

Fukuoka, Japan

Scaffold for designing modern products by reinterpreting the technique and philosophy of traditional crafts

Minako Ikeda
Kyushu University

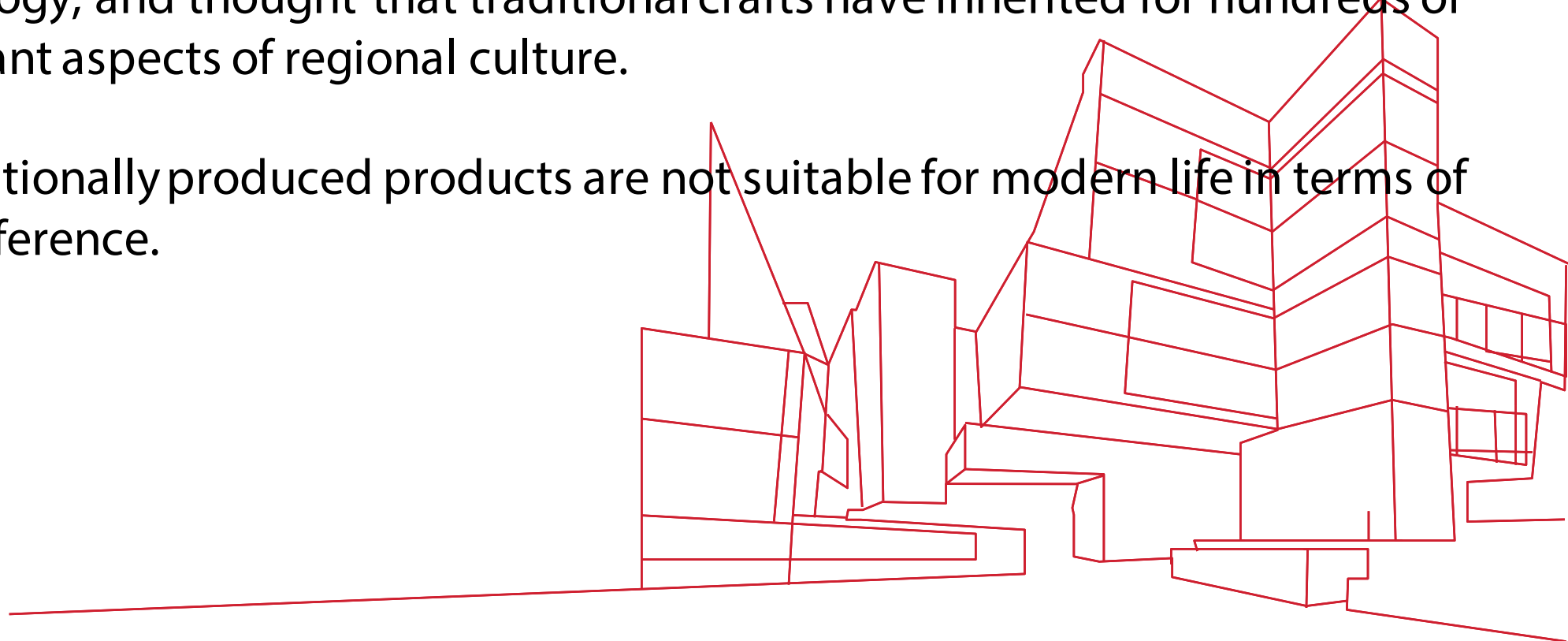


Background

The decline of traditional crafts is a common problem in modern industrialized countries.

Wisdom, technology, and thought that traditional crafts have inherited for hundreds of years are important aspects of regional culture.

Many of the traditionally produced products are not suitable for modern life in terms of function and preference.



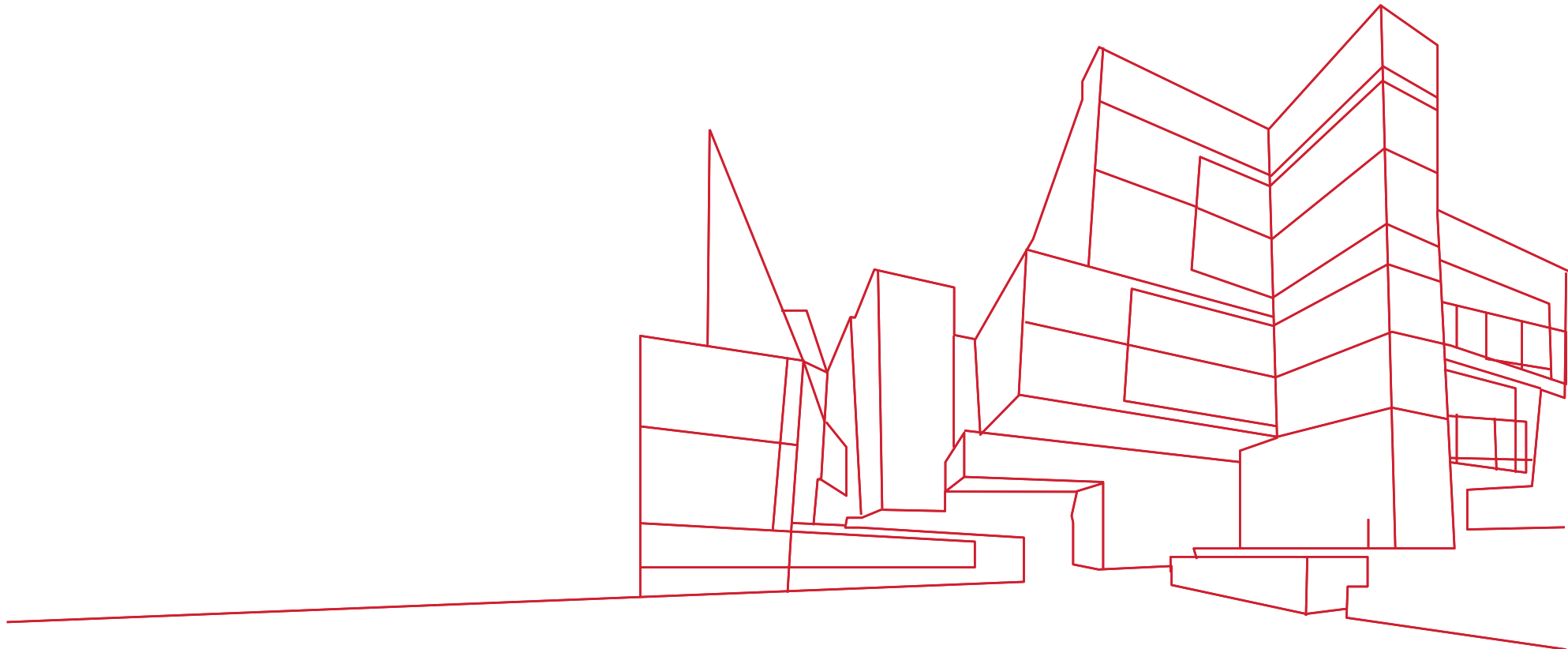
3 approaches in studies to pass on traditional crafts in the future.

1. How to establish the market economy of traditional crafts
2. The method to archive traditional crafts as cultural heritage
3. How to use digital technology in the traditional crafts design and production process



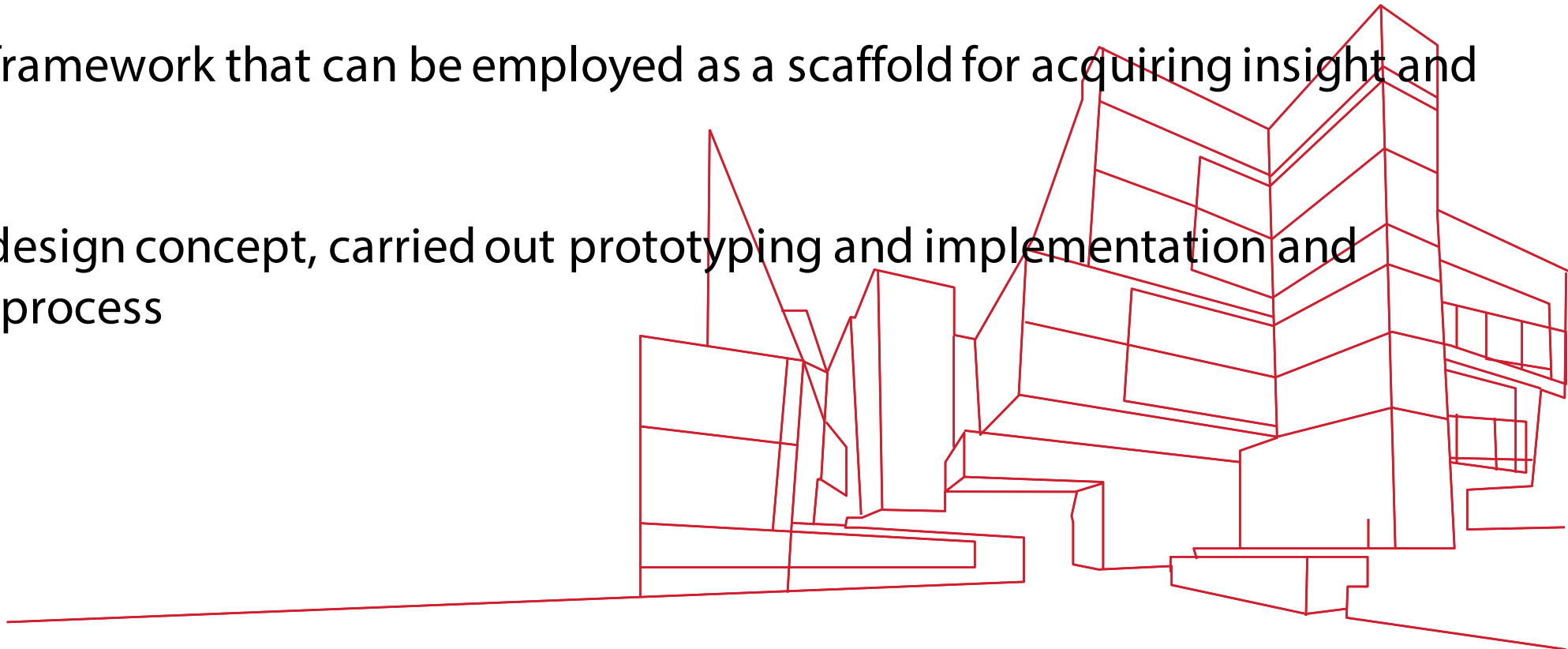
Aim

This research aims to discuss a framework that serves as a scaffold for designing traditional crafts in the context of contemporary life.



Methods

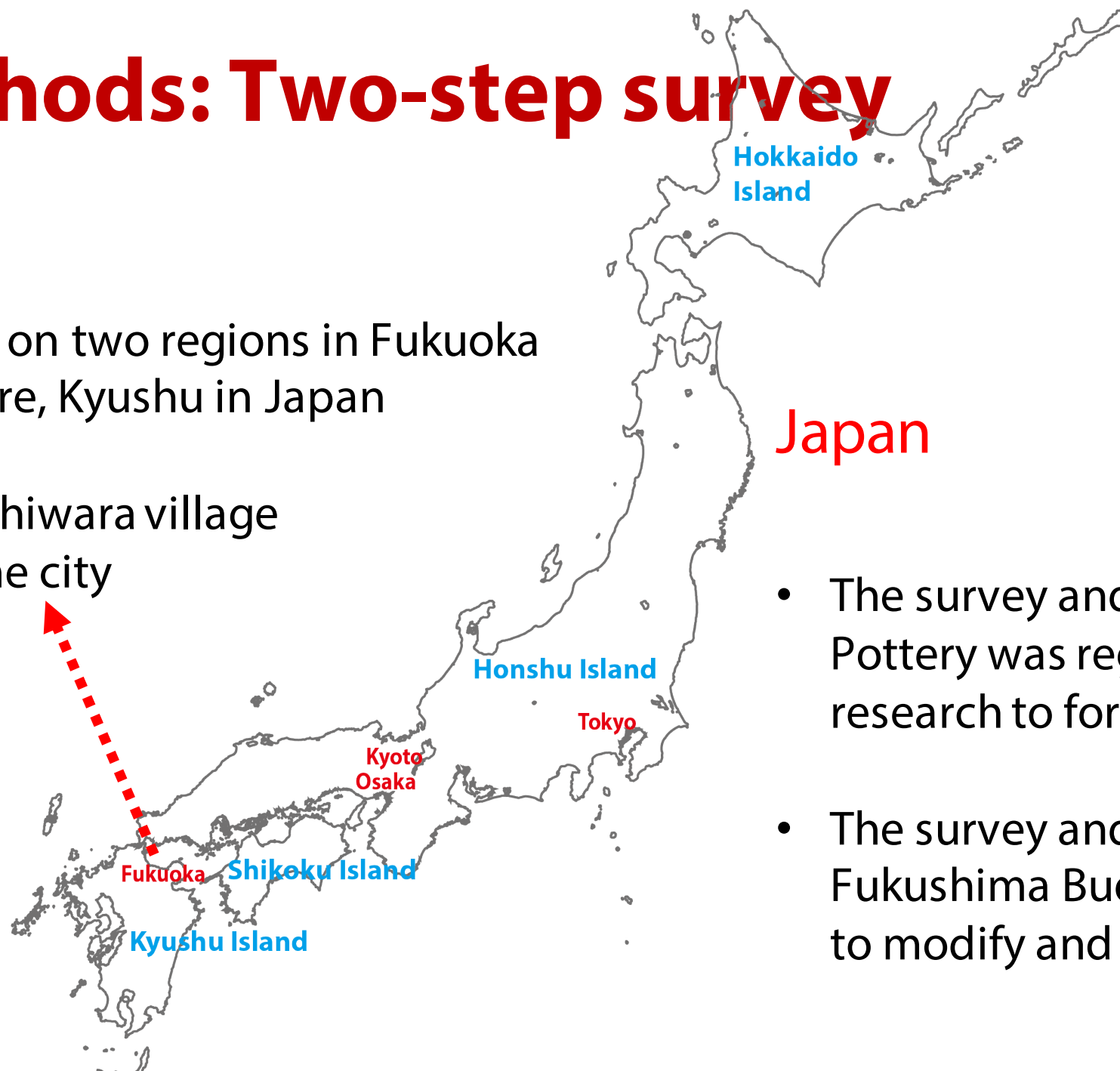
1. Take advantage of the opportunities of design practices in real projects
2. Based on qualitative research by employing ethnography techniques
3. Examine the framework that can be employed as a scaffold for acquiring insight and ideas.
4. Develop the design concept, carried out prototyping and implementation and reviewed the process



Methods: Two-step survey

Focused on two regions in Fukuoka Prefecture, Kyushu in Japan

- Koishiwara village
- Yame city



Japan

- The survey and practice of Koishiwara Pottery was regarded as the basic research to formulate a hypothesis.
- The survey and practice of Yame-Fukushima Buddhist Altar was employed to modify and verify the hypothesis.

Koishiwara Pottery



Life Style of Koishiwara Village

- Most of the pottery workshops are managed by a couple of people in a family.
- Conduct pottery workshops and agriculture at the same time.
- Mainly manufacture tableware for daily use and sell it at affordable prices.
- Many opportunities to gather and eat together in large numbers with families and friends.
- Potters are proud of living in Koishiwara and being the successors of traditional potter families. Boys of potter families want to be craftsmen.

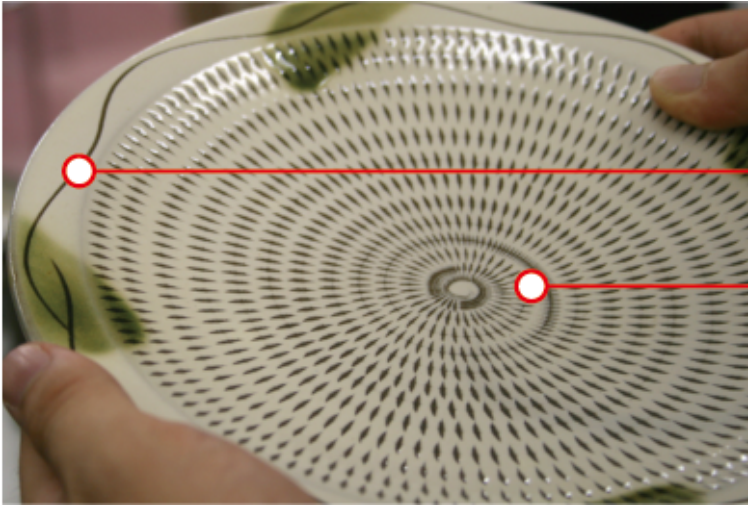


History of Koishiwara Pottery

- Pottery not used as artwork but on a daily basis was mainly manufactured.
- There is a history of producing large vessels because of suitable soil and techniques.
- They are produced while responding to the natural environment by using locally available materials.



Koishiwara Pottery Techniques



Kushime

Tobikanna

- Manufactured by handwork, using potter's wheels
- Many techniques to make patterns while rotating a potter's wheel
- Glazes made individually in each potter's workshop using raw materials



Insights

Identity

- Using soil of the Koishiwara area
- Use of natural glaze, which can be taken from the Koishiwara area
- Production using a potter's wheel

Techniques and modeling

- Mass production within the scope of handicrafts
- Techniques and raw materials to produce large-sized pottery
- The existence of successors who will hand down their skills

Lifestyles

- Strong community consciousness and many opportunities for eating together
- Manufacturing tableware for daily use



Products

Design concept: Timeless and Share



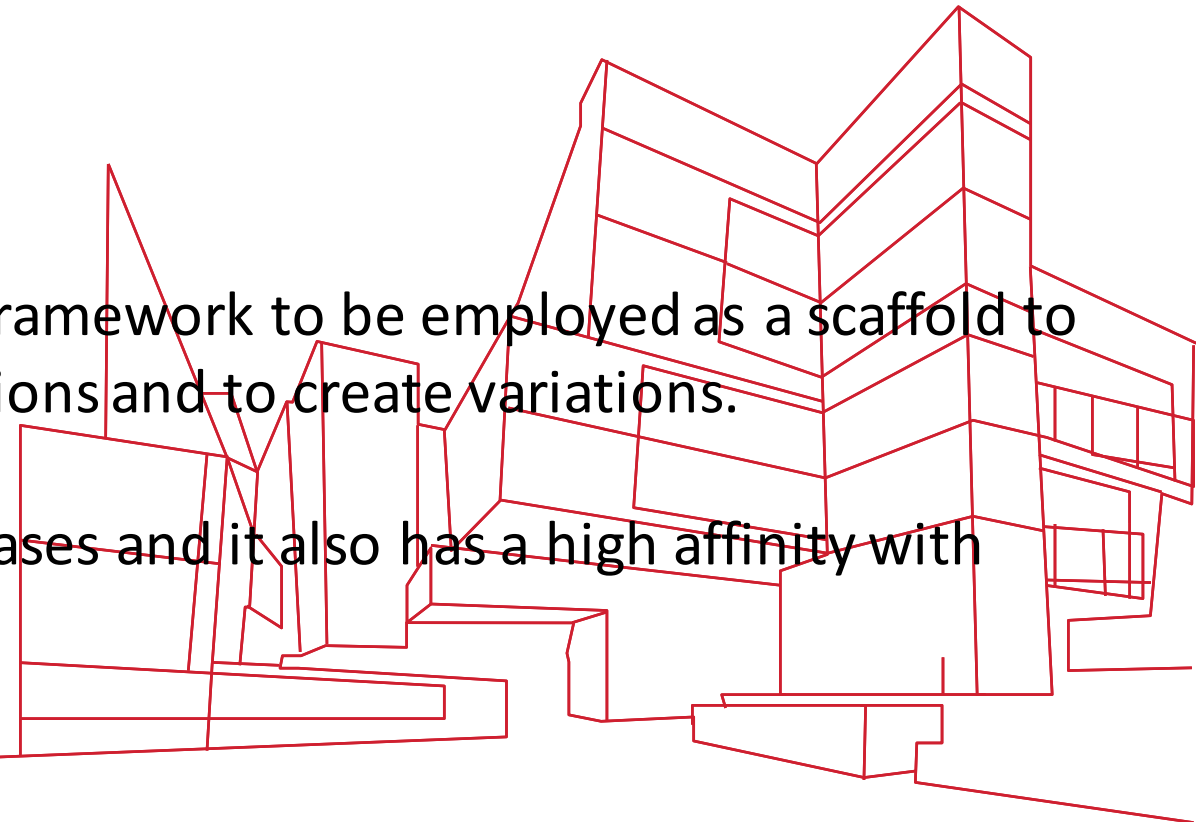
Hypothesis

Three concepts of “KATA” as a framework:

- Shape (formative design)
- Pattern (surface/decorative design)
- Style (usage/cognitive design)

The three elements of “KATA” can be used as a framework to be employed as a scaffold to consider the design concept, shaping, and functions and to create variations.

It is easy to classify the characteristics in other cases and it also has a high affinity with database creation.



Yame-Fukushima Buddhist Altar

More than 80 manufacturing processes, which are divided among six craftsmen
The six steps of manufacturing Buddhist altars

1. Constructing the wooden basis
2. Crafting the “mini-shrine” structure
3. Carving the wooden decorations
4. Making decorative copper clamps
5. Gold and silver powder decoration
6. Painting lacquer/gold gilding/assembling



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Application of the scaffold for designing cutlery

Findings from Surveys

Adaptation in modern context

Shape

- A delicate shape produced by cutting the timber to make a contour and minutely shaving it by hand
- Techniques to efficiently mass produce parts of the same shape with handwork
- Technique to prevent warpage by using specially prepared plywood



- Using wood processing techniques that can produce efficient delicate forms with wood
- Manufacturing method for plates which do not warp over time

Pattern

- Various Lacquering techniques for surface decoration



- Surface variations using various lacquering techniques

Style

- Using and maintaining lacquered products over generations



- Lacquer, which lasts long and maintains the product

Product Design: Cutlery



KATA as a scaffold: Shape, Pattern, Style

Six types of shapes with five types of surface decoration (pattern)



KATA as a scaffold: Shape, Pattern, Style



Communication Design: Exhibition

Presenting usage scenes on the wall explains how to use unfamiliar products overseas. The product series are displayed to show the aspects of shape and pattern.



Conclusion

- The “KATA” framework focusing on the three elements was useful as a scaffold in the process of product design for aspects such as survey, design concept formulation, idea consideration, and communication design.
- Using the “KATA” framework as a scaffold helped create a simple, unified product system that reflects traditional essence and enables clear communication with potential customers.



Thank you..

