



ITEM# UJKA498

CURRENTLY AVAILABLE

A YOSHIKANE KATANA

SIGNED, SHINTÔ EDO PERIOD (ENPÔ ERA: 1673~1681)

Swordsmith:	Chikuzen-jû Minamoto Nobukuni Yoshikane (筑前住源信国吉包)
Measurements:	Length: 71.2cm (ubu) Sori: 1.51cm Moto-haba: 3.22cm Weight: 840g
Jihada:	Expertly forged ko-itame with shining ji-nie and plenty of chukei
Hamon:	Spectacular gunome-chôji-midare with squid-head chôji, sunagashi and tobiyaki
Certificate #1:	NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon (sword Especially Worthy of Preservation)
Certificate #2:	NBTHK Tokubetsu Kichô (koshirae Especially Precious)
Certificate #3-5:	NTHK-NPO Kanteishô (koshirae, fuchi-kashira and tsuba certified as Authentic)
Fujishiro rank:	Jô-saku (ranked as a superior swordsmith)
Authentication:	Sayagaki by Tanzan-sensei (Tanobe Michihiro)
Included:	Shirasaya, Higo-style koshirae, fabric bags, kit, printed description

\$25,500

This spectacular katana was forged by *Nobukuni Yoshikane*, a central figure in the *Chikuzen Nobukuni* school, and retained smith of the *Kuroda* family. The hamon is a dazzling *gunome-chôji-midare* with brushed *sunagashi* that lights up the blade in the most fabulous way. The *Higo*-inspired *koshirae* was crafted as a unified whole - the harmony between the chrysanthemum *tsuba* and the cross-hatched petals on the *kashira* is pure class. Tanobe-sensei's sayagaki described the sword as a healthy, superior masterpiece that demonstrates Yoshikane's skill at its absolute peak. Enjoy!

^
Saki-kasane: 5.2mm

Moto-kasane: 7.3mm

Kissaki: 3.93cm
Saki-haba: 2.28cm

Nagasa: 71.2cm

Nakago: 19.8cm

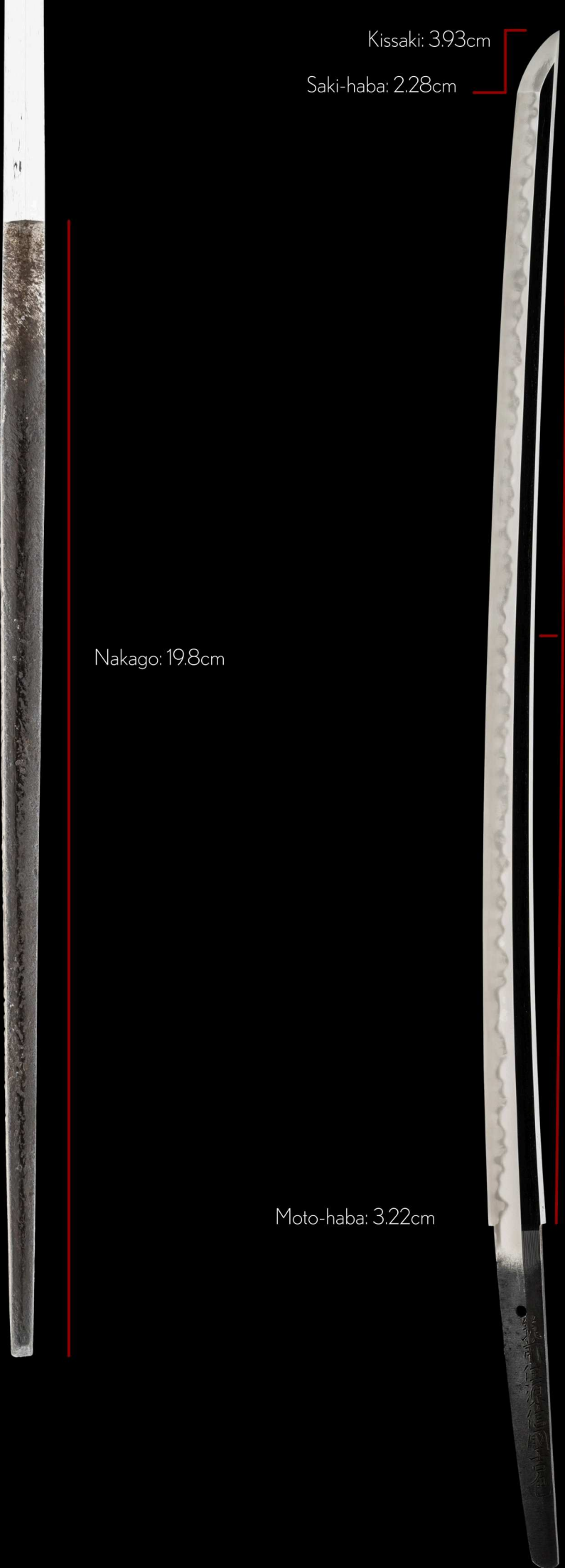
Sori: 1.51cm

Omosa: 840g

nice!

Moto-haba: 3.22cm

Mekugi-ana: 1

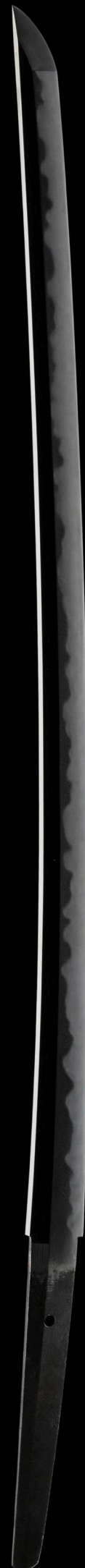


Nobukuni Yoshikane (信国吉包) was a central figure in the *Chikuzen Nobukuni* school, the retained smiths of the *Kuroda* family of *Fukuoka* Domain throughout the Edo period. Known also as *Nobukuni Sukezaemon* (信国助左衛門), he was the 14th generation of a lineage tracing back to the *Kyô-Nobukuni* tradition of *Kyôto*. His father was *Nobukuni Yoshitsugu* (吉次, younger brother of the first-generation *Yoshimasa* (吉政)); his son was *Nobukuni Shigekane* (重包), who would become one of the smiths permitted to engrave the *Ichiyô-Aoi* (hollyhock leaf) crest on his *nakago* at the forging ceremony held at Mihama Palace in 1721, alongside *Ichinohira Yasuyo* (一平安代) of Satsuma and others.

The school was founded in 1602 when *Nobukuni Yoshisada* (吉貞) moved from *Buzen* to *Hakata* in *Chikuzen* at the invitation of *Kuroda Nagamasa*. *Yoshikane* was *Yoshisada*'s grandson. From the *shintô* period onward it became customary for smiths of this school to carry the *Nobukuni* surname. Under the patronage of the *Kuroda* family the school produced many notable smiths across successive generations. *Yoshikane*'s work ranges from *gunome-midare* and *ko-notare* to *notare* and occasionally *suguha*, with the school's characteristic *chôji-midare* appearing frequently in his most distinctive pieces, such as this one. He died in 1693, leaving a body of work that bridges directly to the golden age of *Chikuzen* blades.

This excellent and extraordinarily healthy katana was forged in a fine, tightly forged *ko-itame* and blessed with light *utsuri*. The *hamon* is a completely dazzling *gunome-chôji-midare* that lights up the blade in such a fabulous way. The brushed *sunagashi* is just delightful too. This is *Yoshikane* working in his finest hour, with active *sunagashi* and *tobiyaki* throughout - such an eye-catching blade. The sword retains its original *ubu-nakago* with his thick-chiseled signature. This is indeed a very strong *Tokubetsu Hozon* sword befitting his *jô-saku*, superior sword-making rank.

The *koshirae* was crafted in *Higo-koshirae* style, a fitting complement to the character and location of the *Chikuzen Nobukuni* school. The *tsuka* is uniquely wrapped in smoked leather *fusube-kawa* showcasing proud *kiri-mon menuki*. The harmony between the chrysanthemum-designed *tsuba* and the cross-hatched petals on the *kashira* is pure class. This katana has recently returned from *Tanobe-sensei* who described the sword as a healthy, superior masterpiece that demonstrates *Yoshikane*'s skill at its absolute peak.





WATCH PABLO'S YOUTUBE PRESENTATION OF
UJKA498 - A YOSHIKANE KATANA

[UNIQUEJAPAN.COM/UJKA498-VIDEO](https://uniquejapan.com/ujka498-video)





Location: *Chikuzen province*

Family name: *Minamoto*

School name: *Nobukuni school*

Swordsmith: *Yoshikane* (first generation)

ubu-nakago (original, unaltered tang)

kiri-yasurime (horizontal file marks)

筑 (Chiku)

前 (zen)

住 (jû)

源 (Minamoto)

信 (Nobu)

國 (kuni)

吉 (Yoshi)

包 (kane)



A thick, confident chiseled
signature, pure *Yoshikane*.



A meaty nakago, so healthy.

Ha-agari kurijiri - a form in which the rounded tip of the nakago rises toward the cutting-edge.

(*ura*, reverse)

特 保
27201503



No 1003673

鑑定書

一刀

銘 筑前住源信国吉包

長 二尺三寸四分強

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

平成二十七年五月二十九日

公益財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協會



宮崎 教育委員会
第 5093 号
昭和 31 年 12 月 15 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), May 29th

One, Katana

Mei (signature)

Chikuzen-jû Minamoto Nobukuni Yoshikane

Nagasa (length)

2-shaku 3-sun 4-bu kyô (71.2cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai
(NBTHK)

筑前住信國吉包

Chikuzen-jû Nobukuni Yoshikane

Nobukuni Yoshikane, a resident of Chikuzen Province

八字有銘筑前信國派ハ黒田家ノ抱鍛冶デ同工ハ代表鍛冶ノ一人也彼ハ吉次子デ重包父ニ當タル身幅廣目・中鋒・反浅キ形態ヲ呈シ精良ナル小板目鍛ヘニ丁子与互乃目ガ出入著シク闊達ニ乱レル刃文ヲ焼キ足良ク入り沸厚ク砂流カヽリ匂口明ルク冴ヘ直グニ小丸帽子ニ結ブナド出来宜敷ク本領發揮ノ健ヤカナ優品也

Hachi-ji mei ari Chikuzen Nobukuni ha wa Kuroda-ke no kakaekaji de dôkô wa daihyô kaji no hitori nari. Kare wa Yoshitsugu ko de Shigekane chichi ni ataru. Mihaba hirome chû-kissaki sori asaki keitai o teishi seiryô naru ko-itame kitae ni chôji to gunome ga deiri ichijirushiku kattatsu ni midareru hamon o yaki ashi yoku hairi nie atsuku sunagashi kakari nioiguchi akaruku sae sugu ni komaru-bôshi ni musubu nado deki yoroshiku honryô hakki no sukoyakana yûhin nari

This blade features an eight-character signature. The *Chikuzen Nobukuni* school served as the official swordsmiths for the *Kuroda* clan, and this smith stands as one of their most prominent figures. He was the son of *Yoshitsugu* and the father of *Shigekane*. The blade has a relatively wide *mihaba* with a *chû-kissaki* and a shallow *sori*. The *kitae* is a refined *ko-itame*. The *hamon* is a vibrant, dynamic mix of *chôji* and *gunome*, characterized by significant variation. It is rich with *ashi*, thick *nie*, and *sunagashi*. The *nioiguchi* is bright and clear, concluding in a *sugu-komaru bôshi*. This is a healthy, superior masterpiece that demonstrates the smith's skill at its absolute peak.

刃長貳尺三寸四分強

Hachô 2-shaku 3-sun 4-bu kyô

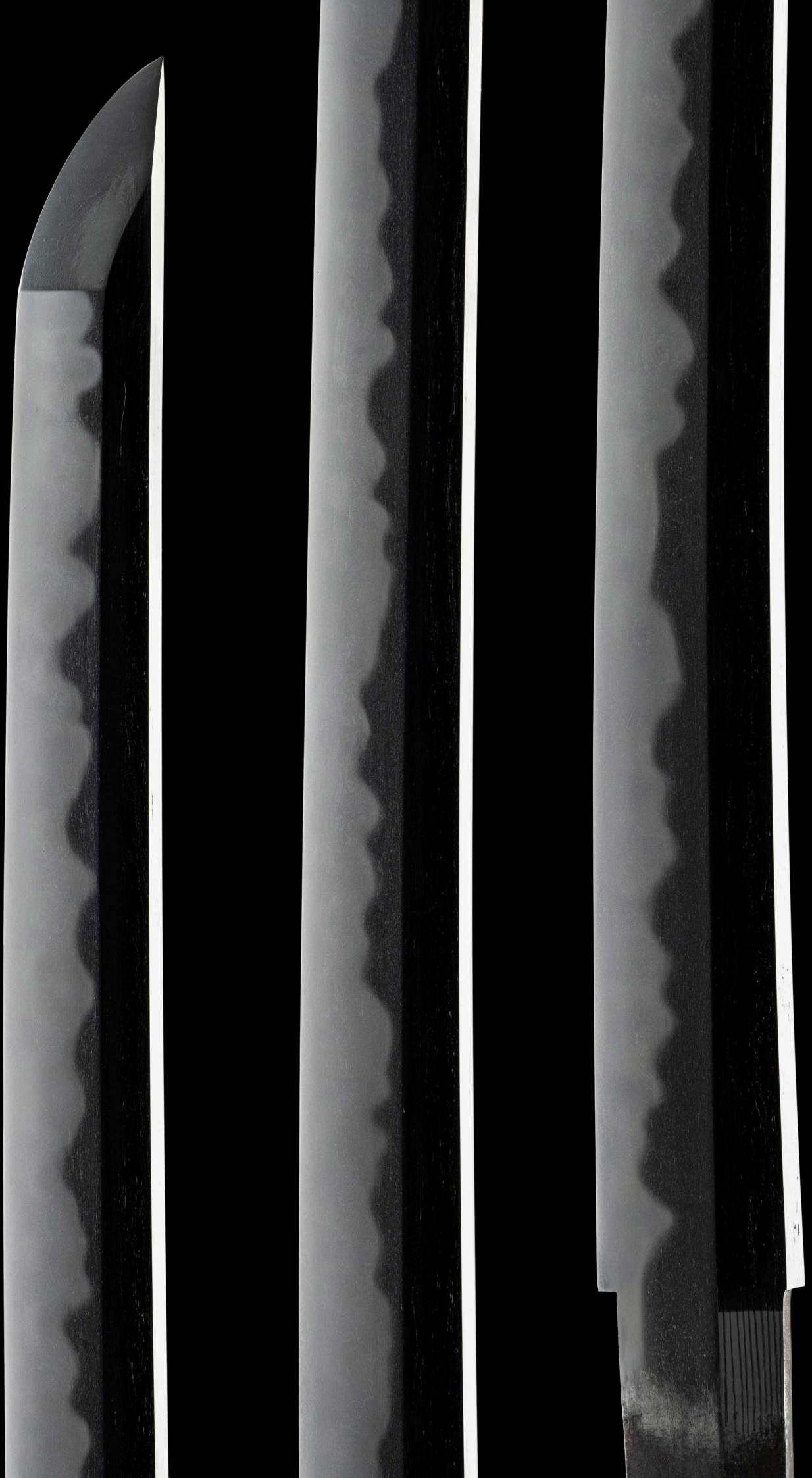
Blade length ~ 71.2 cm

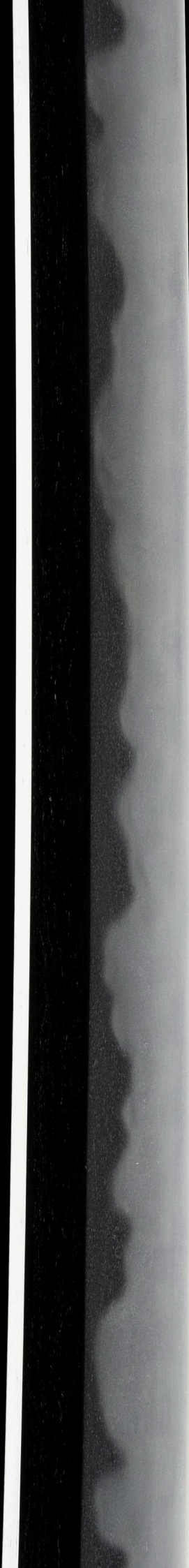
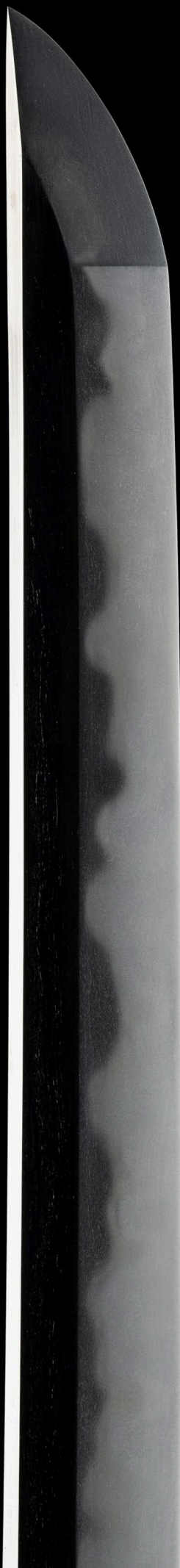
時在丙午弥生探山識「花押」

Toki ari Hinoe-uma Yayoi Tazan shirusu + kaô

Written by Tazan [Tanobe Michihiro] in the third month in the Year of the Horse of this era (March 2026) + monogram









A *hakikake* (brushed) *bôshi* with *komaru*, round turn back.



A close-up photograph of several curved blades, likely from a Japanese sword, arranged vertically. The blades are dark and feature a prominent, wavy, light-colored pattern known as gunome-chôji-midare. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the texture of the metal and the sharp edges of the blades. The background is dark, making the blades stand out.

Simply amazing *gunome-chôji-midare*.

The hamon is a vibrant, dynamic mix of chôji and gunome, characterized by significant variation. It is rich with ashi, thick nie, and sunagashi. The nioiguchi is bright and clear, concluding in a sugu-komaru bôshi. This is a healthy, superior masterpiece that demonstrates the smith's skill at its absolute peak.

Tanobe-sensei, March 2026



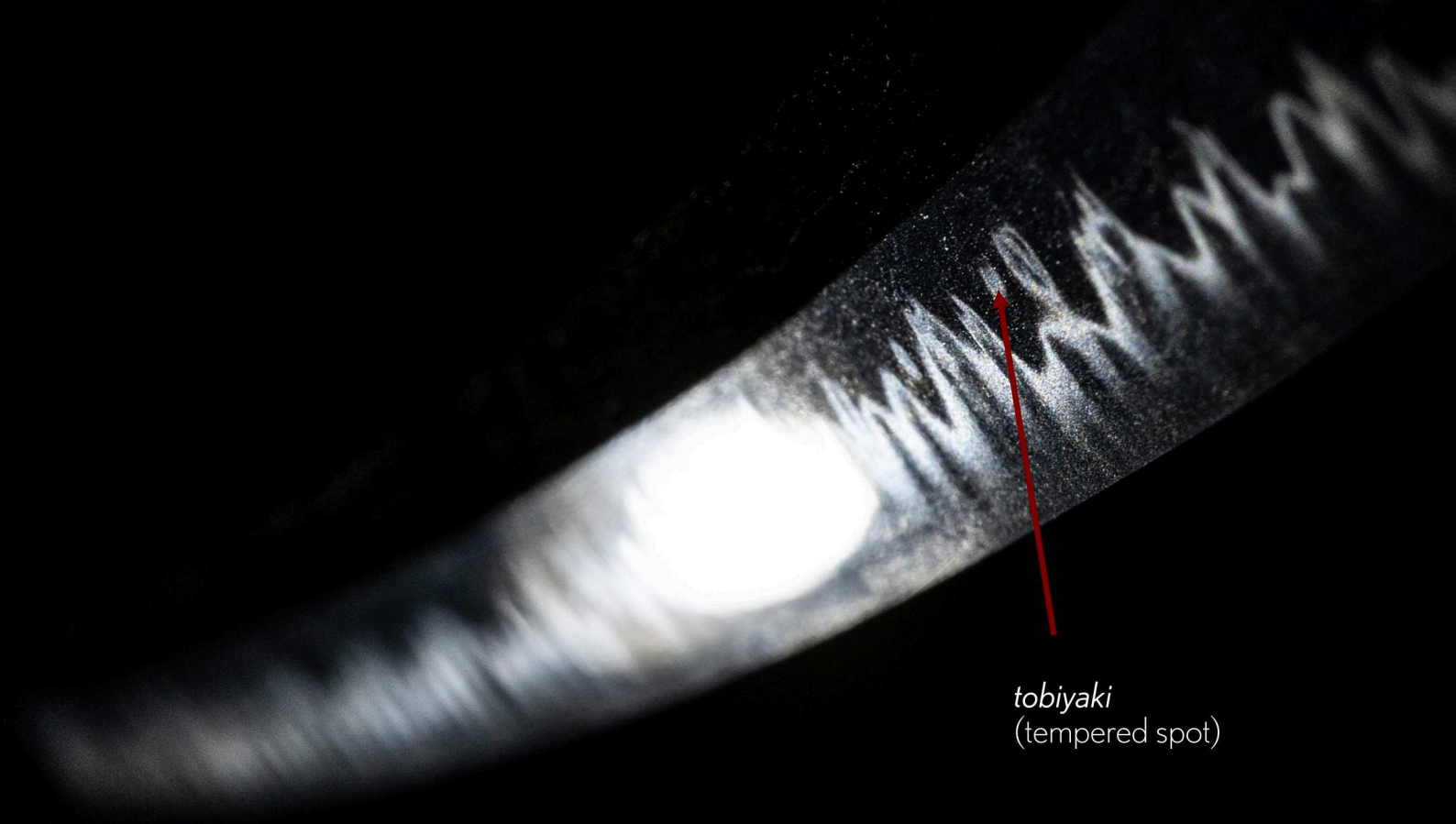
The serenity of *sunagashi*, the brushed effect seen on top swords. Reminiscent of a zen rock garden.

sunagashi





A dense, tightly forged *ko-itame hada*.



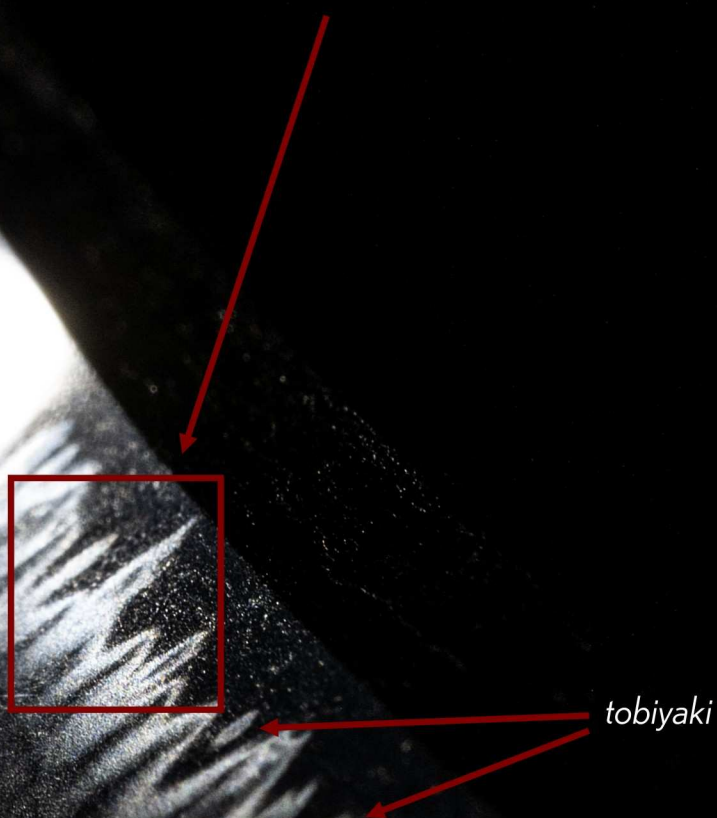
tobiyaki
(tempered spot)

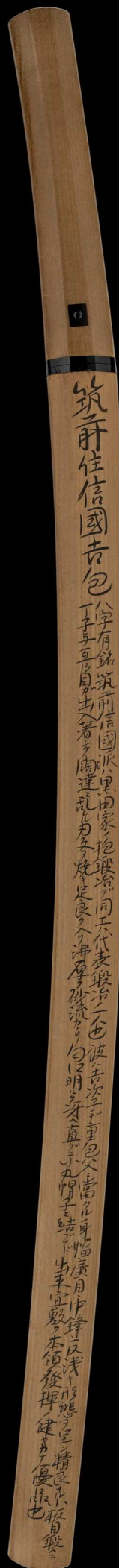
This is hamon energy.



The hamon flares well into the *ji*, body of the sword in such an impressive manner.

The *chôji* (clove blossom bud) here is in the shape known as *ika-no-atama chôji*, (squid head, how endearing) which is similar to the workmanship found on *Fukuoka-Ishidô* swordsmith *Moritsugu*, whose works we have handled at UJ - including a fine *jûyô tôken* piece. Interestingly enough, both *Yoshikane* and *Moritsugu* worked in the *Enpô era* and in *Fukuoka* in *Chikuzen* plus were patrons of the *Kuroda fief*. Each smith rated *jô-saku*, and both died within a few years of each other (*Yoshikane* in 1693 and *Moritsugu* in 1701 at 69). Surely they would have had a few glasses of sake together after a long hot day in the forge. With squid, no doubt.





Shirasaya
(protective scabbard)



gold *habaki* with
copper ground

*Kuro ni shu-moyô
uchigatana-koshirae*
(黒に朱模様打刀拵)

*Uchigatana-koshirae
featuring vermillion patterns
on a black background*

Crafted during the
Modern period

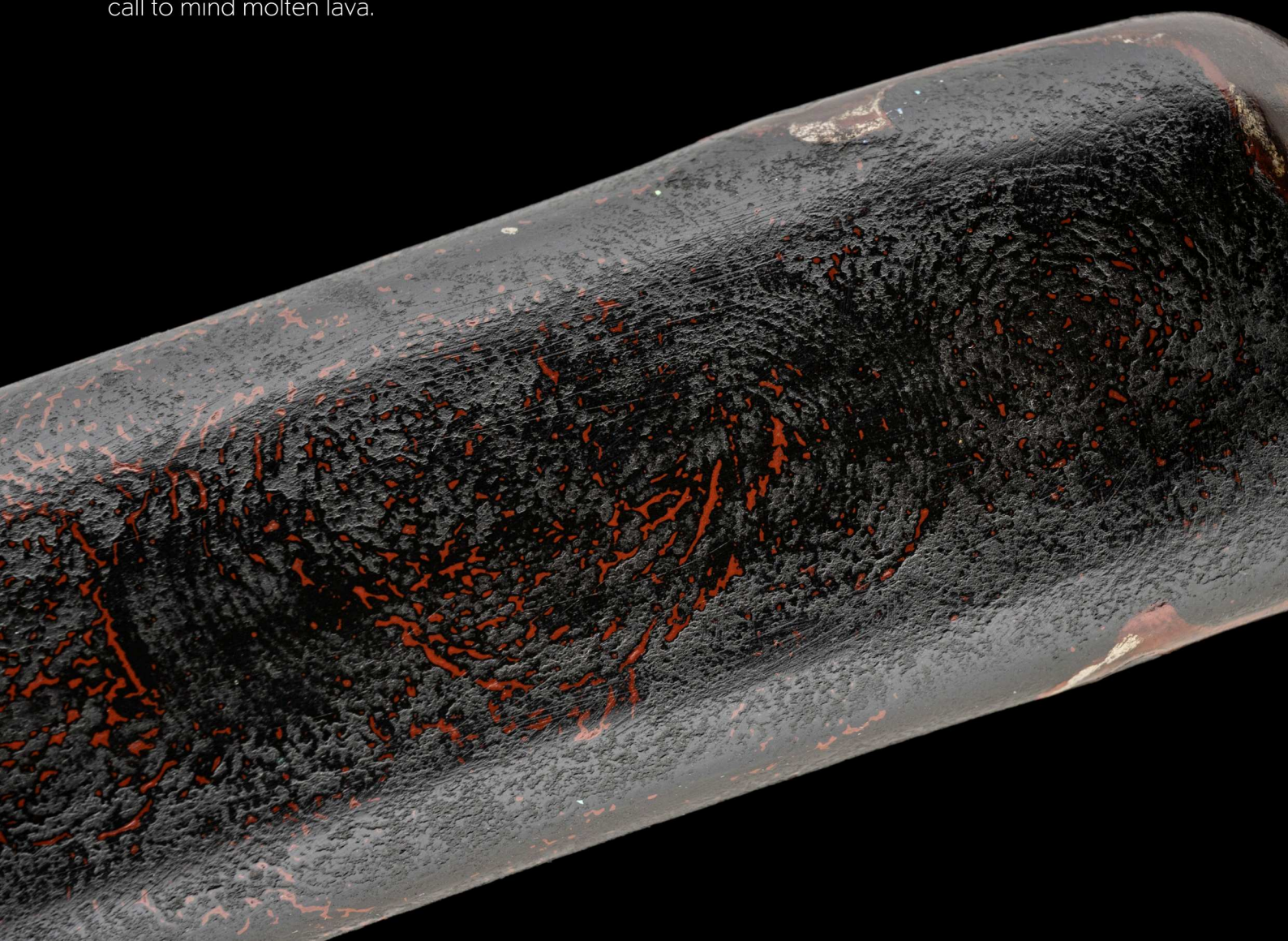


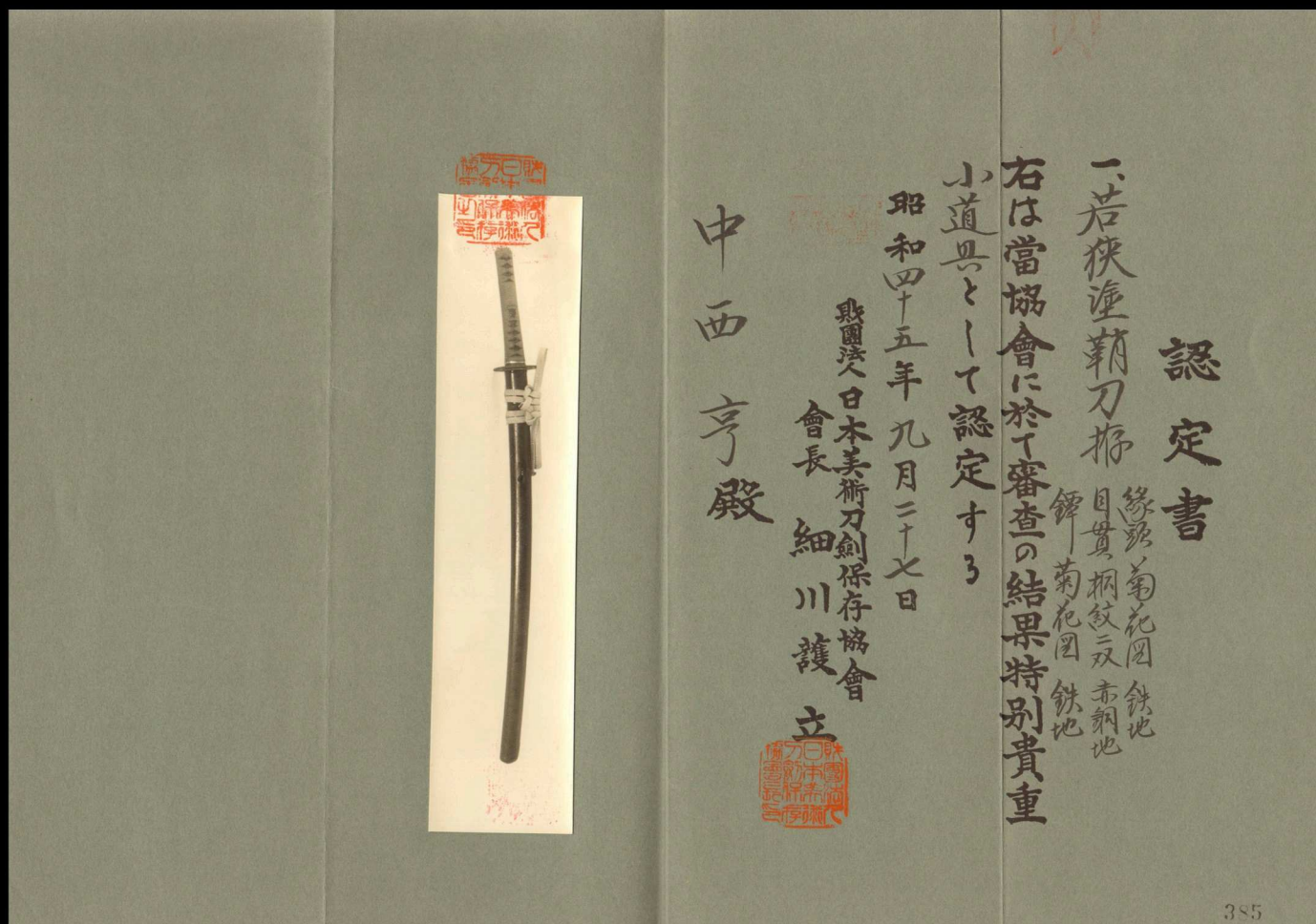
NTHK-NPO Kanteisho
Certificate of Authenticity



How hot do you like it?

The deep red swirls of the *saya* lacquer
call to mind molten lava.





NBTHK Tokubetsu Kichô Certificate of Designation

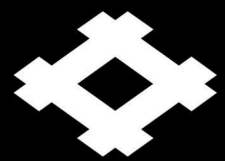
A koshirae designated as *Especially Precious*
by the Society for the Preservation of the Japan Art Sword

Issued in the 45th year of Showa (1970), September 27th

One,

*Uchigatana-koshirae lacquered in Wakasa-nuri style
Fuchigashira with chrysanthemum motif, iron ground
Menuki with a pair of paulownia crests, shakudô ground
Tsuba with chrysanthemum motif, iron ground*

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai
(NBTHK)



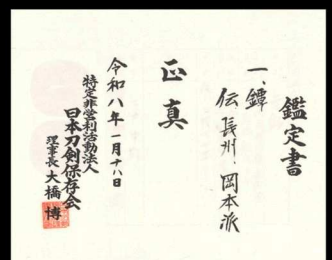
Igeta-mon

This finely made *tsuba* is by the *Okamoto* school, one of the leading lineages of *Chôshû* province, a principal centre of *tsuba* production.

Chôshû tsuba trace back to the early Edo period and fall broadly into two traditions: the *Shôami* lineage, established from the *Kan'ei* era (1624-1644), and the *Umetada* lineage, which rose to prominence during *Genroku* (1688-1704). The *Okamoto* school belongs to the older *Shôami* tradition.

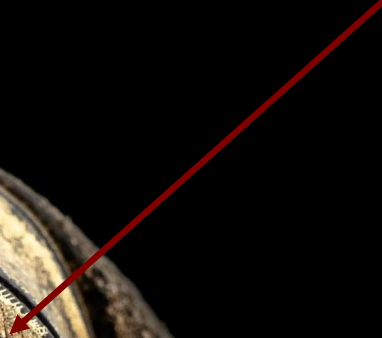
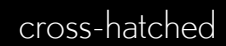
The *tsuba* is a characteristic example of *Chôshû* work - rounded square in form, substantial in scale.

The front bears an *Igeta* (well-crib) crest; the reverse, a chrysanthemum that harmonizes perfectly with the *kashira*. Paulownia and vine scrollwork fill the surrounding areas. The combination of prestigious motifs and the mid-Edo period of production suggests a commission for a *daimyô* family.





(reverse)

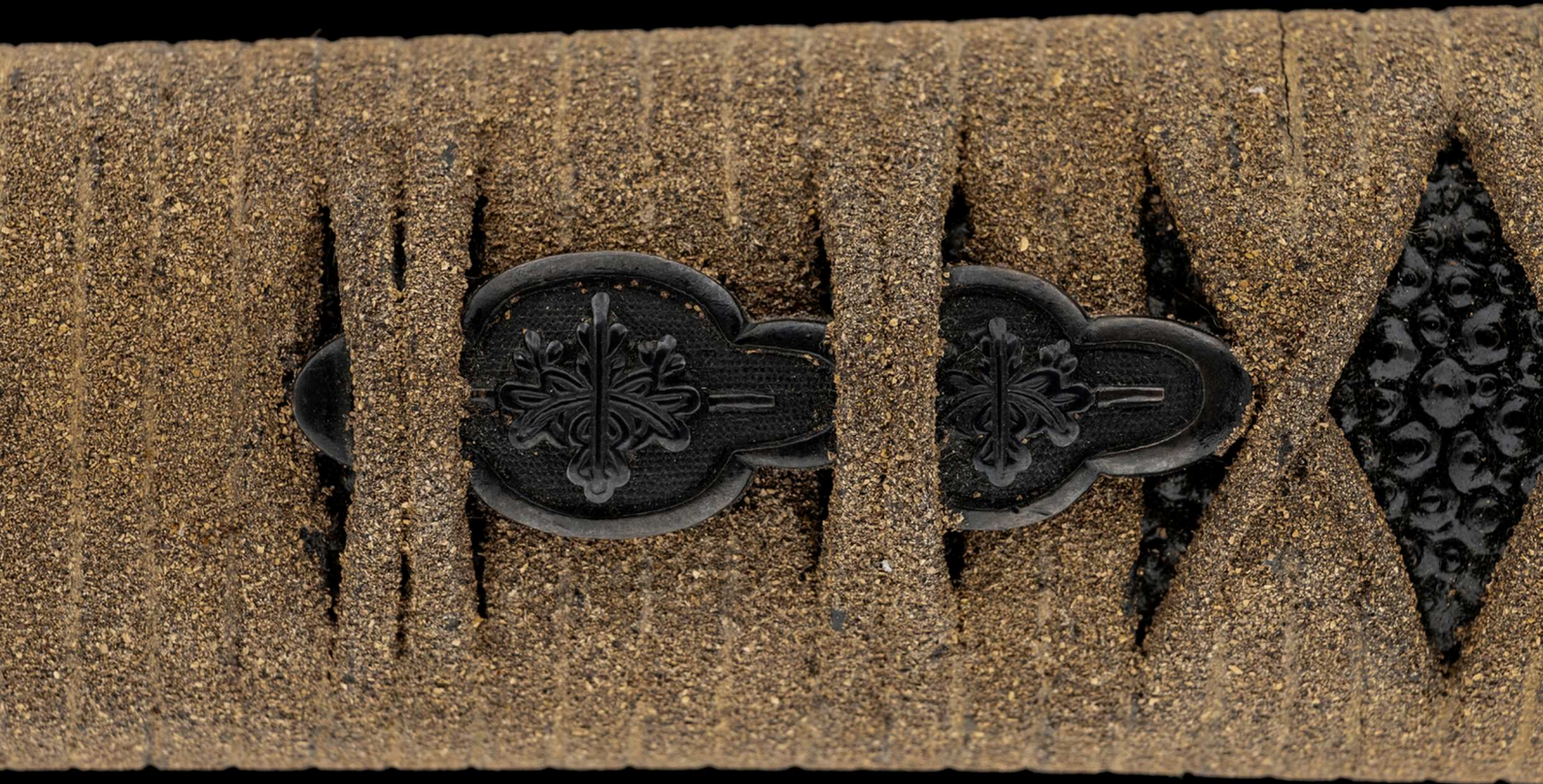
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Nagasaki - and *Hirado* in particular - served as Japan's principal gateway for foreign trade, and the influx of Western influence reached the metalworkers producing sword fittings. The result was a departure from established Japanese conventions toward a more ornate and exotic aesthetic.

This set is a strong example of that tradition. The *kashira* is carved in the round as a fully three-dimensional arrangement of flower petals with fine crosshatched inlay worked across the surface that only reveals itself on close inspection. The combination of sculptural ambition and exquisite detail is characteristic of *Nagasaki* work at its most inventive.



The *tsuka* is covered in black-lacquered *samekawa* and wrapped in *fusube-kawa* (smoked leather) in a unique *kawari-maki* style.



The *menuki* are *shakudô*, featuring *kiri-mon*. Where the crest is more commonly gilded, here it is left in the natural black of the metal – a deliberate choice that ties them to the black *samekawa* and the dark tones of the *fusube-kawa*.





Pearl white koshirae bag

ARIGATO!

THANK YOU FOR DOWNLOADING THIS PDF DESCRIPTION.

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DESCRIPTIONS AND AVAILABILITY ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE.

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