

Earth Flavor (*Tsuchi aji*) in Postwar Japanese Ceramics¹

Bert WINTHER-TAMAKI

This article investigates the turn to an earthy aesthetic in Japanese ceramics of the 1950s through the early 1970s. One term for this aesthetic is “earth flavor” (*tsuchi aji*), defined here as “the beauty of the bare complexion of the earth fired for a long time” in the manner of several types of ancient Japanese pottery and practiced anew by contemporary Japanese potters in the postwar period who admired it as a “natural feeling for the oneness of clay and kiln.” The postwar production of earth flavor ceramics is mapped to four sites, namely Seto and Shigaraki, regions of continuous ceramic production since ancient times, American coordinates of Japanese earth flavor, and the avant-garde ceramics group Sōdeisha. The kilns of Seto in Aichi Prefecture were the source of a canonical earth flavor associated with tea wares, but the fortunes of this type of pottery were buffeted by a series of controversies centered on the conservative Seto potter Katō Tōkurō. The medieval Shigaraki pot became an icon of earth flavor in the photography of Domon Ken, and was revalued in the practice of contemporary ceramicists. America was a powerful market for ceramic objects as well as ideals of Japanese earth flavor, but it was also the source of provocations that instigated new Japanese views of earth flavor. And finally, experiments with earth flavor in the sculptural ceramics of the Sōdeisha group ranged from forms suggesting live organisms of the soil (Yagi Kazuo) to clay firings that protested the industrial pollution of the earth (Satonaka Hideto).

Keywords: Domon Ken, Katō Tōkurō, Narahara Ikkō, Isamu Noguchi, Satonaka Hideto, Seto, Shigaraki, Sōdeisha, Peter Voulkos, Yagi Kazuo

Introduction

Ceramic art is by definition made by firing portions of earth, but some ceramicists process and refine their clay to obtain results that retain scarcely any visible trace of the earthy matter dug out of the ground underfoot, while others go to great lengths to cultivate an

¹ The author would like to acknowledge the advice and assistance of the following individuals in preparing this study: John Breen, Inaga Shigemi, Rebecca Jennison, Meghan Jones, Maezaki Shinya, Niko Vicario, and Robert Yellin. Conversations with the following ceramicists were particularly illuminating, and their generosity is greatly appreciated: Akiyama Yō, Hoshino Kayoko, Hoshino Satoru, Katō Takahiro, Kondō Takahiro, Chiho Tokita, and Tsujimura Shirō. Much of the research for this project was completed during a fellowship in residence at the International Research Center for Japanese Studies in Kyoto.

earthy sensibility in their fired clay work. This article focuses on ceramics of the latter type, works that articulate and value the earthy quality of the presumed natural state of the material from which they are formed. To be sure, pristine, decorative, and colorful ceramic objects continued to be produced in postwar Japan, but other postwar Japanese ceramics look more like rough crusty stone, or even raw mud, than highly processed and exquisitely crafted materials. Already evident in Japanese ceramics in the early twentieth century, this sensibility emerged as a prevalent tendency after the war. One term referencing this aesthetic is “earth flavor” (*tsuchi aji* 土味), which was defined in 1981 by the ceramicist Itō Kōshō 伊藤公象 as “the beauty of the bare complexion of the earth (*tsuchi*) fired for a long time with pine wood fuel in a climbing kiln which is shared by the Six Ancient Kiln Sites (*rokkoyō* 六古窯) of Japan: Seto 瀬戸, Tokoname 常滑, Shigaraki 信楽, Echizen 越前, Tanba 丹波, Bizen 備前.”² Earth flavor, then, is not only a ceramic aesthetic, but also a technique and a tradition bound with specific historical sites of ceramic production. Itō further observed that earth flavor was obtained by avoiding overt ornament and introducing wood ash into the kiln atmosphere to cause a glassy glaze of varied greenish shades. Despite the antiquity of this method, according to Itō, its results aligned closely with “a contemporary sense of beauty and is pursued by numerous contemporary ceramicists.” Itō attributed this contemporaneity of earth flavor to the way it “amplifies the special character of the clay” and provides “a natural feeling for the oneness of clay and kiln.”³ Various terms were employed to refer to this aesthetic in postwar Japan, but among them, perhaps the term Itō used, *tsuchi aji*, and its English equivalent, “earth flavor,” best convey the sense of taste for an aesthetic linked with a romantic conception of the earth that was prevalent in this milieu.⁴ The prevalence of this vision of the earth may be appreciated by recognizing that the Japanese word *tsuchi*, used alone, means “soil” and “earth,” while also serving as the most common word for “potter’s clay,” and sometimes also “the art of ceramics.” This constellation of meanings of the term *tsuchi* neatly diagrams the conceptual associations between ceramics, its material, and larger conceptions of the earth that were highly topical in postwar ceramics discourse.

While Itō suggested that earth flavor was a legacy of the Six Ancient Kiln Sites, ceramic objects made in these places were by no means uniformly characterized by pottery with an earthy aesthetic quality. To be sure, specific types of clay were mined locally at each site, and the properties of the available clay were a major factor determining the pottery that could be produced. Nevertheless, these sites were active over long stretches of time. For example, one of the six sites, the region centered on Seto in the contemporary prefectures of Aichi and Gifu, boasts a millennium of continuous production. Thus, inevitably, enormous changes in market demand, production technologies, and fashion or taste induced wave after wave of dramatic changes in style. Indeed, it is impossible to identify any shared formal characteristics belonging to all the pottery produced at one site during the different periods of its development.⁵ Nonetheless, these kiln sites were the focus of communities

2 Itō 1981, p. 31.

3 Itō 1981, p. 31.

4 Japanese terms that, depending on the context, could convey connotations similar to “earth flavor” include *muyū* 無釉 (unglazed pottery), *sekki* 炆器 (stoneware), *shibui* 渋い (subdued taste), *yakishime* 焼締 (unglazed stoneware), and *yaseimi* 野性味 (wild flavor).

5 For the history of dramatic changes during the various epochs of Shigaraki ware, see Cort 1979.

and histories, as well as legends, and the distinctive materiality of local clay was a key component of the social and cultural identity of the place. Moreover, each of the names of these famous kiln sites (and many others) signifies a specific earth flavor in ceramic objects, even when made in other locations. For example, as we shall see, Shigaraki clay is known for its reddish-brown color, often stippled with small bits of white feldspar, while one of the most famous types of Seto clay retains a pithy look and light buff tone, even when fired at high temperatures.

The Six Ancient Kiln Sites provide an important key to understanding the nuances of earth flavor in postwar Japanese ceramics, and this study investigates aspects of two of these sites: Seto and Shigaraki. Nonetheless, the new values and clash of perspectives that gave meaning to earth flavor in the postwar years cannot be understood by a focus on ancient kiln sites alone. I propose two additional sites as key to the development of new modes of earth flavor: first, a range of perspectives associated with America from the vantage of Japanese postwar ceramics, and second, the Kyoto-based group of potters known as Sōdeisha 走泥社. Issues ranging from American consumer demand to avant-gardist approaches to clay in the United States were influential beacons for the development of earth flavor in postwar Japanese ceramics. Despite its figurative and material grounding in local and national Japanese geography, earth flavor was a highly transnational development. The fourth site considered here, the Sōdeisha group, was first formed in 1948 by Yagi Kazuo and four young second-generation Kyoto potters; their work and that of younger members who joined the group in the 1960s represent some of the most significant transformations of earth flavor in postwar Japanese ceramics. Thus, this article moves through a sequence of four sites that each contributed significant dimensions to the discourse of earth flavor in postwar Japanese ceramics as follows: 1) Seto, the source of a canonical earth flavor that was buffeted by a series of controversies centered on the conservative Seto potter, Katō Tōkurō 加藤唐九郎 (1897–1985); 2) America, as a market for Japanese earth flavor and as the source of provocations that instigated new Japanese views of earth flavor; 3) ancient Shigaraki pottery interpreted through the photography of Domon Ken and reassessed in the contemporary practice of Yagi Kazuo 八木一夫 and Tsuji Kyō 辻協; 4) transformations of earth flavor in non-functional ceramics by Yagi Kazuo and later by Satonaka Hideto 里中英人, a younger member of Yagi's group, Sōdeisha.

This article is shaped by two methodological decisions that are somewhat unusual in ceramic studies. First, ceramicists who were adherents of functional pottery are investigated alongside ceramicists who shunned functional vessels in favor of sculptural ceramics; and second, photographs of ceramics are scrutinized with the same degree of attention as ceramic objects themselves. The first of these decisions, the straddling of functional and non-functional ceramics, might seem the equivalent of downplaying the difference between, say, Norman Rockwell and Jackson Pollock in the context of mid-twentieth-century American painting. To be sure, moving from a stern adherent of sixteenth-century modes of tea bowl making (Katō Tōkurō) to the pioneer of the hybrid genre of the kiln-fired *objet* (Yagi Kazuo) is to move from a neo-classicist to an avant-gardist. But although in many ways these figures represent diametrically opposed positions in the ceramic world, they shared a devotion to earth flavor, a devotion bordering on obsession in both cases. The aim here is to appreciate the degree to which the preoccupation with earth flavor spanned ideological divides within the ceramic world, and to gauge the friction and fault lines that separate its

interlocutors. Photographs have long been indispensable tools in ceramic discourse, but it is common to dismiss their importance by insisting, as Katō Tōkurō did, that “a photograph is just a photograph, and it is no comparison for the intensity of the actual object.”⁶ True, ceramic objects hold a unique intensity when held in hand, but photography is also capable of generating profound experiences of ceramics, and earth flavor was among the properties of postwar Japanese ceramics that were powerfully augmented by photography. Three photobooks by leading photographers are discussed here, and although they are extremely different from one another in style, format, technique, and intended audience, each book provides views of earth flavor in ways that equal or even surpass the intensity experienced when beholding the “actual object.” One of the photographers considered here, Narahara Ikkō 奈良原一高, wrote that his all-night session photographing ceramic works by Yagi Kazuo “brought me into intimacy with the skin of pottery for the first time in my life.”⁷ I would argue that the extraordinary book resulting from this bout of photography in 1969 engages viewers in a similar experience.

1. Prewar Antecedents

Before pursuing the turn to earth flavor in postwar Japanese ceramics that is the focus of this article, I digress to describe early twentieth-century developments that incubated this later tendency. During the Meiji period much of the emphasis of Japanese ceramic art, including production at the Six Ancient Kiln Sites, was focused on bright, colorful, and decorative forms that were often intricately sculpted. These works were designed to appeal to prevailing European and American tastes, notably at the series of international exhibitions held in Paris, London, Philadelphia, and elsewhere in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. Japanese makers and marketers were largely correct in assuming that earth flavor would not win favor in these settings. Meanwhile, brown or black stoneware pottery was stigmatized as a cheaper material unsuitable for art because it was used widely for such plebeian tasks as plumbing pipes, roof tiles, and braziers. Three movements in the early twentieth century, however, started pushing Japanese ceramic taste toward a more earthy sensibility: the *Mingei* (Folk Art) movement led by Yanagi Muneyoshi 柳宗悦 (1889–1961); the rediscovery and revival of the production of sixteenth-century tea ceremony ceramics at ancient kiln sites, especially Mino 美濃 and Bizen; and the continued practice of the tea ceremony by wealthy amateurs who collected and made tea wares. Each of these well-known movements attracted further attention in the postwar years, and provided a foundation for the earthy turn in postwar ceramics, so I summarize some of their earthy ramifications here.

In his promotion of pottery and other utilitarian objects made by common folks, Yanagi Muneyoshi imagined ceramics as integrated within a holistic village ecosystem; villagers created objects to fulfill the needs of daily life using materials in their local environment in ways dictated by the properties of the materials themselves. Thus, for Yanagi, “The natural environment, raw materials, and production, these three are inseparable.” Further, “soil quality” was one of the fundamental elements that Yanagi imagined as harmoniously integrated within “the rich quality of common handicrafts”

6 Katō Tōkurō, interview on “Josei techō,” NHK, 8 January 1973, in Katō 1979, p. 40.

7 Narahara Ikkō, untitled statement dated October 1968, in Unagami and Narahara 1969, n.p.

that is “a gift of nature.”⁸ But when outlining this ethos of craft materials in 1939, Yanagi maintained that “industrialism” now threatened Japan, the erstwhile “land of potters.” Thanks to machine production, “shape and pattern have become false... [and] life has altered and the capacity to see and value what is good and true has been lost.”⁹

While these distressing thoughts led Yanagi to seek living Mingei pottery outside of industrializing Japan, notably in Okinawa and Korea, some of his contemporaries concentrated their efforts on rediscovering and reviving types of pottery associated with the tea ceremony in the sixteenth century.¹⁰ The potter Arakawa Toyozō 荒川豊蔵 (1894–1985) was one of the leaders of this movement; he gathered tea bowl shards in the ancient kiln sites in the Mino area of Gifu Prefecture, sourced his clay from this area, and built kilns modeled on sixteenth-century prototypes in order to reconstruct tea bowls of the Shino type. In these efforts, he was joined by his rival and contemporary, the Seto potter Katō Tōkurō, discussed below. Meanwhile, the potter Kaneshige Tōyō 金重陶陽 (1896–1967) performed a similar role in resuscitating the earthy pottery made at Bizen, another of the Six Ancient Kiln Sites, in Okayama Prefecture. Each of these potters brought new archaeological knowledge to the task of recreating pottery admired in the sixteenth century by tea masters in sophisticated connoisseurship of cracks, scars, and pits that were the outcome of firing their local clay. After the war, these types of pottery and the historicizing vision of the earth flavor they represented, were canonized and institutionalized by schools, workshops, exhibitions, and prizes.

While Arakawa and Kaneshige were professional potters who dedicated themselves to the ancient earthy potteries at the sites where they lived and worked, their friend and patron, the wealthy industrialist Kawakita Handeishi 川喜田半泥子 (1878–1963), contributed a different sensibility to postwar earth flavor. Handeishi was an ardent devotee of the tea ceremony and an amateur potter, who, in the Sino-Japanese literati tradition, idealized a relaxed, unprofessional, even slapdash approach to making pottery as superior to a careful, calculated, and systematic process. Criticizing the exacting reconstructions of old tea bowls by potters such as Arakawa, he pursued the Zen notion of *mushin* 無心 (no mind) in his own tea bowls. Handeishi developed a distinctive view of clay that defied loyalty to any one historic kiln site, for he believed that any clay found in any location could be fired to become pottery. Thus, he collected earth during travels within Japan and abroad, while also using the earth found nearby his home in Mie Prefecture. Still, he opposed mixing clays from different sources together, which was common practice among commercial suppliers. Even if the “pure” clay of one location was prone to flawed results such as cracking, Handeishi refused to add a supplementary ingredient to counteract the weakness. In his view, splitting and warping that may occur in the kiln-firing process divulged the true nature of that particular clay and such flaws could be mended later with gold-lacquer fillings.¹¹ Handeishi’s slightly disheveled tea bowls, as well as his penchant for prioritizing the expression of *tsuchi* even when it risked fracturing the vessel, proved appealing to younger ceramicists. One of the more radical ceramicists of the next generation, Koie Ryōji 鯉江良二, revered the banker/tea-bowl maker, no doubt for the sentiment behind such statements as, “I hate skillfulness

8 Yanagi 2017, p. 92.

9 Yanagi 1972, p. 168.

10 See Tōkyō Kokuritsu Kindai Bijutsukan 2002.

11 Chihaya and Ryūsenji 2007, p. 45.



Figure 1. Katō Tōkurō, Shino tea bowl titled Choroku; stoneware with Shino glaze over iron-bearing slip, 1969. Diameter 14 cm.

and I like the unskilled, and I hate cleverness and I like the clumsy.”¹² Indeed, each of these three prewar movements—Yanagi’s Mingei, the neoclassical revival of Momoyama ceramics, as well as the tea wares of Handeishi—were familiar models of promoting earth flavor among the postwar protagonists of this tendency.

2. Seto Earth Flavor and Katō Tōkurō

Yanagi Muneyoshi’s view of an ideal Mingei ecosystem of village ceramics and his despair at the demise of this model due to rampant industrialization already in 1939 anticipates an even greater divergence between the ideals of earth flavor and the contemporary reality of people who lived and worked in such sites in the postwar years. Indeed, perhaps the preoccupation with earth flavor in ceramic discourse was energized by anxieties regarding this gap. With his outsized rhetoric, flair for controversy, and ceramic activism, the Seto potter Katō Tōkurō was a lightning rod for misgivings about the mismatch between the lofty ideals of earth flavor and the modern realities of present-day ceramic production (figure 1). In 1962, the sixty-four-year-old Tōkurō published an ode to earth/clay (*tsuchi*), including the following lines, in a daily newspaper:

Surviving by consuming *tsuchi*, I am almost a worm...
Wandering around mountains and fields in search of *tsuchi*,
I am a *tsuchi* pilgrim. *Tsuchi* is my lover.¹³

Despite the drama of this imagery, the general notion of the potter as a devoted seeker of *tsuchi* reflects a widespread practice among postwar Japanese ceramicists of ferreting out spots in the earth where preferred clay could be obtained. Tōkurō noted that although the neighborhood near Seto where he resided from 1935 until his death in 1985 was not a particularly convenient place to live, “there is enough good *tsuchi* resembling that used to

12 Okuno 1990, n.p.

13 Katō 1973a.



Figure 2. Katō Tōkurō kneading clay with his feet, ca.1979. In Katō 1979, n.p.

make the finest old pieces of Seto ware to last one or two generations.”¹⁴ Indeed, among the potters of his generation, he was reputed to be one of the most proficient at recreating medieval Seto ware, which he and others regarded as a broad category including styles such as Yellow Seto, Shino and Oribe, though they actually originated in nearby Mino.

One ceramics specialist would remember some thirty years later how impressed he had been when he picked up a few tea bowls made by Tōkurō in the Seto styles of Shino and Black Oribe: “The *tsuchi* used was extremely good. It was *mogusa tsuchi* ... Tōkurō had always said, ‘First comes the clay, and second forming the shape,’ and the tea bowls really were marvelous.”¹⁵ *Mogusa tsuchi* 艾土, literally “mugwort earth,” is a term for the type of clay often used in Shino and other Seto styles. As the unglazed portions of a 1969 Shino-style tea bowl by Tōkurō demonstrate, it fires to a light creamy tone even at high temperatures that darken and blister other types of clay and has a slightly coarse-grained texture (figure 2). This bowl follows prototypes of the sixteenth century, but rather more loosely than works that would be considered *utsushi* うつし (copies). This cylindrical vessel has a thick lip that rises and falls rhythmically, is brushed with vigorous strokes of a liquid solution of iron-rich clay and is partially covered by a thick coat of white feldspathic glaze. In addition to gaps in the glaze that allow the naked clay and underglaze brushstrokes to

¹⁴ Katō 1964, p. 153.

¹⁵ Kiyohara 1986, p. 58.



Figure 3. Tōmatsu Shōmei, *Kamaokoshi no hi* (Kiln Unloading Day), 1955. In Iwanami 1955, pp. 28–29.



Figure 4. Tōmatsu Shōmei, *Asa, entotsu kara hono'o ga miereba, ato sūjikan da* (If flames can still be seen coming out of the chimneys in the morning, the firing will go on a few more hours), 1955. In Iwanami 1955, pp. 32–33.

show, this glaze layer is dotted with pores, and leaches the iron content of the brushstrokes to its milky surface in variegated degrees of darkness. The region around the town of Seto possessed rich deposits of clay and a long, complex history of devising techniques for firing it. Tōkurō was born and raised in a family that had operated a Seto kiln, and through his grandmother he was descended from a multi-generational lineage of Seto potters. But as we will see, Tōkurō's relationship to his native earth was riven by conflict and controversy. Before pursuing Tōkurō's battles with *tsuchi*, however, I turn to a view of Seto that is dramatically different from that which is available in the literature concerning Katō Tōkurō.

The modern media of the ceramic art world often idealize the making of pottery as a process that is in harmony with nature. In contrast, photographer Tōmatsu Shōmei's 東松照明 small photobook of 1954 focuses on the actual conditions of Seto as a major pottery-producing center.¹⁶ While this book shares little with publications dedicated to research or promotion of ceramic art, as volume number 165 in the popular series, Iwanami Shashin Bunko 岩波写真文庫 (Iwanami Photo Library), it reached a large audience of general readers. Seto boasts an exalted role in the development of fine ceramics in Japan, including several hundred years starting in the twelfth century when it was the only place in Japan where high-quality glazed ceramics were produced, but in Tōmatsu's photographs Seto looks more like a dreary coal-mining town than a mecca for ceramic art. Attention to the ceramic *art* of Seto is limited to a brief mention on one page. Instead, one sees rows and rows of identical ashtrays, urinals, flowerpots, and teapots, as well as the labor involved in making them. Workers claw dry clay off vast cliff-like facings of earth scarred with the marks of previous removals. In 1954, according to Tōmatsu's book, almost the entire population of 57,000 people in Seto survived directly or indirectly on the pottery industry. It was a town of "squalid crowded streets," and most of the ceramic work was done in family cottage industry. A typical kiln shop, or *kamaya* 窯屋, consisted of a boss, his family, and a few employees. One of the photographs, labeled "Kiln Unloading Day," shows several workers bundling large numbers of rice bowls for shipment (figure 3). The bowls they wrap appear to be shiny white glazed porcelain, suggesting that there was little room for expression of the earth flavor of Tōkurō's tea bowl in mass-produced Seto ceramics. Nonetheless, the workers labor on a ground surface of raw earth, and indeed, the text quotes one boss complaining, "Even if you work around the clock covered in mud, you can't earn anything." Another photograph shows dark smoke billowing from a forest of chimneys and is captioned as follows: "If flames can still be seen coming out of the chimneys in the morning, the firing will go on a few more hours" (figure 4). To fire all the pottery in Seto, the text notes, some five hundred tons of coal and pinewood were consumed in kilns every day, leading to a high rate of silicosis and tuberculosis among residents.

Needless to say, the lover of *tsuchi*, Katō Tōkurō, was hardly a typical laborer in the Seto ceramic industry. In addition to his proficiency in tea wares in Seto and other antique styles, Tōkurō was also an accomplished scholar of ceramic history, and he mobilized his knowledge to reshape cultural values of Seto *tsuchi* in several controversies that were media events in their day. A brief account of Tōkurō's provocations follows: 1) his debunking

16 Iwanami 1955. Tōmatsu Shōmei is not credited by name in this book itself. He was the photographer on the staff at Iwanami, however, who was responsible for the photographs printed in it. For more on this photobook, see Nakamura 2000.

of the myth of the so-called Father of Pottery in 1933; 2) the exposure of his forgery of a thirteenth-century Seto flask in 1960; and 3) his criticism of women's ceramics on public television in 1973. Tōkurō's first book *Kiseto* 黄瀬戸 (Yellow Seto, 1933) undermined the credibility of the legend of Seto's *Tōso* 陶祖 (Father of Pottery), one Katō Shirōzaemon Kagemasa 加藤四郎左衛門景正. It was said that after studying ceramics in China, Kagemasa traveled all over Japan in search of good quality *tsuchi*, finding it at last in Seto where he established the region's first kiln in 1242. Tōkurō identified impossible historical anachronisms in the story of Kagemasa in his 1933 book and subsequent ceramic historians have generally agreed with Tōkurō's skepticism.¹⁷ But at that time, Kagemasa was still worshipped as the deified ancestor of all local potters at a shrine in Seto, and Tōkurō's fellow potters did not take kindly to his debunking of local religious myth. According to his later account, a rally was held to "Punish Katō Tōkurō, the man who committed the great impropriety of desecrating the Father of Pottery!" and copies of his book were rounded up and burned before the altar to Kagemasa. The incident was sensationalized in the press and local hoodlums broke into and damaged Tōkurō's house.¹⁸ Forced to leave his home and ceramic studio, Tōkurō moved several miles away from Seto to the Moriyama quarter of Nagoya where he would remain for the rest of his life. Thus, Tōkurō's research into the historical origins of Seto led his neighbors and colleagues to eject him from Seto.

Though displaced from Seto earth, however, Tōkurō could not be prevented from obtaining *tsuchi* needed for making Seto pottery. Indeed, if the mastery of Tōkurō's tea bowl of 1969, as described earlier, represents a somewhat freer and perhaps personal interpretation of sixteenth-century Shino-style prototypes, he attained this mastery very gradually and spent most of his early career making more literal copies (*utsushi*) of ancient models. In 1937, he made a flask in the Yellow Seto style with the inscription "*Einin ninen* 永仁二年" (second year of the Einin Era), a date corresponding to the year 1294. Years later, this flask rose to the attention of Koyama Fujio 小山富士夫 (1900–1975), one of the most influential ceramic scholars of his generation, who believed it to be a fine example of thirteenth-century Seto.¹⁹ Tōkurō remained silent while Koyama, in his capacity as Technical Officer at the Cultural Affairs Department of the Ministry of Culture, successfully nominated his forgery for designation by the national government as an Important Cultural Property in 1960. It soon became known, however, that this vessel was Tōkurō's modern fake, and both Koyama and Tōkurō were forced to remove themselves from the public eye, at least for a time. The "Incident of the Einin Vessel" (*Einin no tsubo jiken* 永仁の壺事件) as it became known, unleashed a public outcry and Tōkurō was seen as the "stage director" who had fooled a whole cast of collectors, dealers, and scholars.²⁰ The incident raised a series of doubts about the whole system of evaluating pottery: How would prices of ceramic antiques be impacted? Were potshards found at ancient kiln sites reliable indicators of authenticity? Were federal bureaucrats sufficiently in touch with local knowledge at sites like Seto? How could similar incidents be prevented in the future?

17 Cort 1992, pp. 57–58.

18 Katō 1973b, pp. 172, 174–75.

19 For more on Koyama, see Tsuchikane 2014.

20 *Geijutsu shinbō* 1960.

In 1952 Tōkurō had been honored by the government for his proficiency in Oribe-style pottery as a “Holder of Important Intangible Cultural Property” (popularly known as “Living National Treasure”), and this status was now rescinded. The irony was noted, however, that this honor had been based on the very skills of preserving and transmitting the technique for which he was now faulted. In various statements about the incident, Tōkurō took responsibility for making the Einin vessel, but also explained the incident as a consequence of the conflict between earlier values of ceramics that prioritized copying ancient models and modern views which increasingly emphasized the artist’s original expression. Tōkurō implied that his actions were sanctioned under the protocols of a prewar system of ceramics where replicating ancient masterpieces was accepted and economically necessary, but that new protocols had come into play with the postwar rise of a market for works by contemporary ceramicists.²¹ To this day Tōkurō’s name remains inseparable from his controversial violation of the modern legal and ethical code of authorship, though his supporters make no apologies for his skill in incarnating ancient Seto earth flavor. One critic wrote that Tōkurō “understood the excellence accomplished in Momoyama period tea bowls so deeply that it is painful.”²²

In the early 1970s, it became something of a fashion among Japanese women to take lessons in making tea wares and other kinds of pottery at old kiln sites such as Seto as well as city classrooms. In this context, the now white-bearded Tōkurō declared his opposition to women’s ceramics on public television. Women, he said, should absent themselves from the kiln site to allow men to devote their undivided attention to the dangerous and sensitive work of firing the kiln. Further, he claimed that the tea bowls made since medieval times in the greater Seto area evolved in the milieu of samurai culture, endowing them with a masculine quality. Unfortunately, in Tōkurō’s view, when these techniques were imported from Seto into Kyoto in the early seventeenth century, they were reoriented to a feminine aesthetic favored by aristocratic patrons. Tea bowls by the Kyoto potter Nonomura Ninsei 野々村仁清 were the most egregious example of this feminization in Tōkurō’s eyes. He abhorred the elegance Ninsei obtained with brushed glaze decorations and gilding influenced by the Rinpa painting styles of his day. “Ninsei’s tea bowls were feminine,” Tōkurō declared, and characterized by “a gaudiness, thinness, and weakness.” He continued, “We can’t drink tea out of them. They’re repulsive. It is like drinking out of women’s undergarments.”²³ Tōkurō’s sexist remarks provoked the editors of *Geijutsu shinchō* 芸術新潮 to devote a special issue to the work and thinking of sixteen contemporary Japanese women ceramicists.²⁴ Nonetheless, with the striking exception of Tsuji Kyō, discussed below, nearly all of the sixteen women featured worked in decorative polychrome styles of pottery closer to Ninsei than to the medieval tea bowl styles of Seto that Tōkurō admired for expressing a masculine character. Thus, Tōkurō’s gendering of Seto earth flavor with masculine values seemed to be borne out by contemporaneous practice in the Japanese ceramics world.

Tōkurō’s aggressive hold on Seto earth flavor was obtained by violating the taboos of local religious myth surrounding the Seto founder, and running afoul of modern legal

21 Katō 1964, p. 155.

22 Hayashiya 1992, p. 221.

23 Katō 1979, pp. 249–50.

24 Hata 1976, p. 23.

strictures of authorship and authenticity, not to mention denigrating women. Yet among the costs Tōkurō paid was deterritorialization from his Seto homeland. He was driven out of his home and kiln shop by neighbors outraged by his desacralization of the Seto god, disgraced by the exposure of his deception of government officials with counterfeit Seto antiquities, and dismissed as a “grandstanding old man” for his feminization of the canonical Ninsei. To be sure, Tōkurō never conceded Seto earth flavor to his critics, but neither was his loyalty to Seto *tsuchi* exclusive. Tōkurō’s ceramics commanded high prices and he became a world traveler. In the ode to *tsuchi* quoted above, Tōkurō boasted that he was a “cosmopolitan” with regard to *tsuchi*, bringing it home from travels to fire at his kiln.

Whenever I go overseas, I see *tsuchi* everywhere, and I bring it home and try firing it. India, Arabia, Africa, Central Asia, Southern Europe, Northern Europe, Siberia, Mongolia, China, Korea—I have never wearied of my *tsuchi* pilgrimages.²⁵

The notion that Tōkurō’s tea bowls, seemingly so rooted in the Seto earth, might actually have been made with an admixture of clay from these exotic locations casts them in an unexpected light. But considering that the Seto he knew was also the gritty industrial town Tōmatsu photographed, the town whose tubercular residents expelled him from their community, perhaps it is not surprising that this “lover of *tsuchi*” was just as happy to consummate his love in Siberia as Seto.

3. American Coordinates of Japanese Earth Flavor

The thought that America was in any way commensurable with Seto as a locus for the production of Japanese earth flavor in the early postwar period hardly seems plausible. Even accounting for the tremendous cultural presence of the United States in Japan during the seven-year military occupation (1945–1952) and after, how could America have a determining impact on Japanese earth flavor in any way comparable to the thousand-year history of Seto? Still, as Katō Tōkurō’s career demonstrates, Seto itself was a highly unstable and often unreliable provider of earth flavor. Indeed, the ceramicist Koie Ryōji would remark that the actual ingredients of the “Seto clay” sold by commercial vendors were mostly imported from foreign countries.²⁶ Nonetheless, the United States was hardly regarded by the makers of Japanese earth flavor as a source for *tsuchi*, techniques, styles, traditions, much less as a community of affiliation. Rather, I argue that American perspectives were key to the development of earth flavor in Japan in three ways: 1) provision of an eager market for the consumption of objects and values admired as Japanese earth flavor; 2) broad awareness and keen sensitivity to this American valuation of Japanese earth flavor in the ceramic community in Japan; and 3) Japanese encounters with and responses to a radical new mode of earth flavor in American ceramic art starting in the mid-1960s. More than external influence and patronage, these American coordinates of Japanese earth flavor may be reckoned as a transnational dimension of the development of this aesthetic in postwar Japanese ceramics.

25 Katō 1973a.

26 Koie and Isobe 1990, p. 60.

The reemergence of the Japanese ceramic industry after the war was greatly dependent on exports to the United States. According to Tōmatsu Shōmei's 1954 photobook, 65 percent of Seto's ceramic production in 1953 was bound for foreign export, and North America imported 60 percent of these Seto exports.²⁷ The most popular Seto ceramic products in the North American market were coffee sets and toys, and these inexpensive products were probably glossy porcelain with little or no expression of earth flavor. Rather, American interest in Seto earth flavor was focused on high-end products. One prominent Ginza dealer of Seto, Bizen, and other ceramics, remembered in 1966 that pottery with a "subdued taste like Bizen had only become the better selling pottery in about 1945." Moreover, he continued, "until then it was the bright and shiny pottery enameled with red and blue that sold well."²⁸ Thus, the market for earth flavor pottery emerged with the end of the war, and most consumers were probably American military personnel and their families, for few Japanese had sufficient funds to purchase art ceramics. The Japanese term *shibui* 渋い, used by the dealer to describe the earth flavor pottery that sold well, was introduced to a broad American audience in 1960 as the topic of two special issues of the middle-brow American monthly magazine *House Beautiful*. Not just ceramics, but Japanese arts in all kinds of media were admired under the rubric of *shibui*, which was characterized as "quiet grace through economy of means," "superb understatement," and "letting natural materials show their own nature."²⁹ Catering to American homemakers and designers seeking appealing approaches to interior design, the *shibui* special issues of *House Beautiful* proved extremely popular and undoubtedly helped shift the prevailing American image of Japanese pottery further in the direction of earth flavor.

In addition to the efforts of dealers, journalists, and scholars, an increasingly well-trafficked channel of ceramicists moving between the United States and Japan promoted earth flavored pottery. The five-month American tour in 1952–1953 of three leading proponents of the Mingei movement—Yanagi Muneyoshi, the potter Hamada Shōji 濱田庄司 (1894–1978), and their close associate the British potter Bernard Leach—was instrumental in introducing American potters to the charms of irregular shapes with earthy toned glazes. Watching Hamada's performance at the potter's wheel, they were reportedly "astonished by his close-to-nature, nonchalant treatment."³⁰ Soon thereafter, the potter Kitaōji Rosanjin 北大路魯山人 (1883–1959) exhibited pottery in the Seto, Shigaraki, Shino, and Bizen styles at the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 1954. Although Rosanjin was an epicurean who usually avoided the Mingei ideal of simple peasant pottery, his eclectic appropriations of classic pottery styles were viewed in much the same light as Mingei in the United States. The museum's wall label explained Rosanjin's works as "the studied cultivation of effects characteristic of primitive Japanese art [including] rough irregular shapes, deliberately chipped edges, and glazes ... due to accidental conditions of firing."³¹ Quoting these words, Meghan Jones observes that such primitivist themes were a conspicuous thread in American appreciations of Japanese pottery in the early 1950s. As

27 Iwanami 1955, p. 50.

28 Kuroda et al. 1966, p. 47.

29 *House Beautiful* 1960.

30 Leach 1978, p. 245.

31 Jones 2017, p. 198.

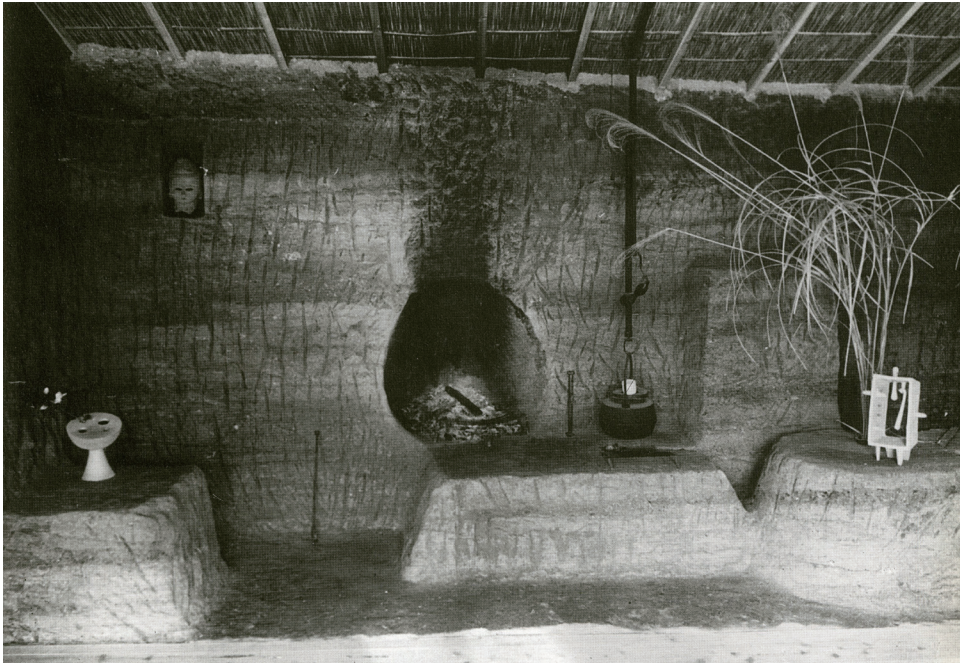


Figure 5. Earthen wall in Isamu Noguchi's studio showing his *Hanaike* (Vase) on the left and *Junsa* (Policeman) on the right, both of 1950, and a prehistoric haniwa head on the upper left. Kita Kamakura, 1952. Photo by Isamu Noguchi.



Figure 6. Isamu Noguchi, Untitled, unglazed Karatsu stoneware, wooden base, 1952. 46.3 x 26.3 x 10.0 cm. Takamatsu City Museum of Art.

we shall see, primitivism would soon emerge as a pronounced note in Japanese views of American ceramics as well.

The Japanese American sculptor and designer Isamu Noguchi (1904–1988) was surely the most influential American to work with ceramics in Japan in the 1950s. Noguchi had already worked at the Kyoto studio of the potter Uno Ninmatsu 宇野任松 in 1931, and on his return to Japan in 1950 he created a group of twenty ceramic sculptures at a Seto workshop. Noguchi's view of Seto, however, was a world apart from that of Katō Tōkurō. Noguchi was introduced to Seto by the Japanese painter Kitagawa Tamiji 北川民次 (1894–1989) who resided in Seto, but had spent fifteen years in Mexico before the war where he first met Noguchi.³² When Tōkurō was told that Kitagawa had said he “loathed Tōkurō because of his deception,” referring to the Einin vessel incident, Tōkurō responded that “he is a sad case of one who doesn't understand Seto even though he lives there.”³³ Noguchi would probably have agreed with Kitagawa's criticism of faking ancient pottery styles, but he quickly learned to love Tōkurō's preferred *tsuchi*. After his week in Seto, Noguchi exclaimed, “Seto is my favorite place in Japan. The clay is good and I want to come back again.”³⁴ The works he created here, however, were precise bisque-fired architectonic forms constructed in slabs of Seto clay that relate more to the modern sculptural and design practices of this artist's New York city art world than the earth flavor of Seto.

It was not until two years later, when he worked at the Bizen workshop of Kanashige Tōyō in Okayama Prefecture and built a studio and residence on the property of Rosanjin in Kita Kamakura, that Noguchi really engaged himself with Japanese earth flavor. Noguchi carved a space out of a hillside where Rosanjin obtained clay, and built a lean-to structure against the raw earth to serve as his studio (figure 5). While carving this hillside into a hearth, niche, and set of low platforms, Noguchi left the earth in an unpainted state roughly scored with tool marks reminiscent of the walls of clay at Seto's quarries. Here Noguchi realized a romantic ideal of closeness to the Japanese earth, a primitivizing vision of creative childlike intimacy with the raw earthy material. In an interview with Noguchi in 1952, a journalist asked the artist, “Just what is it that you find appealing about Japan?” “It's the earth,” Noguchi answered, “the coarse earth which only Japanese people have. It is not in America. I am drawn to the skin of the pottery, the Japanese earth.”³⁵ Noguchi's American experience left him with a thirst for earth flavor that was satiated by digging into the Japanese earth and absorbing lessons from Japanese ceramics. He quickly produced a diverse oeuvre of ceramics including plates, vases, beads, figures, and abstract forms. When he exhibited these works in Kamakura in 1952, they were each identified in the catalogue list with classical kiln sites and clay types including Shigaraki, Bizen, Karatsu, and Kasama. An untitled sculpture in Karatsu ware demonstrates the radical reorientation that Japanese *tsuchi* underwent in the hands of this artist who by this point in his career had rich experience creating various idioms of surrealistic and constructivist sculpture (figure 6). A thick slab of clay has been pierced and affixed with finger-like projections, curled into a wavy loop, and fired on its side. After removal from the kiln it was rotated ninety degrees

32 For a detailed account of Noguchi's ceramic work in Japan, see Winther-Tamaki 2003.

33 Katō 1973b, p. 47.

34 Nakano 1989, p. 3.

35 *Ikebana geijutsu* 1952, n.p.

and installed on a wooden post. Noguchi emphasized the burnt umber earth flavor of Karatsu by violating the standard structure of functional pottery and displaying the ceramic material like a slab of meat at a butcher's shop.

Noguchi's modernist manipulations of Japanese earth, as well as the American market for Japanese ceramics and the American celebrity of Hamada and Rosanjin, were all topics of tremendous interest in the Japanese ceramic world. Obviously, the American market for Japanese ceramics was such that "market research" concerning the taste of American consumers was of great importance to the ceramic industry, and this attitude carried over into the marketing of high-end art ceramics, as suggested by the Ginza dealer who noted that sales of subdued earth ceramics overtook those of bright colorful ceramics after the war. But there was a range of responses in the Japanese ceramic world to the varied forms of American esteem for Japanese earth flavor. Noguchi's experimental forays into Japanese ceramics were highly influential for Yagi Kazuo's innovative ceramic work in the 1950s. Yagi, whose Shigaraki ceramics and pioneering of the genre of the kiln-fired *objet* are discussed below, famously acknowledged, "When I looked at Noguchi's ceramics, I had this feeling of 'Whammo, he's really done me in!'"³⁶ For Yagi, Noguchi's work modeled a way of embedding modern sculptural form in the materiality of Japanese earth flavor.

Meanwhile, American appraisals of Japanese earth flavor also provoked oppositional responses in the community of Japanese ceramics. Consider, for example, the position of ceramics expert Naitō Tadashi 内藤匡 (1889–1966), who published a monograph on Ming dynasty overglaze enameled porcelains in 1953 and three years later a catalogue on Tomimoto Kenkichi 富本憲吉 (1886–1963), the foremost contemporary Japanese ceramicist associated with overglaze enameled porcelain.³⁷ These forms of pottery that Naitō championed concealed earth flavor beneath a bright decorative and colorful layer of glossy glaze, and Naitō's investment in this type of pottery was threatened by the American taste for Mingei. Thus, Naitō translated and published the atypical views of an American potter named Walter Kring (1917–1999) upon his visit to Japan in 1953, shortly after the sensational tour of Hamada, Yanagi, and Leach to the United States. Gratified by Kring's discovery of overglaze enamels in Japan, Naitō added the following note to his 1955 translation of Kring's essay:

There are a lot of people in the West who really think that artistic Japanese pottery is synonymous with crude pottery characterized by bulky forms with a dusky tone and naïve patterns brushed on them. Mr. Kring, held this view, but ... discovered the existence of porcelain that is more beautiful than such vulgar pottery, a more artistic kind of pottery being made in Japan.³⁸

From Naitō's perspective, foreign views of Japanese ceramics were unjustly monopolized by Mingei, and he sought to reverse this bias. But if Naitō objected to the American embrace of the Mingei vision of Japanese ceramics, still others were anxious that foreigners would

36 Yagi 1981c, p. 346.

37 Overglaze enameling is a technique of achieving brighter and more diverse glaze colors by means of a second and sometimes third firing at lower temperatures.

38 Kring 1955, p. 23.

seize the mantle of earth flavor while contemporary Japan reneged on its stewardship of this native property. Thus, the architect Taniguchi Yoshirō 谷口吉郎 (1904–1979), a collaborator of Isamu Noguchi, responded to the special issue of *House Beautiful* magazine devoted to *shibui*, by noting,

We are overjoyed that the Japanese word *shibui* is understood by foreigners and transplanted overseas, but ... it seems that *shibui* has already disappeared from this country. When considering that the classical beauty of ancient Greece is completely extinct in modern Greece and is rather received by later generations in other countries, one has a similar anxiety about *shibui*.³⁹

In this thinking, earth flavor attains the status of a Japanese patrimony as part of the larger complex of *shibui* taste, but is paradoxically more valued in America than at home where it is threatened by modernization.

Anxieties about American appropriations of Japanese earth flavor were further exasperated by the work of younger American ceramicists. In 1964 the Tokyo National Museum of Modern Art organized the *Gendai Kokusai Tōgei Ten* 現代国際陶芸展 (International Exhibition of Contemporary Ceramic Art) to coincide with the Tokyo Olympics, bringing works of Japanese ceramicists into competition with works by counterparts overseas. Ninety contemporary potters from nineteen countries and over one hundred Japanese ceramicists were represented by 220 ceramic works. The ceramics scholar Koyama Fujio, who by now had rebounded from the embarrassment of the Einin affair, selected the foreign works for the exhibition. After visiting potters' studios all over Europe and the United States to make his selections, he reserved his most animated remarks for the young ceramicist he met in California, Peter Voulkos (1924–2002). He described Voulkos as the leading figure of California pottery, which though “in its infancy, has suddenly taken off in the past ten years.” Koyama noted that Rosanjin's pottery had been a pivotal stimulation for Voulkos's development. After this Japanese-inspired breakthrough, Voulkos matured into an artist who Koyama admired as something of a force of nature:

He is very large bodied, like a Niō (Buddhist temple gate guardian)... They say when he works on the wheel, it is like the clouds flowing or like a swell of the ocean.... He is like the chief of the wild beasts and makes a lot of large burly ceramic sculptures.⁴⁰

A 1962 vase of fleshy reddish clay with mad puncturing, scarring, and bruising marks illustrates the energy in Voulkos's ceramics that so impressed Koyama (figure 7). By this point, many Japanese ceramicists had become accustomed to the flattering American esteem for Japanese pottery, but now it seemed that Japanese influence had produced an American outcome that had outdistanced its presumed Japanese inspirations.

The sculptor Yanagihara Yoshitatsu 柳原義達 (1910–2004) elaborated on the significance of new American ceramics in an essay sensationally titled “The Defeat of

39 Taniguchi 1960, p. 58.

40 Koyama et al. 1964, pp. 62–63.



Figure 7. Peter Voukos, *Pier's Piece*, stoneware, white slip, chrome-cobalt and clear glazes, 1962. 58.4 x 29.2 x 30.5 cm. John and Mary Pappajohn, Des Moines, Iowa.

Figure 8. Domon Ken, Photograph of *Hai-kaburi no akai tsubo no soko* (Bottom of Red Pot with Ash Covering), 1965. In Domon Ken, 1965, plate 3, pp. 14–15.

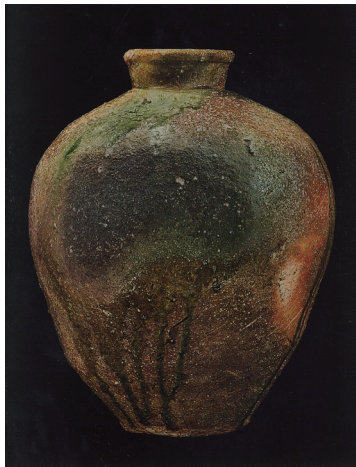


Figure 9. Domon Ken, Photograph of *Hai-nadare no tsubo* (Pot with Ash Melt), 1965. In Domon Ken, 1965, plate 13, p. 25.

Japanese Ceramic Art.⁴¹ Voulkos and other American ceramicists, in Yanagihara's view, "do not rely on the ruins of ceramic heritage," rather they ask, "Why am I living?" and, "throw primitive doubts at the rough and rude lump that comes from fire and earth (火と土)." But perhaps the barb with the worst sting was the contention that, "They have a strong uncouth roughness like the potters of ancient Tanba, ancient Bizen, and ancient Shigaraki." In other words, Yanagihara claims that at the olympics of pottery, Japanese ceramicists were defeated by Americans who had managed to match the primitive power of the earth flavor of the Six Ancient Kilns of Japan. Yanagihara concluded portentously, "Ultimately, ceramics is the most primitive of materials and the only potters who can breathe life into it are probably those whose hands fix upon the feeling of the material by keeping it as primitive as possible."⁴² The anguishing sense that American ceramicists had obtained a more immediate connection with *tsuchi* than their counterparts in Japan despite the resources of Seto and the other Six Ancient Kiln Sites was to be an enduring trope in Japanese ceramic discourse.

Seven years after the olympics of pottery, Miwa Ryōsaku 三輪龍作 (b. 1940), who belonged to a long venerable line of Hagi ware potters, described his epiphany before a work by Voulkos in the United States.⁴³ At age 63 in 2003 Miwa would succeed his father and assume the name Miwa Kyūsetsu 三輪休雪, as the twelfth holder of one of the most prestigious titles in Japanese ceramics, but in 1971 he was still searching for his own path between the weight of his family's tradition and such contemporary attractions as jazz, psychedelia, and erotic popular culture. Miwa's experience of a plate by Voulkos was nothing short of rapturous: "I was physically frozen in place; it was a passion felt in my flesh itself." Miwa believed that Voulkos could not equal Japanese ceramic technique, but he sensed that the American brought an enviable freshness, honesty and passion to his work. While Miwa was struggling to overcome doubts about his patrimony, an unnamed American remarked to him, "Japanese people are married to *tsuchi*, while Americans are its lovers." In other words, the relationship of the Japanese ceramicist to *tsuchi* was regulated by institutional strictures, while Americans were driven to *tsuchi* by instinctual passions. This thought would harden into something of a consensus in Japanese ceramics discourse, such that American ceramics posed a dramatic foil against which Japanese *tsuchi* was defined. Thus, while in the early 1950s America stimulated the development of Japanese earth flavor with a market and an enthusiastic audience, by the late 1960s it seemed to signify the limits of Japanese earth flavor.

4. Old and New Shigaraki Pots

While the rustic but sophisticated tea wares of the Momoyama period that Katō Tōkurō admired were considered "classics," Seto and the other Six Ancient Kiln Sites were also sources of rougher types of pottery, and this rustic pottery rose dramatically in esteem in the 1960s from neglect to objects worthy of study, emulation, and high prices. Though urban elite tea masters also admired such objects in the sixteenth century, these large lumpy pots were typically made by farmers to store grain, water, or even night soil in barns and farmyards. Yanagihara Yoshitatsu was probably referring to this kind of ancient peasant

41 Yanagihara 1964, p. 64.

42 Yanagihara 1964, p. 65.

43 Miwa 1971.

pottery when he admired Voulkos and other young American ceramicists for demonstrating a “strong uncouth roughness like the potters of ancient Tanba, ancient Bizen, and ancient Shigaraki.” A new wave of enthusiasm for such artifacts was abetted by a lavish book of photographs of medieval Shigaraki pots by the prominent photographer Domon Ken 土門拳 (1909–1990) published in 1965. The large Shigaraki pot—visualized in Domon’s photography, marketed as an antique, and potted anew by contemporary ceramicists—emerged as a striking new icon of earth flavor. This section examines Domon’s book, the ironic renditions of Shigaraki vessels created by Yagi Kazuo the following year, and the more full-throated dedication to making a similar kind of pottery by the Tokyo-based ceramicists Tsuji Kyō and her husband Tsuji Seimei in the same period.

Each photograph in Domon’s *Shigaraki ōtsubo* 信楽大壺 (Large Pots of Shigaraki) features a single monumental vessel floating in mysterious black space or cropped in close detail. These vessels were made from the thirteenth through the fifteenth centuries in the Shigaraki region of today’s Shiga Prefecture, one of the Six Ancient Kiln Sites. Domon’s thirty color plates and sixty-four black and white figures give the impression of geological formations, or planets in outer space. If the red neck and peach-colored rim around the shadowy black interior of the jar in plate 2 suggests a volcanic crater, the pitted and scarred reddish brown upended bottom of the same pot in plate 3 resembles a barren mountain peak against a black sky (figure 8). In addition to Domon’s photographs, *Shigaraki ōtsubo* also includes a brief preface by the influential literary critic Kobayashi Hideo 小林秀雄 (1902–1983), an afterword by the photographer, and a lengthy text by Koyama Fujio.

Surprisingly, in their texts commissioned for *Shigaraki ōtsubo*, Kobayashi and Koyama express misgivings about the overwhelming visual power of Domon’s pictures. Domon’s large book broke precedent with its glossy paper, rich range of color, deep shadows and bright reflections, and especially with its close-up photos that immerse the viewer in details of glaze flows and cratered surfaces. Koyama noted that, “Some of these full-color photographs show Shigaraki jars more beautifully than the appearance of the jars themselves.”⁴⁴ In Koyama’s view, the ancient makers of Shigaraki pots “survived by making the lowest cheapest things,” and he characterized the jars as “simple and massive,” adding “they have a coarse texture, but are a pottery type that warms the heart.”⁴⁵ The lushness of Domon’s photographs and almost jewel-like vividness with which each blister and glassy melt was illuminated by his photo lights endowed these humble pots with a glamor that Koyama apparently regarded as belying their true character (figure 9).

Meanwhile, in his preface to the book, Kobayashi observed that his love of pottery grew out of daily use, for example, of his personal saké bottle and saké cup. He noted that he hardly paid attention to what they look like because pouring and drinking from them every night is more of a haptic experience than visual. Kobayashi characterized this tactile sensation of pottery as its “flavor” (*aji*), a quality that is intensely gratifying yet difficult to put into words. He recognized, however, that this personal haptic experience of pottery had been impacted by modernity: “The appreciation of pottery has come to function as a visual power based on the sense of touch.” He observed further that “pottery on a shelf in a display case is something looked at through glass as though it can be touched.” The

⁴⁴ Koyama 1965, pp. 112, 120.

⁴⁵ Koyama 1965, pp. 116, 126.

modern museum culture of pottery that is increasingly removed from the hand is pressed to a further extreme in Domon's photography:

One keenly feels the movement of the eye of a professional working through the lens, and trying to follow that eye, I wander around through these pictures. Indeed, this kind of vision seems to be of a completely different order from the eyesight of a completely average pottery enthusiast such as myself.⁴⁶

The optical power of Domon's photography seems to have alienated Kobayashi from his experiential knowledge of pottery. Still, he recognized that the visuality of ceramics produced by the photographer's eye and lens opens up a stimulating new access to pottery itself.

The new vision of pottery in *Shigaraki ōtsubo* was very much a vision of *tsuchi*. Shigaraki earth, in unfired as well as fired forms, was valued with connoisseurial attention and affection in the text and photographs. Kobayashi imagined an intrinsic link between the Shigaraki landscape and the pottery made from the *tsuchi* mined there. Pottery connoisseurs use the word *kesbiki* 景色 (landscape) to refer to the configuration of details such as drips and heat scars on a vessel, and Kobayashi noted that the incomparable *kesbiki* of old Shigaraki pots was what he most liked about them.⁴⁷ On a visit to Shigaraki, he admired "the white earth and the green pine forest ... and, as if naturally, an image formed in my mind of an outrageously large Shigaraki pot with ash-covering that would be the result of a forest fire here."⁴⁸ Using Domon's photographs as didactic illustrations, Koyama Fujio offered a more technical account of the unique material basis of Shigaraki *tsuchi*, explaining that it had a greater admixture of feldspar and silica grains (causing protruding glassy white dots on Shigaraki pots) and rotted woody matter (which burns out and leaves small cavities).⁴⁹ These features conspired with still others such as *ishihaze* 石爆, tiny stones that appear to be bursting out of their ceramic matrix, to produce a ceramic with an exceptionally coarse texture (figure 8). In Koyama's judgment, this coarseness of Shigaraki, together with its warm reddish-brown color, distinguished it from all other pottery in Japan and beyond: "There is no pottery like Shigaraki, not in China, Korea, or the West."⁵⁰

One striking aspect of the 1960s discourse of Shigaraki *tsuchi* is that although the kiln firing process was a labor-intensive endeavor, Shigaraki potters were not given much credit for the earth flavor of its products. Many of the admired features of Shigaraki pots materialized during the heat and subsequent cooling of the kiln firing: ash coverings were conveyed by the draft to the side of the pot that faces the fire box; this ash vitrified into greenish "natural" glaze by higher concentrations of heat; feldspar grains melted from the surface; small pebbles burst, and the clay body was braised to a shiny reddish color. These features were collectively referred to as *yōben* 窯変 (kiln changes), and they gave Shigaraki pots an appearance that is greatly "changed" from what they looked like before firing. Such kiln changes, however, were determined by the specific contents of clay used in any given

46 Kobayashi 1965, p. 3.

47 For *kesbiki* in ceramics, see Weiss 2013, pp. 153–71.

48 Kobayashi 1965, p. 5.

49 Koyama 1965, pp. 144–45.

50 Koyama 1965, p. 126.

vessel, the design and construction of the diagonally inclined *anagama* 穴窯 (tunnel kiln), as well as the length of time and amount and type of wood fuel used to fire it, not to mention such details as how and where vessels were loaded in the kiln. But despite the human agency underlying all these factors, for Domon Ken, kiln effects were the “work of nature” (*tenkō* 天工) rather than “human work” (*jinkō* 人工): “It is precisely because it is a work of nature that one never tires of looking at it.”⁵¹ In this rhetoric, the value of Shigaraki *tsuchi* is increased by transferring agency from humans to nonhuman phenomena.

But “nature” is by no means antithetical to cultural value in this rationale. “This aesthetic consciousness of the work of nature,” Domon asserted, “is surely a Japanese type aesthetic.”⁵² Perhaps ironically, the Japanese cultural identification of Shigaraki was actually constructed in a transnational market-driven process. Domon confessed that not too many years before his Shigaraki book he would have contemptuously dismissed old Shigaraki vessels like these as *kuso tsubo* 糞壺 (shit pots). It was only the kind indulgence of a Kyoto dealer named Kondō Kingo 近藤金吾 that opened his eyes to the beauty of old Shigaraki pots during visits to Kingo’s gallery in the late 1950s. Kondō had collected these pots from scattered farms and storehouses, and his efforts in building a market for them contributed greatly to their skyrocketing prices. Indeed, most of the Shigaraki pots photographed by Domon, which are listed in the book as belonging to various private collectors in Japan, had been sold to their owners by Kondō. Moreover, Kondō’s own appreciation for Shigaraki pots, according to Domon, had initially been precipitated by an unnamed American collector. This American had urged Kondō to round up old Shigaraki pots because their kiln changes were peerless in world pottery.

The increasing esteem for Shigaraki pots was part of a broad reevaluation of the historical significance of Shigaraki and similar high-fire unglazed Japanese ceramics. In the late 1960s, the ceramic historian and archaeologist Mikami Tsugio 三上次男 (1907–1987) argued that the aesthetic of Shigaraki and other types of unglazed high-fire stoneware of Japan comprised a premier distinguishing characteristic of Japanese ceramic history. Mikami’s views gained wide currency overseas with the appearance of *The Art of Japanese Ceramics* in 1972 in the popular series, *Heibonsha Survey of Japanese Art*. According to Mikami, the history of Japanese ceramics was exceptional for the high quality and diversity of unglazed high-fire stoneware in the medieval period, the late start and restricted reach of glazed ceramics, and the continued prevalence of stoneware after the rise of glazed ceramics in the early modern period. For Mikami, this adherence to unglazed ceramics was a “phenomenon seen rarely, if ever, in the ceramic culture of other countries,” and he appreciated such wares for their “strong, uncluttered beauty.” In effect, ceramics became a vehicle for national expression in Mikami’s rhetoric, and in the beauty of such pottery he imagined a “warm sense of community solidarity,” and a “spirit of rural society, springing from within the earth itself.”⁵³

Meanwhile, soon after Domon’s photobook was published, Shigaraki pots received attention from a very different perspective. Yagi Kazuo (1918–1979) is justly regarded as pioneering the move of ceramics away from functional objects toward sculptural form in

51 Domon 1965, p. 158.

52 Domon 1965, p. 158.

53 Mikami 1972, p. 76.



Figure 10. Yagi Kazuo, *Shigaraki ōtsubo* (Large Shigaraki Pot), 1966. 41.5 x 43 cm.

the mid-1950s (see below). Here, I consider his brief return to vessel forms in Shigaraki in 1966, perhaps in response to Domon's 1965 photobook. Some of the vessels shown in the "Exhibition of Yagi Kazuo's Pots" (Yagi Kazuo tsubo ten 八木一夫壺展) at the Ichiban Gallery in Tokyo in 1966 were indeed quite similar in form, texture, and sensibility to those pictured in Domon's book. Moreover, these works had been made out of Shigaraki *tsuchi* and fired in a wood-fired climbing tunnel kiln at Shigaraki. Since Yagi's break with functional pottery in the mid-1950s was a dramatic avant-gardist gesture, his apparent return in 1966 to old Shigaraki vessels was rather surprising. The critic Unagami Masaomi 海上雅臣 (b. 1931), in his essay for Yagi's 1969 monograph, explained perhaps defensively that Yagi apparently produced these vessels "as if in search of new meaning after devoting himself to making *objet* for ten years," and admired Yagi's change of course, for the artist had now "finally reached an age of self-reckoning" and succeeded in "demonstrating that function is not necessarily an obstacle to imaginative significance."⁵⁴ Nonetheless, while some of Yagi's Shigaraki works hew very close to ancient Shigaraki models, others were formed with an ironic twist.

Yagi added small patches of clay to the shoulder of one of his Shigaraki pots, and carved a gaping fissure into the belly of another (figure 10). To be sure, many old Shigaraki jars have encrustations and fissures that are superficially similar to those Yagi created. In his explication of Shigaraki features in Domon's book, Koyama Fujio noted that a *hittsuki* ひっつき (clinger) is a chunk of kiln wall or a neighboring vessel that fuses onto a pot in the kiln.⁵⁵ And Domon recounted the dealer Kondō Kingo's lesson about the beauty of a crack in one notable old Shigaraki pot, perhaps similar to one deeply cracked pot photographed

⁵⁴ Unagami and Narahara, 1969, n.p.

⁵⁵ Koyama 1965, p. 142.

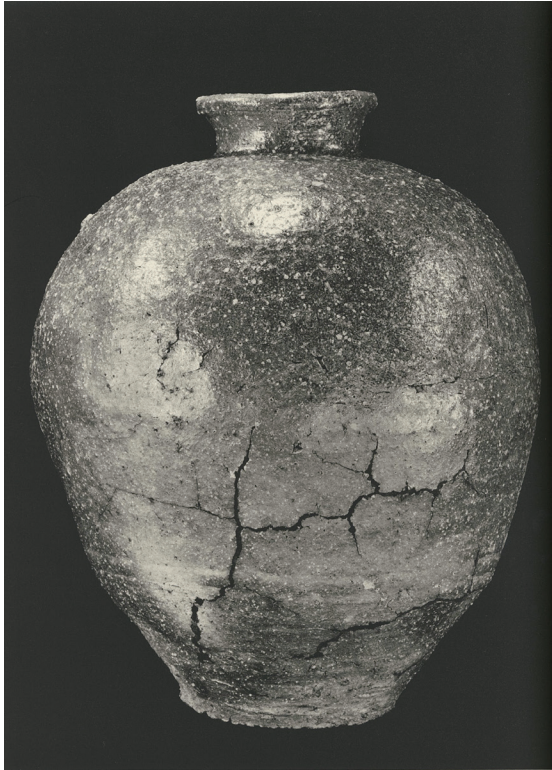


Figure 11. Domon Ken, Photograph of *Hi-ware no tsubo* (Flame-cracked pot), 1965. In Domon Ken, 1965, plate 20, p. 66.

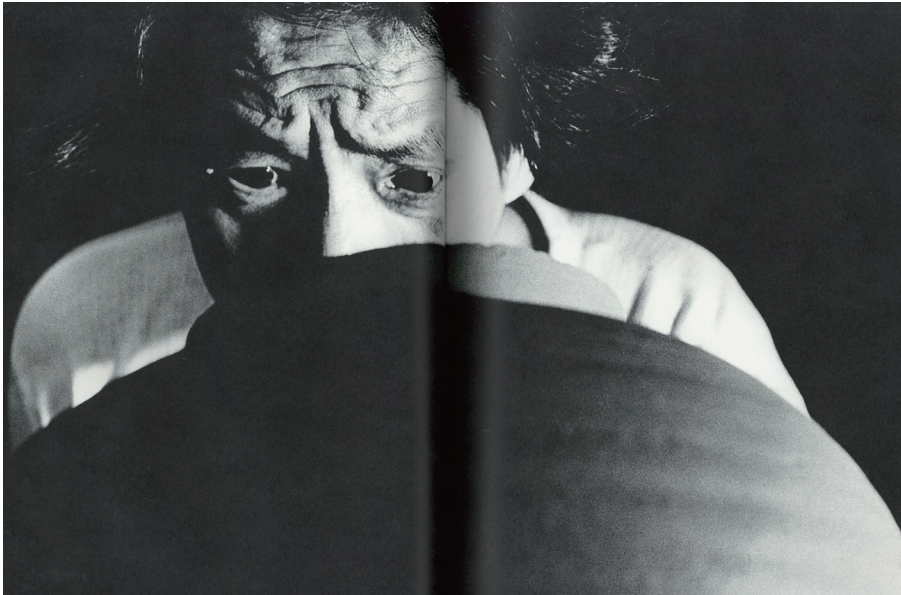


Figure 12. Narahara Ikkō, Photograph of Yagi Kazuo with a large pot, 1969. In Narahara and Unagami 1969, n.p.

in Domon's book (figure 11). Kondō explained to Domon that "a split extending from the edge of its lip, a black opening in the vessel" was a *yamakizu* 山疵 (mountain crack), this being a term for a crack occurring during the kiln firing, as opposed to a crack resulting from a breakage after removal from the kiln, which would be considered a flaw. According to Domon, Kondō acknowledged that this fissure could be repaired with a gold filling, but advised, "Leave it just as it is."⁵⁶ While the crack of Kondō Kingo's pot was a "natural" response of the Shigaraki *tsuchi* to the heat of the kiln, the crack on Yagi's pot is clearly intentional, deliberately carved by the artist into the vessel wall and further elaborated with carefully incised lines. Ōtsuki Noriko 大槻倫子 suggests that Yagi quoted Shigaraki kiln changes here with a sense of irony, making it obvious that his works were not revivals of ancient masterpieces in order to foreground a critique of customs of connoisseurship.⁵⁷

Yagi's foray into Shigaraki vessel-making suggests the strong draw this mode of earth flavor held for him, but this was a short-lived and exceptional move in his career held in check by critical distance. The modernist basis for Yagi's antipathy to crafting "revivals of ancient masterpieces" becomes clear in a blistering denunciation of Katō Tōkurō's forgery of the Einin vessel in Unagami's text for Yagi's 1969 monograph. What outraged Unagami, and perhaps Yagi as well, was the fact that *after* Tōkurō was exposed as a forger, the market value of his tea wares rose considerably higher and he received a prestigious award. In Unagami's modernist ethos, Tōkurō's faking of a thirteenth-century object was a corrupt deception.⁵⁸ The same 1969 monograph of Yagi's work that featured Unagami's critique of Tōkurō included a photograph by Narahara Ikkō (b. 1931) that sensationalizes Yagi's authorship of his Shigaraki vessels (figure 12). Whereas the Shigaraki pots in Domon's photographs were unaccompanied by any human bodies, and their makers were imagined as anonymous "common folks" dwelling in the misty past, Narahara's shadowy photograph featured the artist peering anxiously into the bowels of one of his vessels. The photograph is skillfully cropped to give Yagi a god-like scale, his visage with a deeply furrowed brow and glistening eyes looming over the planet-like arc of his large vessel.

Nevertheless, a tension runs through Yagi's ceramic work, wavering between relinquishing control to invite chance kiln effects and reasserting artistic control as a demonstration of artistic originality. In Yagi's thinking, this duality between soliciting accidental qualities and maintaining control corresponded loosely to several other dualities: ceramics/sculpture, Japan/the West, tradition/modernity. Refusing to be confined too closely with the first terms in each of these pairs, Yagi's foray into Shigaraki was countered by his work in *kokurō* 黒陶 (black pottery), a medium that allowed him to reduce interference from chance kiln effects, and render the kiln-fired *objet* into a form that was more purely the product of the artist's hands. Moreover, in 1969 he held an exhibition of bronze works completely divorced from earth flavor. As Inaga Shigemi 稲賀繁美 has argued, many of Yagi's most compelling works seem inspired by productive exchanges with Japanese sculptors and his "immodest ambition" to outdo European and American contemporary artists such as Marcel Duchamp, Jasper Johns, and Lucio Fontana.⁵⁹ But if this ambition

56 Domon 1965, p. 156.

57 Ōtsuki 2008, pp. 144-45.

58 Unagami and Narahara 1969, n.p.

59 Inaga 2008, p. 111.



Figure 13. Tsuji Kyō
unloading kiln, ca.
1977. In Yoshida
1977, n.p.

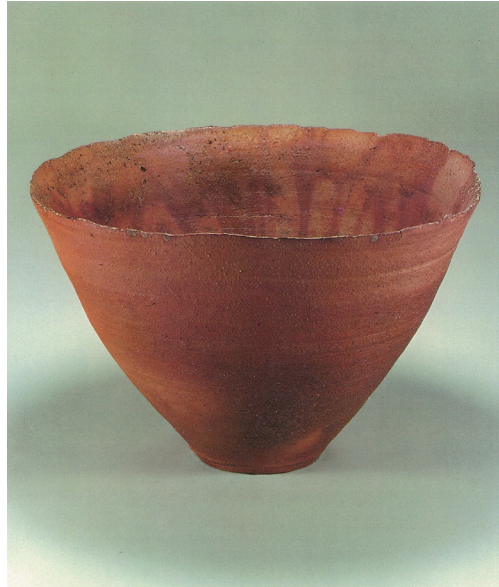


Figure 14. Tsuji Kyō,
Yakishime ōbachi (Large
Unglazed Bowl),
stoneware, 1970. 31.5 x
47 cm. In Yoshida 1977,
plate 5, p. 103.

motivated Yagi to subordinate *tsuchi* to his own creative voice, what makes Yagi such an interesting interlocutor of earth flavor is his incomplete and conflicted departure from *tsuchi*:

In painting and sculpture, the ideational and the poetic come first and these bring materials and technique in. But it is not like that for me; for me the materials and technique come first. You could say that our connection to clay is destiny. That is both my own strength and weakness. In any case, I attempted to continue to dwell purely on *tsuchi*.⁶⁰

Considering the sophistication of Yagi's work in the media of *kokutō* and bronze, the averred strength of this fatalistic tie to *tsuchi* is all the more remarkable.

Many other younger generation potters of this period, however, committed themselves to “dwell purely on *tsuchi*,” without the conflicts and qualms that troubled Yagi. For example, the wife and husband team Tsuji Kyō (1930–2008) and Tsuji Seimei 辻清明 (1927–2008) launched their successful careers as potters admired for their earth flavor vessels by building a wood-fired climbing kiln in 1955. Though working in Tokyo, they imported Shigaraki *tsuchi* and embraced it as their primary material. Seimei explained that he “wanted clay that suited my character and what I wanted to make.” Shigaraki came to “obsess” him, in part, because he believed it had “grown inevitably out of the lifestyle of the Japanese race, and developed into a *tsuchi* of a distinctive character that cannot be found in China or Korea.”⁶¹ But in the case of his wife, Kyō (figure 13), the embrace of Shigaraki and similar earth flavor ceramics came at a higher cost. At about the same time that Katō Tōkurō criticized women's ceramics on public television, Tsuji Kyō described the obstacles she faced as a woman potter.

Most people would take a half teasing attitude toward a woman who worked on a potter's wheel and fired a kiln, and finally they would make it clear that they found [her presence] utterly disagreeable.... One time, an older artisan at a kiln where I went to study treated me as though I were something foul and dirty ... aspects of this unthinkable feudalistic prejudice still continue. Shocking though it is, something like the superstition that women must not set foot in a saké brewery is accepted in the ceramic world.⁶²

Countering this sexism with extraordinary fortitude, Tsuji Kyō became the first woman awarded the coveted annual Japan Ceramic Association Prize (日本陶磁協会賞) in 1971. Her grasp of *tsuchi* succeeded in transcending the “foul and dirty” image of women in ceramics as well as the patronizing restriction of women's ceramics to “accessory type objects.” Her *Yakishime ōhachi* 焼き大鉢 (Large unglazed bowl, 1970) (figure 14) is a strong simple unglazed form with a robust reddish burnt skin and a rough untrimmed rim that can be admired as “natural” in terms of the connoisseurship of earth flavor aesthetic practiced

60 Quoted in Inui 1991b, p. 487.

61 Tsuji Seimei 1981, 179.

62 Tsuji Kyō 1971, 41.



Figure 15. Yagi Kazuo, *Kumo no kioku* (Memory of Clouds), unglazed Shigaraki stoneware, 1959, 50.5 x 33.0 x 23.5 cm. Kyoto Municipal Museum of Art.

by many of the ceramicists discussed in this article. But just as impressive as Tsuji Kyō's potting and firing skills was her expansive rhetoric that elevated earth flavor beyond such identifications as Shigaraki or Japan to a universal sense of self, humanity, and nature:

I think the great work I have wished to stake my career on is nothing more than an effort at unifying the humanity that exists within me together with the character of nature comprised by *tsochi*. From long ago, I have had the feeling that the mystery of the universe can be sought within *tsochi*.⁶³

5. Sōdeisha: From Earth Worms to Burned Flesh

Katō Tōkurō had likened himself to a worm in his 1962 ode to *tsochi*, and the worm is indeed an apt metaphor since potters and worms are both creatures that consume and create *tsochi*. Despite the ideological gap between Tōkurō's dedication to ceramics of the past and Yagi Kazuo's insistence on originality, Yagi's ceramic work was also associated with the earth work of the worm. In 1948 Yagi and his fellow potters coined their group's name, Sōdeisha (Crawling Through Mud Association), using the term *mimizu sōdei mon* 蚯蚓走泥文 (the pattern of the trail of an earthworm on mud), which was a descriptive term for a distinctive pattern in the glaze of Jun-ware pottery of the Jin dynasty (1127–1279).⁶⁴ However, Sōdeisha's early works tended to be glazed vessels that were not particularly noted for their

63 Tsuji Kyō, quoted in Yoshida 1977, pp. 184–85.

64 For further discussion of Sōdeisha, see Cort 2003a; Cort 2003b, pp. 156–87.

earth flavor. Later, Yagi was inspired by Surrealist *objet* and other precedents in modern European art as well as Isamu Noguchi's ceramic work to forge the new genre of the *obuje yaki* オブジェ焼き (kiln-fired *objet*).⁶⁵ This removal of ceramics from vessel function allowed Yagi to investigate metaphors of the earth with more formal freedom, as in a striking group of unglazed abstract works of the late 1950s and early 1960s that suggested the forms of earthy organisms like slugs and worms. By the early 1970s, however, younger ceramicists working in the Sōdeisha milieu moved beyond the organicist potential of abstract *tsuchi* to invoke qualities of life forms. Driven by alarming contemporary conditions of the industrial environment, Satonaka Hideto and other experimental ceramic artists in Sōdeisha pursued more disturbing analogies between firing earth and firing bodies. The Sōdeisha group would continue for half a century (1948–1998), and ceramicists working in a wide variety of styles and techniques ranked among its membership. Here I trace one thread through this group's development, from Yagi's embrace of metaphors of life to metaphors of death in the work of Satonaka.

Among the most compelling kiln-fired *objet* in Yagi's oeuvre is a series of carefully modeled and carved unglazed works dating from the late 1950s and early 1960s including *Kumo no kioku* 雲の記憶 (Memory of Clouds) from 1959 (figure 15). This work was made with Shigaraki clay, but it was not made at Shigaraki nor fired in a kiln in Shigaraki. And in his Kyoto studio and kiln, he handled this Shigaraki *tsuchi* very differently from, for example, the Shigaraki pots later photographed by Domon. This sensuous torso-like form with four tendrils was modeled with extraordinary delicacy and then, when in a semi-hard state, the surface was carefully troweled with a toothed tool to provide a fine network of cross-hatching lines that manage to irritate the surface just enough to expose some of the feldspar grains that Shigaraki is famous for and dislodge others to leave small pits in the surface, without disrupting the sensuous contours of the form. While the compelling form and fine workmanship of *Kumo no kioku* are unique to Yagi, this work is a product of the late 1950s and 1960s, when there was a broad tendency among Sōdeisha members and other ceramicists toward “divulging the purity ... and emphasizing the quality of the medium of *tsuchi*.”⁶⁶ In Yagi's *Kumo no kioku*, this quality of the medium of fired earth is notably manifested in the four pointy projections extending from the torso. Since the thinnest members of ceramic forms heat more quickly than large masses, and therefore begin to vitrify sooner in the kiln, the glossy dark-brown burnt tips of these projections present a quality of earth flavor that is a unique potential of ceramic art.

The organic metaphor of growth suggested by the sensuous form of *Kumo no kioku* was dramatically articulated in an interpretive photograph by Narahara Ikkō, for the same monograph of Yagi's work where Narahara's photograph of Yagi looming god-like above his pot appears (figure 16). “On a day of gentle rain, at the garden of Tokuzenji at Daitokuji temple, [Narahara] placed the *objet* on the moist moss, and aiming for the effect of a drop to fall from a tip of the *objet*, Narahara lay await under the veranda of the temple, becoming one with his camera and leaning over the *objet* for nearly an hour.”⁶⁷ In

65 For Yagi, see Winther-Tamaki 1999.

66 Watanabe 2002, p. 17. A wide range of ceramic works from this period with a pronounced earth flavor are illustrated in Tōkyō Kokuritsu Kindai Bijutsukan 1987.

67 Unagami Masaomi, Untitled essay in Unagami and Narahara 1969, n.p.



Figure 16. Narahara Ikkō,
Photograph of Yagi Kazuo's *Kumo
no kioku* at Tokuzenji, Daitokuji,
Kyoto, 1969. In Narahara and
Unagami 1969, n.p.

Narahara's photograph, *Kumo no kioku* rises like a slug from a thick verdant bed of moss that casts the brown ceramic body in a green light, while drops of water form on the tips of the two tentacles facing downward. The capacity of clay to be sculpted into forms that support the illusion of soft living earth-bound organisms even after petrification into hard ceramic was investigated further in a second group of works by Yagi from the early 1960s known collectively as the *Shiwayose-de* 皺寄せで (Bunched-Wrinkled) series, including *Hekitai* 壁体 (Wall Body) of 1963 (figure 17). This work was constructed of numerous small thin sheets of clay that were bunched together when moist, and then compacted into a wall-like surface by lightly pressing a board against them. But if the “bunching of sheets” suggests a fabric-like form, this work looks more like masses of small organisms wriggling together. Perhaps the most colorful interpretation of *Hekitai* was authored by Inui Yoshiaki 乾由明 (1927–2017), a critic and curator who tirelessly promoted earth flavor ceramics from the 1960s through the 1990s. According to Inui, in works such as *Hekitai* Yagi attempted “to concentrate purely on clay” and “thus, with an attitude like a primitive craftsman, he returned to the earth, and began to work by listening humbly to the voice of the earth itself.”⁶⁸ Still, while admiring the “curdling energy of the hand-clay impact” in Yagi's work, what Inui saw was not merely earth, but “earthworms.” In Inui's animistic interpretation, Yagi's pottery object becomes “a strange living thing” with telluric “internal organs,” though he insists that its form would be impossible in any medium other than *tsochi*. But

68 Inui 1991a, p. 151; Inui 1991b, pp. 489–91.



Figure 17. Yagi Kazuo,
Hekitai (Wall Body),
Shigaraki stoneware with
light oxide, 1963. 52.0 x 37.0
x 7.5 cm. Private collection.

in addition to such ruminations on metaphors of life suggested by the earthy materiality of these works, earth flavor also operates on another register for Yagi:

Even the slightest tea bowl gives rise to the contemplative insight that it has indeed been formed of a handful of earth from the great earth which joins the vast stretch of the horizon to the soil beneath your own feet.⁶⁹

Thus, the intimate connection with *tsuchi* afforded by Yagi's kiln-fired *objet* also leads outward to an expansive spatial view of the earth.

In an essay dealing broadly with unglazed ceramics, Yagi notes the long lineage of unglazed pottery in Japan, starting with such prehistoric wares as Jōmon and continuing through Shigaraki and other medieval wares, and compares such pottery to the unclothed human body.⁷⁰ Yagi regards the nude body as an honest display of inner attributes, and suggests that obscuring the body with clothing and make-up, like veiling pottery with a coat of glaze, is a falsification. “Nakedly divulging the pattern of the contact between the hand and the *tsuchi*,” however, “exposes our eyes to all the physical and physiological ramifications of the artisan’s stance. Truth and falsehood, the undisguised and the camouflaged, are all exposed as is.” This is a clear statement of an ethic threaded through much of the rhetoric of *tsuchi* in ceramic thought, which supposes that fired clay delivers a basic truth by preserving

69 Yagi 1981b, p. 54.

70 Yagi 1981a.

“the pattern of contact between the hand and *tsuchi*.” Nevertheless, this thought is prefaced in Yagi’s statement by a qualification that seems to deconstruct its claim to truth:

The difference between the conscious and the unconscious, the pretentious and the unaffected is paper thin; they are so closely adjacent to one another that they can become confused, for example in complex compounds such as “consciously unaffected,” or “pretentiously unconscious.”

Indeed, the surfaces of *Kumo no kioku* and *Hekitai* are so minutely labored that the unglazed (unclothed) earthen skin is no less performed than a rich coat of glaze. Louise Cort observes that by the time *Hekitai* was made in the early 1960s, smoke-belching wood-fired kilns were prohibited in the city of Kyoto due to concerns about air quality, so this work was fired in an electric kiln. In order to simulate the unique reddish tint of a wood-firing kiln, Yagi (and others in his Kyoto milieu at this time) had to “blow on a thin layer of iron-tinted ‘fire-color’ glaze.”⁷¹ Similarly, Koyama Fujio recognized that although “in early times *tsuchi* dug from the mountains was probably used as is, recently ... even those who use coarse clay like Old Shigaraki often levigate it first and then mix in sand.”⁷² Ceramics with earth flavor that appeared “natural,” we may assume, were often contrived to appear that way.

While works such as Yagi’s *Kumo no kioku* and *Hekitai* departed radically from the functional basis of pottery tradition, the materials and many of the techniques used in making them were not radical at all. Nonetheless, in the early 1950s Sōdeisha works struck one viewer as “rude, rough, and wildly uninhibited” in comparison to craft works that “offered a modest flattering chuckle, or affected conversation.”⁷³ This judgment was relative, however, and the standards for judging the roughness of earth flavor changed quickly. It will be recalled that in the mid-1960s the brash handling and disregard for technique of American ceramicists such as Peter Voulkos attracted much attention in the Japanese ceramics world. In this context, Yagi’s kiln-fired *objet* came to seem somewhat out of date. One critic noted in 1965 that Yagi and his fellow Sōdeisha member Suzuki Osamu 鈴木治 lived in “a world of television, highways, America, the Soviet Union and Communist China, nuclear explosions, and the war in South Vietnam.”⁷⁴ But if this was meant as a compliment to these artists’ greater responsiveness to contemporary reality than was customary in Japanese ceramic art, it was certainly undercut when the same critic then praised their works for “a soft fine-grained sensibility that is redolent of their makers, men of the ancient capital Kyoto, a sensibility that could easily emerge in the tea ceremony world.” Younger ceramicists in the Sōdeisha orbit would break more decisively from earth flavor that retained associations with tradition, elegance, and taste.

Satonaka Hideto (1932–1989), who exhibited with Sōdeisha from 1970 to 1979, was deeply devoted to the charismatic Yagi, but he would remember that this very attraction to Yagi gradually conveyed him away from the kiln-fired *objet*, and “naturally led to an exceeding attachment to the sludge that should be thrown away.”⁷⁵ Satonaka’s term for

71 Cort 2003b, p. 175.

72 Koyama 1965, p. 126.

73 Hamamura 1961, p. 71.

74 Mitsuoka 1965.

75 Satonaka 1981, p. 193.



Figure 18. Satonaka Hideto, *Shirīzu: Kōgai areruḡi* (Series: Pollution Allergy), 1971. The National Museum of Modern Art, Kyoto.



Figure 19. Satonaka Hideto with his work *Akachan no herumetto* (Baby Helmets), 1973. Nineteen units, each: 9.4 x 20.0 x 30.0 cm. Yamaguchi Prefectural Art Museum.

sludge, *hedoro* ヘドロ, refers to the by-products of clay work that end up in a mud bucket rather than an exhibition, but also signifies the soupy muck deposited in river mouths and along coastlines, especially when containing industrial waste. The harm to the environment and public health incurred by full-throttle economic development was thrust into public awareness in 1970. The media was filled with accounts of innocent victims of fatal illnesses caused by industrial pollutants. Satonaka heard a prediction that “Tokyo would be finished in twenty-nine years,” and such gloomy thoughts led him to reject “the eccentric tea masters of the past who would try to console us by speaking of slumping vessels, cracking ceramics, and dripping glaze.” He abandoned his “slim faith in the coexistence of nature and humans with clay” as “hopeless.”⁷⁶

In this despairing frame of mind, Satonaka created *Shirizu Kōgai arerugi* シリーズ・公害アレルギー (Series Pollution Allergy, 1971), a group of six nearly identical hand-built ceramic renditions of standardized machine-made sinks with spigots (figure 18). The sinks were rematerialized here, however, with the coloration and inflections of form and texture that signal earth flavor, though now alienated from the connotations of the earthy life forms in Yagi’s work, not to mention the nostalgic aestheticism of tea wares. Although each of the six units in the series replicated the same sink, different admixtures of metallic oxide in the clay used for the spigot caused this component to fire differently. The spigots twisted askew in the heat of the kiln, and one fell off entirely, leaving a corrosive stain dripping down from the remaining gap on the back of the sink with ominous implications for tap water. These differences in the performance of clay in the kiln due to variable amounts of metallic oxide suggest an analogy to the contamination of the environment by industrial pollutants in the sludge of Japanese waterways such as the mercury poisoning at Minamata Bay, which by February 1971 had caused forty-seven confirmed deaths, and illness in another seventy-four victims. Satonaka’s work was praised for its “indictment of pollution by contemporary industry” by means of techniques “rooted in the basic character of ceramics, such that the work could not be created in any medium other than ceramics.”⁷⁷

Satonaka pursued his investigation of relationships between degrees of earth flavor in ceramics and the contamination of *tsuchi* in the environment to more sensational effect two years later. *Akachan no herumetto* 赤ちゃんのヘルメット (Baby Helmets) of 1973 consists of nineteen kiln shelves each holding a single ceramic mass (figure 19). The series illustrates stages of a metamorphosis, starting with a white dome-shaped object resembling a diminutive helmet, transforming into an object of the same shape coated with handsome earthy glaze, and ending with a flattened and charred mass that looks like a burnt pizza. According to the artist’s account, each of these forms started out in the same shape (a casting of an actual helmet reduced to a smaller size), and all were fired at 1280 °C for thirty hours.⁷⁸ The variable that produced the transformations in the series was, once again, the addition of increasing amounts of metallic oxide into the clay. Greater increments of metallic oxide produced an earth-flavor ceramic and then finally caused the collapse of the form into a charred crisp.

76 Satonaka, statement of 1971, quoted in Satonaka 1976, p. 42.

77 Kōjirō 1971, pp. 67–68.

78 Satonaka 1976, pp. 130–31.

While the step-by-step construction of this piece was carried out in the manner of a laboratory experiment, the imagery of its title, *Akachan no herumetto*, was sensationalized in a science fictional narrative authored by the artist and distributed when this piece was first exhibited in 1973. In Satonaka's story, a foreigner visiting Japan ten years hence in 1983 is appalled at the new norms of a horribly polluted environment where babies are routinely required to wear protective helmets.⁷⁹ Set to this narrative, Satonaka's nineteen baby helmets function as a gruesome forewarning of the dire consequences of projected high levels of pollution. Fired *tsuchi* becomes a heuristic for the destruction of human flesh by industrial contaminants in the environment. Satonaka observed that the great sense of mystery surrounding the tradition of the wood-burning kiln was due to its operation as a "secret chamber" during one day, three days, or a month while it was being fired and therefore inaccessible to the potter.⁸⁰ For his own ceramic work, however, Satonaka declared that this mysteriousness of pottery tradition was an obstacle rather than an attraction. With the shift to an electric kiln and increasingly precise knowledge about the techniques of kiln firing, he said he no longer thought of his kiln as a "secret chamber," but rather as a *tōmei na misshitsu* 透明な密室 (transparent secret chamber), where it was increasingly possible to dictate the outcome of the firing process. He tried to use more precise methods of controlling earth flavor to address contemporary changes in the earth that were dangerously out of control.

* * *

At the outset of this study, earth flavor was defined as "the beauty of the bare complexion of the earth fired for a long time" in the manner of pottery of the Six Ancient Kiln Sites and practiced anew by postwar Japanese potters who admired its "natural feeling for the oneness of clay and kiln."⁸¹ Four sites, including Seto and Shigaraki among the Six Ancient Kiln Sites, as well as America and Sōdeisha have been investigated as producers of earth flavor, but many other sites could be added to this mapping of the earthy turn in modern Japanese ceramics. For example, kiln sites such as Tokoname, where the avant-garde potter Koie Ryōji launched his career, and Mashiko, where the celebrity Mingei potter Hamada Shōji centered his activities, and institutions such as Nihon Tōji Kyōkai 日本陶磁協会 (The Japan Ceramic Society), founded in 1946 and growing to a membership of 2000 by 1960 were all important producers of earth flavor. Moreover, American perspectives were by no means the only foreign coordinates for the earthy turn in postwar Japanese ceramics. The sculpture of the Italian ceramicist Carlo Zauli (1926–2002), for example, first became known in Japanese ceramic circles in 1964 and became a beacon of earth flavor for several individuals discussed in this article.⁸² Nevertheless, extending this investigation to topoi such as Tokoname and Zauli's work in the Italian city of Faenza would probably support the same conclusions that may be drawn from the four sites studied here. Values of earth flavor in postwar ceramics were forged amid debate and often conflict over issues such as the tension between Japanese national identifications of earth flavor, regional centers of

⁷⁹ Satonaka 1976, p. 54.

⁸⁰ Satonaka 1981, p. 192.

⁸¹ Itō 1981, p. 31.

⁸² Kyōto Kokuritsu Kindai Bijutsukan 2007.

production, and the foreign or transnational conditions abetting formations of a Japanese earthy aesthetic. Reverence for models in pottery history persisted alongside avant-gardist disdain for adherence to the canon, while the positions of women underwent changes in a male-centered discourse, and ceramic aesthetics was increasingly identified with the visual to the occlusion of haptic experience.

The deeply contested character of earth flavor discourse, however, is strikingly at odds with one of the stronger threads running through all of these sites of its production, namely a transcendent ideal of *tsuchi* as a pure substance. Perhaps this enigmatic ideal was one that all these interlocutors of *tsuchi* in the Japanese ceramic world agreed upon. Earth flavor was never dirty, rather it was something that people wanted to touch, often with an erotic sense of intimacy, as in Katō Tōkurō's musing that "*tsuchi* is my lover," Isamu Noguchi's confession that what drew him to Japan was "the coarse earth which only Japanese people have," and Yagi Kazuo's comparison of unglazed ceramics to nude human bodies. At the same time, anxieties about threats to this purity abounded, whether male chauvinist fears of women potters such as Tsuji Kyō as "something foul and dirty," or Satonaka Hideto's alarm about *hedoro*, the sludge contaminated by industrial pollutants. Many of the types of pottery discussed here, whether Katō Tōkurō's Shino-style tea bowls or Yagi Kazuo's kiln-fired *objet* continue as institutionalized genres of earth-flavor ceramics practiced today, and many of the same issues endure in contemporary ceramics discourse. Moreover, the focus on the purity of *tsuchi* in postwar ceramic discourse presaged another development, namely an attempt to zero in on *tsuchi* itself, shorn of the manifold identifications that encumbered this substance when bound to such topoi as Seto, America, Shigaraki, and Sōdeisha. "Installation art" emerged as a new genre in Japan in the 1970s and this genre was perhaps a better vehicle than ceramics for essentializing *tsuchi* itself since soil could be foregrounded without undergoing the process of firing. Satonaka was among a small group of ceramicists who would stray from the making of ceramic objects, attempting instead to "make the whole of *tsuchi* itself the issue, the materiality of *tsuchi*, and to try to present the pure form of its bare existence."⁸³ This ideal, however, was deeply rooted in the earth flavor of postwar Japanese ceramics tethered as it was to such discursive circles as Seto, America, Shigaraki, and Sōdeisha.

REFERENCES

Chihaya and Ryūsenji 2007

Chihaya Kōichirō 千早耿一郎 and Ryūsenji Yuka 龍泉寺由佳. *Kawakita Handeishi, mucha no gei* 川喜田半泥子, 無茶の芸. Nigensha, 2007.

Cort 1979

Louise Allison Cort. *Shigaraki, Potters' Valley*. Kodansha International, 1979.

Cort 1992

Louise Allison Cort. *Seto and Mino Ceramics: Japanese Collections in the Freer Gallery of Art*. Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, 1992.

83 This statement by Satonaka is quoted in Saitō 2013, p. 7.

Cort 2003a

Louise Allison Cort. “Crawling Through Mud: Avant-Garde Ceramics in Postwar Japan.” Sixth Annual Dorothy Wilson Perkins Lecture at Alfred University, 14 October 2003. https://ceramicsmuseum.alfred.edu/perkins_lect_series/cort/ (December 10, 2018).

Cort 2003b

Louise Allison Cort. “Japanese Encounters with Clay.” In *Isamu Noguchi and Modern Japanese Ceramics: A Close Embrace of the Earth*, Louise Allison Cort and Bert Winther-Tamaki. The Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, 2003, pp. 103–91.

Domon 1965

Domon Ken 土門拳. “Atogaki, waga Shigaraki” 後書き: 我が信楽. In *Shigaraki ōtsubo* 信楽大壺, photos by Domon Ken and commentary by Koyama Fujio 小山富士夫. Tōkyō Chūnichi Shinbun Shuppankyoku, 1965, pp. 156–62.

Geijutsu shinchō 1960

Geijutsu shinchō 芸術新潮. “Tokushū repōto: ‘Einin no tsubo’ jiken o enshutsu shita otoko” 特集レポート:「永仁の壺」事件を演出した男. *Geijutsu shinchō* 11:11 (November 1960), pp. 244–57.

Hamamura 1961

Hamamura Jun 浜村順. “Sōdeisha, kōgeikai no kanzen yatō” 走泥社、工芸界の完全野党. *Bijutsu techō* 美術手帖 192 (August 1961), pp. 70–81.

Hata 1976

Hata Kōhei 秦恒平. “Onna no tsubo” 女の壺. *Geijutsu shinchō* 27:9 (September 1976), pp. 21–24.

Hayashiya 1992

Hayashiya Seizō 林屋晴三. “Katō Tōkurō, honpō naru tōjin: Momoyama e no chōsen to hyōshutsu suru kosei” 加藤唐九郎、奔放なる陶人: 桃山への挑戦と表出する個性. In *Nihon no tōji 3: Gendai hen* 日本の陶磁 3: 現代編. Chūō Kōronsha, 1992, pp. 217–21.

House Beautiful 1960

“Discover Shibui: The Word for the Highest Level in Beauty.” *House Beautiful* 102:8 (August 1960), p. 102.

Ikebana geijutsu 1952

“Hana o ikeru Isamu Noguchi.” *Ikebana geijutsu* いけばな芸術 4:37 (1 December 1952), n.p.

Inaga 2008

Inaga Shigemi 稲賀繁美. “Dōjidai no sekai bijutsushi ni taiji suru Yagi Kazuo” 同時代の世界美術史に対峙する八木一夫. In *Owarikirenai “kindai”: Yagi Kazuo to obu je yaki* 終わりがきれない「近代」: 八木一夫とオブジェ焼き, eds. Hida Toyorō 樋田豊郎 and Inaga Shigemi. Bijutsu Shuppan, 2008, pp. 71–118.

Inui 1991a

Inui Yoshiaki 乾由明. “Mingei to zen’ei” 民芸と前衛. Orig. pub. 1979; repr. in Inui Yoshiaki, *Gendai tōgei no keifu* 現代陶芸の系譜. Yōbisha, 1991, pp. 47–167.

Inui 1991b

Inui Yoshiaki. “Tōgei no kaihō: Yagi Kazuo no geijutsu to shisō” 陶芸の解放: 八木一夫の芸術と思想. Orig. pub. 1982; repr. in Inui Yoshiaki, *Gendai tōgei no keifu*. Yōbisha, 1991, pp. 458–98.

Itō 1981

Itō Kōshō 伊藤公象. “Tsuchi + katachi: Jizai na hyōgen sozai” 土+形: 自在な表現素材. *Bijutsu techō* 33: 480 (April 1981), pp. 24–39.

Iwanami 1955

Iwanami Shoten Henshūbu 岩波書店編集部. *Yakimono no machi: Seto* やきものの町: 瀬戸. Iwanami Shashin Bunko 岩波写真文庫 165, 1955.

Jones 2017

Meghen Jones. “Hamada Shōji, Kitaōji Rosanjin, and the Reception of Japanese Pottery in the Early Cold War United States.” *Design and Culture* 9:2 (July 2017), pp. 187–205.

Katō 1964

Katō Tōkurō. “Einin jiken sono go, sakutō no himitsu” 永仁事件その後、作陶の秘密. *Geijutsu shinchō* 15:11 (November 1964), pp. 150–55.

Katō 1973a

Katō Tōkurō 加藤唐九郎. “Tsuchi ni ikiru.” Orig. pub. 1962; repr. in *Tōkurō zuimonki* 唐九郎随聞記, ed. Katō Kenji 加藤健二. Fūbaisha, 1973, pp. i–iv.

Katō 1973b

Katō Tōkurō. *Tōkurō zuimonki*. Ed. Katō Kenji. Fūbaisha, 1973.

Katō 1979

Katō Tōkurō. *Tōgei kuden* 陶芸口伝. Suishōen Tōgei Kinenkan, 1979.

Keene 1969

Donald Keene. “Japanese Aesthetics.” *Philosophy East and West* 19:3 (July 1969), pp. 293–306.

Kiyohara et al. 1986

Kiyohara Kunitake 清原邦武, Tanikawa Tetsuzō 谷川徹三, Honda Shizuo 本多静雄, Ōkōchi Fūsenshi 大河内風船子 and Sugiura Sumiko 杉浦澄子. “Katō Tōkurō tsuitō” 加藤唐九郎追悼. *Tōsetsu* 陶説 400 (July 1986), pp. 54–59.

Kobayashi 1965

Kobayashi Hideo 小林秀雄. “Maegaki: Tsubo” まえがき: 壺. In *Shigaraki ōtsubo*, photos by Domon Ken and commentary by Koyama Fujio. Tōkyō Chūnichī Shinbun Shuppanyoku, 1965, pp. 3–5.

Koie and Isobe 1990

Koie Ryōji 鯉江良二 and Isobe Masaru 磯辺勝. “Mirai kara kita genshijin” 未来からきた原始人. In *Tōgei, Koie Ryōji* 陶芸 鯉江良二. Nihon Hōsō Shuppan Kyōkai, 1990, pp. 48–64.

Kōjiro 1971

Kōjiro Yūichirō 神代雄一郎. “Nihon tōgei ten no konran: Nihon tōgei ga gendai geijutsu ni naru toki” 日本陶芸展の混乱: 日本陶芸が現代芸術になるとき. *Geijutsu shinchō* 22:7 (July 1971), pp. 64–71.

Koyama 1965

Koyama Fujio 小山富士夫. “Shigaraki ōtsubo kaisetsu” 信楽大壺解説. In *Shigaraki ōtsubo*, photos by Domon Ken and commentary by Koyama Fujio. Chūnichī Shinbun Tōkyō Honsha, 1965, pp. 111–55.

Koyama et al. 1964

Koyama Fujio et al. “Zadankai: Kokusai tōgei ten” 座談会: 国際陶芸展. *Tōsetsu* 139 (October 1964), pp. 61–67.

Kring 1955

W[alter] D[onald] Kring. “Gendai Nihon no tōki: Amerika no tōkō no mita” 現代日本の陶器: アメリカの陶工の見た, trans. and ann. Naitō Tadashi 内藤匡. *Tōsetsu* 23 (February 1955), pp. 23–27. (Originally published as “Contemporary Japanese Ceramics,” *Ceramics Monthly*, February 1954.)

Kuroda et al. 1966

Kuroda Ryōji 黒田領治 et al. “Tōgei no dentō to sōsaku: Seto, Bizen shinjin jūnin ten kara” 陶芸の伝統と創作: 瀬戸・備前新人十人展から. *Tōsetsu* 164 (November 1966), pp. 44–47.

Kyōto Kokuritsu Kindai Bijutsukan 2007

Kyōto Kokuritsu Kindai Bijutsukan 京都国立近代美術館, ed. *Karuro Zauri ten: Itaria gendai tōgei no kyoshō* カルロ・ザウリ展: イタリア現代陶芸の巨匠 / *Carlo Zauli: A retrospective*. Nihon Keizai Shinbunsha, 2007.

Leach 1978

Bernard Leach. *Beyond East & West: Memoirs, Portraits and Essays*. Faber & Faber, 1978.

Mikami 1972

Mikami Tsugio 三上次男. *Tōki* 陶器. *Nihon no bijutsu* 日本の美術, supplement vol. 4. Heibonsha, 1968. Translated by Ann Herring as *The Art of Japanese Ceramics*, Weatherhill, 1972.

Mitsuoka 1965

Mitsuoka Tadanari 満岡忠成. “Obuje o kiku” オブジェを聴く. *Tōsetsu* 145 (April 1965), pp. 82–83.

Miwa 1971

Miwa Ryōsaku 三輪龍作. “Amerika kara Nihon o miru” アメリカから日本を見る. *Tōsetsu* 214 (January 1971), pp. 34–35.

Nakamura 2000

Nakamura Akira 中村朗. “Iwanami bunko jidai (1954–56 nen): Kata-yaburi na kessaku ‘Yakimono no machi’” 岩波文庫時代 (一九五四—五六年): 型やぶりの傑作「やきものの町」 In *Tōmatsu Shōmei, 1951–1960* 東松照明 1951–1960. Sakuhinsha, 2000, pp. 118–21.

Nakano 1989

Nakano Yasuhiro 仲野泰裕. “Orientaru Tōchō Kenkyūjo to sakka-tachi, chū” オリエンタル陶彫研究所と作家たち (中) *Kyōdo bijutsu* 郷土美術 29 (September 1989), pp. 1–4.

Okuno 1990

Okuno Ken’ichi 奥野憲一. “Kawakita Handeishi” 川喜田半泥子. In *Shōwa no bunka isan* 6; *Kōgei* 1 昭和の文化遺産 6: 工芸 1, ed. Inui Yoshiaki 乾由明. Gyōsei, 1990, n.p.

Ōtsuki 2008

Ōtsuki Noriko 大槻倫子. “Kotōji gihō no saikatsuyō” 古陶磁技法の再活用. In *Owarikirenai “kindai”*: *Yagi Kazuo to obuje yaki* 終わりきれない「近代」: 八木一夫とオブジェ焼, eds. Hida Toyorō 樋田豊郎 and Inaga Shigemi. Bigaku Shuppan, 2008, pp. 119–48.

Saitō 2013

Saitō Toshiju 斎藤敏寿. “Tō ni yoru zōkei no dokujisei ni tsuite no ichi kōsatsu: Satonaka Hidehito ga 1970 nen–1976 nen ni seisaku shita sakuhin o tegakari ni” 陶による造形の独自性についての一考察: 里中英人が1970年~1976年に制作した作品を手がかりに. *Geijutsu kenkyū hō* 芸術研究報 34 (March 2013), pp. 1–12.

Satonaka 1976

Satonaka Hideto 里中英人. *Tō ni yoru atarashii zōkei: Shikō to tekunorojī* 陶による新しい造形: 思考とテクノロジー. Gurafikkusha, 1976.

Satonaka 1981

Satonaka Hideto. “Tsuchi o yaku koto no imi o tou” 土を焼くことの意味を問う. *Bijutsu techō* 33: 480 (April 1981), pp. 191–94.

Taniguchi 1960

Taniguchi Yoshirō 谷口吉郎. “Sekaigo toshite no ‘shibui’” 世界語としての「しぶい」. *Geijutsu shinchō* 11:11 (November 1960), pp. 56–63.

Tōkyō Kokuritsu Kindai Bijutsukan 1987

Tōkyō Kokuritsu Kindai Bijutsukan 東京国立近代美術館, ed. *1960 nendai no kōgei: Kōyō suru atarashii zōkei* 1960年代の工芸: 昂揚する新しい造形 / *Forms in Aggression, Formative Uprising of the 1960s*. Tōkyō Kokuritsu Kindai Bijutsukan, 1987.

Tōkyō Kokuritsu Kindai Bijutsukan 2002

Tōkyō Kokuritsu Kindai Bijutsukan, ed. *Shōwa no Momoyama fukkō: Tōgei kindai-ka no tenkanten* 昭和の桃山復興: 陶芸近代化の転換点 / *Modern Revival of Momoyama Ceramics: Turning Point Toward Modernization of Ceramics*. Tōkyō Kokuritsu Kindai Bijutsukan, 2002.

Tsuchikane 2014

Yasuko Tsuchikane. “Picasso as Other: Koyama Fujio and the Polemics of Postwar Japanese Ceramics.” *Review of Japanese Culture and Society* 26 (December 2014), pp. 33–49.

Tsuji Kyō 1971

Tsuji Kyō 辻協. “Medaka’ no nakamatachi” 女朶火の仲間たち. *Tōsetsu* 214 (January 1971), pp. 41–43.

Tsuji Seimei 1981

Tsuji Seimei 辻清明. “Godai shizen to no ittaika: Shigaraki tsuchi to noborigama” 五大自然との一体化: 信楽土と登り窯. *Bijutsu techō* 美術手帖 33: 480 (April 1981), pp. 179–81.

Unagami and Narahara 1969

Unagami Masaomi 海上雅臣 and Narahara Ikkō 奈良原一高. *Yagi Kazuo sakuhinshū* 八木一夫作品集. Kyūryūdō, 1969.

Watanabe 2002

Watanabe Sei’ichi 渡部誠一. “Zen’ei tōgei no seiritsu to tenkai” 前衛陶芸の成立と展開. In *Kaikan kinen ten I: Gendai tōgei no 100 nen ten, dai ichi bu* “*Nihon tōgei no tenkai*” 会館記念展 I: 現代陶芸の100年、第一部「日本陶芸の展開」. Gifu Kenritsu Tōgei Bijutsukan, 2002, pp. 16–17.

Weiss 2013

Allen S. Weiss. *Zen Landscapes: Perspectives on Japanese Gardens and Ceramics*. Reaktion Books, 2013.

Winther-Tamaki 1999

Bert Winther-Tamaki. "Yagi Kazuo: The Admission of the Nonfunctional Object into the Japanese Pottery World." *Journal of Design History* 12:2 (June 1999), pp. 123–41.

Winther-Tamaki 2003

Bert Winther-Tamaki. "The Ceramic Art of Isamu Noguchi." In *Isamu Noguchi and Modern Japanese Ceramics: A Close Embrace of the Earth*, Louise Allison Cort and Bert Winther-Tamaki. The Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, 2003, pp. 1–85.

Yagi 1981a

Yagi Kazuo 八木一夫. "Shigaraki, Igayaki no kanshō" 信楽・伊賀焼の鑑賞. Orig. pub. 1964; repr. in Yagi, *Kokukoku no hono'o* 刻々の炎. Shinshindō Shuppan, 1981, pp. 111–13.

Yagi 1981b

Yagi Kazuo. "Watakushi no tōjishi" 私の陶磁誌. Orig. pub. 1975–1976; repr. in Yagi, *Kokukoku no hono'o*. Shinshindō Shuppan, 1981, pp. 23–55.

Yagi 1981c

Yagi Kazuo. *Kokukoku no hono'o*. Shinshindō Shuppan, 1981.

Yanagi 1972

Yanagi Muneyoshi (aka Yanagi Sōetsu). "Okinawa." Orig. pub. 1939; repr. in *The Unknown Craftsman, A Japanese Insight into Beauty*, adapted by Bernard Leach. Kodansha International, 1972, 158–69.

Yanagi 2017

Yanagi Muneyoshi. "The Beauty of Miscellaneous Things." In *Selected Essays on Japanese Folk Crafts*, trans. Michael Brase. Japan Publishing Industry Foundation for Culture, 2017, pp. 87–99. Originally published as "Hetamono no bi" 下手ものゝ美, 1926;

Yanagihara 1964

Yanagihara Yoshitatsu 柳原義達. "Nihon tōgei no haiboku: Gendai Kokusai Tōgei ten o mite" 日本陶芸の敗北: 現代国際陶芸展をみて. *Geijutsu shinchō* 15:10 (October 1964), pp. 60–65.

Yoshida 1977

Yoshida Kōzō 吉田耕三. "Tsuji Kyō ron" 辻協論. In *Gendai no tōgei* 現代の陶芸, vol. 14, ed. Yoshida Kōzō. Kōdansha, 1977, pp. 182–87.