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Tomimoto Kenkichi and the discourse of modern Japanese ceramics

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BOSTON UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

Dissertation

**TOMIMOTO KENKICHI AND THE DISCOURSE OF
MODERN JAPANESE CERAMICS**

by

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gave me each time I visited.¹ Yamamoto Shigeo possesses an encyclopedic knowledge of all things Tomimoto, and he opened my eyes to the complexities of this research.

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¹ As the time of this writing, the museum has ceased operations under that name. As of March 20, 2013, it is now the Tomimoto Kenkichi Bunka Shiryōkan 富本憲吉文化資料館 and open Fridays and Saturdays only. Since the death of the museum's founder, Tsujimoto Isamu 辻本勇, in 2008, some of its art and archival materials have been moved to, or are in the process of being moved to, the Hyogo Museum of Ceramic Art and the Kyoto City University of Arts.

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**TOMIMOTO KENKICHI AND
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ABSTRACT

In Japan, ceramics has long been considered a medium associated with elevated aesthetic expression and high cultural capital. However, the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries saw transformations of its epistemological underpinnings. The collapse of the feudal system gave rise to the multivalenced concept of “art craft” (*bijutsu kōgei*) that included “art ceramics.” For individual artists like Tomimoto Kenkichi (1886–1963), ceramics traversed a parallel path with other mediums of modern art that emphasized self-expression and hybridizations of multiple geo-historical sources. Ultimately, these ceramics became significant state-supported symbols of the nation.

An analysis of the art, praxis, and theories of Tomimoto Kenkichi presents an ideal case study for illuminating the central mechanisms responsible for the emergence and development of modern Japanese art ceramics. With a wide angle yet critical perspective lacking in previous studies, this dissertation not only reveals Tomimoto’s complex individual role in the history of modern ceramics, but also sheds light on the ontology of modern Japanese craft itself. By considering Tomimoto’s entire oeuvre—

including calligraphy, ceramics, design goods, painting, and prints—we may track the development of his modernist embrace of the direct observation of nature, abstract form, and original expression. His praxis, synergistically modeled on William Morris and Ogata Kenzan, reveals a modernist stance towards Japanese literati culture in which ceramics became a medium negotiating between British Arts and Crafts design; modernist European sculpture; and Chinese, Korean, and Japanese historical ceramics.

The dissertation's diachronic structure charts artistic concepts, ideologies, and creative works from the late Meiji to the mid-Shōwa eras, relying on formal analysis as well as organizational analysis of pedagogical systems, art organizations, and exhibition structures. Chapter One considers Tomimoto's lineal inheritances, university education, and self-study. Chapter Two explores Tomimoto's discourse of self-expression and the equivalency of artistic mediums. Chapter Three deconstructs the image of the ceramic vessel and Tomimoto's discourse of ceramic form according to respective engagements with Joseon porcelain and modernist sculpture. Chapter Four analyzes the sinophilic and modernist aspects of his overglaze enamel porcelain. Finally, Chapter Five surveys the role of exhibitions and preservation efforts in positioning ceramics as art and national tradition.

PREFACE

At the ceramics department of Musashino Art University in the mid-1990s, I was fortunate to be a student of Katō Tatsumi 加藤達美.² He was famously a man of few words and infrequent praise (I still recall the thrill of hearing him tell me that my wheel throwing was “not completely unskillful.”) He did not lecture about Tomimoto or any other modern ceramists. But, over many afternoons drinking *sencha* around the research room table, my classmates and I leaned on the words Katō-sensei spoke. These were, in hindsight, transmissions of many of Tomimoto’s key messages. Two stand out. One was the criticism of *Mingei* ideology, particularly the hypocrisy of craftspeople making “folk craft” without regard for their consciousness of expression and modern context. The second, related, message was the importance, above all, of original expression; this was perhaps Tomimoto’s most lasting effect on contemporary ceramists in Japan negotiating between self-expression and thousands of years of ceramics heritage.

When I entered graduate studies in Asian art history in the United States, I was stunned to find so little in English written about Tomimoto, since in Japan he is regarded as a titan of modern ceramics.³ With the encouragement of my advisers Elizabeth ten Grotenhuis and Qianshen Bai, I wrote my master’s thesis at Boston University on

² He passed away in 2003 at the age of 74. I wrote a short biographical article about him, with a focus on the legacy of his father, ceramist Katō Hajime, in 1998: “Tatsumi Kato: A Lifetime in Ceramics,” *Ceramics: Art and Perception* 34 (Spring 1998): 30–33.

³ While English translations of short essays appear in some Japanese exhibition catalogues on Tomimoto, there is to date no English-language monograph focused on his work. Two excellent short journal articles that introduce his work are Yuko Kikuchi, “Tomimoto Kenkichi” *Crafts* 148 (1997): 22–3 and Sir Hugh Cortazzi, “Kenkichi Tomimoto: Ceramic Artist,” *Arts of Asia* 30, no. 4 (July/Aug. 2000): 42–53.

Tomimoto.⁴ But much more digging was required in order to understand the complexity of his oeuvre and praxis. This dissertation is the outcome.

⁴ “Tomimoto Kenkichi: The Emergence of a Modern Artist-Ceramist in Twentieth-Century Japan” (MA thesis, Boston University, 2001).

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NOTES TO THE READER

Chinese and Japanese names are given in the customary order of surname followed by given name. The romanization systems used are the modified Hepburn (*hyōjun*) system for Japanese, Pinyin for Chinese, and the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, ROK Revised Romanization of Korean. According to the modified Hepburn system, a macron over a vowel indicates it is a long vowel, with the exception of place names that are written without macrons.

Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are by the author.

In citations, if a magazine or book published primarily in Japanese has both a Japanese title and one in a foreign language, I indicate that by romanizing the Japanese name followed by a slash and the alternative foreign name. Otherwise, translations of titles from foreign languages to English appear within brackets.

In the text and in the illustration section, titles of works of art by Tomimoto generally correspond to those that he inscribed on the lids of their storage boxes.

Time periods mentioned in the text include:

China

Tang	618–906
Jin	1115–1234
Ming	1368–1644
Qing	1644–1911

Korea

Joseon	1392–1910
Japanese Occupation	1910–1945

Japan

Heian	794–1185
Muromachi	1392–1573
Momoyama	1573–1600
Edo (Tokugawa)	1600–1868
Meiji	1868–1912
Taishō	1912–1926
Shōwa	1926–1989

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BLA = Bernard Leach Archives (at Crafts Study Centre)

CSC = Crafts Study Centre (University for the Creative Arts, Farnham, Surrey, UK)

TKKA = Tomimoto Kenkichi Kinenkan Archives (The Tomimoto Kenkichi Memorial Museum, Nara)¹

¹ This refers to archival materials I accessed there in the period of time through 2010.

INTRODUCTION

Defining Craft and Conceptualizing Ceramics in Modern Japan

It is not an exaggeration to say that in the twentieth century, no nation was engaged with craft as much as Japan in terms of creation, exhibition, and discourse. Craft in Japan has always carried a meaning distinct from its Euro-American counterparts bound to the terms “vernacular,” “decorative,” and “minor” since at least the sixteenth century when Giorgio Vasari designated painting, sculpture and architecture as the three *arti del disegno* of “fine art.” In sixteenth-century Japan, in contrast, tea connoisseurs such as Sen no Rikyū (千利休, 1522–91), tea master to the most powerful men of his day, praised the aesthetic values of ceramic vessels as pivotal objects within the ritualized drinking of tea (*chanoyu*). Ceramics and other “craft,” particularly in the Muromachi period and onwards, were seen as objects of potentially high cultural capital, equivalent or even surpassing that of painting or other artistic mediums. I will outline in this section how craft, like so many aspects of Japanese culture, came to have a distinct set of practices, discourses, and meanings in modern Japan.

“Craft” and its closest Japanese equivalent, “*kōgei*,” share in meaning similar emphases on skill, but each carries a complex etymology and nuanced set of meanings. According to *The Craftsman* published in England in the 1770s and 1780s, “craft” originally implied shrewdness, and, as noted above, by the post-Renaissance period it came to designate objects of a lower status than the fine arts. The etymology of “*kōgei*” is more nuanced and complex; it was not, as Satō Dōshin notes, a neologism inspired or

based on Western concepts, as was the case with “*bijutsu*” (art), “*kaiga*” (painting) or “*chōkoku*” (sculpture).¹ Etymologically, the “*kō*” 工 of *kōgei* referred originally to one of two concepts: a person standing between heaven and earth, or a person possessing skill.² Importantly, during and through the end of the Edo period, the concept of “*kō*” was linked to medium designations associated with particular skilled enterprises, as in “*gakō*” (画工, painter) or “*tōkō*” (陶工, potter).³ Regardless of medium, “*kō*” implied a particular skill or set of skills. United with “*gei*” 芸 or “art,” then, *kōgei* implied both the skill of art and the art of skill.

Several turning points for the emergence of modern craft occurred in Japan. The first arose after the collapse of the Tokugawa shogunate, when economic and social ruptures directly impacted practically all aspects of the craft world. Craftsmen had been perceived in the Edo period, according to Confucian order, as having a higher status than merchants. Some craftsmen, such as the Takatori potters of the Kuroda domain, were appointed as daimyo craftsmen (*goyō saikunin*) and considered of equal status to members of the warrior class whose rank was highest.⁴ With the collapse of daimyo,

¹ Satō Dōshin, “*Nihon bijutsu*” *tanjō: kindai Nihon no “kotoba” to senryaku* (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1996), 54. For an analysis of “*bijutsu*,” “*kōgei*,” and “*bijutsu kōgei*” as defined in the Meiji era, see Satō Dōshin, *Modern Japanese Art and the Meiji State: The Politics of Beauty* trans. Nara Hitoshi (Los Angeles: Getty Publications, 2011), 67–72.

² Satō Dōshin, “*Nihon bijutsu*” *tanjō*, 54.

³ *Ibid.*, 55–56.

⁴ The case of Takatori potters serving their patrons, the Kuroda daimyo, is discussed in Andrew Maske, *Potters and Patrons in Edo Period Japan: Takatori Ware and the Kuroda Domain* (Surrey: Ashgate, 2011). “The Takatori potters, although craftsmen, held warrior-class status as *goyō saikunin*, a term translated in this volume as ‘official craftsmen,’ but meaning something closer to ‘workmen at the lord’s behest.’ In this capacity, they received stipends in rice like other

these elevated craftsmen lost their patrons. Two often-cited examples of this rupture are the losses of patronage suffered by metalworkers and Buddhist statue producers. In 1876, a Meiji government decree forbade samurai from wearing swords, and metalwork masters were forced to quickly turn their energies towards new formats, novel objects, and fresh sources of patronage. Similarly, when Buddhism was decreed to be no longer the religion of the Meiji state, Buddhist statue sculptors like Takamura Kōun (高村光雲, 1852–1934) turned to new forms of secular sculpture production in order to remain financially solvent.

The loss of support of local craft workshops on the part of the roughly 260 daimyo, who lost their governing authority in 1871, was abated somewhat by new government measures of support. The Meiji government supported international and domestic exposition participation by Japanese artists and craftsmen as part of a broad promotion of “civilization and enlightenment” (*bunmei kaika*). The transition of support from daimyo to Meiji government institutions was gradual. For example, even before the Meiji era began, Satsuma and Saga ceramics became popular objects of display at the 1867 Exposition Universelle in Paris. Meiji crafts were commodities with the potential to advance the Japanese economy. The Kiryu Kōshō Kaisha (First Trading and Manufacturing Company), a government-supported agency, oversaw domestic design and production of crafts arts for export abroad. The Japanese government also helped private companies establish international export trade, such as the Ōzeki Company and the

warriors, and were even assigned formal military units, although there are no records that indicate the potters ever actually trained for combat,” xvi.

Maruki Company.⁵ The most pivotal historical transition, though, occurred at the World's Columbian Exhibition of 1893 in Chicago, where for the first time Japanese “craft” objects were exhibited in the “fine arts” pavilion. Part of the acceptance of craft within the fine arts pavilion had to do with the approach to surface by craftsmen. One example is the relatively new mode of cloisonné enamel which was largely celebrated for its ability to replicate painterly modes parallel with *nihonga* styles.⁶

Domestically in the Meiji era, the Ministry of Commerce and Agriculture organized expositions of craft objects. These events showcased craft to the delight of the Imperial Household Ministry (Kunaisho), which became an enthusiastic patron of crafts. Craft artists displayed works at the Ministry of Agriculture, Commerce, and Industry-sponsored Nōten, the Concourse Exhibition of Design and Applied Arts. Crafts were excluded from the first Ministry of Education Buntens art exhibition in 1907, as well as later Imperial Salon exhibitions until 1927.

Once Japan entered the modern stage of expositions, several neologisms appeared that altered and confused the conceptual grounding of *kōgei*. In the Meiji era, the terms “*kaiga*” (painting) and “*chōkoku*” (sculpture) fell within the realm of the new concept of “*bijutsu*” (art). What was excluded from “*bijutsu*,” then, was “*kōgei*” or “craft.” Before the Meiji era, there was no hierarchical distinction between “craft” and “painting” or “sculpture,” but in the Meiji era a clear division between “craft” and “art” emerged, one

⁵ Oliver Impey and Joyce Seaman, *Japanese Decorative Arts of the Meiji Period, 1868–1912* (Oxford: Ashmolean Museum, 2005), 6.

⁶ See, for example, Namikawa Sōsuke’s c. 1890 kidney-shaped tray with an image of a pair of pigeons, repr. in *Ibid.*, 98–99.

that reflected the Euro-American hierarchical ranking of painting and sculpture as the highest forms of art. A third term, “*bijutsu kōgei*,” was needed to refer to those crafted objects bearing properties of or with the potential to *perform* as art, and also to distinguish “*kōgei*” from its related term referring to industrially-manufactured objects, “*kōgyō*.” Thus, we find the term *bijutsu kōgei* used in 1887 to refer to the third division of curriculum at the Tokyo School of Fine Arts, and in 1890 to refer to one of four divisions of objects on display at the Imperial Museum.⁷

Although objects of ceramics, metal, and lacquer may have been labeled *bijutsu kōgei* previously, their position as objects made by individuals within Japanese systems of artistic praxis was relatively weak until 1927, when the ninth Imperial Fine Arts Academy Exhibition (Monbusho Bijutsu Tenrankai Buntan, or Teiten) finally accepted craft works as “Category four: *Bijutsu kōgei*.” As a result of this incorporation, collective activities and group formations of craft artists in the modern period in Japan can be seen as emerging along similar lines as those associated with painting, prints, and other art forms. Groups were born, then when factions split new groups emerged, and so forth. Such affiliation with one or more groups was important for most modern Japanese artists in order to exhibit their work in major exhibitions organized for group members.

The education systems for craft shifted as well in the modern period, from workshop-based instruction to urban technical school and art university curricula. Craft education had been enmeshed in the feudal system of workshop heads overseeing small

⁷ Satō, “*Nihon bijutsu*” *tanjō*, 56–57. Alice Y. Tseng, *The Imperial Museums of Meiji Japan: Architecture and the Art of the Nation* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2008), 173–6.

factory operations divided according to task. In education as well as industry and government, hired foreigners (*oyatoi gaijin*) typified the new approach to learning which relied on a whole-hearted embrace of Western technologies. In the case of ceramics, German chemist Gottfried Wagener (1831–92) played a major role in introducing new techniques for underglazes and firing at various factories and schools in Japan where he lectured. He was also hired by the government to advise on Japan’s participation in foreign expositions of craft. For wood craft, the Italian sculptor Vincenzo Ragusa (1841–1927) encouraged to his students figurative sculpture as a viable form of object making that could appeal to foreign markets and bridge the realms of fine art and craft. Both Ragusa and Wagener were associated with the Kōbu Bijutsu Gakkō (Technical Art School, 1876–83). In 1887, at the opening of the Tokyo School of Fine Arts, *bijutsu kōgei* was taught alongside courses in painting and sculpture, but *bijutsu kōgei* courses were limited to metalwork and lacquer.

For the general public, craft also became associated with folk culture. The rapid expansion of urban centers in the Meiji era widened the cultural gap between center and periphery, and between city and country, providing urbanites an outsider’s stature in nostalgic appreciation of rural culture. The folklorist Yanagita Kunio (柳田國男, 1875–1962), as Harry Harootunian has described him, was intensely interested in preserving the past to “compensate for the loss experienced in modern life by recalling the memory of a prior form of existence whose traces, presumably, remained available in the

countryside.”⁸ By the inter-war period (1918–37), a world-wide search amongst writers and other intellectuals for similar national folk culture identities was strong. While on one hand these movements may be interpreted as anti-modernist, the conditions under which they developed were spawned by processes of modernity.⁹

Mingei, or folk craft, philosophy praised the unconscious and collective enterprises of craft. In 1925 Yanagi Sōetsu (Muneyoshi 柳宗悦, 1889–1961) proposed this utopian aesthetic of a “Kingdom of Beauty” in Buddhist terms. Aspects of Yanagi’s grand vision parallel the utopianism of the Arts and Crafts movement and its offshoot in Germany, the Deutscher Werkbund, but Yanagi did not propose an economic social structure for which individuals should strive. Yanagi rejected as well the collaborations between artists and designers within industrial production and architecture. Yanagi was a purist who sought to preserve Japan and Asia’s past quite literally in his museum established in 1936, as well as to preserve crafts praxis as still performed, albeit in isolated pockets in rural Japan, in line with Yanagita’s interest in the preservation of folk culture.

The interest in folk culture was aligned with a search for national cultural identity at large. As Stephen Vlastos has argued, a turning point for modern Japan was the nation’s sense of “being Japanese” in order to stabilize and anchor culture in the face of

⁸ H.D. Harootunian, “Figuring the Folk,” in Stephen Vlastos, ed., *Mirror of Modernity: Invented Traditions of Modern Japan*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 146.

⁹ Noriko Aso argues that *Mingei* (Japanese folk craft) ideology paralleled fascist ideologies in terms of the glorification of the masses “without liberating them” and the promotion of normative aesthetics that could “heal” society. “Mediating the Masses: Yanagi Sōetsu and Fascism,” in Alan Tansman, ed., *The Aesthetics of Japanese Fascism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 138–54.

complex social and industrial modernization processes.¹⁰ These processes produced, according to Dipesh Chakrabarty, “the experience of dislocations in the flow of time.”¹¹ The 1930s saw an effluence of writings on “culturalism” (*bunkashugi*) by such writers as Tanizaki Jun’ichirō (谷崎潤一郎, 1886–1965), Nishida Kitarō (西田幾多郎, 1870–1945), Watsuji Tetsurō (和辻哲郎, 1889–1960), Yanagita Kunio and Yokomitsu Riichi (横光 利一, 1898–1947), who wrote about the “‘return’ to the ‘native place of the spirit’ (*Nihon kaiki*).”¹² The *Mingei* movement grew at the same time, and its leader, Yanagi Sōetsu, promoted the idea that a craft object could perform as a synecdoche for national culture. This idea per se was not new or limited to Japan; at the 1851 London Great Exhibition (the Crystal Palace exhibition), utilitarian objects exuding aesthetic refinements were promoted as “national products.”¹³ However, *Mingei* objects conveyed not contemporary technological achievement or aesthetic refinement, but pre-modern Japanese cultural attributes of goodness and truth. As M. William Steele has described it, “the *Mingei* movement became a sort of moral crusade against a diseased civilization.”¹⁴ In this sense, modern Japanese craft, and particularly craft designated as *Mingei*, was

¹⁰ “Tradition: Past/Present Culture and Modern Japanese History,” in *Mirror of Modernity: Invented Traditions of Modern Japan*, 11.

¹¹ “Afterward: Revisiting the Tradition/Modernity Binary,” in *Ibid.*, 289.

¹² See Tetsuo Najita and H.D. Harootunian, “Japan’s Revolt against the West,” in Bob Tadashi Wakabayashi, ed., *Modern Japanese Thought* (Cambridge University Press, 1998), 231.

¹³ Isabelle Frank, ed., *The Theory of Decorative Art: An Anthology of European and American Writings, 1750–1940* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000), 5.

¹⁴ “Nationalism and Cultural Pluralism in Modern Japan: Sōetsu Yanagi and the Mingei Movement,” in *Diversity in Japanese Culture*, ed. John Christopher Maher and Gaynor Macdonald (Oxon: Routledge, 2011), 31.

distinguishable from other modern genres of artistic expression associated with culturally-specific aesthetic values—such as *nihonga*—in its potential moral dimension.

By at least the beginning of the Taishō era, modern Japanese craft artists began to champion individual expression as the primary motivation for their creations. Subjectivity in modern Japan was proclaimed by many cultural leaders beginning in the 1910s. Takamura Kōtarō's (高村光太郎, 1883–1956) 1910 essay, “A Green Sun,” published in the magazine *Subaru*, typifies late Meiji and early Taishō artists' embrace of individuality in artistic expression. Published the same year that Herwath Walden in Berlin established the gallery and newspaper *Der Sturm* (The Storm), in which the term “Expressionism” was first used, Takamura's essay occupies an important place in the history of global modernism. An often-quoted cultural expression of individuality during the Taishō era was Natsume Sōseki's 1914 speech “My Individualism.” To an audience at Gakushuin University, Sōseki urged a respect for one another's individualism as the cure for the alienation of modern Japanese society caused by the decline of group identity.¹⁵ The ways in which “A Green Sun” and “My Individualism” resonated with the art and praxis of Tomimoto in the 1910s will be explored in more depth in Chapter Two.

Craft in the context of modern Japanese history is a prime example of the shifting mechanisms of the forces, base, and relations of production—the division of labor itself. Fundamentally, what had been primarily in the pre-modern era a daimyo-sponsored set of relations of production opened up to a free market economy cordoned and bolstered by

¹⁵ See Takashina Shuji, “Natsume Sōseki and the Development of Modern Japanese Art,” in J. Thomas Rimer, ed., *Culture and Identity: Japanese Intellectuals during the Interwar Years* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990), 273–81.

new institutional mechanisms of control and support. The economic conditions of the art market form one marker of global twentieth century modernity; internationally, conditions for modern artists in the twentieth century precipitated the emergence of new relations between gallerists, dealers, and artists.¹⁶ Within new market economies, handmade objects could become commodities alongside art objects. Modern “craft,” distinct from “decorative arts” or “design”—based on the reliance on the handmade or pre-modern processes of manufacture—gained economic value according to its mastery of techniques and evocation of a set of aesthetic and cultural values.¹⁷

Japan’s economic modernizing processes also prompted dislocations of population sectors away from regional centers formerly controlled by feudal daimyo to larger urban centers. Crafts makers could, with increased efficiency and costs associated with goods transport, re-locate themselves according to a new set of economic factors based on export wares. One example of this trend is the case of the potter Makuzu Kōzan (1842–1916), who set up a workshop of Satsuma ware in Yokohama.¹⁸ Production of Satsuma ceramics, probably first made in Kyushu at the Satsuma daimyo’s Kagoshima kilns, sprang up throughout Japan in the Meiji era. Kōzan’s co-opting of the style from

¹⁶ See Michael C. Fitzgerald, *Making Modernism: Picasso and the Creation of the Market Place for Modern Art* (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1995).

¹⁷ Brian Moeran borrows Veblen’s term “honorific consumption” to refer to the practice by members of industrialized societies of purchasing handmade goods that are, to quote Veblen, “more serviceable for the purpose of pecuniary respectability; hence the marks of hand labour come to be honorific, and the goods which exhibit these marks take rank as of a higher grade than the corresponding machine product.” T. Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (Allen and Unwin, 1925), 159, quoted in Brian Moeran, “Japanese Ceramics and the Discourse of ‘Tradition,’” *Journal of Design History* 3, no. 4 (1990): 223.

¹⁸ See Clare Pollard, *Master Potter of Meiji Japan: Makuzu Kōzan (1842–1916) and his Workshop* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

Kyoto, where he learned it, to Yokohama represents the geographic fluidity associated with modern market forces in Japan. Many craft styles that were in the Edo period tightly tethered to discrete geographic regions based on clan support circulated fluidly through the actions of individuals seeking economic prosperity.

At stake in the developments of ceramics, in particular, was the ontology of craft in the twentieth century and its resurrection within the canons of Japanese artistic value. After the iconoclastic shifts of Japanese craft in the late nineteenth century, this was a definitive turning point for ceramics as “art ceramics” (*bijutsu tōki* 美術陶器). This development is pertinent not simply as a polemical matter but in terms of the authority of the Japanese state, specifically its embrace of ceramics as a uniquely Japanese form of material expression and cultural capital. With the support of the state, ceramics assimilated into the same genealogy of modern art as prints, photographs and paintings.

Ceramics by Tomimoto Kenkichi (富本憲吉, 1886–1963) are predominantly *bijutsu tōki*. This is a term with multiple interpretations, since what constitutes this genre has accrued a complex set of meanings according to changes in the ways ceramics have been evaluated since the term was first deployed in the Meiji era. *Bijutsu tōki* is inextricably imbedded within *bijutsu kōgei* and its nuanced meanings as described above. In Tomimoto’s 1940 book *Seitō yoroku* (Ceramics-making records) we find his essay “*Bijutsu tōki*.” One passage conveys his perception of the concept and stance towards it as an artist:

Of late, I feel a love for ceramics as great as I ever have, and I have come to think that within what is generally regarded as ceramics (*tōki*), two large fields exist: art ceramics (*bijutsu tōki*) and industrial ceramics (*kogyō*)

tōki). There is also a division between non-utilitarian things that are highly valued, and utilitarian things for everyday life.... Since I am a person engaged in the making of ceramics, I am not particularly concerned with separating them. The principles of craft dictate that beauty arises from an artist's use of technique to respond to materials.¹⁹

Tomimoto seemingly rejects classification as a maker of either type, advocating for the appraisal of his work based on its way of bringing out the beauty of materials. Yet in their gallery and competitive exhibition display, criticism, and general appraisal, the ceramics of Tomimoto should be considered as *bijutsu tōki* since their epistemological foundation was art, not industrially produced tableware.

This dissertation takes Tomimoto as a case study through which to illuminate the history and theory of modern Japanese ceramics. My primary goal is to investigate, through Tomimoto's art, praxis, and context, how ceramics were defined in modern Japan and to reach conclusions about the ontology of modern Japanese craft as a whole. Tomimoto presents an excellent case study because he was an active agent in the processes of making ceramics art, exhibiting ceramics as art, drawing on transnational and transhistorical sources, and, above all, promoting original expression as a requirement for modern art, including ceramics. The entire scope of Tomimoto's oeuvre will be considered since it reveals the continuities and changes in modern Japanese ceramics history. This broad purview encourages a nuanced understanding of the complexities of Japanese craft and the most critical issues in its discourse, namely the relationship between "craft" and "art" and the role of ceramics as embodiments of Japanese national identity. While this dissertation is conceived as a monograph, it is not

¹⁹ *Seitō yoroku* (Tokyo: Shōshinsha, 1940), 15–30.

possible to convey with depth all of the ways in which Tomimoto played a role in modern Japanese art history. Although the boundaries of this study stretch from Tomimoto's birth to death, the primary years of emphasis will be from the 1920s, when Japanese ceramics were first exhibited as modern art, to the 1950s, when the Japanese government institutionalized the preservation of traditional crafts techniques. To reiterate, I seek to chart Tomimoto's role in the mechanisms—artistic, pedagogical, and organizational—through which ceramics became recognized as a significant form of modern Japanese art.

A Concise Biography of Tomimoto Kenkichi

In practically all scholarship on Tomimoto, his work is divided according to the three main places he lived as a mature artist: Yamato/Nara (1913–26), Soshigaya/Tokyo (1926–46) and Kyoto (1946 or 1949–1963). These phases are associated, in turn, with the following media and techniques: Raku, porcelain and blue underglaze in Yamato; porcelain with overglaze enamels in Tokyo; and works with overglaze enamels and gold and silver in Kyoto. Tomimoto conceded to this taxonomy, as it appeared in a monograph of his ceramics that he wrote with Naitō Tadashi in 1956.²⁰ This classification implies that his ceramics rigidly confined to these categories, when in fact he worked with multiple clay and surface approaches throughout his life. During all three periods, for example, he created undecorated white porcelain vessels. Paintings, prints, and calligraphy—important to his oeuvre—are excluded also from these categories.

²⁰ Naitō Tadashi, ed. *Tomimoto Kenkichi tōkishū* (Tokyo: Bijutsu Shuppansha, 1956).

Therefore, the following chapters will incorporate the analysis of a variety of object types produced alongside the ceramics he made conforming to the above media and techniques.

Tomimoto was born in 1883 in Ando-mura, Nara to a family of landowners. In the Edo period members of the family were regarded as large village headmen (*daishōya* 大庄屋) and until the World War II era continued to be landlords (*jinushi* 地主). At age eighteen, he enrolled in the design (*zuan*) division of the Tokyo School of Fine Arts (Tokyo Bijutsu Gakkō), where he majored in architecture and interior decorating. At twenty-two, he submitted his graduation project early and travelled to London, ostensibly to study stained glass and William Morris's theories. Late the next year, he travelled for four months on a research trip to France, Egypt, and India, and he returned to Tokyo in June, 1910. The following May, he returned to his hometown and around that time began his first experimentations with ceramics, after having already amassed a background in sketching, printmaking, and painting in watercolor and *nihonga* (Japanese-style painting) techniques.

His period working in Ando-mura (1913–26) was filled with enthusiastic self-study, interchange of information about ceramics and art with British artist Bernard Leach (1887–1979), work in a variety of design and art mediums, and—through frequent visits—engagement with the world of art and literature in the capital. In 1914, Tomimoto married the writer and feminist Otake Kazue (尾竹一枝, pen name Kōkichi/Beniyoshi 紅吉, 1893–1966). Daughter of the painter Otake Chikuda, Otake Kazue was active in

the feminist Bluestocking Society (*Seitōsha*) and she founded the magazine *Safuron*.²¹

The couple produced together a number of ceramics and calligraphic works and exhibited them in two 1918 joint exhibitions in Tokyo.²²

Tomimoto and his family moved to Tokyo in 1926. There, he established himself as a ceramist with national exposure and influence. In the Taishō and early Shōwa years, he was active with the travel, writing, and exhibition projects organized by the *Mingei* (folk craft) group of artists and enthusiasts led by Yanagi Sōetsu. In 1927, Tomimoto established the first craft section of the Kokuten (National Painting Exhibition) and that same year became a member of the Imperial Arts Academy (Teikoku Geijutsukai). In 1935, he began teaching craft theory at the Imperial Art School (Teikoku Bijutsu Gakkō),

²¹ For a biography of her life, see Takai Yō and Oriie Miyako, *Azami no hana: Tomimoto Kazue shōden* [Thistle flower: biographical sketch of Tomimoto Kazue] (Tokyo: Domesu Shuppan, 1985). Her involvement with *Seitō* and relationship to its founder, Hiratsuka Raicho, is described in Kurosawa Arika, “1912-nen no Raichō to Kōkichi: ‘Josei kaihō’ to lezubianizumu o megutte [Raichō and Kōkichi in 1912: centering on ‘The emancipation of women’ and lesbianism],” in *Bungaku shakai e chikyū* [Literature, toward society and the globe], ed. Nishida Masaru (Tokyo: Sanichi shobō, 1996), 309–27, and Michiko Suzuki, *Becoming Modern Women: Love and Female Identity in Prewar Japanese Literature and Culture* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010).

²² This art was the subject of a 2011 exhibition at the Toyama-shi Tōgeikan. Their joint ceramics include tea and coffee sets with *sometsuke* flower and leaf motifs of a type not seen in Tomimoto’s individual work. Several women’s journals that featured Tomimoto’s articles also included articles by Otake Kazue. Such artistic husband-wife collaborations were not new in the context of Japanese art history. Ike Taiga and Tokuyama Gyokuran, for example, produced joint paintings in the eighteenth century. See Stephen Addiss, “The Three Women of Gion,” in *Flowering in the Shadows: Women in the History of Japanese Painting*, ed. Marsha Weidner (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1990) and Felice Fischer, *Ike Taiga and Tokuyama Gyokuran: Japanese Masters of the Brush* (Philadelphia/New Haven: Philadelphia Museum of Art/Yale University Press, 2007).

and in 1944–1945 he taught ceramics at the Tokyo School of Fine Arts (Tokyo Bijutsu Gakkō).²³

In 1945, after having fled the air raids of Tokyo with a small group of students to Takayama, he moved back to the Kansai area, first returning to Ando-mura and then settling in Kyoto where he remained the rest of his life. Startlingly, he left his wife, children, and all personal belongings in Tokyo, an incident I describe further in Chapter Four. In the postwar years Tomimoto became outspoken in his criticism of the politicization of art institutions, and in 1947 he established the Shinshō Bijutsu Kōgeikai (The New Craftspeople's Art Craft Society) which attracted others who had, like him, resigned from the government-run art academy. Despite his vociferous criticism of the latter, he accepted two prestigious state awards, the designation of Holder of Important Intangible Cultural Property for his *iro-e jiki* (overglaze enamel porcelain) in 1955 and the Order of Cultural Merit in 1961.

Given the shifts in his professional endeavors, the question remains: What was Tomimoto like as a person?²⁴ Insights may be gleaned from two artworks for which

²³ He taught at the Teikoku Bijutsu Gakkō 1935–7 and the Tokyo School of Fine Arts beginning in June 1944 for a year and a half, although his official tenure there was two years. The Imperial Art School is today's Musashino Art University, and the Tokyo School of Fine Arts is Tokyo University of the Arts.

²⁴ As listed in the bibliography, the major monographs and museum catalogues on Tomimoto all include general biographical information, but there is not a book-length biographical text on him. Nakayama Shūichi wrote a series of articles that includes many biographical details of Tomimoto's early years and his relationship to his wife Otake Kazue. "Tomimoto Kenkichi to Kazue no kazoku no seijigaku (I)," *Journal of Cultural Studies in Body, Design, Media, Music and Text* 8, no. 1, (2008): 43–75. "Tomimoto Kenkichi to Kazue no kazoku no seijigaku (II)," *Journal of Cultural Studies in Body, Design, Media, Music and Text* 8, no. 2 (2009):159–200. "Tomimoto Kenkichi to Kazue no kazoku no seijigaku (III)," *Journal of Cultural Studies in Body, Design, Media, Music and Text* 9 no. 2 (2010): 129–64. "Tomimoto Kenkichi to Kazue no

Tomimoto provided the subject. In 1914 Yanagi Keisuke (柳敬助, 1881–1923) painted *Shiro shatsu no okoto* (*Man with White Shirt*), a *yōga* (Western-style oil painting) portrait of twenty-eight year old Tomimoto (**Fig. 0.1**). Sitting in a summer reclining chair, he appears reflective. His bow tie and English-style hat suggest that he might still be in England. Throughout his life, Tomimoto was described as having the appearance of a foreigner. One of his students, the ceramist Yanagihara Mutsuo, reflected upon his first encounter with him at the Kyoto City College of Fine Arts in 1953, a time of continued “strife and poverty” following World War II. To his students he had the “air of an artist or sculptor,” looking like a “foreigner (*gaijin*)...with the stylishness of an English gentleman,” wearing “knickers that looked like deerskin of a kind no one else wore...a type of slip-on shoes that did not exist at that time,” and a “shabby (*usugitanai*) beret.”²⁵

In contrast, a well-known photographic portrait of Tomimoto by the celebrated art photographer Nojima Yasuzō (野島康三 b. Hiromasa 尋正, 1889–1964) suggests different aspects of his persona (**Fig. 0.2**). No longer a young man newly returned from England and lost in reverie, Tomimoto appears in Nojima’s photograph, at age thirty-seven, caught in an intense emotive state, starkly revealing himself to the viewer. This photograph suggests his internal grappling with artistic identity in the Taishō era. As he

kazoku no seijigaku (IV),” *Journal of Cultural Studies in Body, Design, Media, Music and Text* 9, no. 2 (2010): 165–202.

²⁵ “Zadankai: Tomimoto Kenkichi, sono hito to sakuhin [Roundtable discussion: Tomimoto Kenkichi, the man and his work],” *Tōjiro* 33 (Feb. 2003): 38. According to historic records, Tomimoto’s only experience travelling to Europe was 1909 –10.

wrote to Bernard Leach in 1917, “I am still standing at the hard point of the East & West, old & new, and can not say clearly well combined... I am working so hard every day.”²⁶

To many, Tomimoto was not only a fellow artist but an associate in literary circles, beginning in 1910 with his association with the Shirakaba group. Throughout his life he wrote highly personal poems that were published in journals and, in later years, became the focus of calligraphic works on paper and ceramics.²⁷ His novelist and poet friends included Arishima Takeo (有島武郎, 1878–1923), Nagayo Yoshirō (長興善郎, 1888–1961), Mizuhara Shūōshi (水原秋桜子, 1892–1981), and Mushanokōji Saneatsu (武者小路 実篤/實篤, 1885–1976). For his friends’ books, he designed covers, a practice he began in 1912 and continued through his later years.²⁸ In a manner similar to the aforementioned portraits, in 1938 the prominent poet Mizuhara Shūōshi (水原秋桜子, 1892–1981) published in *Mita bungaku* a poem about Tomimoto.²⁹ “Tomimoto Kenkichi shi no tōyō 富本憲吉氏の陶窯 (Tomimoto Kenkichi’s ceramics kiln)” describes a bucolic summer day at the opening of the kiln. Skylarks sing, cucumber flowers bloom

²⁶ Letter to Bernard Leach dated April 10, 1917. TKKA.

²⁷ Poetry on ceramics surfaces is described in Chapter Four, and his poem, “Autumn Pleasures in the New House” of 1914, published in *Takujō*, is discussed in the Conclusion.

²⁸ His first major book design was in 1912, the cover for Kinoshita Mokutarō’s (木下 杢太郎, b. Ōta Masao 1885-1945) play *Izumiya somemonoten* [Izumi-ya Dyehouse]. This and other book designs are described in a 2009 pamphlet published by the Tomimoto Kenkichi Kinenkan, “Tomimoto Kenkichi no sōteihon 富本憲吉の装幀本.” It features short essays by Kaido Ryūkichi, Yamamoto Shigeo, and Yamada Toshiyuki and details Tomimoto’s engagement with these projects that are best understood as peripheral to his major work. For example, Tomimoto wrote in a letter to his daughter Tō dated Nov. 12, 1948: “Recently I did [the design for] Niwa Fumio’s 丹羽文雄 *Kōfuku* 幸福 [Happiness]. The contents are boring but the cover design is getting talked about (*hyōban to no koto*).”

²⁹ 13, no. 8 (August 1938): 79.

on the road leading to the kiln, and a fresh wind blows when the cold porcelain is placed on a table. Tomimoto was again the subject of a literary work as recently as 1996.

Tsutsumi Seiji (堤清二, 1927–), a childhood friend of Tomimoto’s son Sōkichi (富本壮吉, 1927–1989), published the novel *Owarinaki shukusai* (Endless festivals) based on his experiences interacting with the Tomimoto family during the early Shōwa era.³⁰

Throughout his life, Tomimoto also appeared as a public persona on the pages of popular magazines. A 1922 issue of *Shin katei* (New home) featured the photo-essay “Tomimoto Kenkichi san no tōjiki (Tomimoto Kenkichi’s ceramics,” **Fig. 0.3**). Images of his innovative *tōban* (ceramic discs), vessels, and ceramic frames surround a central portrait of Tomimoto and his wife Kazue.³¹ Such a presentation within a home magazine suggests that the two were regarded as models of modern Japanese domestic life, and that ceramics-making was a practice in keeping with modern culture. In the 1930s and later, his ceramics and hints on how to appreciate them were featured several times in the “Home” section of the Tokyo *Asahi* newspaper.³²

Tomimoto wrote for and was the subject of many art journal articles in which he was portrayed as an arts leader and modern literatus (*bunjin*). In a 1956 Domon Ken

³⁰ The novel is published under his pen name Tsujii Takashi 辻井喬. 終わりにき祝祭 (Tokyo: Shinchōsha 新潮社). Tsutsumi, former head of the Seibu Saison Group, published several works of fiction based on his life, including two related to his father Tsutsumi Yasujirō 堤康次郎, business leader and politician, to whom Seiji was born out of wedlock: *Hoko no kisetsu no naka de* (The wandering season, 1969), and *Chichi no shōzō* (Portrait of my father, 2004).

³¹ An unidentified woman stands behind Kazue.

³² See, for example, “Katei: Bunten no kōgei kara [Home: the Bunten (Imperial Salon) exhibition’s craft],” *Tokyo Asahi shimbun*, Jan. 8, 1938, a.m. edition, 6; “Katei: Shumi no tōkishu 5, Tesshayū karakusa ezara [Home: Ceramics taste 5, iron underglaze arabesque painted dish],” *Tokyo Asahi shimbun*, March 22, 1934, 5.

(土門拳, 1909–1990) photo-essay published in *Bijutsu techō* (**Fig. 0.4**), we see him with the qualities not of a *potter* engaged in the mass-production of tableware but of an *artist* with a distinct artistic persona.³³ He is portrayed as a *chajin* preparing powdered tea in the upper right photo, an ironic image since Tomimoto often touted that he was a “steeped green tea [*gyokuro*] person. I don’t drink powdered tea [*matcha*].”³⁴ Domon also presents, below an image of Tomimoto’s calligraphy, the artist as a literatus in quiet solitary repose standing on a veranda. Most accounts of Tomimoto’s personality describe him, as Yanagihara Mutsuo expressed, as an artist, not a craftsman. As the ceramist and *Mingei* associate Hamada Shōji (浜田庄司, 1894–1978) wrote in a memorial article, Tomimoto exuded the bearings of a “first-grade fine artist.”³⁵

Like most well-known artists of his time, he had a public persona that contrasted with his private self. Differing from his published portrayals in which he was presented as a high-toned artist, his letters reveal hints of his ambition, competitiveness, passion,

³³ Text by Fujimoto Shihachi 藤本韶三 and photos by Domon Ken, “Tomimoto Kenkichi” *Bijutsu techō* 2 (Feb. 1956): 2–7. Domon authored a text and accompanying photo-essay on Tomimoto again in 1961. Domon Ken, “Tomimoto Kenkichi-shi,” *Sharakusai* 写楽祭 / *Shyara·Ku·Sai* 5 (1961): 30. With the exception of this instance, in this text I mainly use the term “ceramist” instead of “potter” since the latter is defined as “a person who makes earthenware pots.” “Potter, n.1.” OED Online. June 2013. Oxford University Press. www.oed.com/view/Entry/148919?rskey=U6iJ9D&result=1. Tomimoto did not work in the medium of earthenware except for his early Raku ceramics.

³⁴ “Zadankai ido bata kaigi 座談会井戸端会議 [Roundtable conversation around the well],” *Tankō* 7, no. 8 (July 1953): 22.

³⁵ “Tomimoto Kenkichi san o itamu” *Mainichi shimbun* June 10, 1963, repr. in *Mingei* 117 (July 1963): 45. Tsuchida Maki observed that in published texts Tomimoto referred to himself as a ceramist (*tōkō* or *tōkika*) or artist (*bijutsuka*), never as an artist in a broader sense of the term (*geijutsuka*) or potter (*tōgeika*). See Tsuchida Maki, “Tomimoto Kenkichi no ‘amachuarizumu’ saikō,” in *Tsukuru koto no shiten ni okeru 1910–40 nendai nihon kindai katei no shisō shiteki kenkyū’ seikaronshū* (Heisei 19 nendo agaku kenkyū hihojokin joseikiban kenkyū seika hōkokusho, 2009), FN15, 109.

care for others, and sense of humor. His communication with Bernard Leach, in particular, was of particular significance since the two entered the study of ceramics at the same time, exchanged technical and aesthetic ideas, and shared many of the same aspirations as self-reflexive modern artists engaged with the medium of ceramics. His letters to Leach, signed “Cappa” (water goblin, *kappa*), are filled with affection and competitive spirit.³⁶ This correspondence continued throughout their lives. In a 1961 letter he described his anticipation of Leach’s impending visit, joking, “I’m waiting for September. At that time I want to speak with you about your works. Already I’m preparing in my mind to beat you. [signed] Ken Cappa.”³⁷

Historiography of Tomimoto Kenkichi and Modern Ceramics Studies

Recent years have seen major developments in scholarship on modern Japanese painting that situate it within global modernism or argue for alternative or “decentered” modernisms.³⁸ However, scholars and curators of modern Japanese art history have

³⁶ The *kappa* 河童 has a multivalenced set of associations in Japanese popular culture, from malevolent to benign. See Michael Dylan Foster, “The Metamorphosis of the Kappa: Transformation of Folklore to Folklorism in Japan,” *Asian Folklore Studies* 57 (1998):1–24. Gary Leupp wrote, “The folklore of the *kappa*, or water-sprite, seems to represent...[an] effort to explain homosexual inclinations...[since] the sprite intrudes through the anus, takes possession of the body, and awakens a passion for *nanshoku* [homosexuality].” *Male Colors: The Construction of Homosexuality in Tokugawa Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 151. Since Tomimoto also used the term to refer to Kenzan VI as a “poor old Cappa” in a letter to Leach, for them the term likely carried the meaning of “chap” or “fellow.”

³⁷ Letter dated February 26, 1961. BLA no. 4632, CSC.

³⁸ Partha Mitter, “Decentering Modernism: Art History and Avant-Garde Art from the Periphery,” *The Art Bulletin* 90, no. 4 (Dec. 2008): 531–48. Ming Tiampo, *Gutai: Decentering Modernism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011). Alicia Volk, *In Pursuit of Universalism: Yorozu Tetsugorō and Japanese Modern Art* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010). John Clark, *Modern Asian Art* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1998).

tended not to consider the role of craft, including ceramics, as intrinsic to the history of modern Japanese art. In Tokyo's National Museum of Modern Art, for example, craft objects are housed in a separate Crafts Gallery. The omission of craft from the majority of histories and institutions of modern art perpetuates classification systems initiated in the late nineteenth century, when Western hierarchies, placing painting and sculpture above other forms of expression, were imported to Japan. There has been little consideration of the pivotal role craft had in the evolution of modern Japanese art, particularly in government-sponsored institutions.

One factor contributing to the negligence towards craft within the realm of art is due to the 1950s government acts that hammered craft firmly into the box of “tradition,” separating it from its inherent role in the arts in the earlier twentieth century and before. Thus, craft—as a “traditional” form of art—was discouraged from innovation, the quality most associated with fine art according to the Western-inflected definitions of it that persist. Kitazawa Noriaki's recent writings on the craft/art dialectic chart the complex flows between the two concepts, but more analysis is needed regarding the specific events and objects that contributed to this history.³⁹ Chiaki Ajioka's writings on twentieth-century craft, particularly her assertion that Taishō and early Shōwa craftspeople tended not to separate the concepts of “art” and “craft,” also form a substantive foundation for the analysis of Tomimoto's ceramics.⁴⁰

³⁹ Kitazawa Noriaki, *Avuanyarudo igo no kōgei, 'kōgeiteki narumono' o matomete* (Tokyo: Bigaku Shuppan, 2003).

⁴⁰ This assertion is made in “When Craft became Art: Modern Japanese Craft and Mingei Sakka,” in Inaga Shigemi and Patricia Fister, eds., *Traditional Japanese Arts and Crafts in the 21st*

Generally, scholarship on modern Japanese craft has tended to take either an anthropological/social historical approach or a narrow taxonomic one, but several recent publications are exceptions. One is Clare Pollard's study of Makuzu Kōzan, a book which I have taken as a foundation for the study of twentieth-century ceramics.⁴¹ Pollard's monograph sets forth the historical context for professional ceramics in the Meiji era; it is those ceramics earmarked for foreign consumption that became the mode against which Tomimoto and his Taishō and early Shōwa cohorts Bernard Leach, Kawai Kanjirō (河井寛次郎, 1890–1966), and Hamada Shōji rallied. Yuko Kikuchi and Kim Brandt's critiques of the *Mingei* movement deconstructed the complex mechanisms with which Yanagi Sōetsu constructed *Mingei* ideology and how this thinking aligned with colonialist rhetoric.⁴² Brian Moeran has interrogated the construction of tradition in the field of modern Japanese ceramics and performed a multi-layered anthropological analysis of folk ceramists.⁴³ Theoretical and object-focused studies that situate ceramics within their contexts as art objects have been conducted for postwar ceramics made by

Century: Reconsidering the Future from an International Perspective (Kyoto: International Research Centre for Japanese Studies, 2005), 211–27. Also see “Aspects of Twentieth-Century Crafts: The New Craft and *Mingei* Movements” in *Since Meiji: Perspectives on the Japanese Visual Arts 1968–2000*, ed. Thomas Rimer (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2012), 408–44 and “Early Mingei and Development of Crafts, 1920s–1940s” (PhD diss., Australian National University, 1995).

⁴¹ Pollard, *Master Potter of Meiji Japan: Makuzu Kōzan*.

⁴² Yuko Kikuchi, *Japanese Modernisation and Mingei Theory: Cultural Nationalism and Oriental Orientalism* (London and New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004). Kim Brandt, *Kingdom of Beauty: Mingei and the Politics of Folk Art in Imperial Japan* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007).

⁴³ “Japanese Ceramics and the Discourse of ‘Tradition,’” *Journal of Design History* 3, no. 4 (1990): 213–25. *Folk Art Potters of Japan: Beyond an Anthropology of Aesthetics* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1995).

artists associated with Yagi Kazuo and the Sōdeisha group.⁴⁴ But more analysis is needed in order to situate ceramics within the discourse of modern art in the Taishō and early Shōwa eras.

The taxonomic approach to conceptualizing modern Japanese ceramics can be traced to Paris in 1950. There, the Japanese scholar Koyama Fujio staged the exhibition *Japon Cèramique Contemporain* at the Musée Cernuschi. It rigidly divided works according to perceived adherence to official and non-official schools. The continued power of Japanese artist-craftsmen groups and the social importance placed on group (*uchi*) association has resulted in little questioning of individuals' fluid movement between groups or their lack of obeisance to specific stylistic tendencies. Unsurprisingly, scholars have historicized modern Japanese craft according to taxonomic groupings. For example, Kaneko Kenji, former director of the Crafts Gallery of the National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo, stated that modern Japanese craft artists belonged generally to one of the following four "camps" in the early decades of the twentieth century:

1. Those who strove to transform themselves from artisan to artist based on Western styles and philosophies (c. mid-1910s–late 1920s)
2. Those who sought to revive classical Japanese styles of the past – from the Momoyama period (1573–1600) in the case of ceramics, and from the Nara (710–94) and Heian (794–1185) periods in the case of lacquer (1930s)
3. Those who revived the classical Chinese and Korean ceramic styles (1930s)

⁴⁴ Louise Allison Cort and Bert Winther-Tamaki, eds. *Isamu Noguchi and Modern Japanese Ceramics: A Close Embrace of the Earth* (Washington, D.C./Berkley: Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution/ University of California Press, 2003). Bert Winther-Tamaki, "Yagi Kazuo: The Admission of the Nonfunctional Object into the Japanese Pottery World," *Journal of Design History* 12, no. 2 (1999): 123–42.

4. Those who worked in the ‘Folk Crafts’ (*Mingei*) style, inspired by the simple vigour of wares used by ordinary people, and with a certain spiritual philosophy (late 1920s).⁴⁵

Given Tomimoto’s affiliations with a broad array of organizations, his work defies neat categorization into any single group above. He was influenced by Western thought at the same time he looked to Japanese historical ceramics. He also, in a sense, “revived” both Chinese and Korean ceramics. He was active in the *Mingei* movement in its early years and was enamored by what was deemed by him and others the “simple vigour” of Joseon ceramics of Korea. Furthermore, we are not able to essentialize him as a “Kokuten artist,” “*Mingei* craftsman,” “imperial artist,” “Shinshō artist,” or “traditional craftsman.”

Recent years have seen the publication of critical studies of Tomimoto’s art that examine heretofore untouched issues like patronage (Mikami); stylistic issues including amateurism (Tsuchida) and primitivism (Yamamoto); deeper biographical studies and the influence of William Morris (Nakayama); and theoretical studies of modern craft (Kaneko).⁴⁶ Several exhibitions and catalogues of the last decade illuminated aspects of Tomimoto’s work that had not been the focus of previous exhibitions, which tended to highlight his overglaze enamel *bijutsu tōki*. The 2004 Tokyo National Museum of

⁴⁵ Kaneko Kenji, “The Development of ‘Traditional Art Crafts’ in Japan,” in *Crafting Beauty in Modern Japan: Celebrating Fifty Years of the Japan Traditional Art Crafts Exhibition*, ed. Nicole Coolidge Rousmaniere (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2007), 10.

⁴⁶ Mikami Miwa, “Tomimoto Kenkichi no shoki iro-e sakuhin to Ōhara Magosaburō no kōen nitsuite,” *Tokyo Kokuritsu Kindai Bijutsukan kenkyū kiyō* 11 (2007): 43–85. Tsuchida, “Tomimoto Kenkichi no ‘amachuarizumu’ saikō.” Yamamoto Shigeo, “‘Goshurii’ to ‘setsu’ [‘Gaucherie’ and ‘unskillfulness’],” *Kikan ginka* 111 (Fall 1997): 50–52. See the bibliography for Nakayama Shūichi’s prodigious number of articles on Tomimoto’s engagement with the discourse and design of William Morris, his relationship to Otake Kazue, and generally his early design work in *Journal of Cultural Studies in Body, Design, Media, Music and Text*. Kaneko Kenji, “Tomimoto Kenkichi no ‘ritai no bijutsu,’” in *Gendai tōgei no zōkei shikō* (Tokyo: Abe Shuppan, 2001), 197–237.

Modern Art Crafts Gallery exhibition and catalogue focusing on Tomimoto's approach to everyday vessels opened a new window of scholarly inquiry into Tomimoto's stance towards mass production.⁴⁷ The 2006 Shiodome exhibition and catalogue shed light on Tomimoto's aspirations as a designer of objects and interiors.⁴⁸ Still, there is a need for more holistic analyses that address Tomimoto's contributions to the production and promotion of art craft (*bijutsu kōgei*) and its offshoot art ceramics (*bijutsu tōki*), concepts intrinsic to the ontology of modern Japanese craft.

As the preeminent ceramist of twentieth-century Japan, Tomimoto was the author and has been the subject of many publications. In his time, amongst artists Tomimoto was the most prodigious writer on ceramics in twentieth-century Japan. As the bibliography here demonstrates, in 1911 he began writing and publishing on a variety of topics in Japan's leading modern art journals. He wrote articles on interior design, William Morris, and other topics in journals including *Atorie*, *Bijutsu*, *Bijutsu shinpō*, *Geibi*, *Rogos*, *Shin kōgei*, and *Kōgei*; many of these essays were assembled in an anthology in 1981.⁴⁹ He also published books of his design patterns and photographs of his ceramics beginning in 1915. Tomimoto's later published writings span from art historical texts on a variety of European and East Asian subjects and first-person narratives about his work, studio process, and travels, to substantial autobiographical accounts of his life.⁵⁰ A highly self-

⁴⁷ National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo, ed., *Daily Vessels by Tomimoto Kenkichi, the Master of Ceramic Art* (Tokyo: National Museum of Modern Art, 2004).

⁴⁸ Yamada Toshiyuki, ed. *Tomimoto Kenkichi no dezain kūkan: seitan 120-nen* (Tokyo: Shiodome Museum, 2006).

⁴⁹ Tsujimoto Isamu, ed. *Tomimoto Kenkichi chosakushū* (Tokyo: Satsuki shobō, 1981).

⁵⁰ See the bibliography for a chronological list of these publications.

reflexive tone pervades much of his writing in the form of letters, poems, and first-person narrative. His essays were also featured in magazines for women, newspapers, and general readership journals. In those articles, his writing emphasizes a fundamental appreciation of ceramic materials, processes, and history.

Until several years ago, Tomimoto's writing formed the basis for almost all of the major publications by other authors on his work. These texts have comprised mainly retrospective museum exhibition catalogues, and their thematic organization has usually followed Tomimoto's geographic shifts on a rigid linear path between binary entities such as England/Japan and Tokyo/Kyoto. The introductory essays of these catalogues tend to put forth a consistent set of statements that focus on Tomimoto's originality as the aspect of his work that made him a modern ceramist. In the catalogue for the 1986 Otani Memorial Art Museum exhibition celebrating the hundredth anniversary of Tomimoto's birth, Inui Yoshiaki wrote that "Tomimoto achieved the core task in modernizing ceramics, to break through the practice of copying traditional styles and establish the concept of originality. He did it in a most spectacular way."⁵¹ Aside from museum catalogues, a 1993 biography by Tsujimoto Isamu stands as the most thorough treatment of Tomimoto's life and work.⁵² Lacking footnotes, it appears to have been composed according to the unpublished documents in the Tomimoto Kenkichi Memorial Museum that he founded as well as the collective memory of Tsujimoto and others who knew Tomimoto.

⁵¹ *Tomimoto Kenkichi* (Tokyo: Asahi Shimbunsha, 1986), 171.

⁵² *Kindai no tōkō Tomimoto Kenkichi* (Tokyo: Futaba Raifu Shinso).

In Europe and the United States, Tomimoto's ceramics have been the subject of precious little attention by historians of craft, ceramics, or Japanese art.⁵³ Why is this the case? Simply put, Hamada Shōji and Kitaōji Rosanjin exerted more influence on critics, dealers, and contemporary ceramists in Euro-America than Tomimoto because of their international exhibitions, sales, and workshops.⁵⁴ Yanagi Sōetsu and the British potter Bernard Leach played a role in this history by championing Hamada's ceramics, stoneware utilitarian vessels that appealed greatly to postwar democratic values of the "everyday," subjects that I explore more in Chapter Five's discussion of Tomimoto's overseas exhibitions.⁵⁵ While in the Taishō and early Shōwa eras Yanagi and Tomimoto collaborated on projects and Yanagi visited Tomimoto in Ando-mura several times, in later years their relationship strained due to Tomimoto's public criticisms of the schism between modernity and Yanagi's *Mingei* ideals. In the postwar era, Yanagi did not include Tomimoto in the influential lectures he organized, such as the significant 1952 United States workshop tour featuring Bernard Leach and Hamada Shōji.⁵⁶ Yanagi

⁵³ His ceramics and painting are included in the collections of the Bowdoin College Museum of Art, Boston Museum of Fine Arts, Brooklyn Museum, New Orleans Museum of Art, Victoria and Albert Museum, and the University of Michigan Museum of Art.

⁵⁴ Rosanjin's Museum of Modern Art, New York, exhibition in 1954 and his visit to the United States is discussed in Kida Takuya, "Japanese Crafts and Cultural Exchange with the USA in the 1950s: Soft Power and John D. Rockefeller during the Cold War," *Journal of Design History* 25, no. 4 (Nov. 2012): 379–99.

⁵⁵ While Leach praised Tomimoto's ceramics and the two unquestionably influenced each other greatly throughout their careers, Leach followed Yanagi's leadership of the *Mingei* movement that included his promotion of Hamada's ceramics outside of Japan.

⁵⁶ The tour is described in Nicole Coolidge Rousmaniere, "Yanagi's America: Sōetsu Yanagi's Two Extended Stays in the United States and Their Impact on America," *Mingei: Two Centuries of Japanese Folk Art* (Tokyo: Japan Folk Crafts Museum, 1995), 48–55. Also see Ellen Conant, "Leach, Hamada, Yanagi: Myth and Reality," *Studio Potter* 21, no. 1 (Dec. 1992): 6–9. Tomimoto wrote a letter to Leach, transcribed by Jackie Bernstein and dated February 17, 1960:

exerted a powerful role as an international spokesperson for Japanese arts and culture in the postwar era because, in the words of Leach, Yanagi was “the thinker and guide who provided the aesthetic philosophy for the craftsmen of the Orient.”⁵⁷

In this dissertation, my aim is to contribute to existing scholarship in three main ways. First, I wish to survey his art in multiple mediums, across decades, and in consort with artistic groups, in order to trace, as previously stated, Tomimoto’s role in the mechanisms—artistic, pedagogical, and organizational—through which ceramics became recognized as a significant form of modern Japanese art. In this process, I reiterate the established accounts of how William Morris, Bernard Leach, and his father were early influences, but I also trace their impact over time, extending through his mature work.

The second goal is to consider Tomimoto’s negotiations of historical legacy and the modern realities associated with renowned Edo period ceramist Ogata Kenzan (尾形乾山, 1663–1743). The Edo ceramist Ogata Kenzan I and the Meiji/Taishō ceramist Ogata Kenzan VI 六代乾山 (Urano Shigekichi 浦野乾哉, 1851–1923) were important

“Now I couldn’t stop to attack Yanagi’s new design. I said he was collector, not artist. So everywhere he is lecturing only Kawai and Hamada without my name. So on. Yanagi’s book omitted my name. . . . About twenty years ago when Mingei started, I refused to become member of Mingei. These [sic] will be one of reason why he don’t [sic] like to get in my name to Mingei member.” Signed Ken Tomimoto. BLA no. 4631, CSC. According to Yanagihara Mutsuo, Tomimoto told his students at the Kyoto City College of Fine Arts that “there are three bad (*dame*) things: Yanagi, Rosanjin, and [Katō] Tōkurō (加藤唐九郎)” in “Zadankai, Tomimoto Kenkichi sono hito to sakuhin,” *Tōjiro* 33 (Feb. 2003): 43.

⁵⁷ Bernard Leach, *Beyond East and West* (London: Faber and Faber, 1978), 266. Yanagi’s *Folk-Crafts in Japan* (Tokyo: Kokusai Bunka Shikokai, 1956) introduces fundamental Japanese aesthetic concepts in English. Bernard Leach adapted a group of essays by Yanagi for the book *The Unknown Craftsman* (Tokyo and New York: Kodansha, 1972, repr. 1989). Yanagi’s promotion of the understanding of Japanese arts through Zen Buddhist aesthetic principles aligned with the 1950s American interest in Zen as promoted by D.T. Suzuki in, for example, *Zen Buddhism: Selected Writings* (Garden City NY: Doubleday), 1956.

touchstones for Tomimoto— Kenzan I as a model, and Kenzan VI as the antithesis. Some of Tomimoto's contemporaries referred to him as Kenzan VII, yet scholars have avoided analyzing this dimension of Tomimoto's history since it risks sully the pristine appraisal of Tomimoto as modern artist extraordinaire.

In this dissertation I also explore the private and public spheres that gave rise to his *iro-e jiki* (overglaze enamel) porcelain beginning in the 1940s. Comparing his personal epigraphic *iro-e jiki* to his ornamental boxes popular in public exhibitions reveals the complex ways in which this medium satisfied the modernist literati interests of the artist and was used by the Japanese state to epitomize traditional national expression.

Methodology

The methodology of this study comprises formal analysis as well as the organizational analysis of pedagogical systems, art organizations, and exhibition structures. Throughout, I will explore the complex webs of conceptualization, formation, and evaluation for Tomimoto's ceramics. Such a comprehensive approach that revolves around the analysis of objects allows us to draw conclusions about the ontology of *bijutsu kōgei* (art craft) in the twentieth century.

Within formal analyses, I have identified several key groups of works critical to *bijutsu kōgei*. These include not only ceramics but also prints, design works, calligraphy, and painting. Tomimoto created ceramics as one expression within a sphere of artistic production meant for display. For his ceramics, I will identify the material and formal

surface characteristics that evince the characteristics of art ceramics, framing them historically within the continuum of Japanese ceramics and theoretically as they engage with conceptual issues. My direct study of many of the ceramics analyzed in this dissertation has been one of the leading factors in drawing conclusions about Tomimoto's intentions. Many of his *tsubo* (jars) of the kind that I analyze in Chapter Three are heavier than a user accustomed to similarly-sized porcelain vessels would expect. This is because Tomimoto insisted on his personal creation of forms on the wheel so that he could exert autonomous control over each stage of ceramics production, an aspect of his work with clearly modernist values. This aspect of his praxis is problematized when we consider works that others threw on the wheel and the values accorded to both types of works.

The second methodological principal of this study involves the analysis of systems and organizations in order to identify the mechanisms at play in the creation and consumption of modern Japanese art ceramics. I consider the variety of pedagogical systems that encouraged Tomimoto to approach ceramics as an art medium for personal expression, beginning with the role his father played in instilling an interest in literati culture and continuing through his rejection of the pedagogical practice of copying and lineal systems of skills transference. I also consider arts organizations since they exerted a great impact on the activities of artists, patrons, curators, and scholars.⁵⁸ Taking Tomimoto as a case study provides us with the opportunity to identify critical moments

⁵⁸ A recent issue of *Positions* edited by Reiko Tomii presents a number of articles on artists' organizations in twentieth-century Japan, but craft is not discussed in depth in any of the essays. *Positions: East Asia Cultures Critique* 21, no. 2 (2013).

of factionalism within organizations as well as instances when individuals challenged their authority.

These methodological principles emphasize the interplay within the discourse of modern Japanese ceramics. That is, in this study I treat objects, texts, and organizations as interwoven parts of an overall discursive practice, which can be understood, according to Foucault's description, as "the delimitation of a field of objects, the definition of a legitimate perspective for the agent of knowledge and the fixing of norms for the elaboration of concepts and theories."⁵⁹ With Tomimoto's art, texts, and praxis as a case study, we may trace how ceramics knowledge was constructed in twentieth century Japan and identify systems of power that defined, manipulated, and controlled ceramics discourse. I am interested in exploring the "crossings and convergences" inherent in the study of craft as art, and take Canclini's recommendation to abandon "distinguishing the pure and the uncontaminated in arts and crafts...[and] study them starting from the uncertainties that provoke their crossings."⁶⁰ Tomimoto's ceramics in the early twentieth century demonstrate these crossings and highlight our need to carefully assess the epistemological foundations of modern Japanese craft according to its complex history.

⁵⁹ Michel Foucault, *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice*, trans. and edited by Donald Bouchard (Oxford: Blackwell, 1977), 199.

⁶⁰ Néstor García Canclini, "Art versus Crafts," in *Hybrid Cultures: Strategies for Entering and Leaving Modernity*, trans. Christopher L. Chiappari and Silvia L. López (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995), 175.

Chapter Introduction

The dissertation's diachronic structure charts artistic concepts, ideologies, and creative works over time. Chapter One, "Transhistorical and Transnational Learning: Lineal Inheritances, University Education, and Self-Study" concerns Tomimoto's multiple sources of education and early influence. It considers the concept of "art education" broadly, comparing and contrasting pedagogies and concepts imparted by a diverse group of individuals, including his literatus father; *nihonga* painting and design professors at the Tokyo School of Fine Arts; Tomimoto himself at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London; and Kenzan VI (Urano Shigekichi) alongside Bernard Leach. He absorbed from them a love for sinophilic culture, Arts and Crafts design, and Kenzan-inspired ceramics.

Chapter Two, "Self-Expression and the Equivalency of Mediums: Early Works," examines Tomimoto's discourse of self-expression as it was applied to an array of design and artistic mediums in the late Meiji and Taishō eras. After his return to Japan from England in 1911, he experimented with a range of mediums, resulting in highly self-expressive *sōsaku hanga* (creative prints), *shōgeijutsu* ("lesser arts" inspired by William Morris), and Raku ceramics. In particular, I explore the concepts of *moyō* 模様 [pattern, design, image], *shasei* 写生 [sketching from life], *dokusōsei* 独創性 [originality] and the ways in which Tomimoto relied on these concepts in his interpretations of natural forms. Overall, this chapter emphasizes how the ceramics medium developed according to a dominant artistic thrust at the time towards individualistic expression.

Chapter Three, “The Ceramic Vessel as Image and Form,” deconstructs the image of the ceramic vessel and Tomimoto’s discourse of ceramics form according to his engagement with Joseon porcelain and modernist sculpture. I consider the ways in which he conflated the sculptural properties of bronze nude figures with the formal properties of Joseon porcelain jars in a manner that encouraged the perception of the ceramic vessel form as a work of modern abstract art. The chapter also considers Tomimoto’s prints and *moyō* of vessel images that suggest meaning beyond a still life, embodying self-reflexive iterations of the ceramic vessel as a subject of isolation, inquiry, and suggestion.

Chapter Four, “Modernizing Painted Porcelain: *Tōban* and *Kazari Bako*” focuses on Tomimoto’s processes of modernizing *iro-e jiki* (overglaze enamel porcelain), the medium for which he was designated a Holder of Important Intangible Cultural Property. I focus on the two most significant types of Tomimoto’s *iro-e jiki*: *tōban* (ceramic discs) and *kazari bako* (ornamental boxes). *Tōban* revealed an optic approach to the medium that encouraged the exploration of sinophilic poetry on its surfaces. *Kazari bako*, in contrast, performed as displays of Japanese cultural tradition in public exhibition settings by combining surfaces from multiple geo-historical sources onto forms suitable for optical appreciation in exhibition settings.

Finally, in Chapter Five, “Exhibiting and Preserving Modern Ceramics,” the history of Tomimoto’s organizational affiliations, exhibitions, and awards from the state is explored. In this chapter I expose the consistencies and changes for the ontology of modern Japanese ceramics from first the craft exhibitions at the Kokuten (国展 National Painting Society) exhibition in 1927 to Tomimoto’s creation of the Shinshō Bijutsu

Kōgeikai (新匠美術工芸会 New Craftspeople's Art Craft Association) in 1947 and ultimately his national designation as Holder of Important Intangible Cultural Property in 1955.⁶¹ Pre-World War II organizations and exhibitions tended to promote ceramics as modernist art on par with Euro-American painting and sculpture, but wartime and postwar organizations and exhibitions tended to promote ceramics as material embodiments of the nation.

In the Conclusion, I recapitulate the concepts of modern ceramics discussed recurrently in multiple chapters in order to close this analysis with a broad view of twentieth century consistencies and ruptures in the history of modern Japanese ceramics. The Appendices present a list of names mentioned in the text; organizations and schools Tomimoto was associated with, including, as applicable, name changes and names of exhibitions; a list of his assistants, students, and affiliates; and a chronology of significant events in Tomimoto's life.

⁶¹ In 1949 the name shortened to Shinshōkai 新匠会 [New Craftspeople's Association].

CHAPTER ONE: Transhistorical and Transnational Learning: Lineal Inheritances, University Education, and Self-Study

Introduction

It may seem paradoxical that a man lacking formal training in his artistic field would rise to its highest nationally-recognized echelon, but such was the case with Tomimoto Kenkichi. Unlike the majority of professional craft makers in nineteenth-century Japan and earlier, he did not receive intensive apprentice-based instruction from a master teacher, within a lineal succession of men, nor did he—like some of his contemporaries—train at one of the newly established technical institutes for ceramics. In some respects, his ceramics education more closely resembled that of the renowned Edo period ceramist Ogata Kenzan. Like Kenzan, Tomimoto was exposed from an early age to Chinese literature, calligraphy and cultural studies. And also like Kenzan, he became interested in ceramics only after studying other forms of art, ultimately to credit his ceramics education to a reliance on texts and a series of self-directed learning experiences.¹ Tomimoto's rise to prominence as modern Japan's "pioneer ceramist" can be traced not only to his ceramics education, but, more broadly, to his earlier educational background.

¹ It is believed that Kenzan received a pottery manual from Kōetsu's grandson Kōho (Kuchu). A notebook from Nomomura Ninsei is the basis for Kenzan's *Tōkō hitsuyō*. Kenzan also credited learning from fourth-generation Raku master Ichinyū (1640–96) in *Tōji seihō* of 1737. Richard Wilson, *The Art of Ogata Kenzan: Persona and Production in Japanese Ceramics* (New York: Weatherhill, 1991), 60.

In order to begin to deconstruct Tomimoto's role in the history of modern Japanese ceramics, we must take into account a number of decisive transhistorical and transnational factors unique to his education: lineal inheritances, university education, and self-study. Three main transhistorical dimensions of his education were his symbolic and material lineal inheritances from his family; his exposure to the constructed lineal succession of Kenzan ceramists through Ogata Kenzan VI 六代乾山 (Urano Shigekichi 浦野乾哉, 1851–1923); and his training in ceramics studios in the 1930s. These learning methods transcended historical boundaries by linking his practice to that of Edo period artists. The main transnational elements encircling this analysis are Tomimoto's education in the United Kingdom and his association with British artist Bernard Leach.²

² In 2008, the Nara Prefectural Museum of Art published the exhibition catalogue *Tomimoto Kenkichi to Bānādo Rīchi: nichiei bunka kōryū no kakehashi: kaikan 25-nen tokubetsu ten* (Nara: Nara Kenritsu Bijutsukan, 1998) and in 2007, a critical set of essays analyzing Leach's discourse of ceramics was published: Edmund de Waal, Kaneko Kenji, Suzuki Sadahiro, and Kitamura Hitomi, *Bānādo Rīchi saikō: sutajio potarī to tōgei no gendai* (Kyoto: Shibunkaku Shuppan, 2007). For an overview of Leach's life and work, see Edmund de Waal, *Bernard Leach* (London: Tate Gallery, 1998) and Emmanuel Cooper, *Bernard Leach: Life and Work* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003). Suzuki Sadahiro analyzes the "East-West" dialectic central to Leach's writing on Japan and ceramics in *Bānādo Rīchi no shōgai to geijutsu: 'higashi to nishi no kekkon' no vijon* (Kyoto: Minerva Shobō, 2006). Leach's autobiographical accounts and interpretations of Japanese art and culture in *A Potter in Japan* (London: Faber and Faber, 1960) and *Beyond East and West* (London: Faber and Faber, 1978) may seem somewhat naïve and essentialist in tone, but they rely heavily on his diaries now preserved in the Crafts Study Centre, Farnham, Surrey.

Much of the evidence for this analysis of Tomimoto's early education derives from his copious autobiographical writings.³ Those texts comprise a significant strand of the discourse of modern Japanese ceramics, not as unbiased records but as self-reflexive constructs of Tomimoto's artistic persona.⁴ Additionally, the analysis here of the influence on Tomimoto of the Arts and Crafts movement builds on the scholarship of, in particular, Nakayama Shūichi and Yuko Kikuchi. Nakayama has established with exhaustive precision Tomimoto's indebtedness to William Morris and the Arts and Crafts movement throughout his early education in both Tokyo and London.⁵ Kikuchi's scholarship resurrected the awareness of Tomimoto's role in the circulation of information on the Arts and Crafts movement in early twentieth-century Japan, tracing it to his university graduation project and education in Britain.⁶ Although the ideas of William Morris clearly influenced Tomimoto and became part of his later praxis, we must avoid suggesting that the British Arts and Crafts movement was the chief influence

³ The main compilation of these is the 1962 *Nihon keizai shimbun* series "Watashi no rirekisho" that was republished in book form as Tomimoto Kenkichi, *Watashi no rirekisho* (Tokyo: Nihon Keizai Shimbunsha, 1983).

⁴ To a degree his penchant for autobiographical writing reflects the popularity in the Taishō era of the I-novel and other writings that emphasized self-expression and reflexivity.

⁵ Nakayama wrote a series of articles in Japanese on Tomimoto's engagement with Morris: "Tomimoto Kenkichi in London in 1909–10: His Research at the Victoria and Albert Museum and the Central School of Arts and Crafts, Lodging Life, and Research Trip to Egypt and India," *Hyōgen bunka kenkyū / Journal of Cultural Studies in Body, Design, Media, Music and Text* 7, no. 1 (2000): 59–88; "Rereading 'The Story of William Morris' by Kenkichi Tomimoto," *Hyōgen bunka kenkyū* 5, no. 1 (2005): 31–55; "Tomimoto Kenkichi's Schooldays before his Visiting London for the Study on William Morris," *Hyōgen bunka kenkyū* 6, no. 1 (2006): 35–68; "Tomimoto Kenkichi in London in 1909–10 (1) His Study of William Morris at the Victoria and Albert Museum," *Hyōgen bunka kenkyū* 7, no. 1 (2007): 27–58; "Tomimoto Kenkichi in London in 1909–10 (2) His research at the Victoria and Albert Museum and the Central School of Arts and Crafts, Lodging Life, and Research Trip to Egypt and India," *Hyōgen bunka kenkyū* 7, no. 1 (2007): 59–88.

⁶ Kikuchi, *Japanese Modernisation and Mingei Theory*, 17–23.

on Tomimoto's development or that the Arts and Crafts movement alone gave rise to the interest in craft among young artists in the late Meiji era. Modern Japanese craft ideology developed according to its own pathways and limits, due most notably—in contrast to the craft histories of Europe—to the active appreciation for craft dating to the Muromachi period (1392-1573), if not earlier.⁷

This chapter's analysis of Tomimoto's relation to Ogata Kenzan I and Ogata Kenzan VI relies on Richard Wilson's illuminating analyses of Bernard Leach's apprenticeship to Kenzan VI and the problematic issues of Kenzan line succession.⁸ As Wilson described it, Leach's inheritance was "a particularly weighty affiliation inasmuch as Kenzan is broadly acknowledged as Japan's first 'individual' potter, a visionary who broke with current notions about the potter's practice."⁹ The notion of Kenzan I as an "individual" potter was a modern construction, and Tomimoto acknowledged, as I will explore below, a linkage to him because of his artistry, encountered through the mediation of Leach and the Victoria and Albert Museum, where Tomimoto claimed he first saw Kenzan I's ceramics. Even though Tomimoto learned ceramics techniques, with Leach, from Kenzan VI, Tomimoto eschewed the notion of a direct inheritance of the

⁷ The Muromachi period saw the earliest iterations of Japanese tea practice that played a pivotal role in how ceramics became important artistic objects within Japanese aesthetic appreciation.

⁸ Wilson, *The Art of Ogata Kenzan: Persona and Production in Japanese Ceramics*, esp. 182–203; "Bernard Leach and the Kenzan School," *Studio Potter* 27, no. 2 (June 1999): 9–14; *The Potter's Brush: The Kenzan Style in Japanese Ceramics* (Washington, D.C.: Freer Gallery and Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, 2001), esp. 195–200; "Forming the Japanese Modern Craft Movement: Perspectives from the Leach Archives," *Humanities: Christianity and Culture* 40 (March 2009), 141–62.

⁹ "Bernard Leach and the Kenzan School," *Studio Potter*, 9.

Kenzan line from Kenzan VI, a man not regarded as a visionary or an “individual” potter like Kenzan I.

Chronologically, this chapter charts Tomimoto’s early art education beginning with the early influence of his literatus father and his education at the Tokyo School of Fine Arts. I will then explore his design studies in the United Kingdom 1908–1910 and his initial ceramics training with Bernard Leach and Kenzan VI. The chapter ends with a description of his training excursions to learn Kutani techniques in Kanazawa in the 1930s.

Yamato Roots

To utter the word Yamato 大和 today is—as it was when Tomimoto was born on June 6, 1886—to call to mind the very cradle of Japanese culture. Yamato was the ancient name for Japan itself as well as the modern name for the region of Nara where Tomimoto was born, and in his autobiographical writings he consistently reminisced about its historic importance and beauty. Understanding his Yamato roots is important for two main reasons. He not only lived there as a youth, but he returned there to live from 1911 to 1926, and its picturesque landscape of fields and mountains intersected by the Yamato River comprised the subject of many of his paintings on paper and ceramics which will be discussed in later chapters. Secondly, it is where he obtained lineal inheritances from his father in the form of teachings about literati culture, painting, and ceramics.

His bucolic birthplace, Higashi-Ando 東安堵, is one of five subsets of Ando-mura, the smallest village in the prefecture comprising a flat, level 4.91 square kilometers in the northwest quadrant of the Nara basin floor.¹⁰ At any point of its valley one is surrounded by the beauty of nature, from the encircling chain of mountains with rich associations in legend—including Shigisan 信貴山, Nijōzan 二上山, and Katsuragisan 葛城山—to the gentle ebbing of the Yamato river 大和川 flowing through the village's center (**Fig. 1.1**).¹¹ The village is bracketed by two of the most important temples of Japanese Buddhism, Hōryūji 法隆寺 and Chūgūji 中宮寺.¹² The former, founded in the late sixth century by Prince Shōtoku (574–622), is one of Japan's oldest and most prominent temples. Tomimoto mused, “In the past, the whole village belonged to” Hōryūji, a place for which he held a “deep affinity.”¹³ While the economic base of the population was largely agricultural, even in Tomimoto's youth the village was connected to the urban centers of Kyoto and Osaka by train.¹⁴

Steeped in the natural and cultural significance of the Nara environs and with access to urban centers, Tomimoto was raised as the eldest son of one of the village's

¹⁰ It measures east to west 2.4 kilometers, and north to south 3.4 kilometers. Tsujimoto Isamu, *Tomimoto Kenkichi to Yamato* (Osaka: Richi, 1970), 7. Ando-mura, known today as Ando-chō, is in the district of Ikoma 生駒郡.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 8.

¹² Tomimoto, *Watakushi no rirekisho*, 183.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Ibid.* Hōryūji station is on a Japan Railways line, and Hirahata 平端 station is on the Kintetsu line. Each is an approximately 25-minute walk from the place of Tomimoto's birth.

three most elite Edo period families.¹⁵ With the blood line rank *myōji taito* indicating their right to a surname and carry swords, the family carried out the duties of *shōya*, squires loaning land in exchange for rice.¹⁶ Their manor home was built by the then-head of the family in the beginning of the Edo period.¹⁷ To enter it, one would cross a moat and enter the tile-roofed gate, an architectural feature preserved to this day (**Fig. 1.2**).¹⁸ Throughout the Edo period, the house served as a *honjin* 本陣, an official inn for daimyo. One notable guest was the feudal lord of the Okayama domain, Ikeda Mitsumasa (池田光政, 1609–82), who stayed there on his way to a pilgrimage to the Ise shrine.¹⁹ As a gesture of goodwill and as a symbol of ties between these important members of feudal society, Ikeda gave the Tomimoto family a set of ten Bizen plates that he had made.²⁰ Remaining in the family collection through Tomimoto’s generation, gifts such as these likely offered young Tomimoto his first exposure to the symbolic power of ceramic objects.

¹⁵ The other two families were the Kubotajū 窪田中 and Tsutsui 筒井 families, described as “powerful families” (*gōzoku*). Ando-mura shihen shūi inkai, *Ando-mura shi*, 36.

¹⁶ This is a shortened form of “surname and sword” (*myōji taito gomen* 苗字帶刀御). Tomimoto, *Watashi no rirekisho*, 183.

¹⁷ Kaidō Ryūkichi, in discussion with the author, June 15, 2010, and Ando-mura shihen shūi inkai, *Ando-mura shi*, 36. The family head at the beginning of the Edo period was Tomimoto Rokuro Mototada 富本六郎橋元忠.

¹⁸ This is presently the entrance to the Tomimoto Kenkichi Memorial Museum. The original house has been preserved in part and was renovated extensively in the early 1970s under the instruction of its owner and museum director, Tsujimoto Isamu.

¹⁹ Tomimoto, *Watashi no rirekisho*, 184.

²⁰ Ando-mura shihen shūi inkai, *Ando-mura shi*, 36. It is unknown where the collection of Bizen plates is now, but other historically important family relics are preserved in the Kokugakuin in Aoyama, Tokyo, such as the Edo period palanquin belonging to the Tomimoto family, donated in 1966, and some Taishō era objects.

Of his family members, Tomimoto was closest to his grandmother, Noto 能登, with whom he lived from 1891. When he was five his parents, younger brother and sister moved about thirteen kilometers away to Nara city, leaving the boy and Noto to live together alone in the Ando-mura house. A widow, Noto taught sewing and dying, techniques young Tomimoto must have observed and remembered later when he experimented with embroidery designs influenced by Islamic motifs in the 1910s.²¹ Tomimoto also credited her for his proclivity for painting, remembering fondly that she habitually placed a paintbrush in his hand in order to placate him. Tomimoto claimed that this instilled in him a positive, soothing association with the brush.²² Noto also was important to Tomimoto's artistic development because of the ceramics collection that had passed down through her side of the family, including old blue-and-white porcelain (*kōsometsume*).²³

A Literatus Father

More than anyone, it was his father Toyokichi 豊吉 whom Tomimoto cited repeatedly as a primary inspiration for his initial interest in the arts and, specifically, literati culture. Toyokichi died when his son was just eleven, but he left an indelible impression on him, and in Tomimoto's later years he composed poetry about his father

²¹ Tomimoto, *Watashi no rirekisho*, 186.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid., 184. A year after he began being raised primarily by his grandmother in Ando-mura, at age six he enrolled at the Ando-mura Grammar School, and in 1895, entered the Ikaruga Higher Grammar School. At age 13, he entered the Nara Prefectural Middle School, Kōriyama.

(see Chapter Four). Tomimoto's exposure to literati painting and calligraphy through his father was significant because it differed dramatically from the subjects he focused on later at the university. In autobiographical accounts such as his *Nihon keizai shimbun* series, Tomimoto warmly reminisced about the two of them taking walks together amidst local mountains and rivers and the teachings he received from his father about calligraphy, Chinese poetry, and ceramics: "Father, a person of deep Chinese literati (*bunjin*) interests, painted *nanga* (literati-style painting), wrote *kanshi* (Chinese poems), and introduced me to various Chinese-style things."²⁴

Toyokichi was a serious collector, knowledgeable aesthete, and skilled calligrapher.²⁵ When Tomimoto was a child his father co-founded the Imamura railway enterprise and moved with the rest of the family, as mentioned above, to Nara for the purpose of that work.²⁶ He was like many men of the late seventeenth century through the Meiji era who embraced the Chinese-rooted literati ideal of a cultured man dedicated to amateur scholarly pursuits like poetry, painting, and calligraphy.²⁷ Toyokichi associated with many literati artists including Tomioka Tessai (富岡鉄斎, 1837–1924).²⁸

²⁴ Ibid., 184.

²⁵ He created works under the artist name Kogudō Bōzan 古愚堂房山.

²⁶ Tsujimoto Isamu, *Kindai no tōkō Tomimoto Kenkichi* (Tokyo: Futabasha, 1999), 16.

²⁷ Japanese literati aesthetics relied on Chinese *wenren*, or scholar gentleman, precedents initially perpetuated by retired Chinese government officials. For an overview of *bunjin* artistic approaches in the Meiji era, see Christine Guth, "Meiji Response to *Bunjinga*," in *Challenging Past and Present: The Metamorphosis of Nineteenth-Century Japanese Art*, ed. Ellen Conant (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2005), 178–96.

²⁸ According to Tsujimoto Isamu, young Kenkichi met Tessai as well as Sakurai Koun (桜井香雲, 1840–1895?) when they visited his mother Fusa's home in Nishi-Andomura. Tsujimoto, *Kindai no tōkō Tomimoto Kenkichi*, 202. Tsujimoto's accounts in this text rely on oral

Toyokichi's encouragement wielded itself both symbolically and practically. He named his son Kenkichi after his favorite artist, Edo period literati painter and poet Tanomura Chikuden (田能村竹田, 1777–1835), an artistic source who influenced Tomimoto's combinations of text and images.²⁹ Practically, Toyokichi taught young Kenkichi the techniques of calligraphy. His method, Tomimoto remembered, was rigid, forcing him at age four or five the use of the right hand rather than the left as he was naturally inclined.³⁰ The earliest known extant example of Tomimoto's calligraphy and painting depicts a pair of dolls below the *kanshi* calligraphic inscription from Confucius's *Analects* "A youth is to be regarded with respect" (*Kōsei osorubeshi* 後世可恐, **Fig. 1.3**) that Tomimoto painted at the age of eight.³¹ Using his right hand here appears to have affected the script's slant, tilting it upward and to the left. Tomimoto recalled that being forced to use his right hand had "a great effect on [his] mentality (*shinri*)."³²

transmission and consultation of archival materials in the Tomimoto Kenkichi Memorial Museum, which Tsujimoto founded in 1972.

²⁹ The character "ken" 憲 was from second character of Chikuden's given name, Kōken 孝憲, and the character "kichi" 吉 was from his father's name as well as the second character of Chikuden's childhood name Isokichi 磯吉. "Ken" is also the first character of the word constitution, "kenpō," which at the time of Tomimoto's birth was to come into force soon.

³⁰ Tomimoto, *Watashi no rirekisho*, 187.

³¹ The full inscription is 後世可恐/明治廿六年拾一月五日尋常三年生八年. The quotation is from Book IX, Chapter 23. The fuller passage is "A youth is to be regarded with respect. How do we know that his future will not be equal to our present? If he reaches the age of forty or fifty, and has not made himself heard of, then indeed he will not be worth being regarded with respect." Trans. James Legge (1960).

³² Tomimoto, *Watashi no rirekisho*, 186.

In addition to calligraphy lessons, his father, Tomimoto reminisced, imparted instruction in ceramics connoisseurship.³³ Tomimoto recounted that around his age of ten the two would sit in the *zashiki* (reception room), drink a bit of evening spirits and look at Ming and Arita *kōsometsuke* and other porcelain, discussing issues like the differences between Japanese and Chinese wares and the coloring of *kōsometsuke*. “After dinner, when it was a good time to do so, he would line up ceramics, and explain ‘This is a Chinese thing. That is Arita-yaki. The pattern as well as the tint of the *gosu* (blue pigment) is different.’”³⁴ Such exposure to the diversity of Japanese and Chinese ceramics from his father also imparted a sentimental association with ceramics. This exposure to objects so deeply rooted in autochthonous East Asian traditions contrasted with his later art school pursuits but remained a long-lasting foundation. For a ceramist without a pedigree—that is, without either professional training or granting of name based in lineal succession—this early exposure to refined examples of historical ceramics served as evidence to demonstrate a kind of lineal transference of knowledge.

Despite his father’s early influence, he did not encourage his son to pursue art as more than an amateur endeavor. Tomimoto wrote, “Certainly, Father did not think that I should become an artist. Relatively speaking, many artists emerged from within Nara prefecture in the early Meiji era,” but “amongst those artists, there were many doing [art] haphazardly.”³⁵ Tomimoto was exposed to many local amateur artists like his father, and

³³ The noted collector Asakawa Noritaka described him as a *chajin*, or man of tea, in “Tomimoto Kenkichi-shi no yōgei,” *Atorie* 2, no. 8 (August 1925): 140.

³⁴ Tomimoto, *Watashi no rirekisho*, 185.

³⁵ Imaizumi Atsuo, “Tomimoto Kenkichi no geijutsu,” *Mizue* 610 (May 1956): 45.

his father promoted literati amateurism, but Tomimoto received no impetus from his family to pursue art professionally. However, the ideal of self-cultivation so intrinsic to literati culture persisted as a guiding principle throughout Tomimoto's education.

Education at the Tokyo School of Fine Arts

It was likely his early exposure to the arts that led Tomimoto to pursue study at the prestigious Tokyo School of Fine Arts (Tokyo Bijutsu Gakkō), and his father was no longer alive at this time to dissuade him from this training. In April of 1904, having graduated from the Kōriyama Junior High School in Nara, eighteen-year-old Tomimoto enrolled in the university's department of design (*zuan*), and by his sophomore year he entered the department of architecture and interior design (*shitsunai sōshoku*), from which he would graduate in 1908. His training in the dichotomous subjects of Japanese-style painting, on one hand, and British Arts and Crafts architecture, on the other, reflects the state of Japanese art and architecture of that time at the school, when traditional Japanese and European practices comingled. His coursework ranged from *nihonga* (Japanese-style painting) with Kawabata Gyokushō (川端玉章, 1842–1913),³⁶ to *seiyōga* (Western-style painting) with Okada Saburōsuke (岡田三郎助, 1869–1939), and architecture and interior design studies with Ōsawa Sannosuke (大沢三之助, 1867–1945) and Okada Shinichirō (岡田信一郎, 1883–1932).

³⁶ His given name was Takinosuke.

Initially Tomimoto showed a proclivity towards *nihonga*. Three extant paintings made under Kawabata Gyokushō's tutelage—*Crabs and Squillas* (*Kani to shako zu* 蟹と蝦蛄図, **Fig. 1.4**), *Kanshin* (*Kanshin zu* 韓信図, **Fig. 1.5**) and *Shōki* (Ch., Zhong Kui 鍾馗, **Fig. 1.6**)—were all based on historical Japanese precedents.³⁷ This teaching method, requiring students to copy antique works (*koga rinmo*), was first established by Hashimoto Gahō (橋本雅邦, 1835–1908) for the first class of the university's students and it remained a standard pedagogical method still in 1904 and beyond.³⁸ The halting nature of the brush strokes on these paintings indicates that they are clearly not the work of a mature artist, but they demonstrate his initial training in painting and Gyokushō's influence.

Gyokushō, regarded in his time as one of the “three great Meiji painters,”³⁹ was a follower of the Maruyama-Shijō school of Japanese realism. He became known for imparting the importance of Naturalism, including the reliance on sketching from life

³⁷ This detail was indicated by Tomimoto's handwritten box inscription for them. Tomimoto explained that he took courses in *nihonga* from within the design (*zuan*) division since his painting teacher had “grown old” and switched from teaching within the *nihonga* division to the design preparatory course (*yobika*, 予備課). See Imaizumi, “Tomimoto Kenkichi no geijutsu,” 45.

³⁸ Victoria Weston, “Institutionalizing Talent and the Kanō Legacy at the Tokyo School of Fine Arts, 1889–1893,” *Copying the Master and Stealing His Secrets: Talent and Training in Japanese Painting*, ed. Brenda Jordan and Victoria Weston (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press), 162–3. As Weston notes, the model paintings were mostly Kanō school works or Buddhist paintings in the school collection or that of the Tokyo Imperial Museum.

³⁹ Art historian and critic Imaizumi Yusaku designated him, Hashimoto Gahō and Taki Katei as the three. See “Yo no bijutsu ni shisu ni itarishi doki,” *Shoga kotto zasshi* 62 (August 1913): 5, quoted in Rosina Buckland, “Traveling Literatus to Imperial Household Artist: Taki Katei (1830–1901) and the Transformation of Literati Painting in Late Nineteenth-century Japan,” (PhD diss., New York University, 2008), 18.

(*shasei*) to his students.⁴⁰ His advanced students directly sketched live animals, objects in their everyday lives, and nature motifs.⁴¹ Gyokushō was also a master copier, and for the interiors of the Hō-ō-den (Phoenix Hall) at the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition, he copied a series of paintings by the great Muromachi artist Sesshū Tōyō (1420–1506).⁴² This type of copying would represent what Tomimoto later vehemently criticized in his writings on originality.

Gyokushō taught him for a half a year just before his retirement from the university, but his influence on Tomimoto was lasting. While the teacher critiqued the student for making brush strokes that, when dry, “chattered like a grilled squid,”⁴³ he offered the young student much encouragement.⁴⁴ In the end, Tomimoto was reluctant to pursue *nihonga* study and showed ambivalence towards Gyokushō's paintings.⁴⁵ Gyokushō sensed his student's reluctance to pursue serious study of painting under his tutelage and told him, “I understand what you are thinking. But in the future, you will definitely turn to painting, and there is no way you will remove yourself from the realm of painting your whole life.”⁴⁶ These words might be seen as prophetic, but since they

⁴⁰ See Satō Dōshin, *Modern Japanese Art and the Meiji State: The Politics of Beauty*. He taught there until 1912. Among his many accomplishments, he was also a juror for the Bunten (Ministry of Education Exhibition).

⁴¹ Weston, “Institutionalizing Talent and the Kanō Legacy,” 166.

⁴² Ellen Conant, “Japan ‘Abroad’ at the Chicago Exposition, 1893,” in *Challenging Past and Present: The Metamorphosis of Nineteenth-Century Japanese Art*, 263.

⁴³ Imaizumi, “Tomimoto Kenkichi no geijutsu,” 45.

⁴⁴ Gyokushō was incredulousness that his student had not learned painting before, and so Tomimoto finally muttered to him that he had seen painting done by a friend of his grandfather's on his mother's side. Tomimoto, *Watashi no rerekisho*, 195.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 196.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

were recorded by Tomimoto later, they reveal how he encouraged others to be aware of his painting talents and status as an artist.

Ultimately, Arts and Crafts-style interior design, architecture, and stained glass would be his main concentration as a university student. Tomimoto claimed it was his design professor Ōsawa Sannosuke who introduced him first to the paintings of James McNeill Whistler and the designs of Arts and Crafts leader William Morris. In 1907, he created a design for stained glass (**Fig. 1.7**) which appeared in an exhibition of Tokyo School of Fine Arts students' work judged by faculty held within the Tokyo Industrial Exposition.⁴⁷ In style and subject Tomimoto's design reflects elements of the Arts and Crafts stained glass designs of William Morris and Edward Burne-Jones. Above an image of a woman is inscribed "Gather ye roses...", a phrase from Robert Herrick's (1591–1633) poem "To the Virgins, to Make Much of Time."

Gather ye rosebuds while ye may,
 Old time is still a-flying:
 And this same flower that smiles to-day
 To-morrow will be dying.

The glorious lamp of heaven, the sun,
 The higher he's a-getting,
 The sooner will his race be run,
 And nearer he's to setting.

That age is best which is the first,
 When youth and blood are warmer;
 But being spent, the worse, and worst
 Times still succeed the former.

⁴⁷ The Kangyō Hakurankai 勸業博覧会 was held March 20–July 31 at Takenodai Exhibition Hall in Ueno. Isozaki Yasuhiro and Yoshida Chizuko, *Tokyo Bijutsu Gakkō no rekishi* vol. 2 (Osaka: Nihon Bunkyo Shuppan, 1977), 396–7.

Then be not coy, but use your time,
 And while ye may go marry:
 For having lost but once your prime
 You may for ever tarry.⁴⁸

The seventeenth-century British Cavalier poet's "carpe diem" message likely appealed to the young Tomimoto. He also might have seen stained glass designs related to this poem in an Arts and Crafts magazine such as *The Studio* that he had access to at the university.⁴⁹

Stained glass also comprised a major focus of his graduation project, *A Musician's Cottage* (*Ongakuka jūtaku sekkei zuan* 音楽家住宅設計圖按). One of his classmates remarked that Tomimoto's stained glass design of a round window with a ship was the most impressive work in all of the graduation exhibition and that Tomimoto, around 1938 or 1939, confessed to him that the stained glass drawing comprised the "principle work" of his entire graduation project.⁵⁰ The whole project comprises nine drawings, including a perspective view (**Fig. 1.8a**), ground floor plan (**Fig. 1.8b**), elevation drawings, a cross-section view (**Fig. 1.8c**) and the stained glass design for a hall window (**Fig. 1.8d**). Its theme was not highly original or unusual for students of his department at that time. There were just six design majors graduating at the same time as Tomimoto, and their projects emphasized functional design such as "*Kakushu kōgei zuan*

⁴⁸ Robert Herrick, *Selected Poems*, David Jesson-Dibley, ed. (New York: Routledge, 2003), 72–73.

⁴⁹ Nakayama Shūichi, "Tomimoto Kenkichi no Eikoku ryūgaku izen: Uiriamu Morisu e no kanshin keisei katei," *Hyōgen bunka kenkyū* 6, no. 1 (2006): 43. Nakayama identifies works by E.A. Taylor in 1904 issues of *The Studio* as possible sources.

⁵⁰ Hirokawa Matsugorō 廣川松五郎, "Tokyo Bijutsu Gakkō kōyū kaishi 東京美術学校校友会誌" 19 (October, 1940), in Isozaki and Yoshida, *Tokyo Bijutsu Gakkō no rekishi*, vol. 2, 326–7.

[Drawings of various types of crafts], *Gaka jtaku sekkei zuan* [Drawing of a plan for a painter's house], *Fujinyō fukusei zuan* [Women's uniforms drawing] and *Senshoku oyobi kigu zuan* [Drawing of textiles and utensils].”⁵¹

Tomimoto's graduation project reflected an interest in music as well as Arts and Crafts architecture. A section of the elevation on sheet eight pictures a man in repose near the bath strumming a musical instrument (**Fig. 1.8.e**); this small detail may suggest a more personal ideal of leisure. As he later recollected—perhaps suggesting the stereotypical image of the artist as beyond academics—Tomimoto was not a “good student,” preferring to “confine himself to [his] boarding house and play away at the mandolin.”⁵² He was an active member of his school's Mandolin Club to which he had been introduced through his art history professor, Iwamura Tōru (岩村透, 1870–1917), the group's leader who had provided them with mandolins and mandolas directly from the United States.⁵³ Iwamura and others were likely drawn to the mandolin out of an interest in its association with European culture, generally. The club's establishment coincided with Japan's first publication on mandolin playing methods in 1908.⁵⁴

Yuko Kikuchi has suggested that Tomimoto's design for the house was based on precedents by Richard Norman Shaw and Phillip Webb.⁵⁵ Certainly there are several

⁵¹ “Tokyo Bijutsu Gakkō kōyū kai geppō 報東京美術学校校友会月” 7, no. 8 (April 27, 1909), in Isozaki and Yoshida, *Tokyo Bijutsu Gakkō no rekishi* 2, 448.

⁵² Tomimoto, *Watashi no rirekisho*, 193.

⁵³ Ibid., 194. Also in the club, the *Mandolin no dōkōkai*, were Yoshizō Kyūzō 義三宮造 and Morita Kamenosuke 森田亀之輔.

⁵⁴ Paul Sparks, *The Classical Mandolin* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 133–4.

⁵⁵ *Japanese Modernisation and Mingei Theory*, 17.

parallels with Webb's Red House (**Fig. 1.9**), such as the L-shaped plan; corbelled arch over the central entrance as visible on sheet six; alternating window shapes and sizes; and the use of round stained-glass windows as decorative elements. However, it remains unclear exactly if and how he could have seen Shaw and Webb's designs. A more immediate set of influences for Tomimoto would have been the designs of Kigo Kōzaburō (木子幸三郎, 1874–1941) or Josiah Conder (1852–1920) for the Count Watanabe Residence of 1905 or the Tetsuma Akaboshi Second House of 1907, respectively.⁵⁶ It is conjecture, though, that he would have seen or heard about these.

The question remains: What motivated Tomimoto to create architectural design drawings in such an overtly Arts and Crafts style? Tomimoto's explanation was that he was highly adept at drawing and well-tutored from an early age in math and that these skills prepared him for complex architectural design projects.⁵⁷ Regarding his interest in Morris, in addition to Ōsawa Sannosuke's influence, Tomimoto wrote that as early as his middle school years he had read the socialist newspaper *Heimin shimbun* and that he first heard about William Morris through Shimanaka Yūzō (島中雄三, 1881–1940), a member of the Socialist party and later a leader of the Shin Nihon Kokumin Dōmei.⁵⁸ Morris's Socialist utopian novel *News from Nowhere* was translated and published in

⁵⁶ Suzuki Hiroyuki and Hatsuda Tōru, *Zumen de miru toshi kenchiku no Meiji* (Tokyo: Kashiwa Shobō, 1990).

⁵⁷ Tomimoto, *Watashi no rirekisho*, 188–9. He recounted that he even would face off with his Harvard-trained professor of drafting, a man Tomimoto referred to as Professor Koshima 小島.

⁵⁸ Tomimoto Kenkichi, "Zadankai, Tomimoto Kenkichi no gojūnen, sakutō gojūnen ten o kinen shite," *Mingei techō* (Aug. 1961): 6.

Japan in 1904. Still, at the time Tomimoto was a university student, there was no publication on Morris as designer by a Japanese writer in any Japanese magazine.

Tomimoto's experiences as a student may not seem remarkable in light of his later work. He was not an architecture (*kenchiku*) major and his graduation project showed less technical skill than, for example, the projects by contemporaneous architecture majors at the Tokyo Imperial University. His graduation project as well as his stained glass design and paintings showed little originality and a modicum of skill in execution. His education at the university relied on copying, a method of learning intrinsic to East Asian artistic training that carried on through the Meiji era and later. After he founded, in 1952, the first university department devoted to ceramics at the Kyoto City College of Fine Arts, he instilled the importance of originality to his students and expressed his antipathy towards his design division teachers at the Tokyo School of Fine Arts who, as he stated, lacked any practical design experience.⁵⁹ However, his experiences at the Tokyo School of Fine Arts propelled him towards study in England and instilled ideas about painting and originality that became central to his discourse of ceramics.

Study in Britain and Beyond 1908–1910

Select Japanese men traveled to Britain in the Meiji era, most for diplomatic or cultural purposes and funded by the Japanese government. As John Clark has described

⁵⁹ *Waga tōki tsukuri* (1952), in Tsujimoto Isamu, ed. *Tomimoto Kenkichi chosakushū*, 30.

it, Britain “was a place for gaining technical access to the levers of modern power.”⁶⁰ As early as 1866, Machida Hisanari studied museums in London and later became a curator at what is now the Tokyo National Museum.⁶¹ In the 1870s, several noted Japanese painters and architects flocked to London for advanced study. These men included the painters Kunizawa Shinkurō (国泽新九郎, 1847–1877), Hyakutake Kaneyuki (百武兼行 1842–1887) and architect Tatsuno Kingo (辰野金吾, 1854–1919).⁶² By the first decade of the twentieth century, London was arguably *the* capital of the world in terms of economic, military, and cultural resources. Relations between Japan and Britain became especially favorable after the Anglo-Japanese Alliance of 1902. Also of note and likely known to Tomimoto (who later praised his work) was Natsume Sōseki’s (夏目漱石, born Natsume Kinnosuke 夏目金之助, 1867–1916) study of English literature there from 1900 to 1903. Unlike the aforementioned men who preceded him, however, Tomimoto did not journey there with financial support from the government. Those men received government support due to their intellectual or academic promise and usually entered the service of government upon their return to Japan.

Tomimoto’s personal decision to go to London was kindled by several factors.

One was, as he wrote, “in connection to conscription,”⁶³ which had been universal since

⁶⁰ *Japanese Exchanges in Art 1850s–1930 with Britain, Continental Europe, and the USA* (Sydney: Power Publications, 2001), 218.

⁶¹ Andrew Cobbing, *The Japanese Discovery of Victorian Britain: Early Travel Encounters in the Far East* (Richmond, Surrey: Japan Library, 1998), 135.

⁶² Kunizawa Shinkurō studied under John Edgar Williams. Hyakutake Kaneyuki was there in 1875, and Tatsuno Kingo in 1880. *Japanese Exchanges in Art 1850s–1930*, 136, 213, 216.

⁶³ Tomimoto, *Watashi no rirekisho*, 199.

the beginning of the Meiji era.⁶⁴ Overlapping with his university years, the Russo-Japanese war of 1904–5 had engaged Japan in a series of military conquests leading to the annexation of Korea in 1910. A second factor in his decision to go to Britain was that several of his former classmates and teachers from the university were there, including his design professor Ōsawa Sannosuke, *yōga* painters Ishibashi Wakun (石橋和訓, 1876–1928), Minami Kunzō (南薫造, 1883–1950), and Shirataki Ikunosuke (白滝幾之助, 1873–1960), and sculptor Takamura Kōtarō.⁶⁵

In particular, Tomimoto admitted he wanted to reunite with his close university friend Minami Kunzō. In a January 25, 1908, group letter to Minami, Tomimoto wrote, “Candy, watercolor painting, the light of a spring day, dolls—emerging from my imagination, like a dream, your London life.”⁶⁶ Minami, who became a prominent painter in an Impressionist style at the Imperial Salon exhibitions, was a *yōga* student of Okada Saburōsuke (岡田三郎助, 1869–1939) and a fellow member of the Mandolin Club. After graduating he arrived in England in September of 1907.⁶⁷ He decided to go to Europe, according to his diary entries, after consultation with the school’s director Masaki Naohiko (正木直彦, 1862–1940), the painter Kuroda Seiki (黒田清輝, 1866–

⁶⁴ The law was set into effect in 1873. E. H. Norman, *Soldier and Peasant in Japan: The Origins of Conscription* (New York Institute of Pacific Relations, 1943), 47.

⁶⁵ These men were all in London by September 1907 when Minami arrived there. Takagi Shigenori, “Shirataki Kamenosuke no Minami Kunzō ate shokan nitsuite,” *Bulletin of Hiroshima Prefectural Art Museum* 1 (March 31, 1994): 2.

⁶⁶ Jan. 25, 1908 letter from Morita Kamenosuke and Tomimoto to Minami. Nara Prefectural Museum, ed., *Minami Kunzō ate Tomimoto Kenkichi shokan* (Nara: Nara Prefectural Museum, 1999), 5.

⁶⁷ *Tanjō 100-nen kinen Minami Kunzō ten* (Hiroshima: Hiroshima Kenritsu Bijutsukan, 1983), 123.

1924), and the aforementioned art historian Iwamura Tōru, who urged him to go to Belgium or France.⁶⁸ However, as Okamoto Takahiro has postulated, since early to late Meiji art periodicals such as *Bijutsu shinpō* and *Mizue* emphasized English as well as French art, and since Minami was particularly interested in studying watercolor painting where it was regarded as prominent, he decided to go to England. He enrolled at Southwest Polytechnic College to study oil and watercolor painting under Ernest Borough Johnson (1867–1949).⁶⁹ The son of a wealthy doctor, Minami received financial support from his family for the expensive voyage and costs of living abroad, as would Tomimoto.⁷⁰

In April of 1908 Tomimoto began earnestly preparing to go to London.⁷¹ That summer he returned to Nara to finish his graduation project early in time to sail to London in October.⁷² For virtually all of 1909 he was in London, enrolling at the Central School of Arts and Crafts for three months in the spring and making excursions to Windsor in April and Huntington, Devonshire, in August and October. He then travelled in the Middle East and India and returned briefly to England on April 3, 1910; in less

⁶⁸ Okamoto Takahiro, *Minami Kunzō ten: Seitan 100-nen kinen* (Hiroshima: Hiroshima Prefectural Museum, 1983), 123.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Tomimoto, *Watashi no rirekisho*, 199. This differentiated them from Japanese overseas on diplomatic missions or those whose funding was from the Ministry of Education.

⁷¹ That month he devoted his Saturday and Sunday afternoons to English conversation practice with a man named Roy Eastlake. This spelling is an estimation based on the katakana name ロイ エースレーキ in a letter from Tomimoto to Minami. See Nara Prefectural Museum, ed., *Minami Kunzō ate Tomimoto Kenkichi shokan* (Nara: Nara Kenritsu Bijutsukan, 1999), 1.

⁷² He arrived in mid-December and received his diploma in abstensia in March 1909.

than a month, on April 29, he made his return to Japan. Tomimoto was abroad for a year and a half in total.⁷³

Tomimoto arrived in London and after briefly staying with Minami began living in a boarding house with other Japanese men, mainly Monbusho-sponsored researchers and engineers.⁷⁴ The house was at 26 Cathcart Road (**Fig. 1.10**) in Fulham, southwest London.⁷⁵ It was a typical upper middle-class Victorian era boarding house decorated with dense floral-patterned wallpaper, features which can be glimpsed from a photograph of Tomimoto sitting and reading a book (**Fig. 1.11**).⁷⁶ The house's location in Fulham situated Tomimoto ideally for his daily excursions to the Victoria and Albert Museum, roughly a fifteen-minute walk northeast towards South Kensington.

Much of the time he spent in England was alongside Minami. Tomimoto published recollections of their friendship in the January 1912 issue of *Bijutsu shinpō*.

⁷³ Although in autobiographical accounts Tomimoto states that he was in England for three years, he was actually in London and its environs for about 13 months continuously and again for a few weeks in April of 1910 before returning to Japan. The description of three years appears in many of Tomimoto's published accounts and in various secondary descriptions based on those. For example, see the 1970 *Tomimoto Kenkichi isaku ten* (Tokyo: Tokyo Kokuritsu Kindai Bijutsukan) or 2006 *Seitan 120-nen Tomimoto Kenkichi ten / Tomimoto Kenkichi: A Restrospective* (Tokyo: Asahi Shimbun) catalogues. Claiming that he was there for three years may have bolstered the way in which he was perceived as having substantial foreign training.

⁷⁴ Tomimoto named electrical engineer Torikata Uichi (鳥潟右一, 1883–1923), Waseda architectural department founder Satō Kōichi (佐藤功一, 1878–1941), and bicycle designer 根岸政一. Tomimoto, *Watashi no rirekisho*, 199.

⁷⁵ The house was owned by the widow Frances Shepherd (1842–?). Although Tomimoto's katakana for this suggests the name spelling Sheffield, census records list the name as Shepherd. According to the 1911 census, she had no occupation, and lived there with a cook Alice Whitehard (1888–) and a housemaid Violet Hash (1893–?). On that census form were also two Japanese “professors,” “KOMIZO, Shigekitsn [sic],” born in 1874, and “MAEDA, Malinoto [sic]” born in 1881. Reference #RG14PN125 RG78PN4 RD2 SD1 ED38 SN92, http://www.findmypast.co.uk/CensusAddressShowTranscriptServlet?uarn=1250183&_zga_s=1.

⁷⁶ An extant photographic album is preserved in the TKKA.

At Art School and in London we lived in the same room. I saw him nearly every day. Among my friends he was the closest, and the person I think the most highly of. He taught me not only design and watercolors, but also music, poetry, and all sorts of elevated pursuits. When I came to London, he proclaimed immediately ‘Let’s see things that you like and will make you happy’ and he showed me Whistler’s house, the India Museum’s exhibitions, Albert Hall’s Sunday museum and so on. Minami-kun, who liked Scottish and other folk songs, often inserted in his own paintings a kind of beautiful elegance....I am on edge, cry easily, and am prone to feel angry. Thus I am grateful to gentle Minami-kun who for a long time has introduced me to his refined taste. Minami-kun is a person who stirs in me surreptitious good feelings like those of ocarina music, worn 15–16th century antique cylindrical tin beer mugs...and finely ornamented medieval Persian brocade and embroidery.⁷⁷

Both Minami and Shirataki Ikunosuke influenced Tomimoto there to pursue *plein air* sketching and watercolor painting with them throughout southern England.⁷⁸ Minami was the most enthusiastic *plein air* practitioner, spending almost a month devoted to it in Berkshire. They sent postcards to each other with their updates and paintings capturing their current locations. In a letter to Minami dated October 1, 1909, Shirataki wrote: “Tomi recently went to Huntington, and I received a painted postcard from him every day. That bastard has gotten good. You probably got them [postcards] too. A postcard just came saying tomorrow morning he will come over for breakfast. It seems he’s

⁷⁷ Repr. in *Tanjō 100-nen kinen Minami Kunzō ten*, 123–4. The collection of the “India House” Tomimoto refers to would later become part of the Victoria and Albert museum. In Nara Kenritsu Bijtusukan, ed. *Minami Kunzō ate Tomimoto Kenkichi shokan*, 4, Minami’s address is recorded as 17 Earl’s Court Gardens SW in London, the address to which Tomimoto sent a letter to Minami in 1908. Therefore, it appears Minami lived in at least two different places during his English sojourn.

⁷⁸ The three went on a sketching trip to Windsor for the Easter holiday in April of 1909. *Rondon no seishun: zengo: Shirataki Kamenosuke, Minami Kunzō, Tomimoto Kenkichi to sono shūhen* 1908/09 (Fukuyama: Fukuyama Bijutsukan, 1990), 118–9.

created some watercolor masterpieces. I'm quite impressed by his good coloring. He's a genius, I'm sure!"⁷⁹

As much as Minami introduced Tomimoto to life in London and its art, his was a quite different experience. This was not only because he arrived earlier, in September of 1907, nor that he had studied oil painting and watercolors at the Southwest Polytechnic College with Johnson. Minami also created many more finished paintings than Tomimoto while overseas and he visited more countries. After his two years in London from July of 1909 he was in France, Italy, Berlin, and Amsterdam and from April 1910 in the United States before returning home.

Central School of Arts and Crafts

After settling into London, Tomimoto enrolled in an evening course at the Central School of Arts and Crafts, also known as the London County Council School, in March of 1909.⁸⁰ It is uncertain who introduced him and whether official enrollment was a requirement of his status as a foreigner in Britain. It appears that none of his Japanese colleagues were directly associated with the school and that he alone was studying there.

⁷⁹ Takagi, "Shirataki Kamenosuke," 8. For a compilation of Tomimoto's illustrated postcards and letters, see Tsujimoto Isamu and Kaidō Ryūkichi, *Tomimoto Kenkichi no etagami* (Tokyo: Nigensha, 2007).

⁸⁰ The Central School of Arts and Crafts and St. Martins School of Art combined to become Central Saint Martins School of Art and Design in 1989.

However, he was among hundreds of students, including foreigners, enrolled in evening classes there that spring.⁸¹

At the time he was there, the Arts and Crafts' ethos reigned supreme throughout the curriculum due to the leadership of William Richard Lethaby (1857–1931), its Senior Art Inspector and Principal since its inception in 1896. In 1908 a new classroom building opened on the corner of Southampton Row and Theobald's Road (**Fig. 1.12**). Lethaby exerted an influence on its designs done by a team of architects led by W.E. Riley and A. Halcrow Verstage.⁸² Many of the school's teachers were men Lethaby had met at the Art Workers' Guild and the Art and Crafts Exhibition Society.⁸³ As the crest (**Fig. 1.13**) molded on the façade of the building reads, the school's motto was "Labor Omnia Vincit" (Work Conquers All), referring to the work of craft.⁸⁴ Lethaby and his instructors emphasized materials-based technical instruction of handmade processes. Students learned from master craftsmen in the fields of "Architecture and Building Crafts; Cabinet Work and Furniture; Silversmiths' Work and Allied Crafts; General Book Production; Drawing, Design and Modelling; Needlework, Etc.; Stained Glass, Mosaic and Decorative Painting."⁸⁵ In particular, the crafts involved with paper—namely,

⁸¹ At the Museum and Study Collection at Central Saint Martins, no enrollment records are extant from this period, due to the constant influx of hundreds of students in day and evening courses.

⁸² In 2011 the building ceased holding college classes, now moved to a new campus in Kings Cross.

⁸³ Sylvia Backemeyer, "Introduction," in Backemeyer, ed. *Making Their Mark: Art, Craft and Design at the Central School 1896–1966* (London: Herbert Press, 2000), 9.

⁸⁴ This common Latin phrase can be traced to Roman poet Virgil, c. 29 B.C.E. in *Georgics*, Book I, containing the phrase *Labor omnia uicit improbus* ("uphill work overcame all things").

⁸⁵ London County Council Central School of Arts & Crafts, Southampton Row, W.C., *Prospectus & Time-table for the Session Beginning 21st September, 1908*, 2–3. Women were also permitted

printing and bookbinding—were the school’s most highly regarded subjects of teaching.⁸⁶

During the second term of the 1908–09 school year, Tomimoto enrolled in a stained glass course taught from February 8 to June 26, 1909, on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays from 7:00 to 9:30p.m. It took place in the fifth-floor, rooftop studio (**Fig. 1.14**), where each step in the process of lead stained glass techniques could be executed. Classes that spring were taught by G.F. Brodrick, Karl Parsons, and “cutting and leading” by Alfred J. Drury.⁸⁷ The course was likely attended by many day workers, including women, who lived near the area and were able to pay the course fee.⁸⁸ As examples of student work from that period indicate (**Fig. 1.15**), religious subjects in the style of Charles Rennie Mackintosh (1868–1928) were popular, a continuation of late nineteenth-century tastes.

The study of stained glass did not satisfy Tomimoto, however. As he later stated, “I wanted in England to study interior design and also stained glass, but, along the way, I understood that stained glass and modern architecture do not match, and I came back.”⁸⁹ Yet it would not be modern architecture that most engaged him during the rest of his days. In London he continued to pursue his interest in medieval revivalist forms of Arts

to, and enrolled in great numbers in, the evening courses of the school, while there was also a separate “Day School of Art for Women.”

⁸⁶ Backemeyer, *Making Their Mark*, 11. “It quickly acquired a reputation for innovative teaching in the revival of declining crafts such as illumination, printing, and bookbinding.”

⁸⁷ There is a photograph inscribed “Alfred Drury” in the Museum and Study Collection at Central Saint Martins.

⁸⁸ The fee was “£1 Shilling” per course. London County Council Central School of Arts & Crafts, *Prospectus & Time-table, 21st September, 1908*, inside cover.

⁸⁹ Imaizumi, “Tomimoto Kenkichi no geijutsu,” 46.

and Crafts expression. He abandoned the technical study of stained glass in order to devote his time to studying objects, sketching, and collecting visual sources that would later be integrated into original designs. In this way, placing the assembling of visual source material before technical mastery, he was following the model of William Morris.

The Victoria and Albert Museum

“If I had not known this museum, I think that perhaps I would not have become a ceramist” was how Tomimoto referred to the Victoria and Albert Museum.⁹⁰ What he saw and how objects were displayed there exerted a substantial influence on his development as an artist and designer. Minami and Shirataki introduced him to the museum,⁹¹ and Minami set a precedent for Tomimoto in having gone there regularly starting in September of 1907 to study and copy paintings there by artists such as Burne-Jones.⁹² Tomimoto’s instructors at the Central School regularly integrated its collections into their teaching, too. Earlier in Japan, Tomimoto surely would have known of the museum, since it was in many regards the stylistic and conceptual model for the Ueno

⁹⁰ *Watashi no rerekisho*, quoted in Nara Kenritsu Bijtusukan, ed. *Minami Kunzō ate Tomimoto Kenkichi shokan*, 97. Tomimoto referred to it in published writing as the South Kensington museum. Despite the earlier name change in 1898 to the Victoria and Albert Museum, as late as 1958 many people still referred to it as the South Kensington museum. See William Gaunt, *Kensington* (London: Batsford, 1958), 101, quoted in Anthony Burton, *Vision & Accident: The Story of the Victoria and Albert Museum* (London: V&A Publications, 1999), 154.

⁹¹ Letter to Minami, Oct. 1, 1909, in Takagi, “Shirataki Kamenosuke,” 8.

⁹² Okamoto Takahiro and Takagi Shigenori, *Minami Kunzō no nikki: kanren shokan no kenkyū* (Hiroshima: Yanagimorisha, 1988).

Museum (today's Tokyo National Museum).⁹³ That museum's designer, Josiah Conder, not only had studied at the South Kensington Art School but also modeled in many respects the architecture of the Tokyo National Museum after the South Kensington Museum.⁹⁴

Tomimoto followed a rich tradition of Arts and Crafts designers relying on the museum for inspiration. Burne-Jones did so starting in the 1850s, and Philip Webb in 1859–61 sketched many of the museum's works, likely kindling William Morris's interests in doing the same.⁹⁵ Morris drew many of his 1870s textile designs from patterns he had studied at the museum.⁹⁶ In his 1902 essay "Architecture Industry & Wealth," he wrote about fabrics he saw there "being designed in the heyday of mediaeval art, uniting the wild fantasy and luxurious intricacy of the East with the straightforward story-telling imagination and clear definite drawing of Mediaeval Europe."⁹⁷

In 1909, the museum, in the heart of bustling London, was dedicated to the display of works from around the world, consistent with the museum's aims to improve British design and industry and, in a move instilling limited exposure to contemporary

⁹³ Japanese delegates of the Iwakura and Austrian missions praised it as the ideal model. In 1875, Sano Tsunetami, as Alice Y. Tseng has described, saw "the South Kensington Museum as the most appropriate model for Japan to follow, the aim being the stimulation of good craftsmanship and design through the preservation and exhibition of exemplary samples of such art." *The Imperial Museums of Meiji Japan: Architecture and the Art of the Nation*, 28.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 18–81.

⁹⁵ Barbara Morris, *William Morris and the South Kensington Museum* (London: William Morris Society, 187), 6–7.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 10.

⁹⁷ (London: Londmans, Green, and co.) in Barbara Morris, *William Morris and the South Kensington Museum*, 10.

works, from the nineteenth-century or earlier.⁹⁸ The founders of the Victoria and Albert Museum, even in its earliest incarnation in the mid-nineteenth century, embraced the concept of the museum as a place for learning and, specifically, for training in design.⁹⁹ Tomimoto encountered the museum at the precise time that it was undergoing a major phase of reconfiguration and growth, and this timing may have contributed to his attraction to the institution.¹⁰⁰ The new building design by Sir Aston Webb at least doubled the size of the previous space.¹⁰¹ Within twelve acres of land were exhibition spaces arranged according to medium and geographic origin. Arts and Crafts style “refreshment” rooms included the “Green Room, decorated by William Morris and Associates; the Central Room, with ceramic decoration by J. Gamble; and the Grill

⁹⁸ The latter because “the principle of admitting modern specimens presents grave difficulties; taste is apt to change with time; and the admission of the work of any one living manufacturer or craftsman would not improbably expose the administration to attack from others, and even to the charge of advertising for ulterior ends.” *The Victoria and Albert Museum (Art Division) Report of the Committee of Re-Arrangement (adopted July 29, 1908)* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, Ltd., July 29, 1908), 20.

⁹⁹ It was established as the Museum of Practical Art, at Marlborough House, in 1852, and became the Museum of Ornamental Art, in Brompton, and part of the South Kensington Museum, by 1857. John Physick, *The Victoria and Albert Museum: The History of Its Building* (London: The Oregon Press, 1982), 9.

¹⁰⁰ Tomimoto might have witnessed the procession of King Edward VII and Queen Alexandra and the members of the royal family along Constitution Hill to the opening ceremony in Knightsbridge, seen by masses lining the decorated Brompton Road on June 26, 1909. Seeing these events would have instilled in observers an awareness of the modern imperial support of the objects housed within. This state opening was not open to the public, but there were an estimated 2,300 in attendance total. Physick, *The Victoria and Albert Museum*, 247–8.

¹⁰¹ Burton, *Vision & Accident*, 154. The reconstruction began 17 May 1899, with Queen Victoria’s laying of a foundation stone. Progress was made gradually, and the main elements of the new building’s exterior were virtually complete by August of 1906. Physick, *The Victoria and Albert Museum*, 213–25.

Room, ornamented with panels of tiles from the designs of Sir E. J. Poynter, P.R.A.”¹⁰²

The ceramics section was comprehensive in scope; works were classified “chronologically and geographically” with Japanese pottery and porcelain displayed together.¹⁰³

Tomimoto merged into the ranks of budding artists, craftsmen, and designers fervently sketching objects on display at the museum, a practice that continues to this day (**Fig. 1.16**). In his 1899 survey of European museums, Marius Vachon described how the museum was a place to which one could devote entire days on end:

At South Kensington, you can go in at eight o’clock in the morning, and not come out until ten o’clock at night. A restaurant makes provision for you to take breakfast, lunch and dinner; a bar provides refreshment. Are you tired of walking in the galleries? In winter, a library, admirably heated, ventilated, and lighted, offers you rest in its soft armchairs, and a variety of reading-matter; in summer, a garden offers its rocking chairs and its benches, in the shade, amid verdure and flowers.¹⁰⁴

Tomimoto likely devoted entire days in succession to studying works in the galleries and reading in the library. His efforts yielded approximately eight hundred sketches on loose paper which span in style and subject from a loose pencil sketch of Jean-François Millet’s 1850–52 painting *The Wood Sawyers* (**Fig. 1.17**) to a colorful watercolor rendering of a portion of a Persian carpet (**Fig. 1.18**) to a black ink brushed painting of an Ogata Kenzan

¹⁰² *Guide to the Victoria and Albert Museum, South Kensington* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, Ltd. 1909), 19.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 47.

¹⁰⁴ In 1898 the museum’s name changed to the Victoria and Albert Museum. Marius Vachon, *Pour la Défense de nos Industries d’Art* (Paris: Lahure, 1899), 277–8, repr. in Burton, *Vision & Accident*, 154.

ceramic dish (**Fig. 1.19**).¹⁰⁵ Tomimoto appears to have sketched whatever caught his eye, not select objects for study out of a desire to copy them for specific design projects. This practice differed from that of craftsmen training at the museum at the time. For example, in 1910, George Hutchings, a man using the museum as a place to study furniture, sketched a variety of furniture spindles (**Fig. 1.20**).¹⁰⁶ Tomimoto's sketches, in comparison, are clearly not technical drawings of a student in a training program like Hutchings. Despite the looser qualities of his sketches, Tomimoto's examination of an eclectic array of objects, particularly late nineteenth-century textile patterns by William Morris, Islamic designs, and European medieval metal works, undoubtedly influenced his later pattern designs. According to Tomimoto, "Gothic and early Christian art exerted an influence on my work, and I think that had a great deal to do with that period [of study in England]." ¹⁰⁷

Of particular importance to our consideration of the influence of Ogata Kenzan is that Tomimoto claimed it was at the Victoria and Albert Museum where he first saw the ceramics of Kenzan.¹⁰⁸ While Tomimoto might have sketched only one piece of Japanese ceramics at the museum, it was significant since Ogata Kenzan VI became his first ceramics teacher and he looked to Kenzan I's work as the pinnacle of Japanese ceramics. In his sketch of Kenzan's conjoined square dish (**Fig. 1.19**), he captured with astute observation and attunement to brush techniques its brushed plum blossom design and

¹⁰⁵ Of the extant collection of sketches, however, there may be some not of objects at the museum but from his course at the Central School.

¹⁰⁶ Burton, *Vision & Accident*, 168. See Fig. 10.11.

¹⁰⁷ Imaizumi, "Tomimoto Kenkichi no geijutsu," 46.

¹⁰⁸ Tomimoto, *Watashi no rirekisho*, 200.

calligraphic inscription “View of the three winter months’ many flowers charging ahead, written by Kenzan” (*santōkei hyakka sakigake Kenzan shō*). Such exposure to historical Japanese ceramics as objects of elevated artistic expression within an international context of fine arts, design, and craft objects encouraged Tomimoto’s understanding of Japanese ceramics as art objects. Tomimoto’s *iro-e jiki tōban*, in particular, as discussed in Chapter Four, relate to this dish by Kenzan in terms of its combination of a floral motif with a poetic calligraphic inscription on a flat ceramic surface.

The museum currently has no Ogata Kenzan work matching the dish sketched by Tomimoto, and the dish he saw was likely one of the pieces on temporary view from the Salting collection of Japanese ceramics (**Fig. 1.21**).¹⁰⁹ Historical records suggest that four other works by Kenzan were in the museum’s possession, too, at the time Tomimoto was there. They may have entered the collection after being exhibited at the 1900 Exposition Universelle in Paris.¹¹⁰ According to a 1906 catalogue of Japanese ceramics by August Franks, the museum contained many examples of “old Japanese Ceramic wares” that curators had arranged with “Japanese authorities” to select, place on view at the 1876 Philadelphia Exhibition, and then bring to the museum at South Kensington.¹¹¹ If Tomimoto saw this catalogue, he would have read about the “the great admiration that

¹⁰⁹ The museum also had many Chinese and other East Asian ceramics on view on loan from Salting, many of which would become part of the Salting bequest in 1910.

¹¹⁰ *Histoire de L’art du Japon*. (Paris Maurice de Brunoff, 1900), 257.

¹¹¹ Sir Augustus W. Franks, *Japanese Pottery, Being a Native Report with An Introduction and Catalogue*. London: Wyman and Sons and Board of Education, South Kensington, Victoria and Albert Museum, 1906, xix. Franks worked primarily at the British Museum. His preface notes that Fritz Cunliffe-Owen was “in the Japanese service, and residing in Tokio.” This catalogue was based on the “Report by Mr. M. Shioda” translated by T. Asami, originally published in June 1880.

has long been felt in Europe for Japanese porcelain”¹¹² and seen the text’s in-depth outlining of the history of Japanese ceramics including a discussion of tea ceremony wares, the influence of China and Korea, and descriptions of Bizen, Kutani, Nabeshima Seto, Shino, and Tamba ceramic styles.¹¹³

As Yamamoto Shigeo has argued, a “motivating force for Tomimoto’s later work” was “ascertaining with his own eyes the high international standard of Japanese craft of the Edo period, and *seeing craft objects displayed with equal reverence as paintings and sculpture*” at the Victoria and Albert museum.¹¹⁴ Yamamoto based this claim on Tomimoto’s April, 1912, *Bijutsu shinpō* article in which he wrote, “The first time my eyes were struck by the equivalent value of painting and calico prints (*sarasa*) occurred at London’s S. Kensington Museum.”¹¹⁵ This refers to the equivalency of presumably European painting and Indian prints, but we may also infer that ceramics were a unit in this aesthetic equation of value that flattened artistic hierarchies. Minami Kunzō also wrote, after returning to Japan from England, that decorative arts and paintings were equivalent in terms of their intrinsic artistic values.¹¹⁶

¹¹² Ibid., 1.

¹¹³ Its separation of works as “specimens” according to region is in some respects akin to that of Edward Sylvester Morse in his *Catalogue of the Morse Collection of Japanese Pottery* (Boston and Cambridge: Museum of Fine Arts, 1901).

¹¹⁴ “Mujun sōkoku suru kōgei rinen: Tomimoto Kenkichi no aidenteitei to dokusōsei,” *Honoho geijutsu* 58 (May 1999): 80 (italics mine).

¹¹⁵ “Kōgeihin ni kan suru shiki yori (jō),” *Bijutsu shinpō* 11, no. 6 (April 1912): 8–14, repr. in Tsujimoto, *Tomimoto Kenkichi chosakushū*, 448–9.

¹¹⁶ *Gashitsu nite* (Tokyo: Shumi Sōsho Hakkōsho, 1915).

As mentioned previously, one of the reasons Tomimoto went to England in the first place was to study William Morris.¹¹⁷ But just what of Morris did Tomimoto actually see with his own eyes there and, in particular, the Victoria and Albert Museum? The Victoria and Albert museum itself had a particular relationship to Morris, who stated at a meeting that “the South Kensington Museum was really got together for about six people—I am one, and another is a comrade (Philip Webb).”¹¹⁸ Morris’s ethos of craft was palpable throughout the museum. The museum’s Green Dining Room surrounds its patrons with the designs of Philip Webb and stained glass and painted panels by Burne-Jones, and Morris likely contributed to the designs for its gilded panels and ceiling.¹¹⁹ Examples of Morris’s furniture, including his “St. George cabinet,” were likely on display when Tomimoto was there. However, it was not until 1934 that the museum staged a major exhibition of Morris’s work, so it is plausible that Tomimoto actually saw only a few objects by Morris on display when he was there.¹²⁰

Nakayama Shūichi has investigated the objects and buildings associated with Morris that Tomimoto claimed he saw in England and were the basis for his 1912 *Bijutsu shinpō* articles on Morris.¹²¹ In one of these articles, Tomimoto wrote about a

¹¹⁷ “Uiriamu morisu no hanashi (jō)” *Bijutsu shinpō* 11: 4, 5 (1912): 14–20, 22–27. The first translation in Japanese of a Morris text was the Utopian fiction promoting a socialistic future society, *News from Nowhere*, in 1904, trans. Toshihiko Sakai (Tokyo: Heiminsha).

¹¹⁸ Barbara Morris, *William Morris and the South Kensington Museum*, 6, quoting the Lethaby biography, *Philip Webb and His Work* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1935).

¹¹⁹ B. Morris, *William Morris and the South Kensington Museum*, 14–15.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 23.

¹²¹ “1909–10-nen no Rondon ni okeru Tomimoto Kenkichi (I) Vikutoria and arubāto hakubutsukan ni okeru Uiriamu Morisu kenkyū,” *Hyōgen bunka kenkyū* (2007): 27–58.

chrysanthemum design for wallpaper by Morris. Nakayama ascertained that what Tomimoto actually saw was a rough sketch for embroidery with an artichoke motif.¹²² Nakayama also casts doubt on Tomimoto's visit to Morris's Red House (**Fig. 1.9**), the iconic Arts and Crafts building designed by Phillip Webb in 1859–60 in Bexleyheath, Kent, that Tomimoto also wrote about. Japanese guests to the house were recorded during the time Charles Holme lived there (1889–1903), when the house welcomed several notable Japanese guests introduced through the Japan Society and affiliated with the Imperial Navy. Presumably the practice of recording visits would have continued at the time Tomimoto was in England, but there is no evidence of Tomimoto's visit.¹²³ Imperial Art Advisor Shugyo Hiromichi is believed to have visited in 1910 around the time of the British-Japanese exhibition in May of that year. Given Tomimoto's ties to another Imperial employee, Niinomi Takamasa (新家孝正, 1857–1920), Technical Officer (*gikan* 技官) of the Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce (Nōshōmushō 農商務), it is possible that Tomimoto visited Red House in association with Shugyo just before Tomimoto left England, but this is only conjecture. What is significant, then, is that the articles Tomimoto wrote about Morris did not rely entirely on Tomimoto's direct studies of Morris in England. Tomimoto's engagement with Morris's ideas and design works should be understood in light of this.

Nakayama questions whether Tomimoto actually saw all of the objects and sites he wrote about, particularly Morris's Red House.

¹²² “Tomimoto Kenkichi no ‘Uiruamu Morisu no hanashi’ o saidoku suru,” *Hyōgen bunka kenkyū* 5, no. 1 (2005): 31–55. See esp. pp. 47–50.

¹²³ Sonia Ashmore and Yasuko Suga, “Red House and Asia: A House and its Heritage,” *The Journal of William Morris Studies* (Winter 2006): 5–26. If Tomimoto had visited, it would have been at the time Henry Muff lived there (1903–19).

Paris, Egypt and India

While in London, Tomimoto was approached by his mentor Ōsawa Sannosuke to become a photographer and assistant to Niinomi Takamasa.¹²⁴ Ōsawa met Niinomi in Paris and suggested to him that Tomimoto would be a good assistant since he knew English, had a background in architecture, and could take photographs. After Niinomi met Tomimoto at a London hotel,¹²⁵ the plans for Tomimoto's involvement were decided quickly; the prospect of travel to many distant countries excited Tomimoto and inspired him to read history books before he left.¹²⁶ Although Tomimoto was untrained as a photographer, his skills in English were valuable to Niinomi, and he accepted the offer to go together to Paris, Marseilles, Cairo, and India over the course of four months beginning in late December of 1909.

Niinomi was entrusted with the architectural design of an international exposition hall and hotel to be built for the fiftieth year commemoration of Emperor Meiji's rule scheduled for 1917. According to Tomimoto, Itō Chūta (伊東忠太, 1867–1954) advised Niinomi to design these buildings in an Islamic style. The choice of this style was likely inspired by the Josiah Conder's "pseudo-Saracenic" combination of forms that, as Alice Tseng has described them, were employed for "imparting Eastern character to a brick and stone building."¹²⁷ Hence, the government sent Niinomi to study Islamic architecture in

¹²⁴ Shirataki wrote his name ニイナメ、新嘗. Nov. 30, 1909 letter to Minami, in Takagi, 9.

¹²⁵ *Watashi no rirekisho*, 201.

¹²⁶ Letter from Tomimoto to Minami, Nov. 26, 1909. Nara Kenritsu Bijtusukan, *Minami Kunzō ate Tomimoto Kenkichi shokan*, 3.

¹²⁷ *The Imperial Museums of Meiji Japan*, 71.

Egypt and India in order to prepare his design.¹²⁸ However, the commemoration was never realized and the buildings never executed.¹²⁹

The trip was important to Tomimoto in providing opportunities to view first-hand the cultural and physical contexts for many of the objects he so carefully drew at the Victoria and Albert Museum. In a March 7, 1910, letter to Minami, he wrote, “The most impressive thing here is hindoo [*sic*] sculpture. Particularly the Calcutta [*sic*] museum ones are likely the best in the world....The wall paintings of the palace of Lahol [*sic*] are quite interesting. I bought a small hindoo [*sic*] God stone sculpture...the clothes are irresistible.”¹³⁰ The records of this trip are significant since some of Tomimoto’s later pattern designs, such as his repeating *sarasa* (calico) patterns, reflect an Islamic style of repetitive geometric patterning. He also saw examples of Islamic ceramics during this trip. In a 1913 article for the journal *Kenchiku to sōshoku* (Architecture and decoration), he wrote that he was particularly impressed by a Persian tile he saw at the “Arab Museum” in Cairo.¹³¹

¹²⁸ *Watashi no rirekisho*, 201.

¹²⁹ Additionally, according to Yamamoto Shigeo, all of the at least 300 photos Tomimoto took in Egypt and India were lost. The number of photos is mentioned in a letter from Tomimoto to Minami, March 7, 1910, Nara Kenritsu Bijtusukan, *Minami Kunzō ate Tomimoto Kenkichi shokan*, 4. This loss, along with Tomimoto's witnessing, through a series of distressing correspondences, of Leach's studio burning down, may have accounted for Tomimoto's propensity for precise documentation and preservation of technical information and historical records. Yamamoto Shigeo, in discussion with the author, May 2009.

¹³⁰ Nara Kenritsu Bijtusukan, *Minami Kunzō ate Tomimoto Kenkichi shokan*, 4. The palace of Lahore he referred to is Shish Mahal in present-day Pakistan. Some of Tomimoto's correspondence to Minami was written, like this passage, in English.

¹³¹ See “Ijiputo no kansō [Thoughts on Egypt],” *Kenchiku to sōshoku* 3, no. 3 (May 1913).

After this trip to the Indian subcontinent and Egypt, Tomimoto returned to London and sailed back to Japan.¹³² On April 29, 1910, he boarded the steamship *Mishima Maru* to set sail for Kobe. His reasons for returning were, as he explained, because his family had stopped sending him money and he wished to follow Minami home.¹³³ During the approximately six weeks on board the ship carrying only thirty-seven passengers, he struck up a friendship with Reginald Turvey (1882–1968), a painter from South Africa.¹³⁴ This meeting would prove fateful, as later that summer Turvey introduced him to Bernard Leach, the artist who exerted a profound effect on his life.

Bernard Leach, Kenzan VI, and Making Amateur Ceramics

Biographies written during Tomimoto's lifetime, such as the 1956 special issue of the popular ceramics magazine *Tōsetsu*, record the year 1911 as when “with Englishman Bernard Leach, [he] enters the study of ceramics (*tōki kenkyū*).”¹³⁵ What did this mean exactly? As Leach came to be regarded as the “father of studio pottery” in Euro-America,

¹³² Tomimoto seems to have never returned to England, Egypt, or India, or, if he did, these travels are not recorded in the archival evidence I have seen. In 1937 and 1938, Bernard Leach requested assistance from the Japanese Embassy in London in order for Tomimoto to visit the UK. Correspondence between Bernard Leach and the Japanese Embassy in London, Aug. 18, 1937–June 28, 1938. Tomimoto appealed to Leach after the war to arrange for him to go to England to work and teach, but this never came to fruition.

¹³³ After stops throughout Europe and the United States, Minami returned to Japan on April 2, 1910. Although Tomimoto made plans to return to Japan via Italy with Shirataki Kamenosuke, he returned home directly. Takagi Shigenori, “Shirataki Kamenosuke no Minami Kunzō ate shokan nitsuite” [Concerning Shirataki Kamenosuke's Letters to Minmai Kunzō] *Bulletin of Hiroshima Prefectural Art Museum* 1 (March 31, 1994): 3.

¹³⁴ Tomimoto's name, misspelled “Tominoto,” was listed as “merchant,” as was Reginald Turvey's.

www.findmypast.co.uk/passengerListShowTranscript.action?uvn=673000082&vsn=18.

¹³⁵ *Tōsetsu* 36 (March 1956): 69.

and as Tomimoto rose to prominence as the “pioneer” of modern Japanese ceramics, their respective biographies have mythologized their friendship. It is critically important to the history of modern ceramics since the two of them experienced making ceramics for the first time together and relied on the exchange of techniques and artistic ideas in their development as ceramists. Tomimoto had first heard of Bernard Leach, a “strange one” (*chotto kawatta* 一寸変った) from then-fellow art student Takamura Kōtarō in Paris.¹³⁶ But it was through Leach’s art school friend, the aforementioned Reginald Turvey, that Leach and Tomimoto met in July of 1910.

At his small home in Sakuragicho, Ueno, Leach “took to him [Tomimoto] from the outset” and recollected “during the years I spent in Japan between 1910 and 1920, Tomimoto and I were like good brothers—we shared everything,” including, as Leach would describe, an identity as a “draughtsman” and a shared “middle-class background.”¹³⁷ They also had both lost their fathers relatively early—for Tomimoto at age eleven, for Leach at age seventeen—and they knew the cultural shock of living in a foreign country. Their friendship developed quickly and they saw each other frequently. On January 11, 1911, Leach wrote in his diary “Called on Ken. Tomi. I like him. He has the peculiar [*sic*] Japanese artist character—slight, delicate, fastidious—cherry blossoms.”¹³⁸ That Saturday, Leach “spent the evening ... until 10 o’clock” with “Miss

¹³⁶ Tomimoto Kenkichi, quoted in Imaizumi Atsuo, “Tomimoto Kenkichi no geijutsu,” 46.

¹³⁷ Bernard Leach, *Beyond East and West*, 54.

¹³⁸ The entry appears on page 4, BLA no. 10875, CSC.

Eastlake, Ken Tomi & his friend Mr. Takao.”¹³⁹ The next day Leach wrote that Tomimoto “came again with others for tea and dinner.”¹⁴⁰

The Hong Kong-born Leach, who had lived in Japan until age four and been raised in England, had been garlanded with media attention beginning with his setting foot in Tokyo in the spring of 1909. With a headline proclaiming “Leach is coming,” an April 12, 1909, *Yomiuri* newspaper article lauded Leach’s appreciation not only for the “old Japanese art” of interest to many foreign artists and critics, but also for “new art”; as the article went on to describe him, Leach was an “interesting person” who had come from walking the “cold rainy streets” of London discussing Whistler with Takamura Kōtarō to Tokyo, ready to make a splash on the young arts scene.¹⁴¹ For Tomimoto, there could not have been a more ideal cultural and artistic interlocutor with whom to engage while Leach lived in Japan (1909–1920). Their exchange of ideas also occurred via voluminous correspondence and during Leach’s seven subsequent visits to Japan.

Seven months or so after they first met—about five months since Tomimoto had started living in Tokyo again—they engaged in ceramics painting together. On February 18, 1911, the art historian and critic Morita Kamenosuke (森田亀之輔, 1883–1966), who had played host and made arrangements for Leach since his arrival to Tokyo in 1909, invited Tomimoto and Leach to a party at the home of Hiraoka Gonpachiro (平岡

¹³⁹ Ibid., 7.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 8.

¹⁴¹ Leach wrote that he was “bound up with my romantic experience of living in Chelsea, a place where, through the influence of the paintings of James McNeill Whistler, London and Japan met in ‘some dream of Japan.’” *Beyond East and West*, 32. Ellen Conant wrote about the underlying motivations Leach had in going to Japan and the influence of his teacher Frank Brangwyn in “Bernard Leach, Frank Brangwyn, and Japan,” *Studio Potter* 27, no. 2 (June 1999), 15–20.

権八郎, 1883–1943). About thirty young painters, sculptors, writers, and actors gathered there. Tomimoto, the London returnee who was engrossed in woodblock printmaking experiments at the time, and Leach, the British etcher, would have been at home among other like-minded young men. The potter Horikawa Kōzan (堀川光山, 1857–?) demonstrated to them all the techniques for painting on Raku (lead-glazed earthenware) ceramics. Leach wrote, “We each painted designs on plain glazed cups with special colours & a small kiln was brought into which our wares were placed & the whole baked for a couple of hours or so. As it got darker the sense was both romantic & artistic. Most of us sat in the room beautiful & watched a few standing round the glowing kiln from which cascades of sparks ascended with curious wriggling movement.”¹⁴² Leach was enthralled, recounting, “The pots were put into a red-hot chamber and did not break. That made me gasp....I thought, good God, this is something fantastic.”¹⁴³

Leach and Tomimoto first experienced Raku decorating and firing as a leisure endeavor, but it had historical roots as a more serious form of Japanese ceramic expression tied to tea ceremony aesthetics. Leach and Tomimoto likely would have known of the history of Raku ware according to Edo accounts that told of its origin with the late sixteenth-century potter Chōjirō, credited with making lead-glazed ceramics for Toyotomi Hideyoshi according to the taste of tea master Sen no Rikyū.¹⁴⁴ Tea bowls

¹⁴² Dated “Sat. 18” Feb? 1911–12 diary, BLA no. 10875, CSC.

¹⁴³ “Art: Pottery: the Seventh Kenzan,” *Time* (April 4, 1977).

¹⁴⁴ The family of potters bearing the name “Raku” credits their beginning to 1580 with Chōjirō (1516–92) being granted the name “*raku*,” or “joy,” by Toyotomi Hideyoshi. The fifteenth generation Raku, Kichizaemon, was born in 1949 and exhibits internationally.

associated with the Raku lineage of potters as well as those by “amateur” followers trained in Raku creation, such as calligrapher Hon’ami Kōetsu (1558–1637), were hand-made (as opposed to wheel-thrown), irregularly-shaped, and fired at a low temperature, qualities that made them uniquely suited for the haptic experience of drinking powdered tea in a ritualistic way. Raku firing became popular among dilettantes since it matured at a low temperature in kilns that could fit in a backyard garden. In the nineteenth century, many merchant class and warrior class tea practitioners built Raku kilns for personal use.¹⁴⁵

Filled with enthusiasm, Leach and Tomimoto began over the next month to dabble in pottery painting at a Raku stand within Ueno’s Industrial Exposition (Kangyō hakurankai 勧業博覧会) run by Horikawa Kōzan who they had met at the party.¹⁴⁶ Leach recounted, “That was the beginning. I did painting on ready-made tea bowls.”¹⁴⁷ Tomimoto had recently started a job as a draftsman for the Shimizu construction company and likely welcomed what were for Leach and him creative and pleasurable ventures at the exposition. Painting on ceramics alongside Leach in Tokyo was a transnationalist experience in some ways like Tomimoto’s viewing of Edo ceramics at the

¹⁴⁵ Morgan Pitelka, *Handmade Culture: Raku Potters, Patrons, and Tea Practitioners in Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2005), 125–7. Also see Louise Allison Cort, “Tea-Ceremony Ceramics Made by Amateur Potters at Seto-Related Kilns,” *Seto and Mino Ceramics* (Washington, DC: Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian, 1992), 166–71.

¹⁴⁶ Tomimoto referred to it as 拓殖展覧会. See Tomimoto Kenkichi, quoted in Imaizumi Atsuo, “Tomimoto Kenkichi no geijutsu,” 46.

¹⁴⁷ Hamada Shōji and Bernard Leach, “Taidan: Nihon no tōgei” *Sansai* 252 (Dec. 1969), 23. This has the names of people Leach worked with there and information about the stand which appears to have been open two weeks per month.

Victoria and Albert Museum in London. Both activities encouraged an awareness of Japanese ceramics through an outsider's perspective.

Their painting on pots at an exposition stand clearly was not formal training. It can be best understood, and was described by Leach and Tomimoto, as an amateur approach to craft. It is important to clarify what exactly this amateurism meant. As Glenn Adamson has remarked, in the context of Euro-American art, "When craft manifests itself as an expression of amateurism...it becomes genuinely troublesome."¹⁴⁸ Tomimoto and Leach's amateurism was not of the kind associated with craft endeavors popularized in the twentieth century, in Japan and elsewhere, that encouraged craft making as a hobby activity, without artistic aims and lacking any connection to modernist arts. Tomimoto's approach to ceramics as an amateur, *shirōto*, was an ideal sanctioned, as Tsuchida Maki has pointed out, by East Asian literati values in which amateurism resonated with eremitism and the highest forms of aestheticism.¹⁴⁹ Japanese painters in the twentieth century, including *yōga* painters, embraced amateurism, too, within discourses of modern art. In 1910, Ōshita Tōjiro, a watercolorist and founder of the art journal *Mizue*, extolled the virtues of the amateur: "I am always ready to give up the name of painter. I am satisfied with being an amateur."¹⁵⁰ Leach's sentiments about the amateur echoed Ōshita's: "What is it then that an amateur may have, and the skilled professional may

¹⁴⁸ "Amateur," *Thinking Through Craft* (Oxford: Berg, 2007), 139–63.

¹⁴⁹ Tsuchida, "Tomimoto Kenkichi no 'amachuarizumu' saikō."

¹⁵⁰ "Mizue go shūnen shokan," 64 (July 2010), 39, repr. in Omuka Toshiharu, "The Formation of the Audiences for Modern Art in Japan," in Elise K. Tipton and John Clark, eds., *Being Modern in Japan: Culture and Society from the 1910s to the 1930s* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2000), 56–57.

not? A freer perception of what is alive and true.”¹⁵¹ In the later appraisal of Leach and Tomimoto’s ceramics, too, their amateurist qualities were lauded. The ceramist Hamada Shōji wrote in 1966 that Leach “has applied himself to this art for over half a century and still retains the wonderful qualities of the amateur.”¹⁵²

Leach and Tomimoto’s amateurism was a practical reality, too. Their art university training at the time did not include courses in ceramics. While they could have enrolled at technical colleges, this would have countered their conception of ceramics as art, not a medium for mass-produced manufacturing. Tomimoto described his training in developmental terms. “Among all who pursue ceramics making as amateurs, at first they begin with low temperature *Rakuyaki*, and after they attain few faults working with soft clay, they go on to *honyaki* (high firing) and *tsuchiyaiki* (stoneware).”¹⁵³

After engaging in the decoration of pots at the exposition stand, Leach expressed an interest in pursuing the study of ceramics more seriously, and the literary and arts critic Awashima Kangetsu (淡島寒月, 1859–1926) suggested to Leach the ceramist Kenzan VI as a possible teacher.¹⁵⁴ In October, 1911, while Tomimoto was in the capital at Leach’s home for a three-week stay, the two went to Kenzan VI’s home. Tomimoto recalled their first meeting with him:

It was a small house, about 3 *jo*, with a lattice door. Upon announcing our visit from an earthen floor entryway, an old man wearing what seemed like a sleeveless garment and with a white ridged beard appeared from a

¹⁵¹ *Beyond East and West*, 58–59.

¹⁵² “Bernard Leach: The Man and His Works,” *Bānādo Richi* (Tokyo: Asahi Shimbun, 1966), 13.

¹⁵³ “Waga tōki michi,” *Tankō* 6, no. 4 (April 1952): 76.

¹⁵⁴ Leach and Hamada, “Taidan: Nihon no tōgei,” 24.

workroom ... and said ‘please come up.’ We were led into a room on the left side. I introduced Leach, saying ‘This English man wants to learn the Raku techniques of Japan, so please teach him as your apprentice.’ But the old man said, ‘I am of a strange bent and am strict. None of my apprentices have lasted more than a half year, so I would rather not take an apprentice. But a foreigner with such an interest is quite rare in this world, so I will take him up.’ With that, an apprenticeship was agreed upon. Then we heard him talk about various things. It was the first time I heard that...he was the sole disciple, the sixth Kenzan.¹⁵⁵

Shortly thereafter, Kenzan VI accepted Leach as his apprentice, and Leach went to his workshop nearly every day from morning to evening for a year and a half. He focused on learning wheel throwing skills and painting on ceramics, with more attention to the latter.¹⁵⁶ Tomimoto stated, “Because Leach did not understand Japanese, and Kenzan did not understand English, they asked me, who was on the side, questions. One by one I searched and provided answers, but as I was doing this I thought, ‘How irritating, I’ll try to make one myself.’ These provided direct occasions in which to pursue ceramics.”¹⁵⁷ Other artists came to Kenzan VI’s studio, too. Leach invited Kishida Ryūsei (岸田劉生, 1891–1929) to, in Kishida’s words, “help Leach with some pottery painting.”¹⁵⁸

Who was the man known as Kenzan VI, Urano Shigekichi? According to Leach, Urano’s ancestors were retainers of the Takeda daimyo of Kyushu but Urano himself was uneducated and poor. His father-in-law was Shimooka Renjō (下岡蓮杖, 1823–1914), an

¹⁵⁵ Tomimoto, “Kenzan rokudai no koto to Rīchi,” *Chawan* (1934) in Tsujimoto Isamu, ed. *Tomimoto Kenkichi chosakushū*, 570. A “jo” is a unit of measurement that varies by region. According to current “jo” units, the size of the house Tomimoto describes was about 4.5 square meters.

¹⁵⁶ Leach and Hamada, *Sansai* (252), 24.

¹⁵⁷ Quoted in Imaizumi Atsuo, “Tomimoto Kenkichi no geijutsu,” 46.

¹⁵⁸ Kishida Ryūsei, “On Leach’s Departure,” in Yanagi Sōetsu, ed. *An English Artist in Japan* (Tokyo: privately published, 1920), 24.

acclaimed Kanō school painter and, later, professional photographer. Shimooka appears to have aided his son-in-law's professional pursuits. Urano first studied slip-casting with Gottfried Wagener, the German scientist who in was instrumental in introducing European ceramics technologies to Japan. Urano then studied under Miura Kenya (1821–89), a ceramist who used the title Kenzan V, although not from any official transference.¹⁵⁹ In 1900, Urano began to use the title “Kenzan VI” after being convinced to do so by his father-in-law and Machida Hisanari (町田久成, 1838–1897), the first director of the Tokyo National Museum.¹⁶⁰

Kenzan VI was known for making things like beads and *inro* (small containers worn by men). He also made tea bowls (**Fig. 1.22**) following the orthodox convention of decorative surface subjects like Rinpa-style plum blossoms, as well as Chinese-style patterns in a mode already well established in the Edo period by earlier artists in the Kenzan line.¹⁶¹ Such a following of rote convention was the very paradigm that Tomimoto later railed against, insisting instead on originality in pattern making based on drawing directly from nature. Kenzan VI relied on a modern Western-style kiln, as his teacher Kenya had, and Tomimoto's first kiln was based on Kenzan VI's design.

¹⁵⁹ Richard Wilson notes that he “inherited a group of materials associated with the title.” “Bernard Leach and the Kenzan School,” *Studio Potter*: 11.

¹⁶⁰ Richard Wilson, “Forming the Japanese Modern Craft Movement: Perspectives from the Leach Archives,” *Humanities: Christianity and Culture* 40 (March 2009), 155. That same year, Urano was awarded a certificate of merit at the Paris International Exposition for a work picturing the wind and thunder gods.

¹⁶¹ He generally signed his works “Kensai,” the name Kenya gave him, or “Rokusei Kenzan.” In 1916–1921, while working with the potter Anjo, he signed works “Hakurain gakunan”; in Mishima working for a patron the signature became “Hokurai an.”

Tomimoto's direct interactions and learning from Kenzan VI occurred during his visits to the capital and through correspondence. After the initial three weeks in 1911 when Tomimoto probably accompanied Leach to Kenzan VI's studio on several occasions, Tomimoto returned to Tokyo several times in 1912 and 1913 (see Appendix D, Chronology). In October of 1912, Tomimoto made an extended stay in Tokyo at Leach's home, and he likely accompanied Leach to Kenzan VI's workshop. Tomimoto's engagement with Kenzan VI also occurred through correspondence with Leach in which they traded technical information such as glaze formulae. Thus, even though Tomimoto never studied with Kenzan VI on a daily basis as Leach had, he absorbed important technical teachings from the potter.

Despite a consensus that Tomimoto is linked to the lineage of Kenzan, the nature of Tomimoto's engagement with Kenzan VI and the name "Kenzan" itself are contentious on several levels. A pamphlet for the Kenzan VI thirtieth year memorial exhibition at Mitsukoshi department store, Tokyo, in April of 1953 states that Leach, Tomimoto, Uchijima Kitaro 内島北朗 and others succeeded the Kenzan name as disciples of Kenzan VI.¹⁶² Tomimoto used the word *renkan* (linkage) in his 1954 essay, "Concerning Kenzan's *Potter's Essentials*" ["Kenzan no Tōkō hitsuyō ni tsuite"], one of four published texts he devoted to the subject of Kenzan I. In his introduction to Kenzan I's classic tome on ceramics techniques, Tomimoto revealed, "In that branch [of the Kenzan lineage], I have a position. Since I am not a historian, I have no interest in

¹⁶² 1953 exhibit pamphlet, n.p. Actually few works were shown by Kenzan VI in the catalogue which contained an essay by Leach and Yanagi.

examining genealogies, and I abhor, in particular, the *iemoto* lineages which express just a name. However, I consider myself to have a linkage, somehow, to Kenzan.”¹⁶³ A more specific question remains: *which* Kenzan? Did he refer in that passage to Kenzan I, Kenzan VI, or both?

The work and life of Kenzan I have been so thoroughly documented by Richard Wilson that they do not require detailed repetition here, but a few points demand mention.¹⁶⁴ Kenzan I and his older brother Kōrin, a noted painter, were sons of a Kyoto textile-manufacturing family and thus they are often regarded not as professional artists, but as “cultivated merchant-artisans.” Kenzan, in particular, cultivated a persona as a “scholarly recluse” steeped in the study of poetry and calligraphy who creatively appropriated styles and subjects from a variety of sources—Japanese, Chinese, and Dutch—to execute bold combinations of pictorial scenes, poetry, and patterns. Kenzan I privileged the primacy of painting the ceramic surface, the abiding tendency of Tomimoto’s work as well.

Tomimoto may have encountered ceramics of Kenzan I as a child, since his father collected Japanese and Chinese antique ceramics, but, as described above, he claimed that the first time he saw a Kenzan work was at the Victoria and Albert Museum. Several Kenzan I pieces were in Tomimoto’s later collection, including a well-known set of dishes now in the Kyoto National Museum (**Fig. 1.23**). These plates bear colorful

¹⁶³ Tsujimoto, Isamu, ed. *Tomimoto Kenkichi chosakushū*, 617.

¹⁶⁴ *The Art of Ogata Kenzan: Persona and Production in Japanese Ceramics* (New York: Weatherhill, 1991); *Ogata Kenzan: zensakuhin to sono keifu* (Tokyo: Yūzankaku, 1992); *The Potter’s Brush: The Kenzan Style in Japanese Ceramics* (Washington DC: Freer and Sackler Gallery, 2001).

overglaze enamels, the same material which Tomimoto devoted much of his life's work to mastering.¹⁶⁵

Although Tomimoto clearly was interested in the ceramics of Kenzan I, he was at times outspoken in denying any formal transference of the name Kenzan to him. Leach, in contrast, consistently claimed that Tomimoto was, like him, the seventh Kenzan.¹⁶⁶ In 1966, three years after Tomimoto's death, Leach published the first twentieth-century book in English on Ogata Kenzan.¹⁶⁷ In it, he wrote, "I was the pupil of the sixth Kenzan and received from him the *denshō*, or secret pottery notes, which formed the certificate of succession very much in the same way as that by which Fenollosa was adopted into the Kano School."¹⁶⁸ At times, though, as in his 1960 book of recollections, Leach described Kenzan VI in an unflattering way. He wrote that Kenzan VI was "old, kindly and poor, pushed to one side by the new commercialism of the Meiji era."¹⁶⁹ Tomimoto's ambivalence towards the Kenzan lineage succession echoes Kenzan I's own seemingly disinterested stance towards artistic succession. As Richard Wilson has stated, Kenzan I probably did not plan to have his title continue for two main reasons. Kenzan I freely took information from Nonomura Ninsei but did not adopt the name Ninsei. Secondly,

¹⁶⁵ He described these as being in his personal collection. See Tomimoto's chapter on Ninsei and Kenzan I in "Ninsei, Kenzan no tōhō" for the fifth volume of the series *Sekai tōki zenshū* (Tokyo: Kawade Shobō, 1956).

¹⁶⁶ A footnote on p. 27 of Leach's *Kenzan and his Tradition: the Lives and Times of Koetsu, Sotatsu, Korin, and Kenzan* (London: Faber and Faber, 1966) states "The late Kenkichi Tomimoto was one of the two most original potters in modern Japan, who shared with the author the title of the seventh Kenzan."

¹⁶⁷ Because Leach relied as source material on diaries that were later generally acknowledged to be fakes, the historical worth of this book has been diminished.

¹⁶⁸ Leach, *Kenzan*, 25.

¹⁶⁹ *A Potter in Japan* (London: Faber and Faber, 1960), 30.

Kenzan I saw himself as “dilettante,” so he did not wish to be bound to an organization of artists that implied professional status.¹⁷⁰

The Bush Warblers Bowl

According to Leach, in October of 1912 Tomimoto created his first thrown and decorated pot, a small 8.8 x 19.0 cm bowl brushed with a design of bush warblers and plum blossoms (**Fig. 1.24**). It resonates with Tomimoto’s linkage to both the first and the sixth Kenzan in its approach to overglaze decoration combining calligraphic inscriptions with images of birds and flowers. In surveys of Tomimoto’s work, this bowl is often excluded, probably because it was fired at Leach’s studio, not his own, and, as with much of the other Raku work, it was made before the establishment of Tomimoto’s high-fire ceramics kiln in 1915. Yet, it was exhibited in Tomimoto’s February 1913 Mitsukoshi sale in Tokyo, along with an eclectic array of crafted objects by him like business card cases, copper embossed trays, embroidered kimono under-collars, and obi.

Atop the bowl’s rather asymmetrical unevenly walled form lies a vividly colored combination of roughly brushed motifs and the inscribed text, “the bush warblers in the plum tree sing *hokekyo*, *hokekyo* once again (*ume ni uguisu hokekyo hokekyo to saizuru*).” The Japanese bush warbler (*uguisu*) is a bird popularly associated with spring and a motif in the arts since at least the eighth century when it appeared in over fifty *Manyōshu* poems. In subject, birds and plum blossoms, Tomimoto’s *uguisu* bowl resembles a bowl of the 1910s by Kenzan VI (**Fig. 1.25**). Although both exude a degree

¹⁷⁰ Wilson, *The Potter’s Brush*, 195.

of looseness of brush expression, Kenzan VI's appears to conform to an already established pictorial composition, whereas Tomimoto's seems to result from an improvisational surface choreography. Tomimoto's signature is located in the center of the bowl's floor, reading "Kusa," short for "Kusaemon" 久左衛門, the family name which would have been his and which he used on many of his prints of the time.¹⁷¹ Such integration of the signature within the surface decoration can also be seen in the late ceramics of Kenzan I.

The bowl came to symbolize Tomimoto's perceived connection to the Kenzan lineage for Leach. Tomimoto gave the bowl to Leach, who carried it back to Japan in 1964 for commemorative exhibitions of Tomimoto's ceramics in Tokyo, Osaka, and Kurashiki. He spoke to the crowd gathered for the June 12, 1964, memorial at the Shinjuku Isetan hall: "I receive the *mokuroku* [catalogue] from the sixth Kenzan, and now that Tomimoto has died, only I remain."¹⁷² Leach relied on Kenzan VI for a source of legitimate training to bolster his credibility in Europe and America, and with, at that time, Tomimoto's stature as the leader of modern Japanese ceramics, associating Tomimoto

¹⁷¹ It alternated between "Kyūemon" 久右衛門 and "Kusaemon." See *Kindai no bijutsu* 32, Tomimoto Kenkichi (Jan. 1976). There was some variance and, it appears, experimentation in these early signatures. For example, sometimes he used Roman letters, signing works "Tomi." It was not until his first high-fire kiln was established in 1915 that he began the more systemized signing of his works with the character "Tomi." In 1927, Tomimoto began to change the style of his signature, "Tomi," every year. Tomimoto's conscious use and alteration of signature contrasts with the practice of the modern ceramist Hamada Shōji, who famously refused to sign any of his ceramics. Hamada did, however, sign the lids of his ceramics' wooden storage boxes, a practice also of Tomimoto and most modern Japanese ceramists.

¹⁷² Leach, "Tomimoto to watashi," *Mingei techō* 75 (Aug. 1964): 63. He is said to have delighted the crowd with a melodic reading of the bowl's inscription, repeating "hokeyo" in a bird-like voice several times.

with Kenzan VI could only increase the perceived value of the Kenzan VI name.¹⁷³ Even when Leach gifted the bowl to the Victoria and Albert Museum in 1976, he used it to bolster his own association with Kenzan. The gift form lists it as one of “eight Japanese pots by Kenzan and his successors”¹⁷⁴

After Leach’s two-year formal apprenticeship with Kenzan VI, a period in which Tomimoto made repeated long visits to Tokyo, Tomimoto remained in contact with Kenzan VI. In May of 1919, Kenzan VI came to visit Tomimoto in Ando-mura. Tomimoto wrote about the visit in a 1934 article for the magazine *Chawan*, stating that Kenzan VI’s purpose ostensibly had been to study the Buddhist figures in nearby Hōryūji because he had been commissioned to make figures of its four guardians (*Shitennō*) in clay. The two of them visited Hōryūji, and Kenzan VI expressed his happiness that Leach and Tomimoto developed their ceramics, Leach (by then) in England and Tomimoto in Japan. Yet in private correspondence of 1919 Tomimoto wrote Leach and described Kenzan VI’s desperate state. In the first he wrote: “Mr. Ogata (Kenzan) came Yamato & stayed two nights, poor old Cappa!”¹⁷⁵ In the second he recounted:

Dear Leach, I had your letter / Kenzan, oh / poor old man. He came [to]
Nara to see old Hotokè. There was no other reason. He stayed / two

¹⁷³ Leach’s embrace of the Kenzan lineage was encouraged by Yanagi Sōetsu and connected to Leach’s mistaken identification of fake Kenzan ceramics which came to be known as the “Sano affair.” This history is explained by Richard Wilson in “Bernard Leach and the Kenzan School,” *Studio Potter; The Potter’s Brush: The Kenzan Style in Japanese Ceramics*, 197–9; and “Forming the Japanese Modern Craft Movement: Perspectives from the Leach Archives,” *Humanities: Christianity and Culture*, 141–62.

¹⁷⁴ The director’s note reads that these were “all of his [Leach’s] ‘Kenzanalia’ (note, March 18, 1977). The gift was made during the time of Leach’s retrospective exhibition when he was nearing the end of his life. Dated March 11, 1977. V&A Archive.

¹⁷⁵ Postcard postmarked May 8, 1919. Signed on the side “yours, Ken Cappa.”

nights, my wife & I said ‘shall we give ~~any~~ some mony [sic]?’ But we stoped [sic], There were no reason to give, ‘I am too old,’ he said ‘will not come again’ and his Hanamizu [Leach: nose water] as his Namida [Leach: tears] on his shiwa no Kao. [Leach: old face] Oh! This is too Hidoi [Leach: painful] to watch his face & his conversation.¹⁷⁶

At the time of the visit, Tomimoto had already established his high-fire kiln and established a reputation as a ceramist of high regard. He expressed to Leach in the above passage his compassion as well as pity for this man, a vestige of the past. Kenzan VI’s life ended tragically, shortly after the Great Kanto Earthquake of September, 1923, which destroyed his house. He was one of the tens of thousands who suffered for their location in the cluster of the deadliest zone in the old inner city. Later that month, Tomimoto went to the capital to “check on things,” only to find Kenzan VI nearing death, homeless, in Ueno park. In an article about the ceramics of Kenzan I, Tomimoto wrote “Kenzan VI, shortly before his death, said to me ‘I am able to boast to my master Kenya that I had two apprentices (*deshi*) of the likes of you and Leach.’”¹⁷⁷

Around the time that Kenzan VI died, Tomimoto stopped producing Raku works and devoted himself to high-fire ceramics. Perhaps the death signaled to Tomimoto an end to the era of Raku production. And Tomimoto finally might have taken to heart Leach’s criticism of June, 1914, when he suggested that Tomimoto’s style would be better suited to high-fire wares.¹⁷⁸ Although Tomimoto stopped Raku production, in 1930

¹⁷⁶ Dated May 15, 1919. TKKA. This transcription includes the penciled translations Leach added to the text, shown here in brackets.

¹⁷⁷ “Kenzan no tōkō hitsuyō ni tsuite,” *Tomimoto Kenkichi chosakushū*, 617.

¹⁷⁸ *The Far East* (June 27, 1914): 386. This criticism appeared in a review of Tomimoto’s Galerie Tanaka exhibition, in which Leach wrote “some of the designs fall outside the scope of soft earthenware (*raku yaki*) and should be carried out in porcelain or stoneware.”

he wrote a book about Raku, *Rakuyaki kōtei* 楽焼工程, an important text for the amateur influenced by the Raku techniques of Kenzan I.¹⁷⁹ Although Tomimoto had already published a book on ceramics and two books on his designs, this was the first, and only, stand-alone text that Tomimoto wrote with the didactic intention of serving as a comprehensive manual for ceramics-making. Tomimoto introduced it as a text for the amateur, covering not only the technique of Raku firing, but how to best arrange a studio, what kind of clay to select, and how to throw on the wheel—in short, it offered instructions on everything one would presumably need in order to begin working with clay. In the section “Kakutakigama” he mentions an “old man” from whom he learned the technique of making Raku, and questions whether the technique came from Miura Kenya or someone before. In this section, he does not mention Kenzan VI by name, only referring to him as a “*rōjin*” (old man) and “*sensei*” (teacher), to be interpreted as signaling his desire to distance himself from the Kenzan line.¹⁸⁰

Training in Japanese Ceramics Centers

After a period of production of works in various mediums (which will be discussed in the next chapter), starting in 1930 Tomimoto again sought technical training in ceramics. During this decade in particular he travelled to a number of ceramics workshops throughout Japan. As Tomimoto explained it, he began to make annual

¹⁷⁹ *Rakuyaki kōtei* (Tokyo: Saibunkaku, 1930). It appeared five years after his other book, *Yōhen zakki*, and after several collections of his designs were published. Leach published a guide in English on pottery techniques and aesthetic values, considered in Euro-America the “potter’s bible,” *A Potter’s Book*, ten years later in 1940 (London: Faber and Faber).

¹⁸⁰ *Rakuyaki kōtei*, 54.

retreats in the winters from his studio in Tokyo to regional kilns to study various techniques.

It became a custom of mine to visit potteries in the warmer, southern regions in the winter months. In Tokyo the clay freezes in the winter, making it unsuitable for making ceramics, so during winter I travelled to kilns around the country for the purpose of study. I went to Mashiko, Shigaraki, Seto, Kyoto, Hasami in Kyushu and others, working with local ceramists and discovering techniques that had been passed down to them. I think that this provided good study.¹⁸¹

These were not simply study trips. Another aim was the production of a large quantity of affordable tableware. More information regarding this aspect of the trips will be outlined in Chapter Two. Here, let us focus on the self-designed training he undertook at a Kutani porcelain workshop in Kanazawa that was most important for his attainment of skills in overglaze enamel porcelain. This was the technique for which he received many accolades including the designation Holder of Important Intangible Cultural Property in 1955. His training in this technique took place not as an apprentice but as a visiting artist invited to learn advanced techniques. Like many advanced ceramics techniques, Kutani overglaze enamel skills were regarded as imparted through secret teachings. Even in the twentieth century, as Tomimoto later remarked, workmen who had been painting on porcelain for over twenty years at Kutani kilns were not allowed to know the formulations for color.¹⁸² Thus, his training in overglaze enamel could likely only have occurred through the opportunities to learn directly from skilled technicians as he did.

¹⁸¹ *Watashi no rirekisho*, 215.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*

Although Tomimoto began to create overglaze red enamel wares actively in the early 1930s, he had become enamored of old Kutani (Ko-Kutani) wares much earlier. Examples of these ceramics were in his family's collection. As well, as early as 1913 Tomimoto sang the praises of a Kutani plate to Leach: the "Hotei-no-sara...old Green beautiful Kutani plate, by 'Morikagé' [who was] The first artist of Kutani in [sic] little before Tokugawa."¹⁸³ At the 1932 Teiten exhibition which included Tomimoto's ceramics, he met the Kutani ceramist Kitade Tōjiro (北出塔次郎 b. Sakamoto Fujiro, 1898–1968), who in 1930 had been appointed the third generation head of the Seisengama 青泉窯 workshop. He gained this status by marrying the daughter of the kiln's founder, Kitade Uyomon (北出宇与門).¹⁸⁴ A trained painter, Kitade Tōjiro graduated in 1928 with a degree in *nihonga* from the Osaka Bijutsu Gakkō.

In May of 1936, Tomimoto travelled to Kanazawa to study Kutani techniques at Kitade Tōjiro's kiln for eight months, the longest stint of his journeys to work at kilns in the countryside. He returned to work there again in 1941. As Mikami Miwa has pointed out, owner of the Kurabo textile company, philanthropist, and founder of the Ōhara Museum, Ōhara Magosaburō (大原孫三郎, 1880–1943) gave Tomimoto funds to support his work in Kanazawa.¹⁸⁵ With this support Tomimoto was motivated to continue to pursue *iro-e jiki* in the Kutani style. In essence, Tomimoto wholly embraced Ko-kutani

¹⁸³ BLA no. 2287, CSC. This dish is in the Ishikawa Prefectural Museum of Ceramics.

¹⁸⁴ While it was ostensibly a Meiji kiln, its founder, Uyomon, had previously been involved with a Bakumatsu era kiln. The marriage occurred in 1922 and he was son-in-law to Kitade the Second.

¹⁸⁵ "Tomimoto Kenkichi no shoki iro-e sakuhin to Ōhara Magosaburō no kōen nitsuite," 43–85. Among other philanthropic activities, Ōhara provided the financial support for the construction of the Mingeikan in 1936.

techniques, choices of colors, and forms.¹⁸⁶ While training there, he relied on standard porcelain forms produced by the studio on wooden molds, allowing him to concentrate on painting.¹⁸⁷ Such a division of labor, in which blank bases were produced by certain craftsmen in a given studio, and painting was executed by others in the studio, persisted until Tōjiro's generation when, for the first time, Tōjiro endeavored to execute all parts of the formation processes, from creating the forms themselves to creating the overglaze painting.¹⁸⁸

During the time Tomimoto actively sought out technical training in Kanazawa and other regions, ceramists and scholars across Japan were carrying out technical research and excavations of historical Japanese ceramics. This became particularly active from the late 1920s through the 1930s. As Louise Cort described, there was “a widespread fascination with combing old kiln sites for evidence of the history of Japanese ceramic production.”¹⁸⁹ Three prominent modern ceramists to engage in such study were Arakawa Toyozō (荒川豊蔵, 1894–1985), Katō Tokurō (加藤唐九郎, 1898–1985), and Kaneshige Tōyō (金重陶陽, 1896–1967) who, in the late 1920s and 1930s, performed research and excavations of Momoyama period Seto, Mino, and Bizen ceramics. Their efforts drew much public attention and inspired more research by others. These studies appeared with frequency in *Tōji* (Ceramics), the journal of the Institute of

¹⁸⁶ Hida Toyojirō, *Kōgeika 'denryū' no seisansha* (Tokyo: Bigaku Shuppan, 2004), 128–129.

¹⁸⁷ *Kitade Tōjiro no iro-e sekkai –Tomimoto Kenkichi no keifu* (Komatsu City: Honjin Memorial Art Museum, 2003), 170.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

¹⁸⁹ Louise Allison Cort, “Japanese Encounters with Clay,” in *Isamu Noguchi and Modern Japanese Ceramics*, ed. Cort and Winther-Tamaki, 122.

Oriental Ceramics (1927–1942). Arakawa, Katō, and Kaneshige used their research as inspiration for their ceramics' forms and styles which were, in particular, inspired by ceramics of the Momoyama period. As Kida Takuya described this phenomenon, “During prewar Shōwa, architects looked to Momoyama teahouses, and potters looked to Momoyama ceramics as guides. What was created as a result became established as works in the traditional Japanese style.”¹⁹⁰

Tomimoto's research, in contrast, consisted not of Momoyama wares associated with tea aesthetics, but Kutani porcelain of a more recent history not imbedded so directly in the world of tea. Another noted modern ceramist who created overglaze enamel ceramics at the Kutani kilns was Kitaōji Rosanjin (北大路魯山人, 1883–1959). He stayed in Kutani for two years, beginning in 1915, working at the kiln of Suda Seika (Suda Yosaburo, 須田菁華), and returned again in later years to produce more work there.¹⁹¹ Although he lived and worked in Kanazawa longer than Tomimoto, since Rosanjin worked in a variety of ceramic styles his work was less associated with Kutani than Tomimoto who, from the 1930s, narrowed his main interests to *sometsuke* (underglaze blue pigment) and overglaze enamel painting on porcelain.

Ultimately, Tomimoto's interactions with Kutani ceramists comprised more than technical learning. Training in Kanazawa legitimized his use of precious gold and silver enamels and his adoptions of select elements of the Kutani vocabulary of surface design.

¹⁹⁰ Kaneko Kenji et al., *Tōgei kindaika no tenkan ten: Shōwa no momoyama fukkō* (Tokyo: Tokyo Museum of Modern Art, 2002), 19.

¹⁹¹ Sidney Cardozo, *Rosanjin, 20th Century Master Potter of Japan* (New York: Japan Society, 1972), 14. Rosanjin also had a home in nearby Yamashiro.

In the *Asahi* newspaper announcement of Tomimoto's 1936 exhibition at the Matsuzakaya Department Store in Tokyo, a reporter described his ceramics as new interpretations of Ko-kutani that emerged from his research in Kanazawa.¹⁹² Critics and scholars positioned Tomimoto not as a craftsman who had acquired Kutani techniques from master to student, but an individual artist who revolutionized Kutani ceramics according to his subjective artistic expression.

Conclusion

As this chapter has revealed, Tomimoto Kenkichi received formal artistic training at the Tokyo School of Fine Arts, but his independent—and arguably more significant—early education was rooted more deeply in two divergent geo-cultural locations, Ando-mura and London. His nostalgia for both places would remain enduring sources of inspiration and identity throughout his life's work. Ando-mura, his hometown in rural but culturally rich Nara Prefecture, symbolized all that was old Japan, and in Tomimoto's case this included the literati artistic and cultural values as espoused by his father.

While in some ways his upbringing and formal education were fairly typical for an aspiring young Japanese designer in the late Meiji era, his choice to go to England to study stained glass and Arts and Crafts theory was unusual. His experiences at the Victoria and Albert Museum, in particular, played a major role in how he would later conceive his art, design, and craft as modern creative practices of equivalent value.

¹⁹² Kitade's name as teacher is not included. *Asahi shimbun*, Oct. 14, 1936, Evening edition, 5.

Seeing Japanese ceramics on view there prompted him to conceive of ceramics as art objects with transnational artistic values.

Upon his return to Japan, Bernard Leach played an important role in introducing Tomimoto to ceramics and, as at the Victoria and Albert museum, encouraging an approach to ceramics making with the distance of an outsider. Leach and Tomimoto learned ceramics as amateurs but with an elevated artistic sense of purpose. Their relationship can be seen as emblematic of a modern paradigm in which craft artists transgressed cultures, nations, and media in their search for expression.

Their relationship to the Kenzan lineage was complex. For Tomimoto, ultimately, Kenzan I was his historical model as a ceramist influenced by literati values who approached ceramics as a medium for surface expressions. When Tomimoto expressed a linkage to Kenzan, it was not Kenzan VI with whom he wanted to be associated, but Kenzan I. As I will explore in the next chapters, Tomimoto identified in Kenzan I the attributes of an “individualist” ceramist worthy of his admiration. Kenzan I possessed virtuosic painterly techniques and artful combinations of texts and images.

Tomimoto’s training in Kutani techniques in the 1930s allowed him to construct his own links to ceramics “tradition” without having to undergo rigorous training. In the process of this learning, he appropriated a variety of technical strategies that he embraced in his acclaimed overglaze enamel ceramics. This absorption of teachings from multiple sources amounted to an accumulated transhistorical and transnational knowledge base that propelled him towards modernist self-expression in a variety of mediums as well as, importantly, his identification as a modern artist, not a craftsman.

CHAPTER TWO: Self-expression and the Equivalency of Mediums: Early Works

Introduction

In the years immediately after Tomimoto's return to Japan in 1910, his educational background led him to embrace aspects of both Arts and Crafts and literati ideologies.¹ The Arts and Crafts movement, and specifically William Morris's example, clearly influenced Tomimoto's choice of creating design work in multiple mediums and his embrace of individualist expression. His literati background can be credited for his approach to mediums not just with the mindset of an amateur, relying mainly on experimentation and auto-didacticism, but with the effect of roughness and dilettantism in his finished early works.

In the 1910s and early 1920s, Tomimoto's use of multiple mediums, reliance on self-study, and, most importantly, embrace of individualism, countered, as he described it, the dominant pedagogy of his professors at the Tokyo School of Fine Arts. His embrace of originality (*dokusōsei*) and individuality (*kosei*) signified a rebellion against his professors' painting and design instruction methods which relied so heavily, as discussed in Chapter One, on copying antique works (*koga rinmo*). He also criticized his design teachers' lack of professional experience in the field; this propelled him, he stated, to the creation of original works. And as he began learning ceramics forming and

¹ Lacking funds from his family to continue his time overseas, Tomimoto returned to Japan. On June 15 he disembarked at the port of Kobe, resting that first night at his grandmother's house in Osaka, and the following day returned to his hometown, Ando-mura. By July he was once again in Tokyo, and in September moved into a lodging house in the Kashiwagi section of Shinjuku, Tokyo with his close friend Minami Kunzō who also had recently returned from study abroad.

decoration methods in 1911 alongside Bernard Leach, he observed the method of copying that Kenzan VI relied upon but sought out highly original expression on his early ceramics.

Tomimoto's pursuit of original art across boundaries of media or historical precedence signaled a turning point in the history of modern Japanese ceramics. His compatriots engaged in the creation of craft had, since the beginning of the Meiji era, to a large degree retained traditional concepts but imported technical knowledge from Euro-America under the banner of "Japanese spirit, Western learning" (*wakon yōsai*). In some ways, Tomimoto's application of an overt subjective expression to ceramics and, to some extent, other craft media subverted this notion entirely. Given the rise of sculptural ceramics (*obuje*) in the 1950s, it is particularly important here to chart earlier twentieth-century iterations of expressionistic fabrications in the medium of clay.

Writ large, modernist artists in the 1910s and 1920s, in Japan as in other parts of the world, pursued subjective expression. What was exceptional about Tomimoto in terms of the history of Japanese ceramics was his application of such heightened individualism to a multiplicity of mediums during this time. By not limiting his creative endeavors just to ceramics like the majority of ceramists of his time, he established himself as an artist fluent in the language of modern Japanese art itself. As a result, he established a discourse and praxis defying the epistemological boundaries of design (*zuan*), craft (*kōgei*), and art (*bijutsu*) that were established in the Meiji era. Tomimoto achieved an assimilation of ceramics into the genealogy of modern art as it was being

formulated in Japan. This process of assimilation also involved the emerging artistic mediums of prints and photography. It is necessary to chart his early multi-media works in order to demonstrate the adoption of the ceramics medium into the structures of modernist Japanese art.

Throughout this analysis, it is important to deconstruct Tomimoto's claims of originality and self-reflexivity. His copious writings on processes reveal a desire to demonstrate his original executions of works in their totality rather than copying or applying decoration to forms made by others. To understand his discourse of originality as it was applied to his early works, we must consider, in particular, what he wrote about and how he applied the meanings of the concepts *moyō* 模様 (pattern, design, image) and *shasei* 写生 (sketching from life).

This chapter relies primarily on Tomimoto's writings and several recent analyses of his early work. Upon his return to Japan, he soon emerged as a regular contributor to leading arts journals. In 1911, he began contributing text and graphics to *Bijutsu shinpō* and *Shirakaba*, and through this decade he wrote essays on topics ranging from the wall murals at Hōryūji to William Morris for the journals *Bijutsu*, *Bijutsu shuhō*, *Geibi*, *Kenchiku to sōshoku*, *Shitamoe*, *Takujō*, and *Tōa geijutsu*.² Recurring throughout these early writings were comparisons between Japan and the foreign countries he had recently experienced firsthand. In the 1920s, most of his published essays recorded his ceramics studio (*kōbō*) experiences; these appeared in *Bijutsu geppō*, *Bijutsu shinron*, *Chūō bijutsu*,

² “Hōryū-ji kondōnai no hekiga,” *Bijutsu shinpō* 10, no.11 (Sept. 1911): 15; “Uiriamu Morisu no hanashi (jō)” *Bijutsu shinpō* 11, no. 4 (Feb. 1912): 14–20; “Uiriamu Morisu no hanashi (ka)” *Bijutsu shinpō* 11, no. 5 (March 1912): 22–27.

Ichinichi ichibun, and *Josei nihonjin*. In the 1930s, he was a regular contributor to *Kōgei*, the magazine established by *Mingei* (folk art) movement members, and he also wrote for *Atorie*, *Teikoku bijutsu*, *Teikoku kōgei*, and others. For journals in the 1930s he wrote about a wide range of topics such as his impressions (*zakkan*) of ceramics and descriptions of his travels to ceramics workshops throughout Japan, building on the descriptions he wrote in previous decades about his travels to England, Egypt, and Korea.³

Historians of modern Japanese craft Kaneko Kenji and Chiaki Ajioka provide two statements that offer springboards for this chapter. Kaneko wrote:

The rise of individualistic crafts occurred almost simultaneously in Japan and Britain when, during the 1920s, Tomimoto Kenkichi and Bernard Leach pioneered new approaches to the making of ceramics. These developments led to the expansion of the concept of modern art that had been formulated in the West to include ...*individualistic crafts*.⁴

The “new approaches” involved, most importantly, creating not only ceramics but works of art in other mediums. Ajioka, responding to texts by modern craft historians Suzuki Kenji, Tsuchida Maki, and Kaneko Kenji, wrote that most craft historians “tend to keep their discussions within the border of ‘craft,’ the border which the very products rejected.... Young artists in the 1910s *did not differentiate craft from art*.”⁵ Analyses that

³ See the bibliography for a list of Tomimoto’s articles. He travelled to Korea several times in the early 1920s.

⁴ “Studio Craft and Craftical Formation,” *The Persistence of Craft: The Applied Arts Today*, ed. Paul Greenhalgh (London: A & C Black, 2002), 28 (italics mine).

⁵ “When Craft became Art: Modern Japanese Craft and *Mingei* Sakka,” in *Traditional Japanese Arts and Crafts in the 21st Century: Reconsidering the Future from an International Perspective*, 211–2 (italics mine). Ajioka refers to, specifically, the following texts: Suzuki Kenji, *Genshoku gendai Nihon no bijutsu*: 15 *Tōgei* (Tokyo: Shōgakukan, 1978), 113; Tsuchida Maki, “Kōgei no

highlight Tomimoto's catalytic role in the individualization of craft expression are often stymied by confining their analyses to "craft" mediums. Scholars did not widely acknowledge the extent to which Tomimoto experimented with a range of materials in his youth until two exhibitions of his design work were organized, at the Sogō Museums in 2000 and at the Shiodome Museum in 2006.⁶ The latter exhibition, in particular, brought to light for the first time since their creation a wide variety of Tomimoto's design work from the 1910s. Curators in earlier decades were not eager to feature these objects in their many retrospective exhibitions of Tomimoto. This was likely because the early design work did not convey to them a direct relation to his ceramics, particularly his overglaze enamel porcelain of the 1950s and early 1960s that represented the national aesthetics of Kutani traditions.

The Climate of Originality in late Meiji–Taishō Japan

While an analysis of originality throughout late Meiji-Taishō Japan history is outside the scope of this chapter, Tomimoto's discourse and praxis of originality demand at least a cursory framing within a larger cultural context. Tomimoto played a role in the broad cultural, economic, and social history of this time that has been characterized as the age of "Taishō democracy." During this era we see the emergence of political reforms

kojinshugi [Individualism in craft]," *20 seiki Nihon bijutsu saiken 1 1910 nendai: Hikari kagayaku inochi no nagare* (Mie Prefectural Museum of Art, 1995), 217–23; Kaneko Kenji, *Gendai tōgei no zōkei shikō*, 75–95, 197–237.

⁶ *Modan Dezain no senkusha Tomimoto Kenkichiten/Pioneer of Modern Design Tomimoto Kenkichi Exhibition* (Osaka: Asahi Shimbunsha Kikakukyoku, 2000). This exhibition was held at the Sogō Museum, Yokohama, and the Sogō Museum, Nara. Also see Yamada, *Tomimoto Kenkichi no dezain kūkan*.

accompanied by burgeoning intellectual interests in individualism and humanism.⁷ To set the context, below I briefly describe the practice of copying in pre-Meiji and Meiji Japan, and then I will consider how Tomimoto's discourse relates to two texts central to late Meiji-Taishō individual expression, sculptor and poet Takamura Kōtarō's 1910 essay "The Green Sun" ("Midori no taiyō") and novelist Natsume Sōseki's 1914 speech "My Individualism" ("Watakushi no kojinchugi").

When Tomimoto returned to Japan at the end of the Meiji era and began experimenting with a range of design and art mediums, the pervasive climate was one of "Japanese spirit, Western learning" (*wakon yōsai*). In the Meiji era, as many historians have articulated, models shifted to Western ones under the banner of "encouraging civilization and enlightenment."⁸ After the accolades for the display of Japanese arts and craft at the Vienna World Exposition in 1873, the government initiated support of Japanese craft at both international and domestic expositions. In the case of ceramics, Western *technology* relating to kilns and glazing was encouraged by Gottfried Wagener (in Japan from 1868), but Japanese *forms* and *surfaces* tended to rely on old models. Following old surface designs was a mainstay of ceramics that Tomimoto was exposed to by Kenzan VI and others. Meiji ceramists were encouraged to follow instruction manuals such as the *Kōgeihin ishō no henkaku* (Changes in designs on craft objects) and *Kōgei*

⁷ For a background on the complexity of this era, see Bernard S. Silberman and H. D. Harootunian, eds., *Japan in Crisis: Essays in Taishō Democracy* (Princeton University Press: Princeton, New Jersey, 1974).

⁸ See, for example, essays in Rupert Cox, ed., *The Culture of Copying in Japan: Critical and Historical Perspectives* (London and New York: Routledge, 2008) and Brenda Jordan and Victoria Weston, eds., *Copying the Master and Stealing his Secrets: Talent and Training in Japanese Painting*.

shitazu rui (Types of preparatory drawings for craft) published by the Kiritsu Kōshō Kaisha.⁹

Takamura Kōtarō—who in 1909 had met Tomimoto in Paris, and who in 1911 would begin to participate with him in exhibitions—subverted the fundamental premise of “Japanese spirit, Western learning.” This was typified in his 1910 essay “The Green Sun,” arguably the most influential and representative manifesto of its time advocating for the primacy of subjective artistic expression.¹⁰ Its words that reverberated with young artists like Tomimoto concerned transcendence from national boundaries of artistic structures and the embrace of freedom and personality. The essay begins with the observation, “People become stuck in an unexpectedly insignificant place and suffer. The so-called Japanese-style painters can’t move forward, marked by the term ‘Japanese-style.’ The so-called Western-style painters can’t, either, weighed down by oil paint on their backs.” Then the essay offers the remedy for this conundrum: “I seek absolute *Freiheit* [freedom] in the art world. Therefore, I want to recognize an infinite authority in the artist’s *Persoenlichkeit* [personality].”¹¹

Takamura’s “A Green Sun” resonated with Tomimoto’s development as an artist in two critical ways. It is well-documented that this essay reflected the drive among Japanese artists of this time for creative individualism. But Takamura also expressed an idea about nature that parallels Tomimoto’s. Takamura wrote, “I often think I’m Japanese

⁹ Victor Harris, *Japanese Imperial Craftsmen: Meiji Art from the Khalili Collection* (London: British Museum Press, 1994), 16.

¹⁰ *Subaru* 2, no. 3 (April 1910): 35–36. The following year it was also published in *Bijutsu shinpō*.

¹¹ Takamura Kōtarō, “A Green Sun,” trans. by Sato Hiroaki in *A Brief History of Imbecility: Poetry and Prose of Takamura Kōtarō* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1992), 180.

when I'm dealing with someone. The thought doesn't occur much when I face nature."¹²

In other words, Takamura claimed, the direct encounter with nature, rather than people, was for him the surest means to attain purity in individual expression. This expression would be untrammelled by concerns for whether the resulting artwork looked Japanese or not. This is an idea in unison with Tomimoto's emphasis on *shasei* and, in it, reliance on his direct encounter with nature, above all, in channeling an expression of himself beyond any notion of national identity.

The year "A Green Sun" was published was the same year Tomimoto returned to Japan, and around this time several landmark events occurred that, together, Mori Hitoshi has identified as the emergence of "Japanese Expressionism":¹³ Herwath Walden in Berlin established the gallery and newspaper *Der Sturm* (The storm), in which the term "Expressionism" was first used; In Ogawamachi, Tokyo, Takamura established Rōkandō, a privately-run art gallery which showed amongst its "art objects" a wide range of works from painting and sculpture to cuff links;¹⁴ and a group of zealous young writers and artists began publishing *Shirakaba*, an art journal epitomizing the zeitgeist of the eclectic and transnational modern Tokyo art world. This was also the era of the Fusain Society in

¹² Ibid., 181.

¹³ Mori Hitoshi, ed. *Yakudō suru tamashii no kirameki: Nihon no hyōgen shugi/ Expressionist Movements in Japan* (Tochigi Prefectural Museum of Art, et al. 2009). I avoid classifying Tomimoto's works as "Expressionistic" since "Expressionism" generally is used to reference a particular early twentieth-century Northern European art movement.

¹⁴ See Ajioka, "When Craft became Art: Modern Japanese Craft and *Mingei* Sakka," 215–6. She describes it as "the first art gallery in Japan," and notes that "Kōtarō's contributions to modern craft may have been unintended, but they were nevertheless significant" in "Aspects of Twentieth-Century Crafts," *Since Meiji*, 415.

Japan which, as Alicia Volk has described it, “placed the sole authority for art in the self, and...championed the expression of the self as the one and only rationale for art.”¹⁵

Like “A Green Sun,” Natsume Sōseki’s 1914 Gakushuin University speech “My Individualism” called on his audience to respect one another’s individualism as a means to find release from the anxiety of Western influence on the forces of Japanese culture.¹⁶

The message was not an exact inversion of *wakon yōsai*, but rather a post- Russo-Japanese War (1904–1905) reconfiguration of the dialectic between Japan and “the West.” As Chiaki Ajioka has described it, this “relationship...was no longer that of the provider and consumer of exotic culture, but, at least in the young artists’ minds, between equals.”¹⁷ Although Tomimoto returned from Britain to Japan in 1910, just seven years after Sōseki, his return was of a later generation than Sōseki’s, in concept if not in actual years. In his speech, Sōseki admitted that the “mechanically-acquired information” that he and his peers sought was in reality closer to “borrowed clothes, preening with glued-on peacock feathers.”¹⁸ So by 1914, Sōseki proclaimed that the antidote to such mindless copying was “self-centeredness.” He continued, “the idea of ego-centeredness (*jiga*

¹⁵ *In Pursuit of Universalism: Yoroze Tetsugorō and Japanese Modern Art* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 103.

¹⁶ See Takashina Shuji, “Natsume Sōseki and the Development of Modern Japanese Art,” in J. Thomas Rimer, ed., *Culture and Identity: Japanese Intellectuals During the Interwar Years* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990), 273–81; “My Individualism,” *Sōseki bunmei ronshū* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1986), 97–138. Sōseki studied in England Sept. 1900–Jan. 1903.

¹⁷ “When Craft became Art: Modern Japanese Craft and *Mingei* Sakka,” 218.

¹⁸ Jay Rubin and Natsume Sōseki, “Sōseki on Individualism, ‘Watakushi no Kojinshugi,’” *Monumenta Nipponica* 34, no. 1 (Spring 1979): 33.

hon'i) told me where to stand, showed me the road I must take.”¹⁹ In other words, a person could escape from an irresolute state of vacillating between being guided by either “Japan” or “the West” by simply retreating to the self.

If we follow Sōseki’s line of thinking, then we may conjecture that Tomimoto, too, upon his return to Japan in 1910 after an intense period of living and studying overseas, turned to ego-centeredness as a position from which to negotiate between influences. Thus, the burgeoning of expressionistic arts in the Tokyo art world of 1910 might be better described not simply as part of “global modernism” or the “global avant-garde,” but as a Japanese revolution in thought from *wakon yōsai* to “ego-centeredness.” A unifying factor in what we may term global modernism’s discourse of originality—a discourse engaged in by museum professionals, historians, and writers, as well as artists—is, as Rosalind Krauss has stated, an “originary naiveté” in which “the self as origin is safe from contamination by tradition.”²⁰ For Tomimoto and others writing and making art in 1910s Japan, a resolve to be guided by “ego-centeredness” resulted in what were to them artistic expressions of “originary naiveté.” Yet, as we will see as we examine the exhibitions in which Tomimoto participated and the works he produced under the banner of self-expression, a kind of myth-making existed in his own versions of this history, particularly in the ways in which he described his direct encounters with nature in Ando-mura. While this chapter does not aim to diminish the truths of

¹⁹ Ibid., 34.

²⁰ “The Originality of the Avant-Garde” (1981), in *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1986), 157.

Tomimoto's early experimentations, we must cast a critical eye towards them in light of the Japanese and global contexts for modernism.

The Equivalency of Mediums at Exhibitions

According to Leach, Tomimoto, upon his return to Japan in the summer of 1910, “had studied stained glass, but he couldn’t find an interesting job, so he did design, wood prints, *sarasa* (calico) and the like.”²¹ At the age of twenty-four, he might be described as a young man who was simply experimenting, but his works reveal something greater. These works, as a whole, proclaimed the status of ceramics as equivalent to not only other design and craft works but also prints and paintings. Specifically, they achieved a level of conceptual commensurability with *yōga*. In particular, the display of prints of ceramics alongside actual ceramic works collapsed media-specific boundaries in ways that encouraged ceramics to be read as images as well as three-dimensional forms.

The first major exhibition Tomimoto organized, and one that sent deep reverberations across many of its participants, patrons, and critics, took place beginning on April 16, 1911, at the Gorakuden gallery in Kyobashi, Tokyo, hosted by the magazine *Bijutsu shinpō*. Thirty young *yōga* artists showed their work under the banner “The art news organization rising artists’ small works exhibition” (*Bijutsu shinpō shusai shinshin sakka shōhin tenrankai*). Hitoshi Mori has asserted that it was one of several factors

²¹ Hamada Shōji and Bernard Leach, “Taidan: nihon no tōgei,” *Sansai* (252): 25.

contributing to the emergence of Japanese Expressionism.²² Its purpose was, according to Morita Kamenosuke, to promote the display of *yōga* in Japanese interiors through small-scale works.²³ In fact, Morita, who had been assisting Leach adjust to life in Japan ever since his arrival in 1909, procured the space upon Leach and Tomimoto's urging. He arranged for this on the day prior to their first encounter with the painting and firing of Raku pots, along with Morita, at the party hosted by Hiraoka Gonpachiro as described in Chapter One.²⁴ Several days later, Leach described the participating artists as "some 30 of the best artists of the younger generation...& there will be no Academic [sic] tar & feathers. Takamura, Morita, Tomimoto, Arishima, Yamawaki, Minami, Masamune, Kato & others. All small works with pieces ranging from ¥5 ... ¥15."²⁵ The academicism Leach refers to here is undoubtedly the perceived conservatism and insularity of the Bunten, the Imperial Salon in existence since 1907.²⁶

The exhibition's interior design by Tomimoto and Leach encouraged the flattening of distinctions between art and craft mediums (**Fig. 2.1**). With seating on rush chairs designed and produced by Tomimoto, the effect was a modern European salon-style interior. Leach and Tomimoto's design for the "totally Western" interior was

²² "Naze ima, hyōgenshugi nanoka: 1900 nendai kara no ryūro," in Mori Hitoshi, ed., *Yakudō suru tamashii no kirameki: Nihon no hyōgen shugi* (Tochigi: Tochigi Prefectural Museum of Art, 2009), 11.

²³ "Honshi shusai shinshin sakka shōhin tenrankai no seiritsu nitsuite," *Bijutsu shinpō* 10, no. 7 (May, 1911): 3–10.

²⁴ Dated Sat 18 Feb.? 1911–12 diary, BLA no. 10875, CSC.

²⁵ BLA no. 10874, CSC.

²⁶ For example, the Ministry of Education in 1908 censored the display of nude subjects at the Bunten. See Volk, *In Pursuit of Universalism*, 60.

described by an anonymous *Yomiuri shimbun* reviewer as “refreshing,” adorned with “various beautiful colors,” and in, “of course, Western-style.”²⁷

Other than the chairs, objects by Tomimoto on display were watercolors he had painted in England, several woodblock prints he had made since returning to Japan, and a Raku plate.²⁸ Tomimoto and Minami Kunzō’s prints were described by the aforementioned reviewer as “halfway between prints and paintings” as each print had only ten impressions—much fewer than typical for traditional woodblock prints— and would be “suitable” for decorating a Japanese room.²⁹ The fact that Tomimoto showed a Raku plate made just two months after his first encounter with ceramics is testament to his embrace of the power of “originary naiveté.”

Overall, the exhibiting artists sold many works and critics praised the exhibition. As Tomimoto wrote in a letter to Minami Kunzō six days after the opening day, “The exhibition is, first of all, on the successful side... Yamamoto-kun and others’ paintings sold well. There were also many people who were buying our prints and Leach’s etchings... The response to the interior decoration... [and] my chairs was good.”³⁰ Morita Kamenosuke reported that Tomimoto and Leach’s “self-painted” Raku works sold very well.³¹ According to Leach’s diary, “At the exhibition I have sold 10 Raku yaki, 7

²⁷ Tokyo edition, April 21, 1911, 5.

²⁸ The watercolors included “Hana” [flower]; “London kōgai” [London outskirts]; “Irufurakūmu kaigan” [Ilfracombe coast]; and “Kasukāto rōdo” [Cathcart Road]. National Museum of Modern Art Tokyo, *Seitan 120-nen Tomimoto Kenkichi ten*, 271.

²⁹ *Yomiuri shimbun*, Tokyo edition, April 21, 1911, 5.

³⁰ Letter dated April 22, 1911, Nara Kenritsu Bijyusukan, ed. *Minami Kunzō ate Tomimoto Kenkichi shokan*, 20.

³¹ “Honshi shusai shinshin sakka shōhin tenrankai no seiritsu nitsuite,” 3–10.

etchings & 2 oil paintings on paper, for a profit of ¥54.50 / Tomi sold about 40 small prints & one or two plates with one watercolour. Altogether about 100 things were sold.”³² In Tomimoto’s recollection, “different than the standard paintings or *moyō* for Raku ceramics at the time, our painted works had an unconventional appeal (*zanshinna miryoku*).”³³ With such success, they were buoyed to continue Raku ceramics painting further, and Leach’s diary indicates that just three days after the exhibition opened, they were decorating more ceramics at the exposition stand in Ueno.³⁴

The majority of Tomimoto’s exhibitions at art galleries over the succeeding few years combined ceramics with works on paper, a pairing that spoke to the ways in which he conceived of his ceramics praxis. He participated in the November 1911 Shirakaba *yōga* exhibition by displaying several works of tempera on paper and an etching of a “small *moyō*.” In March of 1912 an entire division of the third *Bijutsu shinpō* art exhibition was devoted to 150 sketches Tomimoto had made “overseas,” his woodblock prints, and watercolors. As he had for the first *Bijutsu shinpō* exhibition, he arranged the interior decoration of the room at the exhibition venue, the Takenodai Exhibition Hall (Chinretsukan) at Ueno.³⁵

Among these early exhibitions, he also showed works of design in a wide variety of mediums signaling, as described below, an embrace of multiple mediums according to

³² May 1, 1911. BLA no. 10875, CSC.

³³ *Watashi no rirekisho*, 207.

³⁴ “Busy every day—baking—at the exhibition with Tomy [sic].” Diary entry dated April 19, 1911. BLA no. 10875, CSC.

³⁵ March 15–31. The first division was for *yōga* painters. The second division was for *yōga* painters who had returned from overseas travel and Aoki Shigeru’s posthumous works.

the ideology of William Morris. In February 1913 at Mitsukoshi Department Store in Tokyo he sold, in addition to Raku works, crafted objects ranging from business card trays to embroidered *haneri*.³⁶ Two other exhibitions of 1914 also articulated the unification of ceramics with works on paper. The first was in March at Mikasa Gallery in Tokyo where he showed ninety ceramic pieces and thirty sheets of ceramic designs.³⁷

His June 1914 solo exhibition took place at the Tanakaya (Galerie Tanaka) in Ginza, a gallery which also featured Cubist and Expressionist prints by European artists.³⁸ Exhibited were more than sixty Raku ceramics and works on paper. Leach, in his *Far East* review of the exhibition, labeled the latter “pen-drawn designs” and deemed them “more vigorous and better works of art than the majority of the pieces made from them.”³⁹ By “works made from them,” Leach refers to the ceramics based on or utilizing motifs from the designs on paper. The gallery director, Tanaka Kisaku (田中喜作, 1885–?), also commissioned Tomimoto to create all of the cover designs for his magazine *Takujō*, a short-lived journal published just six times.⁴⁰ The results were boldly carved flowers for the first three and large calligraphic compositions for the others, all stylistically consistent with his other prints. An example is the April 1914 cover (**Fig.**

³⁶ The collar for an underkimono

³⁷ The exhibition was held March 5–14. *Bijutsu shinpō* 13, no. 6 (April 1914): 40.

³⁸ June 23–July 2, 1914. Some of the European prints it exhibited are listed in an advertisement, May 1915 no. 6 *Takujō*, n.p.

³⁹ “An Artist’s Pottery,” (June 27, 1914): 386.

⁴⁰ Tanaka studied oil painting in Paris 1908–1909 and became a highly influential figure in the 1910s Tokyo art world. According to Kumada Tsukasa, Tomimoto’s *Takujō* covers exerted a considerable influence on *sōsaku hanga* artists. See “Bijutsuten Tanakaya to zasshi ‘Takujō’ – Taishōki bijutsu no seishun no kōsaden [The Art Gallery Tanaka and the magazine Takujō – The intersection of the Taishō era art’s early years]” in *Fukkokuban Takujō bessatsu kai setsu sōmokuji* (Kyoto: Kyoto shoin, 1990), 4.

2.2) featuring a boldly rendered tulip, clouds, and the characters for the magazine's title, "On the table" (*Takujō*). The Tanakaya has been described by Kumada Tsukasa as the first "full-fledged" gallery project in modern Japan, hosting exhibitions and magazine article contributions by luminary *yōga* painters influenced by post-Impressionism such as Umehara Ryūzaburō (梅原龍三郎, 1888–1986) and Kishida Ryūsei.⁴¹ Thus the selection of Tomimoto for their journal's cover designs is significant given his comparative lack of training in painting.

***Shōgeijutsu* and Morrisian Values**

Tomimoto's embrace of multiple mediums stemmed to a large degree from his emulation of William Morris, particularly during the period when he had just returned to his birthplace, Ando-mura. Let us consider the circumstances of his return. In January of 1911, Tomimoto began work as a draftsman for Okada Shinichirō, his former university teacher, at the construction firm Shimizugumi 清水組 (today's Shimizu Corporation). After working there just two months, he earned a prize at the Tokyo Industrial Exposition for a perspectival drawing of a house designed by Okada.⁴² Soon after, in May, he returned to Ando-mura where he would live until 1926. Later historians, following Tomimoto's own classification, would refer to 1910–1926 as his "Yamato" period. Why did he return there? In an era when the majority of young Japanese artists and designers

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² *Watashi no rirekisho*, 208. The 300 yen prize, Tomimoto wrote, was the only monetary one he received in his entire life for a work on display in an exhibition. His name, however, does not appear in records of the exhibition. The exhibition was held beginning March 20.

were flocking to urban centers, Tomimoto's decision to establish a design studio according to Morrisian values in the heart of rural Japan was somewhat unusual. As he wrote to Leach on April 27, 1911, "I had [a] delightfull [sic] ~~dream~~ hope to work in Tokyo, with Persian, Indian designs. But all it was my bad dream."⁴³ Leach recorded in his diary that Tomimoto left Tokyo "to escape the beastliness of Tokyo officialdom" since there was "scarcely any chance for the individual artist, sculptor, [or] architect....The people cannot get out of the habit of bowing to titled authority."⁴⁴ The move may be explained at least partially, too, by Tomimoto's bout with typhoid, leaving him bedridden in the Red Cross hospital from March 16 to April 5 of that year.

Tomimoto's initial period of work in Ando-mura was described by Kida Takuya as one of self-proclaimed "spiritual searching" in which he sought to infuse art into daily life according to European Arts and Crafts precepts.⁴⁵ What were these precepts? Yuko Kikuchi has identified them as "the ideas of the 'art of the people,' the moral aesthetic of country and nature, and even Orientalism."⁴⁶ Tomimoto did not cite the movement as an influence, but did consistently refer to William Morris as a model. He claimed, "After I returned to my hometown in Yamato, what I wanted to study the most was William

⁴³ Letter to Bernard Leach, TKKA.

⁴⁴ The next passage reads "Takamura, Yamashita Tomi & others seem unable to put up a fight & so want to escape." Diary entries April 21, 1911 and April 27, 1911, BLA no. 10875, CSC.

⁴⁵ "Taishō jidai no kōgei to yūtopia shisō: Tomimoto Kenkichi to Uiriamu Morisu," in *Kindai Nihon dezainshi*, ed. Nagata Ken'ichi, Hida Toyorō, and Mori Hitoshi (Tokyo: Bigaku Shuppan, 2006), 184–98.

⁴⁶ *Japanese Modernisation and Mingei Theory: Cultural Nationalism and Oriental Orientalism*, 17. The issue of Orientalism will be discussed in the next chapters.

Morris.”⁴⁷ He recounted that his “heart was drawn to the thoughts of the Englishman William Morris, and [he] pursued the desire to bring them close to [his] own path.”⁴⁸ For his March 1912 *Bijutsu shinpō* exhibition as described above, he displayed sketches, prints, and drawings. As he wrote in a letter to Minami, he had originally intended to create an entire room filled with craft works (*kōgei*) “inspired by Morris” (*Morisu no kimochi de*).⁴⁹

In the February and March 1912 issues of *Bijutsu shinpō*, Tomimoto published two landmark articles on Morris, the first studies in Japanese on him as designer.⁵⁰ These are more important, historically, for their role in influencing others, such as *Mingei* movement founder Yanagi Sōetsu, than for reflecting any particularly vivid insights on why Tomimoto was drawn to Morris, how Morris influenced his works, or accurate records of Tomimoto’s direct studies in England.⁵¹ His articles remained the only in-

⁴⁷ Tomimoto Kenkichi, quoted in Imaizumi, “Tomimoto Kenkichi no geijutsu,” 46.

⁴⁸ Tomimoto, *Watashi no rirekisho*, 198.

⁴⁹ Letter no. 38, Nara Kenritsu Bijtusukan, *Minami Kunzō ate Tomimoto Kenkichi shokan*.

⁵⁰ “Uiriamu Morisu no hanashi (jō)” *Bijutsu shinpō* 11, no. 4 (Feb. 1912): 14–20; “Uiriamu Morisu no hanashi (ka)” *Bijutsu shinpō* 11, no. 5 (March 1912): 22–27. The first publication including information on Morris in Japanese was Shibue Tamotsu’s *Eibungaku-shi* of 1891, a history of English literature. The earliest text by Morris translated into Japanese was Sakai Toshihiko’s translation of *News from Nowhere* in 1904, but the next would not occur until 1923 with *Hopes and Fears for Art* translated by Otsuki Kenji. Regarding publications on Morris’s designs, Tomimoto’s professor Iwamura Tōru wrote a short article on Morris’s designs for a 1902 issue of *Bijutsu shinpō*. However, Tomimoto’s two-part series in 1912 surpassed it in breadth and depth. In 1934, well after Tomimoto’s initial interest in Morris began, a Morris-themed exhibition was held in Tokyo.

⁵¹ Yuko Kikuchi has argued that many of the premises of Yanagi Sōetsu’s vision of *Mingei* developed from Morris’s precedent, and that the values of the *Mingei* movement were more transnationalist than Yanagi ever acknowledged. See “The Myth of Yanagi Originality: The Formation of *Mingei* Theory in Its Social and Historical Contexts,” *Journal of Design History* 7, no. 4 (1994): 247–266 and *Japanese Modernisation and Mingei Theory*, 17–23. As explained in Chapter One, Nakayama Shūichi has argued that Tomimoto likely mistook wallpaper for textile

depth documentation in Japanese on Morris as designer until the 1920s when more publications on Morris appeared, although most of those concerned Morris's socialism.⁵² Tomimoto's text highlighted biographical events paralleling his own, such as that Morris was raised in a rural environment steeped in history and nature, and that he boarded with another artist (Edward Burne-Jones) after graduating from school. Additionally, he praised Morris's poetry and the fact that he published writing as well as created design work. Indeed, Morris and Tomimoto shared biographical landmarks: both were trained as architects and painters, initially, and their design work embraced multiple mediums. Ultimately their paths differed in two major ways, though. Unlike Tomimoto, who embraced an approach to materials using, at times, the hands of an untrained artist, Morris emphasized a high level of craftsmanship as an end goal unto itself, and he also was resolute in not using any post-medieval methods of production. Tomimoto never claimed such a desire to return to a pre-lapsarian state of purity for craft praxis.

Most significant to the question of the ontology of modern Japanese craft is how the articles shed light on the equivalency Tomimoto perceived between art and design, specifically in terms of individualistic expression. He wrote:

designs by Morris when he saw them on display at the Victoria and Albert Museum. See "Tomimoto Kenkichi in London in 1909–1910 (I) His Study of William Morris at the Victoria and Albert Museum," 31–39. In "Rereading 'The Story of Morris' by Tomimoto Kenkichi," Nakayama claims Tomimoto likely never visited Morris's Red House, although readers of Tomimoto's articles might assume that he had done so. Nakayama also convincingly outlines how Tomimoto likely relied on Aymer Vallance's 1897 book *William Morris: His Art, His Writings and His Public Life*.

⁵² Nakayama Shuichi, "The Impact of William Morris in Japan, 1904 to the Present," *Journal of Design History* 9, no. 4 (1996): 273–5. Nakayama cites the 1976 bibliography of sources in Japanese on Morris edited by Makino Kazuhiko and Shinagawa Tsutomu.

[Qualities such as] the appeal of the artist's individuality and eternal beauty must be recognized, not only in paintings and sculpture but also in weaving, metalwork and all other craftwork. Morris was a forerunner like no other in perceiving this. And I feel that he showed us the way through his own practice.⁵³

Such a sentiment was consistent with Tomimoto's remarks on the equivalency of objects that struck him upon viewing the displays at the Victoria and Albert Museum.⁵⁴ His reference to the "artist's individuality" resonates with Morris's emphasis on "imagination." Two passages by Morris describe this important aspect of his design ideology. In 1880, Morris wrote:

In our craft the chief of the limitations that spring from the essence of the art is that the decorator's art cannot be imitative even to the limited extent that the picture-painter's art is...It follows from this that your convention must be your own, and not borrowed from other times and peoples.⁵⁵

This belief in the necessity of originality in *both* decorative art and painting points to the equivalence of practices central to Tomimoto's endeavors. In a lecture of 1881 on Pattern-Designing, Morris identified why "lifeless imitation of a piece of bygone art" is not satisfying:

The reason is that the imitator has not entered into the soul of the dead artist; nay, has supposed that he had but a hand and no soul, and so has not known what he meant to do...[and] if we cannot have an ornamental art of

⁵³ Tomimoto, "Uiriamu Morisu no hanashi (jō)," *Bijutsu shinpō* 11, no. 5 (March 1912): 22–27, trans. by Ajioka in "When Craft Became Art: Modern Japanese Craft and the Mingei Sakka," 217.

⁵⁴ See Ch. 1.

⁵⁵ "Furnishing and Decorating a House (1880)," in Christine Poulson, ed. *William Morris on Art & Design* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 113–4.

our own, we cannot have one at all. Every real work of art, even the humblest, is inimitable.⁵⁶

Originality became the central concern in Tomimoto's praxis, traceable to Morris in the passages above.

Upon settling in Ando-mura, Tomimoto put into practice his Morrisian ideals by making a variety of designed objects under the office name of the "Tomimoto Kenkichi Zuan Jimusho" (Tomimoto Kenkichi Design Office). The details of his activities at this "design office," such as what exactly was produced, who his patrons were, and how much he sold, are murky at best due to few extant records. As Tomimoto wrote to Leach in April 1911, just before "escaping dusty Tokyonian Artists curcle [*sic*] like Russian socialists do" for Ando-mura, his wish was "to work [on] several kinds of designs...and to read books alone."⁵⁷ Then in 1914, he established a similar office in Tokyo. The gallery Tanakaya, which supported his exhibitions and the publication of his *moyōshū* under the sponsorship of its owner, the aforementioned Tanaka Kisaku, announced in the August 1914 issue of *Takujō* that beginning on September 1 Tomimoto's Design Office would be located there in the gallery. The design services advertised were "printed goods (book design, advertising, etc.), interior design (wallpaper, furniture design, etc.), ceramics, dyeing and weaving, embroidery, metalwork, woodwork, lacquer work, stage design, and other forms of design."

⁵⁶ "Some Hints on Pattern-Designing. A Lecture Delivered by William Morris at the Working Men's College, London, On December 10, 1881," in *Some Hints on Pattern-Designing* (London: Longmans, 1899), 8.

⁵⁷ Undated letter, TKKA. The archival label is April 27, 1911.

Such a wide embrace of mediums paralleled Morris's diversity of endeavors with his firm Morris, Marshall, Faulkner & Co.: Fine Art Workmen in Painting, Carving, Furniture and Metals (also referred to as "The Firm"), and then Morris & Co.⁵⁸ They also reflected the mediums taught at the Central School of Arts and Crafts when Tomimoto studied there.⁵⁹ For Tomimoto, what linked all of these mediums was the concept of *shōgeijutsu* 小芸術, a translation of Morris's "lesser arts." Tomimoto used this term to describe his works featured in three of the twelve exhibitions of his work held between the formative design years of 1912–1916.⁶⁰ These included primarily graphic design, woodblock prints, painting and Raku ceramics as well as dyed textiles, weaving, embroidery, and leather craft. As I will describe below, Tomimoto learned techniques for the latter mediums through self-study and collaboration with his grandmother Noto and his wife Kazue.

One major difference between Tomimoto's practice and that of Morris, though, was that Morris's firm had major active partners, whereas Tomimoto worked on his own, at least as can be gleaned from historical records and the extant work produced from that

⁵⁸ The first lasted 1861–1875 and the second 1875–1940.

⁵⁹ See Chapter One. "Index to Contents," *Prospectus & Time-Table for the Session Beginning 21st September, 1908*. London County Council Central School of Arts & Crafts, Southampton Row, W.C., 1908. Hida Toyojiro has argued that Tomimoto's choice of materials was also influenced directly by the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society which showed objects according to the categories of "Pottery, Glass, Painting, Architecture, Sculpture, Metalwork, [and] Design." See "Tomimoto Kenkichi no shōgeijutsu," Fujita Haruhiko, ed., *Atsu ando kurafutsu to Nihon* (Kyoto Shibunkaku Shuppan, 2004), 104.

⁶⁰ See Hida Toyojiro, "Tomimoto Kenkichi no shōgeijutsu," 99–112.

time.⁶¹ However, Leach's diary reveals that he wished to form a collective design company modeled on Morris's. In May of 1911 he wrote in his diary that he was "thinking out a plan for the combined spreading of art=love [sic] & the making of a living. My present idea is a W. Morris movement by Takamura, Tomi, self & a few others. Painting, sculpture, bronze, mats [?], porcelain, lacquer & to be exhibited in a club-ship."⁶² Although a formal "club-ship" never came to fruition, the mutual influences between Leach, Takamura, and Tomimoto were robust and influential in Tomimoto's design activities from 1911 onward. Leach, for example, hosted Tomimoto for three weeks at his Tokyo home in the fall of 1911, inspiring, in Tomimoto's words, "new ideas (mainly refreshed)."⁶³

Whatever the medium, many of Tomimoto's early design works expressed on their surfaces sentiments reflecting Morris's ethics of labor. Morris famously advocated that "art is the expression of man's pleasure in labour...and...that unless man's work once again becomes a pleasure to him, the token of which change will be that beauty is once again a natural and necessary accompaniment of productive labour, all but the worthless must toil in pain, and therefore live in pain."⁶⁴ While Tomimoto was never a declared Socialist like Morris, he inscribed aphorisms glorifying the value of work on the surfaces of several design works, examples from his comparatively large number of

⁶¹ Morris's partners included Charles Faulkner, Edward Burne-Jones, Gabriel Rosetti, Philip Webb, and others.

⁶² May 13, 1911. BLA no. 10875, CSC. Leach also recorded that the "capital needed" was ¥5000.

⁶³ TKKA. Dated "28th." The archival note lists this as October 28, 1911.

⁶⁴ William Morris, Preface to 1892 Kelmscott Press edition of John Ruskin, *The Nature of The Gothic*, rpt. in Krishan Kumar, ed., William Morris, *News from Nowhere* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 95.

works bearing aphorisms in the 1910s.⁶⁵ These tended to vividly exalt the spiritual wealth of physical labor in a manner evincing Morris's romantic nostalgia for a pre-lapsarian past.

A 1914 Raku ceramics jar, *Rakuyaki sōka moyō futatsuki tsubo* 楽焼草花模様蓋付壺 [Raku covered jar with flower design] (**Fig. 2.3**) bears an inscription in English around the circumference of its lower outer wall in loosely rendered red brush strokes, "EAT AND WORK IT'S JOY." Whether Tomimoto was directly channeling it or not is unknown, but this phrase—extolling the joy of labor as parallel to Epicurean pleasure—appears to be a distillation of Ecclesiastes 2:24: "There is nothing better for a man, than that he should eat and drink, and that he should make his soul enjoy good in his labour. This also I saw, that it was from the hand of God." This jar was a singular creative work, not made among others in great quantity and not intended to serve as an affordable object for mainstream use.

In its medium and style, the jar is representative of Tomimoto's early ceramics. It is clearly hand-thrown, likely by Tomimoto himself, apparently using the same clay, underglazes, glaze, and Raku firing as for his bush warblers bowl (**Fig. 1.24**). Tomimoto applied the surface motifs and text with an economic touch, leaving most of its surface covered by clear glaze. The overt coarseness of its painting reflects his embrace of, to return to the above discussion, an "originary naiveté." Its surface message and motif speaks to an expression of the simple, country life ideology of other works in this era and,

⁶⁵ His interest in them extended to publishing a list of mostly 17th–18th century aphorisms carved onto rings. See "Furuki yubiwa ni horaretaru monku," *Takujō* 6 (May 1915): 20.

as outlined in the next section, in images of Ando-mura. Upon returning to Ando-mura, Tomimoto had begun to make a body of Raku ceramics like this decorated with natural leaf and floral forms and calligraphic inscriptions.

The kiln that this jar was fired in was built in February of 1913 by Kenzan VI and Leach's young assistant, known affectionately as Kame-chan. This first kiln was a critically important step in Tomimoto's development as a ceramist. He described his first Raku firing on March 13, 1913, to Leach in a post card:

[Through] the night to this morning I did Raku – my first experience – But done very well. 5 plates, Ōdo [yellow ochre] line. Done. I think one of my best. Kame knows. But after Raku the feeling quite changed. With this [*sic*] plates I can put on some self [*sic*] with Thoumas [*sic*] Toft's work. My personality, Jap's idia [*sic*] represented very well, wish to show you, K.T.

[written on side:] You are only man, wish to show my work.⁶⁶

His wish to merge the English potter Thomas Toft's work with his "personality" of surface design and his "Japanese idea" of Raku firing is a telling indication of his transnationalist approach to design and process. Many early Raku ceramics by Tomimoto and Leach reflect the influence of both English Toft ware and Dutch Delft ware. The two of them had studied with great interest Charles Lomax's *Quaint Old English Pottery*.⁶⁷ In it, Lomax praised Toft: "Of the Staffordshire Potters of the Seventeenth Century, Thomas

⁶⁶ TKKA.

⁶⁷ (London, Sherratt and Hughes, 1909). Tomimoto recounted the details of its purchase in his short essay "1913-nen goro," *Chosakushū*, 397–8. On a trip to Tokyo in 1913 he used up all of his money, he claimed, in order to buy Lomax's book at Maruzen. After doing so, he went straight to Leach's house. One Staffordshire pot, in particular, appears to have inspired a surface image on one of Tomimoto's works. An image of a mermaid on plate VII of Lomax's book is similar to that on a ca. 1915 stoneware vase by Tomimoto in the Ōhara Museum of Art. Also, a similar roughly-articulated mermaid image appears on the cover Tomimoto designed for the first issues of *Saffron*, the journal his wife Otake Kazue established.

Toft has generally been credited with the best productions, and indeed so much of his name is associated with slip-decorated pottery that this branch of ceramics has become known as Toft ware.⁶⁸ Of slipware, Lomax wrote, “the best examples represent the zenith attained by the simple yeoman potter who was supplying the want of an equally humble people.”⁶⁹ The perceived simplicity of Toft ware and slipware resonated with the idealistic life Tomimoto sought in rural Ando-mura and, as will be discussed below, the ideals of the *Mingei* movement.

Other examples of Tomimoto’s *shōgeijutsu* from the 1910s reveal the use of a wide range of materials likely for the sake of experimentation as well as to fulfill specific commissions for gifts. One example of such an experimental medium not repeated in later years is needlework. Tomimoto later recounted that because of his interest in Morris he wanted to “gather materials for Japanese dyed textiles (*wasome*).”⁷⁰ Tomimoto had learned basic needlework skills from his grandmother, a “master of needlework” who taught students etiquette as well as needlework skills like plugging cotton into *chirimen* (silk crepe) and creating finished sewn works.⁷¹ The results were embroideries such as a circa 1915 obi with the design of a mosque (**Fig. 2.4**), inspired by his recent travels to northern African and the Indian subcontinent as well as his awareness of the impact of Islamic forms on Morris’s designs. A *haneri* (**Fig. 2.5**) embroidered with the date 1914 and “KAZ / KEN” with a fern design above clearly was a joint work Tomimoto created

⁶⁸ Lomax, *Quaint Old English Pottery*, 39.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 36.

⁷⁰ 和染, also called *sakizome*, or dyed textiles. Imaizumi, “Tomimoto Kenkichi no geijutsu,” 86.

⁷¹ “Saihō” is the term Tomimoto used in his texts to refer to sewing and needlework. *Watashi no rirekisho*, 186.

with his wife, Kazue. She likely contributed to the design and execution of many of these early works. As much as Tomimoto aspired to create objects to be sold and distributed, this body of works is of limited number, though. Evidence suggests many were made as gifts, such as a leather wallet announcing in English the marriage of his friends bearing the inscription “ALL HAPPINESS TO MR. & MRS. SHIRATAKI” (**Fig. 2.6**).

Imaging Nature through the Self

While Morrisian-inspired functional works comprise an important part of Tomimoto’s early oeuvre, two other significant types of *shōgeijutsu* were his works on paper with landscape as subject and the *moyō* related to them. For analysis of these works, let us return to Takamura’s suggestion that encounters with nature could provide an unfettered channel for individualist expression and move chronologically through representative works. As this section will reveal, Tomimoto embraced *shasei* as a direct means to originality. His landscape-based works also reveal that landscape as subject provided an ideal platform for attaining an equivalency of value between objects of all mediums. For Tomimoto, the landscape as subject, and distilled landscape as *moyō*—whether on paper or ceramics—communicated the artistic vision and originality of the artist.

Sōsaku Hanga

Undoubtedly Tomimoto created many sketches in England of rural scenes alongside Minami, but the first exhibited landscapes he created were *sōsaku hanga*

(creative prints), woodblock prints designed, carved and printed by himself. With their roughly-hewn edges and unique subjects, Tomimoto's landscape prints exude the qualities of *sōsaku hanga* in clear distinction to the technically refined and workshop-produced landscapes of great nineteenth-century print artists like Andō Hiroshige (1797–1858).⁷² *Sōsaku hanga* artists beginning with Yamamoto Kanae (山本鼎, 1882–1946) were equated with painters, not simply designers of reproduced illustrations.⁷³ *Sōsaku hanga* artists eschewed traditional prints methods in which designers, printers, and publishers occupied discreet and specialized roles in a cooperative publishing process. They favored the practice of an individual artist commandeering all aspects of print design and execution. These ideas were codified by the establishment of the Japan Creative Print Association (*Nihon Sōsaku Hanga Kyōkai*) in 1918 and the Japan Print Association in 1931. Tomimoto became a member of the latter, although by that time he was no longer actively producing prints. In fact, he only pursued printmaking from 1909 to 1912.⁷⁴

Nishiyama Junko has postulated that Tomimoto “was unlikely to be conscious that he was a printmaker,” instead intending these works to be used mainly in the

⁷² “*Sōsaku hanga*” initially derived from “*sōsaku shin hanga*” (new creative prints), a neologism coined by the prints publisher Watanabe Shōzaburō (1885–1962) in 1907 to refer to his earliest collaborations with artists, but there is no evidence that Tomimoto had contact with Watanabe.

⁷³ Ajioka Chiaki, “Hanga: Japanese Creative Prints,” in *Hanga: Japanese Creative Prints* (Sydney: Art Gallery of New South Wales, 2000), 9.

⁷⁴ Tomimoto's printmaking seems to have been inspired in large part by Minami Kunzō. Tomimoto wrote in 1911, after returning to live in Ando-mura from Tokyo, where he had lived with Minami, “Four or five days ago after I had unpacked my luggage from morning to night in my small studio (*gashitsu*) I experimented with woodblock printing (*mokuhan*)...Of course without a companion to talk to it was fairly arduous.” Undoubtedly the companion he referenced here was Minami. “Raishin kazunori,” *Bijutsu shinpō* 10, no. 8 (1911): 13.

decoration of the rooms in which he lived.⁷⁵ However, it becomes apparent when analyzing his prints in relation to other works of this time that their conceptual underpinnings operated according to a more complex system. Notable print artists spoke of Tomimoto's influence. The man generally acknowledged as the father of the *sōsaku hanga* movement, Onchi Kōshirō (恩地孝四郎, 1891–1955), identified his “stimulants” as Minami and Tomimoto.⁷⁶ Another leader of the *sōsaku hanga* movement, printmaker Hiratsuka Unichi (平塚運一, 1896–1997), referred to Minami and Tomimoto as the “two greats” of Taishō printmaking.⁷⁷

One of Tomimoto's earliest extant prints, *Kumo* (*Clouds*, **Fig. 2.7**), dates from 1911 and exemplifies his early approach to the landscape as both a universal and local subject, with the decisive factor being his perception of it. It is a stark, quotidian, landscape subject of a vast flatland and mountains. Its gently rising mountains appear to be those of the chain of mountains surrounding Ando-mura. Cumulous clouds linger above them in the peaceful daytime sky. It captures a time and place only Tomimoto, viewers might imagine, experienced, and was likely based on a watercolor painting Tomimoto composed as a *shasei* exercise. But viewers are given very little visual information identifying it as a specific place. The subject is also reminiscent of the

⁷⁵ “One Aspect of Creative Prints: Tomimoto Kenkichi and His Influence,” in *Hanga: Japanese Creative Prints*, 18.

⁷⁶ “Kako sōsaku [Investigation of the past],” *Ecchingu* 86 (Japan Etching Institute, Dec. 1939), repr. in Nishiyama, “One Aspect of Creative Prints: Tomimoto Kenkichi and His Influence,” 20.

⁷⁷ “Kitsutsuki kaisō [Woodpecker's memoir],” *Hanga geijutsu* 43 (Abe Shuppan, Nov. 1983), repr. in Nishiyama, “One Aspect of Creative Prints: Tomimoto Kenkichi and His Influence,” 20.

landscape paintings and prints of James McNeill Whistler (1834–1903) with their saturated effects, varying tones of blue sky, and ambiguity of place and time. Tomimoto was undoubtedly aware of Whistler through Minami who had produced works derivative of Whistler's in subject and style.

This print's ragged-edged lines and overall expressive effect speak to the processes of printmaking Tomimoto embraced. It appears rough to the extent that the marks of carving and printing are recognizable. Tomimoto claimed he had made his first woodblock prints in England by burning grooves into the surface of his oil paints box and forming impressions off of it, graduating to using the spindles of pens, carpenter's chisels, and the "bone" of an umbrella as carving tools.⁷⁸ He executed his earliest prints, which are now no longer extant, using oil paints, but he wrote that, after depleting that supply, "out of necessity" he began to use black ink (*kaimei sumi*) mixed with glycerin.⁷⁹ By the time he composed *Kumo* he was using blocks of cherry wood and carving tools, but the mark of the maker remained a prominent concern, in keeping with the ethos of *sōsaku hanga* artists asserting individual control over the entire artistic process.

An inscription on this print provides stark evidence of the *sine qua non* of the *sōsaku hanga* movement. On the surface of *Kumo* we find the words "jiga jichō" 自画自彫 (self-drawing, self-carving) firmly inscribed in its lower right corner. As print artist Okamoto Kiichi (岡本 帰一, 1888–1930) wrote in 1913, "having a print carved by

⁷⁸ "Watashi no hanga," *Nihon hanga kyokai kashō* (Feb. 1940) in Shibuya Kuritsu Shōtō Bijutsukan, *Sōsaku hanga no tanjō: Kindai o kizanda sakkatachi: Tokubetsu ten* (Tokyo: Shibuya Kuritsu Shōtō Bijutsukan, 1999), 83.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

another person is always meaningless, for a picture contains within it a touch and a rhythm born of the artist's self that another person does not share."⁸⁰ Such an emphasis on control by an individual aligned with overarching philosophical and socio-cultural shifts in Taishō Japan that exulted individual choice, freedom, and subjectivity.

Although *Kumo* clearly demonstrates individual expression, we should also note its multiple sources of influence. It is highly likely that Bernard Leach, a trained etcher, helped to kindle Tomimoto's interest in prints that summer and fall of 1910 when the two became friends. Before coming to Japan, Leach created prints with similar themes, and these may have been one of the most important impetuses to Tomimoto's endeavors in the same genre.⁸¹ As mentioned above, Minami Kunzō and Tomimoto shared a love for similar subjects and styles, and produced prints alongside each other. In Tomimoto's words, "When I just returned from England, Minami and I had a house in Kashiwagi, and the two of us together began to make woodblock prints."⁸² Tomimoto gave this particular impression of *Kumo* to Minami, enclosing it with a letter dated August 11, 1911.⁸³

In particular, *Kumo* shares commonalities with Minami Kunzō's landscape print *Uomi* (**Fig. 2.8**) in the use of a horizontal division of land and sky and the starkly articulated landscape subject. Even their rendition of clouds is comparable. Perhaps most strikingly similar are the relatively irregular, rough lines dominating their prints, an

⁸⁰ Shibuya Kuritsu Shōtō Bijutsukan, *Sōsaku hanga no tanjō*, 92.

⁸¹ See Simon Olding, *The Etchings of Bernard Leach* (Farnham, Surrey: Crafts Study Centre, 2010).

⁸² "Watashi no hanga," in *Sōsaku hanga no tanjō*, 83.

⁸³ Tomimoto also gave prints to Leach and others. Because these prints are often folded and in a poor state of repair, we may surmise that he gave away prints in a casual manner when friends visited him, or sent them with other correspondence.

aspect Yamada Toshiyuki has identified as sourced in their embrace of a “savage” aesthetic. This aesthetic is traceable to correspondence in 1912 between the two in which Tomimoto described the process of “intentionally making it poorly” (*mazuku yaru koto*).⁸⁴ One major difference in their circumstances, however, was the fact that Minami was a trained *yōga* painter; around the time they created prints together, Minami won third prize at the Bunten in October of 1910 and second prize the following year.⁸⁵

More broadly, in this and other prints he created around this time, Tomimoto undoubtedly absorbed aspects of European prints he had seen. Since his university days he had been exposed to European magazines, and surely he had seen many while living in England. In 1911, a Shirakaba exhibition in Tokyo featured prints by artists including William Blake, Wassily Kandinsky, Edvard Munch, and others.⁸⁶ The only European print artist whose influence Tomimoto publicly acknowledged, though, was the French artist Henri Rivière (1864–1951). Tomimoto claimed that he was first inspired to make prints after seeing the woodblock prints made by him.⁸⁷ Other Japanese artists that claimed they were also influenced by Rivière include Itō Shinsui (伊東深水, 1898–1972),

⁸⁴ Yamada, *Tomimoto Kenkichi no dezain kūkan*, 11.

⁸⁵ Okamoto Takahiro and Takagi Shigenori, *Minami Kunzō no nikki: kanren shokan no kenkyū*, 47.

⁸⁶ For an overview of the Shirakaba group’s art activities, see Kyoto Bunka Hakubutsukan, ed. *Shirakaba-ha no aishita bijutsu: Shirakaba tanjō 100-nen* (Osaka: Yomiuri Shimbun, 2009).

⁸⁷ “Watashi no hanga,” in *Sōsaku hanga no tanjō*, 83. Also see Tomimoto’s essay “1913-nen goro [Around 1913],” *Seitō yoroku* (1940), repr. in *Tomimoto Kenkichi chosakushū*, 396–9. Tomimoto likely saw Rivière’s prints in England. Rivière also authored *La céramique dans l’art musulman: recueil de 100 planches en couleurs reproduisant les plus belles pièces originales choisies dans les musées et les collections privées françaises et étrangères* (Paris: Émile Lévy, 1913). Given his interest in Rivière’s work, it is probable that Tomimoto referenced this when preparing his own book on Persian ceramics.

Kawase Hasui (川瀬巴水, 1883–1957), Urushibara Mokuchū (漆原木虫, 1888–1953), Yamamoto Kanae, and Yoshida Hiroshi (吉田博, 1876–1950).⁸⁸ Rivière's idyllic rural subjects are consistent with the interest in capturing idealized rural themes embraced by Romantic artists such as John Constable and Jean-François Millet. Rivière's 1898 lithograph series *Les Aspects de la nature* depicts farmers amidst picturesque fields dotted with livestock. One print from this series, *Le Crépuscule* (Dusk, **Fig. 2.9**), echoes an evocation of isolation favored by literati artists in its bucolic subject—a lone, old farmer leading his companion horse slowly towards the distant sunset. Rivière described himself as a Japoniste and Hokusai fan, and he often utilized *ukiyo-e*-like compositional strategies such as multiple perspectives and Japanese techniques for production. He, like many Japoniste artists, never set foot on Japanese soil.⁸⁹ While Rivière's prints may have been a source of inspiration to Tomimoto in terms of landscape subjects, clearly Tomimoto did not recreate Rivière's dense compositions, nuanced color gradations, or uniform outlines.

Ando-mura: From *Shasei* to *Moyō*

Living in Ando-mura, Tomimoto became preoccupied with the direct encounter of nature through *shasei*, and gradually assembled and distilled his landscape sketches into a body of *moyō*. These motifs then circulated through their reproduction on his

⁸⁸ Kanagawa Kenritsu Bijutsukan et al., *Anri Rivēru ten: Furansu no ukiyoeshi, Orusē Bijutsukan Furansu Kokuritsu Toshokanzō* (Tokyo: NHK Sābisu Sentā, 2009), 163–8. Rivière's lithographs were displayed in 1901 at the sixth Hakubakai exhibition in Tokyo.

⁸⁹ Armond Fields, *Henri Rivière* (Salt Lake City: Gibbs M. Smith, Inc., 1983), xvii.

ceramics and works on paper. Ando-mura epitomized for Tomimoto a utopian artistic space in which he could pursue the creation of original works of design and art freed from any institutional constraints, perceived or otherwise, in the capital. Leach wrote in 1917 about Tomimoto's affection for Ando-mura:

[Tomimoto] is the only young artist in Japan who has been abroad and returned to Japan whose work shows the healthy stimulus of old Japanese life and art seen with fresh vision. Perhaps this is a part of the reason that he hates Tokio [*sic*] and prefers to live as a farmer in his Yamato village. There he finds a comparatively pure country life out of which to build art, whilst in Tokio he feels surrounded by the pitiful but insistent half-mixture environment.⁹⁰

Although not an artists' community, Ando-mura held a similar appeal to Tomimoto as did rural European farming and fishing villages attracting *plein air* painters in the nineteenth century.⁹¹ In 1913 he referred to his occupation there not as designer but "part time farmer-artist" (*hannō geijutsuka* 半農藝術家), a moniker redolent with irony as well as literati associations.⁹² He later recollected, "Already for six years, my wife, children and I have been living in this lonely Yamato, away from many friends in Tokyo. Never laying eyes on a magazine or newspaper, even forgetting my favorite music, I have transformed and now enjoy the silence of fishing."⁹³ Ando-mura was indeed rural, and

⁹⁰ Letter dated March 16 from Bernard Leach to "Mr. Sakai," *Bijutsu* (April 1, 1917): 236.

⁹¹ For a description of the arts communities of St. Ives in England and Abiko and Teganuma in Japan in their relation to individuals associated with the *Mingei* movement, see Nagata Ken'ichi, "Hamada Shōji and the Genealogies of Artist Colonies—From Hammersmith to Ditchling/from Abiko to Mashiko," in *The English Arts & Crafts Movement and Hamada Shōji* (Mashiko: Tōgei messe Mashiko, 1997), 170–6.

⁹² *Bijutsu shinpō* 12, no. 6 (April 1913): 29. This article concerns his exhibition of mainly ceramics works at the Mitsukoshi department store, Osaka.

⁹³ *Seitō yoroku* (1940), repr. in Tsujimoto Isamu, *Tomimoto Kenkichi to Yamato*, 19.

there Tomimoto had countless views of rivers, gentle mountains, and traditional architecture at his reach for *plein air* sketching.

His *shasei* exercises in Ando-mura were to him the most direct ways to encounter nature and source original images. Such a reliance on the powers of observation is consistent with contemporaneous developments in the Japanese literary world as well, particularly the Realism and Naturalism movements.⁹⁴ But *shasei* had another meaning, too. Deriving from the Chinese term *xiesheng*, it initially evoked, as Brenda Jordan has described it, “the painter’s ability to capture the liveliness of an object” or the “intangible essence of the subject depicted.”⁹⁵ The term also conveys a *plein air* approach, dating to the eighteenth century when Japanese artists, influenced by the burgeoning influx of books imported from Europe, initially began to create landscapes and other works modeled from life, and by the nineteenth century the term referred specifically to sketching from life. In 1957, Tomimoto reminisced nostalgically, “I have drawn some thousands of designs, some I threw away, some have got lost, and only a few remain.... When I was young I made many drawings in one day and threw most of them away.... I have spent over 40 years (since before 1917) on foot and on bicycle going over mountains and fields in search of suitable specimens of plants and flowers.”⁹⁶ Leach was an integral part of Tomimoto’s sketching activities, and he remembered their experiences

⁹⁴ See, for example, Natsume Sōseki’s 1906 novella *Kusa makura* (The Three-Cornered World).

⁹⁵ Brenda Jordan, “Kawanabe Kyōsai’s Theory and Pedagogy: The Preeminence of *Shasei*,” in *Copying the Master and Stealing His Secrets: Talent and Training in Japanese Painting*, 87. Also see Satō Dōshin’s analysis of the terms “shajitsu,” “shashin,” and “shasei” in *Modern Japanese Art and the Meiji State*, 231–51.

⁹⁶ Naitō Tadashi, ed., *Tomimoto Kenkichi moyō senshū* (Tokyo: Chūō Kōron Bijtusu Shuppan, 1957), postscript.

nostalgically: “We walked, or bicycled, over that gentle countryside in spring flower, peach and pear tree, beside cherry, sketch books in constant very brief use. Those quick concentrated notes of fern or flower, of cloud or bird, or building, greatly simplified, were the sources of many of the patterns we both used in later year on our pots.”⁹⁷ *Shasei*, in other words, provided the source for distinct original images, or *moyō*, which could capture the “intangible essence of the subject” according to Tomimoto’s individual vision.

How may we best define *moyō*?⁹⁸ The common usage of the term today is for *zugara* (design, pattern), *zukei* (figure, shape, graphic), and also *yōsu* (state of affairs; appearance; sign). *Moyō* derived from the Chinese and was first used in Japan to refer to *yōsu* as in “the appearance of snow” (*yūki ni naru moyō*). Today *monyō* 文様 is sometimes used to indicate the same meaning as *moyō*, but the former refers to singular motifs, as in a family crest or motifs that appeared on a variety of craft objects and were often abstracted from naturally found plants or other things.⁹⁹ For Tomimoto, *moyō* expressed a multivalent set of meanings: an originally conceived “design,” “motif,” or “pattern.” Thus, *moyō* are distinct from model pictures (*fumpon* 粉本), which were relied

⁹⁷ “Kenkichi Tomimoto,” in Imaizumi Atsuo, ed., *Tomimoto Kenkichi tōgei sakuhinshū* (Tokyo: Bijutsu Shuppansha, 1974), 216.

⁹⁸ I choose here to use the word *moyō* without translating it into English since it embodies a concept lacking a single English equivalent. The closest English term is “pattern,” as in “a decorative or artistic design, often repeated, esp. on a manufactured article such as a piece of china, a carpet, fabric, etc.” “Pattern, n. and adj.,” OED Online. June 2013. Oxford University Press. <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/138977?rskey=XVforA&result=1&isAdvanced=false> (accessed June 1, 2013).

⁹⁹ “*mon'you* 文様,” Japanese Architecture and Art Net Users System www.aisf.or.jp/~jaanus/ (2001).

upon by painters in the Edo period and earlier. As Victoria Weston has noted, in the Meiji era American critic Ernest Fenollosa (1853–1908), interested in modernizing Japan’s pictorial traditions, advocated for students at the Tokyo School of Fine Arts to rely not only on such pictorial models but on *shasei*, or sketching from life.¹⁰⁰ Tomimoto used his own *moyō* in the same manner as pictorial models, in a sense, but the difference was that the designs were his own, based on *shasei*.

Tomimoto recalled that he first was struck with the notion of the importance of original *moyō*, as epitomized in his famous dictum “never make *moyō* from *moyō*,” during a trip to visit Leach in Hakone in August 1913. Leach had invited him to join his family and *yōga* painter Yamashita Shintarō (山下新太郎) there. Tomimoto reflected:

When I discuss my education creating *moyō* in school, first the subject of ‘if a pomegranate, than a pomegranate’ comes up. The thing to do would be to go to the library and open up an absurd number of books, looking for images of pomegranates. After seeing about twenty of them, you copy (*hikiutsushi*) them, and create drawings (*zu*). The next step was to make a *moyō* by combining these in a rather excessive (*muchakucha*) way. This is the way people have learned to make *moyō* from a long time ago to the present. In this era, it has changed to copying from foreign magazines. I became concerned that I was not able to make *moyō* that were truly mine. For a half a year I thought a lot about this, and I wrote to Leach about it. He responded, ‘I feel the same way. At the moment I am summering at Hakone. Won’t you come? Let’s think about it together.’ With that I went to Hakone, and over the course of about ten days, as we talked, climbed mountains, and swam in the lake, gradually we arrived at a sense of resolve. That resolve was the statement ‘don’t make a pattern from a pattern’ (*moyō kara moyō o tsukuranai*). This seems simple, but in reality is extremely difficult.¹⁰¹

¹⁰⁰ “Institutionalizing Talent and the Kanō Legacy at the Tokyo School of Fine Arts, 1889–1893,” *Copying the Master and Stealing His Secrets: Talent and Training in Japanese Painting*, 148.

¹⁰¹ Tomimoto Kenkichi, “Tomimoto Kenkichi jiden [Tomimoto Kenkichi autobiography],” in *Mukei bunkazai kiroku, kōgei gijutsu hen 1: iro-e jiki, Tomimoto Kenkichi*, ed. Bunkachō. Tokyo: Dai-ichi Hōki Shuppan, 74.

Moyō are critically important to Tomimoto's discourse of originality due to the numerous essays he devoted to the subject;¹⁰² the writing by others on this discourse;¹⁰³ the publications of his *moyō* books; and the widespread circulation of his aphorism "never make a pattern from a pattern" ("*moyō yori moyō tsukuru bekarazu*" 模様より模様を造る可からず).¹⁰⁴ These factors have led Tomimoto to be generally referred to as a "*moyō* artist." This limiting assessment of his work was first challenged in 1995 when Kaneko Kenji proposed that Tomimoto's work should be evaluated primarily as being made with the intention of abstract sculpture, a concept that will be explored in more depth in Chapter Three.¹⁰⁵ But as Daichō Tomohiro has put forth, Tomimoto was both an "artist of *moyō*" and an "artist of form."¹⁰⁶

¹⁰² Tomimoto Kenkichi, "Moyō zakkan," *Bijutsu shinpō* 13, no. 12 (Oct. 1914): 8–9; "Watashi no moyō" *Kōgei* 22 (Oct. 1931), repr. in *Tomimoto Kenkichi chosakushū*, 559–61; "Moyō nitsuite no zadankai," *Kōgei* 37 (Jan. 1934); "Tōki no moyō," *Tanka kenkyū* 短歌研究 (Sept. 1935), repr. in *Tomimoto Kenkichi chosakushū*, 582–81; "Moyō to kōgei," *Seitō yoroku* (1940), repr. in *Tomimoto Kenkichi chosakushū*, 341–44.

¹⁰³ See Miyazaki Takahiro's analysis in Nara Kenritsu Bijutsukan, ed. *Tomimoto Kenkichi to Bānādo Rīchi: nichiei bunka kōryū no kakehashi: kaikan 25-nen tokubetsu ten* (Nara: Nara Kenritsu Bijutsukan, 1998). 6–23; *Minzoku geijutsu* 19 (March 2003): 134–143; Moriya Miho, "Tomimoto Kenkichi no moyō shūkan—gakan, gajō o chūshin ni," *Tōsetsu* 568 (July, 2000): 24–28; and Tsuchida Maki, *Samoyoeru kōgei Yanagi Sōetsu to kindai* (2007): 102–23.

¹⁰⁴ *Seitō yoroku* (Tokyo: Shōshinsha, 1940), 140, repr. in *Tomimoto Kenkichi chosakushū*, 372. In 1956 Imaizumi Atsuo quoted Tomimoto using the alternate phrasing *moyō kara moyō o tsukuru koto wa keshite shinai. Shizen kara moyō o tsukuru no da* 模様から模様をつくることは決してしない.自然から模様をつくるのだ [I do not make patterns from patterns. I make patterns from nature]. Tomimoto Kenkichi, quoted in Imaizumi, "Tomimoto Kenkichi no geijutsu," 48.

¹⁰⁵ Kaneko Kenji. *Gendai tōgei no zōkei shikō*, 197–237.

¹⁰⁶ Daichō Tomohiro, "Yamato jidai kōki ni okeru Tomimoto Kenkichi no geijutsu 'Tomimoto Kenkichi Moyōshū' (1924, 26, 27) o chushin ni," *Dezain riron* 44 (2004): 47–60.

It is useful also to consider how others described *moyō*, patterns, and designs. William Morris, in an 1881 lecture, spoke on “pattern-design” which he defined as “the ornamentation of a surface by work that is not imitative or historical, at any rate, not principally or essentially so.”¹⁰⁷ He emphasized that its purpose was for “the sake of beauty & richness, and not for the sake of imitation, or to tell a fact directly.”¹⁰⁸ Yanagi Sōetsu, the leader of the Japanese *Mingei* movement, defined a good pattern as “pregnant with beauty” expressing the “essence of the thing seen with his own heartbeat” as a “product of the imagination.”¹⁰⁹ At the same time, he claimed it “comes of Zen emptiness, of *mu* ‘void,’ of ‘thusness.’”¹¹⁰ Leach, in contrast, seemed less concerned with the originality of patterns, describing good patterns as showing a “common beauty...reduced to an ultimate simplicity of related and evocative elements [like] a folk dance, or melody, a few sounds, or movements, or colours.”¹¹¹ What these descriptions of patterns all shared in common, including Tomimoto’s, is the notion that a pattern should express the “essence” of something.

For all of his *moyō*, Tomimoto’s approach generally was the same—to take a sketch done from a natural thing, and then alter it. Thus, Tomimoto had satisfied the parameters of Morris’s credo that “your convention must be your own....at the least...you must make it your own by thoroughly understanding both the nature and the

¹⁰⁷ “Some Hints on Pattern-Designing. A Lecture Delivered by William Morris at the Working Men’s College, London, On December 10, 1881,” *Some Hints on Pattern-Designing* (London: Longmans, 1899), 1.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Yanagi Sōetsu, *The Unknown Craftsman* (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1972), 114.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ *Beyond East and West*, 59.

art you are dealing with.”¹¹² A seemingly straightforward design could embody a host of personal associations and reflections. In 1914 Tomimoto wrote “The things I make are all *moyō*” and that he used to copy *moyō* from old sources but decided that he must find them for himself and go on *moyō* searching trips.¹¹³ What is also critically important is that, as he wrote in 1931, “Of course *moyō* is not craft (*kōgei*) itself, but being a chief part of craft, one must never forget to keep *moyō* in mind. The objects that have forgotten *moyō* should be discarded.”¹¹⁴ *Moyō*, thus, were intrinsic to the way he conceptualized his ceramics.

Tomimoto published his first book of *moyō*, or *moyōshū*, in 1915. As its advertisement from May 1915 reveals (**Fig. 2.10**), it was printed in an edition of 70 books each containing 17 woodblock prints, three photographs, and a short introductory text. Select copies were “special editions” bearing the artist’s signature. In his introduction to the set, Tomimoto purported to have selected these from over 300 sketches done from nature and intended to serve as *moyō* for surfaces of his ceramics.¹¹⁵ However, very few of these motifs can be seen on contemporaneous or later ceramics, and the subjects range from isolated plant forms to ceramic forms to an “Ex Libris” stamp (**Fig. 2.11**); what links this variety is an intentionality of capturing the essence of an image. All of the printed images were reproductions of woodblock prints and the book itself was printed on thin two-layered brown paper from Japan but chosen, as Tomimoto described it, to

¹¹² William Morris, “Furnishing and Decorating a House” (1880), in Christin Poulson, ed. *William Morris on Art & Design* (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 113–4.

¹¹³ “Moyō zakkai,” *Bijutsu shinpō* 13, no. 12 (Oct. 1914): 8–9.

¹¹⁴ *Kōgei* 22 (1931), repr. in *Tomimoto Kenkichi chosakushū*, 560.

¹¹⁵ “Shinkan shōkai [Introducing a New Publication],” *Bijutsu shuhō* (Feb. 21, 1915): 10.

resemble the brown packing paper he had seen in England.¹¹⁶ The approach, like the landscape prints mentioned above, was to create a thick irregular outline and insert linear or graphic designs. In a short article on this *moyōshū* in *Bijutsu shuhō*, an anonymous reviewer wrote that Tomimoto's "unusual sensibility [was] needed now" and that one can acutely sense each *moyō*'s "expressive" and "purely artistic" qualities.¹¹⁷ As important as *moyō* are to Tomimoto's discourse of originality, and despite Tomimoto's claiming there was not a single *moyō* taken from another *moyō* in the first book,¹¹⁸ as Daichō Tomohiro has noted, the first leaves feature images that did not, in fact, rely on sketching from nature (*shizen shasei*), but rather reconfigured patterns based on old models (*tehon*).¹¹⁹

Who bought this book? It was likely patrons to the Tanakaya gallery, including other artists and his friends. Tanaka, who hosted exhibitions of Tomimoto's work at his gallery during this period, was its publisher and producer. As Tomimoto wrote, Tanaka "bought everything from the woodblocks to the paper and other things."¹²⁰ The images were likely among the thirty ceramic designs (*zuan*) shown at his exhibition at the Tanakaya gallery in 1914.¹²¹

¹¹⁶ "Watashi no hanga," in *Nihon hanga kyokai kashō* (1940), repr. in Shibuya Kuritsu Shōtō Bijutsukan, *Sōsaku hanga no tanjō*, 83.

¹¹⁷ "Shinkan shōkai" (Feb. 21, 1915): 10.

¹¹⁸ Tomimoto Kenkichi, quoted in Imaizumi, "Tomimoto Kenkichi no geijutsu," 48.

¹¹⁹ *Dezain riron* 44 (2004): 50.

¹²⁰ "Watashi no hanga," in *Sōsaku hanga no tanjō*, 83.

¹²¹ "Shinkan shōkai," *Bijutsu shuhō* (Feb. 21, 1915): 10. As noted in *Takujō* 1 (April 1914), originally the book was slated to be titled, instead of *Moyōshū dai ichi* 模様集第一, Tomimoto Kenkichi-shi *jikoku tōki zuanshū* 富本憲吉氏自刻陶器図案集.

Tomimoto continued assembling *moyō* for similar books published in 1924, 1926, and 1927. Each one had only twenty copies, but they were substantial, with each edition containing fifty leaves and a total of 192 figures ordered chronologically. Then in 1927 a more widely circulating *moyōshū* combined all three 1924–1927 editions into one. Tomimoto continued to publish *moyōshū* through 1957. Moriya Miho has outlined how Tomimoto’s *moyōshū* evolved over time; his 1910s books, he suggests, should be understood as paintings, not fully matured patterns to be used on ceramics surfaces, and it was not until after his 1922 trip to Korea that he applied such designs published in his *moyōshū* to the surface of his ceramics.¹²² *Moyō* were exhibited within art exhibitions, as was the case in his March 1914 exhibition at Mikasa 三笠 in Tokyo, where he showed ninety ceramic works and thirty sheets of ceramic designs.¹²³ However, reviews were mixed about including *moyō* with ceramics at exhibitions. One reviewer noted the dangers of mixing so many divergent genres in an exhibition. While Tomimoto was praised in an April 1914 *Bijutsu shinpō* review for his “fresh work” with “abundant individuality,” his woodcut *moyō* were described as not having the quality of high art.¹²⁴

Although Tomimoto’s graphic designs for books and magazines circulated widely, his *moyōshū* most profoundly encapsulated his vision for the union of art and design. These were not design or pattern books in the traditional sense of *moyōshū* made for designers to copy others’ *moyō*. Their limited number of copies produced suggests their

¹²² “Tomimoto Kenkichi no moyō shūkan—gakan, gajō o chūshin ni,” *Tōsetsu* (July 2000): 24–28.

¹²³ The exhibition was held March 5–14. *Bijutsu shinpō* 13, no. 6 (April 1914): 40.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

intended buyers were Tomimoto's art patrons and acquaintances. These images functioned more than as simply designs. Indeed, these early *moyōshū*, like other drawings or paintings, reflected Tomimoto's artistic interpretations of various forms; they were not highly wrought-out designs intended for mass production. For him, then, *moyō* encompassed his creative process and each could stand alone as an art object.

The Discourse of Originality, *Mingei*, and Early Ceramics

Gradually over the course of the 1910s, Tomimoto's focus turned to ceramics as his primary artistic medium, and he began to cease creating *sōsaku hanga* and Raku ceramics. This section addresses how, given the history of Japanese ceramics, Tomimoto grappled with the discourse and praxis of self-expression and originality as they applied to ceramics from the late 1910s through the 1930s. Fundamentally, there was a tension between the approaches of an "artist" versus a "craftsman." Given Japan's rich ceramics history, could a modern "artist" develop the technical acumen to successfully create ceramic vessels worthy of recognition? Or, engaged in the creation of functional vessels, could a "craftsman" make original work that appealed to modernist values? Before we analyze the modernist manipulations of ceramics form and surface in Chapters Three and Four, let us consider the early stages in the development of Tomimoto's modernist discourse on ceramics. One question is of particular concern given its centrality to modernism: How did Tomimoto grapple with expressing originality in his ceramics?

As the above sections have outlined, originality was critically important to Tomimoto's early endeavors in a variety of mediums, but the iterations of this view

towards ceramics had their own dimensions. As ceramics historian Naitō Tadashi pointed out in 1956, “the world of ceramics is different than other branches of art” in terms of copying—with modern ceramists declaring themselves as “*geijutsuka*” who copied old *moyō*—but such was not the case with Tomimoto.¹²⁵ Tomimoto claimed repeatedly that one should not look too closely, lest one be influenced too heavily, at old ceramics. The collector and scholar of Korean ceramics, Asakawa Noritaka (浅川伯教, 1884–1964), said of him, “he is continually saying that artists must be careful when looking at a lot of old, good things.”¹²⁶ Tomimoto went as far as blaming the lack of the rise of modern ceramics to the wanderlust “artists and admirers, everyone,” had in “proudly embracing the dead things buried in the muddy sea of antiques.”¹²⁷ This was important to proclaim in the case of ceramics, differentiated from other mediums, due to the long history of the valuing of copying in Japan—particularly the copying of *moyō*—as discussed above.

In order for Tomimoto to receive evaluation of his ceramics as modern art by the critics, historians, and connoisseurs who viewed his work, it was necessary for him to differentiate himself as an artist. Tomimoto wrote, “Craftsmen (*shokunin*) make imitations, and are not artists (*geijutsuka*).”¹²⁸ According to his former assistant Kondō Yūzō, Tomimoto claimed that *shokunin* possessed more skill than artists, but artistically

¹²⁵ Naitō Tadashi, “Sakuhin to sakuhin o tsujite mita Tomimoto-san,” *Tōsetsu* 36 (March 1956): 82.

¹²⁶ Asakawa Noritaka, “Tomimoto Kenkichi-shi no yōgei,” *Atorie* 2, no. 8 (Aug. 1925): 140.

¹²⁷ *Seitō yoroku* (1940), repr. in Kida Takuya, “Tomimoto Kenkichi ‘Iro-e kinginsai shida mon hakkaku kazari bako,’” *Gendai no me* 506 (Oct./Nov. 1997): 16.

¹²⁸ *Iro-e jiki* (1969), repr. in Ibid.

they had much learning they needed to do.¹²⁹ Leach was in unison: “By reason of my training and inclination I have approached pottery primarily as an artist and secondarily as a craftsman.”¹³⁰ An overt way Tomimoto expressed his artistic authorship was through his signature “Tomi,” meaning riches and wealth, on the base of his ceramics works which he slightly altered in form every year starting in 1923. Also, Tomimoto generally priced his wares as art, not everyday tableware, from the time of their earliest exhibitions. Tomimoto recounted that at his October 1915 exhibition in Osaka at Mitsukoshi, with Tsuda Seifu (津田青楓, 1880–1978), that he sold tea cups (*guinomi*) for 80 *sen* each before realizing that porcelain tea cups were priced at the time at just 25 *sen* in Kyoto, and that others criticized him for this.¹³¹

An artist could also call attention to his artistic ability on the surfaces of vessels, since surface decoration did not necessarily require the high level of skills of a craftsman. A focus on the surface freed the artist from the restraints of the technical, and, as with *sōsaku hanga*, one could channel one’s “originary naiveté.” But in reality, in order to become an artist working primarily in clay, Tomimoto needed to develop a new system of ceramics fabrication and firing in order to achieve the results he desired. It was not enough to find an old umbrella spoke and use it to carve the top of a box, as he had done for *sōsaku hanga*. He needed advanced technical skills to be able to execute ceramics that

¹²⁹ Kondō Yūzō, in “Tomimoto Kenkichi sensei o omou,” *Tōsetsu* 125 (Aug. 1963): 54.

¹³⁰ Letter from Bernard Leach to Slater, September 1935, rpt. in Oliver Watson, “Bernard Leach: Rewriting a Life,” in Margaret Coates, ed., *Pioneers of Modern Craft* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), 30.

¹³¹ Tomimoto Kenkichi, “Zadankai, Tomimoto Kenkichi no gojūnen, sakutō gojūnen ten o kinen shite,” *Mingei techō* (Aug. 1961): 5.

expressed the values he desired, values that vacillated during the 1910s to 1930s from those associated with functional ware to, increasingly, objects created primarily for display.

On the other hand, Tomimoto claimed, skill was necessary in order to execute a work with one's own hands, an aspect intrinsic to the autonomous modernist embrace of the total work of art. Yamada Tetsu remembered Tomimoto saying that "people called craftsmen who do not do their own work are exactly like a head of a company, and those people should not exist as artists," and he went on to quote Tomimoto's remark, "If you look at these hands you will be able to see clearly whether I am an artist or not."¹³²

Tomimoto did, in fact, hire assistants, but they were not formally acknowledged as part of the production of ceramics works.¹³³ By the later years, Tomimoto came to rely on his university students as assistants.¹³⁴ He received criticism for the employment of craftsmen (*kōjin* 工人) in a review of his spring 1914 show at Mikasa: "The ceramic skills, compared to last year, have generally improved, but within [the exhibit] there are things that seem like they were fabricated by craftsmen, and it was unfortunate to find

¹³² Yamada Tetsu, in "Tomimoto Kenkichi sensei o omou," 53.

¹³³ For a list of assistants, students, and affiliates see Appendix C. Kondō Yūzō (近藤雄三/ 悠三, 1902–1985) was one of Tomimoto's earliest assistants starting in 1919 for about three years. Kondō Yūzō's remarks about this period are recorded in the "Tomimoto Kenkichi sensei o omou" roundtable discussion, *Tōsetsu* 125 (Aug. 1963): 53.

¹³⁴ Koyama Kihei recounted these experiences in "Kōbō de mananda koto," in *Tomimoto Kenkichi zenshū*, ed. Inui Yoshiaki (Tokyo: Shōgakkan, 1995), 140. Koyama stated that, among other work, he molded porcelain clay for boxes.

things with a cold, mechanical form.”¹³⁵ Tomimoto’s published texts, in contrast, suggested that he made “creative ceramics” as he had made “creative prints.”

Tomimoto’s ideas about originality as applied to ceramics were clarified by his engagement with, and at time vehement criticism of, the *Mingei* (folk craft) movement. As previously noted, Yanagi Sōetsu led this movement, promoting the preservation and exhibition of “art of the people,” beginning in the 1920s. Opposed to the development of individual craft which he described as “made by a few, for a few, at a high price,” Yanagi praised folk craft “unselfconsciously hand-made, and unsigned, for the people by the people, cheaply and in quantity, as, for example, the Gothic crafts, the best work being done under the Medieval guild system.”¹³⁶ *Mingei* theory is a critically important area of inquiry to address within Tomimoto’s discourse of originality since for many scholars, like Yuko Kikuchi, it “has remained the factor which underpins the modern philosophy of studio crafts both in Japan and Britain.”¹³⁷

Tomimoto’s involvement with the *Mingei* group began early, through his friendships with various members of the Shirakaba group.¹³⁸ Bernard Leach has been credited with “bringing together” Yanagi, Tomimoto and Hamada, three of the core

¹³⁵ *Bijutsu shinpō* 13, no. 6 (April 1914): 40.

¹³⁶ *Yanagi Sōetsu zenshū* vol. 8 (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1981), 211, repr. in Yuko Kikuchi, “A Japanese William Morris,” 42.

¹³⁷ *Japanese Modernisation and Mingei Theory*, 206.

¹³⁸ Tomimoto wrote the article “Richō no suiteki [Korean water droppers],” in *Shirakaba* 13, no. 9, Sept. 1922, and designed covers and frontispieces for *Shirakaba* issues in June, July and August 1923.

members of the initial *Mingei* group.¹³⁹ It is generally acknowledged that in 1925 Hamada Shōji, Kawai Kanjirō, and Yanagi Sōetsu formed the word “*Mingei*” 民藝 from existing terms with similar meanings, *minshūteki kōgei* 民衆的工藝 and *minkan kōgei* 民間工藝. In April of 1926, Hamada, Kawai, Yanagi, and Tomimoto together wrote the Japan Mingei Art Museum Establishment Prospectus, and the Mingeikan, or Japan Folk Crafts Museum, was built in 1936.¹⁴⁰ *Mingei* theory began to circulate widely in print from April 1927 to January 1928 in the magazine *Daichōwa* 大調和. Then from 1931 until 1951, the magazine *Kōgei* devoted 120 issues to the interests of *Mingei* aficionados.

Other than his involvement with the conception of the Mingeikan and his contributions to *Mingei* journals, Tomimoto was involved with other *Mingei* projects as well. He sold his ceramics with other *Mingei* group artists at the store Takumi, located in the Ginza district of Tokyo. A pamphlet announcing the opening of the store in December, 1933, declares its goals of selling *Mingei* goods from around the country that were unavailable in any other shops; it is signed by Tomimoto as well as key movement participants Yanagi, Hamada, and Kawai, as well as oil painter Umehara Ryūzaburō. Tomimoto’s name also appears in the meeting notes circulated on May 15, 1934, for the organization of that fall’s Exhibition of Modern Mingei at the Mitsukoshi department store. He was among five men charged with overseeing its preparation.¹⁴¹

¹³⁹ Tomana Makoto, “Craft Movements in Japan 1920s–1945,” in *Nihon kōgei no seishunki 1920s–1945* (Hokkaido Museum of Modern Art: 1996), 21.

¹⁴⁰ “Nihon mingei bijutsukan setsuritsu shuisho” 日本民藝美術館設立趣意書

¹⁴¹ The exhibition name was Gendai mingei ni kan suru tenran 現代民藝に関する展覧 [Exhibition of works related to modern mingei]. BLA no. 2221, CSC.

In the 1920s and 1930s, Tomimoto's ceramics were generally praised by Yanagi. In 1927, Yanagi wrote an article in the *Asahi shimbun* expressing admiration for Tomimoto's pattern book (*moyōshū*). He wrote that it exhibited woodcuts with a "brilliant individuality" and one of the images demonstrated a "surprising power in its brush movement, with unparalleled beauty."¹⁴² However, the description of Tomimoto's work in Yanagi's 1927 landmark book *Kōgei no michi* (The way of craft) hinted at Tomimoto's incompatibility with the *Mingei* movement. Yanagi subtly suggested that Tomimoto should paint, not engage in craft work: "In terms of the maker's painterly elements, his individuality is freely, abundantly expressed. Restricting freedom in numerous ways are the craft materials and the physical manufacturing process. There are few cases of Tomimoto's crafts surpassing his paintings."¹⁴³

As Yuko Kikuchi has established, Tomimoto's contributions to the development of *Mingei* theory were significant and have tended to be overshadowed by those of Yanagi due to the later tensions perceived between the two men.¹⁴⁴ Several scholars in recent years, in deconstruction of *Mingei* theories and history, have resurrected Tomimoto's central place in the movement's earliest history.¹⁴⁵ Tomimoto first put forth

¹⁴² *Asahi shimbun*, February 5, 1927.

¹⁴³ *Kōgei no michi* (1927), repr. in *Yanagi Sōetsu zenshū* 8 (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1981), 166.

¹⁴⁴ In many publications associated with the Mingeikan, particularly in English language materials, mention of Tomimoto's early participation in the movement is scant in comparison to discussion of Hamada, Kawai and Leach's roles. See, for example, Teiko Utsumi's "Mingei and the Life of Sōetsu Yanagi," *Studio Potter* 25, no. 1 (Dec. 1996): 3–7.

¹⁴⁵ Kikuchi, in particular, has shed light on Tomimoto's overlooked role in the movement and the pivotal role he played in not only praising folk arts but introducing William Morris, as designer, to the Japanese audience. Also see Yanagita Takashi "Tomimoto Kenkichi to mingei," *Seitan 120-nen Tomimoto Kenkichi ten* (2006), 24–28, and Brandt, *Kingdom of Beauty*.

a set of remarks on folk arts in a 1913 letter published in *Bijutsu shinpō*. In this letter, he responded to an article published the previous month that critiqued a painting by his friend Minami Kunzō. Writing under the moniker Kuza 久左, Tomimoto chided the critic for describing the vessel in Minami's composition as bearing a "Western pattern."

Tomimoto corrected the term for describing the vessel as a *tokkuri* (sake bottle) and explained that its particular form was still used by farmers in outlying areas.

Understanding the sake bottle as folk craft, he went on to plead, "I would like for people now to directly deal with what is called *minkan* [people's] art.... Not only ceramics, but lacquer, wood, and other mediums need to be studied as people's art."¹⁴⁶ Then in May of 1914, he praised what he termed *minkan geijutsu* 民間芸術 (people's art), remarking, "The peasants (*hyakushō*) I have seen are splendid artists (*bijutsuka*)."¹⁴⁷

As mentioned in Chapter One, starting in 1929 Tomimoto travelled to regional kilns, endeavors in which he negotiated between the artistry of the "common people" and individualistic self-expression. Although he described them as, at least in part, study trips to learn from local ceramists, another purpose was to execute surface decoration on pre-formed vessels and to sell them inexpensively. He expressed a desire to engage in this pursuit as early as 1916 when he stated he wished to make "cheap ceramics."¹⁴⁸ In 1925,

¹⁴⁶ "Yamato no Ando Kuza kun yori raishin no issetsu 大和安堵久左君より來信の一節 [A passage from the response by Mr. Kuza of Ando, Yamato]," *Bijutsu shinpō* 12, no. 3 (Jan. 1913): 35.

¹⁴⁷ "Hyakushōka no hanashi 百姓家の話 [Talk of peasants]," *Geibi* 1, no. 1 (May 1914): 7–16. *Hyakushō* conveys the meaning of farmer, peasant, or laborer.

¹⁴⁸ Karasawa Masahiro, "Tomimoto Kenkichi to ryōsan tōki ni tsuite," *Tōsetsu* 586 (Jan. 2002): 35.

collector Asawaka Noritaka stated that Tomimoto's "original wish was to make a lot of good, cheap things, and have them used in general everyday life."¹⁴⁹ Thus, it appears that Tomimoto's first ceramics works were sold at a relatively high price, as mentioned above, but in the 1920s he began to seek out ways to engage in the production of more inexpensive ceramics tableware that could supplement his creation of other types of ceramics.

Tomimoto wrote in 1930, "At least once a year I would visit one of the main pottery districts around the country and fire some pots. I would not throw the pots myself but choose my favorite shapes from among the local bodies, using the clay, firing techniques and glazes unique to the area, the only freedom of expression I would allow myself being in the decoration."¹⁵⁰ Although form was a primary concern in his discourse, and in his Korean-style white porcelain jars, he lacked the skills to execute tableware forms as mass production. While he did create some works on the ceramic wheel himself during these periods of work, his authorship of these works came about mainly through his manipulations of surface, not form.

At Shigaraki in the spring of 1929, he used plaster molds and pre-formed *hibachi* and teapots (*dobin*).¹⁵¹ Then in 1930 he travelled to several kilns in Kyushu as well as Mashiko. He worked for two winter months in 1930 at the Fukkōgama and Gagyūgama kilns in and near Hasami, Kyushu, mass-production centers known for their stamped blue

¹⁴⁹ Asakawa Noritaka, "Tomimoto Kenkichi-shi no yōgei," *Atorie* 2, no. 8 (Aug. 1925): 142.

¹⁵⁰ "Hizen nakao-san no tōhen [Pot shards discovered at Nakaosan, Hizen]," *Bijutsu shinron* 5, no. 8 (1930): 124, trans. by Gavin Frew in Karasawa, Masahiro, et al., *Daily Vessels by Kenkichi Tomimoto* (Tokyo: National Museum of Modern Art, 2004), 17.

¹⁵¹ Tomimoto Kenkichi, "Hizen nakao-san no tōhen," 124.

decoration.¹⁵² A selection of extant Fukkōgama porcelain tableware from the era Tomimoto worked there demonstrates a range of forms and surfaces for everyday wares (**Fig. 2.12**). At Fukkōgama, he fabricated porcelain vessels, studied gum stamp techniques, and painted fluid abbreviated floral designs using *sometsuke* and *aka-e* (red overglaze painting) on ready-made inexpensive porcelain tableware.¹⁵³ An example is a set of side dishes (*mukozuke*) painted with an abbreviated cobalt design of knotweed (**Fig. 2.13**). Their regular shapes suggest they were fabricated with molds, at least partially. Tomimoto applied a sparse, economical *moyō* not prominent in his later work, but undoubtedly derived from sketches. Thus, although the form was entirely unoriginal, Tomimoto's surface expression was executed by only the artist. At each of these kilns, he primarily painted blue decoration on pre-made porcelain tableware, though he also threw some vase forms on the wheel and created works on paper, too, during these sojourns.

Tomimoto continued to decorate mass-produced wares in April, 1930, at Sakuma Fukujirō's (佐久間福次郎) kiln in Mashiko.¹⁵⁴ The kiln was known for its kitchen wares,

¹⁵² He travelled to Nagasaki with his wife and children. See Tomimoto Kenkichi, "Nagasaki nikki" (Feb. 28, 1930), repr. in *Seitō yoroku*, 207, and Tomimoto, "Hizen nakao-san no tōhen," 124. Tomimoto's wife and children stayed in Kōeiji 光永寺 temple while Tomimoto alone went to the potteries. Gagyūgama's name is traced to a visit to the kiln by the lord of the Hirado clan, Chinshin Matsuura, who thought the kiln on the hill resembled a lying cow (*gagyū*). See "Gagyū gama: Legendary Old Pottery Revived" (Gagyū Tōgei Co., Ltd., n.d.). The kiln continues today with production led by the 13th generation head, Yokoishi Gagyū (横石臥牛, b. 1925). See Tōru Enamoto et al., *Gendai no nihon tōgei Kyushu II* (Kyoto: Tankōsha, 1989), 86–89. The Fukkōgama kiln is no longer extant, but the studio buildings remain and are used as a gift shop and art gallery.

¹⁵³ The person who introduced him to Hasami was Imanishi Hiroki 今西洋. See Tomimoto, "Hizen nakao-san no tōhen," 125.

¹⁵⁴ Mashikomachi Bunka no Machizukuri Jikkō Iinkai, ed., *Sakuma Tōtaro ten: Mingei Mashiko o kizuuta mō hitori no tōgeika* (Mashiko: Mashikomachi Bunka no Machizukuri Jikkō Iinkai,

and other ceramists affiliated with the *Mingei* group had worked there, too.¹⁵⁵ Hamada Shōji had first come to the Sakuma kiln to produce work in 1924 after returning from England.¹⁵⁶ Others who worked there included Bernard Leach, Kawai Kanjirō and print artist Munakata Shikō (棟方志功, 1903–75).¹⁵⁷ At the Sakuma kiln, Tomimoto painted designs in warm iron underglaze pigment on large stoneware storage pots.

In 1932, Tomimoto travelled to Seto, specifically Shinano village, followed by a 1934 return visit to Shinano and neighboring Akatsu.¹⁵⁸ Karasawa Masahiro has described Tomimoto's goals there as using local materials to apply *moyō* while “thinking about the strong ceramics made by old pottery families.”¹⁵⁹ Works made there reflect the special features of Seto wares, namely the slip-trailing (*itchin* イッチン) technique of embellishing the surface of reddish-brown earthenware (*shudei* 朱泥). As at the Hasami kilns, he worked quickly, brushing his original designs on the surfaces of up to 300 mid-sized plates per day.¹⁶⁰

2000), 45. Sakuma's eldest son, Tōtarō (藤太郎, 1900–1976), who became close to Hamada Shōji in 1924 when they worked together at the Sakuma studio, eventually became an important Mashiko representative of the *Mingei* group, selling at the Tokyo *Mingei* store Takumi, and was a member of the Tochigi branch of the *Mingei* Kyōkai.

¹⁵⁵ Mashiko's status as a center for pottery production is traceable only to 1853 when Ōtsuka Keisaburo (大塚啓三郎) founded his pottery there.

¹⁵⁶ Hiroshi Mizuo, *Sakuma Tōtarō, Gendai no tōgei* 15 (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1976), 133.

¹⁵⁷ Mashikomachi Bunka no Machizukuri Jikkō Iinkai, ed., *Sakuma Tōtarō ten: Mingei Mashiko o kizuuta mō hitori no tōgeika*, 5–37.

¹⁵⁸ 品野 and 赤津. See Tomimoto's articles on Shinano in *Kōgei* 23 (1932) and on Akatsu in *Tōei* 11, no. 4. The 2001 catalogue *Tomimoto Kenkichi to Seto* exposed for the first time the high number of works he made there (Seto-shi rekishi minzoku shiryōkan, 2001).

¹⁵⁹ Karasawa, “Tomimoto Kenkichi to ryōsan tōki ni tsuite,” 36.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid. The ceramic color of *shudei* was also referred to as *akaraku* 赤楽 although it is not Raku in the traditional sense of the term.

His experiences at all of these kilns reveal the complexity of *Mingei* values. On one hand, these experiences would have been for Tomimimoto like traveling back in time to a lost Japan. He remarked that the *Mingei* group would be happy to know that at the Kihara kiln of Hizen in Kyushu he witnessed a whole family—two brothers, their wives, a grandmother, and five or six children—all working together on various aspects of ceramics production by the fireside on clay floors under a thatch roof.¹⁶¹ But Tomimimoto's activities were not that of an unknown craftsman. The wares he produced at these kilns, though purportedly intended to be inexpensive, were not necessarily sold at low prices. For example, objects decorated at the Hasami, Gagyūgama, and Mashiko kilns comprised the pieces sold in May 1930 at a solo exhibition at the Kyūkyodo store in Ginza.¹⁶² Tomimimoto lamented that the medium-sized kitchen plates he sold there for 50 *sen* each were re-sold the following year as “a type of antiques” for 40 or 50 yen each.¹⁶³

Other ceramics, too, that he made with the stated intention of selling at low prices later sold at urban galleries and were displayed at major exhibitions. The Beaux Arts Gallery exhibition in London of May 1931 featured some of the Hasami porcelain tableware he decorated in 1930, and the Victoria and Albert Museum acquired one of the plates as representative of his painting prowess.¹⁶⁴ What this reveals is the fluidity of value assessment—within the art gallery and museum context, a dish's value was

¹⁶¹ “Hizen Kiharagama ryokō,” *Ninjō chiri* 1, no. 2 (Feb. 1933): 127.

¹⁶² Kyūkyodo 鳩居堂, first established in Kyoto in 1663 and then on Chūō dōri in Ginza in 1880, is a store specializing in handmade goods such as incense, paper, and other stationary items.

¹⁶³ “Zuan ni kan suru kōgeika no jikaku to hansei [A craftperson's awareness and reflection on design],” *Bi to kōgei* 2, no. 3 (Oct. 1947), repr. in *Tomimoto Kenkichi chosakushū*, 614.

¹⁶⁴ This *sometsuke* plate (CIRC. 148-1931), was acquired for 7 pounds. Unpublished memo, Victoria and Albert Museum archives.

transformed. The fact that Tomimoto was responsible for only the decoration of most of these works suggests that he might have taken to heart Yanagi's recommendation that he should pursue the painting, not the formal execution, of ceramics. The Victoria and Albert Museum's acquisition of the dish demonstrated that the artistic value of the work did not rely on his execution of its form.

In the 1930s, just as the *Mingei* group was gaining significant ground and even though he was actively pursuing his work in regional kilns, Tomimoto began to exhibit ambivalence toward *Mingei* ideology. Mizusawa Sumio owned a small *Mingei* goods store in Tokyo in which he exhibited Tomimoto's work in 1931, and Mizusawa asked Tomimoto to carve a sign for the shop. Tomimoto refused to carve the word "*Mingei*" onto the sign. Mizusawa explained that Tomimoto was "not repulsed" by "*Mingei*'s fundamental spirit," but he questioned the prevailing attitudes of the group and its "cult-like existence."¹⁶⁵ Tomimoto, he remarked, was in pursuit of a "path of originality."¹⁶⁶

Tomimoto is widely acknowledged amongst contemporary scholars and ceramists for critiquing several aspects of *Mingei* ideology.¹⁶⁷ First of all, he rejected the notion that modern craftsmen should necessarily be producing "*Mingei*."¹⁶⁸ He asserted that machines were necessary in the modern age, and for people to not use them was to not

¹⁶⁵ "Tomimoto jiki to watashi," *Sansai* 146 (Jan. 1962): 35. This "cult-like" existence referred to was the following that Yanagi achieved among members of the group.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ See Kikuchi, *Japanese Modernisation and Mingei Theory*, 211–14.

¹⁶⁸ As Tomimoto recounted in a 1960 letter to Leach, "From first I thought *Mingei* is one of parts of decorative arts but before [Yanagi] said decorative work must all be *Mingei*. Now he changed a little but about twenty years ago when *Mingei* started, I refused to become member of *Mingei*." February 17, 1960, BLA no. 631, CSC.

acknowledge the age in which they lived. He criticized the hypocrisy of a formally educated man assuming the air of an anonymous craftsman. Further, he critiqued Yanagi's haphazard but rigid identification of particular objects as "folk crafts" according to his personal aesthetic vision.¹⁶⁹ But, in some ways, Tomimoto remained associated with the *Mingei* group even in the postwar period.¹⁷⁰ Director of the National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo, Imaizumi Atsuo (今泉篤男, 1902–1984) wrote in 1956, "I am against the opinion that Tomimoto's recent work is completely dissimilar to the *Mingei* line...I think there is a feeling in the work in common with the roots and claims of the *Mingei* school. However, Tomimoto ... detests being tied to *Mingei* ideas.... In a lofty sense, it is because he is a free person."¹⁷¹

Conclusion

As this chapter has shown, Tomimoto's early prints, design, and ceramics were part of the late Meiji and Taishō cultural paradigm that emphasized subjective expression, above all. Divisions between "craft" and "art" were not pervasive, either in

¹⁶⁹ In 1929, Tomimoto wrote to Yanagi: "I would like to talk about my present opinion. It is useless to bring Windsor chairs back to Japan. Such antique things only amuse the bourgeois and are no use to general society." Unpublished letter to Yanagi in Japanese dated Dec. 23, 1919, trans. and repr. in Kikuchi, *Japanese Modernisation and Mingei Theory*, 212.

¹⁷⁰ Mizuo Hiroshi, former secretary to Leach and Chairman of the Japan Folk Craft Association (Nihon Mingei Kyōkai), remarked that because Leach was consistently involved in the lives of Yanagi and Tomimoto, he provided a stabilizing presence even though Yanagi and Tomimoto had disagreements. In 1961, the Ōhara Museum of Art in Kurashiki inaugurated a crafts section of the museum within a set of *kura*-like buildings designed by Serizawa Keisuke. The galleries permanently exhibit the works of Hamada, Kawai, Leach, and Tomimoto. Tomimoto attended its opening, as did Yanagi. Mizuo Hiroshi, in discussion with the author, February 24, 2010.

¹⁷¹ "Tomimoto Kenkichi no geijutsu," 38.

Tomimoto's approach to mediums or their display in galleries. All of these mediums were created and displayed, with equivalency, as art. Tomimoto's assertion of artistic authorship relied on his direct observations of nature through *shasei* and the proliferation of these images as *moyō*. As we have established, in many ways Tomimoto relied on amateurism as the overarching mode of educating himself about these mediums, and this carried on in his studio praxis and identification as an artist. This amateurism was encouraged by two sources: the long history of literati culture in Japan and the "originary naiveté" of modernism.

Tomimoto's discourse of originality can be regarded in many ways as parallel to the ideas expressed by men like Takamura Kōtarō and Natsume Sōseki. Further, Tomimoto looked to William Morris's ideals of artistic imagination and originality as inspirations for his design work. But it was Tomimoto's direct grappling with the creative process that allowed him to develop his discourse of originality as it applied to ceramics. When he turned to ceramics decoration in regional kilns, he used his original *moyō* as surface designs and began to experience some of the paradoxes of *Mingei* ideology. Namely, he identified the incompatibility between his desire, on one hand, for "freedom" and the expression of "personality," and, on the other, his interest in creating inexpensive mass-produced tableware. Through these experiences, and through his critiques of Yanagi Sōetsu's *Mingei* ideology, Tomimoto's principles for the creation of original ceramics as art became more refined.

Tomimoto's embrace of originality for craft, design and art works contributed to the emergence of ceramics—we might say the resurrection of ceramics—as a form of art

considered worthy of consideration and display at the most prominent national art exhibitions, the Kokuten and Teiten, in 1927 (to be discussed in Chapter Five). As we have seen, all of the early mediums he engaged in, from works on paper to ceramics, encouraged appreciation of their artistic qualities via optical perception, above all. The tension between surface and form and the assertion of authorship via one or the other would be a longstanding concern throughout his life.

CHAPTER THREE: The Ceramic Vessel as Image and Form

Introduction

In the histories of twentieth-century Japanese ceramics, Yagi Kazuo's (八木一夫 1918–1979) 1954 sculpture *Mr. Samsa's Walk* (**Fig. 3.1**) often receives recognition for inaugurating the sculptural turn in modern Japanese ceramics. The sculpture, a reference to the protagonist Gregor Samsa in Franz Kafka's 1915 novel *Metamorphosis*, releases the thrown ceramic vessel from the burden of functionality and towards the ceramic sculptural realm it inaugurated, *obuje*.¹ *Mr. Samsa's Walk* revolutionized the Japanese ceramic vessel, removing it from the ceramics wheel and creating a new axis through a tilt of its floor. Yet, the manipulation of the ceramic vessel into artistic image and form—in other words, *bijutsu*—was negotiated decades earlier by Tomimoto. His *hakuji tsubo* (porcelain jar forms) may appear to be straightforward recreations of Korean Joseon dynasty (1392–1910) jars, but they embody Japanese modernist ceramics in several important ways. And even before the creation of those forms, Tomimoto had begun to define the vessel as an abstract image or *moyō*.

¹ It was in 1954 that the term “*obuje*,” from the French *objet*, first appeared in print, in the Dec. 1954 issue of *Bijutsu techō*, to refer to the ceramic sculpture of Yagi Kazuo. Members of the Sōdeisha group established in 1948 and led by Yagi, however, would not have described Tomimoto's ceramics as *obuje* nor included Tomimoto in their collective pursuits because of his stature as an Important Intangible Cultural Property. See Cort and Winther-Tamaki, *Isamu Noguchi and Modern Japanese Ceramics: A Close Embrace of the Earth*, 167–71, and Bert Winther-Tamaki, “Yagi Kazuo: The Admission of the Nonfunctional Object into the Japanese Pottery World,” *Journal of Design History* 12, no. 2 (1999): 123–41. Yagi wrote about Tomimoto in “Tomimoto-san no koto [About Mr. Tomimoto],” *Kokukoku no honō* 刻々の炎 [Steady flame] (Kyoto: Shinshindō Shuppan, 1981), 154.

This chapter centers on Tomimoto's conceptions of the vessel. This seemingly simple topic deserves close consideration since it is central to the larger question of how modern ceramics were epistemologically reconfigured as art. The painted images of vessels Tomimoto created suggest meaning beyond still life compositions; they embody self-reflexive iterations of the ceramic vessel as a subject of isolation, inquiry, and suggestion. The process of vessel image-making brought to the forefront two concepts: formal properties of the vessel and the vessel as transmitter of images. Objects at the same time abstract, sculptural, and functional produced an equivalency of craft with art through form. The form which best attained the essential vessel-ness of the vessel was, within Tomimoto's oeuvre, the *hakuji tsubo*. Conceiving of a vessel as both image and form facilitated ceramics conforming to the demands of modernism in Japan.

Where was the prototype for such a vessel to be found? As Kida Takuya has recently argued, it was located in Asia, and many Japanese craftspeople in the 1920s and 1930s searched for an "alternative version of the modern" located in Asia, not the West.² Specifically, Tomimoto's ideal vessel form was Korean. Yanagi Sōetsu, the founder of the *Mingei* movement, had been enamored most by European arts in the 1910s, but in the 1920s, like Tomimoto, his interests shifted to Japanese and Korean folk craft. "Locating the modern" in East Asia, for Tomimoto especially, was a complex process. As the previous chapter has demonstrated, Tomimoto vacillated between a desire to make inexpensive craft for everyday use versus a compulsion to exert his authority as an

² "Asia as Dreamed by Craftspeople: 'Asianist' Craft Arts," in National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo, *Japanese Crossing Borders—Asia as Dreamed by Craftspeople, 1910s–1945* (Tokyo: Crafts Gallery, National Museum of Modern Art, 2012), 144.

autonomous artist. Ultimately, his “ceramics for appreciation,” as he termed them, would triumph over his mass-produced work in terms of his overall focus as an artist. Thus, locating the modern in Asia, for Tomimoto, meant testing and ultimately rejecting pre-modern modes of craft *production*, but embracing the *forms* of Joseon *hakuji* porcelain as works of art. As this chapter will outline, the Joseon *hakuji tsubo*, Tomimoto asserted, possessed the same formal and symbolic artistic values as sculpture by the French artist Aristide Maillol (1861–1944).

Yuko Kikuchi and Kim Brandt’s analyses of early twentieth century Japanese collectors’ interests in Korean ceramics have laid important foundations for our understanding of the role Joseon ceramics played in this period of modern craft history.³ Additionally, Kaneko Kenji’s treatise on Tomimoto’s “three-dimensional beauty” (*rittai no bijutsu*) offers a polemic touchstone for Tomimoto’s discourse on form.⁴ Despite these scholarly contributions, and also considering others who have acknowledged Tomimoto’s stylistic inheritances from Joseon porcelain, heretofore there has been no systematic deconstruction of the complex motivations and mechanisms at play in Tomimoto’s confluences of antique Korean ceramics with modernist values.

³ See Kikuchi, *Japanese Modernisation and Mingei Theory*, Brandt, *Kingdom of Beauty*, and Brandt, “Objects of Desire: Japanese Collectors and Colonial Korea,” *Positions: East Asia Cultures Critique* 8, no. 3 (2000): 711–46.

⁴ Kaneko Kenji, *Gendai tōgei no zōkei shikō*, 2001.

Imaging the Vessel

Upon his establishment of the Ando-mura ceramics studio, and continuing after he and his family moved to Tokyo in 1926, Tomimoto fabricated ceramic vessels while also imaging them in two dimensions in prints and photography, often in collaborative processes. These images revealed important conceptual underpinnings related to Tomimoto's vision for ceramics as art. They isolated the ceramic vessel's formal properties of profile, surface, and scale so that these aspects could be seen as essential to its meaning. In doing so, these images encouraged an abstraction of the vessel and divorcing of the vessel from its utilitarian *raison d'être*.

As discussed in Chapter Two, Tomimoto's landscape sketches and prints clearly align with the ethos of the early creative print movement in Japan, but a significant number of these early prints, particularly those circulating in magazines and reproduced in *moyōshū*, also comprised images of ceramic vessels. According to Tomimoto, his second woodblock print ever created, probably in 1910, was "a color printing of an image of a ceramics piece."⁵ He explained that it was "a Devonshire pot of southern England, a tin production center...Lead was used in its glaze. I bought this ceramic milk pitcher for five or six yen and made it a woodblock print."⁶ An extant print of a small milk pot might be the print to which he refers (**Fig. 3.2**). The impetus to produce a print of an everyday vessel such as this could have stemmed from the sketching of objects he was doing at this time at the Victoria and Albert Museum (see Chapter One). Nishiyama Junko has

⁵ "Watashi no hanga," (1940), repr. in *Sōsaku hanga no tanjō* (Tokyo: Shibuya Kuritsu Shōtō Bijutsukan, 1999), 83.

⁶ Ibid.

postulated that it was Tomimoto's obsessive sketching of objects there that led to his images of ceramic vessels in prints, since the images stayed in his mind after he returned to Japan.⁷ But looking at the sketches from England shows that only a portion consisted of ceramic vessels, and they ranged greatly, being not only craft works, but also oil paintings.

Most of Tomimoto's prints of ceramic pots feature each as a singular motif in monochrome ink printed with rough edges. The 1911 print *Passing the scholar's examination jar* (*Tōka tsubo zu* 登科壺図, **Fig. 3.3**) is such an example.⁸ The two upper register characters refer to a jar common in China used to store rice, potato liquor or preserved duck eggs.⁹ Asymmetrical with uneven edges, the vessel is isolated in the center of an otherwise blank composition. Like the landscape prints, it is likely this print was also a transmission of a seen object. The model appears to have been a late Ming or early Qing Cizhou ware storage jar.

Many of these singular ceramic vessel motifs circulated as images printed amongst text in arts journals or on their covers, suggesting a desire to widely circulate the perception of the vessel as image. Like those of his close friends Bernard Leach and Minami Kunzō, Tomimoto's prints were presented on covers and inside a variety of magazines for the burgeoning art publishing industry, including the art journals *Bijutsu*

⁷ "One Aspect of Creative Prints: Tomimoto Kenkichi and His Influence," *Hanga: Japanese Creative Prints*, 17–18.

⁸ Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo, Tomimoto Kenkichi Memorial Museum Nara, and a private collection. The 1976 impression of this is titled *Tsubo*, *Rikyū moyō* 壺琉球模様, suggesting that the original image was based on an Okinawan object.

⁹ Archival notes, Museum of Modern Art Tokyo.

shinpō, *Geibi*, *Takujō* and the literary journals *Safuron* and *Toride*. As discussed in Chapter Two, these endeavors paralleled those of the initial *sōsaku hanga*, or creative print movement, artists Kanae Yamamoto, Ishii Hakutei and Tsunetomo Morita who from May 1907 used their magazine *Hōsun* 方寸 as a platform from which to circulate their self-designed, self-carved prints amongst wider audiences.¹⁰ Tomimoto's 1913 cover for the drama magazine *Toride* (Stronghold, **Fig. 3.4**) features a single ceramic pot with a similar roughness of carving and boldness of line as the aforementioned 1911 print.¹¹

Some of Tomimoto's prints of vessels were images of his own works. An October 1914 *Bijutsu shinpō* (**Fig. 3.5**)¹² features a small image of a c. 1912–13 Raku sake bottle (*tokkuri*) he made inscribed *Fūki chōshun* ("Riches and honors, long spring," **Fig. 3.6**). The vessel stands off-center and appears to have been executed by Tomimoto as he was still beginning to learn to throw on the potter's wheel. But the rough quality of the jar is translated directly to the print, consistent with other vessel prints of this time. By creating circulating images, or *moyō*, of his own works, he replicated them in a manner increasing

¹⁰ Uchiyama Takeo, *Kindai nihon no bijutsu: sōgyō 90 shūnen kinen kankō* (Tokyo: Dainihon Inki, 1998), xiv. *Hōsun* ceased publication in July 1911. It is important to note that Tomimoto's prints did not appear in *Hōsun* or other journals directly associated with *sōsaku hanga* artists such as *Tsukuhae* 月映. See *Sosaku hanga no tanjō*, 166

¹¹ A copy of this was also published in the March 1913 issue of *Rhythm*. The issue of *Toride* had featured articles and drawings originally published in *Rhythm*, so upon the *Toride* publication, Kimura Shohachi (1893–1958) sent copies to *Rhythm* editors. In turn, they reprinted Tomimoto's pot print under a poem by Katherine Mansfield. See Numabe Shinichi, "Élan Vital and Rhythm: The Ballets Russes in Japan in 1913 / Sei no yakudō to 'risumu' – Taishō 2-nen no barei rius," in *Dansu! 20 seiki shōtō no bijutsu to buyō*, ed. Omuka Toshiharu (Utsunomiya: Toshigi Kenritsu Bijutsukan, 2003), 82.

¹² 13, no. 12 (October 1914): 10.

their potential for interpretation. His first *moyōshū* of 1915 featured many images of pots. The most abstract one consisting of simply a thick, irregular line articulating the outline of a vase form (**Fig. 3.7**) suggests the *hakuji tsubo* forms he would soon be creating in porcelain.

While the above images of vessels clearly demonstrate Tomimoto's interest in exploring two-dimensionally the iconography of the ceramic form, did he intend any specific iconographic meanings? In the history of Chinese art and material culture, images of ceramic vessels could suggest two main meanings. From the fifth century in China, there are examples of water jar images conveying one of the eight auspicious symbols of Buddhism (Ch. *bajixiang*, Skt. *astamangala*).¹³ Conversely, the water vessel image could represent harmony, since in Chinese the word for vase, “*ping*,” is a homonym for the word for harmony. Did Tomimoto intend these kinds of interpretations? Surely he would have been aware of images of ceramic vessels through his father's teachings and common knowledge, but no textual evidence suggests that he intended these specific readings for the above prints.

Conflating the Aesthetics of Flesh and Form: the *Hakuji Tsubo*

In 1919, Tomimoto began making *hakuji* 白磁, white undecorated glazed porcelain that derived from a multivalenced conceptual foundation. These would become

¹³ The other symbols are the wheel of law, conch shell, furled umbrella, canopy, lotus, paired fish, and endless knot. Jan Stuart, “Layers of Meaning,” in *Joined Colors: Decoration and Meaning in Chinese Porcelain*, ed. Louise Allison Cort and Jan Stuart (Washington, D.C.: Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, 1993), 42–43.

a significant genre in his oeuvre that he continued to create throughout his life. The majority were globular vessels that he referred to as *tsubo* 壺 (jars) and which derived from two seemingly incongruent sources, Joseon porcelain and Aristide Maillol's bronze figurative sculpture.¹⁴

Let us first consider several representative examples of his *hakuji tsubo*. Due to variations in materials and kilns, their forms and surfaces varied slightly over time. Straight-sided and smaller vessels were made in Tokyo from 1926 to 1945, and more globular and larger ones were created in Kyoto in the postwar years.¹⁵ His earliest extant *hakuji* jar dates to 1919 (**Fig. 3.8**). At just 16.5 centimeters tall, its scale is suitable for containing a small bouquet of flowers. The form's wide base swells slightly in the middle before tapering at the shoulder to a relatively narrow neck. Like all of his *hakuji*, its white porcelain clay body is covered by a thickly-applied milky semi-matt glaze. Other *hakuji* by Tomimoto bear faceted sides resembling the surfaces of many Joseon vessels. One is an octagonal faceted lidded jar which was exhibited at the 7th Kokuten exhibition in May, 1932 (**Fig. 3.9**).¹⁶ But the most ubiquitous form and scale for Tomimoto's *hakuji* was that of the unlidded jar created in 1941 now in the Museum of Modern Ceramic Art, Gifu, collection (**Fig. 3.10**). Its comparatively large globular form was the prototype for many

¹⁴ *Tsubo* can be translated as vessel, pot, or vase, and also can convey the meaning of a point, target, or essence. The written character derives from the ancient Chinese *hu* 壺, a wine storage vessel.

¹⁵ One important difference between Tomimoto's porcelain made in Tokyo and his porcelain made in Kyoto was that the latter was fired at a communal kiln that reached a lower temperature than his Tokyo kiln. See Tomimoto's caption to Fig. 13, *Jisen Tomimoto Kenkichi sakuhinshū* (Asahi Shimbunsha, 1962).

¹⁶ Kokuten is the abbreviated name of the Kokuga Sōsaku Kyōkai Tenrankai.

vessels with overglaze enamel decoration which will be discussed in Chapter Four. The tensions between form and surface, and Tomimoto's proclamations about the hierarchy of forms, will be discussed below.

While many of the later *hakuji tsubo*, especially, attained the status of "art ceramics" for display in art exhibitions, in the early years at least Tomimoto advocated for their domestic utility. For example, in 1937 one was photographed filled with Japanese beauty-berry and winterberry in a *Fujin no tomo* article on "New Year's flowers" (**Fig. 3.11**).¹⁷ Lidded *tsubo* could be used as *mizusashi*, fresh water containers for the tea ceremony. Some owners provided lacquer lids for Tomimoto's jars, which transformed them into *mizusashi*.¹⁸ Indeed, some of his vessels of this era were described by observers as *chagu*, tea utensils.¹⁹

The interest amongst collectors for Tomimoto's *hakuji tsubo* was limited in the earliest years of their creation. As Naitō Tadashi wrote, in the late 1920s "nobody ... had a taste for plain white pottery [and] he had a difficult time selling it."²⁰ Tomimoto cited as the cause their lack of decoration.²¹ Certainly, the patterned works he was beginning to make at this time were becoming his trademark works. And one may surmise that if collectors were easily obtaining original Joseon *tsubo* in the art market of the colonial

¹⁷ The flowers in the base were *callicarpa japonica* and *ilex serrate*. "Shinnen no hana," *Fujin no tomo* 31, no.1 (January 1937), n.p.

¹⁸ One such example is in the Kōgeikan, National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo, collection.

¹⁹ M, "Tomimoto Kenkichi shi no sakuhin o miru," *Geppō* 4, no. 5 (March 1923): 12–13.

²⁰ "Introduction by Tadasi Naitō," *The Exposition in Commemoration of the Fiftyith [sic] Anniversary of Kenkichi Tomimoto's* (Nihonbashi, Tokyo: Takashimaya, May 23–28, 1961).

²¹ "Tōwaza kansō 陶技感想 [Thoughts about ceramics techniques]," in *Tōki zuihitsushū* (Osaka: Asahi Shimbunsha, 1948), 3.

period, they might have preferred authentic historical works in comparison to modern interpretations of them.

Joseon Moon Jars

Clearly Joseon globular porcelain vessels, known as “moon jars” (*dal hang-ari*), were the main stimulus for Tomimoto’s *hakuji tsubo*. A renowned example (**Fig. 3.12**) purchased by Bernard Leach in 1935 epitomizes this genre in terms of its white color, undulating moon form, and surface irregularities.²² In Joseon Korea, the jar’s undecorated form agreed with Neo-Confucian ethical aesthetics of modesty and purity and would have appealed to scholar-officials who placed vessels like this in their studies. As Kumja Paik Kim and others have noted, in Joseon Korea “moon jars” could also symbolize fertility and femininity.²³ This is a point that Tomimoto was likely well aware of, but instead of writing about moon jars resembling feminine form generally, he specifically related the surface of porcelain jars to the fleshiness of Aristide Maillol’s nude bronze sculptures as described below. If we place Tomimoto’s 1941 vase (**Fig. 3.10**) next to the Joseon jar illustrated in **Fig. 3.12**, several differences are clear. Tomimoto’s is much smaller and more symmetrical. The Joseon jar was executed not as a single thrown vessel like Tomimoto’s but as two bowls joined at the lips. However, the two share the fundamental

²² Leach gave it to Lucie Rie (1902–95) who owned it for fifty years. It is now in the collection of the British Museum.

²³ *The Art of Korea: Highlights from the Collection of San Francisco’s Asian Art Museum* (San Francisco: Asian Art Museum, 2006), 124.

formal properties of medium, overall shape, and surface treatment. Tomimoto reduced the historical source to a modern emphasis on form.

Bernard Leach's purchase of the Joseon vessel (**Fig. 3.12**) is telling of his role as interlocutor in Japanese connoisseurs' identification of modern artistic values in Joseon ceramics. In his 1922 article "The Value of Korean Ceramics," noted collector and scholar of Korean ceramics Asakawa Noritaka wrote that Korean ceramics "have an extremely modern feeling."²⁴ Significantly, he prefaced this remark by describing Bernard Leach's appreciation of a Korean jar, using Leach to bring the assessment of Korean ceramics to a universal context. Joseon porcelains could be appreciated for their modernist formal properties, evidenced by claims of Western artists like Leach.²⁵ Leach as mediator was critical to the rise of Joseon porcelain to the discourse of modern ceramics form in Japan, and his role in influencing Tomimoto's interest in Korean ceramics was important from the time of their first encounter with them on display in 1912, as will be described below.

Engaging with Korea

While the *hakuji tsubo* were most central to the discourse of modern Japanese ceramics, Tomimoto also created other types of porcelain—both decorated and undecorated—that reveal a more complex set of engagements with colonial Korea. These works demonstrate his nostalgia for *sometsuke* as well as a determination to transform

²⁴ "Richō tōki no kachi oyobi hensen ni tsuite [On the value and history of Yi dynasty ceramics]," *Shirakaba* (Sept. 1922): 1.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

historic Joseon porcelain to modern tableware. The *sometsuke* works reflected his long-standing interests in *bunjin* pursuits such as calligraphy and some were clearly imitative of Joseon works. However, he also reconfigured the possibilities for Joseon porcelain into tableware for modern consumption, a brief but significant part of his oeuvre.

Tomimoto created works such as a *sometsuke* water dropper shaped like a house (**Fig. 3.13**) in 1937, one of many water droppers and brush stands he made at this time that reflect his interests in literati culture. Its form and use of blue pigment are clearly derived from Joseon precedents.²⁶ He also transferred nostalgic sketches of several Korean architectural monuments to *sometsuke* in pale blue tones on porcelain *tōban* (discs) that he made through the 1930s. Such *tōban* served as vehicles for evocative painterly expression, a mode of his invention to be discussed at length in Chapter Four.

In contrast to the literati themed desk articles, he also used the vocabulary of *hakuji* for modern tableware. In 1920s Japan, no other beverage symbolized modernity and urbanity more so than coffee.²⁷ Tomimoto's earliest known coffee set was an octagonal-sided faceted set made in 1921 (**Fig. 3.14**). It hybridized Korean faceted porcelain with a vessel form particular to the modern era in Japan, the coffee pot and handled cup with saucer. Faceted porcelain from the Joseon dynasty had been featured in Yanagi's 1920s Korean ceramics exhibits and illustrations were printed in the 1922 Korean special issue of *Shirakaba*. Clearly designed for coffee, Tomimoto's set comprises six tall handled cups with saucers, a lidded tall pot for coffee, a smaller tall pot

²⁶ See, for example, a late 15th–early 16th century example in the Mingeikan collection. National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo, *Japanese Crossing Borders*, Fig. III-30.

²⁷ See Merry White, *Coffee Life in Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012).

for cream, and a lidded sugar jar. Only one coffee set with this form is extant, so even if Tomimoto had intended for it to be mass produced, it was not. A second coffee set was produced in 1933 with melon-shaped indentations of its surfaces.

Tomimoto's interest in ceramics like the aforementioned Joseon *hakuji tsubo*, Joseon *sometsuke*, and painting landscapes of Korean scenes on some of his ceramics can be traced to several pivotal encounters. In the 1920s, other rising ceramists such as Kawai Kanjirō and Kitaōji Rosanjin also emulated Joseon ceramics, and he was undoubtedly aware of their work. For Tomimoto, of greatest direct influence were his trips to Korea where he saw Korean ceramics firsthand alongside fellow aficionados Bernard Leach, the brothers Asakawa Noritaka and Takumi (浅川巧, 1891–1931), and Yanagi Sōetsu.

Tomimoto was, indeed, an active participant in the movement of artists, collectors, and scholars deeply engaged with Korean objects, ideas, and people during the colonial period. These men dedicated themselves to researching Korean history, purchasing works of art, organizing exhibitions, and publishing articles on Korea for arts and culture journals. Aside from the creation of his Korean-influenced ceramics, Tomimoto contributed significantly to the burgeoning modern field of Japanese discourse on Korean ceramics, evidenced, for example, by Tomimoto's inclusion as author—along with Yanagi and the Asakawa brothers—in the seminal 1922 *Shirakaba* special feature on Korean ceramics.

Interest in Korean ceramics among Japanese collectors and connoisseurs in 1920s Japan was a modern iteration of an extensive continuum of Japanese fascination with Korean ceramics. As is generally acknowledged, Korea had long been a prized cradle of

ceramics amongst Japanese collectors and aesthetes. In particular, late sixteenth-century tea men's appreciation of Korean stoneware bowls elevated them to the highest possible echelon of medieval Japanese aesthetics. Modern tea master Takahashi Sōan's (1861–1937) ten-volume *Taishō meikikan* (Model masterpieces of Taishō), published from 1921 to 1928, established a modern canon of tea utensils, including works from Korea.²⁸ Additionally, many 1920s collectors, as Kim Brandt has noted, praised a relatively overlooked segment of Korean ceramics, Joseon porcelain. This genre had never held a significant stature within *chanoyu* practice and its status appealed to Yanagi's desires to distinguish himself from elitist *chanoyu* culture.²⁹ Thus, Tomimoto's fascination with and interpretations of Joseon porcelain reflected modern Japanese collectors' new interests in Korean art as distinct from historical *chanoyu* interests.

Tomimoto claimed he first encountered Korean ceramics alongside Bernard Leach at the Colonial Exposition at Ueno, Tokyo, in the autumn of 1912.³⁰ In his article “One Day at the Colonial Exposition,” he wrote:

I entered the Korean room, and after four or five minutes saw before me Leach standing stiffly two or three steps away. Looking further, I saw porcelain in the Keijō [Seoul] Industrial Training Center display with vases, plates, and representative objects of modern Korea. [Leach said,] ‘I want to get some of that clay and try it out. The glory of late ceramics has been preserved much better in Korea than in Japan.’ ‘That’s not for sale!’

²⁸ Pitelka, *Handmade Culture: Raku Potters, Patrons, and Tea Practitioners in Japan*, 154–55.

²⁹ “Objects of Desire: Japanese Collectors and Colonial Korea,” 715–16. This is also discussed at length in Brandt's book *Kingdom of Beauty*.

³⁰ “Takushoku hakurankai no ichinichi,” in *Tomimoto Kenkichi chosakushū*, ed. Tsuji Isamu (Tokyo: Gogatsu Shobō, 1981), 472. This encounter has been credited with also influencing Yanagi Sōetsu's interest in Korea. See Brandt, “Objects of Desire: Japanese Collectors and Colonial Korea,” 715.

I said, and Leach replied, ‘Somehow, let’s go see Korea. Now is the time to go find clay and glaze in Korea.’³¹

This passage reveals the extent to which the two, searching for technical knowledge, were particularly receptive to outside influences during this germinal phase of their development as ceramists. Leach not only encouraged an enthusiasm for Korean aesthetics and techniques, but instilled in Tomimoto a personal identification with Korean ceramics. Later in the article Tomimoto wrote, “I was particularly interested in a sake bottle (*tokkuri*). Leach tapped my shoulder and said it was Tomi style.”³² As the passage also shows, Tomimoto and Leach believed that Korean ceramics were preserved in their original state more purely than their counterparts were in Japan, a sentiment likely referring to the strong influence of Western technologies on Meiji ceramics that caused them to lose their “pure” essence. As Tomimoto’s essays on Korea described below will demonstrate, for him to go to Korea was to travel back in time to a pre-modern “pure” Japan of the past while at the same time a modern colonial Japan of the present.

Several years later, Tomimoto met the Asakawa brothers Noritaka and Takumi, driving forces in the twentieth century Japanese connoisseurship of Joseon ceramics. In a 1919 letter to Leach, Tomimoto wrote: “Mr. Asakawa came here & stayed two days. I exited [*sic*, excited] with his Coluan Yaki [*sic*, Korean ceramics] no hanashi [conversation].”³³ The brothers were working in colonial Korea, Noritaka as an elementary school teacher and Takumi as a forestry engineer. Gradually their interest in

³¹ “Takushoku hakurankai no ichinichi,” repr. in *Tomimoto Kenkichi chosakushū*, 472.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ Dated May 2. TKKA.

Joseon ceramics prompted them to travel to hundreds of kiln sites to document this history. Their attraction to Korean ceramics was aesthetic and romanticized, not scientific, as reflected in Noritaka's prolix poem "Tsubo," published in the 1922 *Shirakaba* issue on Korean ceramics. He wrote that the beauty of the *tsubo* "enters the eyes as music," and that "for those with impoverished hearts, ceramics become friends."³⁴ More practically, one of the reasons often cited for the Asakawa brothers' zealous acquisitions of Joseon ceramics was that they were so cheap and plentiful.³⁵

In September and October of 1922, Tomimoto travelled to Korea to see ceramics there first-hand. His stated goal was to study there before it was too late: "Since industrial ceramics are rapidly appearing in the marketplace, and there is a concern that Korean ceramics will be overwhelmed and their imprint lost, I think I would like to go there very soon and study Korean ceramics."³⁶ His main activities there were sketching architectural sites and ceramics. His drawing of city gates such as the Seoul Eastern Gate became an often-repeated leitmotif on the surfaces of his *sometsuke* ceramics (**Fig. 3.13**).³⁷ During his time there in 1922, he also helped Yanagi and the Asakawa brothers organize an exhibition of Korean ceramics featuring 400 works of mostly Joseon stoneware and

³⁴ *Shirakaba* (Sept. 1922): 54–55. See Brandt, *Kingdom of Beauty*, for translations of other passages of this poem.

³⁵ Brandt, "Objects of Desire: Japanese Collectors and Colonial Korea," 719.

³⁶ "Seitō zatsuwa," *Bijutsu geppō* 2, no. 5 (Jan. 23, 1921): 73–74.

³⁷ It is known in Korea today as Sungnyemun. He discussed this moyō in his 1957 book. See Naitō, *Tomimoto Kenkichi moyō senshū*. The Seoul "Nandai-Mon Gate" appears in Fig. 9 of this book.

porcelain held under the named sponsorship of the Korean Folk Arts Gallery.³⁸ Over the course of his three weeks in Korea, he visited the exhibition every morning, studying “*tenmoku*, iron-glazed ware, white Goryeo [dynasty] wares, celadon, inlay, *buncheong* (*mishima*), *hakeme*, and iron Goryeo wares.”³⁹ Tomimoto’s sketches of *sometsuke* blue decorated porcelain vessels and shards exhibited there (**Fig. 3.16**) became the basis for several of his surface designs on porcelain plates and other vessels. He described the experience of entering one room as if he was “a child entering a toy shop,” and that “though the room was small, of all the ceramics” he had ever seen, never had he “encountered this level of masterpieces.”⁴⁰

Yanagi’s role in this history is noteworthy since he and Tomimoto exerted a mutual influence on each other in their passion for Korean ceramics and many of their published sentiments regarding Korea in the 1920s shared similar attributes. In addition to the aforementioned exhibition, in May of 1921 Tomimoto helped Yanagi organize an exhibition of Korean ceramics in Tokyo.⁴¹ Much more than Tomimoto, though, Yanagi has received credit amongst the men of his time for introducing modern Japanese ceramic artists to Korean ceramics. Yanagi had first ventured to Korea in August of 1916, and by 1921 had established a plan for a Korean Folk Art Gallery; it officially opened in April

³⁸ It took place starting October 5. Moriya Miho, “Tomimoto Kenkichi to Chosen tōji” *Azami* 8 (August 1, 2002): 3. Tomimoto’s participation in its organization and the number of objects is also described by Kikuchi in *Japanese Modernisation and Mingei Theory*, 129. This exhibition was a primary catalyst for Yanagi’s establishment of a Korean folk craft museum there.

³⁹ The exhibition (李朝陶磁器展覧会) was held at the Chōsen Kizoku Kaikan. Tomimoto Kenkichi, “Keijō zakki,” in *Tomimoto Kenkichi chosakushū*, 282.

⁴⁰ “Keijō zakki,” in *Tomimoto Kenkichi chosakushū*, 283.

⁴¹ Chōsen Minzoku Bijutsukan Tenrankai 朝鮮民族美術展覧会, May 7–15, 1921, held at the gallery Ryuitsu-so 流逸荘, Kanda.

1924.⁴² Like Tomimoto, Yanagi was concerned about the destruction of Korean architectural monuments like the Eastern Gate pictured in **Fig. 3.15**.⁴³

Through their mutual associations, Tomimoto was at least aware of if not wholly sharing Yanagi's evaluations of Joseon porcelain as emblematic of the Korean people. Yanagi wrote that Korean craft, including Joseon white jars, exuded a "beauty of sadness" (*hiai no bi*).⁴⁴ He described white as the color of sadness, representing the people of Korea. The publisher Kurahashi Tōjirō wrote, along similar lines, "Those who travel in Korea are likely to see the scene of people in white clothing working slowly on the reddish-brown terrain. Those white-clad Koreans are, in sum, the white porcelain of the Yi dynasty."⁴⁵ The notion of Koreans as "white-dressed people" (*hakui minzoku*) is, as Idekawa Naoki has argued, a modern Japanese construction.⁴⁶ Yanagi also compared the white jar form to Chinese counterparts, noting the Korean jar had a "sad figure (*sabishii sugata*) ... different from the strength and pride of Chinese ceramics" due to the "way it tapers to the bottom and its small foot."⁴⁷ Yanagi's engagement with Korea was, indeed,

⁴² Kikuchi, *Japanese Modernisation and Mingei Theory*, 129.

⁴³ Ibid., 128–29. Yanagi aimed to help save Gwanghwamun from destruction through his article "For a Korean Architecture on the Verge of Demolition."

⁴⁴ See Kikuchi, *Japanese Modernisation and Mingei Theory*, 131–7.

⁴⁵ Kurahashi Tōjirō, ed., *Tōki zuroku: Richō hakuji* (Tokyo: Kōseikai suppanbu, 1932), n.p., repr. in Brandt, "Objects of Desire: Japanese Collectors and Colonial Korea," 736.

⁴⁶ *Richō tōji shinkō* (Tokyo: Kizukisha Bijutsu Shuppan, 1982), 86.

⁴⁷ *Chōsen to sono geijutsu* 6:161, repr. in Kikuchi, *Japanese Modernisation and Mingei Theory*, 135–6.

as Kim Brandt and Yuko Kikuchi have established, infused with particularly colonialist assessments of the Korean people as inferior.⁴⁸

Tomimoto published two essays shortly after his 1922 trips to Korea that illuminate his particular interest in Joseon ceramics and Korean culture. To clarify the degree to which Tomimoto's engagement with Korean ceramics also reflected colonialist sentiments, let us consider in further depth the text in which his discourse on Korean ceramics is most fully articulated, his 1922 essay "Korean water droppers" (*Richō no suiteki*). It was one of the eight articles authored by Tomimoto, Yanagi, and Asakawa Noritaka comprising "An Introduction to Korean Ceramics" in the September 1922 issue of *Shirakaba*. He began with a formal description of the vessel as a cube with pale blue glaze, fired in reduction. But as the essay goes on, while continuing to describe its formal attributes and values, Tomimoto posited the vessel as emblematic of Korean people. He observed the qualities of the water dropper as "poor (*toboshii*)," "quiet (*shizuka*)," and reflecting the joyful life of East Asians.⁴⁹ He wrote that, "compared to Ming dynasty *sometsuke*, [it is] lonelier and quieter."⁵⁰ It could be said that he positioned Joseon ceramics as not lesser in aesthetic value than their Ming counterparts, but with different aesthetic sensibilities. However, the descriptors "poor" and "quiet" closely align with Yanagi's colonialist-inflected aesthetics, according to which Koreans were seen as resigned, sad, defeated figures after the occupation of their country by the Japanese.

⁴⁸ Brandt, *Kingdom of Beauty* and "Objects of Desire: Japanese Collectors and Colonial Korea"; Kikuchi, *Japanese Modernisation and Mingei Theory*.

⁴⁹ "Richō no suiteki," 27.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 23.

Whether out of ignorance or ambivalence, neither Tomimoto nor Yanagi highlighted in these texts how many of these *sometsuke* wares were actually produced by the Joseon royal kilns and decorated by court painters.

Tomimoto's essay "Keijō zakki" 京城雜記 (Miscellaneous notes on Keijō), the second published essay he wrote on Korea, appeared in his 1923 book *Yōhen zakki* 窯辺雜記 (Miscellaneous kilnside notes).⁵¹ This essay contains diary entries from his October 1922 visit that reveal his sentimentality towards Korea as a nostalgic place similar to his birthplace in Yamato. It also describes how Korea was on the verge of modernization and the negative effects of modernization. He begins the essay by noting the beauty of Korean stone bridges and despairs that "in two or three years' time, they will be turned into dreadful concrete."⁵² He ponders what would happen if the "beautiful fan-shaped stones of western gate of Hōryūji were replaced by concrete."⁵³ In succeeding diary entries comprising this text he noted more instances of resonance with Ando-mura. His October 4 entry began with a poem, *Chonnyanni sokukeyi* (View of Cheongnyangi):⁵⁴

*Aki no ame samishiku kudareba
mado agete miru. Hima no hana
Suzume ou kotō no koe
Chīsaki tani, chīsaki yama
Shizukanimo kurete iku
Chonnyanni*

When the autumn rain cheerlessly gives up,
I open my window. A castor oil plant,
A sparrow follows the cry of its young,
Little valley, little mountain,
Quietly living,
Cheongnyangi.⁵⁵

⁵¹ (Tokyo: Fukunaga Shigekatsu, repr. 1975, Tokyo: Bunka Seikatsu Kenkyūkai). Keijō was the name for Seoul during the Japanese occupation period.

⁵² "Keijō zakki," repr. in *Tomimoto Kenkichi chosakushū*, 278–79. Diary entry from October 2.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ A neighborhood in Seoul

⁵⁵ "Keijō zakki," 281.

In his remarks following it, he notes that the castor oil plant has large leaves and a tiny flower that is “truly bleak” (*jitsuni samishii*) and that the sound of the sparrow reminded him of one line of a farmers’ (*hyakushō*) song of Yamato.⁵⁶ In another entry dated October 7, he compared the loss of valuable old architectural structures in Korea to a similar instance in Japan: “The spectacle of the unnaturally (*jiniteki*) rapid destruction of architecture, bridges, and so on is just like the time Fenollosa came to Yamato. Beautiful old craft objects (*kōgeihin*) with tradition are rapidly disappearing and dying one after another.”⁵⁷ Tomimoto’s wish for the preservation of Korean craft objects and cultural structures aligns closely with that of Yanagi in terms of Yanagi’s project for the museum of Korean craft. While Tomimoto called attention to the rapid modernization of Korea, he did not see himself, like the American art historian Ernest Fenollosa, charged with the task of documentation and preservation. Rather, he viewed Joseon ceramics as depositories of traditional culture linking Korea and Japan.

Tomimoto’s descriptions of Korea and Korean ceramics reveal a sense of nostalgia for experiences, places, and objects that were reminiscent of his hometown, rural Ando-mura. He was drawn to what he perceived to be lost in modern Japan. Seeing Korea as a less technologically advanced place than Japan was a sentiment aligned with Yanagi’s colonialist assessments. Kida Takuya has argued that not only Yanagi—as

⁵⁶ Ibid., 281–82.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 285. Here, Tomimoto is likely referring to the visits to Hōryūji and other sites of cultural importance in Nara by art historian Ernest Fenollosa, art historian Okakura Tenshin, sculptor Kanō Tessai and others under the auspices of the National Treasures Investigation Bureau in the 1880s. Fenollosa played an important role in the history of art preservation in Japan due to his curatorial roles at the Imperial Museum in Tokyo and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. See Tseng, *Imperial Museums*, 141–151.

Kikuchi and Brandt have stated—but also Tomimoto “adopted an Orientalist attitude” towards Korea in which the “colonizer” sees the “colonized” as exotic and inferior.⁵⁸ But Tomimoto and Yanagi’s motivations were complex. As Tomimoto claimed, Yanagi’s motivation for writing so much about Korean ceramics was because so many others had proclaimed it was degenerate (*daraku*).⁵⁹ Thus Yanagi and Tomimoto’s interests were in preserving what was feared on the verge of destruction. We can also position Tomimoto’s stance towards Korea as akin to that of modern artists throughout the world, such as European post-Impressionists, who in early twentieth-century industrialized societies sought unadulterated “pure” aesthetic inspiration from so-called primitive cultures. Indeed, Tomimoto and the *Mingei* faction were intrigued not by the ceramics that until then had been considered the zenith of Korean ceramics achievement, Goryeo celadons, but rather the relatively less refined and irregular expressions ubiquitous throughout later Joseon ceramics.⁶⁰

Discourse on Form

Tomimoto wrote about form in his essay “*Jiki no tsubo*” (White porcelain jar) published in his 1940 book *Seitō yoroku* (Ceramics-making records). He claimed in this essay that, above other aspects of ceramics, form was what he valued the most. While in this short essay he did not mention Korea, he praised the processes and formal qualities

⁵⁸ “Asia as Dreamed by Craftspeople: ‘Asianist’ Craft Arts,” 148.

⁵⁹ “Richō no suiteki,” 28.

⁶⁰ The complicated political implications of these aesthetics are explored at length throughout Kikuchi, *Japanese Modernisation and Mingei Theory*.

of a prototypical Korean *hakuji tsubo*. Tomimoto deconstructed its essential important points: “Looking upon a jar, what is most important is the jar’s form. Glaze and *moyō* are just decoration for the main form. Of course glaze and *moyō* play an important role in bringing out beauty, but the source of life in three-dimensional jars is form.”⁶¹ Of the several types of porcelain Tomimoto created in this period, *hakuji tsubo* were most significant to his discourse on form. As much as they reflected an engagement with Joseon precedents, they also embody Tomimoto’s attempt to create abstract forms according to modern artistic values. Critics of the time praised the purity of form and surface of Tomimoto’s *hakuji tsubo*. For example, in his review of the 1936 Teiten exhibition, Watanabe Soshū described Tomimoto’s white globular jar as imparting a “pure feeling” (*seijun na kokoro kan*) to porcelain.⁶² The same jar was described by another anonymous reviewer as being the “sole work in the Teiten exuding that kind of plain beauty.”⁶³ Indeed, it was the only craft work within the Teiten craft section that lacked decorative surface patterning. Although Tomimoto has been described by some critics and historians as primarily a maker of surface design and *moyō*, recently Kaneko Kenji has called attention to the primacy of “three-dimensional beauty” inherent throughout Tomimoto’s oeuvre. Kaneko suggests that due to his substantive discourse on form we should regard Tomimoto an “artist of form.”⁶⁴

⁶¹ “Hakuji no tsubo,” *Seitō yoroku* (1940), repr. in *Tomimoto Kenkichi chosakushū*, 354.

⁶² Watanabe Soshū 渡邊素舟, “Kōgei jihō,” *Chūō bijutsu* 32 (March 1936): 86.

⁶³ “Teiten daiyon hyō 帝展第四部評,” *Teikoku kōgei* 10, no. 3 (March 1936): 20.

⁶⁴ “Tomimoto Kenkichi no ‘rittai no bijutsu,’” *Gendai tōgei no zōkei shikō*, 198. As stated previously, this stance challenges the notion that Tomimoto was first a “*moyō* artist,” then a “porcelain artist,” and finally transformed into an “*iro-e* artist.”

Interest in form as a primary concern for artistic expression was widespread amongst artists of the time. Nojima Yasuzō photographed Tomimoto's ceramics in the 1920s and 30s and likely exerted an influence on Tomimoto's interest in the purity and primacy of form.⁶⁵ Between 1921 and 1925, Nojima hosted three exhibitions of Tomimoto's art in the Nojima Tei (Nojima Salon) at his home (see Chapter Five). He photographed Tomimoto's prints and sketches from 1923–1927 for a three-volume publication *Tomimoto Kenkichi moyōshū*, and photographed his ceramics in softly muted tones for the 1933 *Tomimoto Kenkichi tōkishū* (Collection of ceramics).⁶⁶

Nojima's stance towards photographically capturing images of Tomimoto's ceramics aligned with Tomimoto's concern with form. In 1929 Nojima stated that he was “not attempting to capture the sitter's personality or to reveal his or her unique characteristics, but rather exploring the surface of the face based on an artistic interest in light and form.”⁶⁷ Tomimoto's *hakuji tsubo*, too, were intended to capture not minutia of detail but the overall “essence” of the vessel. Philip Charrier has described Nojima's photographs as “individuated and strangely animated representations of the originals

⁶⁵ Nojima was a major figure in the history of modern Japanese photography, particularly for his pigment-printed figurative and still-life photographs; his co-founding, with Nayakama Iwata (中山岩太, 1895–1949) and Kimura Ihei (木村伊兵衛, 1901–1974) of the magazine *Kōga* (1932–33); and several art gallery spaces that he created. Tomimoto met Nojima initially during one of the events of the Shirakaba group in the 1910s.

⁶⁶ Nojima's photographic publishing projects in this era also extended to Yanagi Sōetsu: for him, he photographed the September 1922 article “The Characteristics of Korean Ceramics” 朝鮮陶磁器の特質 and that same year he produced photographs for Yanagi's book *Tōjiki no bi* 陶磁器の美.

⁶⁷ *Arusu shashin daikōza* (1929), repr. in Philip Charrier, “Nojima Yasuzō's Transition from Pictorialism to Modernism: The Artwork Illustration Projects of 1921–27,” in *Nojima Yasuzō: Modern Japan through Nojima's Lens*, ed. Makiguchi Chinatsu, Matsubara Ryuichi, and Nakao Yui (Kyoto: National Museum of Modern Art, Kyoto, 2009), 52.

rather than ‘transparent’ or straightforwardly illustrative records or documents” due to the camera’s being “moved in so close, and the image simplified to such an extent, that the factor of scale is eliminated and the limits of the visual frame are blurred.”⁶⁸ The images of Tomimoto’s ceramics by Nojima altered the way they were perceived as art objects and flattened their visual fields so that they could operate outside the established field of *kōgei* as more dependent on visual content than haptic content.

The primacy of form that Tomimoto was an advocate for also tied closely to the role he played as autonomous maker controlling each segment of production. In the essay “*Jiki no tsubo*,” he lamented that “master throwers” were often entrusted with creating ceramic forms on the wheel, but that issues of scale made it difficult for artists to entrust throwers with the task and achieve desired effects. He argued that this was why he “always” made these forms on the wheel himself, even with “poor skills.”⁶⁹ This meant that Tomimoto’s thrown vessels were often heavier and sometimes uneven in comparison to vessels executed by trained professional throwers dedicated to producing large quantities of standardized wares. Tomimoto described the process of making such works without sketching out shapes beforehand, by “just sitting and, while thinking, bringing out the form.”⁷⁰ This mode of creation paralleled that of modern Japanese “creative” prints artists, particularly in the individual artist’s embrace of executing all aspects of object production. In its concept formation, execution, and performed use, this approach may be compared to Richard Wagner’s singular approach to a “total work of art”

⁶⁸ “Nojima Yasuzō’s Transition from Pictorialism to Modernism,” 52.

⁶⁹ “Hakuji no tsubo,” 354.

⁷⁰ “Watashi no rirekisho,” *Nihon keizai shimbun*, Feb. 14, 1962.

(*gesamtkunstwerk*), in which the artist is entrusted with the writing, composing, and designing of all aspects of operatic performance.

Although Tomimoto undoubtedly made many forms himself, and several photographic essays attest that he did throw forms on the wheel, his emphasis on total control over the process of making was hyperbolic.⁷¹ From his earliest period working with ceramics he employed assistants in the studio. In 1920, his wife Kazue wrote, “These days, a master thrower is coming from Kyoto, and work has begun again. From early morning to night Tomimoto is wholeheartedly making ceramics with that craftsman and one other worker, while I am with our two small children singing and playing.”⁷² Edmund de Waal has noted that in the case of Leach, too, a paradox occurs in the implication from Leach’s published how-to writings that a single individual possesses the capacity to commandeer all stages in the process of making ceramics, and that self-reliance in the production of a ceramic vessel results in creating superb work. De Waal wrote, “This has been the great and powerful seduction of [Leach’s] *A Potter’s Book*: its sense of self-sufficiency.... Leach’s relationship with those who worked for him in the studios, those whose ‘orchestral playing’ he ‘conducted,’ seems to stand in direct opposition to such rhetoric.”⁷³ Similarly, Tomimoto’s real or perceived execution on the wheel himself of his *hakuji tsubo* forms served to increase his credibility as the author of his many how-to texts beginning with the book *Rakuyaki kōtei* (Raku processes) in 1930.

⁷¹ See, for example, Tomimoto Kenkichi, “Tōki kōteizu [Illustrations of ceramics processes],” *Kōgei* 3 (March, 1931): 1–12.

⁷² Tomimoto Kazue, “Watashitachi no seikatsu [Our life],” *Josei nihonjin* 女性日本人 1, no. 2 (October, 1920): 60.

⁷³ *Bernard Leach* (London: Tate Gallery, 1998), 73.

Next let us consider Tomimoto's description of "glaze and *moyō*" as "just decoration" as he wrote in the aforementioned "*Jiki no tsubo*" essay. In another essay, "Tōwaza kansō" (Thoughts about ceramics techniques), included in his 1948 book *Tōki zuihitsushū* (Ceramics: A collection of essays), he explained his process of editing the results of a series of thrown jars in order to decide which ones to decorate:

I do not prepare the underglaze when I make forms on the wheel... I make 20-30 *tsubo*, then place them in the open air under the blue sky to dry. Of these, one-third are complete and their form is enough; decoration is not necessary. For the next third I engrave decoration or apply *sometsuke*, and for the last third I use the forms as a base for *iro-e* [overglaze painting]. That is my usual practice ... The reason to apply *iro-e* on unbalanced forms is to regulate the defects of form with a great deal of coloration and pattern. To put it simply, a white porcelain form possesses all of one's strength. It has no deceit whatsoever and is pure.⁷⁴

This passage reveals that for him the undecorated form conveyed the deepest artistic value, a sentiment that aligns with Kaneko's aforementioned assessment of Tomimoto as an "artist of form." Tomimoto's description of his processes also reflects a sensitivity to materials as intrinsically expressive. One aesthetic tendency throughout much of the history of Japanese craft, including the modern period, is a direct adherence to the particularities of the given material, whether wood, metal, fabric, or clay. This is parallel to the British Arts and Crafts ideal of "truth to materials" which was believed to have been abandoned by much industrialized design and manufacturing processes.⁷⁵ Related to this is the Modernist concept of "significant form" as proposed by Clive Bell which

⁷⁴ "Tōwaza kansō," *Tōki zuihitsushū*, 4.

⁷⁵ Christopher Crouch, *Modernism in Art, Design and Architecture* (Palgrave Macmillan, 1999), 30.

advocated for artists to find the best formal resolution of a given idea through materials.⁷⁶

To be “true to materials” was to privilege the undecorated vessel that allowed material qualities to be directly perceptible. As we see in Tomimoto’s writing on form, it also bears mention that he advocated not for abstract sculpture per se, but formal aspects perceptible in utilitarian objects. As he described in his 1920 essay “Bi o nen to suru tōki” (Ceramics concerned with beauty), “Ceramics which have been conceived of as beautiful, but which have forgotten use, are not good ceramics ... The beauty and utility of craft objects is like the flesh and heart of a human being.”⁷⁷

Similar anthropomorphic associations are pervasive in Tomimoto’s rhetoric of form and surface. Tomimoto compared marks he made on the surfaces of ceramics to clothing worn on the body. In the essay he wrote in 1955 on the occasion of his designation as Holder of Important Intangible Cultural Property, he wrote, “When I make ceramics, before I decorate the surfaces, I feverishly create round vessels on the wheel and make forms out of substance. The forms are like human bodies, and the glaze and surface decoration the clothes.”⁷⁸ Such an anthropomorphization of ceramic form amongst modern artists was not limited to Japan or modern craft discourse.⁷⁹ More distinctive to the discourse of modern Japanese ceramics was Tomimoto’s comparison of the beauty of the white porcelain surface to the skin of a naked body which, he wrote,

⁷⁶ In *Art* (1914), repr. in *Ibid.*, 44.

⁷⁷ “Bi o nen to suru tōki,” *Jōsei nihonjin* 1, no. 2 (Oct. 1920), repr. in *Tomimoto Kenkichi chosakushū*, 525.

⁷⁸ *Jūyō mukei bunkazaiho* (1956), repr. in Kaneko, *Gendai tōgei no zōkei shikō*, 200–201.

⁷⁹ See, for example, Phillip Rawson’s discussion of the anthropomorphization of ceramic forms throughout ceramics history in “Body Images,” *Ceramics* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1984), 100–102.

was apparent when “decorative colored and patterned clothes were stripped off.”⁸⁰ The ceramist Kitaōji Rosanjin expressed the sentiment in similar ways: “Just as a beautiful woman who is unclothed is still a beautiful woman, when ‘clay work’ (*tsuchi no shigoto*) has a comparable value, it is a bare form ‘clothed’ by glaze and designs which should not alter its fundamental aesthetic value.”⁸¹ Yanagi Sōetsu similarly wrote about a *hakuji tsubo*: “This jar reminds me of a human body. The beautiful skin is just like a warm human body and I cannot help touching it ... It is such white skin ... It is a hidden submissive colour, showing woman’s modesty.”⁸² And Asakawa Noritaka, in his poem “Tsubo,” likened a Korean water vessel to a female breast, comparing it to “the swelling breast of a girl” and describing it as a form “born in order to provide love.” Later in the poem Arakawa described a Korean woman as a “walking Yi [Joseon] dynasty jar.”⁸³ Yuko Kikuchi has argued that these types of sentiments typified by Yanagi and Arakawa’s remarks reflect a “male gaze ... projected by the Japanese colonizer on a colonized Korean woman whereby the woman is an unreal, static idealized image as represented by a Japanese male.”⁸⁴ But, as Kikuchi also points out, Yanagi referred to

⁸⁰ “Hakuji no tsubo,” 354.

⁸¹ “Nikaime kōkai jisaku tōji ni tsuite,” in *Rosanjin tōjiki sakuhin tenkan* (Tokyo: Mitsukoshi, 1929), repr. and trans. in Noriko Aso, “New Illusions: The Emergence of a Discourse on Traditional Japanese Arts and Crafts, 1868–1945” (PhD diss., The University of Chicago, 1997), 263.

⁸² “Kare no Chōsen yuki [His visit to Korea],” *Yanagi Sōetsu zenshū* 6, 69–70, repr. and trans. in Kikuchi, *Japanese Modernisation and Mingei Theory*, 134.

⁸³ “Tsubo,” *Shirakaba* (Sept. 1922): 57. Kim Brandt identifies and describes these two aspects of the poem in “The Folk-craft Movement in Early Showa Japan” (PhD diss., Columbia University, 1996), 736.

⁸⁴ Kikuchi, *Japanese Modernisation and Mingei Theory*, 135.

Goryeo ceramics as feminine and Joseon ceramics as masculine.⁸⁵ How are we to reconcile such inconsistencies? I propose we read Tomimoto's rhetoric of ceramic "skin" as inflected not with the image of the Korean colonized woman, but rather with the image of a universal woman as realized in a sculpture by Maillol.

Maillol

One remarkable aspect of Tomimoto's modern ceramics discourse is revealed in his conflation of Joseon porcelain with the bronze figurative sculpture of Aristide Maillol. He wrote, "I began to be interested in using thick, soft glaze on porcelain after seeing the plump fleshiness of small figurative sculptures by Maillol in France."⁸⁶ What connected these two forms of art is the corporeal aesthetics of flesh. Tomimoto claimed he first encountered the sculptures of Maillol during his trip to Paris in the spring of 1910.⁸⁷ In 1913, a Shirakaba-organized art exhibition held in Tokyo displayed two works by Maillol: *Femme assise, bras levé*, a sculpture, and *Etude de nu*, a drawing. Tomimoto would have also had the opportunity to read about Maillol in *Takujō*, the magazine for which he contributed cover designs. It reprinted "*Maiyōru ron*" by Maurice Denis and illustrated Maillol's sculptures (**Fig. 3.17**).⁸⁸ Additionally, *Chūō bijutsu* published a text

⁸⁵ Ibid. The text Kikuchi references here is Yanagi, "Chōsen to sono geijutsu [Korea and her art]," in *Yanagi Sōetsu zenshū* (1981), 6: 363.

⁸⁶ "Tōwaza kansō," *Tōki zuihitsu*, 3.

⁸⁷ Yamamoto, "'Goshurii' to 'setsu,'" 50–52.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 50.

by John La Farge about Maillol in 1921.⁸⁹ Then in the April 1923 issue of *Shirakaba*, three bronze figurative sculptures by Maillol were illustrated.

Even considering the appearances of writing on Maillol and illustrations of his sculptures, admiration for Maillol was relatively rare in early twentieth century Japan, and scholarly attention to the sculptor did not proliferate until after World War II. This is likely because admiration for sculpture by Auguste Rodin (1840–1917) overshadowed that for Maillol. For example, the aforementioned 1913 *Shirakaba* exhibition included just two works by Maillol, compared to twenty by Rodin.⁹⁰ Yanagi Sōetsu, a vocal member of the *Shirakaba* group, expressed a great admiration for Rodin's sculpture. One possible reason that Tomimoto admired Maillol's sculpture more than that of Rodin is that Tomimoto desired to distinguish himself from Yanagi.⁹¹ By the 1930s, Tomimoto expressed criticism of Yanagi's craft ideology, and this likely extended to Yanagi's views on sculpture as well.

Other artists, critics, and historians also have supported the notion that these disparate artistic sources—Joseon porcelain and modern bronze sculpture—were commensurable. This reflects a continuing tendency throughout criticism and histories of twentieth-century Japanese art to gauge its commensurability with European precedents. In the words of Tomimoto's assistant, Kondō Yūzō, Maillol's sculpture exuded a

⁸⁹ Trans. Tanaka Kisaku 田中喜作, 7, no. 3 (1921): 2–15.

⁹⁰ April 11–20. Kyoto Bunka Hakubutsukan, ed., *Shirakaba-ha no aishita Bijutsu: 'Shirakaba' tanjō 100-nen* (Osaka: Yomiuri Shimbun Osaka Honsha, 2009), 220. In October 1910, the magazine *Shirakaba* devoted an entire issue to a “Rodin 70th Birthday Anniversary Selection.”

⁹¹ Kikuchi, *Japanese Modernisation and Mingei Theory*, 22. Tomimoto's admiration for Maillol over Rodin may have contributed to or reflected the schism emerging between his interests and those of the *Mingei* group led by Yanagi.

“concealed vanity and beautiful modest taste” that was similar to Korean objects’ “*sabi*” (beauty of materials worn over time).⁹² Such commensurability abounds when considering Maillol’s influence on Tomimoto. Yamamoto Shigeo, for example, has equated Maillol’s “*gikochi*” (stiffness, the translation of Maurice Denis’s word *gaucherie*) with the “*setsu*” or “unskillfulness” of Chikuden, the artist after whom Tomimoto was named.⁹³ No Western scholars of Maillol have pointed out his bronzes’ similarity to the aged quality of Korean objects or the amateurish brushstrokes of Chikuden. What this reveals, then, is that artists, critics, and even contemporary curators like Yamamoto have attempted to promote commensurability between the historical/modern arts of East Asia and modern France. Such commensurability promotes the assessment of historical and modern ceramics as not craft of a lesser stature than art according to Western hierarchies, but art equivalent in value to the highest ranking artistic works in modern Europe.

Conclusion

As this chapter has demonstrated, Tomimoto’s initial configurations of the ceramic vessel as art required manipulations on several fronts. The vessel had to be understood as a modern, abstract image, with the potential to circulate widely. For Tomimoto, the quintessential vessel as three-dimensional form was located in colonial Korea, a space perceived as other from both historical Japan and modern Japan. This distancing made it possible to absorb the form and surface of the *hakuji tsubo* into the

⁹² “Rokuro to watashi,” *Bi no kuni* 4, no. 32 (March, 1928): 51.

⁹³ Yamamoto, “‘Goshurii’ to ‘setsu,’” 50–52.

rhetoric of modernist, expressionistic sculpture in a manner that would have not been as appealing to critics had Tomimoto looked to Japanese historical ceramics as formal models. The *hakuji tsubo*, for Tomimoto rooted in both imperialist and modernist aesthetics, was ideally suited for his interests in exploring artistic expression through three-dimensional form. As Maillol conveyed his autonomous vision of the human figure through bronze, so Tomimoto believed he conveyed his ideas about form and surface through ceramics. After Tomimoto's earlier experimentations with design works in multiple mediums, he began to focus more narrowly on the production of ceramics in the 1920s, bolstered by the modernist ways in which he conceived the medium.

Conceptually, we may interpret the *hakuji tsubo* as Tomimoto's ultimate *moyō*, both the image and the essence of ceramics as art. In one sense, the plain white jar could be seen as the ultimate rejection of Meiji ceramics' *horror vacui*, but it was more than a mere minimalist rendering of a Meiji vessel. Through his focus on the essences of objects, rather than utilitarian concerns, Tomimoto transformed the vessel into a modernist form that performed as art and was distinct from vessels understood simply as *kōgei*.

Tomimoto's concern with both ceramics as images and ceramics as three-dimensional vessels contributed to the securing of the latter's conceptualization as modern art.

CHAPTER FOUR: Modernizing Painted Porcelain: *Tōban* and *Kazari Bako*

Introduction

Chapter Three focused on the form of the undecorated white porcelain jar as a major trope in Tomimoto's modernist enterprise to make Joseon-inspired ceramics commensurable with transnational modernist art. This chapter continues the analysis to consider what Tomimoto referred to as the "clothing" he painted on porcelain forms using the materials *sometsuke* (underglaze blue pigment) and *iro-e jiki* (overglaze enamel porcelain).¹ As described in the previous chapter, Tomimoto produced both undecorated and decorated forms according to, as he stated, his assessment of their forms. In his later years he continued to make undecorated porcelain vessels, but his work in *iro-e jiki*, in particular, became his major focus. *Iro-e jiki* comprises an important subject of analysis since it was the technique for which Tomimoto was designated a Holder of Important Intangible Cultural Property in 1955. For this and other reasons, it was, and arguably continues to be, a significant embodiment of modern Japanese cultural capital. Historically an elite form of ceramics, *iro-e jiki* was the segment of Tomimoto's oeuvre most collected in the postwar era by the Imperial Household Agency, the Ministry of Culture, and Japanese embassies around the world. It commanded amongst the highest prices of any modern Japanese ceramics of Tomimoto's time and since.² Tomimoto's innovative manipulations of form and surface within the tradition of *iro-e jiki* were

¹ For a description of each of these techniques, see Richard Wilson, *Inside Japanese Ceramics* (New York/Tokyo: Weatherhill, 1999), 114–15; 139–42.

² In the mid-1950s, the price of an *iro-e jiki* ornamental box by Tomimoto sold for the price of an average Japanese house of that time. Yamamoto Shigeo, in discussion with the author, July 2009.

typified by two main types of ceramics, the *tōban* (ceramic disc) and the *kazari bako* (ornamental box).³

In this chapter, I will analyze selected examples of *sometsuke* and *iro-e jiki* in roughly chronological order from a 1924 *tōban* to a 1962 *tōban*. I place this extensive range within one chapter in order to trace the development of Tomimoto's extensive contributions to the history of art ceramics (*bijutsu tōki*) through *iro-e jiki*. While there were major changes over time in his oeuvre, several major consistencies are apparent. Primary throughout was a privileging of the optic over the haptic, an aspect that did not deny the importance of form and three-dimensionality per se, but encouraged a viewer's engagement with his art to occur through visual observation while the object was on display, not in use. To some degree this was dictated by the need to display ceramics within multi-media national arts exhibitions in which they competed for visual attention with painting and sculpture. But the emphasis on ceramics as displayed objects also was affected by the needs of placing ceramics in Western-style interiors (as was the initial determining factor, I argue, for *tōban*) as well as, more broadly, the conceptualization of art ceramics as a genre not meant for utilitarian use but for visual appreciation in any suitable space (that could, for example, also be a *tokonoma*). In other words, *bijutsu tōki*,

³ I use the romanized Japanese "*kazari bako*" here since the *kazari* implies more than just ornament or decoration. As Tsuji Nobuo has explained, *kazari* can refer to "archaeological artefacts, festive decorations, ceremonial utensils, and objects used during special occasions in daily life, as well as more conventional works of art." See "On *Kazari*," in *Kazari: Decoration and Display in Japan 15th–19th Centuries*, ed. Nicole Coolidge Rousmaniere (New York: Japan Society and Harry N. Abrams, 2002), 14.

by definition, were ceramics worthy of evaluation set apart from any defined utilitarian requirements.

Painting the surfaces of porcelain not only satisfied the optical primacy required of art ceramics, but it also developed as a primary artistic focus for Tomimoto due to several main conditions. The first two were practical. By painting surfaces, Tomimoto capitalized on his technical abilities, or lack thereof. While he continued to throw on the potter's wheel throughout his years of artistic production, including as we will see the form of a 1957 tsubo, he also relied, as mentioned in previous chapters, on technicians. These technicians fabricated, or assisted in the fabrication, of many of the porcelain forms themselves. Further, he relied on technicians for the successful conduct of his firings, particularly after he moved to Kyoto in 1946. This kind of reliance on others was consistent with traditional ceramics studio praxis in Japan, but was underplayed in written accounts since it undermined the perceived authenticity of the autonomous art object. The second practical condition was financial. Simply put, overglaze enamel, particularly the gold and silver used abundantly in his later years, was perceived by collectors as a form of luxury ceramics that demanded high prices. By mentioning this I am not implying that Tomimoto was drawn to the medium simply in order to acquire wealth, but in his early years of ceramics work there is evidence that he had financial concerns.⁴ By selling works considered elegant, refined art ceramics, Tomimoto clearly was no longer interested in directing his work towards the creation of functional wares at

⁴ Letters to Leach written in the 1920s refer several times to the poor economic conditions of Japan at the time and his concern for selling works. TKKA.

low prices as he had been in the 1910s, and which had propelled his early association with the *Mingei* group. By the time of his post-1945 works in particular, as historical records attest, Tomimoto was experiencing great success with the sale of his works which was dependent on the perception of them as forms of high cultural capital, a subject I will explore in more depth in Chapter Five.

Additionally, his painting on porcelain was conditioned by several conceptual foundations. First was his long-standing interest in *moyō* and the embellishment of surfaces. The other conditions were historically rooted. He assimilated himself into the history of Kyoto ceramics by accepting critics and collectors' associations of his work with "Kyo-yaki" overglaze enamel painting. Related to this is his fervent interest in the ceramics and persona of Ogata Kenzan I, the Kyoto ceramist par extraordinaire who Tomimoto looked to as an artistic model, particularly according to modern constructions of Kenzan's persona as an "individual" ceramist. Like his association with Kyo-yaki, the influence of Kenzan I was not reflected in direct copies of historical examples, but rather a conceptual set of premises that his painted work could be grounded upon.

Given such historical precedents, though, Tomimoto's original *iro-e jiki* forms, *kazari bako* and *tōban*, were like no others in Japanese ceramics history in terms of their optical privileging as a determining factor in their forms and surfaces. As important as these mature works of Tomimoto's oeuvre were in realizing his aim for individualistic expression, however, recent critical analysis of them is scant.⁵ Therefore, a primary goal

⁵ As discussed in previous chapters, the most recent critical analyses of Tomimoto's work have tended to be motivated by shedding new light on his early activities as student in England, as

of this chapter is to establish a framework for interpretation of them based on formal analysis. To observers unfamiliar with the centuries of *iro-e jiki* history, his ceramics may seem conservative in their use of traditional techniques. But even a cursory comparison with historical Japanese precedents demonstrates how radical his reworking of *iro-e jiki* was. In their time and throughout later scholarship on them, Tomimoto's surface paintings of flowers, landscapes, and repeating patterns have been evaluated as original creations growing from his intensive *plein air* sketches. While it is important to acknowledge this modernist reliance on original experience translated to his ceramics, these surface designs operated in more complex ways that must be accounted for. Tomimoto's making of modern Japanese ceramics inherently involved hybridizations of forms and surfaces from multiple temporal and geographic sources. Acknowledgement of such hybridization does not minimize the self-reflexivity inherent in his *plein air* sketch-based surfaces; rather, attention to issues of hybridization positions Tomimoto more securely within the constellation of influences that his work absorbed.

The goal of this chapter is to deconstruct Tomimoto's painted porcelain in order to reveal the mechanisms, over time, with which he radicalized *iro-e jiki* to make it modern art ceramics (*bijutsu tōki*). As these examples will show, his *iro-e jiki* works, as with all of Tomimoto's ceramics, drew from a complex mix of sources in terms of mediums and cultural origins unified ultimately by Tomimoto's personal vision.

designer, as decorator in regional studios, and as artist of undecorated porcelain forms as discussed in Chapter Three. To a large degree, this scholarship has accomplished much in deconstructing the myth of the artist as master *iro-e jiki* ceramist. His mature *iro-e jiki* is well known and documented, and in his lifetime as well as in numerous posthumous retrospectives has, until recently, been the main focus of exhibitions and published compendia.

However, it is discernible that Tomimoto's *iro-e jiki* reveals growing tendencies for his more private self-reflexive works to quote from literati sources, and for his public works meant for national and international display to manipulate Japanese *iro-e* techniques into visual spectacles of abstracted patterns. In this chapter I will examine works primarily using formal analysis and in Chapter Five consider their institutional and organizational contexts.

Early *Tōban*

Ito Tetsuo has described *tōban*, ceramic discs or plaques, as so major to Tomimoto's oeuvre that they "can be said to be the bottom line (*sōkessan*) of his art."⁶ Like *kazari bako*, Tomimoto began to make *tōban* around the same time he started working with porcelain in the 1920s and continued to make them over the entire course of his lifetime.⁷ The *tōban* emerged as a format not only privileging the optic potential of the ceramic medium, but also one that demonstrated the equivalency Tomimoto perceived between sketching, print-making painting and ceramics. They did not primarily feature patterns; instead, *tōban* served as platforms for painterly expressions in several styles which can be traced relatively chronologically, first from *nanga*-like landscapes with sentimental associations to Ando-mura; then Kutani-derived still life paintings; and finally, from 1945 and after, poetry with floral painting influenced by Ming Chinese and

⁶ "Tomimoto Kenkichi no oriedamon shibun sōshoku no tōban sakō," *Kyoto Shiritsu Geijutsu Daigaku Bijutsu Gakubu kenkyū kiyō* 48 (2004), 67.

⁷ The earliest *tōban* I have found is dated to 1920, a wood-framed *sometsuke* image of house with a straw-thatched roof. See Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo, *Tomimoto Kenkichi* (1991), 64.

Edo Japanese porcelain plates. This section traces the origins of his *tōban* and his surface expressions in *sometsuke* and *iro-e jiki*.

The concept of a painted flat ceramic surface was not unprecedented in Japan, and there is evidence of rectangular stoneware plaques made in Seto painted in underglaze cobalt with literati themes.⁸ These were clearly not plates and were, like Tomimoto's *tōban*, meant to be hung on walls. However, Tomimoto appears to have been the first modern Japanese ceramist to create flat, circular painted discs in porcelain.⁹ He is credited with the neologism *tōban* by combining the characters *tō* 陶, “ceramic,” and *ban* 板, “board” or “panel.” Tomimoto's *tōban* forms lie completely flat and bear holes on the reverse that can have cords inserted for hanging. Achieving such flat forms in porcelain that would not warp in the kiln was exceedingly difficult, Tomimoto recounted.¹⁰

Tomimoto traced his initial interest in this form not to Japanese precedents or any form of porcelain decorative plates, but to early twentieth-century English interiors. He wrote, “Around 1908 in England, many Victorian era customs remained, and it was a time when many trifling plates were hung in sitting rooms. I thought they were not plates, but like flat-surfaced panels, and I thought of them as substitutions for paintings. I called

⁸ See, for example, a mid-19th century Seto rectangular plaque picturing a Chinese scholar at a dock. Cort, *Seto and Mino Ceramics*, 216.

⁹ A similarly-sized porcelain disc with a *sometsuke* inscription of the character “fuku” 福 (good fortune), framed in wood like the Tomimoto *tōban* described below, was made by Kitaōji Rosanjin in 1939. See Nakanōdō Kazunobu, ed., *Kitaōji Rosanjin ten: botsugo gojūnen* (Tokyo: Iemua inettowāku, 2009), 43.

¹⁰ He began to make porcelain *tōban* three years after first working with porcelain. Ito, “Tomimoto Kenkichi no oriedamon shibun sōshoku no tōban sakō,” 67.

them by the term *tōban*.”¹¹ Like porcelain plates on the walls of the Victorian home, the intended placement for *tōban* appears to have been Western-style interiors. For example, at the 1924 Nojima exhibition of his ceramics (**Fig. 4.1**), his *tōban* hung from the interior wallpapered and wooden walls in Nojima Yasuzō’s home. A 1928 photograph of the Tomimoto family’s Soshigaya, Tokyo, dining room (**Fig. 4.2**) shows two porcelain paintings on the walls next to an English clock in a room with wooden floors and Windsor-style chairs.¹² Although they are square-shaped, this photograph indicates that *tōban*, for Tomimoto, were inexorably linked to his visions of porcelain on the walls of English homes.

Sometsuke Tōban

Tomimoto’s earliest *tōban* served as platforms for *nanga*-like (literati style) brushed landscapes framed in heavy wood and intended for Western-style interiors. In 1924, he created a *tōban* (**Fig. 4.3**) 30.5 centimeters in diameter with an underglaze brushed blue painting of a *moyō* he termed “old tree” (*rōju* 老樹). The disc is enclosed in a thick wooden frame like others of this period. Ito Tetsuo has suggested the frame was created in order to link this work to *yōga*.¹³ It is a compelling interpretation. Conceiving of a work he made in the realm of *yōga* would have placed it, as I have stated in previous

¹¹ Quoted in Naitō, *Tomimoto Kenkichi tōkishū*, 18.

¹² A Western-style dining room in a Tokyo home was not unusual in early Shōwa Japan. Its specific furnishings and arrangement of elements, though, reflected Tomimoto’s early interest in British Arts and Crafts architecture. For a thorough analysis of domestic spaces of this period in Japan, see Jordan Sand, *House and Home in Modern Japan: Architecture, Domestic Space, and Bourgeois Culture, 1880–1930* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003).

¹³ Ito, “Tomimoto Kenkichi no oriedamon shibun sōshoku no tōban sakō,” 67.

chapters, on par with the individualistic expressions of his peers and encouraged an assessment of his ceramics as modern art, not craft. And it is in keeping with the idea that this was meant to be hung on the wall of a European-style room. Yet, the porcelain plates Tomimoto encountered in London hanging on Victorian interiors' walls would certainly have not been framed. Most likely, Tomimoto added the wide frame in order to pronounce this an object meant primarily for viewing, not a utilitarian vessel.

Its *nanga*-like painting is executed with dark and light blues to convey a large, dramatically twisting, leafless, tree in the center of the composition next to a small roofed shrine structure, and, below an area conveying ground, the Chinese characters for *rōju* are inscribed in semi-cursive, bold script. This exemplifies his growing interest in calligraphic expression at this time. Tomimoto wrote, “from around the age of forty, I began to write energetically, and gradually began to receive many requests [for calligraphy] from people.”¹⁴ The subject of this *tōban*, as the inscription pronounces, an “old tree,” is nostalgic. Tomimoto wrote:

The picture [on this *tōban*] is an old chinaberry tree in the south of my village.¹⁵ There is a legend that Shōtoku Taishi's white hawk is buried there. I copied it facing the east to west direction. In the distant view, what looks small like a forest is the adjacent village's bamboo thicket; from the north, I copied it any number of times, and it is said that the villagers, too, safeguard it dearly, but with last year's Typhoon 'Jane,' it was broken off by the wind, and now it is disappointing that this famous tree has only a four or five *shaku* [approx. 1.5 meters] stump left above the ground.¹⁶

¹⁴ Mizue 610 (May 1956): 45.

¹⁵ Meila azedarach (*sendan* 梅檀)

¹⁶ Naitō, *Tomimoto Kenkichi tōkishū*, 18. The motif of this particular “old tree” does not appear again in any of Tomimoto's later works; later works illustrating trees depict willow trees or pine trees, but these are relatively rare as well. In March 17–April 14, 1930, Tomimoto showed a set of six *kazari zara* painted with scenery, perhaps including this scene, at the Second Shōtoku

This *tōban* records a highly specific, individual encounter local to Ando-mura. The tree was imbued with meaning because of its association with imperial prince Shōtoku Taishi (574–622), regarded as the father of the Japanese nation because of his championing of Buddhism and Confucianism as well as his authorship in 604 of a seventeen article constitution. Similarly, other sometsuke *tōban* of this era record Ando-mura scenes specific to Tomimoto’s individual encounters with them; subjects include a thatch-roofed house (1920), a scene of “drawing water under a scorching sun” (1921) and “straw stacks” (1921).¹⁷

While for Tomimoto it undoubtedly was the rendering of a distinct locality, the *tōban*’s subject also recalls that of a plate Leach made after he returned to England in 1920, suggesting the two mutually influenced each other through their active correspondence at this time.¹⁸ In 1923, Leach created a Staffordshire-inspired earthenware plate with a motif he called the “tree of life,” similarly placing a leafless deciduous tree central to the surface of a circular form (**Fig. 4.4**). Ceramics historians Oliver Watson, Garth Clark, and others have speculated that the tree form, which appears

Taishi Bijutsuten at Tokyo Metropolitan Museum. The site he illustrated later became associated with a sense of loss. As he describes above, Typhoon Jane struck western Honshu in September, 1950, causing, as reported in various newspapers, hundreds of deaths and hundreds of thousands of people to lose their homes. In a 1961 roundtable discussion, he reported that the tree had died, and “although it’s a very rare tree, the folks in town have become Americanized, and they are fine with that kind of thing being destroyed.” Tomimoto, “Zadankai, Tomimoto Kenkichi no gojūnen, sakutō gojūnen ten o kinen shite,” 10. When I saw the site in 2009, there was a tall tree there next to a small shrine structure, presumably the same structure as in the early twentieth century.

¹⁷ The straw stacks *tōban* is in the Tomimoto Kenkichi Memorial Museum, and the other two in private collections. See *Tomimoto Kenkichi ten* (Tokyo: National Museum of Modern Art, 1991), Figs. 13, 19, and 23.

¹⁸ Sketches of trees appear on many of their letters and postcards. TKKA and BLA, CSC.

on many of Leach's works through his later years, may derive from an image he saw on a Han dynasty shrine.¹⁹ He may have seen the well-known second century C.E. Wu family shrine during his time living in China 1914–1917. On one section of the shrine's relief, (**Fig. 4.5**), the legendary archer Yi shoots nine out of ten sun crows surrounding the Fusang Tree of the sun, heroically preventing a drought by reducing the number of suns to just one.

Comparing Tomimoto's early *tōban* to Leach's plate is informative because, like Tomimoto's *tōban*, Leach's plate combines mediums and subjects, as he saw them, from both the "East" and "West."²⁰ And, more significantly, both derived from a sentimentality towards their places of birth—in the case of Leach this was realized in his revivalist use of English medieval slipware mediums and techniques, and in the case of Tomimoto it was the subject of the painting itself. Tomimoto's *tōban* subject was saturated with symbolic content linking to China in terms of both the tree itself, with references to Shōtoku who was so enamored of China, as well as the iconicity of the tree which, as Leach's plate may have also referenced, could be seen as an ancient Chinese symbol. At the same time, this *tōban* by Tomimoto reflected a highly original reliance, as

¹⁹ Oliver Watson, *Studio Pottery: Twentieth Century British Ceramics in the Victoria and Albert Museum Collection* (London: Phaidon Press Ltd., 1994), 201. Garth Clark, *The Potter's Art: A Complete History of Pottery in Britain* (London: Phaidon Press Ltd., 1995), 153. Malcolm Baker, Brenda Richardson, and Anthony Burton, *A Grand Design: the Art of the Victoria and Albert Museum* (New York / Baltimore: Harry Abrams / Baltimore Museum of Art, 1997), 367.

²⁰ Leach's concept of "the marriage of East and West," central to his artistic aspirations, is the subject of Suzuki Sadahiro, *Bānādo Rīchi no shōgai to geijutsu: 'higashi to nishi no kekkon' no vijon* (Kyoto: Minerva Shobō, 2006).

with his *moyō*, on images collected from direct visual encounters that no one could describe as copies, at least directly.

From critics and colleagues, Tomimoto received high accolades for his *sometsuke* brushwork as seen on this *tōban* and other works from this period. *Yōga* painter, former assistant to Henri Matisse, and later porcelain painter, Hazama Inosuke (碓伊之助, 1895–1977) praised Tomimoto’s brushwork and wrote that Tomimoto used a thickly cut brush of the kind used by the Kanō school. In declaring that Tomimoto’s facture was “decidedly Japanese,” he connected Tomimoto’s ceramics not only to the continuum of Japanese ceramics history but, in his description of his brush, to Japan’s paramount painting atelier established in the fifteenth century.²¹ Tomimoto continued to create *sometsuke* work through his later years but ultimately in public perception of him it was overshadowed by *iro-e jiki* for which he was awarded the designation Holder of Important Intangible Cultural Property.

***Iro-e Jiki* from Edo to Shōwa**

Overglaze enamel painting, or the application of glazes on top of already fired and glazed ceramics, has a long history and is—across time periods and geographic origins—a technique associated with luxury and refinement. The technique is essentially the application of low-temperature maturing glazes consisting mainly of lead oxide to already glazed and fired ceramics followed by another firing in an oxidized kiln at 700–

²¹ “Tomimoto Kenkichi kinen ten o mite,” *Tōsetsu* 36 (March, 1956): 76. This article critiques Tomimoto’s 45th anniversary exhibition.

800 degrees Celsius. In the Mesopotamian world, examples of luster painting (the application of metallic overglazes) date to the ninth century and were commissioned by Abbasid caliphs (r. 749–1258). In China, examples of overglazes can be found dating to the early thirteenth century in the Jin dynasty (1115–1234), and overglaze enamel painting flourished through imperial sponsored production at Jingdezhen in the Ming (1368–1644) and Qing (1644–1911) dynasties. Overglaze enamels from the Middle and Near East, China, as well as overglaze enamels from Japan, were all influential for Tomimoto. Given its international scope, *iro-e jiki* can be described as an international medium well-suited for the work of a transnational artist like Tomimoto.

The first overglaze enamel ceramics were produced in Japan in the 1640s and were termed “red painting” (*aka-e* 赤絵). Only in the twentieth century, and particularly after Tomimoto was designated a Holder of Important Intangible Cultural Property for the technique, did the term *iro-e jiki*, literally “color painting porcelain,” come in to use. Arita was the center for overglaze enamel painting on porcelain, and Kyoto for overglaze enamel painting on earthenware.²² The earliest individual ceramist to earn renown for overglaze enamels was the seventeenth-century artist Nonomura Ninsei (active c. 1646–77). The painterly refinement on the surfaces of his jars for display and use in the tea ceremony, such as his jars with overglaze painting of poppies, plum trees, wisteria, and rolling hills, clearly linked to Heian period (794–1195) court painting approaches to composition, color, and subject. Because he lived in Kyoto (after 1946), Tomimoto’s *iro-*

²² Overglaze porcelain made in Arita is also generally referred to as Imari porcelain (Imari is the port near Arita). Within Arita wares, Kakiemon, Iro-Nabeshima, and Kutani are the best known styles.

e jiki has occasionally been historicized by linking it to the history of “Kyo-yaki,” and thereby traceable to Ninsei. But Tomimoto’s work received inspiration stylistically from multiple sources and should not be considered solely a modern form of “Kyo-yaki” based on its technique. Also, it was always executed on porcelain, not earthenware or stoneware, the substructures with which Kyō-yaki is associated.

For Tomimoto, the overglaze enamel wares of Ogata Kenzan I were more influential. Interest in Kenzan grew among ceramists in 1928 when Kasuga Junsei excavated Kenzan’s kiln, followed by discoveries of Kenzan’s notes and documents. In 1933, ceramist Kitaōji Rosanjin praised Kenzan’s ceramics as “at once rough and sophisticated, sublime and callow.... He was a man who followed Confucius’ dictum to ‘play with the arts.’... [He] was in every way a dilettante who played at art, with no desire for social status or acclaim.”²³ In 1942, Fukui Rikichirō wrote the book *Kōhon Kenzan nempyō* (Tentative Kenzan chronology) and then three texts of Kenzan’s were introduced in conjunction with a 200th commemorative exhibition of his ceramics. Kenzan’s overglaze enamels were more direct stylistic and subject models for Tomimoto in the sense that they often combined text and images, relied on classical poetry, and emphasized a brushwork style comparable to that of ink on paper.

Concerning the quality of brush marking, Tomimoto praised the dynamic and vivid qualities of Kenzan’s work effusively. Describing the brush technique on a Kenzan

²³ Quoted in Hirano Masaaki, ed., *Rosanjin tōsetsu* (Tokyo: Shobōsha, 1975), 84. In 1948, Kobayashi Tachiro, scholar of Hokusai and French literature, published *Kenzan Kyoto hen* 乾山京都篇 (Kyoto: Zenkoku Shobō). This was generally regarded as the definitive historical text on Kenzan until Richard Wilson and Ogasawara Saeko’s 1992 monograph, *Ogata Kenzan: Zen sakuhin to sono keifu* (Tokyo: Yuzankaku).

bucket-shaped water container in the collection of Kobayashi Ichizō (小林一三, 1873–1957)—a piece which Tomimoto said he was so happy to see that even in his dreams he could not imagine seeing such great a piece—he said that the quality of the lines depicting the iris resembled a “chicken playing” and that “as much as [he] had been making ceramics, he [was not] able to achieve the flavor” of the line being “quickly drawn with immediacy.”²⁴ In his 1956 essay on Ninsei and Kenzan, Tomimoto wrote, “I have read over and over Kenzan’s ‘Tōhō denshō (transmission of the laws of pottery),’ and I am struck that Kenzan was a very honest person, true to himself.”²⁵ Tomimoto highlighted the fact that Kenzan had learned ceramics by reading the notes of his famed predecessor Ninsei, and that Kenzan himself did not belong to any artistic lineage. As Kenzan had learned from Ninsei’s text, as an amateur, so Tomimoto claimed that in his youth he and Leach, as amateurs, had learned from the book *Quaint Old English Pottery*.²⁶ After Tomimoto surpassed his sixty-year mark, he again looked to Kenzan as a role model, writing, “Kenzan had a strength that revealed itself particularly in his later years, and he lived until age eighty. Around age sixty [his artistic strength] was not there.”²⁷ Thus, Kenzan’s influence was consistent through Tomimoto’s life.

²⁴ “Idobata kaiga,” *Tankō* 7, no. 8 (July 1953): 26.

²⁵ *Ninsei, Kenzan no tōhō, Sekai tōki zenshū* 5 (Tokyo: Kawade Shobō. 1956), 229.

²⁶ In Japan there had been a long historical precedence regarding books on ceramics for amateurs. As early as 1736, *Rakuyaki hinō* (Collected Raku ceramic secrets) was published, illustrating the processes of production.

²⁷ “Idobata kaiga,” 30. Although Tomimoto had manipulated the rhetoric of age to decry Kenzan VI as a “rōjin” (old man), he used it here to praise Kenzan I.

Early *Iro-e Jiki Tōban*

Tomimoto's first experimentations using *aka-e* on porcelain took place in 1919. That October, a young ceramist fresh from the Kyoto Ceramics Technical Institute, Kondō Yūzō (近藤悠三, 1902–1985), became his assistant, and the next month they created sixty sake cups with red enamel ground and gold leaf (*akaji kinsai* 赤地金彩) for politician Imamura Kinzō 今村勤三 and his wife's golden wedding commemoration.²⁸ Undoubtedly Kondō was instrumental in this project, assisting Tomimoto in the successful application of this difficult overglaze technique.²⁹ It was not until his work in the Kanazawa studio of Kitade Tōjiro, however, that *iro-e jiki* became a primary focus for Tomimoto. As outlined in Chapter One, he spent eight months training and working there in 1936 and again for a shorter period in 1941.

One of his most significant and representative *iro-e jiki tōban* (Fig. 4.6) was made in 1938 and shown at the Second Shin Bunten exhibition. Its surface was painted with an image of a *tokkuri* (sake bottle) holding reeds in the center of an otherwise blank white porcelain surface. The image of reeds suggests a host of interpretations, as reed images

²⁸ Tomimoto hired Kondō Yūzō on the recommendation of Hamada Shōji. Kondō's career trajectory followed Tomimoto's in several ways; he became an instructor at the Kyoto Shiritsu Bijutsu Daigaku in 1956, head of the university in 1965, and received the designation Holder of Important Intangible Cultural Property for *sometsuke* in 1977.

²⁹ Experimentations continued in the 1920s and finally Tomimoto studied at Kitade Tōjiro's kiln, as described in Chapter One. Very few of these early works in overglaze enamel are extant, and compared to later examples, their quality of color, facility with the brush, and adherence of the enamel to the glaze surface was less developed. Remembering Matsuda Gonroku's 松田権六 accounts of an early exhibition of Tomimoto's overglaze enamel porcelain at Tokyo's Matsuzakaya department store, Kitade Fujio 北出不二雄 (1919–) stated, "the coloring on the overglaze enamel works delivered to customers peeled off." Kitade Fujio, "Kutani de no sensei," in Inui, *Tomimoto Kenkichi zenshū*, 170.

have been prominent plant features of Japanese painting since the Heian period. The *tokkuri* itself resembles the kind of *tokkuri* he was creating at the time, either at Kitade's kiln or using techniques learned there. One example showing the same subject and overall composition of the pictured vessel is a *tokkuri* with *sometsuke* painting of plum and bamboo of 1945 (**Fig. 4.7**). Tomimoto's picturing of his own vessels is significant since it challenged historical precedents and reflected a highly self-reflexive tendency in his work. This concept of an image of a ceramics work appearing on the surface of a ceramic piece is seen on a sizeable number of works in Tomimoto's oeuvre. It is a mode we may term—to borrow W.J.T. Mitchell's concept of metapictures—metaceramics.³⁰ Such imaging of his own vessels on the surfaces of his porcelain reveals his interest in his own ceramics as “images” as much as, or more than, utilitarian vessels.

Metaceramics per se were not new. We can find many examples of ceramic vessels and baskets pictured on Ming and Arita porcelain vessels for both domestic and export markets, and Tomimoto undoubtedly had seen examples of these. A *sometsuke* dish from Jingdezhen with a flower basket design of c. 1621–27 is one example (**Fig. 4.8**). Tomimoto's image, in contrast, is *specific* to his time and place, picturing a vase that he made. It, therefore, can be said to represent not an *idea* of a vessel holding a large bunch of blooming flowers but a still life akin to those his colleagues in the field of *yōga* were so actively engaged in painting at the time.

The aforementioned 1938 *tōban* by Tomimoto received high accolades when it was shown at the Shin Bunten in the autumn of 1938. A critic for the *Asahi* newspaper

³⁰ “Metapictures,” in *Picture Theory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 35–82.

proclaimed that this *tōban* gave “new life to the classics” and had a “pristine (*seiso*) feeling.”³¹ Another critic, Moriguchi Tari, stated that this work marked Tomimoto’s surpassing of ceramist Itaya Hazan (板谷波山, 1872–1963) at the Shin Bunten.

Moriguchi contrasted their ceramics in humanistic terms, describing Tomimoto’s *tōban* as “covered in errors” exuding a “kind of love” with a human warmth, and Itaya Hazan’s appearing more “anti-human” by relying on a more scientific set of artistic ideals.³²

Another *tōban* (**Fig. 4.9**) of 1940 is instructive to this subject of inquiry. As for the 1938 *tōban*, Tomimoto utilized a circular porcelain substructure as a painterly surface for a still life image of a ceramic vessel filled with flowers. In the 1940 composition, the flowers fill a vase resting on a square mat. In this image, the orchids and adiantum occupy a substantial part of the surface, bringing to mind Ming porcelain precedents and suggesting that we can interpret this work as intending a more felicitous sentiment than the 1938 *tōban*. Again, the vessel pictured seems to refer to Tomimoto’s own creation, a white porcelain vase from the body of undecorated porcelain vessels that he made beginning in the 1920s.

Not all *tōban* of this time featured ceramic vessels and flowers. A 1941 *tōban* (**Fig. 4.10**) with Kutani-style overglaze painting of *myōga* (Japanese ginger) and eggplant was created at Kitade Tōjiro’s studio in Kanazawa. In contrast to the *sometsuke tōban* described above, this *tōban* represents, for Tomimoto, a new type of subject and technique with historical roots in Kutani ware. It recalls in its color usage and subject

³¹ “Bunten no kōgei kara, chōkoku garasu to iro-e *tōban*,” (August 1, 1938): 6.

³² Moriguchi Tari 森口多里, “Bunten daiyonbuhyō [Critique of the Bunten’s 4th division],” *Atorie* 15, no. 16 (Nov. 1938): 26.

matter early nineteenth-century Kutani ware probably made at the Yoshidaya kilns 1824–1831 (**Fig. 4.11**). In both works, an eggplant's fleshiness and volume is rendered by applying heavy brush daubs of pigment and leaving white the area on the main body just below the eggplant's calyx. We also see the use of a yellow ground with black dots as a framing device in both. However, Tomimoto's substructure for painting was a *tōban*, not a plate, and he dramatically reduced the central composition to an isolated painterly still life. The *tōban*, then, functions more as a painterly surface than a plate to be embellished across its entire surface, an effect pronounced by the bright white porcelain around the central subject resembling white paper.³³

If we interpret this *tōban* by Tomimoto as a painting, it reveals parallels with contemporaneous vegetable still life paintings and other vernacular subjects painted in great quantity by modern literati artists such as Qi Baishi (齊白石/ 齐白石, 1864–1957). This allows us to then link this work into the long history of paintings of vegetables and fruit in East Asian painting and the reverberations such a subject might have had for Tomimoto and the object's viewers. As Jonathan Hay has noted in the case of early Qing painting, vegetable paintings had multivalenced meanings; since vegetables were staples to the diet of monks, a painting with that subject could be read as a synecdoche for

³³ Tomimoto also created works that were clearly more directly derived from Kutani forms. One square plate in the Mingeikan collection of 1936 was, it appears, painted on a pre-made molded Kutani plate in the same shape as that of Fig. 4.11. Its interior motif, however, is quite distinctive, comprising two interlocking thistle stems. Inui, *Gendai Nihon tōgei zenshū dai sankan Tomimoto Kenkichi*, fig. 22.

“asceticism and spiritual commitment.”³⁴ Alas, vegetable subjects never became a major part of Tomimoto’s oeuvre, but we should take note that this *tōban* is representative of a highly sinophilic strain of Tomimoto’s production that continued into his later *tōban* and paintings.

The 1941 Shin Bunten *Kazari Bako*

Tomimoto also applied Kutani overglaze techniques to a form he termed *kazari bako*, ornamental boxes. A *kazari bako* that became a turning point in his work was his 1941 covered rectangular box with underglaze blue and overglaze enamel patterns shown at the 1941 Shin Bunten (**Fig. 4.12**). Its form and surface was uniquely suited for the needs of display at this exhibition and others in the future. By 1955, the same year Tomimoto received the designation of Holder of Important Intangible Cultural Property for overglaze enamels, the box was described in a solo exhibition publication as the “locus of a virtuoso’s virtuosity” (*meijingei no meijingei taru tokoro*).³⁵ It formally ushered in for Tomimoto the primacy of the visual phenomenological experience for a ceramic vessel. It is a box meant to hold nothing; its purpose was to put forth Tomimoto’s brush expression and originality of *moyō* using materials and techniques grounded in the long history of Japanese and Chinese ceramics.

Let us first consider the genre of the ornamental (*kazari*) box. In the wide spectrum of Japanese arts, there is a long history of rectangular boxes created as luxury

³⁴ *Shitao: Painting and Modernity in Early Qing China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 182–183.

³⁵ *Tomimoto Kenkichi sakutō yonjūgonen kinen ten* (Tokyo: Takashimaya, Nov. 29–Dec. 4, 1955), n.p.

objects to serve as containers as well as to delight the eye, dating at least as far back as the Heian period.³⁶ Intended most often for holding writing tools, documents, or cosmetics, such boxes tended to be crafted of lacquer and bear ornament not only on their outer surfaces but also on their interior ones, often in highly contrasting visual regimes conveying literary and seasonal references. Ceramic lidded boxes were made as early as the late Momoyama period by Mino potters working in the Oribe style. By the Edo period, Ogata Kenzan and Kyō-yaki potters created ceramic boxes as well. The medium of ceramics, in contrast to lacquer, encouraged the use of the containers for food. The proportions of Tomimoto's 1941 box were not appropriate for food storage, however, and although the box might be an appropriate size for storage of brushes or other small objects, its overall form and scale had no major historical precedents. Clearly its designation as an “ornamental box” (*kazari bako*) indicated its disavowal of utility.

In the Teiten exhibition era, ornamental boxes emerged as a viable craft mode for lacquer, metals, and ceramics. In 1938, Yoshida Junichirō (吉田醇一郎, 1898–1965) exhibited his *Diamond Dove Design Ornamental Lacquer Box* (*Usuyukibatomon urushi-e kazari bako* 薄雪鳩文漆絵飾篋, **Fig. 4.13**). Yoshida had initially trained in *nihonga* and first exhibited lacquer at the Teiten in 1930. In his 1938 box's basic form and bird-and-flower subject of doves with pomegranate branches, as well as in its medium, it appears to lie firmly in the long history of lacquer box-making in Japan, even if the yellow lacquer color is unusual. Similarly, a comparison between equivalent mediums—

³⁶ A well-known Heian period example is the Tokyo National Museum's 12th century *maki-e* lacquer with mother-of-pearl inlay *tebako* with a design of wheels half-submerged in a stream.

Tomimoto's box and a lidded hand warmer by Kiyomizu Rokuwa 清水六和 (五代清水六兵衛 Kiyomizu Rokubei V, 1875–1959, **Fig. 4.14**), exhibited at the 1940 Shin Bunten—provides contextualization of the covered ceramic box as a modern art object.³⁷ Like Yoshida's box, its surface subject and form itself are consistent with historical precedents for utilitarian craft works, and its individualistic artistic expression is achieved through its coloration and manner of arranging motifs on the surface. In contrast to these two boxes, the unprecedented shape and graphic surface designs on Tomimoto's box seem comparatively unusual.

While Tomimoto's box clearly drew from the mediums and techniques of Kutani ceramics, its surface deviated from the tradition of both "Old Kutani" and Kutani from the nineteenth century and later.³⁸ The box's surface of blue underglaze pigment and overglaze black, red, and yellow enamels utilized materials and application techniques that Tomimoto had learned at the studio of Kitade Tōjirō beginning in 1936 (see Chapter One). However, the loose qualities of the lines, overall, have no discernible Kutani precedent. In the aforementioned forty-fifth anniversary catalogue, the box's surface is described as uneven, with the comment that had it been created by a machine, it would have lost its beauty.³⁹

³⁷ Kiyomizu Rokubei V descended from a line of Kyō-yaki potters in Kyoto beginning in the late eighteenth century. In 1937, Tomimoto fulfilled a commission for decorating 3000 plates in *sometsuke* with the motif "Bamboo grove on a moonlit night" at the Kiyomizu kiln. This is mentioned in his 1937 *Chūō kōron* 52, no. 6 articles "Yanagi no komoyō" and "Sara no moyō."

³⁸ Descriptions published at the time referred to his inspiration and research focus as being "Old Kutani." Most scholars today concede that what was previously considered "Old Kutani" was in fact a type of porcelain manufactured not in Ishikawa Prefecture, but at Arita in Saga Prefecture.

³⁹ *Tomimoto Kenkichi sakutō yonjūgonen kinen ten*, 8.

Additionally, the interior's repeating pattern is a rendering of a commonly seen *moyō* in Tomimoto's work beginning in 1936 when he first began working in the Kutani style. This mode of a repeating floral motif was called by Tomimoto and others "*sarasa*," a term derived from the word for Indian cotton calico. The design itself, a repeating motif often seen on his works from the 1940s onward, was termed by Tomimoto "*shibenka*," a four-petal design based on Tomimoto's interpretation of an Asian jasmine (*teikakazura*) vine.⁴⁰ It conformed to his early dictum to "never make a pattern from a pattern" since he had based it on a sketch of a jasmine bloom he saw in front of his Soshigaya, Tokyo, home.⁴¹ How did this relate to the tradition of overglaze enamels of Kutani? Yabe Yoshiaki stated, "Old Kutani ware, with its brightly colored overglaze enamels thickly applied on a white porcelain ground, is very much like an oil painting."⁴² Was Tomimoto attracted to Kutani ware due to its visual equivalency to painting? Surely the 1941 box's strong graphic, abstract composition did not originate from an attempt to interpret, in porcelain overglaze, a subject that could have appeared on an oil painting. But Yabe's sentiment suggests the way Tomimoto and others, earlier in the twentieth century, perceived Kutani ware as a particularly painterly form of Japanese ceramics tradition.

⁴⁰ *Trachelospermum asiaticum*. Common in Japanese mountainous regions, its delicate and perfumed five-petal blooms appear in the early summer.

⁴¹ Naitō, *Tomimoto Kenkichi tōkishū*, 62.

⁴² "Old Kutani Ware: A Product of the Imari Kilns," *Chanoyu Quarterly* 79 (1995): 15.

Later *Iro-e Jiki*

Starting in 1945, Tomimoto's *iro-e jiki* transformed in two main ways. He continued to use *tōban* for images of ceramic vessels, but he did not make them as frequently as before, and began to inscribe poetic passages onto their surfaces. *Kazari bako* from the mid-1950s continued to rely on abstract patterns, but the scale of the patterns became larger, and visually dazzling lustrous overglaze gold and silver enamels were used. These two later types of *iro-e jiki* embodied highly personal sentiments, on one hand, and highly public constructions of post-Occupation *bijitusu tōki*, on the other. What unites these two disparate types of work is, I argue, Tomimoto's private and public responses to the tumult of the war and its aftermath. Specifically, in analysis of this period we must consider Tomimoto's turn to Tang dynasty poetry and the use of luxurious materials as expressions of national aesthetics circulating at this critical time in modern Japanese history. The use of Tang poetry was in some ways a channeling of Japan's national past and a reflection of how Japan was defined during the 1930s and early 1940s, with China and other parts of Asia within the empire of Japan. As Tamaki Maeda has argued, already by the early twentieth century Chinese literati painting was considered part of Japanese art according to Japan's place as imperial power in East Asia. As Maeda explains, "This expansion reflected a change in policymakers' focus from the national to the imperial and brought about a shift in the status of literati painting from the periphery to the core within the newly defined Japanese culture."⁴³ In this section I will

⁴³ Tomioka Tessai's *Narrative Landscape: Rethinking Sino-Japanese Traditions* (PhD diss., University of Washington, 2004), 40. Also see Paul Berry and Michiyo Morioka, *Literati*

examine select examples of this later *iro-e jiki* and then in Chapter Five consider their institutional contexts.

Even before his inscription on the “old tree” *tōban*, Tomimoto’s interest in sinophilic expressions through calligraphy on ceramics is perceptible on his earliest Raku work such as a stoneware *tokkuri* (sake bottle) with a cobalt brushed inscription around its body, “*fūki chōshun*” (riches and honors, long spring, **Fig. 3.6**). This and similar early pieces, while technically inferior in thrown form to his later works, were essential first steps in Tomimoto’s conceptualization of ceramics as substructures for calligraphic inscriptions.

In 1945, at the height of the Tokyo air raids, Tomimoto created a *tōban* with a single thistle image next to a two-line Tang poem written in red script (**Fig. 4.15**). He remained in Tokyo and fired his last kiln there in April of that year, and in May fled to Takayama with students (see Chapter Five). Thus, this work was one of his last pieces made and fired at his Tokyo studio. On its surface, Tomimoto painted a single thistle flower with two leaves isolated on the right side of an otherwise crisp central area of white porcelain. The thistle (*azami*) was a frequent “roadside” flower that Tomimoto used on the surfaces of his Kutani-style work, and its design was featured as early as 1915 in his *moyōshū*. Although thistle flower images are identifiable in Edo period paintings and various craft objects, from the 1910s the flower became a popular subject for writers and craft artists like Tomimoto, ostensibly due to its appealing ubiquity in the

countryside.⁴⁴ Tomimoto included a poem titled “Thistle (*Azami*)” in his 1940 book *Seitō yoroku*.

The flowers not from the florist,
But more beautiful,
Here in Musashino where I recently moved,
Fill me with joy in their abundance.⁴⁵

Tomimoto had surely encountered thistle imagery in England, where it was used with frequency on a variety of art and objects due to its association with Christ’s crown of thorns and Scottish national origin, two reasons it was pictured on many Victorian gravestones.

On the left of the *tōban*, Tomimoto quoted the last two phrases from a four line poem by Tang dynasty poet Tsai Cuitong 崔惠童, “Banquet at the Eastern Castle” 宴城東莊.

*Me ni miru shunshoku ryūsui no gotoshi
konnnichi no zanka sakujitsu hiraku*⁴⁶

The colors of spring running like water before my eyes,
Flowers which linger today bloomed yesterday.

This was a telling juxtaposition of text and image. An eighth-century Chinese poem about the persistence of life next to an image of a tenacious local flower suggests that, despite the chaos of life in Tokyo that Tomimoto must have experienced at the time, the enduring beauty of poetry, flowers, and culture itself remained apparent to him.

⁴⁴ See Tsuchida Maki, “Azami no motifu to 1910 nendai no kōgei,” in *20-seiki Nihon bijutsu saiken 1, 1910 nendai*, ed. Mie Kenritsu Bijutsukan (Tsu: Mie Kenritsu Bijutsukan, 1995).

⁴⁵ 119–120.

⁴⁶ 眼看春色如流水 / 今日殘花昨日開

Insight into this *tōban*, particularly its juxtaposition of a flower image next to the poem about “lingering blossoms,” may be obtained by considering another work of the same year, a compilation of prints titled *Tōgashū* 陶画集, consisting of eight images of Japanese flowers. This booklet of prints was printed on January 10 and distributed on January 15, 1945, to the dormitories of young pilots of the Special Attack Force (*tokkōtai*).⁴⁷ This occurred shortly after the inception of the Special Attack Force (so-called *kamikaze* pilots) in response to the late 1944 increase in US air raids to Japan. At the time it was released, various media in Japan promoted the idea that all citizens should be “kamikazified” (*kamikaze ni ka suru*), and individuals who had died while flying such missions were immediately deemed heroes in popular media.⁴⁸ The images Tomimoto featured on these prints included ones he had utilized before on other works such as the aforementioned eggplant and *myōga* combination (**Fig. 4.16**) and adiantum (**Fig. 4.17**), as well as Chinese clematis (*tessen*), wintersweet (*rōbai*), field poppy (*gubijinsō*), camellia (*tsubaki*), orchid (*ranka*), and pink dianthus superbus (*nadeshiko*). As the illustrated figures show, some flowers were composed in isolation, and others as still life images

⁴⁷ “Shinshū e tōgashū kennō 神鷲へ陶画集献納 [Offering of ceramics painting books to the God-eagle corps], *Asahi shimbun*, March 23, 1945, 2. The *shinshūtai* 神鷲隊 (“god-eagle corps”) was formed nearing the end of the war under the umbrella of the Eastern Japan First Division Aviation Troops. The publisher of the series was the Katō hanga kenkyūjo 加藤版画研究所. The company still exists but this set of prints has not been reprinted since 1945.

⁴⁸ See, for example, the front cover of the January 3, 1945, *Shashin shūhō* [Photographic weekly report], with an image of a girl wearing a headband inscribed “kamikaze” next to the text “In this new year, although the fierceness of the battle intensifies, our will to fight is unyielding. We One Hundred Million are already kamikazefied. The people of this Land of the Gods renew their will to fight.” Trans. and repr. in David Earhart, *Certain Victory: Images of World War II in the Japanese Media* (Armonk, N.Y., M. E. Sharpe, 2008), 409.

with the flowers contained in ceramic vessels, similar to images on Tomimoto's earlier *tōban*.

This series occupies a unique place in the history of Japanese images produced to support imperialist aims. The prints can be understood as flower images used for nationalist war propaganda. Within this propaganda, as Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney has argued, cherry blossom images, in particular, circulated greatly in association with Special Attack Force soldiers.⁴⁹ Japanese soldiers who perished at Pearl Harbor were described as “scattered like the petals of nation-protecting flowers.”⁵⁰ While I do not intend to suggest that all of Tomimoto's flower images from this point forward were used in association with wartime propaganda, it is important to note the potential symbolism inherent in these images that otherwise may appear wholly apolitical and simply sentimental appropriations of Japanese flower paintings. Tomimoto's published descriptions of his flower designs, like the aforementioned *shibenka* pattern, were limited to historical recountings of where and when he saw and sketched the flowers. There is no evidence to suggest that Tomimoto intended for the flowers per se pictured in his 1945 *Tōgashū* to convey particular nationalistic sentiments, but Tomimoto's inscription on the preface page to the prints reveals that the group of prints as a whole was intended to serve as an offering to the Shinshūtai.

⁴⁹ *Kamikaze, Cherry Blossoms, and Nationalisms: The Militarization of Aesthetics in Japanese History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002).

⁵⁰ *History Pictures* 357 (Feb. 1943), 12, repr. in Earhart, *Certain Victory: Images of World War II in the Japanese Media*, 415.

After the end of the war spent in Takayama with students from Tokyo, an experience I describe in further detail in Chapter Five, Tomimoto moved to Ando-mura, briefly, and then in 1946 settled in Kyoto where he would live for the rest of his life. In the 1950s Tomimoto continued to create *tōban* with passages of poetry, mostly Tang poems paired with floral images. To interpret these at times highly personal expressions, we must understand the above precedents as well as the context of his life during the immediate postwar years since he experienced so many monumental transitions personally and professionally. As he recollected, “It was unthinkable. In Tokyo everything was in complete ruins and miserable.”⁵¹ According to his grandson, Tomimoto left everything in Tokyo—his family, as well as his possessions, including all his books.⁵² As he wrote to his close lifelong friend Bernard Leach, “After armistice I have resigned my post as professor [*sic*] of the Tokyo Art School and member of the Academy of art. Last June I left Tokyo for Yamato and I have divorced [*sic*] and am living alone in Andoma.”⁵³

⁵¹ “Watashi no rirekisho,” *Nihon keizai shimbun*. Evening edition, Feb. 18, 1962.

⁵² He wrote a letter to his son-in-law on August 4, 1948, regarding this: “The studio, of course, and all of the things attached to the house may be used by you and whoever wants to use them. As I wrote in the letter I sent last August, half of the house goes to Kazue, and the remaining half I give to the three [children], so it is not my possession. My books and clothes are in that house, but I never want to return there, so I intend to throw it all away.” Repr. in preface to Kaidō Ryūkichi, “Soshigaya no ie,” in *Tomimoto Kenkichi no dezain kūkan*, ed. Yamada, 6.

⁵³ Kaidō and Tsujimoto, *Tomimoto Kenkichi no etagami*, 137. Tomimoto’s handwriting style on this letter, with linear staccato all capital letters, differs dramatically from his fluid cursive style on earlier letters to Leach. As mentioned in the Introduction, Tomimoto separated from his wife Kazue in 1946. Ishida Fukie became his companion during his later years living in Kyoto. BLA no. 4991, 5490, CSC.

Through the late 1940s and the 1950s, Tomimoto continued to create epigraphic *tōban* that often seem to reflect highly personal sentiments. According to Koyama Kihei, Tomimoto's former student and assistant, Tomimoto particularly loved these *tōban* which were sent to be fired at the best possible kilns and sought after highly by collectors.⁵⁴ Like the 1945 *tōban* discussed above, his later *tōban* substructures generally remained the same and most surfaces took their compositional strategies and subjects from Qing porcelain plates. Qing ceramics of this type were usually made under imperial sponsorship at the Jingdezhen kilns, but they also resonate with a more widespread painterly trope at the time. So-called individualist painters expressed their reaction to the fall of the Ming dynasty with subtle, highly emotive combinations of poetry and images about loss.

As we can see by looking at one porcelain plate example (**Fig. 4.18**) Tomimoto followed an established compositional strategy for inscribing a short poem or passage next to a single floral motif, with the rest of the blank porcelain emulating white paper. Using such an established medium, format, and composition combined with copying poetic passages by others may seem to contradict Tomimoto's insistence on original expression. But we may best understand this anomalous set of works by considering his conception of the powerful expressionistic potential of calligraphy. In his descriptions of calligraphy, he consistently referred to his father's influence and his identity as an "amateur" artist. In 1955, Tomimoto stated, "Making ceramics requires creativity, but there is nothing more abstract than calligraphy, and in calligraphy, more than painting, a

⁵⁴ "Tomimoto Kenkichi sensei o omou," 51.

person is clearly revealed.”⁵⁵ Tomimoto spoke in 1961 about the role of the brush for a “Japanese amateur,” stating, “These days many Americans come [to Japan to study ceramics], but most are sculpture graduates. So they cannot use a brush. A person who enters [the field of ceramics] as a Japanese amateur, however, can paint and write calligraphy but is not very sculptural.”⁵⁶ The interest in calligraphy and painting works on paper, which he also did in abundance, also grew out of practical concerns. Initially upon moving to Kyoto in 1946, he did not have access to a kiln. As Kuroda Ryōji recounted, since ceramics could not be made at the time, he painted *shikishi* (square sheets for painting or calligraphy), and twice there were shows of his paintings (*sensei no e no kai*) at the Tokyo Bijutsu Kurabu for which Tomimoto painted multiple works.⁵⁷

Also important to the analysis of Tomimoto’s later *tōban* are the texts themselves that Tomimoto inscribed. A number of works capture lengthier poetic passages by Tang poets including Bai Juyi (白居易, 772–846), Ch’en Tzu-ang (陳子昂 658?–699?), Du Fu (杜甫, 712–770), Hanshan (寒山, fl. 9th C.) and Zheng Gu (鄭谷, 842?–910?). There are also examples of at least one work each copied from poetry by the Japanese poet Saigyō Hōshi (西行法師, 1118–1190) and Zen master Dōgen Zenji (道元禪師, 1200–

⁵⁵ *The Exposition in Commemoration of the Forty-Fifth Anniversary of Kenkichi Tomimoto’s Career as Ceramic Artist* (Nov. 29th–Dec. 4th, 1955, Takashimaya Nihombashi, Tokyo), n.p.

⁵⁶ Tomimoto, “Zadankai, Tomimoto Kenkichi no gojūnen, sakutō gojūnen ten o kinen shite,” 8. This sentiment resonates with a passage from the diary of American Janet Leach (then Janet Darnell, 1918–97), who came to Japan in 1954 and while working at the Ichino ceramics workshop in Tamba made visits to Tomimoto’s studio. She wrote that Tomimoto possessed “such feeling for clay – He realized something important – Japanese come into pottery thru painting, we come in thru sculpture.” Diary entry dated Feb. 11 1954, CSC.

⁵⁷ Kuroda Ryōji, in “Tomimoto Kenkichi sensei o omou,” 55. Kuroda (1905–67) was the owner of the Kuroda Tōen gallery in Ginza and a prolific writer on historical and modern Japanese ceramics.

1253) as well as poems Tomimoto himself composed. However, on his porcelain calligraphic inscriptions, texts by Tang poets predominate. In addition to the poetic passages, shorter phrases appeared on numerous ceramic and painted works that he made after 1946, especially, such as *fūka setsugetsu* 風花雪月 (wind, flower, snow, moon), *kotobuki* 寿 (felicitations), *yukimatsu* 雪松 (snow, pine) *hana* 花 (flower), *shunkashūtō* 春夏秋冬 (spring, summer, autumn, winter), *fūki* 富貴 (riches and honors), and *hakuun yūyū* 白雲悠々 (white clouds sail slowly).⁵⁸

Let us consider one representative example that continues the flower and text pairing established in the 1945 *tōban*. In 1949 Tomimoto created a *tōban* (**Fig. 4.19**) with an overglaze enamel design of a smilax (*sankirai*) and the inscribed poem by Tang dynasty poet Chen Ziang, “Song on Ascending Yuzhou Terrace”:

Those who have gone before, I cannot see;
Those who are to come after, I cannot see.
Thinking of the eternal nature of heaven and earth,
I am alone and grief-stricken, my tears streaming down.⁵⁹

The poignancy of this quatrain, copied four years after he left Tokyo and as he was still re-establishing his practice as an artist, speaks to his personal circumstances of the time as well as the national crisis of the Occupation years. Evidence of its personal meaning for him is the inscription on its storage box lid indicating it was for his own use (*jīyō* 自用). The pairing of the text with the image of the smilax, a flowering vine growing in

⁵⁸ Tomimoto Kenkichi Kinenkan, ed. *Tomimoto Kenkichi no tōjiki moyō* (Tokyo: Gurafikkusha, 1999), 122–31.

⁵⁹ Trans. Richard M.W. Ho, *Ch'en Tzu-ang: Innovator in T'ang Poetry* (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press), 136.

abundance in the Japanese countryside, is also suggestive of Tomimoto's interpretation of the poem. The name for smilax in Japanese, *sankirai*, means "returning to the mountains" and suggests a traditional use of its berries as an antidote. It is only conjecture, but Tomimoto's combination of the flowering smilax vine next to the quatrain by Chen Ziang suggests a call for healing amidst chaos.

The two epigraphic *tōban* described above are highly representative of this group of postwar *tōban*, but it is important to acknowledge that Tomimoto also continued to create highly self-reflexive metaceramic *tōban* in the late 1950s. A 1959 *tōban* (**Fig. 4.20**) pairs the poem "Quiet Night Thoughts" by Tang poet Li Bai with an image of a traveler's tea set and an inscription indicating the tea set pictured was made by him (*jisei ryokōyō chagu* 自製旅行用茶具). The poem inscribed above the teapot and two cups is:

Before my bed
there is bright moonlight
So that it seems
like frost on the ground.

Lifting my head
I watch the bright moon,
Lowering my head
I dream that I'm home.⁶⁰

Why did Tomimoto combine an image of his tea set with this poem? The pairing suggests the associations Tomimoto may have had between *sencha* and the idea of "home."

Sencha is represented by the vessels used to brew it themselves, and the "home" here can be interpreted as not his literal home or family but the Japanese nation itself. Because it is

⁶⁰ Arthur Cooper, ed. and trans., *Li Bai and Tu Fu* (London: Penguin, 1973), 109.

only a “dream” it suggests that it is the home of his youth when his father taught him about the literati arts of China (see Chapter One).

This interpretation is consistent with a highly sentimental inscription on a rectangular *tōban* Tomimoto created in 1962 (**Fig. 4.21**).⁶¹ The surface is covered with *sometsuke* renderings of bamboo growing from the lower edge. Bamboo was a relatively rare subject in Tomimoto’s work, but surely Tomimoto would have been aware of its rich symbolic content here.⁶² The poem “Planting bamboo in the new garden” (*Shinniwa ni take o uetari*), composed by Tomimoto who was then nearing the end of his life, reflects on the important role that his father had.

Rokujūgonen zense o sarishi
Passing away sixty-five years ago,

Waga chichi o omowan tame nari
It is my father I think of

Jūgatsu no usubi sasu niwa ni
In the soft light of October shining in the garden.

Ishi ni koshi shite bifū ni ugoku kage o miru
I sit on a rock and see the shadows moving in the gentle breeze.

Kage wa ueraretaru sugigoke to shirakawasuna ni ari
In the shadows amidst moss and white sand

⁶¹ Tomimoto executed a similar combination of calligraphy and bamboo with a different poem on a circular *tōban*, titled *Sometsuke iro-e take no jisaku* 染付色絵竹の自作詩句 [Underglaze blue with overglaze enamel bamboo original verse]. *Daijūrokukai Shinshō tenrankai zuroku* (Kyoto: Happōdō 八寶堂, 1961), n.p.

⁶² Specifically, bamboo’s symbolic content arose from the Chinese homonyms “*zhu*” (bamboo/congratulations) and “*jie*” (joints/integrity); its association with longevity and upright moral character; and its status as one of the “three friends of winter.”

Futoki takeba wa ugokazu

The thick bamboo trunks do not move.

Kaze ni soyogu takeba nomi ugoku

Only the rustling bamboo leaves move in the wind.

Fushō no ko

A child unworthy of his father,

Ware nanajūsai o koshite nakichichi o omoi

I have passed age seventy, and I think of my deceased father.

Dōnaka no sei no kage o mite tanoshimu

I take delight in the sight of the still shadow amidst movement.

Tomimoto's father passed away in 1897, sixty-five years prior to the writing of this poem. Certainly the poem reveals Tomimoto's love for his father, his awareness of the passing of time, and the association between the qualities of bamboo and his father's sinophilia. Despite this specificity in this poem, we may also interpret "father" as a reference not only his familial father but, we may conjecture, the nation itself. In the autumn of his life, at age seventy-six, Tomimoto wrote this poignant reflection on the unwavering influence of his father while he, the child, experienced the vicissitudes of life in twentieth-century Japan.

Such vicissitudes were starkly articulated on an earlier painting of 1953 (**Fig. 4.22**) which is representative of Tomimoto's frequently used compositional trope of text with still life imagery. On the top of the composition we see a pair of brushes, an ink slab, an ink stump, and what appears to be an *iro-e jiki* chopstick rest of the type Tomimoto made around this time. These images suggest to the so-called four treasures of calligraphy: paper, brush, ink and ink slab. Below them is a calligraphic inscription.

Gaishutsu no uwagiginu no mune ni wa, Pākā o
In the breast pocket of my jacket, a Parker,⁶³

Shigotogi kite suwaru waga tsukue ni wa
But when I sit in my work clothes at my desk,

Aisuru kono sōike suzuri to furusumi no danpen
There is a beloved double pool ink stone and a fragment of an old ink stick.

Jūnen nao kirenu nūton no mizufude
In ten years my Newton's watercolor brush⁶⁴ has still not broken.

Aru toki wa garena uwagusuri o ronji
Sometimes I consider the merits of galena glaze,⁶⁵

Toki toshite wa tōji o tanoshimu
At times I take pleasure in ceramic poems,

Aa konzentaru waga kokoro
Oh, the meanderings of my mind.

Senkyū hyaku go jūsannen, shoshū
1953, early autumn

Kenkichi (in)
Kenkichi (stamp)

E bun
painting/text

⁶³ a Parker pen

⁶⁴ Probably referring to a Winsor and Newton's watercolor brush. It appears that this brand of brush had long been mimetically associated with Western painting methods in contrast to *hake* brushes for East Asian methods. In 1919, Kokugakai member Takehisa Yumeji wrote about his concern that painters would "trade in their excellent *hake* [traditional East Asian paintbrushes] for imported Newton oil brushes." Takehisa Yumeji, "Kokuten kenbutsu no ki [Feelings on viewing the kokuten]," *Yomiuri shimbun*, November 4, 1919, repr. and trans. in John Szostak, "'Art Is Something Born': The Rise and Fall of the Kokuga Society (1918–28) and the Emergence of the Kokuten Style," *Positions: East Asia Cultures Critique* 21, no. 2 (2013): 291.

⁶⁵ a lead glaze used in English slipware

Considering the images which show Japanese-style brushes, and a self-reflexive porcelain chopstick rest indicating the personal nature of this scene, it appears that here Tomimoto wished to express his *Persoenlichkeit* (personality) in a manner reminiscent of Takamura Kōtarō's call for artists to be recognized for their "infinite authority" and complex, transnational, identities.⁶⁶ This work exemplifies Tomimoto's grappling with the binaries outer self/ inner self, ceramics/painting, European painting/East Asian painting, and the basic binary of "East" and "West" of so much concern to Leach. Tomimoto as a modern literatus engaged with the "outside world" of Parker pens and Newton's watercolor brushes, but expressed that he felt most enamored towards his "old" ink stone and ink stick. In a May 1956 *Mizue* article, Imaizumi Atsuo offered a memorable portrait of Tomimoto as modern trans-cultural literatus:

I have visited [Tomimoto's] home in Kyoto once or twice on business, and it had a simple, fresh feeling like the house of a *nanga* painter living a secluded life. That refreshing feeling undoubtedly was brought out in his bearing and the gravity of his words. I have met this internationally prominent ceramist elsewhere.... and although he had a fairly Western style, the Tomimoto Kenkichi I met, sitting quietly enveloped in the middle of books and paintings, talking while pouring tea, had the refined appearance of a literatus with a completely Eastern presence. I was able to feel the intermingling of warmth and the nervous habits of a sensitive side.⁶⁷

Here, Imaizumi provided direct insight into the private Tomimoto who took "pleasure in ceramics poems" and only on the "outside" carried a Parker pen. The "public" Tomimoto, as we could refer to him, created quite different *iro-e jiki* in the postwar period.

⁶⁶ "A Green Sun," in *A Brief History of Imbecility: Poetry and Prose of Takamura Kōtarō*, 180.

⁶⁷ *Mizue* 610 (May, 1956): 38.

Gold and Silver: Ceramics to Dazzle the Eyes

Tomimoto's overglaze enamel porcelain vessels reached an apogee of visual ostentation and saturation of *moyō* in the mid-1950s. They came to epitomize a luxurious national expression befitting the man designated in 1955 as a national holder of techniques for this traditional form of Japanese porcelain. In his 1952 book *Waga tōki tsukuri*, Tomimoto praised the Ming dynasty's apex of ceramics production as occurring when the *iro-e*, *sometsuke*, and gold and silver unite on one piece, describing those as "objects that are able to dazzle one's eyes."⁶⁸ A primary example of his embrace of this combination is his 1957 porcelain *tsubo* "clothed" with his *shibenka* flower pattern (as we saw in the 1941 *kazari bako*) and four roundels with *sometsuke* images and calligraphy (**Fig. 4.23.a**). This combination of form, images, text, and techniques can be considered a unification of several elements established in his previous works.

Its *tsubo* form derived from Joseon dynasty porcelain prototypes that in other iterations, as described in Chapter Three, he left "unclothed." It bears throwing marks on the interior, and the walls of the lower portion of the vessel are comparatively thicker and heavier than the sections on the upper portion of the vessel, a recording of the throwing process consistent with others in his oeuvre. This suggests that Tomimoto himself threw this work, rather than one of his assistants who would have had the ability to achieve walls of a more even thickness and remove throwing rings from the inside of the vessel. The surface of the vessel combines a group of original images with a Chinese phrase. The

⁶⁸ "Waga tōki tsukuri," in *Tomimoto Kenkichi chosakushū*, 104. The phrase he used is "me o ubau mono."

overall *shibenka* pattern is an outgrowth of the pattern developed after moving to Tokyo in 1926 and seen on works such as the 1941 *kazari bako* (**Fig. 4.12**). Two roundels have *sometsuke* renderings of *moyō* from his Ando-mura period, in 1916, based on sketches there. One pictures a motif he called “Winding road” and the other “Bamboo thickets under the moon.”⁶⁹ Both can be seen in many of Tomimoto’s *sometsuke* works and in multiple versions of his *moyōshū*. Tomimoto described “Winding road” (**Fig. 4.23.b**), as a “jewel-like landscape” that he treasured “despite its desolation.”⁷⁰ Why did such local images of Ando-mura, as in the *tōban* with the old tree motif discussed above, persist into the postwar years? Sentimentality, as I noted previously, was certainly a factor. Tomimoto’s remembrances of the Ando-mura of his youth contrasted starkly with the Ando-mura of 1957: “Now if I go back it’s different. Automobiles and so forth go down the streets. All the farmers now have televisions with standing antennas, washing machines, and refrigerators. It’s changed.”⁷¹

The scene is bracketed by two roundels with inscriptions of the Chinese phrase “white clouds sail slowly” (**Fig. 4.23.c**), an expression that he likely encountered as a child reading in school parts of the fourteenth-century *Book of Zhuge Liang* 諸葛孔明 from the *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* 三国志.⁷² This pair of inscriptions casts Ando-

⁶⁹ The winding road motif pictures the same road visible on the “old tree” *tōban* described earlier in this chapter. “Bamboo thickets under the moon” is a scene, like the winding road, just steps from Tomimoto’s Ando-mura period home where he lived until 1926. One half of this bamboo thicket is still located there, surrounded by a group of homes amidst fields.

⁷⁰ Tomimoto Kenkichi Kinenkan, ed., *Tomimoto Kenkichi no tōjiki moyō*, 22.

⁷¹ Tomimoto, “Zadankai, Tomimoto Kenkichi no gojūnen, sakutō gojūnen ten o kinen shite,” 15.

⁷² The passage as he likely encountered it in a school textbook is as follows:

mura, again, in a literati light, and we find this particular set of characters with frequency on his ceramics as well as works on paper in the mid-1950s. These calligraphic expressions on ceramics, in particular, were praised highly. Art critic and art magazine editor Fujimoto Shōzō (藤本韶三, 1896–1992) wrote of them, “The calligraphy on his ceramics bears a different style than calligraphy on paper....Tomimoto’s *sometsuke* calligraphy is text as well as image (*monyō*), together revealing a single abstract world.”⁷³

While many of the *sometsuke* motifs and the *shibenka* pattern itself had long been established in earlier works, we see on this vessel, too, one of the first iterations of Tomimoto’s combination of silver and gold overglaze. Tomimoto was firmly committed to combining gold and silver on the surface of porcelain, as evidenced by his decades-long search for the right technology to do so. As early as 1919, he had started applying gold to his glazed works, and by 1929 had used silver; by 1951, he had perfected the joint firing of both silver and gold. He made a breakthrough in 1951 when he determined the way to fire gold and silver together on one vessel in the same kiln. This came about after exhaustive testing and changing the formula for the silver, first by increasing its ratio of gold content to ¼ in order for the silver not to blacken. When this resulted in a too-yellow coloring, Tomimoto added platinum, and with that step realized that both the gold and the

白雲悠々 去りまた来る / 西窓一片 残月淡し / 浮世をよそなる 静けき住居 / 出でては日ごと 烟を打ち / 入りては 机に書をひもとく. *Jinjō shōgaku kokugo tokuhon kan 11*, *Daisanki kokutei kokugo kyōkasho fukkoku han* 尋常小学国語読本卷 11 第三期国定国語教科書 (Akimotoshobō 秋元書房, 1970).

⁷³ “Hōmon, Tomimoto Kenkichi [A visit to Tomimoto Kenkichi],” *Bijutsu techō* 2 (1956): 5.

newly formulated silver overglazes would mature at the same temperature.⁷⁴ Few ceramists in the 1950s used gold or silver overglazes since they were so expensive, and many ceramists had ceased using them during the war years when the use of luxury materials was restricted. Further, as Naitō Tadashi wrote in 1962, the use of gold and silver was rare since ceramists were cautious about making work that would appear gaudy. Tomimoto's gold and silver achieved, Naitō extolled, a level of artistry exceeding that of his contemporary Katō Hajime (加藤土師萌, 1900–1968).⁷⁵

While these technical achievements were important for the designation Tomimoto received in 1955 as Holder of Important Intangible Cultural Property, this *tsubo* is also a primary example of the ways in which he used the metallic *shibenka* pattern to frame *sometsuke* inscriptions and paintings with literati themes. While the *sometsuke* portions clearly derived from an East Asian set of historical precedents, the *shibenka* pattern recalls repeating patterns on *sarasa* (Indian calico). With the addition of metallic embellishment, particularly, it also recalls repeating patterns on Islamic ceramics. We know that Islamic design was an underlying interest of Tomimoto's since his experiences traveling in Egypt and India. South Asian and Islamic patterns are undoubtedly another source of influence when we consider the underlying red color and use of repeating, interlocking gold and silver motifs. In 1938, Tomimoto co-edited a color printed survey of ceramics focused on works with similar repeating patterns of Egypt and Persia,

⁷⁴ *Mukei bunkazai kiroku, kōgei gijutsu hen 1: iro-e jiki*, Tomimoto.

⁷⁵ “Wakariyasui yakimono to shigaku (7),” *Tōsetsu* 3 (June 1962): 70. Katō, awarded the title Holder of Important Intangible Cultural Property for *iro-e jiki* in 1961, taught with Tomimoto at the Tokyo School of Fine Arts in 1944 and at the Takayama training center in 1945.

Genshokuban tōji taikandai 12 ejiputo perushia.⁷⁶ Such a juxtaposition of bright red and metallic dense floral patterns with the stark white porcelain inscribed with blue underglaze was a combination without historical precedence. To “clothe” the jar with such an optically rich pattern around literati-derived subjects marked the calligraphic sentiment and its landscape, as Tomimoto had described it, as jewels. Significantly, his later work was regarded by critics as more beautiful for its surface pattern treatments than its forms.⁷⁷

Beginning in the late 1950s, Tomimoto also produced a series of large octagonal porcelain boxes with overglaze enamel silver and gold. One example made in 1959 (**Fig. 4.24**) bears a surface of repeating ferns. The size, with a diameter of 28.5 centimeters, encouraged this, and other octagonal boxes of this series, to perform as spectacles for exhibition display. The technique for creating it, according to Tomimoto’s assistant at the time, Koyama Kihei, required the base to be laid across two kiln shelves, an uncommon firing technique. According to Koyama, only one in ten fabricated boxes survived the bisque firing without cracking. When Koyama asked Tomimoto what these boxes were meant to hold, Tomimoto said jokingly that they would be good for eel, one of his favorite foods.⁷⁸ This and other large boxes meant for display, not utilitarian concerns, were completely “clothed” in dense repeating patterns in gold and silver on a base of red framed by undulating blue underglaze.

⁷⁶ 原色版陶磁大観第 12 埃及・波斯 [Color printed survey of ceramics, vol. 12, Egypt, Persia] (Tokyo: Atoriesha, 1938). This book is a selection of large color images of five works from private collections with only a short textual introduction.

⁷⁷ Anon., “Tomimoto Kenkichi sakutō 50-nen kinen ten,” *Bijutsu techō* 191 (July 1961): 91.

⁷⁸ Koyama Kihei, in discussion with the author, July 2009.

Let us consider its red substructure. Since red was predominantly used below the luxury materials gold and silver, as was the case in Qing and Arita porcelain precedents, it communicates to those who see it the exceptional qualities of the vessel. Red generally conveyed felicitous sentiments on Chinese objects and was integrated into ritual practices because cinnabar and vermilion were thought to bring blessings and even immortality.⁷⁹ When we consider the era in which Tomimoto created works like this, the use of red carries another association. The red on Tomimoto's *iro-e jiki* was described during the war period as symbolizing the blood of Japanese people. A December 1943 *Asahi graph* photo-essay on Tomimoto and other artists described his porcelain as reflecting the "purity of Japanese people" (*nihonjin no keppaku*) and the red overglaze "the color of blood like the seething blood in Japanese people."⁸⁰ There is no additional evidence suggesting that Tomimoto either encouraged or discouraged this way of interpreting his *iro-e jiki*. As with the aforementioned 1945 prints set, in this analysis I do not wish to exaggerate the significance of these propagandistic sentiments within our larger analysis of *iro-e jiki* since these were limited to the war years and clearly reflect the context of their time. However, the propagandistic relationship between *iro-e jiki* and the Japanese body politic are part of its twentieth century history. It is significant that Tomimoto was, in the post-Occupation era, amongst the first ceramists designated by the Japanese government a Holder of Important Intangible Cultural Property and that this designation

⁷⁹ Eva Ströber, *Symbols on Chinese Porcelain* (Stuttgart: Arnoldsche, 2011), 28.

⁸⁰ "Kenkan ni koru bijutsuka no netsui 建艦に凝る美術家の熱意 [Artists's zeal devoted to warships]," *Asahi graph* (Dec. 1943):10–11. In the same article, Tomimoto was quoted as saying that if he "was younger" he "would have liked to have enlisted in the front lines." Umehara Ryūzaburō was pictured next to him on the page amongst portraits of several other artists.

was associated with his *iro-e jiki*. Despite its technique rooted in Ming porcelain, clearly Japanese government authorities promoted the public perception of *iro-e jiki* as a historically Japanese ceramic type with innate Japanese cultural attributes.

The fern pattern on this box is traceable to a loosely articulated sketch of a fern appearing in Tomimoto's 1923 *Moyōshu*. Here, he transformed the naturally irregular borders of fern leaves to repeating sections of four as if seen from above. In this way, Tomimoto reduced what in nature bears five or six fronds to just four fronds. Ferns, like the other plants and flowers used in his *iro-e jiki*, were commonly seen near his home. However, like thistle flowers, fern motifs were quite popular in Victorian England on objects of many different mediums. Such Pteridomania was not a major part of Japanese design history, and fern motifs lacked any historical precedence in Japanese or East Asian ceramics. William Morris used fern motifs in several of his designs, including the well-known "Larkspur" of 1875 (**Fig. 4.25**). As on Tomimoto's box, the ferns twist organically, but they are not as geometrically oriented as Tomimoto's. Therefore, we may conclude that the fern, while not embraced as a wholly exotic motif, certainly was one Tomimoto would have linked to the designs of Morris and other Arts and Crafts designers whose work had so captivated him in his youth.

Tomimoto's use of gold and silver across the entire surface of this object and other octagonal boxes like it—for example, a box with *shibenka* pattern shown at the 1960 Shinshōkai exhibition (**Fig. 4.26**)—signals an interest in a visual splendor reminiscent of the use of gold leaf on Edo screen painting in which gold confronts the viewer with an all-encompassing totality of visual effect. Throughout Japanese art

history, the use of gold has carried religious associations with the Buddhist Pure Land as well as secular, symbolic associations with wealth and political power.⁸¹ In 1950s and early 1960s Japan, to encounter a gold and silver *kazari bako* by Tomimoto was to revel in its sense of luxury at a time of postwar recovery. These boxes were usually exhibited and photographed, as we see in the photograph in **Fig. 4.26**, with their lids resting to the side, displaying the interior in order to present visual contrast between patterns.

Critically, Tomimoto's gold and silver *iro-e jiki* was most often discussed in its time and thereafter not for its artistry or visual originality, but for its technical achievement and use of luxurious materials. For example, an *iro-e jiki* jar with a gold and silver fern pattern in the Modern Ceramic Masters Exhibition of 1953 was described as a "steady, diligent work" that as a "luxurious and gorgeous (*gōkakenran*) jar, shows the highest level of technical achievement to date."⁸² Additional insight into Tomimoto's personal motivations and the national significance of the large *iro-e jiki kazari bako* can be gathered from a passage art critic Mizusawa Sumio (水沢澄夫, 1905–1975) wrote in an article about Tomimoto's forty-fifth commemoration exhibition in 1956: "During the war I put a white porcelain jar in my rucksack when I was deployed. When I told Tomimoto-san that, he exclaimed 'That sorry (*binbōttarashii*) jar? I have to make one bigger and better,' and laughed."⁸³ Were Tomimoto's *iro-e jiki* of the postwar era, then,

⁸¹ For Pure Land adherents, gold represented Amida Buddha's radiance, and it was valued as one of the *shichihō*, or seven treasures.

⁸² Tatebayashi Ichirō 館林一郎, "Gendai tōgei kyoshō ten [Modern ceramics masters exhibition]," *Nihon bijutsu kōgei* 182 (Dec. 1953): 44.

⁸³ "Tomimoto Kenkichi sakutō yonjugonen," *Sansai* 71 (Jan. 1956): 35.

made to be “bigger and better”? Certainly the ceramics put forth as representations of Japanese ceramics and the nation itself in the postwar years, as Chapter Five will describe, were not Tomimoto’s white porcelain works, even though he continued to make them through the 1950s. His ceramics that were so celebrated and attained the highest echelon of cultural capital in the 1950s were *iro-e jiki*. While Tomimoto continued to make utilitarian vessels, it was the “bigger and better” ornamental boxes on display that served as representations of the height of *iro-e jiki*.

Conclusion

The wide lens purview of this chapter has established the consistencies and dramatic shifts over time in Tomimoto’s *iro-e jiki*. All are linked by the use of historically-rooted East Asian mediums and techniques, specifically an interest in using porcelain as a substrate for painterly expressions of still life images, calligraphy, and patterns. The broad designation “East Asian” rather than Arita-style, Kutani-style, or Qing-style is appropriate because for Tomimoto *iro-e jiki* was an amalgam of these styles. The *iro-e jiki* works described in this chapter are also joined by their embodiment of art ceramics (*bijutsu tōki*) principles: they were ceramics created primarily for visual spectacle, and they relied on the centrality of original, individual self-expression. Dramatic shifts occurred in 1945, however, when the *tōban* and *kazari bako* took two new directions, with quotations of Qing porcelain plate compositions and usage of Tang poetry, on one hand, and the creation of large *kazari bako* with original patterns in luxurious surfaces of gold and silver enamel, on the other.

As a whole, Tomimoto produced a spectrum of *iro-e jiki* within the framework of modernism. Literati expressions and modernism were not mutually exclusive in the twentieth century. Tomimoto's breadth of conceptual approach paralleled that of oil painters of his time who also created works in the literati mode.⁸⁴ The modernism of his *iro-e jiki* can be located, too, in the achievement of ceramics as a direct medium for personal expression intended to be perceived as, like paintings, primarily *visual objects*. Tomimoto's covered box shown at the 1941 Shin Bunten was not meant to be used for anything. It was made as a visual *recording* of historical techniques and mediums combined with the facture of the artist in order to achieve a powerful visual effect. His post-1934 *tōban* with self-reflexive quotations from Qing porcelain also were primarily visual, not haptic, ceramic objects. Tomimoto's 1959 large *kazari bako* amplified the scale of a box in order to increase its visual impact.

As this chapter has shown, by the postwar period, two distinct forms of Tomimoto's *iro-e jiki* expression seemed to conform to the needs of private expression, on one hand, and public expression, on the other. Both reflected the tumultuous climate of wartime and postwar Japan, when Tomimoto looked to images of "home" and reflections of his father as unmoving anchors to rely upon. Throughout all of his *iro-e jiki*, he remained true to his models of the Edo period, particularly Ogata Kenzan. Kenzan used overglaze enamels to apply painterly subjects and texts to the surfaces of ceramics

⁸⁴ Umehara Ryūzaburō, Yorozu Tetsugorō, and Kishida Ryūsei, for example, created *yōga* informed by *bunjinga* expressions. See *Kindai ni okeru bunjinga to sono eikyō nitsuite / Modern 'Bunjinga' of China and Japan and its Influence* (Tokyo: National Museum of Modern Art, 1965).

in ways that, to Tomimoto, spoke to the transhistorical literary and visual dimensions of Japanese culture.

CHAPTER FIVE: Exhibiting and Preserving Modern Ceramics

Introduction

In the twentieth century, Japan saw several major contestations over the definition and role of ceramics as art and national form of cultural capital. At the same time, no nation experienced as much institutional support of its ceramics, and ceramics rose to prominence as *art* and a premiere form of national cultural capital vis-à-vis national exhibition and education systems. Institutions—private and national— not only provided community and legitimacy to individual artists, but they also operated in powerful ways to propel Japanese craft to national and international stature. In this final chapter, I will chart the main institutional systems of exhibition and preservation that reveal consistencies and changes for the ontology of modern Japanese ceramics and that ultimately positioned ceramics as a medium of cultural prominence for the nation.

By considering exhibition and preservation systems from the late 1920s through the early 1960s, we are able to set into relief what was at stake in this history of ceramics and institutions. In the first part of this chapter I will examine Tomimoto's role in the establishment of craft in the Kokuten (National Painting Exhibition) from 1927 and his participation in the Teiten (Imperial Salon) from 1936. Then I will move chronologically from his leadership of the Crafts Technical Training Center (Kōgei Gijutsukōshūjo) in Takayama in 1945 to his establishment of a new craft organization, splitting from the Kokuten and Imperial Salon, the Shinshō Bijutsu Kōgeikai (新匠美術工芸会, hereafter Shinshōkai). In the final part of the chapter I will analyze key overseas exhibitions,

particularly the 1950 Musée Cernuschi Japanese ceramics exhibition, and end with an outline of Tomimoto's receipt of the awards for Intangible Cultural Property and the Order of Culture.

Because criticism, scholarship, and commentary on Tomimoto, and for twentieth-century Japanese art generally, has tended to categorize individuals according to institutional and organizational affiliations, my goal is to reveal the interstices of this history by identifying and comparing consistencies between organizations and, importantly, between prewar, wartime, and postwar institutions. While the brevity of a single chapter limits the scope that can be addressed, I hope to shed light on the mechanisms supporting modern ceramics as a form of high cultural capital in Japan.¹ Tomimoto is an excellent case study for exposing the competing definitions for ceramics in twentieth-century Japan as art, craft worthy of preservation, and representation of traditional Japan. Sorting through the exhibitions and organization history related to Tomimoto, we are able to identify a core observation: prewar organizations and exhibitions tended towards the positioning of ceramics as modernist art on par with Euro-American painting and sculpture, but wartime and postwar organizations and exhibitions tended towards the promotion of ceramics as material embodiments of the nation and as central to postwar recovery.

¹ By cultural capital I refer to Bourdieu's second subdivision of cultural capital, the objectified state "appropriated by agents and implemented and invested as a weapon and a stake in the struggles which go on in the fields of cultural production (the artistic field, the scientific field, etc.) and, beyond them, in the field of the social classes – struggles in which the agents wield strengths and obtain profits proportionate to their mastery of this objectified capital, and therefore to the extent of their embodied capital." "The Forms of Capital," in *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*, ed. John Richardson (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986), 246.

Private Exhibitions

While national exhibitions were important in establishing the mainstream discourse of modern ceramics, they were not the only venues where Tomimoto's work was displayed and discussed. He exhibited his ceramics, *moyō*, and paintings in a wide variety of venues as listed in the timeline (Appendix D), from his home and salon exhibitions to private galleries and department stores. Within private exhibitions, Tomimoto's ceramics met with commercial success and established his reputation as an artist.

Starting in 1915 and again in 1917, 1921, 1923, 1927, and 1930, Tomimoto held “distribution gatherings” at his studio in which each patron paid a set price of five or eight yen for ceramics and other works by Tomimoto. He organized one of these gatherings, in 1930, specifically to raise funds for his exhibition at the Beaux Arts Gallery in London. His daughter Tō described the practice of catering to patrons and selling works fresh out of the kiln around 1930 or 1931 at the Tokyo studio:

People who loved Father's ceramics were invited to afternoon ‘kiln unloadings.’ At that time, there were no taxis lined up at Seijō 成城 station,² so for the kiln opening, a hired car was ordered to go back and forth between the house and the station. On the front glass of the car was a white paper on which Father had written ‘To the Tomimoto Kiln Unloading’ (富本窯出し行き). I was asked by my mother to go to Toraya in Akasaka to get lots of red and white plum-shaped *monaka* [bean-jam-filled wafers] and beautifully colored *nerikiri* [white bean paste confectionary]. From Shimbashi, the sushi seller brought us *nigiri*. Now when I think about it, I realize it was exceptional hospitality for that

² Today's Seijōgaku-en-mae station, on the Odakyu Odawara line west of Shinjuku.

time.... Father, who usually wore western clothes, on those days always wore Japanese clothes.³

From this recounting, it is clear that Tomimoto treated those who bought his ceramics as special patrons and relied on them for continued support. For a guest, being picked up in a hired car, treated to special sushi and confections, and then interacting with Tomimoto dressed in fine Japanese-style clothing would have conveyed an atmosphere of Japanese elegance and refinement. According to Tō, guests at these gatherings included Ōhara Magosaburō and Hosokawa Moritatsu (細川護立, 1883–1970).⁴

As outlined in Chapter Three, Nojima Yasuzō was instrumental in the modernist enterprise of ceramics through the photographing of Tomimoto's ceramics, and he also supported Tomimoto in significant ways. Nojima was a fellow artist as well as a financial backer, providing, for example, 3000 yen towards the building of Tomimoto's new kiln in 1927.⁵ Between December of 1921 and May of 1925, he held three exhibitions of

³ Tomimoto Tō 富本陶, "Kamadashi no asa [The morning of the kiln unloading]," in Inui, *Tomimoto Kenkichi zenshū*, 173.

⁴ Ibid. Marquis Hosokawa Moritatsu was one of the most significant art collectors of the twentieth century in Japan. He was the sixteenth-generation head of the Hosokawa family, former domain lords of Kumamoto, who held a vast collection of art. He was President of Tōyō Bijutsu Kokusai Kenkyūkai / The Society of Friends of Eastern Art, established in 1940 by the Minister of the Foreign Office and the Minister of the Department of Education, and President of the Committee for National Treasures. In 1950 he created the Eisei Bunko Foundation that, since 1972, has been open to the public as the Eisei Bunko Museum. Kikuchi, *Japanese Modernisation and Mingei Theory*, 265, FN160.

⁵ *Watashi no rirekisho*, 210–211. For the kiln building project, Tomimoto also received about 12,000 yen from his family, and 3000 yen from Fukuhara Shinzō, president of the Shiseidō company.

Tomimoto's work at his home, referring to it as the Nojima Tei, or Nojima Salon.⁶ For Nojima and Tomimoto, exhibiting ceramic work as equivalents of photography, or any other art form, established the artistic capacity of each medium relatively new to the modernist world of Japanese art. During this same period, Nojima hosted several exhibitions by important painters: a solo exhibition of oil paintings and tempera by Kishida Ryūsei (May 25–29, 1922), *nihonga* by Yorozu Tetsugorō (July 8–10, 1922), oil paintings by Yokobori Kakujiro (Oct. 1–3, 1922), and *yōga* by Kobayashi Tokusaburo (Dec. 2–4, 1922).⁷

Department stores across Japan hosted regular solo exhibitions of Tomimoto's ceramics and painting.⁸ As Younjung Oh has described them, modern Japanese department stores from the Meiji through Shōwa eras functioned not only as sites “for the selling of goods, but as the locus of taste education.”⁹ Tomimoto's exhibitions at

⁶ They occurred Dec. 17–19, 1921; Dec. 21–23, 1922; May 17–19, 1924; and in May, 1925. See Shoto Museum, *Yasuzō Nojima 1889–1964 Works and Archives* (2009), 80.

⁷ *Yasuzō Nojima* (Kyoto, 1997), 130. These built on his previous experience holding exhibitions at a gallery he established for a short period in 1919–1920 in Jimbo-cho, Tokyo, called Kabutoya Gado.

⁸ They included exhibitions at Mitsukoshi (Tokyo and Osaka, 1913), Mikasa (Tokyo, 1914), Tanakaya (Tokyo, 1914), Shiseidō Gallery (Tokyo, 1920, 1929, 1931), Takashimaya (Osaka, 1932, 1947, 1958; Tokyo 1942, 1955, 1961), Matsuzakaya (Tokyo, Nagoya 1935, 1936, 1937), and Hankyu (Osaka, 1941). In 1940 Tomimoto produced for Shiseidō porcelain camellia brooches which were distributed to members of the Shiseidō camellia flower club (Shiseidō Hanatsubakikai).

⁹ “Art Into Everyday Life: Department Stores as Purveyors of Culture in Modern Japan” (PhD diss., University of Southern California, 2012), 216. Oh also discusses how department stores in the Meiji era began promoting *nihonga* and craft works, rather than antique works or *yōga*, since they were interested in selling affordable artistic works to middle-class consumers suitable for display in the *tokonoma* of their homes, 113–80. Certainly the number of Tomimoto's exhibitions organized over the decades at several major department stores throughout Japan attests to the success of his ceramics' sales therein. Many buyers of his ceramics were undoubtedly interested in obtaining objects for display in *tokonoma*.

department stores were occasions for the sale of his works, but they were also museum-like displays that facilitated the engagement of the public, collectors, and critics. In 1955 and 1961, Mitsukoshi department store in Nihombashi, Tokyo, hosted two commemorative exhibitions of Tomimoto's work, prompting an array of essays and roundtable discussions in art journals. Evidence suggests that, throughout his career, Tomimoto's sales at gallery and department store exhibitions in Japan were generally good. In his 1920 Shiseidō exhibition, for example, he reported to Leach that together his ceramics sold for 2000 yen.¹⁰ Throughout all of these exhibition locations, he cultivated important relationships with patrons who supported him over the decades of his artistic praxis.

Kokuten

Over the course of the twentieth century in Japan, no more powerful annual national arts exhibitions associations (*dantai*) existed than the Imperial Salon and the National Painting Exhibition.¹¹ As arts organizations tend to do, they both transformed over time—expanding, transitioning, and altering their names according to competing factions and climates of the time—but ultimately they institutionalized the exhibition of ceramics as modern art on a national scale. While Tomimoto actively played a part in

¹⁰ The exhibition Tomimoto Kenkichi tōki sakuhin chinretsukai 富本憲吉陶器作品陳列会 [Ceramics works exhibition], Shiseidō Gallery, Tokyo was held Dec. 18–21, 1920. This notation of the price was written by Tomimoto on the back of a photograph of the exhibition. BLA no. 2004.17.9799, CSC.

¹¹ Over the course of the century, each exhibition and related organization went through organizational shifts and name changes. Here, for clarity I translate into English the exhibitions according to their initial names, the Teiten (Imperial Salon) and the Kokuten.

both histories, his founded the craft section of the National Painting Exhibition (hereafter, the Kokuten).¹²

As is well known, 1927 was the year that craft was first officially designated as a category for work in the Imperial Salon, known then as the Teiten. This was a watershed moment for craft history, since the exhibition in its original inception started in 1907 (the Japanese Ministry of Education Art Exhibition, known as Bunten) limited exhibited art to paintings and sculpture, ostensibly imitating the French Salon and its inherent hierarchical positioning of painting and sculpture as the only mediums of “art.” The only categorical difference in Japan was that painting was divided into two sections, *nihonga* and *seiyōga*. But a growing movement to include craft in the exhibition culminated in the establishment of the Nihon Kōgei Bijutsu Kyōkai (Japan Applied Arts Society) whose purpose was to plan a craft section.¹³

While Tomimoto was not active in the inception of the Teiten’s craft section, he was instrumental in bringing craft to the Kokuten that same year. The Kokuga Sōsaku Kyōkai (Association for the Creation of National Painting 国画製作協会) was established in 1918 by a group of young painters from Kyoto initially to promote an individualist, self-expressive approach to *nihonga* and to counter the suspected favoritism

¹² From its earliest inception, Tomimoto had been cognizant of the Imperial Salon. In October of 1910, when they were still living together in Tokyo, Tomimoto’s close friend Minami Kunzō received the third prize at the Fourth Bunten for his painting *Zaseru onna* 座せる女, created when he was in England.

¹³ Key members petitioning for this were Uematsu Hōbi, Tsuishu Yōzei, and members of the Mukei group led by Takamura Toyochika.

at the Ministry of Education Art Exhibition (the Bunten).¹⁴ The association's annual exhibition, known as the "Kokuten," continues to this day and it is generally acknowledged as the largest public exhibition in Japan. From its earliest formations, its exhibitions attracted exceedingly high numbers of attendees, making it a formidable national institution.¹⁵

The integration of ceramics came about during a time of upheaval and transformation for the organization. In 1925, the group added *yōga* as a second division, ostensibly because of the admission of two painters working primarily in oil painting, Umehara Ryūzaburō and Kawashima Riichiro (川島理一郎, 1886–1971). As John Szostak has noted, this was due mainly to financial reasons, since Umehara and Kawashima were renowned and were thought to have the potential to increase exhibition submission and attendance numbers.¹⁶ Two years later, during this time of change for the organization, Tomimoto was invited to display his works there, an event that caused, as he described it, a "sensation."¹⁷

¹⁴ Association for the Creation of Japanese Painting is the translation John Szostak used in "The 'Kokuga Sosaku Kyokai' and Kyoto Nihonga Reform in the Meiji, Taishō and Early Shōwa Years (1900–1928)" (PhD diss., University of Washington, 2005). Like most modern art groups in Japan, this group had several iterations, and its establishment was initially predicated on breaking away from an existing group. In 1918, several Kyoto *nihonga* painters established the group because they suspected favoritism at the Bunten. The first six founders were all under thirty and graduates of the Kyoto Kaiga Senmon Gakkō 京都絵画専門学校 [Kyoto School of Painting].

¹⁵ It is important to emphasize that the organization began and ended, and then was reformed in 1928. Szostak, "'Art Is Something Born': The Rise and Fall of the Kokuga Society (1918–28) and the Emergence of the Kokuten Style," 270.

¹⁶ Ibid., 295–6.

¹⁷ *Watashi no rirekisho*, 211.

From April 23 to May 15, 1927, Tomimoto exhibited over two hundred ceramics and photographs of his sketches by Nojima Yasuzō in a one-room special “retrospective” (*kaiko*) at the Kokuga Sōsaku Kyōkai dairokuten (国画創作協会第6回展, the Kokuten) held at Tokyo’s Metropolitan Art Museum.¹⁸ Because two-dimensional works were included, it may have seemed quite natural to consider his work—by then the creations of an established ceramist—an extension of the new second division for *yōga*. Tomimoto also created the design for the exhibition catalog’s cover, a peony composed in a *sometsuke*-like blue and calligraphic title inscription (**Fig. 5.1**). In May, 1927, Tomimoto became an official member of the organization’s second division, *yōga*.¹⁹

In addition to Tomimoto’s room, a special exhibition of art by Kaneko Kuheiji (金子九平次, 1883-1971) consisted of twenty-eight pieces of sculpture and eleven paintings he had created in Europe. This was the first time sculpture was shown at the exhibition. Also, for the first time, there was an exhibition area devoted to foreign works by “guest members” Henri Matisse (1869–1954), Pierre Bonnard (1867–1947), Andre Derain (1880–1954), and Henri de Waroquier (1881–1970). Derain and Waroquier became “foreign members” of the organization, and the “foreigners’ exhibition” continued for the next ten exhibitions.²⁰

¹⁸ The number of works he showed was 100 according to Kokugakai Kaimu Iinkai, *Kokugakai 80-nen no kiseki: 80 kai Kokuten kinenshi: kaiga, hanga, chōkoku, kōgei, shashin* (Tokyo: Kokugakai, 2006), 11; But an early source states over 200 of his works in total were displayed. See Tateishi Tetsuomi, ed., *Kokugakai: Hito to sakuhin* (Tokyo: Bijutsu shuppan dezain sentā, 1967), 91. After Tokyo, the exhibition travelled to Okazaki Park, Kyoto (May 21–30), and the Asahi Kaikan, Osaka (June 3–13).

¹⁹ Kokugakai Kaimu Iinkai, *Kokugakai 80-nen no kiseki: 80 kai Kokuten kinenshi*, 11.

²⁰ Tateishi, *Kokugakai: Hito to sakuhin*, 91.

The exhibition's catalogue illustrates sixty *nihonga*, *yōga*, pastel, and watercolor paintings first. Then it includes a ceramics work by Tomimoto, a large porcelain container with a *sometsuke* painting of a mandarin duck (**Fig. 5.2**), and a stoneware jar with white slip decoration of a flower. Both represent the phase of Tomimoto's oeuvre in which the influence of Korean porcelain and stoneware was strong, inspiring him to create many *sometsuke* works and *tsubo* forms. The final works illustrated in the catalogue are two sculptures by Kaneko, a bronze bust of a girl and a reclining female nude. The catalogue elicits an evaluative connectivity between Tomimoto's ceramics and the sculptures and paintings of others; any boundaries between "craft" and "art" were erased.

Tomimoto's ceramics exhibited there were influenced by Joseon stoneware and blue-and-white porcelain."²¹ The covered bowl, titled *Sometsuke oshidori moyō jikirō* 染付おしどり模様食籠 is a relatively anomalous example within Tomimoto's oeuvre. The form is of a type used frequently for the presentation of sweets in conjunction with drinking tea. This usage was not one advocated by Tomimoto in written documents, however. The design of a mandarin duck is also one that did not appear in his later works, but it was a *moyō* featured in his *moyōshū* of the same period. The exhibition also featured a 1925 stoneware jar with inlaid design of a flower (**Fig. 5.3**) that, like the

²¹ It should be noted that the blue-and-white Joseon porcelain wares that received so much praise by Yanagi and others in the *Mingei* movement, and inspired Tomimoto, were far from "folk ceramics." They included wares decorated by court painters and made at court kilns. Cobalt was an expensive pigment since, until the nineteenth century, it was imported to Korea from China. See Chung Yang-om, *Hanguk ui Dojagi* [Korean ceramics], quoted in Kumja Paik Kim, *The Art of Korea: Highlights from the Collection of San Francisco's Asian Art Museum* (San Francisco: Asian Art Museum, 2006), 136–138.

porcelain covered dish, directly appropriated Joseon precedents. Its *buncheong*-inspired (white slip over stoneware) rough surface and irregularly-shaped profile, though, is somewhat anomalous to Tomimoto's work overall.

These types of ceramics with their strong connections to the Korean "folk ceramics" popular in early Shōwa Japan appealed to modern artists like Tomimoto for their raw expressionist aesthetic, an aesthetic we also find underlying the oil paintings by Umehara and others in the Kokuten. This commensurability between mediums was decisive in the entrance of craft to the exhibition. The fact that Tomimoto's historical inspiration was not Japanese ceramics, but the relatively undervalued Joseon-style ceramics, positioned them outside the highly codified categories of Japanese ceramics (mass-produced ceramics, tea ceramics, export ware, and so on). Tomimoto's ceramics lacked a heavy historical residue, as it were, that could deter from viewers directly experiencing the objects according to their formal properties and artistic facture. These objects also provide evidence that the early craft exhibited at the Kokuten was closely connected to the aesthetics of *Mingei* as espoused by Yanagi Sōetsu.

Shortly following this landmark exposure of Tomimoto's work at the Kokuten, Tomimoto established a craft division for it. In his words, "In 1927, under my direction a craft division was established in the association. At the time, the Imperial Salon (*kanten*) had no craft division. The Imperial Salon's craft division was created a half year after that of the Kokugakai."²² Tomimoto's leadership ushered in a watershed moment for the history of modern Japanese ceramics in national arts institutions. In June 1928, in a

²² *Watashi no rirekisho*, 211.

roundtable discussion in *Atorie*, painter Fujii Tatsukichi (藤井達吉, 1881–1964) commented, “It is appropriate to say that Tomimoto rallied crafts to enter into the Kokuten.”²³ But, as Tomimoto described, a craft section was added to the Kokuten first, and the Imperial Salon (Teiten), later. This fact is generally not acknowledged in histories of modern Japanese craft, likely because in this first year the only exhibiting “craft” artist at the Kokuten was Tomimoto.

From May to June of 1928, returning to the same venues in Tokyo, Kyoto, and Osaka, the Kokuten expanded greatly in terms of mediums. Organizers officially accepted sculpture and craft as part of the *yōga* division, and prints as part of the *nihonga* division. Still, the number of submitted and accepted works other than paintings was low—only thirty-two sculptures and sixty craft works in vessel forms—compared to a staggering 1259 pieces of *yōga*.²⁴ The judge for the craft division that year was ceramist Kondō Yūzō, Tomimoto’s assistant from 1921 through 1923, who in 1928 began exhibiting work at the Teiten.²⁵ Tomimoto was highly critical of the first year’s craft entries, writing in a June 1928 *Bi no kuni* article that the majority of works submitted

²³ “Kokuten kappyō [Kokuten joint review],” 5, no. 6: 52.

²⁴ Of these, just 163 *yōga*, five sculptures, and eleven crafts works were accepted, and according to the Kokuten’s published history, actually shown at the exhibition were 197 *yōga*, 16 sculptures, and 25 craft works. Five artists submitted one sculpture each, and nine artists submitted a total of eleven craft works. See www.kokuten.com/ryakushi/frame-7.htm.

²⁵ Although Kondō was only 26 years old at the time he was appointed judge, he had begun his training in ceramics at the age of twelve.

lacked originality (*dokusōsei*) and that “craft works with no originality and only technique cannot be said to be art works (*geijutsuhin*) worthy of praise.”²⁶

Over the course of a few days beginning July 28 of 1928, *nihonga* painter Tsuchida Bakusen (土田麦僊, 1887–1936) announced the formal dissolution of the Kokuten organization as it was then known; Umehara and Kawashima announced to the group their resolve to form a new organization out of the remains of the second division, *yōga*. Among the nine initial members of the new group were Tsubaki Sadao (椿貞雄, 1896–1957), Kōno Michisei (河野通勢, 1895–1950), and Takamura Kōtarō.²⁷ Later that year Hamada Shōji and Bernard Leach became members. Essentially, the Kokugakai, as the organization was then known, grew out of the previous *yōga* division of the organization. The group became officially known as Kokugakai and established three divisions: painting, sculpture, and craft.

From 1929 through the 1930s, the exhibition welcomed a diverse constituency and continued to expand its included mediums. Initially artists associated with the *Mingei* group dominated the craft section. Tomimoto invited most of them, including ceramists Funaki Michitada (舩木道忠, 1900–1963), Kawai Kanjirō, Bernard Leach, and Hamada Shōji; textile artists Serizawa Keisuke (芹沢銈介, 1895–1984) and Tonomura Kichinosuke (外村吉之介, 1898–1993); and printmaker Munakata Shikō. Seemingly

²⁶ Tomimoto’s harsh critique may have had to do with the fact that Kondō, his former assistant who was so well-skilled, was judge. “Kokuten kōgeibu nitsuite [Concerning the Kokuten’s craft section],” 4, no. 6: 26.

²⁷ Takamura Kōtarō never showed work in the exhibition, however.

there were no limits to the types of work shown. For example, in 1929 one exhibited work was a cushion cover designed by Tomimoto and embroidered by Nakae Yoshiko 中江妍子. By 1929, the exhibition had grown in terms of its number of craft works, with 65 craft works, 41 sculptures, and 264 paintings.²⁸ Also in 1929, a special exhibition room was devoted to sculpture and drawing by Rodin, and one drawing each by Antoine Bourdelle, Charles Despiau, and Aristide Maillol. The organization continued to expand its boundaries in terms of which mediums were given their own exhibition categories. In 1931, prints were designated as a separate category (previously they were admitted from within the *yōga* division). In 1939, photography was added.

A notable feature of the Kokuten, beginning with the establishment of the special exhibition room for European artists in 1927, and continuing consistently each year through 1937, was that organizers included the work of renowned artists from Europe, particularly Post-Impressionists such as Paul Cézanne, Henri Matisse, Claude Monet, Pierre-Auguste Renoir, and Henri Rousseau.²⁹ How did the craft by *Mingei*-affiliated artists relate to oil paintings by some of Europe's most highly acclaimed artists? *Mingei*-affiliated artists at the Kokuten displayed their art as inspired by, not belonging to, folk traditions. Yanagi organized adjunct displays at Kokuten exhibitions in the 1930s for utilitarian crafted objects made by rural Japanese craftspeople. This led to a growing tension between Kokuten members who felt only works by named artists should be

²⁸ In that year, for craft, textile artist Serizawa Keisuke and ceramist Kashima Kichijūrō 鹿島吉十郎 were awarded the Kokuga Shōgakushō 国画奨学賞 (Encouragement to Study Award).

²⁹ Additionally, Bernard Leach was not the only British ceramist who was a member; ceramist Michael Cardew (1901–1983) joined the exhibition and was awarded the Kokuga shōgakusho in 1931.

shown versus Kokuten members, following Yanagi, who wanted to include “anonymous” folk craft. A reviewer of the 1935 Kokuten wrote, “Each of these works has its own charm and taste. But I cannot understand why these ordinary objects are placed solemnly and pretentiously at an art exhibition. Some may say that they are there because they are good, or beautiful. But I feel offended to see them placed side by side with works by Mr. Tomimoto or Mr. Hamada.”³⁰ Criticism of this sort became a growing concern to Tomimoto, and it eventually led to the *Mingei* faction’s departure from the Kokuten in 1937. As Yoshiyuki Fuji observed, Tomimoto’s emphasis on “modern ego” (*kindai no jiga* 近代の自我) fundamentally clashed with the *Mingei* group artists’ emphasis on art of unknown craftspeople.³¹

Tomimoto upheld his leadership of the Kokuten craft division, from 1928 until 1947, as a positive force counter to what were deemed unfavorable aspects of the Teiten’s craft division, and others also saw it that way. He sought to avoid the stiff academicism of the Teiten’s craft division and instead gather artworks that had an “enjoyable sense of interest” (*tanoshimi omoshiromi no ari sakuhin*).³² Tomimoto and others had, from the inception of the craft division at the Teiten, criticized its lack of emphasis on originality, and this criticism became hallmarks of the Kokuten’s craft division ethos.

³⁰ Kimura Kazuichi, “Kokuten no kōgei o miru” (Viewing the crafts at the kokuten),” *Atorie* 12, no. 6 (June 1935): 37, trans. and repr. in Chiaki Ajioka, *Early Mingei and Development of Japanese Crafts*, repr. in Brandt, *Kingdom of Beauty*, 112–3.

³¹ “Shinshōkai to Kyoto, Tomimoto Kenkichi, Inagaki Nenjiro o chushin ni,” *Senshoku alpha* 244 (July 2001): 51. Tomimoto left the group in 1946, and the following year Yanagi, Hamada, Kawai, Funaki, Serizawa, and Yanagi Yoshitaka (柳悦孝, 1911–2003) re-joined it.

³² “Watashira no kōgei [Our craft] 私等の工藝,” *Seitō yoroku*, 70.

Despite his criticisms of the Teiten, Tomimoto became a member of its sponsoring organization, the Imperial Fine Arts Academy (Teikoku Bijutsuin), in June of 1935. In this year he also became an instructor at the Imperial Art University (Teikoku Bijutsu Gakkō), and the two events were likely related.³³ In February, 1936, he exhibited his ceramics at the Teiten for the first time, and on this occasion he also served as a judge. One of the works he exhibited was the large white porcelain *tsubo* mentioned in Chapter Three.³⁴ The critic Nakata Mitsuo, in a *Teikoku kōgei* review, described it as ushering in a “fresh spirit” (*shinsenna ki*) to the exhibition. He described this as a turning point not only affecting the two most prominent exhibiting ceramists, Itaya Hazan and Kiyomizu Rokubei, but also for the entire exhibition; Nakata wrote that Tomimoto’s plain white *tsubo* was one of only two or three ceramic works at the exhibition that were progressive and worthy of seeing.³⁵ Additionally, Tomimoto’s influence as judge was the

³³ He became an instructor there in November. The school was regarded as a “kakushu gakkō” (variety school) ranked lower than a “senmon gakkō” (specialty school) and a “daigaku” (university). The department he was affiliated with was the Kōgei zuanka jisshū 工芸図案科実習 [Craft design training department]. Archival records at the university suggest that he taught there through 1937, with a salary of 720 yen/month. Other faculty in that department at the time included the German architect Bruno Taut, multi-media craft artist Fuji Tatsukichi (藤井達吉, 1881–1964), and Ando Kōichi (安藤浩一). Today the university’s name is Musashino Art University. See Musashino Bijutsu Daigaku Daigakushi Shiryō linkai, ed. *Musashino Bijutsu Daigaku Daigakushi Shiryōshū Dairokushū ‘Kanehara Shōgo nikki’ Shōwa jūnen* (Tokyo: Musashino Bijutsu Daigaku Daigakushi Shiryōshitsu, 2009) and Sōritsu Rokujūnen Shihenshū linkai, ed. *Musashino Bijutsu Daigaku rokujūnenshi / The History of 60 Years of Musashino Art University* (Tokyo: Musashino Art University), 1991.

³⁴ The name for this particular exhibition was Kaiso dai ikai teiten 改組第1回帝展, the first reorganized Imperial Fine Arts Academy Exhibition. The reorganization led by the Nihon Bijutsuin (Japan Art Academy) entailed allowing artists to submit works without having been screened first. This year, of 769 submissions for craft, 194 were accepted.

³⁵ Nakata Mitsuo 中田満雄, 10, no. 4 (April, 1936): 20. Later works Tomimoto showed at the Shin Bunten include *a kazari bako* (see Chapter Four) at the fourth Shin Bunten in October 1941; a *kyusu* at the fifth Shin Bunten in October 1942 (when he was also a judge); and a gourd-shaped

reason, Nakata opined, that the number of accepted entries had fallen, since Tomimoto insisted that ceramic forms should be thrown on the wheel by the artists themselves. By October, 1946, though, Tomimoto resigned from the Imperial Arts Association and established the Shinshōkai for reasons that will be described in a following section.

Crafts Technical Training Center, Takayama

One of the most remarkable examples of the preservation of Japanese ceramics techniques in the twentieth century is Tomimoto's continuation of ceramics instruction at the Crafts Technical Training Center in Takayama during the spring and summer of 1945. This marks a turning point for Tomimoto's practice, in a sense, since before then he had not engaged in activities directly centered on preservation. He had been teaching at the Tokyo School of Fine Arts since June 1944. Then in May, 1945, when relentless air raids by the United States Army Air Forces made Tokyo a perilous place in which to remain, Tomimoto fled with twelve or thirteen of his students to Takayama, a small city approximately 240 kilometers west of the capital in the mountainous Hida region of Gifu Prefecture.³⁶ From 1935 to 1947, the Craft Technical Training Center (工芸技術講習所 Kōgei Gijutsu Kōshūjo), a school administered by the Tokyo National University of Fine

white porcelain vase in October 1946 at the sixth Shin Bunten. At the February 1946 Nitten he was a judge.

³⁶ Tomimoto, *Watashi no rirekisho*, 220. Data about their activities came to public light in a 1997 exhibition organized by the city of Takayama. The exact dates are unknown, but it is probable that they left Tokyo before the March 9–10 Tokyo air raid that killed more than 100,000 people and after which an estimated one million citizens became homeless.

Arts, held training courses in Takayama.³⁷ There, Tomimoto taught this small group of students ceramics, while Naitō Shirō (内藤四郎, 1907–1988) taught metalwork, and Yamanaga Kōho (山永光甫, 1889–1973) taught lacquer craft.³⁸ Ceramists Katō Hajime and Fujimoto Yoshimichi (藤本能道, 1919–1992) were at the school at that time as well, presumably also teaching.³⁹

Locating the training center for ceramics in Takayama built on the hundred-plus year history of government-supported overglaze enamel ceramics manufacturing there. The training center used the studio of the Hōkokusha (芳国舎) company, which produced a ware known by the name Shibukusa-yaki (渋草焼) using local porcelain and overglaze enamels. The kiln can be traced to 1841, when it was established as a semi-governmental (*hankanhanmin* 半官半民) manufacturer.⁴⁰ Given the specialty, decorators from Kutani specializing in enameled porcelain joined, and thus the wares came to be known, alternately, as Hida Akae, Hida Kutani, Owari Seto, and Kaga Kutani (飛騨赤絵, 飛騨九谷, 尾張瀬戸, 加賀九谷). By the twentieth century, these refined ceramics became export wares under the company name Hōkokusha, a name given in 1879 by naval officer Katsu Kaishū (勝海舟, 1823–1899) and the government statesman Gotō Shōjirō (後藤象二郎, 1838–1897). The company exhibited their ceramics in various

³⁷ The institution itself had been established in 1941, and it eventually closed in 1947.

³⁸ Tomimoto, *Watashi no rirekisho*, 220.

³⁹ Both ceramists were designated later, like Tomimoto, as Holders of Important Intangible Cultural Property.

⁴⁰ The kiln was established in 1841 by Toyota Fujimoto 豊田藤之進, who invited the potter Toda Ryūzō (戸田柳造, ?–1865) to come there from Owari.

domestic expositions and was awarded medals at the 1910 Exposition Universelle in Paris, the 1910 Japan-Britain exhibition in London, and the 1915 Panama-Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco.

Tomimoto and his students engaged in ceramics firing there as we see in an extant photograph of work taking place at a kiln (**Fig. 5.4**).⁴¹ Tomimoto also reported making a significant finding there, that the local Hida porcelain was of excellent quality equal to that of Kyushu or Kutani.⁴² In 1945, he wrote about this porcelain clay in militaristic terms, in a calligraphic text with an image of a covered jar, stating that “for craftspeople, maintaining high quality materials is like a samurai warrior caressing fine swords.”⁴³ Still, the conditions in Takayama at that time were incredibly harsh, and the purported craft training activities were challenging at best. Tomimoto recounted:

We were more or less able to gather together classes, but in truth it was not a place to hold lectures. Within less than one month of having evacuated there, everyone lacked sufficient nutrition. Small mosquito bites on our arms would quickly become infected, spread gradually, and swell. Then our heads would become foggy, and even if someone called out ‘hey,’ we could not respond. We would get diarrhea and it would not stop for three or four days. Therefore, those with hometowns in the countryside would go home to replenish themselves nutritionally for a week each, alternating with each other.⁴⁴

It is remarkable that during such a tumultuous time Tomimoto and his students even carried on with their education practice to this degree. While we may surmise that the

⁴¹ Some of their works were exhibited in November, 1997, in Takayama at the “Senjichū no yakimono ten [Exhibition of ceramics during the time of war].”

⁴² Inscribed on a painting in a private collection. A photograph of it is the city archives of Takayama.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Tomimoto, *Watashi no rirekisho*, 221.

training center might have served as a way to save some young men from conscription, or that it was simply a safe haven for this small group of students and teachers during the height of the war, the continuation of the training center through the spring and summer of 1945 symbolizes the high degree to which craft was supported at the national level in the modern period.

Shinshōkai

Following the tumult of the war, Tomimoto's institutional alliances changed radically, signaled most dramatically by his establishment of a craft art group named Shinshō Bijutsu Kōgeikai, literally the “New Craftspeople's Art Craft Society” (新匠美術工芸会), abbreviated to Shinshōkai in 1951.⁴⁵ Tomimoto described its inception as follows.

The spring following the end of the war, on my own accord I emigrated alone from the house I had been living in for a long time in Tokyo to the house where I was born in Yamato. At the time, food and clothing were still scarce. It was during that period of just living and then finally going on that “Shinshō”—mostly people who broke away from the Kokugakai Kōgei division—arranged to have an exhibition.⁴⁶

Tomimoto was still allied with the Kokugakai and showed his work in the April 1946 Kokuten in a special room commemorating the twentieth anniversary of his leading of the craft division. In January of 1947, he led the formal establishment of the Shinshō Bijutsu

⁴⁵ This group is still active at present, based in Kyoto, and holds annual exhibitions in Kyoto and Tokyo. I attended part of its annual meeting in Nara on May 23, 2009; members visited the Tomimoto Kenkichi Memorial Museum in Ando-mura, held a business meeting and banquet at a local hot springs hotel, and visited the remains of Asuka temple the following day.

⁴⁶ *Shinshōkai* exhibition catalogue (July 1960), preface.

Kōgeikai, comprised of nineteen artists who worked in ceramics, lacquer, metal, and textiles, and were mostly ten to twenty years younger than Tomimoto.⁴⁷ Their first exhibition took place in May 1947 at Takashimaya in Tokyo.

The strongest rallying point for the Shinshōkai was a rejection of the *Mingei* group's stated intention to re-enter the Kokugakai. Tomimoto and his cohorts perceived that the *Mingei* group artists lacked originality and were too focused on the past. In his history of Tomimoto's founding of the group, Kawabe Atsushi cites a passage of Tomimoto's as epitomizing the feelings of the group: "It is terrible that the majority of craft artists are forgetting modernity and forgetting themselves. Today most artists have been corrupted by the indiscrimination (*kondō* 混同) between learning technique and the spirit of creation (*sōzō seishin* 創造精神)."⁴⁸ Clearly Tomimoto references the *Mingei* group in this statement as the individuals "forgetting modernity." Tomimoto emphasized the ethos of progress in his 1953 poem printed in later Shinshōkai exhibition pamphlets:

<i>Kyōki kazeyo</i>	A strong wind
<i>Shinshō o fuke</i>	Blows on Shinshō
<i>Migi yori hidari yori</i>	From the right, from the left,
<i>Fuku kaze yori hageshiku susumu</i>	Progressing more fiercely than the blowing wind.
<i>Shinshō o miyo</i>	Look at Shinshō
<i>Aruiwa dakōsuru shiku</i>	Sometimes twisting,
<i>Aruiwa yakushinsuru shiku</i>	Sometimes rushing ahead.
<i>Shinshō wa susumu</i>	Shinshō advances. ⁴⁹

⁴⁷ See Appendix C for a list of member artists. Fuji Yoshiyuki, "Shinshōkai to Kyoto, Tomimoto Kenkichi, Inagaki Nenjirō o chushin ni," *Gekkan senshoku alpha* 244 (July 2001): 51.

⁴⁸ *Kōgei kansō henpen* 工芸感想片々, quoted in "Tomimoto Kenkichi to shinshōkōgeikai," *Shinshō 40 shūnen kinen* (Kyoto/Tokyo: Shinshōkōgeikai), 6.

⁴⁹ This was published in the 1955 catalogue for the Shinshōkai exhibition, 3. See Shinshōkōgeikai, ed., *Shinshō: 40 shūnen kinen* (Kyoto: Shinshōkōgeikai, 1985), 5. It was also written on a pot by Tomimoto around this time.

This rousing proclamation was published after the publicized exclusion of association members from the Nitten described below.

The Shinshōkai members also unified under their desire to distance themselves from the Bijutsuin (Japan Art Academy) and its exhibition, by then known as the Nitten (The former Teiten and Shin Bunten). Tomimoto had resigned from the Bijutsuin in October 1946, after exhibiting his work in the first Nitten in February 1946. He stated that the Shinshōkai was created to offset the “outrageous” qualities that the Bijutsuin had assumed, in which “chiefs and underlings’ favors had absolutely nothing to do with art.”⁵⁰ The preface to the 1957 exhibition catalogue captures this rebellion against the political allegiances polluting the national exhibition. Tomimoto wrote:

Shinshō, politically incompetent, and with all its members sharing that incompetence, cannot forget even for one day the work of craft itself. In this world filled with craftspeople who are political and use the roots of decoration in excess, we as Shinshō appoint ourselves proudly independent. July 17, 1957, Tomimoto Kenkichi.⁵¹

This statement reveals the strong stance Tomimoto and his group took against the favoritism on the part of Nitten judges. Tomimoto had also been a judge of the Nitten as late as 1946, so he reacted with an insider’s knowledge of the exhibition’s processes. Tomimoto publicly remarked that he had no objections regarding artists who wished to exhibit in both the Nitten and the Shinshōkai exhibitions.⁵² But after the two 1952 exhibitions, Nitten organizers declared that they would no longer accept artists exhibiting

⁵⁰ Mizusawa Sumio, quoting Tomimoto in “Tomimoto jiki to watashi,” *Sansai* 146 (Jan. 1962): 34.

⁵¹ Frontispiece, *Dai junikai Shinshō tenrankai zuroku* [12th Shinshō exhibition catalogue] (1957).

⁵² Fuji, “Shinshōkōgeikai to Kyoto, Tomimoto Kenkichi, Inagaki Nenjiro o chushin ni,” 54.

at the Shinshōkai exhibition, since the Shinshōkai exhibition had been scheduled at the same time.⁵³ Surely Tomimoto wanted to distance himself and his retinue from the Nitten even before this event. In the 1952 catalogue for the Shinshōkai exhibition, Naitō Tadashi reflected on the identities of the three exhibitions (Nitten, Kokuten, and Shinshō), stating that the first two “contributed greatly to the development of modern Japanese craft” and the Nitten had a “formal face” (*yosoyuki kao*), while the Kokuten was reminiscent of a “friend wearing everyday clothes” (*fudangi no yūjin*), and that if he saw an artist’s work at the Nitten and then the Shinshō, at the Nitten, he “would not be able to feel the freshness or intimacy (*shitashisa*)” towards works that he saw at the Shinshō.⁵⁴ In other words, Naitō overtly regarded the Shinshōkai as the most progressive exhibition group for modern Japanese craft.

Overseas Exhibitions

In 1946, Tomimoto wrote in the women’s magazine *Fujin no tomo* that Japanese people appreciate and understand ceramics like no other people in the world, and that he wanted to “spread to every corner of the world Japan’s unsurpassed ceramics,” especially to Europe and America, sending “porcelain *sometsuke* coffee cups and saucers.”⁵⁵ Several significant overseas group exhibitions in Europe and the United States included Tomimoto’s ceramics. In each of these exhibitions, his work played a significant

⁵³ Ibid., 54–55.

⁵⁴ “Shinshōkai no inshō [Impressions of Shinshōkai],” *Shinshō* 1 (1952).

⁵⁵ Tomimoto, “Sekai ni okuritai nihon no kōgei 5, Tōki,” *Fujin no tomo* 40:6 (June 1946), back cover.

role in defining modern ceramics according to varying ways of classification and cultural diplomacy.

The first time his ceramics were exhibited overseas was with Hamada, Kawai, and Leach in 1929, when Yanagi Sōetsu, then a visiting professor at Harvard University, organized an exhibition of English and Japanese craft at the Fogg Art Museum.⁵⁶ This exhibition was not of any discernible significance for Tomimoto, however, except that it laid a foundation for modern *Mingei* group ceramists' work to receive museum and gallery exposure in the United States. Then in 1931 and 1933 Tomimoto and Leach showed their ceramics in joint exhibitions at the Beaux Arts Gallery on London's Bond Street.⁵⁷ These exhibitions are particularly noteworthy because they took place in a premier art gallery which also sold painting, drawings, and prints by modern European artists. In this context, Tomimoto's ceramics could be viewed on par with modernist art expressions in painting and other mediums.⁵⁸ Published reviews were scant, but praised Tomimoto's ceramics, described in the exhibition pamphlet as consisting of works in the "Korean manner," *sometsuke*, and overglaze enamel porcelain. The *Cornish Evening Tidings* of Penzance, reprinting *The Art Critic*, in the "Morning Post" noted "there is

⁵⁶ "Konshū Beikoku de nichiei kōgei ten 今秋米國で日英工藝展," *Osaka jiji shinpō* (1929).

⁵⁷ Between May 5 and 22, 1931, the "Exhibition of Stoneware Pottery and Porcelain by Kenkichi Tomimoto (of Tokyo) and Bernard Leach" took place at the Beaux Arts Gallery, Bruton Place, Bond Street, in London. Leach knew its director, Frederick Lessore (Letter from Leach to Bernard Rackham, Department of Ceramics, Victoria & Albert Museum, dated 22nd May, 1931), BLA no. 3256–3258, CSC. In 1929, the Beaux Arts Gallery had exhibited the ceramics of Hamada Shōji and Kawai Kanjirō. Cort, "Japanese Encounters with Clay," 118.

⁵⁸ The gallery had "always on view" etchings by "Austin, Brockhurst, Morgan, Newbolt, Skeaping, [and] Walcot," color woodcuts by Elizabeth Keith, drawings by "Bone, Cameron, Forain, John, McBey, M. Maris, Orpen, [and] Sickert," and paintings by William Nicholson. "Exhibition of Stoneware Pottery of Kanjiro Kawai" pamphlet, 1929, CSC.

naturally a certain affinity active in their [Tomimoto and Leach's] work" but that Tomimoto possessed more mastery: "Mr. Leach's brushwork may not be so varied and dramatic as Mr. Tomimoto's, but otherwise his craftsmanship is excellent."⁵⁹

But the Beaux Arts Gallery exhibitions proved to be failures sales-wise, with 83 of 125 of its pieces ultimately shipped back to Tomimoto's Tokyo residence.⁶⁰ This failure was predicted by Henry Bergen (1873–1950), a collector and close friend to Leach, who helped arrange the exhibition; Bergen wrote, "There are few people with money to spare & a good many buyers are full up with pots."⁶¹ Further, Bergen criticized Tomimoto's work, writing that its "form & decoration [are] swearing at one another half the time—or the decoration [is] wholly independent of the form!"⁶² He went on to suggest that Leach "is a friendly rival, if not a pupil, of Mr. Tomimoto."⁶³

In contrast to Bergen's negative assessment, the Victoria and Albert Museum bought a *sometsuke* plate by Tomimoto at the exhibition. The Keeper of the Ceramics Department, B. Rackham, noted in an internal memo regarding the entire acquisition, "The plate by Mr. Tomimoto shows that the Japanese have now fully recovered their sense for painting 'on the biscuit' which had been submerged by the 19th century practice of cheap enamel-painting."⁶⁴ This sentiment sheds light on the general appraisal of

⁵⁹ BLA no. 1395 1928-37, CSC.

⁶⁰ Shipping list, 6 pages, of Wilfred C Kimber, The Etchers' Stores, London. BLA no. 451, CSC. Of the other 42 pieces, one plate was eventually acquired by the Victoria and Albert Museum.

⁶¹ Letter from Bergen to Leach dated Dec. 17, 1930. BLA no. 2397, CSC.

⁶² Letter from Bergen to Leach dated June 6, 1931. BLA no. 2398, CSC.

⁶³ 26 Feb. 1931. BLA no. 1395, CSC. Leach never appears to have described himself as a "pupil" of Tomimoto.

⁶⁴ Unpublished memo, dated "28.V.1931," Victoria and Albert Museum archives.

Tomimoto's work outside Japan. Since overglaze enamel had been so much associated with export wares of the Meiji era, it was a style seen by many as not as authentically Japanese as works by artists associated with the *Mingei* movement, particularly Hamada Shōji, who had worked in England at Leach's studio for three years beginning in 1920, and who later toured the United States conducting lectures and demonstrations along with Leach and Yanagi in 1952.⁶⁵

Contrasting the Beaux Arts exhibitions in which Tomimoto's ceramics were promoted as modernist art objects was a spring, 1938, exhibition in Berlin. The German government organized the exhibition Internationale Handwerks-Ausstellung in Kaiserdamm, Berlin. According to an *Asahi* newspaper report, Japan was deemed a country of "excellent handicrafts skills (*shukōgyō*)" and thus invited to participate in this major international event."⁶⁶ Representatives from Japan sent three hundred historical and contemporary objects conveying the technical and aesthetic achievements of

⁶⁵ Tomimoto's ceramics were displayed in at least one of two other exhibitions of 1935 organized by the Contemporary Art Society, the Silver Jubilee Exhibition at the Tate Gallery, Millbank, and the Modern Pottery exhibition at the Royal Scottish Museum. According to the Tate Gallery pamphlet for the exhibition, "Silver Jubilee Exhibition of some of the Works acquired by the Contemporary Art Society 1910–1935" (Pelican Press, 1935), there were 61 works of paintings and sculpture, with oil painting predominating. According to *The Scotsman* (Dec. 20 1935), for the exhibition at the Royal Scottish Museum, 40 pieces of modern pottery were shown: "These works, which were recently on view at the Tate Gallery, London, are mainly in the form of vessels, such as vases, jars, and dishes. They comprise, for the most part, typical productions of such well-known studio potters as State Murray, Bernard Leach, Michael Cardew, and Mr and Mrs Charles Vyse, though the collection also includes examples by two Swedes, Wilhem Kaïge and Svend Hamershof, and by three Japanese potters, Shoji Hamada, Kanjiro Kawai, and Kenkicki [sic] Tomimoto." Cuttings, BLA no. 1413-1414, CSC.

⁶⁶ "Kyōsa kurabe no kokusai shukōgyōhaku e, Nihon o daihyō suru hin 器用さ比への国際手工業博へ、日本を代表する品 [Comparing skills of the handicrafts industry, representative pieces from Japan]," *Asahi shimbun*, March 14, 1938, 10. The exhibition was held May 28–July 10, 1938. Tomimoto's plates were featured in a photograph accompanying this article.

Japanese craft, including a set of octagonal overglaze enamel plates by Tomimoto.

Tomimoto's ceramics were featured here not as art ceramics but objects of technical virtuosity alongside other ceramics, paper, metalwork, and textiles. The types of objects ranged from tableware like Tomimoto's to tobacco boxes, fishing tools, dolls, and bow-and-arrows. One of the oldest objects shown was a Nara period bronze mirror and clay tile. Although this exhibition is an anomaly within Tomimoto's exhibition history, it serves as an example of how craft objects even by the most celebrated individual artists could serve as representations of the technologically advanced nation at this time.

Framing craft as technological achievement in overseas exhibitions began in the Meiji era, as discussed in the Introduction. By 1938, this promotion of craft served not only commercial purposes; it also demonstrated national strength during a time of war.

Perhaps the most significant overseas exhibition for Tomimoto occurred in 1950, one important in establishing the cultural capital of modern Japanese ceramics to the outside world. Tomimoto's works were exhibited in Paris at the Musée Cernuschi exhibition *Japon C ramique Contemporain*. Conservateur of the museum Ren  Grousset had travelled to Tokyo as a French cultural ambassador and consulted closely with Koyama Fujio of the Ceramics Department of the Tokyo National Museum.⁶⁷ The stated goal of the exhibition was to show works by master ceramists who engaged in the "noble game of earth and fire."⁶⁸ Tomimoto's work was highlighted for its individualism and artistry, and he was the figurehead for one grouping in the exhibition, "Tomimoto et les

⁶⁷ Catalogue of the exhibition (1950), iii. Also see Cort, "Japanese Encounters with Clay," 104–105.

⁶⁸ Catalogue of the exhibition (1950), iii–iv.

artistes de meme tendance.”⁶⁹ In it were Yamada Tetsu, Kondō Yūzō, Suzuki Kiyoshi, and others. The other categories were “Ceramistes Traditionalistes Independants,” “Ceramistes du mouvement de renovation des arts populaires,” and “Ceramistes d’avant-garde.” A review by Yoshikawa Itsuji stated that “the white pottery of Mr. Kenkichi Tomimoto” reflected “one of the essential qualities of Japanese ceramic art in its creamy aesthetic, with beautiful and precious materials covering a shape with clean lines.”⁷⁰ Again, Tomimoto’s overglaze enamel work was not shown there, even though by 1950 it was the technique dominant in his work (see Chapter Four). The exhibition coincided with a display of Japanese ukiyo-e prints in Parisian collections, and together they were referred to as “Exposition d’art Japonais: estampes du XVIII siècle et céramique contemporaines.” Yoshikawa’s article devoted most of its review to the prints, not the ceramics, suggesting that the ceramics, at least for some viewers, were not the main focus of the exhibition. However, this exhibition laid important groundwork for foreign appreciation of modern Japanese ceramics and the categories in which various ceramists’ work was organized.

Koyama was the head of selection for another major foreign exhibition, the *Japanese Life Culture* exhibition which began at New York’s Japan Society and travelled throughout the United States in 1956–1963.⁷¹ The exhibition featured modern Japanese craft in various mediums and included work by well-known individual artists, ceramics

⁶⁹ Ibid., 5.

⁷⁰ “Exposition d’art Japonais au Musée Cernuschi,” *Art d’aujourd’hui* 2, no. 4 (March, 1951): 27.

⁷¹ Koyama Fujio, “Amerika e okutta gendai no yakimono,” *Tōsetsu* 36 (March, 1956): 66–67. This exhibition is also described in Kida, “Japanese Crafts and Cultural Exchange with the USA in the 1950s: Soft Power and John D. Rockefeller during the Cold War.”

manufacturers like Noritake, and anonymous craft by rural Tanba makers. It did not include ceramics by Tomimoto, other “major artists” including Itaya Hazan and Kiyomizu Rokubei, as well as all in the Shinshōkai. Koyama stated that the exclusion occurred due to the limits of funding from Mitsukoshi department store.⁷² Ceramics by other individually known major artists—Arakawa Toyozō, Hamada Shōji, Ishiguro Munemaro, and Kitaōji Rosanjin—were included, though, suggesting their favor among Mitsukoshi sponsors and, as Kida Takuya has suggested, their popularity—particularly Rosanjin’s—among John D. Rockefeller III and others at the Japan Society who exerted authority over the inclusion of Japanese craftsmakers’ work in American exhibitions. “Japanese Life Culture” followed the important summer 1952 Dartington Hall international conference and the fall 1952 tour of the US by Yanagi, Hamada and Leach when they spoke and taught at Black Mountain College, St. Paul Minnesota, the Archie Bray Foundation in Helena Montana, and the Chouinard Art Institute in California. Each workshop lasted up to two weeks.⁷³ Thus, Hamada, who had worked with Leach in St. Ives, became the most prominent representative of modern Japanese ceramics in the United States.

None of the leading ceramists of the Nitten was included in “Japanese Life Culture,” not only due to financial restrictions as Koyama claimed in his *Tōsetsu* article cited above, but also because, perhaps, as Kida has noted, one goal of this and other 1950s exhibitions of Japanese arts in the United States was “to sweep away the anti-

⁷² “Amerika e okutta gendai no yakimono,” *Tōsetsu* 36 (March, 1956): 66–67.

⁷³ Nicole Coolidge Rousmaniere, “Yanagi’s America,” *Studio Potter* 25:1 (Dec. 1996):10–11.

Japanese prejudices that had been formed during the Pacific War, and to show that Japan was a friendly country that shared liberal democratic ideals.”⁷⁴ Tomimoto’s luxurious gold and silver enameled *kazari* porcelain was associated with what we might describe as imperial taste, even though in the postwar era he left the Nitten and resigned from the Bijutsuin. Evidence of the continued preference by the imperial family for Tomimoto’s work is demonstrated in an event of 1953. Crown Prince Akihito visited the United States in September 1953, and on the occasion of this visit, the Japanese Embassy in Washington purchased a gold and silver overglaze enamel covered jar (**Fig. 5.5**).⁷⁵ Unlike works made for government exhibition display by, for example, Hazan and Rokubei, this jar did not exude liberal democratic values. On the contrary, the use of luxurious materials could suggest ostentation and even excess. Tomimoto was a favored ceramist by the imperial family through the 1950s. As Tomimoto wrote to Leach in 1960, “[the] National Museum or Imperial Palace to decorate rooms so many orders comes [*sic*] to me. I am so busy. About money [I am] not anxious and I can live freely.”⁷⁶

Another explanation for the exclusion of Tomimoto and others from the “Japanese Life Culture” exhibition is factionalism. This played a role in the inclusion of works for another modern Japanese ceramics exhibition in the United States that year. In

⁷⁴ “Japanese Crafts and Cultural Exchange with the USA in the 1950s: Soft Power and John D. Rockefeller III during the Cold War,” 393.

⁷⁵ It was only in that summer that Tomimoto had mastered the technique of firing gold and silver together, he recounted, so the piece needed to be sent quickly to Washington. Naitō, “Sakuhin to sakuhin o tsujite mita Tomimoto-san,” 87. Jars similar to this one are in the collection of the Nara Prefectural Museum (1953), the Kyoto Museum of Modern Art (1953), and the Imperial Household Agency (1958).

⁷⁶ Dated Feb. 17, 1960. BLA no. 4631, CSC. This letter was transcribed by Jackie Bernstein, a student of Tomimoto.

the autumn of 1956, Tomimoto and five other ceramists—Arakawa Toyozo, Kaneshige Toyo, Katō Tōkurō, Kondō Yūzō, and Taki Kazuo—participated in an exhibition of seventy-six works of contemporary Japanese ceramics at the Chicago Art Institute. Museum curator Margaret Gentles asked art historian Ellen Conant to curate it since Conant knew many contemporary Japanese ceramists. According to Conant, Hamada and Rosanjin were originally included, but they withdrew. Hamada did so after Yanagi Sōetsu expressed that he wished to choose all of the participants and exclude non-*Mingei* artists. Then Rosanjin also declined when he learned Tomimoto would be a participant.⁷⁷

The late 1950s saw the staging of a growing number of international ceramics exhibitions. In June of 1959, an overglaze enamel gold and silver fern pattern calligraphic work by Tomimoto was selected for the Ostend Belgium International Ceramics Exhibition. In 1961, a *tōban* was shown in the Kyoto-Paris Exchange Exhibition in Paris.⁷⁸ In August, 1962, Tomimoto received Silver prize in the Third International Ceramics Exhibition in Prague for another overglaze enamel work.⁷⁹ Still, the presence of Tomimoto's overglaze enamel porcelain in Europe and the United States was, and continues to be, relatively low, for reasons we can conjecture to be related to those cited above.

⁷⁷ Ellen Conant, email message to author, August 5, 2013.

⁷⁸ 京都・パリ交歓陶芸展. It took place at the Kyoto City Museum Feb. 3–7, 1961, then at Sèvres May 17–June 8.

⁷⁹ Suzuki Osamu won the gold prize. Tomimoto's piece was purchased by the Rome Academy.

Designations of Holder of Important Intangible Cultural Property and the Order of Culture

In the frontispiece to *Bijutsu to kōgei*, a new craft-focused journal that began publication after World War II, its editor wrote, “Japan has forsworn her prewar attitude of implicit imitation of Western art and has launched herself on a sincere attempt to create something of her own, and to invigorate the artistic spirit of the defeated nation.”⁸⁰ Such invigoration was one of the main aims of the government’s new program installed in the early 1950s of designating individuals as “Holders of Important Intangible Cultural Property” (*Jūyō mukei bunkazai hōjisha*) for craft work. Colloquially known as the system for “Living National Treasures” (*ningen kokuhō*), it marked a manifestation of cultural preservation on an official administrative scale never before seen in Japan or elsewhere. This set of government promulgations provides evidence for the official national designation of crafts as synecdoches for “Japan.” The system of Living National Treasures deserves close examination because its establishment marks a turning point in the reception of modern craft in Japan as material embodiments of Japanese tradition. Although Tomimoto critiqued this system as well as the Order of Culture, an award he received in 1961, these prestigious titles raised Tomimoto’s already towering stature amongst ceramics critics, scholars, and artists.

The post-World War II national preservation system for Japanese craft recalls in some ways the promotion of craft at international exhibitions during the Meiji era. The main similarity between these two large-scale efforts was the support and attention to

⁸⁰ Editor’s note, frontispiece, *Bijutsu to Kōgei / Arts and Crafts*, 2, no. 3 (1947).

craft itself. However, the motivations, in the case of the postwar phenomenon, were largely cultural or at most nationalistic, not overtly economic as they had been in the Meiji era. In 1950 the Law for the Protection of Cultural Properties was put into place, and at first craft skills, not individuals, were designated as requiring protection under the title “Important Intangible Cultural Properties.” In 1954 the system was overhauled and the current system for designating individuals and groups was enacted.⁸¹ Along with the institution of Important Intangible Cultural Properties, an equally significant institution, the Japan Traditional Art Crafts Association (Nihon Dentō Kōgeikai) was inaugurated officially in July 1955. This group of craft makers included those designated as Intangible Cultural Property Holders and others deemed to have “exceptional skills ... creative power ... or particularly dedicated” to “traditional craft techniques.”⁸² In the 1956 Japan Traditional Art Crafts Association exhibition record, the preface warns that “superior craft generated by ‘*waza*’ (technique)” is “on the verge of a crisis of decline pressed by the current of the times.”⁸³ Thus, this group embraced as its cause the preservation of traditional techniques as much as the designations of individuals as holders of cultural property.

In February of 1955, Tomimoto received the title “Holder of Important Intangible Cultural Property,” for *iro-e jiki* (enameled porcelain) and thereafter given a yearly

⁸¹ Kaneko, “The Development of ‘Traditional Art Crafts’ in Japan,” 11.

⁸² Uchiyama Takeo, “The Japan Traditional Art Crafts Exhibition: Its History and Spirit,” in *Crafting Beauty in Modern Japan*, ed. Rousmaniere, 28.

⁸³ *Nihon dentō kōgei ten zuroku* 日本伝統工芸展図録 (1956), n.p.

subsidy of 300,000 yen.⁸⁴ The first year for ceramists to be awarded this designation was 1955, and Tomimoto was one of four recipients.⁸⁵ The others were Arakawa Toyozō (荒川豊蔵, 1894–1985) for both Seto black (*Seto guro* 瀬戸黒) and Shino (志野); Hamada Shōji for *Mingei* ceramics (*mingei tōki* 民芸陶器); and Ishiguro Munemaro (石黒宗麿, 1893–1968) for iron-glazed ceramics (*tetsuyū tōki* 鉄釉陶器).⁸⁶ The types of ceramics designated as intangible cultural properties ranged from technical, in the case of Tomimoto and Ishiguro, to geographically-based styles, for Arakawa, and in the case of Hamada, an amorphous reference to *Mingei*. The next year, in 1956, Kaneshige Toyo (金重陶陽, 1896–1967) received the award for his Bizen ceramics, another regional designation, and the next would be Katō Hajime for enameled porcelain in 1961. It bears noting that, while ceramists do not comprise the majority of Important Intangible Cultural Property Holders, they dominated the initial Japan Art Crafts Association makeup, with thirteen ceramists comprising the majority of the forty-seven members.

Ostensibly, Holders of Important Intangible Cultural Properties were designated as carriers of traditional culture. But, as Tomimoto pointed out, such preservation of a single craft “cannot be carried on by an individual” and can be a “detriment, generally, to

⁸⁴ To date, a total of only four artists have received the designation of Holder of Important Intangible Cultural Property for *iro-e jikki*: Tomimoto Kenkichi (1955), Katō Hajime (1961), Fujimoto Yoshimichi (1986), and Imaizumi Imaemon (今泉今石衛門 1926–; received title in 1989). See Minami Kunio, Yagihashi Shin, and Ōtaki Mikio, *Jūyō mukei bunkazai ninteisha sōran, ningen kokuhō jiten, kōgei gijutsu hen* (Kyoto: Geisodo, 2000).

⁸⁵ In an earlier iteration of this designation, Katō Hajime received an award for his *iro-e jiki* in 1952.

⁸⁶ In the 1950s, the only other designation for ceramics was Kaneshige Tōyō (金重陶陽, 1896–1967), for Bizen-yaki, in 1956.

the new start of craft.”⁸⁷ In 1955, both Hamada and Tomimoto were lauded for their “adherence to originality, which is invaluable,” in addition to their ability to carry on traditional practices.⁸⁸ Moreover, as Naitō Tadashi wrote, “Government has appointed him as one of the national treasures [*sic*]. But Tomimoto prefers to remain Japan’s outstanding Individual, Creative Artist.”⁸⁹

Beyond questions of technique or originality was the issue of preserving Japanese culture itself and the definition of Japanese identity, interests that Kida Takuya has described as part of a “quiet nationalism” in postwar Japan.⁹⁰ Ceramics could perform as material embodiments to fulfill these two goals. The Japan Art Crafts Association’s director, Nishizawa Tekiko (1889–1965), echoed this sentiment in his 1955 description of the group’s aim:

The Japan Art Crafts Association [should make] works firmly based in the special character of the Japanese people, with roots in tradition....Only a Japanese and no person from another country can make this many different kinds of craft work....The fundamental aim should be to get the world to recognize the spiritual core of Japanese crafts.⁹¹

In this way, Nishizawa argued, Japanese craft preservation was essential since craft, unlike other forms of material culture, spoke so directly to the “special character” and

⁸⁷ “Kōgei sakka jinbutsu gettan Tomimoto Kenkichi Hamada Shōji 工芸作家人物月旦富本憲吉 濱田庄司,” *Bijutsu zasshi hōshun* 3, no. 3 (March 1955): 25.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ Introduction, *The Exposition in Commemoration of The Forty-Fifth Anniversary of Kenkichi Tomimoto’s [sic] Career as Ceramic Artist*. Bilingual exhibition catalogue. Takashimaya, Nihombashi, Tokyo, Nov. 29–Dec. 4, 1955, n.p.

⁹⁰ “Traditional Art Crafts (*Dentō Kōgei*) in Japan: From Reproductions to Original Works,” *The Journal of Modern Craft* 3, no. 1 (March 2010): 20–22.

⁹¹ *Nihon kōgei* (Oct. 1, 1955), repr. in Uchiyama, “The Japan Traditional Art Crafts Exhibition: Its History and Spirit,” 28.

“spiritual core” of Japan. Tomimoto remarked in 1946, to an audience of primarily female readers of *Fujin no tomo* magazine, that “superior quality ceramics permeate Japan, and probably no other nation’s people are interested in ceramics as much as Japanese people.”⁹² While he praised Japanese ceramics, he did not here, or elsewhere, call for preservation of *tradition* that was at the heart of the Japan Art Crafts Exhibition. As Kida Takuya has noted, several exhibiting artists objected to the notion that their work was united under the mantle of preserving tradition, but they joined the exhibition anyway since they felt it was their duty as good citizens.⁹³

The second major state accolade awarded to Tomimoto also celebrated his contributions to Japanese culture and had imperial precedents. On November 3, 1961, the national holiday “day of culture” (*bunka no hi*), Tomimoto received the highly prestigious designation of *kōrōsha* 功勞者, a person who has done distinguished service. This Order of Cultural Merit (*bunka kunshō* 文化勲章) was accompanied by a yearly untaxed stipend of 500,000 yen.⁹⁴ The Order of Cultural Merit was established in 1937 by an imperial decree that stated it “shall be awarded to persons who have made significant contributions to the development of culture.”⁹⁵ It was a noteworthy symbol of imperial cultural presence persisting in the postwar era, and the emperor conducted its ceremony

⁹² “Sekai ni okuritai Nihon no kōgei 5, Tōki,” *Fujin no tomo* 40, no. 6 (June 1946), back cover.

⁹³ “Traditional Art Crafts (*Dentō Kōgei*) in Japan: From Reproductions to Original Works,” 22. Kida cites Katō Hajime as one of the ceramists expressing this objection.

⁹⁴ Starting in 1951, an annual stipend for each awardee was given, according to the Persons of Cultural Merit Annuities Law.

⁹⁵ Hosono Masanobu, “On the Art Exhibition of the Order of Culture Recipients,” *‘Bunka kunshō jushōsha ni yoru shugyoku no meisaku’ ten: Nihon kindai bijutsu no 60-nen* (Tokyo: NHK puromōshon, 1997), 13.

at the imperial palace. The original rationale for the award was summarized by Prime Minister, Education Minister, and General of the Army Hayashi Senjūrō (林 銑十郎, 1876–1943):

Development of culture has great bearings on the fate of a nation. Promotion of culture cannot safely be neglected even for a single day. As our country is fortunately blessed with long traditions in culture based on our unique history and spirit, we should ceaselessly try to promote and improve on them, in keeping with the inexorable advance of the times, and thereby contribute to the culture of the world.⁹⁶

Tomimoto was the second ceramist in Japanese history to receive this highest award possible for an artist in Japan. The first had been his predecessor in modern ceramics, Itaya Hazan, in 1953, and in its history only a small number of craft artists have received this designation.⁹⁷ Of those who did, all but Hamada and Arakawa were members of the Imperial Arts Academy (known post-World War II as the Japan Art Academy).

As with the Intangible Cultural Property Holder designation, Tomimoto initially expressed reservations about accepting it. According to an article published in January, 1962, by Mizusawa Sumio (水沢澄夫, 1905–1975), Tomimoto wanted to refuse the designation, but that since it was “not a hindrance,” he accepted it and went through the motions of wearing clothing with his family’s crest at the awards ceremony, even though he had told a newspaper reporter that he did not have any formal dress to wear at the

⁹⁶ Ishikawa Hakusui, *Bi no kuni* (March 1937), quoted in Masanobu, “On the Art Exhibition of the Order of Culture Recipients,” 13.

⁹⁷ Others include metals artist Katori Hotsuma (1954), ceramist Hamada Shōji (1968), ceramist Arakawa Toyozō, lacquer artist Matsuda Gonroku (1976), ceramist Kusube Yaichi, metals artist Chōsa Yoshiyuki 帖佐美行, lacquer artist Saji Tadashi 佐治賢使, and ceramist Asakura Isokichi (1996).

ceremony.⁹⁸ Leach flew from Osaka to Tokyo to attend the ceremony, and the two appeared together in an NHK broadcast, “Koko ni kane ga naru” (The bell rings here), filmed that day. According to a December article in *Mingei*, their meeting was an occasion of “extreme delight (*shigoku manetsu*).”⁹⁹ An illuminating conversation they engaged in was recorded in the October 30, 1961, *Sankei* newspaper.¹⁰⁰ Speaking of the award, Leach remarked, “That kind of thing is dangerous.” Tomimoto agreed, and proceeded to mention that Leach was awarded a similar kind of award in England (an honorary doctorate from Exeter University). Then Tomimoto highlighted the difference—that his award came with an annual 500,000 yen untaxed stipend and Leach’s did not. Tomimoto stated that he would use the money for research. In the end, Tomimoto concluded that their awards were bestowed on them because of their advanced ages. Leach’s attendance of the ceremony and their exchange demonstrates the endurance of their relationship and, even if the conversation contained remarks made in jest, its competitive nature.

The awards ceremony took place at the Imperial Palace. Present were the other awardees of the year, fiction writer Kawabata Yasunari (川端康成, 1899–1972); Chinese culture, poetry and *waka* scholar Suzuki Torao (鈴木虎雄, 1878–1963); *nihonga* painter Dōmoto Inshō (堂本印象, 1891–1975); *nihonga* painter Fukuda Heihachiro (福田平八郎, 1892–1974); and scientist Mizushima Sanichiro (水島三一郎, 1899–

⁹⁸ Mizusawa, “Tomimoto jiki to watashi,” 35.

⁹⁹ Anon., *Mingei* (Dec. 1961): 17.

¹⁰⁰ “Nenkin o kenkyūdai ni.”

1983). Each awardee spoke for about five minutes during lunch on their specialization and research to that point. Tomimoto spoke about his research formulating the combination of silver with white gold. Emperor Hirohito uttered no words but, according to reports, seemed to listen earnestly. Tomimoto reported at an interview after the event, “Until now, I have not received an award in relation to ceramics. Consequently, it is my first time to have this kind of grand position. Born in the Meiji era, I was overcome with emotion to be before His Majesty.”¹⁰¹ After speaking with the Emperor, Tomimoto was shown the aforementioned *tsubo* acquired by Crown Prince Akihito. Tomimoto told the Crown Prince, “The silver will blacken in time no matter what, but on this vessel the silver is still quite the original color.”¹⁰² The award was the final chapter in a decades-long association between Tomimoto and imperial individuals and agencies. Testament of Tomimoto’s connection to the imperial family extended until his death when, on June 13, 1963, the Emperor gave condolence offerings before the spirit (*reizen*) of Tomimoto who had passed away on the eighth.¹⁰³

Conclusion

Examining exhibition systems and other organizations for craft in the twentieth century reveals several stages of development and changes, and Tomimoto’s participation, leadership, and in some cases rejection of organizations reflect these. We

¹⁰¹ *Yomiuri shimbun*, Evening edition, Nov. 3, 1961, 1.

¹⁰² “Kangeki ni hitaru 感激にひたる [Flooded with emotion],” *Kyoto shimbun*, Nov. 4, 1961, 9. In the article, it states the Crown Prince had acquired it in the United States “seven or eight years prior.”

¹⁰³ “Tomimoto Kenkichi shi ni kumotsu ryō,” *Mainichi shimbun*, June 14, 1963, 15.

can identify, writ large, state support of craft in the Meiji era translating to craft's forming the fourth division of the Imperial Salon in 1927 and the state preservation of modern craft techniques and art beginning in the early 1950s. Throughout, Tomimoto's ceramics were collected by the imperial family. His ceramics were included in the pivotal first postwar major exhibition of Japanese ceramics overseas at the Musée Cernuschi in Paris. In the twentieth century, then, Tomimoto held a position as one of the most highly regarded ceramists in the eyes of the state, if not the highest. However, we must be aware of the ways in which Tomimoto achieved this stature. Tomimoto struck a balance between identification as a modern artist promoting individual expression and a conservative preserver of Japanese ceramics techniques.

The state's adulation for Tomimoto's overglaze enamel porcelain occurred despite Tomimoto's severing ties with the Imperial Salon, known in the postwar era as the Nitten. Perhaps it was considered inevitable for Tomimoto to sever all ties with former imperial agencies, including the Nitten, given his outward support of the war and the potential backlash that could have occurred for him, personally, in the American occupation era and beyond. Judging from Tomimoto's vitriolic admonition of the political favoritism and lack of original expression in the Imperial Salon, however, it seems that he genuinely wished, in the postwar period, to break free from state agencies, but nonetheless accepted the state awards and the related association with the Japan Traditional Crafts Exhibition. It is also apparent that the war marked a clear break not only in Tomimoto's ceramics, as discussed in Chapter Four, but in his organizational affiliations in terms of art alliances. Postwar organizations he affiliated with were strictly

craft mediums-based. This is more revealing in terms of the organization themselves and Tomimoto's postwar rebellion against the Kokuten and Nitten, I believe, than with regard to Tomimoto's fundamental stance towards art or craft.

It is ironic that an artist described as the pioneer of modern Japanese ceramics—the reformer who brought craft to the *yōga* section of the Kokuten and vehemently advocated for originality in expression—would be seen in the postwar period as one of the great modern carriers of Japanese tradition. This contradiction speaks to the central flux in the ontology of modern craft. All of Tomimoto's strong efforts to merge craft into the discourse of modern art were not lost in the postwar era. In some ways the state's postwar support of craft was an effort to rehabilitate craft to its pre-Meiji state. But the display, critique, and overall discourse for ceramics as modern art established by Tomimoto and others in the 1920s continued unabated in the immediate postwar years and beyond.

CONCLUSION

Tomimoto Kenkichi
(President, Kyoto City Art University, Ceramist, Recipient, Cultural Order of Merit)

Died at 9:35 pm, June 8 of lung cancer at Osaka Medical Center for Cancer and Cardiovascular Diseases, age 77.

Born in Nara. In 1909, graduated from the design department, Tokyo Art School, then foreign study in England. Entered ceramics research. After returning to Japan, in 1935 became member of Imperial Art Academy, but in 1946 declined membership, and returned to Nara to devote self to making work. In 1955, received the designation Living National Treasure, and in 1961 received the Order of Cultural Merit. In May just this year took the position of President, Kyoto City Art University. Tomimoto's works draw on the stream of the mid-Tokugawa's Ogata Kenzan, and in particular his gold and silver painted jars are famous in the ceramics world for their unique expression.¹

As this obituary—representative of those appearing in popular newspapers—states, Tomimoto's life spanned several eras and saw distinct vacillations of art making and organizational affiliation. Such vicissitudes between extremes were in some ways a constant of his life and career. Without formal training, he rose to the top of his field. And no other ceramist of his time experienced such extremes between pre-World War II and postwar affiliations and activities. As this obituary and others highlighted, strongest in the image of him held by his contemporaries were not his early Raku experimentations or painted tableware at kilns throughout the country, but his final works in overglaze enamel porcelain. However, as recent scholarship on Tomimoto's early work has shown, to understand Tomimoto's oeuvre and contributions to Japanese modern ceramics discourse as a whole, we must contend with the complexities of various eras of the

¹ *Keizai shimbun*, June 9, 1963.

twentieth century, each with their own external and internal forces altering the discursive practice of ceramics. The variances in discourse cannot be neatly charted according to temporal units. We must recognize, for example, that in his later years Tomimoto was still credited with revolutionizing ceramics as a viable artistic medium for original self-expression while at the same time he was lauded by individuals and the state for his preservation of “traditional” techniques. As the preceding chapters have shown, the nature of the discourse of ceramics in modern Japan is inherently fluid.

As I mentioned in the introduction’s section on the state of literature on this topic, most scholarship outside Japan on modern art has focused on paintings and related media, and, with some exceptions, the scholarship that has been published on the topic of Japanese ceramics mainly has concerned older forms of expression deemed “traditional.” As John Dower wrote, in the West Japan has been positioned as having a “unique, unchanging cultural essence ... fundamentally divergent from European or Euro-American experience.”² The example of Tomimoto’s ceramics demonstrates that European influence was essential to his ceramics, from his first encounters with making ceramics influenced by Bernard Leach, to his equating of ceramic form with modernist bronze nude sculpture by Maillol. Tomimoto’s ceramics subvert the assumption that Japanese ceramics have an “unchanging cultural essence.” Paradoxically, it was for that reason that he was awarded the title Holder of Important Intangible Cultural Property. In

² Helen Hardacre, ed. *The Postwar Development of Japanese Studies in the United States* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 2–3.

fact, engagement with Europe by displaying craft on the international stage in the Meiji era was essential in the very inception of *bijutsu kōgei*.

Throughout the preceding chapters I have addressed several fundamental questions surrounding ceramics as modern Japanese art by using various critical lenses: through the analysis of Tomimoto's early to late ceramics and other art; through his specific discourses of originality and form; and through his engagement with organization and exhibitions. A central concern in interrogating the discourse of modern Japanese ceramics as a whole has been the multivalenced concept of "art ceramics" (*bijutsu tōki*). In these concluding paragraphs, I would like to suggest ways in which art ceramics changed and remained consistent over time, and then to acknowledge several issues not previously addressed in this text.

Let us first consider overarching stabilities in this discourse. Over the course of the twentieth century, we notice several consistencies in Tomimoto's discourse of ceramics. The first is that he persisted in emphasizing the formal properties of ceramics according to their optical appreciation with an equivalency to other forms of art and, in particular, painting and calligraphy. Despite the fact that all of his ceramics, with the exception of *tōban*, were vessels, he was like some of his Meiji predecessors in terms of producing work with an eye to display in exhibitions rather than utilitarian needs. His early encounter with craft objects, and particularly Japanese ceramics by Kenzan, on display at the Victoria and Albert Museum alerted him to the equivalency ceramics held with other arts mediums as a viable form of *modern* self-expression, not only as commodities or copies of traditional ceramics.

While Tomimoto's counterparts at the Kokuten were engaged with modernist expressions through *yōga*, he engaged with modernist expressions through ceramics according to their formal values that aligned with those of Kokuten painters and sculptors. In his later *iro-e jiki*, too, he remained steadfast in his concern with the formal properties of ceramics. Although his work was included in the Japan Traditional Crafts Exhibition and some of his early published essays praised the values of folk craft, he never sought overtly to restore or revive craft "traditions" in Japan. A concern for "tradition" was not necessarily antithetical to his rhetoric of originality, but the discourse of tradition came from the outside forces of the postwar Japanese state imposed onto his ceramics. At the same time, he embraced the literati ideals espoused by his father and created paintings and calligraphy with overt *nanga* themes. This reveals a modernist literati approach to art-making with highly self-reflexive motivations, in contrast to the approach to "traditional" ceramics making by some of Tomimoto's contemporaries.³

The second major consistency throughout Tomimoto's texts, in particular (but also throughout his ceramics), is the discourse of originality. As we have seen, Tomimoto looked to two divergent models of "original" craft makers: William Morris and Ogata Kenzan I. The examples of Morris and Kenzan propelled Tomimoto towards a resolution of his ceramics expression and, ultimately, his positioning of ceramics into the discourse of modern art. As Tomimoto said in 1953, "I think you must have two aspects—the way of using all of one's ability [like Kenzan] and the way of conceiving of everyday life like

³ Moeran, "Japanese Ceramics and the Discourse of 'Tradition.'"

Morris.”⁴ Tomimoto first identified his stance towards originality in his interpretations of the rhetoric of William Morris and Tomimoto continued to advocate for it vehemently in his many texts and teachings. Clearly Tomimoto’s discourse of originality arose as well out of the climate of Taishō individualism and his close engagement with literary men and artists with similar motivations in the 1910s and 1920s. Yet the hybridization of models that Tomimoto embraced was somewhat unique. His transnationalist encounters with Japanese ceramics—seeing as art Kenzan’s plate on display at the Victoria and Albert Museum; studying Japanese ceramics techniques alongside Leach who had the naïve curiosity of a foreigner; and embracing a hybrid mix of English folk ceramics, Morrisian-inspired patterns, and then Korean Joseon forms for his early ceramics—reveal the composite formula of his articulation of “originality.” Tomimoto did not wed the concept of originality to “the West.” His insistence on originality focused on “the self” and his direct encounters with nature. We can interpret his epigraphic copies of Qing plates as the anomaly to this otherwise consistent part of his discourse, but even those can be said to be self-reflexive pairings of selected classical poetry with *shasei*-derived images of Ando-mura. Still, assessing the originality of a given work is not as essential to this analysis as is the articulation, by Tomimoto and others, of the importance of originality as a means to distinguish modern *art craft* from mere *craft*.

Another continuance was, to a degree, the state’s support of ceramics from the Meiji era through the postwar era. Craft, and particularly ceramics, was promoted by state officials throughout the twentieth century, as it had been in the Meiji era, as a source of

⁴ “Idobata kaiga,” 30.

pride for Japan, and it became embroiled in the politics of international competition for technological superiority. Prior to World War II and after, ceramics were sent overseas as representations of the technical ability of artists and thus reflectors of “Japan.”

Nationalism was certainly inherent in the state’s support of ceramics, including Tomimoto’s participation as a member of the Imperial Art Academy. Even today, the state’s support of overseas craft exhibitions, for example, can be seen as a form of cultural diplomacy or “soft power.”⁵

The example of Tomimoto shows us, however, that there was a distinct change in focus among postwar efforts, which encouraged craft artists not to achieve innovation or express artistic ideas but to preserve “traditional” techniques. Most notably, we see that the state co-opted the notion of “tradition” as a means to support the continued creation of ceramics. This occurred through the systems of designating individuals as Holders of Important Intangible Cultural Property and its related exhibition, the Japan Traditional Arts and Crafts exhibition. Prior to World War II such rhetoric specifying “tradition” as requiring preservation was not as widespread. Tomimoto’s *iro-e jiki*, which as I outlined in Chapter Five was the technique for which he was designated a Holder of Important Intangible Cultural Property, could be seen as traditional or not depending on the viewer’s perspective.

⁵ Consider, for example, the 2007 British Museum exhibition *Crafting Beauty in Modern Japan* that highlighted craft objects made by artists designated by the government as Holders of Important Intangible Cultural Property. The exhibition was funded in part by The Japan Foundation and the Japanese Agency for Cultural Affairs.

Similarly, looking at the twentieth century in retrospect, undoubtedly the major ruptures in Tomimoto's practice are related to changes in organizational affiliations between the pre- and postwar eras. His prewar Imperial Art Academy and Teiten affiliations dissolved in the postwar years along with his affiliation with *Mingei* artists. Tomimoto's establishment of the Shinshōkai in 1947 firmly pronounced his aim to break free from his prewar affiliations. Yet, we must be careful not to weigh these ruptures too heavily in our assessment of Tomimoto's discourse. After all, most members of the Japan Traditional Arts and Crafts exhibition were former Teiten artists, like Tomimoto. Tomimoto to some degree continued to interact with *Mingei* group artists, too, through the end of his career, epitomized by his agreement in 1961 to be one of the ceramists, along with Hamada, Kawai, and Leach, whose work was featured in the Ōhara Art Museum Ceramics Hall.

One of the most unstable forces throughout Tomimoto's oeuvre was *Mingei* ideology and his relation to the *Mingei* group. In order to maintain a focus on *bijutsu kōgei* and its offshoot, *bijutsu tōki*, within the history of modern Japanese art, I have chosen in the preceding chapters to analyze examples from Tomimoto's oeuvre that engage with these concepts. Future exploration is required to fully examine in depth Tomimoto's attempts at mass production as they aligned with the ethos of the *Mingei* movement. Of particular interest is the issue of affordability, since Tomimoto consistently stated he desired to make works accessible to all. In the 1930s, he announced his intentions to make such work, but ultimately his stance shifted away from such *Mingei*-inspired goals of creating inexpensive work. Even as early as his first exhibition,

as I described in Chapter Two, he priced his ceramics well above what were considered average rates for ceramics. Still, in 1932 he wrote in a *Kōgei* article about the stoneware he was decorating at the Shinano kilns in Seto: “My dream of creating inexpensive pottery, something that I first planned twenty years ago when I began pottery, has finally begun to be realized and I am glad that this has been achieved gradually, not forced out suddenly. Inexpensive pottery that anybody can buy, that nobody can afford to be without.”⁶ Certainly this goal would have resonated positively with the readers of *Kōgei*, which was a product of the *Mingei* group.

But if we look further into Tomimoto’s history, a more complex picture of this sentiment is revealed. For example, in 1920 Tomimoto wrote to Leach:

Dear Leach

We must study hard, must learn how to dress to our idea (glaze, Kigi, YakiKata) and must get down Rokubei, KinKozan, and readimis[?] potter of Chelsea. I think, we are now in our studio, not yet in the true street. Please wait more two three years. I will be in the street, and will can [sic] show the low price pot for all people, That is not our biggest hope! I Think so. But it seems that here need not true artistic pot for common people here it is too Sawagashii, hopeless,

What shall I do?

Take care the influenza

Yours, Ken cappa

still maki going up, 40 Kan 5.5 sen Buh!⁷

This letter clearly reveals Tomimoto’s conflicted feelings regarding a desire to make inexpensive ceramics balanced with the aspiration to make artistic ceramics. And his

⁶ “Tōgashu yori – Shinano-jo [From my design book, Shinano volume],” *Kōgei* 23 (1932), trans. Gaven Frew and repr. in Karasawa Masahiro, “Daily Vessels by Kenkichi Tomimoto,” 18.

⁷ Underlining for emphasis not in the original. Postcard postmarked Sept. 1, 1920 addressed to Leach. TKKA.

postscript about “*maki* going up” refers to the rising costs of wood fuel for his kiln. In these last few words, we can ascertain an underlying motive, the need to price ceramics high enough to simply pay for the costs of materials and processes. Later in 1929 he revealed to Leach, in a letter also expressing his desire to escape the economic slump (*fukeiki*) of Japan and find a teaching position in England, that he did “not agree [with] Yanagi’s *gede-mono* idea” since “the arts and science(s) must come on the same road, not fight each other as we were thinking before.” He continued: “Now I am thinking---the big capital, most developed machinery with new design low price, etc.”⁸ But this was not what he engaged with when painting pre-fabricated pots at Shinano. He produced a limited quantity of wares that sold, in some cases, alongside his art ceramics at venues like the Kokuten. They were never distributed on a mass scale. They resulted from the objectives to experiment with a variety of ceramics bodies and surfaces and to create a large number of works to sell and support the work he made in his home studio.

Much later, porcelain ashtrays, chopstick holders, and similar objects with surface designs by Tomimoto were manufactured in Kyoto by Heiangama 平安窯 from 1951 and Yasaka Kōgei ヤサカ工芸, under the brand name “Tomisen” 富泉, from 1957 until around the time of his death.⁹ The latter products, he stated, were sanctioned by him in order to circulate widely his ceramics that could not be produced in the quantity and at a low price by him as an individual (*kojin*), and they did “not lose the beauty of handmade

⁸ Underlining for emphasis not in the original. Letter to Leach dated Dec. 21, 1929. TKKA.

⁹ Workshops in Kyoto at the time encouraged such production of wares. Ceramists associated with the Sōdeisha group, as well, designed small wares also made at workshops like Heiangama and Yasaka.

craft.”¹⁰ These objects embodied, then, his complete acceptance of the schism between *bijutsu tōki* and manufactured ceramics. The fabrication and surface work was done entirely by workers in these factories, with only the design coming from Tomimoto. In some ways, then, the arrangement resembles the division between *haute couture* and ready-to-wear fashion, with the designer relegating aspects of *haute couture* to inexpensive mass-produced goods. This arrangement is also consistent with much craft praxis in Japan before the twentieth century.

By 1957, according to the Japanese state, Tomimoto was a marquee “traditional” craft artist who in previous decades had displayed his ceramics at the Kokuten as *bijutsu kōgei*. To design the surfaces of ashtrays for mass consumption seems antithetical to his stature at that time and a risk to his reputation as a modern artist. This may be why he waited until the age of seventy-one to sanction such mass-produced ware. His reputation as a modern artist of high stature was already established and he did not risk repercussions. More research into Tomimoto’s relationship with these kilns and the circumstances of these productions is required in order to fully assess this part of Tomimoto’s history. For the purposes of this study, we may consider these works not as completely hypocritical to his championing of originality but, rather, as minor endeavors deviating from but ultimately overshadowed by his *bijutsu tōki* works.

My goal in narrowing the focus of this dissertation to Tomimoto’s art ceramics was to establish a foundation for the critical study of ceramics as art in modern Japan, and clearly the complexity of the subject demands continued consideration of these

¹⁰ Yasaka Kōgei pamphlet, 1964, repr. in Karasawa, *Daily Vessels*, 75.

ceramics from varied perspectives. Additional aspects of this analysis that could be explored in the future concern Tomimoto's work in the context of other ceramists. Itaya Hazan's work, in particular, deserves deeper consideration as a source that Tomimoto both drew from and rejected. Hazan, like Tomimoto, relied on *tsubo* forms well-suited for the pursuit of painterly expression meant for primarily visual appreciation. Tomimoto stripped the jar form of its "clothes," however, in order to emphasize its formal properties and engage it with the discourse of modernist sculpture. But later he, like Hazan, used the jar form as a foundation for painterly literati subjects as was the case with his 1957 jar with landscape and calligraphy (Tokyo National Museum of Modern Art, **Fig. 4.23.a**). Although Tomimoto rejected Hazan's derivations of *moyō* from historical sources, he continued the use of the *tsubo* form as a foundation for painterly expression. Similar comparative analyses could be conducted on the relation between Tomimoto's ceramics and related discourse with those of his contemporaries, particularly Hamada, Kawai, and Leach.

Similarly, the legacy Tomimoto left his students, through his many texts and instruction at universities, is of utmost importance to the history of modern Japanese art and deserves a separate study. The discourse of modern Japanese ceramics was profoundly affected by Tomimoto's teachings. These occurred not only formally during his appointments at the Imperial Art University, Tokyo School of Fine Arts, and Kyoto City Art University, but also while engaged with ceramists he hired as assistants, those with whom he worked during his travels, and those who were affiliated with the Kokugakai craft division and the Shinshōkai. Of the latter, many members saw

themselves as disciples of Tomimoto, “the master” (*sensei*).¹¹ While a full analysis of their work exceeds the limitations of the current study, Appendix C presents a partial list of these men and women.

As much as Tomimoto’s teachings stressed originality and self-study for acquisition of knowledge about ceramics materials and techniques, his assistants and students inevitably drew from Tomimoto’s ceramics in significant ways. His early assistants include, most notably, Kondō Yūzō, who worked with Tomimoto in his Andomura studio 1921–1924. As previously noted, in several ways Kondō followed Tomimoto’s footsteps, becoming in 1953 a full-time instructor alongside Tomimoto at Kyoto City College of Fine Arts, and later appointed president of the university in 1965, two years after Tomimoto’s death. In 1975, he was designated Holder of Important Intangible Cultural Property for his *sometsuke*. His *sometsuke* porcelain also developed after Tomimoto’s not only in medium and technique but also in its emphasis on original design presented in evermore visually arresting ways. For example, over the course of two weeks in 1975 he used two hundred kilograms of porcelain clay to throw on the wheel a massive plate that he then painted in *sometsuke* with a plum design (梅染付大皿, National Museum of Modern Art, Kyoto, **Fig. 6.1**). Made in Arita, it was created upon the invitation by local industrialist and politician Asō Takakichi (麻生太賀吉, 1911–1980). This plate embraces the concept of exhibition-focused art ceramics to the extreme

¹¹ Recent essays by Kida Takuya and Tan’o Yasunori shed light on the relationship between Tomimoto and Shishōkai member metals artist Masuda Mitsuo as a “disciple” and close associate of Tomimoto. See Karasawa Masahiro et al., *Masuda Mitsuo seisō no chōkin—soshite, Tomimoto Kenkichi* (Tokyo: Tokyo Kokuritsu Kindai Bijutsukan, 2011).

in its larger-than-life size. This is but one of many examples of Tomimoto's assistants' or students' works that, in comparative analysis, yields informative interpretations.¹²

Although Tomimoto Kenkichi's art, theories, and praxis present just one window into the history of modern Japanese ceramics, craft, and art, a case study analysis of his work reveals the central mechanisms responsible for the emergence and development of modern Japanese art ceramics. Tomimoto's seemingly peripatetic engagement with the creation of art ceramics speaks to the fundamental historical and ontological circumstances facing craft artists in twentieth-century Japan. His ceramics can be best understood, as a whole, as the result of a modernist literati position that considered the discursive field of texts, paintings, ceramics, and other mediums of art as equivalent in

¹² There are many examples of Tomimoto's far-reaching influence on associates and students. In Mashiko, Tomimoto was credited with influencing ceramist Sakuma Tōtarō's use of brushed floral and leaf patterns. See *Sakuma Tōtarō* (Mashiko: Mashikomachi Bunka no Machizukuri Jikkō Iinkai, 2000), 35. At Kutani, Tomimoto exerted a great influence on Kitade Tōjiro, and Tomimoto was appointed the task of naming his kiln, the Seisengama 清泉窯. Many other Kutani ceramists have cited Tomimoto's work as a source of influence, including Mori Kazumasa 森一正, Tokuda Yasokichi 徳田八十古 (二代), Nakajima Juzan 中島寿山, Tera Toshirō 寺利郎, and Bukoshi Zantarō 武腰善太郎. *Kitade Tōjiro no iro-e sekkai*, 171. Tomimoto's students in Kyoto are documented in Appendix C. A My interviews with several of them made it clear that Tomimoto's emphasis on self-expression and approaching ceramics as an artistic, rather than a utilitarian craft, medium, greatly influenced the next generation of artists who explored the sculptural potential of clay. Lacking in previous scholarship on Tomimoto has been acknowledgement of the foreign students he taught, including Jackie Bernstein who worked with Tomimoto for approximately two years around 1960. In a letter to Leach, she wrote that she decided to go to Japan with her husband, a painter, after reading Leach's *A Potter's Book*. Dated Nov. 8 1960, BLA no. 4651, CSC. Tomimoto also reached out to Janet Darnell Leach (1918–1997), Bernard's third wife, when she was working in Tamba in 1954, giving her an "unspoken offer" to work at his studio "for the summer, with visits to other potters." Janet Leach diary, entry dated March 14, 1954, CSC. For a description of Janet Leach's remarkable experiences studying ceramics in Mashiko and Tamba see Emmanuel Cooper, *Janet Leach: A Potter's Life* (London: Ceramic Review Publishing, 2006). The noted American ceramist Frederick Olsen also studied under Tomimoto at his Kyoto studio.

their potential to reflect the independent sentiments of their maker negotiating the challenging terrain of modern Japan.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

Names Appearing Multiple Times in Text

Asakawa Noritaka (浅川伯教, 1884–1964)
 Hamada Shōji (浜田庄司, 1894–1978)
 Hosokawa Moritatsu 細川護立侯爵
 Hyakutake Kaneyuki (百武兼行, 1842–1887)
 Kawai Kanjirō (河井寛次郎, 1890–1966)
 Kigo Kōzaburō (木子幸三郎, 1874–1941)
 Kishida Ryūsei (岸田劉生, 1891–1929)
 Bernard Leach (1887–1979)
 William Richard Lethaby (1857–1931)
 Machida Hisanari (町田久成, 1838–1897)
 Aristide Maillol (1861–1944)
 Natsume Sōseki (夏目漱石, b. Natsume Kinnosuke 夏目金之助, 1867–1916)
 Nojima Yasuzō (野島康三, b. Hiromasa 尋正, 1889–1964)
 Ogata Kenzan (I) (尾形乾山, 1663–1743)
 Ogata Kenzan VI 六代乾山/ Urano Shigekichi (浦野乾哉, 1851–1923)
 Ōhara Magosaburō (大原孫三郎, 1880–1943)
 Henri Rivière (1864–1951)
 Takamura Kōtarō (高村光太郎, 1883–1956)
 Tomimoto Kenkichi (富本憲吉, 1886–1963)
 Umehara Ryūzaburō (梅原龍三郎, 1888–1986)
 Gottfried Wagener (1831–1892)
 Watsuji Tetsurō (和辻哲郎, 1889–1960)
 Yanagi Sōetsu (Muneyoshi, 柳宗悦, 1889–1961)

Appendix B

Organization and Institution Affiliations in Chronological Order

Kokuga Sōsaku Kyōkai 国画製作協会 [Association for the Creation of National Painting], 1918–1928

Exhibition: Kokuten 国展

Member, *yōga* section, May 1927–July 1928

Kokugakai 国画会 [National Painting Society], 1928–

Exhibition: Kokuten 国展

Founding member, craft section, 1928–46

Nihon Hanga Kyōkai 日本版画協会 / Japan Print Association, 1931–

Member, 1931–

Teikoku Bijutsuin 帝國美術院 (1919–37) / Teikoku Geijutsuin 帝國藝術院 (1937–1947) [Imperial Arts Academy] ¹

Exhibition: Teiten / Shin Bunten / Nitten

Member, 1934–46

Teikoku Bijutsu Gakkō 帝國美術学校 [Imperial Art University; today's Musashino Art University]

Instructor of craft theory, 1935–37

Tokyo Bijutsu Gakkō 東京美術学校 [Tokyo School of Fine Arts]

Instructor of ceramics, 1944–46

¹ Since 1947 it has been called the Nihon Geijutsuin 日本藝術院 / Japan Art Academy.

Shinshō Bijutsu Kōgeikai 新匠美術工芸会 [New Craftspeople's Art Craft Association], name 1947–49; In 1949 its name changed to Shinshōkai 新匠会 [New Craftspeople's Association], 1947–

Exhibition: Shinshō Kōgeikai Kōboten 新匠工芸会公募展 [New Craftspeople's Craft Association Competition Exhibition]

Founder and member, 1947–63

Kyoto Shiritsu Bijutsu Senmon Gakkō 京都市立美術専門学校. In 1950 its name changed to Kyoto Shiritsu Bijutsu Daigaku 京都市立美術大学 [Kyoto City College of Fine Arts]; Today it is named Kyoto Shiritsu Geijutsu Daigaku / Kyoto City University of Arts

Visiting Professor/Professor, 1949–1963

President, 1963

Nihon Kōgeikai 日本工芸会 [Japan Craft Association], 1955–

Exhibition: Nihon dentō kōgeiten 日本伝統工芸展 / “Japan Traditional Craft Exhibition” a.k.a. “Japanese Traditional Handicrafts Exhibition” (1960)

Member, 1955–63

Appendix C

Selected List of Tomimoto's Assistants, Students, and Organization Affiliates

in Chronological Order¹

Ando-mura Assistants (–1926)

1913–before 1915: “Kame-chan 亀ちゃん”²

Kashima Kichijūrō 鹿島吉十郎

1921–1924: Kondō Yūzō (近藤悠三, 1902–1985). In 1953 became full-time instructor, alongside Tomimoto, at Kyoto City College of Fine Arts, and appointed President of the university in 1965

1930: Koshiro³

Ando-mura Apprentices

1930: Pi Hariharan⁴

Kokugakai Craft Section Affiliates (1928–46)

Gertrude Aoki? (仰木ゲルトロード)

Michael Cardew

Bernard Leach

Funaki Michitada (船木 道忠, 1900–1963)

Kashima Kichijūrō 鹿島吉十郎

¹ The years listed next to individuals' names correspond to the period of respective engagement, when known.

² “Kame-chan” accompanied Leach to China in 1915.

³ A letter from Tomimoto to Leach dated Aug. 10, 1930 states “We are working hard these days and from June we have begun our work making the hundred exhibits for London. At present we are three working. Mr. Koshiro is with us, he has been assisting me for the past so many years, and also one Mr. Hariharan from India, a friend of Mr. Hasegawa. He has come to learn pottery.” TKKA.

⁴ Ishimaru Jūji 石丸重治 critiqued Hariharan's ceramics in “Kokuten kōgeibu o miru [Looking at the national exhibition crafts division],” *Atorie* 8, no. 5 (May 1931): 79. “Pi Hariharan's small jar and other works are, more than anything, copies of Tomimoto.”

Hamada Shōji 浜田庄司

Pi Hariharan

Serizawa Keisuke 芹澤ケイ介

Tonomura Kichinosuke (外村吉之介, 1898–1993)

Yanagi Yoshitaka (柳悦孝, 1911–2003)

Yoshida Shōya (吉田璋也, 1898–1972)

Tokyo School of Fine Arts Assistants (1944–46)

Fujimoto Yoshimichi (藤本 能道, 1919–1992), Assistant to Tomimoto at the University 1944–1945; From 1956 also became full-time instructor, alongside Tomimoto, at Kyoto City College of Fine Arts, and was appointed president of the university 1985–1990

Kyoto Assistants (1946–1963)

Tamura Kōichi (田村耕一, 1918–1987)

Kumakura Junkichi (熊倉順吉, 1920–1985)

Koyama Kihei (小山喜平, 1930–)

Kyoto Apprentices (1946–1963)

Jackie Bernstein 1958–1960

Kokuryo Toshihito 国領寿人

Kyoto City College of Fine Arts Students (1949–1963)

Kondō Yutaka (近藤豊, 1932–1983). Eldest son of Kondō Yūzō. Graduated from ceramics department in 1955; completed non-degree course (senkōka 専攻科) in 1957; Assistant in department in 1961 and later taught at the college

Kamoda Shōji (加守田章, 1933–1983). Graduated 1956

Morino Taimei (森野泰明 Hiroaki, 1934–). Graduated 1958

Yanagihara Mutsuo (柳原睦夫, 1934–). Graduated 1960

Frederick Olsen. Student 1961–1963

Miyashita Zenji (宮下善爾, 1939–2012). Graduated 1966

Suzuki Soji (鈴木爽司, 1939–). Graduated 1967

Matsuda Yuriko (松田百合子, 1943–). Entered in 1962 and graduated in 1968

Shinshōkai Affiliates (1947–63)

Fujimoto Yoshimichi (藤本能道, 1919–1992). Ceramics

Fukuda Rikisaburo (福田力三郎, 1908–1984). Ceramics

Gotō Toshihiko (後藤年彦, 1911–1962). Metals

Inagaki Toshijirō (稻垣稔次郎, 1902–1963). Textiles

Kamo Masao (鴨政雄, 1906–2000). Metals

Katō Hajime (加藤土師萌, 1900–1968). Ceramics

Kitade Tōjiro (北出塔次郎 b. Sakamoto Fujiro, 1898–1968). Ceramics

Kondō Yūzō (近藤悠三, 1902–1985). Ceramics

Kumakura Junkichi (熊倉順吉, 1920–1985). Ceramics

Masuda Mitsuo (増田三男, 1909–2009). Metals

Naitō Shirō (内藤四郎, 1907–1988). Metals

Ogō Tomonosuke (小合友之助, 1898–1966). Textiles

Suzuki Kiyoshi (鈴木清, –1964). Ceramics

Tokuriki Magosaburō (徳力孫三郎, 1908–1995). Ceramics

Tokuriki Makinosuke (徳力牧之助, 1910–1968). Ceramics

Yabe Renchō (矢部連兆, 1893–1978). Textiles

Yamada Tetsu (山田喆, 1898–1971). Ceramics

Yamanaga Kōho (山永光甫, 1889–1973). Lacquer

Yamawaki Yoji (山脇洋二, 1907–1982). Metals

Appendix D

Selected Chronology of Tomimoto Kenkichi

1886

June 5: Born, Higashi-Ando, Ando village, Ikoma district, in present Nara prefecture.
Eldest son of Toyokichi and Fusa

1891

Family, including younger brother and sister, moves to Nara; Kenkichi stays behind in Ando with grandmother Noto

1892

Begins school at Ando-mura Grammar School

1895

Graduates from Ando-mura Grammar School and enters Ikaruga Higher Grammar School

1899

Enters Nara Prefectural Middle School, Kōriyama

1903

May 17–June 13: A painting copy of Hōryūji main temple's interior painting chosen for Nara-ken Kyōsan Kaishukasai, Nihon Bijutsuin Kaiga Tenrankai 奈良県協賛
会主催日本美術院絵画展覧会 [Nara Prefecture Sponsored Japan Fine Art
Association Exhibition]

1904

March: Graduates Koriyama Junior High School

April: Enrolls in Tokyo School of Fine Arts, *Zuan* [design] Division

1905

As sophomore, decides to major in Architecture and Interior Decorating (*shitsunai sōshoku* 室内装飾)

1907

March 20–July 31: Stained glass design chosen for exhibition at Tokyo Kangyō hakurankai 東京勸業博覧会 [Tokyo Industrial Exposition] at Takenodai Exhibition Hall, Ueno

1908

Nov.: Submits graduation project early, and goes to London using own funds

1909

March: Receives diploma in absentia

March–June: Studies at London Municipal Central School of Arts and Crafts' Stained Glass section

Dec.: Embarks on 4-month trip with Niinomi Takamasa to Paris, Marseilles, Cairo, and India

1910

April 3: Returns to London

April 29: Boards the Mishima Maru to return to Japan. Onboard, meets Reginald Turvey, a painter from South Africa

June 15: Ship arrives to port of Kobe. Stays one night in Osaka with his grandmother, then returns to Ando-mura

July: Goes to Tokyo. Turvey introduces him to Leach

Sept.: Moves in to lodgings with Minami Kunzō at Kashiwagi, Shinjuku

1911

c. Jan.: Starts draftsmanship job for Shimizugumi

Feb.: Morita Kamenosuke invites Tomimoto and Leach to gathering of young artists where Raku decorating and firing is done

March 16–April 5: In Red Cross Hospital, Tokyo, with typhoid fever

March: While working for Shimizugumi, one of his plans chosen for display at the Industrial Exposition, Ueno

April 16–30: Watercolors, Raku, and prints shown at the Kyobashi, Tokyo bijutsu shinpō shusai shinshin sakka shōkin tenrankai 美術新報主催新進作家小品展覧会 [Art news organization rising artists' small works exhibition]

May: Leaves Tokyo to set up studio in Ando-mura

Oct.: Stays 3 weeks at Leach's in Tokyo where he learns etching from him, serves as translator for him, and meets Urano Shigekichi (Kenzan VI)

Nov.: Shows tempera paintings, watercolors, and etchings in *Shirakaba shusai yōga tenrankai* 白樺主催洋画展覧会 [Shirakaba organization Western painting exhibition]

1912

Feb.: Bluestocking Society member Otaka Kazue visits Tomimoto at his home in Ando-mura

March 15–31: Tomimoto's sketches, prints, and watercolors shown at Bijutsu shinpō shusai dai 3 kai bijutsu tenrankai 美術新報主催第3回美術展覧会 [Art news 3rd art exhibition], Takenodai Exhibition Hall, Ueno, Tokyo

March, late: Leach family visits Ando

April 5–9: Shows work in exhibition at Kyoto Prefectural Library. The exhibition sponsor was painter Tsuda Seifū

June 5–12: Gurin hausu no shōgeijutsuhin ten グリンハウスの小芸術品展 [Green house small works of art exhibition], Kyoto, with painters Nagahara Shisui (長原止水 1864–1930), Saitō Yori (斎藤与里 1885–1959), and Tsuda Seifū

Oct.: Goes to Tokyo and stays with Leach; Sees the Takushoku hakurankai 拓殖博覧会 [Colonial exposition] in Ueno. At Leach's studio, creates on the wheel the Raku bush warblers and plum bowl

1913

Feb.: With Leach's assistant "Kame-chan," fires a Raku kiln behind his house

Feb.20–: At Mitsukoshi Tokyo, Gendai taika shōgeijutsuhin tenrankai 現代大家小芸術品展覧会 [Modern masters small artwork exhibition]. Shows Raku, embroidery, and other small works

March: The front cover of the British publication *Rhythm* features Tomimoto's woodblock print "Toride"

May 1–6: Joint craft works exhibition with Tsuda Seifū at Mitsukoshi, Osaka. Shows Raku, embroidered *haneri*, and *obi*

Aug.: Travels to Izu and Tokyo. Visits Leach in Hakone. The aphorism "Do not make a pattern from a pattern" born

Oct.: Goes to Tokyo to prepare solo exhibition

Oct. 24–28: Tomimoto Kenkichi kōgei shisakuhin tenrankai 富本憲吉工芸試作品
展覧会 [Tomimoto Kenkichi craft prototypes exhibition] at Tokyo Venus Kurabu
ヴィナス倶楽部. Includes 70 ceramics pieces, 30 ceramics designs, and sketches
of antique ceramics

Nov. 10–17: 2nd Shōgeijutsu (small works) exhibition at Mitsukoshi, Tokyo. Includes
sarasa pattern *obi*

1914

March: Goes to Tokyo to prepare for solo exhibition

March 5–14: Solo exhibition at Mikasa 三笠 Tokyo. Includes 90 ceramics, 30 ceramic
designs and more

April: Designs the front cover for *Takujō*

June: Goes to Tokyo to prepare for solo exhibition

June 22–July 2: Tomimoto Kenkichi tōki oyobi tōki zuan tenrankai 富本憲吉氏陶器及
陶器図案展覧会 [Ceramics and ceramic design exhibition] at Tanakaya, Tokyo.
More than 60 ceramics pieces exhibited

July: Travels to Shikatsu 鹿津 onsen, Gunma prefecture, for sketching

August: At Shikatsu hot springs, proposes to Otake Kazue

Sept.: In Tokyo, Tanakaya establishes Tomimoto Kenkichi Design Office

Oct. 27: With painter Shirataki Ikunosuke acting as go-between (*nakōda*), marries Otake
Kazue

Nov. 17: Leach goes to China

1915

Jan.: Tanakaya publishes *Tomimoto Kenkichi moyōshū dai ichi* 富本憲吉模様集第一
[First collection of Tomimoto Kenkichi patterns]

Feb. 20–March 1: Solo exhibition at Tanakaya, Tokyo, with ceramics and drawings. First time to exhibit high-fire ceramics

April: At farmland near his birthplace home in Ando-mura, establishes a new home and a high-fire kiln

August 23: Eldest daughter Yō 陽 born

Sept.: Fires first high-fire kiln

Oct.: Leach, returned from Beijing, visits Ando-mura and makes ceramics at Tomimoto's studio

Nov. 1–10: First exhibition of high-fire celadon and *sometsuke* at 15 nichikai bijutsu kōgeihin tenrankai 十五日会美術工芸品展覧会 [15th day association art craft exhibition], Mitsukoshi, Tokyo

Dec. 21: Completes construction of studio attached to residence

Dec.: Arranges first ceramics distribution event, Tomimoto Kenkichi daiichi tōkikai 富本憲吉第一回陶器会, to raise funds. Each sponsor pays 5 yen

Feb: First high-fire ceramics exhibition, Tanakaya

1916

Feb. 17–March 15: Works included in Kokumin bijutsu kyokai dai 4kai bijutsu tenrankai, 国民美術協会第四回美術展覧会 [National art association 4th art exhibition], Takenodai Exhibition Hall, Tokyo

1917

Jan.: Bernard Leach and Yanagi Sōetsu visit Ando-mura

June 25–July 1: Tomimoto Kenkichi-shi fusai tōki tenrankai 富本憲吉氏夫妻陶器展覧会 [Mr. and Mrs. Tomimoto ceramics exhibition] at Ryūitsusō 流逸荘, Kanda, Tokyo

Sept.: Announces second ceramics distribution event. Each sponsor pays 8 yen

Nov. 8: Second daughter Tō 陶 born

1918

June 20–24: Tomimoto Kenkichi fusai tōki tenrankai 富本憲吉夫妻陶器展覧会 [Mr. and Mrs. Tomimoto ceramics exhibition] at Ryūitsusō, Tokyo. The couple stays in Tokyo until around July 10

Nov. 23–27: Tomimoto Kenkichi fusai tōki oyobi zuan tenrankai 富本憲吉夫妻陶器及
図案展覧会 [Mr. and Mrs. Tomimoto ceramics and design exhibition], Beniya
bijutsuten べにや美術店 [Beniya art gallery], Osaka

1919

May 2–4: Asakawa Noritaka visits Tomimoto and brings Korean ceramics

May 8–9: Urano Shigekichi visits Tomimoto

May: Exhibition of Korean ceramics at Ryūitsusō, Tokyo

Sept.: Starts experimenting with *aka-e* 赤絵, red painting on ceramics

Oct.: On the recommendation of Hamada Shōji, Kondō Yūzō becomes assistant

Nov.: Makes 60 gold leaf on red sake cups for Imamura Kinzō and his wife's golden
wedding commemoration

1920

Dec. 18–21: Tomimoto Kenkichi tōki sakuhin chinretsukai 富本憲吉陶器作品陳列会
[ceramics works exhibition], Shiseidō Gallery, Tokyo

1921

May: At his Ando-mura residence, hosts an exhibition of 150 works

May: *Shirakaba* publishes advertisement for Tomimoto Kenkichi saku yunomi haifukai
富本憲吉作湯呑配布会 [teacup distribution event]

July: Yanagi Sōetsu visits Ando-mura

Nov.: Yanagi Sōetsu and his wife visit Ando-mura

Dec. 17–19: Solo ceramics exhibition at Nojima Yasuzō's residence, Tokyo

1922

April: Teacher from Tokyo establishes Tomimoto ka gakkō 富本家学校 [family school]
for his two daughters only

July: Yanagi Sōetsu visits Ando-mura

Sept. 24: Goes to Korea

Oct. 3–7: Collaborates with Yanagi on the Richō tōjiki tenrankai 李朝陶磁器展覧会
[Korean ceramics exhibition] at the Chōsen minzoku bijtusukan 朝鮮民族美術館

Oct.13: Returns to Japan with Yanagi

Dec. 21–23: Solo ceramics exhibition at Nojima's residence, Tokyo

1923

May: Yanagi Keisuke dies. Organizes Yanagi Keisuke tsūtō ten 柳敬助追悼展
[memorial exhibition]

July: Distribution event for sketches

Sept. 1: Great Kanto Earthquake

Sept.: Travelled to Tokyo for two days to check on people he knew, including Urano Shigekichi

Dec.: Travels to Nagasaki with family

Begins practice of making signature different each year

1924

May 17–19: Solo ceramics exhibition at Nojima's residence, Tokyo

1925

May 9–11: Solo ceramics exhibition at Nojima's residence, Tokyo

May 15–20: Exhibits work at Kansai Bijutsukai ten 関西美術会展, Kyoto shōgyō kaigyō 京都商業会議所 [Kyoto commerce assembly place] and becomes committee member of Kansai Bijutsukai

June 20–25: Exhibits work at Kansai Bijutsukai ten 関西美術会展, Shirokiya 白木屋, Osaka

1926–1946: Tokyo Period

1926

Jan.: Yanagi Sōetsu, Kawai Kanjirō, and Hamada Shōji visit Ando-mura. With them, signs the prospectus for the Mingeikan

Oct.: Moves to Tokyo, reportedly so that his two daughters can enter the Seijōgakuen jogakkō 成城学園女学校. Temporary residence at Totsuka 戸塚 Shinjuku, then plans are made for new home in Chitosemura, Tokyo (now Soshigaya, Setagaya-ku)

Establishment of Nihon kōgei bijutsu kyōkai (Japan applied arts society) and Mukey group. The first includes Hōbi Uematsu (lacquer), Yōzei Tsuishu (lacquer). Mukey includes Yoshida Genjūrō (lacquer), Yamazaki Kakutarō (lacquer), Matsuda Gonroku (lacquer), Takamura Toyochika (metals), Kitahara Senroku (metals). Tomimoto not associated with either group

1927

Jan. 2: Son Sōkichi 壮吉 born

April: Moves to new home in Chitosemura, Tokyo

April 23–May 15: More than 200 works exhibited in one room of the “kaiko chinretsu” (recollection exhibition), within the *yōga* division, at the 6th Kokuga sōsaku kyōkai, Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum

May: Becomes member of Kokugakai and begins efforts to establish its craft division

Aug.: Builds kiln adjoining new home

Sept.: 5-100 yen distribution event organized by Nojima Yasuzō

1928

April 27 – May 15: 7th Kokuten, with Kōgei division at Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum. Tomimoto shows 8 designs and 13 ceramics pieces. Judges included Tanaka Kisaku, Nojima Yasuzō, and Kaneko Kuheiji

1929

March: Paints on already-formed tableware (teapots, teacups, plates, etc.), Shigaraki

March 19–23: Exhibition at Shiseidō Gallery, Tokyo

May 3–30: 4th Kokuten, Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum. Shows 12 ceramics pieces and sells tableware made at Shigaraki

Sept.: English and Japanese Crafts exhibition including ceramics by Hamada, Kawai, Leach, and Tomimoto at Fogg Museum, Harvard University. Organized by Yanagi Sōetsu

Sept. 21–30: 4th Shiseidō Art Exhibition at Shiseidō Gallery, Tokyo

1930

Jan.: 2 months in Nagasaki making and decorating ceramics at Yoshiyuki kiln, Hasami, and the Gagyū kiln of Kihara. Collects shards at Nakaoyama kiln

Feb. 10–25: 5th Kokuten, Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum. Shows 13 ceramics pieces and 5 rings

March: Goes to Mashiko to make tableware

May 15–19: Exhibition and sale of mass-produced goods made at Hasami and Mashiko at Kyūkyodo 鳩居堂, Tokyo

June: 5 yen ceramics distribution event to raise funds for forthcoming exhibition in London

1931

Jan.: Becomes member in newly formed Nihon hanga kyokai 本版画協会 [Japan woodblock print association]

April 13–25: 6th Kokuten, Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum

May: “Exhibition of Stoneware Porcelain by Kenkichi Tomimoto and Bernard Leach” at Beaux-Arts Gallery, Bond Street, London

Dec. 21–30: Yōga kōgei shōhin tenrankai 洋画工芸小品展覧会 [Western painting and craft small works exhibition], Shiseidō Gallery, Tokyo

1932

Feb.: Visits Seto

April: Visits Seto

May 7–24: One work shown in 7th Kokuten, Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum

June: Tomimoto Kenkichi shinsakuten [new works exhibition] at Takashimaya, Osaka

July: At Shinano 品野 in Seto, creates mass produced tableware including gum stamp applied red overglaze painting

1933

March 27–31: exhibition of Hamada, Kawai, and Tomimoto at Osaka Bijutsu Shinron Garō

April 18–May 4: Exhibits work at 8th Kokuten, Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum

May: Moves to Yamaya-chō, Yoyogi, but continues to use Soshigaya studio

Second exhibition with Leach at Beaux Arts Gallery, London

1934

Jan. 19–21: Tomimoto Kenkichi-shi somemono shisakuten 富本憲吉氏染物試作展
[prototype dyed textiles exhibition] at Takumi, Kyobashi, Tokyo

March 10–21: Work included in Tōshō jū ka sakuhin tenrankai 陶匠十家作品展覧会
[Exhibition of the works of 10 ceramic artisans], Matsuzakaya, Ueno, Tokyo

April: Meets Leach for the first time in 14 years

April: Exhibits at 9th Kokuten

May: Creates ceramics with Leach at Soshigaya studio

Nov. 25–27: Tomimoto Kenkichi tōjikiten 富本憲吉陶磁器展 [Tomimoto Kenkichi
ceramics exhibition] at studio in Soshigaya

Dec.: Creates mass production tableware at Shinano and Akatsu, Seto

1935

April 28–May 17: At 10th Kokuten, Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum, shows six
ceramics works including *hakuji*, black-glazed jar, and *sometsuke* porcelain

May 16–23: Tōshō taika sakuhin ten 陶匠大家作品展 [Ceramic artisan master works
exhibition] at Matsuzaka, Tokyo; Oct. 25–27 at Matsuzaka, Nagoya

June: Works in Kyoto

June: Nominated to be member of Imperial Art Academy

Nov. 20–27: Tomimoto Kenkichi New Ceramics Exhibition, Matsuzaka, Ueno, Tokyo

Nov.: Becomes instructor at Imperial Art School; lectures on craft theory

Dec.: “Modern Pottery” exhibition at Royal Scottish Museum includes work by
Tomimoto lent by Contemporary Art Society

1936

Jan. 17–22, 1st Tomimoto Kenkichi Nihonga Exhibition 富本憲吉第1回日本画展 at
Matsuzakuya, Tokyo

Jan. 21–24: Tomimoto Kenkichi New Ceramics Exhibition, Matsuzakaya, Osaka

Feb. 25–March 25: 1st Teikoku Bijutsuin exhibition, Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum.
Shows large white porcelain jar

April: Solo exhibition, Matsuzakaya, Nagoya

April 3–18: 11th Kokuten, Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum. Shows 8 pieces

May–Oct.: Researches overglaze enamel and makes work at Kutani kiln of Kitade Tōjiro

June: With 15 others, resigns from Imperial Art Academy

Oct. 11–14: Tomimoto Kenkichi Second Recent Ceramics Exhibition, Matsuzakaya, Ueno, Tokyo. Shows overglaze enamel made in Kutani

Nov. 26–29: Shows works at the Kōgei bijutsu sōgō tenrankai 工芸美術総合展覧会 [Craft art inclusive exhibition], Matsuzakaya, Ueno, Tokyo

1937

March 21–30: Meisaku kaki shinsaku tenkan 名作花器新作展覧 [Masterpiece new flower vases exhibit] at Matsuzakaya, Ueno, Tokyo

April 11–27: 12th Kokuten, Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum; shows 8 ceramics pieces

April: At Shimizu in Kyoto, mass produces 3000 *sometsuke* cake dishes with “Bamboo thicket on a moonlit night” motif

June: Teikoku bijutsuin abolished and Teikoku geijutsuin kansei 帝国芸術院官制 established. Tomimoto appointed a member of the latter

Nov.: Solo exhibition at Soshigaya studio

Dec. 4–5: Solo exhibition at Shōkōkaigisho [Chamber of commerce and industry], Kurashiki

Judge at first Shin Bunten

Mingei-ha artists withdraw from Kokuten

1938

Jan.: Ōhara Magosaburō promises 5000 yen to fund ceramics work

April: 13th Kokuten, Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum

Oct. 16–20: 2nd Shin Bunten, Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum. Shows *iro-e tōban*

1939

April 2–16: 14th Kokuten, Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum

August: Commission to create memento (*kinenhin*) for Shiseidō hanatsubakikai 花椿会. Production and distribution conducted the following year

1940

May: Visited various kilns in Korea with plan to make porcelain there, but returned to Japan early

May 25–31: *Mingei* kyokai sponsors exhibition of Hamada, Kawai, and Tomimoto at Hatoidō 鳩居堂, Tokyo. Exhibition held June 29–July 1 at Kyoto University

1941

Feb. 15–20: Tomimoto Kenkichi kinsaku tōki kanshōten 富本憲吉近作陶器鑑賞展 [Recent ceramics appreciation exhibition], at Hankyu department store, Umeda, Osaka

Oct.: Makes overglaze enamel work at Kutani kiln of Kitade Tōjiro

Oct. 16–Nov. 20: 4th Shin Bunten, Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum. Shows *kazari bako*

Winter: Solo exhibition at Ginza Hattori tokeiten 銀座服部時計店. Showed *iro-e kazari bako*

1942

March 18–22: Solo exhibition at Takashimaya, Tokyo

May 12–16: 2nd Modern Ceramics Exhibition 第2回現代陶芸美術展 at Takashimaya, Tokyo

Oct. 16–Nov.: Judge at 5th Shin Bunten, Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum

1943

June: Makes work at Kitade Tōjiro studio

Oct 16–Nov. 20: 6th Shin Bunten, Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum

1944

Feb. 1–29: Shows work at the Senkan kennō teikoku geijutsuin kaiin ten 戦艦献納帝国芸術院会員展 [Battleship offering imperial academy members exhibition], Imperial Museum

June: Begins teaching at the Tokyo School of Fine Arts

June: At Nanzenji Temple, Kokuten craft division exhibition for members living in Kyoto

Nov.: Stops firing kiln at Soshigaya due to air raids

Nov. 17–21: Kokuten craft division exhibition at Mitsukoshi, Nihonbashi, Tokyo

July: Accepts position of Director of Craft Technical Training Center, Tokyo School of Fine Arts

Oct. 8: Shows work at Kōgei Gijutsukōshūjo sakuhinkai 工芸技術講習所作品会 [Craft technical course example works exhibition], Kōkūkōgyō Gakkō 航空工業学校 [Aviation industrial school], Takayama, Gifu prefecture

1945

April: Last firing of overglaze enamel kiln at Soshigaya

May: Leads the evacuation of students and staff to the Craft Technical Training Center in Takayama

August: After the war ends Tomimoto continues producing work in Takayama

September: States his intention to resign from teaching at Tokyo School of Fine Arts and the technical training center

1946–1963: Kyoto Period

1946

Jan.: Visits friends around Kanazawa and Toyama prefecture, then goes to Kyoto

Feb.: Judge and exhibiting artist, first Nitten; Expresses intention to resign from Imperial Art Academy, but its director, Shimizu Kiyoshi 清水澄, dissuades him

April: Twenty years history room of Tomimoto Kenkichi 富本憲吉二十年史室 at Kokugakai sōritsu 20 shūnen kinenten 国画会創立 20 周年記念展 [20th anniversary exhibition]

July: Officially resigns from professorship, Tokyo School of Fine Arts

Oct.: Resigns from Imperial Art Academy

Dec.: Withdraws from the Kokugakai

Starting this year and continuing, makes ceramics at the kilns of Fukuda Shōsai, Kondō Yūzō, Suzuki Kiyoshi, Miyanaga Tōzan, Tenbō Takehiko 天坊武彦 and Yamada Tetsu

Becomes research adviser on export ceramics at Shōfū factory, Kyoto

1947

Jan: Founds Shinshō Bijutsu Kōgeikai (New Craftspeople's Art Craft Society)

May 5–10: Exhibits work in Shinshō Bijutsu Kōgeikai launch exhibition, Takashimaya, Tokyo

Feb. 3–15: Solo exhibition at Takashimaya, Osaka

1948

April: Rents a room at home of ceramist Matsukaze Eiichi 松風栄一宅 in Kiyomizu, Higashiyama-ku, Kyoto. Makes work at his studio, and studios of those mentioned under “1946.” Also fires red overglaze painting at kiln of Morino Yoshimitsu 森野嘉光

Sept. 25–30: Tomimoto Kenkichi Nihonga Ten 富本憲吉日本画展 at Asahi garō 朝日画廊, Kyoto

Nov. 15–20: Tomimoto Kenkichi sakuga sakutō kanshōkai 富本憲吉作画作陶鑑賞会 [Pictures and ceramics appreciation exhibition], Kabutoya garō 兜屋 画廊, Osaka

Nov. 23–28: Kyoto bijutsu konwakai dai 1kai sakuhinten 京都美術懇話会第1回作品展 [Kyoto art friendly get-together 1st exhibition] at Daimaru, Kyoto

July 23: Sōdeisha established

1948

May 18–22: 2nd Shinshōkai open submission exhibition, Takashimaya, Nihonbashi, Tokyo

Sept 22–26: First Sōdeisha exhibition, Takashimaya Osaka (Tomimoto's work not exhibited)

Dec 15–20: Joint exhibition by anti-Nitten groups (including Sōdeisha and Shinshōkai), Marubutsu, Kyoto

1949

April: Begins visiting professor (*kyakuin kyōju*) position, Kyoto Shiritsu Bijutsu Senmon Gakkō (today's Kyoto City University of Arts)

April 26–May 1: 3rd Shinshōkai open submission exhibition, Takashimaya, Osaka; May 11–15 at Takashimaya, Tokyo

Aug. 22–27: Tomimoto Kenkichi shōhin tōgaten 富本憲吉小品陶画展 [Small works and ceramic paintings exhibition], Kuroda tōen 黒田陶苑, Ginza

Nov. 22–27: Kyoto bijutsu konwakai dai 2 kai sakuhinten 京都美術懇話会第1回作品展 [Kyoto art friendly get-together 2nd exhibition] at Daimaru, Kyoto

1950

April: Begins professorship at Kyoto City College of Fine Arts, the first independent ceramics department in an art university

May 31–June 4: 4th Shinshōkai open submission exhibition, Takashimaya, Osaka (and later at Takashimaya, Kyoto)

Nov.: “Japon Cèramique Contemporain” exhibition, Musée Cernuschi, Paris

1954

June: 4-person exhibit with Leach, Hamada, and Kawai at Takashimaya, Tokyo

1955

Feb. Designated “Holder of Important Intangible Cultural Property” for overglaze enamel porcelain (*iro-e jiki*)

Nov. 19–Dec. 4: “The Exposition in Commemoration of the Forty-fifth Anniversary of Kenkichi Tomimoto’s Career as Ceramic Artist” Takashimaya, Nihombashi, Tokyo

Aug.: Becomes member of Japan Crafts Association

Japanese Traditional Crafts Exhibition established

1956

May 20–25: 11th spring Shinshōkai open submission exhibition, Okazaki Kōen Museum 岡崎公園美術館; June 5–10, at Takashimaya, Osaka

July–Sept.: Contemporary Japanese Pottery exhibition, the Art Institute of Chicago. Included ceramics by Arakawa Toyozo, Kanashige Toyo, Kato Tokuro, Kondō Yūzō, Taki Kazuo, and Tomimoto Kenkichi

Sept. 18–23: Exhibits work at 11th Autumn Shinshōkai Exhibition, Takashimaya, Tokyo

Oct. 9–21: 3rd Japan Traditional Crafts Exhibition, Mitsukoshi, Nihonbashi, Tokyo

1957

May 21–26: 12th spring Shinshōkai open submission exhibition, Okazaki Kōen Museum;
May 28–June 2, at Takashimaya, Osaka

July 17–25: Gendai Bijutsu 10-nen no Kessakuten 現代美術十年の傑作展
[Masterpieces of Modern Art 10 years] exhibition at Tōkyū, Shibuya, Tokyo

Oct. 9–20: 4th Japan Traditional Crafts Exhibition, Mitsukoshi, Nihonbashi, Tokyo
At Yasaka Kōgei ヤサカ工芸, tableware made under brand name Tomisen 富泉 begins

1958

Oct. 7–19: 5th Japan Traditional Crafts Exhibition, Mitsukoshi, Nihonbashi, Tokyo

Nov.: Solo exhibition at Takashimaya, Nanba, Osaka. In Jan. the following year shown at
Takashimaya Tokyo

1959

May 23–July 12: Gendai Nihon no tōgei [Modern Japanese ceramics] exhibition, Tokyo
Museum of Modern Art. Includes five pieces by Tomimoto

May 26–31: Shinshōkai exhibition, Kyoto Municipal Museum of Art

June: Belgium Ostende International Ceramics Exhibition

Oct. 6–8: 6th Japanese Traditional Crafts Exhibition at Mitsukoshi, Nihonbashi, Tokyo

Nov. 24–27: 14th Autumn Shinshōkai exhibition, Takashimaya, Tokyo

1960

June 2–6: 15th Shinshōkai open submission exhibition, Kyoto Municipal Museum of Art

Aug. 27–Sept. 25: Nihonjin no te, gendai no dentō kōgei ten [Hands of Japanese people,
modern traditional craft exhibition], National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo.
Includes Overglaze gold and silver enamel octagonal ornamental box

Sept. 27–Oct. 9: 7th Japan Traditional Crafts Exhibition, Mitsukoshi, Nihonbashi, Tokyo

1961

Jan. 31–Feb. 5: 16th spring Shinshōkai open submission exhibition, Takashimaya, Osaka;
Feb. 7–12, Takashimaya, Tokyo

- Feb. 3–7: Kyoto Pari kōkan tōgeiten 京都・パリ交歓陶芸展 [Kyoto-Paris exchange ceramics exhibition], Kyoto Municipal Museum of Art. Includes *tōban* with scene of distant view of a village with fern pattern. The exhibition shown May 17–June 8 at the Musée national de la céramique, Sèvres
- May 23–28: 50th anniversary exhibition, Takashimaya, Tokyo. Includes 50 new pieces made since the 1955 45th anniversary exhibition
- May 31–June 5: 16th spring Shinshōkai open submission exhibition, Kyoto Municipal Museum
- Sept. 26–Oct. 8: 8th Japanese Traditional Crafts Exhibition, Mitsukoshi, Nihonbashi, Tokyo
- Oct. 21: Leach meets with the Kyoto *Mingei* kyōkai for the first time in 8 years. Leach and Tomimoto visit Ando-mura together
- Nov.: Receives Order of Culture
- Nov. 13: Opening Ceremony, Ōhara Museum of Art Ceramics Hall. Attends with Leach, Hamada, and Kawai

1962

- April 17–22: 17th Shinshōkai exhibition, Takashimaya, Tokyo
- May 30–June 4: 17th spring Shinshōkai open submission exhibition, Kyoto Municipal Museum
- August: Wins Silver prize for overglaze enamel work, Prague's 3rd International Ceramics Exhibition
- Sept. 25–Oct. 7: 9th Japanese Traditional Crafts Exhibition, Mitsukoshi, Nihonbashi, Tokyo

1963

- March: Retires from Professorship at Kyoto City College of Fine Arts
- April: Admitted to Osaka Medical Center for Cancer and Cardiovascular Diseases
- May: Elected President of Kyoto City College of Fine Arts
- May 21–26: 18th spring Shinshōkai exhibition, Takashimaya, Tokyo, Takashimaya (last exhibition before death)
- June 8: Dies of lung cancer at age 77
- June 15: At his birthplace house in Ando-mura, farewell ceremony for the deceased (*kokubetsushiki*)

1974

Tomimoto Kenkichi Memorial Museum opens, Ando-mura (presently the Tomimoto Kenkichi Bunka Shiryōkan)

ILLUSTRATIONS



Figure 0.1



Figure 0.2

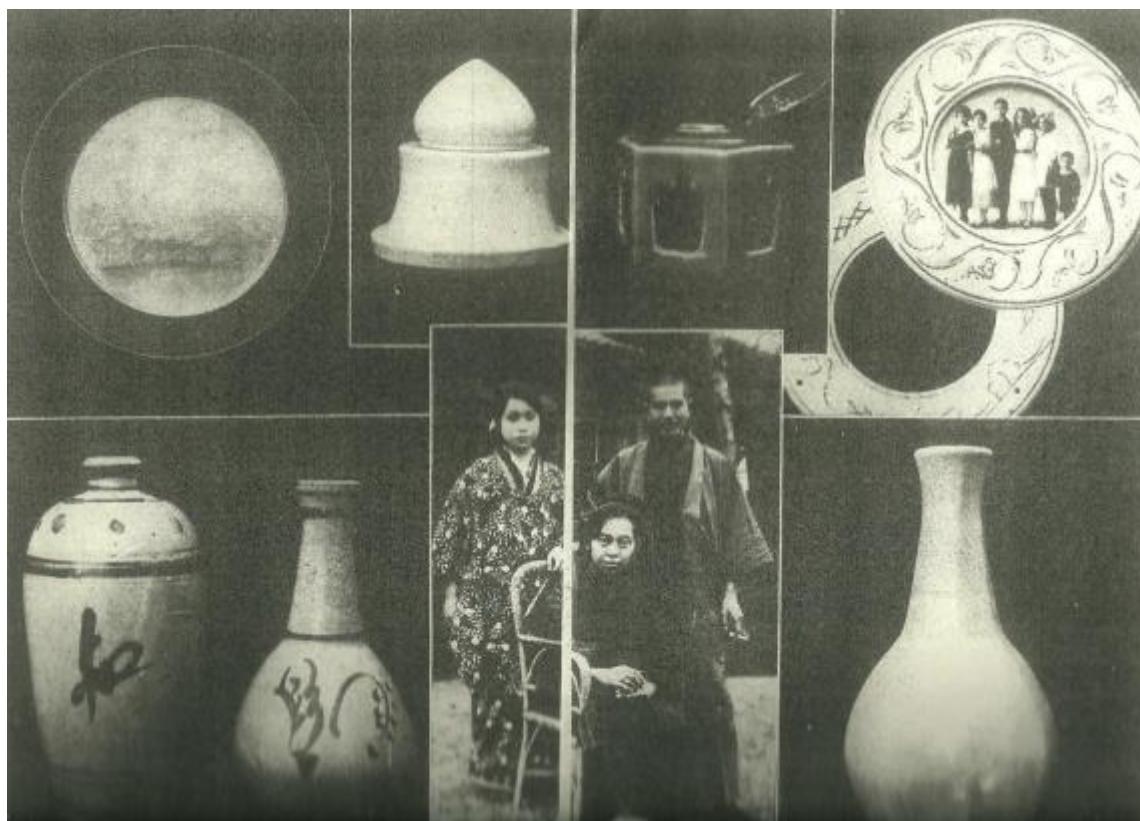


Figure 0.3



Figure 0.4

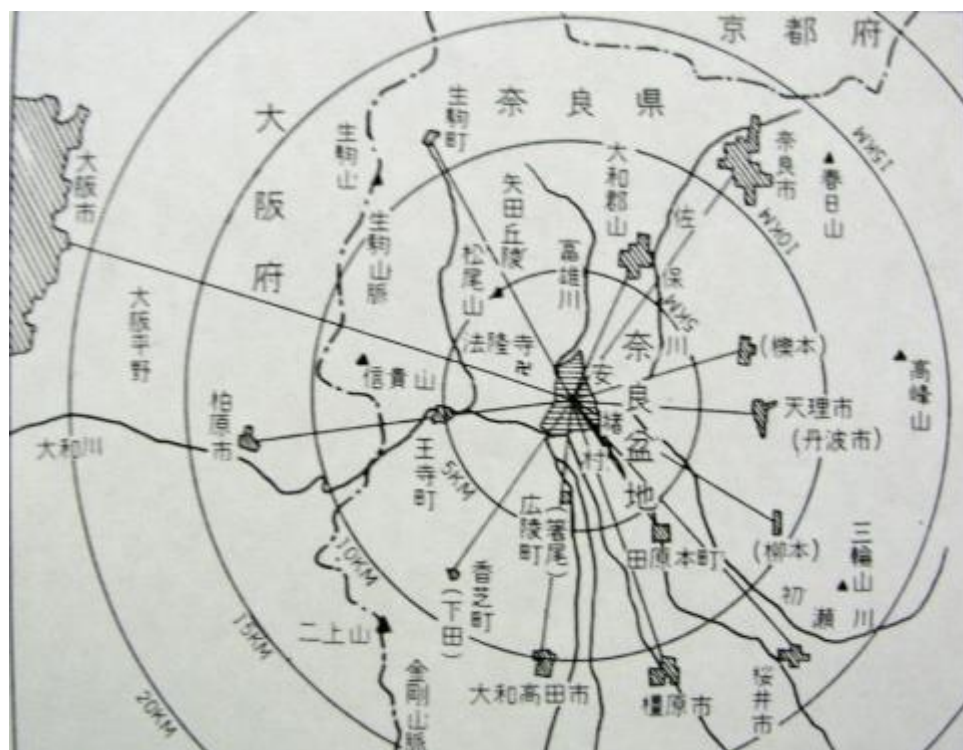


Figure 1.1



Figure 1.2



Figure 1.3



Figure 1.4



Figure 1.5



Figure 1.6



Figure 1.7



Figure 1.8.a



Figure 1.8.b

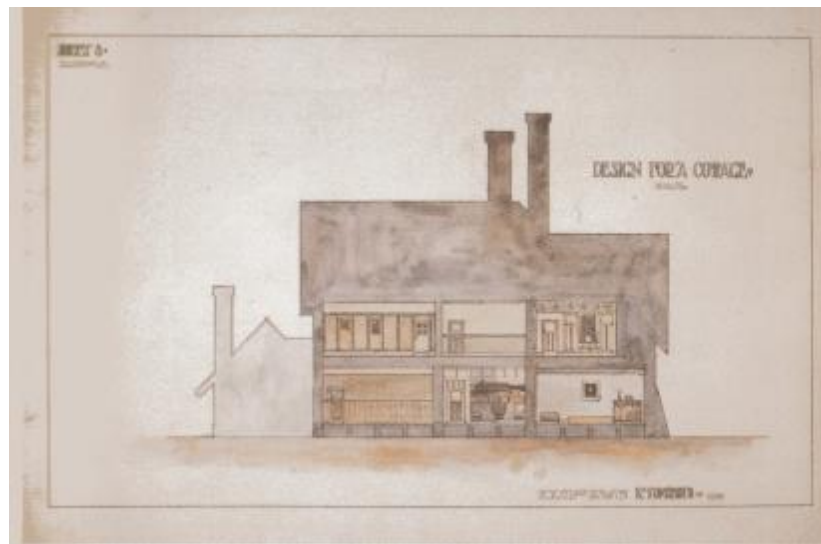


Figure 1.8.c

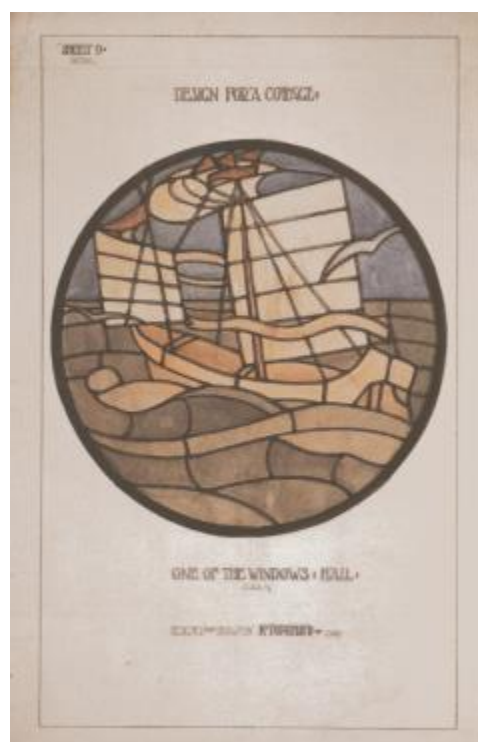


Figure 1.8.d



Figure 1.8.e



Figure 1.9



Figure 1.10

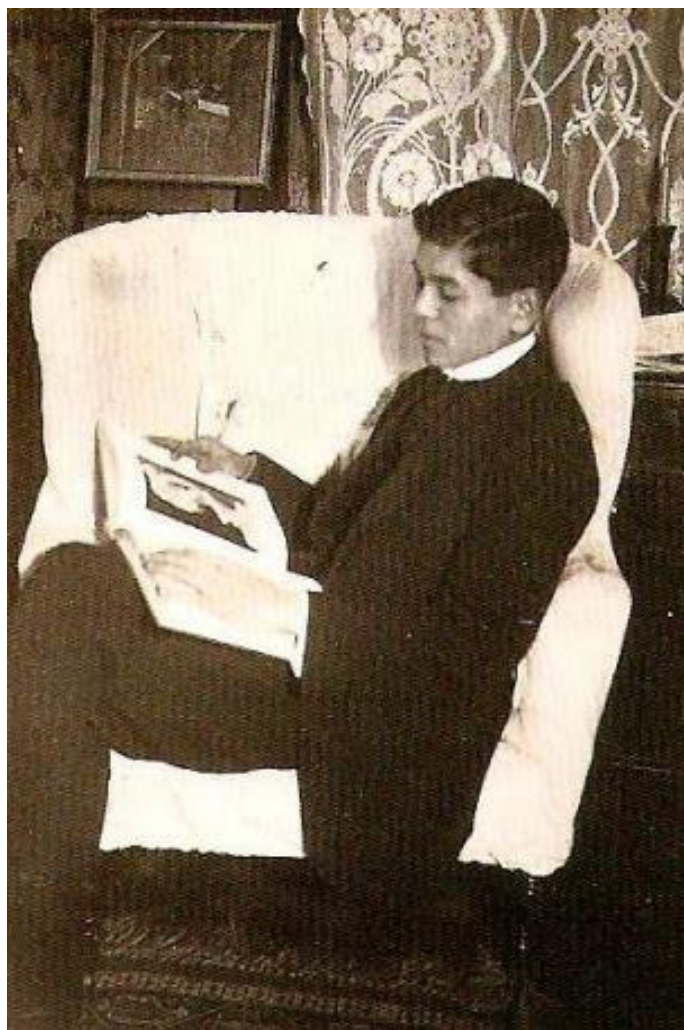


Figure 1.11



Figure 1.12



Figure 1.13



Figure 1.14

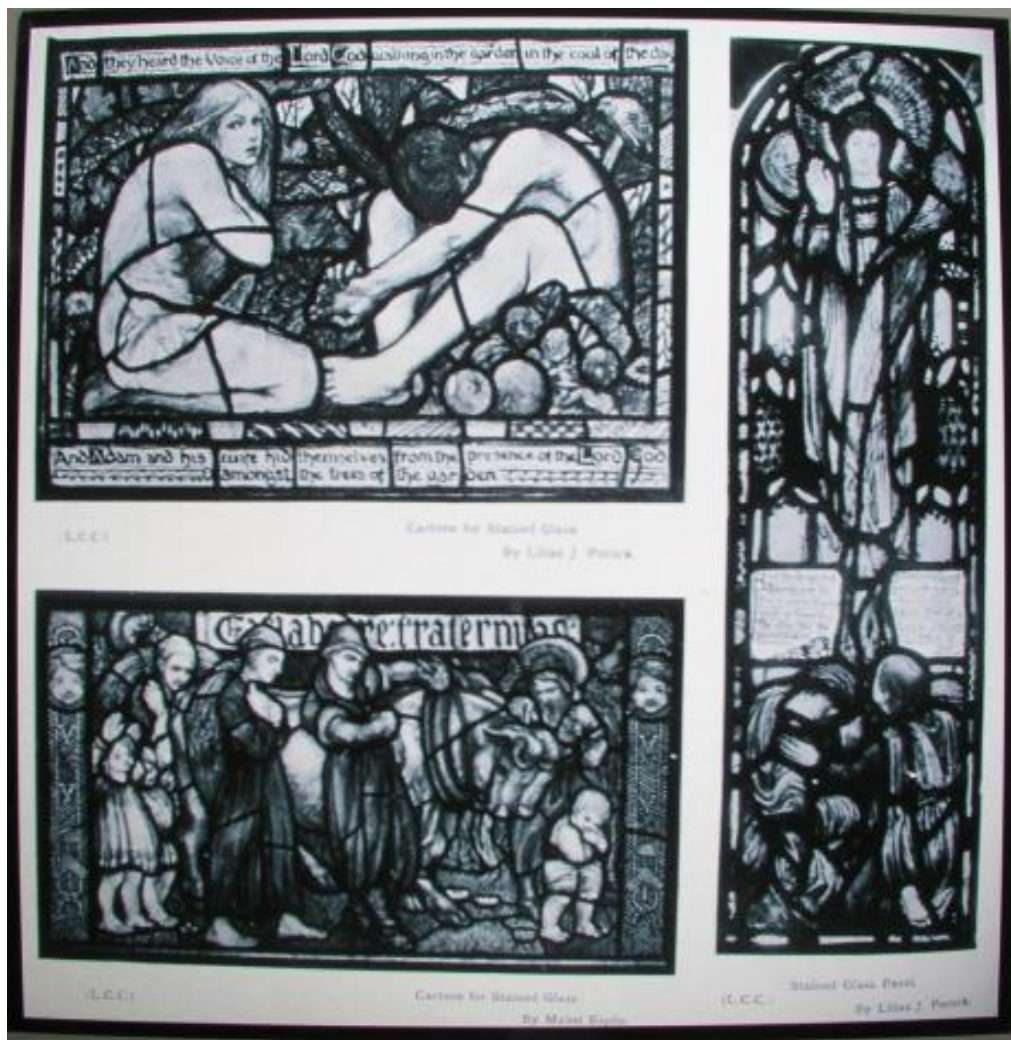


Figure 1.15



Figure 1.16



Figure 1.17



Figure 1.18



Figure 1.19

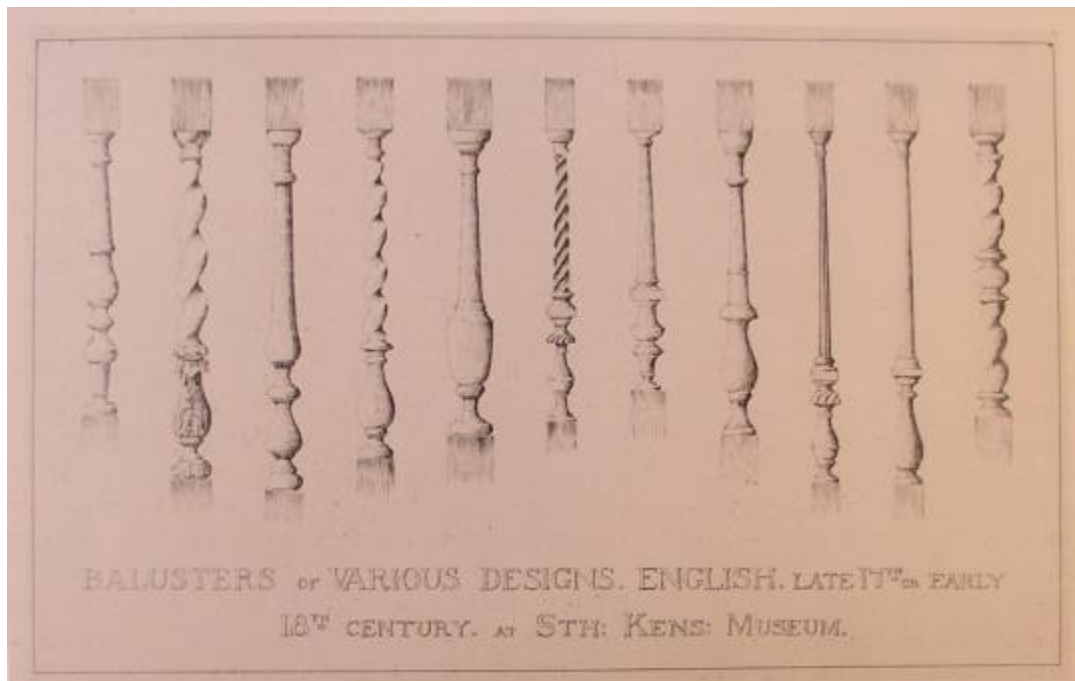


Figure 1.20



Figure 1.21



Figure 1.22



Figure 1.23



Figure 1.24

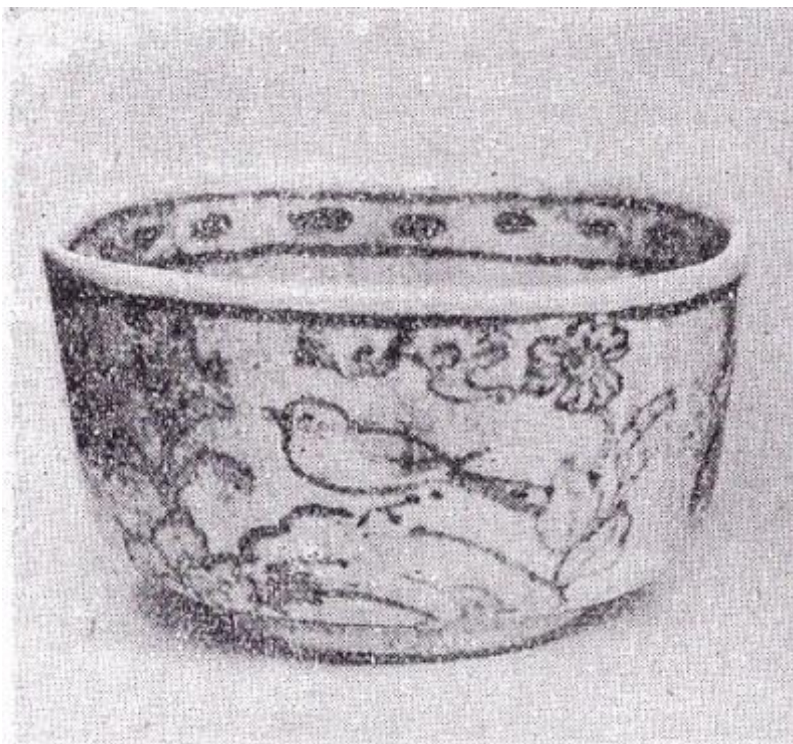


Figure 1.25



Figure 2.1



Figure 2.2



Figure 2.3



Figure 2.4



Figure 2.5



Figure 2.6



Figure 2.7

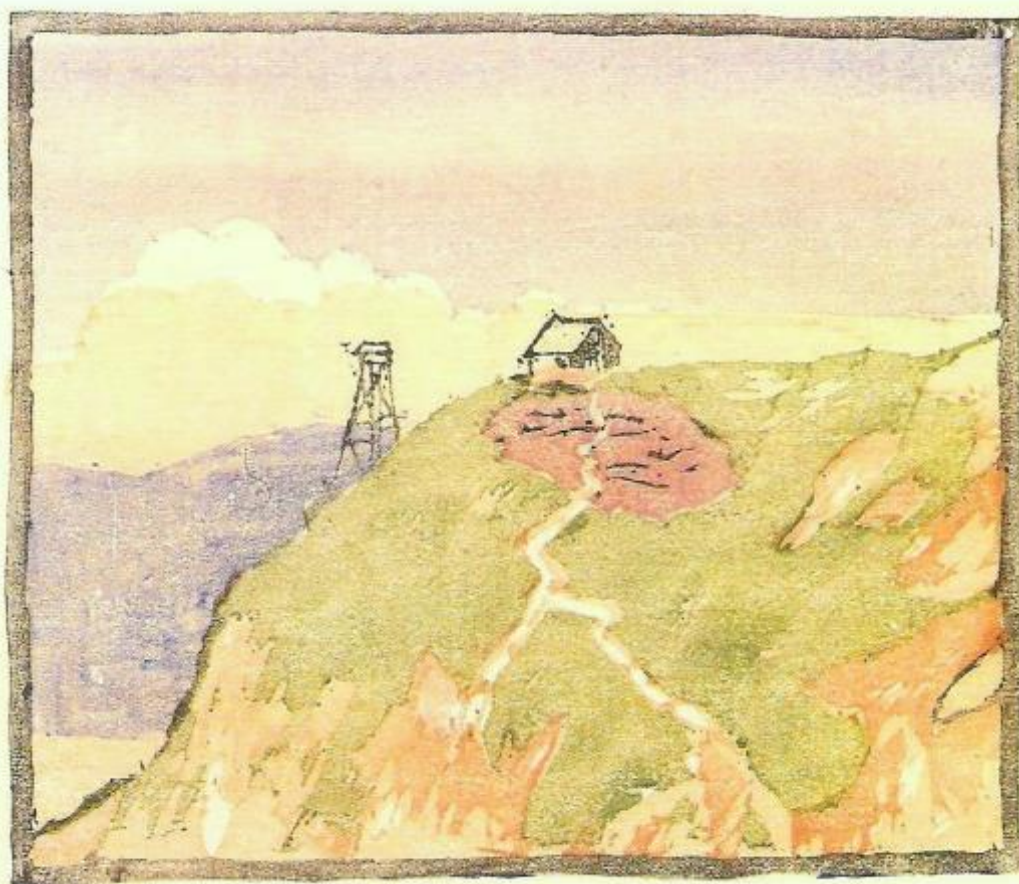


Figure 2.8

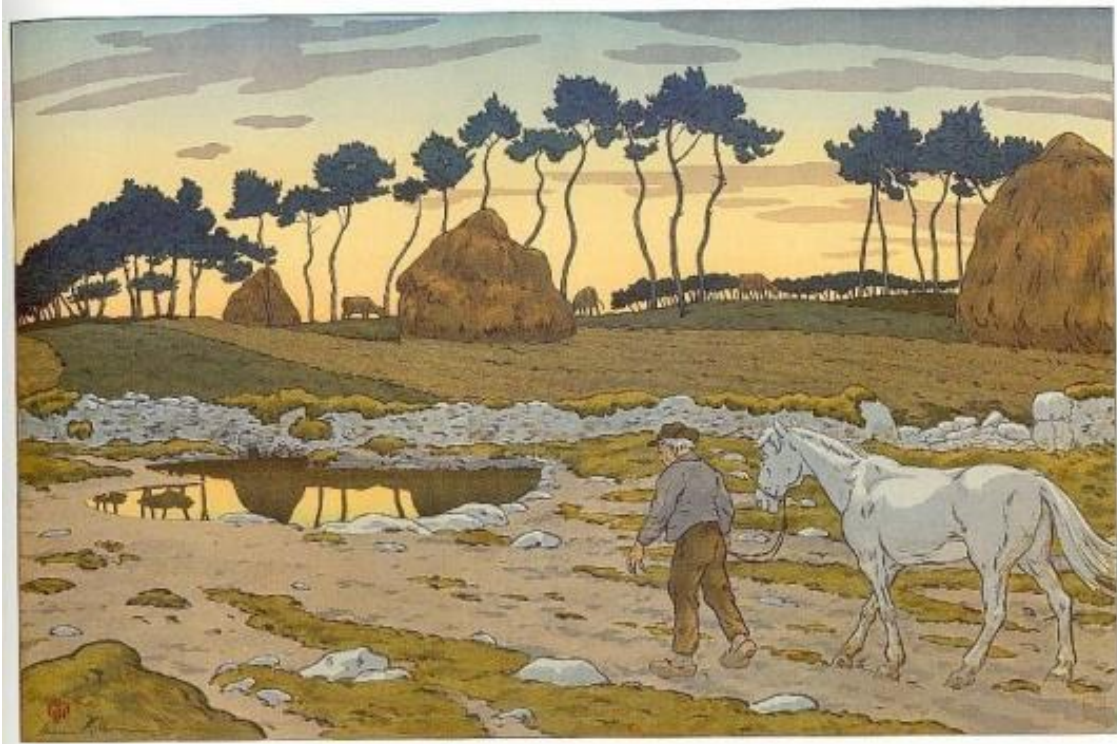


Figure 2.9

富本憲吉模様集 第一

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京橋區竹川町十一番地
美術店 田 中 屋

Figure 2.10

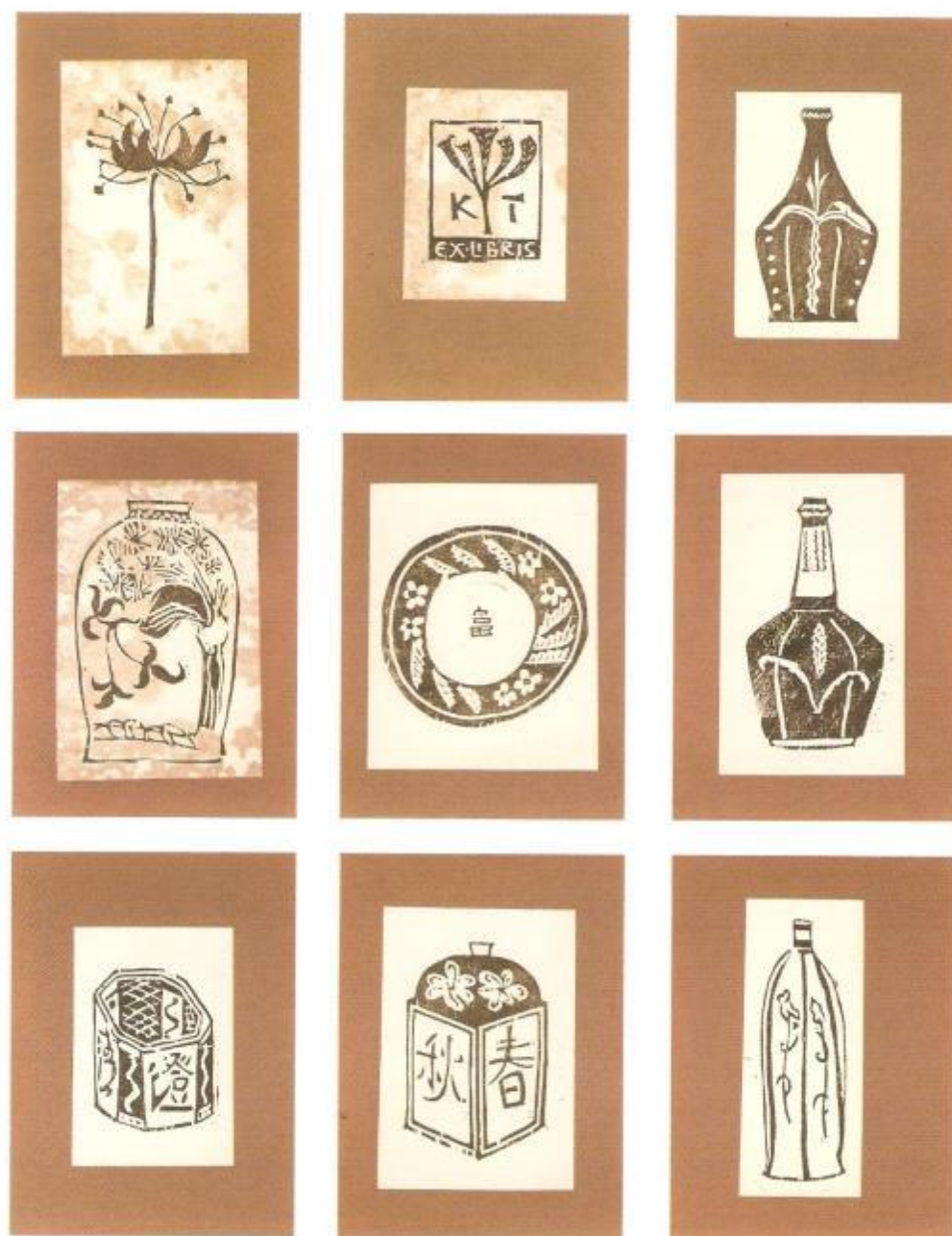


Figure 2.11



Figure 2.12



Figure 2.13



Figure 3.1



Figure 3.2

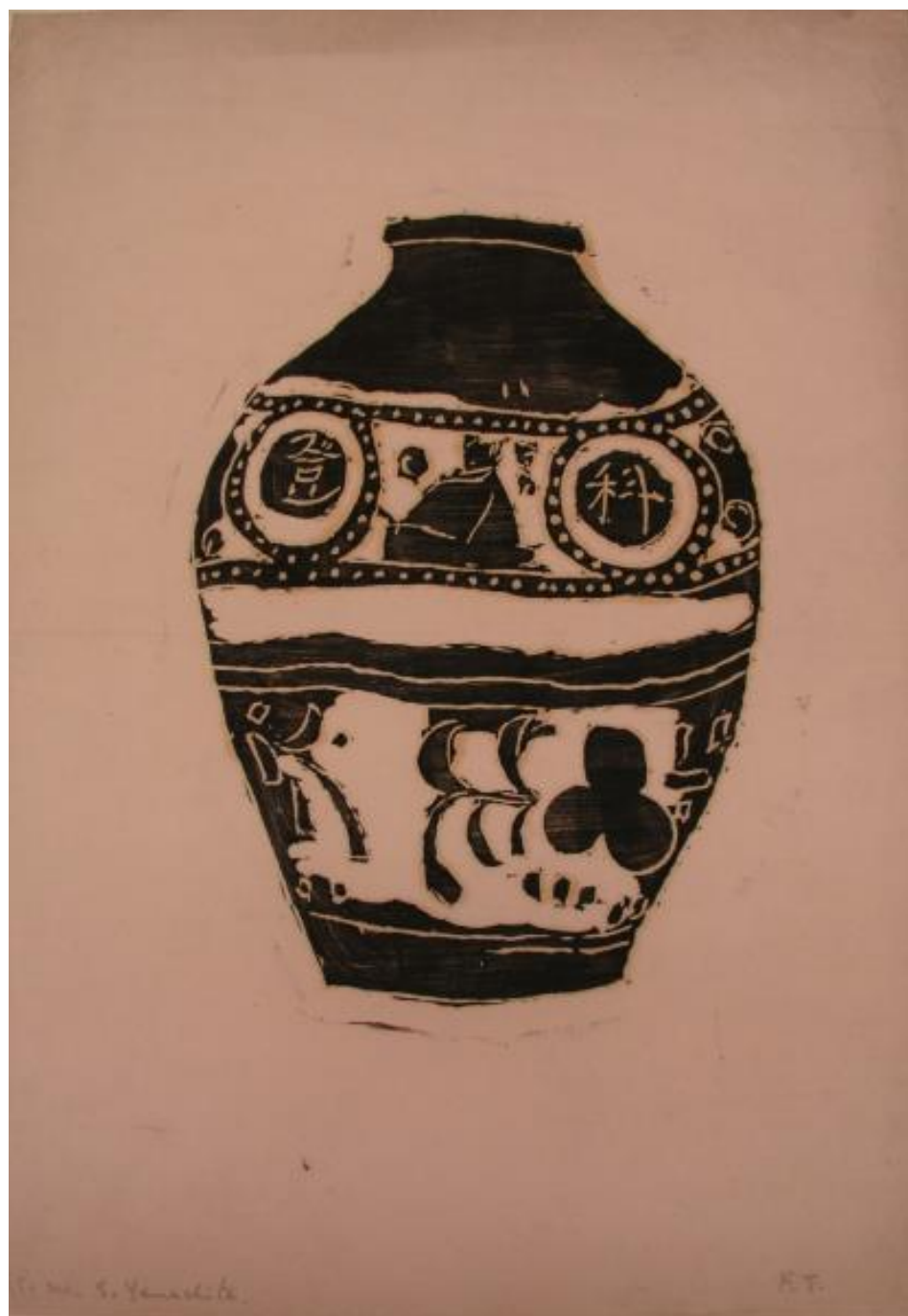


Figure 3.3



Figure 3.4

(10)



ブリスベンには四日間滞在しましたが、小村は里と
小村の村に、バリスベンに、バリスベンに、バリスベンに



滞欧中の所感 三

小林多喜夫

構えらるゝせに、新は文壇的に、凡ての設備が調
つて居るし、西菜などは、固より盛でしようが、
何と云つても、地方局ですから、私はむしろブ
リスベンの方を面白く思ひました。
リスベンのホテルは建築も立派であるし、家具
も七百有餘の大数であります。別荘同様の建
物の高はあまりありませんでした。陽りムーニの町
には感心しました。
其當時最も新しい建物の屋敷が町並みでしに
一寸入つて見ましたが、何れも思ひの青年画家
陣中の物を展覧に陳列したと云ふ様な展覧会
で満ちてゐるやうなものでした。
リスベンのホテルは現今政府の官舎になつて居
ますが、デントン・ホテルの建築とよりは事
ろ奇麗で空想的な建築が、此館に入りましては直
ちにそれと感かれました。大體としては、其館の
陳列のため、其人が人刻を拾つて其上座の調など
あります。其最奇麗に感かしたのは、畫室の一隅に
小室を設け、壁に一つの小孔を穿つて、室内の畫
を覗かせる様に設備されてある事でした。此の如
き室が二つあつて、一方の室には輕々な椅子と
して死人が誕生して、壁の中から手を延出して居
る様を覗き、又他の一室には、眞實、精神錯亂、
狂想と題して死女が小兒の片足を切斷し、其れを
鍋中に投じて煮て居る様を描いてありましたが、
私は其孔に向つて覗かんとする一刹那澤山の哀
を聯想しました。
アン・ゲ・ムに入つたのは、十二年の七月二十



アン・ゲ・ムに入つたのは、十二年の七月二十

日でした。翌朝早く此地の博物館を見物に出掛け
て午後前に歸りましたが、夕刻海沿地の酒屋に
行つて何の氣もなく卓の上にある青目の酒樽を
上げて見ました。先客の御首像を掲げて居る
の建物が記されてありますので、驚いて其像
前に歸つて尋常を致しました。
アン・ゲ・ムに三日間滞在して、それから新
のビルド・ビルトに入りましたが、静かでない一
の街でした。ロワ・ゲ・ムにも行つて見ました
が、神戶の様な盛んなので滞在する氣にはな
りませんでした。

Figure 3.5



Figure 3.6

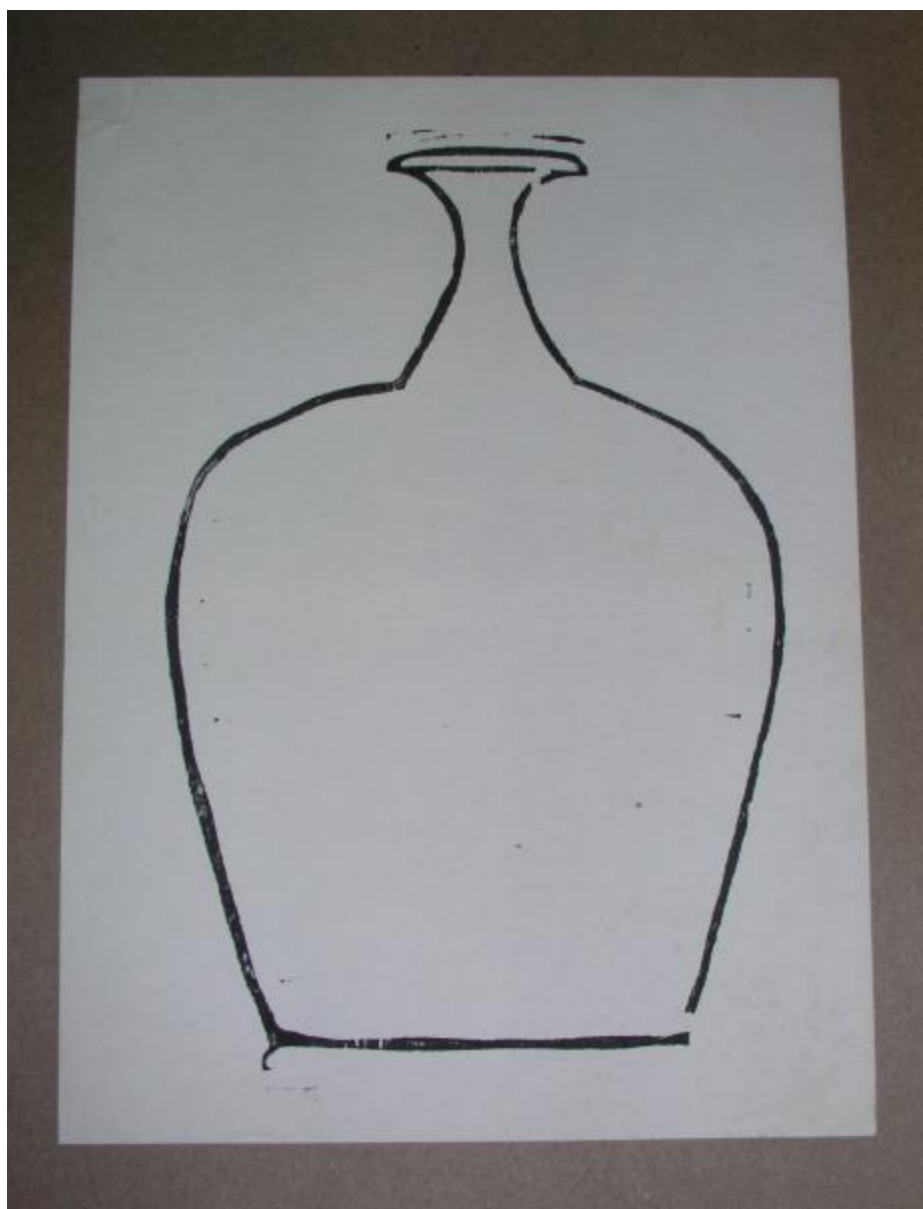


Figure 3.7



Figure 3.8

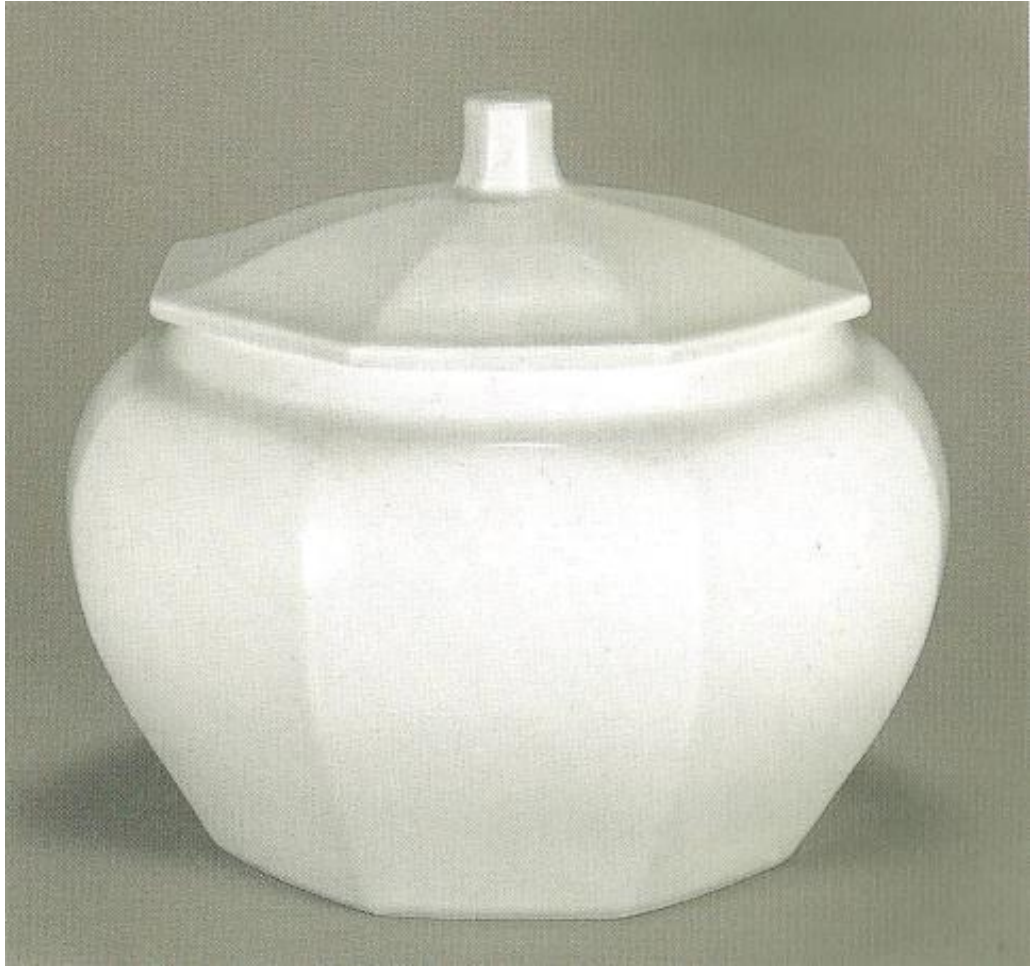


Figure 3.9



Figure 3.10

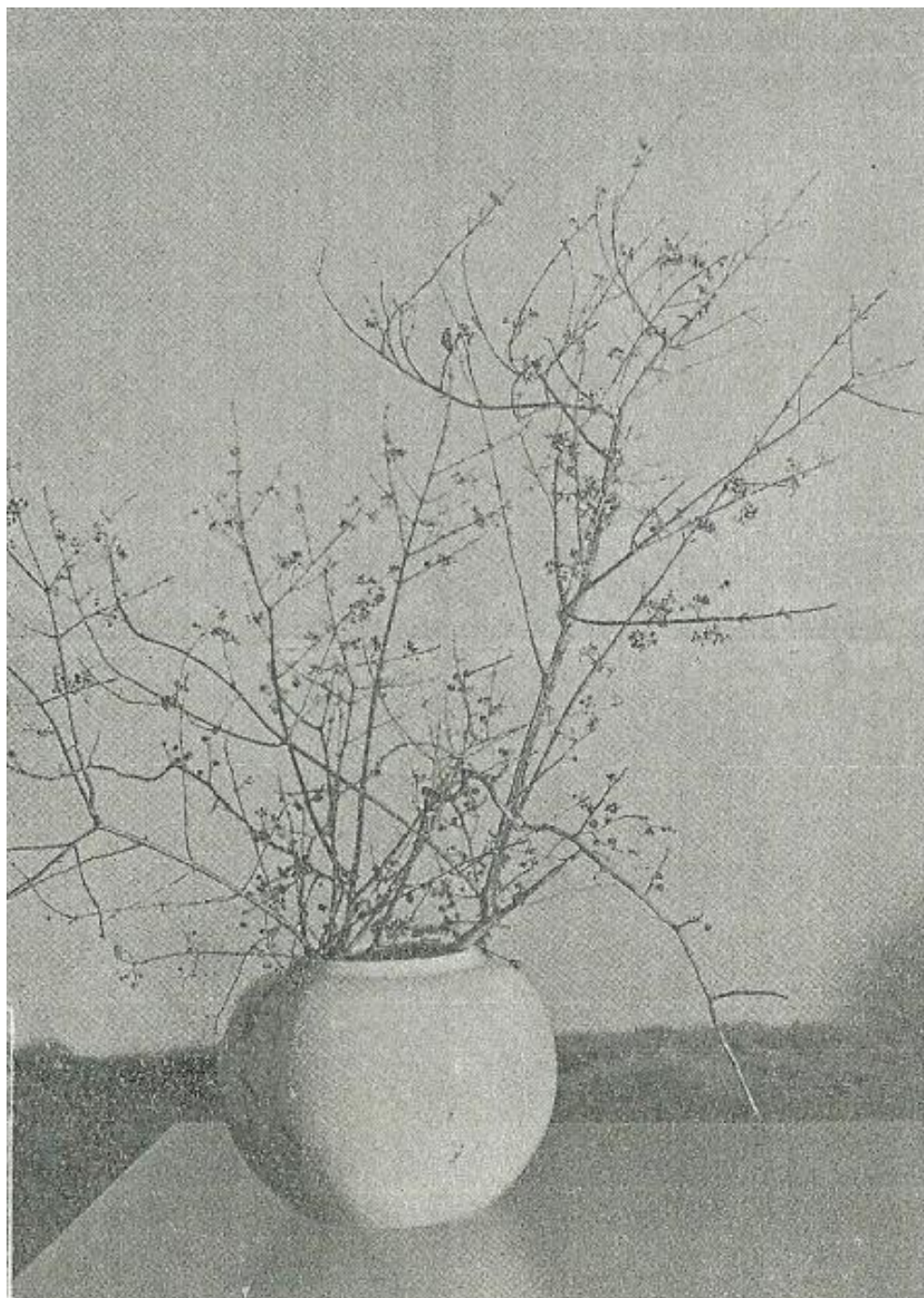


Figure 3.11



Figure 3.12



Figure 3.13



Figure 3.14



Figure 3.15



Figure 3.16



Figure 3.17



Figure 4.1

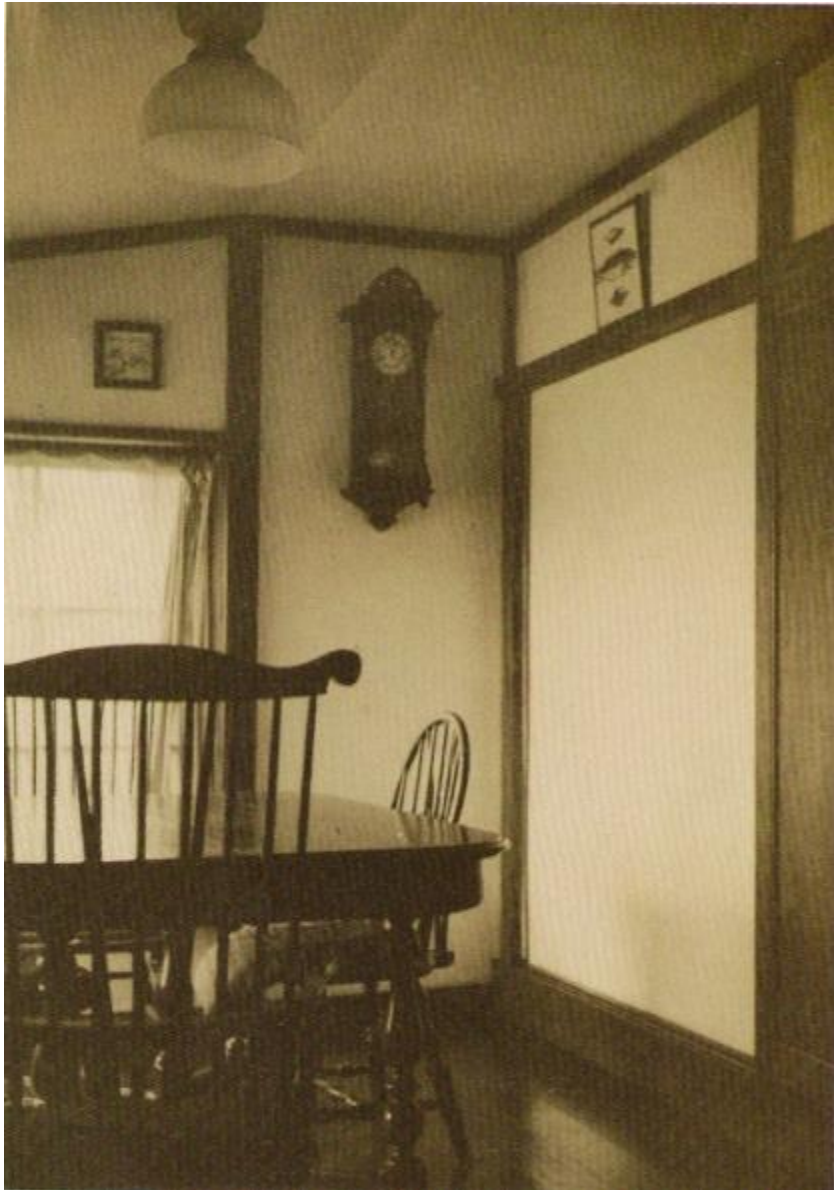


Figure 4.2



Figure 4.3



Figure 4.4

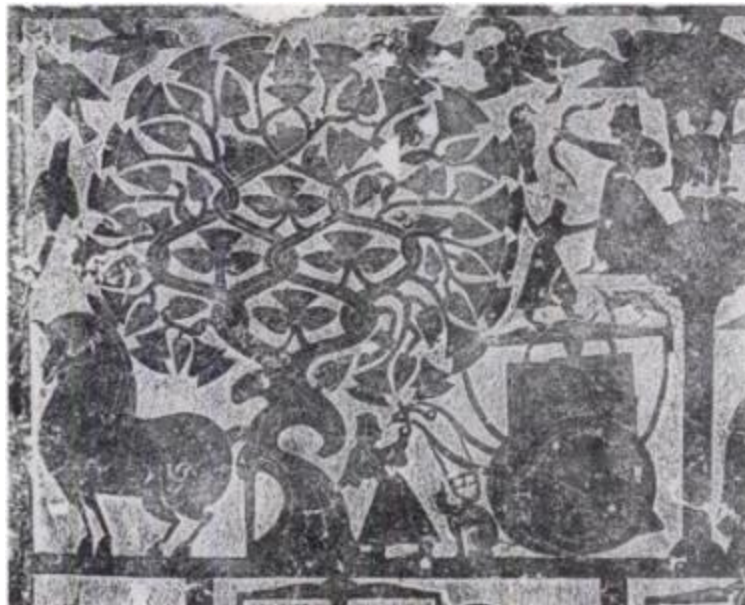


Figure 4.5



Figure 4.6



Figure 4.7



Figure 4.8



Figure 4.9



Figure 4.10



Figure 4.11

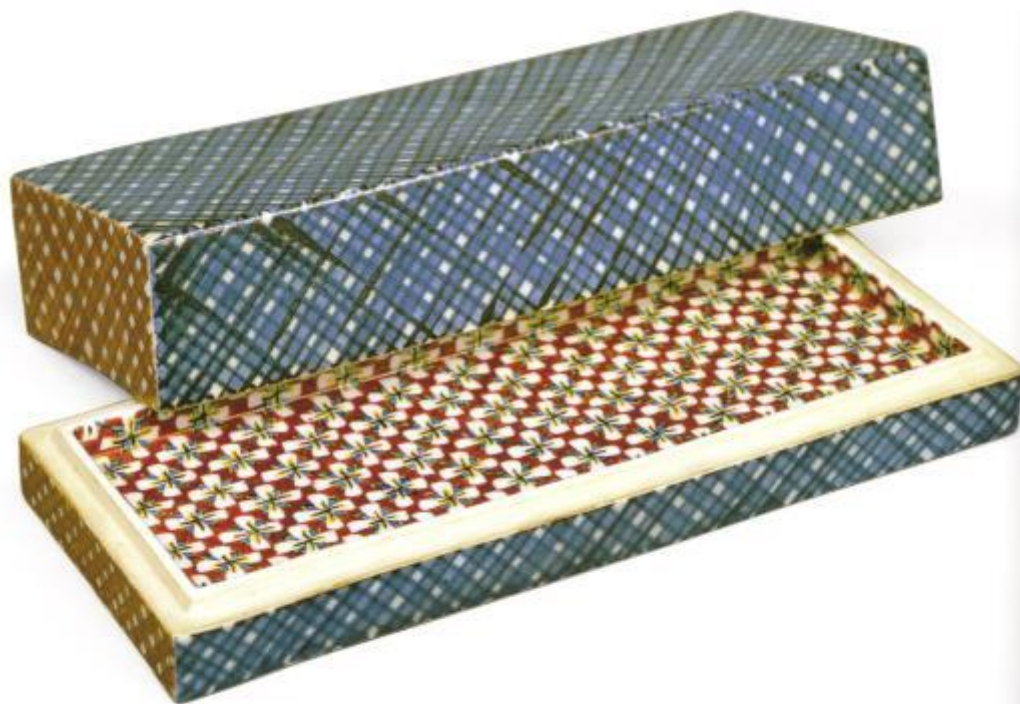


Figure 4.12



Figure 4.13



Figure 4.14



Figure 4.15



Figure 4.16



4.17



Figure 4.18



Figure 4.19

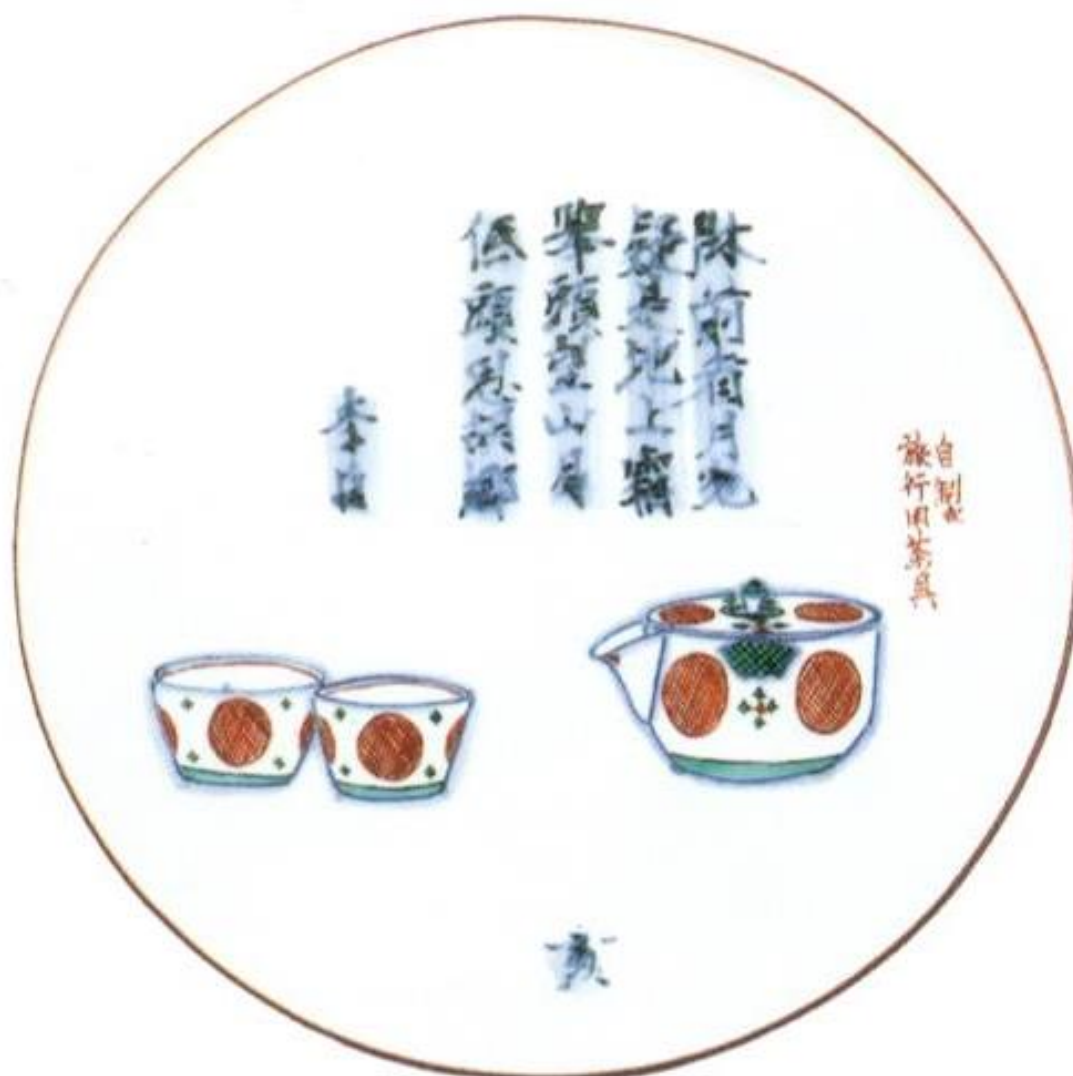


Figure 4.20

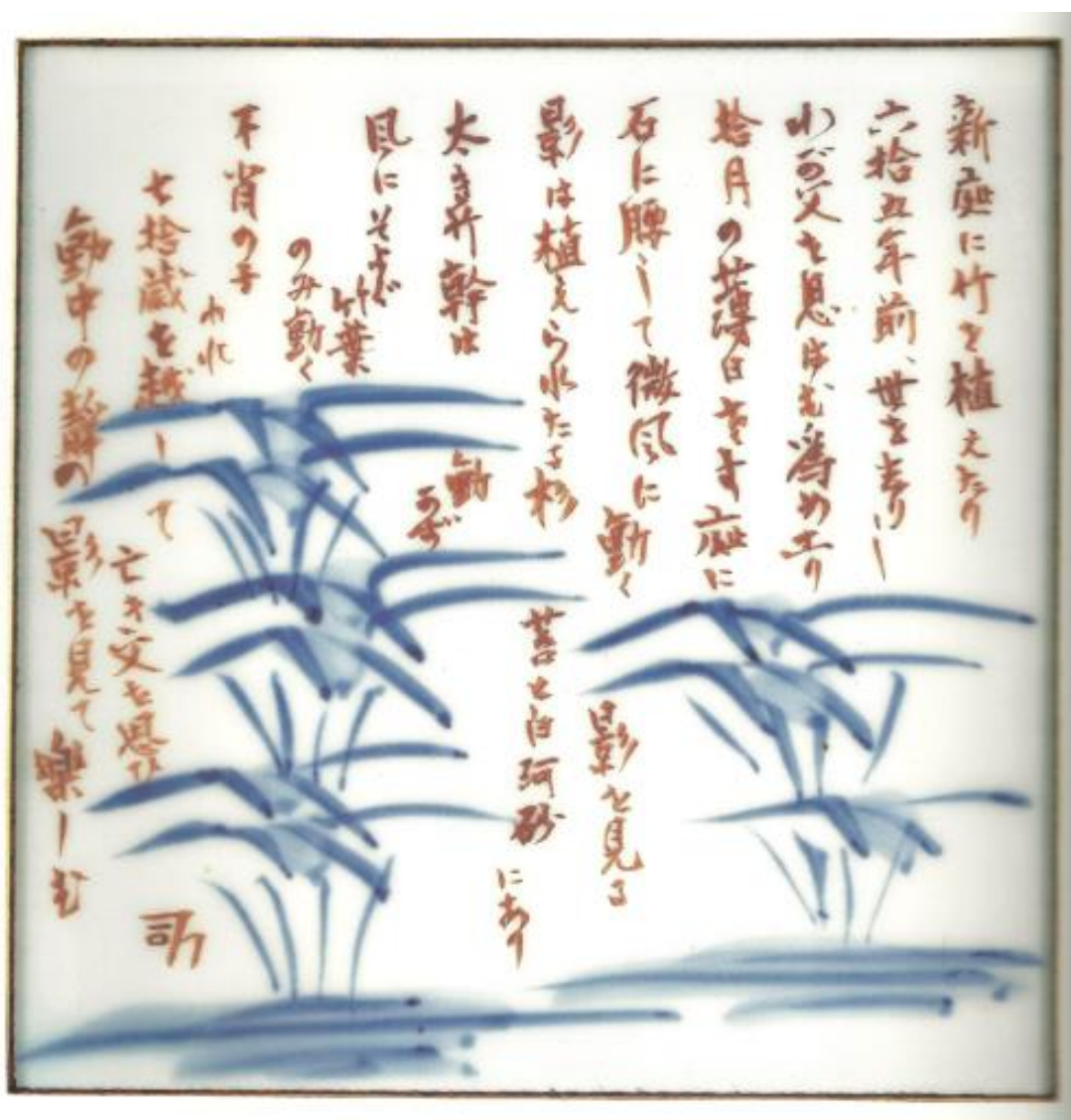


Figure 4.21



Figure 4.22



Figure 4.23.a



Figure 4.23.b



Figure 4.23.c



Figure 4.24

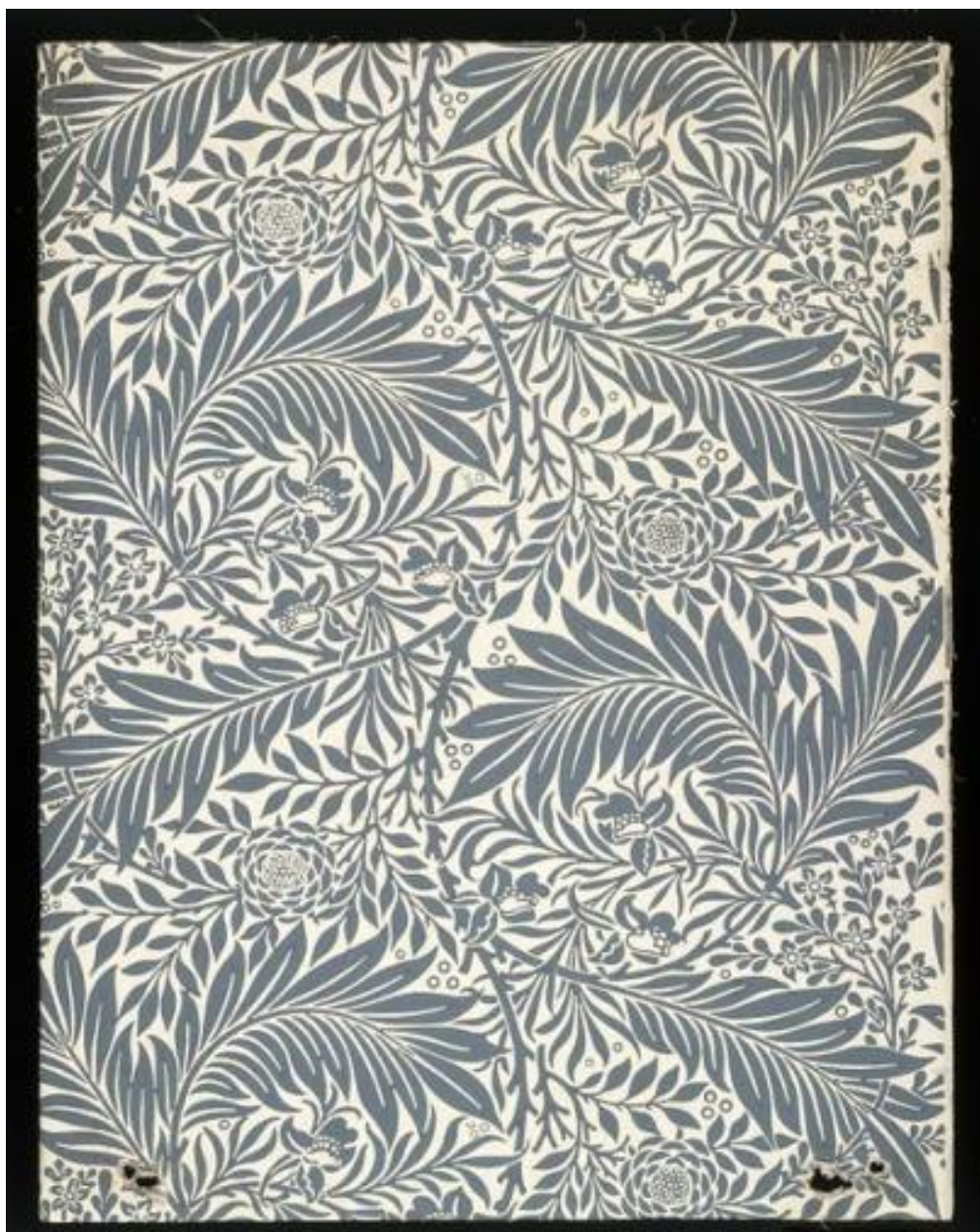
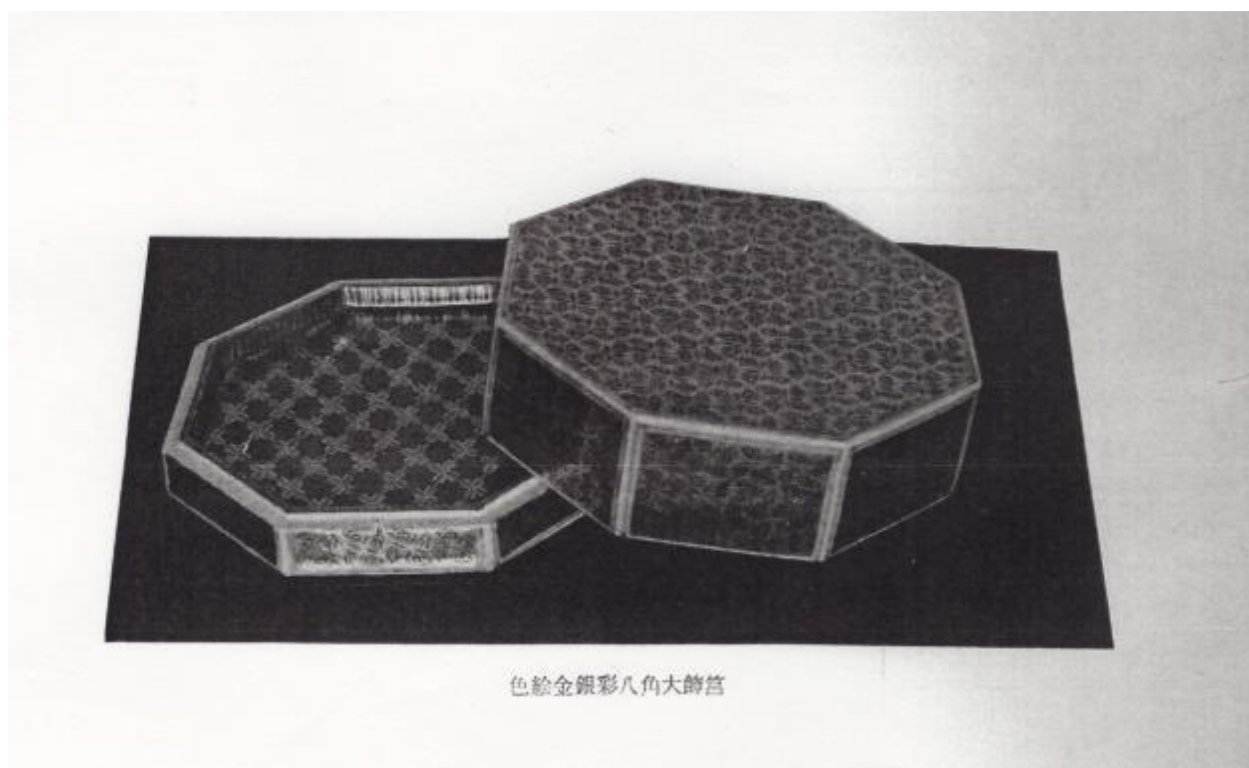


Figure 4.25



色絵金銀彩八角大飾箱

Figure 4.26



Figure 5.1



Figure 5.2



Figure 5.3



Figure 5.4

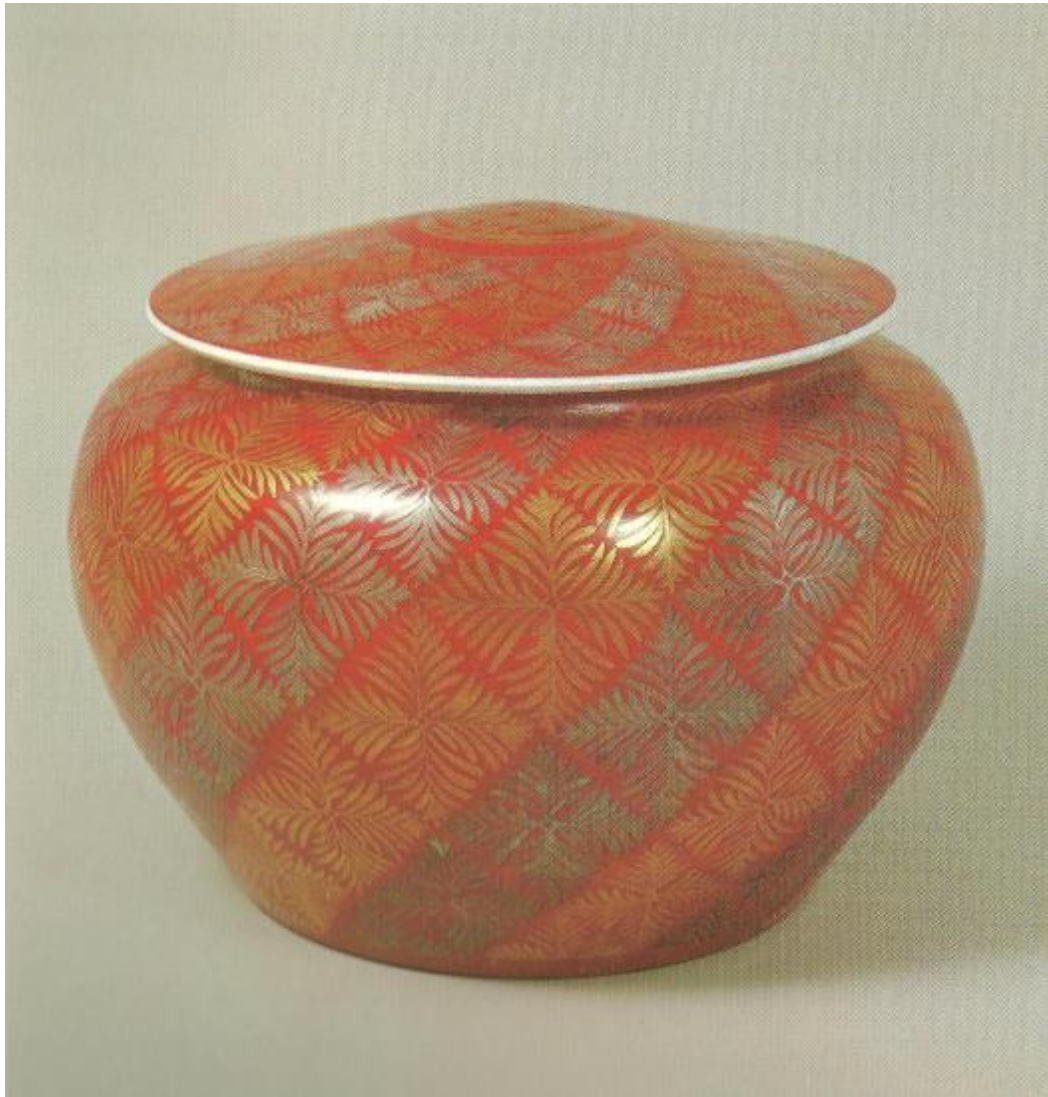


Figure 5.5



Figure 6.1

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Tomimoto Kenkichi Memorial Museum, Ando-mura, Nara, Japan

VII. Film

“Jūyō mukei bunkazai iro-e jiki Tomimoto Kenkichi 重要無形文化財色絵磁器 富本憲吉 [Holder of Important Intangible Cultural Property for overglaze enamel, Tomimoto Kenkichi],” 1959, 30 minutes, NHK.

VIII. Interviews, 2009–2010

Kaidō Ryūkichi

Koyama Kihei

Miyashita Zenji

Mizuo Hiroshi

Morino Taimei

Yanagihara Mutsuo

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