

## Profile of TOMIMOTO Kenkichi (1886-1963)

Tomimoto was born in what is now Ando Town, Ikoma County, Nara Prefecture. He enrolled in the Department of Design at the Tokyo School of Fine Arts in 1904 after graduating from Koriyama Junior High School in Nara Prefecture. He majored in architecture and interior decoration and studied abroad in London from 1908 before graduating. After returning to Japan, he developed a wide range of design—related artistic activities, including the creation of woodblock prints, book designs, textiles and leather products.

In 1913, he began to create Raku ware, largely self-taught under the influence of his best friend, Bernard Leach. In 1915, he built a kiln and broadened the range of his pottery to include earthenware, white porcelain, and blue and white porcelain (sometsuke). He moved to Tokyo in 1924 and continued producing mainly white porcelain and sometsuke. After staying in Kutani in 1963, he created overglaze enamel porcelain works one after another. After the war, he temporarily returned to his hometown, Ando Town, before moving to Kyoto. He established a technique for firing gold and silver overglaze enamels simultaneously in a single kiln firing. In 1955, he was designated a Holder of an Important Intangible Cultural Property in the field of porcelain with overglaze enamels, and he received the Order of Culture in 1961. He passed away in 1963.

Based on his belief that patterns should not be copied from existing patterns, he was passionate about designing original patterns without relying on pre-existing ones. He focused on expressing beauty through form and emphasized the importance of artists creating forms by themselves. He was one of the artists who led the modernization of Japanese ceramics.