

ITEM# UJKA452

## A KANEWAKA KATANA

SIGNED, SHINTÔ MOMOYAMA PERIOD (KEICHÔ ERA: 1596~1615)

<b>Swordsmith:</b>	<i>Kashû jû Kanewaka Tsukuru (shodai, first generation)</i>
<b>Measurements:</b>	<b>Length:</b> 68.2cm ( <i>ubu</i> ) <b>Sori:</b> 1.2cm <b>Moto-haba:</b> 2.98cm <b>Weight:</b> 645g
<b>Jihada:</b>	<i>Itame mixed with nagare-hada with plentiful chikei, tobiyaki with ji-nie</i>
<b>Hamon:</b>	<i>Bright gunome-midare with dramatic dips, togari, kinsuji and sunagashi</i>
<b>Certificate #1-2:</b>	<b>NBTHK Hozon</b> (a sword and set of menuki Worthy of Preservation)
<b>Certificate #3:</b>	<b>NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon</b> (a tsuba Especially Worthy of Preservation)
<b>Certificates #4-5:</b>	<b>NTHK-NPO Kanteishô</b> (tsuba and koshirae designated Authentic)
<b>Fujishiro rank:</b>	<b>Jôjô-saku</b> (ranked as a highly superior swordsmith)
<b>Sharpness:</b>	<b>Ô-wazamonô</b> (rated as a maker of supremely sharp swords)
<b>Included:</b>	Shirasaya, Edo koshirae, fabric bags, stand, kit, printed description

**SOLD**

Born *Tsujimura Jinroku, Shodai Kanewaka*, travelled to *Kaga* province and founded the prestigious *Kanewaka* school. He became so esteemed that he was referred to as *Kaga Masamune*. This fine *ubunakago katana* exudes a proud *Keichô shintô* shape with a well-forged *jihada* containing a great amount of *chikei* with a bright *gunome-midare hamon* that dramatically hugs the *ha-saki* in parts. In wealthy *Kaga* province, ruled by the powerful *Maeda* clan, and renowned for its gold leaf artistry - the *samekawa* (ray skin) wrapping the sword's hilt (*tsuka*) was specially lacquered in gleaming gold and juxtaposed with brilliant butterflies reflecting the region's rich heritage. This is a terrific celebratory samurai sword by a highly superior smith to be cherished for generations to come.



Saki-kasane: 4.4mm

Kissaki: 3.36cm

Saki-haba: 1.92cm

Moto-kasane: 7.2mm

Nagasa: 68.2cm

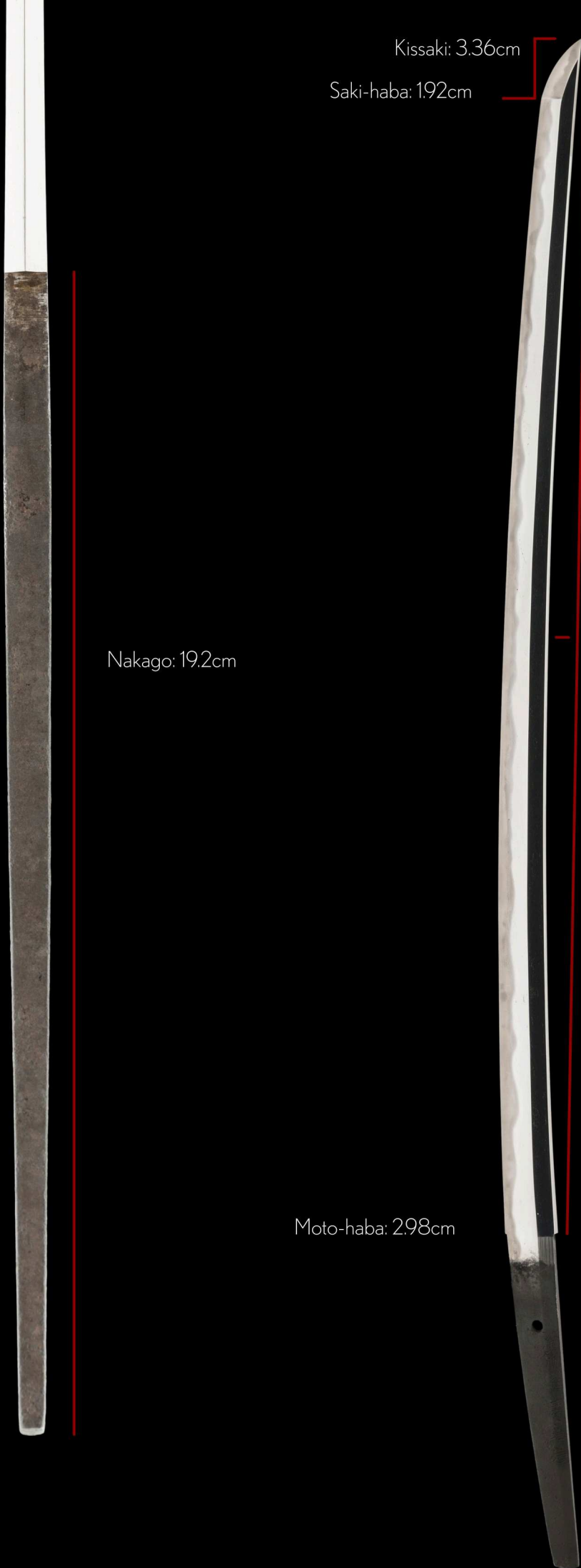
Nakago: 19.2cm

Sori: 1.2cm

Omosa: 645g

Moto-haba: 2.98cm

Mekugi-ana: 1



The famed Kanewaka family of smiths all started in *Mino* province during the *Bunmei era* (1469~1487) with first generation *Mino Kanewaka* said to be a descendent of great swordsmith *Shizu Saburo Kaneuji*.

Fast forward to 1605, the fifth generation Kanewaka, born *Tsujimura Jinroku*, travelled to *Kaga* province from either *Mino* or *Inuyama* in *Owari*, subsequently founding the *Kaga Kanewaka school* and becoming *Kashû (Gashû) jû Kanewaka*. He received the title *Etchu no Kami* circa 1620 and he died in 1628.

Shodai Kanewaka demonstrated a magnificent range of skill, crafting katana in classic *Keichô shintô suguta* (shape), *wakizashi* and *tantô*. In his early years he worked in the *Mino* tradition (that we see in this sword) and later on when signing with the name *Takahira*, he show skilfully cut *horimono* in the form of *shôchikubai* (pine, bamboo and plum) or *kurikara*.

Kanewaka was so highly esteemed that he was referred to as *Kaga Masamune* - in tribute to one of Japan's most celebrated swordsmiths. And because of his fame, his blades were quite expensive for the average samurai, resulting in the famous *nihontô* Edo period saying "*those bushi (samurai) who want a Kanewaka have to spend so much money that they have to sell their daughters.*"

This fine *ubu-nakago* katana exudes a proud *Keichô shintô* shape with a relatively shallow curvature and extended *chû-kissaki* (tip). The *jihada* containing a great amount of dark swirling *chikei* with a bright *gunome-midare* hamon that dramatically hugs the *hasaki* (edge) in parts. There are some areas of *hada-ware* that may turn off some collectors, but seeing past these non-fatal flaws reveals a four hundred-year-old samurai sword with terrific energy.

In wealthy *Kaga* province—ruled by the powerful *Maeda* clan and centred in *Kanazawa*, renowned for its gold leaf artistry - the *samekawa* (ray skin) wrapping the sword's hilt (*tsuka*) was specially lacquered in gleaming gold to reflect the region's rich heritage. Even the silk was braided in gold with meaningful butterflies joining in the party. This is a feel-good, celebratory samurai sword to be cherished and enjoyed within your family for generations to come.





Location: *Kaga province*

Swordsmith: *Kanewaka* (first generation)

*ubu-nakago* (original, unaltered tang)

*sujikai-yasurime* (slanting file marks)

賀 (Ga)

州 (shû)

住 (jû)

兼 (Kane)

若 (waka)

造 (tsukuru)



one clean hole in *nakago*, always desirable

(*ura*, reverse)



Among the existing works of *Shodai Kanewaka*, the oldest known piece is dated to the 14th year of the *Keicho* era (1609), and pieces bearing his signature can be found until the 5th year of the *Genna* era (1619). From 1621, he signed a good number of blades with the name *Takahira* (高平). There are a greater number of swords with the *Takahira* signature, while pieces signed as *Kanewaka* are considered rare and precious.

19200707

No. 378379



鑑定書

長三尺三寸五分

一、刀銘 賀州住兼若造(初代)

右は當協會に於て審査の結果保存刀剣と  
鑑定しこれを証する

平成十九年八月三十一日

財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協會



NBTHK Hozon  
Certificate of Designation

A sword designated as *Worthy of Conservation*  
by the Society for the Preservation of the Japan Art Sword

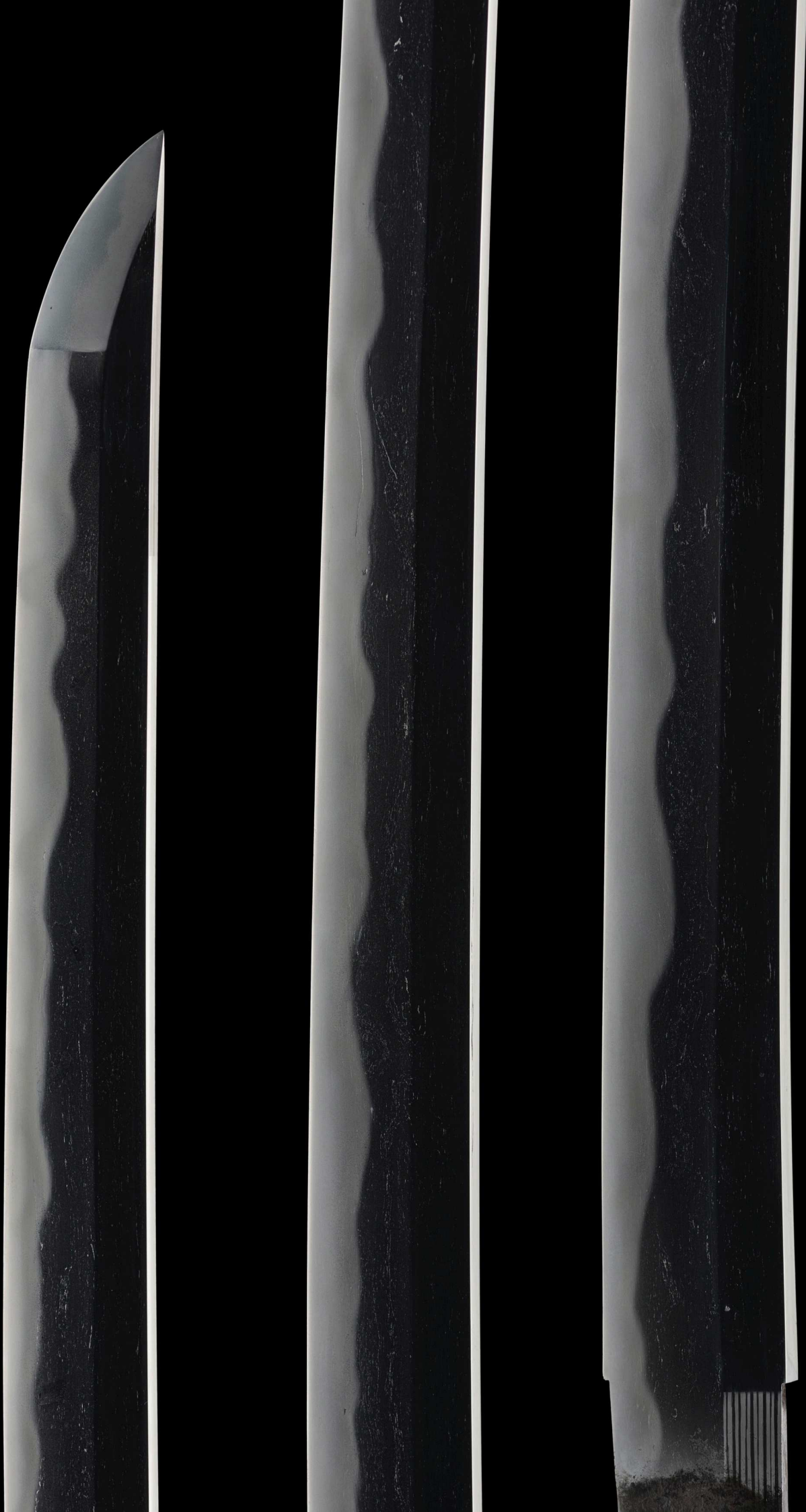
Issued in the 19th year of Heisei (2007), August 21st

One, Katana

Mei (signature)  
*Gashû-jû Kanewaka tukuru (Shodai)*

Nagasa (length)  
2-shaku 2-sun 5-bu (68.2cm)

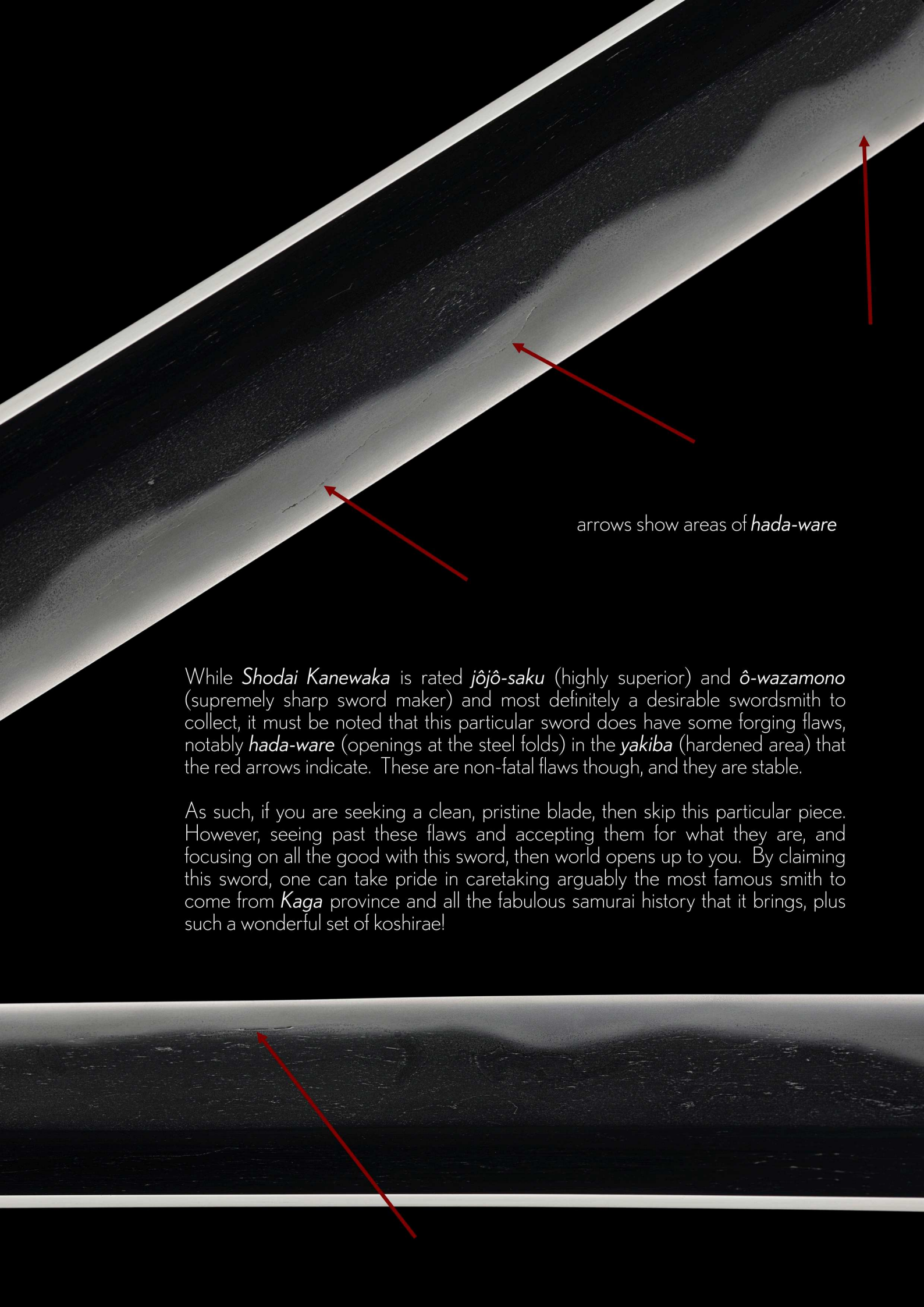
Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai  
(NBTHK)





Stand tall. *Keichô* style.






arrows show areas of *hada-ware*

While *Shodai Kanewaka* is rated *jôjô-saku* (highly superior) and *ô-wazamono* (supremely sharp sword maker) and most definitely a desirable swordsmith to collect, it must be noted that this particular sword does have some forging flaws, notably *hada-ware* (openings at the steel folds) in the *yakiba* (hardened area) that the red arrows indicate. These are non-fatal flaws though, and they are stable.

As such, if you are seeking a clean, pristine blade, then skip this particular piece. However, seeing past these flaws and accepting them for what they are, and focusing on all the good with this sword, then world opens up to you. By claiming this sword, one can take pride in caretaking arguably the most famous smith to come from *Kaga* province and all the fabulous samurai history that it brings, plus such a wonderful set of *koshirae*!

A close-up photograph of a sword's edge, showing a dark, wavy pattern of light reflecting off the metal. A red arrow points from the text to the edge of the sword.

The *gunome-midare hamon* stretches dramatically to the *ha-saki* (edge).

A unique ring of *tobiyaki* appears in the *ji* (body) of the sword.

A close-up photograph of the body of a sword, showing a dark, wavy pattern of light reflecting off the metal. A red arrow points from the text to a specific ring of light on the sword's body.



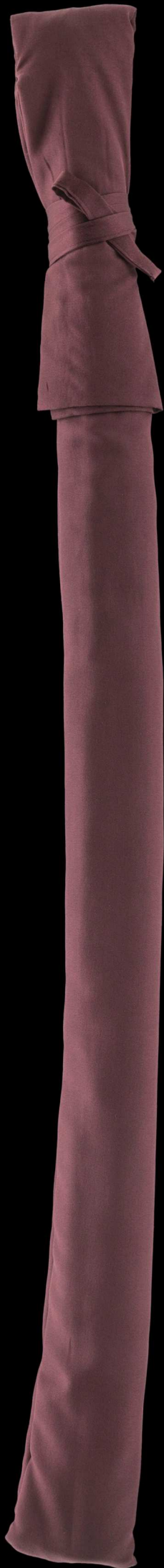
Captivating 'golden' lines of *kinsuji*.



A wonderful stream of *sunagashi*.



The twinkling *nie* crystals with long *ashi* (legs) captures the imagination.



*sayagaki* potential!



*Shirasaya*  
(protective scabbard)



copper *habaki* with  
Kaga style (*Kaga-habaki*)



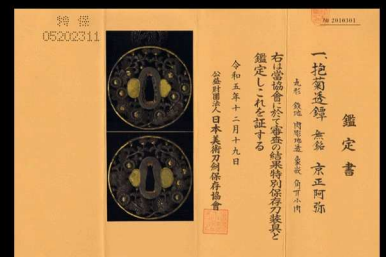


The *tsuba* has "*daki-giku* (embracing chrysanthemum)" theme.

The design of "*daki-giku*" features chrysanthemums arranged to suggest warmth and intimacy, symbolizing longevity, beauty, and the changing seasons. This motif is often used in various artistic forms in Japanese culture and is associated with nobility, signifying its status as a flower favoured by the aristocracy.

*Kyo-Shôami* (京正阿弥) is a traditional school of fittings that developed during the Edo period. The style emphasises delicate and detailed designs, often featuring motifs from nature, such as flowers and animals.

The pieces are characterized by their elegance, sophistication, and adherence to traditional aesthetics, making them highly valued among collectors and enthusiasts of Japanese swords.



NBTHK  
Tokubetsu Hozon Certificate

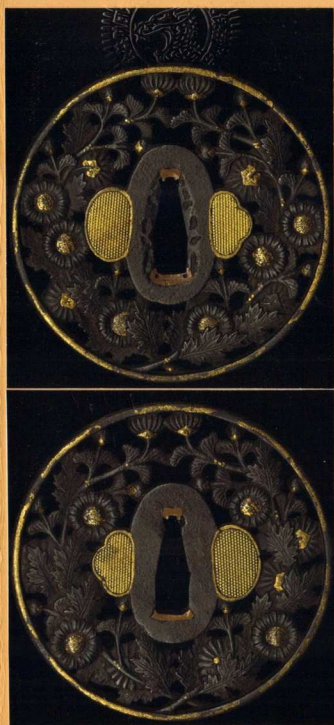
(reverse)

*mimi* (rim)

*nunome-zôgan* (crosshatch design)



特保  
05202311



№ 2010301

鑑定書

一抱菊透鐔 無銘 京正阿弥

丸形 鉄地 肉彫地透象嵌 角耳小肉

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

令和五年十二月十九日

公益財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協會



NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon  
Certificate of Designation

A tsuba 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 19th

One, Tsuba

*With openworks depicting a chrysanthemum bouquet*

*Mumei (Unsigned)  
Kyô-Shôami*

*Round shape, iron, three dimensional openworks, inlay,  
angular rim with a little roundness.*

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai  
(NBTHK)



*Fuchi-kashira*  
depicting butterflies and chrysanthemum

The combination of butterflies and chrysanthemums expresses change and rebirth, love and beauty, as well as longevity and refinement.

This motif was frequently depicted in decorative arts, literature, and *ukiyo-e* (woodblock prints) during the Edo period.



*lacquered in gold*



During the Edo period, *Kanazawa* served as the capital of the prosperous *Kaga* domain in *Ishikawa* Prefecture. The city established itself as a centre of exceptional gold leaf production – a prestigious artistic tradition that continues to flourish today. In respect to this tradition, the *samekawa* (ray skin) on the *tsuka* (hilt) was lacquered in gold and further braided in gold silk. All work was performed by master craftsman in Japan.

The *menuki* (ornamental grips) depict a swallowtail butterfly motif, beautifully matching the butterflies illustrated on the *fuchi-kashira*.

The swallowtail butterfly crest originated during the *Genpei* era (~1192) when it was used by the *Taira* clan. It was also employed by the *Chô* family, who served the *Maeda* clan, the feudal lords of *Kaga*.



25201310



No 4003602



右は當協會に於て審査の結果保存刀装具と  
鑑定しこれを証する

平成二十五年十一月一日

公益財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協會



鑑定書

一 揚羽蝶紋  
二 双図目貫

無銘 後藤

赤銅地 容彫

## NBTHK Hozon Certificate of Designation

A tsuba designated as *Worthy of Conservation*  
by the Society for the Preservation of the Japan Art Sword

Issued in the 25th year of Heisei (2013), November 1st

One, Menuki

*Depicting a crast of a pair of swallowtail butterflies*

*Mumei (unsigned)  
Gotô school*

*Shakudô, three dimensional with forming the outline*

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai  
(NBTHK)



The butterfly effect



Koshirae bag with *kiku-mon*  
(chrysanthemum) pattern