

***Tachi* Swords Donated by Hojo Ujitsuna**

These three swords and their ornate mountings are entirely ceremonial and were never used in battle. The swords were donated to Tsurugaoka Hachimangu by Hojo Ujitsuna (1487–1541), a samurai leader who ruled the domains around Kamakura during a long period of civil war. Having consolidated power in the region and seeking to demonstrate that power to his rivals, Ujitsuna began to rebuild Tsurugaoka Hachimangu, which had been heavily damaged in fighting during the preceding decades.

Ujitsuna brought in craftspeople and construction materials from far and wide, sparing no expense in renovating the shrine that in medieval times had been the spiritual center of the Kamakura shogunate and a symbol of samurai rule. In 1538, two years before the completion of the repairs, Ujitsuna had three medieval-style *tachi* longswords forged and dedicated to the shrine, along with matching black-lacquered paulownia scabbards with golden *maki-e* decorations.