



ITEM# UJKA499

CURRENTLY AVAILABLE

A MUNEYUKI KATANA

SIGNED, SHINTÔ EDO PERIOD (KANBUN ERA: 1661~1673)

Swordsmith:	Hôshû Takada-jû Fujiwara Muneyuki (豊州高田住藤原統行)
Measurements:	Length: 76.5cm (<i>ubu</i>) Sori: 0.8cm Moto-haba: 2.91cm Weight: 730g
Jihada:	Well-forged ko-mokume, itame, nagare-hada with ji-nie, and plentiful chikei
Hamon:	Fiery gunome-midare with hako-midare, yahazuba, sunagashi, tobiyaki, kinsuji...!
Certificate #1:	NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon (Especially Worthy of Preservation)
Certificates #2-4:	NTHK-NPO Kanteishô (koshirae, fuchi-kashira and tsuba certified as Authentic)
Authentication:	Sayagaki by Tanzan-sensei (Tanobe Michihiro)
Included:	Shirasaya, Edo koshirae, fabric bags, kit, printed description

\$15,000

Takada Muneyuki was a talented swordsmith of the *Bungo Takada school*, one of the great provincial traditions of *Kyûshû* that had a reputation for dependable swords on the battlefield stretching back to the *kotô* period. This blade measures a whopping 76.5 cm with a *jihada* of *ko-itame* with *ko-mokume*, areas of *nagare-hada* and loads of *chikei*. Then you look at the *hamon* and the blade erupts with activity: sections of *sudare-ba*, scattered *tobi-yaki*, *sunagashi* sweeping through, solar flares that seem to move as the light moves. There is *hako-midare*, *yahazuba*, *kinsuji*, and more. The sword comes with a handsome late Edo period *koshirae* lacquered in vermillion, tempered by a black *tsuka* and *sageo* that balance its fire. The *fuchi-kashira* depicts a praying mantis, a symbol of resilience and courageous defiance, of standing your ground. This is a katana meant for someone with a fiery spirit and the resilience to stand firm when the inevitable cart comes rolling down the road.

Saki-kasane: 4.3mm [^]

Kissaki: 2.71cm
Saki-haba: 1.85cm

Moto-kasane: 6.0mm

Nagasa: 76.5cm

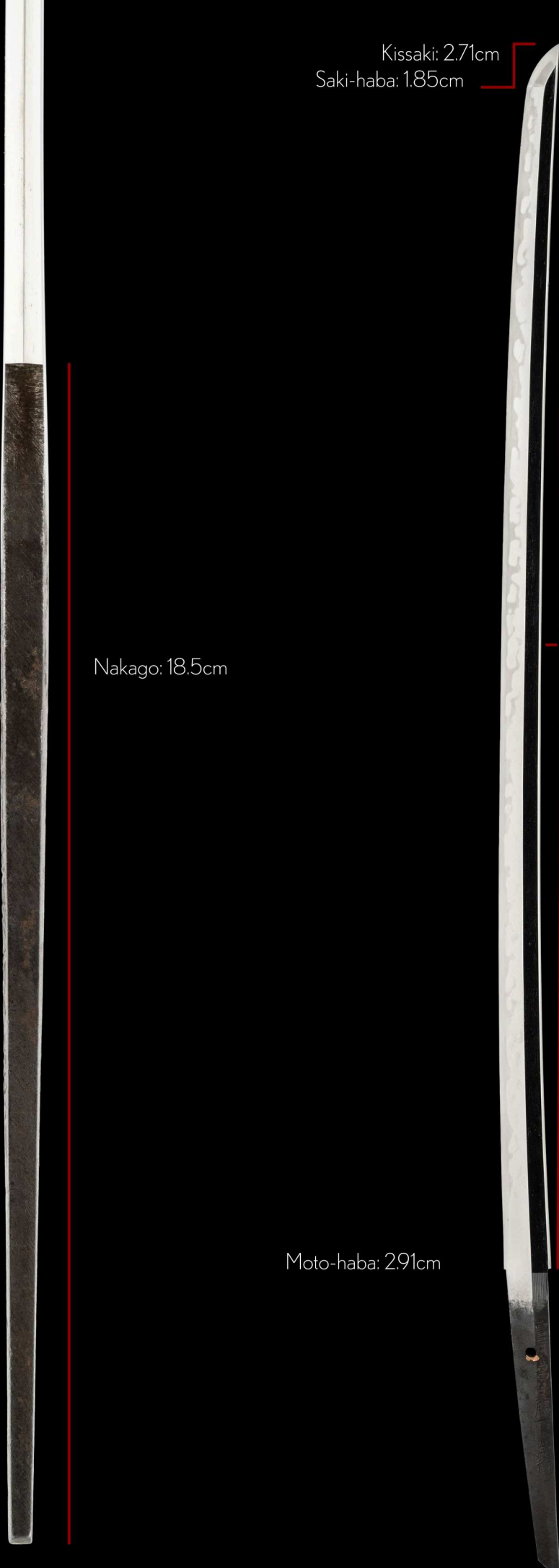
Nakago: 18.5cm

Sori: 0.8cm

Omosa: 730g

Moto-haba: 2.91cm

Mekugi-ana: 1



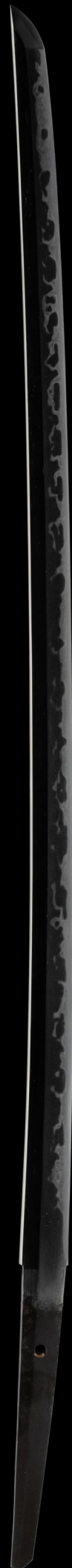
Takada Muneyuki was a swordsmith of the *Bungo Takada* school, one of the great provincial traditions of *Kyûshû*. The first generation *Muneyuki* is credited with reviving the school in the *shintô* period, carrying forward a lineage that stretched back through the *kotô* era. The Takada school had flourished in the civil war years through sheer wartime demand, then briefly faltered following the deaths of its lords and the disruption of natural disasters. It survived, as it always did, through necessity, sustained by demand from the neighbouring *Higo* domain. The name *Muneyuki* passed through successive generations, making attribution a challenge, but the shape of this blade points clearly to the third generation, active during the *Kanbun* era (1661~1673).

Takada blades were made for fighting, and they were judged accordingly. Plain, rustic, purposeful, those are the words most often used to describe them, and they are not criticisms. They embody the three fundamental virtues of the Japanese sword: *it will not break, it will not bend, and it will cut well*. That reputation endured long beyond the Edo period.

This blade measures a whopping 76.5 cm, considerably longer than most *Kanbun shintô* swords. The *jihada* is *ko-itame* with *ko-mokume*, areas of *nagare* and loads of *chikei*. Then you look at the *hamon* and you are instantly transported to another galaxy. Based on a *gunome-midare* with thick *nie*, it erupts with activity: sections of *sudare-ba*, scattered *tobiyaki*, *sunagashi* sweeping through, solar flares that seem to move as the light moves. There is *hako-midare*, *yahazuba*, *kinsuji*, and more. Get ready to board the *nihontô shinkansen* with this blade, endlessly rewarding and enjoyable, for nothing stops this train. This *ubu-nakago* katana comes with NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon certification and a *sayagaki* by *Tanobe-sensei*, who reviewed this sword back in 2019.

The sword comes with a handsome late Edo period koshirae lacquered in vermillion, tempered by a black *tsuka* and sageo that balance its fire. The iron tsuba, with its strong sense of *ma*, that deliberate use of negative space, brings considered restraint to the ensemble. The *fuchi-kashira*, signed by *Mitsunaka* of Mino, depicts a praying mantis and bell cricket amid autumn chrysanthemums, a motif that speaks directly to the spirit of this sword. The mantis is the symbol of resilience and courageous defiance, of standing your ground when everything says step aside.

This is a katana meant for someone with a fiery spirit and the resilience to stand firm when the cart comes.





Location: *Takada village in Bungo province*

Family name: *Fujiwara*

Swordsmith: *Muneyuki* (third generation)

ubu-nakago (original, unaltered tang)

katte-sagari-yasurime (downward sloping file marks)

豊 (Hô)

州 (shû)

高 (Taka)

田 (da)

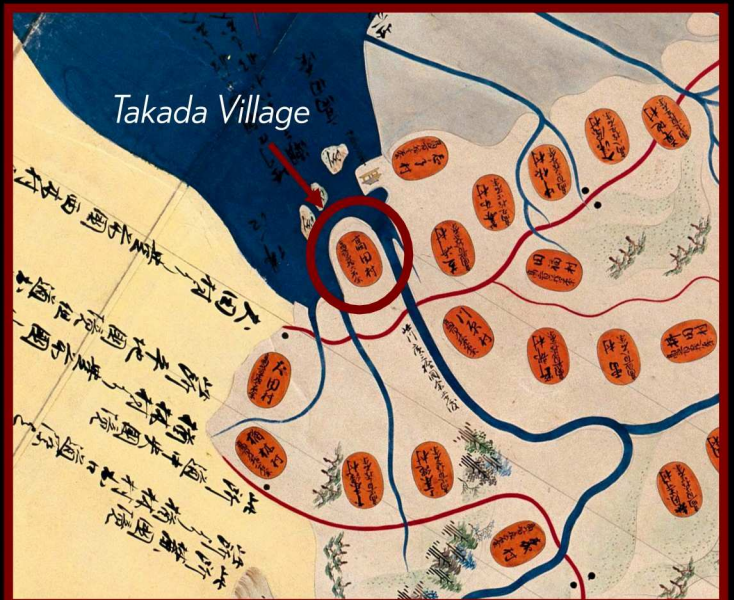
住 (jû)

藤 (Fuji)

原 (wara)

統 (Mune)

行 (yuki)



(*ura*, reverse)

Ha-agari kurijiri - a form in which the rounded tip of the *nakago* rises toward the cutting-edge.



01201906



鑑 定 書
一 刀 銘 豊州高田佐藤原統行
長二尺五寸二分
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
令和元年八月二十六日
公益財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協會

島根県 教育委員会
第 13481 号
昭和41年3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

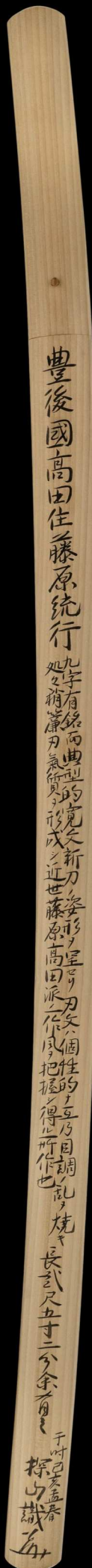
Issued in the 1st year of Reiwa (2019), August 26th

One, Katana

Mei (signature)
Hôshû Takada-jû Fujiwara Muneyuki

Nagasa (length)
2-shaku 5-sun 2-bu (76.5cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai
(NBTHK)



豊後國高田住藤原統行

Bungo no Kuni Takada jû Fujiwara Muneyuki

Fujiwara Muneyuki, resident of Takada village in Bungo Province

九字有銘而典型的寛文新刀ノ姿形ヲ呈セリ刃文ハ個性的ナ互乃目調ノ乱ヲ焼キ処々稍簾刃氣質ヲ形成シ近世藤原高田ノ一作風ヲ把握シ得ル所作也

Kuji yûmei ni shite tenkei-teki Kanbun Shintô no shikei o teiseri hamon wa kosei-teki na gunome-chô no midare o yaki tokoro-dokoro yaya sudare-ba kishitsu o keisei shi Kinsei Fujiwara Takada no ichi sakufû o haaku shiuru shosa nari

Bearing a nine-character signature, this blade exhibits the typical form of the *Kanbun-Shintô* period. The *hamon* is a unique *gunome-midare*, forming a *sudare-ba* temperament in various places. It is a work in which one can clearly perceive the characteristic style of the early-modern *Fujiwara-Takada* school.

長貳尺五寸二分余有之

Nagasa 2-shaku 5-sun 2-bu amari kore ari

Blade length ~ 76.5 cm

于時己亥孟春探山識「花押」

Toki ni Tsuchinoto-i môshun Tanzan shirusu + kaô

Written by Tanzan in the early spring of the Year of the Earth Boar (2019), with his personal monogram.







hako-midare
(square shaped)

yaki-ba

Now this is creativity.

A most eclectic hamon with *gunome-midare* with segments of *hako-midare* (square shaped) that hugs the hardened *yaki-ba*.

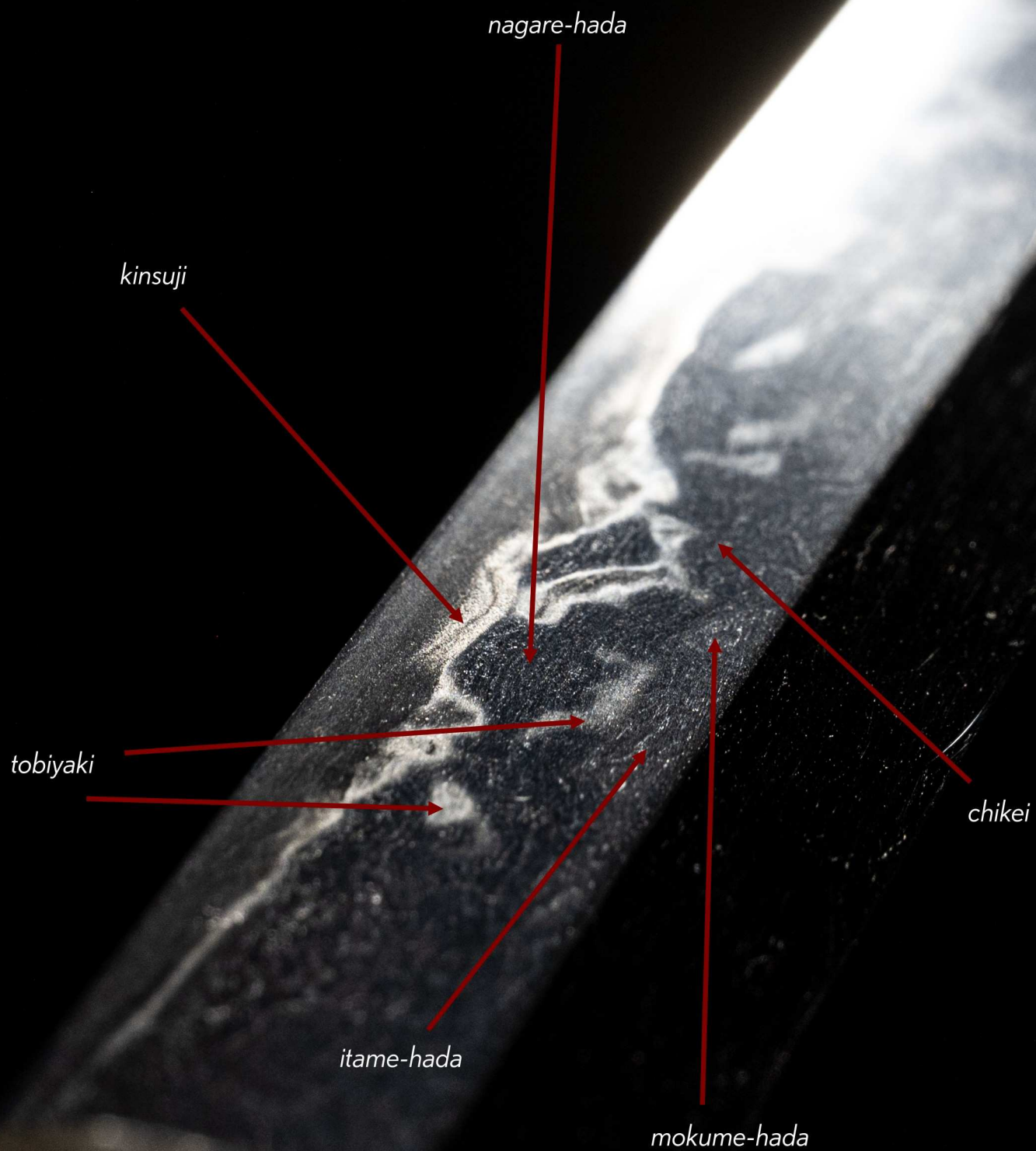


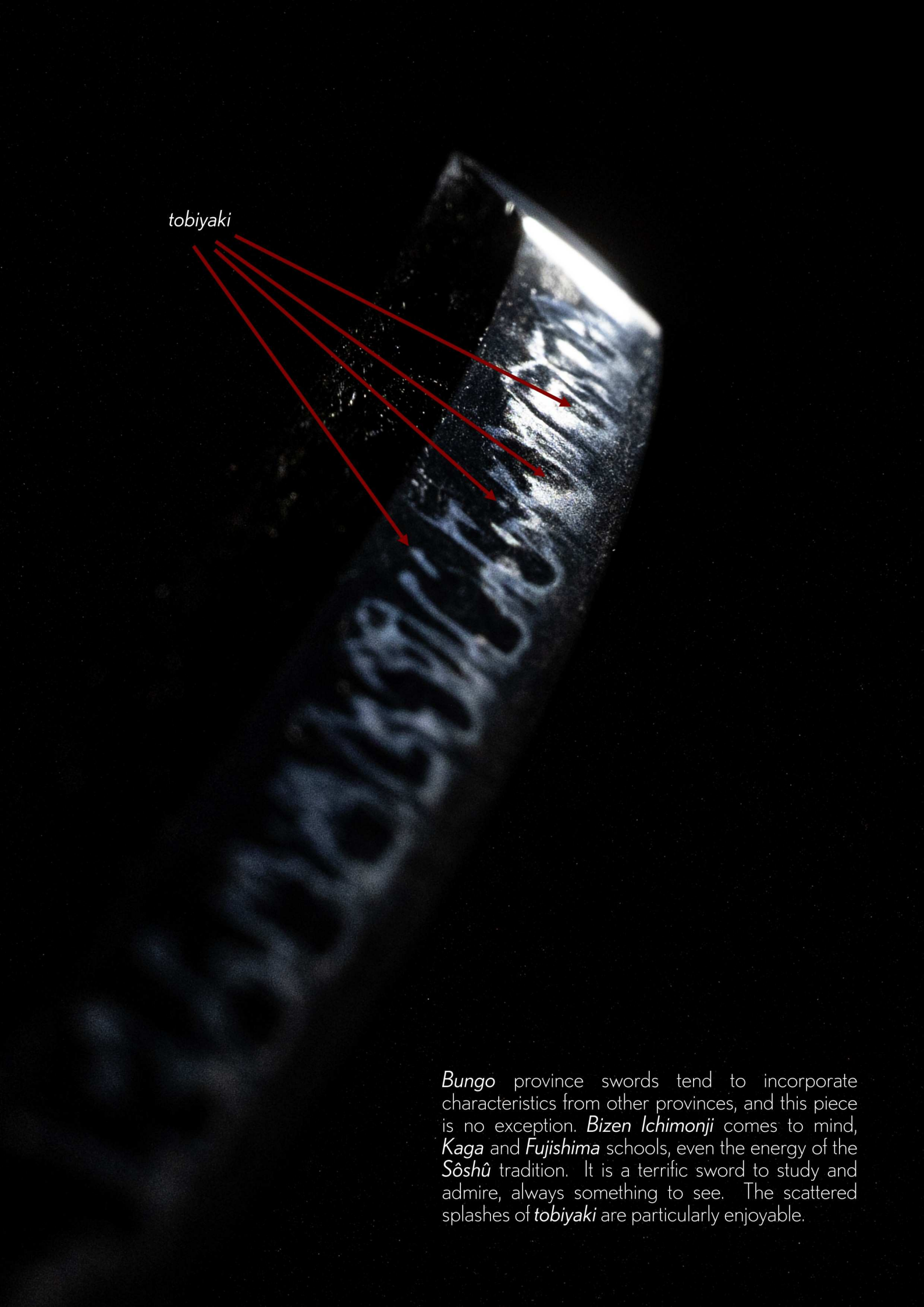
The hamon appears to be on fire. Like solar flares shooting off the surface of the sun. Incredible.

Here comes the sun.



The deeper you look, the more you find.





tobiyaki

Bungo province swords tend to incorporate characteristics from other provinces, and this piece is no exception. *Bizen Ichimonji* comes to mind, *Kaga* and *Fujishima* schools, even the energy of the *Sôshû* tradition. It is a terrific sword to study and admire, always something to see. The scattered splashes of *tobiyaki* are particularly enjoyable.

Nie intensity.



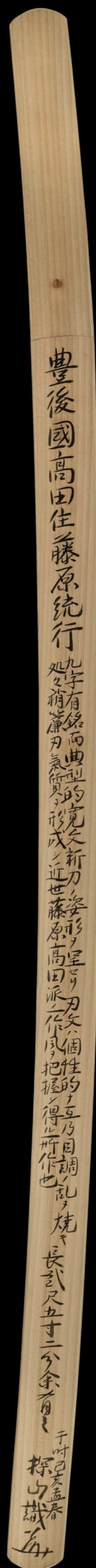


Brushed *sunagashi* captured here.

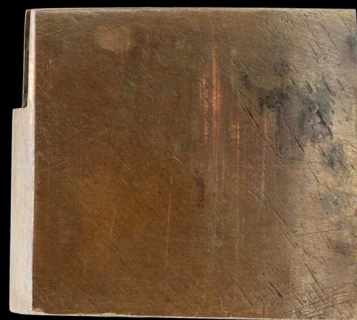


yahazu-ba

Splendid dove-tail shaped *midare* elements that resemble *yahazu* (arrow notches).



Shirasaya
(protective scabbard)



antique copper *habaki*

*Shu-urushi-nuri saya
uchigatana-koshirae*
(朱漆塗鞘打刀拵)

*Uchigatana-koshirae
lacquered in vermillion*

Crafted during the
Late Edo period
(1780~1868)



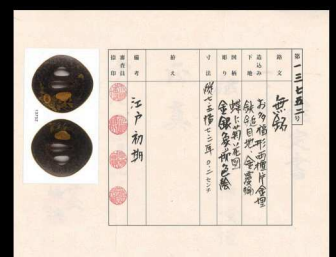
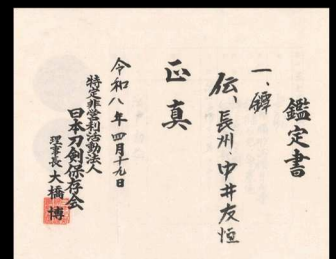
NTHK-NPO Kanteisho
Certificate of Authenticity



This elegant tsuba is the work of *Nakai Tomotsune*, forged in *Chôshû* during the early Edo period, making it the same age as the katana itself. *Chôshû* was a major centre of *tsuba* production, and while *Tomotsune* founded his own school there, his artistic roots reach back to *Kyôto*, the cultural capital of Japan. His style is a skilled blend of several *Kyôto* traditions, drawing on the classic iron work of the *Shôami* school and the more luminous inlay techniques of the *Heianjô* school.

The form is an *otafuku* shape, soft and rounded, and the iron itself gives a strong sense of *ma*, the deliberate use of negative space, where what is left empty speaks as powerfully as what is carved.

Then the gold inlay catches the light and everything awakens.





(reverse)



Fuchi-kashira

depicting autumn grasses, a praying mantis and a bell cricket

Mitsunaka was a metalworker active in Mino province during the mid-Edo period. Mino had flourished as a centre of metalwork since the Muromachi period, its craftsmen particularly celebrated for designs featuring autumn grasses and insects, and from the mid-Edo period onward fuchi-kashira became their signature form. Among Mino metalworkers, Mitsunaka distinguished himself by making the autumn insect his speciality.

This delightful signed fuchi-kashira depicts a praying mantis and a bell cricket amid autumn grasses, rendered with a naturalist's eye and a poet's sensibility. At first glance the scene is charming, almost gentle, a quiet corner of the natural world captured. But look again. The mantis was no innocent choice of motif. In Edo period Japan it carried a very specific meaning, one that any samurai who wore this sword would have understood immediately.

The story behind it is told on the following page.



Tôrô no Ono - The Mantis and the Cart

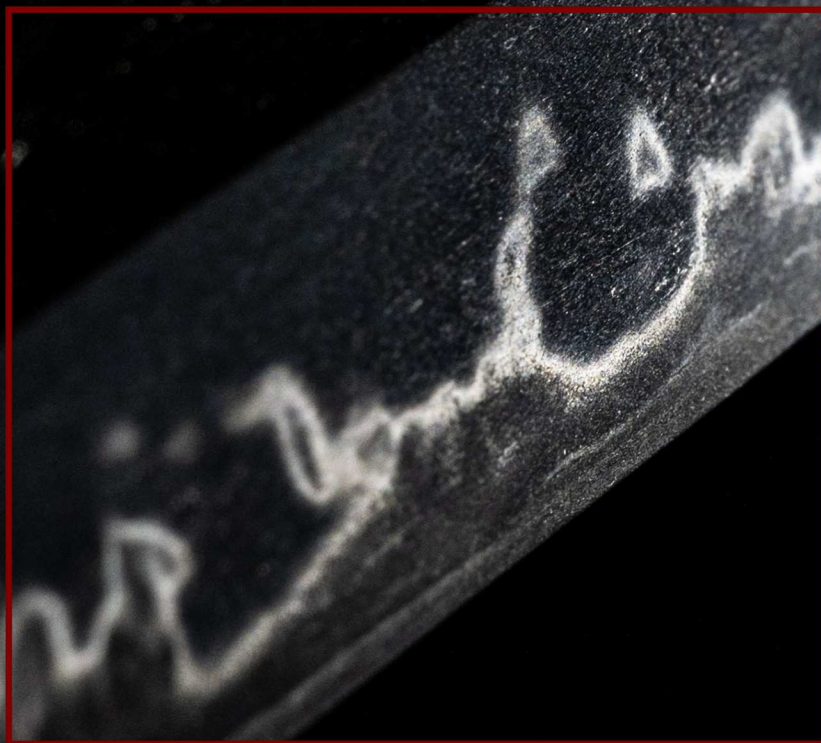
There is an ancient Chinese story, well known in Edo period Japan, of a praying mantis that stood in the middle of a road and raised its forelegs against an approaching horse-drawn cart. The tiny creature held its ground, forelegs lifted like blades, confronting an unstoppable force without hesitation and without fear.

The charioteer pulled back his horse and watched. Then, rather than laughing, he said: *"If this were a man, he would surely be counted among the bravest in the land."*

The story gave rise to the phrase *Tôrô no Ono*, literally "the mantis's axe," which entered the Japanese language as a symbol of courageous defiance against overwhelming odds. A man who faces a far stronger enemy without flinching, who raises his arms regardless of the outcome, embodies the spirit of the mantis.

The samurai who wore this sword knew exactly what the mantis meant. Perseverance in the face of impossible odds. Resilience when the smart choice would be to step aside.

The mantis, however, never steps aside.



Look closely at the *hamon* in the area highlighted here.

Do you see what I see?

I see a praying mantis. The hamon traces what appears unmistakably as the raised silhouette of a praying mantis, forelegs lifted, body poised. It may be my nihontô mind finding what it is looking for. But it is also possible that whoever commissioned this koshirae saw exactly the same thing, consciously or subconsciously, and chose the mantis motif for the *fuchikashira* not despite what the hamon showed, but because of it.





美 (Mi)

濃 (no)

住 (jū)

(Mitsu) 光

(naka) 仲

Mitsunaka, a resident of Mino province.



A shooting star, captured for eternity.



The *tsuka* (hilt) is finished in the most formal style of the period, wrapped with black silk in a *hishi-maki* pattern over white *samekawa* (ray skin).



Chrysanthemum blossoms are depicted as motif for the *menuki*, harmonizing beautifully with the *tsuba* and *fuchi-kashira* - a unified and thoughtful *koshirae*.





A garden in gold, alive with autumn.



Koshirae bag

ARIGATO!

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