

UK Sword Register 74

Type: Koto Katana

Nagasa: 67.0 cm **Moto-haba:** 2.8 cm **Saki-haba:** 2.0 cm

Suguta: O-suriage, hon-zukuri, iori-mune, shallow tori-zori, chu-kissaki, bo-hi on both sides ending in kaki-nagashi.

Jihada: Itame-mokume-hada, some o-hada, chikei and abundant ji-nie.

Hamon: A slightly undulating suguha in ko-nie, sunagaeshi especially in the habuchi area, ko-ashi and gunome ashi in places. The boshi tends towards kaen-boshi with short kaeri.

Nakago: O-suriage with kiri-jiri, one mekugi-ana, slightly sujikai yasuri. Mumei

The sword has a very shallow zori and is almost straight. The mihaba is quite narrow and the kissaki is a “thrusting” chu-kissaki Both hi are deep and well cut. The jihada is very clear with some chikei and abundant ji-nie. Although quite slender, the shape may indicate the Nambokucho period as the time of manufacture, although it seems to be an earlier shape than one might expect from the attribution (attributed to Nakajima Rai school).

The main Rai school is representative of Yamashiro-den in the late Kamakura and Nambokucho periods. As such, a suguha hamon, as with this sword, but possibly with more emphasis on nie, might be expected. On this sword, untypical of the main Rai school, is the irregular boshi which would not be seen in the mainstream Rai school. These differences, early shape, boshi etc., may have helped lead to the Nakajima Rai attribution as well as the quality being less than that of the main Rai school.

The Nakajima Rai school was founded by Rai Kuninaga who was a pupil of Rai Kunitoshi in Kyoto. Fujishiro states that “*when viewed from this point, that he is unmistakably part of the Rai extended family*”. This Kuninaga moved from Kyoto to Nakajima in Settsu province (Osaka) around the Gentoku period (1329-1331). There seem to be three generations of this name, followed by Munenaga, Yoshifusa and Tomouji.

Fujishiro rates the first Kuninaga as Josaku. This sword was attributed to Nakajima Rai at NBTHK Hozon shinsa in January 2006.

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