* ranking. Two certificates accompany this katana, NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon and *Yûshûsaku* (Masterwork). This sword has been authenticated with *sayagaki* by *Tanobe-sensei* and equipped with a top-class custom koshirae that was produced by Unique Japan. Read on for details.



Saki-kasane: 4.3mm

Kissaki: 4.11cm

Saki-haba: 2.30cm

Moto-kasane: 6.7mm

Nagasa: 70.3cm

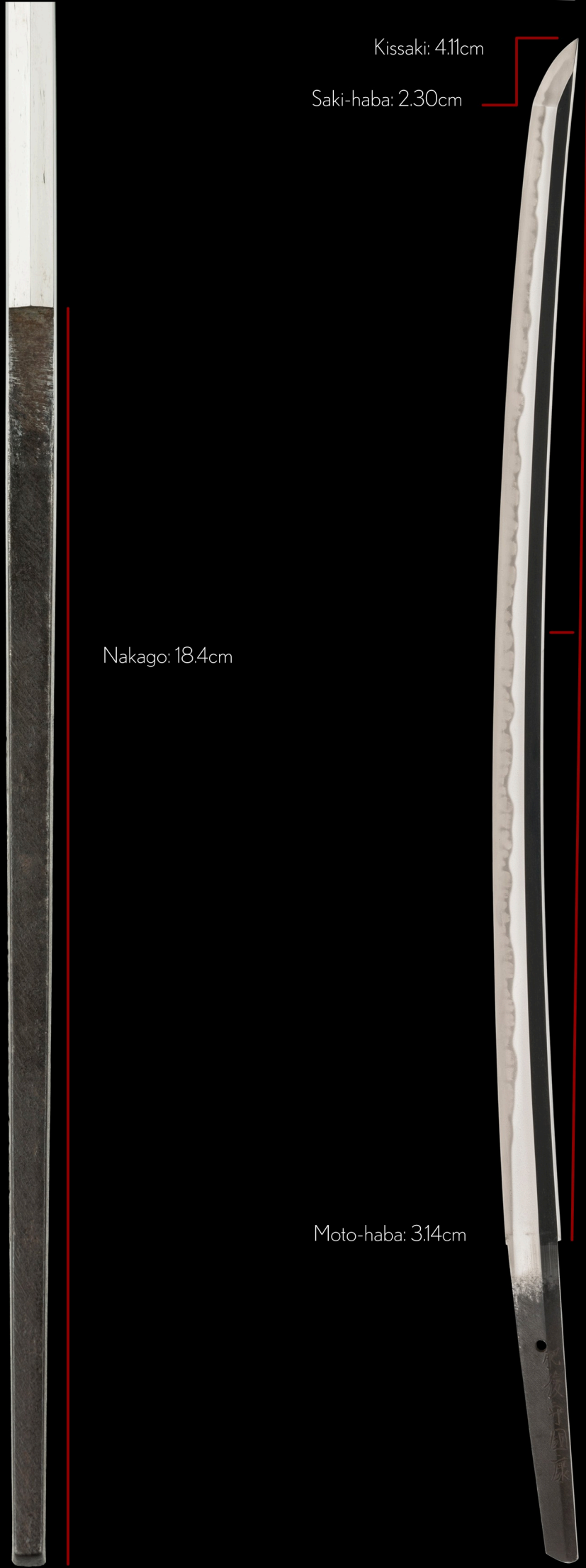
Nakago: 18.4cm

Sori: 1.50cm

Omosa: 820g

Moto-haba: 3.14cm

Mekugi-ana: 1



This is a highly collectible *shintô* period katana by first generation *Higo no Kami Kuniyasu* from *Settsu* province, modern day *Ôsaka*. Born *Kobayashi Genzaemon*, Kuniyasu is the third son of *shodai Kunisuke* (founder the *Kunisuke* school) who first studied under the great *Horikawa Kunihiro* in *Kyôto*.

Kuniyasu's workmanship is similar to that of his older brother, second generation *Kunisuke*, with a spectacular *gunome-chôji-midare* and fist-shaped clusters of clove blossom buds known as *kobushigata chôji*. Long *ashi* also stretch magnificently to the cutting edge.

A traditional *sashikomi* polish was given to this fine blade to deliver a more 'classical finish' without the use of *hadori* that can exaggerate the contrast of the hamon and body of the blade.

The blade was also sharpened to an exceptionally keen edge. Kuniyasu is renowned as an *ô-wazamono* (supreme sharpness) smith, and his swords require careful handling due to their remarkable cutting ability.

As an option for the next owner, we can take this sword to *Tanobe sensei* for *sayagaki* services, as he will most certainly appreciate this blade.

A custom *koshirae* is also an option as this sword is in *shirasaya* only, and we can assist you every step of the way. However, a blade of this quality can easily be enjoyed as it is without *koshirae*.

Two certificates accompany this katana, **NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon** and **Yûshûsaku** (Masterwork), the highest honours at the NTHK-NPO achieving an tremendous score of 83/100 at the past December 2024 *shinsa* in *Tokyo*.



Title: *Higo no Kami* (Lord of Higo province)
Swordsmith: *Kuniyasu* (first generation)

ubu-nakago (original, unaltered tang)
sujikai-yasurime (diagonal file marks)



肥 (Hi)

後 (go, no)

守 (Kami)

國 (Kuni)

康 (yasu)



Crisp file marks.
Nakago is in excellent condition.

(*ura*, reverse)

ha agari kurijiri nakago-jiri

特選
05202309

№ 1021805



鑑定書

一 刀 銘 肥後守国康

長二尺三寸二分

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

令和五年十二月十五日

公益財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協會



和歌山県教育委員会
第 2379 号
昭和27年6月23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

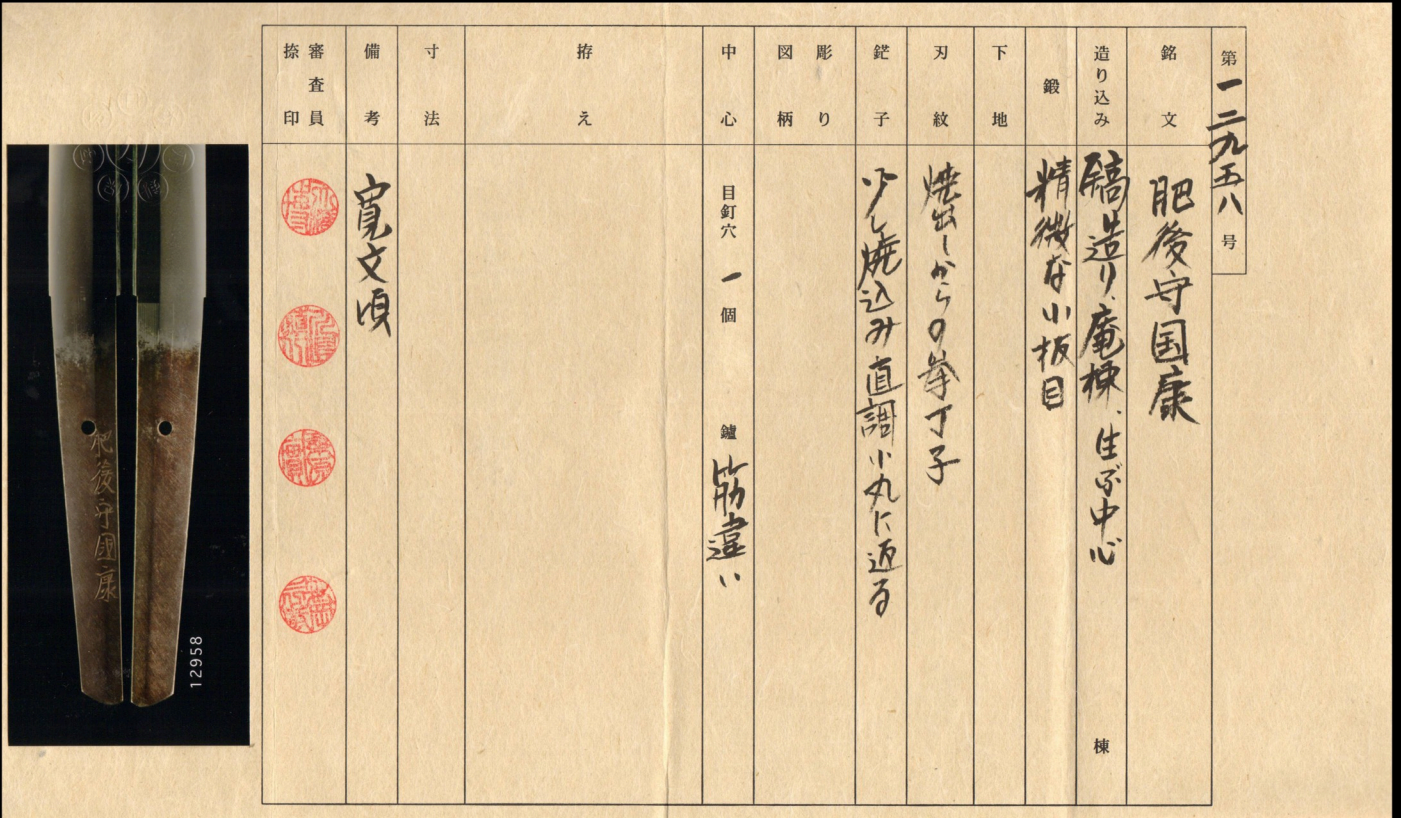
Issued in the 5th year of Reiwa (2023), December 15th

One, Katana

Mei (signature)
Higo no Kami Kuniyasu

Nagasa (length)
2-shaku 3-sun 2-bu (70.3cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai
(NBTHK)



NTHK-NPO Yushusaku Certificate of Authenticity

This katana was designated as *Yûshûsaku* (Highly Excellent) by the Non-Profit Society for the Preservation of the Japanese Sword

Katana

Mei (signature)
Higo no Kami Kuniyasu

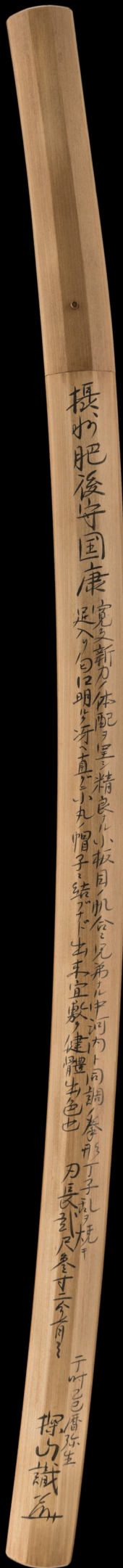
Nagasa (length)
2-shaku 3-sun 2-bu kore ari (70.3cm)

Issued in 6th year of Reiwa (2024), December 15th

Nihon Token Hozon Kai
(NTHK-NPO)

This sword has reached the highest level of honour at the NTHK-NPO.
Four judges have stamped their names to the certificate.

***Yûshûsaku* certificate comes with a frame-able A3 photo of the sword as well.



撰州肥後守国康

Sesshû Higo no Kami Kuniyasu

Higo no Kami Kuniyasu from Settsu province

寛文新刀ノ体配ヲ呈シ精良ナル小板目ノ肌合ニ兄弟ナル中河内ト同調ノ拳形丁子乱ヲ焼キ足入り匂口明ルク冴へ直グニ小丸ノ帽子ニ結ブナド出来宜敷ク健體出色也

Kanbun-Shintô no taihai o tei-shi seiryô-naru ko-itame no hada-ai ni kyôdai-naru Naka-Kawachi to dôchô no kobushigata-chôji-midare o yaki ashi hairi nioiguchi akaruku sae sugu ni ko-maru no bôshi ni musubu nado deki yoroshiku kentai shusshoku nari.

This blade is of a *Kanbun-Shintô* shape and displays a refined forging in *ko-itame*. The hardening is a *kobushigata-chôji-midare* in the style of the smith's brother *Naka-Kawachi* (2nd gen *Kunisuke*), which is mixed with *ashi* and which has a bright and clear *nioiguchi*, and the *bôshi* is *sugu* with a *ko-maru-kaeri*. Thus overall, the blade is of an excellent *deki* and is in outstanding condition.

刃長貳尺參寸二分有之

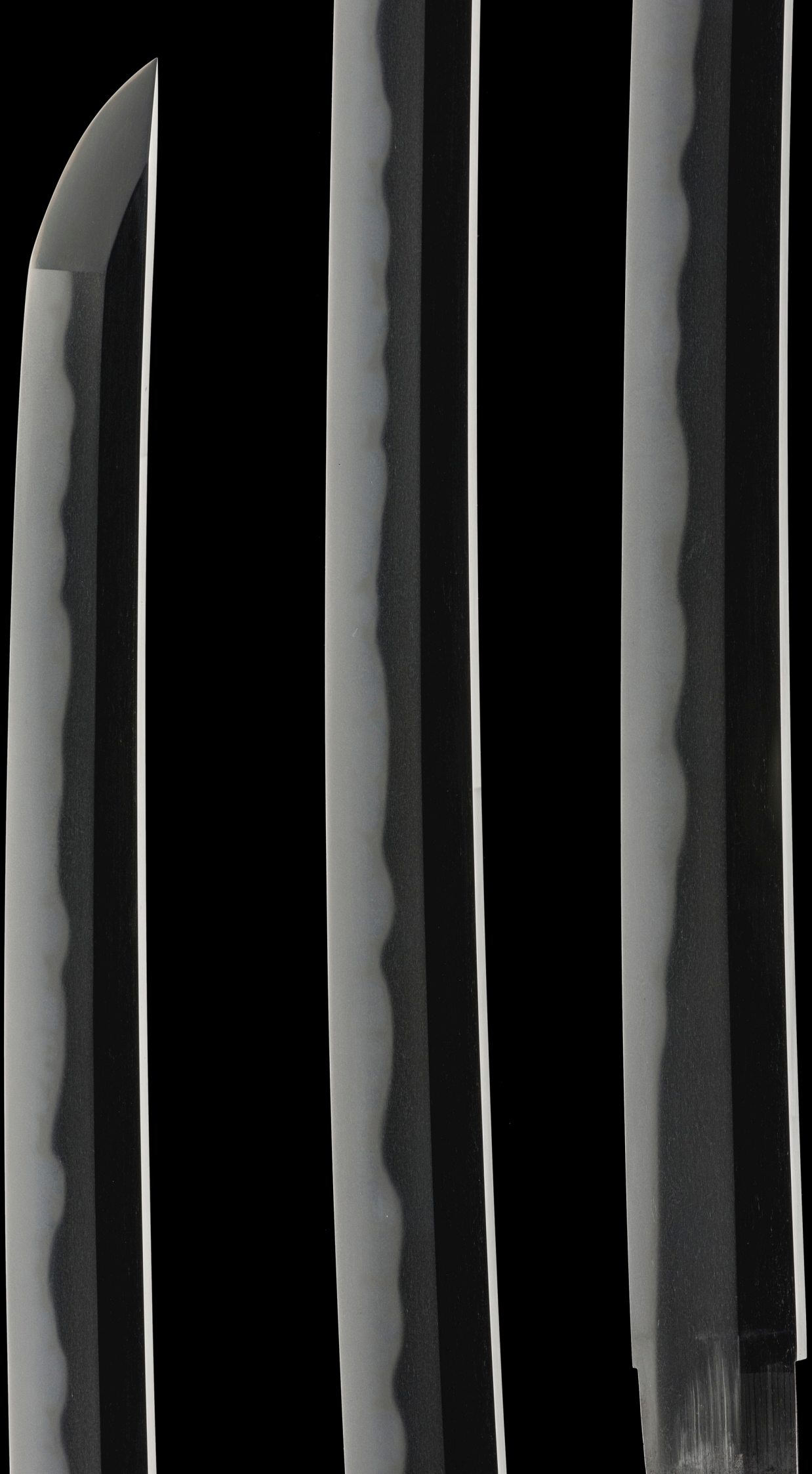
Hachô 2-shaku 3-sun 2-bu kore ari

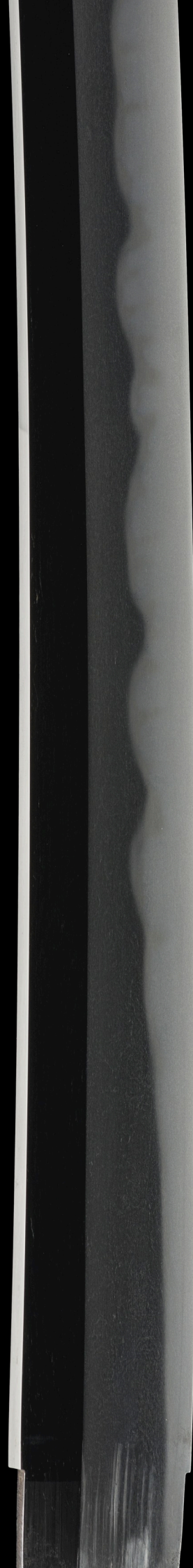
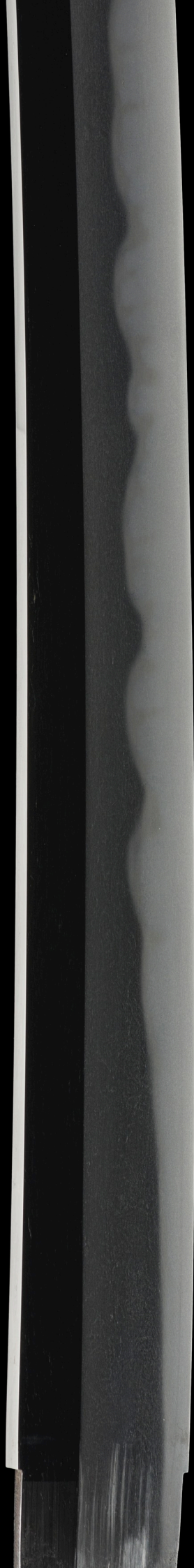
Blade length ~ 70.3 cm

于時乙巳曆弥生探山識「花押」

Toki ni kinoto-midoshi yayoi Tanzan shirusu + kaô

Written by Tanzan [Tanobe Michihiro] in March in the year of the snake of this era (2025) + monogram.

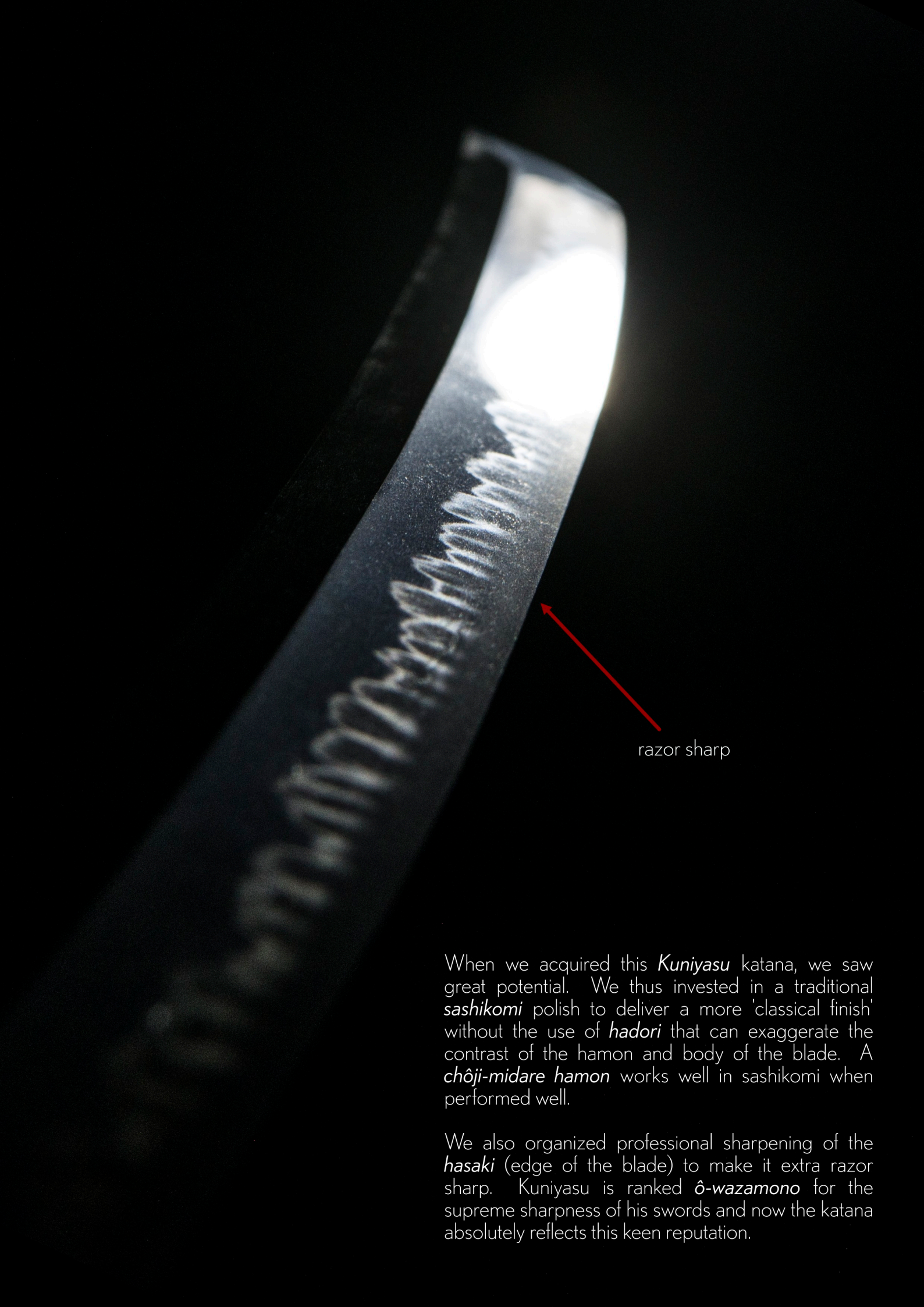




A crisp and clean round *ko-maru bôshi*.

Standing tall.






razor sharp

When we acquired this *Kuniyasu* katana, we saw great potential. We thus invested in a traditional *sashikomi* polish to deliver a more 'classical finish' without the use of *hadori* that can exaggerate the contrast of the hamon and body of the blade. A *chôji-midare hamon* works well in *sashikomi* when performed well.

We also organized professional sharpening of the *hasaki* (edge of the blade) to make it extra razor sharp. *Kuniyasu* is ranked *ô-wazamono* for the supreme sharpness of his swords and now the katana absolutely reflects this keen reputation.



A brilliant *gunome-chôji-midare hamon* blossoms the course of the blade.

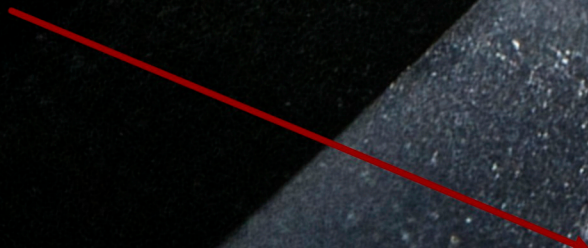
Note the consistency in the hamon, the mark of a superior smith.



Long *ashi* (legs) extend to the edge of the blade.

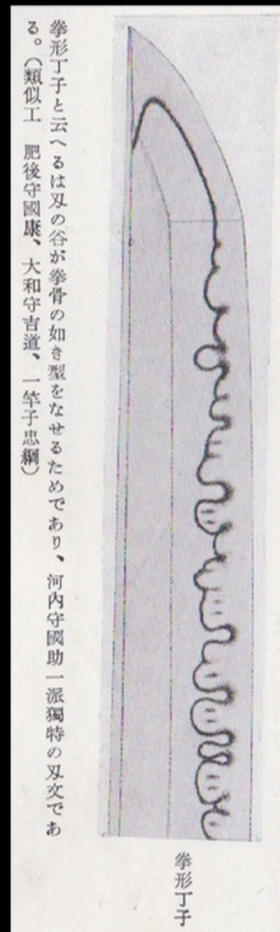
Beautiful.

kobushigata chôji hamon
Fist-shaped clusters of clove
blossom buds



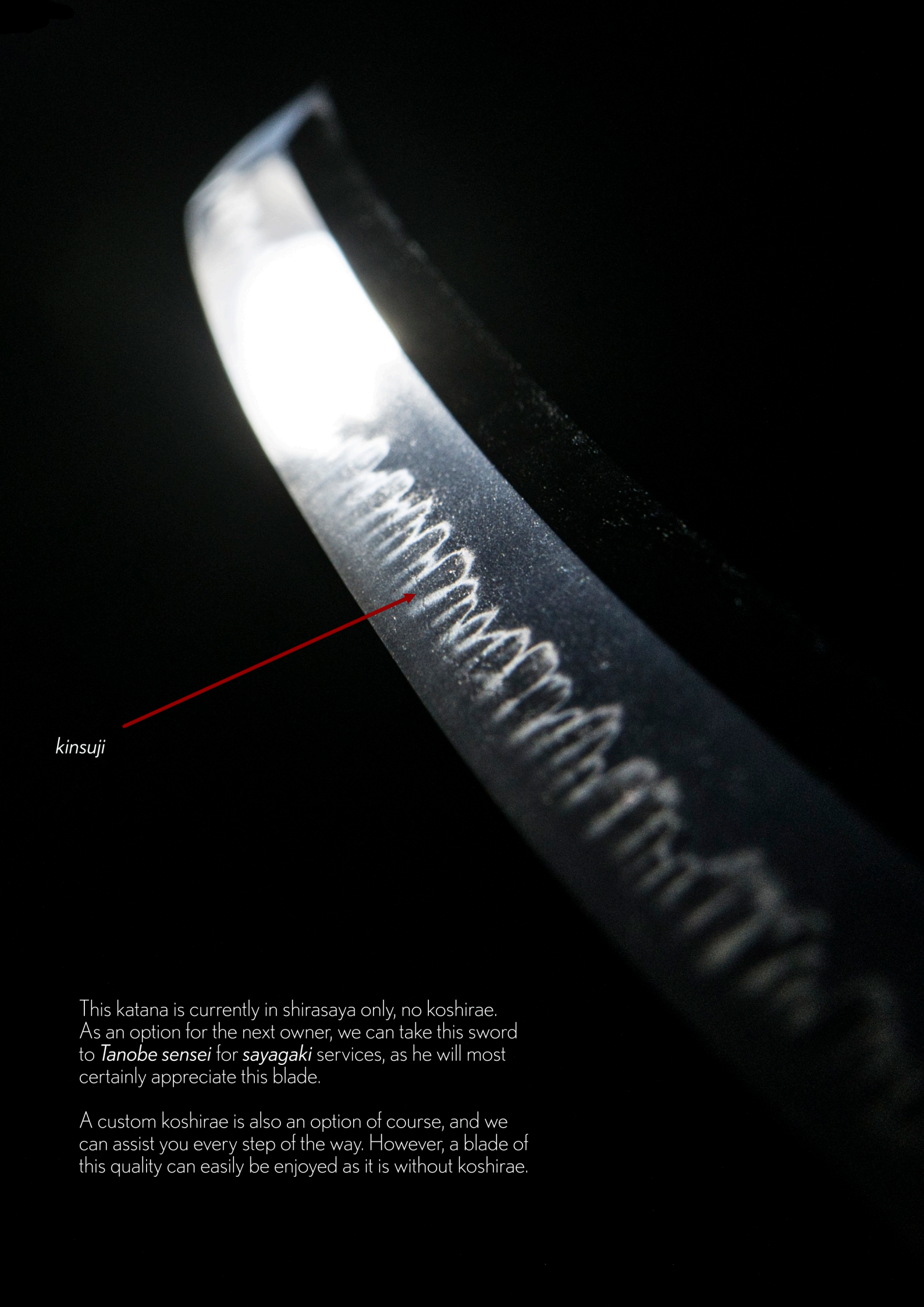
Kuniyasu's older brother *Kawachi no Kami Kunisuke* pioneered a unique *choji midare* known as *kobushigata chôji*, or "fist-shaped" clove blossoms.

On the right is an *oshigata* (rubbing) excerpt from *Nihon Shinto Jiten* written by Fujishiro that highlights this distinctive hamon by second gen. Kunisuke who is known as "*Naka Kawachi*."



Ôsaka yakidashi, where the hamon jets out at the start.

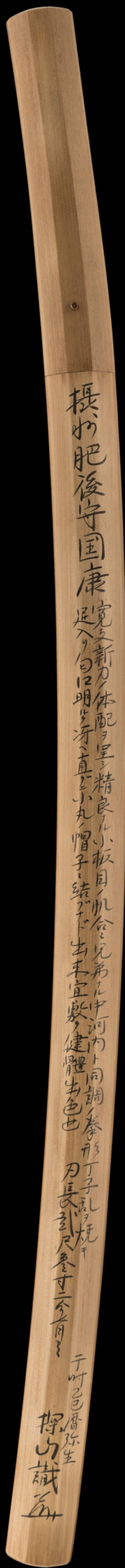




kinsuji

This katana is currently in shirasaya only, no koshirae. As an option for the next owner, we can take this sword to *Tanobe sensei* for *sayagaki* services, as he will most certainly appreciate this blade.

A custom koshirae is also an option of course, and we can assist you every step of the way. However, a blade of this quality can easily be enjoyed as it is without koshirae.



Shirasaya
(protective scabbard)

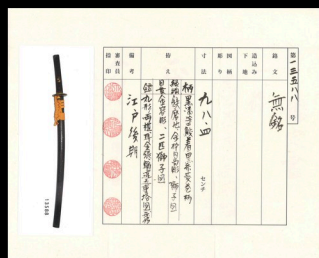
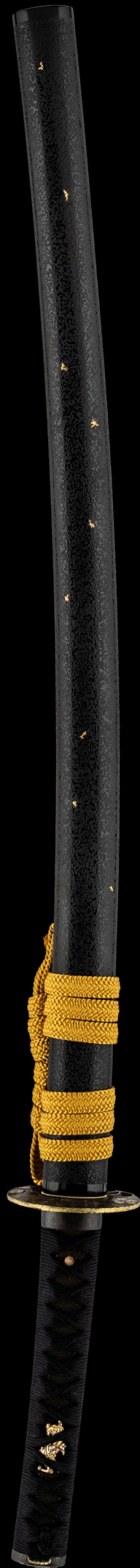


gold *habaki* with
copper ground

*Kuro-ro-ishime-urushi ni
kin-maki-e uchigatana-koshirae*
(黒呂石目漆に金蒔絵塗打刀拵)

*Uchigatana-koshirae
lacquered in black with stone-like
surface and gold maki-e dots*

Crafted during the
Modern era



NTHK-NPO Kanteisho
Certificate of Authenticity

A stone *ishime-ji* finish accented with small flakes of gold *maki-e*.



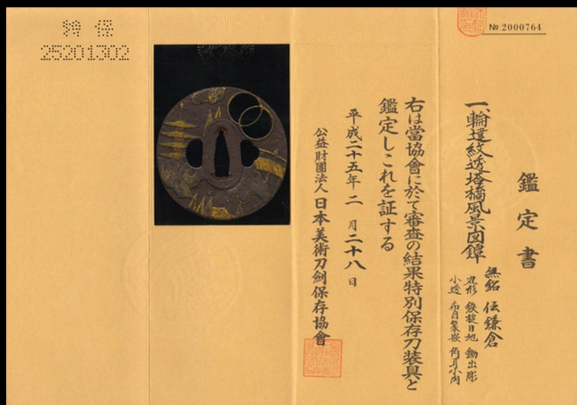


This *tsuba* has been attributed to the *Kamakura* school with a *NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon* certificate.

The term *Kamakura-tsuba* does not refer to a *tsuba* made during the *Kamakura* period. Rather, the name derives from *Kamakura-bori* – a wood-carving technique originating in Buddhist implements crafted by temple sculptors during the *Kamakura* period – to which the style of these *tsuba* bears a close resemblance. The tradition of *Kamakura-tsuba* emerged around the *Ōnin* era (1467-1477) of the *Muromachi* period.

The iron ground of this work displays a fine, aged rust of excellent quality. Upon it are arranged a pagoda and a bridge – the classic motifs of the *Kamakura-tsuba* tradition – accented with gold crosshatched inlay. The design is further enriched by a *wachigai-mon* (crossed-circle) rendered in openwork, lending a distinctive individuality to an otherwise quintessential composition. The *wachigai-mon* symbolizes the teaching of *bonshō-funi* – the inseparability of the mundane and the sacred – representing the unity of the *Kongōkai* (Diamond Realm) and the *Taizōkai* (Womb Realm) in Esoteric Buddhism. Together with the pagoda motif, the *tsuba* becomes a work quietly imbued with the spiritual world of Buddhist thought.

(reverse)



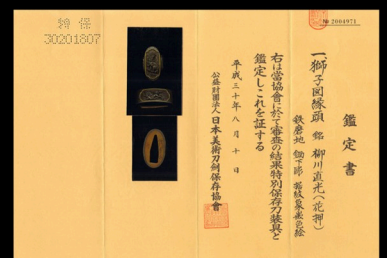
NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon
Certificate



A ink-stone stand crafted in *Kamakura-bori*
during the *Muromachi* period.



柳 (Yana)
 川 (gawa)
 直 (Nao)
 光 (mitsu)
 monogram





The Gotô school, serving the Tokugawa shōgunate and refining their art within a strict formal tradition, and the machibori master Naomitsu, who gave free expression to the spirit of his age – both are united within a single koshirae through the shared motif of the shishi. In this one koshirae, two entirely distinct aesthetic sensibilities engage in quiet dialogue.



This *fuchigashira* is the work of *Yanagawa Naomitsu* (柳川直光, 1733-1808), a master of *Edo machibori* (independent *kinkô* artists).

He studied under *Yanagawa Naomasa* (柳川直政), eventually mastering the art and succeeding him as the second-generation *Yanagawa Naomasa*, his teacher, was considered the most gifted among the disciples of *Yokoya Sômin* (横谷宗珉) – the founder of *machibori* – and *Naomitsu* was said to have been second only to *Naomasa* in skill.



Byôbu painting by Hokusai

The *fuchigashira* is carved with a *shishi*, one of the most beloved motifs in sword fittings. The surrounding gold inlay frames the composition in a manner reminiscent of a *byôbu* (folding-screen) painting, lending the piece a stately grandeur.

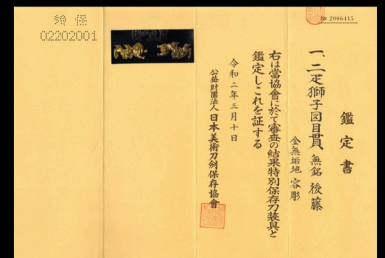
Particularly noteworthy is the *shishi* on the *kashira*, depicted in a posture suggestive of howling with its head raised – a remarkably unusual pose for a *shishi*. A *shishi* in a strikingly similar posture appears in the painting by *Katsushika Hokusai* (葛飾北斎, 1760-1849), raising the possibility that *Naomitsu*'s work was influenced by that composition.



The *tsuka* (hilt) is wrapped in black-lacquered *samekawa* (ray skin), over which black silk is applied in a *hishimaki* style. The overall style is thoroughly classical and formal in character.



The *menuki* (decorative grips) feature a *shishi* by the *Gotô* school – the preeminent *oiebori* family in the service of the *Tokugawa* shōgunate. Executed in solid gold with exceptionally fine and intricate carving, exceptional work from an exceptional school.



銃砲刀劍類登録証

登録記号番梅次山縣第 2379 号

種別 刀 長さ一尺三寸二分ワ厘

反り 寸五分ワ厘 目くぎ穴 茂 個

銘文

裏 表 肥後守臣康

文化財保護委員会

昭和廿七年六月廿三日発行

This is the original *torokusho* (registration card) for the *Kuniyasu katana*.
The card was registered in the 27th year of Showa (1952).

This is significant as 1952 was the very first year that swords were formally registered in Japan. Many former Daimyo families were invited to submit their collections suggesting this blade was once held by a prominent family.

The serial number is just 2379, one of the very first swords registered in Japan.



Koshirae bag



Congratulations David.

Warm regards,
Pablo