

Ginzan Kaminohata Ware and the Kaminohata Pottery Center

Cobalt-blue and white porcelain decorated with motifs of peach, *busshukan* (Buddha's hand) citrus, and pomegranate lines the shelves of the Kaminohata Pottery Center. These simple yet elegant pieces embody the aesthetic of Ginzan Kaminohata ware, Obanazawa's local ceramic tradition lost to time for more than a century.

Kaminohata ware developed at the end of the Edo period (1603–1867), after Yonekitsu Masayoshi (1788–1853), the ruler of the Nagatoro domain (a small portion of present-day Yamagata Prefecture), commissioned potters to build and work a climbing kiln (*noborigama*) in the area in 1833. They created cobalt-glazed porcelain using clay from Kaminohata (near Ginzan). However, the harsh winters of Obanazawa made the kiln difficult to maintain, and it was abandoned after only 10 years. Kaminohata ware all but disappeared until 1980, when local potter Ito Hyodo (b. 1952) resurrected the craft after years of research and experimentation.

Kaminohata ware is often decorated with the traditional *santamon* design featuring three motifs: peach, which represents longevity; pomegranate, which represents fertility; and *busshukan* (Buddha's hand) citrus, which represents good fortune. Original works can be purchased at the Kaminohata Pottery Center, which also offers a painting workshop where visitors can decorate a piece of Kaminohata ware, and a handbuilding pottery workshop.