



ITEM# UJKA469

AN IETADA 'CUTTING TEST' KATANA

SIGNED, SHINTÔ PERIOD (JÔÔ ERA: 1652~1655)

Swordsmith:	<i>Gashû-jû Fujiwara Ietada (1st gen, Kaga province)</i>
Cutting test:	<i>Futatsu-dô dodanbarai kirite Miyai Rokubê (kaô)</i>
Measurements:	Length: 70.7cm (<i>ubu</i>) Sori: 1.5cm Moto-haba: 3.03cm Weight: 720g
Jihada:	<i>Ko-itame mixed with mokume-hada, plentiful ji-nie and swirling chikei</i>
Hamon:	<i>A striking gunome-chôji with a wide nioiguchi mixed with kawazu no ko-chôji</i>
Certificate #1:	NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon (Especially Worthy of Preservation)
Certificate #2-5:	NTHK-NPO Kanteishô (koshirae, fk, kogai and tsuba certified as Authentic)
Fujishiro rank:	Jô-saku (ranked as a superior swordsmith)
Published:	Featured in Kashû Shintô Shû (reference book of Kaga smiths in shintô era)
Sharpness:	Wazamonô (rated as a maker of sharp swords)
Authentication:	Sayagaki by Nozomi-san (shodô artist)
Included:	Shirasaya, Edo handachi-koshirae, fabric bags, stand, kit, print description

SOLD

This magnificent katana by *shodai Ietada* of Kaga province, bears a gold-inlaid *tameshigiri* inscription documenting its cutting power - severing through two bodies in a single stroke before embedding in the earthen testing ground. The blade is documented in *Kashû Shintô Shû*, a notable reference book on Kaga's *shintô* period smiths. Its *hamon* is a brilliant *gunome-chôji midare* pattern featuring distinctive 'tadpole' formations called *kawazu no ko-chôji* made famous by *Bizen Morie*. Mounted in an elegant Edo period *handachi-koshirae*, this outstanding katana is pure samurai class.



Saki-kasane: 4.9mm

Moto-kasane: 6.7mm

Kissaki: 3.19cm

Saki-haba: 1.94cm

Nagasa: 70.7cm

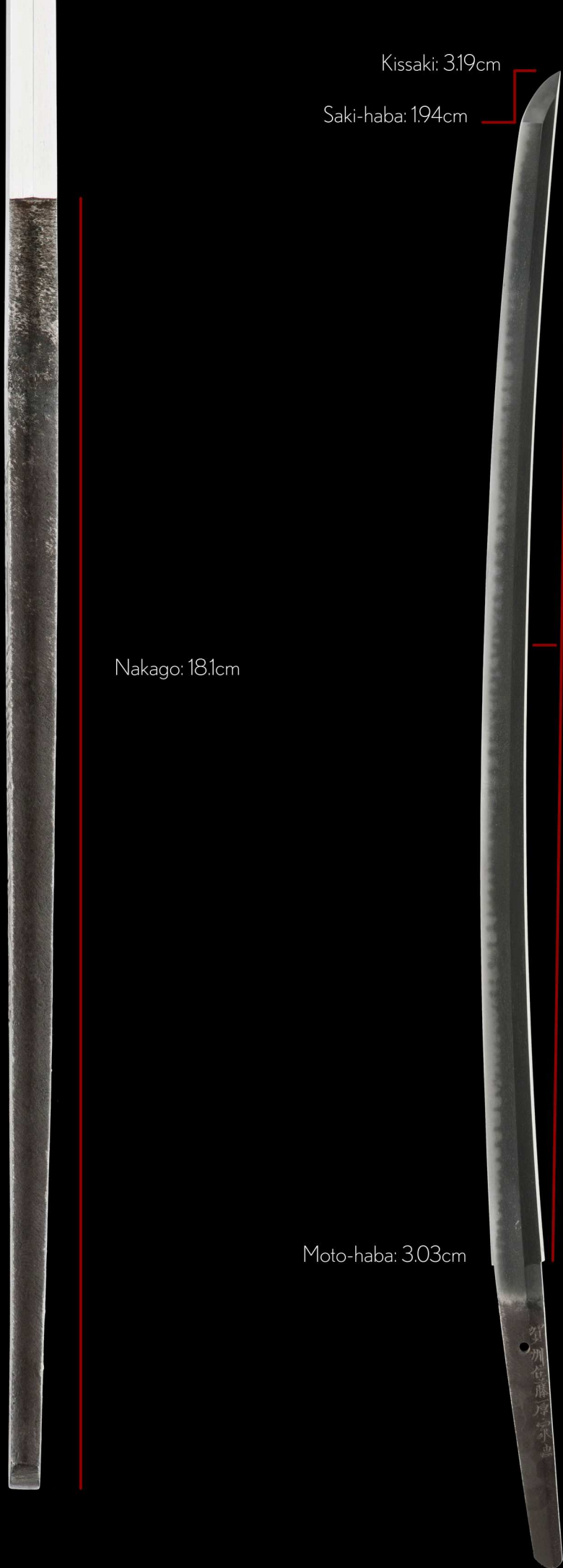
Nakago: 18.1cm

Sori: 1.5cm

Omosa: 720g

Moto-haba: 3.03cm

Mekugi-ana: 1



This magnificent katana was crafted by *shodai* (first generation) *letada* who lived in the city of *Kanazawa* in *Kaga* province during the early to mid-1600s. Born *Suzaki Kichibei* (his first name can also read *Yoshibei*), *letada* was the younger brother of *Katsukuni* and became a prominent smith of the *Kaga Darani* school. *letada* died in the first year of *Meireki* era (1655).

Ranked *wazamono* for his razor sharp sword-making skills, this katana bears a gold-inlaid *tameshigiri* inscription documenting its cutting power - severing through two bodies in a single stroke before embedding in the earthen testing ground.

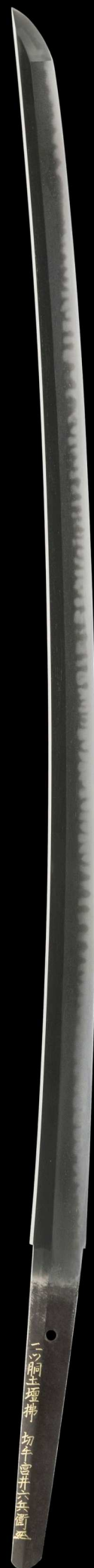
The *hamon* is a brilliant *gunome-chôji midare* pattern featuring distinctive 'tadpole' formations called *kawazu no ko-chôji*. *letada* was clearly aiming to reproduce the masterworks of *Moriie* and *Sanemori* of the *Bizen Hatakeda* school from the golden *Kamakura* period that pioneered this style of temper line.

This blade is further documented in *Kashû Shintô Shû*, an important reference book that showcases major works *shintô* period sword smiths that worked in *Kaga* province. Notice that the nakago is uniquely signed and dated by master sword polisher *Hon'ami Kôho* in 1936 just under the *habaki*. This is rarely seen.

Mounted in an elegant Edo period *handachi-koshirae*, with rich, dark *shakudô* fittings and a wonderful *kogai* attributed to *Morisada* of the *Katsuki* school, this truly outstanding katana is pure samurai class.



Image from Markus Sesko's book 'TAMESHIGIRI' The History and Development of Japanese Sword Testing.





Location: *Gashû (Kaga) province*

Family name: *Fujiwara*

Swordsmith: *letada* (first generation)

ubu-nakago (original, unaltered tang)

sujikai-yasurime (diagonal file marks)

賀 (Ga)

州 (shû)

住 (jû)

藤 (Fuji)

原 (wara)

家 (le)

忠 (tada)

→ *Jô-saku* or *chûjô-saku*, that is the question...

In the 1965 copy of *Fujishiro's Nihon Shintô Jiten*, *letada* was listed as *chûjô-saku*, an above average swordsmith. However, in the 1990 revised edition of the same book, he was upgraded to *jô-saku*, a superior smith.

Based on the quality of this katana, he certainly deserves the rank of *jô-saku*.

Futatsu-dô dodan-barai kirite Miyai Rokubei (kaô)

This katana was tested by *Miyai Rokubei* who severed through two human bodies and into the mound below in one stroke.

The precise gold inlay testifies to the cutting test result.

(Futa) 二
(tsu) ツ
(dô) 洞
(do) 土
(dan) 壇
(barai) 拂

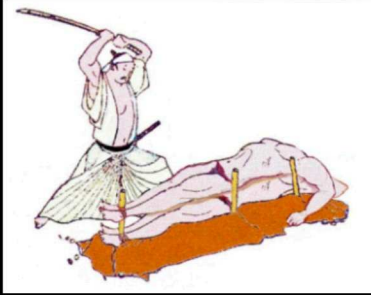
(kiri) 切
(te) 手
(miya) 宮
(i) 井
(Roku) 六
(be) 兵
(i) 衛
(kaô) 花押

二洞土壇拂
切手宮井六兵衛
花押

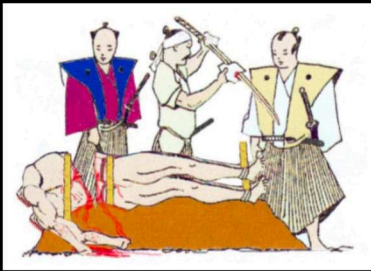


二少洞土壇拂

切午宮井六兵衛



before



after

寛文元年拜帳

一百石	杉岡仁兵衛	一百石	加藤又右衛門
知行三萬七百拾四石九斗三升		一百石	神保六左衛門
●射手		一百石	毛利半助
一四一拾石	金子權右衛門	一〇〇石	宮井六兵衛
一三三五拾石	矢嶋平左衛門	一〇〇石	篠嶋七兵衛
一〇〇拾石	内井兵右衛門	一〇〇石	神戶半九郎
一六〇拾石	内其拾石 小頭科 五拾石 巧料	一〇〇石	古澤宗右衛門
一四〇拾石	辻平之丞	一〇〇石	佐藤傳助
一四〇拾石	金森喜左衛門	一〇〇石	片岡七郎左衛門
一四〇拾石	有山忠左衛門	一〇〇石	原佐左衛門
一三〇拾石	石野義左衛門	一〇〇石	杉山清左衛門
一三〇拾石	大窪六之佐	一〇〇石	山田八郎右衛門
一三〇拾石	奥村彦三郎	一〇〇石	石黒三郎兵衛
一〇〇拾石	和田七右衛門	一〇〇石	服部庄兵衛
一〇〇拾石	内田茂右衛門	一〇〇石	富田助八
一〇〇拾石	小西吉左衛門		

Miyai Rokubei

With great research, Miyai Rokubei's name was discovered on the official Kaga domain samurai name list from 1670. He was listed as an archer. We can assume that he was promoted to the sword branch and asked to perform this cutting test.

Kaga domain samurai name list from the 10th year of Kanbun era (1670)

特 保
06202406

No 1023131



鑑定書

一 刀 銘

賀州住藤原家忠

(金象嵌)

二ツ胴土壇拂

切手宮井六兵衛(花押)

長 二尺三寸三分強

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

令和六年八月二十三日

公益財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協會



石川県 教育委員会
第 2210 号
昭和26年3月13日
(再)令和4年8月22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 6th year of Reiwa (2024), August 23rd

One, Katana

Mei (signature)

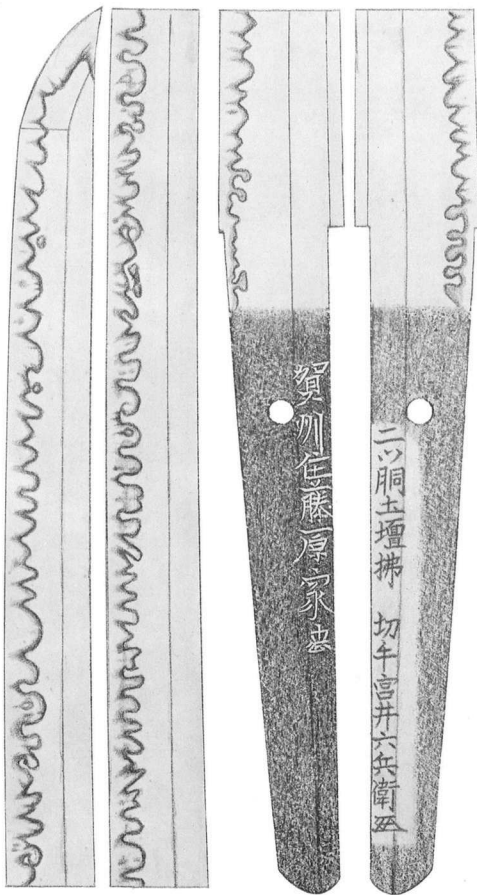
Gashû-jû Fujiwara Ietada

(Kinzôgan) Futatsu-dô dodan-barai kirite Miyai Rokubei (kaô)

Nagasa (length)

2-shaku 3-sun 3-bu kyô (70.7cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai
(NBTHK)



百二十九、 刀 銘 賀州住藤原家忠
(金象嵌)二ツ胴土壇払切手宮井六兵衛 花押

法量 長三尺二寸三分 反り五分

形状 鑄造、庵棟、姿良く、中鋒。

子を交え匂深く、頗る華やか。

味の栗尻、目釘孔一、總目筋透。

金象嵌あり。

鍛 小板目に歪安り地沸つき地景入る。

帽子 乱れ込み、表尖り気味に裏小丸に返る。

茎 生ぶ、先刃上り気

味の栗尻、目釘孔一、總目筋透。表棟寄りに長銘に切り、裏棟寄りに二ツ胴土壇払切手宮井六兵衛 (花押) と

刃文 互の目丁子に蛙子丁

説明 初代家忠、承応明暦頃の作と思ふ、備前の守家を模した彼の意気高く評備したい。

This letada katana has been featured in *Kashû Shintô Shu* (加州新刀集) - a *nihontô* reference book highlighting notable swords from *Kaga* province during the *shintô* period.

Item 129

Katana, mei:

Gashû-jû Fujiwara Ietada (賀州住藤原家忠) "Fujiwara Ietada, resident of Kaga province"

Kinzôgan (gold inlay): *Futatsu-dô dotan-barai kirite Miyai Rokubei + kaô*

Tester *Miyai Rokubei*, with this blade, severed through two bodies and into the earthen mound below signed with his monogram

Measurements:

nagasa: 70.6 cm, sori 1.5 cm

Shape: *shinogi-zukuri*, *iori-mune*, excellent *sugata* (shape), *chû-kissaki*

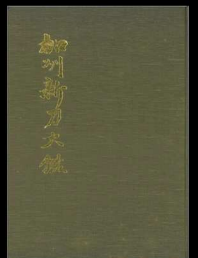
Kitae: *ko-itame* that is mixed with *mokume* and that features *ji-nie* and *chikei*

Hamon: strikingly flamboyant *gunome-chôji* with a wide *nioiguchi* mixed with *kawazu no ko-chôji*

Bôshi: *midare-komi*, on the *omote* side with a pointed *kaeri*, on the *ura* side with a *ko-maru-kaeri*

Nakago: *ubu*, *kurijiri* that tends to *ha-agari*, one *mekugi-ana*, *sujikai-yasurime*, the *omote* side bears towards the *nakago-mune* a *naga-mei*, and the *ura* side towards the *nakago-mune* the above quoted *kinzôgan-mei*

Comment: This is a work from the first generation *Ietada* (家忠) that appears to date between *Jôô* (承応, 1652~1655) and *Meireki* era (明暦, 1655). Praiseworthy is Ietada's skill in aiming at the style of *Bizen* [*Hatakeda*, 畠田] *Morie* (守家) with this blade.



book cover



賀州住藤原家忠

賀州住藤原家忠
Gashû-jû Fujiwara letada
Fujiwara letada, a resident of *Gashû* (Kaga) province

二ツ胴土壇拂
切手宮井六兵衛

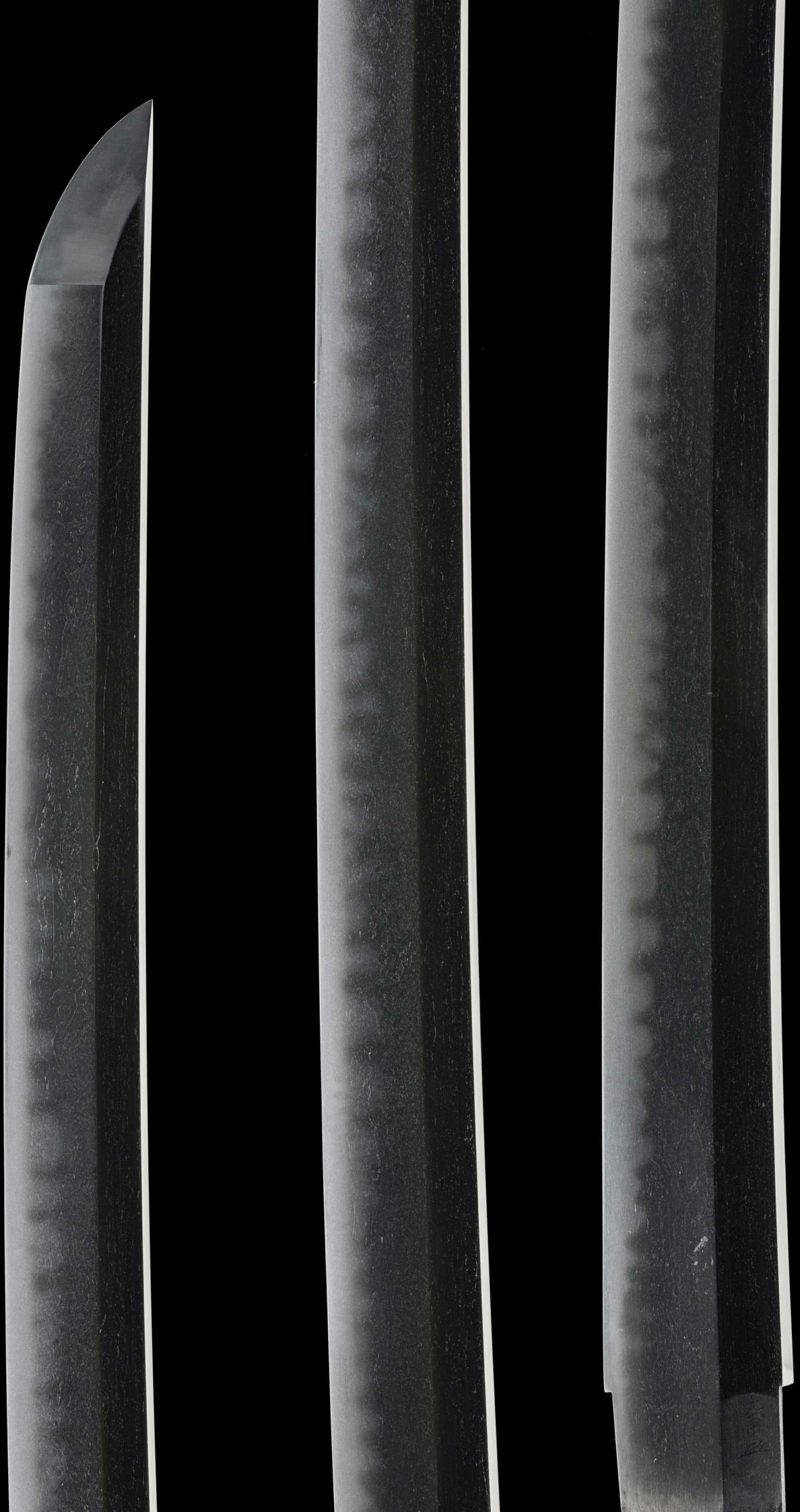
二ツ胴土壇拂
切手宮井六兵衛 (花押)
Futatsu-dô dodan-barai kirite Miyai Rokubê + kaô
Tested by *Miyai Rokubê* severed through two bodies & into the mound

刃長貳尺參寸三分強有之

刃長貳尺參寸三分強有之
Hachô 2-shaku 3-sun 3-bu kyô kore ari
Blade length 70.7 cm

令和七乙巳年正月吉日誌之

令和七乙巳年正月吉日誌之
Reiwa nana kinoto-midoshi Shôgatsu kichijitsu kore o shirusu
Written on a lucky day in the first month in the seventh year of
Reiwa era during the Year of the Snake (January 2025)





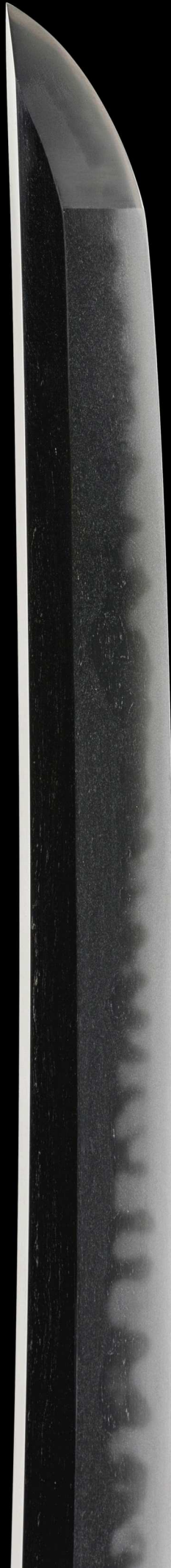
光 (Kô)

甫 (ho)

花押 (kaô)

Under the *habaki* reveals a pleasant surprise - the polisher's signature with his traditional *kaô* (monogram).

This katana was polished by *Hon'ami Kôho* (本阿弥光甫) in 1936.



Shôwa hinoe-nedoshi hachigatsu

Polished in the eighth month of *Shôwa* era
during the Year of the Rat (August 1936).

(Shô) 昭

(wa) 和

(hachi) 八

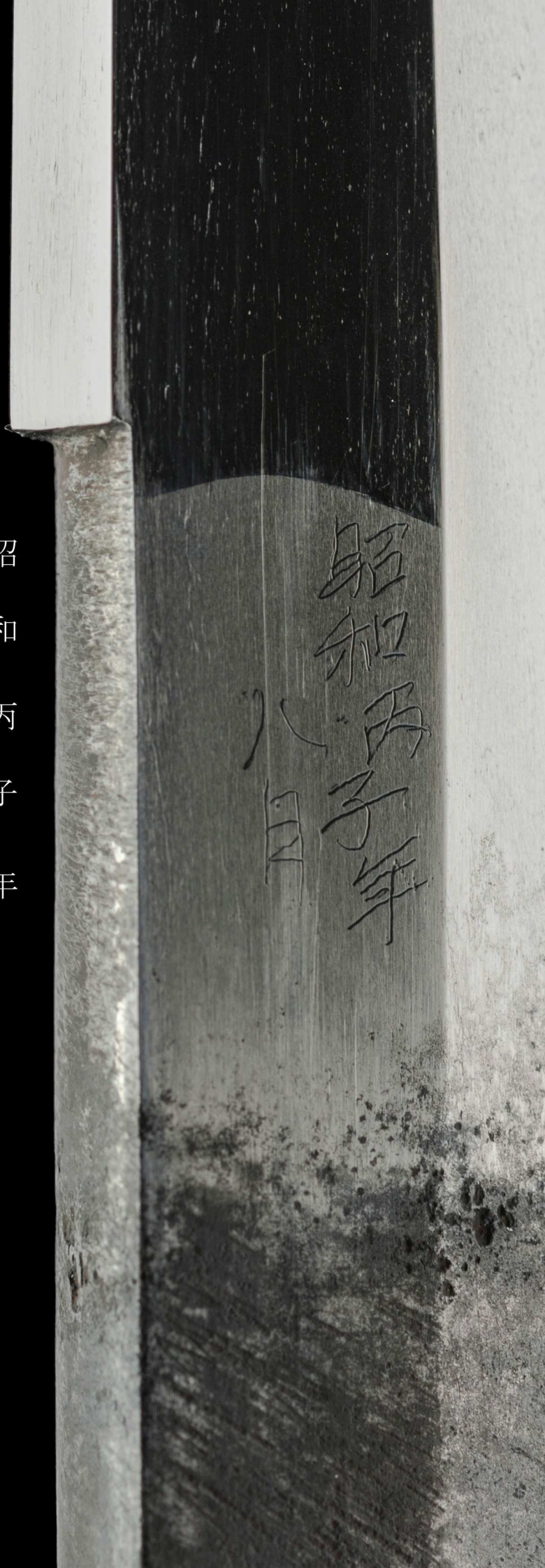
(hinoe) 丙

(gatsu) 月

(ne) 子

(doshi) 年

昭和
八年
丙子
八月



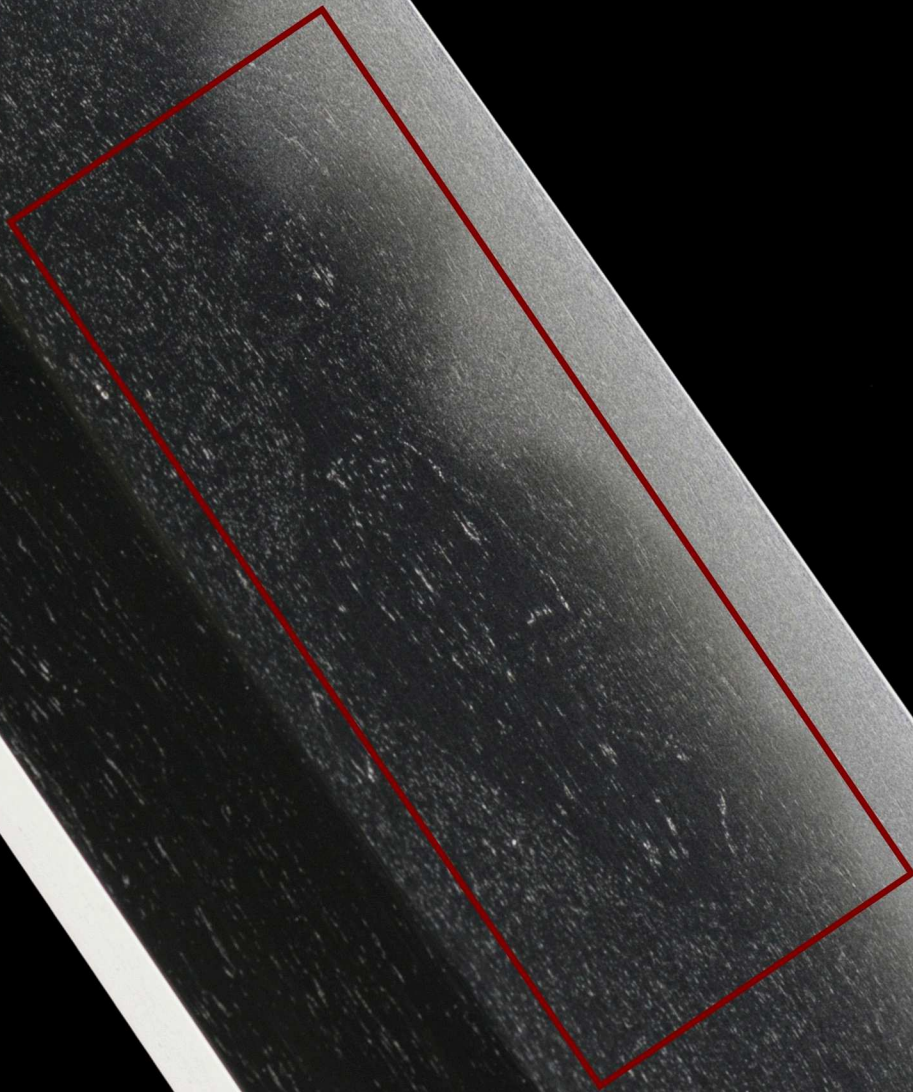


mokume-hada

chikei

Itame mixed with pockets of *mokume-hada* and dark, swirling lines of *chikei* forms a striking visual contrast with the bright, beaming hamon.

Here we see *namazu-hada*, dark spots of nie crystals that form to resemble the skin of a catfish (*namazu*).

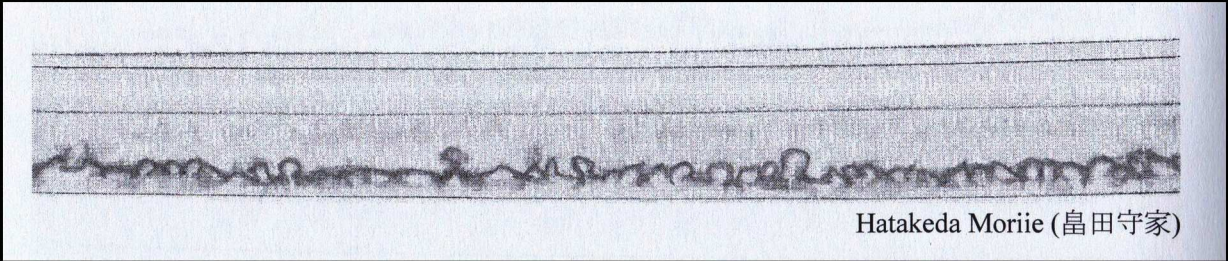


Bôshi displays a wavy *midare-komi* with a slight *togari* (pointed) turn back.





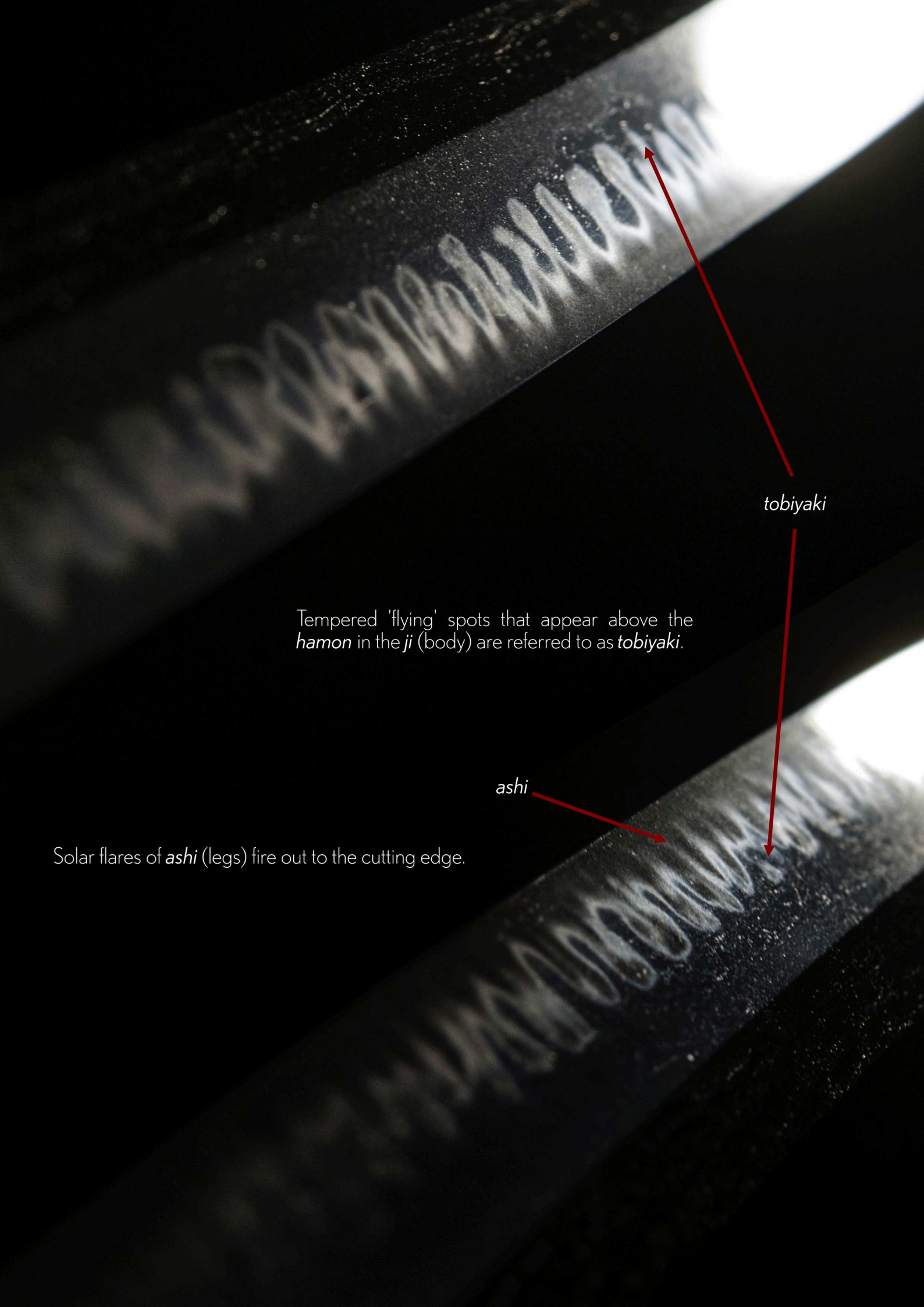
Kawazu-no-ko chôji is translated literally as "*tadpole chôji*" as its elongated shape resembles tadpoles. This unique hamon pattern was originally made famous by *Hatakeda Moriie* who worked in *Bizen* province circa 1232~1233 during the *Kamakura* period. An *oshigata* tracing of a *Hatakeda Moriie hamon* from *Sesko's Kantei Reference Book* is illustrated below. The inspiration is clear.



Hatakeda Moriie (畠田守家)



Parallel lines of *kinsuji* dramatically slice through the *hamon*.



tobi-yaki

Tempered 'flying' spots that appear above the *hamon* in the *ji* (body) are referred to as *tobi-yaki*.

ashi

Solar flares of *ashi* (legs) fire out to the cutting edge.



The blade's edge catches the light with subtle brilliance, revealing its keen cutting potential.

This is a dramatic katana that will elevate one's spirit even on the most challenging of days.



Shirasaya
(protective scabbard)

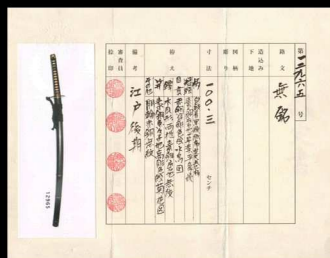


Tall gold *habaki* with
diagonal file marks
with horizontal carving
(*Mito* style)

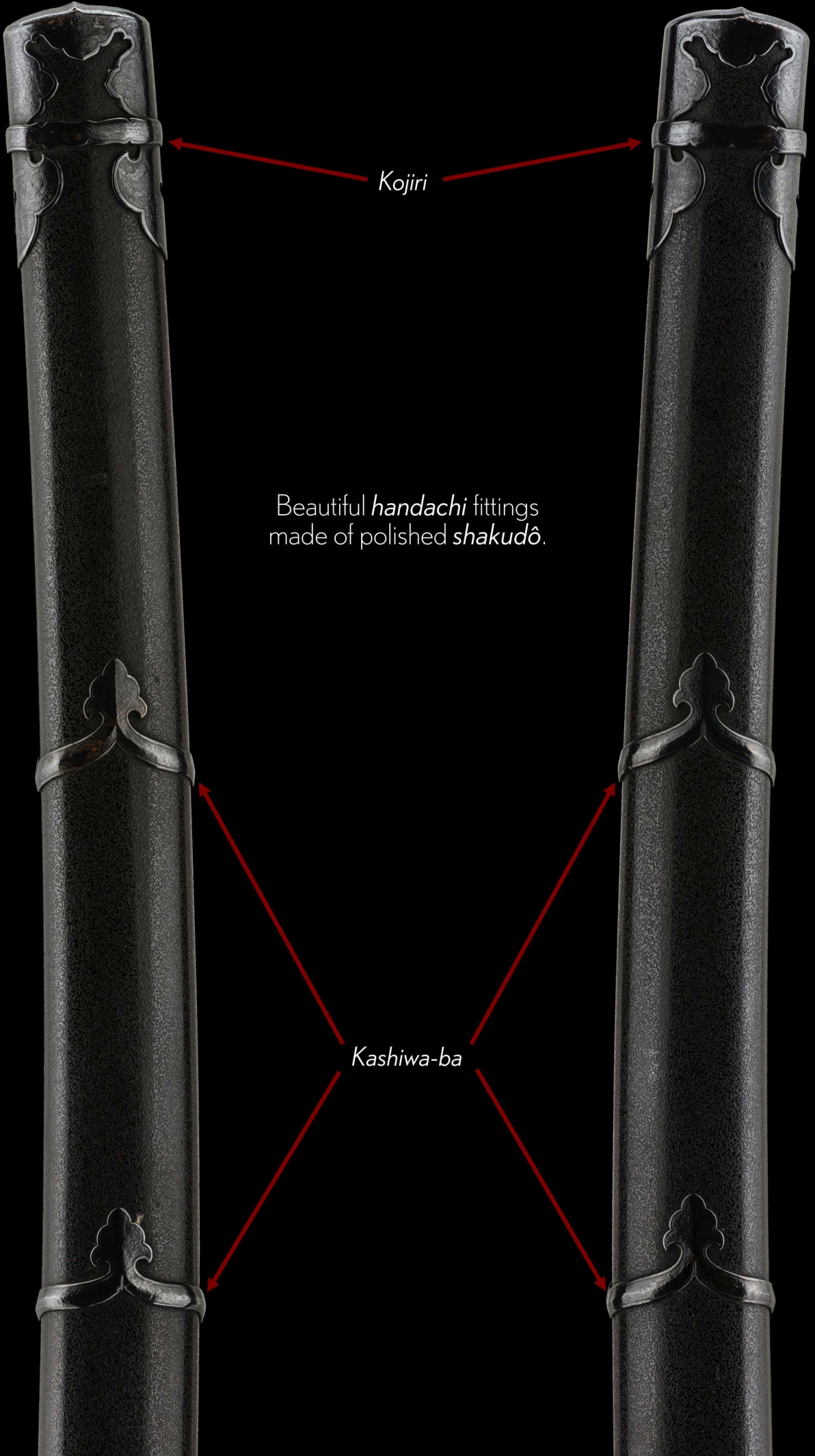
*Kuro-ishime-ji
Sendai-shibonuri saya
handachi-koshirae*
(黒石目地仙台絞塗鞘半太刀拵)

*Handachi-koshirae
lacquered in black with
stone-surface texture in
Sendai-shibonuri style*

Crafted during the
Late Edo period
(1780~1868)



*NTHK-NPO Kanteisho
Certificate of Authenticity*



Kojiri

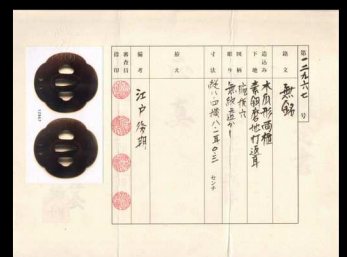
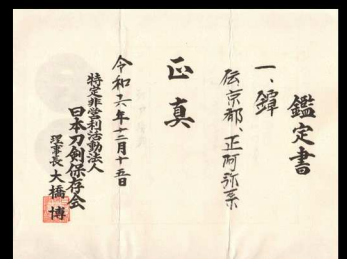
Beautiful *handachi* fittings
made of polished *shakudô*.

Kashiwa-ba



This *tsuba* is attributed to *Kyô-Shôami* (京正阿弥) school. Along with the *Umetada* (埋忠) school, *Shôami* school is known as one of the two major schools of *tsuba*, which flourished from the Muromachi period until the end of the Edo period, and was widely distributed throughout the country during the Edo period. There are *Shôami* schools from *Aizu* (会津), *Akita* (秋田), *Shônai* (庄内), *Edo* (江戸), and other regions.

This work is by *Kyô-Shôami*, the name given for metalsmiths that emigrated to *Kyôto* (京都) and was crafted in late Edo period (1780~1868). It features a polished copper ground with a multiple lobed round shape with two *hitsu-ana*.





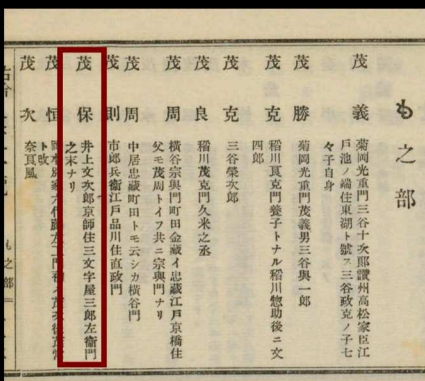
Udenuki ana (two small holes) were common on older tachi tsuba serving the purpose of a safety wrist strap when the sword is used on horseback. The holes are of different sizes and generally close together.

During the Edo period this design enjoyed a resurgence as seen here.



Fuchi-kashira
 attributed to
Inoue Shigeyasu
 (Late Edo period 1780~1868)

Flat gold inlay depicting vines on a polished copper ground.



Inoue Shigeyasu (井上茂保)

According to records, *Shigeyasu* was born *Inoue Monjirô* (井上文次郎). He was a descendant of *Saburôzaemon* (三郎左衛門), who ran *Samonji-ya* on *Oike* street in *Kyôto*. His works were nicknamed "*Oike carving*" after the name of the street.



The *tsuka* (hilt) is wrapped in a *twill* (diagonal ribs) weave and lacquered in black in *hishimaki* style to further preserve the hilt.



Menuki feature frolicking water birds, enjoying life.





A kogai is a thick blunt needle that was primarily used as a hair arranging tool by the samurai. It is fastened into a special notch built inside the *saya* (scabbard) and drawn through the 'bumpy' hole in the tsuba.

This *kogai* is attributed to *Katsuki* school from *Kaga* province, where the sword was made and was crafted during the late Edo period. This piece is comprised of a *shakudô* base decorated with *nanako* (dotted), with a motif of chrysanthemums with colour accents.



NTHK-NPO Kanteisho certificaion

shakudô

nanako decoration



The *Katsuki* school traces its origins to *Katsuki Morisada* (勝木盛定), who initially worked in *Fushimi, Kyôto*. Upon invitation from the *Maeda* clan, lord of *Kaga* domain, he relocated his workshop. Though his early expertise was in decorative horse harness inlay, he established the *Katsuki* school which became renowned for its excellent sword fittings.





Koshirae bag