



ITEM# UJWA174

## A SUISHINSHI MASAhide WAKIZASHI

SIGNED, SHINSHINTO PERIOD (10TH YEAR OF BUNKA, FEBRUARY 1810)

**Swordsmith:** *Suishinshi MASAhide*  
**Location:** Musashi province (modern-day Tokyo)  
**Measurements:** **Length:** 53.2cm (ubu)    **Curvature:** 0.8cm    **Moto-haba:** 3.1cm  
**Saki-haba:** 2.1cm    **Moto-kasane:** 7.6mm    **Saki-kasane:** 5.1mm  
**Weight of blade:** 600 grams

**Hamon:** *Gunome midare hitatsura with intense nie-kuzure, tobiyaki and sunagashi*  
**Jihada:** *O-itame*  
**Certificate:** **NBTHK Tokubetsu Kicho** (a sword designated as Especially Precious by the Society for the Preservation of the Japan Art Sword)  
**Fujishiro:** *Saijo-saku* (ranked as a grandmaster swordsmith)  
**Included:** Shirasaya, sword fabric bag, sword stand, maintenance kit, DVD, printed care guide, registration and export paperwork  
**Koshirae:** Potential custom koshirae project

**SOLD** (a custom koshirae is being built for this sword)

## Suishinshi Masahide

When reviewing the Shinshinto period, one must always begin a conversation with the formidable giant of his time, *Suishinshi Masahide* (pronounced *Mah-sah-hee-day*).

Considered to be the father of the Shinshinto period, Masahide mourned the disappearance of the old traditional Koto methods and advocated for their restoration. This was the seed that was to blossom into the *fukkuto* movement.

The force of his claim was so influential that numerous sword smiths within the country came to study under him. His school soon became the largest in the history of blade making. There were about 200 students, perhaps more, during the lifetime of the school.

Born in 1750 at Akayu in Dewa province, Masahide apprenticed under *Yoshiteru* of the *Shitahara Group* in Musashi province (Tokyo) and changed his birth name of *Suzuki Saburo Iyehide* to *Terukuni*. At the age of 25 he became a retained of Lord Akimoto and changed his name a third time to *Kawabe Masahide* and used *Suishinshi* as a craft name.

Rated *Sai-josaku* (grandmaster swordsmith) of which there are only three in the Shinshinto period (*Suishinshi Masahide*, his star student *Taikei Naotane* and *Kiyomaro*), Masahide became prolific in several traditions when forging blades.

He began his career in the Yamashiro tradition from Kyoto in about 1780 to 1790, then moved on to recreate the masterpieces of the Soshu tradition in 1790 to 1800, and then successfully copied the works of *Tsuda Echizen no Kami Sukehiro* and his iconic *toranba hamon*. He completed his 50-year illustrious career in the Bizen tradition.

What made him *Suishinshi* so remarkable was that he shared his sword-making discoveries and methods generously through books and personal coaching. The Japanese sword world owes an immense debt of gratitude to such a passionate and selfless artist.

## The sword

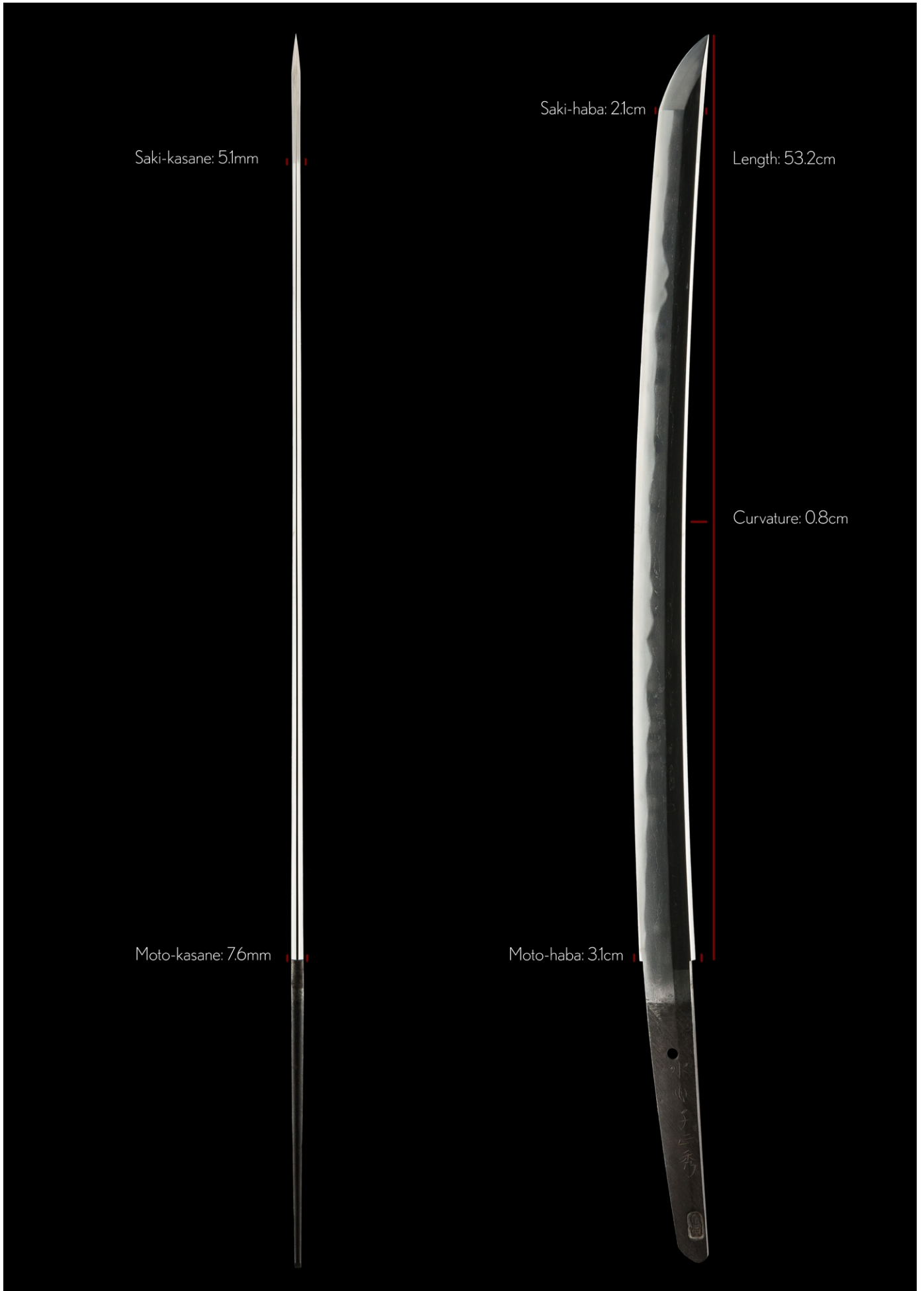
This wakizashi is a masterclass of *Suishinshi Masahide* forging in the Soshu tradition. It is an *utsushi-mono* (faithful replica) of the genius swordsmith *Masamune* – a Soshu founding father from the golden age of swordmaking in the Kamakura period.

Dated February 1810, the blade proudly exhibits a glorious *hitatsura hamon*. This is a sword that has been quite literally cooked to perfection. It's completely alive in your hands with copious amounts of *nie* crystals bursting with life all over the blade.

The *tobiyaki* (hardened spots) are like small islands swimming in a swell of oceanic activity.

In quintessential Soshu form, this long wakizashi is wide with a shallow curvature. It is a healthy and vigorous sword – it feels like a katana – a veritable gladiatorial work of art. In addition, the sword has Masahide's *koku'in* nakago stamp affirming to its authenticity.

The following pages paint a visual story of the sword. It is a prime candidate for a custom koshirae project. However, like all great collectible swords, it can be enjoyed solely in her shirasaya too. Please inquire for further photos, insight and details upon ownership.



Saki-kasane: 51mm

Saki-haba: 21cm

Length: 53.2cm

Curvature: 0.8cm

Moto-kasane: 7.6mm

Moto-haba: 31cm





*koku'in* stamp



Masahide developed his unique *koku'in* stamp from the characters for "hide" (日天).

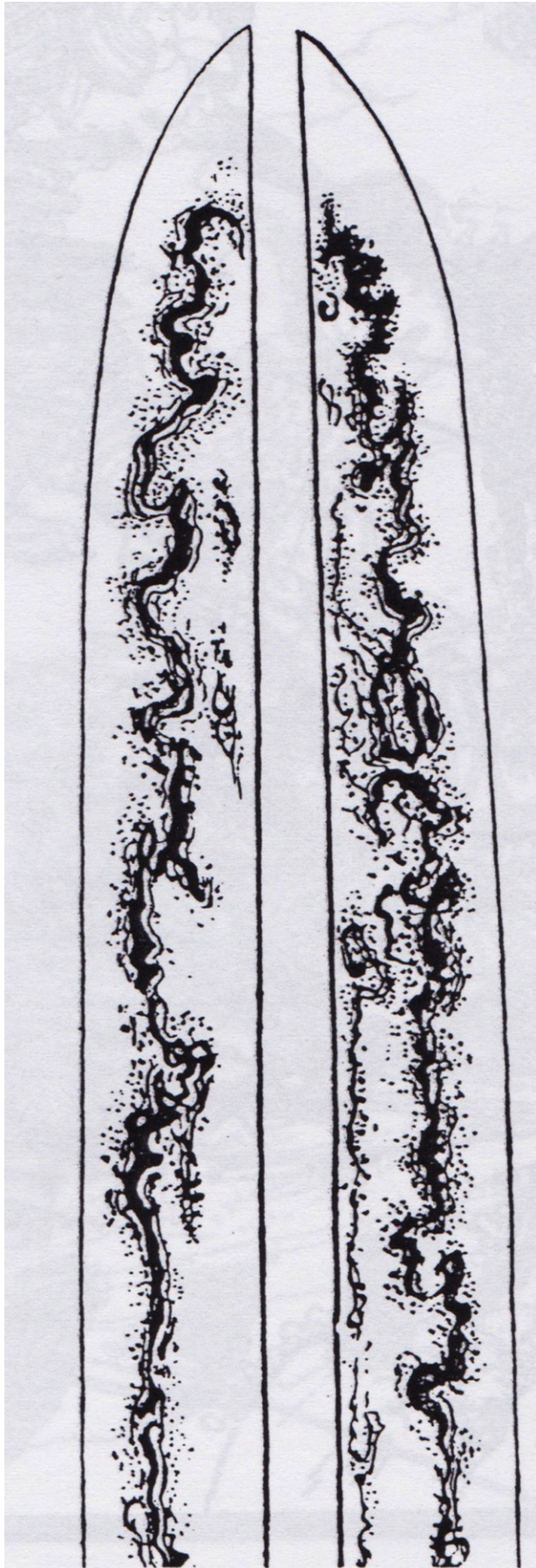
日 is the kanji for *sun*  
天 is the kanji for *heaven*

He used this official seal from 1806 onwards.

Bun  
ka  
7  
nen  
2  
gatsu  
hi

Masahide dated this wakizashi on a day during the second month in the 7th year of Bunka era (February, 1810)





Masamune 正宗 Sagami



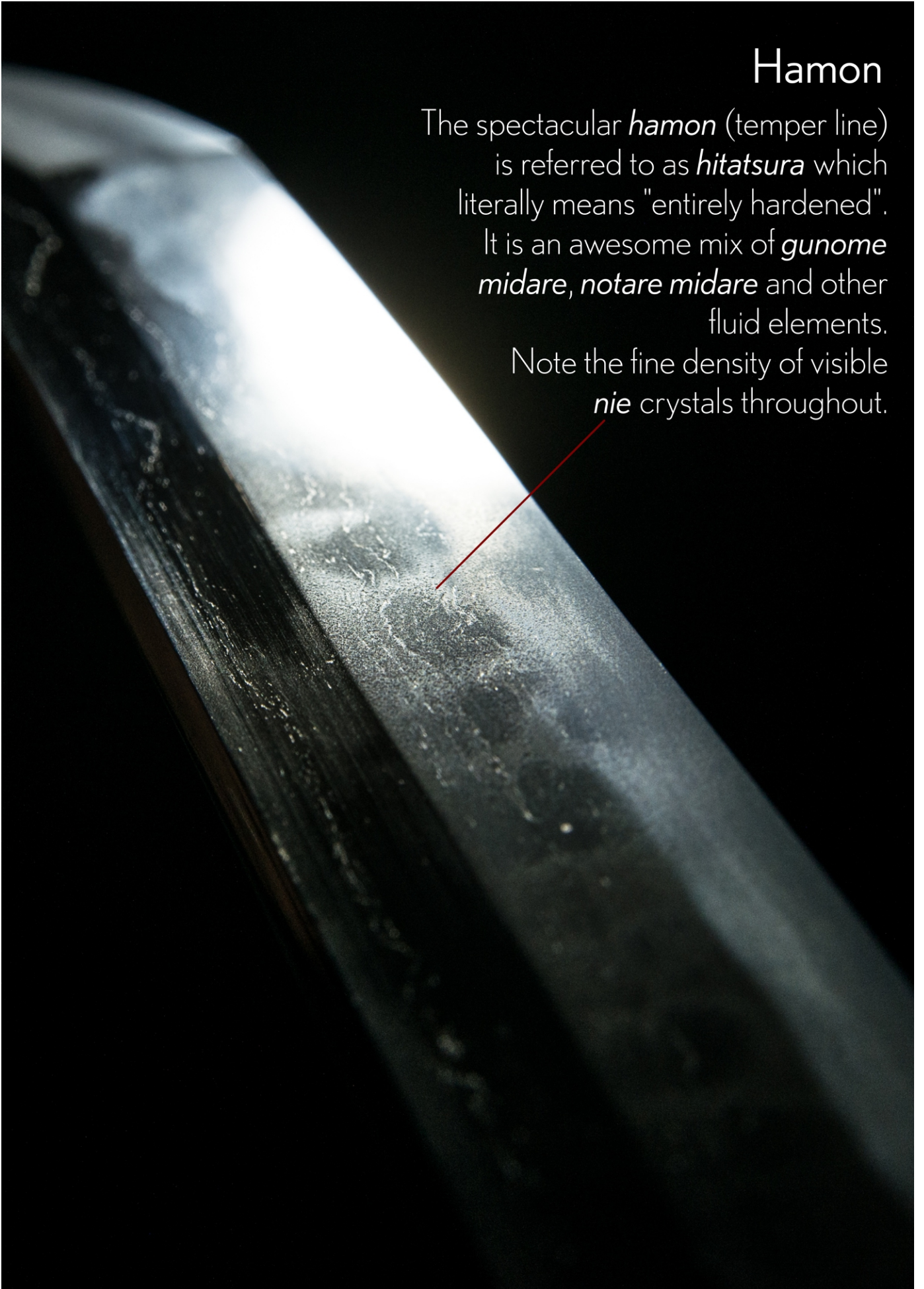
## Goro Nyudo Masamune

Suishinshi Masahide set out to create an *utsushimono* - a respectful tribute - by recreating a masterpiece of Japan's most iconic swordsmith *Goro Masamune* from the late Kamakura period. Above is an *oshigata* of a *Masamune hitatsura* blade and a tanto known as *Hyuga Masamune*.

*Oshigata source: The Soshu School of Swordsmiths by Yasu Kizu*

## Hamon

The spectacular *hamon* (temper line) is referred to as *hitatsura* which literally means "entirely hardened". It is an awesome mix of *gunome midare*, *notare midare* and other fluid elements. Note the fine density of visible *nie* crystals throughout.

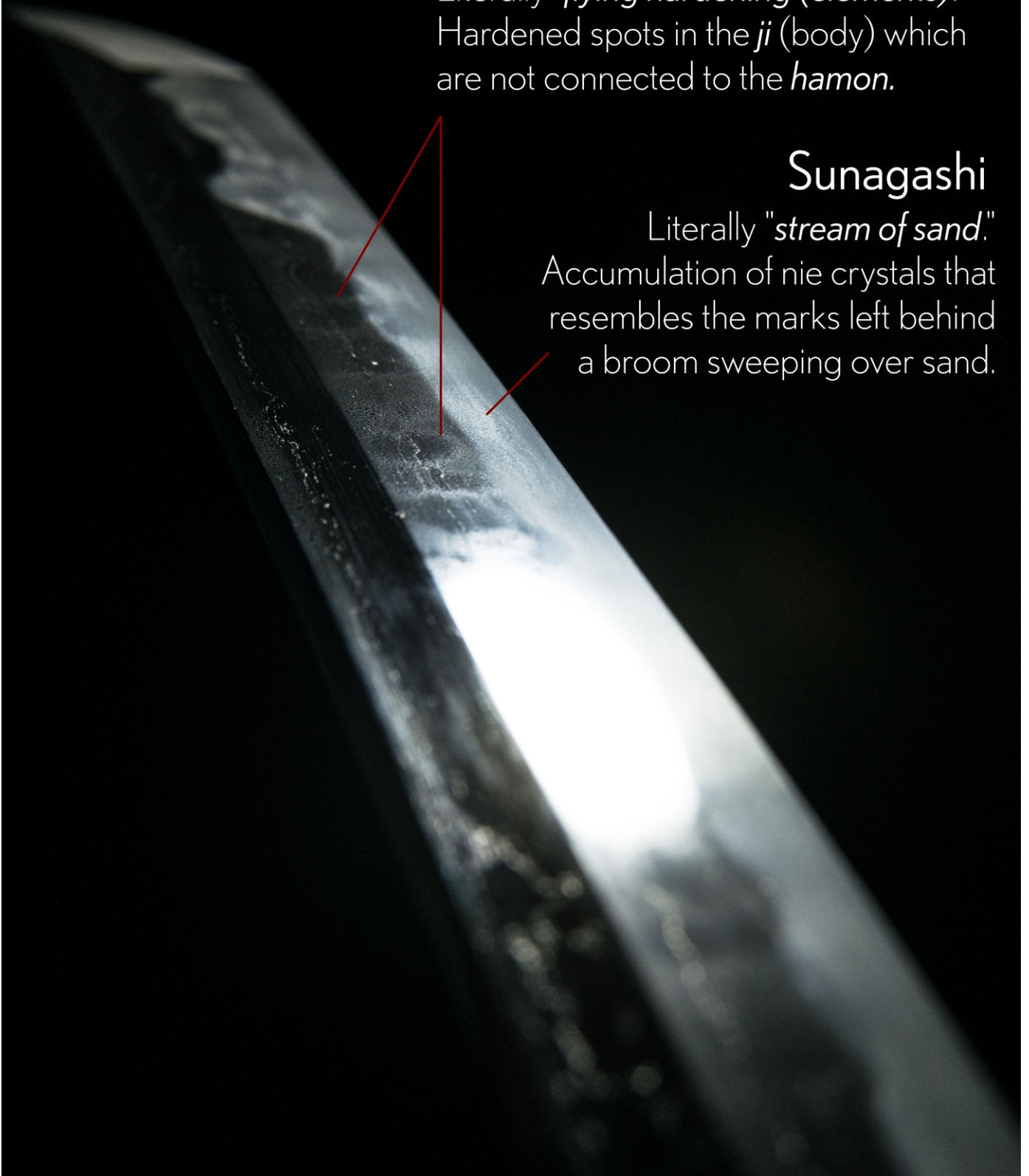


## Tobiyaki

Literally "*flying hardening (elements)*."  
Hardened spots in the *ji* (body) which  
are not connected to the *hamon*.

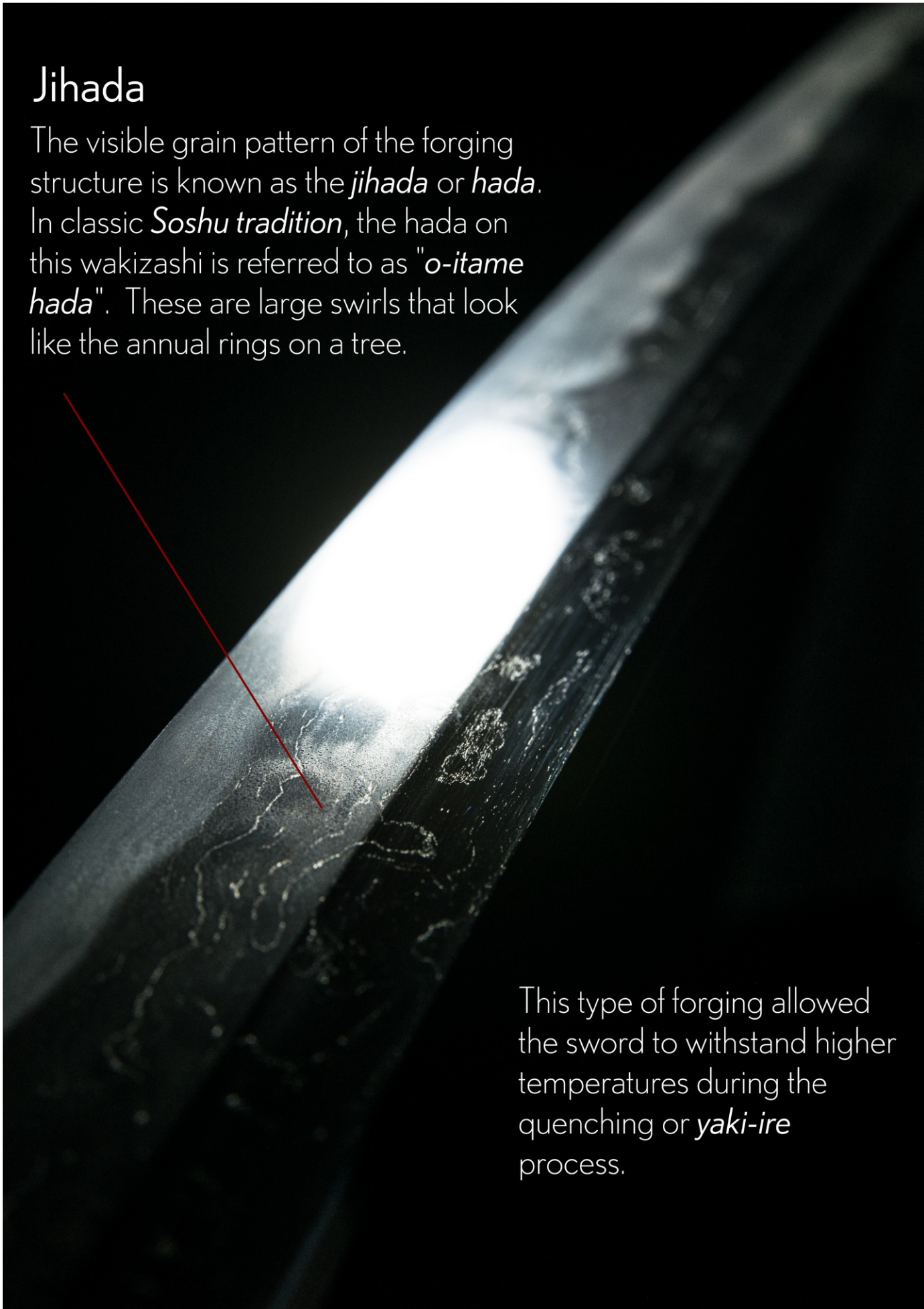
## Sunagashi

Literally "*stream of sand*."  
Accumulation of nie crystals that  
resembles the marks left behind  
a broom sweeping over sand.

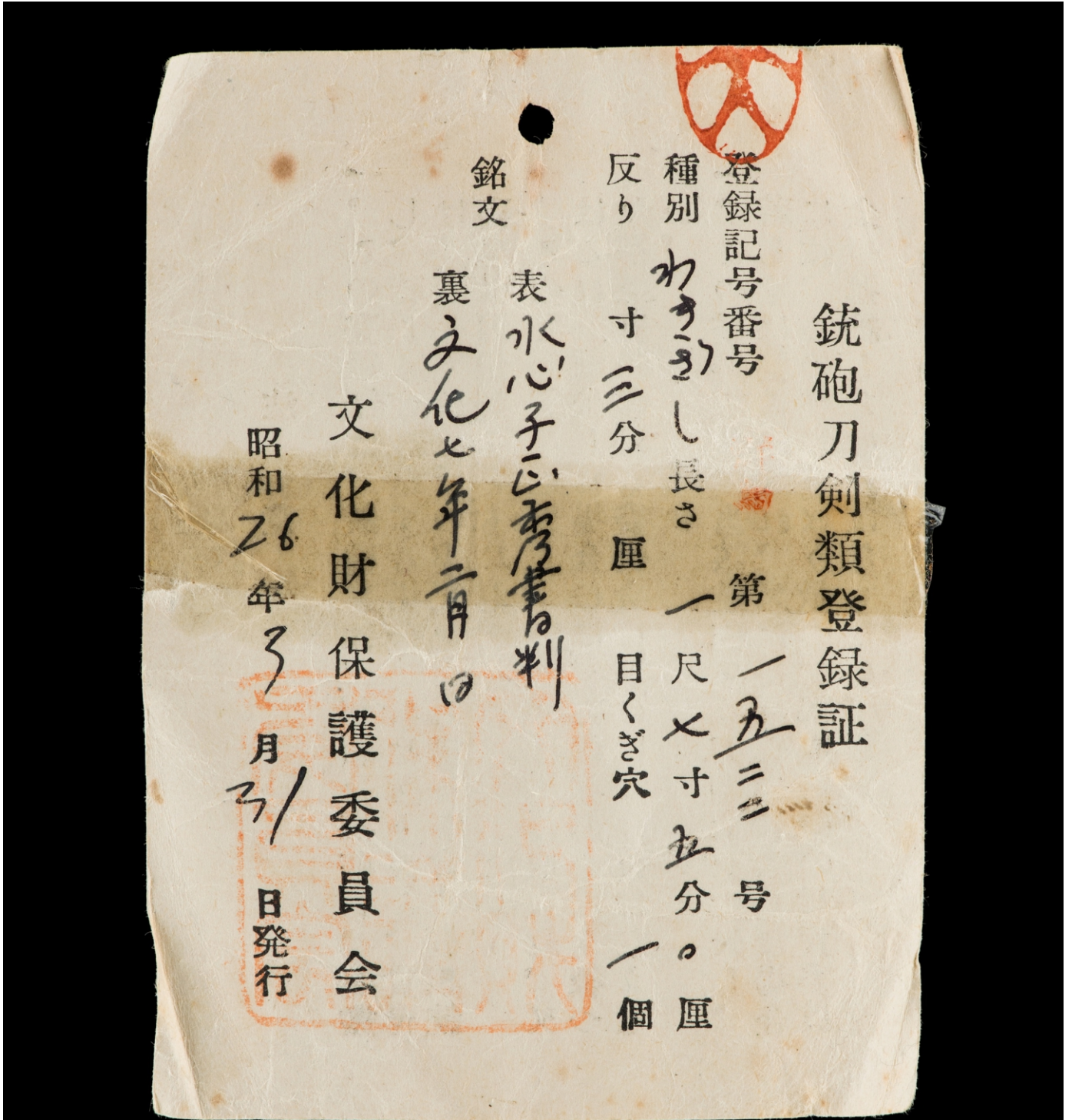


## Jihada

The visible grain pattern of the forging structure is known as the *jihada* or *hada*. In classic *Sosho tradition*, the hada on this wakizashi is referred to as "*o-itame hada*". These are large swirls that look like the annual rings on a tree.

A close-up, diagonal view of a sword blade. The blade is dark and shows a complex, swirling grain pattern known as jihada. A red line points from the text to a specific area of the blade. The background is black, making the blade stand out.

This type of forging allowed the sword to withstand higher temperatures during the quenching or *yaki-ire* process.



This is the *torokusho* (registration card) for the Masahide wakizashi. Note that the card was registered in the 26th year of (1951), on March 31.

This is a significant as 1951 was the very first year that swords were formally registered in Japan. Many Daimyo families were invited to submit their collections suggesting this blade was once held by a prominent family.

The serial number is just 1522, one of the very first swords registered in Japan.



## NBTHK Tokubetsu Kicho Certificate of Designation

(a sword designated as *Especially Precious*  
by the Society for the Preservation of the Japan Art Sword)

Issued in the 50th year of Showa (1975), October 11th

One, Wakizashi

*Mei* (signature)

*Suishinshi Masahide (kao)* (omote, front)

*Bunka 7 nen 2 gatsu-bi* (ura, back)

*Nagasa* (length)

1-shaku 7-sun 4.5-bu (53.2cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai  
(NBTHK)