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ITEM# UJKA518

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A NIDAI KINMICHI KATANA

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

Swordsmith:	***Iga no Kami Fujiwara Kinmichi*** (伊賀守藤原金道)
Measurements:	**Length:** 69.1cm (*ubu*) **Sori:** 1.6cm **Moto-haba:** 3.07cm **Weight:** 775g
Jihada:	*Expertly forged ko-itame with nagare, ji-nie and plenty of chikei*
Hamon:	*Dynamic swells of gunome-midare with hako-midare, sunagashi, kinsuji, yahazu-ba*
Certificate #1:	**NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon** *(sword Especially Worthy of Preservation)*
Certificate #2-4:	**NTHK-NPO Kanteishô** (*koshirae, fuchi-kashira and tsuba certified as Authentic)*
Fujishiro rank:	**Chûjô-saku** (*ranked as an above average swordsmith*)
Sharpness:	**Wazamono** (maker of sharp swords)
Authentication:	**Sayagaki by Tanzan-sensei** (*Tanobe Michihiro*)
Included:	Shirasaya, aogai koshirae, fabric bags, sword care kit, printed description

$16,000

This confident *shintô* katana was forged by the second generation ***Kinmichi***, head of the *Mishina* school of *Kyôto* and holder of the title *Nihon Kaji Sôshô*, the highest honour a swordsmith could attain. He signed it beside a 16-petal *kiku-mon chrysanthemum*. A recognized *wazamono* maker with Mino roots, he forged a wide *gunome-midare* mixed with *hako-midare*, rich in *nie* with *kinsuji*, *sunagashi* and even *yahazu-ba*, and closed it with the family's trademark *Mishina-bôshi*. *Tanobe-sensei*'s *sayagaki* praises its "*strong sense of movement*". The sparkling *aogai-mijin-nuri koshirae* carries a *Genpei War* motif and *Minamoto Yorimitsu* subduing the ogre *Shuten-dôji*. From blade to koshirae, this is a samurai sword worthy of the family that armed the Tokugawa at the *Siege of Ôsaka*.


Saki-kasane: 4.8mm
Moto-kasane: 6.8mm
Nakago: 20.9cm
Omosa: 775g
Kissaki: 3.64cm
Saki-haba: 2.28cm
Nagasa: 69.1cm
Sori: 1.6cm
Moto-haba: 3.07cm
Mekugi-ana: 2

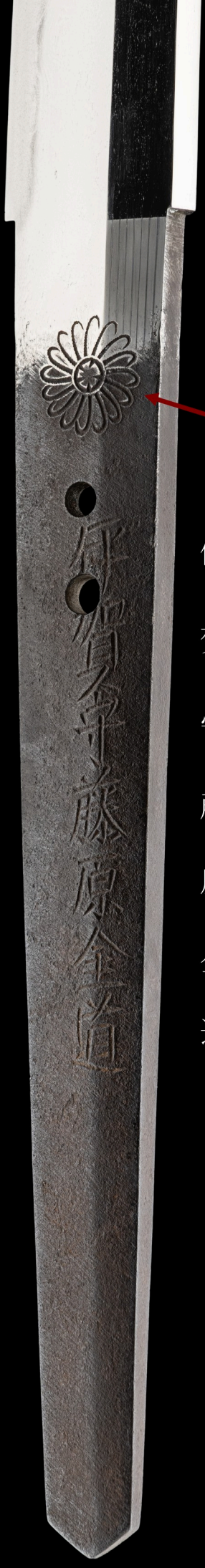
The *Mishina* school traces its roots to *Kanemichi* of *Seki* in *Mino* province. His son, the first generation *Kinmichi*, moved with him to *Kyôto* around the *Bunroku* era (1592 to 1596), and together they laid the foundations of the school. His reputation was made on the eve of the *Siege of Ôsaka*, in the nineteenth year of *Keichô* era (1614), as the *Tokugawa* and the *Toyotomi* prepared for their final confrontation. *Tokugawa Ieyasu* ordered one thousand blades, and *Kinmichi* delivered them with great success. In recognition, *Ieyasu* petitioned the Imperial Court on his behalf, and Kinmichi received the title *Nihon Kaji Sôshô*, the highest honour a swordsmith could attain. From that moment the *Kinmichi* family stood as the foremost house among the swordsmiths of its time.

He was succeeded by his eldest son, the second generation *Kinmichi*, who was active chiefly around the *Manji* era (1658 to 1661). He took over the family headship on his father's death in the sixth year of *Kan'ei* era (1629), and in the fourteenth year of *Kan'ei* era (1637) received the title *Iga no Kami* in his own right. The title *Nihon Kaji Sôshô* passed to him as well, and with it came a new custom. The first generation had kept it off his *nakago*, while the second generation and his successors signed it beside a *kiku-mon* chrysanthemum crest, as the acknowledged head of the swordsmith community. *Kinmichi* died in the third year of *Enpô* era (1675).

This blade by the second generation *Kinmich*i measures 69.1 cm in length. The *mihaba* is wide, the *kasane* of standard thickness, and the *chû-kissaki* slightly elongated. The *nakago* has two *mekugi-ana*, and the second was most likely drilled by a later owner to fine tune the balance to his own preference (*nakago* remains *ubu*). The *jihada* is a *ko-itame* mixed with *mokume*, with *nagare-hada* in places. The *hamon* opens with a traditional *Kyô-yakidashi* and rises into a wide and confident *gunome-midare* mixed with *hako-midare* reaching the *shinogi* in places. Thick *nie* and frequent *kinsuji, sunagashi* and even *yahazu-ba* can be enjoyed. There is a definite Mino influence in this fine katana and the family's trademark *Mishina-bôshi* is also present. *Kinmichi* is also a recognized *wazamono* smith, a maker whose blades were valued for their cutting ability. And *Tanobe-sensei*'s *sayagaki* further calls it an excellent example of the smith's work, with a '*strong sense of movement*'.

The eye-catching *koshirae* features a glossy black *saya* overlaid with *aogai-mijin-nuri*, that sparkles as it catches the the light, and what a presence it will have in the room of its next caretaker. The *tsuka* is classically wrapped in brown *tsuka-ito* with a *fuchi-kashira* and *menuki*, both sharing a *Genpei War* motif, while the iron *tsuba* shows *Minamoto Yorimitsu* subduing the gruesome ogre *Shuten-dôji*. Overall, this koshirae carries a courageous samurai theme that echoes the family history.





Location: *Yamashiro Province*
Title name: *Iga no Kami*
Family name: *Fujiwara*
Swordsmith: *Kinmichi* (second generation)

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

Kiku-mon
Imperial chrysanthemum crest

伊 (I)

賀 (ga, no)

守 (Kami)

藤 (Fuji)

原 (wara)

金 (Kin)

道 (michi)



The *kiku-mon* (chrysanthemum crest) is said to have first been used as an Imperial emblem from the time of Emperor *Go-Toba*, spanning the end of the Heian period into the early Kamakura period. Blades forged by or under the direction of *Go-Toba* bore the chrysanthemum crest on their nakago and are known as *Kiku-gosaku*, of which only a small number survive today.

Records indicate that in the mid-Muromachi period *Shinano no Kami Kanesada* was granted permission by the Imperial Court to use the chrysanthemum crest, though no extant work bearing it has been confirmed.

First generation *Iga no Kami Kinmichi* was granted permission to use the crest even before receiving the title of *Nihon-Kaji-Sôshô*, having presented a tachi to the emperor around the *Tenshô* era (1573-1592). Thereafter, members of the Mishina school also carved the crest, including the second generation *Izumi no Kami Kinmichi* and later *Kinmichi, Tanba no Kami Yoshimichi, Etchû no Kami Masatoshi,* and *Ômi no Kami Hisamichi.*

Inoue Shinkai of *Ôsaka* is a well-known example of a smith who bore the *kiku-mon*. This is said to stem from an oracle received from the tutelary goddess of the *Inoue* family. Following her guidance, he forged a blade and sought to present it to the Imperial Court unsigned, whereupon he was ordered to inscribe both his signature and the *kiku-mon* before offering it, after which he was granted permission to use the crest.

The chrysanthemum crest on a *nakago* thus served as proof of lineage and skill worthy of the Imperial Court, a significant honour among swordsmiths.

Nihon-Kaji-Sôshô
(Supreme master of Japanese sword smithing)



(Ni) 日

(hon) 本

(Ka) 鍛

(ji) 冶

(Sô) 惣

(shô) 匠

Original *mekugi-ana*

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

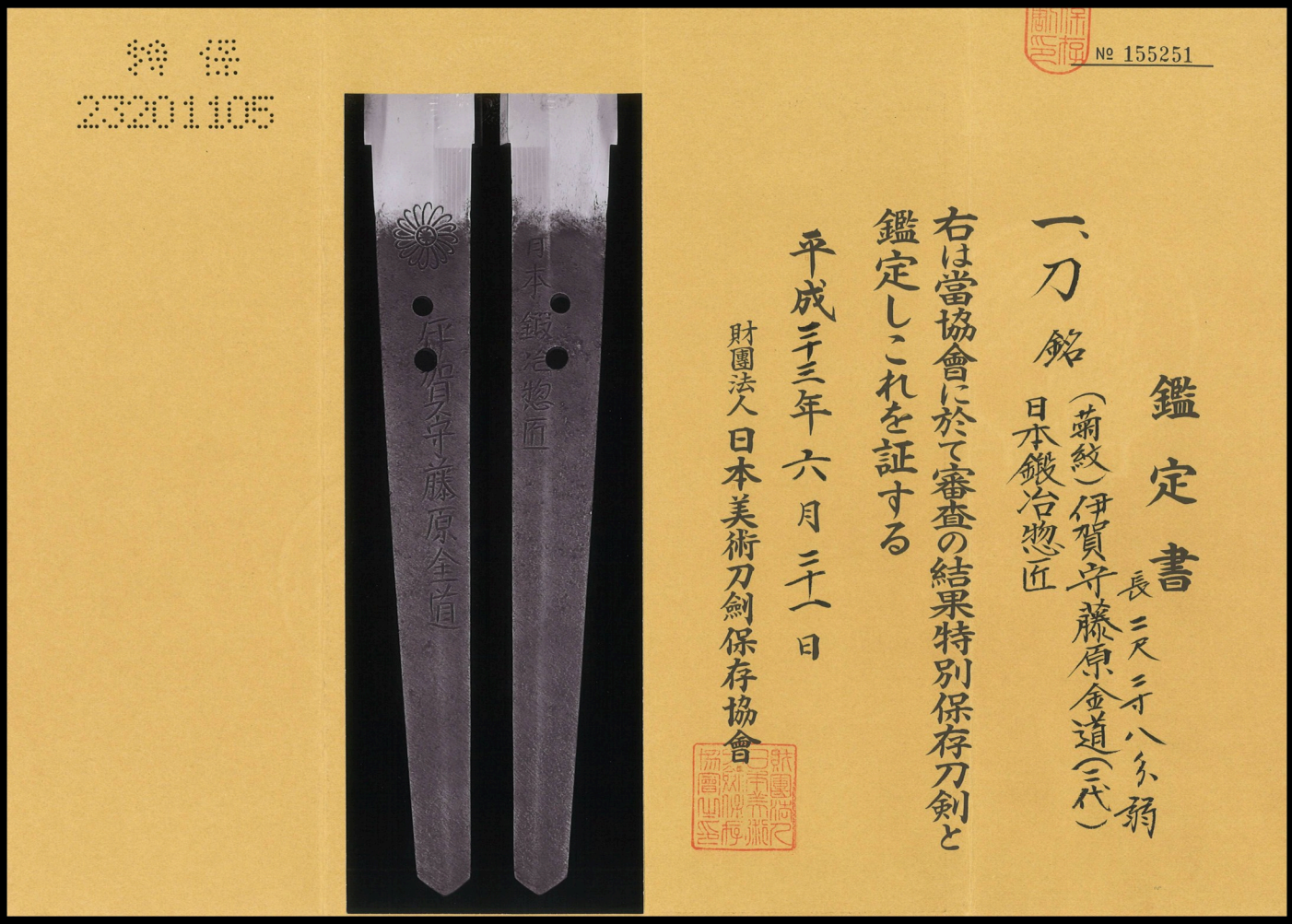
This type of finish is called *kengyo* or sword-shaped. It's impressive.

The title of *Nihon-Kaji-Sôshô* was bestowed upon Kinmichi by the Imperial Court at the recommendation of *Tokugawa Ieyasu*, the first shôgun of the Edo shogunate. How *Kinmichi* earned that recommendation is quite a story.

Ieyasu had triumphed at *Sekigahara* and pacified the realm, yet the *Toyotomi* family remained a thorn in his side, even after the death of *Toyotomi Hideyoshi*. Finishing them off had long been his cherished ambition. So in the nineteenth year of the *Keichô* era (1614), on the eve of the *Siege of Ôsaka,* he gave the first generation Kinmichi an order: one thousand *jintachi* (field tachi, made for use on campaign) in one hundred days. Tough ask! *Kinmichi* knew his own school could never meet the deadline alone, so he sought and was granted permission to enlist skilled swordsmiths from across the provinces. The order was completed on schedule.

Ieyasu was delighted. *Kinmichi* was granted a private audience, a rare privilege, and rewarded with lavish robes, sake cups, authority over the swordsmiths of all Japan, and the right to pass freely through the checkpoints of every province. After *Ieyasu* finally destroyed the *Toyotomi* at *Ôsaka*, he petitioned the Imperial Court himself to grant Kinmichi the title of *Nihon-Kaji-Sôshô*. With it came the right to broker honorary titles for swordsmiths throughout the country, and anyone who sought a title had to join the *Kinmichi* school. The *Kinmichi* family came to reign, in effect, as the supreme head of the swordsmiths of Japan.

One thousand swords in a hundred days.
That is how you earn a crest.



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

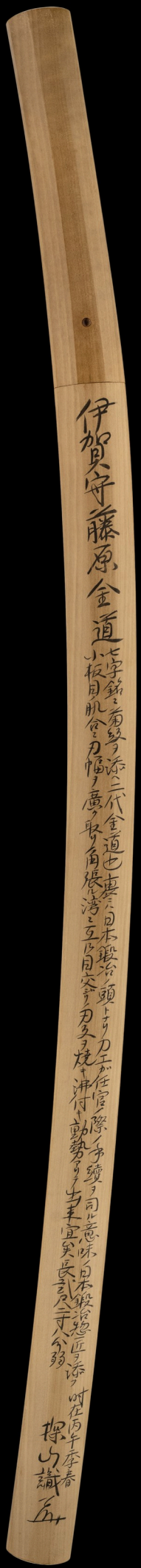
Issued in the 23rd year of Heisei (2011), June 21st

One, Katana

Mei (signature)
(Kiku-mon) Iga no Kami Fujiwara Kinmichi (Nidai)
Nihon Kaji Sôshô

Nagasa (length)
2-shaku 2-sun 8-bu jaku (69.1cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai
(NBTHK)



伊賀守藤原金道
Iga no Kami Fujiwara Kinmichi
Iga no Kami Fujiwara Kinmichi

七字銘ニ菊紋ヲ添へ二代金道也裏ニハ日本鍛冶ノ頭トナリ刀工ガ任官ノ際ノ手續ヲ司ル意味ノ日本鍛冶惣匠ヲ添フ小板目ノ肌合ニ刃幅ヲ廣ク取リ角張ル湾ニ互乃目交ジリノ刃文ヲ焼キ沸付キ動勢アリテ出来宜矣

Nanaji-mei ni kikumon o soe Nidai Kinmichi nari. Ura ni wa Nihon Kaji no kashira to nari, tôkô ga ninkan no sai no tetsuzuki o tsukasadoru imi no Nihon Kaji Sôshô o sou. Ko-itame no hada-ai ni ha-haba o hiroku tori, kakubaru notare ni gunome majiri no hamon o yaki, nie tsuki dôsei arite deki yoroshi

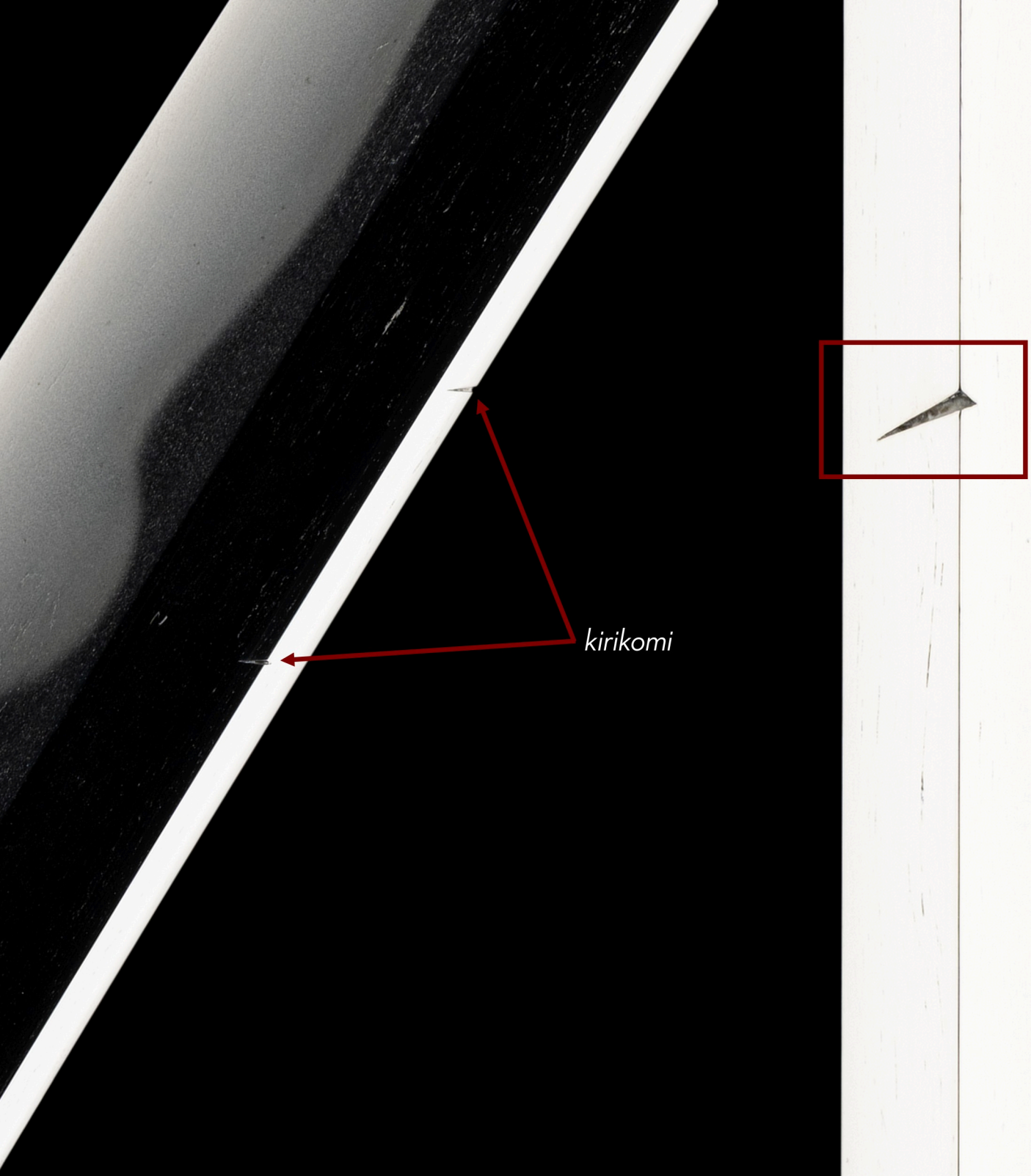
The seven-character signature is accompanied by a chrysanthemum crest, marking this as the work of the second generation *Kinmichi*. On the reverse is added the title "*Nihon- Kaji-Sôshô*", signifying that he served as head of Japan's swordsmiths and oversaw the procedures involved when smiths received official court appointments. The steel shows a fine *ko-itame*; the *hamon* is taken wide, formed as an angular *notare* mixed with *gunome*, accompanied by *nie* and a strong sense of movement. An excellent example of the smith's work.

長弐尺二寸八分弱
Nagasa 2-shaku 2-sun 8-bu jaku
Blade length ~69.1 cm

時在丙午季春探山識「花押」
Toki ni hinoe-umadoshi haru Tanzan shirusu + kaô
Written by Tanzan, during Spring in the Year of the Horse (2026).



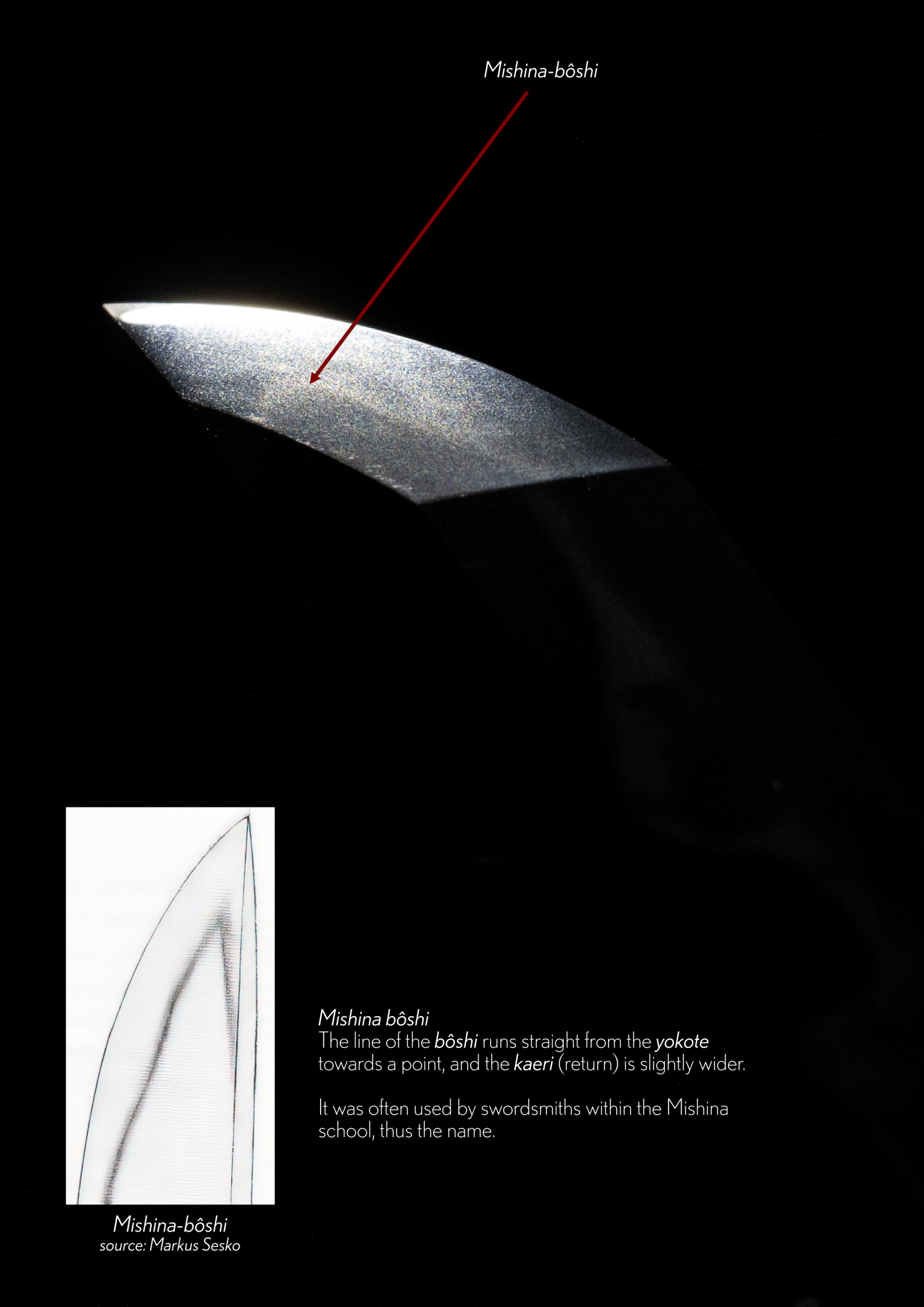




This blade bears ***kirikomi*** (cut marks), scars left when blades clashed against one another in combat. Since an opponent's blow was parried not with the cutting edge but with the ***mune*** , it is on the ***mune*** that such marks are left.

Blades that saw actual combat use were often broken in the course of battle or subsequently discarded, making a blade that still bears such scars today an exceptionally rare survival.

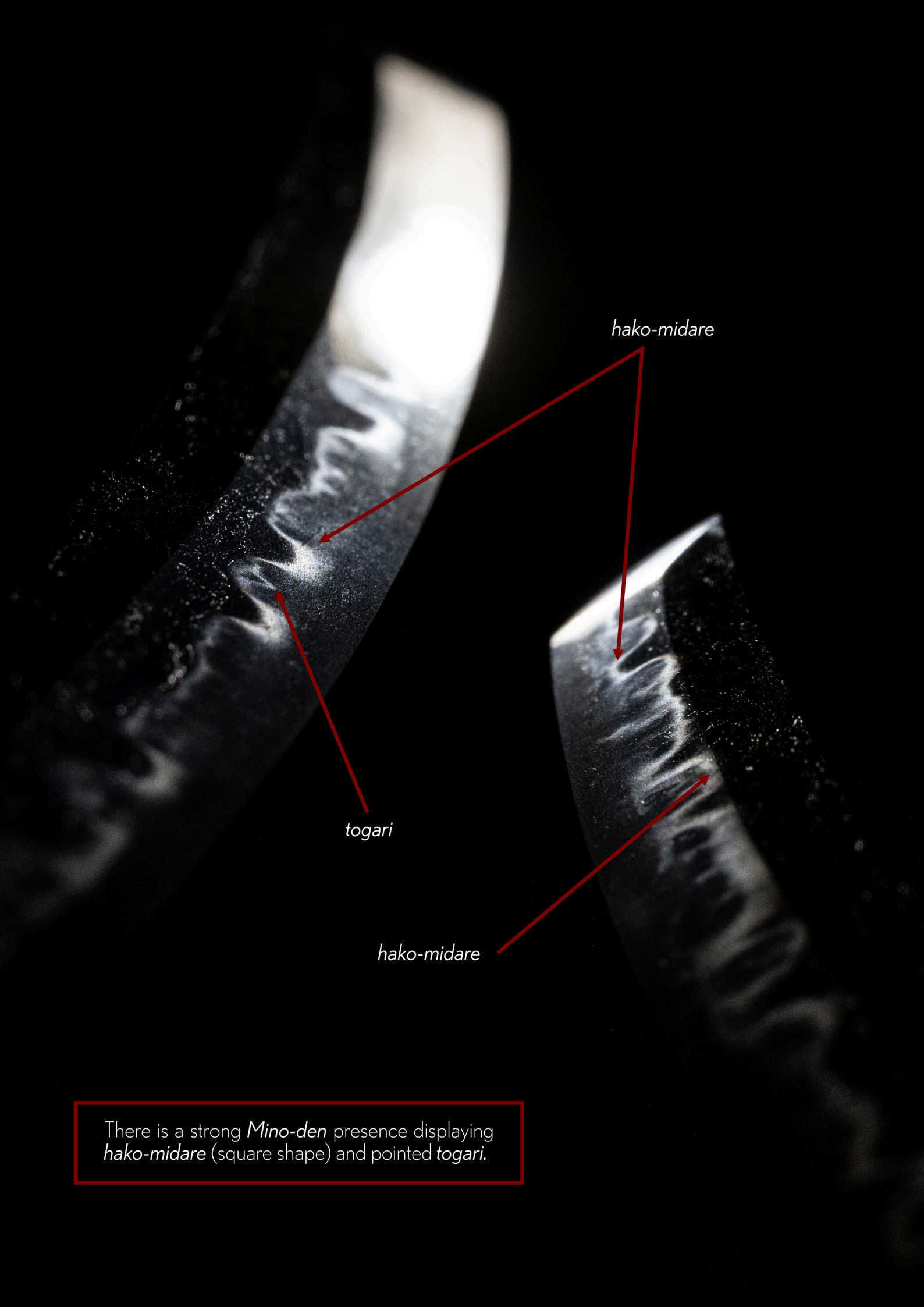
That this blade, though forged during the relatively peaceful ***Edo*** period, bears ***kirikomi*** invites reflection on its history, whether the marks arose from training with a live blade, or from use in some actual historical clash.



Mishina-bôshi
source: Markus Sesko

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.



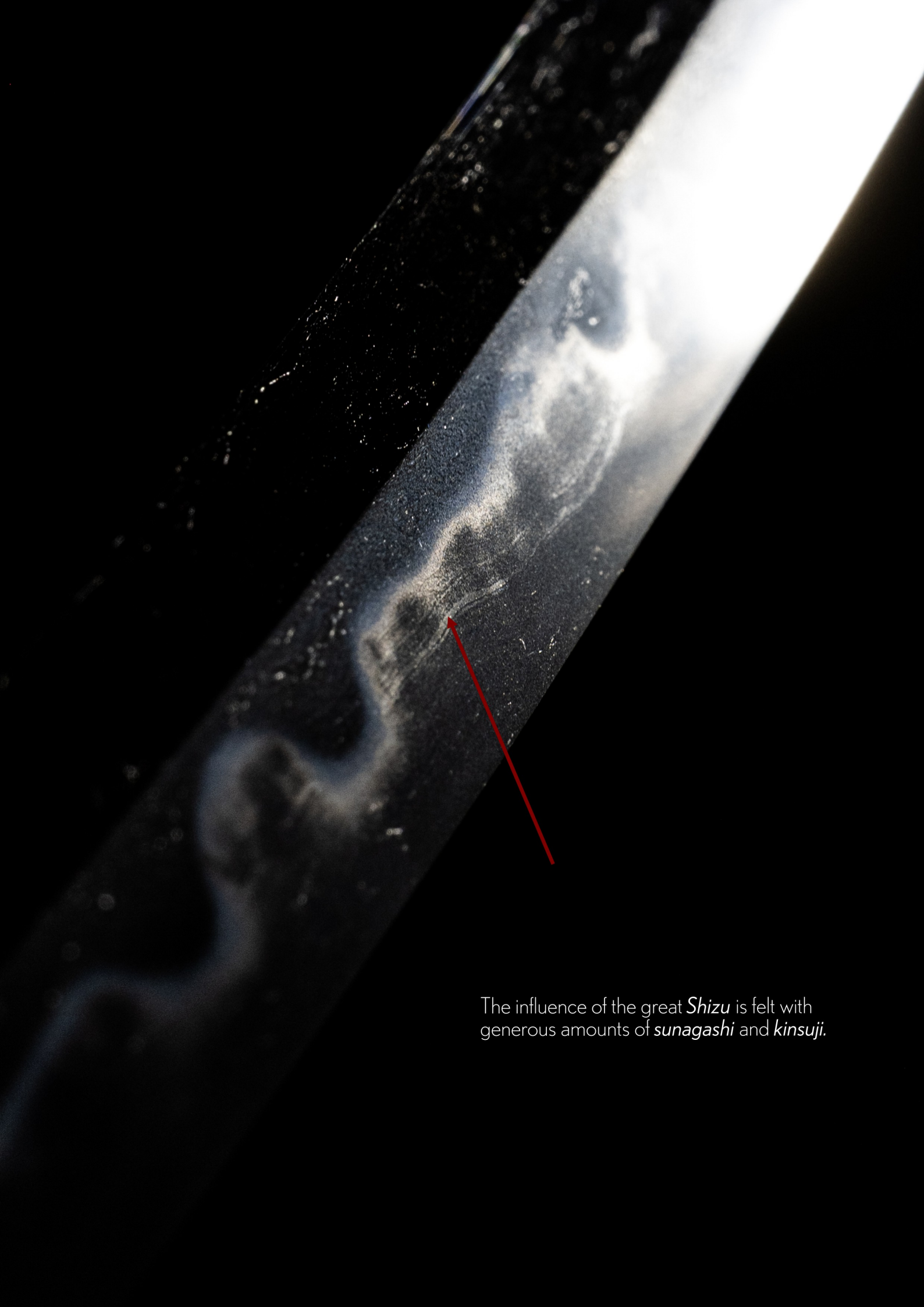
There is a strong ***Mino-den*** presence displaying ***hako-midare*** (square shape) and pointed ***togari.***


An awesome bolt of *kinsuji*



The light show continues with ***yahazuba*** (dovetail elements that resemble arrow notches), ***midare*** that rises from valley to mountain peak, and even a cool ***suguha*** baseline that turns into an iceberg of sorts.

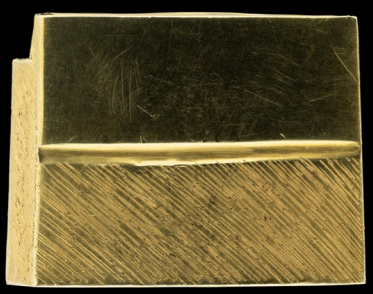
This is a truly unique hamon with plenty of character.



The influence of the great *Shizu* is felt with generous amounts of *sunagashi* and *kinsuji*.



Shirasaya
(protective scabbard)



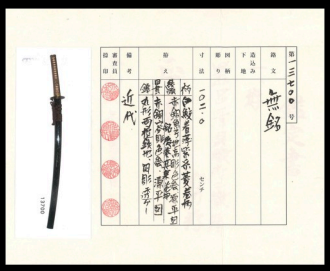
Beautiful two-toned gold
habaki on a copper base



Kuro-iro
aogai-mijin-hirashi nuri saya
uchigatana-koshirae
(黒呂青貝微塵散鞘打刀拵)

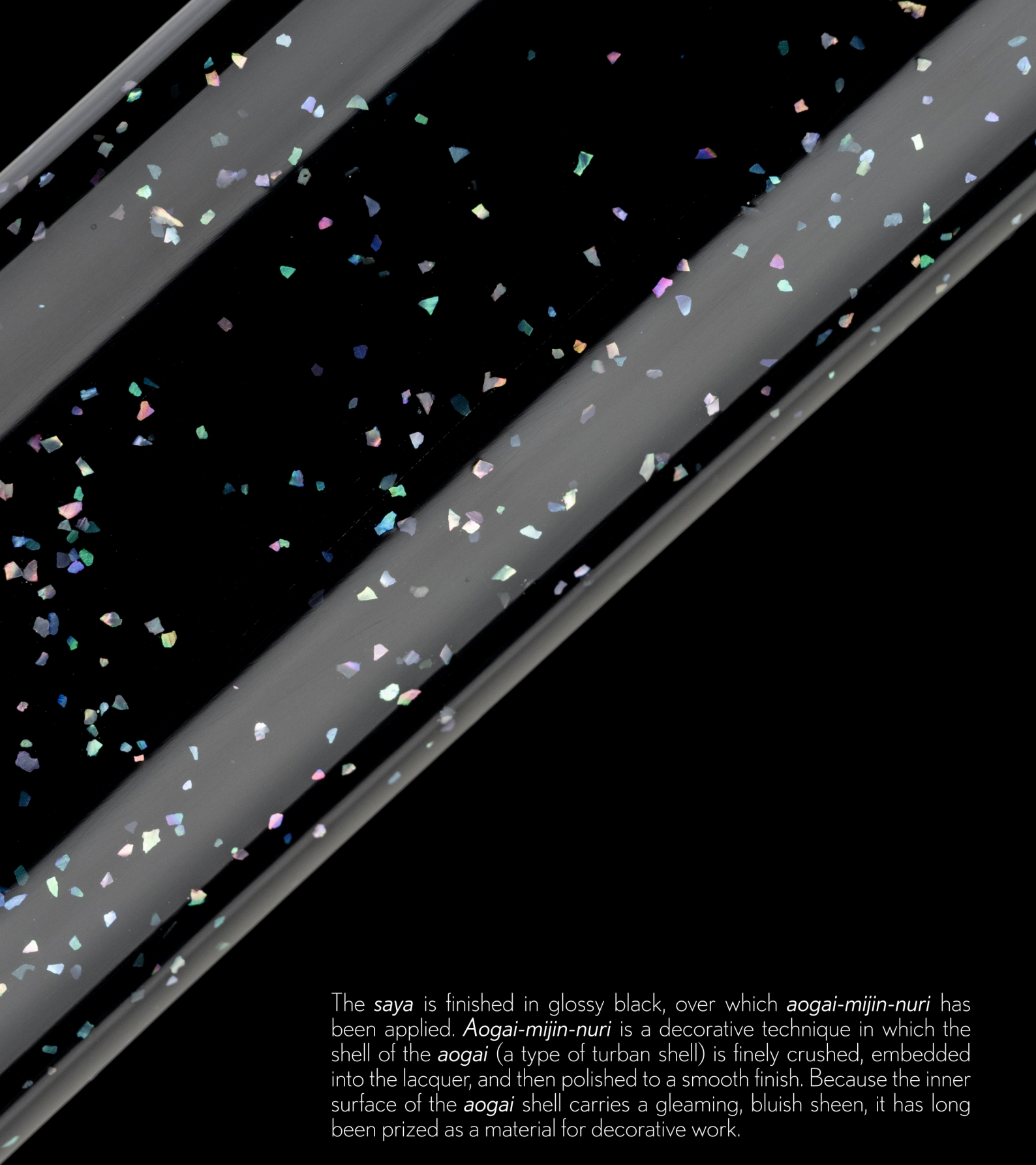
Uchigatana-koshirae
lacquered in glossy black with
mother-of-pearl decoration

Crafted during the
Modern period



NTHK-NPO Kanteisho
Certificate of Authenticity





The *saya* is finished in glossy black, over which *aogai-mijin-nuri* has been applied. *Aogai-mijin-nuri* is a decorative technique in which the shell of the *aogai* (a type of turban shell) is finely crushed, embedded into the lacquer, and then polished to a smooth finish. Because the inner surface of the *aogai* shell carries a gleaming, bluish sheen, it has long been prized as a material for decorative work.

As a rule, *samurai* on duty carried formal *koshirae* finished in glossy black, whereas for off-duty occasions, celebration, outings, or travel, a great variety of *koshirae* were produced according to the owner's rank, means, and personal taste.

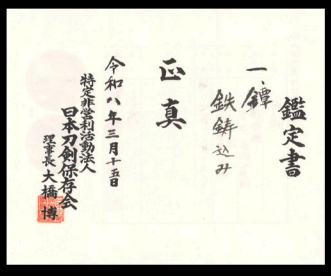
Among these, *saya* finished in *aogai-mijin-nuri* ranked, alongside those covered in *samekawa* or decorated with *raden* (mother-of-pearl inlay), among the most costly.

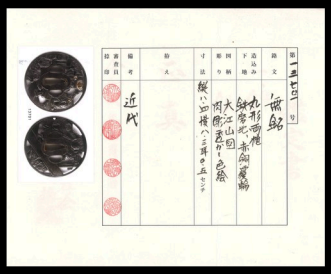


This brilliant iron tsuba depicts *Ôeyama no zu*, where *Minamoto Yorimitsu* and his retainers vanquish the ogre *Shuten-dôji,* the leader of the band terrorizing the capital. Set in the mid-*Heian* period, this legend has been a favourite subject of painters and craftsmen ever since.

Judging by the patina of the iron, it was most likely made around the *Meiji* era (1868~1912). A warrior taking on an ogre gives the whole piece a distinctly martial presence, and it was probably chosen to symbolize its owner's prowess. Courage, cast in iron.

Read on for the legendary story..!


鑑定書
一鐔
鉄錆込み
正真
令和八年三月十五日
特定非営利活動法人
日本刀剣保存会
理事長 大橋博





Shuten-dôji at Ôeyama
by *Utagawa Yoshitsuya* (1822-1866)

The Legend of Shuten-dôji

Every good legend needs a villain, and this one has a great one. According to the story, ***Shuten-dôji*** led a band of ogres on ***Mount Ôe***, which rises on the border of ***Tanba*** and ***Tango*** Provinces. His followers called him "***the sake drinking dôji***", and you can probably guess why. He was very fond of his sake.

The ***Ôeyama Ekotoba***, regarded as the oldest surviving version of the tale, tells us that during the reign of Emperor ***Ichijô,*** young men and noblewomen of the capital began to vanish. The Emperor sent for ***Minamoto Yorimitsu***. Yorimitsu and his men disguised themselves as ***yamabushi*** (mountain priests), turned up at the ogre's lair and asked for a night's lodging. ***Shuten-dôji*** was wary at first, having heard rumours that a subjugation party was coming from the capital, but he let his guard down and shared cups of sake with his guests. What he did not know was that his visitors had brought their own sake, a poisoned gift from ***Hachiman Daibosatsu.*** Once the ogre was drunk and unable to move, **Yorimitsu struck off his head**. The head is said to have bitten at Yorimitsu's helmet even after it was severed.

The blade said to have done the deed is the ***Dôjigiri***, a National Treasure tachi by ***Yasutsuna*** of ***Hôki*** Province from the ***Heian*** period. The name means "***dôji*** cutter", which is about as direct as it gets. The tale became hugely popular among the common people during the Edo period and turned up everywhere in paintings and the decorative arts, including the ***Ôeyama no zu*** (picture of ***Mount Ôe***) on this ***tsuba***.

The legend sits close to home for this sword. ***Mount Ôe*** rises in the mountains northwest of ***Kyôto***, the capital in ***Yamashiro*** province where the ***Kinmichi*** school forged its blades.

Moral of the story: never accept a drink from a stranger dressed as a mountain priest.



Dôjigiri
by *Ôhara Yasutsuna, Hôki* province



(reverse)



Fuchi-kashira
crafted by *Gotô Shinjô*

Gotô Shinjô was the 15th generation head of the *Gotô* main line, succeeding to the family headship in the fourth year of *Kyôwa* (1804). The *Gotô* family served for generations as private retained craftsmen to the *Tokugawa* family, and *Shinjô* was active during the era of the eleventh *shôgun*, *Tokugawa Ienari*.

This piece is worked in *shakudô* ground, to which gold accents have been added, and takes the *Genpei War* as its motif. Judging from the design, it appears to depict the *Battle of Ichi-no-Tani* in 1184. In particular, the figure shown on the *kashira* in the distinctively dressed attire in the upper right is thought to be *Musashibô Benkei*, from which the figure before him can be inferred to be *Minamoto Yoshitsune*.







the Battle of Ichi-no-Tani
by *Kano* school



The *Taira* thought they were safe. At *Fukuhara*, in *Settsu* province, they had built a formidable encampment to meet the *Minamoto* advance, one of the great clashes of the *Genpei War.* Then *Minamoto Yoshitsune*, leading only a small band of men, did the unthinkable: he charged down the sheer cliffs behind *Ichi-no-Tani* on horseback.

It is a story with a famous sidekick. His retainer *Musashibô Benkei* is said to have obtained a guide through the mountain paths from an old hunter, and the rest is history. Struck from the rear, the *Taira* encampment collapsed and fled, and the *Taira* would continue their retreat to *Yashima* and finally to *Dan-no-ura*.

The *fuchi* depicts *Minamoto* forces making their landing during the battle. One daring charge, and an entire clan on the run.

Minamoto Yoshitsune



Musashibaô Benkei

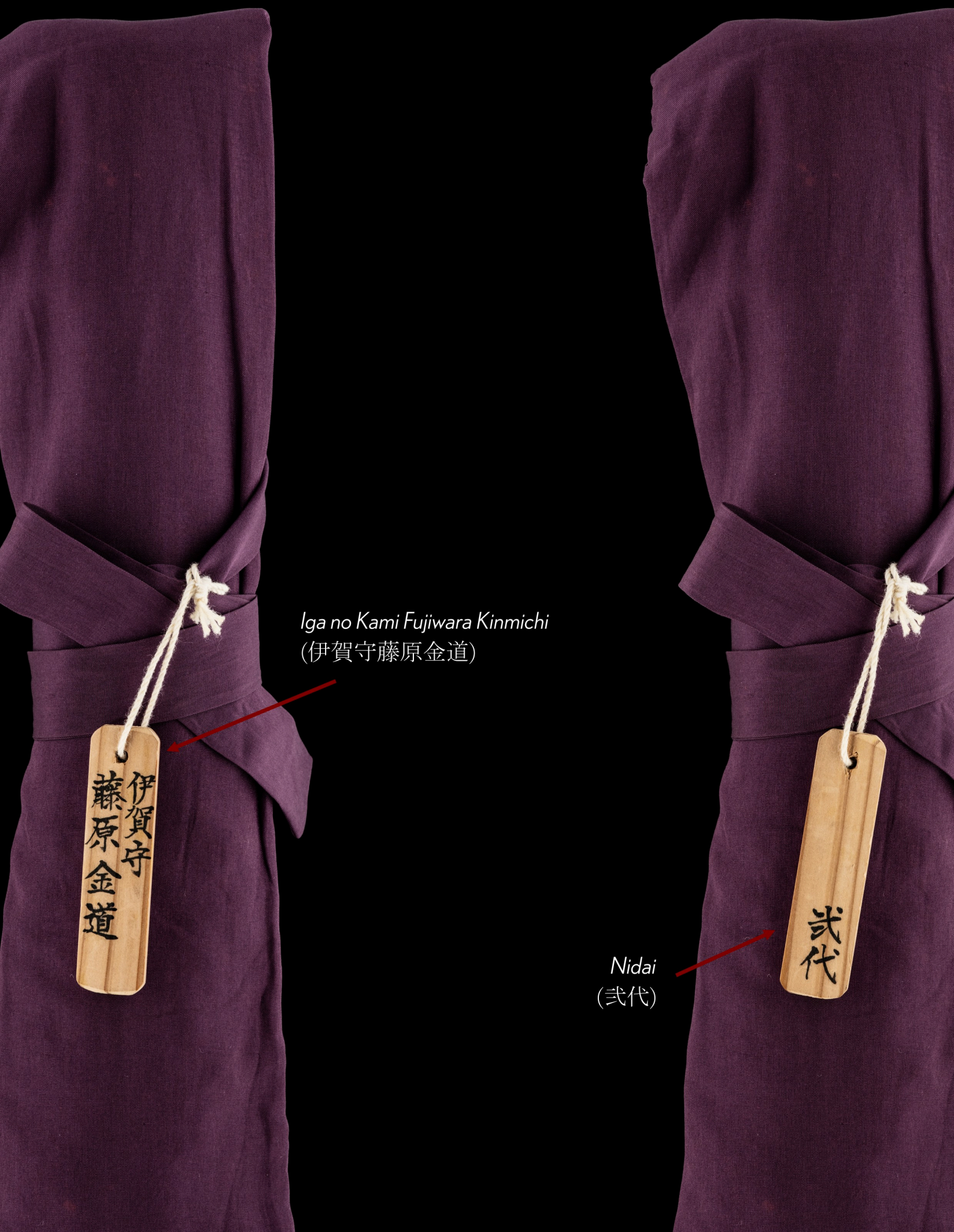


Brown ***tsuka-ito*** wrapped in classic ***hishi-maki*** style over aged ***samekaw***a. Very samurai.



The ***menuki***, like the ***fuchi-kashira***, depict ***the Genpei War*** motif, and judging from the design, appear to portray either the ***Battle of Ichi-no-Tani*** (1184) or the ***Battle of Yashima*** (1185) at the very end of the ***Heian*** period.





Iga no Kami Fujiwara Kinmichi
(伊賀守藤原金道)

Nidai
(弐代)





Koshirae bag
with unique cloud pattern

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Arigato!

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