



ITEM# UJKA451

A MORIKAGE KATANA

UNSIGNED, CHÛ-KOTÔ PERIOD (JÔJI ERA: 1361~1368)

Swordsmith:	<i>Ômiya Morikage (1st gen.)</i>
Measurements:	Length: 72.4cm (<i>ô-suriage</i>) Sori: 1.1cm Moto-haba: 2.97cm Weight: 820g
Jihada:	<i>Well-forged mokume-hada with ji-nie, chikei and midare-utsuri</i>
Hamon:	<i>Spectacular whips of gunome-midare with deep kinsuji and midare-bôshi</i>
Certificate #1-2:	NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon (<i>sword and fk Especially Worthy of Preservation</i>)
Certificates #3:	NTHK-NPO Yûshûsaku (<i>as sword designated as Masterwork</i>)
Certificates #4-5:	NTHK-NPO Kanteisho (<i>tsuba and koshirae designated Authentic</i>)
Fujishiro rank:	Jô-saku (<i>ranked as a superior swordsmith</i>)
Sharpness:	Ryô-wazamonô (<i>rated as a maker of highly sharp swords</i>)
Authentication:	Sayagaki by Tanobe-sensei (<i>Tanobe Michihiro</i>)
Included:	Shirasaya, custom koshirae, fabric bags, stand, kit, printed description

SOLD

This commanding katana by *jô-saku* and *ryô-wazamono* swordsmith *Ômiya Morikage* embodies the warrior spirit of the *Nambokuchô* period. The blade's impressive width and *ô-kissaki* tip reveal its origins as a formidable *ô-dachi*, originally approaching 90cm in length. Its striking *gunome-midare hamon* surges dramatically along the steel, accompanied by a brilliant *midare-utsuri* reflecting the traits of classic *Bizen* tradition of the *kotô* period. The blade's elegant custom *koshirae* features an intimidating demon *tsuba* by *Mogarachi Sôten*, exquisite *fuchi-kashira* signed by *Gotô Mitsutomo*, and lovely *bonsai* tree *menuki*, all wrapped in pristine white silk with high-class *jabaramaki* braiding.



Saki-kasane: 5.1mm

Moto-kasane: 6.8mm

Omosa: 820g

Kissaki: 5.03cm

Saki-haba: 2.15cm

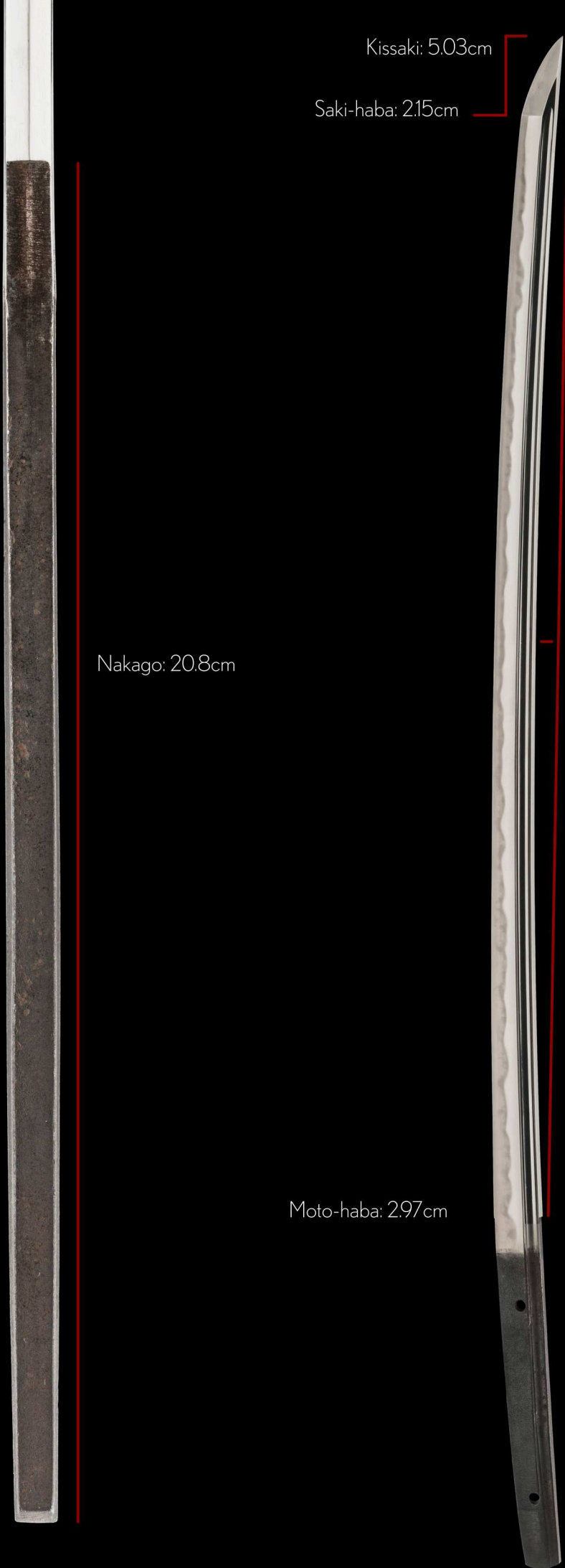
Nakago: 20.8cm

Moto-haba: 2.97cm

Nagasa: 72.4cm

Sori: 1.10cm

Mekugi-ana: 2



Swordsmith *Kunimori* is regarded as the founder of the *Bizen Ômiya school*. He was active circa 1260 during the mid-Kamakura period. Two theories exist on origins of the name; one suggests that Kunimori came from *Inokuma Ômiya* in *Yamashiro province* - the other states he travelled to the Ômiya district of Bizen.

The majority of the swords we find today from this school are unsigned and attributed to a specific smith or simply to the *Ômiya school*. *Morikage*, *Morishige* and *Morokage* are the more prominent swordsmiths.

The NBTHK has attributed this katana to the *Ômiya school*. However, both the *sayagaki* by *Tanobe-sensei* and the NTHK-NPO *Yûshûsaku* (masterwork) certificate went a step further and attributed the sword to *Ômiya Morikage*.

Tanobe-sensei states on the *sayagaki* that this sword was crafted during the *Jôji era* (1362~1368) in the heart of the warring Nambokuchô period. Morikage crafted swords have reached Jûyô status as well as prestigious *Jûyô Bunkazai* and *Jûyô Bijitsuhin*.


This powerhouse katana by Morikage reflects its near 700-year-old *Nambokuchô* time period. This is a wide and thick sword with an *ô-kissaki* that would have meant business on the battlefield. In fact, this sword would have originally been an imposing *ô-dachi*, a long *tachi* with a *nagasa* (cutting edge) approaching 90cm.

The *hamon* is a striking *gunome-midare* that whips high and low, dazzling the eye along the steel. There is also a brilliant *midare-utsuri* that reflects this pattern in classic *kotô* period Bizen tradition.

A beautiful custom koshirae was built for the sword that includes a stunning *Mogarachi Sôten* demon *tsuba*, a gorgeous signed *Gotô Mitsutomo fuchi-kashira* and charming bonsai tree *menuki* wrapped over in pure white silk with first-class *jabaramaki* braiding.

Morikage is ranked as *jô-saku* (superior smith) and *ryô-wazamono* for the enviably sharp reputation his swords enjoyed.

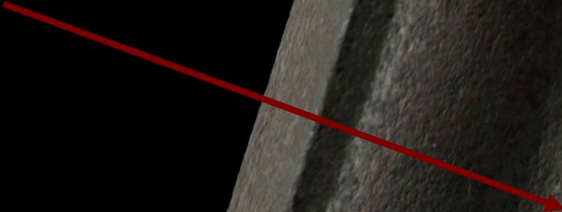




Ô-suriage (greatly shortened)
whereby the signature on the
nakago was lost during the
katana's shortening process.

The katana was once an *ô-dachi*, (very long tachi) with an impressive original length of well-over 80cm in *nagasa*.

A transition point of two ages,
before and after being shortened.



Groove extends through
the *nakago* (*kaki-tôshi*).



特 選
13200111



No. 146899



鑑定書

長二尺三寸九分弱

一 刀 無銘(大宮)

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

平成十三年十二月三十一日

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

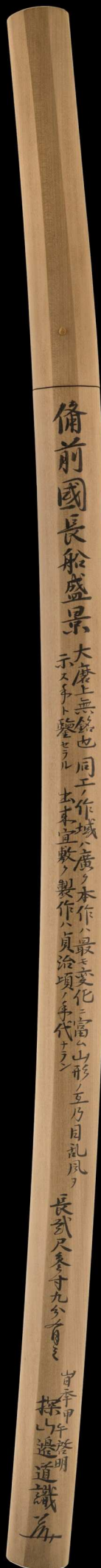
Issued in the 13th year of Heisei (2001), December 25th

One, Katana

Mumei (unsigned)
Ômiya

Nagasa (length)
2-shaku 3-sun 9-bu jaku (72.4cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai
(NBTHK)



備前国長船盛景
Bizen no kuni Osafune Morikage
Osafune Morikage from Bizen province

大摺上無銘也
Ô-suriage mumei nari
Ô-suriage, unsigned

同工ノ作域ハ廣ク本作ハ最モ変化ニ富ム山形ノ互乃目乱風ヲ示ス手ト鑿セラル
出来宜敷ク制作ハ貞治頃ノ年代ナラン

Dôkô no sakuiki wa hiroku honsaku wa mottomo henka ni tomu yamagata no gunome-midare fû o shimesu te to kanserareru. Deki yoroshiku seisaku wa Jōji goro no nendai naran.

This sword smith displays various characteristics in his works. Of all his pieces, this particular blade shows one of the most eclectic styles of *gunome-midare* hamon. This well-made sword was crafted during the Jōji period (1362~1368).

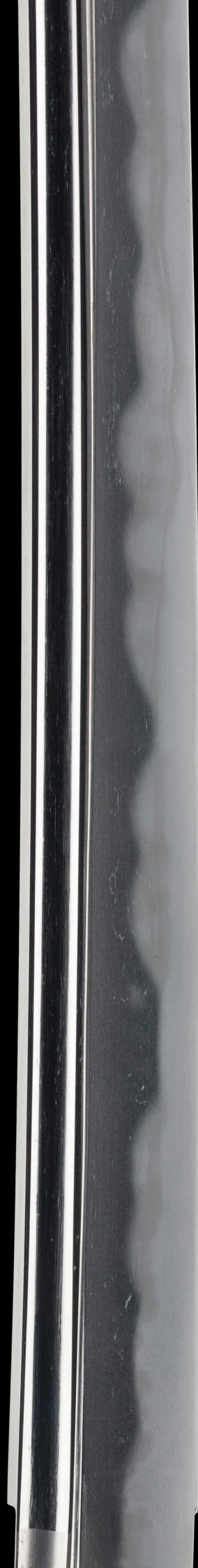
長式尺参寸九分有之
Nagasa 2-shaku 3-sun 9-bu kore ari
Blade length 72.4cm

貞治甲午啓明深山邊道識 (花押)

Shûki kinoe-uma keimei Tanzan Hendô shirusu (kaô)

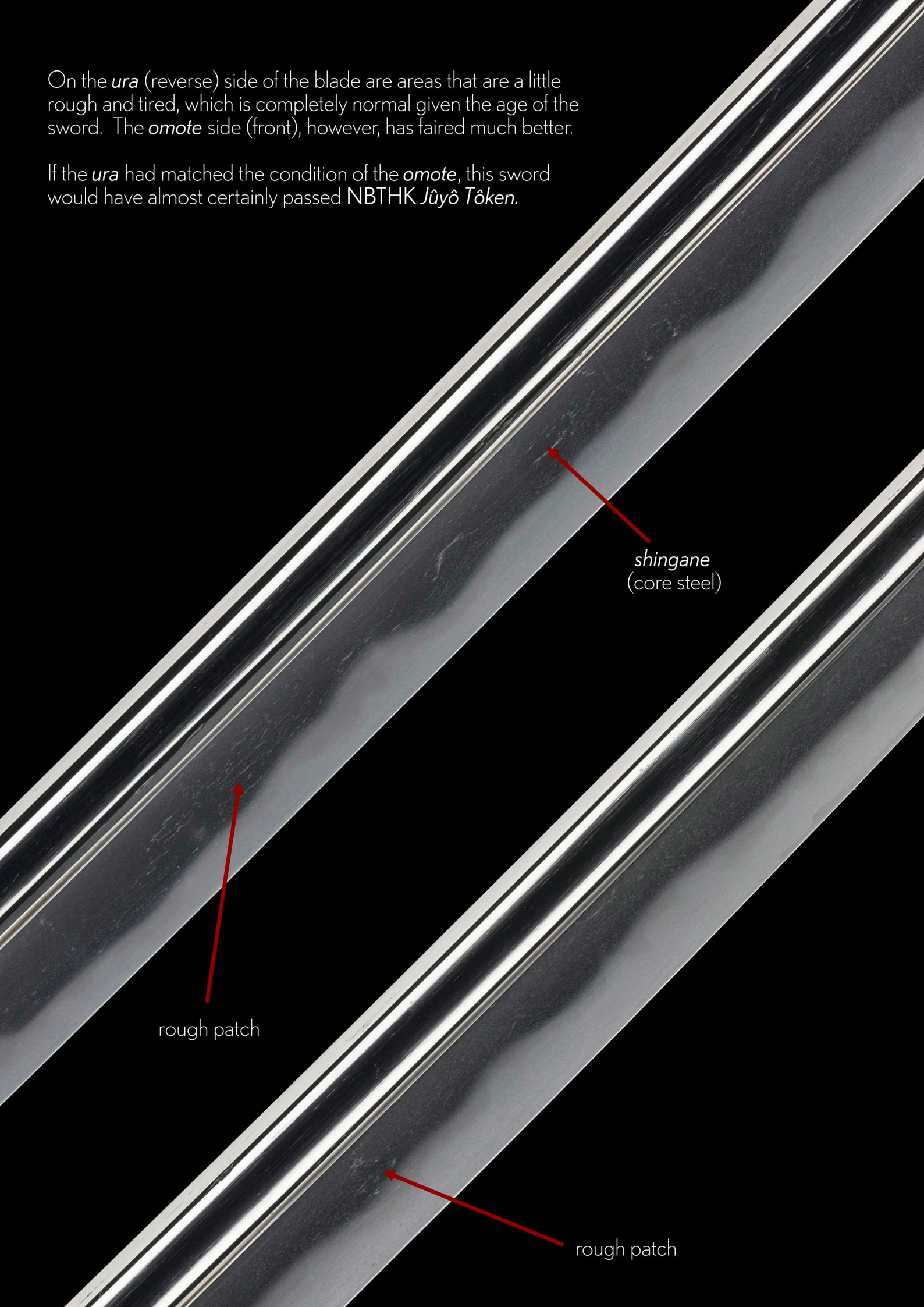
Written by Tanzan Hendô in the morning during the Year of the Horse (2014) + monogram





On the *ura* (reverse) side of the blade are areas that are a little rough and tired, which is completely normal given the age of the sword. The *omote* side (front), however, has faired much better.

If the *ura* had matched the condition of the *omote*, this sword would have almost certainly passed NBTHK *Jûyô Tôken*.



shingane
(core steel)

rough patch

rough patch



bo-hi

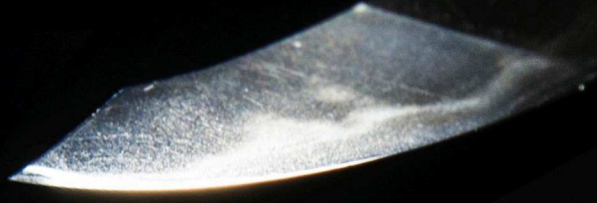
A large groove (*bo-hi*) was made to lighten the blade. Parallel running *soe-bi* (thinner grooves) were also added.

soe-bi

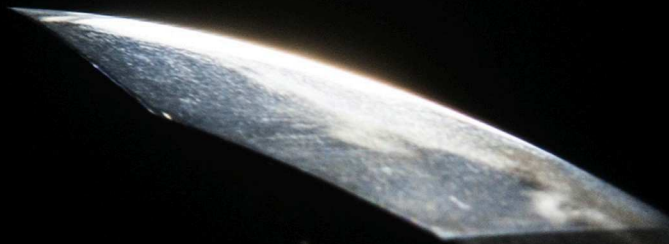
An impressive 5cm long *ô-kissaki* (tip) speaks to the warring mid-1300s *Nambokuchô* period in which this sword was crafted.

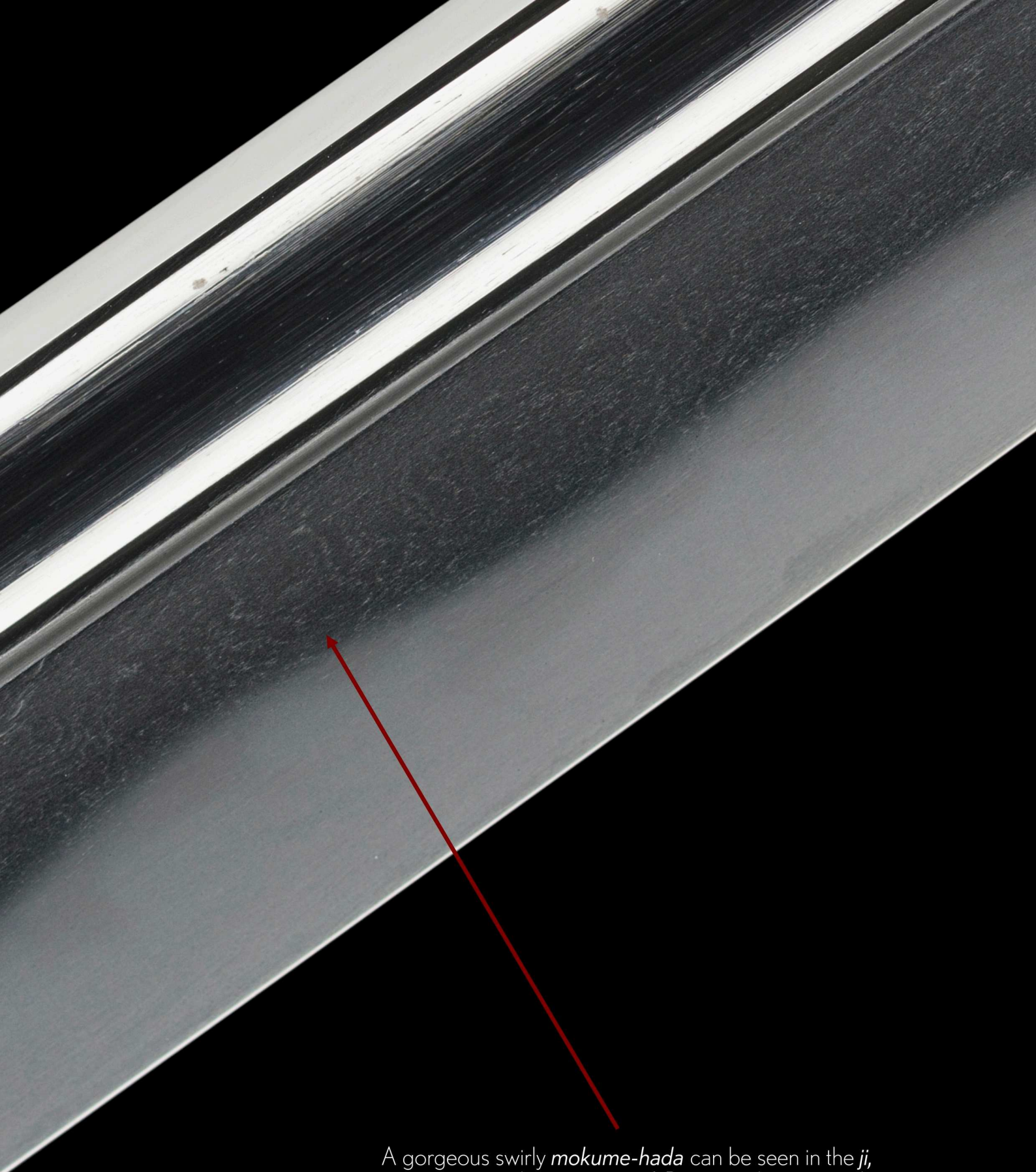
Battle ready.





The *bôshi* (hamon inside the *kissaki*) is a wavy *midare*.





A gorgeous swirly *mokume-hada* can be seen in the *ji*, an important characteristic of Bizen tradition swords from the *Kotô*-period.

A spectacular *hamon* light show of *gunome-midare* that whips from the *ha-saki* (cutting edge) towards the thin *soe-bi* groove. Note how the *midare-utsuri* subtly mimics the hamon pattern. This image captures the beauty found in *kotô* period swords of the Bizen tradition.



Midare-utsuri, a smokey pattern that billows in a wavy formation following the hamon pattern.



Incredible *kinsuji* tears through the *hamon* like an Icebreaker.

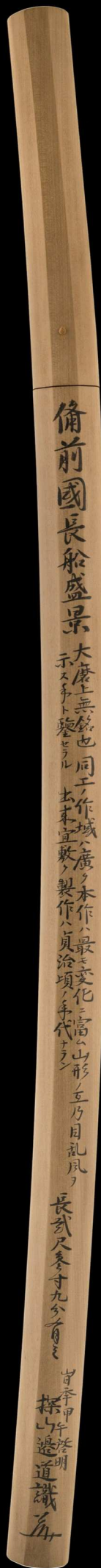




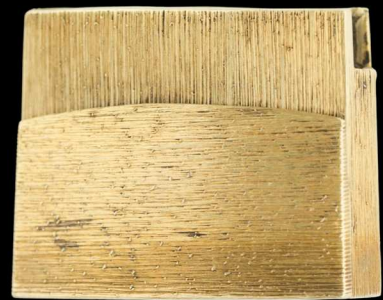
Textbook examples of *sunagashi* (streams of sand) showcasing a broom line effect inside the hamon.



The beating of your heart.



Shirasaya
(protective scabbard & bag)

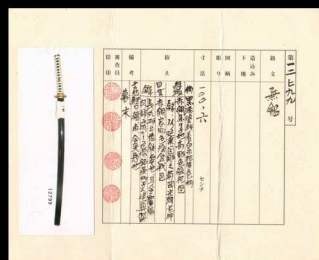


gold *ni-ju habaki* with
straight file marks

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

*Uchigatana-koshirae
lacquered in glossy black*

Crafted during the
modern era.



*NTHK-NPO Kanteisho
Certificate of Authenticity*

(Nyû) 入
(dô) 道
(Sô) 宗
(ten) 典
(tsukuru) 製

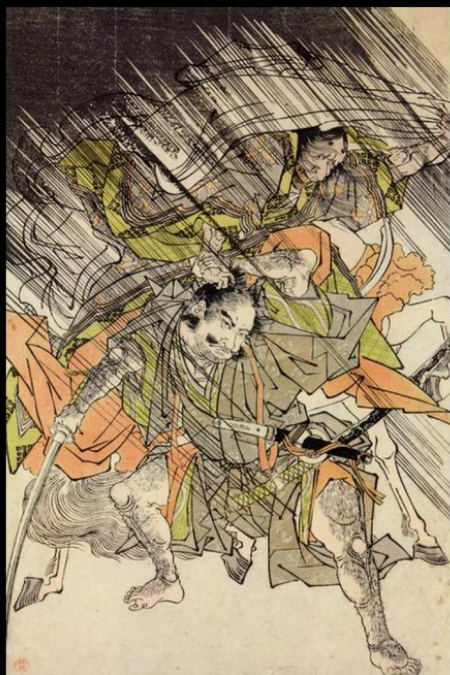


藻 (Mo)
柄 (gara)
子 (shi)

Watanabe no Tsuna

The tsuba was crafted by *Mogarashi Nyûdô Sôten*
(藻柄子入道宗典)

The motif is referred to as "*Ichijô Modoribashi*"



The story goes as follows:

Watanabe no Tsuna, the leader of the big four under *Minamoto no Yorimitsu*, was coming to the foot of *Modoribashi* at midnight and saw a beautiful woman standing there who asked him to take her home as she was scared to return home late at night. Although he considered her behaviour suspicious as a woman alone late at night, he said yes and let her on his horse. Then the woman suddenly transformed into a demon, grabbed Tsuna's hair and flew away with him toward Mt. *Atago*. Tsuna was able to escape by cutting the demon's arm off with his sword. Tsuna kept the demon's arm at his house in *Watanabe no Tsu*, *Settsu Province* (present *Chuo Ward* in *Osaka*), but it is said that the demon recovered it by disguising himself as Tsuna's mother-in-law!

A marvellous *Mogarashi Nyûdô Sôten*
tsuba depicts a demon watching overhead.



(reverse)



Enjô no zu o motte kore o horu - Kikuoka Mitsutomo + kaô
(Crafted based on the motif by Enjô - Kikuoka Mitsutomo + monogram)



(Kiku) 菊

(oka) 岡

(Mitsu) 光

(tomo) 朝

以 (motte)

延 (En)

乘 (jô)

岡 (zu)

彫 (horu)

之 (kore)

Kikuoka Mitsutomo (菊岡光朝) was born in *Kanda, Edo*, in 1775. He lived in *Kanda Kajicho* in Edo and was a renowned craftsman, but died early on April 22, 1813, at the age of just 38.

Enjô is *Gotô Enjô* (後藤延乗)(1721-1784), also known as *Gotô Mitsutaka* (後藤光孝), the 13th head of the famous *Gotô Family*. It is assumed that this piece was created based on a motif by *Goto Enjô*.



A kozuka by
Gotô Enjô



Fukujusô (pheasant's eye)



Fuchi-kashira crafted by *Kikuoka Mitsutomo* depicting *fukujusô* and *chimaki*.

Fukujusô (pheasant's eye) is a buttercup family flower that blooms in early spring, and cherished for its auspiciousness, symbolizing 'rebirth.'



Chimaki is a Japanese dumpling made of various ingredients, that is wrapped in a leaf (bamboo, banana, or reed) and steamed. In Japanese culture, chimaki, or dumplings, are enjoyed on May 5th to celebrate Japanese Children's Day, also known as "*kodomo no hi*" and previously referred to as Boys' Day.

On this national holiday, all boys and girls across Japan are celebrated to wish for their happiness and good health. Imitations of chimaki are used as amulets to ward off bad luck during the *Gion* Festival in Kyôto.



Beautifully braided *jabara-maki tsuka* (hilt) in pure white silk over black-lacquered *samekawa* (ray skin).

鑑定書

一 福寿草粽図縁頭

銘 以延兼図彫之
菊岡光朝(花押)
赤銅魚子地 高彫色絵

右は當協會に於て審査の結果特別保存刀装具と
鑑定しこれを証する

平成二年十月三十一日

財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協會



NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon
Certificate of Designation

A fuchi-kashira designated as *Especially Worthy of Conservation*
by the Society for the Preservation of the Japan Art Sword

Issued in the 2nd year of Heisei (1990), October 31st

One, *Fuchigashira*

*Depicting pheasant's eye and
rice cake wrapped in bamboo leaves*

*Mei (signature)
Enjô no zu o motte kore o horu
Kikuoka Mitsutomo + kaô*

Shakudô with nanako ground, relief with color accents

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai
(NBTHK)



Gorgeous *menuki* depict *bonsai* (miniature trees).

Bonsai was introduced to Japan along with Zen Buddhism between the *Heian* and *Kamakura* periods (794 ~ 1333).

The care and design of *bonsai* requires working with a quiet mind - facing the plant and paying attention to every detail. This has much in common with meditation, an important element in Zen practice.





Koshirae bag



Watching you.