

Kinjiraden Kenukigata Tachi Sword

Kinjiraden Kenukigata Tachi Sword is a National Treasure and is one of the most important sacred treasures of Kasuga Taisha Shrine. It is only rarely on public display.

This is one of only three Heian period (794–1185) complete swords of this type that survive in Japan. It is considered to be the prototype for the katana, the Japanese longsword traditionally used by samurai.

This sword was created and donated to Kasuga Taisha Shrine as a holy artifact to be placed in one of the main shrine buildings, and was not intended for use in battle. The metal fittings of the sword and sheath are made of very pure gold, and are an indication of the faith of those who commissioned and donated this precious object. The mother-of-pearl inlays of the sheath portray a cat pursuing a sparrow through a bamboo grove.