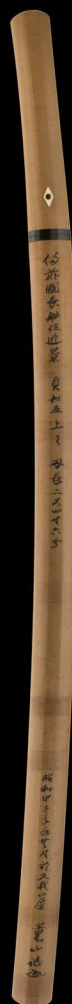


History unfolds itself.



ujka454
A Chikakage Naginata-Naoshi Katana

Length: 74.6cm
12th NBTHK Tokubetsu Jûyo Tôken
Orikaeshi-me dated to *Jôwa* 5 (1349)
Kunzan-sensei sayagaki





Saki-kasane: 4.4mm

Moto-kasane: 2.6mm

Kissaki: 15.7cm

Saki-haba: 3.11cm

Nagasa: 74.6cm

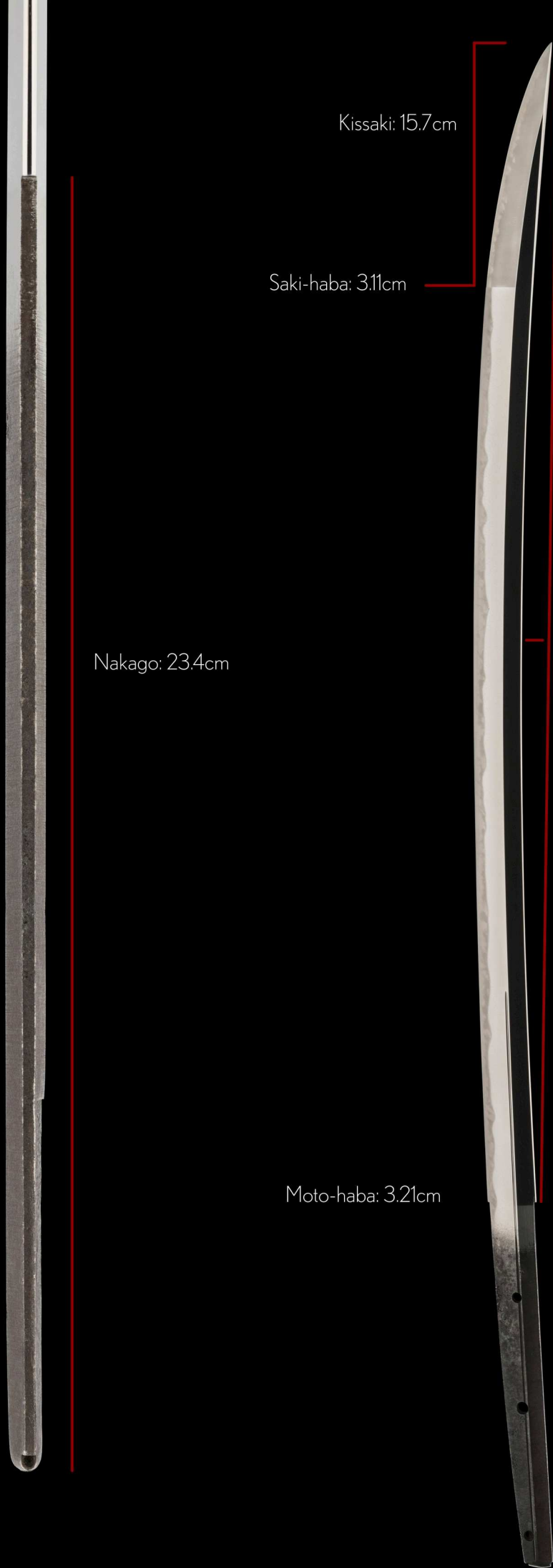
Nakago: 23.4cm

Sori: 1.50cm

Omosa: 900g

Moto-haba: 3.21cm

Mekugi-ana: 3



Born *Saburôzaemonnojô* and son of *Chikatsune*, the commonly accepted tradition is that *Chikakage* was a student of *Nagamitsu*. and existing dated works of his range from the *Bunpô* era (1317~1319) at the end of the Kamakura period, to the *Jôwa* era (1345~1350) in the *Nanbokuchô* period.

Among all smiths of the *Nagamitsu* school, Chikakage's style is closest to *Kagemitsu* and their signature style is fairly close as well.


This blade is a *naginata-naoshi katana*, that is, it was once a *naginata* that was shortened to a *katana*, and of its signature, only the part "Jôwa 5" of the date has survived as *orikaeshi-meji*, although the blade has been handed down as a work of Chikakage.

With its wide *mihaba* and large dimensioned *sugata*, we recognize the typical *naginata* shape of the *Nanbokuchô* period. The *kitae* is an *itame* that is mixed with *mokume* and that features a *midare-utsuri*, and the hamon is a *ko-gunome* that is mixed with *ko-chôji*, and although the elements of the *ha* are small dimensioned, they display noticeable ups and downs. This, and the fact that the *ha* shows an abundance of *hataraki* such as *ashi*, *yô*, and *kinsuji*, and the fact that most of the date is executed using *gyaku-tagane* (opposite stroke order than written with a brush), the we [NBTHK] are sufficiently confident that the period attribution to Chikakage is correct. Both *ji* and *ha* are strikingly healthy (*kenzen*).

Chikakage is ranked as a *jôjô-saku* smith (highly superior) and one of the greatest smiths of the mainline Osafune school in Bizen province. One tachi of Chikakage was awarded the very highest honour of being a *national treasure* (there are only about 120 swords and fittings listed as national treasures).

According to Japanese sword researcher *Markus Sesko*, considering all of the top works of Chikakage (*Jûyô* and higher), this *naginata-naoshi* belongs to an elite group of six objects that represents the greatest masterworks of Chikakage of this type.





Location: *Osafune (Bizen province)*
Swordsmith: *Chikakage* (first generation)
Date: *Jôwa go* (5th year of Jôwa era, 1349)

suriage (altered tang)
kiri-yasurime (horizontal file marks)

An *orikaeshi-me* (lit. "folded-over signature") is a signature that is preserved in the process of a blade being shortened (*suriage*) by folding it over, upwards, to other side of the tang, where it remains upside down.

Assuming that the *mekugi-ana* within the *orikaeshi-me* was the original *mekugi-ana*, it can be assumed that this sword had originally a length of approx. 85~89 cm, likely the longest *naginata* *Chikakage* ever produced.

Only twenty swords awarded NBTHK Tokubetsu Jûyô have an *orikaeshi-me* - a fortunate rarity when a top-ranking blade has its signature preserved this way.

orikaeshi-me

A close-up photograph of a sword's nakago (tang) against a black background. The metal is dark and textured, showing signs of age. A circular hole is visible near the top, and a groove runs down the length of the tang. The characters '貞 (Jô)', '和 (wa)', and '五 (go)' are inscribed on the surface.

貞 (Jô)

和 (wa)

五 (go)

The date of 1349 (5th year of Jôwa era) was preserved in the folding of the nakago.

The *gyaku-tagane* (reverse manner) in which the date was chiseled lead the researchers at the NBTHK to give a firm attribution to Chikakage who signed his swords in this unique way.

Although several battles had been fought after 1333, these took place in more or less remote areas, settling locally related conflicts. The era in which this sword was made falls into a time period that is often described by historians as “*entering the hot phase of the Nanbokuchô period.*”

Nanbokuchô translates to the *Northern and Southern Courts period*, a turbulent 60-year war that followed the end of the notable Kamakura period in 1333. *Emperor Go-Daigo* and *shogun Ashikaga Takauji* were significant players.



Ashikaga Takauji
(first shōgun of Ashikaga shogunate)



Emperor Go-Daigo (Southern Court)



特重要第九〇號

指定書

薙刀卓刀(折返)貞和五以下切伝近景一口

容量 長さ七寸六釐 反り一四釐 元幅三三釐

形状

鑄造 三棟 身幅広く 反り浅く 大鋒

鍛

板目肌 柱交じり 地沸つき 乱れ駢り之つ

刃文

小互の目 小丁子交じり 小足 葉入り 小溝つき

帽子

乱れ込み 焼詰め風

彫物

表裏に細い腰樋を極き流す

茎

磨上 鑲目切り 目釘孔三

右者當協會に於て審査の結果
特別重要刀剣に指定する

平成四年二月十九日

財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協會

會長 山中貞則



Tokubetsu-Jûyô Certificate No. 490
Shiteisho (指定書) Certificate of Designation
Naginata-naoshi-katana
(Orikaeshi-mei): Jôwa go (ika kire) Den Chikakage (伝近景)

Measurements
nagasa 74.6 cm, sori 1.4 cm, motohaba 3.25 cm

Description
Keijo: *shinogi-zukuri*, *mitsu-mune*, wide *mihaba*, shallow *sori*, *ô-kissaki*
Kitae: *itame* that is mixed with *mokume* and that features *ji-nie* and *midare-utsuri*
Hamon: *ko-gunome* that is mixed with *ko-chôji*, *ko-ashi*, *yô* and *ko-nie*
Bôshi: *midare-komi* and tending to run out as *yakitsume*
Horimono: on both sides a thin *koshi-bi* that runs as *kaki-nagashi* into the tang
Nakago: *suriage*, *kiri-yasurime*, three *mekugi-ana*

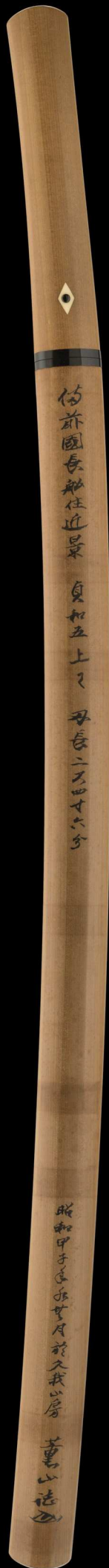
According to the result of the shinsa committee of our society we judged this work as authentic and rate it as *tokubetsu jûyô tôken*.

February 19, 1992
[Foundation] Nihon Bijutsu Tôken Hozon Kyôkai, NBTHK
[President] Yamanaka Sadanori (山中貞則)



薙刀直し刀 (折返銘) 貞和五(以下切れ) 伝近景





This sword was appraised by *Dr. Honma Junji* (1904-1991) also known as *Kunzan*, the former director of the NBTHK.

It is a highly trusted form of authentication known as *sayagaki* (writing in ink on the shirasaya).



Dr. Honma Kunzan Junji

備前國長船住近景

Bizen no Kuni Osafune-jû Chikakage

Chikakage, a resident of Osafune in Bizen province

貞和五上迄

Jôwa go kamimade

In the fifth year of Jôwa era (1349) [rest cut off]

刃長二尺四寸六分

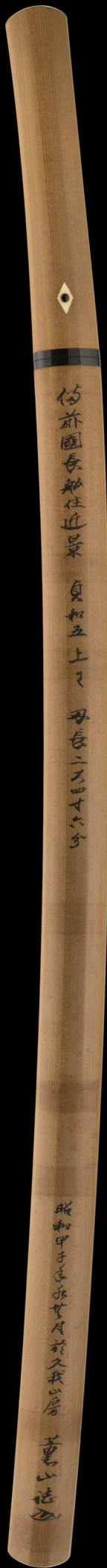
Hachô 2-shaku 4-sun 6-bu

Blade length ~ 74.6 cm

昭和甲子年水無月於久我山房薰山誌(花押)

Shôwa Kinoe-Nedoshi Minazuki kannazuki Kugayama-bô ni oite Kunzan shirusu + kaô

Written by Kunzan at my place in Kugayama in the tenth month during the Year of the Rat in Shôwa era (October 1984)

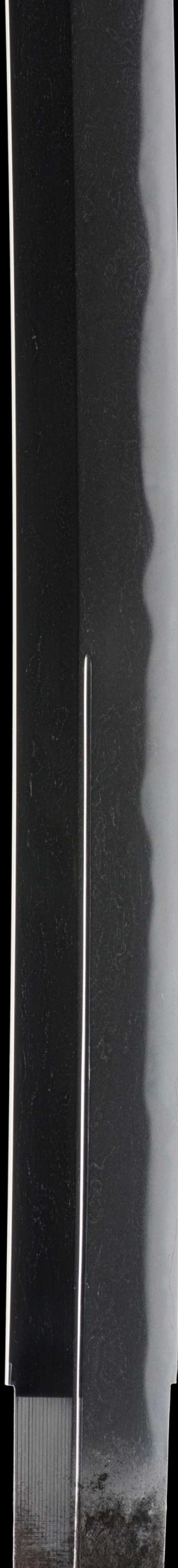


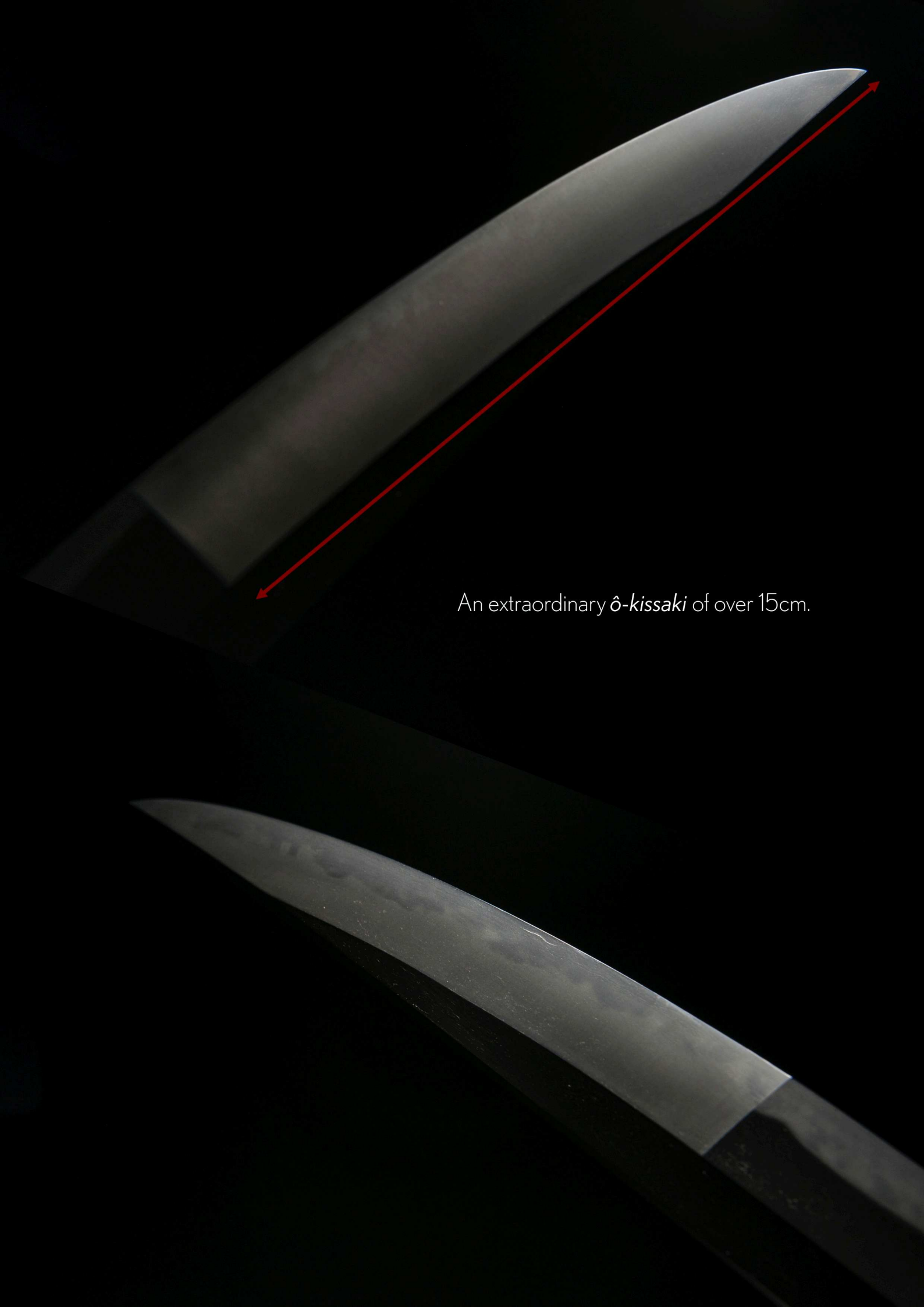
Shirasaya
(protective scabbard)




gold *niju-habaki* with
crisp file marks







An extraordinary *ô-kissaki* of over 15cm.

A close-up, low-angle shot of a sword's blade, focusing on the hamon (the edge of the blade). The hamon features a ko-chôji pattern, which consists of small, repeating, clove-like shapes. The blade is dark, and the light source creates a bright, glowing area at the top of the hamon, highlighting the texture and pattern. The background is dark, making the blade stand out.

Beautiful *ko-chôji* hamon resembling clove blossoms. Well-forged swords give off a bluish tone under the light like we see here.



A wonderful view of the sword's classic Bizen *midare-utsuri* reflecting the hamon like a shadow.

Note the gorgeous rounded burl grain pattern of *mokume-hada* and plank grain *itame-hada*.



A long, magnificent line of *kinsuji* slicing through the bright hamon.

Nihonto excellence.

