



ITEM# UJKA429

A SHODAI MASAHIRO KATANA

SIGNED, SHINTÔ PERIOD (KAN'EI ERA: 1624~1644)

Swordsmith:	<i>Hizen no Kuni Kawachi Daijô Fujiwara Masahiro (shodai, first generation)</i>
Measurements:	Length: 70.6cm (<i>ubu</i>) Curvature: 1.5cm Motohaba: 2.94cm
Jihada:	<i>Ko-mokume leading to Hizen konuka-hada, thick nie-deki and ji-nie</i>
Hamon:	<i>Gorgeous gunome chôji-midare with kinsuji, sunagashi, yô, ashi, tama</i>
Certificate:	NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon (Especially Worthy of Preservation)
Fujishiro:	Jô-saku (a superior swordsmith)
Authentication:	Sayagaki by Kunzan-sensei (for his sword friend Moriyasu Isao)
Sharpness:	Wazamonô (rated as a maker of sharp swords)
Included:	Shirasaya, dragonfly koshirae, stand, kit, booklet, printed description

SOLD

Maestro *Hizen* swordsmith *Kawachi Masahiro* was born *Sadenjiro* in 1607 and died at only 59 in 1665. He is the son of *Yoshinobu* who was the adopted son of the great first generation *shodai Tadayoshi*. This wonderful katana features an absolutely gorgeous *gunome-chôji-midare hamon* that creates a *nihontô* light show like few other blades can. So much to see in the form of *hataraki*; *kinsuji*, *sunagashi*, *yô*, long *ashi*, even *tama*, jewel-like balls appear high up in the *ji* (body). The *shirasaya* is blessed with *sayagaki* by *Kunzan* that he made for his sword friend *Moriyasu Isao*. A magnificent set of *koshirae* comprising of a marvellous *kage-makie* lacquered theme of dragonflies, a unique geometric *tsuba* and a lovely *fuchi-kashira* speaks of the heavenly courtesan *Tennyô* and the captivating *Noh* play called *Hagoromo*. Gold *shisa* lion menuki further guard this spiritual treasure.



Saki-kasane: 4.2mm

Moto-kasane: 5.8mm

Kissaki: 3.38cm

Saki-haba: 2.12cm

Nagasa: 70.6cm

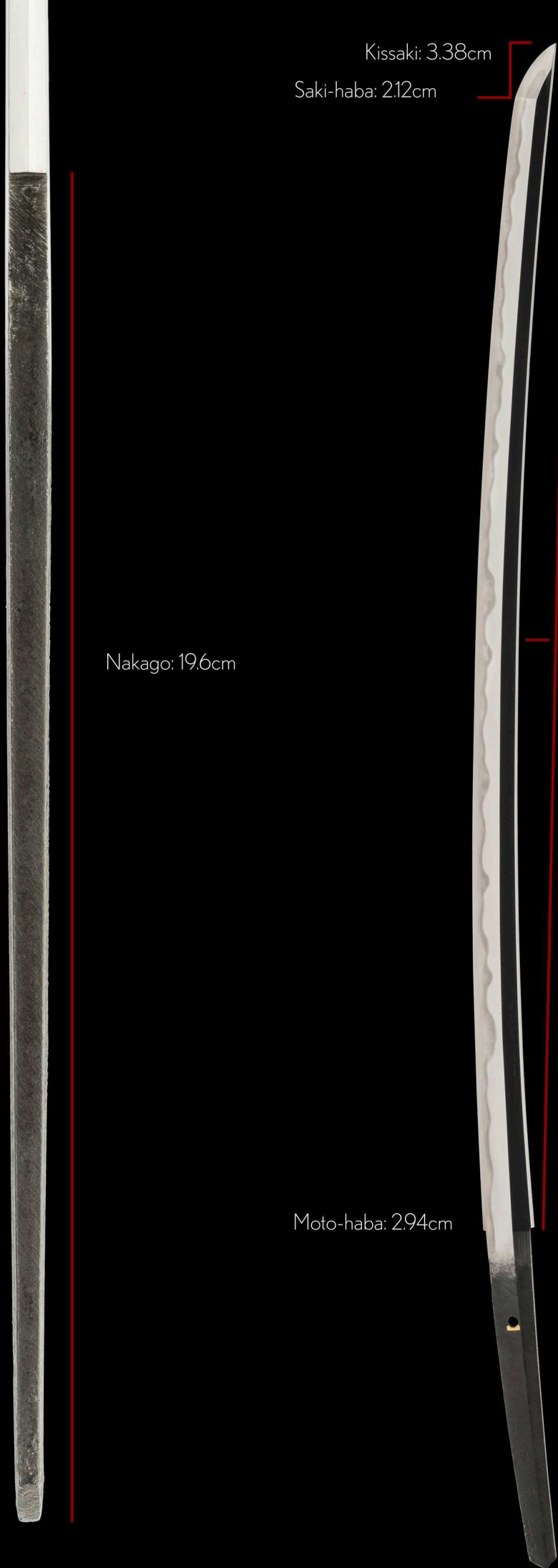
Nakago: 19.6cm

Sori: 1.5cm

Omosa: 690g

Moto-haba: 2.94cm

Mekugi-ana: 1



Kawachi Masahiro was born *Sadenjiro* in 1607 and died at only 59 in 1665. He is the son of *Yoshinobu* who was the adopted son of the great *Shodai* (first generation) *Tadayoshi*.

He began signing as *Masanaga* and signed for *Shodai Tadayoshi* when he became ill (known as *dai-mei*). Recognizing his clear talent, his employer *Lord Nabeshima Katsushige* suggested he change his name to *Masahiro*, thus becoming *Shodai Masahiro*.

This truly wonderful katana features an absolutely gorgeous *gunome-choji-midare hamon* that creates a *nihontô* light show like few other blades can. The genius of *shodai Masahiro* is on full display in this fine sword. So much to see in the form of *hataraki*; *kinsuji*, *sunagashi*, *yô*, long *ashi*, even *tama*, jewel-like balls appear high up in the *ji* (body). Naturally, all these visual treats can be seen over a tightly forged *konuka-hada* that sets the foundations right.

The *shirasaya* of this sword is blessed with *sayagaki* by *Kunzan* (Dr. Honma Junji) that he made in his workshop in 1989 for his swordsman friend *Moriyasu Isamu*. *Kunzan* was the former director of the NBTHK and a profound scholar of Japanese swords.

A magnificent set of *koshirae* accompanies the sword with a marvellous *kage-makie* lacquered theme of dragonflies within a garden. For those with a love of geometry will appreciate the unique gold-inlay obtuse triangles on the *tsuba* and the lovely *fuchi-kashira* speaks of the heavenly courtesan *Tennyô* and the captivating Japanese *Noh* play called *Hagoromo*. Gold *shisa* lions roar as *menuki* guarding the spiritual treasures of this samurai sword.



Location: *Hizen province*

Title: *Kawachi Daijô* (Lord of Kawachi province)

Clan name: *Fujiwara*

Swordsmith: *Masahiro* (first generation)

ubu-nakago (original, unaltered tang)

sujikai-yasurime (diagonal file marks)

(Hi) 肥

(zen, no) 前

(kuni) 国

(Kawa) 河

(chi) 内

(Dai) 大

(jô) 掾

(Fuji) 藤

(wara) 原

(Masa) 正

(hiro) 廣



As per tradition on *Hizen* katana, the sword is signed on the *ura, tachi* side.



Bottom of the *mekugi-ana* is filled with gold to round it off.

The *nakago-jiri* (butt-end) of the tang comes to a sharp point at the center.

This type of finish is called *kengyô* or sword-shaped.

(*omote*, front)

No 120383

鑑定書

長三尺三寸三分

一、刀 銘 肥前国河内大掾藤原正広

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

平成元年八月八日

財團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 1st year of Heisei (1989), August 8th

One, Katana

Mei (signature)

Hizen no kuni Kawachi Daijō Fujiwara Masahiro

Nagasa (length)

2-shaku 3-sun 3-bu (70.6cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai
(NBTHK)

This sword was appraised by *Dr. Honma Junji* (1904-1991) also known as *Kunzan*, the former director of the NBTHK.

It is a highly trusted form of authentication known as *sayagaki* (writing in ink on the shirasaya).



Dr. Honma Kunzan Junji

肥前国河内大掾藤原正広

Hizen no kuni Kawachi Daijô Fujiwara Masahiro

Kawachi Daijô Fujiwara Masahiro from Hizen province

平成元年長月

Heisei gannen Nagatsuki

In September of Heisei 1st (1989)

為森安勇劍兄

Tame Moriyasu Isao kenkei

For my sword friend, *Moriyasu Isao*

於久我山房

Kugayama-bô ni oite

At the Kugayama workshop (Kunzan's house)

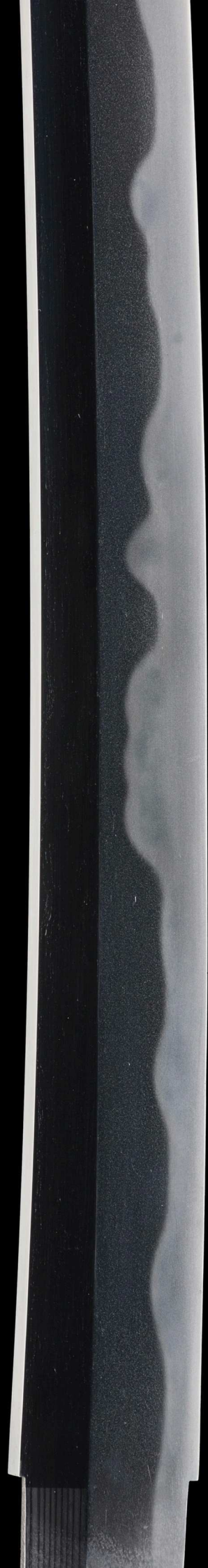
薫山誌「花押」

Kunzan shirusu + kaô

Written by Kunzan + monogram









Hizen-to (swords of Hizen province) enjoy a fine reputation for the quality of the *jigane* - after all, it's the foundation that great swords are built upon.

Here we see a tightly forged *ko-mokume* that leads to *konuka-hada* said to resemble rice grain.

tightly forged *konuka-hada*

The surging brilliance pulsating through the *gunome-chôji midare hamon* is palpable.

This is the magnificence of *Hizen*.



The gift of hamon...

Welcome to the shodai Masahiro hataraki light show...

abu nomefu

ashi

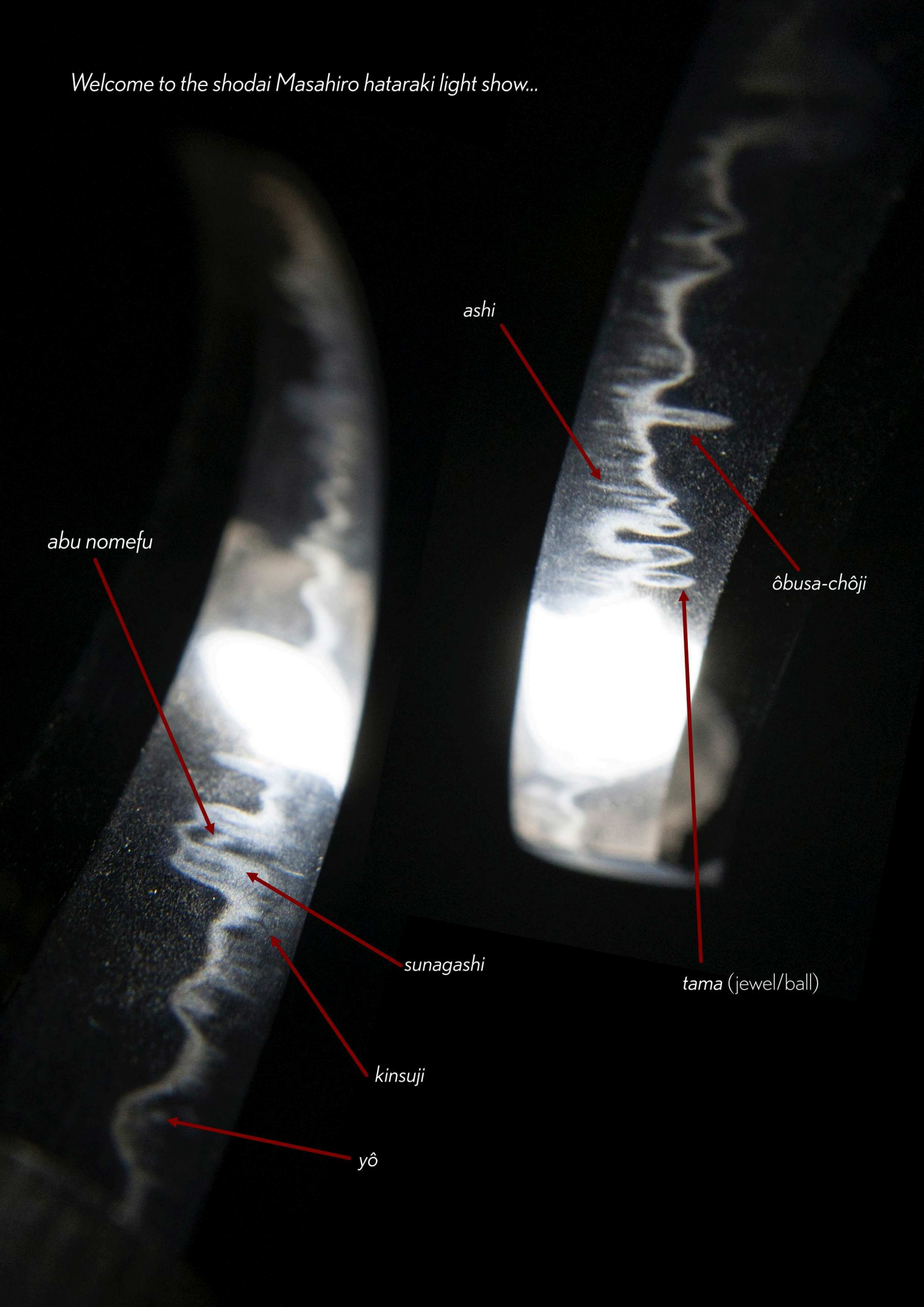
ôbusa-chôji


sunagashi

tama (jewel/ball)

kinsuji

yô

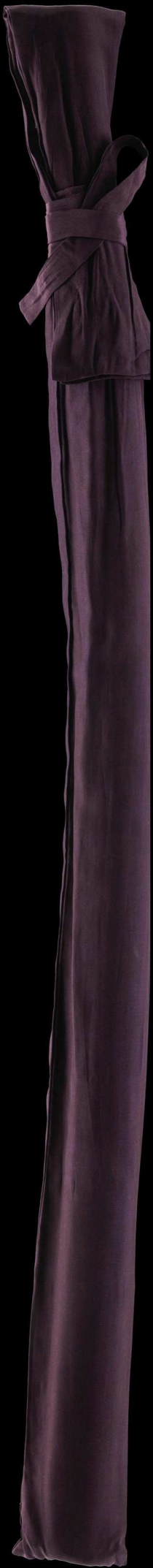




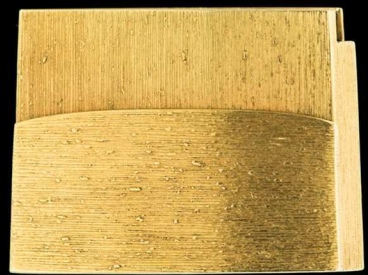
Tama (balls) can be seen curled up in the *hamon*.

A bright, billowing *gunome-chôji midare hamon* with a wide *nioguchi* (crystals that make up the hamon).

This is the creative genius of *shodai Masahiro*.



Shirasaya
(protective scabbard)

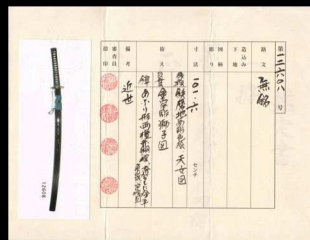


gold *ni-ju habaki* with
crisp file marks

*Kuro-ro kage-makie-nuri saya
uchigatana-koshirae*
(黒呂闇蒔絵塗鞘打刀拵)

*Uchigatana-koshirae
lacquered in glossy black
with dark maki-e*

Crafted during the
Modern period



NTHK-NPO Kanteisho
Certificate of Authenticity



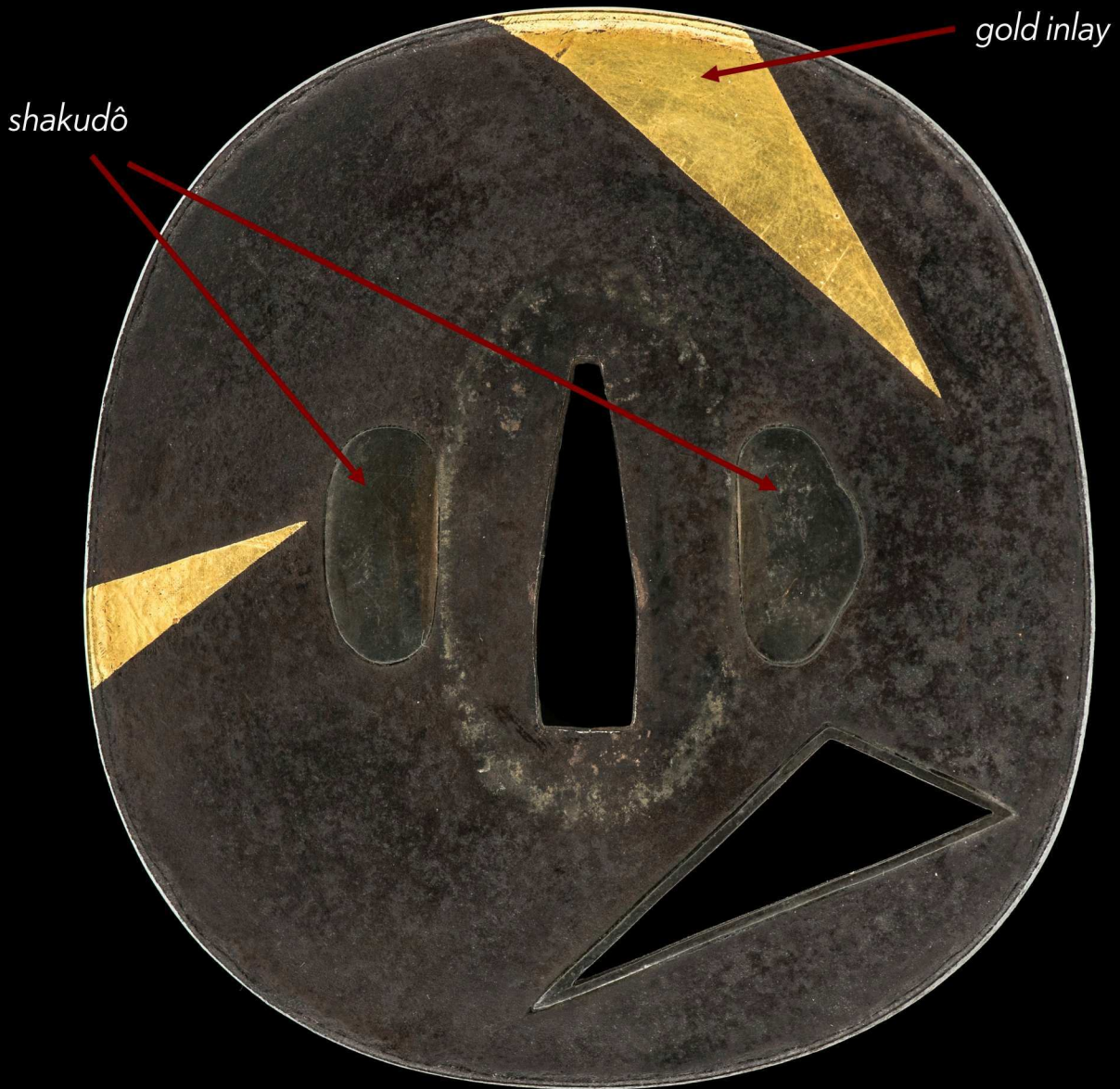
This refined type of Japanese lacquerwork is called *kage-makie* where objects appear like shadows.



The *tombo* (dragonfly) has been revered by the samurai for centuries.

When a *tombo* flies, it flies forward, and never retreats.
It symbolizes bravery, agility and victory.





Polished iron *tsuba* with *hitsu-ana* (holes) filled with *shakudô*.

Openwork in the unique design of flat gold inlay forming the shape of obtuse triangle rulers.





Fuchi-kashira

Polished iron with relief and color accents.

Depicting *Tennyo*,
a heavenly, celestial woman.



Tennyô

Translation: heavenly woman, celestial woman
Habitat: *Tendô*, the realm of heaven in Buddhist cosmology
Diet: as a human

Appearance: *Tennyô* are extraordinarily beautiful creatures who resemble human women. Aside from their unparalleled grace and elegance, and supernaturally attractive faces and figures, there is little way to differentiate them from ordinary women. They wear beautiful gowns called *hagoromo* (literally “feather cloth”), which allow them to fly.

Behaviour: *Tennyô* are servants and courtesans for the emperor of heaven, and companions of buddhas and bodhisattvas. They sing, dance, play music, recite poetry, and do much of the same things as their earthly counterparts in human imperial courts; though they do them all with more grace, refinement, and beauty. They aid and entertain the other inhabitants of heaven, and they even occasionally fly down to earth to visit.

Origin: *Tennyô* are a female-only subgroup of tennin, one of many celestial races native to *Tendô*. They are based on the Indian apsaras, celestial nymphs from Hindu and Buddhist mythology. They were brought to China from India along with Buddhism, where they developed into the *tennyô* we know today. The Chinese Buddhist *tennyô* was later brought over to Japan.

Legends: *Tennyô* are a popular subject of folklore throughout all of Japan. Legends often involve love stories and marriage between *tennyô* and human men. The most famous story is the *Noh* play *Hagoromo*.

Hagoromo

Long ago, in what is today Shizuoka, a fisherman named *Hakuryô* was walking along the pine-covered beaches of the *Miho* peninsula. It was a beautiful spring morning, and *Hakuryô* stopped for a moment to admire the beautiful white sand, the sparkling waves, the fluffy clouds, and the fishing ships on the bay. A pleasant fragrance filled the air, and it seemed that ethereal music was dancing on the winds. Something caught his eye; draped over a nearby pine branch was a robe of the most splendid fabric he had ever seen. It was made of a soft, feathery material, and was woven in fantastic colours, so he decided to take it home and keep it as a family heirloom.

Just as *Hakuryô* was preparing to leave, a young woman of breathtaking beauty appeared in the nude before him. She had flowers in her hair, and smelled just as beautiful as she looked. She said that he was holding her *hagoromo* robe, and asked him to return it. *Hakuryô* realized that this beautiful maiden was a *tennyô*. He refused to return the robe, saying it would bring good luck and fortune to his village.

The woman grew sad, and lamented that she would not be able to fly home to heaven without her robe. She dropped to her knees and cried, her tears falling like beautiful pearls into the sand. The flowers in her hair wilted. She looked up at the clouds above, and heard a flock of geese flying by, which only saddened her more as they reminded her of the celestial *karyôbinga* birds back home in heaven.

Hakuryô was moved by the beautiful maiden’s sadness. He told her that he would return her robe, but first she must perform a celestial dance for him. She agreed to perform the dance, but told *Hakuryô* that she needed her *hagoromo* to perform the dance. *Hakuryô* refused to return the robe. He thought she would just fly off to heaven without performing for him. The *tennyô* replied to him that deception was a part of his world, not hers, and that her kind do not lie. *Hakuryô* felt shame, and returned the dress to her.

The *tennyô* donned her *hagoromo* and performed the dance of the *Palace of the Moon*. She was accompanied by celestial music, flutes, koto, and the wind in the pines. The moon shown through the trees and sweet fragrances filled the air. The waves grew calm and peaceful. Her long sleeves danced upon the wind, and she danced in sheer joy. As she danced, she slowly floated up into the sky. She flew over the beach, higher and higher, above the pines, through the clouds, and beyond the top of Mt. Fuji. She disappeared into the mists of heaven.



Shishi menuki stand on guard.



Get a grip of history.





Koshirae bag

We have a new service offering at Unique Japan! Below is an A3 size hand-drawn *oshigata* (tracing) of the *hamon* and *nakago* for the ujka427 *Sukenao katana* dated to August 1690. Professionally produced and the perfect size to frame as you like at your home or office. Makes an impact! Email Unique Japan (service@uniquejapan.com) for further information.

