



ITEM# UJTA069

CURRENTLY AVAILABLE

A KANENORI TANTÔ

SIGNED, KOTÔ LATE MUROMACHI (TENBUN~EIROKU ERAS: 1532~1570)

Swordsmith:	Kanenori (兼法, <i>shodai</i> , first generation)
Measurements:	Length: 27.6cm Sori: 0.2cm Moto-haba: 2.39cm Weight: 150g
Jihada:	Well-forged mokume-hada with nagare-hada, icy ji-nie, plenty of chikei
Hamon:	Spectacular hitatsura hamon in gunome-midare, kinsuji, sunagashi & mega tobiyaki
Certificate #1:	NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon (sword Especially Worthy of Preservation)
Certificate #2-4:	NTHK-NPO Kanteishô (koshirae, fuchi-kashira & kozuka certified as Authentic)
Authentication:	Sayagaki by Nozomi-san (shodô artist)
Included:	Shirasaya, Edo koshirae, fabric bags, kit, printed description

\$8,800

This special tantô is signed by *Shodai Kanenori* – a master *Mino-den* swordsmith active during the *Tenbun* to *Eiroku* eras known for his *tantô* and extended *sunnobi tantô*. Kanenori travelled from Mino to Echizen by way of a special invitation in 1536 from *Asakura Takakage*. Kanenori went on to lead the forming of the *Echizen-Seki* school. The sword's spectacular *Sôshû*-inspired *hitatsura hamon* is composed of a bright *gunome-midare* with impressive islands of *tobi-yaki* scattered across the blade. The beautiful accompanying *koshirae* is finished in *aogai-mijin-nuri*, decorated with lovely *kurikata* and *saguri* and features a hilt is carved and lacquered black with golden *shisa* lion *menuki*. The *Gotô* family and *Shoami* school fittings confirm this was a piece intended for private, high-ranking use. All told, this is a wonderful *Mino-den* tantô that will surely delight its new caretaker.

A long, narrow, dark, textured object, possibly a piece of wood or metal, oriented vertically. The object has a rough, weathered appearance with visible grain or texture. It is set against a black background.

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A long, curved Japanese sword (katana) is shown vertically against a black background. The blade is dark and features a prominent, wavy pattern of light-colored markings, likely a hamon or a similar decorative element. The hilt is silver-colored and has two parallel vertical lines. Near the base of the blade, there are two circular holes and some faint, illegible markings. The sword is positioned on the right side of the image, with its tip pointing towards the top.

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The *Mino*-den tradition traces its roots to *Yamato*, but its character shifted decisively after *Shizu Saburô Kaneuji* (志津三郎兼氏) - a student of *Masamune* (正宗) - relocated to *Mino* in the early *Nanbokuchô* period, grafting *Sôshû-den* influence onto the school.

Several generations of *Kanenori* (兼法 and 兼則) swordsmiths worked in *Mino* province during the *Sengoku-jidai* (warring late Muromachi period), satiating the demand for dependably sharp blades across Japan. This particular blade was crafted by *shodai Kanenori* who, in 1536, travelled from *Mino* to *Echizen* by way of a special invitation from *Asakura Takakage*. Kanenori went on to lead the forming of the *Echizen-Seki* school, and a swordsmith particularly versed for his *tantô* and *sunnobi tantô* (*ko-wakizashi*).

That lineage is evidently visible here. The *jigane* is a tough *mokume-hada* mixed with *nagare-hada* and a spectacular *Sôshû*-inspired *hitatsura hamon* that is composed of a bright *gunome-midare* and numerous islands of *tobiyaki* that harden the full width of the blade. There is also impressive amounts of sparkling *nie* and *sunagashi*. This is a sword that literally comes alive under the light. The blade also displays meaningful *horimono* comprising of carved *goma-hashii* and *koshi-bi* that point back to the ancestral *Yamato*-den tradition and its Buddhist associations.

The *koshirae* is of a quality consistent with *daimyô* ownership. The scabbard is finished in gorgeous *aogai-mijin-nuri* using finely selected green mother-of-pearl and finished with a lovely *kurikata* and *saguri*. The unique hilt is carved and lacquered black rather than wrapped in silk and proudly displays protective golden *shisa* lion *menuki*. The *tsuba* is deliberately understated to keep the overall line clean. The *Gotô* family and *Shoami* school *shakudô* fittings confirm this was a piece intended for private, high-ranking use.

All told, this is a wonderful and historically-rich *Mino-den tantô* with terrific energy and rightfully accompanied with a *Tokubetsu Hozon* certificate from the NBTHK. It will delight its new caretaker each time it is handled with care and respect.





WATCH PABLO'S YOUTUBE PRESENTATION OF
UJTA069 - A KANENORI TANTÔ

[UNIQUEJAPAN.COM/UJTA069-VIDEO](https://uniquejapan.com/ujta069-video)





Location: *Mino province*
School name: *Seki school*
Swordsmith: *Kanenori*

ubu-nakago (original, unaltered tang)
higaki-yasurime (crisscross file marks)

兼 (Kane)

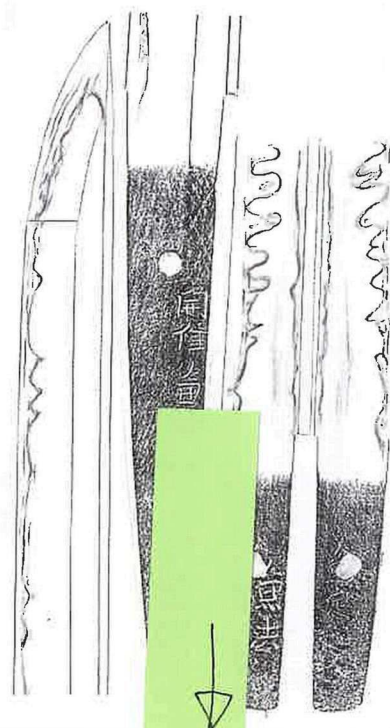
法 (nori)

A close-up, high-contrast photograph of a weathered metal blade, likely a sword or dagger, set against a black background. The blade is oriented diagonally from the top-left to the bottom-right. It features two circular holes: a smaller one near the top and a larger one in the middle. Between these holes, there is a large, deeply engraved signature in a stylized, cursive script. Below the signature, there are several horizontal, parallel grooves or scratches. The metal surface is heavily textured with scratches, scuffs, and signs of age.

Big confident signature.
500 years and going strong.

する。掲出の「濃州関住藤原奥州守兼法」（長さ二尺一寸）の銘作は、平成三年に実見したもので、室町前期まで遡る年代作と鑑じられる。直刃に互の目を交じえた作が一般関物の風を脱した古雅な作行きを示す。明応八年紀がある兼法銘は奥州守銘より太めで「濃州関住兼法」と切る。奥州守銘は細鑿であるが、力感がある。

●古 兼法「かねのり」 美濃国 室町末期（大永）
関住。兼常門。大永ころという。三代兼定との合作がある。「兼法」「関住兼法」。

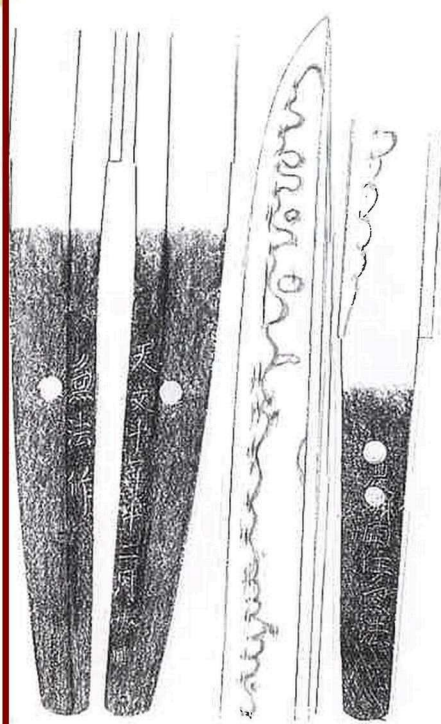


●古 兼法「かねのり」 美濃国 室町末期（天文）

天文六年から十二年紀までがある兼法は関からの越前へ移住する。天文五年に朝倉孝景に招かれて越前松岡に移り、朝倉家滅亡後は柴田勝家に仕えて一乗谷に移ると伝わる。天文七年紀に「濃州関住兼法」銘があり、天文十年紀に「越前一乗住兼法作」がある。「濃州関住兼法」「兼法」「兼法作」。

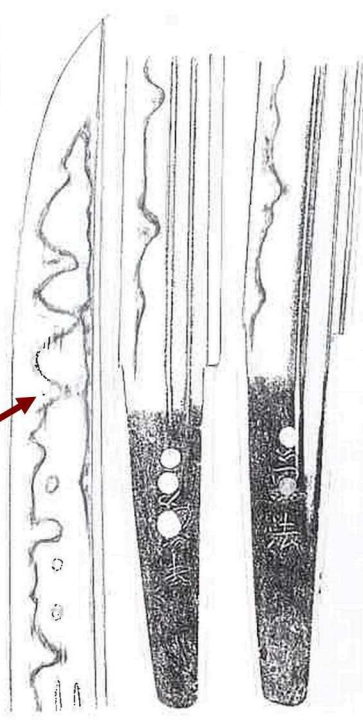
●古 兼法「かねのり」 美濃国 室町末期（永禄）

天文から永禄へかけての兼法で、短刀と寸延び小脇指を好んで造る。小湾れに互の目、尖り互の目交じり、皆焼状の刃も焼く。「兼法」。



●古 兼法「かねのり」 美濃国 室町末期（全正）

美濃関の鍛冶は各地へ分派して、なかでも兼法一門の動きははげしく越



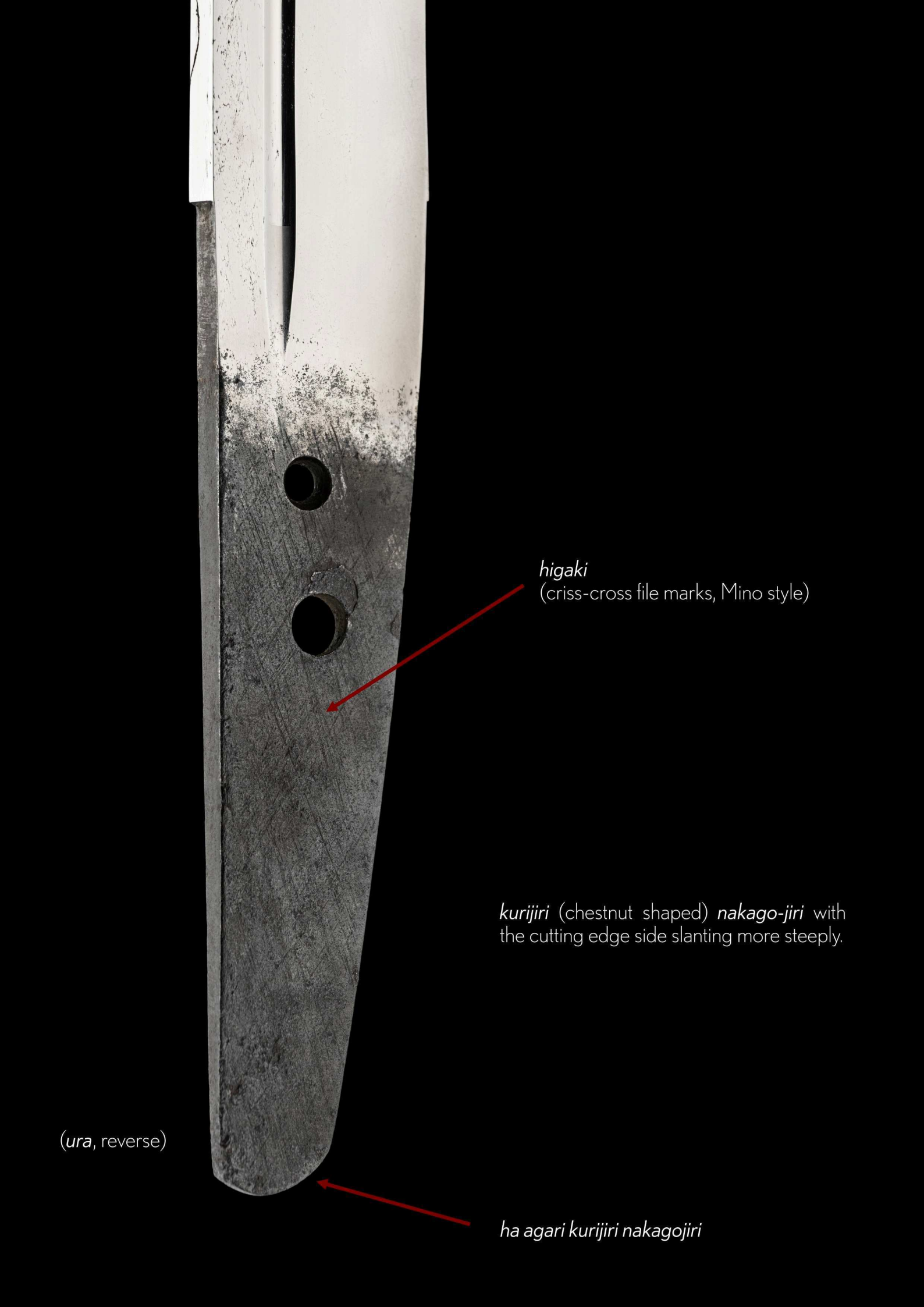
hitatsura
hamon

Entry from *Tomei Taikan* (Japanese sword reference book)

古 兼法（かねのり） 美濃国 室町末期（天文）

天文六年から十二年紀でがある兼法は、関から越前松岡に移り、朝倉家滅亡後は柴田勝家に仕え、天文十五年紀に越前一乗谷に移り、銘「越前一乗兼法作」一兼法。

"The *Kanenori* for whom dated signatures exist from the 6th to 12th year of *Tenbun* moved from *Seki* to *Matsuoka* in *Echizen* province. After the fall of the *Asakura* family he entered the service of *Shibata Katsuie*, and in the 15th year of *Tenbun* moved to *Ichijōdani* in *Echizen*. His signature reads: '*Echizen Ichijō-jū Kanenori saku*' – one [example of] *Kanenori*."



higaki
(criss-cross file marks, Mino style)

kurijiri (chestnut shaped) *nakago-jiri* with
the cutting edge side slanting more steeply.

(*ura*, reverse)

ha agari kurijiri nakagojiri

特 保
06202412



No 1024008



鑑定書

一短刀 銘 兼法

長九寸一分弱

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

令和七年二月二十一日

公益財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協會



高知県 教育委員会
第 23350 号
昭和49年5月7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 7th year of Reiwa (2025), February 21st

One, Tanto

Mei (signature)
Kanenori

Nagasa (length)
9-sun 1-bu jaku (27.6cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai
(NBTHK)

刃長七寸三分強有之
Hachô 7-sun 3-bu kyô kore ari
Blade length 22.3 cm

令和七乙巳年水無月吉日誌之
Reiwa nana kinoto-midoshi Minazuki
kichijitsu kore o shirusu
Written on a lucky day in the sixth
month in the seventh year of Reiwa
era during the Year of the Snake
(June 2025)

長九寸壹分弱有之

令和八年
如月吉日誌之

兼法

兼法
Kanenori
Kanenori

時代天文乃至永祿頃

時代天文乃至永祿頃
Jidai Tenbun naishi Eiroku goro
Around Tenbun ~ Eiroku periods
(1532~1570)

KANENORI 兼法 – *Tenbun* Era (1532~1555)

Province of Origin: *Mino* (美濃), later relocated to *Echizen*

Personal name: *Kichi'emon* (吉右衛門)

Shodai (first generation) *Kanenori* (兼法) was trained within the local *Kanenori* school in *Seki*, *Mino* province - placing him within the *Sue-Seki* tradition. He was not born into *Echizen*; he was invited there.

That invitation came from tenth generation *Asakura Takakage* (朝倉孝景, 1493~1548). In 1536 (fifth year of *Tenbun* era) the *shugo* military governor of *Echizen* province, who brought him to *Matsuoka* (松岡) – a location roughly eight kilometers northeast of *Fukui*. A dated blade signed "*Echizen Ichijô-jû Kanenori saku*" (越前一乗住兼法作) confirms that by *Tenbun* 10 (1541) at the latest, he had settled in *Ichijôdani*, the Asakura clan's fortified valley capital, one of the great cultural and political centres of *Sengoku* Japan.

When the *Asakura* fell – their defeat at the hands of *Oda Nobunaga* in 1573 effectively ended *Ichijôdani* as a functioning city – *Kanenori* passed into the service of *Shibata Katsuie* (柴田勝家), Nobunaga's powerful general who governed *Echizen* and *Kaga* from *Kitanoshô* Castle in *Fukui*. *Kanenori* effectively established what became the *Echizen-Seki* group, one of two major sword-forging streams in *Echizen* province during the *shintô* era (the other being the *Echizen-Shimosaka* group, associated with *Yasutsugu*). He was the foundational figure from whom a significant lineage descended:

The *Tenbun* era was a turbulent period of the *Sengoku* (warring States) period, and it was common for skilled smiths to relocate to serve powerful *daimyô*. This *Kanenori*'s move to *Kasugayama* placed him squarely in the orbit of one of the era's most powerful warlords. His role as a teacher who sent students across *Hokuriku* reflects both his skill and the demand for swords during this period of constant warfare.

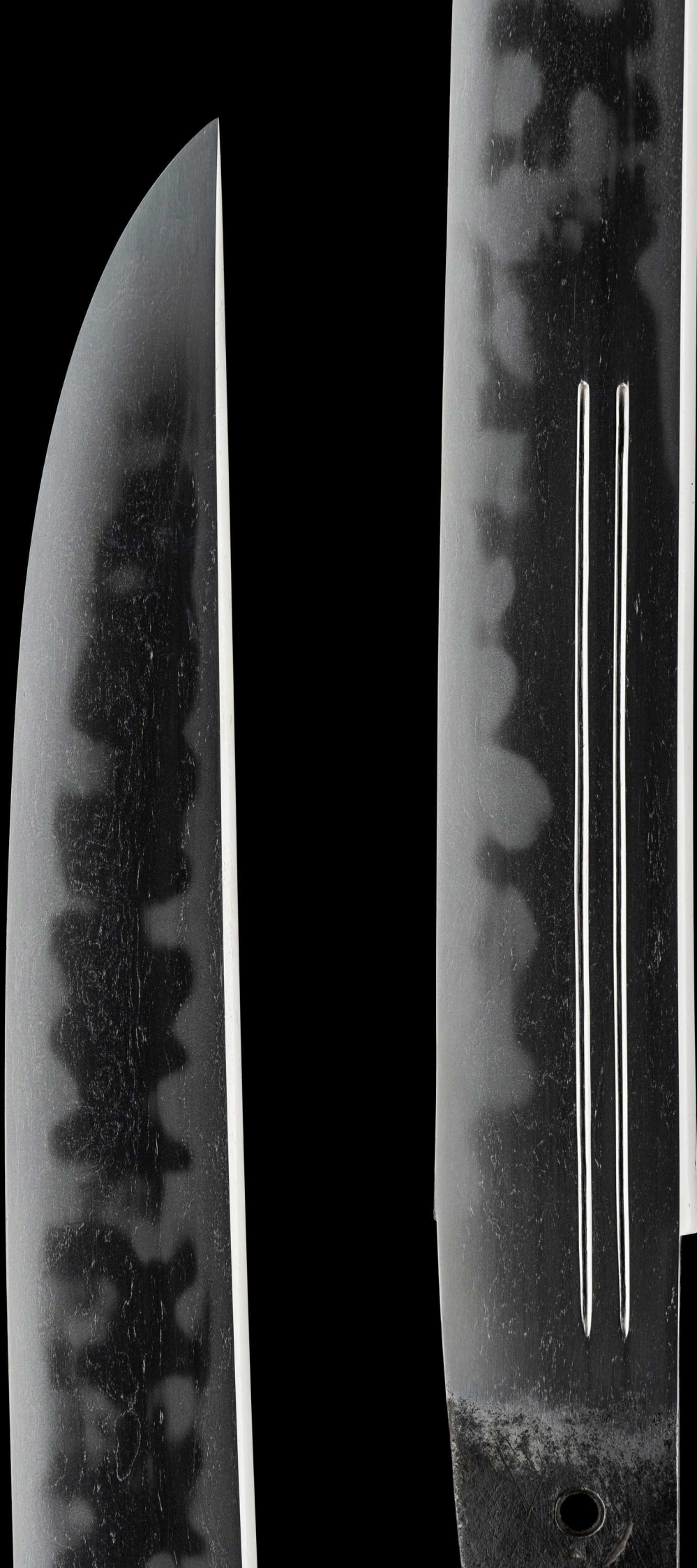
Shodai Kanenori represents an important transitional moment in Japanese sword history: a *Seki*-trained smith carrying the full weight of *Mino*-den technique into a new province at the invitation of a powerful warlord, during the height of the *Sengoku* period. His blades were tools of a war-era court – made for *Asakura* retainers and later *Shibata* Katsuie's men – in one of the most politically charged corners of 16th-century Japan. The *Seki* pedigree underpins the metallurgical quality; the *Echizen* context gives the work its historical depth.



The destructive *Onin* War began in 1467, prompting the *Kai* and *Asakura* Clans to invade *Echizen* Province (present-day *Fukui* prefecture). In 1471, the *daimyô* (feudal lord) *Asakura Toshikage* defeated the *Kai* Clan and established his castle town in the strategic *Ichijo* valley.

The word *dani* literally means "valley," with both the castle town and the surrounding area referred to as *Ichijodani*. The name "*Ichijo*" is derived from Buddhism, as the "one vehicle" which carries man to enlightenment. In fact, the original *Asakura-do* (hall) at the temple complex of *Kiyomizudera* in *Kyoto* was funded by *daimyô Sadakage Asakura*.

Asakura Toshikage (朝倉敏景, 1428-1481),
7th generation – founded *Ichijôdani* in 1471





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*.



goma-hashī
(or gomabashi)

The late *Muromachi* period saw *Sue-Seki* (末関) - the latter-generation *Seki* smiths - produce swords in great quantities, crafted for war. The best of these, called *chûmon-uchi* (注文打, "made to order"), were elaborately crafted blades for high-ranking warriors and *daimyô*. These specially commissioned *Seki* swords sometimes carried the full drama of a *hitatsura hamon*.



Hitatsura literally means "everything hardened." It describes a *hamon* in which *tobiyaki*, isolated islands of tempered activity, are so numerous and so widely scattered across the *ji* (the body of the blade) that they merge and connect with the main hamon line. The effect is rather extraordinary - almost the entire blade surface appears *alive* with tempering activity.

tobiyaki



hitatsura hamon

Where Did Hitatsura Come From?

Hitatsura origins lie in the *Sôshû* tradition (*Sagami* province) of the *Nanbokuchô* period (1336~1392) – the great warring age, massive swords, and explosive metallurgical ambition.

After grandmaster *Masamune* established *Sôshû*-den and his successor *Sadamune* refined it into calmer irregular patterns, the next generation pushed further. Specifically, *shodai Hiromitsu* (広光), considered the most skilled of *Sadamune*'s followers, and *Akihiro* (秋広), also a *Sadamune* student, are the smiths credited with developing true *hitatsura*. *Hiromitsu*'s production dates run from the *Kan'ô* (1350~1352) to the *Jôji* era (1362~1368); *Akihiro*'s from *Jôji* to the *Eiwa* era (1375~1379).

From *Sôshû*, the *hitatsura* pattern spread outward as smiths migrated across Japan during the political chaos of the era. Eventually it reached and was eagerly adopted in *Mino* province.

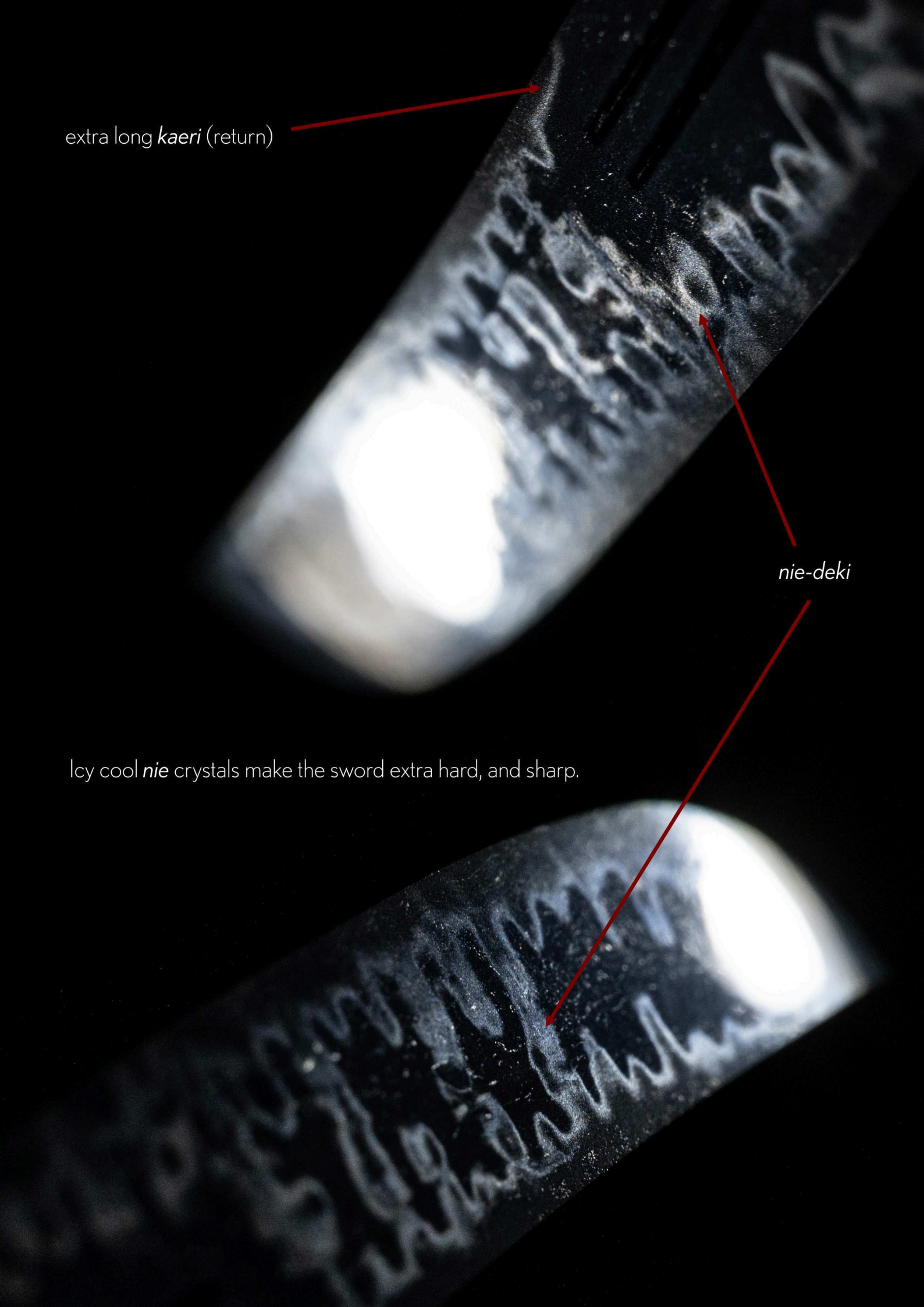


Technically, the *hitatsura hamon* is comprised of *gunome-midare*, *notare-midare*, and other undulating irregular *hamon* forms.



The hamon uniquely mirrors
itself in much of the blade.

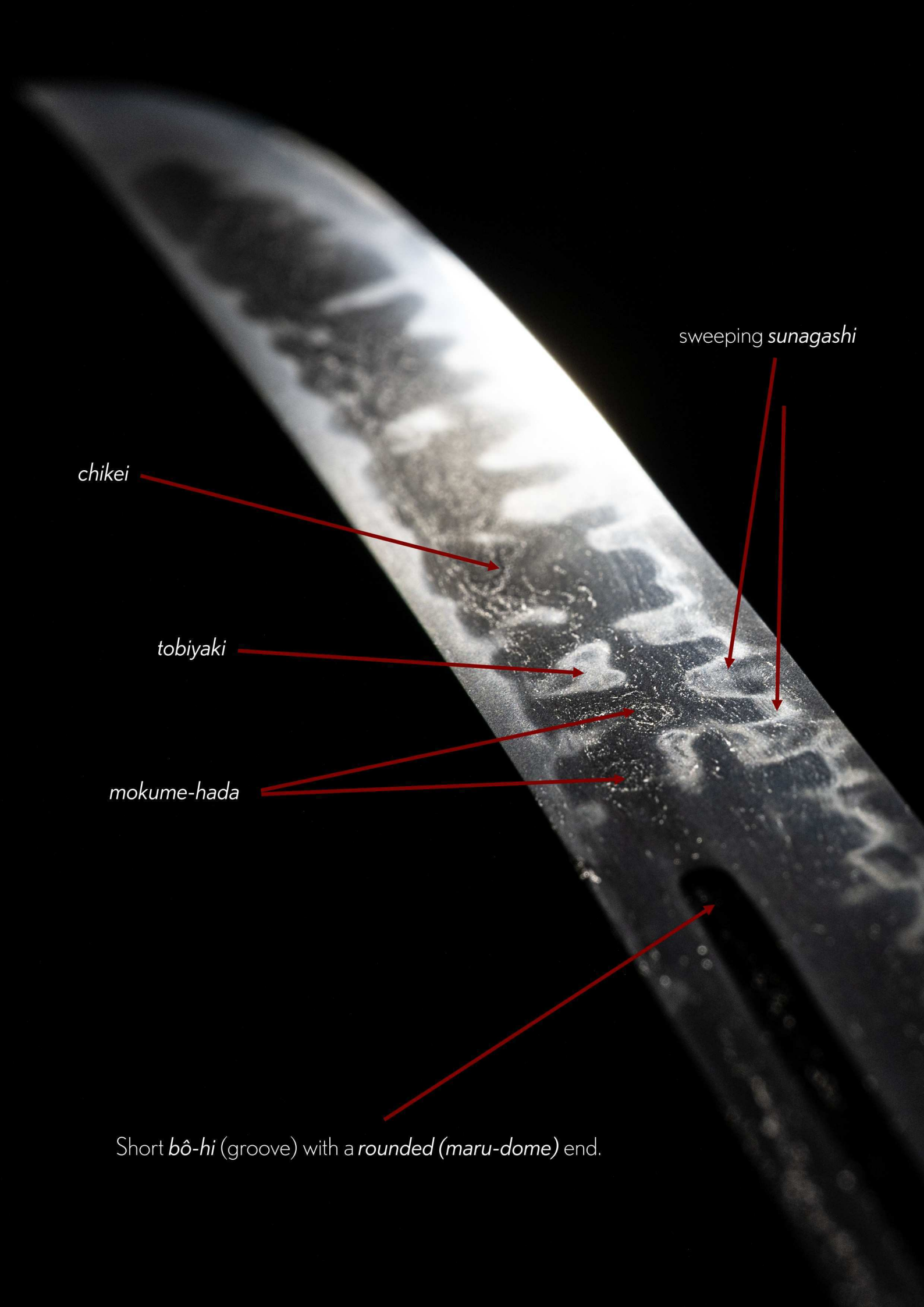
gunome-midare



extra long *kaeri* (return)

nie-deki

Icy cool *nie* crystals make the sword extra hard, and sharp.



sweeping *sunagashi*

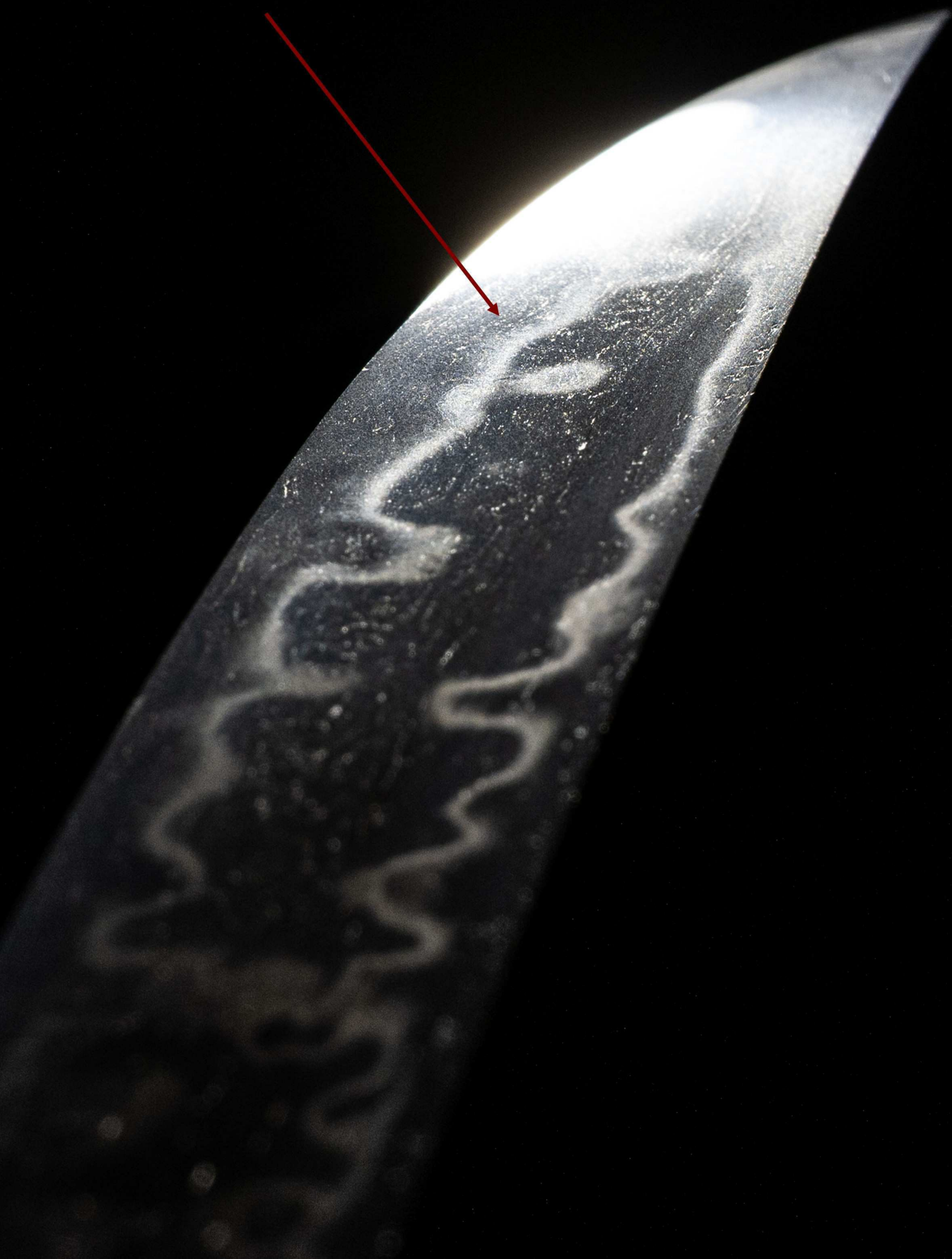
chikei

tobiyaki

mokume-hada

Short *bô-hi* (groove) with a *rounded* (*maru-dome*) end.

Quite literally a masked *bôshi* (hat) in the *kissaki* (tip).





It's alive...it's ALIVE!!!





Shirasaya
(protective scabbard)

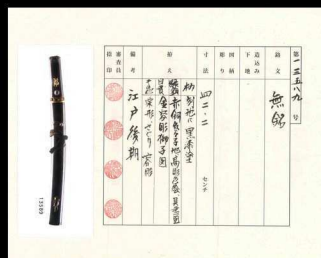


silver *habaki* with
copper ground

Aogai-mijin-nuri
chiisagatana-koshirae
(青貝微塵塗小さ刀拵)

*Chiisagatana-koshirae
decorated with mother-of-pearl*

Crafted during the
Late Edo period
(1780~1868)

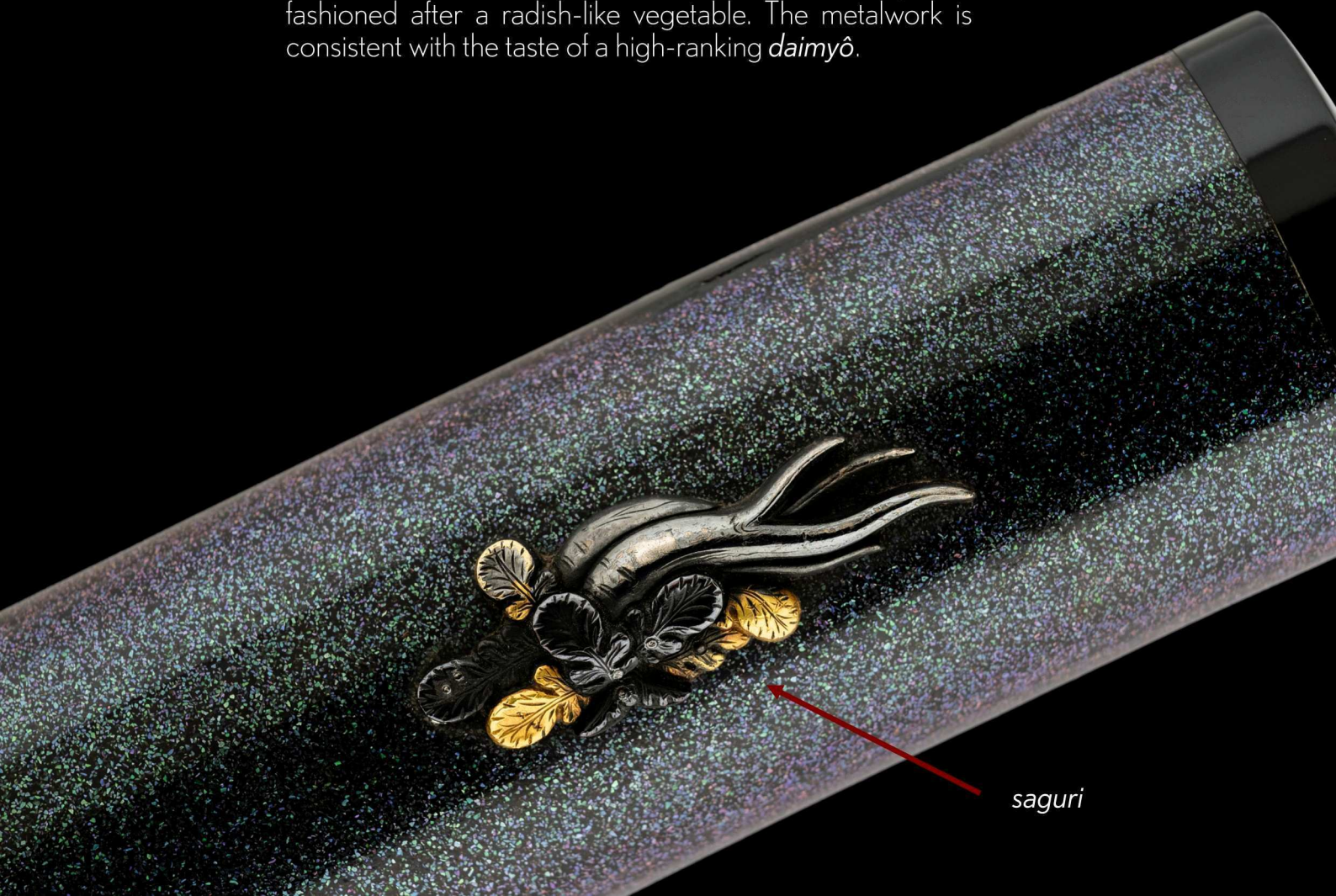


NTHK-NPO Kanteisho
Certificate of Authenticity



While *kurikata* and *saguri* are typically made from black horn, these components are also the work of a metalsmith.

The *kurikata* features a seashell motif, while the *saguri* is fashioned after a radish-like vegetable. The metalwork is consistent with the taste of a high-ranking *daimyô*.





Kozuka (utility knife)

Fastened into a special notch built inside the *saya* (scabbard).

This *kozuka* is a work by the *Gotô* (後藤) school. The *Gotô* family was a lineage of master metalsmiths that served the era's most powerful figures – beginning with the *Ashikaga* in the *Muromachi* period, followed by *Oda Nobunaga*, *Toyotomi Hideyoshi*, and *Tokugawa Ieyasu* – continuing for seventeen generations into the *Meiji* era.

They primarily produced *mitokoromono* for the shogunate, and their style became known as *Oie-bori*, the "official family style." During the *Edo* period, strict protocols governed the formal attire of the *Shogun* and *daimyô*; it was the established protocol to use sword fittings crafted by the *Gotô* school for such special and important occasions.



Shisa (or shishi) lion, resembling a cross between a lion and a dog, shisa serve as protectors from certain kinds of evil. *Shishi* traditionally stand guard outside the gates of Japanese shinto shrines and buddhist temples. Shishi are depicted in pairs, one with mouth open and one with mouth shut. The shisa with the open mouth is said to scare off demons, and the closed mouth to shelter and keep in the good spirits.





While *mekugi* are typically crafted from bamboo or buffalo horn, this *koshirae* features a *mekugi* created by a metalsmith.

Such an inclusion is remarkably rare and resembles a pair of cufflinks.

mekugi





Fuchi-kashira
depicting seashells

Shôami (正阿弥) school of *Kyoto*.

The base is crafted from *shakudô* with a fine *nanako* ground, featuring a motif of seashells. For centuries, shells have been treated as a form of treasure; consequently, they are cherished in Japanese culture as an auspicious pattern symbolizing abundance and fertility.



NTHK-NPO Kanteisho Certificate



兼 (Kane)

法 (nori)

Tsunagi

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





Koshirae bag

This aged koshirae bag is normally an indication it was kept within a family for quite some time.

ARIGATO!

THANK YOU FOR DOWNLOADING THIS PDF DESCRIPTION.

ALL AVAILABLE SWORDS ARE OFFERED ON A "FIRST-SERIOUS-HOLD-REQUEST", FIRST SERVED BASIS. PLEASE EMAIL ME (SERVICE@UNIQUEJAPAN.COM) STRAIGHT AWAY WITH QUESTIONS AND FURTHER PHOTOS AND/OR ADVICE REGARDING ANY SWORD OF INTEREST.

SWORDS CAN BE PAID OVER A FEW MONTHS IF REQUIRED. WE CAN DISCUSS PAYMENT PLANS AS CERTAIN PIECES REQUIRE A MORE SIZEABLE INVESTMENT.

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DESCRIPTIONS AND AVAILABILITY ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE.

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WE LOOK FORWARD TO HEARING FROM YOU. WE HAVE SERVICE OFFICES IN TOKYO AND NEAR LONDON, ENGLAND.

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