In 1936, Soetsu Yanagi (1889-1961) founded the Japan Folk Crafts Museum (Nihon Mingeikan) in Komaba, Tokyo at the age of 47. It is known that Yanagi first found the beauty in daily crafts made by unknown craftsmen used by ordinary people, for which Yanagi coined the word ‘mingei’. In addition to the first advocator of Mingei Movement, Yanagi was described as anesthetics, religious philosophers, art critic, and many other terms. This fact indicates that works of Yanagi covered a wide range of fields, and also tells us that it is difficult to describe him in one word.

The collection of Nihon Mingeikan have mainly consisted of old crafts which should be followed by present craftsmen as a basement of Mingei Movement since its foundation. However, reviewing the private collection of Yanagi from pre-‘mingei’ to his late years, it could tell that his collection is broad and diverse as a collection of one individual. For example, Yanagi got interested in formed objects such as wood block printings or reproduced paintings through the western modern art introduced in ‘Shirakaba’ magazines, which Yanagi took part in the launch at the age of 21 in 1910. Then Yanagi began to devote himself to Korean ceramics in the early 1910’s. It is certain that Yanagi already had fine pieces of Eastern antiques such as ‘jar with common reed motif in iron glaze, Karazuri ware’ (designated as Important Cultural Property of Japan in 2003), ‘painted cow, burial figure’, and Buddhist paintings. These private collection were all donated to the museum on the occasion of his 60th birthday in 1949, and have been stored up to today.

As the third exhibition to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the museum’s foundation, we would like to pay attention to Yanagi as a collector who had pursued ‘Belief and Beauty’ throughout his life, rather than an advocator of Mingei Movement. So, on display in this exhibition are the works whose date of collection by Yanagi is clear, centering on crafts of Japan. In this sense, it is a first challenging exhibition consisted chronologically in Nihon Mingeikan. The collection of Old Tamba wares which were collected centrically after the war, the latest collection when he aimed to accomplish the theory of Buddhist aesthetics; thus, we would like to trace the collection of Soetsu Yanagi and look back his life.

**Second Floor**

**Art of Korean Peninsula 1914-**

In 1914, Hakyo Asakawa, who lived in Korean Peninsula at that time, visited Yanagi in Akiko, Chiba prefecture to see a sculpture of Rodin. Asakawa brought a small porcelain jar as a souvenir, which is now housed in the museum as ‘beveled jar with autumn flower motif, cobalt blue underglaze’. Then Yanagi got deeply impressed with this piece, started to collect Korean craftworks like ceramics and porcelain which had not been evaluated yet in those days, and finally in 1924 established Korean Folk Art Museum in Seoul. He had collected Korean crafts for the rest of his life, and his pre-war collection is especially on display.

**Beauty of Daily Wares 1924-1931**

Triggered by an encounter with a sculpture of Eizo Bodhisattva by Mokusui Myojun, Soetsu Yanagi traveled throughout Japan to investigate works of Mokusui. This research trip led him to pay attention to local crafts made by unknown craftsmen unexpectedly. In 1926, Yanagi announced a prospectus for the formation of a museum of folk crafts, and engaged in collecting many crafts all over the country with his friends, potter Shojo Hamada and Kanjiro Kawai, which are introduced in this room.

**Second Floor**

**Establishment of Nihon Mingeikan**

It was just ten years later since the prospectus for the formation of a museum of folk crafts was announced when Nihon Mingeikan was founded. Works introduced in Kegei magazine vol.70, which commemorated the opening of Nihon Mingeikan, and the collection displayed before the war based on photographs at that time could be seen.

**Present Folk Crafts of Japan 1926-1945**

As indicated in the fact that the opening exhibition of Nihon Mingeikan was ‘Exhibition of Works by Present Artists-Craftsmen’ like Kanjiro Kawai, Shojo Hamada, Keisei Serizawa, and Shiko Munakata, crafts which were being produced at that time were enthusiastically collected. In this room, those crafts made throughout Japan are on display along with a great masterpiece ‘Map of Mingei in Japan by Keisei Serizawa which was produced on the occasion of ‘Exhibition of Present Japanese Mingei’ in 1941.

**First Floor**

**Collection of Tamba ware 1949-1961**

Tamba ware was attracting attention at the very beginning of Mingei Movement, but it was actually the late years when they were particularly collected. Most of them are works called ‘kari-hatagi’, with ashes of wood on surface during firing. They benefited from natural resources such as fire, clay, and wood. This room shows old Tamba wares collected by Yanagi during his latest 10 years.

**Abstract and Free Form**

Yanagi, in his latest years, published books like ‘Kise u no Br’ (the beauty of deformation), ‘Chu-sho-bi ni tsuite’ (about the beauty of abstract), and ‘Nihon no me’ (eyes of Japan), and especially paid attention to primitive abstract patterns of tribal crafts or crafts of free form like caricatures or unevenness. On display in this room are mainly works introduced in Mingei magazine vol.63 which featured abstract patterns.

**Buddhism and Aesthetics**

Yanagi sought for principles of beauty crafts bear in Buddhism in his latest years, and he collected many crafts which are related to Buddhism at the same time. In this room, crafts related to the philosophy of the gateway of the Pure Land, which influenced the formation of Yanagi’s idea, Buddhist paintings and wood block prints are exhibited.

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