

タイトル	The modernization and japanization of contemporary Japanese ceramics by Itaya Hazan
著者	UEKI, Mikio
引用	北海学園大学学園論集, 123: 1-8
発行日	2005-03-25

The modernization and japanization of contemporary Japanese ceramics by Itaya Hazan

Mikio UEKI

1.

It was at the first London Exposition of 1862 for Japanese industrial art objects to have an exhibit in the western world. All of handicraft objects displayed there were a large amount of collections with more than 900 articles of Sir Rutherford Alcock, the first United Kingdom Minister to Japan. They were composed of lacquer ware, metal ware and ceramic ware. They were displayed all together at a special exhibit named the Japan corner, 86 pieces of which were ceramic wares. They were called Satsuma ware, because they were produced in the Satsuma clan. The form of their bodies were borrowed from Chinese flower vases in the late Qing dynasty. They accompanied with an elaborate design in accordance with the combination of overglaze red, gold, green, purple and / or yellow enamels and underglaze blue, of which the method of decorations was and is called Brocade Pattern ('kinrande' in Japanese). They were not considered particularly artistic in Japan, but they certainly were in Europe. They won popularity in Europe and came into one of exportable staple commodities from Japan. Afterward they became the model of decorations for the same type of exportable Japanese ceramics produced in Kyoto, Yokohama and Tokyo as well as Satsuma ware, which were called Kyo-Satsuma, Yokohama-Satsuma and Tokyo-Satsuma respectively.

After the Meiji Restoration, the government promoted intensively a plan for enriching the nation and building up the defenses. At the same time the government urged its industrialization. The government needed foreign currencies to strengthen the nation. Japanese handiworks including ceramics became to play an important role in exportable articles. The government took advantage of an international exhibition held in foreign countries. It was the Wien Exposition of 1873 for the Meiji government to take part in an Exposition for the first time. The governmental intention consisted in the presentation of Japanese exportable

articles and the improvement of them by investigating and researching western technologies and the trend of western goods.

The first occasion to introduce Japanese articles in the United States of America was the Philadelphia Exposition of 1876. The government succeeded in selling Japanese ceramics in the Paris Exposition of 1878 as well as in Philadelphia. Ceramics displayed in each Exposition were a large size of vessels decorated with gorgeous and brilliant colour, which were produced by traditional methods and techniques completed in the late Edo period. On the other hand, the government intently introduced such new western technologies into Japan as a new type of kiln using coal for fuel, cobalt oxide as a pigment and various overglaze enamels, and plaster molds. Though Japanese techniques producing ceramics was comparatively in a high standard, their assimilation to the new western technologies were possible to cultivate a new world in the Japanese ceramics.

The Satsuma type of Japanese ceramics, however, could not get high evaluation on the Columbus Exposition of 1893 in Chicago. It was a turning point of decorative styles and designs of Japanese ceramics. Regrettably, the government passed over new tendency of western admiration and send again the same type of articles to the Paris Exposition of 1900. Their designs, mainly the beauties of nature, had to be innovated with the western aesthetic sense, because a new type of designs originated and popularized in the western world, where designs were attempted in Chelsea, Royal Copenhagen and other kilns. Such type of designs were developed into the style of art nouveau.

The birth of new era in arts and crafts demanded the government the reformation of Japanese traditional way of designs. In addition, The worldwide depression was beginning to stagnate the exportation of Japanese ceramics to the west from the beginning of the 1880s. Since then on, the government finally noticed that the Japanese exportable ceramics had been produced with commonplace designs. The era demanded to encourage artists who were capable of creating new and original designs. In order to afford such a demand, the Tokyo Art School was founded in 1889 with the purpose of the unreserved refinement of Japanese designs in the field of industrial arts. In 1886-87, Fenollosa and Okakura had traveled to Europe to study methods of art education and Okakura became the head of the Tokyo Art School. The curricula planned by Okakura were the combination of sketch, reproduction, and creativity.

2.

Itaya Hazan (1872-1963) was one of secondary graduates of the Tokyo Art School. It

had offered two years foundation course and three years special studies. They were organized by three sections, namely, Japanese-style picture, wooden sculpture, and industrial arts including metal works and lacquer wares. Hazan studied all of techniques through three sections in foundation course and was absorbed in making sketches until his death. His attitude toward sketches were followed the instructions of the head of the Tokyo Art School, Okakura Tensin: art is not copies of old patterns of painting but must be an imaginative creation. Hazan often sketched figures of metal works and dyed clothes on the one hand; on the other hand, he remained designs noted new ideas or self ones among his design books from the 1890s to the 1900s. Afterward his works were highly regarded in the point of his remarkable achievement in the refinement of designs, it was consequences of his faithful fulfillment in accordance with Tensin's philosophy. Hazan's non-degree course for graduate was sculpture in the Tokyo Art School, where he was trained for necessary and enough techniques as a sculptor by Takamura Kohun. His various techniques as a sculptor were applied to the decoration of his works. His techniques in the field of sculpture helped him create various sculptural designs on the surfaces of his potteries, which were one of his characteristics. His engravings were the powerful techniques to decorate his potteries with his original designs. More than any other artist-potters, he originated his proper designs and researched various glazes. He executed his various vessels decorated with engrave patterns by using various glazes, for example, white glaze, celadon glaze, dark caramel-brown glaze, light brown glaze, iron-brown glaze and so on. His masterpieces, however, were and are vessels decorated with under-glaze colourful engrave patterns and over-glaze mat glaze. Such sort of vessels have a high popularity among Japanese virtuosos in comparison with vessels of studio-potters in the same generation.

In 1896, two years after his graduation of the Tokyo Art School he started his career as the chief of the department of wooden sculptor in the Ishikawa prefectural technical high school. When his department was closed two years after, he moved the department of ceramic. He educated his students mainly in the field of design for the next five years. In addition, he studied basic techniques and knowledges concerning clay, forming by potter's wheel, firing, designs, the preparation of glazes and the colour of pigments. At the same time he traveled to Kyoto, Seto and Mie areas to study methods of peculiar products in those areas and written his reports concerning his researches.

The most important achievement at the time of staying Ishikawa Prefecture were his innovation about designs. He sent his own original designs to a ceramic journal published in Tokyo. The more important designs were the series of designs for flower vases in

accordance with the style of art nouveau. Since the 1900's art nouveau style of designs won popularity among the western societies. Hazan grasped earlier the core of its style through foreign art books by his keen sensibility than anyone in Japan. Hazan certainly succeeded in modernizing Japanese ceramics decorated with traditional designs by studying art nouveau designs.

In the Ishikawa prefectural technical high school one of stuffs made a study of under-glaze designs, because such sorts of vessels were imported into Japan from the western nations. Those under-glaze pictures were brilliant and were capable of keeping gradation in colour. The chemical study in high school contributed the innovation and origination of new glazes by Hazan. He actually tried to produce vessels decorated with the style using at the Rock-Wood Company in the United States of America. After many attempts to create a new glaze he originated his peculiar mat glaze that nobody succeed in reproducing it up to the present.

3.

Hazan came back to Tokyo for producing his own potteries without interruption in 1903. At first, however, he had to give instruction in practical skills for making potteries in the Tokyo High Technical School as a part-time instructor for the cost of living. Three years later he took up his house and studio in the town of Tabata in Tokyo and built his new kiln under the guidance of Prof. Hirata, who was a specialist of the Tokyo High Technical School concerning building a kiln. It was very up to date and the western-style of a kiln which had one chamber and three fire doors. His first firing was in 1906. His works were exhibited an exhibition under the auspices of the government. They received a favorable review for their freshness. Although actual forming of his vessels was practiced by an assistant, his forms were not traditional ones in Japan. Even if their models were originated from Chinese vessels in the Quing period or in the Ming period or in the Southern Song, they had his own forms and were completely Japanized by Hazan.

He was one of representative studio-potters in the 20 century, who came to pottery by his own choice rather than by birth. His typical eclectic style of forms based on his strong knowledges of Japanese and Chinese ceramics. After he designed beforehand the form and decoration of his works on his desk in his studio, he ordered his assistant forming by potter's wheel, whose first assistant came from Arita. His secondary assistant was Ichimatsu Genda, who came from Ishikawa Prefecture and continued his assistance all his life. After forming of works, at first Hazan carved their surface his fine designs and decorated them

with various pigments and glazes. After firing he took out only perfect vessels and shattered others. This way of producing was unchanged and his consistent principle during his lifetime.

His long career as a studio-potter with an individual name and style started in the turning point of contemporary Japanese ceramics of which Japanese traditional designs lost interest in the western world. His principle from the beginning to the end consisted in decorating the surface of ceramics with pictures. It is just the same procedure that a painter does. From the beginning he did not intend to be an artisan potter for producing house-wares in the mere household industries. All of his works were executed according to his principle and they continued to give fresh and deep impressions on Japanese ceramic world through his lifetime. The government held the Tokyo-Taisyo Exhibition in commemoration of the succession to the throne by Emperor Taisyo. Hazan exhibited his four pieces of large flower vases, one of which a flower vase decorated with the under-glaze design of thistles and an arabesque got a gold medal. It was purchased at a large amount of money by the Imperial Household Agency. The report of examining for them was as follows: "Though all works were designed by an oriental style, they were, on the whole, influenced by western aesthetic tendencies. This flower vase with finest composition and highly sophisticated technique is the most excellent one among similar works."

His mat glaze characterized his works and had a great effect on Japanese ceramics through the Taisyo and the Showa period. It was originated by Hazan in 1914 and he named it "Hoko-sai", of which derivation was from a famous Chinese book. This glaze was the creation of Hazan in himself after his efforts and used his works favorably. It was transparent glaze without brilliance, therefore, "Hoko" meant absorbing light. Its glaze covered the surface of works painted and decorated with various design in such colour as a spring haze. In brief, it diminished the glitter of colours on under-glaze designs and made the surface of works not to twinkle. Concerning techniques for making ceramics in contemporary Japan, it is said that Hazan's works with engraved and colourful patterns under the glaze are one of the summits.

4.

There are wide differences of opinions among researchers in these days concerning who is a first person originated contemporary Japanese ceramics. A researcher said as follows: "it is a commonly supported notion concerning the birth of first contemporary potter that Itaya Hazan is a first modernized potter. I, however, have not found and attended papers

described about the modernity of Itaya Hazan as an individual potter and his works. I must come to the conclusion that Hazan was not a modern individual potter but the embodiment of the supreme or a great master of a ceramic art and an industrial art in the Meiji period.” According to his understanding “a modernized potter must be an executor who lives up to the ego as an individual potter, in a modern sense, concerning his forms and designs”. In addition “a modern individual potter must be one who persists in his effort to create his own forms and designs and to produce works peculiar to him”. “Only such a way of creation provides us with the enough notion about the birth of a modern individual potter”. He concludes that “the first Japanese potter with an individual name and style is not Itaya Hazan but Tomimoto Kenkichi”.

On the other hand, there are also different evaluations from the other point of view. One of those is as follows: “Itaya Hazan was a pioneer and a great master who established modern ceramics in Japan. The manner of executing works by Hazan was consistency with his principles. Therefore, basically there were no daring changes of his works. He continued to quest for his own forms, glazes and designs consistently. His works kept a neat figure and an elegant style in the point of forming, glazing and designing. Although many potters disposed of themselves in accordance with changes and tendencies of Japanese ceramic world, he continued to walk his own ways without flatteries to world keeping his principles. His trained skills did not rusty till his death, because he continued his studies and endeavors all his life. He held a comparatively long life-time of 92 years old and kept on toward his own art with young ardors of art. He was really a progenitor and a singular originator in contemporary Japanese ceramics which began shortly after 1900.”

The other opinion is as follows: it is thought that the reformation of designs in the modern ceramics displayed by Hazan attained one of fulfillments in the completion of a mat glaze. Its patterns were drawn with writing brushes playing the leading part of decorations during 300 years since the Momoyama period in Japan. On the other hand, Hazan extended the range of colouring by under-glaze colourful pictures under the mat glaze and accomplished decorations which were composed of colourful patterns. His works kept a visionary surface. As he erased completely the outlines of patterns and succeeded in composing delicately changeable surfaces through the gradation of colour by covering the whole of a body, so that his works kept a visionary atmosphere. The path walked by Hazan since the Meiji period was the destruction of the traditional style of Japanese ceramics and the creation of artistic style of ceramics recognized as art like painting and sculpture by everybody. He completed his colourful porcelains with a mat glaze by the techniques of rich

under-glaze carving and painting, which were destroying the established idea of Japanese pottery.

In a certain sense the word of modernity is a concept used ambiguously on the field of human science. If it is understood as meaning used on the field of literature, it is possible to say that its criterion consists in individuality, freedom and rationality. The conventional and industrial methods of producing ceramics were the division of various labours on one hand. On the other hand, Hazan always had said that he did for himself the whole process of making his works. Hazan as a studio-potter placed a special emphasis on the consistency of producing his works in accordance with his individual intentions. His works reflected the influence of foreign countries: for example, Chinese porcelains influenced his forming and articles of western countries helped his decoration. He was a man of intelligence and freedom rather than a mimic. He could bear enough fruits in each fields of producing pottery. Concerning glazes, he could use various glazes for white wares, celadon wares, tenmoku type of tea bowls, tea containers with iron-brown or black glaze or vessels with brown glaze, crystalline glaze, dark green glaze and mat glaze. His attainment depended on his full scientific knowledges, studies and experiments. Evidently his excellent works were the outcome of his scientific knowledge backing his modern rationality.

In early spring of his 88 years old Hazan conversed about his long life as follows: "I have worked on my concern with all soul since my youth and reached old age. I have produced every works with my best endeavors and with youthful zest sweating all over. This principle has been retained from first to last. No matter how I turn myself to my works, it was a commonly shared experience among the potters in this world not to produce excellent ones at all time. It is exceptional matters and important problems that masterpieces are born as the crystallization of enduring endeavors. I give young men my instruction that they must devote all their strength to art in their youth, even if they sink into the lowest pith of poverty. The spirits for art in their youth never vanish even when they are well over 80 years old. I held my individual exhibition commemorated eighty-eight years old at the head store of Mitsukoshi department store in Tokyo. When I review my works, works in my time are full of favor and works from fifties to sixties year are full of life and elegance. Although works from seventies to these days display simple and refined, I regret that there were colourless works among them. After I am passing eighty years old, I desire to make an effort in the realization of art by being an enthusiast who makes his works though his time leaning on his stick."

He remained us his pretension through his massage. When we read it and retrace his

whole of works, we can conclude that he was really one of creators in contemporary Japanese ceramics. Certainly he originated his individual form and his peculiar mat glaze. We must say that he came through his individuality and his originality, because both of them are based on his freedom. Moreover, we can say that Itaya Hazan realized the modernization of the whole Japanese ceramics through the Japanization of designs depending on Western art nouveau. Then we can emphasize that he was really an artist potter walked in accordance with his own individual, free, and rational principles of art for art's sake.