

The Yamanashi Grapevine

山梨グレープヴァイン

Summer 2007

Osano Memorial Foundation 20th Anniversary

Kai City

Yamanashi's Jewelry

Amehata Suzuri

Kai-Ki

Meet the Authors/Contact

Editor's note:

The return of summer, the return of sunny days, of juicy fruits, sticky humidity, intrusive cockroaches, lively festivals, radiant fireworks and last but not least...the return of *The Grapevine*—life is just an everlasting new beginning! And once again, since the first edition of this magazine 18 years ago, your devoted CIRs have done their best to share with you ever more information about Yamanashi, its people, its culture and traditions and we hope you will almost feel like home when skimming through these pages!

Mathieu Bellier

Twenty years have passed since the founding of the Osano Memorial Foundation in 1987, and I deeply thank all of those who lent their loyal support and cooperation during the foundation's twenty years of activities.

Since its inception, our foundation has implemented various international exchange programs, all towards the goal of "promoting the internationalization of Yamanashi Prefecture through cultural, sports, and other types of international exchange, ultimately contributing to the creation of a culturally vibrant Yamanashi that is open to the world." Specifically, our activities include the publication of the present English magazine, *The Grapevine*, which disseminates information about Yamanashi throughout the world; educational and awareness programs such as the Elementary and Middle School International Understanding and Cooperation Essay Contest; and grants for other international exchange programs in fields such as culture and sports.



These past twenty years have seen a surge in the worldwide trend of globalization, spurred by the development of the internet and other information and telecommunication technologies. People, goods, and information are crossing borders like never before, and Yamanashi Prefecture is no exception. The number of foreign-born Yamanashi residents is on the rise, and there is an increased need to promote a multicultural society in which residents of differing nationalities and ethnicities live together as members of the local community.

Our foundation has moved with the flow of the times, and in addition to our pre-existing international exchange programs, we also actively support programs that aid foreign-born residents. As we work towards enhancing our current programs, we also plan to hold commemorative events such as the "International Cooperation Youth Study Tour," our 20th Anniversary Commemorative Program which hopes to broaden the international perspectives of local youth and cultivate a worldly populace that holds an understanding of international cooperation.

I hope that, while building upon our activities thus far, our foundation continues to contribute to the local community and answer the demands of a new age. And I ask for your further support and cooperation towards these goals.

Eiko Osano
Head of the Osano Memorial Foundation

20th Anniversary
Greeting from the
Osano Memorial Foundation



Kai City: History in every Corner

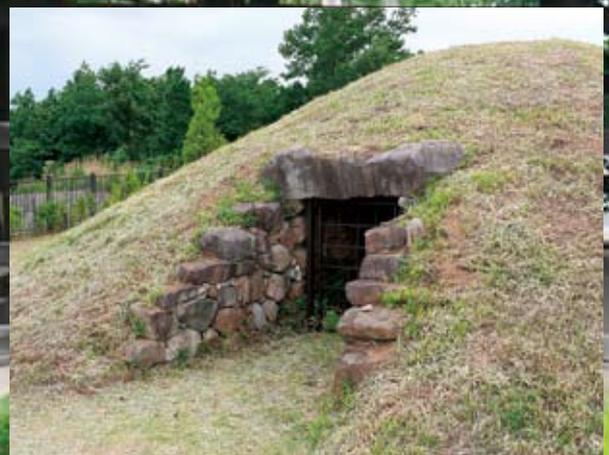
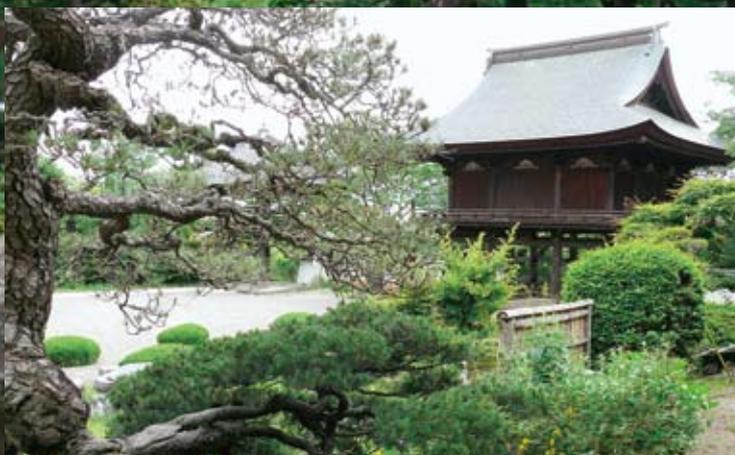


Tachiokayama

Yamanashi is known and loved the world over by its current name, but before Japan's prefectural system was established in the late 19th century, it was a province by another name: Kai-no-kuni, or Kai Province. When three towns to the west of Kofu (Ryuo, Shikishima, and Futaba) merged in 2004, they adopted this toponym of old and were reborn as Kai City. The second most populous city in Yamanashi behind Kofu, Kai City is also a treasure-trove of historical relics and cultural assets, and certainly does live up to its historical namesake.

Our journey into the city's history begins with the legendary warrior Prince Yamato Takeru, who is thought to have existed anytime between the 2nd and 7th centuries CE, if at all. Sent to subjugate enemy tribes by his father the emperor, Yamato Takeru traversed many regions of Japan on military expeditions, and Kai Province was no exception. Said to have composed Japan's first Renga poem in the Sakaori region of Kofu City, he is also said to have forgotten his sword on his way down Tachi-okayama (or, "Sword Hill-Mountain") in what is now Kai City. The unique shape of Tachi-okayama (1295 m) not only attracts the legendary princes of yore, but also the outdoor enthusiasts of today, and it is very popular with rock-climbers and mountaineers. Kai City is also home to other historically significant mountains popular with climbers, such as Kaya-ga-take (1704 m), which was a favorite of Kyuya Fukada, renowned author of the list of the 100 famous mountains in Japan; as well as the dynamic rock faces of Rakanji-yama (1058 m) and the other peaks close to the scenic Shosenkyo Ravine, which were sketched by noted 19th-century ukiyo-e artist Utagawa Hiroshige.

Experts say that the numerous locales around Japan that claim legendary connections with Yamato Takeru are not only relics of the political power of the central imperial court, but possibly also proof of each individual location's relative power in the region. The many Kofun tombs located on and around the Akasaka-dai hill in Kai City (next to Dragon Park) are also further proof of Kai City's historical prominence. Thought to have been built in the 6th or 7th centuries, these circular, mound-shaped tombs house not only the bodies of rulers of more than a thousand years ago, but also their personal items. Among the items discovered by archeologists from the Kai City tombs include iron horse-riding goods and decorations embedded with gold--which lead some to speculate that the old rulers of Kai City not only gained power through military tactics (because horses were used in battles), but also that they had a very close relationship with the Yamato imperial court in central Japan (because of the contemporarily rare gold-on-iron luxuriousness of the items).



The Gate of Jishoji Temple (left) and an Akasaka-dai Tomb (right)



A Dragon in Dragon Park (left) and the Omiyuki Festival on the Shingen-Zutsumi Levee (right)

Shingen-Zutsumi photograph from Graph Shingen-Zutsumi by Kazunori Wada (2003, Yamanashi Nichi-nichi Shimbun Press)

In 825, just a few centuries after the construction of the tombs, massive flooding of the Kamanashi River that runs along the southwestern border of Kai City caused considerable damage to the surrounding land. An imperial envoy was sent to the area and mandated that a festival be held to pray for calm waters. This festival was the basis for the current Omiyuki Festival, which is held to this day every April 15th in Kai and the nearby cities. However, it wasn't until warlord Takeda Shingen began construction of an ingenious water-rerouting and levee system in the 16th century that true flood protection came to the land. Named Shingen-Zutsumi, this engineering marvel of 500 years ago is not only lauded as the oldest large-scale flood control works in the country, but was also recently placed on the preliminary list of the top 100 beautiful historic landscapes of Japan.

Unfortunately for Takeda Shingen, his lineage was not as foolproof as the levee which took his name, and by the start of the 17th century the Takeda clan had lost power to the Tokugawa shogunate in Edo (or modern day Tokyo). It was just a few decades afterwards that the temple gate of Jishoji Temple in Kai City was constructed--but it was made in the Momoyama style of the previous century. Jishoji temple is not only unique for this contemporaneously "retro" gate, which is now a Prefectural Cultural Asset, but also for its large main hall. The temple grounds are also home to the Ryuo water spring, which is named after the "Ryuo," an evil Dragon King who, as legend has it, was converted to good by the head Zen priest at Jishoji. As a token of thanks the dragon made the pure waters beneath Jishoji spring up. This Dragon King gave his name to Ryuo, the central area of Kai City, which also helps explain why you'll find so many dragon statues around the appropriately named Dragon Park, itself named after the Ryuo area.

We've explored the rich history of Kai, but what lies in the city's future? Perhaps one of the most high-profile projects in the works is the reconstruction of the Ryuo JR Train Station, designed by internationally renowned architect Tadao Ando. The unique multi-planed glass facades of his design will not only offer stunning panoramic views of Mt. Fuji and other mountains, but are also meant to resemble both a diamond (gem cutting being a major Yamanashi industry) and parts of the Shingen-Zutsumi levee system. Visitors who get off at the Ryuo Station may then continue on to nearby wineries or the Shikishima Ume-no-Sato Kleingarten, a unique allotment garden popular with residents from Tokyo and other urban centers who want to escape the big-city bustle to find peace in this natural enclave of self-sustenance. But as weekend gardeners and other tourists visit the many modern wonders of Kai City, they just might stumble across the city's plentiful history.



Shikishima Ume-no-Sato Kleingarten (left) and a blueprint for the new Ryuo Station designed by Tadao Ando Architects and Associates (right)
For further information please visit Kai city's homepage:<http://www.city.kai.yamanashi.jp/>

Yamanashi's Hidden Facet

If you exit the southern side of Kofu Station, you may catch sight of a big, isolated sign modeled after a diamond ring near a roundabout displaying "Kofu the city of jewelry"...don't worry if you have never heard before that jewelry is a specialty of Yamanashi-you are like 6 out of 10 Japanese people in the Tokyo metropolitan area. If you continue walking around the station and going down through Heiwa Dori, the city's main street, you will find no visible signs of the Kofu jewelry industry...so how can Kofu assume such a glorious title? Let's go back some hundreds of years ago...

During the Edo era (1603-1868) when mineral excavation was forbidden in Japan, crystal gemstones were a scarce and precious resource. They were found naturally on the surface of the ground or picked after land slides and brought to Kyoto where they were transformed and polished by craftsmen. It is believed that in 1834, a clerk from Kyoto coming to Yamanashi to stock up on gemstones taught polishing techniques to Shinto priests in Kanazakura shrine near the Shosenkyo ravine area during his stay.

Thanks to the promulgation of the mining law during the Meiji era (1868-1912), Yamanashi's crystal production flourished and products such as cuff links, eyeglasses, belt clips, paperweights, beads, rings or hair accessories were very popular. Factories and shops were built in Kofu-where the industry was eventually transferred, and accounting at that time for a total of 183 manufacturers and 708 workmen-the largest in Japan. However due to excessive extraction, the abundant crystal resources were almost depleted and it soon became more profitable to import crystals from abroad-especially from Brazil-for a lower price and better quality. Along with mechanization and the development of sophisticated stone cutting and polishing techniques, an increased quantity of elaborate products successively appeared on the market.

Following the opening of Japan to foreign countries and the westernization of consumers' tastes, Yamanashi's manufacturers had to adapt to the demand, and during WWI they started to successfully combine gold with crystal-made objects and to use precious metals in their creations. Soon necklaces were exported to America, door-to-door salesmen crisscrossed China and jewelry was sold all over Japan through mail-order catalogues. Unfortunately the bombing of Kofu during WWII destroyed many factories and warehouses, dramatically affecting Yamanashi's jewelry industry. During the American occupation manufacturers recovered quickly by producing rings and bracelets targeted to soldiers that were met with great success. Nowadays Yamanashi is still number one: more than 500 companies and as many small workshops produce one third of Japan's jewelry.

With such a long history of craftsmanship why is the true worth of Yamanashi's jewelry industry not more widely recognized?

To get some answers the Grapevine visited Ishitomo, one of the biggest jewelry producers in Kofu, and sat down for a long discussion with its soon-to-retire director Atsushi Matsuba. If Yamanashi's jewelry is not famous among the mass market the reason is very simple: around 75% of Ishitomo's products are OEM (Original Equipment Manufacturer) - meaning that they are sold to the final consumer under the names of other companies, which include some of the world's most prestigious brands such as Chanel, Bulgari, Cartier or Tiffany. As brand image is extremely important in Japan, and particularly in the luxury sector, long established European brands are more appealing to the consumer. And despite their products of the highest quality, by being positioned mainly as wholesalers, Yamanashi's companies have very few contacts with the end-users and therefore suffer from a lack of recognition.

To tackle this problem 270 companies have joined forces through the Yamanashi Jewelry Association to launch, with the support of the Ministry of Economy, their own regional brand: Koo-fu. Focusing on what Yamanashi has always excelled at, platinum jewelry, the Koo-fu brand (in reference to Kofu, the capital of the prefecture) consists of a range of products made exclusively of a unique 95% pure platinum alloy, extremely hard and resistant to scratches, and requiring high-level technical skills to be processed. All companies offering Koo-fu products must follow strict quality standards, and only the finest pieces are included in the "Koo-fu collection" designed to promote the brand during events and commercial fairs. Through this new product differentiation strategy, Yamanashi first aims to attract Japanese consumers' attention and later to explore new markets.

But to live up to its claims, Yamanashi also needs to work hard on the image it reflects as a jewelry producing area. Strangely enough, the presence of jewelry is almost absent from the Kofu downtown area, far from what you would expect of the country's biggest producer. The recent decision to relocate the Prefectural Institute of Gemology and Jewelry Art in the center of Kofu, and the ongoing discussions about the creation of a jewelry district nearby, show the determination of the local government and the manufacturers to improve the situation. The development of an attractive environment putting great emphasis on high-end retail outlets would give customers the refined product image they aspire to and may be one of the keys to transform Kofu into a renowned "city of jewelry" in the future. Yamanashi is still a rough gem which just needs some more time to be polished before sparkling with a thousand points of light!

by Mathieu Bellier



Design jewelry, select gems according to the glaze, the color, the form.



Place the silver prototype in a rubber mold, compress and inject wax.



Solder the wax rings around a "tree" and plaster.



Heat at 900 C and after the wax is melted fill the resulting cavity with metal (platinum, gold, silver)



Cut the pieces from the "tree", polish, set the stones, and do a final check.

Shodo is the name given to the Japanese art of calligraphy – the paths of writing. Walking through these paths might be a whole life journey in which dedication, devotion and time are your compass and essential partners.

There are four indispensable materials to the calligrapher: paper –washi, brush – fude, ink stick – sumi and the ink stone – suzuri which are said to be the “four writing material treasures”. Yamanashi prefecture is known among shodo lovers for its washi production (Ichikawa misato Town) and nationally recognized by the Amehata suzuri produced in Hayakawa Town.

Following the stream of the Hayakawa River we reach Amehata lake, peacefully set against and surrounded by an exuberant green that inspires calmness and suggests an inner voyage. The forest is bed to a very peculiar stone –the Amehata stone.

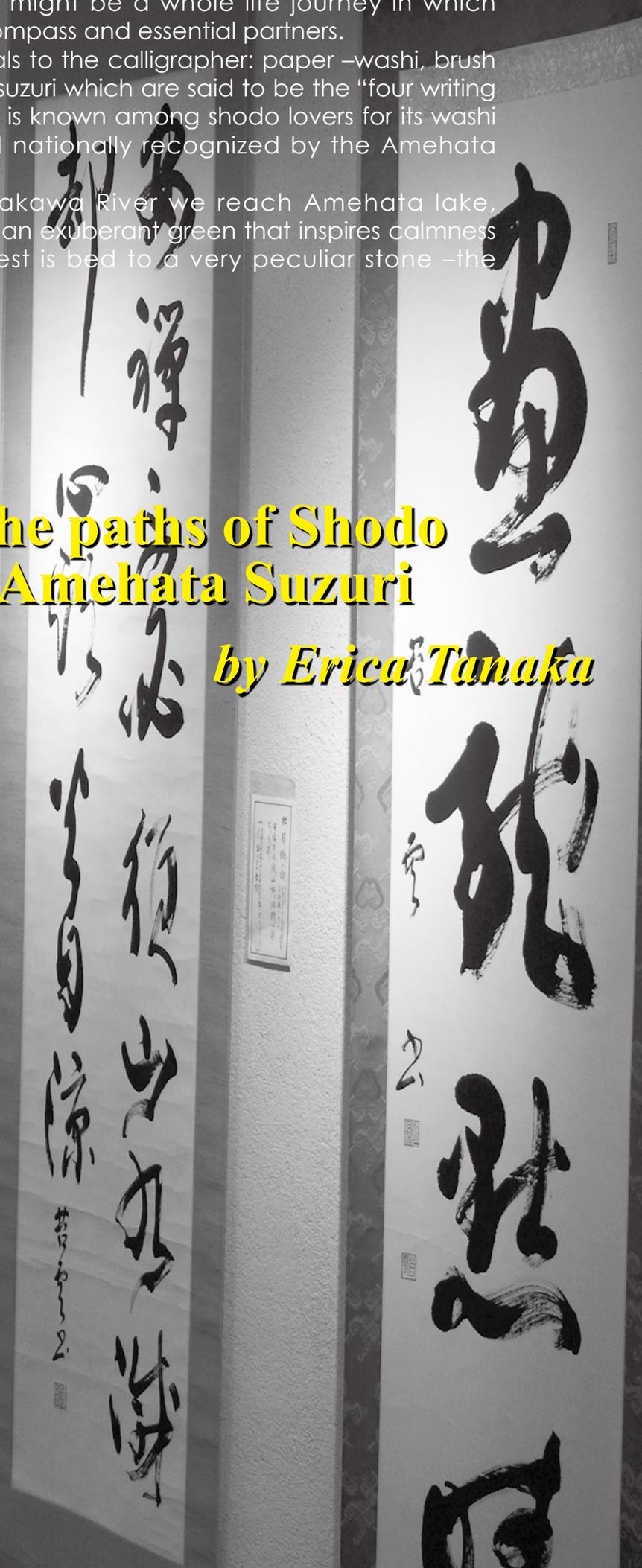
Through the paths of Shodo towards Amehata Suzuri

by *Erica Tanaka*

The ink stone –*suzuri*– has its origin in China and is used to grind the ink stick with water or as a receptacle for ready made ink – *bokuteki*. Among the “four writing material treasures”, suzuri stands in a place of honor since it lasts many years even after heavy use and it is passed on from generation to generation.

Inkstones were first introduced into Japan during the Asuka era. During the Nara era they used to be made from pottery – *token* – but by the mid Heian era they started to be made from stones –*sekiken*. There was a significant growth in production during the Edo period and Amehata was one of the top ten producing areas all over the country. Nowadays there are only around ten locations entitled “the land of suzuri stones” and Amehata is one of them.

An ideal suzuri must go well with the ink stick – *sumi* – not absorbing it too fast or damaging or influencing the movements of the brush. The key point is without a doubt, the stone itself. Stones naturally have iron particles, worm holes, fissures and impure particles that impede the production of a flat ink stone. Also, if the stone is too hard or too soft it can easily end up in a concave shape. An exemplary stone however adheres the ink to its surface as a magnet and this can be said to be the “eye” and “life” of the suzuri, the source of the indescribable strength that attracts our hearts and provides life to the writing art.



The History

“From children to the elderly, it was a custom that anyone would have a suzuri in this village. They would collect the morning dew from the sweet potato leaves, grind the ink stick into liquid and write their wishes on pieces of paper and hang them on tree branches”.

According to the local oral tradition, about 700 years ago, one of Nichiren’s disciple was told to open Mt. Shichimen, and while passing through Akazawa, he unexpectedly found on the shores of the upper stream of the Amehata River a huge black stone which he declared could be the source of a refined suzuri.

The refined texture, smooth surface, and shiny gloss of Amehata stone was formed into a suzuri and later the area was called “Suzurishima-mura” (Suzuri island village), named after this Amehata suzuri. In the Meiji Era, a syndicate of “Amehata Suzuri Commerce and Production” was founded and according to its registers there were more than 90 members, which shows the booming activity of the time. The suzuri not only was spread all over the country but it has penetrated into the local people’s lives and living, being loved by everyone.

Amehata residents still carry in their hearts the wishes of their predecessors to perpetuate the local name. It is thanks to the dedication and devotion of the generations of Amehata suzuri makers that contributes and brings pleasure to calligraphers from all over the country and has made representative local craft into a provincial art.



How to make Amehata Suzuri?



1. Mining the raw stone

The raw stone of Amehata suzuri is quarried on the mines along the shores of the Amehata River in a place where the clay slate is almost homogenous.



3. Manual Carving

A chisel is used to carve and determine the outside shape and a whetstone smooths the back of the stone. With the help of a chisel, the bokuchi – where the ink is poured – and the bokudo – where the ink is ground – are given special polish to make them flatten.



2. Selection and Stonebreaking

Strict eyes and criteria are adopted -- such as the thickness, shape and the texture of the stone – to select what will be the core of the suzuri –hobo, where the ink stone is grinded, and a graver is used to break the stone and flatten both sides of the stone.



4. Polishing and Finalizing

The suzuri is gently polished alternating the use of a coarse and refined whetstone. After all the steps above, in order to prevent natural deterioration rhus lacquer or ink stone are used to luster the suzuri and finalize the work.

The Kenshoan – the Workshop of Suzuri Masters – holds a huge exhibition of various suzuri shapes, sizes and prices. You can also visit and make one yourself choosing a pre-carved suzuri and carve your name on the back.



Villa Amehata is just across from Kenshoan and just before or after paying a visit to the workshop, make sure to spend a pleasant time relaxing in a cozy hot spring inn. Apart from accommodation facilities, their healthy tofu menu is highly recommended. You can savor a tofu salad entree or tofu hamburger main dish and learn about the various healthy and unique tofu made with Hayakawa water.

大願成就

Taigan Joju - praying for the realization of one's aspiration. It is the personal conviction behind my dedicated endeavor to deepen my shodo abilities after this extraordinary experience of visiting the sanctuary of Amehata suzuri.

Kai-Ki (Kai-silk)

Apart from juicy fruits, wine and jewelry, Yamanashi is also known as the home of textiles. The best-known type of textile is Kai-ki(Kai-silk). It was mainly used as luxury lining in kimono and haori (a kimono coat) back in the Edo period (1603~1868). But the production of Kai-ki ended in the 1940s, and production was never resumed. Yet with a majority of the traditional skills passed down, craftsmen were able to produce comparable fabric, which is now called "Koshu-ori (Koshu Fabric)". This article will let you see the past and the present of Kai-ki.

Kai-ki

Kai-ki is said to have been introduced to Japan during the period of Nanban trade (Southern barbarian trade). The original kanji used were 海(kai - sea) 氣 (ki - notion) meaning "the material that came from the sea". The kanji changed little by little as time went on, and now the official kanji used is 甲斐 (kai - Yamanashi) 絹 (ki - silk). Inland farmers produced silk as a sideline business, but for farmers in Yamanashi, it was also a means to pay for their taxes, as Yamanashi is surrounded by mountains and not enough rice can be produced to contribute to the government. It wasn't until the beginning of the Edo period that Kai-ki was used to make products.

Kai-ki is known for its use of ultrafine, high-quality silk threads, which gives the silk a lightness, thinness and beautiful luster, and the softness also providing flexibility in active clothing. The distinguishing characteristic of Kai-ki is its combination of "1. fine raw silk, 2. pre-dyed yarn, 3. untwisted yarn, 4. fine yarn, and 5. high density." Producing silk fabric is a lengthy process that demands constant attention-but the highest of skills is required to produce Kai-ki, which combines all five of the above characteristics in a single textile.

The use of Kai-ki had increased when there was a ban issued by the government on luxury items. Since the upper class was not allowed to wear showy clothes, instead they chose to show off their wealth by using high-class lining. Therefore, the Kai-ki became a fashionable item for the rich. During the Meiji period (1868-1912), Kai-ki was at its best. There were more products being manufactured with advanced machines and technologies. However, the production was terminated due to World War II. After the war, western clothes came into fashion, along with the automation and mass-production accounted for a large proportion of the manufacturing. While it was good for businesses, the Kai-ki market was never resumed.

Koshu Textiles

The new fabrics produced in post-war Yamanashi, and the products made out of them, were named "Koshu (甲州) Fabric (織)" after their place of production. Unlike Kai-ki, the term "Koshu Fabric" does not refer to a specific type of fabric, but rather it is a general term used for the textiles produced in Yamanashi today. Though a variety of production methods are used to make Koshu fabric, one can still find in them the legacy of the sophisticated technology used in the production of Kai-ki. What follows is an example of the production process of a type of Koshu fabric called "Hogushi-ori" made with a jacquard loom.

Before starting the actual weaving on the loom, the worker first weaves a preliminary weft thread through a stabilized warp thread, and begins to dye a pattern onto the yarn like a block print. The preliminary weft thread is then removed so that the actual weaving can take place. This removal of a preliminary weft is called "hogushi" (or disentanglement), and is the reason this textile is named "Hogushi-ori" (or disentangled weave). Using a jacquard loom, which employs punch cards whose pattern of holes determine the position of the warp thread in relation to the weft-and thus determines the final design of the fabric-the worker can create refined and elaborate designs on the fabric. Hogushi-ori and other Koshu fabric are made into sleeve linings, umbrellas, neckties, and interior accessories such as cushions. Koshu textiles are said to be highly durable and yet soft to the touch.

Koshu fabric is like the Kai-ki of today. The entire production process entails many groups of people and takes a lot of time, and what happens to a small part may affect the whole production line. But thanks to the effort of the craftsmen, they have combined the traditional methods with the modern technologies and create a brand of their own. On your next trip to Yamanashi, don't forget to come and have a look at Koshu textiles.

By Yi-Mei Lee



Making of the
Hogushi - ori



Koshu textiles

甲斐絹～山梨の織物の過去・現在

果実やワインやジュエリーだけが山梨の特産品ではありません。山梨の織物産業も全国的にその名を知られており、その中でも高名なものが甲斐絹です。甲斐絹は、江戸時代（1603～1868年）には着物や羽織（着物の上に羽織る上着）の裏地として使用されてきましたが、その生産は1940年代には行われなくなり、その後作られることはなくなりました。しかし、甲斐絹の生産技術の多くは現在の織物職人に受け継がれ、甲斐絹に共通する特徴を持った織物が生産され続けており、現在「甲州織」として知られています。これから、この甲斐絹の歴史、そして現在の山梨の織物について説明したいと思います。



甲斐絹を使った羽織

甲斐絹について

言い伝えによると、南蛮貿易華やかなりし戦国時代、他の様々な品々と共に、甲斐絹のもととなる生地が日本にもたらされました。当初、「かゐき」には海気という漢字が当てられており、海外から渡来した品であったことをうかがわせます。時代の移り変わりと共に漢字が変化していき、現在は甲斐絹という字が使用されています。もともと、養蚕・絹織物業は、主に内陸部の農民の副業として行われていましたが、山に囲まれ、水田とする十分な土地もない山梨の農民達にとっても、年貢を納めるための重要な手段でした。山梨で、甲斐絹の生産が始まったのは江戸時代だといわれています。

甲斐絹は、極細で上質の絹糸が使われており、その軽さ、薄さ、美しい光沢によって知られています。また、手触りが柔らかく、着心地良く着ることができます。甲斐絹の生地としての特徴は、「1. 先練り、2. 先染め、3. 無縫り、4. 細番手、5. 高密度」を同時に兼ね備えているということです。絹の生産は、それ自体時間がかかり、高い集中が要求される工程ですが、上記の様な特徴を同時に兼ね備えた甲斐絹の生産には、他の生地にもまして高度な技術が要求されました。

甲斐絹は、江戸時代、奢侈禁止令によって表向きは質素にしなければならないようになった時期に、広く使用されるようになりました。富裕な町人たちは、表向きに派手な格好をする代わりに、高価で貴重な甲斐絹を着物や羽織の裏地に用いることで、自らの富を密かに誇示しました。甲斐絹はお金持ち御用達のお洒落な品物だったのです。その後、明治時代（1868～1912年）になると、甲斐絹の生産はその最盛期を迎えました。近代的な織物技術によって、多くの甲斐絹が生産されました。

しかし、甲斐絹は、第二次世界大戦の勃発によってその歴史に幕を閉じることになります。戦後の生活様式の変化により着物が日常的に使われていた時代が終焉し、また、製造業界の趨勢がオートメーションや大量生産となっていったことにより、高い技術を要する手作業によって作られる甲斐絹は、その姿を消し、その後再び生産されることはありませんでした。

甲州織について

戦後、山梨で生産される織物は、山梨の昔の国名「甲州」から、「甲州織」という名前では呼ばれるようになりました。甲斐絹と違って、甲州織は特定の生地の名前ではなく、現在山梨県で生産される織物を総称したもので、様々な種類の生産技術が用いられていますが、そこには、甲斐絹の生産で培われた高い技術の名残を見ることができます。ここでは、一つの例として、ジャカード機を用いた、「ほぐし織」と呼ばれる甲州織を紹介したいと思います。

まず、織機で生地を本織する前に、緯糸を仮織りして経糸を固定し、型紙を使って版面のように糸に絵を付けます。その後、仮の緯糸を取り除きながら本織りを行います。この仮の緯糸を取り除くことを「ほぐし」と呼ぶことから、「ほぐし織」と呼ばれています。また、穴が一定のパターンに沿って穿たれたボードによって経糸の上下開口を制御し、複雑な模様を織りこむことができるジャカード機を用いることで、より洗練された、精緻な模様の生地を作っています。この生地をはじめ、甲州織の生地は、スーツの裏地、クッション等の室内のアクセサリ、傘、ネクタイ等に用いられており、耐久性に優れていながら、同時に柔らかな手触りを実現しています。

甲州織は、甲斐絹によって山梨に培われてきた技術を現代に継承するものです。多くの工程を経て、多くの人手と時間がかかる甲州織の製造においては、細部にわたる心配りが欠かせません。織物職人達の努力により、この地が引き継いできた伝統的な技術・工法と現代のテクノロジーが融合され、山梨県の織物産業は、産地を今一度活性化させるべく、模索を続けているところです。次に山梨県にお越しになる際は、ぜひ甲州織に触れてみてください。



昔の甲斐絹の生地



格子甲斐絹



絵甲斐絹

Meet the authors



Yi-Mei Lee. Oi Tudo bem! Eu gosto de udon! (I love udon!) She had planned to improve her Japanese while working as a CIR, but thanks to her crazy Brazilian co-worker, she has started her first Portuguese lesson. As a 2nd year CIR, Yi-Mei wants to improve her languages skills as well as contributes more to multi-cultural living. Even though the subject is pretty new to her, she is hoping that one day multi-cultural living could really take place in Japan. But for now, all she can think of is the fire works that are held around the prefecture! (Huh, when is the next one?)



Mathieu Bellier, has just finished a fulfilling first year in Yamanashi—he took part in the Shingen-Ko Festival as seen here, welcomed a French delegation, climbed Mt. Fuji, survived the rainy season and thus is looking forward to relaxing in France for well-deserved summer holidays. He will be back to start his second year as a CIR, “genki” and eager to celebrate the 150th anniversary of Franco-Japanese diplomatic relations.



Erica Tanaka, 3rd year CIR from Brazil - she is not having a summer vacation this year as the hectic preparations for the Brazil week in Yamanashi. In 2008, the Japanese emigration to Brazil is celebrating its centenary and this will be an opportunity for introducing the historical and cultural bonds of the Nipo-Brazilian relationship to Japanese citizens. She aims to spread the word to as many Yamanashians as possible. It is an attempt to deepen the integration and mutual comprehension of the 6000 Brazilians living in this prefecture. If it comes true her motto of Taigan Joju (praying for the realization of an aspiration) will come true.



Jonathan Smith, half-Cuban Coordinator for International Relations from the USA, is seen here at a Brazilian festival in Japan wearing a Panama Hat made in Ecuador—and sticking his tongue out at those who disbelieve in the power of globalization. After long-awaited trips to China and South Korea, Jonathan returns to his comfortable nook amid the green mountains of Yamanashi to start his third year living and working in the prefecture.



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