San Francisco between 1858 and 1912: Gate of Japanese Ceramics to the United States

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In 1858, the Treaty of Amity and Commerce was concluded between Japan and the U.S. Since the opening of the trade channel, ceramic ware had been one of the most important exports from Japan. These wares were shipped out from Yokohama to trading ports on the West Coast, and the U.S. became the leading importer by 1870s. The Port of San Francisco was the major destination, and tens of thousands of ceramic wares came through the Golden Gate. During the Meiji era (1868-1912), ceramic art of Japan reached one of its peaks. Works by leading potters were praised with many prizes in international expositions, and some were regarded as valuable as their European counterparts.

This presentation will discuss what kinds of Japanese ceramic wares arrived to the Port of San Francisco and how. It will also explain a brief history of Japanese ceramics of the Meiji era, and how they found a way to the U.S.

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