

JAPANESE  
SWORD  
CATALOGUE 45

RELEASED:  
SEPT 30, 2025

**ALL SOLD!**

(COVER PHOTO)

ITEM# UJDI016

A KANESADA DAISHÔ  
EARLY EDO PERIOD (1669~1680)

JÔJÔ-SAKU & Ô-WAZAMONO  
FEATURED ON CNNSTYLE

# ANTIQUÉ JAPANESE SWORDS FOR SALE (VOLUME 45)

RELEASED: SEPTEMBER 30, 2025 TO VIP CLIENTS ONLY

THE FOLLOWING PAGES CONTAIN DESCRIPTIONS AND IMAGES OF GENUINE ANTIQUÉ JAPANESE SWORDS THAT WERE SOLD TO CLIENTS.

EACH SWORD CAN BE LEGALLY OWNED AND EXPORTED OUTSIDE OF JAPAN. ALL SWORDS HAVE CERTIFICATION PAPERS (ORIGAMI) SUCH AS FROM NBTHK AND/OR THE NTHK-NPO.

DESCRIPTIONS AND AVAILABILITY ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE.

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Hi everyone,

I hope all is well and that you had a wonderful summer. In August, Hannah and I travelled to see family and friends in Montreal, Canada and we drove about eight hours for Hannah's first trip to New York city. Hannah went completely bananas when we crossed the Hudson river with the top down and Taylor Swift blasting from the speakers 'Welcome to New York!' We stayed for three nights with my close client and friend Michael, where I was able to reunite myself with his top *jûyô* and *tokubetsu jûyô* swords that he has acquired through Unique Japan over many years. I have shared a couple photos inside the catalogue regarding the experience. Loved the fact he had vinyl playing in the background, which has inspired me to purchase my own turntable since the 1980s!

So let's get rocking with the swords in Catalogue 45! There is a family theme within these twelve lots that you'll definitely appreciate. We kick things off with an *Edo-period daishô* that pairs a *wakizashi* and *katana* by *shintô* period's fifth and sixth generation **Sukesada** of *Bizen* province. The blades beam in *gunome-chôji-midare* and a brilliantly composed *suguha hamon*. The *daishô koshirae* features formal black lacquer with gold-accented fittings, all mounted in matching formal attire, radiating dignity and a commanding presence. A perfect family keepsake from father to his son.

Next up is a top-class samurai sword **Shodai Harima Daijô Tadakuni** - a distinguished swordsmith of *Hizen* Province during the mid-1600s. On June 7th, 1665, sword-tester *Yamano Ka'emon Nagahisa* using this muscular blade, severed through two human bodies in one stroke. The test result is documented in gold inlay on the *nakago* solidifying Tadakuni's *wazamonô* ranking. A gorgeous Edo-period *koshirae* with an eye-catching *aoi-gai* (mother-of-pearl) lacquered scabbard and beautiful fittings showcasing a striking wave motif will look incredible on display in any home or office. We then travel back in time to the mid-Kamakura period for a *wakizashi* by one of my personal favourite smiths, **Hatakeda Sanemori**. A *jôjô-saku* smith active during the golden era of Japanese sword-making, *Sanemori* is believed to be the son or student of *Moriie*, founder of the *Hatakeda* school, who may have descended from the *Ichimonji* line. This elegant and substantial *wakizashi* displays a vivid *chôji-midare* that incorporates the school's iconic *kawazu-ko-chôji hamon*. Lovely *utsuri* is also seen with a heartbeat of *ashi, yô, sunagashi*, and long lines of *kinsuji*. Unique Japan can arrange to take this sword to *Tanobe-sensei* for *sayagaki* services as a well-deserved extra touch.

Sharpness continues with a riveting *katana* attributed to **Kanenori**, a skilled smith of the *San'ami* group in *Mino* province during the *Eishô* period, circa 1504~1521. The *hamon* is a brilliant *gunome-midare* with thick *nie*, interspersed with *chôji*, pointed *togari, tobiyaki*, and frequent sightings of *sunagashi* and *kinsuji*. This highly collectible sword severed through the chunky shoulder area of a human torso in November of 1642 by tester *Ôkawa Hachiemon* who was retained by lords of the *Maeda* family. This *katana* also comes with *sayagaki* by *Hon'ami Chôshiki* dating way back to 1884 (wow) and accompanied by a fabulous *koshirae* with a set of exquisitely crafted matching-themed fittings depicting the famous late *Heian* period *Ujigawa Battle* during the tumultuous *Genpei* war.

The catalogue moves to a terrific *Last Samurai* *katana* crafted by **Gassan Sadayoshi** in November 1864 who was celebrated for reviving the *Gassan* school during the *Shinshintô* period. Trained in Edo under *Suishinshi Masahide*, *Sadayoshi* with his adopted son, the great *Gassan Sadakazu*, established a thriving workshop in *Ôsaka* and worked closely with the Japanese Imperial family. This powerful *katana*, was crafted just years before the fall of the *Tokugawa shogunate* and features an exquisitely forged *nagare-hada* with excellent clarity and consistency. There is a stoic confidence in this sword and *koshirae* that is deeply spiritual. For those seeking a *jûyô tôken* *katana*, be sure to claim the next *katana* attributed to the **Miike** (pronounced *Mee-kay*) school from the Late Kamakura period that comes with a prestigious early 11th session NBTHK *jûyô-tôken* level certification from 1963 and *sayagaki* by *Kanzan-sensei* attesting to the sword being an heirloom of the powerful *Shimazu* family from *Satsuma* province. One can consider building a custom *koshirae* with the *Shimazu kamon* (crest), to pay honourable tribute to the sword and family who took care of it for centuries.

We now crank up the volume to eleven with a *daishô* by *Nidai Echigo no Kami Kanesada* – a phenomenal talent inside *Ôsaka-shintô* tradition. Out of respect for his *sensei*, he relinquished the name *Kanesada* in 1680 and worked under the title *Sakakura Gon-no-Shin Terukane* when his *sensei*'s son came of age. Forty-nine of *Kanesada*'s swords have achieved NBTHK *jûyô tôken* and two have made it to the prestigious rank of NBTHK *tokubetsu jûyô*. This remarkable *daishô* with its glorious *notare hamon* and powerful *gunome-midare* was featured by **CNNstyle** on the topic of antique Japanese swords in which I was interviewed for back in 2015. Read on for my personal backstory on this special *samurai-daishô* that stands to be cherished by a new and proud owner.

Next is a wonderful katana by a smith I have great respect for, *Shodai Ippô* - founder of the *Ômi* branch of the *Ishidô* school. Swords crafted by *Ippô* are rare - more commonly seen are blades by his son *Sasaki Ippô*, making this piece highly collectible and a great pleasure to study. This powerful katana has graceful curvature, thick *ji-nie*, vivid *chikei* and a *hamon* that combines artistic brush strokes of *notare* and *gunome-midare*, with a *tôranba*-like peak at the *monouchi*. A handsome late-Edo period *koshirae* lacquered in vermilion with a black base is pure samurai aesthetic. The *tsuba* captures the magnificence of *Mount Fuji* with a waving tribute to *Hokusai's Kanagawa* masterpiece.

The glory of the *Kamakura* period resumes with a long and elegant 700-year-old *tachi sugata* shaped *katana* by the *Senjuin* school. The *Senjuin* school represents the earliest and most refined among the five major schools of the *Yamato* tradition. Its origins trace back to the late *Heian* period, when smiths connected with *Tôdaiji* temple and its warrior monks forged blades at a sub-temple in the *Senju* valley. With its *koshi-zori* and small *kissaki*, the *hamon* is a refined *hoso-suguha* bright with *nie*, gently varied by small *gunome*. A marvellous *uchigatana koshirae* dating back to the mid-Edo period (1700s) accompanies the sword with the *tsuba* and *menuki* recounting the powerful stories of the *Go-Hôjô* clan and *Honda* family warriors and the brutal siege of *Odawara* castle during the *Sengoku-jidai* in the Late *Muromachi* period. This is a samurai sword with integrity and class.

We fast forward to an outstanding *katana* by third generation *Yasutsugu* that bears the iconic *Tokugawa* family *aoi-mon* and was crafted with *Nanban-tetsu* in Edo, dated February 1666 when the smith was 37 years old. Measuring an impressive 72.9cm with *futatsu-bi* (two parallel grooves), this blade features finely forged *ko-mokume-hada* with *ji-nie* and plentiful *chikei*. A graceful *suguha hamon* with *ko-gunome* and delicate *ashi* displays brilliant activity with a secondary *mekugi-ana* suggests a previous *tameshigiri* cutting test. The beautiful Edo-period *koshirae* features a lovely *tsuba* attributed to *Sano Naoyoshi* with a *taro* leaf design and a *fuchi-kashira* depicting chrysanthemums that is certified to *Kaga Kuwamura Katsuhisa*, who trained in the prestigious *Gotô* school. Currently on hold.

We complete the catalogue with a *katana* and *wakizashi* attributed to first and second generation *Hôki no Kami Nobutaka* - prominent swordsmiths that served the *Owari Tokugawa* family. I acquired these swords in the UK during the spring of 2023, when they were both in rather terrible shape. I could see the potential though, and so over a period of two years the swords were restored by top craftsmen in Japan and then submitted to the NBTHK. I couldn't believe that the swords turned out to be related, another father and son! I was proud on the team effort that made it all happen, and preference will go to the client who will take both swords and a 'family discount' will be offered. Building a formal *daishô* would be a meaningful undertaking, although it's optional.

Thank you all for your continued support, we look forward to serving you.



Pablo Kuntz  
September 2025

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ujwa258	<a href="#">288</a>	A NOBUTAKA WAKIZASHI	50.0	NBTHK Hozon	Keichô (1596~1615)	<b>SOLD</b>

**ALL PRICES ARE IN US DOLLARS**

To access current and previous catalogues, please visit:

**<http://new.uniquejapan.com/currently-available-swords-at-unique-japan>**

## TO ONLINE VISITORS AROUND THE WORLD...

WELCOME! WE COMPLETELY RESPECT THE FACT IT TAKES A HUGE LEAP OF PERSONAL FAITH IN US TO COMMIT TO A PARTICULAR SWORD(S) GIVEN THE RELIANCE ON PHOTOS AND DESCRIPTIONS FOR SUCH A HIGHLY VALUED ITEM.

IT IS OUR PROMISE TO ADDRESS ALL YOUR QUESTIONS TO THE BEST OF OUR ABILITY. IT'S IMPORTANT TO US THAT YOU FEEL COMPLETELY CONFIDENT THAT THE SWORD YOU CHOOSE (AND CHOOSES YOU) IS DESTINED FOR YOUR FAMILY TO CHERISH AND PRESERVE.

PLEASE TAKE REASSURANCE THAT ALL SWORDS FROM UNIQUE JAPAN ARE GUARANTEED AUTHENTIC AND COME WITH A **3-DAY WORRY FREE INSPECTION PERIOD** UPON ARRIVAL TO YOUR HOME.

WE ACQUIRE SWORDS ON A REGULAR BASIS AND CAN SOURCE SWORDS FOR COLLECTORS SEEKING A SPECIFIC SMITH AND/OR SCHOOL. PLEASE INQUIRE ABOUT OUR LATEST ARRIVALS THAT MAY NOT BE LISTED IN THE CATALOGUE.

ALSO, BE SURE LET US KNOW IF YOU ARE TRAVELLING TO TOKYO AS WE CAN BOOK A PRIVATE MEETING TOGETHER AT OUR STUDIO IN MEGURO.

DOMO ARIGATO,  
PABLO



*A Yasusada Katana (ujka324)*

A recently completed *custom koshirae* featuring gorgeous *zen-themed maki-e* artwork of *Mount Fuji* and fittings of battle-ready *samurai*.

# CURRENTLY AVAILABLE JAPANESE SWORDS

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PLEASE CONTACT ME AT [SERVICE@UNIQUEJAPAN.COM](mailto:SERVICE@UNIQUEJAPAN.COM) TO JOIN OUR VIP EMAIL LIST FOR EXCLUSIVE ACCESS TO NEWLY RELEASED SWORDS AND CATALOGUES.

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ITEM# UJDI015

## A SUKESADA FATHER & SON DAISHÔ

SIGNED, SHINTÔ PERIOD (KAN'EI: 1624~1644 & KANBUN: 1661~1673)

- Swordsmith (k):** *Yokoyama Kôzuke Daijô Fujiwara Sukesada (6th gen, Bizen)*  
**Swordsmith: (w):** *Bizen no kuni jû Osafune Shichibei no jô Sukesada Saku (5th gen, Bizen)*  
**Measurements (k):** Length: 70.9cm (*ubu*) Curvature: 1.3cm Moto-haba: 3.03cm  
**Measurements (w):** Length: 52.8cm (*ubu*) Curvature: 1.2cm Moto-haba: 3.01cm  
**Jihada:** *Tightly forged itame-hada and mokume-hada with ji-nie and plentiful chikei*  
**Hamon:** *Spectacular gunome-chôji-midare and suguha with kinsuji, sunagashi, togari*  
**Certificate #1:** *2 x NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon (both swords)*  
**Certificate #2-5:** *NTHK-NPO Kanteishô (koshirae, fk, kogai/kozuka & tsuba certified as Authentic)*  
**Fujishiro rank:** *Jô-saku (son) & Chûjô-saku (father)*  
**Sharpness:** *Wazamonô (dad made sharp swords)*  
**Included:** *Shirasaya, Edo daishô-koshirae, fabric bags, stand, kit, printed description*

**SOLD**

This terrific father and son Edo-period daishô pairs a wakizashi and katana by shintô period's fifth and sixth generation *Sukesada* of Bizen province. The blades beam in vivid contrast of gunome-chôji-midare and a brilliantly composed suguha hamon. The daishô koshirae features formal black lacquer with gold-accented fittings, radiating dignity and a commanding presence. Mounted in matching formal attire, this set represents a tangible monument to the Yokoyama family's enduring legacy in Japanese sword-making excellence. A perfect family keepsake from father to his son.



Saki-kasane: 4.5mm

Moto-kasane: 6.2mm

Omosa: 785g

Kissaki: 2.95cm

Saki-haba: 2.0cm

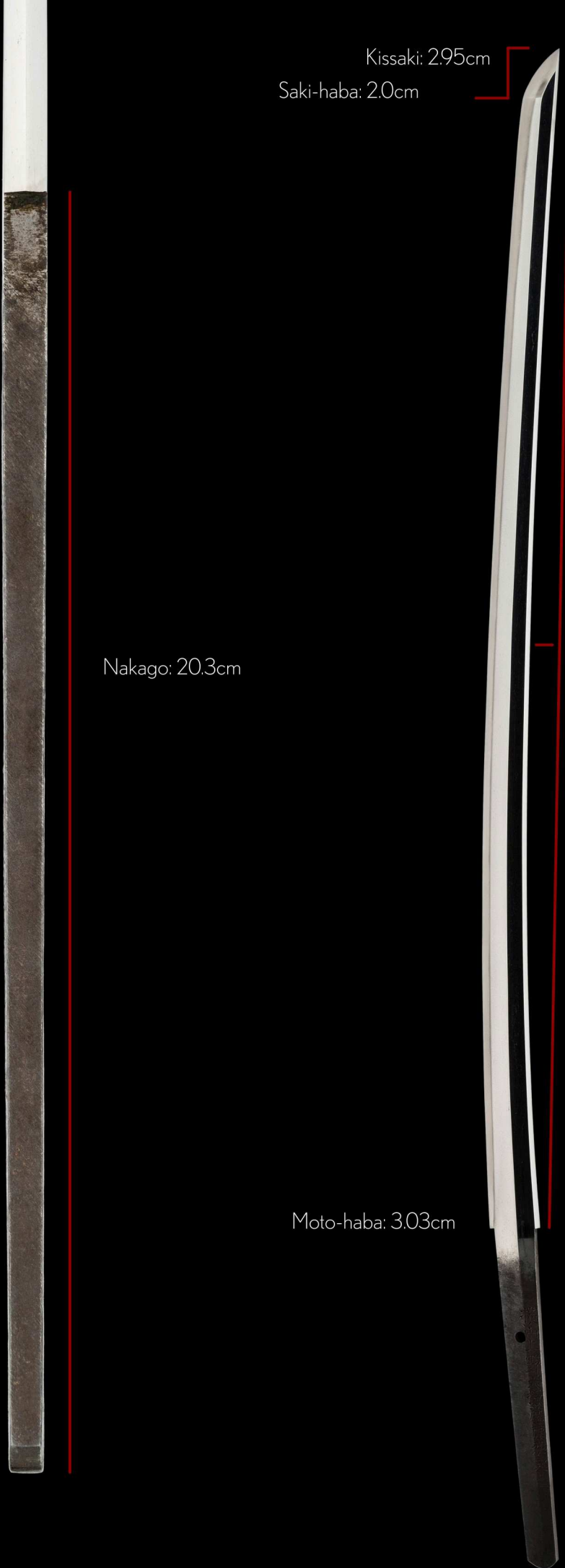
Nakago: 20.3cm

Moto-haba: 3.03cm

Nagasa: 70.9cm

Sori: 1.3cm

Mekugi-ana: 1





Saki-kasane: 4.5mm

Moto-kasane: 7.4mm

Omosa: 635g

Kissaki: 3.43cm

Saki-haba: 2.07cm

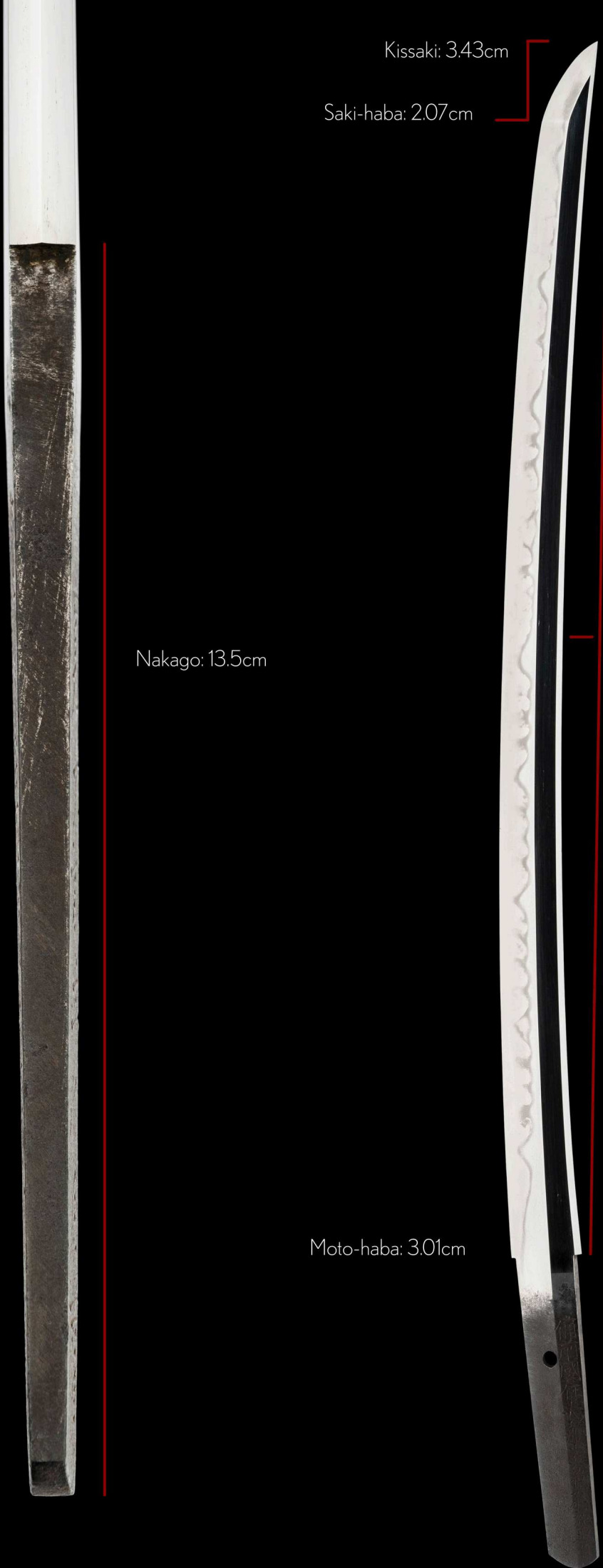
Nakago: 13.5cm

Moto-haba: 3.01cm

Nagasa: 52.8cm

Sori: 1.2cm

Mekugi-ana: 1



This beautiful *daishô* unites two generations from the distinguished Sukesada family of Osafune, Bizen Province - the katana by *Yokoyama Kôzuke Daijô Sukesada* paired with a wakizashi by his father, *Shichibei-no-jô Sukesada*. Both stood as leading figures within the Bizen tradition during the Edo period, making this unique pairing as a direct father-and-son lineage.

*Yokoyama Kôzuke Daijô Sukesada*, born in 1633 was the eldest son of *Shichibei-no-jô*, and emerged among the foremost *Bizen-Osafune* smiths of the *Shintô* period. Granted the honorary title "*Kôzuke Daijô*" in 1664, he worked into the early 18th century, serving the *Ikeda* clan while producing numerous blades for shrine dedications. His exceptional craftsmanship merged classical Bizen elegance with the refined precision of Edo-period swordmaking.

*Osafune Shichibei-no-jô Sukesada*, born in 1577, was son to *Yokoyama Tôshirô Sukesada*, the pivotal figure who revived Osafune swordmaking during the *Genna* era (1615-1624). Claiming descent from grandmaster *Yosôzaemon-no-jô Sukesada*, he lived ninety-eight years and worked from around 1616. His distinguished career bridged the final Sue-Bizen style with the emerging *Shintô* era, ensuring Bizen craftsmanship's survival during transformative times.

The katana by *Kôzuke Daijô* shows magnificent *itame-hada* with flowing *chikei* and subtle *bô-utsuri*, finished in a brilliant, even *suguha hamon* in fine *ko-nie* - a masterful study in restraint and harmony. The wakizashi by *Shichibei-no-jô* offers a spectacular counterpoint, with vigorous *itame hada* and flamboyant *gunome-chôji-midare* rich in *yô*. Together, they contrast two styles - the father's dynamic energy and the son's refined composure - with both swords remaining firmly rooted in authentic Bizen tradition.

The accompanying *daishô koshirae* certified to the *Edo period* features formal black-lacquer with gold-accented fittings, radiating dignity and commanding presence. As an intact *daishô* by father and son, mounted in matching formal attire, this set transcends sheer artistry to become a tangible monument to the *Yokoyama* family's enduring legacy. This exceptional *daishô* now awaits a discerning family to cherish and preserve for generations to come.



Location: *Bizen province*

Title: *Kôzuke Daijô* (lord of Kôzuke province)

Family name: *Yokoyama Heibei*

Swordsmith: *Sukesada*

*ubu-nakago* (original, unaltered tang)

*katte-sagari-yasurime* (slanting file marks)



横 (Yoko)

山 (yama)

上 (Kô)

野 (zuke)

大 (Dai)

掾 (jô)

藤 (Fuji)

原 (wara)

祐 (Suke)

定 (sada)

(*ura*, reverse)

one smooth hole in *nakago*

(Bi) 備  
(shû) 州  
(Osa) 長  
(fune) 船  
(jû) 住  
(nin) 人

*Bishû Osafune jûnin*  
(a resident of Osafune, *Bishû* province)

*kuirjiri*  
(chestnut shaped *nakago-jiri*)



Among the *Sukesada* smiths of the *Shintô* period, *Kôzuke Daijô Sukesada* was regarded as the most skilled swordsmith of his generation. Recommended by *Ikeda Mitsumasa* (池田光政), lord of the *Okayama* domain, he traveled to Kyoto and, in *Kanbun* 4 (1664), was granted the honorary title "*Kôzuke Daijô*." In *Kanbun* 6 (1666), under the order of the second lord *Ikeda Tsunamasa* (池田綱政), he forged an enormous *ô-dachi* with a blade length of 120.3 cm, which was dedicated to *Kibitsu-hiko* Shrine in *Bizen* province. In reference to the famous *Momotarô* legend originating in Okayama, this great sword came to be known as the "*Momotarô Sukesada*."



*Ikeda Tsunamasa*

*Momotarô Sukesada*



特 保  
06202403

№ 1022759



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

令和六年五月三十一日

公益財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協會



二刀 銘

横山上野大掾藤原祐定  
備州長船住人

長二尺三寸四分

鑑定書

岡山県 教育委員会  
第 48316 号  
昭和40年9月21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 6th year of Reiwa (2024), May 31st

One, Katana

Mei (signature)

Yokoyama Kôzuke Daijô Fujiwara Sukesada  
Bishû Osafune jûnin

Nagasa (length)

2-shaku 3-sun 4-bu (70.9cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai  
(NBTHK)



Location: *Bizen province*

Family name: *Shichibei no Jô*

Swordsmith: *Sukesada*

*ubu-nakago* (original, unaltered tang)

*katte-sagari-yasurime* (slanting file marks)

備 (Bi)

前 (zen, no)

國 (kuni)

住 (jû)

長 (Osa)

船 (fune)

七 (Shichi)

兵 (bê)

衛 (i, no)

尉 (Jô)

祐 (Suke)

定 (sada)

作 (saku)

*Kanbun ninen hachigatsu kichijitsu*

Crafted on a lucky day in the eighth month in the second year of Kanbun era (August 1662).

(Kan) 寛

(bun) 文

(ni) 貳

(nen) 年

(hachi) 八

(gatsu) 月

(kichi) 吉

(jitsu) 日

*kuirjiri*  
(chestnut shaped *nakago-jiri*)



特保  
06202403

No 1022758



鑑定書

一、脇指 銘

備前国住長船七兵衛尉祐定作  
寛文貳年八月吉日

長一尺七寸四分強

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

令和六年五月三十一日

公益財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協會



岡山県 教育委員会  
第 48315 号  
昭和40年9月21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 6th year of Reiwa (2024), March 31st

One, Katana

Mei (signature)

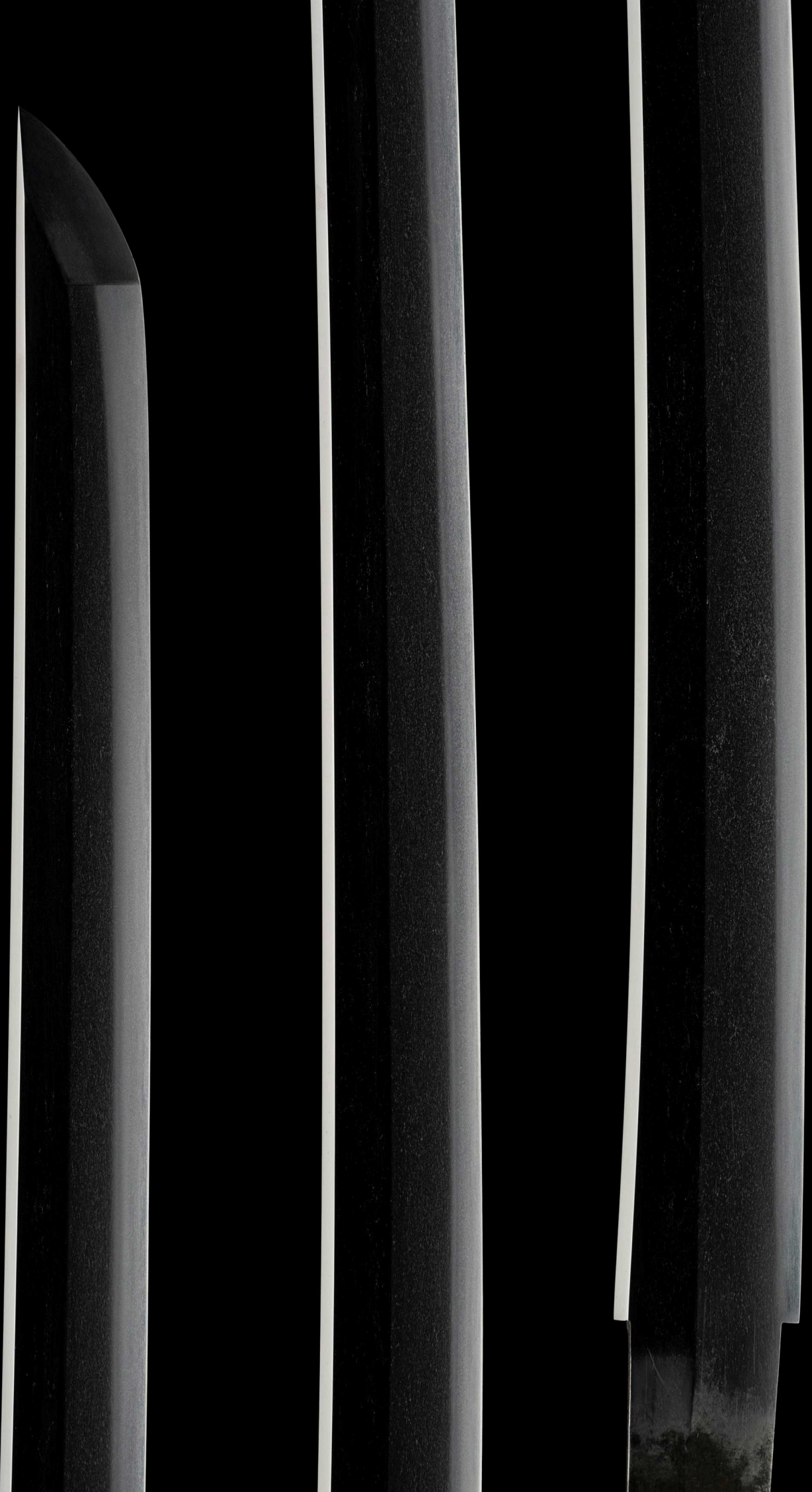
*Bizen no kuni jû Osafune Shichibei no Jô Sukesada Saku*  
*Kanbun ninen hachigatsu kichijitsu*

Nagasa (length)

1-shaku 7-sun 4-bu kyô (52.8cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai  
(NBTHK)





*Ura* (reverse) side shows a *bôshi* with sweeping pattern called *hakikake*.



A close-up photograph of the reverse side of a sword blade. The blade is dark and has a sweeping, curved pattern of light-colored metal inlays, known as hakikake. A red arrow points from the label 'hakikake' to the pattern.

*hakikake*



A close-up photograph of the omote side of a sword blade. The blade is dark and has a small, roundish turnback at the tip, known as kaeri. A red arrow points from the label 'kaeri' to the turnback.

*kaeri*

*Omote* side shows a small roundish *kaeri* (turnback) at the *kissaki*.

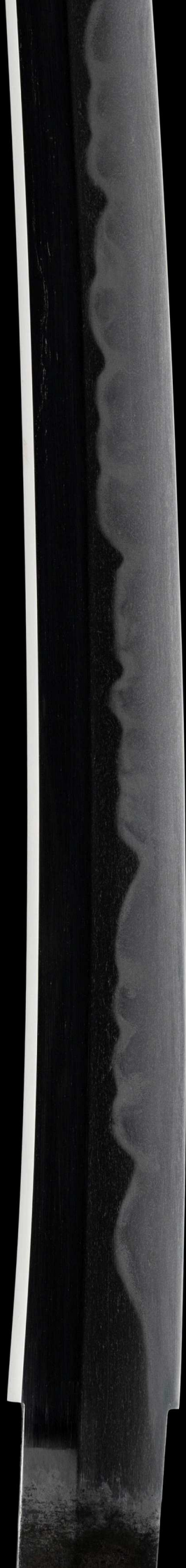


Well-forged dark swirls of *chikei*



Superb densely forged *itamehada* - notice how the body shines in *ji-nie*.





On *omote* side, the kissaki shows *mokume* pattern with *nagare*, forming a *kaen-bôshi*-like shape at the tip.

*mokume*

*kaen-bôshi*





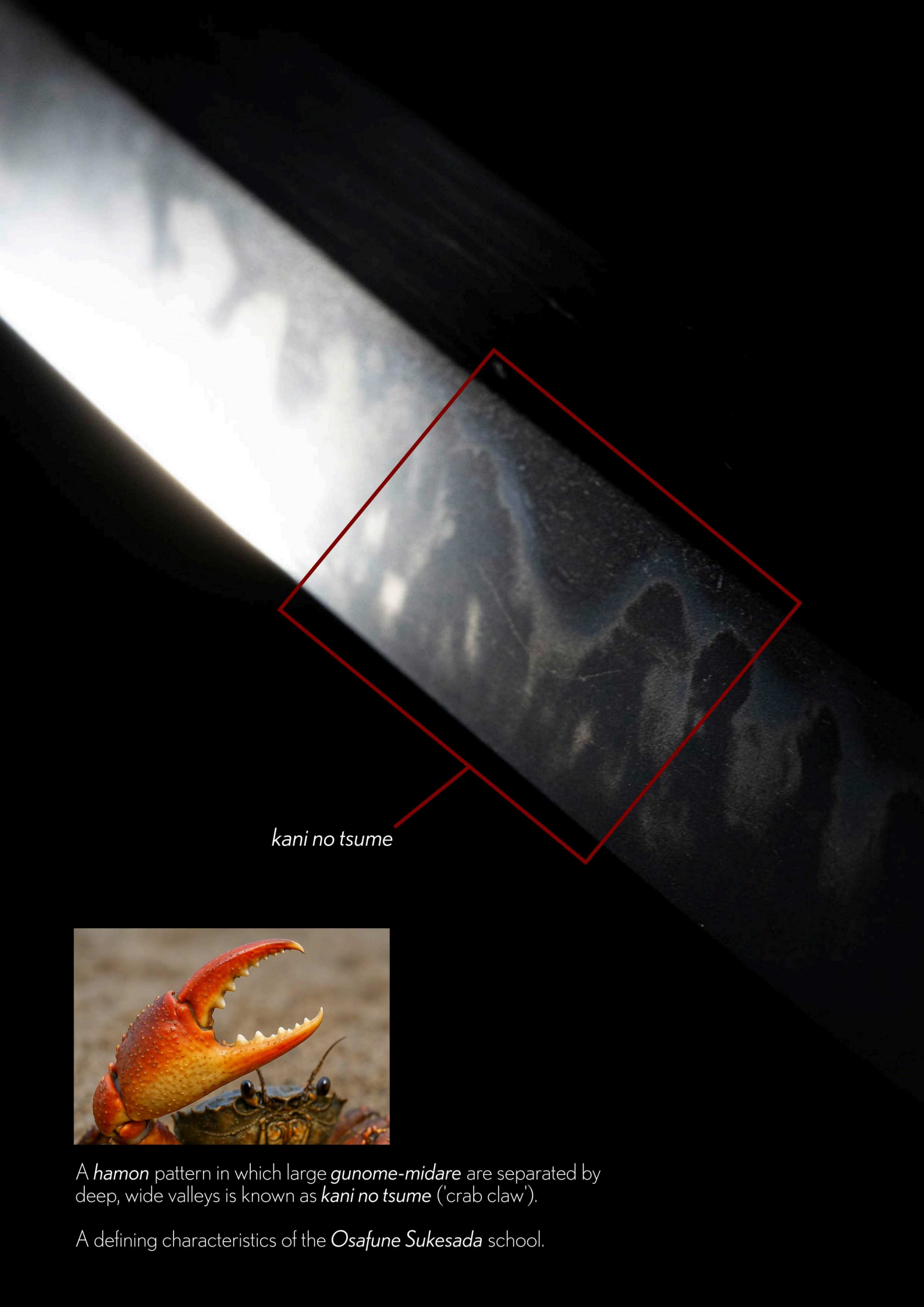
Gorgeous *chôji-midare*,  
truly gorgeous!

A brilliant *jûka-chôji* pattern - an intricate, layered *midare* resembling blooming flowers.

As this style is often seen in the *Ichimonji* school of the *Bizen* tradition, it suggests possible interaction between the *Osafune* and *Ichimonji* schools within *Bizen* province.

*jûka-chôji*





*kani no tsume*



A *hamon* pattern in which large *gunome-midare* are separated by deep, wide valleys is known as *kani no tsume* ('crab claw').

A defining characteristics of the *Osafune Sukesada* school.

*Tama*, a jewel-like ball forms a spot of *tobiyaki*.

*tama*



*Shirasaya*  
(protective scabbards)

*sayagaki* coming for both swords!



Near-matching *nijû-habaki*  
with contrasting *shakudô* and  
a crisp gold base

*Kuro-roiro-nuri saya*  
*daishô-uchigatana-koshirae*  
(黒呂色塗鞘大小打刀拵)

*Daishô-uchigatana-koshirae*  
lacquered in glossy black

Crafted during the  
Late Edo period  
(1780~1868)

The *daishô*, restricted to samurai class wear, emerged as a defining symbol of their status. This paired-sword tradition gained prominence near the close of the *Muromachi* period (1336-1573), with surviving examples dating to the late sixteenth century. A 1629 edict formalized the *daishô* requirement for samurai on official duties. However, this tradition ended during the Meiji period when an 1871 edict removed the samurai's obligation to wear *daishô*, followed by an 1876 public sword ban.

These reforms effectively ended both the *daishô* tradition and the samurai class itself.



NTHK-NPO Kanteisho  
Certificate of Authenticity



dai

*Matsuyama Shoami Moriyuki* was an active metalworker in the late Edo period and a representative of the *Iyo Shōami* tradition. While little is recorded about his personal life, his work reflects the hallmark traits of the school. His pieces often exhibit a quiet dignity, blending simplicity with subtle luxury through selective gilding or silvering.

The *daishō tsuba* set, signed by *Moriyuki*, is forged in iron and decorated in high relief with a motif of a humble mountain village scene. The iron surface exudes a subdued, patinated charm, while the rims are fitted with gilt *fukurin*, lending a formal elegance suited to ceremonial *daishō-koshirae*. Both the *katana* and *wakizashi tsuba* share a complimenting design, lovely visual harmony.



shō

(reverse)



*dai*

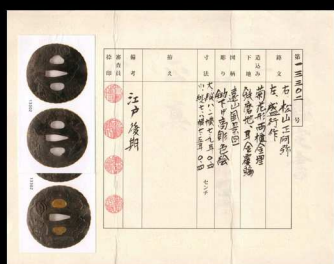


*shô*



(Matsu) 盛  
(yama) 行  
(Shô) 作

松 (Matsu)  
山 (yama)  
正 (Shô)  
阿 (a)  
弥 (mi)



NTHK-NPO Kanteisho  
Certificate of Authenticity

Matsuyama Shôami Moriyuki saku  
Crafted by Moriyuki from Shôami school in Matsuyama



black horn *kashira*

*Daishō fuchi*  
attributed to Ôoka Inju (大岡尹寿)

Ôoka [pronounced Ohh-kah] Inju, active from the late *Edo* into the *Meiji* period, was the adopted son and successor of Ôoka Masatoshi (大岡政寿) – an *Owari Tokugawa* clan metalsmith trained in the *Hamano* school. Inju's work thus inherited the refined *Hamano*-style craftsmanship and dignified aesthetic of the Ôoka lineage, which had been patronized by the senior *Tokugawa* house of *Owari*.

The *shakudô fuchi*, paired with a solid black horn *kashira*, is decorated with the noble *kiri* (paulownia) crest and its three-part variant. These paulownia crests – historically symbols of high honour – personify the formal, courtly nature of the mounting, their crisp motifs arranged in a balanced and dignified design characteristic of *daimyô*-grade fittings.



NTHK-NPO Kanteishō  
Certification





The *daishō tsuka* (hilts) hold a base of traditional white *samekawa* (ray skin) and wrapped in *hishimaki* style with black *ito*, complemented by *shakudō fuchi* with gold accents and solid gold *menuki*. Every element follows the formal dress code for attending castle ceremonies, creating a cohesive and dignified mounting.



← *fuchi* with gold accents

← solid gold *menuki*

← white *samekawa*

← black *ito*



## *Menuki*

The *daishô menuki* feature *shishi* (lion) motifs which, although unsigned, can be attributed with high probability to the *Gotô* school. *Shishi* were one of the signature themes of the *Gotô*, often executed with exceptional skill and lively expression.

The *dai menuki* depict a pair of lions, while the *shô menuki* show a single lion - both executed to a fine degree of carving panache, reflecting the artistry and prestige associated with *Gotô* workmanship.





DV: *Obi-Wan never told you what happened to your father...*  
LS: *He told me enough... He told me YOU killed him...*  
DV: *No... 'I am your father!*





*Daishô koshirae* bags  
with matching mountain  
village theme



ITEM# UJKA478

## A SHODAI TADAKUNI 'TAMESHIGIRI' KATANA SIGNED, SHINTÔ EARLY EDO PERIOD (MEIREKI ERA: 1655~1658)

<b>Swordsmith:</b>	<i>Hizen-jû Harima Daijô Fujiwara Tadakuni (shodai)</i>
<b>Measurements:</b>	<b>Length:</b> 63.9cm ( <i>ubu</i> ) <b>Sori:</b> 0.76cm <b>Moto-haba:</b> 3.16cm <b>Weight:</b> 745g
<b>Jihada:</b>	<i>Splendid konuka-hada with wonderful ji-nie and plenty of chikei</i>
<b>Hamon:</b>	<i>Beautiful deep chû-suguha with bright nioguchi, nijû-ba, sunagashi and kinsuji</i>
<b>Certificate #1:</b>	<b>NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon</b> (Especially Worthy of Preservation)
<b>Certificates #2:</b>	<b>NTHK-NPO Yûshûsaku</b> (as sword designated as Masterwork)
<b>Certificates #3-4:</b>	<b>NTHK-NPO Kanteishô</b> (koshirae and tsuba certified as Authentic)
<b>Fujishiro rank:</b>	<b>Jô-saku</b> (ranked as a superior swordsmith)
<b>Sharpness:</b>	<b>Wazamonô</b> (rated as a maker of sharp swords)
<b>Included:</b>	Shirasaya, fabric bag, stand, kit, printed description

**SOLD**

*Shodai Harima Daijô Tadakuni* was a distinguished swordsmith of *Hizen* Province during the mid-1600s. While many of his works feature a flamboyant *gunome-chôji-midare hamon*, Tadakuni also forged blades in an elegant *suguha* exhibiting a dignified aesthetic which this gorgeous katana encapsulates. On June 7th, 1665, sword-tester *Yamano Ka'emon Nagahisa* using this muscular blade, severed through two human bodies in one stroke. The test result is documented in gold inlay on the *nakago* solidifying Tadakuni's *wazamonô* ranking. A gorgeous Edo-period *koshirae* with an eye-catching *aoi-gai* (mother-of-pearl) lacquered scabbard and beautiful fittings showcasing a striking wave motif will look incredible on display in any home or office. This is a top-class samurai sword.

^  
Saki-kasane: 4.9mm

Moto-kasane: 6.7mm

Omosa: 745g

Kissaki: 3.63cm

Saki-haba: 2.30cm

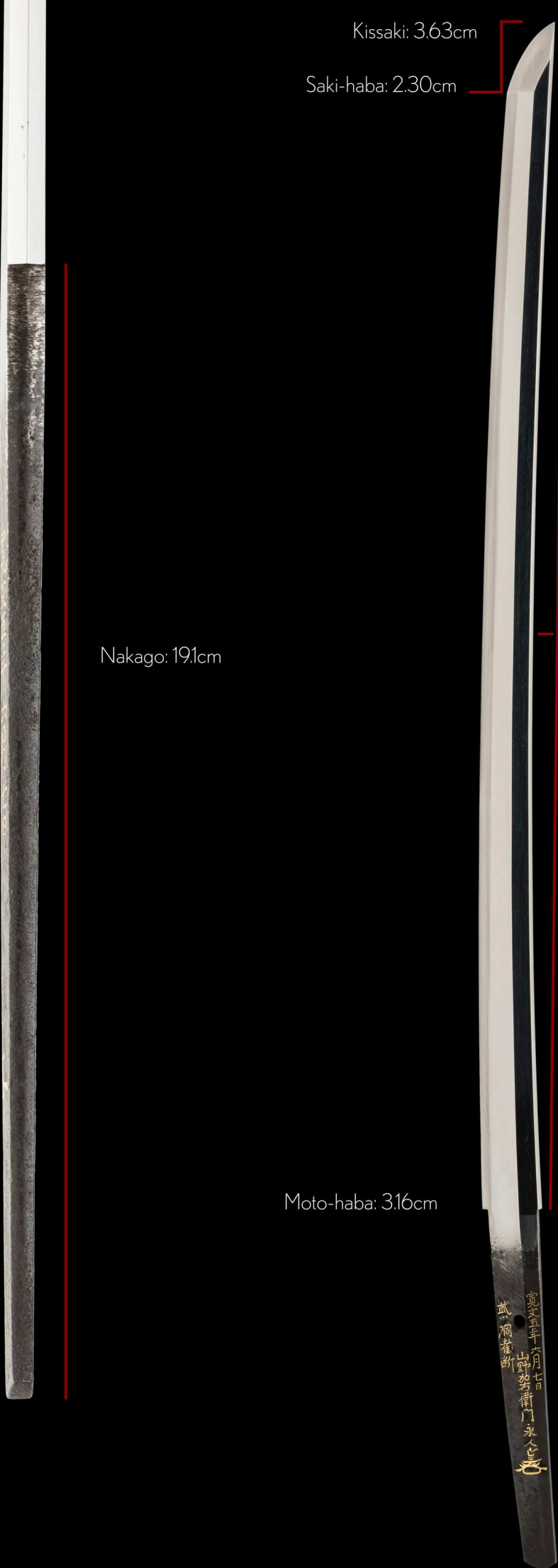
Nakago: 19.1cm

Moto-haba: 3.16cm

Nagasa: 63.9cm

Sori: 0.76cm

Mekugi-ana: 1



寛文五年六月七日  
山野如斎門永人  
武洞

*Shodai Harima Daijō Tadakuni* was a distinguished swordsmith of Hizen Province active during the mid-1600s. A nephew and direct student of grandmaster *Tadayoshi*, he was part of the *Hashimoto* family lineage and contributed significantly to the development of the *Hizen-tō* tradition. In 1634, he was granted the honorary title "*Harima Dajō*," marking the formal beginning of his career under the name *Tadakuni*. Working primarily under the *Nabeshima* clan, he forged swords for the *Ōgi* domain and earned a strong reputation for both technical excellence and elegant craftsmanship.

Tadakuni's blades are admired for their graceful proportions typical of the *Keian-Meireki-shintō* period, often featuring a shallow curvature and a well-balanced *chū-kissaki*. His *jigane* is especially fine, displaying the tight, compact *ko-mokume* pattern known as "*konuka-hada*" (rice-bran grain), rich with sparkling *ji-nie* and subtle *chikei*. The steel appears soft and moist in texture, a hallmark of high-quality *Hizen* swords.

While many of his works feature a flamboyant *hamon*, Tadakuni also forged blades in an elegant *suguha* (straight temper) style. These examples exhibit refined control, evenness of the *nioiguchi*, that resulted in a dignified aesthetic. The present sword is forged in *suguha* - a fine expression of Tadakuni's classical side.

Tadakuni signed his works in a long, confident *mei*: "*Hizen-jū Harima Dajō Fujiwara Tadakuni*," carefully carved in flowing strokes. His *nakagō* often shows a single *mekugi-ana* and well-angled *sujikai* file marks.

This weighty katana underwent a cutting test with the most famous test cutters of the Edo period, *Yamano Ka'emon Nagahisa*, who on June 7th, 1665, using this very blade, severed through two human bodies in one stroke. The test result is documented in gold inlay on the *nakago* of the sword testifying to Tadakuni's *jō-saku* (superior swordsmith) and reputation for crafting sharp swords earning the prized *wazamono* ranking.

A gorgeous Edo-period koshirae with an eye-catching *aoi-gai* (mother-of-pearl) lacquered scabbard and beautiful fittings showcasing with a wave motif will look



Location: *Hizen province*

Title name: *Harima Daijô* (Lord of Harima province)

Family name: *Fujiwara*

Swordsmith: *Tadakuni* (shodai, first generation)

*ubu-nakago* (original, unaltered tang)

*sujikai-yasurime* (slanting file marks)

(Hi) 肥

(zen) 前

(jû) 住

(Hari) 播

(ma) 磨

(Dai) 大

(jô) 掾

(Fuji) 藤

(wara) 原

(Tada) 忠

(kuni) 國

The title "*Harima Daijô Tadakuni*" indicates that this blade was forged by *shodai*, first-generation Tadakuni. Second generation adopted the title *Harima no Kami*. Signature examples below.



shodai



nidai

The shape of the *nakago-jiri* (butt-end of the tang) is called *iriyama-gata*. *Iri* means 'enter' and *yama* is 'mountain', suggesting at the 'base of a mountain.'

*Kanbun gonen rokugatsu nanoka Yamano  
Ka'emon Nagahisa (kaô) futatsu-dô setsudan*

On the seventh day in the sixth month in the fifth year of *Kanbun* era (June 7th 1665), *Yamano Ka'emon Nagahisa* conducted a test cut severing two bodies [in one stroke].

(futa) 貳  
(tsu) ツ  
(dô) 洞  
(setsu) 截  
(dan) 断

寛文五年六月七日  
山野加右衛門永人  
貳ツ洞截断

寛 (Kan)  
文 (bun)  
五 (go)  
年 (nen)  
六 (roku)  
月 (gatsu)  
七 (nana)  
日 (ka)  
山 (Yama)  
野 (no)  
加 (Ka)  
右 (e)  
衛 (e)  
門 (mon)  
永 (Naga)  
久 (hisa)  
花押 (kaô)



*Yamano Ka'emon Nagahisa* was a renowned sword tester in the Edo period and served under the *Tokugawa* shogunate as a member of the *Gokoshimono-gata* - officials responsible for sword-related affairs. The Yamano family held a hereditary role in sword testing, and Nagahisa is considered one of its most skilled members.



gorgeous finely-chiseled signature

The cutting edge of the katana of 63.9cm is similar to what we'd see of one-handed fighting swords known as *katate-uchi* from the Late Muromachi period, circa mid-1500s.

The majority of katana in the Edo period measure around 70cm in *nagasa*. This sword, however, was clearly commissioned by a samurai who desired a supremely crafted blade that is weighty, agile, and exceptionally sharp.

Although NBTHK Jûyô Tōken is a challenge, this sword has an outside chance of being awarded such certification. We plan to submit the katana to NBTHK Jûyô competition in October 2025.

特選  
05202306

No 1020773



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

令和五年八月二十五日

公益財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協會

鑑定書

一、刀銘 肥前住播磨大掾藤原忠国  
(金象嵌) 山野加右衛門永久(花押)  
寛文五年六月七日  
長 二尺一寸一分  
貳ツ胴截断

長崎県 教育委員会  
第 1198 号  
昭和26年11月25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 5th year of Reiwa (2023), August 25th

One, Katana

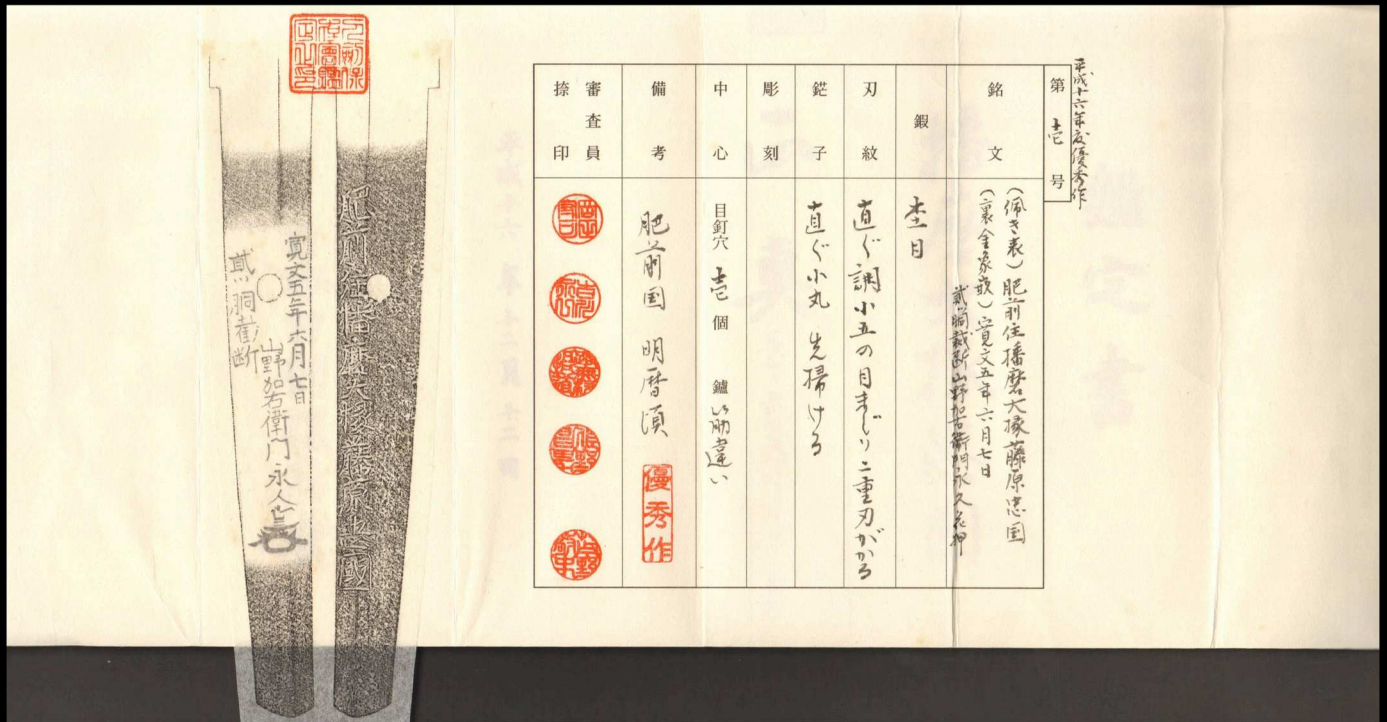
Mei (signature)

Hizen-jû Harima Daijô Fujiwara Tadakuni  
(Kinzôgan) Kanbun gonen rokugatsu nanoka Yamano Ka'emon Nagahisa (kaô)  
futsu-dô setsudan

Nagasa (length)

2-shaku 1-sun 1-bu (63.9cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai  
(NBTHK)



## NTHK-NPO Yûshûsaku Certificate of Authenticity

This katana was designated as *Yûshûsaku* (Masterwork)  
by the Non-Profit Society for the Preservation of the Japanese Sword

*Mei* (signature)

*Hizen-jû Harima Daijô Fujiwara Tadakuni*

*Kanbun gonen rokugatsu nanoka futatsu-dô setsudan Yamano Kaemon Nagahisa kaô*

*Nagasa* (length)

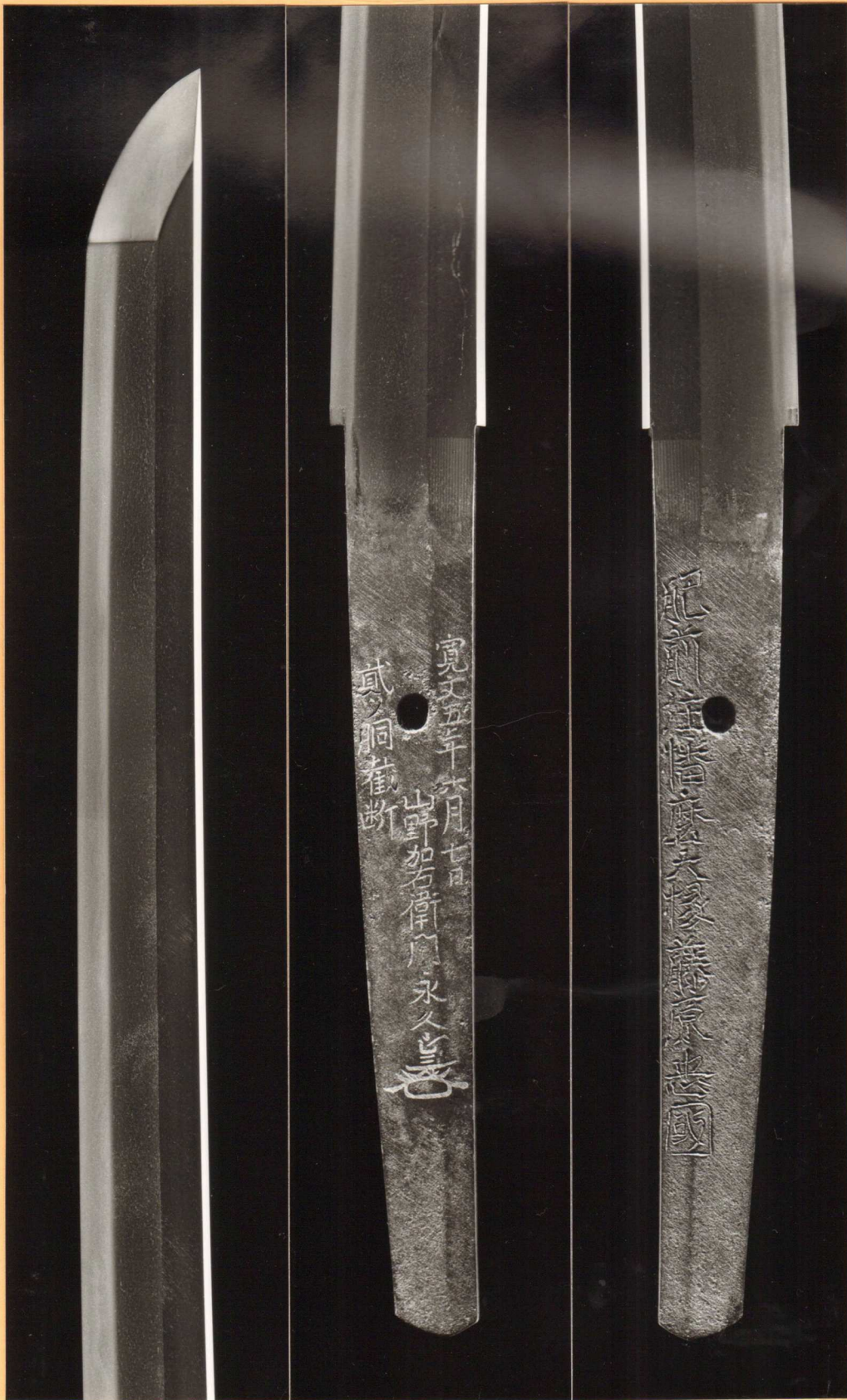
2-shaku 1-sun bu han kore ari (63.9cm)

Issued in 16th year of Heisei (2004), December 12th

Nihon Token Hozon Kai  
(NTHK-NPO)

This sword has reached the highest level of honour at the NTHK-NPO.  
Five judges have stamped their names to the certificate.

This is the highest honour within this sword organization.



優秀作

日本刀剣保存会

A framable photograph of the sword accompanies the NTHK-NPO Yûshûsaku certificate.



肥前住播磨大掾藤原忠国

寛文五年六月七日山野加右衛門永久貳ツ胴截断

長貳尺壹寸一分

令和七乙巳年水無月吉日誌之

肥前住播磨大掾藤原忠国

*Hizen jû Harima Daijô Fujiwara Tadakuni*

Harima Daijô Fujiwara Tadakuni, a resident of Hizen province

寛文五年六月七日山野加右衛門永久貳ツ胴截断

*Kanbun gonen rokugatsu nanoka Yamano Kaemon Nagahisa futatsu-dô setsudan*

On the seventh day in the sixth month in the fifth year of Kanbun era (June 7th, 1665), Yamano Ka'emon Nagahisa conducted a test cut severing two bodies [in one stroke].

長貳尺壹寸一分

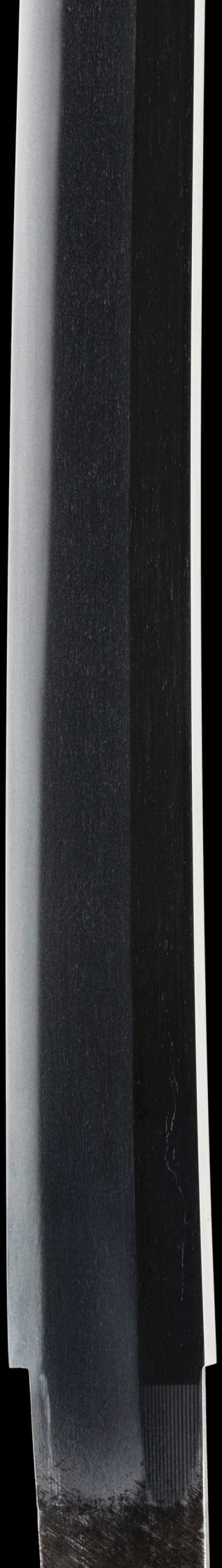
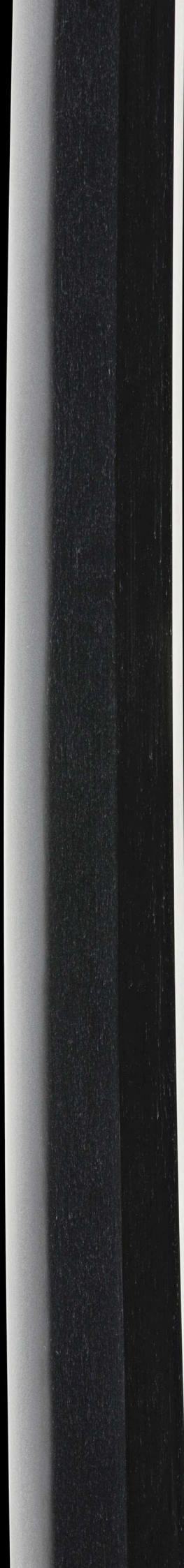
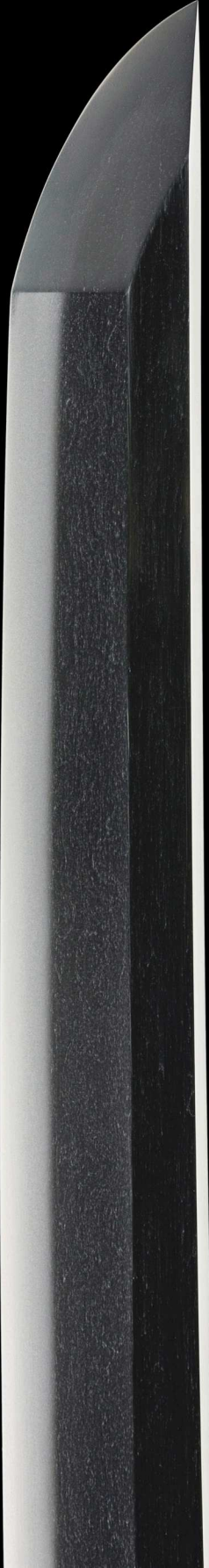
*Nagasa 2-shaku 1-sun 1-bu*

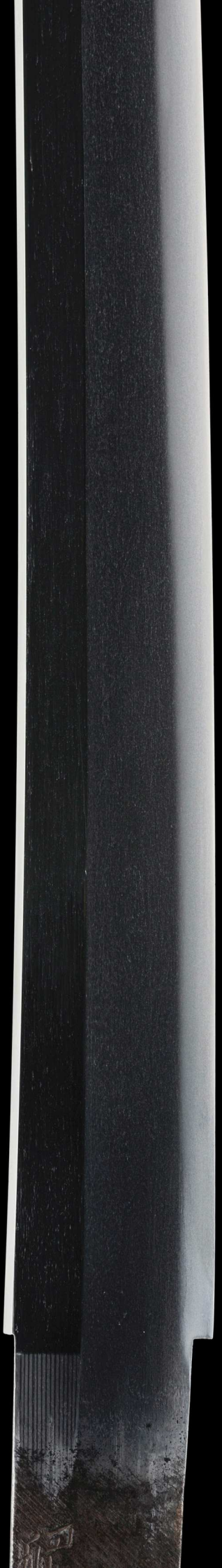
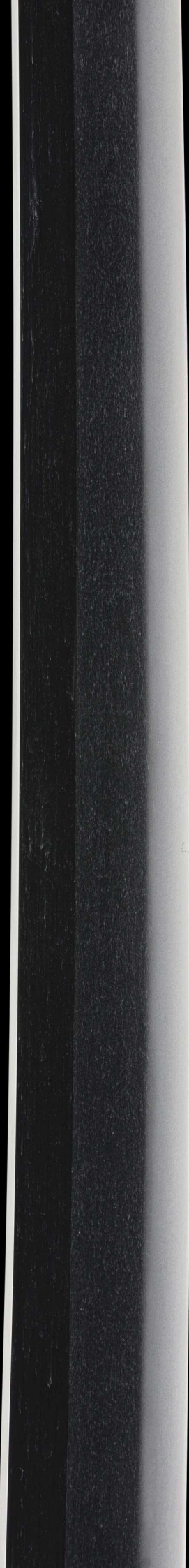
Blade length 63.9 cm

令和七乙巳年水無月吉日誌之

*Reiwa nana kinoto-midoshi Minazuki kichijitsu kore o shirusu*

Written on a lucky day in the sixth month in the seventh year of Reiwa era during the Year of the Snake (June 2025)





A close-up photograph of a sword blade, focusing on the yakidashi area. The blade is dark and textured, with a bright, glowing line of light running along its length. A red arrow points from the text 'yakidashi' to this bright line. The background is dark, making the blade stand out.

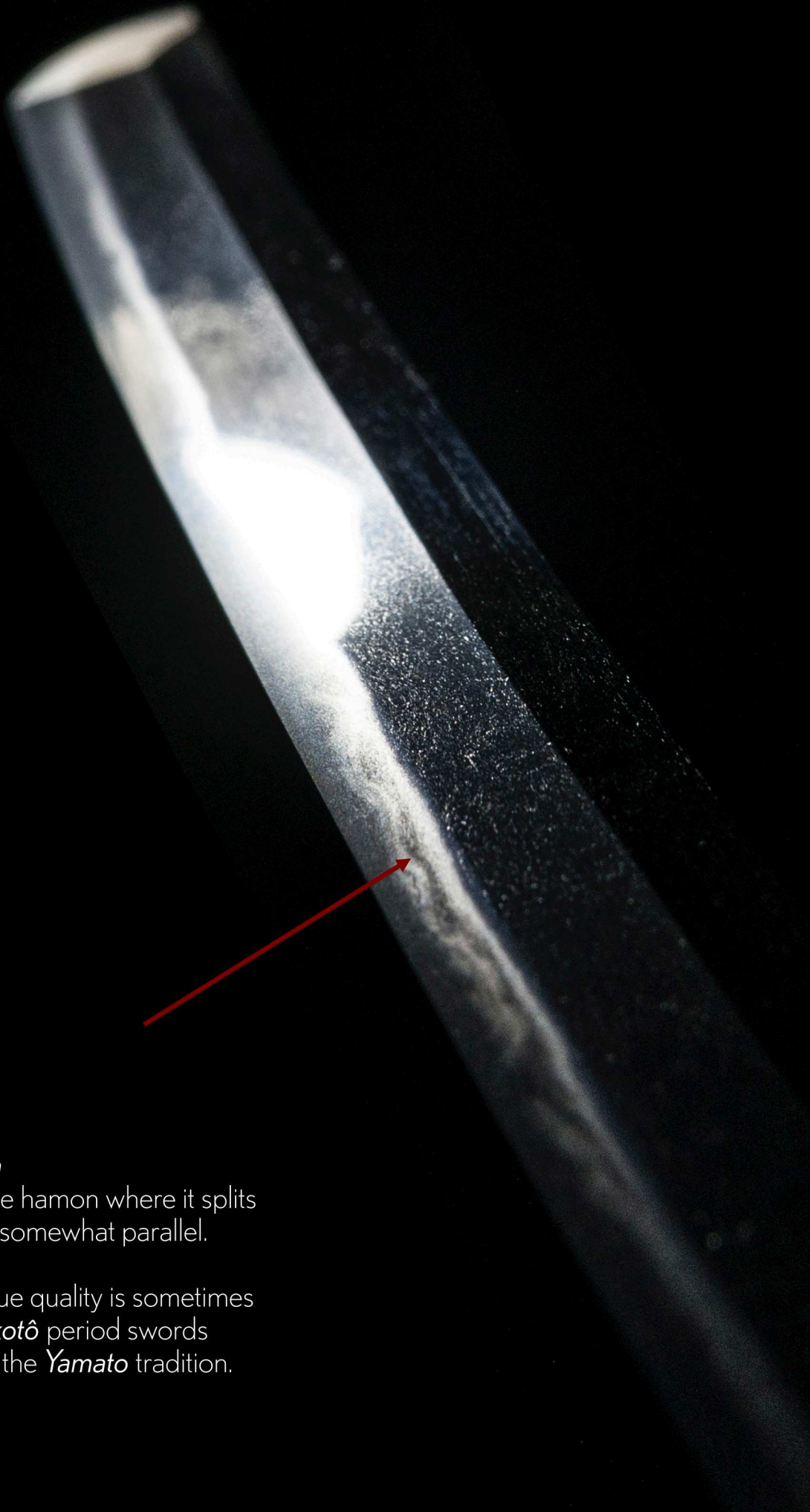
*yakidashi*

It's important to soak in the *yakidashi*, where the *hamon* actually starts on the blade. Here we see the bright *suguha* beam beautifully against the dark swirls of *chikei* in the *hada*. Simply truly observing this one area of the sword immediately tells you that we have a special piece here.

*Ko-maru* (turnback) *bôshi*.

Standing tall.





*nijûbu-ba*

area of the hamon where it splits  
and runs somewhat parallel.

This unique quality is sometimes  
seen on *kotô* period swords  
forged in the *Yamato* tradition.

Rings of *mokume*  
form subtle shadows

*chikei*

*sunagashi*

*kinsuji*

Like a fine wine, this sword will open up, *if* you take the time to admire all the fine elements that it is blessed with. From its exacting geometry to its keen *hataraki*, this is a sword to enjoy spending time with - as you would with a great friend.



*Aogai-mijin-nuri saya  
uchigatana-koshirae*  
(青貝微塵塗鞘打刀拵)

*Uchigatana-koshirae  
decorated with mother-of-pearl*

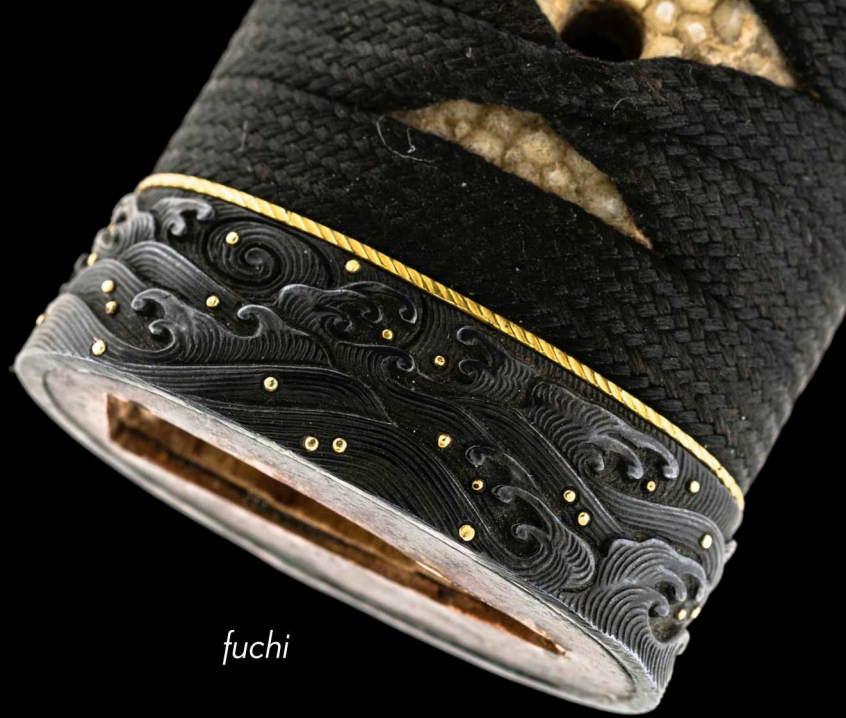
Crafted during the  
Late Edo period  
(1780~1868)



*NTHK-NPO Kanteisho  
Certificate of Authenticity*



*kojiri*



*fuchi*

*kashira*



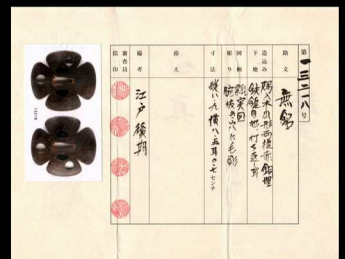
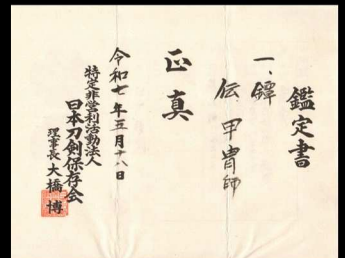
*Fuchi-kashira and kojiri*  
with wave motif

Though crafted by different hands, the *fuchi*, *kashira*, and *kojiri* all depict variations of a wave motif, bringing visual harmony to the koshirae. The *fuchi* is forged in a rich, dark-chocolate coloured *shakudô* with splashes of gold highlighting the power of the open seas. In delightful contrast, the *kashira* and *kojiri* are rendered in a more softer-toned *shibuichi* with deep channels, evoking the indelible spirit of ocean currents.



This handsome *tsuba* was made by an armourer (*katchû-shi*) during the late *Edo* period. Traditionally, armourers were craftsmen responsible for forging and assembling suits of samurai armour, and some of them also produced *tsuba* using their refined skills in ironworking. Unlike the ornate and decorative *tsuba* made by specialized artisans, *katchû-shi tsuba* are characterized by their simplicity, strength, and bold austerity.

This piece, forged from iron with a hammered surface (*tsuchime-ji*), exhibits such characteristics. Its wide and elongated lobed form, combines an intentionally rough surface, embodying a practical and martial spirit. The lack of signature is typical of *katchû-shi* works, where function and form took precedent over individual recognition.



(reverse)



*udenuki-ana*

The round holes found on this *tsuba* serve as "*udenuki-ana*," or "arm cord holes." These openings allowed a cord to be passed through and tied to the user's wrist, preventing the sword from being dropped during battle.

Such features are often found in older or martial-style *tsuba* and reinforce the utilitarian philosophy - the placement and size of the holes suggest a functional intent rooted in battlefield pragmatism.



example with cord running through *udenuki-ana*



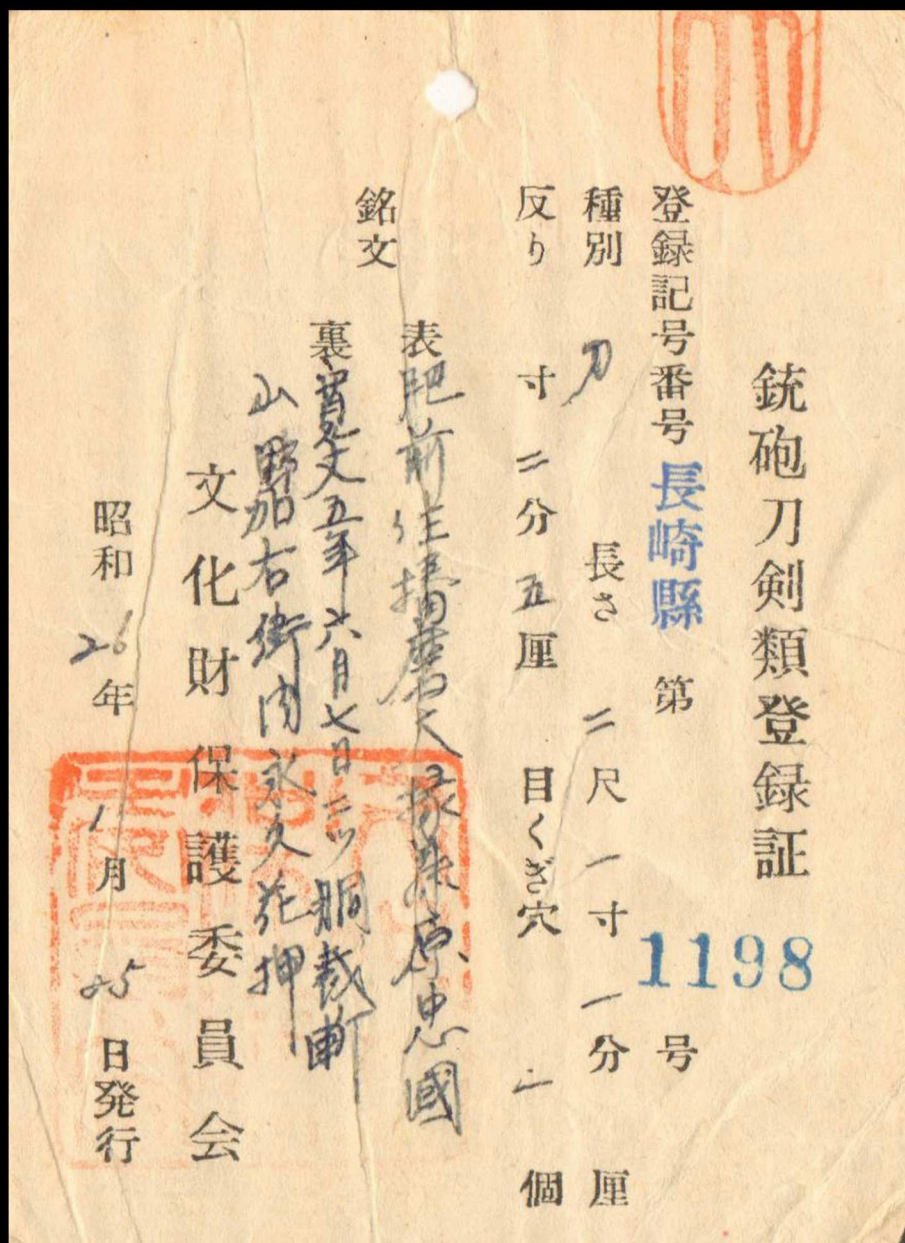
*Ukai* is a traditional Japanese method of fishing using trained cormorants, once cherished as courtly river entertainment. This *menuki* (decorative grips on the hilt) depicts a cormorant, paddle, and fish basket in a compact, poetic composition.

The obedient bird symbolizes the samurai ideal of loyalty and the master-retainer bond. The paddle suggests human intent; the basket, the reward of labor.



### Cormorant Fishing on the Nagara River By Keisai Eisen, Late Edo Period

This *ukiyo-e* print depicts a traditional *ukai* scene, with a fisherman guiding trained cormorants by torchlight. Such images reflect how deeply *ukai* was embedded in the cultural imagination of the Edo period - celebrated not only as a practical tradition but also as a subject of aesthetic appreciation.



This is the original *torokusho* (registration card) for the *Tadakuni katana*. The card was registered in the 26th year of Showa (1951), January 25th.

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

This is one of the very first swords registered in Japan with a serial number of just 1198. Quite remarkably, the blade was registered in *Nagasaki* in *Kyûshû*, the modern-day name for Hizen province. This katana had essentially remained and was cared for in Hizen since it was made some 380 years ago.

Straight to the point.





Koshirae bag with unique  
chrysanthemum design.



ITEM# UJWA262

## A SANEMORI WAKIZASHI

UNSIGNED, KOTÔ MIDDLE KAMAKURA PERIOD (BUN'EI ERA: 1264~1275)

<b>Swordsmith:</b>	<i>Hatakeda Sanemori (shodai)</i>
<b>Measurements:</b>	<b>Length:</b> 51.9cm ( <i>o-suriage</i> ) <b>Sori:</b> 1.2cm <b>Moto-haba:</b> 2.67cm <b>Weight:</b> 500g
<b>Jihada:</b>	<i>Splendid itame-mokume-hada with ji-nie and an abundance of chikei</i>
<b>Hamon:</b>	<i>Gorgeous gunome-chôji-midare with kawazu-ko-chôji, kinsuji, yô and sunagashi</i>
<b>Certificate #1:</b>	<b>NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon</b> ( <i>sword Especially Worthy of Preservation</i> )
<b>Fujishiro rank:</b>	<b>Jôjô-saku</b> ( <i>ranked as a highly superior swordsmith</i> )
<b>Included:</b>	Shirasaya, fabric bag, stand, kit, printed description

## SOLD

*Hatakeda Sanemori* was a *jôjô-saku* (highly superior) smith active during the mid-Kamakura period, (circa 1275) a golden era of Japanese sword-making. The rise of the warrior class and conflicts such as the *Genpei* war and *Mongol* invasions increased demand for functional swords. Sanemori is believed to be the son or student of *Moriie*, founder of the *Hatakeda* school, who may have descended from the *Ichimonji* line. This elegant and substantial wakizashi by *Sanemori* displays a vivid *chôji-midare* that incorporates the school's iconic *kawazu-ko-chôji* (tadpole-shaped) *hamon*. Lovely *utsuri* is also seen with a heartbeat of *ashi*, *yô*, *sunagashi*, and long lines of *kinsuji*. To think this sword was crafted 750 years ago...one can spend hours under the light admiring such a piece - the stories it can tell. Unique Japan can arrange to take this sword to *Tanobe-sensei* for *sayagaki* services as a well-deserved extra touch. A custom *koshirae* can also be considered, ask for details.



Saki-kasane: 4.5mm

Moto-kasane: 5.7mm

Omosa: 500g

Kissaki: 2.89cm

Saki-haba: 1.83cm

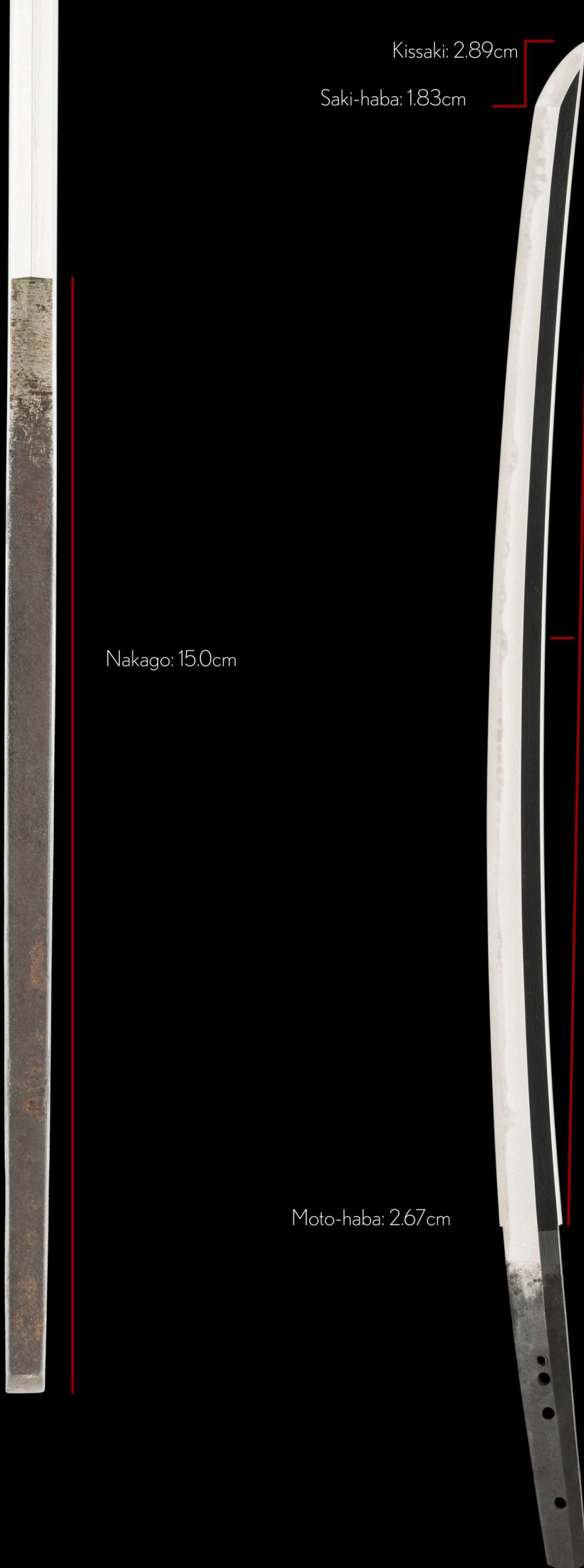
Nakago: 15.0cm

Moto-haba: 2.67cm

Nagasa: 51.9cm

Sori: 1.2cm

Mekugi-ana: 4



*Hatakeda Sanemori* (畠田真守) was a tremendously skilled swordsmith active during the middle *Kamakura* period (circa 1275), a golden era of Japanese sword-making. Five of his swords have made the top NBTHK certification of *Tokubetsu Jûyô* with five *Jûyô Bijutsuhin* (Important Art Object) and six achieving *Jûyô Bunkazai* (Important Cultural Property), two of those were actually national treasures (*Kokuhô*) in the pre-war period. The rise of the warrior class and conflicts such as the *Genpei* war and *Mongol* invasions increased demand for functional swords. Swordsmithing techniques evolved rapidly as the *Kamakura shogunate* supported smiths through official appointments. *Bizen* Province, rich in *tamahagane* and water, became a major hub and *Sanemori* worked during this peak period of *Bizen* sword culture.

*Sanemori* was the son or student of *Moriie* (守家), founder of the *Hatakeda* school which was named after *Hatakeda* village, located east of *Osafune* in *Bizen* Province which was rich in materials and home to many skilled smiths. *Hatakeda* smiths eventually moved into *Osafune* and merged traditions, which *Sanemori*'s work beautifully embodies.

*Moriie* may have descended from the *Ichimonji* line, known for a more flamboyant hamon. *Sanemori* inherited this style and refined it further. He often signed with the title *Sama no Jô* (左馬允), indicating a noble rank. *Sanemori* is considered the second most prominent figure in the school.

This *wakizashi* by *Sanemori* displays an elegant curvature, fine *ko-itame*, and a vivid *chôji-midare* that incorporates the school's iconic *kawazu-ko-chôji* (tadpole-shaped) *hamon*. Glorious *utsuri* is also seen with *ashi*, *yô*, *sunagashi*, and occasional *tobiyaki*. Compared to *Moriie*, *Sanemori*'s style is slightly more restrained, balancing flamboyance with refinement.

This sword represents a terrific opportunity to acquire a master *Kamakura* period smith blade at an attainable price, allowing for countless hours of admiration under the light. To think this sword was crafted ~750 years ago...One may consider building a custom *koshirae* for the sword, but it's not a requirement at all. Unique Japan can arrange to take this sword to *Tanobe-sensei* for *sayagaki* services, as he'd appreciate seeing any quality sword by *Sanemori*. This would add a well-deserved touch.





The image displays two views of a sword blade (nakago) against a black background. The top view shows the blade's upper portion with a dark, polished area labeled 'hamachi' and a lighter, textured area labeled 'kurijiri'. The bottom view shows the blade's lower portion with four circular holes (mekugi-ana) and a dark, polished area labeled 'kurijiri'. Red arrows point from the text labels to the corresponding parts of the blade.

*hamachi*

The *nakago* features *kurijiri*, characteristic of the *Kamakura* to early *Nanbokuchō* period.

The *yasurime* are neat horizontal *kiri-yasuri* showing disciplined craftsmanship.

Four unfilled *mekugi-ana* are present, indicating repeated re-mounts over the centuries.

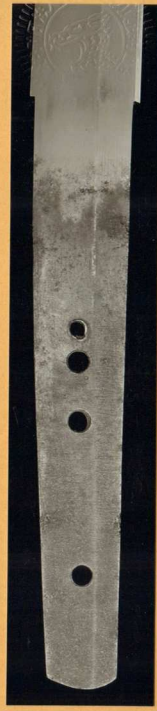
The *nakago* is well-preserved, with a healthy patina and clear *hamachi*.

Its thickness and shape reflect strength and balance. The aged steel texture and subtle workmanship embody the refined dignity of *Hatakedā* blades.

*kurijiri*

特保  
04-2022-12

No. 1019823



鑑定書

一脇指 無銘 伝(畠田真守)

長一尺七寸一分強

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

令和五年三月十日

公益財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協會



大阪府 教育委員会  
第 101873 号  
昭和62年5月28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

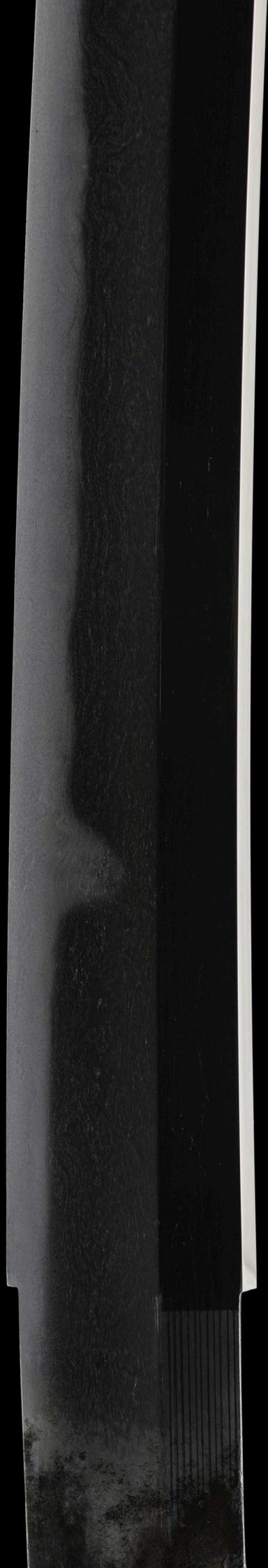
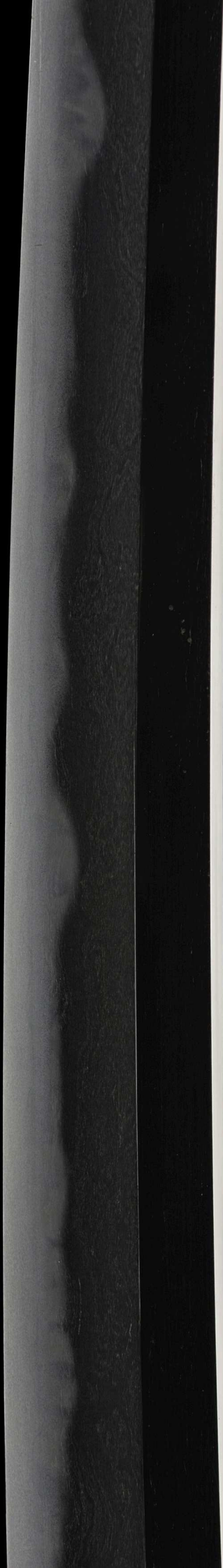
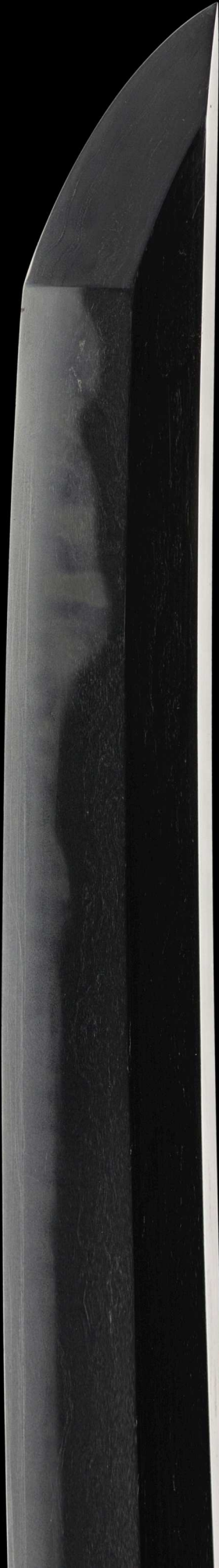
Issued in the 5th year of Reiwa (2023), March 10th

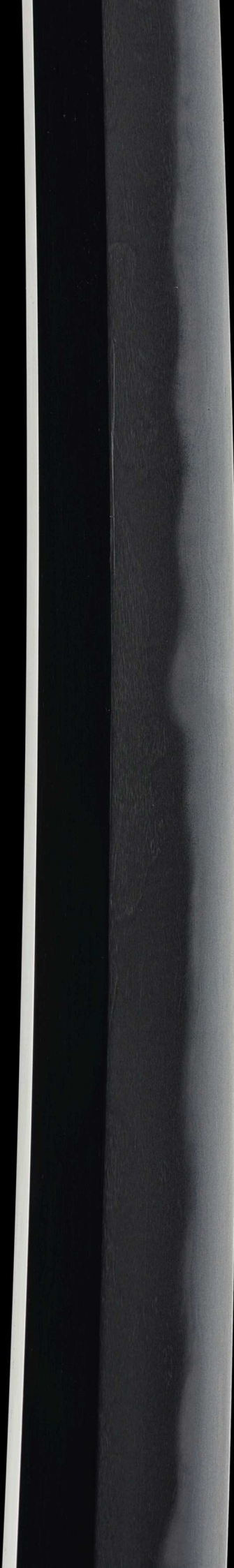
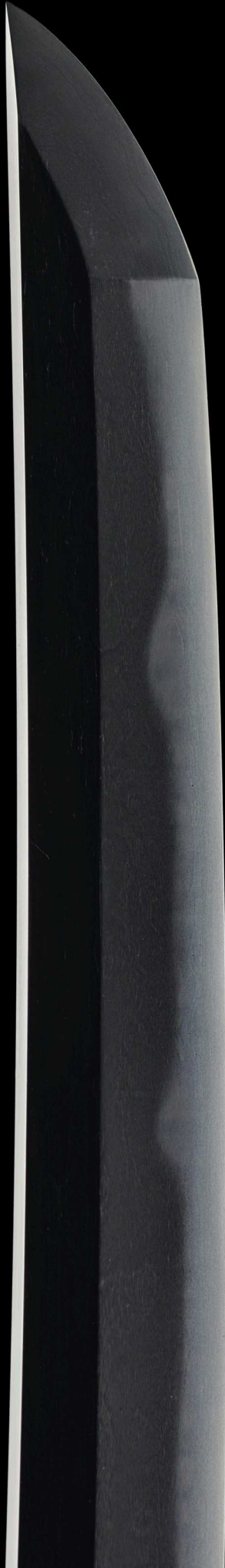
One, Wakizashi

*Mumei* (unsigned)  
*Hatakeda Sanemori*

*Nagasa* (length)  
1-shaku 7-sun 1-bu kyô (51.9cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai  
(NBTHK)





*kinsuji*

A *kissaki* with wonderful deep *kotô* period character. Parallel lines of *kinsuji* knead through the steel with visible *mokume-hada*.



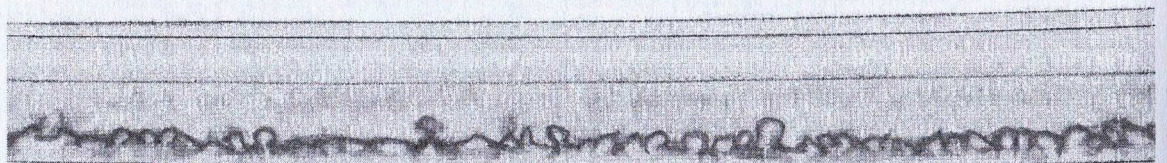


An incredibly beautiful *itame-hada* swirlingly mixed with *nagare and mokume hada* with a generous amounts of gorgeous *chikei*.



*Kawazu ko-chôji*, *Sanemori*'s hallmark.


This "tadpole clove" *hamon* features clove-shaped patterns with long, narrow stems and rounded heads, resembling tiny swimming tadpoles. It is a playful and fluid variation of *chôji-midare*, combining grace with lively movement. The pattern showcases *Sanemori*'s precision and the *Hatakeda* school's unique identity within the *Bizen* tradition.



Hatakeda Moriie (畠田守家)

Gorgeous *kinsuji* (golden lines of *nie* crystals) weaves its merry way through the hamon.



The image shows a close-up, diagonal view of a sword blade. The blade is dark, with a prominent, wavy, light-colored pattern running along its length, characteristic of the midare-utsuri (cloud-like) pattern. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the texture and the undulating lines of the pattern. The background is dark, making the blade stand out.

History in the making.

*midare-utsuri*



*sayagaki* potential

*Shirasaya*  
(protective scabbard)



gold *habaki* with  
rainfall file marks



ITEM# UJKA479

## A KANENORI 'TAMESHIGIRI' KATANA

UNSIGNED, SUE-KOTÔ LATE MUROMACHI PERIOD (EISHÔ ERA: 1504~1521)

<b>Swordsmith:</b>	<i>Nôshû-jû Kanenori (San'ami school)</i>
<b>Measurements:</b>	<b>Length:</b> 64.7cm ( <i>o-suriage</i> ) <b>Sori:</b> 1.4cm <b>Moto-haba:</b> 2.85cm <b>Weight:</b> 630g
<b>Jihada:</b>	<i>Well-forged itame-hada with mokume-hada with shirake-utsuri and chikei</i>
<b>Hamon:</b>	<i>Brilliant gunome-chôji-midare with sunagashi, kinsuji, tobiyaki and togari</i>
<b>Certificate #1:</b>	<b>NBTHK Hozon (Worthy of Preservation)</b>
<b>Certificate #2:</b>	<b>NTHK-NPO Kanteishô (koshirae and tsuba certified as Authentic)</b>
<b>Fujishiro rank:</b>	<b>Chûjô-saku (ranked as an above average swordsmith)</b>
<b>Sharpness:</b>	<b>Wazamonô (rated as a maker of sharp swords)</b>
<b>Included:</b>	Shirasaya, Edo koshirae, fabric bag, stand, kit, printed description

**SOLD** ([click here](#) to watch Pablo's video presentation of this sword on YouTube)

This riveting katana has been attributed to *Kanenori*, a *wazamonô* smith of the *San'ami* group in *Mino* province during the *Eishô* period, circa 1504~1521. The *hamon* is a brilliant *gunome-midare* with thick *nie*, interspersed with *chôji*, pointed *togari*, *tobi-yaki*, and frequent sightings of *sunagashi* and *kinsuji*. This sharp sword severed through the chunky shoulder area of a human torso in November of 1642 by tester *Ôkawa Hachiemon* who was retained by lords of the *Maeda* family. This katana also comes with *sayagaki* by *Hon'ami Chôshiki* dating way back to 1884 and accompanied by a fabulous *koshirae* with a set of exquisitely crafted matching-themed fittings depicting the famous late *Heian* period *Ujigawa Battle* during the tumultuous *Genpei* war. A superb samurai collectible.



Saki-kasane: 4.2mm

Kissaki: 3.48cm

Saki-haba: 1.95cm

Moto-kasane: 6.0mm

Nagasa: 64.7cm

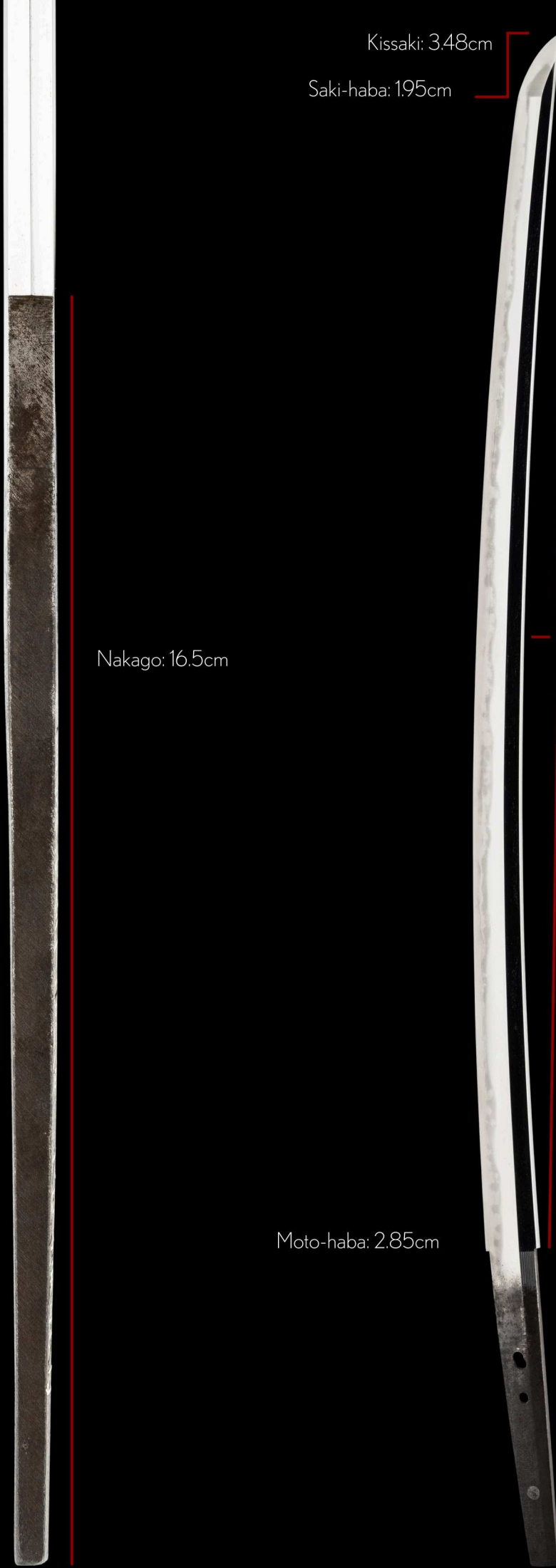
Nakago: 16.5cm

Sori: 1.4cm

Omosa: 630g

Moto-haba: 2.85cm

Mekugi-ana: 2



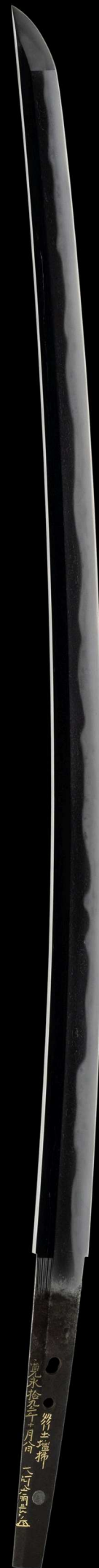
This riveting katana has been attributed to *Kanenori* (兼則), a distinguished smith of the prestigious *San'ami* (三阿弥) group in *Mino* province who worked during the *Eishô* period, circa 1504~1521. The *San'ami* school was founded by a craftsman who bore the personal name *Rokurôzaemon* and signed his works *Kanenori*. Active between 1358~1426, he was the son of the accomplished *Kanetomo*, who in turn descended from the legendary *Kaneuji* - one of the most gifted students of the great Masamune. When Kaneuji established himself in Shizu in Mino province, he became widely celebrated as the founding father of the Mino tradition.

The forging of the sword shows *itame-hada* with flowing patterns (*nagare*) mixed with *mokume*, accompanied by a distinct *shirake-utsuri*. The *hamon* is a brilliant, bubbling *gunome-midare* with thick *nie*, interspersed with *chôji*, pointed elements (*togari*), occasional *tobiyaki*, and frequent *sunagashi* and *kinsuji*.

What really gets the motor running, is that on the reverse of the *nakago*, a gold-inlaid inscription records a test cut: "*Taitai dadan-barai on the eighth day in the eleventh month of Kan'ei 19 (November 8, 1642), Ôkawa Hachimon Nagatsugu + monogram.*" The term *tai-tai* (fat/fat) refers to the shoulder area of the torso - one of the most chunky/difficult sections of the body to sever. That this sword severed through the target and into the earthen mound more than 100 years *after* its forging attests to its extraordinary sharpness. Kanenori is ranked *wazamonô*, it's clear to see why.

This katana comes housed in a *shirasaya* with *sayagaki* dating back to 1884 - a truly extraordinary survival from the Meiji period. According to the *sayagaki* by *Hon'ami Chôshiki* (本阿弥長識), sword tester *Ôkawa Hachimon* (大河八右門) was a retainer of the *Maeda* family, having served both lords of the *Kaga* domain. Through further research, we discovered that this remarkable sword was documented in two separate scholarly publications, which we expand on later on.

The blade is accompanied by a fabulous *koshirae* with a set of exquisitely crafted matching fittings depicting the famous *Ujigawa Battle* - a formal samurai *uchigatana koshirae* that compliments this terrific sword. This katana may only have Hozon-level certification but that is because the sword is unsigned from the Muromachi period. Without question, this is a *Tokubetsu Hozon* level sword in terms of forging quality.



Location: *Echizen province*

School name: *Seki school*

Swordsmith: *Kanenori*

*suriage-nakago* (shortened tang)

*katte-sagari-yasurime* (slanting file marks)

Traces of the original *hamon*

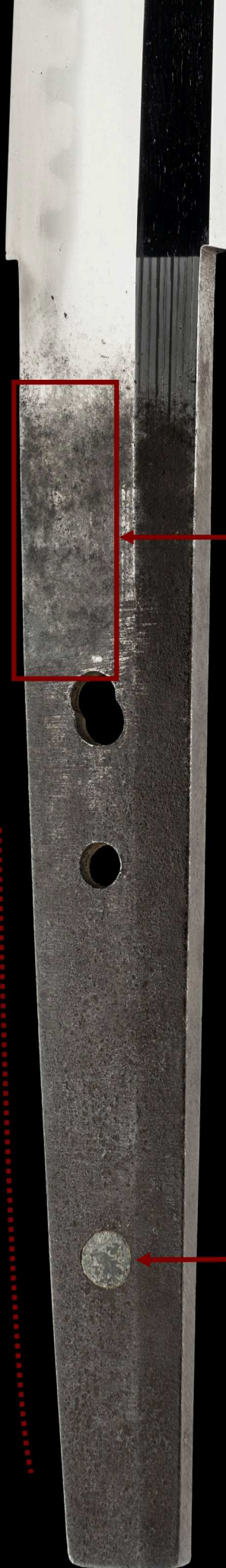
This sword has been shortened (*suriage*).

Such modifications were often carried out in response to changing modes of combat, from mounted to close-quarter fighting, as well as to suit the stature of a new owner or by order of the *shogunate*.

As this blade was forged in the late *Muromachi* period, it was likely intended from the outset for close combat. The fact that it was later shortened suggests that it was further adjusted to enhance usability for the next samurai owner.

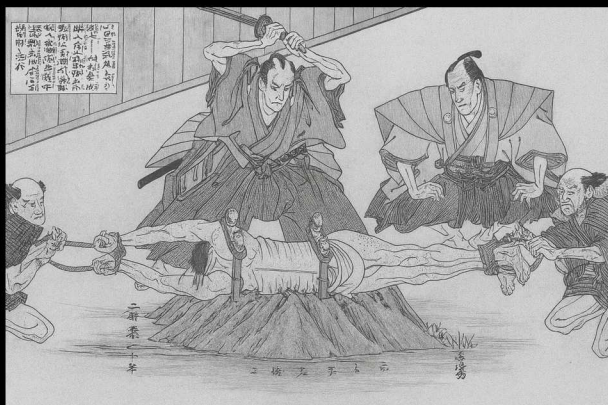
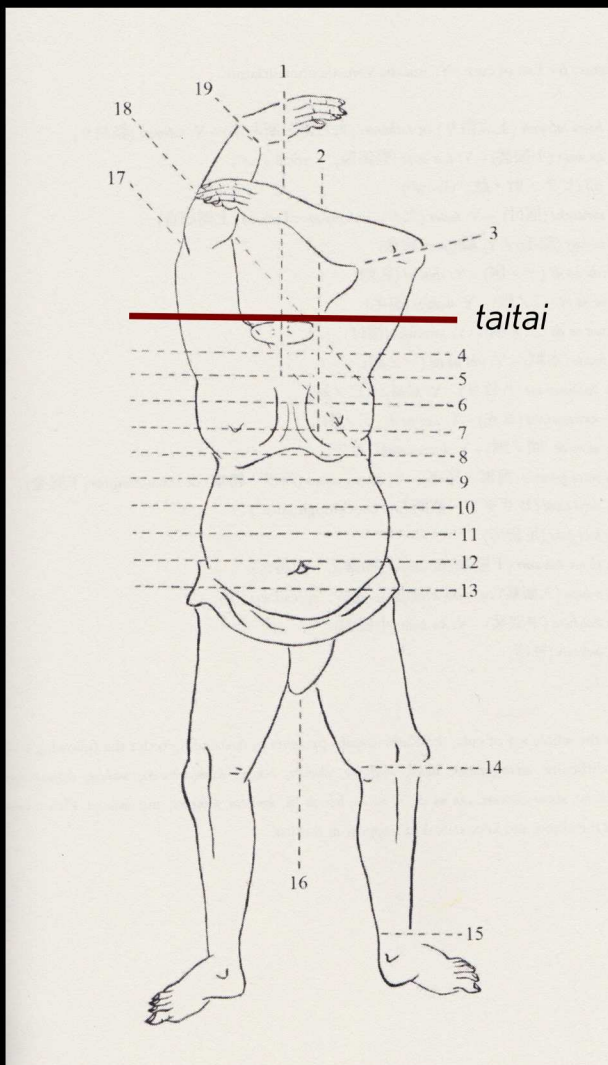
The original *mekugi-ana* before *suriage*

Estimated original shape



*Taitai dodan-barai, Kan'ei jûkyû-nen jûichigatsu yôka*  
*Ôkawa Hachiemon Nagatsugu + kaô*

Ôkawa Hachiemon Nagatsugu severed through a human body at the height of the collarbones and into the earthen mound below using this blade on the eighth day of the eleventh month in the nineteenth year of *Kan'ei* era (November 8th, 1642). *Tai tai* translates to 'fat/fat', suggesting the cut was thick and difficult.



Cutting test on a dead prisoner's body

(Kan) 寛  
 (ei) 永  
 (jû) 拾  
 (kyû) 九  
 (nen) 年  
 (jû) 十  
 (ichi) 一  
 (gatsu) 月  
 (yô) 八  
 (ka) 日  
  
 (Ô) 大  
 (kawa) 河  
 (hachi) 八  
 (e) 右  
 (mon) 門  
 (Naga) 長  
 (tsugu) 次  
 (kaô) 花押

寛永拾九年十一月八日  
 然土壇拂  
 大河右門長次

タイタイ (Taitai)  
 土 (do)  
 壇 (dan)  
 拂 (barai)

pure gold inlay



According to a *sayagaki* by *Hon'ami Chôshiki* (本阿弥長識), sword tester *Ôkawa Hachiemon* (大河八右門) was a retainer of the *Maeda* family, both the lords of the *Kaga* domain.

Records indicate that he served *Maeda Toshitsune* (前田利常), the second lord of *Kaga*. Since this sword bears an inscription dated Kan'ei 19 (1642), *Toshitsune* was still alive at the time, but the domain had already passed to the third lord, *Maeda Mitsutaka* (前田光高).

Other source note that *Ôkawa Hachiemon* carried out numerous test cuts, and that during the tenure of the fourth lord, *Maeda Tsunanori* (前田綱紀), he is recorded as having succeeded in a remarkable three-body test cut (*mitsu-dô*).



*Maeda Toshitsune*  
(1594~1658)



*Maeda Tsunanori*  
(1643~1724)

寛永拾九年十月八日  
然土壇拂  
大河八右門長識

06202406

No 3034843



鑑定書  
一、刀 無銘（兼則）  
（金象嵌）  
（タイタイ土壇拂）  
寛永拾九年十一月八日大河八右門長次（花押）  
長二尺一寸三分半  
右は當協會に於て審査の結果保存刀剣と  
鑑定しこれを証する  
令和六年八月二十三日  
公益財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協會

石川県教育委員会  
第 28104 号  
令和6年1月15日

## NBTHK Hozon Certificate of Designation

A sword designated as *Worthy of Conservation*  
by the Society for the Preservation of the Japan Art Sword

Issued in the 6th year of Reiwa (2024), August 23rd

One, Katana

*Mumei* (unsigned)

*Kanenori*

(*Kinzôgan*) *taïtai dodan-barai*

*Kanei jûkyû-nen jûichigatsu yôtaka Ôkawa Hachiemon Nagatsugu (kaô)*

*Nagasa* (length)

2-shaku 1-sun 3-bu han (64.7cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai  
(NBTHK)

\* As a rule at the NBTHK, if an unsigned sword is judged to be from the Muromachi period (or younger), the highest certificate level that the sword can receive is NBTHK Hozon.

This katana is fitted in a wonderfully old *shirasaya* with *Hon'ami sayagaki* that dates back to March 1884, wow.

It would be wise to create a new *shirasaya* for the long-term health of the blade (and of course keep the existing *shirasaya*). Unique Japan will assist the new owner with this production. Note that Hon'ami sensei attributed the sword to *Sakakura Masatoshi*, a skilled swordsmith from the early 1500s in Mino province.

美濃國坂倉正利

*Mino no Kuni Sakakura Masatoshi*

Sakakura Masatoshi from Mino province

長貳尺壹寸四分磨上無銘也

*Nagasa 2-shaku 1-sun 4-bu suriage mumei nari*

Blade length 64.7 cm, shortened, unsigned

但寛永拾九年十一月八日大河八右衛門様象嵌在之  
*Tadashi Kan'ei jûkunen jûichigatsu yôka Ôkawa Hachiemon tamesu zôgan kore ari*

A gold-inlaid inscription notes that on November 8th, 1642, Ôkawa Hachiemon performed a test cutting.

代金参拾枚

*Dai kin sanjû-mai*

Value: 30 gold coins

大河八右衛門者加賀之士元和寛永頃利常中納言ニ  
仕フ當時其業ヲ以名アリ

*Ôkawa Hachiemon wa Kaga no shi Genna Kan'ei goro*

*Toshitsune Chûnagon ni tsukau tôji sono gô o motte mei ari*

Ôkawa Hachiemon was a retainer of Kaga. During the Genna and Kan'ei eras (1615-1644), he served Lord Maeda Toshitsune, the Chûnagon of Kaga, and was renowned in his time for his skill in this artform.

明治十七年甲申春三月鑑定併記之本阿弥長識

*Meiji jûnananen kinoe-saru haru sangatsu kantei awasete kore o shirusu Hon'ami Chôshiki*

Written and appraised by *Hon'ami Chôshiki* in the spring month of March, Meiji 17 (1884) in the Year of the Monkey.



Kenwa-roku  
(Sword Chronicles)



When searching the National Library database of Japan, we discovered a book called *Kenwa-roku* (Sword Chronicles), published during the 45th year of the *Meiji* period (1912), which highlighted three swords (including this one) that completed cutting tests under the hand of *Ôkawa Hachiemon*.

It reads:

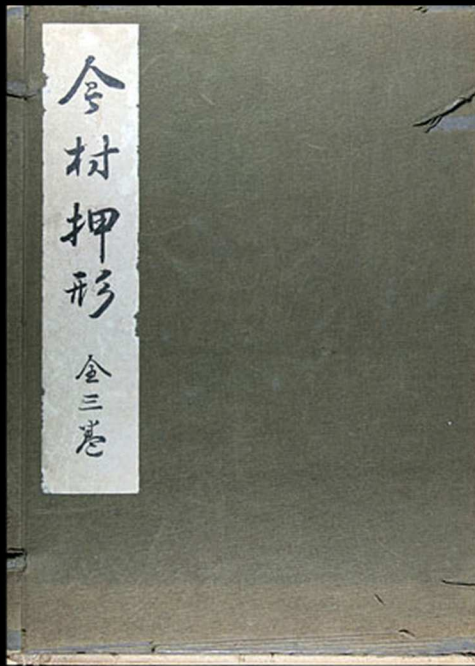
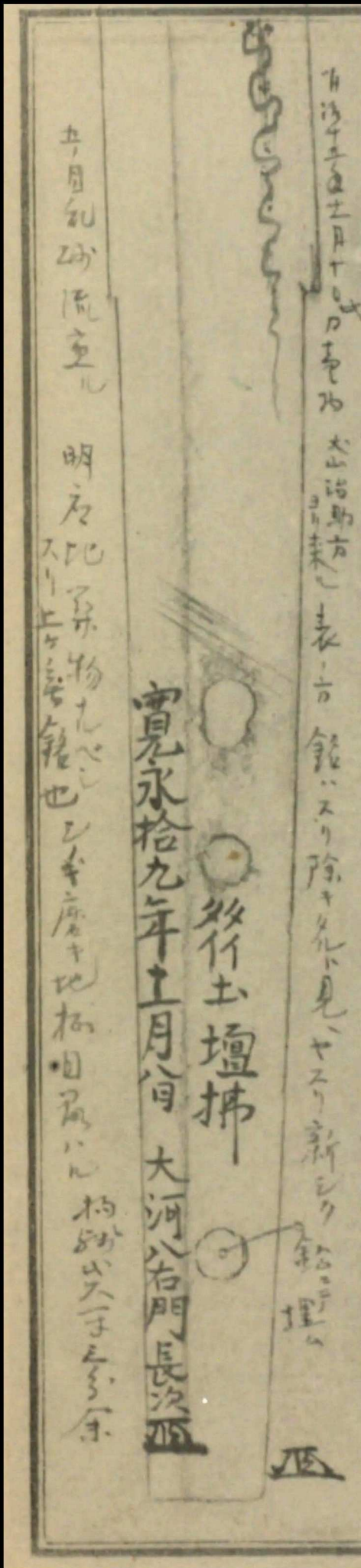
"*Ôkawa Hachiemon* (大河八右衛門), a retainer of the *Maeda* family of *Kaga*, appears to have been an exceptionally skilled tester of blades.

One test inscription reads: "Three-body cut (*mittsu-dô*) through the mound by *Ôkawa Hachiemon*," on a sword by *Kashû Kanewaka* (加州兼若). Another, on a *Kanemoto* (兼元) blade, states: "On June 8th in the 2nd year of the *Manji* era (1659), this sword severed through three bodies through the mound, tested by *Ôkawa Hachiemon*."

On an unsigned sword attributed by *sayagaki* to *Sakarakura no Seki Masatoshi* (坂倉関正利) (this *katana*), the *nakago* bears a gold-inlaid inscription: "Cutting through the mound by *Ôkawa Hachiemon Nagatsugu*, November 8th, in the 19th year of *Kan'ei* era (1642)." All of these test inscriptions were rendered in gold inlay."

"The *saya* of the *Masatoshi* blade also carries *sayagaki* by *Hon'ami Chôshiki* (本阿弥長識), which reads: "*Ôkawa Hachiemon* was a retainer of the *Maeda* family of *Kaga*. During the *Genna* and *Kan'ei* eras he served Lord *Maeda Toshitsune* (前田利常), *Chûnagon* of *Kaga*, and at that time he was renowned for his skill in this art. Recorded together with an appraisal in the spring of March, 17th year of the *Meiji* era (1884). – *Hon'ami Chôshiki*."

大河八右衛門  
○大河八右衛門は是は加州前田家の家臣で、餘程達者に切つたやうに見える。此試し銘は加州住兼若の刀に「三ッ胴土壇拂ふ大河八右衛門試之」とあり、兼元の刀「萬壽二年六月八日三ッ胴土壇に入る」とあつて、「大河八右衛門様之」とあつた。  
無銘の坂倉関正利と鞘書ある刀に、「土壇拂ふ大河八右衛門長次寛永十九年十一月八日」の試があり、孰れも金象眼に入つて居る。此大河八右衛門の試の坂倉関の鞘書に、本阿彌長識の書付がある。それに「大河八右衛門は加賀之士、元和寛永の頃利常中納言に仕ふ、當時其業を以て名あり、明治十七甲申年春三月鑑定併識之、本阿彌長識」とある。



*Imamura Oshigata Collection*

Upon further investigation, this sword was also introduced in the *Oshigata Collection* compiled by the renowned sword appraiser *Imamura Nagayoshi* (今村長賀, 1837~1910).

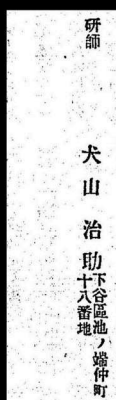
Although the entire text is difficult to read, it records the following points:

On November 10th, 1882 (Meiji 15), a man named *Inuyama Jisuke* (犬山治助) brought it in.

The blade shows *gunome-midare* with *sunagashi*. It is *mumei* (unsigned) and *suriage* (shortened).

The lowest *mekugi-ana* had already been filled with lead at that time.

It is further documented in 1890 that *Mr. Inuyama Jisuke* was active in *Shitaya-ku Tokyo*, working as a polisher while also engaging in sword dealing.

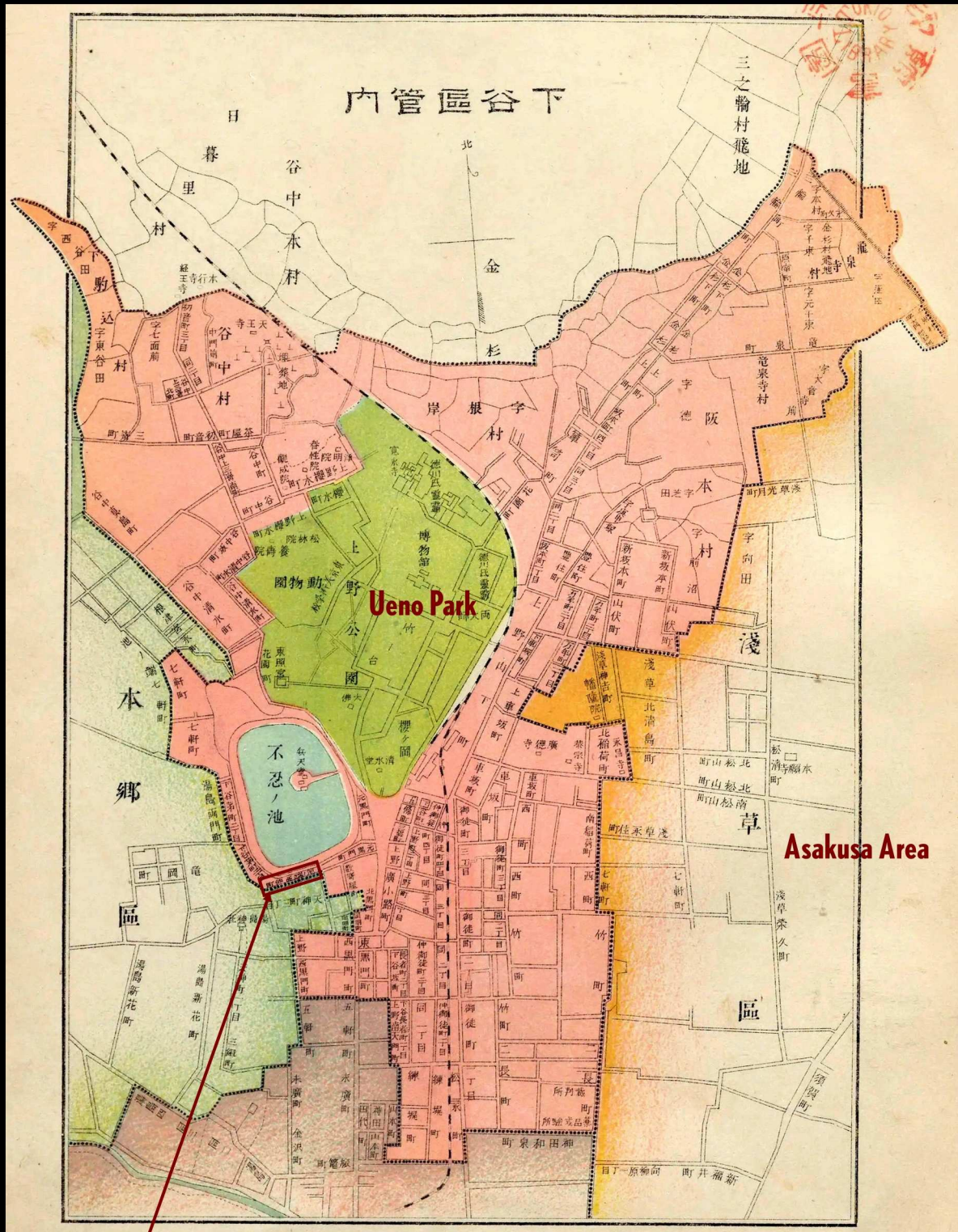


Polisher  
*Inuyama Jisuke*  
Nakamachi 18, Ikenohata, Shitaya-ku

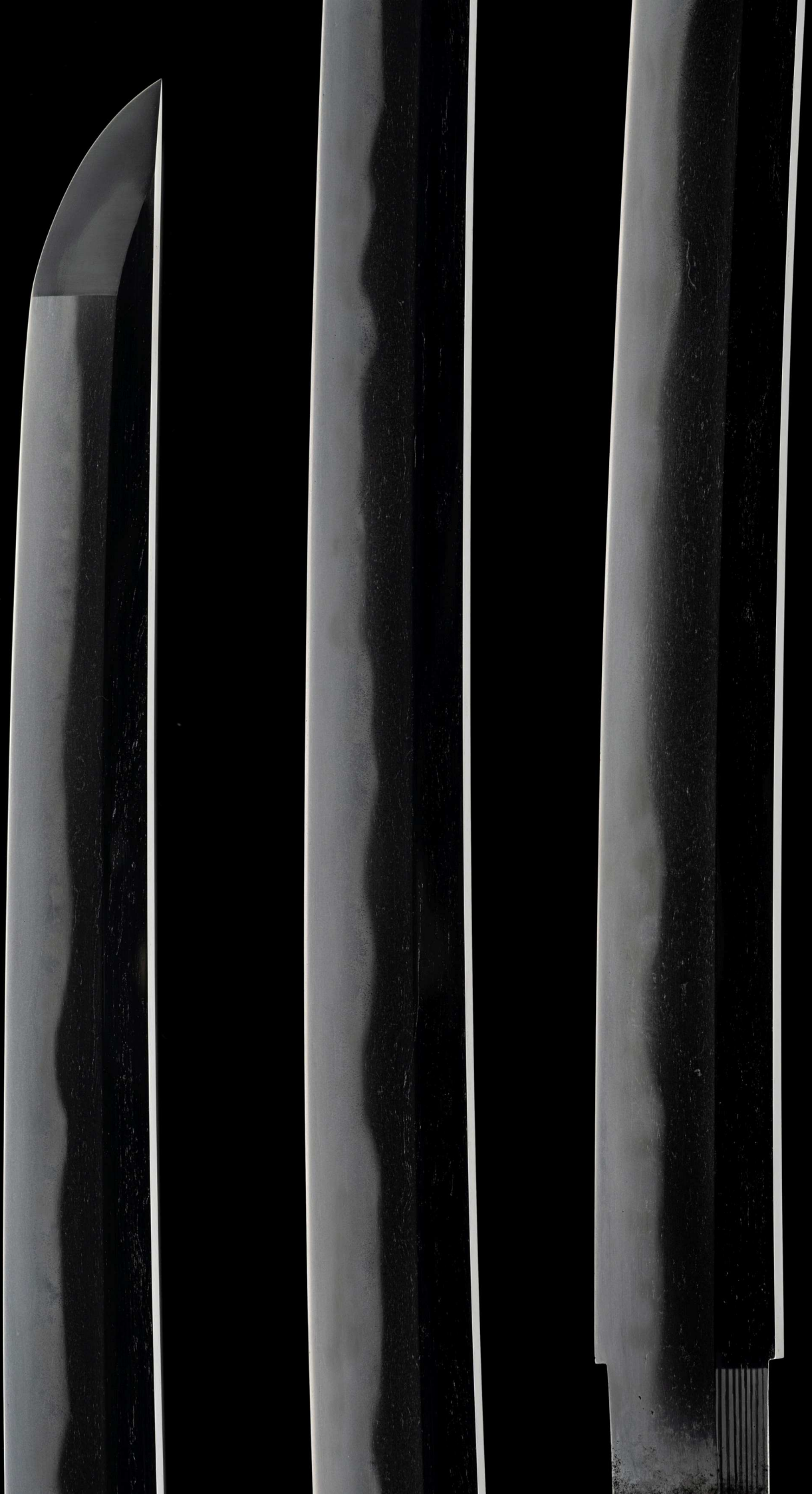
Shitaya-ku is now *Taitô-ku*, a ward in Tokyo. This is a map created in 1891.

*Ikenohata* means 'edge of the pond.'

In this case the pond is *Shinobazu Ike* in *Ueno Park*.



*Ikenohata Nakamachi*

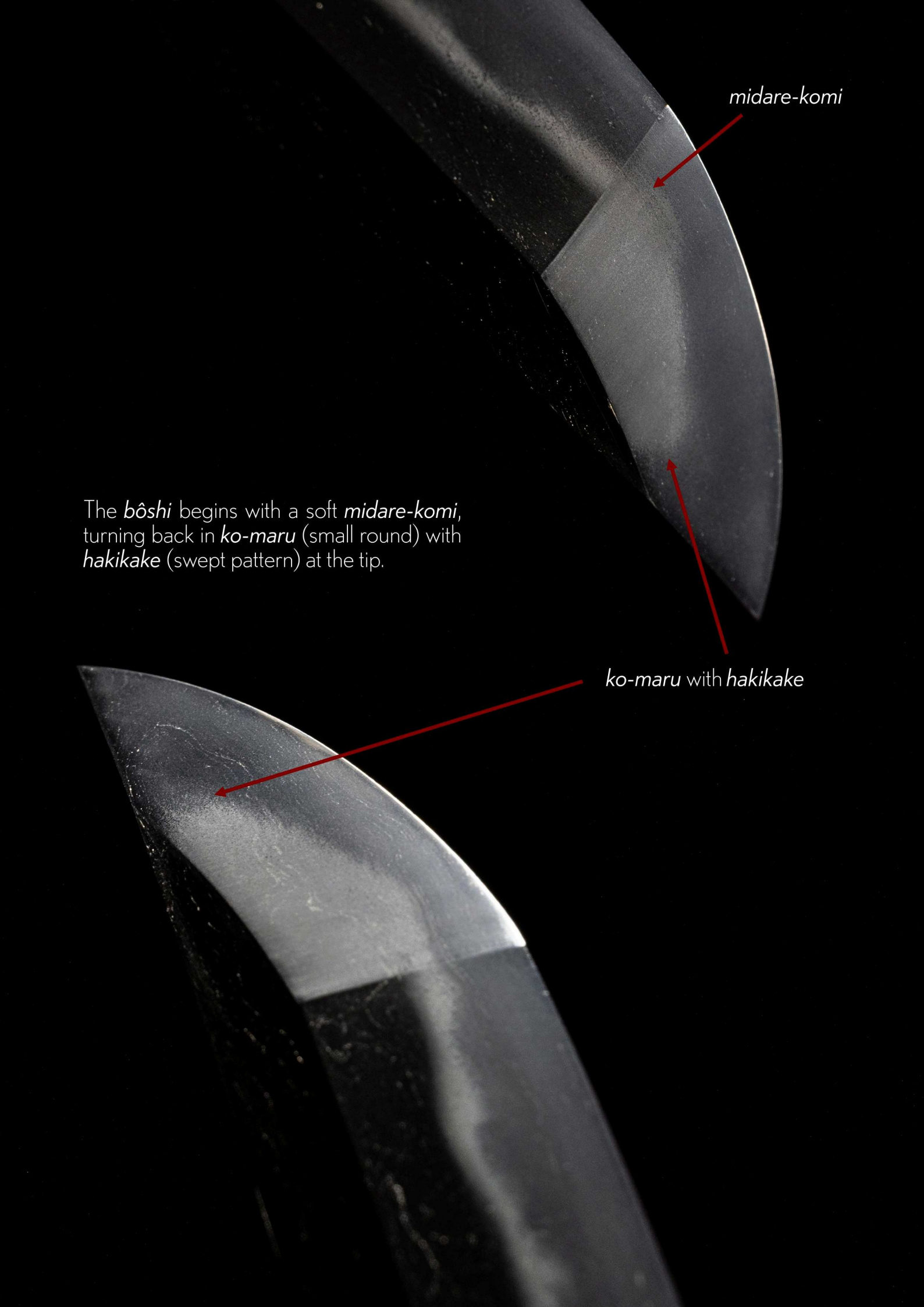




*midare-komi*

The *bôshi* begins with a soft *midare-komi*, turning back in *ko-maru* (small round) with *hakikake* (swept pattern) at the tip.

*ko-maru* with *hakikake*



*gunome-midare hamon*

A striking *gunome-midare hamon* bubbles like champagne - a toast to the katana!

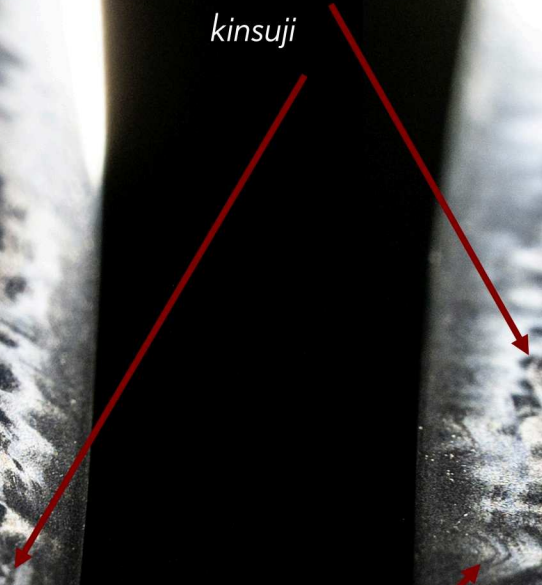
*kinsuji*

The *hamon* displays a super intense multi-layer light show with an abundance of *hataraki* featuring *kinsuji*, *tobiyaki* and *sunagashi*.

*tobiyaki*

*kinsuji*

*sunagashi*





*ying/yang*

*feel the energy*



*mokume*

*Itame-hada* mixed with *mokume*

A close-up photograph of a metal cutting tool's edge, likely a chisel or similar tool, set against a dark background. The cutting edge is brightly lit, showing a sharp, slightly irregular profile. Two red arrows originate from the word 'ashi' and point to two distinct, parallel features on the tool's face, which are the 'ashi' or 'legs' mentioned in the text. These features appear as fine, parallel lines extending from the cutting edge towards the back of the tool. The rest of the tool's body is in deep shadow, with some texture visible on its surface.

*ashi*

Long legs of *ashi* (legs) extend to the cutting edge.

A subtle treat is the presence of white *shirake-utsuri* reflecting the *hamon* inside the dark *jigane* (body) of the sword.

Look for it, you'll be glad you did.

A close-up photograph of a sword blade, showing the dark *jigane* (body) and the lighter *hamon* (edge). The blade is curved, and the lighting highlights the texture and the subtle white *shirake-utsuri* (white reflection) that mirrors the *hamon* inside the dark *jigane*. Two red arrows point to the *shirake-utsuri* on both sides of the blade.

*shirake-utsuri*

togari



*Togari-ba* (pointed) area of the *hamon* can be observed, a staple of the *Mino* tradition.



*Shirasaya* (protective scabbard)  
made in (or before) 1834

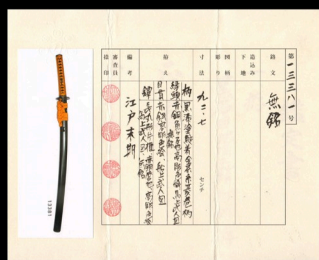
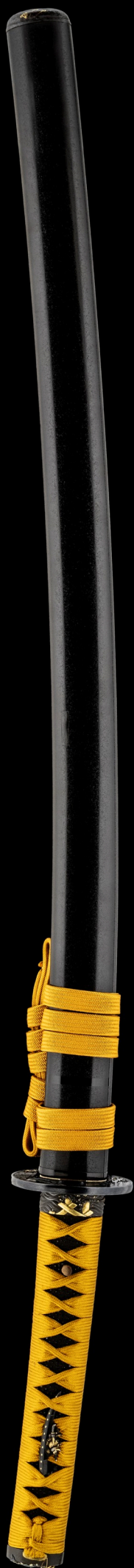


silver *habaki* on a  
copper base

*Kuro-ishime-ji-fû-nuri saya  
uchigatana-koshirae*  
(黒石目地風塗鞘打刀拵)

*Uchigatana-koshirae  
lacquered in glossy black  
with stone-surface texture*

Crafted during the  
Late Edo period  
(1780~1868)

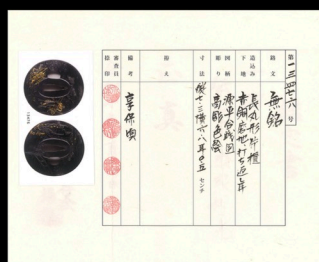


NTHK-NPO Kanteisho  
Certificate of Authenticity



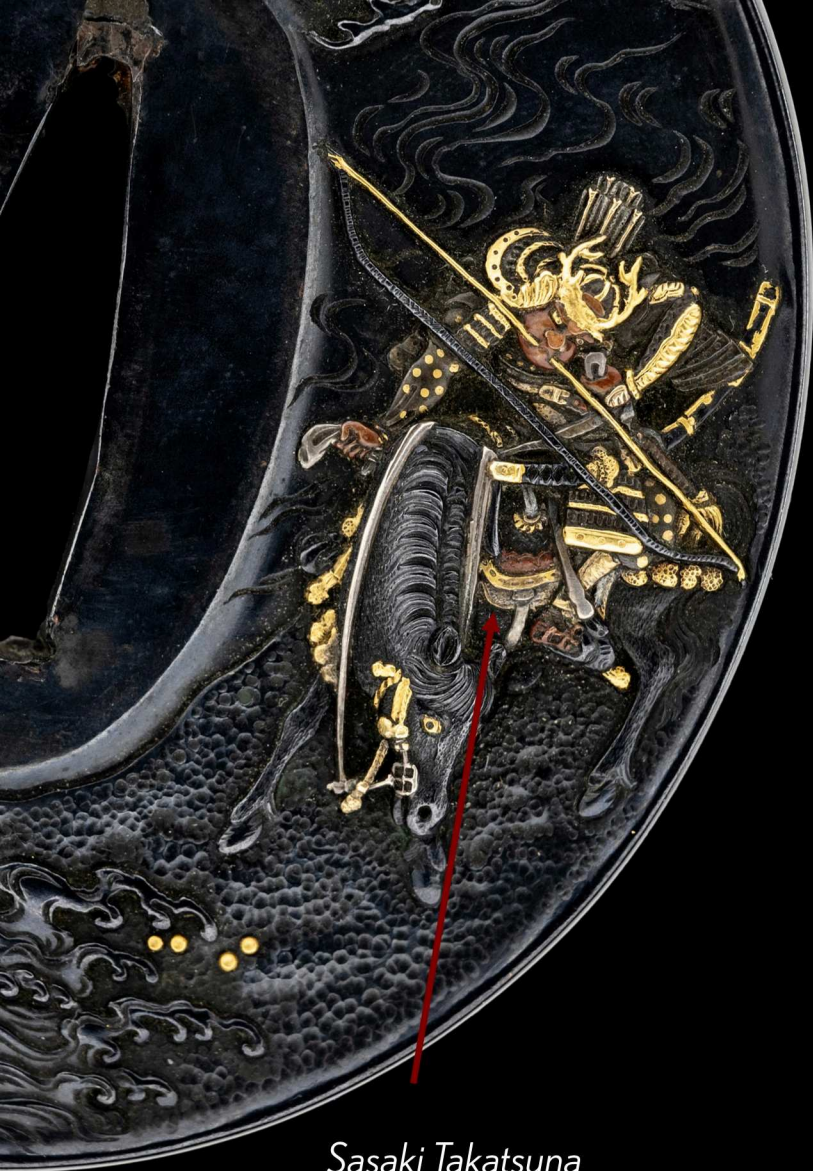
A *shakudô tsuba* depicting two samurai warriors engaged in the *Battle of the Uji River*. The surface is polished *shakudô*, dramatically represented in high relief. The level of detail is out of this world. This is the kind of *tsuba* to appreciate under a microscope.

The motif is a celebrated episode from the late *Heian* period. In 1184, during the *Genpei War*, the armies of the *Minamoto* clan clashed at the *Uji River* near *Kyoto*. When *Minamoto Yoshinaka* (源義仲) pursued *Minamoto Yoshitsune* (源義経), the warriors *Sasaki Tadatsuna* (佐々木忠綱) and *Kajiwara Kagesue* (梶原景季) competed to be the first to cross the river and strike the enemy. Their fierce rivalry to claim the honour of the vanguard became legendary, symbolizing the valour and competitive spirit of samurai warriors.



*Den Efu Nara Toshimitsu* (伝江府奈良利光)  
This superb tsuba has been attributed to *Nara Toshimitsu* from Edo (Tokyo).

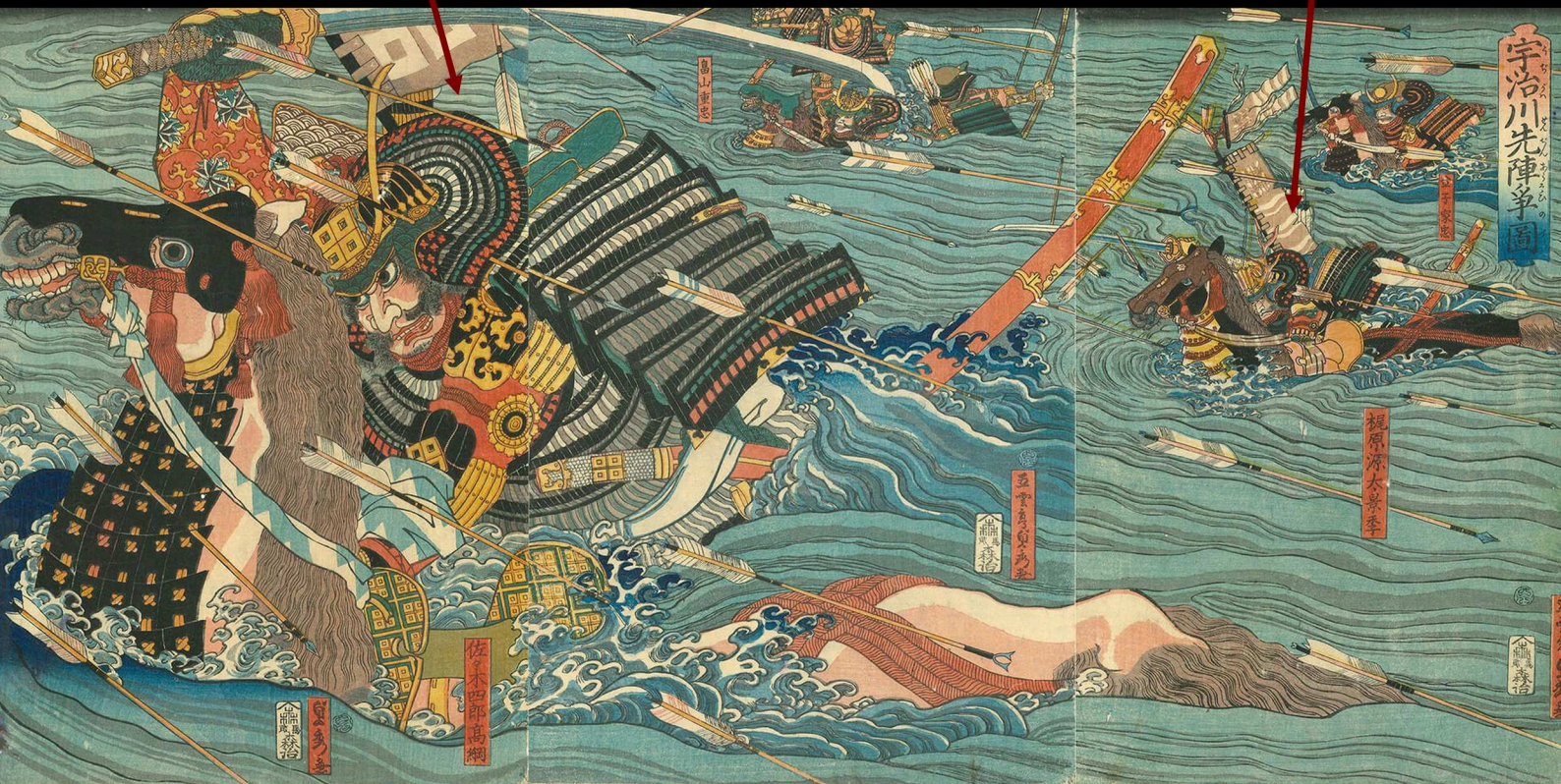
Crafted circa the *Kyohô* period (1716~1736)



Sasaki Takatsuna



Kajiwara Kagesue



The contest for the vanguard at the Battle of the Uji River  
by Utagawa Sadahide (1861)



This brilliant *fuchi-kashira* valiantly continues *the Battle of Uji River* theme as seen on the *tsuba*. The work here was performed by a different Edo period metalsmith as when illustrating the same motif, variations in style often appear depending on the maker.

The carving emphasizes deeper contrasts of light and shadow when compared to the *tsuba*. Particular attention may be drawn to the detailed rendering of the armour and the distinct facial expressions of the samurai on horseback.

Feel the energy!



Two large and powerful *menuki* are both finely detailed, depicting *samurai* advancing aboard a boat during the *Genpei War*. The imagery suggests *the Battle of Dan-no-ura*, the final and most decisive conflict of *the Genpei War*.





*Tsuka* (hilt) is wrapped over black-lacquered *samekawa* (rayskin) and golden silk





*This is samurai spirit.*



Koshirae bag

A complimentary sword maintenance kit with *mekugi-nuki* and a bottle of *Fujishiro* sword oil (trusted by the Japanese sword museum) is included with all sword purchases.



safe, extra large cloth for adding oil to the blade



ITEM# UJKA480

## A GASSAN SADAYOSHI KATANA

SIGNED, SHINSHINTÔ LATE EDO PERIOD (GENJI ERA: NOVEMBER 1864)

<b>Swordsmith:</b>	<i>Gassan Sadayoshi (shodai, first generation of modern era)</i>
<b>Measurements:</b>	<b>Length:</b> 72.1cm ( <i>ubu</i> ) <b>Sori:</b> 2.1cm <b>Moto-haba:</b> 3.05cm <b>Weight:</b> 905g
<b>Jihada:</b>	<i>Expertly forged straight grain nagare-hada with plentiful chikei</i>
<b>Hamon:</b>	<i>Vivid suguha with a touch of notare, splendid sunagashi, kinsuji and kuichigai-ba</i>
<b>Certificate #1:</b>	<b>NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon</b> ( <i>Especially Worthy of Preservation</i> )
<b>Certificates #2-4:</b>	<b>NTHK-NPO Kanteishô</b> ( <i>koshirae, fuchi-kashira and tsuba certified as Authentic</i> )
<b>Fujishiro rank:</b>	<b>Jô-saku</b> ( <i>ranked as a superior swordsmith</i> )
<b>Included:</b>	Shirasaya, Edo handachi koshirae, fabric bags, stand, kit, printed description

**SOLD**

*Gassan Sadayoshi* (月山貞吉) was celebrated for his leadership in reviving the *Gassan school* during the *Shinshintô* period. Trained in Edo under *Suishinshi Masahide*, *Sadayoshi* with his adopted son, the great *Gassan Sadakazu*, established a thriving workshop in *Ôsaka* and worked closely with the Imperial family. This strong and powerful katana, was crafted just years before the fall of the *Tokugawa shogunate* and features an exquisitely forged *nagare-hada* with excellent clarity and consistency. The *hamon* is a *suguha* base with a wonderful *bôshi* that contains rare *kuichigai-ba*. A handsome late Edo-period *handachi-koshirae* with matching fittings and a meaningful polished iron *tsuba* with depictions of the moon and mountain compliments the family name and legacy. There is a quiet, stoic confidence in this sword and *koshirae* that is deeply spiritual. This is an excellent katana for the collector who seeks both refined craftsmanship and a piece of *Last Samurai* history.



Saki-kasane: 4.4mm

Moto-kasane: 7.6mm

Kissaki: 4.36cm

Saki-haba: 2.07cm

Nagasa: 72.8cm

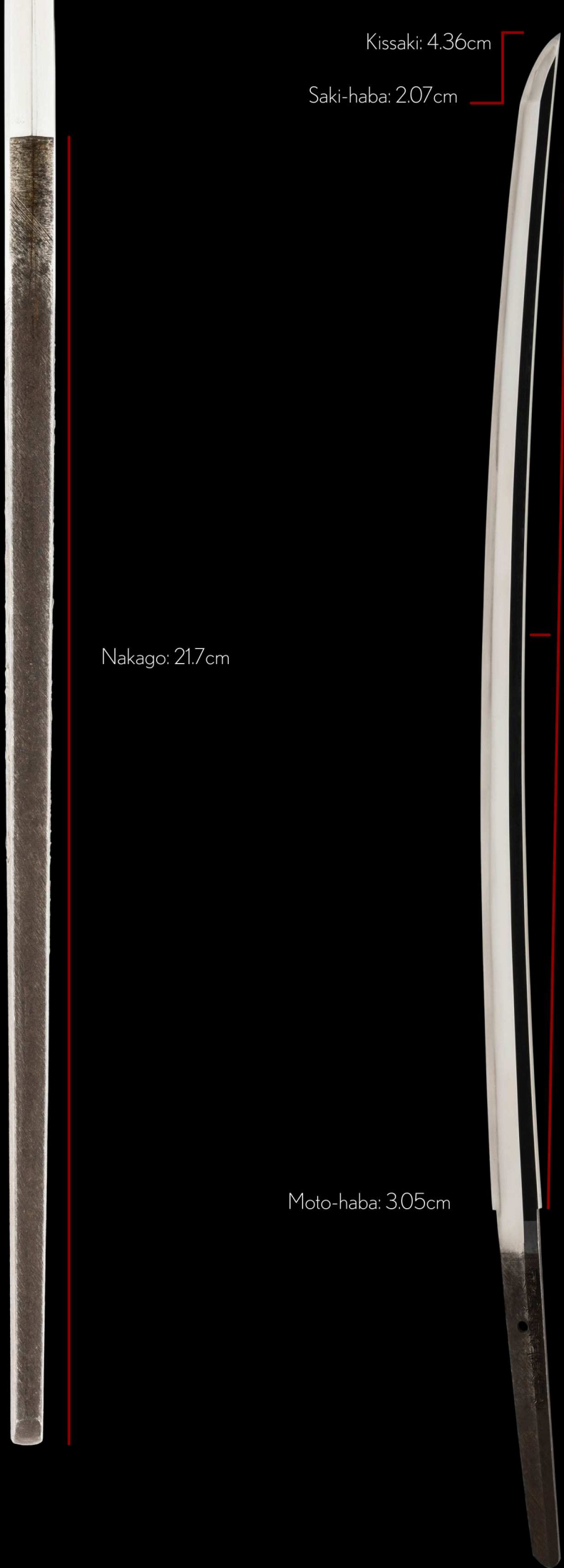
Nakago: 21.7cm

Sori: 2.1cm

Omosa: 905g

Moto-haba: 3.05cm

Mekugi-ana: 1



Born *Gassan Yahachirô*, *Gassan Sadayoshi* (月山貞吉, 1781-1870) was a pivotal figure in the *Shinshintô* period, celebrated for his leadership in reviving the *Gassan* school, one of Japan's oldest swordmaking lineages. Trained in Edo under *Suishinshi Masahide* (水心子正秀, 1760~1825), Sadayoshi studied a wide range of classical techniques before settling in *Ôsaka*, where he reestablished the *Gassan* tradition. With his adopted son, the great *Gassan Sadakazu* (月山貞一, 1836~1918), he successfully revitalized the school's hallmark - *ayasugi-hada*, the wave-like grain pattern long thought lost since the Muromachi period.

This strong and powerful katana, was crafted in the first year of *Genji* era (November 1864), and represents Sadayoshi's mature work, crafted just years before the fall of the *Tokugawa shogunate*. The blade measures 72.8 cm in length with a graceful 2.1 cm curvature. Its stately presence forms a commanding silhouette reflecting the aesthetics of the *Shinshintô* period.

The *jihada* is an exquisitely forged *nagare-hada*, that leads to *ayasugi* with subtle *itame-hada* mixed in. The beautiful *jihada* has excellent clarity and consistency - signs of high-quality craftsmanship and carefully selected *tamahagane* that the school was famous for implementing. The *hamon* is a *suguha* base with a slight touch of *notare*, creating a soft, flowing rhythm along the edge. The *nioiguchi* is deep and luminous, with fine *nie* giving the blade a calm, vivid presence.

A handsome late Edo-period *handachi-koshirae* with matching fittings and a wonderful polished iron *tsuba* with depictions of the moon and mountain further compliments the family name and legacy. It exudes an understated samurai elegance.

All told, this *katana* reflects the clarity, balance, and tradition of a master who stood at the crossroads of past and future. There is a quiet, stoic confidence in this sword and *koshirae* that is deeply spiritual. An excellent katana of the *Gassan Sadayoshi's* legacy, and a meaningful piece for the collector who seeks both refined craftsmanship and a veritable piece of Last Samurai history.



Family name: *Gassan*

Swordsmith: *Sadayoshi* (first generation)

*ubu-nakago* (original, unaltered tang)

*keshô-tsuki ô-sujikai* (slanting file marks with *keshô*)



月  
山  
貞  
吉  
作  
之

月 (Ga)

山 (ssan)

貞 (Sada)

吉 (yoshi)

作 (tsukuru)

之 (kore)



Mt. Gassan



The *Gassan* school, rooted in the sacred mountains of *Dewa* Province, stands as one of Japan's oldest swordsmith lineages. Originating in the *Kamakura* period, its early blades emerged from a spiritual world shaped by *shugendô* and mountain asceticism. Though remote, the tradition has endured and continuously refined across centuries.

*Genji gan kinoe-nedoshi Shimotsuki*

Signed in the eleventh month of the first year of *Genji* era, the Year of the Rat (November 1864).

(Gen) 元

(ji) 治

(Gan) 元

(kinoe) 甲

(ne) 子

(doshi) 歲

(Shimo) 霜

(tsuki) 月



*Ha agari kurijiri*, a type of *nakagojiri* (butt-end of the tang) is rounded, similar to that of *kurijiri* (chestnut shaped) but the cutting edge side slants more steeply than the back (*mune* side).

*ha agari kurijiri*



This is a powerful, muscular katana, with a weight of over 900g just the blade alone. And being crafted at the end of 1864 makes it one of the final swords to be crafted during the Edo period.

A formidable *Last Samurai* sword.

特保  
05202312

№ 1022094



鑑定書

一 刀 銘  
月山貞吉作之  
元治元甲子歳霜月

長 二尺四寸

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

令和六年二月二十一日

公益財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協會



和歌山県教育委員会  
第 11194 号  
昭和41年7月21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 6th year of Reiwa (2024), February 21st

One, Katana

*Mei* (signature)

*Gassan Sadayoshi kore o tsukuru*  
*Genji gan kinoe-nedoshi Shimotsuki*

*Nagasa* (length)

2-shaku 4-sun (72.8cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai  
(NBTHK)

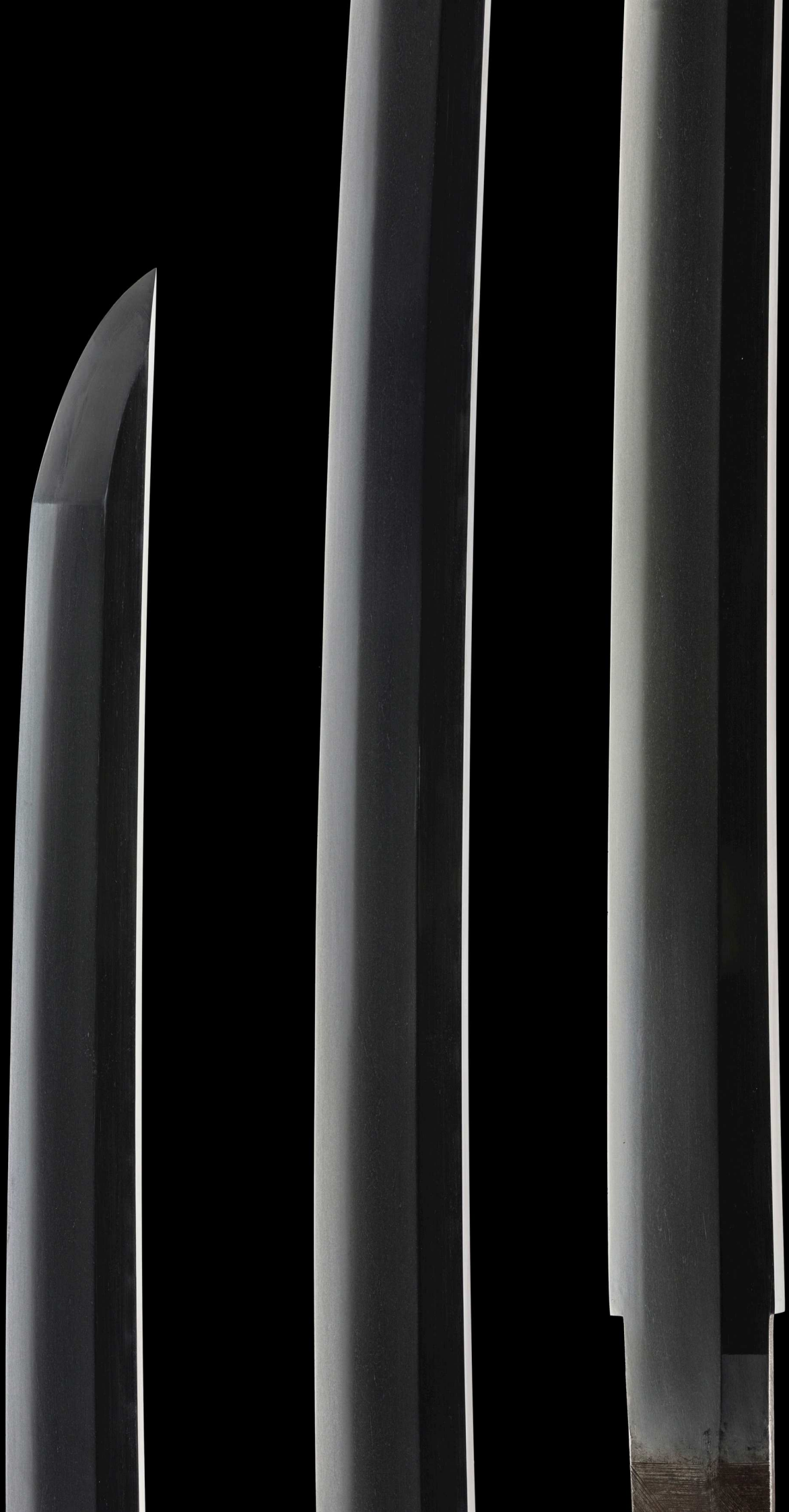


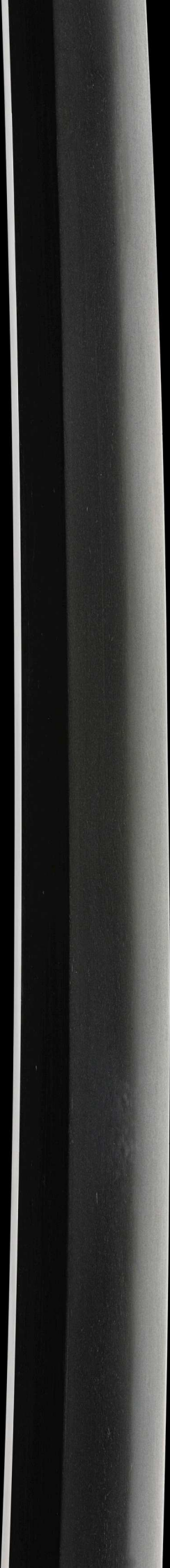
月山貞吉  
*Gassan Sadayoshi*  
Gassan Sadayoshi

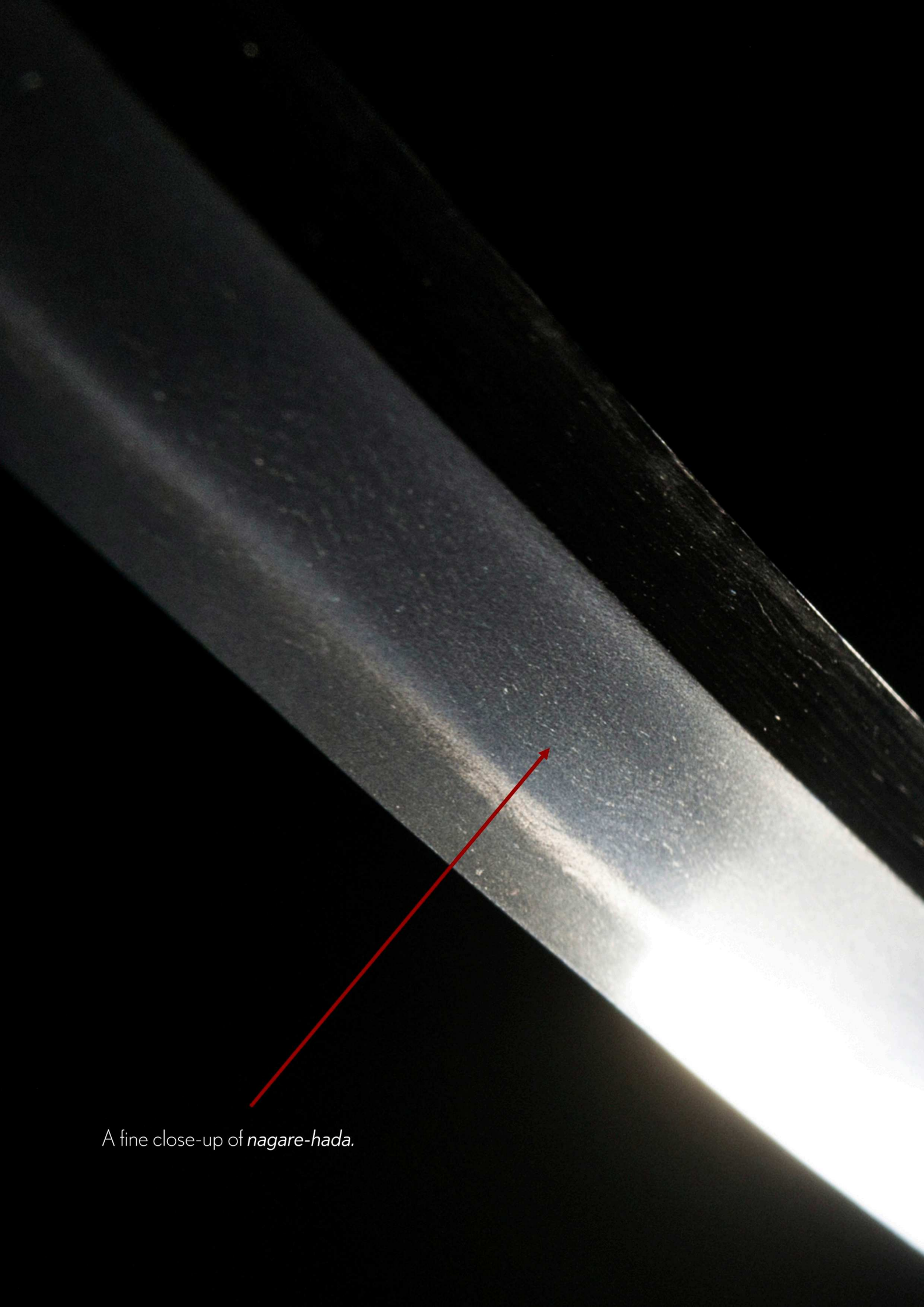
元治元甲子歳霜月  
*Genji gan Kinoe-nedoshi Shimotsuki*  
In the eleventh month of the first year of Genji era,  
Year of the Rat (November 1864)

長貳尺四寸有之  
*Nagasa 2-shaku 4-sun kore ari*  
Blade length 72.8 cm

令和七乙巳年葉月吉日誌之  
*Reiwa nana kinoto-midoshi Hazuki kichijitsu kore o shirusu*  
Written on a lucky day in the eighth month in the seventh year  
of Reiwa era during the Year of the Snake (August 2025)







A fine close-up of *nagare-hada*.

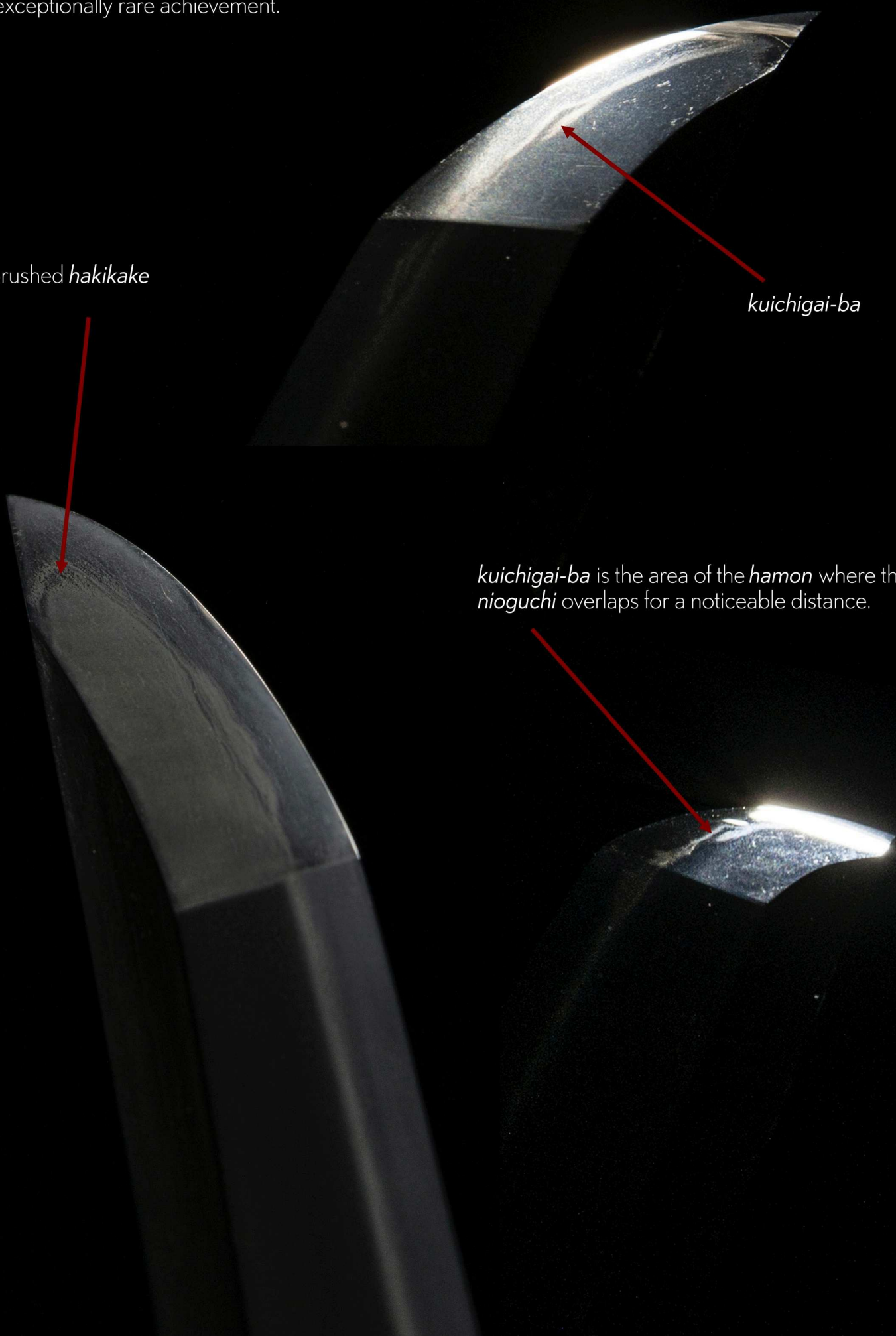
The *bôshi* showcases the mastery of *Gassan Sadayoshi*.

The presence of *kuichigai-ba* in the *kissaki* is an exceptionally rare achievement.

brushed *hakikake*

*kuichigai-ba*

*kuichigai-ba* is the area of the *hamon* where the *nioguchi* overlaps for a noticeable distance.






*shirake-utsuri*

long, impressive line of *kinsuji*

This is a sword that calms the soul.

The *jihada* is a running straight grain *nagare-hada* that forms the *Yamato-den* foundation of the sword. This allows the blade to showcase brushed strokes of *sunagashi* with dark lines of *kinsuji* piercing through the bright *suguha* (straight) *hamon*.

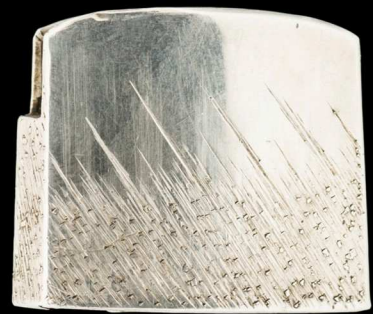
*Kinsuji and sunagashi* flowing through the brilliant *suguha hamon*.

A close-up photograph of a sword blade, showing the hamon (edge) and the grain patterns. The blade is dark, and the hamon is a bright, straight line. The grain patterns are visible as dark lines (kinsuji) and brushed strokes (sunagashi) flowing through the hamon. Two red arrows point to the hamon and the grain patterns.

*nagare-hada* (running)



*Shirasaya*  
(protective scabbard, brand new)

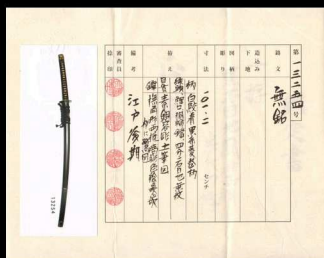


silver *habaki* with  
diagonal rain file marks

*Kuro-ishime-ji-fû-nuri saya  
handachi-koshirae*  
(黒石目地風塗鞘半太刀拵)

*Uchigatana-koshirae  
lacquered in black with  
stone-like surface style*

Crafted during the  
Late Edo period  
(1780~1868)

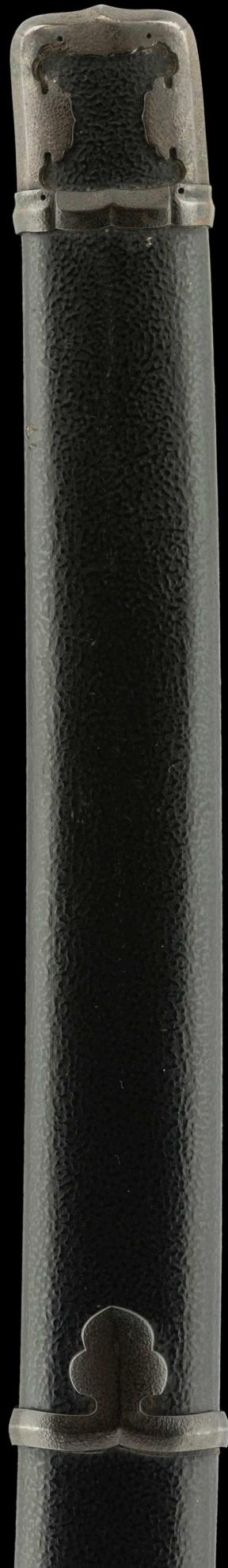


NTHK-NPO Kanteisho  
Certificate of Authenticity



fuchi

kojiri



A superb set of fittings crafted entirely in *shibuichi* (a lovely alloy of 1/4 silver and 3/4 copper) adorns this fine *handachi-koshirae* - evoking the true samurai taste of understated elegance.

The *fuchi*, *kashira*, *kojiri*, and *dôrin* are perfectly matched, lending a subtle yet powerful uniformity. As this *koshirae* has been certified to the late Edo period, it would be the *original koshirae* to this katana. Even the *ishime* (stone) finish of the *koshirae* matches the aesthetic of fittings.



NTHK-NPO Kanteisho



kashira

dôrin

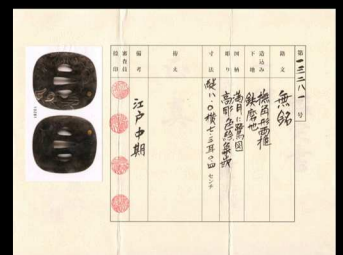
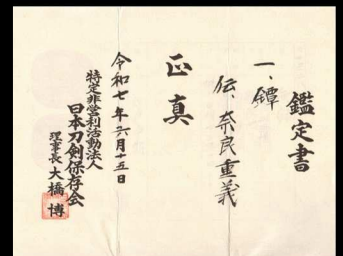




This elegant polished iron *tsuba*, attributed to *Nara Shigeyoshi* of mid-Edo period, features a refined depiction of a heron beneath a full moon, quietly resting among reeds and flowing water. Shigeyoshi was a metalsmith within the *Nara* school, known for its sophisticated metal inlay and carving techniques.

In poetic harmony with the smith's name, "Gassan" (meaning *Moon Mountain*), this *tsuba* features a gorgeous moon over a mountain range rendered subtly in silver and gold accents.

The scene embodies the natural beauty of Japan and deepens the symbolic resonance of the mounted *koshirae* as a whole.





(reverse)



This pair of extra-long copper *menuki* (decorative grips on the hilt) depicts *tsukushi* – the horsetail plant – in fine naturalistic detail. A humble yet seasonally significant motif, *tsukushi* emerges in early spring, symbolizing quiet resilience, new beginnings, and the subtle cycles of nature.

Though unassuming in form, the choice of horsetail carries layered meaning in sword mountings. In Japanese culture, *tsukushi* evokes the spirit of renewal and perseverance – qualities resonant with the ethos of the *samurai*. It also reflects an aesthetic sensitivity toward the transient beauty of seasonal change, a hallmark of Edo-period artistic sensibility.

Worn beneath the tightly woven *tsuka-ito* of the sword's hilt, these *menuki* serve both a functional and symbolic role – enhancing grip while embedding poetic imagery into the very hand of the warrior.





*Koshirae bag with kiku-mon  
(chrysanthemums) and the  
Tokugawa aoi-mon.*



ITEM# UJKA481

## A MIIKE KATANA KATANA

UNSIGNED, CHÛ-KOTÔ LATE KAMAKURA PERIOD (CIRCA EARLY 1300S)

- Swordsmith:** *Miike school (Late Kamakura period)*
- Measurements:** **Length:** 68.2cm (*o-suriage*) **Sori:** 1.3cm **Moto-haba:** 3.07cm **Weight:** 565g
- Jihada:** *Densely forged itame that tends somewhat to nagare and that features plenty of fine ji-nie and some shirake all over the blade*
- Hamon:** *Large and gently undulating notare that tends to suguha-chō and that is mixed with gunome, many chōji-ashi, shimi along the entire ha, sunagashi, and kinsuji in places*
- Certificate #1:** **11th NBTHK Jūyō Tōken** (an important sword, passed on November 15, 1963)
- Authentication:** **Sayagaki by Kanzan-sensei** (Mr. Kanzan Satō)
- Included:** Shirasaya, fabric bag, stand, kit, printed description

# SOLD

The *Miike* school, based in *Chikugo* province, traces its origins to the late *Heian* period with their most renowned blade being the *Ôdenta Mitsuyo*, a National Treasure, and one of *Five Great Swords*, once held by the *Maeda* family. This wonderful katana attributed to the *Miike* school dates back to the late *Kamakura* period, circa 1300. It comes with a prestigious early 11th session *jūyō-tōken* level certification and vintage *sayagaki* by *Kanzan-sensei* from 1970 attesting to the sword being an heirloom of the powerful *Shimazu* family from *Satsuma* province. Its *sugata* is broad and commanding, with a *hamon* filled with *ashi*, *sunagashi*, and *kinsuji*. A fine sword from a notable *daimyō* family who took care of it for centuries. Now, onto its next chapter of life.



Saki-kasane: 3.6mm

Moto-kasane: 4.9mm

Kissaki: 4.04cm

Saki-haba: 2.45cm

Nagasa: 68.2cm

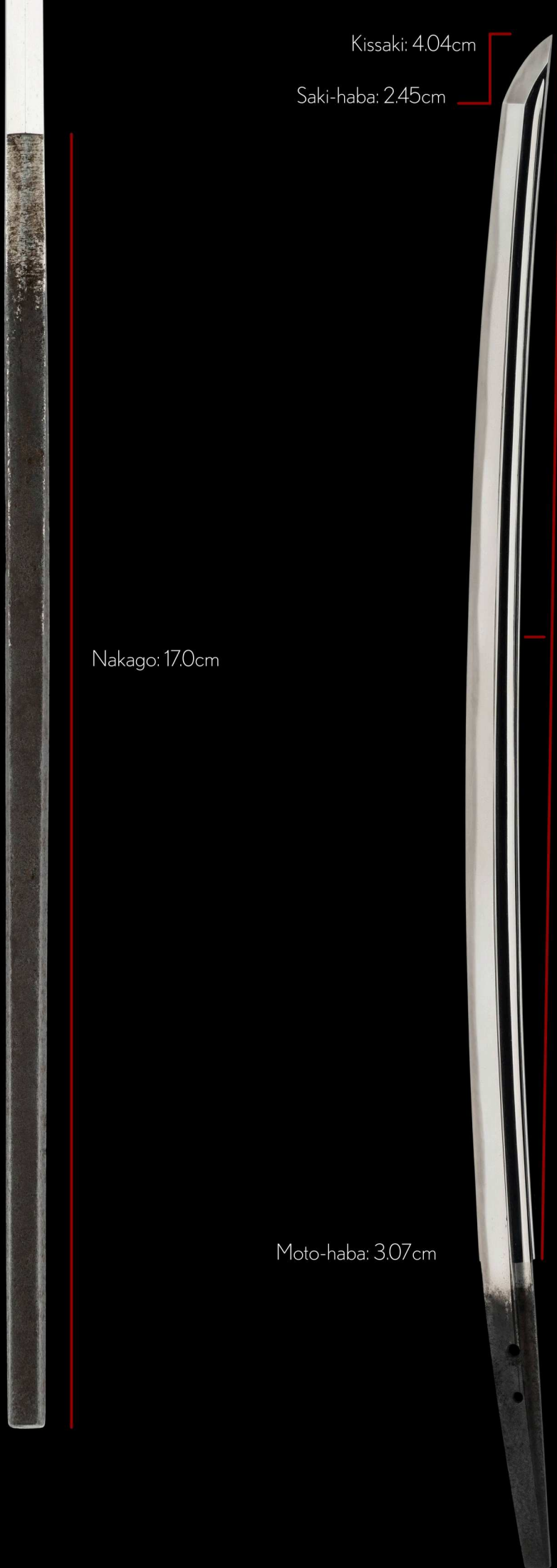
Nakago: 17.0cm

Sori: 1.3cm

Omosa: 565g

Moto-haba: 3.07cm

Mekugi-ana: 2



The *Miike* school, based in *Chikugo* province, traces its origins to the late *Heian* period and is one of the oldest sword-smithing traditions in *Kyûshû*. Its founder, *Miike Denta Mitsuyo* (三池典太光世), flourished in the 11th century. The most renowned blade from this lineage is the *Ôdenta Mitsuyo* (大典太光世), a National Treasure and one of the legendary *Tenka Goken* (Five Great Swords), once held by the *Maeda* family. Its massive size and formidable craftsmanship symbolize the early *Miike* school's legacy.

By the late *Kamakura* period, warfare had evolved into more mobile, close-quarter combat, prompting the development of lighter, more agile blades without sacrificing cutting power. *Miike* smiths responded with swords featuring wide *mihaba*, thinner *kasane*, and slightly extended *chû-kissaki*, optimized for battlefield functionality. *Miike* craftsmanship is marked by robust construction and dignified *jihada*. Their blades often show flowing *itame* mixed with *mokume* and *masame*, with *shirake* - known as "*Miike-hada*" - along with thick *chikei* and occasional *utsuri*. These features convey visual richness and technical skill.

The *hamon* usually follows a straight *suguha* base blended with soft *gunome* or *chôji* elements. Executed in *nie-deki*, it includes active details like *sunagashi* and *kinsuji*. *Miike* blades often feature bold carvings such as *bôhi*, sometimes paired with *soebi*. Especially notable is the *Miike-bôhi* - a broad, deep groove with sharp termination points - reflecting the school's emphasis on structure and rhythm.

This wonderful *ô-suriage* blade from the late *Kamakura* period displays all the hallmarks of the *Miike* school - a prestigious early *jûyô-tôken* level sword to join any quality *nihontô* collection. Its *sugata* is broad and commanding, with a shallow curvature and a slightly extended *kissaki*. The *jihada* features tight *itame* with a whitish tone and thick *chikei*, while the *hamon* combines straight and irregular forms, filled with *ashi*, *sunagashi*, and *kinsuji*. There is much to study and appreciate in a sword of this pedigree.

This katana comes with *sayagaki* by *Kanzan-sensei* attesting to the sword being an heirloom of the powerful *Shimazu* family from *Satsuma* province in *Kyûshû*. One can consider building a custom *koshirae* with the *Shimazu kamon* (crest), which would pay honourable tribute to the sword and family who took care of it for centuries. Unique Japan will gladly assist the new custodian with this process.



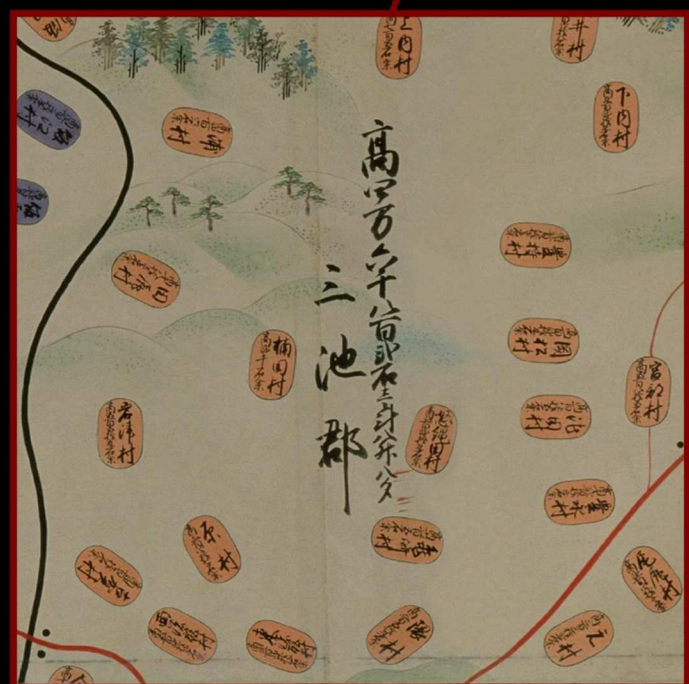
Location: *Chikugo* province

School name: *Miike*

*ô-suriage-nakago* (shortened tang)

*katte-sagari-yasurime* (slanting file marks)

The name *Miike* (mee-kay) refers to a swordsmith lineage based in Miike District, *Chikugo* Province - part of present-day *Fukuoka* Prefecture in *Kyûshû*. The region was historically known for sword production, and the school's name reflects its strong geographical and cultural roots.



(*ura*, reverse)



*kurijiri*  
chestnut shaped *nakagojiri* (butt end)

重要第九九六號

指定書

刀 大磨上無銘 三池 一口

長二尺二寸五分 反五分弱

鑄造 庵棟 中鋒

鍛板目流れごころに地沸細かにつき

総体に白けごころがある

又文直刃仕立て淺く湾れ互の目交

り丁子足入り金筋かかる

彫物表裏棒樋に漆樋

茎大磨上目釘孔二

右者當協會に於て審査の結果

重要刀劍に指定する

昭和卅八年十一月十五日

財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協會

會長 細川護立



Jûyô Certificate No. 996  
Shiteisho (指定書) Certificate of Designation  
Katana, ô-suriage mumei: Miike school (三池)

Measurements

nagasa 2-shaku 2-sun 5-bu (68.2 cm), sori 5-bu jaku (1.3 cm)

Description

Keijô: *shinogi-zukuri*, *iori-mune*, *chû-kissaki*

Kitae: *itame* that tends somewhat to *nagare* and that features plenty of fine *ji-nie* and some *shirake* all over the blade

Hamon: large and gently undulating *notare* that tends to *suguha-chô* and that is mixed with *gunome*, many *chôji-ashi*, and some *kinsuji*

Horimono: on both sides a *bôhi* with *soebi*

Nakago: *ô-suriage*, two *mekugi-ana*

According to the result of the shinsa committee of our society we judged this work as authentic and rate it as *Jûyô-Tôken*.

November 15, 1963

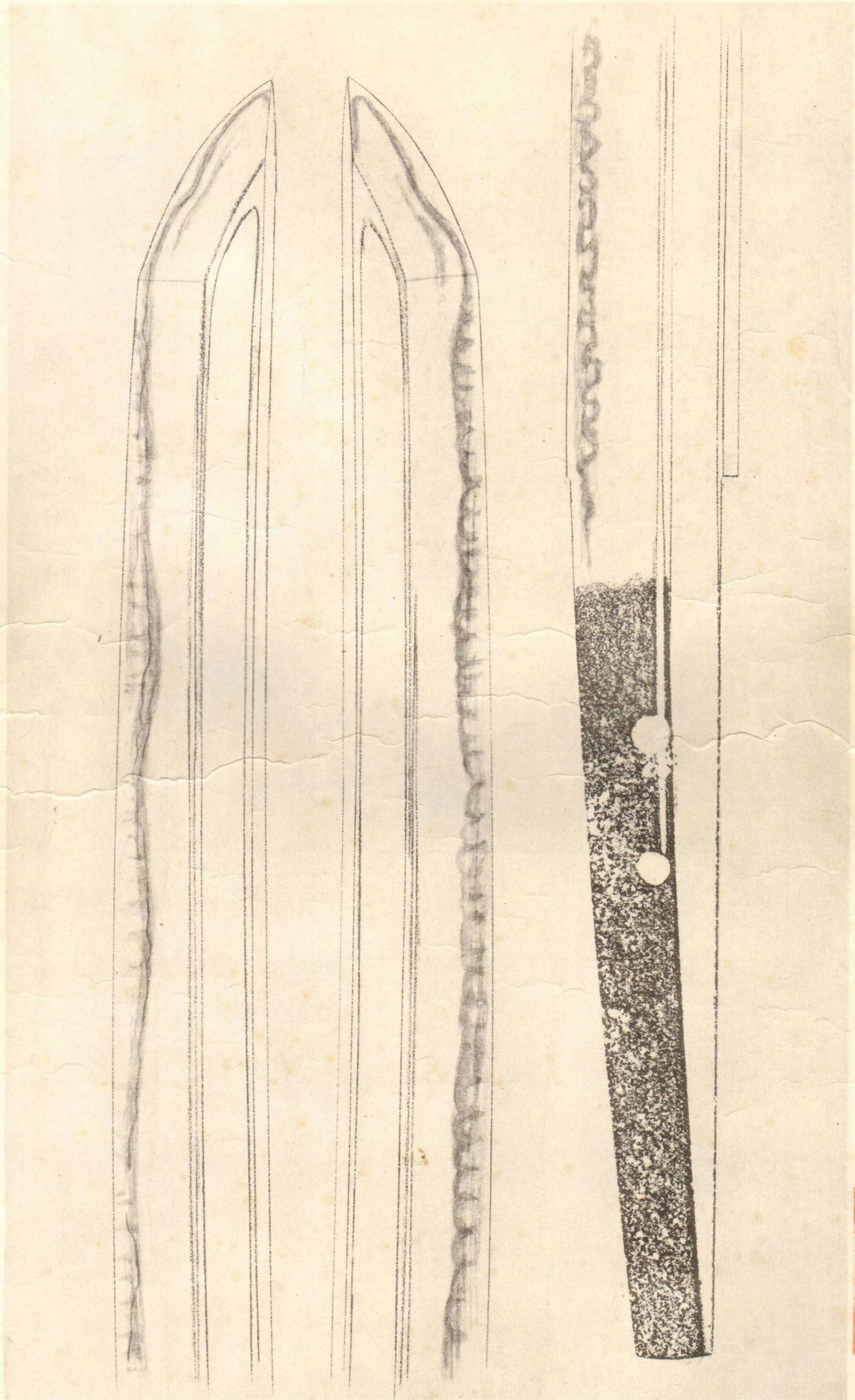
[Foundation] Nihon Bijutsu Tôken Hozon Kyôkai, NBTHK

[President] *Hosokawa Moritatsu* (細川護立)

This katana was awarded NBTHK *jûyô-tôken* at the 11th session way back in November 1963. At that time, *Tokubetsu Jûyô* had yet to be introduced, thus this was the highest honour at the museum. These early *jûyô* certificates make such swords extra special for that reason.



刀 無銘 三池



The Jûyô-Tôken white paper



第十一回重要刀劍指定  
三池  
但大磨上無銘也  
島津家傳來之一

*Dai jûikkai Jûyô-Tôken shitei*  
*Miike*  
*Tadashi ô-suriage mumei nari*  
*Shimazu-ke denrai no hitotsu*

*Jûyô-Tôken at the 11th Jûyô Shinsa*  
*Miike*  
This blade is *ô-suriage mumei*.  
It was a heirloom of the Shimazu family.

刃長貳尺貳寸五分有之  
*Hachô 2-shaku 2-sun 5-bu kore ari*  
Blade length ~ 68.2 cm

昭和庚戌年夏日  
寒山誌「花押」  
*Shôwa kanoë-inudoshi kajitsu*  
*Kanzan shirusu + kaô*

Written by Kanzan on a summer day in the year of the dog of  
the Shôwa era (1970) + monogram.



The *Shimazu* clan were the *daimyô* of the *Satsuma han*, which spread over Satsuma.

The *Shimazu* were identified as one of the *tozama* or outsider *daimyô* families in contrast with the *fudai* or insider clans which were hereditary vassals or allies of the *Tokugawa* clan.





The NBTHK remarks on the 11th *jûyô* certificate are concise and impacting.

*"This blade is ô-suriage mumei, and its powerful shape dates it to the end of the Kamakura period. With its skilfully engraved wide and shallow hi and the interpretation of its jiba, the blade reflects the typical characteristics traditionally associated with the Miike School."*





*notarekomi* (wavy) with a very small turnback

*nijû-ba*





A bright, beautiful *noiguchi* displaying  
a calm *notare hamon*.

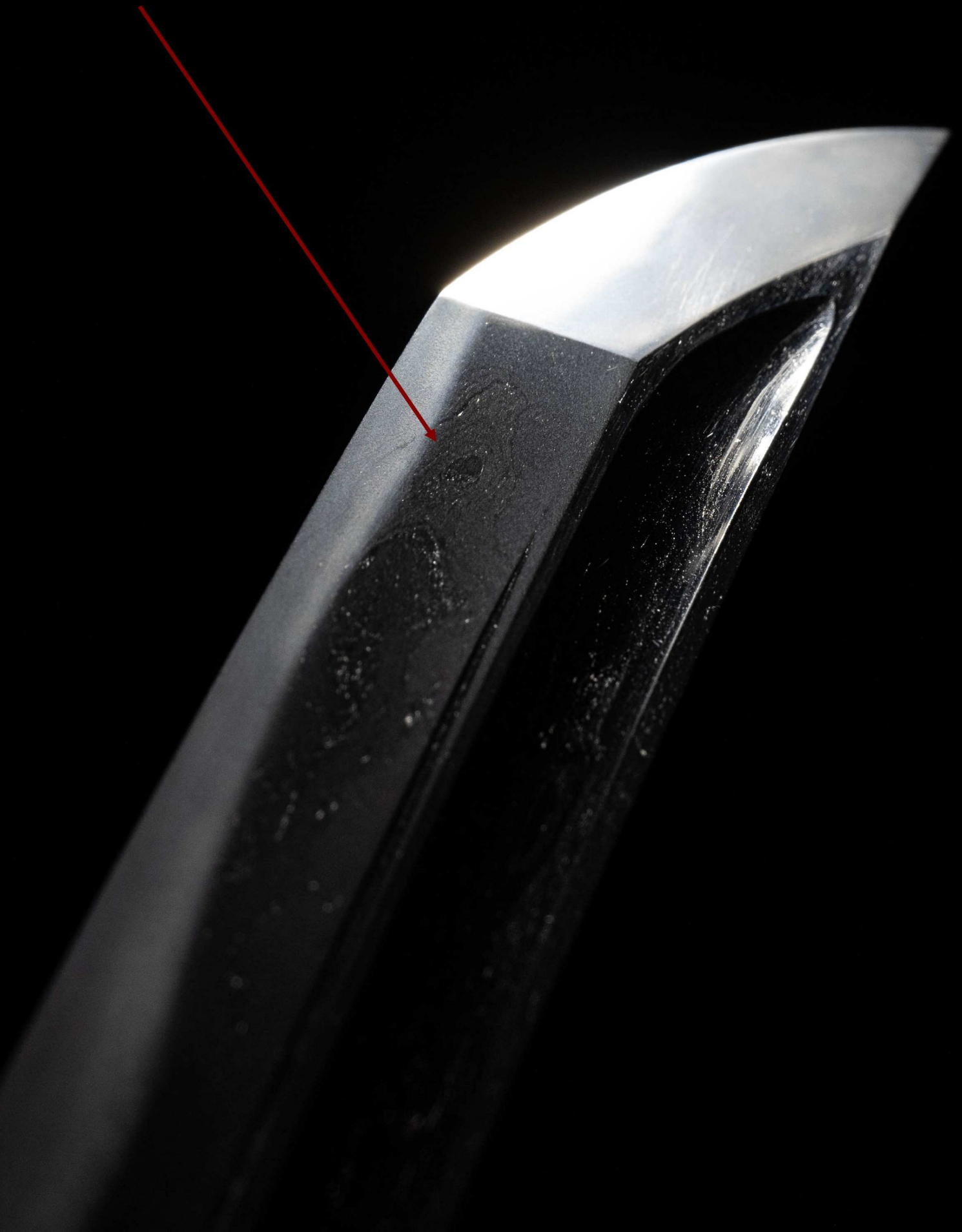



*Chôji-ashi* captured on this dignified blade.



An exceptionally long *kinsuji*—formed by martensitic structures within the *hamon* - runs along the blade, indicating precise differential hardening and expert *yakiire* control.

From *chikei* to *kinsuji*, this is what makes *kotô* period swords so intriguing. Note this lovely burl-grain *mokume* formation that expands like a *zen* rock garden.



A close-up photograph of a sword blade, showing the transition from the dark, polished *itame-hada* (edge) to the lighter, textured *shirake* (back). The blade is oriented diagonally from the top-left to the bottom-right. Two red arrows point from text annotations to specific features on the blade's surface.

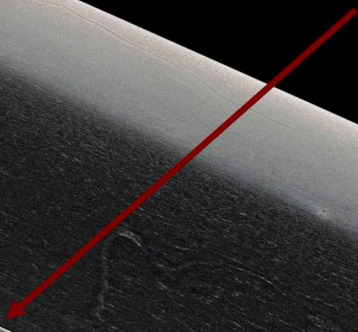
Densely forged *itame-hada* with *shirake* (whitish tone), characteristics of the *Miike* school.

Lovely stream of consistent *nie* crystals.



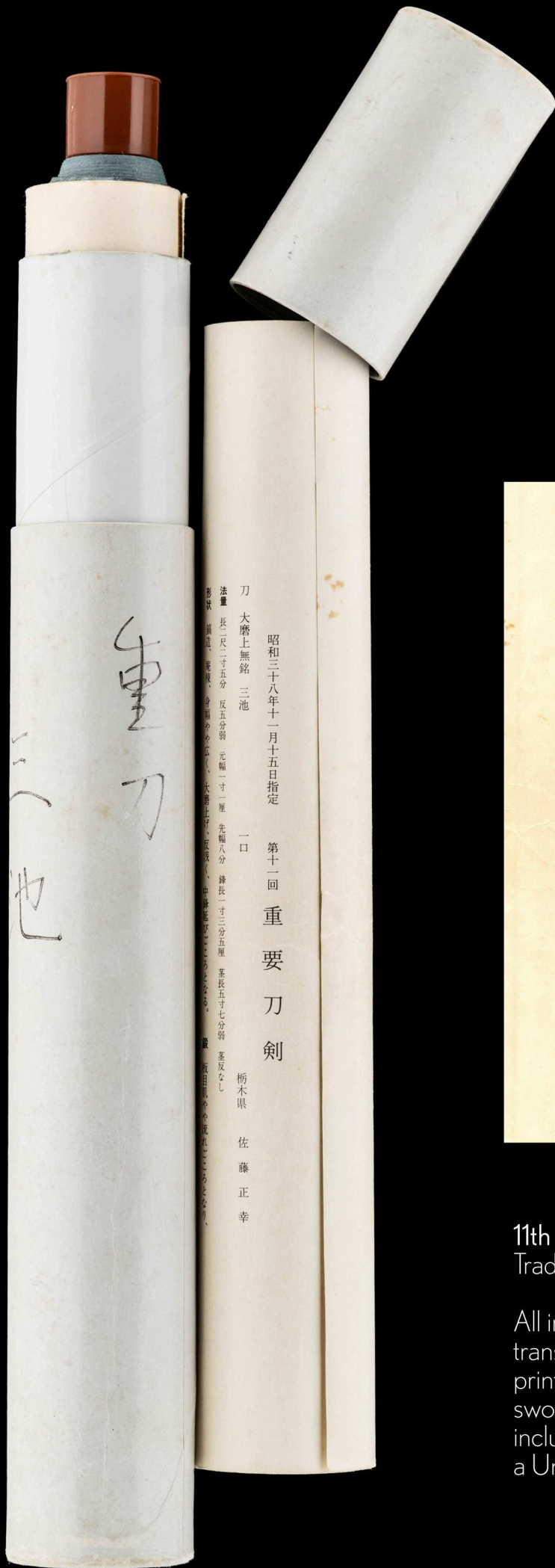
A broad *bôhi*, carved close to the *mune* in the distinctive Miike style—known as the “Miike *bôhi*”—paired with a slender *soebi* running alongside. This combination exemplifies the school’s balance of strength, functionality, and refined detail.

*soebi*



*bôhi*

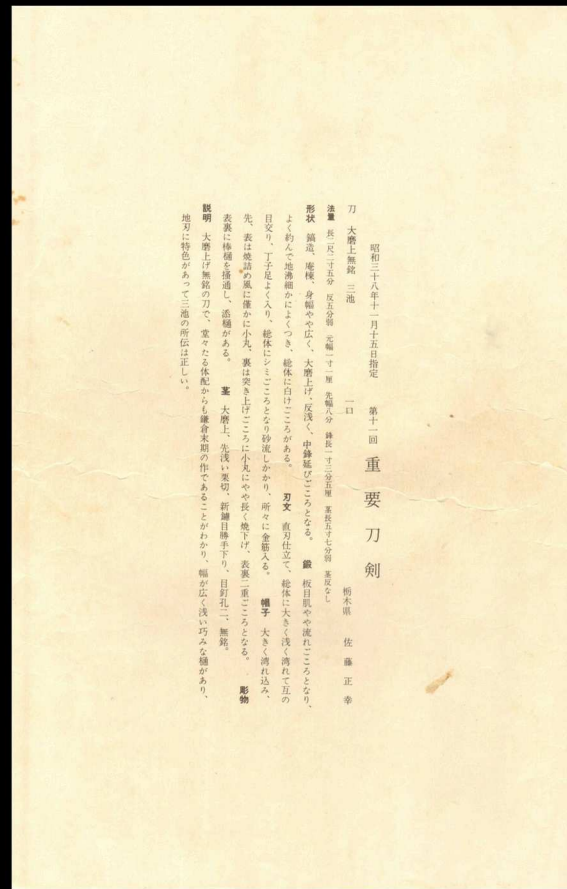




刀 大磨上無銘 三池  
 法量 長二尺二寸五分 反五分弱 元幅一寸一厘 先幅八分 鋒長一寸三分五厘 莖長五寸七分弱 莖反なし  
 形状 廣造、巻腹、身幅やや広、大磨上げ、反収、中鋒延びところとなり、鍔、板目肌や流れところとなり、

昭和三十八年十一月十五日指定 第十二回重要刀剣

栃木県 佐藤正幸



昭和三十八年十一月十五日指定 第十二回重要刀剣  
 刀 大磨上無銘 三池 一口 桐木肌 佐藤正幸  
 法量 長二尺二寸五分 反五分弱 元幅一寸一厘 先幅八分 鋒長一寸三分五厘 莖長五寸七分弱 莖反なし  
 形状 廣造、巻腹、身幅やや広、大磨上げ、反浅く、中鋒延びところとなり、鍔、板目肌や流れところとなり、よく約々地沸細かよつき、総体に白けところあり。刃文 直刀仕立、総体に大きく湾れて五の目交り、丁子足より入り、総体にシミところより砂流しかり、所々に金筋入り。 鑢子 大きく湾れ込み、先、表は巻腹の風に僅かに小丸、裏は突き上げところに小丸にややく捲き、表裏二重ところとなり。 彫物 表裏に縁を掻き通し、形跡がある。 莖 大磨上、先浅い巻切、新鑢目跡あり、目打仕、無銘。  
 説明 大磨上げ無銘の刀で、堂々たる依配からも鎌倉末期の作であることがわかり、幅が広く浅い巧みな鑢があり、地方に特色があつて三池の所伝は正しい。

11th NBTHK Juyo Token Certificate  
 Traditionally rolled in protective tube.

All information will be precisely translated for the new caretaker. A printed and bound description of the sword from this catalogue will also be included along with a sword stand and a Unique Japan maintenance kit.



*Shirasaya*  
(protective scabbard)



gold *habaki* with  
copper ground



This past summer in August, my 18-year-old daughter Hannah and I drove down from Montreal to New York to visit the Big Apple while staying at my close client and friend Michael's apartment. As you can see in the photo, Michael has amassed a fine collection of swords through the years via Unique Japan that includes a *Tokubetsu Jûyô Katana* by *Norishige* (circa 1321) and a *Tokubetsu Jûyô Katana* by *Hankei* (circa 1596). It was a tremendous treat to hold and study these two *saijô-saku* (grandmaster smiths) side by side, especially since *Hankei* is well-known to have been inspired by *Norishige*. We also listened to classic albums on vinyl (you can see his vintage turntable in the background), which lifted the experience to even greater heights. Thank you Michael for your hospitality!



28th Tokubetsu Jûyô  
Norishige Katana  
(72.4cm)

23rd Tokubetsu Jûyô  
Hankei Katana  
(71.5cm)



ITEM# UJDI016

## A KANESADA DAISHÔ

SIGNED, SHINTÔ EARLY EDO PERIOD (KANBUN~ENPÔ ERA: 1669~1680)

- Swordsmith:** *Echigo no Kami Kanesada (2nd gen, Ôsaka)*
- Measurements (k):** Length: 75.4cm (*ubu*) Curvature: 1.9cm Moto-haba: 3.03cm Weight: 815g
- Measurements (w):** Length: 46.3cm (*ubu*) Curvature: 0.9cm Moto-haba: 2.98cm Weight: 500g
- Jihada:** *Expertly forged itame-hada with shining ji-nie and plentiful chikei*
- Hamon:** *Glorious notare and gunome-hako-midare with chôji-ashi, sunagashi*
- Certificate #1-3:** 2 x NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon (both swords) + NBTHK Hozon (*kogai/kozuka*)
- Certificates #4:** NTHK-NPO Yûshûsaku (as sword designated as Masterwork and published)
- Certificate #5-6:** NTHK-NPO Kanteishô (*koshirae, & daishô tsuba certified as Authentic*)
- Fujishiro rank:** Jôjo-saku (*highly superior smith*)
- Sharpness:** Ô-wazamonô (*maker of supremely sharp swords*)
- Included:** Shirasaya, daishô-koshirae, fabric bags, stand, kit, printed description

**SOLD**

*Nidai Echigo no Kami Kanesada* was a phenomenal talent inside the Ôsaka-shintô tradition. Out of respect for his *sensei shodai Kanesada*, he relinquished the name *Kanesada* in 1680 and worked under the title *Sakakura Gon-no-Shin Terukane* when his sensei's son came of age. Forty-nine of his swords have achieved NBTHK *jûyô tôken* and two have made it to *tokubetsu jûyô*. This remarkable *daishô* with its glorious *notare hamon* and powerful *gunome-midare* was featured by CNNstyle on the topic of antique Japanese swords in which Pablo was interviewed for in 2015. Read on for the backstory on this special *samurai-daishô* that stands to be cherished by a new and proud owner.

^  
Saki-kasane: 4.9mm

Moto-kasane: 7.1mm

Kissaki: 4.23cm

Saki-haba: 2.03cm

Nagasa: 75.4cm

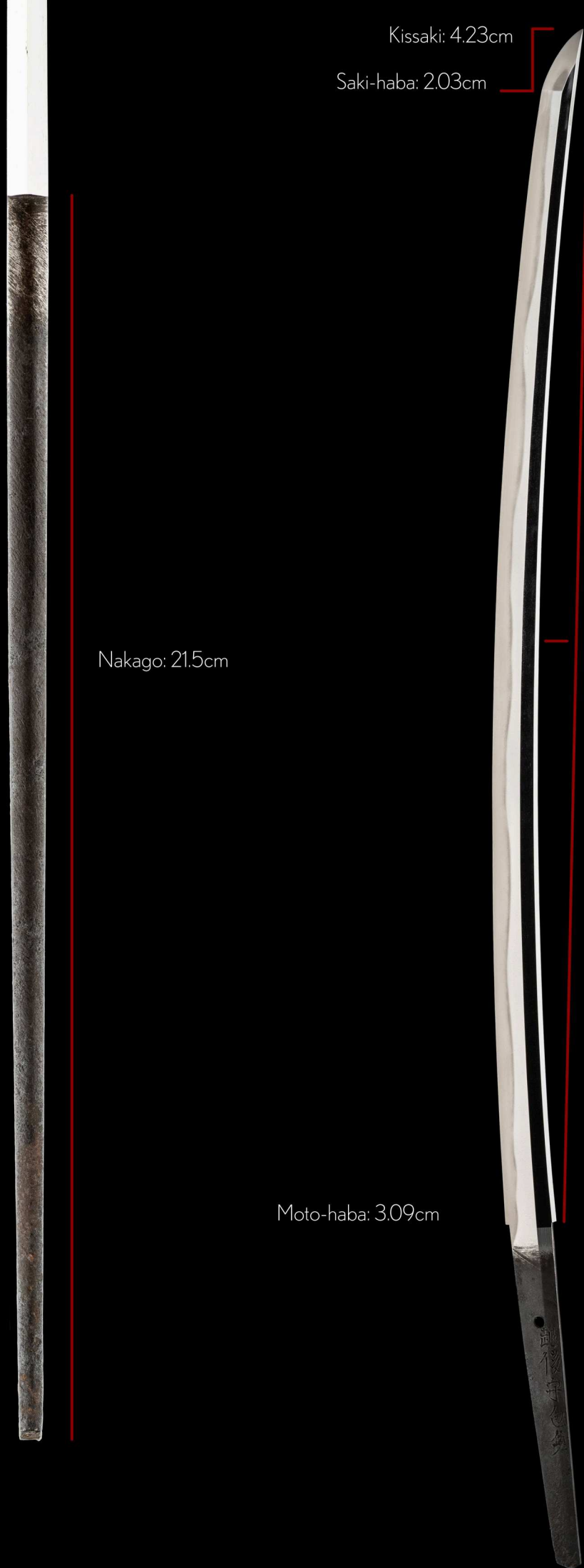
Nakago: 21.5cm

Sori: 1.9cm

Omosa: 815g

Moto-haba: 3.09cm

Mekugi-ana: 1





Saki-kasane: 5.0mm

Moto-kasane: 6.6mm

Kissaki: 3.18cm

Saki-haba: 2.03cm

Nagasa: 46.3cm

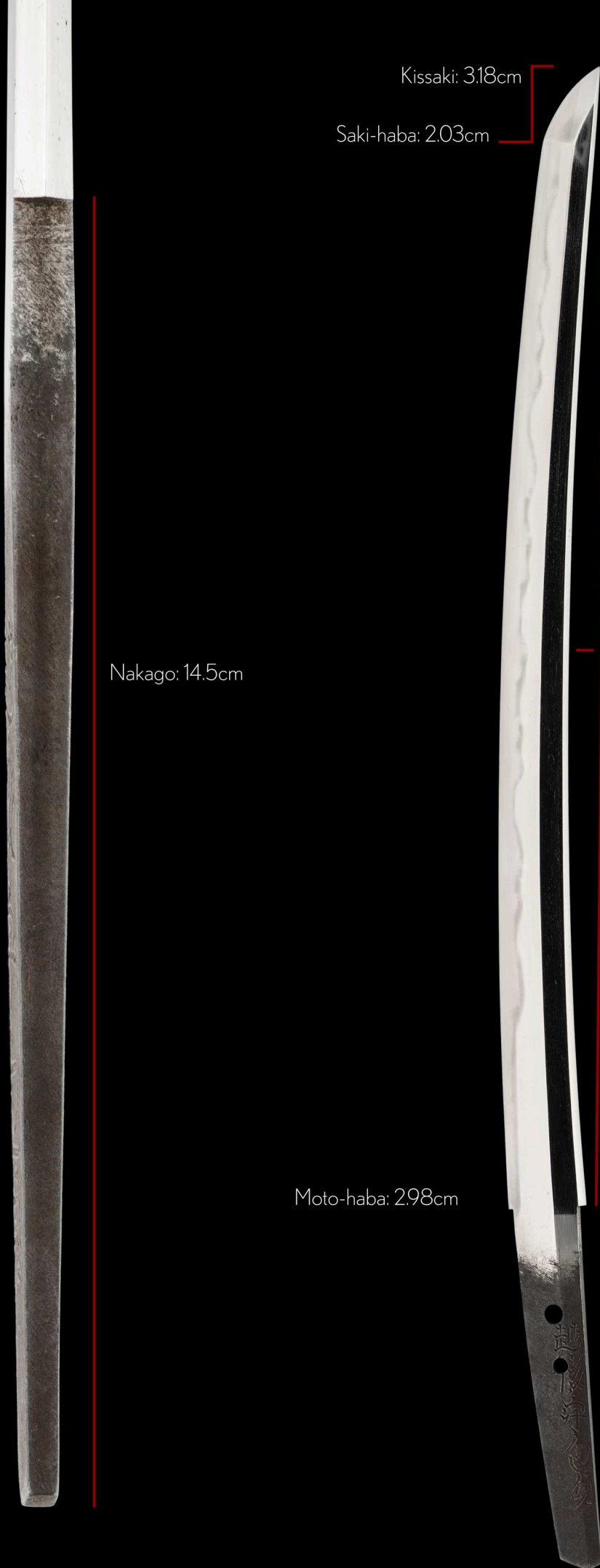
Nakago: 14.5cm

Sori: 0.9cm

Omosa: 500g

Moto-haba: 2.98cm

Mekugi-ana: 2



*Nidai Echigo no Kami Kanesada* (越後守包貞) was a phenomenal talent active in *Ôsaka* during the early *Edo* period. He first studied under *Terukado* (照門) of the *Zenjô* (善定) line from *Mino*, later entering the school of *shodai* (first generation) *Kanesada*. Recognized for his fine talent, he became both the son-in-law and successor to *shodai* and upon his sensei's passing in 1669, he inherited the name [*Nidai*] *Kanesada*. However, when the *shodai Kanesada's* natural son came of age, out of respect, he relinquished the name *Kanesada* and worked thereafter under the title *Sakakura Gon-no-Shin Terukane* (坂倉言之進照包), demonstrating his magnanimous character.

Counted among the great smiths of the *Ôsaka-Shintô* tradition, his works are highly esteemed, and he is rightfully ranked *Jôjo-saku* by *Fujishiro* and designated *Ô-wazamono* for this tremendously sharp sword's cutting ability.

His blades are typically forged with a fine and dense *ko-itame hada*, bright and well-refined, with thick *ji-nie* and lively *chikei*. He is best known for graceful *tôran-ba* (billowing wave patterns) inspired by fellow *Ôsaka*-based grandmaster *Tsuda Sukehiro* (津田助広), with a brilliant *nioiguchi* that gleam with clarity and precision.

This incredible *katana* is forged with a finely executed *ko-itame hada*, with a glorious undulating *notare hamon* pattern that is one of the finest examples of *notare* ever to be seen on a sword. And, important to note, in terms of collectibility, rarely seen on a *nidai Kanesada* sword. Abundant *chôji-ashi* appears from its bright and clear *nioiguchi* giving the sword an atmosphere of serenity and extraordinary elegance.

The *wakizashi* is also forged in refined *ko-itame*, and is more traditional *nidai Kanesada* with a gorgeous *gunome-hakomidare hamon* with a classic *Ôsaka yakidashi* that erupts into a dynamic, storm-like swells at sea. What marvellous juxtaposition these two swords share with one another.

A superb *daishô koshirae* in a *samurai warrior* theme was built more than ten years ago for these swords using top-quality antique *Edo* and *Meiji* period fittings. It was one of the first custom *daishôs* crafted for a client at Unique Japan. This *daishô* was subsequently featured in a 2015 article published online by *CNNstyle* on the topic of antique Japanese swords in which Pablo was interviewed for. Read on for more backstory on this remarkable *daishô* that will always hold a special place in our hearts at Unique Japan.





越 (Echi)

後 (go, no)

守 (Kami)

包 (Kane)

貞 (Sada)

Lovely symmetry in signatures.

Location: *Osaka in Settsu province*

Title name: *Echigo no Kami* (Lord of Echigo province)

Swordsmith: *Kanesada* (second generation)

*ubu-nakago* (original, unaltered tang)

*katte-sagari-yasurime* (slanting file marks)



*Ha-agari kurijiri* is a tang-end style where the rounded tip curves slightly toward the cutting edge.

It is a variation of the *kurijiri* (chestnut-shaped) finish, adding subtle asymmetry.

This shape enhances both the aesthetics and balance of the blade.

Often seen in high-quality *Shintô* swords.

*Ha-agari kurijiri*

(*ura*, reverse)



First generation

A swordsmith's identity is revealed not only in the workmanship of the blade itself but also, of course, in the *mei* (signature).

When comparing the signature of the first-generation Kanesada with that of the second, there is a subtle difference in the character "Kane (包)," - the lower-left stroke forms a sharper right angle in the first generation, while in the second generation is rendered with a gentler curve.

26201405

No 1002380



鑑定書

一 刀 銘 越後守包貞

長二尺五寸強

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

平成二十六年七月九日

公益財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協會



東京 教育委員会  
第 301274 号  
平成21年3月10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 26th year of Heisei (2014), July 9th

One, Katana

*Mei* (signature)  
*Echigo no Kami Kanesada*

*Nagasa* (length)  
2-shaku 5-sun kyô (75.4cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai  
(NBTHK)

特 保  
18200603



No. 151262

鑑定書

長一尺五寸三分弱

一、脇指 銘 越後守包貞

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

平成十八年四月十三日

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 18th year of Heisei (2006), April 13th

One, Wakizashi

*Mei* (signature)  
*Echigo no Kami Kanesada*

*Nagasa* (length)  
1-shaku 5-sun 3-bu jaku (46.3cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai  
(NBTHK)

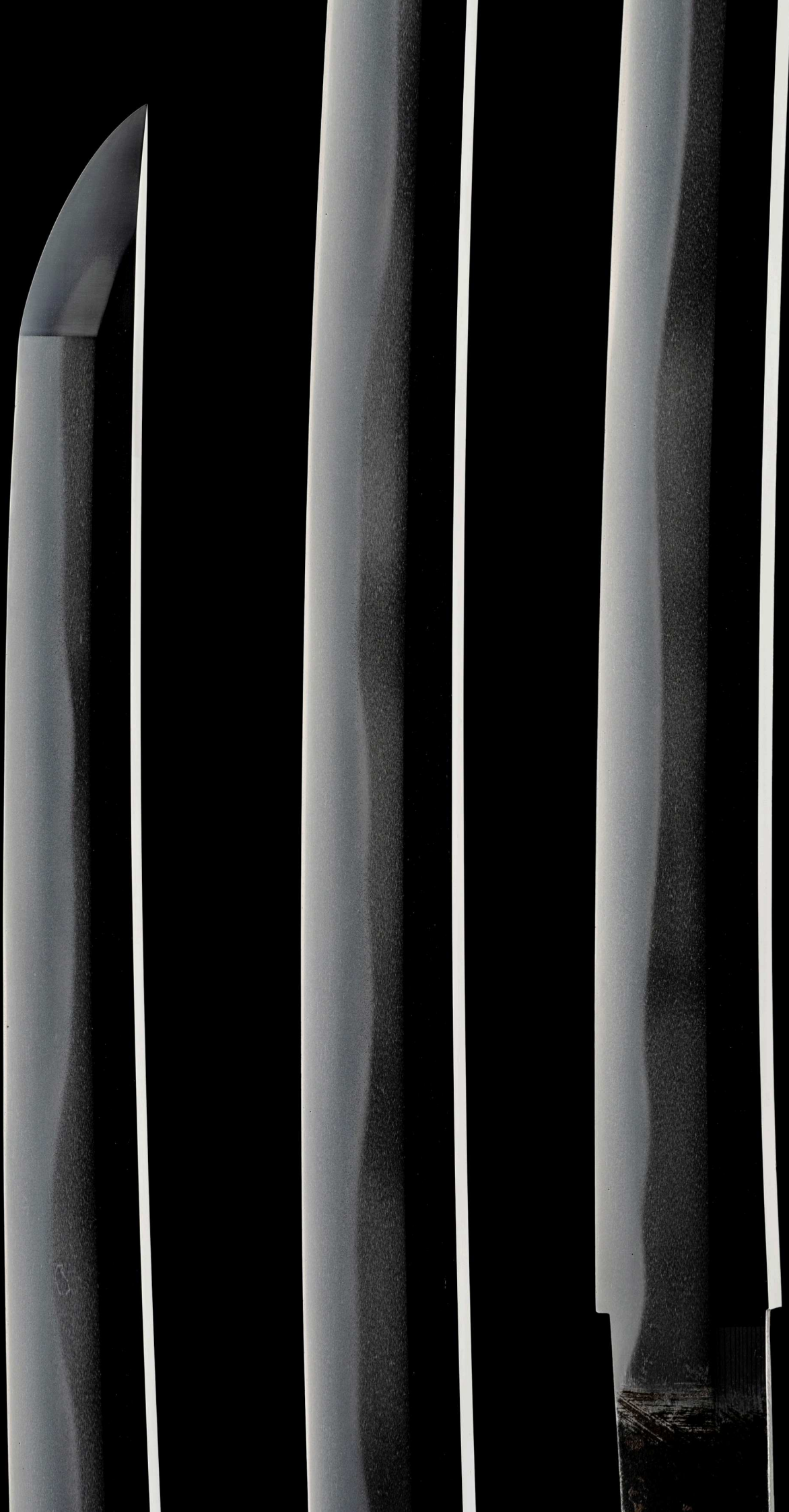


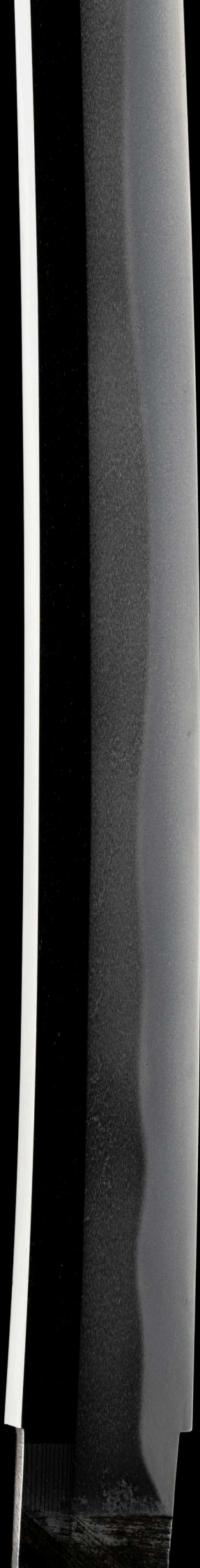
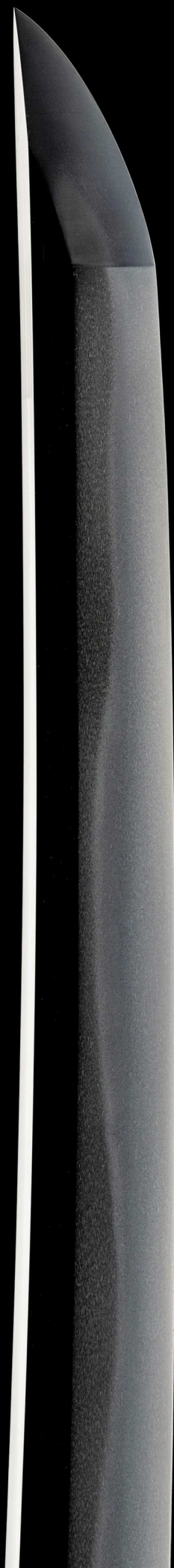
越後守包貞  
*Echigo no Kami Kanesada*  
Echigo no Kami Kanesada

二代也  
*Nidai nari*  
The second generation

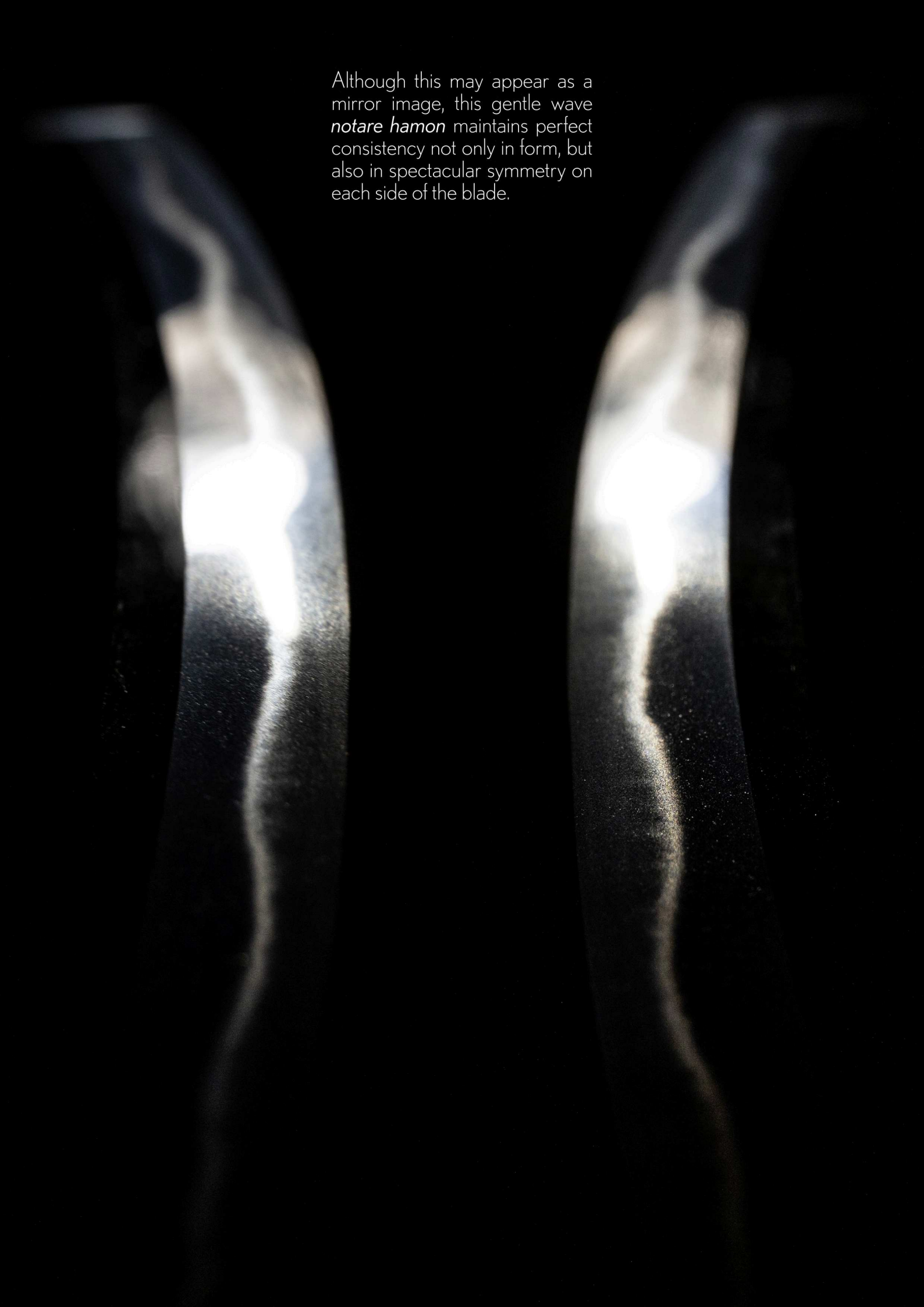
刃長貳尺五寸余有之  
*Hachô 2-shaku 5-sun amari kore ari*  
Blade length 75.4 cm

昭和卅二年卯月日寒山誌  
*Shôwa sanjûyonen Uzuki bi Kanzan shirusu*  
Written on a day in the fourth month in the  
34th year of Shôwa era (April 1959)







Although this may appear as a mirror image, this gentle wave *notare hamon* maintains perfect consistency not only in form, but also in spectacular symmetry on each side of the blade.



(wow)

A close-up photograph of a sword blade, likely a katana, showing the edge and the area just behind it. The blade is dark and has a fine, granular texture. A red arrow points from the bottom left towards a specific area on the blade's edge. The background is black.

*Ashi* (legs) extend to the edge of the blade.



Personal note from Pablo:

I have yet to see a more exquisite *notare hamon* on any sword. I first acquired this katana in 2014, when Unique Japan was still in its relative infancy. It represented one of my first significant acquisitions, purchased from my sensei Mr. Osawa, who sadly passed away in 2022. I still remember the day I held this sword with him - the blade seemed to extend for miles in my hands, and I found myself completely transfixed by the *hamon*. It was in that moment that I truly understood that consistency of the *nioguchi*, whether in a straight *suguha*, *notare*, or *gunome-midare*, separates exceptional swords from ordinary ones. The marvellous consistency of the *nioguchi* and its sheer brilliance will knock the socks off the next owner of this sword.

The *daishô koshirae* that we built turned out to be such a special production, but it will always be the memory of first laying eyes on this katana that will stick with me.

Enjoy.

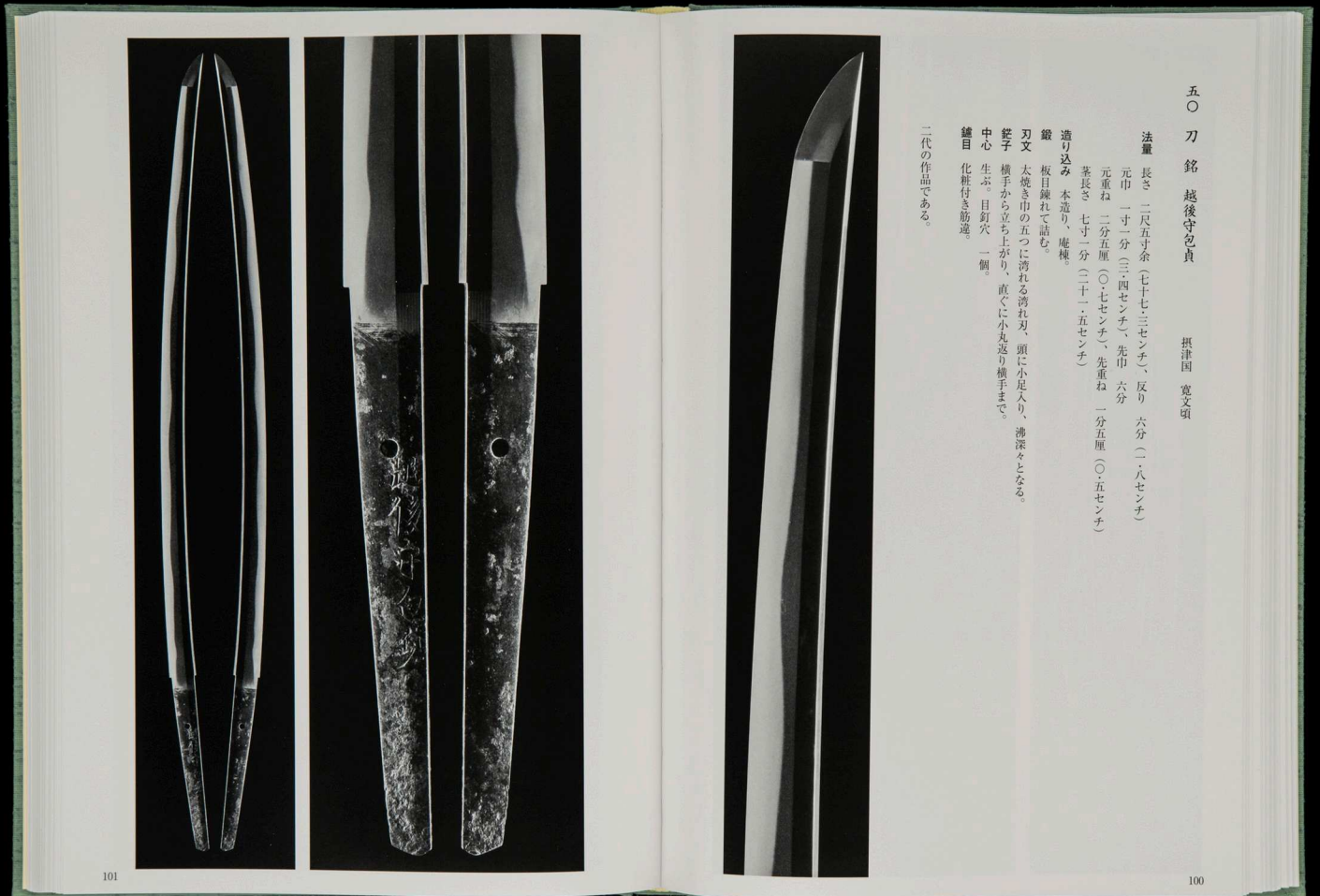


A beautiful hue shines over the  
*ko-itame* and *mokume-hada*.



*Nidai Kanesada* is ranked *jôjô-saku*  
(highly superior) and *ô-wazamono* for  
the supreme sharpness of his swords.

Behold sword mastery.



五〇 刀銘 越後守包貞

摂津国 寛文頃

法量 長さ 二尺五寸余(七十七センチ)、反り 六分(一・八センチ)

元巾 一寸二分(三・四センチ)、先巾 六分

元重ね 二分五厘(〇・七センチ)、先重ね 一分五厘(〇・五センチ)

莖長さ 七寸一分(二十一・五センチ)

造り込み 本造り、庵棟。

鍔 板目練れて詰む。

刃文 大鏡き巾の五つに汚れる汚れ刃、頭に小足入り、沸深々となる。

拵子 櫛手から立ち上がり、直ぐに小丸返り横手まで。

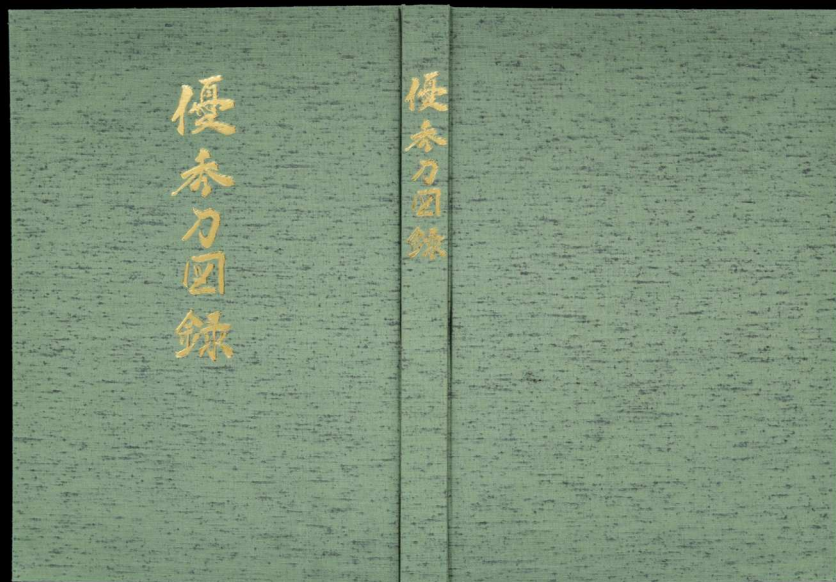
中心 生糸。目釘穴 一個。

鑓目 化粧付き筋違。

二代の作品である。

This *katana* is featured on page 100 & 101 in the NTHK-NPO Collection of *Yûshûsaku Masterwork* swords, published in the twenty-seventh year of *Heisei* era, June 2015.

It details the measurements along with well-taken photos of the sword.









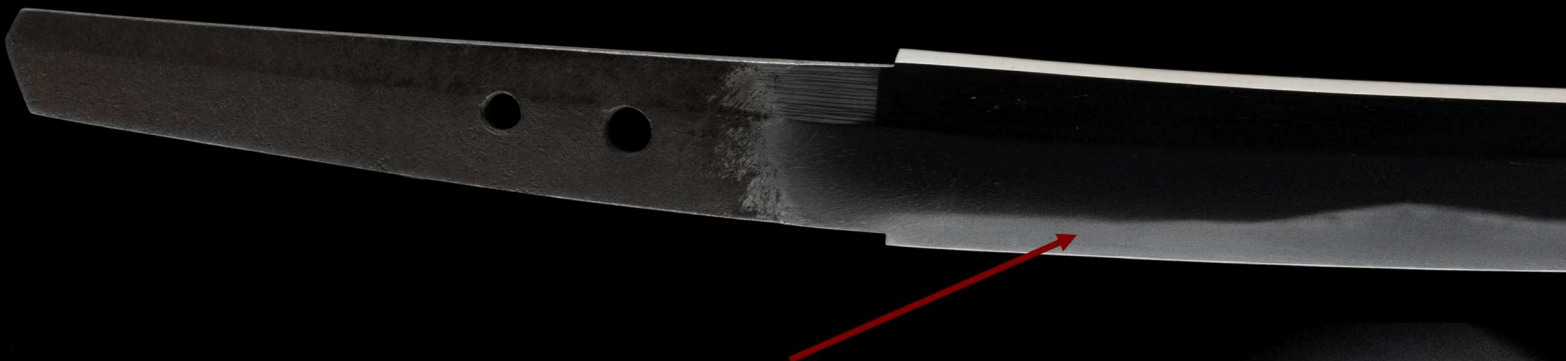
katana

The *boshi* begins in an almost straight line and turns back in a small, rounded circle (*ko-maru kaeri*).



Thick *nie* forming a flow of *sunagashi* forming a *kaen* (candle) *boshi*.

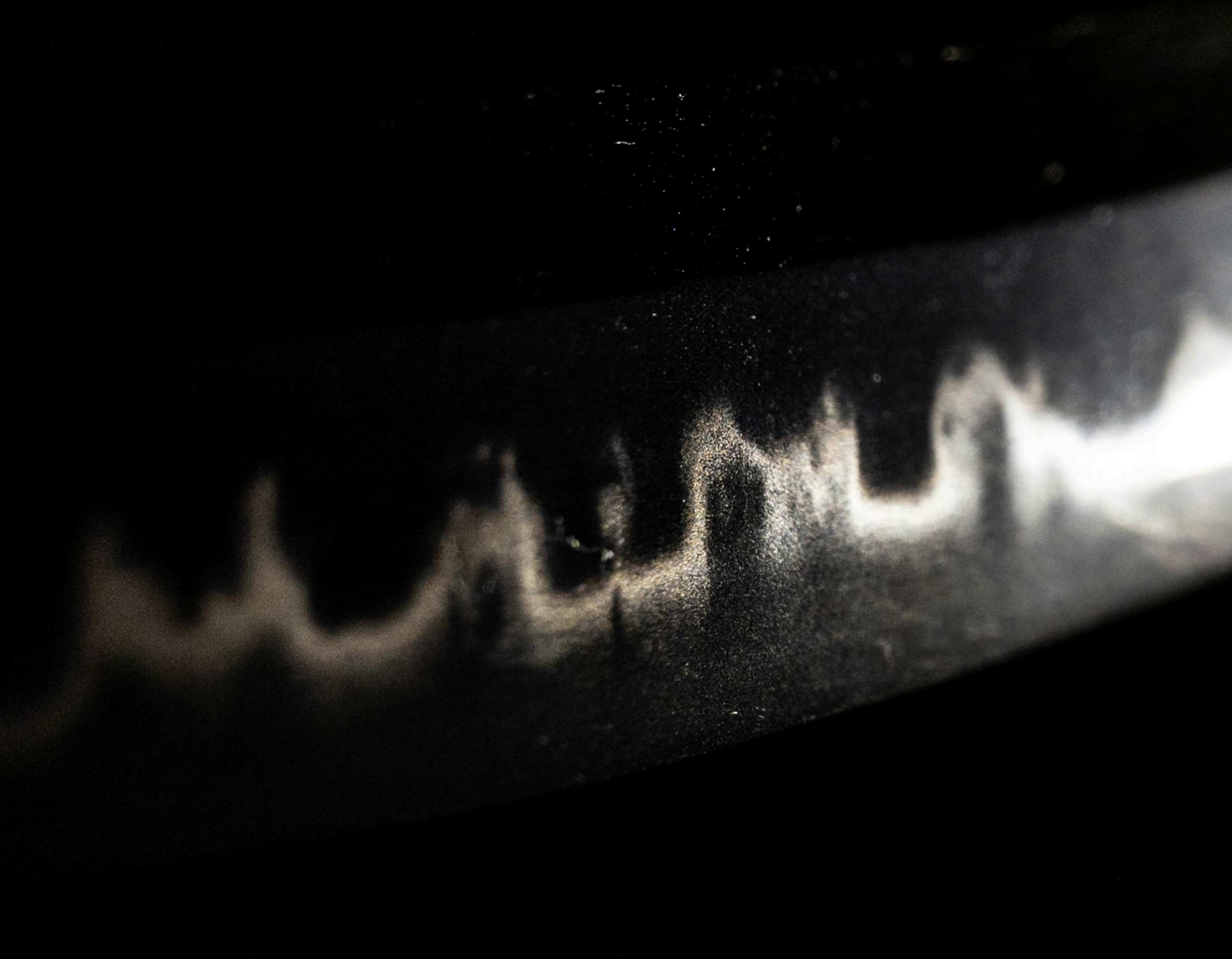
Wakizashi



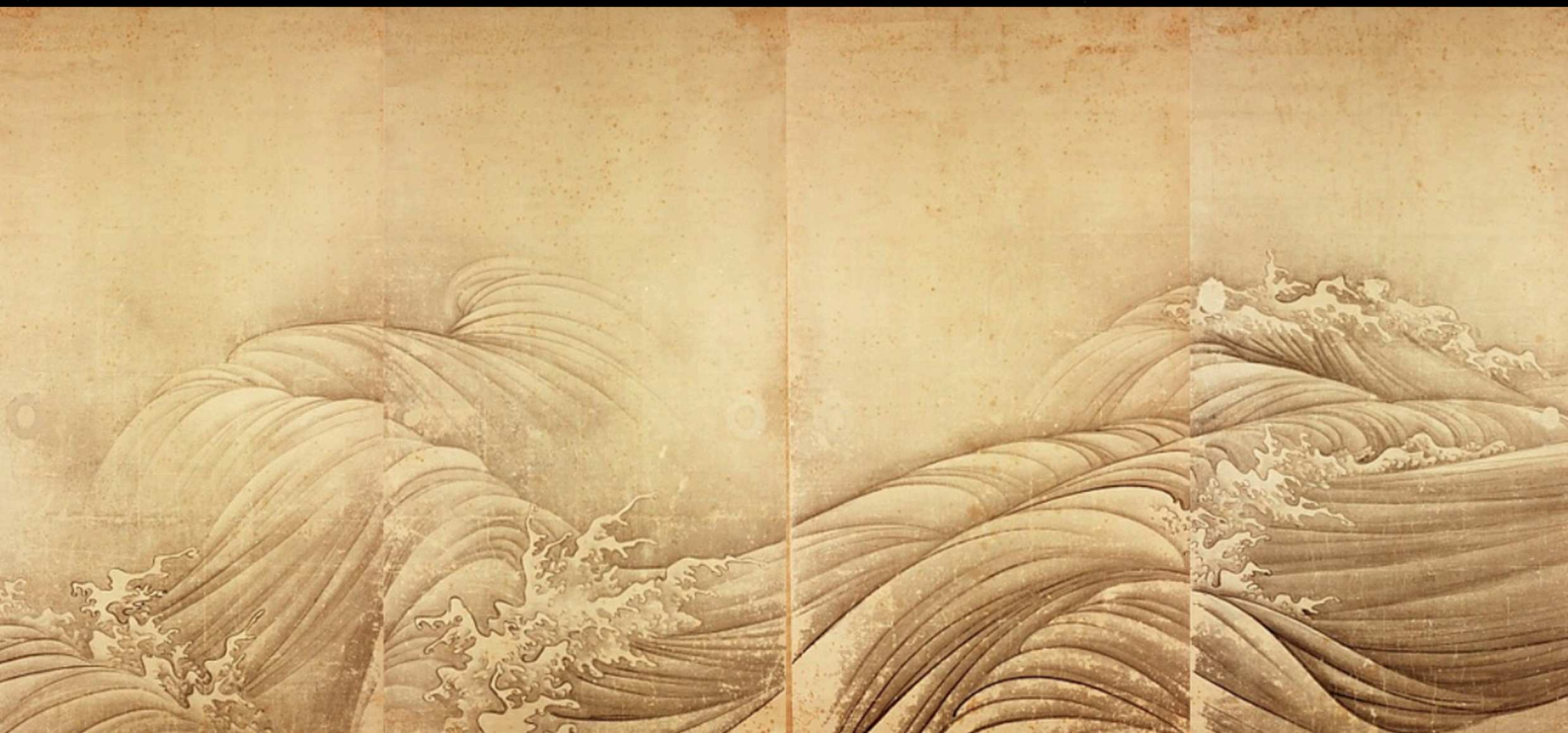
The *wakizashi* in this dynamic duo features an *Ôsaka-yakidashi* is a distinctive feature of *Osaka-Shintô* blades, where the *hamon* begins to widen with a gentle *notare* before developing into a more wavy pattern.

*Osaka-yakidashi*





The *tôranba hamon* resembles the billowing waves and spray of a stormy sea.





Big swells of *gunome-midare*, note the consistent stream of *nie* crystals.

*Nidai Kanesada* is such a talent.



Peak performance.



sayagaki potential



Shirasaya  
(protective scabbard)



silver habaki with  
rainfall file marks



*Shirasaya*  
(protective scabbard)



silver *habaki* with  
horizontal file marks

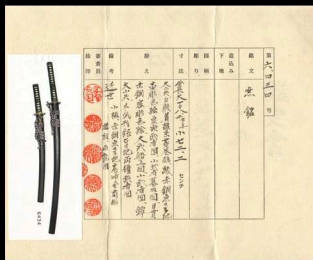
*Cha-ishime-ji-nuri*  
*daishô-uchigatana-koshirae*  
(茶石目地塗大小打刀拵)

*Daishô-uchigatana-koshirae* lacquered in brown with stone-like surface

Crafted during the modern era

The *daishô*, restricted to *samurai* class wear, emerged as a defining symbol of their status. This paired-sword tradition gained prominence near the close of the *Muromachi* period (1336-1573), with surviving examples dating to the late sixteenth century. A 1629 edict formalized the *daishô* requirement for *samurai* on official duties.

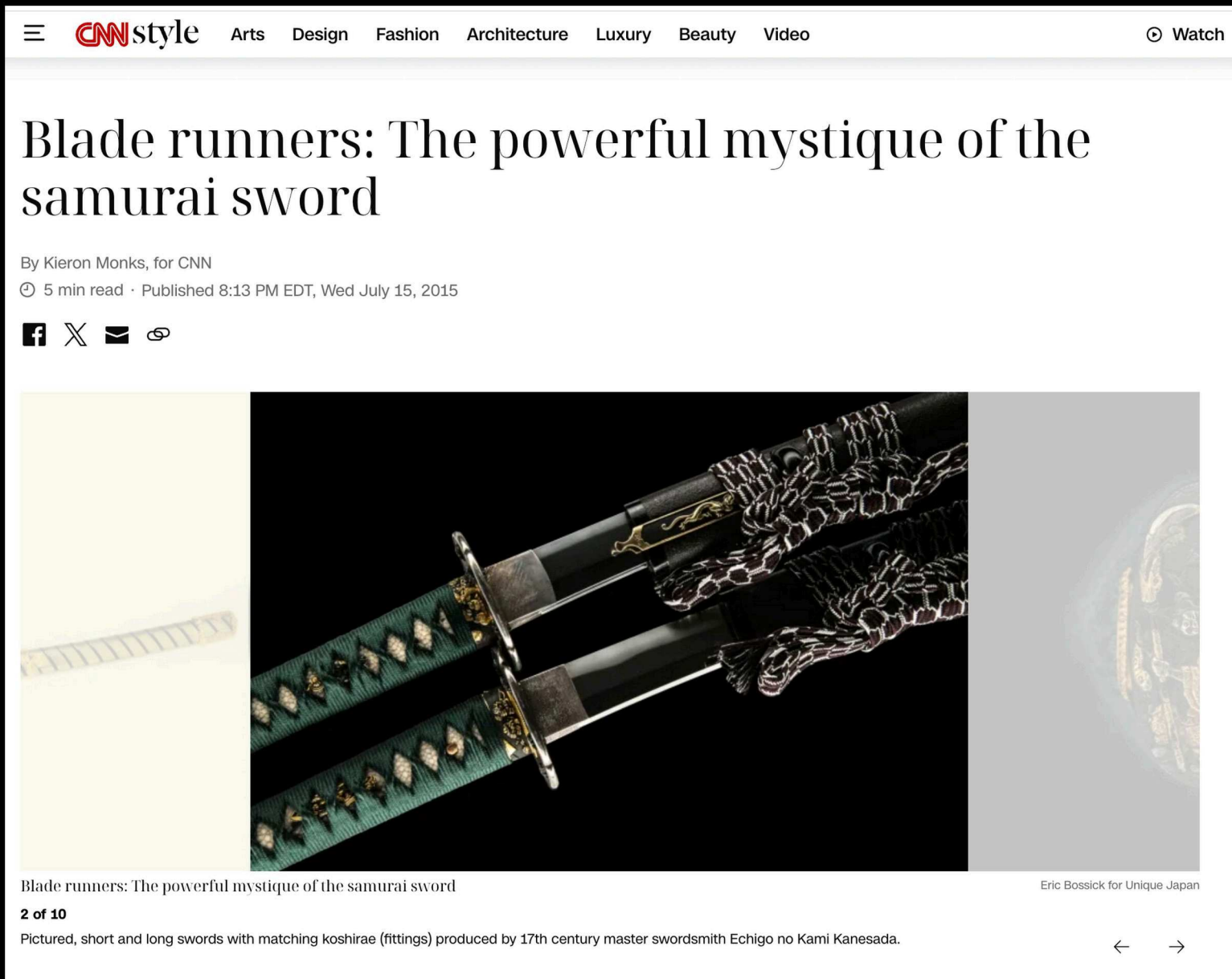
Far beyond their practical function, the *daishô* came to embody the very spirit of the *samurai*. To wear the paired swords was to stand as a true *samurai*, a visible expression of honour, duty, and martial identity.



NTHK-NPO Kanteisho  
Certificate of Authenticity

Not long after the *Kanesada daishô koshirae* was built, I was interviewed by CNN in July 2015 on the topic of antique samurai swords, the Unique Japan business and general thoughts on collecting Japanese swords. Paul Martin was also interviewed for the piece.

When they asked me to provide sword-related images for their CNNstyle article and I naturally thought of the *Kanesada daishô*. Below is a screenshot of the web page that remains online today.



The screenshot shows a web browser interface with a navigation bar at the top containing the CNNstyle logo and menu items: Arts, Design, Fashion, Architecture, Luxury, Beauty, Video, and a Watch icon. The main content area features a large title "Blade runners: The powerful mystique of the samurai sword" and a byline "By Kieron Monks, for CNN". Below the byline is a timestamp "5 min read · Published 8:13 PM EDT, Wed July 15, 2015" and social media sharing icons for Facebook, X, Email, and Print. The central image is a composite of three photographs: a close-up of a sword blade on the left, a pair of swords with green and black koshirae (fittings) in the center, and a circular detail of a sword's hilt on the right. Below the image is a caption "Blade runners: The powerful mystique of the samurai sword" and a credit "Eric Bossick for Unique Japan". A "2 of 10" indicator and a photo description "Pictured, short and long swords with matching koshirae (fittings) produced by 17th century master swordsmith Echigo no Kami Kanesada." are also visible, along with left and right navigation arrows.

Access the article here:  
<https://edition.cnn.com/style/article/samurai-swords>





The spirit of the samurai lives on.

NTHK-NPO Kanteisho  
 Certificate of Authenticity



This *fuchigashira* on the *katana koshirae* is the signed work of *Gotô Mitsukuni* (後藤光邦), second son of *Gotô Teijô* (後藤程乗), the ninth head of the *Gotô* main line, and widely known as *Gotô Etsujô* (後藤悦乗). Retained by the *Maeda* family of *Kaga*, he produced metalwork and related commissions. By training many disciples, he greatly advanced the *Kaga* metalworking tradition.

The design depicts Kamakura-period *samurai* warriors. The armoured figure, poised for combat, embodies strength and resolve. The precise carving showcases Mitsukuni's mastery and aesthetic sense.

(Go) 後  
(tô) 藤  
(Mitsu) 光  
(kuni) 邦  
(kaô) 花押





This *fuchigashira* on the *wakizashi koshirae* depicts figures from the *Chinese Three Kingdoms* period during the 3rd century.

The central motif in the foreground, with his flowing beard and the distinctive curved halberd can be identified as *Guan Yu*. Behind him stands another figure whose unusually large ears suggest *Liu Bei*, founder of the *Shu* kingdom. Known for their oath of brotherhood, the pairing of *Liu Bei* and *Guan Yu* symbolizes valour and loyalty.





The *tsukas* (hilts) are made as a matched *daishô* pair, covered with classic white *same* (ray skin) and wrapped in *hishimaki* style with green braid.



boat

The *menuki* on both the katana and wakizashi continue the *samurai* warrior motif, with the katana depicting warriors advancing by boat while the wakizashi shows warriors preparing for battle.

Determination makes life happen.

*kozuka* (utility knife)



The set of *kozuka* and *kogai*, often referred to together as *futatokoro*, were practical accessories for the Edo-period *samurai*, housed in dedicated slots along the *saya* (scabbard).

These pieces are the work of *Kyô-Kinkô* school. While not attributable to a specific school, they can be securely dated to the Edo period. The ground is of *shakudô* with a *nanako* ground, upon which motifs of *Amaryû* (rain dragons) are set. The motif of the rain dragon conveyed wishes for fertility and good fortune, and for the warrior class it also represented victory in battle and the safeguarding of one's household.

Certified NBTHK Hozon, certificate on next page.



*kogai* (hair pick)

(U) 宇

(da) 多

(jū) 住

(Kuni) 國

(mune) 宗

宇多住國宗



器 名  
23201102

№ 462503



鑑 定 書

一、這龍図二所

無銘 京金工

小柄・筭 赤銅魚子地

金紋

右は當協會に於て審査の結果保存刀装具と  
鑑定しこれを証する

平成二十三年三月一日

財團法人日本美術刀剣保存協會



NBTHK Hozon  
Certificate of Designation

A tsuba designated as *Worthy of Conservation*  
by the Society for the Preservation of the Japan Art Sword

Issued in the 23rd year of Heisei (2011), March 1st

One, Futatokoro

*Depicting crawling dragons*

*Mumei (unsigned)*  
*Kyô-Kinkô*

*Shakudô with nanako ground, gold crest*

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai  
(NBTHK)



*Kamakura samurai meets warriors  
of the Three Kingdoms*





*Daishô koshirae bags*

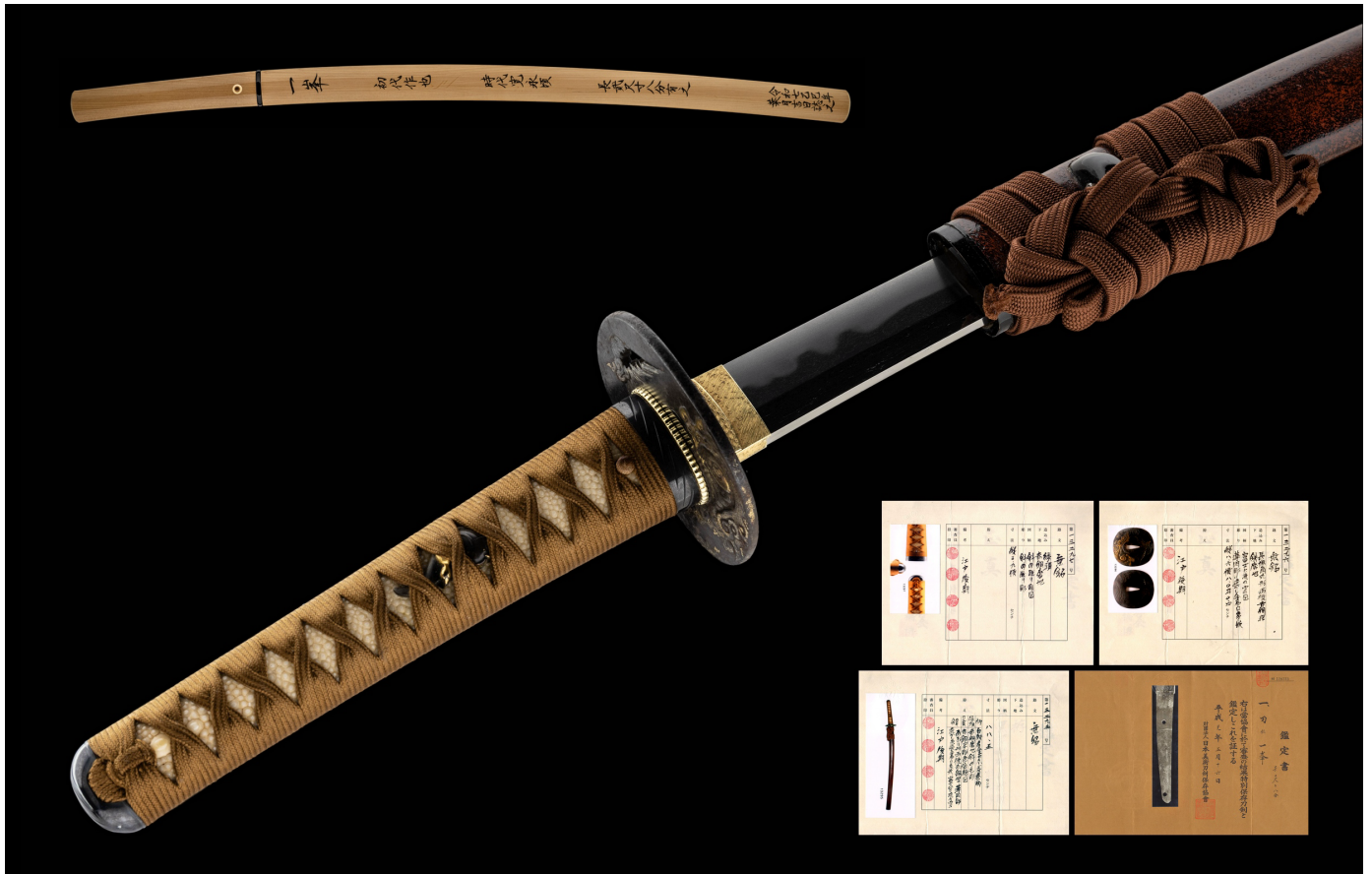


## Flying to Japan?

If you are travelling to Tokyo and are serious about acquiring an authentic Japanese sword, be sure to book a **private meeting** with us in advance.

Many swords from Unique Japan are sold privately every year to clients around the world. Contact [service@uniquejapan.com](mailto:service@uniquejapan.com) where we'll discuss the type of sword, age and other qualities you are seeking along with budget parameters.

Meetings are held at our studio near **JR Meguro station** - only minutes away from all major hotels in downtown Tokyo.



ITEM# UJKA483

## A SHODAI IPPÔ KATANA

SIGNED, SHINTÔ EARLY EDO PERIOD (KAN'EI ERA: 1624~1644)

**Swordsmith:** *Ippô (shodai, first generation)*  
**Measurements:** **Length:** 63.1cm (*ubu*) **Sori:** 1.2cm **Moto-haba:** 2.74cm **Weight:** 620g  
**Jihada:** *Beautifully forged itame-hada and masame-hada, plentiful chikei*  
**Hamon:** *Gorgeous gunome-chôji-midare with splendid sunagashi and kinsuji*  
**Certificate #1:** **NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon** (*Especially Worthy of Preservation*)  
**Certificates #2-4:** **NTHK-NPO Kanteishô** (*koshirae, fuchi-kashira and tsuba certified as Authentic*)  
**Fujishiro rank:** **Jô-saku** (*ranked as a superior swordsmith*)  
**Sharpness:** **Wazamonô** (*rated as a maker of sharp swords*)  
**Included:** Shirasaya, fabric bag, stand, kit, printed description

**SOLD**

*Shôdai Ippô* was the founder of the *Ômi branch* of the *Ishidô school*. Swords crafted by Ippô are rare - more commonly seen are blades by his son *Sasaki Ippô*, making this piece highly collectible and a great pleasure to study. This katana is a well-preserved example with thick *ji-nie*, and soft *chikei* with a hamon that combines artistic brush strokes of *notare* and *gunome-midare*, with a *tôranba*-like peak at the *monouchi*. At 63.1 cm, the blade is compact and powerful, with graceful curvature. It reflects the quiet strength prized in the very early Edo-period. A handsome late-Edo period *koshirae* lacquered in vermillion with a black base is pure samurai aesthetic. The *tsuba* captures the magnificence of Mount Fuji with a waving tribute to *Hokusai's Kanagawa* masterpiece. All told, this is a collectible samurai sword by a leading figure of early 1600s Japan and master artisan.



Saki-kasane: 4.4mm

Moto-kasane: 6.6mm

Omosa: 620g

Kissaki: 3.33cm

Saki-haba: 1.90cm

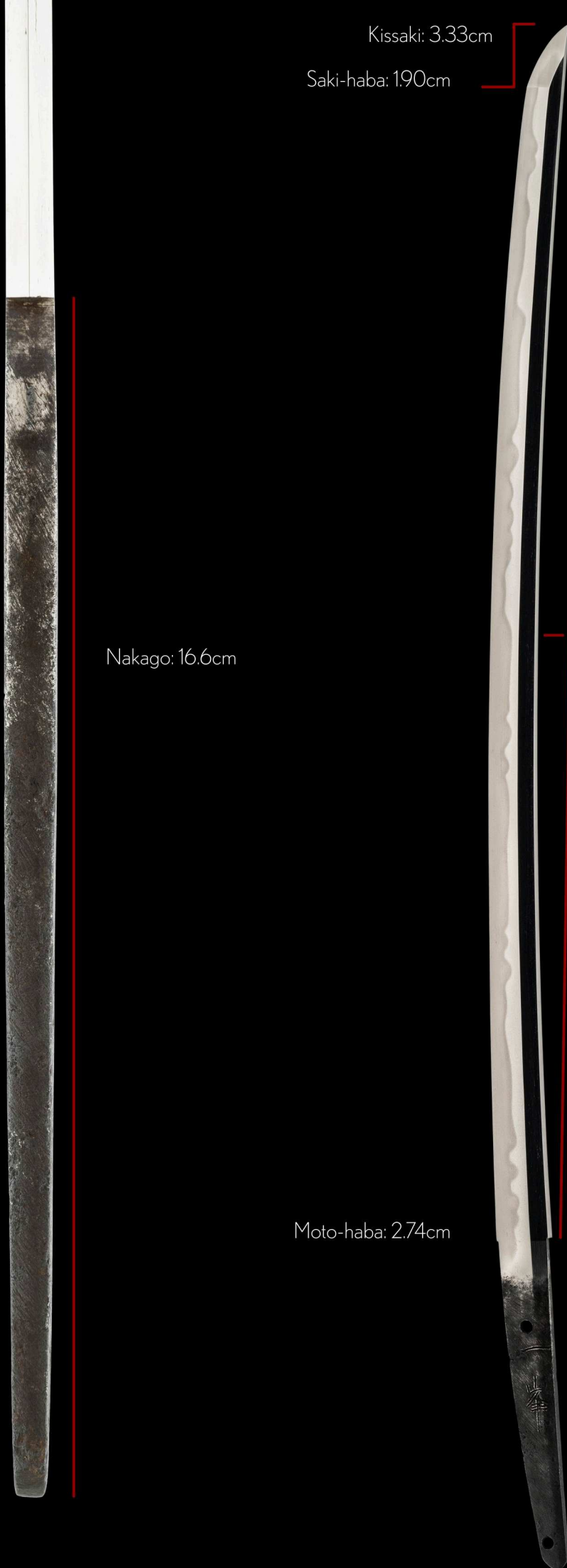
Nakago: 16.6cm

Moto-haba: 2.74cm

Nagasa: 63.1cm

Sori: 1.2cm

Mekugi-ana: 2



*Shodai Ippô* (一峯) was active in *Ômi* Province during the *Kan'ei* era (1624-1644), a transitional period in the early Edo era when peace under *Tokugawa* rule shifted swordmaking from battlefield utility to personal refinement. *Ippô* is regarded as the founder of the *Ômi-Ishidô* school, closely aligned with *Bizen* and *Seki* traditions. His trademark signature features two large characters with a dramatic elongated final stroke.

*Ippô*'s blades blend technical precision with bold aesthetic character. His *hada* typically features flowing *itame* mixed with *mokume*, with prominent *ji-nie* and *chikei* adding visual depth. His *hamon* often takes expressive *notare* or *gunome-midare* forms with *tôranba*-like motion, enhanced by *ashi*, *yô*, gorgeous *sunagashi*, and *kinsuji*. The *bôshi* varies by side: often a tight *ko-maru* on one, and a sweeping *kaen*-like flame on the other.

This katana is a well-preserved example attributed to the first-generation *Ippô* and certified *Tokubetsu Hozon* by the NBTHK. Its *hada* is a tight *itame* with small *mokume*, thick *ji-nie*, and soft *chikei*. The *hamon* combines *notare* and *gunome-midare*, with a *tôranba*-like peak at the *monouchi*. Inside the temper line, active *ashi*, *yô*, *sunagashi*, and *kinsuji* add vibrancy. The *bôshi* shows contrast: the *omote* returns in *ko-maru* with an *ichimonji* feel, while the *ura* lifts in *hakikake*, resembling a flickering flame. So much steely variety to cherish.

The *nakago* has two *mekugi-ana*, one at the tang's end - likely a *hikae-mekugi* for reinforcement during *tameshigiri*. The bold “一峯” signature aligns with early *Ippô* work. At 63.1 cm, the blade is compact and powerful, with graceful curvature and elegant handling. It reflects the quiet strength and balance prized in early Edo-period craftsmanship.

A handsome late-Edo period *koshirae* lacquered in vermillion with a black base is pure samurai aesthetic. The *tsuba* captures the magnificence of Mount Fuji with a waving tribute to Hokusai's Kanagawa masterpiece. Oversized catfish are depicted as *menuki* symbolizing natural power and vigilance. All told, this is a super collectible samurai sword by a leading figure of early 1600s Japan and master artisan.



Location: *Ômi province*

Swordsmith: *Ippô* (first generation)

Cutting ability: *wazamono*

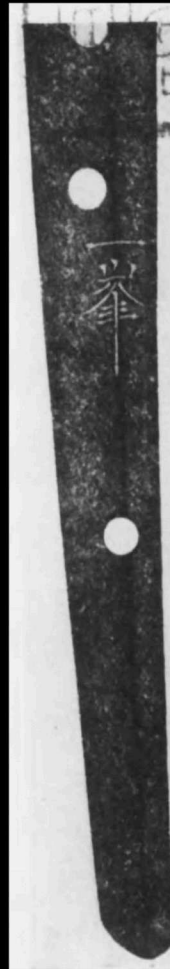
*ubu-nakago* (original, unaltered tang)

*sujikai-yasurime* (slanting file marks)



一 (I)

峯 (ppô)



1st gen

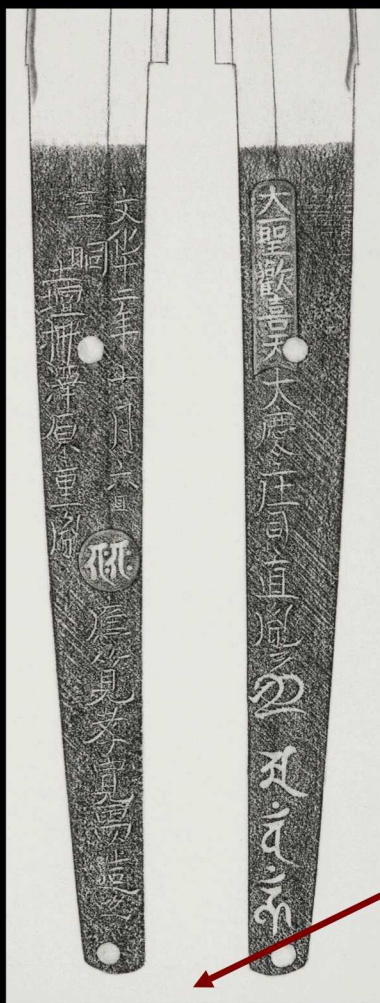


2nd gen

First-generation Ippô typically signed his name using just the two characters "Ippô (一峯)," while the second generation often included his given name, "*Sasaki Zenshirô* (佐々木善四郎)," in the inscription.

Although this blade retains *ubu-nakago*, an additional hole has been drilled near its base. This is known as a *hikae-mekugi-ana* - a secondary peg hole used to insert a second mekugi for reinforcement during *tameshigiri* or heavy use. While this sword bears no test-cutting inscription, the presence of the hole strongly suggests that it was either actually used for such purposes or was forged with serious practical application in mind.

The image below shows the nakago of a katana by *Taikei Naotane* that was used for cutting test. It features a supplementary *hikae-mekugi-ana* drilled near the bottom of the tang for added reinforcement.



ujka403 Taikei Naotane Katana  
NBTHK Jûyô Tôken, featured in Catalogue 40.



*hikae-mekugi-ana*

*ha agari kurijiri*

The *nakagojiri* (butt-end of the tang) is rounded, similar to that of *kurijiri* (chestnut shaped) but the cutting edge side slants more steeply than the back (*mune* side).

一 (one)

峯 (summit, peak)



山 (mountain)

The direct translation of the name *Ippô* is "one mountain top / summit / peak".

This inspiring name suggests the swordsmith is constantly striving for perfection - a quest towards the pinnacle of crafting excellence.





鑑定書

長三尺八分

一、刀 銘 一峯

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

平成元年 五月十六日

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 ast year of Heisei (1989), May 16th

One, Katana

Mei (signature)  
Ippô

Nagasa (length)  
2-shaku 0-sun 8-bu (63.1cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai  
(NBTHK)



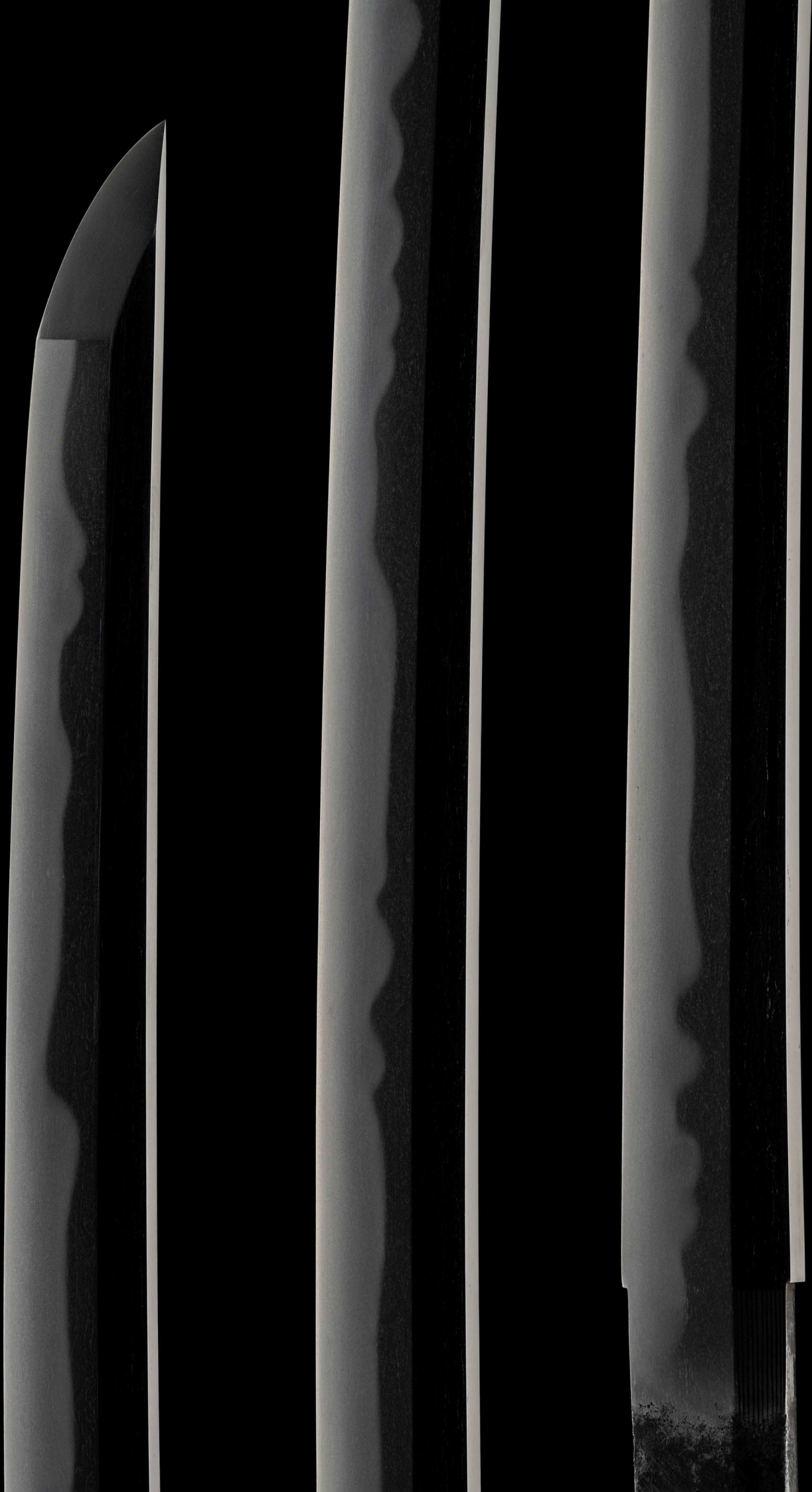
一峯  
*Ippô*  
Ippô

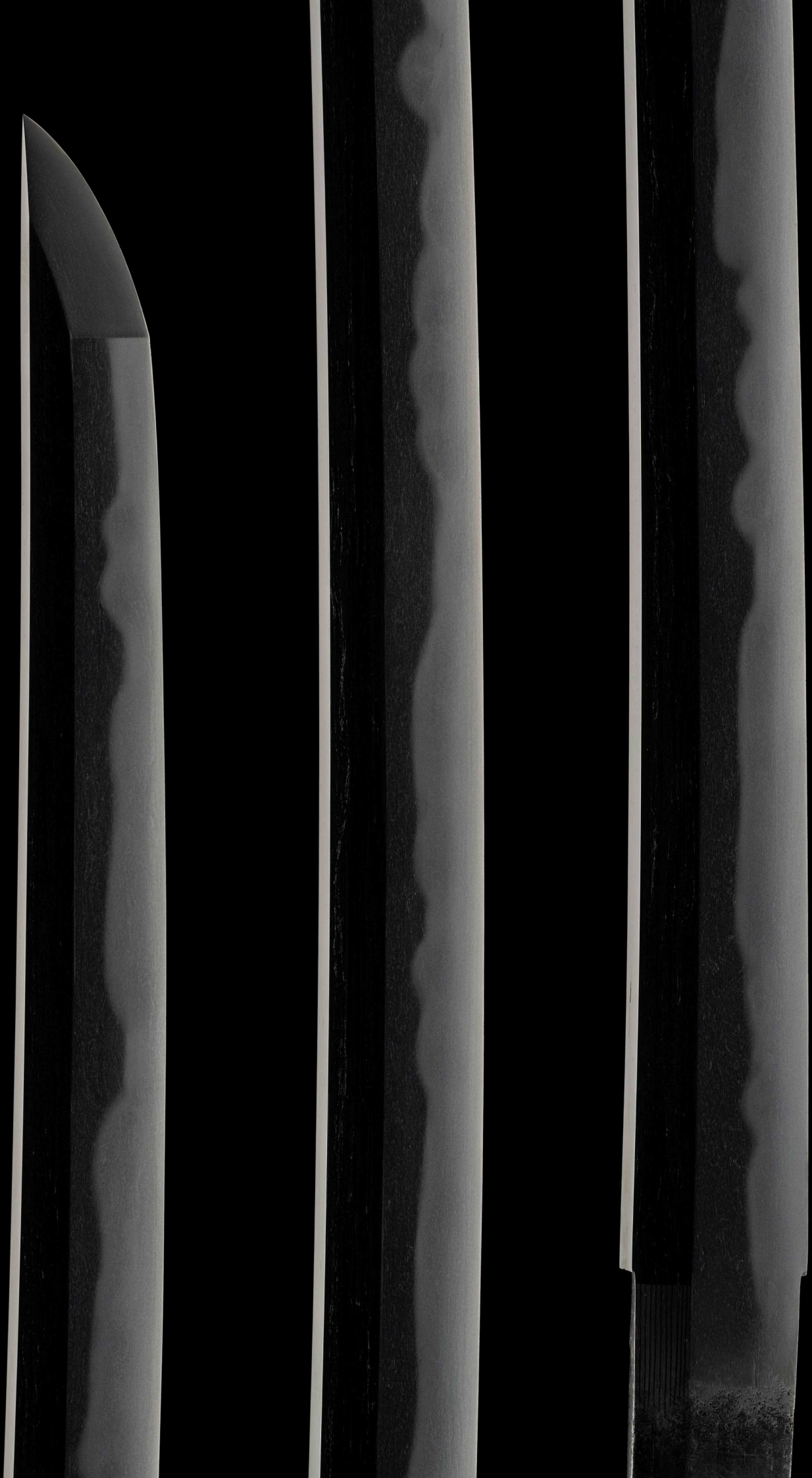
初代作也  
*Shodai saku nari*  
Crafted by the first generation

時代寛永頃  
*Jidai Kan'ei goro*  
Around Kan'ei period (1624~1644)

長貳尺寸八分有之  
*Nagasa 2-shaku 0-sun 8-bu kore ari*  
Blade length 63.1 cm

令和七乙巳年葉月吉日誌之  
*Reiwa nana kinoto-midoshi Hazuki kichijitsu kore o shirusu*  
Written on a lucky day in the eighth month in the seventh year of Reiwa era during the Year of the Snake (August 2025)



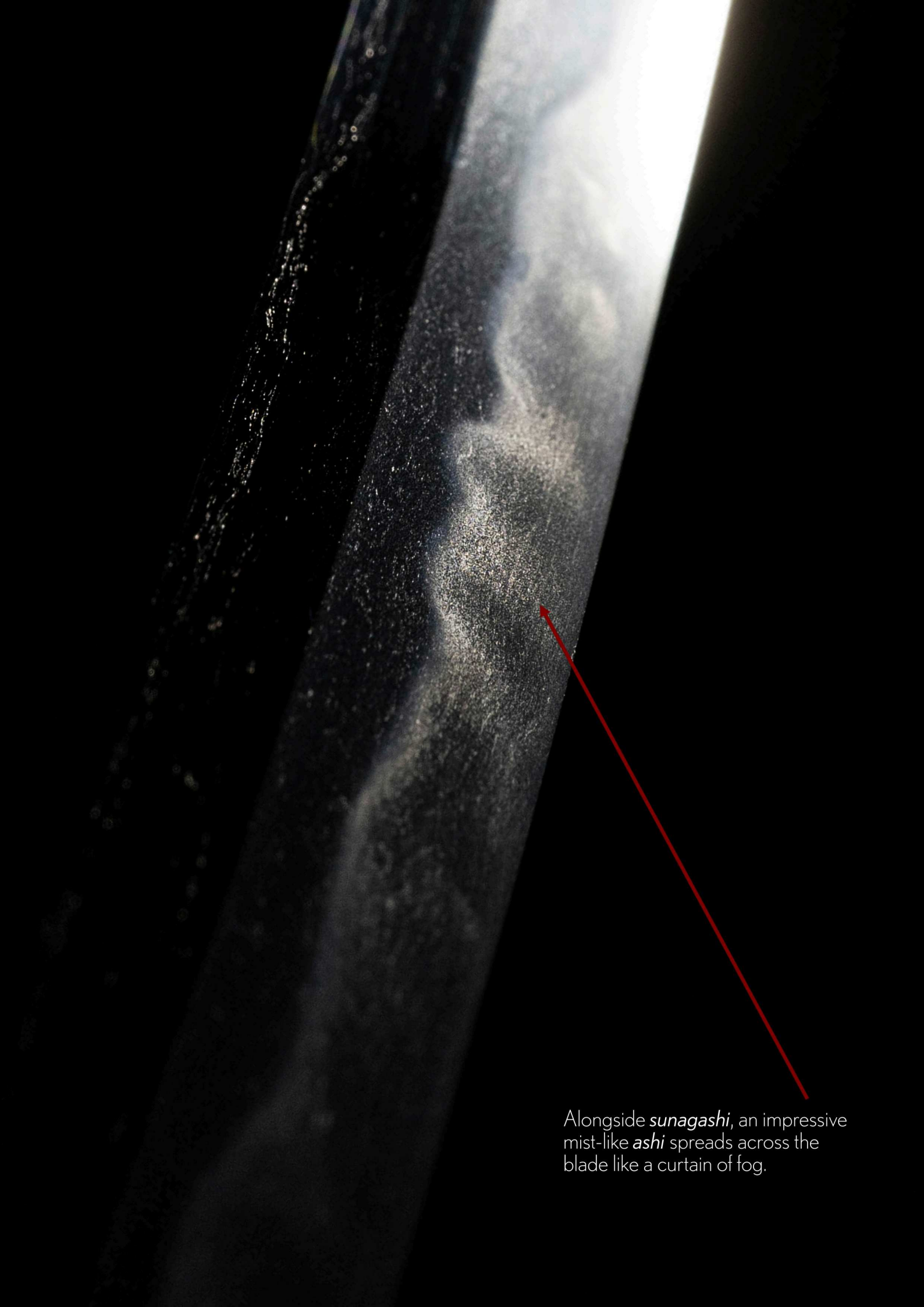





A *ko-maru* turn-back in the style of *Ichimonji*.



*Layers of history*



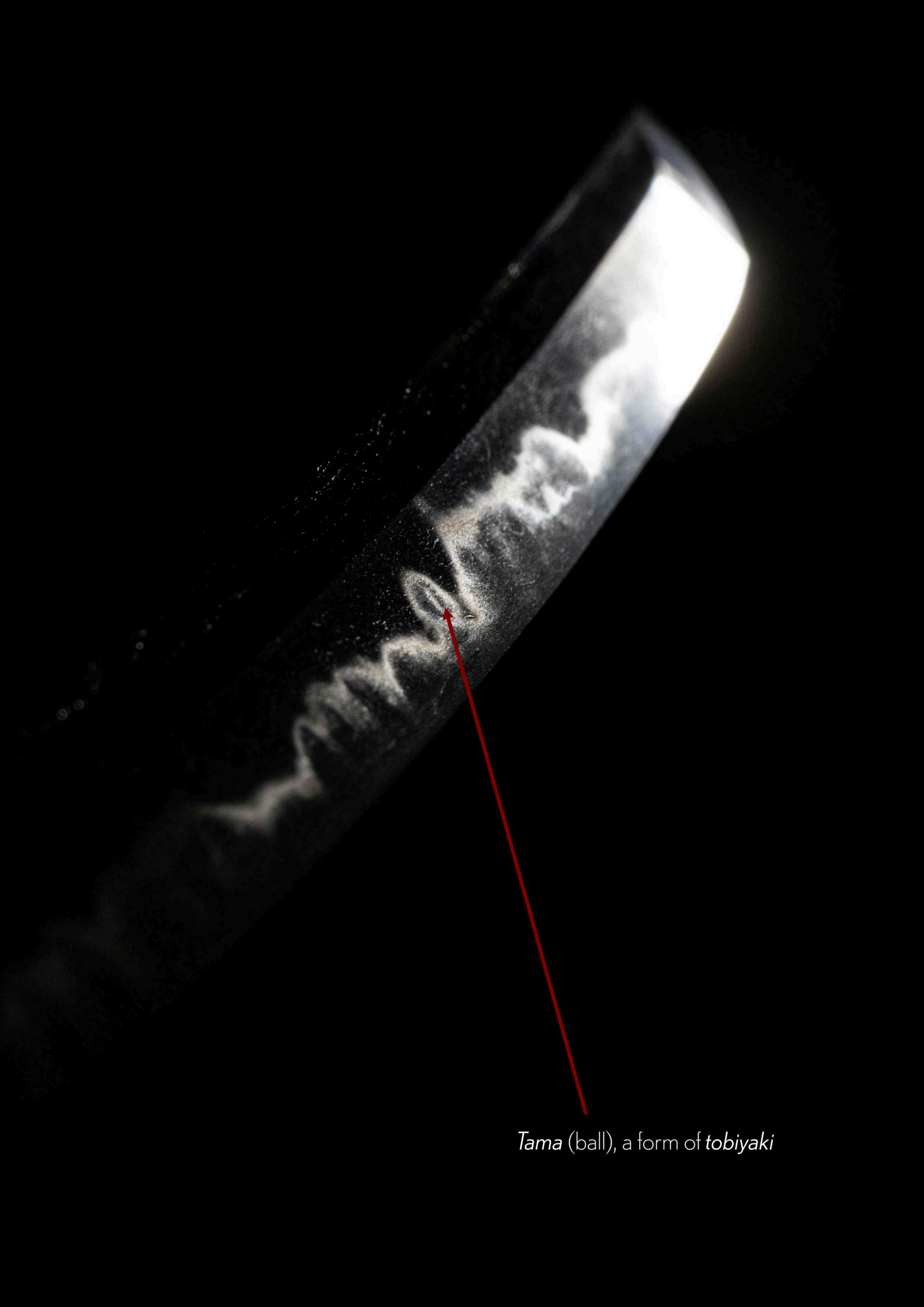
Alongside *sunagashi*, an impressive mist-like *ashi* spreads across the blade like a curtain of fog.

The image shows two Japanese swords, likely katana, positioned diagonally against a black background. The blades are illuminated from the side, highlighting the intricate, wavy patterns of the hamon (edge tempering). The top sword is in sharp focus, showing a clear, flowing 'gunome-midare' pattern. The bottom sword is slightly out of focus, also displaying a similar pattern. The lighting creates a strong contrast between the bright, metallic surfaces and the deep shadows, emphasizing the texture and craftsmanship of the blades.

A free-flowing *gunome-midare hamon* formed by the hands of a true artist.

Fabulously long lightning bolts of *kinsuji*  
formed by hardened martensite.





*Tama* (ball), a form of *tobiyaki*

A close-up of the blade's glorious rounded *mokume-hada*.



*Shodai Ippô* is ranked *wazamono* for producing sharp swords, such as this one.



*Shirasaya*  
(protective scabbard)

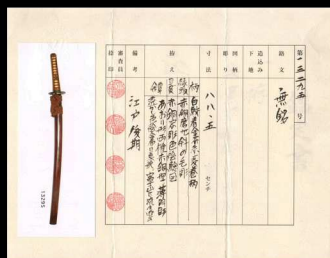


gold *habaki* with  
unique diagonal file marks  
that match the *fuchi-kashira*.

*Shuguro-natane-togidashi-nuri saya  
uchigatana-koshirae*  
(朱黒菜種研出塗鞘脇指拵)

*Uchigatana-koshirae  
lacquered in vermilion revealing  
the black foundation beneath*

Crafted during the  
Late Edo period  
(1780 ~ 1868)



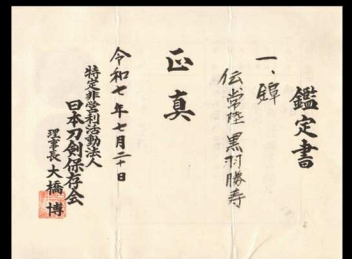
NTHK-NPO Kanteisho  
Certificate of Authenticity

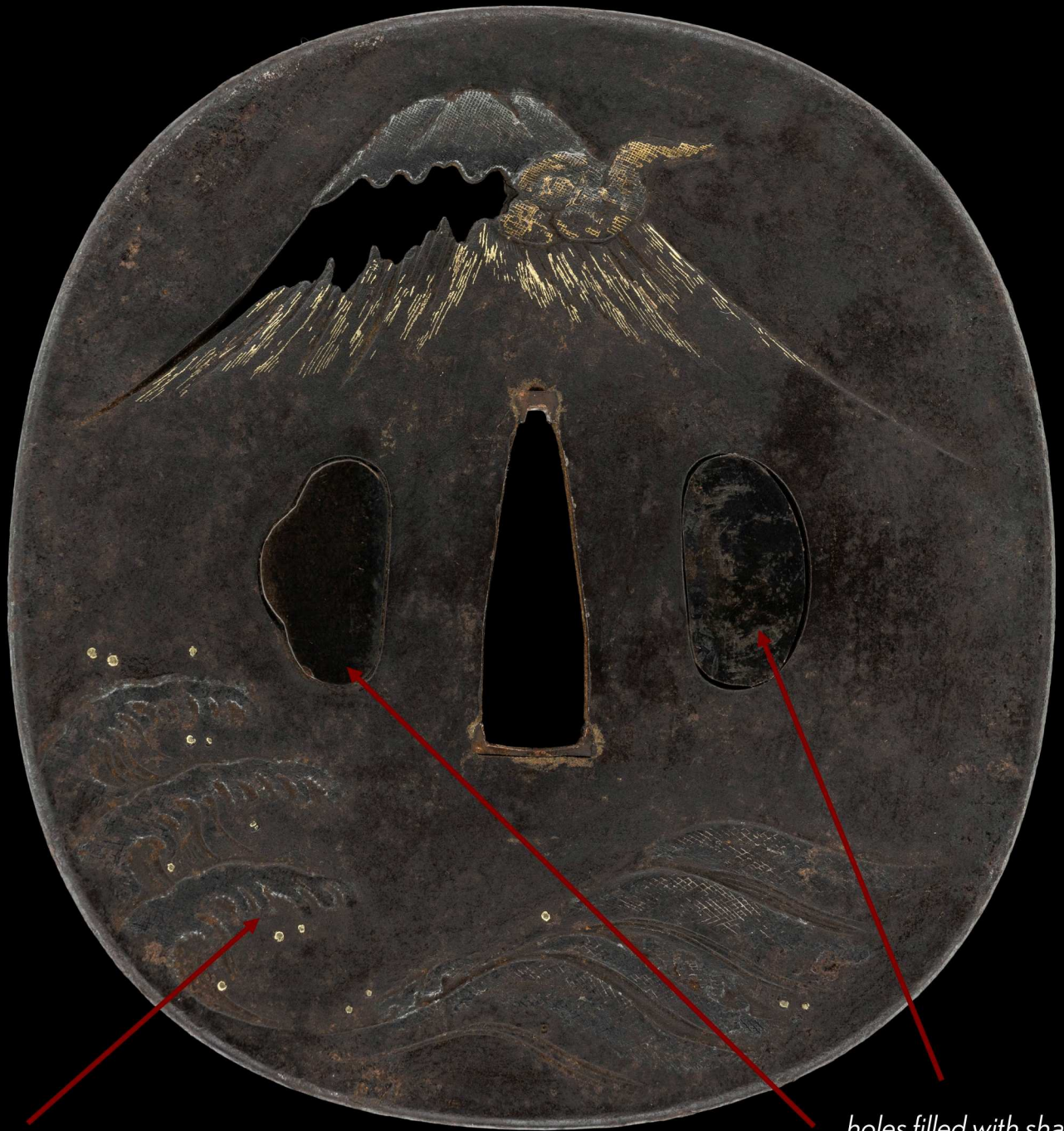


This superb *tsuba* was crafted in the late Edo period by *Kurobane Katsutoshi* (黒羽勝寿). The refined iron plate depicts Mt. Fuji with drifting clouds, executed in low-relief carving (*usuniku-bori*) and accented with gold inlay and cross-hatched inlay.

Mt. Fuji has long held deep spiritual and cultural significance in Japan. By the late Edo period, *Fujikō* pilgrim societies had grown immensely, with thousands venerating the mountain as a path to enlightenment. The image of Fuji rising through clouds symbolizes not only natural beauty but also aspiration and purity.

This *tsuba*'s theme resonates with the work of the swordsmith *Ippō* (一峯), whose name "One Peak" evokes similar ideals of singularity and elevation. A fitting tribute to the spirit of the man and mountain.





curling waves

holes filled with shakudô

(reverse)



Fuji-san

The Great Wave off Kanagawa

The reverse side of the *tsuba* features the same motif as the front - Mount Fuji with drifting clouds - but what stands out is the wave design at the bottom of the piece. The motif clearly draws inspiration from *Katsushika Hokusai's* iconic "The Great Wave off Kanagawa" from "the Thirty-Six Views of Mount Fuji series."

This print was created during the *Tempô* era (1830-1844) in the late Edo period, suggesting that the *tsuba* was likely crafted around the same time.



This *fuchi-kashira* made of *shakudô* dates to the late Edo period and is attributed to an unnamed *Kanagu-shi* (metalsmith artisan). With its simple diagonal line strokes and rounded *kashira*, it resembles fittings seen on *Higo*-style *koshirae*.

Higo-*koshirae* are known for their compact, practical design - often paired with shorter blades suited for one-handed use (*katate-uchi*). These swords offered greater reach and faster draw times than two-handed katana, making them ideal for *iaidô* and close combat.

The minimalist style reflects the *wabi-sabi* aesthetic, valuing simplicity, imperfection, and quiet elegance. Instead of lavish decoration, the subdued metalwork invites contemplation, honouring restraint and natural form. In Higo fittings, such simplicity was a deliberate expression of samurai values and *Zen*-informed discipline.



Antique-style white *samekawa* hilt wrapped in a *hishimaki* style with golden-brown silk braids.



The *menuki* depict carved motifs of catfish (*namazu*). In Japanese folklore, the catfish is associated with earthquakes, as it was believed that a giant *namazu* living beneath the earth caused tremors when it moved. As a result, the image of the catfish came to symbolize both natural power and the need for vigilance -making it a fitting emblem for a warrior's sword.





Koshirae bag with a cloud pattern mixed with maple leaves - perfect for this fall catalogue. ;)



ITEM# UJKA486

CURRENTLY AVAILABLE

## A SENJUIN KATANA

UNSIGNED, CHÛ-KOTÔ LATE KAMAKURA PERIOD (CIRCA 1300)

**Swordsmith:** *Senjuin School*  
**Measurements:** **Length:** 69.7cm (*ô-suriage*) **Sori:** 2.4cm **Moto-haba:** 2.53cm **Weight:** 665g  
**Jihada:** *Exquisite mix of mokume, itame, nagare-hada with ji-nie, plentiful chikei and utsuri*  
**Hamon:** *Vivid hosô-suguha with ko-gunome, sunagashi, kinsuji and sweeping hakikake*  
**Certificate #1:** **NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon** (*Especially Worthy of Preservation*)  
**Certificates #2-4:** **NTHK-NPO Kanteishô** (*koshirae, fuchi-kashira and tsuba certified as Authentic*)  
**Included:** *Shirasaya, Mid-Edo koshirae, fabric bags, stand, kit, printed description*

**SOLD** ([click here](#) to watch Pablo's video presentation of this sword on YouTube)

The *Senjuin* school represents the earliest and most refined among the five major schools of the *Yamato* tradition. Its origins trace back to the late *Heian* period, when smiths connected with *Tôdaiji* temple and its warrior monks forged blades at a sub-temple in the *Senju* valley. The founding figure was *Yukinobu* (行信) in the mid-12th century, followed by *Shigehiro* (重弘), who served *Emperor Go-Toba* (後鳥羽天皇). The splendid sword with its long and elegant *tachi sugata* shape with *koshi-zori* and small *kissaki*, recalls the classical form of the golden Kamakura age. The *jigane* is an *itame* with *nagare*, mixed with *mokume*, covered in fine *ji-nie* and streaked with *chikei*. The *hamon* is a refined *hosô-suguha* bright with *nie*, gently varied by small *gunome*. A marvellous *uchigatana koshirae* dating back to the mid-Edo period (1700s) accompanies the sword with the *tsuba* and *menuki* recounting the powerful stories of the *Go-Hôjo* clan and *Honda* family warriors and the brutal siege of *Odawara* castle during the *Sengoku-jidai* in the Late *Muromachi* period. All told, this is an impressive 700-year-old *Kamakura*-period collectible samurai sword with integrity and class.

Saki-kasane: 3.1mm <sup>^</sup>

Moto-kasane: 5.5mm

Omosa: 665g

Kissaki: 3.0cm  
Saki-haba: 1.73cm

Nakago: 19.9cm

Moto-haba: 2.53cm

Nagasa: 69.7cm

Sori: 2.4cm

Mekugi-ana: 2



The *Senjuin* school represents the earliest and most refined among the five major schools of the *Yamato* tradition. Its origins trace back to the late *Heian* period, when smiths connected with *Tôdaiji* temple and its warrior monks forged blades at a sub-temple in the *Senju* valley, named *Senju-in* after the bodhisattva *Senju Kannon*. The founding figure was *Yukinobu* (行信) in the mid-12th century, followed by *Shigehiro* (重弘), who served Emperor *Go-Toba* (後鳥羽天皇). From these beginnings arose the *Senjuin-kaji*, a lineage of temple smiths who produced swords as both weapons and spiritual amulets. Because their works were made so early and most later shortened, signed examples are almost unknown, which heightens their aura of antiquity.

Over the centuries, scholars identify three phases of production: *Ko-Senjuin* ("Old" *Senjuin*) of the late *Heian* to early *Kamakura*, *Chû-Senjuin* during the mid-*Kamakura* to *Nanbokuchô*, and *Sue-Senjuin* ("Late" *Senjuin*) into the *Muromachi* period. Among these, the earliest works are held in the highest regard for classical beauty and restraint. Even as later generations absorbed influences from other schools, the core traits of *Yamato* elegance and austerity remained.

The present blade is a splendid late *Kamakura* example, embodying the qualities of the *Senjuin* tradition. Its long and elegant *tachi sugata* shape with *koshi-zori* and small *kissaki*, recalls the classical forms of the golden *Kamakura* age. The *ji-gane* is an *itame* with *nagare*, mixed with *mokume*, covered in fine *ji-nie* and streaked with *chikei*. A captivating *utsuri* flowing parallel to the *hamon*, gives the blade a mysterious edge.

The *hamon* is a refined *hoso-suguha* bright with *nie*, gently varied by small *gunome* and enriched with subtle *hataraki* - wisps of *hotsure*, streams of *sunagashi*, and flashes of *kinsuji*. The *boshi* continues the restrained beauty, running straight with a small *ko-maru* return. The nakago is (*ô-suriage*) with *kiri-mei* and two *mekugi-ana*.

A marvellous *uchigatana koshirae* dating back to the mid-*Edo* period (1700s) accompanies the sword. The *tsuba* and *menuki* tell the powerful stories of the *Go-Hôjô* clan and *Honda* family warriors and the brutal siege of *Odawara* castle during the *Sengoku-jidai* in the Late *Muromachi* period. All told, this is an impressive 700-year-old historical *Kamakura* period samurai sword with integrity and class.



Location: *Yamato province*

School: *Senjuin*

*ô-suriage-nakago* (greatly shortened tang)

*kiri-yasurime* (horizontal file marks)

The *mekugi-ana* from the second *suriage*



..... The second *suriage* border

The *mekugi-ana* from the first *ô-suriage*



This sword was originally longer but has been shortened to *2-shaku 3-sun* (69.7 cm). From the rust on the tang and the number of *mekugi-ana*, it can be inferred that it underwent at least two *suriage* shortenings.

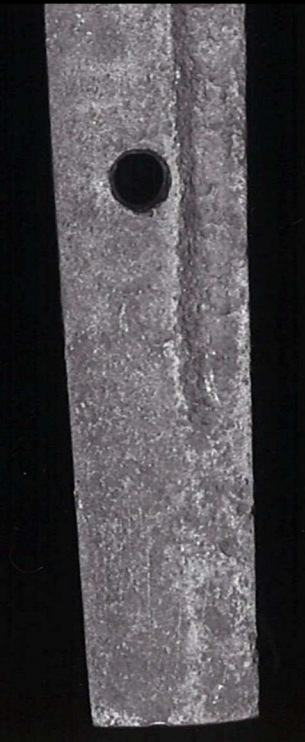
The first was likely carried out before the Edo period to adapt the blade for close combat. Later, during *Tokugawa Iemitsu's* time (~1651), when a regulation set *2-shaku 3-sun* as the maximum length, the sword appears to have been shortened again to match that standard.

Although length regulations were further reduced thereafter, this sword has remained at *2-shaku 3-sun*. This suggests it was no longer intended for combat use but preserved with care as a treasured heirloom within a (likely) formal *daishô*.

This blade has undergone twice *suriage*, yet the shape of the tang's tip is worth noting.

Its form is called *kurijiri*, named for its resemblance to the rounded curve of a *kuri* (chestnut). In this case, however, the curve is rather shallow, making it closer to what is known as *kirijiri* (horizontal).

From this feature, it is suggested that the second *suriage* was performed around the *Keichō* era (1596-1615). This timing corresponds to the period when the legal standard length of swords was about *2-shaku 3-sun* (69.7 cm).



Old Senjuin with horizontal butt



Senjuin Morikuni (Mid 1600s) with chestnut butt

shallow *kurijiri*

(*ura*, reverse)

特 選  
01201903

No 1011365



鑑定書

一 刀 無銘 伝(千手院)

長二尺二寸九分強

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

令和元年五月二十三日

公益財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協會



福島県 教育委員会  
第 9064 号  
昭和29年3月4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 1st year of Reiwa (2019), May 23th

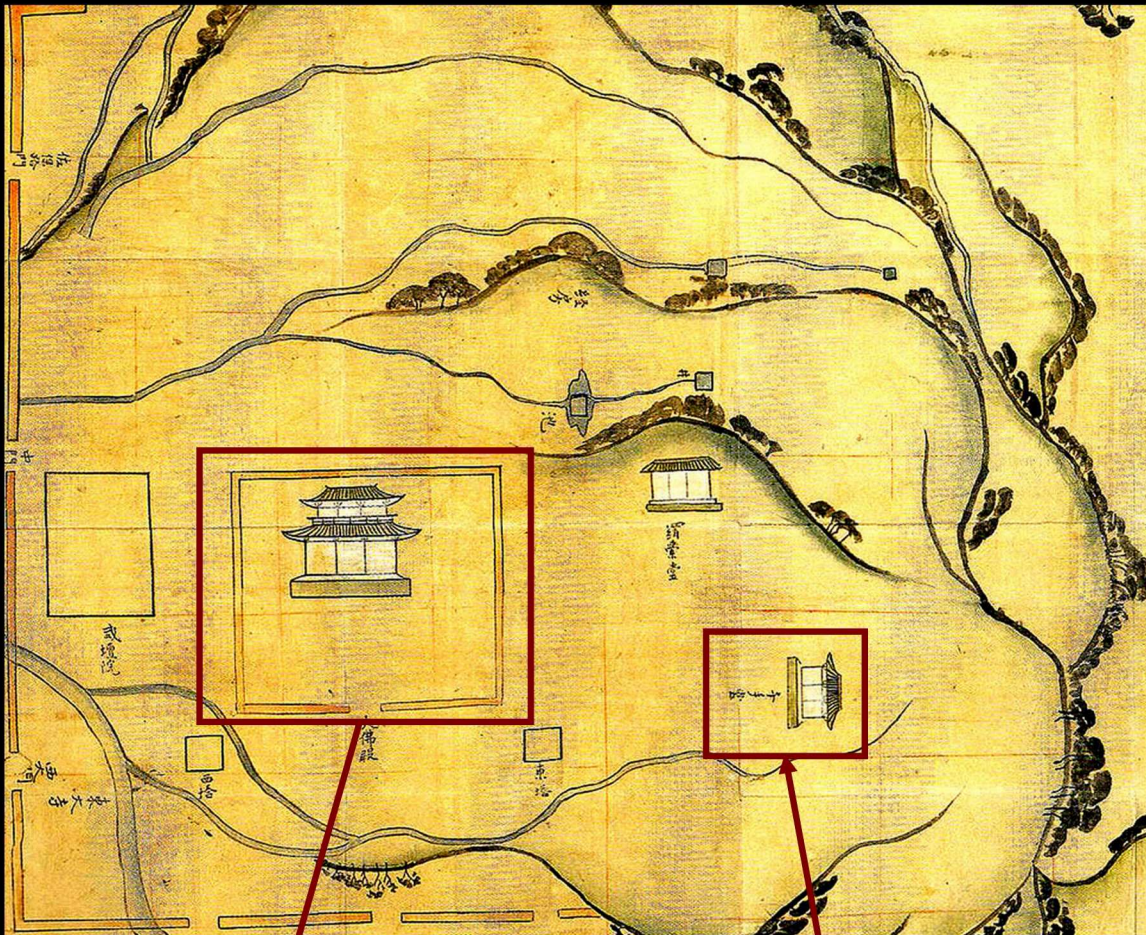
One, Katana

*Mumei* (unsigned)  
*Den Senjuin*

*Nagasa* (length)  
2-shaku 2-sun 9-bu kyô (69.7cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai  
(NBTHK)

A map of the area around *Tôdaiji*, made in 756 during the mid-*Nara* period.



*Senju-dô* hall

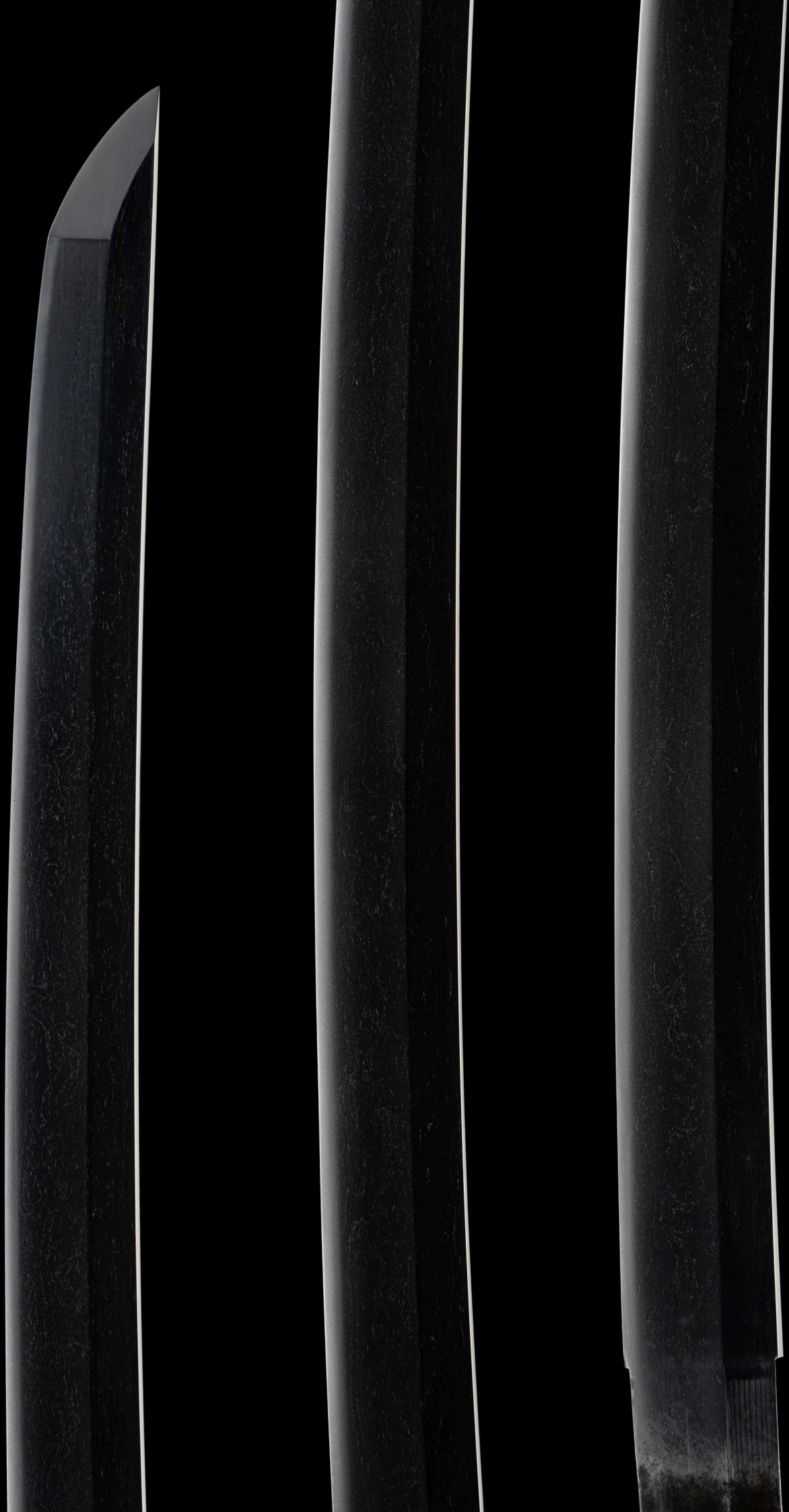


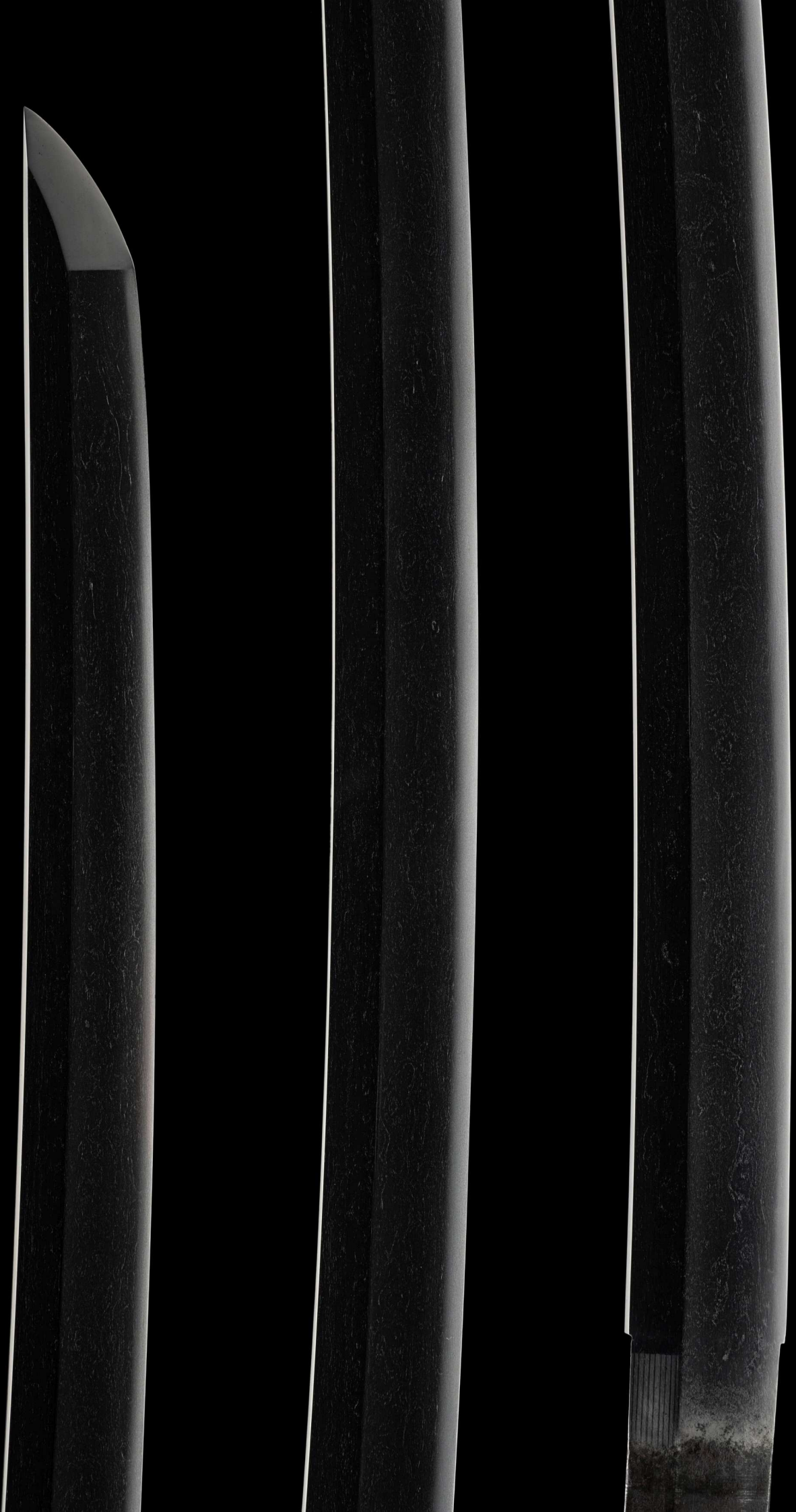
The Great Buddha Hall of Tôdaiji.



The former *Senju-dô* site is now occupied by old residences of *Tôdaiji*'s high priest.

*The Senjuin school derives its name from the Senju-dô hall, situated at the foot of Mount Wakakusa, where swordsmith-monks of Tôdaiji are believed to have forged blades for the temple's warrior monks. The original hall no longer survives, having been reestablished at a different site in the Edo period. However, a map of the Tôdaiji precincts dated to 756 provides firm evidence of the Senju-dô's presence east of the Main Temple at the mountain's base. This historical record offers rare testimony to the geographical and spiritual origins of the Senjuin lineage, situating it firmly within the sacred landscape of the old capital of Yamato, modern-day Nara.*





As this sword is *ô-suriage mumei* (greatly shortened and unsigned) it is technically certified as a *katana*. However, this sword was originally crafted as a *tachi* and it will always be a *tachi*.



A glorious *tachi-sugata* shape.

And turn back in a small round (*ko-maru kaeri*)

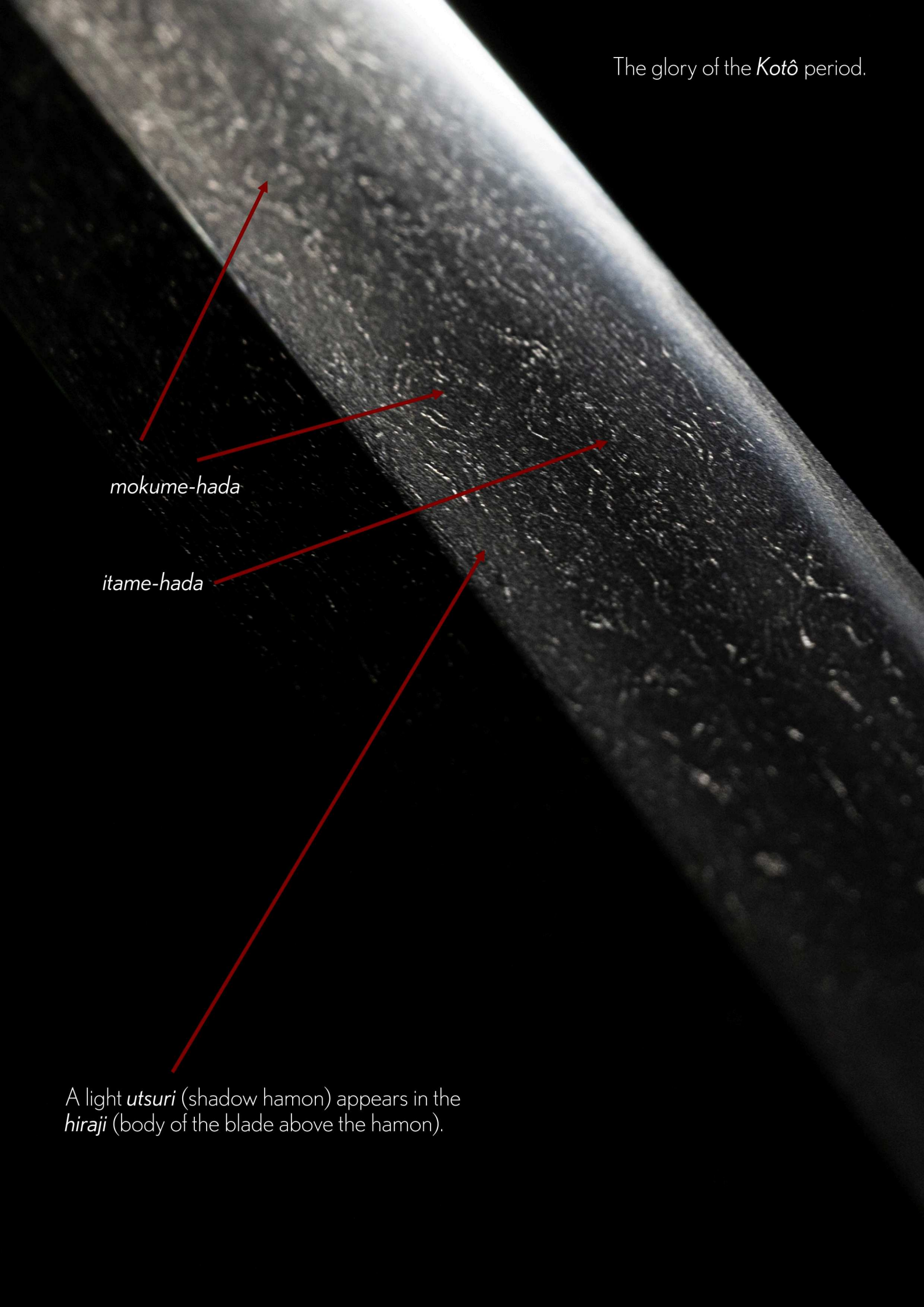
*kissaki* starts in straight with  
a hint of brush strokes (*hakikake*)





*kinsuji* (glorious golden lines of *nie* crystals)

The glory of the *Kotô* period.



The image shows a close-up, diagonal view of a sword blade. The blade is dark, with a prominent hamon (edge line) running along its length. The hamon is composed of several distinct patterns: a dark, irregular pattern at the top, a lighter, more regular pattern in the middle, and a dark, irregular pattern at the bottom. Red arrows point from text labels to these specific areas. The background is black, making the blade stand out.

*mokume-hada*

*itame-hada*

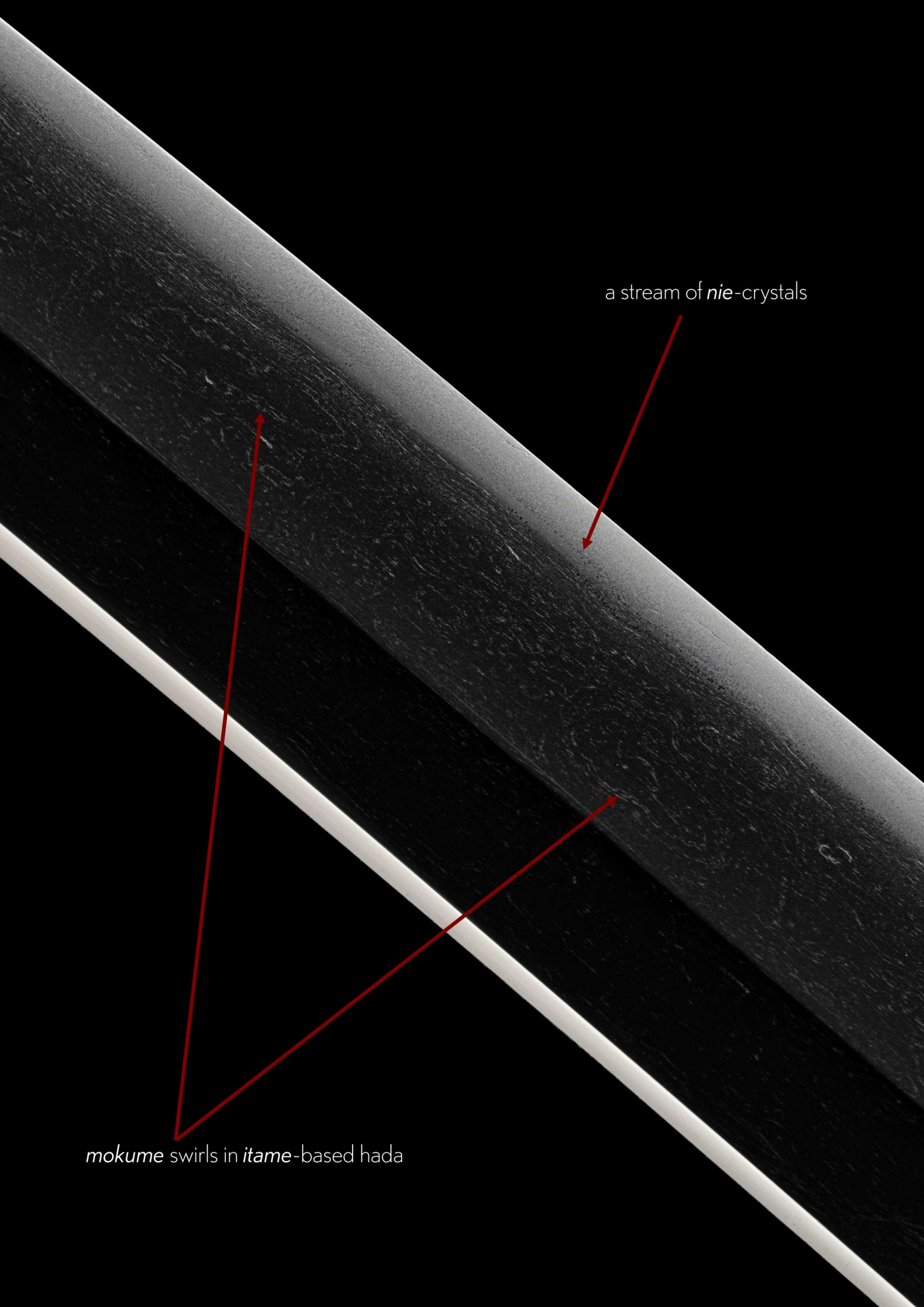
A light *utsuri* (shadow hamon) appears in the *hiraji* (body of the blade above the hamon).



A close-up look at the flowing *nagare-hada*.

A close-up photograph of two blades of a sunagashi brush. The blades are dark and have a fine, textured surface. A central text overlay reads "Brushes of *sunagashi* sweeps us back 750 years...". Two red arrows point from the text to the blades.

Brushes of *sunagashi* sweeps us back 750 years...



a stream of *nie*-crystals

*mokume* swirls in *itame*-based hada



*sayagaki* potential



*Shirasaya*  
(protective scabbard)

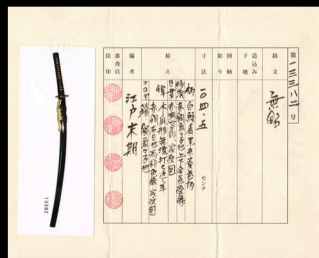


gold *habaki* with  
horizontal file marks that suit  
the *jihada* of the sword.

*Kuro-roiro-nuri saya  
uchigatana-koshirae*  
(黒呂色塗鞘打刀拵)

*Uchigatana-koshirae  
lacquered in glossy black*

Crafted during the  
Middle Edo period  
(1780~1868)



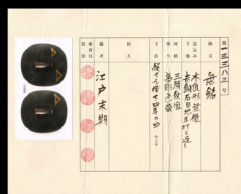
NTHK-NPO Kanteisho  
Certificate of Authenticity



This proud late Edo-period *tsuba* was crafted in a *mokkô* (quatrefoil) shape, made of *shakudô* with a uniquely textured surface. The design prominently features the crest of the *Go-Hôjô* clan, the "*uroko*" (scale pattern), a symbol strongly associated with one of the most powerful warrior families of the *Sengoku-jidai*, late Muromachi period.



reverse



NTHK-NPO Kanteisho  
Certificate of Authenticity

## Background of the Odawara Campaign and the Hôjô Clan

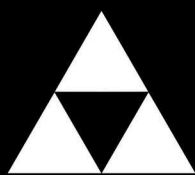
By the late 16th century, the *Go-Hôjô* clan had risen to dominate the *Kantô* region. From their stronghold at *Odawara* Castle, successive generations expanded their influence across *Sagami*, *Musashi*, and much of eastern Japan. Under *Hôjô Ujinao* (北条氏直), the clan commanded one of the largest territories of the *Sengoku* (late Muromachi) era, supported by *well-organized* land surveys and taxation systems.

Odawara Castle itself, with its massive *sôgamae* (total enclosure), was considered impregnable – the ultimate symbol of *Hôjô* resilience. However, in 1590, *Toyotomi Hideyoshi* (豊臣秀吉) launched the Odawara Campaign, the final step toward unifying Japan. Mobilizing more than 200,000 warriors from across the country, *Hideyoshi* encircled *Odawara* and systematically cut off the *Hôjô*'s network of castles.

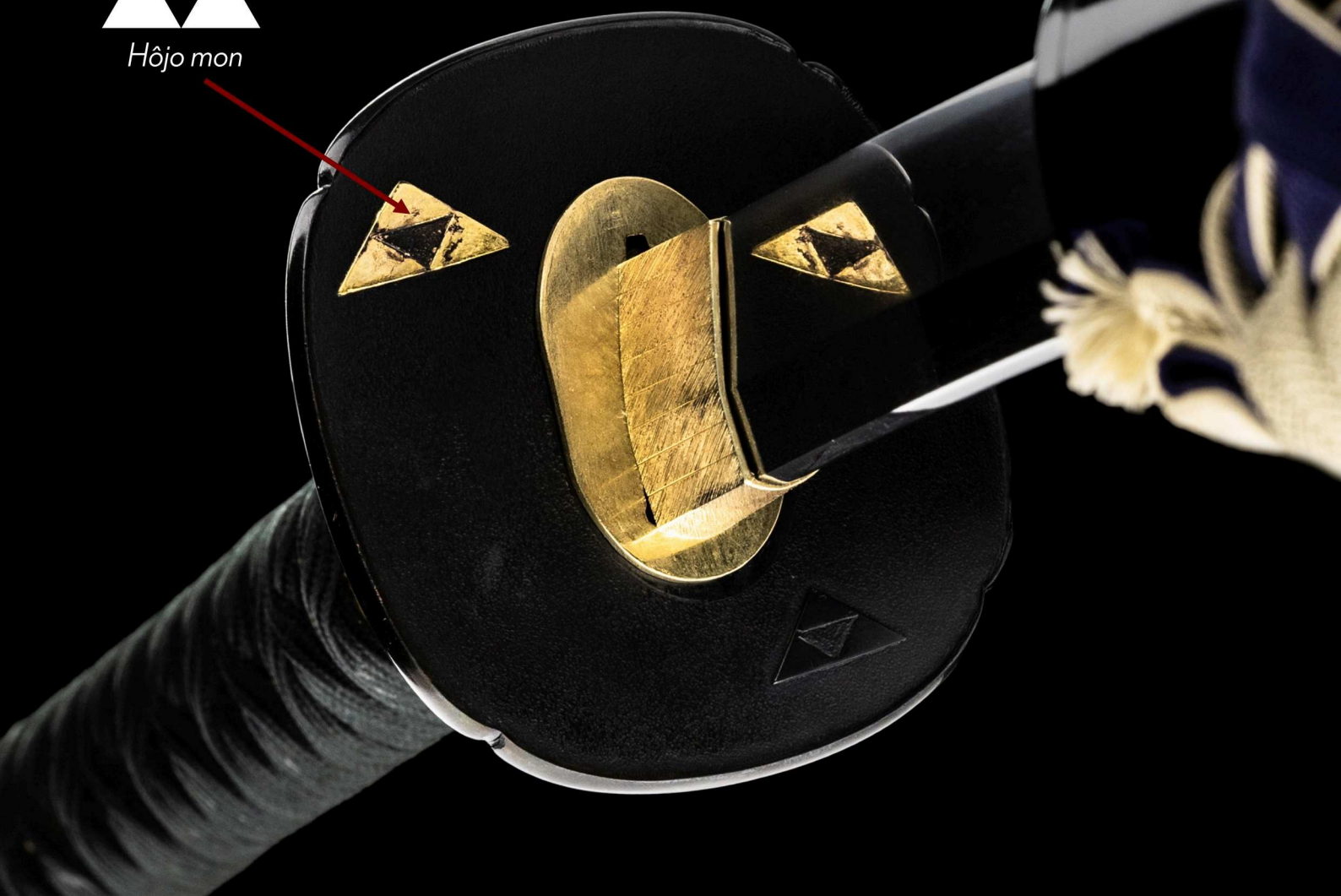
The *tsuba* bearing the crest of the *Hôjô* recalls not only the clan's century-long ascendancy but also its last great act of defiance, holding out within the walls of Odawara Castle against overwhelming odds.



Hôjô Ujinao  
(1562~1591)



Hôjo mon





While *Odawara* endured a long siege, its satellite fortresses fell one after another. Among the generals pressing the attack was *Honda Tadakatsu* (本多忠勝), famed retainer of *Tokugawa Iyasu*.

Renowned as a warrior “without equal in East or West,” *Tadakatsu* led assaults on key strongholds such as *Tamanawa* and *Iwatsuki*, hastening the collapse of *Hôjô* resistance. His presence at *Odawara* underlined the *Tokugawa* clan’s crucial role in *Hideyoshi*’s great coalition.

After months of encirclement, starvation, and isolation, *Hôjô Ujinao* finally surrendered. The fall of the *Hôjô* brought an end to a century of regional power in *Kantô*. In turn, *Tokugawa Iyasu* was granted the *Hôjô* lands, relocated to *Edo* – a move that laid the foundation for the *Tokugawa shogunate* and established over two centuries of relative peace.

The pairing of the *Hôjô* crest on the *tsuba* with the *Honda* mon on the *menuki* transforms this *koshirae* into a historical recount of once bitter enemies, into two emblems that now coexist, embodying the transition from the turbulence of the *Sengoku* period into nearly 300 years of *Edo* period peace.



*Honda Tadakatsu*  
(1548~1610)



*Tsuka* (hilt) follows a classic and formal style, covered with white *same* (ray skin) and wrapped with black silk braids.



These impressive *menuki* feature two complimentary *mon* (crests), both belonging to the *Honda daimyô* family.

One is the *Tachi Aoi* crest, derived from the hollyhock emblem of the Tokugawa clan. The other is the *Hon no ji* (*Hon* character) crest, particularly associated with the famed *Honda Tadakatsu* (本多忠勝).

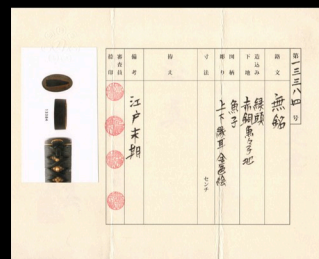


*Tachi Aoi*



*Hon no ji*

Honda Tadakatsu was celebrated as one of the "Four Greatest Warriors of Tokugawa," a loyal retainer of Tokugawa Ieyasu (徳川家康) and a distinguished warrior who contributed greatly to the founding of the Tokugawa shogunate. Due to his achievements, he was one of the very few outside the Tokugawa clan permitted to wear the *Aoi-mon*.



NTHK-NPO Kanteisho  
Certificate of Authenticity



*Fuchi-kashira*  
in pure *nanako* ground

In bold contrast to the *tsuba* adorned with the crest of the *Hôjô clan* and the *menuki* bearing the crests of the *Honda family*, the *fuchi-kashira* is completed in pure *shakudô* with a refined *nanako* ground. Note that each of these *nanako* dimples are hand-punched, such incredible symmetry! The *fuchi-kashira* offers a quiet confidence, contrasting against the symbolic weight of the other fittings. This *fuchi-kashira* has been attributed to the prestigious *Ômori* school from the late *Edo* period.



*Koshirae* bag with long life tortoise shell pattern.





ITEM# UJKA476

CURRENTLY AVAILABLE

## A SANDAI YASUTSUGU KATANA

SIGNED & DATED, SHINTÔ PERIOD (KANBUN ERA: FEBRUARY 1666)

<b>Swordsmith:</b>	(Aoi-mon) Yasutsugu Nanban-tetsu o motte Bushû Edo ni oite kore o tsukuru (Edo sandai)
<b>Measurements:</b>	<b>Length:</b> 72.9cm (ubu) <b>Sori:</b> 1.0cm <b>Moto-haba:</b> 2.95cm <b>Weight:</b> 685g
<b>Jihada:</b>	Beautiful ko-mokume and itame hada with ji-nie and plenty of chikei
<b>Hamon:</b>	Bright and graceful suguha with small gunome and delicate ashi
<b>Certificate #1:</b>	NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon (Especially Worthy of Preservation)
<b>Certificate #2-4:</b>	NTHK-NPO Kanteishô (koshirae, fk and tsuba certified as Authentic)
<b>Fujishiro rank:</b>	Jô-saku (ranked as a superior swordsmith)
<b>Included:</b>	Shirasaya, Edo-koshirae, fabric bags, stand, kit, printed description

**SOLD** ([click here](#) to watch Pablo's video presentation of this sword on YouTube)

Here is an outstanding katana by third generation *Yasutsugu*, forged and dated with *Nanban-tetsu* in Edo in February 1666, when the smith was 37 years old. The cutting edge measures an impressive 72.9cm with *futatsu-bi* (two parallel grooves). The *hada* is a finely forged *itame* with *ji-nie* and plentiful *chikei*. A graceful *suguha* *hamon* with *ko-gunome* and delicate *ashi* shines brightly. A secondary *mekugi-ana* near the end of the *nakago* suggests the blade was either used or intended for cutting-test. It's beautiful Edo-period *koshirae* has a lovely *tsuba* attributed to *Sano Naoyoshi* with a *taro* leaf design that symbolizes prosperity and harmony. The *fuchi-kashira* with depictions of chrysanthemums is further certified to *Kaga Kuwamura Katsuhisa* who trained in the *Gotô* school. All told, this is a terrific samurai sword that will shine brightly in a lucky person's collection.



Saki-kasane: 4.0mm

Moto-kasane: 6.8mm

Kissaki: 3.51cm

Saki-haba: 1.84cm

Nagasa: 72.9cm

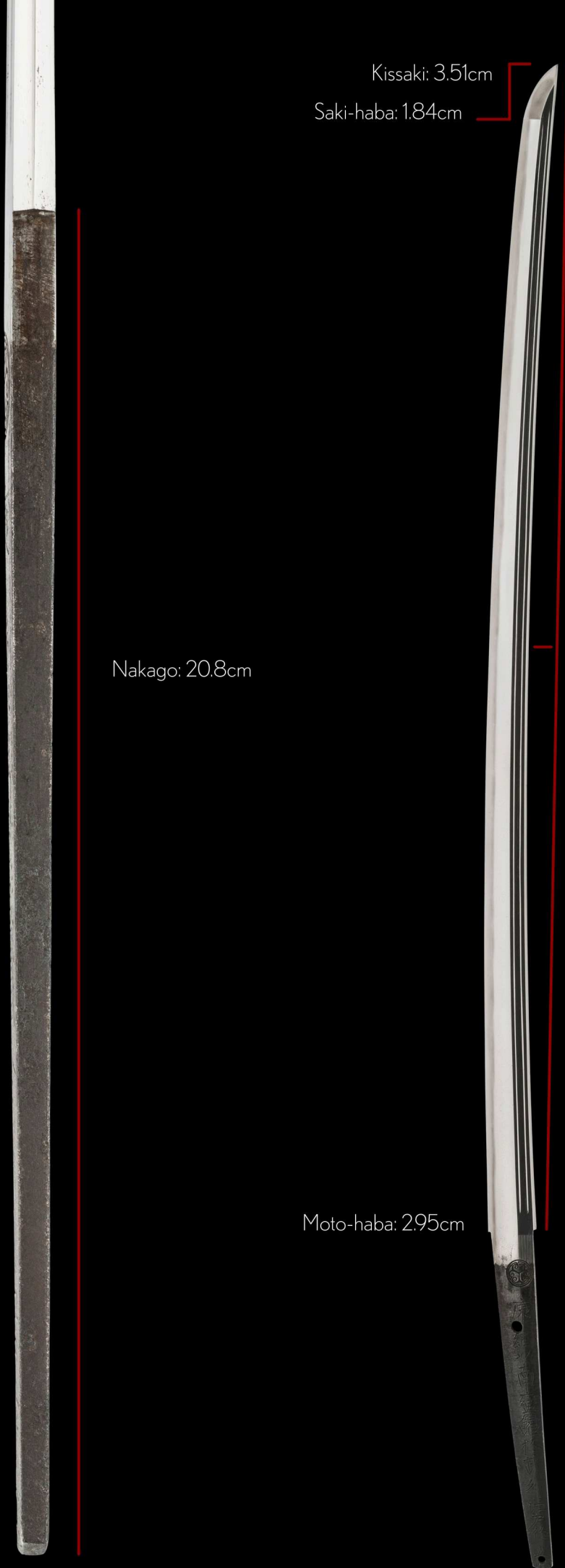
Nakago: 20.8cm

Sori: 1.0cm

Omosa: 685g

Moto-haba: 2.95cm

Mekugi-ana: 2



The third-generation *Yasutsugu* (康継), also known as Edo *Sandai Yasutsugu*, was a prominent *jô-saku* swordsmith active in the mid-17th century during the early Edo period. He inherited the name and tradition of the *Yasutsugu* line, originally founded by the first-generation *Yasutsugu*, a distinguished smith from the *Shimosaka* school in *Echizen* who was later summoned to Edo by *Tokugawa Ieyasu* (徳川家康) himself. Under the continued patronage of the Tokugawa shogunate, the *Yasutsugu* lineage became synonymous with both technical precision and elite status, especially through the use of *Nanban-tetsu* (foreign-imported iron), which was rare and valued for its superior metallurgical properties.

Third-generation *Yasutsugu*, often signing as "*Shimosaka Ichinojô* (下坂市之丞)" in addition to "*Yasutsugu*," worked during the Kanbun and Enpô eras (1660s-1670s), a time of consolidation in both politics and sword artistry. He was known for bold yet refined craftsmanship, creating blades that were well-balanced, durable, and finely structured. His works often exhibit *itame-hada* with clear *utsuri*, paired with elegant *suguha* or *ko-gunome* patterns and well-developed *ji-nie*. The use of the *Aoi-mon* (葵紋) crest in his signature marks official Tokugawa recognition, and his detailed *mei* frequently include the type of iron used, his age at the time of forging, and the exact date of creation - testaments to the pride and responsibility of his official position.

This *katana* is a splendid work by *Sandai Yasutsugu*, forged with *Nanban-tetsu* in Edo and dated to February 1666, when he was just 37-years-old. The cutting edge measures an impressive 72.9cm and is constructed with *futatsu-bi* (two parallel grooves) in *shinogi-zukuri* with an extended *chû-kissaki*. The *hada* is a finely forged *itame* with *ji-nie*, *chikei*, and a soft *utsuri*. The *hamon* is a graceful *suguha* with small *gunome* and delicate *ashi*, while the *bôshi* is *ô-maru* with a hint of *hakikake*. A secondary *mekugi-ana* near the end of the *nakago* suggests reinforcement for *tameshigiri*, indicating the blade was either used or intended for cutting-test.

A beautiful Edo-period *koshirae* accompanies the sword with a lovely *tsuba* attributed to *Sano Naoyoshi* with a *taro* leaf design that symbolizes prosperity and harmony. The *fuchikashira* with depictions of gorgeous chrysanthemums is further certified to *Kaga Kuwamura Katsuhisa* who trained in the *Gotô* school. All told, this is a terrific samurai sword that will shine brightly in a lucky person's collection. Currently on hold.



Location: *Edo*

Secular name: *Shimosaka Ichinojô*

Swordsmith: *Yasutsugu* (third generation)

*ubu-nakago* (original, unaltered tang)

*katte-sagari-yasurime* (slanting file marks)

*Aoi-mon* crest



康  
繼  
以  
南  
蠻  
鐵  
於  
武  
州  
江  
戶  
作  
之

康 (Yasu)

繼 (tsugu)

以 (motte)

南 (nan)

蠻 (ban)

鐵 (tetsu)

於 (oite)

武 (Bu)

州 (shû)

江 (E)

戶 (do)

作 (tsukuru)

之 (kore)

*Yasutsugu Nanban-tetsu o motte Bushû Edo ni oite kore o tsukuru*  
(Crafted by Yasutsugu in Bushû Edo using Nanban-tetsu)



The *aoi-mon* (hollyhock) was the official *kamon* (crest) of the ruling *shogunate* of the Edo period, the *Tokugawa* family who were based in *Owari* province. The use of the *aoi-mon* (葵紋) crest in his signature marks official Tokugawa recognition.

康  
繼  
以  
南  
繼



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

*Shimosaka Ichi no Jô sanjûnana-sai kore o tsukuru*  
*Kanbun rokunen nigatsu kichijitsu*

Crafted by *Shimosaka Ichi no Jô* on a lucky day in  
the second month in the sixth year of *Kanbun* era  
(February 1666) when he was 37-years-old.



(Kan) 寛  
(bun) 文  
(roku) 六  
(nen) 年  
(ni) 二  
(gatsu) 月  
(kichi) 吉  
(jitsu) 日

下 (Shimo)  
坂 (saka)  
市 (Ichi)  
之 (no)  
丞 (Jô)  
三 (san)  
十 (jû)  
七 (nana)  
歳 (sai)  
造 (tsukuru)  
之 (kore)

The shape of the *nakago-jiri* (butt-end of the tang)  
is called *iriyama-gata*. *Iri* means 'enter' and *yama* is  
'mountain', suggesting at the '*base of a mountain*'.



*hikae-mekugi-ana*



*tameshigiri* (cutting test)

Although this blade retains *ubu-nakago*, an additional hole has been drilled near its base. This is known as a *hikae-mekugi-ana* - a secondary peg hole used to insert a second mekugi for reinforcement during *tameshigiri* or heavy use. While this sword bears no test-cutting inscription, the presence of the hole strongly suggests that it was either actually used for such purposes or was forged with serious practical application in mind.

特 保  
062024-09

No 1023802



鑑定書

一刀 銘

葵紋康繼以南蛮鉄於武州江戸作之(江戸元)  
下坂市之丞三十七歳造之  
寛文六年二月吉日

長二尺四寸強

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

令和六年十二月四日

公益財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協會



東京都教育委員会  
第 114065 号  
昭和38年2月14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 6th year of Reiwa (2024), December 4th

One, Katana

Mei (signature)

(Aoi-mon) Yasutsugu Nanban-tetsu o motte Bushû Edo ni oite kore o tsukuru (Edo Sandai)  
Shimosaka Ichi no Jô sanjûnana-sai kore o tsukuru  
Kanbun rokunen nigatsu kichijitsu

Nagasa (length)

2-shaku 4-sun kyô (72.9cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai  
(NBTHK)



葵紋

*Aoi-mon*

Tokugawa hollyhock crest

康繼以南蛮鉄於武州江戸作之

*Yasutsugu nanban-tetsu o motte Bushu Edo ni oite kore o tsukuru*

Crafted by Yasutsugu from Bushu Edo using Nanban-tetsu

江戸三代作也

*Edo Sandai saku nari*

Crafted by the third generation of Edo Yasutsugu

下坂市之丞三十七歳造之

*Shimosaka Ichinojô sanjûnana-sai kore o tsukuru*

Shimosaka Ichinojô made this at the age of thirty-seven

寛文六年二月吉日

*Kanbun rokunen nigatsu kichijitsu*

On a lucky day in the second month in the sixth year of Kanbun era (February 1666)

長貳尺四寸強有之

*Nagasa 2-shaku 4-sun kyô kore ari*

Blade length 72.9 cm

令和七乙巳年長月吉日誌之

*Reiwa nana kinoto-midoshi Nagatsuki kichijitsu kore o shirusu*

Written on a lucky day in the ninth month in the seventh year of Reiwa era during the Year of the Snake (September 2025)





Two beautifully carved full-length parallel grooves known as *futatsuji-bi* gives this samurai sword a distinctive flair. Grooves help lighten the blade, useful for a slicing action with a long katana.





The *bôshi* gleams like a crescent moon.

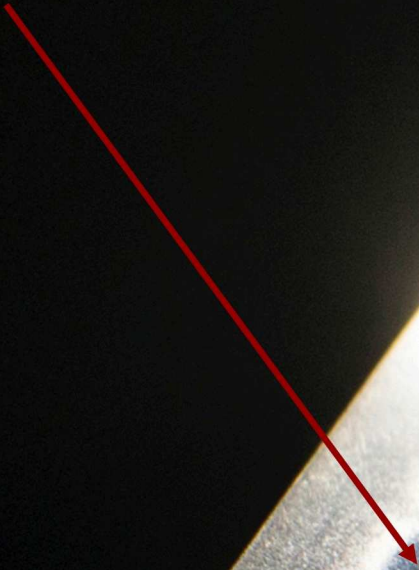


The *kissaki* takes on a *suguha*-like straight temper with an elegant *ô-maru bôshi*

The *bôshi* is finished with *hakikake* (swept pattern)



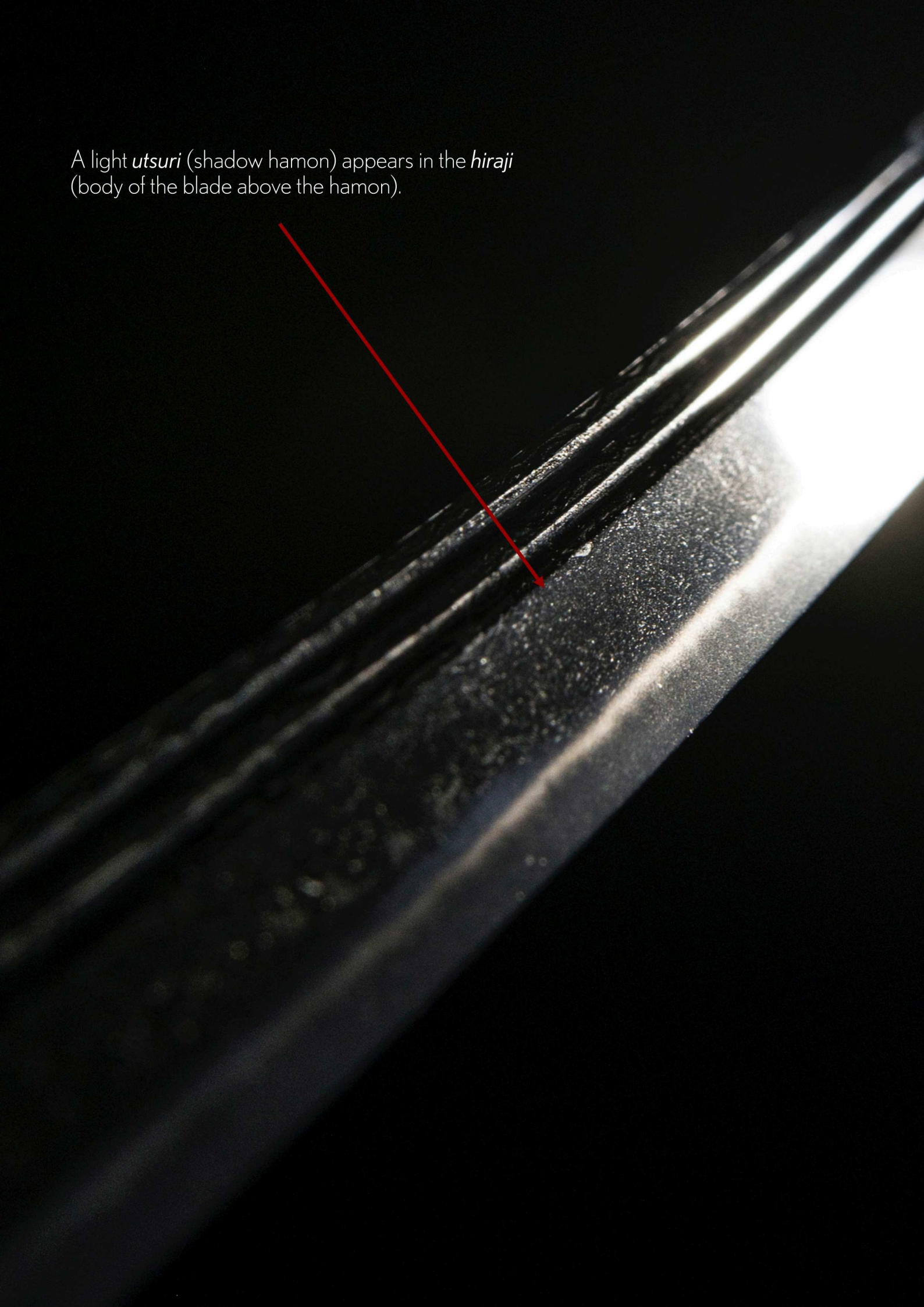
*chikei*  
dark solid lines of *nie* in the *ji*




*ji-nie*  
twinkling *nie* crystals in the *ji*



A light *utsuri* (shadow hamon) appears in the *hiraji* (body of the blade above the hamon).



A close-up, low-angle photograph of a sword blade against a black background. The blade is illuminated from the left, highlighting its curved edge and the hamon (tempered edge). A red arrow points to a specific feature on the hamon labeled 'ashi'.

The *hamon* is based on *suguha* with tasteful *ko-gunome* wave and *ashi* mixed in. Sweet.

*ashi*



*Shirasaya*  
(protective scabbard)

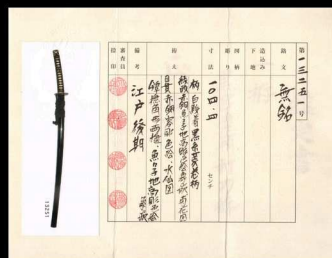


gold *habaki* with  
copper base

*Kuro-ronuri saya  
uchigatana-koshirae*  
(黒呂塗鞘打刀拵)

*Uchigatana-koshirae  
lacquered in glossy black*

Crafted during the  
Late Edo period  
(1780~1868)



NTHK-NPO Kanteisho  
Certificate of Authenticity

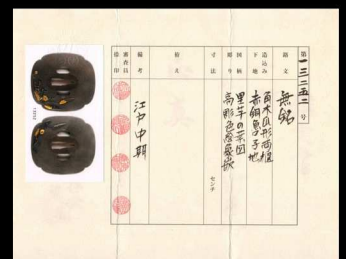
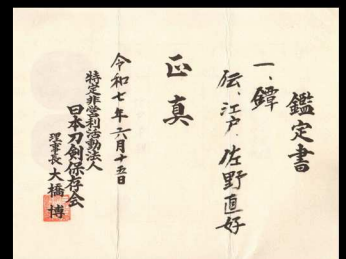


This fine *tsuba* is attributed to *Sano Naoyoshi* (佐野直好) - a late 18th-century Edo-period metalsmith. Crafted from *shakudô* with a sublime *nanako* texture, it features high-relief carving and restrained inlay, merging *Yokoya* school elegance with Naoyoshi's individual style. The *taro* leaf motif, with its soft curves and veins, adds a quiet gracefulness.

Naoyoshi trained under *Yanagawa Naomasa* (柳川直政) and *Nakamura Naonori* (中村直矩), later becoming Naonori's adopted son. He served the *Akimoto* clan of *Yamagata* and lived in *Shirokanemachi* in Edo (Tokyo) during the *Tenmei-Kansei* eras (1781-1801).

In Japanese culture, the taro leaf symbolizes prosperity, harmony, and Buddhist detachment - its water-shedding surface compared to a mind unbound by attachments.

An NTHK-NPO Kanteishô certificate accompanies the tsuba.





(reverse)



NTHK-NPO Kanteishô



This lovely *fuchi-kashira* is attributed to *Kuwamura Katsuhisa* (桑村克久), a mid-Edo period metalworker of the *Kaga* region. Born in 1694, Katsuhisa was the son of *Kuwamura Morikatsu* (桑村盛勝) and a key figure in the founding of the *Kuwamura-bori* style. Trained in the *Gotô* tradition, he developed a distinct Kaga aesthetic and became known for his expertise in *zôgan* (inlay work).

The fittings are crafted in *shakudô* with *nanako* ground, featuring high relief with coloured metal inlay depicting blooming chrysanthemums. The motif of chrysanthemums - symbols of longevity, nobility, and seasonal beauty - was especially favoured in the Edo period for its refined presence and classical elegance. This set exemplifies the sophisticated decorative metalwork of the Kaga domain and the artistic legacy of the Kuwamura lineage.

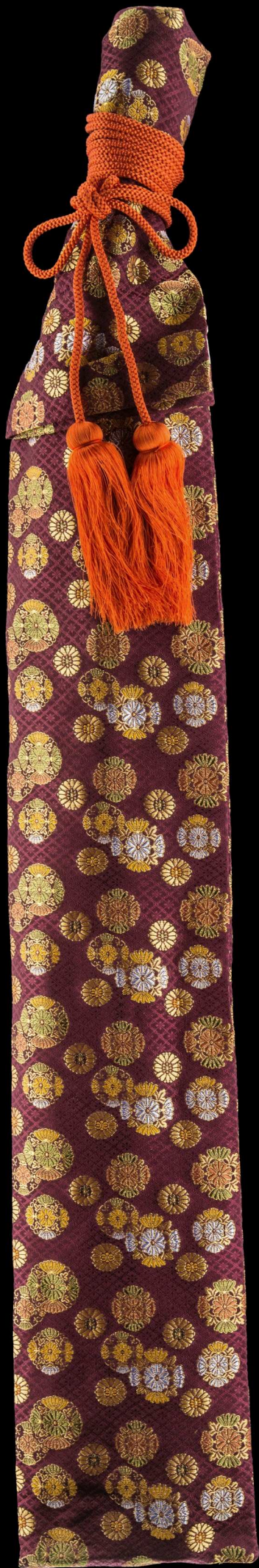


*Tsuka* (hilt) is in excellent preservation, retaining its antique character and atmosphere. It features aged white *samekawa* and *hishi-maki* wrapping in *tsuka-ito* that was originally black, now gently faded with time, adding to its historical charm.



*Menuki* (decorative grips on the hilt) are delicately carved in high relief to depict *suisen* - a flower associated in Japanese culture with grace, renewal, and quiet dignity. Often blooming in winter, the narcissus symbolizes inner strength and hope, making it a fitting motif for a sword carried with calm resolve.





Koshirae bag with  
chrysanthemum pattern.

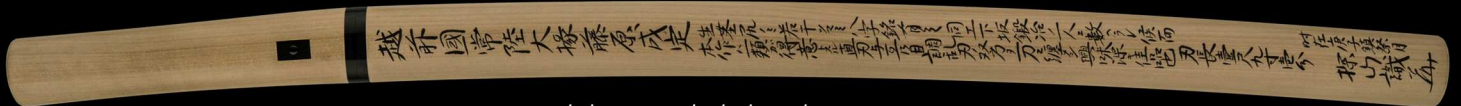


# Submit, Repair, Sell & Create!

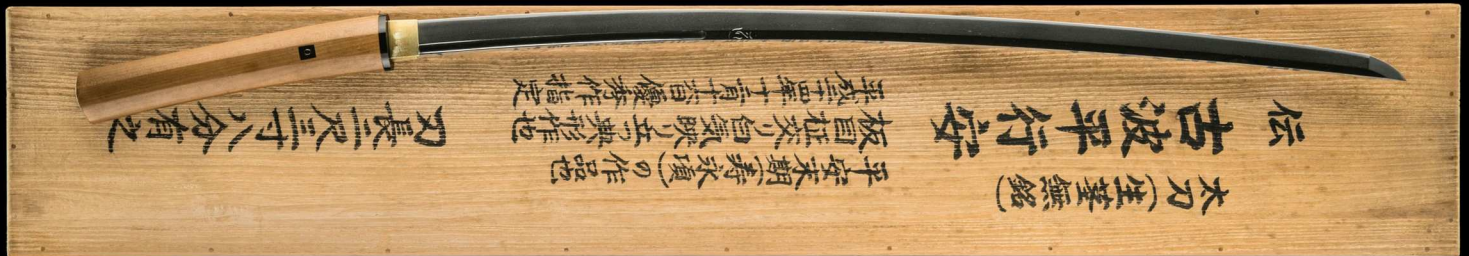
Unique Japan offers a *full-service menu* to assist clients with their Japanese swords and fittings. All services are performed in Japan with top quality craftsmen and women.

## Services include (non exhaustive):

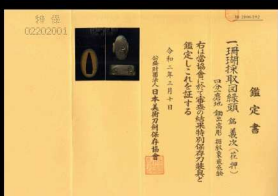
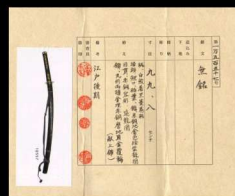
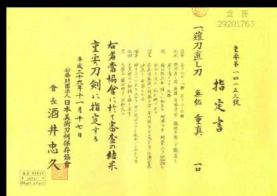
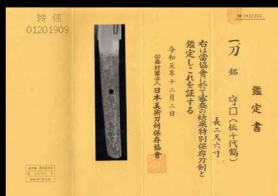
- \* NBTHK and NTHK-NPO *shinsa* certification (swords and fittings)
- \* polishing for all types of Japanese swords (standard to Jûyô-level quality polish)
- \* *shirasaya* making (standard to high quality with horn fittings)
- \* *habaki* making (gold, silver, copper in most any design pattern)
- \* fix wobbly koshirae, repair cracked scabbards, new lacquer work, etc.
- \* *otoshi* presentation boxes for your beautiful *tsuba*, *menuki*, *fuch-kashira*, etc.
- \* *tsuka-maki* (re-wrap your hilts in silk or leather in most any colour, weave or braid)
- \* *oshigata* (sword/hamon tracing on a scroll with a large choice of background)
- \* *sayagaki* services with *Tanobe-sensei* and *shodô* artist Nozomi-san
- \* *sword boxes with hakogaki* (with humidifying options for dry climates)
- \* custom koshirae projects (see separate page)
- \* sell your sword(s) on consignment (qualifying conditions apply)



polish, sayagaki, hakogaki



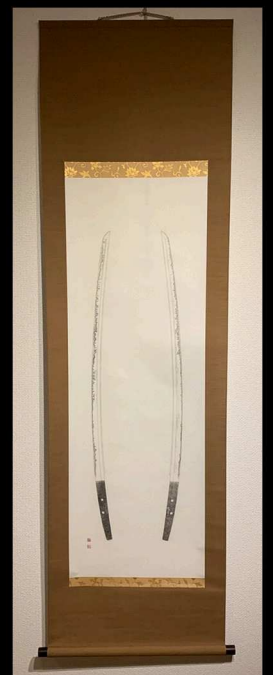
tsuka-maki



habaki creations



otoshi boxes



oshigata scrolls

All NBTHK and NTHK-NPO Shinsa authentication services



ITEM# UJKA418

## A NIDAI NOBUTAKA KATANA

SIGNED, SHINTÔ EARLY EDO PERIOD (KEIAN ERA: 1648~1652)

**Swordsmith:** Zen Haku (ika kire) (Hakushû Nobutaka Nyûdô (2nd gen.)  
**Measurements:** Length: 65.9cm (suriage) Sori: 1.1cm Moto-haba: 3.04cm Weight: 700g  
**Jihada:** Well-forged itame-hada with ji-nie, chikei  
**Hamon:** Gorgeous gunome-chôji-midare with kinsuji, sunagashi, yô and togari  
**Certificate:** NBTHK Hozon (sword Worthy of Preservation)  
**Fujishiro rank:** Jô-saku (ranked as a superior swordsmith)  
**Included:** Shirasaya, fabric bag, stand, kit, printed description

**SOLD** (building custom daishô koshirae with ujwa258)

Born in Kiyosu in 1603, second generation *Nobutaka* became official swordsmith to Tokugawa Yoshinao, founding lord of Owari and son of the great Tokugawa Ieyasu. Granted the title of Hôki no Kami in 1633, Nobutaka was celebrated as one of the finest smiths in service to the Tokugawa family. Acquired in the UK during the spring of 2023, the wonderful katana was initially in dreadful condition, but over a period of two years the sword was restored by top craftsmen in Japan to reveal a soaring gunome-choji and notare-midare hamon displaying brilliant yô, elegant sunagashi, and striking togari-ba formations. This is a sword with an encouraging message that brighter days lay ahead, even if we find ourselves in the most challenging of circumstances. Treasure this katana in shirasaya only, or potentially consider building a daishô koshirae with the ujwa258 shodai Nobutaka wakizashi inside this catalogue that also went through a similar transformative journey.



Saki-kasane: 4.6mm

Moto-kasane: 6.7mm

Kissaki: 3.61cm

Saki-haba: 2.02cm

Nagasa: 65.9cm

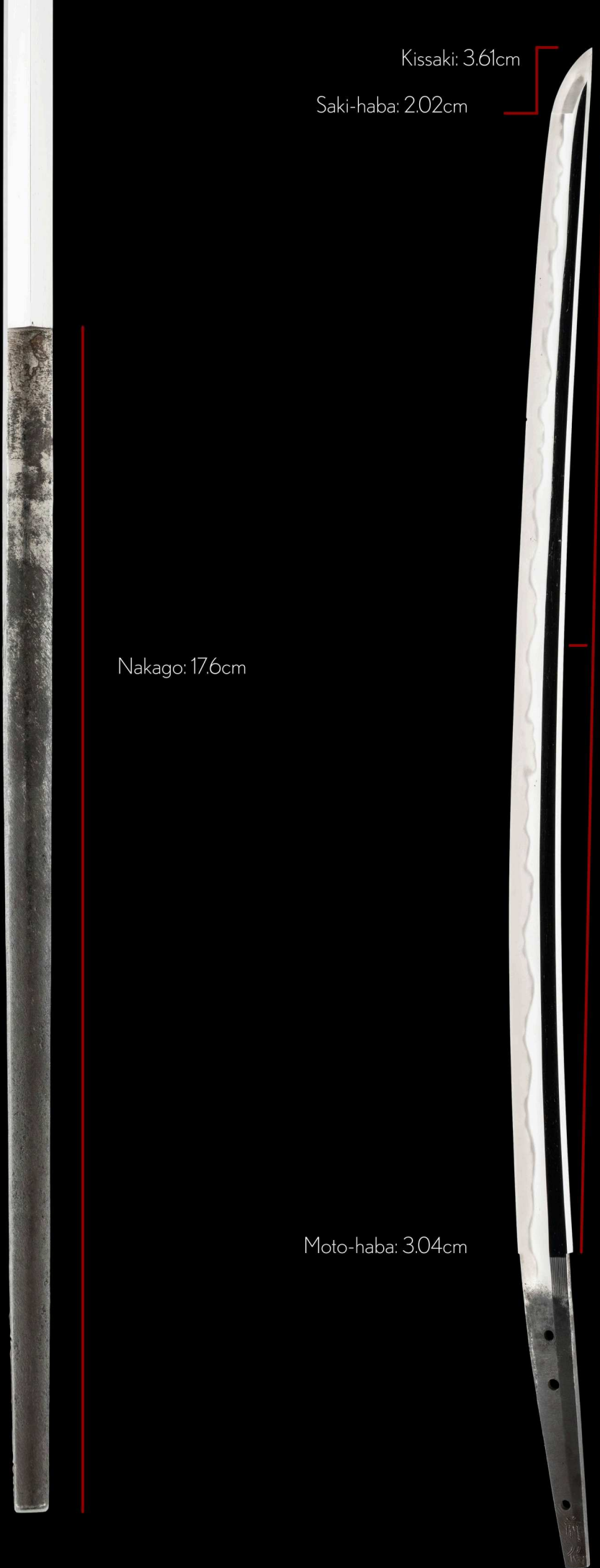
Nakago: 17.6cm

Sori: 11cm

Omosa: 700g

Moto-haba: 3.04cm

Mekugi-ana: 3



The lineage of *Hôki no Kami Nobutaka* represents one of the most captivating chapters in the rise of the *Owari Tokugawa* domain during the formative years of the Edo period. While the first *Nobutaka*, emigrated from *Mino* Province to establish roots in *Owari*, it was his son, *nidai Nobutaka* who would elevate their family name to acclaim.

Born in *Kiyosu* in 1603, second generation *Nobutaka* became official swordsmith (*goyô kaji*) to *Tokugawa Yoshinao*, founding lord of *Owari* and son of the great *Tokugawa Iyasu*. Granted the prestigious title of *Hôki no Kami* in 1633, *Nobutaka* was celebrated as one of the finest smiths in service to the *Tokugawa* family.

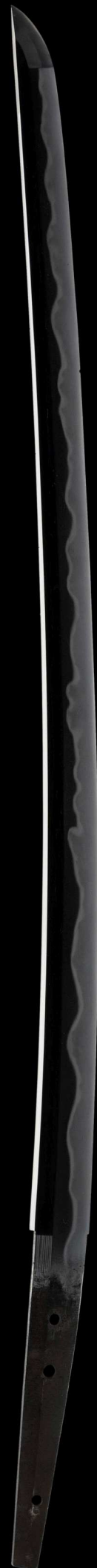
*Nobutaka's* works capture the aesthetic transitions of early Edo craftsmanship, brilliantly fusing *Mino*-den structural foundations with *Sôshû*-den flamboyance.

This wonderful katana has been on a transformative journey. Acquired in the UK during the spring of 2023, the sword was initially in dreadful condition, but alas the blade stood promise. Over a period of two years the sword was shipped to Japan, re-shaped and polished by expert craftsmen. A new shirasaya was also crafted for the sword and it was then submitted to the NBTHK, achieving Hozon certification.

The transformative restoration of this katana reveals truly breathtaking results - a magnificently soaring *gunome* and *notare-midare hamon* displaying brilliant *yô*, elegant *sunagashi*, and striking *togari-ba* formations. What profound satisfaction comes from preserving such a quality sword for future generations to admire.

The *nakago* bears the partial signature "*Zen Haku...*", likely abbreviated from "*Zen Hakushû Nobutaka Nyûdô*" suggesting creation during his final spiritually charged years when he was a Buddhist monk.

This katana can be enjoyed in shirasaya, or consider building a *daishô* koshirae with the *ujwa258 shodai Nobutaka* wakizashi that also went through a similar transformative journey. Preference will go to the client who wants to keep these swords together, and a father/son discount will be offered as such.



Location: *Owari province*

Title name: *Hôki no Kami* (Lord of Hôki province)

Swordsmith: *Nobutaka* (second generation)

*suriage-nakago* (shortened tang)

*sujikai-yasurime* (slanting file marks)

### Evidence of *Suriage* (Blade Shortening)

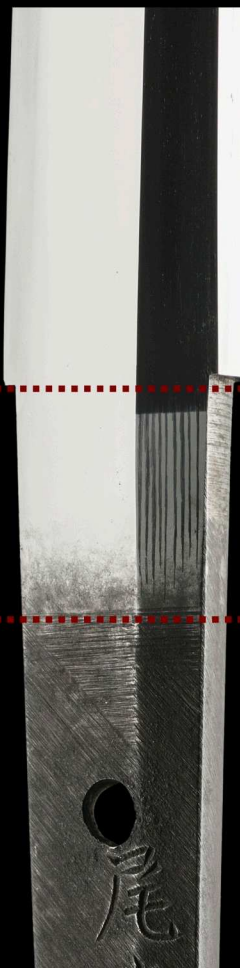
The blade's cutting edge was originally longer, probably just over 70cm.

This area shows clear traces of *sujikai-yasuri* that remain on the bottom of the tang, offering visual evidence of the blade's former length and the *suriage* process it underwent.

(Zen) 前

(Haku) 伯

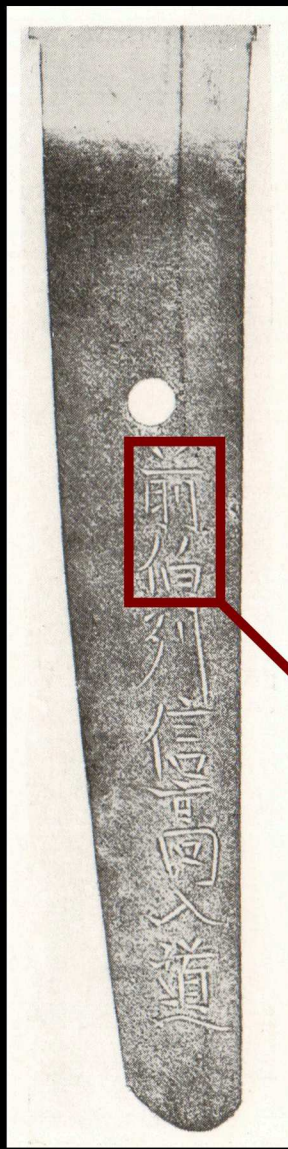
前  
伯



Original cutting edge started here

Original *yasurime* line

尾



(Zen) 前  
(Haku) 伯  
(shû) 州  
(Nobu) 信  
(taka) 高  
(Nyû) 入  
(dô) 道



Though the signature has been partially lost due to *suriage* (shortening), it was likely originally inscribed as “*Zen Hakushû Nobutaka Nyûdô* (前伯州信高入道).”

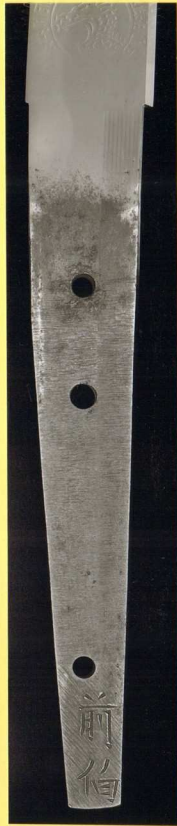
This name reflects Nobutaka’s later-life status as a retired smith and lay monk. *Zen Hakushû* (“former governor of *Hoki* province”) acknowledges his prior title, while *Nyûdô* signifies his religious transition. Such inscriptions denote rare, late-period works forged at the height of his spiritual awareness.



(*ura*, reverse)

保存  
062024-12

№ 3036248



鑑定書

一、刀銘前伯（以下切）（伯州信高入道）

長二尺一寸八分弱  
右は當協會に於て審査の結果保存刀剣と  
鑑定しこれを証する

令和七年二月二十一日

公益財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協會



東京都教育委員会  
第 326143 号  
令和5年4月11日

NBTHK Hozon  
Certificate of Designation

A sword designated as *Worthy of Conservation*  
by the Society for the Preservation of the Japan Art Sword

Issued in the 7th year of Reiwa (2025), February 21st

One, Katana

*Mei* (signature)  
*Zen Haku* (*ika kire*)  
*Hakushû Nobutaka Nyûdô*

*Nagasa* (length)  
2-shaku 1-sun 8-bu jaku (65.9cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai  
(NBTHK)



前伯州信高入道

前伯州信高入道  
*Zen Hakushû Nobutaka Nyûdô*  
Zen Hakushû Nobutaka Nyûdô

貳代作也

貳代作也  
*Nidai saku nari*  
Crafted by the second generation

時代慶安頃

時代慶安頃  
*Jidai Keian goro*  
Circa Keian period (1648~1652)

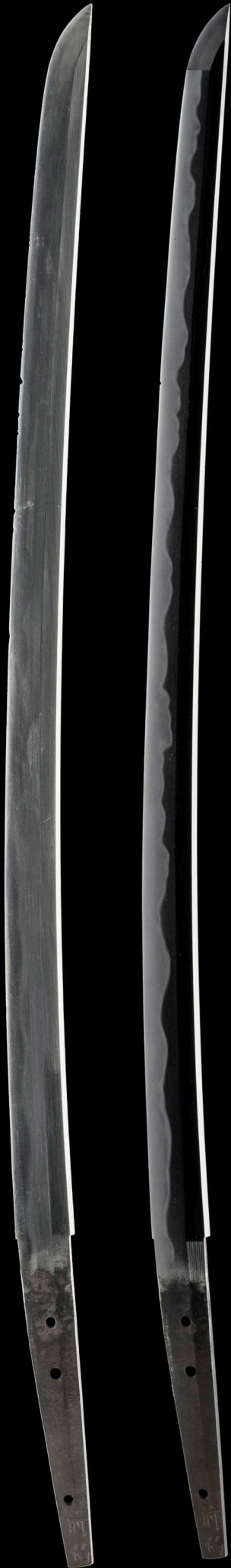
長貳尺壹寸八分弱有之

長貳尺壹寸八分弱有之  
*Nagasa 2-shaku 1-sun 8-bu jaku kore ari*  
Blade length 65.9 cm

令和七乙巳年  
葉月吉日誌之

令和七乙巳年葉月吉日誌之  
*Reiwa nana kinoto-midoshi Hazuki kichijitsu kore o shirusu*  
Written on a lucky day in the eighth month in the seventh year  
of Reiwa era during the Year of the Snake (August 2025)

Pablo first acquired this sword in the spring of 2023 in the UK. Despite its distressed state, potential could be seen! After a long and careful polishing process with expert craftsmen in Japan, the blade was restored to the fine condition that it rightfully deserves. The katana was subsequently attributed to 2nd gen. Nobutaka by the NBTHK.



before polish

after polish



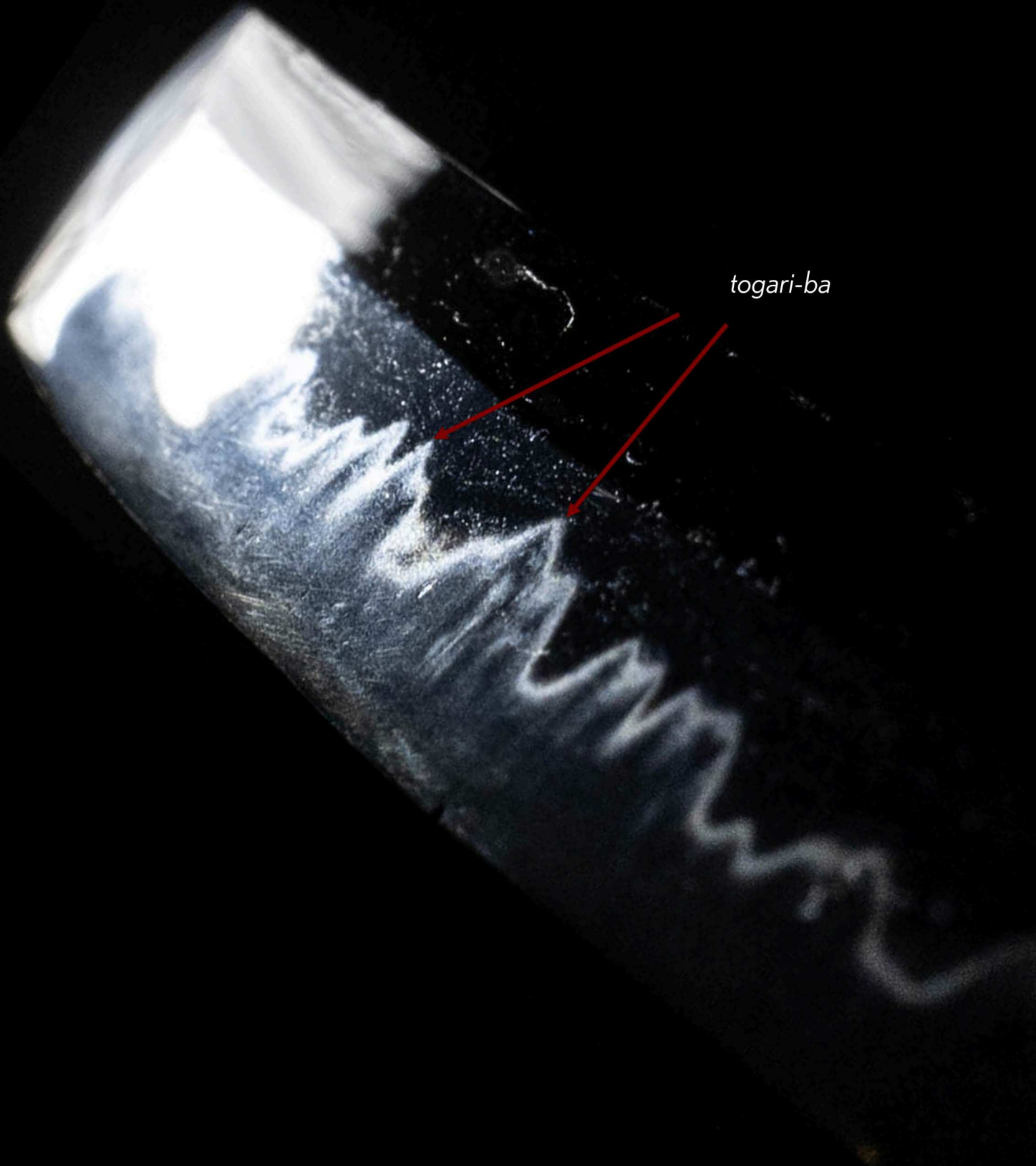







Scars remain, such as a cut in the edge and some pitting in the hardened area, however, they are in stable condition.

This is a sword with an encouraging message that brighter days lay ahead, even if we find ourselves in the most challenging of circumstances. And our battle scars serve as a necessary reminder of times gone, and how much we have grown since then.

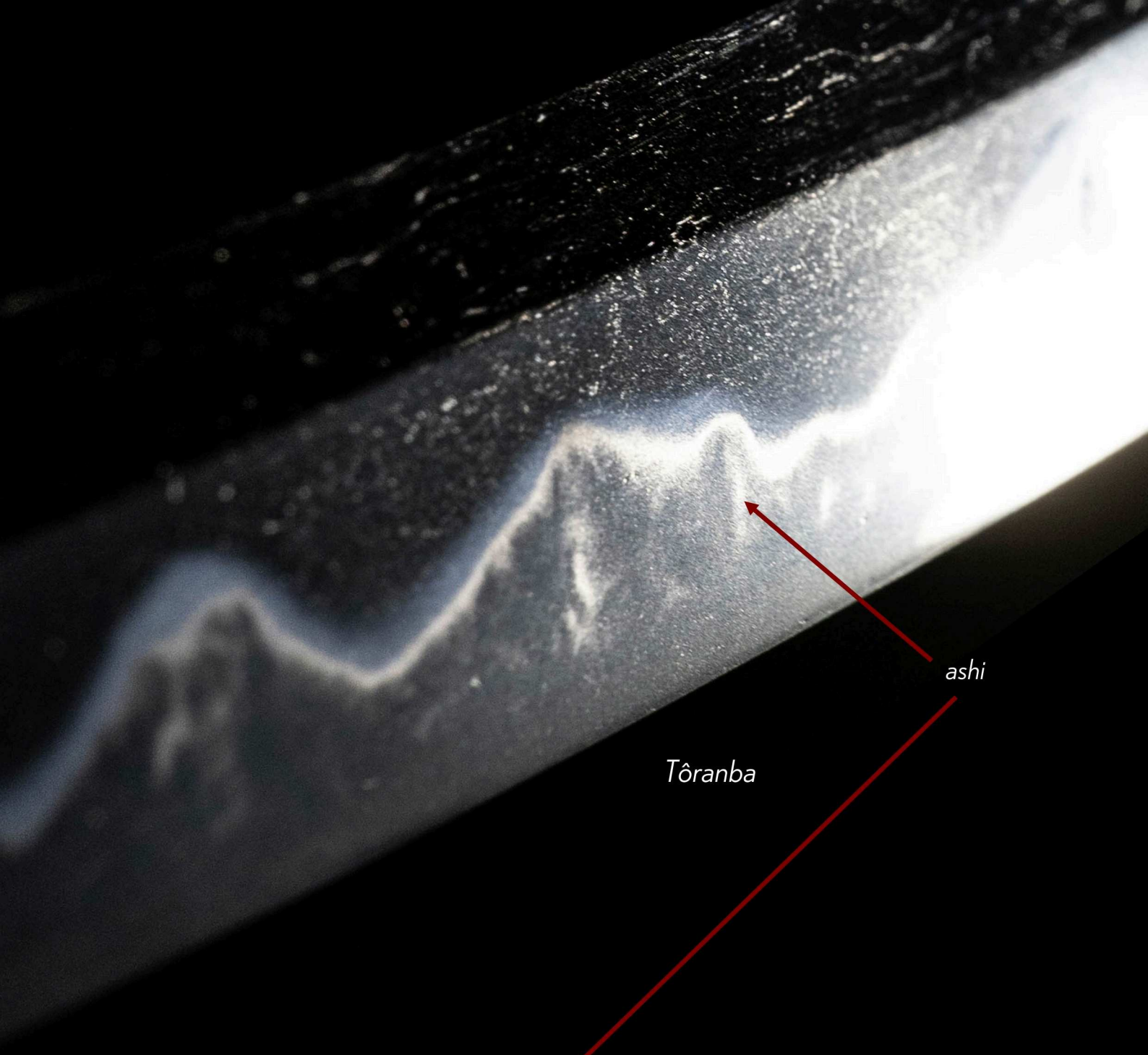


togari-ba

Keeping true with the *Mino* tradition, *togari* (pointed) sections of the *hamon* are readily seen in full force.

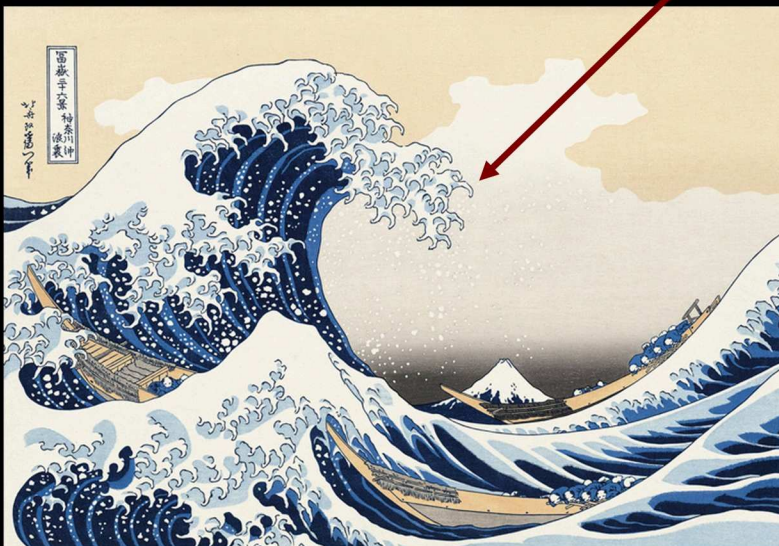
The image displays two blades of a Japanese sword, likely a katana, against a dark background. The blades are positioned diagonally, with the top blade above the bottom one. Both blades exhibit a prominent hamon (temper line) and a yo (leaf) pattern. The hamon is a wavy, light-colored line that runs along the length of the blade, while the yo is a darker, more irregular pattern. Red arrows point to specific features on the blades. The text is written in a white, sans-serif font and is located in the center of the image, between the two blades.

Gorgeous amounts of *yô* (leaves) that fall  
between the hamon and the cutting edge.



ashi

Tôranba

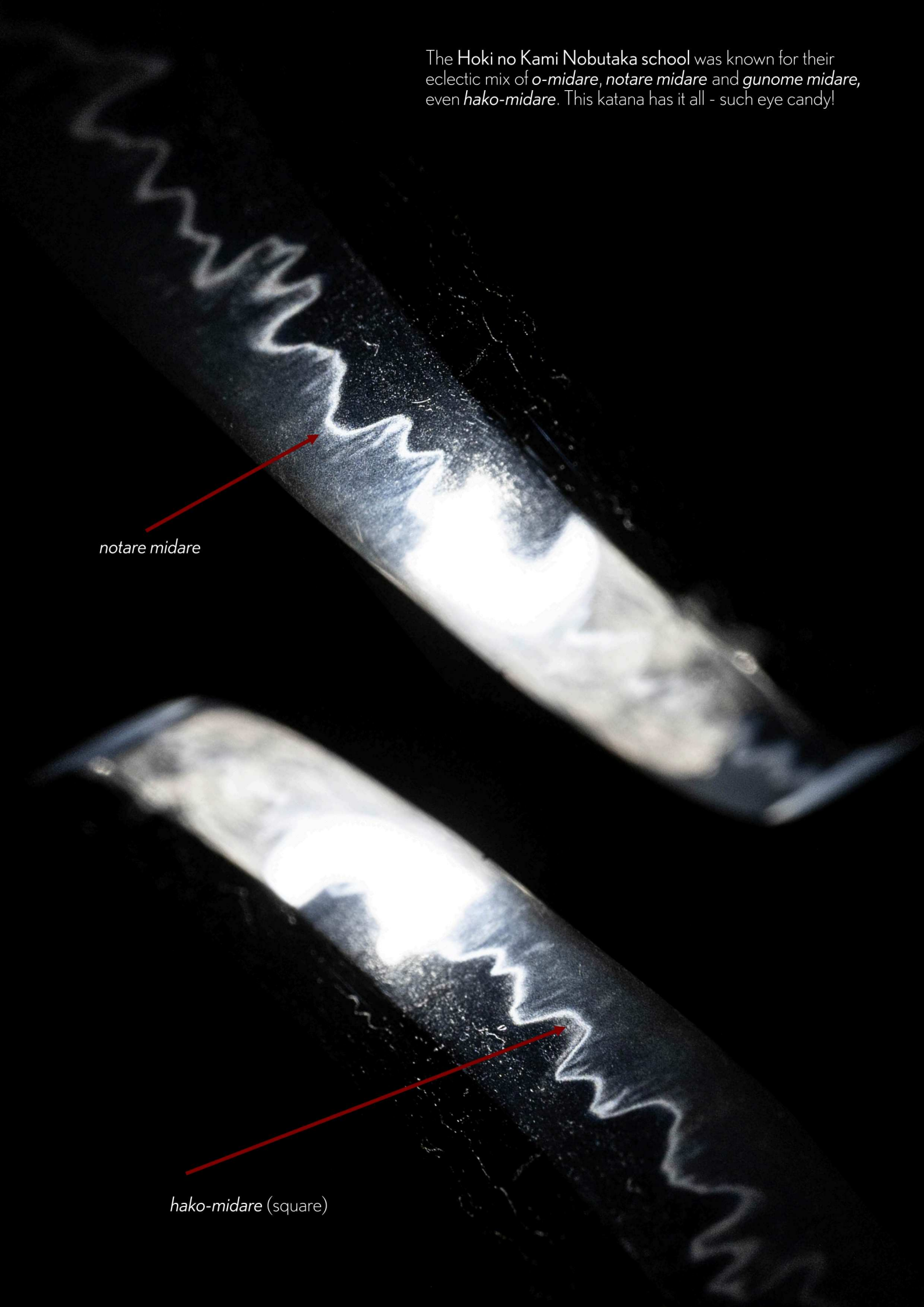


The bold, undulating *tôranba hamon* evokes the dynamic energy of crashing waves - its rhythm rising and falling like the sea in perpetual motion.

Much like Hokusai's iconic *Great Wave off Kanagawa*, the pattern captures both power and elegance, frozen in a moment of time. The crest of the waves are like fingertips, similar to the *ashi* (legs) that extend from the hamon towards the cutting edge.

*Great Wave off Kanagawa*  
by Katsushika Hokusai

The Hoki no Kami Nobutaka school was known for their eclectic mix of *o-midare*, *notare midare* and *gunome midare*, even *hako-midare*. This katana has it all - such eye candy!



*notare midare*

*hako-midare* (square)



*Shirasaya*  
(protective scabbard)



Traditional *Owari*-style *Habaki*

Known as the *Owari habaki*, it features a classic combination: horizontal file marks on the outer piece and a diagonal crosshatch resembling cypress fencing on the inner. It is distinguished by its shallow notch and refined, functional aesthetic rooted in the traditions of Owari.

The unique criss-cross *yasurime* (file marks) is called *higaki*. The name is derived from a fence made of thin, crossed Japanese cypress boards.



Noh play: *Higaki* (cypress wood fence)





The sky is the limit.



ITEM# UJWA258

## A SHODAI NOBUTAKA WAKIZASHI

SIGNED, SHINTÔ MOMOYAMA PERIOD (KEICHÔ ERA: 1596~1615)

<b>Swordsmith:</b>	<i>Hôki no Kami Nobutaka (1st gen.)</i>
<b>Measurements:</b>	<b>Length:</b> 50.0cm ( <i>ô-suriage</i> ) <b>Sori:</b> 0.6cm <b>Moto-haba:</b> 3.03cm <b>Weight:</b> 480g
<b>Jihada:</b>	<i>Well-forged itame, mokume and nagare-hada with ji-nie, and plentiful chikei</i>
<b>Hamon:</b>	<i>Vivid gunome-midare with kinsuji, sunagashi, and tobiyaki in nie-deki</i>
<b>Certificate:</b>	<b>NBTHK Hozon</b> ( <i>sword Worthy of Preservation</i> )
<b>Fujishiro rank:</b>	<b>Jô-saku</b> ( <i>ranked as a superior swordsmith</i> )
<b>Included:</b>	Shirasaya, fabric bag, stand, kit, printed description

**SOLD** (*building custom daishô koshirae with ujka418*)

*Hôki no Kami Nobutaka* (伯耆守信高) was a prominent swordsmith who served as an official swordsmith (*goyô kaji*) for the Owari Tokugawa family, and his name is counted among the famed Owari San-saku ("Three Great Smiths of Owari"), alongside Masatsune (政常) and Ujifusa (氏房). Acquired in the UK during the spring of 2023, this splendid wakizashi was initially in very rough condition, but over a period of two years the sword was restored by top craftsmen in Japan to reveal a snowy white *gunome-midare* hamon displaying brilliant *sunagashi* and *tobi-yaki* formations. Preference will go to the client who wants to pair this sword with **ujka418 Nidai Nobutaka**, and a 'family discount' will be offered as such. Building a formal *daishô* for the two swords would be a meaningful undertaking, although it's optional. By the way, there are ten generations of Owari Nobutaka to collect, these two pieces will give you a nice head start in your collecting days ahead!



Saki-kasane: 4.5mm  
Moto-kasane: 5.6mm

Kissaki: 3.96cm

Saki-haba: 2.18cm

Nagasa: 50.0cm

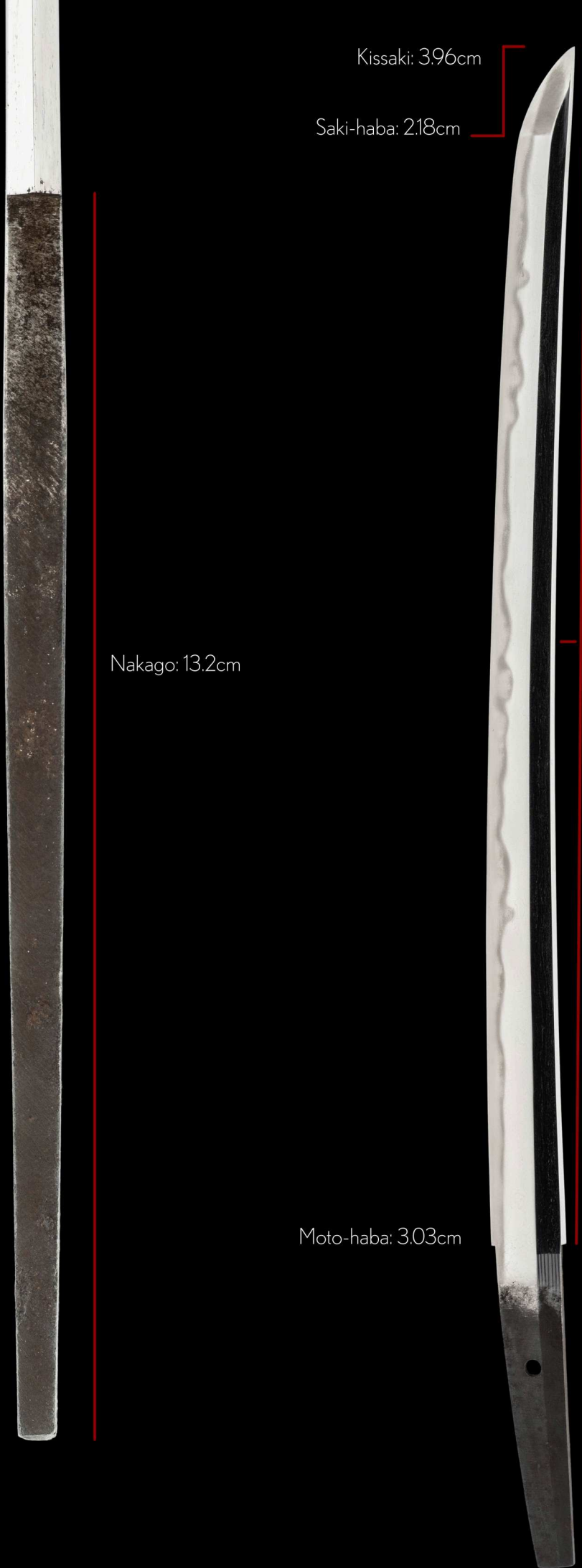
Nakago: 13.2cm

Sori: 0.6cm

Omosa: 480g

Moto-haba: 3.03cm

Mekugi-ana: 1



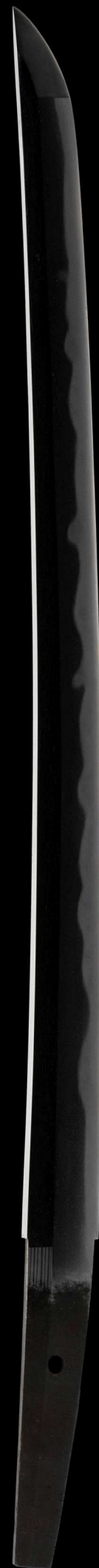
*Hôki no Kami Nobutaka* (伯耆守信高) was a prominent swordsmith who served as an official swordsmith (*goyô kaji*) for the *Owari Tokugawa* family, one of the three great branches (*Gosanke*) of the Tokugawa clan. Originally from *Mino* province, *Nobutaka* moved to *Owari* in the early 17th century and became a key figure in the region's sword-making tradition. His name is counted among the famed *Owari San-saku* ("Three Great Smiths of Owari"), alongside *Masatsune* (政常) and *Ujifusa* (氏房).

The first-generation *Nobutaka* was born in 1561 and trained in the *Mino-den* before relocating to *Kiyosu* and then Nagoya. He was granted the title of *Hôki no Kami* and forged blades for powerful patrons including *Oda Nobunaga* (織田信長) and *Tokugawa Ieyasu* (徳川家康). His son succeeded him in 1633 as the second-generation *Nobutaka*, who upheld the family tradition and later signed blades as "*Zen Hakushû Nobutaka Nyûdô* (前伯州信高入道)" after taking Buddhist vows.

This terrific wakizashi has been on a transformative journey along with ujka418 *nidai Nobutaka* listed earlier in the catalogue. Acquired in the UK during the spring of 2023, both swords were in rough condition, but over a period of two years the swords were shipped to Japan, re-shaped and polished by expert craftsmen. A new shirasaya was also crafted along with *sayagaki* and it turned out that the swords are related! This wakizashi was certified NBTHK Hozon to be by *shodai Nobutaka* while the katana to his son, *nidai*. How amazing!

Blades from both generations share an aesthetic of strength, clarity, and practical elegance. They typically feature tightly forged *itame* or *mokume* grain with *ji-nie* and prominent *chikei*. The *hamon* often follows a flowing *notare* or *gunome-midare* pattern in *nioi-deki* with *nie* highlights. Activities such as *ashi*, *sunagashi*, and *kinsuji* add visual depth, while the *bôshi* tends to show *hakikake* and a return in *komaru* or *kaen* form.

Preference will go to the client who wants to keep these swords together, and a father/son discount will be offered as such. Building a formal *daishô* for the two swords would be a meaningful undertaking, although that would be optional. By the way, there are ten generations of *Owari Nobutaka* to collect, these two pieces will give the next owner a nice head start!





Location: *Owari province*

Title name: *Hôki no Kami* (Lord of Hôki province)

Swordsmith: *Nobutaka*

*ô-suriage* (greatly shortened tang)

*kiri-yasurime* (horizontal file marks)

It is likely that the blade originally bore a signature on the *nakago* when it was first forged. However, at some point in its history, a former owner, prioritising practicality over preservation - had the sword modified into a *wakizashi* for functional use, such as to pair up with a katana to form a *daishô*. As a result of this conversion, the original signature was lost.

As there is no mention of generation on the NBTHK Hozon certificate, we can infer that this sword is the work of shodai, first generation.



*Signed examples of first and second generation Nobutaka.*

*kiri-jiri* (horizontal butt)

In 1610, coinciding with the completion of *Nagoya* Castle, the first generation of *Nobutaka* relocated to *Owari* province and took up residence in Nagoya's *Kaji-machi* (blacksmith town). There, he began his official service as a clan swordsmith under *Tokugawa Yoshinao*, the first lord of the *Owari* domain and ninth son of *Tokugawa Iyasu*. This appointment elevated Nobutaka's status and positioned him as a central figure in the arms production of the *Owari Tokugawa* family.



*Tokugawa Yoshinao* (1601~1650)



(reverse)

保存  
062024-12

№ 3036249



鑑定書

一 脇指 無銘（伯耆守信高）

右は當協會に於て審査の結果保存刀剣と  
鑑定しこれを証する  
長一尺六寸五分弱

令和七年二月二十一日

公益財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協會



東京都教育委員会  
第 327071 号  
令和5年9月16日

NBTHK Hozon  
Certificate of Designation

A sword designated as *Worthy of Conservation*  
by the Society for the Preservation of the Japan Art Sword

Issued in the 7th year of Reiwa (2025), February 21st

One, Wakizashi

*Mumei* (unsigned)  
*Hôki no Kami Nobutaka*

*Nagasa* (length)  
1-shaku 6-sun 5-bu jaku (50.0cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai  
(NBTHK)



伯耆守信高

伯耆守信高  
*Hôki no Kami Nobutaka*  
Hôki no Kami Nobutaka

桃山後期乃至江戸初期

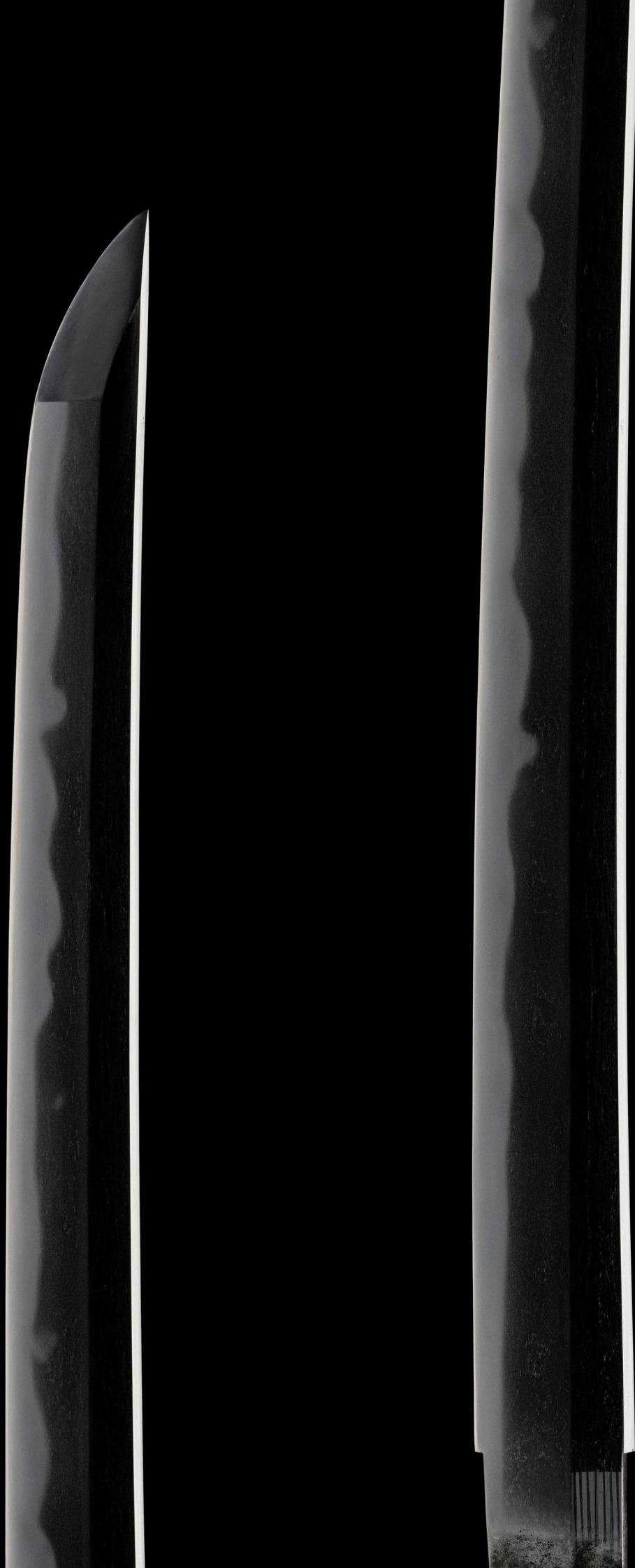
桃山後期乃至江戸初期  
*Momoyama kôki naishi Edo shoki*  
From late Momoyama to early Edo period (1596~1652)

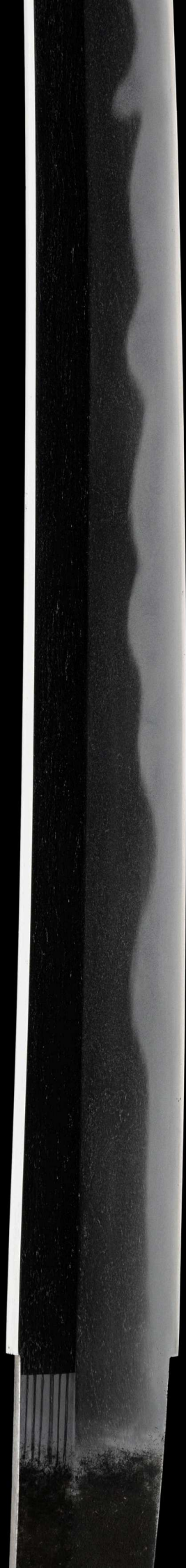
長壹尺六寸五分弱有之

長壹尺六寸五分弱有之  
*Nagasa 1-shaku 6-sun 5-bu jaku kore ari*  
Blade length 50.0 cm

令和七乙巳年  
葉月吉日誌之

令和七乙巳年葉月吉日誌之  
*Reiwa nana kinoto-midoshi Hazuki kichijitsu kore o shirusu*  
Written on a lucky day in the eighth month in the seventh year  
of Reiwa era during the Year of the Snake (August 2025)





This *Nobutaka* wakizashi went through a transformation like its big brother, although it started out in not quite as rough condition (but still rough!). Therefore, a full polish was invested in the sword, with new *habaki*, new *shirasaya* and eventually *sayagaki* with *Nozomi-san*. It was quite the delightful surprise to see both swords certify to first and second generation *Nobutaka*.



*original condition*

*polished*

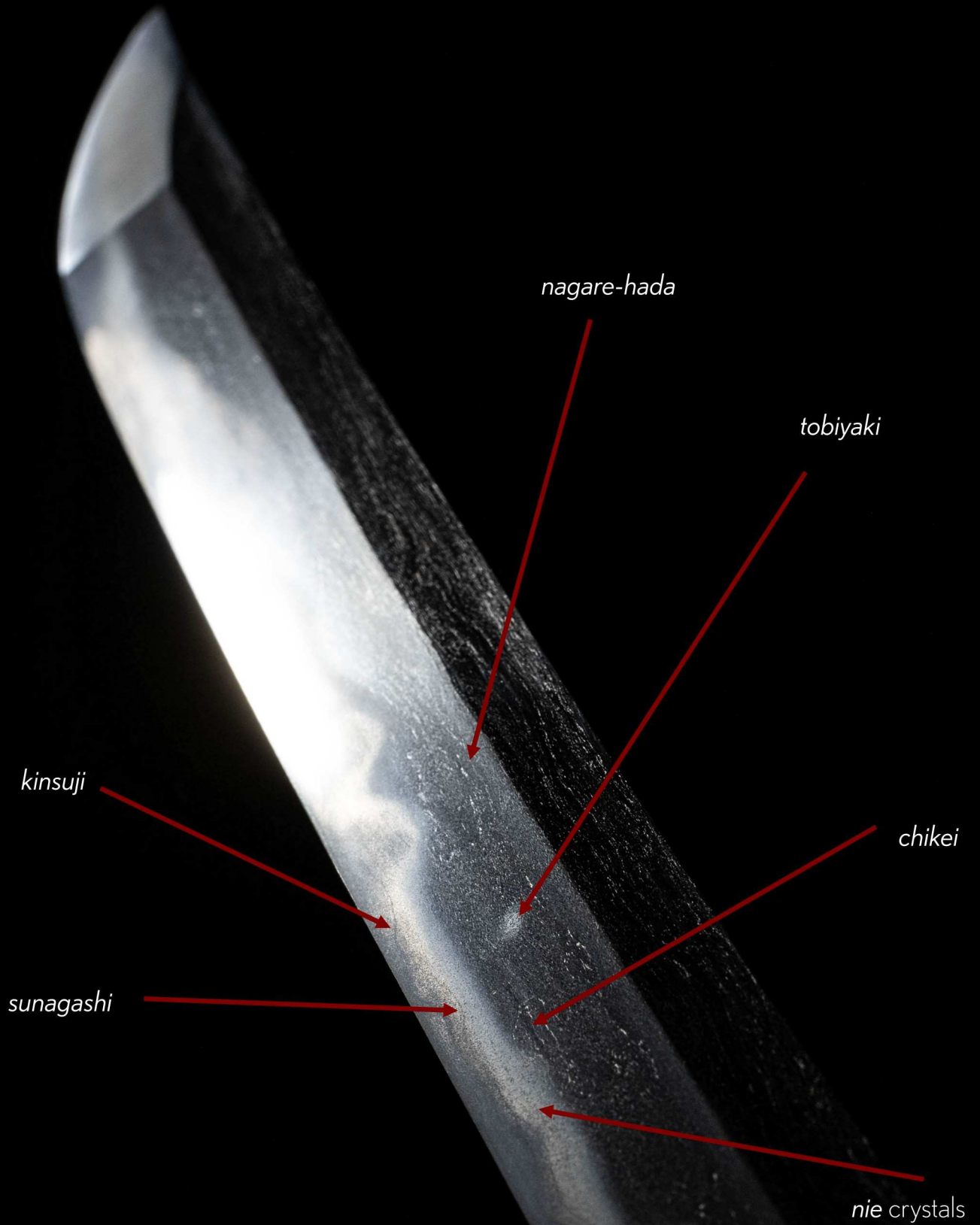
*original condition*

*polished*



*hakikake* (brush swept pattern)

Wild *kaen boshi* that resembles a flame.



A hardened spot of *tobiyaki* appears in the body of the sword. An icy mix of *nagare-hada*, streams of *sunagashi*, impressive *kinsuji*, and *chikei* all in *nie-deki* brings such character to this *Nobutaka* wakizashi.

This glorious hamon features depictions of *yahazu-ba* - forked or dove-tail shaped wavy *midare* elements that resemble arrow notches known as *yahazu*.



*yahazu-ba*



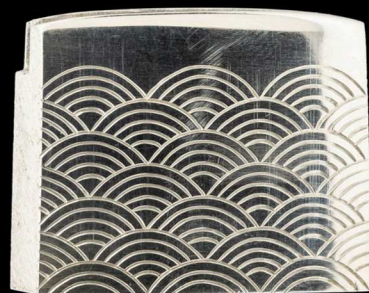
A gorgeous *gunome-midare hamon* that resembles freshly fallen snow.

Winter is coming.  
Embrace it like a *samurai*.

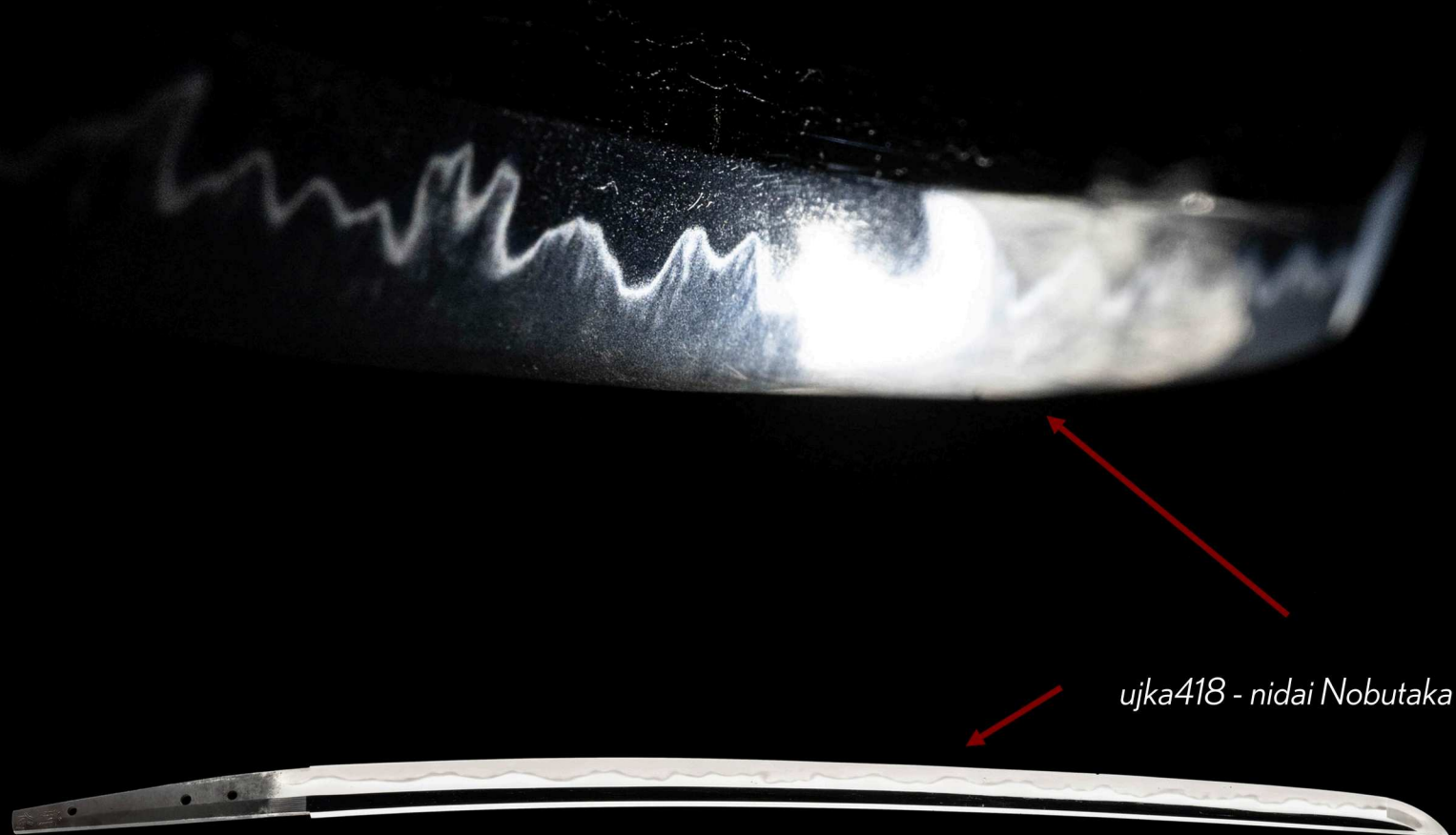




*Shirasaya*  
(protective scabbard)



silver *habaki* with  
wave pattern file marks  
inspired by the wavy hamon



*ujka418 - nidai Nobutaka*



*ujwa258 - shodai Nobutaka*



*Priority will be given to the client that asks to acquire both Nobutaka swords listed in this catalogue. Note, the client does not have to build a daishô with Unique Japan. It would just be nice to keep this family together!*



*Good gunome vibrations.*

# ARIGATO!

THANK YOU FOR DOWNLOADING OUR CATALOGUE.  
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*Hannah and I in NYC, summer 2025. Yes, I am sporting a beard these days!*

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