

JAPANESE SWORD CATALOGUE 22.5

FIRST RELEASED:
SEPTEMBER 9/2015



(COVER PHOTO)

ITEM# UJKA155

A YOSHIHIRO KATANA
W/ KENMAKI-RYU HORIMONO

HIZEN PROVINCE (KYUSHU)
EDO PERIOD, CIRCA ~1688

KOSHU TOKUBETSU KICHO TOKEN
CERTIFICATE OF AUTHENTICITY

ANTIQUE JAPANESE SWORDS FOR SALE (VOLUME 22.5)

RELEASED: SEPTEMBER 9, 2015 TO VIP CLIENTS ONLY
UPDATED: SEPTEMBER 21, 2015

THE FOLLOWING PAGES CONTAIN DESCRIPTIONS AND IMAGES
OF GENUINE ANTIQUE JAPANESE SWORDS THAT WERE SOLD IN
CATALOGUE 22.

THIS IS A REFERENCE DOCUMENT.

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Konnichiwa!

I hope you all had a terrific summer and this message finds you in great spirits.

This catalogue could very well be nicknamed the *Seven Samurai*. On the pages that follow are seven highly collectible katanas dating back four years to five hundred and four years.

Technically a katana is a sword with a cutting edge measuring 2-shaku (60.6cm or more). And only the Samurai were permitted to carry the katana in the Edo period.

The katana thus became the emblem of the Samurai. It stood for, and continues to stand for, a deep sense responsibility, of loyalty, and a commitment to balanced growth.

In Shinto, the Shintai or 'Body of Kami (spirit)' can be found in a stone, tree, river, mountain or a human made object such a sword or a mirror. A mirror reflects the light of the sun, which is revered as the highest divine power for the sensible reason that it is the source of all life on the planet.

It's vital that we self-reflect consistently, realizing our positive contributions are powerful. May the responsibility of Japanese sword ownership inspire us all to even greater heights.

There are 115 pages in this catalogue, our biggest to date. We shared as much as we can because there is so much life in every one of these unique works of art. I know in my heart that each sword will find a family that will cherish them.

One katana that was particularly interesting to work on was the Yoshihiro katana. This piece has some of the finest *horimono* (engraving) work one can hope to see on a Japanese sword. Thank you Eric Bossick for all the incredible photography.

I'd also like to send out special congratulations to all clients who booked **Private Meetings** with us in at our studio office in Ebisu these past few months and became proud sword owners. A high number of swords are claimed this way, before they make it to a catalogue.

If you are flying into Tokyo and are serious about owning a genuine Japanese sword, contact us at **service@uniquejapan.com** as all meetings are by appointment only.

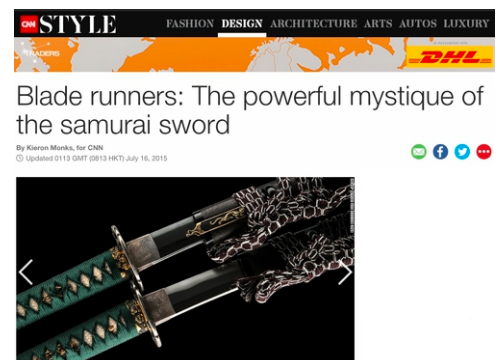
Thank you to all who have joined our VIP email list, your interest and enthusiasm spurs me on!

Feel the history and create your history.

Warm regards,



Pablo Kuntz
September 2015



UJ has been featured in the STYLE section at CNN.com. A recently created Kanesada Daisho koshirae is taking center stage. Congrats Steve!

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ujka155	A YOSHIHIRO KATANA	70.2	Koshu Tokubetsu	Genroku (1688-1704)	SOLD
ujka156	A SUKEKUNI KATANA	69.6	NTHK Yushusaku	Kanbun (1661-1673)	SOLD
ujka161	A SHOHEI KATANA	83.4	N/A	Summer 2011	SOLD
ujka163	A KANEHIDE KATANA	70.8	NTHK Kanteisho	Circa WWII	SOLD
ujka164	A SUKESADA KATANA	72.4	NTHK Kanteisho	Dated March 1511	SOLD

ALL PRICES ARE IN US DOLLARS

To access previously sold swords in Catalogue 21, please copy and paste this link:
<http://tinyurl.com/uj-catalogue-21-sold>

TO ONLINE VISITORS AROUND THE WORLD...

WELCOME! WE COMPLETELY RESPECT THE FACT IT TAKES A HUGE LEAP OF PERSONAL FAITH IN US TO COMMIT TO A PARTICULAR SWORD(S) GIVEN THE RELIANCE ON PHOTOS AND DESCRIPTIONS FOR SUCH A HIGHLY VALUED ITEM.

IT IS OUR PROMISE TO ADDRESS ALL YOUR QUESTIONS TO THE BEST OF OUR ABILITY. IT'S IMPORTANT TO US THAT YOU FEEL COMPLETELY CONFIDENT THAT THE SWORD YOU CHOOSE (AND CHOOSES YOU) IS DESTINED FOR YOUR FAMILY TO CHERISH AND PRESERVE.

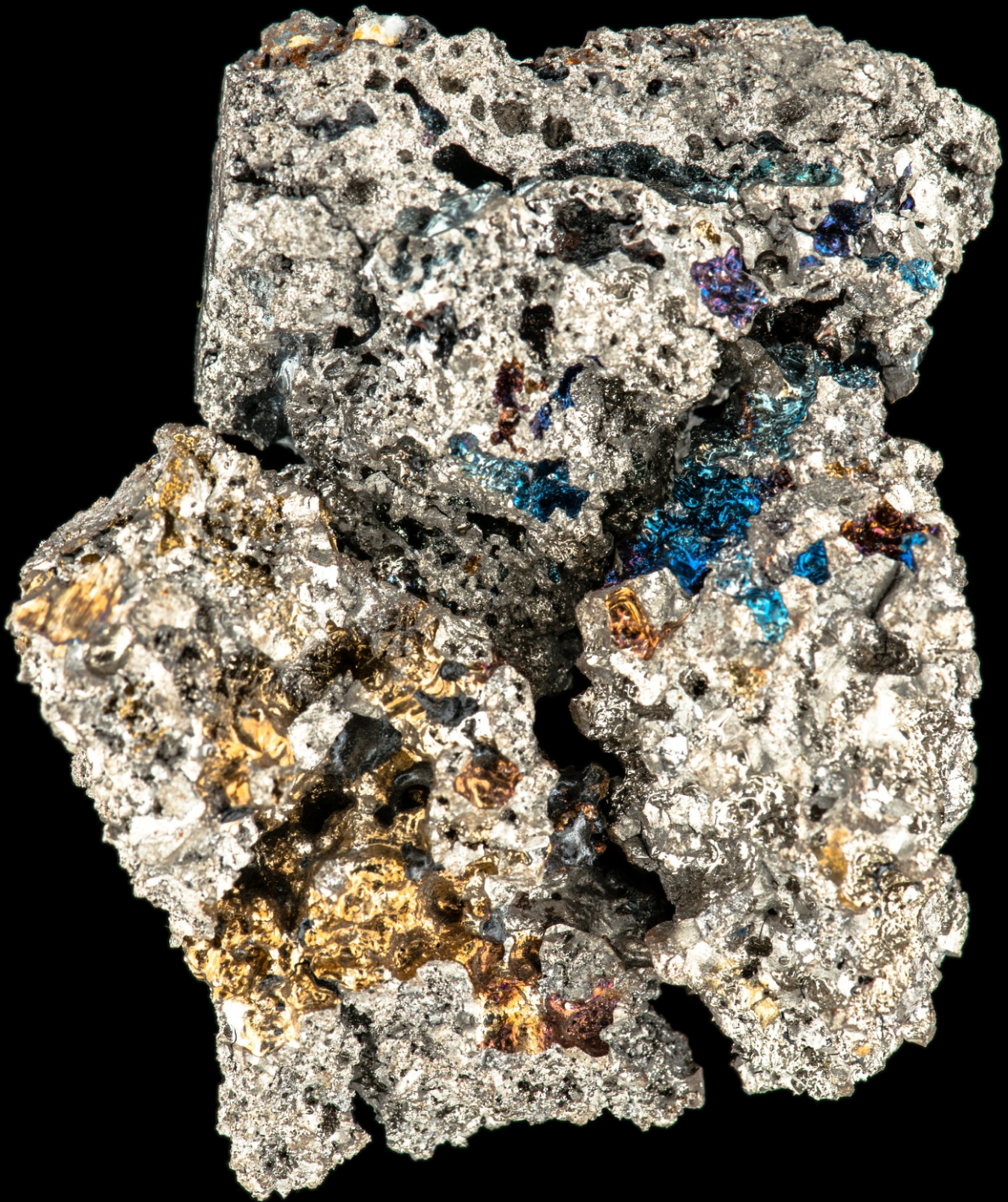
PLEASE TAKE REASSURANCE THAT ALL SWORDS FROM UNIQUE JAPAN ARE GUARANTEED AUTHENTIC AND COME WITH A **3-DAY WORRY FREE INSPECTION PERIOD** UPON ARRIVAL TO YOUR HOME.

WE ACQUIRE SWORDS ON A REGULAR BASIS AND CAN SOURCE SWORDS FOR COLLECTORS SEEKING A SPECIFIC SMITH AND/OR SCHOOL.

PLEASE INQUIRE ABOUT OUR LATEST ARRIVALS THAT MAY NOT BE LISTED IN THE CATALOGUE.

DOMO ARIGATO!
PABLO

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Tamahagane
(the celestial life blood of Japanese swords)



ITEM# UJKA145

A SHIZUHIRO KATANA

SIGNED, EARLY EDO PERIOD (KANBUN ERA: 1661-1673)

Swordsmith: *Hizen no Kami SHIZUHIRO*
Location: Iga province (Mie prefecture)
Measurements: **Length:** 67.3cm (ubu) **Curvature:** 1.3cm **Moto-haba:** 3.2cm
Jihada: *Itame tsumu (tight wood grain pattern)*
Hamon: *Futome naka-suguha (wide straight line)*
Certificate #1: **NTHK-NPO Yushusaku** (a sword designated as Highly Excellent by the Society for the Preservation of the Japanese Sword)
Certificate #2: **NTHK-NPO Kanteisho** (a koshirae designated as Important by the Society for the Preservation of the Japanese Sword)
Provenance: This sword was owned by Mr. Yamamoto Toyoshirou, eighth rank
Included: Customs koshirae, shirasaya, brocade carry bags, sword stand, maintenance kit, DVD, booklet, all exportation paperwork from Japan, Yushuto Book

SOLD

Iga, present-day western Mie prefecture, is a little known province surrounded by mountains that was for centuries inaccessible by road. Iga became independent from its nominal feudal rulers and established a republic by the early Muromachi period (circa 15th century). During this period, Iga came to be known as the birthplace of the *ninja*.

Sword making skills came to Nabari city Iga by way of Bungo province through brothers **Shizutada** and **Shizumasa**. The great influence however comes from Kii province where Shizutada studied for years with the Kii Ishido School.

Shizutada developed a dense and clear *itame* with excellent *suguha* that would become the archetype for future swords spanning a new school known as **Iga Ishido**.

This katana by **Hizen no Kami Shizuhiko** is a rare sword. Rare in the sense that swords by Shizuhiko are almost non-existent (in fact this very katana has been documented by Markus Sesko's *Nihon-Shinto-Shi*), and rare for the fact that a previous owner of the sword chiseled his name and military rank on the backside of the *nakago*.

Clients often ask us if we can state previous ownership of swords but we rarely know provenance. This sword is a delightful exception.

This katana was surely once carried in WWII. Its length would perfectly fit a traditional *gunto* (military) *koshirae*. The *hamon* is a skillfully crafted straight laser beam of *suguha* over a dense *jigane*. Long *bo-hi* (grooves) were also added to lighten and strengthen the blade.

The large tip (*o-kissaki*) draws inspiration from the huge tachi of the Nambokucho period.

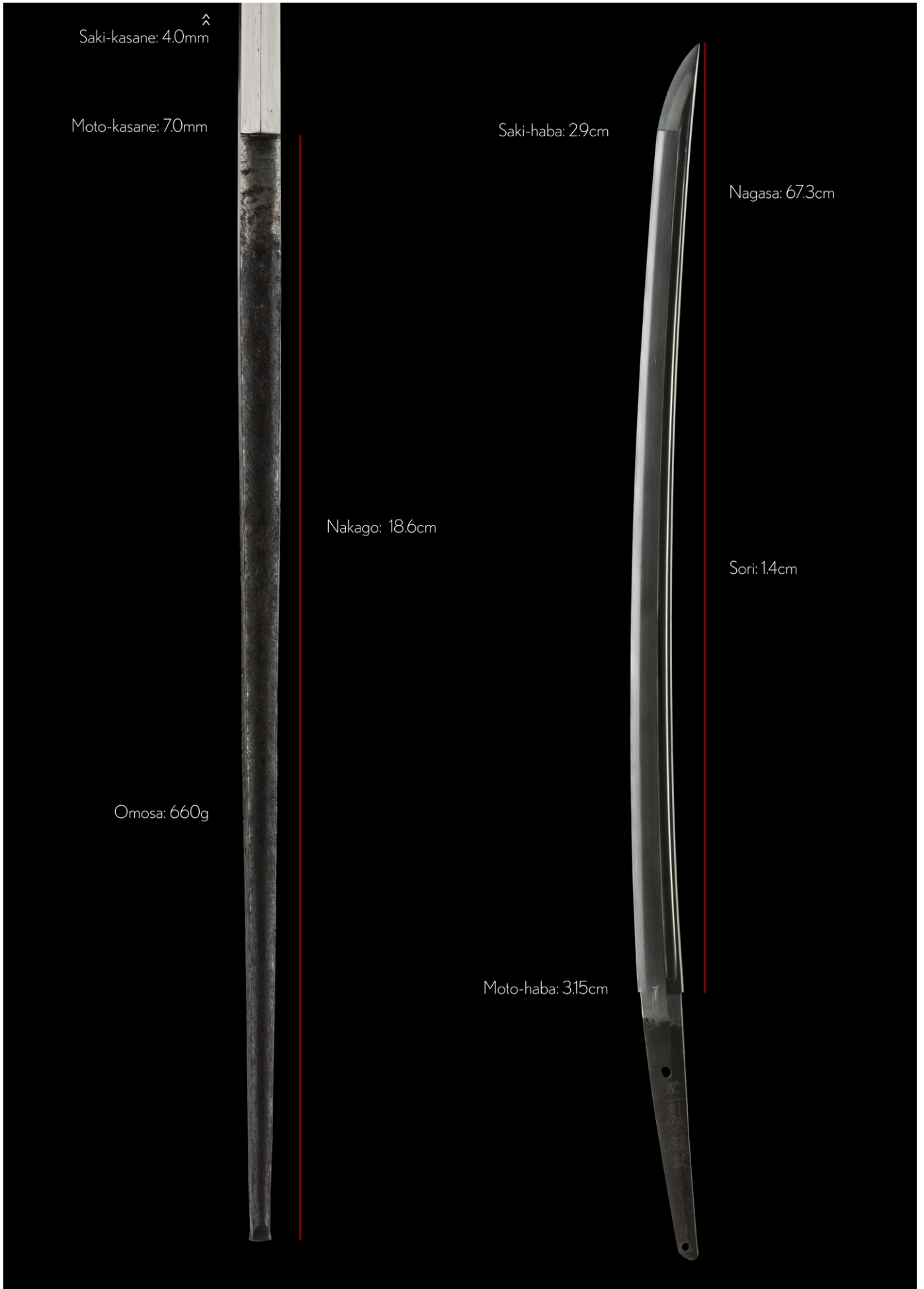
This katana was awarded the prestigious rank of **NTHK-NPO Yushusaku** – the highest level of honour at the non-profit sword preservation society. It has been featured in the *Yushuto Catalogue Book of Swords* recently released by the NTHK-NPO. A copy of the *Yushuto* book will be provided to the sword's new owner.

A beautiful and thoughtful custom *koshirae* was built for the sword that carries a theme of the revered horse and butterfly. Further images and information follow.




Picture 167: katana, mei: „Hizen no Kami Shizuhiko“ (肥前守鎮弘), nagasa 67,3 cm, sori 1,4 cm, shinogi-zukuri, iori-mune.
Work of the 1st generation Shizuhiko.

This katana has been documented in Markus Sesko's book Nihon-Shinto-Shi (page 205)







Province: Iga
Title: Hizen no Kami
(Lord of Hizen province)

Smith: Shizuhiko

Hi
zen (no)
Kami
Shizu
hiro

This katana was once owned
by Mr. Yamamoto Toyoshirou.
He held the 8th rank within
the Japanese Armed Forces.

Kun (rank)
Ha (eighth)
Tou

Yama
moto
Toyo
shi
rou



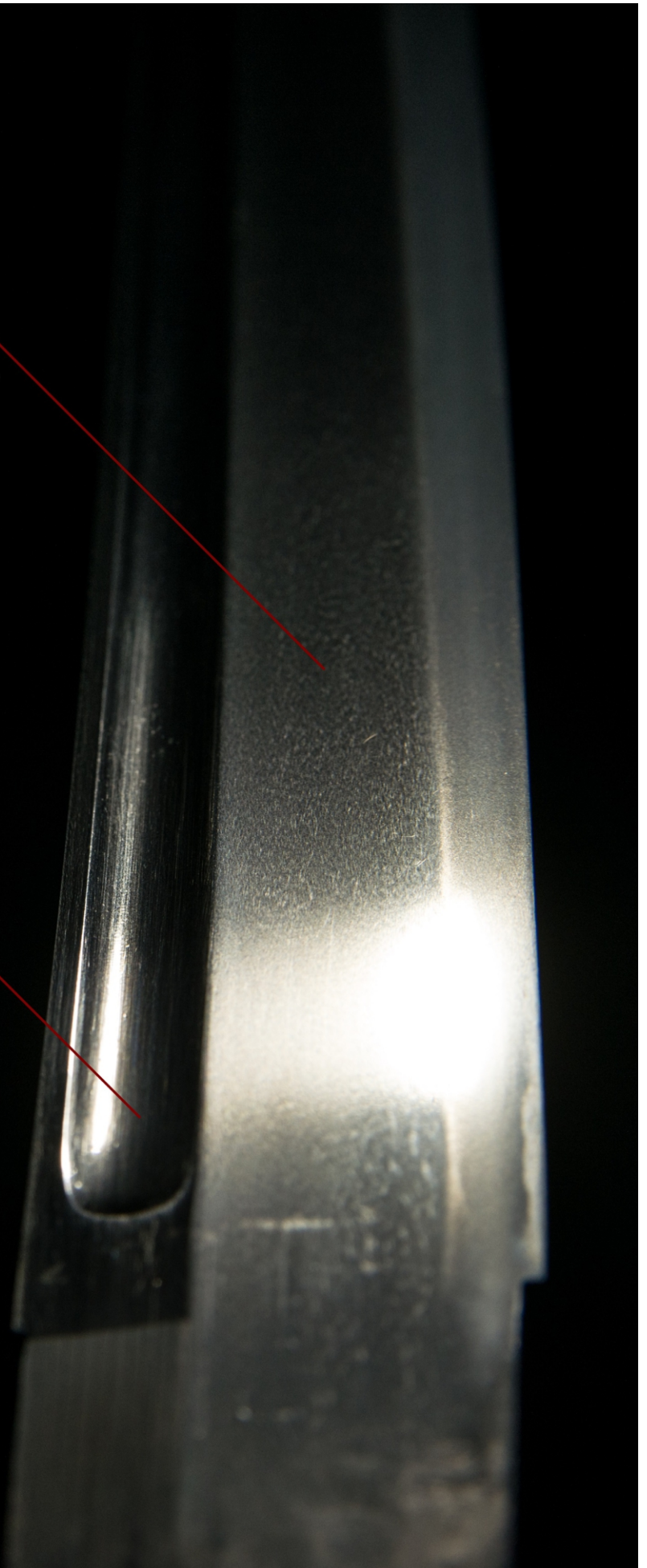
Jihada


The surface grain pattern (*jihada*) is in a handsome polish displaying a tightly forged *ko-itame hada*.

Swords by 1st generation Shizuhiro are rare. According to the NTHK-NPO, he is part of the *Iga Ishido School* by way of Kii province, modern-day Wakayama.

Bo-hi

The *marudome bo-hi* (rounded groove) stretching the full length of the sword forms an '*I-beam*' construction. These grooves serve to lighten the sword while helping to absorb energy loads efficiently. Clever.





A focal point of this katana is its powerful *o-kissaki* (large tip) reminiscent of swords crafted during the turbulent Nambokucho period war of the 14th century.

Hamon

The temper line (*hamon*) on the blade is a crisp *suguha* (straight) - a pattern that takes great skill to achieve given the exacting nature of its shape. The *nioguchi* (band of crystals that make up the hamon) is bright and beautiful.



Shirasaya
(protective scabbard)



Mito-habaki
(copper base)





Tsuba

A rich and beautiful chocolate brown iron guard (*tsuba*) depicting a horse (*uma*) in gold inlay within a meadow paints a scene of serenity.

The horse is the seventh symbol of the Japanese zodiac. Horses have long been depended upon by the Samurai, especially in the 10th to 14th centuries when tachi were carried on horseback.

Their strong and majestic bodies have made them the *symbol of life*.



(reverse side)



Cho (butterfly)

The butterfly holds great spiritual significance in Japan. Given their transformative nature from caterpillars, the Japanese believe butterflies carry the souls of the living and of past ancestors. They are a symbol of joy and longevity.

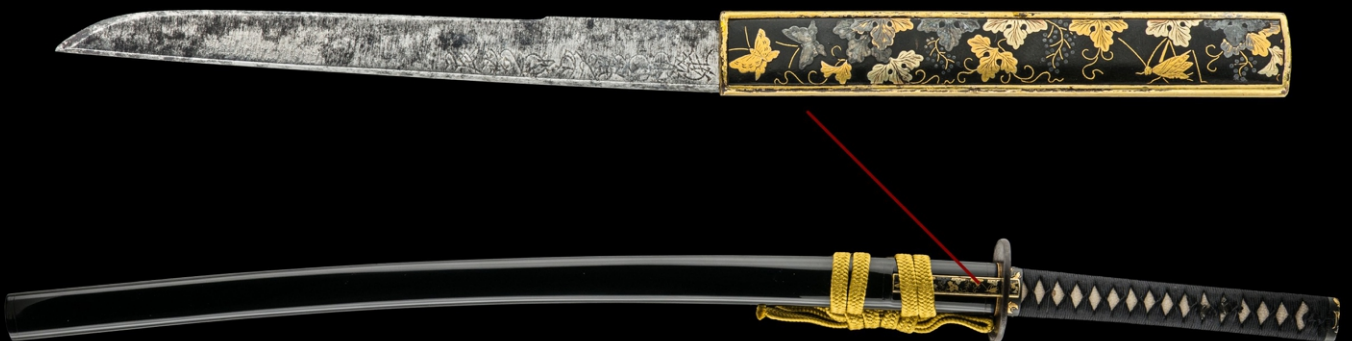
The butterfly is a cherished artistic motif that can be seen on woodblock prints, scrolls and on the *kimonos* of young women.

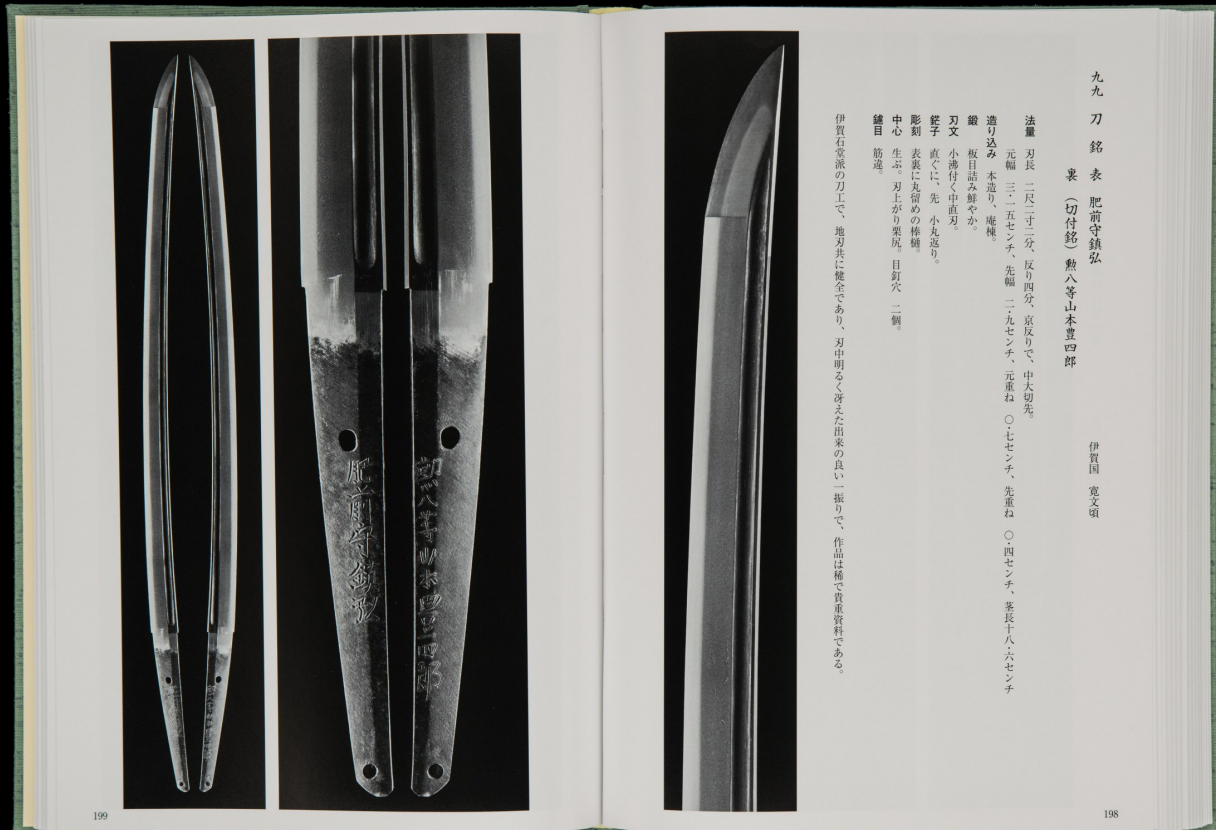
It is also the *kamon* (family crest) of the mighty *Taira* clan that ruled Japan during the Heian period (794-1185).





Kozuka (utility knife)



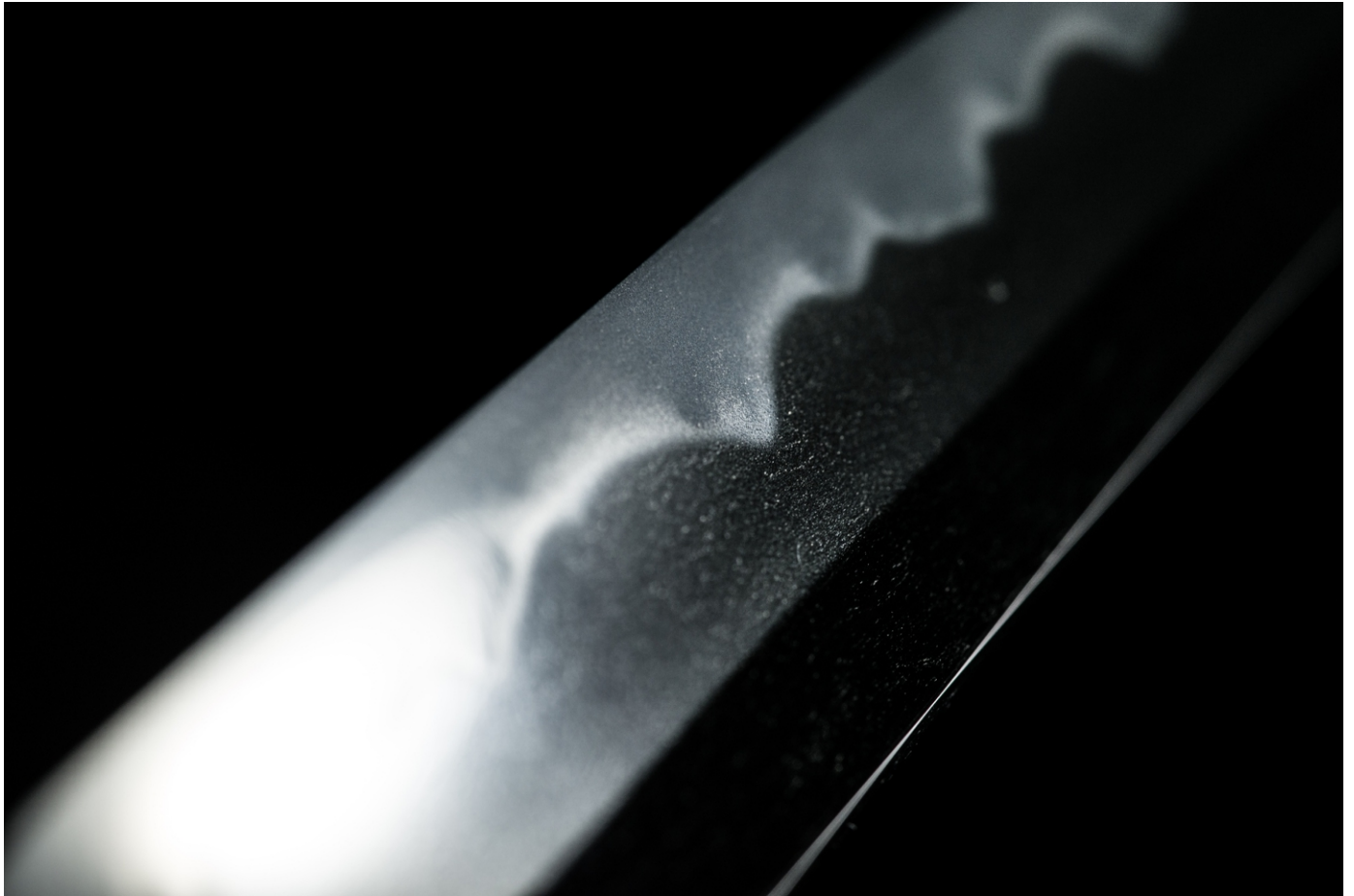


This sword has achieved NTHK-NPO Yushusaku, the highest degree of honour at the Society for the Preservation of the Japanese Sword. The certificate was issued on July 23rd, 2014. The sword is also featured in the society's first edition printed Yushuto Catalogue of Japanese swords. The book will be included with ownership of the sword.

第 五 七 八 二 号	銘 文	造り込み	鑑	下 地	刃 紋	銘 子	彫 柄	中 心	拵 え	寸 法	備 考	捺 査 印 具
	肥前守鎮弘	鐔造り	板目詰み心		太め、中直ぐり	直ぐり心	表裏、棒樋、正上で止り	目釘穴 二個 鍔筋違			寛文頃	
			庵棟									



ujka145
A Shizuhiro Katana



ITEM# UJKA153

A CHIKUZEN YOSHIMASA KATANA

SIGNED, EARLY EDO PERIOD (KANBUN ERA: 1661-1673)

Swordsmith: Chikuzen Ju Minamoto Nobukuni YOSHIMASA (2nd generation)
Location: Chikuzen province (Kyushu)
Length: 75.2cm (ubu)
Curvature: 1.8cm
Moto-haba: 3.0cm
Hamon: Gunome Midare
Jihada: Koitame
Certificate #1: NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon (a sword designated as Especially Worthy of Preservation by the Society for the Preservation of the Japanese Art Sword)
Certificate #2: NTHK-NPO Yushusaku (a sword designated as Highly Excellent by the Society for the Preservation of the Japanese Sword)
Fujishiro: Jo-saku (ranked as a superior swordsmith)
Included: Shirasaya, sword fabric bag, sword stand, maintenance kit, DVD, printed care guide, registration and export paperwork, Yushuto Catalogue book

SOLD

The ancestor of the Shinto-era *Chikuzen Nobukuni School* was **Nobukuni Yoshisada** who referred to himself as the 12th generation Nobukuni by way of Yamashiro province (Kyoto) to Chikuzen province.

Chikuzen province has a long and distinguished history dating back to the Warrior Monks of the Kongobyoe School of the early Koto period.

Yoshisada's eldest son **Yoshimasa** was meant to succeed the school however his father "disinherited" him when he packed up his bags at the age of 26 to study the Bizen tradition of the Ichimonji School under Sukemune.

Yoshisada was an adamant proponent of the Yamashiro and Soshu sword traditions, and clearly '*no son of his*' was going to bring Bizen into the mix! Succession thus went to his younger brothers **Yoshimasa 2nd generation** (maker of this katana) and **Yoshitsugu**.

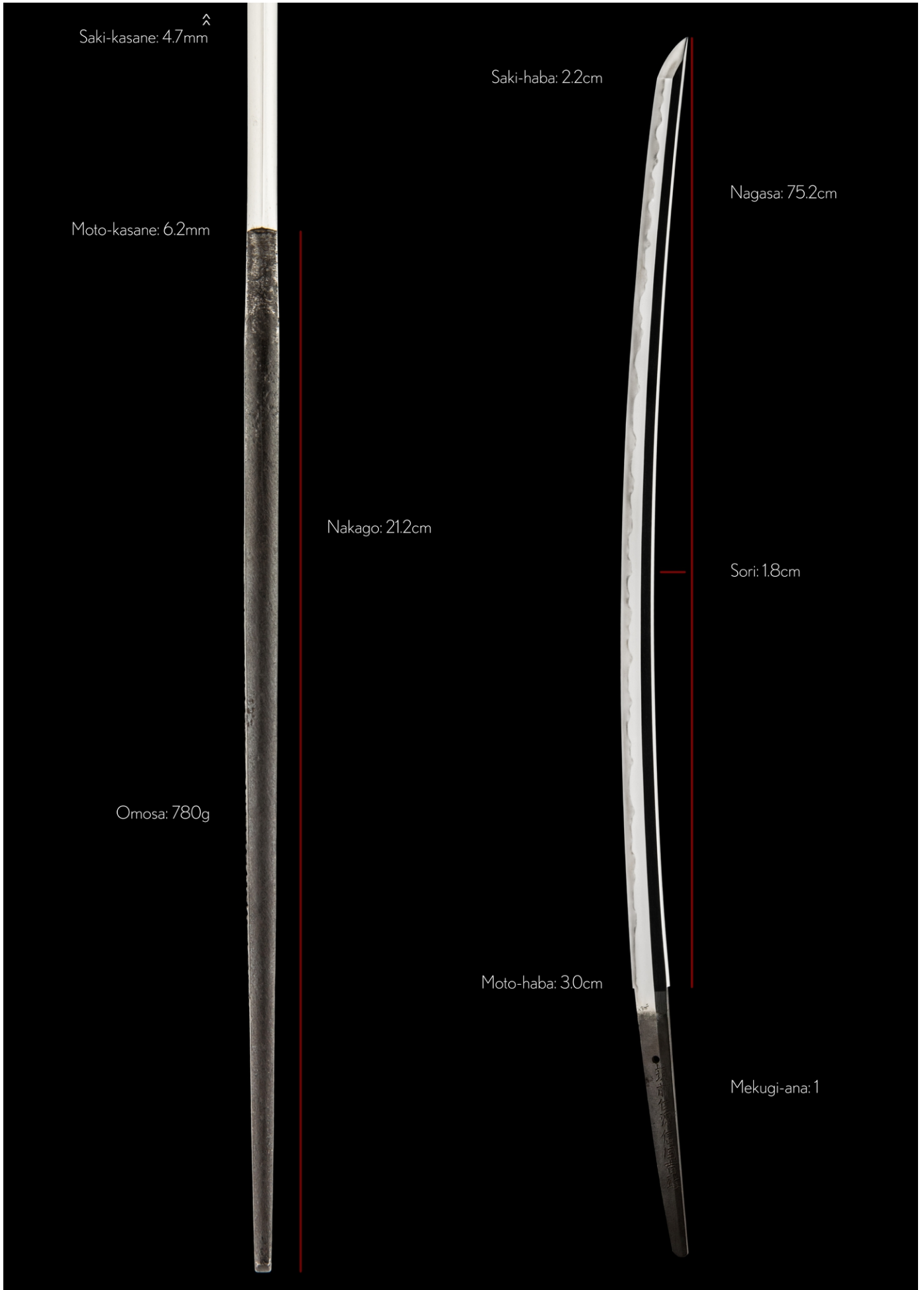
With a cutting edge of 75.2cm and a healthy *mihaba*, this is one seriously impressive katana. The *hamon* is a dazzling *gunome-midare* with a *jihada* that is exceptionally well-forged.

Fujishiro ranks Yoshimasa as a **Jo-saku** (superior) smith. And it's easy to see why. This is a Samurai sword of immense quality and collectibility. The katana has deservedly achieved NTHK-NPO Yushusaku and NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon distinctions.

This sword is currently in shirasaya only. A custom koshirae project is highly recommended to personalize this sword for the family who will take over ownership responsibilities.

Photos and information follow.







Province: Chikuzen

Clan: Minamoto

School: Chikuzen Nobukuni

Smith: Yoshimasa

筑前住源信国吉政

Chiku

zen

ju

Minamoto

Nobu

kuni

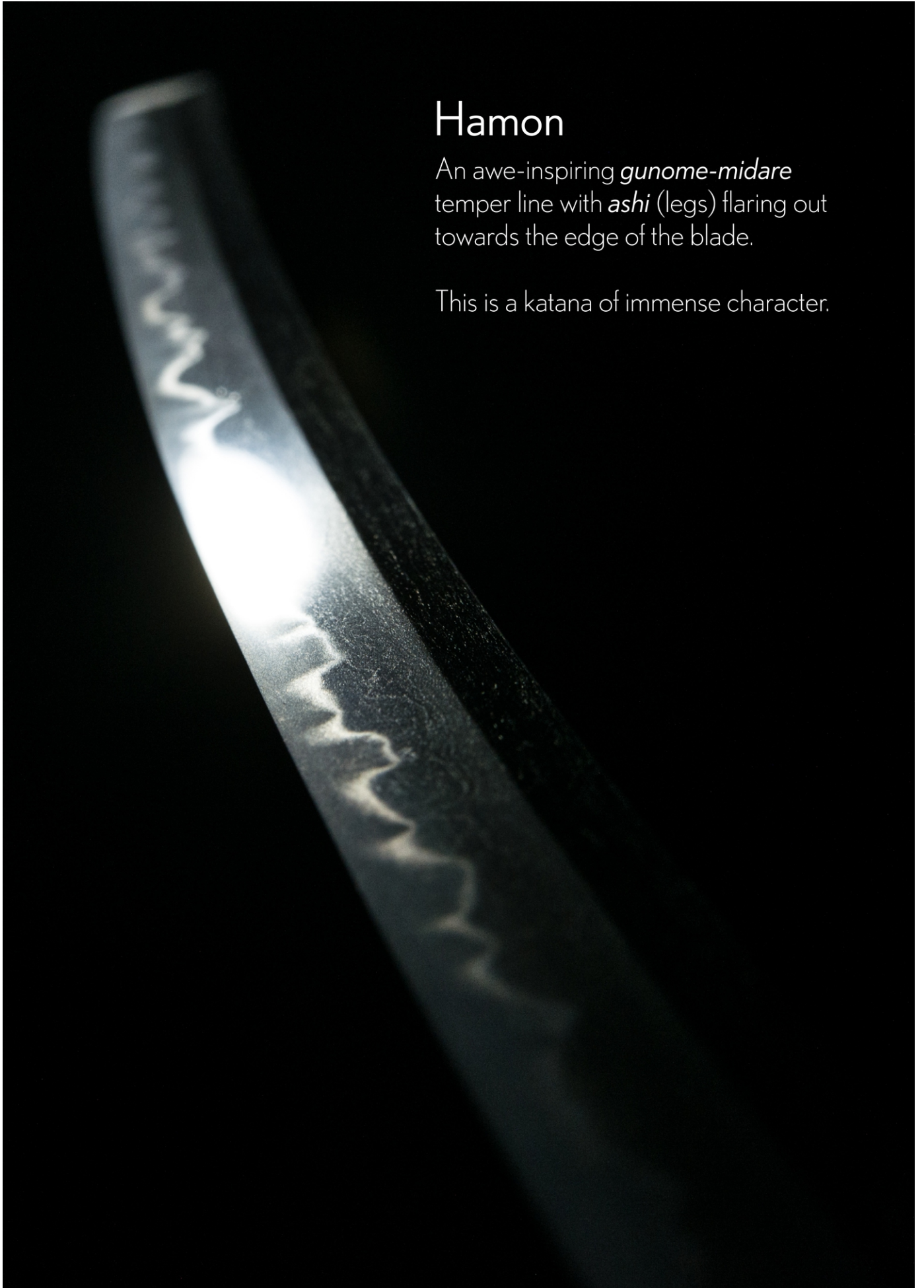
Yoshi

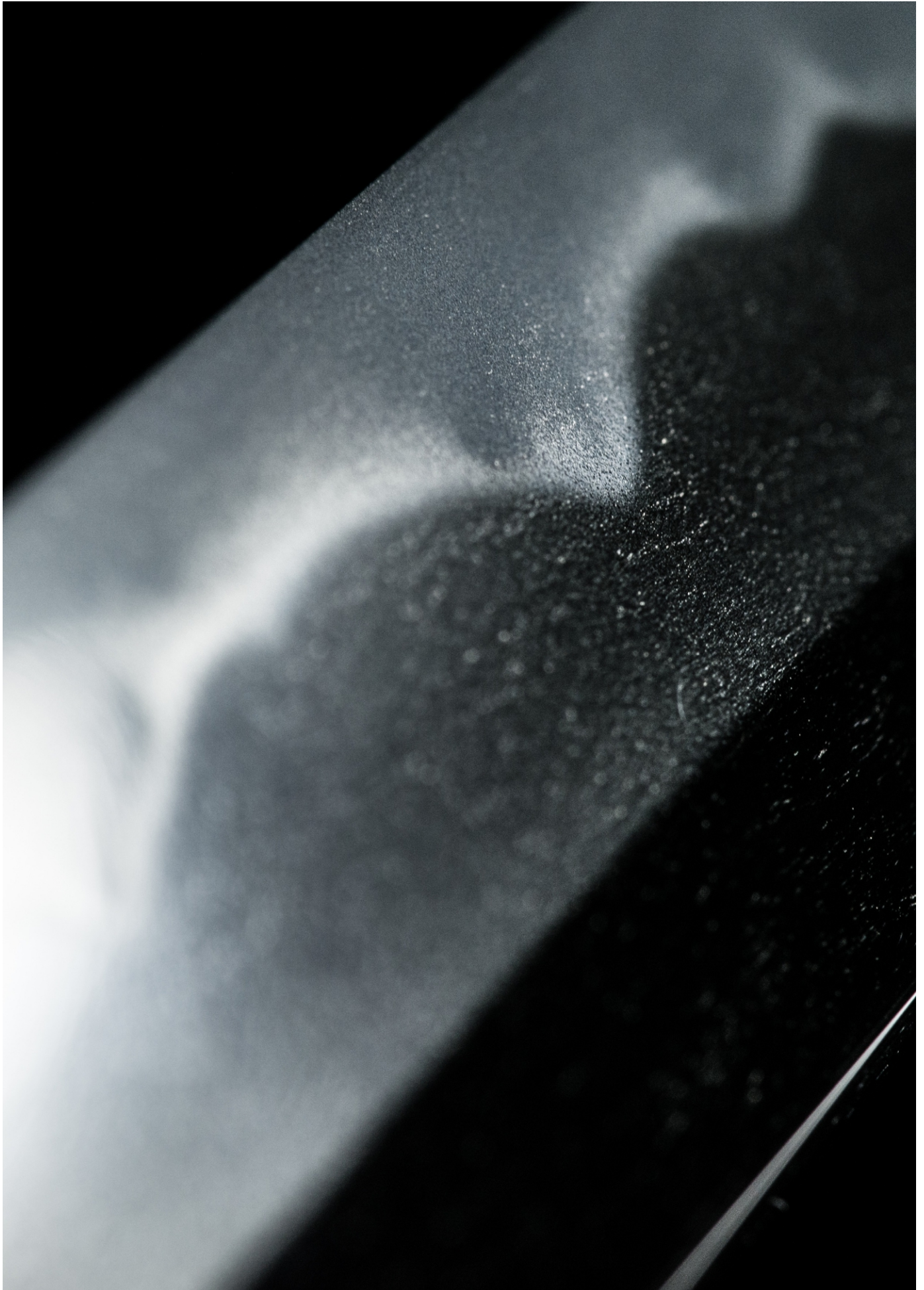
masa

Hamon

An awe-inspiring *gunome-midare* temper line with *ashi* (legs) flaring out towards the edge of the blade.

This is a katana of immense character.







Jihada

Exquisite tightly forged *itame hada* that resembles a wood grain surface.

Zoom into image for a closer look.



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 19th year of Heisei (2007), August 24th

One, Katana

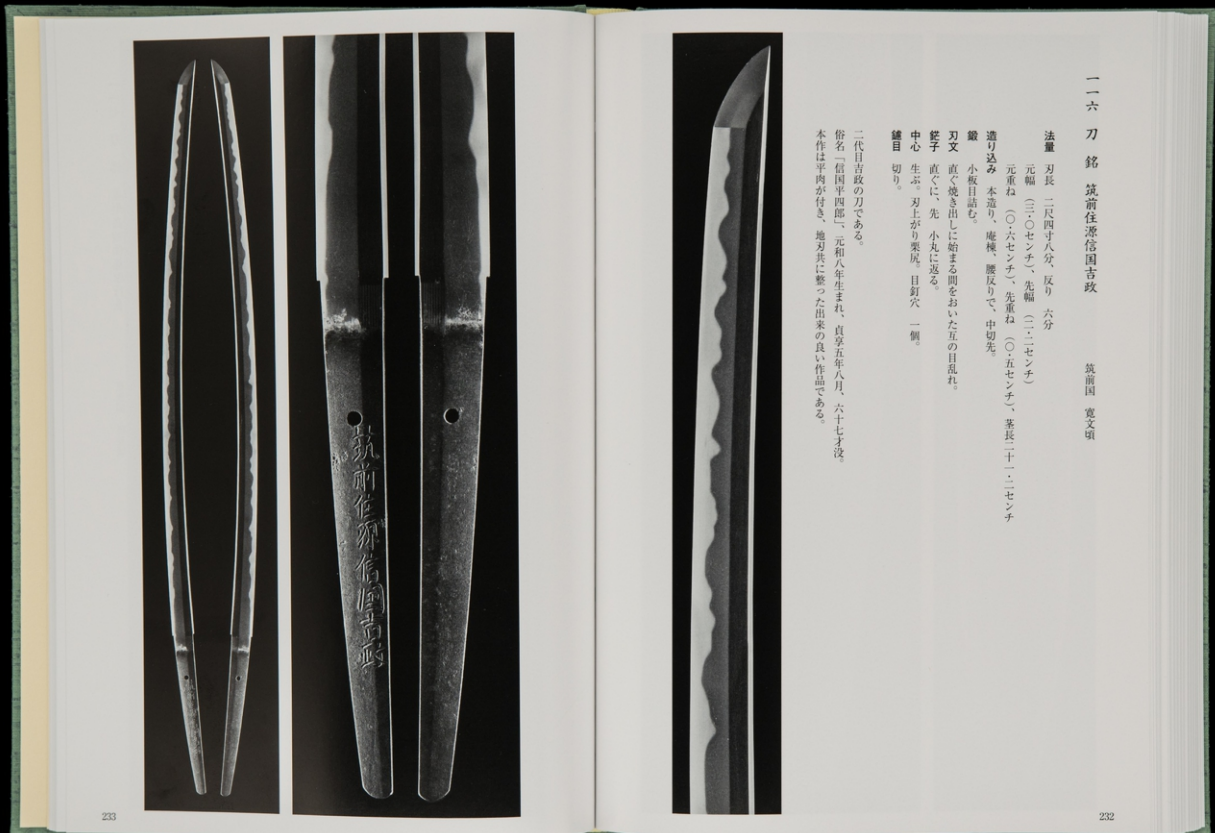
Mei (signature)

Chikuzen Ju Minamoto Nobukuni Yoshimasa

Nagasa (length)

2-shaku 4-sun 8-bu (75.2cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai
(NBTHK)



This katana by second generation smith Chikuzen Nobukuni Yoshimasa has achieved NTHK-NPO Yushusaku, the highest degree of honour at the Society for the Preservation of the Japanese Sword, issued July 23rd, 2014.

The sword is featured in the society's first edition printed Yushuto Catalogue. of Japanese swords. The book will be included with ownership of the sword.



Steps to Building Your Own Koshirae

*Many fine antique Samurai swords today come stored only in a shirasaya.
A shirasaya acts like a humidior, protecting the steel for the long term.
Just as the Samurai would have custom ordered during the Edo Period
we can build a traditional set of outdoor koshirae (sword mounts) for your sword.*

Step 1: Choose your sword (find the sword that chooses you)



Step 2: Select your antique fittings & colours (decide on a theme that speaks to you and your sword)



Step 3: Patience...

(it takes about 3-6 months to build as it is handmade by master craftsmen in Japan)

Total production cost ranges from \$2,500 ~ \$5,000

Please speak to a member of the Unique Japan team to get started!



ITEM# UJKA155

A HIZEN YOSHIHIRO KATANA

SIGNED, EARLY EDO PERIOD (GENROKU ERA: 1688-1704)

- Swordsmith:** *Hizen no Kuni Ju Ise Daijo Fujiwara YOSHIHIRO (2nd generation)*
Location: Hizen province (Saga prefecture)
Length: 69.9cm (ubu)
Curvature: 1.2cm
Moto-haba: 3.2cm
Hamon: *Konie, gunome choji midare, kinsuji*
Jihada: *Koitame, chikei, and yubashiri*
Certificate #1: **NBTHK Koshu Tokubetsu Kicho** (a sword designated as Extraordinarily Precious by the Society for the Preservation of the Japanese Art Sword)
Certificate #2: **NTHK-NPO Kanteisho** (a sword designated as Important by the Society for the Preservation of the Japanese Sword)
Certificate #3,4: **NTHK-NPO Kanteisho** (tsuba and koshirae designated as Important by the Society for the Preservation of the Japanese Sword)
Fujishiro: *Chu-Josaku* (ranked as an above average swordsmith)
Included: Shirasaya, koshirae, sword fabric bags, sword stand, maintenance kit, DVD, printed care guide, registration and export paperwork

SOLD

First generation and grandmaster **Hizen Tadayoshi** trained many top swordsmiths in his distinguished career. One in particular was a smith by the name of **Yoshihiro**.

Yoshihiro went on to establish his own school around the Joo era in approximately 1652. When his second son, succeeded him, he changed his name from Yoshisada to **Yoshihiro** and became known as the school's second generation.

It is said that a katana housed in a red *saya* (scabbard) is special - and very sharp. This exceptional sword keeps to this reputation.

Measuring 69.9cm, this is a classic *josun* (standard length) katana produced by 2nd gen. Yoshihiro. A breathtaking mix of superior sword-making skills and *horimono* (engraving).

The *hamon* is a complex mixture of *gunome-choji midare* and a rare dovetail pattern known as *yahazuba* (arrow notch). Every time this sword is picked up, something new comes to light.

The marvelously detailed engraving of **Kanemaki-ryu** Fudo Myou's rope called **Kensaku** dominate both sides of the blade. One can spend hours and hours (I have!) studying this sword. The degree of craftsmanship is so impressive. This is skill of the highest degree.

Rope of **Fudo-Myou** and other guardian deities symbolizes the keeping at distance of enemies of the Buddhist teachings while catching of new believers.

The purpose of the *horimono* meant to bring the owner of the sword spiritual protection.



When researching, a fine sword was found by Hizen Tadayoshi (left) with engraving by the **Umetada Myoju School** nearly identical in nature.

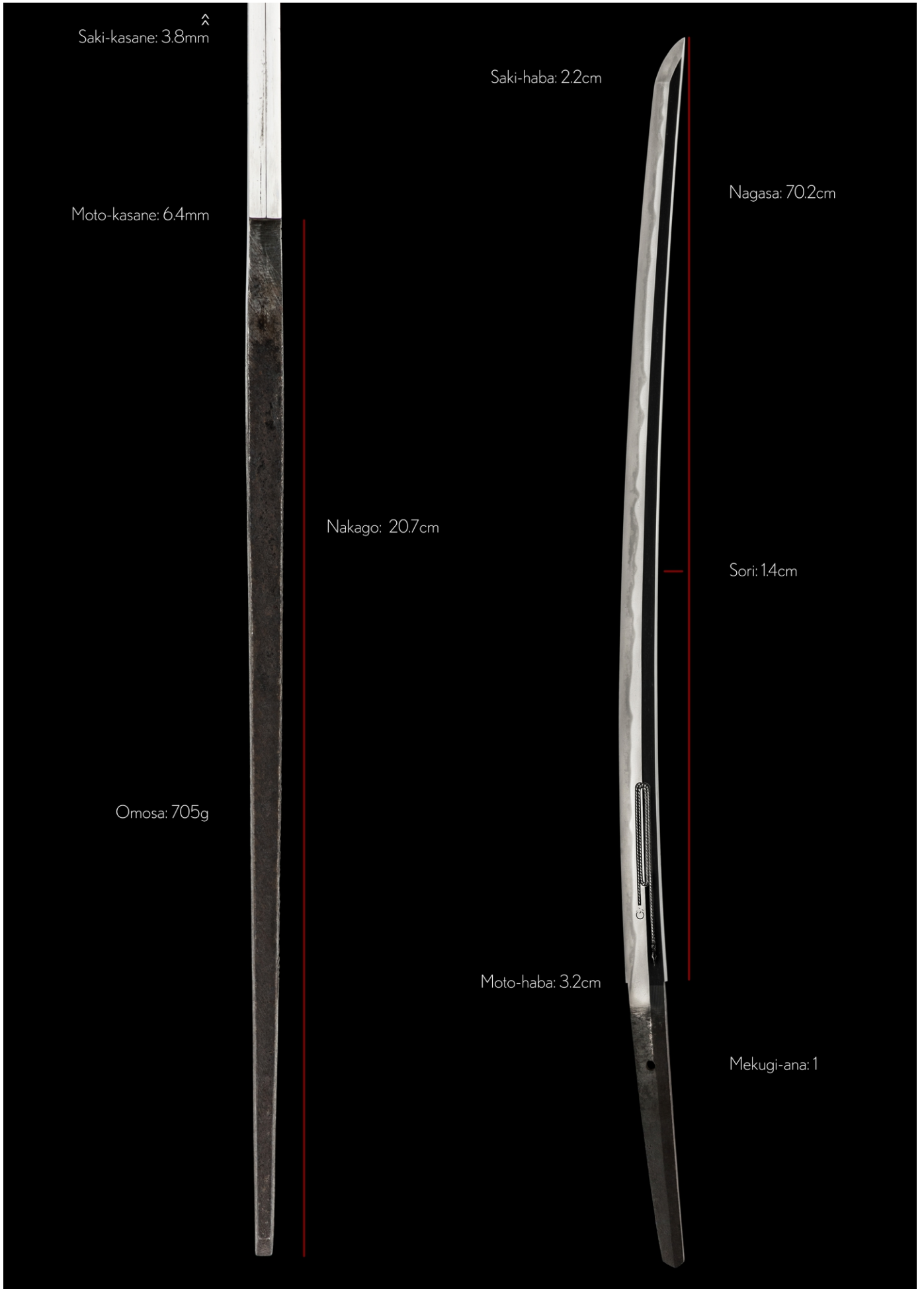
It is highly likely that the same school performed the *horimono* with such rich detail.

Note the incredible detail of just the *skin* on the claws of the dragon!

The rare blue **Koshu Tokubetsu Kicho Token** certificate of authenticity issued by the NBTHK in 1975 deeming the sword to be **Extraordinarily Precious** accompanies the katana.

Three more certificates from the NTHK-NPO are included for the fabulous *koshirae* with *kiri* design elements and a unique *Echizen Kinai tsuba* that depicts a traditional umbrella with snowflakes.

Photos and information follow of this highly recommended Samurai sword.





Province: Chikuzen

Title: Ise Daijo

(Assistant Lord of Ise province)

Clan: Fujiwara

Smith: Yoshihiro

Hi
zen
kuni
ju
I
se
Dai
jo
Fuji
wara
Yoshi
hiro





Kenmaki-ryu

This striking *horimono* (engraving) is called *Kenmaki-ryu*.

It depicts a dragon winding around a sword. According to legend, the guardian deity *Fudo-Myou* once had to fight a deity from another religion, the dragon king *Kurikara*.

He changed himself into a flaming sword but *Kurikara* did the same and the fighting went on without a victor.

In a manner of ingenuity, *Fudo-Myou* transformed into the dragon *Kurikara*, wound himself around the opponent's sword and devoured him from atop.

Hence, the dragon *Kurikara* wrapped around a sword is, in fact, another representation of *Fudo-Myou*.

Kenmaki-ryu on swords can be found at various levels of skill. This is called *Shin no Kurikara* (realistic) for the attention to detail is simply breathtaking (zoom into this image).

This masterpiece would have taken weeks of effort, all *hand-chiseled* from start to finish.

The creator of the work is likely that of the *Umetada Myoju School* as there are documented works of similar quality found on *Hizen Shodai Tadayoshi* swords.

****story of Kenmaki-ryu and Kensaku was found from the "Encyclopedia of Japanese Swords" by Markus Sesko**

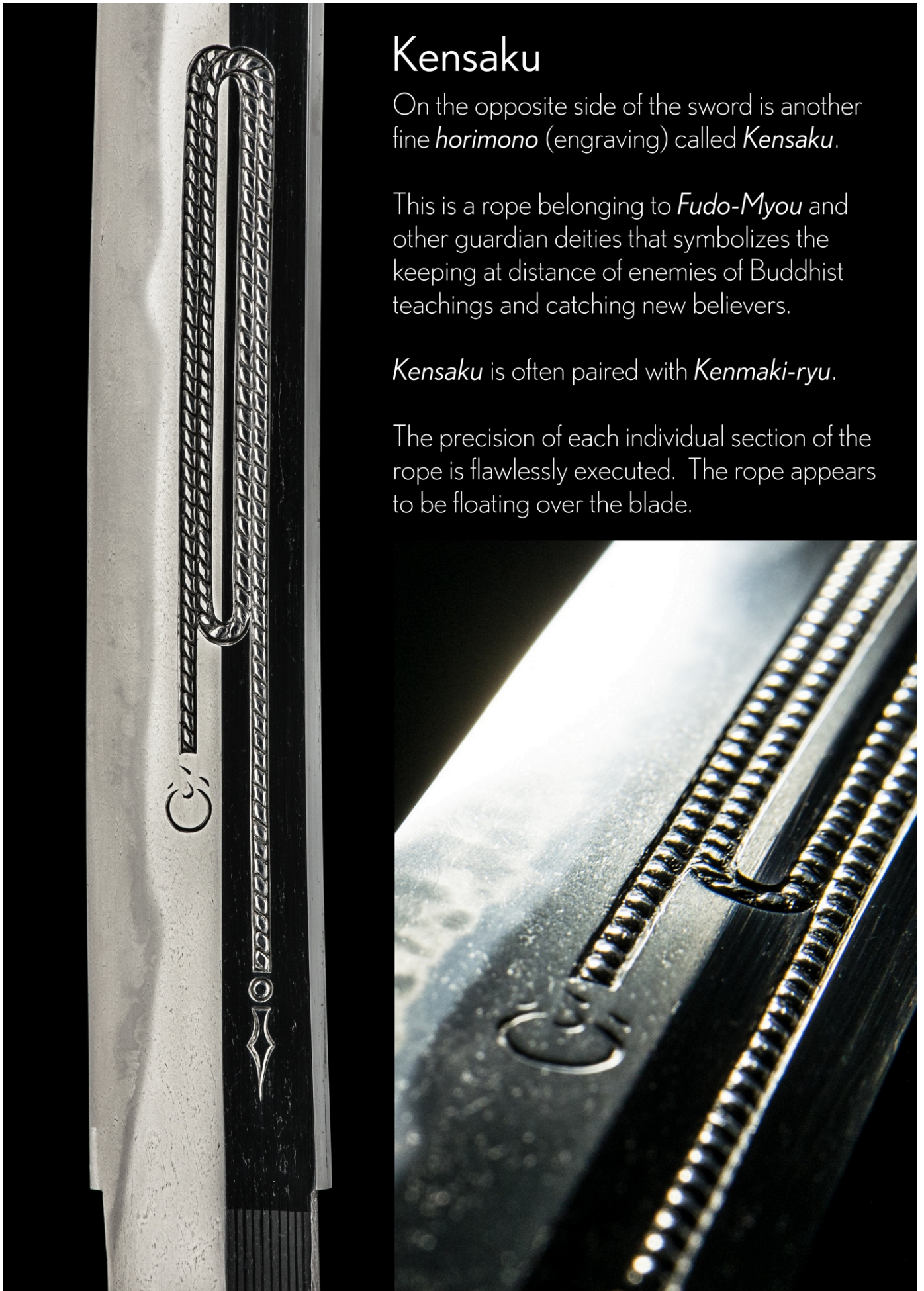
Kensaku

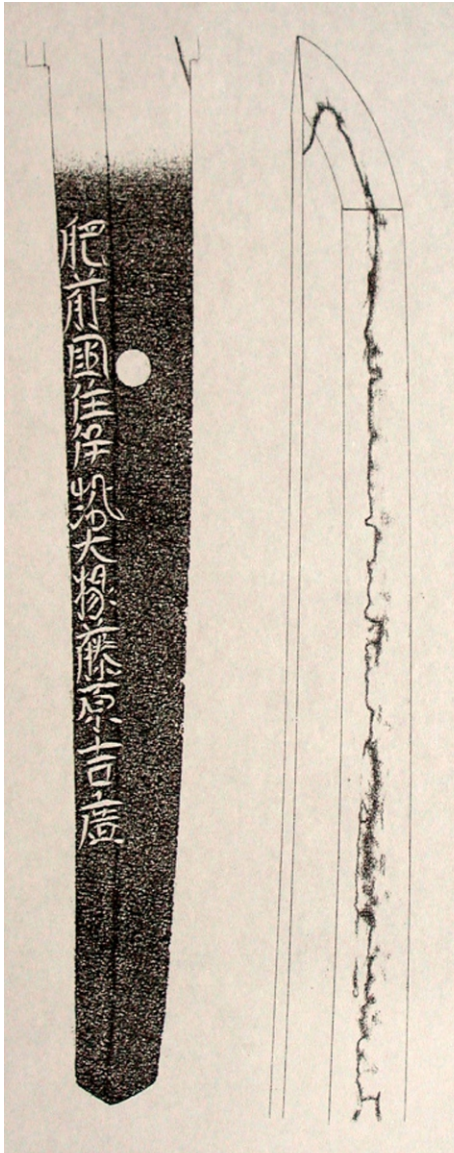
On the opposite side of the sword is another fine *horimono* (engraving) called *Kensaku*.

This is a rope belonging to *Fudo-Myou* and other guardian deities that symbolizes the keeping at distance of enemies of Buddhist teachings and catching new believers.

Kensaku is often paired with *Kenmaki-ryu*.

The precision of each individual section of the rope is flawlessly executed. The rope appears to be floating over the blade.



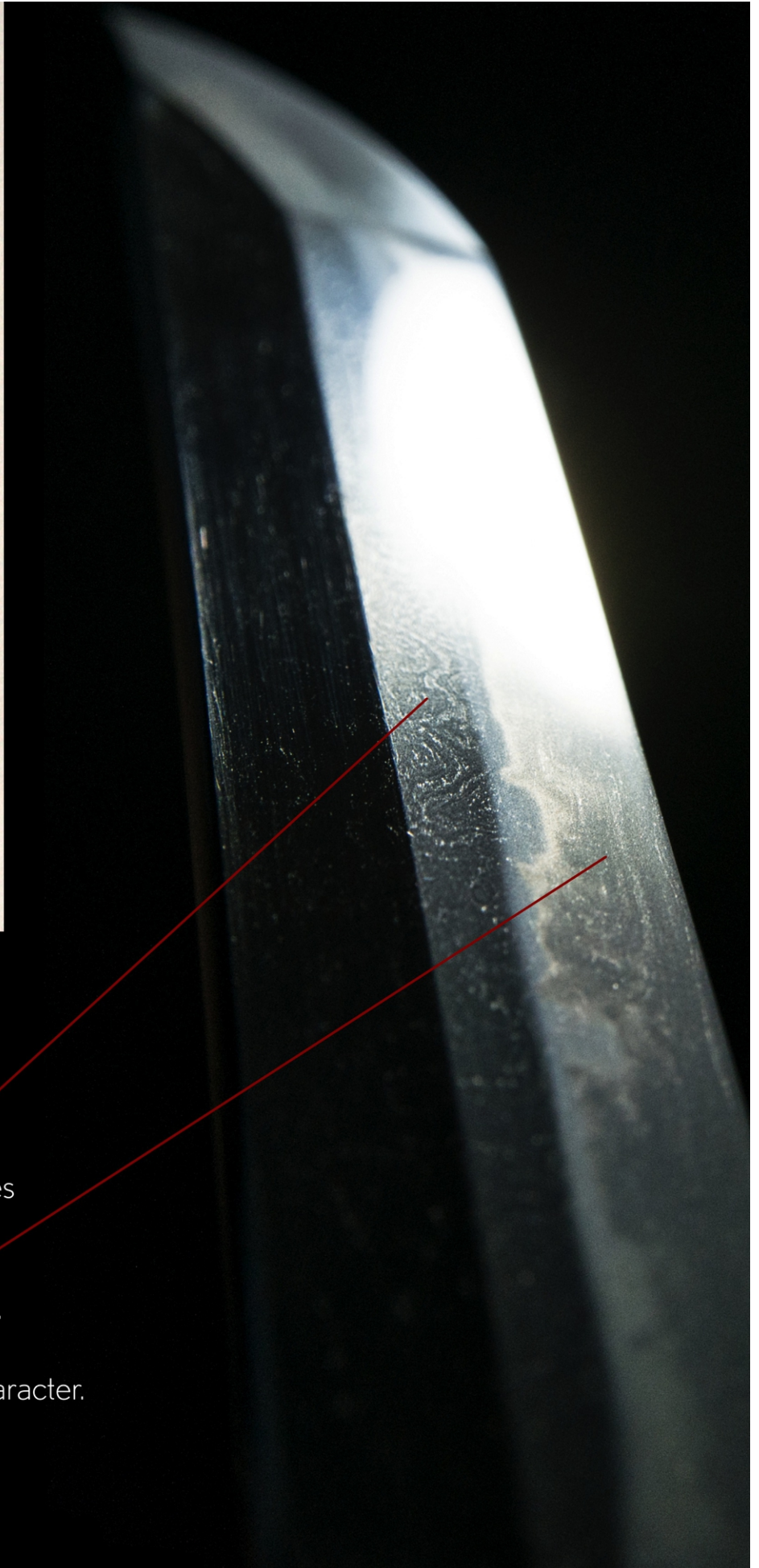


Jihada

The surface grain pattern is a swirling *itame-hada*.

Hataraki (activity) includes *kinsuji* (black lines in the hamon) and *sunagashi*, sweeping streaks of sand.

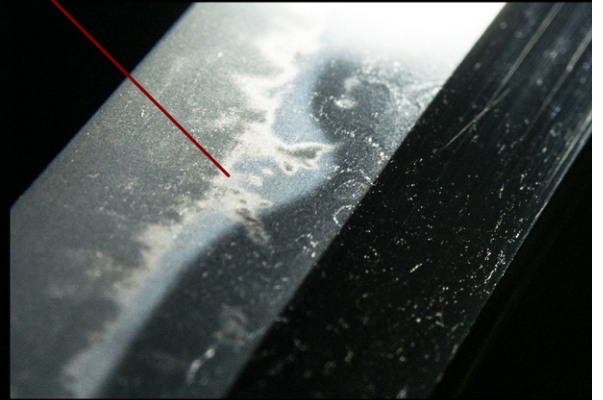
This is a katana rich in character.



Hamon

The temper line (*hamon*) is a complex symphony of *gunome choji-midare* (semi-circular waves fusing clove blossoms) with beautiful dove-tail shaped elements called *yahazuba*.

Yahazu translates to "arrow notch".





Shirasaya
(protective scabbard)



Niju-habaki
(gold on copper base)



Tsuba

The sword's iron guard (*tsuba*) is signed *Echizen Ju Kinai* (the Kinai School from Echizen province). The *sukashi* (openwork) design is that of a *wagasa* (traditional bamboo umbrella) surrounded by a geometric pattern of snowflakes.

Echizen province is known for heavy snowfall, a case of local life inspiration for the design. The *ukiyo-e* (woodblock print) to the right is titled: 'Lady in the Snow' by *Kikugawa Eizan* (1787-1867).





The *fuchi-kashira* (collar/pommel) and *menuki* carry a matching variation of the *kiri-mon*. The *kiri-mon* is one of two imperial badges of Japan consisting of three leaves of the paulownia flower surmounted by three budding stems.

The powerful *Toyotomi family* adopted this crest as their *kamon* (family emblem).



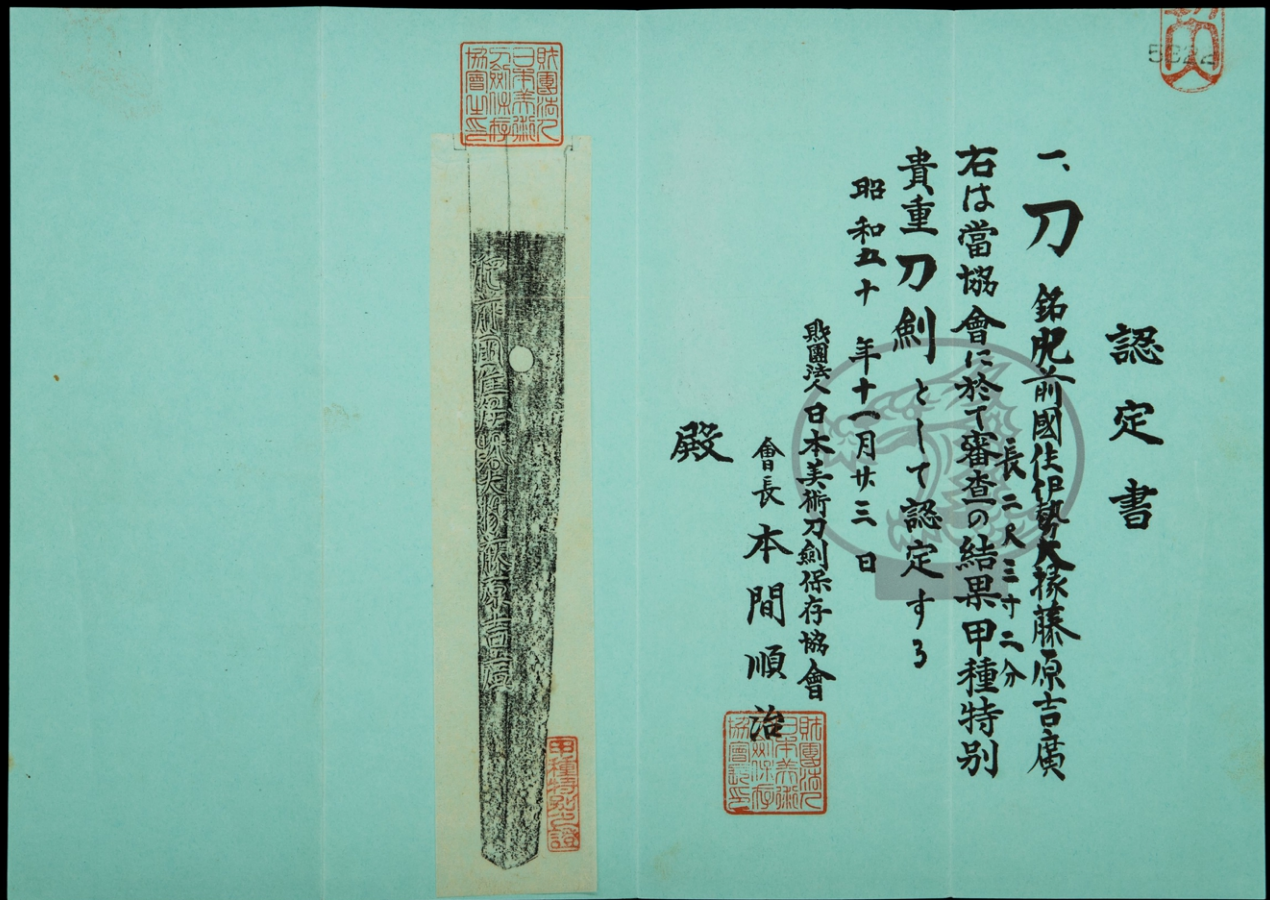


It's more than just love...

The heart-shape on the *kojiri* (metal protection at the end of the *saya* (scabbard)) is called *inome* (meaning the *eye of a wild boar* or *inoshishi*).

The *inoshishi* is known for its single-minded focus. For when it charges, it charges with a vengeance - never retreating.

Note the gorgeous crimson-coloured *saya* with a stone lacquered finish, known as *ishime*.



NBTHK Koshu Tokubetsu Kicho Token Certificate of Designation

(a sword designated as *Extraordinarily Precious*
by the Society for the Preservation of the Japan Art Sword)

Issued in the 50th year of Showa (1975), November 23rd

One, Katana

Mei (signature)

Hizen no Kuni Ju Ise Daijo Fujiwara Yoshihiro

Nagasa (length)

2-shaku 3-sun 2-bu (70.2cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai
(NBTHK)

ujka155
A Yoshihiro Katana





ITEM# UJKA156

A SUKEKUNI KATANA

SIGNED, EARLY EDO PERIOD (KANBUN ERA: 1661-1673)

Swordsmith: *Bizen no Kami Minamoto SUKEKUNI (Settsu, Osaka)*

Length: 69.6cm **Curvature:** 1.7cm **Moto-haba:** 3.1cm

Hamon: *Yakidashi, dai-gunome midare, ashi, kinsen, sunagashi*

Jihada: *Koitame tsumu*

Certificate #1: **NBTHK Tokubetsu Kicho** (a sword designated as Especially Precious by the Society for the Preservation of the Japanese Sword. Vintage certificate in Showa 35, 1960.)

Certificate #2: **NTHK-NPO Yushusaku** (a sword designated as Highly Excellent by the Society for the Preservation of the Japanese Sword)

Certificate #3: **Saitama Prefecture Juyo Token** (A profound sword by the Saitama Prefecture for the Preservation of the Japan Art Sword)

Certificate #4,5,6: **NTHK-NPO Kanteisho** (sword fittings, tsuba and fuchi-kashira designated as Important by the Society for the Preservation of the Japanese Sword)

Fujishiro: **Chujo-saku** (ranked as an above average swordsmith)

Included: Shirasaya, koshirae, sword fabric bags, sword stand, kit, etc.

SOLD

The **Osaka Ishido School** is said to succeed the *Bizen tradition* into the Edo period from smiths like Katsumitsu, Munemitsu and Yoshitsugu.

Another train of thought of the school's origins names **Sukenaga** as the pioneer from the late *Fukuoka-Ichimonji Sukemune* lineage. The name **Ishido** comes from the school's vicinity to the Ishido temple in the Gamo district.

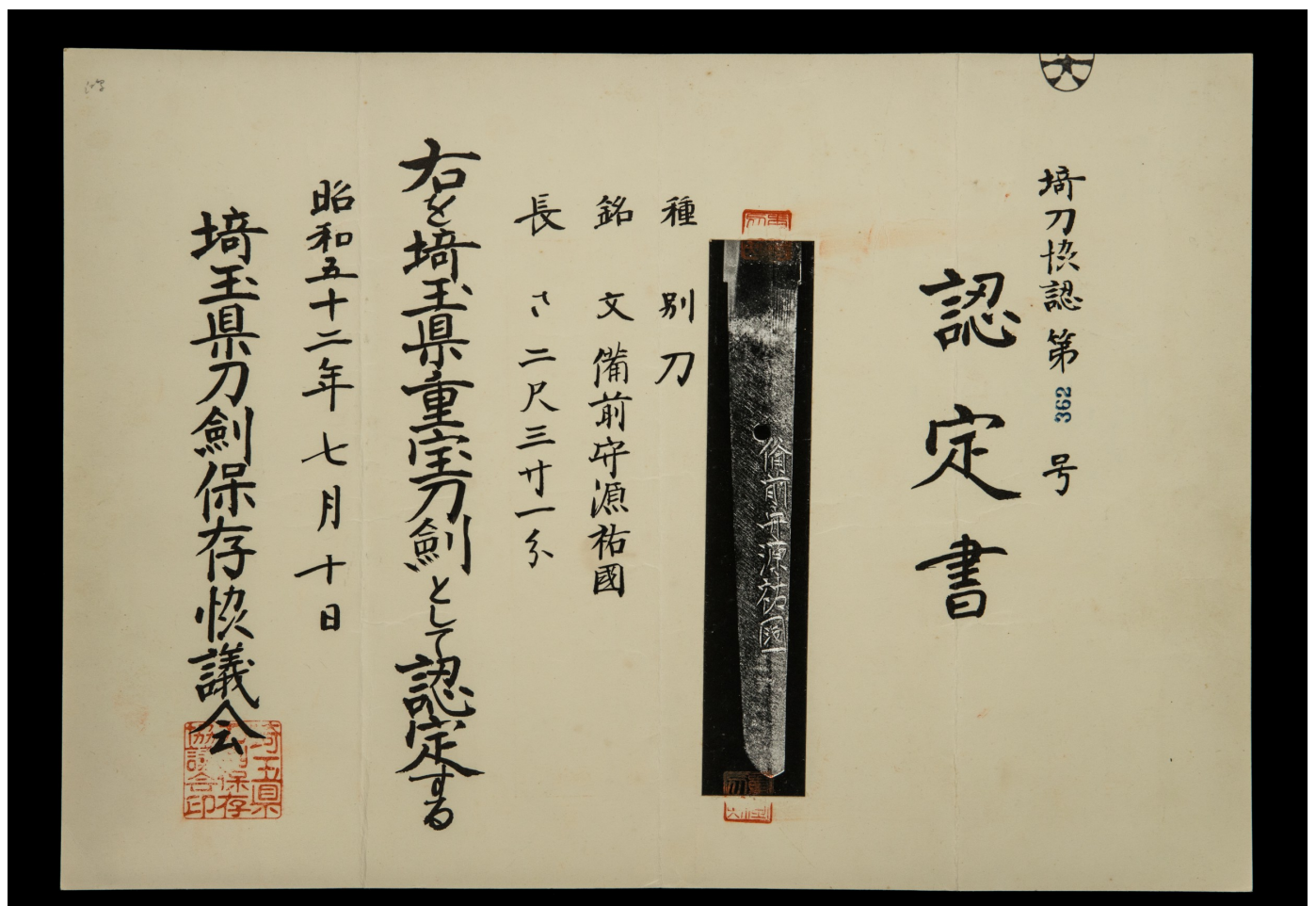
First generation **Yasuhiro**, second son of Tameyasu trained the maker of this excellent katana **Bizen Sukekuni** from Settsu province, modern-day Osaka prefecture.

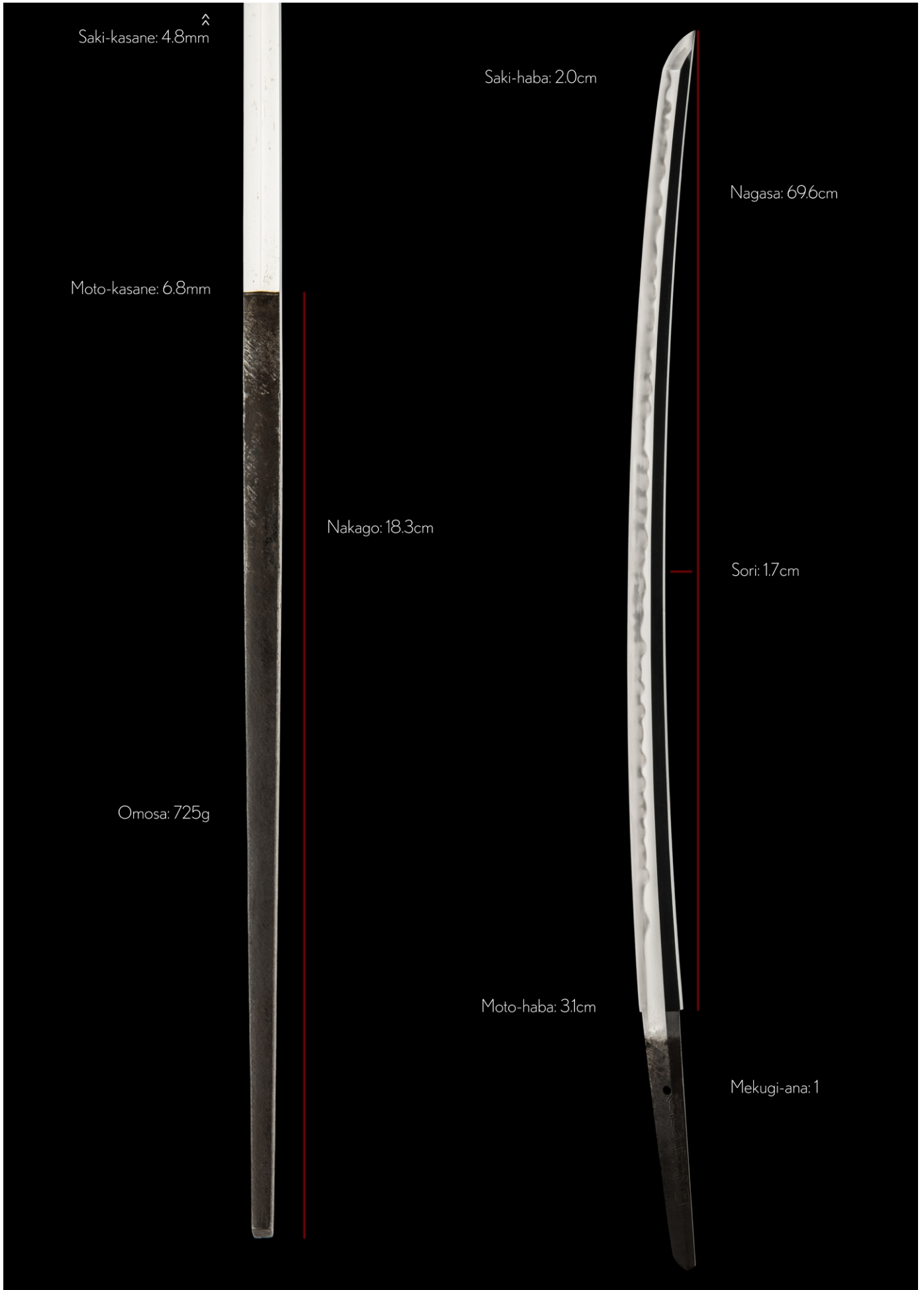
Formally ranked as an above average swordsmith, this *josun* katana may very well be Sukekuni's finest hour. It is definitely a *Jojo-saku* creation - the dexterity of a highly superior smith. It carries a surging *dai-gunome hamon* filled with *sunagashi* and *kinsuji* reminiscent of the skills of Toranba chief Sukehiro. This is a wonderful sword with a joyous spirit.

The sword is fully mounted with first-class fittings from the Edo period that features the imperial chrysanthemum on the *menuki* and terrific *tsuba* with rising phoenix from the 1600s.

All of six (6) certificates of authenticity accompany this sword that includes NTHK-NPO Yushusaku and a rare Juyo certificate issued by the Saitama prefecture in 1977 (see below).

This Sukekuni katana has been freshly polished to a very high standard. It is a true pleasure to admire all the qualities this sword proudly holds. Photos and information follow.







Province: Settsu (Osaka)

Title: Bizen no Kami
(Lord of Bizen province)

Clan: Minamoto

Smith: Sukekuni



Bi

zen (no)

Kami

Minamoto

Suke

kuni



Hamon

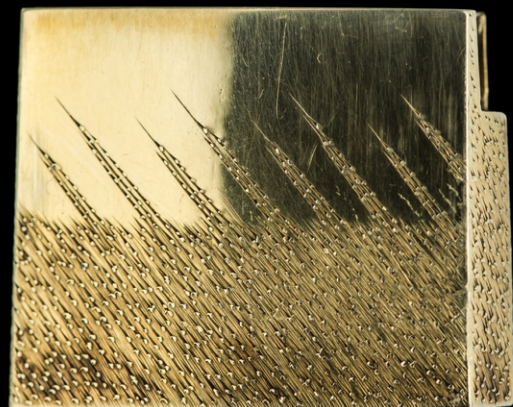
Such a lively *gunome choji-midare* (semi-circular waves fusing clove blossoms) slithers its way down the sword. *Sunagashi* (brushed streaks of sand) cuts through the *hamon*. Crystals of visible *nie* abound...

Jihada

A well-forged *ko-itame hada* provides a solid foundation for this healthy katana.



Shirasaya
(protective scabbard)



Yujo-habaki
(gold on copper base)





Tsuba

An Early Edo period *tsuba* (guard, circa 1603-1691) attributed to the *Kyo Shoami School* compliments the sword's energy.

The design is that of *Houhou* (phoenix) with a lucky 4-leaf clover. The phoenix in Japan, as earlier in China, was adopted as a symbol of the imperial household, particularly the empress. This mythical bird represents fire, the sun, justice, obedience and fidelity.

The *tsuba* is made of polished iron with bright lines of silver and brass inlay suggesting the phoenix in flight (rising). It is a marvellous work of art.





A Mino Fuchi-Kashira

A striking *fuchi-kashira* depicting fall plants, flowers and birds envelopes the *tsuka* (hilt).

Japanese Samurai culture holds profound respect for the beauty and level of detail found in nature itself.

This set is certified with NTHK-NPO Kanteisho origami papers.





A close-up on the *fuchi* (collar)

Harvest = Thankful

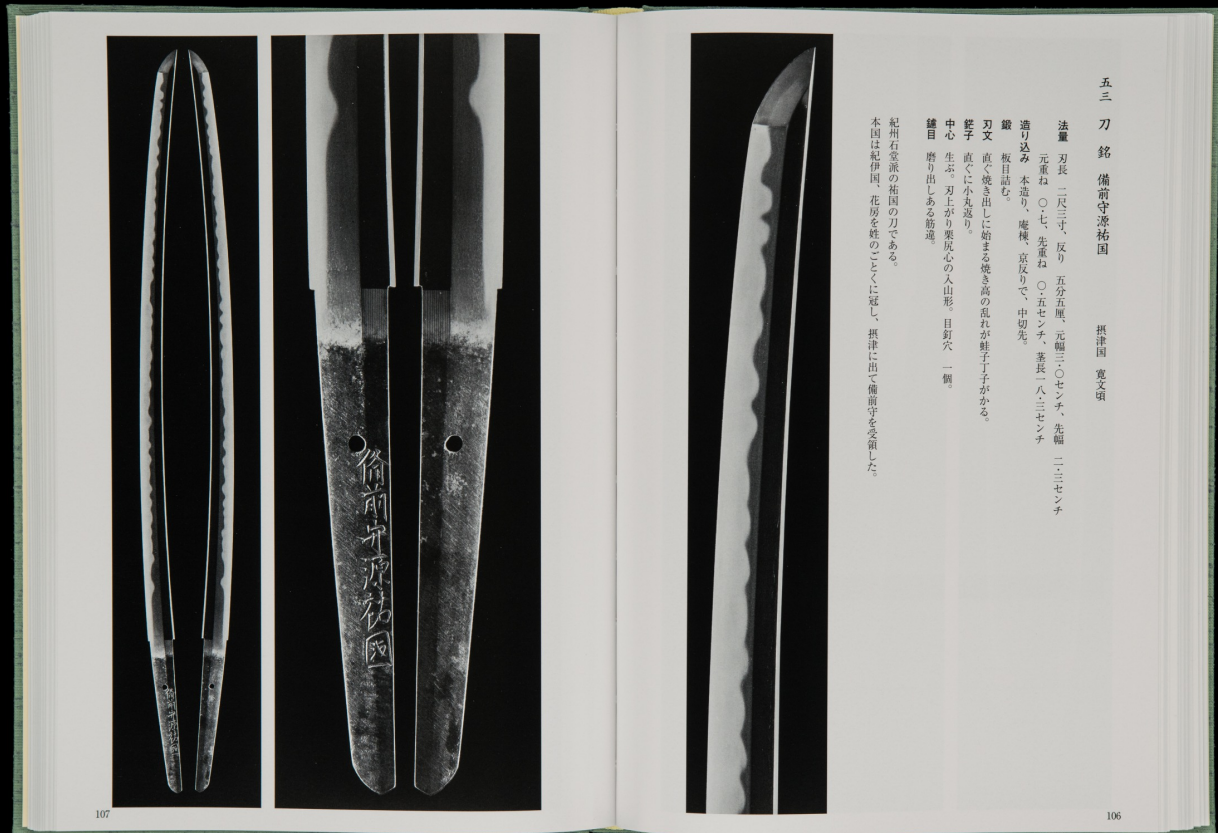




Kiku

A chrysanthemum, the Imperial flower of Japan.

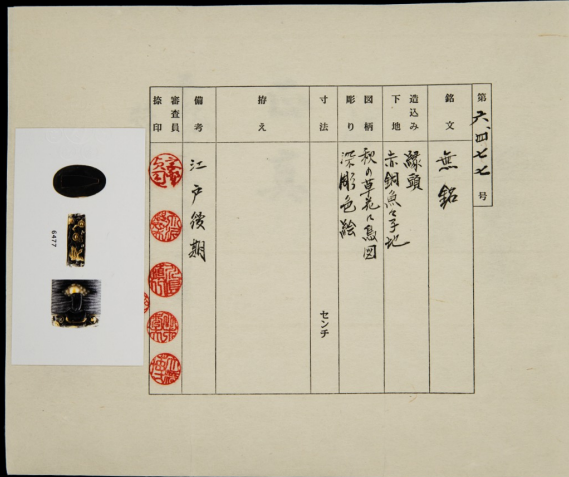




This sword has achieved NTHK-NPO Yushusaku, the highest degree of honour at the Society for the Preservation of the Japanese Sword. The certificate was issued on July 23rd, 2014. The sword is also featured in the society's first edition printed Yushuto Catalogue of Japanese swords. The book will be included with ownership of the sword.

第 五 七 五 三 号	銘 文	造り 込み	鑑 定	下 地	刃 紋	鋳 子	彫 り	図 柄	中 心	拵 え	寸 法	備 考	審 査 印 員
	備前守源祐国	銘造り	板目詰		焼き出しに始まる焼き高の乱れが蛙子丁まがった大乱れ 直ぐ小丸造り				目釘穴 一個 鍔磨り出し有る竹助造			寛文頃	

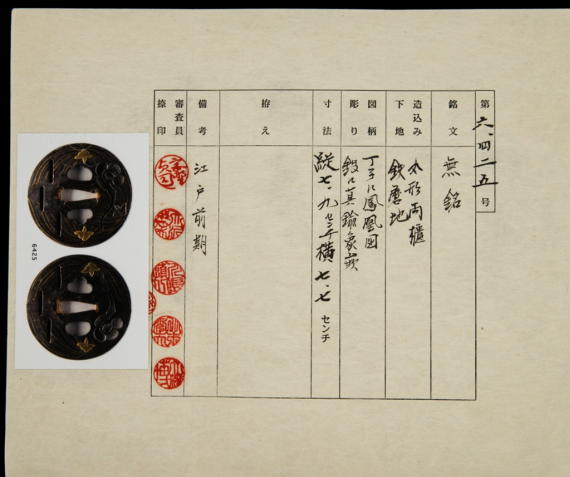
Additional Certificates of Designation



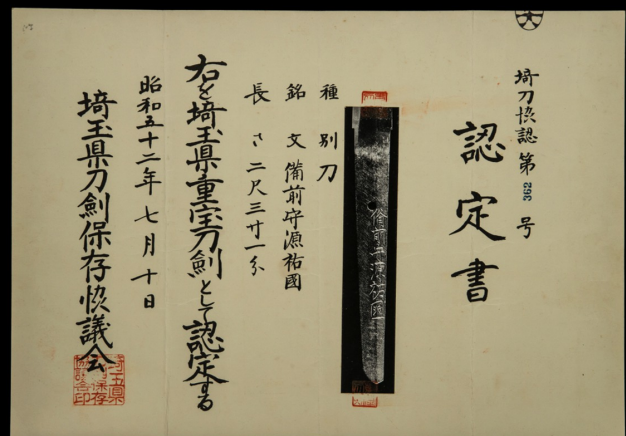
NTHK-NPO Kanteisho (fuchi-kashira)



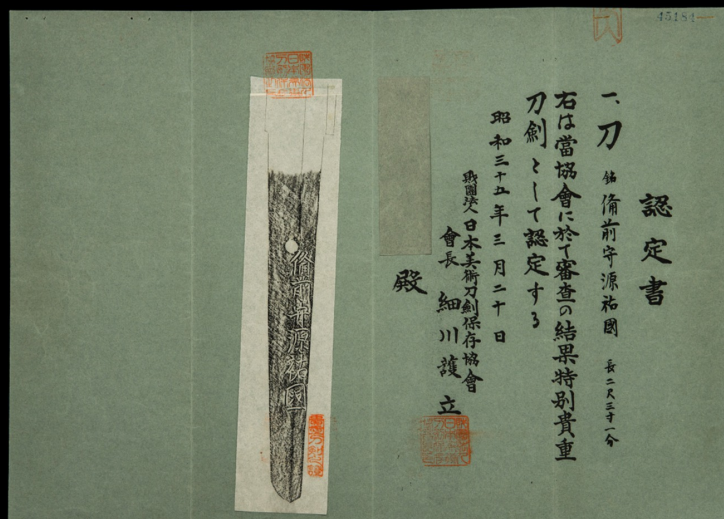
NTHK-NPO Kanteisho (koshirae)



NTHK-NPO Kanteisho (tsuba)



Rare "Saitama Jujo Token" Kanteisho (sword)



NBTHK Tokubetsu Kicho Token
(A sword deemed Especially Precious)
Vintage certificate from 1960 (Showa 35)

"Integrity is the essence of everything successful."

R. Buckminster Fuller





ITEM# UJKA161

A SHOHEI KATANA

SIGNED AND DATED HEISEI 23 CHUKA (SUMMER OF 2011)

Swordsmith: *Seitan SHOHEI*
Location: Saitama prefecture
Length: 83.4cm (!)
Curvature: 2.7cm
Motohaba: 3.3cm
Blade weight: 1.04kg
Jihada: *Ko-itame and nagare-hada*
Hamon: *Gunome midare with sunagashi and kinsuji*
Included: Custom koshirae, shirasaya, special sword box, sword fabric bags, sword stand, maintenance kit, DVD, care guide, registration and export paperwork

SOLD

This incredible katana with a cutting edge of a whopping **83.4cm** pays enormous tribute to the swords made during the warring Nambokucho period (1333-1392). Swords made during this turbulent time were renowned for having an extremely long cutting edge. As a matter of fact, this is the longest sword we have ever offered our clients at Unique Japan.

Modern swordsmith **Shohei** of the Miyairi School would have been about 40 years old when he made this sword in 2011. He has a very promising career ahead of him as many of his swords have already achieved high levels of recognition and prizes.

Two generations before him lived maestro **Miyairi Shohei** (below), a former Living National Treasure in Japan. The school is known for their brilliant work in the Soshu tradition.

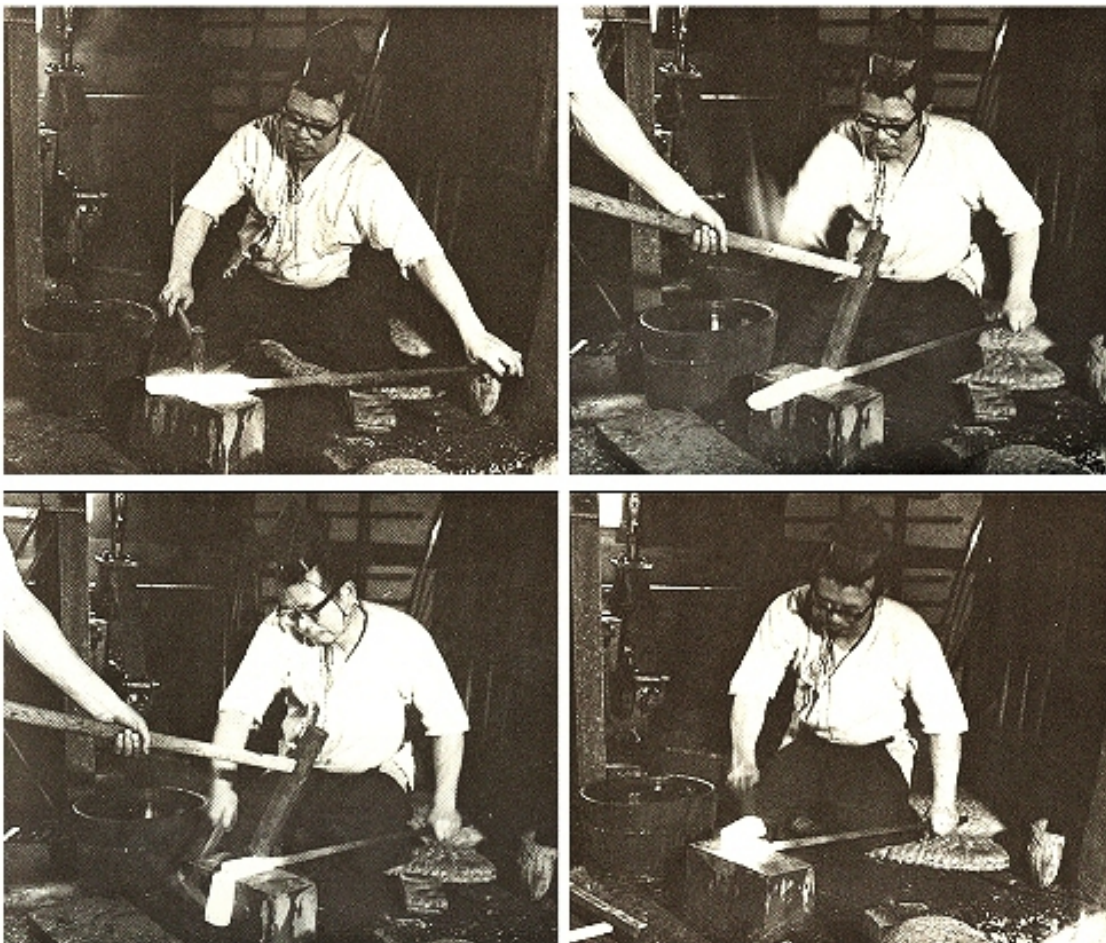
Investment wise, this katana could very well become much more valuable in future as Shohei's artistic reputation grows over time. Note the incredible curvature on the sword, what magnificent shape this sword carries with grace and elegance.

The beautiful *ko-gunome* hamon features *sunagashi* (sweeping sand) and *kinsuji*, dark shiny lines. The steel is a well-forged *ko-itame* hada with *nagare-hada* flowing on the blade. Notice how the *mune* (spine) features a flat roof, known as *mitsu-mune*, or three sides.

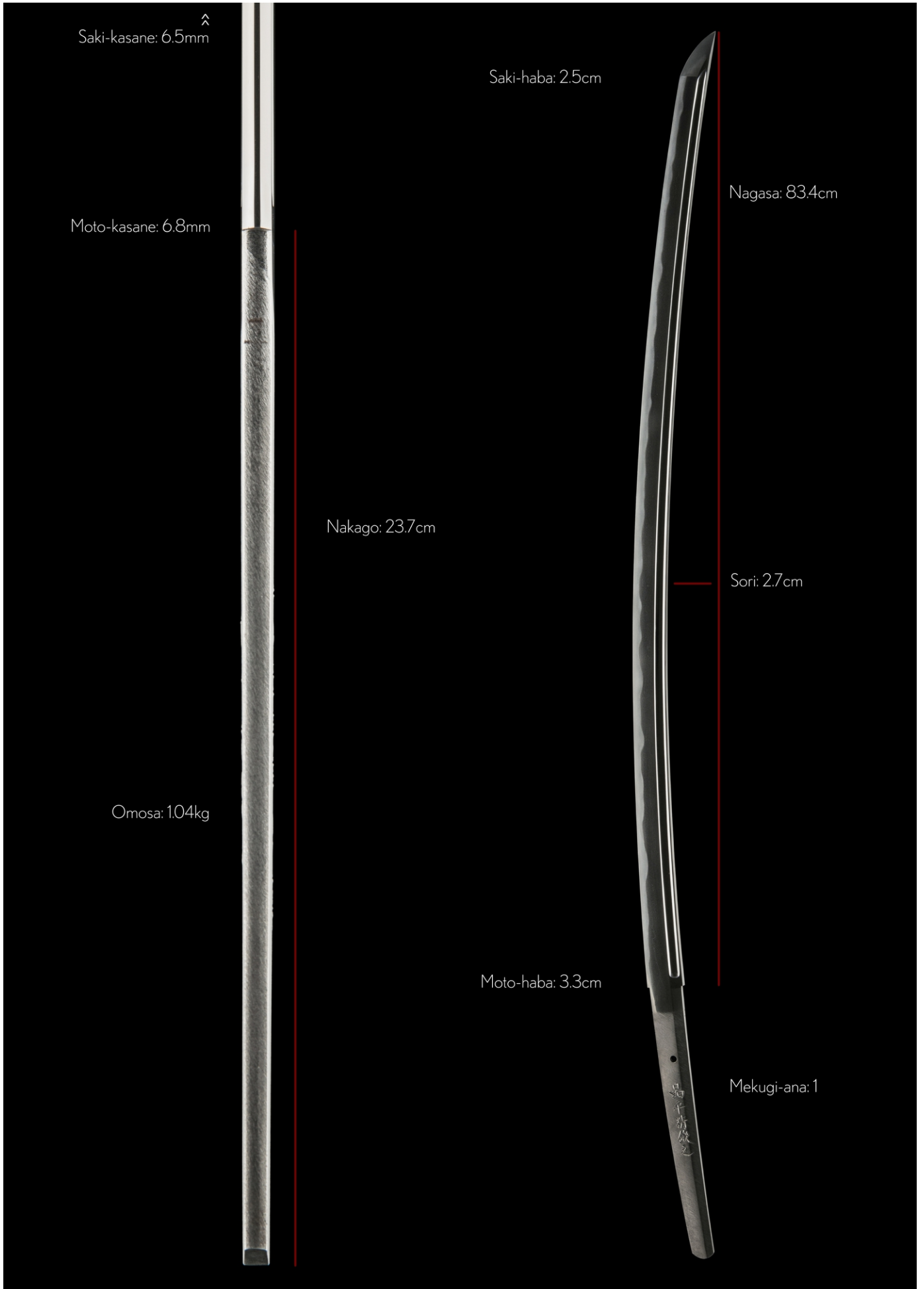
The gorgeous *koshirae* has a saya made in Satsuma koshirae tradition. The *tsuba* depicts cherry and plum blossoms in geometric patterns crafted by Shohei himself.

The swordsmith, polisher and koshirae maker are all credited inside a custom made box that accompanies the sword as a form of authenticity. As policy, the NBTHK and NTHK-NPO do not issue certificates of authenticity for smiths that are living.

Photos and information follow.



Miyairi Shohei





平成二十三年
仲夏



Prefecture: Saitama
Seitan: (forged by)
Smith: Shohei

Sho
hei
Sei
tan
kore

Era: Heisei
Year: 23rd (2011)
Season: Mid-Summer

Hei
sei
2 x 10
+ 3
nen
Chu
ka





Mitsu-mune

Mitsu (three) *mune* (spine/ridge) has three surfaces and is generally found in the blades of smiths working of the *Soshu* (Kanagawa prefecture) and related schools, as well as in the tanto of the Yamashiro school such as *Rai Kunitoshi* from the Kamakura period.

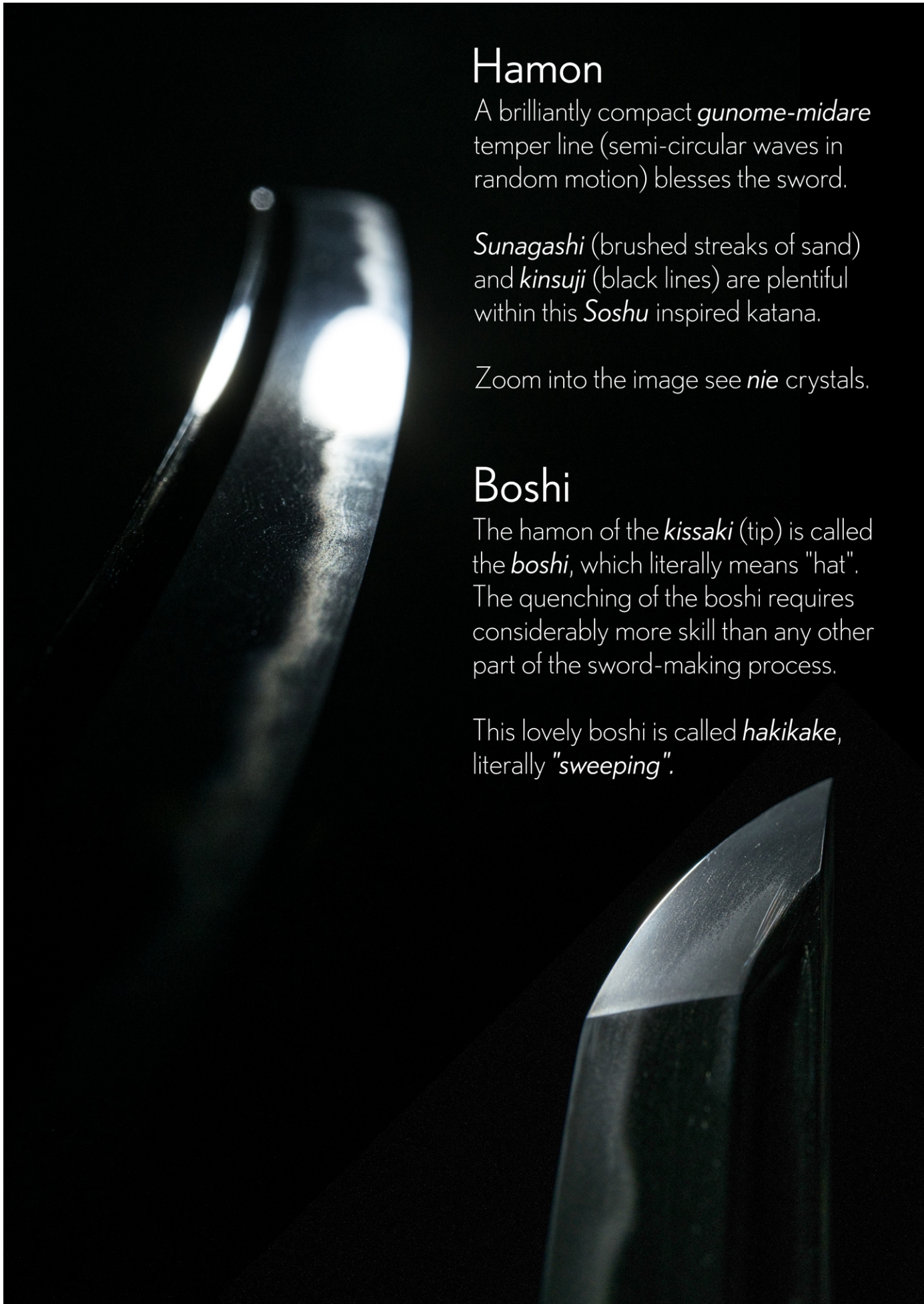
Mitsu-mune is rarely found in sword construction - a most welcomed feature to this formidable sword.

Jihada

A gorgeous *nagare-hada*
(literally "stream grain pattern")
swims along the body of the
steel blade.

Kinsuji

shiny black line in the *hamon*



Hamon

A brilliantly compact *gunome-midare* temper line (semi-circular waves in random motion) blesses the sword.

Sunagashi (brushed streaks of sand) and *kinsuji* (black lines) are plentiful within this *Soshu* inspired katana.

Zoom into the image see *nie* crystals.

Boshi

The hamon of the *kissaki* (tip) is called the *boshi*, which literally means "hat". The quenching of the boshi requires considerably more skill than any other part of the sword-making process.

This lovely boshi is called *hakikake*, literally "*sweeping*".

CHANGES IN THE SHAPE OF THE JAPANESE SWORD **



Nambokucho Period (1330-1389)

The shape of swords from the Nambokucho period were very long with some *o-dachi* longer than 120cm. A very wide *mihaba* (width), with little difference in width between the *moto-haba* and the *saki-haba*.

This remarkable katana (tachi) by *Miyairi Shohei* is an excellent recreation of such glorious swords.

** image source: NBTHK

Nambokucho Period
(Koto times) : 1330 - 1389



Shirasaya
(protective scabbard)



Mito-habaki
(silver)





Tsuba

The brushed iron *tsuba* (guard) signed by the swordsmith himself, is a thoughtfully precise creation of *sakura* (cherry) and *ume* (plum) petals in bloom.

These shapes symbolize the fleeting transience of life. Appreciate the moment, for life is a series of moments to be cherished.

The larger image above is signed
Kyo-fu saku (made in the Kyoto style).



Shohei Kitae Kore
(by swordsmith Shohei)





Man on Umbrella

A temple guardian takes a rest...
Likely crafted by the Goto School, late Edo period.



This Shohei katana comes with its own custom *katana-bako* (sword box).

The box reads:
Cho Wa (harmony)

Shohei Seitan Kore
Heisei 23-nen Chuka

The names of the polisher, koshirae and tsuba maker are listed as well.



*"Look deep into nature,
and then you will
understand everything
better."*

Albert Einstein





ITEM# UJKA163

A NAKATA KANEHIDE KATANA

SIGNED, MIDDLE SHOWA ERA (CIRCA WWII)

- Swordsmith:** *Noshu Ju KANEHIDE*
Location: Saitama prefecture
Length: 70.8cm (*machi-okuri nakago*)
Curvature: 2.2cm
Motohaba: 3.2cm
Sakihaba: 2.1cm
Jihada: *Ko-itame*
Hamon: *High yaki and gorgeous choji-midare*
Certificate #1: **NTHK-NPO Kanteisho** (*a sword designated as Important by the Society for the Preservation of the Japanese Sword*)
Certificate #2: **NTHK-NPO Kanteisho** (*a koshirae designated as Important by the Society for the Preservation of the Japanese Sword*)
Ranking: **Rikugun Jumei Tosho** (*certified swordsmith from Army headquarters of Japan during wartime*)
Included: Koshirae, shirasaya, sword fabric bags, sword stand, maintenance kit, DVD, care guide, registration and export paperwork

SOLD

Superstar gendai swordsmith **Nakata Kanehide** was born **Isamu Nakata** on August 24th 1913 (Taisho 2) in Nagano prefecture.

He apprenticed under 12th generation Kawashima Masahide for 8 years and then became the pupil of the smith Watanabe Kanenaga in Seki city, Gifu prefecture in 1937.

Kanehide is said to have gifted a sword in 1943 to **Hideki Tojo** who was general of the Imperial Japanese Army, leader of the Imperial Rule Assistance Association and the 40th Prime Minister of Japan during much of World War II.

After the WWII, Kanehide won numerous awards commencing in 1955 at Japanese Sword Fine Art Contests held by the NBTHK winning the *Doryoku Award* three times and the *Nyusen Award* eight times.

He also was bestowed the honor of making swords for the Emperor and Empress Showa in 1957. Kanehide became an **Important Intangible Cultural Asset** of Seki city in 1976 and a year later the same honours of Gifu prefecture.

This katana was likely crafted when he was **Rikugun Jumei Toshō**, a certified swordsmith from Army headquarters of Japan during wartime.

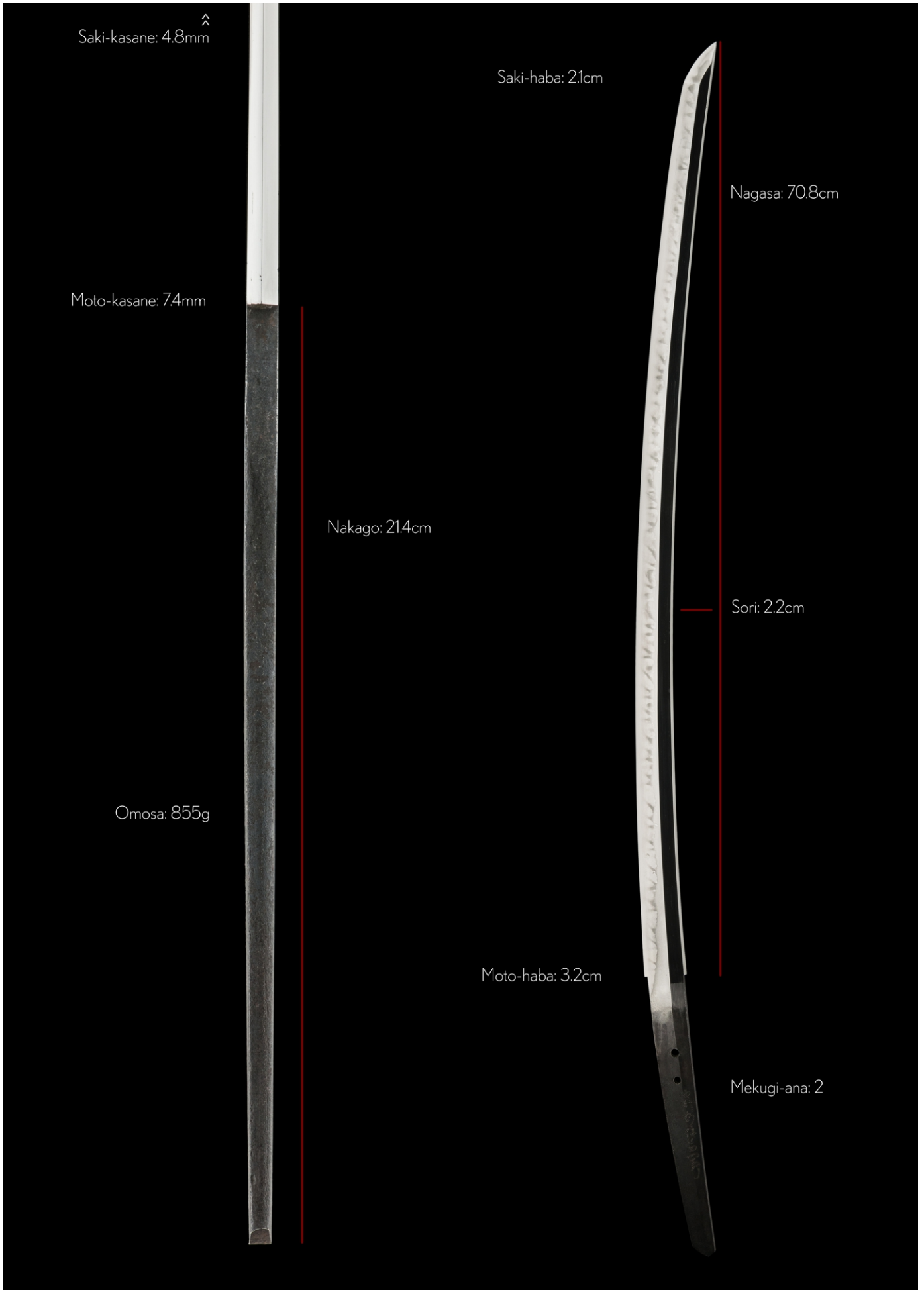
The *choji-midare hamon* is absolutely stunning. This is a sword that demonstrates all the greatness that one would expect from such a valiant emblem of 20th century Japan craftsmanship.

The length and curvature would make it an ideal sword for someone practicing Iaido. The *koshirae* is thoughtfully crafted, fits tightly, and adorned with nature-inspired fittings.

NTHK-NPO Kanteisho certification that accompanies the sword attests to the fact traditional techniques were used to forge the katana. There will also be an NTHK-NPO Kanteisho certificate for the *koshirae* fittings.

Photos and information follow. Below is a photo of the traditional brocade bag for the sword.









Prefecture: Gifu
Ward: Noshu (living in)
Smith: Kanehide

No
shu
ju
Kane
hide

Hamon

The NTHK-NPO Kanteisho certificate describes the *hamon* as:

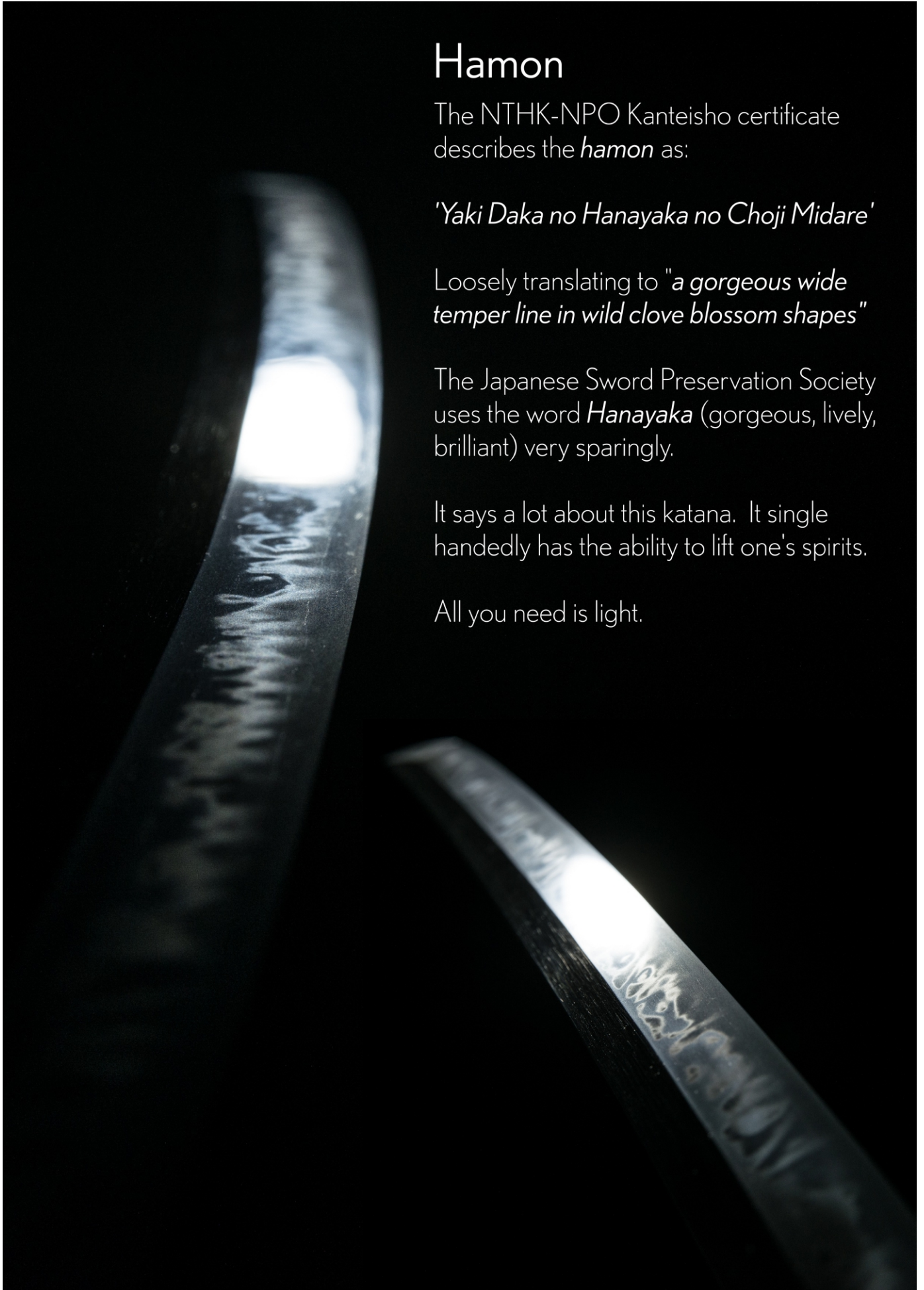
'Yaki Daka no Hanayaka no Choji Midare'

Loosely translating to "*a gorgeous wide temper line in wild clove blossom shapes*"

The Japanese Sword Preservation Society uses the word *Hanayaka* (gorgeous, lively, brilliant) very sparingly.

It says a lot about this katana. It single handedly has the ability to lift one's spirits.

All you need is light.





Ashi

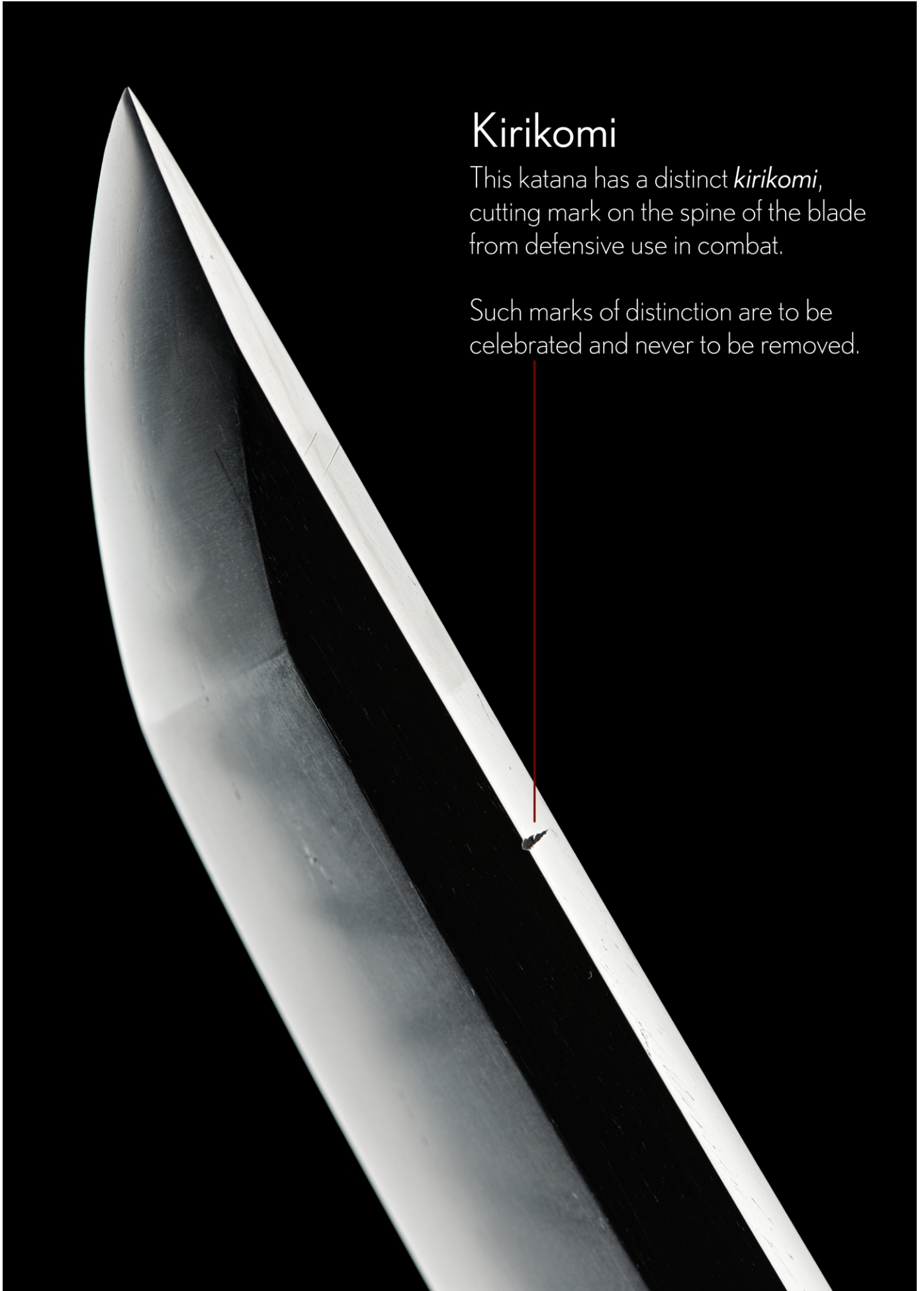
Ashi are "legs" - thin lines of *nioi* crystals (very fine crystals that resemble the Milky Way) that extend from the *hamon* to the cutting edge.

Ashi serve the purpose of limiting the size of lateral cracks at the edge of the blade should damage occur.

Kirikomi

This katana has a distinct *kirikomi*, cutting mark on the spine of the blade from defensive use in combat.

Such marks of distinction are to be celebrated and never to be removed.





Shirasaya
(protective scabbard)



Hitoe-habaki
(painted on copper)





Tsuba

An iron *mokko* shaped (4-lobed) *tsuba* prominently signed *Sadahiro*.

The design is that of tadpoles in gold inlay swimming along the surface.

Tadpoles are seen as symbol of luck and abundance.





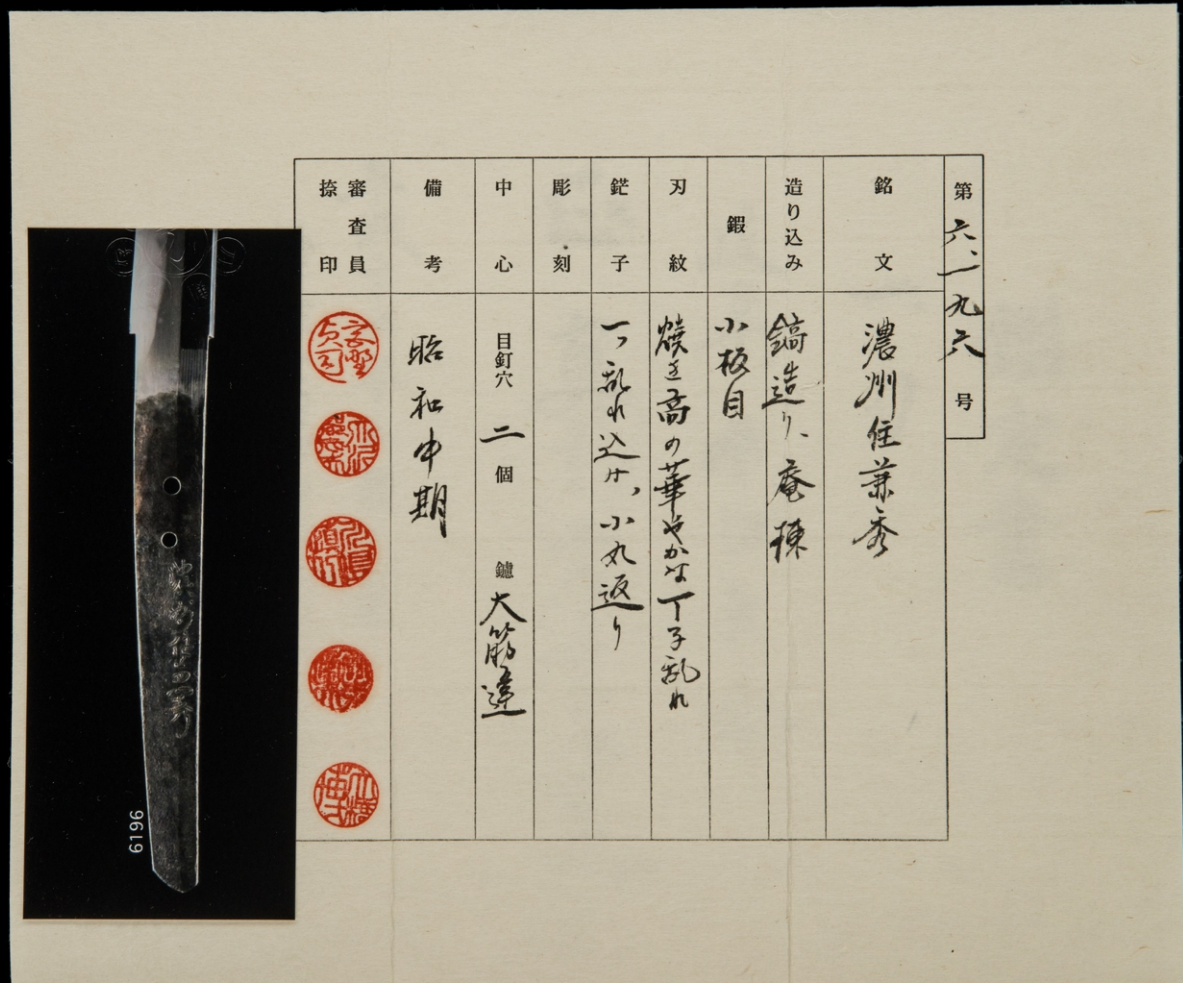


Menuki

The *menuki* (grips under the silk) are of peonies, known as the 'King of Flowers'. A symbol of good fortune, bravery and honour.

The *tsuka-maki* (wrapping of the silk) is a beautifully complex braid known as *ajirokumi-agemaki*.





NTHK-NPO Kanteisho Certificate (sword)

The NTHK-NPO Kanteisho Certificate of Authenticity for the blade itself. This certificate attests to the authenticity and importance of conserving this sword.

Each numbered certificate, made of traditional washi paper, carries a photograph of the *nakago* (tang). The red *hankos* are the individual stamps of each experienced judge that personally reviewed the sword.

The certificate provides useful information on the characteristics of blade such as the *mei* (signature, if present), *suguta* (structure), *hamon* (temper line), *jigane* (surface grain), *boshi* (tip temper line), *nakago* (tang) and its estimated age.

Non-Profit Nihon Token Hozon Kai
The Society for the Preservation of the Japanese Sword

Kiri motif with vines



Spiritual growth



ITEM# UJKA164

A SUKESADA KATANA

SIGNED & DATED, MUROMACHI PERIOD

8TH YEAR OF EISHO, THIRD MONTH (MARCH 1511, 504 YEARS AGO)

Swordsmith: *Bizen Osafune SUKESADA*
Location: Bizen province (Okayama Prefecture)
Length: 72.4cm (ubu)
Curvature: 2.4cm
Moto-haba: 3.0cm
Jihada: *Koitame with midare utsuri*
Hamon: *Gunome midare with choji and ashi*
Certificate #1: **NTHK-NPO Kanteisho** (*a sword designated as Important by the Society for the Preservation of the Japanese Sword*)
Certificate #2,3: **NTHK-NPO Kanteisho** (*sword fittings and tsuba designated as Important by the Society for the Preservation of the Japanese Sword*)
Included: Edo-period koshirae, shirasaya, sword fabric bags, sword stand, maintenance kit, DVD, printed care guide, registration and export paperwork from Japan

SOLD

It's always a treat to hold a sword that is dated within the Koto period (pre-1600).

Behold a magnificent Bizen katana crafted by the celebrated Sukesada family dated over 500 years ago to **March 1511**. The late Muromachi period is a time of tumultuous fighting known as the **Sengoku Jidai** or *Warring States Period*.

This is a long, classic Samurai sword with stories to tell. Energy radiates from this piece.

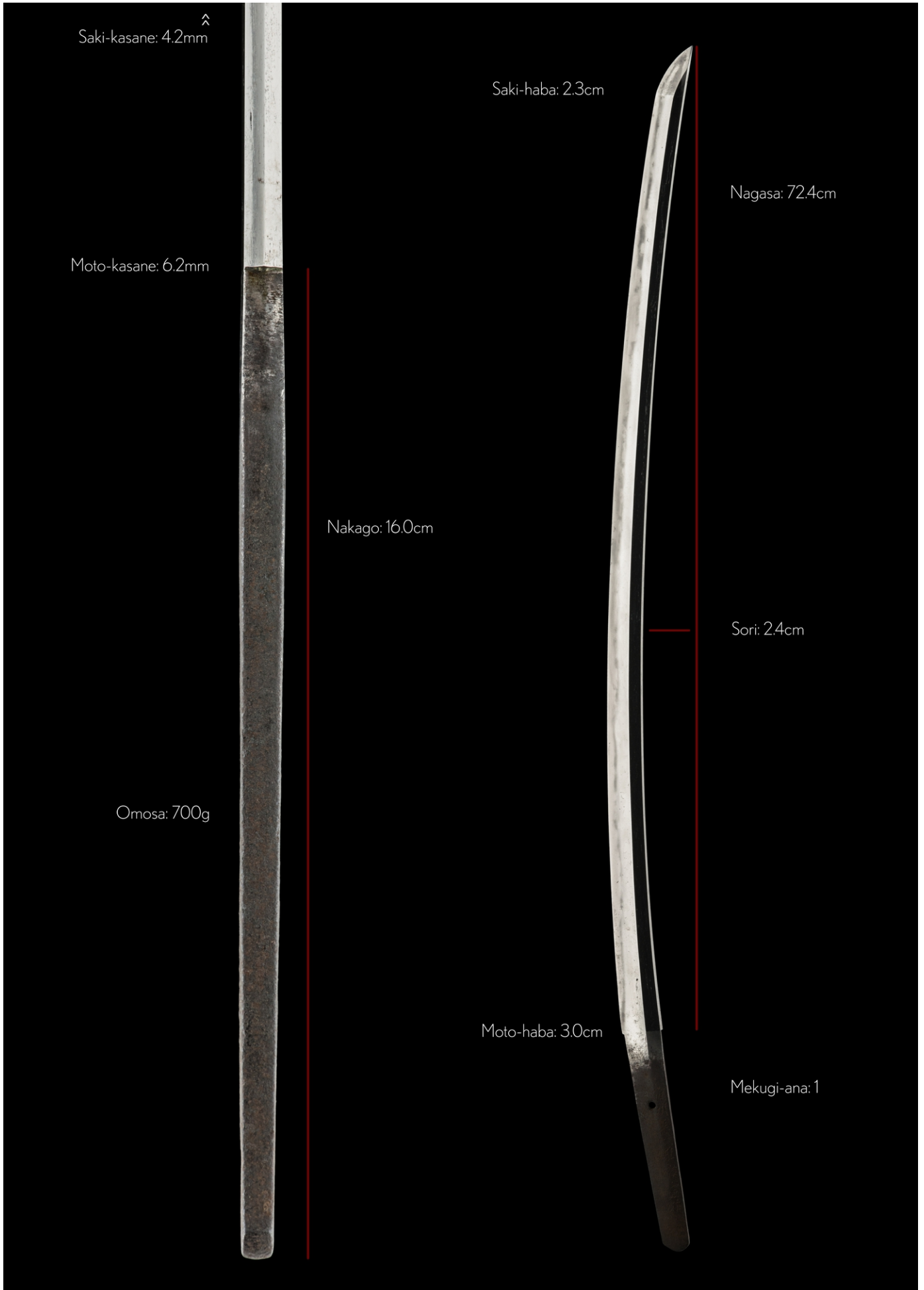
Many fine Sukesada smiths worked during this exact period including **Hikobei** and **Yosozaemon**. It is possible that one of these legendary smiths crafted this beautiful katana but it's very difficult to state with certainty.

The blade is fitted in a stunning set of *koshirae* with Higo style mounts and a gorgeous scabbard with a whirlpool design. It is currently in an older polish, which is understandable given the history this sword has clearly seen. My trusted advisors informed me that any more polishing would only hurt the sword. Photos and information follow.



We have a few new 'floating' acrylic stands at UJ (above), with the traditional wood stand below. It's your choice as a complimentary sword stand is included with all sword investments.







Province: Bizen
Village: Osafune
Smith: Sukesada
Saku (made by)



*Bi
zen
ju
Osa
fune
Suke
sada
saku*

Era: Eisho

Year: 8th (1511)

Month: March

*this katana has been
dated to March 1511*

*Ei
sho
8
nen*

*3
gatsu*



Utsuri

Literally meaning "reflection", *utsuri* is a beautiful, rather magical, misty reflection appearing in the *ji* (body of sword) above the *hamon*).

It is much loved and appreciated feature of swords, particular those made in the Bizen tradition in the Koto period (pre 1600).

The type of *utsuri* found on this Sukesada katana is called *midare-utsuri* - a smokey pattern that billows towards to the *shinogi* (ridge line).



Hamon

The temper line has a variety of elements to keep the eye entertained. There is classic *choji-midare* - a temper line that resembles cloves (*choji*) in an irregular (*midare*) pattern.

Lower down on the blade is a *midare* based on a thick *suguha* (straight).


Note the plentiful *nioi* crystals that make up the hamon that look like the Milky Way.

The grain pattern (*jihada*) is an *itame* mixed with *o-hada*, large wood-grain swirls.

Nioi

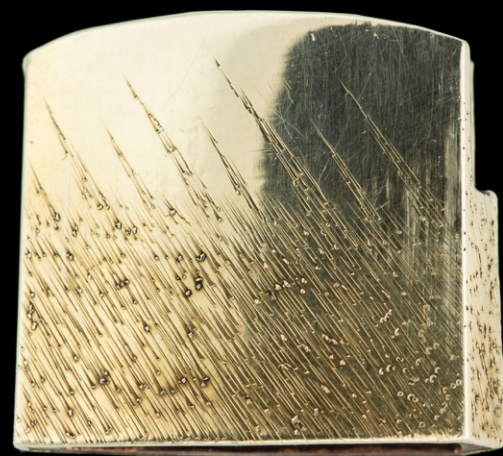
Choji

- * *Choji* is pronounced (*choh-jee*)
- * *Itame* is pronounced (*ee-tah-may*)
- * *Midare* is pronounced (*mee-dah-ray*)
- * *Nioi* is pronounced (*nee-oy*)
- * *Suguha* is pronounced (*soo-goo-ha*)



strips of bamboo to
reinforce the saya

Shirasaya
(protective scabbard)



Yujo-habaki
(gold on copper base)





Tsuba

This is a *Nanban tsuba* - a guard from the Edo period. The term *Nanban* or sometimes written *Namban* ("Southern Barbarians") was applied to all foreigners reaching Japan primarily from the south-west corner in Hizen province (Kyushu). They included Portuguese and Dutch traders whose first contact with Japan dates from the middle 16th to start of the 17th century.

Namban work is thus a unique blend that draws upon European-flavoured designs. Looking closely at the above iron *tsuba* one will see dragons looking skyward entwined within a stunning *karakusa* (arabesque) pattern.



Where's Waldo?

a whip (horse)



Higo Koshirae

A striking set of Edo-period mounts in the Higo tradition first inspired from the personal taste of *Hosokawa Tadaoki* (1563-1645) of Higo province in Kyushu. Two elaborate *o-seppas* (large washers) below typify the understated elegance of Japanese aesthetic.



The *tsuka*, bound in leather, remains in excellent condition since the 1800s.



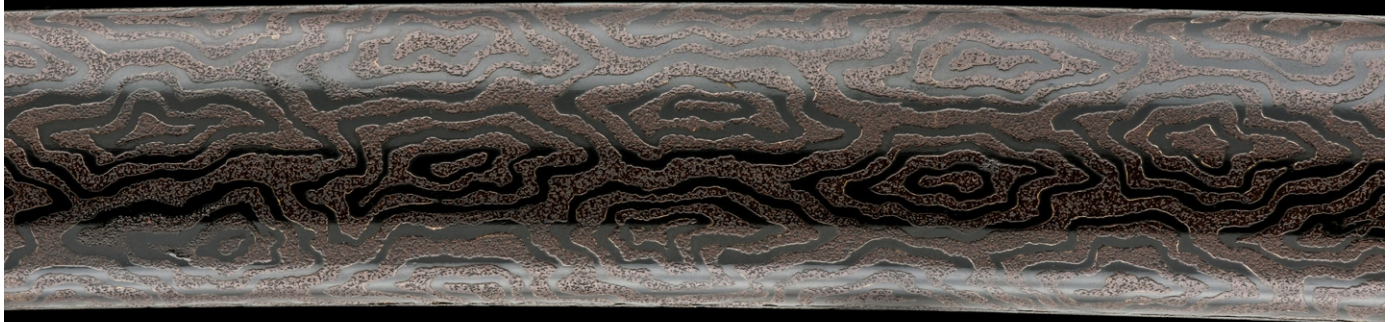
Yin-Yang

phoenix



Kojiri

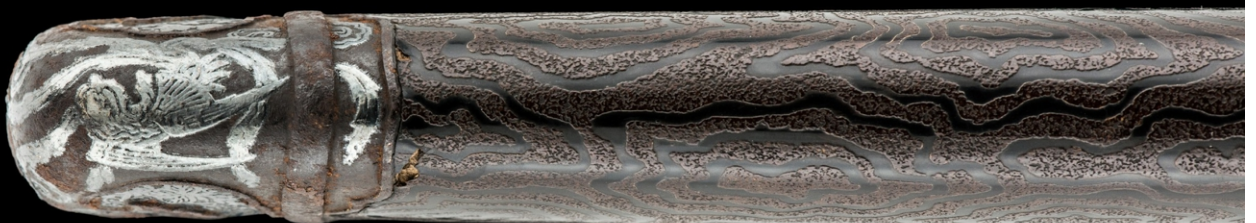
The reinforced iron protection at the end of the saya (*kojiri*) carries depictions of a rising phoenix and a snarling dragon. The *koshirae* exudes harmony.



Saya

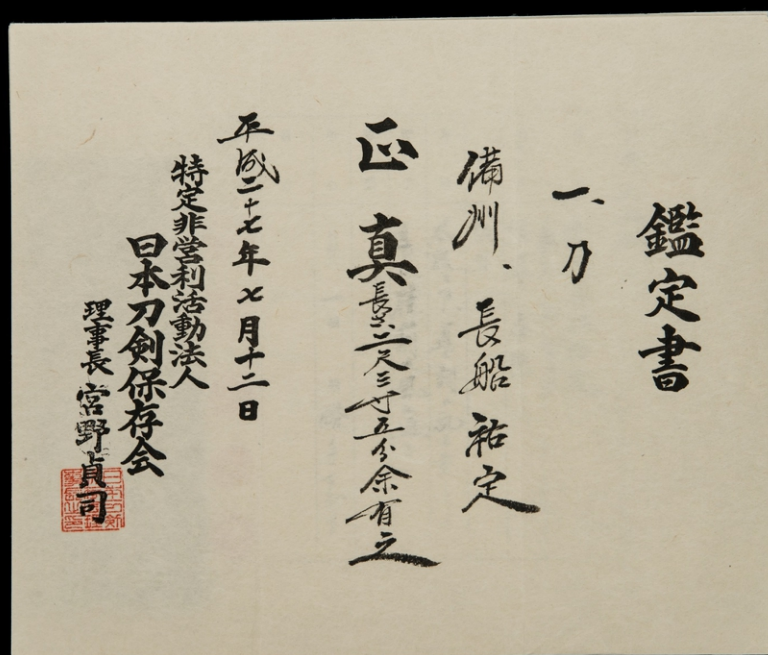
The magnificent *saya* (scabbard) is uniquely lacquered in a whirlpool design that resembles the swirling *jihada* grain pattern in the steel of the katana.

dragon





NTHK-NPO Kanteisho Certificate of Authenticity for the sword



Cover page that contains information such as the smith, length, the date of issue and official seal of the NTHK-NPO.

All information will be translated and printed by Unique Japan for the next caretaker of this katana.



*"Take the first step in faith.
You don't need to see the
whole staircase.
Just take the first step."*

Martin Luther King Jr.

ARIGATO!

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