

White porcelain pitcher

This pitcher dating from 1160–1170 was discovered nearly intact by archaeologists and was excavated from the bottom of a 5-meter deep wooden well. Only a small piece is missing from the spout, making it a rare and valuable discovery. The pitcher is thought to have been crafted in Fujian province in southeast China. Japanese potters were unable to produce the high temperature required to make porcelain at that time, and therefore imported many wares from China. It was then shipped from a trading port in Northern China to Hakata in southern Japan. The third Fujiwara lord Hidehira (1122?–1187), was particularly active in trading gold dust from Japan for Chinese porcelain, and some consider Hiraizumi to be the easternmost point of the Silk Road.

The pitcher was unearthed in the Shirayama area near Hiraizumi's current town hall, on a site where a resident planned to build a house. Excavations are required prior to new developments due to the area's cultural and historical significance. The pitcher is designated an Important Cultural Property.