



ITEM# UJKA471

A CHÔGI KATANA

SIGNED GAKUMEI, KOTÔ NANBOKUCHÔ PERIOD (JÔJI ERA: 1362~1368)

Swordsmith:	Bishû Osafune Chôgi (備州長船長義)
Measurements:	Length: 70.5cm (<i>ô-suriage</i>) Sori: 1.6cm Moto-haba: 2.8cm Weight: 705g
Jihada:	<i>Itame mixed with mokume, features plenty of ji-nie, chikei, and a midare-utsuri</i>
Hamon:	<i>Nie-laden notare, chôji, gunome, many ashi and yô, thick nie, nie-kuzure with tobiyaki and yubashiri to hitatsura, also kinsuji and sunagashi appear</i>
Certificate:	15th NBTHK Tokubetsu Jûyô Tôken (Especially Important Sword, awarded 1998)
Shugaki:	Hôei yonen origami dai gohyaku-kan (valued at 500-kan by Hon'ami Kôchû)
Included:	Shirasaya, fabric bags, stand, kit, printed description

This remarkable katana was crafted by *Osafune Chôgi* was one of the most celebrated swordsmiths of the mid-14th century. Working in *Bizen* province during a time of conflict and stylistic innovation, Chôgi emerged as a central figure of the *Sôden-Bizen* tradition - a hybrid style blending the elegance of *Bizen* with the bold intensity of *Sôshû-den*. He is traditionally counted among the *Masamune Jittetsu*, "Ten Great Disciples of Masamune." This blade showcases an *itame-hada* mixed with *mokume*, abundant *chikei*, and thick *ji-nie*. The *hamon* is a vigorous mix of *notare*, *chôji*, and *gunome*, filled with *ashi*, *yô*, and lively *nie*. In places, bright bursts of *nie-kuzure* can be enjoyed. *Yubashiri* and *tobiyaki* rise along the upper sections, culminating in a flamboyant *hitatsura*-like manner. Inside the *ha*, bold *kinsuji* and *sunagashi* dance across the steel. The sword has been shortened (*ô-suriage*) but its original signature has been preserved as *gakumei* - a framed inscription inlaid into the current tang. Adding to its legacy, the blade once bore an *origami* certificate by famed Edo-period appraiser *Hon'ami Kôchû* dated in the fourth year of *Hôei* era (1707), valued at 500 *kan*.

Saki-kasane: 4.9mm[^]

Moto-kasane: 7.0mm

Kissaki: 4.5cm

Saki-haba: 2.2cm

Nagasa: 70.6cm

Nakago: 17.4cm

Sori: 1.5cm

Omosa: 705g

Moto-haba: 2.87cm

Mekugi-ana: 3



Osafune Chôgi (長船長義) was one of the most distinctive and celebrated swordsmiths of the mid-14th century. Working in Bizen Province during a time of conflict and stylistic innovation, *Chôgi* emerged as a central figure of the *Sôden-Bizen* tradition - a hybrid style blending the elegance of *Bizen-den* with the bold intensity of *Sôshû-den*.

A son of *Osafune Mitsunaga* (長船光長), *Chôgi* descended from a lineage distinct from mainline *Osafune* smiths like *Nagamitsu* (長光) or *Kagemitsu* (景光). Though often paired with his contemporary *Kanemitsu* (兼光), *Chôgi*'s style is far more flamboyant and expressive. *Kanemitsu* has been likened to a graceful plum blossom; *Chôgi*, to cherry blossoms in full bloom - an apt metaphor for his vivid *hamon* and energetic spirit.

He is traditionally counted among the *Masamune Jittetsu*, the "Ten Great Disciples of Masamune." Though likely an honorific association, it reflects the lasting esteem *Chôgi*'s work commands.

This blade captures the essence of *Chôgi*'s dynamic style. The *jihada* shows flowing *itame* mixed with *mokume* and abundant *chikei*, enhanced by thick *ji-nie*. The *hamon* is a vigorous mix of *notare*, *chôji*, and *gunome*, filled with *ashi*, *yô*, and lively *nie*. In places, the *nie* breaks apart in bright bursts of *nie-kuzure*, lending the blade a dramatic texture. *Yubashiri* and *tobiyaki* rise along the upper sections, culminating in a flamboyant *hitatsura-like* upper. Inside the *ha*, bold *kinsuji* and *sunagashi* dance across the steel, creating a fiercely animated visual rhythm - hallmarks of true *Sôden-Bizen* artistry.

The sword has been shortened (*ô-suriage*) for practical use, but its original signature survives as a *gakumei* - a framed inscription inlaid into the current tang. This rare technique reflects the deep respect for *Chôgi*'s name, even in later adaptations.

Adding to its legacy, the blade once bore an *origami* certificate by famed Edo-period appraiser *Hon'ami Kôchû* (本阿弥光忠), dated Hôei 4 (1707) and valued at 500 kan, confirming its long-held prestige.

With its bold activity and brilliant execution, this sword is both a superb example of *Chôgi*'s work and a living record of *Sôden-Bizen* excellence at its peak.



Location: *Osafune in Bizen province*
Swordsmith: *Chôgi* (first generation)

ô-suriage (shortened tang)
kiri-yasurime (horizontal file marks)

gakumei (framed inscription)

備 (Bi)
州 (shû)
長 (Osa)
船 (fune)
長 (Chô)
義 (gi)

This blade features a *gakumei*—a signature inset into the tang after the sword was shortened through *ô-suriage*. Such modifications were often made to enhance handling in real combat, but in this case, great care was taken to preserve the name of *Osafune Chôgi* (長船長義), one of the most esteemed smiths of the Osafune school.

By carving out the original signature and reinserting it into the newly shaped tang, craftsmen honoured both the blade's functionality and its legacy. The presence of a *gakumei* reflects not only respect for Chôgi's name, but also a deep appreciation for the sword as a bearer of cultural and historical value.

Hôei yonen origami dai gohyaku-kan

In the fourth year of *Hôei* era (1707), the *origami* evaluating the blade at 500 *kan*.

(Hô) 宝

(ei) 永

(yo) 四

(nen) 年

(ori) 折

(gami) 紙

(dai) 代

(go) 五

(hyaku) 百


(kan) 貫

kuirjiri

(chestnut shaped butt end)

(reverse)

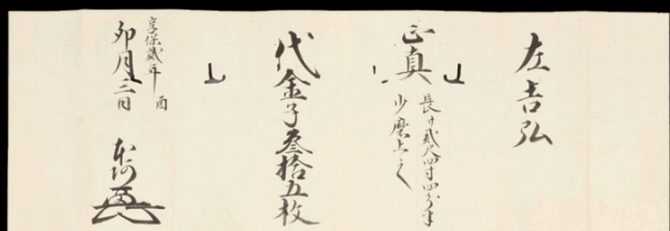




The *nakago* of this blade bears a *shugaki* (red lacquer inscription) reading “*Hôei yonen origami-dai gohyaku kan*” (宝永四年折紙代五百貫), indicating that in 1707, the sword received an appraisal valued at 500 *kan* and was deemed authentic at that time. This inscription is attributed to *Hon’ami Kôchû* (本阿弥光忠, 1654-1725), a prominent appraiser of the Hon’ami family.

Although the original *origami* has been lost, the *shugaki* remains as direct evidence of the sword’s historical value and prestige during the early Edo period.

A known example of *Hon’ami Kôchû*’s *origami* survives from *Kyôhō 2* (1717), in which he appraised the famed blade “*Sa Yoshihiro* (左吉弘)” at 35 gold *ryô*, underscoring the weight and authority of his evaluations.



An example of *origami*
by *Hon’ami Kôchû*



特 定
10199815

特重要第六四號

指 定 書

刀

(願銘) 備州長船長義
(朱書) 宝永四年折紙代五百貫

一口

法量 長さ七〇・五極一及び一六極 元幅二・八極
形状 鑄造 藤棟 身幅広く一及び二極深くつき 中鋒延びる
鍛 極目に本交り 地沸厚くつき 地景入り 乱れ映り五つ
刃文 のたれに丁子・互の目等交り 尾葉繁く入り 津よくつき 部分的に沸崩れ
上半飛焼・湯走りかおり皆焼風となり 金筋・砂流しかかる
帽子 乱れ込み 先さかんに掃きかけて火焔風となる
彫物 表は椿桶を掻き流し 樋中懸元に梵字の浮彫があり 裏は二筋桶と
孔止めにし その下茎に梵字と素剣の痕跡がある
茎 大磨上 鑢目切り 目釘孔四中一埋

右者當協會に於て審査の結果
特別重要刀剣に指定する

平成十年四月三十八日

財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協會

會長 山中貞則



Tokubetsu-Jûyô Certificate No. 644

Shiteisho (指定書) Certificate of Designation

Katana, gaku-mei: Bishû Osafune Chôgi (備州長船長義)

Shugaki: Hôei yonen origami-dai gohyaku-kan (宝永四年折紙代五百貫)

Measurements

nagasa 70.5 cm, sori 1.6 cm

Description

Keijô: *shinogi-zukuri*, *iori-mune*, wide *mihaba*, relatively deep *sori*, elongated *chû-kissaki*

Kitae: *itame* that is mixed with *mokume* and that features plenty of *ji-nie*, *chikei*, and a *midareutsuri*

Hamon: *nie*-laden *notare* that is mixed with *chôji*, *gunome*, many *ashi* and *yô*, thick *nie*, and partially with *nie-kuzure*, the *ha* widens in the upper half of the blade and tends there with its *tobiyaki* and *yubashiri* to *hitatsura*, also *kinsuji* and *sunagashi* appear

Bôshi: *midare-komi* with plenty of *hakikake* at the tip and tending to *kaen*

Horimono: on the *omote* side a *bôhi* that runs as *kaki-nagashi* into the tang and bearing inside towards the base the relief of a *bonji*, on the *ura* side a *futasuji-hi* that ends in *marudome* and below, that is, in the *nakago*, remnants of a *bonji* and a *suken*

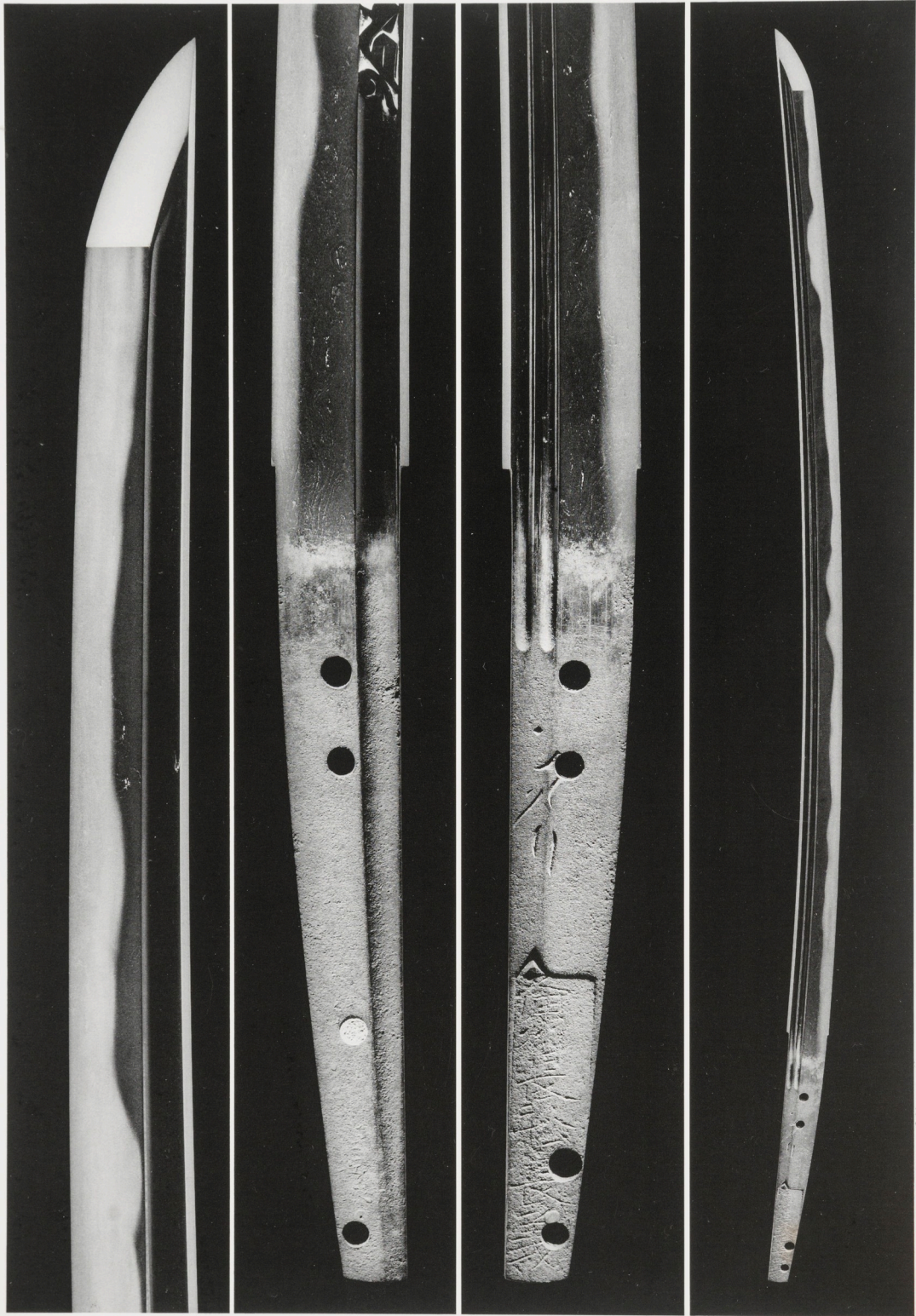
Nakago: *ô-suriage*, *kiri-yasurime*, four *mekugi-ana* (of which one is plugged)

According to the result of the shinsa committee of our society we judged this work as authentic and rate it as *Tokubetsu-Jûyô-Tôken*.

April 28, 1998

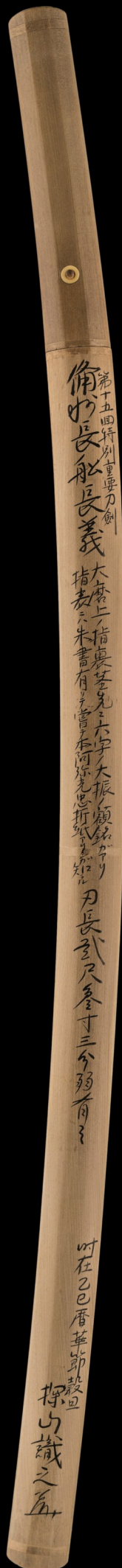
[Foundation] Nihon Bijutsu Tôken Hozon Kyôkai, NBTHK

[President] Yamanaka Sadanori (山中貞則)



刀 (額銘)
(朱書) 備州長船長義
宝永四年折紙代五百貫

備州長船長義



第十五回特別重要刀剣
Dai jûgo-kai Tokubetsu-Jûyô Tôken
Tokubetsu-Jûyô Tôken at 15th Tokubetsu-Jûyô Shinsa

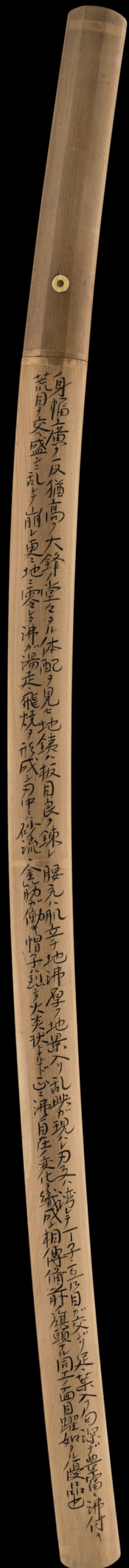
備州長船長義
Bishû Osafune Chôgi
Osafune Chôgi from Bizen Province

大磨上ノ指裏莖先ニ大振ノ額銘ガアリ指表ニハ朱書有
リテ嘗テ本阿弥光忠折紙アリシガ知ラル
Ô-suriage no sashi-ura nakago-saki ni ôburi no gaku-me ga ari
sashi-omote ni wa shusho arite katsute Honami Kôchû origami
arishi ga shiraru.

This blade is *ô-suriage*, but retains at the tip of the *sashi-ura* side of the tang a large *gaku-me*. Also, the *sashi-omote* side bears a red lacquer inscription, which informs us that the blade was once accompanied by an *origami* issued by Hon'ami Kôchû.

刃長貳尺參寸三分弱有之
Hachô ni-shaku san-sun san-bu jaku kore ari
Blade length ~ 70.5 cm

時在乙巳年曆華節穀旦探山識之「花押」
Toki ni kinoto-midoshi kasetu kokutan Tanzan kore o shirusu + kaô
Written by Tanzan [Tanobe Michihiro] on a lucky day in spring in the year of the snake of this era (2025) + monogram.



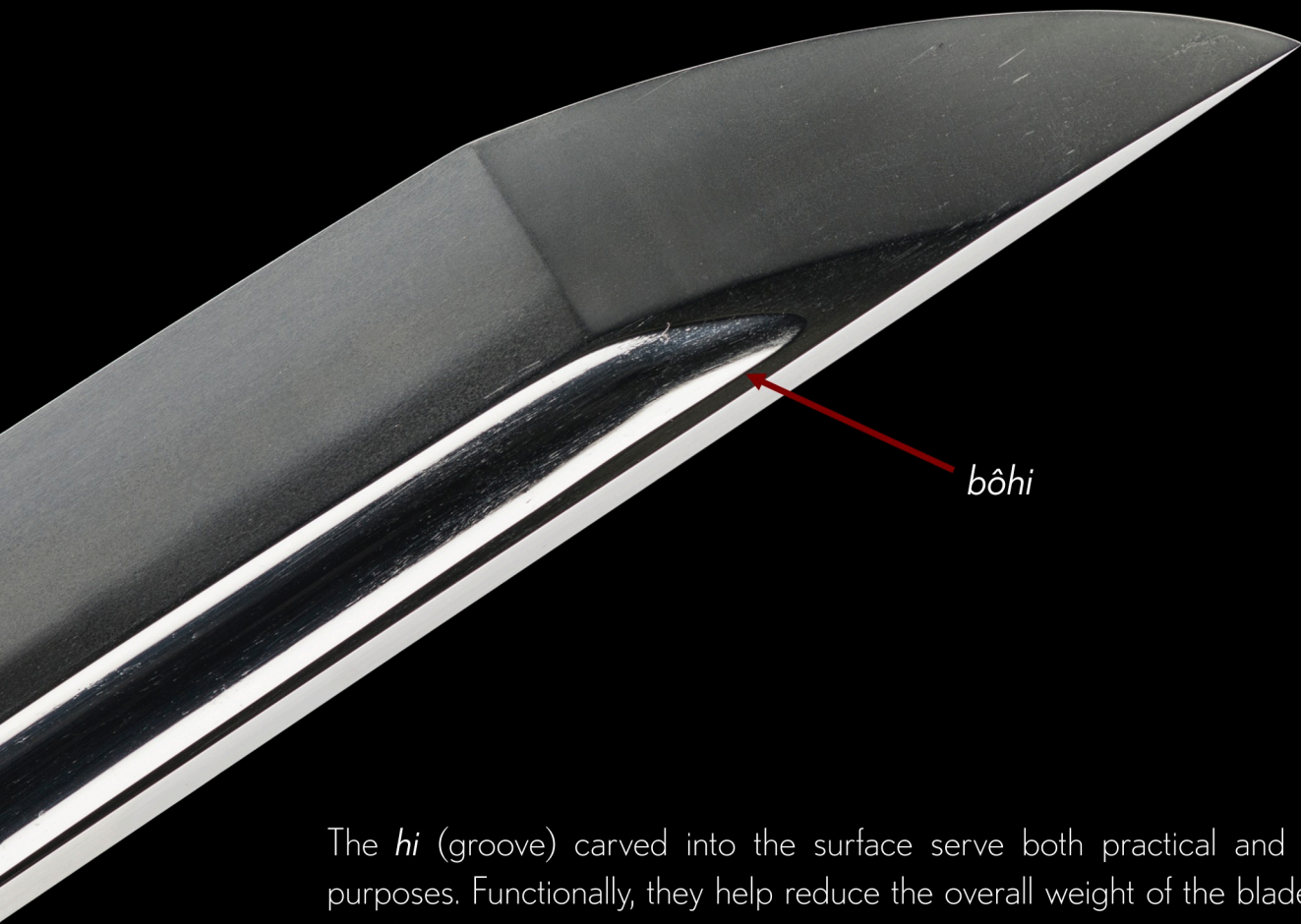
身幅廣ク反猶高ク大鋒ノ堂々タル体配ヲ見セ地鍔ハ板目良ク鍊レ腰元ハ肌立チ地沸厚ク地景入り乱映ガ現ハレ刃文ハ湾レテ丁子・互乃目ガ交ジリ足・葉入り句深デ豊富ニ沸付キ荒目ヲ交ヘ盛ンニ乱レテ崩レ更ニ地ニ零レタ沸ガ湯走・飛焼ヲ形成シ刃中ニハ砂流・金筋ガ働キ帽子ハ烈シク火炎状トナルナド正ニ沸ノ自在ノ変化ヲ織成シ相傳備前ノ旗頭ナル同工ノ面目躍如タル優品也

Mihaba hiroku sori nao takaku ô-kissaki no dôdô-taru taihai o mise jigane wa itame yoku nere koshimoto wa hada-tachi ji-nie atsuku chikei hairi midare-utsuri ga araware hamon wa notarete chôji, gunome ga majiri ashi, yô hairi nioi-fukashi de hôfu ni nie tsuki arame o majie sakan ni midarete kuzure sara ni ji ni koboreta nie ga yubashiri, tobiyaki o keisei-shi hachû ni wa sunagashi, kinsuji ga hataraki bôshi wa hageshiku kaen-jô to naru nado masa ni nie no jizai no henka o orinashi Sôden-Bizen no hatagashira-naru dôkô no menmoku-yakujo-taru yûhin nari.

This blade is with its wide *mihaba*, still deep *sori*, and *ô-kissaki* of a magnificent shape. It displays a *jigane* in an excellently forged *itame* that stands out at the base and that features plenty of *ji-nie*, *chikei*, and a *midare-utsuri*. The *hamon* is a *nie*-laden *notare* with a wide *nioiguchi* that is mixed with *chôji*, *gunome*, *ashi*, *yô*, and *arame*. There are abundant *midare* formations and *kuzure* sections, the *nie* spill from the *ha* into the *ji* where they form *yubashiri* and *tobiyaki* in places, and *sunagashi* and *kinsuji* appear within the *ha*. With this, and the *bôshi* tending voraciously to *kaen*, we recognize truly free *nie* activities that create great variety, and so this masterwork is very typical for Chôgi as the leader of the Sôden-Bizen trend.

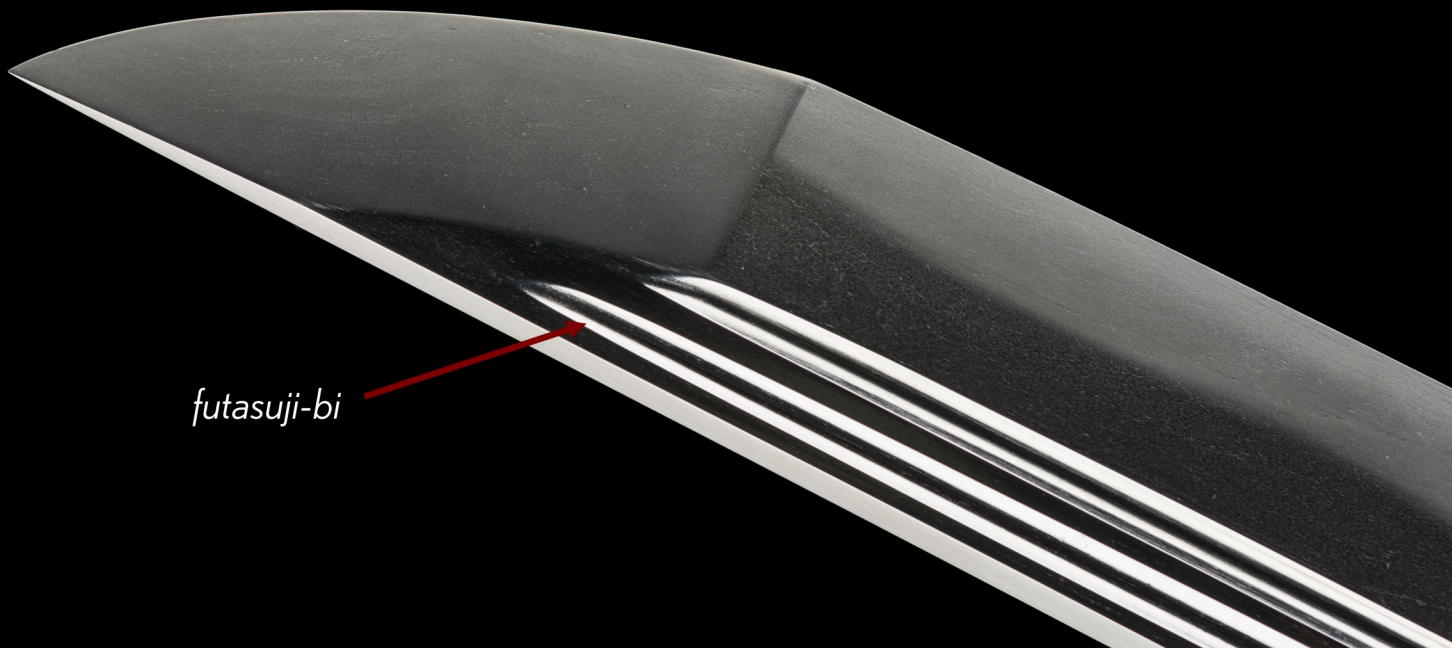






The *hi* (groove) carved into the surface serve both practical and aesthetic purposes. Functionally, they help reduce the overall weight of the blade without sacrificing its structural integrity—allowing for improved handling and responsiveness while maintaining strength. Artistically, they add rhythm, symmetry, and depth to the blade’s visual design.

This sword features a *bôhi*, a thick straight groove running along the blade, accompanied by a set of *futatsuji-hi*, twin parallel grooves. The combination of these elements reflects both the maker’s technical precision and sensitivity to form—balancing utility with elegant craftsmanship.



futasuji-bi

卍

suken

This blade bears a relief carving of a *bonji* on its surface. Faint traces of the same *bonji* appear on the *nakago*, along with part of a *suken* carving beneath it. The *bonji* represents *Kongô-Yasha Myô-ô* (金剛夜叉明王), one of the Five Great Wisdom Kings (*Godai Myô-ô*) in esoteric Buddhism.

Kongô-Yasha Myô-ô is the wrathful form of the Buddha *Amoghasiddhi* and a fierce guardian of the Dharma. Depicted with multiple faces and arms, holding thunderbolts, he is called upon to destroy ignorance and repel evil. In Japanese esoteric Buddhism, he is also linked to martial strength and the transformation of desire into wisdom.



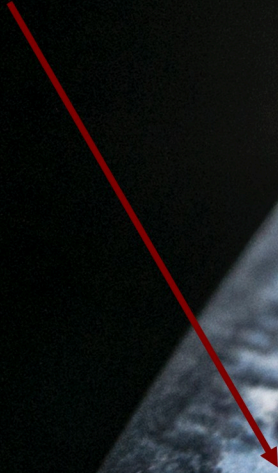
Kongô-Yasha-Myô-ô


The presence of his *bonji*, carved on both blade and tang, suggests the sword served not only as a weapon but as a spiritually charged object. The *suken* adds symbolic depth, representing clarity and the cutting away of illusion. Together, these elements imply that the owner sought divine protection in battle and alignment with Buddhist ideals of purification and inner resolve.



Kaen-boshi where the tip's hamon resembles a flame.

The exceptionally wide and aggressive
Soden-Bizen hamon creates a style
reminiscent of *hitatsura*.



A close-up, diagonal view of a sword blade. The blade is dark and polished, with a prominent hamon (temper line) visible. The hamon is a wavy, light-colored line that runs along the edge of the blade. The kinsuji (golden lines of nie crystals) are visible as thin, golden lines weaving through the hamon. A red arrow points to a specific section of the hamon.

Gorgeous *kinsuji* (golden lines of *nie* crystals) weaves its merry way though the hamon.

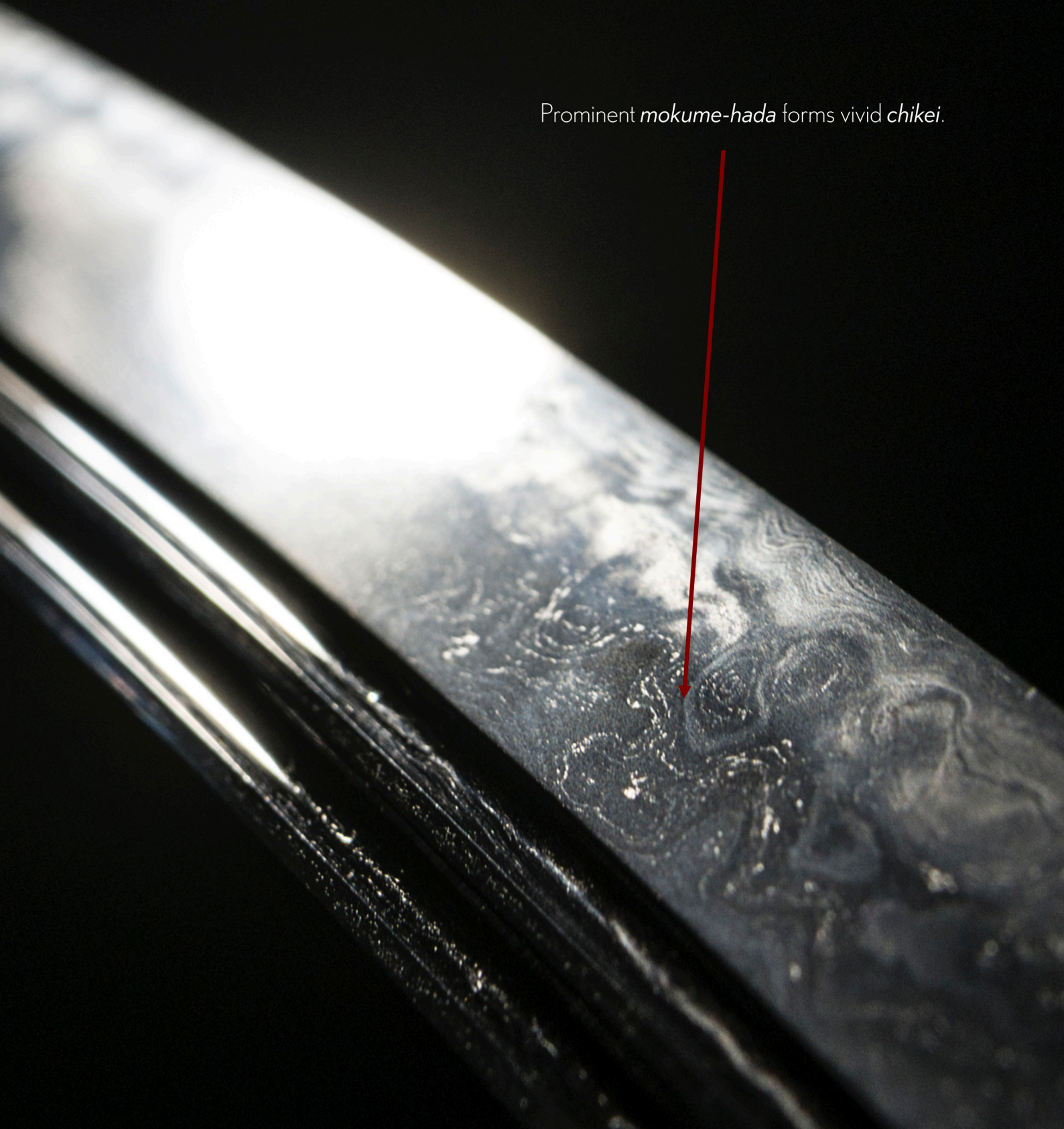


Literally meaning "reflection", *utsuri* is a beautiful, rather magical, misty reflection appearing in the *ji* (body of sword) above the *hamon*).

It is much loved and appreciated feature of swords, particular those made in the Bizen tradition in the Koto period.

The type of *utsuri* is called *midare-utsuri* - a smokey pattern that billows towards the *shinogi* (ridge line).

Prominent *mokume-hada* forms vivid *chikei*.

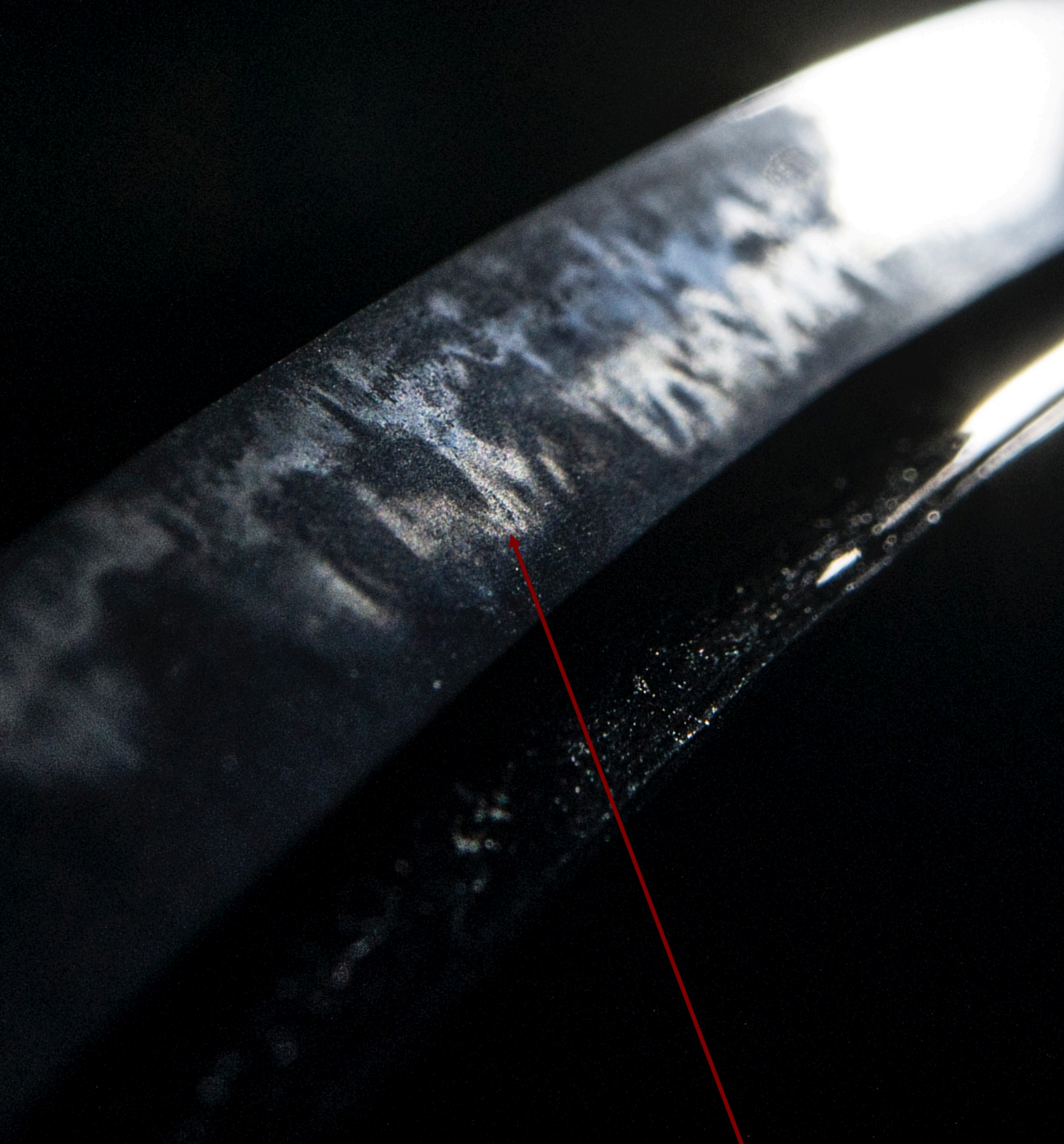




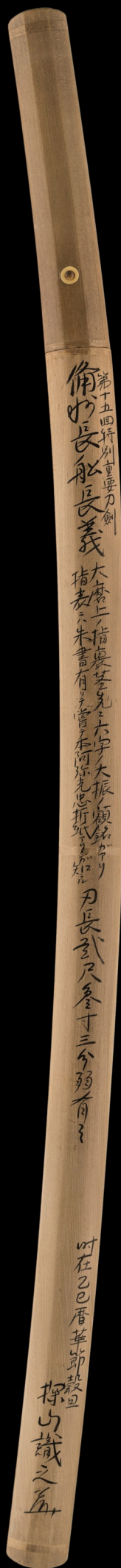
A cluster of nie-crystals known as *nie-kuzure*.



Streaming sands of *sunagashi*
captured nicely here.



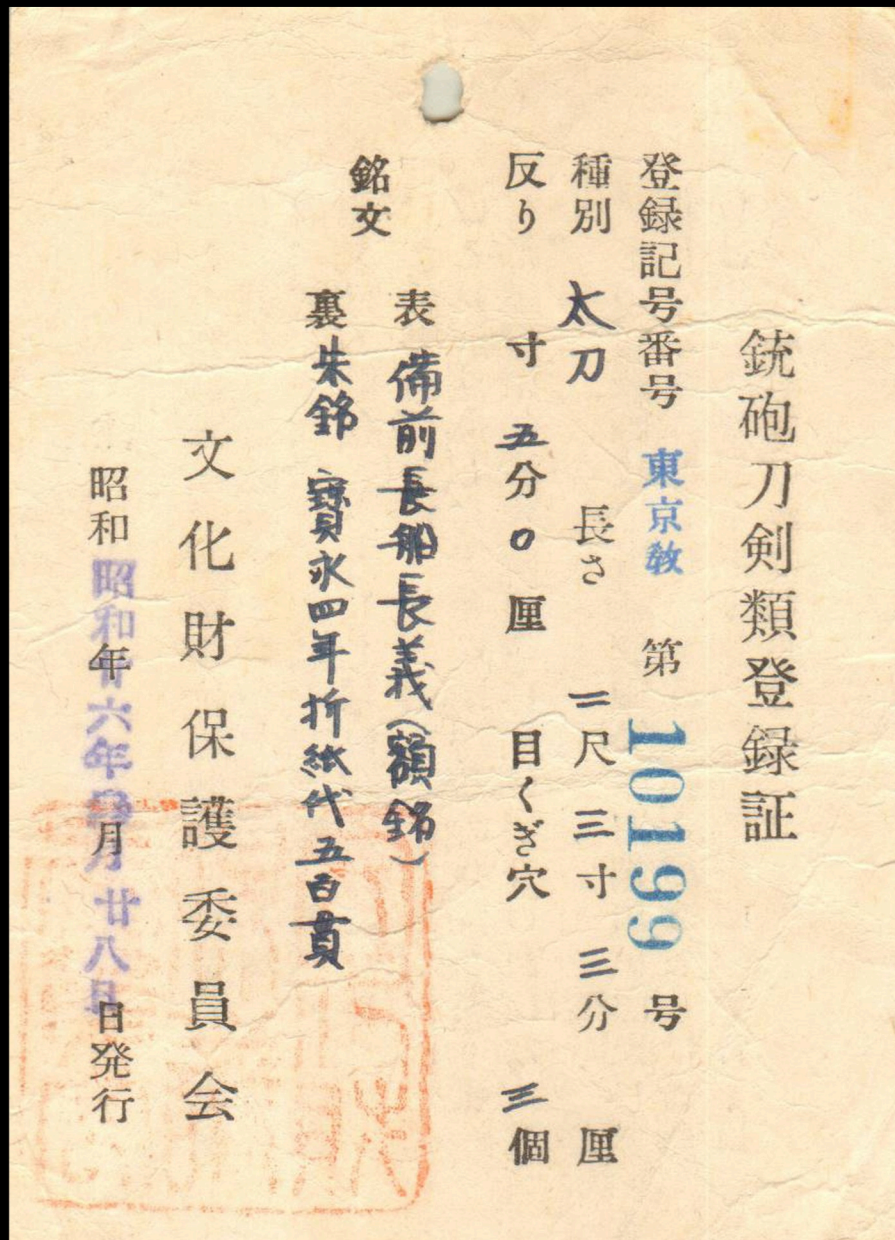
Splashes of *tobiyaki* (tempered spots) add to the incredible energy of this blade.



Shirasaya
(protective scabbard)



gold ni-ju *habaki* with
copper ground



This is the original *torokusho* (registration card) for the *Chôgi katana*. The card was registered in the 26th year of Showa (1951).

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.

One of the very first swords registered in Japan, formally registered in *Tokyô*.



静 (Shizu)
岡 (oka)
県 (ken)
文 (bun)
化 (ka)
財 (zai)

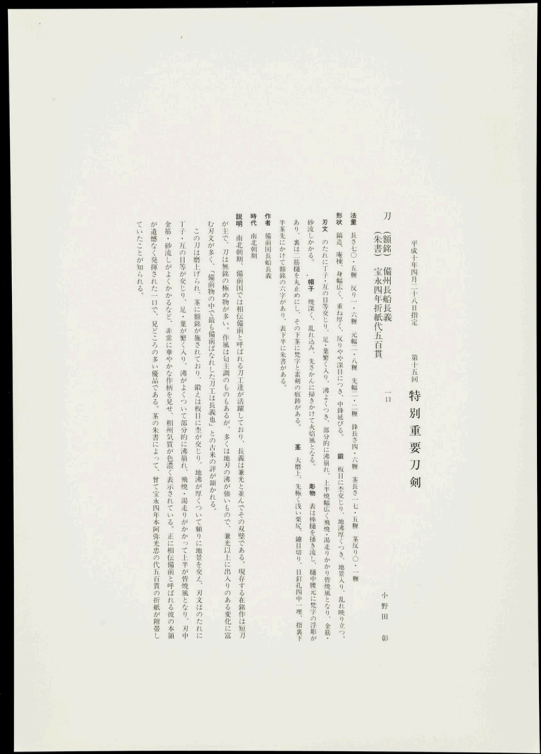
This sword was designated as a *bunkazai* (Cultural Property) of Shizuoka Prefecture on October 17, 1956.



高田 特別重要刀剣

光備十二種 鋒長さ四・六種 葉巻目
 目つき、中鋒延びる。 鐵板目に菱
 り、ゆよつき、部分的に滯崩れ、上段
 欠に極きかけて火焰風となる。 彫物
 類の痕跡がある。 莖 大階上、先極
 考。

寸達が活躍しており、長義は葉巻を葉
 もものもあるが、多くは地方の浦が如
 刀工は長義也」との古来の評が如く
 般之は板目に菱が交じり、地が
 欠まっついて部分的に滯崩れ、飛焼
 作柄を見せ、相州氣質が色濃く表
 出である。莖の朱書によつて、曾て



15th NBTHK
 Tokubetsu-Jôyô-Tôken Certificate
 Traditionally rolled in protective tube.

All information will be precisely translated for the new caretaker. A printed and bound description of the sword from this catalogue will also be included along with a sword stand and a Unique Japan maintenance kit.