

Raku Museum

[TEA & ART]

According to popular belief, sometime in the latter half of the 1500s, the tea master Sen no Rikyu (1522–1591) asked a ceramicist named Chojiro (d. 1589) to craft, for use in a formal tea gathering, a tea bowl in line with Rikyu's *wabi* aesthetic of finding beauty in simplicity and imperfection.

Chojiro created a series of unassuming hand-built tea bowls glazed in red and black. He passed his techniques down to his next of kin, thereby establishing the Raku school of pottery. Sixteen generations of Chojiro's descendants have continued the tradition until the present day.

No Raku master ever teaches his successor directly. Instead, each new generation studies the bowls and other pieces they inherit as models for new works, creating their own style while preserving the Zen-influenced essence of Raku ware.

The Raku Museum is dedicated to displaying and promoting the artisanship and legacy of the Raku family workshop, which is now headed by Raku Kichizaemon XVI (b. 1981). Established in 1976 next to the workshop, the museum houses a 1,300-piece collection comprising tea bowls, utensils, documents, and other items passed down in the family since the time of Chojiro.

The museum holds four exhibitions every year, one in each season. Captions and panels are provided in English as well as in Japanese, and special programs in which participants can hold and drink from actual Raku bowls are also offered.