



One of the World's Top Three Famous Celadon! A Pottery Experience Using "Sanda Celadon"  
with beautiful transparent colors - Hyogo Terroir Journey -



You can easily create "Sanda celadon", which is said to be "the most beautiful celadon in Japan"!  
Mold pressing experience" using a mold frame for a beautiful finish even for beginners: 3,300 yen

Have you heard of Sanda Celadon, known as one of the world's top three famous celadonone? Sanda Celadon was produced in Miwa Town, Sanda City, Hyogo Prefecture. It is said to be the most beautiful celadon in Japan, but production stopped in the early Showa era and was called as "lost celadon". At the Sanda Tougei no Mori, visitors can try to make Sanda Celadon.

Sanda Tougei no Mori is a 15-minute walk from Aino Station on the JR Fukuchiyama Line. The director, Mr. Ito Zuiho, is a ceramic artist who has been working for many years to restore Sanda celadon porcelain, including conducting excavation surveys of Sanda celadon porcelain with the city government. Under the guidance of Mr. Ito, visitors can try to make "Sanda celadon" ceramics, including painting, mold pressing, and hand-binning.

Before starting, we asked Mr. Ito to tell us about Sanda celadon porcelain. Mr. Ito said that Celadonite, which is necessary for celadon production, was mined in Sanda, which led to the production of celadon from the late Edo period. The only kiln that produced Sanda celadon was the Sanda Myojingama in Miwa Town, Sanda City, but the quality of the finished product was so high that it gained a nationwide reputation.



The purplish celadon stones and pottery shards lined up here were excavated by Mr. Ito himself. Some of them are pieces of Sanda celadon molds that are more than 200 years old. The beautiful color is astonishing and it is hard to believe that it was buried in the ground for so many years.



Mr. Ito said that celadon glaze does not change its color or luster even after a thousand years. If the plates are not broken, they will still be there a thousand years from now. So romantic, isn't it?

The most attractive "blue" color of celadon comes from the glaze that covers the surface.



Mr Ito said that "When we fired the celadon in an acid-free kiln, the iron in the glaze causes a chemical reaction that gives it a bluish hue, which also will be kept in the glassy glaze. In other words, because it is a glass and transparent, so the color will change depending on the angle from which you look at it and the reflection of light. It is same with the ocean: if you watch the ocean from a distance you can see color of the ocean is blue, but when you close up it looks crystal clear."

People always link celadon with blue color, but the royal color of Sanda celadon is a deep, transparent green, just like a jade.



"The typical color is deep green, but there is a wide range of colors from pale green to austere green, and some have a bluish tinge," said Mr. Ito. The most interesting is celadon is that the color changes completely depending on the type of glaze, how it is applied, and the fired method.

### Start of the workshop!

I will try the "Mold Pressing Experience" for 3,300 yen (tax included). We can make a flat dish or a small bowl using a mold in which a Sanda celadon design is engraved. The dish we are going to make is a dish with a traditional Sanda celadon design called "Shippoumon Fukuju-ban" means seven treasures pattern and luck.

Using Mr. Ito's sample as a guide, the clay for celadon was first pressed into the mold in which the "Shippoumon Fukuju-ban" was dug.



The crucial part is to apply the clay uniformly, which will result in a beautiful pattern. Once the pattern is imprinted, trim away the excess clay. Next, the clay is stretched into a thin string and attached to the bottom to make the base. It is quite difficult to stretch the clay to a uniform thickness and to attach it well. After signing the bottom, I removed the clay from the mold. I am happy to see the pattern beautifully captured on the clay. Thanks to the mold! Even a clumsy person like me could create a piece that looks professional!



And here is the end of the workshop. Following the stages of drying, unglazing, glazing, and firing, the finished piece will be ready for collection in around two months. They also offer a mailing service as well. The finished product will look like the plate in the foreground of the photo. The design is absolutely charming! This item's color and sheen won't fade even after a millennium. It's not only durable and lightweight, but also versatile enough to be used as tableware. However, I believe it's too precious to be used casually. So, I've decided to showcase it in my room as an accessory organizer.(^^)



During the mold-pressing workshop, the annual commemorative plates featuring Chinese zodiac designs are a hit. This year, my mother crafted a plate with a rabbit motif, which now graces our home. Apart from mold-pressing, there are also workshops available for painting, hand-building pottery, and pottery wheel techniques.

On the second floor, you'll find a gallery showcasing Sanda celadon porcelain. Entry is free, so it's definitely worth a visit. Adorning the wall is a massive lithograph by Taro Okamoto, titled "Art is an Explosion!" Adjacent to the gallery, there's a store selling a variety of tableware in different shades of blue.



In Sanda Tougei no Mori, pottery-making is just the beginning. They also offer a school for those who are eager to delve into the art of ceramics. If you're aspiring to become a Sanda celadon artist, you're in the right place! They're always open to nurturing new talent.

Mr. Ito expressed, "The Sanda Myojingama was unfortunately shut down in 1944 due to the war and various other factors. This led to a long hiatus in the production of Sanda celadon porcelain, and it was called as 'lost celadon'. However, it would be a great loss if this world-class art and culture were to vanish. There are still numerous exquisite Sanda celadon molds in existence. I wish I can expand the number of artists, elevate the brand recognition of Sanda celadon, and promote Japan as one of the world's top three famous celadon to international audiences."

◆ D A T A

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