



ITEM# UJKA470

## A NORISHIGE KATANA

KINZÔGAN MEI, KOTÔ KAMAKURA PERIOD (GENKÔ ERA: 1321~1324)

<b>Swordsmith:</b>	<b>Norishige (則重)</b>
<b>Measurements:</b>	<b>Length:</b> 72.4cm ( <i>ô-suriage</i> ) <b>Sori:</b> 2.2cm <b>Moto-haba:</b> 2.9cm <b>Weight:</b> 665g
<b>Jihada:</b>	<i>Itame mixed with standing out ô-itame plenty of ji-nie , thick chikei, dark steel</i>
<b>Hamon:</b>	<i>Nie-laden notare, chôji, gunome, many ashi and yô, thick nie, nie-kuzure with tobiyaki and yubashiri to hitatsura, also kinsuji and sunagashi appear</i>
<b>Certificate:</b>	<b>28th NBTHK Tokubetsu Jûyô Tôken</b> (Especially Important Sword, awarded 2024)
<b>Kinzôgan-mei:</b>	<b>Norishige - Kunzan + kaô</b> (valued at 500-kan by Hon'ami Kôchû)
<b>Authentication:</b>	<b>Kunzan &amp; Tanzan sayagaki</b> (Honma Kunzan, Tanobe Michihiro)
<b>Included:</b>	Shirasaya, fabric bags, stand, kit, printed description

*Saeki Norishige* from *Etchû* province was a distinguished swordsmith of the late Kamakura period. Though occasionally counted among the 'Masamune Jittetsu' (Ten Great Students of Masamune), modern research more credibly places him as a direct disciple of *Shintôgo Kunimitsu*. Norishige would have been a peer to both *Masamune* and *Yukimitsu*, sharing roots in the powerful *Sôshû-den* tradition. This blade has a deep sori, strong *matsukawa-hada* and prominent *chikei* throughout. The hamon flows in *notare* with *gunome* and *chôji* elements, densely covered in *nie*, and rich in *sunagashi* and *kinsuji*. This blade has been certified as an elite *Tokubetsu-Jûyô-Tôken* and the *nakago* bears a *kinzôgan* inscription judgment of *Honma Kunzan* former director of the NBTHK. The inlay itself was applied by second gen. *Gassan Sadakazu*, a Living National Treasure. This katana by Norishige embodies the fierce spirit of Kamakura-period and stands out among all blades attributed to him.



Saki-kasane: 4.4mm

Kissaki: 3.6cm

Saki-haba: 2.0cm

Moto-kasane: 6.8mm

Nagasa: 72.4cm

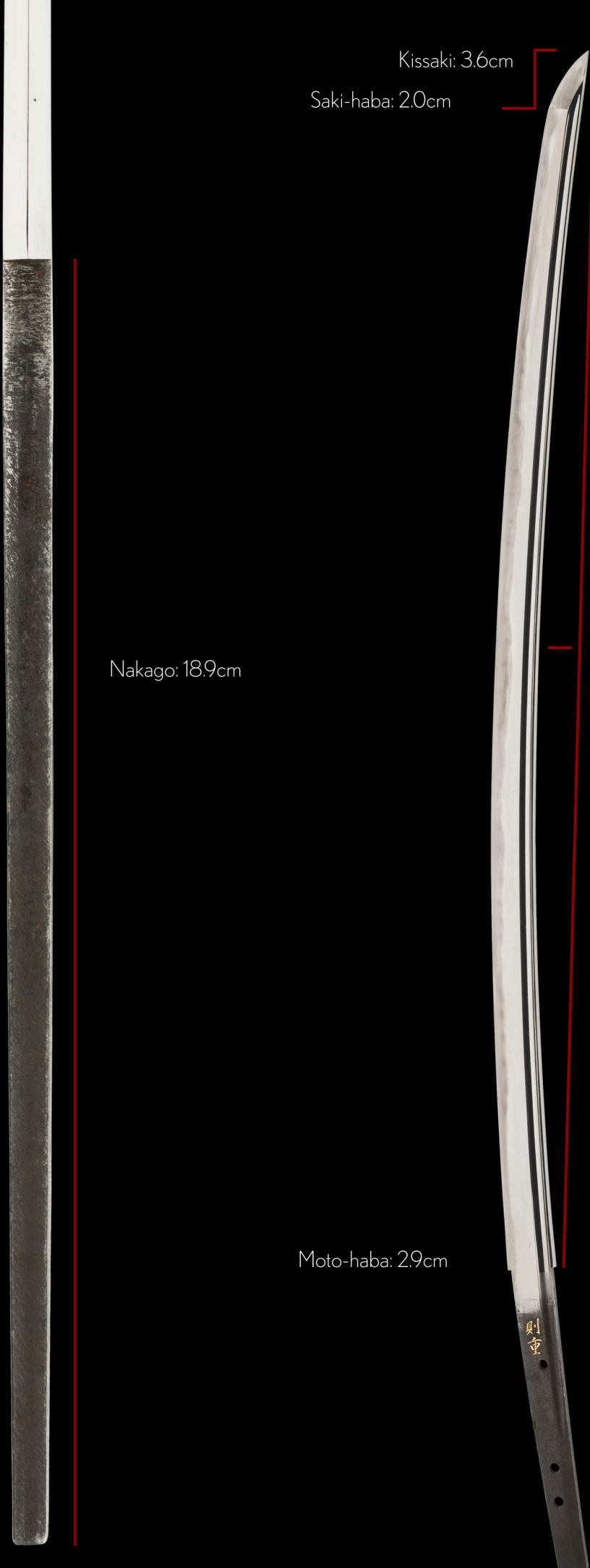
Nakago: 18.9cm

Sori: 2.2cm

Omosa: 665g

Moto-haba: 2.9cm

Mekugi-ana: 3



*Saeki Norishige* (佐伯則重) from *Etchû* province was a distinguished swordsmith of the late Kamakura period, active from the *Enkyô* era (1308) through the early 1330s. Though occasionally counted among the "*Masamune Jittetsu*" (Ten Great Disciples of Masamune) in Edo-period texts like *Kokon Mei Zukushi*, modern research more credibly places him as a direct disciple of *Shintôgo Kunimitsu* (新藤五国光). In this reading, Norishige would have been a peer to both *Masamune* (正宗) and *Yukimitsu* (行光), rather than a follower—sharing roots in the powerful *Sôshû-den* tradition that shaped the swords of the *Nanbokuchô* era.

Norishige's work is among the boldest in *Sôshû-den*. While reflecting the school's strength and dynamic activity, his hallmark lies in a unique forging style called *matsukawa-hada* (pine-bark grain) - a dramatic *jihada* of large, flowing *itame*, visible layering, and frequent *chikei*, forming a rugged, tactile surface.

His *hamon* shows vibrant variation, typically based on softly undulating *notare* with mixed *gunome* and *chôji*. The *nie* is thick and bold, often breaking into expressive activity like *sunagashi*, *kinsuji*, and bright *nie-kuzure*, all blending with the textured *hada*. The *bôshi* frequently sweeps up with vigorous *hakikake*. Together, these features give the blade striking energy, depth, and character.

This katana is a mature example at the height of Norishige's artistry. It features a deep *sori*, with strong *matsukawa-hada* and prominent *chikei* throughout. The steel has a fine wet appearance which clearly demonstrates the overall health and vitality of the sword. The *hamon* flows in *notare* with *gunome* and *chôji* elements, densely covered in *nie*, and rich in *sunagashi* and *kinsuji*. The *hataraki* is rhythmic and forceful - the work of a smith in full command of his craft.

This blade is certified by the NBTHK as a *Tokubetsu-Jûyô-Tôken*, placing it among Japan's most important swords. Reinforcing the attribution, the *nakago* bears a *kinzôgan* inscription reading "*Norishige - Kunzan + kaô*," reflecting the judgment of *Honma Kunzan* (本間薫山), a preeminent 20th-century sword scholar and former head of the NBTHK. The inlay itself was applied by the 2nd gen. *Gassan Sadakazu*, a Living National Treasure.

A sword by Norishige embodies the tactile, fierce spirit of Kamakura-period sword-making at its most expressive.



Location: *Saeki in Etchû province*  
Swordsmith: *Norishige* (first generation)

*ô-suriage-nakago* (shortened tang)

(Nori) 則  
(shige) 重

*kiri-yasurime*  
(horizontal file marks)

*sujikai-yasurime*  
(slanting file marks)

*Keichô-suriage*  
*Suriage* style common in the *Keichô*  
period (1596~1615). A key feature is  
the "Ichi-monji" kiri horizontal bottom.

薰 (Kun)  
山 (zan)  
花押 (kaô)



本  
馬  
心  
正

This blade bears an attribution by **Honma Kunzan**, one of the most influential sword scholars of the 20th century. Kunzan played a central role in postwar sword appraisal and preservation, co-founding the NBTHK and helping define the modern standards for sword classification and authentication in Japan.

His attribution is preserved as a generation of **Gassan Sadakazu**. The presence of Kunzan's name, rendered in gold by the hand of such a master, makes this inscription not only a mark of scholarly authority but also a highly prized feature in itself.

剛  
重

特重要第一三四六號  
06002426

特重要第一三四六號

指定書

一万 (金象嵌銘)

則重 薰山(花押)

一口

法量 長さ七二・四釐 反り二・二釐  
形状 鑄造 庵棟 身幅広め 反り深め 中鋒延び ころ  
板目に大板目交えて肌立ち 地沸よく 頻りに地景水  
く入り 松皮肌風となる  
刃文 小のたれ基調に空の目、丁子風交え 匂口深く 沸厚くつき  
湯走り 飛焼を見せ 頻りに砂流し かり 金筋水く入り  
帽子 表は小さく 乱れ込み 掃きかけ 焼詰め風 裏はのたれ込み  
彫物 表裏に棒樋を掻き流す  
茎 大磨上 鎌目切り 表下半は筋違 目釘孔三  
越中因則重  
鎌倉時代末期

右者當協會に於て審査の結果  
特別重要刀剣に指定する

令和六年 四月三十日

公益財団法人 日本美術刀剣保存協會

會長 酒井忠久



神奈川県 教育委員会  
第 59614 号  
昭和52年 5月 11日

Tokubetsu-Jûyô Certificate No. 1346

Shiteisho (指定書) Certificate of Designation

Katana, kinzôgan-mei: Norishige - Kunzan + kaô 則重・薰山 (花押)

Measurements

nagasa 72.4 cm, sori 2.2 cm

Description

Keijô: shinogi-zukuri, iori-mune, rather wide haba, relatively deep sori, slightly elongated chû-kissaki

Kitae: itame that is mixed with ô-itame that stands out, and that features plenty of ji-nie and much thick chikei, the steel is somewhat blackish

Hamon: prominently nie-laden ko-notare-chô that is mixed with gunome and chôji, deep nioiguchi and thick nie, many yubashiri and tobiyaki, a plenty of sunagashi, and thick kinsuji

Bôshi: on the omote side midare-komi with hakikake and tending to yakitsume, on the ura side a notare-komi with hakikake, a brief maru-kaeri

Horimono: on both sides a bôhi that runs as kaki-nagashi into the tang

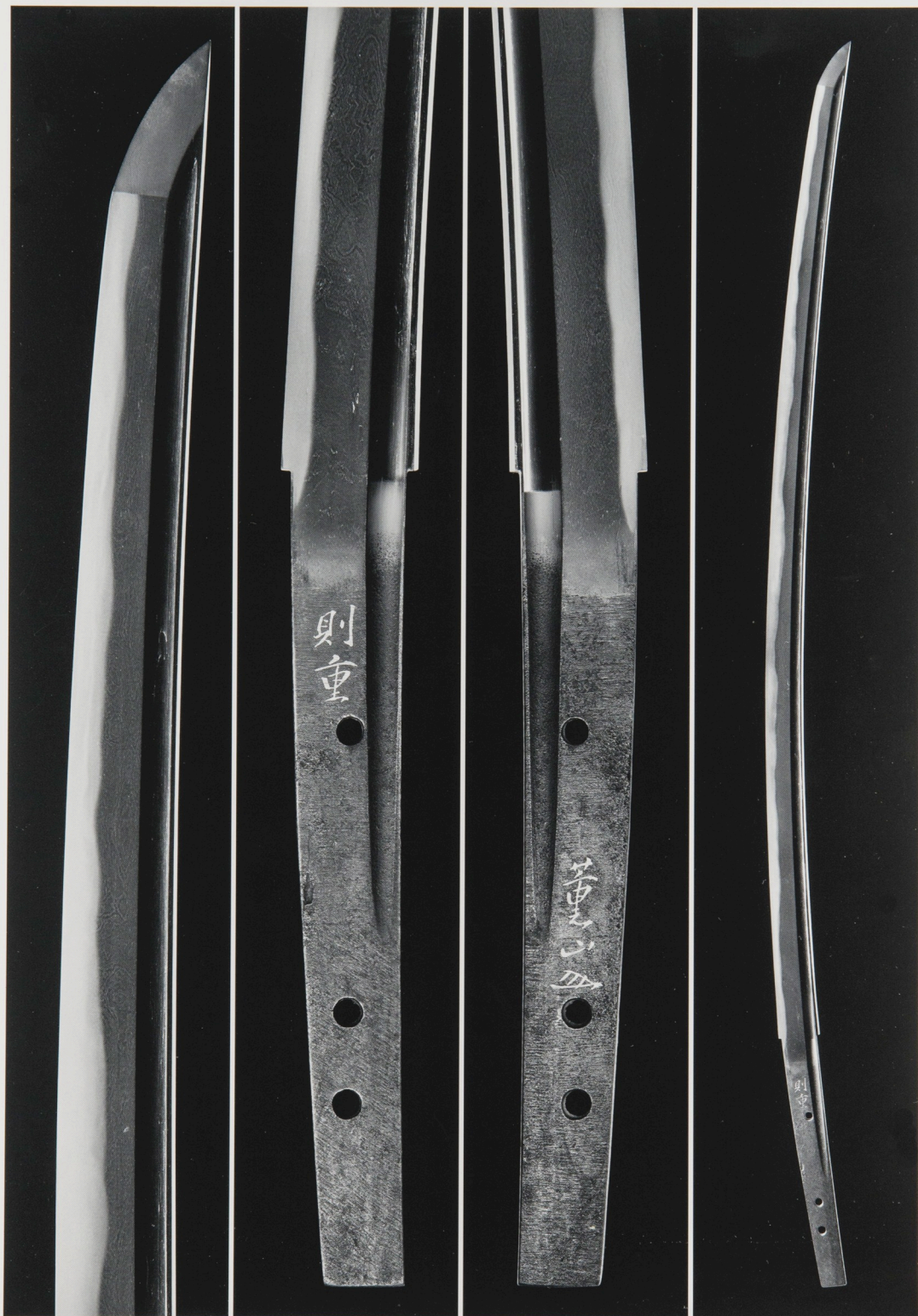
Nakago: ô-suriage, kiri-yasurime along the upper half and sujikai-yasurime along the bottom half of the tang, three mekugi-ana

According to the result of the shinsa committee of our society we judged this work as authentic and rate it as Tokubetsu-Jûyô-Tôken.

April 30, 2024

[Foundation] Nihon Bijutsu Tôken Hozon Kyôkai, NBTHK

[President] Sakai Tadahisa (酒井忠久)



刀 (金象嵌銘)

則重  
薰山(花押)





佐伯則重

佐伯則重  
*Saeki Norishige*  
Saeki Norishige

大磨上刃長二尺三寸八分

大磨上刃長二尺三寸八分  
*Ô-suriage, hachô 2-shaku 3-sun 8-bu*  
Ô-suriage, blade length 72.4 cm

昭和丙辰年葉月為小泉刀契薰山誌(花押)  
薰山誌

昭和丙辰年葉月為小泉刀契薰山誌(花押)  
*Shôwa hinoe-tatsudoshi hazuki Koizumi tôkei no tame Kunzan shirusu + kaô*  
Written by Kunzan for Mr. Koizumi in the eighth month of Shôwa era, the Year of the Dragon (August 1976) + monogram

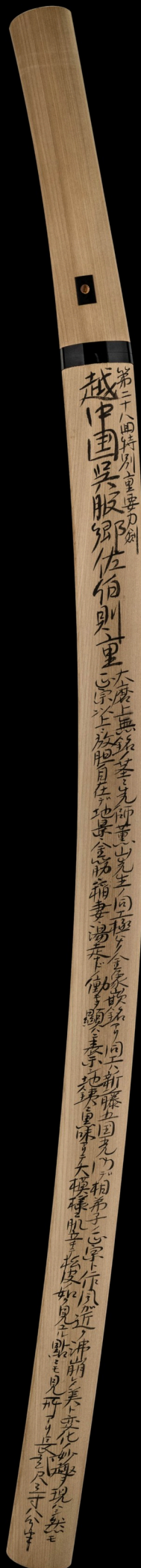


金鏤太阿月山源貞一(花押)

*Kinrô Taia Gassan Minamoto Sadakazu + kaô*

Gold inscription by Taia Gassan Minamoto Sadakazu + monogram

金鏤太阿月山源貞一



第二十八回特別重要刀剣

*Dai nijûhakkai Tokubetsu-Jûyô Tôken*

Tokubetsu-Jûyô Tôken at the 28th Tokubetsu-Jûyô Shinsa

越中國吳服郷則重

*Etchû no Kuni Gofuku-gô Saeki Norishige*

Saeki Norishige from the Gofuku district of Etchû province

大磨上無銘ノ莖先師薰山先生ノ同工極ハメノ金象嵌銘アリ  
同工ハ新藤五国光門デ相弟子ノ正宗ト作風ガ近ク沸崩レノ  
美ト変化ノ妙趣ヲ現ハシ然モ正宗以上ニ放胆自在デ地景・  
金筋・稲妻・湯走ナドノ働キヲ表示シ地鍔ニ黒味アリテ大  
模様ニ肌立チテ松皮ノ如ク見ユル點ニモ見所アリ

*Ô-suriage mumei no nakago-saki shi Kunzan Sensei no dôkô kiwame no kinzôgan-mei ari. Dôkô wa Shintôgo Kunimitsu mon de aideshi no Masamune to sakufû ga chikaku nie-kuzure no bi to henka no myôshu o arawashi samo Masamune ijô ni hôtan jizai de chikei, kinsuji, inazuma, yubashiri nado no hataraki o hyôji-shi jigane ni kuro-aji arite ô-moyô ni hada-tachite matsukawa no gotoku miyuru ten ni mo midokoro ari.*

This blade is *ô-suriage mumei*, but bears at the tip of the tang a gold-inlaid attribution to Norishige that goes back to my teacher, Kunzan Sensei. Norishige worked in a style close to Masamune, who was a fellow student of his under master Shintôgo Kunimitsu, which places an emphasis on the aesthetics of *nie-kuzure* and on a richness in variety. However, Norishige's approach is even more bold and free than seen with Masamune in terms of activities like *chikei*, *kinsuji*, *inazuma*, *yubashiri*, etc., and he produced a blackish *jigane* with a large-patterned and standing-out forging structure, which resembles pine bark, and which is a very typical characteristic of his.

長貳尺三寸八分半

*Nagasa ni-shaku san-sun hachi-bu han*

Blade length ~ 72.3 cm

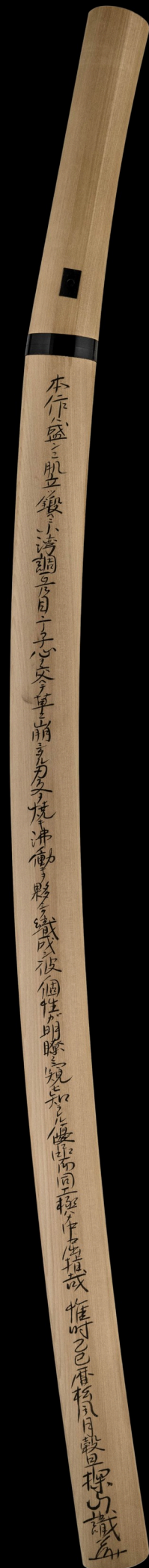
本作ハ盛ニ肌立ツ鍛ヘニ小湾調互乃目・丁子心ヲ交ヘテ草ニ崩シタル刃文ヲ焼キ沸ノ働キヲ夥シク織成シ彼ノ個性ガ明瞭ニ窺ヒ知ラレル優品而同工極ハメ中屈指哉

*Honsaku wa sakan ni hadatatsu kitae ni ko-notare-chô gunome, chôji-gokoro o majiete sô ni kuzushitaru hamon o yaki nie no hataraki o obitadashiku orinashi kare no kosei ga meiryô ni okagai shirareru yûhin shikamo dôkô kiwame no kusshi kana.*

This blade displays a prominently standing-out *kitae* and is hardened in a *ko-notare-chô* that is mixed with some *gunome* and *chôji* and that tends in a free manner to *kuzure*, and brimful of *nie* activities are interwoven with the hardening. Thus, this masterwork reflects very well Norishiges typical characteristics, and stands out among all blades attributed to this smith.

惟時乙巳曆松風月穀旦探山識「花押」

*Koretoki kinoto-mi matsukaze-zuki kokutan Tanzan shirusu + kaô*  
Written by Tanzan [Tanobe Michihiro] on a lucky day in June in the year of the snake of this era (2025) + monogram.

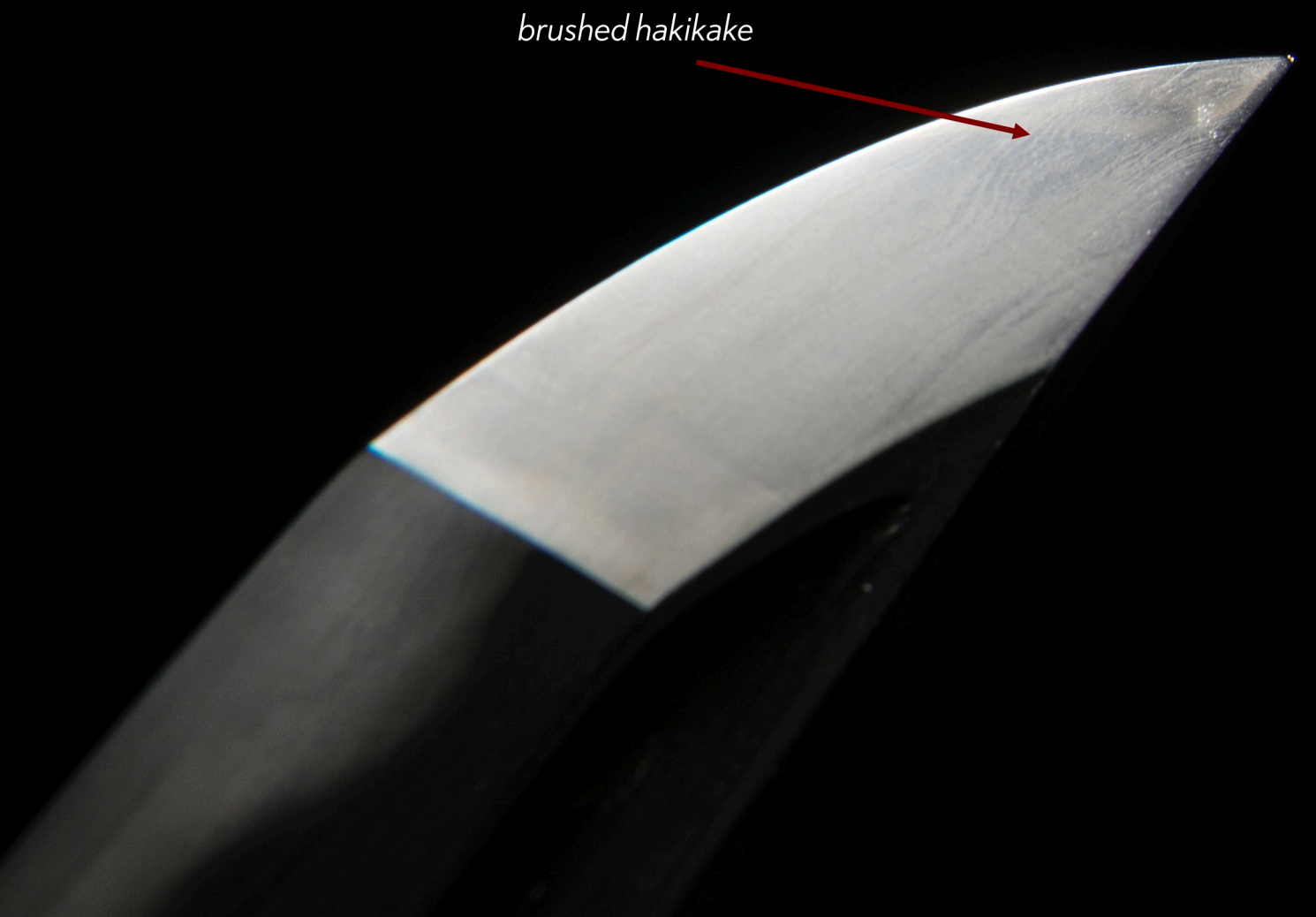




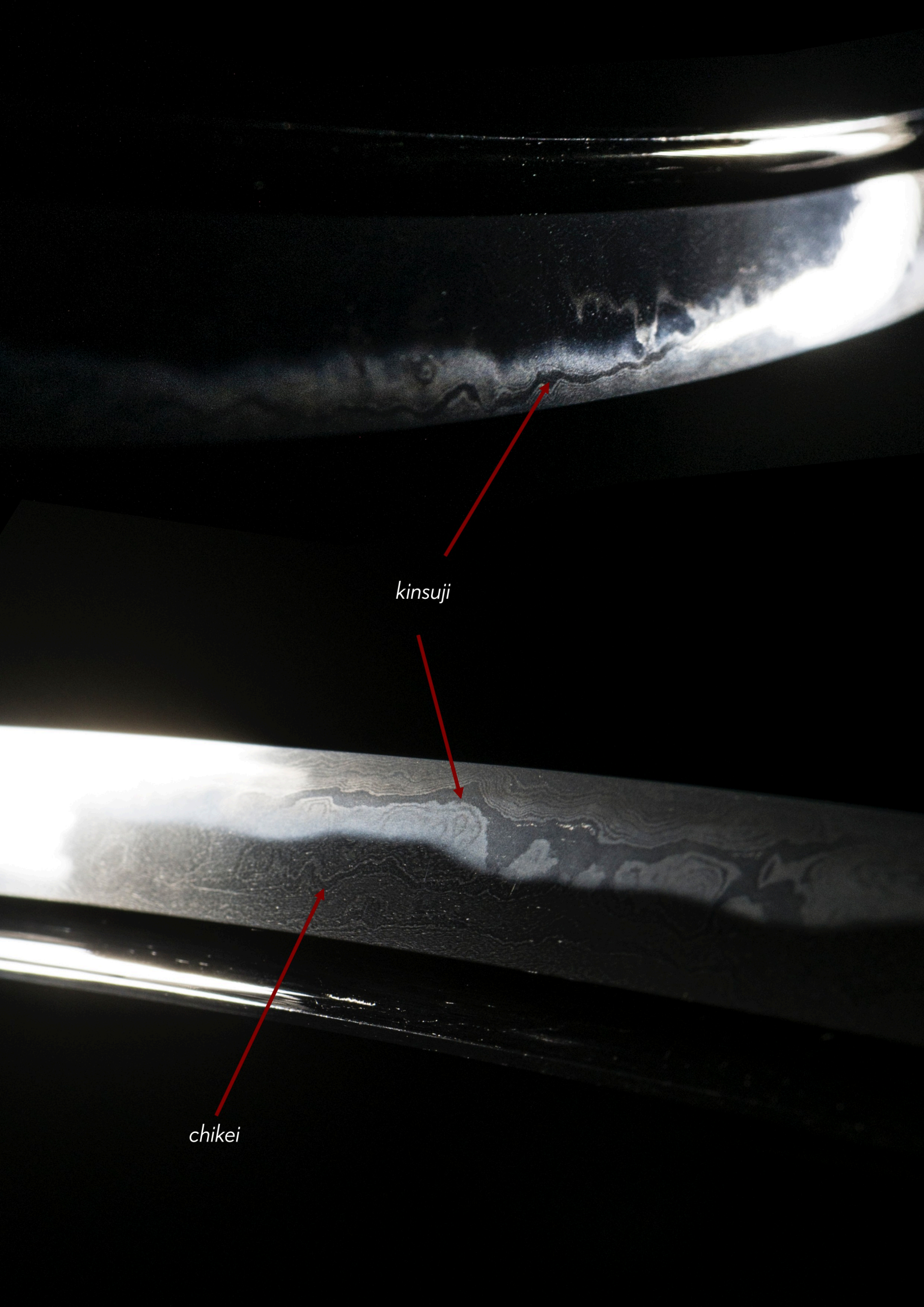




*brilliant kinsuji*

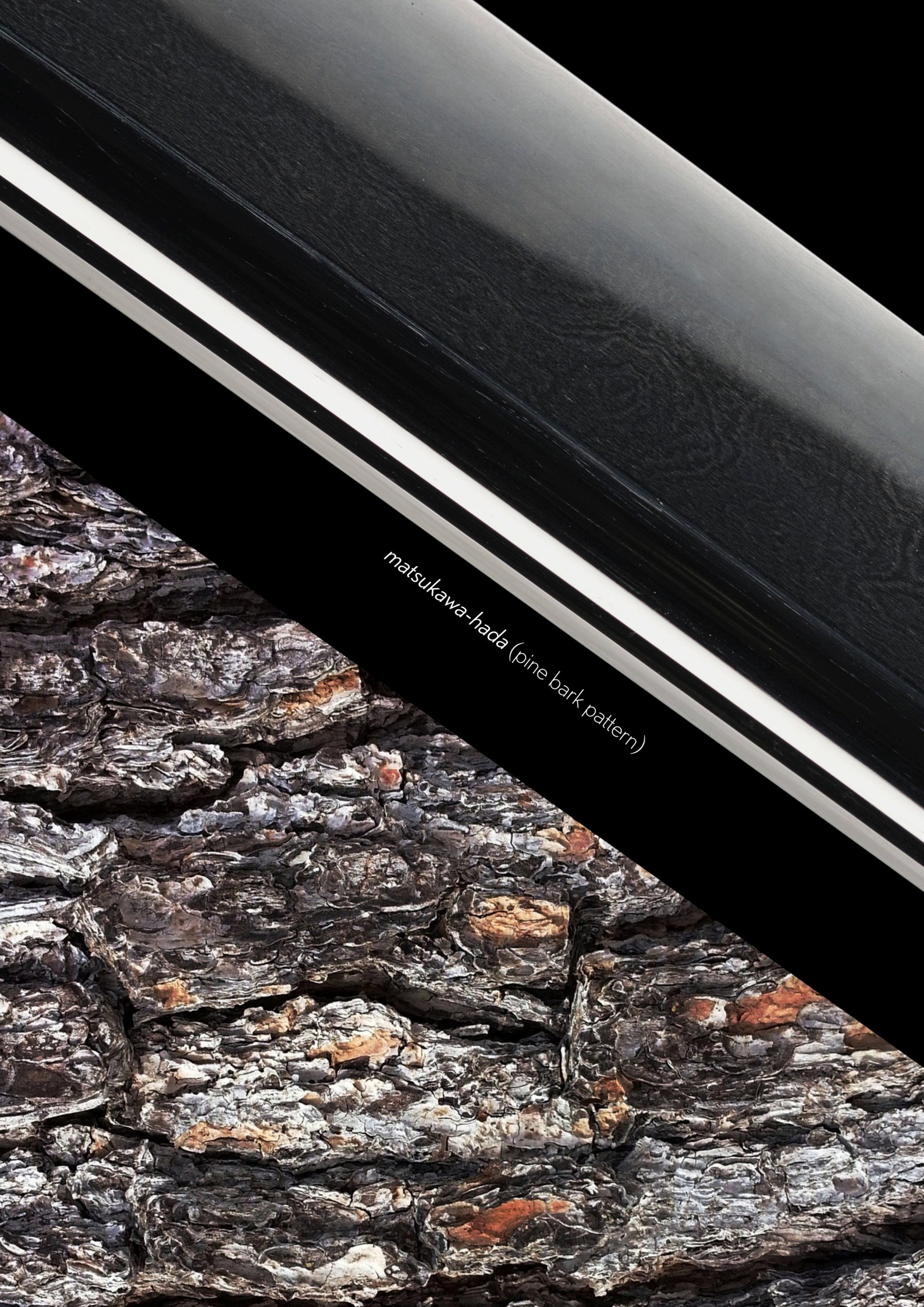


*brushed hakikake*



*kinsuji*

*chikei*



*matsukawa-hada (pine bark pattern)*



*sunagashi*

*mokume-hada*

On the finest of Japanese swords, the steel has a 'wet appearance' - a sign of the highest levels craftsmanship, premier polishing and general health of the sword.





(Ko) 小  
(izumi) 泉  
(ke) 家  
(zô) 蔵



This Norishige katana was formerly owned by Mr. *Koizumi Tomitarô* (小泉富太郎), who once served as Executive Director of the NBTHK.



川 峯 太 久 馬

地 拂 よ く つ き、 順 り に 細 装  
流 し か かり、 金 筋 太 く 入 る。  
刃 上、 先 切 り、 鍔 目 切 り、 表

年 紀 有 る こ と な じ ゃ け ら ず

重 厚 の 作 風 は、 相 州 上 中

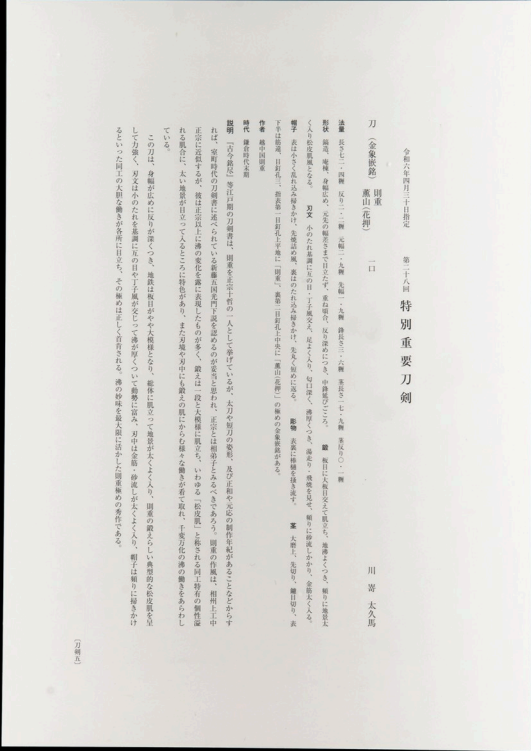
標 さ れ る 同 工 特 有 の 個 性 溢

々 方 化 の 游 の 働 き を あ ら わ し

整 ら し 典 型 的 な 松 皮 肌 を 呈

々、 帽子 は 順 り に 掃 き かけ

念



28th NBTHK  
Tokubetsu-Jôyô-Tôken Certificate  
Traditionally rolled in protective tube.

All information will be precisely translated for the new caretaker. A printed and bound description of the sword from this catalogue will also be included along with a sword stand and a Unique Japan maintenance kit.