

JAPANESE  
SWORD  
CATALOGUE 25.5

FIRST RELEASED:  
JUNE 23/2016

(COVER PHOTO)

ITEM# UJKA204

A SHODAI KUNIKIYO KATANA  
EDO PERIOD, KANEI ERA (1624~1644)

NBTHK TOKUBETSU HOZON  
CERTIFICATE OF AUTHENTICITY

# ANTIQUE JAPANESE SWORDS FOR SALE (VOLUME 25.5)

RELEASED: JUNE 23, 2016 TO VIP CLIENTS ONLY  
UPDATED: SEPTEMBER 30, 2016

THE FOLLOWING PAGES CONTAIN DESCRIPTIONS AND IMAGES  
OF GENUINE ANTIQUE JAPANESE SWORDS THAT WERE SOLD IN  
CATALOGUE 25.

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Konnichiwa everyone!

I am very proud to report that we launched uniquejapan.com ten years ago this month onto the World Wide Web. Time flies. ;) I am in Tokyo now enjoying this milestone with the team as I write this message. Thank you for downloading Japanese Sword Catalogue 25.

We have seven wonderful katanas in this catalogue that we are proud to offer.

The *kiku-mon* (mark of the chrysanthemum) featured on the cover page is from the *nakago* (tang) of a brilliant katana by *Yamashiro no Kuni Kunikiyo* - the most famous smith in the Edo period who had permission from the imperial family to engrave this prestigious 16-petal *kamon* (crest).

Kunikiyo worked in Echizen province as he was retained by the powerful *Daimyo Matsudaira Tadamasa*. This highly collectible sword radiates 400 years of history in your hands.

Another notable *kamon* is the *aoi-mon* (hollyhock) of the ruling Tokugawa family bestowed to swords of the Yasutsugu School. A fabulous katana attributed to *Nidai Yasutsugu* (second generation), signed by his younger brother, is available for ownership. Both the sword and glorious Edo-period fittings are incredible.

Item number ujka209 is a fine steely creation by fourth generation shinshinto smith *Kanetomo* of modern-day Fukushima prefecture. Six certificates of authenticity accompany this sword - be sure to look for the unique work in the blade near the tip area and the silver arrowheads!

A fellow fourth generation smith by the name of *Kanemoto*, who worked in 1573 during the unifying Momoyama period, crafted a true warrior katana with an eye-catching *sambonsugi hamon*. The *koshirae* is terrific. The devilish *oni* (demon) on the *menuki* is very good fun.

For those who appreciate Yasukuni shrine swords, consider the katana by maestro *Yakuwa Yasutake* who once worked there. The katana is dated to August 1979, crafted when he was about to become *mukanza* ranked smith. The sword is housed in lovely Edo-period Higo *koshirae* with a unique *Jingo School* *tsuba* depicting a lightning storm.

Rounding up the catalogue is a healthy and robust katana by *Echizen Hirotaka* from the Meireki period, circa 1655. The understated elegance of this sword is one to cherish.

Each katana holds a special story. May the sword become a source of spiritual inspiration for you to create your own special story.

Thank you to all who have joined our VIP email list and to the many who claimed swords in Tokyo via a private meeting. As always, I look forward to serving you.

Sayonara,

*Pablo*

Pablo Kuntz  
June 2016



## INDEX OF JAPANESE SWORDS & FITTINGS

ITEM#	SWORDSMITH & TYPE	CM	CERTIFICATE	ERA / PERIOD	PRICE
ujka186	A YASUTSUGU KATANA	71.2	Tokubetsu Kicho	Kanei (1624-1645)	<b>SOLD</b>
ujka188	A YASUTAKE KATANA	76.6	NBTHK Hozon	August 1979	<b>SOLD</b>
ujka204	A KUNIKIYO KATANA	70.8	Tokubetsu Hozon	Kanei (1628-1645)	<b>SOLD</b>
ujka209	A KANETOMO KATANA	71.3	Tokubetsu Kicho	Bunsei (1818-1830)	<b>SOLD</b>
ujka210	A KANEMOTO KATANA	69.9	NTHK Kanteisho	Tensho (1573-1592)	<b>SOLD</b>
ujka213	A HIROTAKA KATANA	70.9	NBTHK Hozon	Meireki (1655~1658)	<b>SOLD</b>

**ALL PRICES ARE IN US DOLLARS**

To access current and previous catalogues, please visit:  
**<http://new.uniquejapan.com/currently-available-swords-at-unique-japan>**

## 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.

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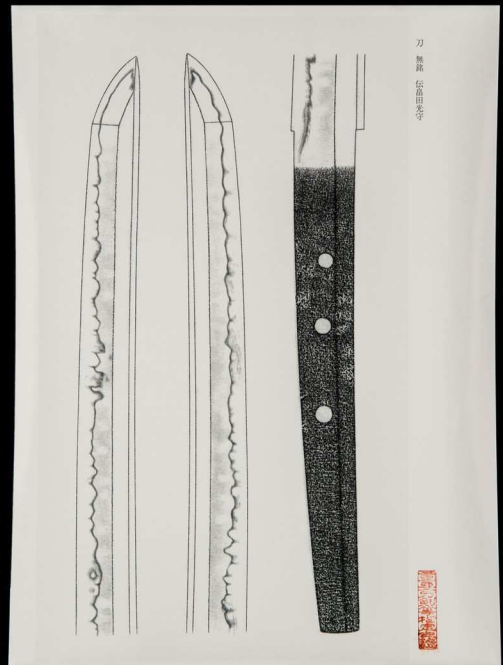
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WE ACQUIRE SWORDS ON A REGULAR BASIS AND CAN SOURCE SWORDS FOR COLLECTORS SEEKING A SPECIFIC SMITH AND/OR SCHOOL.

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

DOMO ARIGATO!  
PABLO





Recently sold...

*A Hatakeda Mitsumori Katana*  
Kamakura Period, circa 1278  
NBTHK Juyo Token

Bizen bliss.



**ITEM# UJKA186**

## A NIDAI YASUTSUGU KATANA

SIGNED BY THIRD GENERATION YASUTSUGU  
EARLY EDO PERIOD (KANEI ERA: 1624~1645)

- Swordsmith:** *Yasutsugu (2nd generation attribution)*  
**Signature:** *Aoi mon, Yasutsugu Saku Mumei (omote, front)*  
*San-Dai Yasutsugu Mei Kore (ura, back)*  
**Location:** Edo province (modern-day Tokyo)  
**Measurements:** **Length:** 71.2cm      **Curvature:** 1.1cm      **Moto-haba:** 2.9cm  
**Jihada:** *Itame with ji-nie*  
**Hamon:** *Ko-notare (small gentle waves) with kinsuji, sunagashi and ashi, wide yaki*  
**Nakago:** *Ubu (original length)*  
**Fujishiro:** *Jo-saku (ranked as a superior swordsmith)*  
**Asaemon:** *Ryo-Wazamono (maker of good sharp swords)*  
**Certificate #1:** **NBTHK Tokubetsu Kicho** (a sword designated as Especially Precious by the Society for the Preservation of the Japan Art Sword)  
**Certificate #2-5:** **NTHK-NPO Kanteisho** (a sword, tsuba, fuchi-kashira and koshirae all designated as Authentic by the Society for the Preservation of the Japanese Sword)  
**Included:** Edo-period koshirae, shirasaya, carry bags, sword stand, kit, etc.

**SOLD**



## The Yasutsugu School

The much-acclaimed Yasutsugu lineage starts with the birth of the first generation, *Ichizaemon*, in *Shimosaka Shiga-gun* in *Omi province* during the middle of the 16th century.

Born into a sword-making family headed by Yasutsugu's father, *Hironaga*, was reputed to be the last descendent of *Yamato no Kuni Senjuin*, by way of Nara. Though his father was from Omi, he was trained in the Mino tradition. Omi neighbors Mino province.

Throughout the history of Japan, a great number of swordsmiths flourished when they came under the patronage and protection of the local feudal lords. Yasutsugu (first generation) was one such swordsmith.

Whether by chance or intent, he became noticed and supported by *Matsudaira Hideyasu*, who was the third son of *Tokugawa Ieyasu* (the 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 fifth year of Keicho (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.

Around the 11th or 12th year of this same period of Keicho (1606-1607), 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. Thus he changed his name to Yasutsugu from that point on.



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. Upon the death of the first generation Yasutsugu, the family responsibility was taken up by his son, *Ichinojo*.

His original signature was *Yoshisuye* and it was officially changed to Yasutsugu in the ninth year of Genna (1623). It was at that time that he received the official *shogunate* order to move to Edo on a permanent basis. Two years after his father's death.

Nidai (2nd generation) Yasutsugu made swords only until the second year of Shoho (1645) and he died on February 15 of the third year of that same era (1646). His death caused a rift in the family that was solved in a most interesting way...

At the time of the death of the Nidai Yasutsugu, his son, first called *Umanosuke* and later *Ichinojo*, was too young to assume the succession. Despite this fact, he was supported by the students of the Nidai and the Shogun's Arms Office.

His succession was opposed by the younger brother of the Nidai, who was the third son of the Shodai Yasutsugu. His name was *Shirouemon* later *Ichiuemon*, who lived and worked in Echizen. In the end, it was decided that there would be *two Sandai* (3rd generation) Yasutsugus.

Umanosuke would assume his father's mantle and become the third generation Yasutsugu working permanently in Edo, while Shirouemon would remain in Echizen and become the Echizen third generation.

From this point onward the Yasutsugu lineage of swordsmiths was split into two distinct branches, the *Edo branch* and the *Echizen branch*. The two divisions of the Yasutsugu school continued for several generations. The Edo school was sustained through eleven generations.

### The sword

What makes this sword so interesting is that it was originally left unsigned, yet later signed by third generation Echizen Yasutsugu. We took this sword to the NTHK-NPO for insight.

They determined that the blade was originally crafted by second generation Yasutsugu. A possible scenario being he was too weak or died before he was able to sign the sword. He may have also intentionally not signed the blade out of respectful protocol.

This is an elegant sword with a finely worked *jihada* filled with plenty of *chikei* (streaks of *nie* crystals). The *hamon* is a *ko-notare* (small undulating waves) with *sunagashi* (brushes of sand) and *kinsuji* (golden lines). It is a katana with character.

The *koshirae* (fittings) is equally as impressive. It's like walking back in time, as the set of *koshirae* is certified as being from the middle Edo period (1700s). On the *fuchi-kashira*, the strategic game of *GO* is being battled out by two daimyo lords.

Look for the spider web depiction on the *kashira* suggesting a very long game of strategy!

The *saya* (scabbard) is beautifully lacquered in *aoi-gai* (mother-of-pearl). The protective *kojiri* (end cap of the scabbard) is carved with superb detail of a dragon.

There is so much to enjoy and cherish in this sword. Five certificates of authenticity accompany this rare Samurai find.

*\*\*Update: The sword has just been submitted to the NBTHK in July for Hozon and Tokubetsu Hozon shinsa (judgement).*



Please watch presentation video here:  
<http://tinyurl.com/ujka186-yasutsugu>



Saki-kasane: 4.0mm <sup>^</sup>

Moto-kasane: 6.0mm

Saki-haba: 2.1cm

Nagasa: 71.2cm

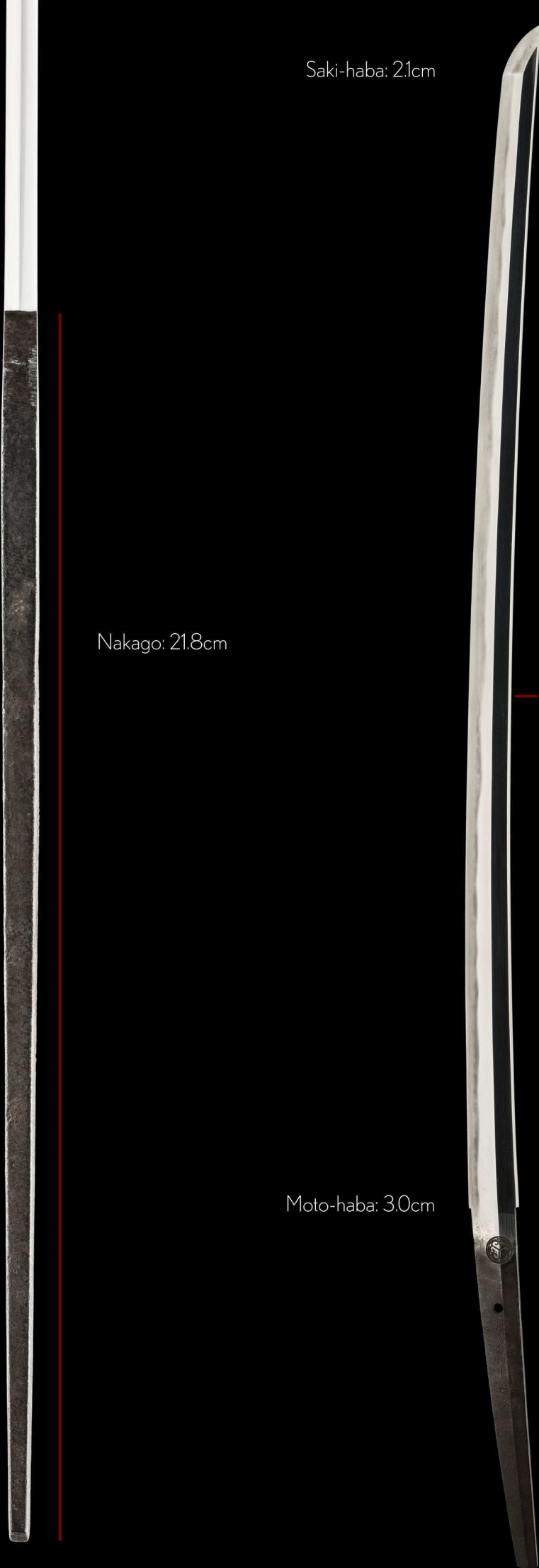
Nakago: 21.8cm

Sori: 1.1cm

Omosa: 670g

Moto-haba: 3.0cm

Mekugi-ana: 1







This katana was crafted by *second generation Yasutsugu*, however, it was never signed. Thus the nakago reads *mumei* (unsigned). His younger brother, Echizen Yasutsugu 3rd generation, signed the piece for him.



Aoi-mon (hollyhock)



康  
継  
作  
無  
銘

Yasu  
tsugu  
saku  
Mu  
mei

The nakago reads:

*This is the signature of 3rd generation  
[Echizen] Yasutsugu.*

San (3)

dai

Yasu

tsugu

Mei

Kore





## NBTHK Tokubetsu Kicho Certificate of Designation

A sword designated as *Especially Precious*  
by the Society for the Preservation of the Japan Art Sword

Issued in the 41st year of Showa (1966), April 17th

One, Katana

*Mei* (signature)

*Yasutsugu Saku Mumei* (omote, front)

*3 Dai Yasutsugu Mei Kore* (ura, back)

*Nagasa* (length)  
71.1cm

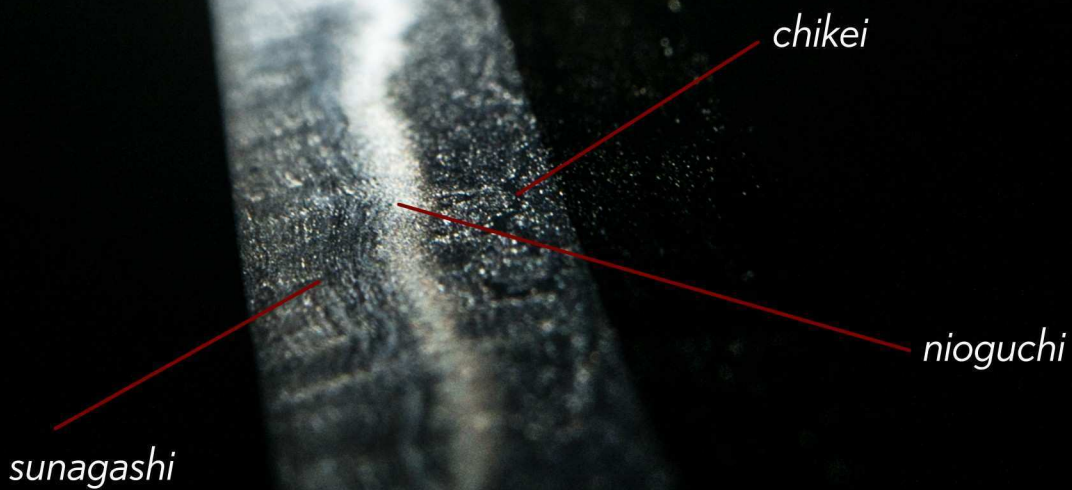
Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai  
(NBTHK)



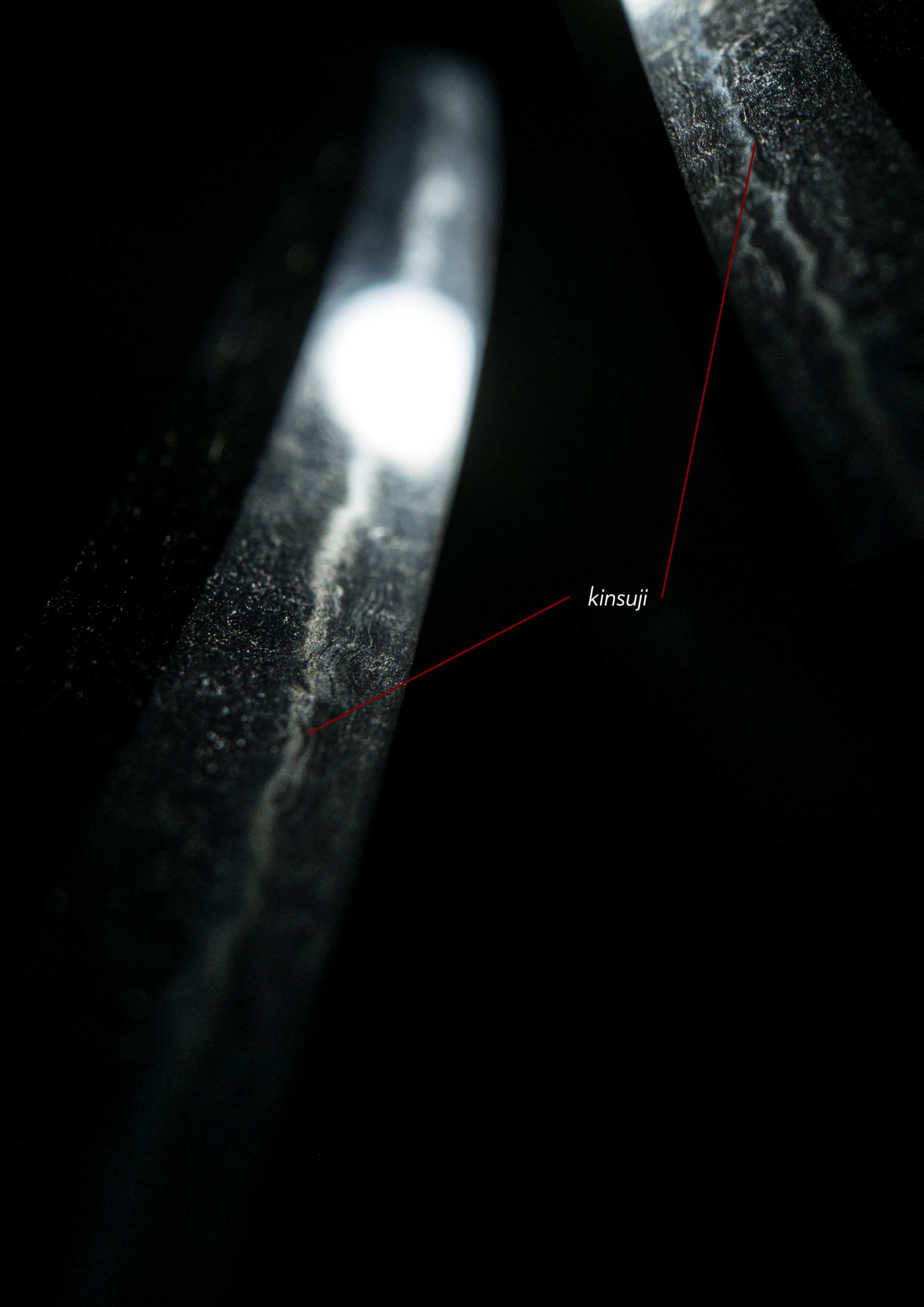
# Hamon

Second generation *Yasutsugu* is known for a thick *nioguchi* (crystals that make up the hamon).

This sword has plentiful *sunagashi* (brushed sand), *chikei* (dark lines in the jihada) and *kinsuji* (black lines within the hamon).







*kinsuji*



*Shirasaya*



*Gin-habaki*  
(silver)







## Tsuba

A beautiful polished iron *sukashi* (openwork) tsuba depicting the *aoi-mon* (hollyhock leaf) consistent with the Yasutsugu *kamon* (family crest) carried on the sword.

The tsuba is from the *Shoami School* crafted during the middle of the Edo period (1700s).

Design also depicts three geese in flight over a grassy plain. Wonderful work.



This tsuba is certified with NTHK-NPO Kanteisho certification





Deep in thought as the nobleman strategizes his next move in the game *GO*.

*GO* is a board game invented in China four thousand years ago, where it is known as *Wei Qi* or *Wei Chi*. Later introduced to Japan, it became the favourite game of nobility, particularly with the three great samurai generals *Oda Nobunaga*, *Toyotomi Hideyoshi* and *Tokugawa Ieyasu*.





Like the strategic general, the spider is also a master tactician.

What's your strategy?





The *tsuka* (hilt) has been preserved since the middle Edo period (1700s).





Where form meets function.

A magnificently carved *kojiri* provides protection to the tip of the saya.







Happy dragon.







ITEM# UJKA188

CURRENTLY AVAILABLE

## A YAKUWA YASUTAKE KATANA SIGNED & DATED, SHOWA PERIOD (AUGUST 1979)

- Swordsmith:** *Musashi no Kuni Yakuwa YASUTAKE*
- Location:** Musashi province (Tokyo)
- Length:** 76.6cm
- Curvature:** 2.2cm
- Jihada:** *Tight itame-hada (wood grain pattern) with midare utsuri*
- Hamon:** *Gunome choji midare (wavy temper line with clove blossom pattern)*
- Nakago:** *Ubu (original length)*
- Certificate #1:** **NBTHK Hozon** (*a sword designated as Worthy of Conservation by the Society for the Preservation of the Japan Art Sword*)
- Certificate #2-4:** **NTHK-NPO Kanteisho** (*a sword, tsuba and koshirae designated as Authentic by the Society for the Preservation of the Japanese Sword*)
- Included:** Edo-period Higo koshirae, shirasaya, silk carry bag, stand, maintenance kit, DVD, printed care guide, all exportation paperwork from Japan

**SOLD**





To introduce *Yakuwa Yasutake* is to discuss the *Nihonto Tanren Kai* (NTK) – a non-profit organization that functioned from 1933 to 1945 on the grounds of *Yasukuni Shrine* (left) in Tokyo to produce quality swords for *high-ranking military officers*.

Over this period about 30 swordsmiths produced an impressive 8,000 blades. As Japan was in constant conflict with Asian countries, producing swords expressing a pure Japanese spirit was essential.

The NTK went to great lengths to produce Japanese swords in the traditional manner. They even constructed a *tatara* (smelter) to produce *tamahagane* for their own swords.

Yasutake was born in 1909 in Yamagata prefecture. He first joined the NTK as a handyman in 1935, and became an established Yasukuni smith in 1944.

Yasutake produced between 10 and 30 swords at Yasukuni. After the war, he resumed sword making again in 1954.

Yasutake has won several awards during his life. He is regarded as the finest swordsmith among other postwar Yasukuni smiths.



Yasutake was finally awarded with *mukanza* (without judgement), the highest degree of crafting honors in 1981. In 1983 he was a leading member of a team that produced a sword for dedication at the Yasukuni Shrine marking the 50th anniversary of the opening of the NTK.

Yasutake died a year later in 1984.

This long and elegant katana is surely one of his finest works having been completed in the summer of 1979 - at the end of a most prolific career. It is crafted in the Bizen tradition, with a stunning *gunome choji midare* (clove blossoms) and with clear *midare utsuri* (shadow hamon).

The sword is well-polished and in exquisite condition.

A handsome Edo-period *Higo koshirae* accompanies the piece with a *Jingo school tsuba* and *fuchikashira* that celebrates the power of mother nature in a prolific thunderstorm.

Four certificates of authenticity accompany this highly collectible katana, recently attaining **NBTHK Hozon** - a sword designated as worthy of preservation by the Japanese sword museum in Tokyo.



Saki-kasane: 5.4mm <sup>^</sup>

Moto-kasane: 7.3mm

Omosa: 890g

Saki-haba: 2.3cm

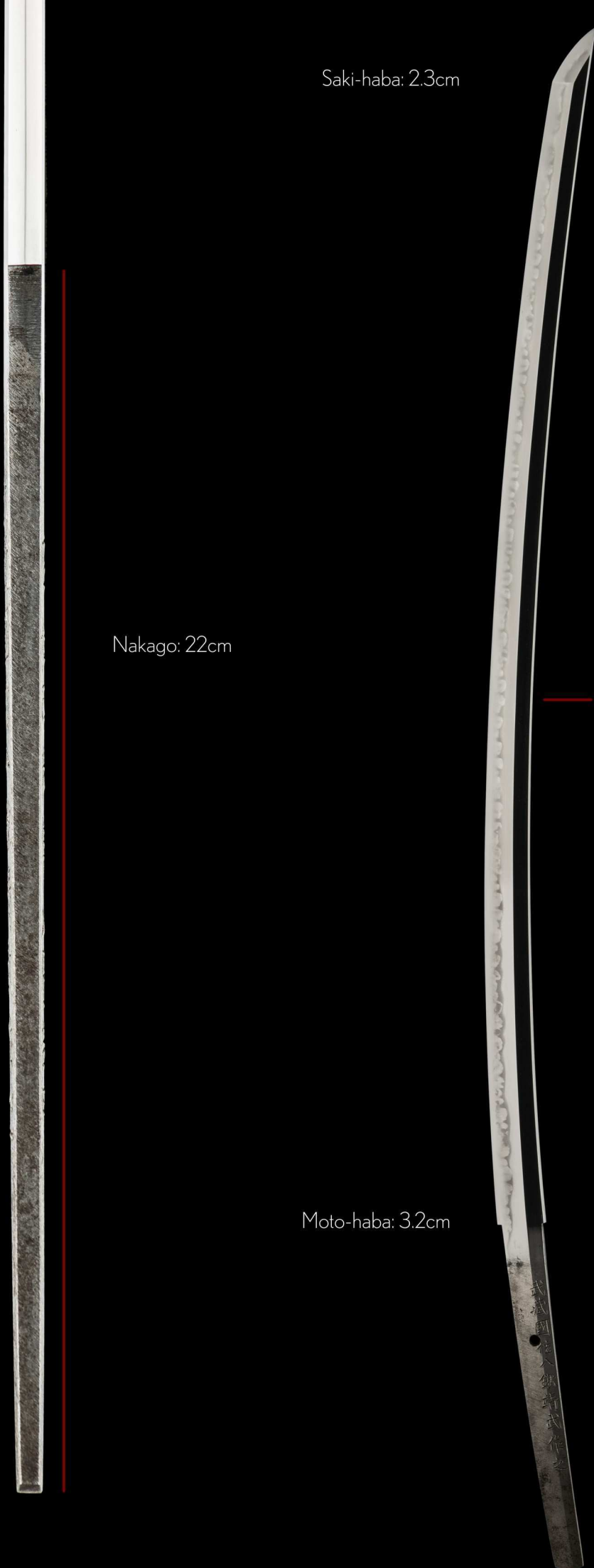
Nakago: 22cm

Moto-haba: 3.2cm

Nagasa: 76.6cm

Sori: 2.2cm

Mekugi-ana: 1





略  
歌己未年八月廿四

Dated:

*A good day in August 1979*

*(during the year of the sheep)*

Sho

wa

Tsuchinoto

hitsuji

Toshi

8

gatsu

Kichi

jitsu

昭和  
和  
乙  
未  
年  
八  
月  
廿  
日



Location: *Musashi no Kuni (Tokyo)*

Swordsmith: *Yakuwa Yasutake*

武藏國往八  
鋤靖武作之

Mu

sashi

(no) kuni

ju

Ya


kuwa

Yasu

take

saku

kore

A close-up photograph of a katana blade, showing the hamon (temper line) patterns. The blade is dark and curved, with a bright light reflecting off its surface. The hamon patterns are visible as lighter, wavy lines against the dark metal. A red line points from the text 'midare utsuri' to a specific pattern on the blade.

*midare utsuri*

*ashi*

A 20th century master of the Bizen tradition.  
This katana by *Yakuwa Yasutake* carries a  
beautiful *gunome choji midare* with *midare*  
*utsuri* (shadow hamon) and long *ashi* (legs).

*gunome choji midare* (a temper line of wild clove blossoms )

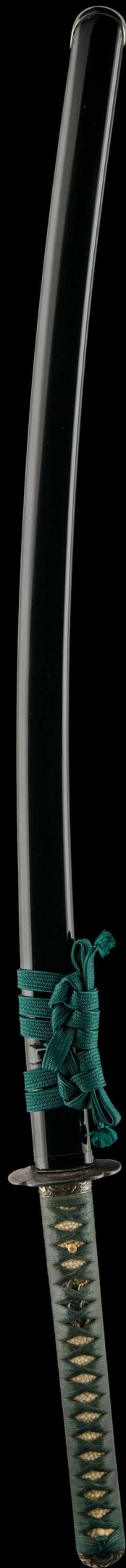


*Shirasaya*



*Niju Yokoyasuri-habaki*  
(silver)







## Tsuba

A splendid Higo province Jingo School polished iron tsuba with gold and silver inlay depicting bolts of lightning amid a thunderstorm.

It was crafted during the late Edo period, mid-1800s.

Feel the power of nature.

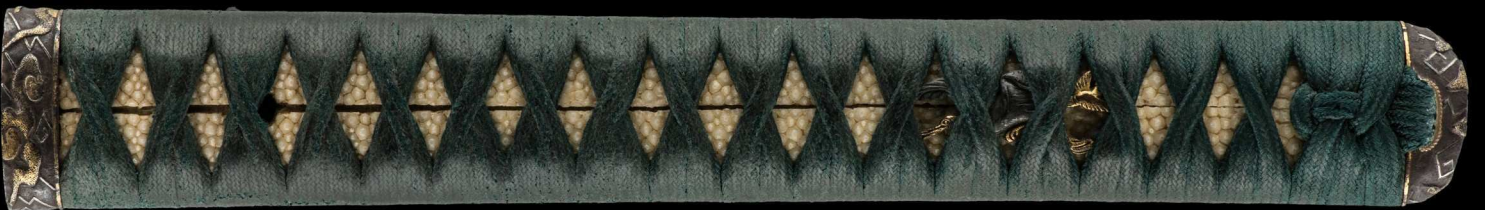


This tsuba is certified with  
NTHK-NPO Kanteisho certification





*Tsuru* (crane) is a mystical creature believed to live a thousand years. The crane thus represents good fortune and longevity. It is celebrated as the “bird of happiness”.







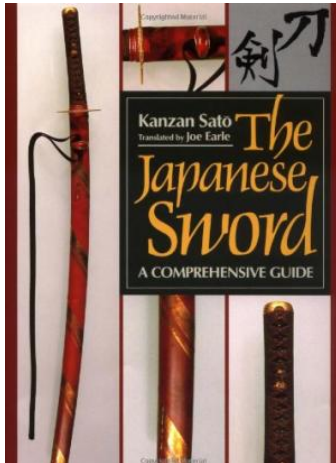
ITEM# UJKA204

## A SHODAI KUNIKIYO KATANA

SIGNED, EARLY EDO PERIOD (KANEI ERA: 1628~1644)

<b>Swordsmith:</b>	<i>Echizen no Kami Kunikiyo (Shodai, first generation)</i>
<b>Length:</b>	70.8cm
<b>Curvature:</b>	1.0cm
<b>Moto-Haba:</b>	3.0cm
<b>Jihada:</b>	<i>Itame with fine ji-nie</i>
<b>Hamon:</b>	<i>Gunome midare with ko-nie, sunagashi, kinsuji</i>
<b>Nakago:</b>	<i>Ubu (original)</i>
<b>Fujishiro:</b>	<i>Jo-saku (ranked as a superior swordsmith)</i>
<b>Asaemon:</b>	<i>Wazamono (maker of sharp swords)</i>
<b>Certificate:</b>	<b>NBTHK Tokubetsu Token</b> (a sword designated as Especially Worthy of Preservation by the Society for the Preservation of the Japan Art Sword)
<b>Included:</b>	Shirasaya, silk carry bag, sword stand, maintenance kit, DVD, printed care guide, registration and all exportation paperwork from Japan

**SOLD** (a new custom koshirae is being created)



Dr. Kanzan Sato, former director of the NBTHK (the sword museum of Japan) writes in his book *The Japanese Sword* (left) that *Yamashiro no Kami Kunikiyo* was the *most famous swordsmith* in the Shinto (Edo period) that was granted permission to stamp the *16-petal kiku-mon* imperial family chrysanthemum on the *nakago* of his swords.

Kunikiyo first left his hometown of Suruga province to Kyoto and became a star student of grandmaster swordsmith *Horikawa Kunihiro*.

He received the Horikawa kanji character for *Kuni* whereupon he became Kunikiyo. He left Kyoto in 1614 after his master's death.

Kunikiyo was retained by the powerful *daimyo* (lord) *Matsudaira Tadamasa* (right) and moved to Fukui to join him in 1624. Only the finest smiths could be retained by such royalty in Japan.

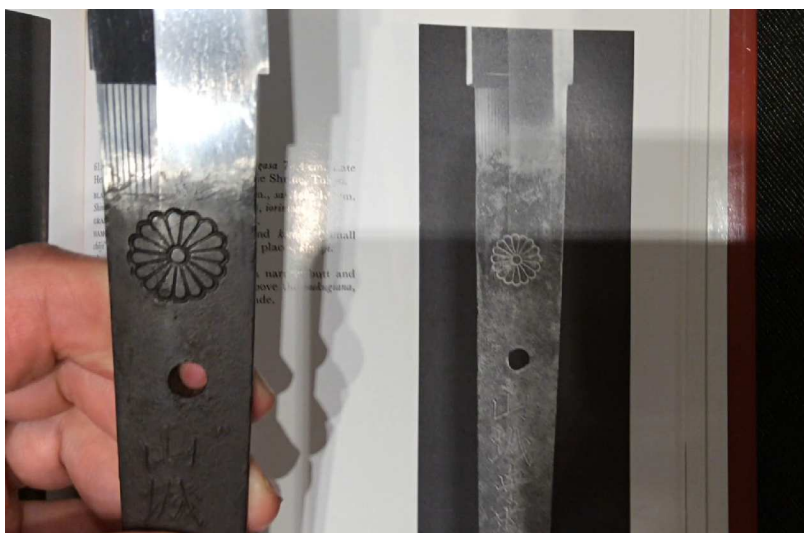
In 1627 he received the honorary title *Yamashiro no Daijo* which is when he received permission to engrave the 16-petal *kikumon*. A year later, in 1628, Kunikiyo's title became the more prestigious *Yamashiro no Kami* (Lord of Yamashiro [Kyoto] province).

Kunikiyo is thought to have died in the second year of Keian (1649) at the age of 60. Several generations of Kunikiyo followed.

Kunikiyo is renowned for producing a fine *suguha* (straight) hamon. Rarely are we treated to such a wonderful Soshu creation with thick *nioguchi* in *gunome midare* and plenty of *hataraki* that we see in this katana. He would have learned these skills from his time under Kunihiro.



The shape of blade makes it easy to draw, a true swordsman's sword. It was surely a custom made katana for a high-ranking Samurai. All told, this is a highly collectible 400-year-old sword with distinguished pedigree. Sword comes with a vintage **NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon** certificate.



A close-up of the *kikumon* and Dr. Sato's reference book

### Custom Koshirae

This katana represents an ideal opportunity to build a custom *koshirae* for, just as the Samurai would have commissioned during the Edo period.

**\*\*Update:** A custom *koshirae* in a theme of *chrysanthemums*, drawing on the historical significance of the *kikumon* on the *nakago* is now being planned.

Watch the introductory video here:  
<http://tinyurl.com/ujka204-kunikiyo>

Saki-kasane: 4.5mm



Saki-haba: 2.0cm

Moto-kasane: 6.5mm

Nakago: 21.0cm

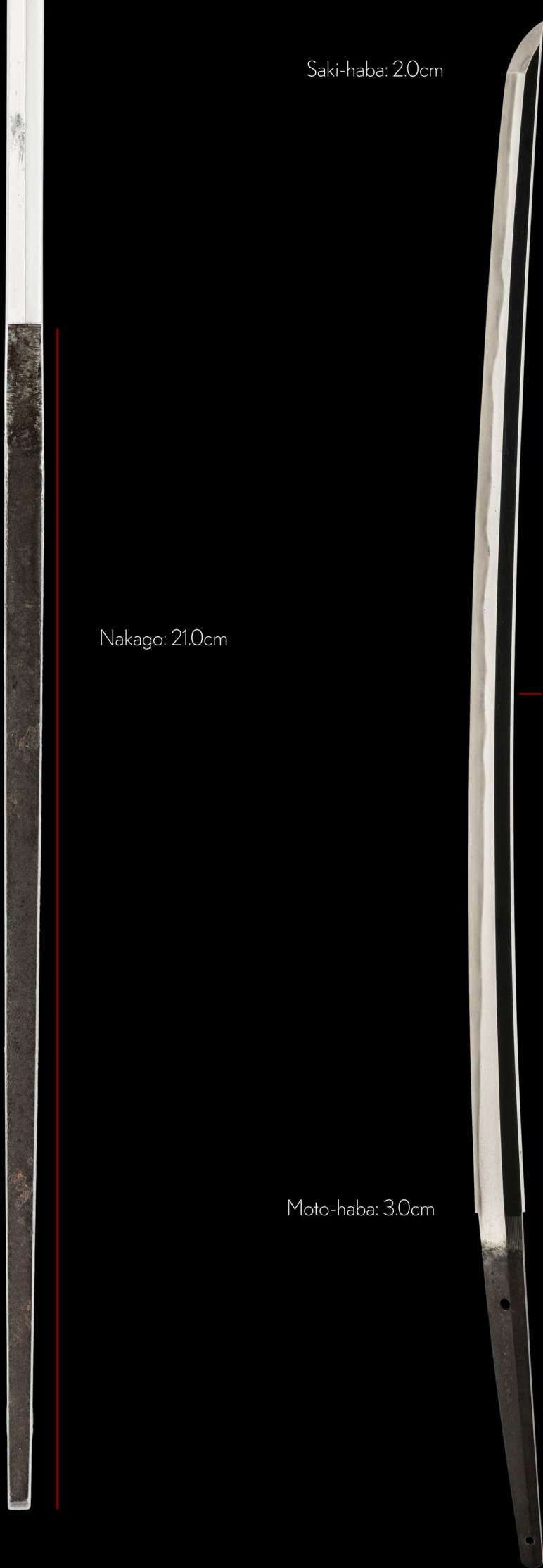
Nagasa: 70.8cm

Sori: 1.0cm

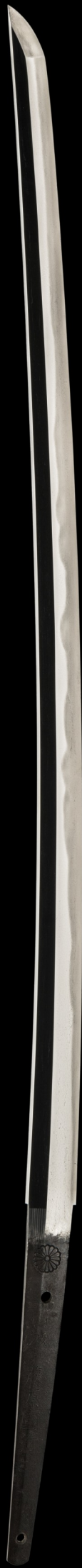
Omosa: 745g

Moto-haba: 3.0cm

Mekugi-ana: 2







Title: Yamashiro no Kami  
Clan: Fujiwara  
Swordsmith: Kunikiyo (1st gen)

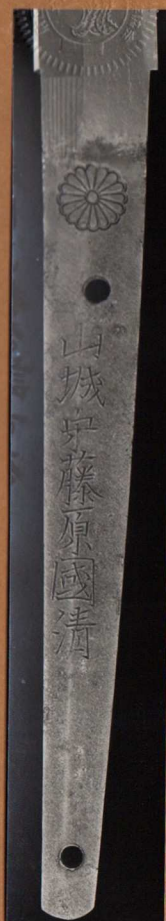
Kiku-mon

Yama  
shiro  
(no) Kami  
Fuji  
wara  
Kuni  
kiyo



保 存  
71995001

No 140216



鑑定書

長二尺三寸三分

一刀 銘 (菊紋) 山城守藤原国清

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

平成七年四月十四日

財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協會



## 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 Heisei (1995), April 14th

One, Katana

Mei (signature)  
(Kiku-Mon) Yamashiro no Kami Fujiwara Kunikiyo

Nagasa (length)  
2-shaku 3-sun 3-bu (70.8cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai  
(NBTHK)



m  
a  
s  
a  
m  
e  
  
h  
a  
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a

## Jihada

*Yamashiro no Kami Kunikiyo* was admired for his fine *masame hada* (straight grain) in the *shinogi-ji* and a dense *itame* in the *jihada*.

*a resilient itame hada*

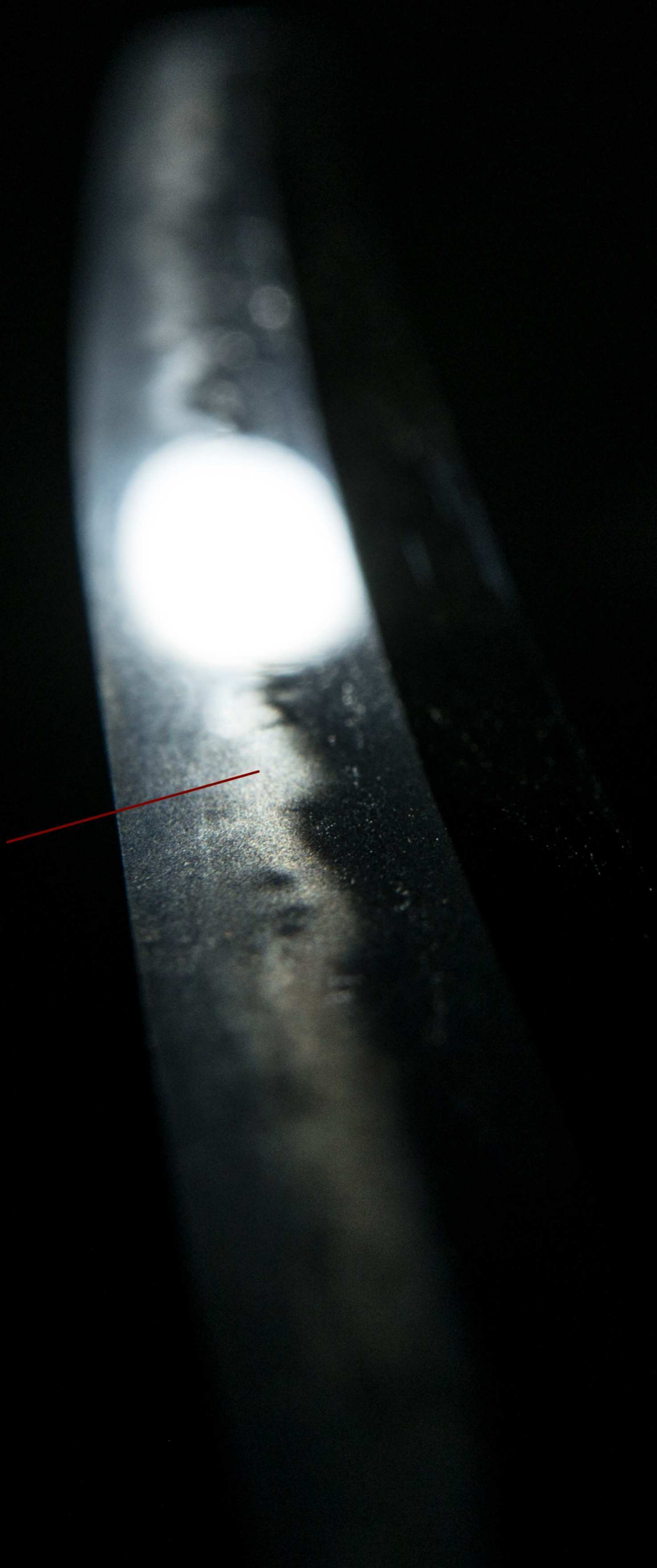


Kunikiyo studied under master swordsmith *Horikawa Kunihiro* in the early 1600s.


As such, when he crafted swords in a *midare hamon*, the steel takes on a *Soshu tradition* look and feel with plentiful *hataraki* (action in the hamon).



Kunikiyo was famous for a  
wide, bright and consistent  
*nioguchi*.



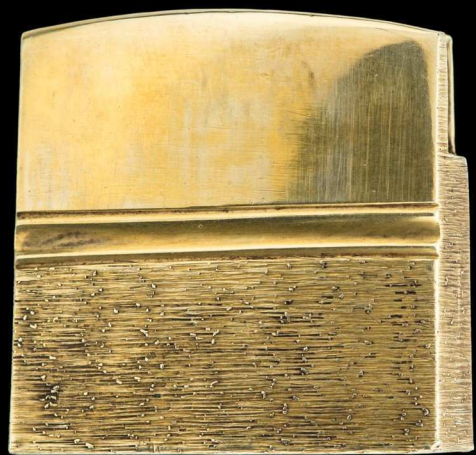




*Kinsuji*  
beautiful golden lines  
in the hamon...



*Shirasaya*



*Yokoyasuri-habaki*  
(brass)

Timeless appreciation.





# 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# UJKA209

## A YONDAI KANETOMO KATANA

SIGNED, LATE EDO PERIOD (BUNSEI ERA: 1818-1830)

- Swordsmith:** Oshu Aizu Ju Kanetomo (4th generation)  
**Location:** Aizu (Western Fukushima)  
**Length:** 71.3cm  
**Curvature:** 1.2cm  
**Moto-haba:** 3.09cm  
**Jihada:** Wavy itame (wood grain pattern)  
**Hamon:** Gunome midare, kinsen, sunagashi, tobiyaki and ashi  
**Nakago:** Ubu (original length)  
**Certificate #1-2:** NBTHK Tokubetsu Kicho (a sword and koshirae designated as Especially Precious by the Society for the Preservation of the Japan Art Sword)  
**Certificate #3-6:** NTHK-NPO Kanteisho (a sword, tsuba, fuchi-kashira and koshirae, all designated as Authentic by the Society for the Preservation of the Japanese Sword)  
**Hawley:** 30 points (equivalent to a Jo-saku, superior smith)  
**Included:** Edo-period koshirae, shirasaya, carry bags, sword stand, kit, etc.

**SOLD**

The **Kanetomo** (兼友) lineage was a successful school that began in the *Genroku era* (~1688) and continued faithfully to the end of the Edo period. First generation Kanetomo was a student of the 5th gen. *Omi no Daijo Kanesada* of the Aizu Kanesada Line.

This strong and vibrant katana is attributed to the *fourth generation Kanetomo*, one of the very finest smiths of the Kanetomo fame. It was crafted 200 years ago during the Bunsei era, circa 1818-1830 in Aizu in Iwashiro province, which is now western Fukushima.



This sword exudes a sense of individual flair, qualities that are found on better swords during the Shinshinto period.

For example, look for the islands of *tobiyaki* (tempering spots) near the tip of the blade. The *gunome midare hamon* is clear and consistent and filled with good *hataraki* (activity).

There is also strong *mune-yaki* (tempering on the spine of the blade) a characteristic that's been seen on other swords from the Aizu region.

A unique set of *koshirae* fittings pays a strong compliment to the sword. One highlight is the Higo School *fuchi-kashira* that depicts antique arrow heads in magnificent designs.

The *tsuba* is of a traditional design that features *matsu* (pine), *ume* (plum) and *sakura* (cherry blossom), each with a special representative meaning that is explained on the pages ahead.



Gold crawling water dragons form the *menuki* that give the sword a sense of protection. The *saya* (scabbard) is lacquered in an *ishime* (stone finish) with a copper *kojiri* (cap) in the form of clouds.

Two vintage *NBTHK Tokubetsu Kicho* certificates of authenticity from *October 1963* were awarded for both the sword and *koshirae*. Judging was extremely demanding during these years as only three levels of achievement were issued at the NBTHK.

A further four certificates from the NTHK-NPO are issued for the blade, *koshirae*, *tsuba* and *fuchi-kashira* painting a full picture for the sword's fortunate new owner.



Watch the introductory video here:  
<http://tinyurl.com/ujka209-kanetomo>

Thank you.



Saki-kasane: 2.3mm



Moto-kasane: 7.2mm

Saki-haba: 2.3cm

Nagasa: 71.3cm

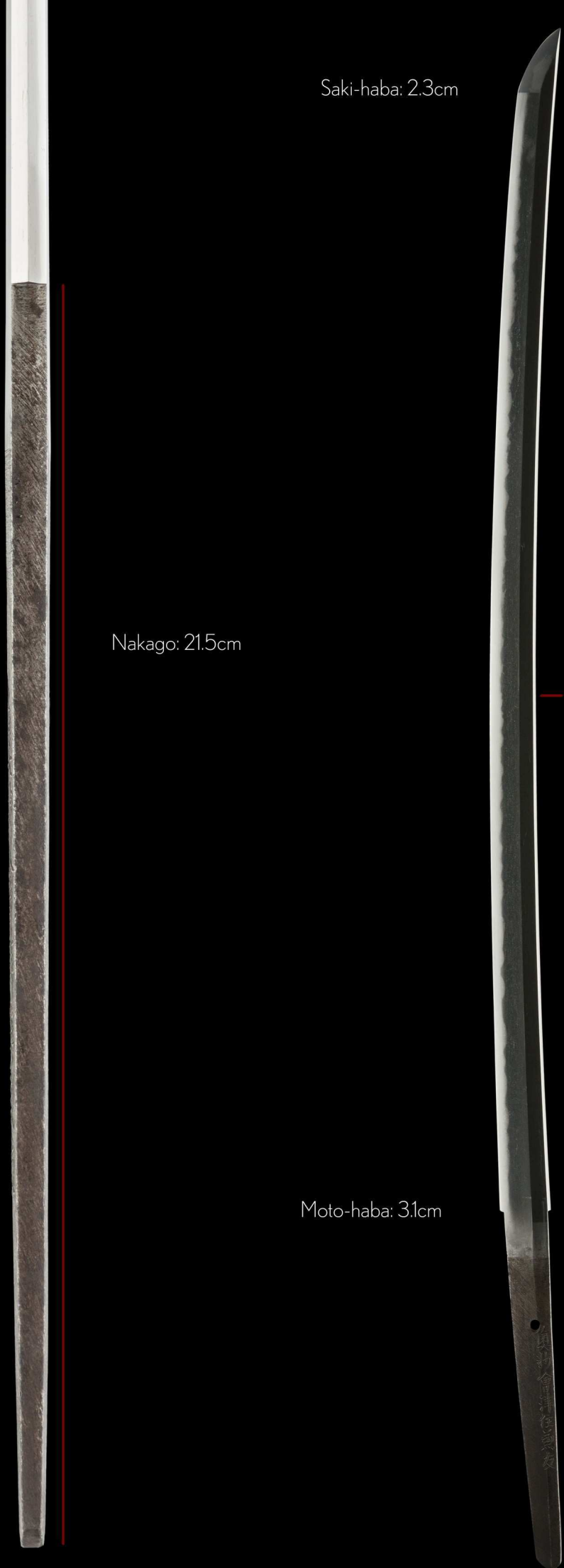
Nakago: 21.5cm

Sori: 1.2cm

Omosa: 825g

Moto-haba: 3.1cm

Mekugi-ana: 1





Location: *Oushu Aizu* (*Fukushima prefecture*)

Swordsmith: *Kanetomo*



Ou

shu

Ai

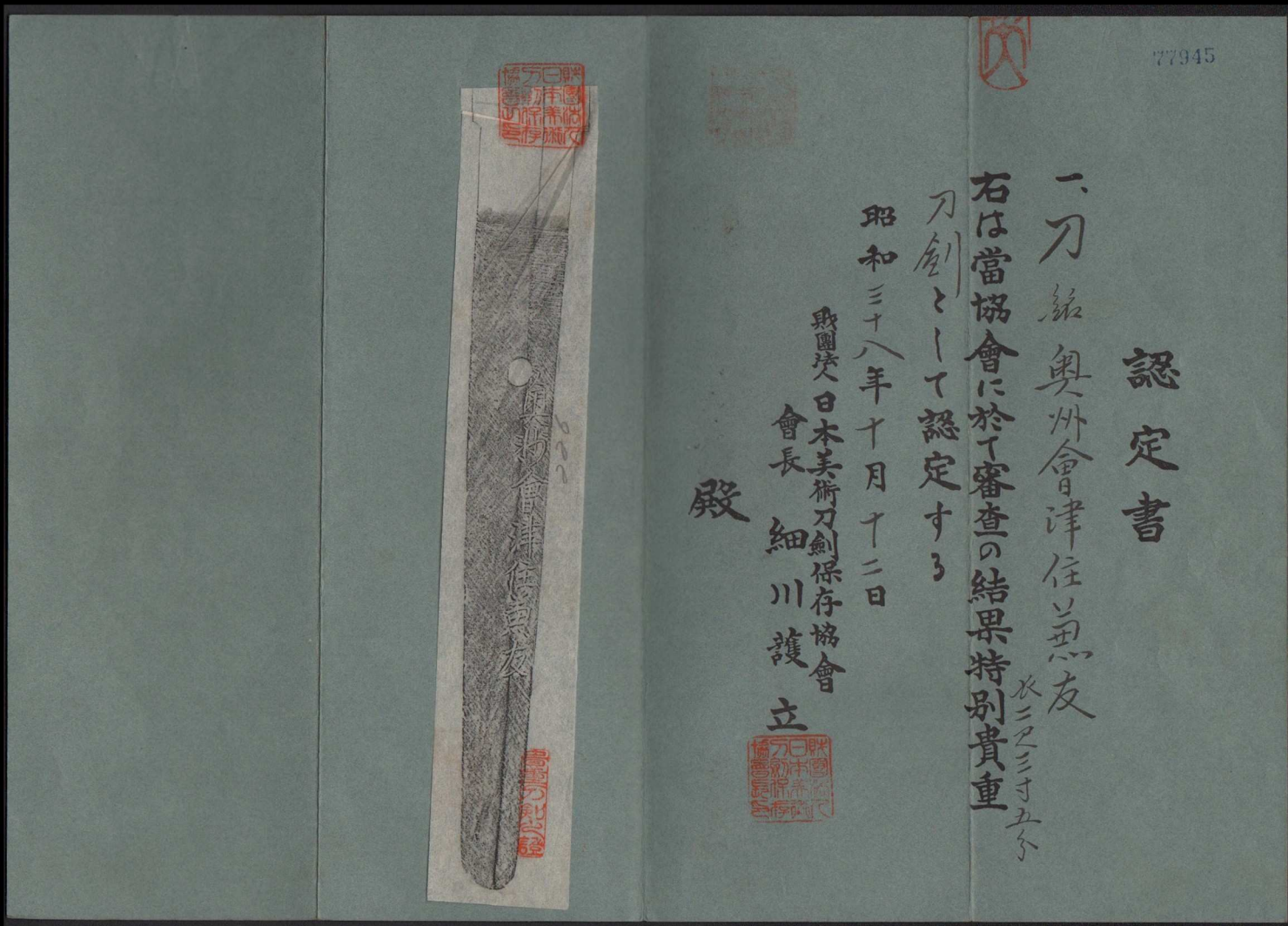
zu

Ju

Kane

tomo





## NBTHK Tokubetsu Kicho Certificate of Designation

A sword designated as *Especially Precious*  
by the Society for the Preservation of the Japan Art Sword

Issued in the 38th year of Showa (1963), October 12th

One, Katana

*Mei* (signature)  
*Oshu Aizu Ju Kanetomo*

*Nagasa* (length)  
2-shaku 3-sun 5-bu (71.3cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai  
(NBTHK)



## Jihada

A skilfully forged *ko-itame hada*.



# Hamon

A clever *gunome midare hamon* (temper line) with *ashi* (legs) extending to the edge of the sharp cutting edge.

A curious patch of *tobiyaki* (hardened spots) near the tip area gives the steel a very unique personality.







*Shirasaya*



*Sukenori-habaki*  
(brass)







## Tsuba

A chrysanthemum shaped tsuba with the traditional design of *Matsu Ume Sakura* (pine, plum and cherry blossoms).

As an evergreen, *matsu* is associated with January and is a symbol of longevity.

In February, the plum emerges. Being the first to blossom, *ume* is a symbol of strength and perseverance.

In March, the much-loved *sakura* blooms. It represents life change and transience.



This tsuba is certified with NTHK-NPO Kanteisho certification





Silver arrowhead  
designs inlaid on  
a polished iron  
*fuchi* (collar).

Crafted by the *Higo  
School* during the late  
Edo period.

NTHK-NPO  
Kanteisho certificate  
of authenticity  
included.







*Kashira*  
(pommel)



Aim high.







ITEM# UJKA210

## A KODAI KANEMOTO KATANA

SIGNED, MOMOYAMA PERIOD (TENSHO ERA: 1573~1592)

- Swordsmith:** *Kodai Kanemoto (4th generation)*  
**Location:** Mino province (Gifu prefecture)  
**Measurements:** **Length:** 69.9cm      **Curvature:** 1.2cm      **Moto-haba:** 2.8cm  
**Jihada:** *O-hada with traces of masame hada*  
**Hamon:** *Togari gunome sambon-sugi*  
**Nakago:** *Suriage (shortened with visible signature)*  
**Certificate #1:** **NTHK-NPO Kanteisho** (a sword designated as Authentic by the Society for the Preservation of the Japanese Sword)  
**Certificate #2:** **NBTHK Tokubetsu Kicho** (a koshirae designated as Especially Precious by the Society for the Preservation of the Japan Art Sword)  
**Certificate #3-4:** **NTHK-NPO Kanteisho** (a tsuba and koshirae designated as Authentic by the Society for the Preservation of the Japanese Sword)  
**Fujishiro:** *Chujo-saku (ranked as an above average swordsmith)*  
**Included:** Edo-period koshirae, shirasaya, carry bags, sword stand, maintenance kit, DVD, booklet, printed description, export permit from Japan

**SOLD**

The **Kanemoto School** of smiths is synonymous with the Mino tradition just as the Sukesada family is to the Bizen tradition.

We pick up the story with second generation **Magoroku Kanemoto**, a gifted *o-wazamono* swordsmith whose swords were well known for their supreme sharpness. Magoroku pioneered the *sambonsugi hamon* – a unique temper line that resembles a cluster of three cedar trees that his descendants followed faithfully and tweaked to their own style.

This signed 70cm katana has been attributed to **fourth generation Kanemoto**, circa 1573 during the Tensho era of the Azuchi Momoyama Period. This turbulent 30-year transitional period culminated in the long and relatively peaceful Edo Period.

True to Mino form, the sword features a *sambonsugi hamon* and the *jihada* is mixed with *o-hada* and *masame-hada* (straight grain) is noticeable in the *shinogi-ji*. The sword has been shortened, it was once about 77cm long. It has a definite warrior feel to it.



The splendid set of *koshirae* fittings is an eclectic combination of dragons, invincible *oni* demons and an uncompromising ox with an attitude! 4 certificates of authenticity come with the katana.

There is also *sayagaki* (writing on the scabbard) that warns the owner to not give this sword to others! Check it out on the pages that follow in the catalogue.



Watch video introduction here:  
<http://tinyurl.com/ujka210-kanemoto>

Saki-kasane: 4.0mm



Moto-kasane: 6.0mm

Saki-haba: 1.9cm

Nagasa: 69.9cm

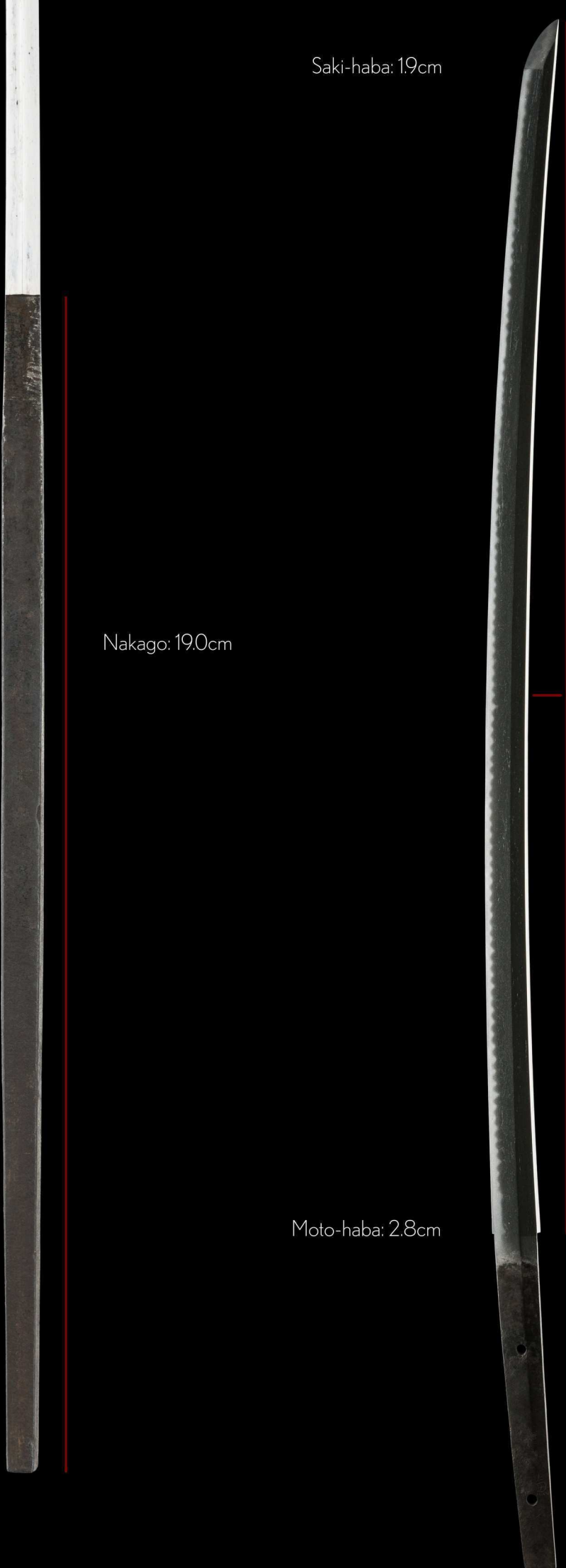
Nakago: 19.0cm

Sori: 1.2cm

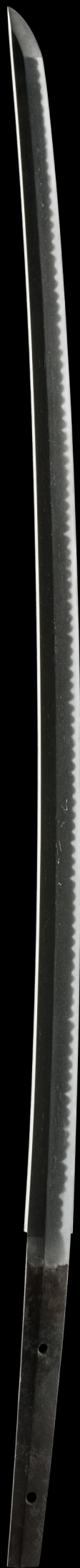
Omosa: 575g

Moto-haba: 2.8cm

Mekugi-ana: 2









Swordsmith: *Kanemoto [Kodai]*  
Fourth generation Kanemoto from the  
Azuchi-Momoyama period, circa the  
Tensho era 1573-1592.

*This sword has been shortened  
(suriage nakago).*

Kane  
moto



## Hamon

A classic *sanbon-sugi hamon* - temper line that resembles a cluster of three cedar trees. Note how the hamon 'peaks' at about every third wave.

This hamon was originated by second generation *Magoroku Kanemoto* circa 1530 and loyally replicated by subsequent generations.





The shirasaya has *sayagaki* attributing the blade to second generation *Kanemoto Magoroku*.



*Muji-habaki*  
(copper)



*Kanemoto Jo Deki Katana*

Kanemoto great work Katana

*Kore wo Watsu Bekarazu*

Don't give this sword to others

*Showa Tsuchinotoi 3 gatsu*

March, 1959

*Ushu Koji Daisu*

Painter







## Tsuba

An impressive *Ko-Kinko mokko tsuba* (four-lobed shape) from the late 1500s to early 1600s.

It was produced at about the same time this Kanemoto katana was crafted.

Made of shakudo, the powerful design is that of a dragon within surging waves in gold inlay.



This tsuba is certified with NTHK-NPO Kanteisho certification





## Oni with Kanabo

The *menuki* on the *tsuka* (hilt) are of *Oni*, a Japanese demon. This mischievous character, famous in Japanese folklore, has sharp claws, wild hair and two horns growing from its head.

Oni are often depicted with an iron club called a *kanabo*. *Oni-ni-kanabo* (oni armed with kanabo) suggests one that becomes invincible. Giving an advantage to one who already has an advantage - ie. adding fuel to a fire.

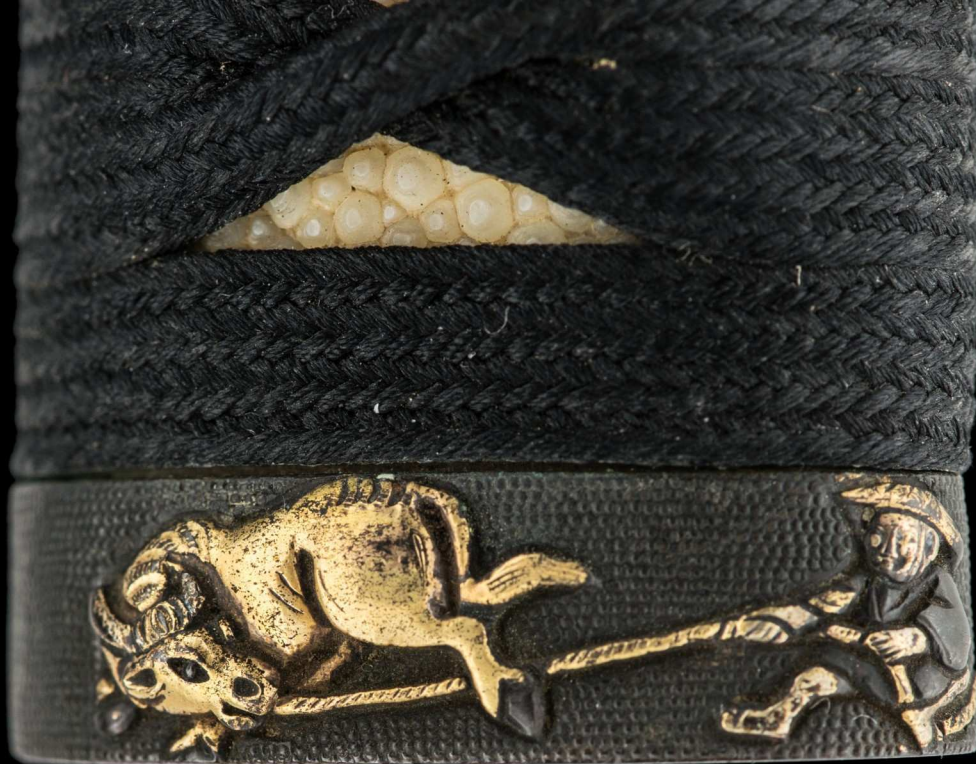
On the left is an old photo of a Samurai holding a kanabo.











## Fuchi-kashira

A playful *fuchi* that shows a farmer trying to control his ox with a rope.

The *kashira* suggests the ox tamed by a wise man using much less forceful spiritual energy.

The *fuchi-kashira* is made on a base of *shakudo nanko*.

The *koshirae* (fittings) as a whole is certified with *NBTHK Tokubetsu Kicho* (a *koshirae* that is rated especially precious).





ITEM# UJKA213

## A SHODAI HIROTAKA KATANA

SIGNED, EARLY EDO PERIOD (MEIREKI ERA: 1655~1658)

- Swordsmith:** *Hoki no Kami Hirotaka (1st generation)*  
**Location:** Echizen province (Fukui prefecture)  
**Measurements:** **Length:** 70.9cm      **Curvature:** 1.5cm      **Moto-haba:** 3.08cm  
**Jihada:** *Ko-itame*  
**Hamon:** *Gunome midare, long ashi, and sunagashi*  
**Nakago:** *Ubu (original)*  
**Certificate #1:** **NBTHK Hozon** (a sword designated as Worthy of Preservation by the Society for the Preservation of the Japan Art Sword)  
**Certificate #2-3:** **NTHK-NPO Kanteisho** (a tsuba and koshirae designated as Authentic by the Society for the Preservation of the Japanese Sword)  
**Fujishiro:** *Chujo-saku (ranked as an above average swordsmith)*  
**Asaemon:** *Wazamono (maker of sharp swords)*  
**Included:** Edo-period koshirae, shirasaya, carry bags, sword stand, maintenance kit, DVD, booklet, printed description, export permit from Japan

**SOLD**



What better way to round off the catalogue than to showcase a fabulous katana by Hirotaka from Echizen province.

Here is a sword packed with dynamite. Hirotaka is a *wazamono* smith known for producing blades with excellent cutting ability. This katana oozes confidence, so strong and healthy.

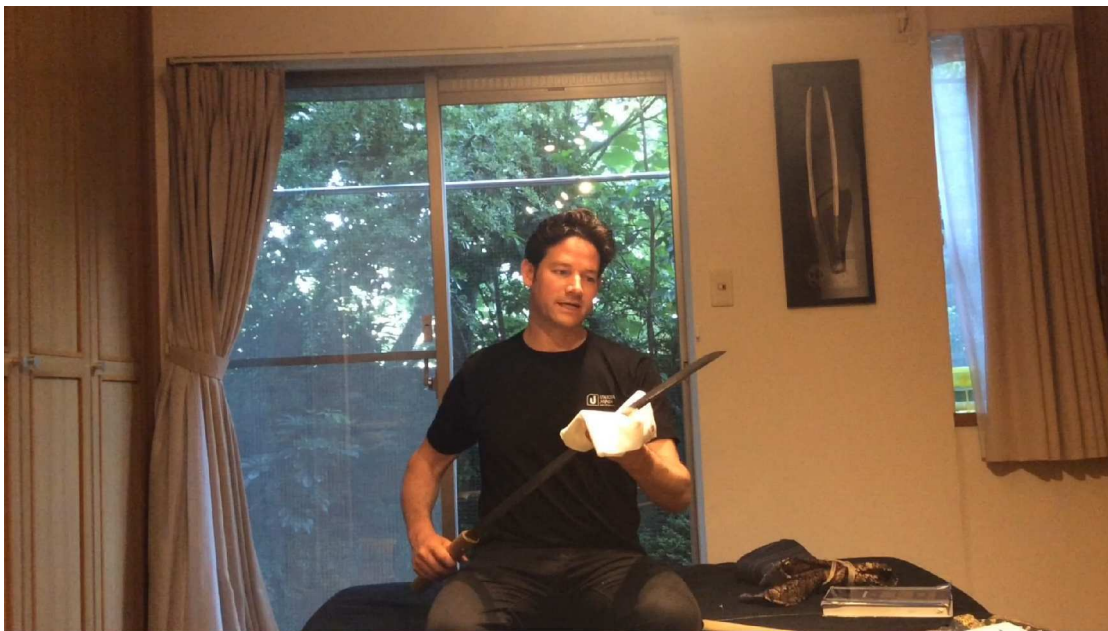
A beautiful *gunome midare hamon* bubbles its way to the edge of the blade with long *ashi* and *sunagashi*. This is the work of a top swordsmith.

It is currently certified with NBTHK Hozon certification, this blade has a high chance of achieving Tokubetsu Hozon if one wishes to submit. We can assist in the process.

The *koshirae* can be best described as understated elegance. We often see swords with a vibrant temper line nestled in a *koshirae* that is more restrained. It provides good harmony and balance.

Please watch the introductory video here: <http://tinyurl.com/ujka213-hirotaka>

Contact us at [service@uniquejapan.com](mailto:service@uniquejapan.com) if you are interested in acquiring this terrific piece of Japanese history from about 1655. Arigato!!





Saki-kasane: 4.8mm



Moto-kasane: 7.4mm

Saki-haba: 2.1cm

Nagasa: 70.9cm

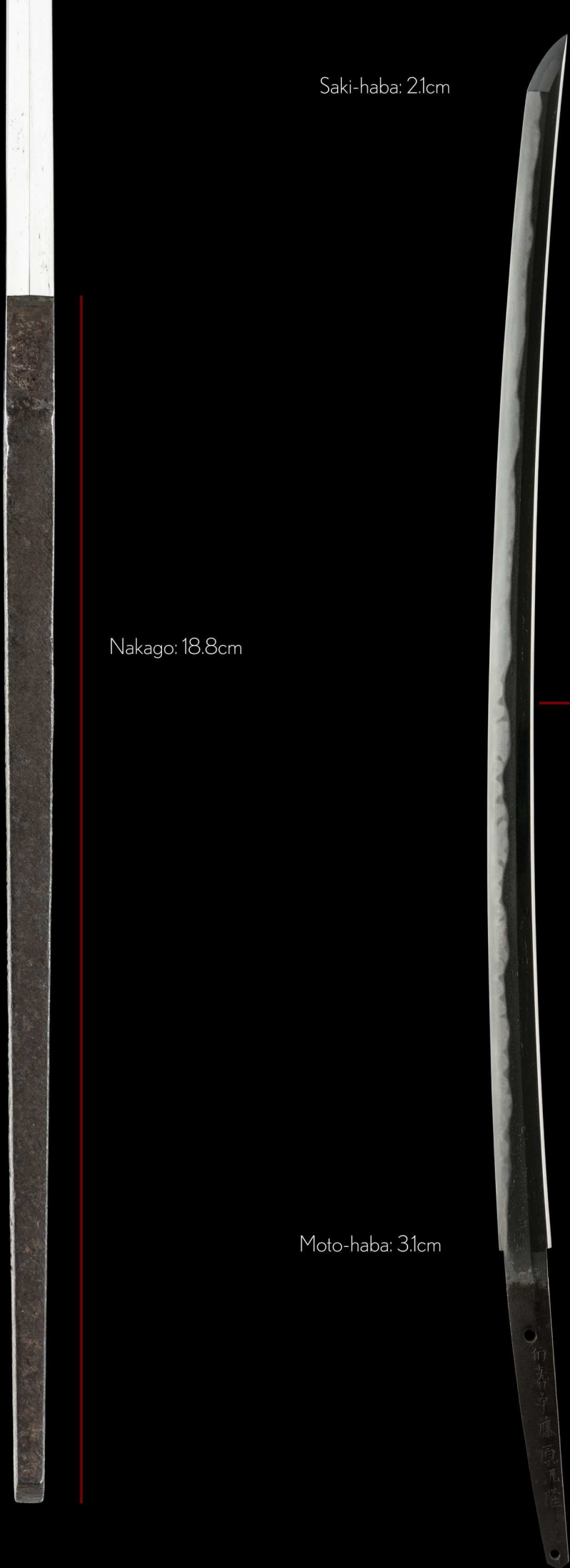
Nakago: 18.8cm

Sori: 1.5cm

Omosa: 765g

Moto-haba: 3.1cm

Mekugi-ana: 2





Title: *Houki no Kami*

Clan: *Fujiwara*

Swordsmith: *Hiro taka*



伯  
菴  
泉  
藤  
原  
汎  
隆

Hou

ki

(no) Kami

Fuji

wara

Hiro

taka



Location: *Echizen* (*Fukui prefecture*)

Echi  
zen  
Ju



25201311



右は當協會に於て審査の結果保存刀剣と  
鑑定しこれを証する  
平成二十六年一月三十一日  
公益財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協會



No 3004133

# 鑑定書

一刀

銘

伯耆守藤原汎隆  
越前住

長二尺三寸五分

長野 教育委員会  
第 13654 号  
昭和 28 年 / 月 2 / 日

## NBTHK Hozon Certificate of Designation

A sword designated as *Worthy of Conservation*  
by the Society for the Preservation of the Japan Art Sword

Issued in the 26th year of Heisei (2014), January 31st

One, Katana

Mei (signature)

Houki no Kami Fujiwara Hirotsuna  
Echizen Ju

Nagasa (length)

2-shaku 3-sun 5-bu (70.9cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai  
(NBTHK)



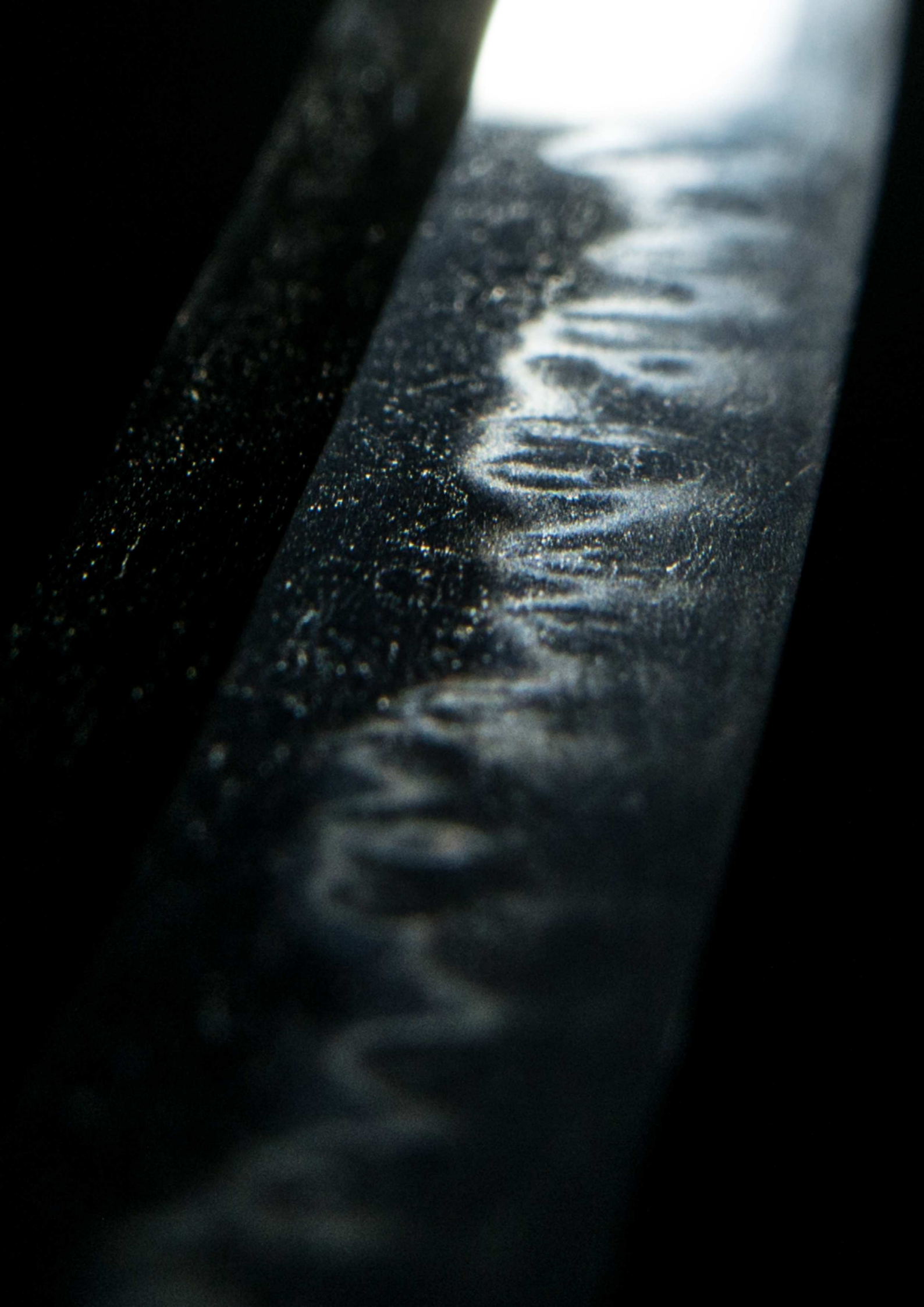
*ashi*

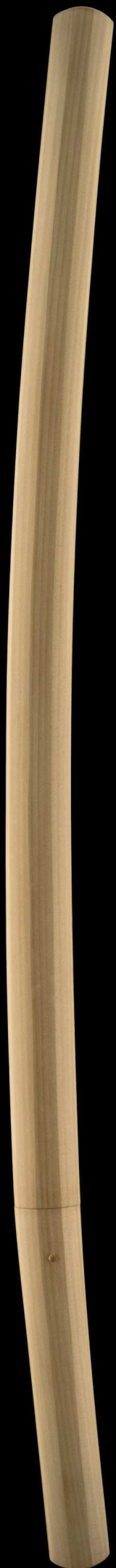
## Hamon

A splendid *gunome midare hamon* (semi-circular waves) with long *ashi* (legs) stretching towards the cutting edge.

This sword is representative of Hirotaka's very finest work.







*Shirasaya*



*Muji-habaki*  
(copper)







## Tsuba

This large, handsome tsuba has been attributed to artist *Sadanaga* of the *Kii School* from the mid-Edo period (1700s).

It is made of polished iron in the design of *Tomoe* - an abstract shape resembling a comma swirl.

Tomoe is representative of the threefold division of *Man, Earth and Sky* at the heart of the *Shinto* (way of the gods) religion. It is a keen reminder of the importance of universal life balance.



This tsuba is certified with  
NTHK-NPO Kanteisho certification







A simple and effective polished iron fuchi-kashira.



Calling all warriors.





Understated elegance.



# ARIGATO!

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*For Jørgen.  
Warrior energy.*

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