



ITEM# UJWA193

## A TSUDA SUKEHIRO WAKIZASHI

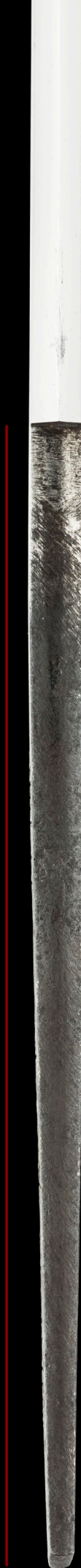
SIGNED & DATED, 2ND MONTH OF THE 7TH YEAR ENPO (FEBRUARY 1679)

- Swordsmith:** *Tsuda Echizen no Kami Sukehiro (ubu nakago)*
- Measurements:** **Length:** 49.8cm **Curvature:** 1.1cm
- Jihada:** *Ko-itame hada with sharp ji-nie*
- Hamon:** *Naka-suguha with sunagashi and deep nioi-guchi*
- Certificate:** **17th NBTHK Juyo Token** (a sword designated as Profound and Important by the Society for the Preservation of the Japanese Art Sword)
- Certificate #2-3:** **NTHK-NPO Kanteisho** (a tsuba and fuchi-kashira designated as Authentic by the Society for the Preservation of the Japanese Sword)
- Publication:** **Echizen Sukehiro Taikan** (a sword designated given an effort award for polishing work performed by Hirai Takamori)
- Ranking:** *Saijo-saku* (grandmaster) *O-Wazamono* (exceptionally sharp swords)
- Sayagaki:** *Tanobe sensei, former director of the NBTHK*

Born with given name *Jinnojo* in Sesshu province (Osaka) in 1636, Sukehiro was adopted by the *Shodai Sukehiro*, becoming second generation Sukehiro, and eventually surpassing his sensei in skill. He was granted the title of *Echizen no Kami* in 1657 at just 21 years of age. In 1667 Sukehiro was retained by *Aoyama Inaba no Kami Munetoshi*, master of Osaka Castle.

Sukehiro was considered the finest maker of the *suguba* (straight) *hamon* (and arguably the very top swordsmith) in the Shinto period. This wakizashi is an early NBTHK Juyo Token awarded masterpiece of such a *hamon* by an artistic genius who died much too early at the age of 46 in 1682. A beautiful custom *koshirae* with a rooster theme was crafted especially for the sword.

Nakago: 16.3cm



Saki-haba: 2.2cm



Nagasa: 49.8cm

Sori: 11cm

Moto-haba: 3.0cm

Mekugi-ana: 1





Title: *Tsuda Echizen no Kami*

Swordsmith: *Sukehiro*

Note the style of the signature, especially in the way he signed "da" of *Tsuda*. This is known as "*maru (round) tsuda*".

These signed swords are particularly collectible amongst Sukehiro works as it comes at the end of his celebrated career.

Tsu

da

Echi

zen

(no) Kami

Suke

hiro

The sword is dated to a day during the  
2nd month of the 7th year of Enpo era.  
(February 1679).

En  
po  
7  
nen  
2  
gatsu  
hi



重要第二七七號

指定書

協指銘津田越前守助広 一口

延宝七年二月日

長四十九八糎 反一二糎

鑄造庵棟 反り浅く中鋒延びる

鍛小板目肌よき約み地沸細かにつき冴える

刃文中直刃僅かに湾れミころあり

帽子直ぐに小丸

莖生ぶ先入山形釘目大筋達化粧釘目釘孔二中一埋

右者當協會に於て審査の結果

重要刀劍に指定す

昭和四十三年七月四日

財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協會

會長 細川護 立



NBTHK Juyo Token Certificate of Designation

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

Issued in the 43rd year of Showa (1968), July 4th, 5th, and 6th

One, Wakizashi

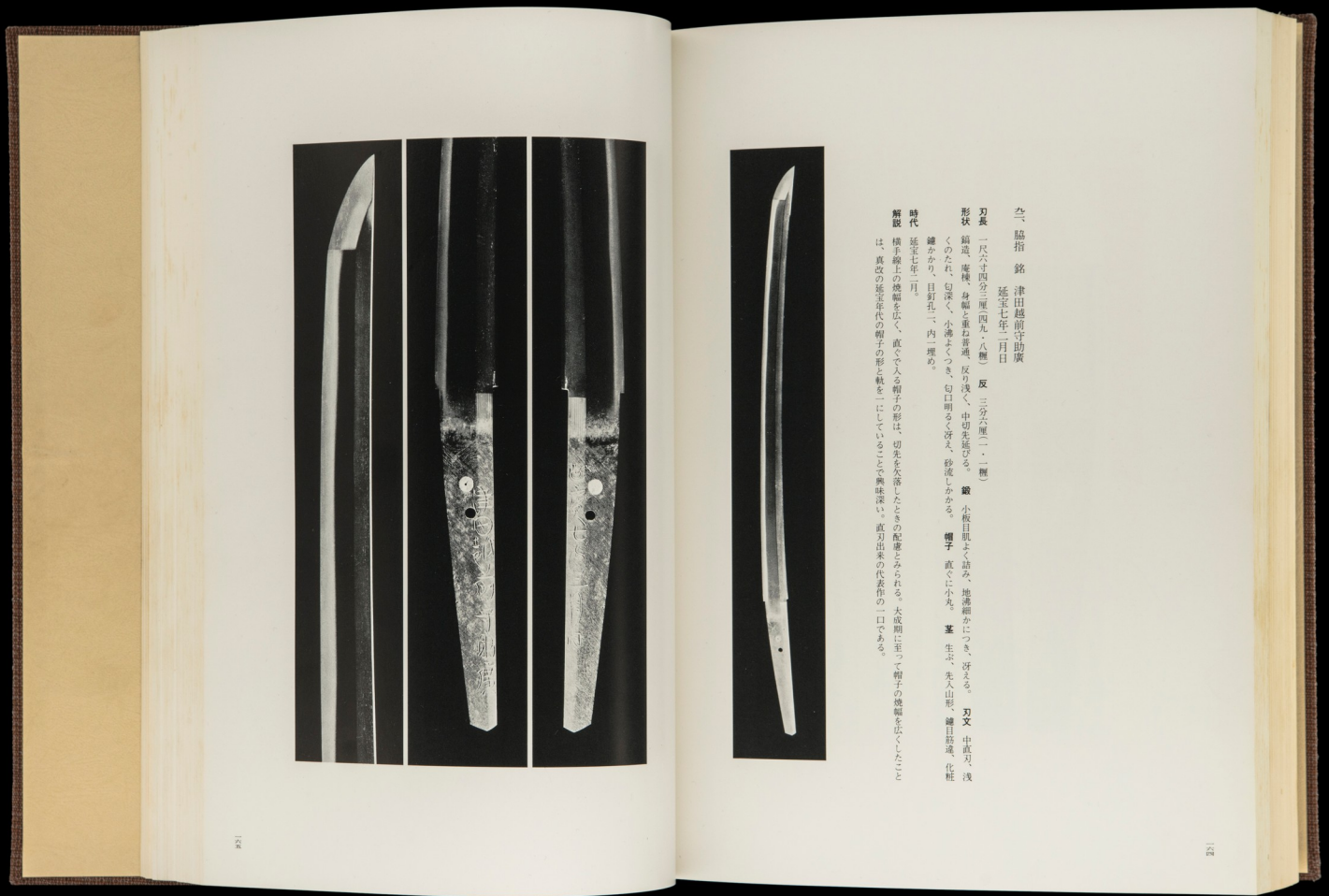
Mei (signature)

Tsuda no Kami Echizen Sukehiro

Nagasa (length)

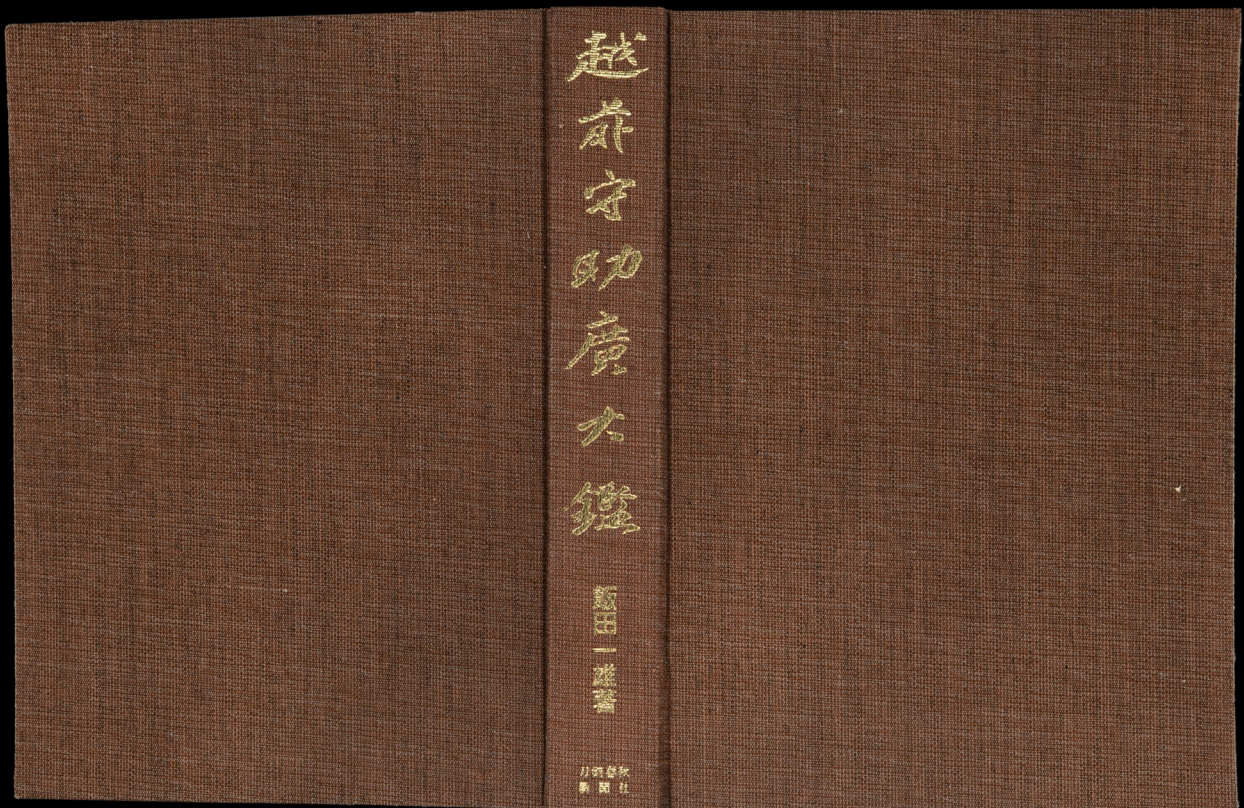
49.8cm

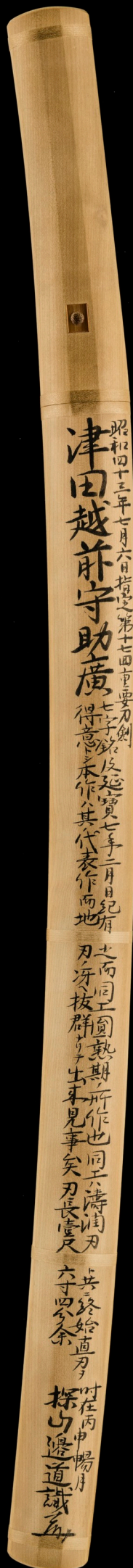
Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai (NBTHK)



凸、脇指 銘 津田越前守助廣  
 延享七年二月日  
 刃長 一尺六寸四分三厘(四九・八厘) 反 三分六厘二・二厘  
 形状 鑢造、庵棟、身幅と重ね普通、反り浅く、中切先延びる。 鍔 小板目肌と詰み、地味細かにつき、研える。 刃文 中直刃、浅くのたれ、匂深く、小薄まくり、匂口明るく、切え、砂流しかかる。 帽子 直ぐに小丸。 茎 生束、先八山形、鑢目経流、化粧  
 鑢かき、目釘孔二、内一埋め。  
 時代 延享七年二月  
 解説 横手線上の焼幅を広く、直ぐに入る帽子の形は、切先を欠落したときの配座とみられる。大成期に於いて帽子の焼幅を広くしたことは、真改の延享時代の帽子の形と軸を二にしていること興味深い。直刃出来の代表作の一口である。

This wakizashi is featured within the respected *Echizen Sukehiro Taikan* publication.





*Showa 43 nen 7 gatsu 6 nichi Shitei Dai 17 kai Juyo Token*  
Designated as Juyo Token on July 6th, 1968

Tsu  
da  
Echi  
zen  
(no)kami  
Suke  
hiro


*7 ji Mei Oyobi Enpo 7 nen 2 gatsu hi Ki Ari Kore*  
*Doukou Jyukki no Syusaku Nari Doukou wa Toranba to*  
*Tomoni Syushi Suguha wo Tokui To shi Honsaku wa Sono*  
*Daihyousaku Naran Jiba no Sae Batsugun Narite Deki*  
*Migoto Hacho 1 shaku 6 sun 4 bu amari*

7 letter signature and dated as February 1679 on tang, Sukehiro's late and good work. The school is accomplished at producing a hamon of toranba and suguha. This sword is a representative work, good/sharp Jiba, fantastic work. Length: 49.8cm

*Jizai Heishin Chogetsu* (November in 2016)

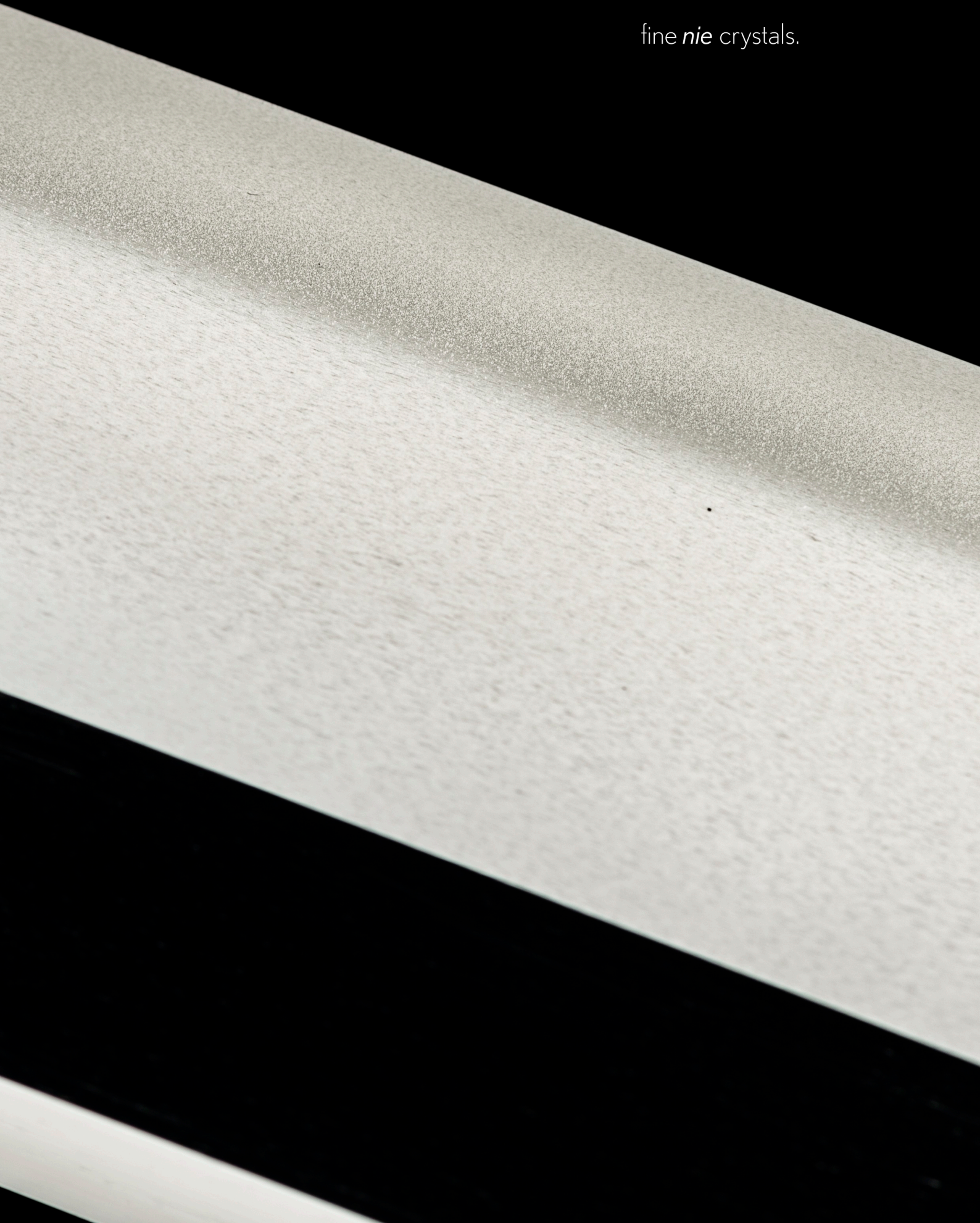
*Tanzan Hendoushiki* (Kaou)

signed by Tanobe sensei with seal



An icy smooth *itame hada*

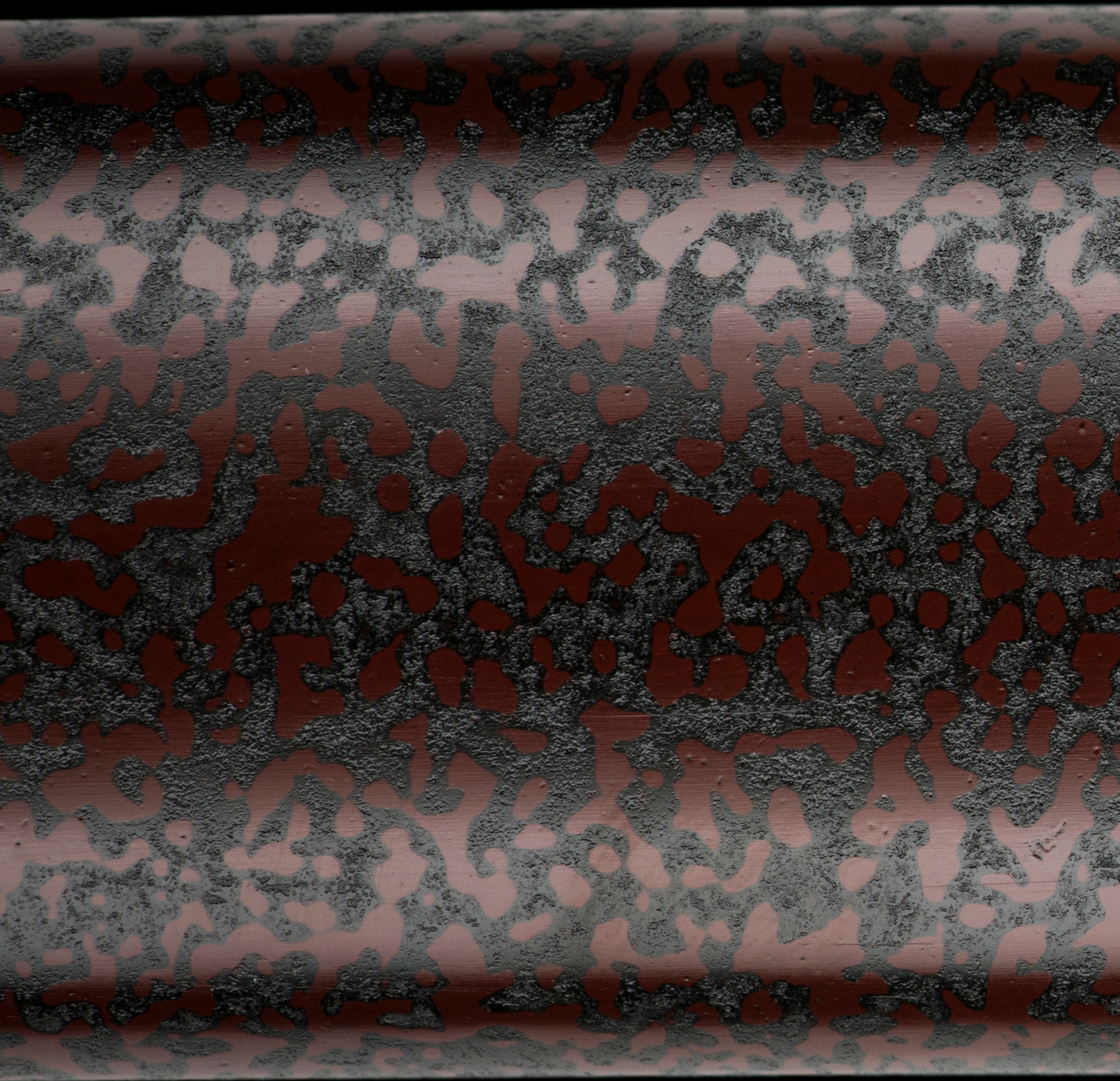
fine *nie* crystals.



*pure suguha*



*Saya* (scabbard) up close.





## Tsuba

The striking tsuba of a rooster from the mid edo period (1700s) is attributed to late generation Yoshiro of the *Heianjo-zogan school*. High relief inlay made around Kaga and Kyoto as well as *mon sukashi* (emblem) is typical of Yoshiro's work.

This tsuba was once part of the late Edward Wrangham OBE collection - a notable scholar of fine Japanese art.



This tsuba is certified with NTHK-NPO Kanteisho certification

Roosters represent courage and honesty.



Ume  
tada  
Nari  
Toshi



2017

Year of the Rooster





*Menuki* (decorative grips on the hilt) carry on the rooster and hen theme.





Congratulations Michael.

Warm regards,  
Pablo

# **Nihon-shintō-shi**

## 日本新刀史

### **The History of the *shintō* Era of Japanese Swords**

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### 3.3 The Kunisuke school (国助)

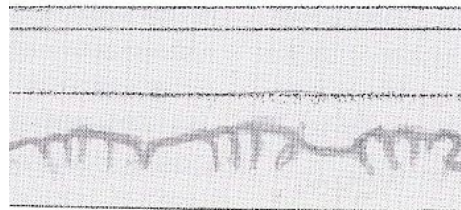
The 1<sup>st</sup> generation **Kunisuke** originally came from Kameyama (亀山), in Ise province, where he served Seki Kazumasa (関一政, 1564-1625) who had returned to his home province of Ise after Sekigahara. But it is said that Kunisuke went to Kyōto where he entered an apprenticeship as a swordsmith under Horikawa Kunihiro. Others say that Kunisuke's roots were in the Ishidō school (石堂), which in turn let us assume that he already worked as a swordsmith for Kazumasa. His younger brother, who also signed „Kunisuke“, was active around Manji (万治, 1658-1661) and, according to transmission, also studied under Kunihiro. He accompanied his older brother to Ōsaka but returned later via Fushimi (伏見) to Kanbe (神戸) in the home province of Ise. There are very few works extant of this younger brother of Kunisuke and it is interesting that his son, also called „Kunisuke“, stayed in Ōsaka with his uncle and did not go to Ise. It is said that the latter, i.e. the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation of Kunisuke's younger brother Kunisuke, also worked temporarily in Edo and in Bungo province.

However, after the death of his master, that means the „famous“ Kunisuke, Kunisuke moved with his fellow student Kunisada to Ōsaka where he received the honorary title „Kawachi no Kami“ (河内守) between the second and third year of Kan'ei (寛永, 1625~1626). Like Kunisada, it is assumed that Kunisuke too actually finished his training under Kunitomo. Unfortunately, the quality of Kunisuke's works varies. His best blades are on the same level as the great masterworks of the Horikawa school, others are just average Ōsaka-*shintō* blades. With the 1<sup>st</sup> generation Kunisuke we can see a reminiscence of a Keichō-*shintō-sugata* but he mostly made *shinogi-zukuri katana* and *wakizashi* in Kanbun-*shintō-sugata*, i.e. with a shallow *sori*, a narrow *sakihaba* and a relatively small *kissaki*. The *jigane* is an *itame* with a tendency to *nagare*. *Ji-nie* and *chikei* appear in Horikawa-style. Naturally he also forged an Ōsaka-*jigane* with a dense *ko-itame* and fine *ji-nie*. The *hamon* is a *notare-gunome* mixed with *chōji* and *ashi* and the *nioiguchi* is wide and shows plenty of *ko-nie*. Some *hamon* interpretations remind us of Oya-Kunisada. He also applied a *suguha* or *ō-midare* but in any case a conspicuous amount of *chōji* is seen. The *bōshi* is mostly *ko-maru* but can run out as *yakitsume* or show *hakikake*. He also tempered a *midare-komi-bōshi*. Kunisuke signed the part „Kawachi no Kami“ smaller than the part „Fujiwara Kunisuke“, but the difference in size decreases over the years. However, this peculiarity is also seen with other *shintō* smiths. For the sake of differentiation with the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation, he is also called „Oya-Kunisuke“ (親国助) or „Oya-Kawachi“ (親河内).

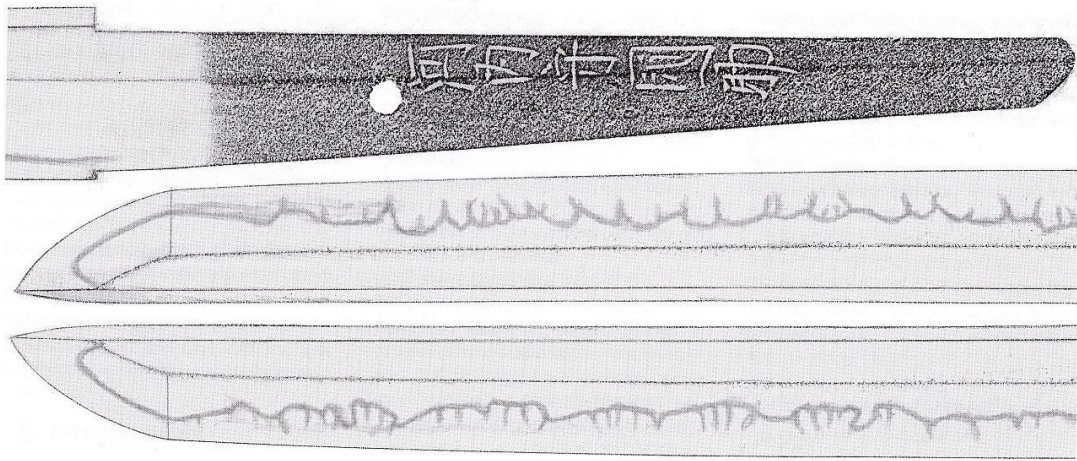
The 2<sup>nd</sup> generation, the so-called „**Naka-Kawachi Kunisuke**“ (中河内国助), was the son of the 1<sup>st</sup> generation and from him we know blades from Keian (慶安, 1648-1652) to Genroku (元禄, 1688-1704). He was more oriented towards the supposed origins of his line, i.e. the Bizen or Ishidō style respectively, and so he is also called „*shintō*-Ichimonji“. His *jigane* is mostly a very fine, almost *muji*-like *ko-itame* which is mixed with fine *mokume*. But some blades also show a coarser *mokume* and a tendency to *masame*. His strong point was a *kobushigata-chōji* (拳形丁子, lit. „fist-shaped *chōji*“) in *nioi-deki* but he also applied a *suguha* and, in his early years, an *ō-midare* in *ko-nie-deki*. There are often small *tama* elements seen between the *midare* and sometimes also *saka-ashi* appear. The *hamon* usually starts with a long *sugu-yakidashi* and does turn abruptly into a *suguha* at the *yokote* area whereas it noticeably runs back parallel to the *mune* after the *ko-maru-kaeri*. His tangs frequently taper from the middle section onwards and therefore remind us of the peculiar *nakago* shape of Muramasa (村正). The tip of his tang is *kata-yamagata* and the *yasurime* are *sujikai* or *ō-sujikai* but do not start with *keshō*. His signature is generally a little larger and thicker than the 1<sup>st</sup> generation.



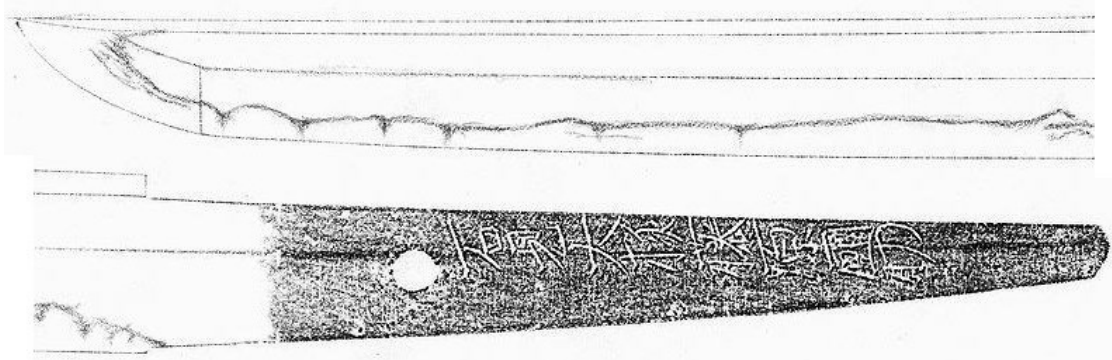
Picture 54: *katana, mei*: „Kawachi no Kami Fujiwara Kunisuke“ (河内守藤原国助), *nagasa* 69,7 cm, *sori* 1,5 cm, *shinogi-zukuri*, *iori-mune*. Work of the 1<sup>st</sup> generation



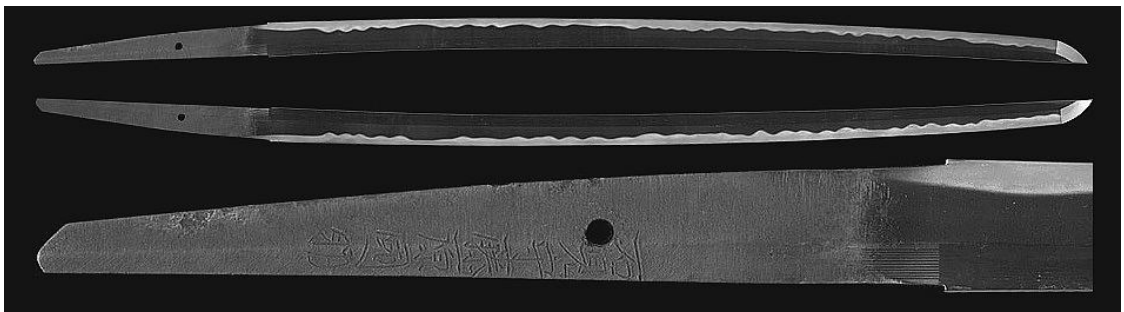
Picture 55: *kobushigata-chōji* of the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation Kunisuke



Picture 56: *katana, mei*: „Kawachi no Kami Kunisuke“ (河内守国助), *nagasa* 73,6 cm, *sori* 1,2 cm, *shinogi-zukuri*, *iori-mune*, Work of the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation Kunisuke



Picture 57: *katana, mei*: „Iwami no Daijō Fujiwara Kunisuke“ (石見大掾藤原国助), *nagasa* 69,1 cm, *sori* 1,3 cm, *shinogi-zukuri*, *iori-mune*. Work of the younger brother of the 1<sup>st</sup> generation Kunisuke with his former honorary title „Iwami no Daijō“.



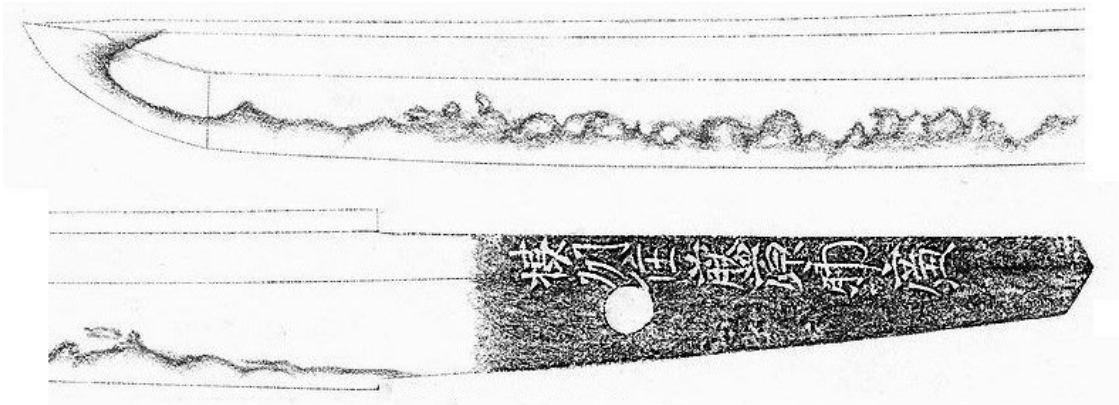
Picture 58: *katana, mei*: „Iwami no Kami Fujiwara Kunisuke“ (石見守藤原国助), *nagasa* 73,6 cm, *shinogi-zukuri*, *iori-mune*. Work of the younger brother of the 1<sup>st</sup> generation Kunisuke with his later honorary title „Iwami no Kami“.

A school, which would turn out to be very influential until the *shinshintō* era, was founded by **Sukehiro** (助広). It is said that the 1<sup>st</sup> generation Sukehiro, his civilian name was „Tsuda Yahei“ (津田弥兵衛), mass-produced blades in his home village of Tsuda, in Harima province, at the beginning of his career. Later he decided to go to Ōsaka to enter apprenticeship under the 1<sup>st</sup> generation Kunisuke. A theory says that he received the nickname „Soboro Sukehiro“ (そぼろ助広, lit. „the ragged Sukehiro“) because of his ragged dressing. Others say that the nickname goes back to a blade which he signed with the *katakana* syllables „Sohoro“ (ソホロ). This theory assumes that this was the nickname of the blade, because „*sohoro*“ might be an old pronunciation of the term „*sōro*“ (霜露) which means „white frost“. And some adopt this approach and see in „*sōro*“ the characters (草露) which stand for „dew-covered grass“, a periphrasis for the transience of all things. However, the 1<sup>st</sup> generation Sukehiro died in the third year of Kanbun (寛文, 1663).

His successor, the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation **Sukehiro**, was born in Uchide (打出), in Settsu province, and was adopted as his successor after being trained by the first generation. From the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation we know dated blades from the first year of Meireki (明暦, 1655) to his year of death, which was Tenna two (天和, 1682). From the eighth month of Kanbun seven (1667) onwards he executed the dated signature of the *ura* side in grass script and applied a *keshō* to his *yasurime*. As the signature of the *omote* side was still signed in block script back then, works of that period are called „Kaku-Tsuda“ (角津田, lit. „angular Tsuda“, see picture 60). From the second month of Enpō two (延宝, 1674), he executed the signatures of both sides in grass script. Such *mei* and works from this period are called „Maru-Tsuda“ (丸津田, lit. „round Tsuda“). His *jigane* is a dense and excellent forged *ko-itame* with fine *ji-nie* all over the blade. The steel is bright and clear and the *hamon* is a *suguha*, *notare* or a *tōranba* with much *nie* in some places and very little elsewhere, and a wide *nioiguchi*. But we also know interpretations in finer *nie*. The *ha* too is bright and clear and he and Kotetsu (虎徹) are considered the *shintō* smiths who applied the most brilliant *ha*. He is also regarded as the „inventor“ of the *tōran-midare* (also called „*tōranba*“). Sometimes we see isolated round hardened elements in the *hira-ji* along such a *tōran-midare*. They are called „*tama*“ (玉, lit. „gem“ or also „ball“). In the case of a *midareba*, the *hamon* starts with a narrow *suguyakidashi* but which is shorter than those of his son-in-law Sukenao (助直). The *ha* becomes smaller from the *yokote* onwards and runs parallel to the *fukura* into a *ko-maru-kaeri*.

The younger brother of the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation Sukehiro was also active as a swordsmith. He was known under the name „**Teruhiro**“ (照広) and was oriented towards the *tōran*-style *ō-gunome-midare* of his brother. The son-in-law of the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation Sukehiro was **Sukenao** (助直). Sukenao originally came from Takagi (高木), Ōmi province, and married the daughter of his master in the third year of Enpō (延宝, 1675). He forged a dense *ko-itame* with *ji-nie* but also a standing-out *itame*. His *hamon* is a *suguha*, *notare*, *tōranba*, *notare* mixed with

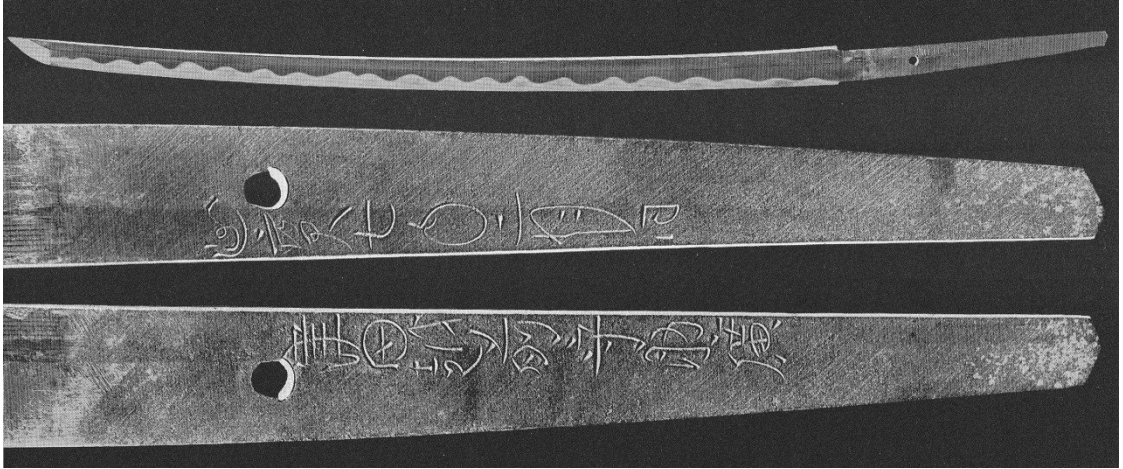
*gunome*, or a *gunome-midare*. In the case of a *midareba*, an *Ōsaka-yakidashi* appears. The hardening is in *nie-deki* and we see a wide, clear and bright *nioiguchi*. But there are also blades with a tight *nioiguchi*. His *gunome* is somewhat more angular than with Sukehiro and Sukenao's *tama* are – if present – not always positioned exactly in the middle of two *midare* elements. From Kanbun eight (1668) onwards he signed the *omote* side of his tangs in block script and the *ura* side in grass script, and from Tenna two (天和, 1682) onwards he executed both sides in grass scripts. From the third year of Enpō (1675) Sukenao added his „new“ family name „Tsuda“ to his signatures. He was about equal in skill to his master and father-in-law.



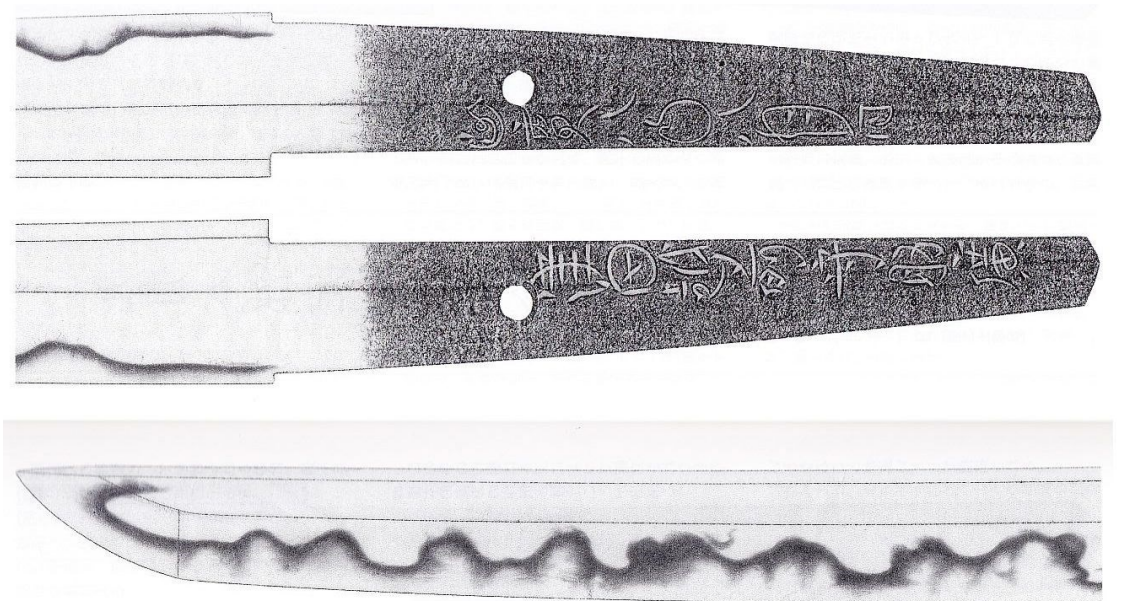
Picture 59: *katana, mei*: „Sesshū-jū Fujiwara Sukehiro“ (撰州住藤原助広), *nagasa* 74,2 cm, *sori* 0,75 cm, *shinogi-zukuri*, *iorimune*. Work of the 1<sup>st</sup> generation Soboro-Sukehiro.



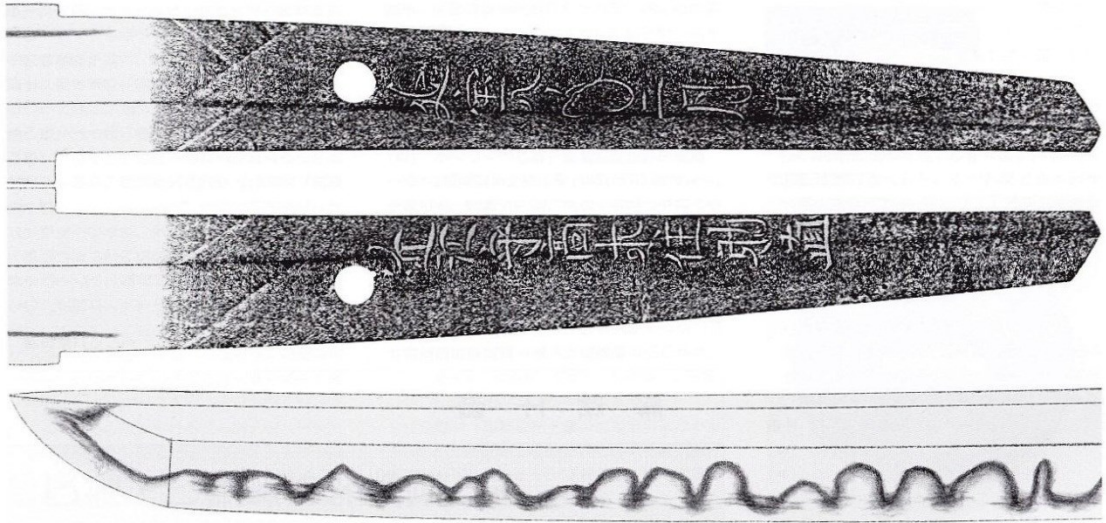
Picture 60: *Kaku-Tsuda-mei*



Picture 61: *jūyō-bunkazai, mei*: „Tsuda Echizen no Kami Sukehiro“ (津田越前守助広) – „Enpō nananen nigatsu-hi“ (延宝七年二月日, „a day of the second month of Enpō seven [1679]“), *nagasa* 71,2 cm, *sori* 1,5 cm, *shinogi-zukuri, iori-mune*, 2<sup>nd</sup> generation



Picture 62: *wakizashi, mei*: „Tsuda Echizen no Kami Sukehiro“ (津田越前守助広) – „Enpō hachi-nen hachigatsu-hi“ (延宝八年八月日, „a day of the eighth month of Enpō eight [1680]“), *nagasa* 52,5 cm, *sori* 1,35 cm, *shinogi-zukuri, iori-mune*

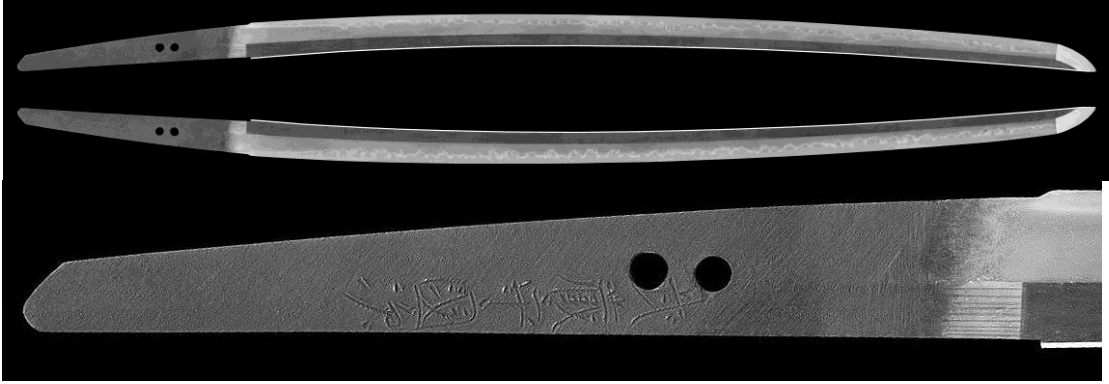


Picture 63: *katana, mei*: „Ōmi no Kami Takagi-jū Sukenao“ (近江守高木住助直) – „Enpō hachinen nigatsu-hi“ (延宝八年二月日, „a day of the second month of Enpō eight [1680]“), *nagasa* 73,6 cm, *sori* 2,1 cm, *shinogi-zukuri, iori-mune*

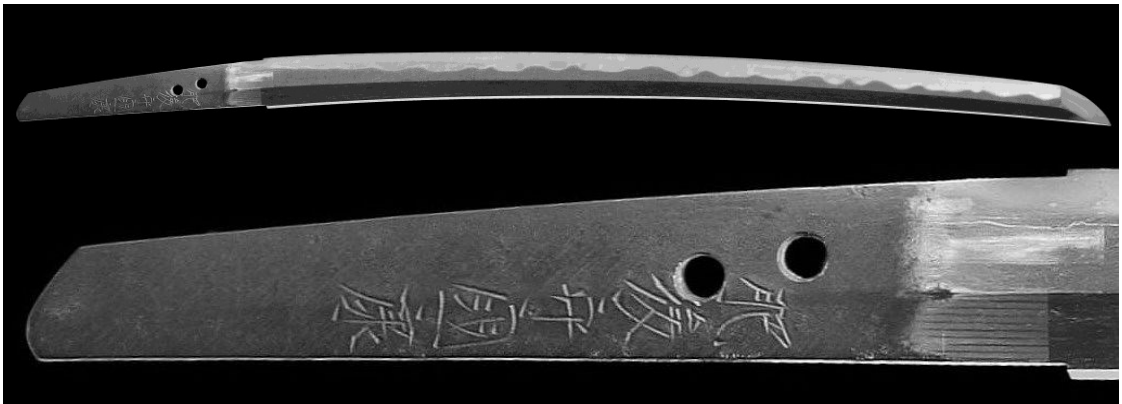
Let's return to the 1<sup>st</sup> generation Kunisuke. He had namely more sons who were active as swordsmiths. For example, **Musashi no Kami Kunitsugu** (武蔵守国次) and **Higo no Kami Kuniyasu** (肥後守国康). **Ise no Kami Kuniteru** (伊勢守国輝) married Kunisuke's daughter and was adopted into the family as son-in-law.

Kuniyasu's son succeeded as 2<sup>nd</sup> generation Kuniyasu but later moved to Edo. Kuniteru was actually the second son of Ise no Kami Kuniyoshi (伊勢守国吉).<sup>\*14</sup> From him we know dated blades from the second year of Kanbun (寛文, 1662) to the sixth year of Hōei (宝永, 1709) which means an active period of at least 47 years. Accordingly, some assume that there were two generations Kuniteru active, but no records would support this approach. Kuniteru's *jigane* is a dense and beautifully forged *ko-itame* with *masame* in the *shinogi-ji*. The *hamon* is a *suguha* with *ko-ashi*, a *notare-midare*, a *chōji-midare* or an *ō-midare*. In addition, we see *sunagashi*, *tobiyaki* and *muneyaki*. The *hamon* starts with a narrow *sugu-yakidashi* and the *bōshi* is *ko-maru* and also shows in some rare cases *hakikake*. From about the third year of Genroku (元禄, 1690) onwards, Kuniteru applied a peculiar *gohei-gata* tang.

\*14 Kuniyoshi was active around Kan'ei (寛永, 1624-1644) in Yamashiro but moved later to Ōsaka.



Picture 64: *katana, mei*: „Musashi no Kami Kunitsugu“ (武藏守国次), *nagasa* 69,1 cm, *sori* 1,2 cm, *shinogi-zukuri*, *iori-mune*

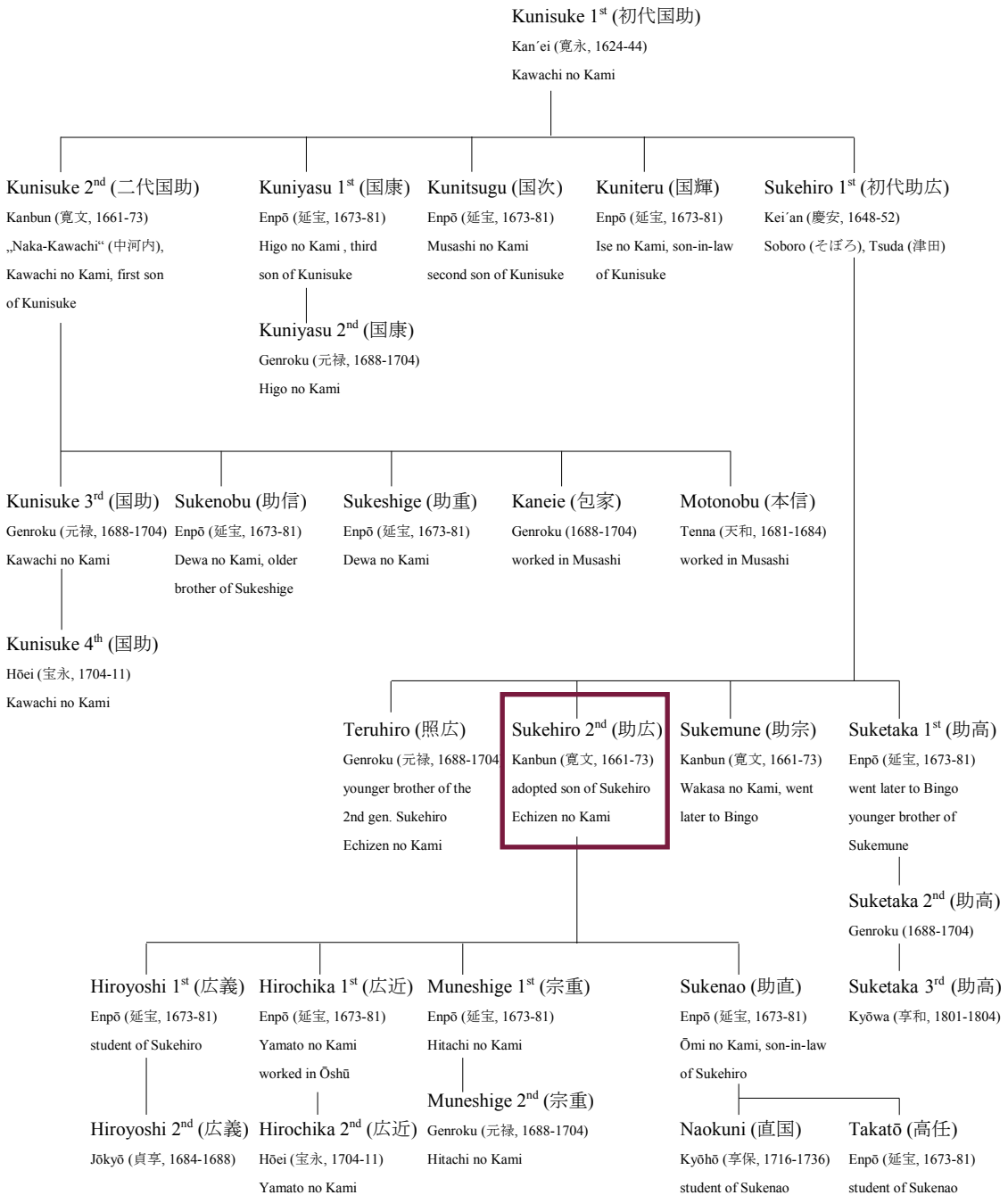


Picture 65: *wakizashi, mei*: „Higo no Kami Kuniyasu“ (肥後守国康), *nagasa* 54,4 cm, *sori* 1,2 cm, *shinogi-zukuri*, *iori-mune*



Picture 66: *katana, mei*: „Ise no Kami Kuniteru“ (伊勢守国輝) – „Hōei ninen kinoto-tori chūshun kitan“ (宝永二年乙酉仲春吉旦, „on a lucky day of the second month of Hōei two [1705] year of the snake“), *nagasa* 70,0 cm, *sori* 2,0 cm, *shinogi-zukuri*, *iori-mune*

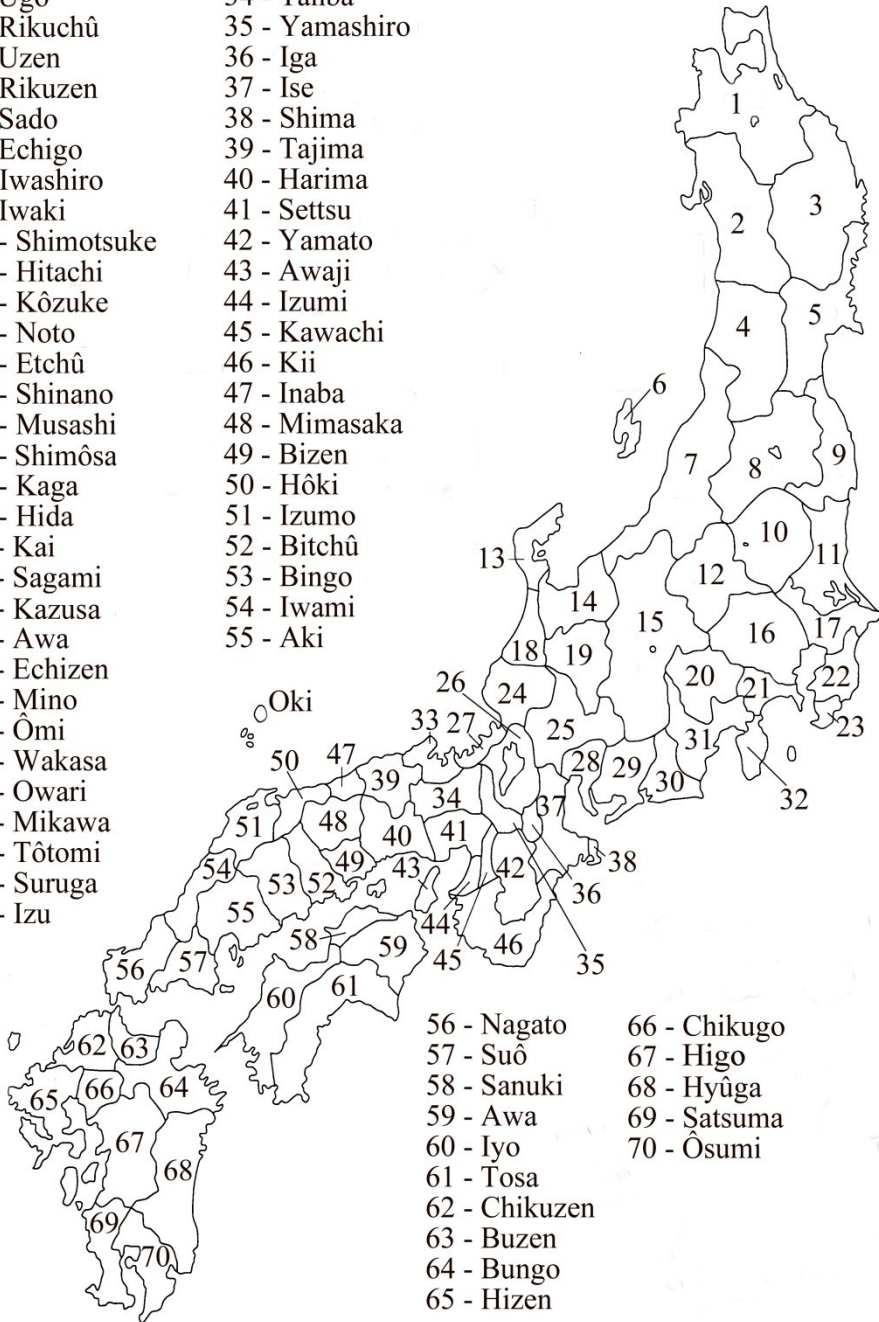
## Genealogy of the Kunisuke school:



# Map of the old provinces of Japan

- 1 - Rikuoku
- 2 - Ugo
- 3 - Rikuchû
- 4 - Uzen
- 5 - Rikuzen
- 6 - Sado
- 7 - Echigo
- 8 - Iwashiro
- 9 - Iwaki
- 10 - Shimotsuke
- 11 - Hitachi
- 12 - Kôzuke
- 13 - Noto
- 14 - Etchû
- 15 - Shinano
- 16 - Musashi
- 17 - Shimôsa
- 18 - Kaga
- 19 - Hida
- 20 - Kai
- 21 - Sagami
- 22 - Kazusa
- 23 - Awa
- 24 - Echizen
- 25 - Mino
- 26 - Ômi
- 27 - Wakasa
- 28 - Owari
- 29 - Mikawa
- 30 - Tôtomî
- 31 - Suruga
- 32 - Izu

- 33 - Tango
- 34 - Tanba
- 35 - Yamashiro
- 36 - Iga
- 37 - Ise
- 38 - Shima
- 39 - Tajima
- 40 - Harima
- 41 - Settsu
- 42 - Yamato
- 43 - Awaji
- 44 - Izumi
- 45 - Kawachi
- 46 - Kii
- 47 - Inaba
- 48 - Mimasaka
- 49 - Bizen
- 50 - Hôki
- 51 - Izumo
- 52 - Bitchû
- 53 - Bingo
- 54 - Iwami
- 55 - Aki



- 56 - Nagato
- 57 - Suô
- 58 - Sanuki
- 59 - Awa
- 60 - Iyo
- 61 - Tosa
- 62 - Chikuzen
- 63 - Buzen
- 64 - Bungo
- 65 - Hizen
- 66 - Chikugo
- 67 - Higo
- 68 - Hyûga
- 69 - Satsuma
- 70 - Ôsumi