



ITEM# UJTU116

A RYÔKA TIEGUAI TSUBA

SIGNED WITH STAMP, MID-EDO PERIOD (CIRCA 1775~1800)

Metalsmith:	<i>Ryôka (Kawamura Tsuneshige of the Nara school)</i>
Location:	<i>Edo province (present-day Tokyo)</i>
Measurements:	Height: 7.2cm Width: 6.7cm Thickness: 4.6mm Weight: 145g
Material:	<i>Brass with stone-like surface finish</i>
Design:	<i>Motif of Taoist immortal Tieguaai (Japanese Tekkai)</i>
Engraving:	<i>Sunken relief, gold accents, the eyes are an inlay of crystals (extremely rare)</i>
Certificate:	NBTHK Hozon (a tsuba designated as Worthy of Conservation)
Included:	Tsuba box and printed description

SOLD

Say hello to a rare brass *kinko tsuba* by Kawamura Tsuneshige of the Nara school who stamped the penname of *Ryoka*. Tsuneshige was active in the mid-Edo period and is said to be a student of *Nara Shigetsugu*. His specialty was depicting characters from Chinese and Japanese legends. On this tsuba, the benevolent (and rather disheveled) *Taoist immortal Tieguaai* is the feature attraction.

Rather unsettlingly, in whichever angle you hold the tsuba, the deep powerful crystal eyes of Tieguaai appear to stare back at you. It's a fantastic curiosity that is delightfully intimidating and completely irresistible once you lock into a personal staring contest with this grumpy immortal. Have a look at this video to see him in action → <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IRjUzTCcMsc>



Tiegui (*Tekkai* in Japan) is a Chinese mythological figure and one of the *Eight Immortals* in the *Taoist pantheon*.

Despite being portrayed as a dishevelled, ill-tempered old man that walks with the aid of an iron crutch, Tiegui has a benevolent character. Using medicine from his gourd, he graciously treats the poor and needy.



(reverse)



Sekiguchi was the initial family name of *Tsuneshige*. He later used the surname *Kawamura* - likely having been adopted into the Kawamura family and made their heir.

Signed with his stamped seal *Ryôka*, metalsmith Kawamura Tsuneshige lived in Edo and was faithful to the Nara tradition.

Tsuneshige had his own school and worked almost entirely in brass. He rarely signed his work, making this piece even more collectible and worthy of study.

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No 4013937



鑑定書

一、鉄拐仙人図鐔 印銘 了嘉（常重）

豎丸形 真鍮石目地 鋤出彫
金色絵 玉眼角耳小肉

右は當協會に於て審査の結果保存刀装具と
鑑定しこれを証する

平成三十年八月十日

公益財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協會



NBTHK Hozon
Certificate of Designation

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

Issued in the 30th year of Heisei (2018), August 10th

One, Tsuba

Depicting the Taoist immortal Tieguai (Tekkai)

Mei (signature)

Signed via seal: Ryôka (Tsuneshige)

*Elongated round shape, brass, stone like surface finish, sunken relief,
gold accents, crystal eyes, angular rim with a little roundness*

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai
(NBTHK)



Before becoming an immortal, Tieguai was a very handsome man. However, on one occasion, his spirit travelled to Heaven to meet other immortals.

He had told his apprentice, Li Qing, to wait for seven days for his spirit to return. If he did not return by then, Li Qing was to burn the body because that meant that he had become an immortal.

But after six and a half days Li Qing had to go home to see to his sick mother one last time before she died. Li Qing thus cremated Li Tieguai's body. He passed by a dying beggar on his way to his mother's but did not have time to bury him.

Upon returning, Li Tieguai's spirit found that his body had been cremated and had to enter the only body available at the time, the corpse of the homeless beggar who had just died of starvation.

The beggar, unfortunately, had a long and pointed head, large ears with one large brass earring, a woolly and dishevelled beard and hair.

He also had long, scraggy, and dark eyebrows, dark eyes, and he had a pan lid on his head and a lame leg. Laozi [founder of Taoism] appeared and gave him a medicine gourd that could cure any illness and never emptied. Li then brought his apprentice's mother back to life using the liquid from his gourd.

Li Qing was then dismissed as his apprentice, after being given a small pill and being told that he would work hard enough to become an immortal himself.

This turned out to be true.

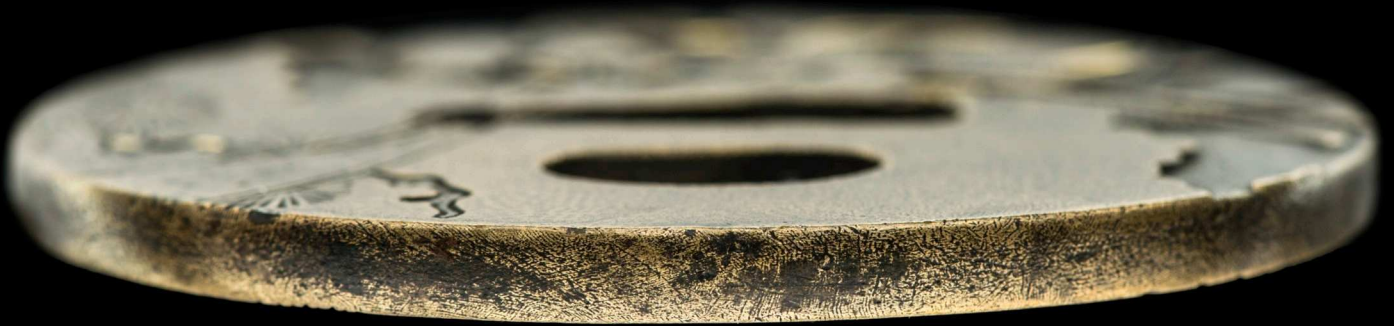
The Eight Immortals of Taoism: Legends and Fables of Popular Taoism. Ho, Kwok Man (1990). Translated and edited by Joanne O'Brien. New York: Penguin Books.

Whichever angle you hold the tsuba, the all-knowing crystal eyes of Tieguaï follow yours...





nature elements in the design are cleverly sunken into the brass base





(presentation box)

