

## Japanese Art and Artists of To-day.—VI. Cloisonné Enamels

### JAPANESE ART AND ARTISTS OF TO-DAY. VI. CLOISONNÉ ENAMEL-WORK. BY PROF. JIRO HARADA.

THERE are two distinct qualities or types expressed in Japanese art: one suggesting endless patience in the execution of minute detail, the other denoting a momentary conception of some fleeting idea carried out with boldness and freedom of expression in form and line—profuse complexity and extreme simplicity.\* The people of the West, finding these apparently inconsistent qualities existing in old Japanese art, marvelled at the former quality, and were fascinated by the latter.

While it is impossible to find either type applied exclusively to any one class of work, it must be admitted that certain branches of art industry are more adapted for the expression of one of these artistic qualities than the other. Like damascene work and the decorations on Satsuma ware, the work on Japanese cloisonné ware generally exhibits the quality suggestive of unwearying labour and patience.

Cloisonné enamels are known amongst the Japanese by the name of *shippō*, a contraction of two words: *shichi*, denoting seven, and *hō*, meaning treasures. Some authorities endeavour to trace the term to an old Buddhist book, discrediting the Chinese origin on the strength of this particular ware being referred to in some old Chinese books as "ware of devil's country," suggesting thereby that they were of foreign importation. However, it is obvious that the name *shippō* has been thought most appropriate in Japan, inasmuch as the exquisite beauty of the work gave it the appearance of having been wrought with the seven precious things, commonly known to consist of gold, silver, emerald, coral, agate, crystal, and pearl. The term *shippō* is used by Sōami to record the fact that Ashikaga Yoshimasa, in the second quarter of the fifteenth century, had considered it superior to inlaid work.

\* The writer has endeavoured to point out these two phases in Japanese art in his article on "Japanese Temples and their Treasures," which appeared in the January number of *THE STUDIO*.

Many claim that the ware had been christened *shippō yaki* by the Japanese, although it was erroneously called *oranda yaki*, or Dutch ware, by Kaji Tsunekichi and others, when a piece of it falling into his hand led to his discovery of this art after years of hard labour, and to the manufacture in 1832 (or 1839 according to some accounts) of a plate six inches in diameter, the first piece of modern cloisonné enamel as we know it to-day.

While the writer keenly feels the need of a complete and systematic record of the development of this art, no attempt will be made in this short treatise to meet that want. Interesting as a minute account of the modern struggle during the last fifty years or so to develop *shippō* in Japan might prove to be, it is not the intention of the writer to make any effort along those lines. The purpose of the present article is little more than to set down a few observations which have occurred



ANDO JUBEI'S ENAMEL ARTISTS AT WORK

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PAIR OF CLOISONNÉ VASES. BY ANDO JUBEI (NAGOYA)

to the writer in connection with this branch of Japanese art, particularly as to certain characteristics of the Japanese people which are revealed in its treatment and craftsmanship. At the same time we shall not omit an introduction to a few of the best-known cloisonné artists of the present day, together with their work, however casual that introduction may prove to be.

It will be well to describe briefly at the outset the different kinds of *shippō* wares now produced. They are generally classified under two heads according to the quality of the paste: (1) *doro-jippō* (*shippō* becomes *jippō* when in combination with another word preceding it) or opaque enamel, and (2) *suki-jippō*, or translucent enamel. The enamels are applied to the metal base or foundation in one of two ways: (a) Those parts of the design which are to be filled with the paste are channelled either in casting or by indenting, or (b) cloisons are formed by the aid of thin wire to receive the paste. The former is more properly called *champlevé*, while the latter is designated *cloisonné*. But the Japanese term *shippō* is applicable to both. It is also applicable to what is known as cloisonless enamel-work (commonly called *musen-jippō*) and to *shōtai-jippō*, or bodiless enamel (known as "transparent or plique à jour cloisonné"), in which the copper foundation is removed, generally by chemical process, leaving only the vitrified enamel, as also to several other variations.



ANDO JUBEI'S MARK

(Silver wire with red, white or green enamel)

The ordinary enamel-work with wire is called *vūsen-jippō*; the variety in which the work is slightly raised in relief by means of applying an extra amount of enamel is called *moriagé*; another variety in which the foundation is hammered out wherever the relief effect is required is called *uchidashi*. Still another variety with translucent red enamel without any cloisons, but generally with carving on the base, is known to manufacturers as *akasuké*. Porcelain and other materials are sometimes used, but a copper base is employed for practically all opaque enamels, also for *akasuké*, as an equally brilliant red cannot yet be obtained upon any other metal. Silver and gold are used



CLOISONNÉ VASE  
BY ANDO JUBEI (NAGOYA)

as bases for the translucent enamels; those with a silver base being known as *gin-jippō*, and those with gold as *kin-jippō*. Translucent enamels are also used, either in part or whole, for *gin-bari*, a variety in which the copper base is covered over with silver paper, giving it the appearance of a silver foundation.

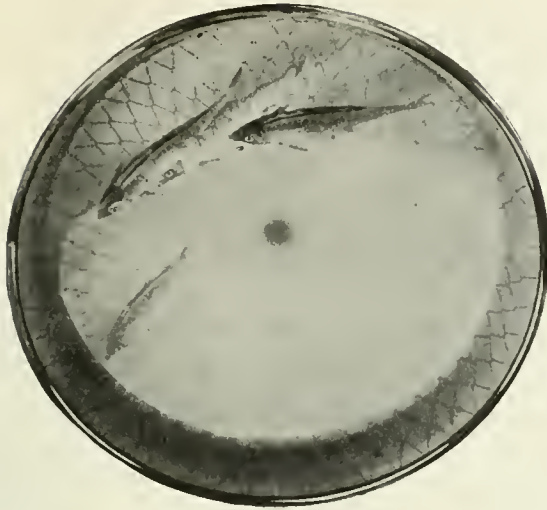
A few terms used to designate different designs



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CLOISSONNÉ ENAMEL INCENSE  
BURNER. BY ANDO JUBEI OF NAGOYA.



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CLOISONNÉ PLATE BY ANDO JUBEI (NAGOYA)

may also prove to be of some value. When the monochromatic ground of the ware is of a light colour the piece is described as *usuji*. When the design is old, more after the old Chinese pattern (with *kara-kusa*, or ornamental vine scroll), generally with heavy wires, the cloisonné is said to have *kodai-moyō*. The rainbow-coloured enamel made to run from the top of a *shippō* piece of recent development after the fashion of a porcelain glaze is called *nagare-gusuri* (streaming or flowing glaze).

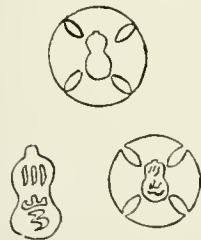
Here a few words about the technique of enamel decoration may prove of interest. Let us take an ordinary example of *yūsen-do-jippō*, a copper cloisonné enamel. To prepare the base a piece of copper is hammered out into the desired shape and form, the surface being made smooth. Upon this copper base is traced with a brush in indian ink the design to be executed, which has been originally painted by an artist on paper or silk. Then thin wires or ribbons of gold, silver, or copper are placed edgeways upon the lines of the drawing with great accuracy in order to make the cloisons. The narrow metallic ribbon is cut into sections of various lengths and curved into the forms required, exactly fitting the lines of the drawing. In the more carefully made pieces the ribbons are not only bent but beaten

with a hammer so as to obtain varying thicknesses of lines, and the ends of the wires filed so as to ensure that they meet perfectly.

The endless patience required, and the great difficulty involved in this preliminary part of the enameller's art, can be imagined when we learn that it is not unusual to find more than one hundred pieces of ribbon set in intricate designs in a space of one square inch. The writer has now before him a cigarette-box, made by Kumeno



CLOISONNÉ VASE BY KAWADE SHIBATARO (NAGOYA)



KAWADE SHIBATARO'S MARKS  
(Silver wire filled with enamel)

Teitaro of Nagoya, about three and a half inches long and a little less wide, literally covered with tiny butterflies, most delicate wire being used to give form to two sets of wings and a pair of antennæ for each butterfly. At an arm's length the box appears to be covered simply with shapeless dots, and it is only by a closer examination that thousands of butterflies of perfect shapes and beautiful colours can be appreciated. How the minute work has been done is still a mystery to many of his friends.

A vegetable glue made from the root of a species

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of orchid is used to make these pieces of ribbon adhere to the base. Then powdered enamel or fine solder-filings are sifted over the work, which is then subjected to a gentle heat, thus securing the cloisons. Enamel pastes of various colours

patronage. It is only in comparatively recent years, most markedly within the last few years, that *shippō* began to find a place in Japanese homes as an ornament. As is so often the case with arts and crafts, there are two more or less distinct types of enamel-work, one designed for foreign markets and the other for the home market—at least, such is one of the latest developments. However, in *shippō*, the distinction between the two types is not so well marked as in other crafts, as cloisonné has not yet won an honoured place on

大吉

OTA KICHISABURO'S  
MARK



GONDA HIROSUKE'S  
MARK



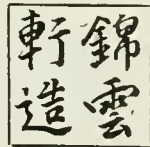
CLOISSONÉ BOWL  
BY KAWADE SHIBATARO (NAGOYA)

are then, with the aid of a bamboo pen, jammed into the cloisons formed by the wires, thus carrying out the design. Different firings are necessary, as some enamels do not fuse as easily as others, and since different layers of enamels are required to attain the desired effect. Finally the surface is polished with stones of different grades of coarseness, then with powdered charcoal, finally with hartshorn mixed with rape-seed oil. However, in the preparation of *musen-jippō*, the process of firing in order to fix the cloisons is omitted. When the cloisons are filled with the paste the enamel is left to dry in the shade, and then the ribbons are pulled out before the work is put into the oven. Afterwards these ribbons are relaid on vitrified enamel and another layer of paste is applied. Thus the process is repeated until a perfect pictorial effect is attained.

Intricate as the process is, the modern cloisonné manufacture happens to be one of the few industries in Japan which have been developed chiefly by European



OTA TAMESIRO'S  
MARK



THE MARK OF  
INABA NANAHO  
(KINUN-KEN)

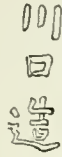


CLOISSONÉ VASE, BY KAWADE  
SHIBATARO (NAGOYA)

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the *tokonoma* or post of honour in the Japanese house. Specimens of the ware are found in what are known as the "European rooms" in Japanese houses,\* either as decorations, when they are in the form of vases set on the mantelpiece or plaques on the walls, or as articles of use, such as cigar or cigarette boxes on tables. It is but natural that the true Japanese taste should make a concession here, giving in to what is termed "foreign taste," a term generally applicable to that which is vulgar according to the true Japanese standard. It may be added that an incongruous combination of gay and brilliant colours is generally considered the prime factor in "foreign taste," whereas harmonious blending of subdued tones is essential in order to appeal to the more æsthetic sense of the Japanese. A weird

The development of this misconception in regard to foreign taste has worked disaster. It is deplorable when any art is degraded in order to please a buyer. The ludicrous part of it all is that in the West, especially in America, this



KAWAGUCHI'S  
MARK



MIWA TOMISABURO'S MARK  
(Carved into silver)



CLOISSONÉ VASE  
BY HATTORI TADASABURO (NAGOYA)



CLOISSONÉ BOWL BY TSUKAMOTO TOJURO (NAGOYA)

combination of absurd colours in the designs of *shippō* wares, as well as in other articles, is often the logical consequence of the former notion.

\*It is quite common nowadays in residences of fairly well-to-do people to have an annexe built in European style, or at least a room furnished in European style.

depraved art, adapted with a view to winning Western favours, and in which the true Japanese ideals are sacrificed, is believed to be characteristic of Japanese workmanship. However, it is but fair to add that this failure to appreciate what is best in the other's art has been mutual, as may be realised from the fact that after several years' experience of selling Western goods in Japan an American firm in Yokohama was at last obliged to instruct the exporters in the West to "ship articles of the ugliest shapes and colours that can be found."

Appreciation for such objects cannot outlive a better knowledge of the nation by whom they are produced, nor can the more *outré* cloisonné enamels continue to be acceptable when produced under such false



THE MARK OF  
TAMURA



THE MARK OF  
ADACHI  
(Both carved into metal)



“WILD DUCKS.” A PAIR OF CLOISSONÉ PLAQUES (ACTUAL SIZE 2×4 FT.) MADE FOR THE S.S. KUMANO MARU BY NAMIKAWA SOSUKE (TOKYO)



清川惣助

NAMIKAWA  
SOSUKE'S  
MARKS

circumstances. The *shippō* industry is already suffering a heavy penalty—at least that class of ware which depended solely upon the capricious demand of the West co-existent with ignorance of the Japanese and their artistic ideals. Let us take as an illustration the case of Toshima, a village a few miles from Nagoya. It is known properly by another name, that of *Shippō Mura*, which means “village of cloisonné wares,” because directly Kaji Tsunekichi, a native of the

village, rediscovered the forgotten art of cloisonné manufacture and started its modern development, the whole village—of a considerable size—turned its entire attention to this industry, each craftsman guarding his own secrets and discoveries, until at one time the inhabitants of *Shippō Mura* turned out no less than seventy per cent. of the total cloisonné enamels produced in Japan. But nearly all the kilns in Toshima are now idle and their workshops closed, while the annual output of Japanese cloisonné has dwindled during the last six years to less than one-third of what it used to be. The appearance of the village was almost unbearable to the writer when he re-visited it nearly two years ago, and remembered the thriving





SILVER CLOISSONNÉ VASE. BY  
KUMENO TEITARO OF NAGOYA.





CLOISONNÉ PLAQUE

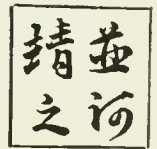
BY NAMIKAWA SOSUKE (TOKYO)

are produced—Nagoya and its vicinity, Kyoto, and Tokyo, the last two places having learned the art from the first, where the bulk of cloisonné enamels are still produced at the present day. It may be well to note that there is a certain class of work known as “Kyoto *iippō*,” in which the whole surface of the piece is generally covered with decoration of gilt wire, which used to be the characteristic production of Kyoto, while in the product of all other branches the artist aimed chiefly at pictorial effect, placing a design in a

state of affairs that had greeted his eyes on the occasion of his former visit made several years before. The whole aspect of the place suggested something little short of a tragedy. While we are conscious of various other causes (one of which we shall deal with later) contributing to this downfall, it is our belief that the keynote of the tragedy lies in a misconception of Western needs and the flooding of Western markets with cheap, low-class wares. This mistake dates especially from the time of the Paris Exposition in 1900 and was carried on until the close of the St. Louis World's Fair in 1904. It was in that period that an enormous amount of cheap *gin-bari* was made at Toshima and sent out of Japan. This was the immediate cause of the decline and was assisted by a better knowledge of things Japanese on the part of the buyers.

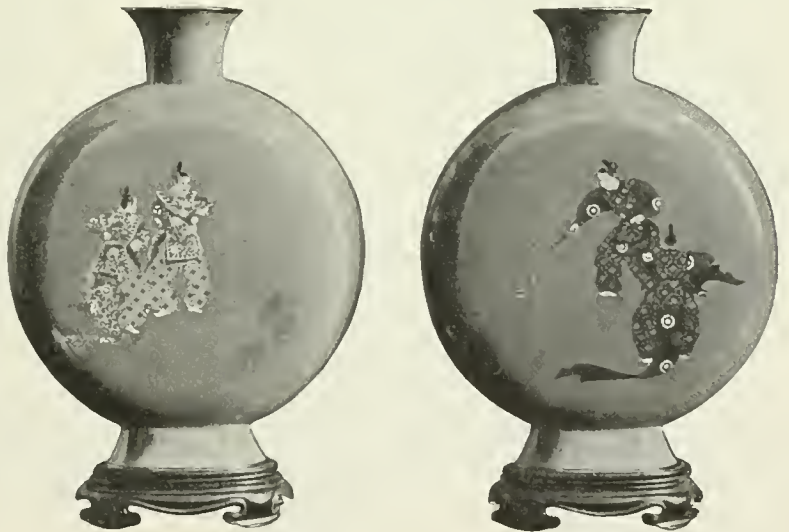
monochromatic field of a pale or dark tone. But “Kyoto *iippō*” has long been manufactured at Toshima, where every variety of *shippō* ware has been successfully produced.

Thus, although the local peculiarities of the product have largely disappeared, it will still be of some interest to observe a few salient points in the life and work of famous *shippō* artists of more recent times who are to be found in these localities.



NAMIKAWA  
YASUYUKI'S  
MARK

It must be stated, however, that some fine specimens of this work are still being produced, although the practical ruin of the industry at Toshima indicates the general decline of the enameller's art as an industry throughout Japan. For the production of *shippō* ware there have been three centres, speaking in reference to the locality in which they



ENAMEL VASES WITH GOLD WIRE CLOISONS

BY NAMIKAWA YASUYUKI (KYOTO)

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ENAMEL SCREEN WITH GOLD WIRE CLOISONS  
BY NAMIKAWA YASUYUKI (KYOTO)

Tokyo—if, indeed, we may not say Japan—has never had a greater *shippō* artist than Namikawa Sōsuke, who died a year ago last February. Credit should be given to him for first elaborating a device by which a large surface of the piece is covered with monochromatic enamel without the use of cloisons. Namikawa Sōsuke is also credited with the invention of *musen jippō*, or “cloisonless enamel.” The excellence of his workmanship in this particular method can well be discerned in the thirty-two plaques now decorating the walls of the palace of the Crown Prince of Japan. *Moonlight on the Sea* and *Wild Goose under the Moon*, two plaques in *musen* which were exhibited at the Palace of Fine Arts at the Japan-British Exhibition, are some of his last triumphs in the execution of difficult subjects by a still more difficult method. His work is now carried on by his grandson, and there is no one else in the capital whose work has any distinction.

While there are in Kyoto a few *shippō* artists of some note, such as Takahara Komajiro—who continues to produce “Kyoto *jippō*” and has recently made some considerable improvement in the ware, giving it the appearance of damascene work—and Inaba Nanaho, who produces some excellent specimens of *gin-jippō* and *yūsen-do-jippō* with intricate work in wires, none have excelled Namikawa Yasuyuki (or Seishi) in the utmost delicacy of craftsmanship and perfection of technique, in purity of design, harmony of colour, and subdued tone. Some of his marvellously minute workmanship can best be appreciated under a magnifying glass, bespeaking his endless patience

and the faithful quality of his labour. He has never lowered his standard of production. His work is strictly high class, and he excels in the employment of fine gold wires in the most intricate of designs. He is the only Court artist now living among the *shippō* manufacturers.

A few names, at least, must be mentioned in connection with Nagoya. Perhaps the best-known Japanese *shippō* manufacturer is Ando Jubei of that city. He and his brother Jūju have done much for the encouragement of this art industry. It was late in 1881 when Kaji Sataro, a grandson of Kaji Tsunekichi (already referred to), came to Ando for his



HAYASHI KODENJI'S  
MARK



CLOISONNÉ VASE  
BY HAYASHI KODENJI (NAGOYA)

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CLOISONNÉ CIGAR-BOX

BY ANDO JŪJU

assistance, as Kaji Sataro was unable to carry on his business; and that was the beginning of Ando's engagement in the present undertaking. Ando's rare insight in noting what is best suited for the time and his valuable judgment of colour and form, together with the talent to get the best out of each of the large number of expert enamel artists that came to work for him, enabled him to send out unusually good specimens of *shippō* ware. He has one large factory, but he also has many artists in different parts of Nagoya and Toshima working exclusively for him. But his reputation was established chiefly by the splendid work turned out by his chief enamel artist and designer, Kawade Shibataro, who is deservedly considered the greatest enamel expert in the manufacture of *shippō* at the present time. Perhaps no other living person has done more towards the improvement of Japanese enamels and the invention of new methods of application than Kawade. He has been engaged in the *shippō* industry for the last forty years, and the advantage of his scientific knowledge and his indefatigable devotion to the work have enabled him to invent new colours in enamels. Both *uchidashi* and *moriagé* are the result of his untiring efforts. Kawade has recently found a novel way of decorating his pieces with rainbow-coloured porcelain-like glaze called *nagare-gusuri*. He also excels in the production of *musen jippō*.

Mention should also be made of Kumeno Teitaro (or Shimetaro) of the same city. While the honour

of being the inventor of *gin-jippō* (silver cloisonné) is claimed by many, the success of *gin-jippō* is no doubt due to Kumeno's discovery of a method that prevented the enamels covering the silver foundation from getting cracked in the course of a year or so, as was formerly the case. According to Kumeno's own story related to the writer, he happened to notice, while waiting for a train at the station one day, that a considerable space was allowed where the rails were joined. When it was explained to him that the space was necessary for



CLOISONNÉ INCENSE JAR AND LID

BY ANDO JŪJU (NAGOYA)

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the expansion of the steel in heat, an idea flashed through his mind that the difficulty with *gin-jippō* might lie in the fact that the silver base was too thick to allow of a uniform contraction and expansion of the metal with the enamel covering it.\*



BODILESS OR "PLIQUE À JOUR" CLOISSONÉ VASE.  
BY HATTORI TADASABURO (NAGOYA)

He began hammering the silver base very thin, and the result proved satisfactory.

Hayashi Kodenji of Nagoya, now eighty years old, is another great benefactor of this art industry. How devoted he was to his art will be recognised when it is remembered that he exhausted his ample wealth in struggling to manufacture and improve *shippō*, and that in order to obtain further capital for his work by selling his productions to foreigners at Yokohama (though it was unlawful then to sell gold, silver, copper or iron to the foreigner) he walked the whole distance of nearly five hundred miles from Tushima to Yokohama and back, disguising himself as a silk merchant, and carrying his *shippō* in cocoon baskets suspended from the ends of a pole across his shoulders. His wares are still noted for the excellent quality of their monochromatic enamel and for faithful technique.

Again, there is Hattori Tadasaburo, noted for

\* It is an interesting fact that the conscience of the *gin-jippō* manufacturers made them use fairly thick foundations in order to give weight, as the pieces fetched enormous prices.

the *shōtai-jippō* or "transparent cloisonné"; Hayakawa Kamesaburo and Ichikawa, the best manufacturers of *akasuke*; and such others as Miwa Tomisaburo, Tsukamoto Tojūro of Tushima, Gonda Hirotsuke, and Kawaguchi Bunzaemon. But space does not permit a detailed account of them and their work. Suffice it to note here that Nagoya is still the centre of the *shippō* industry, which is one of the principal industries of Owari province.

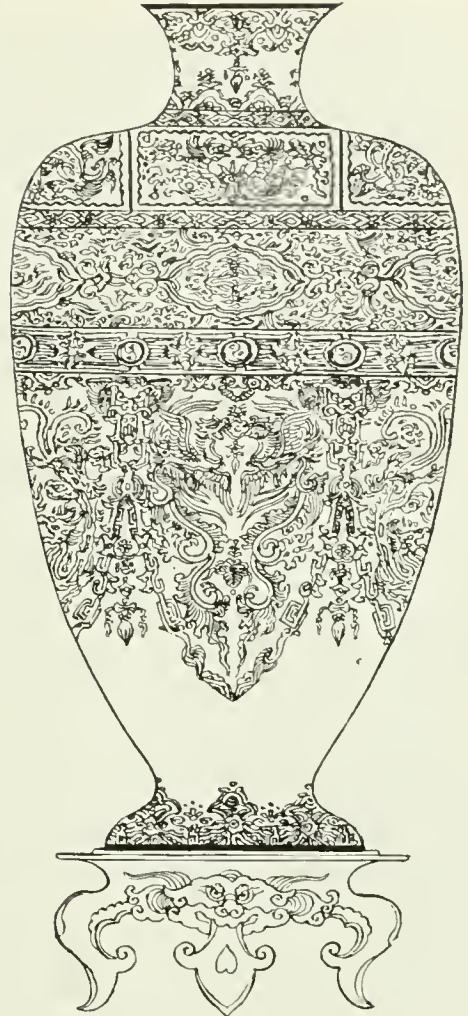
The characteristics indicated in the quality of this work in cloisonné enamel and its development are unswerving devotion and steadfastness of purpose, combined with a spirit of sacrifice, entailed by the lack of scientific methods of investigation. A glance at the history of any of the *shippō* artists will be sufficient to convince us of the extreme hardships encountered by the craftsmen in trying to obtain a result by haphazard yet infinitely laborious experiment, always with the hope that the patient worker might be fortunate enough to hit on a new and valuable secret. They wooed chance with loyal constancy, taking every rebuff cheerfully. Two or three concrete instances which illustrate the strange conditions under which



CLOISSONÉ VASE. BY MIZOGUCHI KANAE (NAGOYA)



DRAWINGS ON COPPER BASE FOR CLOISSONNÉ ENAMEL



BY OTA TOSHIRO (TOSHIMA)

Japanese enamellers have developed their art may be mentioned. First, the chance observation at a railway station by Kumeno, already alluded to. Then the case of the craftsman who stumbled on the secret of *chakin* (tea gold) while experimenting with copper, some shavings of which fell into the molten enamel and gave an exquisite golden lustre. Another instance was the discovery, by a mere smell of burning wood, of a grey enamel by Hayashi while he was working under Dr. Wagnel in Tokyo, to whom the enamellers of Japan as well as porcelain manufacturers owe so much of their success. Such stories might be multiplied, but these should be sufficient to indicate the somewhat haphazard way in which the *shippō* artists arrived at their most treasured secrets, though they worked with great constancy of purpose.

At the same time another national trait may be discerned, namely, the love of overcoming diffi-

culties, which leads to the adoption of a more difficult method even at the expense of its effect upon the art itself. As the manifestation of this idiosyncrasy in Japanese music has been somewhat disastrous, it is to be feared that *shippō* may suffer in like manner. Are not *musen* and *nagare-gusuri*, whose characteristics consist in the heroic achievement of effects properly inconsistent with cloisonné art, clear manifestations of this idiosyncrasy? The artist is in danger of becoming merged in the clever craftsman, and the art itself of being lost in the pursuit after enormously difficult technique. However, it is perhaps merely a matter of taste.

But it is people's taste that often determines a vital point in art. The difference in the points of view from which



GONDA HIROSUKE'S MARK

## The Turin International Exhibition

East and West appraise and appreciate an art object is another factor which may have serious effects. In Japan the object is admired or condemned chiefly on its own intrinsic merits without regard to its decorative appeal. Most of the articles decorating our *tokonoma* are *decorated*, not *decorative*, art objects, whereas in the West the decorative quality is nearly always demanded. As is the case with many other Japanese works of art, much of the best cloisonné depends for its appeal on fine workmanship, which can only be appreciated on close examination, and it has but little value as a decoration in a room. As the cloisonné industry depends largely on its Western markets, this difference in the point of view between the artists who produce it and the people who buy it is bound to present a serious difficulty. The problem is whether the characteristic Japanese genius for fine workmanship can be made to produce a definitely decorative object suitable for ornament in a Western home, without sacrificing both the Japanese artistic ideal and the essential characteristics of cloisonné art.

Such problems are not confined to the future

of *shippō* art. They confront the new Japanese art, which aims at the perfect harmonisation of the best in Occidental art with the best in Japan's own art. Not the least interesting phase of such a problem will be to determine the value of technique in relation to its effect on art, especially in a country like Japan where particular importance is attached to the spiritual and idealistic side of art. Suffice it to note here that there is a strong tendency even in *shippō* art to aim at that which is most difficult regardless of the effect obtained.

JIRO HARADA.

### SOME NOTES ON THE TURIN INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION. BY ALFREDO MELANI.

It is somewhat difficult for foreigners to understand why, in celebrating her Jubilee, Italy should have wished to hold International Exhibitions both at Turin and at Rome, instead of concentrating her efforts upon one important display. Not only Italy herself, but also the other



FRONT ENTRANCE VIEW OF THE HUNGARIAN PAVILION, TURIN EXHIBITION

EMILE TÖRY AND MAURICE POGÁNY, ARCHITECTS