

Karatsu

Tarouemon Nakazato



FAMOUS CERAMICS OF JAPAN 9

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KODANSHA INTERNATIONAL LTD.
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Translated by Shigetaka Kaneko and Lynne E. Riggs

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Karatsu

In the world of the tea ceremony, the traditional ranking of teabowls was expressed by the saying: "First, Ido [Korean]; second, Raku; third, Karatsu." More popularly, in southern Kyushu, part of Shikoku, and in much of the Japan Sea coastal area, the terms *Karatsu* and *Karatsumono* were, and are, used to mean pottery in general.

During the Muromachi period, pottery was manufactured at Kishidake south of the present-day city of Karatsu, and in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries at various locations extending over Saga and Nagasaki prefectures, including the Matsuura area. Karatsu ware made as late as the middle of the seventeenth century is known as *Ko-Garatsu* (Old Karatsu).

In 1616, when the techniques of porcelain production were perfected at Arita in what is now Nishi-Matsuura-gun, Saga Prefecture, most of the Karatsu potters in the area turned to making porcelain. The others produced stoneware for popular everyday use employing techniques adapted from Yi dynasty Korea. A similar changeover among potters took place in the Mikawachi and Hasami areas adjacent to Arita and Nishi-Arita. Stoneware made from the end of the seventeenth century to the present in this area is called Karatsu.

KISHIDAKE AND THE BEGINNINGS OF KARATSU WARE

The history of high-fired glazed ceramics is shorter in Japan than in many other Far Eastern countries, going back, with a few exceptions, only as far as the end of the sixteenth century, to the time following the military forays into the Korean peninsula of Toyotomi Hideyoshi, unifier of Japan's warring clans. As early as the beginning of the fifteenth century, the Korean Yi dynasty king Se-jong opened trade with Japan through the Sō clan on the island of Tsushima. From 1429, the Matsuura Confederation, a warrior alliance entrenched in the Kishidake area

of what is now Saga Prefecture, and other powerful clans of Kyushu and western Honshu entered into agreements with the Yi court, contracting for one to three ships annually for trade. Three ports—Ulsan, Pusan, and Jep'o—were opened, and the *wakō* (Japanese pirates) that had ravaged the Korean coasts as long as trade was officially prohibited disappeared.

In the vicinity of the newly opened Korean ports were many famous kilns, and since settlers from Tsushima are known to have lived in those ports in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, one can assume that the products of those kilns (identified in Japan as belonging to the broad category of "Mishima" ware) were known to the Japanese. Oddly enough, however, there are no examples of Mishima ware among the Old Karatsu wares of Kishidake.

Glazed pottery was made in the Karatsu area before the expeditions in Korea in 1592, as evidenced by shards excavated in Fukui Prefecture at the ruins of the estate of the Asakura clan, which was destroyed in 1573 by the forces of Oda Nobunaga in his campaigns to pacify western Japan. A tea jar, made by the paddling method and covered with a wood-ash glaze, has been preserved at the Seibo Shrine in Katsunomoto on Iki Island, Nagasaki Prefecture. It bears the incised inscription: "Dedicated to the Seibo Daibosatsu of Kazamoto Shrine, Iki Island, Japan. Tea storage jar for offerings. Signed: [Priest] Sōkaku of Mojiro village. 20th year of Tenshō [1592]."

Kishidake, the home of the Matsuura clan, is located about eleven kilometers south of the present-day city of Karatsu. There, in the mid-twelfth century, Hata Tamotsu, a member of the Matsuura Confederation, built his castle, and the stronghold was maintained through sixteen generations and four hundred years. The Matsuura, whose fortunes were legitimized by the officially established trade with Yi dynasty Korea, had a long history of contact with the continent, since they provided many of the leaders of the marauding pirate bands.

At Kishidake, the remains of seven kilns, collectively known as the Kishidake Ko-Garatsu kilns, have been discovered: Handōgame Shimo (lower) and Handōgame Kami (upper), Hobashira, Kishidake Saraya, Michinayadani, Hiramatsu, and Ōtani. The Kishidake potters are believed to have come from the vicinity of Hoeryōng in North Korea. However, little archaeological information is available concerning the kilns located there, and since no documents regarding the Kishidake kilns or archaeological evidence, such as dated shards, have been found to substantiate this, all remains conjecture.

The Handōgame Shimo and Handōgame Kami kiln sites are situated at the west foot of the site of Kishidake castle. Part of the chamber floor and wall of the Shimo kiln has been preserved, the remains of the oldest semiunderground climbing kiln (the type known as *waridake*, "split bamboo") in Japan. Some of the shards of paddled jars found at this kiln site have a celadon-type wood-ash glaze on the inside and a white, porcelain-type feldspathic glaze on the outside. Similar shards, believed to be from the fifteenth century, have been unearthed at an old kiln site in the area of Kwangju, Kyōnggi-do in Korea. The glazes used at Handōgame include wood-ash, feldspar, and iron. The opaque rice-straw ash glaze used on Mottled Karatsu (*madara-Karatsu*), characteristic of the Hobashira kilns, however, is not found on shards from the Handōgame kilns. The wood-ash glaze fires a celadon green in a reducing atmosphere and yellowish brown in an oxidation firing. The feld-

spathic glaze used was almost completely feldspar, producing a color resembling that of Shino ware due to the quality of the clay. Decoration at these kilns was simple and geometric, and shards of large dishes decorated using paper stencils have been unearthed at the Handōgame Shimo kiln site. Excavated shards also indicate that incised decoration (*hori-Karatsu*) occurred at both the upper and lower Handōgame kilns. Jars, mortars, and bottles were paddled, and teabowls, dishes, *mukōzuke* food dishes, saké cups, and other small items were thrown on the wheel. Toward the end of the sixteenth century, teabowls and *mukōzuke* were made in the Oribe and Shino styles.

Forming techniques included wheel throwing (*mizubiki*) on a kick wheel; coil-and-throw (*ita-okoshi*), also using a kick wheel; and paddling (*tataki*) of coiled forms. Potters specialized in one of the techniques. Whereas in conventional throwing the Karatsu wheel turned clockwise, it was turned counterclockwise for the other processes, including trimming.

The Hobashira kiln, located southwest of Handōgame, is thought to be the oldest of the Ko-Garatsu kilns. It is best known for Mottled Karatsu (*madara-Karatsu*) ware made with an opaque rice-straw ash glaze. Wood-ash, feldspar, and iron glazes were also used. Large, wide-mouthed urns (*kame*) and saké bottles were made by paddling, and jars, mortars, pouring bowls, teabowls, dishes, and small saké flasks were thrown on the wheel. Decorated pieces



Mt. Kishidake.



Tea storage jar dedicated to the Seibo Shrine, bearing an inscription with the date Tenshō 20 (1594).



The Handōgame Shita kiln site.

were rare, and designs simple and generally abstract. In 1947, the late Hajime Katō and I excavated the Hobashira kiln site and discovered on the lowest level many rice-straw ash glazed shards of the sky blue (*tianjing*) color of Chinese Jun ware. Even in Korea, the rice-straw ash glaze was found only on northern wares made around Hoeryōng and Myōngch'ōn. Mr. Katō observed then that the Hobashira shards closely resembled the glaze on shards from Chunam-myōn, which is located near the port of Ch'ōngjin. Might it not be reasonable to speculate that (North) Korean potters from this area, brought to Japan by the Matsuura adventurers, were the ones who built and worked the Hobashira kilns?

These two, the Handōgame and Hobashira kilns, represent two distinct Ko-Garatsu traditions. Kishidake Saraya was of the Hobashira line. Eventually the two currents were joined in the Michinayadani and Hiramatsu kilns. Decorated Karatsu pieces were ornamented with realistic motifs such as water plants, pampas grass, and shrimp. Pieces were frequently made in shapes typical of Shino and Oribe wares. For the most part, however, the Old Karatsu of Kishidake consisted of utensils for everyday use; with but a few known exceptions, tea ceremony wares were not made.

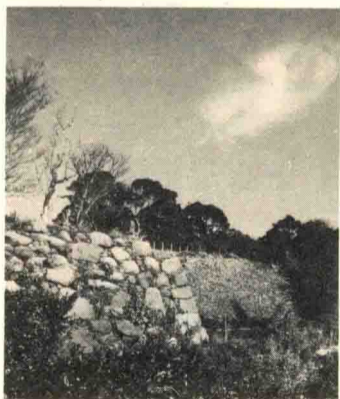
KO-GARATSU AFTER THE KOREAN CAMPAIGNS

The impact on pottery-making in Japan of Toyotomi Hideyoshi's invasions of Korea was so great that

these campaigns are often called the "ceramic wars." Hideyoshi set up his army headquarters at a place called Nagoya in what is now the town of Chinzei in Higashi-Matsuura County, Saga Prefecture, and ordered the construction of a castle in October, 1591. The work was put under the direction of Katō Kiyomasa, a general, and Terasawa Hirotaka, one of Hideyoshi's retainers, and was completed in only five months. In April, 1592, Hideyoshi and his generals gathered at Nagoya with an army totalling two hundred thousand vanguard soldiers and one hundred thousand reserves, filling the fields and mountains around the town of Chinzei.

Among the local leaders who joined the Korean expedition was Hata Chikashi of the Matsuura Confederation, leading 750 cavalry. In the bitter battles pushing into Korean territory, his forces were diminished by half, and he turned back to the base at Pusan in January, 1594, and left for Japan in February. Even before he returned to Japan he was informed through Kuroda Nagamasa that the displeased Hideyoshi had confiscated his domain and banished him to remote Ibaragi Prefecture in eastern Japan. His family and retainers were ordered to leave the Kishidake castle voluntarily. His soldiers disbanded. The castle was entrusted to Terasawa Hirotaka, a tea master and pupil of Sen no Rikyū, who encouraged industry in the domain and did much for the development of Karatsu pottery.

The first campaign into Korea—known as the Bunroku War—ended in overwhelming victory for



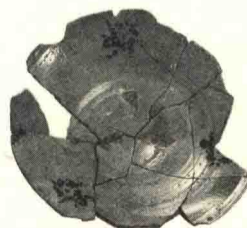
The ruin of Nagoya Castle.



Shiinomine village.



The bottom of the Paddled Black Karatsu water container in Plate 9.



Decorated Karatsu shards unearthed at the Handōgama Shita kiln site. A paper stencil was used for the decoration.

Japan, and peace negotiations with Ming China were begun. Hideyoshi received the Ming envoy at Nagoya Castle in August, 1596, but became enraged at the presumptuous tone of the Ming emperor's letter. The negotiations came to a halt, and Hideyoshi prepared a second military expedition to Korea. In August, 1598, however, Hideyoshi died, and Ishida Mitsunari, a close retainer, gave the order to withdraw from the peninsula. The Japanese forces returned to Hakata in December, bringing the second campaign—the Keichō War—to a close.

The Japanese generals returning to Japan brought back many Koreans with them, and the emigrants were given a warm reception, especially those who were artisans and craftsmen. Skilled potters, in particular, were accorded special treatment, and often given samurai rank or equivalent social standing. Ordinary potters, too, were placed under special protection.

In the Matsuura area, which is located relatively close to the Korean peninsula, the emigrant potters were particularly numerous. As the leadership of medieval Japan changed hands following the death of Hideyoshi, and after the fall of the Toyotomi stronghold in Osaka in 1615, many vassals of vanquished lords became masterless and took up pottery making. So many of these ex-samurai potters built kilns in the Matsuura district that their lumbering of wood for fuel denuded the surrounding hills.

The potters from Yi dynasty Korea who came to Japan created a new type of ceramic suited to the Japanese milieu by adapting their techniques to the Oribe-style designs that were fashionable in Japan at the time. Mishima wares, displaying white slip inlay and the use of copper glaze, were some of the new elements of pottery making that emerged after the end of the Korean campaigns. Old Karatsu wares are classified by kiln location or common techniques into four kiln groups—Matsuura (Terazawa), Taku, Takeo, and Hirado.

Matsuura (Terazawa) Ko-Garatsu

The kilns and branch kilns established by potters from Kishidake or from Korea in Matsuura, originally the domain of the Hata clan and later granted to the Terazawa family, are called the Matsuura Ko-Garatsu kilns. Sometime around 1615, the potters in the Terazawa domain gathered at Shiinomine-yama, located in what is now Fumaneki, Minami Hata-chō,

in the city of Imari. The sites of three large kilns remain there even today, testimony to its importance as a major center of pottery making at that time. One legend holds that the Shiinomine potters were Koreans from Kishidake who came across Ōkawabaru, and another maintains that they were men who left Kishidake and built their kilns at Nagahayama in Mikawachi, Hirado.

The majority of Matsuura Ko-Garatsu kiln sites are located in what is now the city of Imari. Matsuura Ko-Garatsu ware is set apart from that of other kiln groups by the use of rice-straw ash glaze at nearly all the kilns, and it is regarded as successor to the mainstream tradition of Kishidake Ko-Garatsu. These kilns, along with those of other traditions, are scattered in and around Ōkawachi-yama, Ōkawachimachi, in Imari. They belong to the Ichinose Kōrai-jin line of kilns.

The Kameya-no-Tani,¹ Ichiwaka-yashiki, Yakiyama, Dōzono, and Abondani kilns produced outstanding Decorated Karatsu (*e-Garatsu*) in the Shino and Oribe styles. These wares are also called Oribe-Garatsu. The Decorated Karatsu made at the Ichinose Kōrai-jin, Gongendani, and Maki-no-Keyakidani kilns faithfully reproduced the underglaze iron wares of Yi dynasty pottery. The Yamase, Ōkawabaru, Fuji-no-Kawachi (Fujin Kawachi), Abondani, and Kanaishihara Hirotani kilns were noted for Mottled Karatsu and Korean Karatsu wares. Kameya-no-Tani and Yakiyama produced fine paddled water containers and flower vases in the Oribe style. All the Karatsu techniques were practiced at Shiinomine-yama, from inlaid Mishima Karatsu and *katagami* (stenciled) *hakeme* and *kushi* (comb marked) *hakeme* to two-color glazed Karatsu and underglaze copper red Decorated Karatsu. In some, firing effects have transmuted the copper red to reddish, purplish, and greenish tinges.

Taku Ko-Garatsu

In 1598 when Hideyoshi's forces withdrew back to Japan from the Korean campaigns, the lord of the Saga domain, Nabeshima Naoshige, entrusted a distinguished Korean potter named Ri to his vassal Taku Yasunobu to take back to Japan. Ri, a native of Kimgang Island, was given the Japanese surname Kanegae and the personal name Sanbei. Under the patronage of the Taku family, Sanbei built the Tōjin-koba kiln at Nishinohara, in what is now the city of

Taku. Later he moved to Nishi-Taku-machi in the same city and established the Taku Kōraidani kiln, where he made Oribe-style Decorated Karatsu. It would have been difficult for a potter recently come from Korea to decorate fine Oribe-style Karatsu ware in the Japanese taste, so it is believed that among the artisans under him there were Japanese specialists in painting. Sanbei moved to Arita in 1616.

Takeo Ko-Garatsu

The Takeo kilns, which are scattered around Ureshino-machi in the city of Takeo, Saga Prefecture, were built by Korean potters who came to Japan following the Keichō campaign. Gotō Ienobu, a senior councillor in the Nabeshima domain, brought back to Japan many Korean potters, including one named Sōden. He had become a devotee of the virtuous Japanese Buddhist priest Bessō, who was accompanying the Japanese army, and took the Japanese name Fukaumi Shintarō and the Buddhist name Sōden. Under the protection of Ienobu, Sōden discovered clay of good quality at Takeuchi-chō in Takeo and built a kiln at Uchida-yama.

Many of the kilns in this area stem from Sōden, including the Kotōge group at Uchida-yama, the Kawagogama-no-Tani group at Wakagi-chō, Takeo, the Hyakken kiln at Yamauchi-chō in Kishima-gun, the Shōkodani group at Hirakoba, Takeuchi-chō, and the Sabidani group at Kuromuta-yama, Takeuchi-chō. The Uchida Saraya kiln, located at Higashi Kawanobori-chō in Takeo, probably has different origins.

Jakatsu (lizard-skin glaze) Karatsu was made at Shōkodani, Rishōkoba, Kona Kōnotsuji, Suginomoto, Inokoba, Shōgenji, and Ushiishi. Uchida Saraya is famous for Decorated Karatsu in the Oribe style. Kotōge, Kawagogama-no-Tani Shin, Ōkusano, and Hyakken kilns produced excellent Mi-

shima Karatsu ware. Hyakken made Mishima Karatsu with underglaze cobalt blue decoration. Hyakken and Kotōge kilns also made blue-and-white porcelain. A fragment of a large Decorated Karatsu dish dated February 18, 1618, has been unearthed at the Kawagogama-no-Tani kiln site.

Hirado Ko-Garatsu

The kilns located at Arita-machi and Nishi-Aritamachi in Nishi-Matsuura-gun, Saga Prefecture, at Sasebo, Hirado, Hasami-chō in Higashi Sonoki-gun, and at Isahaya are collectively referred to as the Hirado Ko-Garatsu kilns. Matsuura Shizunobu, one of the leaders of the Matsuura Confederation and lord of the Hirado domain, was well versed in the tea ceremony. He had two potters, Kōm Gwan and Kim Yōngku, from among the two hundred-odd Koreans he brought back to Japan with him, build the Hirado Ochawan kiln and ordered them to make Yi dynasty-style slip-brushed (*hakeme*) and slip-covered (*kohiki*) wares and other utensils for the tea ceremony. Clay of good quality was not available there and had to be sought in the Arita area. In the process many kilns were built in the Mikawachi region. The Fudōsa-kiln was established at Hasami-machi by Korean potters brought back by Ōmura Kizen, lord of the Ōmura domain. Korean emigrants also created kilns on the lands of the Isahaya clan, chief retainers of the lord of Nabeshima (Saga), which were the Hajino-o kilns.

Old kiln sites in Korea of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are scattered in the counties of Yangsan, Milyang, and Kimhae around Pusan, and in Sach'ŏn, Hadong, Chinyang, Sanch'ŏng, and Ch'angwŏn counties around Chinju. All produced pottery, especially dishes, that closely resembles Hirado Ko-Garatsu ware in the breadth and eversion of rims, dimensions of foot rings, and other features.



Left: An incised Mishima Karatsu shard unearthed at the Kawagogama-no-Tani Shin kiln site.
Right: Shard of large Decorated Karatsu dish dated February 18, 1618.



Left: A Hirado Ko-Garatsu shard unearthed at the Harayake kiln site.
Right: A shard of Korean pottery.

The decorations used have a great deal in common with those on Korean pieces and are the simplest among the Ko-Garatsu styles. The most prominent Hirado Ko-Garatsu kilns are those at Hirado Ochawan, Harayake, Komoridani, Yoshinomoto, and Yanaginomoto.

AFTER THE ADVENT OF HIZEN PORCELAIN

The Korean potters who settled in Japan after the Keichō War eventually began to attempt production of the white porcelain, blue-and-white ware, celadon, and copper red glazed wares that they had made in their homeland. At that time, good porcelain clay was not available, so their efforts were limited to semiporcelains and to brushing on and dipping pieces in white-slip (*hakeme* and *kohiki*, respectively) as illustrated by the red *hakeme* wares of Shiinomine, the semiporcelain red ware of Terantani Gokeda, the semiporcelain blue-and-white, underglaze iron and underglaze copper red wares of Kotōge, and the underglaze blue *hakeme* and *kohiki* of the Hyakken and Hirado Ochawan kilns.

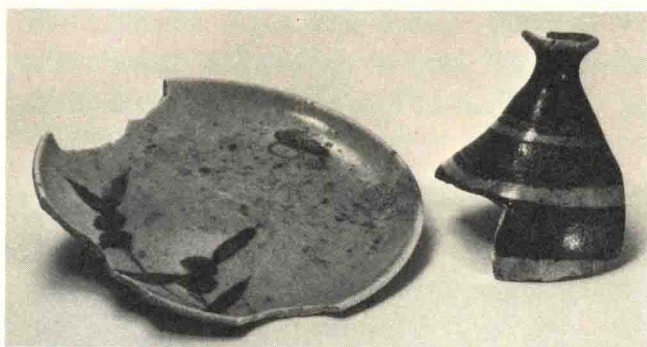
In 1616 Kanegae Sanbei received permission from his patron, Taku Yasunobu, to move to Tengudani, Kami Shirakawa in Arita, where, with his family and followers he succeeded in making white porcelain.

The founder of the Takeo kilns, Sōden, died in 1618, but his son Heizaemon, assisted by Sōden's widow, Hyakubasen, took charge of the potters. Inspired by Sanbei's success in white porcelain, they moved over nine hundred people who belonged to

Sōden's group to Hiekoba, Arita, in 1631. Kanegae Sanbei and Hyakubasen and Heizaemon collaborated in the improvement of white porcelain production. The factories in and around Arita almost exclusively came to specialize in porcelain—what we now identify as Arita ware.

The Hirado potter Kōm Gwan was naturalized and assumed the Japanese name Imamura. At the order of the lord of the Hirado domain, he and his son Sannojō made a thorough search of the area for good-quality clay, finally settling down at Mikawachiyama. Kage (also called Kōrai Baba, or "old Korean woman") was the widow of Nakazato Shigeuemon, a Shiinomine potter and, like Kōm Gwan, a native of Ungch'ōng in Kyōngsang-namdo. After her husband's death, Kage opened a factory at Nagahayama in 1622 with her son Shigeuemon, relying mainly on ex-Kishidake potters. They cooperated with Kōm Gwan and Sannojō in the development of Mikawachi ware. It was Sannojō's son, Yaheiji, who was to discover the porcelain clay known as Amakusa stone in 1662 and allow porcelain production to develop in Hirado.

The shift from production of stoneware to porcelain that had occurred at Arita took place also in Hirado. The Hirado Ochawan, Yoshinomoto, Yanaginomoto, Kihara Jizōdaira, and other kilns in the Hirado domain became manufacturers of Hirado porcelain (Mikawachi ware), while Nagao-yama, Nakao-yama, and other kilns in the Ōmura domain produced Hasami ware. Seirokuntsuji, Komizo, Yanbeta, and others in the Nabeshima domain produced Arita ware.



Shards unearthed at the Kotōge kiln site—left: blue-and-white porcelain plate; right: sake bottle.



Two-colored Karatsu dish unearthed at Ayutthaya, Thailand.



Pine-decorated water storage jar from the Yumino-yama kiln.

FOLK KILNS

Those kilns that did not switch over to production of porcelain—Shiinomine-yama, Uchida-yama, Kuro-muta-yama, Kotaji-yama, Niwaki-yama, Yumino-yama, and Kihara-yama—continued actively to manufacture stoneware utensils for everyday use for the surrounding villages. The distinguishing characteristic of the Karatsu kilns was the use of Mishima techniques and green copper glaze. These techniques, which were being tested beginning early in the Keichō era (1595–1615), probably came into full-scale use sometime after the Genna era (1615–24). The Mishima Karatsu made at these kilns, including inlaid Mishima, incised Mishima, plain *hakeme* (slip brushed), *kushi hakeme* (combed and brushed) and *katagami hakeme* (stenciled), as well as early examples of two-color glazed Karatsu, can be regarded as contemporary with Ko-Garatsu.

Attempts were made to reproduce the Yi dynasty underglaze copper red wares by painting a design in copper powder over a white brushed-on slip. But copper red is obtained only by reduction firing. Since complete reduction firing was not achieved, the results came out in various hues of gray or green. The green color thus produced, however, led to the creation of two-color Karatsu ware. Two-color glazed Karatsu was made at Shiinomine, Kawagogama-no-Tani Shin, Hyakken, Uchida Taitani, Miagari-o, Yakimine, Kotaji-yama, Yumino-yama, and Niwaki-yama. Yumino-yama became famous for large wide-mouthed, pine-decorated jars for water storage (*matsu-e mizugame*)² made in and after the eighteenth century.



Cream-colored porcelain teabowl with copper green glaze, unearched at the Ōkawabaru Shin kiln site.



Teabowl with white slip, unearched at the Kihara kiln site.

The pottery produced at Shiinomine-yama was not white porcelain, but a cream-colored, porcelainous ware. Around 1657, the Ōkawabaru Shin kiln made a ware with copper green glaze poured on a cream-colored clay body. *Hakeme* and *kushi hakeme* were made in abundance at Kihara-yama and Hasami. In 1692 these wares were developed into Utsutsugawa (Yagami) ware by Tanaka Gohei (Sōetsu) and his son Jinnai, who combined the *hakeme*, *kushi* (combed) *hakeme*, and *uchi* (dabbed) *hakeme* textures of Kihara-yama with Kyoto-style designs in making food vessels.

Teabowls coated with white slip and painted with landscape and other designs in iron brown or cobalt blue were made during the first half of the eighteenth century at Zentoku, Seirokuntsuji, Kihara-yama, Hiekoba Saraya, and Nagao-yama.

Archaeological evidence shows that Karatsu wares were widely circulated in Asia, for bottles, dishes, and bowls of two-color Karatsu and *kushi hakeme* have been unearthed in various parts of Southeast Asia, including Sarawak and Brunei on Borneo, Makassar in the Celebes, and Ayutthaya in Thailand. They have also been unearthed on Miyako Island and the Yaeyama Islands in Okinawa along with early Arita blue-and-white wares. Ko-Garatsu pieces from around the middle seventeenth century are frequently discovered in the central part of the main island of Okinawa and on the small islands surrounding it. The production of the privately run Karatsu kilns was gradually overpowered by Arita porcelain, and almost all the kilns were abandoned by the end of the nineteenth century.

THE OFFICIAL KILNS

Sometime toward the end of the sixteenth century, three potters—Fukumoto Yasaku, Ōshima Hikouemon, and Nakazato Matashichi—established the Tashiro kiln at Ōkawa-machi in Imari. Around 1605 they moved to nearby Kawabaru, where they worked for ten odd years, subsequently shifting to Shiinomine around 1615. Yasaku, Hikouemon, and Matashichi were later chosen from among local potters to be official artisans of the Terazawa clan; they received stipends, in return for which they made ceramic objects and utensils once a year for the official use of the clan.

The Terazawa line was brought to an end with the

death of the clan's second head, Yoshitaka, and in 1648 the Karatsu domain was placed under the direct jurisdiction of the shogunate under the supervision of Mizutani Ise-no-kami. Umemura Wahei, a vassal of Mizutani, accompanied his lord to Karatsu, but withdrew from his service after Ōkubo Tadamoto became the new lord of the domain the following year. A few years later Umemura became an official potter of the Ōkubo clan, founding the Hirayama-kami kiln at Ōchi-chō. He also fired official wares in a chamber added to the Ogawara Shin kiln built in 1657 by Nakazato Jinuemon (third generation, d. 1703).

Around 1661, there were three climbing kilns at Shiinomine, each with twenty chambers. They made utensils for everyday use and pieces for the use of the clan once a year. Shiinomine at the time was a pottery community of more than 350 households. Its products were shipped to all parts of Japan from Imari, Karatsu, and other ports.

In 1697, when Doi Toshimasu became the lord of Karatsu, some potters at Shiinomine were sued by Imari merchants for unpaid debts, and eight potters were expelled in 1701. Shiinomine declined rapidly thereafter. Nakazato Jinuemon, his eldest son, Tarouemon, and second son, Sakuhei, along with Ōshima Kaheiji and Shichibei, were not involved in the case, but while the matter was in court, they could not operate all the existing kilns alone. They therefore built an official factory of their own in 1701, where Jinuemon, Tarouemon, and Kaheiji made pieces for clan use.



The remains of the Ochawan kiln preserved on the grounds of the Nakazato Tarouemon Ceramic Studios.

In November, 1707, on clan order, the fourth-generation heads of the Nakazato family and the Ōshima family built an official kiln in Karatsu itself called the Bōzu-machi Ochawan kiln. In January, 1708, both families became vassals of the Doi clan. The official kiln at Shiinomine was abolished in 1723, and the property transferred to private ownership. In November, 1734, the fifth-generation heads of the Nakazato and Ōshima families transferred the Bōzu-machi factory to Tōjin-machi at the order of the clan. This, the Ochawan kiln, continued as an official kiln until the domain was abolished in 1871 following the Meiji Restoration. The pieces made at the Bōzu-machi kiln during the twenty-seven years between 1708 and 1734 are known as Doi Karatsu, and those made at the Ochawan kiln between 1734 and 1871 as Kenjō Karatsu. All types of utensils were made at these two kilns, including tea ceremony objects such as teabowls, water containers, vases, and *mukōzuke* food dishes, and rice bowls, plates, and large bowls as well as ornamental display pieces.

The Bōzu-machi kiln produced teabowls imitating Korean wares, while the Ochawan kiln specialized in pieces emulating blue-and-white porcelain. Typical examples of Kenjō Karatsu are the wares with cloud and crane designs in white inlay against blue or in black inlay against white.

After the Karatsu domain was abolished, the Ōshima family ceased to make pottery. The factory was used during the early part of the Meiji era (1868–1912) by Nakazato Ittō (Nakazato X), his younger brother Keisō, and Ittō's adopted son Ten'yū; and from



A large plate of Kenjō Karatsu. Cranes and clouds are inlaid in black slip.

the middle of Meiji to the end of the Taishō period (1912–1926) by Nakazato Ten'yū (Nakazato XI) and his younger brother Keitarō. It is now abandoned, but its remains are preserved on the grounds of the Nakazato Tarouemon Ceramic Studios.

Nakazato Shigeo succeeded to the hereditary name Nakazato Tarouemon in 1927 as the twelfth generation. He undertook excavations of Old Karatsu kiln sites in Saga and Nagasaki prefectures in an effort to revive the ceramic techniques of the old wares. He took the tonsure in 1970 at Daitoku-ji temple in Kyoto and was succeeded by his son Tadao (Nakazato Tarouemon XIII).

VARIETIES OF KARATSU

Okugōrai

Okugōrai is the most famous type among Karatsu teabowls, but the origin of the term is subject to varying interpretations, and little is definitely known. Yone-hakari, Nenuke, Zekan, and Nakao are types of Okugōrai. Teabowls were made after Korean prototypes, their forms imitating the Korean Ido, Komogai, Goki, Kakinoheta, and other forms. Okugōrai includes Decorated Karatsu and pouring bowls.

The clays used include a light brown type and clays that produce either crepelike crinkling (*chiri-men-jiwa*) or little or no such crinkling. Feldspathic glazes are most common, fired to a variety of colors including white, loquat yellow, light reddish brown, and a light celadon color.

Shards of Okugōrai teabowls have been unearthed at the Yakiyama, Kameya-no-Tani, Fujinkawachi, Ichinose Kōraijin, Kawagogama-no-Tani, Yoshinomoto, and Ōkusano kiln sites.

Seto Karatsu

Seto Karatsu, like Okugōrai, is a very ambiguous term, but encompasses two major varieties: Hon-de ("main" or "standard") and Kawakujira-de. Hon-de Seto Karatsu is a ware made with a white sandy clay that produces crinkling in firing. The feldspathic glaze fires gray, white, loquat yellow, and other colors and is often beaded (*kairagi*) on the trimmed area above the foot. Teabowls were made in the Soba,³ Komogai, and Goki shapes, invariably with a circular depression (*kagami*) at the inside bottom circled by three or four spur marks. Kawakujira-de is a variety imitating the Hon-de Seto Karatsu Soba type. The rim, which is painted in underglaze iron, was thought

to resemble a cross-section of whale skin (*kawakujira*), whence the term. It is generally made of white clay with three spur marks on the circular depression inside, and glossy on the center bulge (*token*) inside the foot ring. This type was probably made at Shiinamine in and after the eighteenth century.

Korean Karatsu (Chōsen Karatsu)

The late potter Tōhen Kanehara observed that the term *Chōsen Karatsu* is used in two ways. With regard to old pieces, it means those made by the paddled (*tataki*) method, and today it refers to pots that display both Mottled Karatsu and iron amber glazes. Korean Karatsu pieces made by the *tataki* method are generally lightweight with bases of the flat (*ita-okoshi*), shell impressed (*kai kōdai*), and rice chaff (*momigara kōdai*) types. A wave pattern (*seikaiha*) remains on the inside, and the exterior is covered with an amber iron glaze (*tataki yū*). This Karatsu glaze is the same as the Korean type known as *irabo* in Japan. The term "Korean Karatsu" derives from the fact that it is frequently difficult to distinguish between such wares made in Japan and Korea, and as the term is used today, refers to pieces fabricated by the coil-and-throw (*ita-okoshi*) and paddling (*tataki*) methods and covered with rice-straw ash and iron glazes.

Decorated Karatsu (E-Garatsu)

Almost all the Ko-Garatsu kilns made Decorated Karatsu, the painted decoration of which was done with a water solution of iron oxide and, rarely, with a copper glaze, and covered with feldspathic glaze. Some rare examples are covered with a rice-straw ash glaze (Mottled Decorated Karatsu). Designs were either faithful imitations of Yi dynasty Korean works or Japanized motifs in the Oribe style. In many cases they are identical to Shino and Oribe designs. The decorative motifs are either abstract, such as dots, lines, circles or crossed lines, or realistic. Some of the common realistic designs are pampas grass, reeds, bamboo, aquatic weeds, pine, plum, fish, plovers, the water wheel, and the pine covered mountain. Korean or Chinese characters and Japanese *hiragana* syllabary letters were also used for decoration.

Mottled Karatsu (Madara-Garatsu)

This variety of Karatsu ware gains its name from the tendency of the rice-straw ash glaze to become mottled (*madara*). The glaze fires pink where it has come into direct contact with flame (oxidizing) and white

in a neutral atmosphere. White Karatsu (Shiro-Garatsu) is a term for this glaze, which fires white, although the term is also used for a feldspathic glaze. Madara Kawakujira is a variant in which the rim is painted with an iron glaze.

Excavated Karatsu (Horidashi Karatsu)

Many fine examples of Karatsu unearthed on old kiln sites were adapted for use as tea ceremony utensils by tea masters around the mid-nineteenth century. These pieces make up an important category all their own.

THE PADDLING TECHNIQUE (*Tataki-zukuri*)

The paddling technique, in which a piece fashioned by coiling is beaten with a paddle or block of wood, has a very long history. Thai scholars have recently found evidence that peoples of Thai ancestry who originally lived south of the Yangtze River made earthenware vessels by this method in the fifth century B.C. In Thailand, pottery fabricated by this technique is called *mo thanon*, meaning "round-bottomed pan." Ware of this kind made in Southeast Asia was imported to Japan in the early seventeenth century, when trade with the kingdom of Ayutthaya was at its height. Such pieces were highly favored among arbiters of tea ceremony taste for use as water containers or waste water jars. With the expansion of Han dynasty China, the Thai tribes migrated southward into Yunnan, Indochina, Thailand, and the Malay Peninsula. Large urns, storage jars, and other vessels are still made by the paddling technique in

these regions. The pots are formed without a wheel and fired without use of a kiln.

The paddling technique was introduced from China to the Korean peninsula in prehistoric times, and the wares thus formed were high fired once knowledge of the climbing kiln, developed in the Jiangnan district of China, became widespread around the first century. This was Kimhae earthenware, the forerunner of Paekche, Silla, and Karak pottery. The techniques were eventually transmitted to Japan, leading to the production of Sue ware. The relation between Sue and Ko-Garatsu wares is as yet unknown. Paddling is still used in various parts of Korea for making large jars. In northern Kyushu, it survived until quite recently in the Matsuura area as a means of making large jars, although in some respects it appears to differ from that practiced in the period when Ko-Garatsu was being made. Ko-Garatsu pieces retain the markings left by the paddles, while in more recent pieces, they have been purposely removed.

The Paddling Technique in Ko-Garatsu Ware

1. A wooden bat is fixed to the potter's wheel and wood ash sprinkled on it. Excess ash is removed while revolving the wheel counterclockwise, and the bare part of the wheel is wet with water. A lump of clay, beaten with the palm of the hand into a disk, is placed on the ash and pounded to fix it to the bat. The size of the pot base is then marked on the clay.
2. A coil of clay about 1 inch (2 cm) in diameter is held in the left hand and fastened to the base with the fingertips. It is then coiled upward and pinched into



Korean Yi dynasty paddled sake bottle, irabo glaze.

Paddled earthen ware water container, excavated at Ayutthaya, Thailand.

