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Ernst Bloch

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The Origin of Provincial Pottery—Old Tokoname

The considerable stir attending successive discoveries in religious sites throughout Japan of Old Tokoname pots dating from about the latter part of the Heian period (from ca. 1100) has been a postwar phenomenon. Old Tokoname differs from Sue ware, the techniques of which were imported from Korea during the late fifth through the late seventh century. Sue ware is wheel thrown, fired at about 1200° C. in hole kilns (*anagama*) dug into hillsides, and is vitreous stoneware, usually gray in color, and with a rich variety of forms. Old Tokoname has received attention because it contains examples of the first purely Japanese religious vessels, the beginning of so-called *kuni-yaki*, or pottery distinguished by the region in which it was made. *Kuni-yaki* wares bear the names of the provinces of origin—Bizen, Tamba, Shigaraki, Echizen, and the like.

In volume eight of the *Chōshū zasshi* (1765), a miscellany depicting aspects of old Owari Province, in which Tokoname is located, there are drawings of Tokoname kilns. Under the heading “Water jars (*kame*) from the four villages of Tokoname,” the author Naitō Tōho, a samurai of the Owari domain, recorded that “the four Tokoname villages have produced pottery since ancient times. It is the first location to have done so.” Items recovered from ancient kilns are also illustrated.

Antedating the *Chōshū zasshi* by nearly two centuries are such works as *Chanoyu kyakujin todome* by Tsuda Sōkyū (d. 1591) and *Rikyū hyakkaiki* compiled by the followers of Sen no Rikyū (1521–91), both books being accounts of tea ceremonies. These works contain important references to Old Tokoname ware and to one Mizuno Kenmotsu, the third lord of Tokoname Castle and a close friend of the books’ authors. Both works note Mizuno’s presence and his display of Old Tokoname jars at tea ceremonies around the year 1583. With advances in scholarship in recent years, Mizuno Kenmotsu has gained

some recognition for his prominence in the world of the tea ceremony and Old Tokoname ware during those last three decades of the sixteenth century known as the Momoyama period.

Old Tokoname kilns had a strong connection with the Buddhist institutions on Mount Hiei and with the mountain ascetic priesthood (*shugendō*) throughout the country. Mizuno Kenmotsu, in whose domain these kilns were located, had been opposed to Oda Nobunaga’s destruction of the Hiei temples in 1571, and it appears that he joined forces with Akechi Mitsuhide when the latter attacked and killed Nobunaga in 1582 at the Honnō-ji temple. (At the time, Nobunaga had been well on his destructive way to unifying Japan, effectively resolving several decades of internecine strife. Toyotomi Hideyoshi, one of Nobunaga’s most able generals, quickly led a force against Mitsuhide, defeated and killed him, and went on to bring unity to the country. Following Hideyoshi’s death in 1598, there was a brief spate of further warfare, out of which Tokugawa Ieyasu emerged as the most powerful man in Japan. A shrewd statesman as well as general, Ieyasu established a stable government and a family dynasty that ruled Japan for some two and one-half centuries after 1600.)

Following the Honnō-ji temple incident and Mitsuhide’s death, Mizuno in 1583 fled from Tokoname Castle to the Tenryū-ji temple outside Kyoto. Unable to escape from his enemies, he finally killed himself in 1598. His grave, a small moss-covered stone replica of a five-storied pagoda, remains today at the Eimei-in monastery within the Tenryū-ji temple compound. After the Honnō-ji temple incident, the Kōsan-ji temple on Mount Mitake—regarded as the center of the Tokoname kilns—was also completely destroyed, buildings as well as holdings, by Hideyoshi’s army. Cut off now from central affairs, Old Tokoname, with its roots back in the Heian period, received a severe blow. In the entry-

way of the Kyoto Zen monastery known as the Myōki-an, with its Tai-an teahouse (a National Treasure) brought there from Rikyū's villa, two Old Tokoname tiles lie quietly in the paving, mute testimony to these events.

Old Tokoname jars are known to have had an important association with Mount Hiei, so thoroughly assaulted by Oda Nobunaga, as well as with Tendai sect temples and training centers for the mountain ascetics. This fact underscores the significance of Mizuno Kenmotsu's allegiance with Mitsuhide's force in the Honnō-ji temple incident. The devout piety reflected in the hand-copying of Buddhist sutras in the Yokawa section of Mount Hiei began with the ninth century priests Ennin (also known as Jikaku Daishi) and Enchin. The common practice of burying these sutras and erecting mounds over them first spread to the Tendai temples and training centers for mountain ascetics, and by about 1100 had extended throughout the country. Even today one may find many of these sutra mounds in their principal location, the vicinity of the Nyōhō-dō hall at Yokawa. Large numbers of Old Tokoname jars of the Heian through Kamakura periods were used as sutra containers in these mounds, and even now it is possible to gather fragments of them there. The late Heian period, principally 1130 to 1150, was a time conspicuous for the spread of these sutra mounds, and many Old Tokoname jars were used as containers for the sacred texts in them.

The sutra vessels of this period were of a particular shape, and large numbers of them remain today. One that is a model of the type, classified as an Important Cultural Property, is the jar unearthed on the grounds of the Hii-Nyakuichiōji Shrine in Hidakachō, Wakayama Prefecture (Plate 24). At the end of the Lotus Sutra contained within this jar appears the date "twenty-third day, the third year of Hōgen [1158]." The eight rolls of this hand-copied sutra were placed in a cylindrical bronze container, which in turn was put into the Old Tokoname jar made for this purpose. A large, shallow bowl known as an *ōhirabachi*, also Old Tokoname, was used to cover the jar; the entire thing was then buried, and over it was erected a sutra mound. (For examples of *ōhirabachi*, see Plates 19 and 20.) Since in addition to dates given at the ends of sutras there are various inscriptions giving the date of a mound's erection and the name of its builder, it is possible to know with accuracy the age of these artifacts.

A sutra jar of the same type as that from the Hii-

Nyakuichiōji Shrine has been excavated from the sutra mound at Hanaseyama in Kyoto, and it should be noted that it, too, has been designated an Important Cultural Property. The Hanaseyama mound lies near the famous Mount Kurama and is evidence of a strong connection with the asceticism that is associated with Mount Kurama. A sutra mound jar of the same style and covered with a superb natural glaze from the wood ash of the firing has been unearthed from Kyōgamine on Mount Asama in Mie Prefecture east of Ise city. Some thirty years ago an Old Tokoname three-grooved jar (so named for the three incised horizontal lines encircling the body) was recovered on the grounds of the Imamiya Shrine in Kyoto beneath a four-faced stone bearing incised pictures of the Buddha (Plate 7). Also on the stone is the inscription "second year of Tenji [1125]." This three-grooved jar remains a treasure of the Imamiya Shrine; the stone with the Buddha pictures is on exhibit at the Kyoto National Museum.

In Wakayama Prefecture are the well-known Three Kumano Shrines, where the ascetic mountain sect flourished—the Nachi Shrine, the Hayatama Shrine in Shingū city, and the Kumano Shrine. On Mount Kamikura near the Hayatama Shrine are numerous sutra mounds. Through the energetic searchings of the chief priest of the Hayatama Shrine, Gen Ueno, the shrine possesses a large number of jars of Old Tokoname lineage. Among them is a three-grooved jar (Plate 5) discovered to contain a complete set of the accompanying articles usually placed in sutra mounds: a Japanese bronze mirror (of the Fujiwara period), a crystal prayer bead, and a small Qingbai porcelain covered box. The three-grooved jar itself is an outstanding example of its kind, a superbly fired piece.

Mount Tankaku near the Hayatama Shrine has yielded the largest Old Tokoname water jar yet discovered, said to have contained human ashes. The piece is of astonishing proportions—ninety-three centimeters in diameter and eighty-eight centimeters tall. Characteristic of Old Tokoname jars of the Kamakura period (1185–1336) is the so-called *ori-hashi* lip, in which the clay has been folded back to form a flat-faced rim (Plate 23).

Dug up at the Nachi Shrine are a large number of three-grooved jars, several of which are in the Tokyo National Museum. Also in Wakayama Prefecture, from the Fuke coast area southwest of Osaka, many fragments of Old Tokoname jars and celadons have been recovered, but all have a connection

with the religious beliefs at Kumano and Nachi. Thus in Wakayama Prefecture one can find a large number of Old Tokoname jars related to the Three Kumano Shrines.

The sutra mound jars excavated from Osugidani in Mie Prefecture display exceptionally well-made forms, fine pieces with bold, masculine surfaces and colors. And, as would be expected, the area yields the accompanying small Chinese porcelain covered boxes with Qingbai glaze. Somewhat large dimensions and precise shapes mark these as works from about the year 1100.

The coastline around Kamakura has long been famous as an area where one can pick up Chinese celadon fragments and also find pieces of Old Tokoname. There are even scholars of porcelain who go out of their way to travel to the Kamakura coast just to gather celadon fragments. Near coastal Kamakura, where erosion by waves has occurred, there are large numbers of sutra mounds and graves. These celadon fragments were probably washed from such sites. Many Old Tokoname jars are coming to light even in present-day Kamakura city, but all are being found in the higher, hilly part of the city. It has been noted, moreover, that they date from the end of the Kamakura period.

A splendidly fired three-grooved jar has been excavated from the grounds of the late Mr. Fujio Koyama's house near the Taitō Shrine in the Nikaidō foothill section of Kamakura. From the same location has also come a more broad-shouldered and somewhat squat *fushiki* jar of the late Kamakura period. Why should such late Kamakura three-grooved jars be found in the higher foothills of the city of Kamakura and yet so seldom be seen in other locations? When one considers both the discovery along the coastal area of Heian and Kamakura period Old Tokoname ware and the scarcity in present-day Kamakura city of records of the Kamakura shogunate, one is led to the conclusion that the sites of Kamakura period buildings, along with Old Tokoname pots, were near the shore and were washed away as a result of wave action.

An excavation was conducted sometime around 1954 along the Zaimokuza coast area of Kamakura by the Japan Anthropological Society. I was invited along and witnessed the operation. A sandy stratum of an ancient shoreline was exposed about one meter below the present shoreline of Zaimokuza, and from that old layer appeared shards of Old Tokoname jars and *ōhirabachi*. All were believed to be from the late Heian to early Kamakura period.

The appearance of Old Tokoname jars from among the relics of three generations of a branch of the Fujiwara family (roughly mid-eleventh through late twelfth century) at Hiraizumi near Sendai in Iwate Prefecture has been reported by Mr. Chū Saitō, a technical expert associated with the Cultural Properties Protection Commission. Therefore, on one occasion, I conducted a detailed survey in Iwate Prefecture. Paying special attention to the sutra mounds on Mount Kinkei behind the Chūson-ji temple in Hiraizumi, a large number of Old Tokoname jars was recovered. It should be noted that an Old Tokoname jar was also found on the Hiraizumi site of the former home of Fujiwara no Hidehira, one of the twelfth century patriarchs there. This jar remains as one of the treasures of the Mōtsū-ji temple not far from the Chūson-ji temple (see Plate 25). Besides Hiraizumi, Iwate Prefecture has provided a great many other Old Tokoname jars, each a superb example, thus causing one to feel that between Old Tokoname and the Fujiwara of Hiraizumi there existed an uncommonly strong connection. In all likelihood, the pots' presence indicates that the Fujiwara of Hiraizumi maintained as an important part of their own background an association with the Hiei-related ascetic training centers. This may or may not be so, but it is most interesting to consider Minamoto no Yoshitsune's ascetic training on Mount Kurama and the fact of his fleeing from the enmity of his brother Yoritomo to this Hiraizumi area.

At Noma no Daibō on the Chita Peninsula there is a sutra mound erected by a Zen nun named Ike no Zenni. An Old Tokoname sutra jar with an impressed design, a similar outer cylinder, and other items have been taken out of the mound. From the old kiln at Fuki, where the Noma no Daibō jar was made, a fragment bearing an impression of the rarely seen crane crest has been recovered. Since the crane crest was the common insignia used to designate items officially presented to a shrine by the Kamakura shogunate, this stands as convincing testimony of a substantial connection between the shogunate and Old Tokoname. We see here a certain irony: on the one hand the Fujiwara of Hiraizumi who protected Minamoto no Yoshitsune seem to have had a relationship with Old Tokoname; on the other, some Old Tokoname jars bear the official crane crest of Minamoto no Yoritomo, who hunted down the younger Yoshitsune, eventually destroying both him and the Hiraizumi Fujiwara.

I have sought out Old Tokoname ware all over Japan; with the exception of Kyushu, countless relics are to be found in every prefecture throughout the country, presenting a picture of the prosperity of the time. In particular, the quantity of Old Tokoname ware recovered from the sites of tumuli (*kofun*) of the Kamakura period is nothing less than amazing.

The Beauty of Old Tokoname

In recent years, large numbers of people have become attracted to the beauty of Old Tokoname ware. The principal reason for this is that these pots, both in form and style, exist in a realm beyond the reach of modern ceramic arts. Much ceramics today are made for art exhibitions and for expressing an artist's individuality. In contrast, Old Tokoname grew out of a world differing totally from the present. Yet, the current appeal of this ware provides a thread linking the aesthetic sensibilities of the Heian and Kamakura periods and that of today. Seen in this light, the mystery shrouding the differences in aesthetic appreciation in ancient times and today is somehow lessened.

Old Tokoname kilns originally came into being for the purpose of making sutra jars; these were fired at high temperature, a practice deriving from the religious idea of purification by fire. Old Tokoname ware unquestionably displays the typical Heian inclination towards heaviness, but its weight is based rather on the concept of creating a sutra container as the dwelling place of the Buddha, made utterly pure through intense heat. Probably the most important aspect of manufacture was that the process be conducted in true purity and piety. Among Old Tokoname jars are many that show markings thought to have been made by ascetics who came to the workshops and, after offering prayers, incised a seal upon the jar. The specific forms, the sharp edge of the lip, the powerful swell of the body—in short, those features with which Old Tokoname is endowed—all derive from Buddhist concepts, and all reflect a particular bent of mind present in the production process.

There is a naturalness in the way the hidden vitality of an Old Tokoname jar comes gradually but inescapably up to the surface, and herein lies the secret of its beauty. To be sure, the spectacular stream of natural ash glaze and coarse clay fired in direct flame at some 1300° C. are also important aesthetic elements that are strong features of Old Tokoname ware and leave a lasting impression.

Old Tokoname jars of the Heian period display a dignity of form and an exacting thin-wall construction. The tightly drawn-in base of the neck and the sharp, thin edge of the lip show a firmness of form and style that hold the piece tightly together as an integrated whole. Old Tokoname jars of the Kamakura period show a masculine strength in their magnificently swelling shoulders, powerful lips, and rugged clay surfaces. Particularly with the occurrence of a flow of a natural ash glaze from the shoulder, these Old Tokoname works truly possess the very essence of the Kamakura warrior.

The fact that the distinctive features of Old Tokoname ware can be clearly seen in different historical periods shows that change in the attitude toward manufacture of the ware accompanied shifts in religious doctrine. Yet, the conventional view of Japanese ceramics in recent times centers around the aesthetic ideas associated with the tea ceremony. The pottery of the Momoyama period (1573–1615) was a noteworthy phenomenon that imparted an important spirit to Japanese ceramics. However, tea ware taste relates only to things used indoors in a tea house. Gauging all Japanese ceramics since the Heian period only by concepts of beauty related to the tea ceremony inevitably produces an aesthetic sense similar to that of the blind men who examined an elephant, each arriving at a different conclusion. If, viewed broadly and from an eminence, one stops at only a surface appreciation of Heian ceramics and fails to sense the power in the virile appeal of Kamakura wares, in all likelihood the true beauty of the world of Japanese ceramics will be missed.

The Autumn Grasses Jar—A National Treasure

After World War II, under the revised Cultural Properties Protection Law, the Autumn Grasses jar (Plate 11) in the possession of Keio University was designated a National Treasure. At the time it was so designated, it was considered Old Tokoname mainly on the basis of the quality of its glaze. Recent years, however, have seen the appearance of a rather confusing theory that holds that it may have come from one of the old kilns at Atsumi, near the tip of Atsumi Peninsula southeast of Tokoname. From the time the jar was named a National Treasure, I had embraced the hope that it was in fact an Old Tokoname piece, but since no indisputable proof of the jar's origin had come from Old Tokoname kiln sites, it remained impossible to be certain. I have surveyed Old Atsumi kiln sites, along with those of Old Tokoname, for

more than twenty years, but convincing evidence has not appeared from the Atsumi sites either. I have, however, finally been driven to some sort of commitment: having made a special study of the Autumn Grasses jar and having conducted surveys throughout Japan, I have concluded that it is Old Tokoname.

In the first place, the quality of the clay and the glaze are Old Tokoname and not characteristic of the old Atsumi kilns. Secondly, the form of the piece sprang from religious ideas and is a shape not found outside the line of Old Tokoname. The Autumn Grasses jar is in the so-called wide-mouthed, long-necked style, a protruding and sharply angled ring encircling the base of the neck. (Compare, for example, Plates 2-9 with Plates 11-13.) Jars with this protruding ring around the base of the neck do not occur in other than Old Tokoname ware. This and the special shape of the jar are decisive features not present in pottery other than Old Tokoname. Wide-mouthed, long-necked jars like the Autumn Grasses jar and long-necked water jars were fired in great numbers at Tokoname. All of them possess the protruding angular ring at the base of the neck, and all are from the late Heian period. After that time the form is no longer seen.

The bold and free line of the decoration on the Autumn Grasses jar is surely the work of a practiced artist. It would seem almost certain that such an artist was sent from the capital and that he incised the design. Since the design was not added by a potter at the original kiln, in all likelihood another jar of the same sort will never come to light from the kiln site. A little-known fact is that incised on the neck and shoulder of the Autumn Grasses jar is the talisman mark of a spell-casting diviner, thus clearly indicating the purpose of the vessel as a burial urn. On a fragment of a long-necked jar unearthed from a sutra mound at the Sekihō-ji temple in Hyogo Prefecture, a picture of a melon has been incised in the same way as the decoration on the Autumn Grasses jar, doubtless by the same artist. Also on this fragment is the remnant of that typical Old Tokoname protruding angled ring about the base of the jar's neck. Records date this sutra mound at 1117; the Autumn Grasses jar should thus be seen as having been made in the same year.

Fujiwara no Akinaga, lord of Mikawa Province, established the old Atsumi kilns in his domain in 1137, and the kilns produced a quantity of ceramic ware in the style of that made in Kyoto. Some pieces decorated with pictures may also be found. Some Old

Tokoname pots show decoration incised by artists, but the number of such pieces is small. Because much of the ware from the old Atsumi kilns is decorated and is made in the style of the more metropolitan ware, however, does not provide adequate grounds for claiming that the Autumn Grasses jar came from Atsumi.

Types of Old Tokoname Ware

1. Sutra jars with impressed designs

These early sutra jars are large vessels; impressed designs occur horizontally in two, four, and six bands. Late Heian period (Plates 2, 4).

2. Three-grooved jars

The name derives from the three horizontal lines incised in the body of the jar. Very numerous, these are representative of Old Tokoname jars. Late Heian, Kamakura periods (Plates 5-10).

3. Sutra mound jars

Some thirty-five centimeters tall with the same diameter measurement, these jars were used exclusively to hold sutras. Late Heian period (Plates 1, 3, 4, 23, 24, 25).

4. Three-eared jars

Characteristic of Old Tokoname ware designed as cinerary urns in the early period of the practice of cremation. The ears, occurring in large and small size, may possibly stand for the three Buddhist deities Kannon, Fudō, and Bishamon. Late Heian, Kamakura periods (jacket).

5. Large, flat bowls (*ōhirabachi*)

Used as covers for sutra mound jars and cinerary urns, they occur numerously and in four different sizes. Late Heian, Kamakura periods (Plates 19, 20).

6. Shallow bowls (*hirawan*)

Occurring in extraordinarily large numbers, these bowls were used as lids for smaller jars. All have pouring lips, and some also have flower patterns and talisman signs incised on the inner surface. Many have a separately attached foot and distinct marks of the rice chaff with which they were rubbed. Late Heian, Kamakura periods (Plates 21, 22).

7. Temple roof tiles

Many tiles are of uneven thickness; these were characteristically made using a fine mesh cloth and are referred to as *hakuji*, "white ware." Late Heian, Kamakura periods.

8. Others

Various items, including small bowls, fishnet weights, ceramic inkstones, small jars, pouring

bowls, ceramic rings, rice cookpots, small stands (with two bowls on them), dice, etc., were made.

Glaze Characteristics of Old Tokoname

Old Tokoname is unequalled in the variety of effects achieved through firing.

1. Flowing ash glaze of vivid green against white clay. (Fired in a strong reducing atmosphere. Found on *hirawan* and on jars fired close to the flame in *hirawan* kilns.)

2. Carbon blackened ware.

3. Dark green ash glaze flowing over a rugged chestnut-colored clay surface.

4. Light brown glaze; ruddy clay bodies; irregular black blotches; and others.

Old Tokoname Techniques

1. Use of the potter's wheel is not evident. Coiling was employed, the shape formed on some sort of rotating device. On *ōhirabachi* and *hirawan* there are marks of the string used to cut the piece free at the bottom.

2. Thick coils of clay were built up, the potter walking around the piece as he formed it. Sandy quartz (presumably to hold the piece in place) pocks the base, forming a so-called "sand base" (*sunazoko*).

3. Pieces made by building with clay coils atop a rotating device, but the bottoms show the split marks of "clog stilts."

Old Tokoname Kiln Sites

Ancient kilns of Old Tokoname ware (Heian and Kamakura periods) center on Tokoname city in the Chita Peninsula and extend twenty-six kilometers north and south into the hilly regions. All are hole kilns dug into hillsides. My own count of those visible on the surface totals 1016 kilns. In places where the strata is suitable for hole kilns, a quantity of them will be clustered together. There are forty such sites, the largest clusters being in the following locations:

1. Hibarayama site, 100 kilns
2. Takazaka site, 51 kilns
3. Hongūsan site, 45 kilns
4. Taya site, 45 kilns
5. South Itayama site (centering on Shiinoki-yama)

Similar clusters occur in such other locations as Handa-ike and Fukuzumi. The Fukuzumi cluster was in operation from the end of the Kamakura period into the period of the Northern and Southern Courts (1333–92). Excavation of this whole mountain area

was conducted, and the astonishing number of eighteen kiln sites was found, covering the entire hilly locale.

A striking feature of all of the Old Tokoname kilns is that their construction follows the principles of astrological, directional, and placement divination. They occur in pairs, one kiln with an ascending angle of about thirty degrees, the other having an angle of about twenty degrees. The thirty-degree kiln was probably used during the rainy season, the one with a twenty-degree slope most likely utilized during the dryer fall and winter. A regular feature is the construction of a supporting pillar in the middle of the fire mouth, dividing the opening into two.

Tokoname Kilns of the Muromachi Period

From the period of the Northern and Southern Courts into the Muromachi period (1392–1573) came a significant change—the gradual shift to the production of grain jars and large-sized water jars for use in daily life. This came about through general economic growth and underscored the important historical changes taking place. Since Tokoname was situated in a location with good water transport facilities, climbing kilns were built, use was made of the plentiful clay deposits of the area, and one can clearly see the tendency toward large-scale production. Larger kilns and oxidation firing came to be utilized. Since the clay contained much iron, the pottery acquired a deep black color with oxidation firing, giving rise to a hard, solid, and heavy stoneware, producing the uniqueness of Tokoname ware.

Kilns were started at various locations on the Chita Peninsula during the Muromachi period, but Tokoname ware was sent for shipment from ports. During the Muromachi period, jars occupied an important place in the daily lives of the common people. There were thus operators of pottery kilns who were known by the particular ceramic ware they produced—kilns making general purpose jars were called *tsuboya*, those producing large water jars being known as *kameya*. Tokoname kiln operators were known by such names as "Kameya Kihachi." Shop names such as Tsuboya and Kameya today are reminders of those early times.

The inhabitants of Tokoname Castle were a branch of the Mizuno family of Ogawa. Backed by blood ties with Odai, the mother of Tokugawa Ieyasu (1542–1616), the Ogawa Mizuno family subdued the Chita Peninsula. The lord of Tokoname Castle, Mizuno Kenmotsu, was one of the important cul-

tural figures of his day, an expert in the tea ceremony and a man fond of composing linked verse (*renga*). He frequently introduced Tokoname jars to the Sakai group that was influential in the tea ceremony, and he is mentioned in several accounts of the ceremonies of the day. In light of the several kiln sites that remain today within the precincts of Tokoname Castle, it is clear that there existed a very strong association between Kenmotsu and the Tokoname kilns.

There remain a number of water containers (*mizusashi*) that Kenmotsu had had made for use in the tea ceremony (Plate 35). All are superb examples of outstanding form and style. Had the unfortunate events at the Honnō-ji temple not taken place, the Tokoname kilns would probably have taken a commanding lead and reigned supreme in the world of tea ceramics.

Tokoname and Tea Ceramics—The Age of Famed Craftsmen

The tea ceremony of the Momoyama and early Edo periods was principally in the hands of the great feudal lords, high-ranking members of the samurai class, and prominent wealthy merchants. The age being marked by a strict class system, there were no signatures on the ceramic tea wares made by the average potter. It was not until the middle years of the Edo period that such signatures appeared. During the 1780s, the potter Watanabe Yahyōe of Tokoname was awarded the name Tokoname Genkōsai by the lord of the Owari domain and was elevated to the rank of samurai. This marked the beginning of the use of a maker's signature at the Tokoname kilns. Genkōsai did not use a potter's wheel, but coiled his pots. A large number of his highly competent tea pieces have been preserved. From the time of Genkōsai on, the practice by well-known potters of signing their works became more widespread and ushered in a colorful age of the ceramic arts.

Akai Tōzen I was an officially designated potter making tea ceremony braziers (*dofuro*) for the lord of Owari. He was quite active in the 1790s, leaving a great number of pieces (Plate 40). Tōzen is noteworthy as the first of the Tokoname potters to produce pots made on the potter's wheel. Tōzen II also has left behind numerous fine pieces. Tōzen I, along with Ina Chōza I, studied under the Buddhist priest Seishū of the Sōshin-ji temple on Mount Mannen. In the precincts of the temple, Seishū built a kiln where he made mainly a soft, low temperature ware that bore the signature Mannensan-in.

Ina Chōza I was a Tokoname potter specializing in large water jars (*kame*). Under Seishū's tutelage he produced some excellent pieces for the tea ceremony. Chōza II was also a fine craftsman, famous for developing the *mogake* technique, which involves wrapping the green piece with seaweed, the firing producing a glaze effect that shows "flame" patterns (Plate 46) like the *hidasuki* of Bizen.

Active from the second decade of the nineteenth century, Uemura Hakuō first used the sobriquet Hakushi, later changing it to Hakuō. He worked mainly with coil construction, producing no works made with the potter's wheel. Sturdy ornamental pieces made with a discriminating touch and tea pieces displaying flawless technique are the oeuvre of Uemura Hakuō (Plates 42, 43). Patronized by Lord Kujō of Kyoto, and a close associate of Ryōnyū (d. 1834), a Raku ware potter in Kyoto, Hakuō has left behind a large number of works in red and black Raku ware. One may also find many pieces made jointly by Ryōnyū, Hakuō, and one Watanabe Hyōgo, the senior retainer of the lord of Owari.

Matsushita Sankō I was a mid-nineteenth century potter known for his skill with the potter's wheel. His disciples were numerous, and he contributed much to the Tokoname ceramic arts. Rare in Tokoname ceramics, many of his pieces have an applied glaze, and many are copies of works associated with Western and Southeast Asian cultures entering from the southwest part of the country. His incense container in the shape of a tortoise (Plate 44) is far superior to a similar imported piece from perhaps South China, Thailand, or Vietnam.

Koie Isaburō, also known by the name Hōju, operated one of the important Tokoname kilns in the 1870s with his father, Hōkyū. They are noted for having introduced to Tokoname the multichambered climbing kiln (*noborigama*). They named their workshop the Kintozan kiln; it was then designated an official kiln for wares made for the lord of Owari. Within the kiln works a research laboratory was set up, and the pair was successful in making European style, precisely manufactured ceramic pipe. To commemorate Hōju's restoring the ceramic industry of Tokoname, a large ceramic statue of him was erected on Mount Tenjin.

Jumon I (Sugie Yasuhei) was a noted potter who first made the red clay teapots (*shudei kyūsu*) in Tokoname. Originating in Yi Xing, China, these red clay teapots eventually came to be produced both in Tokoname and Sado Island to the north. In 1878,

through instruction he received from the Chinese scholar Jin Shiheng, Jumon learned the technique of making these teapots (*kyūsu*) and became instantly famous (Plate 52). Yamada Jōzan I, in the mainstream of red clay teapot production (Plate 53), was known for his flawless potter's wheel technique and was a distinguished teacher of a large number of disciples. His younger brother, Tōzan I, was an outstanding craftsman of the red clay teapots and was also an expert carver of seals. A large number of his invigorating pieces (Plate 50) is extant.

A long-time teacher at the Tokoname School of Ceramics, Hirano Kashō studied Roman sculpture and left behind him in Tokoname a legacy of ceramic sculpture (Plate 49). One of his best works is the above-mentioned ceramic statue of Hōju, completed in 1915. Inoue Yōnan showed considerable talent in painting when he studied at the Japan Fine Arts Academy and has left behind several outstanding works. He also gave much impetus to Tokoname ceramic art (Plate 51). Matsumoto Shigenobu was a maker of tea ceramics during the Taishō era (1912–26). A central figure in Tokoname ceramics, he is known for tea ceremony pieces.

From the middle years of the Edo period into the early part of the Meiji era (1868–1912), the above figures were the major craftsmen. Beside them were many other outstanding potters, who helped create this colorful period at Tokoname.

The Ceramic Arts Today

Considerable interest was generated when Princess Chichibu presented the first prize for outstanding work in the 1975 Third Japan Ceramic Exhibition to Mikio Ōsako of the Tokoname Ceramic Research Institute (Plate 57). In addition, at the same exhibition the Foreign Minister's Prize for the outstanding entry in the general category was awarded to Kōmei Takeuchi of the same research institute (Plate 58). In announcing the award, the chairman of the judges' committee, Mr. Michiaki Kawakita, had the following to say:

"It is a matter of great interest that both Mr. Ōsako and Mr. Takeuchi are associated with the Ceramics Research Institute of Tokoname city. In the world of the ceramic arts, the activity of Tokoname artists bears watching. Memory is still fresh of that outstanding achievement at the 1972 International Ceramics Exhibition in France, when nineteen Tokoname artists submitted entries, and all of them received the highest awards. It is our hope that Messrs. Ōsako and Takeuchi will join their ranks."

After World War II there was the feeling that Tokoname pottery was getting a fresh start, though it was a step behind the progress of pottery in Seto and Mino in the same prefecture. Of late, Tokoname is showing progress at a smooth pace, and there is the sense that a good deal of energy is being put forth. From traditional artists to those of avant-garde stamp, all are equally active. Issei Ezaki (Plate 54) and Jōzan Yamada III (Plate 56) are well known in the traditional style. Showing much activity and possessed of both ability and a sense of restraint are two husband and wife teams, Shigeo Sawada (Plate 55) and his wife Kayoko along with Yoshiaki Katō and his wife Midori. Together these artists contribute warmth to the world of Tokoname ceramics.

The studio named "Sugi," run by Junpei Sugie, is worthy of note as a center of lively activity that attracts aspiring young artists. A youthful symbol of promise in Tokoname pottery is perhaps the group activity of the Zōkei Shūdan, an assemblage of young potters centering on Junpei Sugie, Yoshiaki Katō, Shigeo Sawada, and Ryōji Koie. Koie's avant-garde pieces are striking, but in addition there is brisk movement among a group of several dozen young potters in their twenties who have as their leader Shunyō Tanigawa, himself over seventy. Their uninhibited enterprise and their perseverance give one a strong sense of vital energy at work.

It is particularly important not to overlook the existence of that central figure in Tokoname ceramics, the mature Kenkichi Yamada, president of the Tokoname Association of Ceramic Artists. Special notice must also be taken of the Tokoname City Office, whose backing of the activities of all these people goes well beyond the kind of support one might encounter in other municipalities. And one must surely mention that colorful local tradition of red clay teapot ceramics organized around "The Handmade Teapot Association," with a membership of over one hundred and headed by its president, Jōzan Yamada III. Rare in the pottery world, this group still today uses the Old Tokoname coil building technique, which dates back to the Heian period. Ceramic sculpture centers on the work of Seikan Kataoka and Tsuneo Sawada. The "Tokoname Ceramic Sculpture Association" is an active organization that gives, one might say, an individual quality to Tokoname ceramics.

Thus, one can probably regard the Tokoname Ceramics Research Institute, majestically overlooking the city from a hilltop, as a symbol of the lively vitality of Tokoname ceramic art.





2

HEIAN AND KAMAKURA PERIODS

1. Sutra mound jar, ash glaze. H. 40.0 cm. Kamakura period. (preceding page)
2. Jar, impressed pattern. H. 55.0 cm. Heian period. Aichi Prefecture.