



ITEM# UJKA447

## A KUNISHIGE KATANA

SIGNED, SHINTÔ PERIOD (JÔKYÔ ERA: 1684~1688)

|                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| <b>Swordsmith:</b>       | <i>Yamashiro Daijô Minamoto Kunishige (nidai, 2nd gen.)</i>   |
| <b>Measurements:</b>     | <b>Length:</b> 74.3cm ( <i>ubu</i> ) <b>Curvature:</b> 1.5cm <b>Moto-haba:</b> 2.98cm <b>Weight:</b> 720g |
| <b>Jihada:</b>           | <i>Outstanding ô-itame and mokume-hada with ji-nie and chikei</i>   |
| <b>Hamon:</b>            | <i>Thick suguha in nie-deki, kuichigaiba with ko-ashi, kinsuji and kaen-bôshi</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, fk and tsuba certified as Authentic</i> )                        |
| <b>Fujishiro rank:</b>   | <b>Chûjô-saku</b> ( <i>ranked as an above average swordsmith</i> )  |
| <b>Authentication:</b>   | <b>Sayagaki by Nozomi-san</b> ( <i>shodô artist</i> )   |
| <b>Included:</b>         | Shirasaya, Edo-koshirae, fabric bags, stand, kit, printed description                                     |

**SOLD**

This outstanding katana is the work of *nidai Kunishige*, born *Ôtsuki Denshichirô*, and student of *Ichizô Kunishige* - both of whom were known as *Edo Mizuta*. The *Mizuta* school derives its name from a group of swordsmiths that lived at *Mizuta* village in *Bitchû* province. Members of this school are said to be descendants of *Ko-Aoe Tametsugu* and *shodai Kunishige*, known as *Ko-Mizuta*. This blade is a splendid example of the wonderful grain patterns that make Japanese swords so divine. Gorgeous whirlpools of *ô-itame* and *mokume-hada* illuminate this long samurai sword with a thick blanket of winding *suguha* in *nie-deki*. A set of late Edo period *koshirae* tastefully compliments the blade featuring a leather wrapped *tsuka*, a late *Higo fuchi-kashira* and a beautiful *Heianjô* school *tsuba*.



Saki-kasane: 4.2mm

Moto-kasane: 6.5mm

Omosa: 720g

Kissaki: 2.74cm

Saki-haba: 1.83cm

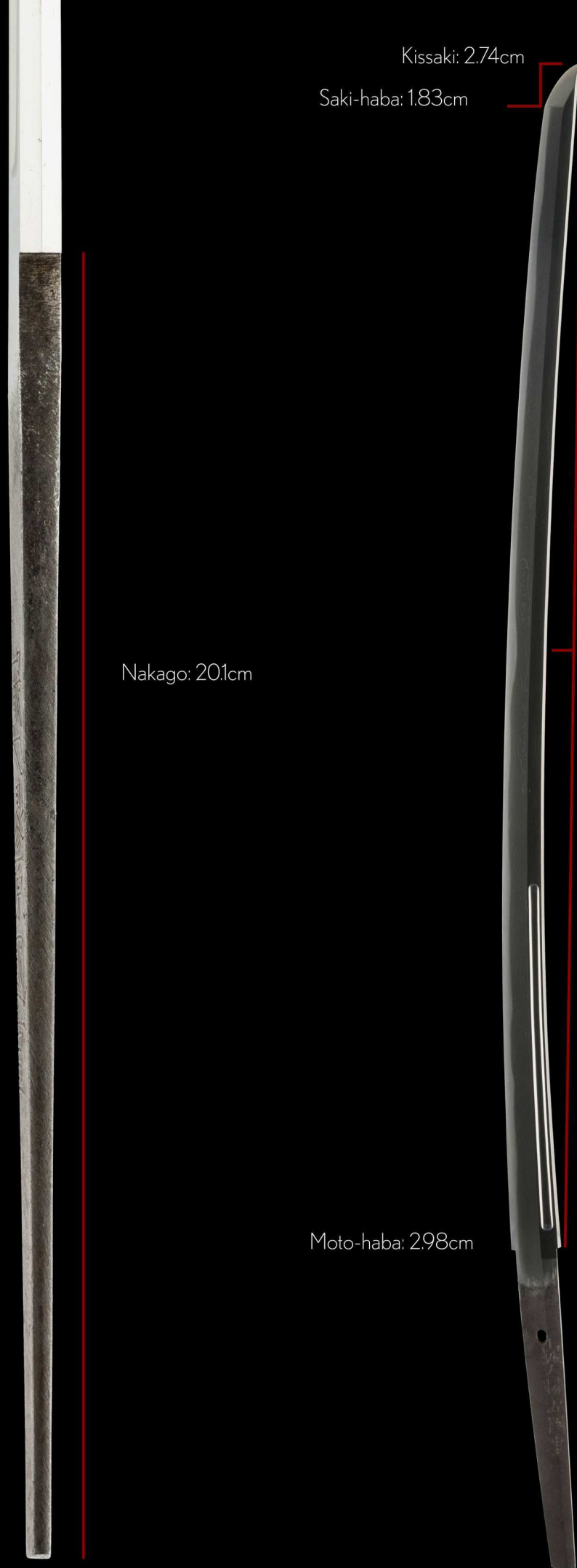
Nakago: 20.1cm

Moto-haba: 2.98cm

Nagasa: 74.3cm

Sori: 1.5cm

Mekugi-ana: 1



The *Mizuta school* derived its name from a group of swordsmiths that lived in *Mizuta village* in *Bitchû province*. Members of this school are said to be the descendants of *Ko-Aoe Tametsugu* and the smith *Kunishige* who lived during the *Kyôroku era* (1528~1532) was known as *Ko-Mizuta*.

In the shintô period, their craftsmanship altered completely from *Sue-Bizen* and *Sue-Mihara* to a more electric *Soshû* influence with loads of visible *nie* crystals, a surging *gunome-midare hamon* and plentiful *hataraki* that includes *sunagashi* and *kinsuji*.

The most famous smith of the Shintô Mizuta school was *Ôtsuki Yogoro Kunishige*, also known as 5th generation *Ôyogo Kunishige*. Unfortunately *Ôyogo* died early leaving his son, 6th generation *Katsubei*, under the care of his younger brother, swordsmith *Ichizô Kunishige*.

This fabulous katana is the work of *Ichizô's* star student, *Ôtsuki Denshichirô*, who signed the nakago of his swords in the same manner as his *sensei*, *Yamashiro Daijô Minamoto Kunishige*.

For those looking for a sword with a pronounced *hada* (grain pattern), then this katana has to be seriously shortlisted. The sword lights up like a Christmas tree under the light with dazzling burl and plank wood grain patterns (*ô-itame* and *mokume hada*) that will delight each and every time it is unsheathed.

Its thick *nioguchi* of *suguha* twists its merry way down the blade with visible *nie* crystals glittering in *Soshû* tradition. Complimenting the sword is a handsome set of *koshirae* with a lovely *Heianjo* tsuba and a firm leather wrap. All told, this is a terrific (and long) katana with a spiritual force that will delight any new or seasoned collector of Japanese nihontô swords.

Enjoy!





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

Clan: *Minamoto*

Swordsmith: *Kunishige* (second generation)

*ubu-nakago* (original, unaltered tang)

*sujikai-yasurime* (diagonal file marks)

山 (Yama)

城 (shiro)

大 (Dai)

掾 (jô)

源 (Minamoto)

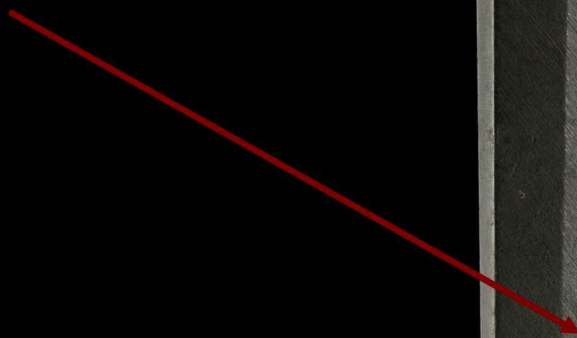
國 (Kuni)

重 (shige)

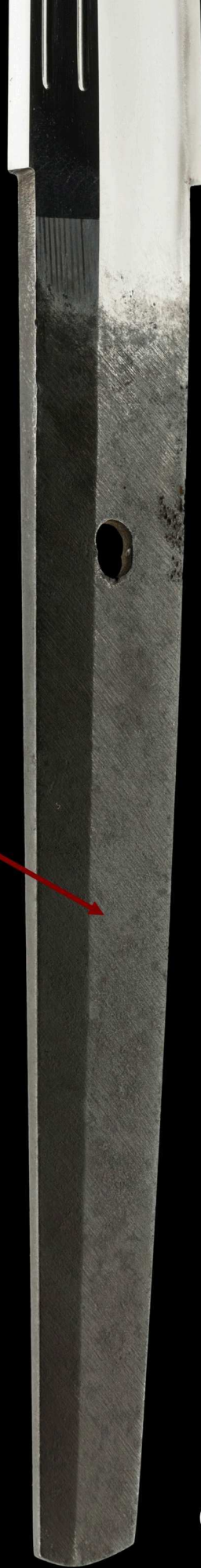


A close look at the precise chisel work that goes into a sword that Kunishige was proud to sign.

Well-chiseled *sujikai* (diagonal file marks)



(*ura*, reverse)



特 保  
26201411

No 1002923



鑑定書

一 刀 銘 山城大掾源国重

長 二尺四寸五分

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

平成二十七年 二月 五日

公益財団法人 日本美術刀剣保存協會



山形 教育委員会  
第 20854号  
昭和34年 5月18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 27th year of Heisei (2015), February 5th

One, Katana

*Mei* (signature)

*Yamashiro Daijō Minamoto Kunishige*

*Nagasa* (length)

2-shaku 4-sun 5-bu (74.3cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai  
(NBTHK)



山城大掾源国重

山城大掾源国重  
*Yamashiro Daijō Minamoto Kunishige*  
Yamashiro Daijō Minamoto Kunishige

時代貞享頃

時代貞享頃  
*Jidai Jōkyō-goro*  
Around Jōkyō era (1684~1688)

刃長貳尺四寸五分有之

刃長貳尺四寸五分有之  
*Hachō 2-shaku 4-sun 5-bu kore ari*  
Blade length 74.3 cm

令和六甲辰年  
葉月吉日誌之

令和六甲辰年葉月吉日誌之  
*Reiwa roku kinō-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)





*Goma* (or "Homa" in Sanskrit) means "to burn".  
*Hashi* means "chopsticks".

These double narrow short grooves with the same length and rounded top are symbolic of chopsticks used during *Goma* - a deeply spiritual Buddhist ceremony.

The officiating priest, who has performed the self-purification rites for both his mind and body, burns the *goma* wood in the center of the fireplace of the *goma* platform, which is in front of the principal holy image of *kôbo daishi*.



*gomabashi* - pair of parallel grooves running partway up the blade resembling chopsticks used for the spiritual Buddhist *goma* fire ritual.

a short *bo-hi* (rounded groove) is featured on the opposite side.

A beautiful *kaen boshi* that resembles a candle flame.



Crazy beautiful grain pattern...

Visible nie-crystals can be seen dotted along the thick, abright *suguha* hamon.



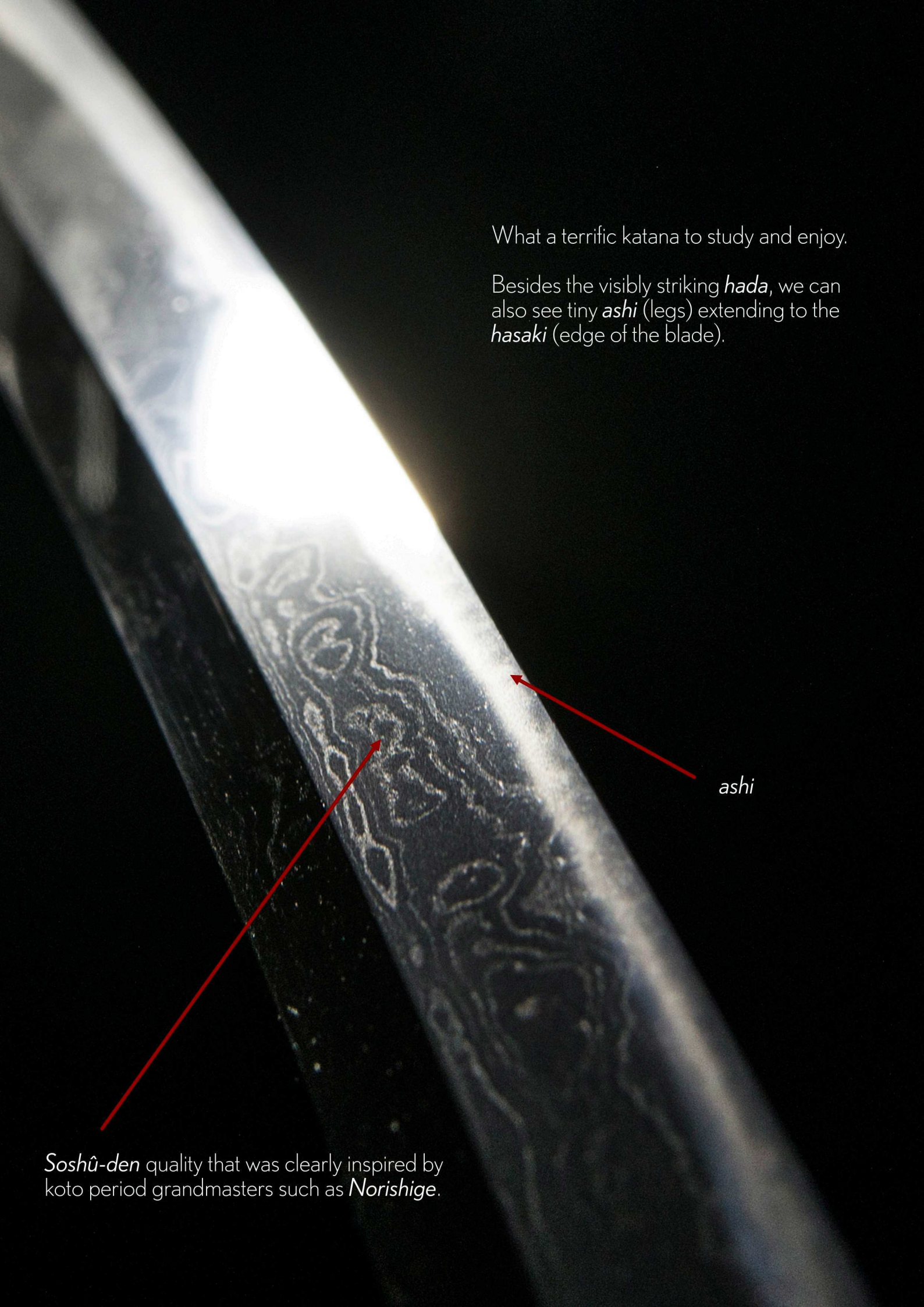
*kuichigaiba*  
(an overlap in the hamon creating a gap.)





*ô-itame* and *mokume-hada*  
(wood grain formations)

Fantastic whirlpools of *ô-itame* and *mokume-hada* form an absolutely brilliant light show.

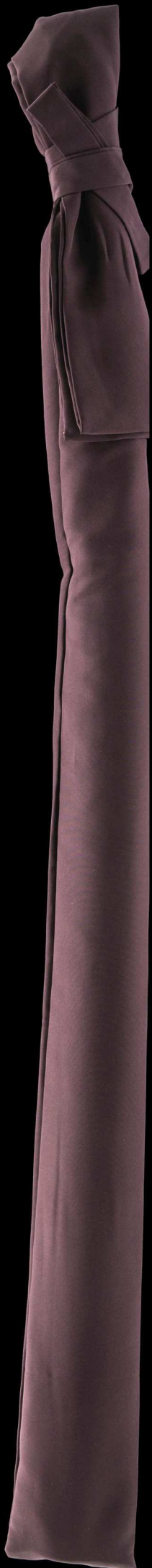


What a terrific katana to study and enjoy.

Besides the visibly striking *hada*, we can also see tiny *ashi* (legs) extending to the *hasaki* (edge of the blade).

*ashi*

*Soshû-den* quality that was clearly inspired by koto period grandmasters such as *Norishige*.

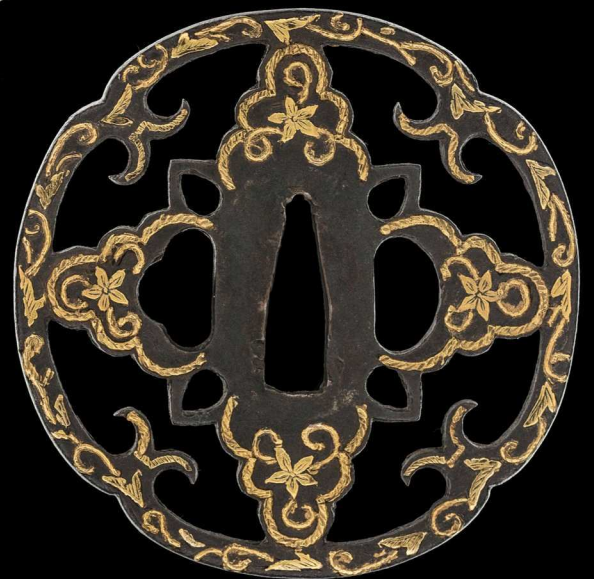


*Shirasaya*  
(protective scabbard)



*gold wrapped niju habaki*





*Heianjô-tsuba* crafted in Yamashiro province.  
 Polished iron, motif of ivy and bellflowers.  
 Crafted in early Edo period, early 1600s.





leather wrap



An antique leather wrapped *tsuka* (hilt) with *menuki* that depict *jimbata* (samurai war flags).  
Note how the *samekawa* (ray skin) has aged nicely - like a bottle of fine whiskey.



polished iron



An elegant *fuchi-kashira* attributed to the  
*Edo-Higo* school  
 Late Edo period (1780-1867)

Gold motif of ivy and *kirimon* (paulownia crest)





Koshirae bag