

Nagasa: 65.0 cm **Moto-haba:** 3.7 cm **Saki-haba:** 3.2 cm
Sugata: Hon-zukuri, shallow koshi-zori, iori-mune, wide mihaba with o-kissaki and bo-hi on both sides in kaki-otoshi..
Hamon: Suguha with slight notare in the mono-uichi area in nioi-deki, sugu boshi with ko-maru and kaeri.
Jihada: Itame mixed with masame, tsukare and shirake hada.
Nakago: Suriage and machi-okuri, 4 mekugi-ana, bo-hi in kaki-otoshi, ha-agari kuri-jiri, yoko yasurime. Signed at the bottom of the omote:
 HIROSUKE.

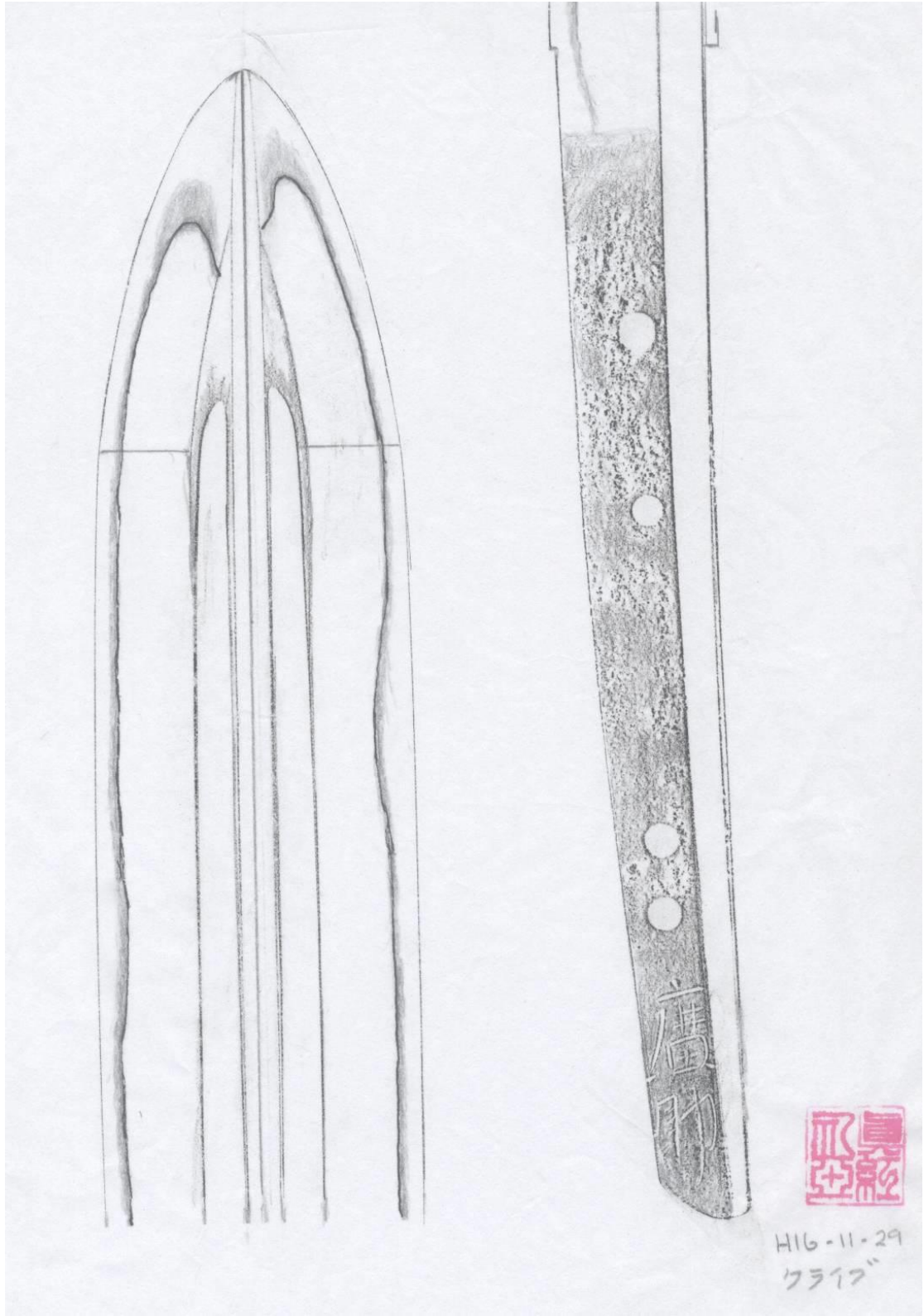
This sword has an impressive and robust wide shape and together with the o-kissaki resembles the sugata of the Namboku-cho period also apparently known as DABIRA which refers to the wide mihaba, (from DANBIRA-MONO or “giant sword” according to AFU Watson’s translation notes in Nihonto Koza).. It also gives the impression of being very sharp. Despite the shortening, the bo-hi helps to provide the sword with a very good balance and one might easily believe that it is a “swordsmen’s sword. The jihada is rather tsukare or tired, making any further polishing inadvisable.

The nakago has undergone a number of changes. It has been shortened although the mei has been retained and the jiri has been reshaped after the suriage. The large degree of machi-okuri (some 14 or 15 cm) and the top mekugi-ana seem to have been done to accommodate the custom made gunto mounts that accompany the blade. Without this machi-okuri, the original nagasa of this sword would have been some 80cm, obviously an impossible length to mount as a shin-gunto.

The first generation Hirosuke made this sword towards the end of the Muromachi period (about 1550). He is known to have made blades of the large proportions as may be seen in this example and was a representative swordsmith of the Shimada school from Suruga province. The school was founded by the shodai Yoshisuke about 1450. Yoshisuke made *Otegine no Yari* which was considered to be one of Japan’s three greatest yari. In spite of this, it seems that few very fine swords were made by the Shimada group although they were regular suppliers to the redoubtable Takeda clan from neighbouring Kai province. This Hirosuke was the son of the sandai Yoshisuke

As well as suguha, Hirosuke also forged blades with gunome and choji hamon, but his work is described by Fujishiro to have *samishi-ha* or subdued hamon in comparison to other sue-Bizen. He further suggests that the large sugata, especially of tanto by Yoshisuke, was a response to the inadequacies of sword-making in the Sengoku-jidai.

Some sources suggest that the shodai Yoshisuke may have worked in the Soshu Tsunahiro mon. There certainly seems to have been a close association between the Shimada group and the Odawara Soshu (representative smiths of Soshu-den at the end of the Muromachi period) from neighbouring Sagami province. This seems to have taken the form of teacher / pupil, marriages and technical exchanges. Hirosuke is rated as chu-saku by Fujishiro.



Katana: Hirosuke (Shimada)