

UK Sword Register No. 41 (revised)

Type: Shinto naginata

Nagasa: 35.3 cm

Moto-haba: 2.3 cm

Saki-haba: 2.8 cm

Sugata: Naginata-zukuri with strong saki-zori.

Horimono: Naginata-hi.

Jihada: Quite a large and visible itame-hada, becoming almost masame near the kissaki.

Hamon: Ko-nie deki, a yakidashi which has a slight midare and starts 2.2 cm up from the ha-machi, some gunome and choji becoming almost toran-midare towards the kissaki, sunagaeshi, slightly pointed boshi and ko-maru with kareri.

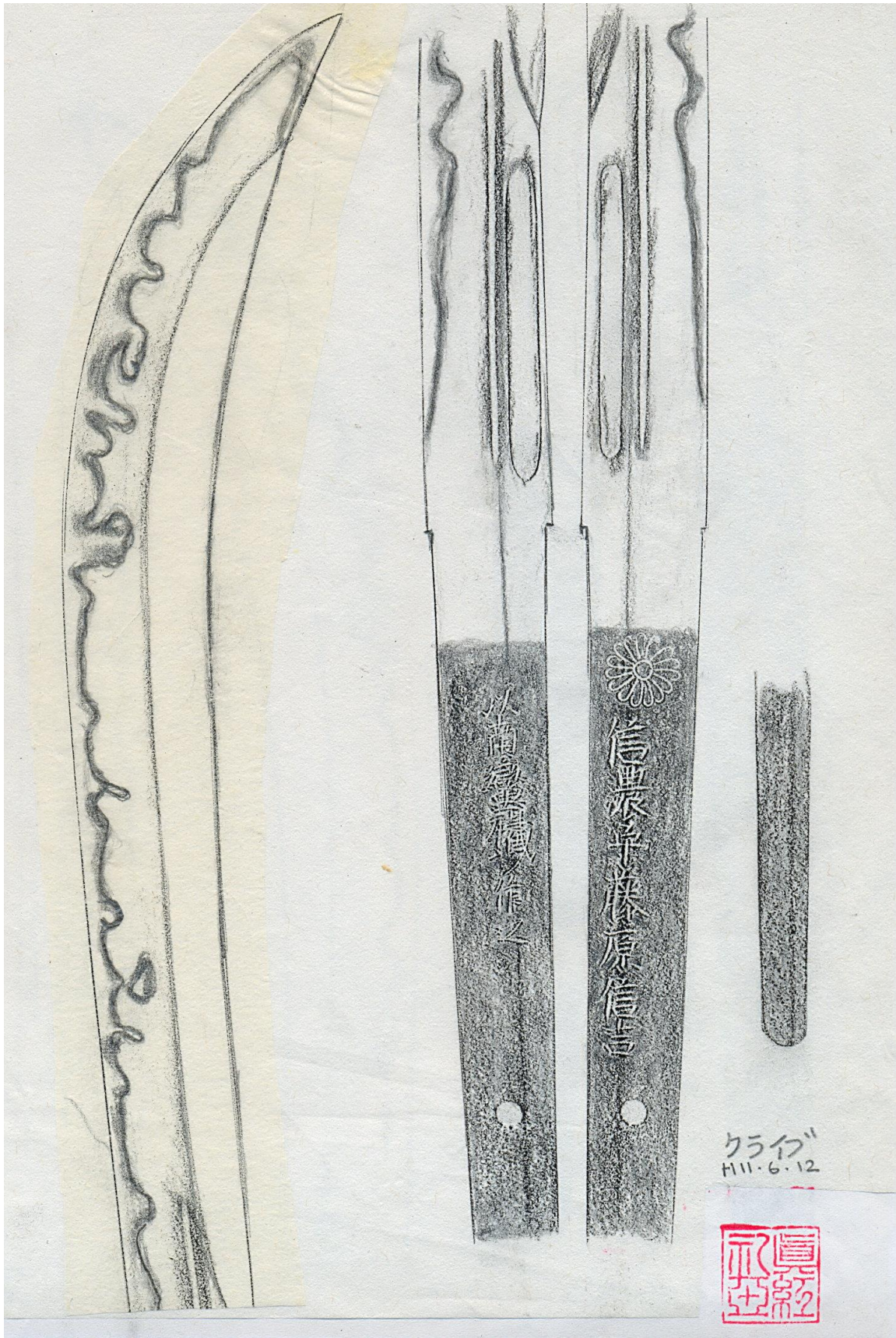
Nakago: Ubu, with one mekugi-ana, sujikai yasurime, ha-agari kuri-jiri, signed on the omote KIKU, SHINANO (no) KAMI NOBUYOSHI and on the ura NAMBAM TETSU KORE SAKU

This is a small but rather elegantly shaped naginata from the middle of the Shinto period. It is of the standard naginata shape of the period but the hi appear to be quite crudely cut. The hamon, mainly constructed in ko-nie, is rather flamboyant resembling toran-midare in the top section of the blade. This, together with the yakidashi, would seem to indicate Osaka as the place of manufacture and may have been influenced by the style of Tsuda Echizen (no) Kami Sukehiro, who is credited with inventing this shaped hamon., although one would not expect to see the yakiotoshi (hamon coming off the edge of the blade) in a sword. Such an ostentatious style is said to represent the brash character of Osaka the powerful merchant class who were so influential there.

The inscription stating that the blade was made from Nambam Tetsu (foreign steel) is of interest and was something of a fashion at this time. However, the inscription appears to have been cut by a different hand to the swordsmith's name on the omote side of the nakago. which, in itself, has a characteristically untidy appearance.

Two generations of Nobuyoshi with the title of Shinano (no) Kami are recorded in Fujishiro's dictionary. The first lived in Heianjo in Kyoto (Yamashiro province) and worked between the Kanei (1624-43) and Kanbun (1661-72) periods. His son, the second generation, whose personal name was Takai Kinsaburo, moved from Kyoto to Osaka and is recorded as working around the Enpo era (1673-80). A third son of the first generation, also a swordsmith, became a lay priest. He was called Tomonobu and was entitled "Echizen (no) Kami. Both the first and second generation Nobuyoshi carved the Kiku on their nakago at times. It would seem that, considering the workmanship of this naginata, with the strong Osaka-shinto appearance of the hamon, that this blade is by the second generation who would have been exposed to the influence of such a master as Shinkai or Sukehiro himself.

Fujishiro rates both generations of Shinano (no) Kami Nobuyoshi as Chujo saku or above average in skill, whilst the first is also "wazamono" or sharp. However, in Fujishiro's opinion, the third generation exceeds both the first and second in terms of skill in workmanship. He further states that the second generation eventually changed the Fujiwara name in his mei to Minamoto, in his later works.



This was originally only in printed form and has now been adapted and revised onto this website

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