

UK Sword Register No. 92

Type: Shinshinto wakizashi

Nagasa: 44.3cm **Moto-haba:** 2.9cm **Saki-haba:** 2.1cm

Sugata: Shinogi-zukuri with tori-zori and extended chu-kissaki with pronounced sori on the fukura.

Jihada: Predominantly ko-itame hada with some ko-mokume and ji-nie.

Hamon: Chu-suguha in nie-deki, ending over the habaki-moto. The boshi is wide on both sides with ko-maru and kaeri. Here is a slight notare on the boshi on the ura.

Nakago: Ubu with one mekugi-ana, slightly sujikai yasurime. Kuri-jiri which is ha-agari and well signed on the omote: HIZEN KUNI TADAYOSHI.

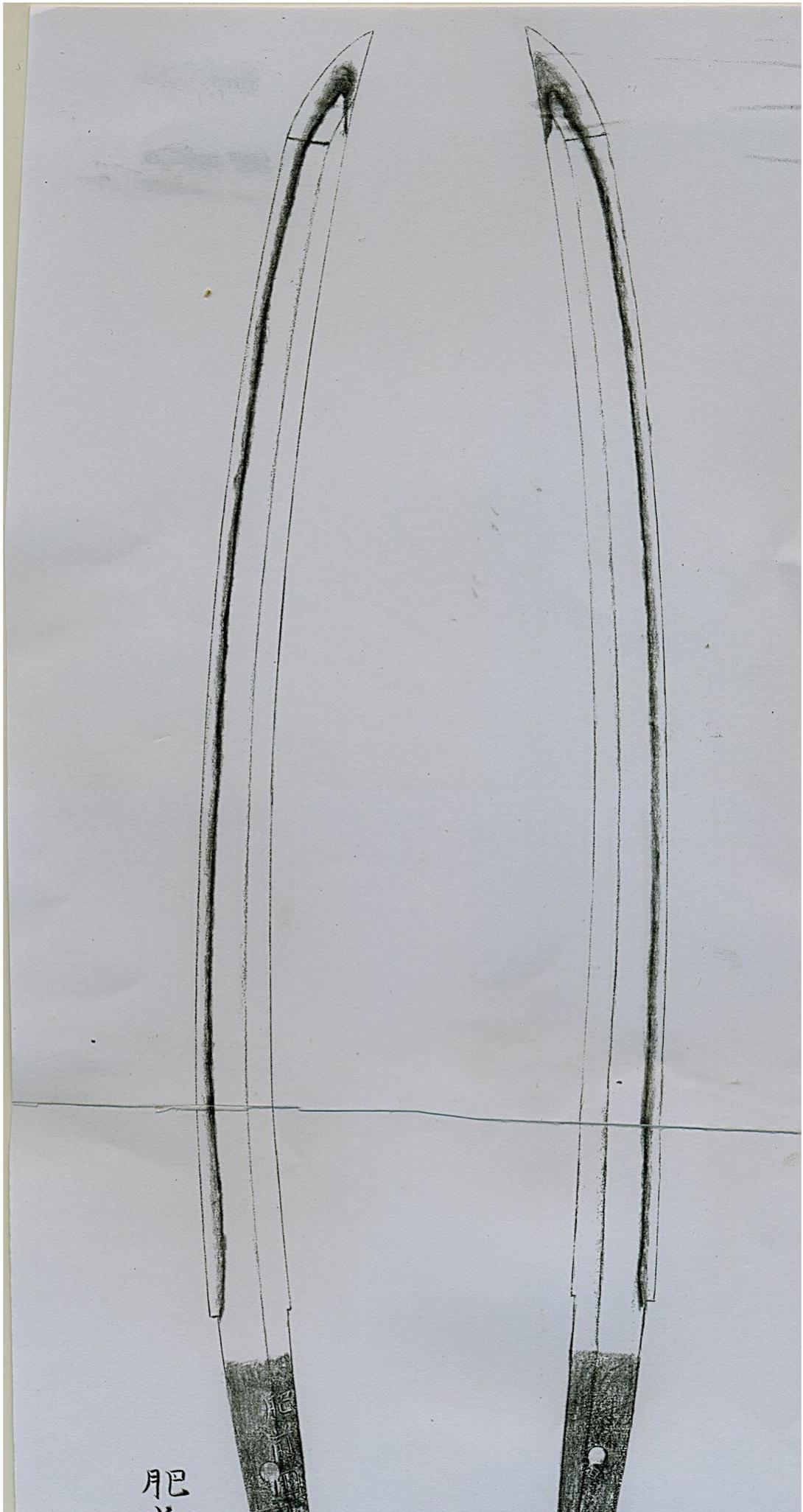
This wakizashi has a good shape and appears to have a strong zori. The fukura on the kissaki is long and at an acute angle to the rest of the blade, contributing to and emphasising the sharp appearance of the blade. The suguha hamon is in nie-deki and is characteristic of Hizen-to and the nie along the habuchi are well ordered and attractive, as one might expect from a mainline smith of the school. Unexpectedly the jihada is predominantly ko-itame and, even with the ji-nie, has only a passing resemblance to the “konuka-hada” associated with the school. The Hizen goji-mei is very well and deeply carved. The depth of the boshi is wider than normal and overall, these slight differences make this a rather individualistic piece.

The sword has been attributed to the hachidai or eighth generation Tadayoshi who was active in the Ansei period and was representative of Hizen smiths in the shinshinto era. He born in 1801 and was the adopted son of the seventh generation. Originally named Hashimoto Shunichiro he became Hashimoto Shinsaemon. He is rated by some sources as the finest mainline smith after the first and third generations of Tadayoshi. Working closely alongside him was Hizen Tadayuki who was appointed as his guardian and in his later days his son, the ninth generation Tadayoshi. Both of these latter talented swordsmiths provided close assistance to Tadayoshi and a number of swords attributed to the eighth generation, may well be dai-mei and dai-saku by these two smiths. Around 1850, Tadayoshi was ordered to learn how to forge cannon, reflecting the troubled times in the Bakamatsu and in 1851 he had the honour of forging a sword in the presence of the ruling Nabeshima daimyo. The hachidai Tadayoshi died on 29th May 1859.

He is rated as josaku by Fujishiro and this sword was awarded Tokubetsu Hozon by the NBTHK.

Clive Sinclair

Bexley, November 2008



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