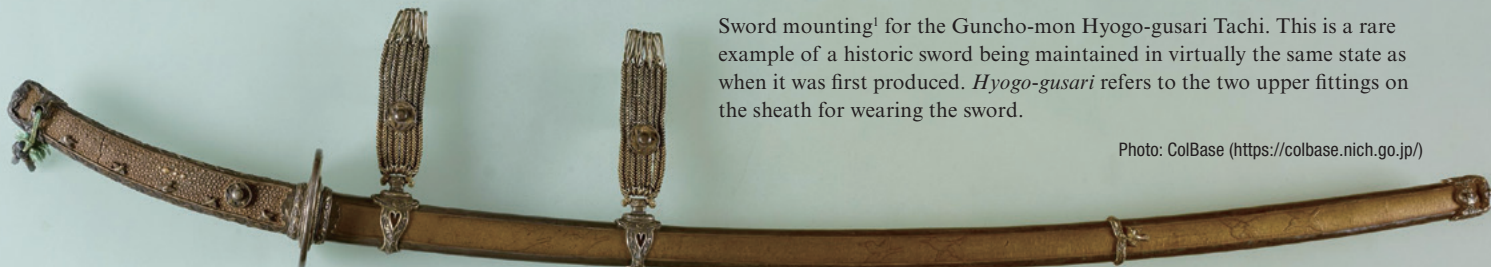


The Long Sword ("Tachi"), Known as the "Uesugi Tachi"

— Gunchomon Hyogo-gusari Tachi (Title: Uesugi Tachi) (Blade signature: Ichi)—



The famous Japanese sword, Guncho-mon Hyogo-gusari Tachi, also known as the "Uesugi Tachi." The handle at the left of the photo is inscribed with the character "一" (meaning "one").



Sword mounting¹ for the Guncho-mon Hyogo-gusari Tachi. This is a rare example of a historic sword being maintained in virtually the same state as when it was first produced. *Hyogo-gusari* refers to the two upper fittings on the sheath for wearing the sword.

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The Guncho-mon Hyogo-gusari Tachi, inscribed with the character "一" (*ichi*, meaning "one") on the blade, is also known as the "Uesugi Tachi." This another name derives from the fact that it was originally owned by the famed Uesugi samurai family and then donated by that family to Mishima Taisha Shrine, in Mishima City, Shizuoka Prefecture. Subsequently, the sword was presented by the shrine to the Meiji Emperor (the 122nd Emperor of Japan, who reigned from 1867 to 1912). It is currently housed in the collection of the Tokyo National Museum.

The sword is thought to have been crafted in the 13th century by the Fukuoka Ichimonji School of swordsmiths, which flourished in Bizen Province (currently southeast Okayama Prefecture). This *tachi* (long sword) exists as a valuable sword of its type remaining virtually unchanged since the time it was made. Its length is 76.1 cm and its warp, 3 cm. This is thought to be a rare existing example of a sword together with the exterior and mounting for the sword crafted together with it at the same time. Metal fittings on the sword, including the *saya*² (sheath/scabbard) and *tsuba*³ (guard) feature exquisite and skillfully represented designs of birds in flight.

1. External mountings for wearing the sword. Such sword fittings (*toso*) are also known as sword mountings (*toso-gu*). From left in the photograph below, one can see the *tsuka* (handle), *tsuba* (guard), *saya* (sheath/scabbard), and further detailed parts.
2. The sheath or scabbard for the blade.
3. A metal fitting in between the *saya* (sheath/scabbard) and blade.



Group of metal fittings crafted for this sword with three-dimensional forms, featuring the flock of flying bird decorations, the *guncho-mon*.

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