



ITEM# UJKA491

## A MUNEHIRA KATANA

UNSIGNED, SHINSHINTÔ LATE EDO PERIOD (BUNSEI ERA: 1818~1830)

<b>Swordsmith:</b>	<i>Koyama Munehira</i> (固山宗平)
<b>Measurements:</b>	<b>Length:</b> 71.0cm <b>Sori:</b> 1.0cm <b>Moto-haba:</b> 2.93cm <b>Weight:</b> 930g (!)
<b>Jihada:</b>	<i>Well-forged mix of mokume and itame-hada with light midare-utsuri and chikei</i>
<b>Hamon:</b>	<i>Gorgeous sashikomi gunome-chôji-midare with tama, tobiyaki, extra-long ashi</i>
<b>Certificate #1:</b>	<b>NBTHK Hozon</b> (sword Worthy of Preservation)
<b>Fujishiro rank:</b>	<b>Chûjô-saku</b> (ranked as an above average swordsmith)
<b>Authentication:</b>	<b>Sayagaki by Nozomi-san</b> (shodô artist)
<b>Included:</b>	Shirasaya, fabric bag, stand, kit, printed description

## SOLD

Born in *Shirakawa, Mutsu* province in the *Kyôwa* era, *Koyama Munehira* was active during the late Edo period who had two younger brothers, *Munetoshi* and *Koyama Munetsugu*, the highly talented *jôjô-saku* swordsmith of the *shinshintô* period. The shape of this imposing katana was clearly inspired by the powerful swords of the mid-1300s *Nambokuchô* period. It measures 71.0 cm and weighs in at an impressive 930g. Its lethal-looking 7.8cm *kissaki* draws particular attention. As the sword is finished in a gorgeous *sashikomi* polish, both the *gunome-chôji-midare* hamon and the well-forged *itame* and *mokume-ha* pop out magnificently under the light. As the sword is *mumei* and in *shirasaya* only, this fine sword can be offered at a very reasonable price point. This is a learning and inspiring piece to jump head first into the Japanese sword world with.



Saki-kasane: 5.6mm

Moto-kasane: 7.1mm

Kissaki: 7.77cm

Saki-haba: 2.33cm

Nagasa: 71.0cm

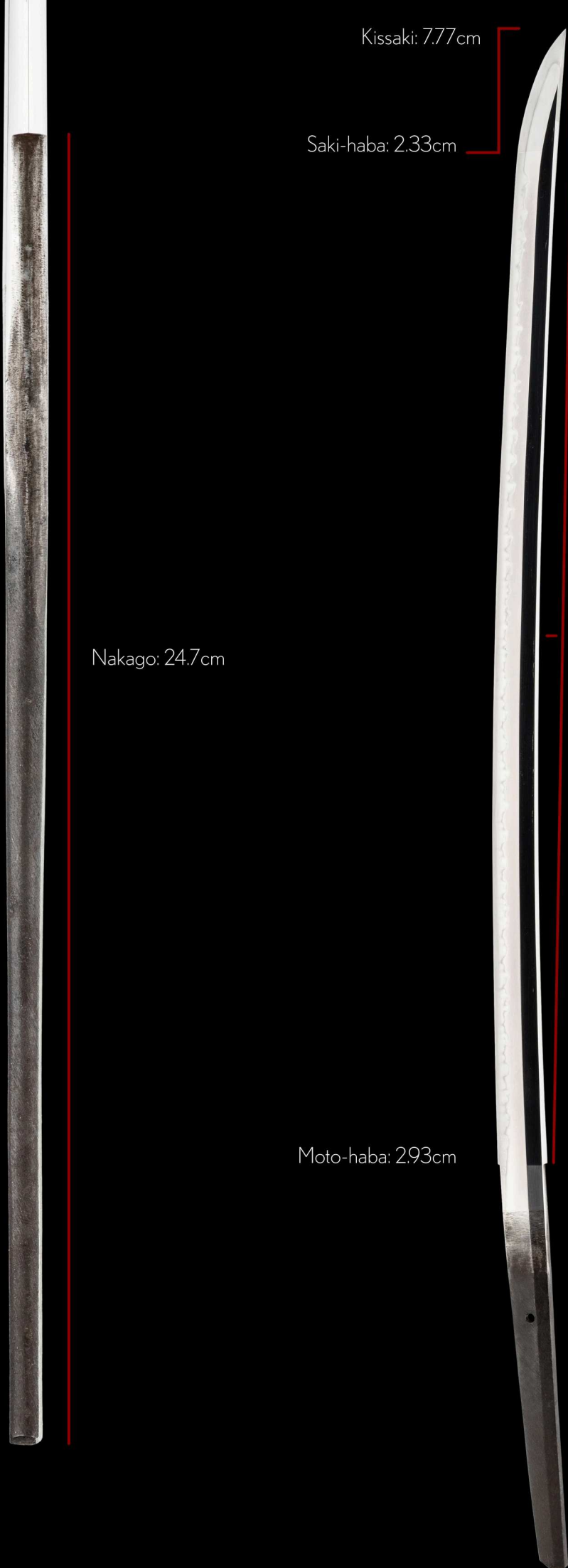
Nakago: 24.7cm

Sori: 1.0cm

Omosa: 930g

Moto-haba: 2.93cm

Mekugi-ana: 1



*Koyama Munehira* (固山宗平) was a swordsmith active during the late *Edo* period. Born in *Shirakawa, Mutsu Province* in the *Kyôwa* era (1801~1804), his given name was *Sôbei* (宗兵衛), and used the art name *Hakuryûshi* (白童子). He had two younger brothers, *Munetoshi* (宗俊) and *Koyama Munetsugu* (宗次), the highly talented *jôjô-saku* swordsmith of the *shinshintô* period.

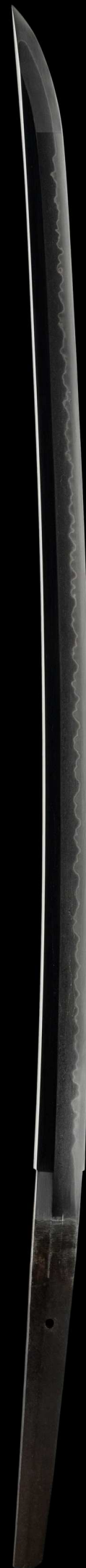
Although traditionally said to have trained under *Kato Tsunahide* (加藤綱英), his style shows stronger influence from *Tsunahide's* younger brother, *Chôunsai Tsunatoshi* (長雲斎綱俊), due to technical and stylistic similarities. *Munehira* initially worked in *Shirakawa*, then moved in 1823 to *Kuwana* when the *Matsudaira* (松平) family, lords of *Shirakawa*, were transferred there. During the *Tempô* era (1830-1844), he served the *Doi* (土井) family of the *Koga* domain in *Shimousa*, and later returned to the *Matsudaira's* service. He died in *Edo* around 1843.

His blades follow the *Bizen* tradition and are known for flamboyant *chôji-midare hamon*, bright *nioiguchi*, and abundant activity within the *yakiba*. The forging is refined, often showing *utsuri* in the steel. Some of his works are considered to rival those of *Munetsugu*, and a few joint works are known. He is rated *chûjô-saku* (upper middle grade) among *shinshintô* smiths.

The shape of the blade was certainly inspired by the powerful swords of the mid-1300s *Nambokuchô* period. It measures 71.0 cm with a gentle 1cm curvature and a weighs in at an impressive 930g. Its long and rather lethal-looking 7.8cm *kissaki* draws particular attention to the eye.

As the sword is finished in a gorgeous *sashikomi* polish, both the *hamon* and the *jihada* pop out, allowing for countless hours of *nihontô* enjoyment. The steel shows well-forged *itame and mokume hada* with thick *ji-nie* and light *midare-utsuri*. The *hamon* is a dynamic *gunome-chôji-midare* with a bright *nioiguchi*, and active features such as *ashi, kinsuji, tobiyaki, tama* and *sunagashi*.

As the sword is *mumei* and in *shirasaya* only, this fine sword can be offered at a very reasonable price point. This is a learning and inspiring piece to jump into the Japanese sword world with. Comes with NBTHK Hozon certification.





Location: *Iwashiro province*

Family name: *Koyama*

Swordsmith: *Munehira* (first generation)

*machiokuri-nakago* (slightly raised tang)

*sujikai-yasurime* (slanting file marks)



*Katasogi*  
(*Kaga* style)



*Iriyama-gata*  
(pointed)



*Kurijiri*  
(rounded)

While *Koyama Munehira*'s tangs are generally finished in standard *kurijiri* (rounded) or *iri-yama-gata* (peaked) styles, this particular example features a rare configuration called *katasogi* (片削ぎ), whereby the tip of the tang slopes only on the *ha* (edge) side, forming an asymmetrical shape. It closely resembles the distinctive "*Kaga*" *nakago* typically associated with smiths from the *Kaga* region.

Interestingly, a known *tantô* by *Munehira* has been documented with a *nakago* described as "*ubu*, with the tang tip sloping upward on the edge side in an *iri-yama-gata* shape." This suggests that at least a few of his works exhibit this *katasogi*-like *nakago*.



*katasogi*-like tip

鑑定書

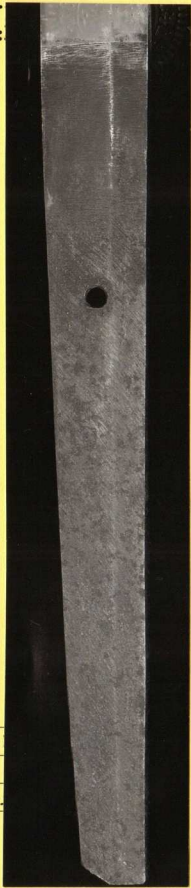
一刀 無銘 (固山宗平)

長二又三寸四分強

右は當協會に於て審査の結果保存刀剣と  
鑑定しこれを証する

平成二十九年二月二日

公益財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協會



兵  
第  
平成

NBTHK Hozon  
Certificate of Designation

A sword designated as *Worthy of Conservation*  
by the Society for the Preservation of the Japan Art Sword

Issued in the 29th year of Heisei (2017), February 2nd

One, Katana

*Mei* (signature)  
*Koyama Munehira*

*Nagasa* (length)  
2-shaku 3-sun 4-bu kyô (71.0cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai  
(NBTHK)



固山宗平

固山宗平  
*Koyama Munehira*  
Koyama Munehira

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*Ubu-nakago mumei nari jidai Bunsei goro*  
Unaltered tang, unsigned, around Bunsei period (1818~1830)

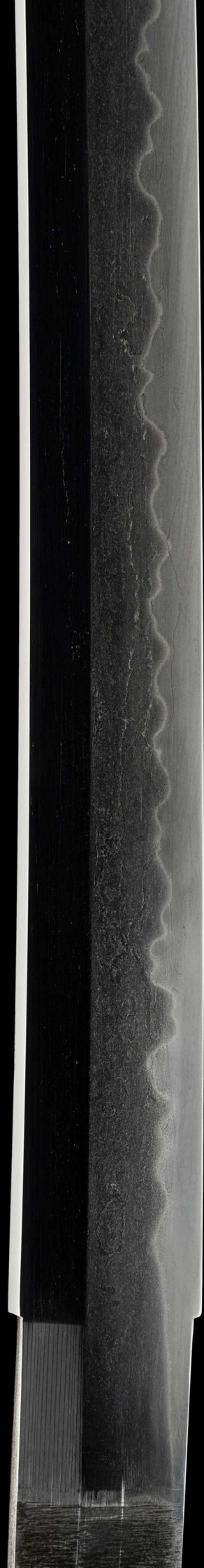
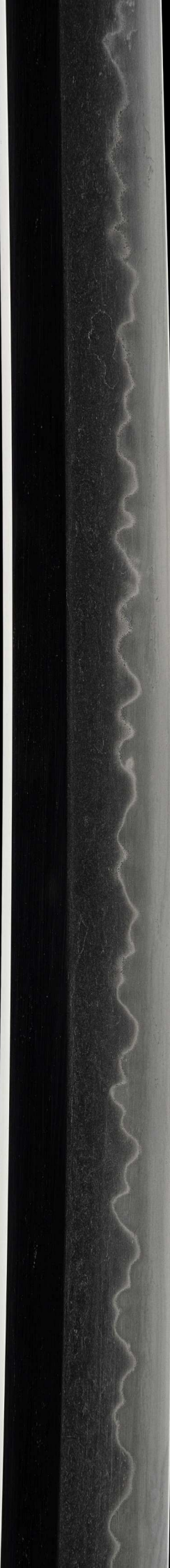
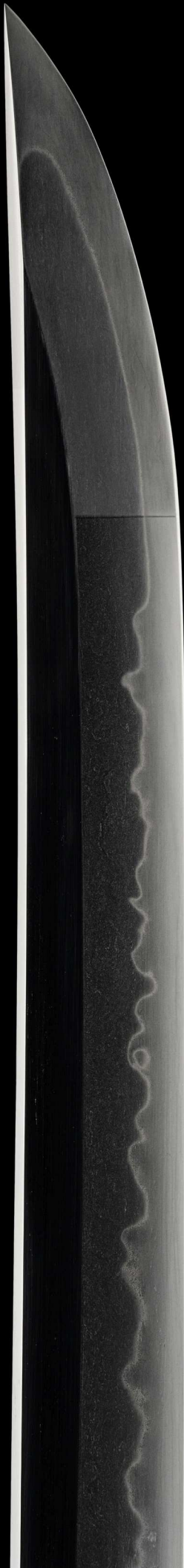
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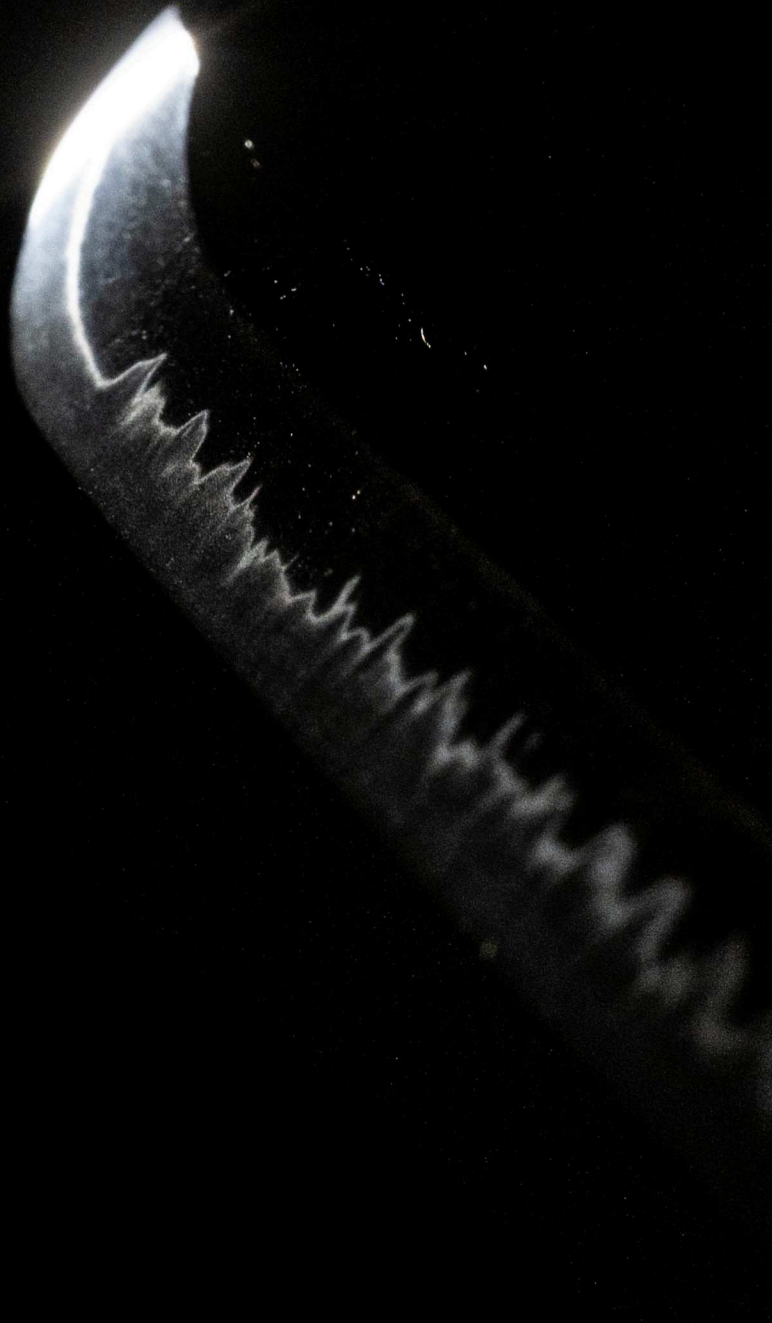
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*Nagasa 2-shaku 3-sun 4-bu kyô kore ari*  
Blade length 71.0 cm

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*Reiwa nana kinoto-midoshi Nagatsuki kichijitsu kore o shirusu*  
Written on a lucky day in the ninth month in the seventh year of  
Reiwa era during the Year of the Snake (September 2025)







Those that are familiar with Unique Japan, know that the majority of swords that are offered come with a set of koshirae. And that nearly all swords from the *shintô* and *shinshintô* period are signed. Well, this sword runs contrary to both!

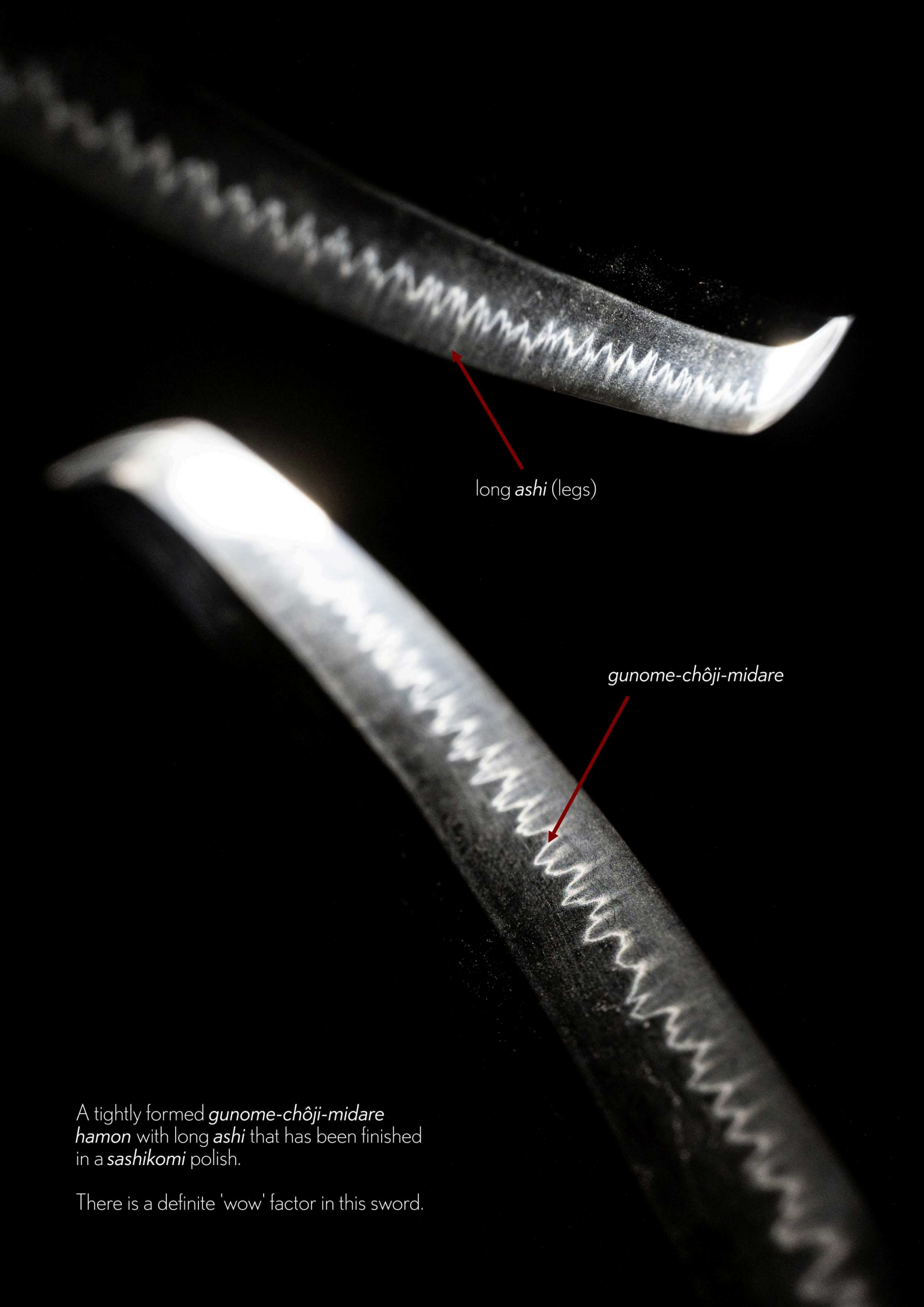
What we have here is a massive, unsigned katana from the *shinshintô* period, crafted in the clear style of *Koyama Munetsugu* in such a gorgeous *sashikomi* polish. The result is a more 'classical finish' without the use of *hadori* that can exaggerate the contrast of the hamon and body of the blade.

This is a sword meant for a hamon connoisseur, who simply wants to sit quietly under the light with a beautifully executed piece without any further distractions. Except for maybe some blues or jazz playing in the background...

An impressive 77.7cm long *ô-kissaki* (tip) speaks to the imposing swords that were crafted during the tumultuous mid-1300s *Nambokuchô* period in which this katana was certainly inspired by.

Feel the power.





long *ashi* (legs)

*gunome-chôji-midare*

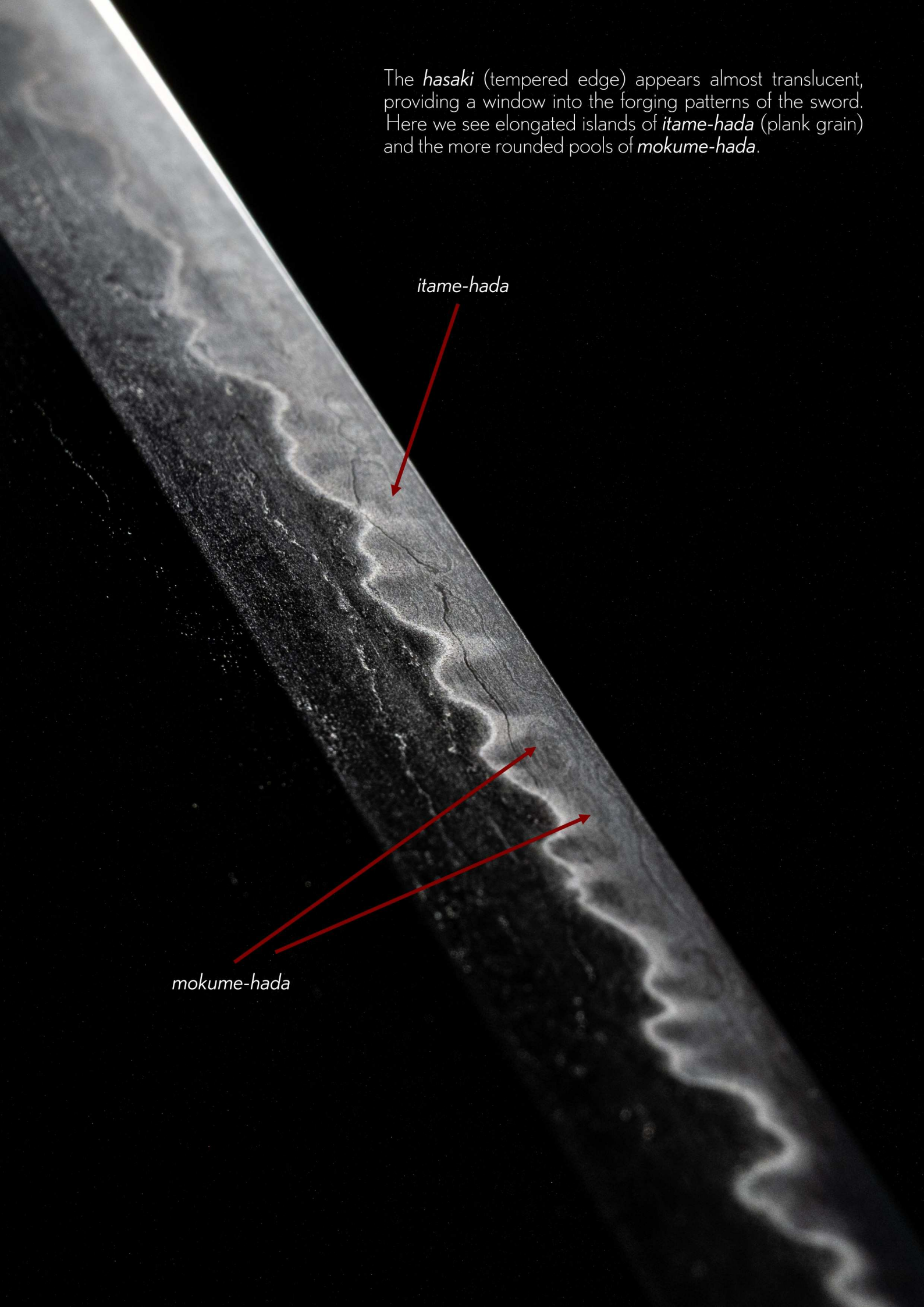
A tightly formed *gunome-chôji-midare hamon* with long *ashi* that has been finished in a *sashikomi* polish.

There is a definite 'wow' factor in this sword.

The *hasaki* (tempered edge) appears almost translucent, providing a window into the forging patterns of the sword. Here we see elongated islands of *itame-hada* (plank grain) and the more rounded pools of *mokume-hada*.

*itame-hada*

*mokume-hada*






*Tama*, a jewel-like ball.

Little nuggets that add further personality to the sword.



*tobiyaki* (tempered spot)



*midare-utsuri*

Literally meaning "reflection", this sword showcases a light *utsuri* - a beautiful misty reflection appearing in the *ji* (body of sword) above the *hamon*).



*Shirasaya*  
(protective scabbard)

固山宗平

生代  
時文  
政頭

長貳尺參寸四分強有之

令和七乙巳年長月吉日誌之



two-toned silver *habaki*

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*On the final day of our safari on Tarangire National Park in Tanzania, I caught this image of an Abdim's Stork (also called White-bellied Stork) in full flight. A wow moment!*

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