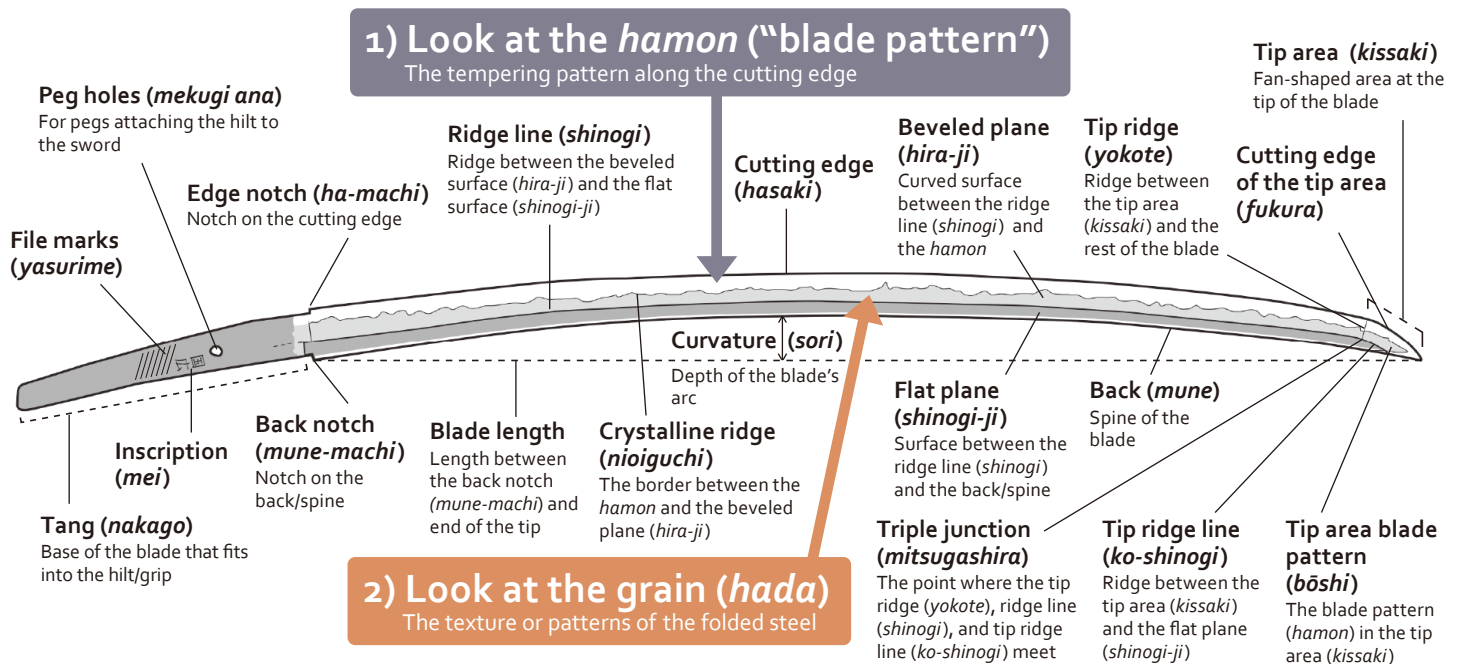


Key Points for Viewing Japanese Swords

*This resource guide was made possible thanks to the generous support of the Bank of America.



1) Types of *Hamon*

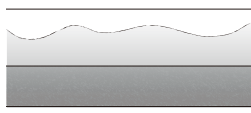
Hamon are patterns along a sword's cutting edge created during the quenching process. They come in many forms and can be used to help identify a blade's smith or school.

Straight *Hamon* (*Suguha*)

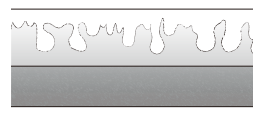


Many straight *hamon* actually have a subtle curve.

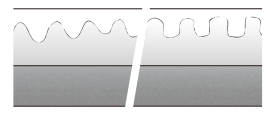
Irregular *Hamon* (*Midareba*) Wavy blade patterns



Undulations (*Notare*)
A gently undulating blade pattern. It can sometimes include cloves and alternations as well.



Cloves (*Chōji*)
A tightly scalloping blade pattern, named after clove buds.

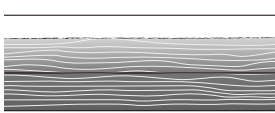


Alternations (*Gunome*)
A continuous, alternating blade pattern, often with semicircles and mountains. The shapes can vary widely, including rounded, angular, and pointed forms.

2) Types of Steel Grain (*Hada*)

Hada refers to the surface texture that results from folding, forging, and quenching the steel. Resembling wood grain, these patterns can be used to determine the period, region, or school of smiths in which the blade was made.

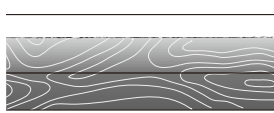
Straight Grain (*Masame*)



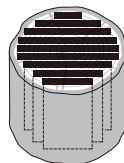
A pattern of nearly straight, parallel lines.



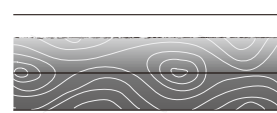
Cathedral Grain (*Itame*)



An irregular pattern resembling mountains and waves. The most common type of grain.



Burled Grain (*Mokume*)



A pattern of concentric circles, resembling burled wood.

