



ITEM# UJKA477

A KO-MIZUTA KUNISHIGE KATANA

SIGNED, SUE-KOTÔ MOMOYAMA PERIOD (TENSHÔ ERA: FEBRUARY 1590)

Swordsmith:	<i>Bitchû no kuni Azae-jû Ôtsuki Matasaburô Kunishige saku (third generation)</i>
Measurements:	Length: 68.6cm (<i>ubu</i>) Sori: 1.8cm Moto-haba: 3.04cm Weight: 695g
Jihada:	<i>Well-forged mokume-hada mixed with itame with plentiful chikei</i>
Hamon:	<i>Gunome chôji-midare mixed with with yô and long ashi</i>
Certificate #1:	NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon (<i>sword and tsuba Especially Worthy of Preservation</i>)
Certificate #2-4:	NTHK-NPO Kanteishô (<i>koshirae, tsuba& soroi kanagu certified as Authentic</i>)
Authentication:	Sayagaki by Kanzan-sensei (<i>Dr. Satô Kanzan</i>)
Included:	<i>Shirasaya, Edo tachi koshirae, fabric bags, stand, kit, printed description</i>

SOLD

The *Ko-Mizuta* school began when *Kunishige* of the *Bingo Tatsufusa* school moved to *Bitchû* around *Eishô* period (1504~1521). Their work was favoured by warlords in *Chûgoku*, praised for their sharpness. Since then, the school flourished throughout the *shintô* period and produced many master smiths. Although a number of *tantô* by the *Ko-Mizuta* school remain, it is rare to find a katana still in existence. This splendid katana was crafted by **Sandai Kunishige** and commissioned for *Nakayama Gen'ue no Jô*, likely a vassal of a warlord from *Bitchû* province, and further dated to February 1590 during the famed *Momoyama* period. A well-forged swirling *mokume-hada* with exceptional falling *yô* (leaves) gives this curvy blade an elegant presence. Sword is housed in a lovely *tachi koshirae* with matching silver fittings and a powerful *Esoteric Buddhist Fudo Myô-ô tsuba*.



Saki-kasane: 4.5mm

Moto-kasane: 5.4mm

Omosa: 695g

Kissaki: 4.09cm

Saki-haba: 2.11cm

Nakago: 17.8cm

Moto-haba: 3.04cm

Nagasa: 68.6cm

Sori: 1.8cm

Mekugi-ana: 1



The *Ko-Mizuta* (古水田) school began when *Kunishige* (国重) of the *Bingo Tatsufusa* (備後辰房) school moved to *Bitchû* around Eishô period (1504~1521).

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This fine katana was crafted by *sandai* (third generation *Kunishige* whose real name *Ôtsuki Sahyô*, oldest son of the second generation *Kunishige*. *Sandai Kunishige* initially worked in *Bitchû Matsuyama* but later moved in the second year of *Tenshō* era to *Azae* village.

As chiseled on the *nakago*, we know that this sword was commissioned by *Nakayama Gen'ue no Jô*. No personal record was found of him but he must have been a vassal of a warlord around *Bitchû* province.

All told, this curvy katana by *Kunishige* in a fine *tachi koshirae* is a rare find from the *Ko-Mizuta school* crafted during the famed *Momoyama* period.

The *Momoyama* period, also known as the *Azuchi-Momoyama* period, lasted from 1568 to 1600 and marked the unification of Japan under the leadership of *Oda Nobunaga* and his successor *Toyotomi Hideyoshi*. This era was characterised by significant political changes, the construction of impressive castles, and a flourishing of the arts.





Location: *Azae village in Bitchû province*

Family name: *Ôtsuki*

Secular name: *Matasaburô*

Swordsmith: *Kunishige* (first generation)

ubu-nakago (original, unaltered tang)

katte-sagari-yasurime (slanting file marks)

備 (Bi)

中 (tchû, no)

國 (Kami)

砦 (Tachibana)

部 (Yasu)

住 (ju)

大 (Ô)

月 (tsuki)

又 (Mata)

三 (sa)

郎 (buro)


国 (Kuni)

重 (shige)

作 (saku)

Shu Nakayama Gen'ue no Jô
Tenshō jū hachinen nigatsu kichijitsu

Sword crafted for *Nakayama Gen'ue no Jô*
Dated on a lucky day in the second month in the
eighteenth year of *Tenshō* era (February 1590)



(Ten) 天
(shō) 正
(jū) 十
(hachi) 八
(nen) 年
(ni) 二
(gatsu) 月
(kichi) 吉
(jitsu) 日

主 中 山 源 右 衛 尉
天 正 十 八 年 二 月 吉 日

主 (Shu)
中 (Naka)
山 (yama)
源 (Gen)
右 (u)
衛 (e, no)
尉 (Jô)

特 選
03202112

No 1017522



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
令和四年三月二日
公益財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協會



一 刀 銘

鑑 定 書

備中国啓部住大月又三郎国重作
主中山源右衛尉
天正十八年二月吉日
長二尺二寸六分強

新潟県 教育委員会
第 33127 号
昭和44年7月23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 4th year of Reiwa (2022), March 2nd

One, Katana

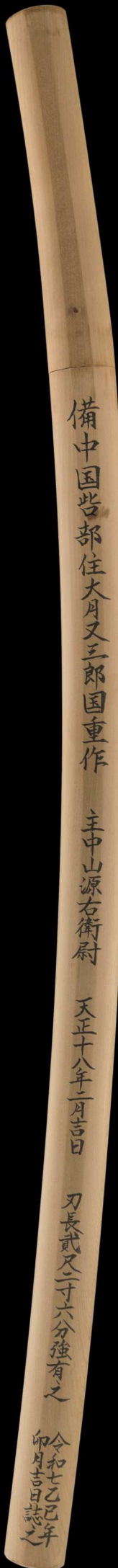
Mei (signature)

Bitchû no kuni Azae-jû Ôtsuki Matasaburô Kunishige saku
Shu Nakayama Gen'ue no Jô
Tenshō jûhachinen nigatsu kichijitsu

Nagasa (length)

2-shaku 2-sun 6-bu kyô (68.6cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai
(NBTHK)



備中國皆部住大月又三郎国重作

主中山源右衛尉

天正十八年二月吉日

刃長貳尺二寸六分強有之

令和七乙巳年卯月吉日誌之

備中國皆部住大月又三郎国重作

Bitchû no kuni Azae jû Ôtsuki Matasaburô Kunishige saku

Crafted by Ôtsuki Matasaburô Kunishige, a resident of Azae in Bitchû province

主中山源右衛尉

Shu Nakayama Gen'e no Jô

For Nakayama Gen'e no Jô

天正十八年二月吉日

Tenshō jûhachinen nigatsu kichijitsu

On a lucky day in the second month in the 18th year of Tenshō era (February 1590)

刃長貳尺二寸六分強有之

Hachō 2-shaku 2-sun 6-bu kyō kore ari

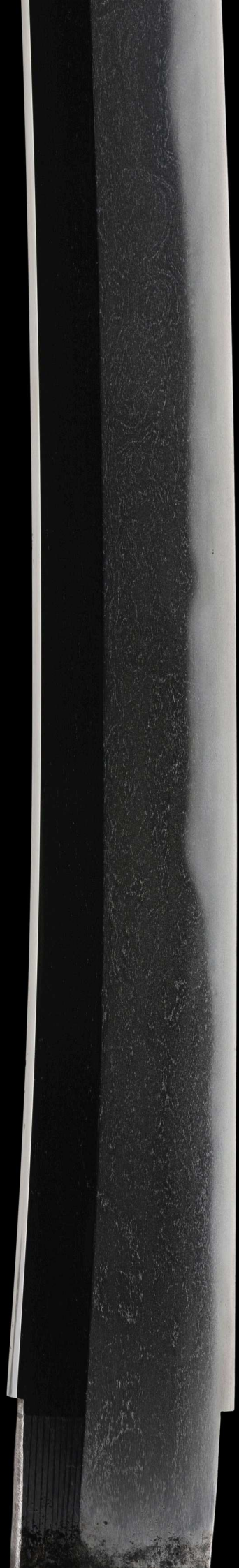
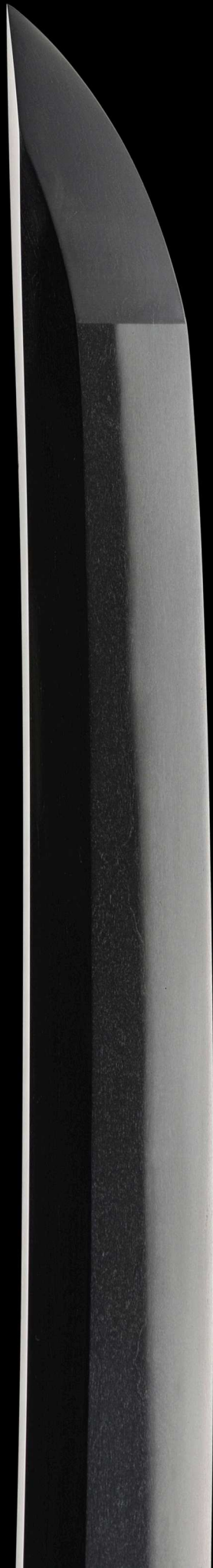
Blade length 68.6 cm

令和七乙巳年卯月吉日誌之

Reiwa nana kinoto-midoshi Uzuki kichijitsu kore o shirusu

Written on a lucky day in the fourth month in the seventh year of Reiwa era during the Year of the Snake (April 2025)







yô

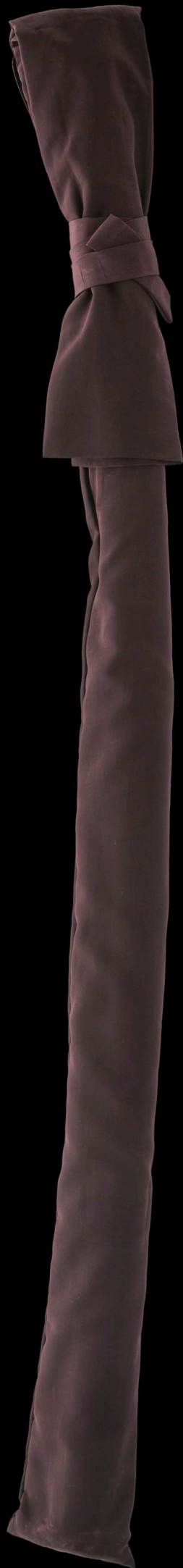
long *ashi* (legs)

chôji midare

A striking *gunome-midare hamon* pattern that starts with a thick *chôji* at the base of the blade, evolving into wisps of flames and a tight *ko-gunome* with plenty of *yô* (leaves) at the top third *monouchi* area of the katana.



Momoyama elegance.



Shirasaya
(protective scabbard)



gold *nijû-habaki*
with file marks

*Ginmuku ishime-ji kaigu
tachi-koshirae*
(銀無垢石目地皆具太刀拵)

*Tachi-koshirae
with matching silver fittings*

Crafted during the
Late Edo period
(1780~1868)



NTHK-NPO Kanteisho
Certificate of Authenticity



Tachi-o: A cord used to attach a *tachi* to the waist. Flat leather cords of approximately three meters in length or braided cords with a *kikkô* (tortoise shell) pattern are most commonly used.

The samurai would wear the *koshirae* by attaching it through the *obitori* and wrapping it around his waist. When on display, the *koshirae* is tied in a beautiful *tachi-musubi* knot.



obitori

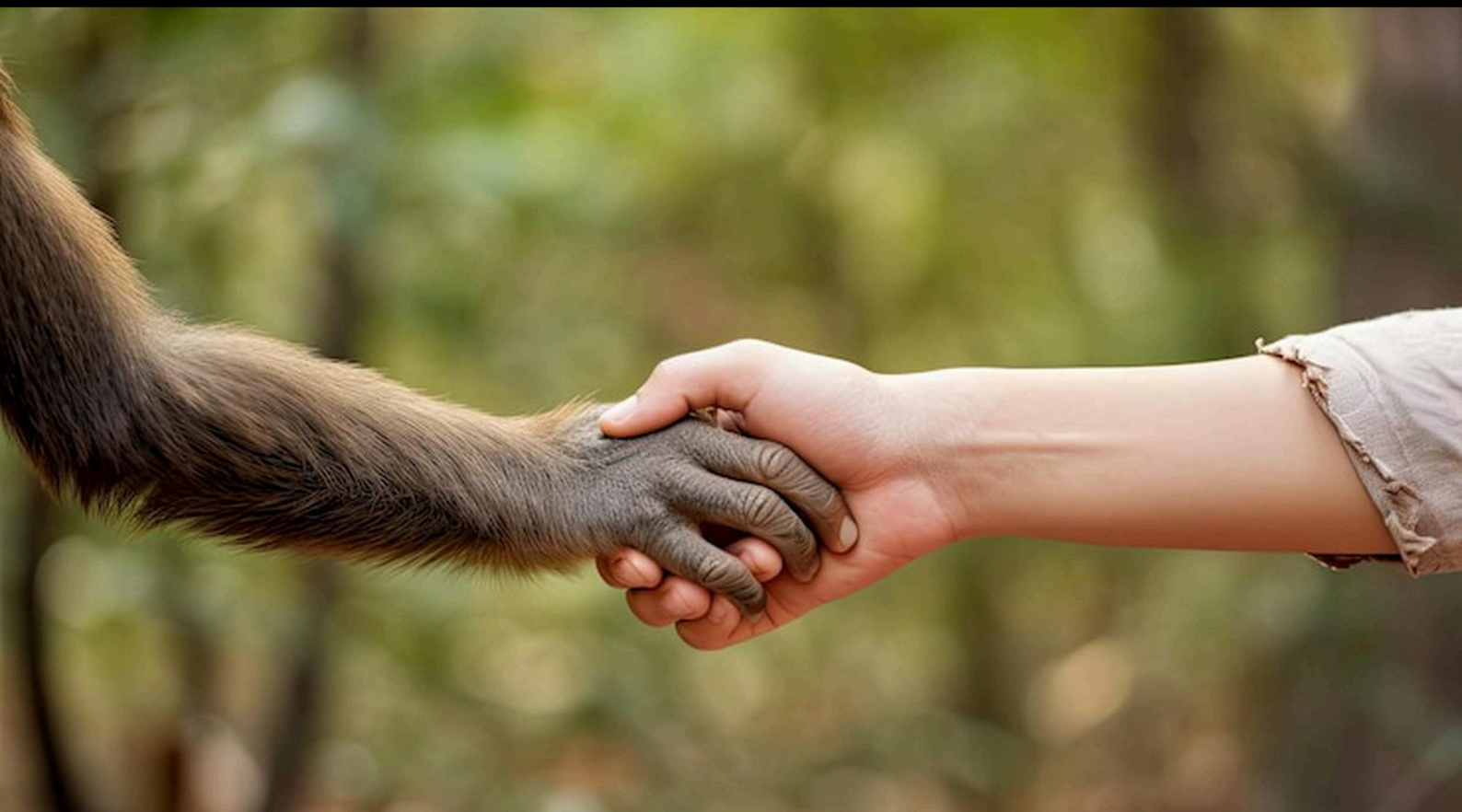


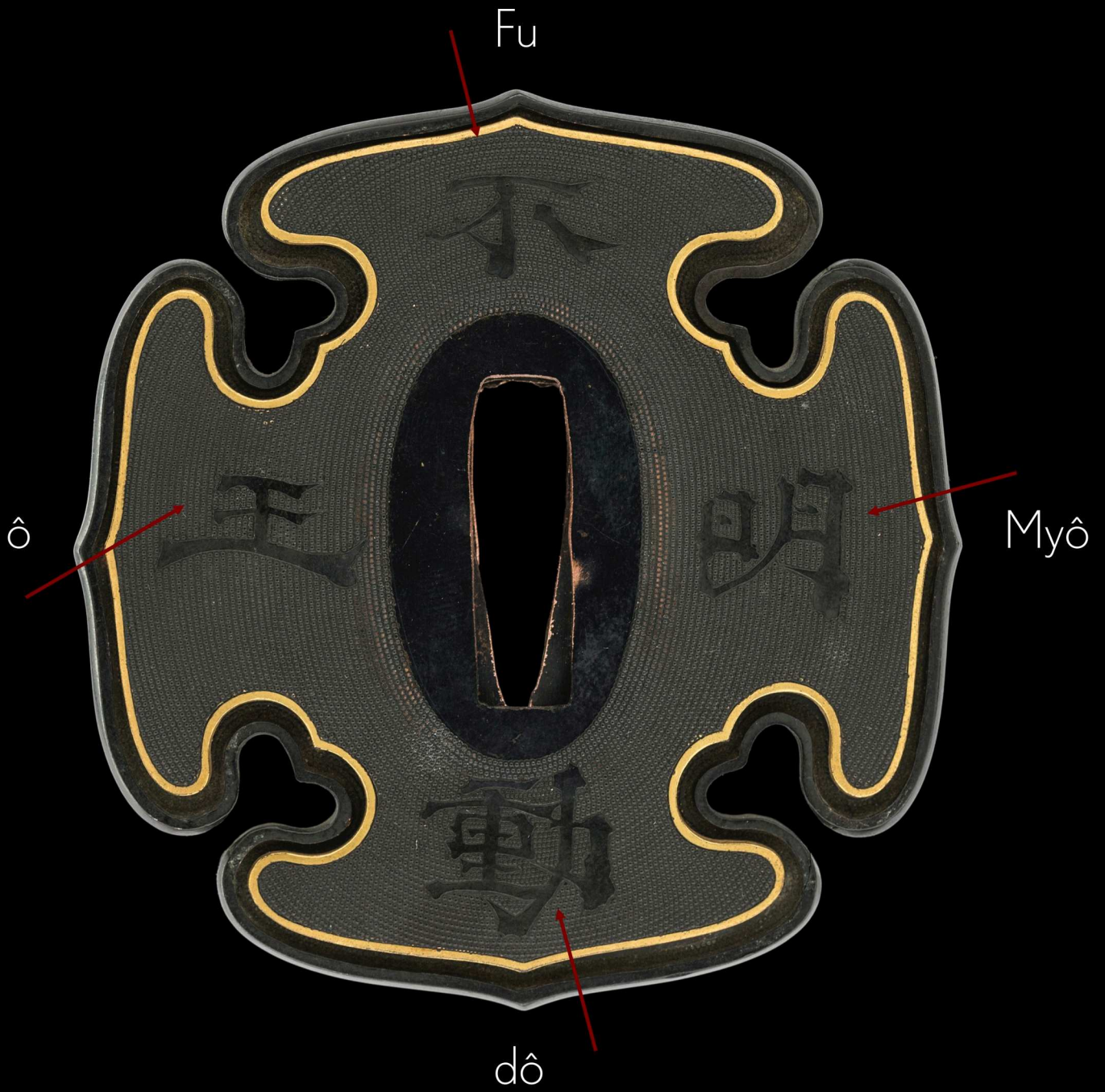


Fuchi-kashira
attributed to
Tachi Kanagu-shi
(Late Edo period 1780~1868)

This metal fitting on the pommel is called *sarude* (monkey hand).

The name is originally derived from the fact it looks like a monkey holding hands. In time, *sarude* began to look like actual hands.



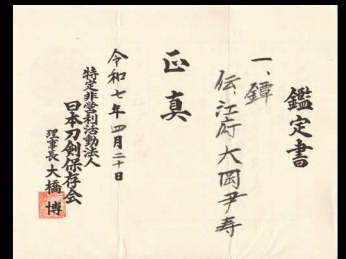


This fine tsuba was crafted by *Ô-oka Tadatoshi*. He studied under *Ôoka Masatoshi*, an official craftsman of *Owari Tokugawa* family. It is in *aoi-gata* shape, a traditional style for tachi koshirae.

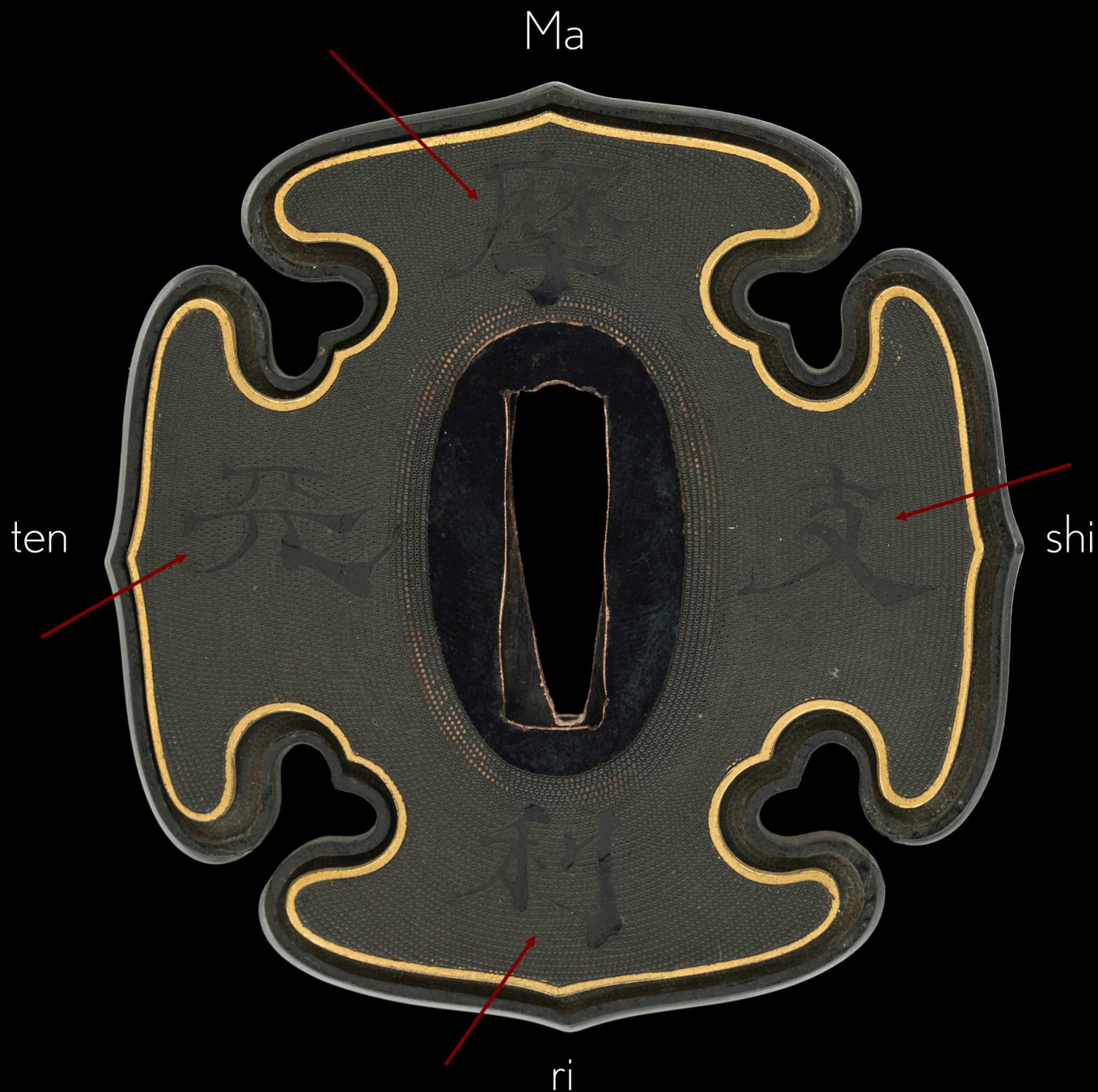


Fudo Myô-ô is one of five great Myoo's worshipped by Esoteric Buddhism, and considered to be the deity that subdues demons.

Fudo was worshipped by warriors and they placed Fudo on their sword fittings.



(reverse)



(reverse)



Marishiten, or Marici, meaning "Ray of Light," is a Buddhist deity and bodhisattva associated with light and the Sun. Marici is considered as a goddess of war.

She is also depicted in Buddhist paintings, usually riding a galloping boar, holding a bow a spear.

Marishiten is often worshipped alongside *Hachiman Daibosatsu* as the guardian deity of warriors who pray to her for divine power to avert all kinds of misfortunes.



A *kamakiri* (praying mantis) forms the *menuki*.
There is a legend called "Axe of Mantis," in which a praying mantis raised its front legs to confront a horse-drawn carriage, epitomising "*the weak challenging the strong*."
A favourite motif especially during the Edo period.





Koshirae bag

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