

Achievement and succession of professional identity in potters I :

An analysis and some considerations of
Prof. Tsunehide Shimabukuro's life and professional works

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The purpose of the present study was to investigate the achievement and succession process of professional identity of a potter artist from the viewpoint of Erikson's Epigenetic Schema. The interviewee was Prof. Tsunehide Shimabukuro, one of the leading ceramic artists in Okinawa, Japan. By the analysis of his narratives, the following results were clarified: ①Professional identity was achieved in the process of re-achievement of psychosocial tasks from infancy to adolescence in professional work. ②Five common characteristics in professional work between clinical psychologists and artisans.

Key Words: professional identity, achievement and succession, ceramic artist.

Introduction: A way of work deepening the identity

In this study, I examine the meaning of the saying that work profoundly impacts the identity of the person who engages in it. I also discuss the manner in which identities are formed among people who have been engaged with a work and whether those identities are inherited by subsequent generations. It is safe to assume that much of the work done by humans that fits this description can be called "professional work."

The middle years of a person's life represent a peak in the continuing process of identity formation that occurs throughout the lifecycle. It is also a period of full-fledged agency. That is, a certain level of success is experienced in the professional work, which one aspires to during adolescence and devotes oneself profoundly to over the course of achieving it. This is then passed along to the following generation.

The psychosocial task of identity formation comes out in adolescence. Life, then, continues into adulthood, and by growing accustomed to questions concerning the very essence of identity, such as what one should do to make a living and what one wishes to seek in life, relationships with

others are expanded. Identity thus gradually becomes a certainty. After entering the middle age, two themes overlap and develop together, much like a double spiral: the theme of achieving “individuality,” which further refines the things to which one has devoted oneself, during the first half of life, and the generativity of educating and nursing the next generation on the basis of that achievement.

Since Erikson’s (1950) theory of identity development, an enormous amount of research has accumulated regarding the formation of identity during adolescence. As a result, we have learned that the identity formed in adolescence is not preserved throughout the lifecycle. Rather, it is questioned on every occasion on which life encounters a crisis and is subsequently reorganized, deepened, and developed (Okamoto, 1994, 1997, 2002, 2007, 2010). How, then, is the professional identity, established and achieved during one’s middle age, passed on to the next generation? Regarding this generativity, yet another important theme concerning the middle years exists, about which surprisingly little is known.

Purpose of the research

The purpose of this research is to empirically investigate the process of formation of professional identity in traditional potter artists, and handing it over to the next generation. The definite research questions are as follows:

1. How did a craftsman himself inherit the profession or skill from their predecessor (their master, mentor, or boss, etc.)?
2. How did he develop the profession or skill personally and establish it as a career?
3. How does he display the professional identity that he has inherited and developed and is he attempting to hand it over to the next generation?

Research hypothesis

1. The four stages of professional identity

At the very least, the following four stages can be considered as the process of achieving and developing professional identity. The first stage is the period from birth to adolescence, and it is the stage where identity itself is formed. In order to live one’s life as a professional, it is important to form a concrete identity that will eventually become the basic foundation.

The second stage is the stage where a person becomes an independent specialist after aspiring to one’s professional area during his adolescence. Aspiring to a world of profession normally starts in adolescence or afterwards. There are also some fields like law and clinical psychology, for which training begins at postgraduate level.

The third stage is the stage after becoming an independent professional. After becoming independent, it is necessary that the specialist professional continues to learn and grow for the rest of his life. The fourth stage is involvement with the next generation that was already there in the third stage; this is the stage where the theme of nurturing the next generation is attained, elaborated, and widened. How the process and characteristics of each stage can be described in psychological level?

2. Psychosocial issues in professional level

The second hypothesis is regarding psychological issues in the world of specialist professions. Professional identity appears to be formed, in the same manner as identity formation, by experience of psychosocial issues such as sense of basic trust, autonomy, initiative, industry, and finally the achievement of professional identity in the world of specialist professions.

In his Epigenetic Scheme, Erikson (1950) cites basic sense of trust (infancy), autonomy (toddler stage), initiative, (preschooler stage) and industry (childhood) as the psychosocial issues that are forerunners to adolescent identity formation. These represent the quality of psychological experiences (psychosocial developmental issues) that are essential for healthy development of a person's ego and personality from birth to adulthood. In other words, these qualities represent the following: (1) a sense of trust in the surrounding world (the sense that one can feel safe in the world that they live in), (2) autonomy (the sense that there are things in this world that should be obeyed), (3) initiative (a sense of purpose that there are things one wants to do and one has the ability to do them), (4) industry (actually acquiring the strength and techniques to be able to do these things), and (5) a sense of one's place (the sense that one wants to be and can be a part of this world). In summary, it is also necessary to go through these qualities of experiences in the professional world in order to form a professional identity .

Participant and method

This research specifically examines and discusses the three aforementioned aims on the basis of the life and works of Tsunehide Shimabukuro, a professor at Okinawa Prefectural University of Arts. He was the principal potter and the driving force behind the creation of Yomitani-ware and Tsuboya-ware pottery. In the semi-structured interview, I asked Prof. Shimabukuro about his growth process, his selection of pottery as a professional occupation, and the process of mastery in his profession. From his responses, I consider the process that formed his identity as a professional as it is revealed through his life and work. This approach is taken because Prof. Shimabukuro's life and experiences, despite being unique, have many universal characteristics.

The contents of the interview are presented in Table 1. This is the life story of Prof. Shimabukuro, of which the creation of pottery forms the core. The interviews conducted were

mindful first and foremost to take into account Prof. Shimabukuro's story as he has expressed it. When one interview ended, its results were examined, and the interpretations gained from the analysis were presented to Prof. Shimabukuro at the next meeting. These interpretations were then adjusted and expanded upon after inquiring into the professor's thoughts. A single interview lasted 2–3 hours; a total of three interviews were conducted.

Table 1. Contents of the Interview

(1) Learnings gained from the environment while growing up

- In an environment that was already a potter's world, what qualities did you acquire while growing up before becoming aware of pottery as a potential future occupation?

(2) Identity formation in adolescence

1. What was it that made you choose to become a potter?
2. Major turning points; the meaning of those decisions; subsequent changes within you
3. Experience of the establishment, re-questioning, and deepening of your identity as a professional during that process.

(3) Work as a professional potter

1. How did your determination toward your work and these attitudes and concepts develop?
 2. How is "mastery" achieved?
 3. The process of realizing an image or concept in a piece
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Results and discussion

1. Learnings gained from the environment during growing up

(1) History and culture of Tsuboya

To begin with, I provide a simple introduction regarding the history of Okinawan pottery, which forms the basis for the growth of both the man, Prof. Tsunehide Shimabukuro, and his work. Okinawa has an indigenous culture, distinct from that of mainland Japan. Maritime trade thrived here since approximately the 12th–16th centuries and included an influx of a wide variety of pottery from both China and various East Asian nations. In the 17th century, the exchange between Okinawan potters and those of China and Korea introduced ceramic techniques to Okinawa.

In 1682, the Ryūkyū Kingdom consolidated all kiln-equipped pottery workshops into Tsuboya, marking the beginning of the Tsuboya-ware tradition. The Shimabukuro family was one of the seven original households affected by this consolidation. From the Taishō through the

Shōwa period, prominent figures of the folk craft movement such as Muneyoshi Yanagi and Shōji Hamada visited Okinawa, and the Tsuboya-ware of the Ryūkyū Kingdom era garnered attention as highly valued pieces of pottery representing the “beauty of use.” Influenced by the folk craft movement, Tsuboya potters began to explore new directions for their craft. However, just as they began to do so, Japan entered World War II, during which Okinawa played host to multiple gruesome land battles. After the devastating combat in the Battle of Okinawa, the prefecture experienced a severe shortage of goods and materials, and it was Tsuboya that first provided jars and pots for storage and dishware for everyday use. Ceramics manufacture had already restarted by the end of 1945. In 1985, Jirō Kinjō was judged the keeper of an important intangible cultural heritage and was officially recognized as a living national treasure in the field of ceramics (Ryūkyū pottery). Consequently, the Okinawan pottery drew further attention.

With the advent of the 1970s, Tsuboya became a dense residential area, and the smoke emitted by climbing kilns was deemed pollution. This resulted in the prohibition of the use of climbing kilns. Many potters made the transition to gas kilns, and they still continue to protect the over 300-year old Tsuboya tradition. Potters intent on using climbing kilns, however, relocated to Yomitan, another location where many potters craft their wares to this day. In 1986, Okinawa Prefectural University of Arts was founded, and a new generation of potters began to flourish.

Prof. Tsunehide Shimabukuro was born and raised amid this rich history of Okinawan ceramics and is a potter who has thoroughly inherited the Tsuboya tradition while at the same time burning with the desire to innovate. He is now both the master potter at his Tsunehide Workshop in Yomitan and an assistant professor at Okinawa Prefectural University of Arts. He thus occupies a position that is of vital importance to the creation and inheritance of Okinawan pottery.

(2) Tsunehide’s mother: The guardian Goddess of Tsuboya

In the development of an individual, the mother and father play an important role. Prof. Tsunehide’s 95-year-old mother is still alive and well. Until her retirement at the age of 92, she was an overseer of rituals in the town (*saishisha*) and for a long time filled the role of supporting the town’s spiritual base. Prof. Tsunehide’s maternal grandmother had also filled the same position, and this position came to be inherited among the women in the Shimabukuro line.

The Shimabukuro family was a very large one, with a total of eight children: five boys and three girls. The families of potters are generally poor, and most of the children from such homes would enter into pottery apprenticeships upon graduating from junior high school. The Shimabukuro family, however, valued education, and therefore all five sons were sent to and graduated from a university, despite the difficult times before, during, and after the War. All of the higher education costs were paid for through Tsunehide’s mother’s resourcefulness.

In the Okinawa region, a tradition exists even today whereby fortunes of all family members

are read by a *yuta* (a non-official fortune-teller) on New Year's Day. It is also a custom to have the fortunes of newborn children read. When Tsunehide was born as the fifth son into the Shimabukuro family, his parents had a *yuta* read his fortune. It is said that the *yuta* turned to Tsunehide's mother and proclaimed, "You have been endowed with a blessed gem." After this proclamation, Tsunehide's parents would sometimes recount this story among relatives at family gatherings.

The world into which one is born and the manner in which one is received by one's parents and relatives upon being born have a great significance for the person's life. The words "blessed gem" were interpreted by the Shimabukuro family and a young Tsunehide, since as far back as he can remember, to mean a bright and shining revelation. This is what gave direction to Tsunehide's life, or in other words, gave him the fundamental sense of acceptance born from being blessed by the world he was brought into.

(3) Tsunehide's father: A role model

Prof. Shimabukuro's father, Joukei Shimabukuro (1911–1996), is known even today as a master of the potter's wheel and tricolored glaze. He was a man of few words, and a quintessential artisan devoted to his work. Tsunehide grew up closely watching his father literally day and night.

Though his father never taught him anything about pottery, his father's the very work of creating ceramics was highly alluring to the young Tsunehide. First, Tsunehide found the potter's wheel to be a fascinating tool. His father was an expert at using the wheel and would use it masterfully for his creations. At his father's side, Tsunehide would gaze for long periods at his father's hand movements. This yielded realizations such as "using your hands this way causes this to happen." Tsunehide recalls how he would hurriedly seat himself at the wheel when his father would leave and how he would try and learn the techniques by himself. Such powers of observation are simply astonishing. Today, there is a legend that by the age of eight, Tsunehide had completely mastered the foot-pedal potter's wheel, and, as an opening act at an annual pottery-making race held every autumn, he would dazzle the crowd with his wheel techniques.

The manner in which his father worked continued to have a decisive influence on Tsunehide. "The work I watched my father do ever since I was a child became instilled in me," he states. He also claims, "Being idle around the house is against my nature." Even now, after returning home from teaching at the university, he can be found in his workshop creating ceramics late into the night. The work ethic of his father is being emulated even today without change. By the time he graduated from the university, Tsunehide had learned every technique associated with pottery.

(4) What does the experience during the developmental period signify?

I consider this experience during Tsunehide's developmental period in accordance with

Erikson's Epigenetic Schema. To state the conclusion from the outset, the qualities forming the basis for the identity formation in the first through fourth stages of Erikson's Epigenetic Schema are thoroughly experienced and acquired. Strictly speaking, however, the psychosocial task of "basic trust" in Erikson's first stage (infancy) and the tasks continuing from that into the second stage of early childhood and subsequent stages differ slightly in nature. This is because basic trust is a problem based in a dimension of fate with absolutely no room for individual intent, and it is profoundly affected by the psychological environment of the world into which one is born.

1) The world into which one is born and "basic trust"

Prof. Tsunehide Shimabukuro was born in March 1948, two and a half years after the end of World War II. Despite the damages inflicted by the War on Okinawa, Tsuboya miraculously escaped unburned. After the War, the Americans who came to occupy Okinawa bore witness to the plight of the peoples' lives, lacking as they did even the basic dishes used in everyday life. As a result, potters living in relocation camps were brought back to Tsuboya in November 1945 and were set to producing ceramics. In this sense, Tsuboya and its potters can be considered to have played a symbolic role in Okinawa's revival, which instilled in those potters a great sense of pride. From a very young age, Tsunehide was surrounded by these Tsuboya craftsmen. Thus, the world observed by young Tsunehide was simultaneously proud. It is perhaps this group identity that nurtured and ripened the inexplicable power of "human will and pride."

2) How were the psychosocial themes of the developmental period experienced?

In Erikson's Epigenetic Schema (1950), the independent awareness and will of human beings take on a clear meaning in each stage following the second stage that is associated with early childhood. The second stage of "ego autonomy" refers to the awareness of "law and order" or rules of the world, the third stage of "initiative" refers to the experience of enjoyment of tangible or personal attempts in "modeling," and the fourth stage of "industry" refers to the creation of a sense of competence through task repetition.

From the perspective of Erikson's psychosocial development, the foundations for Tsunehide to become a potter were already developing remarkably during his infancy and childhood, concurrent with the development of his ego.

First, the "ego autonomy" in professional work refers to the learning and acquisition of the rules of the world of that work, namely its "form" and "technique." The very natural progress made during Tsunehide's developmental period with regard to acquiring the "form" of the world of creating ceramics is astonishing. While still a young boy, his knowledge of pottery techniques had already advanced to a very significant degree.

Next, I examine the enjoyment resulting from voluntary attempts. It is not hard to imagine that a child might find crafting of ceramics to be an appealing form of work. To begin with, the potter's wheel is a fun and interesting tool. On this spinning wheel, a clump of mud gradually

takes shape before one's eyes. When we consider that the childhood period is characterized by a concrete operational stage of cognitive development, the easily understood form of a dish is perhaps the most suited to a child. Moreover, as the above recollections indicate, by realizing that using his hands in certain ways yielded certain results and seating himself at the wheel when his father was away to try things for himself, Tsunehide was constantly and earnestly observing his father's work and acquiring the techniques through his own attempts.

In this, we see that the "initiative" of performing the concrete task of creating something by oneself, the "industry" of acquiring techniques through repetition of tasks and the power to be able to do that task in one's own way, and the sense of competence this yields are all experienced. What has been inherited is not only a body of pottery techniques but also the artisans' ways of work and living, as evidenced by the devotion that keeps Tsunehide even today in his workshop until late night.

Long before the awareness of themes concerning identity, such as questions of what one will become or how one will live, the life of a potter had already deeply resonated within Tsunehide: "I will do this work and live this way."

2. Identity formation in adolescence

(1) Choice of pottery as a profession

The formation of identity in adolescence refers to the creation of a self by actively selecting characteristics acquired through assimilation with various people one encounters during the period of development. The decision to live life in a certain manner is made, and then one actively devotes oneself to the world. Regarding the selection of a profession, the professions of one's parents and those encountered during the developmental period exert a great degree of influence. How was the selection of a profession made during Tsunehide's adolescence?

Because it was by no means easy to earn a living as a potter, Tsunehide's father did not recommend his children to follow his career path. Not once did he indicate his desire for them to continue his work. Yet, despite his elder brothers becoming school teachers, Tsunehide settled upon the occupation of a potter without, he claims, the slightest hesitation or debate. Why did he choose this profession? As we shall see, the decisive factor determining his choice was the enjoyable experience of pottery.

What exactly was the nature of the decision-making process that determined how he would live his life? In elementary and junior high school, Tsunehide was a baseball player. It was during his third year of junior high school, however, that he began to consider pottery as a future profession. In high school, he became a member of the art club, in anticipation of his future occupation. After high school, Tsunehide gained admission to the Fine Arts Department at the

University of the Ryūkyūs. While there, he studied topics such as Muneyoshi Yanagi's theories and Joukou Shimabukuro's research on glazing. He states that he was deeply impressed by the realization that such magnificently unique things existed in Okinawa.

In addition to the dishes, bowls, *sake* containers, and teapots used in everyday life, Tsunehide's father crafted all forms of ceramics, from *zushigame* (cinerary urns) and *yushibin* (ceremonial *sake* containers) to statues of Shisa, creatures from Okinawan mythology. By learning the techniques associated with these creations, participating in the production process, and corroborating this information through his studies, Tsunehide excelled in both theory and practice of pottery in his university days. By the time he graduated, he had learned virtually every pottery technique in existence. After university, he joined his father's workshop. Tsunehide remarks that he could just as well have joined another workshop but felt no particular need to do so. At his father's workshop he was able to continue learning about any and all pottery techniques.

When discussing the selection of a profession, we use the term "foreclosure" to refer to a young adult choosing the profession of a parent without searching for other options or going through a process of trial and error. Because such individuals lack in the experience of challenging other possibilities or of conducting trial and error investigations into different professions, they are thought to be more vulnerable to later missteps in their career. However, if an individual arrives at the same profession as that of a parent even after going through a process of trial and error, this is referred to as "identity achievement."

Tsunehide states that he never considered any other profession simply because his father's work was highly appealing and using the potter's wheel was an extremely enjoyable experience. The fact that not much economic prosperity can be expected from the career did not deter him from choosing to become a potter. It was an active decision grounded in the strong determination to deepen the art of pottery itself. This is another form of identity achievement that exists.

At the age of 26, Tsunehide left his father's workshop to work on his own and established his own workshop in Tsuboya. This was four years after his graduation from university. He recalls that when he first told his father of his desire to work independently, his father uttered only a simple and brief acceptance. This marked a new beginning for Tsunehide at the site of Jirō Kinjō's old kiln, who at that time had relocated to Yomitan. With the establishment of his own workshop, Tsunehide decided to focus on creating ceramics for everyday use and reclaim the true nature of Okinawan pottery. The identity handed down for the generations by artisans raised in the households of Okinawan potters is vividly apparent in the two beliefs Tsunehide held toward his work. During those days, the work of many potters centered on the creation of *zushigame* (cinerary urns) and ceremonial *sake* containers, as mentioned previously. This was caused by the War having destroyed numerous graves and the high demand for religious items created by this destruction. At his workshop, however, Tsunehide decided to focus on the creation of ceramics for

everyday use. This seems to have been a prophetic decision as wholesale stores in Ōsaka came to pick up his work and he sold a significant number of pieces. He admits, however, to having felt that the great amount of work he was doing still did not yield much money.

(2) A transition at the onset of the middle age

At the age of 39, Tsunehide Shimabukuro's life underwent two major turning points. The first was the relocation of a certain workshop to the village of Yomitan in central Okinawa, and the second was the beginning of his employment as an assistant professor at the newly established Okinawa Prefectural University of Arts.

With the onset of the 1970s, the number of residents in Tsuboya significantly increased, and the pollution caused by the smoke of climbing kilns became an issue in the community. Jirō Kinjō, who would later be named a living national treasure, relocated from Tsuboya to Yomitan in order to erect a climbing kiln and continue creating ceramics. In 1987, Tsunehide seized upon this opportunity to also move to Yomitan and join the group of potters working collaboratively at Jirō Kinjō's kiln. Tsunehide claims that this was an extremely fortuitous turn of events. It was thus that an extensive workshop was constructed and full-scale pottery production began. Tsunehide's relocation to Yomitan was focused on the work using a climbing kiln, and it was here that he was able to take up challenges very different from those presented by a gas kiln. Over time, the number of people working at the kiln increased, and so did the breadth of the work done there.

The second major turning point, as mentioned previously, came when Tsunehide was hired by Okinawa Prefectural University of Arts as an assistant professor. Tsunehide refers to this, too, as having an immensely positive effect on his professional life. Okinawa Prefectural University of Arts was established in 1986 on the ideological premises of creating and continuing the unique artistic culture fostered by the distinctive features of Okinawa, as well as for the cultivation of individuals to promote this goal. Tsunehide has been involved with the university since its founding, and by securing a post on the faculty, his professional world greatly expanded. First-class potters from all over Japan visited the university as part-time and contract lecturers. The rare and valuable experience of being able to witness firsthand both the creations and the classes of these potters along with university students had an enormous impact on Tsunehide. Through interactions and exchanges with other potters, Tsunehide further mastered the profession.

In the wake of the laying of his professional work's foundation, Tsunehide Shimabukuro's creations came to simultaneously express his original aesthetic and manifest the Tsuboya tradition that he had inherited.

3. Prof. Tsunehide Shimabukuro's professional work

(1) Transition from his father's work to his own

Tsunehide's father, Joukei, was a craftsman who produced all types of ceramics that were needed in the course of everyday life. He was also famous for the speed with which he could create these products. During his father's days, emphasis was placed almost entirely on manufacturing these daily wares, and it was rare that a potter would pursue his personal esthetics and challenge himself to create new, innovative pieces.

In contrast, Tsunehide speaks of his desire to receive and incorporate inspiration from others into his work. Moreover, while his father's work remained within the scope of the tradition he had inherited, Tsunehide talked of inheriting traditions from previous generations and then developing them further. How did Tsunehide obtain these distinctive feelings of "inheritance" and "development"?

(2) Work as a professional potter

I consider the originality of Prof. Tsunehide Shimabukuro's work first in relation to the process of mastery. Then I consider it in relation to his identity and affections as an Okinawan, which could perhaps best be termed the "belief" that forms the basis for his pottery.

1) How is mastery achieved?

At the core of professional identity formation lays "mastery" as a professional in a certain field. What does the process of artisan mastery entail? Furthermore, what types of psychological factors are involved in this, and what type of mental process can we understand it to be?

① Support of sustained energy

When placing oneself in and devoting oneself to a single world of work, what are the most fundamental powers that support this devotion? Tsunehide claims that for him, these were a love of what he was doing and the enjoyment he experienced while doing it. He further says that at no time in his life have either of these feelings been shaken. Tsunehide had already been experiencing this sense of enjoyment during his infancy and childhood. This enjoyment came from several sources: watching his father work and then attempting and confirming the methods himself, the learning and acquisition of "form" and "technique" through concentration and repetition, and the sense of competence in being able to do it himself. As stated above, these phenomena precisely correspond to the developmental stages of ego. Thus, this sense of enjoyment became a source of vitality, which served to support a lifetime of work.

② The fundamental "form": "Hands Remember" technique

Tsunehide believes that "form" comprises the fundamentals of ceramics and can be interchanged with technique. He says that the most important point is to "remember the hands of a

good potter.” The pupil needs to make the teacher’s hands his or her own. If this sense regarding form and shape is not acquired, one’s work will not grow or expand. When form is properly acquired, it becomes the foundation upon which one needs to add individual uniqueness, which then serves to expand one’s originality.

As considered within the framework of this study, the notion that fundamentals of any type of professional work are decisively important and the hypothetical image of people who have made those fundamentals and forms their own and are able to express their inner creativity over the course of a lifetime, are corroborated by Tsunehide’s actual experiences.

③ Active internalization of the impact of other skilled artisans

Tsunehide claims that the examination of both old works and those of other potters had a tremendously meaningful impact on him. Among such experiences, one that had a particularly decisive influence was his exposure to Shōji Hamada. As is well known, Shōji Hamada (1894–1978) was a central figure in the folk craft movement, together with such individuals as Muneyoshi Yanagi and Kanjirō Kawai. Hamada established a kiln in Mashiko, Tochigi, and in 1955 he became the first person to be named a living national treasure in folk craft ceramics, a subfield of ceramics. In 1918, at the age of 24, Hamada visited Okinawa, where he was deeply impressed by the ceramics and textiles created by unknown artisans, which were used in everyday life. He subsequently visited Okinawa numerous times, and over the course of these visits, his interaction with Tsuboya potters increased. During his visits, the potters would visit the Aragaki household, where Hamada was staying, to receive instruction from him. Tsunehide states that he, too, learned a great deal by observing where the appeal and attraction in ceramics lay for Hamada as well as how he developed pottery techniques.

Hamada’s work gained widespread recognition as being different from that of other potters. One reason for this was the *gosurōnuki* method that he employed in his pottery made in Mashiko. Seeing Hamada’s creations had great impact on Tsunehide, and as a result he considered employing this technique in his own work. Pieces created by this *gosurōnuki* technique have become representative of Tsunehide’s work from his youth until the present day.

From this exchange and others, Tsunehide learned how potters from the mainland came to perceive Okinawan characteristics, and that, in turn, inspired him. He began to work as an artisan who applied to his craft what could only be done in Okinawa and what forms the essence of Okinawan pottery. There are countless topics that he researched, examples of which include his use of red clay that abounds in Okinawa, his method of decorating after the application of glaze, and his use of unique Okinawan glazes.

We can consider these experiences important factors contributing to the originality of Tsunehide’s professional work as well as to the creation of his individual work. In the realms of both research and art, originality is not born simply by waiting aimlessly for a surge of one’s ideas.

What is of the utmost importance is the type of impact that is made and the point where it is made. This, in turn is determined by a close and thorough observation of the work of predecessors, together with an active awareness of relevant issues. I believe that the process of adding the impact made by one's predecessors to the world into a self that has been cultivated through training and active awareness of issues is akin to crystallization, or the reaction between a fluid and a catalyst.

④ **Formation of an aesthetic sense**

The acquisition of “form” and “technique” comprise the foundation of an artisan's work. However, Tsunehide claims that an aesthetic sense is more important than any technique. In what way is this sense of beauty cultivated?

Much of Tsunehide's work incorporates aspects of Okinawa's culture and nature. His designs have been known to include patterns from *minsā* weavings, the red flower of the Tiger's Claw tree, the long vines of the Curtain fig, and recently, ginger and sugarcane. He often takes the close and familiar and transforms it into the elements employed in his designs.

Ceramic design must give complete respect to the pattern on which it is based and simultaneously constitute something new. Certainly, new ideas for designs do not easily come to mind, even when one takes great pains to think of one. Tsunehide laughs as he says, “Designs are not easy. They make my head hurt.” There are times when he does not know how to go about drawing a pattern. When he reaches an impasse, he does not try to force the issue but rather returns to the basic decorating that he has done for years. By going back to something known to be good, he returns to that with which he has experience and is therefore able to break through the creative block preventing him from moving forward. Though he does not have many of these basic designs, devising a decoration brings about a feeling of novelty. The originality of a design is born along the way as he engages in this repetition of creativity and effort.

At present, Tsunehide's deepest interest and involvement lie in creating large plates and dishes. The fires of Jirō Kinjō's kiln are lit four times a year. On the first lighting of the climbing kiln, he puts all his energy into creating about ten of these plates. These large plates are now his “favorite thing” to create, and he describes the occasions of his doing so as fulfilling times in which his creative urges are truly awakened.

⑤ **The sense of becoming a professional and the formation of core identity**

At the age of 26 when he struck out on his own, Tsunehide first sensed that the pottery was something that he was capable of doing. He had experienced this feeling to a certain degree during his developmental period, but whether he could earn a living as a potter was something he could not know until becoming independent. Even so, he describes what he experienced after leaving his father's workshop as a feeling of “...not making much money despite working hard and selling many pieces.” He had first thought of making his way as an “artisan.” What he found, however,

was that creating large quantities of ceramics for daily use would not yield much income. It was here, positioned precariously on this threshold between being an artist and an artisan but truly being neither, that, Tsunehide says, he passed more than ten years in Tsuboya.

In this sense, the move to Yomitan was an unforgiving one that demanded preparation for, at long last, true independence. This was the time for a shift to a new mentality—what he refers to as one of “I will do whatever I can here.” We can perhaps say that the fact that this change in the perspective coincided with the onset of the middle age, coming as it did at the age of 39 following the more than ten years spent in Tsuboya, presented an amazing opportunity. Tsunehide already possessed skills and techniques of his craft. Though his time as an assistant professor at the university and the expansion of operations at his studio may have exacted both a physical and mental toll, for Tsunehide this was the ideal period for the fruition of a career characterized by originality based upon the strengths he had acquired.

Even today, as he approaches his 60th birthday, Tsunehide’s daily routine consists of teaching at the university during the day, and after dinner, retiring to his workshop where he creates ceramics late into the night. He describes the time he comes into his workshop and sits before his potter’s wheel as that when he feels being his truest self and a fulfilling and relaxing time when he is able to concentrate. For one who has been a potter from a very young age, this forms the core of his identity even today.

I believe that Prof. Shimabukuro’s profession can accurately be described as a “potter and researcher.” This is because he simultaneously combines the roles of a potter, being a continuing practitioner of pottery in a ceramics workshop, and a researcher, by not only learning pottery techniques but also constantly exploring new worlds.

2) Work beliefs and Okinawan identity

Tsunehide maintains, “Dishes should be used” and “Okinawan dishes should be made from Okinawan soil.” In addition to the Okinawan soil, which he of course uses, nearly all the other materials in his pieces are also procured from Okinawa. These include the various raw ingredients used in glazes, such as lime burned by wood ash or coral, iron, brass, and manganese.

Tsunehide’s characteristic designs incorporate many elements of Okinawan culture and nature, such as *gosurōnuki* and *minsā* patterns, and traditional decorative red painting, from which can be felt a sense of warmth and stability with roots in the very land. These are positive expressions of Tsunehide’s inner world. He says, “It is not enough for a piece to simply reflect a part of the world. How is the creator looking at that world? The creator’s feelings should act to emphasize this. Then, the world of the creator’s mind and his or her personality will be reflected in the piece.” Could it be that for Tsunehide, this world of the mind and personality are expressions of his identity as an Okinawan? That is to say, in Tsunehide’s beliefs there is a strong feeling of trust and a sense of

affirmation toward his roots as a person who has lived in Okinawa for generations—both as the son in a potter’s household and as a native born and raised in Okinawa.

This trust in one’s own roots and beliefs toward one’s work are deeply connected with the regionality and spirituality of not only Tsunehide but also the generations in Tsuboya that have made pottery their livelihood. Manufacturing ceramics by using the climbing kiln makes a potter one with nature. Ceramics are created out of earth and water and finished by fire. Thus, pottery brings together the three elements of earth, water, and fire. From this, a respect and worship of nature are born. In Tsuboya, the wells from which water is drawn are regarded as sacred. Even today, rituals worshipping the gods of fire and water are held eight times a year. Both Tsunehide’s mother and her mother before her occupied the role of the leader of these village rites (*saishishi*). When lighting a climbing kiln, the kiln’s master will make offerings of *awamori* (Okinawan sake wine), salt, and rice and recite the prayer, “may good ceramics be born.” These ceremonial prayers and rites were continued following relocation to Yomitan.

In this manner, as generations of artisans continued their way of life as potters in Tsuboya for over 300 years and practiced a form of nature worship which honored earth, water, and fire, a shared spirituality was formed among the potters. Tsuboya was one community—a world protected by the gods of earth, fire, and water. The ceremonial worship in Tsuboya was the work of the area’s women.

In the rite of *ugan* (praying), the words of prayer offered are “May good ceramics be born. May they be good wares and sell well.” These prayers have a very realistic implication. Whether or not a climbing kiln is successful and yields pieces worthy of being sold is a grave issue on which the very livelihoods depend. This was all the more reason why the belief in the god of fire was so strong and why men worshipped at their kilns, women held rituals for the stability of life in the village as a whole, and prayers were offered for all the kilns of Tsuboya.

General considerations

1. Developmental process of professional identity and psychosocial tasks

In this study, we hypothesize that the formation process of professional identity occurs in four stages. Additionally, after the individual enters into a professional occupation, psychosocial tasks from up until adolescence are repeated in the world of that profession.

The process of mastery in the professional world, as described in the interviews with Tsunehide, can be organized into five stages with qualitatively different characteristics, as illustrated in Figure 1. First, belief toward one’s work forms both the conscious and unconscious foundation for continuing professional work. Supported by this, we then have the feeling of enjoyment from voluntary attempts and the acquisition of the form and technique of a specific

world of work. The accumulation of these experiences then forms the basis for the feeling of capability in that world and finally a standing in that world is achieved. An individual's uniqueness is both sought and deepened through further devotion to the craft after standing independently as a professional, and the subsequent passing of this along to the next generation represents the inheritance of work born of oneself.

Looking at the psychological experiences evident in this mastery process from the perspective of the developmental stages of professional identity, we can find the psychosocial tasks related to stages I through VIII of Erikson's Epigenetic Schema, as noted in the left column of Figure 1.

In this way, the hypothesis of this study is supported by the experiential process of Tsunehide. In contrast to many people who enter into a single professional world during adolescence, the experiences in Tsunehide's developmental period formed the foundation of his professional decision. In his case, the processes of forming a fundamental identity and a professional identity overlapped from a very early age. Tsunehide's life saw the formation of his identity in the developmental period, and the formation of his identity as a potter fused and progressed from a very early stage of his life. The two identities were subsequently attained on an extremely high level.

2. Identity formation in adolescence

Trust in the world into which one is born is particularly connected to belief in one's work. Worthy of special mention in this concept is the direct relationship between identification with the father during the developmental period and the formation of a professional identity.

The term "foreclosure" was introduced to refer to the absence of active trial and error, or searching, during adolescence with regard to the characteristics of the self acquired through identification with the various people and roles experienced during development. As mentioned, this is thought to result in a fragile identity. If we examine the path taken by Tsunehide from the outside, it appears to be an example of this foreclosure. However, a closer inspection of his experiences and decisions shows that his selection of a profession in adolescence was unlike that of most adolescents who experience the trial and error on the threshold between self and society. Rather, his was a diligent process of trial and error and search conducted within the world of pottery.

While being a highly elaborate form of handiwork, pottery is also a form of physical labor requiring great strength. In Tsunehide's developmental period and adolescence, the life of a potter was still one of economic hardship. Choosing this profession despite being well aware of this fact indicates that he sought the challenge of, or what could perhaps be termed a wager on, the true pursuit of pottery.

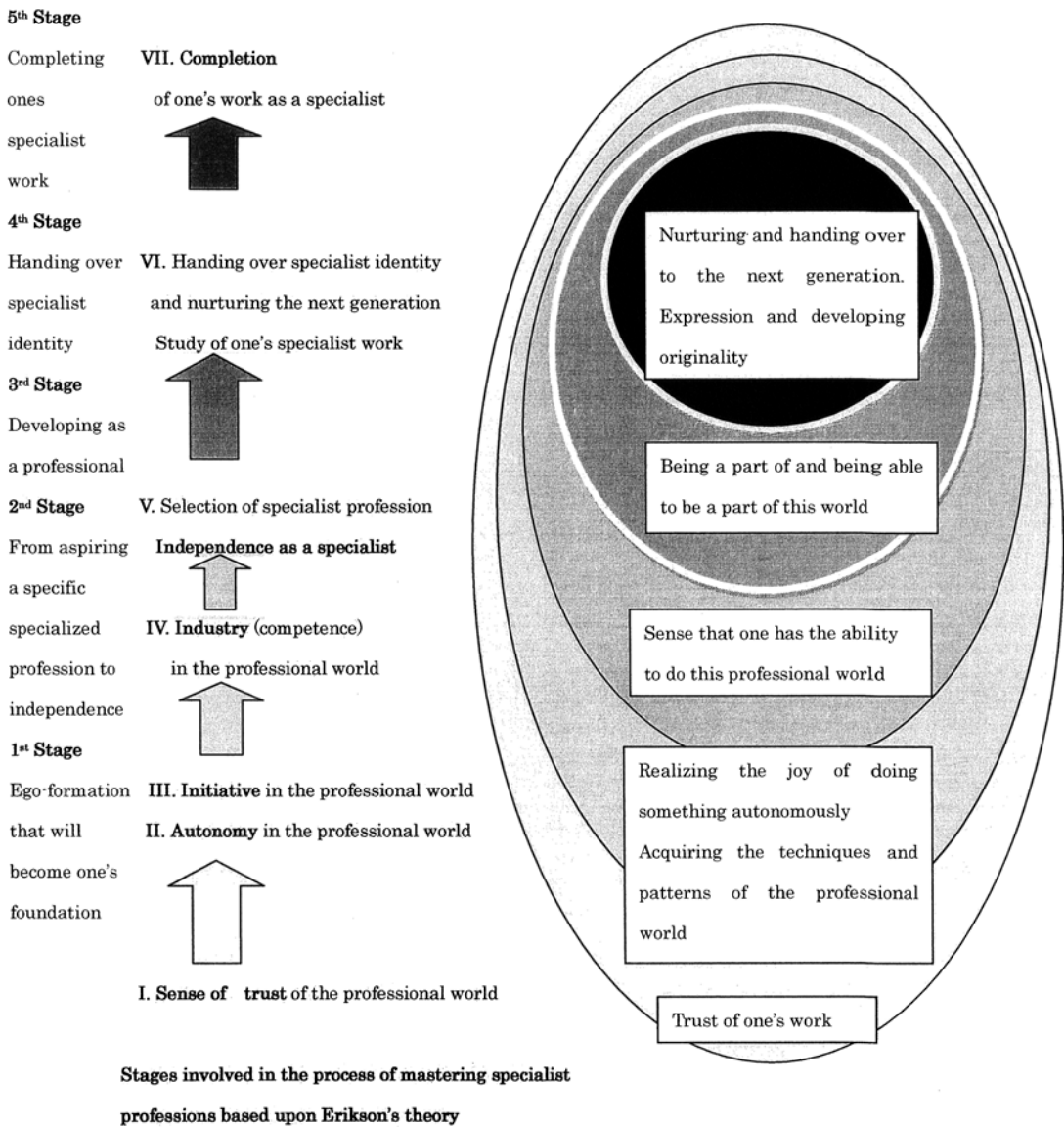


Figure 1. The process of qualitative changes in acquiring mastery of specialist professions

3. Changing and deepening of identity in middle-age

It can be said, and not only with regard to professionals, that the onset of the middle age, which occurs around the age of 40 to the mid-40s, is generally a period of crisis and transition. During this time, many people stand at the halfway mark and look back on the way they lived during the first half of their lives and the way things are now. That is, they begin to question their identity. In Tsunehide's case, he experienced extreme turning points around the time he turned 40. He relocated to Yomitan and joined the group at the kiln of Jirō Kinjō and also began his employment as an assistant professor at Okinawa Prefectural University of Arts. While these two events turned out to be blessings for Tsunehide, they were also the events in his life which required the most energy. As we have seen, he speaks of the solid "resolution" he made for himself by doing anything that he was able to accomplish. The experience of this turning point in his life indicates his undertaking the challenge of an even more essential pursuit of the profession he had chosen.

However, it cannot simply be said that Tsunehide enjoyed nothing but smooth sailing throughout the course of his life as both a potter and student. As previously mentioned, there were times when he, too, would reach impasse in his work. We have seen that he would overcome these difficulties with a "back to basics" approach. This "back to basics" strategy possesses an important meaning from a psychological perspective as well. When a critical situation is encountered, it is the power of the self, acquired from the developmental stages up until that time that gives the individual the power to overcome the crisis at hand. To borrow Erikson's words, this is the psychosocial task of each developmental stage. The re-experiencing of these mental qualities perhaps serves to support the process of mastery of one's profession. This, as already described in detail, is illustrated in Figure 1. If we change the manner in which we view the mastery process, it can be considered the power to overcome the difficulties encountered during work. That is, the "techniques" and fundamental "forms" that one has acquired support the professional when an impasse is reached in the expression or development of originality. This process of "going back and forth" is frequently experienced in the mind's development in times of crisis. The fact that this is also observable in the process of professional mastery is worthy of attention.

4. Common characteristics in professional work of clinical psychologists and artisans

While clinical psychologist is a high-level scientific profession, it can sometimes be called "an artisan's skill" or an "art." There are some characteristics common to the professional work of clinical psychologists and handicraft artisans.

The first characteristic is the fact that while both are intellectual works, sensitivity and imagination play an important role. For example, raw clay refining, glaze preparation, and firing

done by potters are all a part of chemical experiments. Sensitivity and imagination are also extremely important in the molding and painting of pottery. On the other hand, clinical psychologists, like psychological researchers, also require a high intellectual level and sensitivity in understanding and imaging the mental world of the client, which is an important and desired quality.

The second characteristic common to both professions is the presence of a strong expression of humanity in their work. Potters express their own world in pottery based upon their aesthetic sense. Clinical psychologists provide support having a specialized role of helping the client to live more flexibly, accompanying them in the process of resolving psychological problems. I believe that, after all, the job of the clinical psychologist is to understand the clients desired way of living and support them in that. The life clients want to live vary depending as per their point of view, and accordingly the ways of offering support also vary. This indicates how the clinical psychologist “perceives, understands, and relate to” the client. This specialized activity is quite similar to an artisan’s ceramic work who does not just take an idea from the world and reflect it, but express how he personally perceives the world.

The third characteristic is that both works are done in the field. In other words, majority of the core job is not done in a laboratory or library, but out in the field. The primary role of an artisan is to be in front of the potter’s wheel, creating earthenware. It is also important that clinical psychologists give priority, by allocating separate time, for psychotherapy while working.

The fourth characteristic is that basic training in both professions is learning patterns and techniques. However, the methods of training appear to differ considerably between artisans and clinical psychologists.

The fifth characteristic among artisans and clinical psychologists is the attraction to constantly encounter new worlds as a part of their work and this appears to be the surprise element and joy of coming across new lives. After the potter has put his heart and soul in creating his work, the final product enters the climbing kiln and is fired. The final outcome of the finished product is unknown as to what it would look like until the pottery is taken out of the kiln. This example of the pottery (a child) suggests a child being born from the climbing kiln (the womb).

The work of a clinical psychologist has similar characteristics. Clients who a therapist encounters during psychotherapy are not identical and they have an inherent mental constitution. Through the process of psychotherapy, psychological obstacles, difficult problems, and unconscious conflicts that the client is facing are identified, regulated, and the client is made conscious of a new self that he/she was not aware of. The greatest attraction in the profession of a clinical psychologist is being able to continuously observe and stand close the mental processes which differ from person to person.

Futures Tasks

Research dealing with the formation and inheritance of professions has only just begun. As the first in this body of research, this study considered the professional identity of a potter from Tsuboya through the life and career of Tsunehide Shimabukuro. Regarding the formation and inheritance of the Tsuboya potter's profession, however, the following important issues need to be addressed in future studies.

First, there is the question of the differences between the professional identity formations based on the period in which one enters a professional world. Surely, the process and crises of identity formation differ between individuals such as Tsunehide, who was raised in a professional world from infancy and developed an intimacy with the craft because of that immersion, and those who aspire to become potters in adolescence, or those who enter the field in adulthood because they seek an occupational change.

Second, the process of inheriting a profession through the face-to-face relationship between a teacher and pupil warrants clarification. What is it that the pupil inherits from the teacher, and in what manner is it transmitted and made one's own? Furthermore, from the teacher's perspective, what is the nature of the relationship with the pupil, and what is it that is being communicated?

Third and finally, a comparative examination is necessary with the mastery process of a clinical psychologist. As mentioned above, the expertise of a clinical psychologist is in ways similar to that of an artisan. By conducting a comparative study of the two, the former may stand to learn a great deal from the professional work of the latter.

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