



ITEM# UJWA260

A SHODAI MASATSUNE SUNNOBI TANTÔ

SIGNED, MOMOYAMA PERIOD (BUNROKU~KEICHÔ ERAS: 1591~1607)

Swordsmith: *Sagami no Kami Fujiwara Masatsune (shodai, first generation)*
Measurements: **Length:** 30.3cm (*ubu*) **Curvature:** 0cm **Moto-haba:** 2.89cm
Jihada: *Ko-itame mixed with mokume, standing hada and utsuri*
Hamon: *Suguha with ko-gunome and ashi*
Certificate #1: **NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon** (*Especially Worthy of Preservation*)
Certificate #2-4: **NTHK-NPO Kanteisho** (*for the tsuba, fuchi-kashira and koshirae*)
Fujishiro rank: **Jôjô-saku** (*ranked as a highly superior swordsmith*)
Included: *Shirasaya, Edo koshirae, fabric bags, stand, kit, description*

SOLD

Born *Nôshû Tarô*suke in 1535 distinguished swordsmith Masatsune was the second son of the ninth generation *Sukemon Kanetsune* and the most accomplished swordsmith of the *Owari Shintô* group. He was bestowed title of *Sagami no Kami* in 1591 from *Toyotomi Hidetsugu*, nephew of powerful *daimyô* lord *Toyotomi Hideyoshi*, known as the second great unifier of Japan. This splendid *sunnobi-tanto* by *shodai Masatsune* is exactly one-shaku in length and features a wide, healthy body and a bright *suguha-hamon* with *ko-gunome* and *ashi* over a well-forged *itame-hada* with fine *ji-nie*. It is a prime example of his work early on into his career before his son – *Nidai Masatsune* - died quite unexpectedly in 1609. A rare and beautiful Edo-period *toppei koshirae* accompanies the piece that pays homage to the ruling *Tokugawa shogunate* of the Edo period.

Moto-kasane: 5.6mm

Omosa: 235g

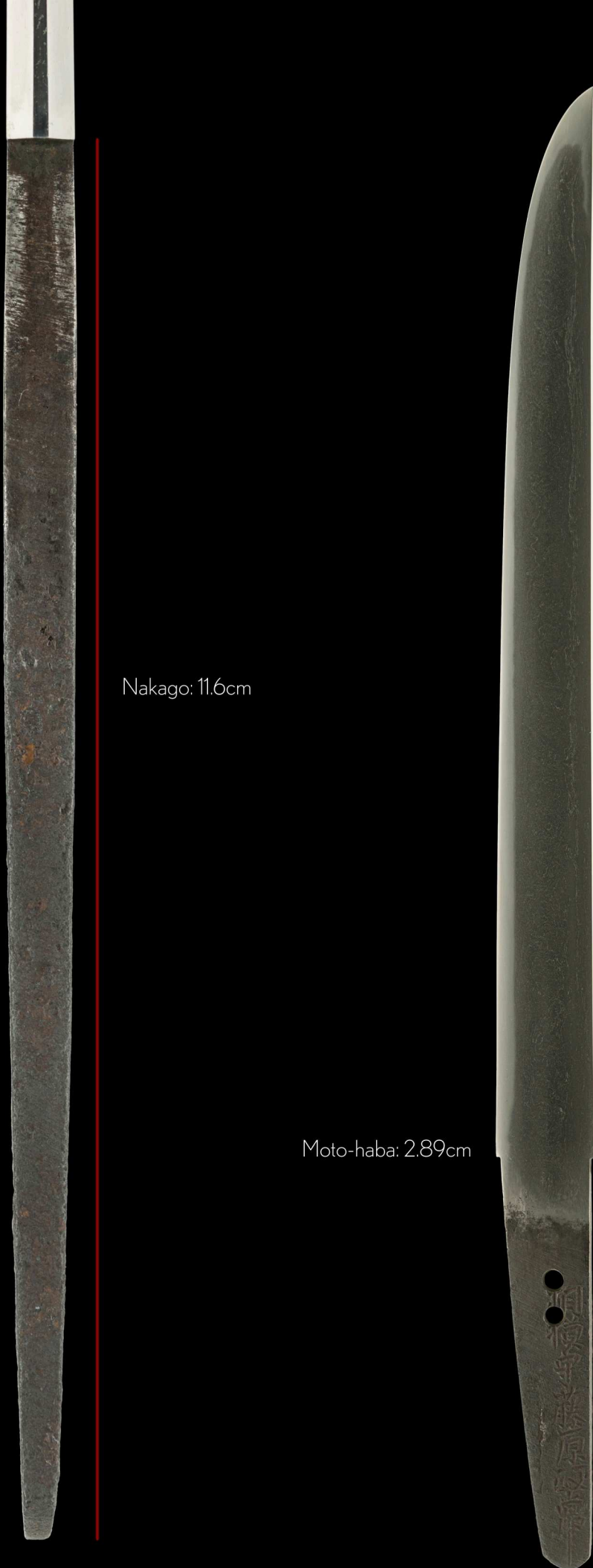
Nakago: 11.6cm

Moto-haba: 2.89cm

Nagasa: 30.3cm

Sori: 0.0cm

Mekugi-ana: 2



Born *Nôshû Tarôsukey* in 1535 distinguished swordsmith *Masatsune* was the second son of the ninth generation *Sukemon Kanetsune*. He initially signed *Kanetsune* when he established his own branch of the *Kanetsune* lineage in the village of *Komaki* in the *Kasuga* district of *Mino* province.

He later moved to *Kiyosu* in *Owari* province where he was employed by *Fukushima Masanori* and subsequently changed his name to *Masatsune* in 1592. A year prior in 1591, Masatsune was granted the honorary title of *Sagami no Kami* by *Toyotomi Hidetsugu*, alongside fellow swordsmiths *Hida no Kami Ujifusa* and *Hoki no Kami Nobutaka* who together were known as the *Owari san-saku* (three major smiths of Owari province).

After the decisive *Battle of Sekigahara* that brought unity to Japan, he was employed by *Matsudaira Tadayoshi* - the new lord of the Kiyosu fief - whereupon he moved to the flourishing castle town of *Nagoya*. He retired in 1607 and gave the leadership of the school to his son *Tarôsukey*, but *Tarôsukey* died unexpectedly in 1609. He thus resumed work as a swordsmith and did so up until he died. After his son's untimely death, he signed his nakago with the supplement "*Nyûdô*" (Buddhist priest name). Masatsune died on February 18, 1619 at the age of 84.

Masatsune is ranked as a *jôjô-saku* smith (highly superior) was mostly known for producing *tantô*, *sunnobi-tantô*, *ko-wakizashi* but also produced many fine *katana* and *naginata* and *yari*.

This wonderful *sunnobi-tanto* by shodai Masatsune is exactly one *shaku* in length (30.3cm) - a traditional measurement in Japan used by carpenters and smiths for centuries. It has a wide, healthy body and features a bright *suguha-hamon* with *ko-ashi* over a well-forged *itame-hada* with fine *ji-nie*. It is a prime example of the work of this remarkable swordsmith, and father. A rare Edo-period *toppei* koshirae accompanies the piece that pays homage to the ruling *Tokugawa shogunate* of the Edo period. This is a prime collectible from the very early years of the *shintô* period.



Traditional Japanese units of measurement is largely based on the Chinese system, which has remained mostly unaltered since its adoption from the *Tang* dynasty in 701 AD.

This sword was almost certainly purposely commissioned to be 1-shaku in length.

30.3cm = 1 shaku



A shaku is known as the 'Japanese foot'.
Note: 1 Imperial foot is 30.48cm

Title: *Sagami no Kami* (Lord of Sagami province)

Family name: *Fujiwara*

Swordsmith: *Masatsune* (first generation)

ubu-nakago (original, unaltered tang)

katte-sagari-yasurime (slanting file marks)

相 (Sa)

模 (gami, no)

守 (Kami)

藤 (Fuji)

原 (wara)

政 (Masa)

常 (tsune)

Shodai Masatsune was known for signing '*tsune*' in an elongated manner.



(*ura*, reverse)

特 保
12200007



№ 145874

鑑定書

長一尺強

一、脇指 銘 相模守藤原政常

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

平成十二年八月二日

財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協會



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 12th year of Heisei (2000), August 2nd

One, Wakizashi *

Mei (signature)

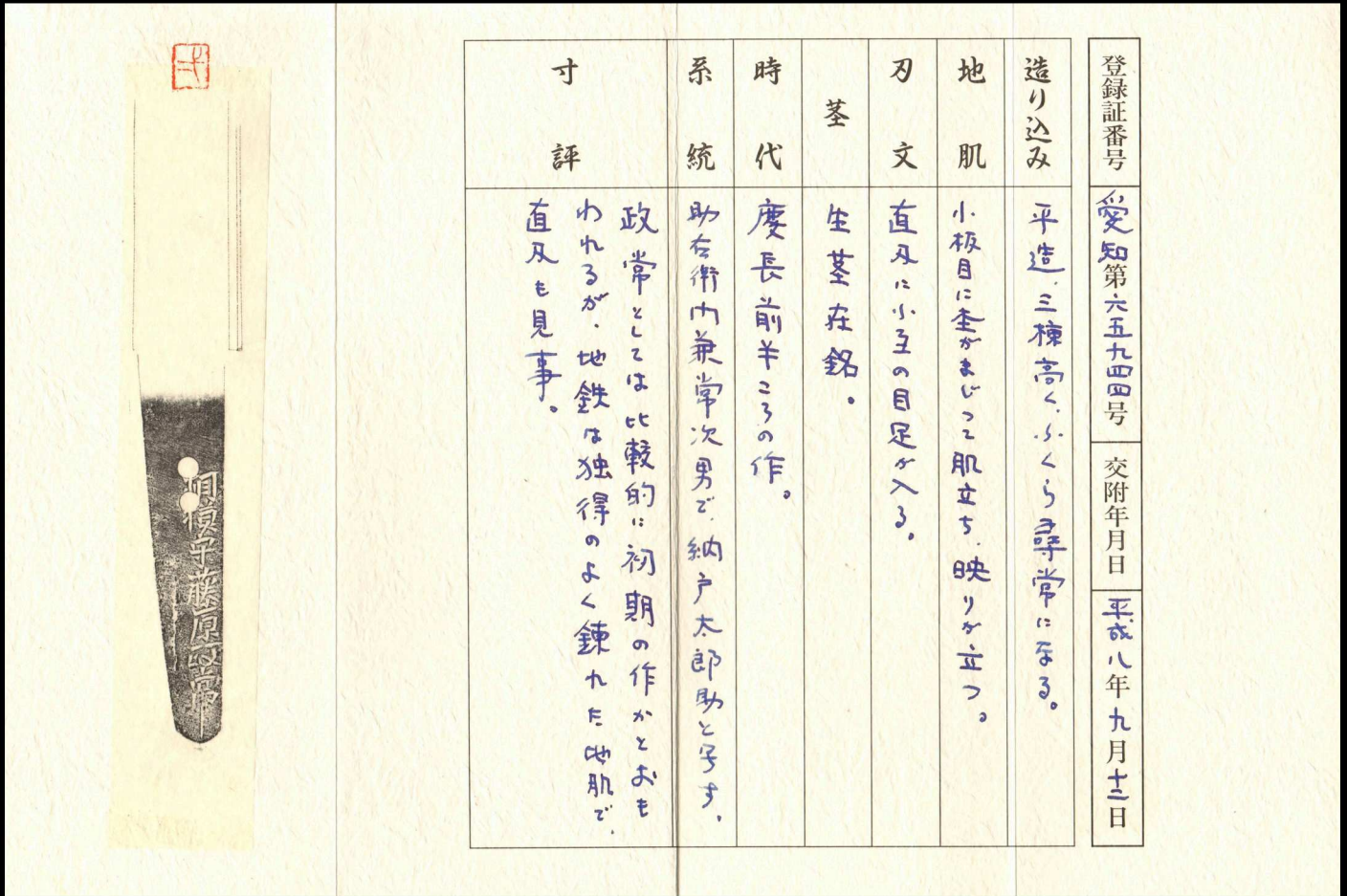
Sagami no Kami Fujiwara Masatsune

Nagasa (length)

1-shaku kyô (30.3 cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai
(NBTHK)

* NOTE: this sword is technically registered as a wakizashi as it is 30.3cm - the transition point of when a tantô becomes a wakizashi for the purpose of sword registration.
A sunnobi-tanto is a tanto that is slightly longer than 1-shaku.



Kanteisho Certificate of Authenticity

This wakizashi was designated as *Authentic*
by Tokunô Kazuo

One, Ko-wakizashi

Mei (signature)
Sagami no Kami Fujiwara Masatsune





Nagasa (length) 30.3cm
Sori (curvature) 0.05cm

Well forged blade by Masatsune in his early days

Issued in 12th year of Heisei (2000), March 23rd

Tokunô Kazuo



捺 審 査 員 印	備 考	中 心	彫 刻	鈍 子	刃 紋	鍛	造 り 込 み	銘 文	第 五 千 三 百 十 一 号
   	慶長頃	目釘穴 一個 鏽 以那達い		直調丸く返る	直刃 足入る	板目良く練れ地付之映り立つ	平造り 真の棟 生ぶ中心	相模守藤原政常	

NTHK-NPO Kanteisho Certificate of Authenticity

This wakizashi was designated as *Authentic*
by the Non-Profit Society for the Preservation of the Japanese Sword

One, Wakizashi

Mei (signature)

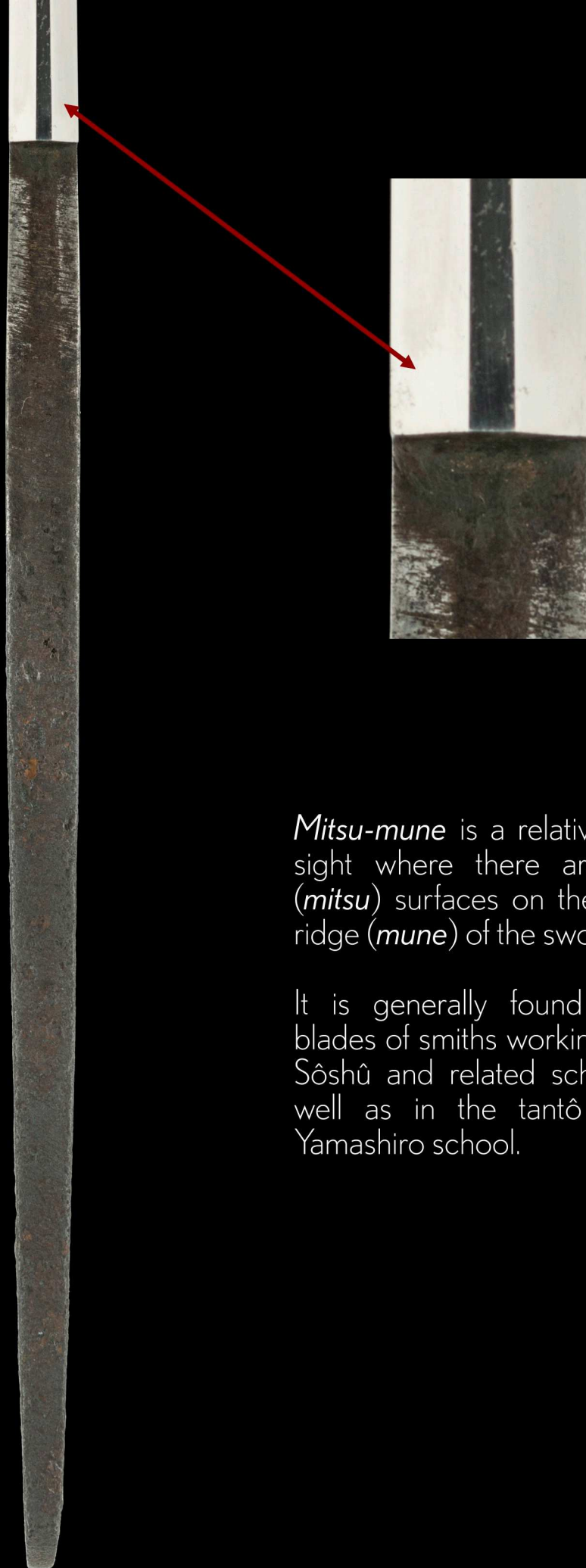
Sagami no Kami Fujiwara Masatsune

Nagasa (length)

1-shaku (30.3cm)

Issued in 5th year of Reiwa (2023), June 16th

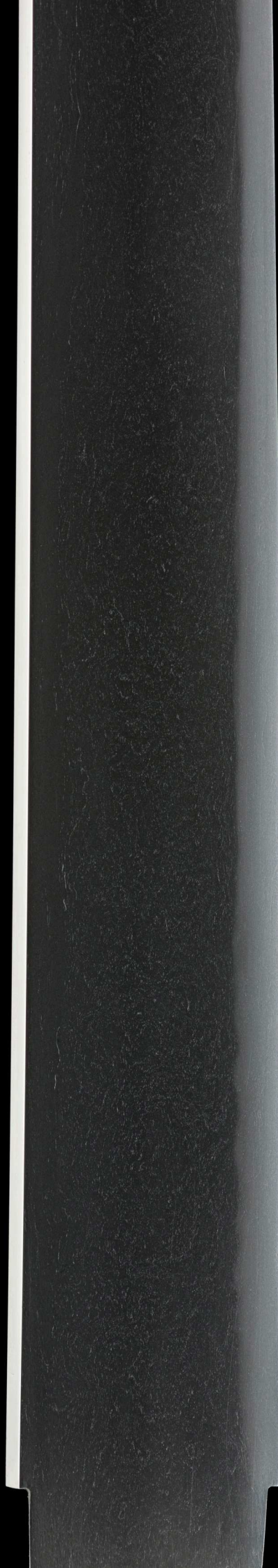
Nihon Token Hozon Kai
(NTHK-NPO)



Mitsu-mune is a relatively rare sight where there are three (*mitsu*) surfaces on the spine/ridge (*mune*) of the sword.

It is generally found in the blades of smiths working of the Sôshû and related schools as well as in the tantô of the Yamashiro school.








Boshi displays a *suguha-chô* with round *kaeri*.

The decision for a *toppei-koshirae* may have been influenced by this temper line.

A beaming straight *suguha hamon* with a weaving *ko-gunome*.

There is a *togari* (pointed) element to the hamon showcasing Masatsune's roots with the Mino tradition.



A close-up photograph of a sword's blade, showing the intricate patterns of itame and mokume-hada. The blade is dark and textured, with a bright light reflecting off its surface. A red arrow points to the upper part of the blade, and another red arrow points to the lower part of the blade.

Whirlpools of *itame* and *mokume-hada*
to dive into and enjoy under the light.

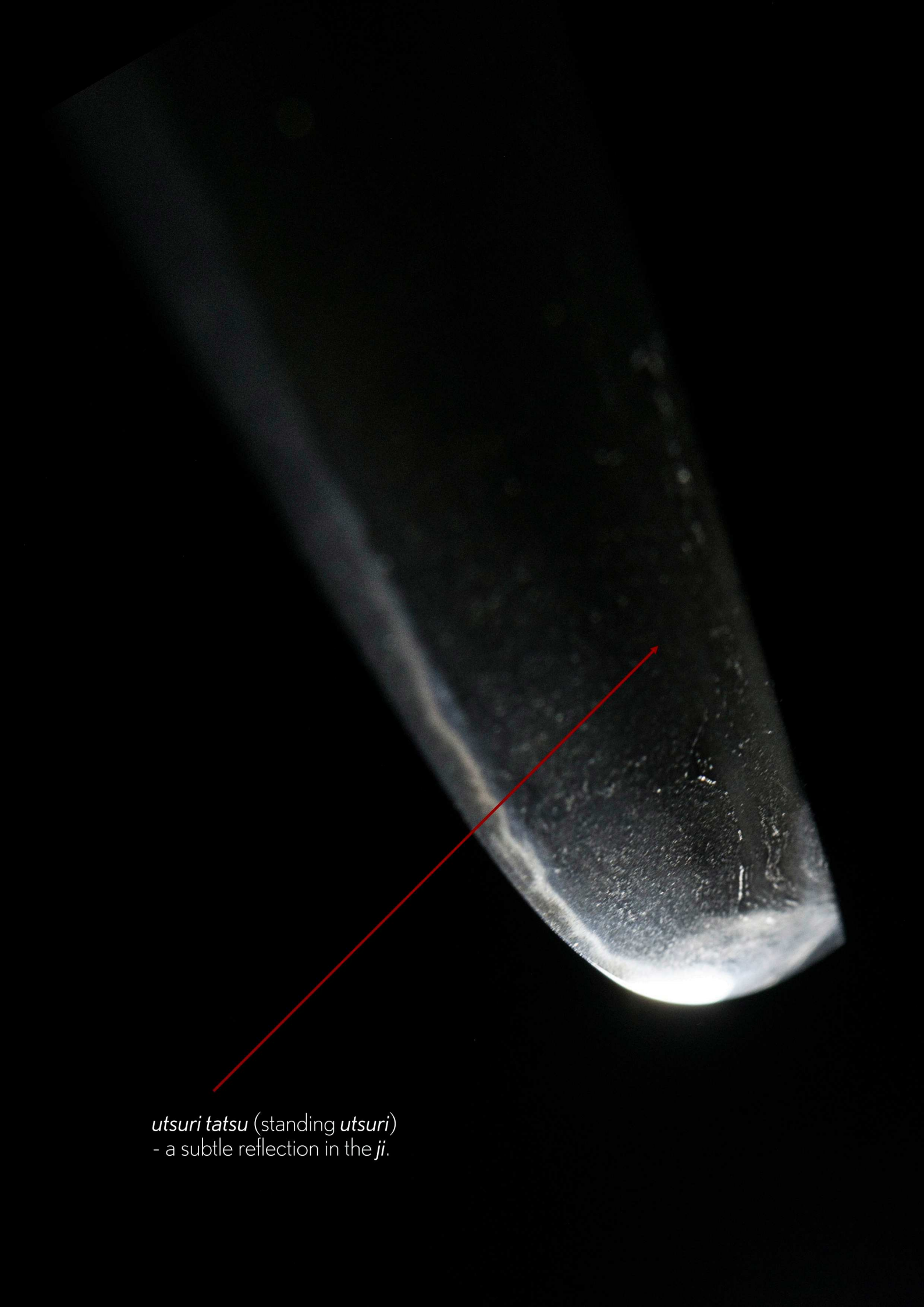
ashi (legs)

Ji-nie

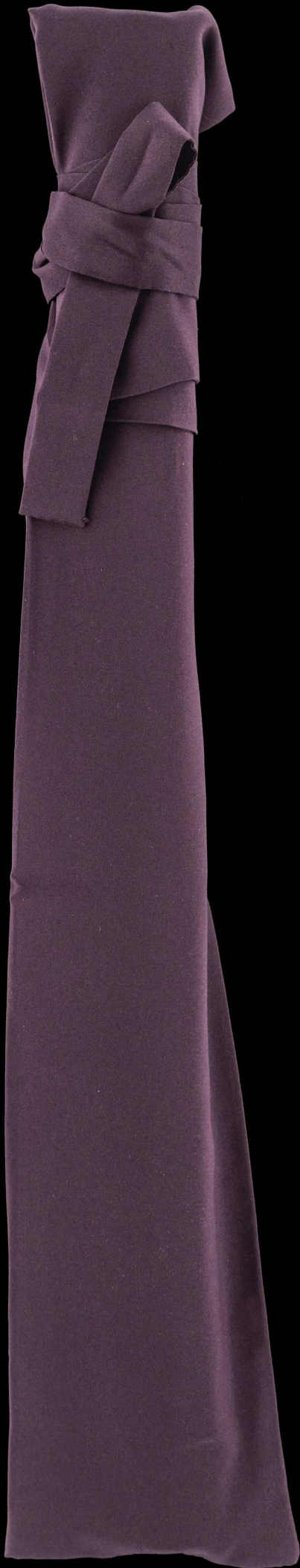


Ji-nie is when the visible surface of the steel (*jigane*) shimmers with visible *nie*-crystals.

Found on top quality swords, *ji-nie* is most definitely a beautiful sight.



utsuri tatsu (standing *utsuri*)
- a subtle reflection in the *ji*.



Shirasaya
(protective scabbard)



antique gold and silver
ni-ju habaki with
horizontal file marks

*Kuro-ishime-ji-nuri saya
toppei-tantô-koshirae*
(黒石目地塗鞘突兵短刀拵)

*Toppei-tantô-koshirae
lacquered in black with
stone-like surface*

Crafted during the
Late Edo period
(1780~1867)



NTHK-NPO Kanteisho
Certificate of Authenticity

'Toppei-koshirae' got its name from how the *kojiri* (scabbard end-cap) resembles a *toppai-kabuto* (a tapered helmet bowl).





The *kojiri* (end cap) is designed with *aoi-mon* (hollyhock).

This is the official *kamon* (crest) of the ruling shogunate of the Edo period, the Tokugawa family who were based in Owari province. This toppei koshirae may have once been the property of the Tokugawa family or this kojiri was placed in honour of the family and the connection it had with first-generation Masatsune.



Tokugawa Iyeyasu (1543-1616)
Founder and first shogun of the
Tokugawa shogunate (Edo period)



Matching branches of plum blossoms decorate the saya.





A charming polished iron lobed-tsuba attributed to the work of the *Nara* school from *Edo* (Tokyo).

Tsuki (moon) and *ominaeshi* - a flower known as the Japanese golden lace - are expressed in lovely detail.



鑑定書
 一、鐔
 依 江府奈良殿
 正真
 令和五年六月十八日
 特定非営利活動法人
 日本刀創保存会
 理事長 大橋 博

品名	種別	材質	寸法	備考
鐔	刀装具	鉄	縦長 約 10.5cm 横長 約 4.5cm	江戸巻鞘

三浦 謙三
 大橋 博
 月夜野 若園
 西郷 從三郎
 西郷 從三郎

NTHK-NPO Kanteisho certificate of authenticity

(reverse)

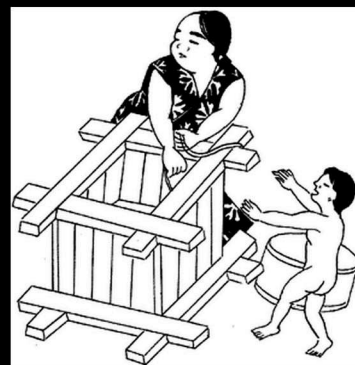


The *Igeta kamon* (Igeta family crest) can be found on the *fuchi* (collar).

Mon are hereditary, handed down the male line of the family (often of samurai heritage) for several generations.

Different families often shared the same mon - those that share the Igeta kamon were the *Hanai*, *Orii*, *Fujii*, *Nagai*, *Ida*, *Sakai*, *Asai*, *Hashimoto*, and *Handa* families.

Igeta is a wooden frame on the surface of a well. The origin of the kanji is an abstraction from the shape of the frame.



Igeta frame



Fuchi-kashira
attributed to *Kyôto Kanagu-shi*
(metalsmith based in Kyôto)

Crafted during the Late Edo period (1780-1867).

Its powdered gold symmetrical design pattern depicts a motif of *sensu*, Japanese fans, which were considered a symbol of high court aristocracy.



This antique *tsuka* (hilt), clearly from the Edo period, features *menuki* with a design of *ume* (plums) and a flute. These two articles are traditionally associated with the *Tale of Genji*, the classic work of literature by the noblewoman and poet *Murasaki Shikibu* who lived during the 11th century *Heian* period. Plum blossoms bloom early in spring thus capturing a celebratory mood.



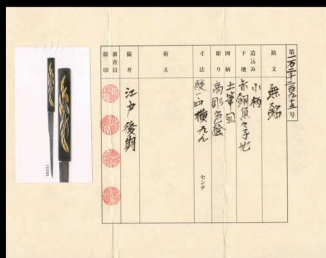
black-lacquered *samekawa* (ray skin).



Quite literally hanging on by a thread, this *tsuka-maki* (hilt wrap) has managed to survive for easily over 150 years. It is tradition when collecting koshirae to preserve the past and keep the existing silk whenever possible. If the new owner wishes to re-wrap, however, Unique Japan can arrange for this to be done at a reasonable cost by a top professional craftsman in Japan.

kogatana (blade) is signed Masatsune

美濃守 (Mi no no) 藤原 (Fujiwara) 政常 (Masatsune)



Kozuka (utility knife) has been attributed to the prestigious *Kyô-Gotô* school Late Edo period, 1780~1867.

The design is that of a Japanese horsetail plant.





Shodô (calligraphy) artist
Nozomi-san creating sayagaki



初代相模守藤原政常
Shodai Sagami no Kami Fujiwara Masatsune
Sagami no Kami Fujiwara Masatsune (first generation)

時代慶長頃
Jidai Keichô-goro
Around Keichô Period (1596-1615)

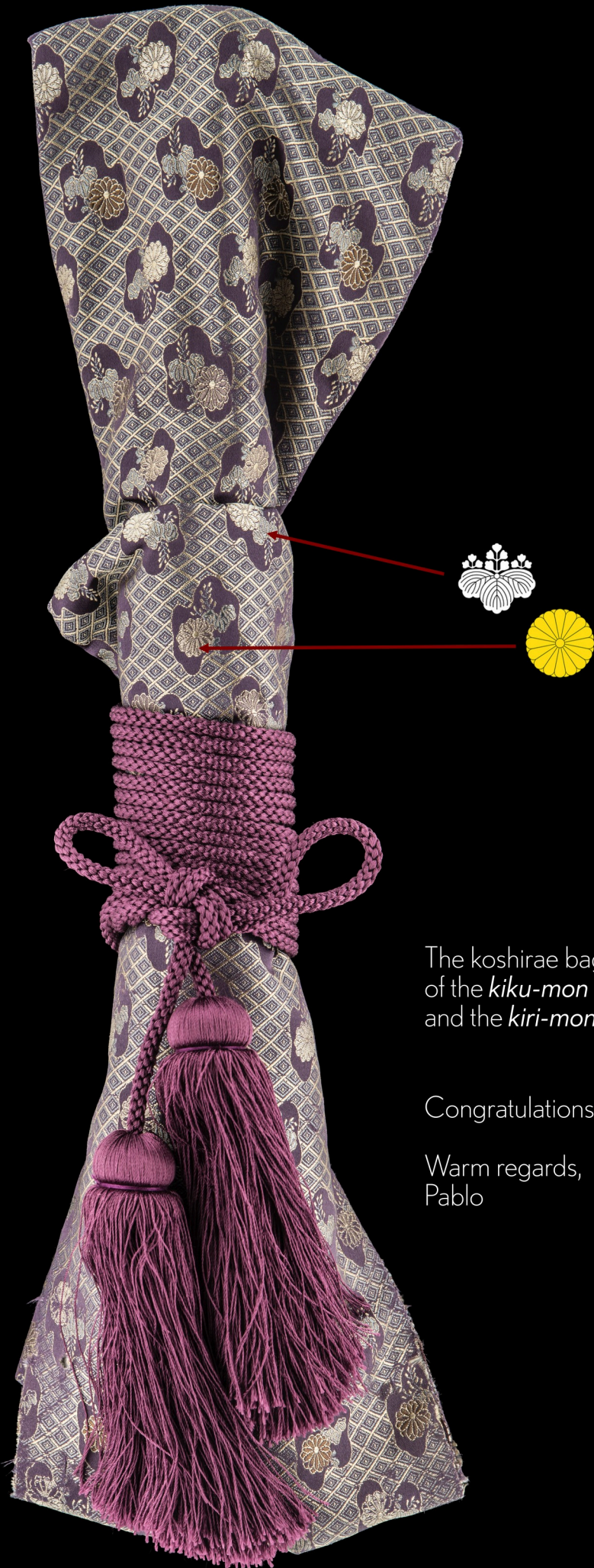
刃長壹尺強有之
Hachô 1-shaku kyô kore ari
Blade length 30.3 cm

令和六甲辰年卯月誌之
Reiwa roku kinoe-tatsudoshi Yayoi kore o shirusu
Written during the month of April in the sixth year
of Reiwa era, in the Year of the Dragon (2024)



The *tsuka* (hilt) was traditionally re-wrapped in black silk and a black sageo was tied to the saya (scabbard) as well.





The koshirae bag displays a regal pattern of the *kiku-mon* (imperial chrysanthumen) and the *kiri-mon* (Toyotomi family crest).

Congratulations Nick.

Warm regards,
Pablo



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Contact Pablo at service@uniquejapan.com where we'll discuss the special qualities you are seeking: type of sword, era, hamon pattern, level of certification, cutting test, etc. along with budget parameters in order to best serve you.