



ITEM# UJWA125

A SHIMADA GISUKE WAKIZASHI

SIGNED, MUROMACHI PERIOD (TENSHO ERA: 1573-1593)

Swordsmith: GISUKE (3rd generation of the Shimada School)
Location: Suruga province (Shizuoka prefecture)
Length: 37.9cm **Curvature:** 1.0cm
Jihada: *Itame, nagare and masame*
Hamon: *Gunome, tobiyaki, hitatsura*
Nakago: *Ubu* (uncut, original length)
Certificate: NTHK-NPO Kanteisho (a sword designated as Important by the Society for the Preservation of the Japanese Sword)
Included: Vintage koshirae, silk carry bag, sword stand, maintenance kit, DVD, printed care guide, registration and all exportation paperwork

SOLD

Swordsmith Gisuken was a skilled smith of Suruga province along with Sukemune, Hirosuke, and Yoshitsuna during the mid to late Muromachi Period (16th century). He is of the Shimada School that formed a close alliance with the Soshu tradition of sword making.

This commanding wakizashi carries all the hallmarks to cherish in a Soshu-driven blade. The blade exhibits a vivid combination of wavy *gunome hamon* with brilliant spots of *tobiyaki* and full-temper *hitatsura*. The sword is signed and in original condition (*ubu nakago*).

The sword is nestled within a superbly decorative *Toppei Koshirae*. This is a rare set of mounts that originated during the late Edo period based on designs of military sabres introduced from the West. A key feature is their long *jiri* (part that fastens over the tip of the scabbard).

Circular depictions on the hilt and *kozuka* (utility knife) are called *Dharmacakra*, or the Buddhist "Wheels of Life". This symbolizes the infinite cycle of human life and our ability to persevere through all obstacles. The *tsuba* (guard) is of a lotus flower representing that beauty is fleeting – a powerful reminder to always appreciate the moments that make up our daily days.

Of treasured importance is the *tsuka* (hilt), which is wrapped in *baleen* also known as “whale beard”. This is a highly prized binding found only on very special *koshirae*, often seen in museums of today. Baleen is composed of keratin, a fibrous protein that is flexible when wet.

Toppei can be translated to meaning “fighting with full force”. This is a deeply spiritual sword with a valuable set of warrior mounts that would have been held by the last of the elite Samurai class.



Tsuka is wrapped with *baleen* or whale beard.