



ITEM# UJTA051

SOLD

## A SHÔDAI MASAHIRO TANTÔ

SIGNED, EARLY EDO PERIOD (KAN'EI ERA: 1624~1644)

<b>Swordsmith:</b>	<i>Hizen no Kuni Saga Ju Masahiro (shôdai, first generation)</i>
<b>Measurements:</b>	<b>Length:</b> 26.9cm ( <i>ubu</i> ) <b>Curvature:</b> 0.2cm <b>Moto-haba:</b> 2.78cm
<b>Jihada:</b>	<i>Ko-mokume leading to Hizen konuka-hada, thick nie-deki</i>
<b>Hamon:</b>	<i>Gorgeous gunome choji-midare with kinsuji and sunagashi</i>
<b>Certificate #1:</b>	<b>NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon (Especially Worthy of Preservation)</b>
<b>Certificate #2-3:</b>	<b>NTHK-NPO Kanteisho (matching fittings and koshirae designated as Authentic)</b>
<b>Fujishiro rank:</b>	<b>Jo-saku (ranked as a superior swordsmith)</b>
<b>Authentication:</b>	<b>Sayagaki by Kanzan-sensei (Dr. Satô Kanzan)</b>
<b>Cutting ability:</b>	<b>Wazamono (maker of sharp swords)</b>
<b>Included:</b>	Shirasaya, Edo koshirae, fabric bag, stand, kit, DVD, booklet, description

**SOLD**

Master swordsmith *Kawachi Masahiro* was born *Sadenjiro* in 1607 and is the son of *Yoshinobu* who was the adopted son of the great first generation *Shodai Tadayoshi*. He began signing as *Masanaga* and even signed for grandmaster *Shodai Tadayoshi* when he became ill (*dai-mei*).

**Tantô crafted during the shinto period (1600~1780) are extremely rare.** As the formal *daishô* (matching katana/wakizashi) became the official dress code for the samurai, demand for tantô subdued dramatically. The blade is forged with a magnificent *gunome-choji-midare hamon* over a tightly forged *konuka-hada* that captures the heart and imagination. This is a highly collectible tantô housed in a gorgeous matching wave-themed Late Edo period *koshirae* with its *tsuka* (hilt) wrapped in baleen representing the high social status of the samurai that it once belonged to.

Moto-kasane: 6.7mm

Omosa: 210g

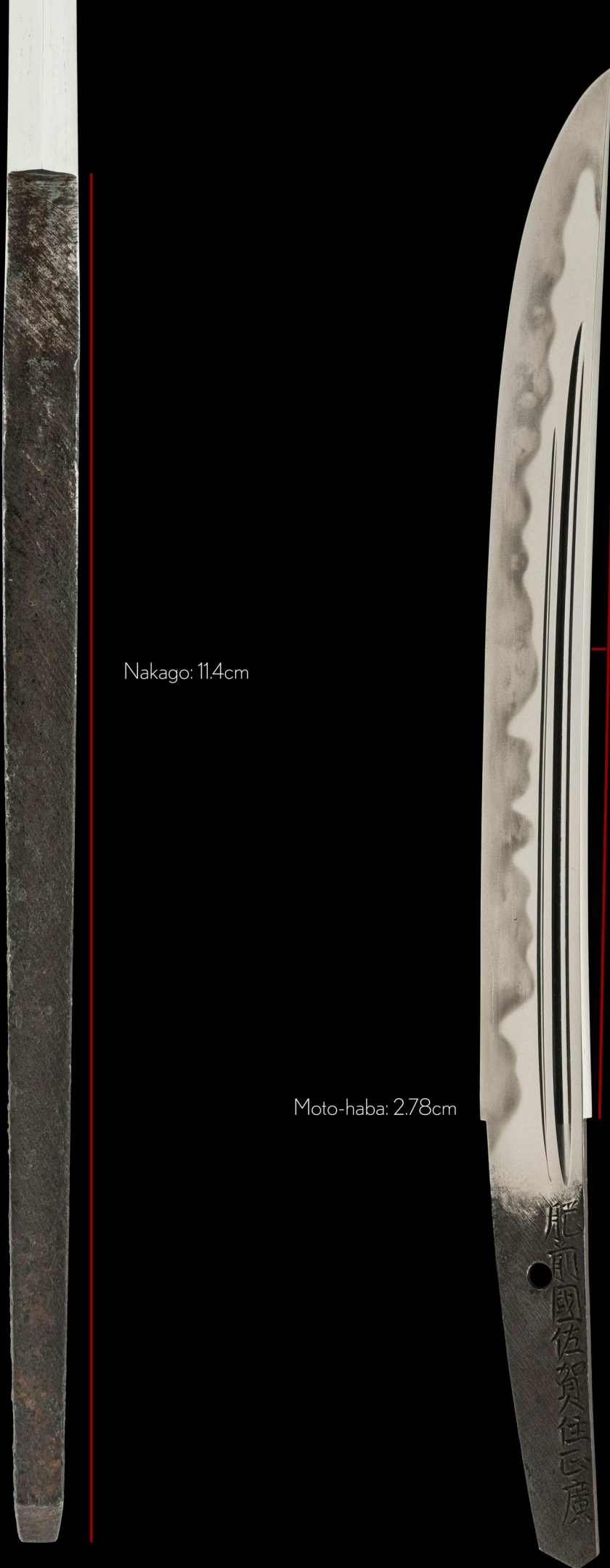
Nakago: 11.4cm

Moto-haba: 2.78cm

Nagasa: 26.9cm

Sori: 0.20cm

Mekugi-ana: 1



*Kawachi Masahiro* was born *Sadenjiro* in 1607 and died at only 59 in 1665. He is the son of *Yoshinobu* who was the adopted son of the great *Shodai* (first generation) *Tadayoshi*.

He began signing as *Masanaga* and even signed for *Shodai Tadayoshi* when he became ill (known as *dai-mei*). Recognizing his clear talent, his employer *Lord Nabeshima Katsushige* suggested he change his name to *Masahiro*, thus becoming *Shodai Masahiro*.

*Tanto* crafted during the *shinto* period (1600~1780) are extremely rare. As the formal *daisho* (matching katana/wakizashi) became the official dress code for the samurai, demand for tanto subdued dramatically. Tanto rebounded in demand in the *shinshinto* period.

A magnificent *gunome-choji-midare hamon* over a tightly forged *konuka-hada* captures the heart and imagination. This is a timeless samurai tanto from the early Edo period with a gorgeous matching wave-themed *koshirae* from the early 1800s.




Shodai (1st generation) Hizen Masahiro



Location: *Hizen* (resident of Saga)  
Swordsmith: *Masahiro* (first generation)

*ubu-nakago* (original, unaltered tang)  
*sujikai-yasurime* (diagonal file marks)



肥 (Hi)

前 (zen, no)

國 (kuni)

佐 (Sa)

賀 (ga)

住 (jû)

正 (Masa)

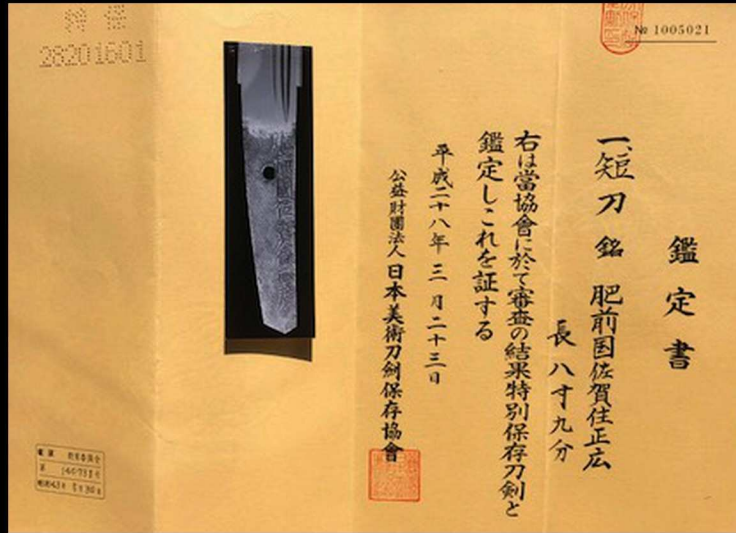
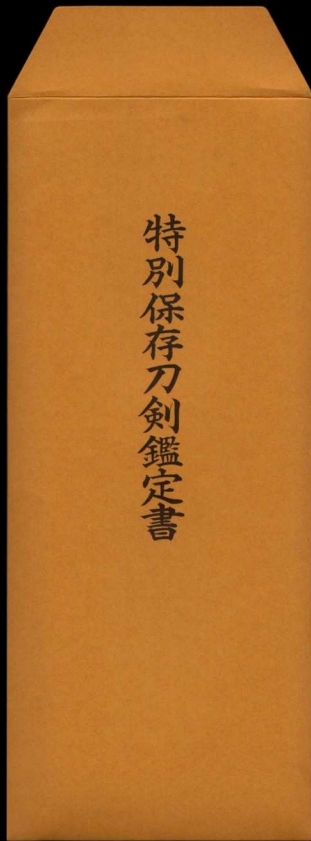
廣 (hiro)



The *nakago-jiri* (butt-end) of the tang comes to a sharp point at the centre.

This type of finish is called *kengyô* or sword-shaped.

(*ura*, reverse)



## 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 28th year of Heisei (2016), March 23rd

One, Tanto

*Mei* (signature)  
*Hizen no Kuni Saga Ju Masahiro*

*Nagasa* (length)  
8-sun 9-bu (26.9 cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai  
(NBTHK)



初代肥前佐賀住正廣  
*Shodai Hizen Saga jû Masahiro*  
The first generation of Masahiro,  
Resident of Saga in Hizen Province

長八寸九分有之  
*Nagasa 8-sun 9-bu kore ari*  
Blade length ~26.9 cm

昭和己酉中春寒山誌（花押）  
*Shôwa tsuchinoto tori chûshun Kanzan shirusu + kaô*

Written and authenticated by *Dr. Satô Kanzan* in  
mid-Spring during the Year of the Hen of the Shôwa  
period (1969) plus his personal monogram



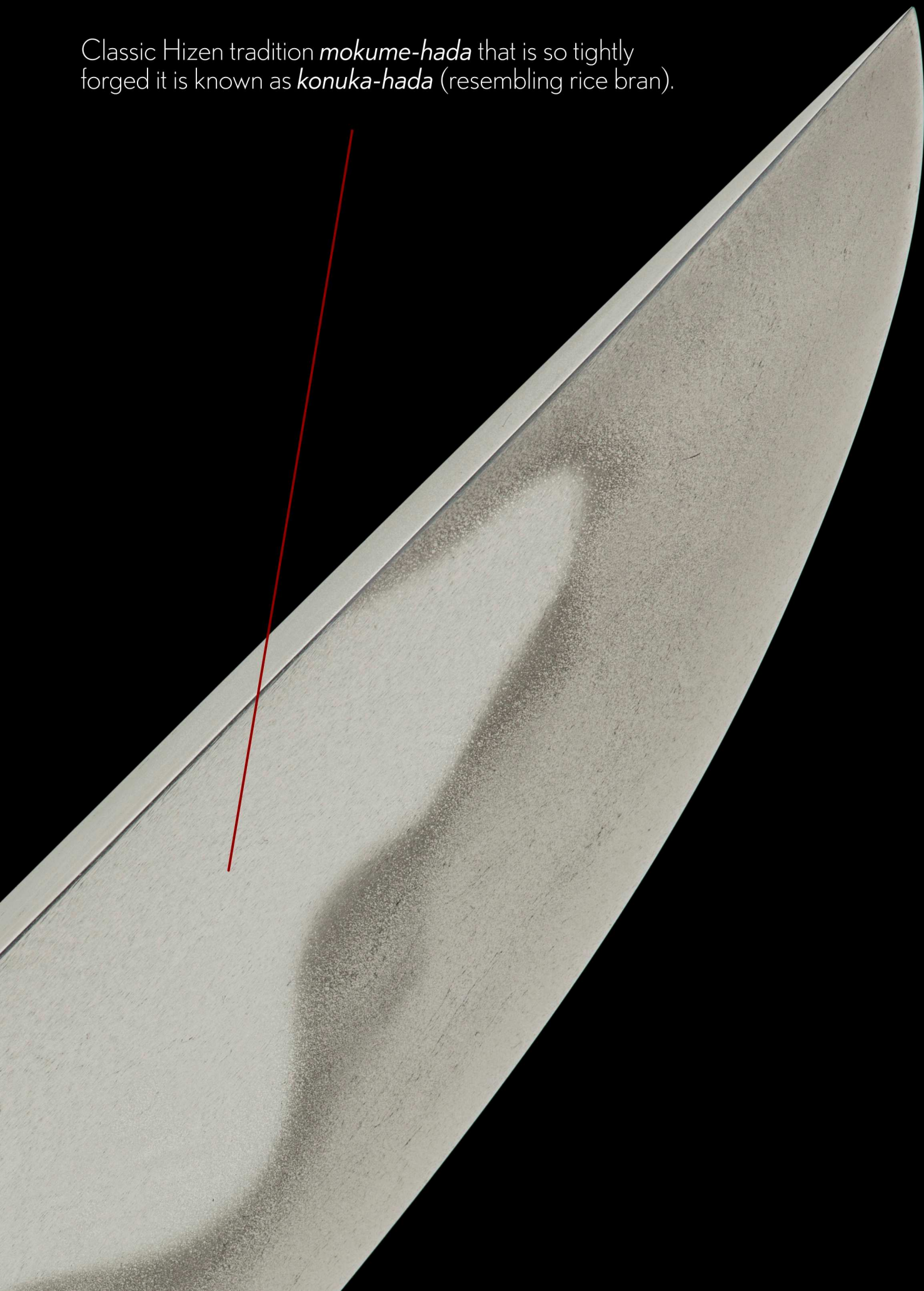


The image shows two Japanese swords, likely katana, positioned diagonally against a black background. The blades are dark, and the hamon (temper line) is visible as a lighter, wavy pattern. The top sword's hamon is described as gunome-chôji-midare, and the bottom sword's hamon is described as kaeri katai. The tip of the bottom sword is labeled as kissaki.

A brilliant *gunome-chôji-midare hamon* curls back steeply in the *kissaki* (tip).

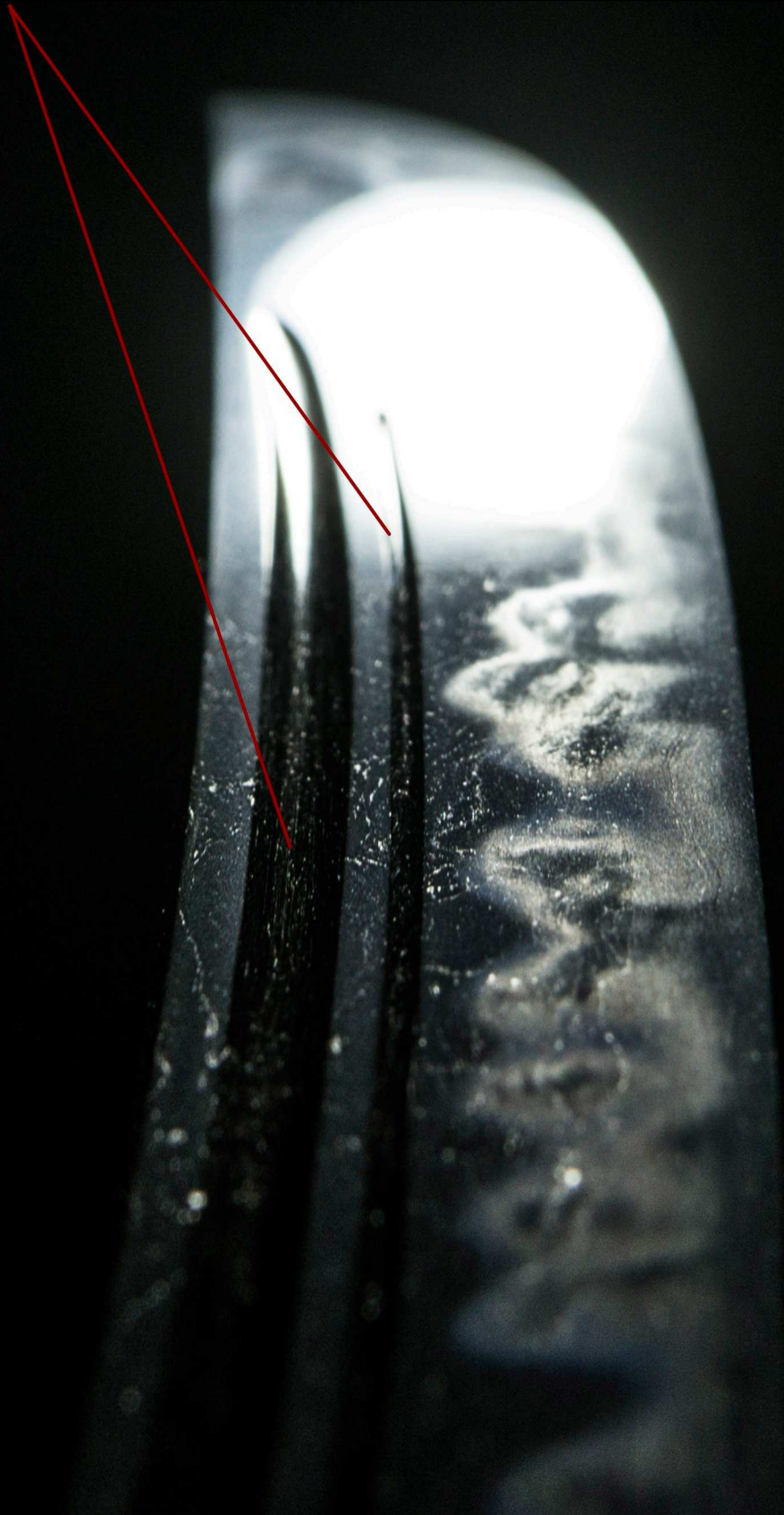
*kaeri katai*  
(steep turn back)

Classic Hizen tradition *mokume-hada* that is so tightly forged it is known as *konuka-hada* (resembling rice bran).





The tanto features two slightly arching parallel grooves, one thicker than the other, known as *bo-bi* and a thinner *soe-bi*.





A bright, billowing *gunome-chôji midare hamon* with a wide *nioguchi* (crystals that make up the hamon).


This is the creative genius of *shodai Masahiro*.

*wide nioguchi* —————

To the casual observer, the tanto might appear as simply a big knife - holding not quite the allure of the katana. However, this could not be further from the truth. The tanto is an immensely personal amulet, guarding the spirit of the samurai. It was, of course, also used in *seppuku* (ritualistic suicide) if ever such action deemed appropriate.

Any serious Japanese sword collection will hold at least one tanto.

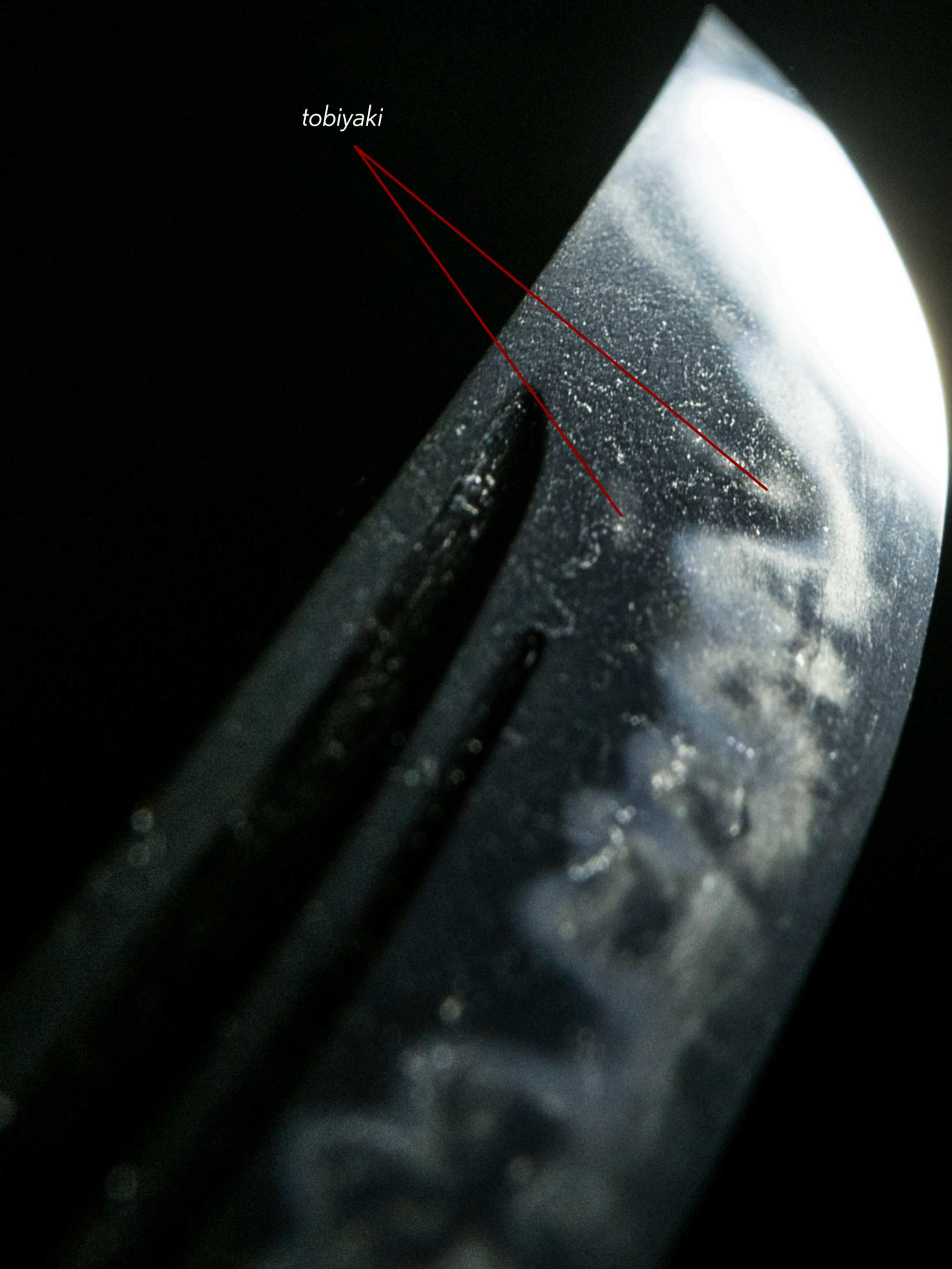
With so few tanto having been crafted during the shinto period (1600~1780), this piece with a full matching tanto koshirae, is one such collectible to cherish.



Brushed strokes of *sunagashi*  
with 'golden' lines of *kinsuji*.

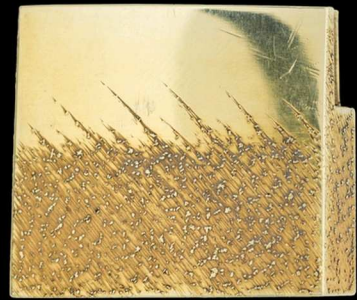
Glimmering silver nuggets of *tobiyaki*, tempered spots of *nie crystals* in the *ji* (body) of the sword.

*tobiyaki*





*Shirasaya*  
(protective scabbard)



gold-wrapped *habaki*  
with diagonal file marks





*Soroi kanagu* (all matching fittings) from the Edo period signed by metalsmith *Nagamasa*



NTHK-NPO Kanteisho  
Certificate of Authenticity



(Naga) 長  
(masa) 正



Matching wave carvings in *shibuichi* (1/4 silver and 3/4 copper).

The navy blue *sageo* brings harmony to the natural water theme.



The twisted wood pattern known as *naname-kizami* resembles a rhythmic wave pattern as well.



As Japan is an island country, waves hold great spiritual meaning. A wave pattern is a symbol for peace and represents surging good fortune and boundless potential from the vast ocean.

This splendid tanto koshirae was crafted using *high quality matching shibuichi in a wave theme*. It has remained as a faithful set for about 200 years, dating back to the Late Edo period (1780~1867).

This is a koshirae to cherish, especially for someone with an affinity for the open seas.





*Kujira-maki* (lit 'whale wrapping') is a hilt wrapped using *baleen* - the tough material that hangs down from the upper jaw of certain whales to filter small ocean animals out of seawater.

Due to its rich, glossy appearance and high price tag, baleen became a status symbol of well-to-do samurai, particularly during the late Edo period. The use of baleen in Japan dates back to the 7th century Nara period, coveted for centuries by aristocracy.





The *menuki* carry depictions of *tora* (tigers) which symbolise, willpower, courage, and personal strength.

Tigers also serve to protect against evil spirits, wind, disease, and bad luck.



A *kozuka* (utility knife) used by the samurai to open letters, cut fruit, etc. It was not a weapon per se.

A custom-made groove on the tsuba allowed the kozuka to slide fluidly into a special slot on the side of the *saya* (scabbard).



*mokko-shaped* wood *tsuba* with slotted groove and specially lacquered with sprinkles of *maki-e*



*kozuka* (utility knife)



Koshirae bag