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ITEM# UJDI023

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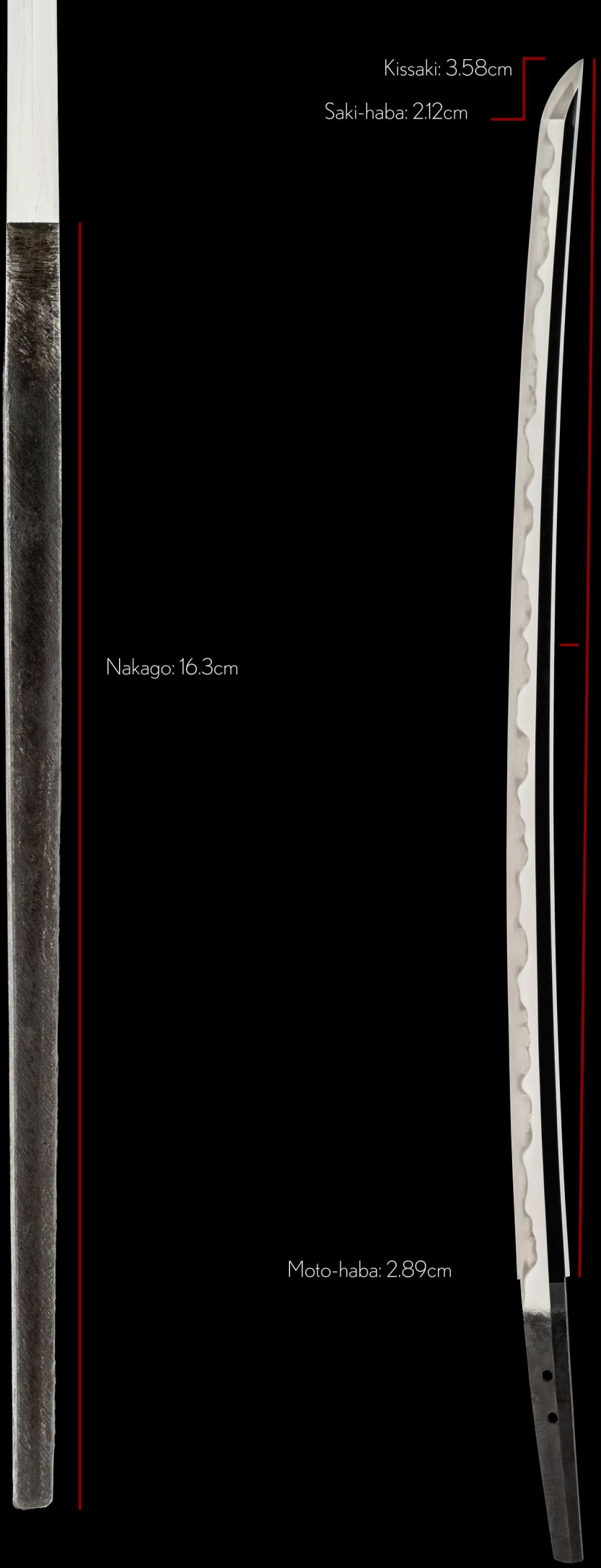
A MASAHIRO / SANEMITSU DAISHÔ

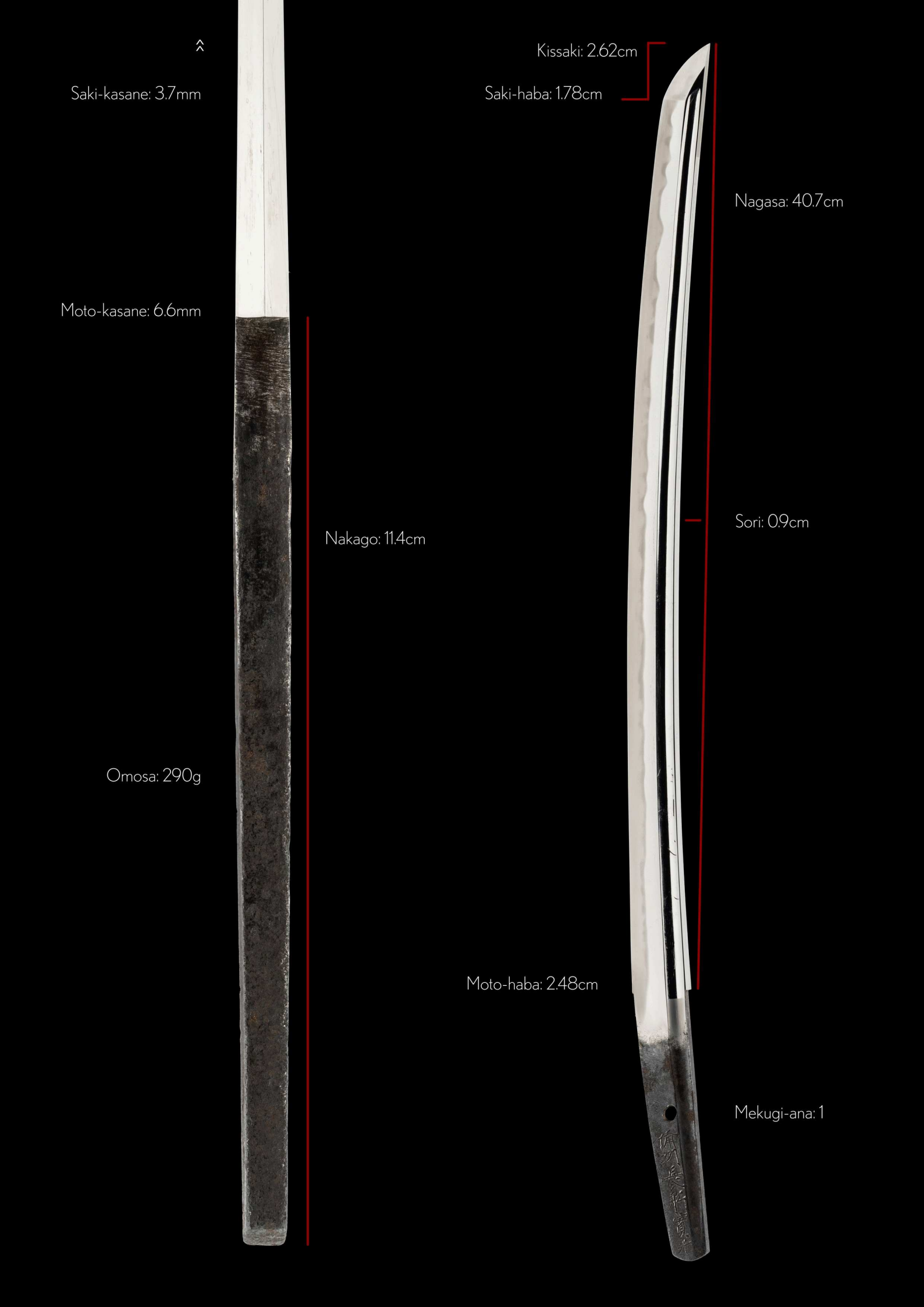
SIGNED, KOTÔ & SHINTÔ PERIODS (AUGUST 1406 & 1624~1639)

Swordsmiths:	***Hizen Shodai Masahiro*** (正広, *katana*) *&* ***Osafune Sanemitsu*** (実光, *wakizashi*)
Measurements (k):	**Length:** 70.5cm (*suriage*) **Sori:** 1.3cm **Moto-haba:** 2.89cm **Weight:** 660g
Measurements (w):	**Length:** 40.7cm (*ubu*) **Sori:** 0.9cm **Moto-haba:** 2.48cm **Weight:** 290g
Jihada:	*Beautifully-forged itame, konuka-hada with chikei and midare-utsuri on wakizashi*
Hamon:	*Brilliant gunome-chôji midare, kawazu-no-ko-chôji, bright nioiguchi, yô, sunagashi*
Certificate #1-2:	**NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon** *(wakizashi & katana Especially Worthy of Preservation)*
Certificate #3:	**NBTHK Hozon** *(daishô koshirae Worthy of Preservation)*
Rankings:	**Jô-saku & Wazamono** *(Masahiro),* **Chûjô-saku** (*Sanemitsu)*
Authentication:	**Sayagaki by Nozomi-san** *(shodô artist)*
Included:	Shirasaya x 2, daishô koshirae, fabric bags, kit, printed description

$35,000

This exceptional *daishô* couples a *shintô* period katana by ***shodai Masahiro*** with a wakizashi by ***Osafune Sanemitsu***, dated to August 1406 during the *Ôei* era. Among the *Waki-Hizen* smiths, Masahiro was especially known for his *chôji-midare hamon*, which is on glorious display on the katana. *Sanemitsu* belongs to the famed *Ôei-Bizen* lineage that drew on styles from the earlier *Ko-Bizen* masters and smiths such as *Mitsutada*. The NBTHK Hozon certified *daishô koshirae* is highly classical, tuxedo-like in its formality, with stunning depictions of *onagadori* birds and iron *Higo tsuba* bearing a *kuyô-mon*, a nine star crest hinting at a connection to a *daimyô*. This is a wonderful opportunity to proudly own and display a tasteful, authentic *samurai daishô* from the Edo period.


Kissaki: 3.58cm
Saki-haba: 2.12cm
Saki-kasane: 4.9mm
Moto-kasane: 6.6mm
Nagasa: 70.5cm
Sori: 1.3cm
Nakago: 16.3cm
Omosa: 660g
Moto-haba: 2.89cm
Mekugi-ana: 2


Saki-kasane: 3.7mm
Moto-kasane: 6.6mm
Nakago: 11.4cm
Omosa: 290g
Kissaki: 2.62cm
Saki-haba: 1.78cm
Nagasa: 40.7cm
Sori: 0.9cm
Moto-haba: 2.48cm
Mekugi-ana: 1

This wonderful *daishô* couples a katana by first generation *Masahiro*, made around the *Kan'ei* era (1624 to 1644), with a *wakizashi* by *Osafune Sanemitsu*, dated to the eighth month of the thirteenth year of the *Ôei* era (August 1406). Both carry an NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon Certificate, and the koshirae itself, made as a matched set, holds its own NBTHK Hozon Certificate.

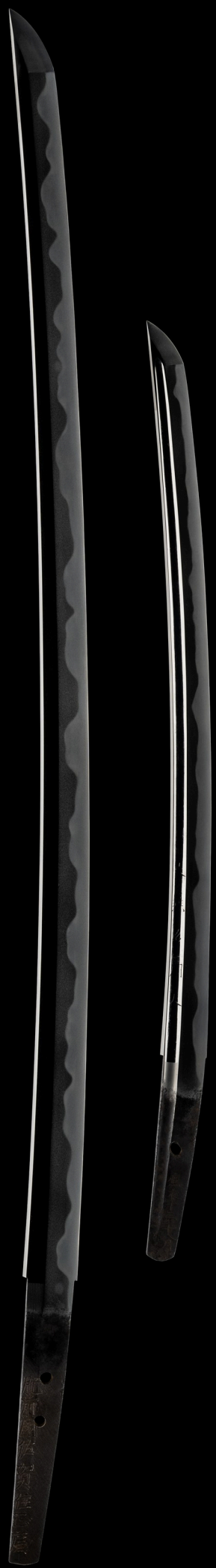
Pairing a katana and wakizashi by the same smith as a true *daishô* is largely a *shinshintô* period reality. In the *shintô* period, the fashionable move was actually the opposite, pairing a 'new' katana with an old *kotô* wakizashi, a choice that spoke to an owner's taste and discernment. The *Tokugawa Jikki*, the shogunate's own chronicle, records a vast number of *daishô* held by its retainers, and even there, a matched pair by the same hand is genuinely rare.

Masahiro was a grandson of grandmaster *Tadayoshi*, founder of the *Tadayoshi* school of *Hizen* province. Born in the twelfth year of the *Keichô* era (1607), he signed early works as *Masanaga* before adopting *Masahiro* in the second year of the *Kan'ei* era (1625), and received the title *Kawachi Daijô* in the fifth year of the *Kan'ei* era (1628). Among the *Waki-Hizen* smiths, those working outside that direct lineage, he's considered the finest, especially for his glorious *chôji-midare hamon*, which is on full display on the katana. *Nabeshima Katsushige*, lord of Saga domain, took notice and brought him on as a private retained smith.

Sanemitsu, who forged the wakizashi, belongs to the lineage of *Morimitsu*, a leading name of *Ôei-Bizen*. Given that the first generation worked around the *Ôei* era (1394 to 1428) and the second around the *Bun'an* era (1444 to 1449), this blade is attributed to the first. *Ôei-Bizen* itself is the *Osafune* tradition's golden run of peacetime production, kicked off once *Ashikaga Yoshimitsu* ended the *Nanbokuchô* conflict. *Osafune* drew on styles from the earlier *Ko-Bizen* masters and smiths like *Mitsutada*, *Nagamitsu*, and *Kagemitsu*, and in 1401, *Osafune* blades became a principal export in *Yoshimitsu*'s new trade with *Ming* China.

The *daishô koshirae* is highly classical, tuxedo-like in its formality. The saya are finished throughout in black lacquer, the *tsuka* wrapped in black *tsuka-ito* over white *samekawa*. The stunning *fuchi kashira* carry beautiful *onagadori* birds, a motif echoed in gold on the *menuki*, and the *Higo tsuba* are iron, bearing a *kuyô-mon*, a nine star crest hinting at a connection to a *daimyô*.

The katana's *saya* carries a slightly reddish tone against the wakizashi's, most likely due to years of differing sun exposure. Small things like this are proof of genuine age, and the NBTHK Hozon certification confirms it was conceived and built as a *daishô* from the very start. All told, this is a wonderful opportunity to proudly own and display a tasteful, authentic *samurai daishô* from the Edo period.



Location: *Saga, Hizen province*
Swordsmith: *Masahiro* (first generation)

suriage & machi-okuri nakago (shortened tang)
sujikai-yasurime (slanting file marks)



(Hi) 肥

(zen, no) 前

(kuni) 國

(Sa) 佐

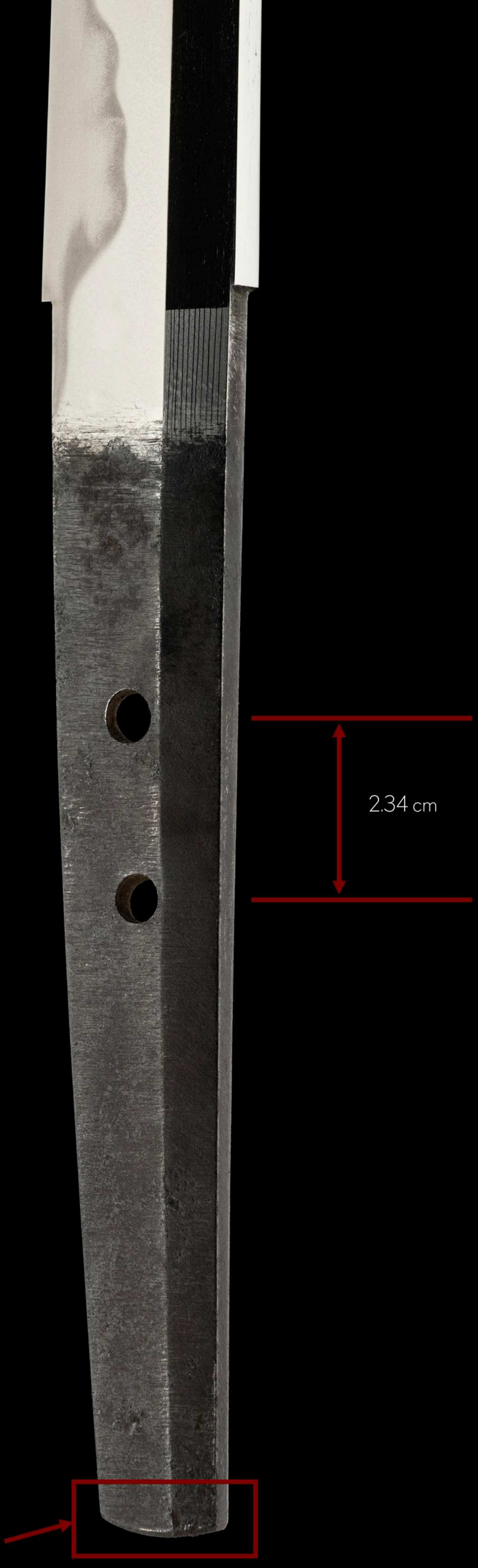
(ga) 賀

(jû) 住

(Masa) 正

(hiro) 廣

(reverse)



The *katana* has two *mekugi-ana*. Judging also from the *yasurime*, it appears that the blade underwent *machi-okuri*.

Machi-okuri is the process of shortening the *ha-machi* and *mune-machi*, that is, the cutting edge, while leaving the length of the *nakago* unchanged, typically carried out to suit the physique or swordsmanship style of a new owner.

Based on the distance between the two *mekugi-ana*, it can be estimated that the blade was originally about 2.34 cm longer, giving an original length of roughly 72.8 cm.

kurijiri
chestnut shaped *nakago-jiri* (butt end)



№ 1023758

特保
06202409

鑑定書

一、刀　銘　肥前国佐賀住正広（初代）

長　二尺三寸二分半

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

令和六年十二月四日

公益財團法人日本美術刀剣保存協會

兵庫県　教育委員会
第　121033　号
平成24年8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), December 4th

One, Katana

Mei (signature)
Hizen no kuni Saga-jû Masahiro (Shodai)

Nagasa (length)
2-shaku 3-sun 2-bu han (70.5cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai
(NBTHK)



肥前国佐賀住正広
Hizen no kuni Saga jû Masahiro
Masahiro, a resident of Saga in Hizen province

初代作也
Shodai saku nari
First generation

長船実光ト大小ヲ成ス
Osafune Sanemitsu to daishô o nasu
Daishô with Osafune Sanemitsu

刃長貳尺参寸二分半有之
Hachô 2-shaku 3-sun 2-bu han kore ari
Blade length 70.5 cm

令和八丙午年文月吉日誌之
Reiwa hachi hinoe-uma doshi Fumizuki kichijitsu kore o shirusu
Written on a lucky day in the seventh month of the eighth year of the Reiwa era, the Year of the Horse (July 2026)



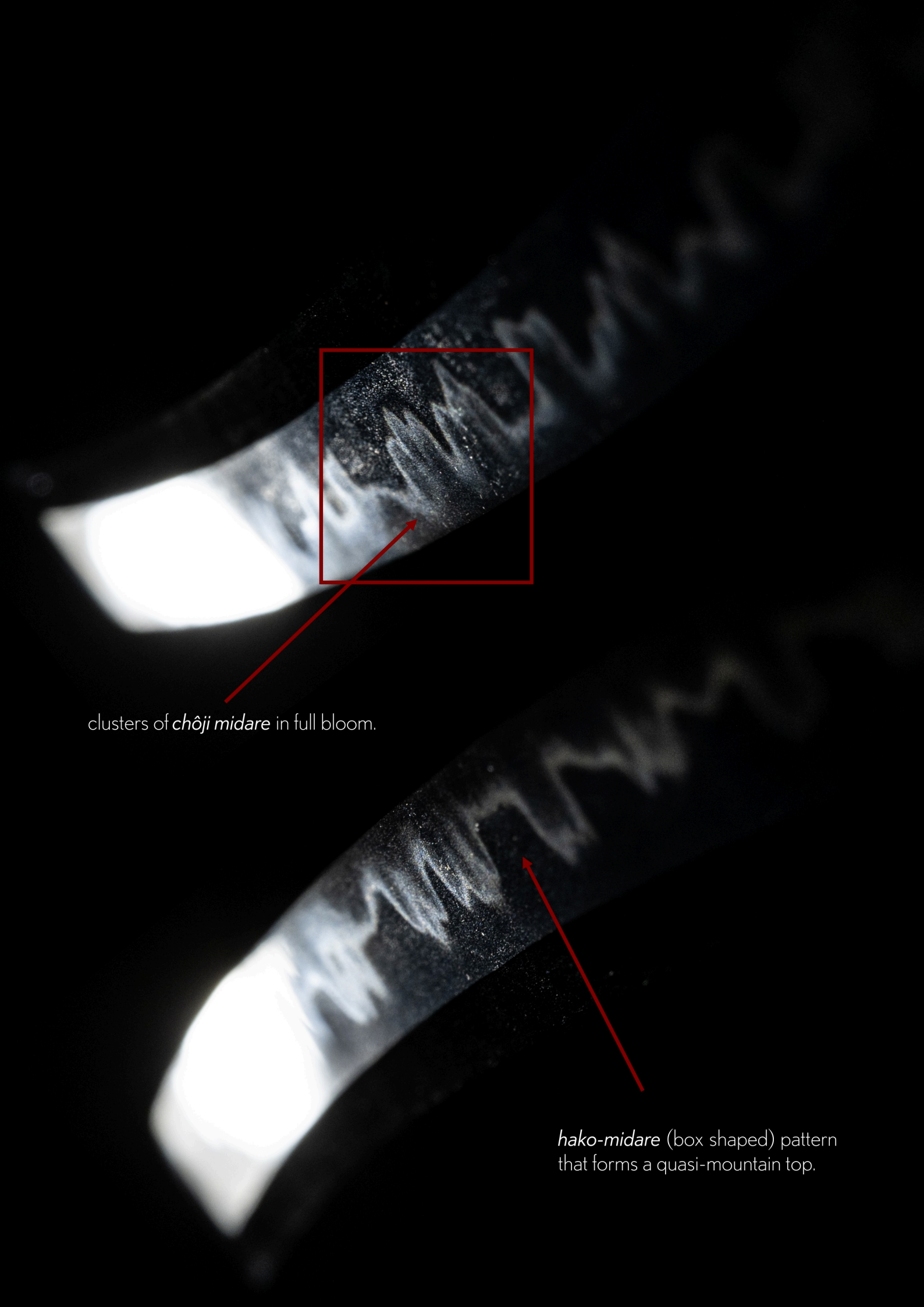


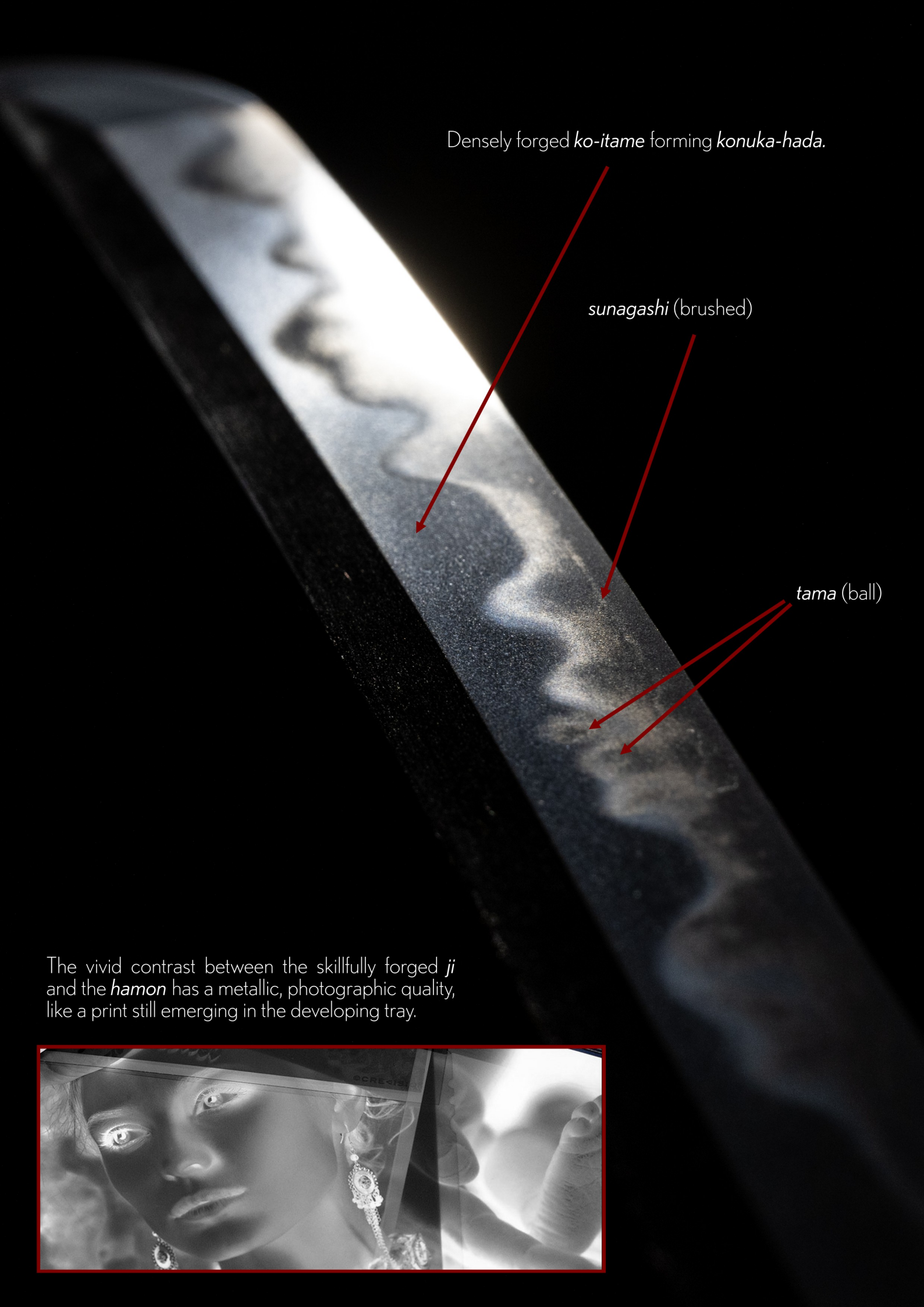
A *kaen-bôshi*, resembling a lit candle.





A splendid ***gunome-chôji midare hamon*** opens up like a fine wine.


clusters of *chôji midare* in full bloom.
hako-midare (box shaped) pattern
that forms a quasi-mountain top.



The vivid contrast between the skillfully forged *ji* and the ***hamon*** has a metallic, photographic quality, like a print still emerging in the developing tray.



Glimmering with ***ji-nie***, visible crystals
brilliantly forged with ***Hizen*** pride.



Location: *Bizen province*
Family name: *Osafune*
Swordsmith: *Sanemitsu* (first generation)

ubu-nakago (original, unaltered tang)
katte-sagari-yasurime (slanting file marks)

備 (Bi)

州 (shû)

長 (Osa)

舩 (fune)

實 (Sane)

光 (mitsu)

Ôei jûsan-nen hachigatsu-hi
Dated on a day in the eighth month in the thirteenth year of *Ôei* era (August 1406)



(Ô) 應

(ei) 永

(jû) 十

(san) 三

(nen) 年

(hachi) 八

(gatsu) 月

(hi) 日

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

(***ura***, reverse)

The thirteenth year of *Ôei era* (1406) falls roughly fifteen years after the reunification of the Northern and Southern Courts in 1392, as *Muromachi* shogunate rule settled into stability. The nominal *shôgun* was the 4th, *Ashikaga Yoshimochi*, but real power remained with his father, the 3rd *shôgun Yoshimitsu*, who continued to reign as de facto supreme authority from *Kinkaku-ji*, even after formally stepping down.

Diplomatically, the official *Japan-Ming* trade, *Ming* being the ruling dynasty of China at the time, opened by *Yoshimitsu* was beginning in earnest. He had dispatched an envoy to Ming in 1401 and received the title "King of Japan" from the *Yongle Emperor* the following year. Formal trade under the tally system began in 1404, with Japanese swords, including those of *Osafune* in *Bizen*, among the principal exports.

Domestically, memory of the *Ôei Rebellion* of 1399, in which *Ôuchi Yoshihiro* rose against the shogunate, was still fresh. *Yoshimitsu* suppressed the revolt, curbing the great *daimyô* while consolidating his own authority. The relative stability that followed underpinned the flourishing of mass sword production at *Osafune*, the rise of the *Ôei-Bizen* tradition.



Kangô-sen, the official ships used for the Japan-Ming trade



鑑定書

一、脇指　銘　備州長船実光

応永十三年八月日

長一尺三寸四分強

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

令和六年十二月四日

公益財團法人 日本美術刀劍保存協會

兵庫県 教育委員会
第 121034 号
平成24年8月21日

№ 1023765

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, Wakizashi

Mei (signature)
Bishû Osafune Sanemitsu - Ôei jûsan-nen hachigatsu-hi

Nagasa (length)
1-shaku 3-sun 4-bu kyô (40.7cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai
(NBTHK)



備州長船実光
Bishû Osafune Sanemitsu
Osafune Sanemitsu from Bishû (Bizen) province

応永十三年八月日
Ôei jûsannen hachigatsu hi
On a day in the eighth month in the thirteen year of Ôei era (August 1406)

初代正広ト大小ヲ成ス
Shodai Masahiro to daishô o nasu
Daishô with Masahiro, first generation

刃長壱尺参寸四分強有之
Hachô 1-shaku 3-sun 4-bu kyô kore ari
Blade length 40.7 cm

令和八丙午年文月吉日誌之
Reiwa hachi hinoe-uma doshi Fumizuki kichijitsu kore o shirusu
Written on a lucky day in the seventh month of the eighth year of the Reiwa era, the Year of the Horse (July 2026)





摩 (Ma)

利 (ri)

支 (shi)

天 (ten)

Upon careful observation on the ***bô-hi*** of the ***wakizashi*** are traces of characters carved long ago. On the ***omote***, "***Marishiten***" remains legible, and on the ***ura,*** "***Daihi Tamonten***", both names of Buddhist guardian deities.

The practice of carving ***horimono*** into a blade traces back to the ***Kofun*** period (c. 300 to 538). Its original purpose was largely practical, recording the blade's provenance, but examples such as the ***naginata-hi*** and ***shinogi-hi*** seen on the ***Kogarasumaru***, a blade attributed to ***Amakuni*** and traditionally dated to the ***Nara*** period (710 to 794), suggest carvings were also made to reduce the blade's weight. In the ***Heian*** period (794 to 1185), religious motifs such as ***suken*** and ***kurikara-ryû*** began to appear alongside the ***bô-hi***, and by the ***Kamakura*** period this variety expanded further to include ***bonji***, ***Sanskrit*** characters, and figures such as ***Jizô Bosatsu***. ***Horimono***, in other words, grew into something far more than decoration, part practical, part structural, and eventually devotional, believed to carry real protective power for the blade's owner.

Marishiten, carved on the ***omote***, is a fascinating choice. She was born of the deification of shimmering haze and the light of the sun and moon, said to be intangible, untouched by fire, water, or injury, and believed to hold the power of concealment along with boundless supernatural ability. Warriors across medieval Japan worshipped her devoutly.



Marishiten

Daihi Tamonten, carved on the ***ura***, is an alternate name for ***Bishamonten***, one of the 'Four Heavenly Kings' and the warrior deity who guards the northern direction. Worshipped on his own, he's simply ***Bishamonten***, and as one of the Four Heavenly Kings, ***Tamonten***. In later ages he took on a reputation as a bringer of fortune and victory, eventually earning a place among the Seven Lucky Gods. The prefix "*Daihi*," *great compassion*, adds another layer entirely, his fierce warrior aspect paired with a role delivering sentient beings from suffering through boundless compassion.

Both *Marishiten* and *Daihi Tamonten* were worshipped by warriors, so carving these two figures into the blade reads as exactly what you'd expect from a samurai owner entrusting his protection and victory in battle to their care.



Tamonten

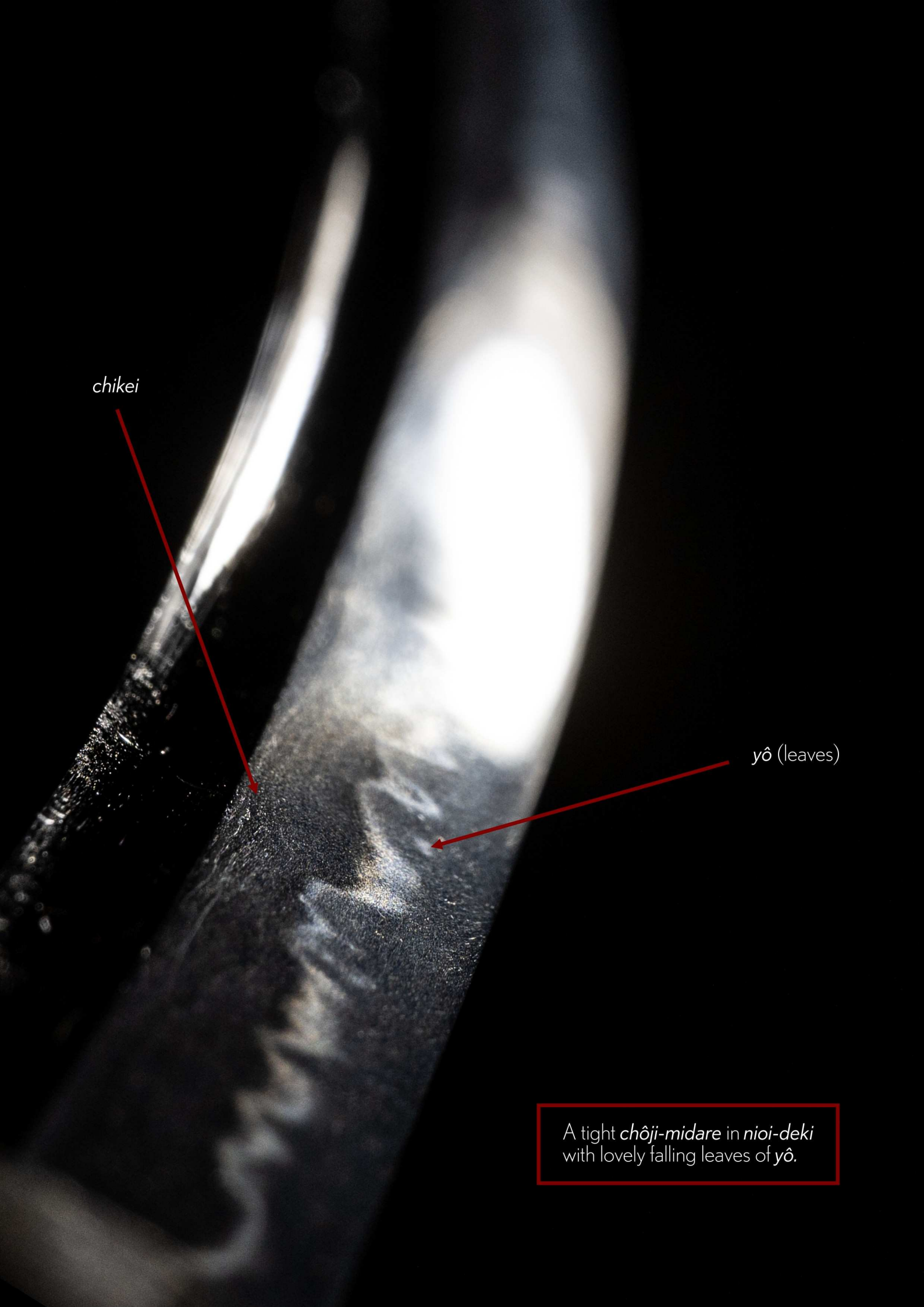
(Dai) 大

(hi) 悲

(Ta) 多

(mon) 聞

(ten) 天



A tight ***chôji-midare*** in ***nioi-deki*** with lovely falling leaves of ***yô.***

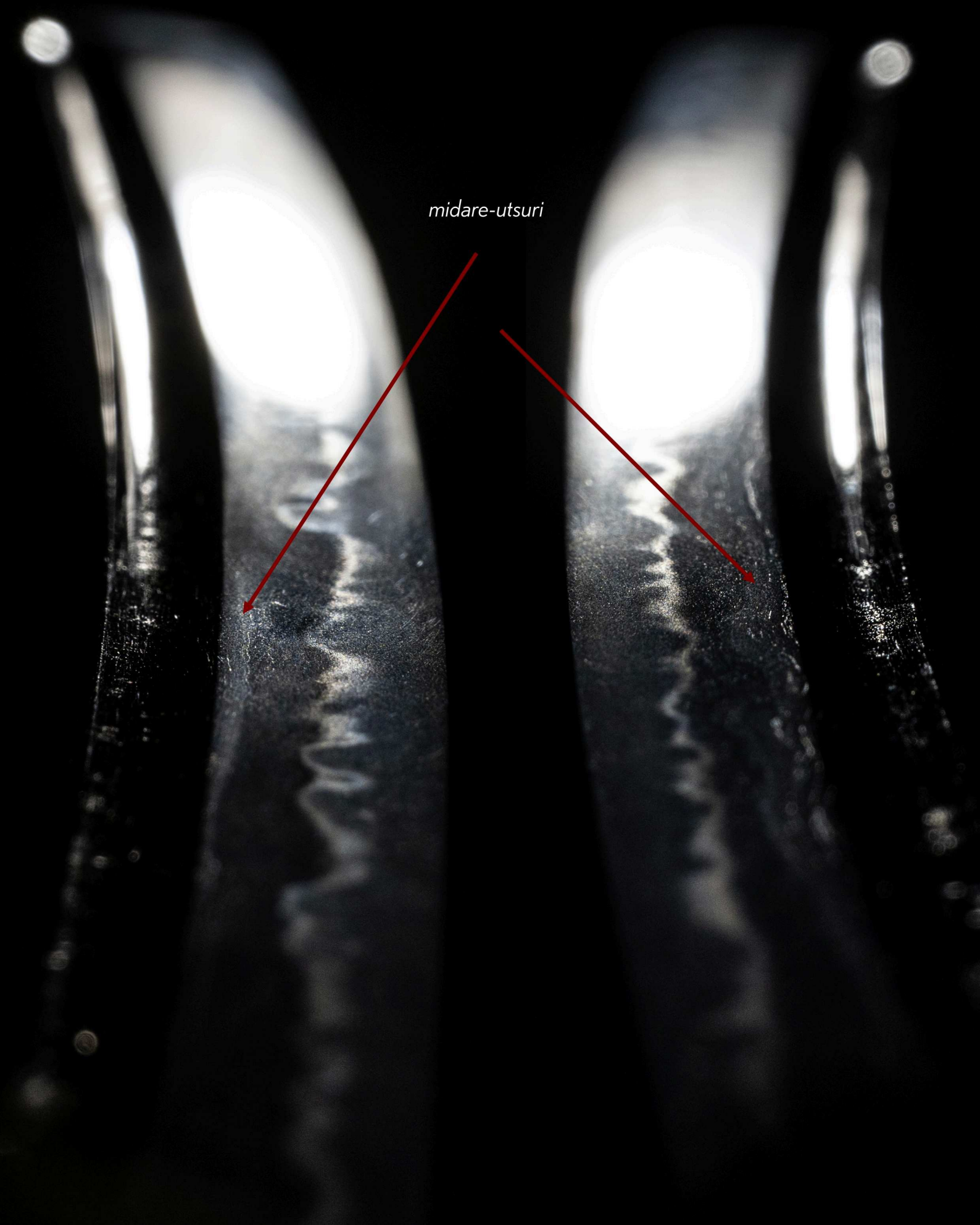

A gorgeous *bô-hi* (groove) enhances the elegant line of the wakizashi.
Illuminating *ji-nie* - even though the swords are made over 200 years apart, by two distinct schools, the healthy, vibrancy of the blades shine as one.



The ***chôji*** (clove blossom bud) here is in the shape known as ***kawazu no ko-chôji,*** with long necks which reminds one of tadpoles.

Famous interpretations of ***kawazu no ko-chôji*** can be seen on swords by ***Osafune Mitsutada***, ***Hatakeda Moriie*** and ***Hatakeda Sanemori*** plus ***Kamakura-Ichimonji Sukezane***.

Literally meaning "reflection", ***utsuri*** is a beautiful, misty reflection appearing in the ***ji*** above the ***hamon***.



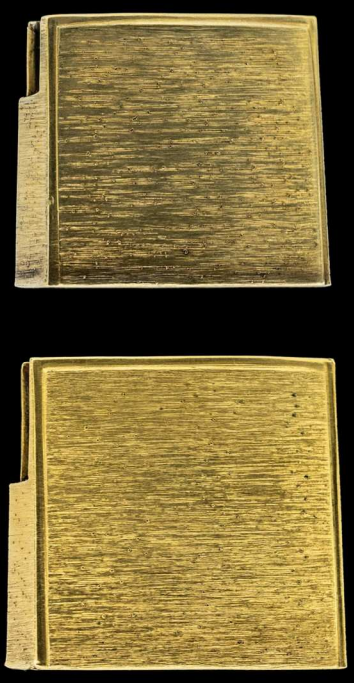








Daishô-Shirasaya
(protective scabbards)



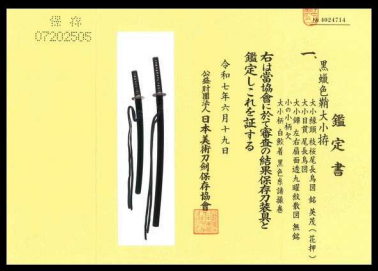
Daishô matching gold ***habaki***
with copper base

Kuro-roiro saya daishô-koshirae
（黒蠟色鞘大小拵）

Daishô-koshirae
lacquered in glossy black

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.

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.


保存
07202505

鑑定書

一、黒蠟色鞘大小拵

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

令和七年六月十九日

公益財団法人 日本美術刀剣保存協会

NBTHK Hozon
Certificate of Authenticity

保存
07202505

№ 4024714



鑑定書

一、黒蠟色鞘大小拵
大小縁頭 枝桜尾長鳥図 銘 英茂（花押）
大小目貫 尾長鳥図
大小鐔 左右扇面透九曜紋散図 無銘
小の小柄欠
大小柄 白鮫着 黒色糸諸撮巻

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

令和七年六月十九日

公益財團法人 日本美術刀劍保存協會

NBTHK Hozon
Certificate of Designation

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

Issued in the 7th year of Reiwa (2025), June 19th

One,

Daishô-koshirae lacquered in glossy black

Daishô-fuchigashira: depicting a long-tailed bird on a cherry blossom branch, signed Hideshige + monogram

Daishô-menuki: depicting long-tailed birds

Daishô-tsuba: depicting fan-shaped openwork on both sides with scattered kuyô crests, unsigned

Kozuka on wakizashi saya is missing ← ** chance to personalize*

Hilt covered with white same and wrapped morotsumami-maki style with black braids

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai
(NBTHK)



katana saya

wakizashi saya

A keen eye will notice that the ***saya*** of this ***daishô*** differ subtly in colour. While the ***katana***'s ***saya*** has taken on a reddish hue, the ***wakizashi***'s ***saya*** remains almost entirely pitch black.

Black lacquer shifts gradually toward reddish-brown under UV exposure, so the difference simply tells us the katana's saya spent longer in the sun than its partner. That kind of colour shift takes several decades to reveal itself. It's a small, yet telling trace of age, and one more detail to admire in this samurai koshirae. This is natural wear the NBTHK recognized immediately, awarding the ***daishô koshirae*** Hozon Certification as a genuine Edo period pairing.

Feel the history.



These gorgeous iron ***daishô tsuba*** wear the understated elegance the ***Higo school*** is famous for.

The ***Higo*** school flourished under the patronage of ***Hosokawa Tadaoki***, a disciple of ***Sen no Rikyû***, the very founder of the ***wabi-sabi*** aesthetic. By the Edo period it commanded such prestige that a saying took hold, "***for blades, Bizen; for tsuba, Higo***", and its work built its reputation on restraint, a beauty found in simplicity rather than ostentation.

These tsuba fit that mould perfectly. Scattered across the fittings, the ***kuyô-mon*** crest ties this piece directly to the ***Hosokawa*** family of ***Higo***, suggesting whoever commissioned it held real standing within the domain.

And then there's the combination itself, a tsuba from ***Higo***, a katana from neighbouring ***Hizen***, and a wakizashi from ***Bizen***. Three provinces, three traditions, one ***daishô***. A trifecta.

Kuyô-mon, the nine-planet family crest that was first adopted by the powerful ***daimyô*** family leader *Hosokawa Tadaoki* (1563-1646).

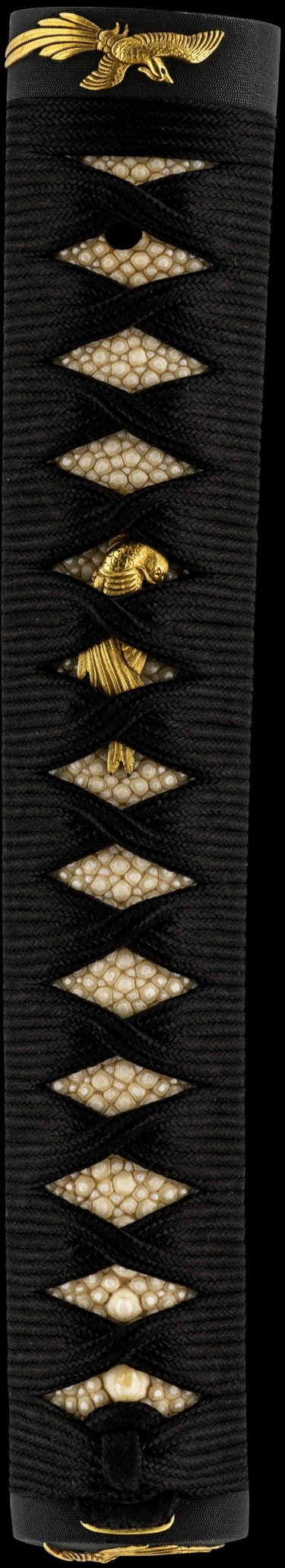




This absolutely stunning *daishô fuchi-kashira* is the work of *Yokoya Terushige*, later known as the 3rd generation *Yokoya Eisei*.

Against the *Gotô* family, the shogunate's official metalworkers, the *Yokoya* school stood as the finest of the independent *machibori* masters, and it's a story worth telling properly. The first generation, *Yokoya Sôyo*, had himself served as an official shogunate metalworker, but the second generation, *Yokoya Sômin*, grew weary of the rigid constraints of official service, resigned his post, and struck out on his own. That was a bold move in Edo Japan. His extraordinary skill captivated the townspeople of Edo, sparking a citywide sensation and elevating the school to the foremost position among independent metalworkers.

Eisei carried that lineage forward beautifully. This *fuchi-kashira* renders the plumage of the *onagadori*, the long-tailed bird, so vividly that it seems almost ready to take flight. The exceptionally even *nanako-ji* ground is likewise a telltale sign of a metalworker at the height of his craft.

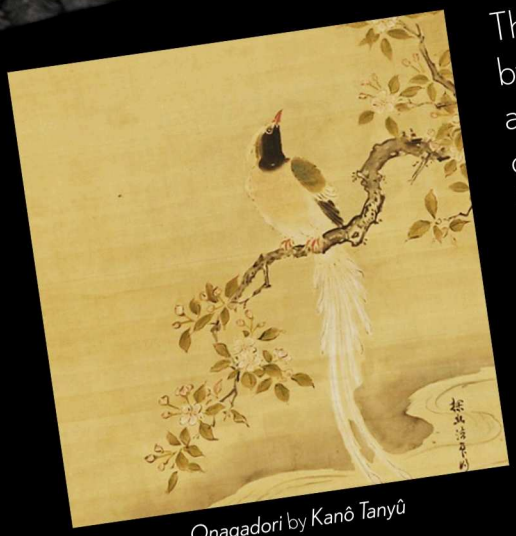


The *daishô tsuka* (hilts) are wrapped in white *samekawa* and finished in *morotsumami-maki* style with black *ito*, and set off by s*hakudô fuchi kashira* with gold motifs and gold *menuki.*

Every element here follows the formal dress code for attending castle ceremonies, creating a cohesive and genuinely dignified mounting.







Onagadori by Kanô Tanyû

The ***onagadori*** (long-tailed bird/chicken) has long been favoured by Japanese painters and artists as a motif symbolizing grace and auspiciousness, prized for its elegant form and the striking beauty of its long trailing tail feathers. The tail consists of about 16-18 feathers, which under the right conditions never moult. Within the lineage of ***kachô-ga*** (bird-and-flower painting), particularly in the ***Tosa*** and ***Kanô*** schools, the ***onagadori*** was often depicted alongside pine, plum, or the flowers of the four seasons, its flowing tail evoking associations of longevity and prosperity. It was designated a Japanese National Natural Treasure in 1952.





(Teru) 英

(shige) 茂

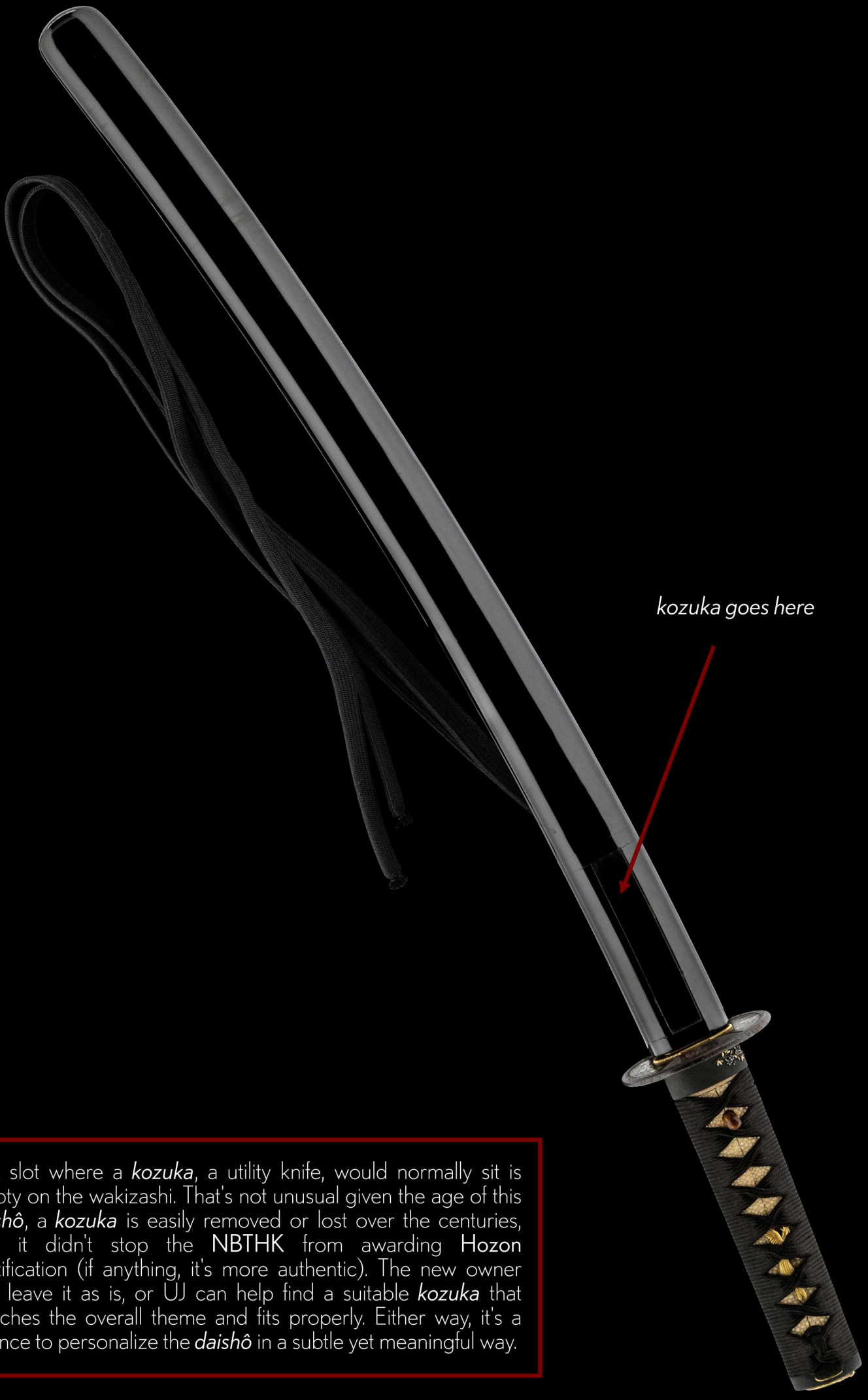
monogram



Menuki (decorative grips on the hilt)

The ***daishô menuki***, like the ***fuchi-kashira***, carry the wonderful ***onagadori*** motif, and the carving here is nothing short of superb. Every feather is rendered with real care, layered and flowing, capturing that unmistakable, sweeping texture of the ***onagadori***'s tail.

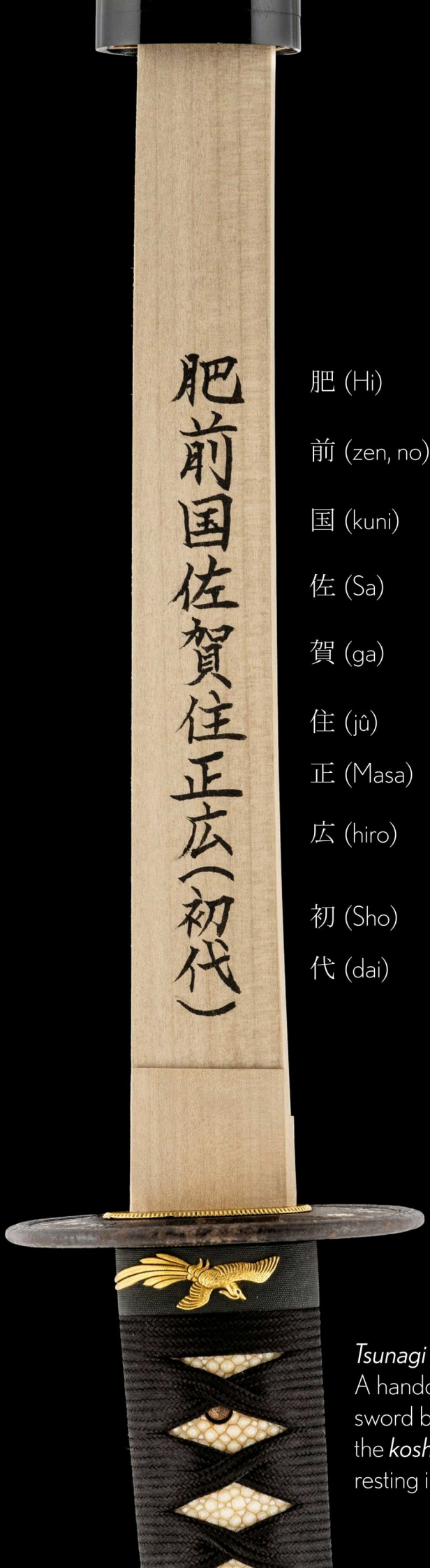




The slot where a ***kozuka***, a utility knife, would normally sit is empty on the wakizashi. That's not unusual given the age of this ***daishô***, a ***kozuka*** is easily removed or lost over the centuries, and it didn't stop the NBTHK from awarding Hozon certification (if anything, it's more authentic). The new owner can leave it as is, or UJ can help find a suitable ***kozuka*** that matches the overall theme and fits properly. Either way, it's a chance to personalize the ***daishô*** in a subtle yet meaningful way.



Matching daishô koshirae storage bags with ***tama*** brocade pattern.



肥 (Hi)

前 (zen, no)

国 (kuni)

佐 (Sa)

賀 (ga)

住 (jû)

正 (Masa)

広 (hiro)

初 (Sho)

代 (dai)



Tsunagi
A handcrafted duplicate wooden sword blade that holds together the ***koshirae*** when the blade is resting in ***shirasaya***.



備 (Bi)

州 (shû)

長 (Osa)

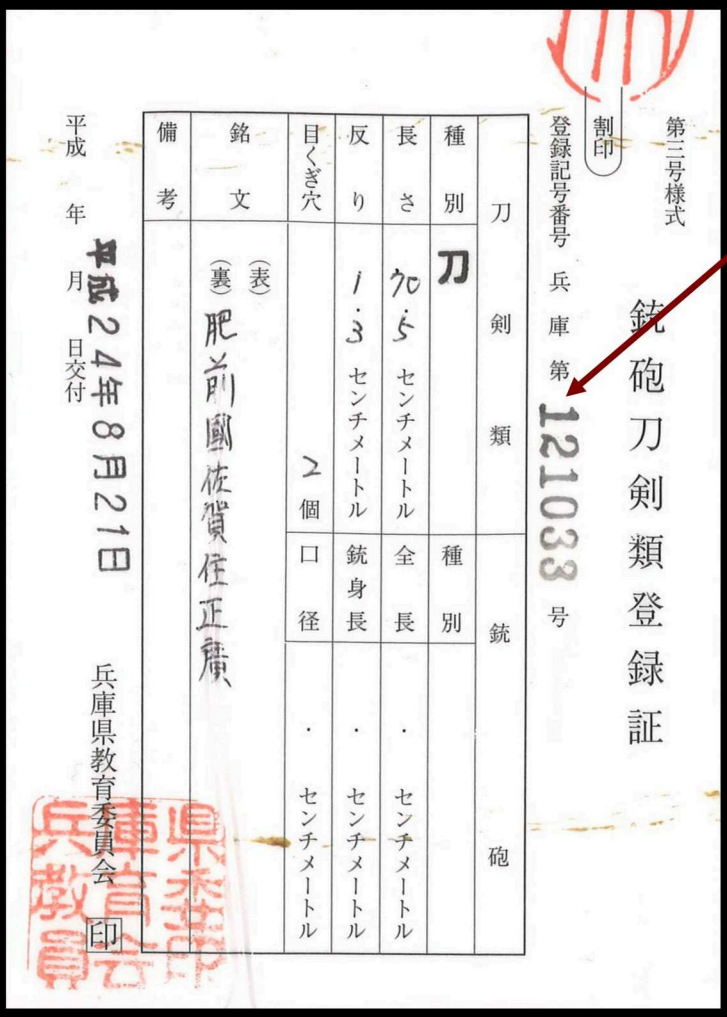
船 (fune)

実 (Sane)

光 (mitsu)



Tsunagi
A handcrafted duplicate wooden sword blade that holds together the ***koshirae*** when the blade is resting in ***shirasaya***.


第三号様式

銃砲刀剣類登録証

登録記号番号 兵庫第 121033 号

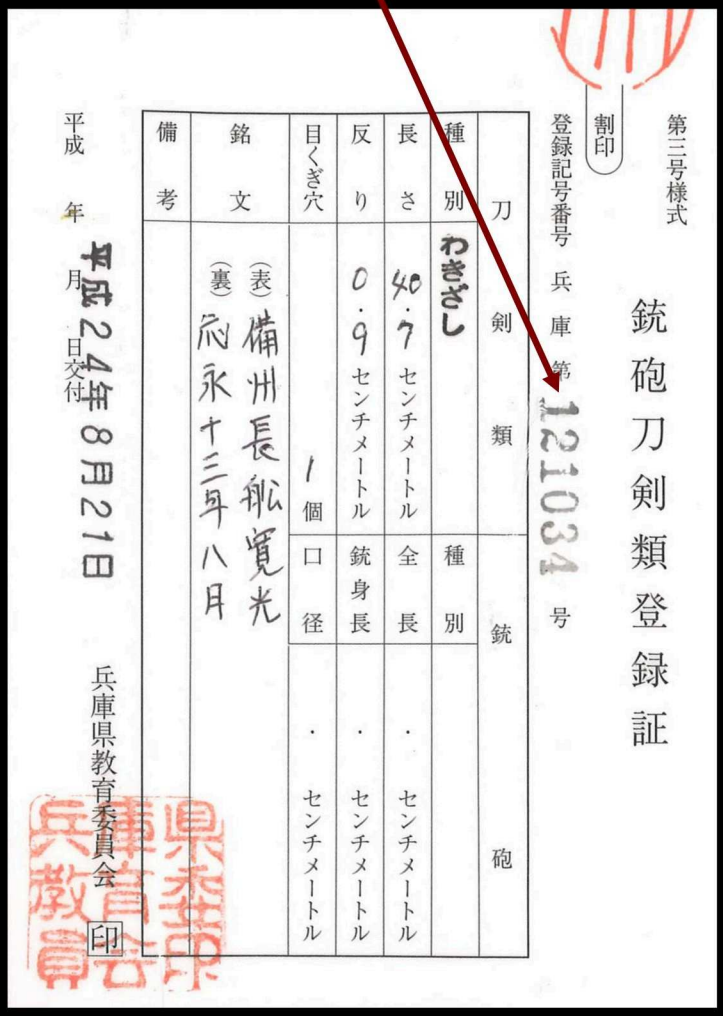
割印

刀剣類	銃砲		
種別	刀	種別	
長さ	70.5 センチメートル	全長	・ センチメートル
反り	1.3 センチメートル	銃身長	・ センチメートル
目くぎ穴	2 個	口径	・ センチメートル
銘文	(表) (裏) 肥前國佐賀住正廣		
備考			

平成 24 年 8 月 21 日交付

兵庫県教育委員会 印

Masahiro Katana, 121033


第三号様式

銃砲刀剣類登録証

登録記号番号 兵庫第 121034 号

割印

刀剣類	銃砲		
種別	わきざし	種別	
長さ	40.7 センチメートル	全長	・ センチメートル
反り	0.9 センチメートル	銃身長	・ センチメートル
目くぎ穴	1 個	口径	・ センチメートル
銘文	(表) 備州長船寛光 (裏) 応永十三年八月		
備考			

平成 24 年 8 月 21 日交付

兵庫県教育委員会 印

Sanemitsu Wakizashi, 121034

The pair of *tôrokusho*

In Japan, a system is in place whereby every ***nihontô*** is issued and managed under an individual registration card known as a ***tôrokusho***.

Both this ***katana*** and ***wakizashi*** were issued their ***tôrokusho*** on August 21st, in the 24th year of ***Heisei*** era (2012), and their registration numbers run consecutively. This indicates that by the time of registration, the two blades were already being treated as a matched ***daishô***.


Next level detail.

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