

Kashima Ikkoku

Kashima Ikkoku (鹿島一谷) (1898-1996), also known as Kashima Eiichi, was one of the most talented metalworkers in Japan, certified as a Preserver of Important Intangible Cultural Properties, or Living National Treasure, for his mastery over his craft. A few pieces created by Kashima Ikkoku are now part of Liang Yi Museum's permanent collection of Japanese objects.

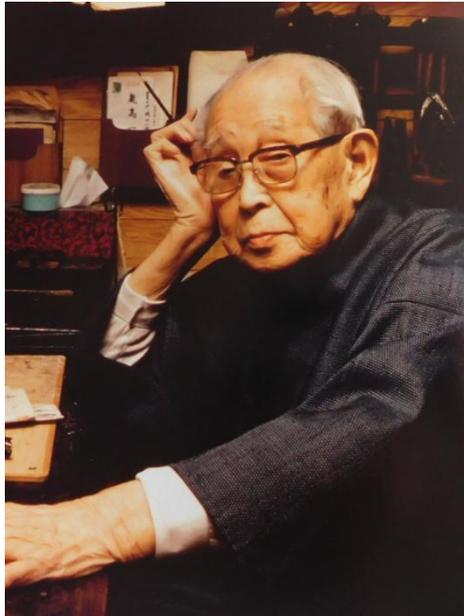


Figure 1. Kashima Ikkoku (1898-1996)

Biography

Kashima Ikkoku was born in 1898, the eldest son in a family of metalworkers specialising in the traditional overlay technique of *nunome-zogan* (布目象嵌, lit. cloth inlay); a metal-on-metal inlay technique using a thin metal plate as the base, and a hammer and *meikiri* chisel to create a surface texture similar to weaved cloth¹. Usually, silver or gold foil is gently placed on the textured surface, then hammered and smoothed to create delicate patterns. He studied the technique under his father Ikkoku Mitsutaka (一谷光敬) (d. 1918), an Imperial Artist to the Meiji Emperor (1852-1912), and his grandfather Ikkokusai Mitsutaka (一谷齋光敬) (1846-1925)². At the age of 14, Kashima Ikkoku began to study under the father-and-son metalworkers Sekiguchi Ichiya (1850-1933) and Sekiguchi Shinya (1877-1932), the former having apprenticed under Goto Ichijo (1791-1876), and learned metalworking skills such as engraving, inlaying, glazing, colouring, making stands, brazing, and alloy compounding techniques³.

In 1918, after his father passed away, Kashima Ikkoku took over the family business at the age of 20 and began producing accessories and jewellery, such as *obi* accessories (*obidome*) and hairpins. However, Kashima was not satisfied with the repetitive designs, and began to create his own design. His abilities and techniques flourished, and in 1929,

¹ Ford Hallam, 2018

² Tokyo National Research Institute for Cultural Properties, 2021.

³ Masuken 2017

he was invited to the 10th Imperial Exhibition, winning a prize for his piece “*Flame Pattern Metalwork*”⁴. In 1932, he won an award with piece “*An Obore (or obore shirogane, a copper and silver alloy) Tray with a Mandarin Duck pattern*” during the 13th Imperial Exhibition; and in 1949, he won an award for the piece “*A Metal Buffalo Vase*” in the 5th Japan Fine Arts Exhibition⁵.



Figure 2. A golden pagoda-shaped śarīra reliquary with turtle base, circa 618-1333, Toshodai-ji Temple. As a national treasure of Japan, this reliquary is the oldest of its kind.

After the Second World War (1939-45), Kashima Ikkoku furthered his mastery over metalworking under Unno Kiyoshi (1884-1956) and Kitahara Senroku (1887-1951)⁶. In June 1955, Kashima Ikkoku participated in the founding of the Japan Kogei Association. By March 1957, he had become part of the Cultural Property Protection Committee for his *nunome-zogan* technique, and took measures to preserve the technique through written records. He also engaged in the conservation and preservation of national treasures, such as the golden pagoda-shaped śarīra reliquary with a turtle base at Toshodai-ji Temple, Nara in 1964, and important cultural properties such as the round metal votive plaque carrying the image of the Guanyin at the Jakushoji Temple, Yamagata in 1965.⁷

⁴ Tokyo National Research Institute for Cultural Properties, 2021.

⁵ Tokyo National Research Institute for Cultural Properties, 2021.

⁶ Masuken 2017

⁷ Tokyo National Research Institute for Cultural Properties, 2021.



Figure 3. A round metal votive plaque carrying the image of the Guanyin, circa 1263, diameter 75.7 cm, weight 60kg, Jakushoji Temple.

Kashima Ikkoku held his first solo exhibition in 1984 at the Nihombashi Mitsukoshi Main Store. He held more solo exhibitions in 1988, 1993 and 1995, and in 1990, a joint exhibition with Otomaru Kodo (1898-1997) titled, '*Living National Treasure Otomaru Kodo • Kashima Ikkoku*'. Shortly after, in 1996, Kashima Ikkoku passed away in his home in Tokyo at the age of 98.

In the collection

Liang Yi Museum houses a few objects made by Kashima Ikkoku. The first piece is a pipe, or *kiseru*. There are two types of *kiseru*; the *rau-kiseru* and the *nobe-kiseru*. Both constructed with a lip, mouthpiece, 'goose neck', and bowl, but while the former has a stem (usually made from bamboo) to separate both ends, the latter has a body made entirely from the same material.

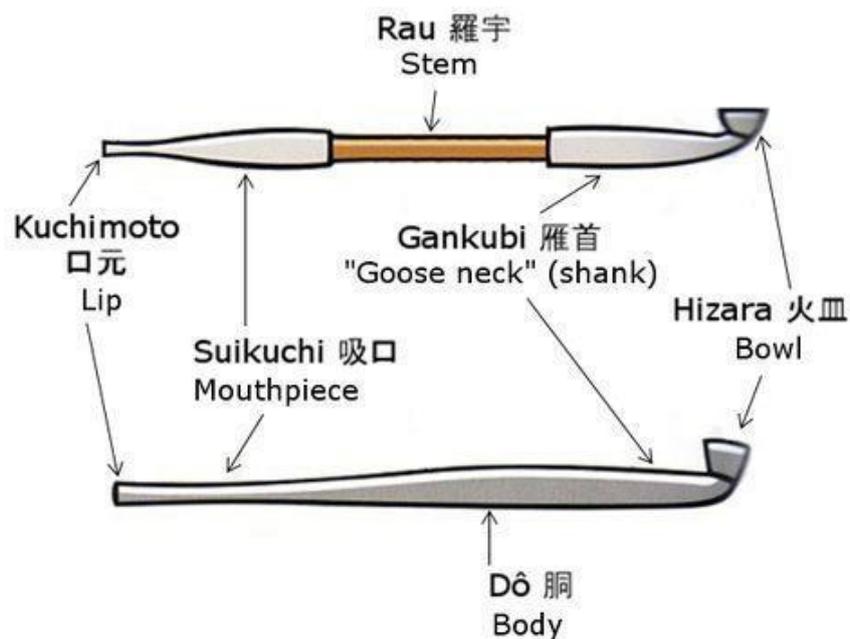


Figure 4. *Kiseru* types (*rau* and *nobe*)



Sekishū 石州



Joshin 女信



Kōdaiji 光大寺

Figure 5. Styles of *rau kiseru*

This piece (fig. 6) is a *rau-kiseru* with the mouthpiece, ‘goose neck’ and bowl made from *shakudo* (a tradition *irogane* metal, lit. meaning coloured metal, *shakudo* is a type of copper alloy usually containing percentages of gold or silver, and sometimes, small percentages of iron and arsenic as well), and a bamboo stem in the style of a *sekishū rau-kiseru*, one of the most commonly seen styles of *kiseru*.



Figure 6. *Rau-Kiseru*, Marked: Kashima Ikkoku, Meiji Period, bamboo, *shakudo* and gold, Length: 18.9cm, Liang Yi Museum Collection.

The *kiseru* is decorated with inlaid gold foil in a design reminiscent of Japanese paintings of birds and a waterside scenery using the *nunome-zogan* technique. The technique creates multiple indentations for the gold leaf to adhere to, and a bamboo chisel is used to drive the metal leaf further into the grooves¹¹. Copper punches are then used to smooth the surface and polished to finish. This technique has a clear advantage as it applies inlays without heating the metal surface and requires minimal use of precious metals in the inlay.

¹¹ Ford Hallam, 2018



Figure 7. *Tabakoire* Fittings, Marked: Kashima Ikkoku and Toyokawa Mitsunaga, Meiji to Taishō Period, Various Materials, Dimensions Vary, Liang Yi Museum Collection.

Additionally, 7 pieces from this set of *tabakoire* fittings (fig. 7) were also made by Kashima Ikkoku. *Tabakoire* are pouches used to hold tobacco leaves, and the fittings can be exchanged to customise the pouch to personal preferences. *Tabakoire* was hung from the *obi* of traditional clothing (fig. 10 and fig. 11) and apart from being a functional yet decorative accessory, it can also be a symbol of one's power and wealth. Tobacco pouches were seen as a luxurious good, and was included in luxury prohibition orders issued during the Edo period; for example, the prohibition orders in 1704 prohibited the use of gold and silver on tobacco pouches, which suggests the extensive use of these precious materials in its production¹². Consumers continued to enhance the value of these accessories and, at the same time, evaded prohibition orders by using small amounts of gold and silver on metal parts, as seen in the following examples (fig. 8 and fig. 9).

¹² Masayuki Handa, 2014, p. 7



Figure 8. *Tabakoire* Fitting, Marked: Kashima Ikkoku, Copper and Gold, Meiji to Taisho Period, Liang Yi Museum.



Figure 9. *Tabakoire* Fitting, Marked: Kashima Ikkoku, *Shakudo*, Meiji to Taisho Period, Liang Yi Museum.

Due to the restrictions, tobacco pouches and their fittings also turned to highly refined and sophisticated designs in order to show the good taste of the wearers. Accessories that hung from the *obi* were called *netsuke*, and the tobacco pouches could also be customised by interchanging front metal fittings (*maekangu*). These decorative accessories were used by all social classes and even some commoners would commission skilled craftsmen to carve intricate designs on the metal¹³.

¹³ Masayuki Handa, 2014, p. 7

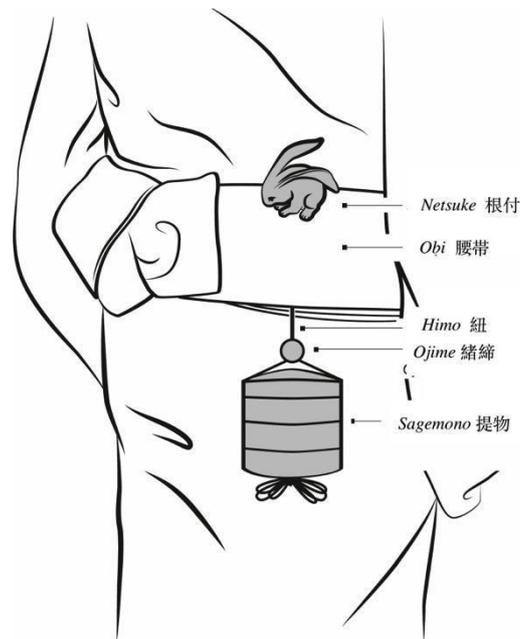


Figure 10. Diagram demonstrating how *netsuke* and *sagemono* were worn.

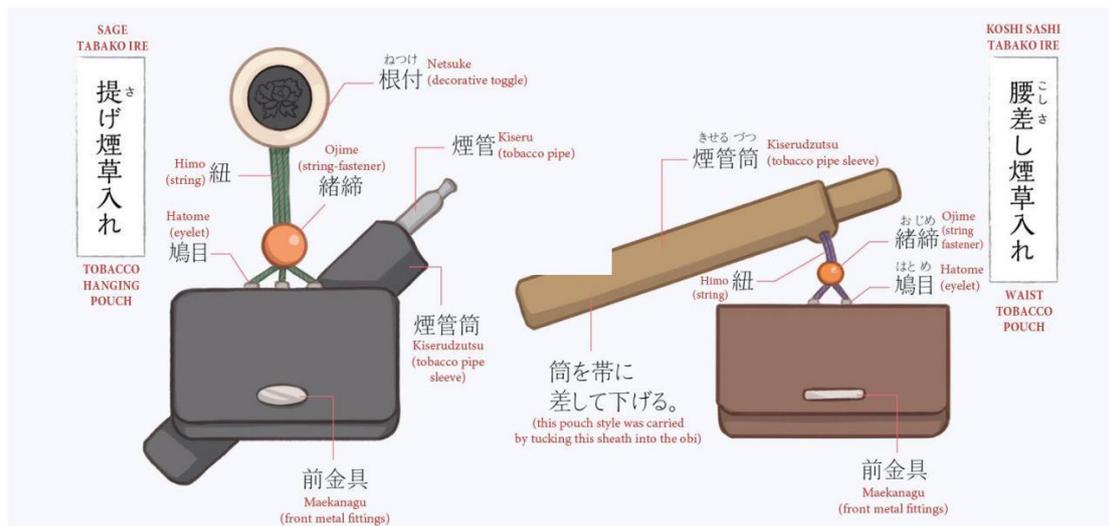


Figure 11. Diagram demonstrating the different styles.

圖 11 不同類型的煙草袋

Other examples of *tabakoire* fittings in this set by Kashima Ikkoku include fig 12, made entirely from silver, with an *amenbo* or *mizusumashi* (water strider) design to represent the summer season; fig. 13 and fig. 14 are fan-shaped fittings. Fig 13 is made from *shibuichi*, another traditional *irogane* copper alloy made from one part silver and four parts copper, and is decorated with a peony, the ‘King of Flowers’, symbolising good fortune, bravery and honour; on the other hand, fig 14 is made from copper and decorated with a soaring crane. In Japan, the crane traditionally symbolises good luck and longevity.

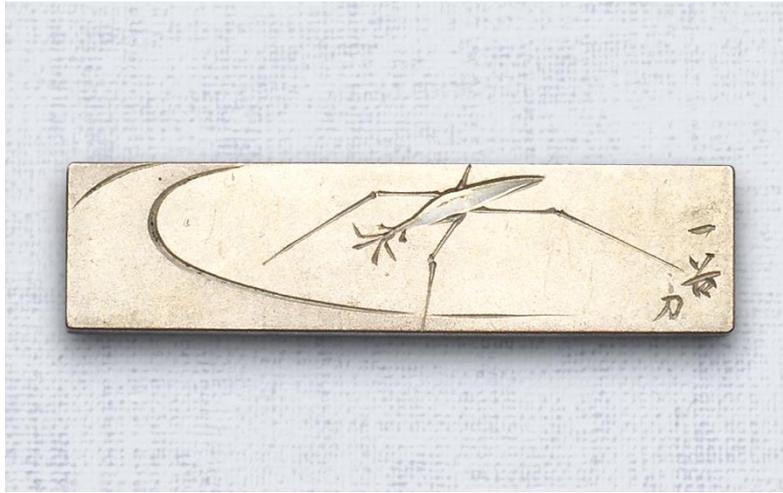


Figure 12. *Tabakoire* Fitting, Marked: Kashima Ikkoku, Silver, Meiji to Taisho Period, Liang Yi Museum Collection.



Figure 13. *Tabakoire* Fitting, Marked: Kashima Ikkoku, *Shibuichi*, Meiji to Taisho Period, Liang Yi Museum Collection.



Figure 14. *Tabakoire* Fitting, Marked: Kashima Ikkoku, Copper, Meiji to Taisho Period, Liang Yi Museum Collection

Kashima Ikkoku's techniques that have been passed down his family over centuries and the skills he honed over the decades he worked as a metalworker are evident in every piece of work he has produced. As such, it comes as no surprise when Kashima Ikkoku was officially made a Living National Treasure in 1979. Today, his craft survives through his grandson Kashima Kazuo, and other fine art metalworkers that studied under him, such as Ōsumi Yukie and Ford Hallam.

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