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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.

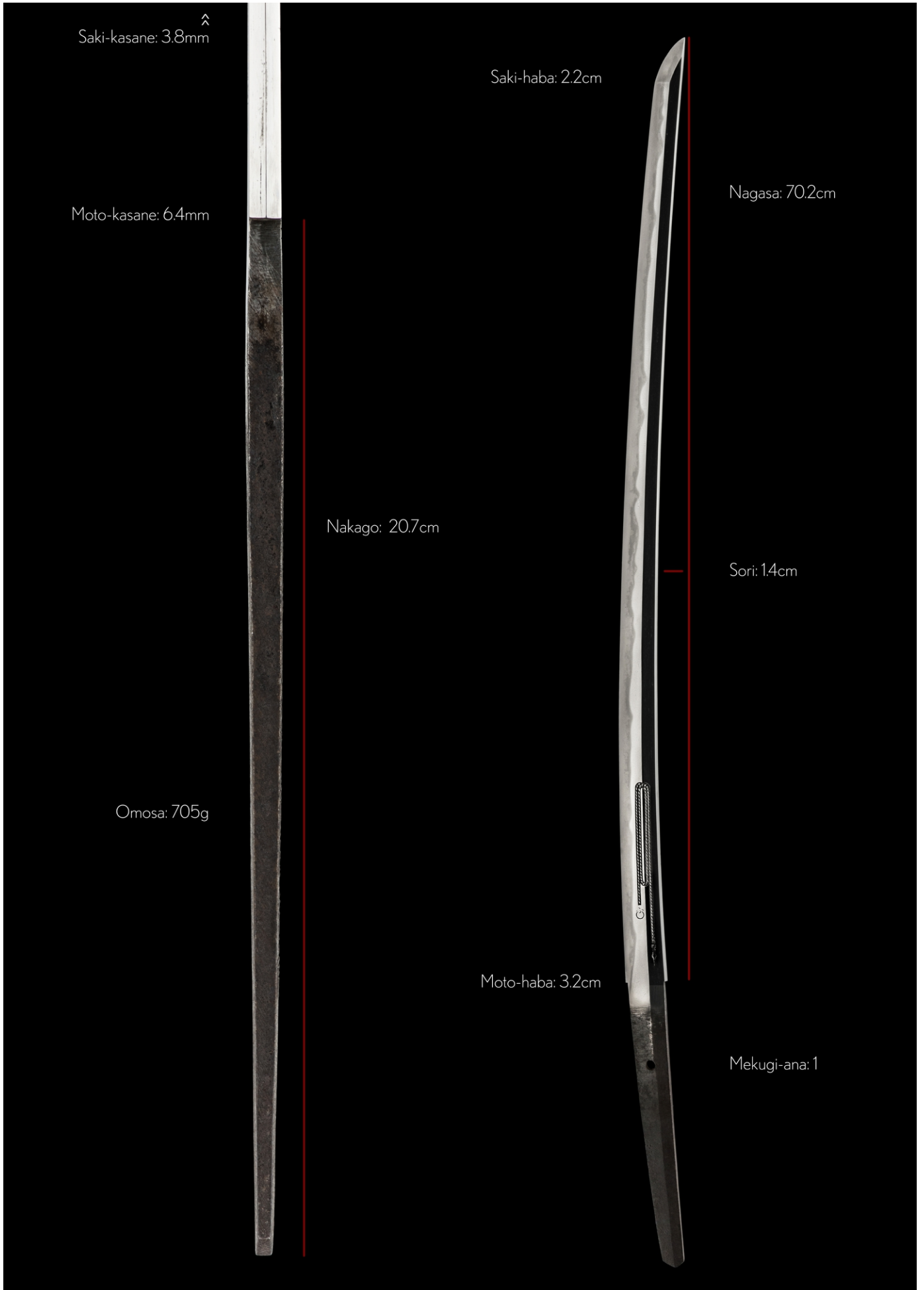
It is highly likely that the same school performed the *horimono* with such rich detail.

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.



Saki-kasane: 3.8mm <sup>^</sup>

Moto-kasane: 6.4mm

Omosa: 705g

Saki-haba: 2.2cm

Nakago: 20.7cm

Moto-haba: 3.2cm

Nagasa: 70.2cm

Sori: 14cm

Mekugi-ana: 1





Province: Chikuzen

Title: Ise Daijo

(Assistant Lord of Ise province)

Clan: Fujiwara

Smith: Yoshihiro

*Hi  
zen  
kuni  
ju  
I  
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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*.

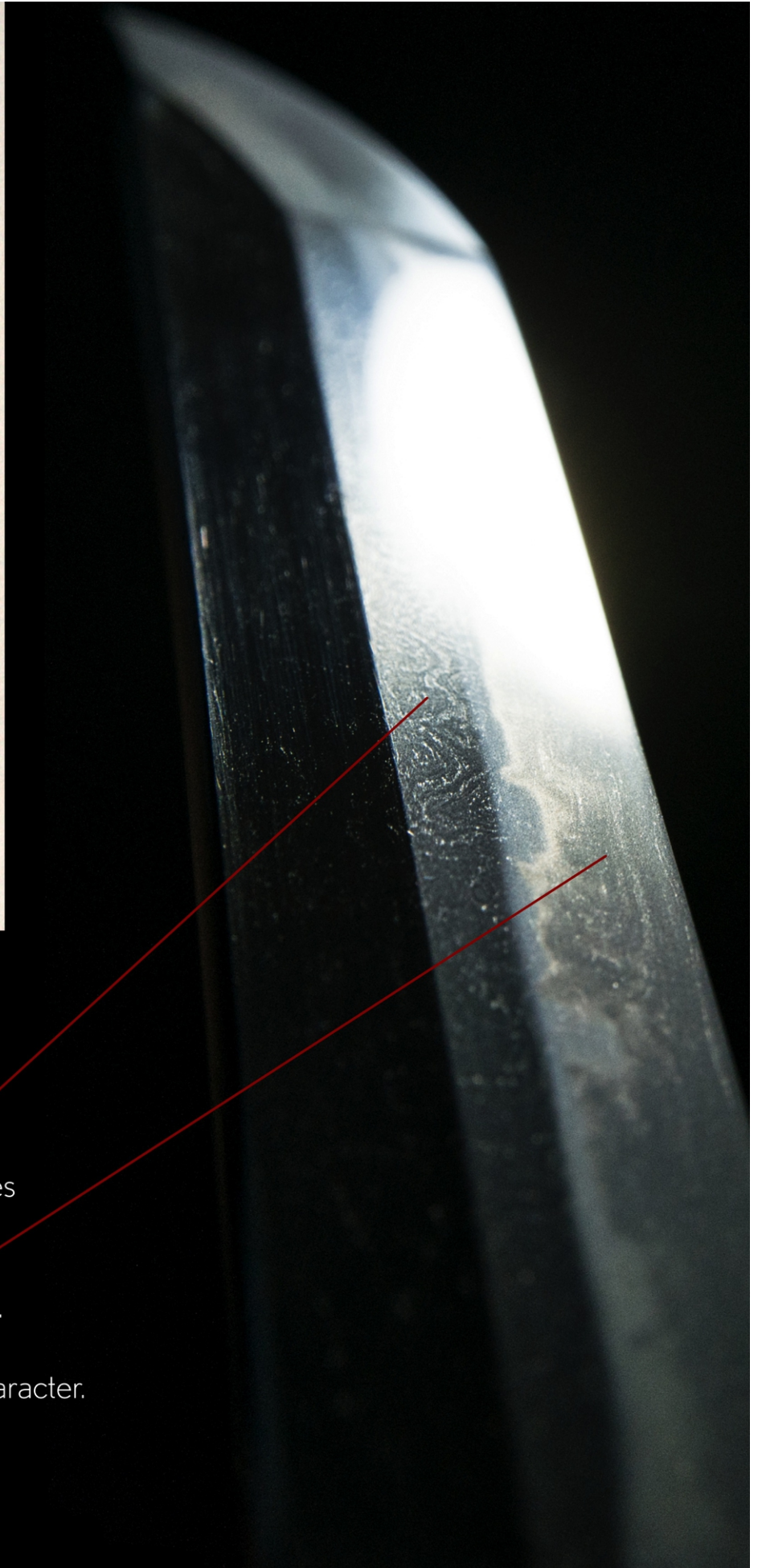
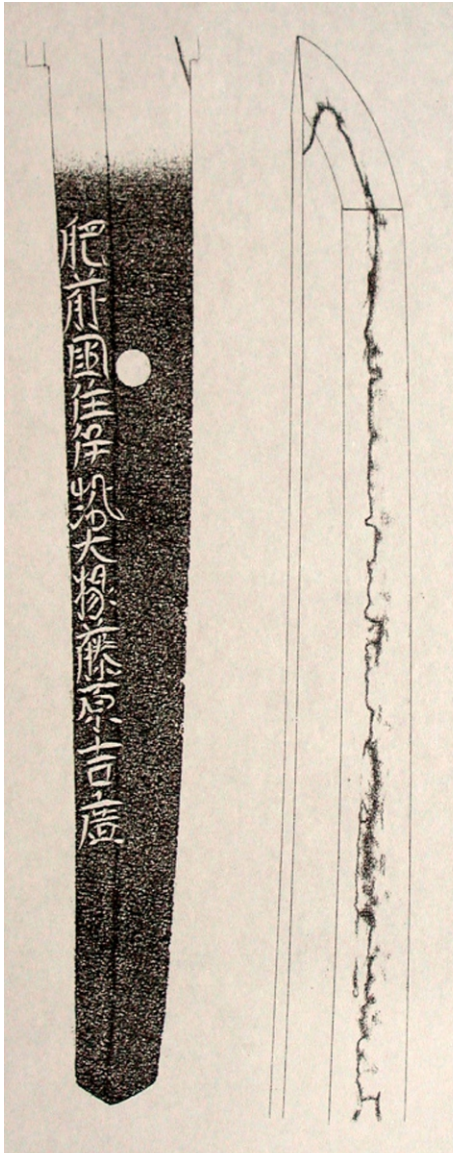
This is a rope belonging to *Fudo-Myou* and other guardian deities that symbolizes the keeping at distance of enemies of Buddhist teachings and catching new believers.

*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.

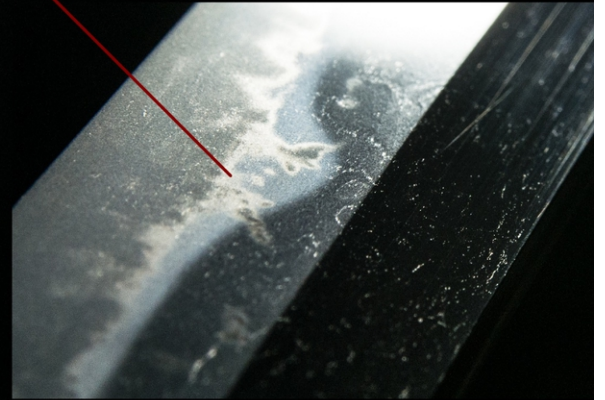
This is a katana rich in character.



## 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).





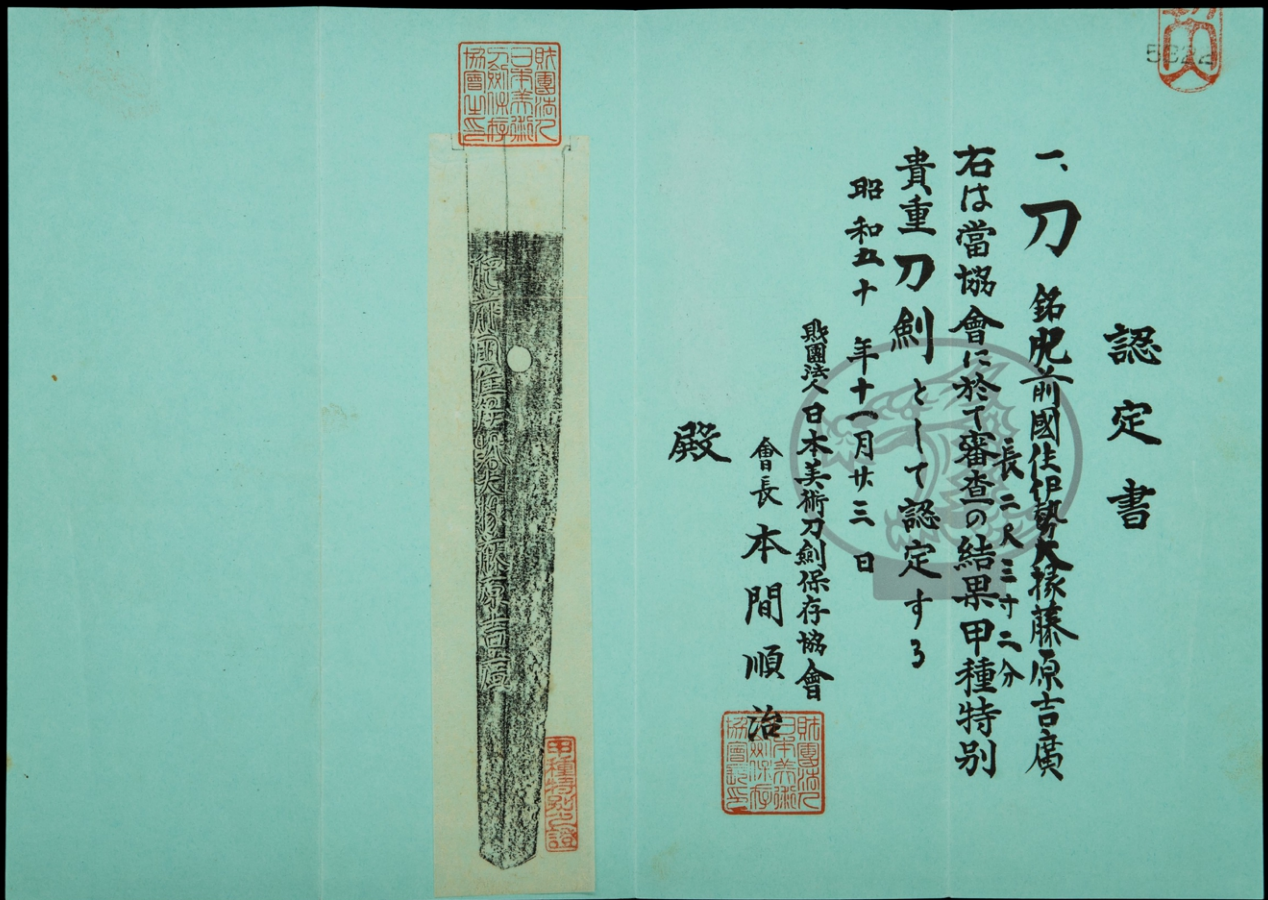


## It's more than just love...

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*

