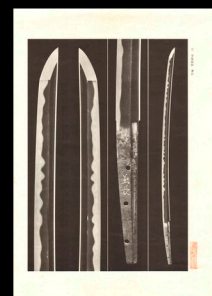


# JAPANESE SWORD CATALOGUE 43

UPDATED:  
APR 2/2025

兼長



(COVER PHOTO)

ITEM# UJKA455  
A KENCHÔ KATANA (兼長)  
NAMBOKUCHÔ PERIOD (1362~1368)  
7TH NBTHK TOKUBETSU JÛYO TÔKEN  
GIFT OF THE 9TH TOKUGAWA SHÔGUN



# ANTIQUE JAPANESE SWORDS FOR SALE (VOLUME 43)

RELEASED: JANUARY 30, 2025 TO VIP CLIENTS ONLY  
UPDATED: APRIL 2, 2025

THE FOLLOWING PAGES CONTAIN DESCRIPTIONS AND IMAGES  
OF GENUINE ANTIQUE JAPANESE SWORDS CURRENTLY  
AVAILABLE, ON HOLD, OR RECENTLY SOLD TO CLIENTS.

EACH SWORD CAN BE LEGALLY OWNED AND EXPORTED  
OUTSIDE OF JAPAN. ALL SWORDS HAVE CERTIFICATION PAPERS  
(ORIGAMI) SUCH AS FROM NBTHK AND/OR THE NTHK-NPO.

DESCRIPTIONS AND AVAILABILITY ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE  
WITHOUT NOTICE.

PLEASE ENQUIRE FOR ADDITIONAL IMAGES AND INFORMATION  
ON SWORDS OF INTEREST TO [SERVICE@UNIQUEJAPAN.COM](mailto:SERVICE@UNIQUEJAPAN.COM).

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



PABLO KUNTZ  
FOUNDER, UNIQUE JAPAN

UNIQUE JAPAN, FINE ART DEALER  
ANTIQUES LICENSE ISSUED BY MEGURO CITY  
TOKYO, JAPAN (No.303291102398)

FEEL THE HISTORY.<sup>™</sup>  
UNIQUEJAPAN.COM



Hi everyone,

2025 is off to the races, and I trust you are in great spirits. Big moments all over the world. It's so easy to get distracted with it all, and emotions can run real hot. I'll be honest, I don't wish to pour oil on any fire. The only oil I am interested in is the *Fujishiro oil* that helps preserve Japanese swords. ;) Seriously, sit back, grab a drink and cozy up to Catalogue 43, as this is a special one!

We kick off the catalogue with a challenge. A brilliant *shintô* period katana by **Higo no Kami Kuniyasu** that is in *shirasaya* only. I completely understand that most clients prefer to have a sword with *koshirae*, but I absolutely urge you to consider this sword as this samurai sword stands on its own. A traditional *sashikomi* polish was given to this fine blade that brought out its gorgeous *gunome-chôji-midare* with *kobushigata chôji hamon* magnificently well. And the blade was also sharpened to razor sharp edge affirming Kuniyasu's well-deserved *ô-wazamono* ranking. Two certificates accompany this katana, NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon and *Yûshûsaku* (Masterwork), the highest honours at the NTHK-NPO at the past December 2024 shinsa. Sword has *sayagaki* potential with *Tanobe-sensei* and would make for a superb custom *koshirae* project too.

Next up, we travel back to the mid-1300s to a commanding katana by *jô-saku* and *ryô-wazamono* swordsmith **Ômiya Morikage** that embodies the warrior spirit of the *Nambokuchô* period. There is so much to love about this sword! The blade's impressive width and *ô-kissaki* tip reveal its origins as a formidable *ô-dachi*, originally approaching 90cm in length. Its striking *gunome-midare hamon* surges dramatically along the steel, accompanied by a brilliant *midare-utsuri* reflecting the traits of classic *Bizen* tradition of the *kotô* period. The blade's elegant custom *koshirae* features an intimidating demon *tsuba* by *Mogarachi Sôten*, exquisite *fuchi-kashira* signed by *Gotô Mitsutomo*, and lovely *bonsai* tree *menuki*, all wrapped in pristine white silk with high-class *jabaramaki* braiding. This sword is also certified with Tokubetsu Hozon and NTHK-NPO *Yûshûsaku* (Masterwork).

We zip forward to the 1600s to a handsome katana by **Yukimitsu** of the *shintô Takada school*. What makes this sword collectible is that a variety of traditions can be enjoyed all in this one sword. The blade's wide *shinogi-ji* and *nagare-hada* demonstrates a robust *Yamato* influence, while the *hamon* displays *Mino* characteristics featuring a *togari-gunome* and *yahazu-ba* blended with *Bizen* and *Osaka-shintô* elements - even *yô* in the *yaki-ba* reflects *Yamashiro* aesthetics. There is also a *kirikomi* (battle scar) on the *mune* suggesting that this sword has seen combat in its day. The sword's late Edo period *koshirae* has a real samurai feel with classic iron fittings and matching swirling gold arabesque motifs. The *tsuka* features a unique linen-wrapped *hanabishi* pattern that speaks to Japan's nobility class. This is an ideal katana for the new Japanese sword (*nihontô*) collector.

Once in a while, a sword so special comes to Unique Japan that it's hard to express in words the aura and cultural importance that it represents. The following sword is an exceptional Tokubetsu Jûyô katana (the highest level of certification from the NBTHK) from the warring *Nambokuchô* period that is attributed to **Kenchô** (also known as **Kanenaga**), the celebrated pupil of *Chôgi*. The blade represents a masterful blend of *Bizen* and *Sôshû* traditions, exemplifying the rare and coveted *Sôden Bizen* style of workmanship. The cover page of this catalogue is a close-up of the *nakago* that was gold-inlaid with *kinzôgan-mei* and it comes with *origami* from *Hon'ami Kôyû* dated to 1753, assessing its value at 15 gold coins. That same year, the ninth *shogun Tokugawa Ieshige* presented this actual katana as a gift to Lord Asano Munetsune upon his succession as head of the Asano clan. This is a precious sword worthy of a place amongst the most prestigious *nihontô* collections and it comes with my highest recommendation. Please ask me directly for the price and shipping plan.

Although *Kenchô* may be a hard act to follow, another thrilling addition to the catalogue is a remarkable *daishô* that pairs a katana by fourth generation **Tadayoshi** with a wakizashi by second generation **Tadahiro**, both masters of the renowned *Tadayoshi school* of *Hizen* province. The blades display graceful curvature, adorned with a vivid *gunome-chôji-midare hamon*, which, on the



wakizashi, extends brilliantly towards the *shinogi*. Outstanding *horimono* also evokes deep spiritual power. An exquisite *daishô koshirae* with a split-lacquer design and an incredible pair of dragonfly *tsubas* along with rain dragon motifs and *cloisonné* enamel is a *samurai tour de force*. Both swords and the *daishô koshirae* have been awarded NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon certification. We even have a copy of a handwritten note that the samurai owner documented; charting both swords and all the beautiful fittings he acquired to form the *daishô* along with the prices that he paid. So cool!

Swordsmith **Kanegishi** (also read *Kanekishi*) is our next katana in the catalogue. *Kanegishi* worked in *Seki* city in *Mino* province about five hundred years ago during the *Kyôroku* era in the turbulent *Muromachi* period, circa 1528~1532. If you are seeking a long sword (74.5cm) that has almost certainly seen battle, then consider claiming this blade. This is a very sharp and sturdy *Sue-Seki* katana that carries an eye-catching *kenbô-midare* hamon that pays tribute to first generation *Kanefusa* about a century earlier. Its handsome *koshirae* features an iron tsuba adorned with a *suhamas* motif, thoughtfully chosen to complement the blade's swirling *hamon* pattern which evokes the natural curves of a sandbar. The unique diamond-shaped *renbishi fuchi-kashira* from the famed *Yoshioka* school gives the sword an armoured presence. Very few signed examples of *Kanegishi* katana are in existence making this formidable *Sue-Seki* katana a fine discovery indeed.

For those wanting to add a very special cutting test sword to your collection, then this next katana must be placed on your radar. This magnificent katana by **shodai Ietada** of *Kaga* province, bears a gold-inlaid *tameshigiri* inscription that states that the blade severed through two bodies in a single stroke before embedding in the earthen testing ground. Through extensive research performed by my Operations Manager *Ayumu Ogusu*, we discovered that the tester, *Miyai Rokubei*, was a samurai of the *Kaga* domain, listed as an archer on a document he found from 1670. The blade is also documented in *Kashû Shintô Shû*, a notable reference book on *Kaga's* top *shintô* period smiths. The *hamon* is a brilliant *gunome-chôji midare* pattern featuring distinctive 'tadpole' formations called *kawazu no ko-chôji* made famous by *Bizen Morie* during the golden *Kamakura* age. The sword is further mounted in an elegant Edo period *handachi-koshirae* - this is a katana of pure samurai class.

Our final sword is a delightful tantô by **Enju Nobukatsu** that shares qualities of the classic *Enju* school that dates back to the *Kamakura* period in the *Kikuchi* area of *Higo* province in *Kyûshû*. It features a wavy *ayasugi hada* and a bright *suguha hamon* that splits into *niju-ba* in a very *Yamato-den* manner. Several river-like veins of *kinsuji* flow through the hamon most impressively as well. Its wonderful *koshirae* is certified to the late Edo period with menuki depicting *Hotei*, the Japanese god of contentment and happiness, guardian of children. He has such a cheerful face and a big belly - widely recognised as the *Laughing Buddha*. For a small blade, this sword packs a punch and definitely carries positive energy. *Nobukatsu* is ranked *chûjo-saku*, an above average smith, and there is a good chance this sword can be upgraded to NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon. UJ will assist.

Thank you for all your passion, trust and confidence in our ability to serve you in this wonderful world of Japanese samurai swords. It means a lot to me and the team.

I wish you and your family a healthy and prosperous year ahead!



Pablo Kuntz  
January 2025



## INDEX OF JAPANESE SWORDS

ITEM#	PAGE	SWORDSMITH & TYPE	CM	CERTIFICATE	ERA / PERIOD	PRICE
ujka426	<a href="#">8</a>	A KUNIYASU KATANA	70.3	Tokubetsu Hozon	Kanbun (1661~1673)	<b>SOLD</b>
ujka451	<a href="#">27</a>	A MORIKAGE KATANA	72.4	Tokubetsu Hozon	Jōji (1361~1368)	<b>SOLD</b>
ujka460	<a href="#">57</a>	A YUKIMITSU KATANA	68.7	Tokubetsu Hozon	Enpō (1673~1681)	\$9,500
ujka455	<a href="#">86</a>	A KENCHÔ KATANA	71.0	<u>Tokubetsu Jūyō</u>	Jōji (1361~1368)	<b>SOLD</b>
ujdi013	<a href="#">114</a>	TADAYOSHI/TADAHIRO DAISHÔ	70/40	Tokubetsu Hozon x 3	Keian (1648~1688)	<b>SOLD</b>
ujka467	<a href="#">163</a>	A KANEGISHI KATANA	74.5	NBTHK Hozon	Kyōroku (1528~1532)	<b>SOLD</b>
ujka469	<a href="#">188</a>	AN IETADA KATANA	70.7	Tokubetsu Hozon	Jōō (1652~1655)	<b>SOLD</b>
ujta062	<a href="#">218</a>	A NOBUKATSU TANTÔ	20.9	NBTHK Hozon	Bunkyū (1861~1864)	<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.

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.

ALSO, BE SURE LET US KNOW IF YOU ARE TRAVELLING TO TOKYO AS WE CAN BOOK A PRIVATE MEETING TOGETHER AT OUR STUDIO IN MEGURO.

DOMO ARIGATO,  
PABLO



RECENTLY SOLD...

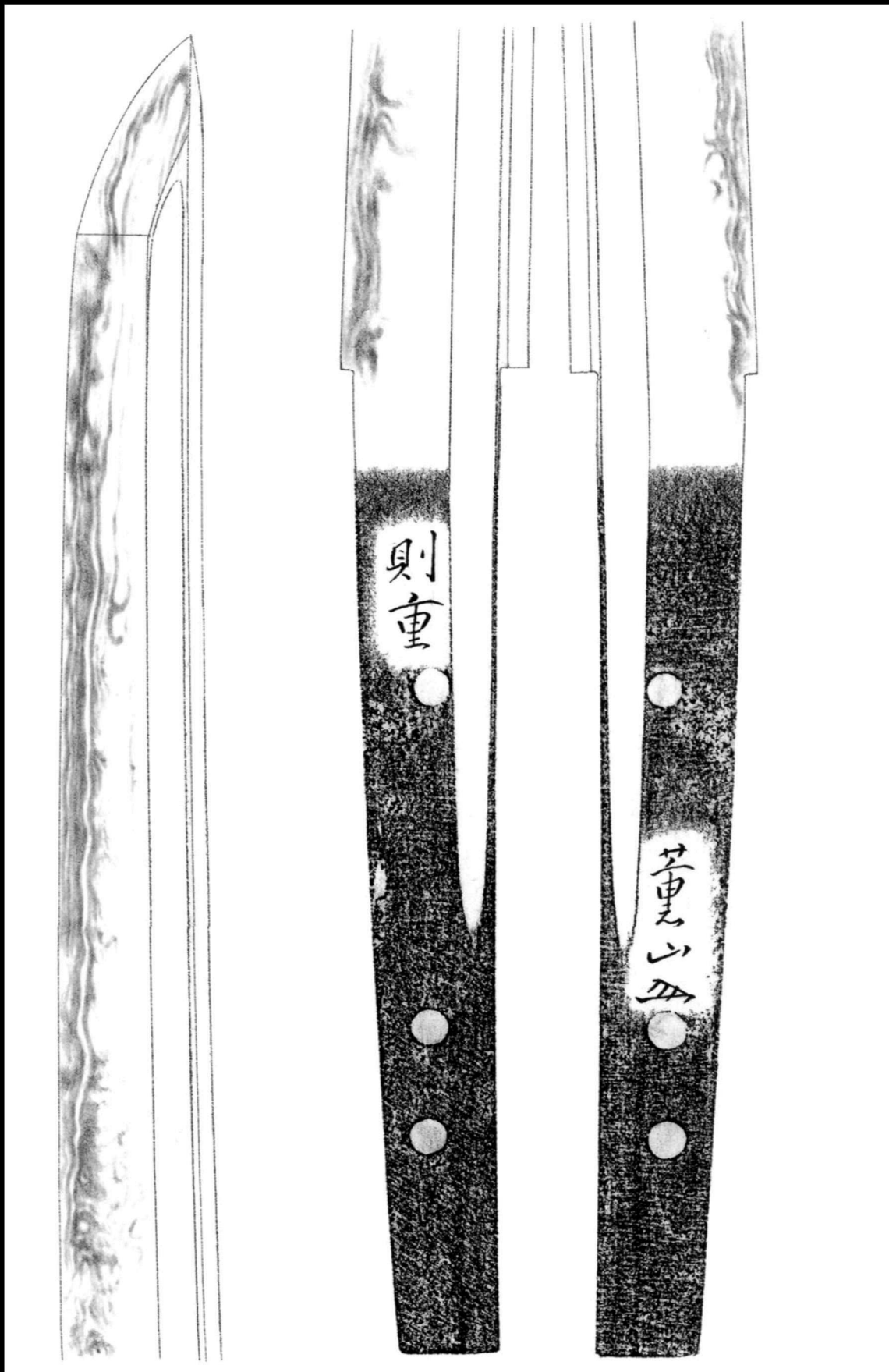
UJKA470

A NORISHIGE KATANA

(ONE OF MASAMUNE'S TEN STUDENTS)

LENGTH: 72.4CM

28TH NBTHK TOKUBETSU JŪYO TŌKEN



FURTHER DETAILS TO COME IN A FUTURE CATALOGUE

# CURRENTLY AVAILABLE JAPANESE SWORDS

RELEASED: JANUARY 30, 2025 TO VIP CLIENTS ONLY  
UPDATED: APRIL 2, 2025

THE FOLLOWING PAGES CONTAIN DESCRIPTIONS OF AUTHENTIC  
AND CERTIFIED JAPANESE SWORDS THAT ARE CURRENTLY  
AVAILABLE, ON HOLD OR SOLD IN CATALOGUE 43.

PLEASE CONTACT ME AT [SERVICE@UNIQUEJAPAN.COM](mailto:SERVICE@UNIQUEJAPAN.COM) FOR  
FURTHER IMAGES AND INFORMATION INTO ITEMS OF INTEREST.

ALL SWORDS ARE OFFERED ON A "FIRST-SERIOUS-HOLD-REQUEST",  
FIRST SERVED BASIS. EVEN IF AN ITEM IS LISTED AS BEING "ON  
HOLD", REGISTER YOUR INTEREST AS IT MAY COME AVAILABLE.

SWORDS MAY BE PURCHASED OVER A NUMBER OF MONTHS IF  
REQUIRED, PLEASE INQUIRE FOR DETAILS. DESCRIPTIONS AND  
AVAILABILITY ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE.

THANK YOU,



PABLO KUNTZ  
FOUNDER, UNIQUE JAPAN

[SERVICE@UNIQUEJAPAN.COM](mailto:SERVICE@UNIQUEJAPAN.COM)

+44 7954 102 277

(MOBILE ON 'SIGNAL & WHATSAPP' / BRITISH TIME)

PHOTOS TAKEN FOR UNIQUE JAPAN.  
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.





ITEM# UJKA426

## A KUNIYASU KATANA

SIGNED, SHINTÔ PERIOD (KANBUN ERA: 1661~1673)

<b>Swordsmith:</b>	<i>Higo no Kami Kuniyasu (1st gen.)</i>
<b>Measurements:</b>	<b>Length:</b> 70.3cm ( <i>ubu</i> ) <b>Sori:</b> 1.5cm <b>Moto-haba:</b> 3.14cm <b>Weight:</b> 820g
<b>Jihada:</b>	<i>Well-forged itame-hada with ji-nie, chikei</i>
<b>Hamon:</b>	<i>Gorgeous gunome-chôji-midare with kobushigata chôji, kinsuji and komaru-bôshi</i>
<b>Certificate #1:</b>	<b>NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon</b> (sword Especially Worthy of Preservation)
<b>Certificates #2:</b>	<b>NTHK-NPO Yûshûsaku</b> (as sword designated as Masterwork)
<b>Fujishiro rank:</b>	<b>Jô-saku</b> (ranked as a superior swordsmith)
<b>Sharpness:</b>	<b>Ô-wazamonô</b> (rated as a maker of supremely sharp swords)
<b>Included:</b>	Shirasaya, fabric bag, stand, kit, printed description

**SOLD** (*with custom koshirae in process*)

This is a highly collectible *shintô* period katana by first generation *Higo no Kami Kuniyasu* from *Settsu* province. Kuniyasu is the third son of *shodai Kunisuke* who first studied under the great *Horikawa Kunihiro* in *Kyôto*. A traditional *sashikomi* polish was given to this fine sword to deliver a more classical finish which brought out the full beauty of its absolutely gorgeous *gunome-choji-midare* with *kobushigata chôji hamon* and long *ashi* that stretch magnificently toward the cutting edge. The blade was also sharpened to an exceptionally keen edge affirming Kuniyasu's well-deserved *ô-wazamono* ranking. Two certificates accompany this katana, NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon and Yûshûsaku (Masterwork), the highest honours at the NTHK-NPO. This sword has *sayagaki* potential with *Tanobe-sensei* and would definitely make for a superb custom koshirae project too.



Saki-kasane: 4.3mm

Kissaki: 4.11cm

Saki-haba: 2.30cm

Moto-kasane: 6.7mm

Nagasa: 70.3cm

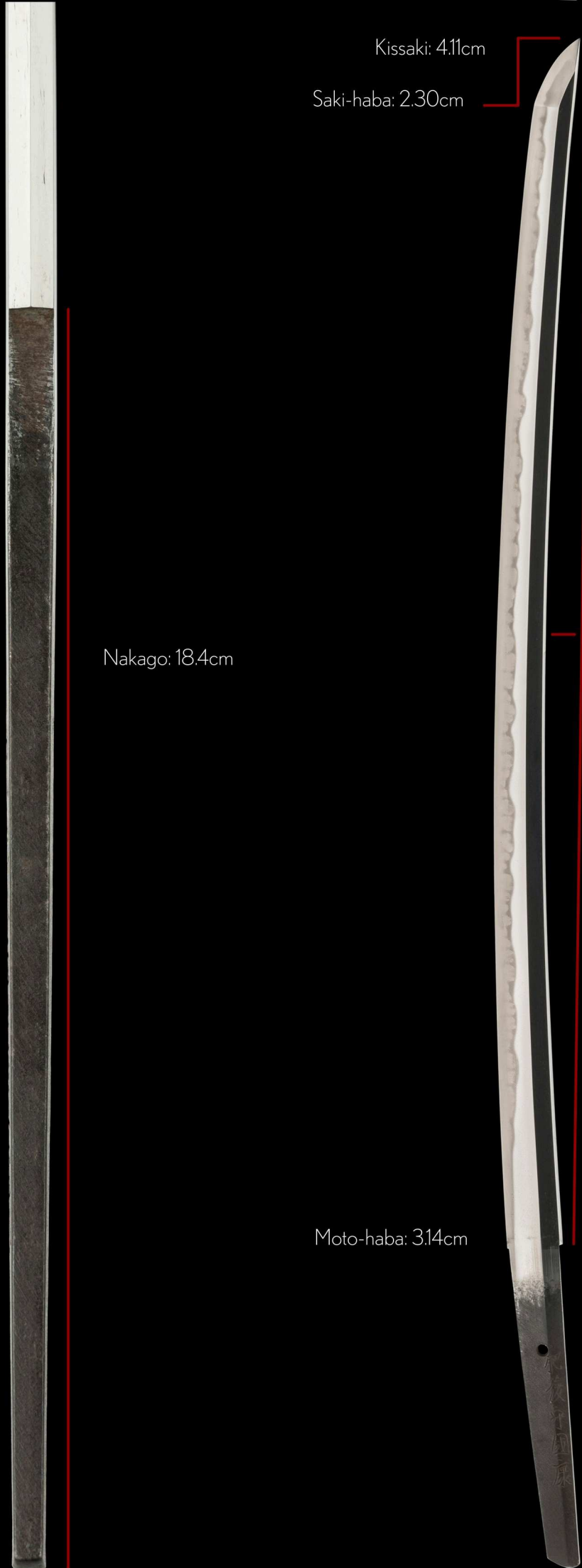
Nakago: 18.4cm

Sori: 1.50cm

Omosa: 820g

Moto-haba: 3.14cm

Mekugi-ana: 1



This is a highly collectible *shintô* period katana by first generation *Higo no Kami Kuniyasu* from *Settsu* province, modern day *Ôsaka*. Born *Kobayashi Genzaemon*, Kuniyasu is the third son of *shodai Kunisuke* (founder the *Kunisuke* school) who first studied under the great *Horikawa Kunihiro* in *Kyôto*.

Kuniyasu's workmanship is similar to that of his older brother, second generation *Kunisuke*, with a spectacular *gunome-chôji-midare* and fist-shaped clusters of clove blossom buds known as *kobushigata chôji*. Long *ashi* also stretch magnificently to the cutting edge.

A traditional *sashikomi* polish was given to this fine blade to deliver a more 'classical finish' without the use of *hadori* that can exaggerate the contrast of the hamon and body of the blade.

The blade was also sharpened to an exceptionally keen edge. Kuniyasu is renowned as an *ô-wazamono* (supreme sharpness) smith, and his swords require careful handling due to their remarkable cutting ability.

As an option for the next owner, we can take this sword to *Tanobe sensei* for *sayagaki* services, as he will most certainly appreciate this blade.

A custom koshirae is also an option as this sword is in shirasaya only, and we can assist you every step of the way. However, a blade of this quality can easily be enjoyed as it is without koshirae.

Two certificates accompany this katana, **NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon** and **Yûshûsaku** (Masterwork), the highest honours at the NTHK-NPO achieving an tremendous score of 83/100 at the past December 2024 *shinsa* in Tokyo.







Title: *Higo no Kami* (Lord of Higo province)  
Swordsmith: *Kuniyasu* (first generation)

*ubu-nakago* (original, unaltered tang)  
*sujikai-yasurime* (diagonal file marks)

肥 (Hi)

後 (go, no)

守 (Kami)

國 (Kuni)

康 (yasu)



Crisp file marks.  
Nakago is in excellent condition.

(*ura*, reverse)

*ha agari kurijiri nakago-jiri*

特 保  
05202309

No 1021805

鑑定書

一 刀 銘 肥後守国康

長二尺三寸二分

右は當協會に於て審査の結果特別保存刀剣と  
鑑定しこれを証する

令和五年十二月十五日

公益財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協會



和歌山県教育委員会  
第 2379 号  
昭和27年6月23日

NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon  
Certificate of Designation

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

Issued in the 5th year of Reiwa (2023), December 15th

One, Katana





*Mei* (signature)  
*Higo no Kami Kuniyasu*

*Nagasa* (length)  
2-shaku 3-sun 2-bu (70.3cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai  
(NBTHK)





捺 査 印 員	備 考	寸 法	拵 え	中 心	図 彫 柄 り	鍔 子	刃 紋	下 地	鍛	造 り 込 み	銘 文	第 一 元 五 八 号
   	寛文頃			目釘穴 一個  鍔 筋違い		少し焼込み直調い丸に返る	焼出しからの拵丁子		精微な小板目	鑄造り、庵棟、生ぶ中心  棟	肥後守国康	

## NTHK-NPO Yushusaku Certificate of Authenticity

This katana was designated as *Yûshûsaku* (Highly Excellent)  
by the Non-Profit Society for the Preservation of the Japanese Sword

Katana

*Mei* (signature)  
*Higo no Kami Kuniyasu*

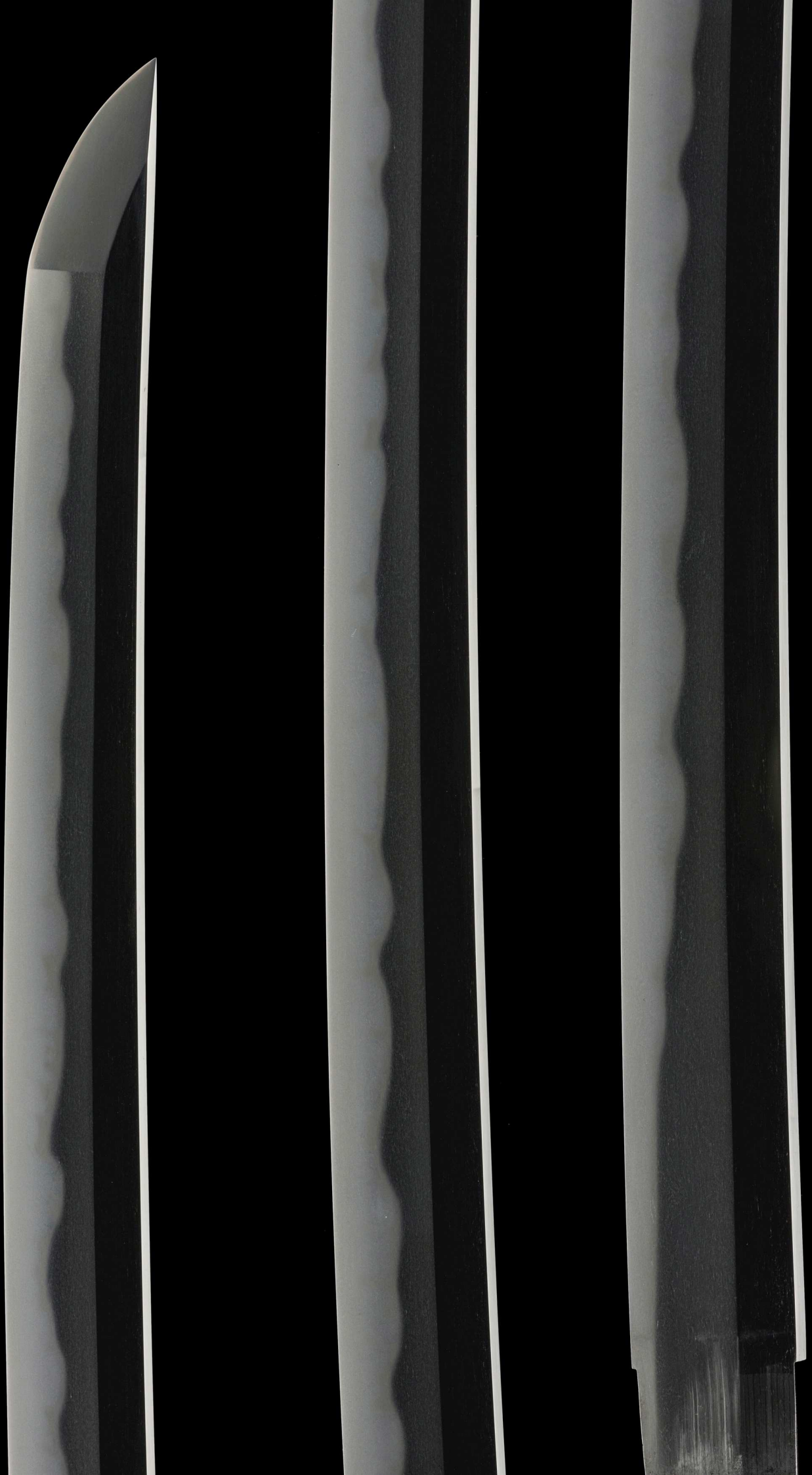
*Nagasa* (length)  
*2-shaku 3-sun 2-bu kore ari* (70.3cm)

Issued in 6th year of Reiwa (2024), December 15th

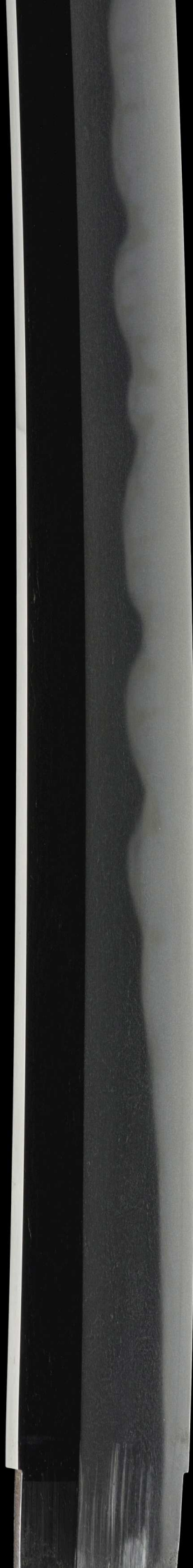
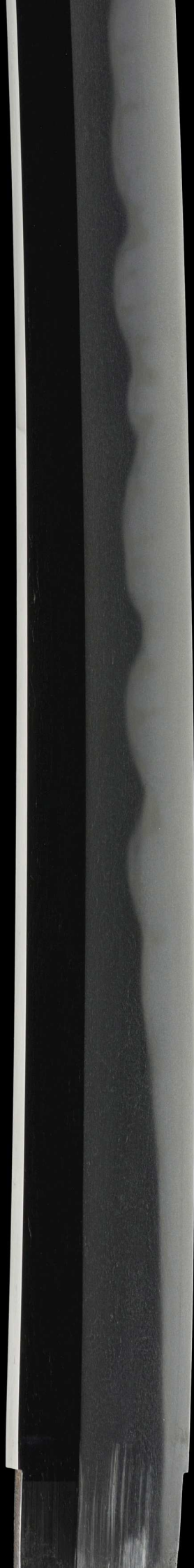
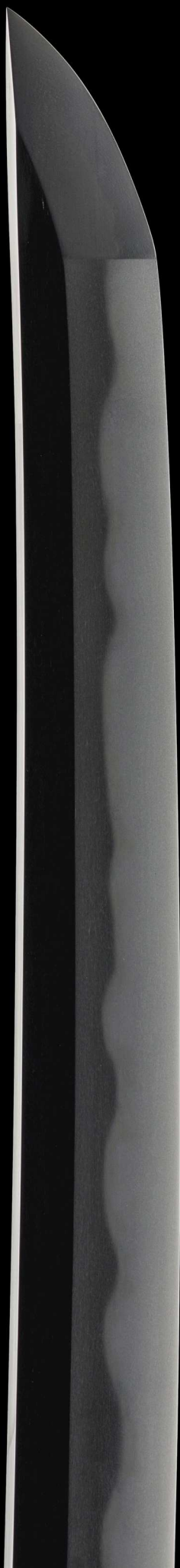
Nihon Token Hozon Kai  
(NTHK-NPO)

This sword has reached the highest level of honour at the NTHK-NPO.  
Four judges have stamped their names to the certificate.

\*\**Yûshûsaku* certificate comes with a frame-able A3 photo of the sword as well.



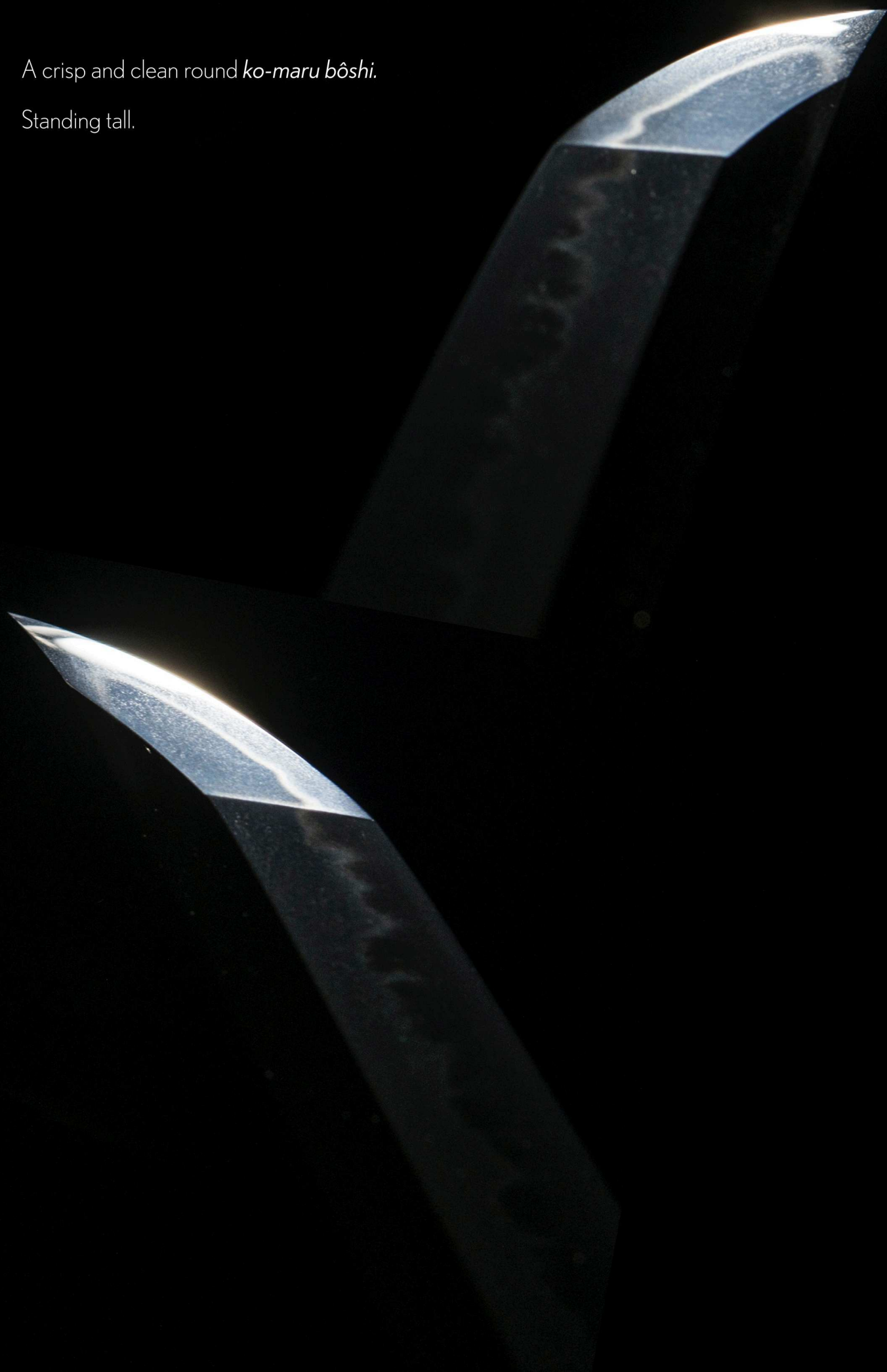






A crisp and clean round *ko-maru bôshi*.

Standing tall.






razor sharp

When we acquired this *Kuniyasu* katana, we saw great potential. We thus invested in a traditional *sashikomi* polish to deliver a more 'classical finish' without the use of *hadori* that can exaggerate the contrast of the hamon and body of the blade. A *chôji-midare hamon* works well in sashikomi when performed well.

We also organized professional sharpening of the *hasaki* (edge of the blade) to make it extra razor sharp. Kuniyasu is ranked *ô-wazamono* for the supreme sharpness of his swords and now the katana absolutely reflects this keen reputation.





A brilliant *gunome-chôji-midare hamon* blossoms the course of the blade.

Note the consistency in the hamon, the mark of a superior smith.



Long *ashi* (legs) extend to the edge of the blade.

Beautiful.

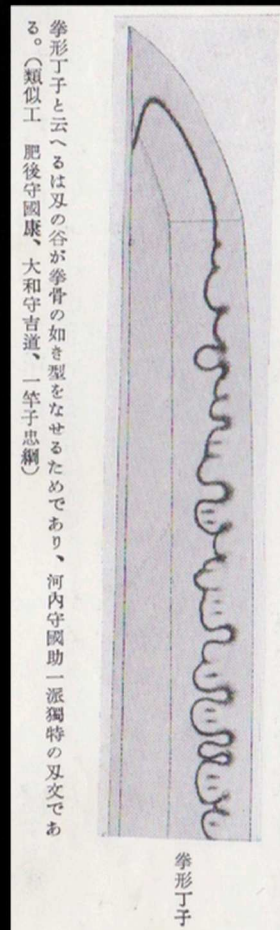


*kobushigata chôji hamon*  
Fist-shaped clusters of clove  
blossom buds



Kuniyasu's older brother *Kawachi no Kami Kunisuke* pioneered a unique *choji midare* known as *kobushigata chôji*, or "fist-shaped" clove blossoms.

On the right is an *oshigata* (rubbing) excerpt from *Nihon Shinto Jiten* written by Fujishiro that highlights this distinctive hamon by second gen. Kunisuke who is known as "*Naka Kawachi*."



*Ôsaka yakidashi*, where the  
hamon jets out at the start.







*kinsuji*

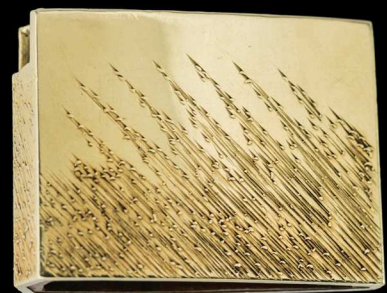
This katana is currently in shirasaya only, no koshirae. As an option for the next owner, we can take this sword to *Tanobe sensei* for *sayagaki* services, as he will most certainly appreciate this blade.

A custom koshirae is also an option of course, and we can assist you every step of the way. However, a blade of this quality can easily be enjoyed as it is without koshirae.



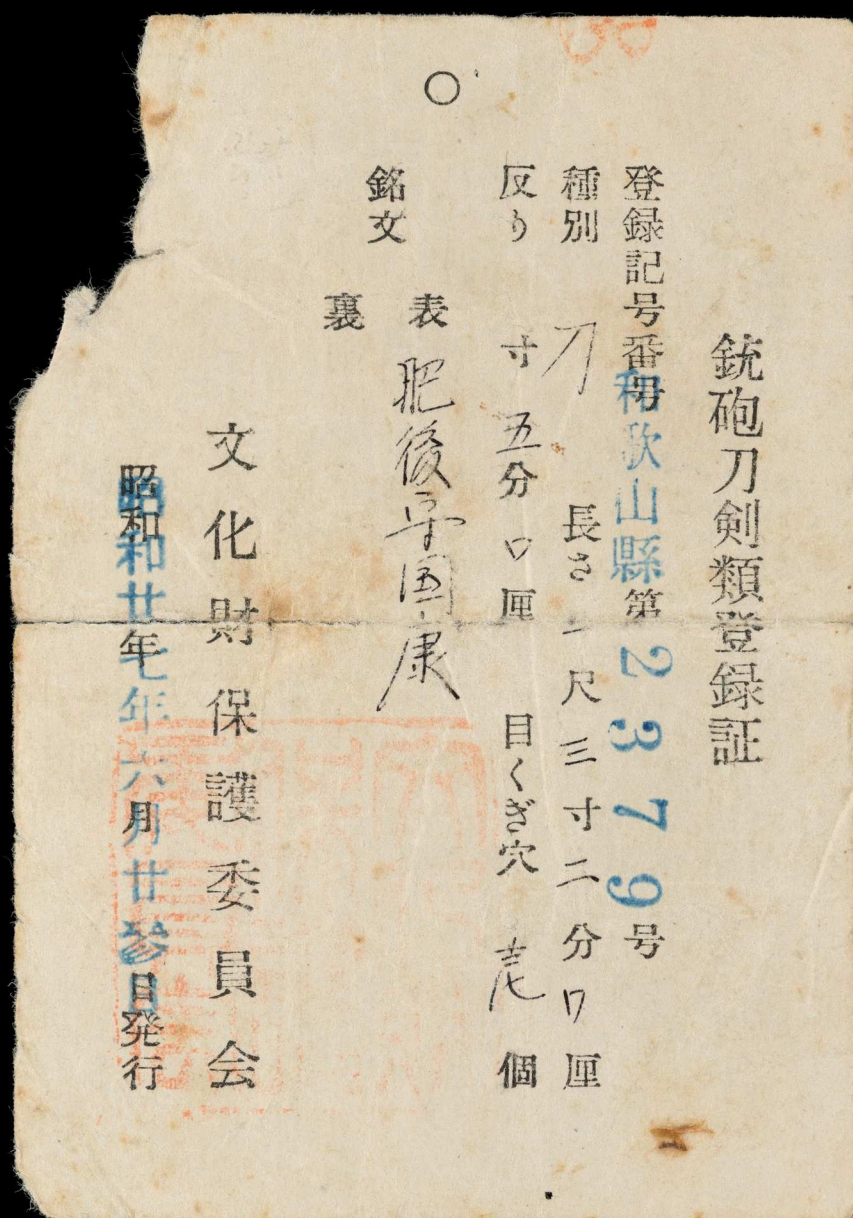
*Shirasaya*  
(protective scabbard)

*sayagaki* potential



gold *habaki* with  
diagonal file marks





This is the original *torokusho* (registration card) for the *Kuniyasu katana*.  
The card was registered in the 27th year of Showa (1952).

This is significant as 1952 was the very first year that swords were formally registered in Japan. Many former Daimyo families were invited to submit their collections suggesting this blade was once held by a prominent family.

The serial number is just 2379, one of the very first swords registered in Japan.



*Recently Completed Custom Koshirae*

ujka411

*A Koyama Munetsugu Katana*

*Dated 1862, at the age of 60*

*Ryô-guruma tameshigiri cutting test*

*Nagasa: 75.6cm*

*NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon*

*Warrior themed koshirae with gold flakes on scabbard*





ITEM# UJKA451

## A MORIKAGE KATANA

UNSIGNED, CHÛ-KOTÔ PERIOD (JÔJI ERA: 1361~1368)

<b>Swordsmith:</b>	<i>Ômiya Morikage (1st gen.)</i>
<b>Measurements:</b>	<b>Length:</b> 72.4cm ( <i>ô-suriage</i> ) <b>Sori:</b> 1.1cm <b>Moto-haba:</b> 2.97cm <b>Weight:</b> 820g
<b>Jihada:</b>	<i>Well-forged mokume-hada with ji-nie, chikei and midare-utsuri</i>
<b>Hamon:</b>	<i>Spectacular whips of gunome-midare with deep kinsuji and midare-bôshi</i>
<b>Certificate #1-2:</b>	<b>NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon</b> ( <i>sword and fk Especially Worthy of Preservation</i> )
<b>Certificates #3:</b>	<b>NTHK-NPO Yûshûsaku</b> ( <i>as sword designated as Masterwork</i> )
<b>Certificates #4-5:</b>	<b>NTHK-NPO Kanteisho</b> ( <i>tsuba and koshirae designated Authentic</i> )
<b>Fujishiro rank:</b>	<b>Jô-saku</b> ( <i>ranked as a superior swordsmith</i> )
<b>Sharpness:</b>	<b>Ryô-wazamonô</b> ( <i>rated as a maker of highly sharp swords</i> )
<b>Authentication:</b>	<b>Sayagaki by Tanobe-sensei</b> ( <i>Tanobe Michihiro</i> )
<b>Included:</b>	<i>Shirasaya, custom koshirae, fabric bags, stand, kit, printed description</i>

**SOLD**

This commanding katana by *jô-saku* and *ryô-wazamono* swordsmith *Ômiya Morikage* embodies the warrior spirit of the *Nambokuchô* period. The blade's impressive width and *ô-kissaki* tip reveal its origins as a formidable *ô-dachi*, originally approaching 90cm in length. Its striking *gunome-midare hamon* surges dramatically along the steel, accompanied by a brilliant *midare-utsuri* reflecting the traits of classic *Bizen* tradition of the *kotô* period. The blade's elegant custom *koshirae* features an intimidating demon *tsuba* by *Mogarachi Sôten*, exquisite *fuchi-kashira* signed by *Gotô Mitsutomo*, and lovely *bonsai* tree *menuki*, all wrapped in pristine white silk with high-class *jabaramaki* braiding.





Saki-kasane: 5.1mm

Moto-kasane: 6.8mm

Omosa: 820g

Kissaki: 5.03cm

Saki-haba: 2.15cm

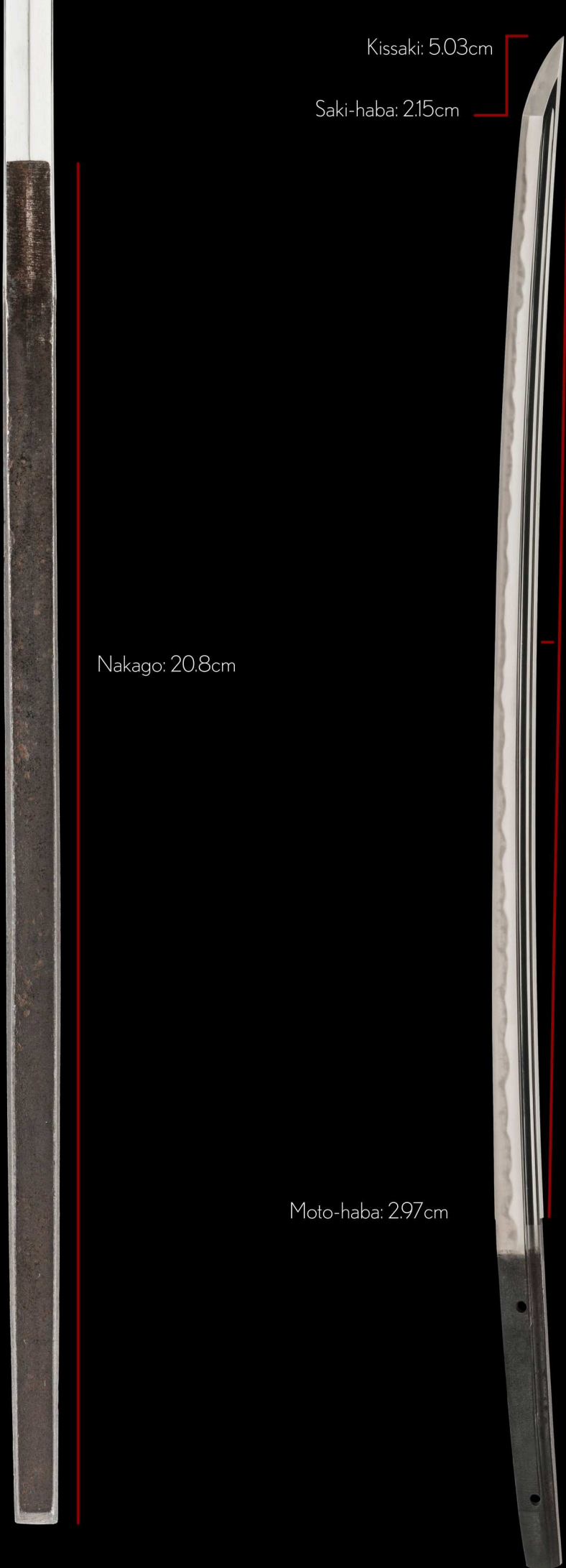
Nakago: 20.8cm

Moto-haba: 2.97cm

Nagasa: 72.4cm

Sori: 1.10cm

Mekugi-ana: 2



Swordsmith *Kunimori* is regarded as the founder of the *Bizen Ômiya school*. He was active circa 1260 during the mid-Kamakura period. Two theories exist on origins of the name; one suggests that Kunimori came from *Inokuma Ômiya* in *Yamashiro province* - the other states he travelled to the Ômiya district of Bizen.

The majority of the swords we find today from this school are unsigned and attributed to a specific smith or simply to the *Ômiya school*. *Morikage*, *Morishige* and *Morokage* are the more prominent swordsmiths.

The NBTHK has attributed this katana to the *Ômiya school*. However, both the *sayagaki* by *Tanobe-sensei* and the NTHK-NPO *Yûshûsaku* (masterwork) certificate went a step further and attributed the sword to *Ômiya Morikage*.

Tanobe-sensei states on the *sayagaki* that this sword was crafted during the *Jôji era* (1362~1368) in the heart of the warring Nambokuchô period. Morikage crafted swords have reached Jûyô status as well as prestigious *Jûyô Bunkazai* and *Jûyô Bijitsuhin*.


This powerhouse katana by Morikage reflects its near 700-year-old *Nambokuchô* time period. This is a wide and thick sword with an *ô-kissaki* that would have meant business on the battlefield. In fact, this sword would have originally been an imposing *ô-dachi*, a long *tachi* with a *nagasa* (cutting edge) approaching 90cm.

The *hamon* is a striking *gunome-midare* that whips high and low, dazzling the eye along the steel. There is also a brilliant *midare-utsuri* that reflects this pattern in classic *kotô* period Bizen tradition.

A beautiful custom koshirae was built for the sword that includes a stunning *Mogarachi Sôten* demon *tsuba*, a gorgeous signed *Gotô Mitsutomo fuchi-kashira* and charming bonsai tree *menuki* wrapped over in pure white silk with first-class *jabaramaki* braiding.

Morikage is ranked as *jô-saku* (superior smith) and *ryô-wazamono* for the enviably sharp reputation his swords enjoyed.





Ô-*suriage* (greatly shortened)  
whereby the signature on the  
nakago was lost during the  
katana's shortening process.

The katana was once an ô-  
*dachi*, (very long tachi) with an  
impressive original length of  
well-over 80cm in *nagasa*.





A transition point of two ages,  
before and after being shortened.

This image shows a close-up of a Japanese sword blade (katana) against a black background. The blade is oriented diagonally from the bottom left towards the top right. A prominent longitudinal groove, known as a nakago, runs along the length of the blade. A circular hole is visible on the upper right side of the blade. Two red arrows point to specific features: one points to a transition point on the blade's surface, and the other points to the groove near the tip.

Groove extends through  
the *nakago* (*kaki-tôshi*).

特 保  
13200111



No. 146899



鑑定書

長二尺三寸九分弱

一刀 無銘(大宮)

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

平成十三年十二月三十五日

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 13th year of Heisei (2001), December 25th

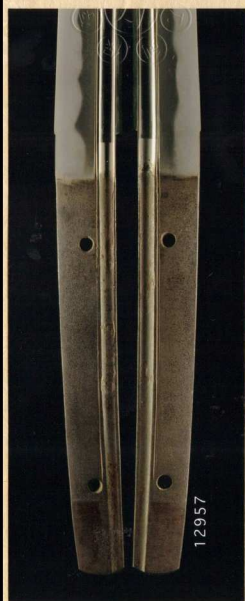
One, Katana





*Mumei* (unsigned)  
*Ômiya*

*Nagasa* (length)  
2-shaku 3-sun 9-bu jaku (72.4cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai  
(NBTHK)





捺 査 印 員	備 考	寸 法	拵 え	中 心	図 柄	鑑 子	刃 紋	下 地	鍛	造り込み	銘 文	第一二九五七号
   	延文頃			目釘穴 二個		表裏棒樋に添樋掻き通す	丁子乱れ拵強く、砂流し入る			板目、乱れ映り華やか	無銘 鐙造り、庵棟、大磨り上げ	
				鍔 切り							棟	

## NTHK-NPO Yushusaku Certificate of Authenticity

This katana was designated as *Yushusaku* (Highly Excellent)  
by the Non-Profit Society for the Preservation of the Japanese Sword

Katana

*Mumei* (unsigned)  
*Bishû Ômiya Morikage*

*Nagasa* (length)  
*2-shaku 3-sun 9-bu kore ari* (72.4cm)

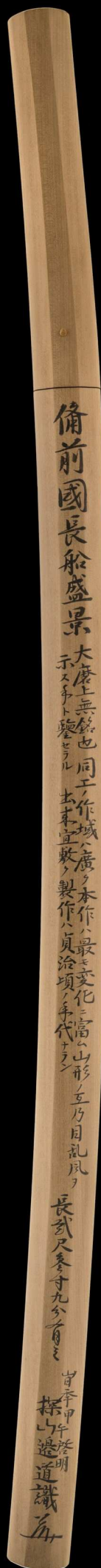
Issued in 6th year of Reiwa (2024), December 15th

Nihon Token Hozon Kai  
(NTHK-NPO)

This sword has reached the highest level of honour at the NTHK-NPO.  
Four judges have stamped their names to the certificate.

\*\**Yûshûsaku* certificate comes with a frame-able A3 photo of the sword as well.





備前国長船盛景

*Bizen no kuni Osafune Morikage*

Osafune Morikage from Bizen province

大摺上無銘也

*Ō-suriage mumei nari*

Ō-suriage, unsigned

同工ノ作域ハ廣ク本作ハ最モ変化ニ富ム山形ノ互乃  
目乱風ヲ示ス手ト鑑セラレル  
出来宜敷ク制作ハ貞治頃ノ年代ナラン

*Dôkô no sakuiki wa hiroku honsaku wa mottomo henka ni tomu  
yamagata no gunome-midare fû o shimesu te to kanserareru.  
Deki yoroshiku seisaku wa Jôji goro no nendai naran.*

This sword smith displays various characteristics in his works.  
Of all his pieces, this particular blade shows one of the most  
eclectic styles of *gunome-midare* hamon. This well-made  
sword was crafted during the Jôji period (1362~1368).

長貳尺参寸九分有之

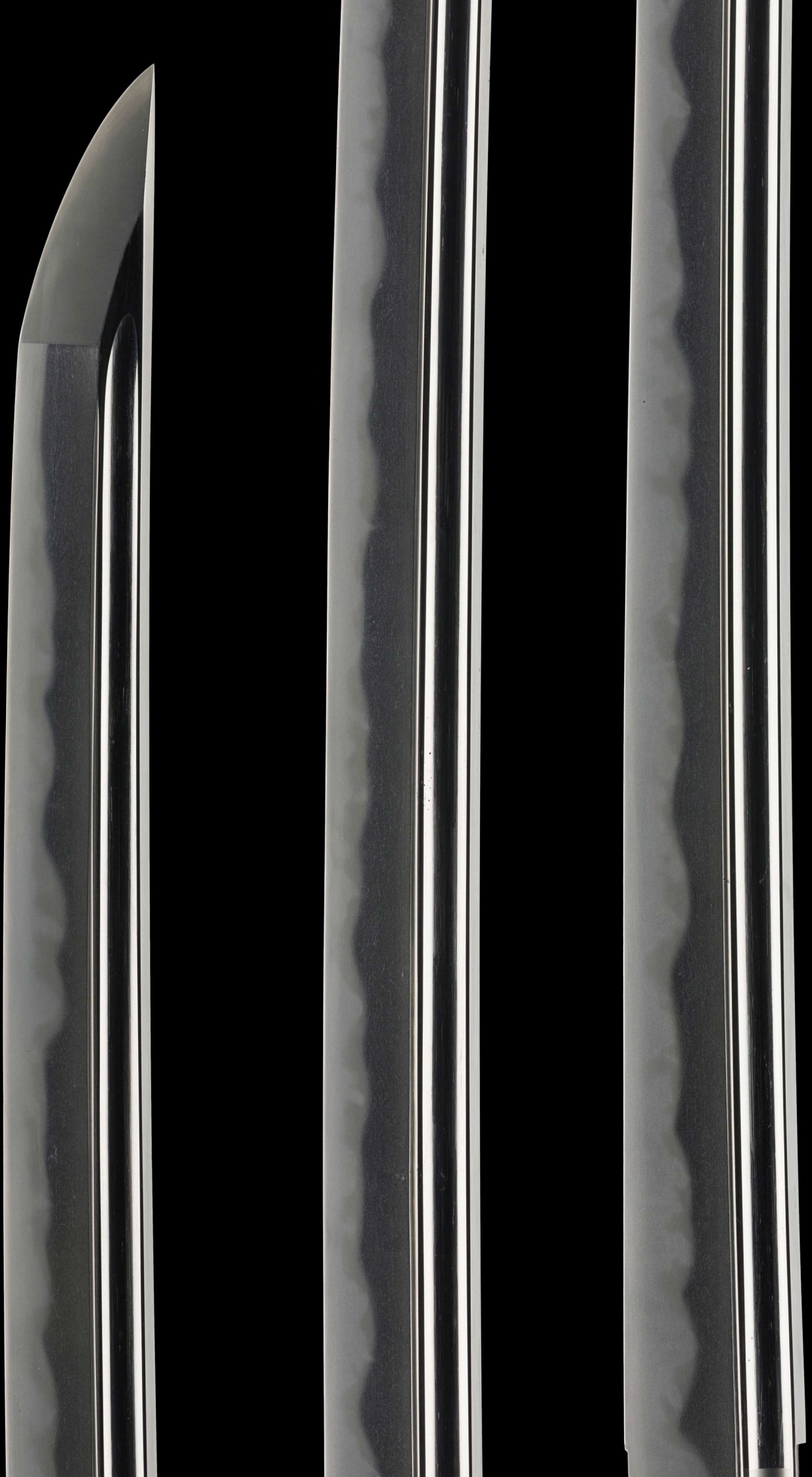
*Nagasa 2-shaku 3-sun 9-bu kore ari*

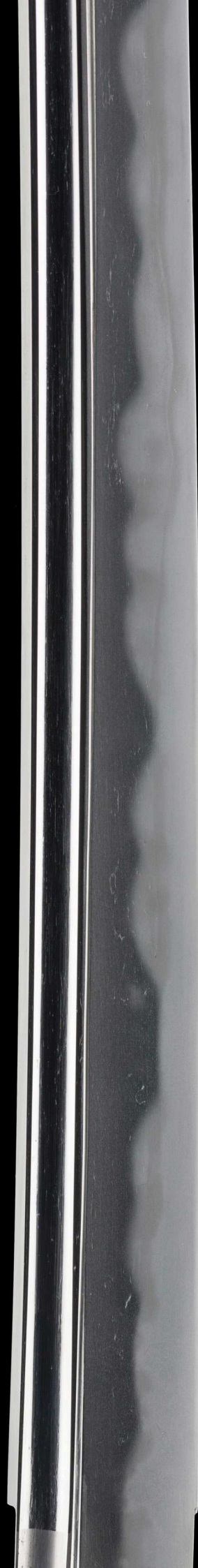
Blade length 72.4cm

肖季甲午啓明深山邊道識(花押)

*Shûki kinoe-uma keimei Tanzan Hendô shirusu (kaô)*

Written by Tanzan Hendô in the morning during the Year of the  
Horse (2014) + monogram







On the *ura* (reverse) side of the blade are areas that are a little rough and tired, which is completely normal given the age of the sword. The *omote* side (front), however, has fared much better.

If the *ura* had matched the condition of the *omote*, this sword would have almost certainly passed NBTHK *Jûyô Tôken*.



*shingane*  
(core steel)

rough patch

rough patch



*bo-hi*

A large groove (*bo-hi*) was made to lighten the blade. Parallel running *soe-bi* (thinner grooves) were also added.

*soe-bi*



An impressive 5cm long *ô-kissaki* (tip) speaks to the warring mid-1300s *Nambokuchô* period in which this sword was crafted.

Battle ready.

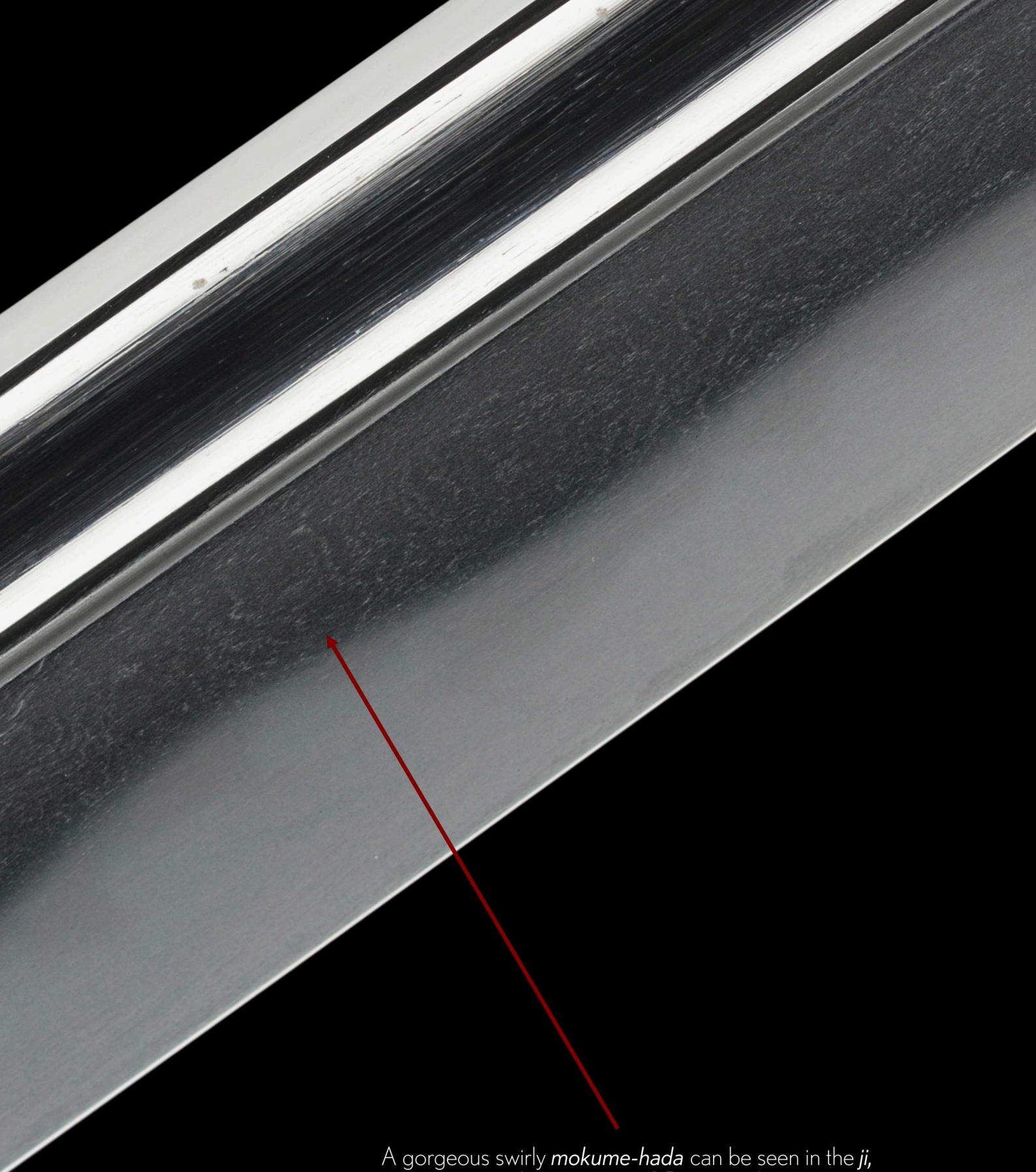






The *bôshi* (hamon inside the *kissaki*) is a wavy *midare*.





A gorgeous swirly *mokume-hada* can be seen in the *ji*,  
an important characteristic of Bizen tradition swords  
from the *Kotô*-period.



A spectacular *hamon* light show of *gunome-midare* that whips from the *ha-saki* (cutting edge) towards the thin *soe-bi* groove. Note how the *midare-utsuri* subtly mimics the hamon pattern. This image captures the beauty found in *kotô* period swords of the Bizen tradition.



*Midare-utsuri*, a smokey pattern that billows in a wavy formation following the hamon pattern.





Incredible *kinsuji* tears through the *hamon* like an Icebreaker.





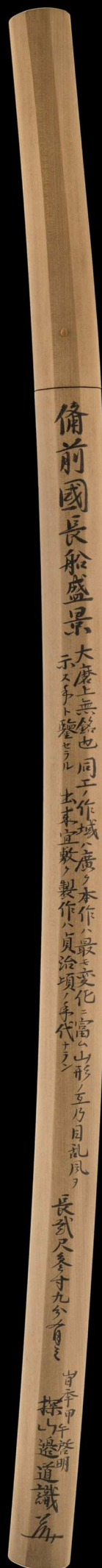


Textbook examples of *sunagashi* (streams of sand) showcasing a broom line effect inside the hamon.



The beating of your heart.





*Shirasaya*  
(protective scabbard & bag)

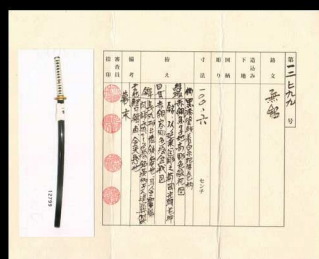


gold *ni-ju habaki* with  
straight file marks

*Kuro roiro-nuri saya  
uchigatana-koshirae*  
(黒呂色塗鞘打刀拵)

*Uchigatana-koshirae  
lacquered in glossy black*

Crafted during the  
modern era.



*NTHK-NPO Kanteisho  
Certificate of Authenticity*



(Nyû) 入  
(dô) 道  
(Sô) 宗  
(ten) 典  
(tsukuru) 製



藻 (Mo)  
柄 (gara)  
子 (shi)

*Watanabe no Tsuna*

The tsuba was crafted by *Mogarashi Nyûdô Sôten*  
(藻柄子入道宗典)

The motif is referred to as "*Ichijô Modoribashi*"



The story goes as follows:

*Watanabe no Tsuna*, the leader of the big four under *Minamoto no Yorimitsu*, was coming to the foot of *Modoribashi* at midnight and saw a beautiful woman standing there who asked him to take her home as she was scared to return home late at night. Although he considered her behaviour suspicious as a woman alone late at night, he said yes and let her on his horse. Then the woman suddenly transformed into a demon, grabbed Tsuna's hair and flew away with him toward Mt. *Atago*. Tsuna was able to escape by cutting the demon's arm off with his sword. Tsuna kept the demon's arm at his house in *Watanabe no Tsu*, Settsu Province (present *Chuo* Ward in Osaka), but it is said that the demon recovered it by disguising himself as Tsuna's mother-in-law!



A marvellous *Mogarashi Nyûdô Sôten*  
*tsuba* depicts a demon watching overhead.



(reverse)





*Enjô no zu o motte kore o horu - Kikuoka Mitsutomo + kaô*  
(Crafted based on the motif by Enjô - Kikuoka Mitsutomo + monogram)

(Kiku) 菊  
(oka) 岡  
(Mitsu) 光  
(tomo) 朝



以 (motte)  
延 (En)  
乘 (jô)  
岡 (zu)  
彫 (horu)  
之 (kore)

*Kikuoka Mitsutomo* (菊岡光朝) was born in *Kanda, Edo*, in 1775. He lived in *Kanda Kajicho* in Edo and was a renowned craftsman, but died early on April 22, 1813, at the age of just 38.

*Enjô* is *Gotô Enjô* (後藤延乗)(1721-1784), also known as *Gotô Mitsutaka* (後藤光孝), the 13th head of the famous *Gotô Family*. It is assumed that this piece was created based on a motif by *Goto Enjô*.



A kozuka by  
*Gotô Enjô*





*Fukujusô* (pheasant's eye)



*Fuchi-kashira* crafted by *Kikuoka Mitsutomo* depicting *fukujusô* and *chimaki*.

*Fukujusô* (pheasant's eye) is a buttercup family flower that blooms in early spring, and cherished for its auspiciousness, symbolizing 'rebirth.'





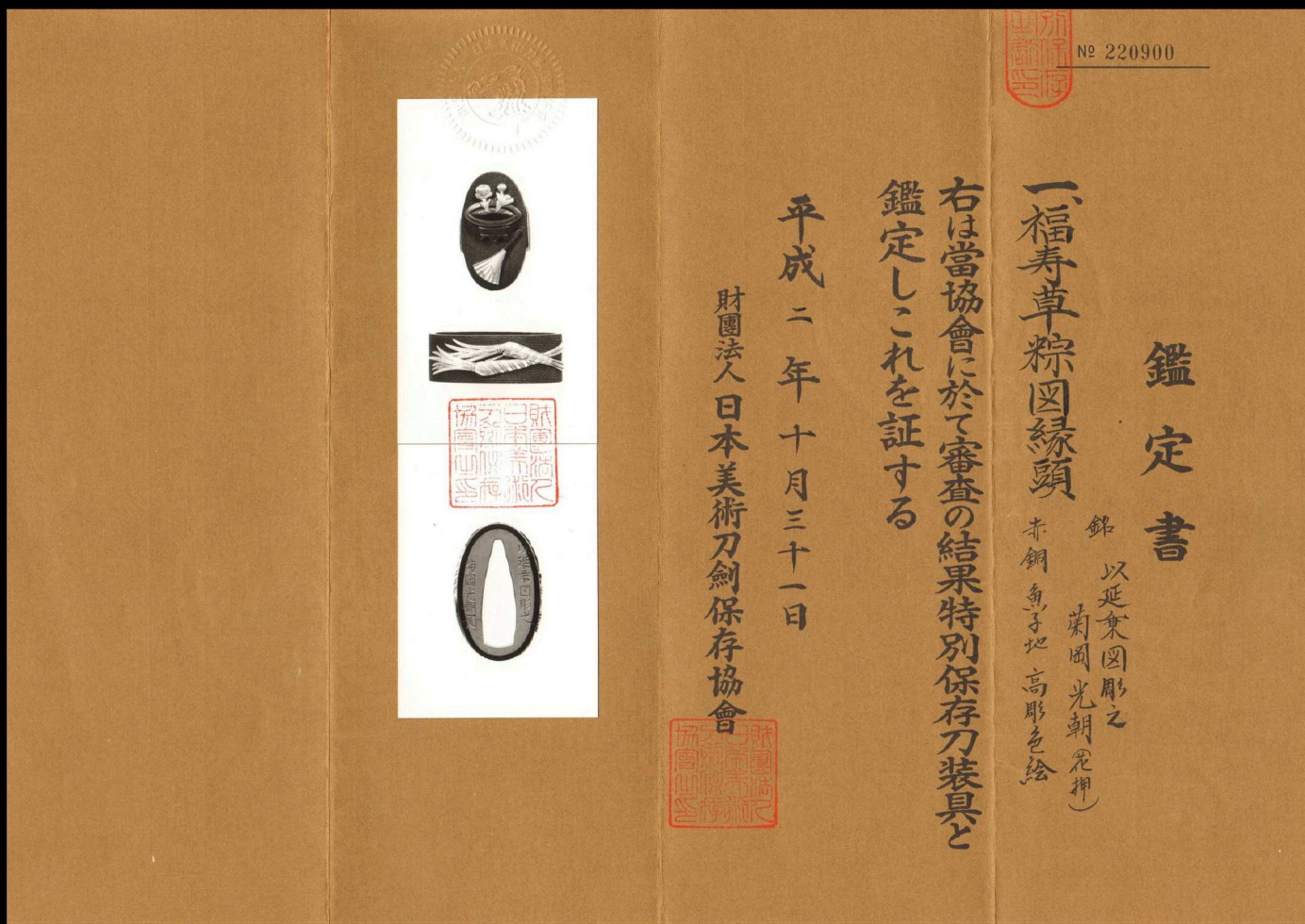
*Chimaki* is a Japanese dumpling made of various ingredients, that is wrapped in a leaf (bamboo, banana, or reed) and steamed. In Japanese culture, chimaki, or dumplings, are enjoyed on May 5th to celebrate Japanese Children's Day, also known as "*kodomo no hi*" and previously referred to as Boys' Day.

On this national holiday, all boys and girls across Japan are celebrated to wish for their happiness and good health. Imitations of chimaki are used as amulets to ward off bad luck during the *Gion* Festival in Kyôto.



Beautifully braided *jabara-maki tsuka* (hilt) in pure white silk over black-lacquered *samekawa* (ray skin).





## NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon Certificate of Designation

A fuchi-kashira designated as *Especially Worthy of Conservation*  
by the Society for the Preservation of the Japan Art Sword

Issued in the 2nd year of Heisei (1990), October 31st

One, *Fuchigashira*

*Depicting pheasant's eye and  
rice cake wrapped in bamboo leaves*

Mei (signature)  
*Enjô no zu o motte kore o horu*  
*Kikuoka Mitsutomo + kaô*

*Shakudô with nanako ground, relief with color accents*

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai  
(NBTHK)





Gorgeous *menuki* depict *bonsai* (miniature trees).

*Bonsai* was introduced to Japan along with Zen Buddhism between the *Heian* and *Kamakura* periods (794 ~ 1333).

The care and design of *bonsai* requires working with a quiet mind - facing the plant and paying attention to every detail. This has much in common with meditation, an important element in Zen practice.







Koshirae bag



Watching you.





ITEM# UJKA460

CURRENTLY AVAILABLE

## A YUKIMITSU KATANA

SIGNED, SHINTÔ PERIOD (ENPÔ ERA: 1673~1681)

<b>Swordsmith:</b>	<b>Bungo Takada jû Fujiwara Yukimitsu (1st gen.)</b>
<b>Measurements:</b>	<b>Length:</b> 68.7cm (ubu) <b>Sori:</b> 1.5cm <b>Moto-haba:</b> 2.89cm <b>Weight:</b> 630g
<b>Jihada:</b>	<i>Nagare-hada mixed with mokume-hada with chikei</i>
<b>Hamon:</b>	<i>Togari-gunome in nie-deki mixed with toran, koshibiraki, yahazu-ba and kaen-bôshi</i>
<b>Certificate #1:</b>	<b>NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon</b> (sword Especially Worthy of Preservation)
<b>Certificates #2-4:</b>	<b>NTHK-NPO Kanteisho</b> (tsuba, fuchi-kashira and koshirae designated Authentic)
<b>Fujishiro rank:</b>	<b>Chujô-saku</b> (ranked as an above average swordsmith)
<b>Authentication:</b>	<b>Sayagaki by Nozomi-san</b> (shodô artist)
<b>Included:</b>	Shirasaya, Edo koshirae, fabric bags, stand, kit, printed description

**\$9,500**

Born Nakama Kanzaemon, this handsome katana was crafted by **Yukimitsu** of the *shintô* Takada school. What makes this sword collectible is that a variety of traditions can be enjoyed all in this one sword. The blade's wide *shinogi-ji* and *nagare-hada* demonstrates a robust *Yamato* influence, while the hamon displays *Mino* characteristics featuring a *togari-gunome* and *yahazu-ba* blended with *Bizen* and *Osaka-shintô* elements - even *yô* in the *yaki-ba* reflects *Yamashiro* aesthetics. There is also a *kirikomi* (battle scar) on the *mune* suggesting that this sword has seen combat in its day. The sword's late Edo period *koshirae* has a real samurai feel with classic iron fittings and matching swirling gold arabesque motifs. The *tsuka* features a unique linen-wrapped *hanabishi* pattern that speaks to Japan's nobility class. An ideal katana for the new Japanese sword (*nihontô*) collector.



Saki-kasane: 4.3mm

Moto-kasane: 6.2mm

Kissaki: 2.86cm

Saki-haba: 1.84cm

Nagasa: 68.7cm

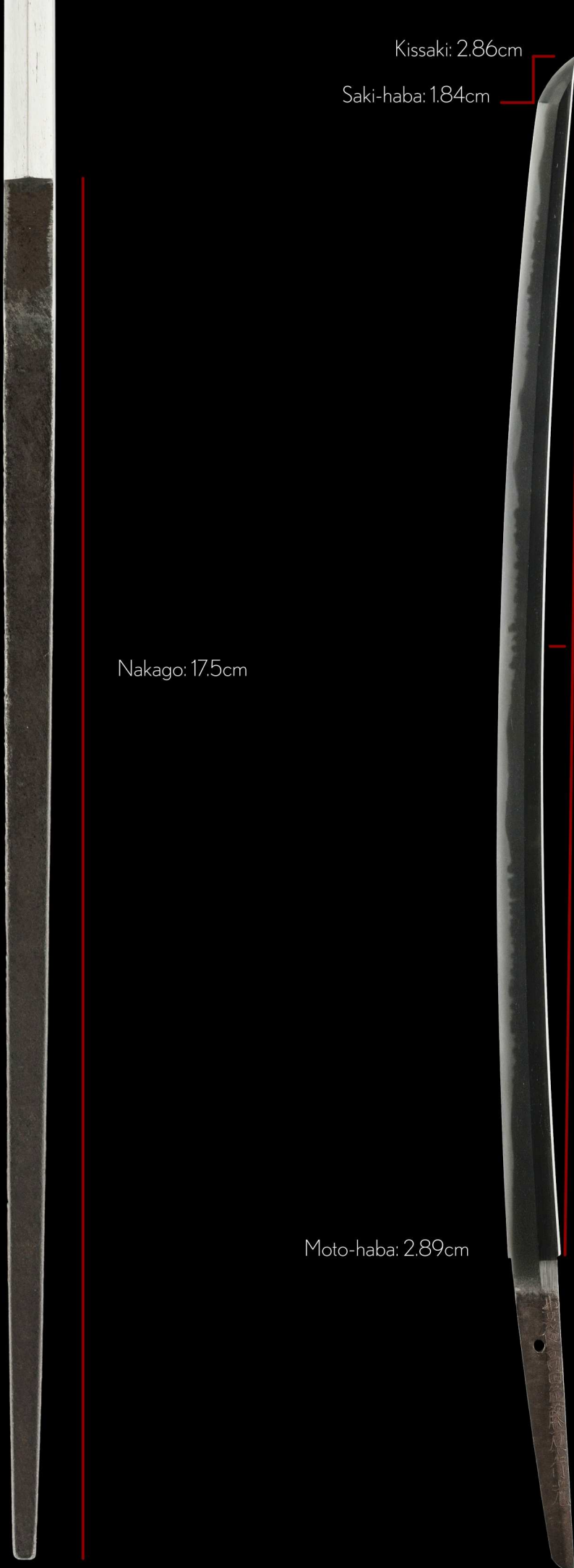
Nakago: 17.5cm

Sori: 1.5cm

Omosa: 630g

Moto-haba: 2.89cm

Mekugi-ana: 1





The *Takada* school located in *Bungo* province in *Kyûshû* was originally founded by *Tomoyuki* circa 1334~1338 at the start of the *Nambokuchô* period. After studying *Bizen* techniques in present-day *Okayama*, *Tomoyuki* returned to establish what would become the school's distinctive tradition. The *Takada* school has an impressive history of dependable sword-making that lasted into the *shintô* period (1600s).

Born *Nakama Kanzaemon*, this handsome katana was crafted by *Yukimitsu*, a representative smith of the *Takada* school. What makes this sword unique and collectible is that a variety of traditions can be enjoyed all in this one sword. The blade's wide *shinogi-ji* construction and *nagare-hada* demonstrates a robust *Yamato* influence, while the hamon displays *Mino* characteristics featuring a *togari-gunome* and *yahazu-ba* blended with *Bizen* and *Osaka-shintô* elements - even the falling *yô* in the *yaki-ba* reflects *Yamashiro* aesthetics.

There is also a *kirikomi* (battle scar) on the *mune* suggesting that this sword has seen combat in its day.

*Yukimitsu* flourished about 350 years ago during the early Edo period, circa the *Enpô* (1673~1681) and *Jôkyô* eras (1684~1688). What is pleasing to see is that *Yukimitsu* signed the sword with its full location of where it was made and clan name (*Bungo Takada jû Fujiwara Yukimitsu*) as sometimes *Yukimitsu* swords are only signed *Fujiwara Yukimitsu*.

The sword's late Edo period koshirae has a real samurai feel with classic iron fittings and matching swirling gold arabesque motifs. The *tsuka* (hilt) is very attractive featuring a unique linen-wrapped *hanabishi* pattern that speaks to Japan's nobility class.

All told, this is an ideal sword for the new Japanese sword (*nihontô*) collector who wishes to study a variety of points and styles - all offered at a very reasonable price - especially as this katana is certified with **NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon** and comes with certified antique koshirae as well.





Location: *Takada in Bungo province*

Clan name: *Fujiwara*

Swordsmith: *Yukimitsu* (first generation)

*ubu-nakago* (original, unaltered tang)

*katte-sagari-yasurime* (slanting file marks)

豊 (Bun)

後 (go)

高 (Taka)

田 (da)

住 (jû)

藤 (Fuji)

原 (wara)

行 (Yuki)

光 (mitsu)





one clean hole in *nakago*

The *nakagojiri* (butt-end of the tang) is rounded, similar to that of *kurijiri* (chestnut shaped) but the cutting edge side slants more steeply than the back (*mune* side).

*ha agari kurijiri nakago-jiri*

特 保  
05202312

No 1022244

鑑定書

一刀 銘 豊後高田住藤原行光

長 二尺二寸六分半

右は當協會に於て審査の結果特別保存刀剣と  
鑑定しこれを証する

令和六年二月二十一日

公益財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協會



東京都 教育委員会  
第 278949 号  
平成10年3月17日

NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon  
Certificate of Designation

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

Issued in the 6th year of Reiwa (2024), February 21st

One, Katana

*Mei* (signature)  
*Bungo Takada-jû Fujiwara Yukimitsu*

*Nagasa* (length)  
2-shaku 2-sun 6-bu han (68.7cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai  
(NBTHK)





豊後高田住藤原行光

豊後高田住藤原行光

*Bungo Takada-jû Fujiwara Yukimitsu*

Fujiwara Yukimitsu, a resident of Takada in Bungo province

時代延宝頃

時代延宝頃

*Jidai Enpô-goro*

Around Enpô period (1673~1681)

刃長貳尺二寸六分半有之

刃長貳尺二寸六分半有之

*Hachô 2-shaku 2-sun 6-bu han kore ari*

Blade length 68.7 cm

令和七乙巳年正月吉日誌之

令和七乙巳年正月吉日誌之

*Reiwa nana kinoto-midoshi Shôgatsu kichijitsu kore o shirusu*

Written on a lucky day in the first month in the seventh year of Reiwa era during the Year of the Snake (January 2025)








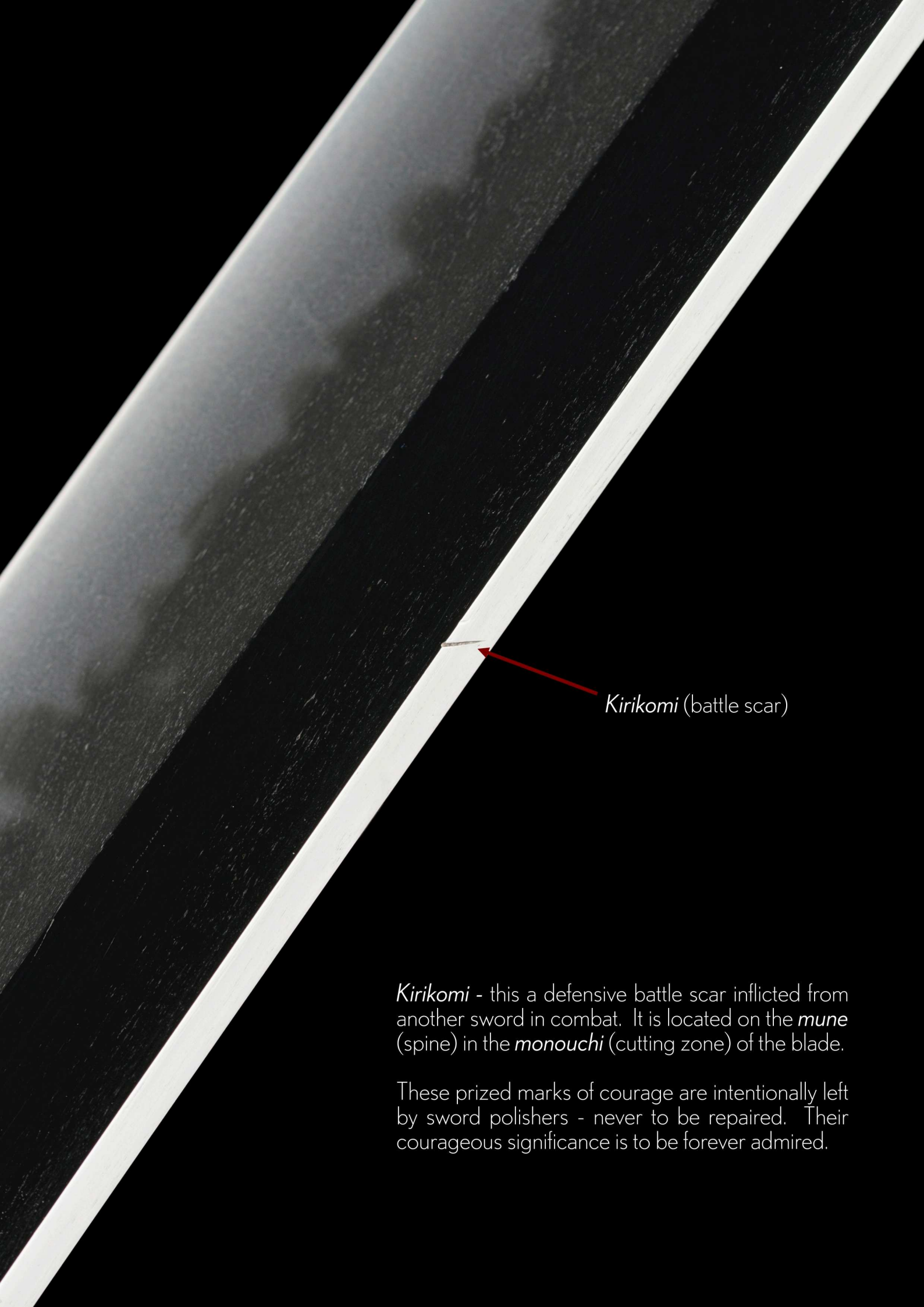
A *komaru-kaeri bôshi* (a small roundish turnback) with beautiful *kaen boshi* that resembles a candle flame.





A close-up photograph of a sword's internal structure. The image shows the transition from the light-colored wooden nakago (core) to the dark, textured metal body (blade). A red bracket is drawn across the junction to highlight the consistent thickness. The background is solid black.

Consistent thickness between the *nakago* and the body at the *moto-haba* area. Evidence that the sword is quite healthy and has not been over polished.



*Kirikomi* (battle scar)

*Kirikomi* - this is a defensive battle scar inflicted from another sword in combat. It is located on the *mune* (spine) in the *monouchi* (cutting zone) of the blade.

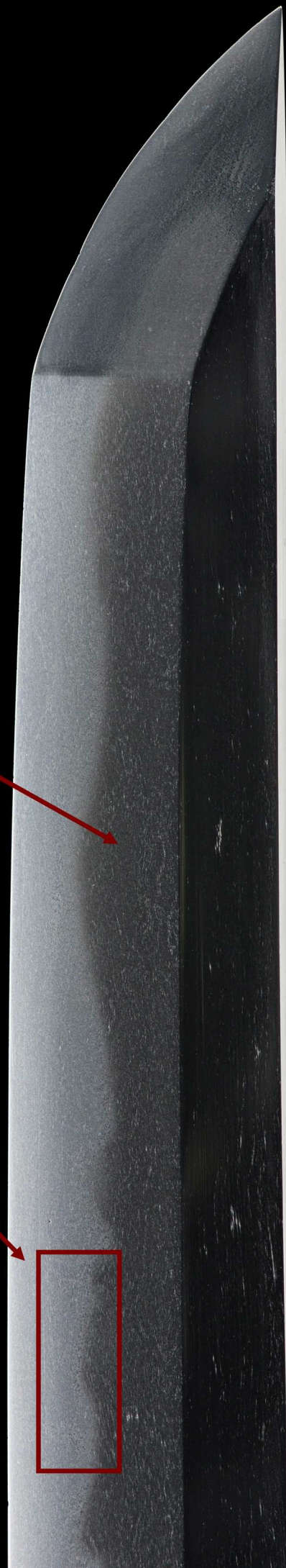
These prized marks of courage are intentionally left by sword polishers - never to be repaired. Their courageous significance is to be forever admired.



Swirly *mokume-hada*

*kirikomi*

A cluster of nie-crystals known as *nie-kuzure*



It is said that the *hamon* is the *signature* of the swordsmith.

Well, the hamon pattern on this *Yukimitsu katana* truly looks like a written signature.

*John Hancock*

*Tama*, a jewel-like ball.

*Yô* (leaves) are beautiful clusters of *nie* crystals 'falling' from the *hamon*.







Here we see a *togari-gunome* pulsing like a heart beat. *Yukimitsu* was a representative smith of the Takada school and a variety of traditions can be enjoyed all in one sword. The blade's construction and *nagare-hada* demonstrates a robust *Yamato* influence, while the hamon displays *Mino* characteristics blended with *Bizen* elements, even the falling *yô* reflects *Yamashiro* aesthetics.





*Nagare-hada*  
Flowing *masame-hada*.





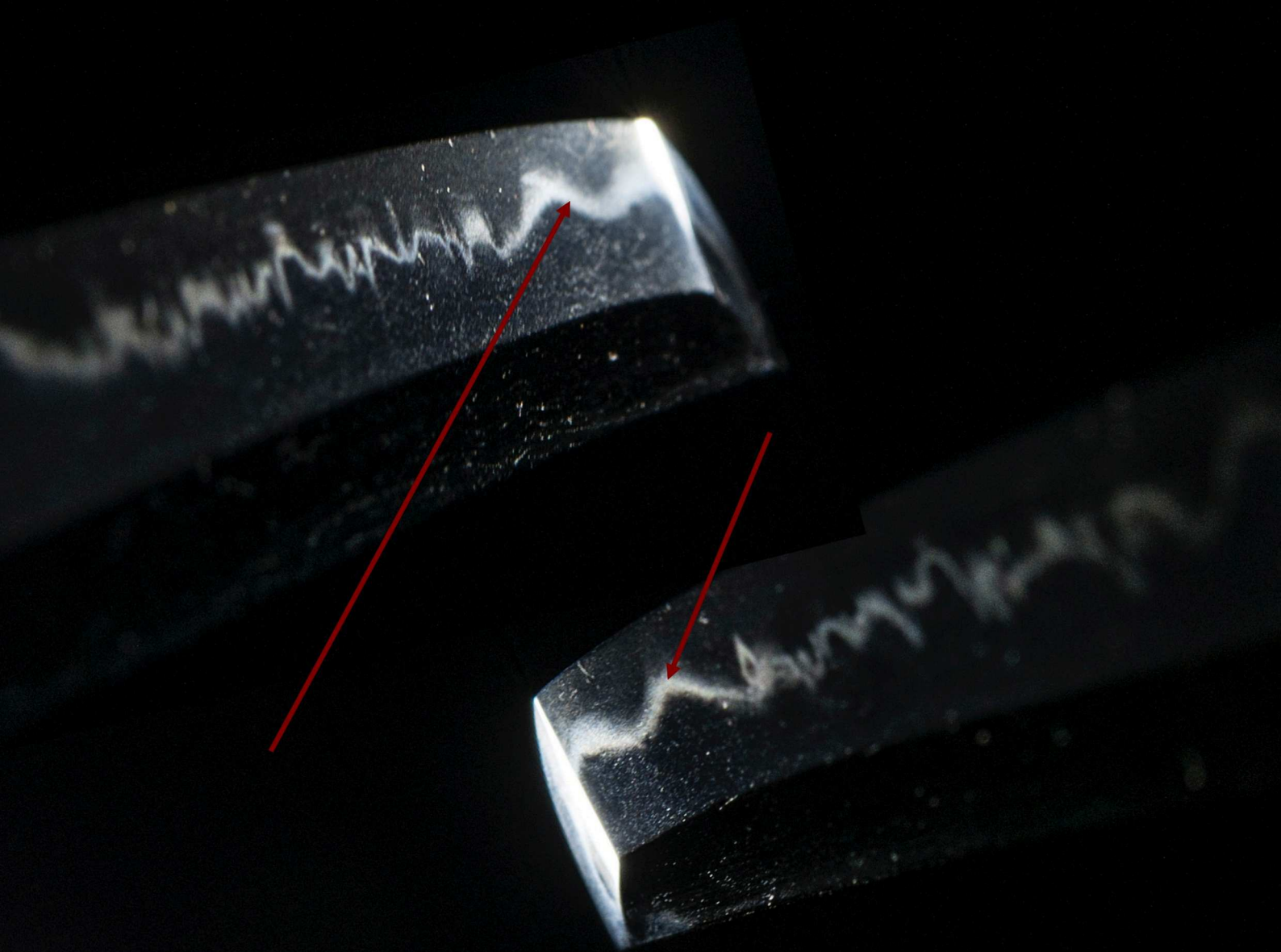
Dark (golden) lines of *kinsuji* slice through the hamon



*Ôsaka yakidashi*, where the  
hamon jets out at the start.







Just as the hamon flows into the *kissaki*, we see a beautiful *tōran* (surging wave), which is reminiscent of *Ôsaka shintô* swords from *Sukehiro* and *Sukenao*.

The Takada school was located in *Bungo* province on the island of *Kyûshû* - one can feel the influence of the powerful open sea in this section of the blade.



Map of Bungo and neighbouring provinces on Kyûshû island





*yahazu-ba*

Here is the *Mino* side of the sword speaking, the presence of *yahazu-ba* - a unique dovetail shape resembling arrow notches (*yahazu*).

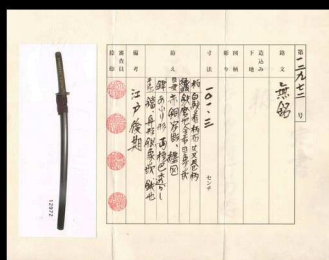




*Cha-ishime-nuri saya  
uchigatana-koshirae*  
(茶石目塗鞘打刀拵)

*Uchigatana-koshirae  
lacquered in brown with  
stone-surface texture*

Crafted during the  
Late Edo period  
(1780~1868)



NTHK-NPO Kanteisho  
Certificate of Authenticity



*kojiri*

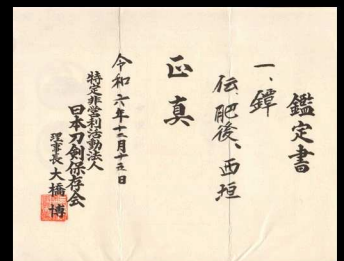
The *kojiri* (end cap) of the beautiful brown *ishime* (stone-surface) *saya* (scabbard) is showing its age, which is surely at least 200 years old. We recommend that it is kept as it is to preserve its samurai history but we can repair at an extra cost, or we can create a whole new saya if desired.





The gold-inlay sukashi design is that of *Tomoe* - believed to depict the threefold division of *Man, Earth, and Sky* at the heart of the Shinto belief system of universal life balance.

The tsuba is attributed to *Nishigaki* school from *Higo* province.



*Higo* schools developed under the leadership of *Hosokawa Sansai Tadaoki* (細川三斎忠興, 1563-1646), and the *Nishigaki* (西垣), *Hayashi* (林), *Hirata* (平田), *Shimizu* (志水) schools flourished.



(reverse)

*Sansai*, a close companion of the renowned tea master Sen no Rikyu (千利休, 1522-1591), deeply embraced the principles of *wabi* and *sabi*. He championed an aesthetic that prized restraint over opulence, guiding craftsmen toward expressions of profound refinement through simplicity. Among these artisans was *Kanshiro Nishigaki*, founder of the *Nishigaki* school, who later earned the respected position of official craftsman to the *Hosokawa* clan.



*Higo* province in *Kyûshû*



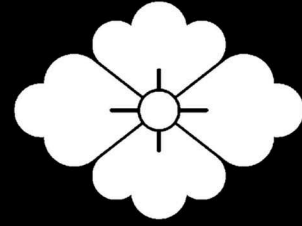
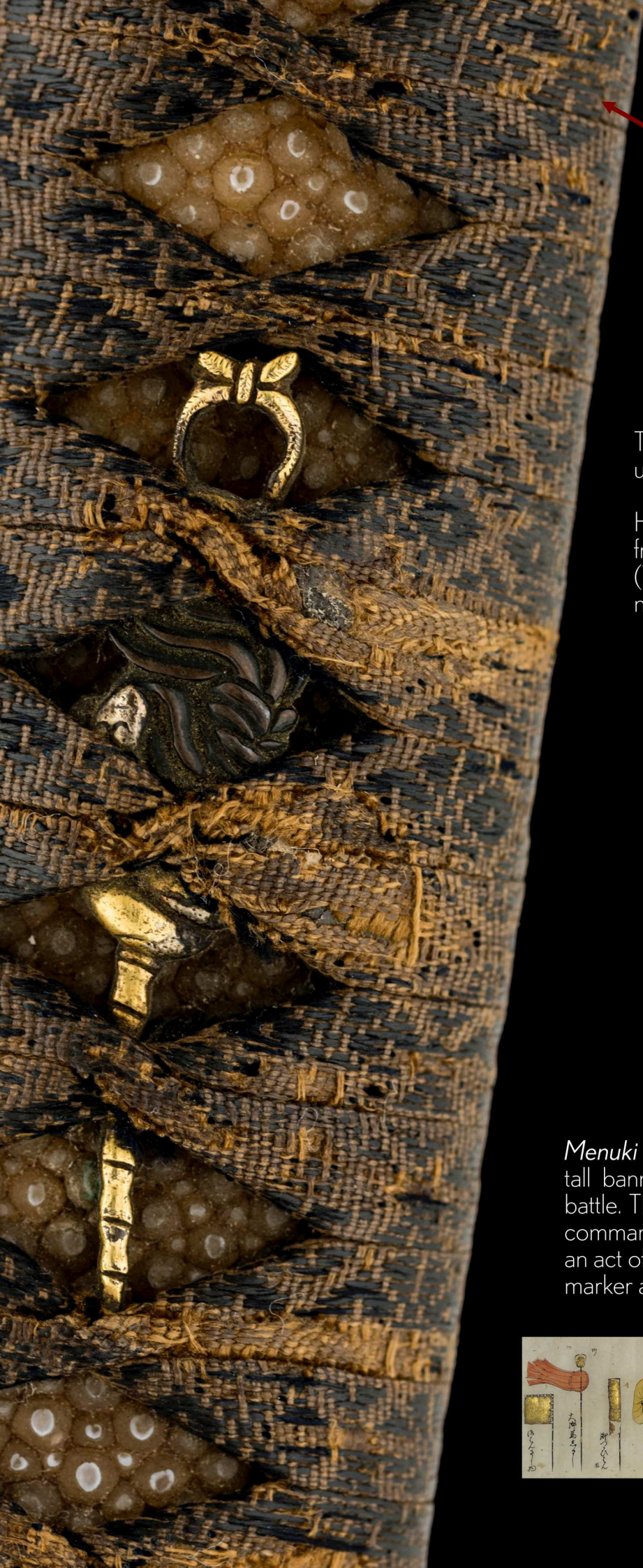
*Hosokawa Sansai Tadaoki*



*Sen no Rikyû*

The *Nishigaki* tradition flourished through eight generations, with the second master studying under *Gotô Kenjô*, while the fifth and sixth generations refined their craft under *Kumagai Yoshiyuki* in Edo. The school's distinctive aesthetic came to be celebrated for its liberated spirit, works that radiate both generosity and creative freedom.





The *tsuka* (hilt) is wrapped in linen with a unique *hanabishi* pattern.

Hanabishi-mon is a pattern introduced from China during the *Heian* period (794-1185), it came to be used on court nobles' costumes and furnishings.

*Menuki* depict *umajirushi* - "horse insignia" tall banners mounted on poles carried into battle. They helped identify different units and commanders on the warring battlefield. It was an act of humiliation for a warlord to lower the marker as it meant that he had been defeated.



examples of *umajirushi*





Antique *tsuka*.  
Get a grip, samurai style.







*Kashira* (pommel)  
attributed to  
*Bizen Shōami school*  
(Mid Edo period: 1700~1780)

Arabesque design on iron with  
crosshatched gold inlay



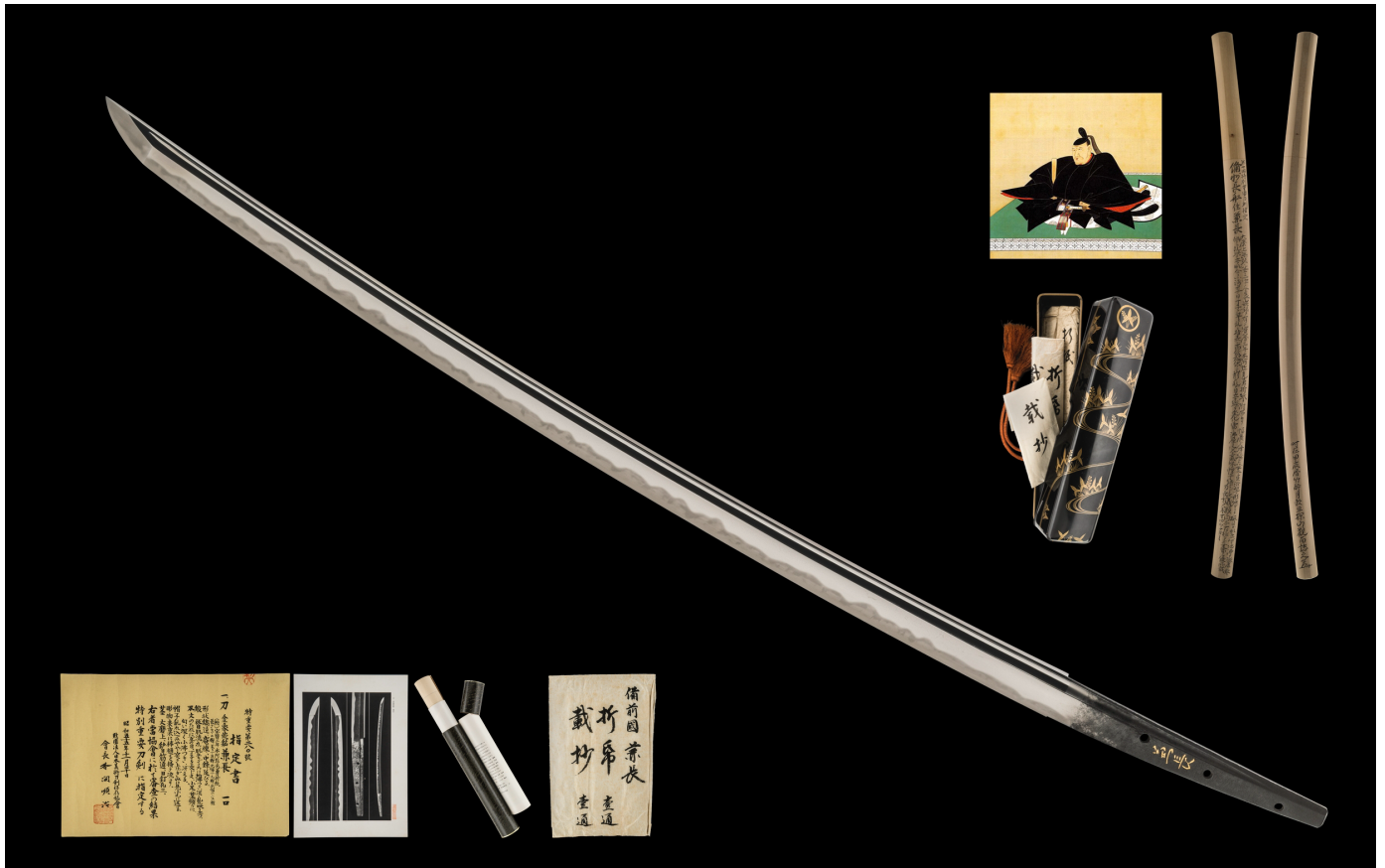


The *Nishigaki* and *Bizen-Shôami* schools meet in gold-inlay harmony.





Koshirae bag



ITEM# UJKA455

## A KENCHÔ KATANA

UNSIGNED WITH KINZÔGAN-MEI, NAMBOKUCHÔ (JÔJI ERA: 1362~1368)

<b>Swordsmith:</b>	<i>Bizen Osafune Kenchô (Kanenaga, first generation)</i>
<b>Measurements:</b>	<b>Length:</b> 71.0cm ( <i>ô-suriage</i> ) <b>Sori:</b> 1.5cm <b>Moto-haba:</b> 2.96cm <b>Weight:</b> 770g
<b>Jihada:</b>	<i>Beautiful itame mixed with nagare with sparkling ji-nie and a faint midare-utsuri</i>
<b>Hamon:</b>	<i>Wavy notare in ko-nie-deki, wide, clear nioiguchi mixed with gunome, chôji, larger dimensioned midare elements, many ko-ashi and yô, and with sunagashi</i>
<b>Certificate:</b>	<b>7th NBTHK Tokubetsu Jûyô</b> (An Especially Precious and Important sword)
<b>Fujishiro rank:</b>	<b>Jô-saku</b> (ranked as a superior swordsmith)
<b>Sharpness:</b>	<b>Ô-Wazamono</b> (maker of extremely sharp swords)
<b>Provenance:</b>	<i>Sword was gifted by the ninth shogun Tokugawa Ieshige to Lord Masatsune in 1753</i>
<b>Authentication:</b>	<b>Origami by Hon'ami Kôyû</b> (dated to 1753)
<b>Authentication:</b>	<b>Sayagaki by Tanobe-sensei</b> (Tanobe Michihiro)
<b>Included:</b>	Shirasaya, fabric bag, stand, kit, printed description, origami & antique box

**SOLD**

This exceptional katana from the warring *Nambokuchô* period is attributed to *Kenchô* (also known as *Kanenaga*), the celebrated pupil of *Chôgi*. The blade represents a masterful blend of *Bizen* and *Sôshû* traditions, exemplifying the rare and coveted *Sôden Bizen* style of workmanship. The *nakago* features a gold-inlaid *kinzôgan-mei* signature and comes with *origami* from *Hon'ami Kôyû* dated 1753, assessing its value at 15 gold coins. That same year, the ninth shogun *Tokugawa Ieshige* presented this actual katana as a gift to *Lord Asano Munetsune* upon his succession as head of the *Asano* clan. This is a precious sword worthy of a place amongst the most prestigious *nihontô* collections.





Saki-kasane: 5.0mm

Moto-kasane: 6.3mm

Omosa: 770g

Kissaki: 4.33cm

Saki-haba: 2.17cm

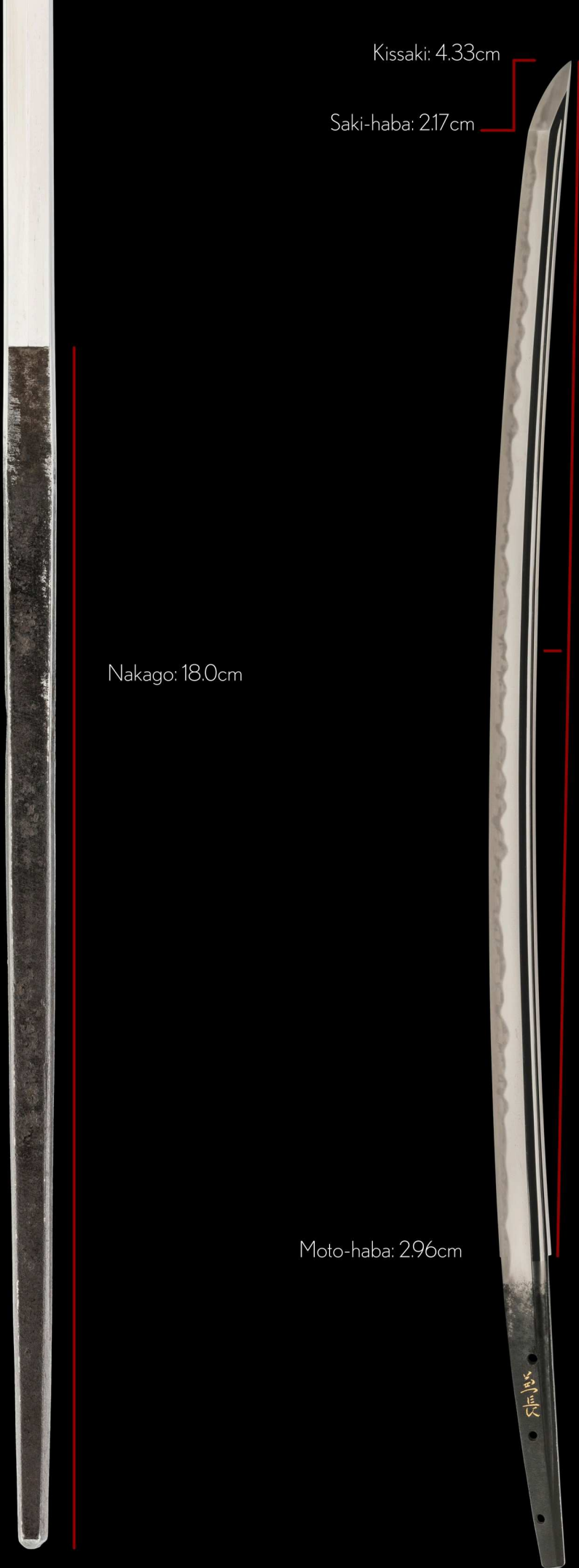
Nakago: 18.0cm

Moto-haba: 2.96cm

Nagasa: 71.0cm

Sori: 1.50cm

Mekugi-ana: 3



The following text is a summation of *Kenchô*'s historical background and synopsis of its very early 7th NBTHK *Tokubetsu Jûyô Tôken* certificate issued in 1980 that highlights the virtues of this prestigious katana.

Tradition has it that *Kanenaga*, whose name can also be read *Kenchô*, was the son of *Nagashige*, who is said to have either been the father, or the older brother of *Chôgi*. Another tradition sees him as son of *Kaneshige*, who is believed to have been the younger brother of *Chôgi*. Kanenaga became a student of *Chôgi*, and it is safe to assume that all these smiths worked closely together, with *Chôgi* as head of the forge.

Existing signed works of Kanenaga are extremely rare, but there is a wakizashi dated *Jôji* five (1366), which is designated as a *Jûyô-Bijutsuhin*, one *tantô* that passed *Jûyô* that is dated *Shitoku* four (1387), and one *tantô* that passed *Tokubetsu-Jûyô* which is dated *Kakyô* two (1388). Accordingly, we can narrow down Kanenaga's active period to mid to late *Nanbokuchô* period.

The style of Kanenaga was very close to *Chôgi*, meaning a workmanship that is based on the Bizen tradition, but also prominently enriched with elements from the *Sôshû* tradition, an approach that is traditionally referred to as *Sôden-Bizen*. Some of his blades emphasize *nie* even more than *Chôgi*.

This blade bears the *kinzôgan-mei* (gold inlaid signature) "*Kanenaga*" and is accompanied by an origami issued by *Hon'ami Kôyû* (1704~1770) in *Hôreki* three (1753), in which he evaluates the blade with 15 gold coins. Furthermore, it can be definitively stated that this sword was gifted in 1753 by the ninth shogun Lord *Tokugawa Ieshige* to Lord *Asano Munetsune* on the occasion of succeeding as head of the *Asano* family and entering for the first time his domain plus receiving the rank of Chamberlain and Fourth Court Rank Second Class.

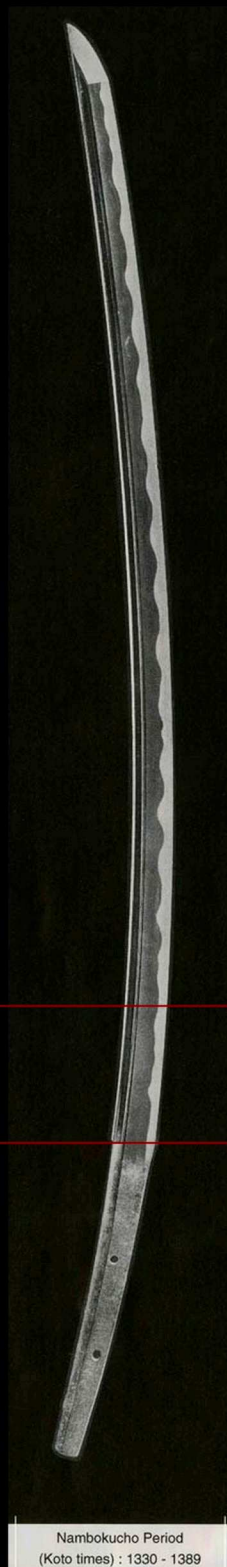
This sword's majestic shape with a wide *mihaba* and prominently elongated *kissaki* is typical for the *Nanbokuchô* period. With Kencho's unique flamboyant interpretation of the *jiba*, we have here a particularly excellent work of all blades attributed to *Kanenaga*. According to the NBTHK, this blade appears to have been once an *ôdachi* with a *nagasa* of more than three *shaku* (90.9cm).





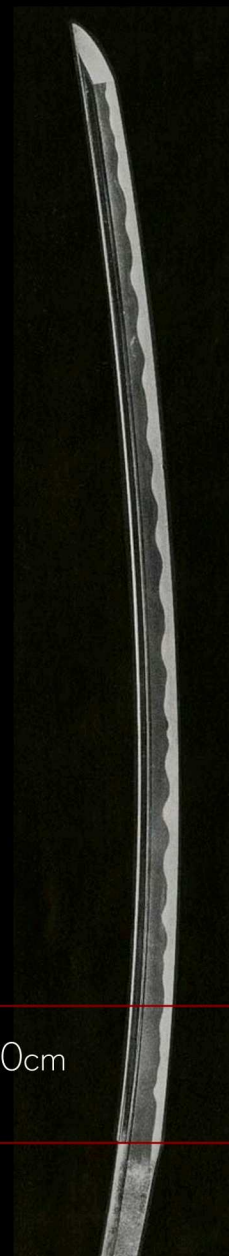


original  
signature



~20cm

*o-suriage nakago*  
(greatly shortened)



*Kanenaga  
TokuJu katana*



Nambokucho Period  
(Koto times) : 1330 - 1389

This katana was crafted during the tumultuous *Nambokucho period*, circa 1362~1368. The original cutting edge would have been about 90cm and called an *ôdachi*.

Very few of these long and imposing blades have survived in their original length. Later generations of samurai had them shortened (*o-suriage nakago*) to a convenient size for everyday wear thus losing any signature in the process.

Above is an example of a sword from the Nambokucho period. Note how through the shortening process it has attained its current powerful shape.



Location: *Bizen province*

Village: *Osafune*

Swordsmith: *Kenchô*

*Kinzôgan mei*, gold inscription by *Ho'nami Kôyû*

*ô-suriage-nakago* (greatly shortened tang)

*sujikai-yasurime* (diagonal file marks)

兼 (Ken)

長 (chô)



The *Hon'ami* family were the official sword appraisers and polishers of the shogunate. They also issued origami appraisals for blades.

This katana has origami appraised by *Hon'ami Kôyû* dated to 1753.

永  
正  
三  
年  
五月  
廿  
三  
日  
鑑  
定  
金  
剛

The 14th generation of the *Hon'ami* mainline was held by *Kôchû*'s son *Kôyû* who was born in the first year of *Hôei* era (1704) and died on December 23, 1770 in the tenth year of *Hôreki* era at the age of 57.



The nakago features *kaki-nagashi* - grooves that extend to the middle of the butt end of the tang.

(*ura*, reverse)





一刀金象嵌銘兼長一口

(附) 宝曆三年本阿弥光勇折紙  
長<sub>子</sub>七〇糎 及び一五糎 元幅二九糎 先幅二五糎

形状鑄造庵棟中鋒延びる

鍛  
楮肌流水肌辛ミろに地沸ミ淡く影映り立つ

又文のたれに互の目、丁子を交じえ、小足、葉焼りに

白い深く小沸つき、  
牙える。

帽子カッパ乱カ丸カ込カみカやカやカ突カきカ上カけカみカにカ先カ小カ丸カにカ返カるカ

彫物表裏に棒樋を搔き流す

莖大磨上、釵目筋違、目釘孔三

右者當協會に於て審査の結果

特別重要刀剣に指定する

昭和五年十一月二十日

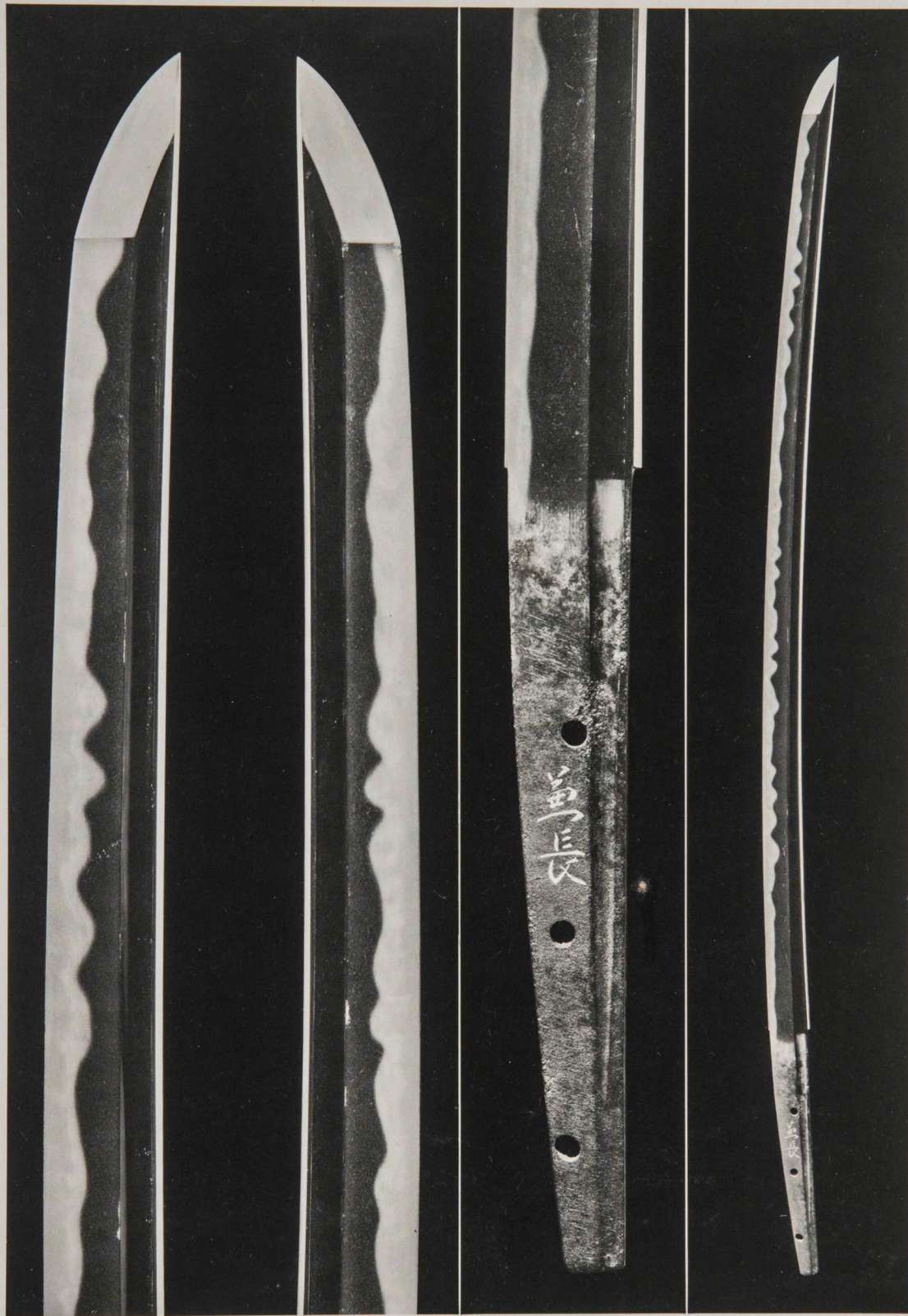
財團法人日本美術刀劍保存協會

會長 本間順治



[President] Honma Junji (本間順治)

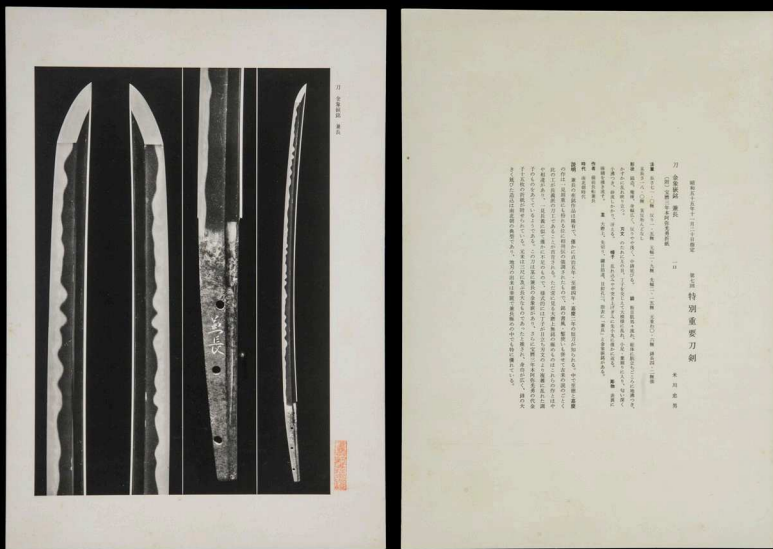




刀  
金象嵌銘  
兼長







Translation of the reverse side of the white paper

Tokubetsu-Jûyô Certificate at the 7th Tokubetsu-Jûyô Shinsa held on November 20, 1980

Katana, kinzôgan-mei: Kanenaga (兼長)  
with Hon'ami Kôyû origami in the third year of Hôreki era (1753)

#### Measurements

nagasa 71.0cm, sori 1.5cm, motohaba 2.9cm, sakihaba 2.15cm, moto-kasane 0.6cm,  
kissaki-nagasa 4.2 cm, nakago-nagasa 18.0 cm, almost no nakago-sori

#### Description

Keijô: *shinogi-zukuri*, *iori-mune*, wide *mihaba*, relatively shall *sori*, elongated *chû-kissaki*

Kitae: standing-out *itame* that is mixed with some *nagare* in places featuring *ji-nie* and a faint *midare-utsuri*

Hamon: *notare* in *ko-nie-deki* with a wide and clear *nioiguchi* that is mixed with *gunome*, *chôji*, larger dimensioned *midare* elements, many *ko-ashi* and *yô* with *sunagashi*

Bôshi: *midare-komi* and has a brief and rather late starting *ko-maru-kaeri*

Horimono: on both sides a *bôhi* that runs as *kaki-nagashi* into the tang

Nakago: *ô-suriage*, *sujikai-yasurime*, three *mekugi-ana*, *sashi-omote* side bears the above *kinzôgan-mei*

#### Artisan

Osafune Kanenaga from Bizen province

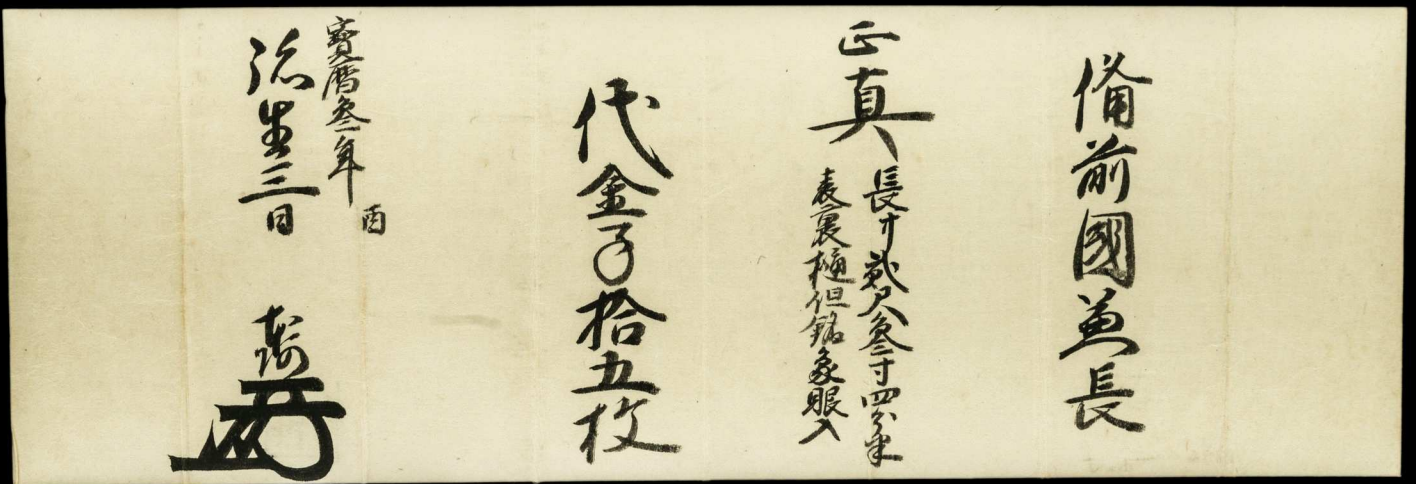
#### Era

Nambokuchô period

#### Summary

Signed works of Kanenaga (兼長), whose name can also be read as "Kenchô" are rare, but we do know of a few *tantô* that are dated Jôji five (1366), *Shitoku* four (1387), and *Kakyô* two (1388). The latter two blades place a noticeable emphasis on the *Sôshû* tradition and can be confused with works of *Norishige* (則重) at first glance, but in terms of overall signature style and the way the *mei* is chiselled, the old tradition that the smith belonged to the school of *Chôgi* (長義) appears to be correct. The *ô-suriage mumei* blades attributed to Kanenaga that are commonly seen differ from signed works and are similar to *Chôgi*, although slightly inferior in make, and rather than featuring a hamon with a prominent amount of *chôji*, the hardening is based on a more complex *midare*.

This blade bears the *kinzôgan-mei* "Kanenaga" and is accompanied by an origami issued by *Honami Kôyû* (本阿弥光勇, 1704~1770) in *Hôreki* three (宝暦, 1753), in which he evaluates the blade with 15 gold coins. It appears that this blade was once an *ôdachi* with a *nagasa* of more than three *shaku* (90.9 cm). Its shape with a wide *mihaba* and prominently elongated *kissaki* is typical for the *Nambokuchô* period. With the flamboyant interpretation of the *jiba*, we have here a particularly excellent work of all blades attributed to *Kanenaga*.



備前國兼長  
*Bizen no Kuni Kanenaga/Kenchô*  
 Kanenaga/Kenchô from Bizen Province

正真 (*Shôshin*, Authentic)

長サ貳尺参寸四分余  
*Nagasa ni-shaku san-sun yon-bu yo*  
 Blade length ~ 71.0 cm

表裏樋但銘象嵌入  
*Hyôri hi tadashi mei zôgan hairi*  
*Hi* on both sides and name of maker inlaid in gold

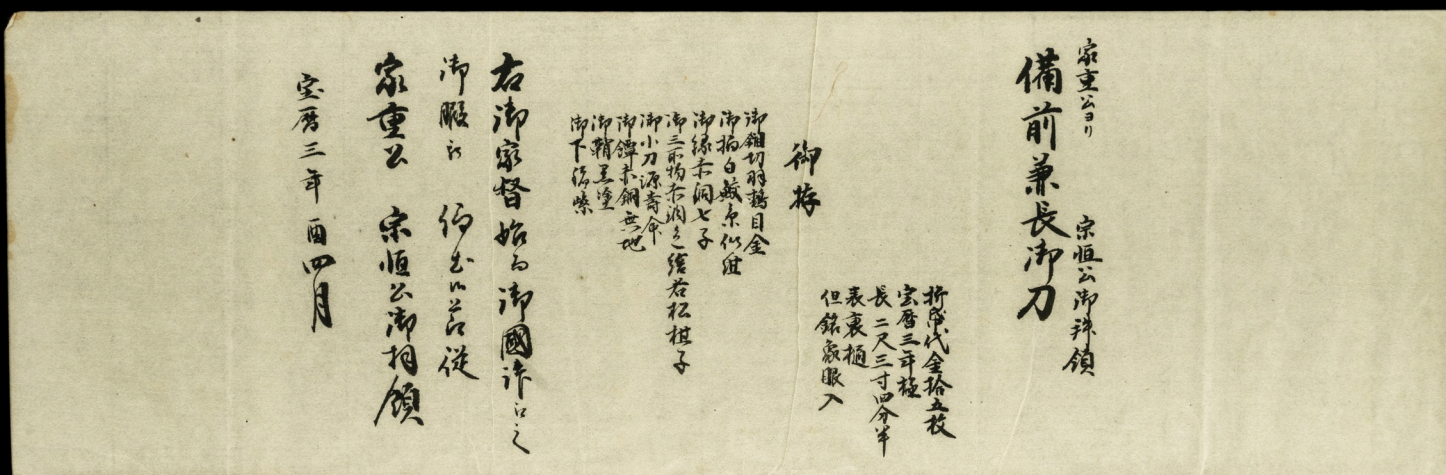
代金子拾五枚  
*Dai-kinsu jûgo-mai*  
 Value 15 gold pieces

宝曆参年酉弥生三日本阿「花押」  
*Hôreki sannen tori Yayoi mikka Hon'a + kaô*  
 Hôreki three (1753), Year of the Rooster  
 Third month, third day  
*Hon'a + monogram*



Origami certificates are safely stored in an antique lacquered box with the *Fukushima daimyô* family crest.





## Formal Gift Certification Origami

On the occasion of succeeding as head of the *Asano* family and entering for the first time his domain, and also receiving the rank of Chamberlain and Fourth Court Rank Second Class, this sword was presented to *Lord Asano Munetsune* by *Lord Tokugawa Ieshige*.

Dated fourth month in the third year of *Hôreki* era (April 1753), Year of the Rooster.

家重公ヨリ宗恒公御拝領

*Ieshige-kô yori Munetsune kô gohairyô*

Given by Lord [Tokugawa] *Ieshige* to Lord [Asano] *Munetsune*

備前兼長御刀

*Bizen Kanenaga ontô*

Katana by Bizen Kanenaga/Kenchô

折紙代金拾五枚

宝曆三年極

長二尺三寸四分半

表裏樋

但象嵌眼入

*Origami daikin jûgomai*

*Hôreki sannen kiwame*

*Nagasa 2-shaku 3-sun 4-bu han*

*Hyôri hi, tadashi zôganmei iri*

With origami from the third year of *Hôreki* era (1753)

With a value of 15 gold coins

*Nagasa* ~71.0cm

*Hi* (groove) on both sides

Name of maker inlaid in gold

Third month, third day - *Hon'a* + monogram

御拵

御鑢切羽鴈目金

御柄白鮫糸色紺

御縁赤銅七子

御三所物赤銅色絵若松柑子

御小刀源寿命

御鐔赤銅無地

御鞘黒塗

御下緒紫

*Koshirae (with the following honourable fittings)*

*Habaki seppa hatome kin*

*Tsuka shirozame ito ito kon*

*Fuchi shakudô nanako*

*Mitokoromono shakudô iroe wakamatsu kôji*

*Kogatana Minamoto Jumyô*

*Tsuba shakudô muji*

*Saya kuronuri*

*Sageo murasaki*

*Accompanied koshirae*

*Habaki, seppa, and shitodome* of gold

Hilt covered with white *samekawa* (ray skin) and wrapped in navy blue silk

*Fuchi* of *shakudô* with *nanako* ground

*Mitokoromono* of *shakudô* with *iroe*, depicting young pines and *kôji* oranges

*Kogatana* (knife) signed by *Minamoto Jumyô*

*Tsuba* of *shakudô* and unsigned

*Saya* lacquered black gloss

*Sageo* purple



Origami envelope from 1753  
Traditional washi paper

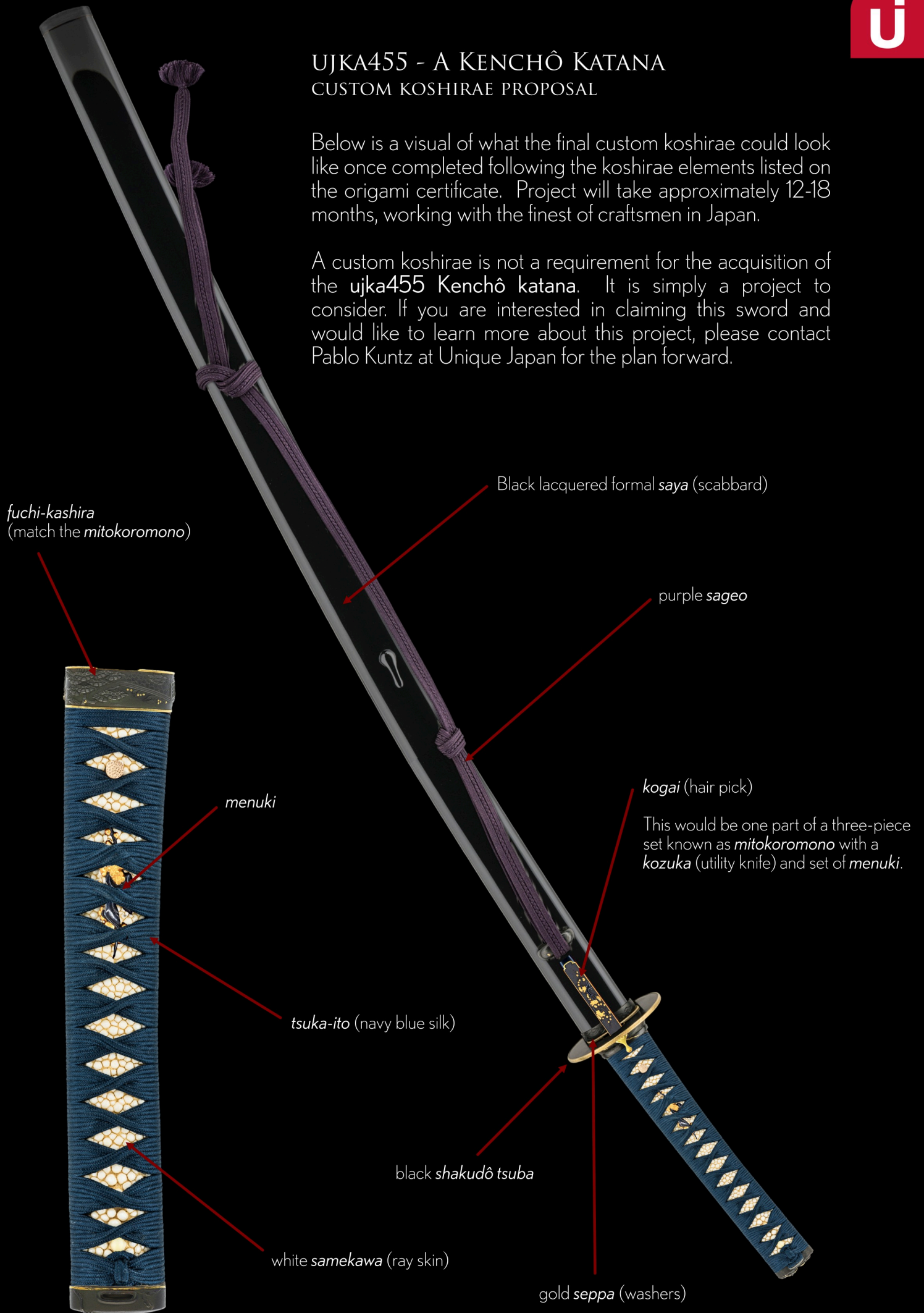
A set of *koshirae* originally accompanied this *Kenchô* katana when it was presented to *Lord Masatsune*. For the next owner, Unique Japan can commission a custom set of *koshirae* using period fittings, crafted to closely replicate the original *koshirae*. See next page for details.

## UJKA455 - A KENCHÔ KATANA

### CUSTOM KOSHIRAE PROPOSAL

Below is a visual of what the final custom koshirae could look like once completed following the koshirae elements listed on the origami certificate. Project will take approximately 12-18 months, working with the finest of craftsmen in Japan.

A custom koshirae is not a requirement for the acquisition of the **ujka455 Kenchô katana**. It is simply a project to consider. If you are interested in claiming this sword and would like to learn more about this project, please contact Pablo Kuntz at Unique Japan for the plan forward.





Sword researcher Markus Sesko discovered evidence of this precious gift from the Tokugawa Chronicles.

年四月 六百二十八

重賢をはじめ参観廿四人。(日記)○十六日勘定吟味役神尾忠藏幸之が子伊右衛門道器父の蔭により。大番より兩番にうつる。松平加賀守重熙卒去しければ。奏者番松平紀伊守信岑昂慰の御使して。其養子松平上總介利見に銀五十枚たまはり。香火の奠とせらる。(日記)○十七日紅葉山に。大納言殿と共に御詣あり。宿老。少老例のごとく豫参して。阿部能登守正敏。小堀和泉守政峯等の五位三十人行列し。先導は酒井雅樂頭忠恭。御簾は松平右近將監武元。御太刀前田信濃守長泰。御刀は赤井安藝守忠晶。御沓は平塚伊賀守爲政役し。大納言殿御簾は秋元但馬守涼明。御太刀は堀川兵部大輔廣益。御刀は松平主計頭乘季。御沓は奥田山城守忠祇役し。紀伊宰相宗將卿。尾張中將宗睦卿陪拜せらる。(日記)○十八日臨時の朝會あり。藤堂和泉守高豊を始め就封三十八人。松平伊豫守宗政。松平安藝守宗恒。南郡信濃守利雄。相良志摩守賴峯は初てなり。伊豫守宗政には城州國行の御刀たまひ。安藝守宗恒には備前兼長の御刀をたまふ。佐渡奉行脇坂主計安繁赴仕のいとまたまはる。けふ奈良奉行石黒日向守易慎田安家老となり。目付神尾市左衛門元壽奈良奉行となり。使番岡部久太郎元良目付となる。きのふ右衛門督宗武卿第四子乙菊世を早ふせしにより。三家本城に使して御氣色伺はる。(日記)○廿日東叡山 大猷院殿靈廟に詣させたまふ。堀田相摸守正亮。本多伯耆守正珍。松平右近

Hi Pablo,

Wow, actually did find the reference in the *Tokugawa Chronicles* (*Tokugawa Jikki*). As highlighted in [red] in the attached pic, the *Shōgun Ieshige* gifted *Aki no Kami Munetsune* on the 18th day of the fourth month of *Hōreki* three (April 18, 1753) with a katana by *Bizen Kanenaga/Kenchō*."

Nice provenance!

Best regards,  
Markus



Tokugawa Ieshige (Jan 28, 1712 - July 13, 1761)  
Ninth shōgun of the Tokugawa shogunate

第七回特別重要刀剣指定

*Dai nana-kai Tokubetsu-Jûyô Tôken shitei*

Tokubetsu-Jûyô Tôken at the 7th Tokubetsu-Jûyô Shinsa

備州長船住兼長

*Bishû Osafune-jû Kenchô*

Kenchô, resident of Osafune in Bizen Province

大磨上無銘ノ茎ニ二字ノ金象嵌銘ヲ有シ寶曆三年本阿弥光勇折紙ヲ附帶セリ幅廣デ鋒ノ延ビル延文・貞治型ノ形態ナリテ板目ガ肌立心ニ地沸ヲ微塵ニ敷キ幽カニ乱映ノ立ツ肌合ニ小湾・互乃目・丁子ガ草ニ乱レ指表ハ高低起伏アル山形ノ乱ガ目立チ変化ニ富ミ沸厚ク突上気味ノ帽子ニ結ブナド長義一類ノ同エノ古極ハメハ妥當ナル優品哉

*Ô-suriage mumei no nakago ni niji no kinzôgan o ari-shi, Hôreki sannen Hon'ami Kôyû origami ga futaiseri. Haba-hiro de kissaki no nobiru Enbun-Jôji-kei no keitai narite itame ga hadadachi-gokoro ni ji-nie o mijin ni shiki kasuka ni midare-utsuri no tatsu hada-ai ni ko-notare, gunome, chôji ga sô no midare sashiomote wa kôtei kifuku aru yamagata no midare ga medachi henka ni tomi nie atsuku tsukiage-gimi no bôshi ni musubu nado Chôgi ichirui no dôkô no ko-kiwame wa datô naru yûhin kana*

This blade is ô-suriage mumei, bears a two-character gold inlaid attribution on its tang, and is accompanied by an origami issued by *Hon'ami Kôyû* (本阿弥光勇, 1704-1770) in *Hôreki* three (1753). The blade has a wide *mihaba* and an elongated *kissaki* and is thus of what is referred to as an *Enbun-Jôji* shape. It displays a forging structure in a standing-out *itame* that features fine *ji-nie* and a faint *midare-utsuri*, and the *hamon* is a *nie-laden* mix of *ko-notare*, *gunome*, and *chôji*, that appears overall as a *sô no midare* ["freely interpreted midare"]. The *sashi-omote* side displays a prominent amount of undulating mountain-shaped *midare* elements and the *ha* is thus rich in variety, and with the rather late starting *kaeri* of the *bôshi*, the attribution of this masterwork to *Kenchô*, whose name is also read *Kanenaga*, within the *Chôgi* group is appropriate.

刃長貳尺參寸四分有之

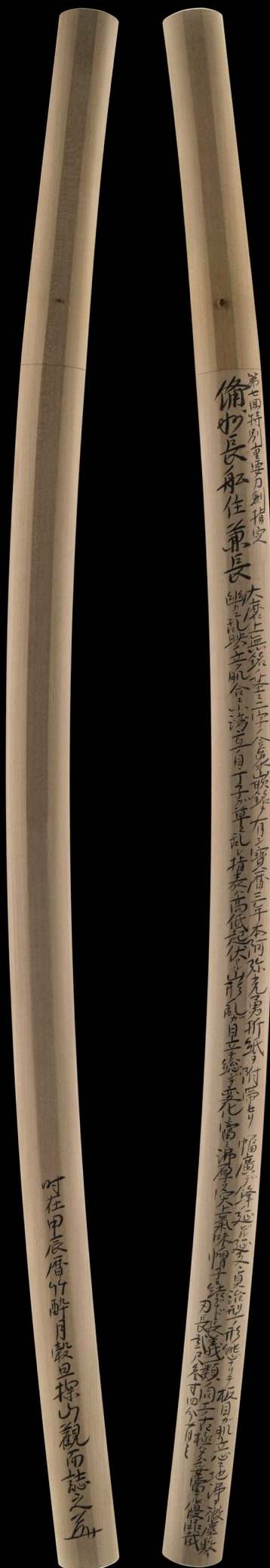
*Hachô ni-shaku san-sun yon-bu kore ari*

Blade length ~ 71.0 cm

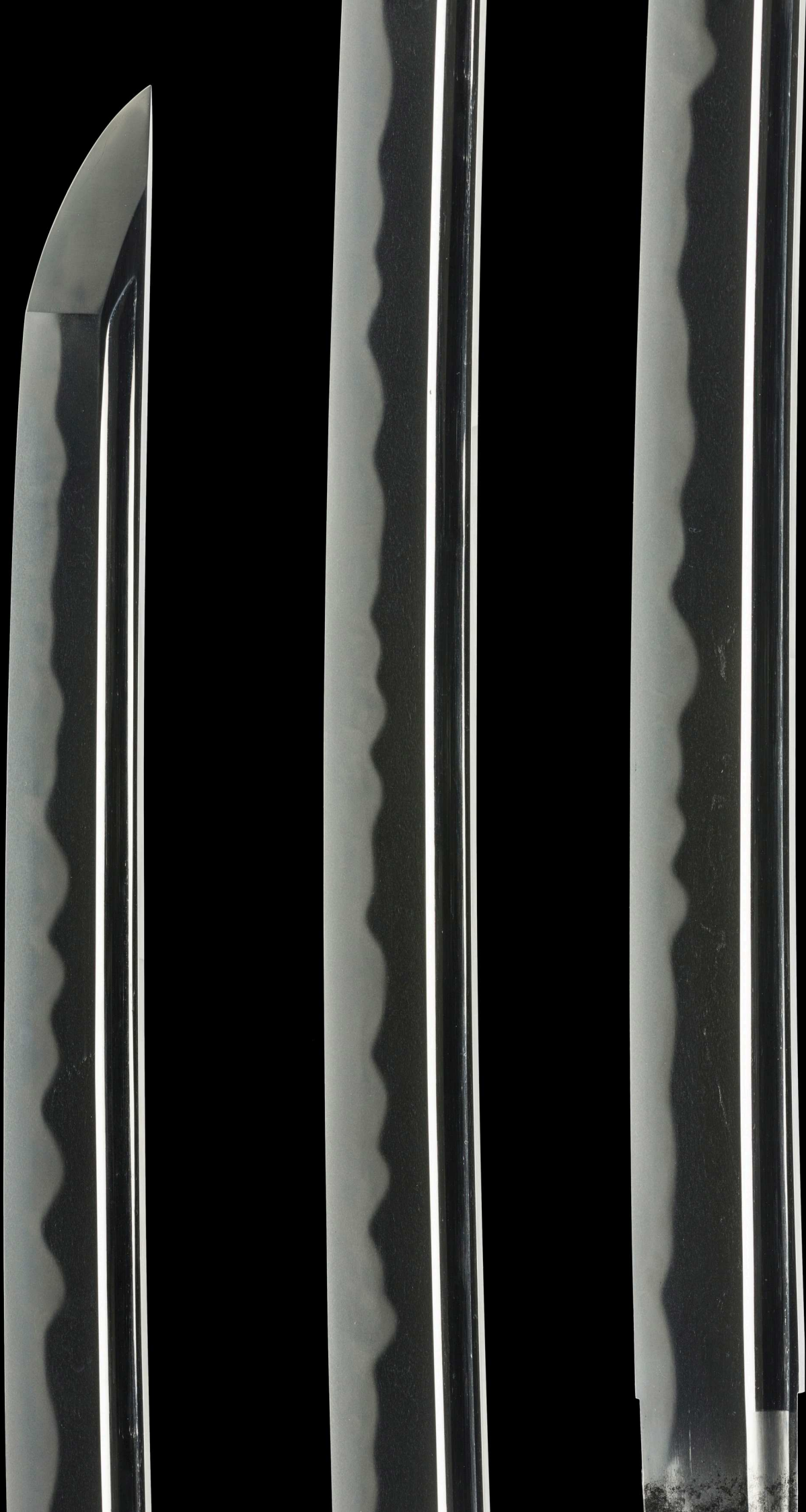
時在甲辰曆竹酔月穀旦探山觀而識之「花押」

*Jizai kinoe-tatsudoshi chikusui-zuki kokutan Tanzan kore o mite narabi ni shirushite + kaô*

Examined and written by Tanzan [Tanobe Michihiro] on a lucky day in September in the Year of the Dragon of this era (2024) + monogram.










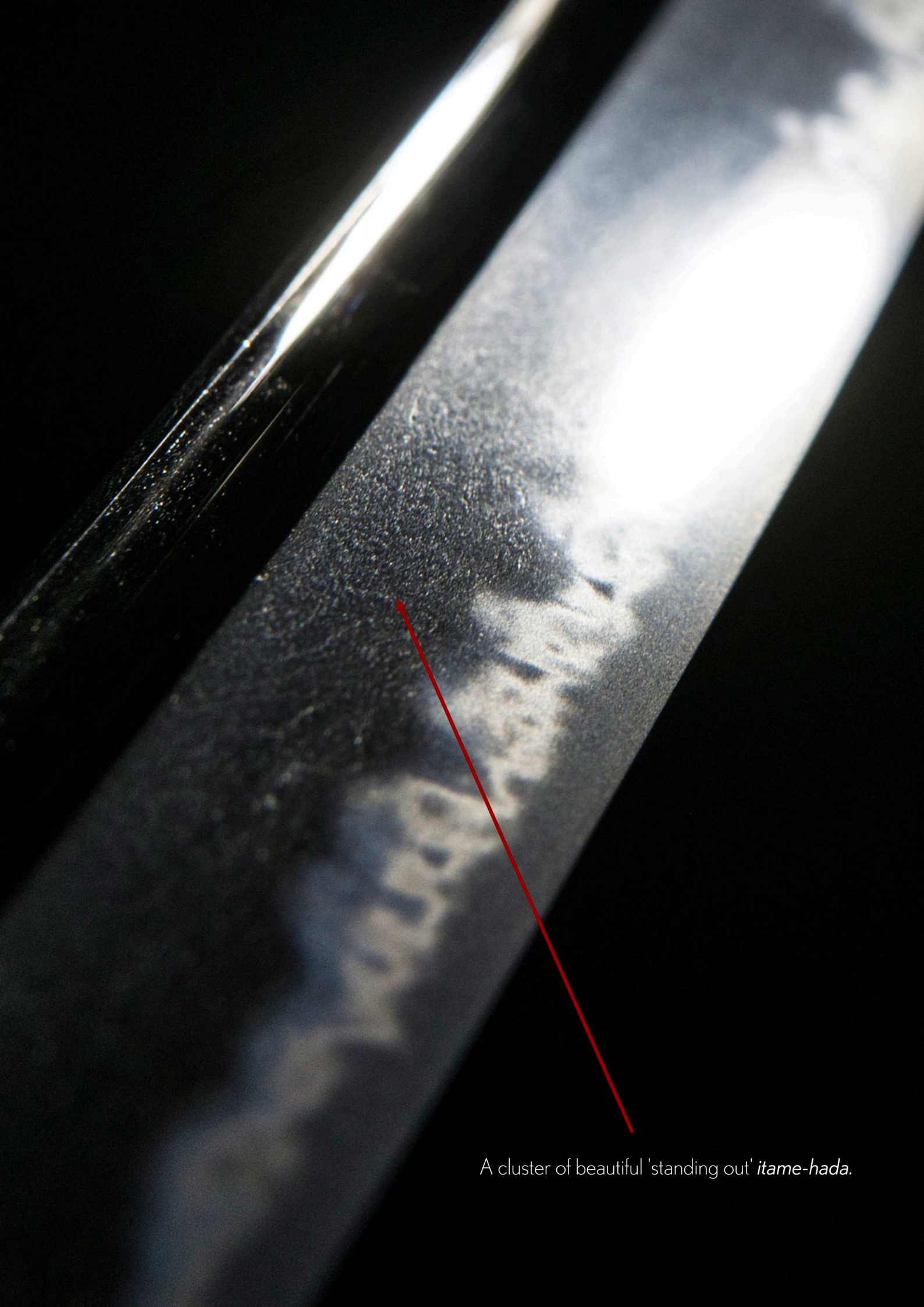


A close-up photograph of the tip of a sword, showing the curved blade and the dark hilt. A red arrow points from the text 'ko-maru kaeri' to the very tip of the blade.

*ko-maru kaeri*

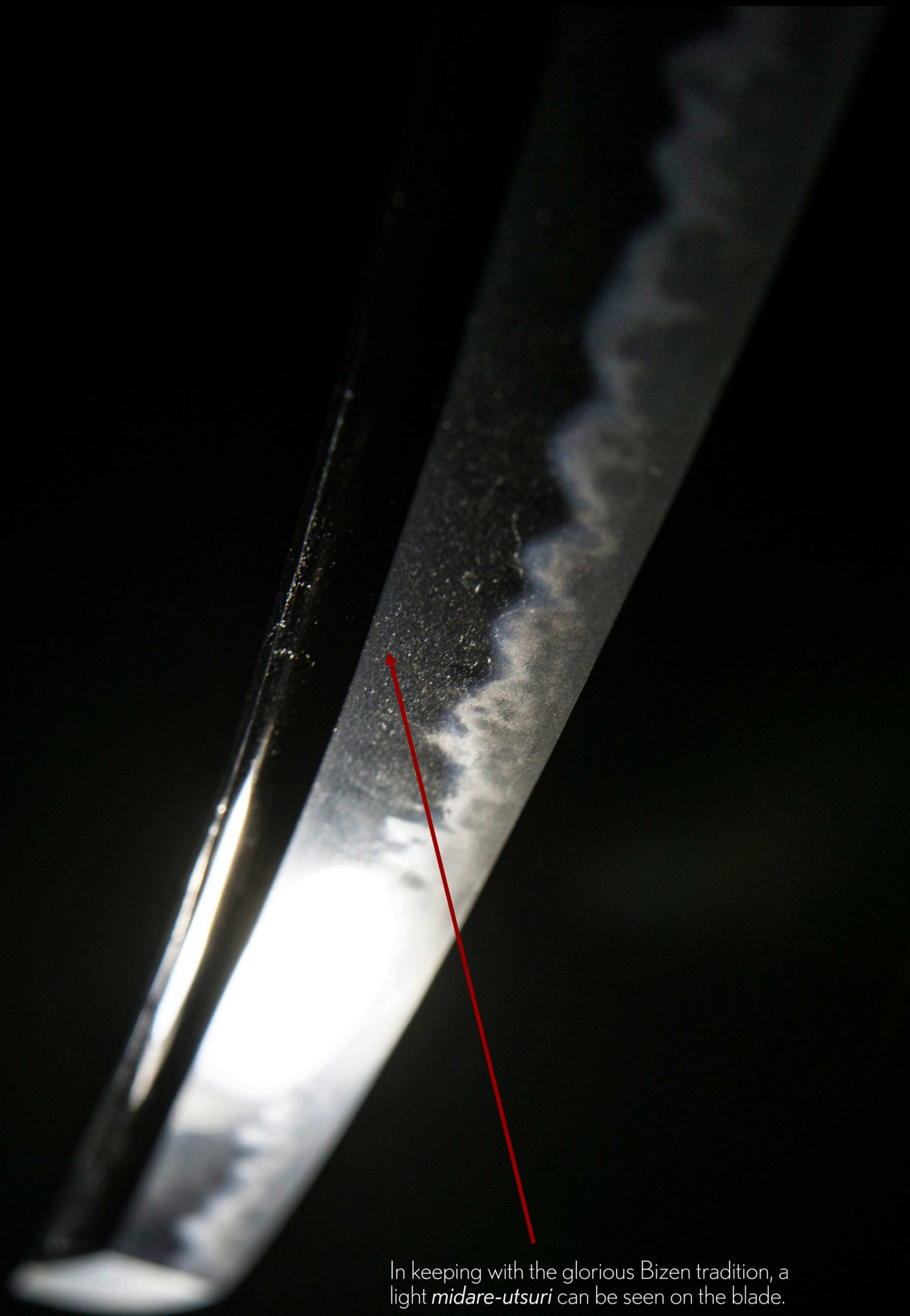
A powerful elongated *chû-kissaki* with a *bôshi* displaying a wavy *midare-komi* and late starting *ko-maru kaeri*.

A close-up photograph of the tip of a sword, showing the curved blade and the dark hilt. A red arrow points from the text 'late starting ko-maru kaeri' to the tip of the blade.



A cluster of beautiful 'standing out' *itame-hada*.





In keeping with the glorious Bizen tradition, a light *midare-utsuri* can be seen on the blade.



Gorgeous *nagare-hada* that streams along.



A close-up, high-contrast photograph of a Japanese sword's blade, focusing on the hamon (temper line). The blade is dark, and the hamon is highlighted by a bright light source, creating a series of white, wavy lines. Two red arrows point from text labels to specific features on the hamon. The background is black.

*chōji*

whips of *midare*

Good view of the mixture of *chōji* (clove buds) and a freely interpreted *midare* (wavy) *hamon*.

A Nambokuchô masterclass.

*ko-nie deki*

A wide, beaming *notare*-based *hamon* in *ko-nie deki* where a universe of tiny crystals shine brightly under the light.

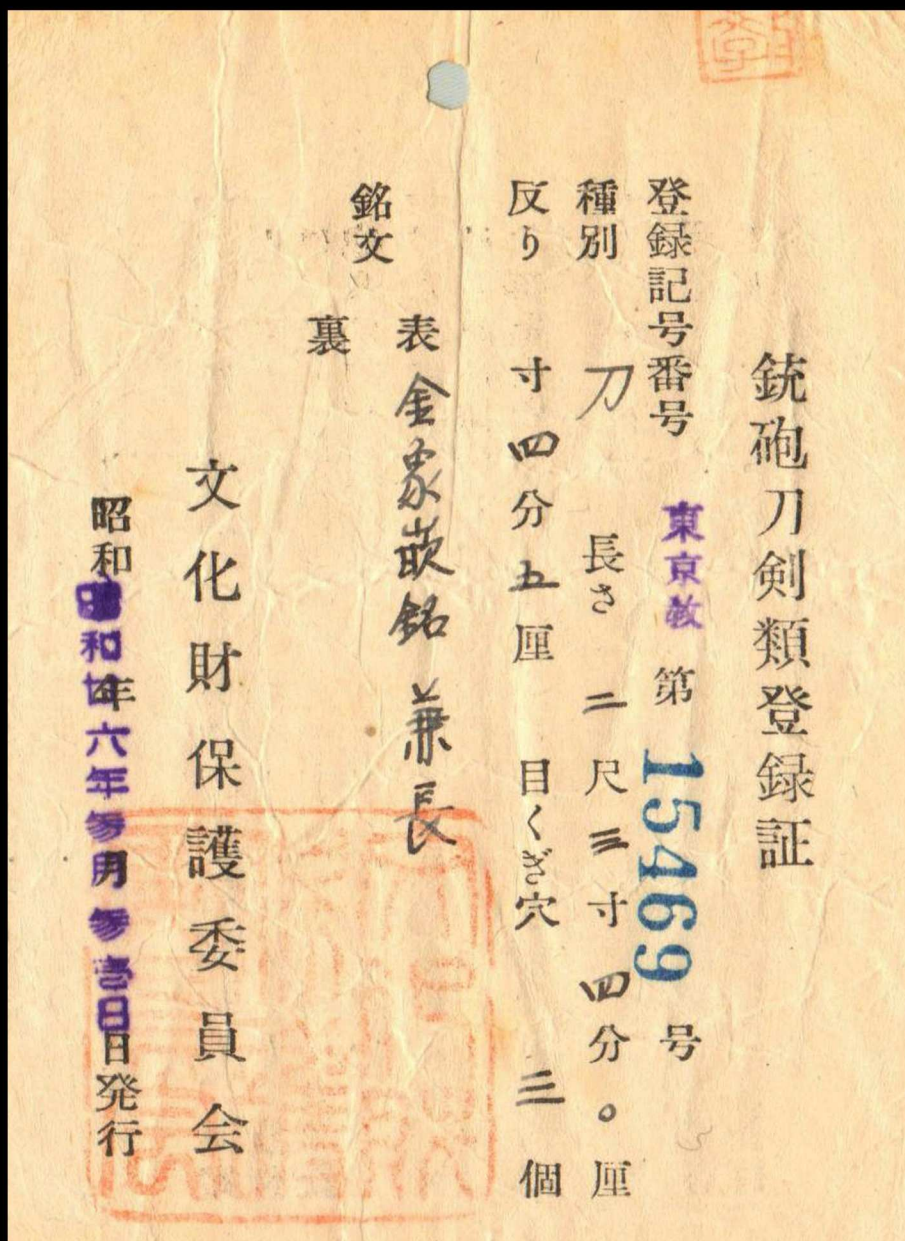
*yô* (leaves)

*tobiyaki* (tempered spots)





The sheer intensity of a top-class *Sôden-Bizen* hamon combining all the energy of the *Sôshû* tradition with the elegance of *Bizen*.

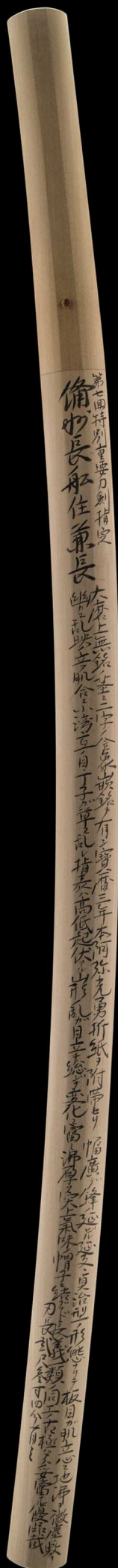


This is the original *torokusho* (registration card) for the *Kenchô/Kanenaga katana*. The card was registered in the 26th year of Showa (1951) in Tokyo, formally known as Edo, the capital of the country.

This is significant as 1951 was the very first year that swords were formally registered in Japan. Many former *daimyô* (great) families were invited to submit their collections suggesting this blade was once held by a prominent family.

The serial number is 15469, one of the very first swords registered in Japan.





*Shirasaya*  
(protective scabbard)



gold *habaki* with  
file marks

Feel the history.





A complimentary sword maintenance kit with *mekugi-nuki* and a bottle of *Fujishiro* sword oil (trusted by the Japanese sword museum) is included with all sword purchases.



safe, extra large cloth for  
adding oil to the blade



ITEM# UJDI013

## A TADAYOSHI/TADAHIRO DAISHŌ

SIGNED, SHINTŌ PERIOD (KEIAN: 1648~1652 & GENROKU: 1688~1704)

**Swordsmith (k):** *Hizen no Kuni jū nin Tadayoshi (4th gen, Hizen province)*  
**Swordsmith: (w):** *Hizen no Kuni jū Fujiwara Tadahiro (2nd gen, Hizen province)*  
**Measurements (k):** Length: 70.4cm (ubu) Curvature: 2.1cm Moto-haba: 2.93cm  
**Measurements (w):** Length: 40.3cm (ubu) Curvature: 1.2cm Moto-haba: 2.9cm  
**Jihada:** *Vibrant mix of itame-hada and konuka-hada with ji-nie and plentiful chikei*  
**Hamon:** *Spectacular gunome-chōji-midare with kinsuji, sunagashi, ashi in nie-deki*  
**Certificate #1:** **3 x NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon** (both swords & daisho koshirae)  
**Fujishiro rank:** **Jōjo-saku (nidai) & Jō-saku (yondai)**  
**Sharpness:** **Ō-Wazamono** (nidai is a maker of extremely sharp swords)  
**Authentication:** **Sayagaki by Nozomi-san** (shodō artist)  
**Included:** Shirasaya, daishō-koshirae, fabric bags, stand, kit, printed description

# SOLD

This remarkable *daishō* pairs a katana by fourth generation *Tadayoshi* with a wakizashi by second generation *Tadahiro*, both masters of the renowned *Tadayoshi* school of Hizen province. The blades display graceful curvature, adorned with a vivid *gunome-chōji-midare* *hamon*, which, on the wakizashi, extends brilliantly towards the *shinogi* line. Outstanding *horimono* also evokes deep spiritual power. An exquisite *daishō koshirae* with a split-lacquer design and an incredible pair of dragonfly *tsubas* along with rain dragon motifs and *cloisonné* enamel is a *samurai* tour de force. Both swords and the *daishō koshirae* have been awarded NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon certification.





Saki-kasane: 4.8mm

Moto-kasane: 6.6mm

Kissaki: 3.51cm

Saki-haba: 2.15cm

Nagasa: 70.4cm

Nakago: 22.0cm

Sori: 21cm

Omosa: 740g

Moto-haba: 2.93cm

Mekugi-ana: 1





Saki-kasane: 4.7mm

Moto-kasane: 6.2mm

Kissaki: 3.72cm

Saki-haba: 2.02cm

Nagasa: 40.3cm

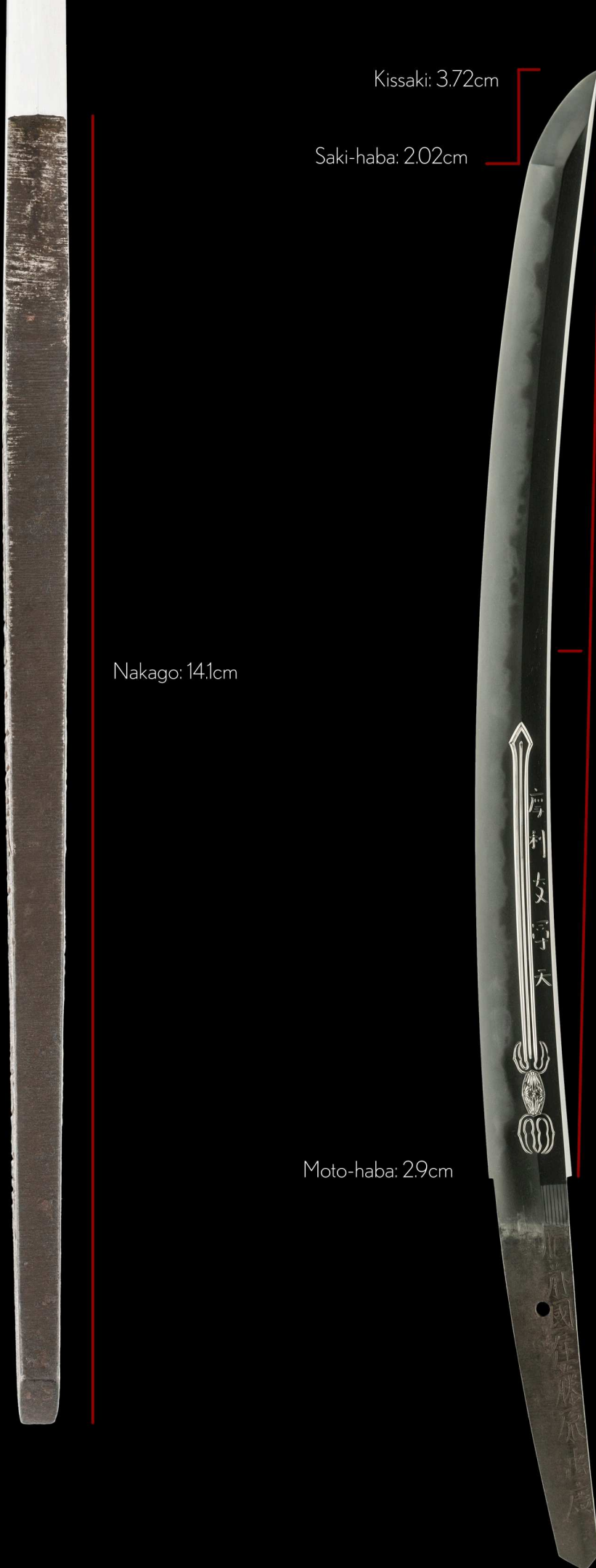
Nakago: 14.1cm

Sori: 1.2cm

Omosa: 405g

Moto-haba: 2.9cm

Mekugi-ana: 1





This remarkable *daishô* pairs a katana by the fourth generation *Tadayoshi* with a wakizashi by the second generation *Tadahiro*, both masters of the renowned *Tadayoshi* school of *Hizen* province in *Kyûshû*. Let us examine the swordsmiths' lineage, followed by a synopsis of the blades and their *daishô koshirae*.

Born *Hashimoto Gensuke* and later known as *Shinzaburô, Yondai* (fourth generation) Tadayoshi was a superior swordsmith from the prestigious Tadayoshi school in Hizen province and the oldest son of talented *sandai* (third generation) Tadayoshi.

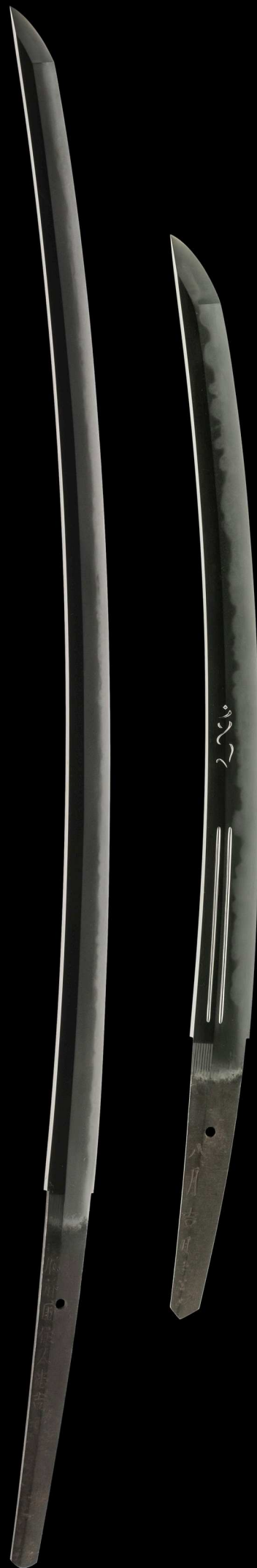
He received the honorary title of *Ômi no Daijô* on March 10, 1700 and after the untimely death of his father (who was just fifty years old), he then trained under his grandfather, *nidai* (second generation) Tadahiro for whom he also made *daisaku* (swords made in the name of his master). He Tadayoshi died on September 9, 1747 at the age of 80.

Born *Hashimoto Heishiro* in 1614, second generation Tadahiro began working with his father, maestro *shodai* (first generation) Tadayoshi at the tender age of ten. Guided by his father and other great smiths such as *shodai Masahiro* and *Yoshinobu*, Tadahiro took over leadership of the school at the age of nineteen when his father died in 1632.

As head of the Tadayoshi school, second generation Tadahiro always signed his name Tadahiro and never Tadayoshi. In July of 1641, only nine years after taking over the Tadayoshi School, he was given the honorific title of *Omi Daijô*. He was only 28.

The blades display graceful curvature, adorned with a vivid *gunome-chôji-midare hamon* pattern, which, on the wakizashi, extends brilliantly across the *jihada* reaching to the *shinogi* line. Fine *horimono* on the Tadahiro wakizashi evokes deep spiritual power.

An exquisite *daishô koshirae* with a unique split-lacquer design and an incredible pair of dragonfly *tsubas* along with rain dragon motifs and cloisonné enamel dotted throughout is a samurai treat for the senses. Both swords AND the *daishô koshirae* have been awarded with NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon certification.



Location: *Hizen province*

Swordsmith: *Tadayoshi* (fourth generation)

*ubu-nakago* (original, unaltered tang)

*kiri-yasurime* (horizontal file marks)

(Hi) 肥

(zen, no) 前

(kuni) 國

(jû) 住

(nin) 人

(Tada) 忠

(yoshi) 吉







one smooth hole in *nakago*

(*ura*, reverse)

*kuirjiri*  
(chestnut shaped *nakago-jiri*)

特保  
06202406



No 1023114

鑑定書

一 刀 銘 肥前国住人忠吉(四代)

長二尺三寸二分強

右は當協會に於て審査の結果特別保存刀剣と  
鑑定しこれを証する

令和六年八月二十三日

公益財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協會



肥前国住人忠吉

埼玉県 教育委員会  
第 4044 号  
昭和26年10月5日

NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon  
Certificate of Designation

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

Issued in the 6th year of Reiwa (2024), August 23rd

One, Katana

*Mei* (signature)

*Hizen no kuni jûnin Tadayoshi (Yondai)*

*Nagasa* (length)

2-shaku 3-sun 2-bu kyô (70.4 cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai  
(NBTHK)



肥前国住人忠吉(四代)

時代元禄頃

二代忠廣ト大小ヲ成ス

刃長貳尺三寸二分強有之

令和七乙巳年正月吉日誌之

肥前国住人忠吉(四代)

*Hizen no kuni jûnin Tadayoshi (yondai)*

Tadayoshi, a resident of Hizen province (the 4th generation)

時代元禄頃

*Jidai Genroku-goro*

Around Genroku period (1688~1704)

二代忠廣ト大小ヲ成ス

*Nidai Tadahiro to daishô o nasu*

Daishô with 2nd generation Tadahiro

刃長貳尺三寸二分強

*Hachô 2-shaku 3-sun 2-bu kyô*

Blade length 70.4 cm

令和七乙巳年正月吉日誌之

*Reiwa nana kinoto-midoshi Shôgatsu kichijitsu kore o shirusu*

Written on a lucky day in the first month in the seventh year of Reiwa era during the Year of the Snake (January 2025)



Location: *Hizen province*

Family name: *Fujiwara*

Swordsmith: *Tadahiro* (second generation)

*ubu-nakago* (original, unaltered tang)

*kiri-yasurime* (horizontal file marks)

肥 (Hi)

前 (zen , no)

國 (kuni)

住 (jû)

藤 (Fuji)

原 (wara)

忠 (Tada)

廣 (hiro)



*Hachigatsu kichijitsu*

Dated on a lucky day in the eighth month

(Hachi) 八

(gatsu) 月

(kichi) 吉

(jitsu) 日

The *nakago-jiri* (butt-end) of the tang comes to a sharp point at the centre.

This type of finish is called *kengyô* or sword-shaped.



06202406



No 1023115



鑑定書

一、脇指 銘

肥前国住藤原忠広(二代)  
八月吉日

長一尺三寸三分

右は當協會に於て審査の結果特別保存刀剣と  
鑑定しこれを証する

令和六年八月二十三日

公益財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協會



埼玉県 教育委員会  
第 4045 号  
昭和26年10月5日

NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon  
Certificate of Designation

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

Issued in the 6th year of Reiwa (2024), August 23rd

One, Wakizashi

*Mei* (signature)

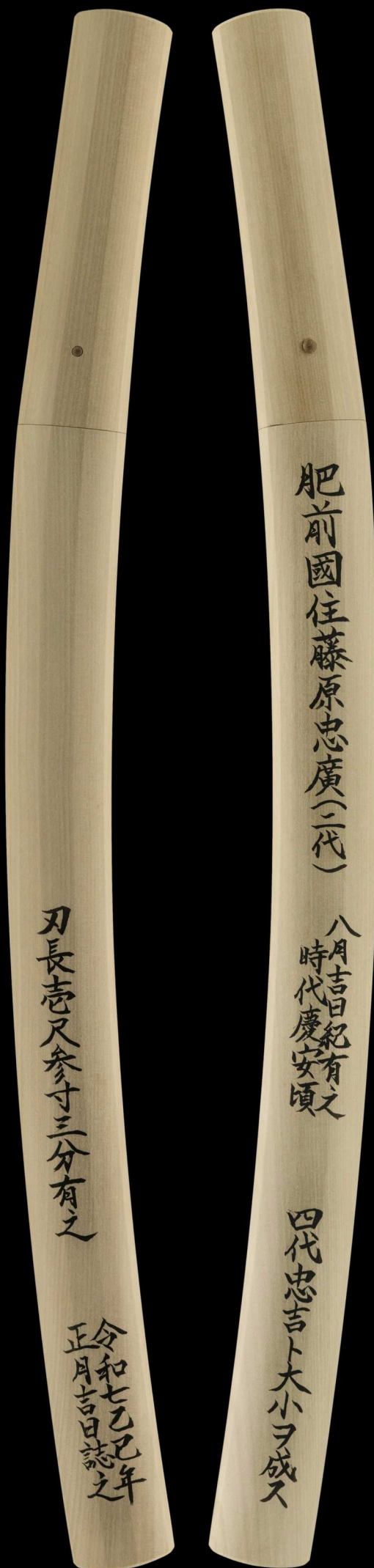
*Hizen no kuni jû Fujiwara Tadahiro (nidai)*  
*Hachigatsu kichijitsu*

*Nagasa* (length)

1-shaku 3-sun 3-bu (40.3 cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai  
(NBTHK)





肥前國住藤原忠廣(二代)

*Hizen no kuni jû Fujiwara Tadahiro (nidai)*

Fujiwara Tadahiro, a resident of Hizen province  
(2nd generation)

八月吉日紀有之

時代慶安頃

*Hachigatsu kichijitsu ki kore ari jidai Keian goro*

Dated on a lucky day in the eighth month, around Keian  
period (1648~1652)

四代忠吉ト大小ヲ成ス

*Yondai Tadayoshi to daishô o nasu*

Daishô with 4th generation Tadayoshi

刃長壹尺参寸三分有之

*Hachô 1-shaku 3-sun 3-bu kore ari*

Blade length 40.3 cm

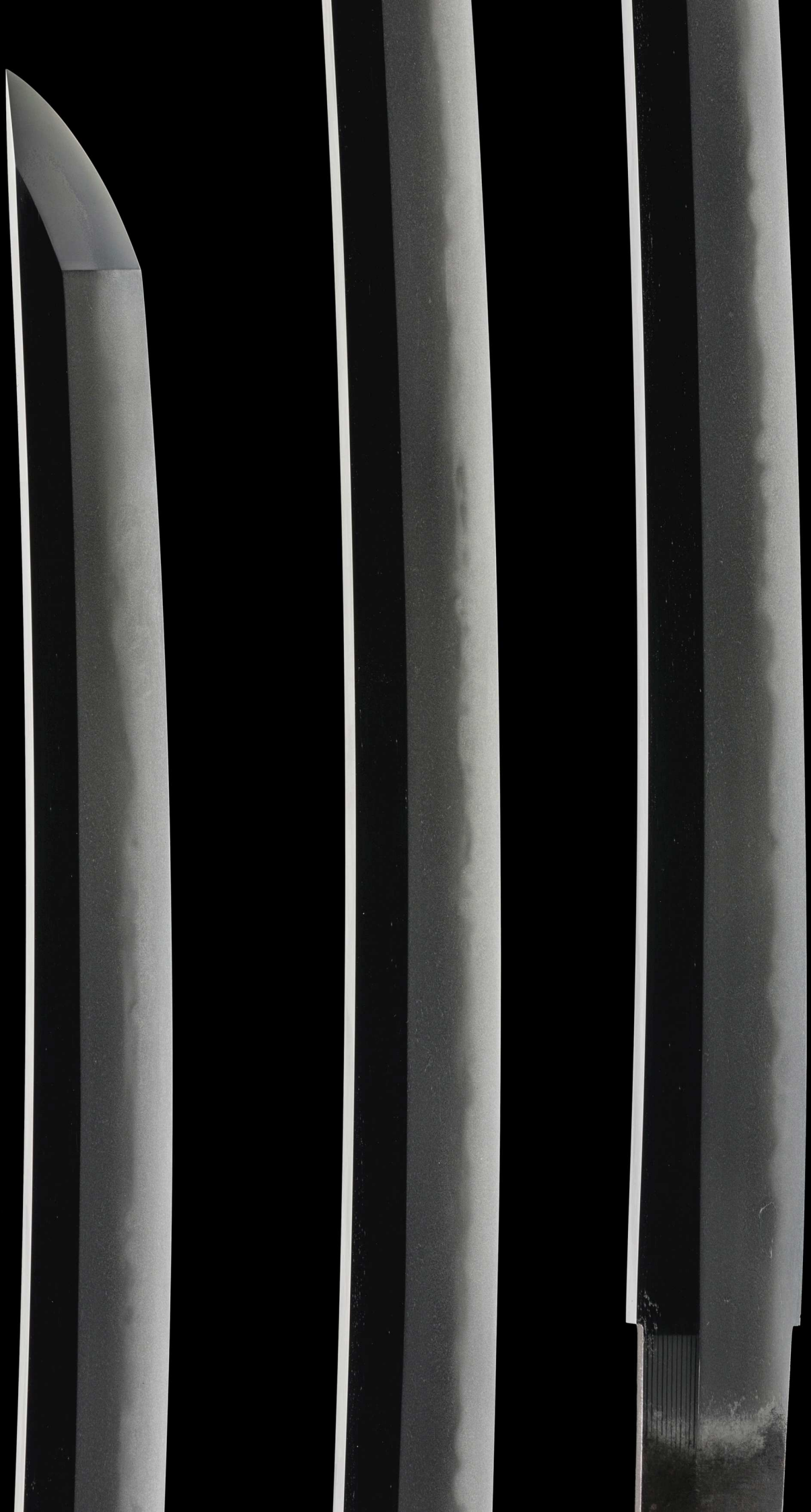
令和七乙巳年正月吉日誌之

*Reiwa nana kinoto-midoshi Shôgatsu kichijitsu kore o  
shirusu*

Written on a lucky day in the first month in the seventh  
year of Reiwa era during the Year of the Snake  
(January 2025)









*hada-ware*

An opening in the jihada that follows a fold, a flaw, but it's stable.





*Sankozuka-ken*, a trident-shaped sword is held by *Fudô Myôô* and is also an esoteric Buddhist tool used for prayer, meditation, purification, and protection from evil spirits. It is said to be used to ward off bad luck and keep evil spirits at bay.



*Sankozuka-ken*



*Marishisonten*, or Marici, meaning "Ray of Light," is a Buddhist deity and bodhisattva associated with light and the Sun. Marici is considered as a goddess of war.







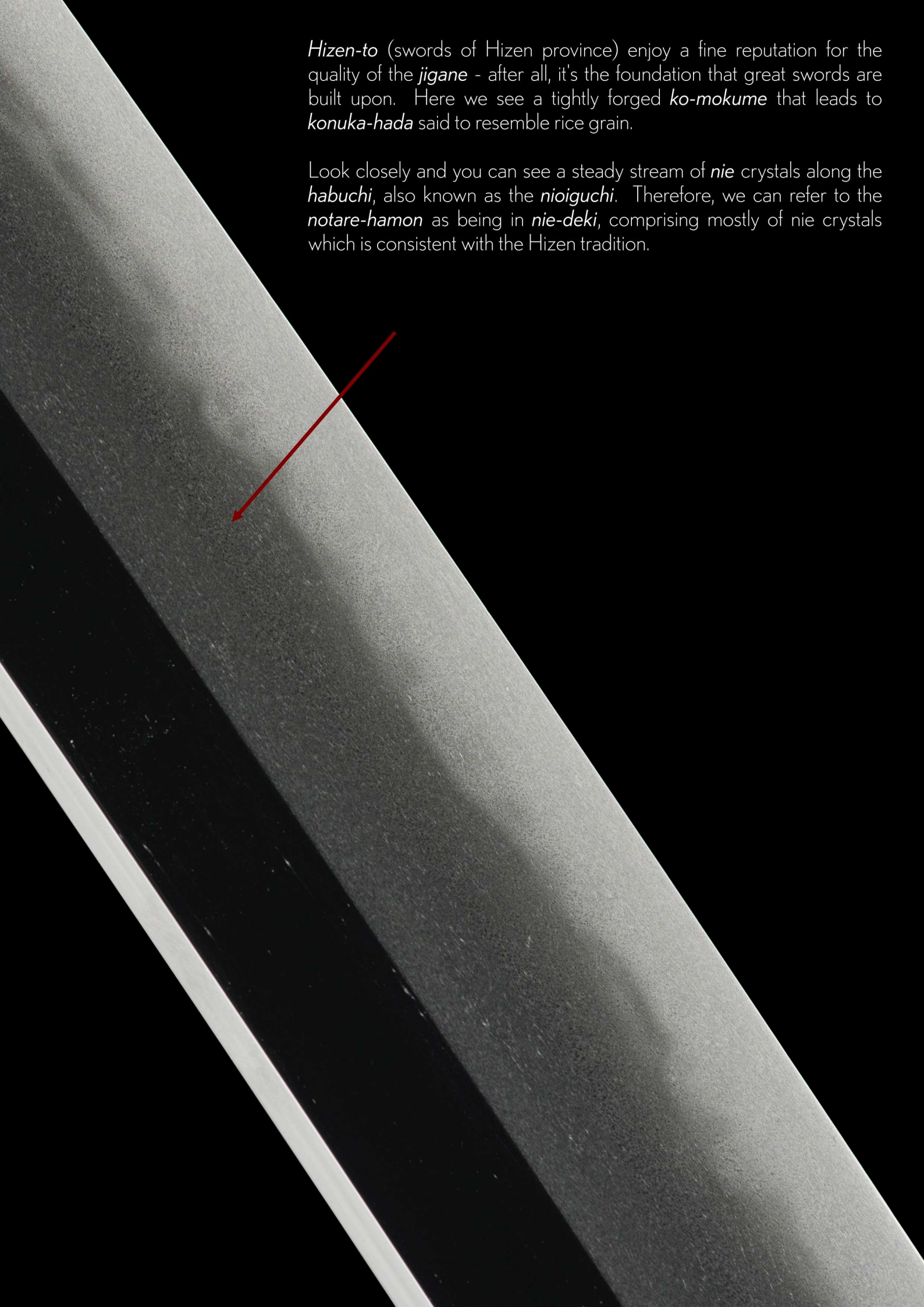
This *bonji* symbolizes *Gundari Myôô* - a Buddhist wisdom king who is often depicted with three eyes and flame-like hair (à la 80s fashion!).

Of his eight arms, two are crossed on his chest in a *mudra*; the rest hold implements of war and of Buddhist devotion. His headdress is adorned with a human skull, sometimes multiple, while his armlets, anklets, and occasionally other decorum take the form of snakes.

*gomabashi* - pair of parallel grooves running partway up the blade resembling chopsticks used for the spiritual Buddhist *goma* fire ritual.





A close-up, diagonal view of a sword blade against a black background. The blade is dark and polished, with a lighter, textured band (hamon) running along its length. A red arrow points to a specific section of this band. The text is positioned in the upper right corner.

*Hizen-to* (swords of Hizen province) enjoy a fine reputation for the quality of the *jigane* - after all, it's the foundation that great swords are built upon. Here we see a tightly forged *ko-mokume* that leads to *konuka-hada* said to resemble rice grain.

Look closely and you can see a steady stream of *nie* crystals along the *habuchi*, also known as the *nioiguchi*. Therefore, we can refer to the *notare-hamon* as being in *nie-deki*, comprising mostly of nie crystals which is consistent with the Hizen tradition.

A close-up photograph of the tip of a katana blade. The blade is dark and polished, with a visible grain. A red arrow points to a small, roundish turn back at the tip, which is a komaru-kaeri bôshi. The background is black.

*katana*

A *komaru-kaeri bôshi* (a small roundish turn back) with rather *tsukiage* (late-starting). Plenty of *nie-deki*.

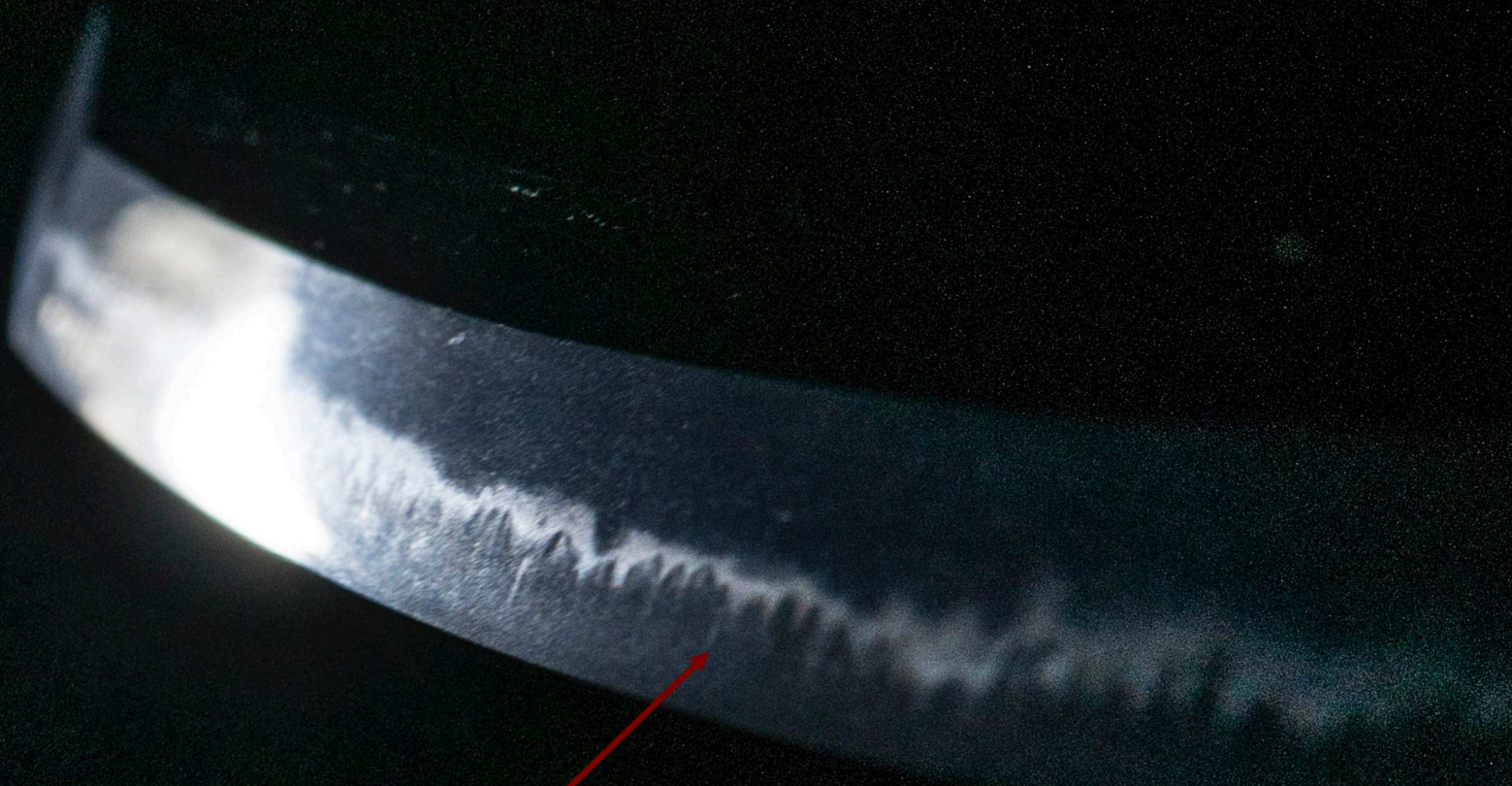
Wakizashi is in *hakikake* (brushed) form, also in *nie-deki*.

A photograph of a wakizashi blade. The blade is dark and polished, with a visible grain. It has a curved, slightly curved tip. The background is black.

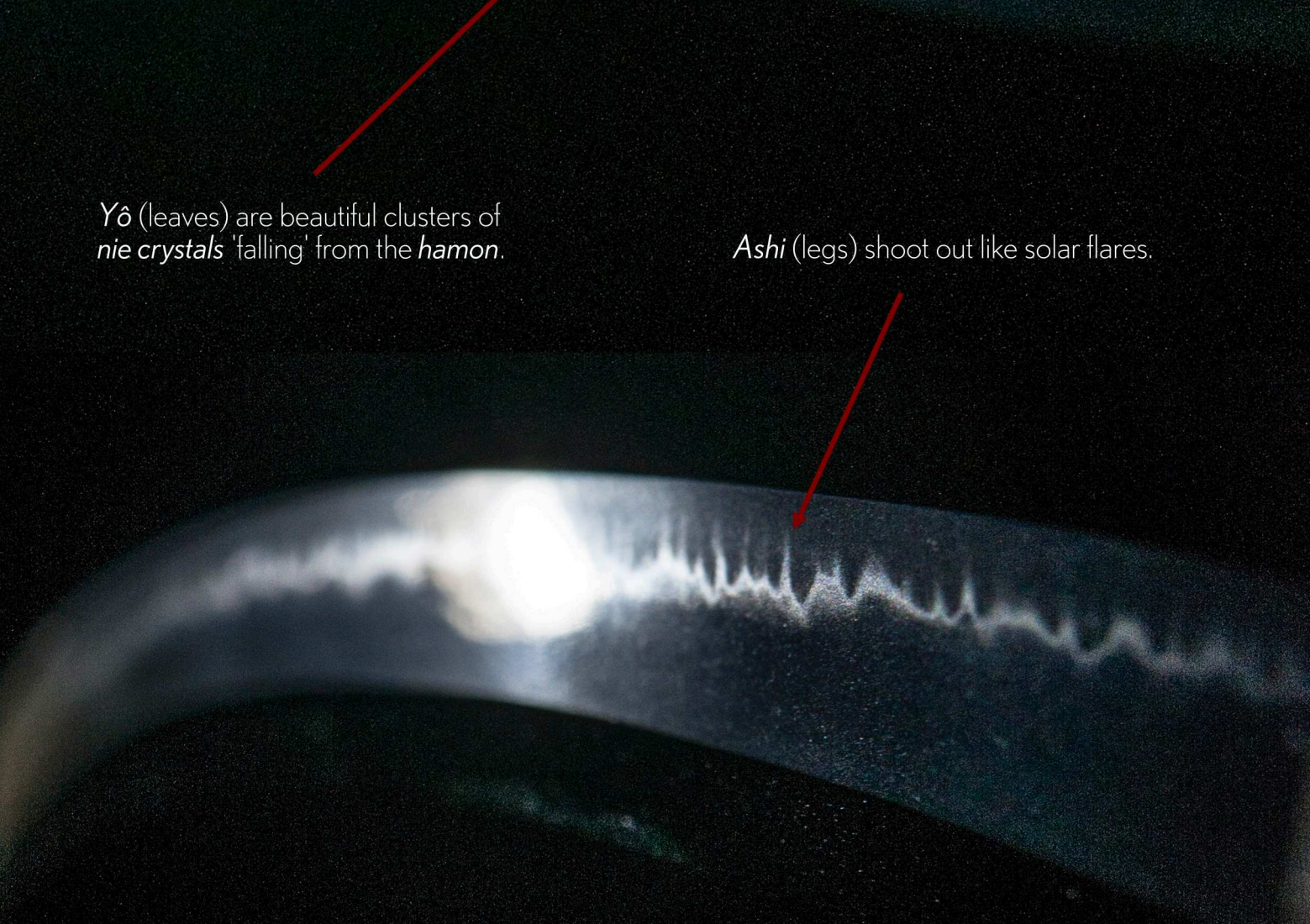
*wakizashi*



A bright *gunome-chôji hamon*, resembling clove blossom buds cascades the length of the blade in style.



*Yô* (leaves) are beautiful clusters of *nie crystals* 'falling' from the *hamon*.



*Ashi* (legs) shoot out like solar flares.





The hamon flows beautifully with  
the elegant curvature of the katana.





A spectacular *gunome-chôji-midare*  
*hamon* with streams of *sunagashi*.



An impressive golden line of *kinsuji* rips through the hamon





The *hamon* stretches the width of the blade, kissing the *shinogi* line in places.



A higher power.







*Shirasaya*  
(protective scabbard)



gold *nijû-habaki* with  
*botan-yasuri* (peony) file marks



*Shirasaya*  
(protective scabbard)



gold *nijû-habaki* with  
diamond-shaped pattern



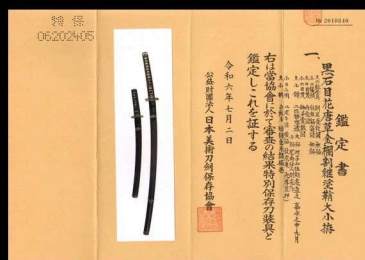
*Kuro-ishime hana-karakusa  
kiran waritsugi-nuri saya  
daishô-koshirae*  
(黒石目花唐草金襴割継塗鞘大小拵)

*Daishô-koshirae* featuring scabbards  
with a split lacquer design of black  
stone-surface and gold brocade with  
a floral and arabesque pattern

*Late Edo* to very *early Meiji* period  
circa 1867~1870.

The *daishô*, restricted to samurai class wear, emerged as a defining symbol of their status. This paired-sword tradition gained prominence near the close of the Muromachi period (1336-1573), with surviving examples dating to the late sixteenth century. A 1629 edict formalized the *daishô* requirement for samurai on official duties. However, this tradition ended during the Meiji period when an 1871 edict removed the samurai's obligation to wear *daishô*, followed by an 1876 public sword ban.

These reforms effectively ended both the *daishô* tradition and the samurai class itself.



NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon  
Certificate of Authenticity



鑑定書

黑石目花唐草金欄割継塗鞘大小拵

一の  
大の総金貫  
小の縁頭  
大の目貫  
小の目貫  
師子靈獸図  
劍花菱紋図  
紋散結袋図  
無銘  
無銘

大小鐔  
二匹勝虫透  
大小銘  
雙銘

小の柄 二疋半 因棟銘紋

富協會にて審査の上

會方一署至の

右は當協會に於て審査の結果特別保存刀装具と  
鑑定しこれを証する

令和六年七月二日

公益財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協會



# NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon Certificate of Designation

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

Issued in the 6th year of Reiwa (2024), July 2nd

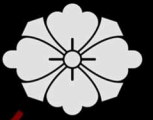
One,

*Kuro-ishime hana-karakusa kinran waritsugi-nuri saya daishô-koshirae*

*Daishô-koshirae* featuring scabbards with a split lacquer design of black stone-surface and gold brocade with a floral and arabesque pattern

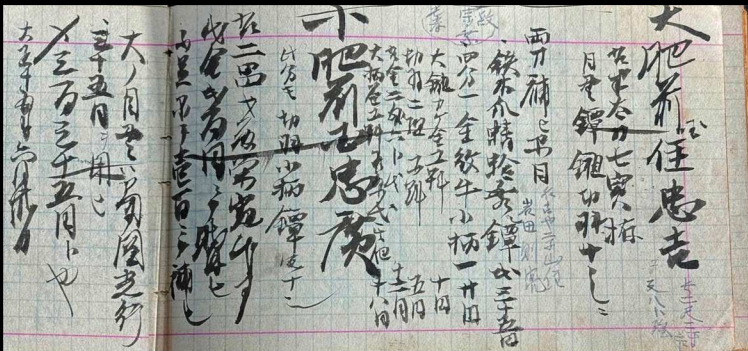
Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai  
(NBTHK)





This stunning *daishô-koshirae* features scabbards with a split lacquer design of black *ishime* (stone) and *hana-karakusa kinran* (gold brocade of floral pattern).

It has been conveyed to Unique Japan that this *daishô koshirae* was thoughtfully commissioned by a samurai from the late Edo period during the very early Meiji period. We even have a copy of the handwritten note from the former samurai owner who itemized both swords and all fittings, even with prices that he paid.

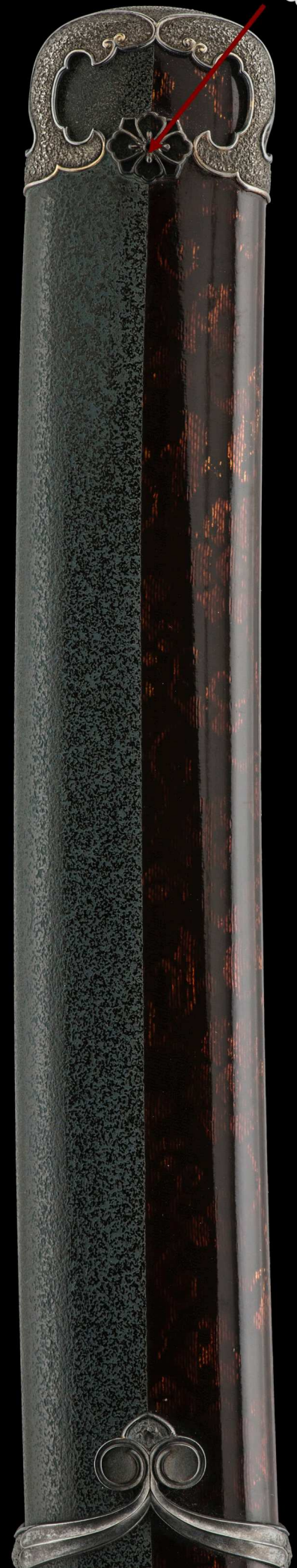


Former samurai owner's written log of the *daishô* swords and fittings



wakizashi

katana



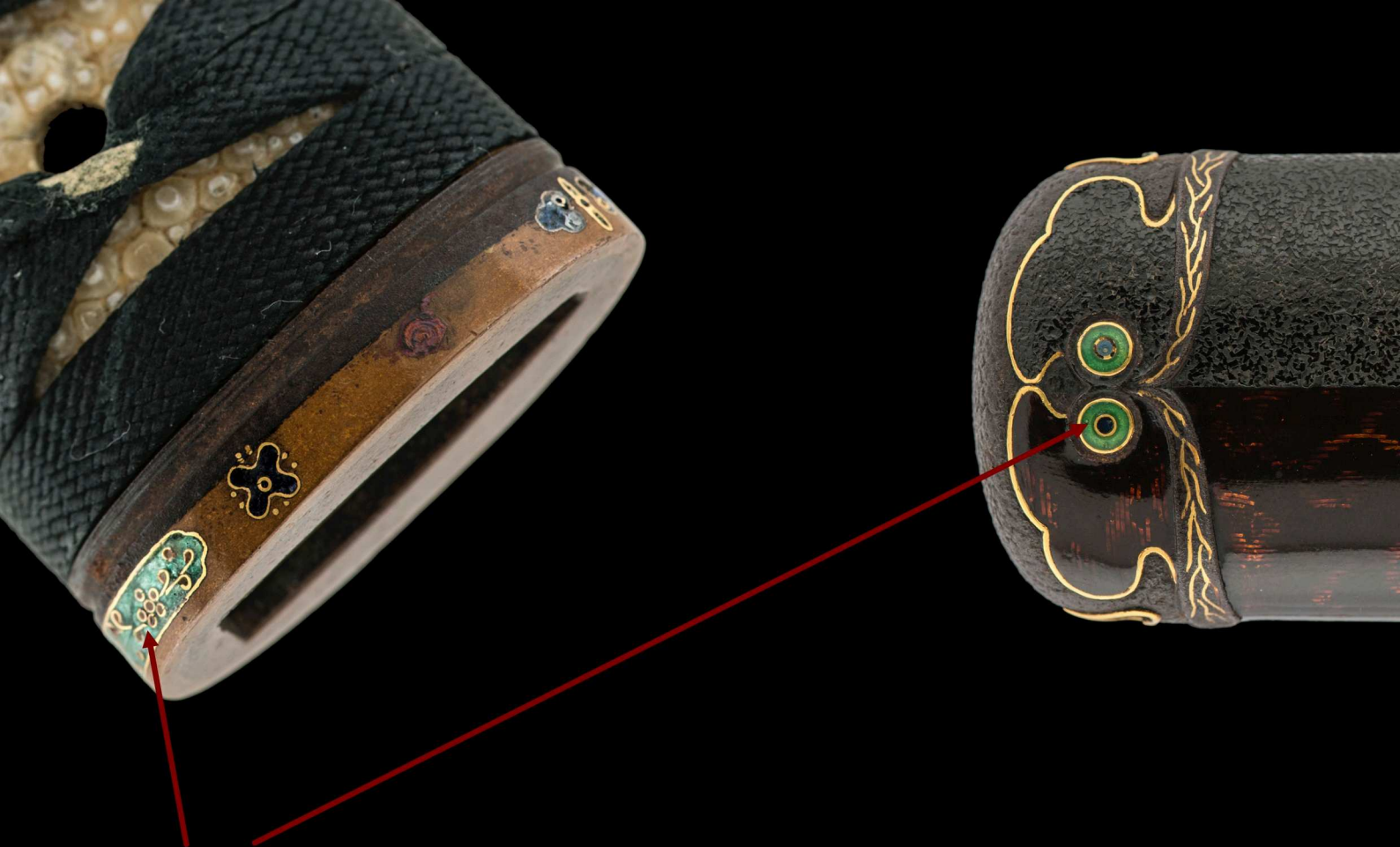


While the traditional image of a *daishô* is of a katana and wakizashi crafted by the same maker, with identical sets for all fittings, the reality back in the Edo period normally paints a much different story. For example, some *daimyô* lords provided a single sword to their samurai and the samurai was then expected to source the other to form a daishô. This would explain the fact on some daishô koshirae, the *fuchi-kashira* and *menuki* may not matching but they contain common elements between them. *Tsubas* are fairly straightforward to replace and thus we often see matching tsuba on daishô koshirae.

The fact that the NBTHK has awarded this beautiful daishô koshirae with Tokubetsu Hozon certification is a testament to not only the overall quality of the daishô, but also to the personal samurai journey involved in this creation.







*Shippô-yaki* (cloisonné ware) is a refined craft where coloured glass enamel powder is fired at high temperatures onto copper bases to create vibrant designs. From the 17th to 19th centuries, the techniques of shippô masters serving the shogunate were closely guarded secrets. The craft evolved into *Tokyo Shippô* in the late 19th century when Western badge-making techniques were introduced, leading to its widespread use in school and organisational emblems.

While traditional cloisonné manufacturing has declined elsewhere, Japanese artisans maintain this distinctive tradition. Tokyo Shippô craftsmen exclusively use glass materials for their superior finish and transparency. Through meticulous layering and polishing of each color, they create intricate patterns with remarkable depth by combining transparent and opaque enamels. This versatile art adorns various accessories from tiepins and cuff links to earrings and necklaces, and can even incorporate *ukiyo-e* motifs in custom pieces.





*Dai*





*Futagoyama jû Norisuke kore o tsukuru*  
Crafted by *Norisuke*, a resident of *Futagoyama*

A stunning pair of *daishô tsubas* displaying a life-like design of *tombo* (dragonflies) by premier metalsmith *Iwata Norisuke* (岩田則亮). *Norisuke* - an *Owari tsuba* craftsman active during the late Edo period.

There are two generations of *Norisuke*, and from the signature style, this work appears to be by the first generation who died in the 5th year of *Kaei* era (1852).



*Bifu jûnin Norisuke saku*  
*Norisuke*, a resident of *Owari* province



*Kaei no saru kugatsu*

The *dai* (large) tsuba for the katana is dated to the ninth month in the Year of the Monkey during the *Kaei* era (September 1848).



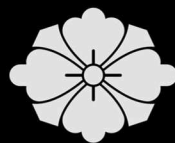




*Fuchi-kashira*

*Ken-hanabishi* (sword and flower) pays respect to the *Nabeshima* family, which ruled *Saga* domain in *Hizen* province where both swords were crafted.

The name *hanabishi* originates from the arrangement of four *hishi*-like (water chestnut-like) leaves as petals into a flower.



*Nabeshima Naoshige* (鍋島直茂, 1538~1618)

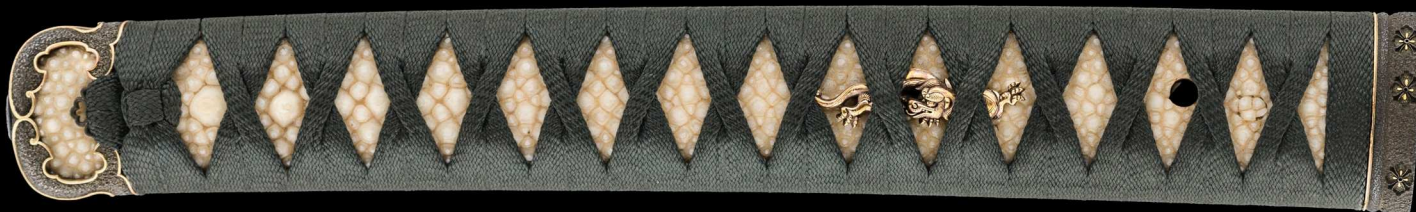
The second son of *Nabeshima Kiyofusa* (鍋島清房). After the death of *Ryuzôji Takanobu* (龍造寺隆信), he laid the foundation of the *Nabeshima* family as the lord of *Saga* domain in *Hizen* province.





The katana's *tsuka* (hilt) features *menuki* depicting *amaryû* (rain dragons) beneath its silk wrapping. These youthful dragons, harbingers of rain and fortune, were said to eventually ascend skyward and mature into fully-horned, scaled dragons.

This symbolism of transformation and ascendance made them powerful imperial emblems, representing the path to greatness.





*shô*





Rain dragon on  
the wakizashi *kurikata*

We will give the new owner of this *daishô koshirae* the option of having matching *sageo* (cord that is laced through the *kurikata*) sourced for the two scabbards.

Additional cost may apply.





Stylised *amaryû*  
(rain dragon)



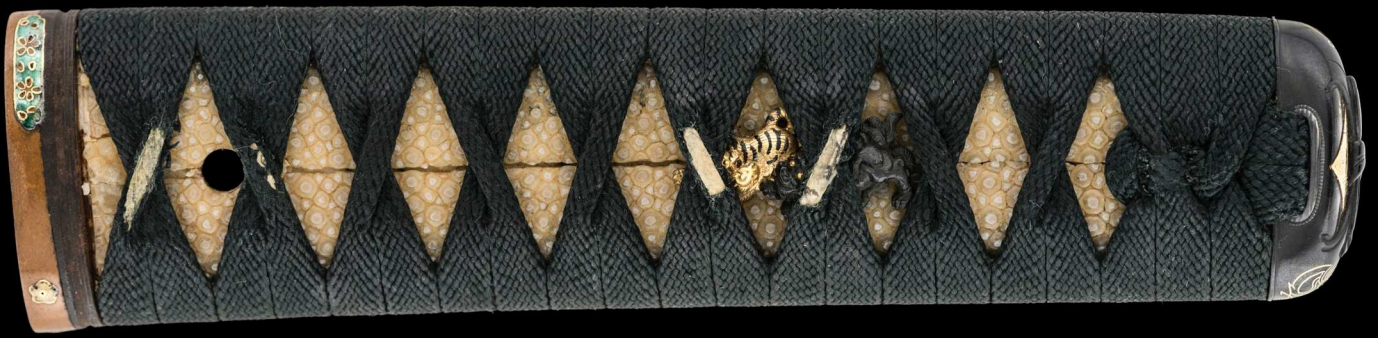
The *fuchi-kashira* on the *wakizashi* (*shō*) showcases a motif of *musubi-bukuro* (tied bag) with gold flower crests and a stylised *amaryû* (rain dragon) motif that ties into *katana tsuka* that has *amaryû menuki*.

The *fuchi* is decorated with beautiful *shippô* (cloisonné).



*Shippô* (cloisonné enamel)





The silk is fraying in parts, which is normal as this is a veritable antique. Definitely savour the age and handle with care. Unique Japan can assist with a re-wrap in the future should the need arise.



*Menuki* on the *shô-koshirae* carry sacred *shishi* (shisa lions).

In Buddhism, the *Monju Bosatsu* is depicted sitting on a sacred lion. During the *Heian* period, shrines and temples started placing a pair of sacred lions (*komainu*) at the gate to ward off evil spirits.



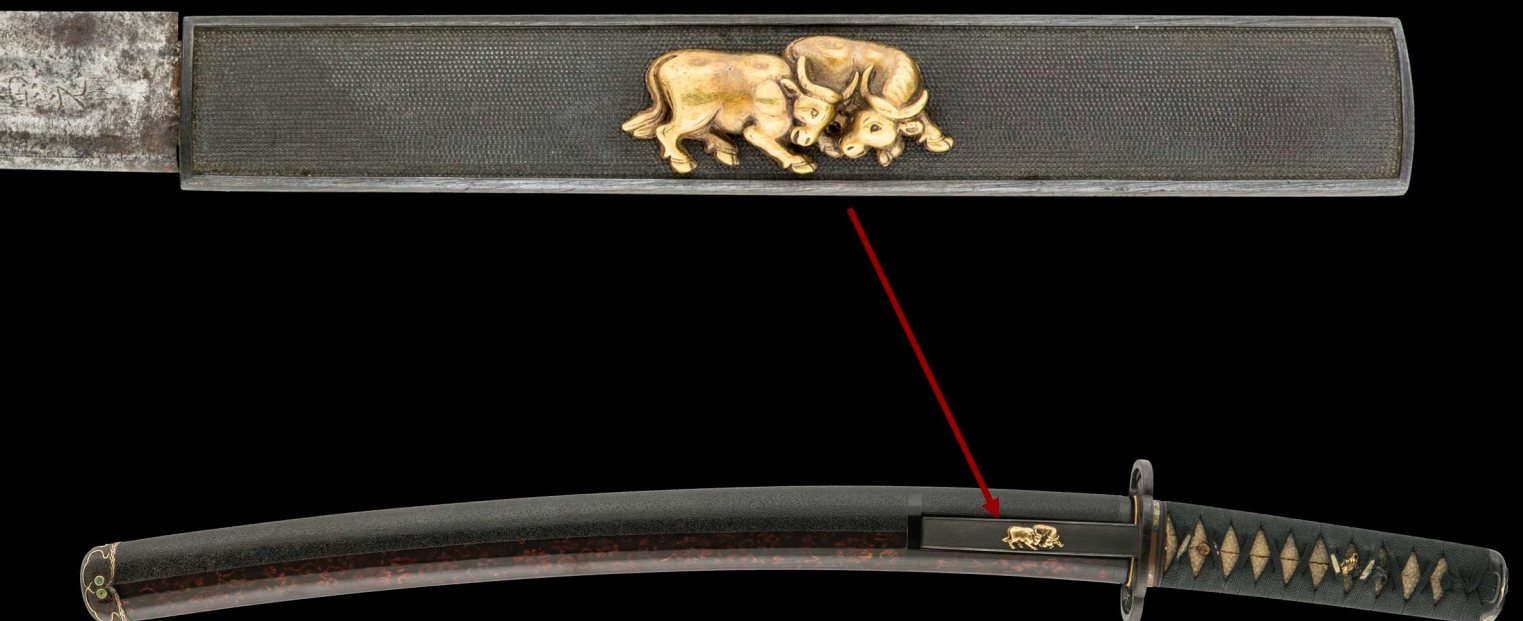




A *kozuka* is a samurai utility knife that is fastened into a special notch built inside the *saya* (scabbard) and drawn through the *hitsu-ana* (hole) of the wakizashi *tsuba*.

The artwork was created by two famous craftsman from *Gotô* family of metalsmiths. The oxen motif is by *Gotô Sôjô Takemitsu* (後藤宗乗武光), the second head of the family, and the rest by *Gotô Enjô Mitsutaka* (後藤延乗光孝), the 13th generation.

Unlike horses, oxen are slower on their feet, but their sturdy physique allows them to move forward with strength. This *kozuka* expresses the desire to have unshakable determination.



Kozuka is signed:  
Seki Magoroku kyûdai Sue Zenjô Kanemoto

Sue Zenjô Kanemoto,  
9th generation of Seki Magoroku



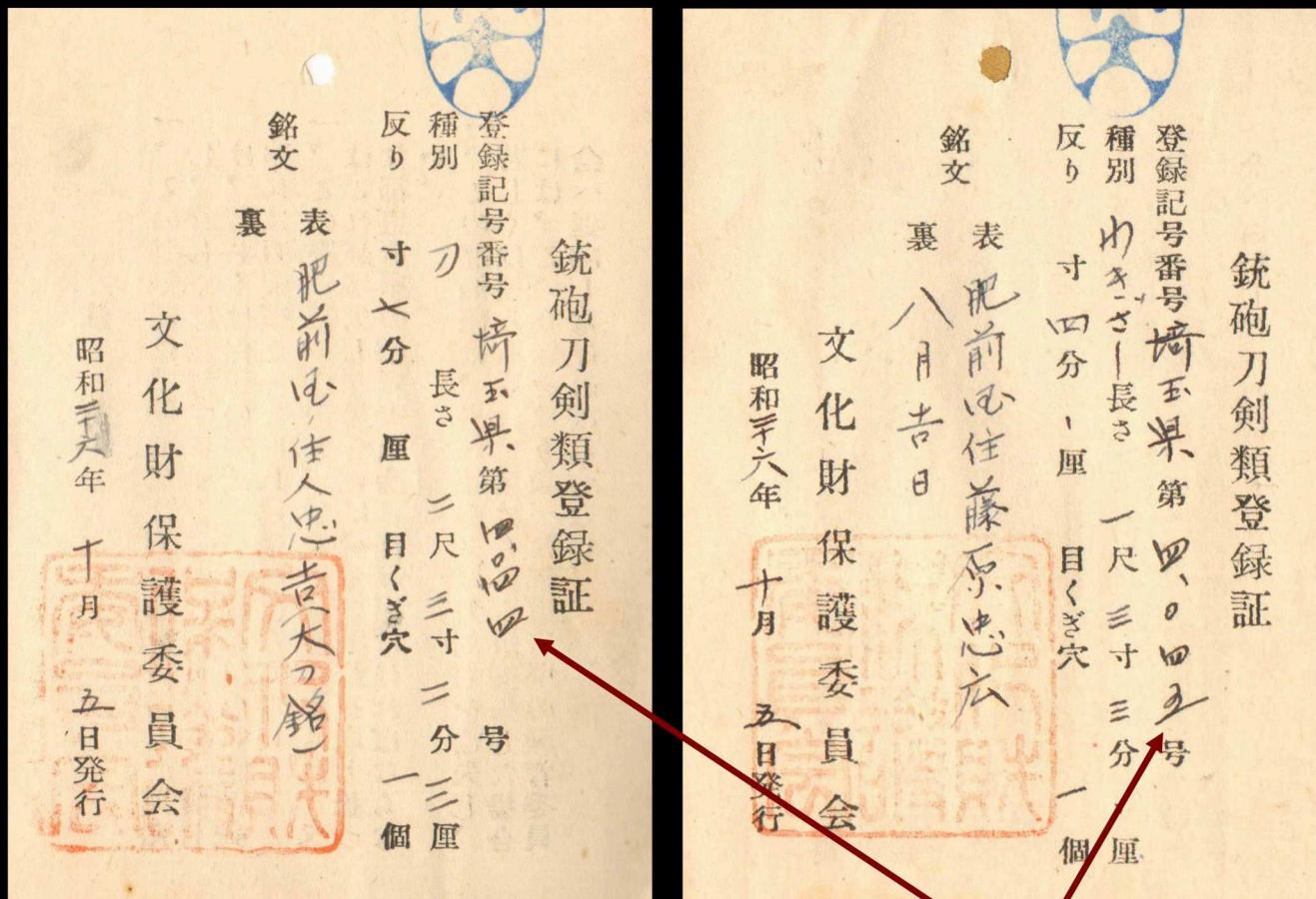
関 (Seki)  
孫 (Mago)  
六 (roku)  
九 (kyû)  
代 (dai)  
末 (Sue)  
善 (Zen)  
定 (jô)  
兼 (Kane)  
元 (moto)

(Mon) 紋  
(Sô) 宗  
(jô) 乗

(Mitsu) 光  
(taka) 孝  
(kaô) 花押

The signatures of *Gotô Sôjô Takemitsu* and  
*Gotô Enjô Mitsutaka* placed discreetly on  
the side of the *kozuka* handle.





4044, 4045

These are the original *torokusho* (registration cards) for the *Tadayoshi/Tadahiro daishô*.

These cards were both registered on the same day in the 26th year of *Showa era* (Oct 5, 1951) AND they were in sequential order, numbering 4044 (katana) and 4045 (wakizashi).

This is significant as 1951 was the very first year that swords were formally registered in Japan. Many former *daimyô* (powerful lord) families were invited to submit their collections suggesting this blade was once held by a prominent family.

These swords were among the very first swords registered in Japan, a rare treat to see!





*Daishô koshirae* bags  
with phoenix and arabesque pattern



I believe I can fly.







## Making footsteps to Japan?

If you are travelling to Tokyo and are serious about acquiring an authentic Japanese sword, be sure to book a **private meeting** with us in advance.

Many swords from Unique Japan are sold privately every year to proud clients around the world. Private meetings are held at our studio near **JR Meguro station** - only minutes away from all major hotels in downtown Tokyo.

Contact Pablo at [service@uniquejapan.com](mailto:service@uniquejapan.com) where we'll discuss the special qualities you are seeking; type of sword, era, hamon pattern, level of certification, cutting test, etc. along with budget parameters in order to best serve you.

Enjoy your trip!





ITEM# UJKA467

## A KANEGISHI KATANA

SIGNED, SUE-KOTÔ PERIOD (KYÔROKU ERA: 1528~1532)

<b>Swordsmith:</b>	<i>Kanegishi (Sue-Seki)</i>
<b>Measurements:</b>	<b>Length:</b> 74.5cm ( <i>machi-okuri</i> ) <b>Sori:</b> 1.3cm <b>Moto-haba:</b> 3.01cm <b>Weight:</b> 840g
<b>Jihada:</b>	<i>Nagare-hada mixed with masame-hada with chikei, and shirake-utsuri</i>
<b>Hamon:</b>	<i>Kenbô-midare with togari mixed with yahazu-ba, tobiyaski and sunagashi</i>
<b>Certificate #1:</b>	<b>NBTHK Hozon</b> (a sword Worthy of Preservation)
<b>Certificates #2-4:</b>	<b>NTHK-NPO Kanteisho</b> ( <i>tsuba, fuchi-kashira and koshirae designated Authentic</i> )
<b>Authentication:</b>	<b>Sayagaki by Nozomi-san</b> ( <i>shodô artist</i> )
<b>Included:</b>	Shirasaya, koshirae, fabric bags, stand, kit, printed description

**SOLD**

Swordsmith *Kanegishi* (also read *Kanekishi*) worked in *Seki* city in *Mino* province five hundred years ago during the *Kyôroku* era within the turbulent *Muromachi* period, circa 1528~1532. If you are seeking a long sword that has almost certainly seen battle, then consider claiming this blade for your collection. This is a very sharp and sturdy *Sue-Seki* katana that carries an eye-catching *kenbô-midare* hamon that pays tribute to first generation *Kanefusa* about a century earlier. Its handsome *koshirae* features an iron *tsuba* adorned with a *suhami* (sandbar) motif, thoughtfully chosen to complement the blade's swirling *hamon* pattern which evokes the natural curves of a sandbar. The unique diamond-shaped *renbishi fuchi-kashira* from the famed *Yoshioka* school gives the sword an armoured presence, built to protect the samurai. Very few signed examples of *Kanegishi* katana are in existence making this formidable *Sue-Seki* katana a fine discovery indeed.

^  
Saki-kasane: 4.5mm

Moto-kasane: 5.9mm

Kissaki: 3.7cm  
Saki-haba: 1.96cm

Nakago: 19.5cm

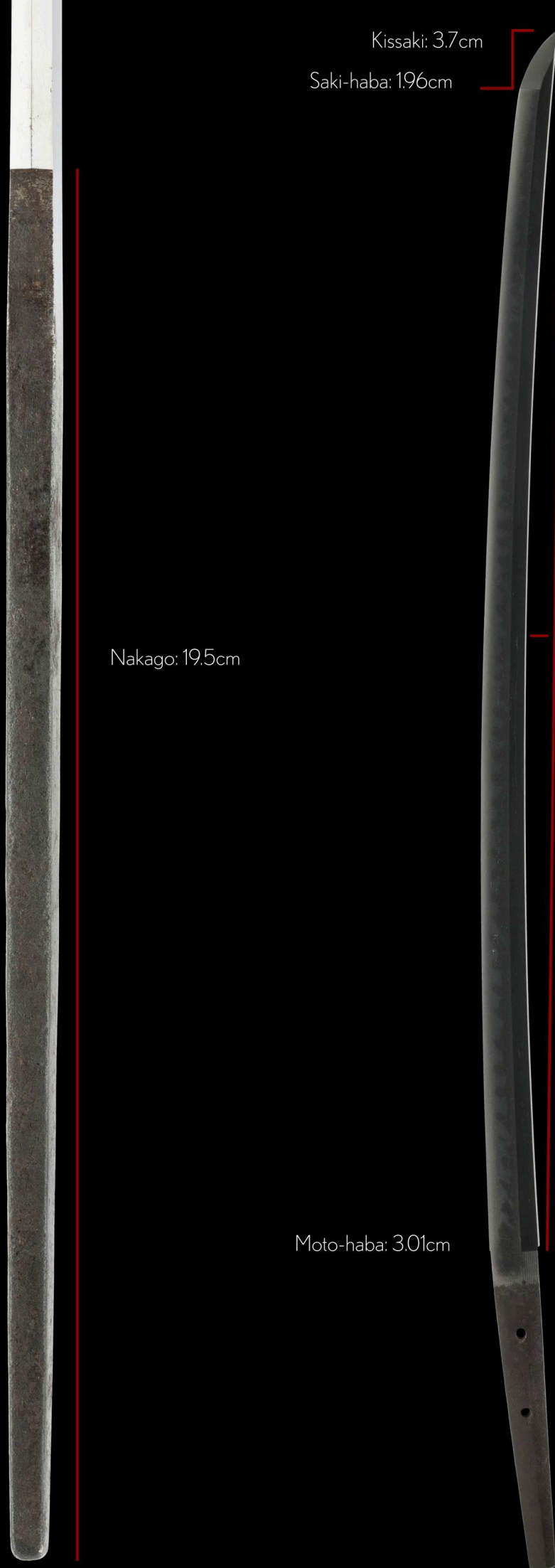
Omosa: 840g

Moto-haba: 3.01cm

Nagasa: 74.5cm

Sori: 1.3cm

Mekugi-ana: 2





Swordsmith *Kanegishi* (also read *Kanekishi*) worked in *Seki* city in *Mino* province 500 years ago during the *Kyôroku* era during the turbulent *Muromachi* period, circa 1528~1532.

If you are seeking a long sword that has almost certainly seen battle, then this is a sword to consider claiming for your collection. After all, it was made right in the thick of the *Sengoku-jidai* - warring states period when the whole country was at odds with each other.

This is a very sharp and sturdy *Sue-Seki* katana that carries all the hallmarks of this school of sword-making. The eye-catching *kenbô-midare hamon* is a temper line pioneered by first generation *Kanefusa* back in the *Eikyô* era circa (1429~1441). You'll also see a strong presence of *masame-hada*, *nagare-hada*, arrow notch *yahazu-ba*, *togari-gunome*, *sunagashi*, *shirake-utsuri* and bright tempered spots of *tobiyaki*.

Its handsome *koshirae* centres around an iron tsuba adorned with a *suhami* (sandbar) motif, thoughtfully chosen to complement the blade's swirling *kenbô-midare* pattern which evokes the natural curves of a sandbar. And the unique diamond-shaped *renbishi fuchi-kashira* from the famed *Yoshioka* school gives the sword an armoured presence, built to protect the samurai.

Very few signed examples of *Kanegishi* katana are in existence making this formidable *Sue-Seki* piece a rather fine discovery indeed.





Location: *Seki, Mino province*

School: *Kanetsune school*

Swordsmith: *Kanegishi*

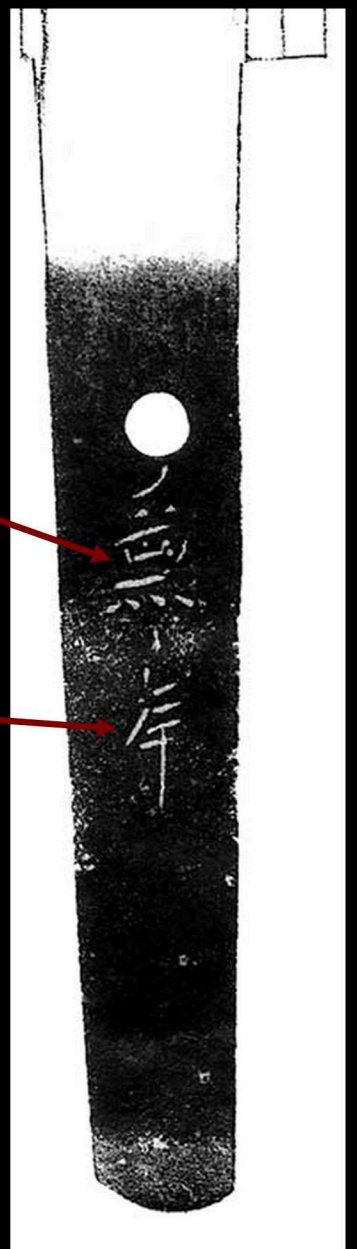
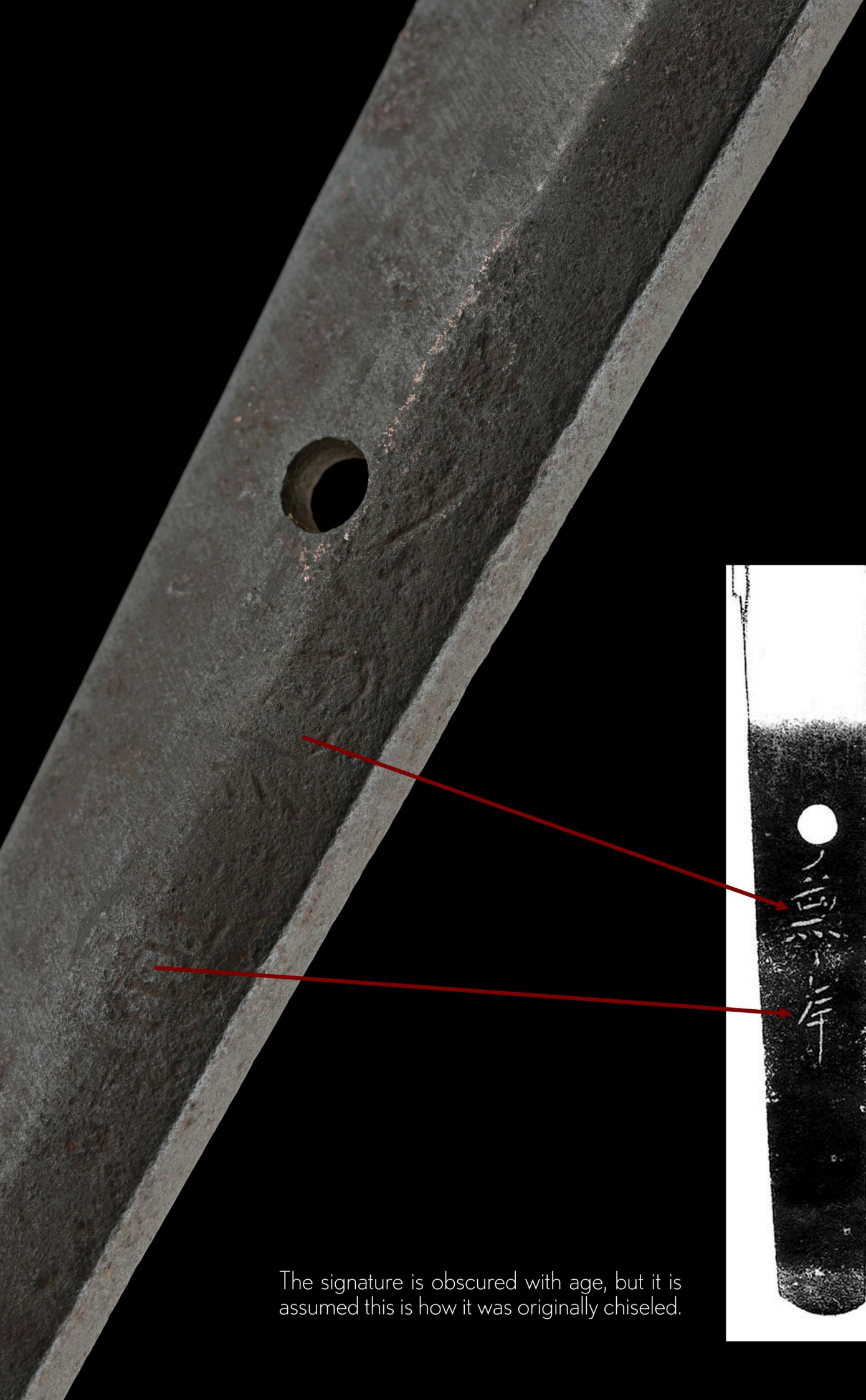
*machi-okuri-nakago* (shortened tang)

*sujikai-yasurime* (diagonal file marks)

兼 (Kane)

岸 (gishi)





The signature is obscured with age, but it is assumed this is how it was originally chiseled.

### *Machi-okuri nakago*

As warfare changed over the centuries, swords needed to be drawn from a standing position. Therefore the *nagasa* (length) had to be physically viable given the height of the warrior. In most cases, a longer blade needed to be shortened, often times by several centimetres.

A way to shorten a sword is through a process called *suriage* where the sword is cut from the nakago and a new nakago is formed where the cutting edge used to be.

In other cases, such as on this blade, the shorter nagasa is achieved by simply moving the *machi* (notch) upwards. This process is called *machi-okuri*.

The overall length of the sword is unchanged, only the cutting edge is shorter, typically by about 1-sun or 3cm.

A new hole (*mekugi-ana*) is created for the new hilt that is required. It should also be noted that with *machi-okuri* the *mei* (signature and date) has been left intact and preserved, a true blessing.





保 存  
05202312

№ 3033889

鑑定書

一刀銘兼岸(関)

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

令和六年二月二十一日

公益財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協會



兵庫県 教育委員会  
第 43119 号  
昭和40年5月6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 6th year of Reiwa (2024), February 21st

One, Katana

*Mei* (signature)  
*Kanegishi (Seki)*

*Nagasa* (length)  
2-sun 4-sun 6-bu han (74.5cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai  
(NBTHK)



濃州関住兼岸

*Nôshû Seki jû Kanegishi*

Kanegishi, a resident of Seki in Nôshû province

時代享禄頃

*Jidai Kyôroku-goro*

Around Kyôroku period (1528~1532)

刃長貳尺四寸六分半

*Hachô 2-shaku 4-sun 6-bu han*

Blade length 74.5 cm

令和七乙巳年正月吉日誌之

*Reiwa nana kinoto-midoshi Shôgatsu kichijitsu kore o shirusu*

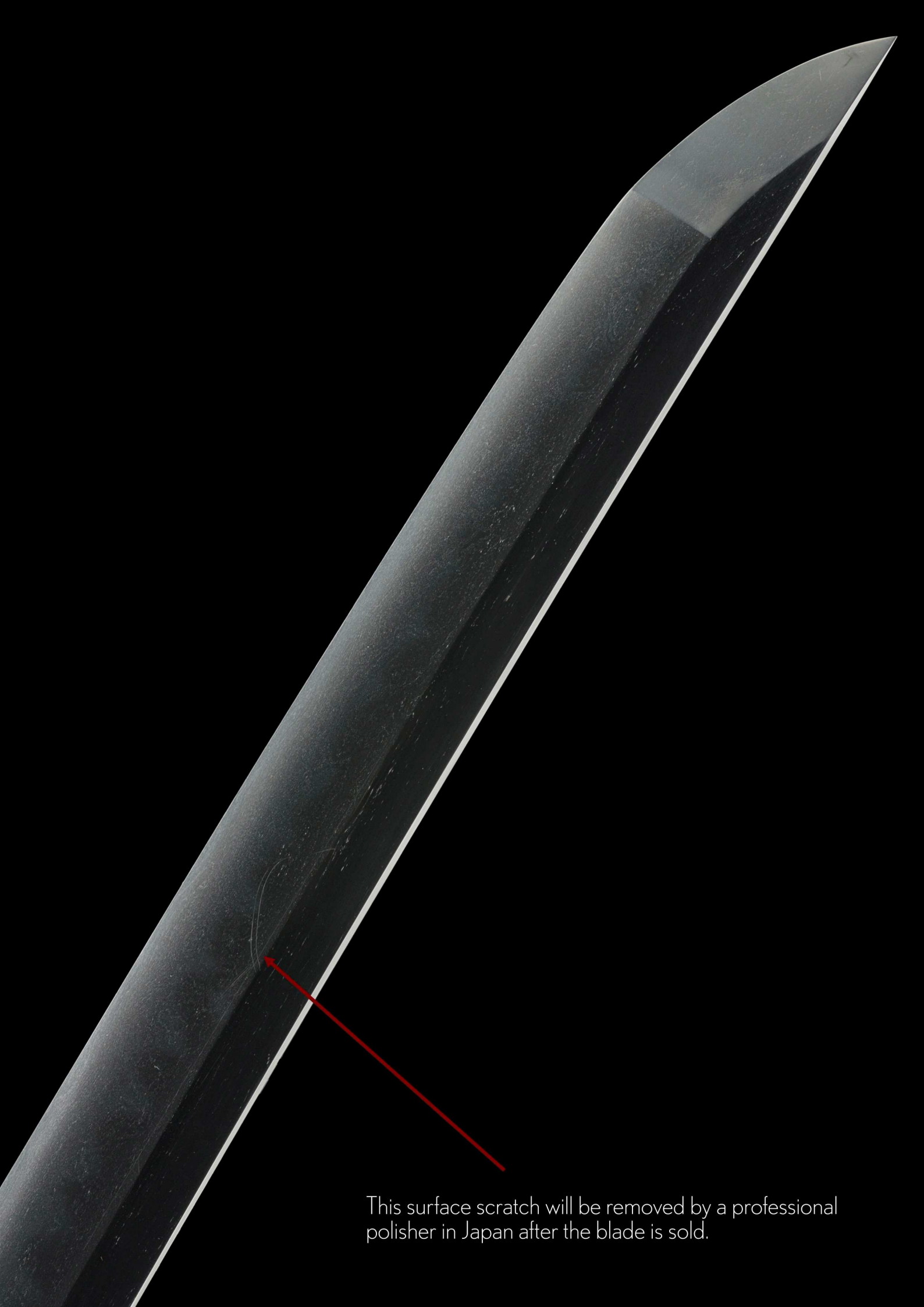
Written on a lucky day in the first month in the seventh year of Reiwa era during the Year of the Snake (January 2025)











This surface scratch will be removed by a professional polisher in Japan after the blade is sold.



A time to reflect.



*togari* (pointed section)

A sandbar of *sunagashi*







*masame-hada*

*nagare-hada*

*Masame-hada* (straight grain) in the *shinogi-ji* and a flowing *nagare-hada* in the body of the blade are prime characteristics of blades crafted in *Seki* during the late *Muromachi* period, known collectively as *Sue-Seki* swords.



A close-up, diagonal view of a Japanese sword blade. The blade is dark and polished, with a bright, glowing hamon (temper line) running along its length. The hamon features a series of large, wavy, and somewhat irregular patterns. Two red arrows point to specific features: one points to a straight section of the hamon, and the other points to a section with large, wavy patterns.

A bright consistent hamon.  
The hallmark of a healthy, well made sword.

Note the touch of straight *shirake-utsuri* on  
the back of the *ji* (body).

*shirake-utsuri* (shadow hamon).

This hamon is called *kenbô-midare*  
a rather large *chôji-midare* that can  
be traced back to its pioneer *shodai*  
*Kanefusa* (1429~1441).

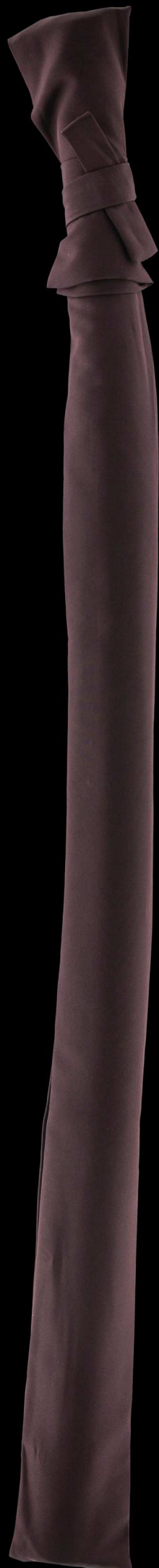


yahazu-ba

A visual treat on certain *Sue-Seki* swords is the presence of *yahazu-ba* - a unique dovetail shape resembling arrow notches (*yahazu*).







*Shirasaya*  
(protective scabbard)

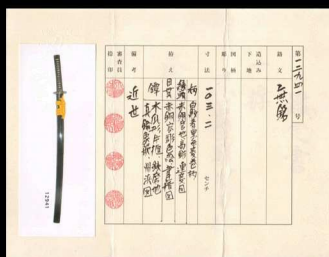
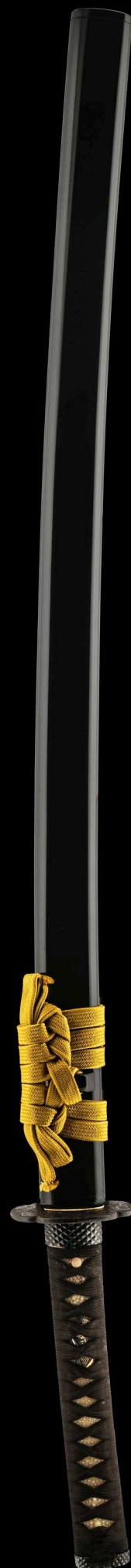
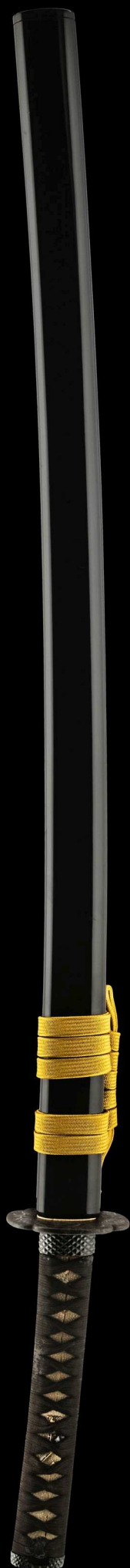


silver *habaki* with  
copper base

*Kuro-ronuri saya  
uchigatana-koshirae*  
(黒呂塗鞘打刀拵)

*Uchigatana-koshirae  
lacquered in glossy black*

Crafted during the  
Modern period

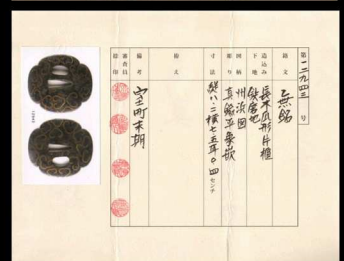
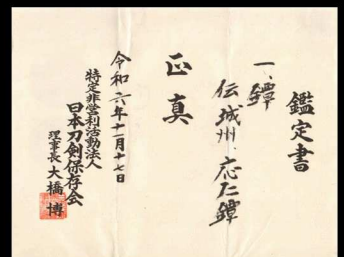


*NTHK-NPO Kanteisho  
Certificate of Authenticity*





This tsuba has a motif of *suhama*, meaning 'sandbar'. The shape of *suhama* is also used in family crests, etc. The origin of this shape is a *suhama-dai* which is a stand decorated with wood, stone, flowers, birds, and other scenic objects and used as a decoration for banquets and to serve food at weddings, New Year's, and other occasions.





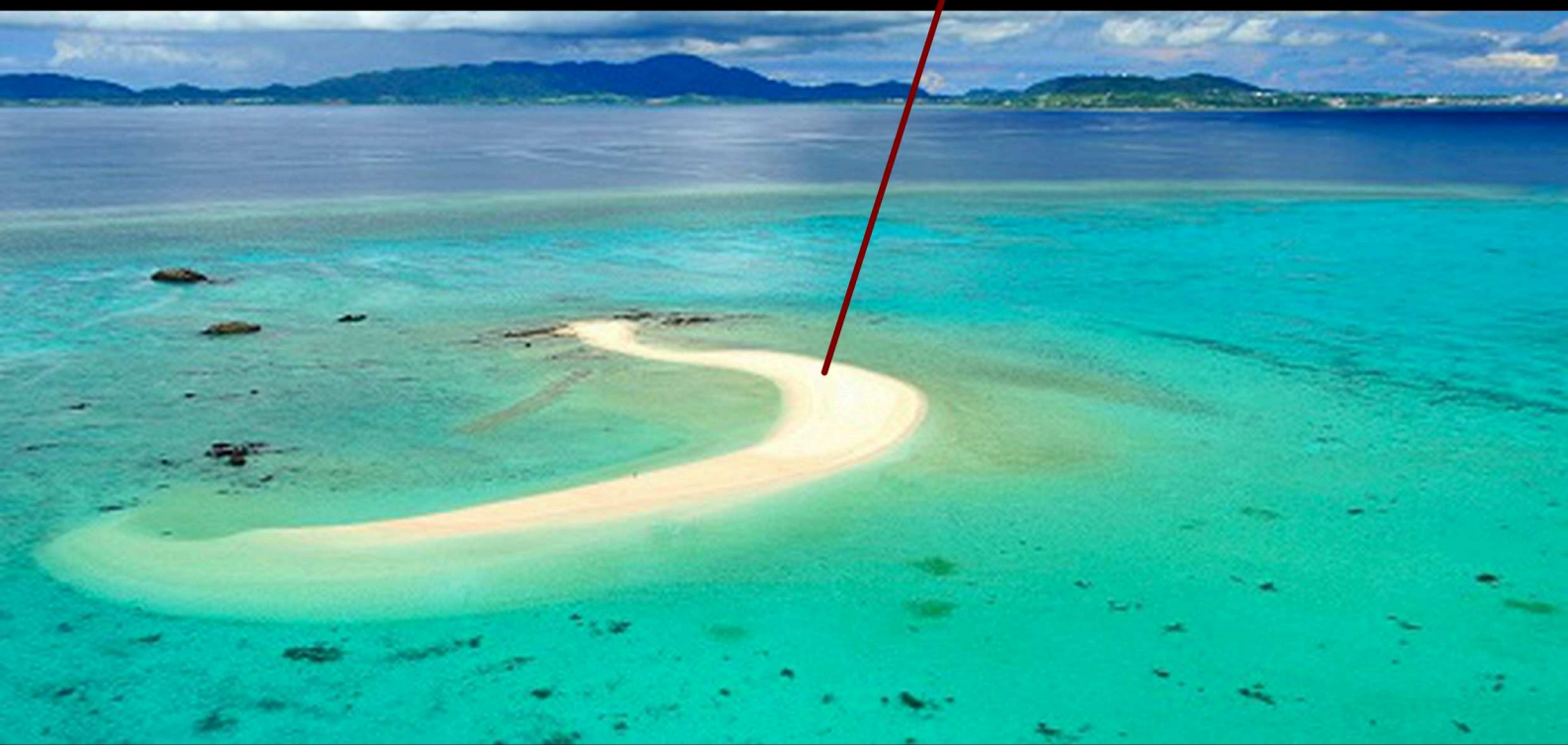


The curvy *gunome* pattern in the hamon works in harmony with the *suhama* sandbar design on the tsuba.





*suham* (sandbar)





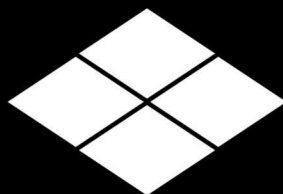


*Fuchi-kashira*  
attributed to  
*Yoshioka school*  
(Late Edo period, 1780~1868)



*Renbishi* (diamond shape)

This diamond-shaped pattern was used on the costumes of emperors and aristocrats. It was established around 1370 as the *kamon* (family crest) of the great Takeda samurai clan as a symbol to honour the deeds of ancestors.

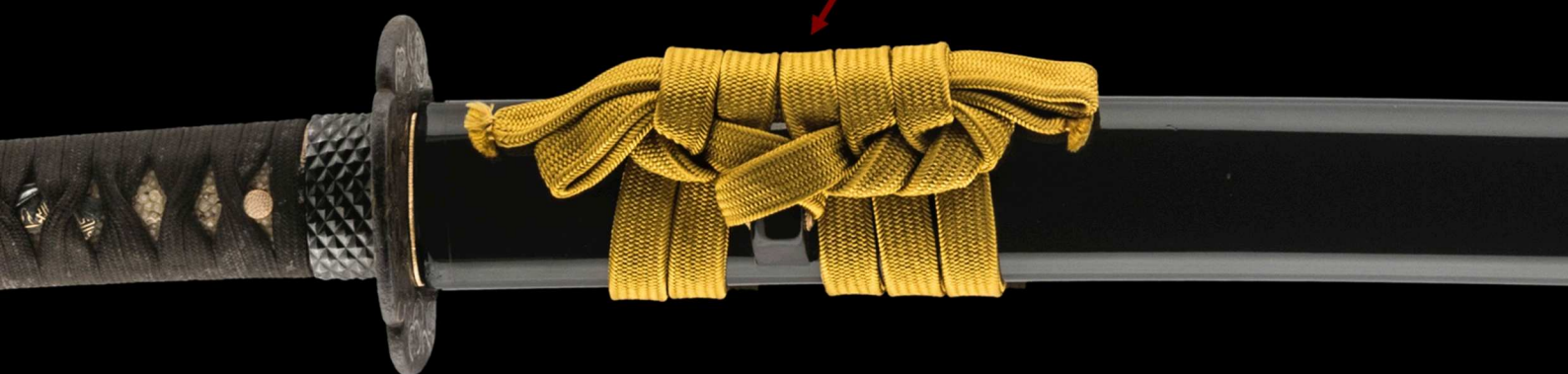


*Takeda kamon*





antique *tsuka* (hilt) provides a true samurai feel



*Menuki* (decorative grips on the hilt) depict antique books.  
The sageo helps bring out the gold geometric pattern on the menuki.



Koshirae bag

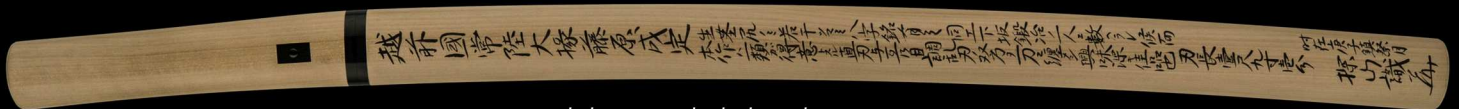


# Submit, Repair, Sell & Create!

Unique Japan offers a *full-service menu* to assist clients with their Japanese swords and fittings. All services are performed in Japan with top quality craftsmen and women.

## Services include (non exhaustive):

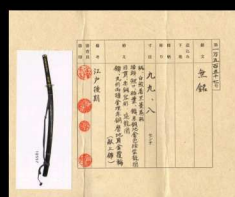
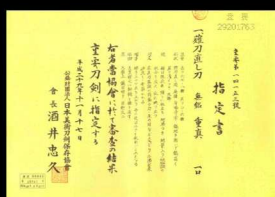
- \* NBTHK and NTHK-NPO *shinsa* certification (swords and fittings)
- \* polishing for all types of Japanese swords (standard to Jûyô-level quality polish)
- \* *shirasaya* making (standard to high quality with horn fittings)
- \* *habaki* making (gold, silver, copper in most any design pattern)
- \* fix wobbly koshirae, repair cracked scabbards, new lacquer work, etc.
- \* *otoshi* presentation boxes for your beautiful *tsuba*, *menuki*, *fuch-kashira*, etc.
- \* *tsuka-maki* (re-wrap your hilts in silk or leather in most any colour, weave or braid)
- \* *oshigata* (sword/hamon tracing on a scroll with a large choice of background)
- \* *sayagaki* services with *Tanobe-sensei* and *shodô* artist Nozomi-san
- \* *sword boxes with hakogaki* (with humidifying options for dry climates)
- \* custom koshirae projects (see separate page)
- \* sell your sword(s) on consignment (qualifying conditions apply)



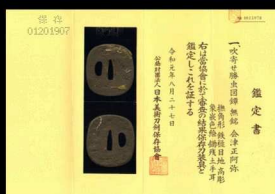
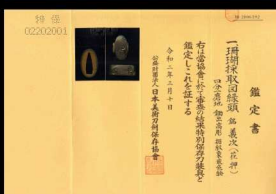
polish, sayagaki, hakogaki



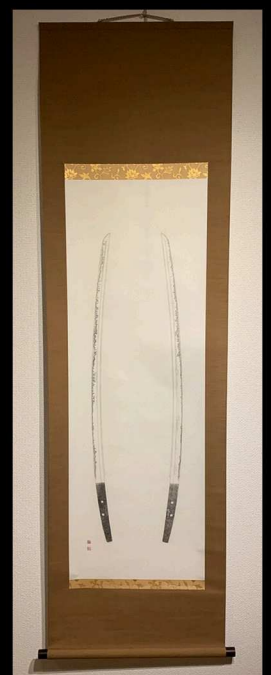
tsuka-maki



habaki creations



otoshi boxes



oshigata scrolls

All NBTHK and NTHK-NPO Shinsa authentication services



ITEM# UJKA469

## AN IETADA 'CUTTING TEST' KATANA

SIGNED, SHINTÔ PERIOD (JÔÔ ERA: 1652~1655)

<b>Swordsmith:</b>	<i>Gashû-jû Fujiwara Ietada (1st gen, Kaga province)</i>
<b>Cutting test:</b>	<i>Futatsu-dô dodanbarai kirite Miyai Rokubê (kaô)</i>
<b>Measurements:</b>	<b>Length:</b> 70.7cm (ubu) <b>Sori:</b> 1.5cm <b>Moto-haba:</b> 3.03cm <b>Weight:</b> 720g
<b>Jihada:</b>	<i>Ko-itame mixed with mokume-hada, plentiful ji-nie and swirling chikei</i>
<b>Hamon:</b>	<i>A striking gunome-chôji with a wide nioiguchi mixed with kawazu no ko-chôji</i>
<b>Certificate #1:</b>	<b>NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon</b> (Especially Worthy of Preservation)
<b>Certificate #2-5:</b>	<b>NTHK-NPO Kanteishô</b> (koshirae, fk, kogai and tsuba certified as Authentic)
<b>Fujishiro rank:</b>	<b>Jô-saku</b> (ranked as a superior swordsmith)
<b>Published:</b>	<b>Featured in Kashû Shintô Shû</b> (reference book of Kaga smiths in shintô era)
<b>Sharpness:</b>	<b>Wazamonô</b> (rated as a maker of sharp swords)
<b>Authentication:</b>	<b>Sayagaki by Nozomi-san</b> (shodô artist)
<b>Included:</b>	Shirasaya, Edo handachi-koshirae, fabric bags, stand, kit, print description

**SOLD**

This magnificent katana by *shodai Ietada* of Kaga province, bears a gold-inlaid *tameshigiri* inscription documenting its cutting power - severing through two bodies in a single stroke before embedding in the earthen testing ground. The blade is documented in *Kashû Shintô Shû*, a notable reference book on Kaga's shintô period smiths. Its *hamon* is a brilliant *gunome-chôji midare* pattern featuring distinctive 'tadpole' formations called *kawazu no ko-chôji* made famous by *Bizen Morie*. Mounted in an elegant Edo period *handachi-koshirae*, this outstanding katana is pure samurai class.





Saki-kasane: 4.9mm

Moto-kasane: 6.7mm

Kissaki: 3.19cm

Saki-haba: 1.94cm

Nagasa: 70.7cm

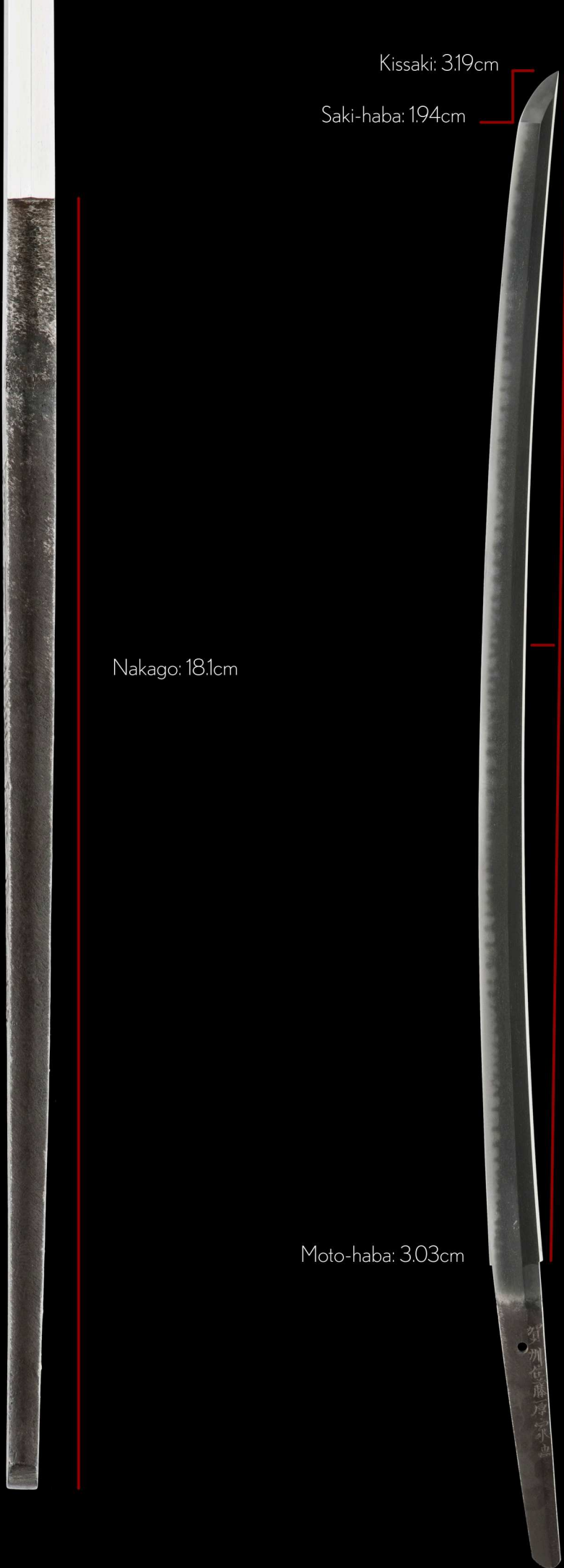
Nakago: 18.1cm

Sori: 1.5cm

Omosa: 720g

Moto-haba: 3.03cm

Mekugi-ana: 1



This magnificent katana was crafted by *shodai* (first generation) *letada* who lived in the city of *Kanazawa* in *Kaga* province during the early to mid-1600s. Born *Suzaki Kichibei* (his first name can also read *Yoshibei*), *letada* was the younger brother of *Katsukuni* and became a prominent smith of the *Kaga Darani* school. *letada* died in the first year of *Meireki* era (1655).

Ranked *wazamono* for his razor sharp sword-making skills, this katana bears a gold-inlaid *tameshigiri* inscription documenting its cutting power - severing through two bodies in a single stroke before embedding in the earthen testing ground.

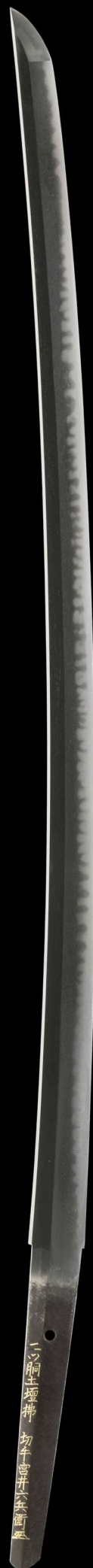
The *hamon* is a brilliant *gunome-chôji midare* pattern featuring distinctive 'tadpole' formations called *kawazu no ko-chôji*. *letada* was clearly aiming to reproduce the masterworks of *Moriie* and *Sanemori* of the *Bizen Hatakeda* school from the golden *Kamakura* period that pioneered this style of temper line.

This blade is further documented in *Kashû Shintô Shû*, an important reference book that showcases major works *shintô* period sword smiths that worked in *Kaga* province. Notice that the nakago is uniquely signed and dated by master sword polisher *Hon'ami Kôho* in 1936 just under the *habaki*. This is rarely seen.

Mounted in an elegant Edo period *handachi-koshirae*, with rich, dark *shakudô* fittings and a wonderful *kogai* attributed to *Morisada* of the *Katsuki* school, this truly outstanding katana is pure samurai class.



Image from Markus Sesko's book 'TAMESHIGIRI'  
The History and Development of Japanese Sword Testing.







Location: *Gashû* (*Kaga*) province

Family name: *Fujiwara*

Swordsmith: *letada* (first generation)

*ubu-nakago* (original, unaltered tang)

*sujikai-yasurime* (diagonal file marks)

賀 (Ga)

州 (shû)

住 (jû)

藤 (Fuji)

原 (wara)

家 (le)

忠 (tada)

→ *Jô-saku* or *chûjô-saku*, that is the question...

In the 1965 copy of *Fujishiro's Nihon Shintô Jiten*, *letada* was listed as *chûjô-saku*, an above average swordsmith. However, in the 1990 revised edition of the same book, he was upgraded to *jô-saku*, a superior smith.

Based on the quality of this katana, he certainly deserves the rank of *jô-saku*.

*Futatsu-dô dodan-barai kirite Miyai Rokubei (kaô)*

This katana was tested by *Miyai Rokubei* who severed through two human bodies and into the mound below in one stroke.

The precise gold inlay testifies to the cutting test result.

(Futa) 二  
(tsu) ツ  
(dô) 洞  
(do) 土  
(dan) 壇  
(barai) 拂

(kiri) 切  
(te) 手  
(miya) 宮  
(i) 井  
(Roku) 六  
(be) 兵  
(i) 衛  
(kaô) 花押

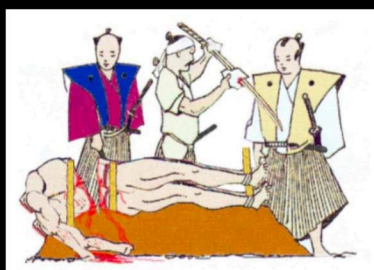
二ツ洞土壇拂  
切手宮井六兵衛  
花押







before



after

寛文元年御帳

一 百 石	杉岡仁兵衛	一 百 石	加藤又右衛門
知行三萬七百拾四石九斗三升		一 百 石	神保六左衛門
●射手		一 百 石	毛利半助
一 百 石	金子權右衛門	一 百 石	宮井六兵衛
一 百 石	矢嶋平左衛門	一 百 石	篠嶋七兵衛
一 百 石	永井兵右衛門	一 百 石	神戶半九郎
一 百 石	内五拾石 小頭科	一 百 石	古澤宗右衛門
一 百 石	五拾石 弓科	一 百 石	佐藤傳助
一 百 石	辻平之丞	一 百 石	片岡七郎左衛門
一 百 石	金森喜左衛門	一 百 石	原佐左衛門
一 百 石	有山忠左衛門	一 百 石	杉山清左衛門
一 百 石	石野義左衛門	一 百 石	山田八郎右衛門
一 百 石	大窪六之丞	一 百 石	石黒三郎兵衛
一 百 石	奥村彦三郎	一 百 石	服部庄兵衛
一 百 石	和田七右衛門	一 百 石	富田助八
一 百 石	内田茂右衛門		
一 百 石	小西吉左衛門		

一八二

Kaga domain samurai name list  
from the 10th year of Kanbun era (1670)

### Miyai Rokubei

With great research, Miyai Rokubei's name was discovered on the official Kaga domain samurai name list from 1670. He was listed as an archer. We can assume that he was promoted to the sword branch and asked to perform this cutting test.

三洞土壇拂

切午宮井六兵衛

特 保  
06202406

No 1023131



公益財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協会



令和六年八月二十三日

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

一刀 銘

賀州住藤原家忠

(金象嵌)

ニツ胴土壇拂  
切手宮井六兵衛(花押)

長二尺三寸三分強

鑑定書

石川県 教育委員会

第 2210 号

昭和26年3月13日

(再)令和4年8月22日

## NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon Certificate of Designation

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

Issued in the 6th year of Reiwa (2024), August 23rd

One, Katana

Mei (signature)

Gashû-jû Fujiwara Ietada

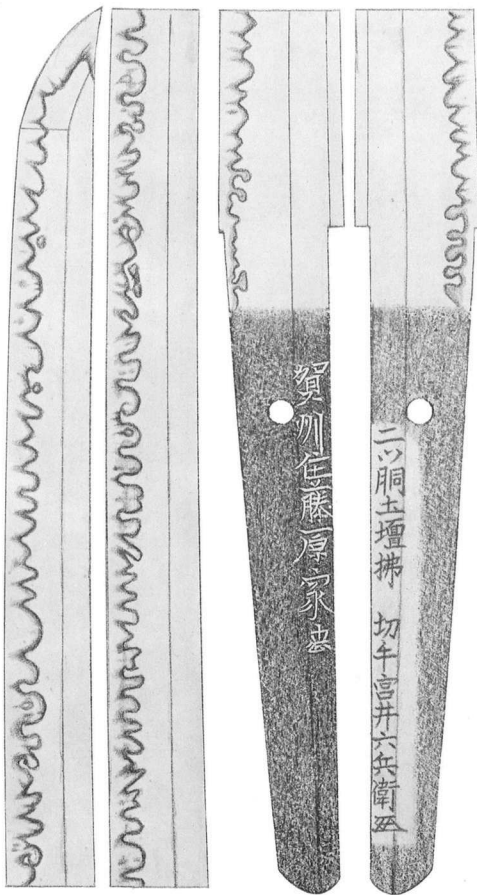
(Kinzôgan) Futatsu-dô dodan-barai kirite Miyai Rokubei (kaô)

Nagasa (length)

2-shaku 3-sun 3-bu kyô (70.7cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai  
(NBTHK)





## 百二十九、 刀 銘

賀州住藤原家忠  
(金象嵌) 二ツ胴土壇切手宮井六兵衛 花押

法量 長さ一尺二寸二分 反り五分

形状 鑄造、庵棟、姿良く、中鋒。

鍛 小板目に奎安り地沸つき地景入る。

刃文 互の目丁子に鈍子丁

子を交え匂深く、頗る華やか。

帽子 乱れ込み、表尖り気味に裏小丸に返る。

茎 生ぶ、先刃上り気

味の栗尻、目釘孔一、鈍目筋透、表棟寄りに長銘に切り、裏棟寄りに二ツ胴土壇切手宮井六兵衛 (花押) と

金象嵌あり。

説明 初代家忠、承応明暦頃の作と思ふ、備前の守家を模した彼の意気高く評価したい。

This letada katana has been featured in *Kashû Shintô Shu* (加州新刀集) - a *nihontô* reference book highlighting notable swords from *Kaga* province during the *shintô* period.

Item 129

Katana, mei:

*Gashû-jû Fujiwara letada* (賀州住藤原家忠) "Fujiwara letada, resident of Kaga province"

*Kinzôgan* (gold inlay): *Futatsu-dô dotan-barai kirite Miyai Rokubei + kaô*

Tester *Miyai Rokubei*, with this blade, severed through two bodies and into the earthen mound below signed with his monogram

Measurements:

nagasa: 70.6 cm, sori 1.5 cm

Shape: *shinogi-zukuri*, *iori-mune*, excellent *sugata* (shape), *chû-kissaki*

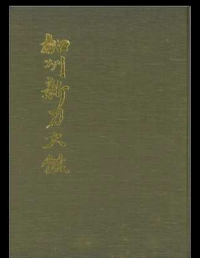
Kitae: *ko-itame* that is mixed with *mokume* and that features *ji-nie* and *chikei*

Hamon: strikingly flamboyant *gunome-chôji* with a wide *nioiguchi* mixed with *kawazu no ko-chôji*

Bôshi: *midare-komi*, on the *omote* side with a pointed *kaeri*, on the *ura* side with a *ko-maru-kaeri*

Nakago: *ubu*, *kurijiri* that tends to *ha-agari*, one *mekugi-ana*, *sujikai-yasurime*, the *omote* side bears towards the *nakago-mune* a *naga-mei*, and the *ura* side towards the *nakago-mune* the above quoted *kinzôgan-mei*

Comment: This is a work from the first generation *letada* (家忠) that appears to date between *Jôô* (承応, 1652~1655) and *Meireki* era (明暦, 1655). Praiseworthy is letada's skill in aiming at the style of *Bizen* [Hatakeda, 畠田] *Morie* (守家) with this blade.



book cover

賀州住藤原家忠

賀州住藤原家忠

*Gashû-jû Fujiwara letada*

Fujiwara letada, a resident of *Gashû* (Kaga) province

二ツ胴土壇拂  
切手宮井六兵衛

二ツ胴土壇拂

切手宮井六兵衛（花押）

*Futatsu-dô dodan-barai kirite Miyai Rokubê + kaô*

Tested by *Miyai Rokubê* severed through two bodies & into the mound

刃長貳尺參寸三分強有之

刃長貳尺參寸三分強有之

*Hachô 2-shaku 3-sun 3-bu kyô kore ari*

Blade length 70.7 cm

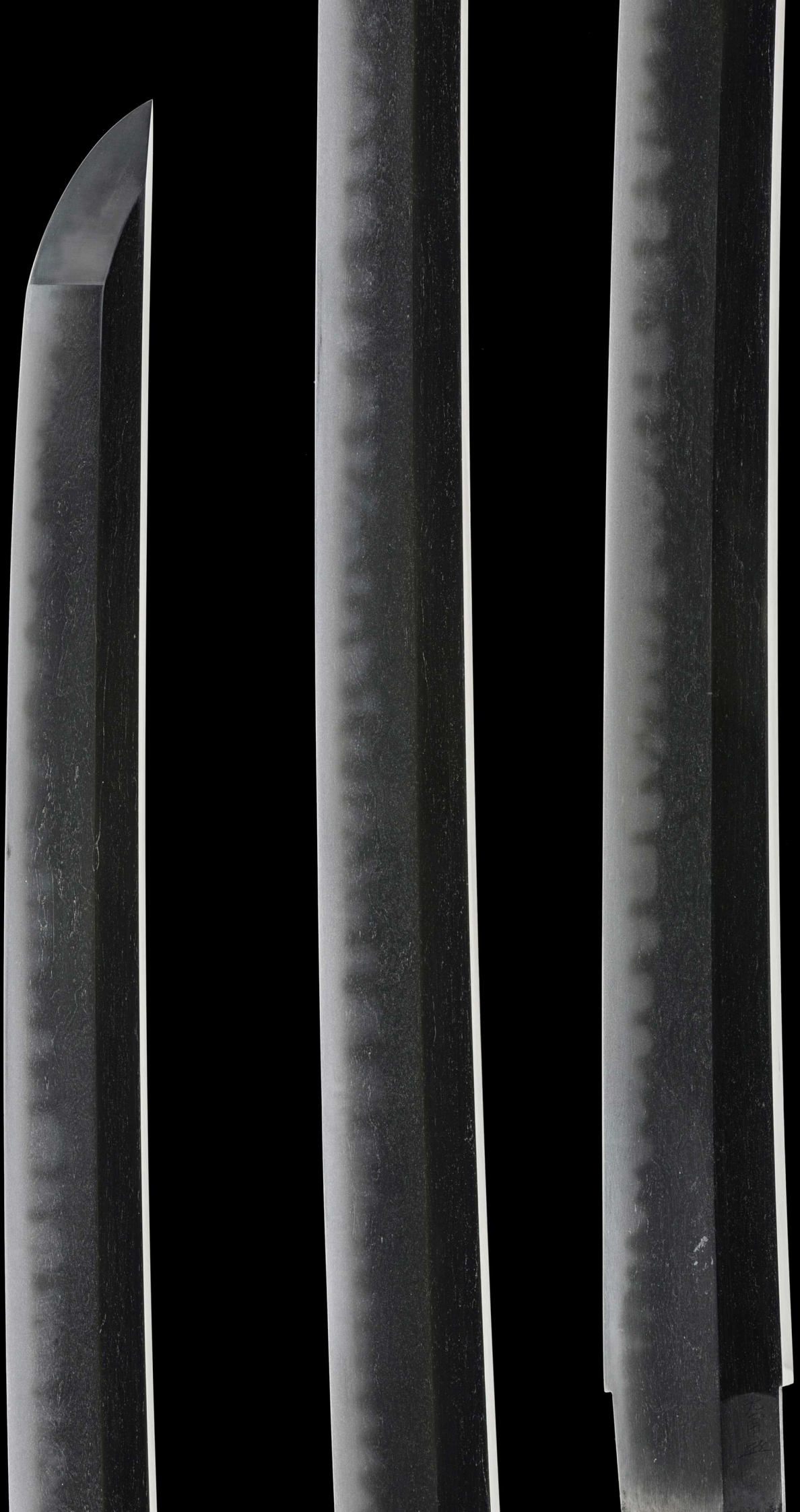
令和七乙巳年  
正月吉日誌之

令和七乙巳年正月吉日誌之

*Reiwa nana kinoto-midoshi Shôgatsu kichijitsu kore o shirusu*

Written on a lucky day in the first month in the seventh year of  
Reiwa era during the Year of the Snake (January 2025)





光甫

花押

光 (Kô)

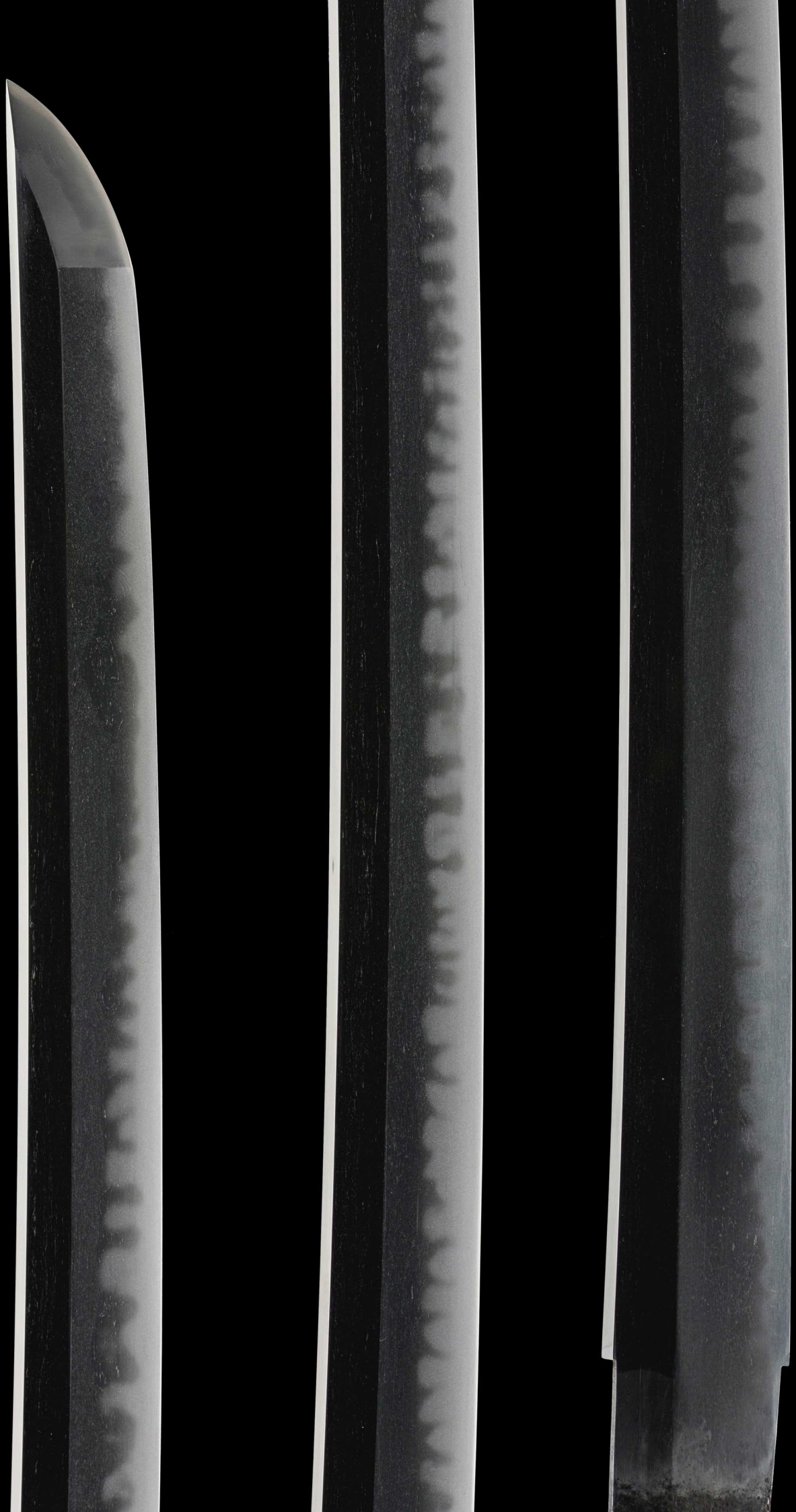
甫 (ho)

花押 (kaô)

Under the *habaki* reveals a pleasant surprise - the polisher's signature with his traditional *kaô* (monogram).

This katana was polished by *Hon'ami Kôho* (本阿弥光甫) in 1936.





*Shôwa hinoe-nedoshi hachigatsu*

Polished in the eighth month of *Shôwa* era  
during the Year of the Rat (August 1936).

(Shô) 昭

(wa) 和

(hachi) 八

(hinoe) 丙

(gatsu) 月

(ne) 子

(doshi) 年

昭和  
八年  
丙子  
八月





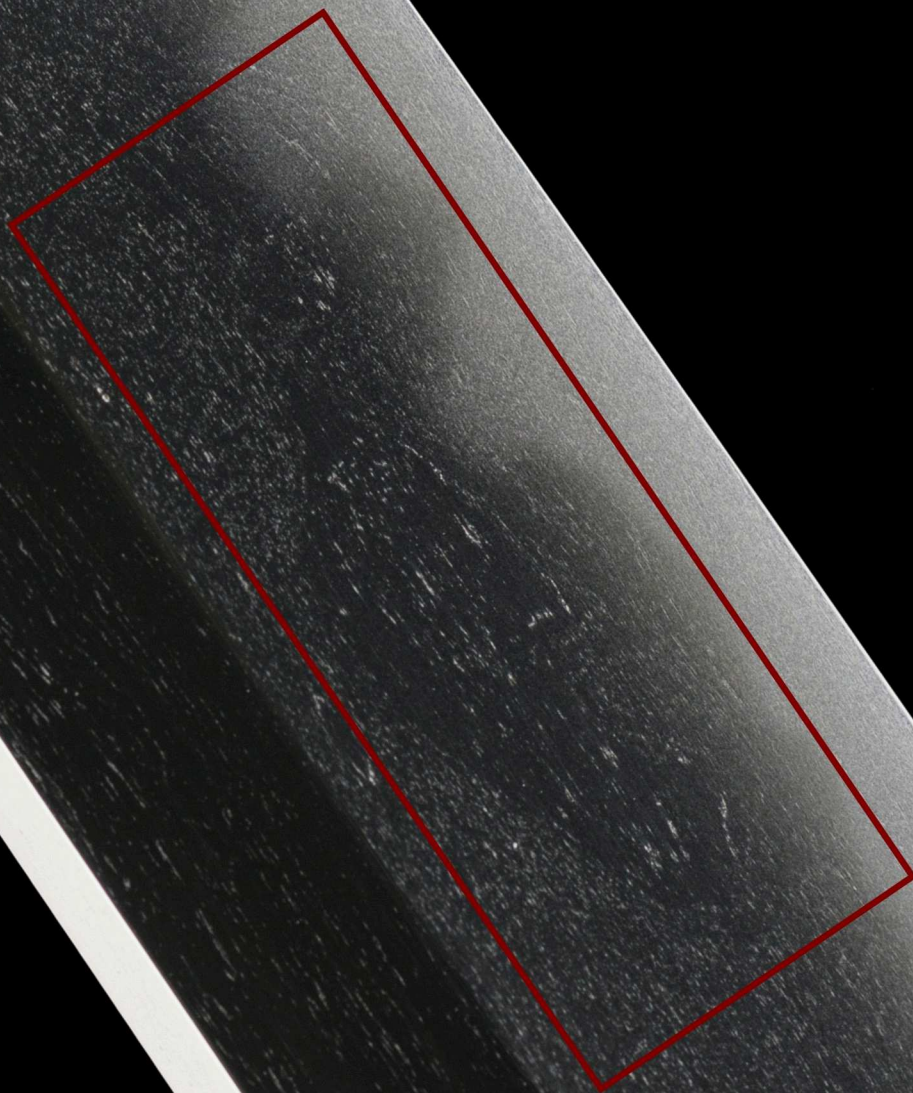
*mokume-hada*

*chikei*

*Itame* mixed with pockets of *mokume-hada* and dark, swirling lines of *chikei* forms a striking visual contrast with the bright, beaming hamon.

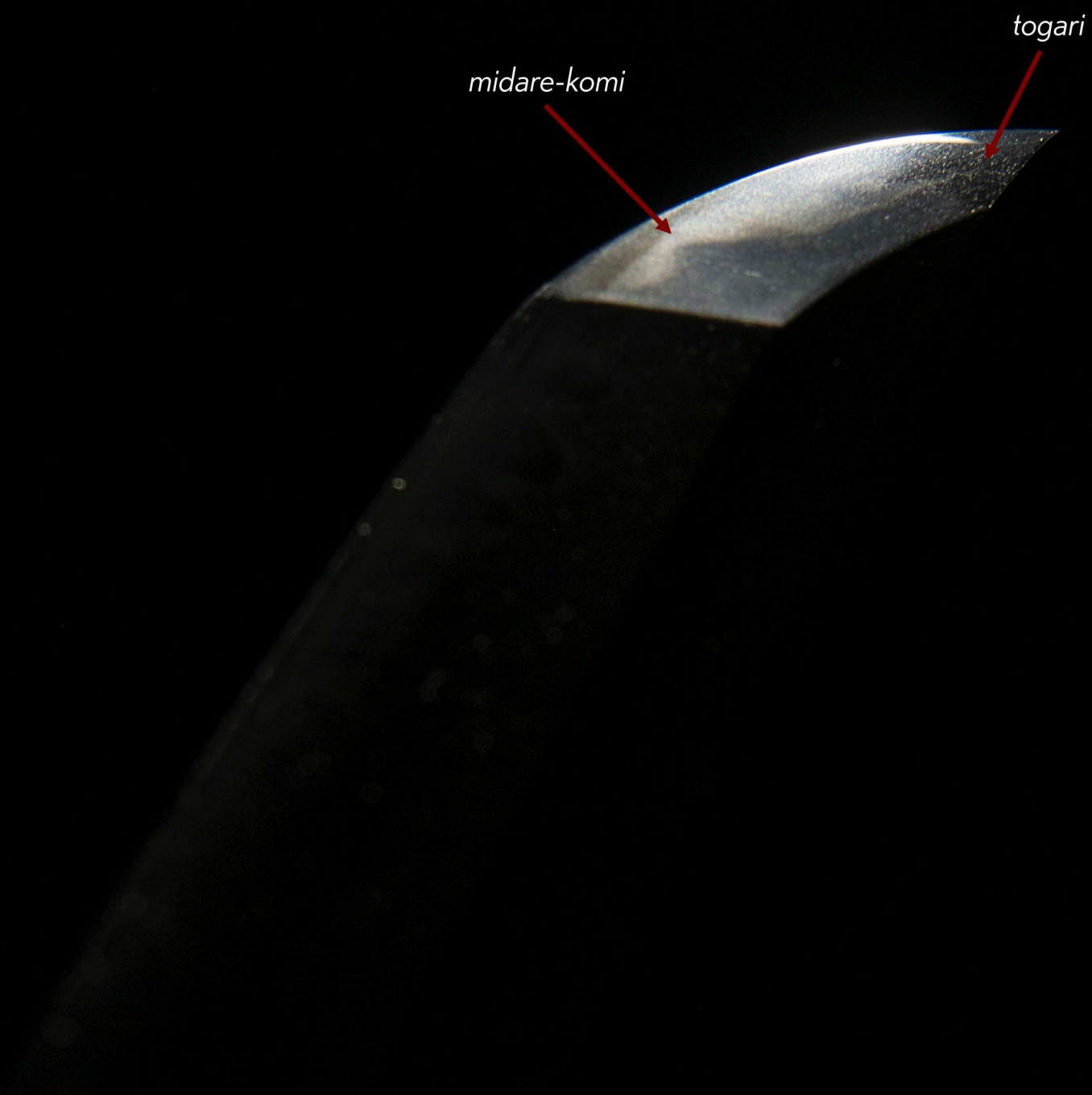


Here we see *namazu-hada*, dark spots of nie crystals that form to resemble the skin of a catfish (*namazu*).



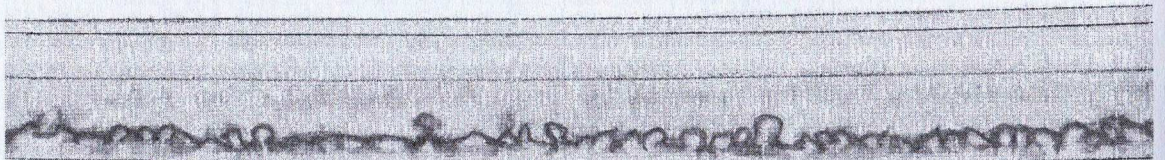


*Bôshi* displays a wavy *midare-komi* with a slight *togari* (pointed) turn back.





*Kawazu-no-ko chôji* is translated literally as "*tadpole chôji*" as its elongated shape resembles tadpoles. This unique hamon pattern was originally made famous by *Hatakeda Moriie* who worked in *Bizen* province circa 1232~1233 during the *Kamakura* period. An *oshigata* tracing of a *Hatakeda Moriie hamon* from *Sesko's Kantei Reference Book* is illustrated below. The inspiration is clear.



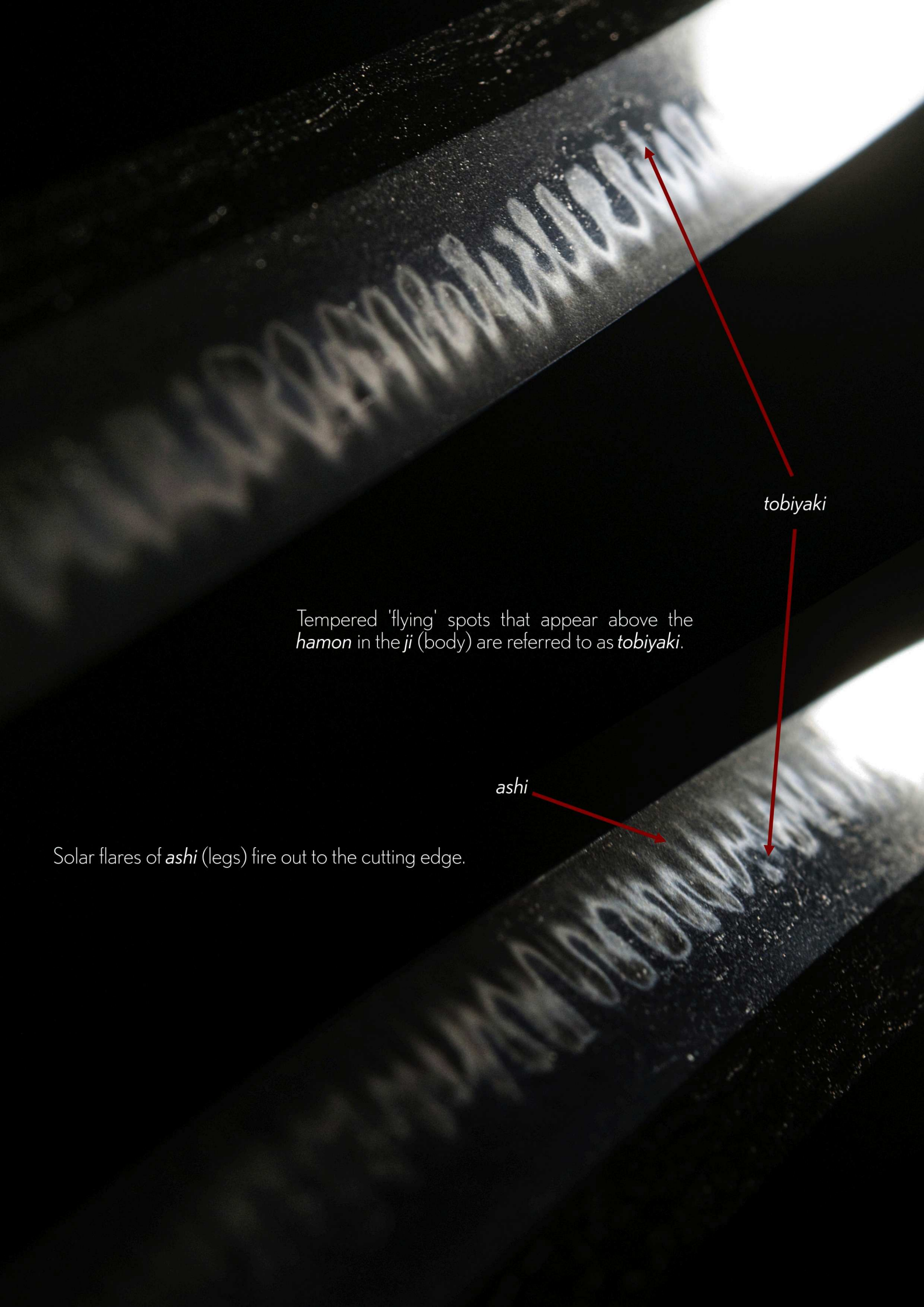
Hatakeda Moriie (畠田守家)





Parallel lines of *kinsuji* dramatically slice through the *hamon*.





*tobi-yaki*

Tempered 'flying' spots that appear above the *hamon* in the *ji* (body) are referred to as *tobi-yaki*.

*ashi*

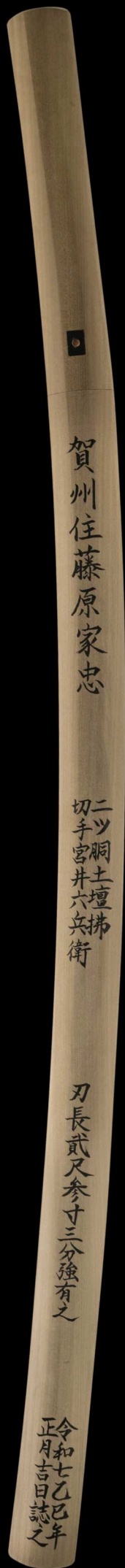
Solar flares of *ashi* (legs) fire out to the cutting edge.





The blade's edge catches the light with subtle brilliance, revealing its keen cutting potential.

This is a dramatic katana that will elevate one's spirit even on the most challenging of days.



*Shirasaya*  
(protective scabbard)



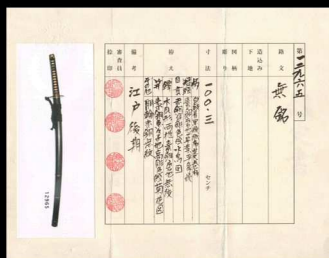
Tall gold *habaki* with  
diagonal file marks  
with horizontal carving  
(*Mito* style)



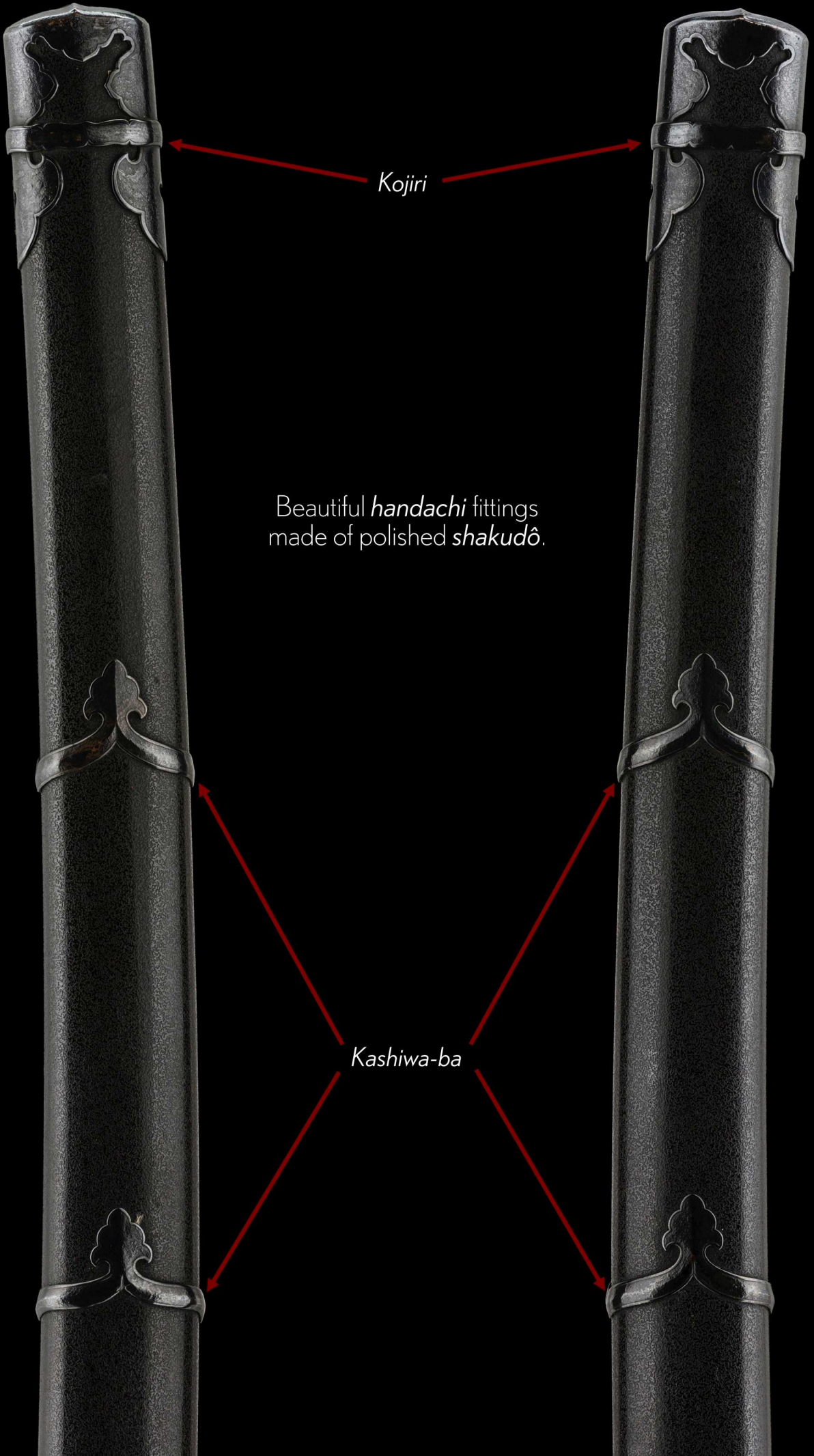
*Kuro-ishime-ji  
Sendai-shibonuri saya  
handachi-koshirae*  
(黒石目地仙台絞塗鞘半太刀拵)

*Handachi-koshirae  
lacquered in black with  
stone-surface texture in  
Sendai-shibonuri style*

Crafted during the  
Late Edo period  
(1780~1868)



*NTHK-NPO Kanteisho  
Certificate of Authenticity*



*Kojiro*

Beautiful *handachi* fittings  
made of polished *shakudô*.

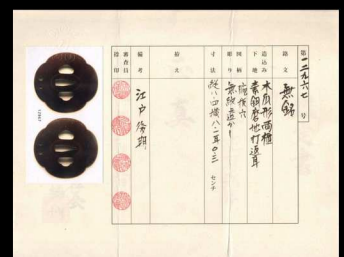
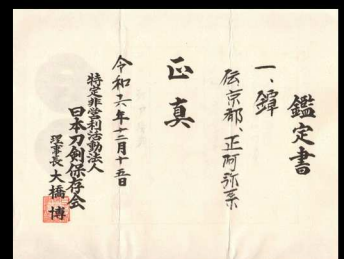
*Kashiwa-ba*





This *tsuba* is attributed to *Kyô-Shôami* (京正阿弥) school. Along with the *Umetada* (埋忠) school, *Shôami* school is known as one of the two major schools of *tsuba*, which flourished from the Muromachi period until the end of the Edo period, and was widely distributed throughout the country during the Edo period. There are *Shôami* schools from *Aizu* (会津), *Akita* (秋田), *Shônai* (庄内), *Edo* (江戸), and other regions.

This work is by *Kyô-Shôami*, the name given for metalsmiths that emigrated to *Kyôto* (京都) and was crafted in late Edo period (1780~1868). It features a polished copper ground with a multiple lobed round shape with two *hitsu-ana*.







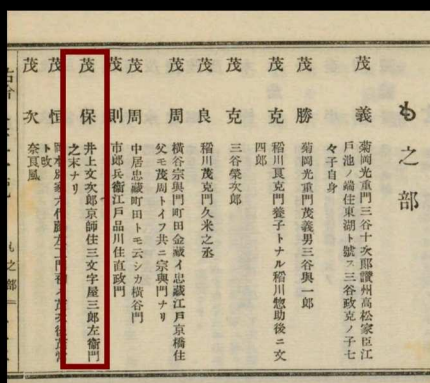
*Udenuki ana* (two small holes) were common on older tachi tsuba serving the purpose of a safety wrist strap when the sword is used on horseback. The holes are of different sizes and generally close together.

During the Edo period this design enjoyed a resurgence as seen here.



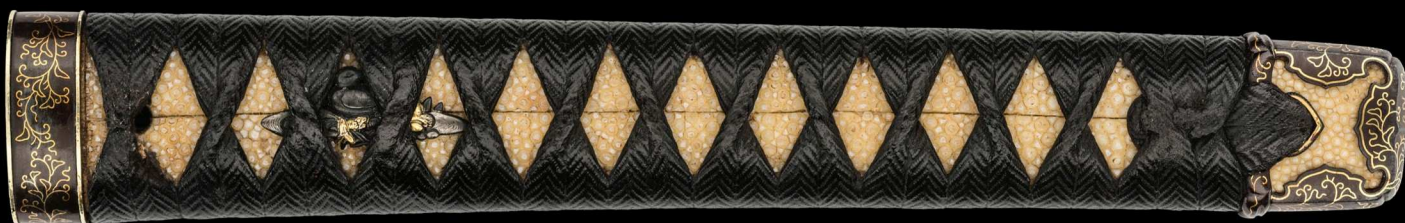


Flat gold inlay depicting vines on a polished copper ground.



According to records, *Shigeyasu* was born *Inoue Monjirô* (井上文次郎). He was a descendant of *Saburôzaemon* (三郎左衛門), who ran *Samonji-ya* on *Oike* street in *Kyôto*. His works were nicknamed "*Oike carving*" after the name of the street.





The *tsuka* (hilt) is wrapped in a *twill* (diagonal ribs) weave and lacquered in black in *hishimaki* style to further preserve the hilt.



*Menuki* feature frolicking water birds, enjoying life.







A kogai is a thick blunt needle that was primarily used as a hair arranging tool by the samurai. It is fastened into a special notch built inside the *saya* (scabbard) and drawn through the 'bumpy' hole in the tsuba.

This *kogai* is attributed to *Katsuki* school from *Kaga* province, where the sword was made and was crafted during the late Edo period. This piece is comprised of a *shakudô* base decorated with *nanako* (dotted), with a motif of chrysanthemums with colour accents.




NTHK-NPO Kanteisho certification



The *Katsuki* school traces its origins to *Katsuki Morisada* (勝木盛定), who initially worked in *Fushimi, Kyôto*. Upon invitation from the *Maeda* clan, lord of *Kaga* domain, he relocated his workshop. Though his early expertise was in decorative horse harness inlay, he established the *Katsuki* school which became renowned for its excellent sword fittings.





石川県教育委員会

昭和26年 3月 13日交付  
令和4年 8月 22日再交付

## 銃砲刀剣類登録証

登録記番号 石川 第二二一〇号

備考	銘文	目くぎ穴	反り		長さ		種別	
			目くぎ穴	反り	長さ	種別		
	(表) 賀州住藤原家忠 (裏) (金象嵌) ニッ胴土壇拂切子 宮井木兵衛(花押)	1 個	1.5	70.7	センチメートル	全長	種別	
		口径	銃身長	全長	センチメートル	銃	砲	
		口径	銃身長	全長	センチメートル	銃	砲	

The original *torokusho* (registration card) for the *letada katana* was registered in the 26th year of Showa (March 13, 1951). Often the cards get worn out or ripped over time and thus this torokusho was re-issued on August 22, 2022.

This is significant as 1951 was the very first year that swords were formally registered in Japan. Many former *daimyô* (great) families were invited to submit their collections suggesting this blade was once held by a prominent family.

The serial number is just 2210, one of the very first swords registered in Japan. The sword was registered in *Ishikawa* prefecture, the modern-day name for *Kaga* province, suggesting that this katana had been in *Kaga* for more than 400 years.





Koshirae bag



ITEM# UJTA062

## A NOBUKATSU TANTÔ

SIGNED, SHINSHINTÔ PERIOD (BUNKYŪ ERA: 1861~1864)

<b>Swordsmith:</b>	<i>Enju Nobukatsu (shodai, 1st gen.)</i>
<b>Measurements:</b>	<b>Length:</b> 20.9cm ( <i>ubu</i> ) <b>Moto-haba:</b> 1.96cm <b>Weight:</b> 130g
<b>Jihada:</b>	<i>Ayasugi-hada with ji-nie and chikei</i>
<b>Hamon:</b>	<i>Bright suguha with niyu-ba, kinsuji and long ko-maru kaeri bôshi</i>
<b>Certificate #1-2:</b>	<b>NBTHK Hozon</b> (a sword Worthy of Preservation)
<b>Fujishiro rank:</b>	<b>Chûjô-saku</b> (ranked as an above average swordsmith)
<b>Authentication:</b>	<b>Sayagaki by Nozomi-san</b> (shodô artist)
<b>Included:</b>	Shirasaya, Edo-koshirae, fabric bags, stand, kit, printed description

## SOLD

This delightful tantô by *Enju Nobukatsu* shares qualities of the classic *Enju* school that dates back to the *Kamakura* period in the *Kikuchi* area of *Higo* province in *Kyûshû*. It features a wavy *ayasugi hada* and a bright *suguha hamon* that splits into *niyu-ba* in a very *Yamato-den* manner. Several river-like veins of *kinsuji* flow through the hamon most impressively as well. It's wonderful *koshirae* is certified to the late Edo period with *menuki* depicting *Hotei*, the Japanese god of contentment and happiness, guardian of children. He has such a cheerful face and a big belly - widely recognised as the *Laughing Buddha*. For a small blade, this sword packs a punch and definitely carries positive energy. Nobukatsu is ranked *chûjo-saku*, an above average smith, and there is a good chance this sword can be upgraded to NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon. UJ will assist.





Moto-kasane: 6.5mm

Omosa: 130g

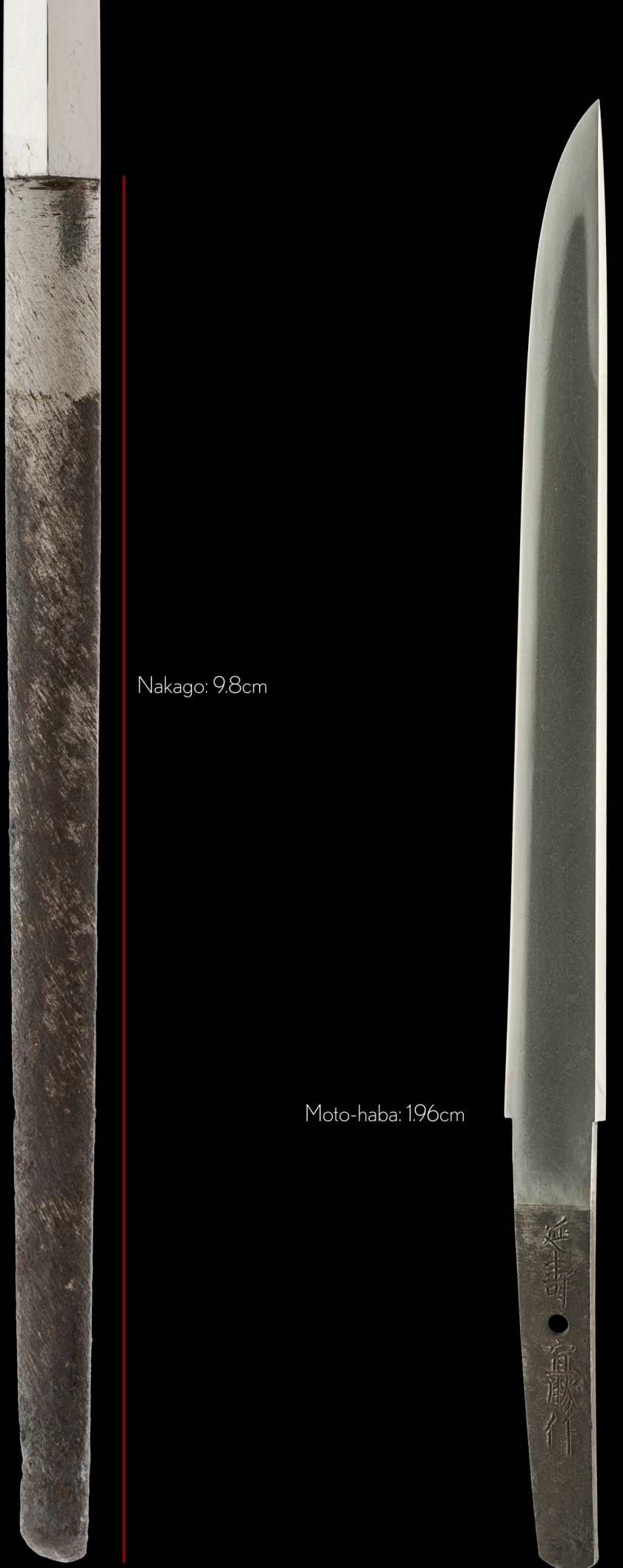
Nakago: 9.8cm

Moto-haba: 1.96cm

Nagasa: 20.9cm

Sori: 0.0cm

Mekugi-ana: 1



The *Enju* school from the *Kikuchi* area of *Higo* province in *Kyûshû* rose to prominence from the late *Kamakura* through the *Nanbokuchô* period, founded by *Rai Kunimura* (来国村), reportedly a grandson of the esteemed *Yamashiro* province smith *Rai Kuniyuki* (来国行). Under its banner emerged several master craftsmen, including *Kuniyoshi* (国吉), *Kunitoki* (国時), and *Kuniyasu* (国泰).

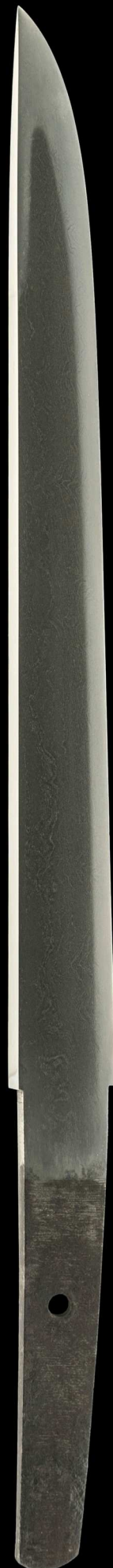
Centuries later, *Nobukatsu*, born Takenaga Kizaemon (武永喜三右衛門), carried forward the *Enju* legacy. His journey began under *Mimasaka's Tada Masatoshi* (多田正利), before his domain commissioned him to study in Edo under *Hosokawa Masayoshi* (細川正義) of *Tsuyama*. While crafting swords from 1844 to 1867, he gained particular recognition for his masterful *yari* (spears). His life's work concluded in 1871, during the fourth year of *Meiji*, when he passed at age 75.

This delightful *tantô* shares features of the classic *Enju* school with a wavy *ayasugi hada* and a bright *suguha hamon* that splits into *niju-ba* in a very *Yamato-den* manner. Several river-like veins of *kinsuji* flow through the hamon most impressively as well.

It's wonderful *koshirae* is certified to the late Edo period (possibly original to the sword) and sports over-sized *menuki* depicting *Hotei*, the Japanese god of contentment and happiness, guardian of children. He has such a cheerful face and a big belly - which is why he is widely recognised as the *Laughing Buddha*. Hotei carries a large cloth bag over his back, one that never empties, for it is said he uses it to feed the poor and needy.

All told, for a small blade, this sword packs a punch and definitely carries a message of good fortune and positive energy.

Nobukatsu is ranked *chûjo-saku*, an above average smith, and there is a good chance this sword can be upgraded to **NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon**, but there is no guarantee. Unique Japan can assist the next owner for its submission in the next NBTHK shinsa if he or she so chooses.







Location: *Higo province*

Family name: *Enju*

Swordsmith: *Nobukatsu* (first generation)

*ubu-nakago* (original, unaltered tang)

*kiri-yasurime* (horizontal file marks)

延 (En)

壽 (ju)

宣 (Nobu)

勝 (Katsu)

作 (saku)



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

(*ura*, reverse)

*ha agari kurijiri nakagojiri*



保 存  
12200003



No. 356427

鑑定書

長七寸弱

一短刀 銘 延寿宣勝作

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

平成十二年五月二日

財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協会



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 12th year of Heisei (2000), May 2nd

One, Tantô

*Mei* (signature)  
*Enju Nobukatsu saku*

*Nagasa* (length)  
7-sun jaku (20.9cm)

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai  
(NBTHK)



延  
寿  
宣  
勝

時  
代  
文  
久  
頃

延寿宣勝  
*Enju Nobukatsu*  
Enju Nobukatsu

時代文久頃  
*Jidai Bunkyû-goro*  
Circa *Bunkyû* era (1861~1864)

刃長七寸弱有之  
*Hachô 7-sun jaku kore ari*  
Blade length 20.9 cm

令和六甲辰年坤月吉日誌之  
*Reiwa roku kinoe-tatsudoshi Kongetsu kichijitsu kore o shirusu*  
Written on a lucky day in the tenth month in the sixth year of  
Reiwa era during the Year of the Dragon (October 2024)



刃  
長  
七  
寸  
弱  
有  
之

令  
和  
六  
甲  
辰  
年  
坤  
月  
吉  
日  
誌  
之



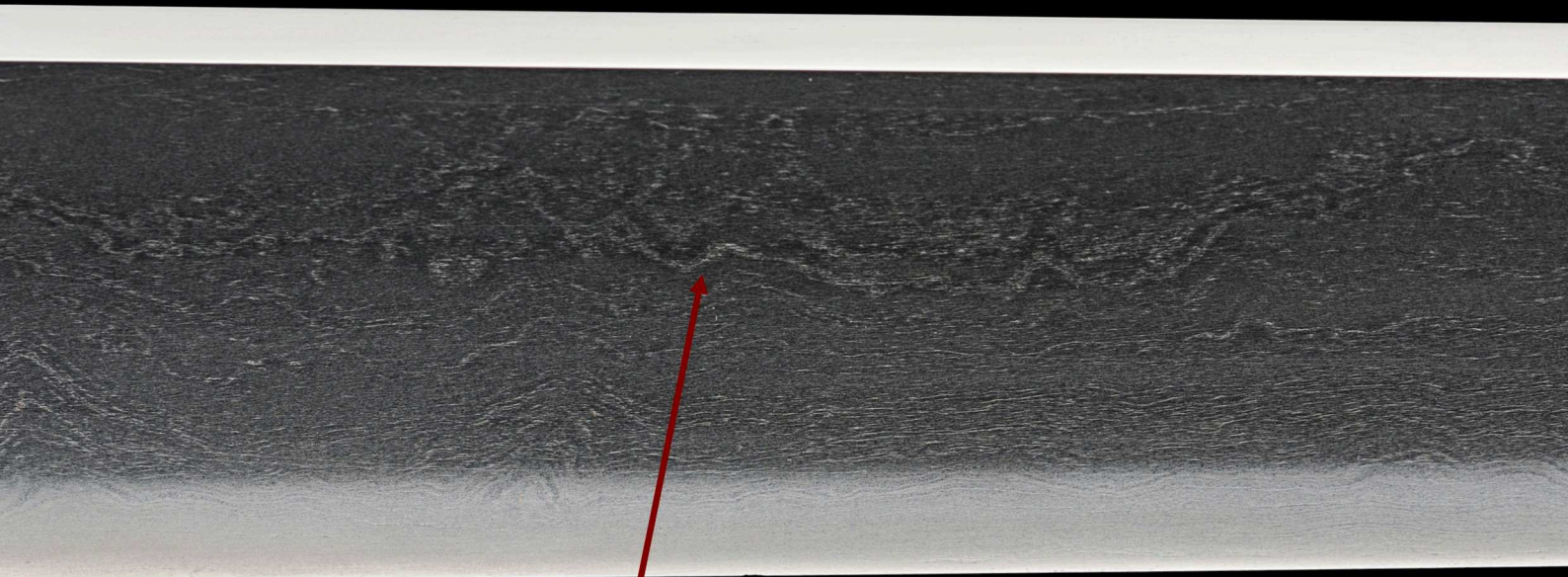




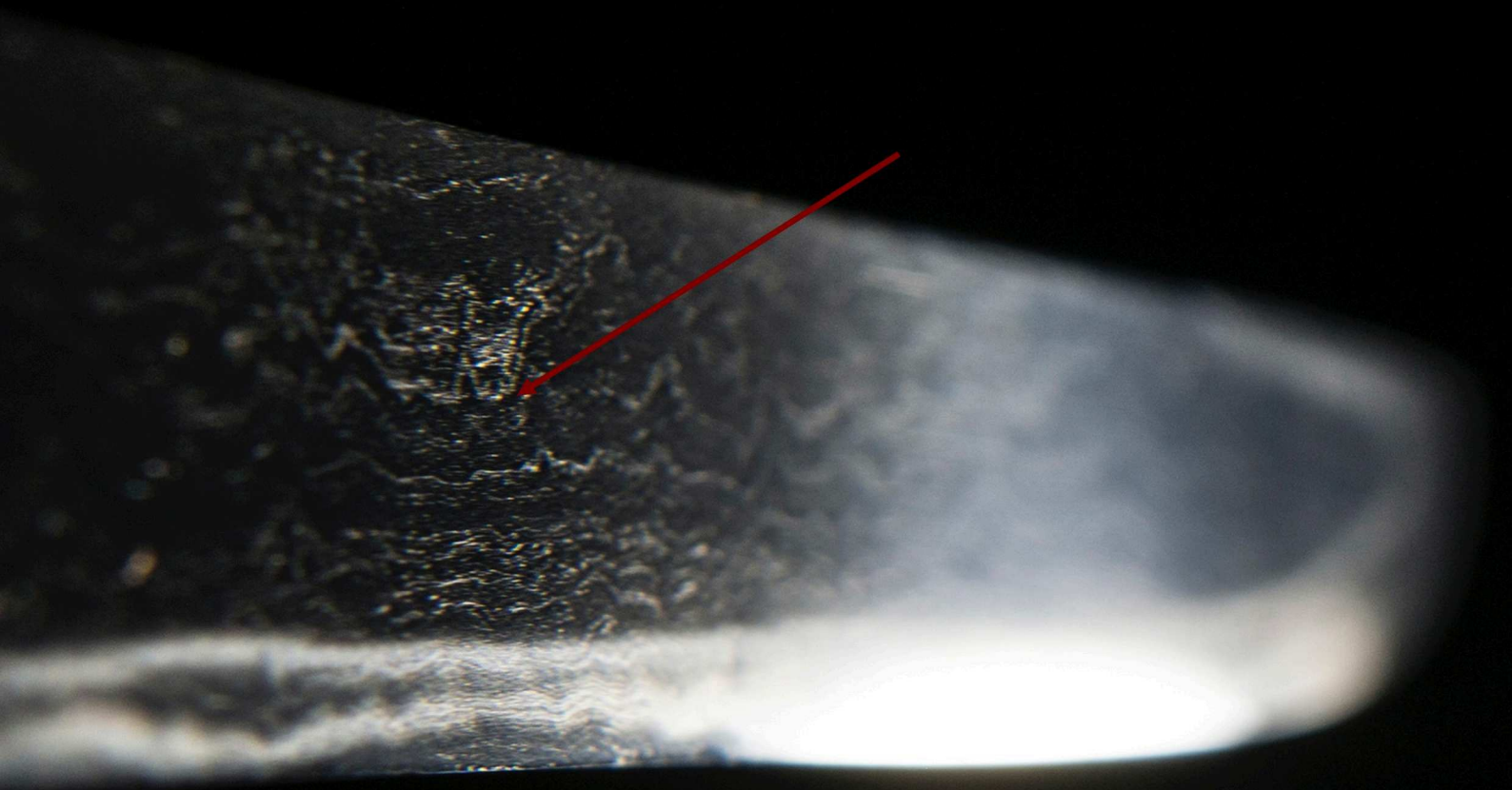
Surface scratch will be polished away before shipment from Tokyo.





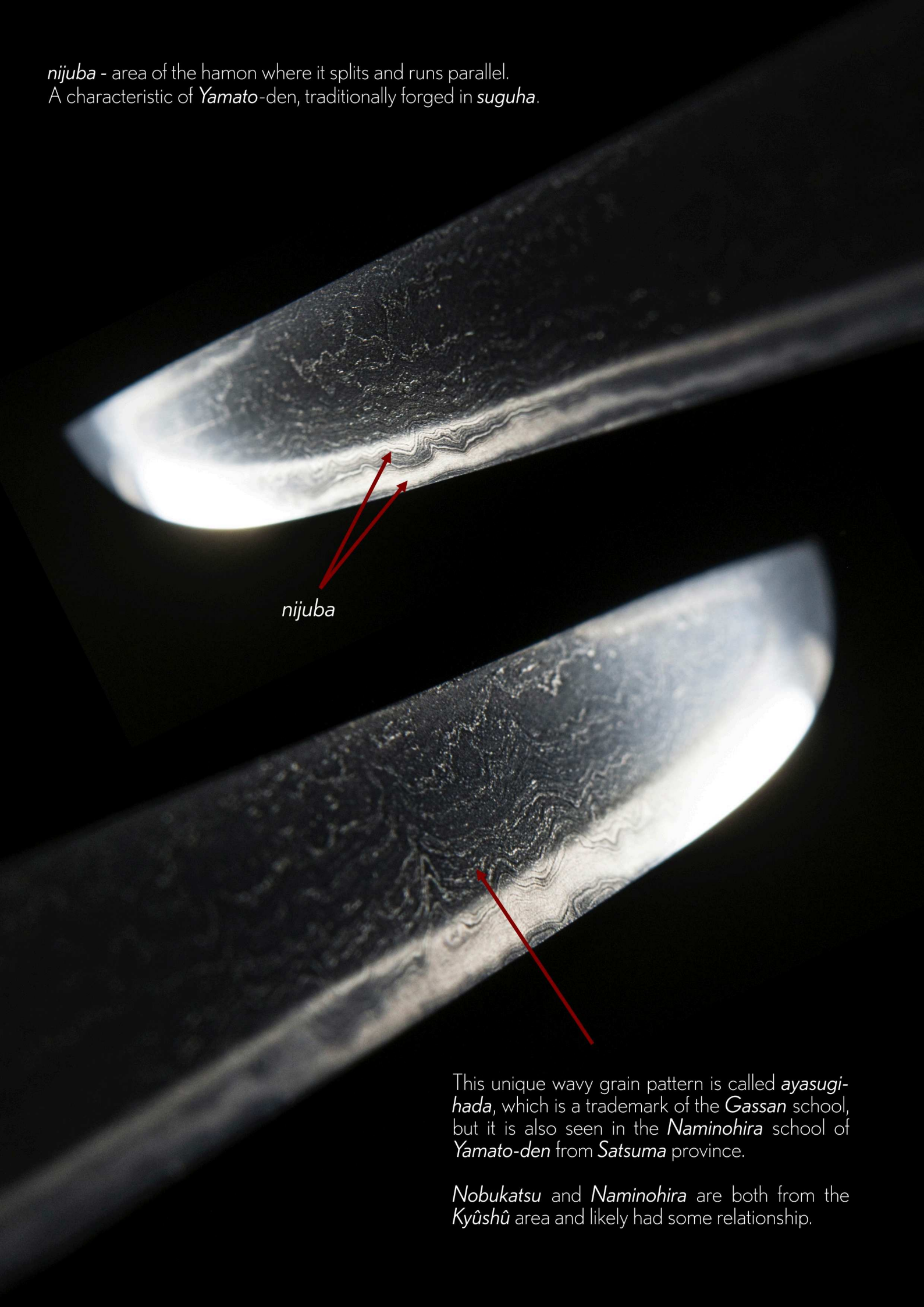


*chikei*, impressive dark channels of *nie* crystals  
burrow through the *ji* (body) of the sword.





*nijuba* - area of the hamon where it splits and runs parallel.  
A characteristic of *Yamato*-den, traditionally forged in *suguha*.

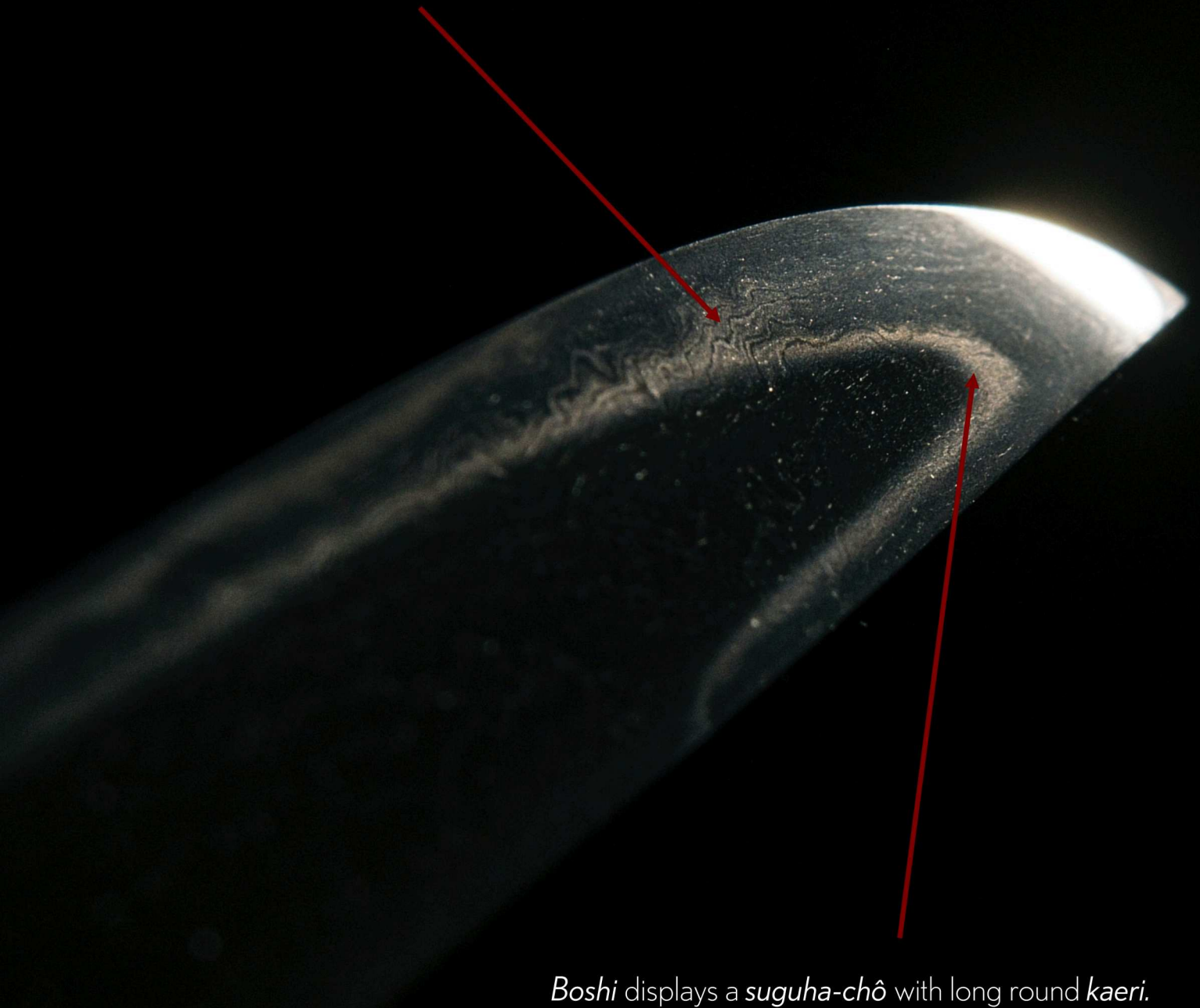


*nijuba*

This unique wavy grain pattern is called *ayasugihada*, which is a trademark of the *Gassan* school, but it is also seen in the *Naminohira* school of *Yamato*-den from *Satsuma* province.

*Nobukatsu* and *Naminohira* are both from the *Kyûshû* area and likely had some relationship.

Spectacular rivers of *kinsuji* flow through the hamon



*Boshi* displays a *suguha-chô* with long round *kaeri*.

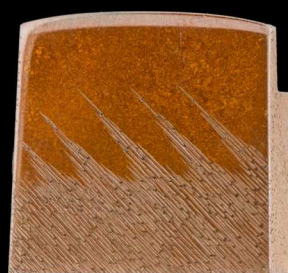
\*\* There is a good chance (but no guarantee) that this sword can achieve NBTHK Tokubetsu Hozon level of certification.

Unique Japan can assist with this submission in March 2025.  
Please enquire for details.





*Shirasaya*  
(protective scabbard)

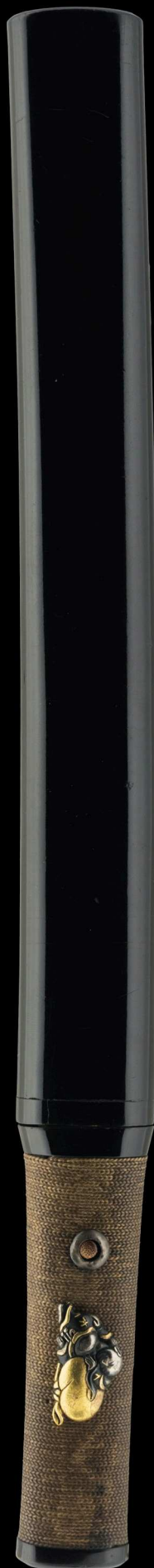


copper *habaki* with  
rainfall file marks

*Kuro-ronuri saya  
aikuchi-tantô-koshirae*  
(黒呂塗鞘合口短刀拵)

*Aikuchi-tantô-koshirae  
lacquered in glossy black*

Crafted during the  
Late Edo period  
(1780~1868)



NTHK-NPO Kanteisho  
Certificate of Authenticity





Antique leather *sageo*





The *tsuka* (hilt) is wrapped with *katate-maki* style



*Hotei*, the Japanese god of contentment and happiness, guardian of children. He has a cheerful face and a big belly - widely recognised as the *Laughing Buddha*. Hotei carries a large cloth bag over his back, one that never empties, for he uses it to feed the poor and needy.





Fortune arises from a merry disposition.





Look up, way up.







Koshirae bag with aged  
floral design



# ARIGATO!

THANK YOU FOR DOWNLOADING OUR CATALOGUE.  
WE LOOK FORWARD TO SERVING YOU.



*Temperatures dipped to -3C here in England recently (which caused a big panic ;).  
I took this photo of a frosted fallen maple leaf.*

PLEASE JOIN OUR VIP MAILING LIST TO BE  
INFORMED OF RECENTLY ACQUIRED SWORDS.

EMAIL US AT [SERVICE@UNIQUEJAPAN.COM](mailto:SERVICE@UNIQUEJAPAN.COM)

UNIQUEJAPAN.COM