



ITEM# UJKA508

CURRENTLY AVAILABLE

A 'KANE' KATANA

SIGNED, SUE-KOTÔ LATE MUROMACHI (TENBUN ERA: 1532-1555)

Swordsmith: Kane (*ika-kire*) (*Sue-Seki*) - 兼, 以下切 (末関)
Measurements: Length: 69.9cm (*suriage*) Sori: 1.3cm Moto-haba: 3.14cm Weight: 675g
Jihada: Well-forged itame-hada with mokume-hada with shirake-utsuri and chikei
Hamon: Bright sanbonsugi with sunagashi, kinsuji and midare-komi bôshi
Certificate #1: NBTHK Hozon (*sword Worthy of Preservation*)
Certificate #2-5: NTHK-NPO Kanteishô (*sword, koshirae, tsuba and fk certified as Authentic*)
Authentication: Sayagaki by Nozomi-san (*shodô artist*)
Included: Shirasaya, Edo koshirae, fabric bags, kit, printed description

\$7,700

The Seki smiths of Mino province were active in the latter part of the *Muromachi* period, particularly after the *Ônin War*, and are known collectively as *Sue-Seki*. Responding to surging wartime demand, this group forged for reliability under real combat conditions, sharp, resilient, and unlikely to fail at the moment it mattered most. This blade has been shortened from an original cutting edge of over 80cm, and as a result only the first character of the signature, "*Kane*" survives. The *hamon* is a textbook example of *sanbonsugi*, a *togari* pattern that "jumps" every third pass like a heartbeat. The handsome set of *koshirae* features a hawk on the *tsuba* staring down from among plum blossoms and on the *fuchi-kashira*, a young rain dragon caught mid-motion, growing into its full power. For anyone taking their first step into Japanese swords, this is a great place to start. A *Sengoku*-era katana with an eye-catching *hamon* and *koshirae* with a story worth recounting.



Saki-kasane: 4.0mm

Moto-kasane: 5.3mm

Kissaki: 4.01cm

Saki-haba: 2.13cm

Nagasa: 69.9cm

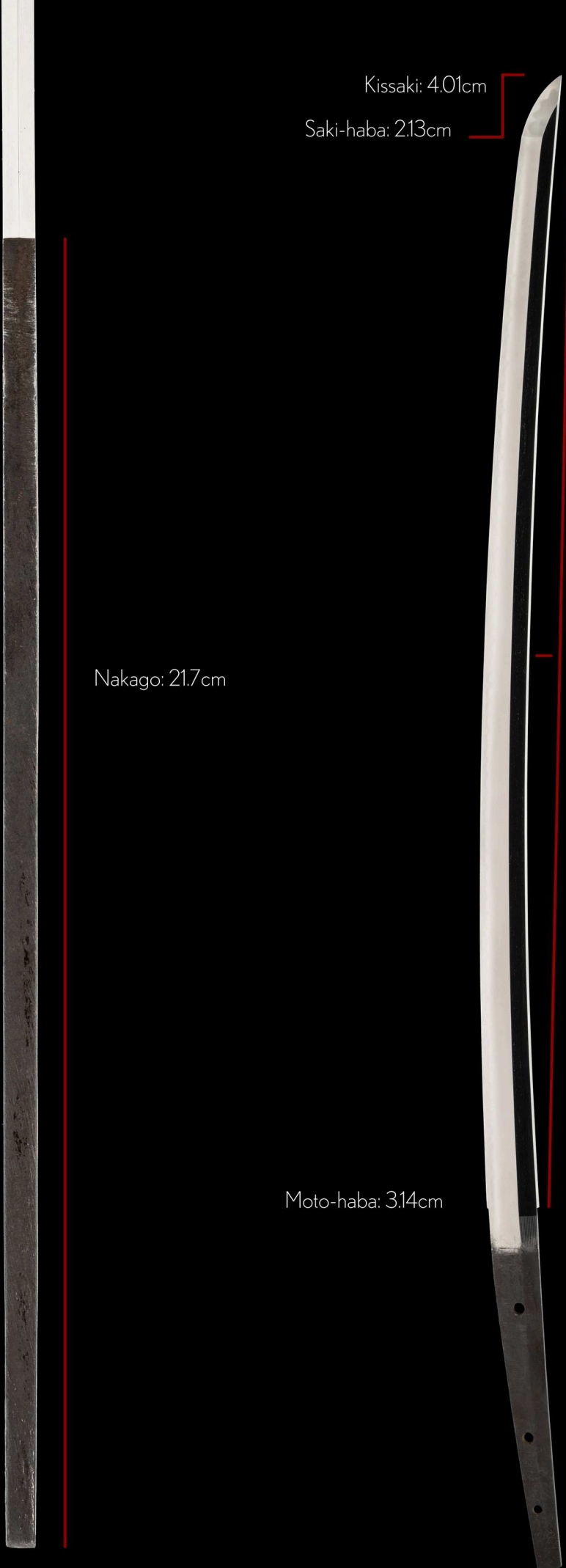
Nakago: 21.7cm

Sori: 1.3cm

Omosa: 675g

Moto-haba: 3.14cm

Mekugi-ana: 3



Sword production in *Seki*, in *Mino* province, is traditionally traced to smiths of the *Kaneshige* (金重) lineage, descendants of the *Yamato* tradition, who relocated there toward the end of the *Kamakura* period. Favourable geography, rich in iron sand and positioned along major trade routes, allowed *Seki* to become a leading centre of sword production through the *Muromachi* period, producing blades built for battlefield durability. Smiths such as *Shizu Saburô Kaneuji* (志津三郎兼氏), along with successive generations working under the names *Kanesada* (兼定) and *Kanemoto* (兼元), helped establish the *Mino* tradition as one of the Five Traditions, alongside *Sôshû*, *Yamashiro*, *Yamato*, and *Bizen*.

The *Seki* smiths active in the latter part of the *Muromachi* period, particularly after the *Ônin War* (1467-1477), are known collectively as *Sue-Seki*. Responding to surging wartime demand, this group produced vast quantities of blades. While smiths such as *Kanesada* and *Kanemoto* achieved individual renown, many others worked under the shared character "*Kane*" across lineages that remain difficult to untangle today. What was always clear, though, was the standard. The smiths of Mino province, working in and around *Seki*, forged for reliability under real combat conditions, sharp, resilient, and unlikely to fail at the moment it mattered most. A tradition defined by dependability.

This blade has been shortened from an original cutting edge of over 80cm, and as a result only the first character of the signature, "*Kane*" survives. While the NBTHK has not identified the smith by name, the NTHK-NPO has attributed the blade to *Kanemoto*, a noted line of smiths of the *Sue-Seki* tradition. The *hada* shows *itame* mixed with varied dimensions *mokume-hada* with *utsuri* appearing across the surface. The *hamon* is a textbook example of *sanbonsugi*, a *togari* (pointed) pattern that 'jumps' every third pass like a heartbeat - a *hamon* synonymous with the *Kanemoto* family.

The *koshirae* has a fine story of its own. On the *tsuba*, a hawk stares down from among plum blossoms, sharp eyed, and decisive, the very qualities the samurai class prized most. Look closer at the *nakago* and you'll find the same hawk again, its feathers echoed in the *takanoha* file marks cut into the tang itself. Then there is the *fuchi-kashira*, a young rain dragon caught mid-motion, growing into its full power. Courage already earned, and strength still forming, both carried by the same sword.

For anyone taking their first step into Japanese swords, this is a great place to start. A *Sengoku*-era katana with an eye-catching *hamon* and *koshirae* with a story worth recounting.



Location: *Seki in Mino province*

Swordsmith: *Kane* [rest of signature cut-off]

suriage-nakago (shortened tang)

kiri and takanoha yasurime

(horizontal and hawk feather file marks)

Judging from the number of *mekugi-ana*, this blade appears to have been shortened twice.

The original *mekugi-ana* is the lowest of the group, and above it, a boundary line in the *yasurime* (file marks) can be observed.

Based on the position of this boundary, the original edge is estimated to have extended roughly 13 cm further than it does today, indicating that the blade was originally a considerably longer sword, with a length of approximately 83.0 cm.

Traces of the original *hamon*.
The edge would have started
around here.

Boundary of original file marks

taka-no-ha (hawk feather) *yasurime*

Original *mekugi-ana*

兼 (Kane)



A large, confident character '*Kane*' (pronounced *Kah-nay*), remains on the *nakago*, chiseled some 500 years ago.

(ura, reverse)

kurijiri
(chestnut shaped *nakago-jiri*)



保 存
25201311



No 3004510

鑑定書

一刀

銘 兼 (以下切) (末関)

長 二尺三寸一分

右は當協會に於て審査の結果保存刀剣と
鑑定しこれを証する

平成二十六年 一月三十一日

公益財団法人 日本美術刀剣保存協會



兵庫 教育委員会
第 96816 号
昭和 37 年 10 月 27 日

平成 25. 10. 16

NBTHK Hozon
Certificate of Designation

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

Issued in the 26th year of Heisei (2014), January 31st

One, Katana

Mei (signature)
Kane (ika-kire) (Sue-Seki)

Nagasa (length)
2-shaku 3-sun 1-bu (69.9cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai
(NBTHK)



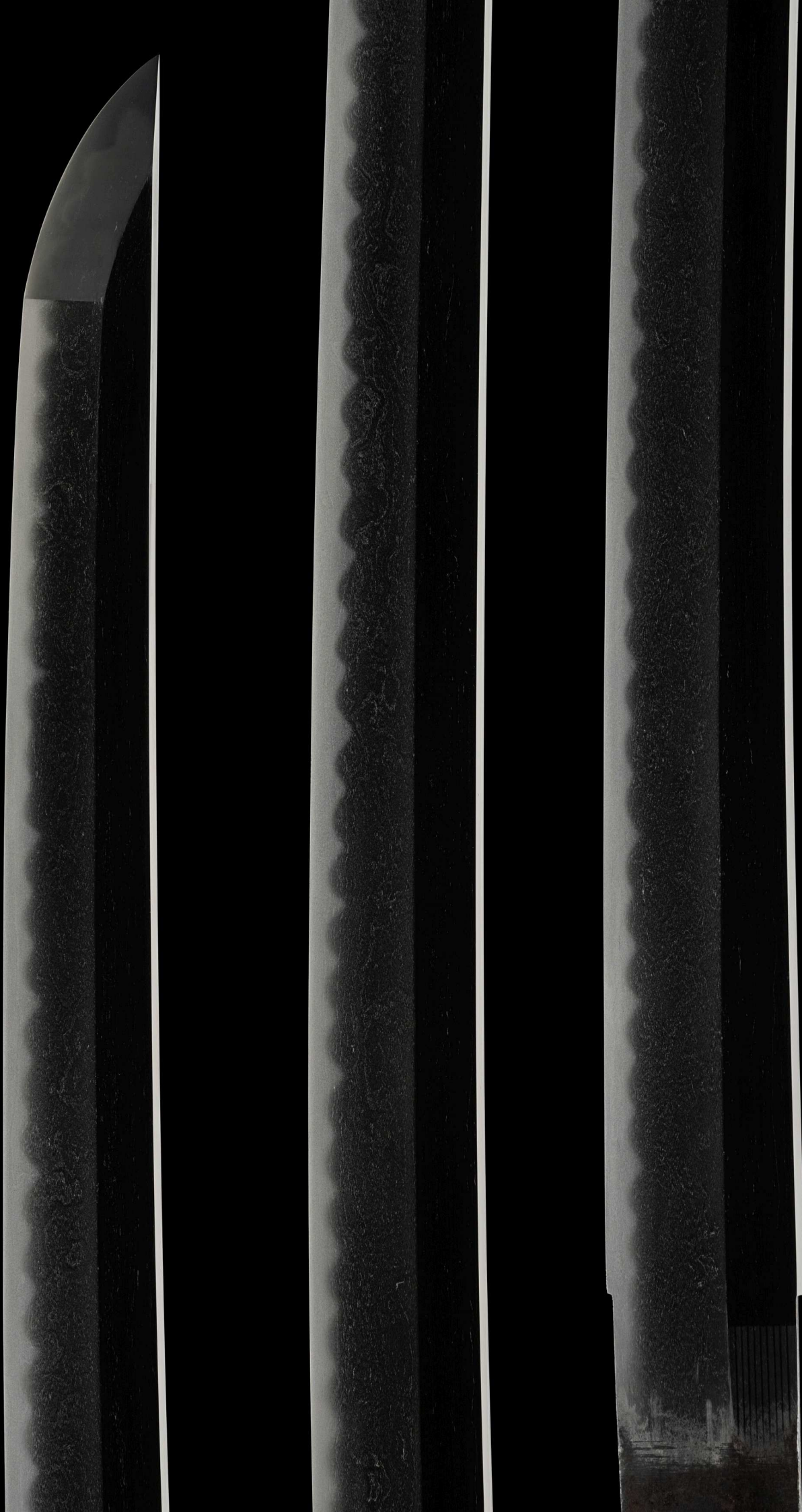
刀
Katana
Katana

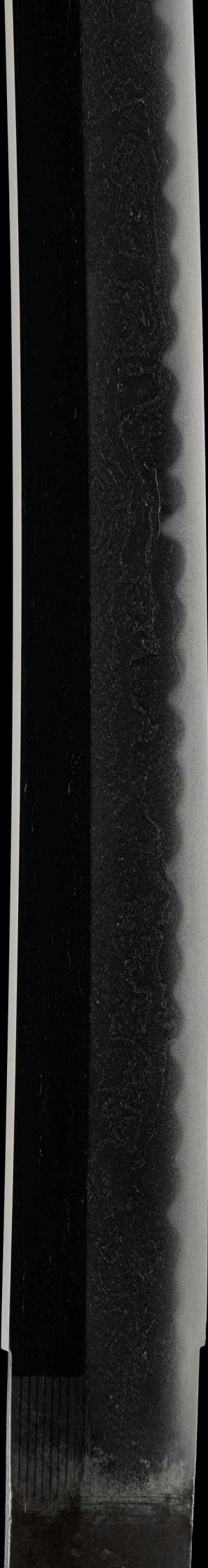
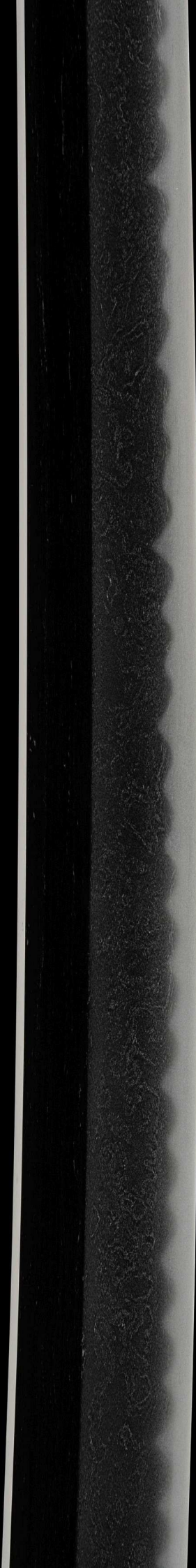
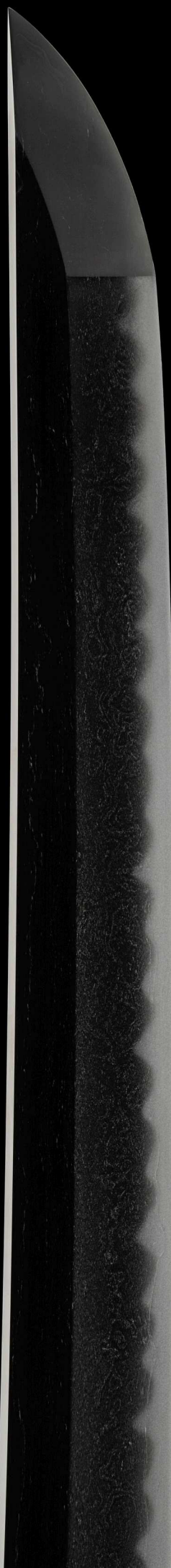
兼(以下切) 末関
Kane (ika kire) Sue-Seki
Kane (cut-off), Sue-Seki school

時代室町後期
Jidai Muromachi kôki
Late Muromachi period (1500~1573)

長貳尺参寸一分有之
Nagasa 2-shaku 3-sun 1-bu kore ari
Blade length 69.9 cm

令和八丙午年如月吉日誌之
Reiwa hachi hinoe-uma doshi Kisaragi kichijitsu kore o shirusu
Written on a lucky day in the second month in the eighth year of Reiwa period, the Year of the Horse (February 2026)

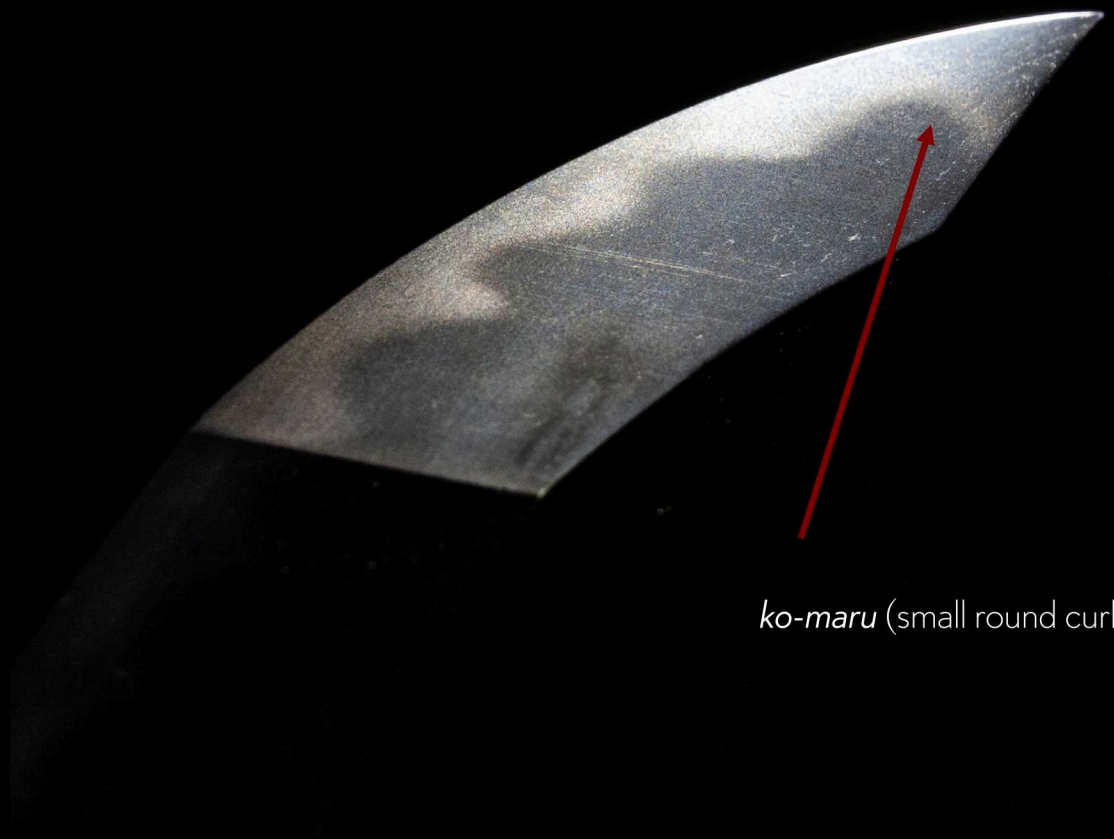




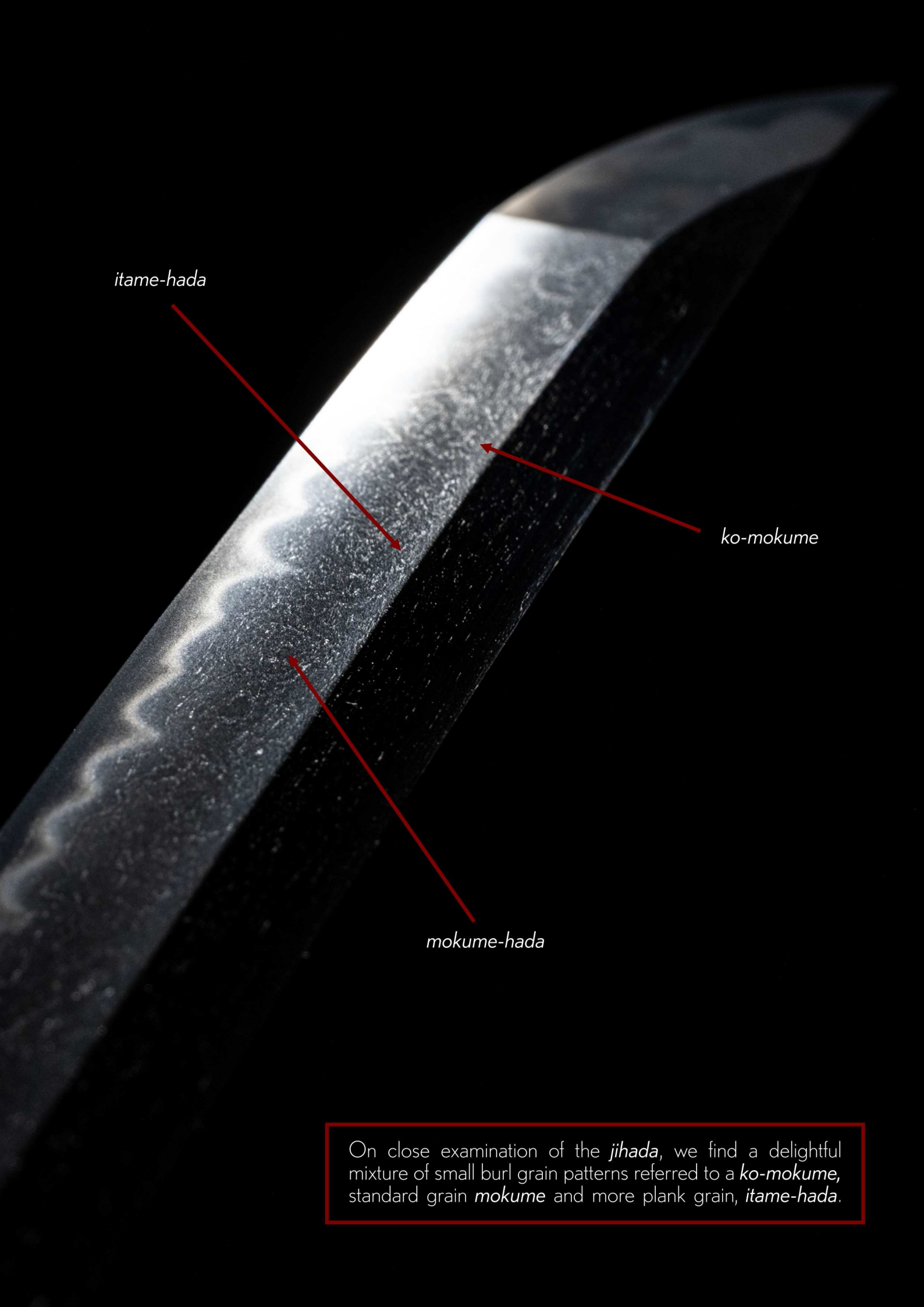


midare-komi

The *bôshi* is a wavy *midare-komi* with a slight *ko-maru kaeri* (turn back). Both of which are classic features of the Mino tradition.



ko-maru (small round curl)

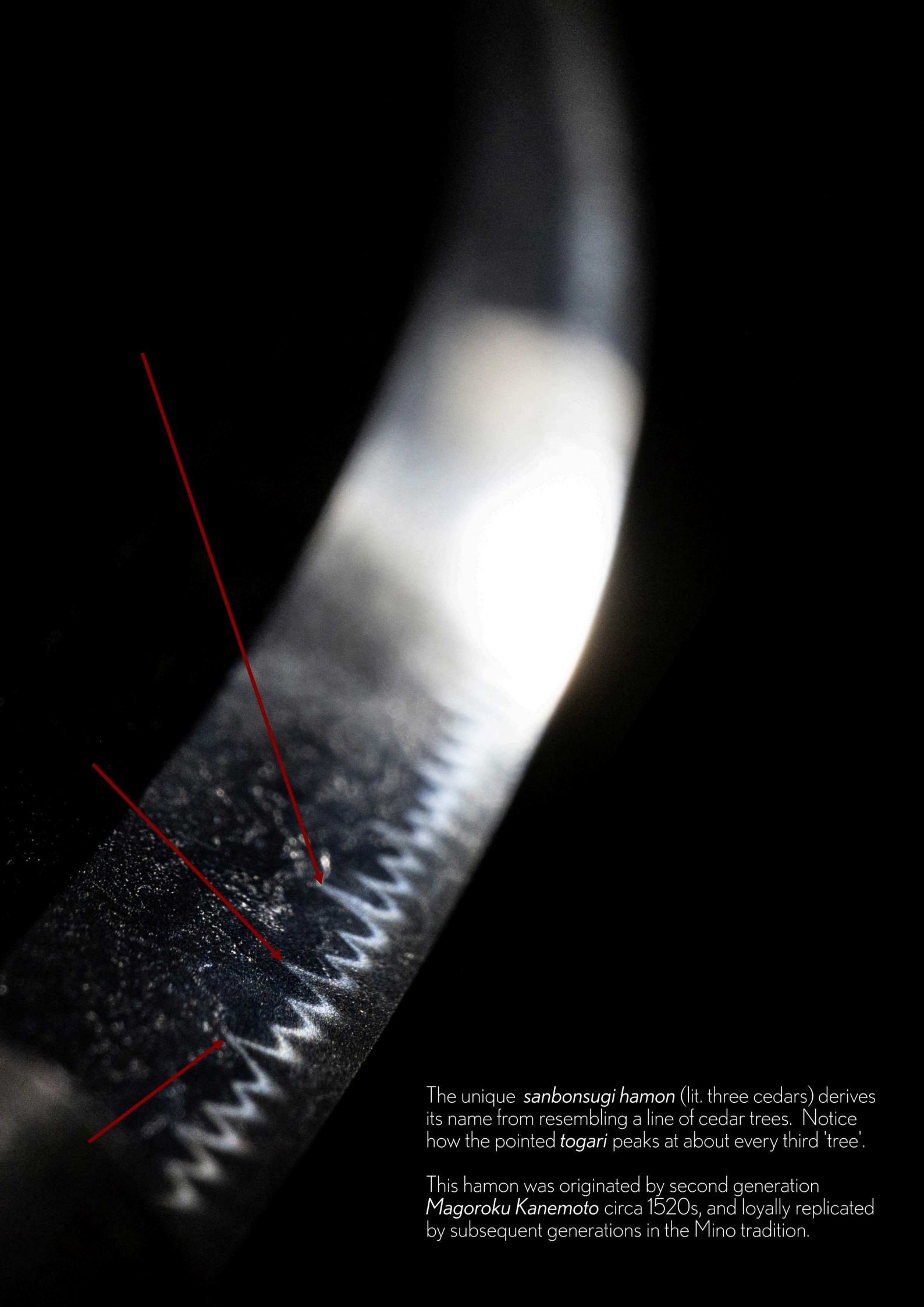


itame-hada

ko-mokume

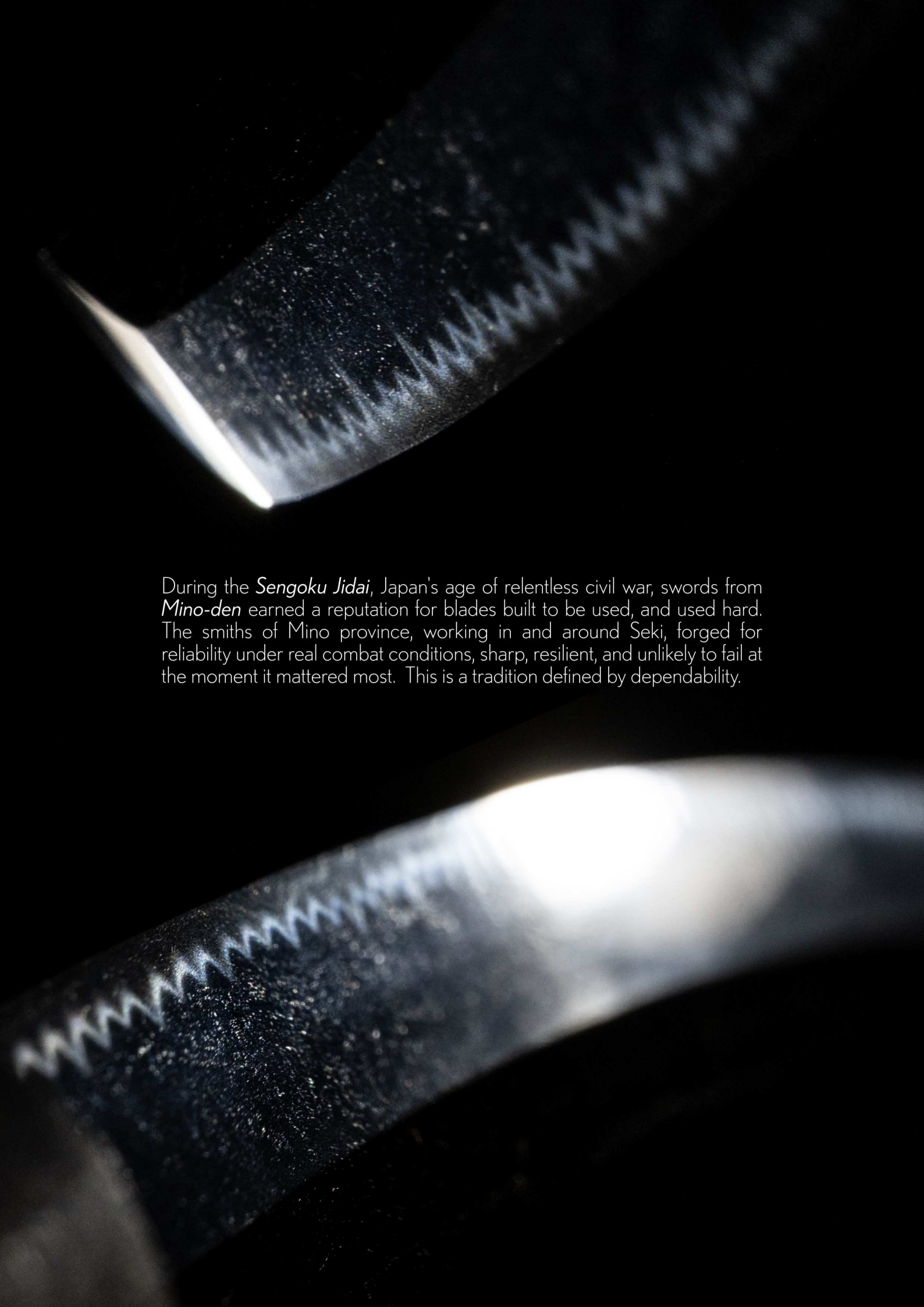
mokume-hada

On close examination of the *jihada*, we find a delightful mixture of small burl grain patterns referred to a *ko-mokume*, standard grain *mokume* and more plank grain, *itame-hada*.



The unique *sanbonsugi hamon* (lit. three cedars) derives its name from resembling a line of cedar trees. Notice how the pointed *togari* peaks at about every third 'tree'.

This hamon was originated by second generation *Magoroku Kanemoto* circa 1520s, and loyally replicated by subsequent generations in the Mino tradition.

A close-up, high-contrast photograph of a sword blade. The blade is dark and textured, with a prominent, light-colored, wavy hamon pattern running along its length. The blade is angled diagonally across the frame, with the tip pointing towards the upper left. The background is black, making the blade stand out. The lighting highlights the texture of the metal and the sharpness of the hamon.

During the *Sengoku Jidai*, Japan's age of relentless civil war, swords from *Mino-den* earned a reputation for blades built to be used, and used hard. The smiths of Mino province, working in and around Seki, forged for reliability under real combat conditions, sharp, resilient, and unlikely to fail at the moment it mattered most. This is a tradition defined by dependability.

shirake-utsuri



cedar tree inspiration

Swirling dark *chikei*, a beaming hamon,
a blade with contrast and character.

chikei

A close-up, diagonal view of a sword blade. The blade is dark and textured, with a prominent, bright, wavy line (hamon) running along its length. A red arrow points from the word 'chikei' to a dark, swirling pattern (chikei) on the blade's surface.



Brushed *sunagashi* is captured here.

*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
(1780~1868)



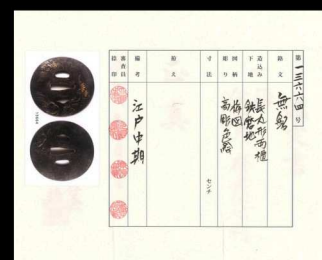
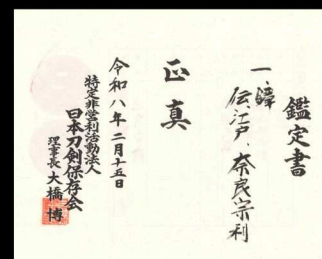
NTHK-NPO Kanteisho
Certificate of Authenticity



This superb *tsuba* is the work of *Nara Muneyoshi* (奈良宗利), fifth generation head of the *Nara* school, active during the mid-Edo period.

The *Nara* family originally worked as lacquerers. The school's founder, *Toshiteru* (利輝), was appointed official lacquerer to the Edo shogunate. He was accomplished enough to take part in construction work at *Nikkô Tôshô-gû*, but it was his successor, the second generation *Toshimune* (利宗), who turned the family toward metalwork. Among the two dominant schools of the Edo period, the *Gotô* and the *Yokoya* families, the *Nara* school avoided intricate carving in favour of overall elegance, establishing a distinctive style of its own.

The *tsuba*'s beautiful design combines plum blossoms, flowing water, and an awesome hawk, ready to pounce on its prey.



The nakago's file marks are cut in *takanoha yasurime*, hawk feather file marks, echoing the very hawk perched among plum blossoms on the tsuba. It feels less like coincidence than intention, the hawk's courage and sharp judgement, paired with the plum's quiet resilience, carried from the steel outward into the fittings.

Where the hawk speaks to strength already earned, the rain dragon on the *fuchi-kashira* speaks to strength still forming, a symbol of growth and advancement. The koshirae tells a story from three angles, courage, endurance, and the promise of what is yet to come.





(reverse)



Fuchi-kashira
amaryû no zu (rain dragon)

This brilliant *fuchi-kashira* has been attributed to the *Myôchin* school of *Tosa* province and features a wonderful rain dragon. It should be noted that the piece is in fact signed, appearing to read *Yoshinaga*, though the NTHK-NPO certificate lists it as *mumei*, unsigned. We are returning to the NTHK-NPO with this discovery, and the attribution may be refined as a result.

The *Myôchin* school traces its origins back to the *Hôgen* era (1156-1159) of the *Heian* period, and was once the most celebrated lineage of armour makers in Japan. It was not until the *Keichô* era (1596-1615), under the 19th generation head of the main line, that the school began devoting serious attention to the production of sword fittings. From that point on, members of the school relocated to various regions across the country, eventually establishing themselves as one of the major schools of fittings makers.

The *Tosa Myôchin* school, whose founder *Ki no Munehide* (紀宗栄) had studied under the *Akasaka* school, was known for *tsuba* that struck a balance between the rugged strength characteristic of armourer's style *tsuba* and elegant openwork design.

This *fuchi-kashira* is carved in an iron ground with a rich, textured patina, depicting a spirited rain dragon rendered in smooth, flowing relief. The rain dragon is regarded as the young form of the dragon, destined to mature into a full dragon in time, a symbol of advancement and growth.



The rain dragon was also a favoured *emblem of rainmaking rituals*.
We could definitely have used this rain dragon in the UK this summer!





The *tsuka* (hilt) pairs white *samekawa* with navy blue *tsuka ito* in a combination that has long defined the classic Edo aesthetic. Time has softened the *tsuka ito* with a gentle fade, and together with the *saya*, the *koshirae* appears to have survived largely as it was made, in the late Edo period. The *samekawa* itself shows remarkably little wear, a sign that this piece was cared for and cherished.



The *menuki* depict a crawling dragon, which represents a dragon still close to the earth, not yet ascended to the heavens. Worked in copper with gold plating.





兼 (Kane)

以 (i)
下 (ka)
切 (kire)

末 (Sue)
関 (seki)



Tsunagi

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



*Beautiful koshirae bag with
traditional tama design.*

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