ITEM# UJKA159

A YASUTSUGU KATANA
SIGNED WITH AOI MON, EARLY EDO PERIOD (JOYKYO ERA: 1684-1688)

Swordsmith: Yasutsugu Motte Namban Tetsu Bushu Edo Saku Kore (4th gen.)
Location: Edo province (Tokyo)
Length: 71.2cm (ubu)
Curvature: 1.2cm
Moto-haba: 3.1cm
Hamon: Deep suguha with ko-midareba (a straight hamon with a slight undulation)
Jihada: Itame (wood grain pattern)
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: NBTHK Tokubetsu Kicho (a sword designated as Especially Precious by the Society for the Preservation of the Japanese Art Sword)
Certificate #3: NTHK-NPO Kanteisho (a koshirae designated as Important by the Society for the Preservation of the Japanese Sword)
Certificate #4: NTHK-NPO Kanteisho (a tsuba designated as Important by the Society for the Preservation of the Japanese Sword)
Included: Shirasaya, custom koshirae with hollyhock theme, sword fabric bags, sword stand, maintenance kit, DVD, printed care guide, export paperwork from Japan
The maker of this formidable katana is the fourth generation Yasutsugu of the famed Edo branch of the Yasutsugu School.

The name Yasutsugu has a distinctly royal flavor. Shodai Yasutsugu (first generation) was supported by Matsudaira Hideyasu, third son of Tokugawa Ieyasu (first shogun of the Edo period, pictured on right).

Hideyasu was the daimyo (great family) of Echizen province. His power and influence bolstered the fame of Yasutsugu considerably. By the year 1600, Yasutsugu was well established in Echizen. His patronage by Hideyasu secured his livelihood and allowed him the freedom to produce swords in a variety of styles.

In 1606 or 1607, Yasutsugu's fame reached the point that he was called to Edo (Tokyo) to share his time with Tokugawa Ieyasu. Not long after Yasutsugu was given the privilege of using the kanji character Yasu (康) from Tokugawa Ieyasu's name.

An additional privilege followed whereby the carving the Aoi Mon (hollyhock crest) on his blades was granted. These privileges were given in perpetuity to Yasutsugu and his descendants. Yasutsugu swordsmiths thus became the kaji (official smiths) of the Tokugawa Family.

No less than eleven generations of Yasutsugu smiths in the Edo line proudly followed suit.

The fourth generation's working period was from the third year of Enpo (1675) to the Jokyo era. He specialized in crafting swords with a deep consistent suguha (straight) hamon (temper line) with tiny undulations.

The 71.2cm cutting edge makes this sword a classic Samurai katana, typical of his fine work.

Interestingly, the steel used to produce this sword was in part sourced from Europe, likely from Dutch traders. This steel was known as “Namban tetsu”, (lit. Southern Barbarian steel). It would have been expensive and unique to produce swords with steel from faraway lands in the late 1600s. Thus the nakago (tang) is chiseled with the words Namban tetsu.

Two certificates of authenticity accompany this katana from the sword museum of Japan, the NBTHK. A vintage Tokubetsu Kicho Token (An Especially Precious Sword) certificate issued in 1970 and a modern-day Tokubetsu Hozon (Especially Worthy of Preservation).

As the sword was originally acquired in it’s shirasaya (magnolia wood scabbard), a custom koshirae (fittings) was traditionally crafted for the sword that took over three months to produce.

Like a tailor made suit, the tsuka (hilt), the saya (scabbard) along with the ray skin base wrapped with Japanese silk are all made to measure. Each koshirae is unique to the sword and owner.

All the fittings for the sword are from the Edo Period (pre 1868). Two further NTHK-NPO certificates for the tsuba (guard), and the koshirae further accredit the sword.

The common theme throughout the koshirae is that of the Aoi Mon (hollyhock leaf) – the official kamon (crest) of the Tokugawa family.
Swordsmith Yasutsugu crafted this sword using Namban tetsu (southern barbarian steel) in Bushu, Edo (modern-day Tokyo).

Aoi Mon (hollyhock crest)

Yasu

tsugu

Motte

Namban

Tetsu (iron)

Bushu

Edo

Saku kore (made this)
Thick suguha (straight) hamon (temper line)
Koshirae
(sword fittings)
Signed *Echizen Kinai* (school)

*Tsuba* (guard)
Tsuka (hilt)
Kashira (pommel)

Each dot is hand-punched...
Kogai (hair pick)

Kozuka (utility knife)
Torokusho (registration card, issued in Showa 26, 1951)
The first year that registration began. Notable daimyo families in Japan were invited to register their swords first.
Certificate of Designation

One, Katana

Mei (signature)
Aoimon, Yasutsugu Motte Nanban Tetsu Oite Bushu Edo Saku Kore (Edo 4th generation)

Nagasa (length)
2 shaku 3 sun, 5 bu (71.2cm)

After examination, we hereby announce that the Katana has been awarded Tokubetsu Kicho Touken (An Especially Precious Sword)

Issued in 45th year of Showa (1970), August 30th

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai
(The Society for the Preservation of the Japan Art Sword)
Chairman of the Board, Hosokawa Moritatsu

*The above translation was prepared by Unique Japan for the benefit of our clientele. It is not an official translation by the NBTHK.*
Certificate of Designation

One, Katana

Mei (signature)
Aoimon, Yasutsugu Motte Nanban Tetsu Oite Bushu Edo Saku Kore (Edo 4th generation)

Nagasa (length)
2 shaku 3 sun, 5 bu (71.2cm)

After examination, we hereby announce that the Katana has been awarded *Tokubetsu Hozon Token* (A Sword Especially Worthy of Preservation)

Issued in 9th year of Heisei (2015), February 5th

*Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai*  
(The Society for the Preservation of the Japan Art Sword)

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ET VOILA...
THE SWORD PROUDLY DISPLAYED IN IT’S NEW HOME.
Steps to Building Your Own Koshirae

Many fine antique Samurai swords today come stored only in a shirasaya. A shirasaya acts like a humidor, 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!