



ITEM# UJTA065

SOLD

A SUKEMUNE TANTÔ

SIGNED, SUE-KOTÔ LATE MUROMACHI PERIOD (TENBUN ERA: 1532~1555)

Swordsmith:	Shimada Sukemune (shodai, 1st gen.)
Measurements:	Length: 22.3cm (ubu) Moto-haba: 2.48cm Weight: 135g
Jihada:	Itame and mokume-hada with ji-nie and chikei
Hamon:	Bright gunome-chôji-midare with hitatsura, tobiyaki in nie-deki
Certificate #1:	NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon (a sword Especially Worthy of Preservation)
Certificates #2-4:	NTHK-NPO Kanteisho (soroi kanagu, kozuka and koshirae designated Authentic)
Fujishiro rank:	Chûjô-saku (ranked as an above average swordsmith)
Sharpness:	Wazamonô (rated as a maker of sharp swords)
Authentication:	Sayagaki by Nozomi-san (shodô artist)
Included:	Shirasaya, koshirae, fabric bags, stand, kit, printed description

This striking tantô was crafted by **Shimada Sukemune**, an eminent swordsmith active in the mid-16th century, during the *Tenbun* to *Eiroku* eras of the late *Muromachi* period. Based in *Shimada* of *Suruga* province, he flourished under the rule of the *Imagawa* clan, contributing significantly to the development of the *Shimada* school. This sharp tantô features a well-forged itame-hada mixed with *mokume*, complemented by a bright, lively hamon of *gunome* and *chôji-midare*. Its wide *hirazukuri* (flat-shaped) displays a flamboyant *hitatsura* 'all-over' hardening that has made *Sôshuden* works particularly desirable over the centuries. Sword is complimented with a regal *aikuchi kiku-mon* (chrysanthemum) *koshirae* with matching plant design celebrating longevity in life. The *saya* is tastefully decorated with a charming sprinkling of mother-of-pearl. All told this is a vibrant, energetic *tantô* from the late *Muromachi* period with plenty of *nihontô* character to cherish.



Moto-kasane: 5.5mm

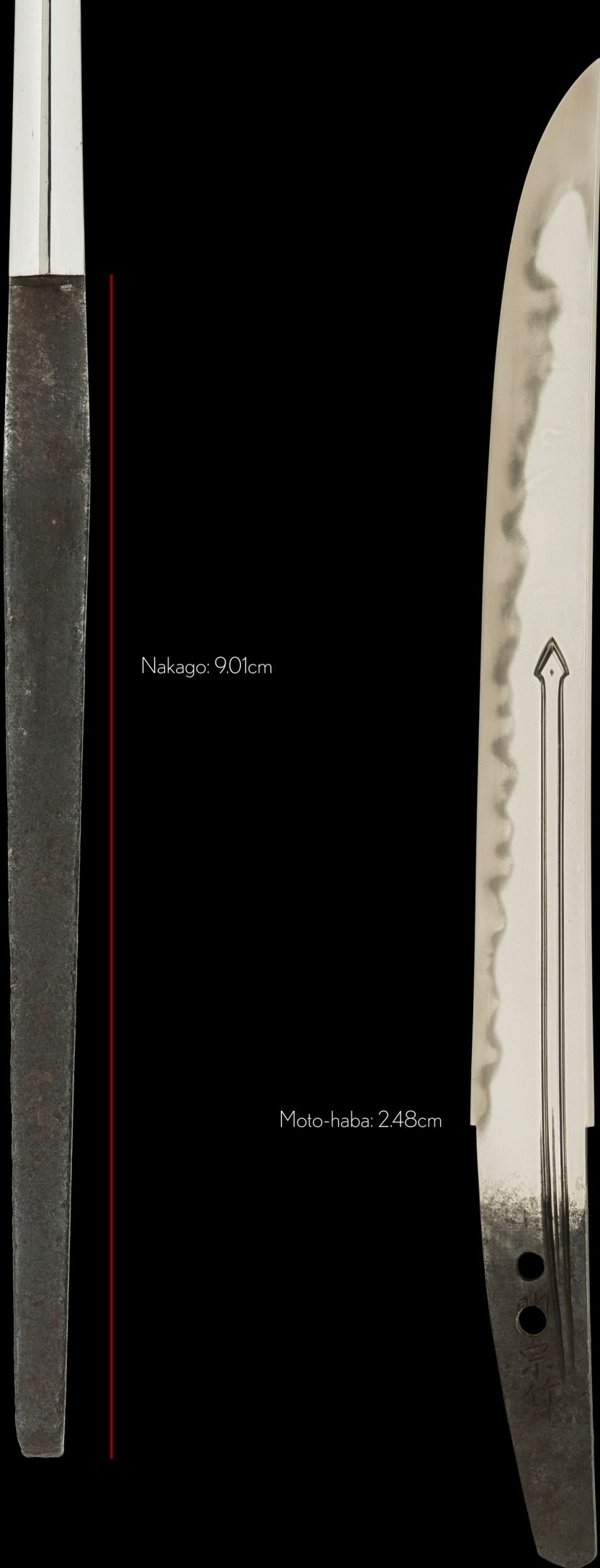
Omosa: 135g

Nakago: 9.01cm

Moto-haba: 2.48cm

Nagasa: 22.3cm

Mekugi-ana: 2



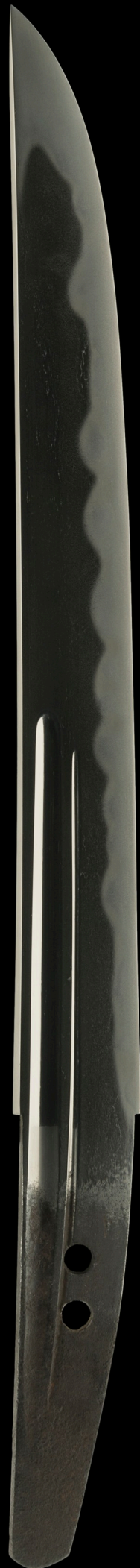
Shimada Sukemune (島田助宗) was an eminent *wazamono*-ranked swordsmith active in the mid-16th century, during the *Tenbun* to *Eiroku* eras of the late Muromachi period. Based in *Shimada* of *Suruga* Province, he flourished under the rule of the *Imagawa* clan (今川氏), contributing significantly to the development of the Shimada school. Tradition holds that he was the younger brother of the famed *Shimada Yoshisuke* (島田義助), and his distinctive, vibrant style became a hallmark of the Shimada lineage.

There are also accounts of Sukemune forging swords in *Kai* Province under the patronage of *Takeda Shingen* (武田信玄), suggesting his skills were recognized by powerful warlords beyond his native land.

This sharp tantô features a well-forged *itame-hada* mixed with *mokume*, complemented by a bright, lively *hamon* of *gunome* and *chôji-midare*. Its wide *hirazukuri* (flat-shaped) displays a flamboyant *hitatsura* "all-over" hardening that has made *Sôshu-den* works particularly desirable.

This *hitatsura* style reflects the geographical proximity of Suruga Province to Sagami, the home of *Sôshû-den*. Furthermore, the tantô holds the iconic *suken horimono* and a bulging *funagata nakago* that embodies the *Sôshû* spirit.

Sword is complimented with a regal *aikuchi kiku-mon koshirae* with matching plant design celebrating longevity in life. The saya is tastefully decorated with a charming sprinkling of mother-of-pearl. All told this is a vibrant and rather energetic *tantô* from the late Muromachi period with plenty of *nihontô* character to cherish.



Location: *Suruga province*

Shimada name: *Shimada school*

Swordsmith: *Sukemune* (first generation)

ubu-nakago (original, unaltered tang)

kiri-yasurime (horizontal file marks)

助 (Suke)

宗 (mune)

作 (saku)

Ha-agari kurijiri

The *nakagojiri* (butt-end of the tang) is rounded, similar to that of *kurijiri* (chestnut shaped) but the cutting edge side slants more steeply than the back (*mune* side).



(*ura*, reverse)



funagata

Hôchô Masamune Tantô
14th century Kamakura period
Japanese National Treasure

The shape of the *nakago* (tang) is called *funagata* (boat-shaped), as the line of the cutting edge resembles the bottom of a boat. "*Funa*" or "*fune*" means boat.

This style is famously seen in Masamune's *Hôchô* masterpiece, and it also appears in the work of the *Shimada* school of *Suruga*, which was strongly influenced by the *Sôshû-den* tradition.

特保
05202306



鑑 定 書
一、短刀 銘 助宗作(島田)
長 七寸三分強
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
令和五年八月二十五日
公益財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協會

広島県 教育委員会
第 10440 号
昭和30年12月12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 5th year of Reiwa (2023), August 25th

One, Tanto

Mei (signature)
Sukemune saku (Shimada)

Nagasa (length)
7-sun 3-bu kyô (22.3cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai
(NBTHK)

刃長七寸三分強有之
Hachô 7-sun 3-bu kyô kore ari
Blade length 22.3 cm

令和七乙巳年水無月吉日誌之
Reiwa nana kinoto-midoshi Minazuki
kichijitsu kore o shirusu
Written on a lucky day in the sixth month in
the seventh year of Reiwa era during the
Year of the Snake (June 2025)

刃長七寸三分強有之

令和七乙巳年
水無月吉日誌之

島田助宗

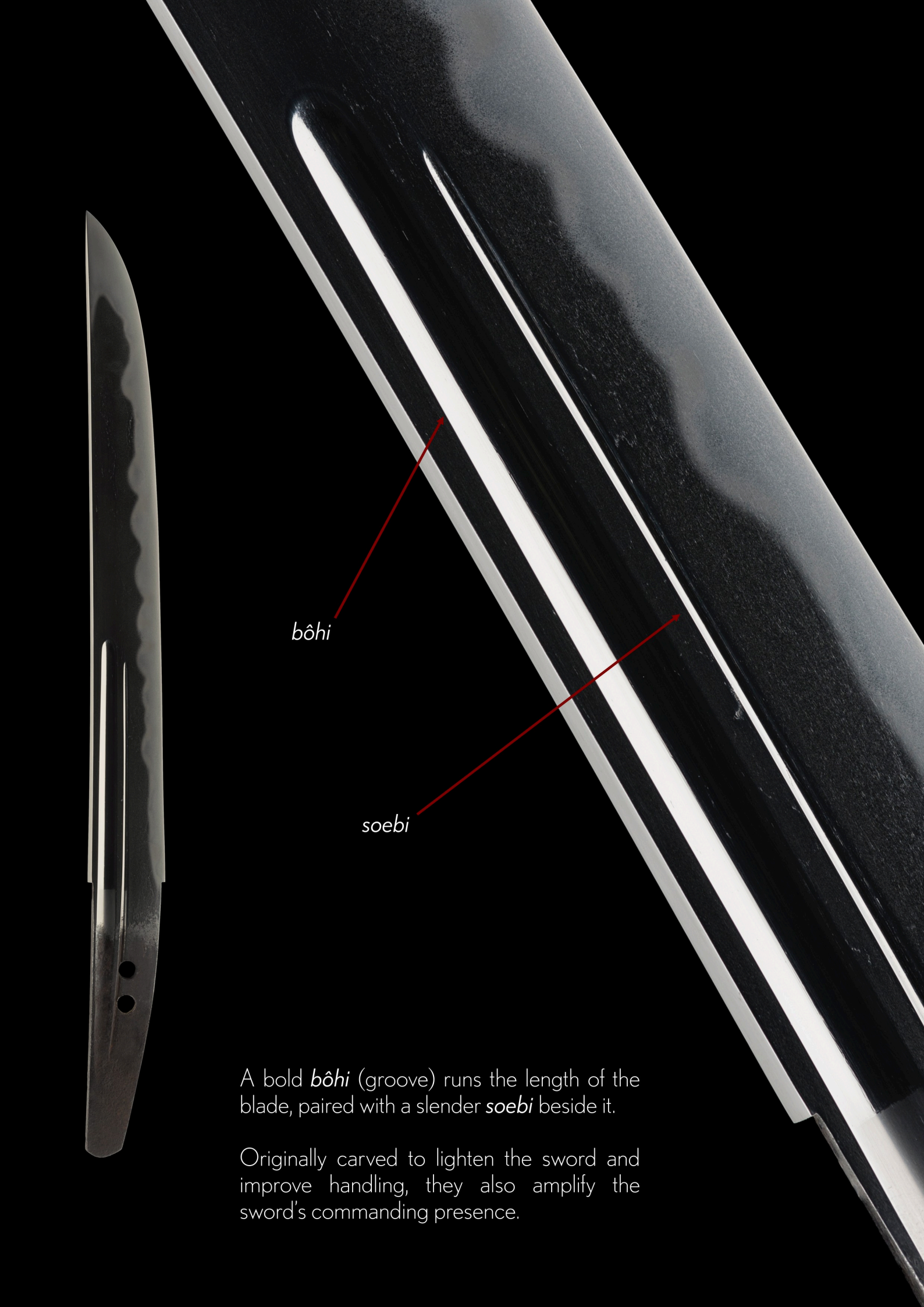
時代天文頃

島田助宗
Shimada Sukemune
Shimada Sukemune

時代天文頃
Jidai Tenbun goro
Around Tenbun period (1532~1555)







bôhi

soebi

A bold *bôhi* (groove) runs the length of the blade, paired with a slender *soebi* beside it.

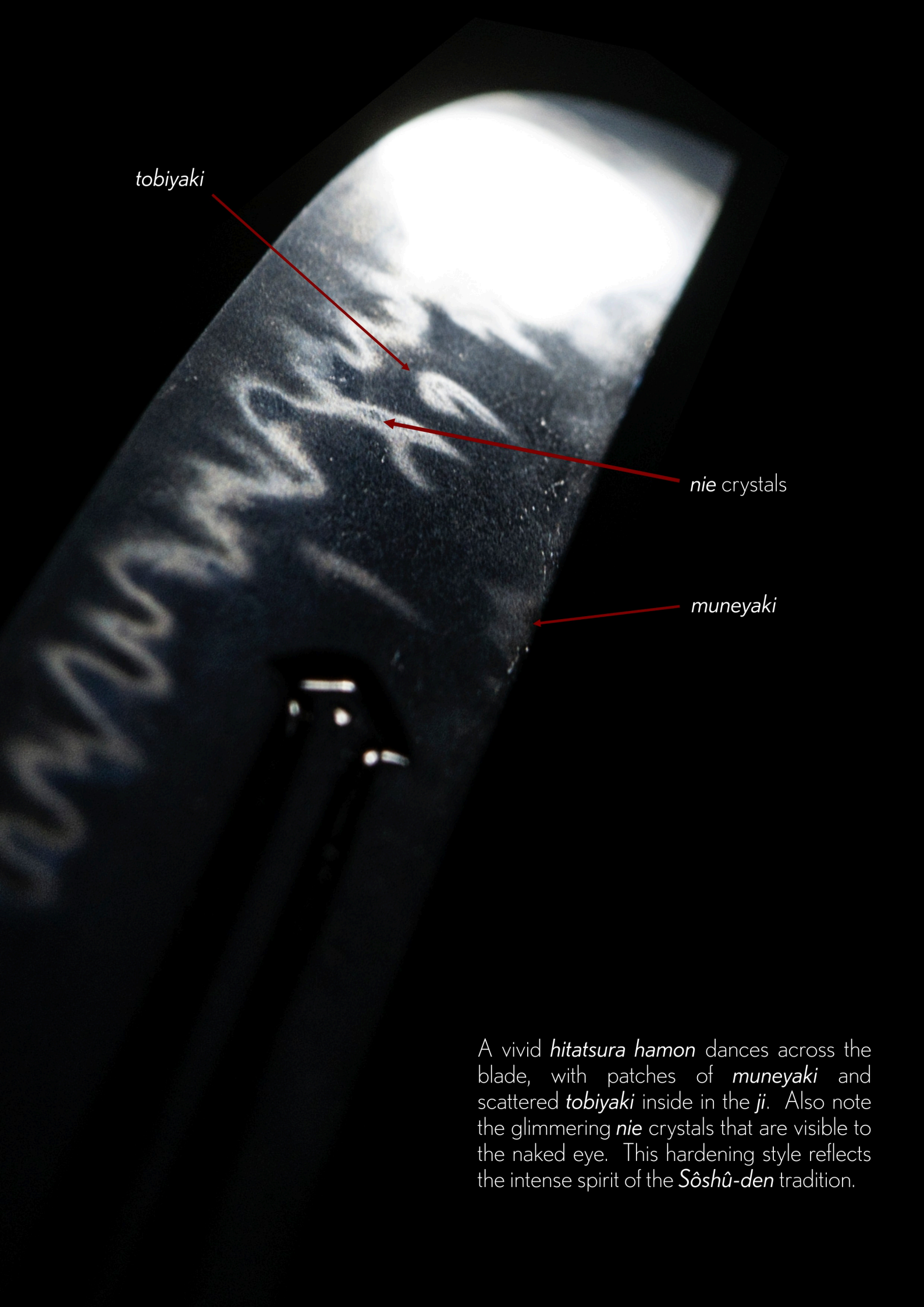
Originally carved to lighten the sword and improve handling, they also amplify the sword's commanding presence.



hakikake (brush swept pattern)

The *bôshi* enters with a gentle *midare-komi*, blending into the tip in a natural continuation of the hamon.

It returns deeply along the *mune* in a quiet deep *kaeri*, showing careful control at the kissaki. A subtle touch of brushed *hakikake* can also be observed.

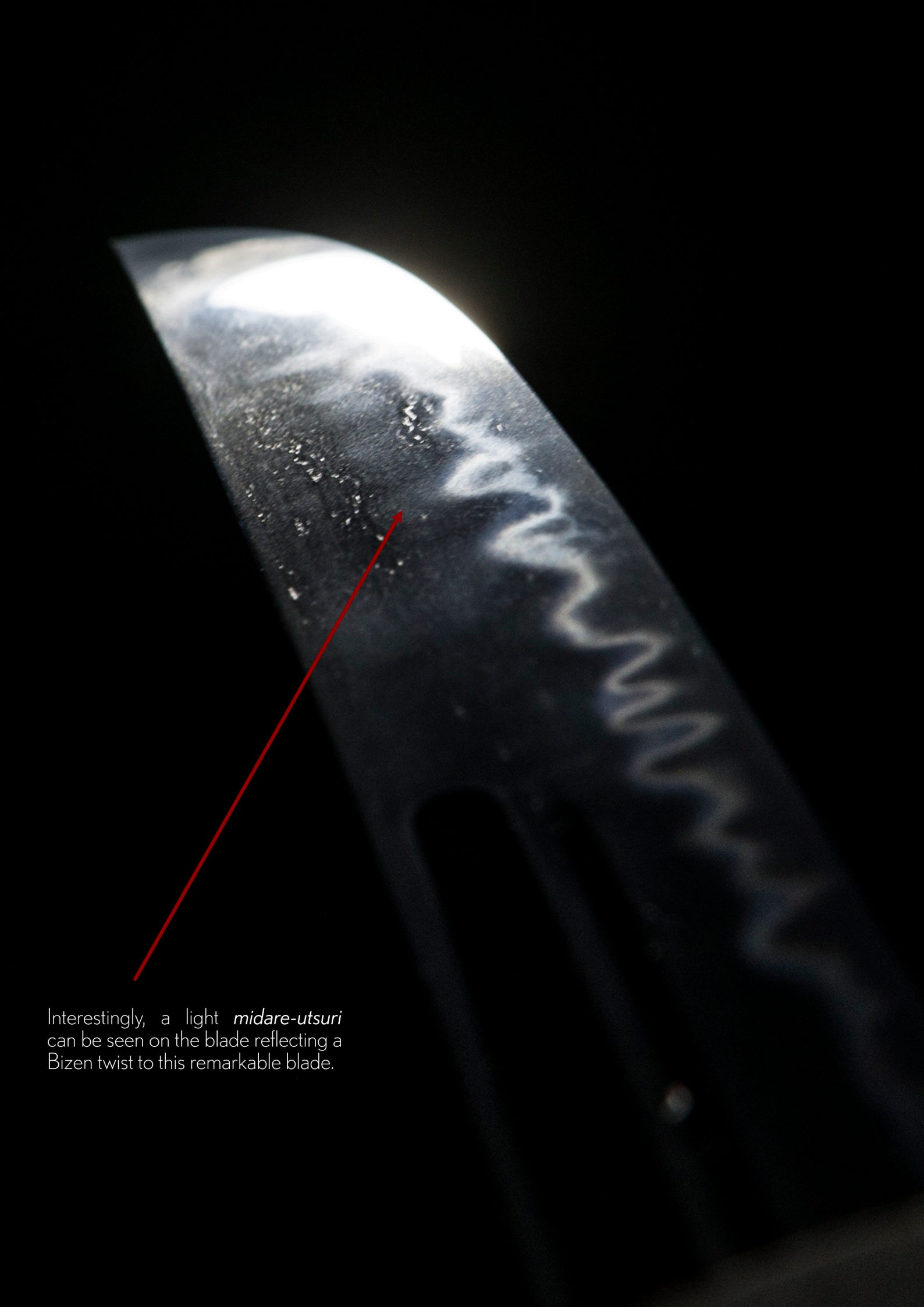


tobiyaki

nie crystals

muneyaki

A vivid *hitatsura hamon* dances across the blade, with patches of *muneyaki* and scattered *tobiyaki* inside in the *ji*. Also note the glimmering *nie* crystals that are visible to the naked eye. This hardening style reflects the intense spirit of the *Sôshû-den* tradition.



Interestingly, a light *midare-utsuri* can be seen on the blade reflecting a Bizen twist to this remarkable blade.

The spirit of *Sôshû-den*.





Shirasaya
(protective scabbard)

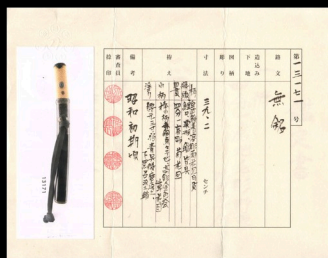


gold *ni-ju habaki* with
crisp file marks

*Shibuichi migaki-ji
kebori nogusa no zu kaigu
aikuchi-koshirae*
(四分一磨地毛彫
野草図皆具合口拵)

*Aikuchi-koshirae
with matching shibuichi fittings
with hairline carvings
depicting plants*

Crafted during the
Early Shôwa period
(1926~1940)



*NTHK-NPO Kanteisho
Certificate of Authenticity*



fuchi



kashira



kojiri



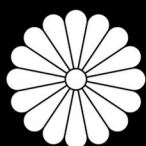
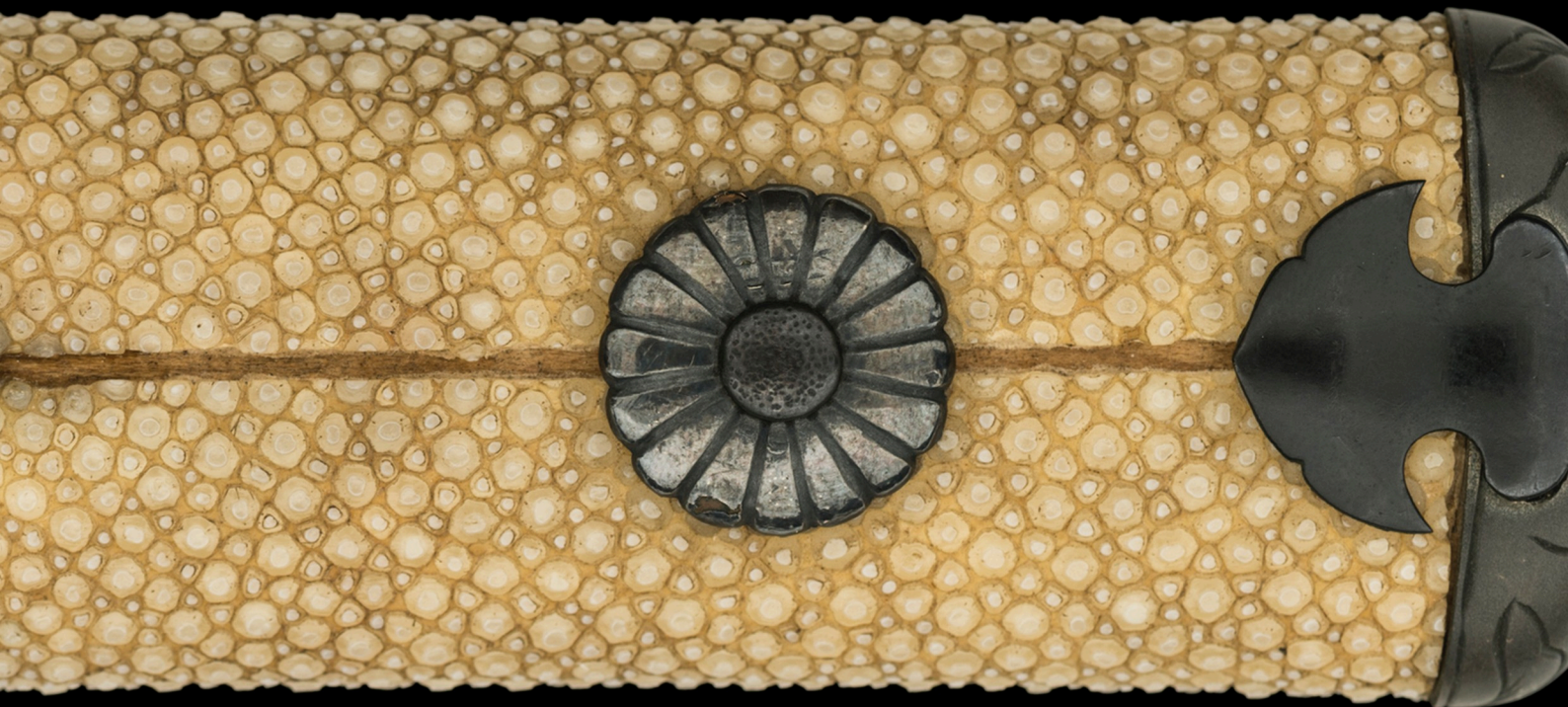
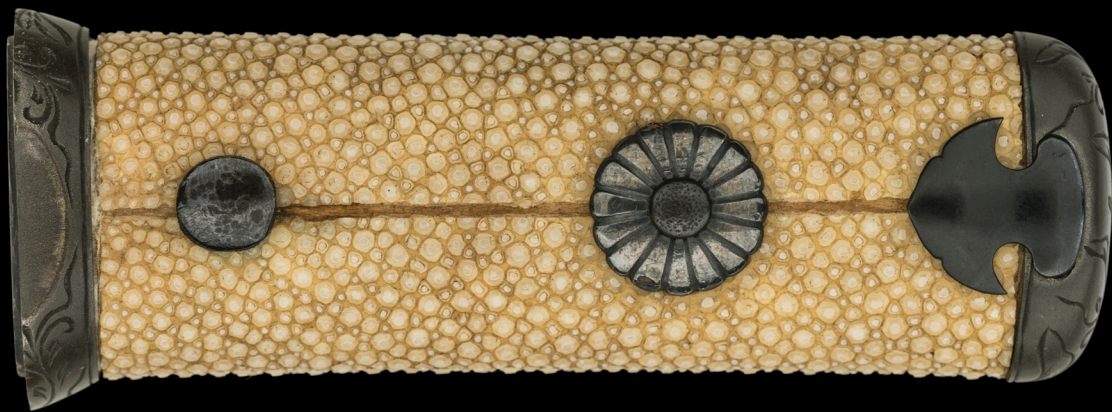
koiguchi

Soroi-kanagu
depicting plants pattern

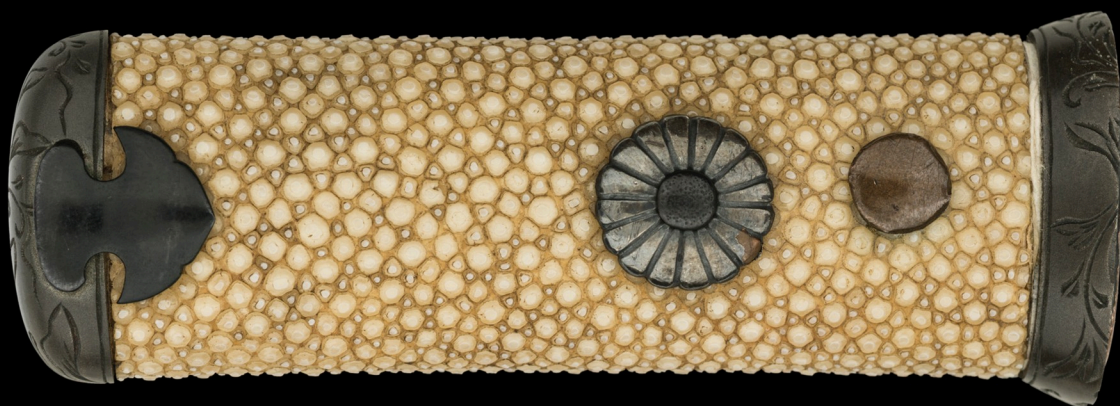
kurikata

This *tantô* is accompanied by a matching set of fittings (*soroi-kanagu*) decorated with engraved plant motifs in hairline carvings.

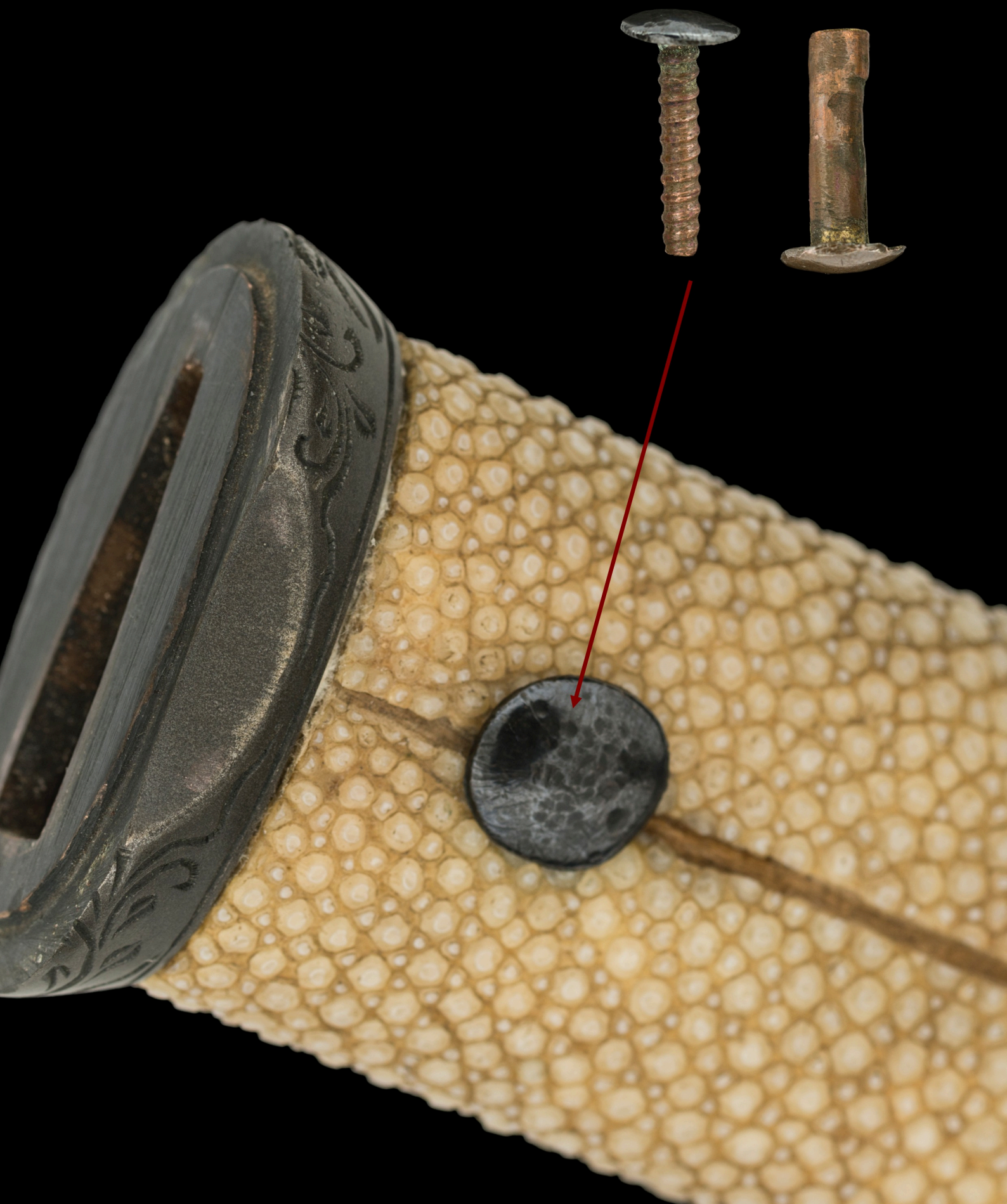
The *fuchigashira*, *kashira*, *kurigata*, and *koiguchi* together form what is known as a *kaigu*—a unified set crafted by the same artisan.



Menuki feature the chrysanthemum crest (*kikumon*), a symbol historically associated with the Japanese Imperial family. Its presence on sword fittings may signify a connection to the court, a display of loyalty, or an aspiration toward noble ideals. In some cases, it may also reflect the sword owner's social standing.



This *tantô* features a rarely-seen screw-style *mekugi*, a secure variation from the traditional wooden peg.





Congratulations Art.

Warm regards,
Pablo