**Site of the Tengudani Kiln**

One of the oldest former kiln sites in Arita, Tengudani was in use from approximately 1630 through the 1660s. Tengudani is recorded as the first kiln built after the discovery of pottery stone at nearby Izumiyama in the first decades of the 1600s. Pottery stone is high in kaolinite, a necessary mineral to create porcelain, and the quantity of the kaolinite-rich stone at Izumiyama prompted the development of new kilns in the eastern area of Arita. Documents owned by the descendants of the “Father of Arita ware,” a Korean man known to history as Kanagae Sanbe’e (d. 1655), record that Tengudani was chosen as the first kiln location due to its convenient access to water and firewood for fuel. After an initial period of simultaneously producing porcelain and pottery, Tengudani produced only porcelain and is regarded today as the oldest porcelain-only kiln in Arita.

The first of the town’s 66 historic kiln sites to be researched by twentieth-century archaeologists, Tengudani was excavated from 1965–1970 and again from 1999–2001. The initial excavation was the first of an early-modern ceramic site in Arita and was significant for research in art history and geology. The excavations revealed the remains of at least four *noborigama* climbing kilns. The kilns were built to replace each other because the structural integrity of the kiln chambers was gradually weakened by the heat of the fires inside.

The kiln marked at this site was chosen for preservation and public display as it was the most intact of the four. Known as the “B” kiln, it was the second to be discovered and is thought to have been used from the 1640s through the 1650s. At nearly 70 meters long and with 21 chambers, the kiln was unusually large for the time. Saga domain ran the kiln using a lottery system for porcelain producers to “win” the right to use each chamber of the kiln. With the fires lit at the bottom of the hill, the first chambers could be too hot, while the chambers at the top were often too cool to successfully fire the porcelain. Getting the right chamber could determine the success of a craftsman’s pottery as much as his individual skill.

Broken and discarded pieces of porcelain from the Tengudani kiln, known as sherds, have given researchers invaluable insight into Arita’s earliest porcelain production history. A small section of hill has been left exposed next to the kiln to show a “discard pile” of imperfect and broken pieces. The diagonally-shaped accumulation of the sherds reflects the slope of the hill at the time they were thrown away. The actual remains of the kiln are located approximately 80 centimeters below the paved surface, thereby preserving and protecting the remaining unexcavated artifacts.

The ruins of the Tengudani kiln was designated a National Historic Site in 1980 along with the Yanbeta kiln site, Izumiyama quarry, and several other sites. A model of a *noborigama* based on the Tengudani kiln is on display at the History and Folklore Museum of Arita.