

***Anagama* Kilns**

This is a diagram of an *anagama*, or “tunnel” kiln, a type of kiln that was first used in Mino in the seventh century. As suggested by the name, an tunnel kiln is built by first digging out a hole in the slope of a hill. This hole serves as the kiln’s single firing chamber. The furnace door and firebox are at the lower end of the chamber, and the damper and flue are at the upper end.

With the firebox at a lower level, the heat naturally travels up into the chamber, firing the ceramics. Using the damper, the flue can be opened or closed to regulate the temperature by allowing more or less heat to pass up and out of the kiln.

The pillar at the front of the firing chamber does not support the roof of the kiln. This fire-resistant stone column is called a “smoke-dividing pillar” (*bun'en-bashira*). These pillars were added to control air flow and create a uniform temperature within the kiln, ensuring that the pieces fired evenly. The smoke-dividing pillar was a particular feature of kilns built in Mino and other ceramic-making centers in central Japan.