



ITEM# UJKA502

SOLD

A KO-MIHARA KATANA

UNSIGNED, NAMBOKUCHÔ PERIOD (EITOKU ERA: 1381~1384)

Swordsmith:	<i>Ko-Mihara School (attribution, o-suriage mumei)</i>
Measurements:	Length: 69.9cm Curvature: 1.6cm Moto-haba: 2.74cm Weight: 700g
Jihada:	<i>Beautifully forged itame, mokume and nagare-hada with exquisite chikei</i>
Hamon:	<i>Wide suguha with bright nioguchi, deep nioi and ko-nie with kinsuji and sunagashi</i>
Certificate:	59th NBTHK Jûyô Tôken (designated as an Important sword)
Fujishiro rank:	Jô-saku (Ko-Mihara Masahiro is ranked as a superior swordsmith)
Authentication:	Sayagaki by Tanzan-sensei (Tanobe Michihiro)
Included:	Shirasaya, fabric bag, kit, booklet, description

Ko-Mihara refers to the *Mihara* school that flourished in *Bingo* province (present-day *Hiroshima*) from the late *Kamakura* to the *Nanbokuchô* periods. *Bingo* province was renowned for producing high-quality iron and the strong reflection of the *Yamato* tradition is a result of the migration of skilled *Yamato* smiths to the region. This samurai sword is a classic beauty - an elegant masterpiece from the *Ko-Mihara* school that will appeal to the discerning collector with an eye for quality and keen detail. The wide *suguha-hamon* beaming over its exquisitely forged *jihada* is blessed with bountiful *chikei* and *kinsuji* displaying a quiet confidence. The NBTHK summed it up brilliantly in the sword's *jûyô tôken zûfu* certificate stating 'the dignified form [of this sword] carries a sense of strength, while the minute activities along the edge offer refined taste and quiet beauty.' That is exactly right.

^
Saki-kasane: 4.4mm

Moto-kasane: 6.1mm

Omosa: 700g

Kissaki: 2.81cm
Saki-haba: 1.76cm

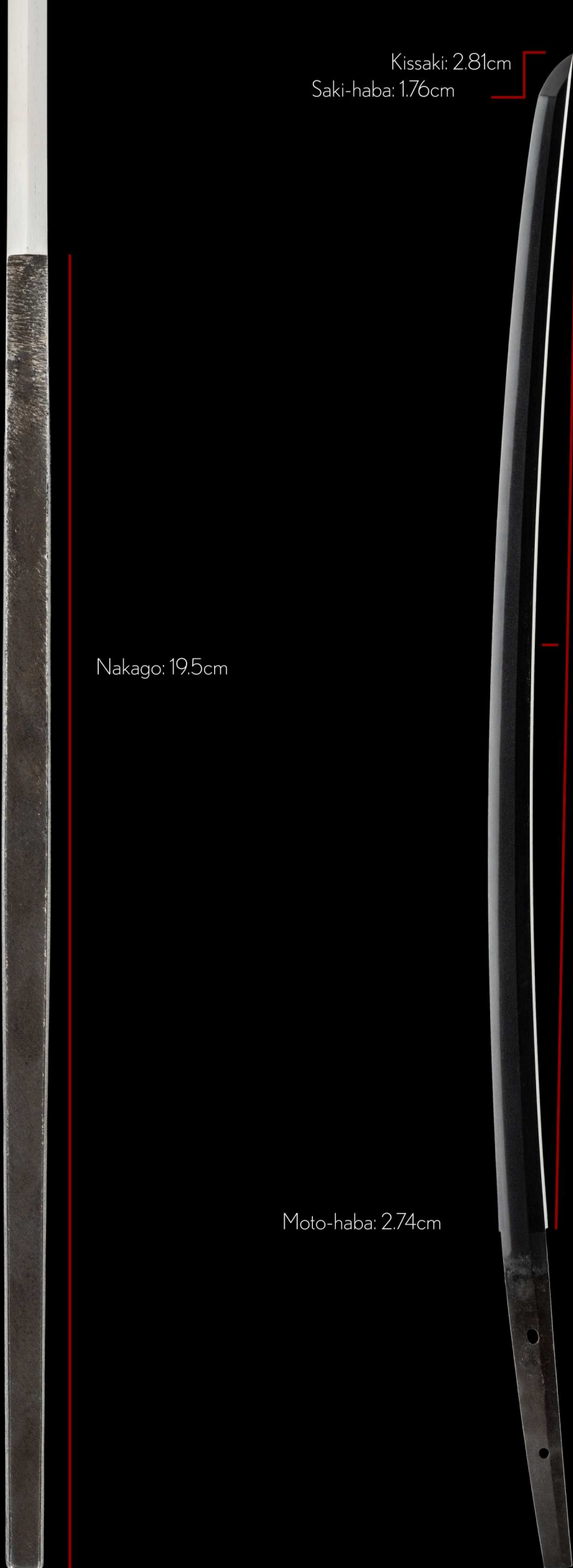
Nakago: 19.5cm

Moto-haba: 2.74cm

Nagasa: 69.9cm

Sori: 1.5cm

Mekugi-ana: 2



"*Ko-Mihara*" (古三原) refers to the *Mihara* school that flourished in the *Mihara* area of *Bingo* Province (present-day eastern *Hiroshima* Prefecture) from the late *Kamakura* to the *Nanbokuchô* periods.

The lineage began with the founder *Masaie* (正家) around the Shôchû era (1324~1326) in the late *Kamakura* period, followed by his son *Masahiro* (正広); works from the *Muromachi* period onward are distinguished as "*Sue-Mihara*." *Bingo* Province was renowned since ancient times for producing high-quality iron, providing the ideal foundation for forging superior swords. Additionally, the presence of many manors owned by major temples and shrines from the capital fostered active cultural exchange with the *Kinai* region, particularly *Yamato* Province. The strong reflection of the *Yamato* tradition in the *Mihara* school's style resulted from these connections and the migration of *Yamato* smiths to the region. Their style is characterized by a straight temper line (*suguha*) that deeply reflects *Yamato* traditions, with a grain pattern (*jigane*) often mixed with *masame*. Master swordsmiths such as *Masaie* and *Masahiro* are well-known within the school and *Tanobe-sensei* cites in his *sayagaki* that this particular sword is reminiscent of their fine workmanship.

This katana proudly displays the shape and overall quality of the warring *Nanbokuchô* period. '*Jihada* lovers' will adore its exquisitely forged *itame* mixed with *ko-itame* and *nagare-hada*. The *hamon* is a clear and wide *suguha* mixed with *gunome* and plenty of *ko-nie* with iconic *Yamato-den kuichigai-ba* to enjoy. The *bôshi* is *ko-maru* and the *kissaki* itself is very healthy indeed.

This samurai sword is a classic beauty - an elegant masterpiece from the *Ko-Mihara* school that will appeal to the eye of a collector with an admiring taste for detail. This is not a showy Bizen blade - this is a sword with a quiet confidence for it knows what it stands for. Quality. In fact, the NBTHK summed it up brilliantly in the sword's *jûyô tôken zûfu* certificate by stating:

'The dignified form carries a sense of strength, while the minute activities along the edge offer refined taste and quiet beauty.'

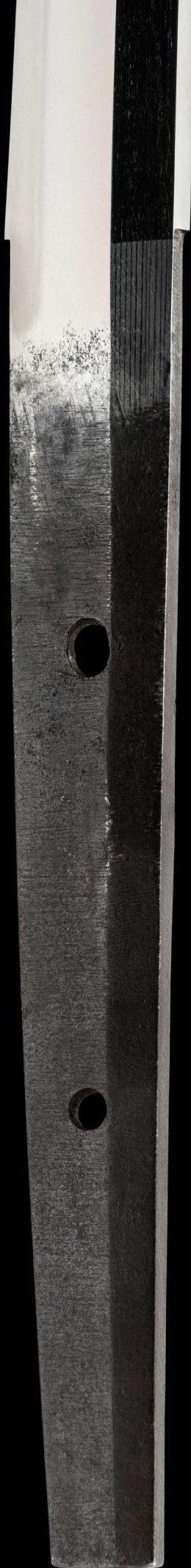




WATCH PABLO'S YOUTUBE PRESENTATION OF
UJKA502 - A KO-MIHARA KATANA

[UNIQUEJAPAN.COM/UJKA502-VIDEO](https://uniquejapan.com/ujka502-video)





Location: *Bingo province*

School name: *Ko-Mihara School*

ô-suriage-nakago (shortened tang)

kiri-yasurime (horizontal file marks)

The term *ô-suriage* refers to a sword that has been significantly shortened from its original length by cutting the *nakago* (tang) to the point where the original signature of the swordsmith is completely lost.

During the *Kamakura* and *Nanbokuchô* periods, *samurai* primarily engaged in cavalry warfare, wielding long *tachi* from horseback. However, as combat evolved into mass infantry battles and close-quarters fighting indoors, there was a growing demand for shorter, more manageable blades. This practical need was further amplified during the *Edo* period by the *Tokugawa* Shogunate's strict edicts (*Hatto*) governing the permissible length of swords. To continue carrying a treasured family heirloom while remaining within the law, many *samurai* chose to have their masterpieces shortened.

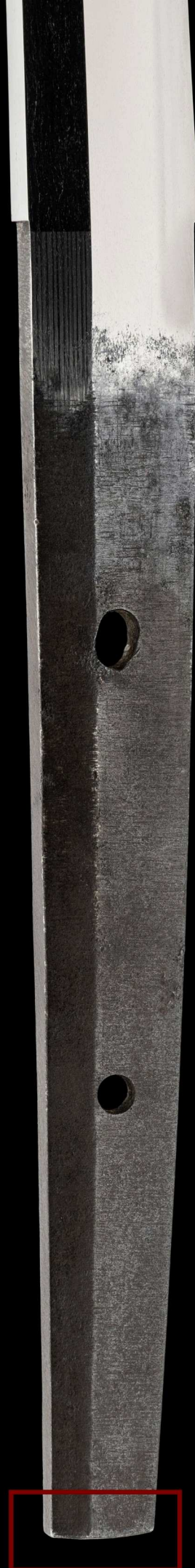
These two historical forces – the evolution of combat tactics and legal restrictions – became the primary drivers behind the transformation of legendary blades into the *ô-suriage* form we see today.

(*ura*, reverse)

During the *Tokugawa* period, the shogunate enforced a strict dress code for the *samurai* class, which included a standardized length for swords known as *jô-sun*. The standard length for a *katana* was typically set at *2-shaku 3-sun 5-bu* (approx. 71.2cm). This blade remains remarkably close to that prestigious standard.

A close look at the *nakago-jiri* (the tip of the tang) reveals a horizontal, flat cut known as *kiri-jiri*. This distinctive feature suggests a high probability that the sword was shortened during the *Keichô* era (1596~1615) to align with the official regulations of the time.

kiri-jiri





25201359

重要第三四五號

指定書

一刀 無銘 古三原 一口

法量

長さ六九・九釐 反り一・六釐

形状

鎗造庵棟重ねほぼ尋常反りつき中鋒つよりころ

鍛

板目肌に小板目交じり 辻を交え 地滞つき

刃文

広直刃 かすかにのたれ 互の目を交え 足・葉入り

帽子

匂深く小沸つき刃縁ほつれ 処々喰違刃を見せ 口沈みころとなる

茎

直ぐに小丸 大磨上 鑢目切り 目釘孔二

右者當協會に於て審査の結果

重要刀剣に指定する

平成二十五年 十月 十一日

公益財団法人日本美術刀剣保存協會



東京 教育委員会
第 192189 号
昭和50年 3月20日

Jûyô Certificate No. 13425
Shiteisho (指定書) Certificate of Designation
Katana, mumei: Ko-Mihara (古三原)

Measurements
nagasa 69.9 cm, sori 1.6 cm

Description

Keijo: *shinogi-zukuri*, *iori-mune*, ordinary thickness, moderate curvature, rather tight *chû-kissaki*
Kitae: *itame* that is mixed with *ko-itame* and *mokume*, accompanied by *ji-nie*, *chikei*, the steel in rather dark tone

Hamon: wide straight (*hiro-suguha*) with a faint *notare*, mixed with *gunome*, accompanied by *ashi* and *yô*, deep *nioi* with *ko-nie*, some *hotsure* on the *hamon* edges, occasionally displaying *kuichigai-ba*, and the *nioiguchi* tends to appear somewhat subdued.

Bôshi: straight with a small round turn-back (*komaru*)

Nakago: *ô-suriage*, horizontal file marks, two *mekugi-ana*

According to the result of the shinsa committee of our society we judged this work as authentic and rate it as *jûyô-tôken*.

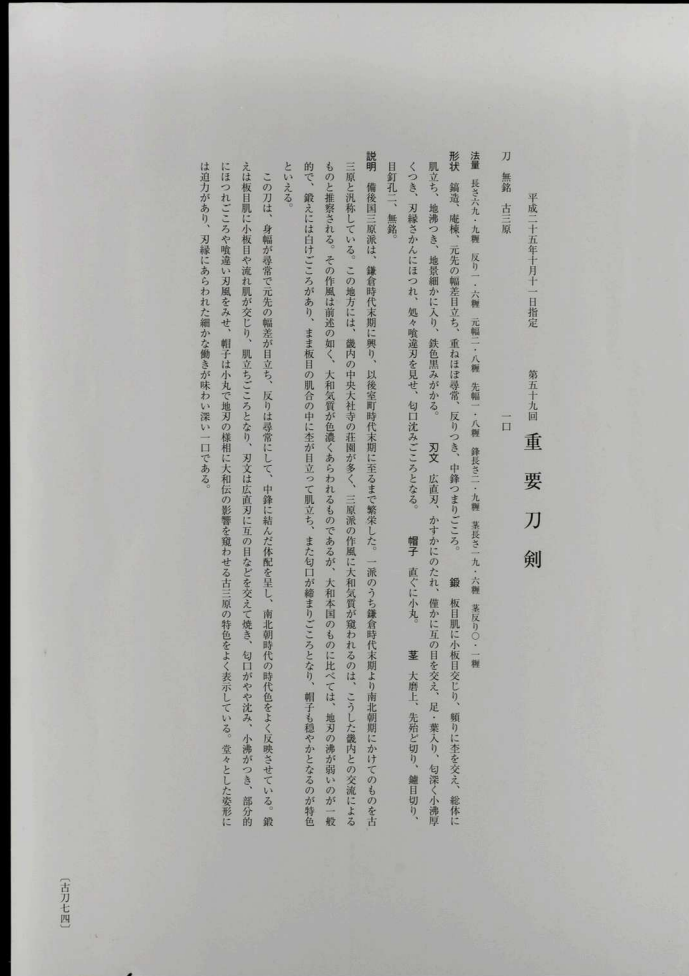
October 11, 2013
[Foundation] Nihon Bijutsu Tôken Hozon Kyôkai, NBTHK

super healthy bôshi



刀 無銘 古三原





Mihara (三原) school of *Bingo* province arose toward the end of the *Kamakura* period and flourished until the late *Muromachi* period. Among its lineage, works from the late *Kamakura* to *Nanbokuchô* periods are collectively referred to as "*Ko-Mihara* (古三原)." The region contained numerous estates belonging to major temples and shrines of the Kinai area, and it is believed that the strong *Yamato* influence visible in *Mihara* workmanship resulted from this cultural and economic exchange. While the style bears distinct *Yamato* characteristics, in comparison to smiths of *Yamato* proper, *Mihara* blades generally show a somewhat weaker *nie* activity, a whitish tone in the *jihada*, and prominent *mokume* standing out among the *itame* grain. The *nioiguchi* tends to be tight, and the *boshi* is usually gentle traits regarded as typical of the school.

This blade displays a well-proportioned *sugata* with normal width and a clear taper toward the tip, a moderate curvature, and a *chû-kissaki* features that well reflect the style of the *Nanbokuchô* period. The forging shows *itame* mixed with *ko-itame* and *nagarehada*, appearing somewhat prominent. The *hamon* is a broad *suguha* mixed with *gunome*, having a slightly subdued *nioiguchi* with attached *ko-nie*, occasional *hotsure* and *kuichigai-ba* tendencies, and a *komaru boshi*. Altogether, it clearly manifests the characteristics of *Ko-Mihara* workmanship influenced by the *Yamato* tradition. The dignified form carries a sense of strength, while the minute activities along the edge offer refined taste and quiet beauty.

備後國古三原

大磨上無銘也地刃ニ同派ノ特色ヲ明示シ且健ヤカナル
一類中取分ケ正廣並ニ正信被擬者有之候
佳也

刃長貳尺參寸壹分有之

惟時壬辰曆水無月探山邊道識

備後國古三原

Bingo no kuni Ko-Mihara

Ko-Mihara school from Bingo province

大磨上無銘也地刃ニ同派ノ特色ヲ明示シ且健ヤカナル
佳品也一類中取分ケ正廣並ニ正信被擬者有之候

*Ô-suriage mumei nari ji-ba ni dôha no tokushoku o meiji shi katsu
sukoyaka naru kahin nari ichirui chû toriwake Masahiro narabi ni
Masanobu higisha kore ari sôrô*

[This blade is] *ô-suriage* and unsigned. It clearly exhibits the characteristics of the [Ko-Mihara] school in its *jigane* and *hamon*. It is healthy and fine work. Among this lineage, it is particularly reminiscent of *Masahiro* or *Masanobu*.

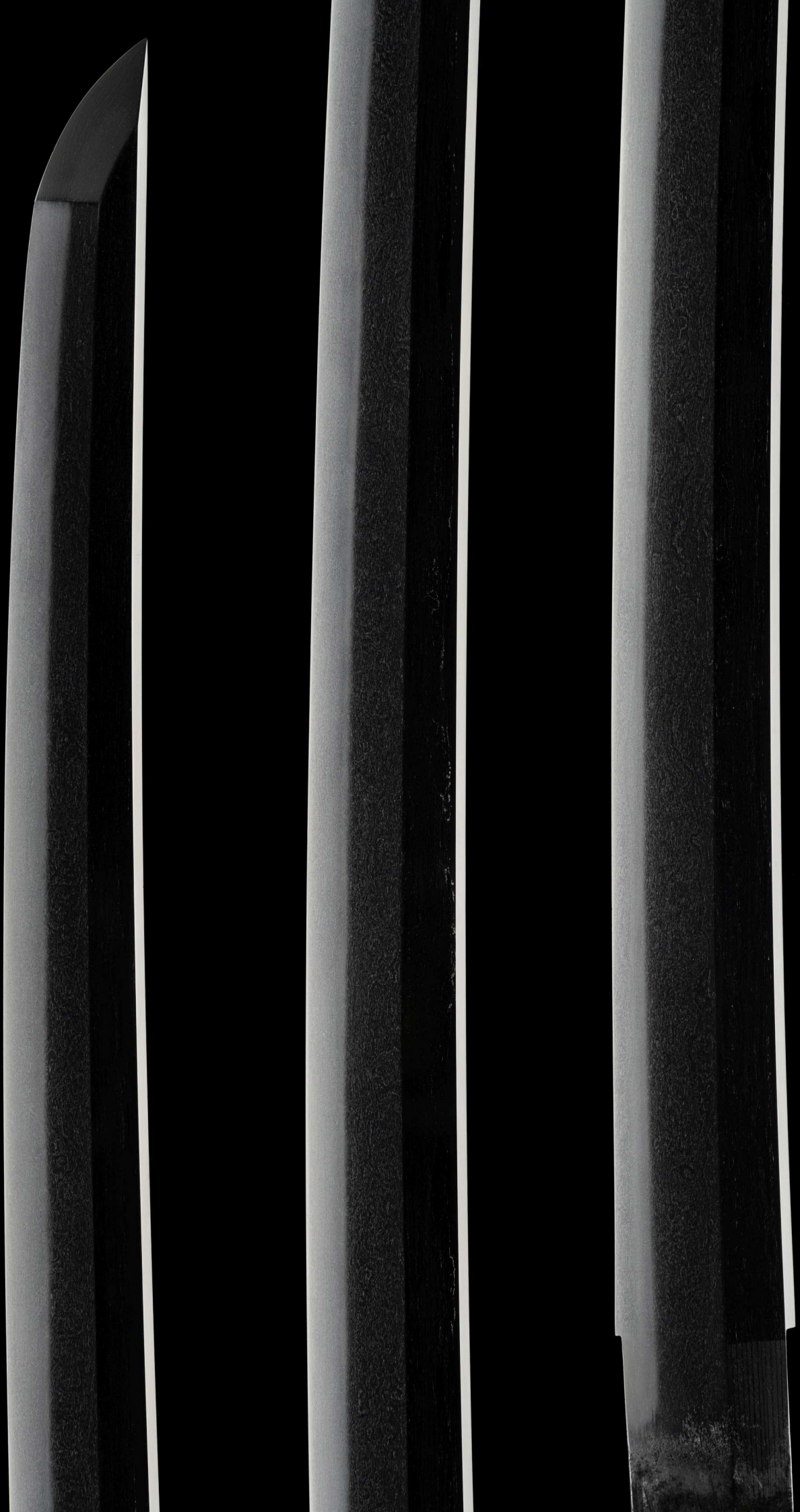
刃長貳尺參寸壹分有之

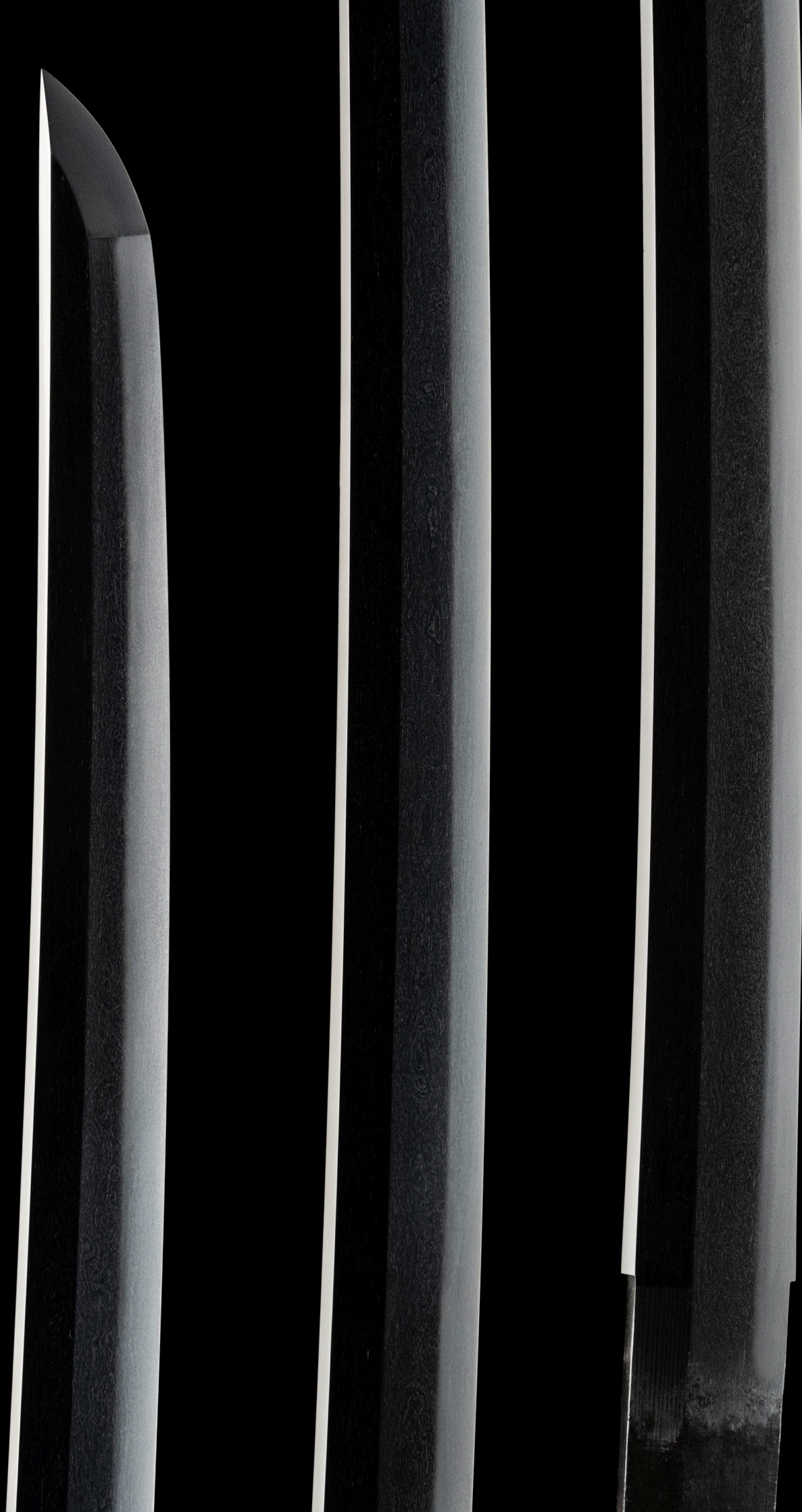
Hachô 2-shaku 3-sun 1-bu kore ari

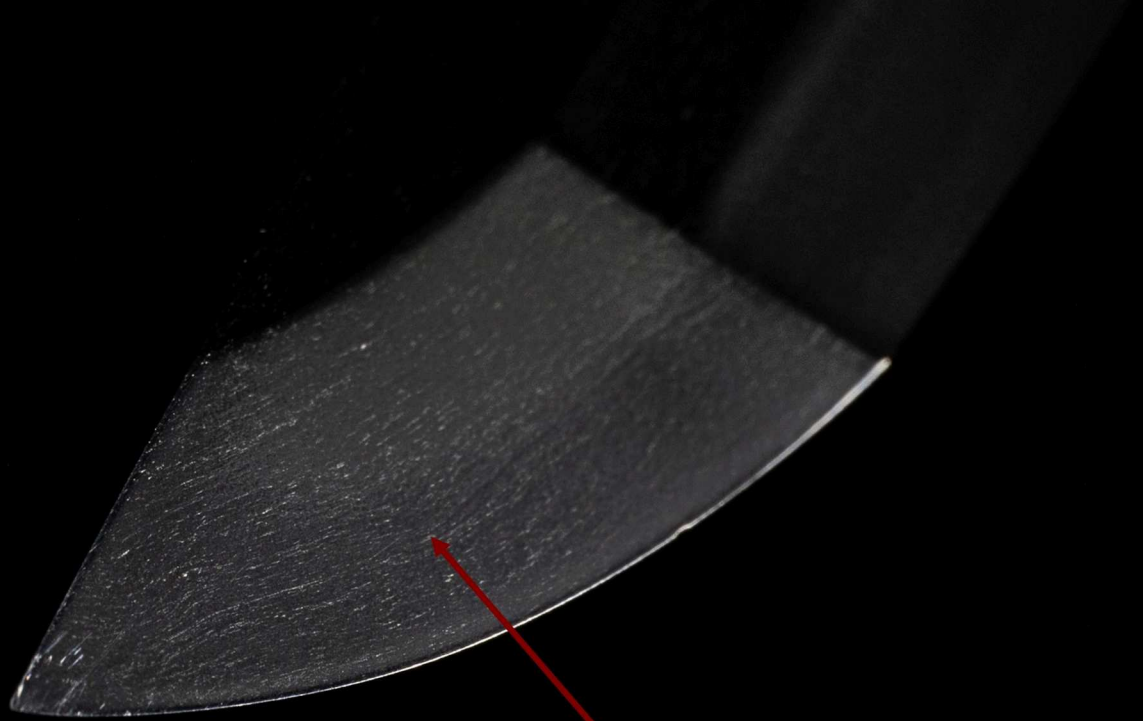
Blade length ~69.9 cm

惟時壬辰曆水無月探山邊道識（花押）

Kore toki mizunoe-tatsudoshi minazuki Tanzan Hendô shirusu + kaô
Written by *Tanzan* [Tanobe Michihiro] in the sixth month in the Year
of the Dragon (June 2012) + monogram







A beautifully flowing *nagare-hada* in the *kissaki*.

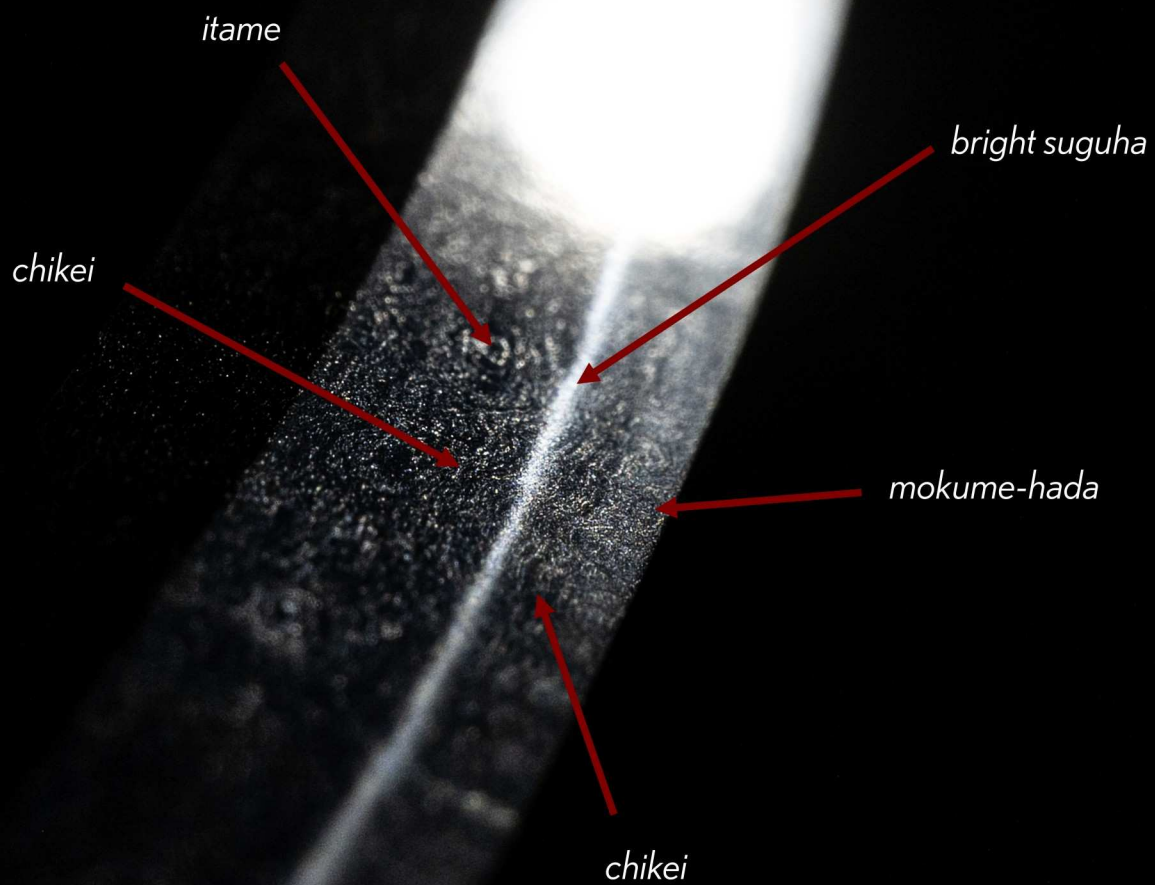




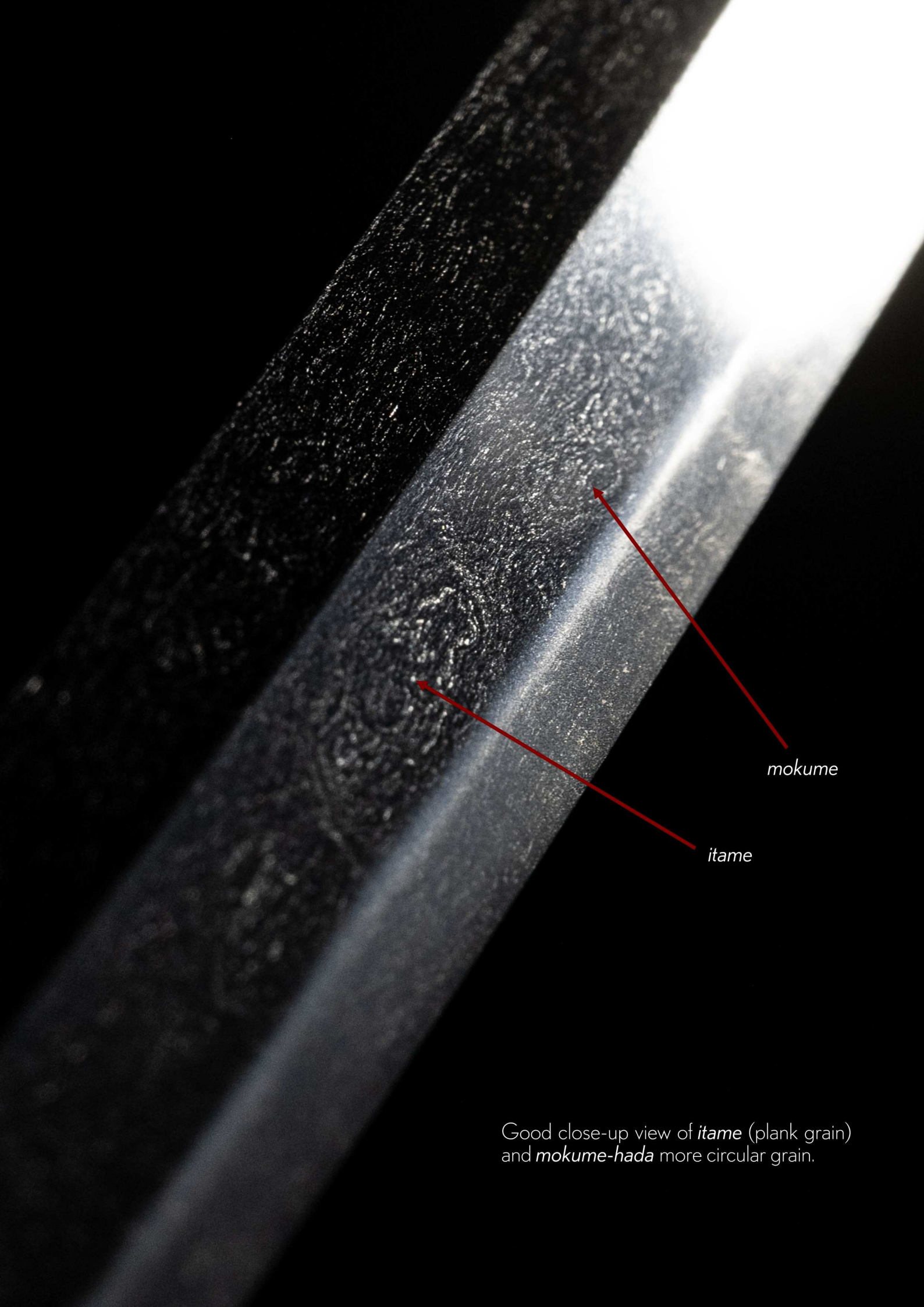
A clean, consistent *suguha* is only possible on a superbly forged foundation - and this blade has exactly that. A proud example of the *Ko-Mihara* school at the highest echelon.

A river of *chikei* accentuates the blades's beautiful *nagare-hada*.





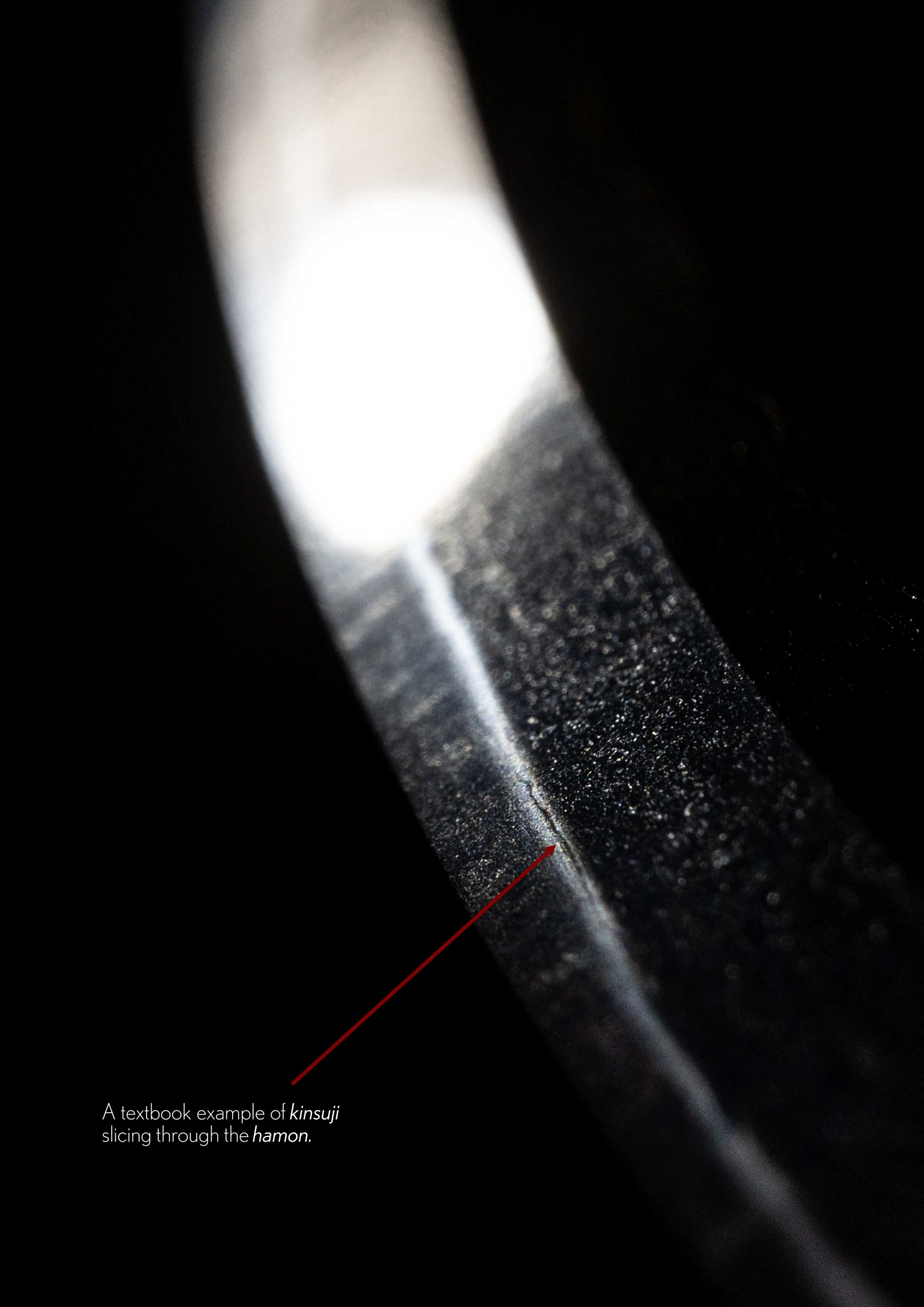
This *Ko-Mihara katana* is all about the fine, subtle details. A sword that will reward those who take the time to sit down and relax into it.



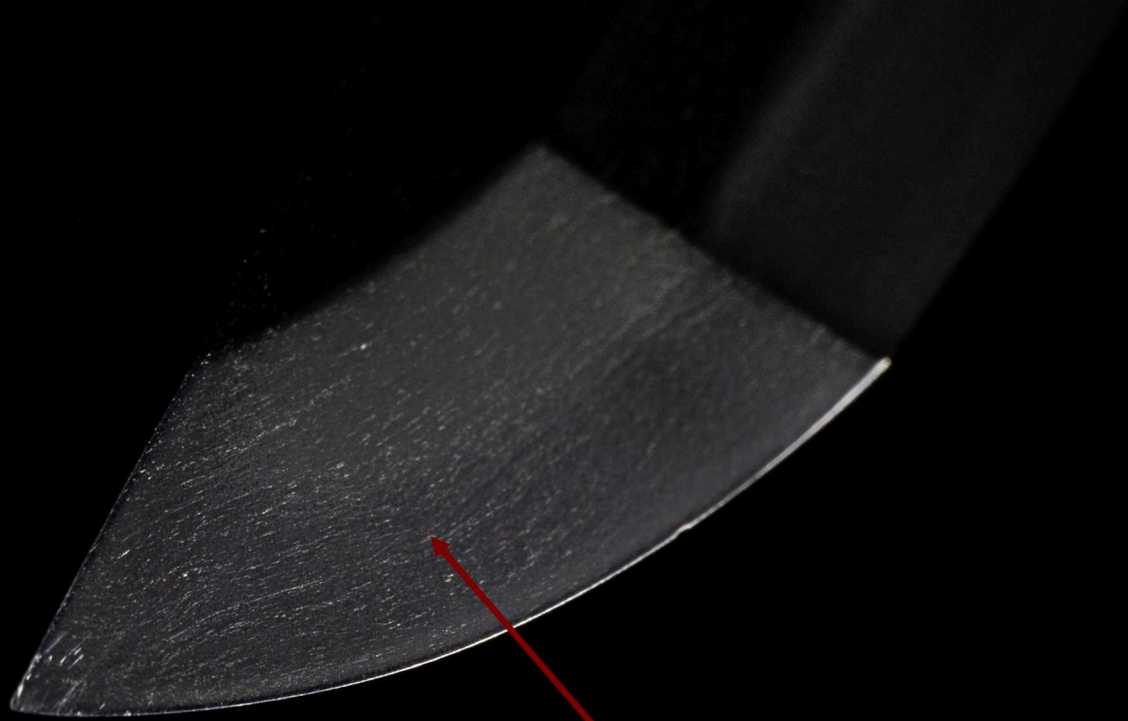
mokume

itame

Good close-up view of *itame* (plank grain)
and *mokume-hada* more circular grain.



A textbook example of *kinsuji*
slicing through the *hamon*.

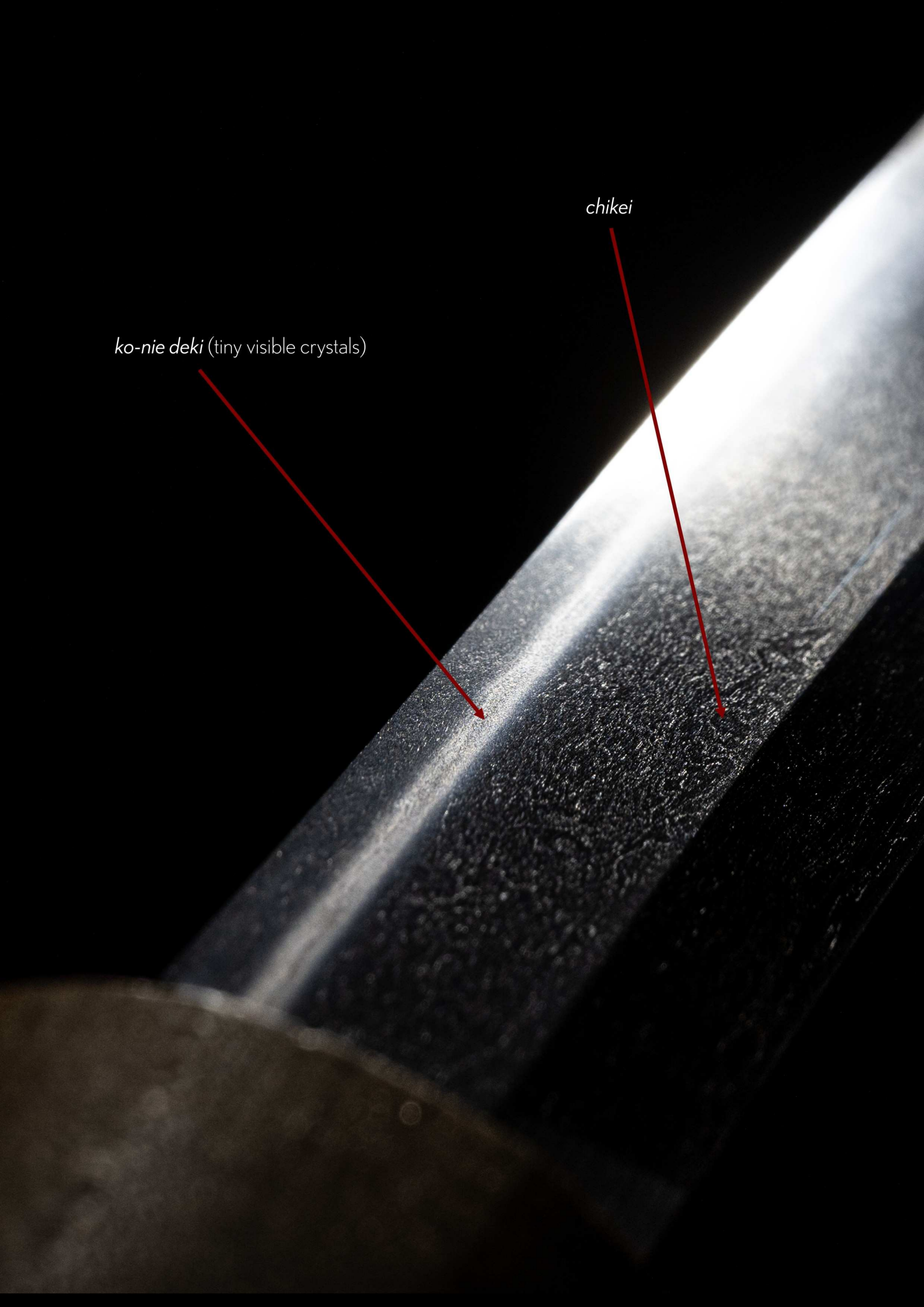


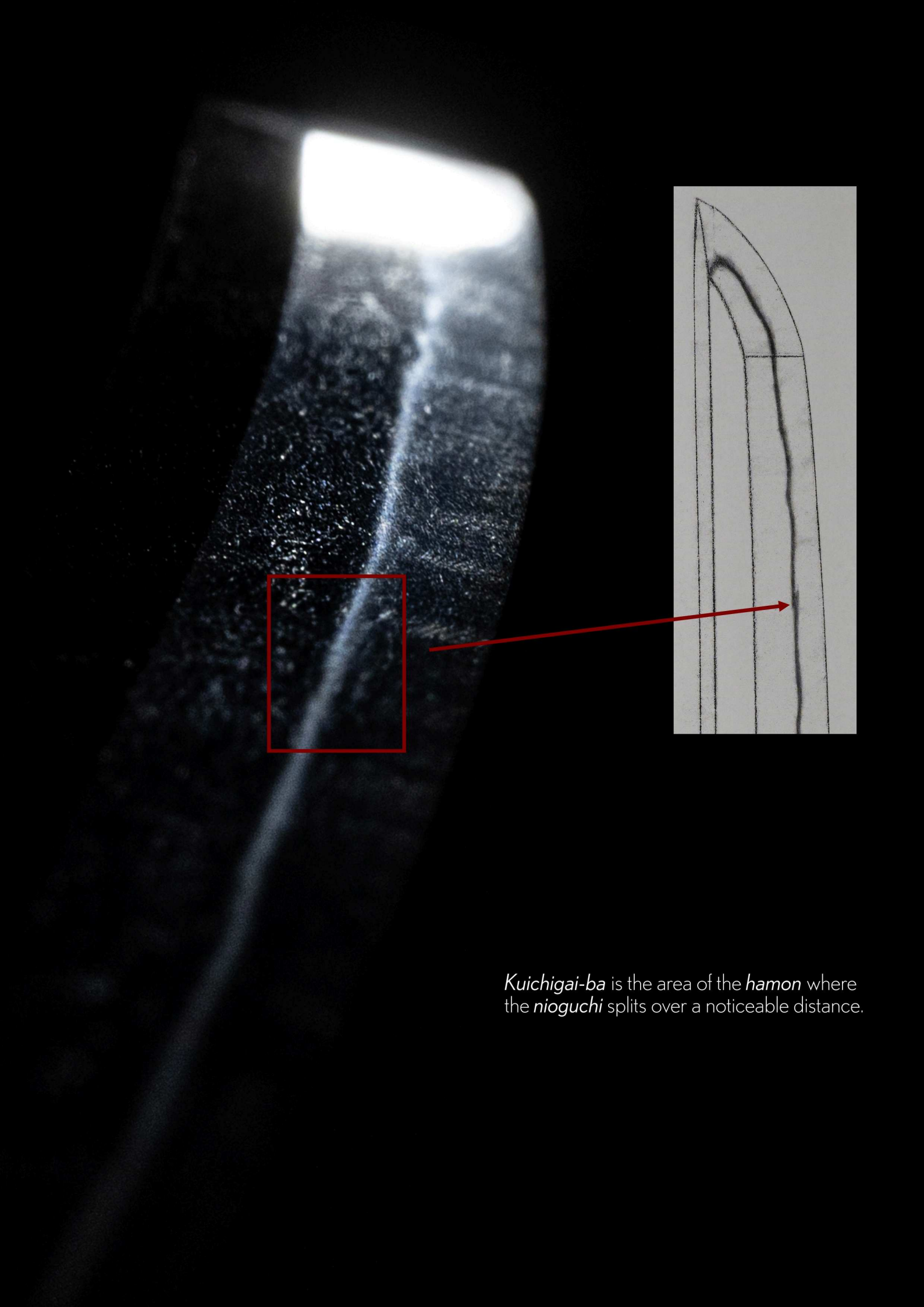
A beautifully flowing *masame-hada* in the *kissaki*.



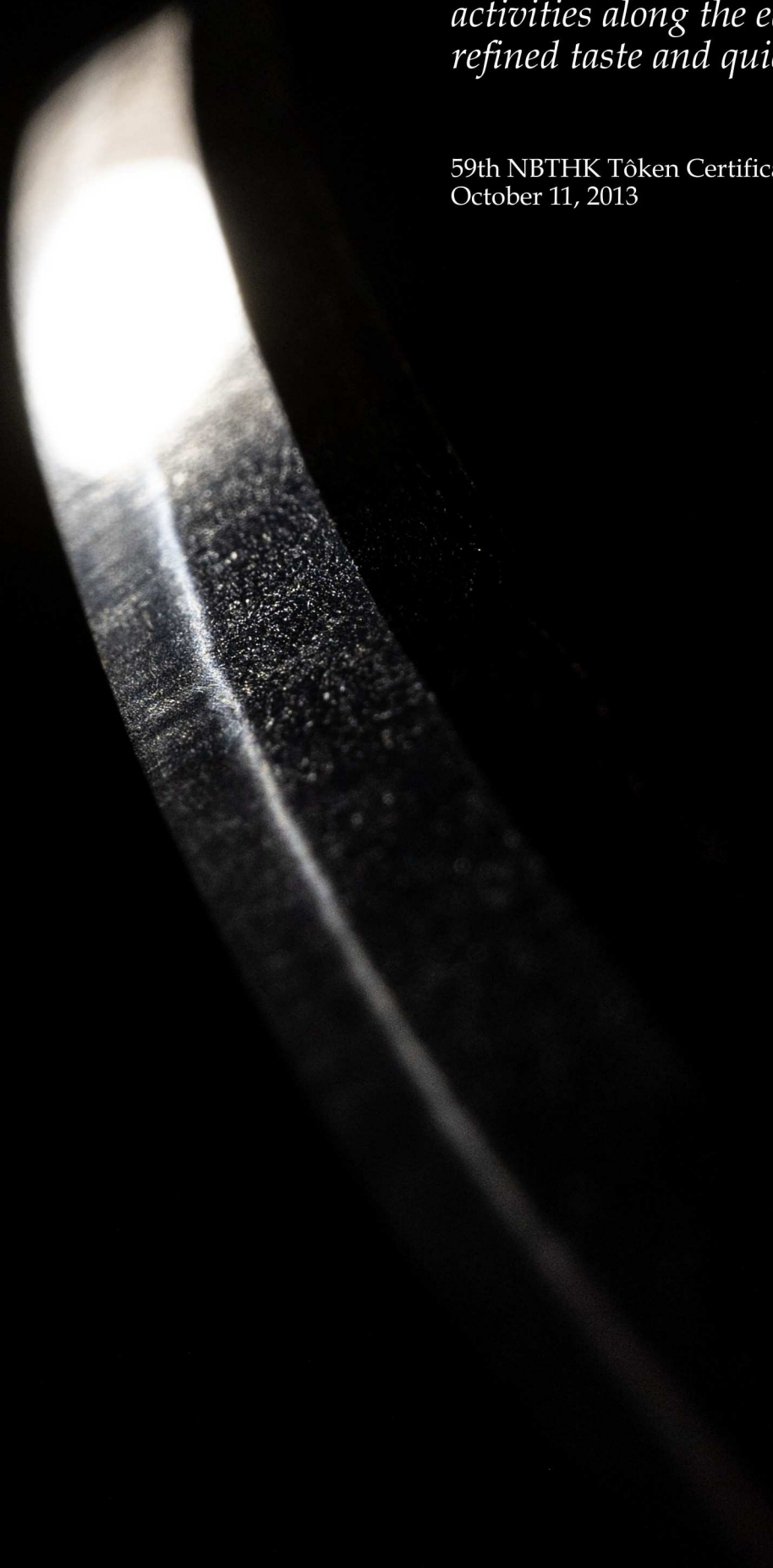
ko-nie deki (tiny visible crystals)

chikei





Kuichigai-ba is the area of the *hamon* where the *nioguchi* splits over a noticeable distance.



*"The dignified form carries a sense
of strength, while the minute
activities along the edge offer
refined taste and quiet beauty."*

59th NBTHK Tôken Certificate
October 11, 2013



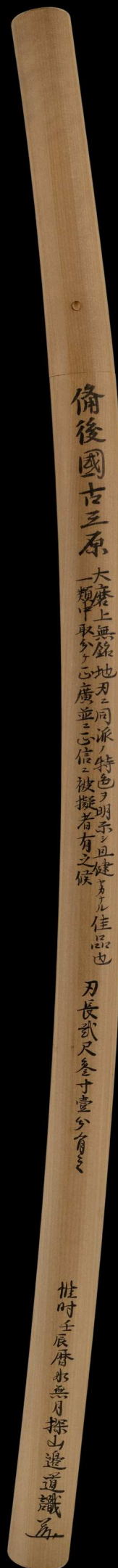
簡易書留

この刀は、身幅が尋常で元先の幅差が目立ち、反りは尋常にして、中鋒に結んだ体配を呈し、南北朝時代の時代色をよく反映させている。鍛えは板目肌小板目や流れ肌が交じり、肌立ちところとなり、刃文は広直刃に互の目などを交えて焼き、匂口がやや沈み、小沸がつき、部分的には迫力があり、刃縁にあらわれた細かな動きが味わい深い一口である。

平成十五年十月十一日指定
第五十九回 重要 刀剣
刀 無銘 古三原 一口
刀身 長九寸九分、反り一丈二寸、幅二寸八分、重九兩一匁。刀身は板目肌小板目や流れ肌が交じり、肌立ちところとなり、刃文は広直刃に互の目などを交えて焼き、匂口がやや沈み、小沸がつき、部分的には迫力があり、刃縁にあらわれた細かな動きが味わい深い一口である。

59th NBTHK Jûyô Tōken 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.



Shirasaya
(protective scabbard)



gold *habaki* with
vertical lines that harmonize
with its *suguha hamon*

UJKA426 - A KUNIYASU KATANA
CUSTOM KOSHIRAE PROJECT BY UNIQUE JAPAN
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