



KOREAN AND JAPANESE CERAMIC HERITAGE

National discourse, cultural institutions and people
shaping views on an inter-cultural relationship



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Introduction

We live in an age of comparison, Nietzsche contemplated, where a plurality of customs, ideas, morals and cultures live side by side. He supposedly reacted to urbanisation and the respective use of 'folk cultures' as a commercial means to be labelled as the most attractive urban centre (Baumann 1999:81). Bauman positions this thought of Nietzsche as an foretelling of what a hundred years later would still be true to contemporary dynamics: "he envisioned living people as the active negotiators of culture and cultural difference" (Baumann 1999:82). This idea was a concern about the developing Western nation states and the use of culture, but this concern was also applicable to other regions than western Europe. On the other side of the earth, a similar process on 'folk cultures' and an equal modern idea of 'nation building' was emerging in Japan and Korea.

Nationalism and national narrative were also developing since the birth of the nation state in Japan and Korea. Korea had its struggle developing to this state, but nevertheless solidified its own rhetoric on national culture, despite, or even because of the harsh environment of colonisation and occupation, in which it created its identity and solidified its own rhetoric on national cultures (Choe, Lee and De Bary 2000).

Apparently, national heritage, identity and equilibrium of the nation-state are inevitably tied to each other. When drawing on Bauman's three phases of 'culture' there is a link between the phases of heritage (and the parallel phases of capitalism) according to Harrison (2013:146). In phase number two, heritage is used as a means of state regulation and subject to a nation-building project (Harrison 2013:146). Phase number three sees the rise of commercialised heritage experience and marketing. Japan and Korea seem to reside in between phases two and three, as there still exists an idea of culture as symbol of the nation and institutions that are responsible for marketing of culture, often representing tradition in an essentialist form (Harrison 2013:147).

As heritage is tied to a nationalist discourse, it only creates a cultural wedge between Korea and Japan. Japan and Korea are addressed as countries that do not (yet) engage in the promotion of multi-culturalism (Harrison 2013:143). Their relationship with heritage, as will become clear throughout this thesis, seems to be partially derived from these national conditions. Thus the certain features of modernity that Nietzsche was concerned with in the past are indeed still relevant today.

As nation states attempt to create a stable society they actualise policies to aid in the creation of identities that coincide with a national goal of legitimacy. Identity and the nation state are inseparable as they both influence each other's existence. After all, if nations are not capable of producing an imagined community, an overarching identity which acts as the cohesive matter that keeps a nation stable, the modern nation state would have no legitimacy to exist. Without the reason to believe in the imagined community, the state's power becomes obsolete (Anderson 2006).

When creating identity, simultaneously, the 'other' is inherently defined. Hegel's notion of othering is as addressed by Brons (2015) something to keep in mind while reading this thesis, because this demarcation of the other and the self, has had practical effect on the relationship between South Korea and Japan.

Othering is a practice that, tacitly or explicitly, manifests itself in creating and believing an identity. This is especially relevant with national identities having much tension between them throughout history, as is the case with the relationship between Japan and (South) Korea. Manifestations of othering can have the effect of distancing oneself from the imagined other. This happens through defining the other relative to oneself, often as inferior, and in more radical

cases alienating the other entirely (Brons 2015).

While othering is, in most cases, seen as negative, Brons explains that in some cases, it can be applied in a reflecting way. For example, a concept of fluid culture can create a constructive interaction for the ones involved, as they recognise, compare, and value each other. To create a link with pottery as a craft, present in both Japan and Korea, this theme of valuing each other can be fulfilled through constructive artistic exchanges between potters.

The idea of 'the age of comparison' and people as agents of how cultural difference is perceived and acted upon is an underlying notion in this thesis. As will be discussed in chapter three, this human agency is on the forefront of my reasoning for positively influencing the connection between two peoples. In some cases this agency may affect institutions, functioning within their respective national and heritage discourses, especially concerning the field of pottery craftsmanship. While national heritage discourse might have created views of hierarchical structures among and within Japan and Korea, the individual agency of craftsmen is one of the possibilities for cultural development (Ahearn 1999).

Although the actions of individuals are always, in some way, influenced by larger social and political structures, this relationship is not one-sided. In a mutually constitutive way, human actors can exchange dialogue, influence each other, to challenge a discourse. The human dynamic in pottery culture is explored in chapter three, attempting to present the way in which Korean and Japanese individuals and groups, despite being influenced by political and social discourses, have a way to impact those very structures themselves (Ahearn 1999).

Heritage policies have helped the creation of identity via its own discourse on the national history and corresponding culture. The Korean and Japanese pottery heritages will be used as means to illustrate how heritage can become attached to the idea of the nation-state and its essentialist cultural identity (Harrison 2013).

In contradiction pottery culture as a whole can also contribute to the cultural connectedness or views of cultural fluidity. Thus the Korean and Japanese historical connection of pottery will be illustrated first. Cultural discourses will be analysed and placed side by side, followed by an analysis of stories of people and institutions active in the Korean and Japanese pottery heritage.

An inflexibility in viewing culture as a fluid entity prevails, because mainly Japan has not shifted away from absolute standards on heritage, such as aesthetic value (Harrison 2013:145). The way heritage policies, cultural institutions and the government cooperate on creating a favourable, recognisable image of Japanese and Korean culture is testament of the continuation of the discourse of their distinctiveness (within pottery). Chapter two tries to explain how such discourses came to be. As Benedict Anderson said, nationalism has to be understood by aligning it with the large cultural systems that preceded it, as it evolved from it or struggled against it (Anderson 2006:12).

As we look further into how pottery heritage is related to national narratives, Japan seems to have a stronger connection between national discourse and craftsmanship, hence the focus on Japan in chapter two. This Japanese focus on craftsmanship is discussed as part of the national discourse as I map ongoing importance of pottery as a prestigious art form.

My research question is the following: can pottery heritage act as a cultural connection that could challenge the Korean and Japanese cultural discourse and in this way promote cultural fluidity between Japan and Korea?

This is not only a question of heritage as a means to create a stable nation-state and to legitimise the government's policies, but also a question of how far the national discourse actually reaches and if we are able to oppose the structure in which institutions are responsible

for creating an essentialist 'tradition'.

Trough posing pottery as a platform of cultural connection and fluidity I am looking for possible ways to challenge the discourse on cultural identity that have developed in both countries. Firstly chapter one will discuss the historical connection trough pottery. It will feature a rough outline of the earliest found pottery in both countries and the earlier proof of cultural exchange of pottery. The centre event of this chapter is the *Imjin* war in the late sixteenth century. This war also marks the clear contributions Korean pottery heritage has made to the Japanese pottery culture. By analysing historical reasons for taking the pottery to Japan the tea ceremony and Korean tea wares become central to the historical pottery connection. This historical overview is then linked to a contemporary story on Korean identity and being a potter in Japan.

After this historical perspective on pottery I will first examine what the historical and social context was in which a cultural essentialist discourse could develop. In chapter two Japan's history of how nationalism and heritage are intertwined is first reviewed. I will try to map the social-political milieu of the twentieth century and what the nationalist beliefs are that arose at certain times. I will then introduce the rise of heritage and their focus on craftsmanship as being part of the nationalist discourse. The history of heritage in Korea is told in a similar build-up. Starting from the colonial era I will discuss briefly what caused heritage policies to become relevant in Korea and how they interact with the government.

The connection of craftsmanship being a part of nationalistic discourse and its consequences will be explained in the paragraph on the National Living Treasure programme. And after discussing how heritage and nationalist principles came to be, there is a critique on how craftsmanship heritage is acted upon. The end of the chapter is marked by a critique on the effects of policies on craftsmanship.

Chapter three is providing an insight of what institutions and craftsmen themselves do according to the principles explained in chapter two. I will illustrate some of the effects of the discourses and powerful positions institutions have on the pottery culture in Japan and Korea. To contrast the power of discourse the agency of craftsmen will be addressed and an analysis of how potters engage with the other in fruitful ways. The interaction between potter as craftsmen will be displayed and connected to chapter one, as these potters work in traditional styles but each on their own find a connection with the style or artistry of the other.

The aim of this thesis is not to claim that Japanese and Korean ceramic heritages are one and the same. They have their own material characteristics and meanings. Nevertheless this is an endeavour to shift perspective, too take pottery as a platform where one can see similarity and unity within a heritage discourse that focusses on distinctiveness which creates no room for acknowledgement of the historical development and other facets of pottery where they might overlap.

Due to time and space limitations this thesis is not able to discuss the whole scope of socio-political and economical influences on the course of how pottery and this craftsmanship is perceived or enacted upon. Also the influence of Chinese ceramics is not discussed since this poses as a whole new topic of intercultural relations. Thus the focus will be on in what context the heritage discourse and legislation of Japan and Korea has developed and how this affects the dynamic of the pottery industry. In opposition to this discourse or view of craftsmanship is the concept of cultural connectedness or fluidity which is presented in historical accounts and contemporary artists and people who feel a connection. What is shown here is what the heritage discourse brings about, how this is not the indefinite truth about pottery heritage, and how and why people seek out each other's pottery heritage. Resulting is the proposition that sharing

pottery practices and ideas might be a step towards an acknowledgement of cultural connectedness, and ultimately the strengthening of socio-cultural bonds.

Methods

A considerable part of this thesis is rested upon historical information that I took from multiple secondary sources on history of Japan and Korea itself and on the history of their pottery. By comparing sources I could fill in information that in other sources was left out or phrased differently. Through a literature study I tried to sketch a historical context of heritage and pottery. Since my Asian language skills are of a beginner's, the Japanese and Korean sources used were largely pre-translated webpages of official cultural organisations.

I found an adequate amount of books on heritage policies and descriptions of a Japanese and Korean national discourse in English. But since there is a dearth of English language sources on Japanese and Korean potters themselves I analysed many video's to construct an image of their relationship with pottery and the national discourse, but also to see if there were hints of international cultural interaction within the pottery world.

Note on transliteration

For the Romanisation of Korean the Revised Romanization system (RR) will be used as it is the most simple and this thesis is not of linguistic nature. For the same reason the Romanisation of Japanese will be done in the simplified fashion of the Hepburn Romanization system. Thus with some terms I will disregard pronunciation for a focus more on the concept itself instead of the phonology. For specific Japanese terms such as *daimyō*, a letter from the revised Hepburn system is used to portray the long vowel 'oo' or 'ou'.

Korean names are written in the original order of family name first and given name second. The same will be done with Japanese names where the family name is placed before the given name. I will be using the last name to address a person after mentioning the entire name. As some sources used their own spelling of names there is a chance that some of the names are not corresponding well to their pronunciation. Place or area names will not be in italics, but terms and specific concepts and styles are, for example the *satsuma* style was made in Satsuma prefecture.

Chapter 1 Historical connection and its resonance with pottery

Since the dawn of humankind, pottery has played a role in civilisation. Pottery can be used to pinpoint geographical expansion or migration of a people. Using pottery in archaeology can be a way to determine events surrounding civilisations. This historical consciousness of pottery is also what illustrates some iconic events in the history between Japan and Korea, which are briefly outlined below, but it may also link the contemporary relationship of each respective ceramic tradition since there are many people interested in the Korean and Japanese pottery of the past. The content of this thesis argues that these pottery cultures were never completely separate from each other.

Pottery has existed as long as there is human civilisation. Both Japan and Korea are known to have unearthed pottery styles as old as 10.000 or 15.000 years of age. The Jōmon pottery in Japan dates back to the Late Pleistocene, around 12.000 to 15.000 years ago. Found earthenware pottery corresponds with this age (Kaner 2013:302). The oldest example of pottery in Korea is from the Neolithic age around 10.000 years ago as the *deotmuni togi* (earthenware with clay appliqué decoration) found dates from 7.000 BC (Kang 2008:23). Along the span of Korean and Japanese history there have been several important events that exerted influences on each other's pottery industry.

Around 400 A.C. there was a migration from Korea to Japan. Korean migrant potters established the stoneware technique in Japan, firing at higher temperatures and creating harder wares that were less porous (Cort 2008). This cultural exchange resulted in the *sue* (or *sui*) pottery production during the Kofun period (c. 300-552) in Japan. Kofun burial goods often were similar to Korean burial objects of the same era. During the same era the Chinese writing system was introduced in Japan indicating that they had strong ties with the mainland at that time (Sadao and Wada 2010: 32). Again in the Nara period (710-794) the Japanese try to grasp the Korean and Chinese *celadon* styles themselves as the green-glazed wares from the Korean Goryeo dynasty (918-1392) were very popular among collectors (Sadao and Wada 2010:72). But this cultural assimilation in Japanese pottery, relatively harmonious, becomes obscured in the face of the war between Japan and Korea at the end of the sixteenth century.

Japanese warlord Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1536-98) tried to overtake the peninsula because of aspirations to march onto China (Berry 1982:208). The reason Hideyoshi was interested in Korean potters was partly the importance of the tea ceremony as an aristocratic symbol of political influence (Sadao and Wada 2010:192).

Around the sixteenth century in Japan, the tea ceremony (*chanoyu*) gained a position as an aesthetic ritual that was developing into a 'politics of tea' (Varley and Elison 1981:187-188). In the Muromachi period (1337-1573) the tea ceremony is characterised by the concept of *kanso kotan*, known as 'plainness and refined simplicity'. Tea utensils usually had a 'used' and imperfect look (Varley and Elison 1981:203-204). During this time the Japanese adopted the tea bowl shapes from Korea. The elaborate or refined finished Chinese ceramic style (*karamono*) was replaced by a new trend. Tea ceremony aficionados were becoming more interested in the roughened Japanese *wamono* aesthetic (Varley and Elison 1981:208, Takamasu, 2005:18). Korean ceramics having these aesthetics drew much attention from Hideyoshi and other lords fighting in the war. The invasion of Korea was hence also known as the 'Ceramics War' (*yakimono sensō*) in Japan (Mitsumasa 1980:77).

The style the Japanese were most appreciative of was *buncheong* ware, and it quickly became treasured by the Japanese as tea-bowls and as cultural assets (Kang 2008:135). This appreciation still seems to resonate in contemporary times, because Japanese museums still

exhibit Korean *buncheong* and other antique wares, sometimes even as ‘national treasures’ (Kang 2008:135).

The exact scale of the influence of the Korean potters brought to Japan is hard to pinpoint. It is claimed that the pottery centres on the southern island of Japan, Karatsu and Satsuma, are true to be established by Koreans (Gorham 1971:4). Although it is believed that the Karatsu centre was established by Koreans from an earlier exchange who also brought the multi-chamber climbing kiln (fig. 1) to Japan (Takamasa 2005:20).

According to an older collectors compendium on Japanese pottery the popular *hagi* tea wares originate from the early sixteenth century when later a Korean potter renamed Korai Saiyemon started making tea wares of Korean shape (Franks 1906:45). As the style was revived in the twentieth century, it remains popular today (Wilson 1995:34). Thus influential tea ware styles such as *karatsu* and *hagi* have a direct relationship with Korean potters and their styles of the past.

It is said that the porcelain industry in Japan was only able to exist because of the knowledge of Korean craftsmen (Swope 2009: 233) acquired by many fief lords through the *Imjin Waeran* (1592-1598). Korea had developed a porcelain industry after China’s shift from celadon to porcelain, using a purer type of clay that fires at higher temperatures. The potters at the royal kilns of Gangjin of the Goryeo period dispersed during the founding of the Joseon dynasty (1392-1910) and started creating *buncheong* wares with a white slip glaze (fig. 2) and later created white porcelains (fig. 3) at the same kilns (Kang 2008:126, 131, 136).

The first porcelain kiln in Japan was supposedly established by a Korean going by the name of Ri-sanpei, who was brought to Japan in 1592. This kiln at Tanaka-mura is better known as the Arita kiln (fig. 4). This kiln would have the Arita region expand to be the porcelain centre of Japan. It is said that the Japanese porcelain industry would not have survived had the Korean potters not found the specific resources around the Arita region (Wilson 1905:144, Ohashi 2005:20).

1.1 Historical awareness

Some Satsuma potters still have a linear historical connection with the Korean immigrants. The *daimyō* (fief lord) of Satsuma brought many Korean craftsmen to his county in Japan, which led to the development of the satsuma porcelain style (Franks 1906:73-74). The Korean styles, techniques and knowledge spread quickly, and few decades after the start of the Edo period, during the Shoho period (1624-47), the Yatsu-shiro style kiln was established to make wares derived from the original satsuma style that still resembled *buncheong* style wares (Franks 1906:76) (fig. 5).

A potter in Japan named Chin Yukan works in this Satsuma style, carrying the name of the Japanese fiefdom that brought Korean potters to Japan. He recalls under which circumstances his ancestors were brought to Japan. "Our experience and endurance made us strong.", "Nothing can break me down.", he tells his interviewers (Wehrfritz and Takayama 2002). In contemporary times the Korean ancestors that made *satsuma* wares possible live on in people who are aware of their cultural ties.

The Japanese in the sixteenth century went beyond their collectors interest in Korean pottery and started to assimilate and use Korean styles and techniques. Their interest stemmed from the importance of the *chanoyu*, or tea ceremony. The parallel that could be drawn here is that there is still a cultural interest in the tea ceremony as embodiment of the Japanese culture

and ideals, and that the Korean tea-wares still exist within the same dynamic of the prestigious tea ceremony as back in the sixteenth century. Korean wares are still sought after by collectors and tea masters¹. This contemporary social interest will be further discussed in chapter three.

In this way they have become a contributor to the development of the tea-culture and Japanese tea-wares, as they have merged on this cultural front of tea-bowls and utensils. Taking into account the comments of the Satsuma potter, it could be stated that Korean tea wares have a living connection with the Japanese ceramics culture as the artist is aware of the style and influence origins. This confirms the pre-modern historical relationship with pottery as a link between the countries that is still alive in the contemporary pottery realm. Nevertheless, taking into account numerous events in modern history, some of which will be discussed in chapter two, will this connection appear less relevant to the contemporary nation state?

From the outside, it seems as if Japan is residing in a state of inflexibility or inaptness to look at Korea's contribution to the pottery heritage and Korea also does not seem to be in a hurry to seek out the contemporary connection, but instead lingers on past events. Chapter two will shed light on the most shaping events and thoughts that helped create the discourses that could explain the disinclination of engaging in a cultural connection (of the subject of pottery).

¹ 'Arirang Prime - Ep225C03 Young Japanese potters visit in Boseong to learn how to make Joseon-style ceramics', available at <<https://youtu.be/zbDAWT42MM4>> (last accessed on 13th December 2016).

Chapter 2 The relationship of national discourses with heritage and craftsmanship

Japan and Korea are both countries where heritage legislation was in place before any UNESCO charter took hold (Yang 2003:33; Akagawa 2015:48). Both countries saw their identity as something valuable and to be protected around the second half of the nineteenth century. Both countries took countermeasures against westernisation in the form of folklore programmes and revitalisation and other searches for nostalgia and identity.

This chapter will outline how heritage saw its growing hold in Japan and Korea within the modern context. A connection will be made between heritage policies, heritage industry born from anxieties and self-consciousness, and the discursive narratives that focus on uniqueness and distinctiveness. The effects of the rise of heritage will be discussed in relationship with ceramic heritage, since legislation surrounding craftsmanship or folk art is also central to Japanese and Korean heritage programmes (Pai 2013:8; Akagawa 2015:52-53). What drove them to form their version of nationalistic heritage concepts and what were some of the consequences of the implementation of heritage and its political role and commercial power? How are craftsmanship and the heritage discourse connected and what socio-political discourse keeps them from being recognised as a cultural connection?

2.1 The history of heritage, connoisseurship and nationalism in Japan

As Anderson (2006:12) noted the connection between nationalism and culture should be understood in perspective. Therefore an outline of the history of the context from which such a nationalism originated is important. In Japan the idea of distinctiveness of the Japanese culture already stemmed from the *kokugaku* (national learning) idea from the seventeenth and eighteenth century, in which scholars created a cultural gap between China and Japan (Akagawa 2015:36-37) as means to construct Japanese identity. ‘Nihonjinron’ stems from the search of identity in the absence of other symbols such as a national anthem and flag, and grew as a cultural nationalism in the 1980s when economic success boosted confidence and pride (Akagawa 2015:36-37; Befu 2001). ‘Nihonjinron’ as the core of Japanese identity is persistent in redirecting Chinese or Korean cultural influences, focusing only on the more recent Western influences as opposed to the pure ‘Japanese’ culture.

Prior to the modern period, Japan had an abundant history of collecting and inheriting, but the start of a modern heritage concept was initiated in the nineteenth century. Temples and shrines held onto precious objects for centuries, objects which in the second half of the nineteenth century were asked to be displayed when the concept of the museum was introduced in Japan along with the influx of western concepts of culture and heritage (Pai 2013:38, 56). This second half of the nineteenth century marked the start of heritage in the modern context. Westernisation gnawed at the base of Japan’s national consciousness while it enabled heritage to grow institutionally.

During the Meiji period (1868-1912) collections of artefacts, and historical monumental physical remains (of tombs) were used to ‘brand’ Japan for a world audience and legitimise the emperor and his regime (Pai 2013:60, 64). All organisation surrounding heritage, education, research, and promotion were monopolised under the imperial state government (Pai 2013:108). Heritage became a form of the self-promotion of the state, while also materialising the Japanese identity the people within the fast changing society were looking for.

The Meiji government pursued a combination of Eastern traditionalism and Western technologies (Varley 2000:251), mirroring the public and scholarly debates of the times. A movement called Seikyōshu (The Society for Political Education) advocated preserving the 'national essence' because they aligned with the idea that diversity among the nation states of modern times should be maintained in a particularistic way, for it was fundamental to modernisation and progress as seen in Europe (Varley 2000:251). This thought was a catalyst for the rise of ultra-nationalism in the first quarter of the twentieth century (Varley 2000:252). In this context the hybridity of Japan as a western and traditional society was born. The sudden changing milieu made the cultural particularism of the modern nation-state immovable.

After the Second World War, Japan started a new period of rapid modernisation whilst regarding America as an example to strive for, due to the people's social insecurity that coincided with the occupation under the Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers (SCAP) (Varley 2000:250). Nostalgia and re-articulating the own identity became a new central force instead of militarism (Morris 1960:39) while the government started to attend to this feeling by preserving farmhouses, and initiating the *furusato* (hometown) revitalisation projects (Akagawa 2015:41). Japanese culture, although sometimes staged, was a welcome escapism in a rapidly transforming society (Akagawa 2015:42).

The uses of heritage spanning over the course of the Meiji period up until the post-war period resulted in the development of many laws and enlisting criteria. These criteria and categories served as a blueprint for the more recent law on cultural property in 1950, which was quickly revised in 1954 after intangible heritage was added to the discussion of preserving Japan's heritage (Akagawa 2015:51-52). In 1975 the category on 'folk materials' that already existed was expanded to 'folk cultural property', and in 2004 this category would be enveloping more sub-categories such as 'folk techniques' (Akagawa 2015:53; Goto 2013:571). There are quite a few scholars discussing Japan's influence on UNESCO policies, especially when the discussion arose on intangible heritage and authenticity (Akagawa 2015; Goto 2013:569-70). Through Japan's focus on the importance of craftsmanship and divergent idea of authenticity, intangible heritage became a large UNESCO topic.

Skill is at the core of the Japanese notion of authenticity (Akagawa 2015:69-70), hence craftsmanship is seen as a symbol of national identity embedded in the meaning of places, objects and people as skill holders. The *mingei* folk art movement addressed this importance by advocating the safeguarding arts and crafts in the age of industrialisation (Kikuchi 2007). Pottery thus gained a place in the national heritage discourse as one of the cultural feats that Japan needed to establish themselves after juxtaposing itself with the West. After the second world war folk art in Japan became a tool for the unification of the urban centres. Thus pottery as part of folk art gained the status of 'a highly significant form of national identity' (Akagawa 2015:73).

The *mingei* movement added another factor to the pottery culture in Japan. Commercialising pottery as a result of the interest of the *mingei* critics and connoisseurs seemed inevitable when looking at the case of the Sarayama potters (Moeran 1997). The situation is much like a UNESCO enlistment on a micro-scale, whereas an enlistment can draw out less desirable effects of heritage protection. Enlistment has an accompanying effect, having heritage made into a competition, because of the imaginary hierarchical list of designations, that gives a scale of value to culture (Askew 2010:21). The *mingei* movement ideals implied that the *onta* pottery should remain traditional and hand-made according to a slow and anonymous production process. The critics discovered the beauty of *onta* pottery this way, but due to economic changes and increasing demand the potters invested in technological advancements

such as electric pottery wheels and started purchasing their materials outside of the region, which caused the leading *mingei* critics to be disappointed as they are holding on to a past ideal wherein the potter is to remain an anonymous and a locally sourced craftsman (Moeran 1997:181). Thus deliberately becoming an anachronism, that is exempted from the globalizing world. This causes a very inwards view of the own national and regional pottery culture, as the domestic market is kept to strict creative limits once recognised via *mingei* ideals. Such views create a distance from alternative narratives on cultural exchange, since *mingei* principles on pottery are firmly directed inwards.

The particularistic views stemming from connoisseurship is not isolated in *mingei*. As Morgan Pitelka illustrates it is a trend in connoisseurship within the study of art. Beauty is regarded as an objective value and forms the base of a hierarchy or a distinction between real and fake, original and non-original. This discourse of aesthetic disregards historical context (Pitelka 2005:10-11).

The Raku tea ware research is created within the discourse of connoisseurship and it is very hard to withstand the top critics of Raku since they are themselves positioned at the top of the Raku hierarchy through the *iemoto* system²(Pitelka 2005:163). Twentieth century research shows a focus on a linear history of ceramics as originated from certain key figures that contributed to the existence and creative continuation of the Raku ware, while disregarding evidence of influence from other cultures or societies (Pitelka 2005:11). According to Pitelka the particularistic view on *raku* is construed by a post-Enlightenment idea of artistic genius that views originality as a vacuum which in turn coincided with the Japanese urgency to negate the idea of Japan as a “borrower” of culture (2005:11). Thus through a discourse of connoisseurship combining with a nationalist climate in the interwar years tea culture and tea ceramics became the epitome of Japan’s cultural uniqueness (Pitelka 2005:11).

2.2 Korea’s revival and heritage policy

While Japan’s heritage narratives did explicitly take into account pottery, in Korea, the pottery heritage was more so entailed in its national discourse, which is why, in this sub-chapter, pottery will not be discussed so elaborately connected to the discourse as is the case in Japan.

A large event in history that should not be left undiscussed here is the colonisation of Korea, because of its overall cultural implications. The Japanese occupation of Korea from August 1910 until August 1945 suppressed the Korean people’s identity in its entirety (Choe, Lee and De Bary 2000:315). Under the Japanese rule, patriotic Koreans struggled for the survival of Korean culture under the scrutiny of the Japanese regime. These groups that studied Korean history, literature and other means of cultural identity held on to the thought that Korea was a place of unique origin that had achieved many cultural feats (Choe, Lee and De Bary 2000:315-317).

As with the case of Japan’s upcoming nationalism and self-consciousness on the global stage, we see a particular development in Korea as a reaction against the suppression of Japanese colonial rule and the struggle of finding the Korean identity. As everything was converted to Japanese property before their eyes, some Korean historians promoted *kukhon*, or ‘national spirit’ and others kept the writing system known as *hangul* alive by studying and

² The *iemoto* system is a complex hierarchy in which the master of crafts is the head of the family, carrier of the family name and responsible for continuation of the craft through standardisation of the practise (Pitelka 2005:94).

promoting it (Choe, Lee and De Bary 2000:316, 321). Large national freedom and independence movements such as the March First Movement kept fighting for the Korean culture (Choe, Lee and De Bary 2000:334-335) while the Japanese were promoting its own supposed heritage within Korea through a domestic tourism boom. Although a colonial legacy, the 'heritagisation' of Korea nevertheless left the legacy of a bureaucratic heritage system (Pai 2011:68-69).

After the Korean War (1950-53) there could be a complete revision of the older, based on Japanese heritage model to have it represent 'true Korean values' (Pai 2013:19). Due to efforts of folklorists such as Song Sok-ha (1904-1948) and Yim Suk-jay (b. 1903-?), the Cultural Property Protection Law (CPPL) could be established in 1962 (Yang 2003:15). This went hand in hand with a cultural revival programme under the military government of Park Chung-Hee (1961-79). The cultural policy of Park Chung-Hee government was ambiguous since on the one hand it instated a law to protect intangible and tangible heritage, but also destroyed many old traditions by changing the living spaces of people through the 'new village movement' that introduced westernised ways of living in the 1970's (Yang 2003:97).

The core of Korea's heritage boom can be found within the 1960's. Moon Okpyo describes this cultural revival as a postmodern search for roots in a globalising world, which translates to a collective interest in nostalgia and things from the past as a measure against the rapid westernisation that already lured since the end of the nineteenth century (Moon 2011:91). In the late twentieth century many Koreans still expressed anxiety over "the corrupting influence" of this influx of western materiality (Kendall 2011: 3). Korean arts, crafts and tradition in general took on new meanings during the 1980's and 1990's when Korean writers and others encouraged Koreans to look at their traditions and art as icons of their Korean identity (Moon 2011:92).

The dynamic of the Korean identity is constructed by *han* and *chung*. *Han*, as a Korean equivalent of previous discussed anthropological social phenomenon 'Nihonjinron', is evenly complex to understand and seems to be founded on a feeling of deep sorrow and injustice done to oneself with a mix of having a resilient spirit (Glionne 2011). *Chung* is the counterpart of *han* as it is defined as a feeling of everlasting connectedness and emotional bonds. *Chung* creates the emotional bond between the people that experience the same *han* (Standish 1992:110). As the self-consciousness on the global stage grew these concepts both seem to gain more importance. A concept of 'Korean-ness' could be construed upon these social dynamics at the new beginning of Korea as a successful nation-state.

In 1998 the cultural heritage administration took over the former office of cultural properties and continued working together with the ministry of culture, sports and tourism and the Korean tourism organization (Pai 2013:5). The institutions are closely tied to the government and have deployed various mean to promote Korean World Heritage to domestic an international interest groups through numerous media outlets, including the internet. They also constructed museums, monuments, and placed demarcations and 'Korean-style' pole markers to demarcate and highlight heritage monuments and heritage zones (Pai 2013:5).

The Korean identity had to be build up trough research of the traditions and reinstating them as national assets. To create this awareness of Korea as a cultural rich nation, it seems that 'heritagisation' in Korea often resulted in accumulated efforts of promoting and 'branding' (Pai 2013:6). The government's efforts of promoting traditional culture is reflected in many festivals and public events such as performances that seem to have the closest ties with designated performers (Yang 2003:84). Pottery is treated in much the same way, as it is featured at grand

biennales or exhibitions of the ‘national pottery’ heritage.³

2.3 The National Living Treasure Programme

In Japan, the National Living Treasure (*ningen kokuhou*) programme, as the popular term goes, is one of the tools that is used within the realm of heritage to instigate the process of including and excluding. The potters who become recognised by the programmes become protected, funded, but also bound by the set of regulations attached to the programmes. What happens after a designation is dedication to protect the designated person and the intellectual property, but it also creates the focus on one cultural item as a symbol for the whole population.

In Japan, the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology is responsible for selecting techniques to be preserved, but before designation the respective municipalities and the Agency for Cultural Affairs need to examine each case (Goto 2013:573). The designation for craft techniques can be approved based on one of the following three principles: ‘outstanding artistic value’, ‘regional features with outstanding artistic value’ and ‘occupying an important position in the craft history’ (Goto 2013:571).

Preservation and utilisation of the heritage are reported to be the foundation of the National Living Treasure policy (Goto 2013:574). Public access is a main responsibility as part of the utilisation process (Akagawa 2015:61). The holders are themselves responsible for transmitting the intellectual property. It seems the designated potters are still freely experimenting with their style according to some reports, but they are allowed to do so because they are not seen as potters anymore, but as artists. As one collector remarked about ‘national treasure’ Shimizu Uichi, “what Shimizu creates is not pottery; it is pure art.” (Bradford 2001:47).

This is also the case for Korea, where there is a lot of media attention for designated potters. Although one difference is that there is less attention for the personal genius of the potter as they speak more of a ‘Korean spirit’ and the inheritance of the beauty and techniques. It is not entirely clear how the status of the art work works within the Korean pottery heritage. But in Korea the National Living Treasure programme does impact the traditional arts through the governmental rules and regulations.

In Korea the designated people are popularly called *in-ganmunhwajae* (living national treasure). They must ensure the tradition is publicly displayed and is kept in ordinance with the style of dance or art form that was agreed upon to be the one that needs to be continued. Fixing and eternalising a style is a harsh brake on creativity for Korean designated artists. This would be less of an issue if creativity was acted more upon, according to Yang (2003:113).

To Japan, designation means fame and glory in much the same way. On top of that the government encourages and reinforces the performer and artists role as a source for national pride. This, in turn, affects the person’s artistry and self-image (Yang 2003:72), and possibly the way a designated potter views cultural exchange. Through acting on personal self-worth, the Bureau of Cultural Properties is creating a cultural essentialist mind-set that fits the nationalistic discourse.

Again, the rules for the continuation of the practise are strict, and there is even a list of commandments. Number one is to be aware of transmission, presentation and development of the intangible culture. Number two is to faithfully perform in public (with potters often having

³ ‘History of Korean Ceramic Foundation’, available at <https://www.kocef.org/eng/n03_info/03_03.asp> (last accessed on 11th December 2016)

public kiln firing events⁴ and attending ceramic exhibitions and biennales). Number three is to maintain pride and dignity as the transmitter of cultural property. And number four calls upon the designated artist to “maintain self-control in morals, health and social actions in both public and private” (Yang 2003:77). Under the guise of preservation, folklore and its people are being institutionalised and reshaped.

Although the government’s policies seem all encompassing, there is a cultural dynamic apart from policies. In Korea, as a reaction to government policies, a student organisation on traditional dance culture arose (Yang 2003:102). Intellectuals and students, grouped under the name of the National Culture Movement, have successfully adapted traditional forms of culture such as dance to the contemporary cultural sphere, by taking note of the fixed forms stuck with the heritage policies. This seems to be a positive trend of rejuvenating traditional culture, making it dynamic again. Nevertheless, a downside to this movement is the rejection of non-Korean cultures, which seems to be an ongoing theme when the word ‘national’ is applied to these cultural movements (Yang 2003:114). Through this movement they return the agency of culture to the people, but simultaneously provide rejecting views on other, non-Korean cultures, resisting forms of fluid culture. It leaves the question whether this is the same for the ceramic artists of Korea.

2.4 Hypocrisy of hierarchy in culture

The pottery world in Japan was inevitably changed due to a changing Japanese market. One can argue that the above mentioned heritage policies are the answer to such modern changes, but the following example also shows the effect of categorisation, as this policy of designation cannot do without.

Ceramics scholar Mizuo Hiroshi noted the introduction of the train railroads to be a defining factor in the decline of the many regional folk kilns that suddenly had to compete with others, and saw mass produced wares taking over the local clientele (Mizuo 1981:6). The positive factor of the modern pottery market, and the fame potters can acquire through winning awards, is that pottery was again relevant in the modern context.

Nevertheless this changing economical milieu coincided with a case of nationalist narratives obscuring other forms of pottery. It seems the status of a pottery style and the previous mentioned connoisseur recognition in Japan is very important to preserve the community that makes it. As such, through the created policies and categorisations of what is, and what is not, national heritage and national treasures, a part of pottery culture is overshadowed. Not nationally recognised as treasure, makes the tradition difficult to preserve.

An ironic case is that earthenware pottery production in Japan has seen a steep decline while there is still need for it in ritual contexts. According to Louise Allison Cort (2008) porcelain has been a main focus of Japan. Earthenware in its less glamorous form remained in the shadow. The main use for it is for Buddhist or Shinto ritual practise and potters who make the wares have often no successor because of the unpopularity of the job (Cort 2008: 64). The wares demonstrate techniques older than the immigrant stoneware techniques from 400 A.C., making it more indigenous to Japan than other ceramics born from exchanges. Even so, historical earthenware has not been recognised as art, unlike stoneware inspired by earthenware

⁴ ‘Wood Firing in Mungyeong, South Korea’, available at <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hhPz30bi-es>> (last accessed on 13th December 2016).

forms.

Shrines and temples feel rushed to contract commercial Kyoto potters to keep up with the demand for ritual earthenware (Cort 2008:68). In a changing manufacturing climate, potters decline fast while the demand still exist, wondering why no earthenware potter has received a title of National Living Treasure. In the 1970's the meaning of purity within its ritual context was still relevant and widespread as a living tradition, but there was no sign of a plan of protection for the potters who made the sober wares, possibly instigating its extinction, not solely because of not being protected, but also because of implicitly being designated not worthy of protection.

What happens conspicuously in Japan, as compared to Korea, is a culture of prestige surrounding ceramic artists. This includes the well-meant National Living Treasure programme. An interesting point Goto makes, is that in Japan, individuals recognised as National Living Treasure are not given an honour or privilege, but should be viewed as a “container of intangible heritage”, for the individual is a transmitter of the past to the future, so the skills are not exclusive to that person. So he claims that the National Living Treasure concept is not “an honour system” (Goto 2013:574).

But this system is thrown into paradox as the term *ningen kokuho* does elude prestige and personal genius when referred to in Japan (Bradford 2001:47). It is even in contrast with the *mingei* ideals of the 1950's, which advocated beauty that was made in harmony with nature and inside a community cooperative system⁵ (Moeran 1997:120-122). There are also many prizes and awards to be won in Japan, at a range of exhibitions and biennales, that, when won, constitutes a craftsman and its pottery's value. The more awards won, especially if they are from the It is said that one's works economical value can increase fourfold overnight after news of a designation (Bradford 2001:47).

At the point where the art world and heritage meet there resides an essentialism. The national living treasure designated potters are often dubbed masters of pottery and all the titles they hold seem to be revered. The Agency for Cultural Affairs organises exhibitions where the designated holders are displayed as individual holders of craft techniques (Goto 2013:581). As soon as the prestige of a potter rises to the point of personal recognition we see them becoming themselves a symbol for the pride of the nation. Through contests, such as and exhibitions of highly esteemed institutions such as NITTEN⁶, this idea of hierarchy and prestige is even more consolidated.

Based on the many socio-political dynamics described above, it seems that the main theme is the emerging state policies and national narratives that affected how craftsmanship was perceived. It was often labelled as symbol of the state, and something to find your ethnic and national identity in. These post-war policies created a sense of cultural essentialism that was hard to alter, even in the social context. Institutionalisation, as part of ‘heritagisation’ created a web of museums, government advertising, government organised or endorsed festivals and the National Living Treasure programme. Especially in Korea was this a scholarly source of critique.

The complex relationship between the views of *mingei*, the art world and the heritage legislations, especially the ‘national living treasures’ policy, is creating a system where there is little to no room for historical reflection or an open dialogue about cultural exchange, or even

⁵ This system is described by Brian Moeran (1997) as a combination of farming and pottery, where each person of the community serves its role performing different kinds of labour needed to sustain the community of potters.

⁶ ‘The Guide of Nitten’, available at <<https://nitten.or.jp/english/index.html>> (last accessed on 14th December 2016).

cultural assimilation. Because these potters works are esteemed high art they are becoming detached from the traditional views of pottery, community based and driven. And as a result potters who were once working anonymously under patronage or in folk kilns are now symbols of a national culture, of the nation, completely stripped from its historical context, and taken in by institutions promoting a selected Japanese culture on an international scale.

It seems Korea and Japan have gone through a development of a essentialist cultural nationalism parallel to each other, each with their own reasons, but resulting in the same nationalist dynamics. But where the parallel seems to stop is the attention of the art world that is given to Japanese pottery. The art world may be internationally focused, but it also enables a nation to portray themselves on a global platform as culturally superior. This may be a nationalistic side of cultural diplomacy. Since Japan takes pride in craft aesthetics, they present a hierarchy of aesthetics on the world stage and elevate their heritage through their aesthetic prowess.

This undivided attention for stardom potters in Japan leaves the potters that also contribute to pottery as a divers heritage in the shadows. Nevertheless there are potters who seek the connection actively, as they will be introduced in chapter three.

Due to an overwhelming interest in potters ad their art that is legitimised by institutional awards and titles the traditional context of pottery culture slowly disappears. The historical connection as described in chapter one is overlooked due to the unprecedented attention that is given to tea wares made by the Japanese ‘genius’ potters. The artists genius, that is isolated in originality, is what stands in the way of viewing a culturally influence craft history as a whole.

It seems as soon as a potter and its works are being defined as art, the pottery becomes an object of desire and status. Through institutions of art and heritage pottery is mainly in Japan used as a marker of cultural prestige. The cultural heritage policy of national living treasure enables the forming of a hierarchy and together with the art world that hold exhibitions and critics that treat these potters as artists of high calibre this hierarchy of prestige is directed outward. This complex system of aesthetic hierarchy, and the effect of the heritage policy in idolizing its heritage in people is still an obstruction on the way to an open dialogue on cultural fluidity.

Chapter 3 Stakeholders challenging the confinement of ceramics

In the previous chapter it was noted that crafts were an established part of the national heritage discourse and that heritage policy was enacting the same rhetoric of distinctness and separation of culture. Firstly, this chapter will outline the perks of institutions as marketers of pottery culture. Then we will zoom in on the agency of individual people within the pottery heritage that instigated change or give reason to see Korean tea ware as part of Japanese culture that is slowly reciprocated.

Possibly, cultural diplomacy enacted between Korea and Japan through pottery can be beneficial as a factor for enhancing their international relationship. Not just to promote their cultures towards each other, keeping an essentialist discourse in mind, but to work towards a recognition of the similarities of the cultures. The following cases will elaborate on the role and agency of people in relation to the rigid essentialist discourses discussed in chapter two and how these alternative perspectives can contribute to an open dialogue on cultural interaction between Japan and Korea. Will or can redirecting our view to the level of the people as artists involved with Korea's and Japan's ceramics heritage change an obstinate cultural essentialism and disconnectedness?

In order to illustrate some of the effects of the discourses and powerful influence that institutions have in the field of pottery culture in Japan and Korea, an interview from 2014 with the Korean potter Shin Kyung-Kyun was analysed. Shin describes his triumph of being able to exhibit Korean porcelain wares, such as the 'moon jar' (fig. 6), at the UNESCO headquarters in Paris. During the programme, this selection for the UNESCO exhibition is portrayed as a very desirable acknowledgement that elicits the selected culture and labels it as 'prestigious'. It is repeated that the exhibition is to introduce the world to the excellence of other cultures⁷. Despite Shin's recognition of the similarities between China, Korea and Japan's ceramic heritage, it seems the idea of international recognition still creates a construct of cultural hierarchy.

We see Shin and the presenter discussing how special it is for Korea to be the first among Japan, China and Korea to have an exhibition on ceramics at the UNESCO headquarters. The mention of this trinity is repeated several times, which makes it interesting as to why he is juxtaposing himself with China's and Japan's ceramics. There must be a connection if they are portraying UNESCO's selection of Korea, among the three ceramic heritages, to be of high importance. In a way as he is posing the Korean ceramic heritage to be unique, he is also opposing it deliberately with China's and Japan's ceramic heritage. Judging by Shin's and the presenter's rhetoric it is due to UNESCO's selection that the pottery heritage between China, Japan and Korea suddenly becomes a competition. It is expressed by the presenter that this selection was probably a disappointment for China and Korea, because they were also keen on having an exhibition at the UNESCO headquarters⁸. So instead of promoting unity, such an exhibition that is meant for learning about the flow of culture, is turned into a moment of national glory.

Also noted in chapter two, as a result of institutionalizing pottery, it became part of a hierarchy of aesthetic and what and who is the most valuable, a common practice within the art world. Aside from the art world as prestigious cluster of cultural heritage 'holders', it can adopt

⁷ 'Heart to Heart - Ep2715C01 Shin Gyung-kyun, Ceramic Artist', available at <https://youtu.be/Zoh_gVRQjmQ> (last accessed on 12th December 2016).

⁸ 'Heart to Heart - Ep2715C03 Moon Jars of Korea and Shin Gyung-kyun', available at <<https://youtu.be/d3umnB5jILY>> (last accessed on 12th December 2016).

a different rhetoric that is more directed outward and is less inclined to sell a hierarchy of beauty. There seems to be a problem with the combination of the art world and the prestige of a heritage designation. Nevertheless there are still existing different views possible and as some changes are made in the discourse we can find evidence of it within certain institutions and their views.

When we see pottery as art it becomes something fluid, almost universal, but when it is labelled and seen as heritage it becomes isolated and often nationalist. The rhetoric of the art world that is connected to international research is almost an opposite from the heritage policies imposed on traditional pottery and craftsmen, because it focuses on international connections, aesthetics, and new findings through creativity. Since museums are not necessarily national museums that are linked to a national narrative they can still contribute to alternative views.

As we examine museums such as the Museum of Oriental Ceramics in Osaka it promotes a rhetoric of contributing “to the society through introducing art from various aspects”.⁹ Since the opening of the museum many exhibitions on Korean ceramics have taken place and from 1996 on a Korean businessman turned ceramics collector donated in parts his collection of Korean and Chinese ceramics. The museum informs that this man, Dr. Rhee Byung-Chang entrusted the museum “with the care of his collection, which he believed will benefit the friendship between Korea and Japan as well as the improvement of the social status of Koreans living in Japan.”¹⁰

The museum notes that they have accepted all his wishes through their hard work on the exhibitions, conservation, and also on interpretation and research. Stating that this museum views pottery as art and a part of social interaction it does not conform to the idea of pottery as something secluded and only to be interacted with as part of the nation. As a Japanese museum working on Korean pottery they are contributing to the Korean pottery heritage, and their note on friendship between Korea and Japan marks an interest in their connectedness through pottery.

Another noteworthy change in the “inwards” gaze of one of the most important Japanese ceramic societies, is that the Journal of the Ceramic Society of Japan has been allowing contributors from overseas to participate in making the academic journal, that as of 2008 also has been published entirely in English.¹¹

Korea has also started seeking out international partnerships on projects regarding pottery heritage. Especially China is popular for joint exhibitions and partnerships as seen in the long list of projects by the Korea Ceramic Foundation (KOCEF)¹². Japan seems underrepresented on this list, although such institutions are slowly seeking connection on the ground of pottery heritage with Japan. For in 2005 an “Agreement on Cultural Exchange” with Museum of Modern Ceramic Art in Gifu was signed¹³. The bond through pottery between China, Korea and Japan is slowly being acknowledged.

Biennales can also contribute to a connecting view on pottery as a world culture, but also as a close connection in Asia. In a lecture on ceramics by the Korean potter Young-mi Kim it is said that Gyeonggi International Ceramic Biennale featured a lot of Japanese potters since they were invited to be the main guest together with Germany and England at the 2014 edition

⁹ ‘Our Concept and Mission’, <<http://www.moco.or.jp/en/about/idea/>> (last accessed on 6th December 2016).

¹⁰ ‘The RHEE Byung-Chang Collection Gallery’, <<http://www.moco.or.jp/en/facilities/map/d.html>> (last accessed on 6th December 2016).

¹¹ ‘About JCS – Introduction’, available at <<http://jcs.ceramic.or.jp/en/jcs-japan-en>> (last accessed on 12th December 2016).

¹² ‘History of Korean Ceramic Foundation’, available at <https://www.kocef.org/eng/n03_info/03_03.asp> (last accessed on 12th December 2016).

¹³ ‘History of Korean Ceramic Foundation’, available at <https://www.kocef.org/eng/n03_info/03_03.asp> (last accessed on 12th December 2016).

of the biennale.¹⁴

Although steps are taken to engage in each other's pottery heritage, a demarcation of what is Korean and what is Japanese is still fitted into concepts of Korean pottery. There still remains a rhetoric on the assimilation of pottery styles in the sixteenth century that resides in a paradoxical state between fluid heritage and the history of Japan as Korea's oppressor.

Director Ito Yoshiaki of Curatorial Research at the Tokyo National Museum tells the viewer that the Japanese like *buncheong* wares a lot, especially *mishima*, or as they are called in Korean, *deombeongi* styles, "They are not perfectly shaped or exquisite but they resonate with the Japanese people".¹⁵ This has started from the sixteenth century onwards. He calls the Japanese valuing of pottery an unchanging tradition. This statement relates to the fact that there are Korean pottery bowls inscribed as Japanese national treasures.

Another example is the "ancient art collector" Tominaga Tamio, who tells about the appreciation of old tea bowls and his interest in antique Joseon tea ware. He states "I'm not the only one. Many tea masters would love to own them"¹⁶. Therefore Japanese pottery culture also consists of collecting wares, while not paying attention to the impact it may have on the culture where it came from.

These Korean pottery scholars and hobbyists are legitimating the assimilation of Korean pottery simply by saying it resonates with the Japanese. It is almost as if they mean that Korean pottery is therefore also a Japanese heritage. Which is in this case ambiguous because they try to say that the culture around the creation and collecting of Korean style pottery is a thing on its own, while still mentioning their sentiments connected with Korean pottery heritage. So from an outsiders perspective it seems just that Japan is making understatements about their assimilating role. They do not see Korean pottery as part of the Japanese tradition of making pottery, but of collecting pottery.

Through institutions dealing with pottery it seems that Japan and Korea are slowly approaching each other. The effects of internationalising these pottery institutions are becoming visible in the cultural exchanges and intensified collaborations. However on the level of individual stakeholders, such as the potters themselves, thoughts on how Korean and Japanese pottery are connected are quite diverse. Many work in a cultural spirit, but there are others that are keeping the traditional styles of the 'other' alive.

3.1 The potter's agency and artistic connection

As Richard Jenkins points out (1996:190) "identity is a process, not an essence, which is continually being remade in consistent ways, through an 'internal-external dialectic' involving a simultaneous synthesis of internal self-definition and one's ascription by others". Modern organisations that put value on demarcated forms of culture and an international gaze possible obstructed this view on identity as an ongoing process. Are people on the other hand losing their agency within the changing context of culture from the everyday to the commodity? In a concoction of different views is there a proof of dismantling the discourse on the separation of

¹⁴ 'Gallery Talk: Korean Contemporary Ceramics', available at <<https://youtu.be/3JCY-tPPq4>> (last accessed on 10th december 2016).

¹⁵ 'Arirang Prime – Ep225C03 Young Japanese Potters visit in Boseong to learn how to make Joseon-style ceramics', available at <<https://youtu.be/zbDAWT42MM4>> (last accessed on 10th December 2016).

¹⁶ See note 15, available at <<https://youtu.be/zbDAWT42MM4>> (last accessed on 10th December 2016).

cultures by the borders of the nation-state? Do potters themselves think in boundaries?

Some potters still talk about their craft as being part of the nation in relation to their ancestors. This probably came from the idea of historical continuity, thus the ancestors that left these ceramics and their techniques are from the same nation. A programme on Korean culture called ‘100 Icons of Korean Culture’ defines the meaning of Korean *buncheong* pottery as the mirror that reflects the mind-set of Koreans who love freedom and simplicity. A *buncheong* craftsman in the video summarises this claim in his words¹⁷. He does not tell the viewer about his personal artistic relationship with pottery as he is stuck in the position of promoting *buncheong* as an icon of the state.

In another video a contemporary Korean *onggi* potter Lee Kang-hyo does go into detail about his artistic struggles with his genre. *Onggi* is considered to be another form of an exclusive Korean pottery used to preserve food in (fig. 7). When he was asked to give an *onggi* workshop in Japan as part of a cultural exchange, he came in contact with the Japanese potter Koie Ryoji.¹⁸ Lee recalls he had felt dependant on the *onggi* technique alone, and saw that master potter Koie Ryoji had a free and creative mind. They worked together on their pottery for a while and Lee says that he learned to be more free in his own work. These kinds of personal cultural exchanges within pottery among artists are possibly a result of our globalizing era and they can constitute an act of reciprocation between the two pottery cultures.

This reciprocation of Japan’s pottery culture back to Korea is so far something only seen on this personal level of the artist. Nevertheless, it is happening in the work of Korean potter Kim Se-wan. Kim is making Korean tea wares, as he is interested in historical pottery. But featured in the article by Australian potter Rowley Drysdale are tea bowls that are called *shino*, recognised by the style of glaze and colour (Drysdale 2014:48). An *oribe* style tea bowl is also shown, which is a style that originated around 1600 by combining certain glazes and techniques of other tea wares (Wilson 2005:30). The exchange of styles from Japan to Korea, through these potters that use the Japanese styles, is a reciprocation of the styles that 400 years earlier were taken to Japan.

The historical connection of chapter one is also illustrated by the ceramic artist Maruyama Touri. She tells about her interest in *deombeongi* (a specific form of Korean tea bowls) which in Japanese is called *kohiki*. She discovered Korean tea bowl pottery (*Ido chawan* in Japanese) after learning about *deombeongi*. Maruyama uses the iconic stamping technique of Joseon pottery on the clay. In Japan the look it gives the tea bowl is renamed *mishima*. She reminds the interviewer that it is known as the *buncheong inhwa* technique, hinting that she has the knowledge of where the technique originated from.

She tells that the “Joseon potters left behind *deombeongi* bowls as well as the *Ido chawan*”, acknowledging the full extent of the inheritance of Korean techniques. The programme’s presenter re-confirms this historical relationship by stating “replicas of brushed *buncheong* ceramics from the early sixteenth century of Joseon are being created by a Japanese potter in the 21st century.”¹⁹

Apart from Maruyama, other young Japanese potters express their love for the Korean *deombeongi* tea bowl while on a visit to a Korean kiln site. “To find out what material

¹⁷ ‘100 Icons of Korean Culture Ep90 Buncheong Ceramics, Sculpturing Dreams’, available at <<https://youtu.be/t0xJzkH6CTw>> (last accessed on 10th of December 2016).

¹⁸ ‘Lee Kang-hyo ‘Onggi master’ – a film about a Korean potter’, available at <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ayDjp4yvF3o>> (last accessed on 13th December 2016).

¹⁹ ‘Arirang Prime – Ep225C03 Young Japanese Potters visit in Boseong to learn how to make Joseon-style ceramics’, available at <<https://youtu.be/zbDAWT42MM4>> (last accessed on 10th December 2016).

it's made of, you need to study its fragments. But you can't learn that in museums in Japan"²⁰. An interpretation of this quote is that Japan does not offer information on Korean ceramics in a way that Korean ceramics can spread throughout Japan. But from the perspective of personal and artistic interest, these potters want to make Korean style tea bowls themselves and thus also keep a piece of Korean heritage alive.

A testimony of human agency within the pottery world is the Korean potter Song Gi-jin. He instigated the first exhibition where Chinese, Japanese and Korean slip wares meet. In an interview from 2013 Song states that since we live in a plural society we must adhere to many aesthetic demands. He thinks that the versatile naturalness of slipware can satisfy that demand. He tells that he "...thought it'd be a good idea to bring different slipware from different countries and meet other potters to exchange ideas"²¹. Again a personal interest in exchanging ideas as artists is expressed through his words. Moreover, this idea of artists exchange is ensuring a reciprocation of traditional influences, since all three of the potters work in traditional styles.

The Chinese tea ceremony master featured in the interview with Song tells that in China there are many events surrounding slip ware pottery, assuming it being the same way in Japan and Korea. Although he clearly states that it is the first time that "the three countries have come together to partake in this kind of exchange"²². People are starting to breach just the parallel similarities to come together and create a sphere of cultural fluidity through these projects.

As previously mentioned, the institutions act slow and are still based upon worldly competition, but through these people a human connection can mean a cultural exchange. If that spreads to a bottom-up dynamic the potters of Korea and Japan will not see in each other a contestant, but a teacher. This interaction possibly makes the circle of reciprocation round.

It seemed like there has been little cultural exchange from Japan to Korea in the past, but this is changing recently. Globalisation is making it possible for pottery to become a global culture. People can appropriate styles as they please, but when you want to submit work to prestigious exhibitions it has to be either art or something traditional that embodies the spirit of the potters culture. Therefore its identity has to have a direct link with the national cultural discourse, what is our culture, and what is not?

Based on the analysis of the different levels of stakeholders there seems to be a paradox in the rhetoric. People acknowledge a cultural connection, but often turn this knowledge around to enhance the position of their own cultural identity. When the Japanese curator mentioned above acknowledges the historical connection, it is again twisted so that Korean heritage is still a building block in creating the Japanese pottery heritage. Instead of viewing it as a living entity within another living entity. Korean pottery is admired, collected and made by Japanese people, and it is still labelled as Korean. Therefore, it seems the nationalistic cultural discourse of Japan is not recognising Korean pottery heritage in itself, for they keep denouncing it as part of the Japanese sentiment.

Both Japanese and Korean potters acknowledge a connectedness within the area of tea wares. When facing a western gaze, potters such as Shin Kyung-Kyun even go as far to say that China, Korea and Japan are a connected entity of pottery. Regardless, it seems Japan and Korea still use pottery to legitimise their cultural continuity and coherence within the boundaries of a distinct ethnic group. The hardest part of the aimed acknowledgment of this cultural connection

²⁰ See note 18, available at <https://youtu.be/zbDAWT42MM4> (last accessed on 10th December 2016).

²¹ 'Arirang Prime - Ep225C01 East Asia Slipware Three Potters Exhibition' available at <https://youtu.be/SeAIcIqVTY> (last accessed on 14th December 2016).

²² See note 20, available at <https://youtu.be/SeAIcIqVTY> (last accessed on 14th December 2016).

is probably that until today the Korean cultural influence is still overshadowed by China and the west. It seems that Japan has yet come to terms with its Korean heritage.

Korea and Japan seek the confirmation of their cultural excellence with international institutions such as UNESCO, which creates competition. Other art and pottery institutions also facilitate this ongoing competition. Potters are offered the chance to win awards for personal recognition and a stable income. Due to the economic changes potters outside of the government protection will have to claim their recognition, much like the state is trying to claim their legitimacy on the global scale. Participating in biennales may thus simultaneously lead to the validation of a whole pottery culture instead of only the personal work of a potter.

Japan and Korea would have a very fruitful connection because of the historical connection of Korean and Japanese tea wares. Artisanship, or craftsmanship itself also can bring people from Korea and Japan closer together in teaching each other to deal with such a position within our fast passed society. The open dialogue of the ceramics heritage connection can maybe flow naturally out of that first real red line between the two heritages.

Conclusion

Both Japan and Korea have a strong feeling of national pride through craftsmanship and other intangible heritage that can be displayed at cultural events. The National Living Treasure programme has reshaped craftsmanship to national symbols, especially articulated in Korea. Such policies on identity shaping on a nationwide scale are still stemming from turbulent and insecure times. Heritage as used to explicitly define the national character is a modern consequence of the formation of nation-states and all the social anxieties that coincided with urban development. In the contemporary world, it seems, this shaped an anachronistic idea of culture as fixed. The idea of distinctive identity still has not changed publicly to a more dynamic dialogue on an international level. Culture is still fixed within its legislative boundaries even after opening the UNESCO discourse up to diversity within national cultures, by instigating the intangible heritage charter.²³

The feeling of uniqueness is embedded in a web of national sub-discourses, due to a long historical development on the concepts of being separate cultural entities and it seems that the importance of crafts for both sides only made it more difficult to look at the crafts industries as a cultural entity in flux, because the crafts industries became part of the national discourse. The question is whether there is any platform that can enhance cultural exchange in the positive light of mutual understanding, instead of continuing a rigid discourse of cultural distinctiveness turning culture into a competition.

This competition between nations for cultural recognition trickles down into the pottery world. Institutions organise biennales for showcasing potters, who earn prestige through this practice. To add to this idea of prestige in the pottery world, many foundations for the preservation and furthering of the pottery craftsmanship give out awards, nominations and other prizes that contribute to a potter's resume. In this way status is made relevant to a potter to present him or herself as prestigious. On an international level this prestigious person is used as a marker of cultural prowess by a nation. This is a practise that is firmly embedded in the art world, and it entwines with how heritage policies, such as the National Living Treasure programme, support and popularise their cultural assets. In other words the potters are used as

²³ 'Text for the Convention of the Safeguarding of Intangible Heritage', available at <<http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/convention>> (last accessed on 6th December 2016).

national figures to promote a national culture as a whole, as long as they work within distinguishable traditional forms.

Nevertheless it is the people that work within the pottery world of prestige that can change the rhetoric on pottery, currently defined by a distinct product of one historically fixed culture and group. Brons' notion of 'othering' as mentioned within the introduction sheds light on how the potter's cross-cultural interaction can contribute to a motivating reflective relationship between cultures. On the level of individual potters I would argue that Japan and Korea are deeply connected by appreciating and furthering each other's ceramic heritage. And it is often the potter who is most aware of the historical relationship and influence of Korea, (China) and Japan on each other.

As in the case of Song Gi-jin, we see how, in contrast, cultural institutions will be able to connect the pottery heritages. But to come to this stage of cross-cultural connection that is also recognised by the institutions who promote the culture, we need more people like Song Gi-jin who envision the pottery heritages as related to each other without juxtaposing them hierarchically.

As long as the idea of the nation-state exists a notion of cultural purity will prevail, but let this notion be on equal grounds, with an open dialogue and acceptance of a cultural connection where people can communicate without culture being a competition. As long as cultural diplomacy is enacted as a pageant, people themselves will want to win. And if they win for their nation, their own identity is re-articulated. Thus the rhetoric of UNESCO and a nation's cultural policy overshadow real connections between people, whom are not disconnected from the context of the pottery culture. This connection between people is hopefully a step to changing identity to something a little less defined as being part of a nation state, and more part of a creative reality that is connecting people cross-culturally.

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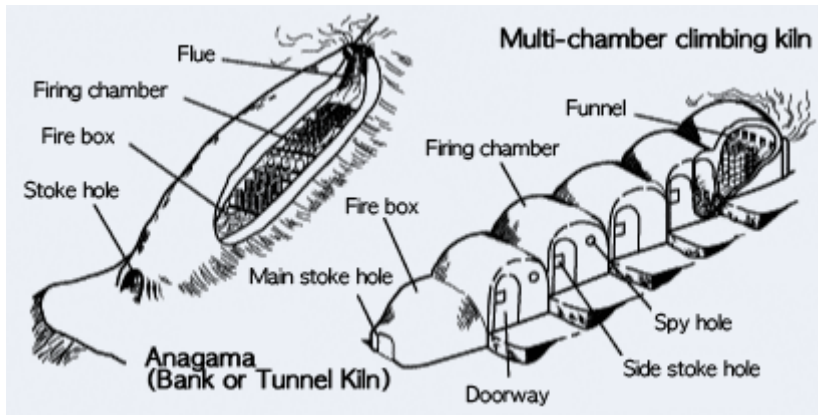
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Appendix

Figure 1



A Japanese tunnel kiln next to a multi-chamber climbing kiln

© The Museum of Oriental Ceramics, Osaka
<http://www.moco.or.jp/>

Figure 2



Bowl, Joseon dynasty, first half of sixteenth cent., stoneware in white slip under *buncheong* glaze.

© Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

Figure 3



Bottle, Joseon dynasty, sixteenth cent., white clay white porcelain.
© Leeum Samsung Museum of Art, Seoul.

Figure 4



Arita tea bowl with landscape, Edo period (1603-1868), c. 1660-1680, stoneware with white slip and cobalt blue underpainting under clear glaze.

© Freer and Sackler Gallery of Art, The Smithsonian's Museum of Asian Art, Washington.

Figure 5



Yatsu-shiro tea bowl, Edo period (1603-1868), c. 1660-1680, stoneware with white slip and cobalt blue underpainting under clear glaze.

© Freer and Sackler Gallery of Art, The Smithsonian's Museum of Asian Art, Washington.

Figure 6



Shin Kyung-kyun, **moon jars**.
© Gallery ArtLink

Figure 7



A cross-section of an Onggi pot show the fermentation process of kimchi.
© Courtesy of Korea.net.