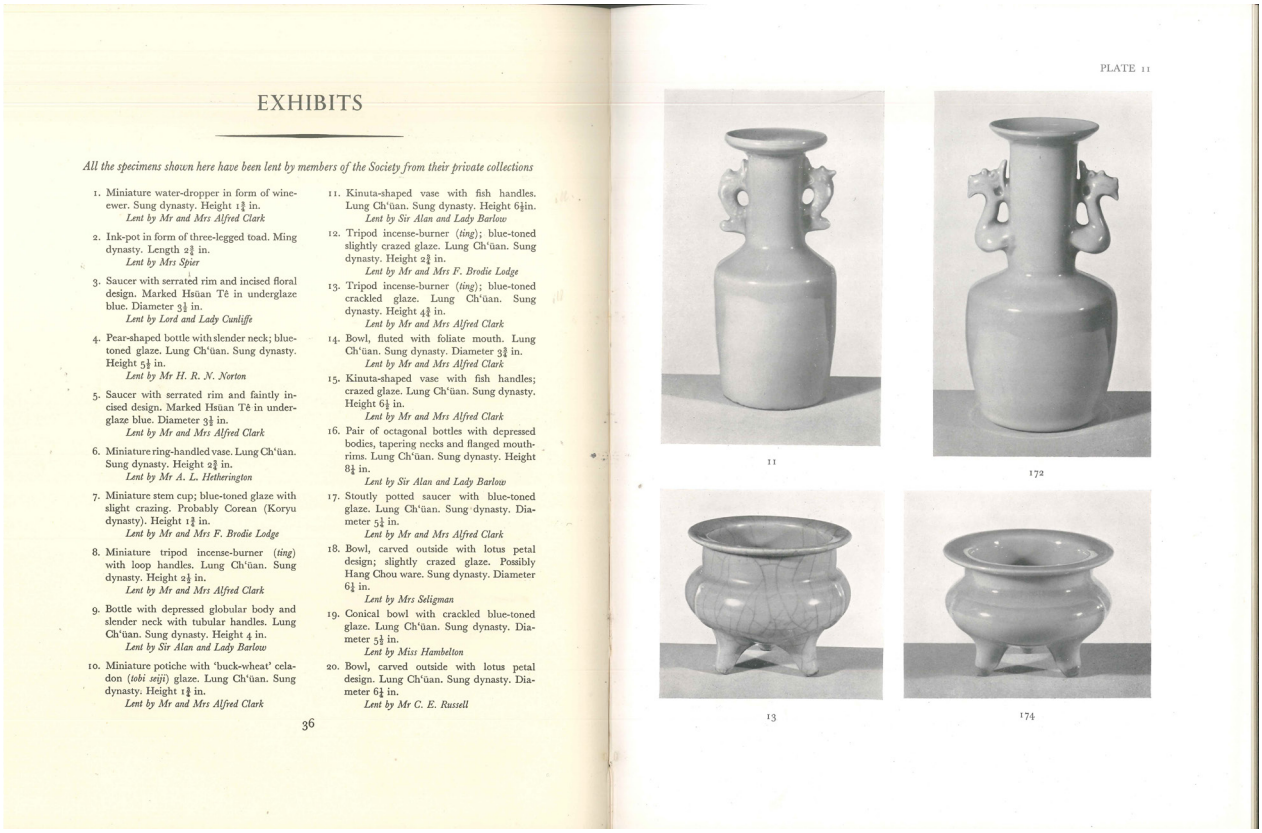
# KINDRED SPIRITS: 100 JAPANESE CERAMICS IN CHINESE STYLE

*Lecture given by Clare Pollard on Tuesday 14 October 2025*

In winter 1947, the Oriental Ceramic Society held an exhibition called '*Celadon Wares*', showcasing greenwares from China, Korea, Thailand and Japan. In his introduction to the catalogue, A. L. Hetherington observed that: 'modern Japanese celadons [based on Chinese technique and largely copied from Song wares] are of exceptionally fine quality so far as glaze effect is concerned and cause considerable trouble to collectors'. The catalogue demonstrates the point by illustrating Chinese and Japanese works side-by-side (fig. 1).[1]

[1] Hetherington 1948, pp 34, 36 and 45. See catalogue nos 11 and 162, and nos 13 and 174 respectively.



EXHIBITS

*All the specimens shown here have been lent by members of the Society from their private collections*

1. Miniature water-dropper in form of wine-ewer. Sung dynasty. Height 1⅞ in.
*Lent by Mr and Mrs Alfred Clark*
2. Ink-pot in form of three-legged toad. Ming dynasty. Length 2⅜ in.
*Lent by Mrs Spier*
3. Saucer with serrated rim and incised floral design. Marked Hsüan Tê in underglaze blue. Diameter 3¼ in.
*Lent by Lord and Lady Cunliffe*
4. Pear-shaped bottle with slender neck; blue-toned glaze. Lung Ch'üan. Sung dynasty. Height 5⅛ in.
*Lent by Mr H. R. N. Norton*
5. Saucer with serrated rim and faintly incised design. Marked Hsüan Tê in underglaze blue. Diameter 3⅛ in.
*Lent by Mr and Mrs Alfred Clark*
6. Miniature ring-handled vase. Lung Ch'üan. Sung dynasty. Height 2⅜ in.
*Lent by Mr A. L. Hetherington*
7. Miniature stem cup; blue-toned glaze with slight crazing. Probably Corean (Koryu dynasty). Height 1⅜ in.
*Lent by Mr and Mrs F. Brodie Lodge*
8. Miniature tripod incense-burner (*ting*) with loop handles. Lung Ch'üan. Sung dynasty. Height 2⅛ in.
*Lent by Mr and Mrs Alfred Clark*
9. Bottle with depressed globular body and slender neck with tubular handles. Lung Ch'üan. Sung dynasty. Height 4 in.
*Lent by Sir Alan and Lady Barlow*
10. Miniature potiche with 'buck-wheat' celadon (*tobi seiji*) glaze. Lung Ch'üan. Sung dynasty. Height 1⅜ in.
*Lent by Mr and Mrs Alfred Clark*
11. Kinuta-shaped vase with fish handles. Lung Ch'üan. Sung dynasty. Height 6⅛in.
*Lent by Sir Alan and Lady Barlow*
12. Tripod incense-burner (*ting*); blue-toned slightly crazed glaze. Lung Ch'üan. Sung dynasty. Height 2⅜ in.
*Lent by Mr and Mrs F. Brodie Lodge*
13. Tripod incense-burner (*ting*); blue-toned crackled glaze. Lung Ch'üan. Sung dynasty. Height 4⅜ in.
*Lent by Mr and Mrs Alfred Clark*
14. Bowl, fluted with foliate mouth. Lung Ch'üan. Sung dynasty. Diameter 3⅜ in.
*Lent by Mr and Mrs Alfred Clark*
15. Kinuta-shaped vase with fish handles; crazed glaze. Lung Ch'üan. Sung dynasty. Height 6½ in.
*Lent by Mr and Mrs Alfred Clark*
16. Pair of octagonal bottles with depressed bodies, tapering necks and flanged mouth-rims. Lung Ch'üan. Sung dynasty. Height 8¼ in.
*Lent by Sir Alan and Lady Barlow*
17. Stoutly potted saucer with blue-toned glaze. Lung Ch'üan. Sung dynasty. Diameter 5¼ in.
*Lent by Mr and Mrs Alfred Clark*
18. Bowl, carved outside with lotus petal design; slightly crazed glaze. Possibly Hang Chou ware. Sung dynasty. Diameter 6¼ in.
*Lent by Mrs Seligman*
19. Conical bowl with crackled blue-toned glaze. Lung Ch'üan. Sung dynasty. Diameter 5¼ in.
*Lent by Miss Hambelton*
20. Bowl, carved outside with lotus petal design. Lung Ch'üan. Sung dynasty. Diameter 6¼ in.
*Lent by Mr C. E. Russell*

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PLATE 11

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Fig. 1. A L. Hetherington, 'Catalogue of the Exhibition of Celadon Wares from October 20th to December 20th, 1947', *Transactions of the Oriental Ceramic Society*, 23 (1947–1948) Japanese works illustrated to the right.



Fig. 2. Selection of Japanese ceramics in Song-dynasty, Ming-dynasty and Qing-dynasty styles, Shen Zhai collection.

The 'considerable trouble' mentioned by Hetherington in the catalogue piqued the interest of Singaporean collector Patrick Kwok. Kwok had long been fascinated by Longquan celadons, but learning that the Japanese mallet vase featured in the 1947 exhibition was by the Japanese potter Suwa Sozan I (1851–1922), he was inspired to start a new direction of research and collecting in the field of modern Japanese ceramics in Chinese style. Through systematic additions to his Shen Zhai collection, he created a representative group of works ranging from celadon, *tenmoku*, copper red, underglaze blue and Dehua-style white porcelains, overglaze enamelled porcelains and *fahua* wares (fig. 2). This is an area that has been relatively little studied, despite extensive research into the crucial role played by Chinese ceramics in Japan in earlier centuries.[2] From the beginning of diplomatic relations with China in the 6th century, precious Chinese objects were valued as symbols of authority and power for religious or military elites in Japan. Over time, such objects became more widely accessible, although still regarded as coveted luxury goods: desired by newly emergent merchant classes, revered in tea ceremony circles or enjoyed as part of literati culture and Chinese-style tea-drinking practices. At the same time, Japanese makers also always looked to Chinese ceramics as models, studying and emulating them.

For Japanese ceramics of the late 19th to early 20th century, however, the focus of research has tended to be on Japan's relationship with Europe and the USA. In the mid–19th century, the Western powers forced Japan to open up to international

[2] Such studies are too numerous to list here, but Rousmaniere 2013 was a particular inspiration for this book and article.

trade, bringing an end to centuries of military rule under the Tokugawa shoguns. The new government, ruling in the name of the Emperor Meiji, enthusiastically embraced Western culture in its efforts to build a strong state capable of holding its own on the world stage. Within just a few decades, the country had transformed itself from a semi-isolated feudalistic society into a modern, industrialised nation state and emergent world power. Studies of Meiji ceramics have mostly explored developments within the narrative of the modernisation of Japan and the exciting new commercial, technical and artistic opportunities created by interactions with the West. The reality was more complex. The ratification of a Friendship and Trade Treaty in 1873 and the establishment of a Chinese legation in Tokyo in 1877 led to increased interaction between Japan and China, while the Japanese government encouraged makers to look not only to the West but also to their own past as a source of artistic inspiration, national pride and international esteem. This led to a re-evaluation of Japan's classical artistic heritage—a heritage that had long encompassed China.

These circumstances led to a remarkable flowering of Chinese-inspired ceramics—mainly porcelain—for both domestic and export markets. Despite important pioneering research by scholars such as Maezaki Shinya and Okamoto Takashi, the field has received little scholarly attention.[3] *Kindred Spirits*, published last October with the generous support of the Ceramica-Stiftung, is the first comprehensive monograph dedicated to the subject.[4] The book presents 100 examples of Chinese-style Japanese ceramics from the Shen Zhai collection, fully illustrated with marks and accompanying *tomobako* box inscriptions, and sets them into their historical and artistic contexts. Clare Pollard was invited to edit the volume and explore the background to the relationship between Japanese ceramics and China; Rose Kerr to consider the Chinese models that so inspired Japanese potters; Maezaki Shinya to shed light on the life and work of the important but little-known potter Suwa Sozan; and Fukunaga Ai to examine the historiography of the 'Chinese style' in Japanese ceramics. Through a selection of six works from the collection, and drawing on contributions by all the authors, this paper illustrates key aspects of the artistic dialogue between Japan and China and its expression during the Meiji, Taishō and early Shōwa eras.

The first example is a mallet vase with decorative handles in the shape of *hōō* phoenixes, made around 1913–4 by the Kyoto-based potter Suwa Sozan I (fig. 3). It is very similar to the one displayed as no. 172 in the 1947 OCS exhibition. Sozan was born in Kutani, a major centre of Japanese ceramic production in northern central Japan. He moved to Tokyo in 1875 to study and work before moving back to Kutani, finally settling in Kyoto, where he established his own kiln in 1907. Here he produced a wide variety of pots, drawing broadly on the ceramic traditions of Japan, Korea, China and modern Europe. He also worked as a restorer, not just of ceramics but of lacquerware.[5] In recognition of these multiple achievements, in 1917 he was awarded the title of *Teishitsu gigeiin*, or 'Imperial Household Artist', the highest honour for an artist in Japan at the time.[6]

Sozan is best known for his interpretations of Chinese Song-dynasty porcelain. This mallet vase was inspired by Chinese originals made at the great ceramic centre of Longquan in Zhejiang province during its heyday in the 12th and 13th centuries. It is especially reminiscent of the fine celadons of the Dayao kilns, with their soft, jade-like glazes. Longquan celadons represent a relatively early chapter in the history of Sino-Japanese ceramic contact. After the fall of the Song court in 1279, a wave of Chinese Zen Buddhist monks emigrated to Japan. As a result, imported Chinese luxury goods, including silks, musical instruments and ceramics, became more readily available for use in Buddhist temples and by the military elite. These items were known as *karamono*, or 'things Chinese'. Vases like this one were exported to Japan from around this time. Because of their shape they were called *kinuta seiji*, 'mallet [fulling block] celadon', and were highly prized by Japanese elites for their desirable glaze colour. They were the quintessential *karamono* luxury goods, symbolising the wealth, power, elite status and superior culture of their owners, and were passed down from generation to generation.

Sozan's fascination with classic Chinese ceramics reflected the complex cultural climate of the time. Despite the wave of Westernisation in Japan after the Meiji Restoration of 1868, most Japanese citizens,

[3] See, for example, Okamoto 2005, Okamoto 2008, Maezaki 2009 and Maezaki 2010.

[4] Pollard *et al*., 2024.

[5] Kuroda 1920, p. 137.

[6] Only five ceramicists were ever honoured with the title of Imperial Household Artist: as well as Suwa Sozan, there were Seifū Yohei III, Miyagawa Kōzan I, Itō Tōzan I and Itaya Hazan. All these artists excelled in Chinese-style ceramics and examples of their works form the core of the Shen Zhai collection.








Fig. 3. Suwa Sozan I, celadon vase with *hōō* handles, porcelain with celadon glaze and moulded handles, circa 1913–14, height 26.5 cm, Shen Zhai collection 1–1 (1).

educated within a Chinese Confucian system, maintained a deep knowledge of and respect for Chinese culture. During the 1890s, attitudes towards contemporary China became more ambivalent, as the growing social unrest and political instability in China undermined Japan's idealised image of the country. Sino-Japanese relations were further strained by rivalry over interests in the Korean peninsula, which eventually led to war in 1894. However, Japan's victory over China and its growing self-confidence as it expanded its empire into Asia fostered a renewed appreciation of Chinese art and culture. Chinese cultural symbols were no longer appreciated from a desire to claim the moral virtue and prestige of an elite culture, but instead as a means of helping Japan to construct its own national identity vis-à-vis the West—absorbed into a new East Asian art that could

stand confidently in opposition to Western civilisation.[7] A further revival of interest in Chinese art among Japanese artists, collectors and connoisseurs was stimulated by the social upheaval in China at the end of the Qing dynasty, which saw many important imperial and aristocratic porcelain collections sold to Japan.[8]

There existed several similar Chinese mallet vases in Japanese collections that might have served as inspiration for this one. The most famous is a vase that once belonged to the third Tokugawa shogun, Iemitsu (ruled 1632–51). It was named 'Bansei' (Ten Thousand Voices) after a line from the Chinese poet Bo Juyi's poem 'Hearing the Fulling Blocks at Night' (*Wen ye zhen*). Now designated a National Treasure, it is owned by the Kubosō Memorial Museum of Arts in Izumi city, but in Sozan's day was held at Bishamondō Temple in Kyoto.[9] Such treasures became far more accessible over the course of the Meiji era, thanks to a proliferation of exhibitions hosted by learned societies and local authorities, and the publication of specialist art magazines such as the periodical *Kokka*, established in 1889 specifically to promote East Asian art. In his capacity as a restorer, Sozan also regularly visited Kyoto temples and private collections. He first developed his version of *kinuta seiji* in 1907 and succeeded in creating an exact copy of 'Bansei' in 1913. He donated this work to the Tokyo Imperial Household Museum (now Tokyo National Museum) the following year.

Sozan's celadons were very close to their Chinese models, as A. L. Hetherington noted in 1947. In an interview in 1920, Sozan commented wryly that his works sometimes came on the Japanese market as 'Chinese antiques', at higher prices than he could have sold them as original Sozan pieces, despite the fact that they were all signed, with inscribed *tomobako* boxes. Sozan's celadons are an excellent example of the Japanese tradition of *utsushi*, or imitating past masters for study, inspiration and to demonstrate knowledge and refinement, a practice that builds on the Chinese idea of copying as an intentional act of honouring a past creation. In ceramics, *utsushi* were not usually straight copies of classical works; rather they were imaginative reinterpretations that aimed to capture the spirit of an existing work while allowing a new generation of artists to show off their own skill and creativity. While Sozan's vases are mostly very faithful tributes to their Chinese ancestors, a tea bowl by his adopted daughter Torako is an *utsushi* with a more personal twist (fig. 4). Suwa Torako, a rare female potter of the period, became Suwa Sozan II on the death of her father in 1922. She continued the repertoire of celadon styles so successfully established by Sozan I but often subtly adjusted the forms of her vessels and the application of her glazes to suit her own personal aesthetic. This bowl uses the *tobi seiji*, 'flying celadon' technique, with rust-coloured splashes on a celadon ground. The technique was developed at the Longquan kilns during the Yuan dynasty and was particularly prized by practitioners of the Japanese tea ceremony during the Muromachi period (1336–1573). *Tobi seiji* is most commonly seen on bottle-shaped vases but Sozan II uses the technique, unusually, to decorate a tea bowl.

The Chinese practice of tea drinking has had an enormous impact on Japanese ceramics over the centuries. The practice of formal tea drinking, or *chanoyu*, was taken up by Japanese military leaders in the 12th century as a way of strengthening their social position in relation to the imperial court and the aristocracy. Initially, tea was consumed as part of lavish gatherings in specially constructed banquet-room complexes decorated with elaborate displays of prized *karamono*, including celadons from the Longquan kilns. Imported Chinese tea ceramics also inspired Japanese domestic ceramic production, as Japanese versions of celadon, *tenmoku* and other wares began to be made as cheaper substitutes for expensive Chinese prototypes, albeit often using different materials and techniques. Japanese potters were frequently very inventive in the way they recreated Chinese effects: the Sozan family, for instance, used copper instead of the iron oxide more usually employed in China to make the brown splashes in *tobi seiji*. *Chanoyu* continued to evolve over the centuries. By the early 1900s, it was undergoing a revival under the patronage of newly wealthy businessmen such as Masuda Takashi (1848–1938), director of the Mitsui conglomerate.[10] Once again, Chinese antiquities became fashionable status symbols for such Japanese wealthy elites, and Japanese potters responded in turn.

By the 1920s, the appreciation of Chinese art and culture had blossomed into full-blown *tōyō shumi*', or 'Japanese oriental' taste, extending Chinese taste beyond

[7] For discussions of changing Japanese attitudes to China in the Meiji era, see Buckland 2012 and Guth 2006.

[8] Maezaki 2009, p. 160.

[9] Rousmaniere 2013, pp 84–6.

[10] See Guth 1993.



Fig. 4. Suwa Sozan II, *tobi seiji* celadon tea bowl with brown spots, porcelain with celadon glaze and copper oxide, 1922–77, diameter 13.8 cm, Shen Zhai collection 2–2 (21).

elite circles.[11] During World War I, Japanese industry had expanded rapidly, with Japan serving as a wartime supplier to the Allies and increasing its trade with other Asian nations. This industrial expansion led to major changes in the social and economic structure of Japan, with large sections of the rural population migrating to urban areas. Greater prosperity led to growing consumerism, particularly in the big cities. Department stores enthusiastically catered to the growing urban market and, with imperialist Japan increasingly assuming the role of the 'guardian' of Asian cultures, Chinese and other types of Asian art became popular products. Department stores not only sold Chinese art but also educated their customers, holding exhibitions and producing catalogues containing illustrations and information as well as prices (which were high but not completely beyond the reach of middle-class customers). Asian (and Asian-style) artworks became a modern version of *karamono*.[12]

Another Chinese ceramic style that saw a revival in late 19th-century was copper-red glazed porcelain. Changing tastes and a worldwide recession in the 1880s led to a fall in the overseas demand for elaborate

[11] See Tanaka 1993, Sand 2000 and Oh 2019.

[12] Oh 2019, p. 69.

Satsuma-style enamelled earthenwares that had dominated the market for a decade, forcing Japanese potters to adapt their wares. Many turned to porcelain manufacture, taking advantage of newly imported chemical glaze technology. Some introduced pictorial motifs of flowers, fish and birds designed to appeal to the taste for Japonisme, while others—described by the Yokohama-based journalist and collector Frank Brinkley (1841–1912) as 'the Sinico-Japanese school'—turned to Chinese-style monochrome glazes.[13] The emergence of Chinese-style ceramics at this time reflected not only Japan's relationship with China but also Japanese and Chinese interactions with Europe and the US, illustrating the complex artistic cross-currents of the era. Increased diplomatic contact with China, together with Chinese participation at the international fairs, made Chinese ceramics more accessible around the world, especially after the looting of the emperor's Summer Palace in Beijing in 1860 released a large number of Chinese imperial porcelains onto the market. These were mostly porcelains associated with the Ming and Qing courts, rather than the earlier works that had been so prized historically in Japan.

Over the next few decades, collectors paid astronomical sums for exquisite Chinese vases. Particularly fashionable were *yōhen* 'transmutation' or *flambé* glazes (Chinese *yaobian*), and of these the notoriously difficult copper-red glazes drew the highest admiration. William Walters famously paid $18,000 for a spectacular 'peachbloom vase' from the Mary Morgan collection in 1886.[14] At the same time, extensive scientific research into the creation of Chinese glaze effects was undertaken at Sèvres, Limoges, Royal Copenhagen and many other ceramic centres across Europe and the USA. The grand vase illustrated in fig 5, by Kyoto potter Kiyomizu Rokubei V (1875–1959), is a magnificent example of a Chinese-style copper-red transmutation glaze. It was made around the same time as Suwa Sozan's mallet vase and recalls copper-red porcelains of the Yongzheng and Qianlong eras, which themselves sought to recreate the famous classical Jun wares of the Song dynasty.

Kiyomizu Rokubei V was an important figure in the development of modern Kyoto ceramics. A highly versatile potter, he took inspiration from a variety of sources, from Japanese Rinpa design to Art Nouveau and Chinese porcelain. Rokubei was fascinated by glaze composition throughout his career, having been a student at the Kyoto City Ceramic Research Institute, one of several technical research institutions established by the Meiji government as part of its modernisation campaign. He harnessed his new technical knowledge to recreate a variety of classic Chinese glazes, including *tenmoku* and copper red. The box inscription for this vase identifies the glaze as '*shusha*', literally 'cinnabar-red', a Japanese term for the copper-red Chinese glaze more commonly known as *shinsha*. The inscription describes the unpredictability and beauty of the copper-red glaze and expresses the maker's desire to create something new from the old: 'Current and past kilns in Asia and the West may have created small items with brilliantly coloured *shusha* glaze, but I have long thought it a shame that no large-scale items have been created.'[15]

A variation of transmutation glaze that became popular in the early 1900s in Japan was the crystalline glaze. The striking incense burner illustrated in fig. 6 is by the Kyoto potter Seifū Yohei III (1851–1914), the very first ceramic artist to earn the title of Imperial Household Artist. Yohei was raised within a *bunjin* literati environment. The family business was the production of *sencha* utensils, many of which were in Chinese style. From Seifū Yohei II he inherited a repertoire that included copies of Chinese underglaze blue, celadon and *kinrande* porcelain as well as enamelled earthenwares in Dōhachi style. During the 1880s he combined family traditions with modern technological advances to develop a wide range of new techniques and glazes after Chinese models—both for overglaze and underglaze decoration.[16] The bronze- and gold-coloured crystalline glaze on this censer cleverly simulates a Chinese bronze Buddhist alms bowl of the Ming dynasty. Even the base is glazed brown to simulate bronze. In China the alms bowl shape was an idealised form, associated with mendicant Buddhist monks who lived in rustic simplicity, an image that had great appeal for the Chinese scholar. During the 17th century, cast-bronze alms bowls were often converted to incense burners for the scholar's studio, while new incense burners, often embellished with gold splashes, were created to look like alms bowls. The censer may also refer to Qianlong porcelain imitations of similar gilt-splashed bronze prototypes and testifies to Yohei III's deep knowledge of Chinese ceramics and antiques.

[13] Pollard 2002, p. 61 and Brinkley 1900, p. 27.

[14] Frick Collection and Hearst Archive.

[15] Thanks to Maezaki Shinya for transliterating and translating the box inscription.

[16] Maezaki & Vilbar 2023.



Fig. 5. Kiyomizu Rokubei V, copper-red glazed vase, porcelain with copper-red *flambé* glaze, impressed mark *Kiyo*, circa 1918, 54.5 x 41 cm, Shen Zhai collection 26–3 (188).







Fig. 6. Seifū Yohei III, incense burner in the form of a Buddhist alms bowl, porcelain with crystalline glaze, circa 1900–14, diameter 12.5 cm, Shen Zhai collection 5–4 (53).

The *chabin* tea kettle shown in fig 7 is by another Kyoto potter Takahashi (Nin'ami) Dōhachi (1783–1855), and illustrates another important, earlier, chapter in the history of Sino-Japanese ceramic exchange. In the 1740s, the government relaxed restrictions on the importation of foreign books and artworks. This led to the arrival of numerous works by Chinese *wenren* or literati—scholar-bureaucrats who had renounced the pursuit of wealth and power to devote themselves to a life of cultivation and connoisseurship. There soon emerged a group of Japanese intellectuals and artists who aspired to emulate the cultural attainments of these Chinese literati. They were known in Japanese as *bunjin*. *Bunjin* culture, with its positive associations of continental refinement, appealed both to samurai looking to escape the tedium of government during peacetime, and also to affluent merchants at the bottom of the social hierarchy seeking an outlet for their wealth and leisure. It was given further



Fig. 7. Takahashi Dōhachi II (Nin'ami Dōhachi), Shonzui-style teapot with a design of *kirin*, soft-paste porcelain with underglaze blue, mid–19th century, 13.5 x 17.5 cm, Shen Zhai collection 11–1 (55).

moral authority by Chinese émigré monks of the Ōbaku sect of Zen Buddhism, who settled in Japan after the fall of the Ming dynasty in 1644. The monks themselves practised literati pastimes and brought many associated materials with them.[17]

Part of the literati ideal was to pursue the arts in the company of like-minded individuals. *Bunjin* gathered to compose Chinese poetry, play music, create *bunjinga* (literati-style paintings) and display Chinese artworks. They also drank tea—not the whipped *matcha* tea associated with the military regime but the steeped tea known as *sencha*, poured from teapots and served not in large tea bowls but in small cups, usually made of light-coloured porcelain to show off the colour of the tea. These were made mainly in Ming and Qing styles, rather than the earlier styles that appealed to *chanoyu* practitioners. At first the demand for *sencha* utensils was met by imports from China, but Japanese versions were quickly developed. Kyoto became a centre of *bunjin* culture and also a centre of *sencha*-related ceramic manufacture.[18] Dōhachi lived in the Awataguchi area of Kyoto at the height of the fashion for *sencha* tea drinking, and a large part of his output was in the form of *sencha* utensils: teapots, braziers and tea cups. This *chabin* is decorated with lively underglaze blue painting of *kirin* among peonies and its lid handle is in the form of a *shishi* lion dog—both auspicious and suitably Chinese creatures. The box inscription identifies the style of the work as 'Shonzui', a type of Chinese underglaze-blue porcelain first developed in the 1630s and '40s especially for Japanese *matcha* tea aficionados.

The popularity of *sencha* continued after the Meiji Restoration. The leaders of the new Meiji government and the industrialists and educators initiating social and economic changes were mostly former samurai who had received a classical Chinese education under the Tokugawa regime. These men continued to look to China for their intellectual and moral framework and enjoyed Chinese cultural pursuits in their private leisure time. During the turbulent years before the Meiji Restoration and throughout the radical reorganisation of social and political structures in the early Meiji era, *bunjin* ideals and practices offered these men a welcome sense of continuity, and their well-established networks of literati acquaintances provided stability and support. Politicians, industrialists, intellectuals and art dealers would meet regularly for political discussions, art demonstrations and *sencha* tea drinking, with Chinese and Japanese ceramics and other scholarly objects playing an essential role at these gatherings.[19]

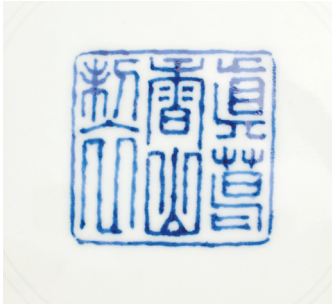
The vase illustrated in fig. 8, with a 'Chinese palace landscape' by the Yokohama-based potter Miyagawa Kōzan I (1842–1916), is another fine Japanese interpretation of a classic Chinese subject in underglaze blue. In 1870, shortly after the Meiji Restoration, Kōzan moved from Kyoto, where his family had been making tea ceramics for generations, to the newly opened port of Yokohama. Here he set up a workshop making Satsuma-style ceramics for export. In response to the changing market, however, he shifted to the production of colourful porcelain products from the 1880s. These included a wide range of Chinese-inspired ceramics that were enormously successful both within Japan and abroad. Like Seifū Yohei, Kōzan was born and brought up in Kyoto, a background that provided him with a grounding in Chinese culture that informed his later work. From an early age Kōzan studied *bunjinga* Chinese ink painting, acquiring skills that he would later apply to ceramic decoration. His father, Miyagawa Chōzō, had studied with the *bunjin* potter and painter Aoki Mokubei (1767–1833) and the family made a range of Chinese-style *sencha* wares after Mokubei's designs. While also keeping abreast of artistic developments in the West, Kōzan maintained a lifelong interest in Chinese culture, becoming a member of many of the art societies that promoted Chinese works and opening an antique business selling old Japanese, Korean, Chinese and Southeast Asian artworks in 1907.[20]

This vase is clearly deeply indebted to mid–17th-century porcelain landscape vases from Jingdezhen. Landscape elements had featured on Chinese porcelain since the Yuan dynasty, but it was not until the turbulent decades at the end of the Ming dynasty that landscape emerged as a design subject in its own right, rather than simply as a setting for figures. From the 1620s, many high-quality Chinese porcelains began to be decorated with idealised landscape scenes inspired by contemporary ink paintings and woodblock-printed books. At this time, Jingdezhen potters began to cater to a new group of patrons—the *wenren* literati-gentry. For these men, mountain landscapes represented an idyllic escape from the realities of daily life, and

[17] See Graham 1999.
[18] See Kawahara 1981 and Nakanodō 1985.
[19] Buckland 2012, p. 43.
[20] Pollard 2002, pp 10–1, 51–3, 56.



Fig. 8. Miyagawa Kōzan I, vase with a design of a mountain landscape and Chinese palace buildings, porcelain with underglaze blue, circa 1910–16, height 44 cm, Shen Zhai collection 7–8 (111), (ex-Tanabe Tetsundo collection).







loyalty to the Ming emperor. By the early 18th century, panoramic mountain landscapes featuring elaborate pavilions among forests, cliffs and lakes were being executed with extraordinary finesse.[21] While this vase was undoubtedly informed by the soft blue landscape designs being produced around the same time at the Danish Royal Copenhagen Porcelain Manufactory, and by contemporary 'Nihonga' (Japanese painting), the range of brush strokes used to depict details of the mountains, trees and palace buildings, and the subtly graded washes expressing the atmospheric effects of mist and clouds are above all reminiscent of Chinese ink painting. The Chinese inspiration for the vase is indicated by the box inscription, which describes the style of underglaze blue decoration as *'seika'*—the Japanese term denoting Chinese-style underglaze blue decoration, rather than the traditional Japanese '*sometsuke*'.

With Japan's growing presence on the international stage, landscape designs became more than an expression of refinement and skill, taking on increasingly nationalistic implications. From around 1900, Kōzan frequently used Japan's sacred mountain and national icon, Mount Fuji, as a decorative motif, but Chinese motifs such as the palace landscape also came to serve a similar purpose. China had long been an integral part of Japanese art heritage, but copying Chinese models now became tied up with Meiji Japan's attempts to establish its new status as an imperial power: Chinese designs and styles gained a complex symbolism as expressions of an idealised East—a region under the guardianship of Japan as a pan-Asian leader. This vase, like so many others in *Kindred Spirits*, reflects Japan's evolving sense of national identity during the late 19th and early 20th century and gives an insight into the ongoing relationship between Japanese ceramics and China at the time.

[21] Curtis 1995, pp 16–7 and Little 1995, pp 35–41.

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