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## The Korean Art Collection of the Nezu Museum: The Kōrai Tea Bowls Collected by the Founder, Nezu Kaichirō, Sr.

### Introduction: The Nezu Museum

The Nezu Museum in Aoyama, Minato City, Tokyo, is an art museum that was created for the preservation and exhibition of antique works of art from Japan and Asia that were collected by the businessman Nezu Kaichirō, Sr. 初代根津嘉一郎 (1860–1940, tea name Seizan 青山, hereafter, Kaichirō) (Figure 1). After his death in 1940, his eldest son, Nezu Kaichirō, Jr. 二代根津嘉一郎 (1913–2002, Tōtarō 藤太郎, hereafter, Kaichirō, Jr.) established a foundation in the autumn that same year, and a year later, the Nezu Museum opened in the main building of the Nezu residence. Although a large portion of the exhibition rooms and the tea house were lost in a firebombing during the war in 1945, the collection, which had been evacuated in advance, mostly avoided damages. In



Figure 1. Nezu Kaichirō, Sr.

1946, the museum resumed its activities, and in 1954, a new main building was built by the architect Naitō Tachū 内藤多伸 (1886–1970). After extension and alterations between 1964 and 1991, the former exhibition halls were torn down to rebuild an earthquake-resistant structure, and under the leadership of the current director of the museum, Nezu Kōichi 根津公一 (1950–), the current main building was completed in 2009 by the architect Kuma Kengo 隈研吾 (1954–).

The items in the museum's collection, which amounted to 4,643 at the time the foundation was first established, reached 7,613 as of December in 2021. This increase is the result of the donations that were made to the museum by 14 philanthropists in addition to the small number of items that were purchased after the opening of the museum. The large number of donations the museum received is rare for a private art museum and shows a high level of trust of the museum. The museum's collection also includes 7 National Treasures, 88 Important Cultural Properties, and 95 Important Works of Art of Japan.

While the majority of the collection consists of premodern works of art from Japan, it not only includes antique art from the Korean peninsula, China, and Southeast Asia that are related to Japanese culture but also items from India, Europe, and South America. The items range from calligraphy, paintings, sculptures, metalwork, ceramics, lacquerware, wooden and bamboo crafts, and textiles, boasting a wide variety for a private art museum.

Among them, there are 230<sup>1</sup> Korean works of art, which mainly consist of 170 items collected by Kaichirō and 43 Korean ceramics donated by the businessman Akiyama Jun'ichi 秋山順一 (1892–1975). The other items in the Korean collection besides these include Korean ceramic shards collected by the Korean ceramics researcher Asakawa Noritaka 浅川伯教 (1884–1964) among the ceramics material of the Institute of Oriental Ceramics that were transferred to the museum in 1942.

The museum has held several exhibitions related to Korean art based on the aforementioned items. The exhibition Masterpieces of Korean Ceramics, which was held in 1966, displayed 139 masterpieces of Korean ceramic existing in Japan, including items from the collection of the Tokyo National Museum in addition to the Nezu Museum's own collection. In 1978, the exhibition

<sup>1</sup> This figure includes those whose site of production cannot be determined.

Ceramics of Joseon was held after the museum received the aforementioned Akiyama Jun'ichi collection, displaying these items together with the items previously owned by the museum. The special exhibition Ido Tea Bowls, Treasured Possessions of Muromachi Daimyō, which was held in the fall of 2013, gathered 74 Ido tea bowls that had been cherished by the daimyōs of Japan together in one exhibition hall. The special exhibition The Fragrant Sublime, Koryō Buddhist Paintings, which was held in 2017, displayed 38 famous works of Goryeo Buddhist paintings and crafts dating from the 11<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> centuries extant in Japan. Finally, there was the exhibition held in the spring of 2024 of which I was in charge, Museum Collection Exhibition: Enchanting Korean Ceramics.

The most frequently held exhibitions, however, are those of the Kōrai tea bowls owned by the museum. Starting with the exhibition Kōrai Tea Bowls, which was held in 1958, exhibitions on this theme have continued to be held every few years or so, in 1965, 1972, 1977, 1984, and 1991. This is primarily because of the sheer number of Kōrai tea bowls that Kaichirō collected, which amount to around 130 items among the approximately 230 items of Korean art owned by the museum. This is likely one of the largest collections of its kind among museums in Japan. Simply put, the Kōrai tea bowls represent the core pieces of Korean art in the museum's collection.

In this article, I first outline Nezu Kaichirō, Sr. and his collection of art, after which I examine his purchase of Kōrai tea bowls, including their prices. Finally, I look at how they were used during the tea gatherings he hosted. This will provide an example of how Kōrai tea bowls were collected and used by modern tea masters and help clarify the status of Kōrai tea bowls in modern Japan by comparing them with Chinese and Japanese tea bowls.

### Nezu Kaichirō, Sr.'s Collection of Art and Tea Gatherings

Nezu Kaichirō was born in 1860 in present-day Yamanashi, Yamanashi Prefecture, as the second son of a wealthy farmer who also worked as a merchant. After becoming independent by branching out in 1896, he moved to Tokyo, and poured his efforts into becoming a businessman (Nezuō denki hensankai 1961, 41). Over his lifetime, he was involved in over 130 corporations, which include the founding and reconstruction of 40 railway

companies such as Tobu Railway Company, earning himself the nickname “The Railroad King.”

Kaichirō (1938, 230–31) recalled in his memoirs that he “collected antique paintings and calligraphic works since he was young.” Starting from his late twenties, Kaichirō would circle second-hand shops near Kyōbashi whenever he went to Tokyo for work and buy up items that appealed to him.

In 1906, After moving to Tokyo, he bought a plot in Minam Aoyama, where the Nezu Museum stands today. This year is also a memorable year for the collector. In November, he participated in person in the second auction held by the Hirase family, the household of a wealthy merchant in Osaka, and successfully bid the highly regarded *Writing Box, Known as Hana-no-Shirakawa*, at 16,500 *yen*, marking the highest price until then. With this purchase, he suddenly became famous as the collector of antique works of art, which further to his energetic purchases of masterpieces.

It was around this period that Kaichirō started to write down the works of art he bought in his accounts. He continued to do so for around 35 years until right before his death, resulting in the records of 8,542 purchases of art. The recorded details included the collection number of the item, name of the work and its author, date of purchase, name of handler, and purchase price. Among the current collection of the museum, the items whose number assigned at the time of purchase is clear can be easily identified by referring to the accounts, although this is not the case for items that do not have a clear assigned number. By looking at his accounts, we can see that the early collection included many practical daily items, such as Imari ware dishes and bowls, lacquerware tray tables and tableware, large vases, and incense burners.

In terms of Korean ceramics, Kaichirō bought a 5-piece set of Goryeo celadon cups on December 29, 1908; the *Celadon Foliated Basin*, as a bellflower-shaped confectionary bowl, on April 1, 1909; and the *Ewer with Lotus Scroll Design* as a vase (Figure 2) on May 6, 1909. Jung Eunjin has pointed out that among these items, the ewer is listed as a collection of the Nezu family in Kōrai-yaki (Goryeo Ware), which was published in 1910 and was a masterpiece of Goryeo celadon that was brought to Japan early on (The Museum of Oriental Ceramics, Osaka 2018, 391). However, rather than concentrate on collecting Korean ceramics, he appears to have perceived them as everyday items and fixture together with the Imari ware of Japan. On June 11, 1917, he purchased the *Buncheong War Buddhist Cabinet with Peony Design*, although in this case,



**Figure 2.** Important Cultural Property, *Ewer with Lotus Scroll Design* 青磁蓮華唐草文淨瓶, Korea, Goryeo dynasty, 12<sup>th</sup> century, Nezu Museum

his objective was to purchase the three gilt-bronze Buddhist statues inside the cabinet.<sup>2</sup> The cabinet itself only served as their storage. Kaichirō deeply felt the necessity of Buddhist spiritual guidance to the extent that he had plans to build a large, non-sectarian temple in Asaka, Saitama Prefecture. Throughout his lifetime, he focused on collecting Buddhist sutra and Buddhist art including paintings, sutra coverings, and the robes of Buddhist monks.

His collection started to take on a different note after his first tea gathering in 1918. Many fellow businessmen around him enjoyed this way of tea, including Makoshi Kyōhei 馬越恭平 (1844–1937, tea name Kasei 化生), the founding president of Dai-Nippon Brewery; Masuda Takashi 益田孝 (1848–1939, tea name Don’o 鈍翁), the founding president of Mitsui Trading Company; Takahashi Yoshio 高橋義雄 (1861–1939, tea name Sōan 籌庵), the senior managing director of Oji Paper; and Iwahara Kenzō 岩原謙三 (1863–1936, tea name 謙庵 Ken’an), the first president of NHK, the Japan Broadcasting Corporation. Kaichirō was invited by these men to the tea gatherings they held and, at their urging, opened his first formal tea gathering

<sup>2</sup> This is because the purchase was noted as “Three small, gilded Buddha statues inside Goryeo-ware Buddhist cabinet” in his account and because its collection number was included with the Buddhist statues.

at the age of 58. Although he was slow to begin, he instantly became absorbed in the way of tea and later wrote, “Indeed, I have realized that the host makes up 70 percent tea while the guests make up 30 percent. I find it particularly enjoyable [to serve as the host]” (S. Nezu 1938, 41). In addition to the regular tea gatherings he held in his home as well as at his villa in Karuizawa, he was asked to hold tea gatherings at venues including Gokokuji Temple in Tokyo and Kiyomizu Temple in Kyoto. His enthusiasm for the tea gathering never failed to wane during his lifetime. The last tea gathering he held was a regular year-end gathering one week before his death on January 4, 1940.

The Japanese tea gathering, during which invited guests are served tea and a light meal, is a gathering enjoyed by the host and guests together. A wide range of utensils are needed for the occasion: to drink tea, there should be a kettle, a freshwater container, tea container, tea scoop, and wastewater container. If the guests are also served a light meal, there must be dishes, bowls, sake bottles, and sake cups to serve the meal, and a hanging scroll and vase to decorate the room in which the gathering is held. Ever since this form of tea gathering was born in Japan around the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, tea masters have sought to collect all of the utensils used in the gathering that were regarded as masterpieces, items used by renowned tea masters, and items that were newly created during this period, all of which were displayed during tea gatherings as they interacted and deepened their relationships. Although the tea gathering declined for a while between the unrest during the last years of the Edo shogunate up to the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, when the westernization and modernization of Japan took place. However, as if a reaction to this decline, newly rising businessmen such as Kaichirō who enjoyed the way of tea emerged in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. These men collected the precious tools that formerly powerful figures had long treasured but given up and used them during their own tea gatherings, thus reinvigorating the tea gathering.

The items that Kaichirō particularly sought after was *bokuseki*, which was calligraphy by Zen monks, and ceramic tea bowls and tea containers, particularly the many Seto tea containers, and Kōrai tea bowls.

## The Purchase of Kōrai Tea Bowls

While the name Kōrai 高麗 tea bowls implies that they are tea bowls dating

from the Goryeo 高麗 dynasty, which lasted from 918 to 1392, it actually refers to tea bowls that were produced in the Korean peninsula. Almost all of them were produced in kilns located in the southern part of the Korean peninsula during the Joseon dynasty, which lasted from 1392 to 1910, and made their way to Japan during then. The name Kōrai was attached to the tea bowls as a symbolic reference to the Korean peninsula, similar to the way the name Tang was attached to objects produced in China despite their coming from a later period. The term Kōrai tea bowl first came out in an entry written on the 12th of the 9th month of the 6th year of the Tenbun 天文 era, or October 15, 1537, in *Matsuya kaiki* (*The Matsuya Family Tea Diary*), during a tea gathering held by the Kyoto tea master Jūshiya Sōgo 十四屋宗伍. However, it was only after the 1580s when the term often appeared in these records, which suggest that the tea bowls were frequently used. This can be seen in a comment by Yamanoue Sōji, the disciple of the tea master Sen Rikyū, who greatly developed the way of tea. In *Yamanoue Sōji ki* (*The Yamanoue Sōji Records*), which listed 212 masterpieces of the tea gathering around 1588, Yamanoue writes, “Chinese tea bowls have gone out of style. It is now the era of Kōrai tea bowls, Raku tea bowls, and Seto tea bowls” (qtd. in Kumankura 2006, 34). Afterwards, Kōrai tea bowls have continued to reign as the representative tea bowls during tea gatherings.

The early Kōrai tea bowls were chosen among Korean ceramic bowls or dishes that were used in everyday life and had the right form and size to use as tea bowls during tea gatherings. For this reason, they are not markedly refined or elegant compared to the Chinese tea bowls that were mainstream during then, such as the Tenmoku tea bowls, or Jian ware, and the Longquan celadon. However, the simple beauty and strength wonderfully agreed with the way of tea of Japan since the 16<sup>th</sup> century, which valued rustic simplicity. After they gained popularity, orders for custom-made Kōrai tea bowls were even placed later by Japan.

The classification of Kōrai tea bowls was born during this process. The tea masters of Japan classified the Kōrai tea bowls produced in various kilns across the Korean peninsula into groups depending on elements such as the clay used, their shape, and decorations and gave each group a unique name. This classification largely include more than 20 groups including Unkaku 雲鶴, Kyōgen-bakama 狂言袴, Mishima 三島, Hakeme, Muji-hakeme 刷毛目・無地刷毛目, Kohiki 粉引, Kata-de, Amamori-kata-de 堅手・雨漏堅手, Amamori 雨漏, Ido 井戸, Ido-waki 井戸脇, Soba 蕎麦, Totoya 斗々屋,

Kakinoheta 柿の蒂, Tamago-de 玉子手, Komogai 熊川, Goki 呉器, Wari-kōdai 割高台, Goshomaru 御所丸, Irabo 伊羅保, Hori-mishima 彫三島, Kinkai 金海, Gohon 御本, and Hansu 半使.<sup>3</sup> These are further classified into a complicated division of subtypes. For instance, Ido can be divided into Ō-ido 大井戸, Ao-ido 青井戸, Ko-ido 小井戸, and Ko-kannyū 小貫入. This meticulous classification system shows just how much the tea masters of Japan closely studied, classified, and valued Kōrai tea bowls.

According to Kaichirō's aforementioned account in which he recorded his purchases of art, he bought 411 tea bowls over 35 years, from 1906 to 1940. Table 1 shows the number of purchases he made for each type of tea bows and the percentage of each type out of the total of 411 items. Among 411 tea bowls, there are 199 Kōrai tea bowls (48.42%), the majority of which are Ido (34 items, 8.27%), including Ō-ido, Ao-ido, Ko-ido, and Ido-waki, followed by Gohon (24 items, 5.84%), Irabo (20 items, 4.87%), Mishima (17 items, 4.14%), Totoya (12 items, 2.92%), and Hakame (11 items, 2.68%). It is evident that Kaichirō collected Kōrai tea bowls across the major categories. The Japanese tea bowls made in Japan amount to 180 items (43.80%), the majority being the Raku tea bowls (56 items, 13.63%). Thus, the number of Kōrai tea bowls and Japanese tea bowls that Kaichirō bought up are roughly the same, with the former being slightly more numerous. Table 2, which is a graph showing this ratio in units of 5 years, show that this ratio largely stays consistent throughout the years.<sup>4</sup>

3 The classification is based on Mitsui Memorial Museum 2019.

4 The increase in the number of purchased items seen for 5 years starting from 1920 has to do with the shift to the collection of tea bowls after Kaichirō became captivated by the way of tea following his first tea gathering in 1918. The large number of purchased items seen for 5 years starting from 1935, meanwhile, is because he made a large purchase from the antique dealer Mio Kunizō 三尾邦三 (1891–1966) in 1939. This purchase, however, was likely done for purposes of providing funds for Mio, who had shifted to politics during then. The majority of the items he bought up in 1939 were resold to Mio himself and his colleague Oda Ōsaku 小田栄作 of Harumi & Company 春海商店 in 1946.

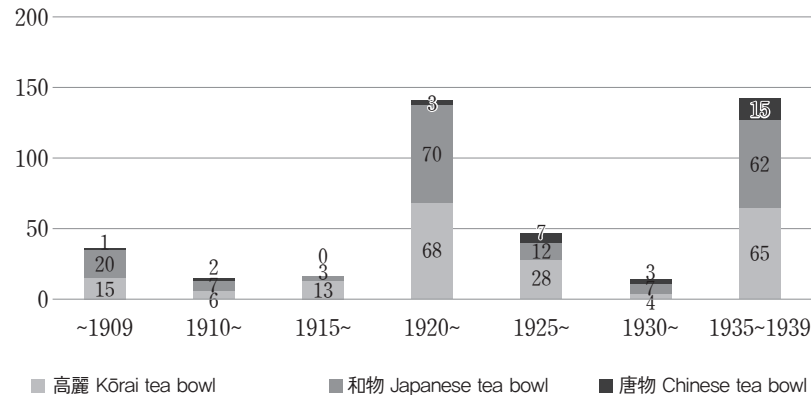
**Table 1.** Number of Tea Bowls Purchased by Nezu Kaichirō, Sr. by Type

Classification	Number of items	Breakdown	Number of items	Percentage
Kōrai tea bowls	199			48.42%
		井戸 Ido	34	8.27%
		御本 Gohon	28	6.81%
		立鶴 Tachizuru	2	
		弥平太 Yaheita	2	
		伊羅保 Irabo	20	4.87%
		三島 Mishima	17	4.14%
		斗々屋 Totoya	12	2.92%
		刷毛目 Hakeme	11	2.68%
		熊川 Komogai	9	2.19%
		呉器 Goki	9	2.19%
		堅手 Kata-de	7	1.70%
		粉引 Kohiki	6	1.46%
		茂三 Mosan	5	1.22%
		雨漏 Amamori	4	0.97%
		雲鶴 Unkaku	4	0.97%
		金海 Kinkai	3	0.73%
		蕎麦 Soba	3	0.73%
		柿の蓐 Kakinoheta	3	0.73%
		玄悦 Gen'etsu	2	0.49%
		御所丸 Goshomaru	2	0.49%
		玉子手 Tamago-de	2	0.49%
		半使 Hansu	2	0.49%
		割高台 Wari-kōdai	2	0.49%
		狂言袴 Kyōgen-bakama	1	0.24%
		塩筥 Shioge	1	0.24%
		不明・その他 Unknown or other	12	2.92%
Japanese tea bowls	180			43.80%
		楽 Raku	56	13.63%
		うち家元手造 Handmade by the head of a tea school	7	
		美濃 Mino	24	5.84%

		唐津 Karatsu	22	5.35%
		瀬戸 Seto	9	2.19%
		御室 Omuro	9	2.19%
		光悦 Kōetsu	7	1.70%
		高取 Takatori	7	1.70%
		権兵衛 Gonbei	6	1.46%
		萩 Hagi	6	1.46%
		信楽 Shigaraki	5	1.22%
		伊賀 Iga	4	0.97%
		出雲 Izumo	3	0.73%
		大樋 Ōhi	3	0.73%
		乾山 Kenzan	3	0.73%
		朝日 Asahi	3	0.73%
		空中 Kūchū	2	0.49%
		粟田 Awata	1	0.24%
		伊万里 Imari	1	0.24%
		薩摩 Satsuma	1	0.24%
		志賀 Shiga	1	0.24%
		伯庵 Hakuan	1	0.24%
		肥後 Higo	1	0.24%
		備前 Bizen	1	0.24%
		八代 Yatsushiro	1	0.24%
		不明・その他 Unknown or other	3	0.73%
Chinese tea bowls	32			7.79%
		天目 Tenmoku	8	1.95%
		安南 Annan	6	1.46%
		絵高麗 E-gōrai	5	1.22%
		祥瑞 Shonzui	4	0.97%
		珠光青磁 Celadon, jyükō type	3	0.73%
		青磁 Celadon	3	0.73%
		人形手 Celadon, ningyō-type	2	0.49%
Total	411			100.00%

However, there is a large difference in the price Kaichirō paid for each group, which is evident in Tables 3-1, 3-2, and 3-3.<sup>5</sup> Each table is a list of the top ten items and one lowest item in terms of purchase price of the Kōrai tea bowls, Japanese tea bowls, and Chinese tea bowls, respectively. The average purchase price and median has been added at the bottom of each table. The 35 years during which Kaichirō bought and collected art was a period when the prices of goods in Japan rose steeply, and the purchase price does not necessarily reflect the value of each individual item. A comparison of the prices, however, is significant nevertheless considering the consistency in the ratio of the types of tea bowls he purchased throughout the years as demonstrated in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Number of Tea Bowls Purchased by Nezu Kaichirō, Sr. by Year



<sup>5</sup> The names have been revised to match the current names displayed by the Nezu Museum. The tea bowls for which the purchase price was not recorded were excluded from the calculation of the average and median prices. The asterisk (\*) marks items that are not currently found in the Nezu Museum's collection.

**Table 3-1.** Purchase Price of the Kōrai Tea Bowls Bought by Nezu Kaichirō, Sr.

Kōrai Tea Bowls			
	Name	Date of purchase	Purchase price
1	青井戸茶碗 銘 柴田 Tea Bowl, Named <i>Shibata</i> , <i>ao-ido</i> type	1934/5/4	¥111,000
2	井戸茶碗 銘 加賀* Tea Bowl, Named <i>Kaga</i> , <i>ō-ido</i> type	1927/4/6	¥100,000
3	小井戸茶碗 銘 忘水 Tea Bowl, Named <i>Wasure-mizu</i> , <i>ko-ido</i> type	1922/4/21	¥53,200
4	雨漏茶碗 銘 蓑虫 Tea Bowl, Named <i>Minomushi</i> , <i>amamori</i> type	1920/5/26	¥32,205
5	堅手茶碗 銘 長崎 Tea Bowl, Named <i>Nagasaki</i> , <i>kata-de</i> type	1927/2/25	¥30,000
6	紅葉呉器茶碗 Tea Bowl, <i>momiji-goki</i> type	1938/12/16	¥30,000
7	粉引茶碗 銘 花の白河 Tea Bowl, Named <i>Hana-no-shirakawa</i> , <i>kohiki</i> type	1938/12/16	¥30,000
8	斗々屋茶碗 銘 春日山 Tea Bowl, Named <i>Kasugayama</i> , <i>totoya</i> type	1938/12/16	¥30,000
9	御所丸茶碗 Tea Bowl, <i>goshomaru</i> type	1914/1/28	¥22,500
10	大井戸茶碗 銘 宗及 Tea Bowl, Named <i>Sogyū</i> , <i>ō-ido</i> type	1919/12/25	¥20,000
∴			∴
188	高麗茶碗* Kōrai-chawan Tea Bowl	1908/3/4	¥5
		Average price	¥4,689
		Median price	¥1,000

**Table 3-2.** Purchase Price of the Japanese Tea Bowls Bought by Nezu Kaichirō, Sr.

Japanese Tea Bowls			
	Name	Date of purchase	Purchase price
1	色絵鉄仙花文茶碗 野々村仁清作 Tea Bowl with Clematis Design, By Nonomura Ninsei	1927/1/30	¥30,000
2	伯庵茶碗 Hakuan Tea Bowl	1927/3/19	¥30,000
3	鼠志野茶碗 銘山の端 Tea Bowl, Named <i>Yamanoha</i> , Mino ware, <i>nezumi-shino</i> type	1919/12/25	¥20,000
4	信楽茶碗 銘水のこ Tea Bowl, Named <i>Mizunoko</i> , Shigaraki ware	1927/6/14	¥20,000
5	赤志野茶碗 Tea Bowl, Named <i>Asakayama</i> , Mino ware, <i>aka-shino</i> type	1927/6/14	¥20,000
6	黒織部茶碗 Tea Bowl, Mino ware, <i>kuro-oribe</i> type	1937/6/9	¥18,000
7	黒楽茶碗 本阿弥光悦作* Black Raku Tea Bowl, By Hon'ami Kōetsu	1920/2/15	¥14,700
8	黒楽茶碗 銘雪峰 樂道入作 Black Raku Tea Bowl, Named <i>Seppō</i> , By Raku Dōnyū	1938/12/16	¥7,000
9	志野曆茶碗 銘年男 Tea Bowl, Named <i>Toshiotoko</i> , Mino ware, <i>shino</i> type	1939/3/18	¥7,000
10	楽山茶碗 銘小舟 Tea Bowl, Named <i>Kobune</i> , Rakuzan ware	1938/12/29	¥6,500
⋮			⋮
166	黒楽茶碗* Black Raku Tea Bowl	1908/3/4	¥5
		Average price	¥2,015
		Median price	¥600

**Table 3-3.** Purchase Price of the Chinese Tea Bowls Bought by Nezu Kaichirō, Sr.

Chinese Tea Bowls			
	Name	Date of purchase	Purchase price
1	絵高麗白梅鉢文茶碗 Tea Bowl with Plum Design, Cizhou ware group, <i>e-gōrai</i> type	1933/7/26	¥25,000
2	青磁蓮弁文碗 Celadon Tea Bowl with Petal Design, Longquan ware	1937/7/26	¥10,000
3	玳瑁盞 Tea Bowl, Jizhou ware	1937/12/18	¥8,000
4	祥瑞山水鶏文筒茶碗* Tea Bowl with Landscape and Roosters Design, Jingdezhen ware, <i>shonzui</i> type	1937/5/13	¥4,770
5	曜変天目 Tea Bowl, Jian ware, <i>yōhen-tenmoku</i> type	1925/7/1	¥4,000
6	人形手茶碗 銘亜聖* Celadon Tea bowl, <i>ningyō</i> type	1925/12/9	¥3,221
7	絵高麗茶碗 Tea Bowl, Cizhou ware group, <i>e-gōrai</i> type	1927/5/30	¥3,031
8	金天目* Tea Bowl, <i>tenmoku</i> type	1927/6/4	¥2,081
9	珠光青磁茶碗* Celadon Tea Bowl, <i>kyūkō</i> type	1938/6/13	¥2,000
10	安南見込馬茶碗* Annan Tea Bowl with Horse Design	1939/3/20	¥2,000
⋮			⋮
29	天目碗* Tea Bowl, <i>tenmoku</i> type	1938/11/25	¥45
		Average price	¥2,779
		Median price	¥1,500

As these tables show, the tea bowl that Kaichirō paid the highest price for is the tea bowl named “Shibata,” of the *ao-ido* type (Figure 3), which he bought at 111 thousand *yen* in 1934. Investigation and excavation conducted in recent years have found that one of the production sites of the Ido tea bowl, which represents Kōrai tea bowls, is the Ungcheon Kiln Site of Changwon, South



**Figure 3.** Important Cultural Property, *Shibata* 柴田, tea bowl, *ao-ido* 青井戸 type, Korea, Joseon dynasty, 16<sup>th</sup> century, Nezu Museum

Gyeongsang Province (Geongnam Development Institute 2004). Among the Ido tea bowl, the *ao-ido* type refers to the tea bowls which show a straight line from the foot to the rim. The tea bowl in Figure 3 is one of the masterpieces of its kind, depicting the characteristic clean-cut shape and light loquat color of *ao-ido* tea bowls, and has been named “Shibata” 柴田 after the fact that Oda Nobunaga 織田信長, a war lord during the Sengoku period, gifted it to one of his generals, Shibata Katsue 柴田勝家. Afterwards, it was under the possession of Hirase Kamenosuke 平瀬亀之輔 (1839–1908, tea name Rokō 露香), a wealthy merchant of Osaka, until he was forced to part with it in 1903. The tea bowl is also famous for the seal stamped on its box by Hirase with the letters “Though the gathering and dispersal of things cannot be anticipated, may this be sent into the hands of one who can also appreciate its value” 集散不期 願貽同好.<sup>6</sup> It is evident that Hirase Kamenosuke, who was called the “Last Person with Refined Taste,” was deeply sorry to part with this cherished item. The businessman Fujita Denzaburō 藤田伝三郎 (1841–1912) purchased this tea bowl, and in 1934, when the Fujita family put it up for sale, through the antique dealer Kawabe Rikichi 川部利吉, it finally reached the hands of Kaichirō in exchange for a high price.

<sup>6</sup> Since then, the seal with this phrase was stamped on all boxes of the masterpieces released by the Hirase family after this.

The second most expensive tea bowl Kaichirō purchased was the tea bowl named “Kaga” 加賀 of the *Ō-ido* type, which he bought for 100 thousand *yen* in 1927. The museum does not currently own the item because Kaichirō put it up for sale in the following year.<sup>7</sup>

The third tea bowl is the tea bowl named “Wasure-mizu” 忘水 of the *ko-ido* type (Figure 4), which he bought for 53,200 *yen* in 1922. *Ko-ido* referred to tea bowls that were smallish among the *Ido* type. This particular item has been described as a “tea bowl resembling a beautiful person” for its reddish hue and gentle lines of its lovely shape (Takahashi 1926, 70). After the *daimyo* and tea master of the 17<sup>th</sup> century Kobori Enshū 小堀遠州 (1579–1647) wrote “Wasure-mizu” on its box with ink, it was transferred to prestigious households including the hands of Tsuchiya Sagami-no-kami 土屋相模守, the lord of Tsuchiura who followed Enshū; Matsudaira Iga-no-kami 松平伊賀守, the lord of Ueda; Akaboshi Yanosuke 赤星弥之助 and Sakamoto Kin'ya 坂本金彌, who were both modern businessmen; and the antique dealer Tsuchihashi Kahei 土橋嘉兵衛, and was finally purchased by Kaichirō through the art dealer Harumi & Company 春海商店 and Kawabe Rikichi 川部利吉.



**Figure 4.** *Wasure-mizu* 忘水, tea bowl, *ko-ido* 小井戸 type, Korea, Joseon dynasty, 16<sup>th</sup> century, Nezu Museum

<sup>7</sup> This is likely “Kaga Ido” listed in *Unshū Kurachō* (An Inventory of the Collection of Matsudaira Fumai) of Matsudaira Harusato 松平治郷, the seventh-generation *daimyo* of the Izumo Matsue domain (1751–1818, tea name Fumai 不味).





**Figure 5.** Important Art Object, *Minomushi* 蓑虫, tea bowl, *amamori* 雨漏 type, Korea, Joseon dynasty, 16<sup>th</sup> century, Nezu Museum



**Figure 6.** Important Cultural Property, *Nagasaki* 長崎, tea bowl, *kata-de* 堅手 type, Korea, Joseon dynasty, 16<sup>th</sup> century, Nezu Museum

The fourth and fifth tea bowls are the tea bowl named “Minomushi” 蓑虫 of the *Amamori* type (Figure 5), which Kaichirō bought for 32,205 *yen* and the tea bowl named “Nagasaki” 長崎 of the *Kata-de* type (Figure 6), which he bought for 30,000 *yen*, respectively.

Next, the following two are also Kōrai tea bowls that originally would have been among the top-ranking items in terms of purchase price: a tea bowl of the *amamori-kata-de* type (Figure 7) and a tea bowl named “Ueda-Koyomi-

De” 上田曆手 of the *Mishima* type (Figure 8). The former has traces on its surface from long use that tea masters admired as they compared them to the traces of rainwater leaks in the ceiling or down the walls. Formerly owned by the Sakai 酒井 family, this tea bowl, produced out of thin, coarse kaolin, displays a relaxed opening towards the rim. The viscous melted glaze gives off a soft finish, into which fine traces of “rainwater leaks” have formed. Its distinctly stylish beauty has earned it the position as the highlight among the *amamori-*



**Figure 7.** Important Cultural Property, *Tea Bowl*, *amamori-kata-de* 雨漏堅手 type, Korea, Joseon dynasty, 16<sup>th</sup> century, Nezu Museum



**Figure 8.** *Ueda-Koyomi-De* 上田曆手, tea bowl, *Mishima* 三島 type, Korea, Joseon dynasty, 15<sup>th</sup> century, Nezu Museum

type tea bowls. The latter tea bowl named “Ueda-Koyomi-De” has patterns of flowers and lines inside and outside of the bowl, which have been created by carving the design and filling it with white clay. According to Katayama Mabi 片山まび (2005, 158–59), this tea bowl, a form of *buncheong* ware with stamped design, was produced between the 1450s and 1470s and was called “*baragi*” (small, flat, wide-rimmed dish) in the Korean peninsula. It is one of the earliest types of bowls that were chosen for the tea ceremonies in Japan. These two items, which are still regarded as masterpieces of Kōrai tea bowls, used to be among the possessions of the Sakai 酒井 family, which was the household of the former *daimyo* of the Himeji domain. Sakai Tadamasu 酒井忠正, the then family head, invited several antique dealers and collectors in 1927 and sold off his collection, during which these two items were transferred to Kaichirō, a close friend of Sakai, at 15 thousand *yen* each. According to Takahashi Yoshido (1929, 428–29), the Sakai family was able to save 20% of the commission and other miscellaneous expenses by excluding many antique dealers during the sale. In this way, Kaichirō not only obtained art from antique art dealers but also directly from former *daimyos* such as the Sakai family at relatively cheap prices.

Meanwhile, the Japanese tea bowl for which Kaichirō paid the highest price is the tea bowl with a clematis design by Nonomura Ninsei 野々村仁清, from the Omuro kiln in Kyoto. At 30 thousand *yen*, the purchase price of this tea bowl is equal to the Kōrai tea bowl named “Nagasaki,” which ranks fifth in terms of purchase price, and one third of the purchase price of the Kōrai tea bowl named “Shibata.”

As this shows, there was an overwhelming gap in the purchase prices of the Kōrai tea bowls and the Japanese tea bowls. The average and median prices of the two categories also show a stark difference: the average and median of the purchase prices of Kōrai tea bowls are 4,689 *yen* and 1,000 *yen*, respectively, while these figures for the Japanese tea bowls are 2,015 *yen* and 600 *yen* respectively.

The superiority of the tea bowls of the *ido*-type, which are not only the most numerous in total but also take up four places among the top ten Kōrai tea bowls in terms of purchase price, is quite remarkable. From early on, the *ido*-type tea bowls have been appreciated for its formal style and class among the Kōrai tea bowls. During the late Edo period, it is said that the tea bowls could be ranked “1 *Ido*, 2 Raku, 3 Karatsu” in terms of their appraisal (Yabe 2002, 86). Kaichirō had therefore acquired masterpieces of *ido*-type tea bowl that had

gained price as they traveled from hand to hand among prominent tea masters including the warlords of the 16<sup>th</sup> century and the *daimyo* of the 17<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.

The Raku tea bowl, which are the most numerous among Japanese tea bowls at 56 pieces, is a type of tea bowls that were mentioned in *Yamanoue Sōji ki* together with the Kōrai tea bowls and Seto tea bowls. After it was born based the guidance of Sen Rikyū, the Raku tea bowls were produced by the Raku family in the Kyoto. They carry a unique aura from being hand-molded and fired at low temperatures. In 1934, when Kaichirō acquired the tea bowl *Shibata*, the Raku tea bowl *Hayafune* 早舟, which was created by the Chōjiro 長次郎, the first generation of the Raku family, was sold at the high price of 100 thousand *yen* during the auction held by Fujita family (Tokyo bijutsu kurabu hyaku-nenshi hensan iinkai 2006, 619), which shows how some of the masterpieces of Raku tea bowls were already highly regarded. However, because Raku tea bowls were mainly used by the Sen family, which was called “*chōnincha*,” which literally translates to townspeople’s tea, the number of masterpieces traded at high prices is small when compared to the Kōrai tea bowls. Even among Kaichirō’s collection, the most expensive Raku tea bowl he bought was the black Raku tea bowl *Seppō* 雪峰, by Raku Dōnyū 樂道入, at 7 thousand *yen*, followed by the Raku tea bowl *Takano* 高野,<sup>8</sup> by Chōjiro, at 3,745 *yen*, which ranks 18<sup>th</sup> place among the Japanese tea bowls in terms of purchase price.

Despite having learned the way of tea from the Okada Shūko 岡田秋湖, the tea master of the Sen school in Edo, Kaichirō spent his funds on the Kōrai tea bowls that had been passed down among prominent *daimyo* households.

## The Use of Kōrai Tea Bowls during Tea Gatherings

Tea ware, or tea utensils, do not end with their collection. They prove their value as tools, and their individual characteristics are appreciated only when they are used during tea gatherings and present a wonderful combination with the other items of tea ware. When selecting the tea ware to use during the tea gathering, the tea master hosting the gathering considers whether they fit with

<sup>8</sup> This tea bowl *Takano* was sold in 1938 for 4 thousand and is no longer among the museum’s collection.

the class and theme of the occasion as well as the season, their balance with the other utensils, and their ease of use, among others. Accordingly, the selection of tea ware is the best expression of the host's perception and understanding of the way of tea.

A detailed study and analysis of the tea bowls used by Kaichirō has already been conducted by Saitō Yasuhiko 齋藤康彦 (2014, 241–44). However, if we take into the new records that have been found after this study was published,<sup>9</sup> it has been confirmed that Kaichirō held 57 tea gatherings and used a total of 117 tea bowls.<sup>10</sup> These tea bowls consist of 58 Kōrai tea bowls (49.6%), 50 Japanese tea bowls (42.7%), and 9 Chinese tea bowls (7.7%), the ratio of which is largely similar to the ratio of their purchase.

There was a great different in the way he used them, however. For *koicha* 濃茶, tea brewed to have thicker consistency, he favored Kōrai tea bowls; for *usucha* 薄茶, thinner and lighter tea, he preferred to use the Japanese tea bowls. During a formal tea gathering, the host first brews one tea bowl of *koicha* amid solemn silence, which is shared among all of the guests: this is the main event of the tea gathering. The host then brews one tea bowl of *usucha* for each guest, which means that there needs to be many tea bowls specifically for *usucha* during a gathering. Unlike *koicha*, *usucha* is taken amid a light mood while enjoying conversation with the host. An informal, simplified tea gathering may only drink *koicha* or *usucha*.

For instance, in 1918, during the first formal tea gathering Kaichirō held, the part of the gathering preparing *koicha* was held in a small tearoom using a Kōrai tea bowl of the *goshomaru* type (Figure 9), with which he combined serious and dignified items of tea ware including a calligraphy from the 13<sup>th</sup> century. For the tea bowl of *usucha* that followed, however, the guests moved to a more open tearoom, where a picture of Budai from the 17<sup>th</sup> century was hung to lighten the mood. The tea was served in the tea bowl with a water drop design of the *shonzui* type, which had been produced in the Jingdezhen, China, and the Raku square tea bowl by Raku Ryōnyū 了入. The words of the businessman Nozaki Kōta 野崎広太 (1859–1841, tea name Gen'an 幻庵), who was a guest at this gathering, “There is a subtle charm in the change from dense richness to simple lightness” (Nozaki 1923, 209) well express the clear gradient

9 Saitō's study lists 53 tea gatherings by Kaichirō. See Saitō 2014, 36–38.

10 The record of 53 tea gatherings out of the 57 are featured in Shimomura 2015.



Figure 9. Tea Bowl, *goshomaru* type, Korea, Joseon dynasty, 17<sup>th</sup> century, Nezu Museum

between the tea ware used for *koicha* and *usucha* during this gathering.

The sum of the tea bowls Kaichirō used for *koicha* during his lifetime include 39 Kōrai tea bowls (69.6%), 12 Japanese tea bowls (21.4%), and 6 Chinese tea bowls (8.9%). The tea bowls he used for *usucha*, on the other hand, are made up by 19 Kōrai tea bowls (31.1%), 38 Japanese tea bowls (62.3%), and 4 Chinese tea bowls (6.6%). These figures show how the ratio between Kōrai tea bowls and Japanese tea bowls were largely reversed for *koicha* to *usucha*.

Furthermore, each Kōrai tea bowl was used differently depending on its type. For instance, the *irabo* type in general could be both used for *koicha* and *usucha*, but the *ki-irabo*-type tea bowl could customarily only be used during *usucha*. As Saitō (2014, 243) has pointed out, Kaichirō used the *ido* type, *kakinoheta* type, *komogai* type, and *goki* type exclusively for *koicha* and *kata-de* and *amamori* almost always for *koicha*. Meanwhile, *totoya*, *gohon*, and *hansu* types were used only for *usucha*, and tea bowls of the *mishima* type and *hakame* type were used for both.

It is not clear when the use of tea bowls started to be differentiated in this way. For example, when the tea bowl *Wasure-mizu* of the *ko-ido* type was in the possession of Matsudaira Fumai 松平不味, he used it for *usucha* during the tea gathering held on August 18, 1802 (Matsudaira ke henshūbu 1917, 195), suggesting that there was not a clear line drawn between their distinctive uses until the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. However, Kaichirō had separate tea bowls he

used for the more formal and dignified *koicha* and the lighter *usucha*, and the majority of the tea bowls he used for *koicha* were among his Kōrai tea bowl collection.

## Conclusion

There are almost no writings by Kaichirō himself on how he thought about the tea bowls.<sup>11</sup> In this article, however, I have outlined how Kaichirō, who started to collect tea ware in earnest after his first tea gathering in 1918, spent more of his funds on buying Kōrai tea bowls compared to Japanese tea bowls and used these Kōrai tea bowls for the more formal and dignified procedure of preparing *koicha* during the tea gatherings.

This final section will consider the background that led Kaichirō to collect and enjoy using Kōrai tea bowls. One of the circumstances forming this context was the trends of the world of tea utensils during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. An excellent illustration of the appraisal of tea ware during then is *Taishō meikikan* (*Famed Tea Utensils of the Taishō Period, 1912–1926*), edited by Takahashi Yoshio 高橋義雄 (also known as Takahashi Sōan 高橋箒庵), one of Kaichirō's friends (1921–1927). This work, a kind of record of famous items, features Takahashi's review of items he appreciated in person among historically famous tea containers and tea bowls. The entire work of 9 volumes, 11 books, includes the appraisal of a total of 875 famed items—436 tea containers and 439 tea bowls (including tenmoku tea bowls)—along with their photographs. The tea bowls consist of 229 Kōrai tea bowls (52.5%), 153 Japanese tea bowls (34.9%), and 57 tenmoku and Chinese tea bowls (13.0%). In short, the majority of tea bowls that were highly regarded as famous were Kōrai tea bowls. Meanwhile, many of the masterpieces featured in *Taishō Meikikan* were being sold from prestigious households during this period. For this reason, newly rising businessmen like Kaichirō were able to acquire them during this period unlike the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, when class and wealth were more fixed

11 In Nezu Seizan's "*Shin wo banji no moto to nasu*" 信為万事本, which features anecdotes during the purchase of new art works, the tea bowl of the *goshomaru* 御所丸 type used during Kaichirō's first tea gathering is described as "the peach-colored bowl upon the well-finished foot is extraordinarily fine." See Nezu 1938, 41.

overall. Kaichirō would have also been able to obtain information of the secret storages of prestigious households earlier than anyone else considering that he had Takahashi Yoshio, who was well acquainted with these masterpieces, as his friend. It was possible for Kaichirō to buy these highly esteemed Kōrai tea bowls precisely because it was a period when there was much movement among works of art.

Another one of the circumstances forming the background was Kaichirō's presentation of these masterpieces. As I have pointed out in my analysis of Kaichirō's tea gatherings held in the tea houses in "Shodai Nezu Kaichirō no Aoyama hontei no chashitsu" (The Tea House in the Aoyama Residence of Nezu Kaichirō, Sr.) (Shinomura 2024, 58–62), his tea gatherings shifted from the so-called thatched-hut style of tea 草庵の茶, which emphasized rustic simplicity, to the reception-room style of tea 書院の茶, which was a formal affair during which he did not hesitate to present the masterpiece tea wares he owned. This was likely based on his belief that "Making masterpieces widely open to the public serves public good." Thus, presenting prestigious Kōrai tea bowls he purchased from distinguished households at his tea gatherings would have been his true desire of collecting famed utensils rather than keeping them in his private collection.

The Kōrai tea bowls should be said to be the most fitting choice of tea bowls for the tea gatherings held by Kaichirō.

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