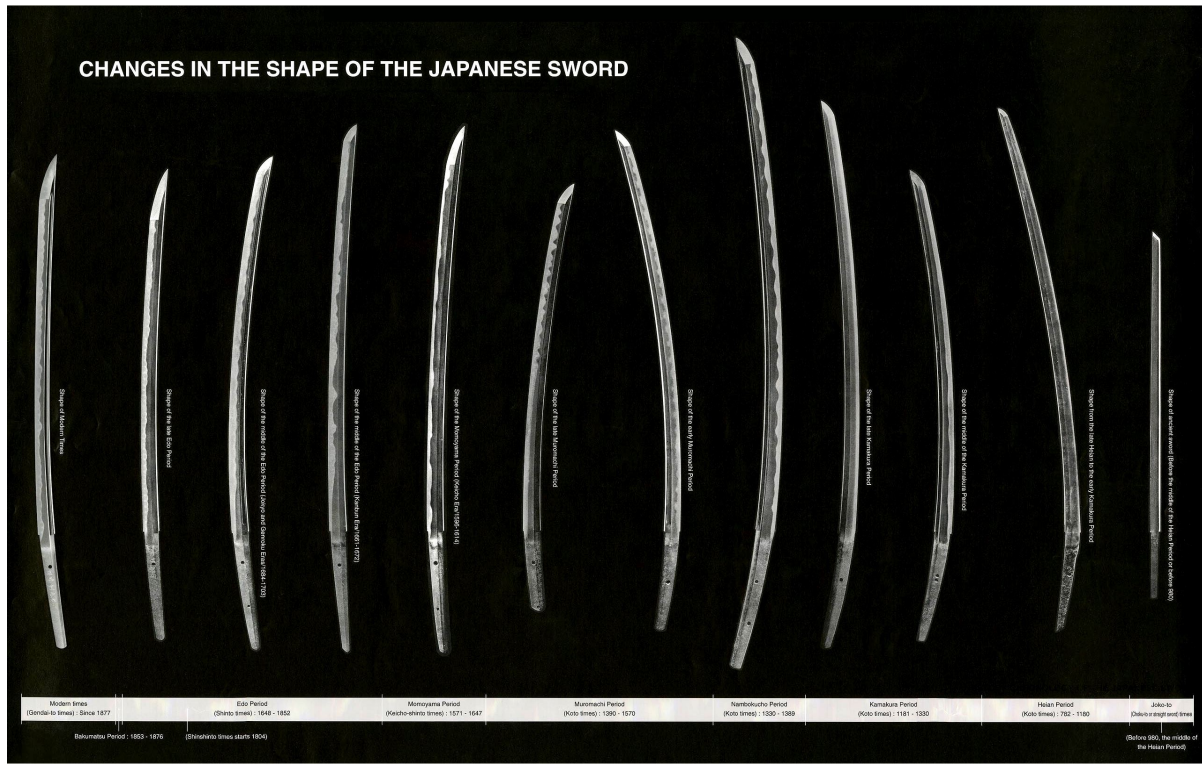


Large Pictures Chapter 11.6

This picture shows the changes of the shape of the Japanese sword from about 1000 AD to modern times (like WW II). In comparison to what happened in Europe and the Middle East during the same time period, there was hardly any change.

Illustration



[Link to text](#)

Source: The Beauty of the Japanese Sword, History and Traditional Technology. Michihiro Tanobe; The Japanese Sword Museum. From the Macao Museum of Art page.

Here is the full picture and the description of the 36.000 Euro sword offered by the Japanese Sword Shop Aoi-Art in March 2015. I do not doubt that it is worth that much money, by the way.



筑前国福岡住是次 : Chikuzen koku Fukuoka ju Koretsugu

Ordering number : 14473 (Consignment sale)
 Katana in Shirasaya (50th NBTHK Juyo paper)
 Signature : Chikuzen koku Fukuoka ju Koretsugu

The blade was polished.
 Blade length : 69.9 cm or 27.5 inches.
 Sori : 1.7 cm or 0.66 inches.
 Mekugi : 2
 Width at the hamachi : 3.16 cm or 1.24 inches.
 Width at the kissaki : 2.10 cm or 0.82 inches.
 Kasane : 0.71 cm or 0.27 inches.
 Era : Edo Karibun period.

Price (credit card) : JPY 4,600,000-.
 Price (bank transfer) : JPY 4,550,000-.

Shape : It is wide and thick nice sori katana with Jitetsu : koitame hada well grained with jinie attached. There is floating masa pattern, fine chike is attached.
 Hamon : There is wide burn pattern and it is mainly choji midare with mixture of gunome midare.
 Some togari gunome midare is flamboyantly mixed.
 Ashi yo is active and sunagashi, kinsuji works are seen. There are deep vaki around the hakikake area of the boshi.

Special feature : koretsugu was the most skillful and famous swordsmith in Fukuoka Sekido school, as well as Moritsugu.
 He was born as a son of Toshihide the descendant of Bizen Ichimonji school in 1609.
 He was called Hanbe, or Ipppei.
 He moved to Edo in 1655, and he started to study under Sekido korekazu.
 3 years after, he returned to Chikuzen, and he became a hired swordsmith of kuroda clan.
 He passed away March 3rd in 1681 when he was 53 years old.
 He made excellent Choji-midare that looks like Fukuoka-Ichimonji.
 This katana jigane is well forged and the hamon is gorgeous yet rustic chojimidare of korekazu.
 I think it is the most gorgeous hamon. The kissaki hamon is Mitsuhiro and korekazu.
 It is similar of Ichimonji. This piece reminds of Fukuoka Ichimonji.

Historical Background: In Early Edo period, Date Sodo (family feud by Date clan in Sendai) break out.

[Link to text](#) Source: Japanese Sword Shop Aoi-Art, March 2015

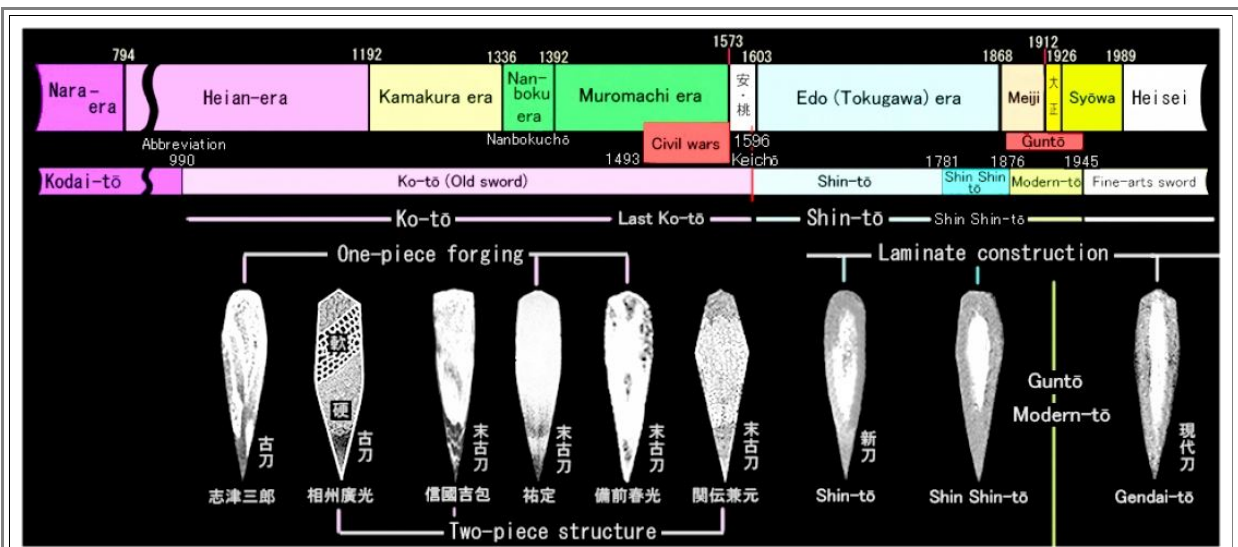
Here are the Metropolitan 6th century Japanese / Chinese swords.
 The metal, as far as preserved, shows no particular structure.



[Link to text](#)

Source: [Metropolitan Museum, NYC](#)









Development of the complexity of the Japanese sword blade.



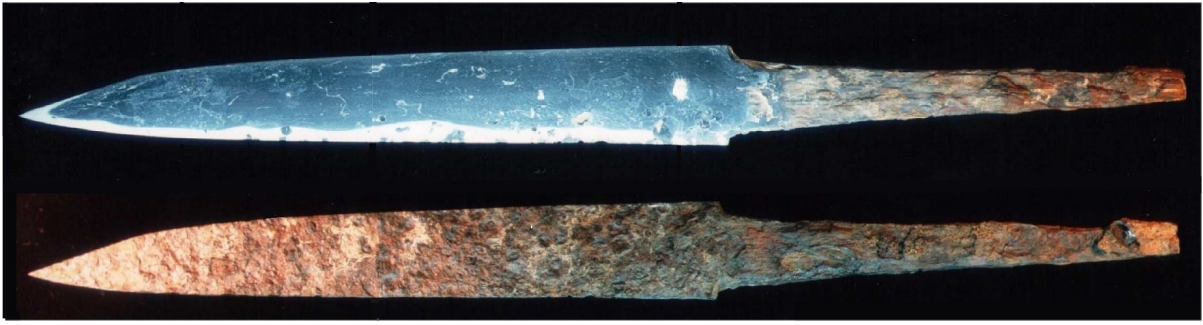
[Link to text](#)

Source: <http://ohmura-study.net/994.html>. This is not the original source but a student paper without recognizable references (it contained Japanese parts). I could not find the original picture

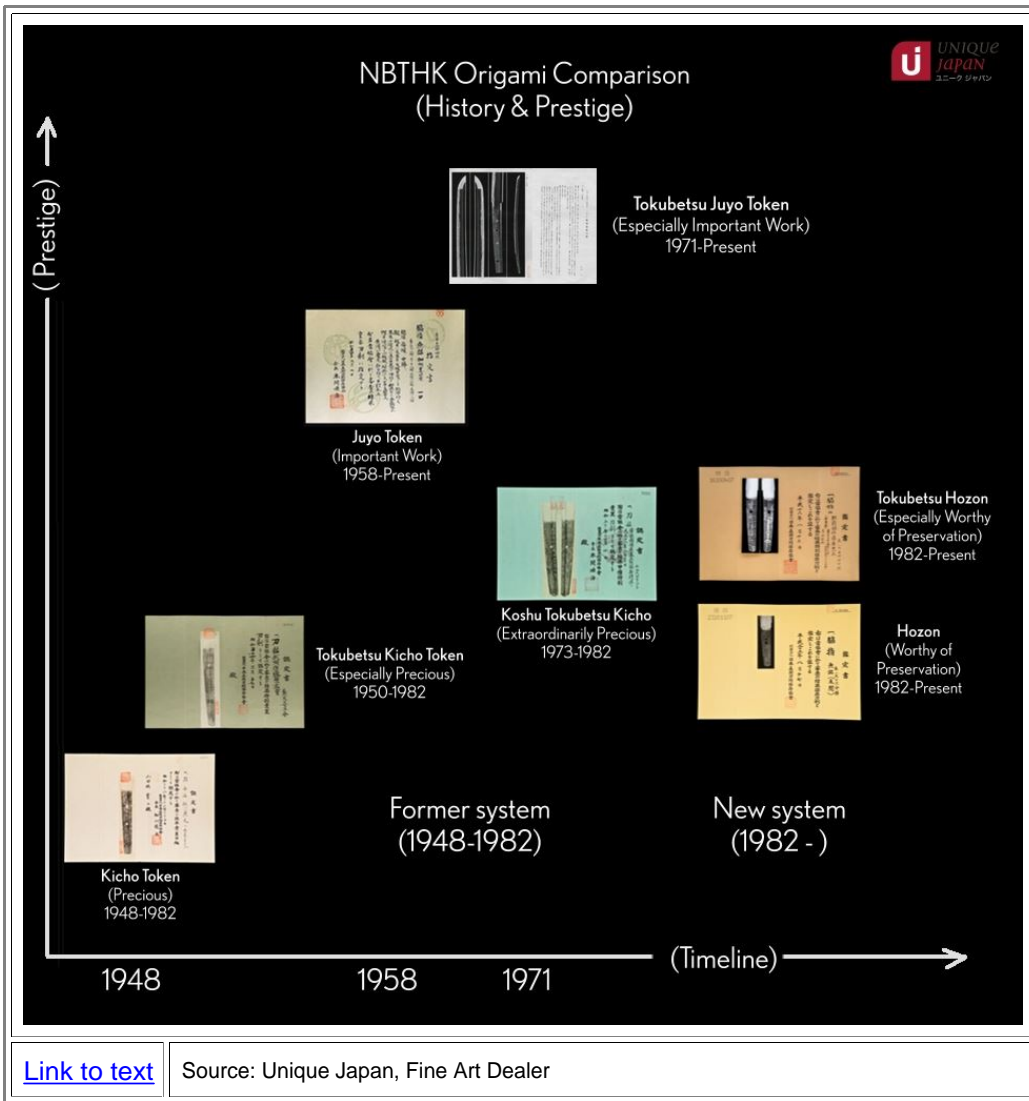
Here you see Master smith Miyairi Akihira (1913-1977) at work around 1960 or so. He was a so-called living national treasure when the pictures were taken. To the left and right are pictures of the tamahagane pieces to be welded and steps in the folding process

			
			
<small>FUKUDOME Fusayuki's Japanese Swordsmith Workshop (also on left)</small>	<small>Samuraisword.com. Miyairi Akihira (1913-1977) living national treasure, forges a blade</small>		
Link to text	Source: See above		

Here is the South German sax from 600 AD - 750 AD before and after Japanese polishing from [Stefan Maeder's Ph.D. thesis](#). See also [this module](#). There is a clear hamon and since it is not parallel to the blade there might have been a clay coating. On the other hand, the wavyness of the hamon may just be due to thickness variations of the blade.

	
Link to text	Source: Stefan Maeder

Here is what kind of papers the NBTHK issued for good swords now and then.



What we see here are some impressions of the katana of my daisho.



[Link to text](#)

Source: All mine

Here we get some idea of what the koshirae of the daisho katana looks like



[Link to text](#)

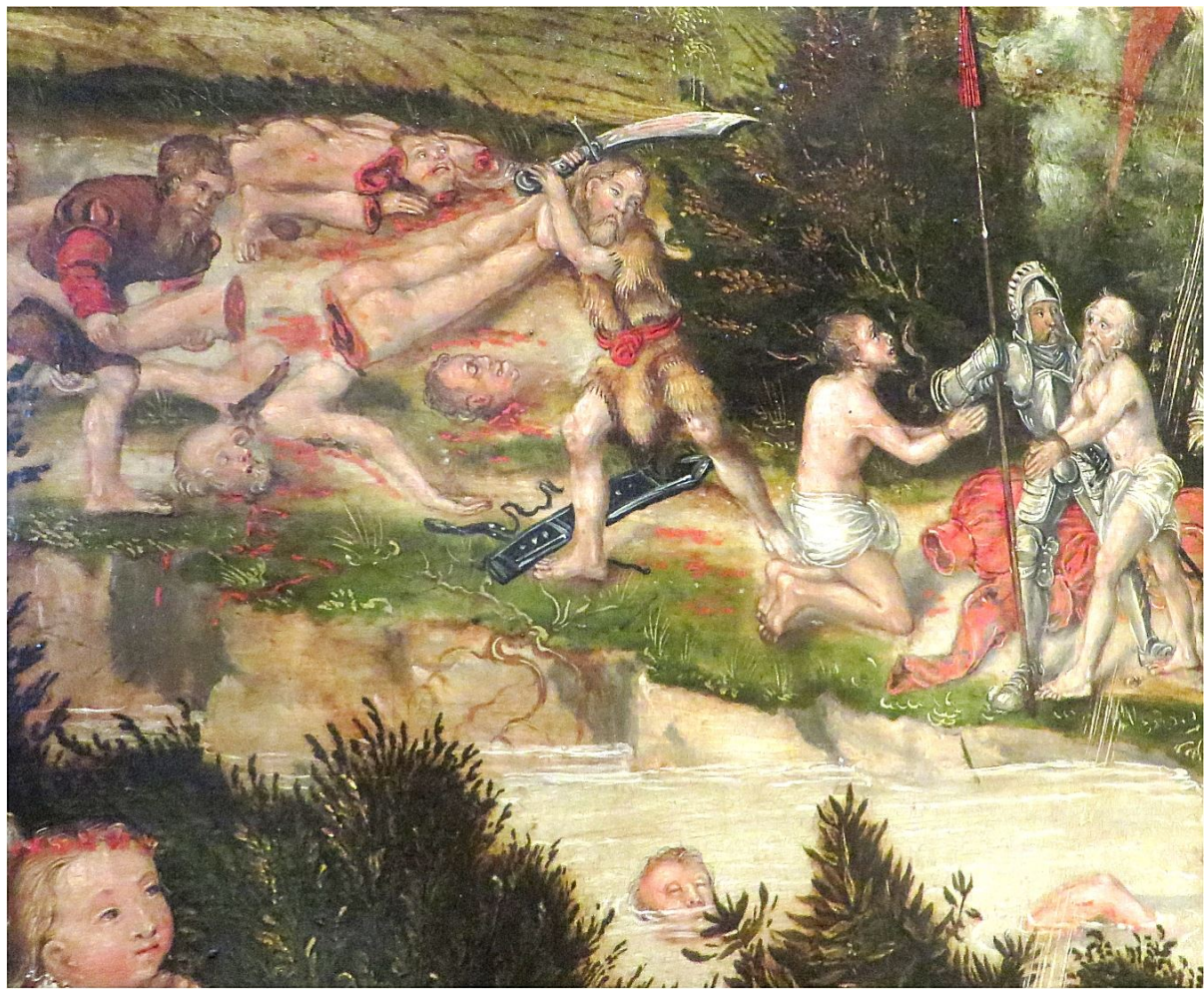
Source: All mine

Here we have some parts of the wakizashi:



Here is a painting from around 1550. It is traced to the work shop of Lucas Cranach the Younger and shows the offering of Elias. Here is the story (from Wikipedia):

- Elijah (Jewish prophet) challenges one Ahab (High priest of Baal; some old God) to a direct test of the powers of Baal and the Jewish God by seeing how some offering will go. Two oxen are slaughtered and cut into pieces; the pieces are laid on the wood. Elijah then invites the priests of Baal to pray for fire to light the sacrifice. They pray from morning to noon without success. Elijah ridicules their efforts. "At noon Elijah mocked them, saying, 'Cry aloud! Surely he is a god; either he is meditating, or he has wandered away, or he is on a journey, or perhaps he is asleep and must be awakened.'" They respond by cutting themselves and adding their own blood to the sacrifice (such mutilation of the body was strictly forbidden in the Mosaic law). They continue praying until evening without success. Elijah now orders that the altar of God be drenched with water from "four large jars" poured three times. He asks God to accept the sacrifice. Fire falls from the sky, consuming the water, the sacrifice and the stones of the altar itself as well. Elijah then orders the deaths of the priests of Baal.
- I guess we see the end of the priests of Baal in the background. The marked area is shown below in full gory detail
- There is more to this painting. The Cranach's were ardent fans of one Martin Luther, and Luther was linked to Elias and the pope to Baal. The painting thus also shows that the family that ordered it were Protestants (the noble or at least rich guys, shown in the bottom left).



The sword is not a typical 1550 western sword but a kind of "scimitar". After all, the whole story took place in the East and a long time ago. Of course, the Cranach's had no idea how people that far away in time and space were dressed and therefore painted them generally in the style of their region and time. The occasional exotic element like a scimitar just added a bit of spice to an already rather rich painting. The Cranach's, however, were probably quite aware of what one could do with a good sword, curved or straight.

[Link to text](#)

Source: Photographed in the "Altes Rathaus" museum in Leipzig, 2018