



ITEM# UJKA437

## A SHIZUMOTO KATANA

SIGNED & DATED, MUROMACHI PERIOD (TENBUN ERA: AUGUST 1533)

<b>Swordsmith:</b>	<i>Hôshu Takada jû Taira Shizumoto saku (Bungo province)</i>
<b>Dated:</b>	<i>Tenbun ninen hachigatsu hi – Aruji Gotô Tôgorô</i>
<b>Measurements:</b>	<b>Length:</b> 81.0cm ( <i>ubu</i> ) <b>Curvature:</b> 2.2 cm <b>Moto-haba:</b> 3.21cm
<b>Jihada:</b>	<i>Tightly forged ko-itame-hada that leads to muji-hada with ji-nie and midare-utsuri</i>
<b>Hamon:</b>	<i>Ko-gunome with chôji and ko-notare and plenty of ko-ashi</i>
<b>Certificate #1:</b>	<b>NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon</b> ( <i>Especially Worthy of Preservation</i> )
<b>Certificate #2-4:</b>	<b>NTHK-NPO Kanteishô</b> ( <i>koshirae, fukuro and tsuba certified as Authentic</i> )
<b>Fujishiro rank:</b>	<b>Jô-saku</b> ( <i>ranked as a superior swordsmith</i> )
<b>Authentication:</b>	<b>Sayagaki by Dr. Honma Junji</b> ( <i>Kunzan sensei</i> )
<b>Included:</b>	<i>Shirasaya, Edo-koshirae, fabric bags, stand, kit, printed description</i>

**SOLD**

This incredibly long *ubu-nakago*(!) katana by *Shizumoto* from the *Taira-Takada* school has a cutting edge of, get this, 81cm. In every way it stands proudly like a tachi from the Kamakura period. It is a small miracle that this sword has managed to retain its length since it was signed and dated back nearly 500-years ago in August of 1533. Interestingly, we know that the blade was originally created for patron *Gotô Tôgorô* of the powerful *Ôtomo* clan in *Kyûshû*. This is a masterwork among the known works of *Shizumoto* - a rare and collectible katana from the late Muromachi period with a terrific set of Edo-period *koshirae* that will add to its impressiveness on display.

^  
Saki-kasane: 4.8mm

Moto-kasane: 8.6mm

Omosa: 1015g

Kissaki: 4.32cm  
Saki-haba: 1.96cm

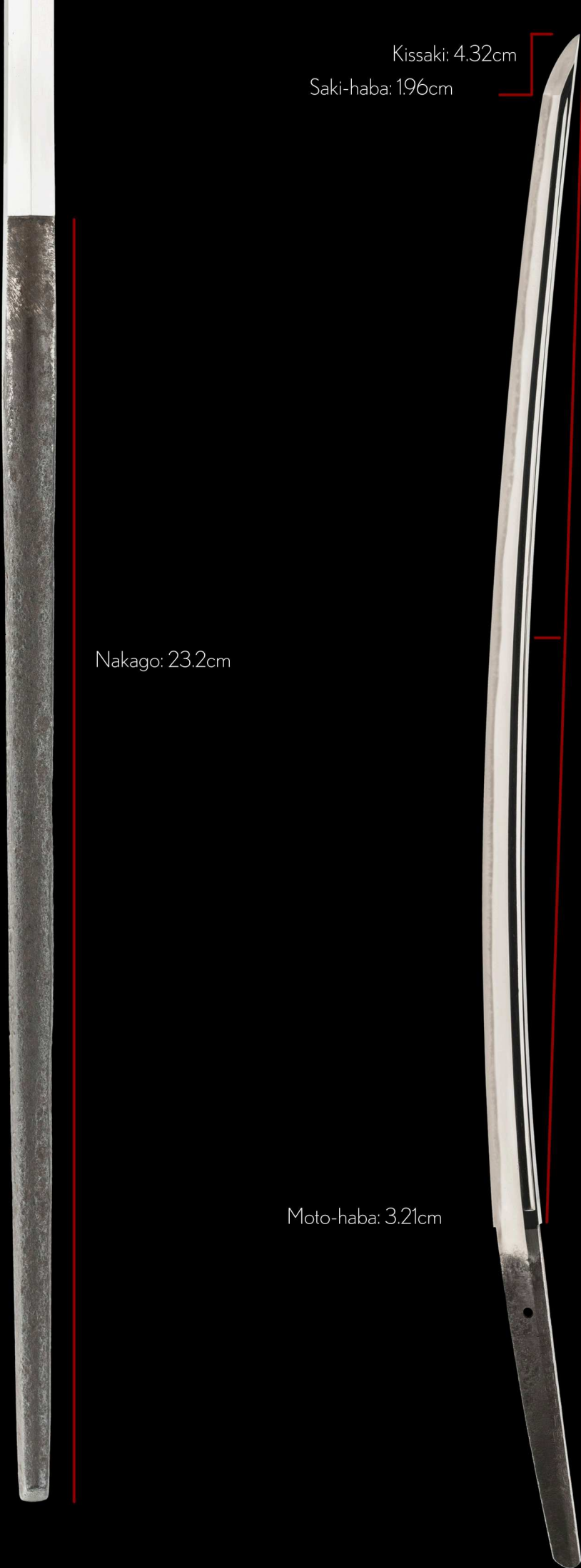
Nakago: 23.2cm

Moto-haba: 3.21cm

Nagasa: 81.0cm

Sori: 2.2cm

Mekugi-ana: 1



The *Takada* school located in *Bungo* province in *Kyûshû* was originally founded by *Tomoyuki* circa 1334~1338 at the start of the Nambokuchô period. It has an impressive history of dependable sword-making that lasted into the *shintô* period (1600s).

Smiths of the *Nagamori* lineage of the Takada school used the clan name of '*Taira*' in their signature, thus becoming known as the *Taira-Takada* school. *Shizumoto* was a skilled smith (rated *jô-saku*) and one of about a dozen smiths from this school that all shared the character for *Shizu*. Other swordsmiths included *Shizumori*, *Shizutaka* and *Shizunori*.

As a whole, all these smiths flourished as caterers to the local ruler, the *Ôtomo* family. This powerful clan throughout the warring *Sengoku* period (1467-1573), were especially notable as one of the first clans to make contact with Europeans, particularly the Portugese, and established a close trade relationship with them for years.

This incredibly long *ubu-nakago* katana by Shizumoto (also read as *Shigetomo*) has a cutting edge of 81cm. In every way it stands proudly like a *tachi* from the Kamakura period. It is a small miracle that this sword has managed to retain its length since it was signed and dated back nearly 500-years ago in August of 1533. Interestingly, we know that the blade was originally created for patron *Gotô Tôgorô* as chiseled onto its *nakago*.

In a diary submission by former director of the NBTHK, Dr. Honma Junji describes the sword as a long *uchigatana* that has a wide *mihaba* that tapers noticeably and that has an elongated *kissaki*, a standard *koshizori*, and *funbari*. The *kitae* is a very densely forged *ko-itame* that tends to *muji* and its *midareba hamon* is rare for *Sue-Kotô Takada* works and features and a very finely forged *kitae* that appears to be *muji* at first glance is also seen with the smith *Nagamori* from the same school.

All told, this is a masterwork among the known works of Shizumoto - a rare and collectible katana from the late Muromachi period with a terrific set of Edo-period *koshirae* that will add to its impressiveness on display.





Location: *Hoshû province* (resident of Takada)

Clan name: *Taira*

Swordsmith: *Shizumoto* (first generation)

*ubu-nakago* (original, unaltered tang)

*katte-sagari-yasurime* (slanting file marks)

豊 (Hô)

州 (shû)

高 (Taka)

田 (da)

住 (jû)

平 (Taira)

鎮 (Shizu)

元 (moto)

作 (saku)

Note: the *kanji* characters for *Shizumoto* can also be read as '*Shigetomo*'.

*Tenbun ninen hachigatsu hi - Aruji Gotô Tôgorô*

This sword has been dated to a day in the eighth month in the second year of *Tenbun* era (August 1533)  
It was crafted for master *Gotô Tôgorô*.



(Ten) 天  
(bun) 文  
(ni) 二

(nen) 年  
(hachi) 八  
(gatsu) 月  
(hi) 日

主 (Aruji)  
後 (Go)  
藤 (tô)  
藤 (Tô)  
五 (go)  
郎 (rô)

*Gotô Tôgorô* would have been a member of the *Ôtomo* clan. The Jesuit missionary *Francis Xavier* arrived in Japan in 1549, and soon afterwards met with *Sôrin* (Yoshishige), *shugo* of *Bungo* and *Buzen* provinces. He would later be described by Xavier as a "king" and converted to Roman Catholicism in 1578. *Ôtomo* was eager to secure for his clan further trade and contact with the Portuguese, seeing the technological and, more importantly perhaps, economic benefits that could be derived.

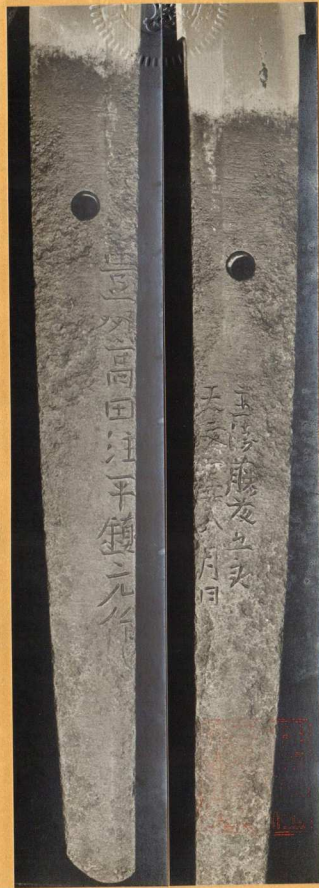
In 1552, emissaries from the *Ôtomo* clan traveled to *Goa* with Xavier, to meet with the Portuguese Governor of India. Xavier and other Jesuit missionaries would return to *Kyûshû*, traveling and proselytising; the *Ôtomo* were always well-disposed towards them, and they saw some success in *Bungo* as a result, converting many Japanese to Christianity.



特 保  
11199901



No 143969



鑑定書

長三尺六寸七分半

一、刀銘

豊州高田住平鎮元作

天文曰年八月日 主後藤藤五郎

右は當協會に於て審査の結果特別保存刀劍と  
鑑定しこれを証する

平成十一年二月五日

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 11th year of Heisei (1999), February 5th

One, Katana

Mei (signature)

Hôshû Takada-jû Taira Shizumoto  
Tenbun ninen hachigatsu hi  
Aruji Gotô Tôgorô

Nagasa (length)

2-shaku 6-sun 7-bu han (81.0cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai  
(NBTHK)



豊州高田住平鎮元

*Hôshû Takada-jû Taira Shizumoto*

Taira Shizumoto, a resident of Takada in Hoshû Province

天文二年紀

*Tenbun ninen ki*

Dated in the second year of *Tenbun* era (1533)

刃長二尺六寸七分

*Hachô 2-shaku 6-sun 7-bu*

Blade length ~81.0 cm

昭和壬戌年長月依清田泰臣氏囑薰山誌「花押」  
*Shôwa Mizunoto-Idoshi Nagatsuki Kiyota Yasuomi-shi no*  
*tanomi ni yori Kunzan shirusu + kaô*

Written by Kunzan at the request by Mr. Kiyota Yasuomi in  
September in Shôwa, the Year of the Dog (1982).





This very katana was featured in Kunzan sensei's diary, towards the very end of the series that was never published in book form, only in magazine format.

Sword researcher *Markus Sesko* managed to find this article and translated as follows:



Series Kantô Hibi Shô by Dr. Honma Kunzan Junji  
*Tôken Bijutsu* No. 387 (April, 1989), p. 40

Katana, mei:  
*Hôshû Takada-jû Taira Shizumoto saku*  
*Tenbun ninen hachigatsu hi, shu Gotô Tôgorô*



Dr. Honma Kunzan Junji

Crafted by Taira Shizumoto, resident of Takada in Bungo province, dated on a day of the eighth month in the second year of Tenbun era (August 1533), for patron *Gotô Tôgorô*

Nagasa 80.9 cm, one *mekugi-ana*

This is a long *uchigatana* with a wide *mihaba* that tapers noticeably and that has an elongated *kissaki*, a standard *koshizori*, and *funbari*. The *kitae* is a very densely forged *ko-itame* that tends to *muji* and that features plenty of fine *ji-nie* and some faint *midare-utsuri*. The hamon is a densely arranged *ko-gunome* in *ko-nie-deki* that is mixed with *ko-ashi*, a few *chôji*, and on the *omote* side from the mid-blade section upwards with a little bit of *ko-notare*. The *ha* appears overall as a *gyôsô no midare* (about "semi-freely to freely interpreted midare), and the *bôshi* is *midare-komi* with *kuzure* at the tip.

A *bôhi* is engraved on both sides that ends in *hisaki-sagaru* and at the base in *kakudome*. The *nakago* is *ubu* and has a *ha-agari-kurijiri*, a roundish *nakago-mune* and cutting edge side, fine *yasurime* that are almost entirely *kiri*, and bears towards the *nakago-mune* the above quoted *naga-mei* and date, which are executed in a close to semi-cursive manner. Next to the date the name of the patron is recorded, which is inscribed by partially using a cursive script.

This blade is hardened in a small-dimensional *midareba*, which is rare for *Sue-Kotô Takada* works, and a very finely forged *kitae* that appears to be *muji* at first glance is also seen with the smith *Nagamori* from the same school.


September 5th  
Sayagaki written for Tôkyô member *Kiyota Yasuomi*

The *kakudome bo-hi* (squared end groove) stretching the full length of the sword forms an '*I-beam*' construction.


These grooves serve to lighten the sword (even though it still weighs 1015g (2.24lbs!)) while helping to absorb energy loads efficiently.

A close-up, diagonal view of a sword blade against a black background. The blade is dark and polished, showing a prominent groove running along its length. A red arrow points from the text label to this groove.

*kakudome bo-hi*

A close-up photograph of a curved metal blade, likely a Japanese sword, showing a midare utsuri finish. The blade is dark and highly reflective, with a bright, shimmering band of light reflecting off its surface. The background is dark, making the blade stand out. A red arrow points from the text below to the shimmering band on the blade.

A beautiful *midare utsuri* shines under the light.

A close-up photograph of a curved metal blade, likely a Japanese sword, showing a ko-ashi finish. The blade is dark and highly reflective, with a bright, shimmering band of light reflecting off its surface. The background is dark, making the blade stand out. A red arrow points from the text below to the shimmering band on the blade.

*ko-ashi* (small legs) flare out to the cutting edge.

A close-up, artistic photograph of a sword blade. The blade is dark and curved, with a prominent, bright, wavy line of light running along its length, known as a hamon. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the texture and the sharp edge of the blade against a dark background. The hamon pattern is described as 'tight oscillating' in the text.

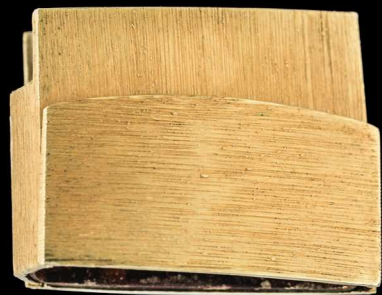
A tight oscillating *midare-ba hamon* beams brightly across this impressively long sword.



Known as *muji-hada*, swordsmith *Shizumoto* folded the steel so densely that no discernible grain pattern can be seen. Muji-hada or *kagami-hada* (mirror like) is generally seen on swords made during the *shinshintô* period or on modern *gendaitô* swords. It is quite rare for a Muromachi period sword to show such a trait. This is one of the reasons why the sword weighs over a kilogram, coupled of course, with its incredible length.



*Shirasaya*  
(protective scabbard)

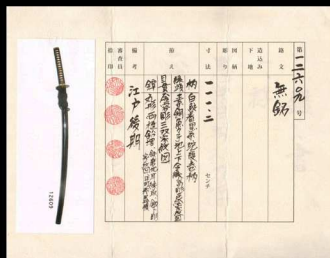


gold *niju habaki* with  
*kiri* file marks

*Kuro-roiro-nuri saya  
uchigatana-koshirae*  
(黒呂色塗鞘打刀拵え)

*Uchigatana-koshirae  
lacquered in glossy black*

Crafted during the  
Middle Edo period  
(1700~1780)



*NTHK-NPO Kanteisho  
Certificate of Authenticity*

(Shô) 正  
(a) 阿  
(mi) 弥

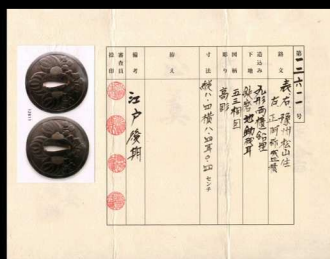
(Mori) 盛  
(zumi) 積

豫 (Aruji)  
州 (Go)

松 (tô)  
山 (Tô)  
住 (go)



Signed, *Shôami Morizumi*  
Resident of Matsuyama in Yoshû province.  
Iron ground tsuba with *kirimon* (paulownia) design.  
Late Edo Period (1780~1868)



(reverse)



*hitsu-ana* (holes) filled with lead.



There is great satisfaction to see a full set of koshirae with a matching theme. The tsuba, fuchi-kashira and menuki all carry a kirimon theme. The use of copper with gold accents gives a fine touch of class.





*Fuchi-kashira*  
 attributed to  
**Masamitsu**  
 the 7th head of the Nomura Family  
 (Late Edo period)

*Kiri-mon* (paulownia design)





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.



safe, extra large cloth for adding oil to the blade