

Carved pieces of Tendo

Tendo's carved pieces have a relatively short history. Mikawa Kinjirō (known artistically as Kinkō) was in the seal business in the early Taisho era but made use of seal-carving techniques to create shogi pieces decorated with shapes of old seals. A few years later, Takeuchi Shichisaburō learned Tokyo-style carving under Okuno Ikkyō in Tokyo, and introduced that technique in Tendo. Judging by pieces from that period, it seems that there were very few types of typefaces at the time, mainly kinryū. The size of the wooden base was smaller than the current type called kinryūgata but it was used as the standard form. From the Taisho era to the prewar period, when abbreviated fonts and simple manufacturing methods were introduced from Osaka, ingenuity was devised so that anyone could do side jobs. Depending on the degree of simplicity of the glyphs, they are categorized into black carving, normal carving, medium carving, and high carving, and those with a typeface name are called meigoma pieces, and the wood base and character shape to be worked on are determined according to the carver's skill level. Around 1940, animal glue came to be used as a filler for carving, replacing persimmon juice, which had the drawback of turning red. Until the 1950s, it was mainly made of stamped pieces and drawn pieces, but the materials used for them were

Japanese whitebark magnolia and styrax obassia, while carved pieces were made of painted maple and Hamilton's spindletree. Around 1955, Siamese boxwood was introduced from overseas and gradually replaced the domestic Hamilton's spindletree. Piece bases made of Japanese whitebark magnolia, Styrax obassia, and redvein maple were cut by machine while those made from Hamilton's spindletree and Siamese boxwood were cut with hatchets. Around this time, wood glue came to be used as the filler for carving instead of animal glue, which had the drawback of being water soluble. In the mid-1960s, the focus of production shifted to carved pieces, and techniques for carving and raising were researched and commercialized. As a result, more typefaces were used. Satsuma boxwood and Mikurajima boxwood were often used as high-quality materials, and wood processing changed from rough cutting to precision machining. On the other hand, machines were also introduced into hand carving with stamps, and the first oil crisis marked a major turning point. Currently, in terms of quantity, machine-carved pieces make 90% of the production, mostly made of redvein maple and Siamese boxwood, and in lower quantities, Satsuma boxwood. On the other hand, hand-carved craftsmanship is used for higher quality and higher value-added products, such as lacquered pieces and raised pieces.