

### **Gen-emon Pottery History and Vision**

Gen-emon kiln was established over 260 years ago. Since 1753, the kiln has maintained its handmade traditions with very little automation. Gen-emon is one kiln that preserves the highly refined, traditional process that helped make Arita porcelain ware known all over the world. Strict regulations regarding kilns, meant that Gen-emon pieces were fired in shared kilns during the Edo period (1603–1867). With the fall of the shogunate in 1867, the regulations were relaxed, and Gen-emon kiln was reestablished at its current location with a new kiln based on Western designs in the early 1870s.

Until the 1950s, Gen-emon kiln was known for their restaurant tableware. After his father, Gen-emon V's (d. 1962) retirement in 1951, Gen-emon VI (1928–1989) took over the kiln and began producing tableware for use in the home and other household items like patterned fabric based on Arita ware designs and fountain pens made of porcelain. The current head of the kiln, Gen-emon VI's second son Kaneko Shoji (b. 1957), continues to focus production on handmade pieces for everyday use such as teacups and chopstick rests.

Adhering to the tradition of craftsmen specializing in only one aspect of the production process, each stage of Gen-emon porcelain (throwing, underglaze painting, glazing, overglaze painting, and firing) is done separately by different teams. In the workshop, new artisans are seated next to senior craftsmen in order to observe and receive guidance.