

UK Sword Register 125 – Shinto wakizashi

Nagasa: 45.2 cm

Moto-haba: 3.2 cm Saki-haba: 2.5 cm

Sugata: Shinogi-zukuri, iori-mune, chu-kissaki/ Overall a broad blade with shallow zori.
Ji-hada: Difficult to see but appears to be a very tight ko-itame-hada but finished almost muji-hada
Hamon: A very narrow suguha in ko-nie.
Nakago: Slightly suriage and okuri-machi, kuri-jiri, a single mekugi-ana and another original that has been filled. Distinct o-sujikai yasuri-mei on original part of the nakago.
Signed on the omote SHINANO (no) KAMI HIROKANE and on the ura YAMATO KUNI
TEGAI KANENAGA JU-ICHI MAGO SAKU KORE and the date KAMBUN JU-ICHI NEN
KANATO (offset) I NI_GATSU KICHI NICHI

This wakizashi has a very robust Sugata and the shallow zori is in accordance with its period of manufacture which is the Kanbun period and is of interest from a number of different aspects. The very narrow suguha

hamon certainly resembles that of the earlier and original Yamato Tegai school which is rarely seen in Shinto times but Hawley lists Hirokane as “Late Yamato Tegai”

It appears that the suriage and the machi-okuri are both done by the same hand and this is the original swordsmith named, Hirokane. This may be seen from the fact that the Nengo or date period of Kanbun, has been

engraved above the original filled mekugi-ana and is continued, uninterrupted, immediately under the filled mekugi-ana. In other words, a space has been left in the inscription, to account for the filled mekugi-ana.

Of further note with the date inscription (which equates to 1671) is the inclusion of the zodiacal characters *Kanoto I*, which indicates “the wild boar year. The first character, *Kanoto*, being offset from the main line of characters. This is no accident as it appears on other swords by this man.

The other line of inscriptions on the ura starting with “Yamato Kuni) may be translated as “*Yamato province Tegai Kanenaga’s 11th (generation) Grandson, made this*”. Although not seen here, on other examples, the

character *jidai* or “generation” is also included. This 12 character inscription is confined to the Shinogi-ji of the nakago’s ura and, together with the date, is represented in much smaller and finely cut characters than

those found on the omote. (Kanenaga founded the Tegai school, one of the five accepted sub-divisions of Yamato-den, in Nara in the late Kamakura period. It was located at the Tegai gate of the Todaji temple.)

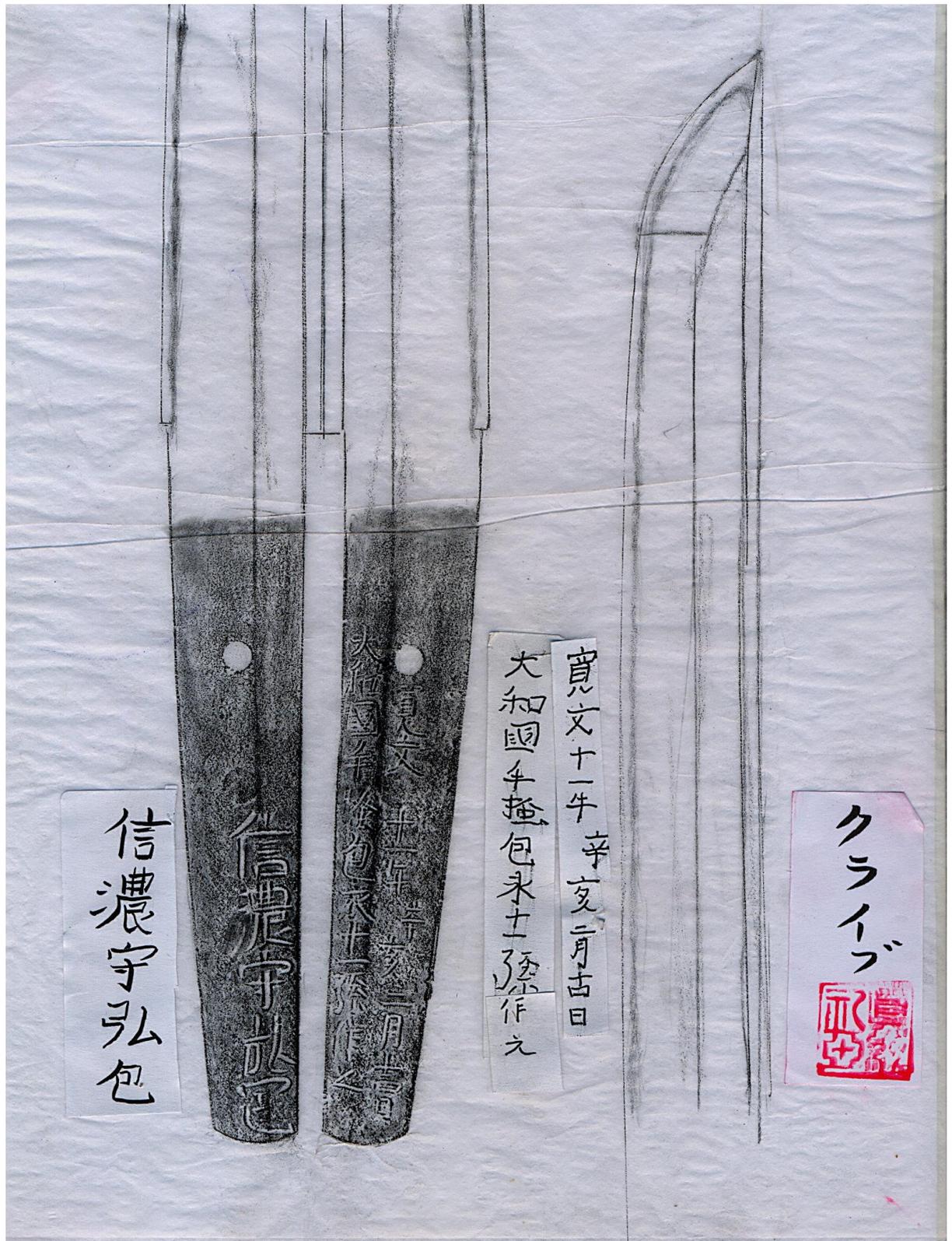
The smith’s name Hirokane and his title “Shinano (no) Kami” are located immediately under the filled Mekugi-ana and were almost certainly carved before the suriage and machi-okuri. It is fortunate that the last character

is just before the nakago-jiri. It is also immediately noticeable that this inscription has been carved using a much thicker chisel than that used on the ura.

There are two generations of Shinano (no) Kami Hirokane recorded in Hawley’s but only this, the first in Fujishiro’s Shinto Jiten. Here he states that the first generation was called Monju Hachirouemon and as well as

Settsu (Osaka) he also produced swords in Edo,. His swords were classed as Wazamono and he is rated as Chujosaku.

Finally, I would apologise for poor oshigata and my rather crude calligraphy.



- 1
2
3
- 1) Shinano Kami Hirokane
 - 2) Yamato Kuni Tegai Kanenaga Ju-ichi Mago Saku Kore
 - 3) Kanbun Ju-ichi Nen Kanato I Ni-Gatsu Kichi-Nichi