

CURRENTLY AVAILABLE
JAPANESE SWORDS

UPDATED:
DEC 19/2024



(COVER PHOTO)

ITEM# UJKA442

A YASUUJI KATANA
KANSEI ERA (1789~1801)

TOKUBETSU HOZON (SWORD)
KANTEISHÔ (KOSHIRAE, TSUBA & FUCHI-KASHIRA)

CURRENTLY AVAILABLE JAPANESE SWORDS

UPDATED: DECEMBER 19, 2024

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CURRENTLY AVAILABLE JAPANESE SWORDS

ITEM#	PAGE	SWORSMITH & TYPE	CM	CERTIFICATE	ERA / PERIOD	PRICE
ujka400	4	A NAKAJIMA RAI KATANA	69.5	Tokubetsu Hozon	Shôhei (1346~1370)	\$15,000
ujka414	26	A SHIGEZANE KATANA	68.2	NBTHK Jûyô Tôken	Enbun (1356~1361)	\$30,000
ujka430	51	A YOSHIKAGE KATANA	69.5	Tokubetsu Jûyô Tôken	Kenmu (1334~1338)	ASK
ujka433	81	A KINMICHII KATANA	72.0	Tokubetsu Hozon	Manji (1658~1661)	\$15,000
ujka447	107	A KUNISHIGE KATANA	74.3	Tokubetsu Hozon	Jôkyô (1684~1688)	\$14,000
ujka442	129	A YASUUJI KATANA	69.7	Tokubetsu Hozon	Kansei (1789~1801)	\$10,000
ujka448	152	A KANEZUMI TACHI	69.6	Tokubetsu Hozon	Meiô (Feb 1498)	\$12,800

ALL PRICES ARE IN US DOLLARS

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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



ITEM# UJKA400

CURRENTLY AVAILABLE ON CONSIGNMENT

A NAKAJIMA-RAI KATANA

UNSIGNED, NAMBOKUCHÔ PERIOD (SHÔHEI ERA: 1346~1370)

Swordsmith:	<i>Nakajima-Rai</i> (attribution, o-suriage mumei)
Measurements:	Length: 69.5cm Curvature: 1.2cm Moto-haba: 2.90cm Weight: 660g
Jihada:	<i>Vivid mokume mixed with ji-nie and abundant chikei</i>
Hamon:	<i>Suguha-chô in bright nioguchi, ko-nie-deki mixed with ko-gunome, ashi and yô</i>
Horimono:	<i>Bôhi on both sides with kaki-nagashi running partway through the nakago (tang)</i>
Certificate #1:	NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon (designated as Especially Worthy of Preservation)
Certificate #2-4:	NTHK-NPO Kanteisho (tsuba, koshirae & fittings designated as Authentic)
Fujishiro rank:	Jô-saku (ranked as a superior swordsmith)
Authentication:	Sayagaki by Tanzan-sensei (Tanobe Michihiro)
Included:	Shirasaya, Edo koshirae, fabric bags, stand, kit, booklet, description

\$15,000

The *Nakajima-Rai* branch of the esteemed *Rai* school was founded by superior swordsmith *Rai Kuninaga*, a pupil of national treasure swordsmith *Rai Kunitoshi*. *Kuninaga* moved from *Kyotô* to the *Nakajima* district in *Settsu* (Osaka) in the *Gentoku* era (1329-1331), earning him the nickname *Nakajima-Rai*. This powerful katana has a wide, robust body with gorgeous *mokume jigane* that speaks to the 14th century warring *Nambokuchô* period. An abundance of *hataraki* with long *ashi* and *yô* (leaves) is classic *Rai* workmanship. A handsome Edo-period *handachi-koshirae* further compliments the sword. This sword comes with *sayagaki* by *Tanobe-sensei* who stated that this sword has 'exquisite *jigane*' and an 'elegant *suguha*' hamon. A terrific *katô* period samurai sword.



Saki-kasane: 3.8mm

Moto-kasane: 6.3mm

Kissaki: 3.59cm

Saki-haba: 2.10cm

Nagasa: 69.5cm

Nakago: 20.1cm

Sori: 1.20cm

Omosa: 660g

Moto-haba: 2.90cm

Mekugi-ana: 3



The *Kamakura period* (1185-1333) was marked by a gradual shift in power from the nobility to landowning military men in the provinces. This era was a time of dramatic transformation in the politics, society, and culture of Japan. The *bakufu*, or government led by *samurai* (warrior chieftains) controlled the country from their base in Kamakura, near modern Tokyo. Because the emperor remained the head of state in his capital in Kyoto, a binary system of government, whereby *emperors reigned but shoguns ruled*, was established and endured for the next seven hundred years.

In 1333, a coalition of supporters of *Emperor Go-Daigo* (1288-1339), who sought to restore political power to the throne, toppled the Kamakura regime. Unable to rule effectively, however, this new royal government was short-lived.

In 1336, a member of a branch family of the *Minamoto* clan, *Ashikaga Takauji* (1305-1358), usurped control and drove Go-Daigo from Kyoto. Takauji then set a rival on the throne and established a new military government in Kyoto. Meanwhile, Go-Daigo traveled south and took refuge in *Yoshino* district in *Nara*. There he established the *Southern Court*, in contrast to the rival *Northern Court* supported by Takauji.

The whole country was in turmoil. Kyoto was ravaged time and time again. This time of constant strife that lasted from 1336 to 1392 is known as the *Nanbokucho period* (Period of Southern and Northern Courts).

Swordmaking flourished during this period. Many notable swordsmiths moved outside of war torn Kyoto to supply the high demand for blades. *Rai Kuninaga* was one of these swordsmiths that left Kyoto for *Nakajima* in *Osaka*. Eventually *Ashikaga Yoshimitsu* merged victorious and the northern dynasty was confirmed. The Muromachi period thus ensued.




Ashikaga Takauji (Northern Court)



Emperor Go-Daigo (Southern Court)





This sword was once a very long tachi during the *mid-1300s* of the *Nambokuchô period*. The sword is now *ô-suriage nakago* - greatly shortened at least twice since then to suit the battle requirements of the subsequent time periods.

The nakago features *kaki-nagashi* - grooves that extend to the middle of the butt end of the tang.

The nakago tells a story. Notice how the patina changes slightly, darker and more rusty are older shortenings.

The *hi* (groove) did not originally extend into the nakago. It was only after several shortenings that it ended where it is today.

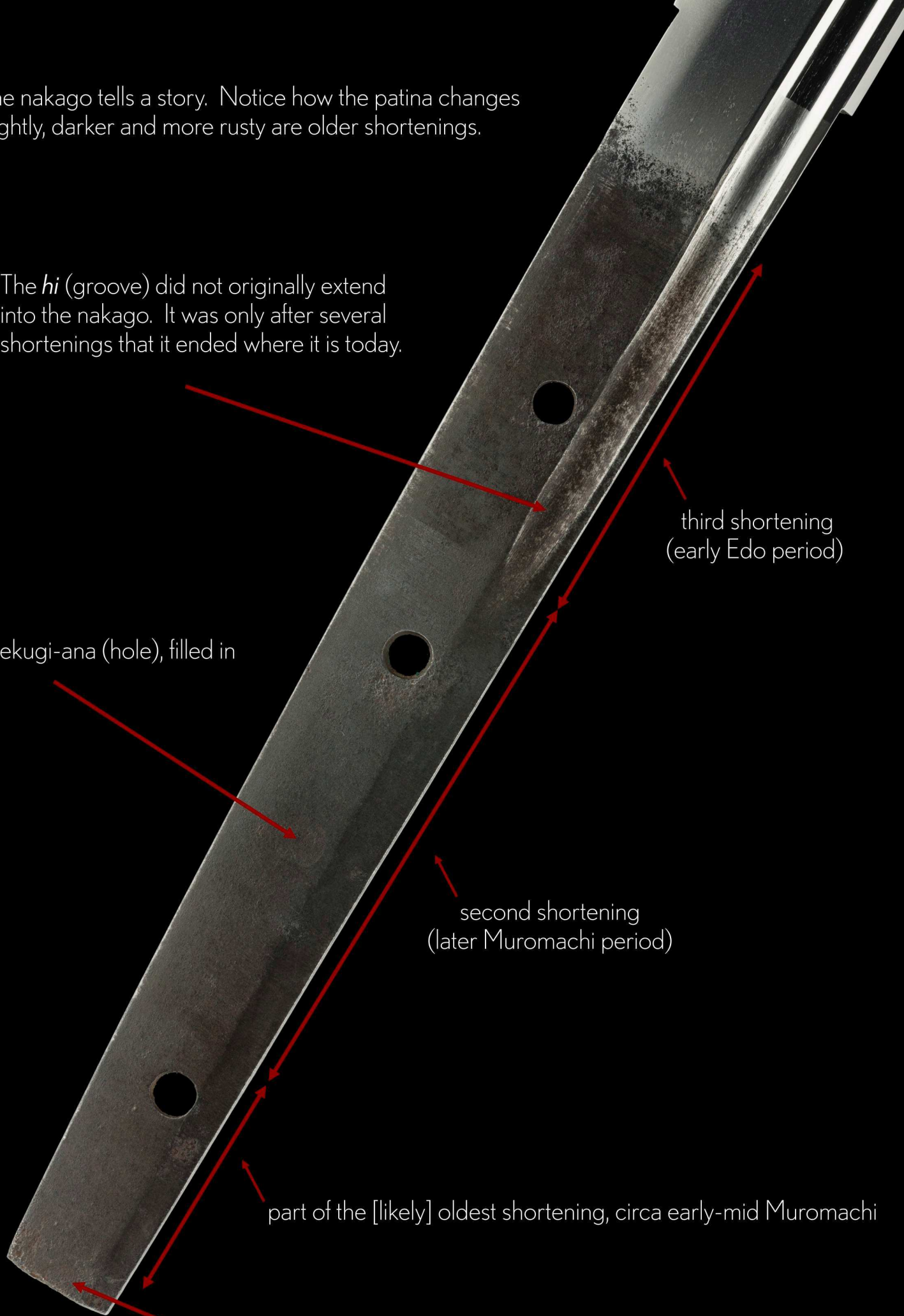
old mekugi-ana (hole), filled in

third shortening
(early Edo period)

second shortening
(later Muromachi period)

part of the [likely] oldest shortening, circa early-mid Muromachi

original deep rust to when the sword was first forged



01201909

No 1012533



鑑定書

一刀 無銘 (中島来)

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

令和元年十二月二日

公益財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協會



長崎県 教育委員会
第 9109 号
昭和34年2月12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), December 2nd

One, Katana

Mumei (unsigned)
Nakajima Rai

Nagasa (length)
2-shaku 2-sun 9-bu kyô (69.5cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai
(NBTHK)



中島来

Nakajima Rai

Nakajima Rai

大磨上無銘也来国俊門人ナル国長ハ後ニ撰州中島ニ移住シ鍛刀シタルニ因リ中島来ト通称セラル本刀ハ精妙ナル地鉄ニ鍛へ小沸出来ノ端正ナ直刃ヲ焼キ足・葉頻リニ入り帽子ヲ丸ク纏メルナド身幅廣目デ稍延心ノ鋒ノ形状ト併セテ同工ト鑿スベキガ妥當ナル優品哉

Ô-suriage mumei nari Rai Kunitoshi monjin naru Kuninaga wa nochi ni Sesshû Nakajima ni ijû shi tantô shitaruni yori Nakajima Rai to tsûshô seraru. Hontô wa seimyô naru ji-gane ni kitae ko-nie deki no tansei naru sugu-ha o yaki ashi yô shikirini hairi bôshi o maruku matomeru nado mihaba hirome de yaya nobi-gokoro no kissaki no keijô to awasete dôkô to kansubeki ga datô naru yûhin kana.

Kuninaga, student of Rai Kunitoshi, later moved to Nakajima in Sesshû Province and earned the nickname Nakajima Rai. This ô-suriage blade shows exquisite jigane with elegant suguha in ko-nie deki, and plenty of ashi and yô. The bôshi is round, with a rather wide mihaba, and a slightly extended kissaki - qualities that point to a masterwork of Kuninaga.

長貳尺二寸九分余

Nagasa 2-shaku 2-sun 9-bu amari

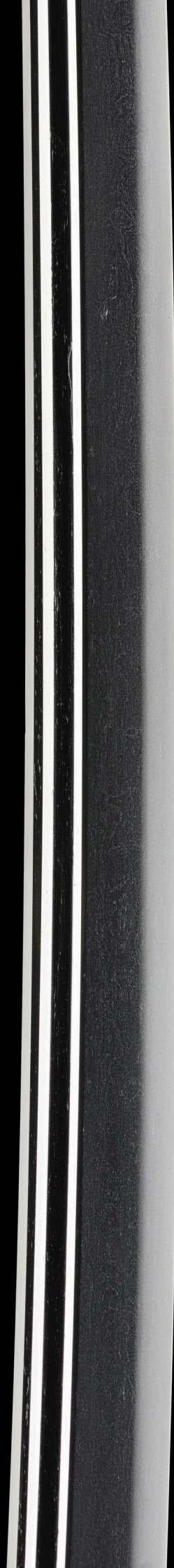
Blade length ~69.5cm

時在己亥林鐘探山識 (花押)

Jizai tsuchinoto-i Rinshô Tanzan shirusu + kaô

Written by Tanzan [Tanobe Michihiro] in the sixth month of the year of the boar (June 2019) + monogram

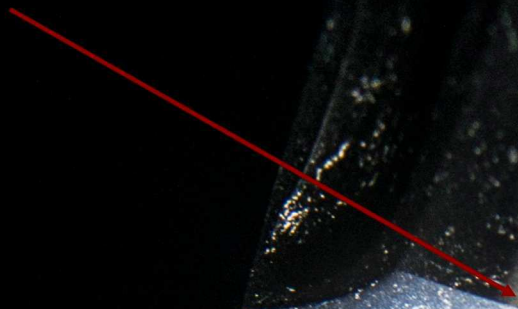




Gorgeous swirls of dark *chikei* form rounded islands of *mokume-hada*.



Impressive line of *kinsuji*
piercing through the hamon.



Smooth *ko-maru* (rounded) *bôshi* (hamon in the tip area).





The *hamon* along the lower third of the blade features long *ashi* (legs) that are particularly attractive.



Clean *suguha* (straight) hamon that carries a sense of pride.

Note the bluish tint to the blade, a sign of a well-crafted sword.

Yô (leaves) are delightful clusters of *nie* crystals inside the hamon.

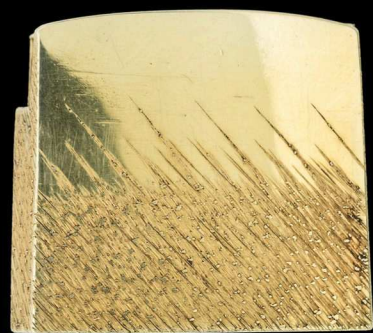


Take no prisoners.





Shirasaya
(protective scabbard)

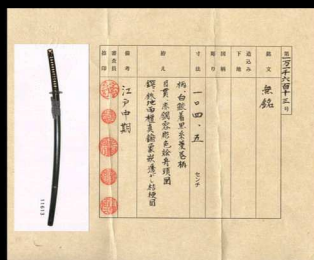
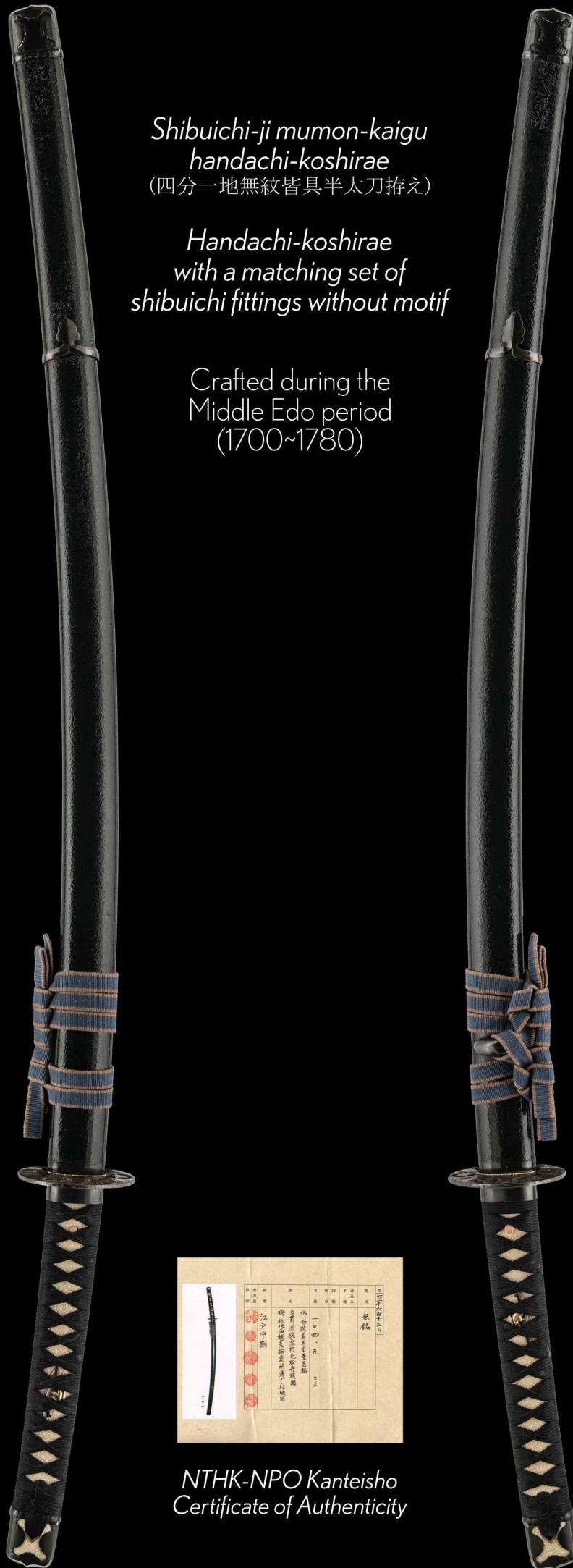


gold-wrapped *habaki* with
rain pattern file marks

*Shibuichi-ji mumon-kaigu
handachi-koshirae*
(四分一地無紋皆具半太刀拵え)

*Handachi-koshirae
with a matching set of
shibuichi fittings without motif*

Crafted during the
Middle Edo period
(1700~1780)



NTHK-NPO Kanteisho
Certificate of Authenticity



all matching fittings

Soroi Kanagu (matching fittings)

Certified by the NTHK-NPO to a tachi craftsman circa mid-Edo period (1700~1780)

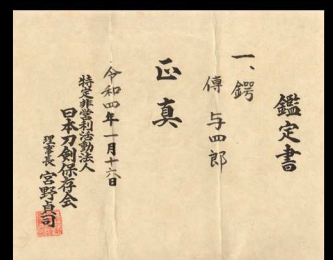




This polished iron tsuba has been attributed to the *Yoshihiro school*, which originated from the *Heianjo-zôgan* school. From the middle part of the 16th century the majority of high relief inlay along with *mon sukashi* (open work with family crests) made around *Kaga* province and *Kyotô* was considered the work of the Yoshiro.

Well-preserved openwork was done in brass inlay. The star-shaped motif is that of the cherished bellflower (*kikyô no zu*).

An NTHK-NPO Kanteisho certificate of authenticity attributing the piece to the *early-Edo period* circa 1603~1700 has been attained.



The star-shaped Japanese bellflower, *kikyô*, is a vivid purple five petal flower which is the symbol of unchanging *love*, *honesty*, and *obedience*. *Kikyô* is often used as patterns in *kimonos* and *obi*, the kimono belt, and also used as *kamon* (family crests), known as *kikyô-mon*.

The flower blooms at the end of summer and is intimately associated with the autumn season in Japanese culture. *Kikyô* is considered one of Japan's "*Seven Flowers of Autumn*," and a popular theme in *haiku* and other Japanese literature. During the *Heian* era (794 -1185), these flowers were common in the gardens of the aristocracy.



Bellflower and Dragonfly
from an untitled series known as *Large Flowers*

Artist: *Katsushika Hokusai*
circa 1833-1834





The *menuki* depicts a man on a boat, likely a fisherman.
A peaceful scene.





Koshirae bag



ITEM# UJKA414

CURRENTLY AVAILABLE ON CONSIGNMENT

A SHIGEZANE KATANA

UNSIGNED, NAMBOKUCHO PERIOD (ENBUN ERA: 1356~1361)

Swordsmith:	<i>Shigezane</i> (attribution, <i>ô-suriage nakago</i>)		
Measurements:	Length: 68.2cm	Curvature: 1.4cm	Motohaba: 2.78cm
Jihada:	Gorgeous mixture of itame, mokume and nagare with ji-nie, chikei, light utsuri		
Hamon:	Chû-suguha in nioi-deki with angularity, ashi, yô and sunagashi		
Certificate:	62nd NBTHK Jûyô Tôken Shômeisho (designated as Profound and Important)		
Fujishiro:	Jô-saku (ranked as a superior swordsmith)		
Sharpness:	Ryô-Wazamonô (rated as a maker of highly sharp swords)		
Authentication:	Sayagaki by Tanobe-sensei (Tanobe Michihiro)		
Included:	Shirasaya, Edo koshirae, stand, kit, booklet, printed description		

\$30,000

Like an artisan baker kneading his dough to perfection, this brilliant *katana* by *Shigezane* of the *Motoshige* school shows just how gorgeous the grain pattern of a Japanese sword can become. Quite literally hours can be spent gazing into the vivid textures of *itame* (plank grain), *mokume* (burl grain) and *nagare-hada* (running wavy grain) that this katana possesses. The tight razor-saw-tooth *hamon* with falling leaves (*yô*) is delightful as well, that compliments rather than over-taking. This is *jûyô-tôken* quality. A magnificent set of matching iron-laden Edo-period *koshirae* featuring *Kumagai* school rain and sand dragons gives the entire sword a dark and mysterious feel. *Sayagaki* by *Tanobe-sensei* states that this sword is a masterwork of *Shigezane*. Enjoy.



Saki-kasane: 4.1mm

Kissaki: 3.23cm

Saki-haba: 1.97cm

Moto-kasane: 5.4mm

Nagasa: 68.2cm

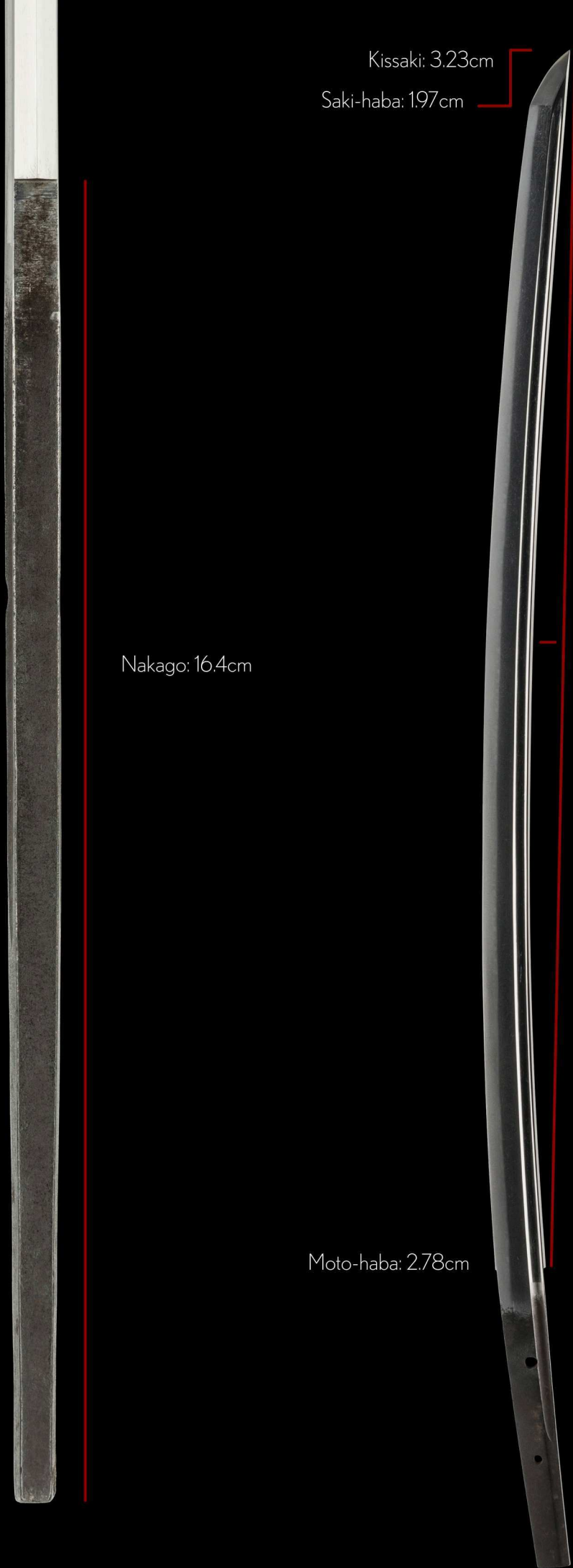
Nakago: 16.4cm

Sori: 1.40cm

Omosa: 615g

Moto-haba: 2.78cm

Mekugi-ana: 2



Shigezane's family name is *Jirôbei* and is said to be the son of the first generation *Hatakeda Morishige* and the younger brother of *Motoshige* of the Motoshige school.

His work dates from *Karyaku* era (1326~1329) to *Enbun* era (1356~1361), culminating in an active period of about 35 years.


In the later years, during the warring *Nanbokuchô period*, Shigezane's creations took the form of a wide *mihaba*, a thick *kasane*, and an elongated *kissaki*.

The *jihada* features a completely eye-catching mix of *itame*, *mokume* and flowing *itame-nagare* and *utsuri*.

The NBTHK certificate states:
"The *jiba* (steel) is perfectly healthy and so we have here a masterwork among all blades attributed to Shigezane."

Shigezane is rated *jô-saku* (superior smith) with a *ryô-wazamono* rank for the intense sharpness of his swords.





This sword was once a very long tachi during the *mid-1300s* of the *Nambokuchô period*. The sword is now *ô-suriage nakago* - greatly shortened at least twice since then to suit the battle requirements of the subsequent time periods.

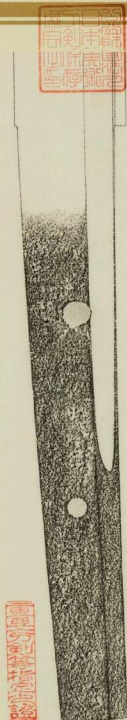
The nakago features *kaki-nagashi* - grooves that extend to the middle of the butt end of the tang.

証明書

指定番号 第一三九七二号

一 刀 無銘 重真 一 口

長さ 六八・二 釐



右は第六二回平成二八年十月十八日付
を以て重要刀 剣 に指定された
ものであることを証明する

令和四年八月十五日

公益財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協会

岐阜 教育委員会
第 086644 号
令和 4 年 5 月 18 日

Jûyô Certificate No. 13972
Shômeisho (証明書) Certificate
Katana, mumei: Shigezane (重真)

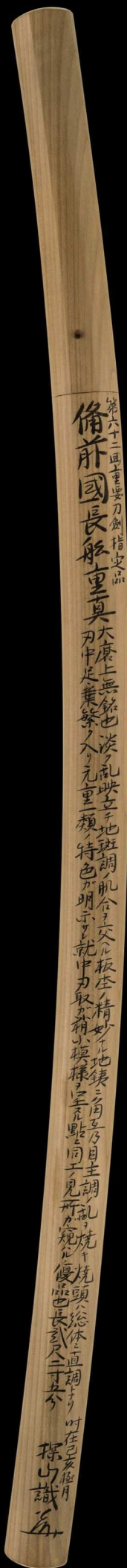
Nagasa 68.2 cm

The sword was registered on May 18th in 2022 by the Board of Education of Gifu prefecture

This is to certify that above sword had been designated as *Juyô-Tôken* on October 18th, 2016 at the 62nd session

August 15th, 2022
[Foundation] Nihon Bijutsu Tôken Hozon Kyôkai, NBTHK

** Note: the original *Jûyô Tôken* certificate was lost. By policy, rather than issuing a new certificate, the NBTHK issues a *shômeisho* (a certificate of acceptance) after they carefully review the sword in person ensuring the authenticity and condition of the item.



第六十二回重要刀剣指定品

Dai rokujûni-kai jûyô-tôken shitei-hin

Designated as jûyô-tôken at the 62nd jûyô-shinsa

備前國長船重真

Bizen no Kuni Osafune Shigezane

Osafune Shigezane from Bizen Province

大磨上無銘也淡ク乱映立チ地斑調ノ肌合ヲ交ヘル板空ノ精妙ナル地鍔ニ角互乃目主調ノ乱ヲ焼キ焼頭ハ総体ニ直刃トナリ刃中足・葉繁ク入り元重一類ノ特色ガ明示サレ就中刃取ガ稍小模様ヲ呈スル點ニ同工ノ見所ガ窺ハル優品也

Ô-suriage mumei nari awaku midare-utsuri tachi jifu-chô no hada-ai o majieru ita-moku no seimyô naru jigane ni kaku-gunome shuchô no midare o yaki yaki-gashira wa sôtai ni suguha to nari hachû ashi yô shigeku hairi Motoshige ichirui no tokushoku ga meiji sare nakanzuku hadori ga yaya ko-moyô o teisuru ten ni dôkô no midokoro ga ukagawaru yûhin nari

[The blade is] *ô-suriage mumei*. It features a faint *midare-utsuri*, and its finely forged *jigane* appears as *itame-mokume* mix with a tendency towards *jifu*. The hardening of the blade is based on an angular *gunome* whose *yakigashira* are overall aligned as *suguha*. The *ha* is mixed with connected *ashi* and *yô*, and thus we recognize the typical characteristics of the *Motoshige* group. Within this group, the relatively small elements of which the *ha* is composed of is synonymous with *Shigezane* and the blade is a masterwork of his.

長貳尺二寸五分

Nagasa 2 shaku 2 sun 5 bu

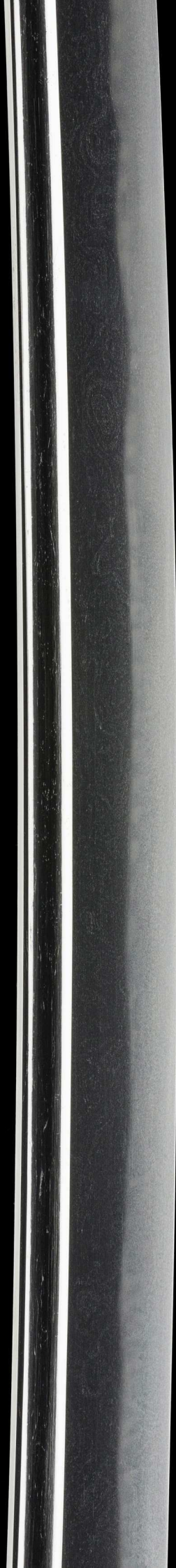
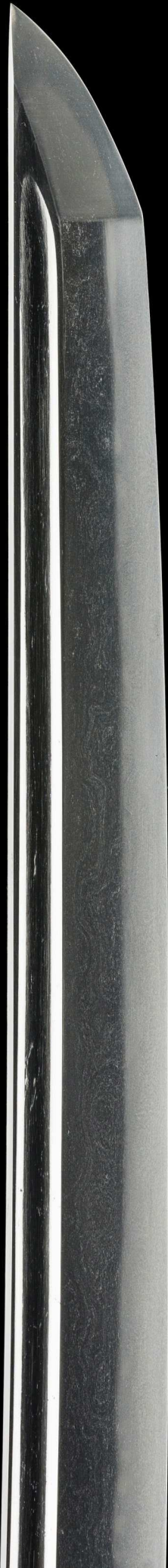
Blade length ~ 68.2 cm

時在己亥極月探山識「花押」

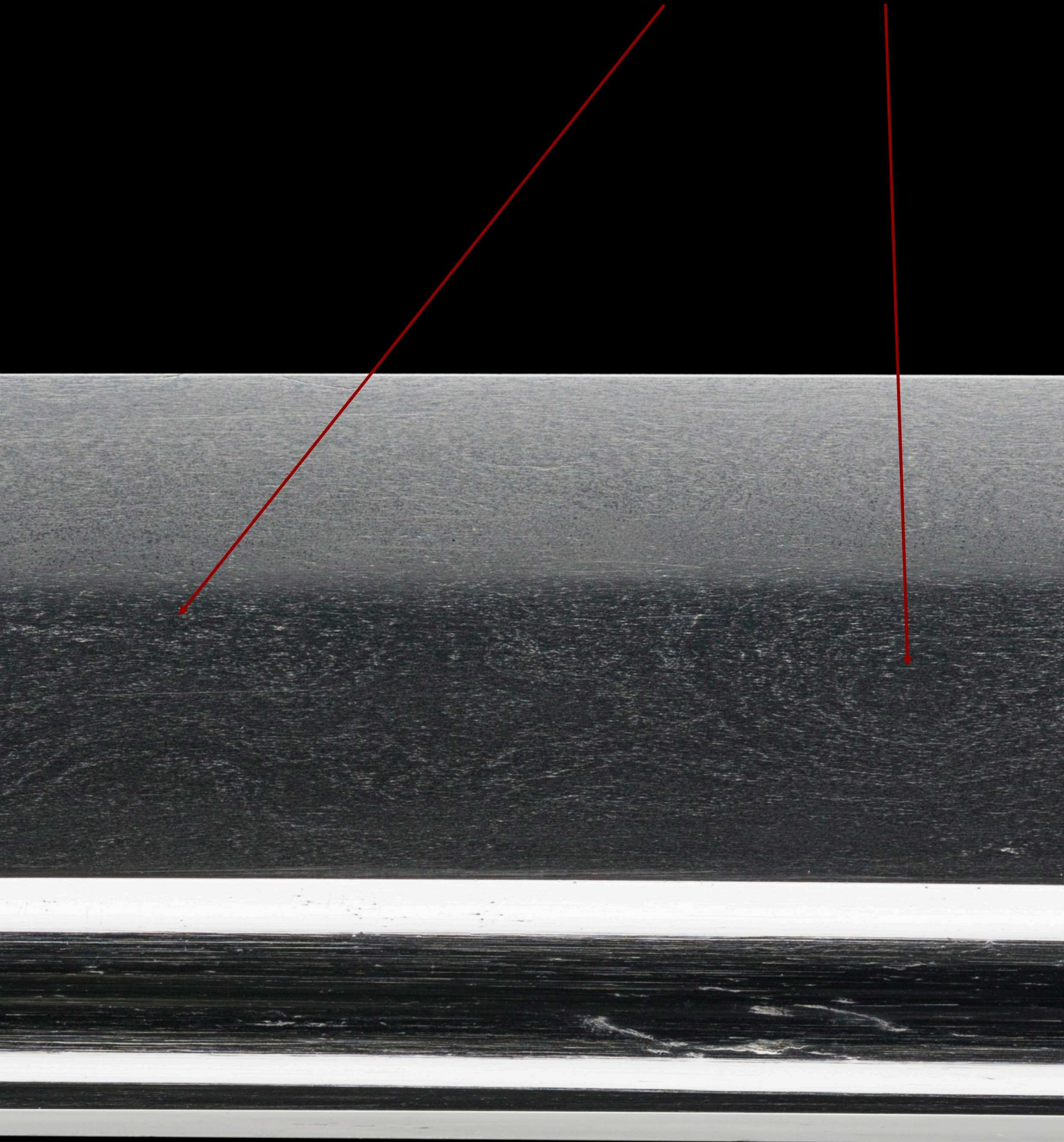
Toki ari tsuchinoto-i gokugetsu Tanzan shirusu + kaô

Written by Tanzan [Tanobe Michihiro] in December of the Year of the Boar of this era (2019) + monogram

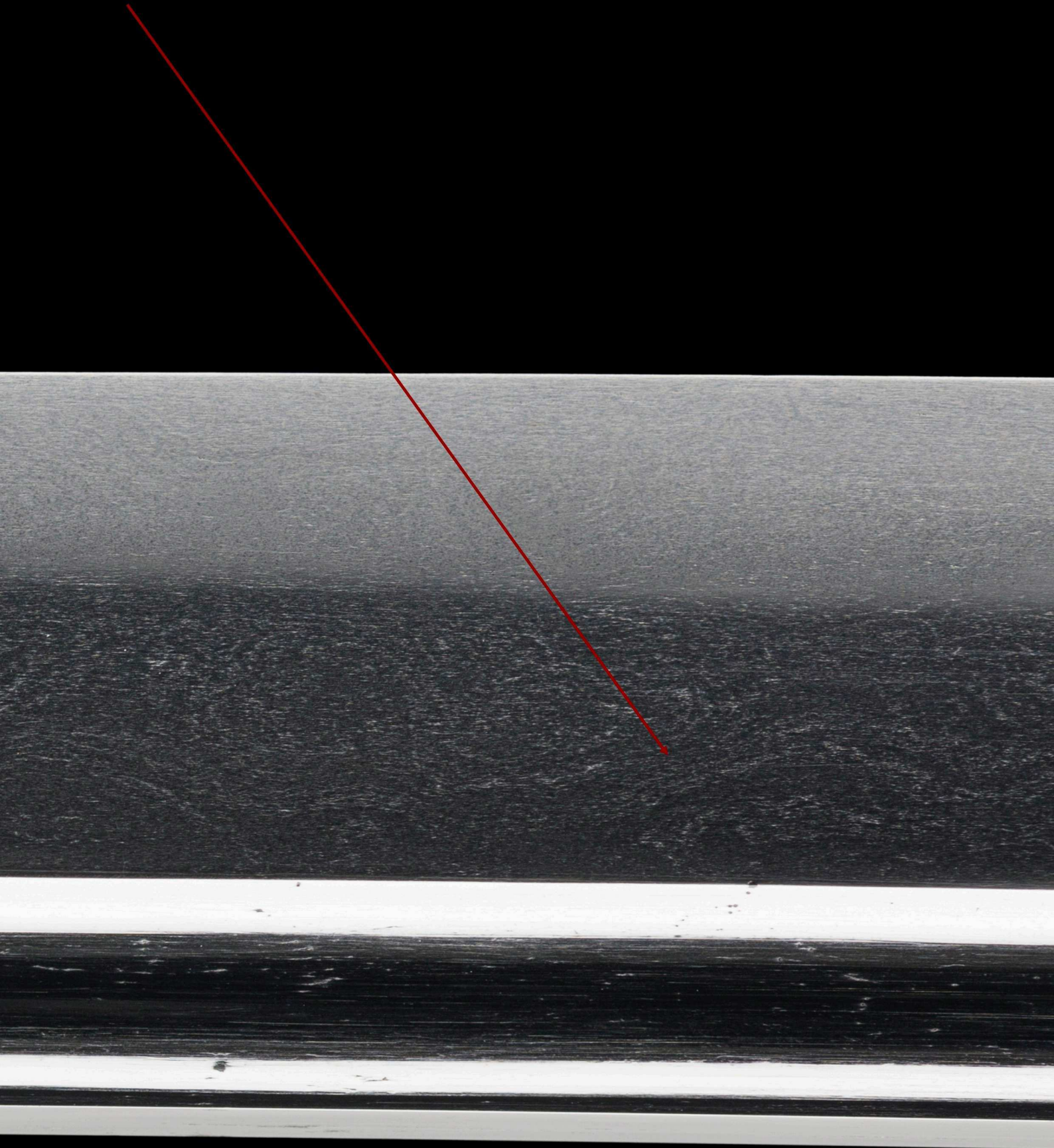




The *jihada* (grain pattern) is a sublime mix of *itame* (plank grain), *mokume* (burl grain)



and *nagare-hada* (running, wavy). This is steel artanship.




Stand tall.

The *bôshi* (hamon in the *kissaki*, tip) features brushed *hakikake*.





A beautiful tight *nioguchi* with sharp, angular sections of *gunome* and *ashi* (legs) that resemble the teeth of a saw.

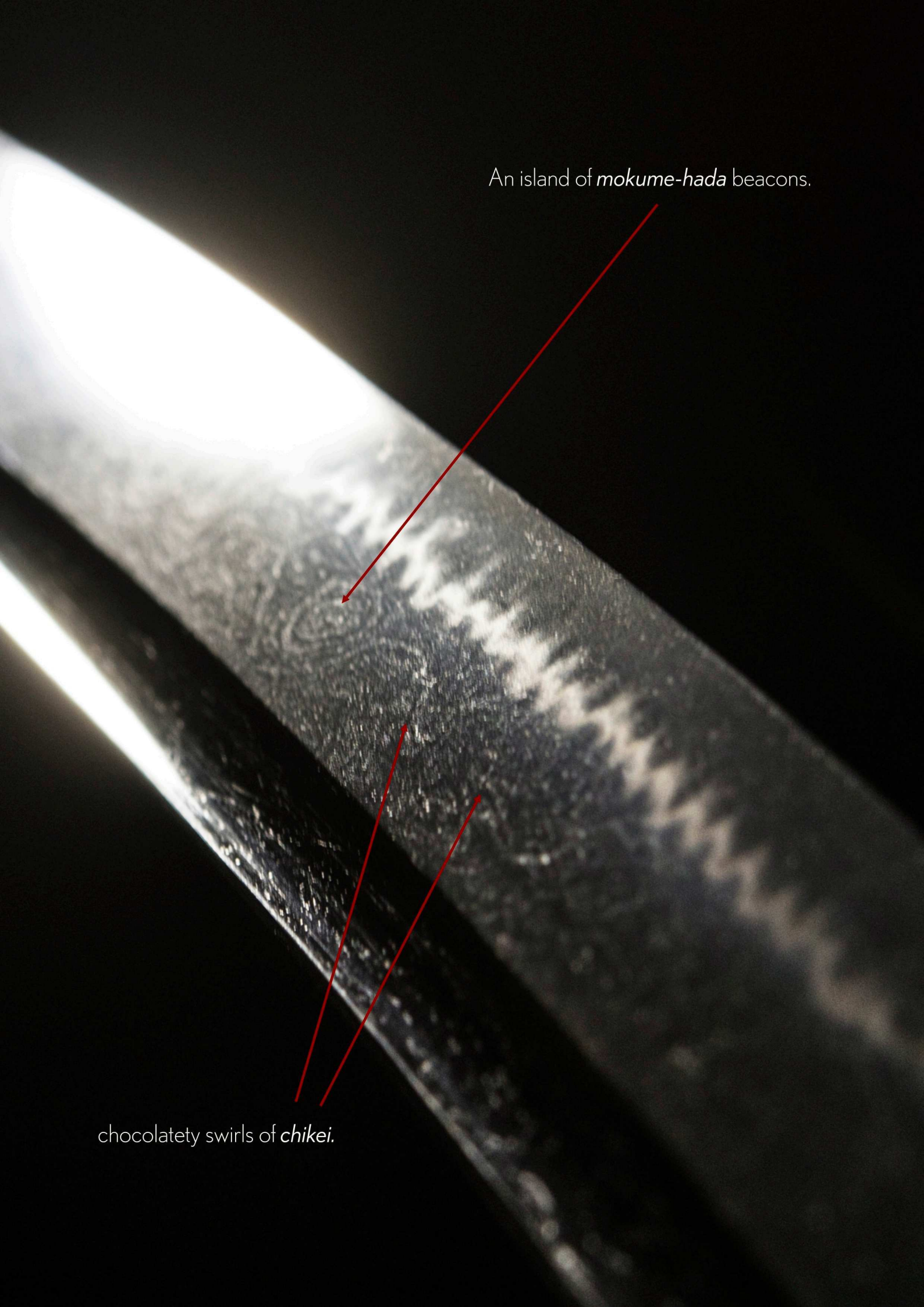
A close-up, high-contrast photograph of a sword's hamon (edge) against a black background. The hamon is a straight line of light, labeled as *chû-suguha*. Along this line, there are several small, dark, irregular spots, which are clusters of *nie* crystals called *yô*. Three red arrows point from the text labels to these spots. The sword's blade is visible in the background, slightly out of focus.

chû-suguha

The *hamon* is *chû-suguha* (straight) and these 'spots' are clusters of *nie* crystals called *yô* (leaves) as they appear to 'fall off' the hamon.

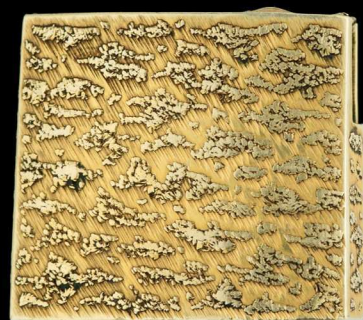
An island of *mokume-hada* beacons.

chocolatety swirls of *chikei*.





Shirasaya
(protective scabbard)



gold habaki with
Botan-Yûjô file marks

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

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

Crafted during the
Late Edo period
(1780~1867)



NTHK-NPO Kanteisho
Certificate of Authenticity

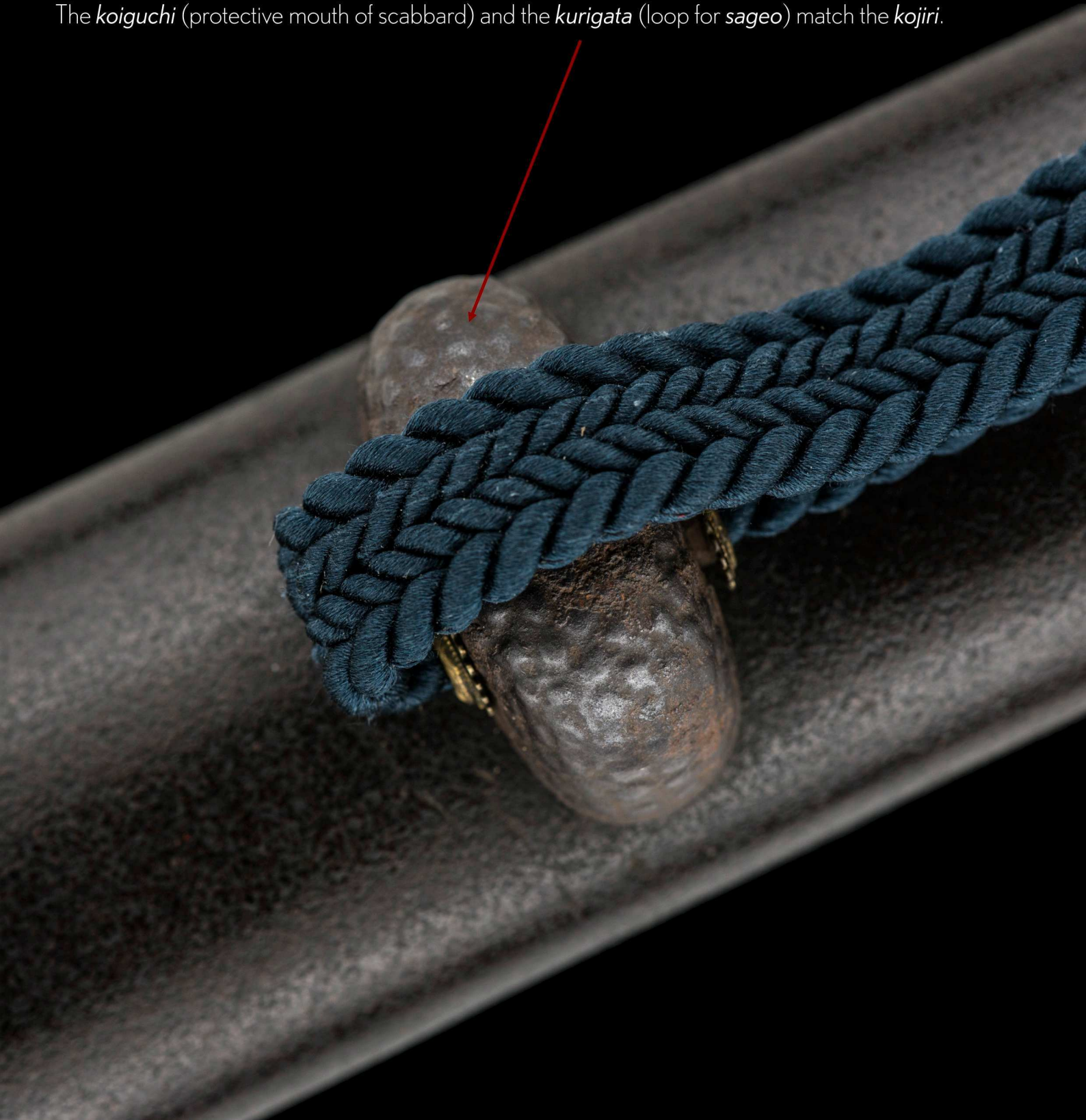


A protective solid iron *kojiri* (butt end scabbard).
A weapon in its own right.





The *koiguchi* (protective mouth of scabbard) and the *kurigata* (loop for *sageo*) match the *kojiri*.



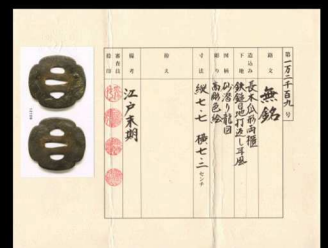
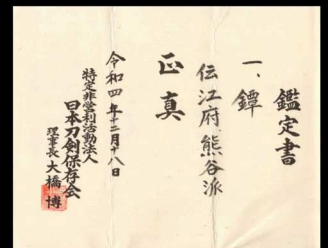


Behold a rather mysterious *mokkô-gata* (multiple lobed) hammered iron tsuba with gold accents that features a *sunamoguri-ryû* theme by which a dragon lurks in the sand.

This tsuba personifies the quintessential rustic *wabi-sabi* essence of Japanese art.

Kumagai school from Edo (Tokyo).

NTHK-NPO Kanteisho certification
Late Edo period, circa 1780~1867





Through the darkness, I emerge.



fuchi (hilt collar)



kôryû no zu (water dragon)



Kashira (pommel)

The water dragon is hungry...



Rain dragon *menuki*, on the lookout.
Uniquely wrapped in linen over a base of antique *samekawa* (ray skin).





Koshirae bag



ITEM# UJKA430

CURRENTLY AVAILABLE ON CONSIGNMENT

A YOSHIKAGE NAGINATA-NAOSHI KATANA

UNSIGNED, NAMBOKUCHÔ PERIOD (KENMU ERA: 1334~1338)

Swordsmith:	<i>Bishû Osafune Yoshikage (Bizen province)</i>
Measurements:	Length: 69.5cm (<i>ô-suriage</i>) Curvature: 1.5cm Moto-haba: 2.95cm
Jihada:	<i>Standing-out itame mixed with mokume, ji-nie, chikei and midare-utsuri</i>
Hamon:	<i>Gunome in nioi-deki with ko-nie mixed with ko-gunome, chôji, kinsuji, & sunagashi</i>
Certificate #1:	26th NBTHK Tokubetsu Jûyô Tôken (An Especially Important Sword)
Certificate #2-4:	NTHK-NPO Kanteishô (koshirae, fukuro and tsuba certified as Authentic)
Fujishiro rank:	Jô-saku (ranked as a superior swordsmith)
Sharpness:	Ô-wazamono (maker of extremely sharp swords)
Authentication:	Sayagaki by Tanzan-sensei (Tanobe Michihiro)
Included:	Shirasaya, koshirae, fabric bags, stand, kit, printed description

Ask

This special sword that has been attributed to *Bizen Osafune* swordsmith *Yoshikage*, master of the *naginata*. It was crafted in the early 1300s and later preserved into a katana, a process known as *naginata-naoshi*. This katana is certified *Tokubetsu Jûyô Tôken*, the highest rank at the NBTHK.

The polearm type of the *naginata* (薙刀) emerged in the late *Heian* period (794~1185) and then later in the *Genpei War* (1180~1185). High-ranking warriors recognized the efficacy of the *naginata* and made it their weapon of choice when fighting on foot. Many famous figures of that time period being recorded as fighting preferably with the *naginata* have become a fixture of Japanese lore, e.g., *Minamoto no Tsunemitsu* (源経光, died 1146), the warrior monk *Benkei* (弁慶, 1155~1189), female

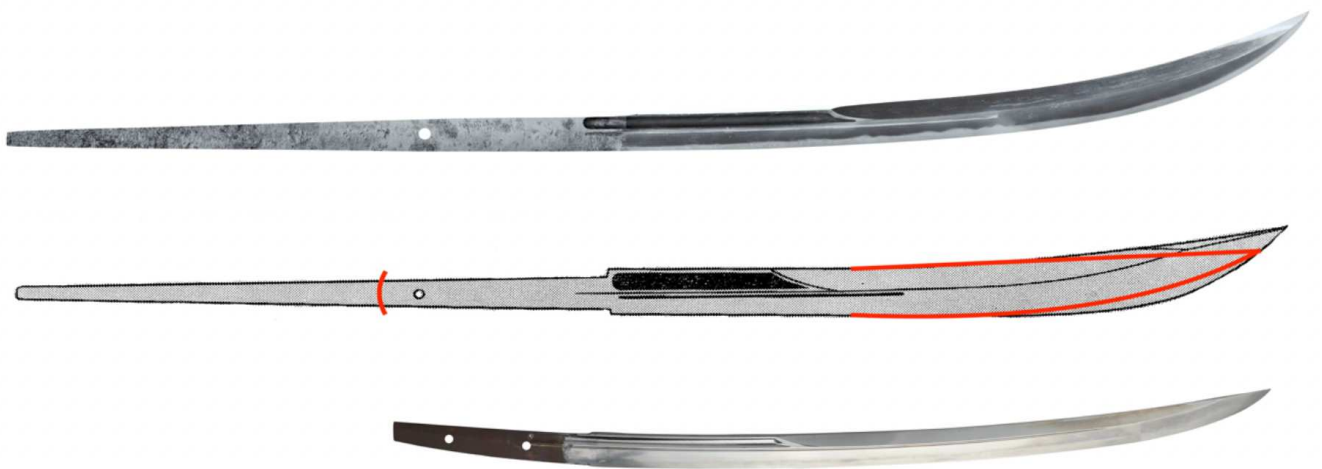
warrior *Tomoe-Gozen* (巴御前, late 12th century). The *naginata* henceforth remained much in use until the Muromachi period, when *yari* and firearms became the decisive weapons on the battlefield. By the end of the *Muromachi* period and entering the *Momoyama* period (1574~1600) changes in the way battles were fought and significant changes among the warrior class itself took place. This was the time when *samurai* took over land ownership on a large scale and were no longer more or less armed guardians of someone else's land as they had been in previous periods.

As a result, local *samurai* rulers now also had to administer the lands under their rule, which was of course not done in full armour wearing a *tachi*, but in a "civilian *samurai* attire" so to speak wearing the iconic *daishō* pair of swords consisting of a *katana* and a *wakizashi*. In other words, was the sword worn to the civilian or casual attire earlier mostly for reasons of self-defence, it had now become the *visible symbol of rank and authoritative power*, and eventually the status symbol of the entire warrior class.

The *shōgun*, the *daimyō*, and highest ranking *samurai* were of course seeking to wear the best blades possible. And as the qualitative and aesthetic zenith of Japanese sword making is often considered to have been the Kamakura and early to mid-Nanbokuchō period by connoisseurs and experts alike, this of course means that the body of work to select from was *tachi*, *tantō*, and *naginata*. Thus, reworking a *naginata*, if it was one's best blade, into a *katana* was not considered a sacrilege, but was understood as making it become a part of one's life rather than having it sit in a treasury or storehouse. Presenting and receiving a gift of a blade made by a smith renowned for having produced the finest examples of its type was very much desired. In this sense, *naginata-naoshi* by *Hōjōji Kunimitsu* or *Osafune Yoshikage* were by no means regarded second-rate to *tachi* by these smiths, rather in the contrary, i.e., as superior cutters and more desirable than their *tachi*.

Accordingly, the following saying developed among warriors:

Naginata-naoshi ni namakura nashi (薙刀直しに鈍刀なし)
"No sword made from a *naginata* is dull!"



(process of reshaping a *naginata* into a *katana*)

Yoshikage (義景) is said to be the son or a student of national-treasure swordsmith *Chikakage* (近景) and the son-in-law of *Chôgi* (長義). Thus he belonged to one of the then influential collateral branches of the large *Osafune* (長船) School, which was closely connected to the main line, led at that time by *Kagemitsu* (景光), see genealogy below.



In terms of workmanship, *Yoshikage's* early works tended to be hardened in *suguha* with *ko-ashi*, an approach that bears semblance to the style of *Chikakage*. Later on though, *Yoshikage* adopted elements of the *Sôshû* tradition in the style of *Chôgi*, which had been very much thriving at that time, influencing swordsmiths all across Japan. This mix of the *Sôshû* and *Bizen* traditions is referred to as *Sôden-Bizen*, and having been an early adopter, ***Yoshikage can be regarded as one of the forerunners of this trend.*** Existing dated works of *Yoshikage* range from the second year of *Kenmu* era (建武, 1335) to the third year of *Enbun* era (延文, 1358).

What makes this sword quite remarkable, is that it serves as transition-point in the career of *Yoshikage*. On *ura* (reverse) side of the blade is *Yoshikage's* early works (similar to *Chikakage*) in that it is composed of smaller elements, a more-exacting *midare-ba* and with hardening in *ko-nie-deki*. However, the *omote*-side displays a forging structure in *itame* that is accompanied by a *midare-utsuri* and a flamboyant hardening in a *chôji*-based *midareba*, and plenty of *kinsuji* and *sunagashi* in the *Chôgi* and *Sôden-Bizen* tradition. It is a wonderful sword to study and one where *Yoshikage* pays respect to his previous style while embracing a new chapter in his working life as a smith.

As the NBTHK *Tokubetsu Jûyô Tôken* concludes in their description summary:

The ha is nie-laden and displays plenty of kinsuji and sunagashi and therefore we recognize along the jiba the characteristic features of the Sôden-Bizen style... The blade is of a gallant naginata-naoshi shape and coupled with kinsuji, sunagashi, and other hataraki we have here an outstanding masterwork among all blades known by this smith.



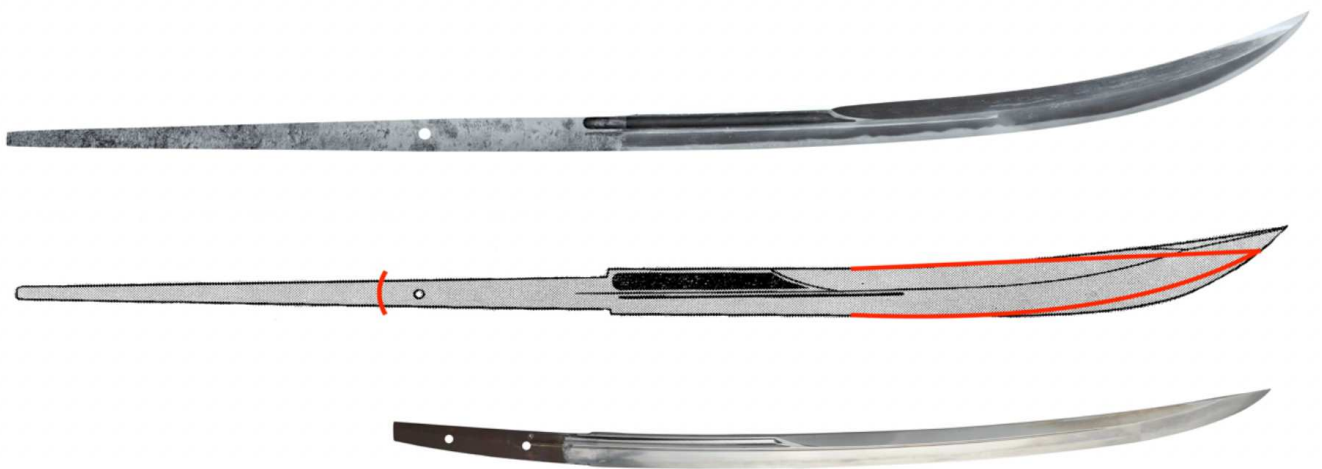
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Saki-kasane: 3.7mm

Moto-kasane: 5.3mm

Omosa: 835g

Kissaki: 8.38cm

Saki-haba: 2.48cm

Nakago: 20.1cm

Moto-haba: 2.95cm

Nagasa: 69.5cm

Sori: 1.50cm

Mekugi-ana: 2



The NBTHK Tokubetsu Jûyô Certificate description for this magnificent Yoshikage katana translates as follows:

Several traditions exist regarding *Osafune Yoshikage* - for example, one states that he was a student of *Kanemitsu* and another that he was a student of *Chôgi*.

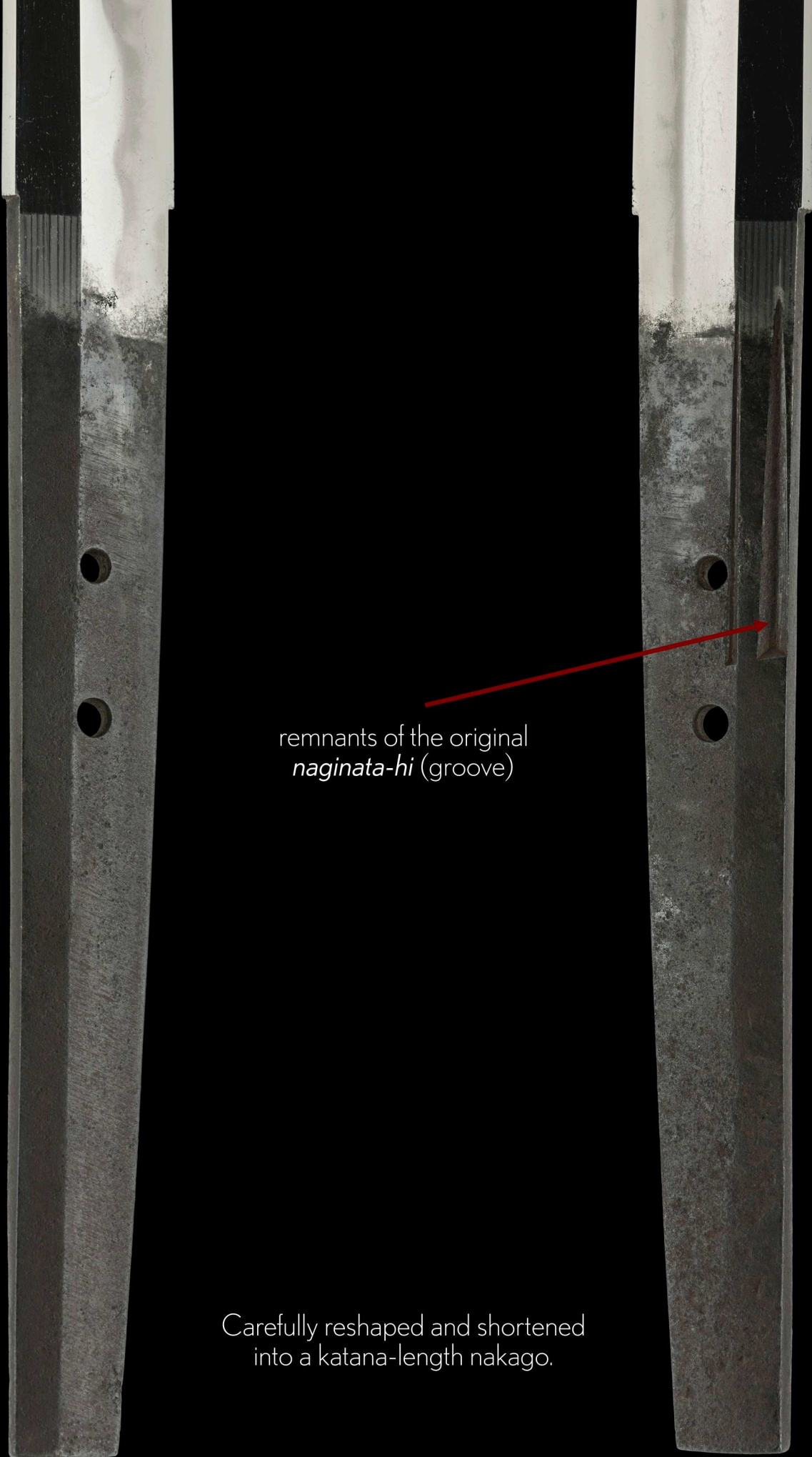
However, more recent studies suggest that based on similarities in workmanship and a unique signature that makes use of *gyaku-tagane* (certain strokes of the signature being chiseled the opposite way as written by brush), he may have been an *Osafune* side line smith from the groups surrounding *Chikakage* or *Morikage*.

This blade was originally a *naginata* which has been greatly shortened and which had material removed from the *mune* side along the tip section to rework it into a *katana*. The *kitae* is an *itame* that is mixed with much *mokume* and some *nagare* and that features plenty of *ji-nie*, much thick *chikei*, and a *midare-utsuri*. The *ha* is *nie*-laden and displays plenty of *kinsuji* and *sunagashi* and therefore we recognize along the *jiba* the characteristic features of the *Sôden-Bizen* tradition.

The *hamon* is a *gunome* that is mixed with *chôji*, *togariba*, and a variety of other elements, in particular with prominently pointed elements all across the *ha*. All this and the fact that the *midare* sections are relatively densely arranged and small made us conclude that the attribution to *Yoshikage* is appropriate.

The blade is of a *gallant naginata-naoshi* shape and coupled with *kinsuji*, *sunagashi*, and other *hataraki* we have here an outstanding masterwork among all blades known by this smith.





remnants of the original
naginata-hi (groove)

Carefully reshaped and shortened
into a katana-length nakago.

02202026

特重要第一二八〇號

指定書

一薙刀直し刀無銘義景 一口

法量 長さ六九・六榎 反り一・六榎
形状 薙刀直し造庵棟 身幅広め 元先の幅差やつぎ反り浅く 大鋒
銀 板目に委を交え 肌立ちころ 地沸き 地景入り 乱れ映り立つ
刃文 互の目に小互の目・丁子などを交え 匂勝ち小沸つき 全筋・
砂流しかかる
帽子 乱れ込み 先焼詰め風
彫物 表茎上半に 薙刀樋と添樋の痕跡
茎 大磨上 鑑目勝手下がり 目釘孔二
備前國長船義景
南北朝時代

右者當協會に於て審査の結果
特別重要刀剣に指定する

令和二年五月二十八日

公益財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協會

會長 酒井忠久

東京 教育委員会
第 321708 号
令和 2 年 5 月 28 日

Tokubetsu Jûyô Certificate No. 1280
Shiteisho (指定書) Certificate of Designation
Naginata-Naoshi Katana, mumei: Yoshikage (義景)

Measurements
nagasa 69.6 cm, sori 1.6 cm

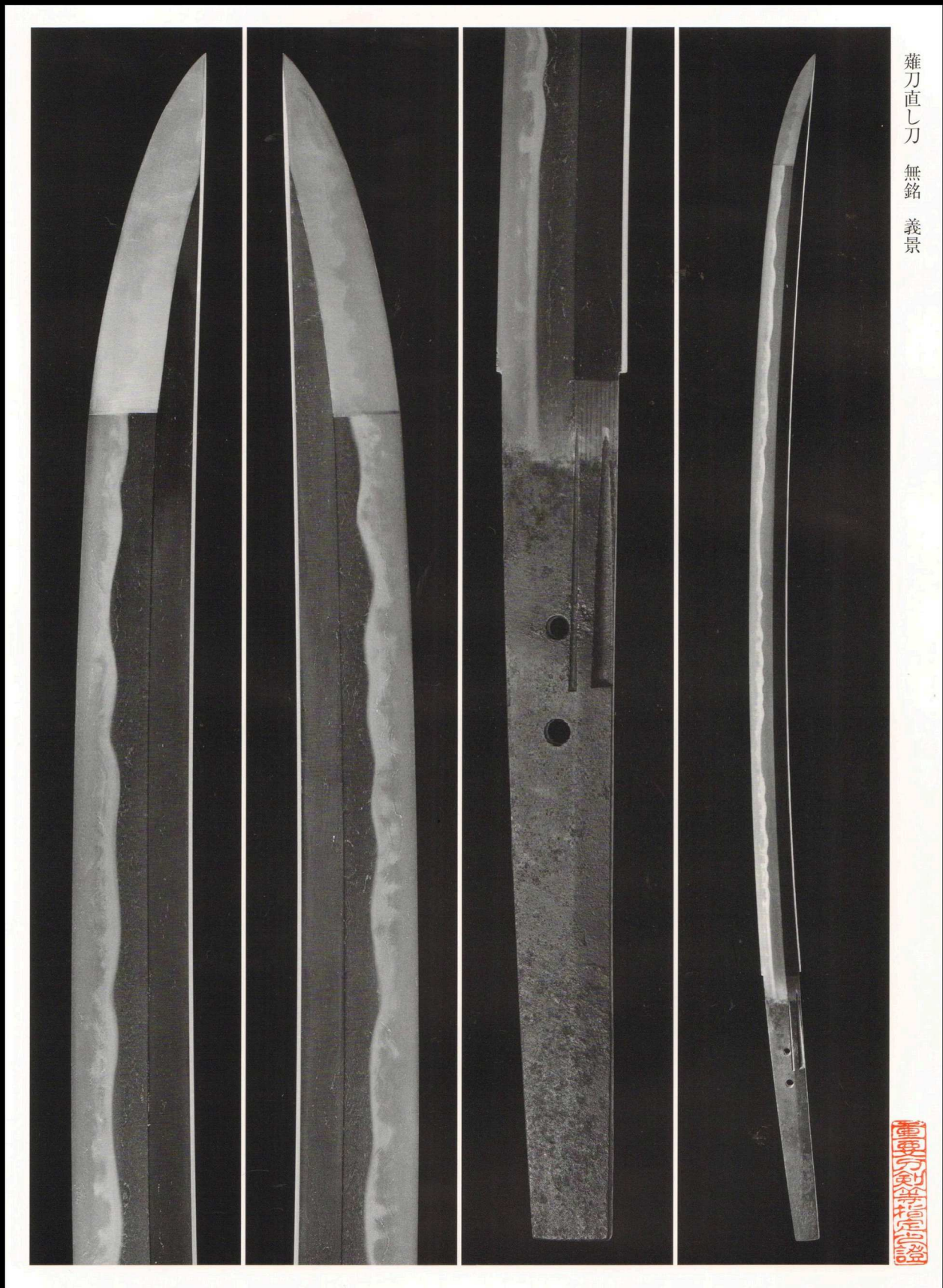
Description

Keijo: naginata-naoshi-zukuri, iori-mune, wide mihaba, noticeable taper, shallow sori, ô-kissaki
Kitae: rather standing-out itame mixed with mokume and features ji-nie, chikei, and midare-utsuri
Hamon: gunome in nioi-deki with ko-nie mixed with ko-gunome, chôji, kinsuji, and sunagashi
Bôshi: midare-komi and running out in yakitsume fashion
Horimono: on the omote side on the upper half of the tang traces of a naginata-hi and soebi
Nakago: ô-suriage, katte-sagari yasurime, two mekugi-ana

Osafune Yoshikage from Bizen province
Nanbokuchô period

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

May 28, 2020
[Foundation] Nihon Bijutsu Tôken Hozon Kyôkai, NBTHK
[President] Yamanaka Sadanori (山中貞則)



薙刀直し刀 無銘 義景



*A Bishû Osafune Yoshikage Naginata Naoshi Katana
Nambokuchô period, Kenmu era (1334~1338)*

A brilliant *Sôden-Bizen* powerhouse described in its NBTHK Tokubetsu Jûyô Tôken certificate as having a gallant *naginata-naoshi* shape with *kinsuji*, *sunagashi*, and other *hataraki* and an outstanding masterwork among all blades known by *Osafune Yoshikage*.

Designated as *Tokubetsu-Jūyō-Tōken* (an especially profound and important sword)
at the 26th *tokubetsu jūyō shinsa* held on May 28, 2020

***naginata-naoshi katana, mumei: Yoshikage* (義景)**

Unique Japan

Measurements

nagasa 69.6 cm

sori 1.6 cm

motohaba 2.95 cm, *sakihaba* 2.5 cm

kissaki-nagasa 8.5 cm, *nakago-nagasa* 20.1 cm, only very little *nakago-sori*

Description

Keijo: *naginata-naoshi-zukuri*, *iori-mune*, wide *mihaba*, noticeable taper, thin *kasane* and *shinogi-ji* drops off noticeably towards *mune*, shallow *sori*, *ō-kissaki*

Kitae: rather standing-out *itame* that is mixed with much *mokume*, some *ō-mokume* in places, and a little bit of *nagare*, and that features plenty of *ji-nie*, much thick *chikei*, and a *midare-utsuri*

Hamon: *gunome* in *nioi-deki* with *ko-nie* and a bright *nioiguchi* that is mixed with plenty of *ko-gunome*, *chōji*, prominent *togariba* along the *monouchi*, many *ashi* and *yō*, and with an abundance of thin *kinsuji* and *sunagashi*

Bōshi: prominently *midare-komi* with some *hakikake* and running out in *yakitsume* fashion

Horimono: on the *omote* side on the upper half of the tang traces of a *naginata-hi* and *soebi*

Nakago: *ō-suriage*, very shallow *kurijiri*, *katte-sagari yasurime*, two *mekugi-ana*, *mumei*

Artisan

Osafune Yoshikage from Bizen province

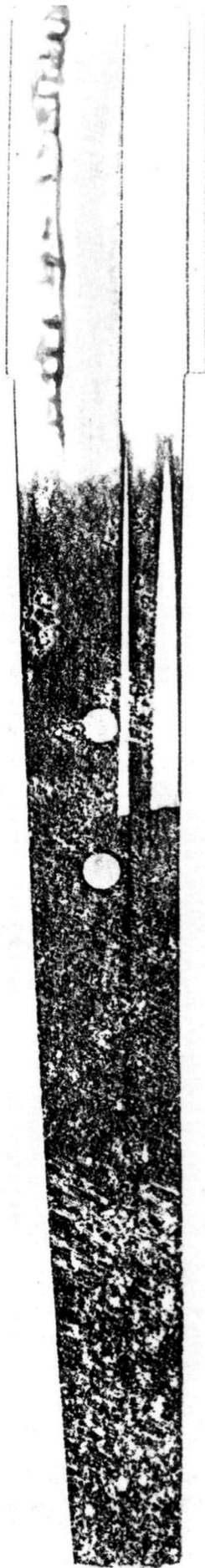
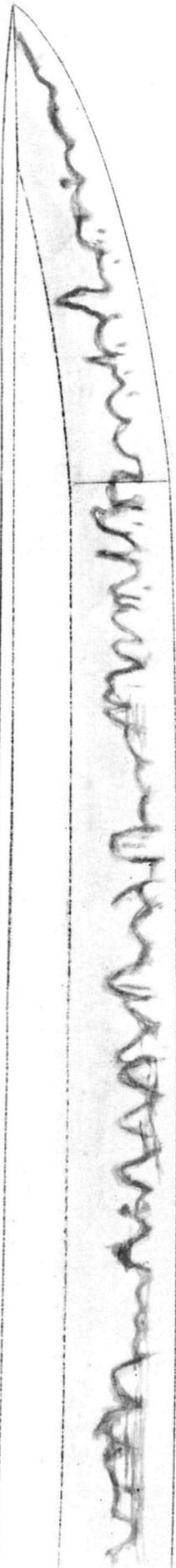
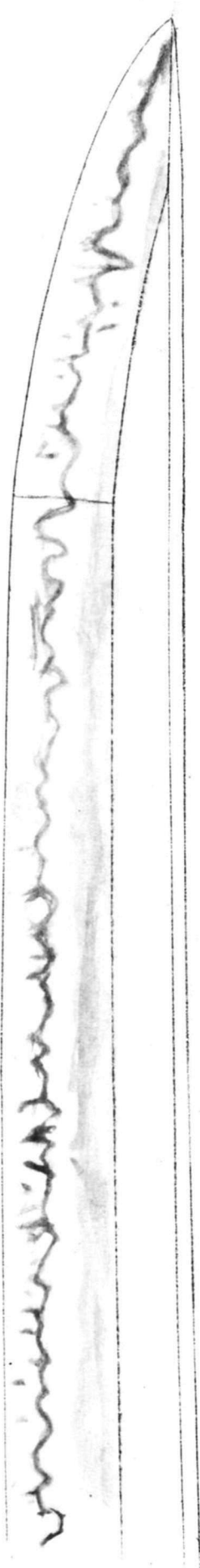
Era

Nanbokuchō period

Remarks

Several traditions exist regarding Osafune Yoshikage, for example, one saying that he was a student of Kanemitsu (兼光) and another that he was a student of Chōgi (長義). However, recent studies rather suggest that on the basis of similarities in workmanship and a unique signature style that makes use of *gyaku-tagane* (certain strokes of the signature being chiseled the opposite way as written with a brush), he may have been an Osafune side line smith from the groups surrounding Chikakage (近景) or Morikage (盛景).

This blade was originally a *naginata* which has been greatly shortened and which had material removed from the *mune* side along the tip section to rework it into a *katana*. The *kitae* is an *itame* that is mixed with much *mokume* and some *nagare* and that features plenty of *ji-nie*, much thick *chikei*, and a *midare-utsuri*. The *ha* is *nie*-laden and displays plenty of *kinsuji* and *sunagashi* and therefore we recognize along the *jiba* the characteristic features of the Sōden-Bizen style. The *hamon* is a *gunome* that is mixed with *chōji*, *togariba*, and a variety of other elements, in particular with prominently pointed elements all across the *ha*. All this and the fact that the *midare* sections are relatively densely arranged and small made us conclude that the attribution to Yoshikage is appropriate. The blade is of a gallant *naginata-naoshi* shape and with the *kinsuji*, *sunagashi*, and other *hataraki* we have here an outstanding masterwork among all blades known by this smith.



第十七回重要刀剣指定品

Dai jûnana-kai jûyô-tôken shitei-hin

Designated as jûyô-tôken at the 17th jûyô-shinsa

備前國長船義景

Bizen no Kuni Osafune Yoshikage

Osafune Yoshikage from Bizen province

大磨上無銘而薙刀直也裏ハ乱映ヲ伴フ板目ノ肌合ニ丁子主調ノ華ヤカナ乱ヲ焼キ一見吉岡一文字風ナレド表ガ乱ノ間詰マリ小模様トナリ小沸付ク點ヤ薙刀直ノ遺例ハ同工ニ多キコトナドヨリ所傳ハ首肯シ得ル者ナラン同工ハ近景ノ流ヲ汲ミ盛景トハ同族也本作ハ同工極中屈指ノ優品哉

Ô-suriage mumei shikamo naginata-naoshi nari. Sashiura wa midare-utsuri o tomonau itame no hada-ai ni chôji-shuchô no hanayaka na midare o yaki ikken Yoshioka-Ichimonji-fû naredo omote ga midare no aida tsumari ko-moyô to nari ko-nie tsuku ten ya naginta-naoshi no irei wa dôkô ni ôki koto nado yori shoden wa shukô-shi eru mono naran. Dôkô wa Chikakage no ryû o kumi Morikage to wa dôzoku nari. Honsaku wa dôkô kiwame-chû kusshi no yûhin kana.

This blade is ô-suriage mumei and is a naginata-naoshi. The sashi-ura side displays a forging structure in itame that is accompanied by a midare-utsuri and a flamboyant hardening in a chôji-based midareba, which bears semblance to the Yoshioka-Ichimonji style at first glance. The midare of the ura side, however, is more densely arranged and composed of smaller elements, and with the hardening in ko-nie-deki, and the fact that many naginata-naoshi exist by Yoshikage, I am in agreement with the attribution to this smith. Yoshikage belonged to the family of Morikage, who came from the lineage of Chikakage, and we have here a particularly outstanding masterwork among all blades with period attributions to this smith.

長式尺二寸九分

Nagasa ni-shaku ni-sun kyû-bu

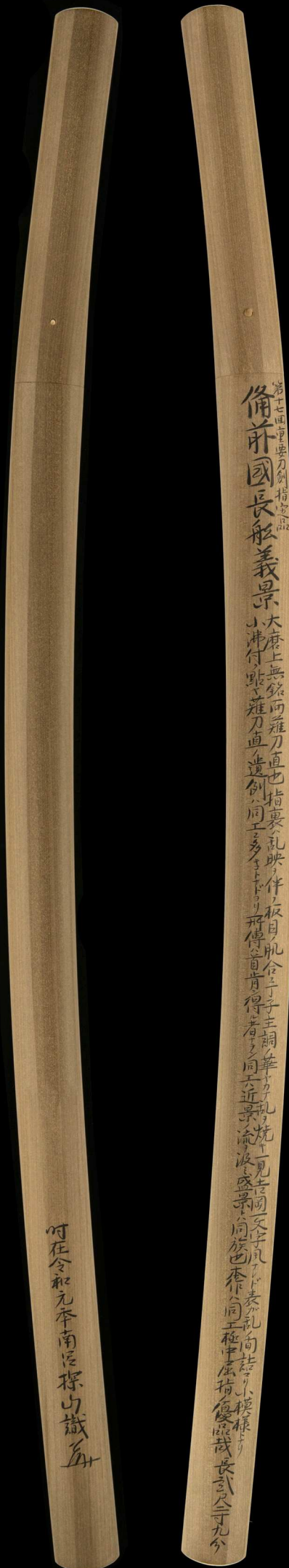
Blade length ~ 69.6 cm

時在令和元年季南呂探山識「花押」

Jizai Reiwa gannen nanryô Tanzan shirusu + kaô

Written by Tanzan [Tanobe Michihiro]

First year of Reiwa era (August 2019) + monogram.



時在令和元年季南呂探山識



When it comes to quantities of works that hold the highest ranking statuses issued by the NBTHK and designations by the Agency for Cultural Affairs, we have the following numbers for the *Osafune Yoshikage* (as per March 2024):

2 blades have been designated as a *Jûyô-Bunkazai* (Important Intangible Cultural Property)
1 tachi, 1 wakizashi; both signed

2 blades have been designated as a *Jûyô-Bijutsuhin* (Important Art Object)
both are katana and unsigned

3 blades have passed *Tokubetsu-Jûyô* (Especially Important Sword)
2 katana, 1 naginata-naoshi katana)

65 blades have passed *Jûyô* (Important Sword)
5 tachi, 52 katana [of which 17 are naginata-naoshi]
6 wakizashi [of which 2 are naginata-naoshi], and 2 naginata

Of only four blades having been designated by the Agency of Cultural Affairs and of only three blades that passed *Tokubetsu-Jûyo*, the naginata-naoshi in question belongs to an elite group of less than ten objects that represents the greatest masterworks known by *Osafune Yoshikage*.

Moreover, this sword is the only *naginata-naoshi* that holds the *Tokubetsu-Jûyô* status, and as no blade of this type by Yoshikage has yet been designated a *Jûyô-Bijutsuhin*, *Jûyô-Bunkazai*, or *Kokuhô* (national treasure), this is arguably the finest *naginata-naoshi* by Yoshikage in existence.

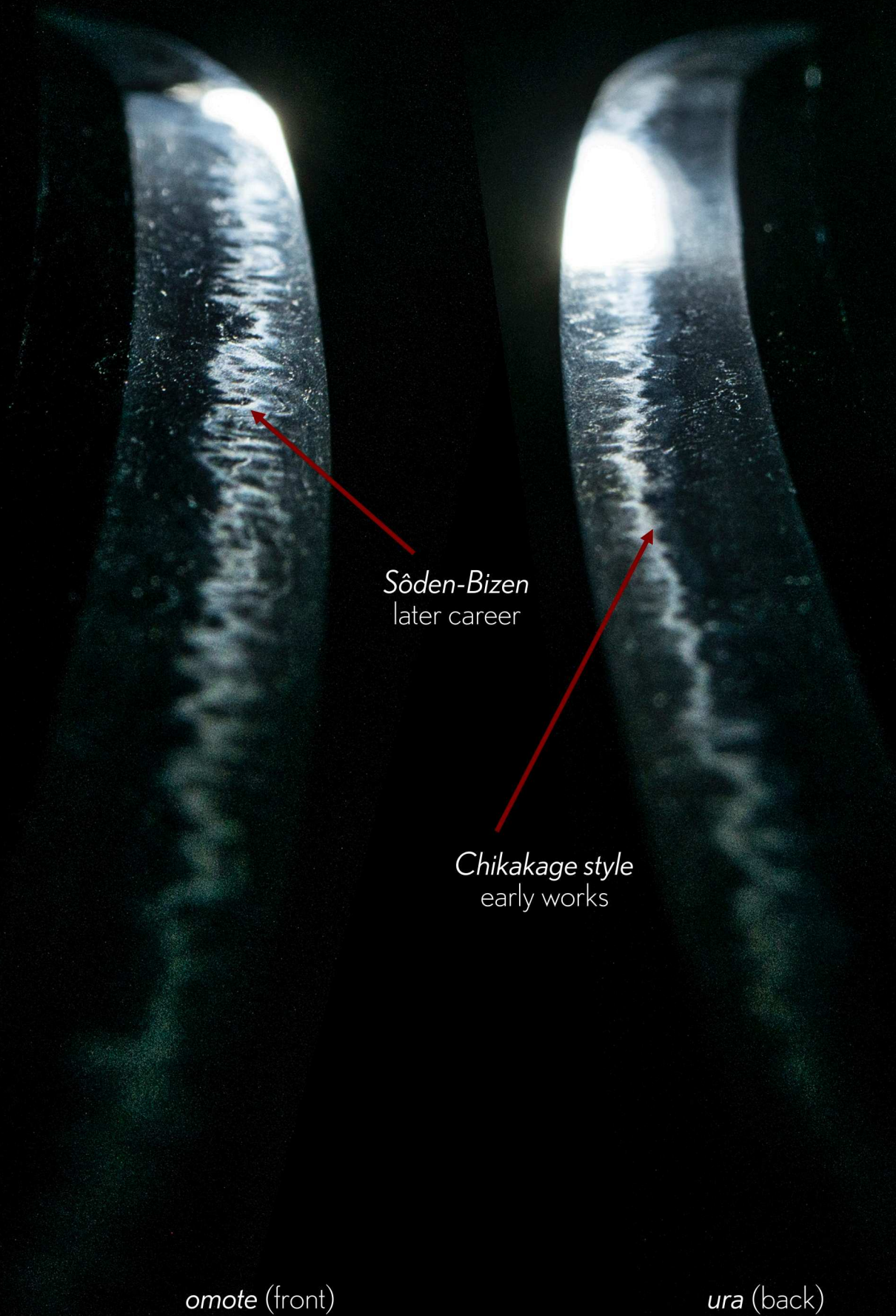




Yoshikage is rated *ô-wazamono* for the supreme sharpness of his swords.
This large *ô-kissaki* tapers to a razor-tip point that clearly means business.



What's quite remarkable about this sword is that it personifies the life's work of Yoshikage. Early in his career, Yoshikage under the tutelage of *Osafune Chikakage*, forged a hamon that was more tightly arranged, based on *suguha* with *ko-ashi*, exactly what one sees on the *ura* (back) of this blade. Later on, Yoshikage was inspired by the energy and power of the *sôshu* tradition and hardened a hamon in *gunome-chôji* with plenty of *hataraki*, with *midare-utsuri* all characteristic of the *sôden-bizen* tradition. And this is what is delivered on the *omote* (front) side. In this unique way, Yoshikage connects the dots on a fine career.



Sôden-Bizen
later career

Chikakage style
early works

omote (front)

ura (back)

Literally meaning "reflection", *utsuri* is a beautiful, misty reflection appearing in the *ji* (body of sword) above the *hamon*).

It is much loved and appreciated feature of swords, particular those made in the Bizen tradition in the Koto period (pre 1600).

The type of *utsuri* found on this blade is called *midare-utsuri* - a smokey pattern that billows towards the *shinogi* (ridge line).



So much *hatarki* to enjoy. Swords like this will reveal something new each time you pick it up.



mokume
rounded burl grain

sunagashi (flowing sands)

kinsuji ('golden' lines of *nie*)

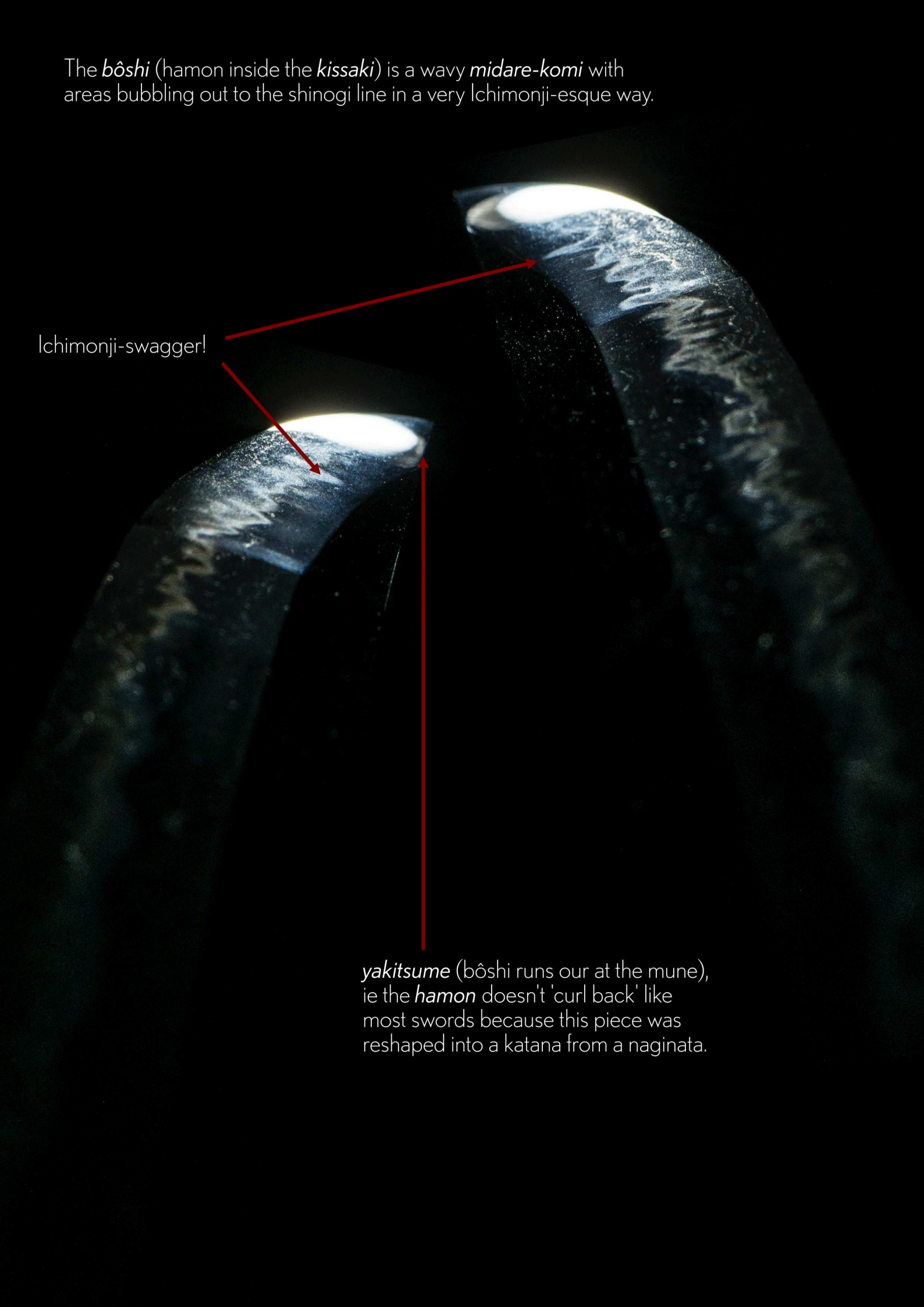


togari

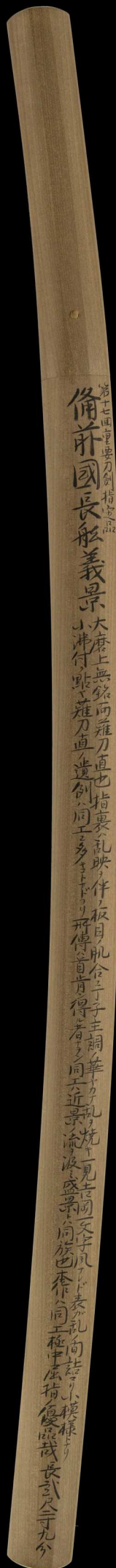
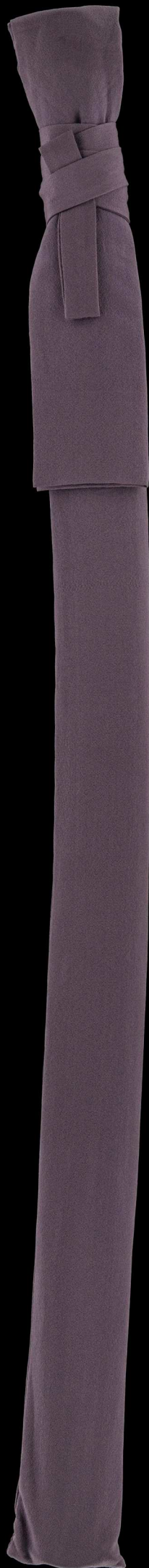
The NBTHK certificate mentions the presence *togari* (pointed) areas, which is normally a feature of Mino tradition crafted swords. This is a rather fascinating sword for its sheer range of attributes.

The *bôshi* (hamon inside the *kissaki*) is a wavy *midare-komi* with areas bubbling out to the shinogi line in a very Ichimonji-esque way.

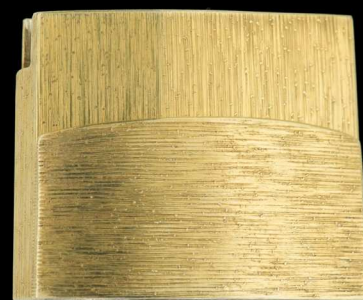
Ichimonji-swagger!



yakitsume (*bôshi* runs out at the mune), ie the *hamon* doesn't 'curl back' like most swords because this piece was reshaped into a katana from a naginata.



Shirasaya
(protective scabbard)

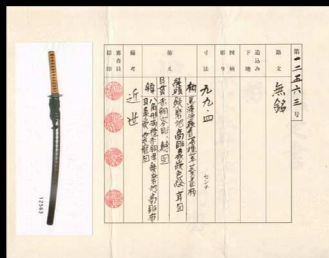


gold *ni-ju habaki* with
crisp file marks

*Shu-kuro botan-mon nuri saya
uchigatana-koshirae*
(朱黒牡丹紋塗鞘打刀拵)

*Uchigatana-koshirae
lacquered in red and black
with peony pattern*

Crafted during modern times



NTHK-NPO Kanteisho
Certificate of Authenticity



Beautifully lacquered red and black zen-like swirls depicting peonies adorn the *saya*. Note the antique floral pattern on the *kojiri* (cap).



This polished iron tsuba in octagonal shape in a cloud dragon design. It has been attributed to the *Nanban* school from *Nagasaki* and crafted in the middle Edo period, circa 1700s. Eight is a lucky number in Japan, and thus the shape of the tsuba is meant to bring good fortune.

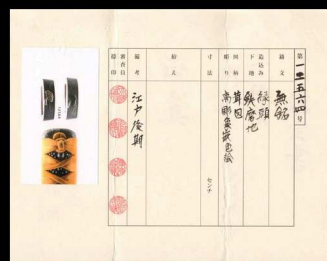


NTHK-NPO Kanteisho
certificate of authenticity



(reverse)





NTHK-NPO Kanteisho
Certificate of Authenticity



Fuchi-kashira
attributed to
Late generation of Shimizu Jingo
(Higo province, Late Edo period)

Motif of mushrooms
Polished iron

Mushrooms hold a special place in Japanese culture, symbolizing prosperity and the changing seasons. They're featured in festivals, art, and literature, reflecting the deep bond between the Japanese people and nature.

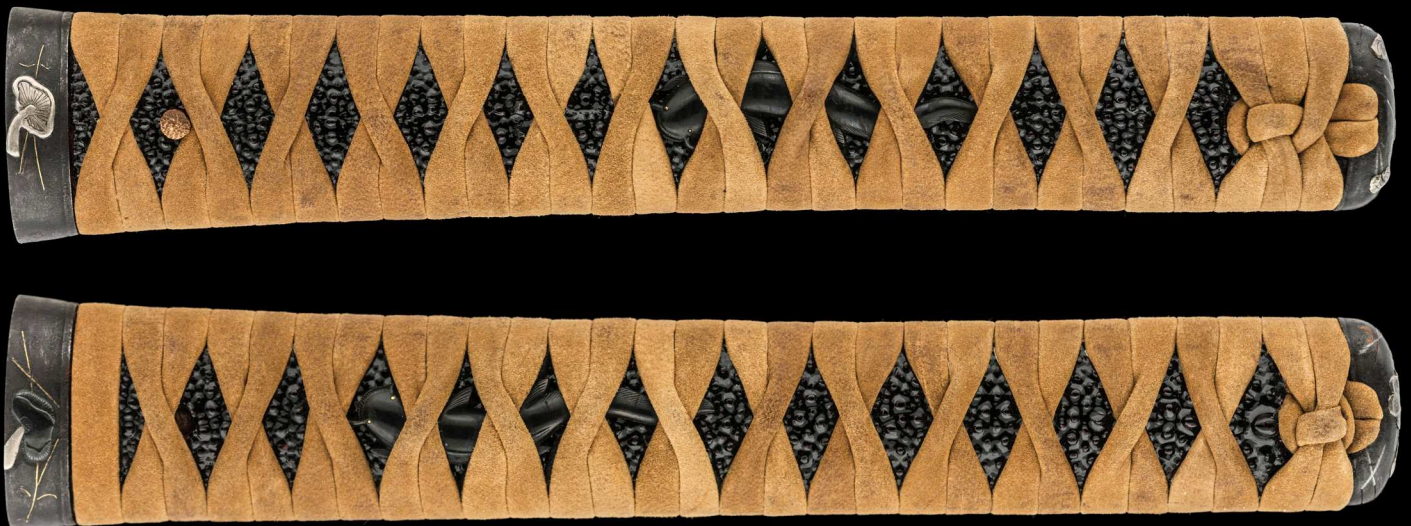


suede-leather wrap



The *menuki* display two impressively large catfish (*namazu*) swimming over the black-lacquered *samekawa* (ray skin). In Japanese mythology, the *Namazu* or *Ōnamazu* is a giant underground catfish that lives under the islands of Japan guarded by the god *Takemikazuchi* enshrined at *Kashima*, and who restrains the catfish with a stone. When the *Kashima-god* lets his guard down, *Namazu* thrashes about, causing violent earthquakes.

Interestingly, prior to the 1855 Edo earthquake, an eel fisherman reportedly spotted unusually active catfish in a river, which he took as a predictor of an earthquake. Later that night, the earthquake struck. The anecdote, recorded in an 1856 chronicle of journalistic reporting on the earthquake, is the earliest known claim that catfish can naturally predict earthquakes.





Koshirae bag with floral pattern.



ITEM# UJKA433

CURRENTLY AVAILABLE

A KINMICHII KATANA

SIGNED, SHINTÔ PERIOD (MANJI ERA: 1658~1661)

Swordsmith:	<i>Iga no Kami Kinmichi (nidai, 2nd gen.)</i>
Measurements:	Length: 72.0cm (<i>ubu</i>) Curvature: 1.7cm Moto-haba: 3.00cm Weight: 790g
Jihada:	<i>Well-forged itame and mokume-hada with ji-nie and plenty of chikei</i>
Hamon:	<i>Gunome-midare with hako-midare with sunagashi ashi, and hakikake-bôshi</i>
Certificate #1:	NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon (<i>Especially Worthy of Preservation</i>)
Certificate #2:	NBTHK Hozon (<i>Fuchi-kashira Worthy of Preservation</i>)
Certificate #3-6:	NTHK-NPO Kanteishô (<i>koshirae, fk, menuki and tsuba certified as Authentic</i>)
Fujishiro rank:	Chûjô-saku (<i>ranked as an above average swordsmith</i>)
Sharpness:	Wazamono (<i>maker of sharp swords</i>)
Authentication:	Sayagaki by Nozomi-san (<i>shodô artist</i>)
Included:	<i>Shirasaya, Edo-koshirae, fabric bags, stand, kit, printed description</i>

\$15,000

Born *Mishina Kanbei*, this brilliant katana was crafted by *nidai Iga no Kami Kinmichi* who flourished in *Yamashiro* province (*Kyôto*) during the *Manji* era. The *Mishina* school was a prestigious and powerful family with deep connections to the ruling *Tokugawa* family and the imperial court. There is so much to cherish in this structurally sound and most lively katana containing a string of rich cultural elements that the following pages happily expand upon. This is a sharp, and definitive samurai sword from the early Edo period to collect and admire for generations to come.

Saki-kasane: 4.9mm [^]

Moto-kasane: 71mm

Kissaki: 3.75cm

Saki-haba: 2.11cm

Nagasa: 72.0cm

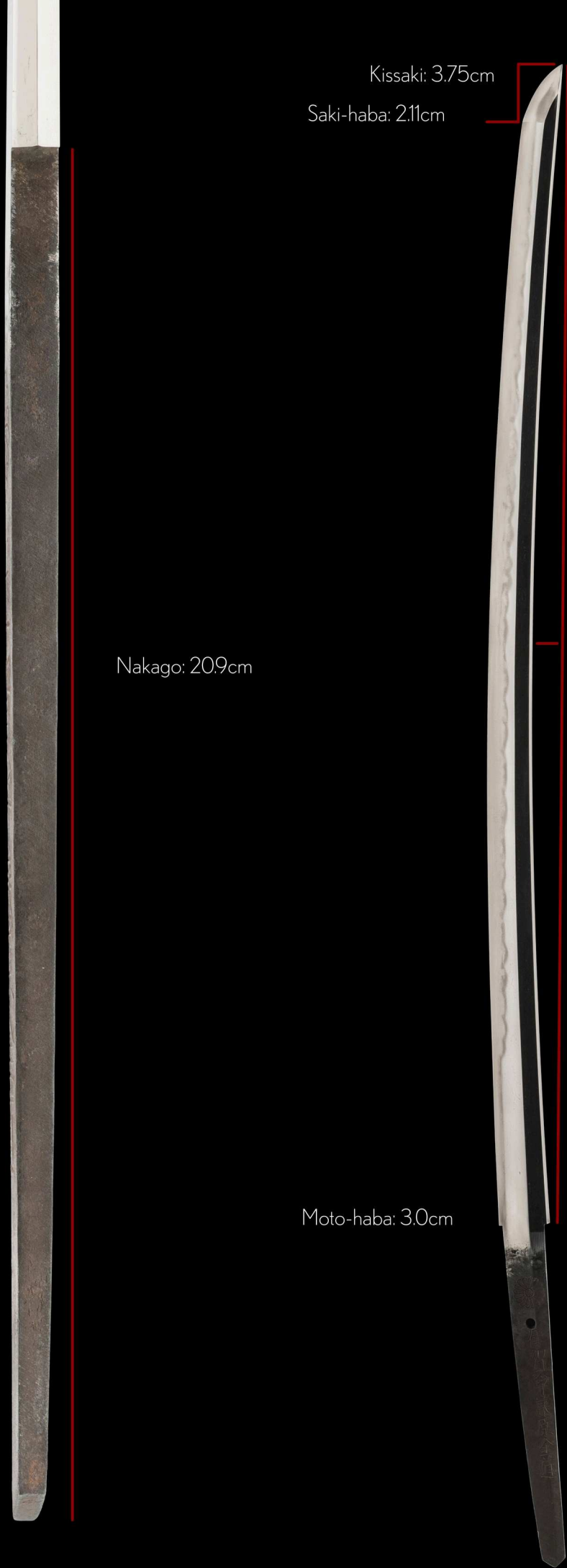
Nakago: 20.9cm

Sori: 1.70cm

Omosa: 790g

Moto-haba: 3.0cm

Mekugi-ana: 1



This stately katana is crafted by *nidai* (2nd gen.) *Iga no Kami Kinmichi* who worked in *Yamashiro (Kyôto)* - Japan's old cultural capital. Known as *Mishina Kanbei*, he is the first son of *shodai* (first gen.) *Kinmichi* and the elder brother of *Izu no Kami Fujiwara Kinmichi*.

The *Mishina* school was a prestigious and powerful family with deep connections to the ruling *Tokugawa* family and the imperial court. Several generations of swordsmiths worked throughout the Edo period.

Japan's largest and arguably most important event in its feudal history was the *Battle of Sekigahara* that took place on October 21, 1600 in Mino province. Prior to the battle, *Tokugawa Ieyasu* ordered no less than 1,000 tachi from shodai Kinmichi. Due to the skilful management of all workers involved in this mission, and Tokugawa's eventual victory, Kinmichi was granted with the honorary title *Nihon-kaji-sôshô* meaning "*Master swordsmith of Japan*".

This title gave Kinmichi the unique authority to register swordsmiths and award them with titles. Second generation Kinmichi assumed these responsibilities from his father and was actually the first smith to sign *Nihon-kaji-sôshô* on his swords adding a special chrysanthemum in a stylized cartwheel design.

Structurally, this impressive katana is fairly long and wide with a *nagasa* of 72cm, exhibiting a lovely curvature and robust weight of nearly 800grams. A straight *kyô-yakidashi* starts the hamon off and then explodes into a wavy *gunome midare* with beautiful *sunagashi* resembling sweeping strokes over sand. This brushed effect continues into the *Mishina bôshi* in the form of *hakikake*.

The character "*Kin*" of *Kinmichi* means 'gold' as thus the gold elements found on this stunning Mid-Edo period koshirae brings this work of art all together. Look for the *kenjô* presentation *tsuba* from *Kyôto* and marvellous rooster and chick themed *fuchi-kashira* signed by *Ômori Terutsugu*. Its *kizami saya* (ribbed scabbard) is completely brilliant as is the hilt with impressive *gunbai menuki* attributed to *Gotô Unjô*.

Kinmichi is respectfully ranked as *chûjô-saku* and *wazamono* for the excellent sharpness of his swords. Kinmichi died on October 21, 1680.





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

Family name: *Fujiwara*

Location: Yamashiro (Kyôto)

Swordsmith: *Kinmichi* (second generation)

ubu-nakago (original, unaltered tang)

sujikai-yasurime (diagonal file marks)

(*Kiku-mon*, chrysanthemum crest)

伊 (I)

賀 (ga, no)

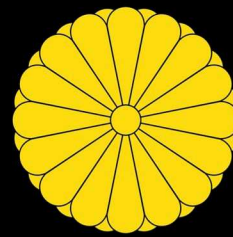
守 (Kami)

藤 (Fuji)

原 (wara)

金 (Kin)

道 (michi)



The Imperial Seal of Japan.

Called *kiku-mon* or 'chrysanthemum seal', it is a *mon* or crest used by members of the Japanese Imperial family.

The chrysanthemum symbolises the sun and the light, thus reflecting a sense of immortality.

Kinmichi and other swordsmiths of the *Mishina* school were granted permission from the Imperial family to place the 16-petal *kikumon* and variations on their swords.

It was an honour and privilege.



The *nakago-jiri* (butt-end) of the tang comes to a sharp point at the center.

This type of finish is called *kengyô* or sword-shaped.

(*ura*, reverse)

特 保
05202303

No 1020574



鑑定書

一 刀 銘 (菊紋) 伊賀守藤原金道 (二代)

長二尺三寸七分半

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

令和五年五月三十一日

公益財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協會



兵庫県教育委員会
第 210 号
昭和26年7月27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 31st year of Reiwa (2019), May 31st

One, Katana

Mei (signature)
(Kikumon)

Iga no Kami Fujiwara Kinmichi (nidai)

Nagasa (length)
2-shaku 3-sun 7-bu han (72.0cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai
(NBTHK)



二代伊賀守金道

二代伊賀守金道

Nidai Iga no Kami Kinmichi

Iga no Kami Kinmichi, the 2nd generation

時代萬治頃

時代萬治頃

Jidai Manji-goro

Around Manji period (1658~1661)

刃長貳尺參寸七分半有之

刃長貳尺參寸七分半有之

Hachô 2-shaku 3-sun 7-bu han kore ari

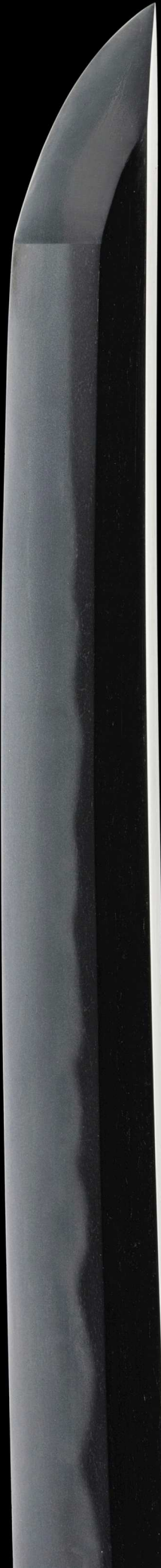
Blade length 72.0 cm

令和六甲辰年
皐月吉日誌之

令和六甲辰年皐月吉日誌之

Reiwa roku kinoe-tatsudoshi Satsuki kichijitsu kore o shirusu

Written on a lucky day in the fifth month in the sixth year of
Reiwa era during the Year of the Dragon (May 2024)





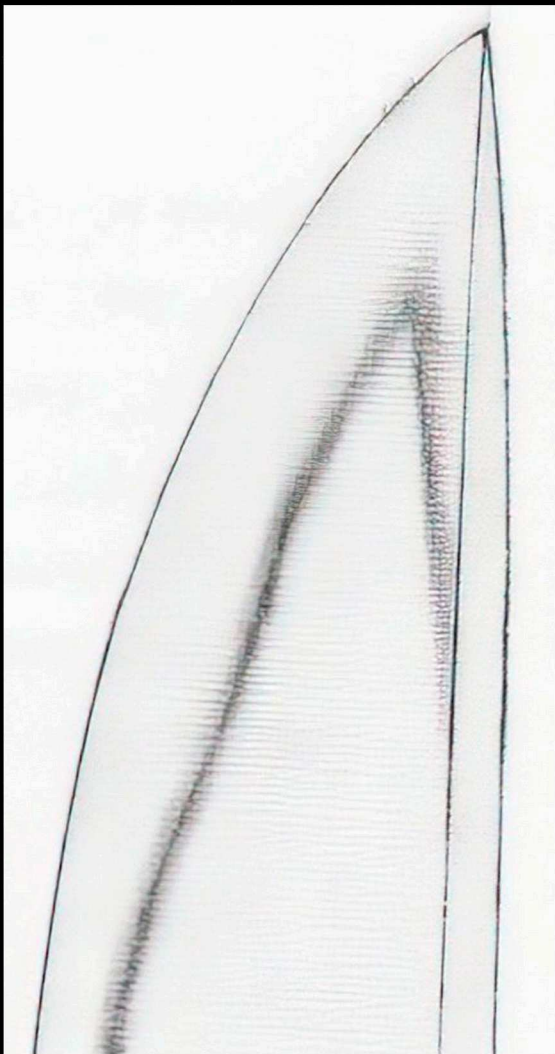
Mishina bôshi



Mishina bôshi

The line of the *bôshi* runs straight from the *yokote* towards a point, and the *kaeri* (return) is slightly wider.

It was often used by swordsmiths within the Mishina school, thus the name.



Mishina-bôshi

source: Markus Sesko



A *hakikake* (sweeping effect) harmonizes with the vast amount of *sunagashi* on this blade.



kyô-yakidashi



gunome-midare

suguha


The *hamon* commences in *suguha* (straight line) and then transitions into a wavy *gunome-midare* shape.

This unique hamon pattern is known as *kyô yakidashi* - iconic to swords made in *Kyôto* (*Yamashiro*).

As seen on swords by his father, *shodai Kinmichi*, there are interesting areas of the hamon that are somewhat box shaped, known as *hako-midare*.



hako-midare (box shaped)



Textbook examples of *sunagashi* (streams of sand) showcasing a broom line effect inside the hamon.

sunagashi

A crisp *gunome-midare hamon* with *ashi* (legs)
billowing out towards the cutting edge of the blade.

ashi





Shirasaya
(protective scabbard)

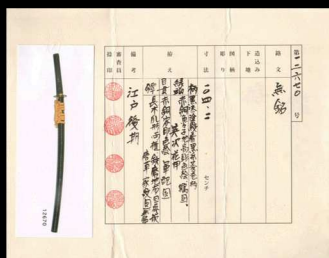
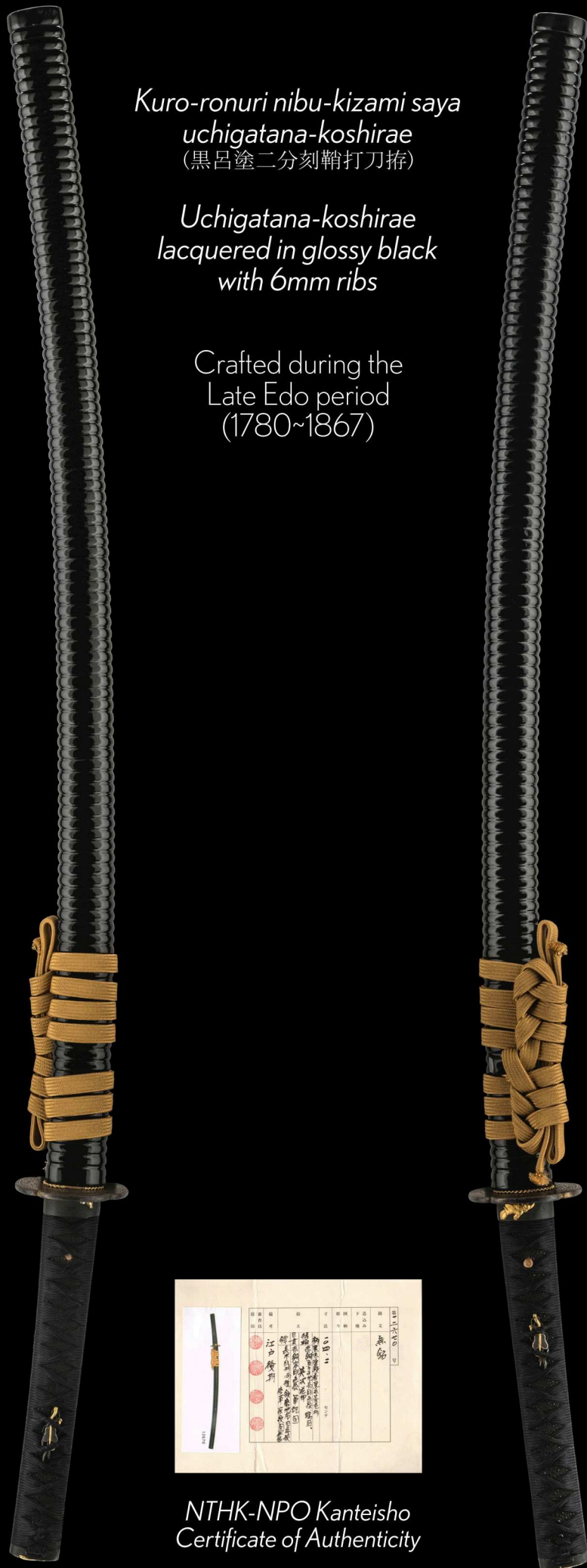


silver *habaki* with
horizontal file marks

*Kuro-ronuri nibu-kizami saya
uchigatana-koshirae*
(黒呂塗二分刻鞘打刀拵)

*Uchigatana-koshirae
lacquered in glossy black
with 6mm ribs*

Crafted during the
Late Edo period
(1780~1867)



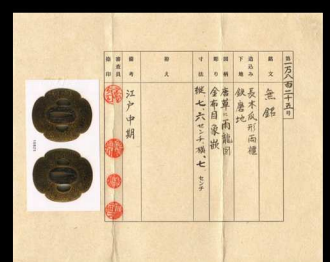
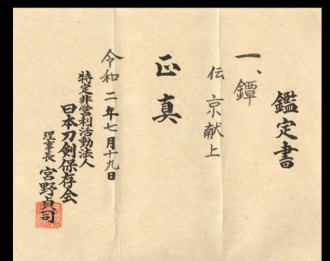
NTHK-NPO Kanteisho
Certificate of Authenticity



This is a *Kyô-kenjô tsuba*, meaning “presentation tsuba from Kyôto.” The *sankin-kotai* system of *daimyô* (great family) attendance is Edo (Tokyo) created special products that were sold along the main travel routes as souvenirs.

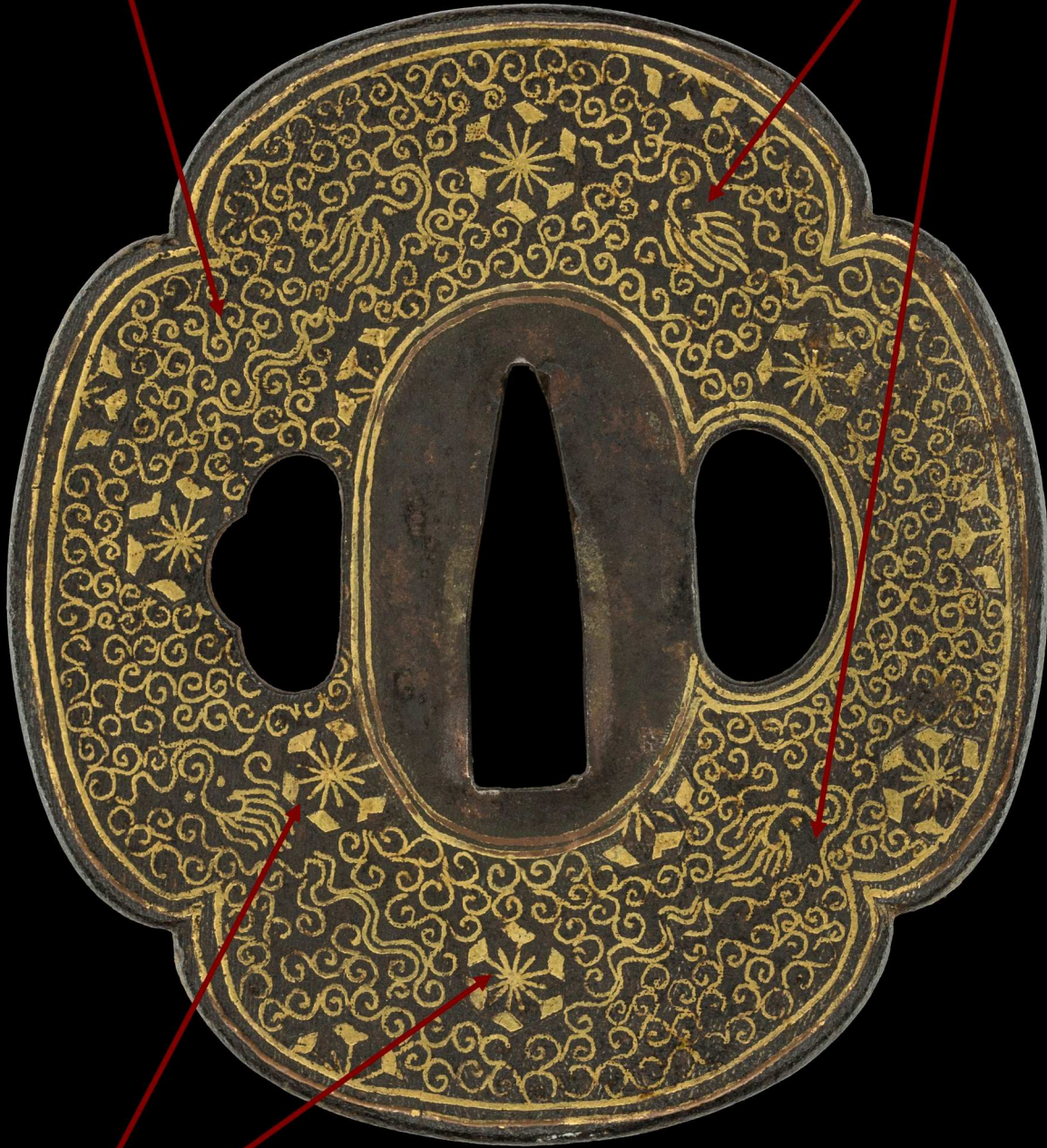
One such souvenir were highly decorative *kenjô-tsuba*. This four-lobed polished iron tsuba features a gold *nunome-zôgan* (gold cross-hatched) design motif of *karakusa* (arabesque) and *unryû* (rain dragons).

Many of these tsubas were made in Kyôto, thus the prefix “Kyô”. They were generally crafted by artists from the *Kyô-Shoami* and *Awa-Shoami* groups. An NTHK-NPO Kanteisho certificate of authenticity attributing the piece to the *mid-Edo period* circa 1700~1780 has been attained.



decorative arabesque (floral figures)

rain dragons



snowflakes

ura (reverse)



another chick...and an egg



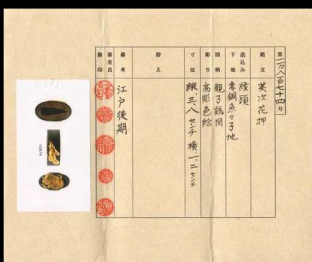
a hen and her chick



英 (Teru)

次 (tsugu)

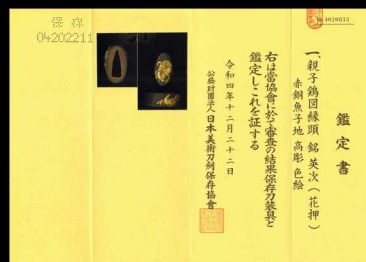
花押 (Kaô)



NTHK-NPO Kanteisho

A gorgeous signed *fuchi-kashira* by *Terutsugu* who was trained by *Teruhide* of the very famous *Ômori* school in *Edo*.

Two certificates of authenticity accompany this piece that depicts a rooster, hen and chicks.



NBTHK Hozon Certification



Fuchi-kashira
crafted by
Ômori Terutsugu
(Late Edo period)

A rooster

04202211



4020833

鑑定書

一、親子鶏図縁頭 銘 英次（花押）
赤銅魚子地 高彫 色絵

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

令和四年十二月二十二日

公益財団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 4th year of Reiwa (2022), December 22nd

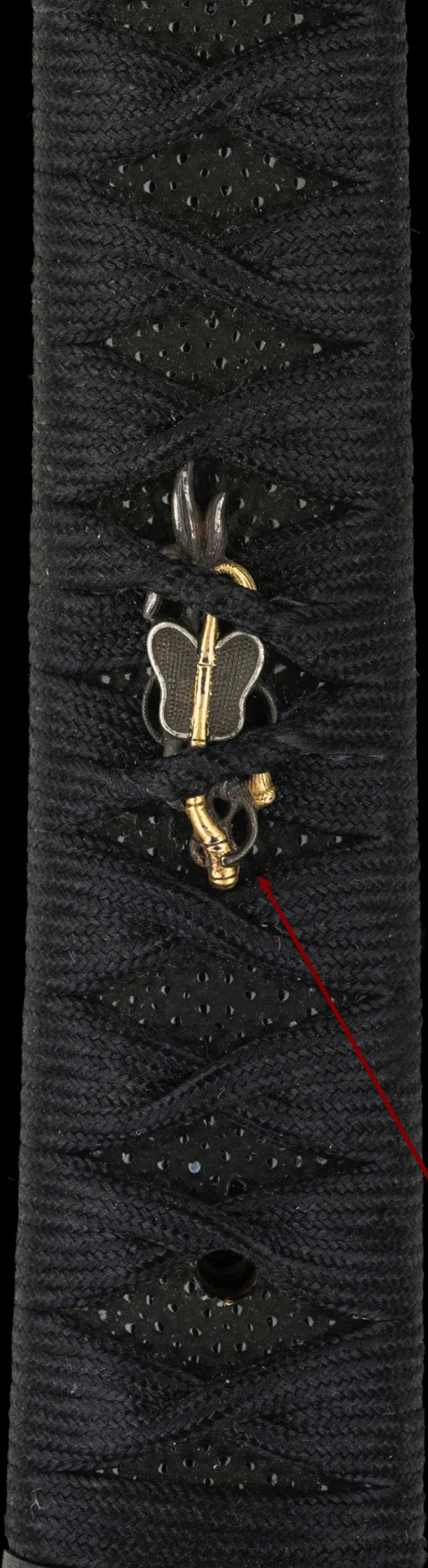
One, Fuchi-kashira

Depicting a rooster, hen and chicks

*Mei (signature)
Terutsugu + kaô*

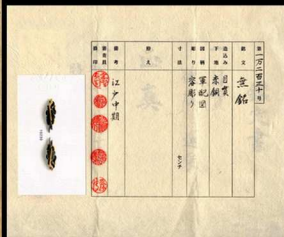
Shakudô with nanako ground, relief with color accents

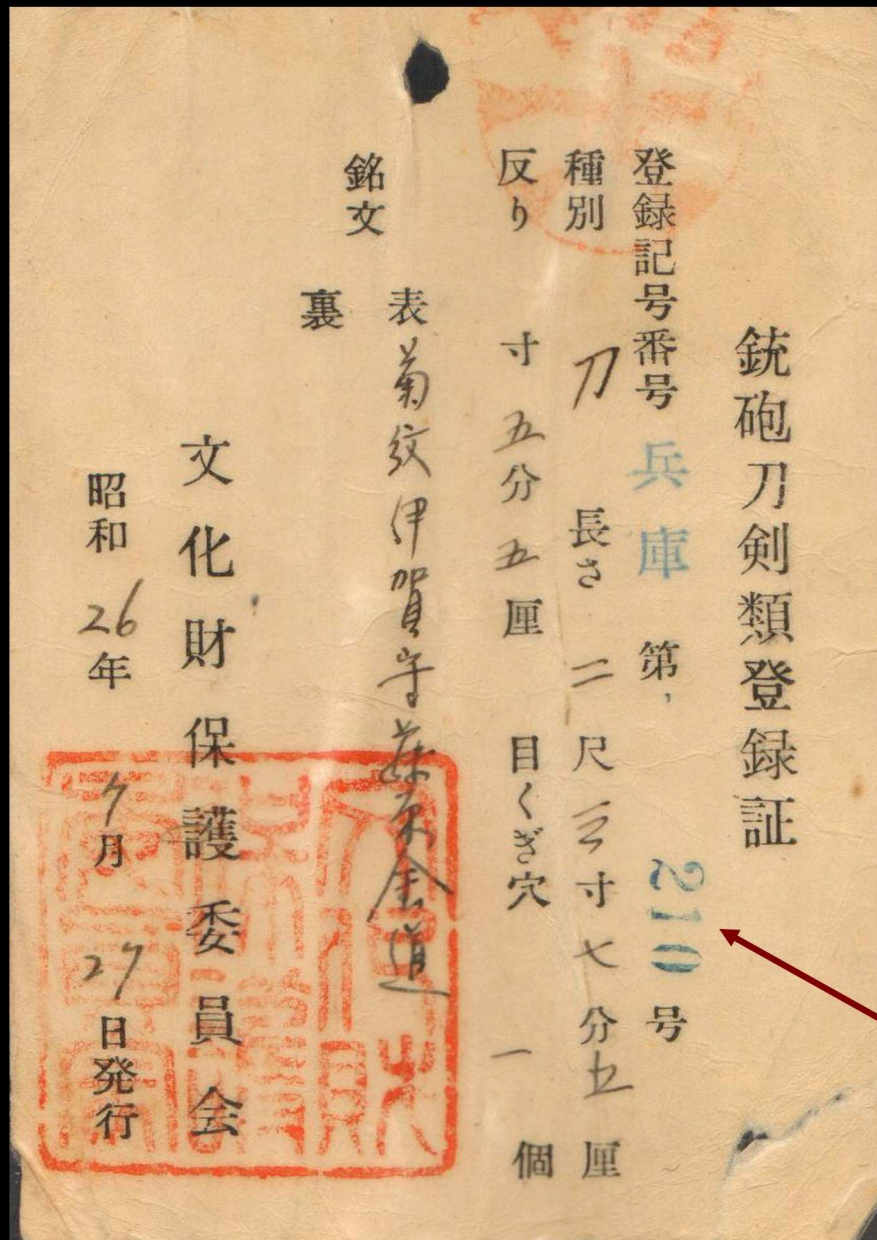
Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai
(NBTHK)



The menuki depict *gunbai*, short for *gunbai-uchiwa*, a type of signal baton and Japanese war fan. Once held by military leaders (such as daimyô) and priests in the past. It is used in the modern day by umpires in sumo wrestling.

Certified with NTHK-NPO Kanteisho attributing the menuki to *Gotô Unjô* circa the middle Edo period.





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

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.

The serial number is just **210**, one of the very first swords registered in Japan. Interestingly, it was registered in *Hyôgo* prefecture, which borders *Kyôto*. It's possible this sword had remained in the *Kyôto* region for most of its life.



Koshirae bag



ITEM# UJKA447

CURRENTLY AVAILABLE

A KUNISHIGE KATANA

SIGNED, SHINTÔ PERIOD (JÔKYÔ ERA: 1684~1688)

Swordsmith:	<i>Yamashiro Daijô Minamoto Kunishige (nidai, 2nd gen.)</i>
Measurements:	Length: 74.3cm (<i>ubu</i>) Curvature: 1.5cm Moto-haba: 2.98cm Weight: 720g
Jihada:	<i>Outstanding ô-itame and mokume-hada with ji-nie and chikei</i>
Hamon:	<i>Thick suguha in nie-deki, kuichigaiba with ko-ashi, kinsuji and kaen-bôshi</i>
Certificate #1:	NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon (<i>Especially Worthy of Preservation</i>)
Certificate #2-4:	NTHK-NPO Kanteishô (<i>koshirae, fk and tsuba certified as Authentic</i>)
Fujishiro rank:	Chûjô-saku (<i>ranked as an above average swordsmith</i>)
Authentication:	Sayagaki by Nozomi-san (<i>shodô artist</i>)
Included:	Shirasaya, Edo-koshirae, fabric bags, stand, kit, printed description

\$14,000

This outstanding katana is the work of *nidai Kunishige*, born *Ôtsuki Denshichirô*, and student of *Ichizô Kunishige* - both of whom were known as *Edo Mizuta*. The *Mizuta* school derives its name from a group of swordsmiths that lived at *Mizuta* village in *Bitchû* province. Members of this school are said to be descendants of *Ko-Aoe Tametsugu* and *shodai Kunishige*, known as *Ko-Mizuta*. This blade is a splendid example of the wonderful grain patterns that make Japanese swords so divine. Gorgeous whirlpools of *ô-itame* and *mokume-hada* illuminate this long samurai sword with a thick blanket of winding *suguha* in *nie-deki*. A set of late Edo period *koshirae* tastefully compliments the blade featuring a leather wrapped *tsuka*, a late *Higo fuchi-kashira* and a beautiful *Heianjô* school *tsuba*.



Saki-kasane: 4.2mm

Moto-kasane: 6.5mm

Omosa: 720g

Kissaki: 2.74cm

Saki-haba: 1.83cm

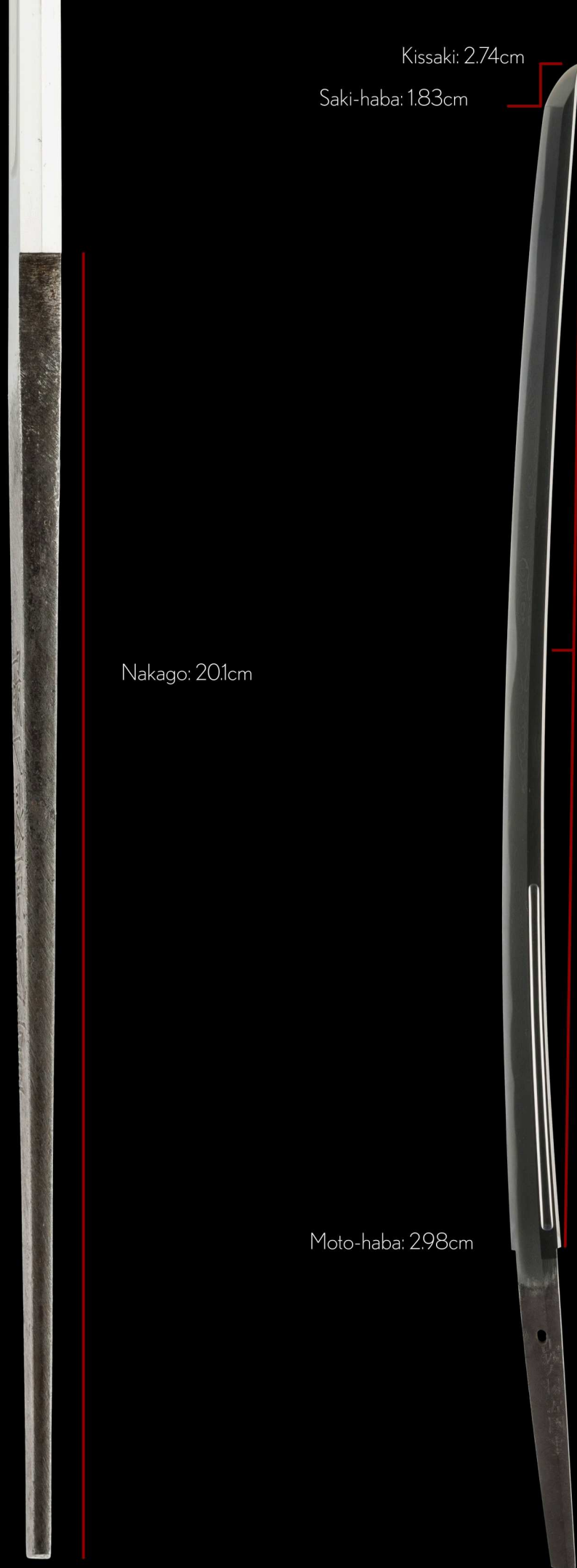
Nakago: 20.1cm

Moto-haba: 2.98cm

Nagasa: 74.3cm

Sori: 1.5cm

Mekugi-ana: 1



The *Mizuta school* derived its name from a group of swordsmiths that lived in *Mizuta village* in *Bitchû province*. Members of this school are said to be the descendants of *Ko-Aoe Tametsugu* and the smith *Kunishige* who lived during the *Kyôroku era* (1528~1532) was known as *Ko-Mizuta*.

In the *shintô* period, their craftsmanship altered completely from *Sue-Bizen* and *Sue-Mihara* to a more electric *Soshû* influence with loads of visible *nie* crystals, a surging *gunome-midare hamon* and plentiful *hataraki* that includes *sunagashi* and *kinsuji*.

The most famous smith of the *Shintô Mizuta school* was *Ôtsuki Yogoro Kunishige*, also known as 5th generation *Ôyogo Kunishige*. Unfortunately *Ôyogo* died early leaving his son, 6th generation *Katsubei*, under the care of his younger brother, swordsmith *Ichizô Kunishige*.

This fabulous katana is the work of *Ichizô's* star student, *Ôtsuki Denshichirô*, who signed the *nakago* of his swords in the same manner as his *sensei*, *Yamashiro Daijô Minamoto Kunishige*.

For those looking for a sword with a pronounced *hada* (grain pattern), then this katana has to be seriously shortlisted. The sword lights up like a Christmas tree under the light with dazzling burl and plank wood grain patterns (*ô-itame* and *mokume hada*) that will delight each and every time it is unsheathed.

Its thick *nioguchi* of *suguha* twists its merry way down the blade with visible *nie* crystals glittering in *Soshû* tradition. Complimenting the sword is a handsome set of *koshirae* with a lovely *Heianjo* tsuba and a firm leather wrap. All told, this is a terrific (and long) katana with a spiritual force that will delight any new or seasoned collector of Japanese *nihontô* swords.

Enjoy!



Title: *Yamashiro Daijō* (Lord of Yamashiro province)

Clan: *Minamoto*

Swordsmith: *Kunishige* (second generation)

ubu-nakago (original, unaltered tang)

sujikai-yasurime (diagonal file marks)



山 (Yama)

城 (shiro)

大 (Dai)

掾 (jō)

源 (Minamoto)

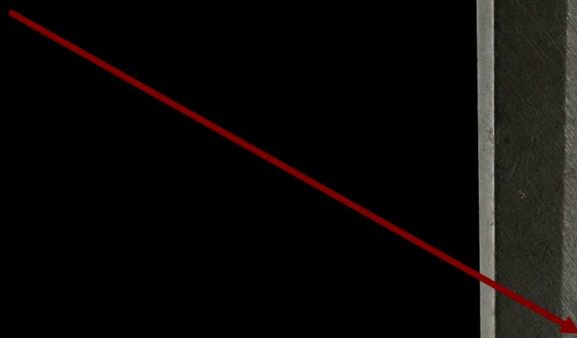
國 (Kuni)

重 (shige)

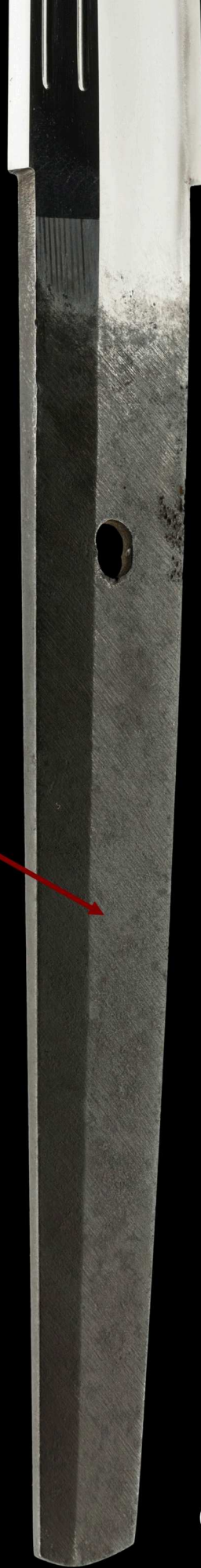


A close look at the precise chisel work that goes into a sword that Kunishige was proud to sign.

Well-chiseled *sujikai* (diagonal file marks)



(*ura*, reverse)



特 保
26201411

No 1002923



鑑定書

一 刀 銘 山城大掾源国重

長 二尺四寸五分

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

平成二十七年 二月 五日

公益財団法人 日本美術刀剣保存協會



山形 教育委員会
第 20854 号
昭和 34 年 5 月 18 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 27th year of Heisei (2015), February 5th

One, Katana

Mei (signature)

Yamashiro Daijō Minamoto Kunishige

Nagasa (length)

2-shaku 4-sun 5-bu (74.3cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai
(NBTHK)



山城大掾源国重

山城大掾源国重

Yamashiro Daijô Minamoto Kunishige

Yamashiro Daijô Minamoto Kunishige

時代貞享頃

時代貞享頃

Jidai Jôkyô-goro

Around Jôkyô era (1684~1688)

刃長貳尺四寸五分有之

刃長貳尺四寸五分有之

Hachô 2-shaku 4-sun 5-bu kore ari

Blade length 74.3 cm

令和六甲辰年
葉月吉日誌之

令和六甲辰年葉月吉日誌之

Reiwa roku kinoe-tatsudoshi Hazuki kichijitsu kore o shirusu

Written on a lucky day in the eighth month in the sixth year of

Reiwa era during the Year of the Dragon (August 2024)





Goma (or "Homa" in Sanskrit) means "to burn".
Hashi means "chopsticks".

These double narrow short grooves with the same length and rounded top are symbolic of chopsticks used during *Goma* - a deeply spiritual Buddhist ceremony.

The officiating priest, who has performed the self-purification rites for both his mind and body, burns the *goma* wood in the center of the fireplace of the *goma* platform, which is in front of the principal holy image of *kôbo daishi*.



gomabashi - pair of parallel grooves running part way up the blade resembling chopsticks used for the spiritual Buddhist *goma* fire ritual.

a short *bo-hi* (rounded groove) is featured on the opposite side.

A beautiful *kaen boshi* that resembles a candle flame.



Crazy beautiful grain pattern...

Visible nie-crystals can be seen dotted along the thick, abright *suguha* hamon.



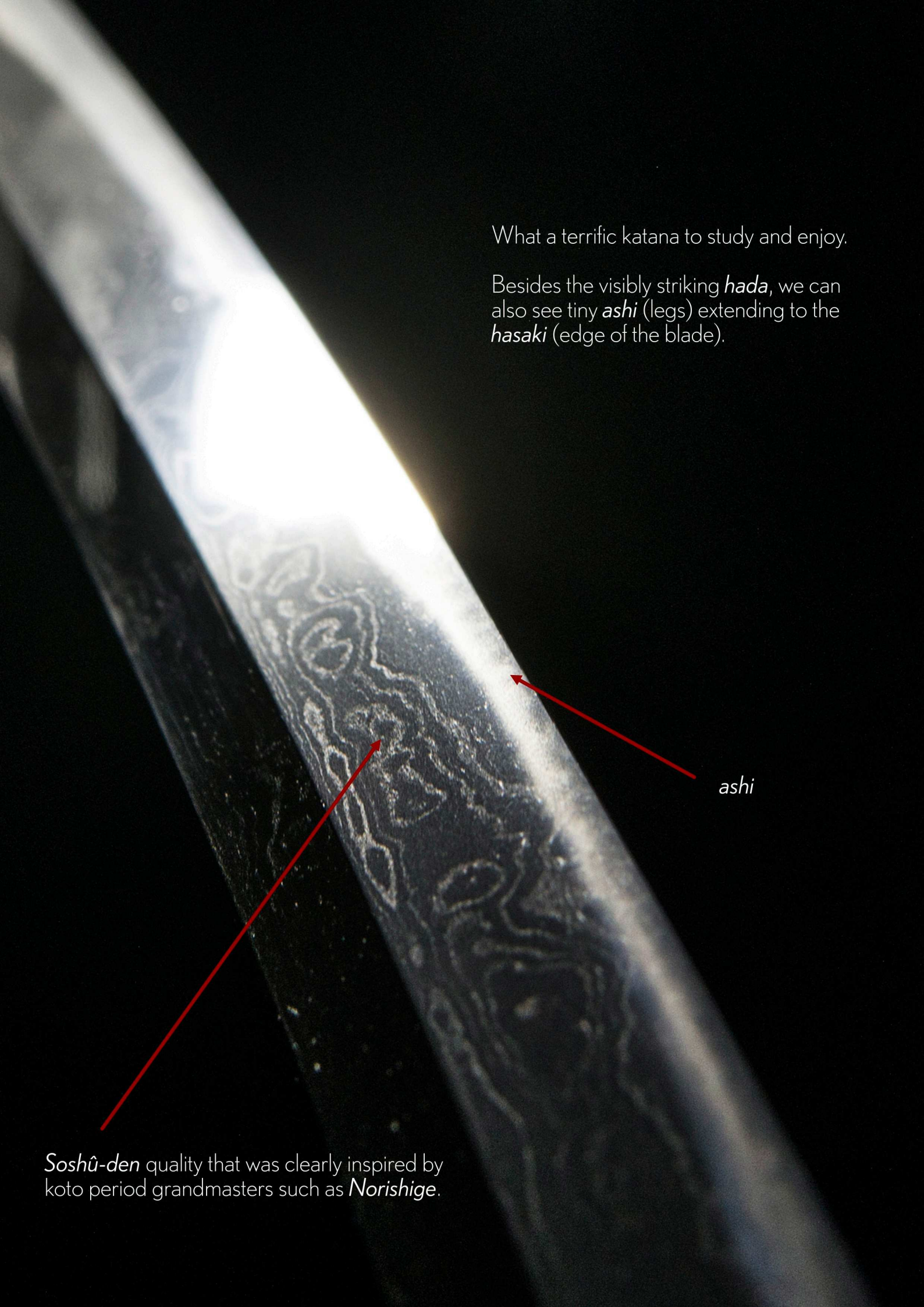
kuichigaiba
(an overlap in the hamon creating a gap.)





ô-itame and *mokume-hada*
(wood grain formations)

Fantastic whirlpools of *ô-itame* and *mokume-hada* form an absolutely brilliant light show.

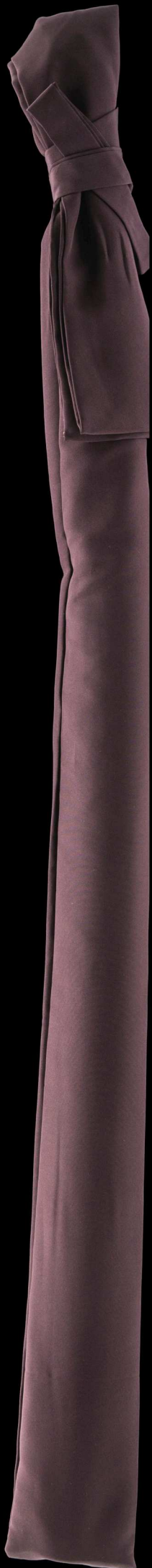


What a terrific katana to study and enjoy.

Besides the visibly striking *hada*, we can also see tiny *ashi* (legs) extending to the *hasaki* (edge of the blade).

ashi

Soshû-den quality that was clearly inspired by koto period grandmasters such as *Norishige*.



Shirasaya
(protective scabbard)

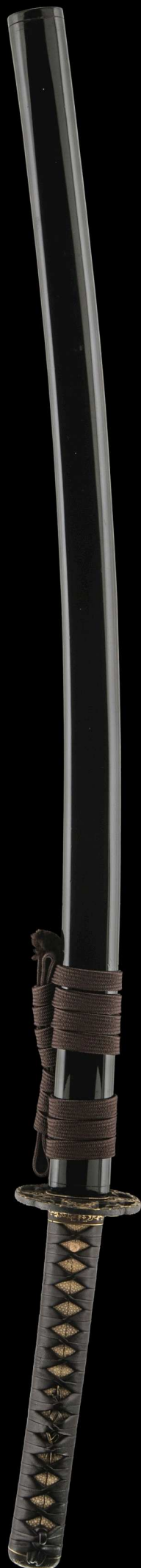


gold wrapped *niju habaki*

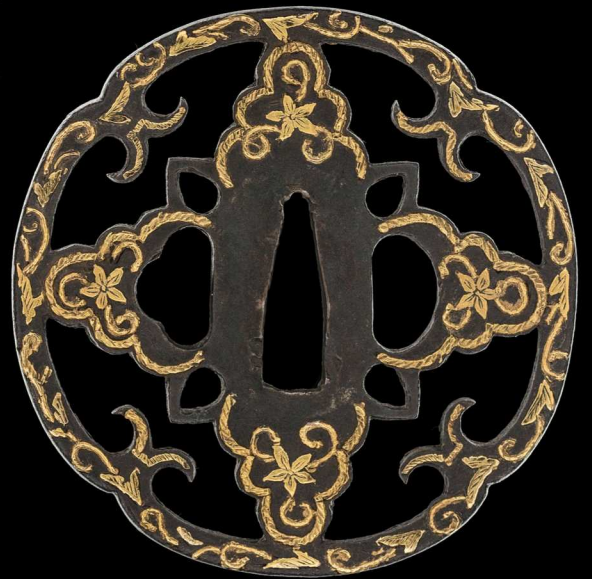
Kuro-ro-nuri saya
uchigatana-koshirae
(黒呂塗鞘打刀拵)

Uchigatana-koshirae
lacquered in glossy black

Crafted during the
Late Edo period
(1780~1867)



NTHK-NPO Kanteisho
Certificate of Authenticity



Heianjô-tsuba crafted in Yamashiro province.
Polished iron, motif of ivy and bellflowers.
Crafted in early Edo period, early 1600s.





leather wrap



An antique leather wrapped *tsuka* (hilt) with *menuki* that depict *jimbata* (samurai war flags).
Note how the *samekawa* (ray skin) has aged nicely - like a bottle of fine whiskey.



polished iron



An elegant *fuchi-kashira* attributed to the
Edo-Higo school
 Late Edo period (1780-1867)

Gold motif of ivy and *kirimon* (paulownia crest)





Koshirae bag



ITEM# UJKA442

CURRENTLY AVAILABLE

A YASUUJI KATANA

SIGNED, SHINSHINTÔ PERIOD (KANSEI ERA: 1789~1801)

Swordsmith:	<i>Naminohira Yasuuji</i> (60th Naminohira generation)
Measurements:	Length: 69.7cm (<i>ubu</i>) Curvature: 1.5cm Moto-haba: 3.14cm Weight: 875g
Jihada:	<i>Densely-forged ko-itame and masame-hada with ji-nie</i>
Hamon:	<i>Thick suguha in nie-deki with flaring ashi and a komaru-bôshi</i>
Certificate #1:	NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon (Especially Worthy of Preservation)
Certificate #2-4:	NTHK-NPO Kanteishô (<i>koshirae</i> , <i>fk</i> and <i>tsuba</i> certified as Authentic)
Fujishiro rank:	Chû-saku (ranked as an average swordsmith)
Authentication:	Sayagaki by Nozomi-san (<i>shodô</i> artist)
Included:	<i>Shirasaya, Meji-koshirae, fabric bags, stand, kit, printed description</i>

\$10,000

This terrific *shinshintô* period samurai sword is the work of *Yasuuji*, the early smithing name of *Yasuyuki* who counted himself as the 60th generation of the famed thousand-year-old *Naminohira* school from *Satsuma* on *Kyûshû* island. This katana was made during the *Kansei* era (1789~1801) and crafted with pure *Yamato-den* characteristics making it rather special indeed. The blade is densely forged in *ko-itame* and *masame-hada* with a bright and generous *suguha-hamon* in sparkling *nie-deki* with *ashi* that look like solar flares. Look out for the unique *higaki yasurime* on the *nakago* - another centuries-old trait of its *Yamato* heritage. A splendid *Meji*-period *koshirae* houses the sword with gorgeous fittings that include insects crawling over a realistic woodgrain *tsuba* and a polished brass *fuchi-kashira* featuring a chilled hermit and a jubilant scene of birds flying over waves.

⤴
Saki-kasane: 4.9mm

Moto-kasane: 7.5mm

Omosa: 875g



Kissaki: 3.86cm
Saki-haba: 2.04cm

Nakago: 19.4cm

Moto-haba: 3.14cm



Nagasa: 69.7cm

Sori: 1.50cm

Mekugi-ana: 1

The *Naminohira* school is one of the oldest sword-making traditions said to have begun working in *Satsuma* province way back in 987AD. *Satsuma* province is located at the southern end of Japan's southernmost island *Kyûshû*. The island is known for its high-quality sand iron that was found on its rivers and beaches.

The pioneering smiths of the *Naminohira* school originally travelled from Japan's old capital *Yamato* province, present-day *Nara* prefecture, and most impressively, this school worked uninterrupted right up to the end of the Edo-period 1868.

The two *kanji* characters that form *Naminohira* are *Nami*, meaning 'wave', and *hira* being 'flat', thus translating to *calm seas*. Swords of the *Naminohira* school were said to have been prized by the Japanese navy for their name carried such a good omen.

This strong and valiant katana is the work of *Yasuuji*, the early smithing name of *Yasuyuki* who counted himself as the 60th generation [wow] of the *Naminohira* school. Its NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon certificate states the sword was made during the *Kansei* era (1789~1801) during the *shinshintô* period.

Born *Hashiguchi Kannojô*, *Yasuuji* was the son of the 59th *Naminohira*-gen *Yasutsune*. In the early years of his career, *Yasuuji* also signed *Yasukuni*, but moved on to *Yasuyuki*, the most iconic name of the school, in the first year of *Kyôwa* (1801). *Yasuuji* died on the May 10, 1808 during the *Bunka* era at the age of just 66.

Yasuuji was immensely faithful to his *Yamato-den* roots which makes this sword rather special indeed. The blade is densely forged in *ko-itame* and *masame-hada* with a bright and generous *suguha-hamon* in sparkling *nie-deki* with *ashi* that look like solar flares. Look out for the unique *higaki yasurime* on the *nakago* which another centuries-old trait of its *Yamato* heritage.

A splendid *Meiji*-period leather-wrapped *koshirae* houses the sword with gorgeous fittings that include insects crawling over a highly realistic woodgrain *tsuba* and a polished brass *fuchi-kashira* featuring a chilled-out hermit and jubilant scene of birds flying over waves.



Location: *Satsuma province*

School: *Naminohira*

Swordsmith: *Yasuuji* (60th generation)

ubu-nakago (original, unaltered tang)

higaki-yasurime (diagonal file marks)



波 (Nami, no)

平 (hira)

安 (Yasu)

氏 (uji)

higaki



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

Higaki yasurime can be seen on swords from Yamato province, Mino province and as we see here, the *Naminohira* school.



Noh play: *Higaki* (cypress wood fence)

(*ura*, reverse)



特選
05202306

№ 1021084



鑑定書

一刃 銘 波平安氏(寛政頃)

長 二尺三寸

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

令和五年八月二十五日

公益財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協會



愛知県 教育委員会
第 6822 号
昭和27年12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 5th year of Reiwa (2023), August 25th

One, Katana

Mei (signature)
Naminohira Yasuji (Kansei-goro)

Nagasa (length)
2-shaku 3-sun (69.7cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai
(NBTHK)



波平安氏

波平安氏
Naminohira Yasuuji
Naminohira Yasuuji

時代寛政頃

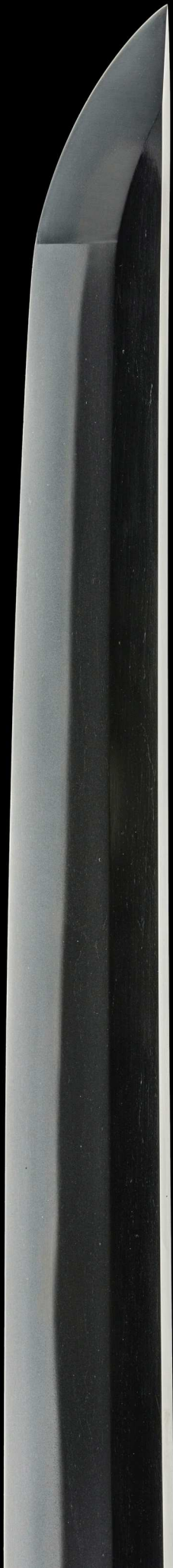
時代寛政頃
Jidai Kansei-goro
Around Kansei period (1789~1801)

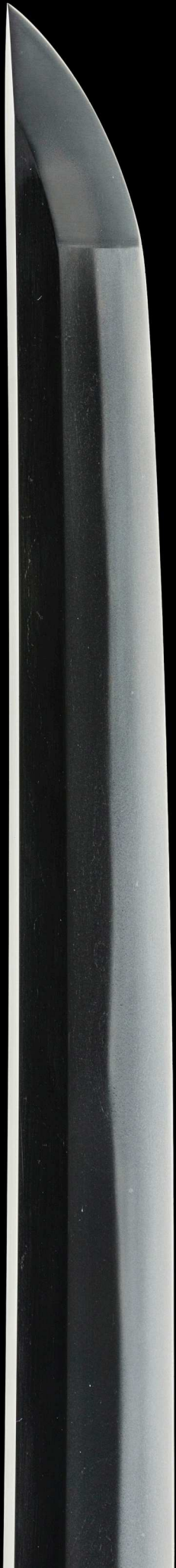
刃長貳尺參寸有之

刃長貳尺參寸有之
Hachô 2-shaku 3-sun kore ari
Blade length 69.7 cm

令和六甲辰年
葉月吉日誌之

令和六甲辰年葉月吉日誌之
Reiwa roku kinoe-tatsudoshi Hazuki kichijitsu kore o shirusu
Written on a lucky day in the eighth month in the sixth year of
Reiwa era during the Year of the Dragon (August 2024)





A close-up photograph of two sharp knives. The blades are dark and highly reflective, with bright highlights along their edges. The knives are positioned diagonally, with their tips pointing towards each other in the center of the frame. The background is a solid, deep black, which makes the metallic surfaces of the knives stand out prominently. The lighting is dramatic, emphasizing the sharpness and texture of the blades.

This is a sharp *'kiss'aki* ;)

This clear and serene *hamon* is *suguha* in *nie-deki*.

The *nioiguchi* (crystals that make up the *hamon* line) are densely concentrated *nie* particles that one can differentiate on an individual level by the naked eye.

When the crystals are so fine that it looks like the milky way galaxy, it is *nioi-deki*. Yamato-den blades are generally forged in *nie-deki*.



nie-deki

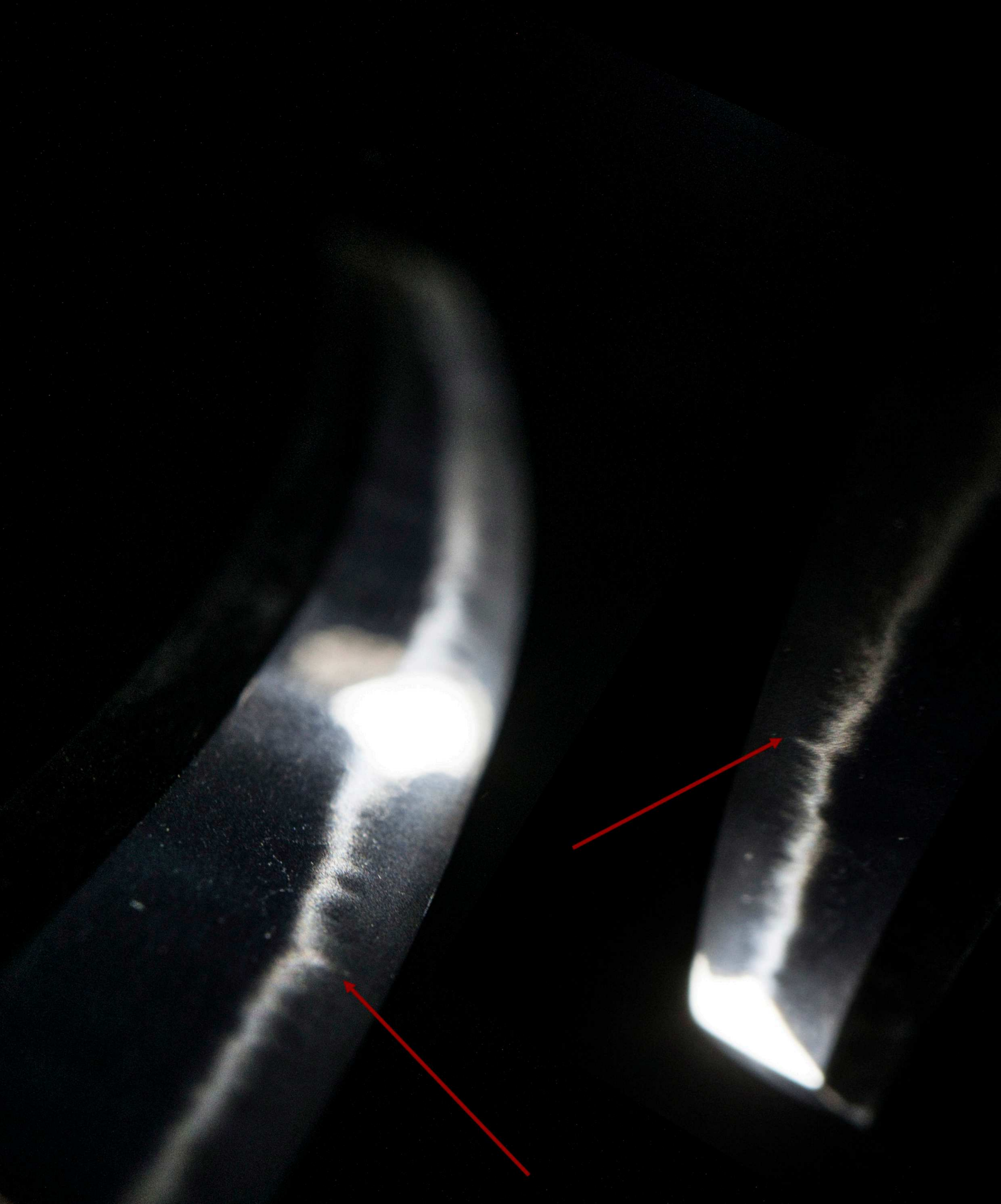
This katana is densely forged in *ko-itame* and *masame-hada* exuding an aura of power.



ko-itame with a wavy *masame-hada*

A curious 'bump in the road' can be seen in the *monouchi* (upper third) hitting area of the sword. This katana is filled with little nuggets to be savoured.

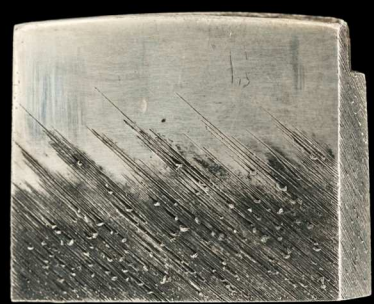




Solar flares of *ashi* (legs) shoot out to the cutting edge.



Shirasaya
(protective scabbard)

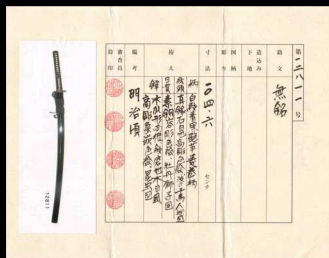


silver *habaki* with
diagonal rain file marks

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

*Uchigatana-koshirae
lacquered in glossy black*

Crafted during the
Meiji period
(1868~1912)



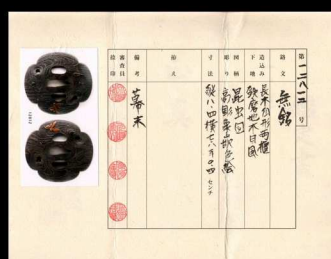
*NTHK-NPO Kanteisho
Certificate of Authenticity*



This wonderful *tsuba* has been attributed to the collaborative effort between a *tôshô* (swordsmith) and *kinkô* (metalsmith).

It is made of polished iron with a marvellous woodgrain texture depicting insects in such a realistic manner.

Crafted during the very late Edo period, 1853~1868.



Udenuki ana



Udenuki ana (two small holes) were common on older tachi tsuba serving the purpose of a safety wrist strap when the sword is used on horseback. The holes are of different sizes and generally close together.

During the Edo period this design enjoyed a resurgence as seen here.





Fuchi-kashira
attributed to
Nara Tsuneshige
Late Edo period (1780~1868)

A hermit is depicted on the *kashira*.
Crafted from polished brass.

Edo Japan was a rigidly stratified society, where one's role was pre-determined and an individual's movements were both limited and regulated. Unsurprisingly, the longing to escape the tensions inherent in living in such an environment manifested itself in visual art as well as in literature, poetry, drama, and music. Artists found parallels for their current circumstances in the Chinese traditions of centuries before, as well as in the long tradition of Japanese recluses and exiles in poetry, literature and history.

The ideals of reclusion and retirement were visualized in a number of ways. Most commonly, painters created mountain landscapes sparsely populated by diminutive figures and minimal signs of human habitation. The pavilions, cottages and huts nestled in the cliffs and coves provide shelters wherein gentlemen and their friends could engage in scholarly pursuits or the contemplation of nature. Here, one could escape the worries and cares of everyday life, either permanently, through retirement; or temporarily, through an excursion to the mountains or a visit to a retired friend.

By following the paths, walkways and footbridges as they wind past rivers and cliffs, we too can momentarily retreat into this idealized world.



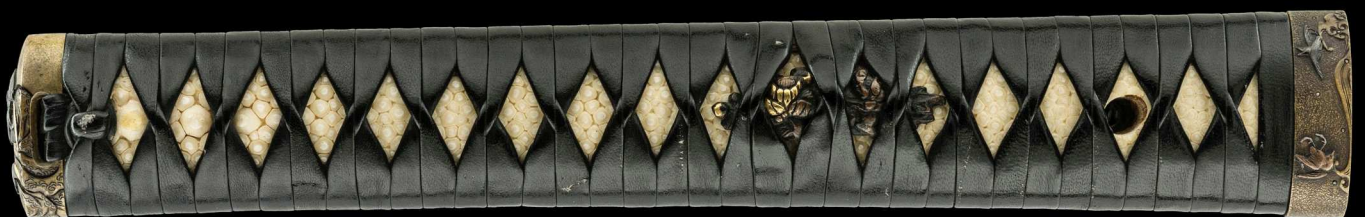
The two kanji characters that form *Naminohira* are *Nami* meaning 'wave' and *hira* being 'flat', thus translating to *calm seas*. This beautiful brass-inlaid *fuchi* pays tribute the school with birds flying high above waves with great delight.

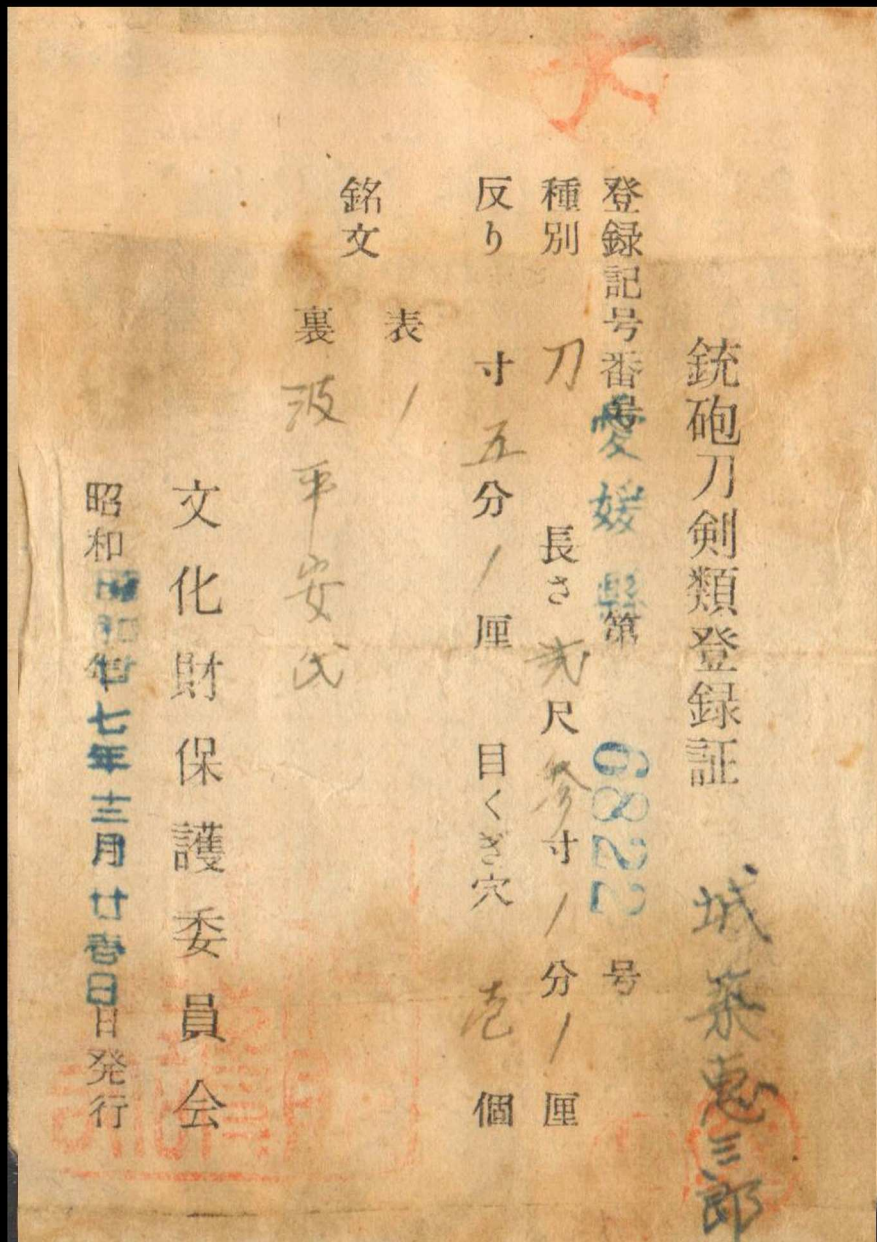


NTHK-NPO Kanteisho
certificate of authenticity



A tightly wrapped black-leather *tsuka* (hilt) provides enhanced grip for the samurai swordsman. The menuki are spiritually protective *shisa* lions and peonies made from copper with gold accents.





This is the original *torokusho* (registration card) for the *Yasuuji katana*. The card was registered in the 27th year of Showa (1952).

This is significant as 1952 was the second year that swords were formally registered in Japan. Many former *daimyô* (great) families were invited to submit their collections early suggesting this blade was once held by a prominent family.

The serial number is **6822**, one of the very first swords registered in Japan. It was registered in *Ehime* prefecture on the island of *Shikoku*.



Koshirae bag



ITEM# UJKA448

CURRENTLY AVAILABLE

A KANEZUMI KATANA

SIGNED & DATED, SUE-KOTÔ PERIOD (MEIÔ ERA: FEBRUARY 1498)

Swordsmith: *Kanezumi (Seki)*
Measurements: **Length:** 69.6cm (*machi-okuri*) **Curvature:** 1.2cm **Moto-haba:** 2.82cm
Jihada: *Finely-forged itame-nagare, mokume, masame-hada with ji-nie and chikei*
Hamon: *Dazzling gunome-chôji-midare with tobiyaki, yô and Jizo-bôshi*
Certificate #1: **NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon** (*Especially Worthy of Preservation*)
Certificate #2-4: **NTHK-NPO Kanteishô** (*koshirae, fuchi and tsuba certified as Authentic*)
Included: Shirasaya, koshirae, fabric bags, stand, kit, printed description

\$12,800

We time travel back to February 1498 with the creation of this fiery *tachi* by *Kanezumi* (also read *Kanesumi*) who worked in *Seki* during the tumultuous *Muromachi* period. Born *Jûrôzaemon*, *Kanezumi* was the younger brother of *Kaneyuki* who is said to have worked in the *Nara* school. This is a classic Mino-tradition creation with a *Kanesada* school influence featuring a *jihada* that is a finely forged mixture of *itame-nagare* and also straight grain *masame-hada*. Its dazzling *gunome-midare hamon* is reminiscent of *ôbusa-chôji* from the great *Fukuoka-Ichimonji* school. There are also spots of *tobiyaki* and *yô* that further adds to its charm. The sword is housed in a tasteful set of *koshirae* that imbues class. The *tsuba* features three family *kamon*, each with its own unique story and the wonderful *fuchi-kashira* carries a cross-design that pays a thoughtful tribute to the swordsmith. This is a rather rare, 526-year-old dated reference piece that touches the soul on several levels.

Saki-kasane: 3.0mm [^]

Moto-kasane: 5.7mm

Kissaki: 2.78cm

Saki-haba: 1.75cm

Nagasa: 69.6cm

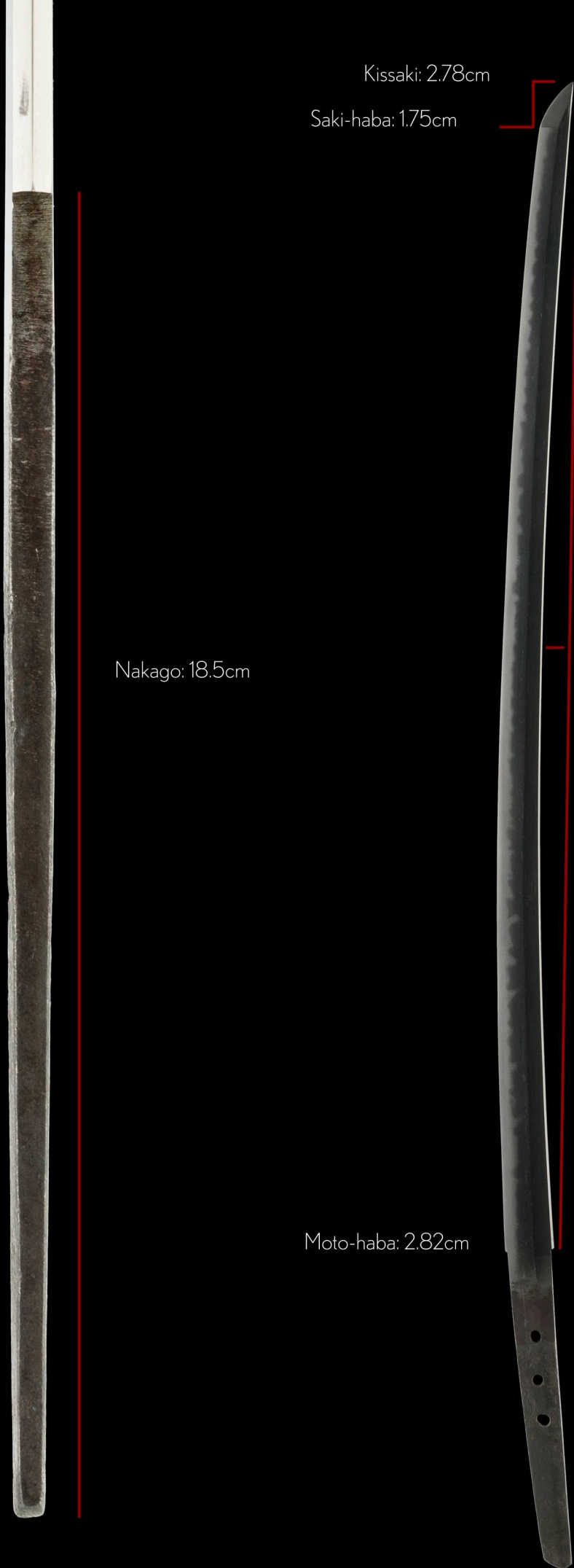
Nakago: 18.5cm

Sori: 1.2cm

Omosa: 620g

Moto-haba: 2.82cm

Mekugi-ana: 3



Let's travel back in time to February 1498 with the creation of this fiery *tachi* by *Kanezumi* (also read *Kanesumi*) who worked in *Mino* province during the tumultuous *Muromachi* period. Born *Jûrôzaemon*, *Kanezumi* was the younger brother of *Kaneyuki* who is said to have worked in the *Nara* school. Historically speaking, not a lot more is known of *Kanezumi*, making this sword a rather rare, dated reference piece.

When we examine this sword, we come to see a classic *Mino*-tradition creation with a *Kanesada* school influence that is superior to traditional *Sue-Seki* blades of the 1500s. The *jihada* is a finely forged mixture of *mokume*, *itame-nagare* and also straight grain *masame-hada*. And its dazzling *gunome-midare hamon* features areas that are reminiscent of *ôbusa-chôji* (long tasselled buds) that stretch high up to the *shinogi* linemade famous by the great *Fukuoka-Ichimonji* school. There are also spots of *tobiyaki* and *yô* that furthers the appeal of this 526-year-old blade.

The sword is housed in a tasteful set of *koshirae* that was lacquered by a master artist in modern Japan. Its subtle deep shades of red imbues a sense of class. The *tsuba* features three family *kamon*, each with its own unique story and the wonderful *fuchi-kashira* carries a *jûji* design of crosses with diamond shapes. This is a clever tip-of-the-hat gesture that pays tribute to *Jûrozameon*, the swordsmith.

This is a sword that touches the soul on many levels. And being dated to the late 1400s is a wonderful thing.



Location: *Mino province*

School name: *Seki*

Swordsmith: *Kanezumi*

machi-okuri-nakago (shortened nagasa)

sujikai-yasurime (diagonal file marks)

This sword has a whole lot of history as it once was carried on horseback as a tachi, therefore it needed to be long and curvy.

As warfare changed over the centuries, swords needed to be drawn from a standing position. Therefore the *nagasa* (length) had to be physically viable given the height of the warrior. In most cases, a longer blade needed to be shortened, often times by several centimetres.

A way to shorten a sword is through a process called *suriage* where the sword is cut from the nakago and a new nakago is formed where the cutting edge used to be.

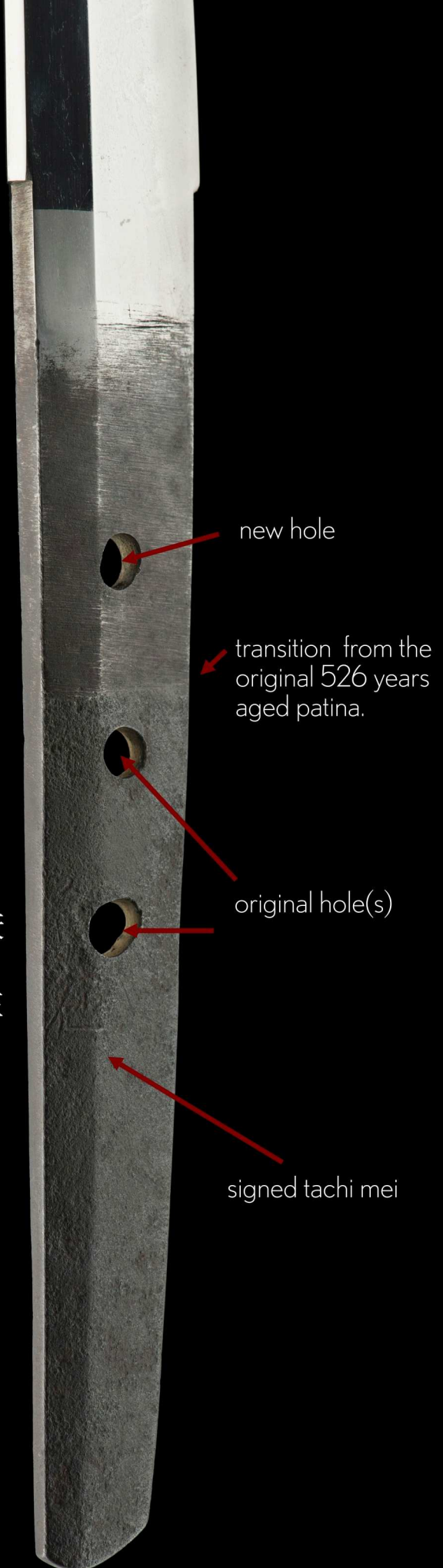
In other cases, such as on this tachi, the shorter nagasa is achieved by simply moving the *machi* (notch) upwards. This process is called *machi-okuri*.

The overall length of the sword is unchanged, only the cutting edge is shorter, typically by about 1-sun or 3cm.

A new hole (*mekugi-ana*) is created for the new hilt that is required. It should also be noted that with *machi-okuri* the *mei* (signature and date) has been left intact and preserved, a true blessing.

(Kane) 兼

(zumi) 住



Meiô nananen nigatsu hi

This sword has been dated to a day in the second month in the seventh year of *Meiô* era (February 1498).

明 (Mei)

應 (ô)

七 (nana)

年 (nen)

二 (ni)

月 (gatsu)

日 (hi)



In 1492, Christopher Columbus sailed the ocean 'blue'.
In 1498, Seki Kanezumi crafted this tachi 'great'.

Feel the history captain.

特 保
05202303

№ 1020296



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

令和五年五月三十一日

公益財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協會



鑑定書

一太刀 銘

兼住(関)

明応七年二月日

長二尺二寸九分強

東京都 教育委員会
第 267690 号
平成6年6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 5th year of Reiwa (2023), May 31st

One, Tachi

Mei (signature)

Kanezumi (Seki)

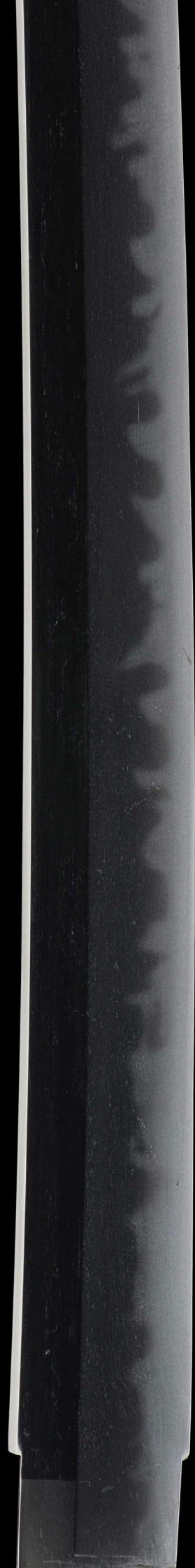
Meiô nananen nigatsu hi

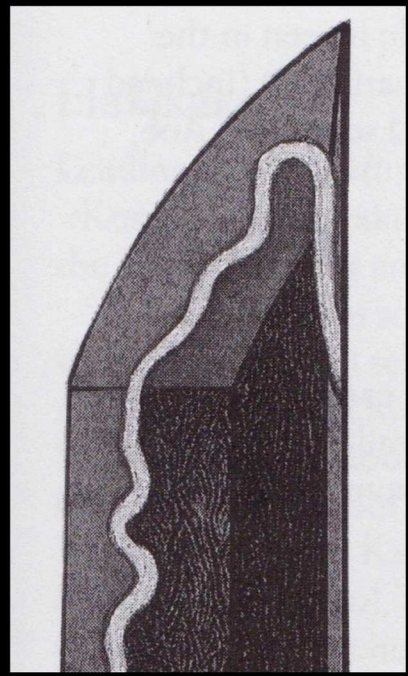
Nagasa (length)

2-shaku 2-sun 9-bu kyô (69.6cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai
(NBTHK)







Jizo boshi
(illustration by Nagayama Kokan)

A *boshi* resembling the deity *Jizo*, heads its way through the *kissaki*.





A beautiful *itame-nagare* weaves its way through the body of the sword.



This katana is filled with *nihontô* goodies. Here we see spots of *tobiyaki* in the *ji, yô* (leaves) that fall below the *hamon* line and there is even straight grain *masame-hada*, which is a textbook example of quality *Mino-den* work.

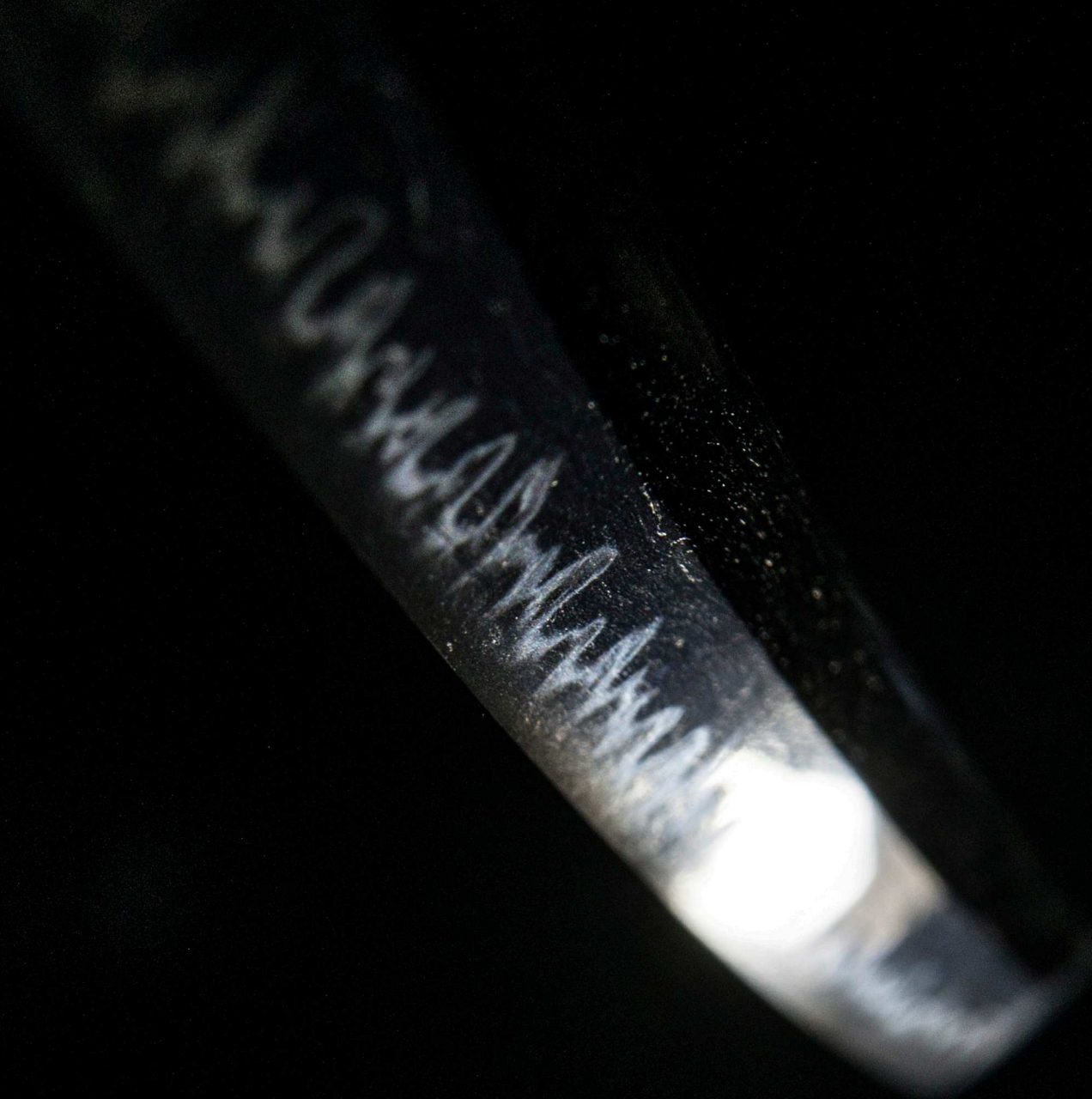


A gorgeous *gunome-midare* stretches dramatically to the *shinogi* line that is reminiscent of *ôbusha-chôji* - tall bubbly clove buds produced by the masterful swordsmiths of the *Fukuoka-Ichimonji* school.



The upper *monouchi* (hitting zone) features a tight *gunome-midare* that's ready for action.

It's great to be alive.





Shirasaya
(protective scabbard)

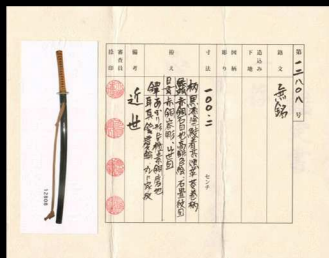


gold *ni-ju habaki* with
straight file marks

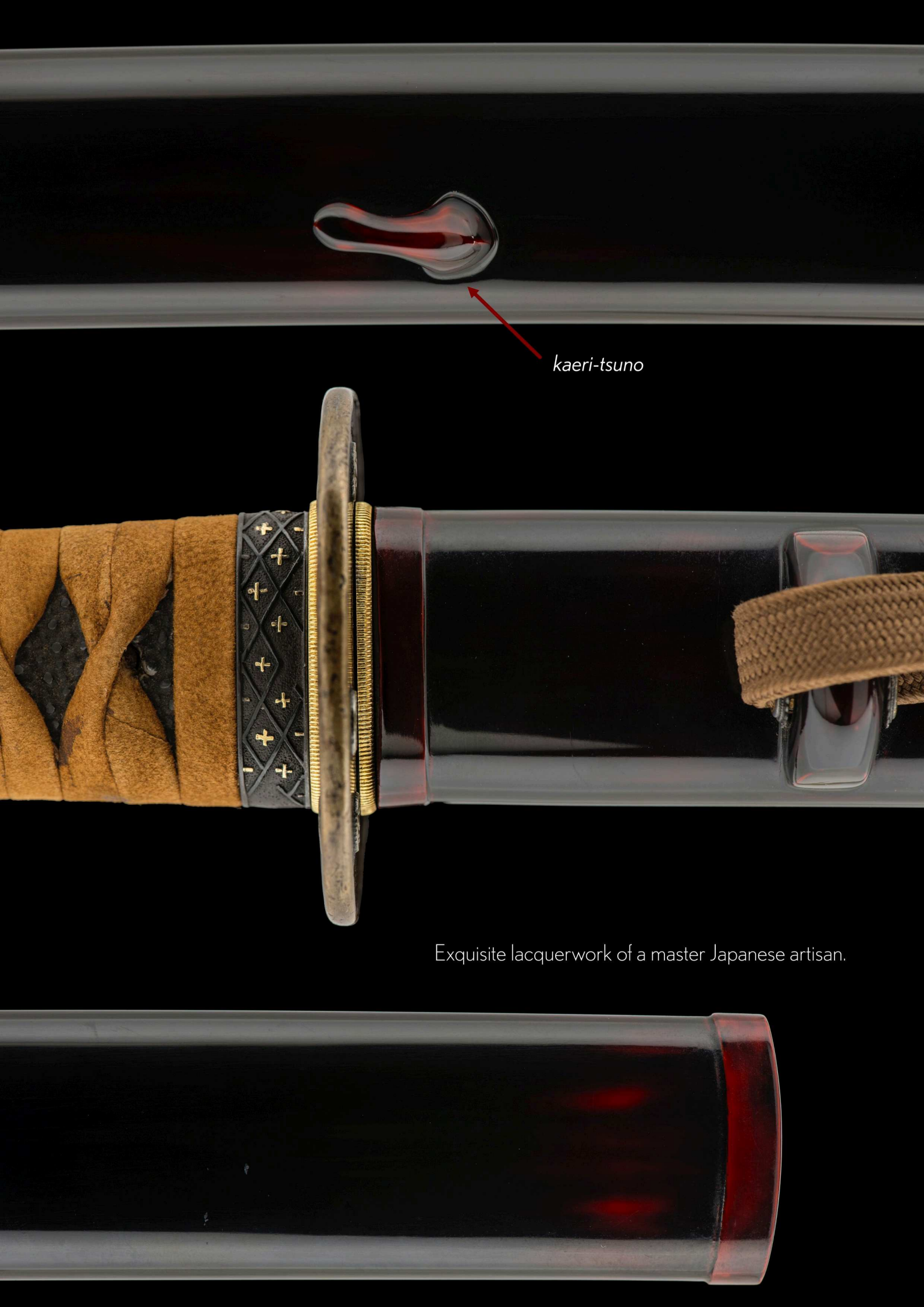
*Kuro-shu bokashi-nuri saya
uchigatana-koshirae*
(黒朱ぼかし塗鞘打刀拵)

*Uchigatana-koshirae
lacquered in
blurred black and red*

Crafted during the
Modern period



NTHK-NPO Kanteisho
Certificate of Authenticity



kaeri-tsuno

Exquisite lacquerwork of a master Japanese artisan.



This chic *tsuba* has been attributed to the *Nishigaki* school from *Higo* province. It features the following *mon* (family crests):

- kuyô-mon* (nine planets)
- sumitate-yotsume* (diagonal four eyes in a ring)
- shihô-hanabishi* (four petals)



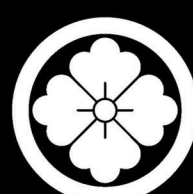
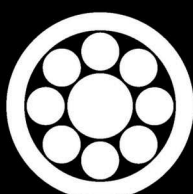
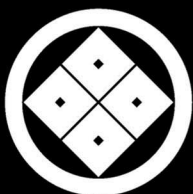
(reverse)



Kuyo-mon (nine planets) the family crest of the *Hosokawa* family, represents nine planets, which are the seven luminaries (the sun, moon, Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn) and *Rahu* and *Ketu* (planets that are associated with eclipses and comets).

Sumitate-yotsume (diagonal four eyes in a ring), from a symbolic perspective, the number four is often associated with balance, stability, and completeness. It represents the four cardinal directions (north, south, east, west), the four elements (earth, air, fire, water), and the four seasons (spring, summer, autumn, winter). When combined with the symbolism of eyes, this signifies a holistic view that encompasses all aspects of existence.

Shihô-hanabishi (four petals) originates from the arrangement of four *hishi-like* (water chestnut-like) leaves as petals into a flower. During the *Heian* period, *hanabishi* was used as traditional design motifs of court nobles for furnishing goods and costumes of court nobles. It is said that *hanabishi* was first used as a family crest by the *Kai-Takeda* clan.

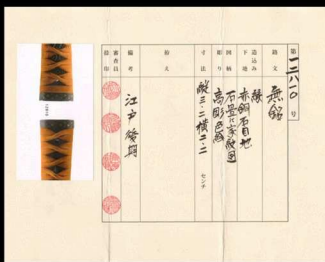




This eye-catching *fuchi* (collar) has been attributed to the Edo branch of the *Yoshioka* school, crafted Late Edo period (1780~1867).

The unique cross diamond design pattern is called *jûji-mon* as the Japanese character for *jû* (ten) is a cross. This is a 'fitting' choice as this *tachi* was crafted by *Jûrozaemon* (十郎左衛門) - the first character of his name being *Jû*. It thoughtfully pays tribute to him in a clever way.

The *Shimazu* clan was the most prominent family to have a cross *kamon* (family crest) albeit rounded.



Shimazu kamon



Kashira is crafted from buffalo horn and lacquered to match the *saya*.



Illustration by John Sims
(1749~1831)

The *menuki* depict *omoto no zu* (*Rohdea japonica*), a species of plant known as the Japanese sacred lily.

Paired with the generic lily, it means *a long-lasting peaceful union* thus a popular wedding gift.

Time to pass the baton.
Yours for the next 500 years.





Koshirae bag