

Eyes of Sori Yanagi

August. 27th (Tue) – November . 21st (Thu), 2013

On Christmas day in 2011, Munemichi Yanagi (commonly called Sori Yanagi) passed away at the age of 96. Sori, a world-famous industrial designer, took responsibilities as a third director of the Japan Folk Crafts Museum for 29 years (1977 to 2006).

During his days as a director, he made it his task to combine the museum with a modern society or how to revive the beauty of *mingei* in a modern life by planning exhibitions, displaying, and graphic or photographic works such as posters and monthly '*Mingei*' magazines (published by the Japan Folk Craft Association). In addition, he worked hard collecting objects to his eyes with his intuition for the collection of the museum.

For a museum, the act of collecting means a source of its activity and a mirror which reflects its principle. Sori's father Soetsu Yanagi (1889-1961), founder of the museum, distributed to the public a new value of the *mingei* aesthetics by his outstanding eyes. Sori, too, believed that the Japan Folk Crafts Museum should be the place where a pure and simple beauty becomes much brighter. Then he traveled through Japan and many other places in the world with his eyes and foot, encountered various works here and there and collected them for the museum, making efforts to let people know widely the beauty and the value of excellent *mingei* works.

The common aspects between Soetsu and Sori are their innocent interests with daily wares which are produced in a traditional life and the sympathy toward 'unconscious beauty'. Of course, they had different tastes of their own and naturally Sori's unique aesthetics or creative sense could be found in his collection reflected by his tastes. What attracted Sori's eyes especially were those crafts which were produced in a daily life of various areas in

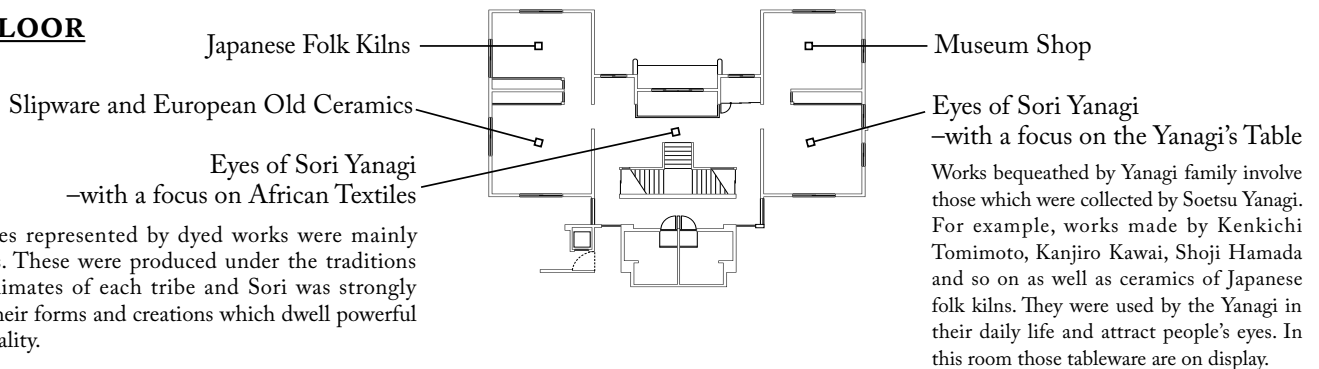
Asia or in Africa, where handcraft works remain in an unmixed plain style still now.

Specifically speaking, the collection by Sori are as follows: ceramics, masks, dyed and woven textiles, moulds for sweets, and *kamon-ori* folding paper which express Japanese traditional aesthetics, things born in Okinawa which reflect its nature and beliefs such as *shisa* of a guardian dog and ceramics, folk paintings, ceramics and wooden works produced by the people in the Chosen peninsula, dyed and woven textiles, masks, unglazed earthenware and metal wares from Africa which bear primitive beauty, dyed and woven textiles with rich and expressive colors and patterns from India, Bhutan, Tibet, Afghanistan etc. Sori collected these works and introduced them enthusiastically in the exhibitions and special issues of '*Mingei*' magazines.

The reason why Sori collected these things was so simple. That is because he found what stimulated his creativity in them. It is needless to say that he would not have a thing which he disliked around him and he even did not pay attention to what would not be revitalized as his creations at all. For Sori, to collect means simply a motivation for his future creativity and energy for living a life.

In this exhibition works collected by Sori Yanagi during his term as a director of the museum as well as those which were bequeathed by Yanagi family are on display. These were definitely Sori's favorite things. Moreover, daily wares produced by Shoji Hamada, Kanjiro Kawai and so on which were inherited from his father Soetsu Yanagi and used in an everyday life are also shown. Here it will be introduced what Sori Yanagi saw in his life and how he made them sources of his design activities.

FIRST FLOOR



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