



ITEM# UJWA265

CURRENTLY AVAILABLE

A MASAHIRO '3-BODY TAMESHIGIRI' WAKIZASHI SIGNED & TEST DATED (KANBUN: 1661~1664, TESTED FEBRUARY 7, 1664)

Swordsmith:	<i>Hizen no Kuni Kawachi Daijô Fujiwara Masahiro (shodai, first generation)</i>
Measurements:	Length: 53.7cm (ubu) Curvature: 0.9cm Motohaba: 3.07cm Weight: 595g
Jihada:	<i>Ko-itame leading to Hizen konuka-hada, thick nie-deki, utsuri, ji-nie</i>
Hamon:	<i>Gorgeous wide-ranging gunome midare with chôji, kinsuji, sunagashi, long ashi</i>
Certificate:	NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon (Especially Worthy of Preservation)
Fujishiro:	Jô-saku (a superior swordsmith)
Sharpness:	Wazamonô (rated as a maker of sharp swords)
Included:	Shirasaya, kit, booklet, printed description

\$20,000

Maestro *Hizen* swordsmith **Shodai Masahiro** was the son of *Yoshinobu* who, in turn, was the adopted son of the *saijô-saku* grandmaster *Shodai Tadayoshi*. At first glance, one can see something very special about this long wakizashi. A *naginata-hi* groove runs along the base that tapers mid-section to form a rare and glorious *unokubi-zukuri* configuration. The *jihada* is a tightly forged *Hizen konuka-hada* with an explosive *gunome-midare* hamon peppered with fine *kinsuji*, *ashi* and *sunagashi*. A *kinzôgan* gold-inlay further records a *tameshigiri* test performed on February 7th, 1664 by the renowned tester *Yamano Kaemon no jô Nagahisa* in which he severed three bodies in a single stroke using this very blade. All at the age of 67. This spectacular wakizashi is an ideal sword to build a custom koshirae for and also a prime candidate for *Tanobe-sensei sayagaki* if his schedule permits.

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Saki-kasane: 4.1mm

Moto-kasane: 6.7mm

Omosa: 595g

Kissaki: 4.08cm

Saki-haba: 2.24cm

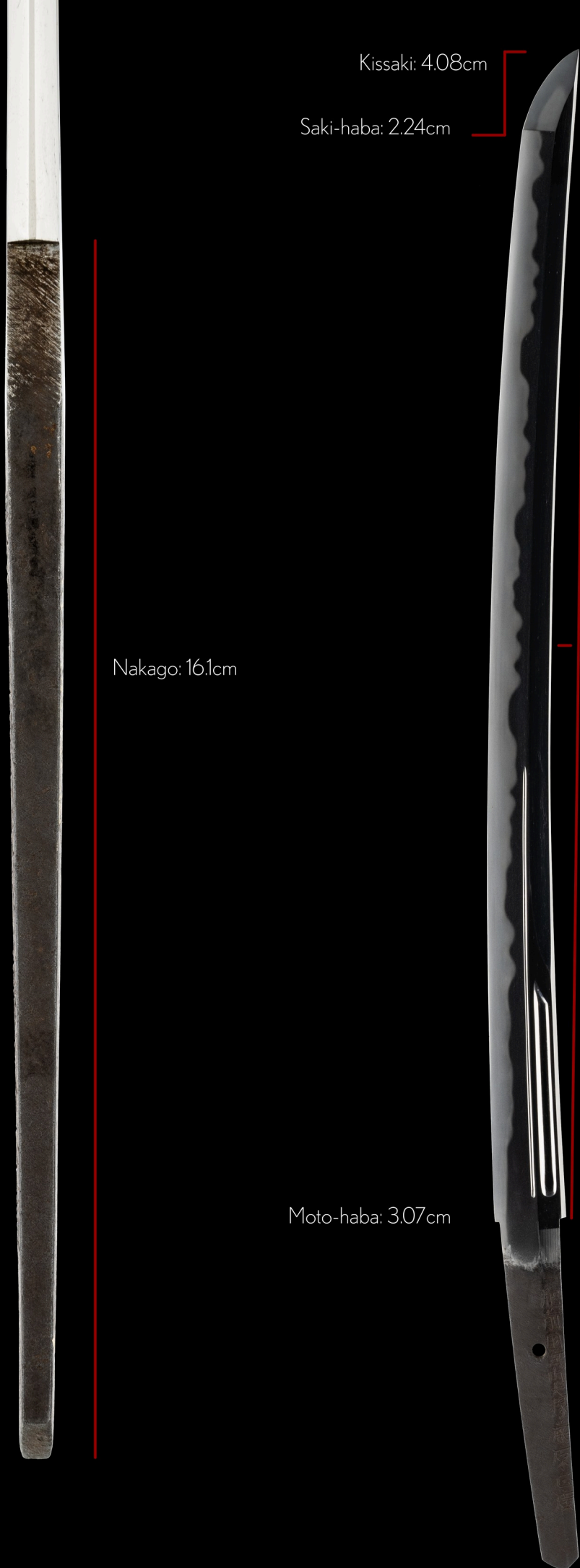
Nakago: 16.1cm

Moto-haba: 3.07cm

Nagasa: 53.7cm

Sori: 0.9cm

Mekugi-ana: 1



Kawachi Daijô Masahiro is one of those figures who sits just outside the main spotlight of the Hizen school yet outshines almost everyone in it. He was the grandson of the grandmaster *shodai Tadayoshi*, founder of the entire Hizen tradition, and originally signed his blades as *Masanaga* - until the *daimyô* of *Saga* domain himself intervened. *Nabeshima Katsushige* was so struck by the young smith's talent that in 1625, when Masahiro was just nineteen years old, he personally commanded him to change his name. And, well, so he did.

Masahiro was regularly called upon to serve as mentor and substitute smith for the main Tadayoshi lineage - and historical records suggest the Nabeshima clan held him in even higher favour than the main line itself. Masahiro held the title of *Kawachi Daijô* and the rankings of *jôsaku* (a superior smith) and *wazamono* (maker of sharp swords) which will soon be made readily apparent why. His son, by the way, *nidai Masahiro* held the title of *Kawachi no Kami*.

At first glance, one can see something very special about this long wakizashi. First to point out is the *naginata-hi* groove that runs along the base. Just after the groove, the blade tapers at the back-ridge into a unique extremely rare *unokubi-zukuri* configuration (we have never seen before on a sword by Masahiro) - named after the cormorant bird which is highlighted later in this PDF description. This shape speaks strongly of a special commission. The *jihada* is a tightly forged *ko-itame Hizen konuka-hada* alive with fine *ji-nie* and a light *utsuri* drifting through the steel. The hamon is a blazing mix of *gunome* and *chôji*, laden with thick *nie*, with impressive *kinsuji*, *sunagashi*. It's incredible.

And then there is the *nakago* where we revisit the well-deserved *wazamono* rank that Masahiro holds. A *kinzôgan* gold-inlay inscription records a *tameshigiri* test performed on February 7th, 1664 by the renowned swordsman *Yamano Kaemon no Jô Nagahisa* in which he severed three bodies in a single stroke using this very blade. Boom. While one or two body *tameshigiri* tests are impressive, a three-body test, especially on a wakizashi, is fairly rare and super collectible. This spectacular wakizashi is certified (naturally) with NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon and is almost begging for a custom koshirae to be made for it. The blade is also a prime candidate for *Tanobe-sensei sayagaki* should his schedule permit.





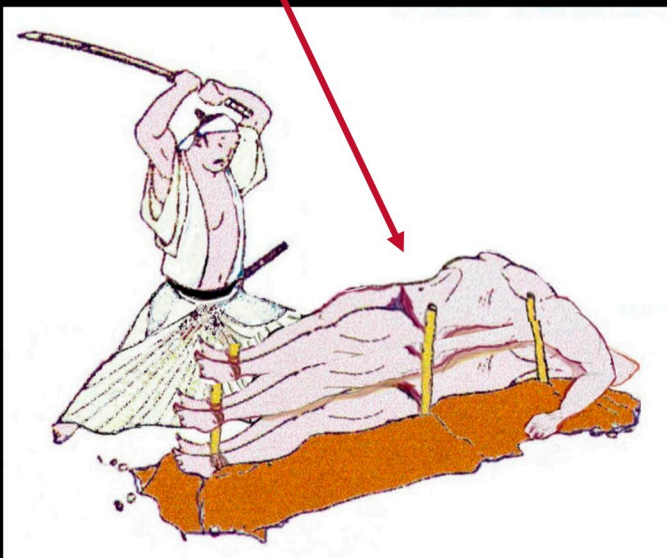
WATCH PABLO'S YOUTUBE PRESENTATION OF
UJWA265 - A MASAHIRO 'TAMESHIGIRI' WAKIZASHI

[UNIQUEJAPAN.COM/UJWA265-VIDEO](https://uniquejapan.com/ujwa265-video)



On February 7th in the fourth year of the Kanbun era (1664), *Yamano Ka'emon Nagahisa*, at the age of 67, tested this blade severing through three bodies in one stroke.

3-body cutting test, rare!


$$(M_i) \equiv$$

(ttsu) ツ

(dô) 胴

(setsu) 截

(dan) 断

(Yama) 山

(no) 野

(Ka) 加

() 右

(e) 衛

(mon) 門

(roku) 六

$$(\hat{j}) +$$

(nana) 七

(sai) 歳

(Naga) 永

(hisa) 久

(kaô) 花押

寛 (Kan)

文 (bun)

四 (yo)

年 (nen)

二 (ni)

月 (gatsu)

七 (nano)

目 (ka)

寛文四年二月七日
山野架右衛門六十七歳永久正三
三ツ胴截断

Location: *Hizen province*

Title name: *Kawachi Daijô*

Family name: *Fujiwara*

Swordsmith: *Masahiro* (first generation)

ubu-nakago (original, unaltered tang)

sujikai-yasurime (slanting file marks)



肥 (Hi)

前 (zen, no)

國 (kuni)

河 (Kawa)

内 (chi)

大 (Dai)

掾 (jô)

藤 (Fuji)

原 (wara)

正 (Masa)

廣 (hiro)

kengyô (sword-shape)



Shodai



Nidai

The primary clue for distinguishing between the first and second generations based solely on the signature is the title. The first generation held *Kawachi Daijô*, while the second generation received *Kawachi no Kami*.

The signature styles of the first and second generations are remarkably similar, and both feature a *nakago-jiri* in the shape of *ken-gyô* (or *iriyama-gata*). This clearly demonstrates that the school followed strict guidelines regarding the finishing of the signature and the *nakago*.

To appreciate what this blade represents, it helps to know who tested it. *Yamano Ka'emon Nagahisa* (1598-1667) was the founding figure of professional *tameshigiri* in the Edo period, trained under *Nakagawa Saheita Shigeyoshi* and active as a tester for roughly four decades. By his own account, between the ages of twenty and fifty alone he performed cuts on over 6,000 bodies. He then worked for twenty years beyond that.

The *kinzôgan-me* on this wakizashi records a *mittsu-dô* - three bodies, single stroke - on the seventh day of the second month in the fourth year of *Kanbun* era (February 7th, 1664). Recorded on the nakago was also Nagahisa's age of 67 (six...sevvven) years old.

We did some digging and found that Nagahisa performed the following **3-body cutting tests** ALL in the year 1664. Some seriously great swordsmith company here and *Shodai Masahiro* kicked it all off!

3-body cutting tests performed in 1664

Feb 7: *Shodai Masahiro* (this wakizashi)
Mar 25: *Yamashirô Daijô Kunikane* (katana)
May 1: *Nidai Tadahiro* (katana)
May 29: *Shodai Kôtetsu* (katana)
Jun 27: *Shodai Kôtetsu* (wakizashi)
Oct 22: *Yamato no Kami Yasusada* (wakizashi)
Nov 25: *Dewa Daijô Yukihiro* (katana)
Dec 27: *Edô sandai Yasutsugu* (katana)

Nagahisa's last recorded cutting test was in 1667 - the year he died, aged 70. Consider the timing. When he tested this wakizashi in 1664, Masahiro himself had just one year left to live. Nagahisa had three years left himself. Two masters, both in their final chapters so to speak.

Nagahisa's son Hisahide was already active and capable at the time - young, sharp, entirely able to have taken the test. Yet it was papa Nagahisa who did it. When you look at the *jûyô tôken* Masahiro blades tested by Hisahide, the pattern is revealing: they were all tested posthumously, after Shodai Masahiro had already died. This one was not. Nagahisa tested it while Masahiro was still alive.

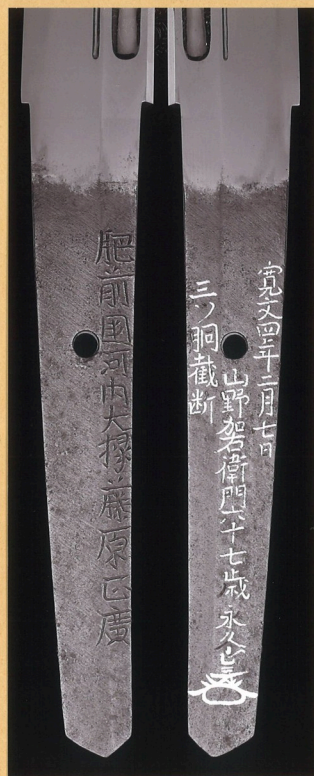
Which brings us back to the special commission. Perhaps the client was very specific. Perhaps he wanted the head of the Yamano family - not the heir, not a substitute - to put his name to this blade. At 67, cutting three bodies clean with a wakizashi is most impressive. From one master, on the work of another.



特 保
07202506



No 1024986



公益財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協会



令和七年八月二十二日

鑑定しこれを証する
右は當協會に於て審査の結果特別保存刀剣と

一、脇指銘 肥前国河内大掾藤原正広
寛文四年二月七日

(金象嵌) 山野如右衛門六十七歳永久(花押)
三ツ胴截断

長一尺七寸七分強

鑑定書

東京都 教育委員会
第 206973 号
昭和52年12月8日

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 7th year of Reiwa (2025), August 22nd

One, Wakizashi

Mei (signature)

Hizen no kuni Kawachi Daijô Fujiwara Masahiro

(kinzôgan) Kanbun yonen nigatsu nanoka

Yamano Kaemon rokujûnana-sai Nagahisa (kaô)

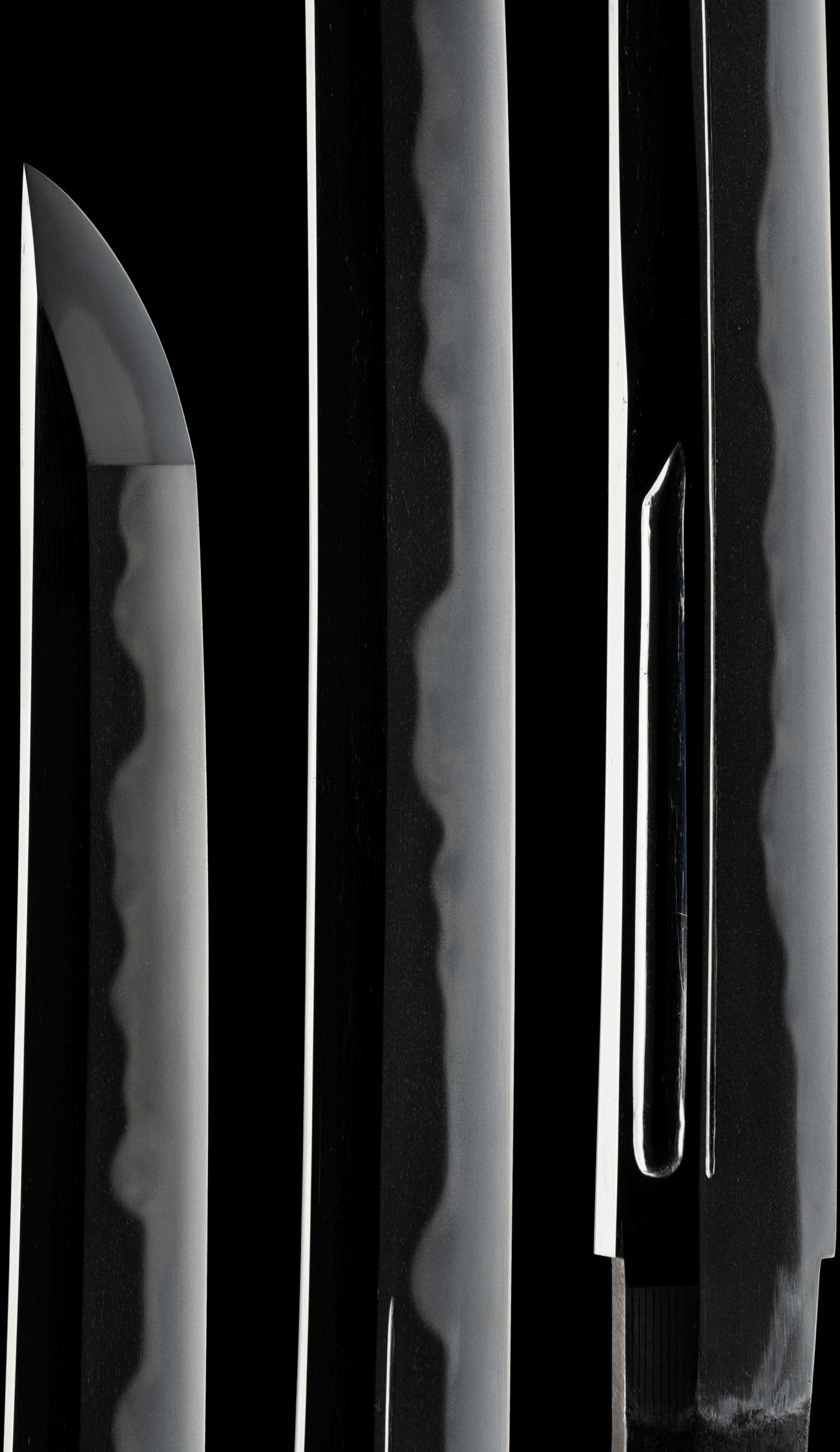
Mittsudô setsudan

Nagasa (length)

1-shaku 7-sun 7-bu kyô (53.7cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai
(NBTHK)



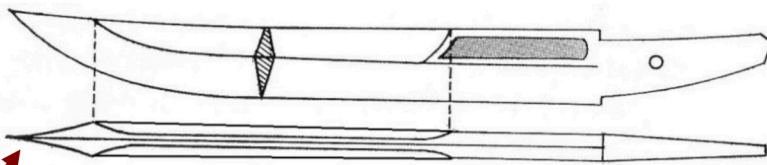


Unokubi-zukuri construction
(top down view)

widens again in this upper section (*yokote*)

tapered section

unokubi-zukuri (鵜首造) – Lit. “cormorant’s neck construction.”
Sword construction similar to *kanmuri-otoshi* but here only the middle part of the *shinogi-ji* is slanted while the base and *kissaki* area are normal. *Unokubi-zukuri* blades sometimes come with a *yokote*.

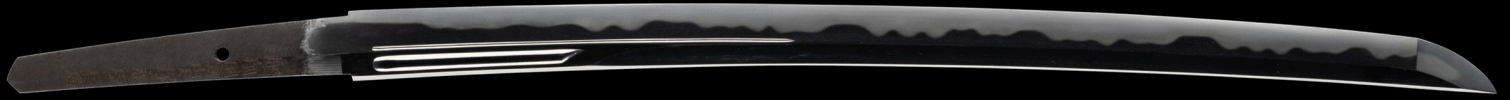


Excerpt from Markus Sesko's
Encyclopaedia of Japanese Swords

[buy the book, super usefull!]

sword starts to taper,
above the groove.

Unokubi-zukuri



The unique shape of the sword is referred to as *unokubi-zukuri*, as it resembles the *neck of a cormorant* (bird). *U* means cormorant, *kubi* is neck, *zukuri* is shape.

Unokubi-zukuri, swords taper in the middle section of the *shjinogi-ji* and then widen in the top *kissaki* area. Blades with an *unokubi zukuri* shape often also feature *naginata-hi* which is a short *koshi-bi*.

This geometry was initially designed to lighten the blade of a *naginata* while keeping its functionality intact.

Cormorants are expert swimmers and divers despite the fact they are buoyant. To overcome this hurdle, they swallow pebbles to make themselves heavy enough to stay under water. A testament to the saying, "*if there is a will, there is a way.*"



Consistency matters.

Whether the *hamon* is thick or thin, wavy or straight, look for consistency in the *nioguchi*. If you see a clean flowing rythm, then the *jigane* (steel) is strong and solid. The hamon is direct reflection on the quality of the forging. Here we have clear example of superior worksmanship.



A white comet of competence, still burning strong!

An absolutely brilliant *gunome-midare hamon* blesses the blade. Note the impressive width of the *nioguchi* too, it nearly touches the *shinogi* line.

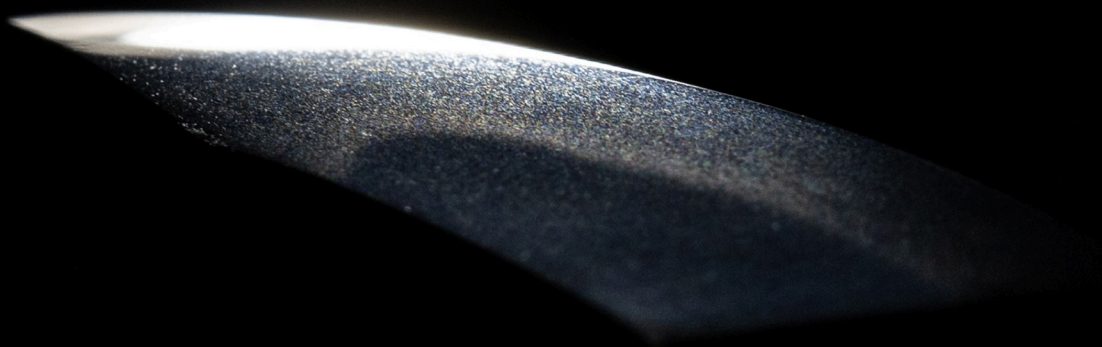
Awesome.

shinogi (ridge line)

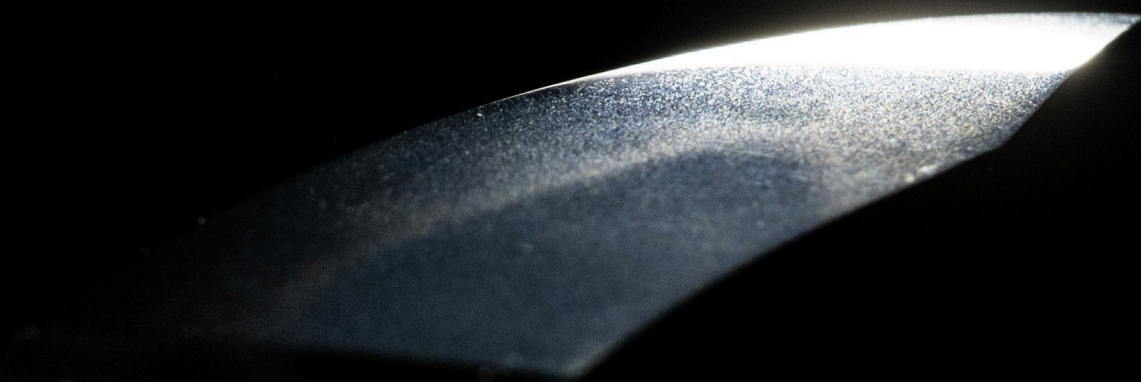




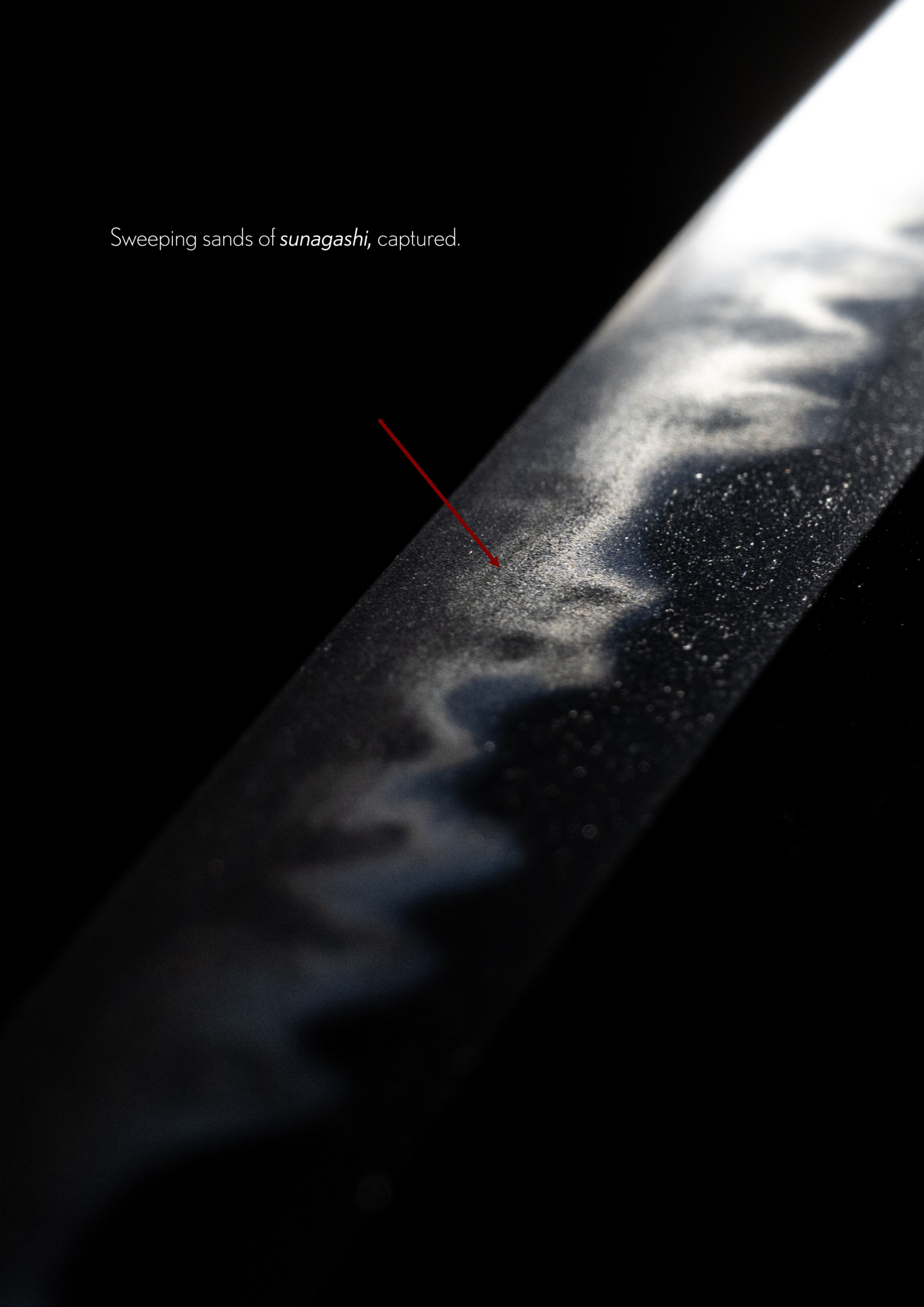
A most impressive display of *kinsuji* (black line of *nie* crystals in the hamon).



A sharp and confident *ko-maru bôshi*.



Sweeping sands of *sunagashi*, captured.





Tanobe-sensei sayagaki potential



Shirasaya
(protective scabbard)



gold *habaki* with
copper ground



UJWA176 - A MOTOSHIGE WAKIZASHI
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