

Ogata Keisuke, Urano's adoptive father, claimed familial descent from an Ogata Kenzan back in Kyoto, but Keisuke's genealogy suggests that his ancestor was not Kenzan the first but Kenzan's adopted son, Ihachi.¹⁶ Regardless of its origins, this was not a potter's title inheritance, but after the adoption Urano used the name "Kenzan VI" and signed his pots "Kenzan." Much in the manner of his teacher, Kenya, Urano's real specialty lay in forming and decorating small accessory items such as medicine cases (*inrō*) and beads; wheel work was hired out to a specialist. By the time he began to tutor Leach, Urano had abandoned his traditional multichamber climbing kiln in favor of a single-domed device with flanking square fireboxes, which some authorities claim was a Western innovation. Shikiba Ryūzaburō, an early biographer of Leach, mentions that Urano was making toys and dolls for sale at the Tokyo department store, Mitsukoshi.¹⁷

Leach's days with Urano are described briefly in Leach's memoir *Beyond East and West*: "There, sitting on his [Urano's] hard floor, I began to learn my alphabet of clay, turning a potter's wheel with a stick, either making the soft ware with wet hands, or turning the cheese-hard pots. He said very little; in fact my many questions in very limited Japanese bothered him—"Do what I show you, which is how my master taught me."¹⁸ Leach was impatient with this manner of teaching, and the record shows that before meeting Urano he had tried out several potters, including one named Horikawa Kōzan. They seem to have been less than forthcoming.¹⁹ The fact that Urano was able to satisfy Leach's expectations indicates that the former was to some extent accustomed to discourse: Urano's writing appears in at least one antique art journal.²⁰ Contrary to Leach's depiction of a last-of-a-breed artisan, Urano was a nimble survivor of Japan's pell-mell modernization.

