

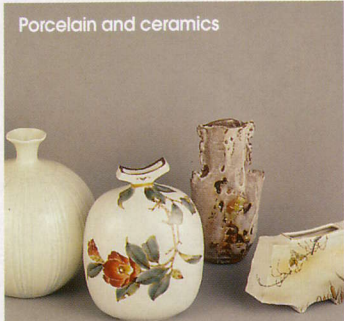
酒と器

Sake and Ceramics

The façade of a sake brewery, Sake barrels and toji (head sake brewer)



Sake, or Japanese wine, is produced in various areas around the nation and is regularly drunk by many Japanese. The brewing process begins by fermenting newly harvested rice early in the winter with the differences in the quality of the rice, the milling of the grains, temperature control and the water quality all influencing the taste. Recently, sake is also being exported overseas in larger quantities and tours of sake breweries are becoming increasingly popular.



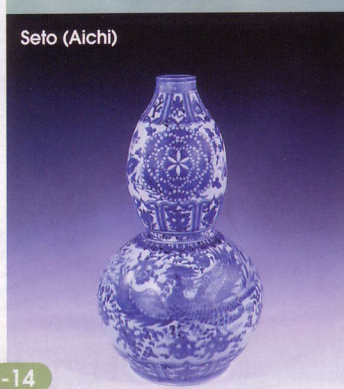
Porcelain and ceramics



Mashiko (Tochigi)



Bizen (Okayama)



Seto (Aichi)

Porcelain and ceramics: Japanese porcelain was greatly appreciated by the aristocracy and the royalty of the 17th century eastern Europe, and was the subject of fervent collectors and even imitation with one result being the great influence on the development of European kilns it had. Ceramics, on the other hand, are loved for their natural appearance and are frequently used in Japanese tea ceremonies. At prestigious Japanese restaurants, porcelain and ceramics are used not only as dinnerware but as important elements of the cuisine itself - in other words, as a part of the Japanese culinary art-cum-experience as chefs painstakingly choose the best pieces of porcelain to go with their works. Many ordinary Japanese households, perhaps from the same philosophy thus possess a variety of dinnerware for similar use.

Mashiko (Tochigi): Mashiko earthenware has a folkloric appearance and visitors can easily enjoy the experience of painting on china.

Bizen (Okayama): This unglazed-style ceramic is cherished for its natural clay texture and accidental transformations during the firing process. The works are mainly for practical use, for example sake bottles, flower vases and dinnerware.

Seto (Aichi): One of the most important production areas of porcelain in Japan, the word "seto" is even used to mean ceramics in general.

Arita (Saga): Porcelain produced in this region charmed the European royalty and aristocracy of the 17th century and greatly influenced western porcelain design. For a week from the end of April to the beginning of May, Arita hosts a porcelain market that attracts about a million visitors each year.

Imari (Saga): Three hundred years ago, the official kiln of the Nabeshima feudal domain was established here and at the time a check point was set up in order to protect the production techniques from being stolen.

Arita (Saga)



Imari (Saga)



Sake Bottles



Painting

Potter's Wheel

