

## UK Sword Register No. 76

Type: Koto wakizashi

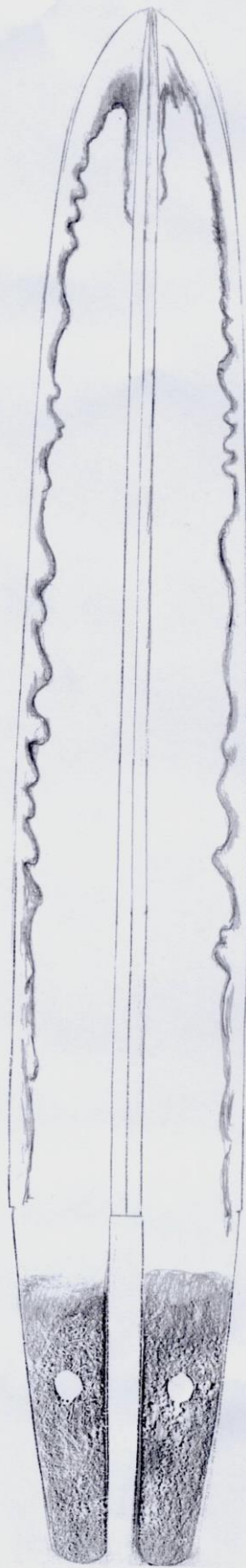
Nagasa: 31.1cm      Moto-haba: 2.7 cm      Saki-haba: 1.9 cm

- Sugata:** Hira-zukuri, almost mu-zori but with slight saki-zori, iori-mune.
- Jihada:** A rather loose itame-gokoro with some mokume, becoming masame near the mune.
- Hamon:** Nioi-deki with some nie, gunome-midare with occasional togari, some sunagaeshi particularly in the lower portion of the blade (nearer the machi area) the ura generally less defined. The boshi on the omote is notare-komi, ko-maru with kaeri. (hinting at Jizo-boshi). Similar on the ura but with hakikake.
- Nakago:** Ubu with two mekugi-ana (one filled). Higake (cross hatched) yasurime. Kuri-jiri, finely chiselled mei on the omote KANESAKI SAKU.

Although this blade is officially classified as a wakizashi, I think that more properly it should be called “sunobi-tanto” – long or stretched tanto. In proportion to its length, the nakago looks rather small, a feature encountered on Nambokucho period tanto, but tanto in excess of 30 cm were also made by the Sue-Seki smiths of the late Muromachi period. The somewhat loose jihada, the whitish or shirake like colour of the jigane and especially the higaki yasurime, leave one in no doubt that this is Mino-Seki work from the Sue (late) Koto period. At this time both the Mino-Seki and Bizen Osafune schools dominated sword production but Mino swordsmiths began to move to other provinces and provided the basis for Shinto Tokuden (the style of Shinto times). I think this sword is somewhat more elegant in shape than some other sue-Seki work, which is sometimes displays a broader mihaba.

There are two generations named Kanesaki listed in Koto times, both of whom hailed from Mino-Seki. The first worked around the Eisho era (1504) and was said to be a successor of Seki Kanenaga and, according to Fujishiro, “the same person as Sagawa Gojuri Ju Kanesaki (wazamono)”. The later one, given a working date of around the Tensho era ((1573) was from Akasaka Seki and was called Inshu Kanesaki. He is thought to have moved to Bizen province and was the father of Inshu Kanesaki, the first of a number of generations who used this name in the shinto period in Inaba province. Both of these koto smiths are rated as Chujosaku by Fujishiro. This blade has been awarded Hozon Token by the NBTHK>

Clive Sinclair  
Bexley, June 2006



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