

NBTHK SWORD JOURNAL
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Meito Kansho
Examination of Important Swords

Juyo Bijutsu Hin
Important Art Object

Type: Tachi
Owner: Mori Kinen (memorial) Shu-sui Museum
Mei: Toshitsune

Length: 2 shaku 3 sun 1 bu 8 rin (70.25 cm)
Sori: 9 bu 6 rin (2.9 cm)
Motohaba: 9 bu 2 rin (2.8 cm)
Sakihaba: 6 bu 3 rin (1.9 cm)
Motokasane: 2 bu (0.6 cm)
Sakikasane: 1 bu 1 rin (0.35 cm)
Kissaki length: 8 bu 6 rin (2.6 cm)
Nakago length: 6 sun 5 bu 7 rin (19.9 cm)
Nakago sori: 1 bu (0.3 rin)

Commentary

This is a shinogi zukuri tachi with an ihorimune, a standard width, and there is not much difference in the widths at the moto and saki. It is slightly thick, there is a large koshi-sori with funbari, the tip has a prominent sori, and there is a short chu-kissaki. The jihada is itame mixed with mokume, the entire jihada is well forged, and some areas have a fine ko-itame jihada. There are ji-nie, chikei along the itame hada areas, and jifu utsuri. The entire hamon is high, and composed of ko-gunome mixed with ko-choji, square gunome, and togariba. The hamon's vertical alterations are not prominent, and in some places it is a suguha type hamon. There are ashi and yo, a nioiguchi, a little bit of uneven fine mura, and mizukaze-like utsuri at the koshimoto is very clear and almost looks like a hamon. The boshi is straight, the tip is yakizume on the omote and has a komaru on the ura. Both tips have small hakikake. The nakago is ubu, and shows a slight kijimata-like shape, and the nakago tip is a very shallow kiri-jiri. The yasurime are katte-sagari and

there is one mekugi-ana. On the omote side, above the mekugi-ana, on the center and over the mekugi-ana, there is a somewhat small two kanji mei made with a thick chisel.

Many Ko-Bizen smiths such as Tomonari and Masatsune have signatures which were recorded in the Meikan, and Toshitsune was one of them. Toshitsune's signed blades consists of one classified as Juyo Bunkazai and owned by the Kyoto National Museum, three which are classified as Juyo Bijutsu Hin, and ten Juyo Token. In the Meikan, his works were grouped in the Shogen (1207-11), Bunryaku (1234-5), and Kencho periods (1249-56), but we are still not completely sure yet about the period he worked in.

His signature contains the "tsune" kanji, and just two kanji, so are not long signatures, and this is the same characteristic seen in Masatsune's work. His signatures are under the mekugi-ana, and almost on the center. From these details, it is practically certain that Toshitsune was a Masatsune school smith, and his style belongs with Ko-Bizen style work. His hamon are ko-midare mixed with ko-choji and ko-gunome, and a suguha style mixed with ko-midare. Both of these hamon styles have dense frequent nie and relatively frequent kinsuji and sunagashi.

The tachi's jihada is itame hada mixed with mokume, and from the nakago to the tip, this is a well forged jihada. Some parts of the refined jihada almost look like a ko-itame hada, and is very well forged, and because of this, the jifu utsuri is very clear which shows his high level of skill. In addition, in some places, the width of the hamon covers almost half the width of the jihada. Toshitsune's jihada and hamon characteristics are associated with Masatsune's work, and so the historical theories of where he worked are understandable.

This hamon has almost no ko-midare, but is mostly ko-gunome and ko-notare with a clear nioiguchi, which gives it a fresh or healthy appearance. Compared with Toshitsune's other signed blades, this work is more sophisticated, demonstrates his skill, and is worthy of special attention.

The tachi's upper half has no decrease in the degree of sori, there is a strong shape, and an unusual nioi type hamon for Ko-Bizen work. From these details, it is possible to judge that this tachi was made around the Bunryaku to Kencho periods (1234 -1255) and there are important characteristic points here to judge the period.

The tachi's utsuri is very strong, in fact almost as strong as the hamon, and this is the same feature seen in the Token Bijutsu No.702 issue which described the Juyo Bijutsu Hin sword owned by the Sano Museum. The same type of work is seen in the Masatsune Juyo Bunkazai blade owned by the NBTHK, the Yoshikane Juyo Bunkazai blade owned by the Hayashibara Museum, the Tadashige Tokubetsu Juyo blade, and sometimes seen in Bizen work in this period.

This tachi shows Toshitsune's high level of skill, large niku-oki, a healthy shape, and a kijimata style ubu nakago, so it is a valuable sword, and a good reference material to help us understand Toshitsune's work, and can help us examine his work in different periods.

Explanation and picture by Ishii Akira.

No.723 Tosogu Kanshou Juyo Tosogu

**Shiho karigane wa (depictions of birds around the tsuba) zu (image)
sukashi tsuba
Mumei: Owari**

A good sukashi tsuba utilizes the charm of its iron foundation. There are many sukashi tsuba styles and schools such as Owari sukashi, Kyo sukashi and Akasaka sukashi. A sukashi tsuba collector's ultimate tsuba is supposed to be an Owari sukashi tsuba. Collectors love them and consider them to be the best sukashi tsuba which can be seen.

The Owari tsuba's characteristic points are mainly a symmetrical design, a sukashi tsuchime (hammered) style jihada where the steel is almost melted while it is worked, its finish or patina, and iron "bones" are visible. "Bones" refers to visible lines of the jihada in the tsuba: these are formed when forging the steel. These bones enhance the appearance and charm of the tsuba. Owari tsuba reflect the samurai's excellent sense of beauty and way of life, and this idea is called "hagakure". This is expression means "quietness and strength".

This is a simple sukashi composition with a refined simplicity, but at the same time, it has a deep sense of spirituality and elegance, and a sense of moderation. It is made from strong well forged iron, with visible iron bones on the mimi (rim). There is an even or uniform composition and design, everything is in good balance, and the entire tsuba is well done. There is a very unique feeling in the oxidized and patinated iron, a beauty in the composition, a high skill in modeling or carving, and it looks simple, but has an interesting iron surface. This tsuba give us a taste of the best elements and designs of Owari tsuba.

Explanation by Kurotaki Tetsuya

Shijo Kantei To No. 723

The deadline to submit answers for the No. 723 issue Shijo Kantei To is May 5, 2017. Each person may submit one vote. Submissions should contain your name and address and be sent to the NBTHK Shijo Kantei. You can use the Shijo Kantei

card which is attached in this magazine. Votes postmarked on or before May 5, 2017 will be accepted. If there are sword smiths with the same name in different schools, please write the school or prefecture, and if the sword smith was active for more than one generation, please indicate a specific generation.

Information:

Type: katana

Length: 2 shaku 4 sun 5.5 bu (74.39 cm)

Sori: 5.5 bu (1.67 cm)

Motohaba: 1 sun 06 rin (3.2 cm)

Sakihaba: 6 bu 9 rin (2.1 cm)

Motokasane: 2 bu 8 rin (0.85 cm)

Sakikasane: 1bu 8 rin (0.55 cm)

Kissaki length: 1 sun 1 bu 6 rin (3.5 cm)

Nakago length: 7 sun 2 bu 3 rin (21.9 cm)

Nakago sori: slight

This is a shinogi-zukuri katana with an ihorimune, and which is a little wide. The widths at the moto and saki are different. The center of the sori is slightly high, and there is a chu-kissaki. The jihada is a tight ko-itame hada, and the hada is visible. There are thick dense ji-nie and frequent fine chikei. The hamon and boshi are as seen in the picture. There are frequent ashi, a dense nioiguchi, abundant nie mixed with rough (ara) nie, frequent kinsuji and sunagashi, and bo-utsuri. The horimono on the omote and the ura are bo-hi carved through the nakago. The nakago is ubu and the nakago tip is kuri-jiri. The yasurime are kate-sagari and there is one mekugi ana. On the omote side, under the mekugi-ana towards the mune edge, there is a long kanji signature. The ura has a saidan kiritsuke mei (cutting test).

Teirei Kanshou Kai For March, 2017

The swords discussed below were shown in the March 2017, meeting at the NBTHK headquarters building. This discussion presents answers concerning the makers of these blades.

Meeting Date: March 11, 2017 (2nd Saturday of March)

Place: Token Hakubutsukan auditorium

Lecturer: Ishii Akira

Kantei To No. 1: katana

Mei: Mutsu Daijo Miyoshi Nagamichi
Empo 4 Hinoe Tatsu nen 8 gatsu bi

Length: 2 shaku 3 sun 6 bu

Sori: 3.5 bu

Style: shinogi zukuri

Mune: ihorimune

Jihada: tight ko-itame hada; there are thick dense nie and frequent fine chikei.

Hamon: small yakidashi at the koshimoto; above this, the hamon is gunome mixed with small togariba and ko-notare. There are ashi, a dense nioiguchi, dense slightly uneven rough nie.

Boshi: straight with a komaru and a long return.

This has a shallow sori, and the widths at the moto and saki are obviously different, and there is a short chu-kissaki. This is a typical Kanbun Shinto period shape, and from this it is easy to judge the period. In this period, katana had wide hamon which were often based on notare and gunome. The hamon can be wide with a large and prominent pattern, and there is a bright nioiguchi. Because of these details, in the first vote, many people voted for Kotetsu and Yasusada as we expected.

The hamon style definitely reminds us of both smiths' work, and there is no sign of poor work in the jihada and hamon, so there is a high level of skill here. But if this were Kotetsu's work, this kind of work would be from his Hane-Tora period and the yakidashi would be much longer, and there would be a mixture of prominent groups of small and large gunome called Hyotan-ba. There would also usually be thick ashi, and we do not see these details in this katana.

Yasusada's hamon are narrower around the monouchi, and are gentle which is similar to this one, but the midare hamon's peaks and valleys form squares, and these hakoba type features are prominent. Also there would be a slightly worn down nioiguchi. Most of his boshi are a shallow notare. Beside this, his mune angle is sharp and high, and these features are different from what we see on this sword.

This is a Miyoshi Nagamichi katana. Many of his swords have a shallow sori, even among the Kanbun Shinto smiths. In particular, the upper half of this sword around the monouchi area has an especially shallow sori.

Nagamichi's characteristic shape is intended to be effective for use in stabbing, and its shape emphasizes its use as a weapon. If you look at the nie carefully, you can see that they are uneven nie, and sometimes his characteristic boshi return finishes on the mune. On this katana, it is visible on the omote side. These are characteristic points.

The two smiths Kotetsu and Yasusada are from different areas than Nagamichi, and their styles seem similar, but are quite different.

Kantei To No. 2: wakizashi

Mei: Hasebe Kuninobu

Length: 1 shaku 1 bu

Sori: 1 bu

Design: hira-zukuri

Mune: mitsumune

Jihada: itame hada mixed with mokume and nagare hada, and the entire jihada is visible. There are jinie and frequent chikei.

Hamon: On the omote, the hamon width is narrow and is ko-notare mixed with ko-gunome. On the ura, there is a gunome style hamon with ko-notare, and the entire hamon is high. There are ashi on both sides, small uneven dense nie, kinsuji and sunagashi; on the ura side along with forging lines, these hataraki are especially prominent. On the omote and the ura there are tobiyaki, yubashiri, and muneyaki which becomes a hitatsura hamon.

Boshi: on the omote side there is a shallow notare with a komaru; on the ura side the boshi is an o-maru (large circle) style; both tips have hakikake; the ura kaeri or return continues down the blade and forms muneyaki.

This is a wide, long, and thin blade, and from the shape, is obviously a mid-Nambokucho period work.

In that period, notably thin shapes are seen in Yamashiro Hasebe, Bichu Aoe, and Bingo Hokke schools, and only these three schools. This wakizashi's hamon is based on notare, and there are tobiyaki, yubashiri, and muneyaki and the entire hamon is a hitatsura style, and from this you can judge this as Hasebe school work.

Looking carefully, the jihada is mixed with nagare hada in some places going toward the hamon and toward the mune side. There is nagare hada, mixed with mokume hada, and the entire jihada is visible. Also, there are long thick kinsuji and nie-suji, and this school's characteristic hataraki are seen. The boshi on the omote and the ura side are an o-maru style. The muneyaki intermittenly continues on the way to the machi, especially on the ura side, which shows Hasebe's characteristic points. From these characteristics, the majority of people had the correct answer at the first vote.

Besides Hasebe, some people voted for same period's hitatsura work from Soshu smiths such as Hiromitsu and Akimitsu. The Soshu Den hamon's width become wider along the upper part of the blade, and are mixed with narrow bottom prominent round choji called "dango choji" and this is one of their characteristic points. Usually their boshi are sharp and their returns or kaeri are different from the one on this blade. Also, the thinness of their blades are not as notably thin as we see on this wakizashi, and many of them have a standard thickness.

In the Hasebe school, Kunishige and Kuninobu are famous. Kuninobu's unique hamon have yahazu style choji mixed along with a narrow suguha or a shallow

notare. The wakizashi does not have this kind of hamon, and so Kunishige is the most appropriate answer.

In Kunishige's signatures, the inside of the kuni kaji contains the radicals “王” or “玉”. The interior radical inside of Kuninobu's kuni kanji is simplified, and the vertical line leans toward the left side, and many radicals on the right side are the hirakana “て” or “ろ”. It is rare to see the hirakana ろ changed into a romanji-like small character resembling “M” like we see on this wakizashi.

Kantei To No 3: katana

Mei: Inoue Izumi-no-kami Kunisada with kiku-mon
Kanbun 9 nen (1669) 2 gatsu bi

Length: slightly less than 2 shaku 3 sun 8 bu

Sori: 5 bu

Style: shinogi zukuri

Mune: ihorimune

Jihada: tight ko-itame hada; there are thick dense ji-nie and frequent chikei.

Hamon: the entire hamon is a high and wide suguha mixed with a gentle notare and ko-gunome. There are some ashi, a dense nioiguchi, dense nie, and some parts of the nioiguchi are rough.

Boshi: the omote is a shallow notare, with yaki-kuzure and hakikake. The ura is straight with a komaru, and the return has hakikake.

The katana's widths at the moto and the saki are different, but not by much, and is similar in this respect to the No.1 Nagamichi katana. There is a shallow sori, a short chu-kissaki, and from the shape, we can judge this as Kanbun Shinto work. The jihada and hamon are clear, and from the shape, you can narrow this katana to a mainstream smith, from either Edo or Osaka. The jihada has thick dense ji-nie, frequent fine chikei, and the entire jihada's surface presents a strong feeling. The hamon has a dense nioiguchi, thick slightly uneven rough nie, and a bright and clear nioiguchi. From the jihada and the hamon's abundant nie, clarity, and wide suguha style hamon, Shinkai's name comes to mind.

Compared with Shinkai's usual work, the hamon's width has wide and narrow variations, and there are parts with strong and weak nie. Some people thought about the abundant nie, and voted for Satsuma work. But in many of the Satsuma works, the individual and rough nie are prominent, and there are frequent nie suji and kinsuji hataraki. The jihada is usually a moist appearing unique jihada.

Compared with Satsuma work, this has a high quality dense nioiguchi, and bright and reflective nie. I would say the brightness of the nie and of the entire hamon and jihada is a more sophisticated, elegant style, and shows high quality work.

There is an opinion that Kunisada modeled his work after Go Yoshihiro. Usually, his hamon do not have much variation in the nioiguchi's width and in the nie. But

sometimes, there is emphasis in the hamon on movement, just like on this katana, so please remember this.

Kantei To No 4: katana

Mei: Hirosuke

Length: 2 shaku 4 sun 5 rin

Sori: 9.5 bu

Design: shinogi-zukuri

Mune: ihorimune

Jihada: itame mixed with some mokume hada; there are ji-nie and chikei.

Hamon: the entire hamon is a wide, high midare hamon mixed with ko-notare and ko-gunome, and gunome. There are ashi, yo, uneven nie, and the bottom half has fine sunagashi and small yubashiri.

Boshi: wide straight yakiba with a komaru; the tip has small hakikake; a small section has a gap in the boshi's yakiba and there is a shimaba.

Horimono: on the omote and ura there are futasuji-hi (twin hi) with marudome.

This is a katana by Shimada Hirosuke.

The upper half's shape shows a clear strong saki zori. The blade is wide, and the widths at the moto and saki are not very different. There is a long chu-kissaki, and the entire katana has a dynamic shape. The boshi is very wide, and the boshi almost looks like an ichimai boshi, and from this, you can judge this as work from around the Genki (1570-72) to Tensho (1573-91) eras which was the late Muromachi period. In this period, styles were similar among the different schools, and it can be difficult to narrow down a work to a single smith's name. So, a short cut to identifying a smith is to examine a school's work, and look for common characteristic features.

First of all, many Sue Bizen hamon have open valleys and double gunome or a suguha style hamon. Yamato Kanefusa's hamon have some places where the nioiguchi is a nie kuzure, and variations in nie are supposed to be one of his characteristic points. A majority of Sue-Soshu Den hamon have tobiyaki, yubashiri, muneyaki, and can become a hitatsura hamon. They are different from this example though.

In the case of Higo Dotanuki work, the blade can be rather heavy and this is common. Their hamon are usually a smaller size with an irregular or random midare hamon. Chikuzen Kongo-byoei hamon have more prominent chikei, and the jihada is darker and different from this one. Many of their hamon are a suguha style hamon with a small midare hamon.

If this were Sue-Seki work, the hamon can be based on a clear gunome hamon, and usually there is no hamon based on a ko-notare pattern like this one. The boshi are a midarekomi jizo boshi.

Finally, you can see a wide range of styles in the Shimada school, and among those, there are many with a dynamic shape, and which are the work of Hirosuke. For a kanteito, this is a difficult katana to identify.

You can see almost the same style in the Bungo Takada school's work, but inside of the hamon we can see many hard yo, and the Bungo Takada school has a wide range of styles, the same as the Shimada school. This means that a vote for a Bungo Takada school work would receive a good score.

Kantei To No 5: katana

Mei: Shoji Chikuzen Daijo Fuji Naotane with kao
Tenpo 14 nen (1843) 2 gatsu bi

Length: 2 shaku 3 sun 3.5 bu

Sori: slightly less than 7 bu

Design: shinogi zukuri

Mune: ihorimune

Jihada: tight ko-itame; the bottom half is mixed with mokume hada and there are dense ji-nie.

Hamon: entire hamon is wide; it is based on a choji style hamon mixed with gunome, togariba, and square shaped gunome. There are frequent ashi, a dense nioiguchi, thick even fine nie; from the moto to the saki there are prominent kinsuji, nie-suji, sunagashi; there are yubashiri-like tobiyaki at the koshimoto.

Boshi: the omote is a small notare with yakizume. The ura is midarekomi, the tip is sharp and there is a return; the entire boshi is a yaki-kuzure style and there are hakikake.

The katana has a sori, but it is not pronounced in the bottom half; the upper half has a more shallow sori. There is not much koshizori here for a tachi shape, or for an uchigatana, so it is hard to judge a period. The blade is thick, the shinogi-ji's width is a little narrow for the blade's width, and there is not much hiraniku. Looking at the jihada, the ko-itame hada is too tight, and it is almost a muji jihada, and from these details, you can judge this as a Shinshinto katana.

In the Shinshinto period, each school worked with the idea of restoring the quality of swords to that seen in the koto period. Among these, the person who most exemplified this idea of making swords to rival koto quality was Taikei Naotane. His strongest efforts were his work in the Bizen Den and Soshu Den styles, and many of his master works are seen in both school's style. Sometimes, he mixed characteristics from both schools, and produced an unusual style just like we see in this katana. The hamon is based on choji and there are prominent kinsuji, nie-suji, and sunagashi.

Looking at the jihada, the ko-itame hada which is different from the mokume hada at the omote koshimoto. This is what is called "uzumakihada" which looks something like a series of concentric circles, and you can recognize this as one of his characteristic points.

This style is seen sometimes in work from his senior students and later in the work of his adopted son Jiro Taro Naokatsu.

In voting, if you judged this as Shinshinto work, it would be fine, but some people voted for Kiyomaro. If it were Kiyomaro's work, the jihada would not be a muji style, but usually itame mixed with mokume, and the hada would be slightly visible. In some places, we would see some nagare hada. Kiyomaro's nie are rougher and uneven when compared with this sword's, and usually we never see this much skillful hataraki.

Shijo Kantei To No. 721 (in the February, 2017 issue)

The answer for the Shijo Kantei To No. 721 in the February issue is a katana by the Shodai Dewa no kami Yukihiro.

Among the Hizen To smiths in the Keicho Shinto period, smiths such as the Shodai Tadayoshi and Iyo no jo Munetsugu made swords with a Keicho Shinto shape. But later generations such as the Nidai Tadahiro, the Sandai Tadayoshi, the Shodai Masahiro, Yukihiro, and Tadakuni working in a later period, gradually altered their shapes to follow the Hizen To's original shape, which we do not see often in other areas.

In other words, just like this example, their shape has a standard width or is slightly wide, and the widths at the moto and saki are not very different. There is a chu-kissaki or slightly long chu-kissaki, and the sori is average plus or minus about 6 bu.

The Hizen school founder, the Shodai Tadayoshi, worked around the Keicho (1603-14) and Genna (1615-23) eras and modeled his work after Koto master pieces and their classic styles. But in the Kanei (1624-43) period, after the Musashi Daijo Tadahiro's time, styles changed.

The Shodai Tadayoshi's jihada is a tight ko-itame with a refined komenuka-hada. His hamon are suguha with a belt-like nioiguchi, and can also be based on round top choji, gunome, and ko-notare. The hamon widths show high and low alterations with his midare hamon, and inside of the gunome he made what are called "abu no me" or snake eyes. There are prominent thick ha-nie along the valleys of the hamon, and prominent kinsuji and sunagashi in his midare hamon just like we see on this katana. The boshi is straight and parallel to the fukura, and has a komaru and return.

The Hizen branch schools' main smiths such as Kawachi Daijo Masahiro, Dewa no Kami Yukihiro, and Harima Daijo Tadakuni are members of the Shodai Tadayoshi's family and were making swords since the Kanei period. Usually they had blades with something like the Shodai Tadayoshi's five kanji signature, and also included "ju nin" in their mei which is modeled after older style work. The majority of their hamon are based on a belt-like suguha, or based on a gunome and choji midare hamon, and can be more midareba than suguha.

This is a midare hamon as I just discussed. The jihada is slightly dark, there are some choji and gunome grouped together, and between the groups of gunome and choji there is a continuous low notare hamon. This is a branch Hizen school's characteristic hamon.

The Shodai Yukihiro's nakago tip is kurijiri, the yasurime are sujichigai. Many of his mei on katana are signed on the ura side, and there is a long kanji signature close to the mune side of the nakago.

In voting, a majority of people voted for the Shodai Yukihiro. Besides him, a few people voted for Kawachi Daijo Tadakuni.

The difference between these three smiths' work are: 1) Masahiro's hamon are based on round topped choji, gunome and are ko-notare; there are high and low areas in the hamon; there is a beautiful midare hamon; and there are dense ha-nie, prominent kinsuji and sunagashi, and he has the most dynamic style among these smiths. (2) Tadakuni's hamon valleys have prominent kinsuji and sunagashi. (3) Yukihiro's midare hamon are sometimes mixed with strange shaped details, and people have pointed out that his level of skill seems to be lower than these other two smiths.

This katana has a wide yakiba and a gorgeous midare hamon, and at the first impression it reminded us of Masahiro's work, and it is not clearly different from Tadakuni's work. Among the main branch Hizen smiths, the nakago tip is sujichigai or o-sugichigai so all are all these names were treated as a correct answer at this time.

But Masahiro's nakago tips are iriyamagata, and Tadakuni's are both, iriyamagata and kurijiri.

Another branch Hizen mainline smith is Iyo-no-jo Munetsugu, and he is known to have a unique style among the Hizen To smiths. His jihada are a large itame hada when compared with the usual Hizen To, and the hada is visible, there are dense ji-nie, frequent chikei, and sometimes there are jifu. His hamon are ko-notare with gunome mixed with togariba, square gunome, a sharp tipped style of choji, and midare waves close to each other. There are tobiyaki, muneyaki, yubashiri, a dense nioiguchi, dense nie, frequent kinsuji and sunagashi. His boshi are midarekomi, tsukiage, and there are frequent hakikake.

His hamon are different from the Shodai Tadayoshi's Musashi Daijo Tadahiro period, the Nidai Tadayuki, Masahiro, Yukihiro, and Tadakuni which are based on choji and gunome in a midare hamon. Munetsugu's hamon are known to have been strongly influenced by Soshu Den work, and have a very characteristic midare hamon. He was working from the Keicho period, and at that time, smiths

modeled their work after the Kamakura and Nambokucho period Soshu Den style. Similarly, the Shodai Tadayoshi tried all kinds of styles modeled after classic styles, and Munetsugu is supposed to have created his style by following Soshu Den old master works as his models.

During the Shodai Tadayoshi's Musashi Daijo Tadahiro period, he changed his style around the Kanei period to a more common contemporary style, and that style was inherited by the Tadayoshi school smiths. For some reason, Iyo-no-jo Munetsugu's family followed the old style used by the Nidai and Sandai Munetsugu smiths. Because of this, after the Kanei period, their work became quite different from the usual Hizen smiths. This is supposed to be a major reason that the Munetsugu family's work is very unique.

Explanation by Hinohara Dai