

HIGHLIGHTING
Japan

VOL.
181
JUNE
2023



THE UMBRELLAS OF JAPAN

CONTENTS

VOL. 181, JUNE 2023



9

22



12

FEATURES

6 History of the Umbrella in Japan and Meaning of Umbrellas in Festivals

An interview with Danjo Tatsuo, Specially Appointed Professor of the Department of History and Cultural Properties, Faculty of Humanities, Beppu University

10 Wagasa Maker in Kyoto Shares More Than 300 Years of Tradition

We interviewed the owner of a time-honored Kyoto shop established more than 300 years ago about traditional Japanese umbrellas *wagasa*.

12 Gifu City: Japan's Largest Manufacturer of Wagasa

Introducing Gifu *wagasa* created in Gifu City, the largest *wagasa* manufacturing region in Japan

14 Kanazawa Wagasa: The Ultimate Functional Beauty Born from the Local Climate

Wagasa made in Kanazawa, Ishikawa Prefecture, are distinguished by their sturdy structure and beautiful design.

16 Venerable shop makes handmade dual-use umbrella-parasols

Dual-use umbrella-parasols enjoy recent popularity at a venerable maker of handcrafted umbrellas in Asakusa.

18 Umbrellas Used in Traditional Japanese Dance

As one of Japan's traditional performance arts, *Nihon buyo* is known for dance plays that feature umbrellas in some of their most memorable scenes.

20 Wagasa Illumination Lights Up Tokyo Business District

Introducing an illumination event that uses *wagasa* and is held every year in the Otemachi business district in Tokyo

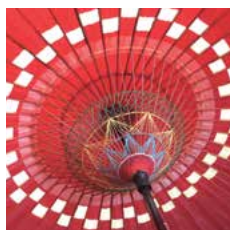
22 Umbrella-Shaped Yokai

We interviewed Komatsu Kazuhiko, the former director-general of the International Research Center for Japanese Studies, about an umbrella-shaped *yokai* that has been part of Japan's folklore since ancient times.

29



15



ALSO

- 24 POLICY-RELATED NEWS**
Japan to Host the “Justice Affairs Diplomacy” Ministerial Forum
- 26 SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY**
Ocean Thermal Energy Conversion
—Making the Dream a Reality
- 28 MY WAY**
Handmade *Washi* Artisan Shares Traditional Techniques
- 30 THE BEAUTY OF KIMONO**
“*Furisode*” (Kimono with Long Sleeves) Plum Trees, Standing Screens, and Falcon Design on Whity Brown Chirimem Crepe Ground

19



THEME FOR JUNE: The Umbrellas of Japan

During the transition from spring to summer, Japan goes through a rainy season, the so-called *tsuyu* (also pronounced *baiu*), literally meaning “plum rain.” Umbrellas are one of the indispensable items during this season. *Wagasa* are a type of unique Japanese umbrellas made using traditional paper *washi*, and original techniques for making *wagasa* have been handed down through the ages in various regions throughout Japan, such as Kyoto, Gifu, and Kanazawa. In this month’s issue of *Highlighting Japan*, we explore *wagasa* traditions, the use of umbrellas in *Nihon buyo* dance plays and events, as well as unique Japanese beliefs, awareness, and culture associated with umbrellas.



ON THE COVER: *Janome* are a type of slender Japanese umbrellas distinguished by a circular ring pattern. Literally translated as “snake’s eye,” the pattern represents the eye of a snake, a messenger of the gods, and traditionally has been used to ward off evil spirits.

COPYRIGHT © 2023 CABINET OFFICE OF JAPAN

The views expressed in this magazine by the interviewees and contributors do not necessarily represent the views of the Cabinet Office or the Government of Japan. No article or any part thereof may be reproduced without the express permission of the Cabinet Office. Copyright inquiries should be made through a form available at:

www.gov-online.go.jp/eng/mailform/inquiry.html

WHERE TO FIND US

Tokyo Narita Airport terminals 1 ●JR East Travel Service Center (Tokyo Narita Airport) ●JR Tokyo Station Tourist Information Center ●Tokyo Tourist Information Center (Haneda Airport, Tokyo Metropolitan Government Building, Keisei Ueno Station) ●Niigata Airport ●Kansai Tourist Information Center (Kansai Int’l Airport) ●Fukuoka Airport Tourist Information ●Prefectural Central Libraries

PRODUCTION

FBI Communications, Inc.

MANAGING EDITOR

Fukuda Yasuhiro

EDITORS

Kato Naruho, Kimura Tetsuro, Koike Ginga

CONTRIBUTORS

Fukuda Mitsuhiro, Murakami Kayo, Oyama Yuzuruha, Tanaka Nozomi

DESIGN

Azuma Terutaka, Sawatari Rumi

EDITORS’ NOTE

Japanese names in this publication are written in Japanese order: family name first, personal name last.

FEATURES

The Umbrellas of Japan



Above left: Kanazawa *wagasa* are known for eye-catching, vibrant colors and elaborate, elegant patterns.

Above right: Kyoto's *hanamachi* districts offer a condensed experience of traditional culture, including performing arts, as well as the unique Japanese culture of *omotenashi* (hospitality), and *wagasa* are a part of this experience.

Below left: The process of attaching *washi* to the umbrella frame using an adhesive made from natural ingredients (tapioca starch)

Below right: Display of a tower-shaped three-dimensional work

During the transition from spring to summer, Japan goes through a rainy season, the so-called *tsuyu* (also pronounced *baiu*), literally meaning “plum rain.” Umbrellas are one of the indispensable items during this season. *Wagasa* are a type of unique Japanese umbrellas made using traditional paper *washi*, and original techniques for making *wagasa* have been handed down through the ages in various regions throughout Japan, such as Kyoto, Gifu, and Kanazawa. In this month’s issue of *Highlighting Japan*, we explore *wagasa* traditions, the use of umbrellas in *Nihon buyo* dance plays and events, as well as unique Japanese beliefs, awareness, and culture associated with umbrellas.



History of the Umbrella in Japan and Meaning of Umbrellas in Festivals

Japan's tsuyu¹ rainy season makes the *kasa*, or umbrella, essential. Danjyo Tatsuo, Specially Appointed Professor of Humanities at Beppu University, is expert on Japanese folklore and folk tools and author of numerous research papers on umbrellas. He explains the history of the umbrella in Japan and its meaning in festivals.

When did the *kasa* first appear in Japanese history?

First, looking at the role that the *kasa*, or umbrella, it is to cover the head to protect against the rain and to shade from the sun. In Japanese, there are two distinct kanji for *kasa* referring to two different types of umbrella: the hat type worn directly on the head and the type of a hand-held umbrella with a handle. The *kasa* first appears in Japanese history around the 9th to 11th centuries. At the time, umbrella referred to the *sashikake kasa* that was held over religious and

political figures in positions of authority. Before that, umbrellas were reserved for symbolic god-like beings such as people of extremely high rank or the canopies above the heads of Buddha statues or hung from temple ceilings. It was not until the 12th century that the common people began to carry umbrellas for practical use.

The *sashikake kasa* is a large umbrella with a long handle held by an attendant over a person of high rank. This situation is portrayed in the *Nenju Gyoji Emaki* ("Picture Scroll of Annual Events"). Commissioned by Emperor Go-Shirakawa² to depict courtly ceremonies, folk festivals, and other traditional events, this scroll was completed in 1165. As such, it is a good source of information on the customs and man-

ners of the time.

The scroll depicts scenes from the Kamo-sai³ festival in Kyoto, with a large *kasa* shown held over the *kampaku* (regent to an adult emperor), as well as an



Danjyo Tatsuo
Specially Appointed Professor,
Department of History and
Cultural Properties
Faculty of Humanities, Beppu
University



Photos: ColBase (<https://colbase.nichig.jp/>)



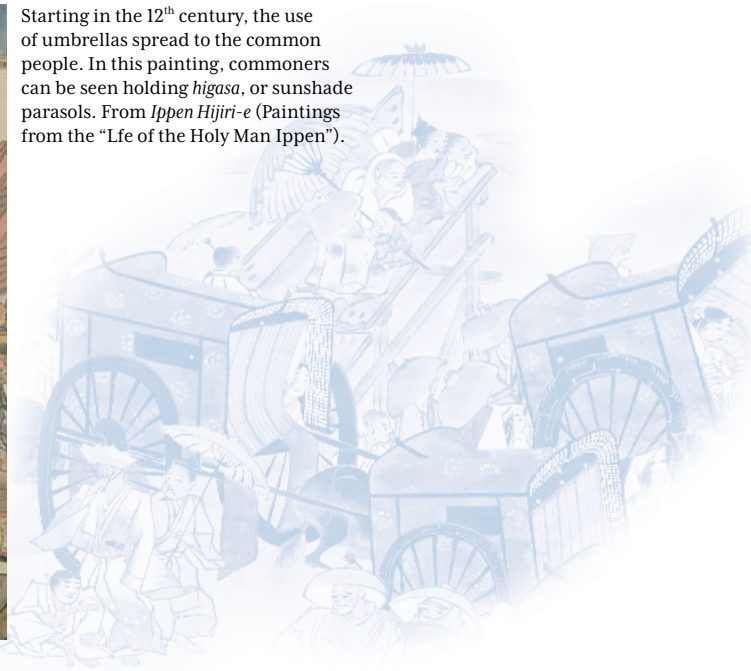
Photos: National Diet Library

Left: A canopy of flowers is depicted above the head of a bodhisattva statue. From the Nara National Museum collection.

Right: A large umbrella carried at the Kamo-sai festival. From the *Nenju Gyoji Emaki* ("Picture Scroll of Annual Events").



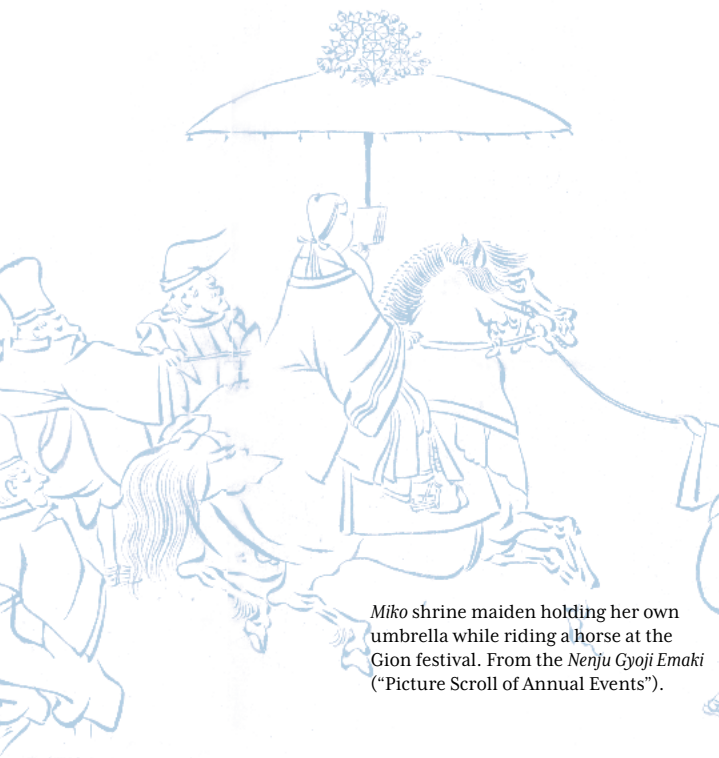
Starting in the 12th century, the use of umbrellas spread to the common people. In this painting, commoners can be seen holding *higasa*, or sunshade parasols. From *Ippen Hijiri-e* (Paintings from the "Life of the Holy Man Ippen").



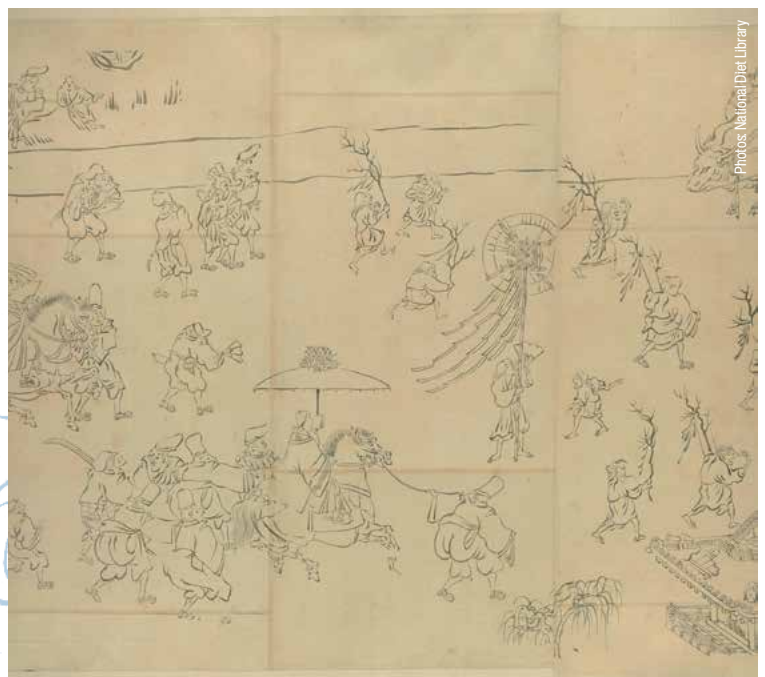
umbrella topped with decorations consisting of miniature reproductions of shrines and a horse race. Both are elaborate umbrellas designed to convey authority. A *miko*⁴, or shrine maiden, shown riding a horse at the Gion-Goryoe⁵ festival at Yasaka Shrine in Kyoto, is depicted with an umbrella similarly decorated with flowers. However, she is holding it herself, which indicates that the *miko* were seen as having less authority than the previously mentioned *kampaku*, who had a large umbrella held over him by someone else. We can

understand a person's position in the society at the time just from the way the umbrella was held.

Incidentally, this is not just true in Japan. There are also depictions of umbrellas held over the heads of kings in ancient Egypt, some 3,200 years ago. A portrait of one of the Louis kings of France also depicts an umbrella being held over the king's head. The use of the umbrella as a symbol of political and religious authority is common in both the East and West.



Miko shrine maiden holding her own umbrella while riding a horse at the Gion festival. From the *Nenju Cyoji Emaki* ("Picture Scroll of Annual Events").





Large *kasaboko* floats form a procession at the Gion festival in Kyoto.

When was the shift from the *wagasa*, made using traditional Japanese *washi* paper, to today's Western umbrella?

Western-style *yogasa* umbrellas did not arrive in Japan until 1853 or later, after Japan ended its policy of isolation and their import began. The name for them at the time was “umbrella,” in English, or *komori-gasa*, literally “bat umbrella,” because the black cloth and umbrella ribs were said to remind people of the wings of a bat. After the arrival of Western umbrellas, people began to use properly between Japanese-style *wagasa* made from bamboo and *washi*, and Western-style *yogasa* made from cloth.

When I was a child in the 1960s, I remember our mothers still carried *wagasa*, so both types were presumably in use for quite a long time after the introduction of the Western umbrella. I think it is likely that *wagasa* were used when kimono were still everyday wear, and then as women wore kimono less often, there was a rapid shift from Japanese-style to Western umbrellas. It seems that the decline in *wagasa* use was inversely proportional to the rise in Western-style clothing as everyday wear.

Decorated umbrellas can be seen at Japanese festivals. What meaning does the festival umbrellas hold?

Umbrellas are used throughout the world, but one of the characteristics that is unique to the *kasa* is the belief that souls and gods descend onto it. This idea is expressed in the word *yorishiro* (an object that attracts gods or spirits). Animism, the belief that all things possess a living soul, is deeply rooted in Japanese history. The umbrella is said to be conducive as a *yorishiro* for souls to inhabit due to their circular shape, which resembles the shape of a soul, and the handle, which resembles a pillar (which was thought to be an accessible place for a soul to descend).

Japanese festivals are held at temples and shrines to express gratitude to the gods, celebrate a good harvest, and make offerings to the spirits of the ancestors, so it is likely *kasa* appeared at the festivals as *yorishiro* to attract the spirits. The umbrella is thought to have played a variety of roles in festivals, beginning with the role of appeasing the spirit of the deceased and of absorbing and exorcising disease. Eventually, these *kasa* became large and showy and were used as

umbrellas representing specific towns. Festival processions are led by large floats featuring *kasa* covered in hanging decorations are called *kasaboko*, and while they are now centerpieces of local festivals around the country, they originated as *yorishiro*.

What famous festivals in Japan use umbrellas?

There are festivals all over Japan that still use *kasa* today. Umbrellas decorated in cherry blossoms and camellias are used in the Yasurai Matsuri, an annual festival held at Imamiya Shrine in Kyoto, as implements to ward off disease by absorbing the god of pestilence and confining it within the shrine. Similarly, you can see Aoi Matsuri (Kamo-sai)³ and Jidai Matsuri⁶ processioners in Kyoto holding *furyu-gasa*, Japanese umbrellas decorated in a profusion of flowers. The Nagasaki Kunchi festival held in Nagasaki City each October also originated with the *kasaboko* town umbrellas. The festival features performances by individuals carrying and twirling elaborate, very heavy

100-kilogram *kasaboko* for each town. At the Hakata Dontaku festival, too, elaborate *kasaboko* appear as town symbols, and passing under one is said to bring blessings of good health and good fortune.

I am utterly fascinated with the *kasa* that decorate Japanese festivals and have studied them for a long time. Looking at Japanese festivals from the perspective of the *kasa* may be an entirely new way to enjoy them. If you have a chance to see a Japanese festival, I hope you won't miss the chance to take note of the *kasa*. 🗿

1. The Japanese characters for rainy season can be read as either *baiu* or *tsuyu*. This period of much rain generally occurs from early June to late July from Japan and the rest of East Asia to Southeast Asia.
2. Emperor Go-Shirakawa was born in 1127 and died in 1192. He was the 77th emperor of Japan.
3. Kamo-sai is a festival held at Kamigamo and Shimogamo Shrines in Kyoto. The official name is Aoi Matsuri, and it is one of the three most famous festivals in Kyoto. Held every May, it is also known for being the oldest festival in Kyoto.
4. Miko is a shrine maiden, one of the positions at a shrine. This individual serves the deity and assists the priest by performing chants and sacred dances held at the shrine and by reciting prayers.
5. Gion-goryoe is the old name for the Gion Festival, which is held at Yasaka Shrine in Kyoto. Originating as a festival to ward off epidemics and disaster, this one-month festival is held each year in July.
6. Jidai Matsuri is held annually on October 22 at Heian Shrine in Kyoto. The festival features a procession of some 2,000 Kyoto residents dressed in accurate costume representing each period from the 8th to 19th century.



Flower-adorned umbrellas at Aoi Matsuri (Kamo-sai festival) in Kyoto.

Wagasa Maker in Kyoto Shares More Than 300 Years of Tradition



Janome are a type of slender Japanese umbrellas distinguished by a circular ring pattern. Literally translated as “snake’s eye,” the pattern represents the eye of a snake, a messenger of the gods, and traditionally has been used to ward off evil spirits.

***Wagasa* are traditional Japanese umbrellas made of *washi* paper attached to a bamboo frame and treated to ensure it is waterproof. We visited a venerable *wagasa* maker in Kyoto, which has been creating *wagasa* for more than 300 years, to learn about the history and characteristics of this traditional Japanese item.** (Text: Tanaka Nozomi)

There are various theories as to the origin of *wagasa*, but it is more or less accepted that their predecessor was the so-called *kinugasa*, which was brought to Japan from the Korean Peninsula in the 6th century as a type of Buddhist ritual utensil together with Buddhist statues and sutras. At that time, the term “*kinugasa*” referred to an umbrella or a type of cover, or, in other words, a canopy, which was placed over the head of Buddhist statues. It was not until much later, in the 12th century, that common people began to use umbrellas. Until then, umbrellas were usually held by attendants as they accompanied

members of the aristocracy, high priests, and other persons of noble rank.

Nowadays, *wagasa* are a practical item used to keep away the rain or to provide a shield from the sun, especially when wearing a kimono. *Wagasa* are also a familiar presence at weddings and other celebratory occasions when kimonos are worn, and they are used by high-ranking Buddhist and Shinto priests at temples and shrines for ceremonies and traditional festivals. Recently, *wagasa* have found innovative applications, both in Japan and abroad, as interior decoration items, etc.

Tsujikura, the *wagasa* maker featured in this article, was established in 1690 in Kyoto. Apparently it is the oldest existing *wagasa* maker in Japan. Ever since its establishment, Tsujikura has consistently used only domestically produced *washi*, bamboo, and vegetable oils as primary materials. Furthermore, the entire manufacturing process is done by hand. In the past, there was division of labor, but today a single craftsman is in charge of the entire assembly process. The



Bangasa (sturdy umbrellas) are larger *wagasa* with a simple design. They originated as an improved, simplified and more reasonably priced version of the slender and exquisitely crafted *janome* umbrellas, and were made to be used by the common people.



Left: A kimono-clad woman holding a *wagasa* as she walks down a street steeped in historic old capital charm is a typical Kyoto sight.

Right: The left photo features a crimson *janome* umbrella. In the photo on the right, a *geiko* is holding a purple *janome* umbrella. Kyoto's *hanamachi* districts offer a condensed experience of traditional culture, including performing arts, as well as the unique Japanese culture of *omotenashi* (hospitality), and *wagasa* are a part of this experience.

appeal of the Tsujikura brand of umbrellas is their exquisite beauty backed by craftsmanship and tradition. Seven dedicated craftsmen strictly adhere to the traditional methods handed down through the generations. As the saying goes, "Open it and it is an umbrella; close it and it is a bamboo cane," the *wagasa* must be crafted to transform back just like a single bamboo cane when closed. The Tsujikura umbrellas are born from this refined handiwork that makes it possible to take a bamboo cane, split it into 40 to 50 pieces and form the frame in such a way that the order of the pieces does not change. As a result, when closed, the Tsujikura *wagasa* are slender, neat, and beautiful, and when opened, they create a rich and elegantly designed space enclosed by *washi* paper and bamboo and filled with the ambience of the four seasons of Japan.

Kyoto was the capital of Japan for 1,000 years, and as a result it developed culturally as well, providing a conducive environment for the birth of numerous highly skilled traditional crafts. *Wagasa* was one of them. While remaining a practical item, Kyoto *wagasa* was refined by the sophisticated spirit of the ancient capital, and evolved into an elegant and perfectly

crafted object that can rightfully be called work of art.

"I would like to pass on the beauty of *wagasa* to the future generations while preserving the traditions and culture," says Kinoshita Motohiro, the head of Tsujikura, Kyoto. In Kyoto, in the so-called *hanamachi*¹ districts, many *geiko* and *maiko*² still live and work. In fact, they continue to use *wagasa* as a daily commodity. "The sight of *geiko* or *maiko* holding *wagasa* as they walk down the charming streets of Kyoto is one of the scenes that symbolize the ancient capital's unique allure. I hope that visitors to Kyoto will be able to savor the city's unchanged atmosphere of ages past." 



Wagasa are an indispensable item for an outing in a rainy day when wearing a kimono.

1. *Hanamachi* (also read as *kagai*, lit. "flower town") is a district of restaurants where customers can be entertained by *geiko* and *maiko*. In Kyoto, there are five famous *hanamachi* districts, collectively known as *Gokagai*.
2. *Geiko* and *maiko* are professional entertainers who live and work in a *hanamachi* district. Their role is to enliven banquets by performing traditional dances and playing Japanese instruments. *Maiko* are *geiko* apprentices. *Geiko* and *maiko* dress quite differently and have distinctive hairstyles. *Maiko* wear kimonos with long *furisode* sleeves. *Geiko* wear wigs, while *maiko* style their own hair into elaborate arrangements.



Left: The process of attaching *washi* to the umbrella frame using an adhesive made from natural ingredients (tapioca starch)

Center: Drying umbrellas by exposing them to sunlight after applying oil to waterproof them

Right: The process of threading the inner framework for reinforcement. The framework features impressively beautiful geometric patterns.



The phrase, *tojite take, hiraite hana* (“closed, like bamboo; open, like a flower”) expresses the beauty of the wagasa.

Photo: Wagasa CASA

Gifu City: Japan’s Largest Manufacturer of *Wagasa*

Gifu City in Gifu prefecture remains Japan’s largest manufacturer of traditional Japanese *wagasa* umbrellas. We asked the Gifu Wagasa Association about the traditional manufacturing process handed down since the 17th century and the region’s history as an umbrella making area. (Text: Tanaka Nozomi)

While umbrella making (currently called Gifu *wagasa*) in the city of Gifu dates back to the first half of the 17th century, it did not develop on a significant scale until after the middle of the 18th century. It is said that when Nagai Naonobu became the feudal lord of the Kano domain, which was based in Gifu, he encouraged lower-ranking samurai to engage in umbrella making to help pay their living expenses. Since that time, the area that included the Kano domain (today’s Gifu Prefecture) has been blessed with the materials needed for umbrella making, including fine-quality bamboo, *washi*,¹ vegetable oil, *kakishibu*,² and glue. Moreover, since the Nagara River and its well-developed water transportation system made distribution by ship convenient, umbrella making went beyond a side job for samurai, eventually becoming a regional trade. Before long, it was a stable,

flourishing industry, as demand for umbrellas rose in the large cities of the day like Edo (today’s Tokyo) and Osaka. As a result, the present-day Kano district in the city of Gifu and the surrounding areas became the center of one of Japan’s most distinguished *wagasa* making regions, through to the 20th century.

The golden age for *wagasa* production was after World War II, around 1950, when it is said that annual production exceeded 10 million umbrellas. In the 19th



The water transportation provided by the Nagara River that cuts through the city of Gifu has been the key to the development of the *wagasa* industry here.

Photo: PKTA



Photo: Wagasa CASA

Left: Sakura Wagasa, created by young artisan Kawai Mikiko, was given as a gift to a female actor overseas.

Center: Gifu *wagasa* specialty shop Wagasa CASA actively offers ideas for coordinating *wagasa* with Western clothing.

Right: Wagasa CASA offers coordination ideas for kimono as well, such as retro-looking kimono with a green *wagasa*

century, Japan relied on imports for Western-style umbrellas, but these gradually became to be produced domestically, and their popularity exploded with the postwar development of folding umbrellas. The subsequent appearance of cheap polyester umbrellas further drove this popularization. As a result, Gifu *wagasa* production fell sharply, but the area remains a representative *wagasa* making region of Japan, with most of the *wagasa* used in Japanese *buyo* dancing and other entertainment said to be manufactured here.

Gifu *wagasa* developed through a system in which wholesalers managed the artisans and divided umbrella making labor into over 100 processes, each of which was handled by a specialist, thereby achieving both efficiency and minute detail in production. This system was especially proficient at making *hosomono* (thin umbrellas), which are thin and compact when folded. *Hosomono* form slender, slim silhouettes when closed, and are often used as *janome* (snake-eye) *wagasa* for the performing arts, as well as umbrellas for traditional Japanese *buyo* dancing, and parasols.

Gifu *wagasa* have been valued traditionally for their slenderness, delicacy, and beauty, but another defining characteristic is the high quality of their elaborately formed structural design. When actually opening the umbrella, the user is fascinated by the delicate beauty of the geometric patterns created by the threads sewn into the inside, as well as the beauty of the light streaming in through the *washi* paper. In addition, the pitter patter of the rain, the gentle

fragrance of the vegetable oil applied for water resistance, and the feel of the bamboo when taken in the hand offer delightful sensations that only craftwork made from natural materials can provide.

In addition, the Kawara district along the Nagara River in the city of Gifu is attracting attention as a tourist destination with its traditional wooden buildings that line the area and lasting remnants of the old townscape. Gifu *wagasa* specialty shops have also opened in recent years, and are communicating the appeal of Gifu *wagasa* as traditional handicrafts. The *Sakura Wagasa* (cherry blossom umbrella), which was made by a young Gifu *wagasa* artisan, caught many eyes on social media, and was also used for promoting an overseas movie. While strolling through the traditional streets, you may want to look for an attractive Gifu *wagasa* to use as a parasol for the hot season. ■

1. *Washi* is Japan's unique paper, made by hand from paper mulberry, oriental paper bush, and other plant materials that are native to Japan.
2. Juice squeezed from unripe persimmons, which is then fermented. It is used as a dye, strengthener and preservative for paper, wood, and hemp.
3. The *janomegasa* is a small type of *wagasa* characterized by its rounded ring pattern. The snake's eye pattern symbolizes the eye of a snake, messenger of a god, and was also meant to ward off evil.



Photo: Wagasa CASA

Kawaramachi Town in the city of Gifu is a sightseeing spot where the old town scenery remains.

Kanazawa *wagasa* are known for eye-catching, vibrant colors and elaborate, elegant patterns.

FEATURES



Kanazawa Wagasa: The Ultimate Functional Beauty Born from the Local Climate

The city of Kanazawa in Ishikawa Prefecture has a significant amount of rainfall throughout the year and heavy snowfall in winter. The main characteristics of the *wagasa* (traditional Japanese umbrellas) made in this region are their sturdiness and beauty. We interviewed the owner of the only remaining shop that specializes in making Kanazawa *wagasa*. (Text: Tanaka Nozomi)

Photo: Matsuda Wagasa



Matsuda Wagasa was among the collaborators in the creation of exhibits that showcased traditional Japanese crafts at the crafts exhibition Homo Faber held in Italy in 2022.



Left: Matsuda Wagasa, a Japanese umbrella shop with over 127 years of history
Right: A snowy view of an old Kanazawa townscape

The most notable characteristic of Kanazawa *wagasa* is the combination of beauty and outstanding sturdiness that enables them to withstand the weight of rain and snow. At the peak of this craft, there were more than one hundred *wagasa* shops in Kanazawa, but today just one remains: Matsuda Wagasa, established in 1896. The store's third generation owner, Matsuda Shigeki, and his three apprentices perform all operations required to make a Japanese umbrella, except a few special components.

Wagasa making is practiced in various regions throughout Japan. Especially, Kanazawa *wagasa* is known as the features of sturdy, elegant, and magnificent. The local climate is distinguished not only by frequent rains, but also by wet and heavy snowfall, so Kanazawa *wagasa* are made solid enough to withstand the weight of the heavy snow, and yet beautifully crafted to the smallest detail.

The sturdiness of *wagasa* is embodied in the key elements of its structure: the umbrella frame and the Japanese paper (called "*kasagami*") that is attached to it. Made of bamboo, the umbrella frame is crafted strong and solid, with no effort to make it slender. Also, thick Japanese paper is used as *kasagami*. The craftsman attaches the paper to the frame, making sure that it is not too tightly stretched, paying particular attention to the center of the umbrella, where four layers of paper are affixed.

The elegance of *wagasa* is embodied in the geometric *chidori-gake* (zigzag) pattern of variously colored threads woven together on the inside, just above the head, visible when the umbrella is opened (see photo). *Chidori-gake* has a practical purpose of strengthening the inner bamboo frame that supports the umbrella, but it is also designed to be aesthetically pleasing. So, although it serves as reinforcement, *chidori-gake* has decorative design properties and reflects the craftsman's hope that, even on rainy or snowy days, the sight of the beautiful combination of colors on the inside of the *wagasa* will cheer up its owner. The edges are sewn with a process called *koito-gake* which reinforces the umbrella and gives an elegant look to the thread patterns.

So Kanazawa *wagasa* are distinguished by functional beauty born from the practical necessity of creating a reinforced structure tailored to the local climate. At the same time, the elegance and magnificence of the overall design when the umbrella is opened is another attractive feature. "Today, we are not restricted by traditional standards for beauty of form, and proactively collaborate with artists across various fields. For instance, we commission artisans of Kaga Yuzen¹, a technique originally used for kimono, to paint drawings on the umbrellas," says Matsumoto Yoshiko, an artisan at Matsuda Wagasa. Currently, 90% of all Kanazawa *wagasa* buyers are people residing outside Ishikawa Prefecture and customers from overseas. As a traditional craft, *wagasa* have powerful artistic appeal.

Wagasa are finished by coating the *kasagami* with vegetable oil (perilla oil), which gives the paper unique translucency. When the Kanazawa *wagasa* is opened and viewed from the inside, the patterns painted on the paper right above the *chidori-gake* colorful threads shine through like a stained glass window. Hold it up in the rain to enjoy the soft and warm sound of raindrops that only an umbrella made of sturdy Japanese paper can make. Kanazawa *wagasa* offer a blend of strength and beauty that needs to be seen in person to be truly appreciated. ▮



A *koito-gake* process of sewing the edges in order to reinforce them.



A *chidori-gake* pattern woven with colorful threads (center of the photo). A beautiful world unfolds for those who look up.

1. Kaga Yuzen is a fabric-dyeing technique used mainly in Kanazawa City, Ishikawa Prefecture. The technique was established in the mid-17th century. It is characterized by hand-painted realistic patterns of plants and flowers. (For more information, see https://www.gov-online.go.jp/eng/publicity/book/hij/html/202212/202212_05_en.html)

FEATURES

Asakusa, located in Taito City, Tokyo, retains the charm of old downtown Tokyo. The area is home to the veteran umbrella makers at Maehara Koei Shoten, which opened in 1948. Company president Maehara Shinji says, "Today, Japan's umbrella making process has been partially mechanized and incorporates mass production, but they used to be handmade, one-by-one, by professional artisans. We make it our goal to carry on the umbrella

making methods of the olden days, meticulously carrying out each production process."

Umbrella making is roughly divided into four processes: *kiji* (fabric), *hone* (frame), *temoto* (handle), and *kako* (processing (cutting and sewing)). For umbrella fabric, Maehara Koei Shoten uses fabrics woven in Fujiyoshida in Yamanashi Prefecture, a city located at the foot of Mt. Fuji that is famous for its textiles. Waterproofed fabrics woven on an old-fashioned loom

Venerable shop makes handmade dual-use umbrella-parasols

This Tokyo shop has been making umbrellas for 75 years. Their parasols and dual-use umbrella-parasols are especially popular.

(Text: Tanaka Nozomi)



Handmade umbrellas with beautiful glossy fabrics



Left: The *kiji* (fabric) is manufactured at a factory at the foot of Mt. Fuji. Pre-dyed yarn is used to weave the fabric.

Right: An artisan adjusts and cuts the woven fabric using a self-made wooden guide.

Photo: Maehara Koei Shoten



Photo: Maehara Koei Shoten



Photo: Adobe Stock

Above left: This parasol uses a wide original lace fabric.

Above right: The umbrellas are fastened by hooking a loop to a button, a traditional part called *wakan* (Japanese ring).

Below: One reason Japanese women often use parasols is to avoid sunburn.

are used. The *temoto* handle is heated depending on the quality of the material, put in hot water to soften and then bent to form a hook. The woven fabric is then cut and sewed, before being passed along with the *hone* frame to the processing artisan and assembled. This assembly is the most important process because it affects the umbrella's tension, the sound it makes, and the shape it has when opened.

In Japan, there is a custom of using parasols, something you don't see much in other countries. Japanese summers are intense, and many Japanese women habitually use parasols in seasons of strong sunshine to prevent sunburn. Parasols have also been used to counter heatstroke, and not only women, but also men are using them today in greater numbers. Maehara Koei Shoten says it is working to create parasols with

traditional designs that utilize Japanese hemp, lace and other fabrics, as well as dyed fabrics.

Their most popular umbrellas are all-weather types that can be used both as rain umbrellas and as parasols. These are selling quite well.

Maehara adds, "We get a lot of customers from overseas, but they too enjoy and select Japanese umbrellas made by Japanese artisans. Our traditional crafts and collaborations with other brands are also popular. For example, we reproduced the umbrella Totoro uses in the Studio Ghibli film *My Neighbor Totoro*, and in the past, our umbrellas using colors from the *Evangelion* anime series have also been popular. We also get a lot of orders for collaborations with apparel manufacturers." When you have a chance to visit to Japan, try one of these handmade umbrellas found only in Japan. 🇯🇵



Photo: Maehara Koei Shoten

These parasols are starting to become popular with men, and the company is now offering parasol designs that fit with men's fashions.

Umbrellas Used in Traditional Japanese Dance

Nihon buyo, a form of dance that is one of the traditional Japanese performing arts, features umbrellas in some of its most memorable scenes. We interviewed a member of a prestigious *Nihon buyo* school about the role of umbrellas in dance performances.

(Text: Tanaka Nozomi)

N*ihon buyo* is a generic name for various styles of traditional Japanese dance, such as *mai* (generally, a type of dance that emphasizes smooth, circling movements), and *odori* (generally, a dance style that features rhythmical, lively movements). The umbrellas used in *Nihon buyo* are an essential prop that assists the audience in creating a richer visual image of characters and scenes. In addition to ordinary *wagasa* (traditional Japanese umbrellas), “trick umbrellas” are also used for dramatic purposes. For instance, when performers change costumes on stage, umbrellas are held up as screens to hide them. In fight scenes called “*tachimawari*,” umbrellas are handled as weapons. Apart from ordinary *wagasa*, a type of traditional Japanese hat shaped like an umbrella but without the handle can also add a touch of glamor to the performance when used as a “trick umbrella.” Since the four seasons are important in *Nihon buyo*, umbrellas are also used as a prop that enhances the lyrical effect of the performance by superimposing the character’s feelings on the natural phenomena typically associated with each season.

This translucent silk umbrella creates an impression of fragility. *Sagi Musume* (“The Heron Maiden”).

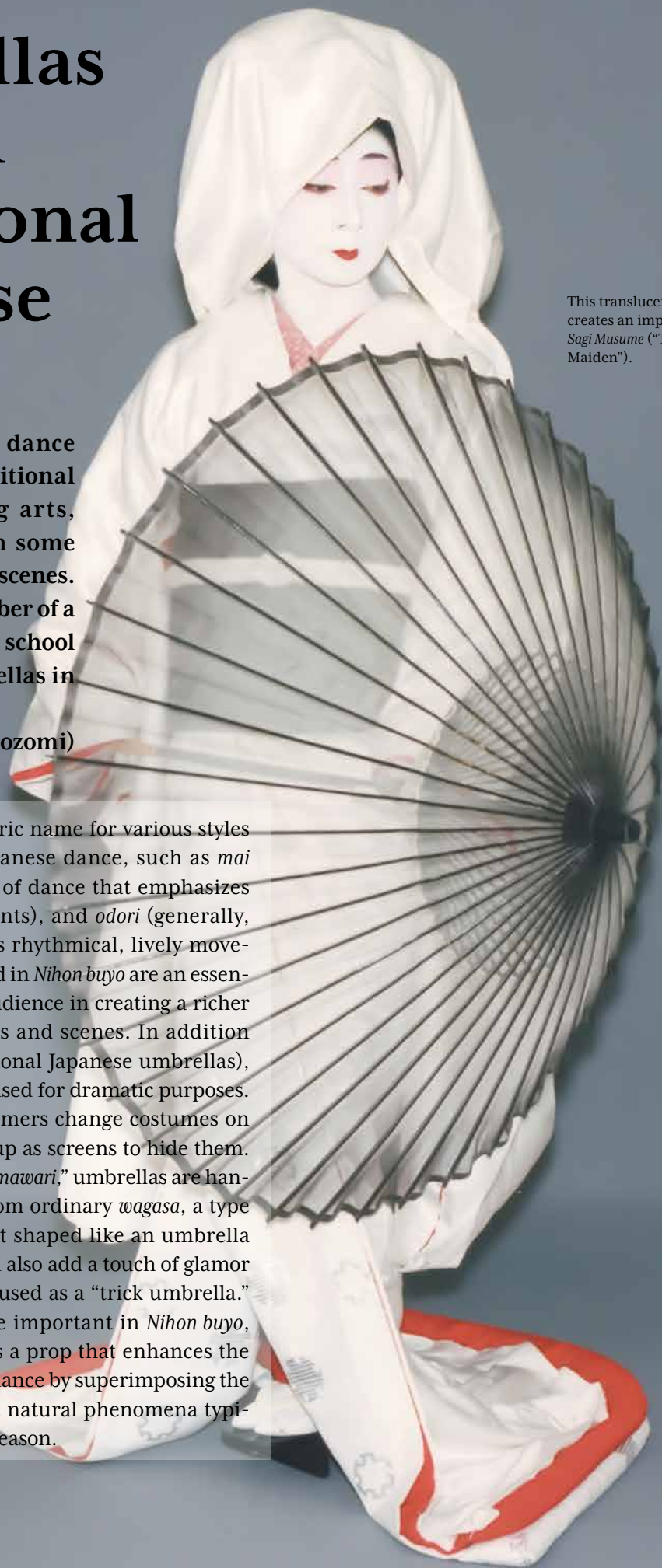




Photo: Nihon Buyo Bando-Ryu


Kyoganoko Musume Dojoji (“The Maiden at Dojoji Temple”). Halfway through the play, the protagonist, Hanako, appears on stage with three umbrella-shaped hats, one on her head and two in each hand. When she releases the tricks in the hats in her hands, each hat opens into three linked hats, which symbolize the blooming of plum blossoms.

The use of umbrellas in the famous dance performance *Sagi Musume* (“The Heron Maiden”) is particularly impressive. The curtain opens to reveal a young woman dressed in a pure-white wedding kimono, who embodies the spirit of a white heron. She is holding an umbrella as she lingers by a snow-covered pond with her back to the audience. The umbrella used in this scene is called “*shabari-gasa*” (umbrella made of thin silk gauze). The translucent material of the umbrella gently reveals the pure-white kimono-clad figure of the protagonist, bringing her exquisite beauty into focus. As an incarnation of a white heron, the protagonist wants to escape the bitterness of unrequited fleeting love for a human being, and her emotional state is expressed in the choreography of her dance as she retreats with the umbrella half-open.

We asked the publicist for the Nihon Buyo Bando-Ryu¹, about which traditional Japanese dance plays featuring umbrellas as props she would recommend and why. This is what she said: “In addition to *Sagi Musume*, *Kyoganoko Musume Dojoji* uses umbrellas to a great effect. This play is based on the Dojoji legend about a woman who turned into a serpent and burned

to death the man she loved.

As a work of art, however, it is a magnificent play that uses numerous costumes and props to paint the image of a young woman in love. Halfway through the play, the protagonist, Hanako, appears on stage with three umbrella-shaped hats, one on her head and two in each hand. When she releases the tricks in the hats in her hands, each hat opens into three linked hats, which symbolize the blooming of plum blossoms.

Traditional Japanese dance has been handed down for generations by preserving *kata* (set forms) and dance formats, while expanding the traditions with new attempts to keep up with the times. As one element in this rich tapestry of traditions, the umbrella used as a prop, too, has a profound meaning, as illustrated by the above examples. I hope that visitors from overseas to Japan, too, will enjoy the presence of umbrellas in *Nihon buyo* performances as they appreciate traditional Japanese culture.” 

1. Bando-Ryu is a school of Nihon buyo (traditional Japanese dance) established by kabuki actor Bando Mitsugoro III. Its current iemoto (school leader) is Bando Minosuke, who inherited the title after the death of Bando Mitsugoro X.



Performance of *Sagi Musume*. Unlike ordinary *wagasa*, which is made of Japanese paper *washi*, *shabari-gasa* is made of silk gauze.



Photo: Nihon Buyo Bando-Ryu / Shoohika Costume

Wagasa Illumination Lights Up Tokyo Business District

Since 2018, the Otemachi area near Tokyo Station has been the site of an illumination event that uses *wagasa* (traditional Japanese umbrellas). The contrast between the business district vibe of the area and the Japanese-style illuminations looks fascinating in photos, making this event quite the talk of the town. We interviewed one of its organizers. (Text: Tanaka Nozomi)

Walumination is a coined term combining “wa” meaning “Japanese-style” and “illumination.” The event came about after an executive committee was formed among local corporate employees interested in community development. Otemachi, the site of the event, is located in the northwestern part of the area between Tokyo Station, also known as the main entrance to Tokyo, and the Imperial Palace, where the Emperor of Japan resides. Otemachi is one of Japan’s most prominent business districts, home to the headquarters of many major corporations and financial institutions, yet it also holds a certain charm as a place of historical interest. This is what inspired the executive committee to choose it as the site for the event.

Although there is almost no trace left of them today,

Multicolored *wagasa* illuminated in vibrant light in the center of the Otemachi business district.

residences of feudal lords¹ who served the shoguns of the Tokugawa Shogunate lined the Otemachi district from the 17th through the middle of the late 19th century. The executive committee decided to organize an illumination event that features the *wagasa*, the traditional Japanese craft in order to create a space in which visitors could experience a sense of Japanese ambience in an area where feudal lords used to live and many samurai used to come and go.

“In 2019, the second year of holding the Walumination event, we used about 100 *wagasa* and arranged them in a display like *andons*² (Japanese lanterns) (see photo). We chose Otemachi Nakadori Street, one of the more vibrant and bustling thoroughfares in Otemachi, as the site of the display, placed the *wagasa* on both sides of the street



Otemachi is located between Tokyo Station and the Imperial Palace.

Photo: Geospatial Information Authority of Japan





Above left: *Wagasa* illumination lights up Otemachi business district

Below left: Illuminated *wagasa* arranged in a curved line

Center: Display of a tower-shaped three-dimensional work

Above right: *Wagasa* artworks are also displayed in building entrance halls.

Below right: An installation of traditional Japanese umbrellas called *Wagasa Wall*

in straight or curved lines, employing variations in the arrangement, and illuminated them. This display was very well received. In a different previous year, in addition to arranging *wagasa* displays along the street, we exhibited installations, such as tower-shaped *wagasa* arrangements, in building entrance halls and alleys. The light emanating from the *wagasa*, which are made by attaching traditional Japanese *washi* paper to a bamboo frame, is soft and mesmerizingly beautiful. I hope these lights allow many people to experience the charm of the Otemachi district," says Kitamura Ayumi, a member of the executive committee.

In the past, the event program included *wagasa* making demonstrations by artisans and workshops where people could try attaching the paper to *wagasa*



A workshop offering the popular experience of *wagasa* making

frames. These attractions were very popular with visitors from overseas, too. The comments received, such as "Very beautiful," "Thank you for showing us this craft," and "Amazing! Beautiful Japan!" indicate that visitors from overseas enjoyed the workshops with the awareness that *wagasa* making is an experience of traditional Japanese craft.

Currently, the organizers are coordinating efforts toward holding Walumination in October, 2023. Executive Committee member Kitamura Ayumi expressed her enthusiasm about the event, saying: "Although Otemachi is a business district, I would be very happy to see it become a place visited by many people on weekends and outside of working hours, and the fan of Otemachi gradually increases." [7]



1. The Tokugawa Shogunate granted residences in Edo (current Tokyo) to the feudal lords who served the Tokugawa family, as they were required to travel from their domains to Edo, where they had to spend every second year. The site where the Edo Castle once stood is now occupied by the Imperial Palace, and part of it is open to the public as the East Gardens of the Imperial Palace.
2. An *andon* is a type of lantern made of *washi* Japanese paper attached to a frame made of bamboo or wood. In the past, oil or candles were used as the light source, but nowadays electric lanterns are also referred to as *andons*.

Umbrella-Shaped Yokai

In Japan, *yokai* (supernatural spirits) often appear as motifs, even in anime, manga, and video games. One type is characterized by umbrella-like shapes; in Japanese, *kasa yokai*. We turned to Komatsu Kazuhiko, the former director-general of the International Research Center for Japanese Studies and the foremost expert on *yokai*, to learn more about the origin of *yokai*, along with *kasa yokai* and more.

(Text: Tanaka Nozomi)



Above: A *kasa yokai* clad in common Chinese clothing of the time.

Below: *Yokai* visible behind the performers in Utagawa Kunisada's *Kabuki Ichigatsu Kogyo* ("Kabuki Performance in January").



Above: Damaged umbrella *yokai*, from *Yokai Emaki* ("Yokai Picture Scroll").

Below: Utagawa Yoshimori's *Shinpan Bakemono Zukushi* ("A New Collection of Monsters"), a sort of pictorial guide to *yokai*.

Left: A *kasa yokai* that has grown a leg and two arms is shown in silhouette in Mano Gyotei's *Toto Senjafuda Ogai Hiro* ("Collection of Votive Tags from the Eastern Capital (Edo)").



Kasa yokai are depicted in a *yokai* motif *sugoroku* game board as well. *Ooshinpan Bakemono Tobimawari Sugoroku* ("New Frolicking Monsters Sugoroku")



Nishimonai Bon Odori festivities in Akita Prefecture, registered on UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage list. *Kasa* hats keep dancers' faces almost completely hidden from sight.



Photo: PIXTA

Scattered among the dancers wearing *kasa* hats, which are considered to be *yorishiro* that draw or summon divine spirits, are some wearing black *hikosa zukin* hoods said to be representative of deceased people's spirits. Festivals in which participants dance wearing black hoods are very rare.

Y*okai* are entities representing strange, abnormal phenomena incomprehensible to the unaided mind, which have been given physical form. While much folklore concerning *yokai* had been found in various parts of Japan, the belief became more prevalent after artists in cities began painting works such as the *Hyakki Yagyo Emaki* ("Night Parade of the Myriad Goblins Picture Scroll")¹ around the 14th century. In this picture scroll, *yokai* taking the forms of various old worn-out tools take center stage, shown in procession. Among them is a *yokai* peeking out from under a damaged umbrella. Stories associated with the paintings also formed, saying that the tools and other objects formerly used in daily life had transformed into *yokai* out of resentment toward people after they wore out and got discarded.

While depictions of *yokai* range from frightening to humorous, this *kasa yokai* (*yokai* with an umbrella form) features a startlingly endearing expression. Within the *ukiyo-e* form that flourished in the 18th and 19th centuries is a genre called *omocha-e*, or "toy"-like prints for children. These *omocha-e* also present a range of different *kasa yokai*, with appearances ranging from adorable to comical.

The conception of *yokai* fundamentally stems from nature worship, or animism, practiced in Japan since the distant past. This includes the belief that all things—from flora and fauna to rocks and even tools and so on—while they may have different outward appearances—experience emotions and have a spirit.

Umbrellas are implements originally meant to repel rain. In Japanese, two words, both pronounced

kasa, refer to different types: *kasa* hats worn directly on the head, and handled *kasa* umbrellas; (see page 6 for reference). There is also a form of *kasa* hat worn in Bon Odori dance festivities,² *kagura* ritual dances,³ and so on. These *kasa* worn for dancing often have shapes that cover the wearer's face. Covering the face is equated with concealing one's true form, which has given the *kasa* hats impressions of being tools enabling the wearer to assume different forms, as well as being frightening, as the wearer's true form cannot be seen.

Kasa umbrellas with handles, similarly, are considered to function as *yorishiro*⁴ due to the similarity of their shapes with mountains, where spirits were believed to descend.

There is speculation that the invention of *kasa yokai* may stem from the way people saw Japanese *kasa* hats as frightening since they concealed the wearer's true form, combined with how people thought of hand-held *kasa* umbrellas as *yorishiro*.

In modern Japan, *wagasa* (traditional Japanese umbrellas) are considered traditional implements with graceful beauty. The fact that they once even lent their forms to *yokai*, however, might be taken as a sign of Japanese people's fertile imagination with regard to objects. ■

1. *Hyakki Yagyo*: The procession of a myriad (literally "hundred") widely varied *yokai* jostling along through the night. *Emaki*: an ancient Japanese form of painting in which sheets of paper or silk are lined horizontally to create a very long canvas where sequential representations of scenes or stories can be painted.
2. Bon (O-Bon): A period when deceased ancestors return to the world of the living and grave visits are practiced. Bon Odori: Dances performed at festivals that take place during this period.
3. *Kagura: Odori* or *mai* dances performed at Shinto shrines as offerings to *kami* deities with musical accompaniments played with instruments including Japanese traditional flutes and *taiko* drums.
4. *Yorishiro*: Objects that draw or summon *kami* deities and spirits.

Japan to Host the “Justice Affairs Diplomacy” Ministerial Forum

Hotel New Otani Tokyo's Japanese Garden
 Photo: Tsukinosabaku / PIXTA



New Otani Tokyo
 Photo: arikura machiko / PIXTA



G7 Justice Ministers' Meeting
 Logo



The ASEAN-Japan Special Meeting of Justice Ministers Logo design features a plum knot, which is one of the most common motifs in mizuhiki, a traditional Japanese handicraft made of paper cord, as a symbol of the strong bond of friendship between the ASEAN countries and Japan.

The Ministry of Justice of Japan will invite the Justice Ministers and Attorneys General of the ASEAN and G7 Member States to the “Justice Affairs Diplomacy” Ministerial Forum, which will take place on July 6 and 7, 2023, at Hotel New Otani (Tokyo). This article provides an overview of the Forum, which is being held to strengthen cooperation among the participating countries in the field of law and justice. The Forum also represents an opportunity to uphold and promote fundamental values such as the rule of law.

Significance and background of the Forum

“Justice Affairs Diplomacy” is an initiative that aims to promote fundamental values such as the rule of law throughout the international community. Over the years, the Ministry of Justice of Japan has contributed to the efforts of many countries to promote and uphold the rule of law by providing legal technical assistance. Sharing fundamental values has been ever more important in recent years, particularly in the wake of international situations such as the war of aggression against Ukraine. In addition, 2023 is the 50th Year of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation, and the year in which Japan assumes the G7 Presidency. Under these circumstances, the Ministry of Justice of Japan decided to hold the “Justice Affairs Diplomacy” Ministerial Forum. The Forum will consist of three meetings:

the ASEAN-Japan Special Meeting of Justice Ministers, the G7 Justice Ministers’ Meeting, and the ASEAN-G7 Justice Ministers’ Interface. The Forum will seek to strengthen cooperation among the ASEAN and G7 countries based on the rule of law and to further promote Justice Affairs Diplomacy.

ASEAN-Japan Special Meeting of Justice Ministers (AJSMJ)—July 6, 2023

At the ASEAN-Japan Special Meeting of Justice Ministers (AJSMJ), the Ministry of Justice of Japan will invite the Justice Ministers and Attorneys General of the ASEAN Member States to discuss cooperation between ASEAN and Japan in the field of law and justice and define a medium-to long-term vision on the issue. Furthermore, the partici-

pants will aim to uphold and promote fundamental values such as the rule of law and respect for human rights. The AJSMJ is also expected to be effective in advancing the amicable relationship between ASEAN and Japan to the next phase of equal partnership¹.

G7 Justice Ministers' Meeting—Afternoon of July 7, 2023

Justice Ministers and Attorneys General of the G7 countries and the EU Commissioner for Justice will attend this meeting to discuss under three discussion themes: Assist Ukraine's rebuilding efforts in the field of law and justice; Build cooperation and coordination among the G7 to promote the rule of law; and Connect the G7 and Indo-Pacific (including ASEAN) in the field of law and justice. The participants are expected to adopt the G7 Justice Ministers' Communiqué (The Tokyo Declaration) and deliver a strong message of unity and cooperation based on the rule of law.

ASEAN-G7 Justice Ministers' Interface—Morning of July 7, 2023

Taking advantage of the opportunity presented by the visit to Japan by Ministers of Justice and Attorneys General of ASEAN and G7 Member States, the Ministry of Justice of Japan plans to bring them together by convening the ASEAN-G7 Justice Ministers' Interface. The event will aim to strengthen further cooperation among ASEAN and the G7, based on shared fundamental values such as the rule of law.

Special events and exhibitions

The Ministry of Justice of Japan will hold special events and exhibitions in conjunction with the "Justice Affairs Diplomacy" Ministerial Forum. These events and exhibitions will be open to public participation, with advance registration required. Information about the programmes of the special events and exhibitions and the advance registration process is available on the following webpages and the Forum's official Twitter feed.



Poster for the "Justice Affairs Diplomacy" Ministerial Forum

Photo: The Ministry of Justice of Japan



Poster for special events to commemorate the "Justice Affairs Diplomacy" Ministerial Forum

Photo: The Ministry of Justice of Japan



Preparatory Meeting for the ASEAN-Japan Special Meeting of Justice Ministers held in February 2023 at a hotel in Tokyo

Photo: The Ministry of Justice of Japan

Note: 1. Partnerships and cooperation Japan has conducted while maintaining an equal relationship with ASEAN as a partner that shares fundamental values such as the rule of law.

Program information

https://www.moj.go.jp/Asean_Japan_Special_Meeting_of_Justice_Ministers/jasean/en/program_list.html#event_tbl

Registration for participation

https://www.moj.go.jp/Asean_Japan_Special_Meeting_of_Justice_Ministers/jasean/en/info.html

Official Twitter feed (ASEAN-Japan & G7 Justice Ministers 2023)

https://twitter.com/MOJ_ASEAN_Japan

Ocean Thermal Energy Conversion—Making the Dream a Reality

Ocean Thermal Energy Conversion Pilot Project Facility

Photo: Industrial Policy Division, Department of Commerce, Industry and Labor, Okinawa Prefectural Government

Ocean Thermal Energy Conversion (OTEC) is a way to stably supply power without negatively impacting the environment or having to rely on certain weather or climate conditions. With attention around the world focused on this new form of “futuristic power generation,” steady progress is being made on pilot projects to prepare for practical use, through cooperation amongst the Japanese companies, universities, and municipalities.

Fukuda Mitsuhiro

OTEC is a power generation system that uses warm 25-30°C ocean water from the sea surface layer as its heating source and cold 5-7°C ocean water from depths of 800-1,000m as its cooling source. Like thermal power and nuclear power, vapor is produced to turn turbines and generate power.

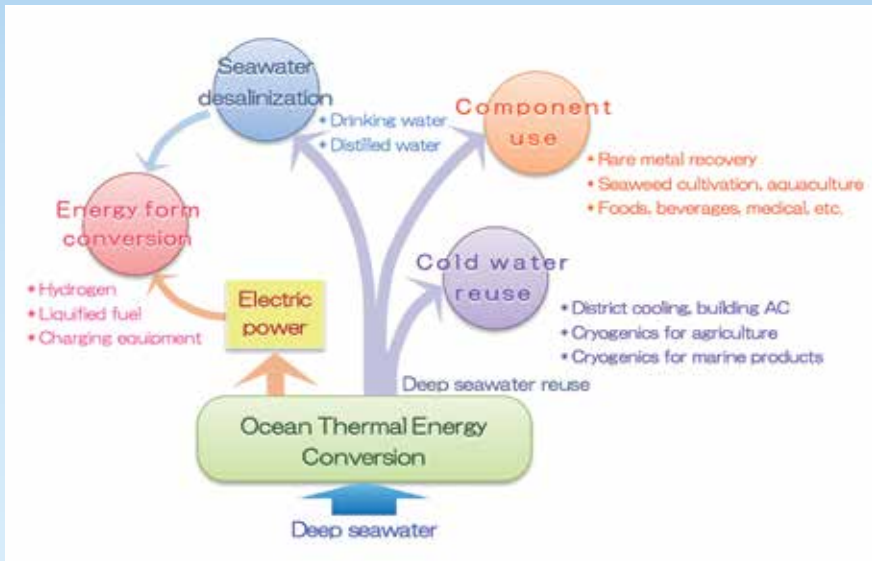
OTEC operates through a facility connecting five pieces of equipment—an evaporator, a condenser, a turbine, a power generator, and a pump. In the

facility, electricity is produced by circulating ammonia, a CFC substitute, or other easily vaporized substances with a low boiling point.

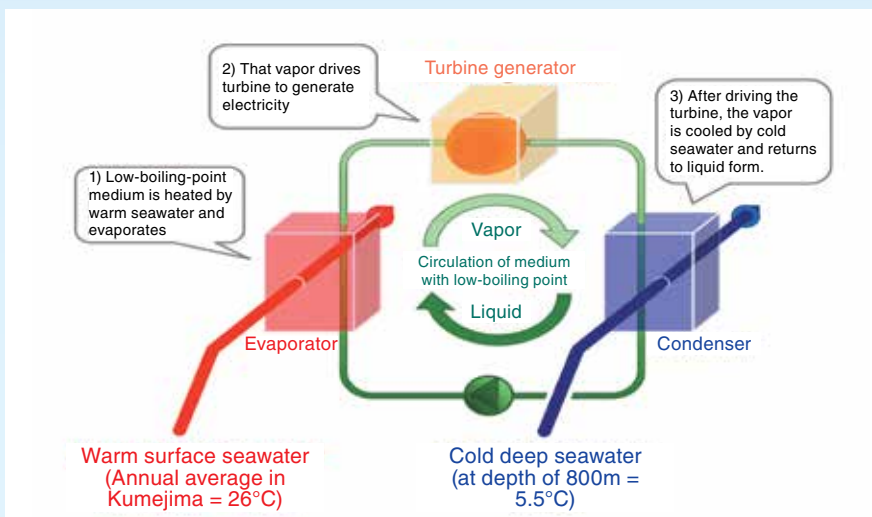
The power generation flow works as follows. First, the warm water in the ocean surface layer is drawn up and sent to the evaporator. Ammonia or other liquids that evaporate at a low boiling point are also sent to the evaporator where they are warmed by the warm seawater and evaporate. The vapor expands through the turbine, generating power. After expand-

ing through the turbine, the vapor is sent to the condenser, where it is cooled by the cold seawater from the deep layer and returns to liquid form. This cycle is repeated.

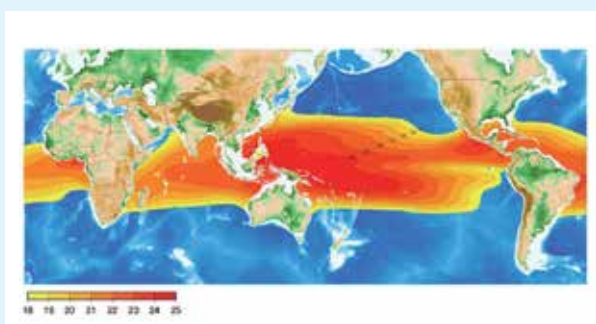
OTEC differs significantly from thermal and nuclear power generation in that it uses renewable resources, seawater of different temperatures as its energy source. With today’s technology, OTEC power generation is considered possible in subtropical and tropical regions where the temperature difference between surface



Deep seawater used in Ocean Thermal Energy Conversion can be used for many purposes



Basic Diagram of OTEC



Temperature difference map of surface seawater and deep seawater (depth = 1,000m)

seawater and deep seawater is 20°C or more. In Japan, power generation is possible in the Ogasawara Islands, as well as around Okinawa. About 100 countries worldwide have the potential to build such plants, with power generation potential estimated at 1 trillion kW.

A notable characteristic of OTEC is stability of supply. Unlike wind and solar, which are affected by weather, making continuous operation difficult, OTEC can be used perpetually to

1. Roughly equivalent to the average power consumption of 200 Japanese households
2. Roughly equivalent to 15% of the entire electricity demand of Kumejima Town, Okinawa Prefecture

supply a fixed amount of power.

Furthermore, OTEC has extremely low CO₂ emissions compared to other power generation methods, and it also promotes the growth of seaweed and the absorption of CO₂ by discharging the deep seawater used to generate electricity to the surface.

Secondary reuse of the deep seawater used for power generation is a major benefit. Deep seawater has immeasurable potential for mariculture, agriculture, district cooling, manufacturing of mineral salts as well as mineral water, and extraction of rare minerals. All these benefits are expected.

Xenesys Inc. and several other private enterprises are working together with Saga University to practically implement OTEC. With the desire to do business that contributes to the global environment, Xenesys approached the Institute of Ocean Energy, Saga University in 1997. They poured their efforts into designing the systems needed for OTEC and developing the heat exchanger, which is the most important element of the system.

In 2013, pilot projects at the 100kW level¹ operated by Okinawa Prefecture began in Kumejima Town. Secondary use of deep seawater for mariculture, etc., was also performed in partnership with local municipalities. Power generating capacity will be increased going forward, with targets of 1MW² by 2026, and 100MW by 2030.

OTEC is getting attention overseas. In 2018, a project supporting practical application was launched in Malaysia. Mauritius, Indonesia, and Hawaii have also been mentioned as candidate locations for the establishment of power generation facilities.

It could be said that the futuristic power generation method of OTEC, which has low CO₂ emissions and is environmentally friendly, and provides a stable supply, is now making steady steps toward practical use.

Handmade Washi Artisan Shares Traditional Techniques

Rogier's *washi* artwork installed in the elevator hall of AC Hotel by Marriot Tokyo Ginza in Tokyo

Rogier Uitenboogaart came to Japan from the Netherlands in 1980, enchanted by a single sheet of Japanese *washi* paper¹. Today, he is an artisan who crafts handmade *washi*. He lives in Yusuhara Town, Kochi Prefecture, where he continues to pursue the possibilities of this craft while preserving traditional production methods.

Murakami Kayo

Rogier first encountered *washi* at the age of 25, in a bookbinding studio in the Netherlands. “When I held the sheet up to the light, I could see the fibers of plants. I was fascinated by the beauty of this unique material, which was nothing like European paper. I came to Japan driven by a desire to see the actual process of making *washi*,” he recalls.

He spent about a year travel-

ing around Japan and visiting *washi* workshops in various regions. What impressed him the most were the sights and sounds of clear running water at each workshop he visited. He eventually arrived in Kochi Prefecture, which is famous for its production of *kozo* (paper mulberry) and *mitsumata* (oriental paper bush), the primary material sources used to make *washi*. Following the advice of a *washi* artisan that he should grow

the primary materials himself if he wanted to make traditional *washi* Japanese paper, Rogier decided to settle in Kochi Prefecture, as it had all the right conditions for making *washi*. He started learning and practicing cultivation of materials and paper-making on his own, and for more than 40 years since then has honed his skills as a *washi* artisan. In 1992, he moved to Yusuhara Town, near the headwaters of the Shimanto River,² which is known for its clear waters, in search of an environment more suited to his vision of *washi*-making.

His workshop, Kamikoya Washi Studio, is surrounded by sprawling, beautiful *satoyama*³ scenery worthy of the description “an original Japanese landscape.” Trees and plants that pro-

1. It is a general term for paper made by a method unique to Japan, and basically refers to paper made by hand using plant fibers such as *kozo* (paper mulberry) and *mitsumata* (oriental paper bush).

2. A river with a total length of 196km, which flows through the western part of Kochi Prefecture and into the Pacific Ocean.

3. Mountain villages and neighboring agricultural lands, forests, etc. *Satoyama* are intermediate zones between pristine nature and urban areas, and consist of settlements and surrounding secondary forests, mixed with farmlands, irrigation ponds, and grasslands.

4. See Highlighting Japan July 2021, “A Town Handing Down Forest Resources to the Future”
https://www.gov-online.go.jp/eng/publicity/book/hlj/html/202107/202107_04_jp.html



A field where primary material sources for *washi* are cultivated



Rogier Uitenboogaart from the Netherlands, an artisan who crafts handmade *washi* Japanese paper

Photo: Hosogi Takuya

Kamikoya Washi Studio doubles as a guest house. Lampshades made of handcrafted *washi* attached to lacquered frames illuminate the guestrooms.



Rogier makes *washi* using traditional methods

duce the primary materials for *washi* paper grow on the property and are cultivated without agricultural chemicals or fertilizers with the cooperation of local people.

“What I cherish in *washi* making is the connection with nature. It is impossible to create high-quality *washi* without beautiful mountains, clear water, and good materials. That is why I grow most of the materials myself. I also treasure the traditional methods for making *washi* without preservatives and chemicals that have been handed down for more than 150 years.”

The finished texture of *washi* varies depending on the materials and the method used to make it. Rogier creates unique paper based on traditional *washi* from Kochi Prefecture

called “Tosa Washi” by incorporating in the production process long-established techniques for European handcrafted cotton paper. The presence of the plants used as primary materials stands out, and the texture and appearance are not uniform, but rich and beautiful. It is this beauty of his *washi* that has made it the material of choice for interior furnishings and decorations in architect Kuma Kengo’s buildings⁴ and prominent hotels.

In 2007, Rogier was designated *Tosa no Takumi* (master artisan of the Domain of Tosa [now Kochi Prefecture]). *Washi* artisans often visit his workshop to learn from him the fading traditions of *washi* making. He also manages a guest house at Kamikoya Washi Studio where visitors can try

their hand at *washi* making, and works to convey the appeal of this ancient craft to tourists who come to Japan inspired by a desire to experience traditional Japanese culture.

“The opportunities to use *washi* as part of the modern lifestyle are gradually diminishing, and the number of *washi* artisans is also on the decline. However, it is precisely because we live in such times that I want to continue to pursue the possibilities of *washi* and convey its appeal to a broad audience, without forgetting the original reason I was enchanted by *washi* in the first place.”

Going forward, Rogier will continue his quest to create traditional Japanese paper that will inspire the hearts of many people.



"Furusode" (kimono with long sleeves) Plum trees, standing screens, and falcon design on whitey brown chirimen crepe ground
Edo period/18th century

Yuzenzome, dyeing technique popular from the end of the 17th century to the first half of the 18th century. This groundbreaking technique allowed dyers to create designs that look like paintings.

Photo: ColBase (<https://colbase.nich.go.jp/>)

"Furusode" (Kimono with Long Sleeves) Plum Trees, Standing Screens, and Falcon Design on Whitey Brown Chirimen Crepe Ground

The kimono is more than a garment; it is a symbol of traditional Japanese culture. The kimono originated in the Edo period (early 17th century to mid-late 19th century) along with its companions, the short-sleeved *kosode* and the long-sleeved *furusode* robes. This article introduces a selection from the Tokyo National Museum's collection of outstanding examples of *furusode* worn by young men and women in the Edo period.

OYAMA YUZURUHA

The pattern represents the daring hawk bred for *takagari*,¹ the noble sport of falconry, a traditional Japanese pastime. The Japanese Imperial Court came to hold falconry displays in the Heian period (794 - end of the 12th century). Starting in the Kamakura period (late 12th century - 1333), the sport was practiced among the *busho*, Japanese military commanders, and falconry was well-known as a particular favorite of Tokugawa Ieyasu, the first shogun of the Edo Shogunate. It was during the Edo period that the culture of falconry developed into a way of life for the samurai, and *kayozu*² images of hawks, like the one adorning this robe, were common.

The majestic hawk depicted on this *furusode* looks as if it were painted, though the colors used—red, blue, green, yellow, purple, and other intense colors—do not have the realities reflecting an actual hawk. A closer look also shows the pattern with an extremely delicate gradation is outlined in white, and that outline is actually a thin line which is not dyed. The falcon looks like a painting, but it is dyed using a sophisticated dyeing technique called Yuzenzome, which has developed uniquely in Japan. The extremely thin white outline is drawn on with glutinous rice glue, which acts as a barrier to prevent the dye from bleeding beyond the outline when applied. (See photos captioned "Yuzenzome Process.") This technique creates clear, vibrant contours and makes it possible to dye various patterns. In addition, the glue is washed off with water after dyeing, and the traces become the white contour lines.

This glamorous robe, a *furusode* dyed with the full-body image of a hawk perched on a *tsuitate* (a portable partition traditionally used in Japan as a screen), features sleeves that are a full 70cm. Originally worn by young unmarried men and women, *furusode* sleeves



Takazu Byobu (“Depiction of Hawks on Folding Screen”)
Muromachi period/16th century
Six-panel folding screen
Donated by Okazaki Masaya

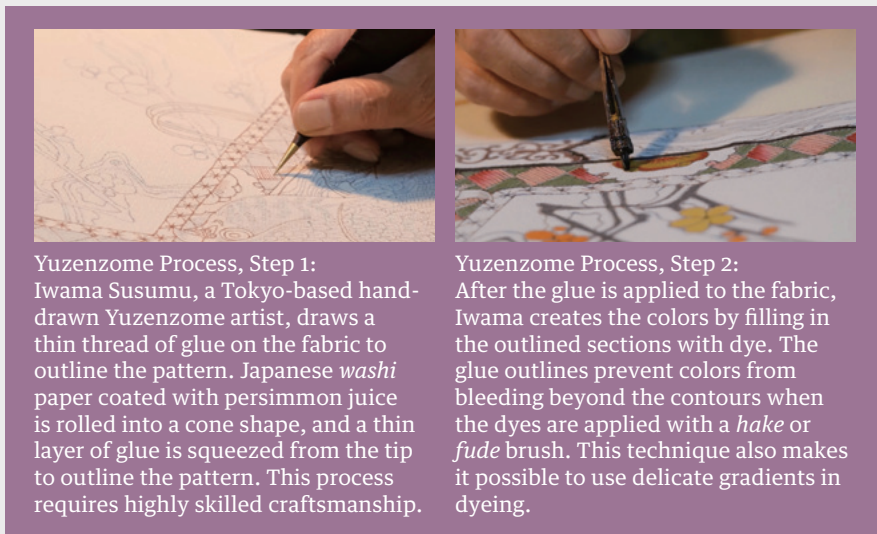
From the Kamakura period (1185–1333), *takagari* (falconry) came to be practiced among the samurai class, with falconers raising and training hawks for the sport.

Photo: ColBase (<https://colbase.nich.go.jp/>)



“Furisode” (kimono with long sleeves)
Plum trees, standing screens, and falcon design on white brown chirimen crepe ground (Back)
Edo period/18th century

Dyed with four colors—red, blue, yellow, and black. These four were mixed in a variety of ways to create different colors. The white outline drawn in glue and the delicate blurring of the brush and brushstrokes are distinctive features of Yuzenzome dyeing.



Yuzenzome Process, Step 1:
Iwama Susumu, a Tokyo-based hand-drawn Yuzenzome artist, draws a thin thread of glue on the fabric to outline the pattern. Japanese *washi* paper coated with persimmon juice is rolled into a cone shape, and a thin layer of glue is squeezed from the tip to outline the pattern. This process requires highly skilled craftsmanship.

Yuzenzome Process, Step 2:
After the glue is applied to the fabric, Iwama creates the colors by filling in the outlined sections with dye. The glue outlines prevent colors from bleeding beyond the contours when the dyes are applied with a *hake* or *fude* brush. This technique also makes it possible to use delicate gradients in dyeing.



Ogura Sansozu (“Allusion to Great Medieval Waka Poet, Fujiwara no Teika’s Cottage at Mount Ogura in Kyoto” (Tokyo National Museum collection), by Okumura Masanobu depicts *wakasha* dressed in *furisode*.

Photo: ColBase (<https://colbase.nich.go.jp/>)

gradually grew in length from the mid-to late-Edo period. Kimono patterns at the time held unspoken meaning, hinting at the traits of the person who wore them. In *Hinagata Miyako Fuzoku* (“Rare and Popular Kimono Patterns of the Capitol”),³ an illustrated book of *kosode* patterns rendered in woodblock printing that was published in 1716, a *furisode* with a hawk pattern is included in the section on men’s fashion. At first glance, the pattern is gorgeous enough for a woman’s kimono, but the falconry motif favored by *samurai* warriors

is rather more appropriate for men. Moreover, if you connect the depictions on the *tsuitate* screens on which the hawks perch, a fresh and youthful image emerges from the hem of the garment – a snow-covered plum tree that has endured the cold to blossom. *Hatsuume* (early-blooming plums) were a metaphor for *wakasha*⁵ (adolescent boys) as noted in *Nanshoku Ookagami* (“The specialized book of Male Love”)⁴ by Ihara Saikaku. That adolescent boys were considered suitable objects of affection of older men is a known part

of Edo period culture in Japan. Dress was an important matter in youth, and fashionable patterns designed especially for them were often featured in *hinagata* books. This *furisode* would have been worn by a boy between the ages of 15 and 18 and would have been a thing of great beauty.

A video introducing Yuzenzome dyeing is available on the Tokyo National Museum YouTube channel.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MsZRmOQ3k10>

1. A type of hunting in which domesticated and trained hawks and peregrine falcons are released into mountains and fields to catch wild birds and small mammals.
2. Depictions of hawks resting their wings on a *hoko*, a wooden screen perch for resting during falconry. This *furisode* depicts a *tsuitate* house screen rather than a *hoko* falconry perch.
3. A *hinagata-bon* of design samples from the time, published as a booklet printed from woodblocks. These books would have been read as modern fashion magazines are today.
4. Ihara Saikaku (1642–1693), one of the leading literary figures of the Edo period. Published in 1687, *Nanshoku Ookagami* (“The specialized book of Male Love”) contains 40 stores of male love featuring *wakasha* (adolescent boys) from samurai families and kabuki actors.
5. Young kabuki actors were called *wakasha*. In addition to performing on stage, they were also romantic partners for men at the time.



Birds of Japan

Mejiro

Japanese white-eye

The Japanese white-eye (*Zosterops japonicus*) is a small bird, only about 12 cm in length, and widely distributed in Japan and other parts of East Asia. It has a distinctive white ring around its eyes, and its body color is green on the back, yellow along the throat, and white on the abdomen. The Japanese white-eye is omnivorous, and lives on a diverse diet of insects, flower nectar, and fruit. It has a broad habitat that extends from flatlands to mountain forests. The Japanese white-eye can also be found in human habitats, such as urban parks, and its lovely appearance and beautiful singing can be enjoyed even in the big city.



A Japanese white-eye drinking flower nectar
All photos: Adobe Stock

HIGHLIGHTING

Japan

PLEASE VISIT the top page of Highlighting Japan for links to all our past issues including videos.

www.gov-online.go.jp/eng/publicity/book/hlj/

HIGHLIGHTING JAPAN



ALL PAST ISSUES available online

PLEASE VISIT the Government of Japan's official English-language website



JAPAN GOV
THE GOVERNMENT OF JAPAN

<https://www.japan.go.jp/>

The official JapanGov website functions as a portal for users to access a broad range of information from policy-related information to cultural content.