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Know Your Stuff: New or old, Japanese pottery resides in many American homes

BY **CONNIE SUE DAVENPORT** • FOR WILLIAMSON A.M. • FEBRUARY 1, 2008

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Two readers have sent pictures and questions regarding their Japanese pottery and porcelain.

Dale, in Brentwood, sent photos of a small, pastel-colored vase with green background and stylized, hand-painted flowers. It's marked Made in Occupied Japan with a red stamp.

ADVERTISEMENT Having sent pictures of her teapot with a decal scene of an 18th century court scene surrounded by cobalt blue with heavy gold outlines, Tammy asked, "Do you know anything about this?"

Although she doesn't mention a mark, this set may have been made in Japan, too. Most homes I visit have at least one colorful, decorative item made in Japan during the mid-20th century

Here's a guide to Japanese pottery and porcelain marks.

- Before 1891, pieces made in Japan either had no mark, or were identified with Japanese characters.
- In 1891, the United States' import marking requirements of the McKinley Tariff Act required items imported into the United States be marked with the country of origin. The name Nippon, another name for Japan, was used until 1921.
- After 1921 the mark rule was changed to Japan, which was used until 1941.
- In 1941, Japanese imports were expected to add the words "made in" to Japan. Pieces marked with Japan, Made in Japan or Made in Occupied Japan, like Dale's vase, date to the period immediately after the second World War.



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This teapot, which has an 18th-century court scene surrounded by cobalt blue with heavy gold outlines, might sell for \$85.

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Tammy's tea set might sell for \$85 in an antique mall. Dale's vase could bring \$6. Many brightly colored, whimsical items sell for well over \$50.

Vases made to hang on the wall are selling for \$40 to \$65. Called wall pockets, these popular pottery pieces are flat on one side and have a nail hole for hanging.

Here's a reader's contribution to last week's column in which Nancy of Brentwood asked about her copper teakettle, which had "Revere Copper and Brass Incorporated Rome N.Y. 1801 Revere Ware" inscribed on its bottom.

Dear Connie Sue,

The plastic handles on that copper tea set are probably Bakelite, a sturdy phenol plastic developed in the 20s. It was in wide use until the early '60's. It provided a cool grip. The old black telephones were made of this stuff, as were toaster and pot handles. I think its presence on an item might make it more collectible.

Love your column! — Carole Barenys, Brentwood

Contact Connie Sue Davenport with questions about antiques and collectibles, and we'll discuss them here. Send to curios@conniesueinc.com or by mail in care of Williamson A.M.

in your voice

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