



ITEM# UJTA031

A HASEBE KUNIHIRA TANTO

SIGNED, MID-NAMBOKUCHO PERIOD (OAN ERA: 1368-1375)

- Swordsmith:** Hasebe KUNIHIRA
Location: Yamashiro province (modern-day Kyoto)
Measurements: Length: 27.0cm (ubu) Curvature: 0.2cm Moto-haba: 2.6cm
Jihada: *Itame mixed with masame, abundant ji-nie*
Hamon: *Ko-gunome, ko-midare, slight hitatsura*
Certificate #1: **NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon** (a sword designated as Especially Worthy of Conservation by the Society for the Preservation of the Japanese Art Sword)
Certificate #2: **NBTHK Hozon** (a kozuka designated as Worthy of Conservation by the Society for the Preservation of the Japanese Art Sword)
Fujishiro: Jo-saku (ranked as a superior swordsmith)
Included: Vintage dashizame aikuchi koshirae, shirasaya, brocade carry bag, sword stand, maintenance kit, DVD, printed care guide, and all exportation paperwork

SOLD

Handling a signed Japanese sword in original condition from the Nambokucho period is a rare and precious adventure. An instant time warp takes hold, transporting one 650 years in the past.

Hasebe Kunihiro, in the capital province of Yamashiro, crafted this special tanto in circa 1368. His pedigree is impressive. His father, Hasebe Kunishige, a talent who provided inspiration to countless smiths is said to be one of Masamune's ten celebrated students (see chart below).

What we have here is a classic Hasebe School *hirazukuri* tanto made in the middle-period Soshu tradition. Of all the major sword-making traditions, living examples of the Soshu are particularly

scarce, let alone signed. There is an impenetrable force that lies deep within this tanto. *Itame* mixed with *masame hada* with an irregular *ko-midare hamon* that travels up the blade with purpose. Refined elements of *hitatsura* can also be enjoyed.

Like the Nambokucho period Juyo Token Naoe Shizu katana featured earlier in this catalogue (ujka136), the *boshi* (hamon in the kissaki area) is *midare-komi* and curls back with a long *kaeri*.



Looking back, the vicious warring Nambokucho period of the Northern and Southern courts of Kyoto would have been in full force. This tanto was made right in the thick of the action.

What stories this tanto can tell...Carried by elite Samurai over the centuries, Kunihiro is ranked as a *Jo-saku* (superior swordsmith), which speaks volumes. At least three swords by Kunihiro have reached NBTHK Juyo status and this piece has a chance of attaining such distinction.



Masamune
(1264-1343)

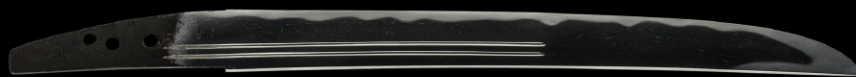
Juttetsu
(10 celebrated students)

Choji Kanemitsu Kinju Naotsuna Kunitsugu **Kunishige** Saemonsaburo Norishige Yoshihiro Kaneuji
(~1334)

Moved to Kyoto

Started the Hasebe School
(had three sons)

Kunishige (2nd) **Kunihira** Kuninobu
(~1356)



A Hasebe Kunihira Tanto
(~1368-1375)

A charm point of the sword is its *nakago*, the *funagata* shape. *Funa* (or “*funé*”) means boat as the line of the cutting edge has a deep outward bulge. The *funagata* is closely associated with Masamune and his Soshu School. In a sophisticated way, it pays respect to its great forefathers.

The blade is complimented by a magnificent *dashizame aikuchi-koshirae* from the Edo period where the hilt is wrapped in ray skin. The *kozuka*, with lucky god Hotei, is further NBTHK certified.



A Hasebe Kunihira Tanto

Signed, *ubu funagata nakago*
circa Oan era (1368-1375)

Dashizame Aikuchi-koshirae
circa Late Edo period

NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon origami