

COLOURED NABESHIMA WARE

LANGUAGE VERSION / English, French, German, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Spanish.

* With the Cooperation of Agency for Cultural Affairs

* Produced by Sakura Motion Picture Co., Ltd.

PRODUCTION STAFF

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EXPLANATION

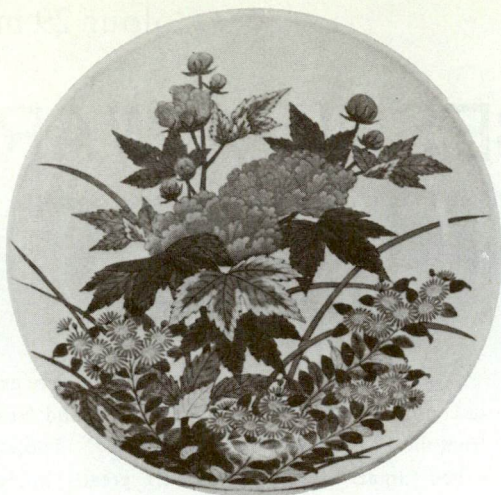
Quantities of Japanese ceramic wares were exported to countries in Europe and the Middle, and Near East from the 17th through the 18th century. Those wares, called "Imari" in Japanese, were greatly appreciated abroad for their fantastic colour-glazed patterns and pictures.

Celebrated ceramics, produced in Japan at that time, included "IRONABESHIMA", or the coloured Nabeshima ware, products of the Arita District in Kyushu, Japan's southernmost main island. The coloured Nabeshima's excellent quality and craftsmanship, however, were little known at home in those days, let alone abroad, because the wares were produced exclusively in the kilns of the provincial lord only as gift articles for the Shogunate and other influential lords.

The elaborate shapes and patterns characterize the coloured Nabeshima wares, representing extremely Japanese qualities. One of the most noteworthy, in particular, is the method of designing patterns and pictures in colour glazing, which is said to resemble the dying techniques of the Edo Period, another fine example of the unique craftsmanship perfected in the 18th century. Those techniques with the use of simple but efficient tools, devised by ancient craftsmen, brought about a fruition of typical handwork tradition which has been handed down to this day, meeting various requirements of different ages.

It is interesting to note, however, that the development of ceramic art in Japan was brought about as a result of cultural interchanges with the Chinese and Koreans, who by then had already possessed highly sophisticated techniques in ceramic production. The early Japanese learned from the Koreans, for instance, how to fire and glaze white ceramics, while the art of colour glazing from the Chinese. Introduction of these advanced techniques from the (Asian) continent helped the Japanese to develop their own methods and styles in ceramic art, including those of the uniquely Japanese vessels, the coloured Nabeshima.





FILM OUTLINE

Well-organized division of labour characterizes the production of the coloured Nabeshima. The following shows some processes of this noted ware.

1. CLAY REFINING

Ordinary works of pottery are made from clay, while more elaborate ceramic wares are made from good quality ceramic rocks and stone which are crashed and ground extremely fine before careful beating and kneading, the essential processes prior to shaping.

2. SHAPING

Playing one of the leading parts in vessel shaping is the foot-operated pottery wheel which enables the potter to use both hands in the manipulation of the kneaded putty, using different tools for finishing touches.

3. UNDER-GLAZE PAINTING

In the Japanese method, a sheet of specially devised Japanese paper with inked patterns is applied over the fired bisque article. Genge rubbing over the inked paper leaves the desired patterns on the bisque surface. The transferred patterns are then under-glaze painted with a brush.

4. GLAZING

The use of specially prepared material characterizes the glazing of "Ironabeshima".

5. GLAZE FIRING

Each of the glazed articles, placed in a saggar, is fired at high temperatures.

6. ON-GLAZE COLOURING

The underglaze colour turns blue under the fired glaze, which is again painted in different colours such as red, green, yellow, purple, etc.

7. ON-GLAZE FIRING

The on-glaze coloured vessel is again fired to obtain the combined effects of fired on-glaze colours, called "AKAE", or a "Red Picture", suggesting the prevailing reddish hue of the glazed surface.

All these hand work processes based on division of labour are carried out by highly skilled Nabeshima craftsmen.

Cultural Documentary Film

1. The Art & Meaning of IKEBANA (In colour, 27 min.)

Planned by The Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Version (English, French, Spanish, Portuguese, Russian)

2. An Invitation to Traditional Music (In colour, 25 min.)

Planned by The Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Version (English, French, Spanish, German, Portuguese)

* IL MAURIZIO ORVIETO FESTIVAL INTERNAZIONALE DEL FILM SULLE ARTI POPOLARI E MESTERT TRADIZIONALI

3. Heritage of Stone Arts (In colour, 29 min.)

With the Cooperation of Agency for Cultural Affairs
Version (English, Japanese)
* National Art Festival Prize

4. BUNRAKU-Puppet Theatre of Japan (In colour, 28 min.)

Planned by The Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Version (English, French, Spanish, German)

* FESTIVAL INTERNAZIONALE DEL CINEMA FORMATO RIDOTTO TROFEO GOLFO DI SALERNO

5. NOH DRAMA (In colour, 30 min.)

Planned by The Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Version (English, French, Spanish, German, Portuguese, Italian)

* Gold Prize, Contest for Cultural Documentary Film on Japan

6. Sweets of Japan (In colour, 26 min.)

Planned by EITARO CONFECTIONARY
Version (English, Japanese)

* Gold prize, the Educational Film Contest.
* Silver prize, Contest for Cultural Documentary Film on Japan.
* Award for Educational and Cultural Film, the 20th Annual Japanese Motion Picture Concours.

7. Culinary Arts of Japan (In colour, 30 min.)

Planned by The Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Version (English, French, Spanish, German, Portuguese)

* Gold prize, Contest for Cultural Documentary Film on Japan.

8. Living Arts of Japan (In colour, 28 min.)

Planned by The Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Version (English, French, Spanish, German, Portuguese)

* The Highest Prize in 7th Contest for Cultural Documentary Films on Japan.

9. Handicrafts-Beauty of Japan (In colour, 21 min.)

Planned by Japan External Trade Organization
Version (English, French, Russian)

* Gold Mercury Prize, Venice Film Festival.
* Tourism Film Contest Prize.
* Prize for excellence, Contest for Cultural Documentary Film on Japan.

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