



ITEM# UJWA237

## A NORISHIGE KODACHI

UNSIGNED, LATE KAMAKURA PERIOD (CIRCA ENKYO ERA 1308~1311)

**Swordsmith:** *Den Norishige (o-suriage, mumei)*  
**Measurements:** **Length:** 59.0cm **Curvature:** 1.3cm **Moto-haba:** 2.6cm **Weight:** 470g  
**Jihada:** *Stand-out itame with mokume and nagare forming matsukawa-hada, darkish steel*  
**Hamon:** *Wide nioguchi mixed with gunome, choji, ko-notare, ashi, kinsuji and sunagashi*  
**Boshi:** *Nie-laden ko-maru kaeri with plenty of hakikake*  
**Certificate:** **62nd NBTHK Juyo Token** (a sword designated as *Profound and Important*)  
**Fujishiro:** **Sai-josaku** (ranked as a *grandmaster sword smith*)

**SOLD**

It gives us great pleasure to introduce a sword by one Japan's finest swordsmiths. *Norishige* was a fellow student of *Masamune* under *Shintôgo Kunimitsu*. Among the early great *Sôshû* masters, *Norishige's* workmanship is closest to that of the *Masamune*. The major difference is that the *kitae* (body grain) produced by *Norishige* stands out more visibly – primarily in the form of his iconic *matsukawa-hada* - a spiraled grain pattern resembling the bark of old pine trees.

This sword is registered as a *wakizashi*, however, its long cutting edge of 59cm and generous curvature demonstrate the classic shape of a *kodachi* – a small *tachi*. A spectacular amount of *hataraki* featuring *yo*, *hotsure*, *kinsuji*, *sunagashi* and dazzling *ji-nie* abound on this blade. 700-year-old whirlpools of *matsukawa-hada* gives the steel such character. A gorgeous set of antique *Higo-koshirae* with gold-lacquered *samekawa* on the hilt completes this museum-worthy *Juyo* treasure.

Saki-kasane: 3.7mm <sup>^</sup>

Moto-kasane: 4.9mm

Omosa: 470g

Kissaki: 2.37cm  
Saki-haba: 1.74cm

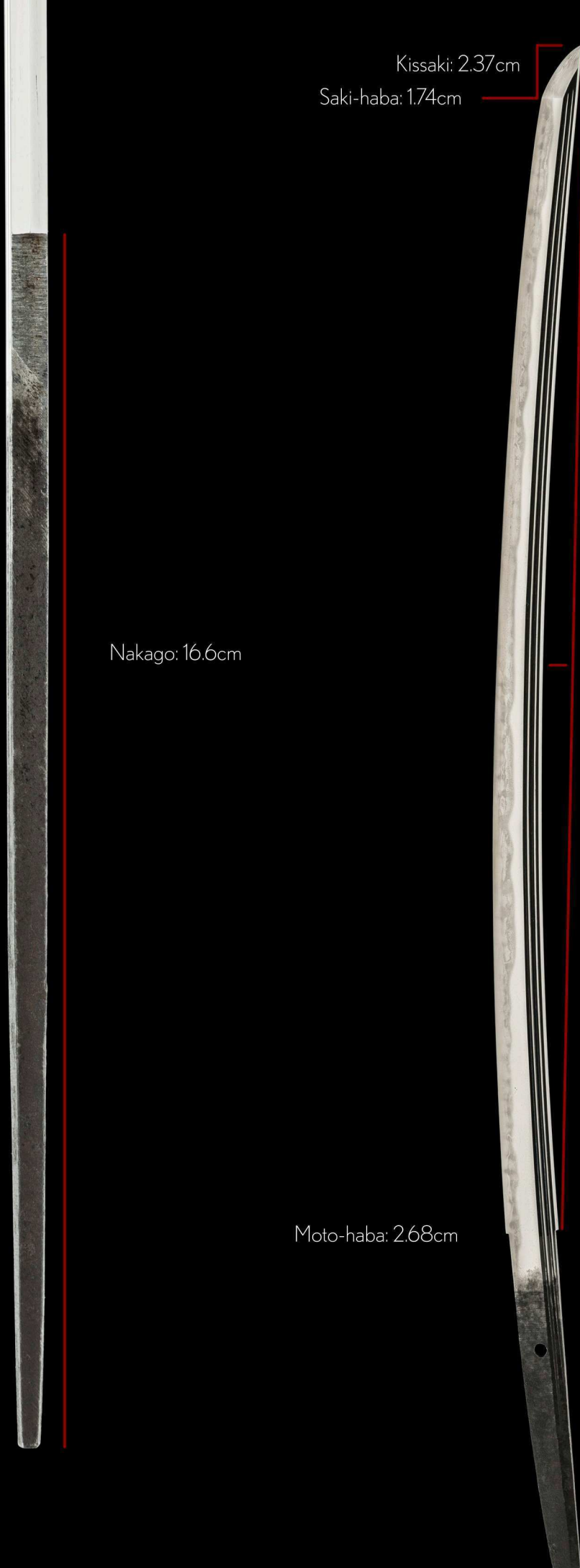
Nakago: 16.6cm

Moto-haba: 2.68cm

Nagasa: 59.1cm

Sori: 1.3cm

Mekugi-ana: 1



According to the NBTHK Token Bijutsu, *Norishige* is superior to *Masamune* in *hataraki* [activity] and forged a unique jihada called *matsukawa-hada*.

Norishige worked at the very end of the Kamakura period, circa 1308 and 1328 and lived in northern *Etchu province* on the Sea of Japan giving his swords a darkish appearance.

This splendid *kodachi* carries a graceful shape with two parallel grooves known as *futatsuji-hi* running the length of the blade.





a clean and precise  
*o-suriage nakago*  
(*mumei*, unsigned)

一、脇指 無銘 伝則重 一口

重要第三九三九號

指定書

法量 長五九〇糎 反り一三糎  
形状 鎚造庵棟 やや細身 反り浅くつき 中鋒  
鍛 板目に全流れ肌交じり 総じて肌立ち 地滞つき 地景入り  
かな色黒みを帯びる  
刃文 中直刃調に互の目寸子ふのたれなど交じり 足葉入り 匂深く  
沸厚くつき 金筋 砂流しかかる  
帽子 直ぐ調によく沸つき 掃きかける  
彫物 表裏に二筋樋を掻き流す  
茎 天磨上 鑢目切り 目釘孔一

右者當協會に於て審査の結果  
重要刀剣に指定す

平成二十八年十月十八日

公益財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協會

會長 酒井忠久

東京 教育委員会  
第 61849 号  
昭和 30 年 4 月 / 日

NBTHK Juyo Token  
Certificate of Designation [#13939]

A sword designated as *Profound and Important*  
by the Society for the Preservation of the Japan Art Sword

Issued in the 28th year of Heisei (2016), October 18th

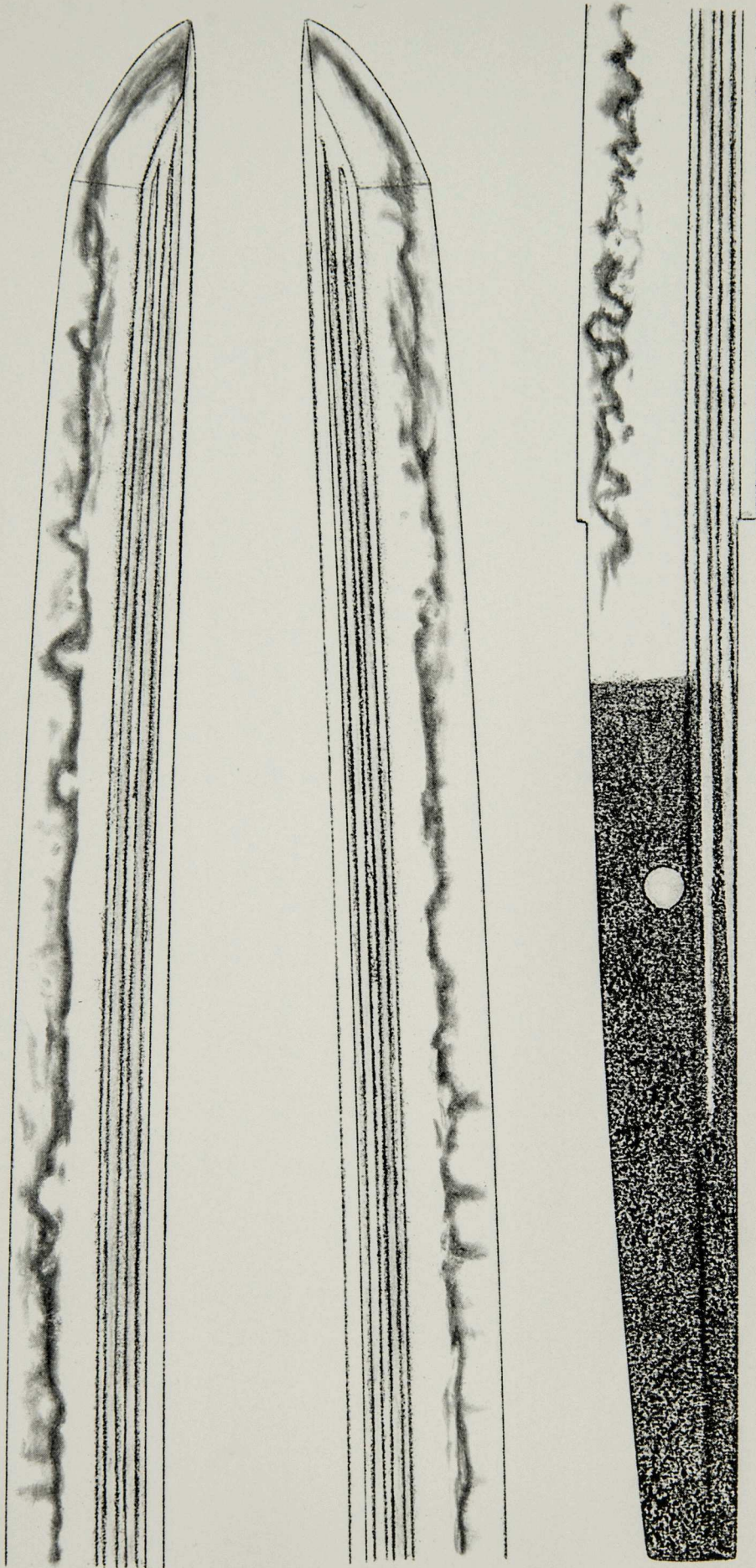
One Wakizashi,  
Mumei, Den Norishige

Length: 59.0cm  
Curvature: 1.3cm

Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai  
(NBTHK)

[President] Sakai Tadahisa (酒井忠久)

62nd NBTHK Juyo Token Oshigata  
Wakizashi, Mumei Den Norishige



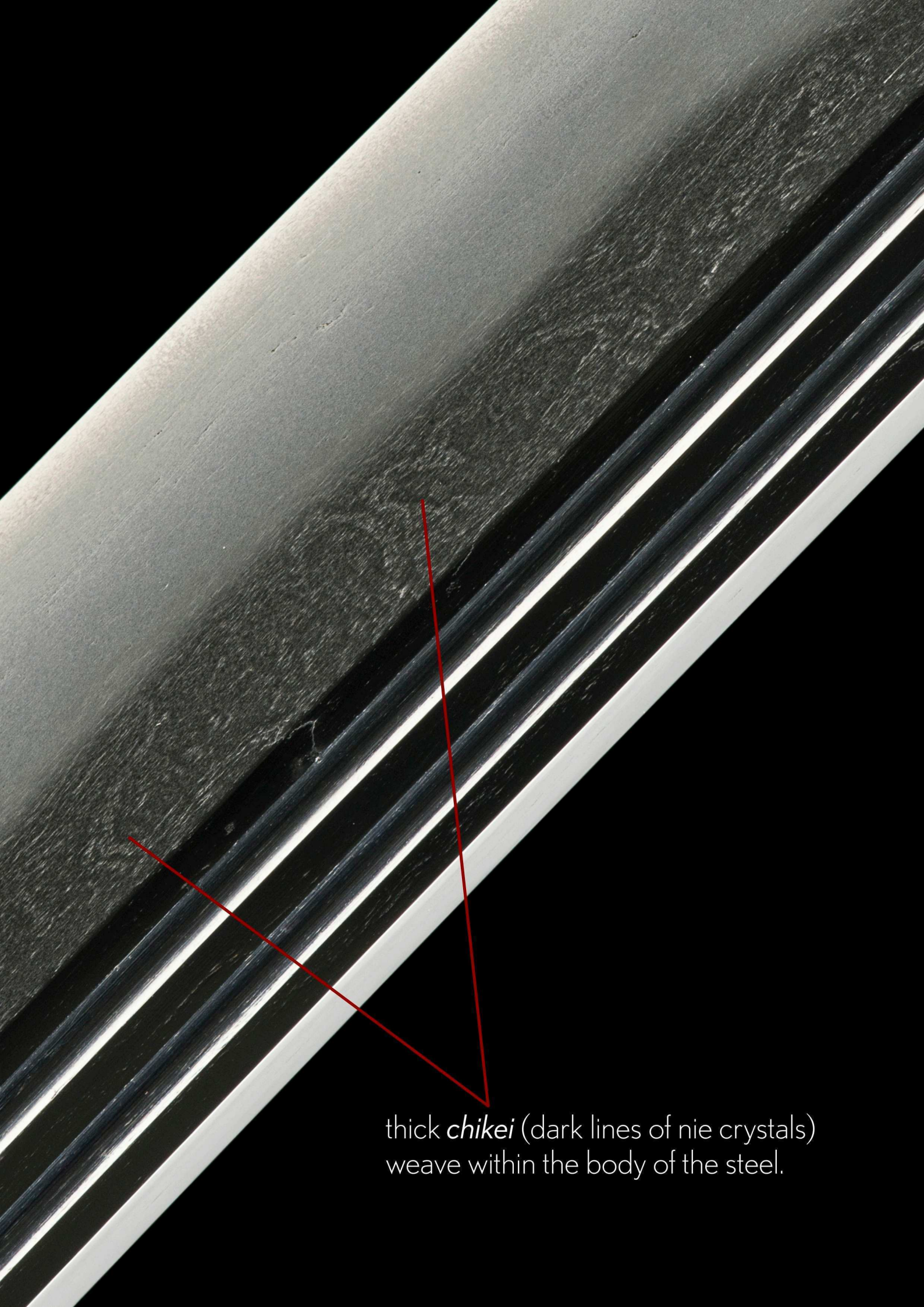
脇指 無銘 伝則重





a beautiful *boshi* (hamon in tip area) made up of brushed streams of *nie crystals* that form *hakikake*.





thick *chikei* (dark lines of nie crystals)  
weave within the body of the steel.



*futatsuji-hi* (double groove)

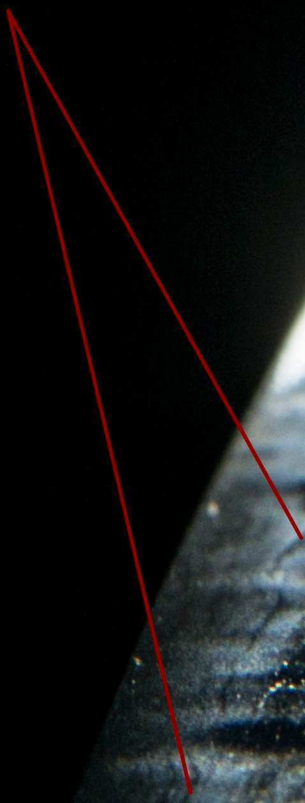
*"A wide nioiguchi that is mixed with gunome, choji, ko-notare, many ashi and yo, some hotsure, yubashiri, and plenty of kinsuji and sunagashi ."*

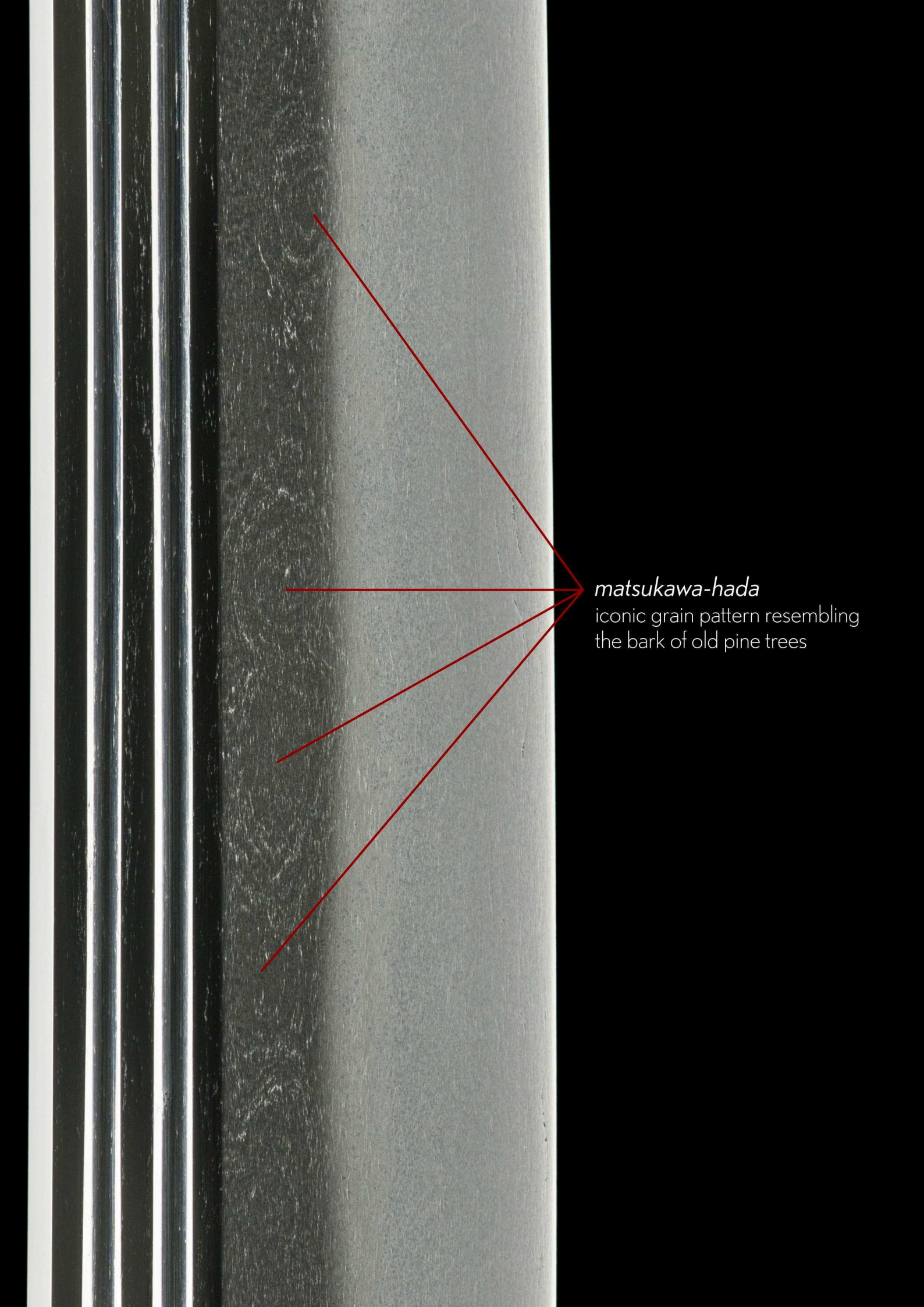
- 62nd NBTHK Juyo Token Certificate

Clusters of *nie crystals* that form *jifu*.



*kinsuji* dazzles inside  
the hamon.





*matsukawa-hada*

iconic grain pattern resembling  
the bark of old pine trees



*Shirasaya*  
(protective scabbard)



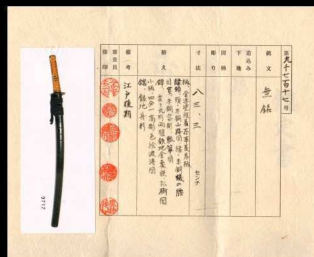
copper *habaki*  
with peony design



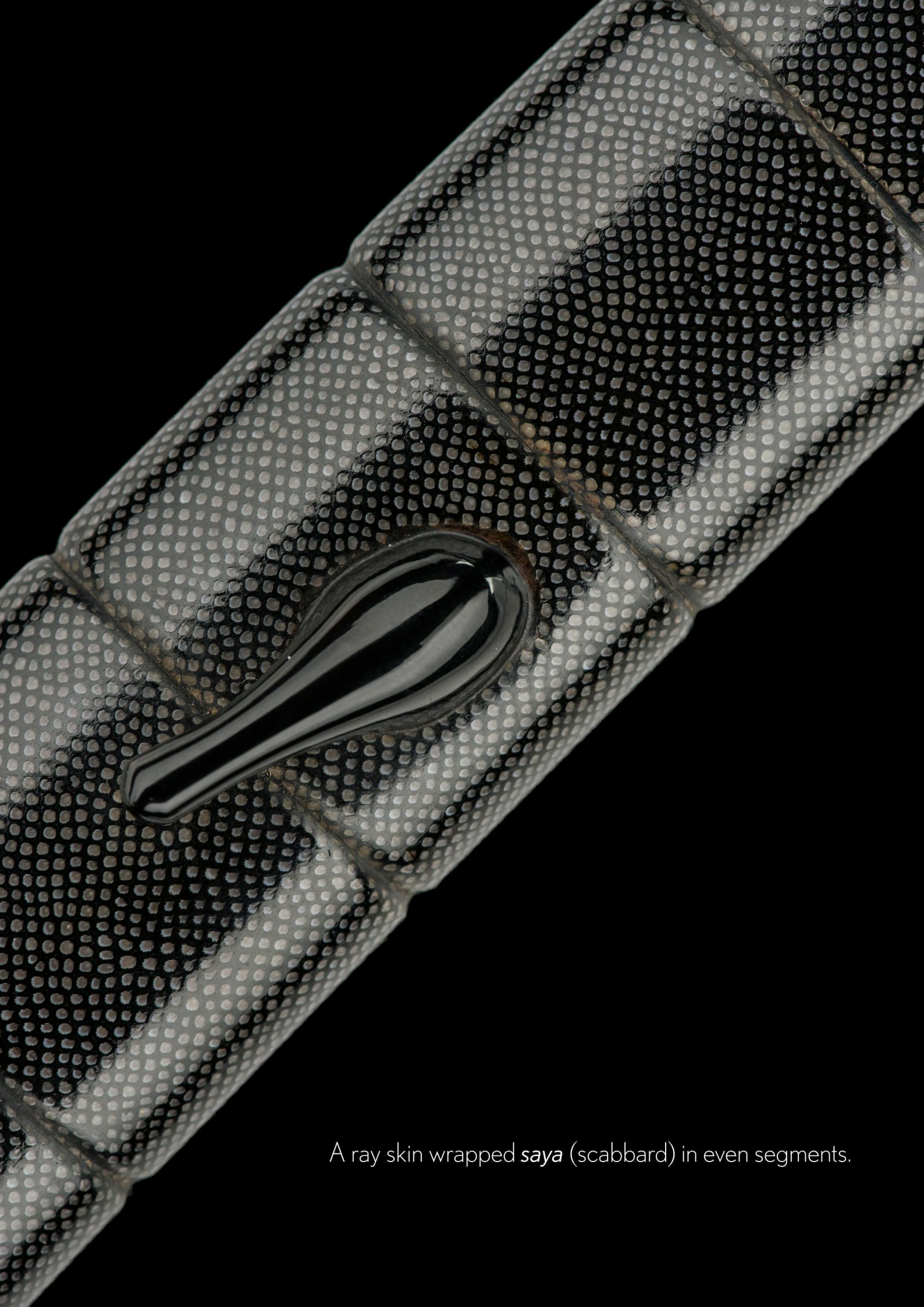
*Aizame-gise koshi-hachi-bu-kizami  
saya Higo uchigatana-koshirae  
(藍絞着腰八分刻鞘肥後打刀拵)*

*Higo uchigatana-koshirae with ribbed  
saya wrapped with navy same*

*Koshirae constructed during  
the late Edo period  
(1780~1867)*



*NTHK-NPO Kanteisho  
Certificate of Authenticity*



A ray skin wrapped saya (scabbard) in even segments.



The tsuba has a design of a pine tree that pays tribute to the *Norishige matsukawahada* that resembles the bark of a pine tree.

Matsu means "*waiting for the soul of a god to descend from heaven*". In ancient Japanese Shinto beliefs, gods were said to have ascended to heaven on a pine tree, where they now reside on a beautiful volcanic mountain in giant or old trees.

Pine trees are also associated with the New Year in Japan. It is customary to hang a bundle of pine twigs and bamboo trunks known as a *kado matsu* (gate pine) on doors to receive blessings from the gods.





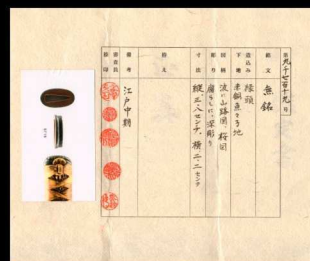
NTHK-NPO Kanteisho certificate to a late generation of the *Nishigaki* school of *Higo* province, circa 1780-1867.



This antique brown-leather wrapped *tsuka* (hilt) is being preserved with luxurious gold lacquer.



Deeply carved waves on the *shakudo kashira* (hilt) have been certified to the work of the *Jingo school* in *Higo province*. Crafted circa the middle Edo period (1780~1868).



NTHK-NPO Kanteisho





*kozuka* (utility knife carried by the samurai)  
wave design with *Omori* signature.



Gold standard.