



ITEM# UJKA453

A TEGAI KATANA

UNSIGNED, KOTÔ PERIOD (KAMAKURA~NAMBOKUCHÔ 1300~1350)

Swordsmith:	<i>Tegai school</i> (手搔)
Measurements:	Length: 71.3cm (<i>o-suriage</i>) Sori: 1.8cm Moto-haba: 2.97cm Weight: 700g
Jihada:	<i>Well-forged ko-mokume, nagare-hada with chikei with sparkling ji-nie</i>
Hamon:	<i>Bright suguha in nie-deki with uchinoke, kinsuji and kaen-bôshi</i>
Certificate #1:	NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon (Especially Worthy of Preservation)
Certificate #2-4:	NTHK-NPO Kanteishô (<i>koshirae, fk and tsuba certified as Authentic</i>)
Authentication:	Sayagaki by Nozomi-san (<i>shodô artist</i>)
Included:	<i>Shirasaya, Edo-koshirae, fabric bags, stand, kit, printed description</i>

SOLD

The handsome katana by the *Yamato Tegai school* is a prime example of the splendour of *kotô* period swords. The Tegai school was named after its workshop's location in front of the glorious *Tengai-mon* gate of *Todaiji* temple in *Nara*, the former capital of Japan. The sword's elegant shape is indicative of its origins as a *tachi* - the early Japanese long sword design that was typically made for horseback warfare. The *ji* beams brightly with *ji-nie* highlighting a well-forged *nagare-hada, ko-mokume*, loads of *chikei* and the presence of *uchinoke*, small 'crescent-shaped moons' along the hamon. A splendid iron-based dragon *koshirae* with a signed *Sôten* school *fuchi-kashira* houses this sword in such a spirited manner. This is a refined and gracious sword from one of the very oldest, most respected schools in Japanese sword history. It deserves a secure place to call home.



Saki-kasane: 5.0mm

Moto-kasane: 5.6mm

Omosa: 700g

Kissaki: 3.30cm
Saki-haba: 2.01cm

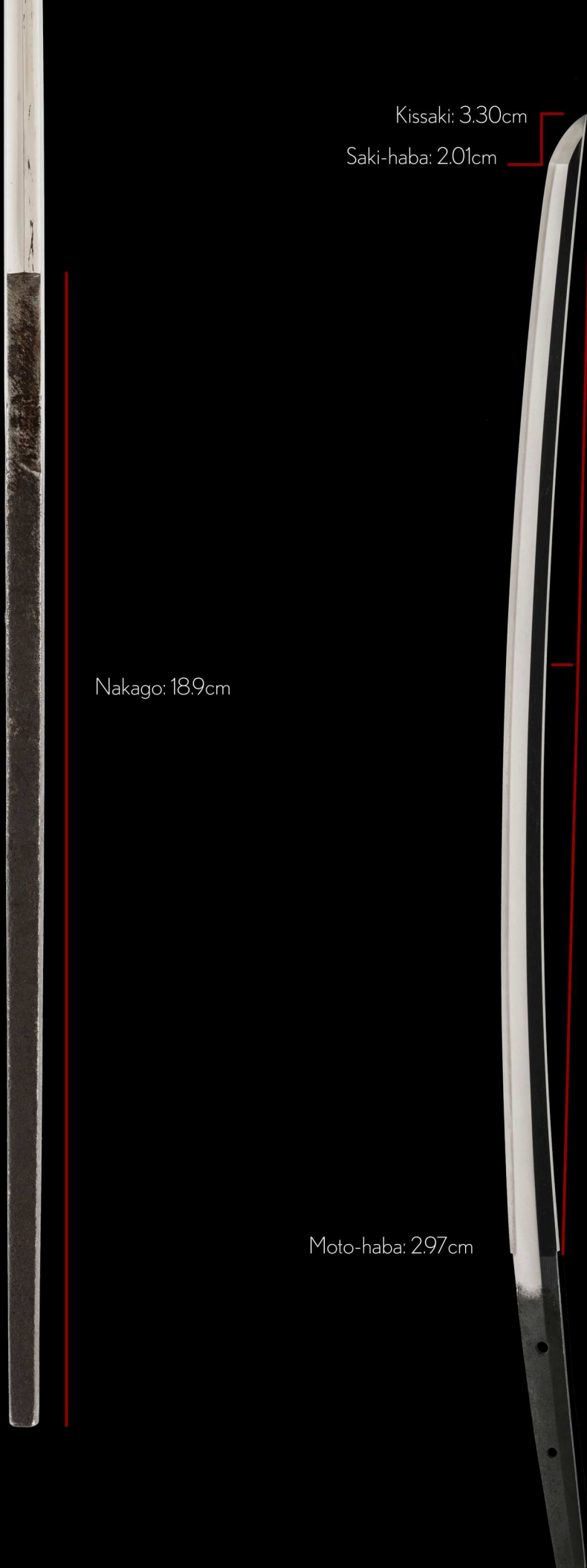
Nakago: 18.9cm

Moto-haba: 2.97cm

Nagasa: 71.3cm

Sori: 1.8cm

Mekugi-ana: 2



During the *Nara* period, before the capital was moved to *Yamashiro* province (*Kyôto*), *Yamato* province was the centre of Japanese culture. According to legend, Yamato was home to some of Japan's earliest swordsmiths, including *Amakuni* and *Amakura* in the late *Heian* period, however the earliest confirmed Yamato-made sword with a maker's signature dates back to the middle of the Kamakura period.


The growth of the Yamato sword-making tradition was closely tied to the region's proximity to the capital in Nara. Smiths' prosperity depended on their relationships with the powerful temples in Yamato, which had acquired vast estates and sought to arm themselves to protect their rights and property. Five major Yamato schools emerged - *Senjuin*, *Tegai*, *Taima*, *Hôshô*, and *Shikkake* - supplying these temples and their *sôhei* (warrior monks) with quality weapons.

The Tegai school was named after its workshop's location in front of the *Tengai-mon* gate of *Todaiji* temple in Nara. Its founder, *shodai* (first gen.) *Kanenaga*, worked around 1288~1293. Other well-known Tegai smiths included *Kanekiyo*, *Kanetsugu*, *Kanetoshi*, and *Kanemitsu*. The Yamato Tegai school continued to produce swords from the *Kamakura* through the *Nanbokuchô* eras. At the end of the Nanbokuchô period, the school ceased to be active. However with the start of the Muromachi period, it once again became active and began to prosper. The revived school is called *Sue-Tegai*.

The handsome katana is a prime example of the splendour of *kotô* period swords. The sword's elegant shape is indicative of its origins as a *tachi* - the early Japanese long sword design that was made for horseback-ridden warfare. The *ji* beams brightly with *ji-nie* highlighting a well-forged *nagare-hada*, *komokume* and loads of *chikei*. A wonderful trait found on *Tegai* swords is the presence of *uchinoke*, small 'crescent-shaped moons' along the hamon. Many have been highlighted in the pages that follow.

A splendid iron-based dragon koshirae with a signed *Sôten* school *fuchi-kashira* houses this sword in such a marvellous manner. This is a refined and gracious sword filled with history that quietly speaks of eras long past. Take care of it well.





The *ura* (reverse) of the *nakago* tends to get filed down more when performing a shortening, thus we see less patina.

This sword was once a long *tachi* crafted during the late *Kamakura* to *Nambokuchō* period. This is when the *Tegai* school flourished.

As there are two holes in the *nakago*, it appears to have been shortened twice in its lifetime to its present *ō-suriage nakago*.

Its current length of 71.3cm (2-*shaku* 3-*sun*, 5-*bu*) is no accident. This length is known as *jo-sun* - 'the *katana benchmark*' size that was standardized during the early Edo period. Top-ranked samurai adored Yamato-den katana such as this piece and would have had this katana paired with a wakizashi to form a *daishō*.

鑑定書

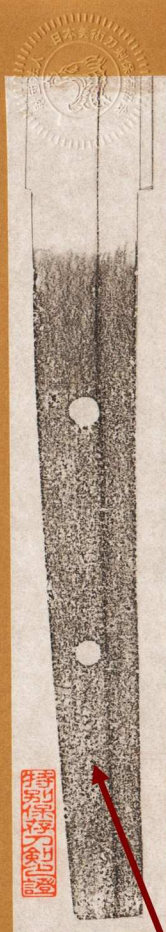
長三八三寸五分半

一刀 無銘 (手掻)

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

昭和六十年五月二十九日

財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協會



It's great to see an *oshigata* (rubbing) of the nakago, rather than the standard photographs that we see today. This sword passed Tokubetsu Hozon way back in 1985, just three years after this certificate was introduced by the NBTHK.

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 60th year of Shōwa (1985), May 29th

One, Katana

Mumei (unsigned)
Tegai

Nagasa (length)
2-shaku 3-sun 5-bu han (71.3cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai
(NBTHK)

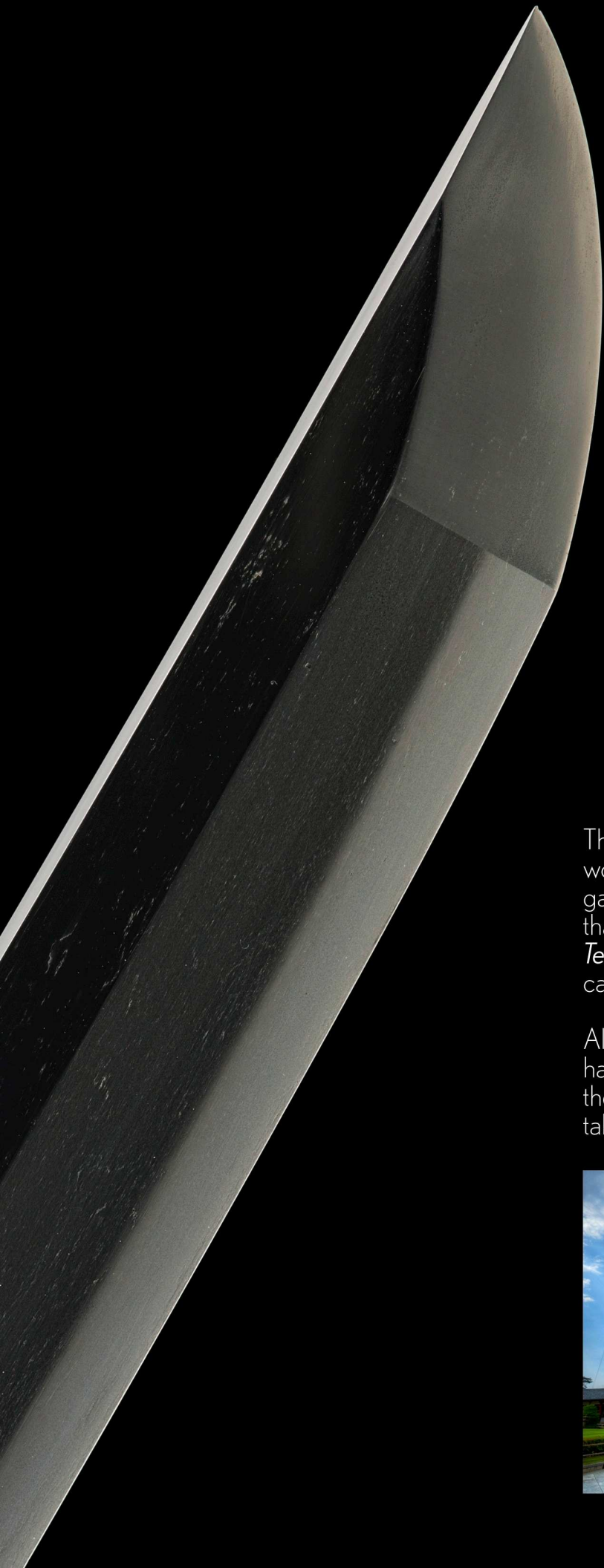


無銘
Mumei
Unsigned

手搔
Tegai
Tegai school

刃長貳尺參寸五分半有之
Hachô 2-shaku 3-sun 5-bu han kore ari
Blade length 71.3 cm

令和六甲辰年坤月吉日誌之
Reiwa roku kinoe-tatsudoshi Kongetsu kichijitsu kore o shirusu
Written on a lucky day in the tenth month in the sixth year of
Reiwa era during the Year of the Dragon (October 2024)



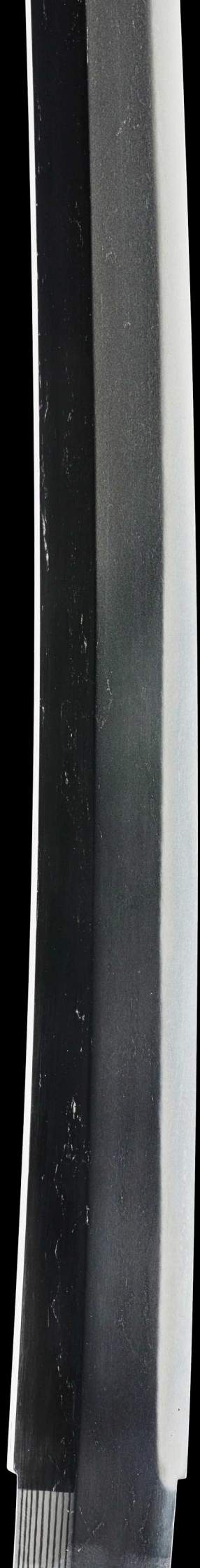
The *Tegai* school was named after its workshop's location in front of the *Tengai-mon* gate of *Todaiji* - a Buddhist temple complex that was once one of the powerful *Seven Great Temples*, located in the city of Nara, the former capital of Japan.

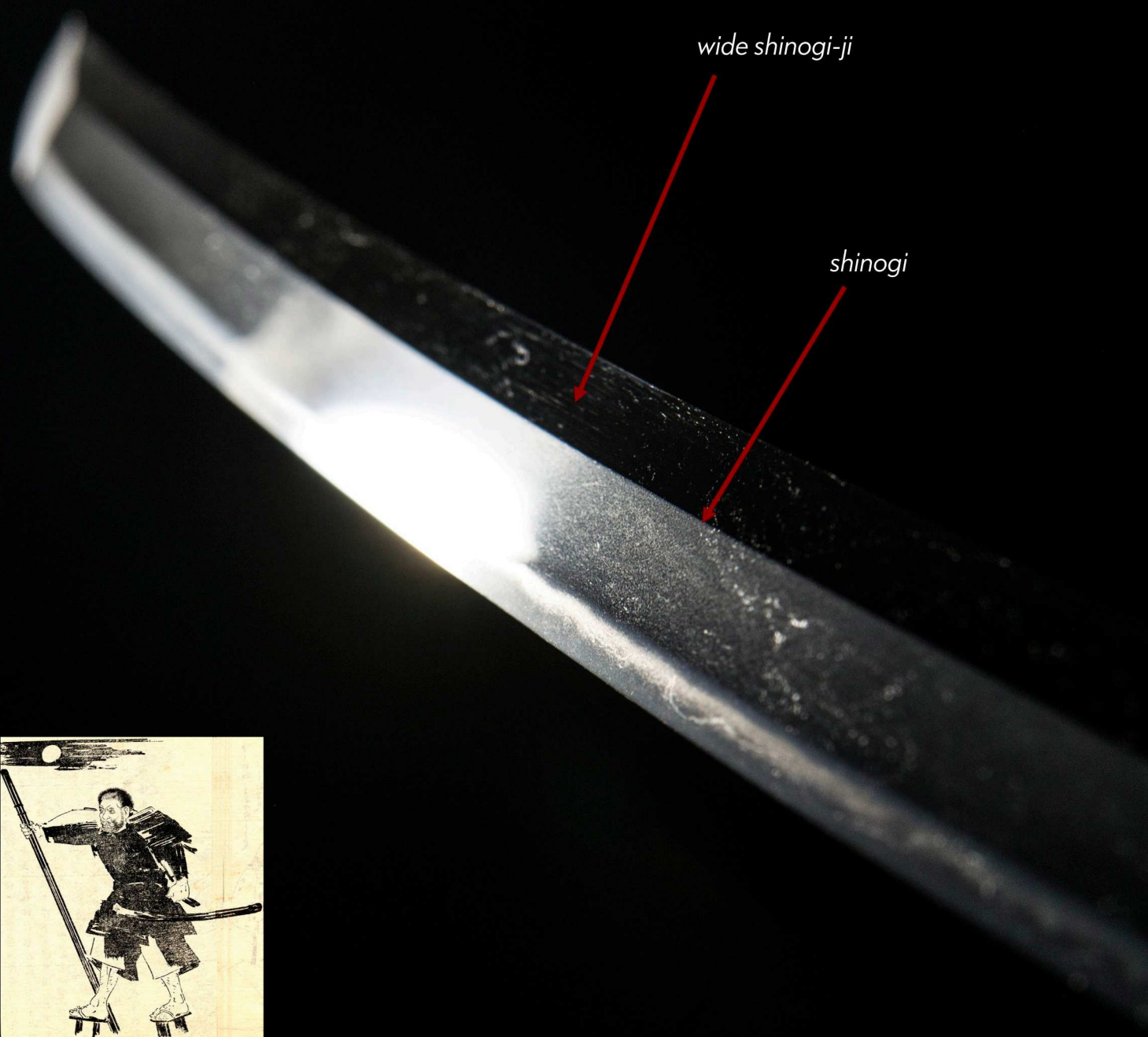
Although the temple was opened in 752AD, it has undergone several reconstructions since then, with the most significant reconstruction taking place in 1709.



Todaiji temple







wide shinogi-ji

shinogi



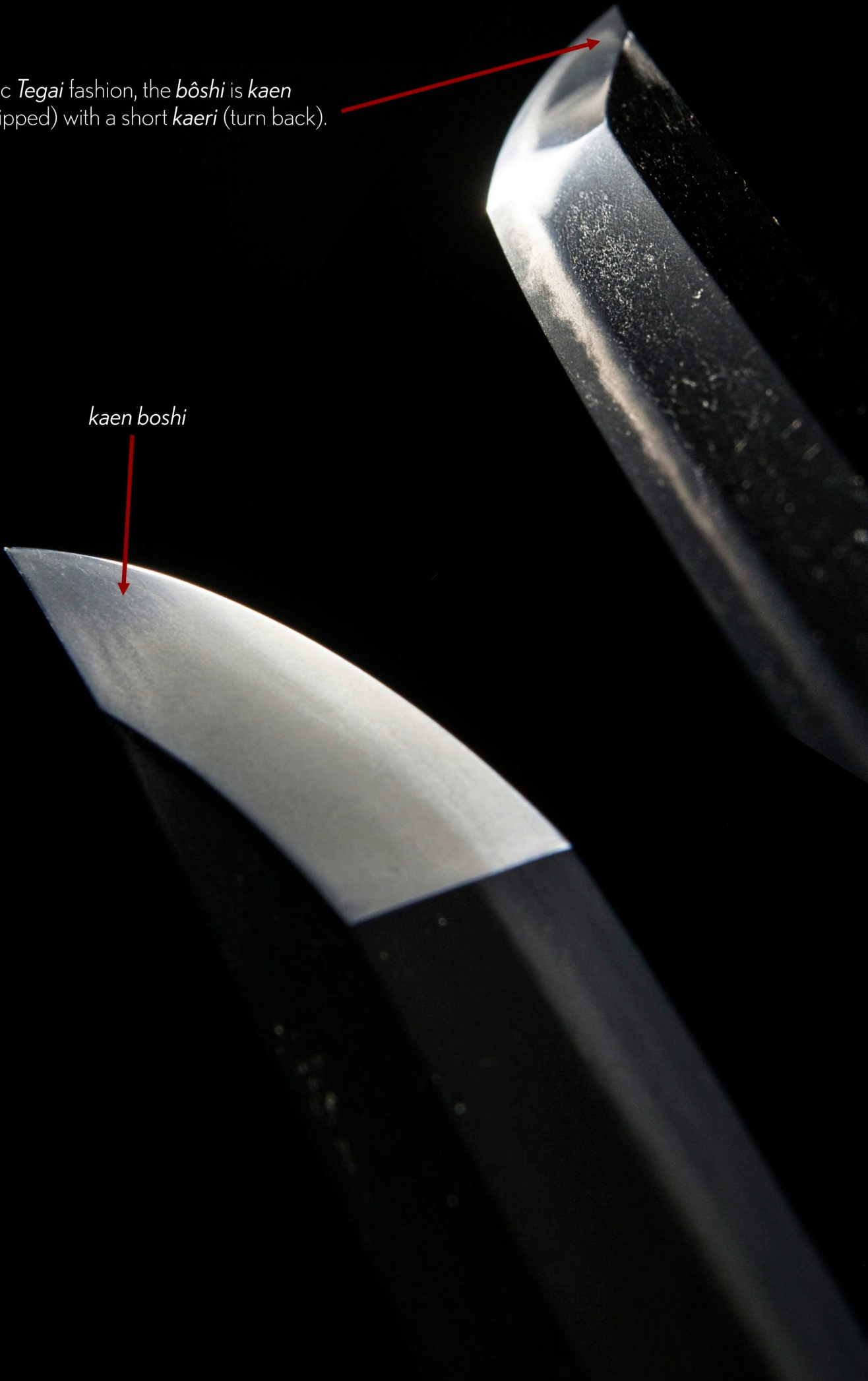
sōhei warrior monk

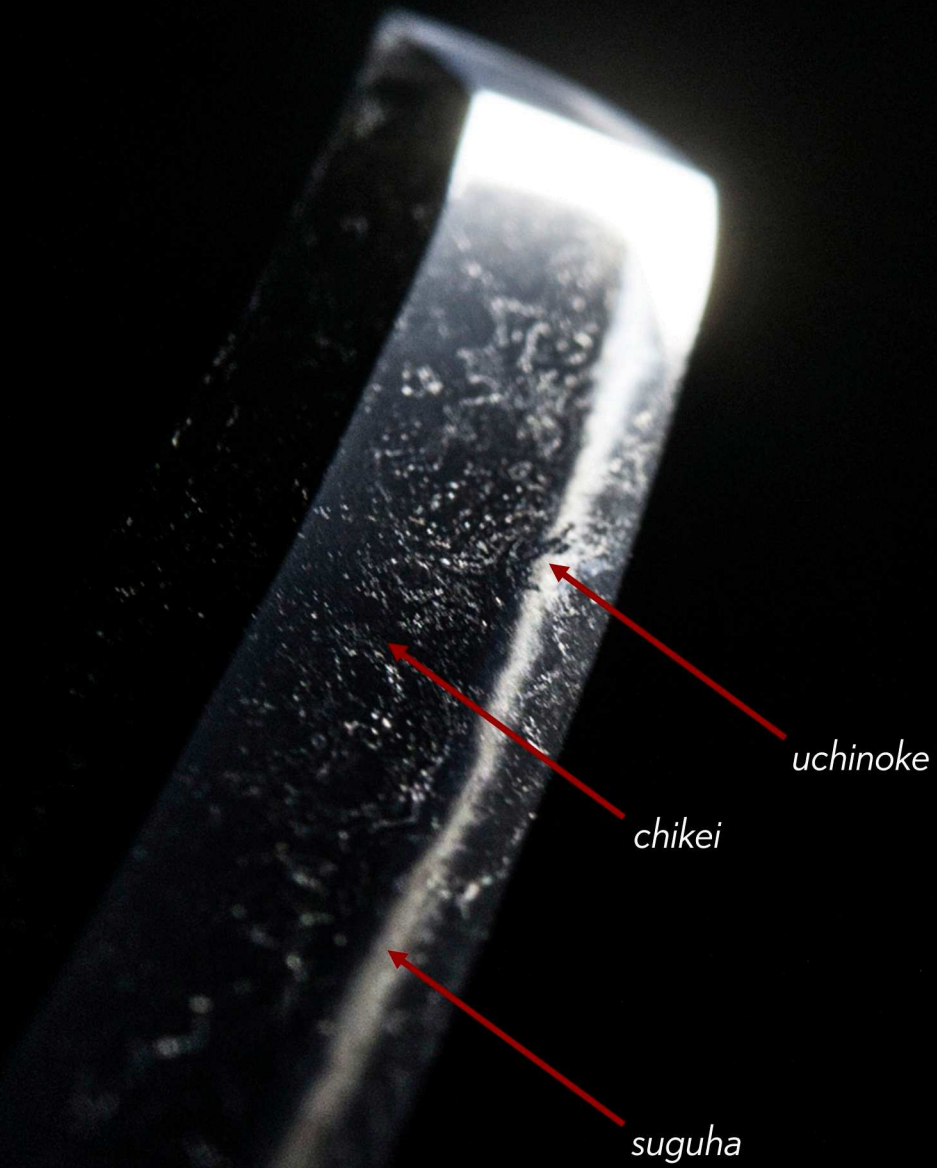
Swords of the *Yamato* tradition have a wide *shinogi-ji* (the flat surface between the *shinogi* line and the *mune*, spine) of the sword. This tends to make the sword thick, powerful and full of *niku* (meat).

Swordsmiths from the five major Yamato schools - *Taima*, *Tegai*, *Hōshō*, *Senjuin* and *Shikkake* armed the major Buddhist temples in *Nara* (and their warrior monks known as *sōhei*) with exquisite, highly dependable swords to guard their rights and property.

In classic *Tegai* fashion, the *bôshi* is *kaen* (flame tipped) with a short *kaeri* (turn back).

kaen boshi





Shining with a bright and consistent *suguha-hamon*, there is a refined beauty in this *Tegai* school katana.

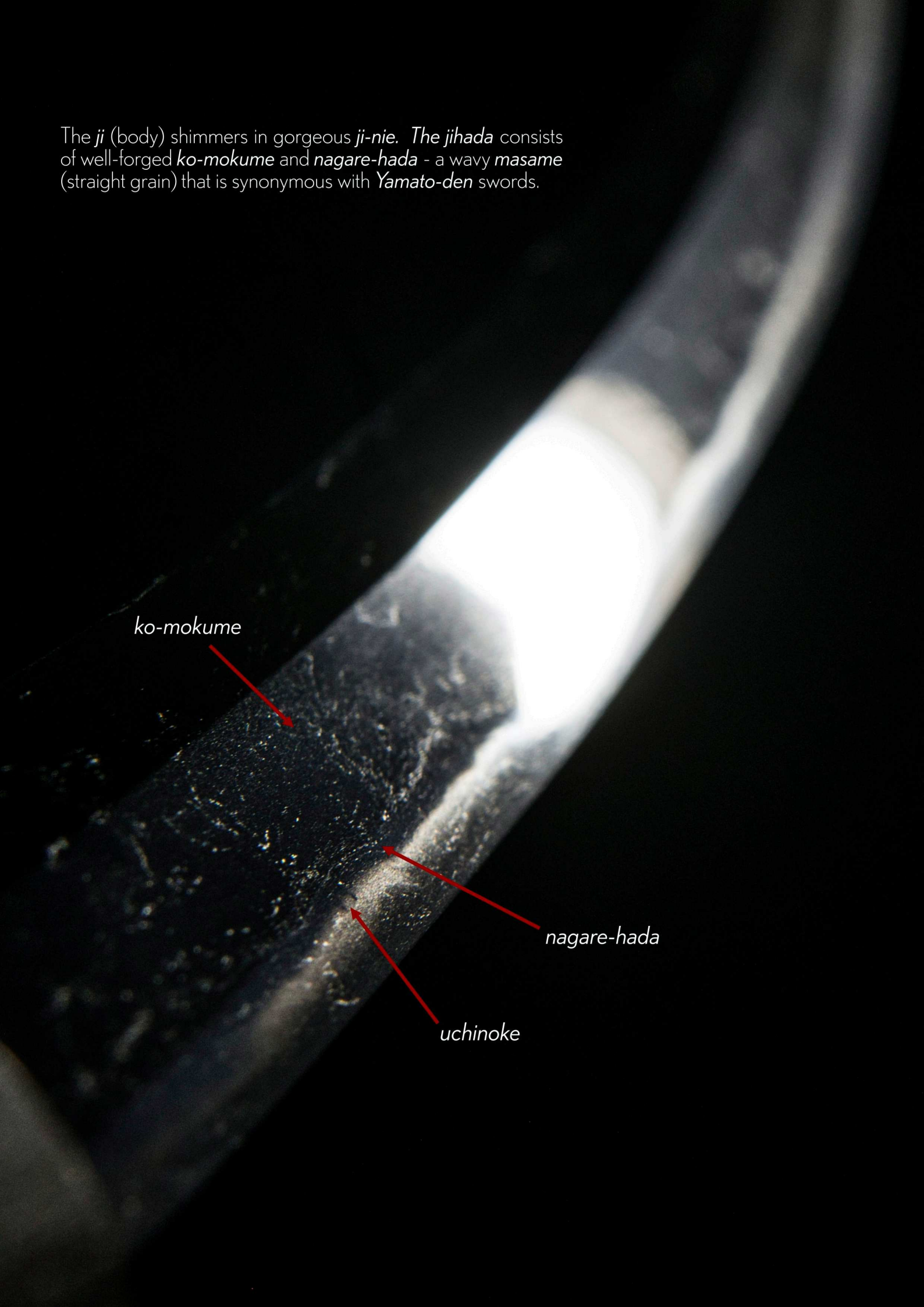
Subtle gifts of *uchinoke* and dark swirls of *chikei* that abound in the *jigane* are to be cherished. Such is the allure of swords from the Kotô period.

The *ji* (body) shimmers in gorgeous *ji-nie*. The *jihada* consists of well-forged *ko-mokume* and *nagare-hada* - a wavy *masame* (straight grain) that is synonymous with *Yamato-den* swords.

ko-mokume

nagare-hada

uchinoke





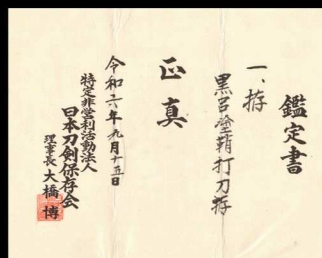
These wonderful crescent moons that appear just above the *hamon* are called *uchinoke*.

Uchinoke is a rare and coveted *hataraki* (activity) that is normally found on swords from the *Yamato Tegaï* school and also on blades from *Ko-Naminohira* and *Rai* schools, and *Yamashiro Sanjo*.

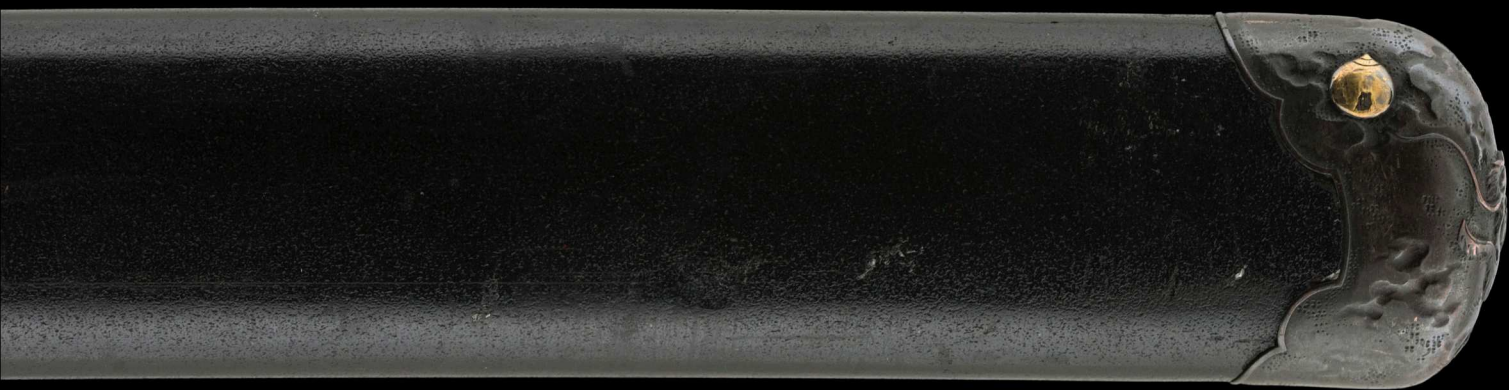
*Kuro-ishime-ji-nuri saya
uchigatana-koshirae*
(黒石目地塗鞘打刀拵)

*Uchigatana-koshirae
lacquered in black with
stone-surface texture*

Crafted during the
Late Edo period
(1780~1868)



NTHK-NPO Kanteisho
Certificate of Authenticity



Signed by metalsmith *Kazutoshi*, this *kojiri* (end cap) in the form of a ferocious dragon reinforces the *saya* (scabbard). And forming a weapon in its own right.



jewel



This spirited polished iron *tsuba* with carvings of a cloud dragon clenching onto a jewel amongst crashing waves has been attributed to *Kanetane* from the *Chishiki* school in *Satsuma* province.





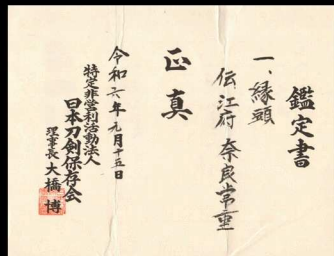
Feel the energy.





This brilliant polished iron *fuchi-kashira* of a crawling dragon is signed by *Mogarashi Sôten*, a resident of *Hikone* in *Gôshû* province and crafted during the late Edo period, circa early 1800s.

The dragon's intense golden eyes add a spiritual dimension to the piece.



(○) 藻
(mo) 柄
(kage) 子
(○) 宗
(mo) 典
(kage) 製



江 (Gô)
州 (shû)
彦 (Hiko)
根 (ne)
住 (jû)



ENTER the DRAGON





Gold crawling dragon *menuki* guard the koshirae.

The *tsuka* (hilt) is braided in deep navy blue silk with aged white *samekawa* (ray skin).



再

手搦

登録記号番号 新潟 1498 号

銃砲刀剣類登録証

備考	銘文(裏表) 無銘	目くぎ穴	反り	長さ	種別	刀 剣 類
		式 個	一 八	七 一 三	刀	
		口径	銃身長	全長	種別	銃 砲
		・	・	・		
		メートル	メートル	メートル	銃砲	

昭和 60 年 5 月 21 日 交付
昭和 60 年 5 月 22 日 再交付

新潟県教育委員会

(印)

This is the *torokusho* (registration card) for the *mumei Tegai katana*. The card was originally registered in the 26th year of Showa (May 21, 1951). Sometimes old *torokusho* cards get refreshed (as seen here) if they are worn out, but the original registration date is always kept.

This is significant as 1951 was the very first year that swords were formally registered in Japan. Many former *daimyô* (great) families were invited to submit their collections suggesting this blade was once held by a prominent family.

The serial number is just **1498**, one of the very first swords registered in Japan. It was registered in *Niigata* prefecture.



Koshirae bag



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If you are travelling to Tokyo and are serious about acquiring an authentic Japanese sword, be sure to book a **private meeting** with us in advance.

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