

## ***Saiyū* Glazing**

*Saiyū* is a modern glazing technique invented by Tokuda Yasokichi III (1933–2009) and characterized by vividly colored glazes that fuse to create fine gradations. It was designated an Important Intangible Cultural Heritage in 1997.

Yasokichi III was the third generation of the Tokuda family to advance the art of Kutani ware. He studied under his grandfather, the first Yasokichi (1873–1956), who recreated the lost glazes used in seventeenth-century *ko-kutani* ware. Yasokichi I was also known for his skill with overglaze enamel techniques—a legacy his grandson would continue.

Yasokichi III was particularly interested in the “blue” (*aote*) overglaze enameling of *ko-kutani*. This style is distinguished by its avoidance of red in favor of deep green, yellow, purple, and navy blue glazes. He was experimenting with ways to apply these glazes to a more modern aesthetic when he accidentally discovered the liquid, psychedelic color gradations he called *saiyū*. The effect is achieved by using higher-than-normal firing temperatures, causing the glazes not just to fuse to the bisque but melt into one another. The result is hazy spectrums of color often compared to auroras or supernovas.

In 1997, Yasokichi III was named a Holder of Important Intangible Cultural Heritage charged with preserving and promoting *saiyū* glazing. He died in 2009, but he passed the techniques of *saiyū* to his eldest daughter, who assumed the family title of Yasokichi IV (1961–).