



# BERNARD LEACH : DISCOVERED ARCHIVES

EDITED BY SIMON OLDING

CRAFTS  
STUDY  
CENTRE

LIC  
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Creative Arts

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FOREWORD BY DAME MAGDALENE ODUNDO

CHAPTERS BY YUKO MATSUZAKI, SIMON OLDING

AND SADAHIRO SUZUKI

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**FOREWORD : AN ENCOUNTER  
WITH BERNARD LEACH  
MAGDALENE ODUNDO**

The admission pack I received from West Surrey College of Art and Design, Farnham in 1973 included a congratulatory letter of acceptance, brochures of the town, a rail timetable, a reading list and a set research project relevant to one's chosen subject of study. Everyone was expected to have read *The Story of Art* by Ernst Gombrich. Ceramics students like me were directed to *A Potter's Book* by Bernard Leach and *Pioneer Pottery* by Michael Cardew. At the time, I was switching subjects from commercial art and advertising and found both books hard to grasp. I have subsequently read biographies and various essays on both authors in depth. But the two textbooks in my library continue to be accessed for reference and as dictionaries of studio ceramics. Bernard Leach was the star we all wanted to meet and hear.

The ceramics course was led by Henry Hammond, who accompanied us on a study trip to Cornwall in 1974. On the way we visited several potteries, including Cardew's Winchcombe Pottery, and one of the highlights was being taken to the china clay mining pits. It is hard to visualise that these china clay pits are no longer working mines today. Our visit to the famous Leach Pottery was eagerly anticipated. David Leach and William Marshall led demonstrations, and we met the rest of the resident potters. We were shown around the kilns and Janet Leach spoke about her interest in Tamba wares. This description of Tamba ware firing by Janet Leach might have been the trigger for my later interest in carbonisation, and the accidental effects of the flame in such firings.

We were then ushered to a side room into which we tiptoed in silence as if entering a Trappist monastery or arriving at our pilgrimage destination. Janet Leach was a formidable figure; perhaps this made us feel like we were students at a primary school



assembly. The room was small, and we sat huddled together in a disciplined manner while others in the group stood at the back. Janet Leach then led Bernard Leach to his seat as he was, by then, rather blind. We listened in silence as Bernard Leach spoke about himself, his time in Japan, Shoji Hamada, his return to England and the establishment of the Pottery in St Ives. We were all awe struck by the status of Bernard Leach and his epic story of Japan, his travels to China and Korea, so none of us students asked questions. Thankfully, Henry Hammond did all the questioning, seemingly on our behalf.

Thinking back all these years now, apart from remembering the description of the Tamba pottery and firing that Janet Leach spoke of, what struck me most was the life of the objects embedded in the spirit of the place. The collection of individual tiles, pottery and prints made me understand the connection between Bernard Leach and his Japanese experience. These were not just things for decoration, they defined who he had become. The pots that were being made at the workshop came from years of travelling and living in the Far East and now they had matured into a St Ives Leach tradition that everyone could understand. These symbolic objects and the people around him, in essence, helped to signify who and what Bernard Leach was. This Anglo-Japanese potter surrounded himself with the things he had collected and the people he worked with throughout his travels.

The springtime study trip to Cornwall made an impact on me that was to influence my own journey as a ceramic artist. Bernard Leach worked comfortably between diverse cultures, materials and art mediums. This, I think, gave him a platform to create a dialogue between work and life. I hope working within the context of many cultural traditions and learning about diverse arts continues to enrich my own artwork and use such an important message for the present time.

## INTRODUCTION

SIMON OLDING

This book has been planned, for some time, as the principal means by which the Crafts Study Centre would help to celebrate the centenary of the founding of the Leach Pottery in St Ives in 1920. We are delighted to be able to play a part in the international programme of events which has been organised by the Leach Pottery, sadly interrupted by the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. This is also a book which has been researched, written and designed in lockdown. Research, writing and exhibiting collections and archives lies at the heart of the Crafts Study Centre's mission. Founded in 1970 as a registered charity, the Crafts Study Centre has systematically collected objects and associated archives in discrete fields of the studio crafts: ceramics, textiles, lettering and calligraphy, wood and furniture.

The board of Trustees has always included celebrated practitioners in these fields, and in the first decade of the charity, Henry Hammond (then teaching ceramics at the Farnham School of Art) played his part, along with the curator and critic Muriel Rose, in helping 'our friend Bernard Leach' to 'readily lodge a collection of his pots with us'. The collection was presented for display and research at the Crafts Study Centre's first home, within the Holburne Museum in Bath. In the year 2000, the Crafts Study Centre relocated to Farnham and began a new partnership with the University for the Creative Arts, occupying a purpose-built museum which opened to the public in 2004. Two distinguished makers in the field of ceramics have chaired the board since that move: Edmund de Waal and, presently, Alison Britton.

*Bernard Leach : Discovered Archives* links to an exhibition at the Crafts Study Centre, *The Leach Pottery: 100 years on from St Ives*, based on the extensive collections and archives from, and associated with, Bernard Leach held at the museum. The exhibition

opened to the public on 29 September 2020. Leach was one of the great founding donors to the Crafts Study Centre in its early years, and the scope of this book covers his personal gifts as well as remarkable archives that have come to light very recently. The second purpose of the book has been to bring together writers from the UK and Japan to consider Leach's archive, collection and personal writings in the context of his own efforts, as Soetsu Yanagi wrote in the commemorative book *An English Artist in Japan* (1920) to 'knit the East and West together by art'.

There is another factor that links the essays in the book. Each writer has attempted to say something new. This may be an impossibly bold claim. Leach himself wrote inexhaustibly, and the groundbreaking biographies of Edmund de Waal and Emmanuel Cooper have brought, in their own ways, significant new information, as well as critical arguments, to light. The major retrospective exhibitions held by the Victoria & Albert Museum, London (*The Art of Bernard Leach*, 1977), *Bernard Leach: Potter and Artist* organised by the Crafts Council and touring to Japan (1997–8), *Bernard Leach and his Circle*, Tate St Ives, 2007 and Emmanuel Cooper's touring exhibition *Bernard Leach: Concept and Form* organised by Penlee House Gallery and Museum in 2002–3 (and displayed on its run at the James Hockey Gallery, UCA Farnham) all uncovered new insights and presented works both central to the understanding of Leach and works rarely, if ever, seen in public. However, the recent emergence of ceramics, archives, drawings and personal letters over the past two years or so, which have been acquired by purchase or gift by the Trustees of the Crafts Study Centre, have enabled the writers to study materials that have been safely kept in private. The book is the first effort to understand Leach through the discovered archive and the newly published works of art contained there.

The rediscovery of a number of cards that were made to catalogue Bernard Leach's personal collection of ceramics in the 1970s underpins the opening chapter. It is also based on the generous testimony of a number of the Leach potters and members of the

Leach family, and thus has a deeper grounding in the cultural history of St Ives. These pots played a part in the daily round of the place, and the evocative nature of their presence is also vividly recalled by Dame Magdalene Odundo in her foreword.

A 'counterpoint' to the Leach personal collection in Japan is the Mashiko Sankokan Museum in Japan, which focuses on Shoji Hamada's collection. Hamada and Leach were life-long friends with deep and abiding respect for each other's creative work. They were also collectors, and a comparison is made in Yuko Matsuzaki's chapter which establishes the significance and extraordinary breadth of Hamada's museum, which is perhaps less well known in the UK.

Sadahiro Suzuki has undertaken the first study of a remarkable cache of letters written by Bernard Leach to Laurie Cookes during his trip to Japan in 1934–5, which enables us to understand in forensic detail his itinerary and the cultural achievements of that important trip. Leach was having an affair with Laurie, and the trip to Japan afforded him a chance to escape, at least physically, from the emotional turmoil. The letters reflect, in part, these intensely personal concerns, for he knew he was deliberately running away from problems that would need resolution. He found that he was much more in control of his creative development in Japan, and his extraordinary output and relentless itinerary is the focus of Dr Suzuki's chapter. We are very grateful to the Victoria & Albert Museum Purchase Fund for financial support towards the acquisition of the letters.

One further chapter considers the broad outlines of Alan Bell's Leach archive and collection, which was acquired by the Crafts Study Centre with the generous financial support of the Victoria & Albert Museum Purchase Fund and the Art Fund. It is perhaps the largest artistic archive relating to Leach ever to have been held in private hands, and the wealth of drawings, etchings and personal memorabilia is made the more important as Leach seems to have curated it as a gift to his friend and assistant, who helped with the preparation of his valedictory book *Beyond East and West*.

The chapters are arranged in two sections: one for St Ives and one for Japan, to hint at Leach's work, life and travels both from the base of the Leach Pottery in Cornwall, and in Japan, where he also found inspiration, deep friendships and a potent and strong cultural connection.

The book is published in 2020 as a contribution to the centenary of the Leach Pottery. But this is also a significant year in the history of the Crafts Study Centre, and the book is also intended as a 50th birthday present for the Centre.

## **PART 1 : ST IVES**

**CHAPTER 1**  
**BERNARD LEACH: 'LOOKING AT ANCESTORS'**  
SIMON OLDING

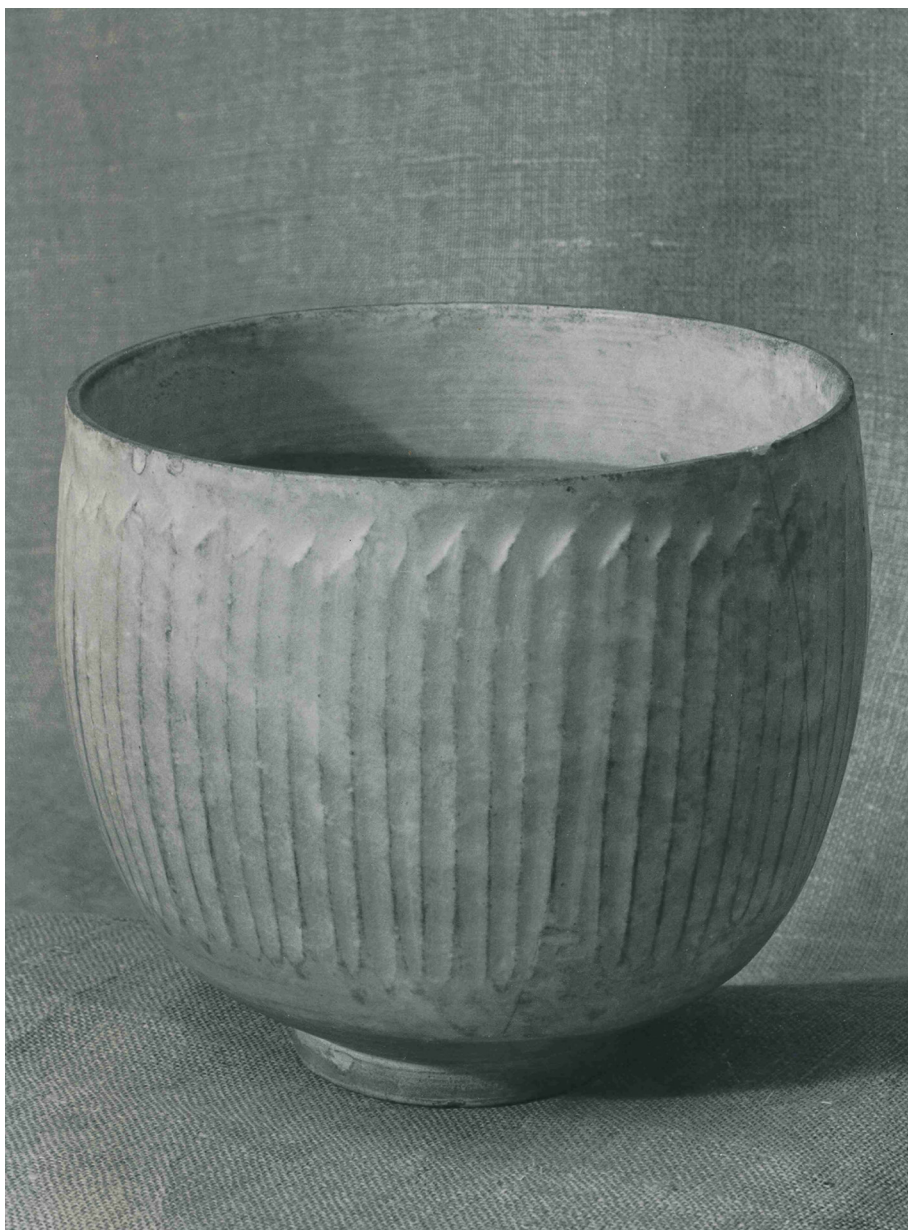
**INTRODUCTION**

Bernard Leach's biographer, the potter and writer Emmanuel Cooper, recalled a meeting in the early 1970s when he 'spent a memorable afternoon with Leach in his flat in St Ives'. Leach was clearly on good form, talkative and engaged. As he spoke, he would pick up a pot lying close to hand. His favoured works would be sitting on the windowsill of his flat, 4 Barnaloft, with its majestic vista across Porthmeor beach to the scudding Atlantic waves beyond. This view was timeless, and ever-changing.

[Leach] spoke about his early years in Japan and his growing belief that an essential ingredient of pots was what he called 'vitality', pointing out such qualities in a medieval pitcher, a Chinese Sung bowl and a small lidded pot by the French potter Francine Del Pierre, caressing the forms as he talked movingly about the pots and the potters who made them.<sup>1</sup>

This conversation and its didactic intentions were illustrated by works drawn from Leach's extensive collection of ceramics. They offered instant proof of the argument; his flat might be a proxy for the classroom, but it was a museum classroom full of appropriate works, ready to clinch the case. The collection, even from this microcosmic view, had a broad sweep. Leach took in a 12th-century Chinese stoneware bowl (figure 1), a sturdy, useful English earthenware jug (figure 2), and a contemporary vessel with a more personal resonance (figure 3). Leach had exhibited with both Del Pierre and Shoji Hamada in South America, and with the noted French potter in Japan after admiring her pots at Primavera, Henry Rothschild's gallery in London. Del Pierre's work was among the





1 Unknown photographer, black and white print, bowl, 12th century, Cizhou type stoneware, Northern Song or Jin, China. The description 'Sung' is written in Leach's handwriting on the back of the photograph. Crafts Study Centre, BHL/8245.

few modern ceramics Leach admired. The collection, as seen through this trio of pots, connects to Leach with technical, artistic, historical and emotional ties. This chapter focusses on the personal collection of ceramics that Bernard Leach built up over his lifetime as a practising potter. New information from Leach's archive has very recently come to light to enable a deeper consideration of this collection. I comment on terminology later, but primarily the phrase 'personal collection' is used as a catch-all phrase for the many ceramics that Leach bought or was given.

The 'Chinese Sung bowl'<sup>2</sup> was, perhaps, Leach's favourite work. It is recorded in a personal document, *Pottery Notes 1955–6*, which included a 'list of my collection'.<sup>3</sup> *Pottery Notes* had found its way into the collection of Leach memorabilia gathered up by Trevor Corser, himself a potter at the Leach Pottery (1965–2005)<sup>4</sup> and eventually sold by David Lay Auctioneers in Penzance in 2016.

This list is the first extant record that Leach made of his personal collection of pots: he notes that they were kept in the pottery studio. He described each work in a cursory line, broken down into categories: a number, a short description and a valuation. Number one, for example, was a 'Hamada travelling tea bowl (chipped) £3'. There was a large holding of ceramics by Shoji Hamada (38 in total). There were also precious and rare examples of Chinese Song dynasty ceramics (960–1279) – including his favoured fluted bowl, which Leach valued at £100, the most expensive pot in his collection. Other sections listed his ceramics from Japan and named works by other Japanese potters with whom he also worked closely and regarded as peers or close personal friends, for example Ogata Kenzan VI, Leach's master, and the first Kenzan (eight pots) all 'guaranteed by Hamada and Yanagi and Tomi[moto]'. There were additional pots by Kenkichi Tomimoto and Kanjiro Kawai, and 34 pots from Korea.

The list comes across less as a curator's research enquiry, more as an insurance valuation. The pots described in this formulaic manner were, at this stage, fundamentally a collection of historic East Asian ceramics. It was a later gathering than the pioneering collections of



**2** Unknown maker, jug with pricked strap handle, earthenware, 13th to 14th century, possibly Cheam, Surrey. h. 22.5cm x d. 17.5cm. Crafts Study Centre, P.79.70.

early Chinese, Korean and Japanese ceramics put together by British museums and private collectors such as George Eumorfopoulos in the 1920s. But it harked back to those collections, and it had a very personal potency, since Leach was buying works not in the sale room or through agents but in the field, in the antique shops and markets of Tokyo and Seoul. His fellow potters and artistic friends were also generous donors of work.



**3** Francine Del Pierre, lidded box, porcelain, 1960s, h. 8cm x d. 7cm. A gift by the maker to Bernard Leach, which Emmanuel Cooper notes he kept on a favoured Korean chest in his living room. The box is in the shape of a persimmon fruit. See *Bernard Leach Life & Work*, p. 334. Private collection. © Estate of Francine Del Pierre.

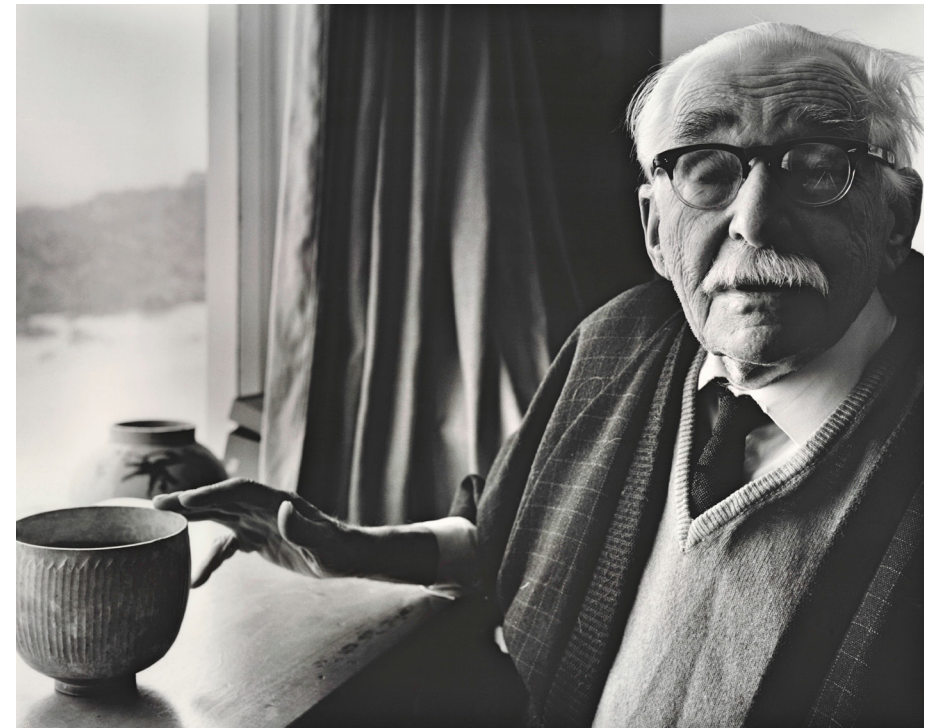
Leach first came across East Asian ceramics whilst an art student in London, and although he had no professional interest in them at the time, perhaps they lodged an idea in his mind of the function and value of assembling such a collection. Frank Brangwyn, who taught Leach etching at the London School of Art, knew important Japanese collectors of modern and traditional Japanese art such as Shosaku Matsukata and Kojiro Matsukata, and Brangwyn was an avid collector himself. Emmanuel Cooper notes that Brangwyn's ceramics were 'of various ages and styles, including pieces from China and the Middle East, arranged on every shelf throughout the house ... [Brangwyn] also had a number of Japanese tea-bowls that were of sufficient note to be mentioned in a letter to Leach', although Cooper indicates that we do not know if Leach ever saw his teacher's collection.<sup>5</sup> Brangwyn also displayed Japanese prints and ceramics in his studio and, as Libby Horner comments, he 'collected the more austere Awata, Raku and Kenzan ware, explaining that "when it's the real genuine article – such as a piece of Kenzan ... well, there's no finer pottery in the world"'.<sup>6</sup>





4 Unknown photographer, black and white print, circa 1920, Bernard Leach at an exhibition of his work in Tokyo. The table was designed by Bernard Leach, as were (probably) the textiles. His painting *Woodcutter* hangs on the wall (see chapter two figure 7), and both the Seto ware plate and Song bowl in his collection (see figures 1 and 24) are also shown. Crafts Study Centre, BHL/6703. © Courtesy of the Bernard Leach Estate.

Leach was more directly influenced by the special collections of art that he saw in Japan. The most significant of these early insights into the purposes of a collection for reflection, inherent lessons of technique, philosophy and aesthetics came from Soetsu Yanagi, who had assembled a gathering of art objects for his house in Abiko, just north of Tokyo. A close personal friend of Leach's, Yanagi was an influential art critic and philosopher as well as the founder of the Mingei movement in Japan in the 1920s and 1930s. 'Mingei' refers to utilitarian, hand-crafted art created by 'unknown' makers for ordinary use. Yanagi was also the unofficial editor of *Shirakaba* (white birch), the literary and artistic journal to which Leach contributed. Leach would have had regular access to Yanagi's home during the period when he set up his own studio in the city, in 1917. Cooper



5 Paul Joyce, Bernard Howell Leach, bromide print on card mount, November 1976. Bernard Leach in his Barnaloft flat, St Ives, barely touching his favourite Song fluted bowl (see figure 1). © Paul Joyce/National Portrait Gallery, London.

notes the care with which Yanagi displayed his collection, as if it were an artwork in its own right, merging pieces from eastern and western cultures: 'scrolls with Sanskrit characters hung in alcoves, incense burners stood on furniture and large jars were placed in corners'. A drawing by Leach of Yanagi in his study shows Chinese ceramics and a sculpture by Rodin, *Man Standing*, presented to the Shirakaba group by the artist himself.<sup>7</sup> A contemporary record by Robertson Scott indicates, too, this interplay of images (presumably prints) by artists such as Cezanne, Van Gogh, Matisse and William Blake, with a miscellany of what he referred to as 'Chinese, Korean and Japanese pottery and paintings'.<sup>8</sup>

Leach's favoured Song bowl is first seen in a photograph of his farewell exhibition in Japan in 1920, sitting quietly on a tabletop

behind him (figure 4). He had been presented with the work by his Japanese friends and members of the Shirakaba group of young artists, writers and intellectuals with whom he had been closely associated. It was a leaving present: a way of reminding him of Japan, and a way of indicating the modest potency of 12th-century Song ceramics. It was also the great exemplar, one to be kept in mind through a lifetime's creative work of making, writing, and further collecting. Leach illustrated the bowl in his pedagogical books, and he was often photographed in his flat with the pot on his picture windowsill. In great old age, when he could hardly see, Leach is shown in an elegiac photograph by Paul Joyce, barely touching the bowl with three plaintive fingers (figure 5). It was a lifetime's caress.

### BERNARD LEACH AND HIS POTS OF INSPIRATION

Leach used his foreword to an exhibition titled *Pots of Inspiration* held at the Holburne Museum in Bath in 1979 to describe the deep personal significance that collecting ceramics held: for the purposes of reflection and connectivity to the past, its geographies and fellow artists. But he was not collecting with a comprehensive regime in mind. There is a focus to his acquisition of works from Korea, China and Japan, for in these groupings he could bring together works that upheld the ideology and the practice of the Mingei potters; and, in his most celebrated porcelains, begin to 'define' the standard which he felt these works clearly expressed. They were exemplars, points of reference, indisputable in their elegant serenities. But plain and modern domestic wares were in the collection too, and he added the very occasional figurative work such as a Tang dynasty (618–907) burial figure, and other useful wares such as a Korean pickle jar and a porcelain bearing for the spindle of a potter's wheel. In the 18 works from Korea in the gift to the Crafts Study Centre there were bowls from the 12th century as well as 19th-century domestic works. They seem to have been



6 Unknown maker, rice bowl, porcelain, Arita, Japan, 1600s. h. 7.3cm x d. 12.5cm. Given to Bernard Leach by Shoji Hamada. Crafts Study Centre, P.79.60.

chosen for the essential and universal character of form, for the depth of the off-white glaze, for the rarity of the underglaze blue line, for simplicity and not extravagance, for the pace and bravura of some calligraphic lines. Some works have a personal connection, such as the small, warped rice bowl from Arita in Japan, dating from around 1610, and given to Leach by Shoji Hamada (figure 6). Leach was not in the least concerned (as a professional collector might be) by chipping and cracking. Several pots have been given exquisite repairs in gold lacquer, using the art-form technique called *kintsugi* or 'golden joinery', where mended breaks are treated as an essential part of the object's history.

As Edmund de Waal remarks, some of these early, 'seemingly simple pots' from Korea, like the ones that Leach and Yanagi had seen on



what de Waal calls a 'short collecting trip' to Korea in 1918, were more authentic than later decorated wares.<sup>9</sup> His second trip to Korea with Yanagi in 1935 was highly productive, adding significantly to his personal collection. He bought important works such as an early 12th-century wine cup and stand (also repaired with gold lacquer), described by the ceramic historian Nigel Wood as 'aristocratic and rare'.<sup>10</sup> Leach himself said that the golden 'gleam ... told me that it must have been prized and mended in Japan'.<sup>11</sup> Leach was moved to rhapsody by some of the early Korean porcelain vessels in his collection. He described one 12th-century 'porcellaneous celadon wine cup and stand' as 'exquisitely engraved and imbued with a poetic sensibility'.<sup>12</sup> Leach seems to refer to this pot as if it is somehow both clay and poem. Perhaps, as the curator and writer Glenn Adamson remarks, he is thinking of Yanagi's phrase 'the beauty of sadness' which suggests both the history of Korean art and craft and its troubled history of invasions; or perhaps he had a specific Korean verse in mind.<sup>13</sup>

Leach's preference for an innate expression of humanity in the works he collected is also exemplified by 21 works from China in *Pots of Inspiration*. They range widely in date, from the earliest – a small Han dynasty dish – through his most precious works from the Song dynasty, to 14th- to 16th-century Ming dynasty vessels and then finally early 20th-century pieces. The sweep of Chinese ceramic history is represented by these works. Ten works from Japan complete the suite of East Asian ceramics, and these were mostly of later dates of manufacture. The fluted bowl was on loan, as was a large bowl 'probably used in a Buddhist temple. Given to Bernard Leach by Henry Bergen', the American-born classical and Oriental scholar whom Leach had known since the 1920s and who commissioned works from him.<sup>14</sup>

The Song bowl appears on the front cover of the exhibition catalogue *Pots of Inspiration*<sup>15</sup> held at the Holburne Museum, Bath in 1979. The exhibition was described as 'showing a selection of Bernard Leach's personal collection together with his own work'. It

was the first time the collection had been seen in a public, museum setting, and the catalogue (the terse, scholarly object entries had been scrutinised by the writer and collector<sup>16</sup> George Wingfield-Digby and his wife, Cornelia) reveals something of its range and depth as Barley Roscoe reports:

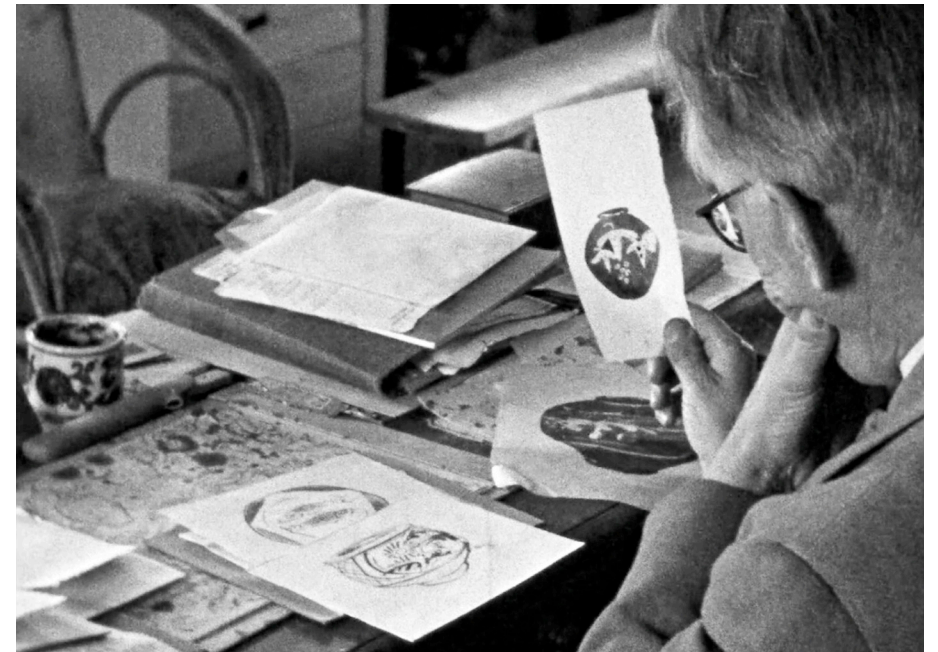
*Pots of Inspiration* was held to celebrate receipt of Bernard Leach's source collection into the CSC. His own collection of work had been delivered to the Holburne Museum in 1977 in time for the opening of the Centre, but this second tranche of pots was not sent until a year or so later. Bernard was nearly blind and quite frail by this time so did not have much input into the exhibition other than to write a foreword for the catalogue. However, there was general agreement (BL and Henry Hammond) that the Wingfield Digbys would be the people to ask for advice regarding more detailed cataloguing of the source collection and might be prepared to provide assistance with the planning. Happily, George and Nellie were very willing to give their time and expertise and were hugely helpful, coming over to Bath from Sherborne on several occasions in order to go through the pots in detail. Their visits were also an opportunity to sound them out on the various groupings that usefully could be made by juxtaposing Leach's pots with his source collection and to establish what would work best. I learnt a lot in the process, and it was a great way of coming to understand better what had helped inform the diversity of style, form and technique to be found in Bernard's work.<sup>17</sup>

Fifty-seven pieces are listed in the categories 'Chinese', 'Korean', 'Japanese' and 'Miscellaneous'. Number 56, a 'pot with pricked strap handle',<sup>18</sup> was perhaps the same medieval English work that Leach had shown to Emmanuel Cooper. As Barley Roscoe, founding Director of the Crafts Study Centre and the curator of *Pots of Inspiration* described, Leach had earlier donated to the Crafts Study Centre 'a magnificent selection of his own work spanning his career. This recent donation makes a superb complement to his own work now in the collection'.<sup>19</sup> George Wingfield Digby reflected that



← **7** Ogata Kenzan VI, ash pot, stoneware, Tokyo, circa 1910. h. 7.2cm x d. 8 cm. Crafts Study Centre, P.79.62.

→ **8** Bernard Leach's studio desk. Taken from the film, *The Leach Pottery 1952* (second edition). The still shows the ash pot by Ogata Kenzan VI (see figure 7). © Marty Gross Film Productions Inc.



the exhibition 'offers an occasion to understand Bernard Leach's aesthetic judgements and his insistence on standards'.<sup>20</sup>

This exhibition was both a first and last for Leach: the inaugural display of his personal collection in public, but also the final exhibition of his own work during his lifetime. The foreword to the catalogue is, therefore, in a sense his last public word, and it has an appropriately elegiac tone. Indeed, it transpired that he would never see these pots again, for he died while the exhibition was still on show. It became a sort of obituary. Leach noted that:

These pots have been collected during a long life, from various backgrounds. They have stimulated me, and have given me inspiration, as I hope they will now do for other potters who come to see them in the Crafts Study Centre at Bath.<sup>21</sup>

Leach fell back on customary themes. He insisted that the past be linked to the present and the future. And he railed against the kind of individualism that revealed no more than 'an expression

of the lesser self, concentrating on the individual part rather than the whole to which we all belong'.<sup>22</sup> These pots of reference had a moral duty to perform: they should represent the best that individual potters could do without recourse to egotism. Three of the East Asian works on show from his personal collection were by named makers. One was a teapot by Masu Minagawa from Mashiko, called by Leach 'the last pattern-painter in Japan'.<sup>23</sup> The others were a tea bowl and an ash pot made by his ceramic master Ogata Kenzan VI in 1912 (figures 7 and 8). They were works of specific personal connectivity to Leach's life and time in Japan. Everything else was work of the 'unknown craftsman'. Leach wanted these works of the past – 'my standards – my classics, the pots that gave me joy – to be exhibited, that the future might make use of the past'.<sup>24</sup>

*Pots of Inspiration* offered a formal record of Bernard Leach's source collection and began to categorise it according to museum formulae. I use the term 'source collection' to refer to the East Asian pots and a smaller number of English slipwares

from the Leach Pottery that were acquired by Leach throughout his lifetime. These pots were donated to the Crafts Study Centre, then housed at the Holburne Museum in Bath, in 1979. Many of them were displayed in the exhibition *Pots of Inspiration*. The term 'personal collection' refers, in addition, to the pots that he made, or had been made in the Leach Pottery by his fellow potters. The 'source collection' is thus a part of the wider personal collection and was specifically selected as a gift to the Crafts Study Centre. Leach displayed his personal collection at the family home, The Count House, in Carbis Bay, St Ives, and later in his life in his flat, Barnaloft; and works were also displayed and stored throughout the Leach Pottery. The term 'reference collection' is also used in auction house catalogues to denote works in Bernard Leach's personal collection. Two terms of Bernard Leach's refer specifically to ceramics displayed from 1974 onwards at the Leach Pottery in a purpose-built exhibition room: 'the Leach Pottery permanent collection' and the 'St Ives pottery permanent collection'. The phrase 'the Janet Leach collection' is used by Janet, Leach's third wife, to describe the collection she inherited after his death as well as ceramics she had acquired herself through gift and purchase, and her individual pots made at the Leach Pottery.

As Barley Roscoe notes, the source collection was a profoundly important means of influencing Leach's own practice. When Leach called these pots his standards and classics, Roscoe argued that 'this statement is the key to the collection: ignore it and you may well wonder why some pieces are included or feel better examples are available elsewhere. Looking at this collection rather as the touchstone for much of Leach's own work proves much more constructive, for it provides the clue to the range and variety found in his own pots'.<sup>25</sup> The Bath exhibition was, therefore, both celebratory and revelatory.

A small selection from the source collection was selected for a contextual display in 1985. Peter Dormer curated this show for

the Institute of Contemporary Arts, London, titled *Fast Forward: New Directions in British Ceramics*. A small group of East Asian pots was displayed to illuminate how Leach had drawn inspiration from them, but also to contend that by this date other potters were looking beyond 'Anglo-Orientalism'. The idea of lineage that Leach found compelling was not attractive to young makers, and Glenn Adamson observes that the very title 'Fast Forward' 'seems the very opposite of Leach's world view'.<sup>26</sup> Dormer himself did not by any means dismiss Leach or Cardew, writing that their work 'is eclectic and contrived, sometimes very successfully'.<sup>27</sup> However, the new ceramics by makers such as Alison Britton, Jacqueline Poncelet, Elizabeth Fritsch and Richard Slee held out new prospects, not old orthodoxies. Leach's collection, seen in this light, was a problem, not a solution.

However, Dormer wanted his exhibition to encourage debate, and his presentation of Leach's source collection was both respectful and challenging. Barley Roscoe's essay on Leach's collection offers a subtle reading of Dormer's exhibition thesis, one where Leach was not the copyist of the past, but 'an innovator in his work', sharing this concern, in fact, with the fellow potters in the exhibition.<sup>28</sup> Alison Britton recalls that Dormer 'was questioning the continued dominance of [the Leach] "movement" and certainly I think people visiting the exhibition did not have a strong sense of looking at disapproved objects, more at ancestors'.<sup>29</sup> The works that Leach had collected for reference and integration into his own practice were still valuable documents in their own right. He kept faith with them, despite the often intractable opposition in the 1980s to his view of pots of the present through pots of the past. As we learn more about his personal collection from new research and information, we find a more complex picture, for the personal collection was also rich in contemporary work, especially pots by Hamada and Tomimoto, as well as examples from ceramic cultures in the Americas as well as East Asia.

## CATALOGUING THE LEACH PERSONAL COLLECTION

We must look for other source materials to understand the fuller picture of Leach's personal collection, and until a 'complete' authenticated record appears, our knowledge must remain partial. What we do know consists of Leach's own records (and he rarely put pen to paper on this matter), catalogues of sales of work from his personal collection, and the significant, recent rediscovery of catalogue cards from the Leach Pottery, some of which accompanied the pots listed for the important 1998 Bonhams sale, 'The Art & Influence of Asia including the Janet Leach Collection'.<sup>30</sup>

The catalogue cards were an instrumental means of organising the whole collection (and of indicating works that specifically belonged to Janet Leach, or would be transferred to her own collection of ceramics). They also assisted in the decision-making about the transfer of parts of the collection to other specialist institutions, notably the Crafts Study Centre and the Penwith Society of Arts in Cornwall.

These cards (now generously donated to the Crafts Study Centre) had been scattered around on the shelves in the Leach Pottery where Leach's personal collection was found in the melee of that time when a first catalogue was made for the Bonhams sale by Ben Williams. The cards were written by the Canadian potter Charmian Johnson, who travelled to the Leach Pottery in the 1970s to continue with her research into Leach's theories and to photograph and catalogue Bernard and Janet's pottery collections.<sup>31</sup> Barley Roscoe recalls that:

I first remember seeing Leach's own catalogue cards of his collection when I was at the Leach Pottery with Muriel Rose around September 1975. The purpose of this visit was to go through all the pots Bernard Leach was proposing to give to the Crafts Study Centre. These cards were then consulted and read out as the various pieces on offer were produced to help jog Bernard's

memory, and in turn sometimes prompted further information to be imparted. I imagine (but can't be sure) that the original information on those cards all came direct from Leach himself.<sup>32</sup>

The catalogue cards were intended to gather systematic information enabling Janet and Bernard to get a full picture of the collection and to aid decisions about future gifts. Many of the surviving cards are now illegible and badly water-damaged, and what remains of this archive is perhaps less than 20 per cent of the total collection. 133 cards have survived and the highest number (if this number refers to the number of objects in the collection) is 782. Notwithstanding that many of these numbers could have been attributed to the associated books and memorabilia also retained by Leach during his lifetime, this was a very large collection indeed.

These cards offer the fullest list yet available to researchers seeking to scope out Leach's personal collection of ceramics, although given the somewhat uncertain status of the evidence, some caution in the analysis is required. The function of the cards seems to be two-fold: they account for works belonging to Bernard Leach, and they indicate works from this total collection which have been selected for distribution to public and private collections. They include 38 pots by Leach himself, from a larger group that was gifted to the Crafts Study Centre as one of its most important foundation donations (the others being Leach's source collection and a massive archive of papers, diaries, photographs, manuscripts, memorabilia and drawings which represent the largest public holding of his documentary work in the world). These cards are given the letter 'L'. The works in this group include a small raku bowl, noted as 'Bernard Leach's earliest decorated in Tokyo, pattern Greens History England [sic]'.<sup>33</sup> It is possible that Leach took his inspiration for the geometric design from the Macmillan & Co. logo on the reverse of the first title page of the second abridged edition (figure 9). The bowl was not thrown by Leach, but painted by him, and represents, one might say, his first tentative steps as a student-designer of ceramics. It is probably the earliest work by Leach in any





9 Unknown maker, bowl, decorated by Bernard Leach, raku, Tokyo, 1911. h. 6.7cm x d. 11.2cm. The geometric pattern may derive from the Macmillan and Company logo in John Richard Green's *A short history of the English people*, 1902. Crafts Study Centre, P.75.67.

public collection. There are other rare works from his earliest years, including a small stoneware *unomi* (cup) with an incised drawing of the kiln and workshop that Leach set up at Abiko. The work dates from the first kiln firing there.<sup>34</sup>

We can deduce from the cards that Leach kept his own works for his personal collection, with a leaning towards his own early career in Japan, the period from 1920 to around 1935 when he was establishing the Leach Pottery in St Ives with his business partner and friend Shoji Hamada, and during the period when he worked at Dartington in Devon. One work, although it was given a Crafts Study Centre accession number, did not get sent to Bath. This was a remarkable slipware charger, 'The Mermaid of Zennor', dated 1923 (figure 10). A hand-written note by Barley

Roscoe, who was responsible for arranging the transfer of the gift to the Crafts Study Centre, rather presciently states 'Delivery?' as if there was doubt even then. Her concern that the charger had not arrived was alleviated by a letter from Janet on 30 March 1977. She wrote to say that 'I again instituted deep searches, but a dish like that is too large to disappear. When I finally mentioned it to the potters, someone remembered that Bernard had had it in his own flat under the bed last autumn'. He decided that the work should stay in the family.

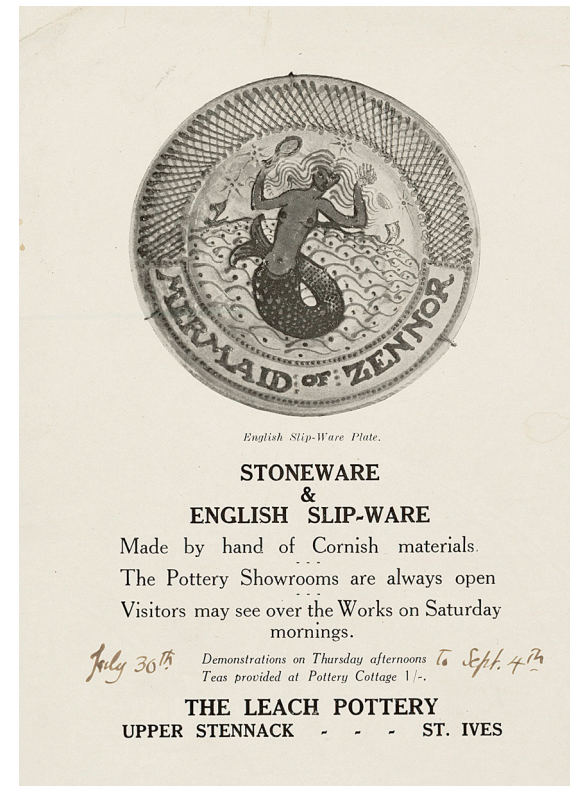
The 1923 charger is an extraordinary work. It has a notched edge, like many 17th-century chargers. The rim has no cross-hatching, unlike many of Leach's chargers, influenced by the designs of Ralph Toft which he had first encountered in Japan. The drawing of the mermaid is rapidly done, and the scaly tail is hardly tapered: it looks more like a sea cucumber. Although not entirely convincing, there is a latent energy to the work. We know from an account in *Beyond East and West* that Leach's benefactor Frances Horne introduced him and Hamada to Eleanor Podmore (known as 'Dreolin'). 'Both Hamada and I fell under her spell. She told us of the carved mermaid of Zennor Church and took us to see it. The mermaid is said by legend to have enticed the curate of Zennor under the waves of the sea'.<sup>35</sup> Leach goes on to say that Dreolin 'was full of ideas for the future of the pottery' but that she was also 'not physically strong' and indeed she died shortly afterwards in Switzerland having been treated for pernicious anaemia. Leach records her address at the Clinique de Collance, Montreux in his 1923 diary. On 27 March he says that he is packing Galena pots, firing them on 28 March and unpacking the kiln on 29 March. Leach writes that 'we were sad for her lonely death but have never forgotten her. I made a slipware dish taken directly from one of her scribbles in memory of her after her death'.<sup>36</sup> Dreolin died in 1923<sup>37</sup> and so this charger is, I believe, the one that Bernard is referring to (figure 11). The hasty slipware drawing is a scribble for a purpose: to recall Dreolin's sketch. It is a deeply personal work, and therefore it is no surprise that Leach did not want it to leave the family ownership.



**10** Bernard Leach, charger, earthenware or raku, 1923. d. 41cm. The charger shows Leach's first ceramic drawing of the Mermaid of Zennor. Described in his catalogue card as 'English Galena slipware (from Dreolin Podmore) B.L. copied her drawing'. Private collection. © Courtesy of the Bernard Leach Estate.



**11** Bernard Leach, the Mermaid of Zennor charger's maker's mark and date. The date on marks of this sort read clockwise. Private collection. © Courtesy of the Bernard Leach Estate.



**12** Handbill for the Leach Pottery, after 1925. The charger depicted is in the Ohara Museum of Art, Kurashiki, Japan. Crafts Study Centre, BHL/1910. © Courtesy of the Bernard Leach Estate.

A companion example, dated 1925, is in the collection of the Ohara Museum of Art, Japan. It is a much more considered depiction of a mermaid, and the scaly tail is slender now. The rim is cross-hatched, like the 17th-century 'founding' examples, one boldly signed by Ralph Toft in the Glaisher Collection at the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, and one by Thomas Toft, in the Victoria & Albert Museum, London.<sup>38</sup> It is a public plate, with its references to a historic, ceramic past, and not to an urgent personal mourning. A drawing of the plate was used as a handbill by the Pottery (figure 12), and Michael Cardew illustrated it in an article on Leach's recent slipware, exhibited in Paterson's Gallery, London, in *The Studio* magazine.<sup>39</sup>

Other categories in the card index give only scant information. There are three cards from the group of 18 of his own individual pots that were gifted in January 1976 to the Penwith Society of Arts,



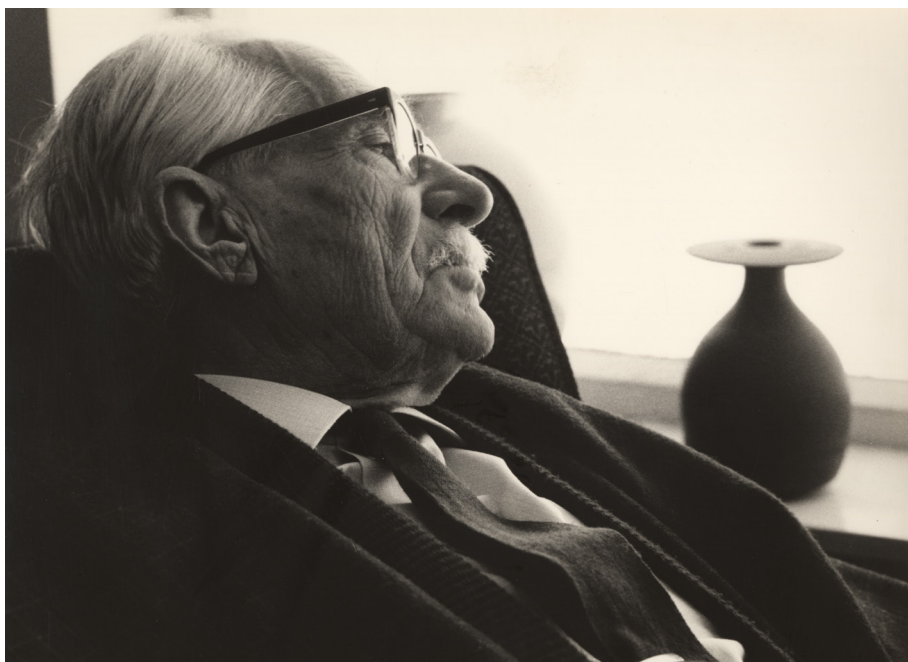
St Ives (Leach had been one of the founder members in 1949).<sup>40</sup> Thirty-three cards describe ceramics from Japan (annotated with the letter 'J'). These range from modern domestic wares through to works by Leach's great friend and fellow potter Tomimoto, as well as works by Leach's master, Ogata Kenzan VI and works by the first Kenzan. Some of these pots were specifically intended for presentation to the Victoria & Albert Museum, reinforced by a clause in Leach's will. These included a raku dish by the first Kenzan at Sano, with a text in Japanese translated by Leach.<sup>41</sup> A second card with a tiny black and white photograph shows a 'Japanese Raku square dish [dated 1738]. 1st Kenzan uncontroversial [sic] handwriting and use of brush "Convolvulus" flowers'. The assertion of provenance to the first Kenzan recalls the controversy (called the 'New Sano Kenzan affair') about a discovery of works from the master in 1962 which many Japanese experts, including Hamada and Tomimoto, thought were fakes, but which Leach, not without damage to his reputation, steadfastly defended.<sup>42</sup> There are nine pots from China (annotated with a 'C'). These range from a 10th-century stoneware bowl to a modern Chinese rice bowl that may have been used during the Leach Pottery lunches. The card for the Song bowl has not, as far as I know, survived.

Otherwise, the records are tantalisingly brief. A card describes a pre-Columbian, South American 'simple Ocharino unglazed design polished in the raw'. Another card for a 19th-century English slipware miniature rocking chair (annotated 'B'); a pair of American cider bottles emphatically marked 'J.L.' from which we may deduce that the catalogue cards merged Bernard's and Janet's personal collections of ceramics. There are two of Janet Leach's own works in the group 'D', marked even more emphatically, 'J.L. claims.' One of these, an oblong slab dish, was kept by Leach at Barnaloft. There are five works from Korea, including rare engraved 12th-century celadons and other Joseon dynasty (1392–1897) works.<sup>43</sup>

The largest grouping indicates the deep feeling and respect that Bernard held for his friend, partner and fellow potter, Shoji Hamada.

There are 39 pots by Hamada ('H') recorded here, the largest group in this holding of the catalogue cards. They include rare examples of jointly made works such as a lidded pot with a 'willow' design of 1935 'thrown by Hamada ... turned by Bernard Leach'. One wax resist teapot by Hamada made in 1925 has a 'mended spout by B.L.'. The collection includes works made by Hamada at St Ives between 1920 and 1923, and a stem bowl also made in St Ives in 1933. Works made during Leach's trip to Japan in 1934–5 have been brought back for the collection and there are several vessels from the 1950s and 60s, marked 'J.L.'. The latest work (dated 1970) is '410 H', a vase with a wax relief abstract pattern and a kaki (persimmon) glaze, made at Mashiko with a note to say, 'at marriage of daughter, gift to B & J'.<sup>44</sup>

The group designated 'X' contains a variety of work by contemporary potters, although the card for his lidded vase by Francine Del Pierre has not survived. These include a small number of pots by students and assistants who worked at the Leach Pottery, such as Kenneth Quick, Elizabeth Heinz and Shoji Hamada's son Atsuya. A fine large cider bottle dated 1940 by Michael Cardew ('wedding present to J.L.') is in this group, marked 'To N.C.', presumably meaning the shop in St Ives that Janet managed with her partner, Mary 'Boots' Redgrave, although it seems hard to believe that Janet would have sanctioned its sale through New Craftsman Gallery. Finally, there are three porcelain bowls by Bernard Leach's long-time friend, the eminent potter Lucie Rie. Leach was also connected to Rie via another work in his personal collection, a fine Korean Moon Jar from the Joseon dynasty which, alongside his Song bowl, was perhaps the ceramic object that meant the most to him. This notable pot is discussed in more detail later in the chapter. Leach also owned one work by Hans Coper, although Emmanuel Cooper notes that he admired, rather than liked, Coper's vessels, 'finding them too cerebral and dry for his taste'.<sup>45</sup> On one occasion, however, Janet and Bernard visited Coper at his studio at Digswell, discussing his work. 'Janet admired a particular piece, an approval echoed by Leach. Much to her annoyance, she subsequently discovered that



**13** J. L. Lewinski, bromide print on card mount, Bernard Leach, 1970. Bernard Leach in the living room of his flat at Barnaloft, St Ives with his Hans Coper bottle with disc top on the window sill. Crafts Study Centre, BHL/7658. © The Lewinski Archive at Chatsworth/Bridgeman images and © Estate of Hans Coper.

Coper had given the piece to him when she felt it more rightfully belonged to her'.<sup>46</sup> The vase is revealed on Leach's windowsill at Barnaloft in a photograph taken by J. L. Lewinski (figure 13).

The range of objects described in these catalogue cards allows us to understand better how his 'source' and 'personal' collections amounted to a single synthesis. This led to a creative merger of historic works from Korea, China and Japan and his own individually made, favoured pots (many dating back to the formative period of his life in Japan and China from 1909 to 1920). In addition, the collection developed to include the many pots he made and then lovingly gave as gifts to Janet for her birthdays and other special dates. The choice to place his own ceramics into the exhibition *Pots of Inspiration* emphasises the connection between

the groups – one needs the other. Leach agreed to this curatorial choice. Barley Roscoe recalls that 'from the first suggestion of an exhibition of Bernard's source collection and agreeing the title, it was always acknowledged that examples of his own work should be included in the show, selected from the pieces he had given to the Crafts Study Centre in 1976'.<sup>47</sup> Roscoe explains that he was very frail as the selection was made, primarily expending his effort on the elegiac foreword.

### THE COLLECTION IN THE SALE ROOM

We can see the personal collection through a different lens in the catalogues of key auctions, none more so than the sale of 'The Janet Leach Collection'<sup>48</sup> which was subsumed within the Bonhams Knightsbridge sale entitled 'The Art & Influence of Asia'. This sale, in 1998, followed Janet's death the previous year. Boots Redgrave, her long-standing business partner and close friend was the principal legatee of Janet Leach's estate, and she inherited the business, most of the pottery buildings and their contents, as well as Bernard and Janet's personal collections and Janet's possessions. Redgrave had no desire to continue the often fraught business of managing a working pottery. But on Janet's death, the Pottery Cottage (where she had lived in the centre of the site) was left equally between Bernard's five children and Redgrave emptied the house. Joanna Wason recalls that she was exhausted by the responsibilities and decisions she needed to make at this time. She preferred to focus her entrepreneurial skills on the continuing work of managing New Craftsman, the fine art and craft shop-cum-gallery in St Ives that she had co-managed with Janet since the mid-1960s.

The Bonhams sale included 328 lots and was the principal means of dispersing Bernard's as well as Janet's personal collection into the marketplace. The majority of the works made their way into private collections, with the very notable exception of the Korean Moon Jar, which was given star billing, and which eventually, as we shall



see, by running down a somewhat chequered path, was acquired by the British Museum. Every lot was given the provenance line of 'The Janet Leach Collection'. The statement added Janet's personal and professional authority to the provenance and was an additional guarantee to the purchaser.

'The Janet Leach Collection' was comprehensive in its scope. Not only had the ceramic shelves at the Leach Pottery been cleared, so had the bookshelves, Janet's personal rooms in the Pottery Cottage and the minor cupboards. The ceramics included historic and more recent works from Japan, Korea and China. In some cases the attribution to Janet's personal collection is made explicit (lot 96, a grey-black stoneware stem bowl had been 'purchased by Janet Leach in Tokyo, 1962').<sup>49</sup> Two Korean chests made their way into the sale, including one which Bernard Leach had acquired on his important collecting trip to Korea in 1935. Japanese ceramics from the Jomon and Tamba kilns in Japan were certainly acquired by Janet (one vase, lot 155, had been purchased by her in Tokyo 'and authenticated by Hamada as Yi [sic] period').<sup>50</sup> Rare books and reference literature found their way into the sale, often including provenance notes in Bernard's handwriting as well as the inscription that a book was 'Bernard Leach's copy'. Limited edition art books by Kenkichi Tomimoto, groupings of photographs of Tomimoto's ceramics or his woodcuts, joined scarce editions of books by Soetsu Yanagi and catalogues of the ceramics by Shoji Hamada. This was Leach's personal reference library. The last lot in this section of the sale was a rare copy of the hand-made book *An English Artist in Japan*, with essays by Yanagi, Tomimoto and the artist Ryusei Kishida, 'compiled', as his fellow artists remarked, 'as a commemoration of our long friendship with Leach'.<sup>51</sup>

'Kimono fabrics and sashes' and a significant group of drawings, silk scroll paintings and porcelain vessels by Tomimoto attest to the depth of Leach's relationship with his contemporary. Lot 350, 'a stoneware Salt Pot' dated 1913, was offered for sale 'together with Janet Leach's catalogue index card with photograph'.<sup>52</sup> Similarly,

Janet Leach's index card for Toyozo Arakawa's brush pot was offered with the work (lot 367). The sale also dispersed Leach's collection of pots by Shoji Hamada, including some pieces that he illustrated in his instructional books: for example, lot 373, a stoneware bottle vase that was 'in the author's possession' and described by Leach in *The Potter's Challenge* as having a 'roguish foot a good balance to the smooth curvature of the sides'.<sup>53</sup>

The sale came to an end with a grouping of pots from a wide variety of ceramic cultures and ages, and these were classified as drawn from 'Janet Leach's diverse collection of ceramics'. They range from the pre-Columbian bowl to works by Leach Pottery students. Two pots are by Trevor Corser, who, along with Joanna Wason, were the last potters employed at the site before it was put up for sale in 2004. And this note of finality continued, for the last two lots were 'left beside the wheel in the Leach pottery'.<sup>54</sup> Symbolically, one was a biscuit-fired bowl made by Shoji Hamada in St Ives in 1923, presumably left unglazed because a large section of the rim had broken away. The bowl was acquired by the American collector John Driscoll for his substantial collection of British studio pottery, along with a catalogue card. Lot 481, its companion, was a vase by Leach with a carved decoration of the tree of life. The catalogue note reports that 'as the vase cracked in the kiln, Bernard Leach never glazed it'.<sup>55</sup>

John Driscoll also acquired an exceptional small slipware plate, dated 1917, which had been left to Janet Leach.<sup>56</sup> The plate was purchased for him by Ben Williams from the Primavera gallery in Cambridge around 1999. In the well of the plate is a flying bird – perhaps a dove or 'bird of peace' which reappears on a watercolour drawing of 1918 illustrated in *An English Artist in Japan*. Around the rim, set in between cross-hatching, are lines from William Blake's prophetic *Book of Urizen*. The crowded combination of slip-drawing, text and traditional ceramic pattern gives the plate an energy. It fuses ceramic art, literature and thought, and is one of the treasures of Leach's personal collection, and one of his very earliest slipware pots (figure 14).



14 Bernard Leach, dish, earthenware or raku. 1917, Abiko, Japan. h. 4.4cm x d. 20.9cm. The John Driscoll Collection, New York. © Courtesy of the Bernard Leach Estate.

The pot that Leach cared about with as much intensity as his Song fluted bowl was a Korean Moon Jar. But this great work, serene and seemingly simple, played a more contested role in his personal collection for he hardly ever, if at all, had it to hand. It was, so to speak, placed out on a permanent loan. The description of the Moon Jar in the Bonhams sale catalogue (lot 106) pulled no punches, not least as Bonhams expected to sell it for hundreds of thousands of pounds. There was no estimate, but a note to 'Refer to Department'

which indicated that the auction house could not give an estimate with any degree of accuracy at the point of cataloguing, and was asking potential bidders to maintain a dialogue with the department up to the day of the sale. It was described as 'A Spectacular and Highly Important Full-Moon Jar'.

Bonhams' description of the Moon Jar emphasises the cultural significance and poetic sensibility of the vessel, as well as its scarcity. The author of this text, James Hammond, noted that:

Leach's acquisition of this masterpiece is significant, for behind the apparent simplicity of colour and form, lies a complex philosophy and iconography, deeply rooted in Korea's culture. The slightly distorted moon-shape is no mere artistic licence but an aesthetic standard inspired by the puritanic Neo-Confucianism which set-in-motion the great revival of Korean art during the Choson dynasty'.<sup>57</sup>

This was a work freighted with meaning, and Leach was deeply attracted to its ceremonial stature, its off-centred bearing and the eloquent white sheen of glaze. It was majestic as well as modest. Leach bought the Moon Jar from an antique dealer in Seoul in 1935 on a collecting trip to Korea with Soetsu Yanagi. He recalled in his book *Beyond East and West* that 'a small group of friends, both Korean and Japanese, took me around the antique-shops of Seoul. I wanted to buy some examples of old Korean pottery. We found both large and smaller plain Yi dynasty pieces. These I have and still use with increasing pleasure to this day'.<sup>58</sup> He also bought a large pickle jar which was probably packed in the iron-bound chest that was also sold in the Bonhams sale. Leach kept this chest to the end of his life in his living room at his flat at Barnaloft and it, too, held deep resonance as a record of this significant collecting journey. He left the chest in his will for Janet, and she kept the Moon Jar on it.

The Moon Jar had something of a peripatetic life. It is described in the list of works exported from Seoul 'to be bonded to Plymouth for Customs examination'. Number one on this list of 'Old Korean





**15** Unknown photographer, sepia print, 1950s, the Moon Jar in Lucie Rie's studio showroom. Crafts Study Centre, RIE/20/5/2/1. ©Estate of Lucie Rie and © Estate of Hans Coper.

[sic] pots' (which also entered his personal collection) is the Moon Jar, we may deduce: '1 Very large white jar, value 10 yen'.<sup>59</sup> The note clearly states that the goods were to be delivered to the Leach Pottery in St Ives, and this seems plausible, though Jessamine Kendall, Leach's daughter, and John Leach, his grandson, had no memory of seeing the Moon Jar either in the Leach Pottery or at the Leach family home in Carbis Bay. Its location between 1935 and



**16** Ben Williams, colour print, 1989, the Moon Jar (see figure 15) at the Leach Pottery. By kind permission of Ben Williams.

1943 is, I believe, unknown. We do know for certain that the Moon Jar was in London in 1943, for Leach wrote to Lucie Rie on 12 April that year with a specific and adventurous request:

Lucie, will you do something for me? If you can. I have two v[ery] large pots at a friend's house in Kensington and she must have them removed at once because builders are coming in. Would you take a taxi and collect them for me? One is a bellarmine and the other is a white Korean jar 2 foot high. My friend's name is Jean Milne ... and she is the best weaver of carpets in these islands and a quiet and sincere artist and craftswoman whom I would like you to meet if possible.<sup>60</sup>

The Moon Jar famously remained with Lucie Rie at Albion Mews for over 50 years (figure 15). There is no record, apparently, that helps to explain when and why it was first sent to Jean Milne. The Moon Jar became part of Rie's showroom, playing the role that Leach's personal collection did in his studio, his office and later

in his flat in St Ives. It was the silent symbol of ceramic art in its most restrained yet expressive character. For Leach it represented the most canonical form of Mingei pottery; perhaps for Rie it had the elegance and utility of a classic modernism. It certainly 'held' emotional content of a private nature. Recently revealed letters from Leach to Rie in the John Driscoll collection describe the strength of their admiration and affection for each other, and he gave Rie the Moon Jar as a mark of these shared feelings. In 1947 a loan had become the most intensely personal of gifts: 'keep the Korean pot in memory'.<sup>61</sup>

After Lucie Rie's death, the Moon Jar passed to Janet Leach and made its way to, or back to, St Ives. Janet kept it in her living room in the Pottery Cottage (figure 16). It was kept on top of one of Bernard's most precious Korean chests, so that she could see it while resting in her bed. A tableau was formed of the Moon Jar, a small white marble sculpture by Barbara Hepworth and a still life painting by Kate Nicholson, who had borrowed a large dish from Bernard's personal collection with a brushed iron stencilled pattern of a bird.

The Moon Jar had a final journey to make, as fraught as the one across London during the Blitz with Lucie Rie shepherding the large pot in the back of a London cab. Ben Williams from Bonhams was instructed by his boss, Cyril Frankel, to travel with speed to St Ives once Boots Redgrave had taken the decision to sell the Leach collection. Momentarily, and in a gesture of loyalty and friendship, Boots offered the Moon Jar to Joanna Wason 'out of the blue and then the next day she said she actually needed it for death duties'. It hovered, for these hours, with its future still in Cornwall.<sup>62</sup> Ben Williams recounts that:

I travelled in a hire car to secure as much of value as I could ... There were some index cards that showed what used to be there. Apart from the Moon Jar I itemised everything I could and secured the property and drove back to London with the car full of the most obviously valuable items across Bodmin Moor in a blizzard with the Moon Jar strapped into the passenger seat beside me.<sup>63</sup>

The sale took place at Bonhams, but more drama was to follow. A bid for £360,000 for the Moon Jar was accepted during the sale, but afterwards the prospective purchasers could not close the deal. Bonhams wrote to Boots Redgrave to explain the sorry case:

We are deeply disappointed that the original American Korean purchasers were not able to complete. We believed that they were buying in good faith and we had two meetings with them, on each occasion ending with the promise of funds being sent over. But nothing materialised ... and we advised them that they were in breach of contract.<sup>64</sup>

Eventually the matter reached a happy conclusion. A private sale was made after Boots accepted her solicitor's advice to sell at a price 'to benefit the nation as a whole'.<sup>65</sup> Leach had valued the Moon Jar at £25 in the list of his collection contained in his *Pottery Notes 1955–6*, although in a way, of course, it was priceless to him as it had been to Lucie Rie.

### GIFTS AND FURTHER SALES FROM THE PERSONAL COLLECTION

Bernard Leach stated in his last will that he would give 'all my permanent collection of pots ... and all books magazines photographs slides films motion pictures and note books covering pots or pottery and my personal potting tools' with the intention that Janet would present them to the Crafts Study Centre at Bath. In addition 'all old correspondence and photographs concerning my family' were passed on to David Leach, his eldest son, and Edith 'Eleanor' Nance, his eldest daughter, to be retained 'for biographical purposes' for 25 years, after which period of time they could be gifted to the Crafts Study Centre. The will was indeed enacted in this way.<sup>66</sup> It was an extraordinary gift. But matters relating to Leach's personal collection did not end there.



Works from the personal collection appeared in several auction house sales over time. In some cases, the attribution to the personal collection is explicit, and in other cases we can make a reasonable supposition that a work could have been contained in the collection. The first such sale was held in 1981 and they are considered here chronologically.

The first of these sales was held in Cornwall on 21 May 1981, two years after Bernard's death. Janet was closely involved, and the auction house, Taylor, Lane & Creber, noted 'our thanks to Janet Leach for the assistance in cataloguing this sale'.<sup>67</sup> This help was given a further and formal statement that 'those pots positively attributed to the master [Bernard Leach] will be sold with a certificate of authenticity signed by Janet Leach'. This testament was used in several sale rooms. It was started at the initiative of Cyril Frankel when he first joined Christie's. Part of the reason was to give the lustre of association directly back to Bernard; but the second reason was driven by circumstances. A spate of fakes of Bernard Leach's pots entering the secondary market had made buyers beware and Frankel felt, with justification, that having Janet formally endorse each work for sale would address this concern. It was a role Janet played in the sale rooms of Cornwall as well.

The 1981 sale included works that are rare or by makers who are known to have been important in Leach's personal collection. None can be attributed to Leach's collection but there are works which have the characteristics of pieces that were added to his personal pot holdings. There were 43 lots in total. Lot 210 is a 'very rare and early stoneware Cottage', a model of Reginald Turvey's house dated 1925. The South African born painter was one of Bernard's oldest friends and moved to St Ives at one point to live opposite The Count House, the Leach family home in Carbis Bay, St Ives. The house and studio was called Wheelspeed and Leach helped to design it. Lot 201 is a milk jug which was 'believed to have been from the first wood fired kiln at St Ives' in the 1920s, and lot 223 was a stoneware vase catalogued as being believed to have been 'one of the last pots made by Bernard Leach, having been one

of only five that were kept from a batch' in 1975. There are two early works by Hamada, as well as a stoneware cup by Tsurunosuke Matsubayashi (lot 266), who crucially assisted Hamada and Leach in the rebuilding of the Leach Pottery kiln in 1923.

Hamada's work, drawn, it seems, from acquisitions or gifts from Hamada himself to Janet, also featured in a sale held in London by Bonhams Contemporary Ceramics on 16 November 1995. They were described as 'a part of the Janet Leach collection of Shoji Hamada with whom she studied in Japan'. There were 12 works, including one very rare example of a collaborative work (lot 53), 'an exceedingly rare and unique covered pot' made by Hamada but decorated by Bernard Leach, with a label in Bernard's handwriting stating '32 Hamada and BL'. It has a very close resemblance to the aforementioned 'lidded pot thrown by Hamada turned by Bernard Leach' with a 'willow' design, dating from 1935 and recorded in the Leach catalogue cards.

A companion Bonhams sale on 15 November 1995 of 'Japanese and Korean Ceramics & Works of Art' also included 'A selection of Korean Ceramics from the Bernard and Janet Leach collection', which suggests that Janet was making a concerted effort to raise funds, leaving an increasingly edited core collection for display at St Ives. Some seven Korean pots were sold, two of which had been acquired by Janet in Tokyo and authenticated by Hamada as Yi Dynasty works. The other five works were most likely acquired on Leach's important collecting trip to Korea in 1935, and include two water stoppers as well as a white glazed globular jar, of a similar style to the Moon Jar. The sale of 'The Mary "Boots" Redgrave Collection' at Lays Auctions on 16 October 2002 included a wide range of paintings, sculpture and studio ceramics. There is no record of an attribution to work that came specifically from Bernard's collection, and the collection may have included objects both from Boots' home and from the stock of New Craftsman. An early stoneware cup 'made in Tokyo' is a candidate for the personal collection (lot 89).

On 25 November 2009, at a sale in Salisbury by the auction house Woolley & Wallis (lot 1099) three 'saggur pots' from the Leach Pottery were on offer, given by Bernard Leach to Katharine Pleydell-Bouverie and then in turn given by her to the potter Ian Gregory. In the same sale (lot 282) a Leach Pottery stoneware covered pot based on a 14th-century jar from the Sawankhalok kilns in Thailand 'included in Leach's own collection' was also sold.<sup>69</sup> Occasionally a richer provenance is declared. Information from two private collectors in the USA in 2018 detailed 'the line of stewardship of his exemplars', in this case, a 10th- to 12th-century Chinese Southern Song Dynasty porcellanous incense burner tripod with incised wave form decoration. Professor Helene Dwyer, who ran the ceramics programme at the Cultural Art Center, Columbus College of Art and Design, Ohio, had acquired it during her Fellowship to study with Leach in 1969, and used it as an example with students. Its subsequent private owners carried on that tradition so that, in the words of the present owner, the pot was used 'as a teaching specimen for three generations of western master porcelain ceramicists due to the developmental period for the glaze, the firing technique, and the porcelain/pre-porcelain temper'.<sup>70</sup>

On the 15 October 2013, a sale was held at Christie's, South Kensington. The sale was given the overall title 'Asobi: Ingenious Creativity' (*asobi* being the Japanese word for play) and it included 'ceramics from the collection of Bernard Leach'. The collection also comprised first-edition etchings by Leach made in Japan, drawings, a kettle stand with inset tiles by Leach, and the second-edition prints made from the rediscovered etching plates at the Leach Pottery on the instructions of Janet Leach and Boots Redgrave. These etchings were offered for sale at New Craftsman and the remaining prints can still be bought there to this day. But the core of the collection was a large body of pots 'presented to the present owner by Janet Leach from Bernard Leach's flat on his death in 1979. They have since remained packed in an attic until 2012'.<sup>71</sup> The seller of this 'property of a gentleman' was Michael Hunt, who had been Janet Leach's and Boots Redgrave's manager at New



**17** Bernard Leach, albarello or drug jar, raku 1912, Tokyo, h. 20.7cm x d. 4.6cm. One of Leach's earliest pots made in the kiln of his ceramic master, Ogata Kenzan VI. Crafts Study Centre, 2013.26. © Courtesy of the Bernard Leach Estate.

Craftsman in St Ives. These pots from the personal collection had not been seen for nearly 25 years.

There were 62 ceramic lots in the sale. Rare early works were among them, including two of Leach's earliest pots: a raku albarello or drug jar dated 1912 (lot 125), which in fact had originally been promised to the Crafts Study Centre (and was subsequently acquired from the sale, figure 17), and a raku vase (lot 126) dated 1913, which was acquired by the Victoria & Albert Museum. More modest vessels from the 1950s and 1970s were included as well, alongside a fine example of a pilgrim bottle (lot 137). The collection also included works by several of the potters who had worked alongside Leach in

the Pottery, such as Gwyn Hanssen Pigott, William Marshall, John Reeve, Shigeyoshi Ichino and Michael Cardew. A pot and cover by Ray Finch from Cardew's Winchcombe pottery was a gift to Leach for his 50th birthday – 'he used it as his bread bin'.<sup>72</sup> A small number of works by Janet Leach were included, together with a larger group of vessels by Shoji Hamada, some of which were accompanied by a 'signed handwritten note by Janet Leach attributing them to Hamada'. The ceramic part of the collection was concluded with a fine porcelain bowl by Lucie Rie dating from the 1960s. One other work attributed to Bernard Leach's personal collection appeared in the sale too, a 19th-century Seto dish decorated in a 'horse eye' pattern, 'accompanied by a letter signed by Janet Leach stating that this dish 'came from the reference collection of Bernard Leach'.<sup>73</sup> It is like two other Seto dishes noted in the catalogue cards.

Tanya Harrod wrote about these ceramics from Barnaloft that 'when it comes to the ceramics that Leach owned (including work by him, by friends and the historic examples he valued), the situation is more complicated'.<sup>74</sup> Harrod notes that Leach's canonical Song bowl did not get transferred to the Crafts Study Centre gift (although it was on the front cover of the Bath exhibition and was catalogue entry number one, it was still described as being 'on loan from Bernard Leach'). Harrod mentions works by, and associated with, his great early student, Michael Cardew, and how these pots 'tell stories ... which remind us of the richness and complexity of Bernard Leach's life'. She concludes: 'in the hurry and scrabble that so often comes after a death they disappeared from view. It is good to see them again'.<sup>75</sup>

The same could be said about an even more recent sale. This sale was held at David Lay Auctions in Penzance on 16 June 2016. It was comprised of ceramics, memorabilia, books and archival materials that had been gathered by Trevor Corser, a total of 84 lots in all. They ranged from ordinary domestic tableware to the 'standard ware' that Corser and many others made at the Pottery, alongside many of his own individual pots. Trevor had started working at the Leach Pottery in 1965, undertaking jobs such as packing pots, but he found an aptitude

for the work and eventually became one of the production potters, building up a repertoire of his own individual works. He remained at the Pottery until its closure, having worked there for 40 years. Trevor and Janet had a mutual respect. They were both, at times, difficult people to get on with, but they had an underlying affection for each other, and it is touching to discover that Janet kept two pots by Trevor in her personal collection: a plate with a design of the harbour at St Ives, and a stoneware bottle.<sup>76</sup> Trevor, likewise, had three of Janet's vases and a miniature stoneware pot in his own collection.

Presumably over a period Trevor took these pots, archives and etchings back to his house in St Ives. Janet and Bernard often donated work to their Pottery crew, their close friends and members of the family. Corser's close friend and fellow potter John Bedding<sup>77</sup> recalls that 'there was also the time around 1972 when Janet and Bernard had a clear out of some of the collection and let Shigeyoshi Ichino, Trevor [Corser] and myself choose what we wanted. I think some good pieces slipped through because Shigey got a nice Tomimoto porcelain'.<sup>78</sup> Joanna Wason also recounts how Boots Redgrave, in the intense drama of the period when Bonhams were about to remove the ceramics for sale in London, 'gave me a small/medium plain undecorated black Hamada plate from Janet's kitchen shelf and an oblong slipware plate [illustrated in *A Potter's Work*, plate III]. She told Trevor to choose two or three pots by Bernard, and a Hamada pot. At another moment, Boots let me choose a pot from what was in the back of the pot cupboard when it was nearly empty. I chose a beautiful old translucent Sung bowl in a box, light as a feather'.<sup>79</sup> Janet Leach also sold pots from the collection, a fact reflecting the sometimes financially precarious position of the Leach Pottery and Janet's own anxieties about having enough funds to sustain herself and the business. For example, she sold five lidded rice bowls with carved lotus flowers by Tomimoto which he had presented for Janet and Bernard's wedding. The bowls are now in a private collection.

Trevor Corser gathered these archives, etchings and ceramics as a form of protection, it would seem. John Bedding says that he was doing



*List of pots in Pottery Studio*  
Friday, January 1, 1954  
belonging to B.L. - no. value. description  
7th day - 364 days follow

New Year's Day

1	Hamada travelling tea bowl (Chippie)	£3
2	" " "	6
3	" Teapot with sides (rounded)	8
4	" Covered pot square	6
5	" large sq. dish	12
6	" red bowl wax resist	5
7	" " "	7
8	" Teapot	12
9	" " (rounded)	6
10	" " (Kaki)	7
11	" covered pot (small square)	3
12	" " (Rabbit) 1921	4
13	" " "	3
14	" " (Kaki + Tenmoku)	4
15	" Reku jar 1922	10
16	" sq. dish (deep)	7
17	" " (shallow)	6
18	" Kaki Cup	3
19	" Sauce pot 1927	5
20	" Tea bowl 1954	8
21	" Water pot	3
22	" Covered pot (Red enamel)	5
23	" " (Dartington)	2
		£135

**18** Bernard Leach, 'Pottery Notes 1955-6 & List of my collection'. Crafts Study Centre, 2016.44.1. © Courtesy of the Bernard Leach Estate.

Thursday, January 7, 1954  
7th day - 358 days follow

79	Correa (Nantou) small jar Ri.	5
80	" " bowl "	5
81	" " Ri bowl	5
82	" " " later	5
83	" " " older.	5
84	" " " white bottle	5
85	" " " water pot	3
86	" " " small jar	4
87	" " " Creamy jar	15
88	" " " Bottle	12
89	" " " Large jar (gobe peltora)	25
90	Chinese Sung 12 <sup>th</sup> Cent. Ting dish	15
91	" " " small "	7
92	" " " longer "	18
93	" " " Ying Chang bowl	35
94	" " " "	25
95	" " " Tzu Chen bowl	100
96	" " " Yüan in China bowl	50
98	" " " Tenmoku bowl - Hamada jar	10
99	" " " silver rice "	17
100	" " " + Kaki	15
101	" " " Tang Toy	3
102	" " " "	3
103	" " " "	3
104	" " " Ham	5
105	" " " Early Ming Tzu Chen	25
		1005

**19** Bernard Leach, 'Pottery Notes 1955-6 & List of my collection'. Crafts Study Centre, 2016.44.1. © Courtesy of the Bernard Leach Estate.

so to safeguard them, to act as a kind of unofficial Leach archivist and historian. The documents included one very important document that helps us to understand the specific content of Leach's personal collection.

This little book looks unprepossessing. It is a small diary for the year 1954, repurposed (figures 18 and 19). The cover is given the hand-written title *Pottery Notes 1955-6 & list of my collection*. The list is perhaps the single most important record of Leach's personal collection drawn up in his lifetime. It is also cursory and, without photographs, sometimes impossible to use as a document to relate to a known pot in his personal collection. But there are flashes of analysis amongst the prosaic text, arranged in columns: number, description, value. Leach informs us that this is a 'list of pots in

[the] Pottery studio belonging to B.L.'. The shelves must have been crowded. Pot number 140 is a 'Hamada at St Ives, experimental 1923 £10', and there are 38 works by Hamada in total. There are eight works by the first Kenzan 'guaranteed by Hamada & Yanagi & Tomi' as well as one piece by Leach's master Kenzan VI, a 'copy of 1st Kenzan gift to me'. Leach records one work by Tomimoto (number 61) as 'His v. first pot made on my wheel, 1912'. His favoured 'Chinese Tz'ou bowl' is number 95, in an undemonstrative line, but valued at £100. And perhaps most elegiacally of all, number 63 is an indented bowl with plum blossom decoration by '6th Kenzan, from the ashes of his house 1923'. The list is predominantly factual, but these side comments show how Leach was attached to the pots as markers of his deepest artistic friendships.





**20** Unknown photographer, colour print, between 1969–1971. The Leach Pottery fireplace with Jeff Oestreich, Alan Brough and Judy Gardner. The medieval handles on the fireplace were sometimes used by Bernard Leach or Bill Marshall for instruction on how to make a good handle. Crafts Study Centre, BHL/9074. © Courtesy of the Bernard Leach Estate.

A final small group of very important ceramics, with an embedded place in the history of the Leach Pottery, had also been handed over to Trevor at some stage, perhaps in the final years of the Pottery as a public site, prior to its sale. Archive photographs (figures 20 and 21) of the fireplace of the Pottery, the heart of the place, which warmed the Pottery suppers and the teatime talks, show a changing series of pots on the ledge and niches. Three works are often to be seen there and have a kind of talismanic presence. A pair of Tang burial figures occupy the niches,<sup>80</sup> and above them a third unglazed ceramic (a companion to the two unfired works by Leach and Hamada found beside the wheels when the site was cleared of ceramics for the Bonhams sale in 1998).

This was a large slipware charger (with the date 1936 on the base) in the manner of similar works referring to 17th-century slipware from Staffordshire. It has a slight firing crack which is no doubt the reason why the charger was not glazed and



**21** Unknown photographer, black and white print, circa 1924. Tsurunosuke Matsubayashi in front of the Leach Pottery fireplace. A charger by the Leach Pottery sits on the ledge, next to a German Bellarmine in Leach's collection, with two Tang figures in the niches. The table in the foreground was designed by Bernard Leach. Crafts Study Centre, BHL/9667. © Courtesy of the Bernard Leach Estate.

completed. Leach had first come across the work of the Staffordshire potters Thomas and Ralph Toft when he was in Japan, through a book by Charles J. Lomax, *Quaint Old English Pottery*,<sup>81</sup> bought for him by Tomimoto. He made his own versions there using Lomax's commentary and drawings on his private collection, taking the Tofts' exuberantly decorated pottery as deliberate starting points for his own experimental slipware. One such work was a charger with the slip drawing of a running hare (1919) which he gave to his friend Yanagi – it is now displayed at the Japan Folk Craft Museum in Tokyo. Although they proved difficult to fire properly, Hamada and Leach continued to make these chargers in St Ives, and the version with an owl design can be traced back to Lomax's catalogue. Perhaps the best-known version of Leach's owl chargers is in the private collection of David and Jane Attenborough.<sup>82</sup>

Corser told John Bedding that after Janet Leach died 'Boots allowed him and Jo [Wason] to choose something from the collection; he chose the figures ... he



**22** Loucia Manopoulou, colour print, 2016, the Leach Pottery fireplace. The slipware charger with the owl design is a contemporary version by Philip Leach, and the 'Tang' figures in the niches are contemporary copies by John Bedding. By kind permission of Loucia Manopoulou.

had rescued the plate when building works were taking place on the other side of the fireplace and he thought that there was a danger it would get damaged'.<sup>83</sup> Given their symbolic presence in the history of the place, after the Leach Pottery had been reopened in 2008 following restoration, a decision was taken to clear, clean and stabilise the corner fireplace so that it could be lit again (for special occasions). To recreate the display of ceramics that were known to have been shown there, John Bedding made replicas of the Tang figures (figure 22). Bedding recalls that Trevor Corser allowed him to photograph the figures which he was displaying at home 'high upon his fireplace and he wouldn't allow me to touch or handle them, I had to photograph them in situ. They were on a recessed ledge so only ¾ of the figures were visible and I was on a chair doing the best I could'.<sup>84</sup> The duplicate replica figures are presently sitting in the niches of the fireplace at the Leach Pottery.

Philip Leach, Bernard's grandson, was similarly commissioned to make a contemporary version of the owl charger. Philip made his version of this symbolic dish in the Leach Pottery workshop itself, as if to imbue the piece with the sense of place and to find a way, by so doing, of recovering the 'lost work' in the way that only a Leach potter could do. It was an act of creative respect, risk and reward. He recounted his sense of place and the shadow of the past:

Making jugs in the old Leach Pottery in St Ives. Full to the brim with memories. Bill Marshall, Scott Marshall, Frank Vibert, Horatio Dunn, Uncle David, my Dad to name a few ... The owl platter was quite a curiosity because Bernard's original platter was heavily influenced I think by an owl from *The Slipware Book* which inspired a lot of his work at that time ... His owl was quite comical.

I decided to go for a trailed platter, white slip on black with a honey glaze. Throwing in the old workshop my back was near an incredibly cold damp wall and by the third morning I had managed to tear a muscle in my lower back. I realized that working out of my comfort zone I was having problems achieving the size of platter for this project. [But] I persevered and [threw] four more platters now measuring about sixteen inches and finished one which I think is worthy of the fireplace.<sup>85</sup>

The story had a moving conclusion. Members of Trevor's girlfriend's family came together and gifted these remarkable works, the original owl plate and the Tang figures, back to the Leach Pottery. They had watched for so long over the Pottery and were its most visible talismans.

A 19th-century Japanese bowl from Leach's source collection 'painted to the exterior with a wading bird' was also sold in the 2016 Lay sale (lot 868) described in Leach's own list of his collection as 'Japanese? Tokunabe Pottery' and valued by him at £3. From time to time, single items with this attribution appear in the marketplace. A c. 1955 salt-glazed tea bowl by Shoji Hamada was sold at the Oxford Ceramics Gallery in 2019 from the important collection of Michael O'Connor, Head of Art at Christ's Hospital, Horsham in the 1990s. The work was recorded as 'originally from the collection of Bernard Leach'. A bowl by William Staite Murray c. 1932 had been purchased by the American collector John Driscoll and is noted as being 'formerly in the collections of Bernard Leach and Dartington Hall'.<sup>86</sup> An Imari porcelain tea set 'from the reference collection of Bernard Leach'



plus the original box together 'with a certificate of authenticity signed by Janet Leach, dated October 1984', was sold in the Adam Partridge sale of Studio Ceramics and Modern Design (lot 63) on 14 October 2016.<sup>87</sup>

## LEACH AND THE PURCHASE OF WORK FOR THE PERSONAL COLLECTION

Leach acquired his ceramic collection over a long period of time. He tells us that he was buying ceramics in China on his extended trip there from 1914 to 1916, recalling that 'for a few pence each I was able to buy stoneware pots, beginning with kitchen ware made at Tz'u-chou,<sup>88</sup> almost as good as they were in those Sung days six hundred years earlier'.<sup>89</sup> These were pots purchased for daily use, but he could see in them a resonance to the deep past of China's porcelain histories. Looking at them, not in the kitchen (his cook had taken him to the shop) but in 'the quiet of my room' he explains that 'seen within that setting the uniformity of style became apparent and explained why it was only isolation that revealed its full beauty'.<sup>90</sup> Leach liked pots with lineage, and he liked to spend a long time in their company.

Leach purchased systematically it seems, rather than acquiring just on impulse. He was also given pots and cherished the ones that had the closest personal associations. Pots made by Hamada, Tomimoto and Kenzan VI were especially revered, for they connected him to his peers, and to his past and present. He also had a keen eye for a bargain. In his book *A Potter in Japan 1952–1954* for example, he describes staying in the 'feudal town' of Sasayama where he 'spent the next half-day in the house of a good dealer and bought old Tamba wares for the museum [the Mingaikan in Tokyo] and two pieces for myself at half price'.<sup>91</sup> As this anecdote suggests, he did not keep everything for himself. In the city of Beppu, he reports, 'we visited antique shops and saw some good things and I bought a Seto oil lamp, about 150 years old, for a friend in the British Museum for £2.00'.<sup>92</sup> In Hita he acquired a stoneware plate made in Seto with the characteristic 'horse eye' pattern.<sup>93</sup>

Leach did not lose the habit of collecting as he grew older. In 1950, staying with his friend the American artist Mark Tobey, in Seattle, he was encouraged to cross the border on a day trip, travelling to Victoria, British Columbia, Canada. Here

they went around Tobey's 'circle of curio-shops'. Leach was the luckier of the two for in the sixth shop 'I found a collection of eleventh-to twelfth-century Chinese bowls and bought a beautifully engraved translucent Ying Ching example for £35 ... I bought it only because of a long-suppressed desire for such a piece'.<sup>94</sup>

We know from photographs taken at Barnaloft, the Leach Pottery and The Count House, that he displayed his collection both formally and informally, in cabinets and on shelves. Leach kept his ash pot by his master, Kenzan VI, on the desk where he sketched out designs, as if to keep this practice in company with an icon from his past. They take on the stricter appearance of a formal 'curator's' collection displayed in a cabinet at The Count House; and a freer association when not held behind the glazed door: for here they could be picked up at a moment's notice, both to handle for personal enjoyment and for the purposes of teaching. This was a working collection, and one meant for the prompting of conversation as much as for stricter didactic purposes.

In *An English Artist in Japan*, privately printed in Tokyo in 1920, Yanagi writes of the time he spent with Leach in China in 1916. The essay, 'Leach As I Know Him,' sets these recollections in the context of powerful emotions and aesthetic judgements; moments where 'more than all, the warm beauty of the art of the Tang and Sung periods came to both of us like the revelation of another world'.<sup>95</sup> These pots had a transformative power. Yanagi refers to acquisitions that they must both have made during his visit, 'for the specimens of Sung pottery that we acquired too gave us much food for thought. We would go on talking so that the time flew by and we often heard it strike two or three in the morning'.<sup>96</sup> This is a dialogue between equals, two collectors of the same mind.

## THE PERSONAL COLLECTION: A MEANS OF PROMOTING DIALOGUE AND LEARNING

Other considerations of Leach's personal collection took place in more discursive environments. Michael Cardew recalled how meals at the Leach Pottery ('a great thing in those days') often became the setting for ceramic criticism. The pots were not only on display, they were in daily use:

Perhaps the best thing about those meals was the plates and bowls we used. There were some beautiful Tzu-chou rice bowls and plates which Leach had bought from coolies at Shanghai or Hong Kong for a penny or two each: they were rough but had infinite refinement in shape and in the slight, summary brush decoration.<sup>97</sup>

Cardew goes on to say that the pots prompted further discussion of 'how they were made, in a metaphysical as well as a technical sense'. And he recalls Leach's actual words at one such meal, 'We were looking at a turquoise green Chinese pot, and Leach said "I wish we could go to the place where it was made, and see what they use: it is sure to be something quite simple"'.<sup>98</sup>

The potter Matsubayashi, who was listening to the conversation, 'smiled, drew his breath through his teeth in the true Japanese way, and said, after a pause, "I think –ah –rather complicated"'.<sup>98</sup>

Cardew is also on hand to report directly on the occasion when Leach used a pot from his own collection as a kind of exam question. Leach quotes from Cardew's own account of the meeting, which took place at The Count House. Cardew asked about the prospect of working at the Leach Pottery (he noted beforehand that they ate a meal together 'using plates and cups of grey stoneware', so his observant eye was in, at least).

Leach said to me, 'Before I give you an answer, let's see what your ideas are'. He then produced a lovely fluted twelfth-century Chinese bowl. 'What do you make of that?' he asked. Of course I didn't make anything of it. I had seen and admired some exciting sepia-painted Tz'u chou pots, which then were beginning to appear for the first time in London but I had never seen anything like this bowl before. Luckily I had enough sense not to say something stupid.<sup>99</sup>

This is a telling encounter between the sagacious potter-teacher and the aspirant pupil, who had equally as good instincts and the wit to edit his reply to meet the mood of the moment. He became Leach's 'first, and best, student'.<sup>100</sup>

Leach's personal collection played a part, then, in professional dialogues as well as more personal testimony and reminiscence. But Leach used his collection as a means of commentary and explication through his publications, especially the 'catalogues' he made up of illustrative ceramics. He drew heavily on his personal collection in these volumes, as well as on examples from major museums across the

world. Leach's commentary shows how he regarded his collection as an appropriate source for a truly world-wide gathering of exemplars. The illustrations of these works are often accompanied by short descriptive texts.

Leach had editorial control and a writer's command in three significant publications (*A Potter's Work*; *A Potter's Portfolio*; *A Potter's Book*) which brought favoured and relevant works from his personal collection of ceramics into the public arena. It is perhaps not too far-fetched to think of these books as akin to museum catalogues, and the descriptions of the objects like exhibition labels. It was a museum of his own imagining, containing works he admired ('borrowed' as it were), as well as owned.

*Bernard Leach: A Potter's Work* (1966) is a particularly clear example: the publisher's purpose for this book – an exhibition in two dimensions – was to give an account of the range of Leach's work, and he said himself that 'I think this collection is fairly representative'.<sup>101</sup> It was intended to show objects covering the full span of his working life and gave equal weight to Leach's drawings – often the starting point for a pot's design. The book was aimed particularly at students and working potters. Leach notes the difficulty – familiar to any hard-working curator – in pinning down the best representative work to illuminate his theme or didactic point. Leach gives a helpful provenance to each illustrated example, and this is important because it identifies pieces which he describes as contained in the 'Leach Pottery Permanent Collection'. This indicates that Leach regarded his own collection as more than a highly personal gathering of works for introspective uses, and as something with a more public gathering of works identified not with him but with the Pottery itself. The place of display is important, suggestive of a public life for the pots.

These permanent collection works include very rare pieces made when Leach was exploring his craft for the first time in Japan. He illustrates a covered porcelain pot, remarking that 'I had not found any idiom of my own ... so ... I copied from memory a Chinese example of the Ming dynasty which I had seen in the Tokyo museum. When I could not remember details, I invented them'.<sup>102</sup> He did the same by copying a 17th-century tin-glazed earthenware drug pot in a Tokyo collection, 'looking over my shoulder to see what European potters had done in the past, whilst going through my studentship in Japan'.<sup>103</sup> He wants the reader (or viewer) to see how he approached making the work, with the intention that a student might learn through the same approach. This work was important to him: it featured, too, on the front cover of the book, and was specifically intended to be sent to the Crafts



Study Centre collection, denoted by the ink accession number written on the foot of the work.

Leach uses another pot to give technical information. A slipware dish from the Leach Pottery dating from the 1930s that was in the permanent collection 'was made by pressing a slice of clay on a hump mould ... pouring yellow ochre slip over the inside when the clay was half-hardened, and immediately combing the surface, back and forth, with a notched kidney rubber'.<sup>104</sup> This work was given by Boots Redgrave to Joanna Wason, although it is now happily back on display as a treasured loan at the Leach Pottery.

Of the 68 pots illustrated in *A Potter's Work*, 13 are objects in the 'Leach Pottery Permanent Collection'. The implication of this title is that these identified works were more formally on display and had been extracted for this public purpose. Others were kept for Leach's daily reference, or as a backdrop to his everyday life, in his personal workshop, his office at the Leach Pottery and at home. But perhaps there was a blending of the collections. They did receive curatorial care. They were cherished, without doubt, and some were placed for a more formal display.

We are presented with the same sort of curatorial analysis in Leach's earlier book, *A Potter's Portfolio: A Selection of Fine Pots* (1951). This volume was dedicated to 'the unknown potter', placing it in the service of the folk craft tradition. It is a 'Mingei' book. *A Potter's Portfolio* sits within that important genre of instructional, inspirational, maker-led ceramic literature represented by, for example, Edmund de Waal's *The Pot Book* (2011), or Peter Held's *Innovation and Change* (2009).<sup>105</sup>

Leach's tone in *A Potter's Portfolio* is both sage and didactic. The personal collection is never far away from his mind. He builds on its individuality by surveying other major museum collections for his examples. This gives him a free rein to follow his eclectic curatorial instincts. He reflects on this freedom: 'Various examples are gathered in books and museums which may or may not be beautiful: rarity, historic or technical importance, ostentation, extravagance or mere freakishness frequently determine their inclusion'.<sup>106</sup>

Yet, despite the embrace of intuition implied here, Leach also falls back on the notion of a 'standard', a quintessential quality on which a lifetime's practice could be based. He remarks that the illustrations of exemplar works could be removed from the book and 'framed for the walls of a private room or hung in a studio or school'.<sup>107</sup>

They must be ever present, all around and, rather like his own personal collection, ready for duty, implicit instruction, symbolically as well as by the commentary of the expert. They are there for instruction, even genuflection. They must seep into a potter's heart and mind. This gives Leach a defined purpose for his collection as well as this manufactured museum-in-a-book: 'One has to live with fine pots', he says, 'in order to appreciate their character, for they are intimate expressions of people and their cultures. Human virtues such as nobility, generosity, breadth, simplicity, sincerity and charity – virtues common to both man and pot – are there to be discovered in shape, texture, colour and pattern'.<sup>108</sup> His curatorship of these works – the ideal (and idealised) collection merging seamlessly with works from his personally owned collection – is intended as a rallying call for the community of potters and pot lovers 'from all periods and backgrounds', as he remarks 'except that of industry'.<sup>109</sup>

These rules seem to have guided the choices he made in selecting work from his personal collection. If we regard *A Potter's Portfolio* as a visual credo, we may be able to look for the reasoning behind his own collecting instincts. He talks about how the mark of the maker must be present in these exemplar pots. To enter the collection (of the book, at the very least) he wanted to find the quality of 'life in one or more of its modes: inner harmony, nobility, purity, strength, breadth and generosity, or even exquisiteness and charm'. Having done so, and made 'a list of virtues in man and pot' the curator-collector still had work to do, for it was another thing 'to interpret' these virtues 'in the counterpoint of convex and concave; hard and soft; growth and rest, for this is the breathing of the Universe in the particular'.<sup>110</sup>

Leach's collection, as represented in *A Potter's Portfolio*, is both romantic and moral; symbolic and individual. His search for works of the essential standard was both liberating and reverential. He took the broadest of sweeps in assembling this imaginary collection in the imagined museum from the great museums of America, Japan and Europe. He marshals ancient works from China, Greece and Egypt, as well as Native American vessels. His examples of Mexican olla ware from the Minneapolis Institute of Arts are juxtaposed with modern work in his own collection which express the same 'drawing through geometric [that] is emotional rather than intellectual'.<sup>111</sup>

Leach's writing in the book is often intensely personal. He talks as if the pot was in his hand, and indeed, in some cases, it would have been on his desk as he wrote, so that he could weigh its virtues, its proximity to the standard. Of a Chinese covered

stoneware bowl, he notes the 'richness of the iron pigment welling up to the surface of the glaze, the ivory-like texture and the vigorous shape seems admirable to me, but the rather crowded pattern hardly conforms to the overall mood of the 12th century'.<sup>112</sup> This is a description that takes one way beyond the impartial posture of the museum curator, and Leach knows it. He wants to be the reader's personal tutor; he wants you to feel the weight of the pot, to imagine running your hand over the glaze. He wants you to be there in the moment. And so his writing veers from the descriptive to the technical and the lyrical. Perhaps it is a shade pretentious for today's curatorial taste. But this is the professor-poet in Leach. He notes, on looking at a celadon wine bowl from Korea in his source collection, that 'the lines are elongated and the decoration is exquisitely engraved and imbued with a poetic sensibility so frequently to be found in the expression of this race of sad history'.<sup>113</sup> It is perhaps a claim too far, as Leach's stereotype begins to stretch credibility.

The selection of work for Leach's personal collection, as evidenced in these books and proto-catalogues, is done according to criteria: deep association with makers and place; a visible manifestation of his ceaseless and reflective search for 'standard'; and the journey of that standard through cultural transference: Korea to China to Japan to England. And perhaps, as well as discrimination and the search for a humanity of form, and the tacit sense of the individual (though often unnamed) maker in communion with clay and glaze, there may well have been more ordinary impulses: the irresistible urge to secure and own a work, whatever the peril to one's finances. Although Leach does not say much about how and when he bought work, he never regrets buying a pot.

The third of his texts where the personal collection plays an important role is *A Potter's Book* (1940). It is Leach's most significant published work, a canonical book which combines technical information enabling the reader to have information enough to start a pottery; and the elucidation of what the potter's life means, not for the day of making, but the whole commitment of a lifetime. It is a practical as well as an ideological book. And pots from his source collection are there as a backdrop. They are the guardians of his central historical message, for in 'the nobility and universality of the best T'ang and Sung pots discerning minds have recognized the highest achievement and therein a measuring rod of values'.<sup>114</sup>

Leach wrote the book for an audience of the 'hand craftsman' and 'the school'. The volume gave him a teacher's pulpit and his first major public platform on which

to illustrate his thesis by means of black and white photographs of his personal pots. Leach selected 77 black and white illustrations, and Emmanuel Cooper notes that they 'were a personal choice rather than a catholic survey of ceramic history. They include a bonfire firing in Nigeria and historical and modern pots that he particularly admired'.<sup>115</sup> These were the essential as well as the favoured examples. The great fluted Song bowl is present, as is the stoneware ash pot by Ogata Kenzan VI. Three tea bowls by Hamada (a 'Japanese individual potter') are shown along with a Japanese dish with its 'lovely willow pattern in brown and blue ... probably painted by a child as was the custom in the 18th and 19th centuries'.<sup>116</sup> Leach also considers pots by former assistants who had worked alongside him at the Leach Pottery in its early days: Michael Cardew, Katharine Pleydell-Bouverie and Norah Braden. As befits a book with an instructional manner, the detailed descriptions of the pots are terser and more technical: the form of decoration, the type of glaze, the clay body are enumerated. These are akin to the curator's label: they are factual and unassailable.

We can read Leach's personal collection as one of how he gave a personal account of his own search for the 'standard'. These pots, arranged around him, were the embodiment and the visualisation of his lifetime's work. His personal collection was totemic, representational, and instructional, both for himself, his readers, and, he hoped, for a wider community.

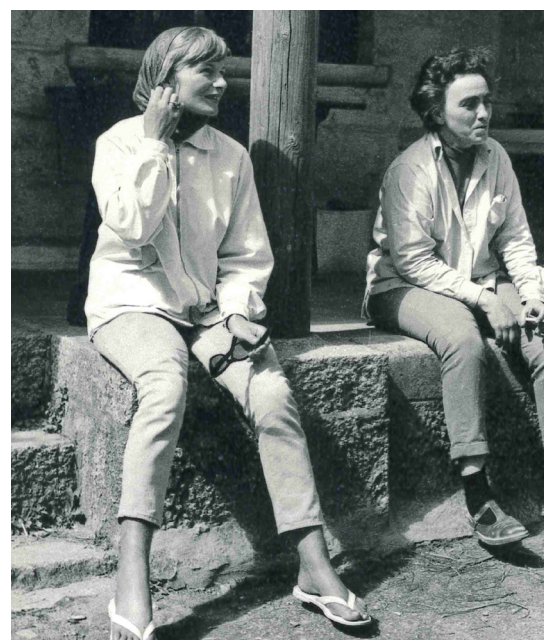
### THE PERSONAL COLLECTION ON DISPLAY: BECOMING MUSEUM-LIKE

Leach's personal collection of ceramics had something of a peripatetic life in the Pottery itself. The main location, at least of the works most significant to him, was his personal studio and office. As time passed, the collection was packed away on shelves in the entrance hallway to the Pottery Cottage which had been sealed from the outside and turned, as Joanna Wason says, into 'a cupboard of wonders'.<sup>117</sup> They were variously boxed up and stored in a downstairs room in the Pottery Cottage. The potter Harry Isaacs recalls how he was asked to clean up Bernard's studio and to prepare it for the filming of *The Potter's Art* in 1968. The works were displayed without undue ceremony on the studio shelves surrounding



**23** Unknown maker, dish, stoneware, 19th century, Seto ware. h. 5.5cm x d. 28.3cm. Crafts Study Centre, P.2000.1. © Courtesy of the Bernard Leach Estate.

the wheel. The film was written and presented by Clive Gunnell for Westward TV and, according to an early version of the film script, 'opens on close decoration of Oriental pottery and slowly pulls back to reveal the pot', along with 'suitable Oriental music' as a backdrop (figure 23). This image cut to what Gunnell had described as an 'Anglo Saxon' pot and Leach corrected to say 'a typical medieval English pot' (this, too, in his personal collection), and the shot dissolved to 'a pot being fashioned on the wheel'.<sup>118</sup> The personal collection is at work: it has a tangible connectivity to the East and West, and demonstrates the pulse of this geographical and time line within the contemporary pot. The pots might stay for years on the shelf or out of sight. It was a collection with no glass walls and occasional but deeply relevant



**24** Unknown photographer, black and white print, 1960s, Janet Leach (left) and Boots Redgrave outside the Leach Pottery. Crafts Study Centre, NCM/13/1/2. © Courtesy of the Bernard Leach Estate.

usage. John Bedding, who worked at the Leach Pottery from 1972 to 1978 recalls how in later years 'various pots were stored in the cottage in the rooms below Janet's accommodation ... we were allowed to go in there when we wanted and occasionally Bernard would draw on them to demonstrate techniques and good examples but this area was never open to the public'.<sup>119</sup>

Bernard Leach was accustomed to seeing his personal collection of pots play a kind of public life: through his instructional books, through impromptu lectures, or conversations where a piece would be used to exemplify a point about history, technique or aesthetics. In the mid-1960s, the idea of using the collection more strategically as a public resource began to be discussed. These conversations did not lead to any quick resolution. Janet Leach took the first initiative. At a time when the Pottery Cottage in the middle of the Leach Pottery site was more or less empty, according to Emmanuel Cooper, she proposed turning part of it 'into a small museum to house a collection of Leach's work as a further attraction for the increasing number of visitors'.<sup>120</sup> This idea was dropped due to the costs involved in making the necessary improvements. David Leach was worried about the major structural changes that would have been required (figure 24).



Leach himself was adamantly opposed to an idea put to him in 1976 by John Lane of Dartington Hall, Devon, that a museum of his work be established on the estate to acknowledge the important part he had played in its history. This idea was backed up by the enterprising and forceful David Canter (co-founder of the Dartington Pottery Training Workshop and Honorary Secretary of the Craft Potters Association), who argued that such a museum could have both educational and commercial benefits. The museum would be respectful and 'authentic', as a letter to Leach pointed out, and 'your life and achievements will be traced with both word panels and photographs, a collection of your pottery on show ... and a full-scale replica view created looking into part of your workshop'. The Dartington proposal also included a request to borrow from Leach's personal collection, but nothing could persuade him from rejecting the idea, saying that it smacked too much of a 'Madame Tussauds' exhibition. In addition, the proposal coincided with the donation by Bernard Leach of a substantial body of his ceramics to the Crafts Study Centre.

Janet was not happy either, thinking that the idea 'reeked of the cliché "Bernard Leach slept here"', but as Emmanuel Cooper goes on to observe, 'with hopes of creating her own Bernard Leach museum at St Ives, she had an element of self-interest'.<sup>121</sup> While true, this was a generous and compassionate self-interest. Janet had always acknowledged Bernard's remarkable contribution to studio ceramics, and the establishment of a permanent display of his work was a visible means of her respect, as well as a means of encouraging visits to the Pottery and additional sales. She recalled, according to Joanna Wason, that when she first arrived at the Pottery there was no collection of Bernard's work on public view, and she wanted to remedy this situation. She acted as the unofficial curator of Bernard's work, building up over time an important documentary record of his individual pots, including many with deep personal associations, such as pots that Bernard had given to her for birthdays, anniversaries and Christmas presents. Her own private collection would be a public one, too.

The idea to display Leach's pots as an exhibition at the Pottery, in order to give a context and a backdrop to visitors seeking to purchase its contemporary products, was developed in 1974 at a time when Janet made improvements to the Pottery buildings. Janet Leach had been sharing the workshop with the apprentices and students and not unnaturally wanted a workshop of her own. Joanna Wason recalls that 'Bernard said she could share his, but she preferred to work where she could concentrate on her work alone. So with Bernard's agreement a large rustic shed was constructed in the yard for a showroom'.<sup>122</sup> The showroom sign was in capital letters, filled in with white paint, carved into a long, aged piece of wood, saying 'THE : LEACH : POTTERY :



**25** Unknown photographer, black and white print, 1970s, Leach showroom sign. Crafts Study Centre, BHL/9018.

SHOWROOM' and it is still in the Pottery today (figure 25). Jonny Nance recalls Dicon (his father) 'telling me that the sign's post came from a spar salvaged from a schooner (possibly the *Mary Barrow*) wrecked in St Ives in 1908 by George Dunn. Dunn was a charismatic local with fascinating stories to tell of fishing voyages and mining ... and an odd-job man in the early years of the Pottery.'<sup>123</sup> Perhaps the story is a smuggler's yarn. If it is, it links the site of the Pottery to St Ives folklore. If it is true, then it adds a grace note to the site, a relic of local history integrated into the place, and in doing so it emphasises the meaning of the Leach Pottery as a site of modernist making, hewn from local granite, made with local tools and presenting not only found wood, but the storied place of St Ives itself.

The so-called 'pot room' for her collection was a well-lit but windowless locked room at the back of the shed. Its one touch of luxury was that it was carpeted, the only such room in the Pottery. The design aesthetic of the pot room was spare, even rudimentary: plain wooden shelves fixed on brackets to the walls. The new room was intended to accommodate the increasing number of visitors, and seeing this collection was intended to give a welcoming curatorial backdrop to inspire a purchase. The old showroom in Pottery Cottage was converted into Janet's studio. And so the collection



**26** Pat Carter, colour print, 1990s, the 'Bernard Leach collection of Janet Leach'. By kind permission of Pat Carter. © Courtesy of the Bernard Leach Estate.

began to take on a public role, akin to a private museum, although it was not referred to as such. Leach, in his will, specified that 'all articles at the Pottery that directly pertain to my profession as a potter including ... all my permanent collection of pots' (other than the works to be left to the Crafts Study Centre and the Victoria & Albert Museum) be left to Janet.<sup>124</sup> Leach preferred to use the phrase 'the Leach Pottery Permanent Collection' to describe the grouping of his work. After his death, and to acknowledge its transfer of title, a single card label was propped up against a fixing bar for the shelves holding the pots (figure 26). It read:

BERNARD LEACH  
 COLLECTION OF JANET LEACH  
 NOT FOR SALE  
 DO NOT MOVE OR TOUCH THE POTS  
 PHOTOGRAPHS MAY BE TAKEN

The display was almost as curt as the label. No other supporting information seems to have been provided by way, for example, of individual object cards. Photographs taken in the 1990s reveal an extensive display of Bernard's own pots, dating from the 1960s and 1970s. Around 100 in number, the works included vases, bowls, teapots, plates and one large tile panel. Another report suggests that the display was changed regularly since 'a constant stream of visitors come from all over the world to see the historic collection of Leach and Hamada pots and to buy the present-day work of Trevor [Corser] and Janet from the pottery showroom'.<sup>125</sup>

The collection was used as a fully public resource, too. The major retrospective exhibition *The Art of Bernard Leach* held at the Victoria & Albert Museum in 1977 in honour of his ninetieth birthday drew widely from public and private collections, and included twelve pots from both Janet's and 'the artist's' collection.<sup>126</sup> Many of the works given to the Crafts Study Centre by Leach were also loaned out. The private works were getting a full public airing.

An advertisement in the St Ives September Festival programme announced an exhibition to be held in 1972 at the Penwith Galleries. This was titled *Bernard Leach Pots 1956–1972* and consisted of works 'from the private collection of Janet Leach'.<sup>127</sup> And a letter from Janet Leach to the Canadian film maker Marty Gross dated 27 July 1979 states that Janet was 'doing a small but well-chosen Exhibition of my collection of Bernard's pots here in St Ives from 18th September to 19th October'. It must have been intended as her own exhibition-memorial to Bernard, a way of saying farewell through pots that had been kept as exemplars by Bernard and passed on to Janet as such. She wanted to get Gross's help to bring this particular exhibition to life: 'what I am really asking is if I can find someone to do a few minutes of this Exhibition with perhaps me talking about the pots to give it some action'.<sup>128</sup> They were effectively on open display, although eventually, where possible, larger vessels had been filled with sand to make their removal more difficult, and they were glued to the shelves. This was not enough to stop a robbery. In truth the wooden building was vulnerable, and in August 1995 thieves broke into the building beside the Stennack stream and made away with 43 pots from Bernard's collection of his own ceramics. Cyril Frankel lamented 'an irreplaceable and terrible loss to the art world. The pots were particularly good examples of Bernard's work and they were ones that he especially treasured'.<sup>129</sup> A further report in *The Times* explained how significant the collection was since the pots were 'all birthday and Christmas presents to Leach's wife, Janet'.<sup>130</sup> Two

were broken, but the police managed to recover all but one work – a little lidded cigarette box with two carved swallow motifs on the lid, brushed blue<sup>131</sup> – before they were sold on, and after six months they were returned to St Ives and an arrest was made. Most of these pots were eventually gifted to the collection of the Crafts Study Centre in August 2004.

The 'Leach Pottery permanent collection', or the 'St Ives pottery permanent exhibition', as it was also referred to, carried on after Janet's death in 1997 and was run by Boots Redgrave for a short while. The Bonhams sale of 1998 saw the effective ending of Leach's personal collection as a discrete entity. In 1999 the property was put on the market and sold to the St Ives hotelier Alan Gillam, and he began to restore the buildings, 'converting the cottage into a showroom and Leach museum'.<sup>132</sup> This showed the works by Bernard himself which were eventually gifted, in turn, to the collection of the Crafts Study Centre.

## CONCLUSION

Bernard Leach writes in *Beyond East and West* about the time when, as a young potter, he persuaded his friend Tomimoto to throw 'his very first pot', after Leach had been working with his master Kenzan for a year or so. He helped him with the process, admiring Tomimoto's decision to paint a design of plum blossom with words from a popular spring song on the bowl. This seemed propitious: 'I have since discovered that the first Kenzan quoted from the same spring ballad on one of his pots two hundred years earlier. This very pot was later given to me, as was the first pot by Tomimoto. Both are now in the Victoria and Albert Museum'.<sup>133</sup>

Although this story has passed into ceramic legend, it is almost certainly apocryphal given the high level of skill and experience that would have been required to make it.<sup>134</sup>

What is more certain is Leach's eloquent ownership of the bowl. He recalled 'looking back over the fifty years of our friendship' after hearing of Tomimoto's death in 1963. He had still 'a predominant sense of its continuity, tempered by the poignancy of his absence in the flesh', and in order to manifest this connection 'I

touch his pots with my hands – *raku*, stoneware, and porcelain; re-read his letters and postcards, gaze at his clear, sharp brush-work and drawings in pen and pencil, with vivid memories, full of both sadness and joy'.<sup>135</sup>

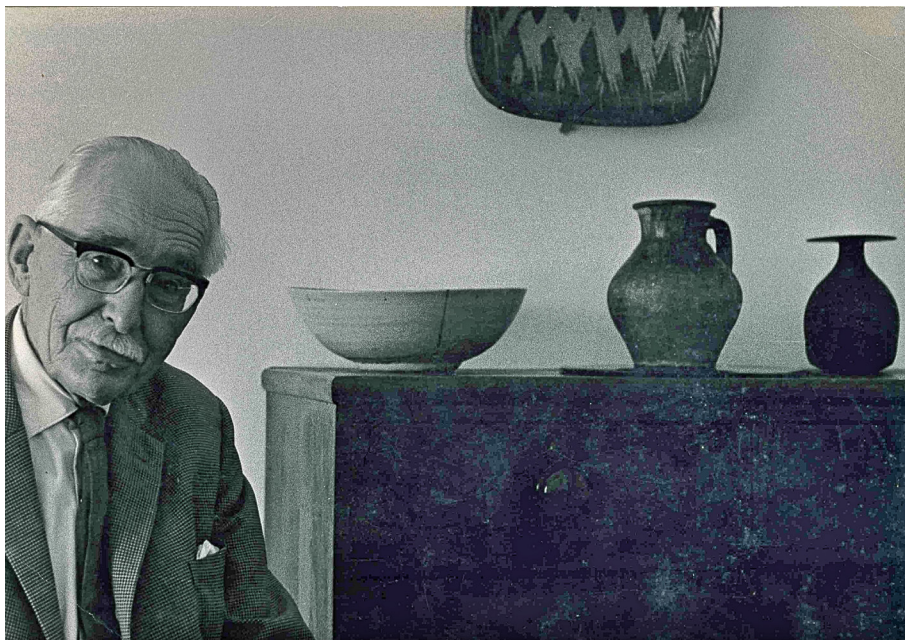
Leach had a clear destination in mind for this pot, and it joined a small group of works by Kenzan that he gifted to the Victoria & Albert Museum. Bernard gave some to his potter friends as a mark of respect and fellowship. Janet did likewise, and she sometimes sold works from the collection at New Craftsman. She also honoured the collection by curating exhibitions at the Leach Pottery, and this, together with exhibition loans and the extraordinary gift to the Crafts Study Centre, placed Bernard's personal collection into the public domain for future generations. Towards the end of his life, Bernard liked to keep his pots close to hand, so he could look back to his past, and see how his own work could sit in a deep tradition. The pots from his collection became messengers and ancients.

On the top of my desk I keep two bowls. One is almost the last pot I made and the other is a Korean pot made for rice. My piece is fancy by comparison, and its market value is about seventy-five dollars. The Korean pot probably costs less than a penny although perhaps now worth as much as mine because of rarity, and I say that the Korean pot is better. True, mine is quite pretty, and I do not think it is bad, but the Korean one was born; mine has been made. When I compare the Korean pot with mine I say that the Korean pot is better: it has warmth. That warmth is there because there is no ego: we do not feel any egotism on the part of the maker.<sup>136</sup>

Leach's own pots could only learn from the ones that paved their way from the distant past. He kept his cherished fluted Song bowl from his collection on the Barnaloft windowsill in his final years. It made its own way back into the limelight in 2002 in the saleroom of David Lay in Penzance. The potter Jason Wason (who had worked at the Leach Pottery from 1976 to 1981) understood its significance and potent meanings and bid successfully for the work. He recalls it in the sale room 'looking resplendent, like the jewel that it is'.<sup>137</sup>

David Lewis gives a remarkable account of Bernard Leach's animated discourse on ceramics, using his collection as the aids to language and argument. It is contained in his book on the distinguished American potter Warren Mackenzie. As Marion Whybrow notes, Warren and his wife Alix 'lived for two years in the Pottery Cottage





**27** Andrew Lanyon, Bernard Leach, black and white print, September 1966. Leach is shown at his Barnaloft flat, St Ives. Top: The slipware dish on the wall was made at the Leach Pottery and is illustrated in a number of Leach's books. Left to right on the chest: unidentified bowl; Medieval jug, see figure 2, p.16) and Hans Coper bottle with disc top see figure 13, p.36. Crafts Study Centre, BHL/12879. © Courtesy of the Bernard Leach Estate and © Estate of Hans Coper. By kind permission of Andrew Lanyon.

at St Ives with Bernard Leach and learned much of value from their conversations. 'He taught me [Warren reported] to see, to think and to feel'.<sup>138</sup>

David Lewis recounts these conversations between Bernard, himself, Warren and Alix, and their dramatic interplays between language and clay form.

As though he was bringing out and revealing part of himself, Bernard would reach for pots by his old friends Hamada, Tomimoto, and Kawai, but also for the Korean stonewares, Chinese Sung [pots] and old English salt glazes and slipwares, which he had collected, ostensibly to demonstrate the range and longevity of utilitarian form-language. He had one Sung bowl of the twelfth century which had been given to him when he left Japan in 1920, and of which

he was enormously proud ... He would compare this bowl to others from the Sung dynasty to teach us how warm and generous and easy-seeming this bowl was, and it certainly was: it made other Sung pieces look remote, colder and more calculated.<sup>139</sup>

Lewis reveals Leach's lecture-conversations almost as a kind of performance. Leach would caress meaning out of each exemplar pot from his collection and find connections not dogmatically from East Asia to England, but across cultures and time zones. 'He would show us how abstract patterns on preclassical Greek pots were paralleled by contemporary beadwork and polychromed walls of Saharan communities.'<sup>140</sup>

We can hear, in the echo of these conversations, how essential Bernard Leach's personal collection was to the way he thought, the way he drew, and the way he made and decorated his own ceramic art, for the pots that came before him lived on in his own imaginings (figure 27).

## ENDNOTES

- 1** Cooper, E. (2020) *Bernard Leach: Life and Work*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, p.xvii.
- 2** The titles of dynasties are written in the current accepted forms such as 'Song'. However, when the term is used in an earlier form such as 'Sung' by Leach or others in a quotation, the earlier version is used.
- 3** Crafts Study Centre archive, 2016.44.1.
- 4** See Tyas, M. (2016) Introduction, *Trevor Corser: his Life and Work*. St Ives: The Leach Pottery, p.4.
- 5** Cooper, op. cit., p.33.
- 6** Horner, L. (2010) Frank Brangwyn (1867–1956): the Japanese Connection, in: Cortazzi, H. (ed.) *Britain & Japan: Biographical Portraits*, vol.VII. Folkestone: Global Oriental, p.430.
- 7** The drawing is in the collection of the Japan Folk Craft Museum, Tokyo.
- 8** Cited in Robertson Scott, J. (1922) *The Foundations of Japan*, London: John Murray, pp.98–9.
- 9** de Waal, E. (1998) *Bernard Leach*. London: Tate Gallery, p.19.
- 10** In conversation with Simon Olding.
- 11** Leach, B. (1978) *Beyond East and West: Memoirs, Portraits, and Essays*. London and Boston: Faber, p.203.

- 12 Outerbridge, D. (1975) *Bernard Leach: the Potter's Challenge*. London: Souvenir Press, p.94.
- 13 Email to Simon Olding from Glenn Adamson, July 2020.
- 14 *ibid.*
- 15 The exhibition was held from 27 April to 30 July 1979.
- 16 In 2005 the Wingfield Digby collection of Leach's pots and other major studio potters was accepted in lieu of inheritance tax and allocated to Tate St Ives.
- 17 Email from Barley Roscoe to Simon Olding, June 2020.
- 18 Crafts Study Centre P.79.90.
- 19 Roscoe, B. (1979) Acknowledgements, *Pots of Inspiration*, Bath: Crafts Study Centre, p.1.
- 20 Wingfield, G. (1979) Pots of Inspiration: Bernard Leach's personal collection at the Holburne Museum, Bath, *Burlington Magazine*, p.401. See also Roscoe, B. (1982) Pots of Inspiration, *Ceramic Review*, 77, pp.28–31.
- 21 Leach, B. (1979) Foreword, *Pots of Inspiration*. Bath: The Crafts Study Centre, p.2.
- 22 *ibid.*
- 23 Leach, B. (1973) *Drawings Verse and Belief*. London: Jupiter Books, p.73. Leach illustrates Minagawa with a pen and wash drawing of 1953.
- 24 Leach, B. *Pots of Inspiration*, *op. cit.*, p.2.
- 25 Roscoe, B. (1985) Bernard Leach – the Sources of his Influence, *Fast Forward: New Directions in British Ceramics*, exhib. cat. London: Institute for Contemporary Arts, p.36.
- 26 Email from Glenn Adamson to Simon Olding, July 2020.
- 27 Dormer, P. (1985) Familiar Forms, *Fast Forward: New Directions in British Ceramics*, exhib. cat. London: Institute for Contemporary Arts.
- 28 Roscoe, *op. cit.*, p.36.
- 29 Alison Britton, email to Simon Olding, June 2020.
- 30 Bonhams (1998) *The Art & Influence of Asia including the Janet Leach Collection*. Bonhams: London. The catalogue cards are now in the collection of the Crafts Study Centre.
- 31 I am indebted to Alexandra Lambley for this information. See her PhD thesis: Lambley Clark, A., *Translation and Appropriation: Mingei Theory, Bernard Leach and his Vancouver Apprentices (1958–1979)*, University of Falmouth, 2020, p.320. An exhibition review by Sarah Milroy, 'A Licence to Kiln', in *The Globe and Mail*, 15 March 2004, reports that Johnson 'also spent some time in St Ives, documenting the Leach Pottery collection in the late 1970s'.
- 32 Email from Barley Roscoe to Simon Olding, June 2020.
- 33 Crafts Study Centre collection P.75.67. Leach refers here to his copy of John Richard Green's 1874 work *A Short History of the English People*.
- 34 Crafts Study Centre collection P.75.62.
- 35 *Beyond East and West* p.139.

- 36 *ibid.*
- 37 I am indebted to Janet Axten, St Ives Archive, for this information. Eleanor Oliver Podmore (née Bramwell) died on 9 March 2013 in Switzerland. She met and married Frank Podmore in 1891. He knew Eleanor's brother, John Milne Bramwell, an eminent Scottish physician, surgeon, and medical hypnotist. Podmore was a spiritualist and a co-founder of the Fabian Society. In 1898 he became involved in the agitation against the work of Havelock Ellis, who had lived, with his wife, at The Count House some years before Bernard Leach and his family. Email to Simon Olding, June 2020.
- 38 See Adamson, G., Droth, M., and Olding, S. (2017) *Things of Beauty Growing: British Studio Pottery*. New Haven CT and London: Yale University Press, p.35 and pp.256–7 for illustrations and a further discussion of the Toft chargers.
- 39 Cardew, M. The pottery of Mr Bernard Leach, in *The Studio*, vol.90, no.392, 14 November 1925, pp.298–301.
- 40 Emmanuel Cooper states that 18 pots were donated by Leach. The three catalogue cards which have been rediscovered suggest the total number was at least 20, including a round ash glazed vase (given the number 20), a tall, flattened vase ('Penwith no 15') and a tall tenmoku vase (3), the date range of these ranging between 1968 and 1970. See *Bernard Leach Life And Work*, p.400, footnote 66.
- 41 'Red and White camellias  
Red so magnetic, white so pure –  
Together compelling'.  
The card number is 238 J (accession no. 2020.12) and it is marked V & A? It is now in the Victoria & Albert Museum (FE.61-197).
- 42 For further details see Cooper, *op. cit.*, pp.303–5.
- 43 Leach writes 'Ri' dynasty, and Nigel Wood indicates that it may be an old Japanese spelling for 'Yi'. Email to Simon Olding, June 2020.
- 44 It is unclear who this refers to. John Leach's (Bernard's grandson) daughters were born in 1964 and 1965, so this may have referred to a family friend rather than a family member.
- 45 Cooper, *op. cit.*, p.324.
- 46 Cooper, *op. cit.*, pp.324–5.
- 47 Barley Roscoe, email to Simon Olding, June 2020.
- 48 Ben Williams notes (email to Simon Olding, April 2020) that 'I had a discussion with Cyril [Frankel] about the name of the sale, and we concluded that as Janet herself described Bernard's collection, after his death as "The Janet Leach Collection of Bernard Leach", this attribution was most appropriate.'
- 49 Bonhams, *op. cit.*, p.24.
- 50 *ibid.*, p.31.
- 51 Leach, B. (1920) *An English Artist in Japan*. Tokyo: privately published.
- 52 Bonhams, *op. cit.* p.61. It seems very likely that there were at least two sets of the catalogue cards.
- 53 Leach, B. (1976) *The Potters Challenge*, Outerbridge, D. (ed.) London: Souvenir Press Ltd, p.128.

- 54 Bonhams, op. cit., p.106.
- 55 *ibid.*, p.107.
- 56 The plate was lent to the *Exhibition of the Art of Bernard Leach: his masterpieces loaned by British museums and collectors, meeting of East and West* organised by the Ohara Museum of Art and the Asahi Shimbun and held in Japan in 1980. Catalogue number 10, illustrated on p.38, and described as 'lent by Mrs Janet Leach'.
- 57 *ibid.*, p.28.
- 58 *Beyond East and West*, p.202.
- 59 Nihon Mongeikan (2014) *Sōetsu Yanagi and Bernard Leach: Letters – from 1912 to 1959*. Tokyo: Nihon Mingeikan, pp.281–3.
- 60 British Museum (1999) catalogue information relating to the Moon Jar, 0302.1.
- 61 Quoted in *Things of Beauty Growing*, op. cit., p.171.
- 62 Joanna Wason, email to Simon Olding, June 2020.
- 63 Ben Williams, email to Simon Olding, June 2015.
- 64 Crafts Study Centre, Janet Leach papers.
- 65 Crafts Study Centre, Janet Leach papers.
- 66 Bernard Leach papers in the Crafts Study Centre.
- 67 The auction house is noted on the catalogue as 'Taylor, Lane & Creber, W.H. Lane and Son Fine Art Division' and was held at the Central Auction Rooms, Penzance.
- 68 This information is in Cooper, op. cit., p.165. However, the sale catalogue entry states the house 'was built behind the St Ives studio'. In Lowell Johnson's study of Turvey's life, he notes that after rejoining his friend Leach in around 1924 'he set up a studio in St Ives, Cornwall, and later built a house and studio opposite Leach's home'. Johnson, L. (1986) *Reginald Turvey: life and art*. Oxford: George Ronald.
- 69 See Rice, P. (2002) *British Studio Ceramics*. Ramsbury: Crowood Press.
- 70 Letter to Simon Olding from the present owners of the pot, Mike and Julie Herzbach-Wied, September 2018.
- 71 Michael Hunt further stated (in conversation with Simon Olding) that the collection had been given to him jointly by Janet Leach and Boots Redgrave.
- 72 Asobi, Christie's South Kensington, sale catalogue, 15 October 2013, p.165.
- 73 *ibid.*, p.194, lot 234.
- 74 Harrod, T. (2013) Ceramics from Barnaloft, in Asobi, op. cit., p.160.
- 75 *ibid.*
- 76 Lots 468 and 469 in the Bonhams sale of The Janet Leach Collection.
- 77 John Bedding worked at the Leach Pottery alongside Corser but has pursued his ceramic career both as an independent maker and owner of a ceramics gallery in St Ives. He makes pots at the Gaolyard Studios in the town and is Honorary Potter at the Leach Pottery.
- 78 John Bedding, email to Simon Olding, June 2020.
- 79 Joanna Wason, email to Simon Olding, June 2020.

- 80 One Tang figure is in the Crafts Study Centre collection, P.79.4, and is dated as 7th to 10th century with a comment by Leach to say, 'Southern type of female beauty'.
- 81 Lomax, C. (1909) *Quaint Old English Pottery*. Sherratt and Hughes: London.
- 82 Slipware dish with owl design, mid to late 1920s. Exhibited in the retrospective Crafts Council exhibition Bernard Leach: Potter and Artist in 1998. See Oliver Watson (1997) *Bernard Leach, Potter and Artist*, London, Crafts Council, p.71, illustration no.62.
- 83 John Bedding, email to Simon Olding, June 2020.
- 84 John Bedding, email to Simon Olding, June 2020.
- 85 Philip Leach, email to Simon Olding, July, 2014.
- 86 A collection of British studio ceramics had been built up by the Elmhursts of Dartington Hall, the progressive school and arts education centre in Devon. Works from this collection were sold, in some controversy, at Sothebys on 16 November 2011, including works by Leach, Rie, Coper, Hamada and Cardew. Major works by Leach were subsequently loaned to the Leach Pottery. The Staite Murray work does not appear in the Sotheby's sale catalogue.
- 87 Adam Partridge, Auctioneers & Valuers, Studio Ceramics and Modern Design, The Cheshire Salesroom, Macclesfield, 14 October 2016, lot 63.
- 88 A term used to classify northern Chinese stoneware made between 960–1644.
- 89 *Beyond East and West*, p.95.
- 90 *ibid.*, p.95.
- 91 Leach, B. (2015) *A Potter in Japan 1952–1954*. London: Unicorn Publishing, p.50.
- 92 *ibid.*, p.181.
- 93 An example is in the Crafts Study Centre, P.79.52, and the catalogue cards from the Leach Pottery indicate that there were two plates of the horse eye pattern.
- 94 *Beyond East and West*, p.237.
- 95 *An English Artist in Japan*, p.5.
- 96 *ibid.*, p.5.
- 97 Cardew, M. Bernard Leach – Recollections, in Barrow, T., ed. (1960) *Bernard Leach: Essays in Appreciation*. Wellington NZ: Editorial Committee, New Zealand Potter, p.22.
- 98 *ibid.*, pp.22–3.
- 99 *Beyond East and West*, p.147. Cardew recounts the story in his autobiography. See Cardew, M. (1988) *A Pioneer Potter*. London: Collins, p.25.
- 100 *ibid.*, p.149.
- 101 Leach, B. (1976) *A Potter's Work*. London: Evelyn, Adams & Mackay, p.5.
- 102 *ibid.*, figure I.
- 103 *ibid.*, also given the illustration number I.
- 104 *ibid.*, colour illustration III. Bernard Leach illustrates the slipware dish in several of his books such as *The Potter's Challenge* and *A Potter's Work*, with dates in the 1930s.



- 105** Held, P., ed. (2009) *Innovation & Change: Ceramics from the Arizona State University Art Museum*. Arizona State University Art Museum: Tempe. Held's catalogue gathers commentary from makers and ceramic historians tasked with the analysis of works from the outstanding ceramic collection of Arizona State University.
- 106** Leach, B. (1951) *A Potter's Portfolio: a Selection of Fine Pots*. London: Lund Humphries, p.7.
- 107** *ibid.*
- 108** *ibid.*
- 109** *ibid.*
- 110** *ibid.* p.16.
- 111** *ibid.*, p.22, plate 9.
- 112** *ibid.*, p.23 plate 25.
- 113** *ibid.*, p.24, plate 28.
- 114** *ibid.*, p.12.
- 115** Cooper, *op. cit.*, p.211.
- 116** Leach, B. (1977) *A Potter's Book*. London: Faber. pp.100–101, plate 49.
- 117** Joanna Wason, email to Simon Olding, June 2020.
- 118** Conversation between Simon Olding and Harry Isaacs (2010); The Westward TV film script is in the Bernard Leach papers at the Crafts Study Centre.
- 119** Conversation between John Bedding and Simon Olding, 2010.
- 120** Cooper, *op. cit.*, p.351.
- 121** *ibid.*
- 122** Joanna Wason, email to Simon Olding, June 2020.
- 123** Jonny Nance, text to Simon Olding, June 2020.
- 124** A copy of the will is held in the Crafts Study Centre.
- 125** Whybrow, M. (1996) *The Leach Legacy: the St Ives Pottery and its Influence*. Bristol: Sansom, p.91.
- 126** Hogben, C., ed. (1978) *The Art of Bernard Leach*. London: Faber, catalogue numbers 53, 54, 61, 63, 91, 96, 103, 110, 117, 118, 120, 122.
- 127** Crafts Study Centre correspondence.
- 128** Crafts Study Centre, Janet Leach papers. Marty Gross Film Productions Inc has, through long-standing work on the Mingei Film Archive, ([www.mingeifilm.com](http://www.mingeifilm.com)) played a pioneering role in digitising the films, many showing Leach and Hamada in Japan, but also footage of the Leach Pottery, such as the 1952 documentary.
- 129** Conaghan, D. (1995) Stolen Leach Pots 'Are Irreplaceable', *Daily Telegraph*, 9 October.
- 130** Trendler, S. and Shaw, J. (1995) Worldwide Hunt For £500,000 Leach Pots, *The Times*, 8 August.
- 131** Ben Williams, email to Simon Olding, with corroborating information from Cyril Frankel and Trevor Corser, June 2020.

- 132** Cooper, *op. cit.*, p.366.
- 133** *Beyond East and West*, p.57.
- 134** Victoria and Albert Museum, accession number FE.66-1977. The catalogue entry says that Tomimoto gave him the pot in 1911, recalling that it was his very first pot. Whilst this is not strictly true, it is a famous story often recounted by aficionados of Japanese studio ceramics.
- 135** *Beyond East and West*, p.60.
- 136** Outerbridge, *op. cit.*, p.21.
- 137** Jason Wason, email to Simon Olding, June 2020. At the time of writing, the fluted bowl is kept at Austin/Desmond Fine Art, London.
- 138** Whybrow, M. (1996) *The Leach Legacy: the St Ives pottery and its influence*. Bristol: Sansom, p.142.
- 139** Lewis, D. (1991) *Warren MacKenzie: an American Potter* Tokyo. New York, London: Kodansha International, pp.50–51.
- 140** *ibid.*, p.52.

**CHAPTER 2**  
**ALAN BELL'S BERNARD LEACH ARCHIVE**  
**AND COLLECTION**  
SIMON OLDING

**INTRODUCTION**

Bernard and Janet Leach made a determined effort in the 1970s to ensure that Bernard's major collection of ceramics, along with his extraordinary archive of diaries, letters, manuscripts, drawings, photographs and other materials were passed on into public hands. In this way his legacy could be secured for future research. The Crafts Study Centre was represented in these long discussions by the craft doyenne Muriel Rose, who had been a colleague and great friend of Bernard's since the time in the 1930s when she exhibited and sold his work (along with Hamada's) at the Little Gallery in London. She could be trusted implicitly to be fair and forensic, and understood how such a gift would give the emerging Crafts Study Centre a foundational basis for its ceramic holdings both at the time of the gift and for future generations of ceramic historians and researchers.

Leach's pots were also donated (in smaller numbers) to the Penwith Gallery in St Ives, keeping a Cornish collection alive for posterity, and to the Victoria & Albert Museum, ensuring that his work had a national home, too. We know that pots were handed on to the Leach family as gifts as well. Leach was doing this, we may feel, with love and respect. Pots were also presented as gifts during Bernard and Janet's lifetime to their fellow potters, friends and business colleagues. Some of these works have reappeared in the sale room in recent years, often with a revelatory effect, bringing new information to light on Leach's life and work. But we might be forgiven for thinking that by now there would be little left to be uncovered. The Alan Bell archive has proved this viewpoint to be entirely wrong.

It is a foundational archive in two respects. First, as far as we can tell, everything in this substantial and varied group – over 150 drawings, rare and sometimes unpublished first edition etchings, books from Leach’s own library, three oil paintings, photographs and memorabilia – was selected by Leach himself. It was a highly personal and, so to speak, curated collection to his friend and assistant, Alan Bell. Second, the gift marks Leach and Bell’s fellowship as members of the Bahá’í Faith. Leach had been introduced to the faith at Dartington in the 1930s by the American artist Mark Tobey, who was head of painting there. Emmanuel Cooper tells us that ‘Leach was so enthused by the power of Tobey’s personality that he grew a short, neatly cropped beard in imitation of his newly found spiritual mentor’.<sup>1</sup> Tobey had become a Bahá’í in 1918, when he was 28, and was a devoted adherent. The Bahá’í belief in the oneness of humanity and its emphasis on unity in diversity resonated strongly with Tobey’s own appreciation of the cultures of the Far East. This aspect had immediate appeal for Leach with his desire to see East and West embrace, and he began to attend Bahá’í gatherings in Devon, eventually declaring his commitment to the Faith in 1940. Leach’s artist friend Reginald Turvey also embraced the faith.

Some years after Alan Bell’s death, his wife Mehrangiz approached the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of the United Kingdom in London, offering the archive in the hope that it could be sold to raise funds for the furtherance of the UK Bahá’í community’s activities. The Crafts Study Centre was made aware of the archive by the curator of ceramics at the Victoria & Albert Museum, Alun Graves, who understood the strong connection it made to the Centre’s existing Leach papers. David Kendall, Bernard Leach’s grandson, was also generously instrumental in supporting the proposal for the acquisition to be made by the Crafts Study Centre. After a period of time, the Crafts Study Centre raised funds to buy the collection as a whole (with the support of Trustees of the Centre, as well as the Victoria & Albert Museum Purchase Fund and the Art Fund), and the archive was transferred to Farnham in 2019. It has been carefully catalogued by Charlotte Dover under the supervision of the Crafts Study Centre archivist Shirley Dixon.

The gift realised the National Spiritual Assembly’s desire both to raise funds for its charitable purposes, and to ensure that the archive was not broken up and dispersed in the sale room. It has remained intact for ongoing study. This chapter foregrounds a small selection of its contents as a primer for future research.

## BERNARD LEACH AND ALAN BELL



<sup>1</sup> Unknown photographer, black and white print, the first Local Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of Penwith, Cornwall, 1978. Alan Bell is standing in the back row, 4th from left (with the beard). It is illustrated in ed., Rob Weinberg, *Spinning the clay into stars* (George Ronald, 1999), between pages 100 and 101, with a full key to the members of the Penwith Assembly. Photograph courtesy of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of the United Kingdom.

Alan Bell was born in Torquay on 28 July 1939. He had a varied career as an accounts clerk and an air-traffic controller for the Royal Air Force, as well as a freelance English language teacher. Bell’s ‘most memorable work experiences include working with the late Bernard Leach from 1975–1978 in St Ives, Cornwall. This included the editing of Mr Leach’s “Magnum Opus” *Beyond East and West*’.<sup>2</sup>



A photograph (figure 1) shows the first Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís in Penwith in 1978 with Leach in the front row, sitting next to his great friend and assistant Trudi Scott, with Alan Bell in the row behind. Also pictured is Paul Profaska who recalls the relationship between the two men:

Alan Bell spent much time with Leach in the late 1970s. Bernard's sight was limited to mere shadows and Alan helped him to write his last book, *Beyond East and West*. Alan was well educated and his calmness, positivity and irrepressible sense of humour were invaluable in helping to focus someone whose great capacity was sometimes frustrated by blindness. The book was extremely important to Bernard, the summation of what made him who he was and how he understood, and Alan, as a Bahá'í also, was the ideal person to help Bernard put his thoughts on paper.<sup>3</sup>

Perhaps Leach thought that Bell might be able to sell items in lieu of payment. We do not know if it was given as a single archive, or in smaller groupings over a longer period of time. But it was certainly a gift of great significance, containing hitherto unseen works from Leach's time as a student in London, through his early years as an artist in Japan, and continuing up to the end of his life. It was a gift of both friendship and faith, and Alan Bell kept faith to Leach's legacy. The archive is a 'microcosm' of the very substantial materials gifted to the Crafts Study Centre: a life-time's work in hundreds, rather than thousands, of items.

## OIL PAINTINGS

Very few oil paintings by Leach survive in public hands, and not many more have been exhibited from private collections, so the discovery of three paintings by Leach in the Alan Bell archive offers a chance to re-evaluate his work in this medium. By far the best known painting is a self-portrait of 1903, the year that Leach started at the Slade



2 Bernard Leach, *West India Docks*, etching, 1908–9. h. 11.0cm x w. 13.0cm. From a set of three trial prints for the first edition. Crafts Study Centre, ABL/2/1/75/2. © Courtesy of the Bernard Leach Estate.

School of Art (Philip Leach Collection).<sup>4</sup> The young student is in evening dress; his head is angled and rests somewhat uncomfortably on his right hand. He looks intently at the viewer: serious, taut and somehow pensive. The only clue that he may have an interest in art is hinted at by a small framed work on the wall behind him. It is a haunting image and shows that Leach had a real feeling for portraiture, a fact that is clarified and proven by many powerful and charismatic portrait drawings and etchings that figure in his output from student days up until the 1950s. Another early painting (private collection) dated c. 1907–8 shows a sailing vessel docked at Poole, Dorset from the harbourside. It is not entirely convincing. Leach has found the handling of waves and a flat sky problematic. We know from a number of early etchings and aquatints that he used dockside





**3** Bernard Leach, *A bridge at Hakone Lake*, oil on wood, 1911. h. 22cm x w. 27.5cm. Leach seems to have been dissatisfied with the painting and marked over the paint as if to reject it. Crafts Study Centre, ABL/2/3/3. © Courtesy of the Bernard Leach Estate.

scenes in London as a source of imagery, and this oil painting seems to be an effort to bridge the gap between the highly accurate rendition of the working scene in etchings such as the unpublished print from *West India Docks, London*, also in the Alan Bell archive (figure 2), and more atmospheric treatments of the river scene such as the Whistlerian work *Chelsea Embankment, Nocturne of 1908–9*.<sup>5</sup>

The three oil paintings in the Alan Bell archive (figures 3, 4 and 5) were done in Japan in 1911. They demonstrate his preference to work directly from nature and in the field. They are unpublished, and they reveal something of Leach's struggle with colour and his contest with oil paint. Leach entered the Slade in 1903. He was 16 and liked to recall that he was the same age as Augustus John, who had entered the same art school in 1894. John was a figure to look



**4** Bernard Leach, *A landscape near Hakone Lake*, oil on wood, 1911. h. 22.7cm x w. 28.4cm. The painting is on the reverse of figure 3. Crafts Study Centre, ABL/2/3/2. © Courtesy of the Bernard Leach Estate.

up to. Leach had met him in London (introduced by his friend, the artist Henry Lamb), and highly regarded his etchings and his facility with fresh and vital colour in oil painting. Leach was also, I believe, influenced in painting by the works of his great friend Reginald Turvey, whom he had met on his first day at the Slade. Leach remarked about their different artistic strengths: 'I was interested in line ... and Reggie in colour texture. He loved painting in itself and was a born colourist'.<sup>6</sup> Leach and Turvey later went on a painting trip to Wensleydale with their fellow student Reginald Brundrit, and they 'painted assiduously, but, looking back, I cannot recall a single picture of mine of any real merit'.<sup>7</sup>

When in Japan, Leach continued to make strenuous efforts to improve his painting and feel more comfortable and incisive





5 Bernard Leach, Hakone Lake, 1911, oil on wood. h. 22.6cm x w. 32.3cm. Crafts Study Centre, ABL/2/3/1. © Courtesy of the Bernard Leach Estate.

in the handling of colour. He painted in the plein-air manner of the Barbizon artists or the impressionists. His desire, the same as Turvey's, was to find a way of representing nature directly, as a major subject in its own right. He painted in the field, in a manner becoming familiar to Japanese painters from the end of the Meiji to the Taisho era. Emmanuel Cooper notes that Leach's few paintings that survive from this time are 'impressionist in style with a broad use of paint thickly applied to create an impasto effect with rich bright colour'.<sup>8</sup> Cooper does not identify the paintings that he bases this judgement on, but his comment is apt in relation to the three works from the Alan Bell archive. One painting is marked on the reverse 'Bernard Leach, Hakone Lake 1911' and the similarity of the subject matter and the colour schemes indicates that they were done at the same time. Two paintings are done on the same piece of wood (most likely paulownia, known as *kiri* wood in Japan, and favoured as it was warp resistant and repelled insects),<sup>9</sup> perhaps for reasons of economy, perhaps because Leach wanted to work hard to get

these studies direct from nature complete as quickly as possible: they are more like training works than completed, gallery-ready scenes. Bernard and Muriel, his first wife, travelled on a number of occasions to the attractive mountains and lakes of Hakone, going in the summer in order to escape the stifling and humid heat of Tokyo.

Emmanuel Cooper notes that 'one year they rented a thatched cottage by Lake Hakone, a magnificent stretch of water six miles long [approximately 10 km] and one and a half wide [approximately 2.4 km] renowned for its shimmering reflection of Fuji'.<sup>10</sup> Perhaps this trio of works dates from that holiday. The oil painting 'Muriel in a [corn]field' may also date from 1911 and shows his wife. The painting is on wood, and this, along with an analysis of her dress by textile historian Alison Carter helps to identify it as a companion to a number of other works done in Japan. She notes that 'Muriel is wearing an over-the-head linen sailor suit top. The skirt is like the hobble-style coming in around 1910–11'.<sup>11</sup> Her figure is sketched out in a much freer manner, and the overall effect is to show the rural setting as a blaze of summer colour. It is a painting of love and affection (private collection). Although it sits with the works that can be directly linked to the Hakone Lake expeditions, a later date is also possible as a paper label found with the painting shows the date 1917 and 'Pe-tai Ho', which would place it as a work done in China (where Leach and his family were based between 1914 and 1916).

Although the scenes reflect a bright summer light and an optimistic mood, Leach may not have been fully satisfied. He wrote in his 1910 diary in a tone of some despair, asking 'is painting my metier? I doubt it. It does not flow. No sense of touch, no sense of colour and no sense of tone – three weaknesses. Worst of all, cannot see anything in essentials ... The young artist, even more than the old must paint Nature amorously. Love is the best teacher'.<sup>12</sup> This sentiment suggests that the painter had to be absolutely at one with the natural scene and the command of technique and materials. These paintings perhaps show the struggle to dramatise the scene





6 Bernard Leach, Hakone Lake, oil on canvas, 1911. h. 33cm x w. 42cm. Private collection.  
© Courtesy of the Bernard Leach Estate.

in a fully effective manner: they seem a little stilted and flat. Leach complained again that 'they say it is difficult to put a camel through eye of needle [sic] ... I haven't tried, but I have attempted to force myself to paint'<sup>13</sup> Curator Kanae Aoki (from The Museum of Modern Art, Wakayama, Japan) considers that the paintings have an affinity with works 'of the Taisho era style, called 'Koki-insho-ha' or post-impressionism with rough brush strokes and bright colours reflecting the painters' admiration for the works of their idol Van Gogh.'<sup>14</sup> Leach's works reflected the interest of Japanese artists in western painting methods and content. A soft-ground etching of Hakone Lake dated 1913 is a more abstract rendition of a favoured scene from the landscape, and it has a freedom of expression and a feeling of motion from wind blowing through the forest that is missing from the painting.<sup>15</sup> A further painting in this sequence (private collection) relates to another of Leach's etchings.<sup>16</sup> It is the

most successful of his Lake Hakone paintings, showing a view of the woods coming right up to the lakeside, and done as if from the lake itself. A small yacht is moored on a strip of beach, and a sketchy figure dressed in white is depicted just off centre. The waves reflect back the intense light of a summer sky, and this light tints the green wood. This may be the same boat that Leach depicts in his etching *On Hakone Lake, Boat and Muriel* and the figure on the beach may be Muriel herself (figure 6).

Leach also added works of fine art, often with deep personal associations, to his personal collection, reflecting his companionship with Japanese painters associated with the Shirakaba group. Two oil paintings, *Seated Bather* and *Bather* by the western-influenced Ryuzaburo Umehara (1888–1986) were done by the artist, as a note by Leach on the back of one painting says 'Made by Umehara Ryuzaburo in Paris when under Renoir. Given to me Circa 1912 on his return to Japan'.<sup>17</sup> Leach also notes in *Beyond East and West* that Umehara 'has been the doyen of all oil-painters in Japan for no less than 40 years. He started working under Renoir and after his return found his own expression reflecting Impressionism and Post-Impressionism in a Japanese way'.<sup>18</sup> Perhaps Leach was thinking here, too, of his own trajectory (and struggles) as a painter in Japan.

Leach mentions in his private diaries that he also painted portraits during the early part of his residency in Japan. He talks about working hard on a portrait of Muriel (whereabouts unknown, unless he is referring to *Muriel in a Cornfield*) and he completed a sensitive and even haunting study of the head of a woodcutter. Aoki's research into the sitter for the painting suggests that the portrait may show Bonkotsu Igami (1875–1933) who was an artisan specialising in woodblock (or woodcut) printing.<sup>19</sup> Aoki comments that they knew each other as Igami cut the work by Leach in 1919 for the book *One Way* by Saneatsu Mushanokoji. Soetsu Yanagi specifically commented on the Woodcutter painting in a review of Leach's work in the journal *The Far East*.<sup>20</sup> His painting was in fact exhibited (20–29 October 1914) in two complementary Shirakaba





7 Bernard Leach, Wood Cutter, oil on cardboard, 1914. h. 43.8cm x w. 43.8cm. Koriyama City Museum of Art, Fukushima Prefecture, Japan. Image by permission of the Koriyama City Museum of Art, Fukushima Prefecture, Japan. © Courtesy of the Bernard Leach Estate.

group exhibitions of paintings, etchings, drawings and pottery at the Tanaka-ya art shop and the Mikasa galleries, the latter exhibition held in an English-style hotel in Karuizawa where Shirakaba artists gathered for conversation.<sup>21</sup>

The painting is faintly revealed in the background of a photograph of Leach at his farewell exhibition in Tokyo in 1920 (see chapter 1, figure 4 on p.XX). It was acquired from an art dealer in Japan in 1996. It had previously been sold (entitled *The Woodcutter, Japan* at a Sotheby's auction on 28 September 1994)<sup>22</sup> and is now in the

permanent collection of the Koriyama City Museum of Art. The catalogue entry for the sale states that the painting 'is of [Leach's] personal woodcutter for his kiln' and therefore a second possibility for the sitter's identity. The work had a long life on display in the Leach Pottery. A letter from Michael Leach, Bernard's second son, written from his Yelland Manor Pottery in Barnstaple, Devon, reported to his father on 21 September 1978 that 'I think you will be interested, as I was, to meet someone whose father bought the painting which for years hung in the pottery showroom – the old Japanese (?) wood cutter. I think it was one you specially prized. The name of the purchaser – about 1942 – is TOMPSETT and lives at Tonbridge'.<sup>23</sup> Leach brought the painting back from Japan in 1920, we can assume, so it resided at the Leach pottery for over 20 years. The phrase 'Russian togo' (for Russian 'to go') is written on the back of the painting which perhaps, according to Ben Williams, may refer to the transit route from Tokyo to St Ives, as Leach is known to have sent other goods using a Russian transit route.

Leach also made a pen drawing of 'Munakata' (the renowned wood block artist Shiko Munakata, 1903–75), dated 1953 (figure 7). Leach called his work 'outstanding' and said 'the Buddhist background in his work predominated', recalling, too, that Munakata was 'a good friend',<sup>24</sup> which suggests a continuing interest in the subject matter of portraits of Japanese woodcut artists, one from the beginning of his own career as an artist, and one in his maturity.<sup>25</sup>

A significant painting by Leach (private collection) steps away from his interests in portraiture and landscape. Perhaps it is a bridge to his future and might be seen as a farewell to painting. It shows a ginger jar (figure 8), with a band of cobalt blue around the neck and a freely painted wavy motif on the sides of the vessel. To the right, on a green tablecloth are four persimmon fruit. The art historian Brandon Taylor links the painting to the long tradition of still life works instigated by Chardin, where the simplicity of everyday objects is enriched by telling geometric compositions. In Leach's painting, too, the influence of Cezanne's vital still lives of fruit set



8 Bernard Leach, Still Life, oil on board, circa 1909–1914. h. 23cm x w. 33cm. Private collection.  
© Courtesy Estate of Bernard Leach.

on tables may also be felt. Taylor remarks how Leach has ‘a feeling for the roundness of the ginger jar, its specific shape and placement on the table, all these are potter’s interests rather than those of a painter, and a sign of his future path’.<sup>26</sup> It is the only still life painting that has been recorded in Leach’s modest surviving output; and the only one that connects him from the world of painting to the world of ceramics. His future painting would be on, rather than of, pots.

## ETCHINGS

Leach travelled out to Japan in 1909 with a massive etching press in the hold of the German liner he sailed in. He announced that he would teach etching to Japanese artists, and after a month or so, wrote an essay in a Japanese art magazine (*Shumi*) to press his case, called, perhaps rather vaingloriously, ‘The Introduction of Etching

into the Art World of Japan’. Here he claimed that his facility in line would be of pedagogical value, ‘therefore I think the technique of etching – etching, basically an art of appreciation of various lines – must be of great interest for young talented artists to learn’.<sup>27</sup> It was a bold claim for someone who had taken up etching at the London School of Art not much more than a year beforehand, and even then somewhat by chance. Leach was studying at the London School of Art, and Frank Brangwyn had advertised an evening etching class which Leach quickly joined. He found that etching suited his skill and aptitude for line. He was immediately happier working on a metal plate rather than in front of a canvas.

His art school etchings include two studies from the life class, scenes from the London docklands and other city locations, and these latter works showed the influence of Brangwyn, his teacher. But he found his own subjects, too, as the unpublished etching *Gala Day*, reveals with its cheery promenade flags. Like all of the etchings in the Alan Bell archive, this is a first edition work, and perhaps they are all in preparation for the first edition (that is, trial prints) as none have been given an edition number or marked as an artist’s proof. A second edition of Leach’s etchings was sanctioned by Janet Leach and Boots Redgrave in the 1980s, and these are more frequently seen (indeed remaining prints from this second edition are still being sold from New Craftsman Gallery in St Ives). These second edition prints (each one with a run of 25) were printed by the artist Sue Lewington, who combined her creative work at one time with teaching print making at the Penzance School of Art. She recalled evenings of late night printing from the plates between 1985 and 1989 at her workshop in New Bridge on the Penwith peninsula. Some of the prints may have been printed by Christine Maunder.<sup>28</sup> First edition prints are very rarely seen either in museum collections or through the secondary market, which gives an added piquancy to the works that Leach donated to his friend.

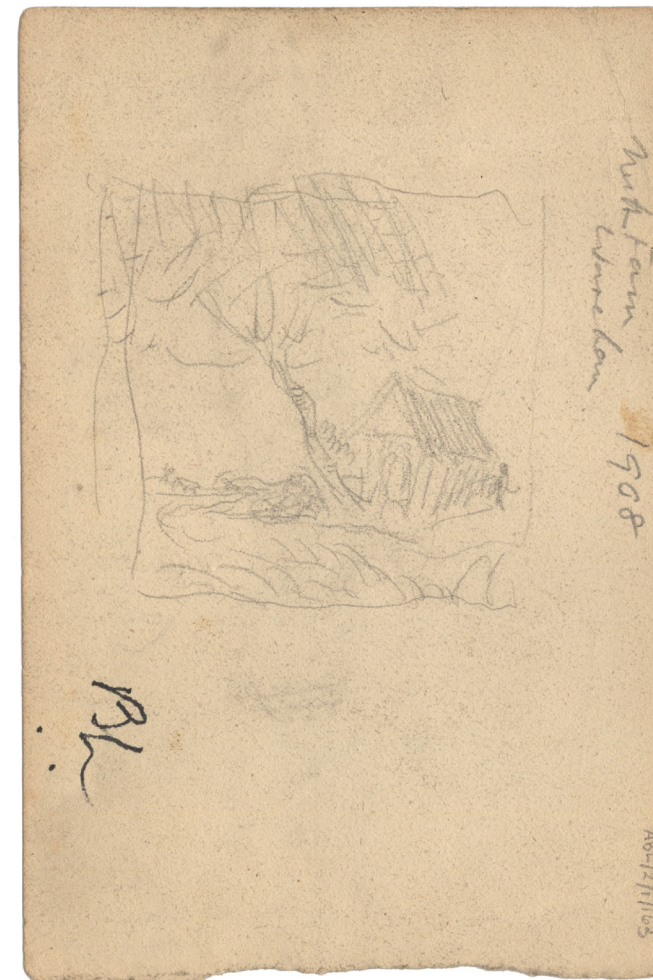
Leach’s student etchings date from 1908 to 1909 and were printed most likely on the presses of the London School of Art; later





9 Bernard Leach, Northmoor Farm, etching, 1908-9, with '£1-1' (one guinea) written on reverse. h. 10.5cm x w. 10.0cm. Crafts Study Centre, ABL/2/1/67. © Courtesy of the Bernard Leach Estate.

etchings from 1909 to 1920 were printed on his own press in Japan. Two etchings are dated 1924 and these were presumably printed in St Ives, although one image is of a Japanese scene. Leach gave Alan Bell an unpublished etching of Northmoor Farm, Wareham in Dorset, where he was staying on a painting trip. Emmanuel Cooper reports that Leach also completed a painting of the farmhouse where he was staying, and a pencil drawing with the inscription 'North Farm Wareham 1908'; this may be a preparatory drawing for the painting (whereabouts unknown) (figures 9 and 10).



10 Bernard Leach, North Farm, Wareham, pencil, 1908. h. 10.3cm x w. 15.4cm. The drawing is on the reverse of 'Little Stack' see figure 13. Crafts Study Centre, ABL/2/1/163. © Courtesy Estate of Bernard Leach.

Further drawings from the Alan Bell archive make clear, more emphatically than hitherto, the relationship between drawing and etching. A tiny pencil drawing done in the field of a scene in China (figures 11 and 12) relates to an etching done in 1917 in the studio after he had returned to Japan. A more fully realised watercolour and ink drawing called *Little Stack* (figures 13 and 14) is likely to have been done on his Dorset trip and it shows how Leach was gathering confidence in suggesting the impact of a summer breeze and a sense of palpable motion in his drawing, which would in turn feed through into his most atmospheric soft-ground etchings.





**11** Bernard Leach, 'Pei-tai Ho', pencil on paper, 1917. h. 6.8cm x w. 9.5cm. On reverse 'Pei tai hur, China'. Crafts Study Centre, ABL/2/1/63. © Courtesy of the Bernard Leach Estate.



**12** Bernard Leach, 'Sunset', soft ground etching, 1917. h. 19.3cm x w. 22.5cm. Leach-Redgrave edition, Crafts Study Centre, 2012.4.21.



**13** Bernard Leach, Little Stack, 1908–9, ink and watercolour on paper. h. 10.3cm x w. 15.4cm. A preparatory drawing for the etching probably showing a scene in the Dorset countryside. Crafts Study Centre, ABL/2/1/163, © Courtesy of the Bernard Leach Estate.

The final discovery that can be deduced from the etchings in the Alan Bell archive rests on the self-appointed role Leach took on as a teacher of etchings. One etching is from the series called *Tenchi Sozo* (*Creation*) by the talented artist Ryusei Kishida, later a member of the Shirakaba group, and an artist who painted in the Taisho and Showa periods in Japan, assimilating western and Japanese styles. Edmund de Waal notes that these works reveal 'Leach's direct influence',<sup>29</sup> although the influence of William Blake is also clear from the naked biblical figures represented in these dramatic scenes of heightened physical and mental tension. Kishida wrote in *An English Artist in Japan* that 'from the time that I saw his oldest copper plates and drawings I thought they were of an unordinary kind. There was something living about them. There was a mind in them'.<sup>30</sup> Leach's first Japanese students were all from the Shirakaba group and included the novelist Ton Satomi and the art historian Kikuo Kojima, who made self-portraits after Rembrandt or, in Satomi's case, 'a brooding image in which his face was cast in





**14** Bernard Leach, Little Stack, 1908–9, etching, research print. h. 18.7cm x w. 26.5cm. Crafts Study Centre, 2020.1.62. © Courtesy Estate of Bernard Leach.

dramatic shadow', which sounds as though it is in a similar vein to the forlorn mood expressed in an etching which is marked on the reverse as a 'Japanese student copy' (figure 15). Sadahiro Suzuki has deduced that Ton Satomi's etching is likely to be a portrait of the novelist Naoya Shiga (1883–1971).

## DRAWINGS AND WATERCOLOURS

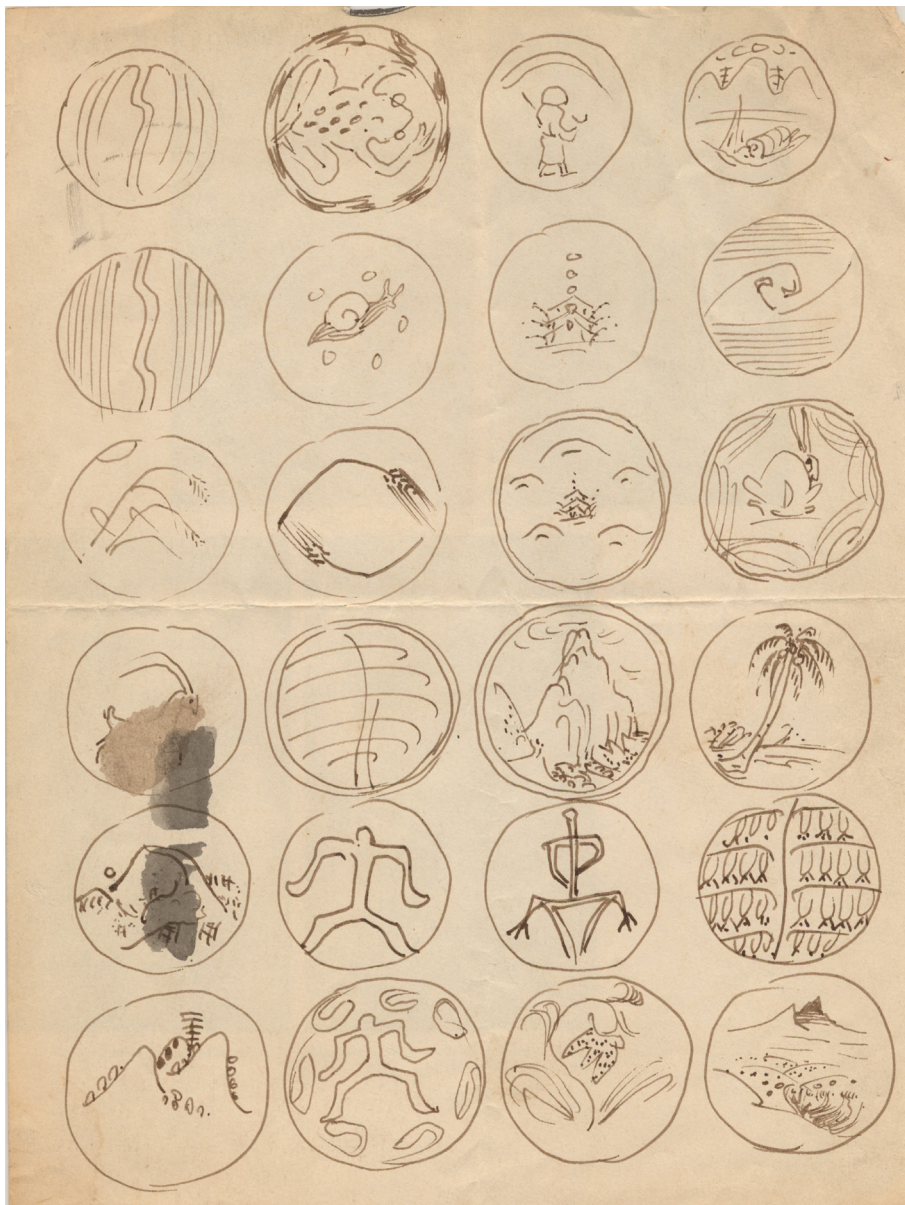
Leach drew from childhood; and he continued to draw throughout his long life, until he could no longer see well enough to do so. There is a haunting sheet of Leach Pottery headed paper in the Alan Bell archive with his tentative, halting and barely legible hand-



**15** Attributed to Ton Satomi, portrait of Naoya Shiga, etching, circa 1909-11, marked in pencil on reverse 'Japanese student copy'. h. 17.5cm x w. 14.0cm. Crafts Study Centre, ABL/2/1/71.

written signature, done in great old age, its painful line so different from his easy and graphic control as a child and adult. Drawing was as natural as breathing. He drew on whatever material came to hand, and in situations both formal and informal. He drew on the margins of committee reports in the course of the meeting, when his mind should have been on the business in hand. He drew pots (figure 16), people and places, and examples of all three are contained in the Alan Bell archive. This prolific group of works is the major highlight of the archive. There are informal drawings, not much more than doodles; there are formal portraits and hasty, but still evocative sketches. There are many drawings done in Japan, and others done in the course of his many international travels. There are scenes from Cornwall to Norway, Hong Kong to America. It is a remarkable collection, in scale and scope rivalling the number





**16** Bernard Leach, ink on paper, circa 1950s. h. 27.8cm x w. 20.1cm. The drawing is on the reverse of a page of a book illustrating Chinese ceramics from Sir Herbert Ingram's substantial collection now in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford. Some appear to be design ideas for Leach's own ceramic dishes. Crafts Study Centre, ABL/2/1/183. © Courtesy of the Bernard Leach Estate.



**17** Bernard Leach, 'The Baptism', after Rembrandt, ink on paper, 1903. h. 14.2cm x w. 16.8cm. A copy of a detail from 'The Baptism of Christ', reed pen in brown ink, 1660, attributed to Rembrandt, in the Graphic Collection of the State Art Collections, Dresden. Crafts Study Centre, ABL/2/1/81. © Courtesy of the Bernard Leach Estate.

of drawings Leach himself donated to the Crafts Study Centre and adding to its rich and authoritative holdings.

Leach studied drawing at the Slade under Henry Tonks, who stressed the importance of significant line on his students. He could be fierce in his criticism, but Leach flourished, remarking that 'I have drawn since I was a child of 6. At 16 I was sent to the Slade; there I suffered under the scalpel of Henry Tonks. He said I might draw one day'.<sup>31</sup> Ryusei Kishida remarked on the significance and poetry of line in commenting on Leach's work: 'And the movement of the line, and the building up of the form, what are they? They are an instinct that is within the man; they are the inner beauty; they are THE REAL ABSTRACT BEAUTY'.<sup>32</sup>

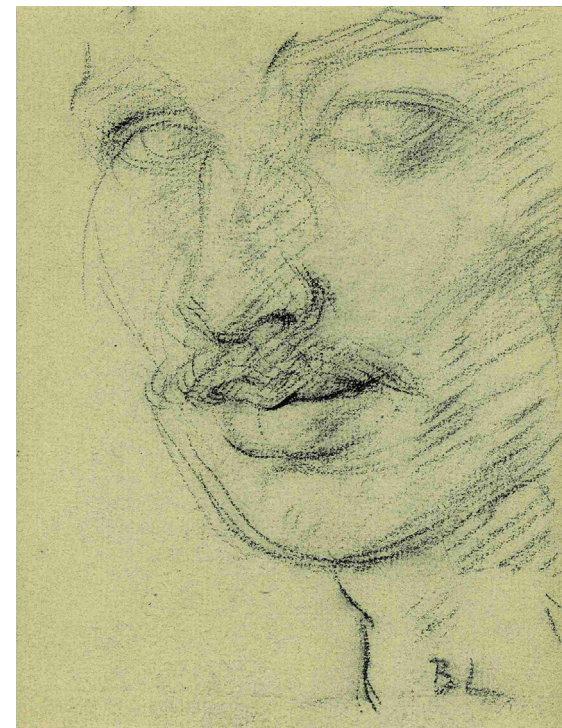
Leach sympathised with this view of art as an expression of humanity and inner value. He saw it in Rembrandt's drawings and etchings





**18** Bernard Leach, Study of a man, pencil and black chalk on paper, 1903. h. 38cm x w. 26cm. An early life class drawing at the Slade School of Art. Crafts Study Centre, ABL/1/1/6. © Courtesy of the Bernard Leach Estate.

and attempted to realise it through direct copying of works by Rembrandt, shown in one drawing in the archive (figure 17). He assimilated and learned from Augustus John as well as Henry Lamb's drawings in his formative years as a student, reaching back to their own influencing studies of works by Rubens or Ingres. But of most importance to Leach was the didactic forcefulness of Tonks and his insistence on clean straightforward drawing and forceful, potent line. He is reported as saying ' "choose your line and draw it" ... students were always rubbing out and Tonks forbade it'.<sup>33</sup>



**19** Bernard Leach, pencil and black chalk on paper, study of a man's head, 1903. h. 16.8cm x w. 13.4cm. Crafts Study Centre, ABL/1/1/5. © Courtesy of the Bernard Leach Estate.

Leach followed the strict curriculum at the Slade. Students first drew from plaster casts of Greek, Roman and Renaissance heads, then from classical sculptures. Once they demonstrated proficiency, they were allowed to study in the life class, and Leach was happy to make this progression. He marks out the timetable on one evocative study of a nude man (figure 18) and notes on the reverse of this drawing from 1903 that it was completed after six months at the Slade. These are exceptional and unpublished insights into Leach's student work (see also figures 19 and 20). The only other student drawings that have been retained in public hands are in the collection of the Leach Pottery.

The Alan Bell archive includes other very early works by Leach. One watercolour is marked 'Bournemouth' on the reverse and may possibly be the newly constructed Edwardian villa 'Bel Retiro', Chester Road, Branksome, Poole, on the civic boundary with Bournemouth (see figure 21), which the Leach family moved → 111





**20** Bernard Leach, study of a female, pastel on paper, 1903. h. 23.2cm x w. 16cm. Crafts Study Centre, ABL/1/1/3. © Courtesy of the Bernard Leach Estate.



**21** Bernard Leach, Bel Retiro, Branksome, Poole watercolour on paper, 1908. h. 8.6cm x w. 11.0cm. On reverse 'Bournemouth B L'. Crafts Study Centre, ABL/2/1/125. © Courtesy of the Bernard Leach Estate.

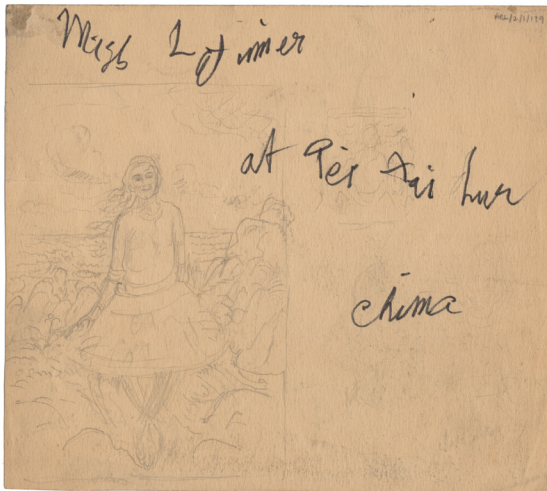


**22** Bernard Leach, Chinese ship's cook, pencil on paper, 1909, h. 12.4cm x w. 9.9cm. marked on the reverse 'on the ship going to Japan'. Crafts Study Centre, ABL/2/1/149. © Courtesy of the Bernard Leach Estate.

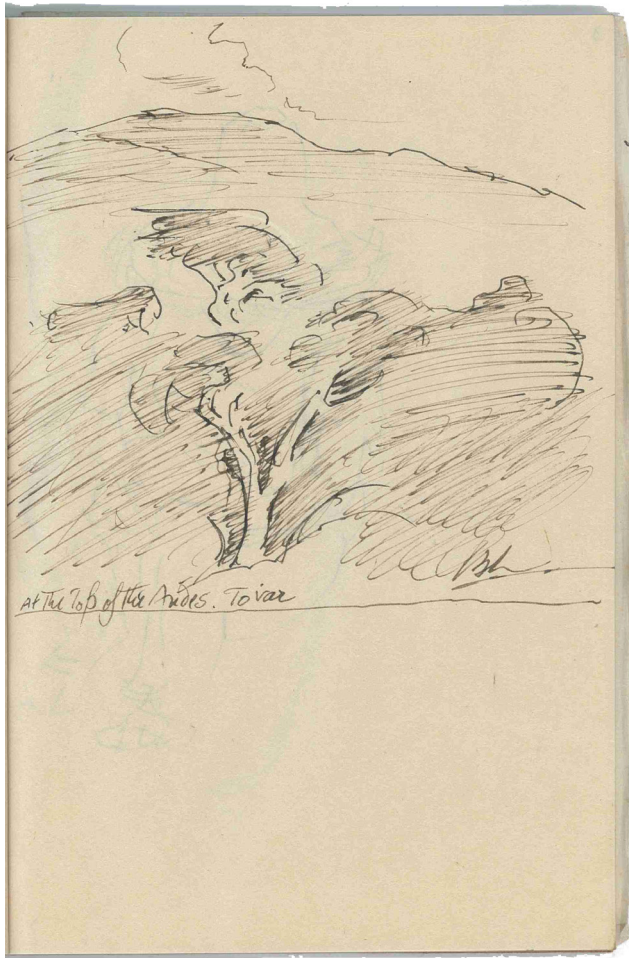
**23** Bernard Leach, Miss Latimer, pencil on paper, 1913. h. 17.2cm x w. 19.5cm. Crafts Study Centre, ABL/2/1/139. © Courtesy of the Bernard Leach Estate.







**24** Bernard Leach, preparatory sketch for the drawing of Miss Latimer, pencil on paper, 1913. h. 17.2cm x w. 19.5cm. Leach has identified the portrait on the reverse of the finished work. Crafts Study Centre, ABL/2/1/139. © Courtesy of the Bernard Leach Estate.



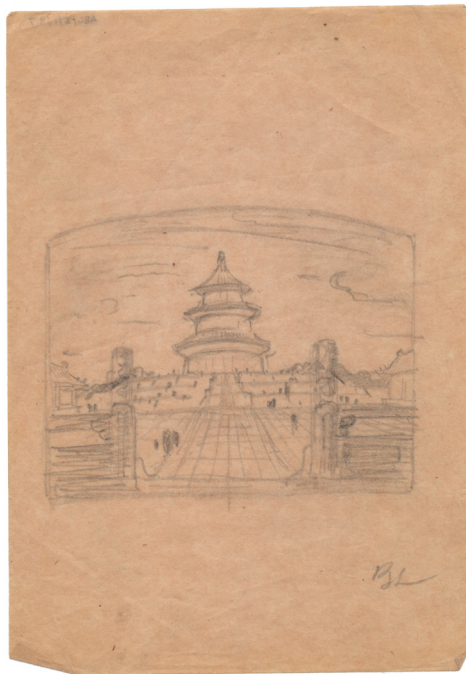
**25** Bernard Leach, 'At the top of the Andes, Tovar', 1966, ink on paper. h. 24.2cm x w. 16cm. The drawing is one of many contained in a book of hand-made Japanese paper. Leach held exhibitions in Venezuela and Colombia in 1966. Crafts Study Centre, ABL/1/3. © Courtesy of the Bernard Leach Estate.

107 → to when his father had received the news of his terminal cancer. Bernard was unhappy here, calling it 'the horrid stark new house', although the watercolour seems to carry none of these overtones of disapproval.<sup>34</sup> On the trip out to Japan he quickly and effectively drew a portrait of the Chinese ship's cook (figure 22) as a memento of the journey to his and Muriel's new life. During a stay in China in 1916 Leach stayed in a rented bungalow at Pei-tai Ho in a small, largely foreign, colony on the coast, where he made studies and etchings and acted as the drawing tutor to the Latimer family. A fluent pencil drawing of Miss Latimer resulted, with Leach's descriptive text and a preliminary drawing on the reverse (figures 23 and 24). The writing is that of the old man (the drawing by the young teacher) and suggests that Leach wanted Alan Bell to know the provenance of the drawing, or that he was recalling when he made the work as an *aide memoire* for his own archival purposes.

There are evocative informal landscape sketches in the archive (figure 25) and drawings of important buildings such as the *Temple of Heaven, Peking* (figure 26) which relate to an etching of 1916. He continued to engage with portrait drawings, including a study of Yanagi's nephew on a train journey (figure 27); and back in England, a formal account of an as yet unnamed member of the St Ives Art Club (figure 28). There is also a swiftly drawn study of Janet Leach (with a large fish to hand), done during the trip to Japan in 1954 (figure 29). One ink drawing expresses Leach's long friendship with Mark Tobey and shows a nude man at a table at Dartington (figure 30). The art historian Rob Weinberg surmises that the man may have been a model and both Tobey and Leach might have each done a sketch as if in the life class. A moving watercolour from 1954 shows four figures by the seaside: perhaps Soetsu Yanagi, Kanjiro Kawai, Shoji Hamada and Janet Darnell (figure 31). Leach was staying in Tateyama, Chiba prefecture at this time with his old friends and Darnell, who was acting as his assistant, had arrived in Japan at this same time.<sup>35</sup>

→ 115





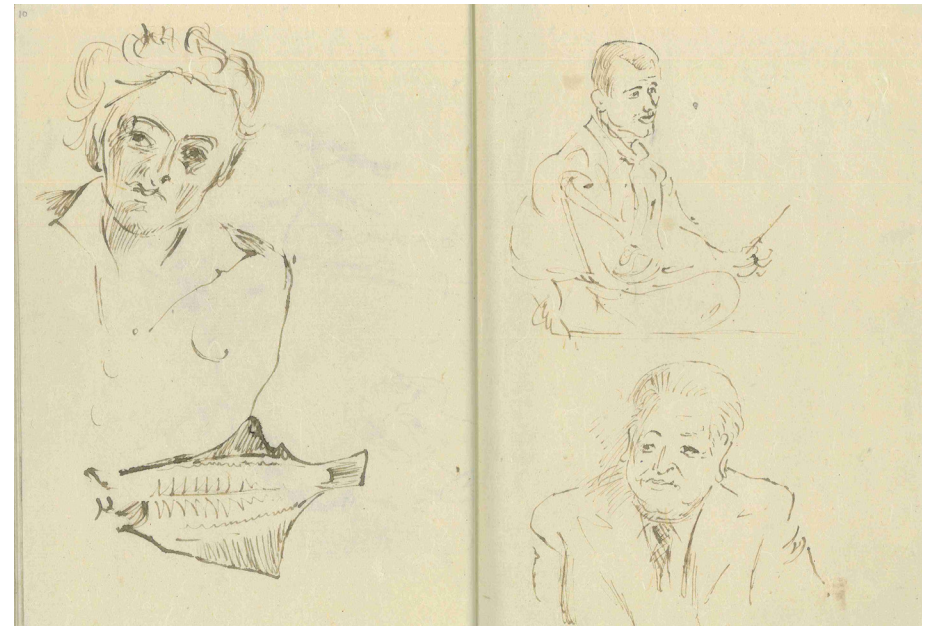
**26** Bernard Leach, The Temple of Heaven, Peking, 1916, pencil on paper. h. 18.5cm x w. 12.8cm. A preparatory drawing for the etching, printed later in Japan. Crafts Study Centre, ABL/2/1/87. © Courtesy of the Bernard Leach Estate.



**27** Bernard Leach, pencil drawing of Soetsu Yanagi's nephew on a train to Boshu, pencil on paper, c. 1954. h. 21.3cm x w. 17.8cm. Yanagi had seven nephews and a genealogical tree of the Yanagi family is contained in Muneyoshi Yanagi's Collected Works, volume 22, Chikuma Shobo Publishing Co. Crafts Study Centre, ABL/2/1/182. © Courtesy of the Bernard Leach Estate.

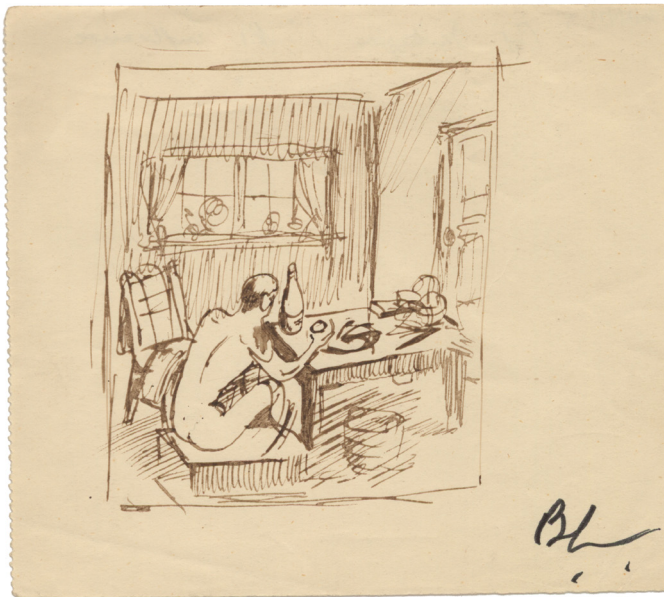


**28** Bernard Leach, pencil on paper, portrait of a member of the St Ives Arts Club, 1920-35. h. 27.8cm x w. 20.9cm. Crafts Study Centre, ABL/2/1/156. © Courtesy of the Bernard Leach Estate.



**29** Bernard Leach, portrait of Janet Darnell with a fish, ink on paper, 1954. h. 24.2cm x 32cm. One of a number of drawings in a book of hand-made Japanese papers done during a trip to Japan. Janet Darnell came to Japan to act as his assistant. On the right hand side is (top) an unidentified man and (below) possibly a portrait of Dr Shikiba Rhyuzaburo, the author of Bernard Leach: biography (Tokyo, 1934). Crafts Study Centre, ABL/1/2. © Courtesy of the Bernard Leach Estate.





**30** Bernard Leach, ink on paper, a nude man sitting at a table, 1932-34, Dartington, Devon. h. 12.0cm x w. 13.6cm. Text on reverse 'At Dartington, Mark's influence'. Crafts Study Centre, ABL/2/1/77. © Courtesy of the Bernard Leach Estate.

**31** Bernard Leach, Beach in Japan, watercolour on paper, 1954. h. 16.4cm x w. 20.0cm. Crafts Study Centre, ABL/2/1/195. © Courtesy of the Bernard Leach Estate.



## PHOTOGRAPHS AND MEMORABILIA FROM THE ALAN BELL ARCHIVE

The Alan Bell archive includes important, interesting, and peripheral materials, these adding to its character and value. Leach had written to Henry Moore after seeing the BBC arts programme *Kaleidoscope* on 27 June 1978, when the art critic Edwin Mullins interviewed the sculptor. Henry Moore replied a few weeks later in a letter now in the archive to say that 'it is really satisfying to get appreciation from someone whom I have so long admired and who has contributed so tremendously to the revival and understanding of Pottery as a great art'.<sup>36</sup> A first-day set of stamps from the Post Office showing works by British studio potters (Leach, Lucie Rie, Hans Coper and Elizabeth Fritsch) is included. A terracotta medallion with Leach's raised portrait given, one assumes, as a presentation gift to Leach, is in the archive, as is a leather bound volume of photographs (figure 32) of the private home in Kyoto of Shotaro Shimomura, owner of the Daimu department store, designed by the American-born architect William Merrell Vories (who later became a naturalised Japanese citizen).<sup>37</sup> There is also a stencil design for a book plate for Yanagi which has a reverential association (figure 33).

One important drawing shows examples, rarely seen in this level of finish and detail, of Leach's furniture design. A bookcase is lined with leather bound volumes as well as examples of Chinese-influenced ceramics, perhaps ones that were held in Leach's personal collection of ceramics or were works reflecting his interests in Song ceramics. This is a fine addition to the Crafts Study Centre's archival holdings, as a photograph shows Leach himself sitting in front of the bookcase, now completed, with the actual volumes and ceramics on display (figures 34 and 35).

There are also photographs which help to illuminate Leach's personal life. One early photograph shows him in the Leach Pottery in the working clothes of the potter, caught in the shadows of the great site of ceramic practice. This is from the start of his life's work as a professional potter. An evocative photograph of the Leaches → 120





32 Presentation album for Bernard Leach, Kyoto. Crafts Study Centre, ABL/6/2.



Unknown photographer, front elevation from the opposite side of Karasuma Street, Kyoto, 1935, from a presentation album of photographs of the 'Tudor House' designed for Shimomura Shotaro given 'to my friend Bernard Leach'. Crafts Study Centre, ABL/6/2.



33 Bernard Leach, Ink stencil on paper, Ex Libris book plate for Soetsu Yanagi. h. 10.6cm x w. 9.7cm. Marked on reverse 'EX LIBRIS for Yanagi'. Crafts Study Centre, ABL/2/1/60. © Courtesy of the Bernard Leach Estate.



34 Bernard Leach, Furniture designs, watercolour, pencil and ink on paper, 1917–19. h. 38.1cm x w. 26.0cm. The Japanese writing describes measurements in an old Japanese scale system and were most likely written by the carpenter Yoza Sato. The bookcase is now in the collection of the Japan Folk Craft Museum, Tokyo. Crafts Study Centre, ABL/1/1. © Courtesy of the Bernard Leach Estate.

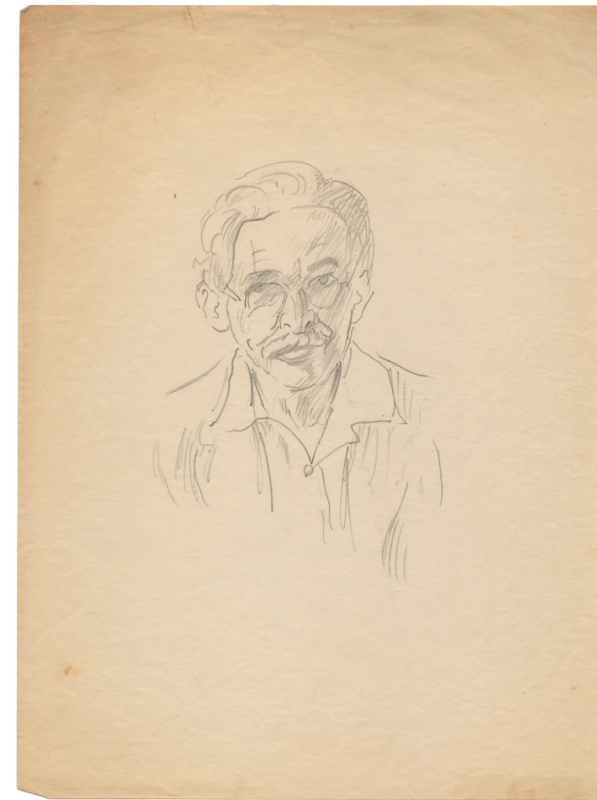




**35** Unknown photographer, black and white print, Bernard Leach in his house in Tokyo circa 1917–19. The bookcase and chair (see figure 34) were designed by Leach, as were the pots and the rug, the motif of which is shown on both a vase and an etching by him. Crafts Study Centre, BHL/12567. © Courtesy of the Bernard Leach Estate.



**36** Attributed to D. Evans, Colour print, the Leaches and the Hamadas, Lands End, Cornwall, 1968. From left to right: Shoji Hamada; Hisa Hamada (daughter); Janet Leach; Bernard Leach; Mihoko Okamura (who helped Leach translate Yanagi's Unknown Craftsman into English; foreground, seated, Kazue Hamada. Marked on reverse 'D. Evans' possibly the name of the photographer. Crafts Study Centre, ABL/3/1/21.



**37** Bernard Leach, self portrait, pencil on paper, circa 1935. h. 19.5cm x w. 14.0cm. Crafts Study Centre, ABL/2/1/193. © Courtesy of the Bernard Leach Estate.



**38** Bernard Leach, self portrait, ink and pencil on paper, 1953. h. 9.8cm x w. 7.2cm. Crafts Study Centre, ABL/2/1/106. © Courtesy of the Bernard Leach Estate.



115 → and the Hamadas comes towards the end of his career (figure 36). It is taken at Land's End in Cornwall. St Ives is close by. Mashiko, Hamada's hometown, as the sign reveals, is 7329 miles distant. But in this family photograph, perhaps they as one, as St Ives and Japan, linked the life and the ceramic making of Bernard Leach, Janet Leach and Shoji Hamada.

Bernard Leach's earliest self-portrait, at least as far as we know, was done in the oil painting of 1903. He made highly dramatic self-portraits in pencil and also in the medium of etching during his time in Japan. The Alan Bell archive contains two rare and unpublished drawings: one more formal than the other. In a pencil drawing from the 1930s (figure 37), Leach is shown in a more kindly manner; and in an informal drawing on lined paper (figure 38), he is seen looking away from the viewer, as if in reflective retirement. It seems a fitting finale to this remarkable archive and the generosity of spirit behind Leach's personal gift to his friend and colleague, Alan Bell.

## ENDNOTES

- 1 Cooper, E. (2003) *Bernard Leach: Life and Work*. New Haven CT and London: Yale University Press p.180.
- 2 This information is contained in The Bahá'í Story Credential No. 005146 and is quoted with the kind permission of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United Kingdom.
- 3 Paul Profaska, email to Simon Olding, February 2020.
- 4 The painting is illustrated in Cooper, op. cit., after p.110.
- 5 Olding, S. (2010) *The Etchings of Bernard Leach*. Farnham: Crafts Study Centre and the Leach Pottery, p.37, figure 10.
- 6 Lowell Johnson, E., ed. (1986) *Reginald Turvey: Life and Art*. Oxford: George Ronald, p.2.
- 7 Olding, op. cit., p.11.
- 8 Cooper, op. cit., p.50–1.
- 9 I am indebted to Pat and Ken Carter for this information. 'Paulownia is a light, fine grained and warp resistant hardwood, fast growing and importantly repels insects. It is also used for the boxes made to contain pots'. Email to Simon Olding, August 2020.

- 10 Cooper, op. cit., p.77.
- 11 Email to Simon Olding, August 2020.
- 12 Crafts Study Centre, Bernard Leach papers, BHL/10875.
- 13 Cooper, op. cit., p.78.
- 14 Kanae Aoki, email to Simon Olding, June 2020.
- 15 Olding, op. cit., p.57, figure 57.
- 16 Olding, op. cit., p.72, figure 45.
- 17 Umehara returned to Japan in 1913. The paintings were sold from the Janet Leach collection at the sale of 'Modern British, Impressionist and Contemporary Art', Bonhams, London, 28 September, lots 54 and 55, provenanced as from 'The Janet Leach Collection'.
- 18 Leach, B. (1978) *Beyond East & West* London and Boston: Faber and Faber, p.123.
- 19 Kanae Aoki, 'Bernard Leach and Prints', in *NEWS*, No. 104, The Museum of Modern Art, Wakayama, December 2020
- 20 Cooper, op. cit., p. 85.
- 21 Information from Kanae Aoki, email October 2020.
- 22 Bernard Leach's painting *Woodcutter* was sold at Sotheby's, London, Modern British & Irish Paintings, 28 September 1994, lot 262, for £805.00.
- 23 Crafts Study Centre, Bernard Leach papers, BHL/439.
- 24 Leach, B., op. cit., p.123.
- 25 Crafts Study Centre, Bernard Leach papers, BHL/439.
- 26 Brandon Taylor, email to Simon Olding, September 2020.
- 27 Quoted in De Waal, E., (1998) *Bernard Leach*. London: Tate Gallery Publishing, p.8.
- 28 Conversation with Sue Lewington, November 2020.
- 29 Ibid., p.10.
- 30 Kishida, R. (1920) 'On Leach's departure', in Leach, B. *An English Artist in Japan*. Tokyo: privately printed, p.30.
- 31 Quoted in Leach, B. 'Pottery, drawings and patterns' (1974) in *A Potter's Work*, Bath: Adams & Dart, p.31.
- 32 Kishida, op. cit., p.29.
- 33 Edna Clarke Hall, 'The heritage of ages', Tate Gallery archive, 8226/2/1.
- 34 Crafts Study Centre, Bernard Leach papers, BHL/11369.
- 35 Sadahiro Suzuki also confirms the possible attribution of the watercolour to Leach's stay in Tateyama.
- 36 Alan Bell archive, ABL/2/1/142. The letter is dated 15 July 1978.
- 37 I am indebted to Sadahiro Suzuki for this information.

**PART 2 : JAPAN**



**CHAPTER 3**  
**SHOJI HAMADA: THE EYES OF**  
**A BRILLIANT COLLECTOR**  
YUKO MATSUZAKI

**INTRODUCTION**

Without a good eye you cannot do anything. This applies not only to the critic but also to the maker of things ... No matter in what country or in what antique shops, I rely on my eyes. Yet I do not like to use the word beauty. Things correctly made, rightly made, properly made, and healthy – these are the ingredients of beauty. Even when going to an unfamiliar country, if such things are solidly ingrained in you, you do not go wrong. They have become part of you, and everything that is part of you goes directly into your potting.<sup>1</sup>

This message by master potter Shoji Hamada (1894–1978) in *Hamada: Potter* (1975) evokes his lively curiosity about, and attachment to, physical objects, and the philosophy behind his collecting. Like his friend Bernard Leach, Hamada was a keen collector of the applied arts and hand-crafted objects. In this chapter, the characteristics of Hamada's collection and his vision for arts and crafts will be discussed, based on the words that Hamada wrote and the catalogues of the Mashiko Sankokan Museum, the collection which grew out of Hamada's personal collection. It should be pointed out that the Mashiko Sankokan Museum does not contain Hamada's entire collection, nor does it consist exclusively of Hamada's collection. Since its opening, the museum has accepted increasing numbers of donations, and the original philosophy of collection has not always been adhered to. However, the museum's core collection reflects Hamada's ideas.

## ESTABLISHMENT OF THE MASHIKO SANKOKAN MUSEUM

Shoji Hamada was born in 1894 in Mizonokuchi, Kawasaki, near Tokyo. After studying pottery at the Tokyo Technical High School, he worked for four years as a technician at the Kyoto City Ceramics Research Institute. He moved to England with Bernard Leach in 1920 and held his first solo exhibition at Paterson's Gallery in London in 1923. He returned to Japan in 1924, a year after the great Kanto earthquake, and decided to settle in Mashiko, Tochigi prefecture. He purchased his home in 1930 and finally became a Mashiko-based potter.

Hamada, who had been promoting the Mingei (Folk Craft) movement with Soetsu Yanagi and others, travelled around Japan. He also gave lectures and workshops around the world, mainly in the West, and contributed to spreading the name of Mashiko ware to the world. Hamada's biography shows that he travelled throughout his life. He experienced different cultures and almost always brought back collectibles.<sup>2</sup> His second son, Shinsaku Hamada, recalled that Shoji continued his 'world tour in search of encounters with things until he died'; and when the afterglow of travelling motivated him, he made pots.<sup>3</sup> The theme of 'journey' is often important to artists, but in Hamada's case it is at the heart of his activity. It was an important act not only in the creation of his work but also as a means of supporting his collecting. Of course, even when he was in Japan, he visited antique shops frequently. He experienced various cultures from East to West, built his own vision, and expressed it with Mashiko's materials. Collecting was the inspiration for his creation and helped to establish the essence of meaning in his ceramic work.

Over the course of half a century, Hamada collected crafted items from all over the world, including Japan, China, Korea, the Middle East, Europe, the USA and Pacific countries. Many critics say that his collectibles are world-class masterpieces selected by his own particular sensibilities.



1 Unknown photographer, the *Nagayamon* (Building 1) of the Mashiko Sankokan Museum, 1977. Photograph courtesy of Shoji Hamada Memorial Mashiko Sankokan Museum.

The Mashiko Sankokan Museum was opened on 10 April 1977 as an integral part of the Hamada residence in Sayado, Mashiko (figure 1). The museum was renamed the Shoji Hamada Memorial Mashiko Sankokan Museum in 2012. According to Taizaburo Tsukada, the former director of the Tochigi Prefectural Museum of Art, who was involved in creating a catalogue of the works, Hamada wished to donate to the Mashiko Sankokan Museum; Hamada always planned to open his collection to the public from an early stage.<sup>4</sup> It is said that a *nagayamon*, a traditional gate-style building which had been purchased by Hamada, was dismantled and preserved in the early 1950s, 20 years before the museum came into existence. In celebration of turning 80 in 1975, Hamada planned to donate most of the site and buildings of a vast mansion to establish a museum foundation. Initially, a luxurious house of about 100 tsubo (330 sq m) called Uendai was built deep into the site, and this was intended to form the main





**2** Unknown photographer, the gate (Building 1) of the Mashiko Sankokan Museum (Building 3 is visible behind), 1977. Photograph courtesy of Shoji Hamada Memorial Mashiko Sankokan Museum.



**3** Unknown photographer, Shoji Hamada in front of the exhibits, opening ceremony of the Mashiko Sankokan Museum, 1977. Photograph courtesy of Shoji Hamada Memorial Mashiko Sankokan Museum.

part of the museum. The *nagayamon* was to be remodelled into an exhibition hall, and another building was to be built between them. However, by chance, someone suggested donating two disused stone warehouses from the neighbouring city of Moka. Originally, these were rice storehouses made of *oya* stones, and Tsukada suggested that they be used as storehouses for art works. Hamada was impressed by the magnificent appearance of the buildings and they were instead transported to the site and used as exhibition halls (today's Buildings 2 and 3). The *nagayamon* was rebuilt in front of these warehouses (today's Building 1, figure 2), and an atmospheric and purposeful museum consisting of four old houses was completed (figures 3 and 4).<sup>5</sup> It was on 9 December 1974, a day after Shoji's 80th birthday, that Tochigi prefecture permitted the establishment of a museum foundation.<sup>6</sup> This was finally set up in April 1976 with Hamada as chairman and director, but the opening was delayed until 1977 due to internal



4 Unknown photographer, opening ceremony of the Mashiko Sankokan Museum, 1977.  
Photograph courtesy of Shoji Hamada Memorial Mashiko Sankokan Museum.

remodelling and additional construction work. However, Shoji died suddenly on 5 January 1978 and his second son, Shinsaku, succeeded as director.

The museum holds more than 2000 items of ceramics, dyed and woven textiles, woodwork, furniture, paintings, and other items collected by Hamada from all over the world. The name 'Sankokan' (Reference Museum) expresses his wish to share the joy about things which 'entertained and stimulated his own eyes' with makers and enthusiasts who could use them as 'references' for their own creation.<sup>7</sup> His intentions in this respect are similar to Leach's. Hamada wanted a public museum outcome from the outset; Leach built his 'reference' collection as a private affair, only seeking to donate it to the Crafts Study Centre towards the end of his life.

## THE MASHIKO SANKOKAN MUSEUM COLLECTION

According to the list compiled at the time of founding there were 2044 items in the collection.<sup>8</sup> About half of them – 1058 pieces – were ceramics.<sup>9</sup> The others were 262 wood items, 245 textiles, 193 glass works, 156 items of furniture, 68 stone pieces, 41 paintings, 4 pieces of metalwork, and 17 miscellaneous goods (for example a fan, storage case, clock and harness). The list is roughly classified by material, and the large numbers of ceramics are further classified by region. These items are then sub-divided by the production period or by region (production area), and each item has its own entry in the register. For example, the first item in the Ceramics (Korean) section is 'Yi Dynasty, Iron painted sake bottle, 1 piece, [valued at] 3.5 million yen'.

What characterises Shoji Hamada's collection is that it was collected from the vision of a creator. In general, a collection is said to reflect the personality of the collector. In the words of Atsuo Imaizumi, an art critic who also worked for the Sankokan Museum Foundation, Hamada's collection showed his free spirit as a great artist.<sup>10</sup> It is composed of items that Hamada deeply appreciated rather than being bound by preconceived curatorial ideas. Although it covers a wide range of applied arts from East to West, the collection mainly contains folk crafts and tools that are suited to everyday life. He systematically collected excellent pieces, but there is an effective creative curatorial impetus behind his collection. This curatorial overview is the key to thinking about Shoji Hamada's aesthetics and craftsmanship.

First, the Hamada collection emphasises 'where' something was made, rather than 'who' made it. As we will see later, Shoji Hamada repeatedly advocated the importance of the place of creation, and he valued the crafts unique to a particular place. Works by only a handful of named makers are listed: Totaro Sakuma's bowls, Jiro Kinjo's sake bottle, and Seijiro Takeuchi's large bowls. Ceramics by Ogata Kenzan, for example, whom Leach respected, might well





5 Yasuko Tada, black and white print, Hamada travelling in Latin America (probably in Mexico), c. mid-1960s. Photograph courtesy of the Mashiko Museum of Ceramic Art.

have been included in Hamada's personal collection, but are not found in the museum's collection. Hamada kept faith with his own selecting instincts.

Second, items in the regular 'canon' of ceramic historians are not always included in his collection. For example, as Hiroshi Mizuo has pointed out, neither *kinuta*-shaped celadon pieces from the Ryusen kiln in the Song dynasty nor the elaborate works of the Southern Song kiln are included; both are highly regarded as treasures in the history of ceramics.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, there are barely any examples of porcelain in the section of Western wares,<sup>12</sup> and in Hamada's collection 'slipware' does not refer specifically to Toft ware, derived from English 17th-century examples for special and ceremonial presentation, but also includes dishes with abstract patterns used in daily life by the common people. He accepts an inclusive rather than a rigorously defined definition of the ceramic term. We find on the list and in the catalogues of the Sankokan's



6 Unknown photographer, Hamada and Leach looking at the Okinawan *bingata* stencil-resist dyed kimono in the museum, 7 April 1964. Photograph courtesy of the *Okinawa Times*.

collection for example 'English slip dishes' which have simple combed decoration, and unglazed 'English jugs', which are like those made in potteries in Devon or Cornwall. His selection of the tools of daily life was also grounded in his feeling for the special nature of site or place (figure 5).

It is not just the ceramics collections which are significant: the textiles are especially important (figure 6). There are many rare items such as Ryukyu (Okinawan) *kasuri*, Native American rugs and Coptic fabrics. As well as large pieces, there are also smaller items such as bags and quilted clothes. As the prominent textile artist Yoshitaka Yanagi says, 'these are the things which looked like commonplace, but [are] very attractive'.<sup>13</sup> After 1918, when Hamada visited Okinawa for the first time with Kanjiro Kawai, he





**7** Unknown photographer, Hamada and Leach visiting the museum in Okinawa, 7 April 1964. Photograph courtesy of the *Okinawa Times*.



**8** Unknown photographer, Hamada and Leach looking at the Okinawan zushigame (containers for storing the bones of ancestors) in Shuri Museum, 1964. Photograph courtesy of the *Okinawa Times*.



**9** Unknown photographer, Hamada and Leach talking about Okinawan crafts, 7 April 1964. Photograph courtesy of the *Okinawa Times*.

often returned to make his works there. He loved and collected a range of Ryukyu crafts, including ceramics and textiles, throughout his life (figures 7–10). Some of his works have decorative patterns which evoke those of textile works. It is not easy to prove how other craft disciplines influenced his pottery, but it is true that his open mind and variety of inspirational sources formed his style.

Anonymous crafts form the heart of Shoji Hamada's collection but the reference museum now includes named artists' works such as Bernard Leach's important and often illustrated slipware large plate with a deer design, along with some of his well-known drawings and etchings, such as the etching of his son, David (figure 11). These are perhaps the works of equivalence: for Leach proudly added ceramics by Hamada to his own personal collection as a mark of mutual respect and affection. In addition, works by Hamada's friends including Kanjiro Kawai, Tatsuaki Kuroda, → 138





**10** Hamada and Leach discussing their works made in Okinawa, 1969. Photograph courtesy of the *Okinawa Times* and © Courtesy of the Bernard Leach Estate.



**11** Bernard Leach, *David 1920*, soft ground etching, 1920. h. 18.4cm x w. 16.5cm. A tender portrait of Bernard and Muriel Leach's eldest son, David, on the eve of their journey from Japan to St Ives. An example of this first edition etching is also held in the collection of the Shoji Hamada Memorial Mashiko Sankokan Museum. Crafts Study Centre, Leach archive BHL/11405.





**12** Lucie Rie, bowl with sgraffito design, 1950s to 1960s, Shoji Hamada Memorial Mashiko Sankokan Museum. h. 13.4cm x d. 26cm. Photograph taken and provided by Mashiko Museum of Ceramic Art and © Estate of Lucie Rie.

135 → Keisuke Serizawa and Shiko Munakata are also displayed. There is also one sgraffito pot by Lucie Rie (figure 12).<sup>14</sup> However, these works were not registered in the catalogue when the museum foundation was established, probably because the purpose of the museum centred on Hamada's own personal items. Later, the Mashiko Sankokan Museum repaired another *nagayamon* as the 'Hamada Shoji kan' (Hamada Shoji Exhibition Hall) in 1988, which had been used as a warehouse at the time of establishment. It shows the works by Shoji Hamada. Today the works of artists including Leach and others are exhibited in Building 1, which is defined as the special exhibition room.

## HAMADA'S VIEW ON CRAFTS

Some key texts by Shoji Hamada reveal his position as an analyst of craft. Among his collections, Korean porcelain, especially Yi dynasty porcelain, stands out in terms of quantity and quality. In 'The Form and Decoration of Yi Dynasty Pottery', he wrote:

I am most impressed with the form of Yi dynasty pottery. The beauty of the shape of Tang and Song potteries lies in the tension from the inside to the outside. On the other hand, adjectives such as wonderful and splendid are absolutely not suitable for Yi pottery; rather, they are clumsy. However, if you focus on the very small parts of the contour line of the shape, you could find a special beauty that comes from lively complexity and natural inequality. Usually faceted pieces tend to be hard and liable to get cold due to the nature of their shapes and methods, but those of Yi pottery are really lively and have a deep taste.<sup>15</sup>

In reference to the pattern, he wrote: 'it is serious but not too sophisticated. There is no point that is treated coarsely ... I think it's a unique feature that the brush doesn't run too much'.<sup>16</sup>

According to the philosophy that Shoji Hamada valued, it is not difficult to make first-class works with first-class materials, but the ability as a creator is shown when asked to make first-class things with inferior materials. Regarding the idea that luxury goods are not always the best, he stated:

When I look at the antiquated brown knobs and the white cloudy glaze, and the light blue-tinted iron painted decoration, with the lidded piece of Sangkhalok ware, I am moved by its simple and unassuming beauty born from deficient technology. You could see it naturally leaving China while it's coming out of China. It reminds me of the obedient appearance of the seeds sown on different land ... It's not surprising to be able to produce good things from fine materials, but it is not always the case that products made with scarce [poor] raw materials become scarce.<sup>17</sup>



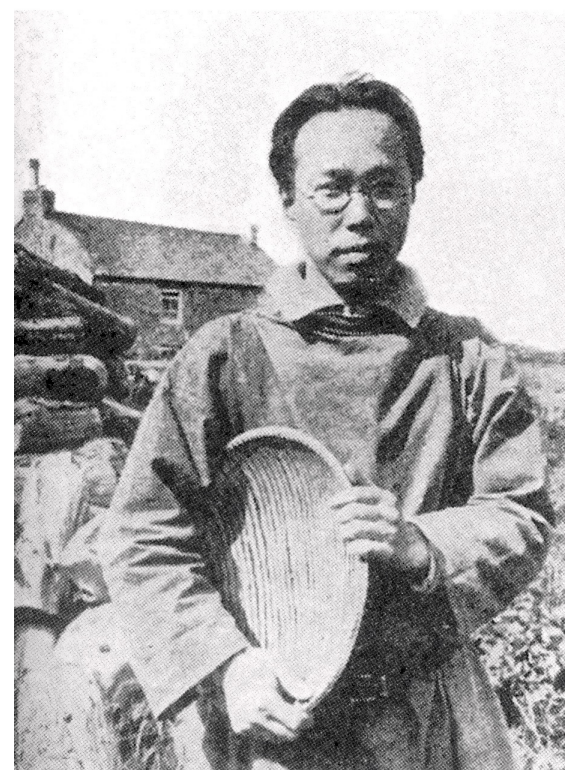


13 Unknown photographer, sepia print, three Song dynasty pots, 1911–20. Photograph courtesy of the Crafts Study Centre, BHL/9949.92.

Generally, in Japan, criticism tends to be made by people such as critics and connoisseurs, but what is consistent with Shoji Hamada is the analysis from the viewpoint of the maker. It is similar to Leach's remark in *A Potter's Book*, that 'the most beautiful pots in the world are filled with technical imperfection',<sup>18</sup> but Leach and Hamada referred to slightly different objects to establish their aesthetic viewpoint.

Figure 13 in the archives at the Crafts Study Centre shows three pots, of which the lidded one was held in Leach's personal collection according to Simon Olding.<sup>19</sup> On the back of the photo is written '3 specimens of Sung Dynasty, Tsu chou ware',<sup>20</sup> which Leach acquired in Beijing in 1917, showing the first step of his collection.

In contrast, the true eye of Shoji Hamada as a collector began with his encounter with slipware. In his essay 'The Stay in England



14 Attributed to Tsurunosuke Matsubayashi, black and white print, Shoji Hamada with old English slipware, St Ives, c. 1922. Photograph provided by Mashiko Museum of Ceramic Art.

(Slipware)' he wrote that even though he tried Japanese-style raku ware it did not work, but he succeeded easily from the beginning when using the British galena glaze. For this reason, he suggested the importance of creation using land-specific materials.<sup>21</sup>

Functional daily-use slipware – rather than ornamental Toft ware – was the starting point for Shoji Hamada's collection (figure 14).<sup>22</sup> He thought 'it's a pottery that was born out of Englishness in comparison with other Delfts and other things that were made possible by the strong influence of other countries, because the shapes, patterns and methods are fully unique'. He thought of slipware as an expression of both the ideal form and a philosophy of pottery: 'the work of Leach and Cardew will eventually open the door to new slipware. They have a different start from the old one, because of its re-evaluated beauty'.<sup>23</sup>

## CONCLUSION

The collection of Shoji Hamada has a strong characteristic that was formed from the viewpoint of the maker. The Mashiko Sankokan Museum, which is based on his collection, is a place where his ideal is manifested, and Shoji Hamada's message is transmitted. It is therefore slightly different in character from Leach's private collection, which is considered in chapter 1 of this book, and it is not possible to make a highly direct comparison. However, there are some parallels. According to Shinsaku Hamada, Shoji often said that a 'collection is not necessarily a result of acquiring something, but it begins from surprise at the encountering of things. Makers could create their own works for the first time when they truly absorb these experiences'.<sup>24</sup> Shoji Hamada's view on collection is condensed in this episode. The collection itself is the creation. We tend to think of the collection in terms of how it influenced Hamada's work, but that view diminishes the richness of the collection itself. The contents of the museum represent one of Hamada's major legacies as a maker-curator. In that respect he stands alongside his life-long friend Bernard Leach, for they both saw the potency of the object, and the strength and insight gained by placing artefacts together for study and reference.

## ENDNOTES

- 1 Leach, B. (1975) *Hamada: Potter*. Tokyo: Kodansha International, pp.204–5.
- 2 As a story of memories related to the collection, see Hamada, Shoji (1974) *Travels of Overseas Mingei [Folk Crafts]*, Mujinzo: Asahi Newspaper Co., pp.153–67.
- 3 Hamada, Shinsaku (1979) *My Father's Collection, Shoji Hamada Collection, Mashiko Sankokan Museum, vol.3, Western and Others*. Tokyo: Gakken, p.209.
- 4 Tsukada, T. (1979) *The Mashiko Sankokan Museum, Shoji Hamada Collection vol.3*, op. cit., p.206. The idea to establish the Mashiko Sankokan Museum as a 'museum' was conceived much later. See also Hamada, T. (2007) *The Collection of Shoji Hamada and the Mashiko Sankokan Museum, Mingei*, No. 656, p.14, August.
- 5 Later, another exhibition space, Hamada Shoji kan, which specialises in Shoji Hamada's works, was opened in 1988. Hamada, T., op. cit., p.12.

- 6 Tashiro, I. (1978) *Before Opening the Museum, Shoji Hamada Collection, Mashiko Sankokan Museum, vol.2, Oriental*. Tokyo: Gakken, p.211.
- 7 Regarding the philosophy of the museum, see the website of the Shoji Hamada Memorial Mashiko Sankokan Museum: <https://mashiko-sankokan.net/top/about/> (Accessed July 2020).
- 8 Some items were not registered to the museum foundation so it is said that there were approximately 2500 pieces in the collection in total.
- 9 They include Jomon, Yayoi, Sueki, Old Imari, Seto, Satsuma, Tokoname, Tamba, Karatsu, Shigaraki, Ryukyu, Mashiko, Yi dynasty, Song dynasty, Ming dynasty, South China, Thai, America, Mexico, Spain, Iran, England, Germany and others.
- 10 Imaizumi, A. (1978) *Shoji Hamada's Collection, Shoji Hamada Collection, vol. 2*, op. cit., p.9.
- 11 Mizuo, H. (1978) *Chinese Pottery and Porcelain, Shoji Hamada Collection, vol. 2*, op. cit., p.213.
- 12 Maeda, M. (1978) *Ceramics and Porcelain, Shoji Hamada Collection, vol. 3*, op. cit., pp.210–11.
- 13 Yanagi, Y. (1978) *The Collection of Mr. Hamada (Textiles), Shoji Hamada Collection, vol. 2*, op. cit., p.209.
- 14 It is unknown when Hamada acquired this pot, but it could have been around the time of the International Conference of Craftsmen in Pottery and Textiles held at Dartington Hall in 1952. Both Hamada and Rie were attending the conference.
- 15 Hamada, Shoji (1932) *The Form and Decoration of Yi Dynasty Pottery, Kogei*, 13, p.108, January.
- 16 *Ibid.*, p.109.
- 17 Hamada, Shoji (1939) *About Sangkhalok wares, Kogei*, 93, February, pp.2–3. Even if the origin of Sangkhalok ware was from China, it was apart from China and acquired its own beauty.
- 18 Leach, B. (1940/2011) *A Potter's Book*. London: Faber, p.24.
- 19 Olding, S. (2020) *Bernard Leach: a life of collecting, Mingei*, 811, July, p.25.
- 20 The vase in the centre of the photo can be seen in Shoji Hamada's collection. See *Shoji Hamada Collection, vol. 2*, op. cit., p.24. It is still not clear when Hamada acquired it. Today's researchers say the one on the right is probably made in the late Ming dynasty or Qing dynasty and the centre one in the Yuan dynasty.
- 21 Hamada, Shoji (1933) *About Sangkhalok wares, Kogei*, 8, August, pp.48–9.
- 22 English slipware became his standard of collecting. See Leach, B. (1975) *Hamada: Potter*, pp.149–50.
- 23 Hamada, Shoji (1933) *About Sangkhalok wares, Kogei*, 8, August, pp.52–3.
- 24 Hamada, Shinsaku, op. cit., p.209.



**CHAPTER 4**  
**BERNARD LEACH'S STAY IN JAPAN**  
**1934–5: HIS INVOLVEMENT IN THE**  
**MINGEI MOVEMENT**  
SADAHIRO SUZUKI

**INTRODUCTION**

Boarding the Nippon Yusen's ship *Tatsuta-Maru* from Hong Kong, Bernard Leach (1887–1979) arrived at the third jetty of Kobe Port at noon on Monday 23 April 1934, where he was greeted by Muneyoshi (also known as Soetsu) Yanagi (1889–1961), Shoji Hamada (1894–1978), and Kanjiro Kawai (1890–1966). It was his first visit to Japan in 14 years since his return to Britain in 1920. He stayed in mainland Japan until 21 May 1935, and after spending about a month on the Korean peninsula under Japanese rule, he left Keijo (Seoul) on 10 June and returned home via the Trans-Siberian Railway.

The 14 months in Japan were financially supported by the Dartington Hall Trust, an organisation that was trying to establish a new community in Devon. Leach was tasked with conducting research on Japanese ceramics, with the aim of producing fine stoneware at the Dartington Pottery, in which he was involved. When he left England in 1934 he was considering closing down the Leach Pottery in St Ives, Cornwall, and moving to Dartington. Researching Japanese pottery was a good reason – or excuse – for him to think about his future, as well as developing his skills as a potter and increasing the credibility of his 'voice' as an expert on East Asian culture. To achieve this, he took with him a seven-pound Bell and Howell 16-mm cine-camera, borrowed from the organisation, and filmed various parts of Japan.

Leach was also supported on the Japanese side, at the centre of which was the Mingei (Folk Craft) movement led by Yanagi. After

Leach returned to England in 1920, Yanagi and other friends often held exhibitions of Leach's work in Japan to support the running of the Leach Pottery. The nature of that support, however, gradually changed from around 1931. The Mingei movement began in 1926 and its founders were all friends of Leach, and so support for him went from private to public, and from individual and informal to organised. They went on to found the Japan Folk Craft Museum in 1936, to which Leach contributed in no small part.

Seen from these two perspectives, Leach's stay in Japan from 1934 to 1935 seems to deserve further consideration. Emmanuel Cooper, his biographer, described Leach's visit to Japan in 1934.<sup>1</sup> Analysing the extensive archival material, Cooper revealed what was not written in Leach's autobiography, *Beyond East and West*.<sup>2</sup> He points out that this trip to Japan in 1934 was a kind of escape from the difficulties Leach faced in England: family problems, relations with Laurie Cookes (1895–1976) and the management of the Leach Pottery. Although Cooper does not explicitly mention it, we could also add Leach's impasse in the making of work. Regarding the stay in Japan, he essentially repeats Leach's accounts in *Beyond East and West*. Cooper's point is persuasive, and there is no doubt that Leach had private, religious, economic and artistic problems to solve.

In spite of this rather negative evaluation, Leach's activity in Japan in the period was both significant and productive. He made ceramic works and drawings at about ten kilns in six prefectures, and held five major exhibitions during his 14-month stay. As the title of his autobiography shows, there was a cross-cultural dimension to his life. In order to achieve a balanced view of this period it is necessary to consider Leach's activities not only in the British context but also in the Japanese one.

One symbolic episode tells of Leach's wavering position between the two countries. Arriving at Kobe, the artist received a present from Yanagi, Kawai, and Hamada – a biography of Leach himself.<sup>3</sup> The book consisted of 736 pages of text and 122 illustrations. Unable

to touch the thick book on the table, in surprise and confusion, the Englishman said, half-jokingly: 'I feel as if I were dead and reading my own epitaph'. The Japanese friends replied: 'Now you start another life.'<sup>4</sup>

To consider Leach's life and art fully, it is necessary to scrutinise sources across Britain and Japan. Cooper and other studies on the British side have tried to make use of the Japanese material on Leach and the Mingei movement,<sup>5</sup> but there is still further work to be done. In particular, *Kogei* and *Mingei*, the magazines published by the Japan Folk Craft Association need careful study. Looking at the Leach special issues of these magazines alone would improve the quality of the research.<sup>6</sup> In the same way, it is necessary for the Japanese side to make use of the materials in Britain.

The collection of letters from Bernard Leach to Laurie Cookes, acquired by the Crafts Study Centre in 2019, are highly significant when examining Leach's stay in Japan in 1934–5. Most of them were written during this period and posted from Japan. In these letters the artist describes his experiences and fresh impressions in the manner of a diary. Although Cooper used a smaller cache of letters from the Crafts Study Centre in writing his biography of Leach<sup>7</sup>, this previously unresearched material deserves further study – they reveal to us previously unknown details and events, and make new discussion possible.

For example, one of Leach's private letters to Laurie proved to have served as the manuscript for a circular letter he wrote to his friends.<sup>8</sup> While the latter was of a public nature, the former conveys his first-hand experiences in Japan. The time he spent writing to Laurie was an opportunity for him to speculate, reflect, and deepen his insights into art and life.

This essay will consider the significance of Leach's stay in Japan from April 1934 to June 1935 primarily from the Japanese perspective. To this end, the first section reviews the dates and locations of Leach's stay during this period. The second section provides an



overview of the type of activities that Leach undertook, followed by an analysis of the relationship between the Mingei movement and Leach himself. Section three deals with the importance of Leach's activities to the movement, and the fourth examines how Leach viewed this craft movement in Japan and related it to his career. The final section considers the impact of this trip on the life and art of the artist, and on the craft movements in Japan and Britain.

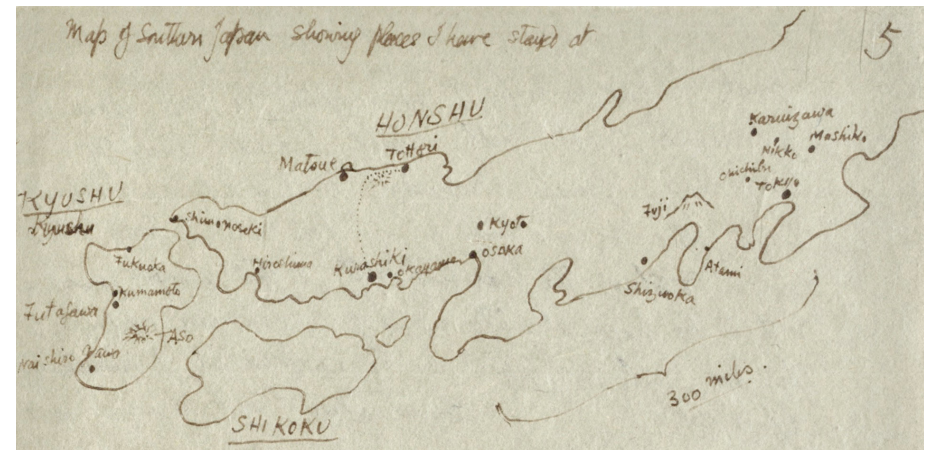
## OVERVIEW OF THE STAY

After arriving in Japan on 23 April 1934, Leach spent a few days in Kyoto and Osaka before moving to Tokyo. From then on he was based in Tokyo and travelled to various parts of Japan. The year 1934 was the first time he had worked in regional kilns, although he had seen some on previous visits. The map of Japan Leach drew shows the names and locations of the places he visited: Tokyo, Mashiko, Kyoto, Matsue, Karuizawa, Tottori, Kurashiki and Futagawa (figure 1). A chronology of the entire stay can be found in the appendices, along with a list of Japanese people he met. The relationships with these kiln sites would continue not only during this period but also after the war, with the exception of the kiln at Futagawa which disappeared shortly after Leach's visit.

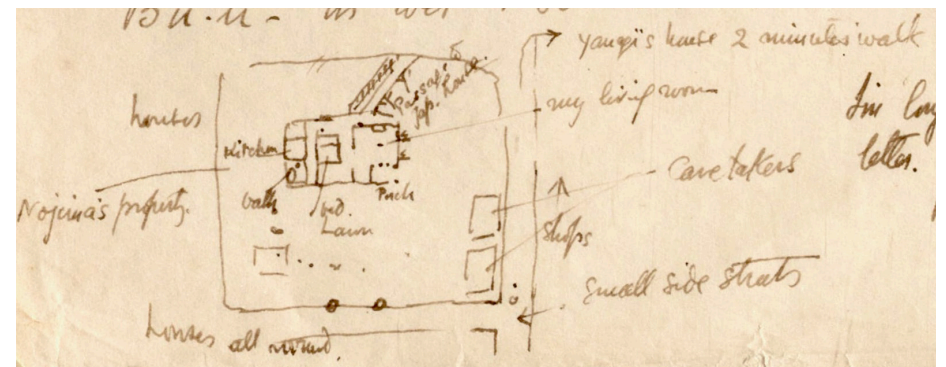
## TOKYO

In Tokyo Leach rented a house located at 90 Takehaya-cho, Koishikawa-ku, where he lived alone. The stay seems to have been comfortable for him, as he repeatedly referred to this place as 'my room' in his letters to Laurie Cookes. Except during the times when he stayed at a hotel or another house, this was the main base for his stay in Japan from 1934 to 1935.

The house was owned by Kozo Nojima (1889–1964), a photographer and owner of the art gallery, Kabuto-ya. This European-style house was one of several properties Nojima owned, and it was often used



1 Bernard Leach, 'Map of Southern Japan showing places I have stayed at, 16 February 1935', letter to Laurie Cookes, p.XX. Crafts Study Centre, BLE/4. © Courtesy of the Bernard Leach Estate. Enhanced image.



2 Bernard Leach, plan of the Nojima House, 1 January 1935, letter to Laurie, reverse side of p.XX. Crafts Study Centre, BLE/4. © Courtesy of the Bernard Leach Estate. Enhanced image.

as a venue for exhibitions. Among the artists Nojima dealt with were people of Leach's generation, and some of them were his friends. Leach himself held a small exhibition of folk pottery from the Kyushu region in the rooms where he was staying on 2–3 June 1934, probably for the purpose of defraying the costs of living.<sup>9</sup> Leach drew a floor plan of the Nojima house (figure 2), which provides a valuable record of the place. Leach met Nojima at least once, on 28 October, when they went to see a play together with other friends, including Yanagi.

It was Yanagi who arranged the Nojima house for Leach. Nojima and Yanagi were members of Kokuga-kai, an organisation of artists, and on good terms. The house was very close to Yanagi's (at 26 Hisakata-cho, Koishikwa-ku), to which he moved from Kyoto in May 1933, and lived until January 1935. It was just a minute or two's walking distance from Nojima's.

The Yanagi family supported the daily life of the English artist. Leach had meals every day at Yanagi's, just as he had done during his time at Abiko, Chiba prefecture, in 1917-9. Also, as in his Abiko days, Leach met many people at Yanagi's and expanded his circle of acquaintance. Among them, for example, were the German architect Bruno Taut (1880-1938) and Hanka Schjelderup Petzold (1862-1937), a Norwegian music teacher who had taught Yanagi's wife, the alto singer Kaneko Yanagi (1892-1984).<sup>10</sup> During Leach's stay in Japan, Muneyoshi and Kaneko Yanagi acted as his manager or secretary.

While making new acquaintances, Leach also rekindled old friendships in Tokyo, and one of them was with Kenkichi Tomimoto (1886-1963), who held exhibitions of ceramics in the Nojima house on several occasions. Letters to Laurie reveal that Leach often visited Tomimoto's house and studio in Seijo to create his works,<sup>11</sup> although no pieces produced by Leach at Tomimoto's kiln have been found in public collections.

Thanks to his friends, Leach enjoyed urban life in Tokyo. The city was severely damaged by the Great Kanto earthquake in 1923, but by the time Leach visited in 1934 it had recovered, and was even more developed than before. It was the change in Japanese women, rather than the city itself, that perplexed him: he found them more influenced by American films in terms of fashion and behaviour than before.<sup>12</sup> Two weeks after his arrival in Japan, Leach wrote to Laurie:

Of course I am being spoiled – I am hardly allowed to pay for anything at all & things come wonderfully ahead anyhow roughly

half our costs all round – even western things & Tokyo is now as comfortable for a foreigner as any other great city – for this foreigner more comfortable. We eat & sleep & bathe & work when & where we feel inclined – everything is open to me & there are lots & lots of people who just want to do anything for me.<sup>13</sup>

About ten days later, he wrote:

I won't have any financial difficulties in Japan – living is so cheap & I feel sure, & my friends all say, I can make £500 a year. Really at times the temptation to stay here is great. I'll never get the chance of doing as much in England, even with Dartington's backing – nothing like the understanding & support I get here. Still the less easy road may be the truer one. If necessary I might possibly come at the end of the year & square the situation.<sup>14</sup>

These citations show the artist adjusted to life in Japan without difficulty and enjoyed the city life in Tokyo.

## MASHIKO

During his stay in Japan, Leach spent the most time at the kiln of Shoji Hamada in Mashiko, Tochigi prefecture, located to the north east of Tokyo. Hamada went to England with Leach in 1920 to help him build a kiln in St Ives, Cornwall, but returned to Japan in 1924 and settled in Mashiko in 1930. Hamada purchased a traditional gate-style building from another part of the region, and moved it on to his estate as a place for Leach to stay and work. Leach designed a decorative motif based on this building, as is depicted in a letter to Laurie.<sup>15</sup>

The details of the stays are as follows: (1) Leach first visited Hamada's house with Yanagi and Kawai on 31 May 1934 and stayed for one night. Then the stays became longer: (2) around 7 June to 3 July, (3) 16 to 26 September, (4) October, (5) 18 to 24 December 1934 and (6) 22 to 25 January 1935. The letters to Laurie not only enable us to determine the dates of these stays, but also witness the casual



way in which Leach travelled back and forth between Tokyo and Mashiko, especially in October 1934, when he moved between the two places every few days.

With the support of Hamada and the craftsmen in his workshop, Leach was able to devote himself to production. He wrote to Laurie on 4 July that he made '550 good pots & 100 drawings & 4 reels & one 3 hour lecture' in 17 days.<sup>16</sup>

In Mashiko, Leach worked almost exclusively with Hamada and had little contact with other Mashiko potters, with the exceptions of Masu Minagawa (1874–1960), Fukujiro Sakuma (1873–1943), and his son Totaro Sakuma (1900–1976). Some of the descriptions of Mashiko in a letter to Laurie are included in Leach's autobiography.<sup>17</sup> We know that Leach worked at the Sakuma Pottery as well as at Hamada's, through ceramics he left there and through his letters to Laurie.

It is interesting to note that while in Mashiko in September 1934 Leach experienced the Muroto typhoon, which caused serious damage to many parts of Japan, and which occurred when they were firing a kiln. The wind was so strong that they had to interrupt the firing for five hours; and the result was not satisfying because of the unexpected effect of too much oxidisation.<sup>18</sup>

## KYOTO

Leach's base in the western part of Japan was the house and studio of Kanjiro Kawai in the Gojozaka area of Kyoto, the old capital of Japan. Gojozaka was known for its high concentration of pottery manufacturers. Kawai acquired ownership of a communal kiln in the area and founded his studio, Shokei-yo, in 1920, which Leach had visited in May of that year. The kiln was used not only to fire his own works, but also to fire pieces made by other potters in the area.

During his 1934–5 stay Leach visited Kyoto frequently. Specifically, soon after his arrival in Kobe he spent a few days at Kawai's, although

the date is not clear. He revisited Kyoto around 7 July and made ceramics until 31 July. He also stayed at Kawai's from 24 August to 1 September. A letter to Laurie reveals that he moved from Tokyo to Kyoto in a rather rapid manner on 10 December so as to attend an incense-smelling ceremony at Ginkakuji Temple the next day; on this occasion he stayed in Kyoto for about five days. In 1935 he stayed in Kyoto for 11 days, starting around 7 February. In addition to these visits he stopped and stayed in Kyoto several times on his way to other places.

In Kyoto Leach worked in a determined manner. He wrote to Laurie on 30 July:

Since I came here I have not written a line because between waking about 7 am under this mosquito net & lying down again under it at about 11 or 12 pm I have either been making pots as hard as I could go or meeting people. Except at night I have never been alone. In a month & a half at Mashiko, at Tomi[moto]'s & here I have made over 1000 pots.<sup>19</sup>

Kyoto, full of history and culture, was a fascinating place for the Englishman. In his letter to Laurie, Leach described the festivals of Kyoto, and other customs such as *noryo-yuka*, the summer evening dinner on the banks of the Kamo River with a cool breeze. The experience of acupuncture at Kawai's seems to have been a memorable one for him, as it is mentioned in two letters to Laurie and also in his autobiography.<sup>20</sup> As a treatment, he experienced needles being driven into his shoulders and the sides of his spine, unexpectedly without feeling pain.

As to the pottery, it is noteworthy that although Leach worked in Kawai's workshop, it was a network of craftsmen in the Gojozaka area that supported him. For example, in Kyoto Leach made a number of porcelains, while at the same time and in the same place, Kawai seems to have made something different. This suggests local craftsmen must have played an important role in obtaining materials and in firing.

The life at Kawai's was busy, but Leach enjoyed the production process and communication with the local people. He wrote:

Here at Kawai's all sorts of people, university professors, millionaires, artists, craftsmen, newspaper people etc. come to talk with me about art & craft & other things too. Neighbouring potters come & work for me at night & ask many questions some of which I find I can answer, hardly a day passes without an article in some paper about my movements or work or ideas.<sup>21</sup>

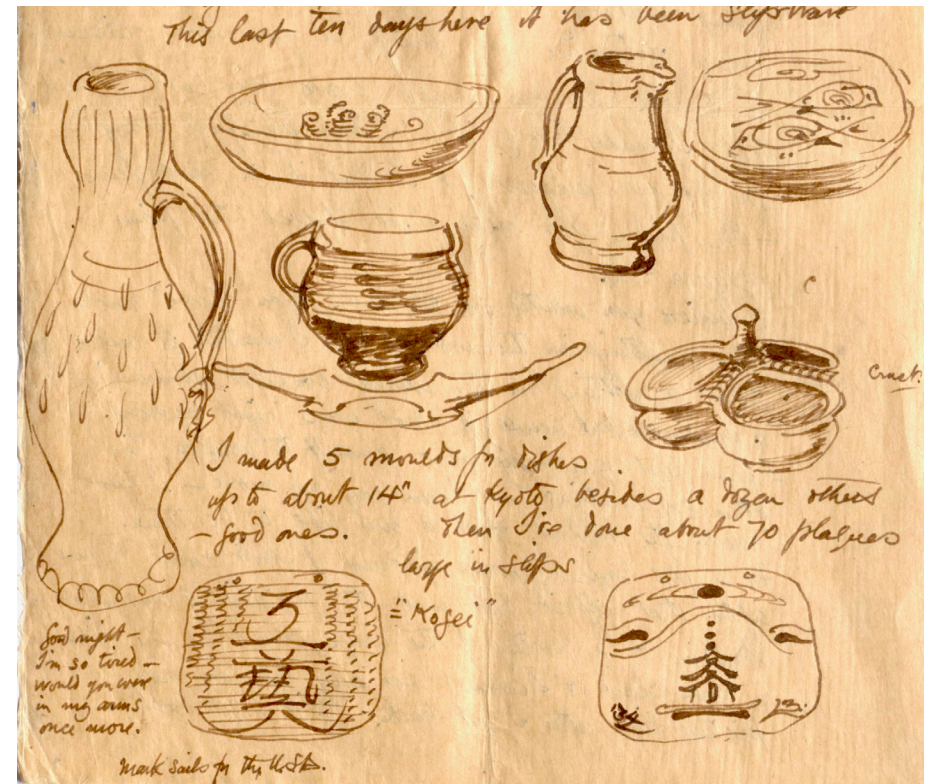
Such was the charm of this old city that after the Second World War Leach even planned to leave England and settle in Kyoto with his new partner Janet Darnell (1918–97), although this plan was not realised.

## MATSUE

While Leach had known Hamada and Kawai before this visit to Japan, his connections with people in Matsue, Tottori, Kurashiki, and Futagawa, which we will discuss below, were first made in 1934. Leach became aware of Matsue when he saw Michitada Funaki's (1900–63) work at Takumi, an Arts and Crafts store in Tokyo's Ginza district, shortly after his arrival in Japan. Funaki came from a family that had been making pottery for generations in Fujina, near Matsue, Shimane prefecture. Leach noticed that the lead glaze Funaki used was similar to the English galena glaze, and this is the reason he paid special attention to Funaki.<sup>22</sup>

Leach stayed in Matsue from 1 to 14 August 1934, and worked tirelessly at about five kilns in the Fujina, Sodeshi, Yumachi, and Ho'onji areas. He revisited this town from 8 March to 3 April of the following year, working in Fujina and Sodeshi. He stayed mostly at hotels such as the Minami-kan and Tofu-ya Ryokan, with the exception of several nights at Funaki's house. In terms of length of stay, Matsue is as important as Mashiko and Kyoto.

Leach's visit to Matsue was organised by Naoyuki Ota (1890–1984), a leading figure of the Mingei movement in Shimane. Ota was



3 Bernard Leach, designs for pots drawn in Matsue, 8 August 1934, letter to Laurie Cookes, p.XX. Crafts Study Centre, BLE/4. © Courtesy of the Bernard Leach Estate. Enhanced image.

a fellow student of Kanjiro Kawai at Matsue Junior High School and worked for the Matsue Chamber of Commerce. He became interested in the promotion of crafts, and was involved in the establishment of the Shimane Mingei Society in 1932. Although Ota's name does not appear in Leach's letters to Laurie, he was an important figure in facilitating Leach's stay in Matsue. On 1 and 2 April 1935 an exhibition of Leach's works was held at the Matsue Chamber of Commerce and Industry under Ota's auspices.

During these stays Leach met a group of young artist-craftsmen: Michitada Funaki in Fujina, Toshio Ono (1903–95) in Sodeshi, and Takashi Fukuma (1904–89) in Yumachi. In addition to these potters, Leach also came to know such craftsmen as Eishiro Abe (papermaker, 1902–84) and Shigeharu Morinaga (weaver). They



were members of the Shimane Mingei Society and thanks to them, Leach enjoyed a productive period (figure 3). Looking back on the days in Mashiko, Kyoto and Matsue, he wrote on 8 August: 'It has been an experience & oh how work flows out this way – two months & 1500 pots besides drawing & ex libris & designs for woodwork & cane furniture & spoons & all the talk'.<sup>23</sup> According to Naoyuki Ota, Leach made more than 700 pots at Fujina and about 100 at Sodeshi during his stay from March to April 1935.<sup>24</sup>

While Leach provided advice and had an intangible impact on the local people, he also had a lot to learn from his stay. Funaki's lead-glazed pottery was similar to the English galena glaze, but the firing temperature was different. Leach wrote Laurie a recipe of Funaki's glaze.<sup>25</sup>

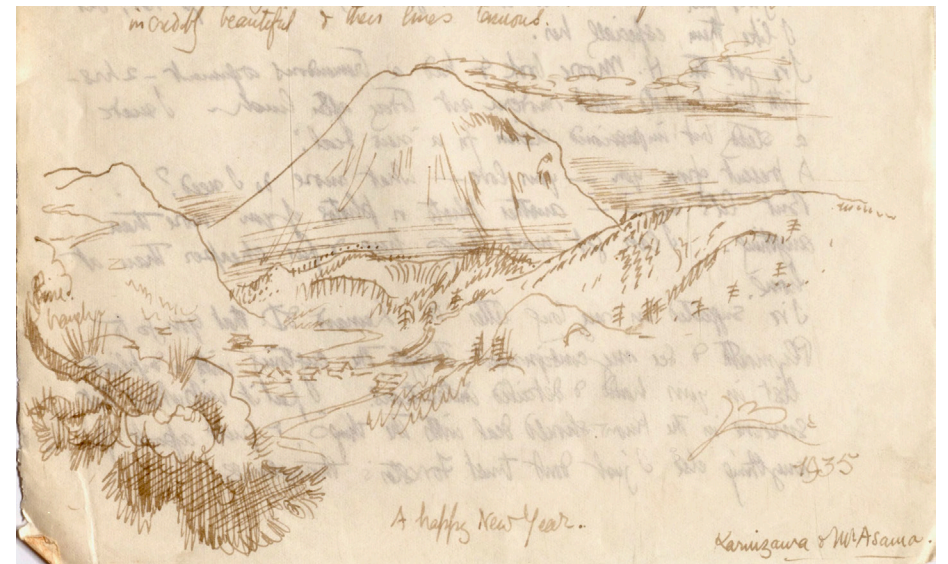
## KARUIZAWA

Karuizawa in Nagano prefecture was known as a mountain resort for foreigners. It was originally an inn town. It was popularised as a summer retreat for foreigners by the Anglican missionary Alexander Croft Shaw (1846–1902). Leach spent three summers here with his family: in 1914, 1918, and 1919.

He revisited Karuizawa in 1934, but this time in winter. After visiting Bruno Taut at Takasaki, he went on to Karuizawa on 27 December, and stayed at Winnie and Harold Spackman's house for a week. Exploring the beautiful winter mountains, Leach enjoyed his vacation (figure 4).

## TOTTORI

While Naoyuki Ota took care of Leach in Shimane, it was Shoya Yoshida (1898–1972) who warmly received him in Tottori. Leach's visit to Tottori was realised largely at the behest of Yoshida. Leach stayed in Tottori three times: first from 31 July to 1 August 1934, then 17 to 22 February, and lastly 3 to 5 April 1935.



4 Bernard Leach, Karuizawa and Mount Asama, 26 December 1934 [1 January 1935], letter to Laurie Cookes, p.XX. Crafts Study Centre, BLE/4. © Courtesy of the Bernard Leach Estate. Enhanced image.

Yoshida was a central figure of the Mingei movement in the region. While running an otolaryngology clinic as a doctor, Yoshida also established an Arts and Crafts shop, Takumi, in 1932, the Tottori Folk Craft Museum in 1949, and the Restaurant Takumi across the street from his home and hospital in 1957, organically connecting these three businesses.

During the stay in Tottori, Leach and Yoshida visited a local kiln in Ushinoto which had been established in 1837, and gave advice to the local craftsman, Hideharu Kobayashi. Yoshida began the Mingei movement in Tottori in 1931, when he found the Ushinoto Pottery was in financial difficulty and on the verge of closure. It is not clear whether Leach made any pottery at the kiln.

Leach also engaged in more unusual activities in Tottori. He held workshops on English home cooking for Japanese housewives. Yoshida wrote about this event, but the letters to Laurie tell us more. Leach held the first cooking class for nine women at Yoshida's on 19 February 1935, and the second for 30, including the first nine

as assistants, on 21 February. The menu was curry, salad, coffee and ice cream; he even taught how to make bread from wheat flour.<sup>26</sup>

## KURASHIKI

Kurashiki, Okayama prefecture, like Tottori, was an important place for the Mingei movement. Leach stayed there from 11 to 16 and 22 to 26 February 1935. These stays were arranged by Magozaburo Ohara (1880–1943), Tamami Mitsuhashi (1882–1939), and Kiyomi Takeuchi (1888–1981). Ohara was the head of a Kurashiki-based business group and a supporter of the Mingei movement. Mitsuhashi was his attending physician, and Takeuchi was the director of the Ohara Museum of Art, which Ohara founded in 1930. They gathered in an organisation called the Kurashiki Cultural Association, which was founded in 1921, and they were interested in the promotion of local pottery in the Sakazu area in the 1930s.

Although it is not clear when Ohara met Leach, Ohara was an important collector of his work. There is some evidence that they knew each other before 1920, although this is not yet confirmed. Leach's 'Mermaid of Zennor' platter (see p.00), produced in 1925, was purchased by Ohara prior to 1934, as a photograph of it appears in the 1934 book on Leach edited by Shikiba.<sup>27</sup>

In contrast, Ohara's friendships with Hamada, Yanagi and Kawai started after April 1931, when Ohara purchased a work by Hamada. Thereafter, the three men began to visit Kurashiki and advise on craft production. Hamada visited the Sakazu Pottery in 1932 and Kawai in 1933.

Leach visited Kurashiki in February 1935 to work at the Sakazu Pottery. He stayed at Ohara's villa, Muison-so, which was a house with a studio built by Ohara for his friend, the artist Torajiro Kojima (1881–1929). During his stay there, Leach was cared for by Takeuchi, who lived next door. The Sakazu Pottery was established by Suekichi Okamoto (1833–1908) in 1876 in the Sakazu area on the outskirts of Kurashiki. Leach probably met Suekichi's three grandchildren: Kenji

Okamoto (1895–1956), Seitaro Okamoto (?–1945), and Shoichi Okamoto (?–1966?). Leach crossed the Takahashi River every morning by boat from the villa to the kiln in Kabuto Yama (Helmet Hill). Leach's account and illustration of this kiln in one of his letters to Laurie is a valuable record.<sup>28</sup>

The works Leach produced in Sakazu were exhibited in the *Bernard Leach Exhibition* sponsored by the Kurashiki Cultural Association and held at the Kurashiki Chamber of Commerce and Industry from 23 to 26 February 1935.

## FUTAGAWA

Leach left Kurashiki on the night of 27 February 1935 for Kyushu, and worked at Kumagoro Sumi's (?–1969) pottery in Futagawa, Fukuoka prefecture from 1 to 8 March. Leach had visited the workshop on 19 August the previous year with Yanagi, Kawai, Hamada and Ryoichi Mizutani (1901–59). Although the kiln had little to do with the Mingei movement, it was decided later that Leach should stay there. This workshop is illustrated in Leach's letter to Yanagi.<sup>29</sup>

It was Kawai who suggested that Leach should go to Futagawa, and Yanagi supported the idea.<sup>30</sup> The conditions of this pottery in Futagawa were different from those in Mashiko, Kyoto and Matsue. In Mashiko and Kyoto Leach worked in the workshops of two individual artists, Hamada and Kawai. In Matsue he worked with a group of young potters such as Funaki and Ono. In contrast, Sumi's pottery was a conventional workshop with its master at the centre. Therefore, Yanagi and Kawai expected that the impact Leach would have on Futagawa would be different from elsewhere. When Kawai and Yanagi made this suggestion, they were probably remembering an earlier failure: in Kyoto in the late 1920s they had organised a group of craftsmen called the Shimogamo Mingei Kyodan to attempt collective craft production, in vain. It seems Yanagi and Kawai hoped that Leach would pioneer a new way of collaboration between individual potters and conventional kiln sites.



During his stay, Leach encountered difficulties, including catching a cold due to the bitter climate, and a fire that burned almost an entire kiln's worth of wood while it was drying beside the kiln. Due to the fire, Leach had to extend his stay by a day. It was after Leach left Futagawa that the pots he had worked on were fired in the kiln. In fact, Leach did not see his own works from Futagawa until after the Second World War. It was in the Japan Folk Craft Museum in Tokyo on 17 February 1953 that he saw them; it was also the day when he visited the museum for the first time.<sup>31</sup>

### LEACH'S ACTIVITIES

The main focus of Leach's activities during his travels throughout Japan was pottery-making, but in reality the activities he engaged in were probably even more diverse than he had originally anticipated. This section describes his research activities, his production activities, the lectures he gave, the publications he issued, and exhibitions in which he was involved.

### RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

Leach's pottery-making activities in various parts of Japan provided him with the opportunity to learn the techniques of the local people and work with local materials. The letters to Laurie include such technical information. In addition to his research on ceramics, Leach was involved in a variety of other research activities, which he filmed and recorded. The following examples are taken from his research trips to Kuriyama in Tochigi prefecture, Saitama prefecture, and the Chugoku and Kyushu regions.

In Kuriyama a survey of folk crafts was carried out by members of the Mingei movement from 26 to 31 May 1934. This survey was done by a team of four – Leach, Kawai, Hamada and Yanagi. The trip is described in Leach's letter to Laurie on 4 June 1934. On the first day, the group arrived in Utsunomiya, where they met with Governor

Kiyoshi Hanai before proceeding with their research, attended by prefectural officials. In addition to cars, they also used three horses and two cattle for getting around. It was through this research that they discovered *o-ya-ishi*, a type of stone which they would use for the construction of the Japan Folk Craft Museum in 1936.

There were two aspects to this research. From the local side, as evidenced by the involvement of the governor and county officials, this was a survey conducted with the intention of promoting the local economy. On the other hand, from the perspective of the Mingei movement, this was part of their activities to research and collect examples of the surviving folk crafts from across Japan.

Leach was part of neither side. He was not a local; despite cooperating with the Folk Crafts movement he was still a foreigner, and different from the other three members. He also had his own mission of investigating Japanese crafts for the Dartington Hall Trust. He took advantage of the occasion as a third party. We will discuss this point later.

Similar to the one in Tochigi, there was a survey in Saitama prefecture, which was conducted twice: firstly on 8 to 9 December 1934 and again on 21 January 1935. These surveys were carried out at the request of Izumi Yamaguchi, Director of the Saitama Prefectural Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and were aimed at investigating the current state of handicrafts in Saitama prefecture and their promotion. Leach, Yanagi and Ryoichi Mizutani participated in these surveys.

The investigation is described in detail in Leach's letters to Laurie,<sup>32</sup> which reveal that the research spanned multiple fields, including cast iron and fishing-rod making. The letters provide a valuable record as they specifically mention the places they stopped at in Saitama prefecture. It is also interesting to note that they were picked up from Tokyo by car, and that their involvement with officials, businesspeople and makers in Saitama is described more specifically than in the case of Tochigi.

The largest survey effort that Leach was involved in during this period was the one conducted in the Chugoku and Kyushu regions from 15 to 24 August 1934. The participants were Leach, Yanagi, Hamada, Kawai, and Mizutani. This research was done in preparation for the *Contemporary Japanese Folk Craft Exhibition* scheduled to be held at the Takashimaya department store in November of the same year, and their travel expenses were covered by Takashimaya. The details of the investigation were reported by Mizutani and published in the magazine *Kogei*.<sup>33</sup>

On 15 August the group gathered at the Kyoto bureau of the *Osaka Mainichi Shimbun* newspaper for a ceremony to unite the investigation team. They left Kyoto on 16 August and stopped in Himeji, Okayama and Hiroshima; on the 17th they visited Hiroshima and Hakata, on the 18th Fukuoka (Nishi-Shin-machi and Noma) and Kurume, on the 19th Kurume, Saga, Shiraishi, Futagawa and Kumamoto, and on the 20th Kumamoto and Kagoshima. The 21st was a day of rest and the group stayed in Ibusuki and enjoyed the spa there. On their return trip, they visited Naeshiro-gawa, Kagoshima and Kumamoto on the 22nd, and Mount Aso, Kumamoto and Fukuoka on the 23rd.

The itinerary described above is gruelling, even with today's transport network. According to Mizuno's report, Leach reached the end of his physical strength on 19 August, saying he wanted 'at least eight hours of sleep', and went to the accommodation, accompanied by Kawai, earlier than originally scheduled. While Leach was resting at the hotel, Yanagi, Hamada, and Mizutani had a quick dinner in the station's cafeteria and continued their investigation.

The group's visits included Commerce and Industry Promotion Halls, founded by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry in major cities. They visited one of them in Hiroshima.<sup>34</sup> After viewing the exhibits at the hall, Leach was critical, saying: 'Japan has entered the machine age. You won't find anything good even if you look for it', and 'The officials of the Hall are blind'.<sup>35</sup>

The team flew from Fukuoka to Osaka on 24 August. They boarded a Fokker seaplane at Najima, taking off at 9:00 am and landing in Osaka at 11:30 am. This was probably the first time in his life that Leach had flown in a plane. They enjoyed the beautiful view of the Seto Inland Sea from the plane.

The survey was conducted not by local governments but by a private company (the department store). Leach, as well as Yanagi and the other Japanese participants, set out to investigate, not knowing what they would find, but they achieved a certain degree of success. In November 1934, the Takashimaya department store held its exhibition, where a total of 20,000 items from all over Japan were on display, including those from Chugoku and Kyushu. The show was repeated in Osaka in April of the following year.

While Leach participated in these surveys, his position was not always clear. Although he was involved in the Mingei movement, he was also a foreigner, and was therefore different from the other members. He had come to Japan to investigate Japanese craftsmanship with the help of the Dartington Hall Trust, or more correctly, from Leonard and Dorothy Elmhirst (Leonard 1893-1974, Dorothy 1887-1968). While Leach was in step with his counterparts in the Mingei movement, he also observed the movement's relationship with local governments and commercial organisations. In this sense, his position may have been closer to that of a cultural anthropologist conducting participant observation. The things he saw in Japan were filmed with his 16-mm camera. The films were developed during his stay in Japan and used in his lectures. Afterwards, they were submitted to the Dartington Hall Trust.

## PRODUCTION ACTIVITIES

**Ceramics:** Leach created ceramic works in Tokyo, Mashiko, Kyoto, Matsue, Kurashiki and Futagawa, and sold them at exhibitions. It is unusual for an artist or craftsman to produce ceramic works in six places in the short space of a year. Each work shows the



characteristics of its place of production and, of course, differs from those made in England. Let us consider some of their features.

The first feature is consistency. Leach worked at about ten kilns in six regions, all of which were unfamiliar to him. As mentioned before, he had never worked at regional kilns in Japan. Each pottery had its own characteristics in terms of materials, such as clay and glaze, and kiln construction. Leach had to identify them in an extremely short period of time and create his own work. Despite these limitations, his personal style is recognisable in the works he produced in this period. The use of local artisans for moulding and firing, and Leach's own expertise in painting, probably contributed to this consistency of style.

The second feature is mould forming. During his stay in Japan, Leach used moulds to mass-produce works of the same size and shape. Some of the moulds used at Fushina were made in Gojozaka, Kyoto, where he could find specialists. In Leach's own potteries at St Ives and Dartington, wheel throwing seems to have been the main method of pottery-making. In this sense, the use of moulds, with which he was not very familiar, may have expanded the range of his work and increased his productivity.

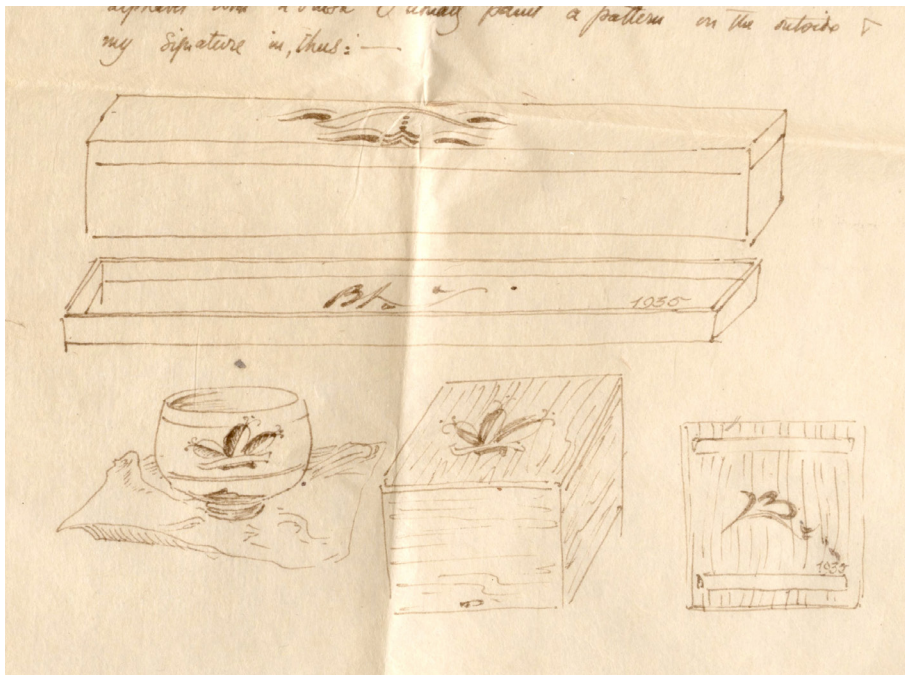
The third is the production of porcelain. The works made in Kyoto include those that can be classified as celadon or porcelain. For example, at Kyoto a number of incense containers were made using moulds, and decorated with blue cobalt and red enamel pigments over incised patterns. Considering the fact that the production of porcelain and celadon at the Leach Pottery in St Ives did not begin until around 1940, when they found appropriate clay at St Erth, Leach's commitment to porcelain is characteristic of this period (figure 5).

The fourth feature is Leach's awareness of the Japanese market. What Leach produced in Japan was sold on the domestic market and does not seem to have been exported abroad, with the exception of several works owned by Leonard Elmhirst and the



5 Bernard Leach, designs for a cigarette box, bowl, incense containers, water sprinklers and tile, 29 August 1934, letter to Laurie Cookes, p.XX. Leach made these porcelain works in Kyoto. Crafts Study Centre, BLE/4. © Courtesy of the Bernard Leach Estate. Enhanced image.

artist himself. Not surprisingly, Leach produced what the Japanese liked and needed – specifically, the inclusion of ceramic ends for hanging scrolls and water containers for calligraphy, as well as plates and bowls, is striking. In particular, incense containers for the tea ceremony were made in large numbers during this period, as they were small but could command a high price. He also made tiles, which he was already skilled at, using blue cobalt glaze over incised patterns for those made in Kyoto, and black and brown slips for those made in Matsue.



6 Bernard Leach, examples of *hakogaki*, 16 March 1935, letter to Laurie Cookes, p.3. 'Hako' means 'box', and 'gaki' means 'to write', 'to draw' or 'scripture'. The elongated box pictured above is for storing a hanging scroll. The box in the bottom centre is for the tea bowl on the bottom left. The bottom right shows the reverse side of the box cover. Crafts Study Centre, BLE/4. © Courtesy of the Bernard Leach Estate. Enhanced image.

It is interesting to note that Leach, on request, did *hakogaki*, a traditional practice where the artist signs the boxes of his works. He wrote: 'People are always turning up with those boxes for me to sign containing pots made years ago'.<sup>36</sup> He seems to have enjoyed this unfamiliar custom. At Matsue he signed the wooden boxes at the exhibition venue,<sup>37</sup> which may have been, for him, a performance of signature using a brush and black ink. The letter to Laurie which he wrote from 16 to 27 March is especially interesting in that he explains the custom of *hakogaki* in English, and that it also records how he responded to the request of a signature from Torajiro Haramoto (?–1936), the president of the Yasugi Folk Craft Association.<sup>38</sup> Figure 6 shows examples of *hakogaki* he did for Haramoto.

His stay in Japan taught Leach a lot and allowed him to solve his problems. He wrote:

I have got used to being watched intently by groups of potters and others, and my own comparative clumsiness in throwing large pots on the wheel does not trouble me any more – it is secondary – and the intense desire I meet [sic] to learn and to understand outweighs it.<sup>39</sup>

This year of actual work amongst the potters in nine potteries has taught me a lot technically about the handling of clay, pigments, glazes, kilns etc. and I have been able to discuss many of the difficulties we have encountered during the last fourteen years in England and to get light on them. That alone would, to my mind, have justified the journey.<sup>40</sup>

The presence of Leach in the workshops brought new ideas to the Japanese craftsmen. The method of drawing a picture of what to make on a piece of paper in advance and then making something on the potter's wheel following that design was not familiar to them. Leach also brought to the Japanese potteries the knowledge of European tableware in general and how to attach a handle, which had not really existed in Japan.

**Design:** Leach was not only involved in the creation of ceramics during his stay. The letters to Laurie reveal that he committed to designing a wide variety of things. As examples, we will focus on two exhibitions, one in Tottori and the other in Tokyo.

In Tottori, Shoya Yoshida played the role of producer and encouraged local craftsmen to create new products. Leach's letter to Laurie written on 20 February 1935 reveals that, in response to Yoshida's request, he made various designs during his stay in Tottori in February 1935: specifically, six types of chairs, buttons, a bamboo cake stand, a bamboo toast rack, a photograph frame, three textiles, two tables, and more.<sup>41</sup> Some of these designs were actually made at Yoshida's arrangement. For example, the Leach-designed picture





**7** Model room (study) designed by Bernard Leach. The photograph was probably taken on 20 November 1934 (Leach, letter to Laurie Cookes, 20 November 1934). Crafts Study Centre, BHL/8714. © Courtesy of the Bernard Leach Estate.

frames and photograph frames were made by the Tottori woodwork company Torao Kogei-do. Leach wrote in another letter to Laurie that he exhibited wooden buttons, silk neckties, lacquer photograph frames and other items, and obtained about 200 yen in sales.<sup>42</sup> This probably refers to *A Small Exhibition of Mr. Leach's Works*, held on 20 to 21 March 1935 on the first floor of Matsumura Nanmei-do in Tottori. Although he could not attend the show as he was in Shimane, the exhibition seems to have been a success.

There is another exhibition that is particularly noteworthy. As mentioned earlier, the *Contemporary Japanese Folk Craft Exhibition* was held at the Takashimaya department store in Tokyo from 16 to 23 November 1934. On this occasion, model rooms were displayed, proposing a new lifestyle using folk crafts. They consisted of a study designed by Leach, a dining room by Hamada, and a kitchen by Kawai (figures 7 and 8).

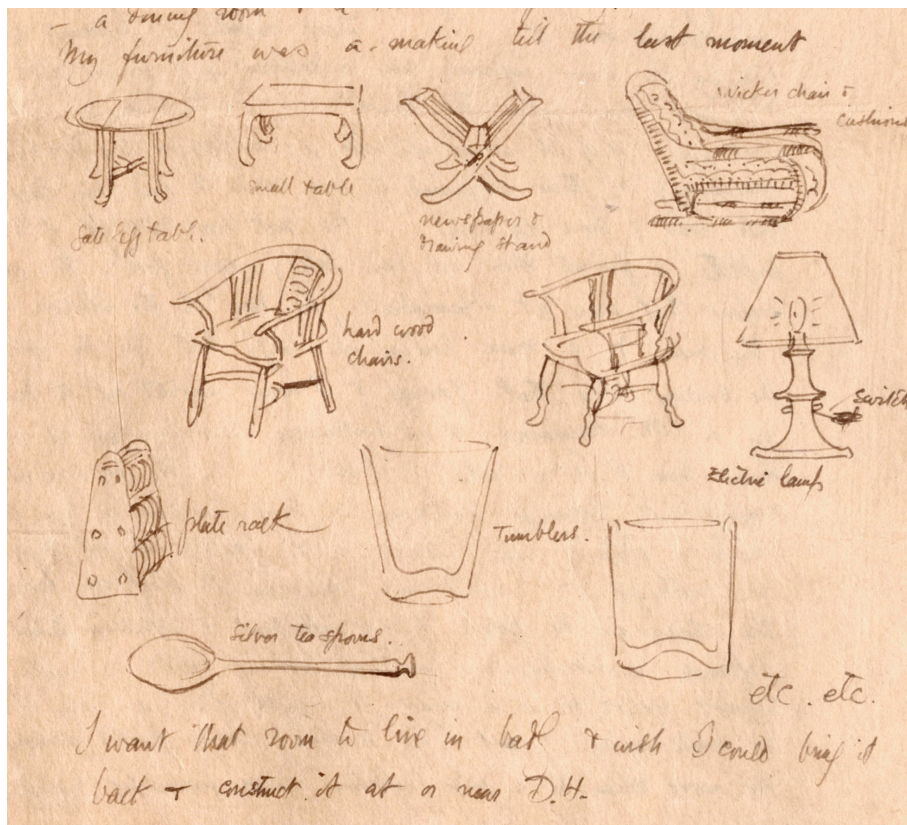


**8** Model room (study) designed by Bernard Leach. The photograph was probably taken on 20 November 1934 (Leach, letter to Laurie Cookes, 20 November 1934). Crafts Study Centre, BHL/8713. © Courtesy of the Bernard Leach Estate.

These model rooms were previously known about through photographs, but there was no detailed documentary evidence. Leach's letters to Laurie, however, reveal that the preparation for the show started in May 1934 with a budget of £1000. Describing this rare opportunity, he wrote: 'an experiment in the meeting of East & West in which I feel I can be of use – they want me – the time is ripe for it – the financial backing gladly & generously offered – the team spirit present – the stage set.'<sup>43</sup>

Leach was intensely active in this project. When he was in Chugoku and Kyushu regions in August, he designed not only the rooms, but also the furniture and fixtures – while on a moving train. It is not clear from the photographs of the room, but a letter to Laurie written on 20 November 1934 gives the details (figure 9).





9 Bernard Leach, designs for the model room at Takashimaya: tables, chairs, electric lamp, plate rack, tumbler, spoon, etc., 20 November 1934, letter to Laurie Cookes, p.3. 'I want that room to live in badly & wish I could bring it back & construct it at or near D.H.' Crafts Study Centre, BLE/4. © Courtesy of the Bernard Leach Estate. Enhanced image.

The exhibition was repeatedly referred to in Leach's letters to Laurie,<sup>44</sup> showing the preparations were increasingly pressed. One of them tells us that the model room was assembled on site with the framework prepared in advance, and that it was completed only 30 minutes before the preview.<sup>45</sup> Leach wrote about the study he designed: 'Still it is a room, & I believe one in which there are successful combinations of Japanese architecture & materials with European usage.'<sup>46</sup> He expressed confidence in the workmanship of the project, and also stated that he would like to move it to Dartington (figure 9); however, this did not happen. After showing in Tokyo in November 1934, the model room travelled to the

same exhibition held in Osaka in April 1935, after which it was demolished. Eishiro Abe, a Shimane papermaker, wrote about the event. Abe witnessed that Leach, staring at the model room being carelessly torn down, said in tears, 'how can such a wasteful thing happen in Japan'.<sup>47</sup>

The creation of the model room in Tokyo and Osaka seems to have been a valuable experience for Leach, when we remember that he did not seem to have undertaken any architectural work in England, except for the fireplaces and tiles. The experience of designing a room may well have been a chance for him to rethink the role of utensils in the context of the modern urban life of the middle classes. Also, his commitment to building a room may have later been put to good use for building his home, 'the Cabin', in the Shinner's Bridge area of Dartington where he lived with Laurie Cookes from 1936. After the Second World War Leach had another chance to design a room. Tamesaburo Yamamoto (1893–1966) commissioned him to supervise the design of the main bar of what is now the Rihga Royal Hotel in Osaka in 1965. After the completion, the bar was named 'the Leach Bar' as a memorial to the Mingei movement.

**Drawings:** An often-forgotten aspect of Leach's stay in Japan in 1934–5 is that he left behind a number of drawings. He spent almost every spare moment drawing. This is evident in the sketches of Japanese food and the landscapes from moving trains included in his letters to Laurie. Occasionally, he would give such drawings to the Japanese in gratitude or in lieu of payment.<sup>48</sup>

During his stay, Leach practised how to use a brush and draw or paint with it on Japanese paper. Such experiences deepened his understanding of the importance of calligraphy in East Asia and broadened his own expression. He keenly discovered an affinity between East Asian calligraphy and European music as highly abstract expressions.<sup>49</sup>



Leach commissioned a Japanese maker to frame his drawings and make them into *kakemono*, hanging scrolls. To make a hanging scroll, the artist is required to trim his own paintings, as well as choose paper and fabric of various colours and patterns to harmonise with them – a process he described in a letter to Laurie.<sup>50</sup> He also collaborated with local decorators, such as a man named Maruyama of Kurashiki. Later, he wrote in his autobiography how much he enjoyed the collaboration.<sup>51</sup>

There was a lot of demand for Leach's drawings. In the two-day exhibition held in Kurashiki in February 1935, people wanted the drawings so much on the first day that he decided to spend the second day painting in the gallery.<sup>52</sup> The sale of the drawings was encouraging to Leach not only from an economic point of view but also from an artistic one. After the successful exhibition in Kurashiki, Leach confessed to Yanagi: 'I must admit that the experience of having my drawing appreciated has given me great pleasure & encouragement – that side has been starved for 14 years'.<sup>53</sup>

## LECTURES AND PUBLICATIONS

In addition to his research and production activities, Leach was also active in speaking, writing and radio appearances. For example, during his stay in Kyoto in July 1934 alone, he gave three lectures.<sup>54</sup> As it would be difficult to describe all of these engagements, let us look at four main ones.

Leach gave a speech on 23 October 1934, at 'An Evening of Craft and Art with Bernard Leach and Muneyoshi Yanagi', held by the Medical Association. This event was probably arranged by Ryuzaburo Shikiba, a medical doctor and the editor of a biography of Leach. The talk was recorded and published, as is mentioned in a letter to Laurie.<sup>55</sup> He gave a lecture in Kurashiki on the night of 14 February 1935. This was 'A Welcome Roundtable Discussion for Mr. Leach', held at the Kurashiki Asahi-machi Ni-san Kaikan Hall by a group of volunteers of the Kurashiki Institute for Labour

Studies. Among the attendees were Kiyomi Takeuchi, Tamami Mitsuhashi, Soichiro Ohara, and Sumiji Hara (1878–1968). A letter to Laurie gives us the details of this event: former Kurashiki Town Mayor Sumiji Hara gave a speech to introduce the artist, Leach then told the same story twice because of the large number of attendees, and then showed the film he had taken in Japan.<sup>56</sup> He gave a lecture at Tottori High School for Girls on 19 February 1935. The title was 'European customs in Japan and the preservation of Oriental culture'. The lecture was given in Japanese and lasted 45 minutes. A letter to Laurie is specific about the content of this talk.<sup>57</sup> Leach also appeared on a JOAK (Japan Broadcasting Corporation) radio show, probably on 30 October 1934. This appearance is also mentioned in a letter to Laurie.<sup>58</sup>

Leach gave numerous other talks, which were often accompanied by a screening of the film he had shot. It is notable that the lectures for Japanese audiences were delivered in Japanese.

## EXHIBITIONS

During his stay in Japan, Leach held several exhibitions on various scales. Some of the main ones include:

- A solo exhibition, Kyukyo-do Gallery, Tokyo, 20 to 26 October 1934.
- *Modern Japanese Folk Craft Exhibition*, Takashimaya department store, Tokyo, 16 to 23 November 1934 and Takashimaya department store, Nankai, Osaka, 23 to 28 April 1935.
- A solo exhibition, organised by the Kurashiki Cultural Association, at the Kurashiki Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 23 to 24 February 1935. 100 pots (60 made at Sakazu, 40 made at Mashiko, Kyoto, and Matsue) and 11 drawings.<sup>59</sup> The average price of the works from Sakazu was 15 yen (just under £1), and the minimum 3 yen.

- A solo exhibition, Matsue City Chamber of Commerce, 1 to 2 April 1935, 350 pots and 14 *kakemono* (hanging scrolls).<sup>60</sup>
- A combined exhibition of Bernard Leach, Shoji Hamada and Kanjiro Kawai, Takashimaya department store, Nagahori, Osaka, 23 to 28 April and Takashimaya department store, Tokyo, 12 to 15 May 1935. Exhibits included pots made in Mashiko, Tokyo, Kyoto, Matsue and Sakazu, and drawings.

Sales at these exhibitions were generally strong. The Dartington Hall Archive has a report of Leach's income and expenses for his stay in Japan.<sup>61</sup> His sales were:

Exhibitions	Total in yen
Kyukyo-do (gallery in Tokyo)	2140
Takumi (craft shop in Tokyo)	100
Kurashiki	1510
Matsue	411
Tottori	134
Kyoto	2722
Osaka	1089
Takashimaya	1870
Seoul	200
[others] Various private	650

The sum total was 10,826 yen – about £640 (£1 = 17 yen). As far as this figure is concerned, the exhibitions were all successful, although it was not sufficient to cover the expenditure of Leach's journey to Japan. But still, it made it possible for him to send some money to Laurie.

In May 1935, when Leach was about to leave Japan, Hamada summed up Leach's activities, rating highly his undiminished passion for his work:

This time Leach's stay was much busier, and I am sorry to say that we made use of him a little too much. But nonetheless, when it comes to work, Leach, enviably, absorbs himself in his work entirely, and is saved by the very work he does. He is quick to draw up a plan, even if it is a trivial one. This comes instinctively from his love of work, and the results are full of kindness and sincerity. In his works, some of the patterns were made for the first time, and some others have been repeated for 20 years. The enthusiasm with which he works does not allow him to fall prey to repetitive inertia. Perhaps Leach's attitude toward work is the closest to what the tea masters have to say about 'once-in-a-lifetime encounter'.<sup>62</sup>

As mentioned above, before arriving in Japan, Leach, with the understanding and financial assistance of Leonard and Dorothy Elmhirst, was considering closing down his pottery in St Ives and moving his base to Dartington. Leach was versatile and energetic during his stay in Japan, and his artistic activity included not only ceramics but also interior design and other types of work that had not been possible in Britain. By the time of his departure from Japan, Leach was considering moving to Japan as an option alongside Dartington.

#### LEACH'S STAY IN JAPAN FROM THE VIEWPOINT OF THE MINGEI MOVEMENT

We will now turn our attention to Leach's activities in Japan from the Japanese perspective, especially from the viewpoint of the Mingei movement. After Leach's return to England in 1920, Yanagi and other friends often had him send his works to Japan for exhibitions. However, the situation changed with the start of the Mingei movement, which is usually considered to have started



with the announcement of the *Prospectus for the Establishment of the Japan Folk Craft Museum* by Yanagi, Tomimoto, Kawai and Hamada in January 1926. These four men were friends of Leach's, so naturally the Englishman became involved in this movement.

When Leach decided to return to Japan, welcoming him became a project for the Japanese side. In 1933, Yanagi and others held a solo exhibition of Leach's work at the Kyukyo-do Gallery in Tokyo from 2 to 6 December, and held a roundtable discussion on Leach's art on this occasion.<sup>63</sup> In the discussion Yanagi made the following statement:

Leach has been doing a lot of work, but I think he can do an even better work if he comes to Japan again; it is a welcome addition to our craft world, which has become more and more prosperous, and our work can continue to grow with him. When he comes here, I would like him to work in the kilns of Hamada, Tomimoto, and Kawai. Also, I will adopt Leach's designs to various new folk crafts so as to leave his seeds in Japan.<sup>64</sup>

Welcoming Leach became a project for all those involved in the Mingei movement, and a concern for the writers and readers of the magazine *Kogei*. Yanagi commissioned Ryuzaburo Shikiba to edit a biography of the artist. The 'Miscellaneous' section at the end of *Kogei* reported Leach's movements in Japan every month.

As a result, Leach's 14-month stay in Japan seems to have advanced the Mingei movement. Let us consider the relationship between Leach and the movement in three ways: firstly, Leach's activities as seen by the movement's leaders, secondly, his contribution to the public understanding of 'mingei', and finally, the establishment of the Japan Folk Craft Museum.

#### LEACH'S ACTIVITIES AS SEEN BY THE MOVEMENT'S LEADERS

From the point of view of the leaders of the Mingei movement, Leach helped to revitalise the activity of the movement: research, exhibitions, buying and selling, advice, and publications. Like Hamada and Kawai, Leach was involved in all of these.

The Mingei movement developed in the following ways: the leaders of the movement researched historic artefacts made in various parts of Japan, and contributed an article to *Kogei* to report their findings. They also 'discovered' artefacts that were still being made and, at times, advised on their production. Both historic and contemporary folk crafts were collected and sent to urban areas to be exhibited in department stores and other places. Between research activities and exhibitions, the members met for roundtable discussions, where they not only exchanged information but also discussed such issues as collection, production and exhibition of folk craft objects. At times, they summarised surveys and exhibitions, and discussed the future course of the movement. The series of research, reports, roundtable discussions and exhibitions was publicised in *Kogei*.

At the centre of the movement were *kojin sakka* (individual artist-craftsmen) such as Hamada and Kawai. They held solo exhibitions, provided content for *Kogei*, educated consumers through their writings and lectures, and provided technical guidance and advice in the production areas where they conducted research. Their works were bought and sold in art galleries and department store exhibitions, and were collected by collectors. The fact that 'proper' artists like Hamada and Kawai respected 'folk craft' gave credence to the claim of 'mingei' formulated by Yanagi. Looking at the relationships between *Kogei* magazine, exhibitions, consumers and collectors, local makers, and distribution agents, individual artists played a key role in connecting them all.

Like Hamada and Kawai, Leach was an exemplary, or ideal, individual artist. He participated in several of the surveys of folk crafts, and

also took part in roundtable discussions. As an artist, he made works at around ten kilns in six prefectures, giving advice not only to local craftsmen but also to those involved in the education, production and distribution of crafts. His exhibitions were held in art galleries and department stores in urban areas, and the advertising for them appeared in *Kogei*. He was involved in all the activities related to the movement.

For example, the research trip to Chugoku and Kyushu regions took place in late August 1934. The research was reported in issues 45–7 of *Kogei*. In the midst of this research, a roundtable discussion was held in Kagoshima prefecture on 20 August. Some of the things they collected on this trip were displayed at the *Contemporary Japanese Folk Craft Exhibition* held at the Takashimaya department store in Tokyo from 16 to 23 November. Issue 47 of *Kogei*, published in November 1934, was a special issue about this exhibition.

We can see that there was an organic connection between the research and collecting of 'folk craft' in rural areas of Japan, the members' contributions of articles to *Kogei* magazine, their roundtable discussions, and the holding of an exhibition in conjunction with the publication of the magazine. It is true that these kinds of activities had taken place before Leach's visit to Japan in 1934, but after his arrival their scale and scope was expanded, and their happening in quick succession may also have added momentum to the movement.

The leaders of the movement, in an attempt to set up collaborations between *kojin sakka* (individual craftsmen, or artist-craftsmen)<sup>65</sup> and local potters, sent Leach to Futagawa as an experiment. It is not clear if it was successful, as the pottery closed in the Second World War, but the collaboration between *kojin sakka* [an artist-craftsman] and unknown craftsmen [artisans] remained a key issue for Yanagi and the movement. Yanagi took up this challenge again in 1953 and 1954, and tried to send Leach to a local kiln once again: this time to Shussai Pottery in Shimane prefecture, which was formed soon after the war by local young men with no experience of potting. Yanagi

thought his plan meaningful not only for the potters there but also for Leach, and tried to persuade him to settle in the rural village of Shussai, but he rejected this suggestion.<sup>66</sup>

Seen in this way, Leach's collaboration with the Mingei group seems to have benefitted the Japanese movement in no small way. Leach organically connected such activities as collection, discussion and exhibition and, as a result, he provided a lot of content for their magazine – as did Yanagi, Hamada and Kawai. Taking part in these activities, Leach learned about the concept of *mingei*, while at the same time participating in the 'discovery' or 'invention' of 'folk craft', and his comments became part of the *mingei* discourse.

#### LEACH'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE PUBLIC UNDERSTANDING OF THE MINGEI MOVEMENT

Leach's activities as an artist may also have helped to popularise the Mingei movement, as well as the word *mingei* in other ways. Leach's exhibitions, lectures, and technical instruction at various locations were naturally reported not only in *Kogei* magazine but also in the press. A lot of attention was paid to his work in many of the places he visited.

Leach's activity in local production areas contributed to the development of the Mingei movement in the regions. To consider Leach's impact in rural areas, we need to take the Showa Depression, which started in 1929, into consideration. As part of their economic recovery, some production areas were embracing the arguments of the Folk Craft movement in order to foster local industry. The movement's assertion that each local handmade craft had its own unique value was a convenient one for local politicians and businessmen in these areas.<sup>67</sup> As part of their craft revitalisation strategy, it was thought that welcoming Leach and supporting his production activities would help promote the regions, both in terms of topicality, and in terms of aesthetic and technical leverage.



Leach's activities in various parts of Japan seem to have encouraged connections between local government, local business groups and the members of the local Mingei associations. The leaders of the Mingei movement had already developed connections with some of these people in many parts of Japan. However, when the Japan Folk Craft Association was established in June 1934, the reality was only a loosely connected set of small groups scattered around the country, and their official magazine *Kogei* had 800 subscribers at most, the majority of whom were not very active in the movement. As far as the examples of Tottori, Matsue and Kurashiki are concerned, however, there is no doubt that Leach's stays in these places rallied the local members of the movement, however small their numbers, and drew public attention to them.

Leach's activities also benefitted the Mingei movement in urban areas. His statements in the media and lectures contributed to popularising the concept of Mingei, and his exhibitions at galleries and department stores seem to have opened up a new market for folk crafts. Of course, Leach's work could not be folk craft, but exhibitions of Mingei items were often held at the same time as his exhibitions. As we have seen above, from 23 to 28 April 1935, a combined exhibition of the work of Leach, Hamada and Kawai was held at Takashimaya department store, Nagahori, Osaka; and on the same date, another exhibition, *Contemporary Japanese Folk Craft* was held at another Takashimaya store in Osaka (Nankai). In other words, Leach, Hamada and Kawai pioneered the craft market with their exhibitions in urban areas which also encouraged the sales of folk craft. As a result, folk craft became something to be distributed nationwide and traded in urban department stores rather than solely on the local market.

Leach's activities seem to have contributed to enlightening the public, and revitalising the local networks of people and the market for the Mingei movement.

## ESTABLISHMENT OF THE JAPAN FOLK CRAFT MUSEUM

The Japan Folk Craft Museum was established in October 1936 as a nexus between collections of folk craft items, networks of knowledge, information, human resources, and money related to folk craft activities. It was made possible by financial support from Magozaburo Ohara.

It is said that one of the impetuses for Ohara in making this donation was a speech that Leach gave on 24 February 1935, at a party Ohara held at his residence, Yurinso, after his exhibition in Kurashiki. According to the biography of Ohara, Leach delivered a speech on this occasion about the importance of Japanese folk crafts; he claimed that they should be known around the world, and that the idea and works of *mingei* were of importance not only for individual, self-reliant artists but also for craftsmen. In light of this, he concluded that the establishment of the Japan Folk Craft Museum, as envisioned by Yanagi, was absolutely necessary. Ohara sympathised with this opinion and promised to provide money for the construction of the museum.<sup>68</sup>

In fact, on 12 May 1935, Ohara formally declared a donation for the Japan Folk Craft Museum. Ohara, with Kiyomi Takeuchi, went all the way to Tokyo to attend Leach's solo exhibition at the Takashimaya department store (12 to 15 May), and also visited Yanagi's house in Komaba, to which he had moved from Koishikawa in January. When Ohara announced his donation, Bernard Leach, Shoji Hamada, Tamesaburo Yamamoto and Sozan Iseki (1866-1939) were also present.

There is room for discussion about Leach's role in Ohara's decision to donate the money. It would be incorrect to state that Leach's speech was the deciding factor as, even before Leach's visit to Kurashiki, the cultural figures of the town had developed a trusting relationship with Yanagi, Hamada, Kawai and others involved in the Mingei movement. However, it is possible that the circumstances of

Leach's speech and his departure from Japan may have indirectly prompted Ohara's final decision.

As we have seen, Leach's visit to Japan in 1934-5 was an inspiration to the regions, and encouraged Folk Craft Association members to unite. It was in June 1934, shortly after Leach's arrival in Japan, that the Japan Folk Craft Association was founded – with Yanagi as its president – and *Kogei* became its official magazine. Leach's various activities as an artist gave life to the Mingei movement, which unexpectedly resulted in an endowment from Ohara. Thanks to this donation, the Japan Folk Craft Museum was established in October 1936 – ten years after the official start of the movement. As a result, it can be said that the Japanese side made the most of Leach's visit to Japan.

Leach's relationship with the Folk Craft movement as well as with kilns across Japan was not limited to the 1930s, but continued after the war. His stay in Japan from 1934 to 1935 laid the foundation for his post-war activities, which led to the further expansion of the Mingei movement.

### THE MINGEI MOVEMENT FROM LEACH'S VIEWPOINT

Let us now turn to how Leach perceived his own activities in Japan, especially those related to the Folk Craft movement. We will first look at the situation with regard to his overall stay in Japan, then we will examine Leach's role as a teacher or leader of the craftspeople, and finally consider Leach's attitude to the Mingei movement.

#### TREATMENT

During his stay in Japan in 1934-5, Leach was treated well throughout the country and often wrote about this to Laurie. The hospitality extended to all aspects of his life in Japan. Thanks to the efforts of his friends and collaborators, Leach did not experience

any major difficulties in getting around, staying and eating, as is testified by the following:

At Kurashiki I have been treated as a 'To no Samma' – a lord. Sometimes it is overwhelming – every detail of trains & motor cars and accommodation & food, to the number of seconds I like my egg boiled for breakfast is passed on ahead – the brand of coffee – the hot milk – who is to meet me or travel with me – those to be fended off – everywhere I go. It is amazing! It isn't that I get a conducted tour without freedom, or that I am put on an inaccessible pedestal, far from it. I am living intimately in their lives, & I have only to express the slightest desire & the way is made easy without apparent effort & I am accompanied rather than conducted.<sup>69</sup>

Here Leach writes that Japanese support for him was passed on from one person to the next, smoothly yet unobtrusively. Each place he stayed had a caretaker: Yanagi in Tokyo, Hamada in Mashiko, Kawai in Kyoto, Ota in Matsue, Yoshida in Tottori, and Takeuchi in Kurashiki. We can add here Ryuzaburo Shikiba in Shizuoka and the Mizutani family in Nagoya. These members of the Mingei movement facilitated Leach's stay and activities.

The care for Leach was meticulous. While staying at Kawai's in Kyoto, Leach wrote:

Oh how the women folk of Japan look after one! – they pack, & unpack, & clean, & mend, & cook, & forethink one's wants – even my hat was cleaned & pressed for my departure – I can't pay for taxis & only with difficulty can I leave tips with the maids. But one can give presents & I'm learning the art a little. Am I getting lazy & spoiled my dear? I am trying not to be – I certainly work, but I have enjoyed leaning back after work. And how the Japanese know the pleasure of doing things for others.<sup>70</sup>

Leach is probably referring to Kawai's wife here. He gave a similar description about Kiyomi Takeuchi's wife in another letter to Laurie.<sup>71</sup> This kind of detailed reception was more than Leach expected.



These favourable circumstances also extended to the workshops. At the pottery-making sites, the Japanese craftsmen and artisans respected Leach's wishes. Moreover, production and labour costs in Japan were cheaper than in Britain. For example, in Matsue, while he was using the wheel at Funaki's workshop, he commissioned another pottery to make shapes using a mould. It only cost three (old) pence per item to outsource the firing.<sup>72</sup>

In this way, Leach was able to do what he wanted better than in England, and he found his work rewarding. He felt that it was not a mistake for him to have come to Japan:

I have received such a welcome & such support & encouragement & kindness since I reached these shores that I feel absolutely bound inwardly & outwardly to do my uttermost to meet the occasion. I did not foresee that it was going to be like this, but the feeling which made me come in spite of everything – the feeling that there was work for me to do – which I could and ought to do & which perhaps no one else can or would do – is justified . . . This people want my friendship, my criticism, my work & they give me all the support & opportunity I could desire. On my side I know that in some measure I can give those things & I am doing so daily.<sup>73</sup>

Since this is a passage in a private letter to Laurie, we can regard it as reflecting Leach's true feelings.

As he immersed himself in production under these favourable circumstances, he felt a sense of fulfilment. At Kawai's, making pottery by day and drawing by night, he felt that 'in this country through me life has flowed out into work which won't die'.<sup>74</sup> He was generally well provided for in terms of transport, accommodation and pottery production during his time in Japan, and there is no doubt that he was able to devote himself to his artistic activities.

## LEACH'S VIEW OF THE MINGEI MOVEMENT: AS A SENSEI

One thing that baffled Leach during his stay in Japan was that everywhere he went, he was treated as an expert or authority on art and craft, and he was asked to criticise not only artistic matters but also Japanese society and culture in general. His essay, 'Impression of Japan after Fourteen Years' is an example of the kind of critical focus that resulted. In one letter Leach wrote he played a role of 'the master' with a little hesitation:

Pain is teaching me to be kinder to others my dear & here amongst these young potters & craftsmen where indeed I am 'the master' I give & give & I am given to. Strange insight comes at moments & I find I can offer the solutions to personal or artistic problems, & so these men come & work morning to night with and for me utterly absorbed.<sup>75</sup>

While Leach was somewhat bemused, he also calmly analysed the role he was expected to play:

I have given three talks in Japanese in Kyoto – one to the Rotary club & another to the leading industrialists & the other at a school. They want me to criticise the present conditions of Japanese art, craft, architecture, clothing etc. and because they do want this & accept my criticisms as a foreigner who they believe understands Japan & just because they do not want gratuitous criticism from foreign countries & people I just feel I have my work clear cut. It is flattering of course, & of course I enjoy that too, but there is a far deeper call & I hear it day by day.<sup>76</sup>

Based on this self-reflection, Leach acted as a *sensei*, a teacher or master.

And as to the 'Sensei' business, besides being flattering & pleasant up to a point, I have no difficulty in accepting the role when it comes to craft itself, simply because, excepting two or three – Yanagi – Hamada – Tomi – & to some extent Kawai, who

are also 'Sensei', I feel able to teach & to explain & show the way confidently to this younger generation & to the half-attached world of connoisseurs & art-lovers who are mostly very bogged by the complexities of industrial life & art. Moreover when I don't know I say I don't know.<sup>77</sup>

Yanagi, the leader, and the *kojin sakka* (individual artist-craftsmen) gave direct advice to those involved in folk crafts in various prefectures, and had local products shipped to department stores and craft shops in urban areas, making the Mingei movement powerful and persuasive. Leach took it upon himself to be part of such a movement.

After returning to his home country in 1935, Leach made efforts to introduce contemporary Japanese crafts to Britain. One of these was the *Exhibition of Contemporary Japanese Crafts* held at the Little Gallery in London from 5 to 23 May 1936. The exhibition included not only the work of individual artists such as Hamada and Kawai, but also the works of craftsmen such as Funaki, whom Leach had advised. He wrote to Yanagi to give feedback on its sales and reputation in London.<sup>78</sup>

Under the favourable circumstances Leach experienced in Japan, he did not hesitate to take the role of *sensei*. It seemed natural for him to take the same role in the pottery-making process in local kilns as Yanagi, Hamada, Tomimoto and Kawai.

#### LEACH'S VIEW OF THE MINGEI MOVEMENT: AS THE 'FATHER'?

While Leach was an active participant in the Folk Craft movement, he was still a foreigner. In other words, he was an active player of the movement on the one hand, but he was also a guest on the other. His view of the movement and the way he talks about it sometimes remind us of an anthropologist's observation.

Whether as a player or an observer, or something more ambiguous, there is no doubt that Leach viewed the Mingei movement positively. In many ways he regarded this movement as an extension of his own activities in the late 1910s. In the summer of 1934, while on the research trip to the Chugoku and Kyushu regions with Yanagi and others, he wrote a noteworthy passage to Laurie:

I am looked upon as the father of the modern craft movement in Japan & they are doing their best to make an 'old master' of me in my life time. But this is in accordance with the traditions of the East & I understand, & beyond the pleasure & flattery I see that I have a great work to do here & I must try. Such vision of faith as I have had out of all my years in Japan and China has taken root – time is ripe and the bird on the wing. Life is very strange, I don't feel like a leader, but I have inspired this thing – the wind blew through my window despite the cobwebs. Don't imagine I'm made a personal God of – I'm teased & chaffed continuously for example on this journey – even a little horseplay – but behind that they believe in what I believe in & in part their belief has grown from mine in a natural but independent way & they know & I know that there is interchange & interpenetration between E[ast]. and W[est]. to be achieved in art & that there is nobody to do a certain part of that work except me. It is a very strange tale if I say it myself & I'm not yet used to the fact.<sup>79</sup>

Leach noticed that those involved in the Mingei movement regarded him as 'the father' of their movement, although it is not clear if he accepted this role himself. But still he recounts that 'the modern craft movement' (i.e. the Mingei movement) sprouted from his activities in the mid- and late-1910s 'in a natural but independent way', and that the core members of the Mingei movement and he shared the same views and values.

To understand this, it is useful to refer to Leach's autobiography. Remembering the first year in St Ives, Cornwall, he writes about his endeavour to establish a pottery:



In 1920 Hamada was 25 and I was 33 ... For three years we shared a good partnership. The background of thought which we brought to the undertaking was that of the artist turned craftsman; or at least of the educated and thinking man perceiving the simple beauty of material, workmanship and general approach to work which had preceded the Industrial Revolution. His desire, as was mine, was to recapture some of the lost values through the use of his own hands. So it was with William Morris, Gimson and Edward Johnston. East or West, this is the counter-revolution, the refusal of the slavery of the machine. The Industrial Movement started here in England. The return wave of artist-craftsmanship from Japan had a character of its own – it had gained richness, a reflection of other and different philosophies and culture.<sup>80</sup>

This illustrates the focus of Leach's activities in Britain. The references to William Morris (1834–96), Ernest Gimson (1864–1919) and Edward Johnston (1872–1944) indicate that Leach regarded his activities as being of the same nature as those of the Arts and Craft movement.<sup>81</sup> 'The return wave of artist-craftsmanship from Japan' refers to Hamada and Tomimoto, who initiated the Mingei movement later. This passage tells us that the values Leach and the leaders of the Mingei movement shared were those that criticised the adverse effect of the Industrial Revolution and that they aimed 'to recapture some of the lost values through the use of' their own hands; theirs was not an attempt of 'anti-' but of 'counter-' movement. This is the reason why he, as an artist, dared to engage in handmade pottery in a studio, and his trials later had a major influence on British studio pottery.

Returning to the letter to Laurie, Leach seems to imply that the two activities – Leach's attempt at the Studio Pottery movement in Britain and the Mingei movement in Japan – arose from the same source: Leach's activities in Abiko in the latter half of the 1910s. This was a period when Leach, having followed Yanagi's advice, returned from China to Japan and engaged in pottery making at Yanagi's property. The leaders of the Mingei movement and Leach

shared the same understanding that there was 'interchange and interpenetration' between them. It implies that Leach saw this exchange as one of the practices of his idea of 'the marriage of East and West', and found it significant enough to devote his life to it.

In another letter to Laurie, Leach recounts again that the Mingei movement sprang from his own activity in the 1910s. When he gave a lecture in Kurashiki on 14 February 1935, Sumiji Hara, a former mayor of the town, gave an introduction and welcome speech. According to Leach, Hara wanted 'to hear my views on modern craft, on pottery especially, & on the problems facing the modern craftsman, & my criticism of the contemporary Japanese movement which I had initiated 20 odd years ago, & which has grown up under Yanagi's wing'.<sup>82</sup>

Here Leach admits that it was he who initiated the Mingei movement in the mid-1910s.

The importance of the period of the late-1910s as the starting point seems to be shared by Muneyoshi Yanagi. In 1958, Yanagi published a book entitled *Mingei Yonju-nen* (Forty Years of Mingei). Working backwards, this places the start of the Folk Craft movement around 1918, and this is the same as Leach's understanding.

It is noteworthy that both Leach and his Folk Craft coterie shared the understanding that their movements began in the late-1910s, and that they were both pursuing the same values, which can be summed up in the phrase 'counter-Industrial Revolution'.

#### ASSESSMENT OF LEACH'S STAY IN JAPAN FROM 1934 TO 1935

Finally, let us consider the significance of Leach's stay in Japan. So far, we have discussed it primarily from the Japanese perspective, analysing the personal letters Leach wrote to Laurie Cookes. However, to consider the significance of the stay fully, it is also necessary to analyse it from the British perspective – but that is beyond the scope

of this chapter. The following discussion is therefore incomplete, but we would like to consider the characteristics and implications of Leach's stay in Japan as far as we can.

There are four main points to note: first, Leach's stay was set against the backdrop of the Folk Craft movement; second, Leach's confidence was restored through discussions with his Japanese counterparts; third, the stay meant a period for him to reflect on his career after he dedicated his life to pottery; and lastly, Leach's view of the Mingei movement was formed in this period, and was retained after the war.

Leach's stay in Japan was conditioned by the Folk Craft movement: there was a close relationship between Leach and the members of the Mingei movement. The cooperation of those in the movement certainly made Leach's stay and work in Japan easier. Their support also made it possible for him to do things that would not have been possible in England, such as designing small objects and the model room, in addition to his pottery. However, since the Mingei movement was originally started by people with similar values to Leach, in a sense he was probably offered only what he wanted to see. For example, as far as pottery was concerned, he mostly visited traditional kilns where the work was mainly done by hand. It is probable that he also visited large industrial ceramic factories during his stay in Nagoya in February 1935, but the time spent on such contacts was limited, and there is no indication that such ceramic industry had much effect on him. There is no denying that the Mingei movement offered an ideal environment like an echo-chamber, in which Leach, who had found value in hand-making, could reaffirm its significance.

One of the outcomes of Leach's stay in Japan was that he shared discussions with his Japanese counterparts about the nature of an artist-craftsman and reaffirmed his personal mission. Leach and the members of the Mingei movement discussed their social role in terms of *kojin sakka* – individual craftsmen or artist-craftsmen. And Leach, observing Hamada and Kawai, noticed that *kojin sakka*

could play a central role in promoting their craft movement. On leaving Japan in May 1935 he wrote about the qualities needed for an individual craftsman:

It seems to me that this expression [*kojin sakka*] is used freely of craftsmen in Japan who are not creative, and I wonder if that is a clear and right use of words. 'Individual craftsman' seems to me to imply a creative craftsman, and a creative craftsman in Japan to-day is almost bound to combine in his work East and West.

To do that he must have sensed two cultures to their roots, and he must have unusual perception to know how to fuse such opposites. Knowing how difficult this is to achieve, 'Kojin Sakka' is not an expression I want to use often.<sup>83</sup>

Here we can see his philosophy of 'the marriage of East and West', as well as his self-confidence as an 'individual craftsman'. 'The marriage of East and West' is a leitmotif of his life. Engagement in pottery-making was, for him, a way to put that idea into practice, and this was a motive for him to dedicate his life to pottery in 1917 and establish a pottery in England in 1920. In reality, however, it was difficult for him to implement this idea by way of making ceramics; contrary to his enthusiasm, his pottery was on the verge of bankruptcy several times, which meant he struggled to find a place and role in British society. As Cooper points out in his biography of Leach, he confronted many difficulties in the early 1930s and tended to lose his confidence, and was considering pulling out of St Ives. However, his activities in Japan and discussions with Yanagi and others convinced Leach that his philosophy of cultural blending and its practice in society were of significance. In addition, he also found aspects of the practice of 'the marriage of East and West' in the contact and links between the Japanese Folk Craft movement and the British Studio Pottery movement. In other words, Leach found a basis for his self-affirmation in the discussion of *kojin sakka* and his contacts with the Mingei movement.

Leach's time in Japan seems to have been a period of reflection on his activities in England. At that time, correspondence between England and Japan took about two or three weeks each way, and it is possible to sense Leach's frustration at this slowness. At the same time, however, he was able to reflect on his activities over the past 20 years or so in this isolated time and place. In particular, he considered how the nature of his pottery activities, which began in Abiko in the late-1910s, had changed over a period of 14 years or so.

To give an example of this reflection, the model room project for Takashimaya would have enabled Leach to reflect on the role of ceramics in the modern world. In the project, Leach designed a whole range of furniture and fixtures for the modern urban middle classes. After his return to Britain, this experience may have led him to start the production of tableware suited to modern life at the Dartington Pottery, as well as to begin the production of standard ware at the Leach Pottery after 1937. These attempts were intended to produce more items than an individual craftsman but fewer than a factory, and meant deviating from the studio pottery philosophy that he initially aimed for in 1920.

On the other hand, Leach's reaffirmation of his mission as an artist-craftsman in Japan may have also influenced his work on his return to England. Specifically, in running the Dartington Pottery he sought for 'an artistic scientific' pottery,<sup>84</sup> but this policy created a rift with Dr W.K. Slater, the manager of the Dartington Hall Trust, who attempted to impose limits on such requirements in terms of profitability.<sup>85</sup> Because of the good production environment he experienced in Japan, Leach seems to have become less resilient to this kind of external pressure. These frictions may have revived Leach's desire for pottery-making in the studio, which he had originally set out to do at St Ives, and may have encouraged him to write *A Potter's Book* during his time at Dartington,<sup>86</sup> in which he idealised the concept of the studio that he had had to abandon.<sup>87</sup>

Finally, Leach's seemingly distant, and yet basically positive attitude toward the Mingei movement was formed in the period of 1934 to

1935, and lasted until after the war. As we have seen in the previous section, Leach implicitly admitted that he was the father of the Folk Craft movement. This perception led to the following text, written after Muneyoshi Yanagi's death in 1961:

Even as Yanagi's health deteriorated, he exerted his final energies to complete the magnificent work that he had set out to accomplish. From both a Japanese or worldwide perspective this is truly great work. In Japan, he was responsible for founding a movement. This movement can in actual fact be said to be the definitive conclusion to a string of movements that sprang up in agreement to the 'counter-Industrial Revolution' movement started by William Morris a hundred years ago. We now live in an age of science and mechanization but the purpose of this movement in Britain as well as Japan, springs from the very depth of the human heart, and aims to preserve and encourage authentic and beautiful things made into works of art by human hands and then to hand these objects on to future generations ... The father of the movement I have just described is Dr. Yanagi and, in a certain sense, I am the grandfather of the movement, and perhaps you won't object to me calling myself this. However, the movement that sprang up in Japan was not an exact replica of the movement founded in Britain. Yanagi was able to add something, a something he had cultivated over many years of experience, to our British movement. Moreover, in the process of adding new things to the movement whilst cutting out other undesirable things, he was able to transform an aesthetic of the beautiful which had as its origin a Christian-centric perspective that has had the upper hand in terms of world-view until now, into a Buddhist one. Throughout his life, Yanagi, who dedicated himself to creating a 'kingdom of beauty' of the highest-order, expressed part of the spirit of the Orient through his work. For his achievements, he will always be remembered.<sup>88</sup>

Leach's view of the Mingei movement basically remained unchanged from 1935. For him, the movement was a continuation of the spirit



of the Arts and Craft movement founded in his native country, but it was by no means an inferior imitation. Leach and Yanagi shared the same fundamental awareness that, in terms of 'the Industrial Revolution' or 'modernisation', Britain and Japan were confronting identical problems. One response to this problem in the 20th century was the Mingei movement in Japan, and another was the Studio Pottery movement in Britain which Leach engaged in. The difference from 1935 is that Leach distanced himself from the Mingei movement, renaming himself the 'grandfather' of the movement. As of 1934–5, he did not actively acknowledge himself as the father, or the Folk Craft movement as his child. This cautious attitude appears to have become stronger by 1961. Although the reasons for this need further consideration, it is possible to say that Leach's view of the Mingei did not waver from 1935 to 1961.

## CONCLUSION

In his stay in Japan from April 1934 to June 1935, Leach was able to see Tokyo recovered from the devastation of the Great Kanto earthquake, which allowed him to reflect on his previous activities in Britain and to consider his plans for the future.

During his stay Leach not only made ceramic works at about ten kilns in Tokyo, Mashiko, Kyoto, Matsue, Kurashiki, and Futagawa, but also designed paintings, furniture, various crafts, and a model room. It is astounding that he accomplished such a wide range of activities in such a short period of time, something he had never done in Britain. It is true that he felt a mental rift with Laurie Cookes and others, but it is also clear that he developed an extremely productive career during this period.

The time in Japan enabled Leach to rethink the role of the *kojin sakka* and the issue of cultural exchange, and to reaffirm the significance of his idea of 'the marriage between East and West'. It also seems his commitment to non-ceramic works enabled him to reconsider the role of modern ceramics in the context of modern urban life.

From the Japanese side, Leach's visit revitalised the Folk Craft movement. It was during Leach's stay in Japan that the Japan Folk Craft Association was founded (June 1934). The donation by Magozaburo Ohara, which made possible the establishment of the Japan Folk Craft Museum, was also made during Leach's stay (12 May 1935). Of course, there is room for argument about the significance of his role in these events, but it is possible to say that the Japanese made the most of Leach, and their efforts were rewarded.

As the end of his stay approached, Leach wrote in an article for *Kogei* magazine:

On May 20th, I leave Tokyo on my return journey to England. I have been in Japan just over a year and it has been full to the brim. I cannot express my feelings at going, there are so many memories of people and places, and the exchange of talk, and of those homes and workshops I have lived in so intimately, and where I have found such friendship – memories I have can never lose, and memories I can never really share with my own people. What can I say? 'Thank you from the bottom of my heart – it has been life – the life that I believe in – the meeting of East and West. – Good-bye'.<sup>89</sup>

This chapter has examined the significance of Leach's stay in Japan from 1934 to 1935, mainly in the context of the Japanese Folk Craft movement, as well as exploring Leach's views of the movement. Regrettably, the details of Leach's own deepening of ideas and the changes in the style of his ceramics have not been addressed. In particular, his discussion with the Dartington Hall Trust should be the subject of further study. Furthermore, re-evaluation of Leach's stay in Japan in 1934–5 from the British viewpoint is now necessary to achieve a balanced understanding of him and the history of Studio Pottery.

## ENDNOTES

- 1 Cooper, E. (2003) *Bernard Leach: Life and Work*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, chap. 8, pp.175-6, 181ff.
- 2 Leach, B. (1978) *Beyond East and West: Memoirs, Portraits and Essays*, London and Boston: Faber.
- 3 Shikiba, R. (1934) *Banado Richi* [Bernard Leach], Tokyo: Kensetsu-sha.
- 4 Leach, B. (1935) A Letter to England, *Kogei*, May, pp.18–41, p.40.
- 5 For examples see de Waal, E. (1998) *Bernard Leach*, London: Tate Gallery Publishing, and Brandt, K. (2007) *Kingdom of Beauty: Mingei and the Politics of Folk Art in Imperial Japan*, Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press.
- 6 The Leach features of the magazine *Kogei* are: 29 (April 1933), 46 (October 1934), 53 (May 1935). Those of the magazine *Mingei* are: 107 (November 1961), 140 (August 1964), 179 (November 1967), 197 (May 1969), 320 (August 1979), 321 (September 1979) among others.
- 7 It is not clear if Cooper saw the actual letters, but according to the notes to chapter 8 of *Bernard Leach: Life and Work*, he certainly read at least a summary of the letter related to Laurie Cookes, which had been stored in the Crafts Study Centre probably since its foundation, in the following catalogue: Alyn Giles Jones (1984–5) *Catalogue of the Papers and Books of Bernard Leach*, 4 vols, Bath: Crafts Study Centre.
- 8 For example, Leach's letter to Laurie on 16 February 1935 (pp.3–13) served as a draft of the circular letter written on the following day; this circular letter was published in the magazine *Kogei* (no.53, under the title, 'A Letter to England', pp.18–26); and a part of this article was revised and included in Leach's autobiography *Beyond East and West* (pp.193–7). As another example, two pieces of enclosure in a letter to Laurie on 19 September 1934 are manuscripts of an article, 'Impressions of Japan after Fourteen Years', which first appeared in two brother newspapers, *Osaka Mainichi* and *Tokyo Nichi-nichi* on 1 January 1935, and later it was included in the magazine *Kogei* (no.53, pp.9–17).
- 9 'Two days show & sale of old country wares in my sitting room in aid of *Kogei* (craft magazine). Sold ¥400 & met lots of friends.' Leach, Letter to Laurie Cookes, 4 June 1934, p.6.
- 10 Leach, Letter to Laurie Cookes, 4 July 1934.
- 11 Leach, Letter to Laurie Cookes, 30 July 1934, p.1; 15 January [22 January] 1935. It was not uncommon for Leach to write a single letter over the course of a few days or weeks. The date in the bracket indicates the date when the quotation was actually written.
- 12 Impressions of Japan after 14 Years, op. cit.
- 13 Leach, Letter to Laurie Cookes, 7 May 1934, p.2.
- 14 Leach, Letter to Laurie Cookes, 18 May 1934, p.2.
- 15 Leach, Letter to Laurie Cookes, 29 August 1934, p.6. An example of Gate House decoration (incense container) can be found at the bottom of this page (see figure 5).
- 16 Leach, Letter to Laurie Cookes, 4 July 1934, p.1.
- 17 Leach, Letter to Laurie Cookes, 7 June 1934, [9 June], p.2. Also *Beyond East and West*, pp.175–6.
- 18 Leach, Letter to Laurie Cookes, 19 September [22 September] 1934, p.3.
- 19 Leach, Letter to Laurie, Cookes, 30 July 1934, p.1.
- 20 Leach, Letter to Laurie Cookes, 2 November 1934 [11 November], p.5; 16 March 1935 [20, 21 March], p.2. *Beyond East and West*, p.183.
- 21 Leach, Letter to Laurie Cookes, 30 July 1934, p.2.
- 22 Leach, B. (1935) Funaki kun no Hito to Sakuhin [The life and works of Mr. Funaki], Konoki T. [Mizutani, R.] (trans.), *Kogei*, April, pp.12–22.
- 23 Leach, Letter to Laurie Cookes, 9 August 1934, p.4.
- 24 Ota, N. (1935) Shimane Tsushin [News from Shimane], *Kogei*, April, pp.62–3, p.62.
- 25 Leach, Letter to Laurie Cookes, 16 March 1935 [26 March], p.4.
- 26 Leach, Letter to Laurie Cookes, 16 February 1935, [20 February], p.13. Shoya Yoshida, Zatsuroku: Tottori Tsushin'[Miscellaneous: News from Tottori], *Kogei*, June 1935, pp.39–45, pp.42–5.
- 27 Shikiba, op. cit., pl.45, p.720–1.
- 28 Leach, Letter to Laurie Cookes, 16 February 1935 [17 February], pp.3ff.
- 29 Leach, Letter to Muneyoshi Yanagi, 5 March 1935 (Japan Folk Crafts Museum Archive). See Japan Folk Crafts Museum, ed., (2014) *Soetsu Yanagi and Bernard Leach: Letters from 1912 to 1959*, supervised by Okamura M. and Suzuki S., Tokyo: Japan Folk Crafts Museum, pl.6.
- 30 Leach, B., Yanagi, M., Kawai, K. et al. (1934) Zadankai: Kogei to Seikatsu [A Roundtable Discussion: Crafts and Life], *Kogei*, December, pp.48–63, pp.62–3.
- 31 Ferguson, J.S. (1953) Bernard Leach Returns to Orient: Pottery-Making Party in Japan Aroused his Interest, *Nippon Times*, 22 February, p.4.
- 32 Leach, Letter to Laurie Cookes, 10 December 1934, p.1; 13 December 1934, p.1; 15 January 1935 [21 January], p.5.
- 33 Mizutani, R. (1934) Chugoku Kyushu no Tabi [Travels to Chugoku and Kyushu Regions], *Kogei*, November, pp.96–110.
- 34 The building of the Commerce and Industry Hall in Hiroshima, which was bombed by US military on 6 August 1945, is known today as the Atomic Bomb Dome.
- 35 Mizutani, op. cit., p.98. This view is repeated in Leach's later writings. See Leach, B. (1935) Thoughts on Japanese Crafts, *Kogei*, May, pp.1–8.
- 36 Leach, Letter to Laurie Cookes, 9 August 1934 [13 August], p.3.
- 37 Leach, Letter to Laurie Cookes, 1 April 1935 [2 April], p.2.
- 38 Leach, Letter to Laurie Cookes, 16 March 1935, p.3.
- 39 Leach, A Letter to England, p.19. The cited part of this article is based on his letter to Laurie Cookes written on 16 February 1935, p.5.
- 40 Leach, A Letter to England, p.34.
- 41 Leach, Letter to Laurie Cookes, 16 February 1935 [20 February], p.13.
- 42 Leach, Letter to Laurie Cookes, 1 April 1935 [5 April], p.5.

- 43 Leach, Letter to Laurie Cookes, 18 May 1934, p.2.
- 44 Leach, Letter to Laurie Cookes, 4 July 1934, p.2; 30 July 1934, p.1; 16 August 1934, p.2; 5 September 1934, p.3; and 2 November 1934 [11 November], p.5.
- 45 Leach, Letter to Laurie Cookes, 20 November 1934, p.2.
- 46 Leach, Letter to Laurie Cookes, 20 November 1934, p.3.
- 47 Hamagawa, H., ed. (1978) *Washi ni Ikiru: Aebe Eishiro* [Living on Washi Paper, Eishiro Abe], Tokyo: Satsuki Shobo, pp.49–50.
- 48 There were times when Leach would buy flowers or confectionery at the stores and neither the florist nor the confectioner would accept payment. In such cases, Leach would give a pot or drawing instead. See Leach, Letter to Laurie Cookes, 16 February 1935 [20 February], p.14.
- 49 Leach, Letter to Laurie Cookes, 16 February 1935, pp.6–7.
- 50 *ibid.*
- 51 Leach, *Beyond East and West*, p.186.
- 52 Leach, A Letter to England, p.28.
- 53 Leach, Letter to Muneyoshi Yanagi, 26 February 1935 (Japan Folk Craft Museum Archive). See Japan Folk Crafts Museum (ed.), *op. cit.*, p.168.
- 54 Leach, Letter to Laurie Cookes, 30 July 1934, p.2.
- 55 Leach, Letter to Laurie Cookes, 16 February 1935, p.10. Banado Richi to Yanagi Muneyoshi Ryoshi-ni Kogei Bijutsu wo ki ku Yube [An Evening of Craft and Art with Bernard Leach and Muneyoshi Yanagi], *Nihon Iji Shinpo* [Japan Medical News], November 1934.
- 56 Leach, Letter to Laurie Cookes, 16 February 1935, pp. 7–9.
- 57 *ibid.*, pp.11–13. Cf. Leach, A Letter to England, pp.24–5.
- 58 Leach, Letter to Laurie Cookes, 29 September 1934 [14 October], p.3. See (1-C-2) J.O.A.K. 30.10.34 outline, Japan Folk Crafts Museum, ed., *op. cit.*, pp.310–11.
- 59 These figures are based on the records in Japan, and are different from Leach's own. Compare the following: *Sanyo Shimpō* [newspaper], morning and evening edition, 23 February 1935. Kurashiki-shi-shi Kenkyukai [Kurashiki City History Research Association], ed.(2001) *Shinshu Kurashiki-shi-shi* [Kurashiki City History], vol.12, Kurashiki: Kurashiki City, pp.1134–5. Leach writes that the exhibits were 130 pots and 13 *kakemono* pictures (Leach, Letter to Laurie Cookes, 23 February 1935, p.3).
- 60 Leach, Letter to Laurie Cookes, 1 April 1935, p.1.
- 61 Memorandum of Discussion with Mr. Leach on 16.7.35, Dartington Hall Archive.
- 62 Hamada, S. (1935) *Zatsuroku* [Miscellaneous], *Kogei*, May, p.63.
- 63 Shikiba, R. (1933) *Richi Zadan-kai ki* [Report of a Roundtable Discussion on Leach], *Kogei*, December, pp.52–62.
- 64 *ibid.*, p.52.
- 65 *Kojin* means 'individual' or 'independent'. *Sakka* basically means 'makers'; it can be either artist or craftsman. In his writings in 1935 Leach translated this word into 'Individual Craftsman' (see the quote in note 85). But when Leach called himself *Kojin sakka*, he seemed to have thought of himself as 'artist' or 'artist-craftsman' in English.

- 66 Note that although Leach mentions the Shussai Pottery (Shussai Brotherhood) in Chapter 14 The Journey East, 1934–1935 of his autobiography *Beyond East and West* (pp.188–9), this pottery was actually founded in 1947.
- 67 Brandt, *op. cit.*, chap. 3.
- 68 Ohara Magozaburo Den Kanko-kai [Publication Society of Biography of Magozaburo Ohara] (1983) *Ohara Magozaburo Den* [Biography of Magozaburo Ohara], Kurashiki: privately published, pp.324–5.
- 69 Leach, Letter to Laurie Cookes, 16 February 1935 [17 February], p.5.
- 70 Leach, Letter to Laurie Cookes, 27 August 1934, p.4A.
- 71 Leach, Letter to Laurie Cookes, 16 February 1935 [17 February] p.9.
- 72 Leach, Letter to Laurie Cookes, 8 August 1934 [9 August], p.3.
- 73 Leach, Letter to Laurie Cookes, 30 July 1934, p.2.
- 74 Leach, Letter to Laurie Cookes, 16 July 1934, p.4.
- 75 Leach, Letter to Laurie Cookes, 8 August 1934, p.2.
- 76 Leach, Letter to Laurie Cookes, 30 July 1934, p.2.
- 77 Leach, Letter to Laurie Cookes, 16 February 1935 [17 February], pp.5–6.
- 78 Leach, Letter to Muneyoshi Yanagi, 2–7 May 1937(Japan Folk Crafts Museum Archive). See Japan Folk Crafts Museum, ed., *op. cit.*, pp.193–200.
- 79 Leach, Letter to Laurie Cookes, 17 August 1934 [22 August], pp.7–8.
- 80 Leach, *Beyond East and West*, pp.143–4.
- 81 Tanya Harrod classifies Morris as being a member of the first generation of the Arts and Craft movement, artists such as Ernest Gimson, Ernest Barnsley (1863–1926) and Sidney Barnsley (1865–1926) as the second generation, and artists like Bernard Leach and Eric Gill (1882–1940) as the third generation. (Harrod, T. (1999) *The Crafts in Britain in the 20th Century*, Bard Graduate Center for Studies in the Decorative Arts and Yale University Press.) This view is basically carried over into the exhibition at the National Portrait Gallery: MacCarthy, F. (2014) *Anarchy and Beauty: William Morris and his Legacy 1860–1960*, London: National Portrait Gallery Publications.
- 82 Leach, Letter to Laurie Cookes, 16 February 1935 [17 February], p.8.
- 83 Leach, Thoughts on Japanese Crafts, p.4.
- 84 'So I feel more strongly than ever that a pioneering effort to unite art and science in a pottery at Dartington Hall must depend first on traditional craft experience, secondly on imagination, thirdly on scientific backing and help, and finally on adequate business procedure.' Leach, A Letter to England, p.35.
- 85 Even before his return to the UK, Leach had been criticising Leonard Elmhirst over the management policies of the Dartington Pottery. According to him, Dartington Pottery was initially intended to be 'an artistic scientific' pottery, but as Leonard changed his mind, it began to aim to be 'a commercial scientific pottery'. Leach, Letter to Laurie Cookes, [9] February 1935, p.5.
- 86 Leach, B. (1940) *A Potter's Book*, London: Faber.



- 87 Leach's thought and practice around 'the Studio' is complex and needs further consideration. Here I will only point out that the 'Plan of a Small Pottery' described in Chapter 8 of *A Potter's Book* is the floor plan of the Dartington Pottery. See Whiting, D., ed. (1993) *Dartington: 60 Years of Pottery 1933–1993*, Dartington: Dartington Cider Press, pp.22, 33.
- 88 Leach, B. (1961) *Omou koto, Omoidasu koto* [Thinking and Remembering], *Gakuto*, November, pp.4–9. As the original text in English is not known, the quotation is re-translated from Japanese by Suzuki.
- 89 Leach, *Thoughts on Japanese Crafts*, p.6.

## APPENDIX 1: CHRONOLOGY OF BERNARD LEACH'S STAY IN JAPAN

1934

### APRIL

- 23 Arrived at the Port of Kobe at noon and was greeted by Muneyoshi Yanagi, Shoji Hamada, Kanjiro Kawai and others. *Banado Richi* [Bernard Leach], the book edited by Ryuzaburo Shikiba, was presented to the artist himself in the ship's saloon. Probably moved to Osaka and stayed at Mikuni-so, a residence of Tamesaburo Yamamoto.
- 24 Spent some days reconnecting with old friends before moving to Tokyo. In Kyoto stayed at Kawai's house. In Tokyo lived alone in a house (90 Takehaya-cho, Koishikawa-ku) owned by a photographer and gallery owner, Kozo Nojima, which was very close to Yanagi's house (26 Hisakata-cho, Koishikawa-ku).

### MAY

- 6 Travelled around the five lakes of Mount Fuji with Yanagi, Ryoichi Mizutani and Kazuki Mori.
- 14 Attended a meeting, 'Roundtable Discussion to Hear Leach's View' at Yanagi's in Koishikawa, Tokyo. (See *Kogei*, June 1934.)
- 26–31 Investigated the folk crafts of the Kuriyama area of Tochigi prefecture with Kawai, Hamada, and Yanagi. Returned from Mashiko to Tokyo on 1 June.

### JUNE

- 2–3 Hosted an exhibition: *Kyushu Folk Pottery Mini-exhibition* at Nojima's house in Koishikawa, where he was staying.
- 7–3 July Stayed and worked at Shoji Hamada's residence and workshop in Mashiko, Tochigi prefecture. Hamada had relocated a tenement gate for Leach as his living and work space. July 1–3, opening of the kiln after firing.

### JULY

- 2 c. 3 Returned from Mashiko to Tokyo.
- c. 7 Moved to Kyoto.
- 8–30 Stayed and worked at Kanjiro Kawai's residence and workshop in Gojozaka, Kyoto.
- 31 Left Kyoto for Tottori and stayed there.

### AUGUST

- 1–13 Stayed in Matsue, Shimane prefecture. Worked at potteries in Fujina, Yumachi, Sodeshi, and Ho'onji areas.
- 9 Visited the Lafcadio Hearn Memorial Museum, and enjoyed a night sailing at Lake Shinji.
- 10 Visited Eishiro Abe's paper-making factory in Iwasaka.

- 13 Climbed Mount Makuragi-san with Haramoto, Kawai, Funaki, Ono, Fukuma, the Abe brothers, Moriyama, and Ota. Left Matsue for Kyoto by train.
- 14 Returned to Kyoto.
- 15–24 Research trip to the Chugoku and Kyushu regions supported by the Takashimaya department store and *Osaka Mainichi Shimbun* newspaper, with Yanagi, Hamada, Kawai and Ryoichi Mizutani. 15 August, meeting at the Kyoto bureau of the *Osaka Mainichi Shimbun* newspaper. 16 August, departure from Kyoto, visits to Himeji, Okayama, Hiroshima. 17 August, Hiroshima, Hakata. 18 August, Fukuoka (Nishi-Shinmachi, Noma), Kurume. 19 August, Kurume. 20 August, Kumamoto and Kagoshima; joined 'Roundtable Discussion' on *Akai* (porcelain decorated with red enamel pigments). See *Kogei*, September 1934. 22 August, Naeshirogawa, Kagoshima. 23 August, Mount Aso, Kumamoto and Fukuoka.
- 24 Travelled by plane from Fukuoka to Osaka. Arrived in Osaka at 11:30 am.
- 24 or 25 Moved to Kawai's house in Kyoto, where he stayed until 1 September.

## SEPTEMBER

- 1–4 Stayed in Shizuoka. 1 September, left Kyoto with Kichinosuke Tonomura to Shizuoka. Stayed at Ryuzaburo Shikiba's.
- 4 Returned to Nojima's house in Tokyo.
- 11 Visited Sozan Iseki with Hamada. Attended a roundtable discussion 'Hearing Leach's View Again'. (See *Kogei*, October 1934.)
- 16–26 Stayed in Mashiko.
- 21 Large-scale typhoon 'Muroto' made landfall in Japan, causing severe damage mainly in the Kinki and Shikoku regions. The average wind speed was 45 metres per second, and the lowest atmospheric pressure in Japan, 911.9 hPa, was recorded at Cape Muroto. Over 3000 dead or missing, and over 15,000 injured.

## OCTOBER

- Spent the month moving between Tokyo and Mashiko.
- 6–7 Exhibitions, *Recent works by Leach, Kawai, Hamada, Tomimoto, Serizawa, Tonomura and New folk crafts from Tottori and Shimane prefectures, as well as crafts from the Kurashiki Region* in Muneyoshi Yanagi's house in Hisakata-cho, Koishikawa, Tokyo.
- 18 Kiln opening at Hamada's workshop.
- 20–26 Solo exhibition. Kyukyo-do gallery, Ginza, Tokyo.
- 23 Gave a lecture, 'An Evening of Arts and Crafts with Bernard Leach and Yanagi Muneyoshi' for the Medical Association at Sansuiro restaurant, Hibiya, Kojimachi, Tokyo.
- 27 Attended a roundtable discussion, 'Craft and Life'. Attendees: Yanagi, Kawai, Serizawa, Tsuguo Koide and Ryoichi Mizutani. At Mizutani's in Yoyogi, Tokyo. (See *Kogei*, December 1934).

- 30 Appeared on a radio programme of the Japan Broadcasting Corporation.

## NOVEMBER

- 16–23 Exhibition: *Contemporary Japanese Folk Crafts* at Takashimaya department store, Nihon-bashi, Tokyo. 13,000 items on display, with model rooms designed by Leach (study), Hamada (dining room) and Kawai (kitchen).

## DECEMBER

- 8–9 Leach, Mizutani, Yanagi and others investigated Ogawa Washi paper at the request of Izumi Yamaguchi, director of the Saitama Prefectural Chamber of Commerce and Industry.
- 10–16 Stayed in Kyoto.
- 11 Attended a society for an incense-smelling ceremony held at Ginkakuji Temple, under the care of Naoyuki Kumagai, the manager of the Kyukyo-do company.
- 12 Combined lecture with Kawai at the December meeting of the Rotary Club of Kyoto.
- 16 Tokyo.
- 18–24 Stayed in Mashiko.
- 24 Returned to Tokyo from Mashiko. Attended a dinner party hosted by Tamesaburo Yamamoto. Those involved in the Contemporary Japanese Folk Craft exhibition at the Takashimaya department store gathered.
- 27 Visited Bruno Taut, a German architect, at his place of residence, Senshin-tei, in Shorinzan Daruma-ji Temple in Takasaki, Gunma prefecture with Yanagi, and stayed the night.
- 28 Visited the Numata area with Yanagi, Taut, Fusaichiro Inoue by car. Headed to Karuizawa, Nagano prefecture.
- 28–c. 4 January Winter break with Harold & Winnie Spackman in Karuizawa.

## 1935

## JANUARY

- c. 4 Returned to Tokyo.
- 14 Lecture with film screening at Tokyo Women's Club.
- 21 Inspected factories and workshops in Saitama prefecture with Yanagi.
- 22–25 Stayed in Mashiko.
- 25 Returned to Tokyo from Mashiko with Hamada.

## FEBRUARY

- 3–c. 7 Stayed in Nagoya, Aichi prefecture, with the Mizutani family. Visited Seto and Tokoname areas. Met Yonan Inoue.
- c. 7–11 Kyoto.

- 11–16 Stayed in Kurashiki, Okayama prefecture.
- 11 Moved from Kyoto to Kurashiki. Stayed at the Muison-so villa, a property of Magozaburo Ohara, in the Sakazu area.
- 12–16 Worked at the Sakazu Pottery at the commission of the Kurashiki Cultural Association.
- 14 Attended a roundtable discussion held at Kurashiki Asahi-machi Ni-san Kaikan Hall by a group of volunteers of the Kurashiki Institute for Labour Studies. Among the attendees were Kiyomi Takeuchi, Tamami Mitsuhashi, Soichiro Ohara's wife, and Hara Sumiji.
- 15 Visits to the Ohara Museum of Art, Kurashiki Business School, and a *dantsu* [rug] factory.
- 17–22 Stayed in Tottori.
- 19 Lecture at Tottori Girls' High School on 'Foreign Manners and Customs in Japan and the Preservation of Oriental Culture'. Instructed English home cooking for nine housewives at Shoya Yoshida's house.
- 21 Instructed English home cooking for 30 participants.
- 22 Returned to Kurashiki from Tottori.
- 23–26 Exhibition: *Bernard Leach's Works* at the Kurashiki Chamber of Commerce and Industry, hosted by the Kurashiki Cultural Association.
- 24 Invited to the Ohara's residence, and gave a speech at the party. It is said that on hearing this speech Magosaburo Ohara made a decision to donate funds to establish the Japan Folk Craft Museum.
- 27–28 Moved from Kurashiki to Futagawa, Fukuoka prefecture.

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MARCH

- 1–8 Worked at the Futagawa Pottery.
- 8 Moved from Futagawa to Matsue, Shimane prefecture.
- 8–3 April Stayed in Matsue.
- 20–21 Exhibition: *Small Works of Mr. Leach* at Matsumura Nanmei-do, Tottori.

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APRIL

- 1–2 Exhibition at the Matsue City Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Roundtable discussion and film projection.
- 3–5 Stayed in Tottori.
- 5 Moved from Tottori to Kyoto with Yanagi.
- 7–20 Stayed at a hotel in Tokyo.
- c. 20 Moved from Tokyo to Osaka.
- 23–28 Combined exhibition of Bernard Leach, Shoji Hamada and Kanjiro Kawai at Takashimaya department store, Nagahori, Osaka.
- 23–28 Exhibition: *Contemporary Japanese Folk Crafts* at Takashimaya department store, Nankai, Osaka. With model rooms designed by Leach (study), Hamada (dining room) and Kawai (kitchen).

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MAY

- 3–5 Exhibition at Kyoto Omai Kaikan (Kyoto bureau of the *Osaka Mainichi Shimbun* newspaper).
- 12–15 Combined exhibition of Bernard Leach, Shoji Hamada and Kanjiro Kawai at Takashimaya department store, Tokyo.
- 12 Magosaburo Ohara and Kiyomi Takeuchi visited Muneyoshi Yanagi to donate 100,000 yen to establish the Japan Folk Craft Museum. Tamesaburo Yamamoto, Sozan Iseki, Shoji Hamada and Bernard Leach attended.
- 14 Farewell party for Leach at Sansui-ro restaurant, Tokyo. The attendees were: Leach, Yanagi, Kawai, Hamada, Kenkichi Tomimoto, Ryuzaburo Umehara, Tamesaburo Yamamoto, Sozan Iseki, Shozo Uchiyama, Ryuzaburo Shikiba, Ryoichi Mizutani, Kazuki Mori, Choryo Asano, Toraichiro Haramoto, Tsuguo Koide, Okada (Heian-do Brush Shop), Naoyuki Kumagai (Kyukyo-do), owner of Bansui-ken Restaurant, owner of Sansui-ro Restaurant (Takeyoshi Miyata?), Ms Kawai, Miss (Sono?) Matsumoto, a female clerk of Takashimaya department store, Kenichi Kawakatsu, Eiji Akami, Yoshitaka Yanagi, Michitada Funaki, Shigeharu Morinaga, and Kiyomi Takeuchi.
- 20 Left Tokyo with Yanagi for Korea, where they stayed for three weeks. Nami Ogata, a daughter of Kenzan VI accompanied their trip from Busan. The three of them visited the Bulguksa temple in Kyungju on 22 May, and Seokguram the next day. Exhibition at Meiji Seika Hall in Keijo (Seoul). Visited Mount Kumgang.

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JUNE

- 10 Left Keijo (Seoul) for Paris via the Trans-Siberian Railway.
- 19 Arrived in Paris. After spending a few days waiting for Laurie Cookes in vain, went back to London, where his children and wife were waiting. Went back to St Ives, Cornwall, and saw Laurie Cookes again at the Leach Pottery.



**APPENDIX 2: LIST OF JAPANESE NAMES  
APPEARING IN THE LETTERS FROM  
BERNARD LEACH TO LAURIE COOKES**

The following is a list of those who were associated with Leach during his stay in 1934–5 and who appear in his letters to Laurie Cookes. Note that there are some other people, despite their importance to him, who are not included here.

Asano, Marquis	Not exactly identified. Perhaps Leach refers to an art historian Nagatake Asano (1895–1969), although it is in 1940 that Nagatake inherited the title of Marquis from his father.
Asano, Choryo	Supporter of the Mingei (Folk Craft) movement. When the Japan Folk Craft Association was established in June 1934 its office was placed in Asano's house, and he became the publisher of <i>Kogei</i> , which became the Association's official magazine. As a monk of Genko-ji, a Buddhist temple in Tokyo, he presided over the funeral of Muneyoshi Yanagi in 1961. He purchased Leach's work, <i>Panel of Tiles: 'Horse'</i> at Leach's solo exhibition held at Kyukyo-do Gallery in Tokyo in December 1933, which is now in the collection of the Japan Folk Crafts Museum.
Fukuma, Takashi	(Sadayoshi, 1904–89, Yumachi Pottery) Artist-potter in Yumachi in Shimane prefecture.
Funaki, Michitada	(1900–63) The fourth generation to inherit his family's pottery business in Fujina in Shimane prefecture. His son, Kenji Funaki (1927–2015) worked with David Leach at the Lowerdown Pottery in Bovey Tracey in 1967.
Hamada, Atsuya	(1931–86) Third sun of Shoji Hamada. Worked at the Leach Pottery from 1957 to 1959.
Hamada, Shoji	(1894–1978) Ceramic artist born in Kawasaki, Kanagawa prefecture as a son of a merchant. Came to know Kanjiro Kawai at the ceramic department of Tokyo Advanced Technical College (today's Tokyo Institute of Technology) as students, and they became colleagues at Kyoto Municipal Ceramics Laboratory. Went to England with Leach in 1920 and helped him to establish the pottery in St Ives, Cornwall. Turned from a technician to an artist during his stay in the UK, and had his first solo-exhibition in London in 1923. March 1924 he returned to Japan and stayed at Kawai's house in Kyoto for about two months, and introduced Kawai and Muneyoshi Yanagi to each other. After spending about six years in several pottery districts in Japan, finally settled in

	Mashiko, Tochigi prefecture in 1930. One of the four founders of the Mingei (Folk Craft) movement (1926). The second director of the Japan Folk Crafts Museum (1961).
Hara, Sumiji	(1878–1968) Businessman and politician of Kurashiki, Okayama prefecture. Took part in the management of several companies under Magozaburo Ohara. Established Kurashiki Observatory, the first private observatory in Japan in 1926, for which a reflecting telescope made by George Calver (1834–1927) was imported from the UK. Mayor of Kurashiki Town (1918–23). He gave an introductory speech for Leach, the lecturer at a roundtable discussion held on 14 February 1935.
Haramoto, Toraichiro	(?–1936) Wealthy person in Yasugi, Shimane prefecture. Practitioner of the tea ceremony. The first president of Yasugi Folk Craft Association (1933). Preferred the works of Shoji Hamada. It seems in March 1935 he asked Leach for <i>hakogaki</i> , a signature on the wooden cases specially made to hold Leach's works, so as to attest the authenticity of them.
Horiuchi, Kiyoshi	Dentist in Kyoto. His father, Toru Horiuchi, also a dentist, knew Edmund Hamilton Sharp, the grandfather of Leach. Their hospital in the Karasuma-Oike area was designed by William Merrell Vories (1880–1964, a missionary and architect).
Inoue, Yonan	(1869–1956) Ceramic artist of Tokoname, Aichi prefecture. Received an honorary prize at the Universal Exhibition of Decorative and Industrial Arts in Paris in 1925. Met Leach in February 1935.
Iseki, Sozan	<<check alignment>>(Genpachiro, 1866–1939) Lawyer. After retiring, trained at Myoshin-ji Temple in Kyoto and was registered as a monk. Practitioner of an art of physiognomy called <i>toki-jutsu</i> . A friend of Shoji Hamada's father, and the matchmaker for Shoji and his wife Kazue. When Shoji went to England with Leach in 1920, Iseki gave the young Japanese man 1000 yen, which he borrowed from a moneylender. After Iseki's death Shoji was informed that Iseki kept on paying off the debt for nearly twenty years. Sozan's second son, Gen'e Iseki was Muneyoshi Yanagi's attending physician.
Jugaku, Bunsho	(1900–92) Scholar of English literature and papermaking. Studied the life and works of William Blake.
Kumagai, Naoyuki	Manager of the Kyukyo-do company that sold incense and art materials. Commissioned Yanagi and Hamada in 1929 to purchase English crafts and furniture, especially Windsor chairs. Hosted Leach's solo-exhibitions at the Kyukyo-do Gallery in December 1933 and October 1934. Introduced the artist to a society for incense-smelling ceremony held at Ginkaku-ji Temple on 11 December 1934.

Kawai, Kanjiro	(1890–1966) Ceramic artist. Son of a carpenter in Yasugi, educated in Matsue, Shimane prefecture. Came to know Shoji Hamada at the ceramic department of Tokyo Advanced Technical College (today's Tokyo Institute of Technology) as students, and they became colleagues at Kyoto Municipal Ceramics Laboratory. Turned from a technician to an artist and established the Shokei-yo Pottery in the Gojozaka area, Kyoto in 1920. One of the four founders of the Mingei movement (1926).
Matsumoto, Sono	(Sonoko) Female friend of Leach.
Mayama	A wealthy man. Practitioner of the tea ceremony. A subscriber to the magazine <i>Kogei</i> . He invited Leach and Soetsu Yanagi to his home around 8 November 1934.
Mihashi, Tamami	(1882–1939) Magozaburo Ohara's attending physician, and one of the central figures on the art scene in Kurashiki, Okayama prefecture.
Minagawa, Masu	(1874–1960) Painter of mountain and water decoration of Mashiko ware.
Mizutani, Ryoichi	(1901–1959) Japanese Government civil servant [AQ2] (Cabinet Statistics Bureau 1924–38, Ministry of Commerce and Industry 1938–44). Supporter of the Mingei movement. Translated Leach's writings into Japanese for the magazine <i>Kogei</i> . His family took care of Leach during his stay in Nagoya from 3 to 7 February 1935.
Mori, Kazuki	Japanese Government civil servant. Supporter of the Mingei movement.
Moriyama	Cane craftsman. On the evening of 19 March 1934 he visited Leach at Minami-kan, the hotel in Matsue.
Muraoka, Kageo	(1901?–?) Psychologist. Professor of Doshisha University, and later of Joshibi University of Art and Design. Supporter of the Mingei movement.
Naka, Shogo	(1878–1969) Art dealer in Tokyo. Owner of the gallery Ryuitsu-so (Ruisseau) in Ogawa-cho, Kanda, Tokyo, where he hosted solo exhibitions for Leach in the latter half of the 1910s, and sold his works on consignment after his return to England in 1920.
Ninsei, Nonomura	Ceramic artist in Kyoto in the seventeenth century.
Ohara, Magozaburo	(1880–1943) Businessman of Kurashiki, Okayama prefecture, who presided over a group of companies covering spinning, banking, power generation, etc. As a philanthropist, enthusiastically involved in social and cultural activities, and established such institutions as: Kurashiki Central Hospital, Ohara Museum of Art, the Agricultural Research Institute (now a division of Okayama University), Ohara Memorial Institute for Science and

Labour, Ohara Institute of Social Problems (now a division of Hosei University), Kurashiki Commercial School, etc. In 1935 donated 100,000 yen to establish the Japan Folk Craft Museum in Komaba, Tokyo. His son, Soichiro Ohara (1909–68) was also an earnest supporter of the Mingei movement, and established the Kurashiki Museum of Folk Craft in 1948. In 1961, he built an annex to the Ohara Museum of Art called the *Toki-kan* (now known as the Crafts Gallery), and allocated a room there to exhibit Leach's work alone. There were also rooms in this building for Hamada, Kawai and Tomimoto.

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<b>Okamoto, Kenji</b>	(1895–1956, Sakazu Pottery) The third generation to inherit his family's pottery business in Sakazu, Kuyrashiki in Okayama prefecture.
<b>Okamoto, Seitaro</b>	(?–1945, Sakazu Pottery) A brother of Kenji Okamoto. Inherited the family's pottery business from Kenji in 1941.
<b>Okamoto, Shoichi</b>	(?–1966?, Sakazu Kabutoyama Pottery) A younger brother of Kenji and Seitaro Okamoto. Established his own pottery in 1930.
<b>Ono, Toshiro</b>	(1903–95, Sodeshi Pottery) The third generation to inherit his family's pottery business in Sodeshi, Shimane prefecture.
<b>Sakuma, Fukujiro</b>	(1873–1943) A potter in Mashiko. Established his own pottery in 1907. His son, Totaro Sakuma (1900–76), was also a ceramicist. Shoji Hamada worked at the Sakuma Pottery periodically from 1924 to 1930. The Sakuma family treated Hamada with respect in spite of the unfriendly rural atmosphere against outsiders.
<b>Sakya, Shigenobu</b>	(Sakiya) Teacher of English, translator. Came to know Leach in 1909, when the artist built his house in Ueno Sakuragi-cho, Tokyo, where Sakya also lived.
<b>Sato, Sawako</b>	Muneyoshi Yanagi's secretary. Engaged in editing the magazine <i>Kogei</i> .
<b>Serizawa, Keisuke</b>	(1895–1984) Dyeing artist. Took part in the Mingei movement. Designed the covers for the magazine <i>Kogei</i> and works by Yanagi Muneyoshi.
<b>Shiga, Naoya</b>	(1883–1971) Writer (novelist). A member of the magazine <i>Shirakaba</i> . Lived in Abiko in Chiba prefecture from 1915 to 1923, and enjoyed the company of his neighbours including Yanagi and Leach.
<b>Shikiba, Ryuzaburo</b>	(1898–1965) Medical doctor majoring in psychology. Supporter of the Mingei movement. Edited the book <i>Banado Richi</i> [Bernard Leach] in 1934.
<b>Sotatsu, Tawaraya</b>	(?–c. 1640) Artist.

<b>Suzuki, Sohei</b>	Medical doctor in Mashiko. Leach was invited to a party held at Suzuki's hospital in September 1934.
<b>Takamura, Kotaro</b>	(1883–1956) Poet and sculptor. Came to know Leach in London in 1907, and introduced him to Japan, especially to the artist circle of Tokyo Art College, including his father Koun Takamura (1852–1934, professor of sculpture) and brother Toyochika Takamura (1890–1972, metal artist).
<b>Takeuchi, Kiyomi</b>	(1888–1981) The first director of the Ohara Museum of Art. Served as a conduit between Magosaburo Ohara and the members of the Mingei movement. The museum has been entrusted with works of Rodin and Cezanne collected by the <i>Shirakaba</i> group.
<b>Tomimoto, Kenkichi</b>	(1886–1963) Ceramic artist. Born as a son of a wealthy family in Ando-mura village, Nara prefecture. After studying design and architecture at the Tokyo Art College (today's Tokyo University of the Arts), went to study in England at private expense in 1908. In 1910, on a ship returning home, he met Reginald Turvey, a friend of Leach, which led him to meet Leach in Tokyo. A visit to Kenzan VI with Leach changed the course of his life, and he became a ceramic artist. Worked in Tokyo from 1927 to 1945, and after the war in Kyoto. Professor of ceramics at the Tokyo School of Art, and Kyoto City University of Arts. In 1926, Yanagi, Tomimoto, Kawai, and Hamada published the <i>Prospectus for the Establishment of the Japan Folk Craft Museum</i> , but the relationship between Tomimoto and Yanagi was strained and it broke down with the opening of the Japan Folk Crafts Museum in 1936. Received the Order of Culture in 1961.
<b>Tonomura, Kichinosuke</b>	(1898–1993) Methodist minister. Dyeing and weaving artist. The first director of the Kurashiki Museum of Folk Craft (1948) and founder of the Kumamoto International Folk Craft Museum (1965).
<b>Yamamoto, Tamesaburo</b>	(1893–1966) Businessman. Manager of the Asahi Beer Company. Supporter of the Mingei movement. Owned Mikuni-so cottage in Osaka, and welcomed Leach to this house shortly after his arrival to Kobe in 1934. Mikuni-so was originally built in Tokyo as a pavilion named 'Mingei-kan' on the occasion of the Tokyo Exposition for the Promotion of Domestic Economy in 1928, and was purchased by Yamamoto after the exposition. When he founded what is now Rihga Royal Hotel Osaka in 1965, he not only asked Leach to be a member of the screening committee that would decide on the name of the hotel, but also commissioned the artist to supervise the design of the main bar of the hotel. Yamamoto named it 'the Leach Bar' as a memorial to the first generation of the Mingei movement.



Yanagi, Katsuko	(1855–1943) Muneyoshi Yanagi's mother. Elder sister of Jigoro Kano (1860–1938), the founder of Kodo-kan, the central organisation of modern Judo.
Yanagi, Munetami	(1927–2006) A son of Muneyoshi Yanagi. Horticulturist.
Yanagi, Muneyoshi	(Soetsu, 1889–1961) Philosopher of religion. A member of the magazine <i>Shirakaba</i> . Leader of the Mingei movement. Visited Leach in Beijing in September 1916 and persuaded him to return to his pottery-making activities. From 1917 to 1919 offered land at his home in Abiko, Chiba prefecture, for a studio and kiln for Leach. In 1926, together with Tomimoto, Hamada, and Kawai, he published the <i>Prospectus for the Establishment of the Japan Folk Craft Museum</i> and coined the term 'Mingei'. Established the Japan Folk Craft Association in June 1934 and became its president. Founded the Japan Folk Crafts Museum in October 1936 and became its director. Formulated aesthetics based on Buddhism.
Yanagi, Yoshitaka	(1911–2003) A nephew of Muneyoshi Yanagi. Dyeing and weaving artist. President of Joshibi University of Art and Design (1975–83).
Yoshida, Shoya	(1898–1972) Medical doctor (otorhinolaryngologist). Directed the Mingei movement in Tottori prefecture. Established the Tottori Folk Craft Shop Takumi (1932), Tottori Folk Crafts Museum (1949) and Restaurant Takumi (1957), and played a producer's role in organically connecting these three businesses.

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### Yuko Matsuzaki

## BOOK CONVENTIONS

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In the chapters, Japanese names are given in a western form with the family name second. Modern spellings of such names as Song (dynasty) rather than Sung are used unless they are within quotations.

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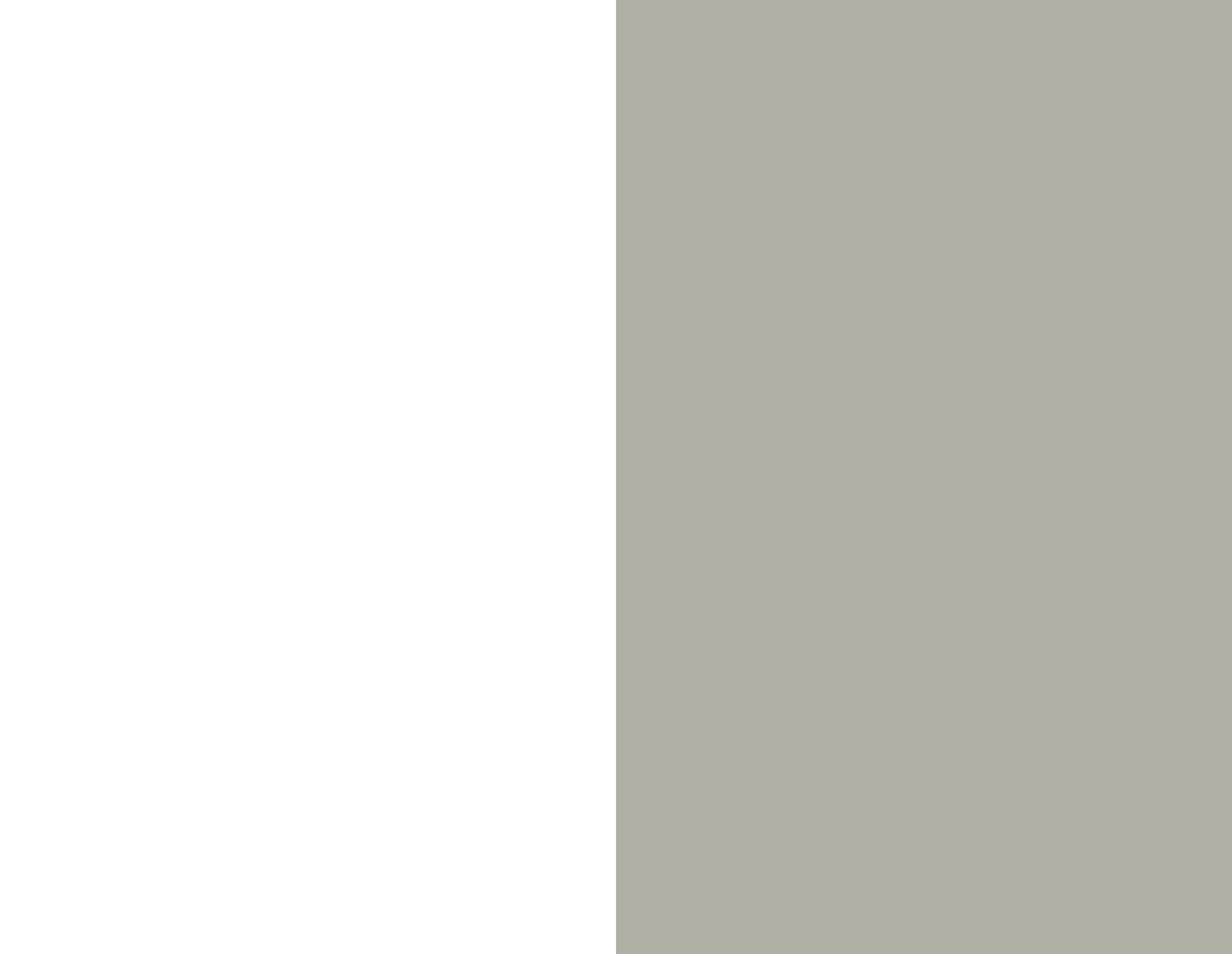
The Leach albarello (chapter 1, figure 17) was acquired with the support of the Arts Council England / V&A Purchase Grant Fund and Art Fund.

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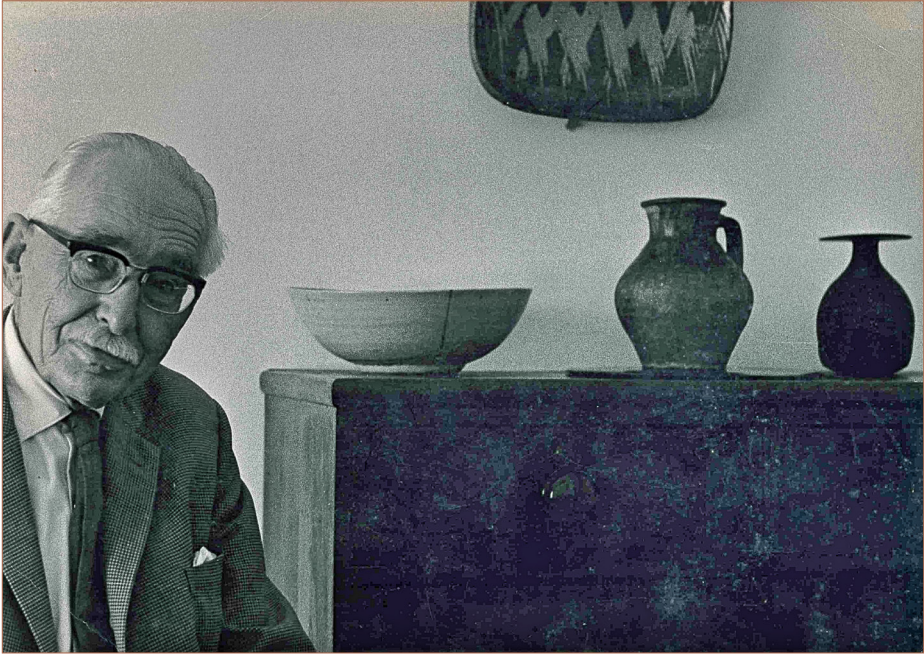
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Etchings from the Leach Redgrave edition (chapter 2, figures 12 and 14) were acquired with funds from the Heritage Lottery Fund's Collecting Cultures programme









**BERNARD LEACH : DISCOVERED ARCHIVES**

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