



# TRADITIONAL CRAFTS of TOKYO

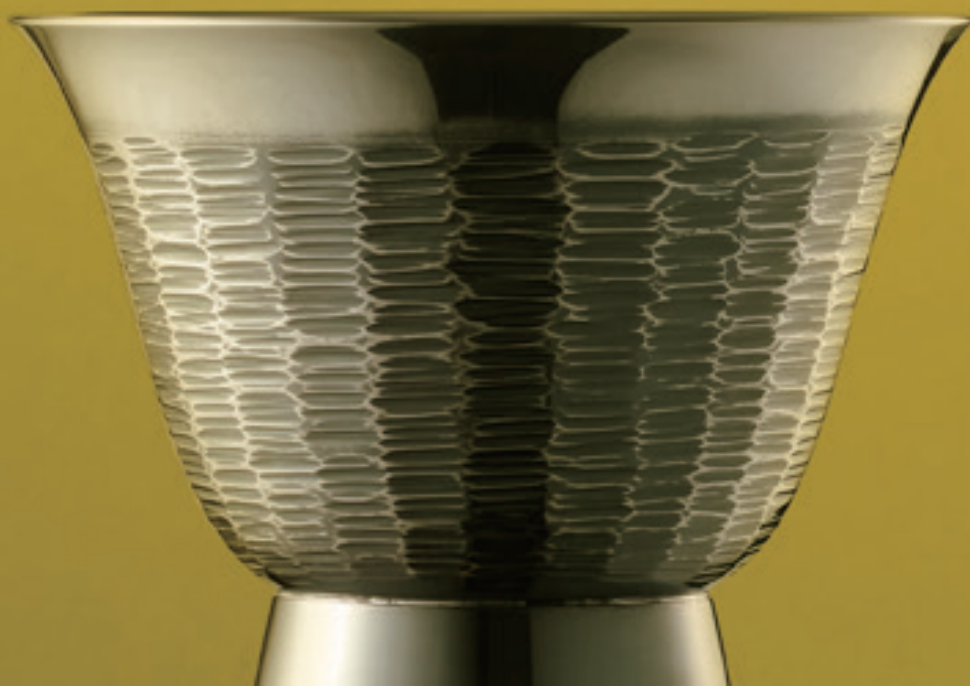





Superlative Skills



A Challenging Spirit







Edo Kiriko cut glassware with unbelievably fine patterns.

Tokyo Uchihamono forged blades that concentrate the skills of Japanese sword making from the Edo period.

Edo Moku-hanga woodblock prints that reveal not even micron-level printing discrepancies.

These are some of the spectacular items made in Tokyo that are praised as astonishing, incredible, and meticulous to the point of eccentricity. The almost maniacal passion of Tokyo's craftspeople has always taken craftsmanship to new heights, with traditional skills, which appear to have reached their pinnacles, refined even more through a constant influx of the latest tastes and sensibilities.

Introduced here are 42 traditional crafts of Tokyo.

See, feel and be awed by them and the unbelievable skills and painstaking attention to detail of the craftspeople.

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The Traditional Crafts of Tokyo are created using traditional skills and techniques that have long been nurtured in the climate and history of Tokyo and passed down over generations.

Compared to mass-produced, standardized products, the simplicity, familiarity, and superior functionality of traditional handmade crafts enrich our lives. As local industries rooted in the community, traditional crafts have contributed to local economic development and have played a major role in local culture. Currently 42 crafts have been designated as Traditional Crafts of Tokyo.

## ▼ “Traditional Crafts of Tokyo” Designation System

The Governor of Tokyo designates crafts that meet the following requirements as Traditional Crafts of Tokyo.

- ☐ The main part of the crafting process is done by hand.
- ☐ The product is made using traditional techniques and skills.
- ☐ The product is primarily made from raw materials that have been traditionally used.
- ☐ The product is being made by a fixed number of individuals in Tokyo.

## ▼ “Traditional Craftspeople of Tokyo” Certification System

The Governor certifies craftspeople as Traditional Craftspeople of Tokyo from among those who meet the following requirements.

- ☐ Has at least 15 years of experience in making a Traditional Craft of Tokyo and is still engaged in its production.
- ☐ Possesses a high level of traditional skills and techniques
- ☐ Is cooperating and will continue to cooperate in programs to promote the traditional crafts industry.

## ▼ “Traditional Crafts of Tokyo” Symbol Mark

Products bearing this mark are traditional crafts designated by the Governor of Tokyo.

This mark combines the crest of the Tokyo Metropolitan Government and the Chinese character 伝 which is the first character of *dentokogeihin*, the Japanese word for traditional crafts.





## List of Associations for Traditional Crafts of Tokyo

Name of Traditional Crafts	Names of Associations	Telephone number	Date designated by Tokyo (National gov't designation)	
Murayama-Oshima Tsumugi (Textured Silk Pongee)	Murayama Textile Cooperative Association	042(560)0031	Dec. 24, 1982 (Feb. 17, 1975)	p.6
Tokyo Some-Komon (Tokyo Fine-Patterned Dyeing)	Tokyo Order-Made Dyeing Association	03(3208)1521	Dec. 24, 1982 (June 2, 1976)	p.7
Honba Kihachijo (Hachijojima Island Silk Fabric)	Kihachijo Textile Cooperative Association	04996(7)0516	Dec. 24, 1982 (Oct. 14, 1977)	p.8
Edo Kimekomi Ningyo (Wooden Dolls in Traditional Garments)	Tokyo Hina Dolls Cooperative Association	03(6284)3765	Dec. 24, 1982 (Feb. 6, 1978)	p.9
Tokyo Ginki (Silverware)	Tokyo Gold and Silverware Industrial Cooperative Association	03(3831)3317	Dec. 24, 1982 (Jan. 12, 1979)	p.10
Tokyo Tegaki Yuzen (Hand-Painted Kimono)	Tokyo Crafts and Dyeing Cooperative Association	03(3953)8843	Dec. 24, 1982 (Mar. 3, 1980)	p.11
Tama Ori (Tama Woven Fabrics)	Hachioji Textile Cooperative Association	042(624)8800	Dec. 24, 1982 (Mar. 3, 1980)	p.12
Tokyo Kumihimo (Braided Cords)	Edo Kumihimo Heritage Association	03(3873)2105	Feb. 4, 1982	p.13
Edo Shikki (Lacquerware)	Tokyo Lacquerware Cooperative Association	03(5600)9401	Feb. 4, 1982	p.14
Edo Bekko (Tortoiseshell Products)	Tokyo Federation of Bekko Cooperatives	03(3863)4083	Feb. 4, 1982 (June 18, 2015)	p.15
	Tokyo Bekko Crafts Cooperative Association	03(3828)9870		
	East-Japan Bekko Cooperative Association	03(3828)7957		
Edo Hake (Brushes)	Tokyo Brushes Association	03(3664)5671	Feb. 4, 1982	p.16
Tokyo Butsudan (Home Buddhist Altars)	Tokyo Karaki Butsudan Cooperative Association	03(3620)1201	Dec. 24, 1982	p.17
	Tokyo Religious Ornaments Cooperative Association	03(3542)5771		
Edo Tsumami-Kanzashi (Ornamental Hairpins)	Tokyo Hair Ornaments Cooperative Association	03(3861)0522	Dec. 24, 1982	p.18
Tokyo Gakubuchi (Picture Frames)	Tokyo Gakubuchi Cooperative Association	03(3892)8682	Dec. 24, 1982	p.19
Edo Zoge (Ivory Carvings)	Tokyo Ivory Arts and Crafts Association	03(3841)2533	Mar. 10, 1983	p.20
Edo Sashimono (Wood Joinery)	Edo Sashimono Cooperative Association	03(3947)2797	Aug. 1, 1983 (May 14, 1997)	p.21
Edo Sudare (Natural Blinds)	Tokyo Sudare Cooperative Association	03(3873)4653	Aug. 1, 1983	p.22
Edo Sarasa (Calico Patterned Cloth)	Tokyo Order-Made Dyeing Association	03(3208)1521	Dec. 27, 1983	p.23
Tokyo Honzome Yukata and Tenugui (Dyed Summer Kimono and Hand Towel)	Kanto Chusen Dyeing Cooperative Association	03(3693)3333	Dec. 27, 1983	p.24
Edo Wazao (Bamboo Fishing Poles)	Edo Wazao Manufacturing Cooperative Association	03(3803)1893	Nov. 1, 1984 (May 20, 1991)	p.25
Edo Ishogi Ningyo (Costumed Dolls)	Tokyo Hina Dolls Cooperative Association	03(6284)3765	Nov. 1, 1984 (Mar. 9, 2007*)	p.26
Edo Kiriko (Cut Glassware)	Edo Kiriko Cooperative Association	03(3681)0961	July 15, 1985 (Jan. 30, 2002)	p.27
Edo Oshie Hagoita (Padded Battledores)	Tokyo Hina Dolls Cooperative Association	03(6284)3765	July 15, 1985 (Nov. 20, 2019*)	p.28
Edo Katchu (Warrior Armor)	Tokyo Hina Dolls Cooperative Association	03(6284)3765	July 18, 1986 (Mar. 9, 2007*)	p.29
Tokyo To-Kogei (Rattan Craft)	To (Rattan) Cooperative Association	03(3862)3101	July 18, 1986	p.30
Edo Shishu (Embroidery)	Tokyo Embroidery Cooperative Association	03(5913)7989	July 27th, 1987	p.31
Edo Moku-Chokoku (Woodcarving)	Japan Woodcarving Federation (Edo Woodcarving)	03(3849)0217	July 29, 1988	p.32
Tokyo Chokin (Metal Engraving)	Japan Chokin Association	03(3381)9859	July 29, 1988	p.33
Tokyo Uchihamono (Hand-Forged Blades)	Tokyo Blades Cooperative Association	03(6904)1080	July 26, 1989	p.34
Edo Hyogu (Scroll Mountings)	Tokyo Hyogu Kyoji (Scroll Mounting and Mounter) Interior Culture Association	03(5826)1773	July 26, 1989 (Nov. 16, 2022)	p.35
Tokyo Shamisen (Three-Stringed Musical Instrument)	Tokyo Japanese Music Instruments & Commerce Union	03(5836)5663	Aug. 9, 1990 (Nov. 16, 2022)	p.36
Edo Fude (Handmade Calligraphy Brushes)	Tokyo Stationery Federation	03(5687)0961	Aug. 9, 1990	p.37
Tokyo Mujizome (Plain Dyeing)	Tokyo Order-Made Dyeing Association	03(3208)1521	Aug. 1, 1991 (Nov. 30, 2017)	p.38
Tokyo Koto (Japanese Harp)	Tokyo Japanese Music Instruments & Commerce Union	03(5836)5663	Aug. 15, 1991 (Nov. 16, 2022)	p.39
Edo Karakami (Handcrafted Decorative Paper)	Edo Karakami Cooperative Association	03(3842)3785	Aug. 20, 1992 (May 13, 1999)	p.40
Edo Mokuhanga (Woodblock Prints)	Tokyo Traditional Woodblock Print Association	03(3830)6780	Dec. 17, 1993 (Mar. 9, 2007)	p.41
Tokyo Shippo (Cloisonné Enamelware)	Tokyo Shippo Crafts Association	03(3844)8251	Jan. 25, 2002	p.42
Tokyo Teue Brush (Handmade Brushes)	Tokyo Brushes Association	03(3664)5671	Jan. 25, 2002	p.43
Edo Garasu (Glassware)	TOBU Glass Industry Co-operative Association of Japan	03(3631)4181	Jan. 25, 2002 (Nov. 26, 2014)	p.44
Edo Tegaki Chochin (Hand-Painted Paper Lanterns)	Tokyo Paper Lantern Association	03(3801)4757	Dec. 19, 2007	p.45
Tokyo Yogasa (Tokyo Umbrella)	Tokyo Umbrella Association	03(3851)5328	Mar. 22, 2018	p.46
Tokyo Tebori Insho (Hand-Carved Seals)	Tokyo Seal Engravers Co-operative Association	03(3261)1017	Jan. 26th, 2023	p.47

\* Other than Tokyo Order-Made Dyeing Association, Edo Kiriko Cooperative Association, Tokyo Japanese Music Instruments & Commerce Union, Tokyo Traditional Woodblock Print Association, TOBU Glass Industry Co-operative Association of Japan and Tokyo Umbrella Association, the names of the above associations are provisional translations.

\* "Edo Ishogi Ningyo" and "Edo Katchu" were designated as a national traditional craft under the name "Edo Sekku Ningyo."

\* "Edo Oshie Hagoita" was designated as a national traditional craft under the name "Edo Oshie".



The choice of kimono aficionados.  
Magnificent casual wear from the Edo period.

## Murayama- Oshima Tsumugi (Textured Silk Pongee)

Oshima Tsumugi is woven silk fabric synonymous with quality. It is made on Amami-Oshima Island in southern Japan. Carrying this brand name is Murayama Oshima Tsumugi, which is made around Musashimurayama City in Tokyo. Like Oshima Tsumugi, it is made from raw silk, but while production of Oshima Tsumugi involves mud-dyeing of the silk fibers, which is very time-consuming, this version established a method called *itajime*, in which fibers are specifically dyed in patterns using boards engraved with the pattern. The resulting fabric has a texture similar to that of Oshima Tsumugi, but is reasonably priced, making it popular among the general public. The most outstanding feature of Murayama Oshima Tsumugi is its elaborate patterns, which appear blurred or brushed, called *kasuri*. Here, the patterns dyed in the warp and/or weft are matched precisely and woven together to form the fabric pattern. The wearer can feel the smooth texture of the fibers, and its light weight means that it can be worn comfortably for hours. Murayama Oshima Tsumugi for men has fine kasuri patterns that reveal their intricacy up close, but look like solid colors from afar, allowing for a subtle display of good taste. For women, design is a focal point and the chic patterns and colors available will suit wearers of all ages. To assure the high quality of Murayama Oshima Tsumugi, the stamp of approval is only granted to those products that use traditional techniques and materials acceptable to the Governor of Tokyo and pass stringent inspection covering 28 criteria, including length, weight, and absence of flaws.



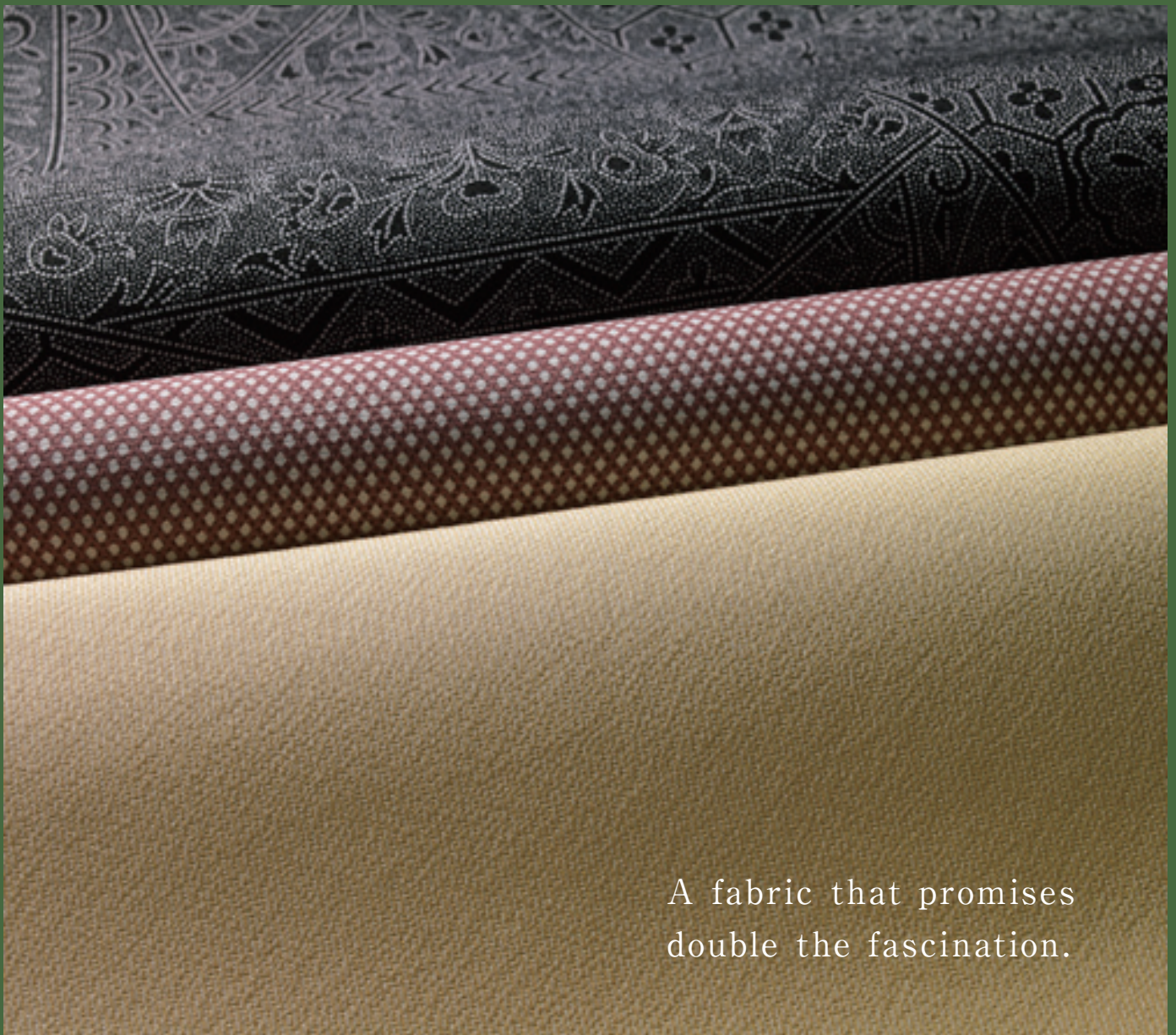




# Tokyo Some-Komon (Tokyo Fine-Patterned Dyeing)

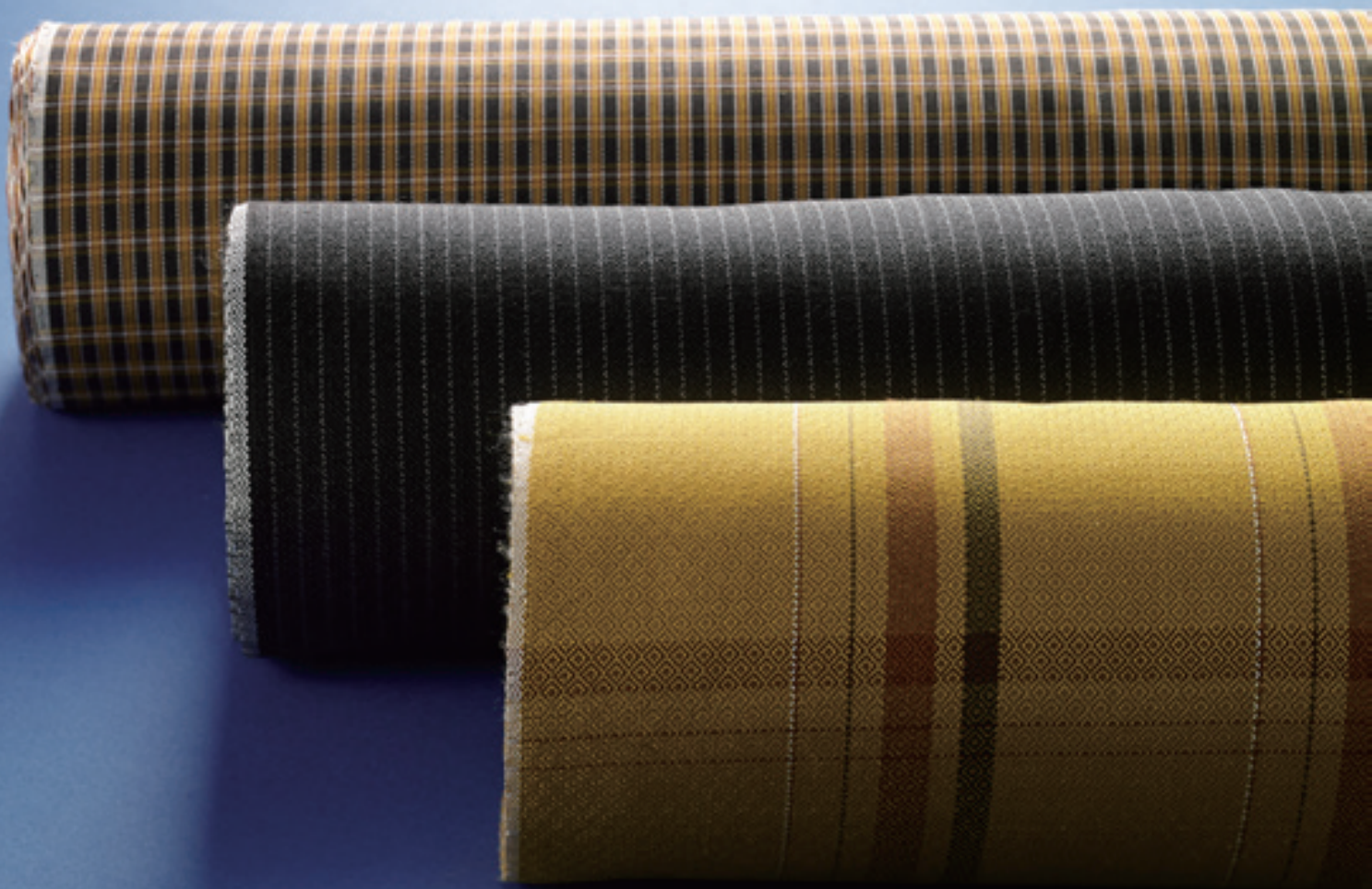


*Komon* is a fabric dyed with a repetitive pattern of extremely fine designs. In the 17th through mid-19th centuries, it was used in the ceremonial wear worn to distinguish between clans when the feudal lords (daimyo) visited Edo Castle. The patterns are formed from fine lines and points as tiny as 0.5-1 millimeter. One leading pattern, *gokuzame* (fine shark skin pattern), has more than 1,000 dots clearly dyed within a mere 3 square centimeters. This makes the fabric look like a solid color from afar, which also allows it to be paired with almost any kind of obi belt. Rather than making a flamboyant first impression, *komon* expresses a refined sense of style through a dyeing technique that can be truly appreciated when viewed up close. The hand-dyeing process gives a subtle nuance to the fabric and the skills lending depth to a flat surface are highly admired. The undyed back of the fabric is testament to the high skills applied to highlight the minute patterns. Pairing of patterns and colors can be tailored to requests, and the dyeing of a fabric can be done in not only a single color, but in multiple patterns and colors. Tokyo Some-Komon is not just limited to Japanese dress. Its broader applications in fine quality dyed items include ties, pocket chiefs, and shawls.



A fabric that promises  
double the fascination.





An island 300 km south of mainland Tokyo is the ultimate destination for kimono admirers.

## Honba Kihachijo (Hachiojima Island Silk Fabric)



Hachijo Island is located 300 kilometers south of Tokyo. *Honba Kihachijo* is silk fabric dyed using only plants that are indigenous to or cultivated on this verdant island. The colors are limited to yellow, black, and reddish-brown. In the past, yellow was the main color, which is why it came to be known as Kihachijo (Ki means yellow). But, black has now become the predominant color. It is not just any black; compared to dyes that combine other colors such as indigo, this is pure black dye made only from pigment of the *shiinoki* tree (Castanopsis). In the case of black fabric, raw silk is dyed in a liquid made from boiled-down shiinoki bark, the water is removed from the fabric, which is then dried outdoors. By repeating this process about 40 times, exposure to sunlight gives the fabric a glossy sheen. To highlight the distinctive colors of the plants growing in the climate of Hachijo Island, the designs are kept very simple; for example, plain, striped, or checked patterns. The material's comfort is enhanced the more it is worn, and because of this, it used to be popular for everyday wear. But Honba Kihachijo fabrics have been growing increasingly rare and precious of late due to the declining number of manufacturers. It is said that this is the ultimate choice for those who know all there is to know about kimono.



# Edo Kimekomi Ningyo (Wooden Dolls in Traditional Garments)

Parents don't consider these dolls as toys, but as precious talismans.

In Japan, there is a traditional custom that has been passed down over generations in which parents present their children with dolls to pray for their sound health and growth. Dolls are largely classified into *ishogi ningyo* and *kimekomi ningyo* depending on how they are made, with garments draped



on the former, and attached on the latter. The kimekomi doll is said to have originated in Kyoto in the 18th century, and is made from a technique unique to Japan. Various fabrics, which make up the doll's garments, are pasted to grooves carved in the doll's figure to create a natural garment-wearing appearance, which is the distinguishing feature of this technique. Although dolls are mainly regarded as toys overseas, in Japan, following a belief that spirits reside in dolls, they are given to children as a talisman to keep them safe. So that children, after they have grown up, can sense the deep love of their parents, the craftspeople imbue these thoughts in the dolls and pursue materials and crafting methods that are durable and maintain their original shape. The garments reproduce the court dress worn by the nobility in the 8th through 12th centuries, and the dolls are also highly prized by doll collectors around the world for their miniature kimonos. Trusted for their high skills, the craftspeople also receive requests to repair Edo Kimekomi dolls. With aspirations to spread to the world these dolls, along with their cultural background and the wishes they carry, these craftspeople also make products such as beckoning cat and character doll.



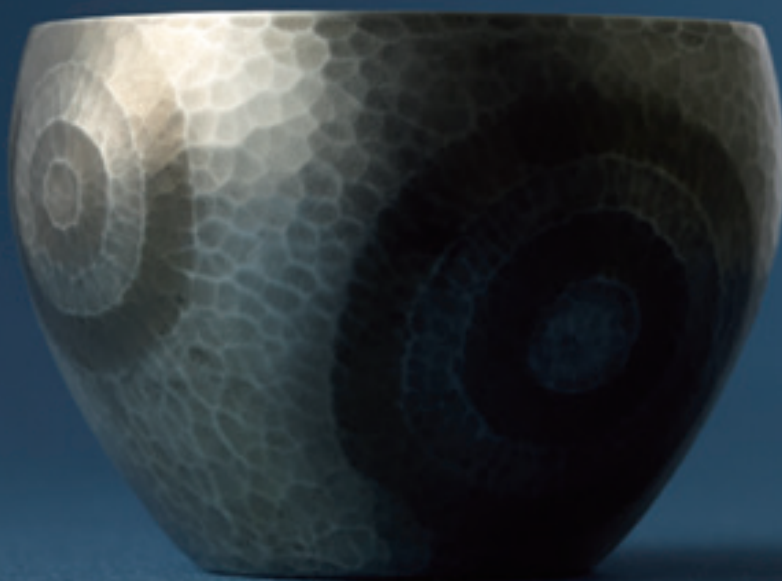




# Tokyo Ginki (Silverware)



In its prime, the Iwami Silver Mine was one of the two largest silver mines in the world; the other being the Cerro Rico silver mine located in Potosí, Bolivia. And Japan was one of the world's largest producers of silver. Silver products had already existed in 916, and in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, not only were silver craftsmen called *shiroganeshi* given important posts in the households of the feudal lords, but silverware was also broadly used by the common folk. At the Paris Expo in 1867, people, even Europeans who were quite familiar with silver, were amazed by the perfection of the Japanese silverware items exhibited. Although it was evident that the Japanese products were greatly influenced by Europe, they incorporated many proud techniques such as *tankin* (hammering) and *zogan* (inlay). Such precise skills that pushed the envelope for painstaking detail were unrivalled in the world. Tankin is the process of using metal or wooden hammers to pound one-millimeter sheets of metal into a desired shape, and kashoku involves creating patterns on the surface with a metal hammer. The various patterns have unique textures, and their indentations fit the user's hand even more comfortably after time. With silver goblets presented to seniors as gifts to commemorate long life, and silver teapots and kettles, which are very popular in Asia, this silverware continues to attract people with its deep luster that does not fade, even after a century.



The deep luster of Japanese silverware  
astonished viewers at the 1867 Paris Expo.





Displaying the stylish flair of Edo  
in response to Kyoto's preference for extravagance.



## Tokyo Tegaki Yuzen (Hand-Painted Kimono)



Yuzen is a resist dyeing technique said to have been created from artists in Kyoto in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. It took its own course of development after some of the painters and dye masters moved to Edo, giving birth to Tokyo Tegaki Yuzen, which ranks along with Kyo Yuzen (Kyoto), Kaga Yuzen (Kaga domain, present day Ishikawa Prefecture), as one of the three major Yuzen traditions. While the other Yuzen traditions use a division of labor process, Tokyo Tegaki Yuzen differs in that a single craftsperson is responsible for the whole process, from hand-drawing the design using no paper patterns, to painting in the colors and dyeing, resulting in a product that is distinct to its maker. The craftsperson spends a considerable amount of time selecting the motif, and designing and sketching it. Innovative designs from streetscapes to animals and even outer space, are crystallizations of the craftsperson's imagination and clearly distinguish Tokyo Tegaki Yuzen from other Yuzen traditions that place importance on formal style. The limited range of colors that could be used, arising from the sumptuary edicts of the Edo period, gave birth to a refined style based on simple grey and blue tones. As a result, rather than the historical streetscapes of Kyoto, Tokyo Tegaki Yuzen blends in with the contemporary streets of Tokyo, in harmony with the times as a youthful kimono combining history and modernity.





# Tama Ori (Tama Woven Fabrics)

Hachioji, located in southwest Tokyo, was once known as “the city of mulberry” and it flourished as a major center for the sericulture, silk thread and textile production industries. Tama Ori is a generic name for five kinds of weaves that have their origins in Hachioji textiles and is known as the culmination of the diverse skills cultivated in this area famous for producing a wide range of silk textiles. It carries on even today the colors and patterns that were top fashion in their respective days. “Zurashi gasuri” is a sophisticated technique for adding calculated transitions in geometrical designs by staggering 1,200 strands of dyed raw silk to weave the patterns. Making slight adjustments to the weave using both hands and feet to operate the loom results in a natural touch that can only be achieved through handwork. The rustic feel of spun silk thread, and the simple patterns and colors, manifest Tokyo’s stylish flair. It has a broad appeal that does not wane even when constantly worn for daily use. As the fabric is rare and expensive because it is entirely made by hand, with hopes that many can enjoy the touch and patterns of Tama Ori, it is also being made into accessories such as neckties, hats, and shawls.



Human hands weave a comfortable noise  
into geometric prints.





# Tokyo Kumihimo (Braided Cords)



Braiding cords is a profession  
for some people in Tokyo.

Braiding in Japan is said to be one of the most sophisticated in the world. *Kumihimo* enjoys a very high reputation, as can be noted by the fact that an international sports brand adopted it for its shoelaces. Braiding developed through the use of cords in samurai armor, helmets and as sword straps, and thus cords made through this braiding technique became strong enough to withstand fierce fighting. This skill has been passed down to today. From the 17th century, braiding was expanded to items for everyday use, including decorative *obijime* cords tied around the kimono *obi* sash, and straps for miniature netsuke carvings. Compared to the extravagant Kyoto kumihimo, which developed from its noble court society, Tokyo Kumihimo, influenced by samurai society and the townspeople culture, is more subdued in color. The seasonal colors of Japanese climate are highlighted by the finely braided patterns. Craftspersons take care to adjust the braiding to be neither too tight nor too loose, and place importance on how the intertwining of the threads appear. The product line is expanding today to include bracelets, belts and straps. Although production quantities are declining, there are still many people who are fans of the comfortable touch of the silk threads, fashionable designs that add a touch of flair, and the toughness of the braids.





Not metal, not porcelain.  
Lacquerware is another option for the dining table.



## Edo Shikki (Lacquerware)



In the past, outside of Japan, porcelain was often referred to as “china,” and *shikki* was popularly known as “japan.” The application of dozens of coats of lacquer produces high durability and a beautiful luster that rivals porcelain. Through the process of repeatedly applying lacquer and then wiping it with a cloth, a texture that utilizes the grain of the wood emerges. Lacquerware has long been used by the general population. This is the result of the highly skilled craftsmanship that brings personality to wooden utensils, as well as the distinctive ability of lacquer to prevent decay and warping. Shikki has excellent heat-retaining and insulating properties, meaning that hot food is kept warm, yet little heat is transmitted through the vessel. Therefore, shikki can be easily handled, even with hot soup inside. Shikki is smooth to the touch and pleasant to hold or to drink from, bringing out the flavors of the food or drink contained inside. Edo Shikki, which developed as tableware for everyday use, is relatively unconstrained by the traditions that other shikki producing areas of Japan are bound to adhere to, enabling craftspeople to actively work on new designs as well. In addition to chopsticks and bowls, accessories such as earrings and kanzashi ornamental hairpins, and various other goods are being produced. The latest challenge to be undertaken has been to produce shikki that utilizes glass.



# Edo Bekko (Tortoiseshell Products)



Edo Bekko is made from the shell of the hawksbill sea turtle, which mainly inhabits the southeastern seas and Indian Ocean. International transactions of this tortoiseshell is regulated under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), but domestic sale is not prohibited under Japan's law on endangered species and other such regulations. With shells featuring dark brown spots on a transparent yellow base, the patterns on the shell are considered to be more beautiful than that of other species, and the shell is easy to work using heat. This has led to their use for hair accessories such as ornamental *kanzashi* hairpins. The first shogun of the Edo Shogunate, Tokugawa Ieyasu, who used tortoise spectacle frames, was one of its fans. The skills of the craftsman is best displayed in the process of bonding. The individuality of the person who made it is expressed in the balance between the solid base and patterns, with no two designs the same. Tortoiseshell spectacles are light and gentle on the skin, and fit the facial contours of their wearer. Accessories such as bracelets and rings, are safe for those with metal allergies.

\* Tortoiseshell products are prohibited in principle from taking out of Japan.



Accessories made of tortoise shells provide  
a comfortable and flattering fit.



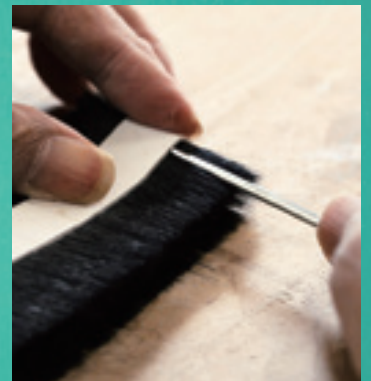


# Edo Hake (Brushes)



A tool for making traditional crafts  
became a traditional craft in itself.

The Edo Hake brush is an essential tool for traditional Japanese crafts. Trusted by many craftsmen, it takes on various forms for traditional crafts such as an *urushibake* lacquer brush for applying *urushi* lacquer to lacquerware, a *kyojibake* brush used by picture framers, a woodprint brush, dyeing brush, and doll brush. With the addition of the *oshiroibake* brush for applying for Japanese powder makeup, and painting brushes, a total of seven different types of brushes fall under the category of Edo Hake brushes. They are made through skills passed down over the ages. Materials used for painting brushes include human hair, animal hair, and plant fibers, and picture framers use brushes made of horsehair to ensure an even coat. In this way the brush bristles are selected according to the brush's application. For all brushes, it is the tip that determines the quality of the product. It is said that the best brushes have tips that are resilient and allow even coating. To achieve this, the craftsperson devotes a great deal of time and effort to processes including ironing to straighten the bristles and removing oil in the bristles by rubbing them with the ash of rice husks. They see their mission as making products that suit the users' needs and so they also accept orders such as adjusting the amount of bristles in the brush. The finished products can be used for many years as they are easy to use, fit comfortably in your hand, and are highly durable.







# Tokyo Butsudan (Home Buddhist Altars)



Buddhist family altars combine skills going beyond genres as an integration of the Traditional Crafts of Tokyo.

Between the 17th and 18th centuries, *butsudan*, small Buddhist shrines that can be placed in homes, was born as Buddhism spread among commoners with the development of Buddhist temples. The butsudan holds religious objects such as a statue or image of Buddha and memorial plaques inscribed with ancestors' names. Tokyo Butsudan features simple and dignified beauty realized by intricate craftsmanship that bears the influence of temple designs and a solid exterior that brings out the quality and texture of the grain of imported *karaki* woods such as rosewood and ebony as well as mulberry. Finest techniques associated with the traditional crafts of Tokyo are fully employed in the making of butsudan, including the engraving of Chinese-style phoenix and foliage scroll patterns, a Japanese traditional lacquering (*urushi*) technique to highlight the beauty of the woodgrain, and Japanese wood joinery (*sashimono*) to assemble precisely-cut pieces of wood without using metal nails. For this reason, Tokyo Butsudan is often described as an integrated art that is the culmination of the sophisticated skills of the traditional crafts of Tokyo. Today, while more and more butsudan are made in a furniture style that has little to do with temple design, Tokyo Butsudan aims to manufacture butsudan rooted in tradition. Produced with traditional craftsmanship and with a vision to allow "people to pay their respects to their ancestors and feel a sense of gratitude for the lives they were given," Tokyo Butsudan will undoubtedly be passed on to future generations to continue cultivating strong family ties.



# Edo Tsumami-Kanzashi (Ornamental Hairpins)



Kanzashi is a hairpin that decorates the hair of women wearing kimono for celebratory events such as the New Year, and rites of passage such as *shichigosan*, a celebration for girls when they are 3- and 7-years-old, and the coming of age celebration at the age of 20. Among these hairpins, the colorful Edo Tsumami Kanzashi, decorated with flowers and birds shaped by silk fabric called *habutae*, has long been a favorite as a hair ornament that best suits kimono. The name, Edo Tsumami Kanzashi, comes from the word *tsumamu*, which means “to pinch,” since the process involves using tweezers to pinch habutae fabric that has been cut into squares, and fold them into small shapes. Using various folding techniques that include rounding the fabric to give an impression of softness, or creating sharp corners for a strong image, the craftsperson creates motifs such as chrysanthemum and plum flowers, as well as butterflies and Chinese phoenixes. The finished products have a sense of depth that cannot be achieved by artificial flowers, and seem almost real with their vibrancy and dynamism. With the belief that the best products are those that sell well because they meet current needs, the craftspeople have recently been taking up the challenge of coming up with various motifs. Interest in these beautiful designs is spreading as can be noted by the increase of orders from overseas wholesalers.

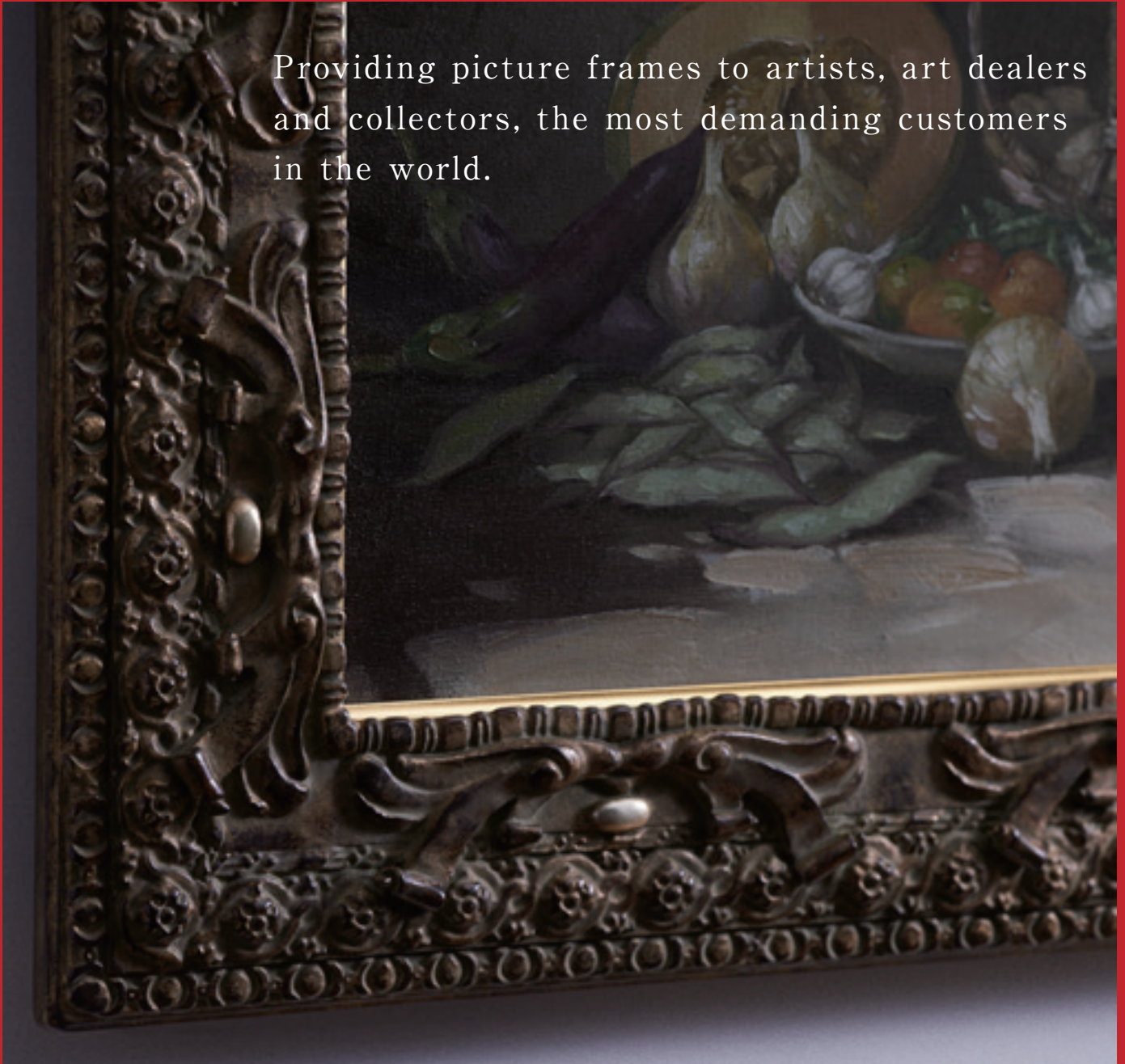
Transforming small scraps of silk  
into treasured accessories







Providing picture frames to artists, art dealers and collectors, the most demanding customers in the world.



## Tokyo Gakubuchi (Picture Frames)

Painters regard picture frames as part of their work and demand perfection that they can be proud of. Art dealers hold anticipations that the frame will add value to the painting, and art collectors want the frame to be one that will make the picture a part of their interior spaces. That is why there is no standard design for picture frames; no ready-made picture frame can answer specific demands. Tokyo Gakubuchi craftspeople listen to the requests of painters and art dealers, and create the best designs, sometimes after much consultation with the client. Making picture frames developed in the 19th century with the popularization of Western art. In the beginning, separate craftsmen were involved in different parts of the process—the joinery, carving, and painting. By bringing these skills together for a single operation from start to finish, Tokyo Gakubuchi is able to produce frames that answer various demands. Clients have great trust in the aesthetics and experience of the craftspeople including their skills in having the frame match the color tones of the painting and the display space, in addition to their techniques in painting the frame to bring out the texture of wood grain. Although a particular design may be used repeatedly for woodblock print picture frames, the care the craftsman places on the depth that handwork can achieve makes each frame special.



The unrivalled warmth  
of ivory  
makes it a favorite for  
all forms of art.

## Edo Zoge (Ivory Carvings)



The technique of carving ivory is said to have arrived in Japan in the 8th century from China. In the 17th through 19th centuries, ivory was used to make items such as teaspoons, hair decorations, and *netsuke*, miniature carvings attached to the end of pouch cords. Today, its international trade is strictly regulated under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and none has been imported to Japan since 2009. Only ivory that has been registered and issued a card can be crafted. Not only because of the value of this rare material, but also due to the different degrees of hardness and softness, and unique grain of each piece, ivory craftspeople have developed skills to ensure that not even the smallest of fragments are wasted. The smooth texture and luster distinctive to ivory are appreciated by many people, with it used to make personal seals as well as room ornaments and netsuke designed after traditional Noh plays and Buddhist and Shinto religions. It is also used in Japanese musical instruments such as string bridges and finger plectrums for the *koto* harp, and pegs, bridges, and plectrums for the banjo-like shamisen, where it demonstrates its resistance to slipping in perspiring hands, and flexibility against the vibrations of the strings and metal parts. Many players are insistent on ivory because of this almost-tailored comfort it offers, but the scarcity value of hard ivory that can be used for these musical instruments is very high. Despite this situation, ivory is still highly prized because of unflagging demand for quality that only such natural materials can provide.

\* Ivory products are prohibited in principle from taking out of Japan.





# Edo Sashimono (Wood Joinery)



No nails are needed  
in Edo furniture making.



*Sashimono* is wood furniture and objects that are made by joining interlocking boards without the use of nails. In line with economic and cultural developments in the 17th through 19th centuries, Edo Sashimono developed as furniture for samurai and wealthy merchants, and in the world of Kabuki, items such as dressing room furniture for the actors. It then spread to the general public. A feature of Edo Sashimono is that it highlights the woodgrain of natural materials, such as mulberry and paulownia wood, with only the bare minimum of metal fittings. The design, which eliminates excessive ornamentation, has a value that is not swayed by the trends of a particular age, and it remains popular today, even as lifestyles have become increasingly diversified. This is thanks to skills honed through tailor-made production by the craftspeople who create products that do not fail to be highly precise and interesting while meeting various requests such as size and application. Supporting the advanced skills needed to identify how much the wood will bend or degrade from changes in humidity, is the craftspeople's dedication to perfection even in places unseen and their wishes to have their products used for decades to come. Edo Sashimono takes on a deep elegance as it matures. It is a special piece of craftwork that develops even more after decades of careful use.



Natural blinds provide comfort  
by being not open nor closed.

## Edo Sudare (Natural Blinds)

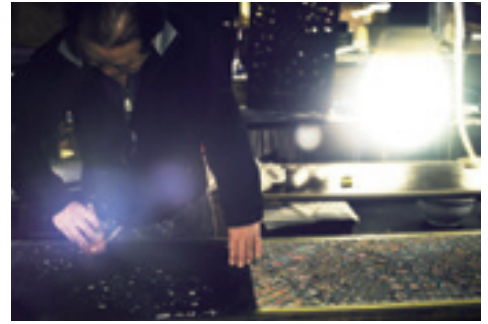


*Sudare* blinds are used as sunshades or screens when hung from the eaves or outside windows, and as room dividers inside the house. *Sudare* has a long history: it was mentioned in *Man'yōshū*, the oldest anthology of Japanese *Waka* poetry, compiled in the 7th through 8th centuries. *Sudare* became popular among the general public after the 17th century. Compared to the luxurious Kyoto-style *sudare* that developed out of the noble culture of Kyoto, the Edo *Sudare* of Tokyo sought to feature convenience and simple designs, focusing on the everyday lives of the general public. They are tailor-made to fit living environments and lifestyles, with materials such as bamboo, reed, or bush clover selected according to how they will be used. Bamboo grown for about three years to become the ideal color and sufficient hardness are cut and braided in multiple ways as required. The completed *sudare* breathes well, and the natural scent of the material that is carried by a pleasant breeze creates a comfortable space. Compared to the generally larger *yoshizu* reed screen that is propped up against the windows under the eaves, *sudare* places importance on becoming a part of daily life as an interior fitting and is distinguished by the Japanese aesthetics of “feeling cool just by looking at it,” which goes beyond its original application. Utilizing skills built up by meeting needs that change with the times, tapestries and placemats are also being made now.





# Edo Sarasa (Calico Patterned Cloth)



Colorful cotton textiles dyed with five colors (dark red, indigo, green, yellow, and brown) originated in India more than 3,000 years ago, and are known as sarasa in Japan. From India, it became popular in Asia and Europe, where it developed while reflecting the history and culture of the land. Sarasa is said to have come to Japan around the 14th through 16th centuries. Edo Sarasa took its own path, applying the traditional Japanese katazome (stencil dyeing) method to create complex patterns with multiple colors. By using 20 patterned stencils for simple patterns and as many as 90 for more intricate patterns, it is possible to achieve fine color gradations. Japanese dyeing skills are used to control how the brushes touch the surface to rub dye into the material to create delicate shading and gradations. Edo Sarasa differs from the multicolored patterns based on primary colors, which are found overseas, and instead features a composed color scheme. Edo Sarasa is now venturing into new areas such as scarves and other wardrobe items, and interior furnishings such as partitions. The blend of exotic patterns with the subtle tones of Edo has garnered fans as a fusion of beauty that transcends cultures.



Edo's take on  
the colorful prints of India.





Real yukata that  
even few Japanese are familiar with.



# Tokyo Honzome Yukata and Tenugui (Dyed Summer Kimono and Hand Towel)

Yukata (summer kimono) developed as a garment primarily worn after taking a bath. Even though it was not a formal attire, the Edo people pursued elegance and style in yukata, mostly due to their heightened sense of fashion. By the late 19th century, yukata became room wear or nightwear. Today, it is worn in the summer at events such as fairs, festivals, and fireworks displays. Made of thin cotton fabric, it is breathable and doesn't cling to the body. It also has a cool appearance, making it an essential part of the summer scene in Japan. Yukata is dyed using a Japanese dyeing technique called *chusen*. Dye is poured over fabric using a watering can-shaped container. The beautiful blurred effect created by pouring multiple-colored dyes simultaneously on the fabric requires advanced skills. Subdued colors of indigo and deep blue embody Tokyo's stylish flair, and the gradual fading of colors over time adds a flavor that can only be achieved by hand-dyeing. Currently, many *tenugui* (hand towels) are produced by using the same *chusen* yukata-dyeing technique, and are particularly favored by overseas visitors because they are compact and make perfect souvenirs.







The Edo townspeople sought flair even in their fishing gear.

## Edo Wazao (Bamboo Fishing Poles)



Japan has a food culture of eating fresh fish. Fishing has thus been a popular hobby of the general populace, leading to the development of fishing poles. Due to geographical reasons, such as facing the Pacific Ocean and being traversed by many rivers, a wider variety of fishing poles have been made here compared to other areas of Japan. It is no exaggeration to say that there are as many different kinds of Edo wazao fishing poles as there are species of fish, including specific poles for Japanese parrot fish, Japanese black porgy, and landlocked salmon.

Edo wazao are mostly tailor-made with particular attention paid to the size of fish targeted and amount of strength applied. The two processes that determine the quality of a fishing pole are: *kiri-kumi* (cutting and combining), where bamboo dried for at least three years are cut into pieces and, with understanding of the different qualities of the bamboo section, are joined into one fishing pole, and *hi-ire* (firing) to increase the resilience of bamboo. Because it is made of a natural material, the more Edo wazao is used, the more its handle fits comfortably in the hand.

Anglers are attracted to Edo wazao's combination of this practicality and the artistry of the handles, including decorative lacquering and engravings. The elasticity of the wazao, which is calculated to absorb the pull of fish, makes fishing a much more pleasant experience than using modern carbon fiber fishing rods. This is the reason why Edo wazao continues to appeal to fishing aficionados around the world.





Refined skills  
breathe life into dolls.



The culture of parents giving their children dolls to pray for their growth and good health has been passed down in Japan through the generations. This includes *Hina-ningyo* and *Gogatsu-ningyo*, which are displayed for the Doll Festival (Hina Matsuri) and Children's Day (Kodomo-no-hi) respectively. In the 8th to 12th centuries, the nobility enjoyed playing with Hina dolls. This led to the dolls also becoming popular among the general public in the 17th century, and finally evolving to become *Ishogi Ningyo* (dolls wearing traditional clothing). Throughout the process of creating Edo Ishogi Ningyo and conveying the history of these dolls to the present day, the artisans are fully immersed in how to bring the doll to life. The eyes, nose, and mouth are carved out of wood, forming a base for the doll's human-like features. Glass eyes are affixed to the doll's head, which is subsequently coated in layers of white pigment. The artisan then carves away the coating to once again reveal the beautiful glass eyes beneath. In doing so, decisions such as the positioning of the eyes and the degree to which the eyelids should be open must be made. These decisions determine the impression of gentleness or strength given by the doll. With color applied to the lips, the dolls take on the appearance of being warm and alive. By deliberately accentuating their features and placing dolls in human-like poses, the dolls immediately come to life. Artisans constantly search for beauty in their daily lives and even gain inspiration from the things they see. When you look into the eyes of these dolls and feel instantly charmed, as if fate has brought you together, that is because the artisans have truly given them life.

## Edo Ishogi Ningyo (Costumed Dolls)







Cutting brilliant paths for light  
in tinted glassware.

## Edo Kiriko (Cut Glassware)



Edo Kiriko (cut glass), born in the 19th century, is a craft that incorporates European glass cutting techniques. In addition to Edo (present day Tokyo), Satsuma (present day Kagoshima Prefecture) is also an area that is well known for the *kiriko* it produces. While the art of Satsuma Kiriko was lost for a period of time due to a series of historical events that affected the area, Edo Kiriko, an item widely used by the general public in everyday life, has been continuously passed down through the generations. Including the Nanako pattern, which resembles shimmering rows of fish eggs when light is reflected off of the glass, twenty or so timeless traditional patterns continue to light up the modern day dining table. While carrying on the traditional patterns, artisans are also eager to create pieces using original cutting patterns. In contrast to the blurring technique used in Satsuma Kiriko, which uses Irokise colored glass two to three millimeters thick, Edo Kiriko is formed by engraving fine lines into Irokise colored glass less than one millimeter thick to create its signature sharp, clear brilliance. Although Kiriko's high popularity stems from the way it reflects light like a kaleidoscope when seen from above, its simple beauty, created by intricate patterns engraved on to transparent glass, is also being rediscovered. Various types of vessels, for sake, beer, and wine are now being crafted, and artisans continue their pursuit to create glassware fit for everyday use featuring enduring designs.





*Hanetsuki*, or battledore, is a traditional game similar to badminton, which is played in the New Year to pray for sound health. Since the 17th century, there began a tradition of presenting the *hagoita* paddles, also known as battledores, to girls on their birth, and this led to the development of the *oshie* technique for making three-dimensional decorative designs using cloth padded with cotton. Hagoita decorated with scenes from Kabuki plays became popular among the general populace, and this led to the pursuit of hagoita that were beautiful to look at. Traditional motifs that have been passed down the ages are women in ceremonial kimono or Kabuki actors, which are based on traditional Japanese dance, Japanese paintings, and Kabuki plays. As it is difficult to express the dynamism of scenes from Japanese dance or Kabuki, the craftspeople work out their design by watching the performances. Using the trapezoidal paddle to its fullest, they take special care in creating facial expressions to convey dynamism and depth. Beauty and lively expressions are pursued in the faces that reflect the changes in the age. Products are also created in various sizes to match where they are displayed, such as on walls or tabletops, and they are very popular as New Year decorations and talismans celebrating the birth of girls or collectors' items for Kabuki fans.

Colorful battledores contain wishes for the healthy growth of girls.

## Edo Oshie Hagoita (Padded Battledores)





# Edo Katchu (Warrior Armor)

Robust suits of armor contain wishes for the healthy growth of boys

In the 8th through 12th centuries, when battles began to be fought on horses, large armor, known as oyoroi, came into use to protect the warrior's entire body from arrows. The design of Edo katchu is based on that oyoroi. Although armor is for protection, it also incorporates Japan's unique sense of aesthetics as a culmination of skills such as metalwork, lacquer work, and leather dyeing.

In the 17th through 19th centuries, a period notable for no major domestic wars occurring for more than 200 years, at the time of the Boy's Festival, which prays for the healthy growth of boys, parents began displaying oyoroi as a symbol of strength. The custom of displaying helmets, armor, and dolls dressed in them in May, when the festival is held, subsequently spread among the general populace.

Compared to the gorgeously decorated Kyoto katchu, Edo katchu reproduces oyoroi based on thorough study of historical evidence and features dignified designs that are simple and strong. As with real katchu, even the smallest of parts are made by hand, thus requiring more than 5,000 processes for its completion. The hopes of the craftspeople for children to sense the love of their parents even after they have grown up, are incorporated in the strong and eternal dignity of the katchu, which is passed on to them as a symbol of the eternal love of parents for their children.







Artistic rattan furniture are comfortable to use and admire in daily life.

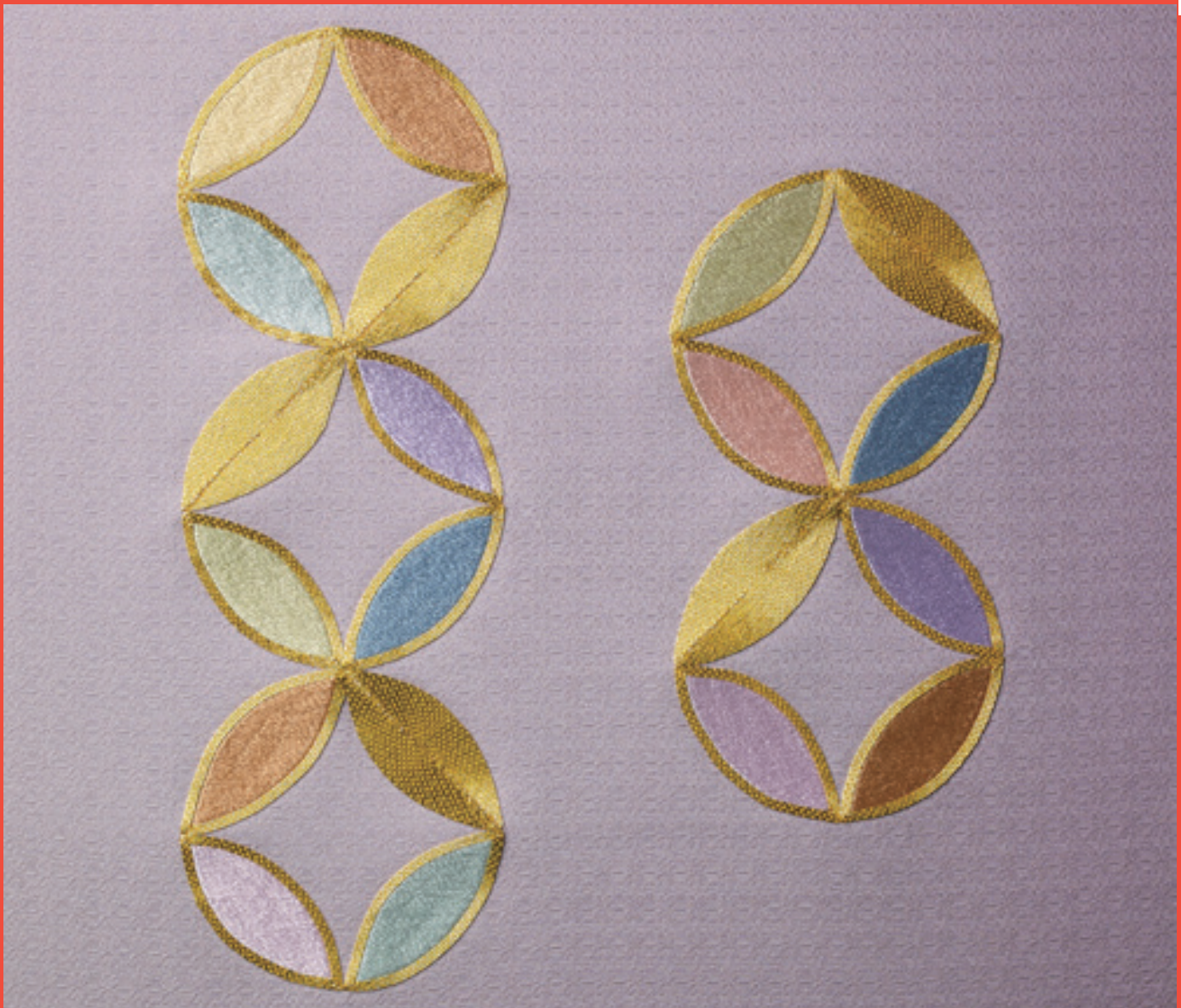
## Tokyo To-Kogei (Rattan Craft)



*To* (cane) is a plant of the family *Palmae*, mainly found in Southeast Asia. It has the characteristics of being supple and light and also robust. It is more suited than bamboo for work that involves rolling or binding, and has long been used for various products. Craftspeople declare that the material used determines the quality of Tokyo To-Kogei, and so they are particular about using Indonesian and Malaysian cane, which breathe well and are highly durable, and they let none of it go to waste. Of course, the artisan's high level of skills passed down the ages also ensure the quality of Tokyo To-Kogei. All assembly work is done manually and care is taken to ensure that no nails are left exposed. Craftsmen change braiding techniques in specific sections to achieve the perfect amount of tension and hardness, and make knots to prevent sliding. These skills show their determination to pursue functionality by making full use of the material. While meeting needs that change with the times, they also repair old cane products with thoughts that "handcrafting is work from the heart." The cool touch of stools, chairs and beds, as well as the soft pillows provide a comfort that is also winning the hearts of people around the world. It's said that in countries abroad there are those who enjoy the atmosphere created by To Kogei and use it in ways such as displaying bonsai.

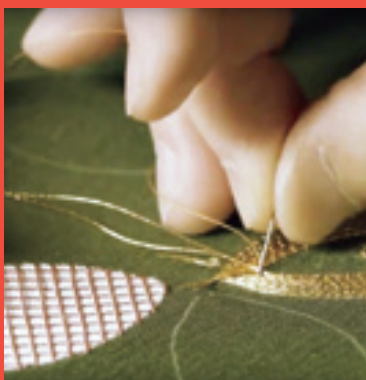






## Edo Shishu (Embroidery)

Embroidery with rich dimension and luster created by an impossible multitude of stitches.



The history of Japanese embroidery goes back some 1,400 years. It began with the embroidery of images of Buddha when Buddhism was introduced to Japan, and from the 17<sup>th</sup> century, embroidered kimono became popular among the townspeople. Edo Shishu became one of the major Japanese embroidery traditions, ranking alongside the Kyoto and Kaga styles. Production starts from hearing what a customer requires, after which the design, color, and other elements are determined. With, for example, almost 20 variants of red thread alone, craftspeople well versed in Japanese traditional colors can exhibit their sense of color. There are also Japan-specific stitching techniques, including *komanui* in which thread on a reel is unwound on the cloth and stitched into place with another thread called *toji-ito*. The craftspeople are taking on the challenge of applying these traditional techniques to new creations, refining their identity as artists. Created out of stitches that can number up to tens of thousands, the detailed works have a luster distinctive to silk, which cannot be seen in embroidery of other countries that use cotton thread. The silk threads shine differently depending on the angle, making Edo Shishu items highly valued as works of art that can be appreciated for an appeal that differs from paintings and pictures.



# Edo Moku-Chokoku (Woodcarving)

Carving not the wood,  
but to expose the figure  
that lies in the wood.



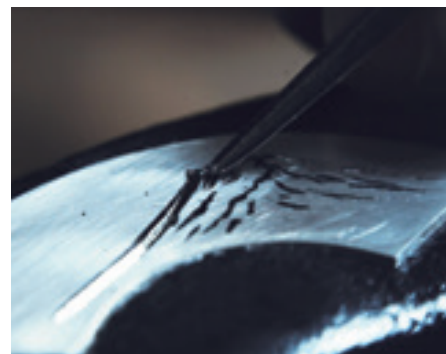
A dragon about to soar high in the sky, and a lion filled with life and movement. Characterized by rich expressions and precise carvings, Japanese woodcarving has given birth to historical works of art, including the World Heritage-listed Yomeimon Gate of the Nikko Toshogu Shrine. Although sculptors of Buddhist statues use knives and chisels, the reason why Edo Moku-chokoku (woodcarving) craftspeople do not use knives is because their roots can be traced to the carpentry trade. The techniques of Edo Moku-chokoku were refined as the craft developed from architectural ornaments on pillars and *ranma* (ornately carved transom windows) for shrines and temples, to wooden decorations for *dashi* (floats) and *mikoshi* (portable shrines) used during festivals. By selectively using several hundred chisels, the artisans create dimension to portray branches in the back, birds about to fly out from the front, and human interaction through eyes locking together. From the perspectives of the Edo Moku-chokoku artisans, only amateurs sand their crafts. The Edo Moku-chokoku carver deliberately leaves the traces of chisel cuttings to bring out the sheen of the wood. The highly-skilled craftspeople value the elegant finished look of their work rather than detailed craftsmanship, with care given, for instance, to highlight the nose of dragons, and for human figures, the eyes and mouth. The wooden carvings made from robust wood will last a century or two, and possess a majesty that will make you want to bow before it.





Elements of Japanese style paintings  
on a metal canvas.

## Tokyo Chokin (Metal Engraving)



Chokin (metal engraving) techniques, once used in samurai swords and armor, evolved around the 18th century when the *katakiri-chokoku* technique arose to reproduce the brush strokes of Japanese paintings in metal engravings. This led to its application in the production of everyday items for the general public, including *kiseru* (thin tobacco pipes) and *netsuke* (miniature sculptures). It was highly acclaimed at the Nuremberg 1885 international exhibition held in Germany. *Katakiri-chokoku* is a Japanese engraving technique that uses only one side of a chisel to strike the metal surface at an angle, to achieve both deep and shallow depths. This difference in depth creates shadows, making it possible to re-create the brushstroke effects found in Japanese paintings. The beauty of Japanese paintings is also pursued through designs that boldly leave spaces not engraved and use a limited number of colors. The finished product is a fusion of different art genres—Japanese paintings and metal engraving—achieving the beauty sought by the artisans. Changes in the metal texture over time add depth, with items such as rings, pendants, *obidome* (ornament for an *obi*), and metal cigarette lighters long-treasured by many. Valuing relationships with their customers, the craftspeople not only accept custom orders but also provide lifetime repair services.



# Tokyo Uchihamono (Hand-Forged Blades)

Even scissors are forged  
in the same manner as  
Japanese swords.



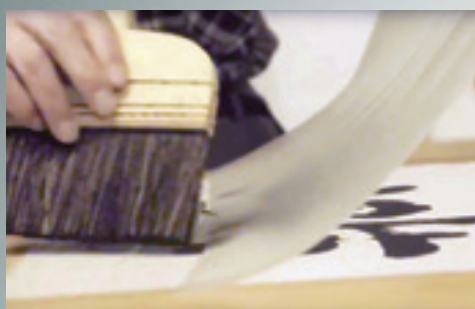
Tokyo Uchi-hamono has its roots in Japanese sword-making tradition. When the Japanese government issued an edict banning the wearing of swords in 1871, many swordsmiths were forced to change their careers and produce knives and other bladed tools to be used for business and household purposes. Carrying on the skills honed by the swordsmiths, Tokyo Uchi-hamono uses the highest-grade of *yasuki-hagane* steel, a steel unique to Japan, which is used in Japanese swords. The long-lasting sharp edge, crack resistance and other features of Tokyo Uchi-hamono blades owe largely to materials such as this yasuki-hagane steel that has impurities drawn out to all possible limits. Kitchen knives and scissors are manufactured by heating the steels to 1,000°C and hammering them to achieve beautiful shapes and a brilliant sheen. While many European blade tools require the application of some pressure for cutting, Tokyo Uchi-hamono cooking knives can slice with little force. This is similar to Japanese swords that require just the slightest touch. Tokyo Uchi-hamono scissors can also precisely cut through each thread of fabric. These products can be used for a lifetime, with a light weight and beauty that promises comfort, said to last a hundred years.







# Edo Hyogu (Scroll Mountings)



Why centuries-old  
calligraphy and art  
retain their beauty even  
today.

Centuries old calligraphic works are beautifully preserved today because the original piece of brushwork on paper (*honshi*) was reinforced with *kireji* fabric and Japanese *washi* paper mountings, called *hyogu*. Upon receiving an order from a calligrapher or painter, the craftsperson will use imagination to envision what colors and patterns would highlight the work. As the *kireji* is crucial to successfully bringing out the atmosphere of the work, the texture and color tones of the fabric will be determined after several interactions with the client to learn about their tastes or lifestyle. To prevent the degradation of *honshi*, special *washi*, which has been preserved for 5 to 10 years to soften, is pasted on the back of the work. Of course, as each piece of work is one of a kind, no failure is allowed. The artisans have much self-respect for their work, and detest negligence in parts that are not visible. And they never allow others to touch their tools because they are the most important things in their lives. With such firm pride, they gain literacy in all things from Japanese paintings to calligraphy, art prints and the tea ceremony, and treasure them throughout their lives. Recently, they have been taking on orders for works that have predetermined combinations and those sent from abroad, but the artisans never lose their commitment to placing value on dialogue with the customer to highlight the work and to enhance its preservation.





## Music made from the ensemble of performer and craftsperson.

Shamisen, a Japanese traditional musical instrument with over 400 years of history, can broadly be categorized into three types according to their size and genre of music. The first type is *bosozaō* (slim-neck type), the original shamisen and typically played as an accompaniment to long epic songs called *nagauta*; the second is *chuzao* (medium-neck type), commonly performed for folk songs and accompanying *koto* (Japanese zither) music for local songs called *jiuta*; and the third type is *futozaō* (thick-neck type), represented



by the Tsugaru shamisen of the Tsugaru region and played for *gidayu*, narrative music for Japanese puppet plays. For all types, the shamisen's neck is central to the quality of the instrument's sound. Compared to the Kansai region where different craftspeople are involved in making the instrument's neck, for Tokyo Shamisen, this entire process is done by one artisan. This allows them to tailor the shamisen to the player's needs. Shamisen necks made of red sandalwood from India are considered to be of the highest quality, with the hard wood resulting in an excellent sound. However, a player needs high proficiency to produce the sound desired when playing a shamisen with a neck made of hard wood. For this reason, the craftsperson selects the material after assessing how capable the player is. They then make the shamisen while considering how to best allow the player to play it in the way they desire, and to make it one that can be used for many years through periodic repairs. Shamisen performers have full trust in the custom-crafted shamisen, and in recent years there has been an increase in recycling activities to repair and sell used shamisen to beginner-level learners at affordable prices.



## Tokyo Shamisen (Three-Stringed Musical Instrument)





# Edo Fude (Handmade Calligraphy Brushes)

Comfortable writing tools that supported  
the highest literacy rate in the world.

Edo Fude (brushes) developed as education and the arts spread among the general populace in the 17th through 19th centuries. The majority of Edo Fude are custom-made. The brush-making technique in which the lengths of the brush hairs are precisely aligned down to the millimeter has made Edo Fude a product sought after by famous calligraphers and painters. It is not rare for orders to be received from China or Korea, which are renowned for their production of brushes. The hair for the brushes is taken from animals such as goats, horses, and tanuki raccoon dogs because their hair can hold an optimal amount of Japanese ink or paints. The best suited brush hair is selected by considering the user's handwriting, writing pressure, and the purpose of writing. The hair seldom falls out because it is firmly bound to the brush handle. And as the hairs wear out evenly as pressure is applied, the brushes are comfortable to use. Edo Fude not only holds ink well, but can also create unique brushstrokes with various contrasts and feathery appearances, allowing artists to express their individuality. Of the nearly 30 processes involved in brush-making, craftspeople give utmost importance to the process in which a metal comb is used to comb the hairs. This meticulous combing removes twisted or bent hair, leaving only good quality hair for the brush. A comb with worn out teeth is a craftspeople's badge of honor, serving as a testament to the enormous time and energy that went into the completion of a brush.





# Tokyo Mujizome (Plain Dyeing)



*Mujizome* (plain dyeing) is the most basic form of dyeing, in which a roll of white fabric approximately 13 meters in length is dyed in the color of the customer's liking. Color samples total 170, including nuanced shades of color, making it no easy task to reproduce the exact color ordered on textiles that come in a variety of thicknesses and woven patterns. Without a blueprint to serve as a guide, craftspeople mix dyes of five basic colors to attain the ideal color. As the process requires a heightened sense of color, the artisans are careful of their health. They also do not receive guests while working in order to maintain their concentration. Tracing its origin to *kusakizome*, the ancient art of dyeing using mainly plants, mujizome can be regarded as a skill to project the colors existing in nature into clothing. The natural colors feature elegance and have long-lasting appeal. As mujizome fabric can be re-dyed, many customers change the color of their kimono to be what they feel is more age appropriate. In addition to tailor-made dyeing, the craftspeople are using their artistic sensibilities to make scarves and shawls. They are popular for their colors that go well with any kind of western apparel.



All the desired colors  
existed in nature.





Japanese harps tuned to the performer.  
Each is unique in the world.



## Tokyo Koto (Japanese Harp)

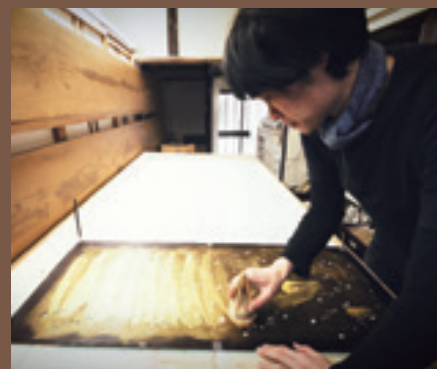
Around the 18th century, the prototype of Tokyo koto, a traditional Japanese musical instrument, was created; since then, improvements were made along with the changing times. The beautiful sound and resonance that characterize Tokyo koto were realized by altering the length, thickness, and curvature of the instrument to enhance the sound volume, as well as by increasing the size of *kotozume* (finger plectrums) to make the sound clearer. An excellent Tokyo koto is one that lives up to the expectations of craftspeople, the players, and the music stores standing in between. Based on the order, the craftsman will begin making the koto so that it can produce the sound desired, which takes into consideration the proficiency and level of the performer. The work of shaping the body of a koto, called *kora* (shell), is a very important part of the production process as it influences the sound quality. Paulownia wood, used to make the kora, varies in hardness and structure depending on its place of origin and the environment in which it was grown. Taking this into consideration, the craftsperson whittles the inner side of the body while adjusting its thickness. Then, by considering the wood's age rings and end grain, they finish the product to make the best of the beauty of the wood grain. Such craftsmanship and experience is poured into the making of Tokyo koto, for a unique sound produced in collaboration between craftspeople and performers.





# Edo Karakami (Handcrafted Decorative Paper)

Lifestyles may change,  
but the aesthetics lives on.



Edo Karakami developed as decorations for *fusuma* sliding doors in Japanese houses. Its origins can be traced to decorations for paper or scrolls used to write Buddhist scriptures and Japanese *waka* poems. The skills to make these decorations were honed over long years of history. Applications of Edo Karakami are now broadening, from fusuma to wall-paper and tapestries. Several craftspeople, each with a specialized skill, take part in the production of Edo Karakami to express a variety of patterns on Japanese traditional paper known as *washi*. These include the *karakami-shi* artisan who prints the engraved woodcut patterns onto washi using a hand-pressed woodblock printing method, the *sunago-shi* craftsperson who adds gold leaf and silver leaf and these in powder form, and the *sarasa-shi* master who adapts the stencil-dyeing method for fabrics to print patterns on paper. Patterns depicting townspeople culture feature magnanimity and dynamism, while traditional motifs such as plants and flowers and sea waves are designs that are universal and sophisticated. The aesthetic sense of Edo blends into modern spaces, and the warm texture of washi brings a sense of calm. Houses installed with Edo Karakami-fusuma are very popular in Tokyo, and they are also increasingly being used in hotels and other facilities. In addition, in order to spread the charms of this traditional Japanese paper, Edo Karakami is also being used for envelopes and other writing items

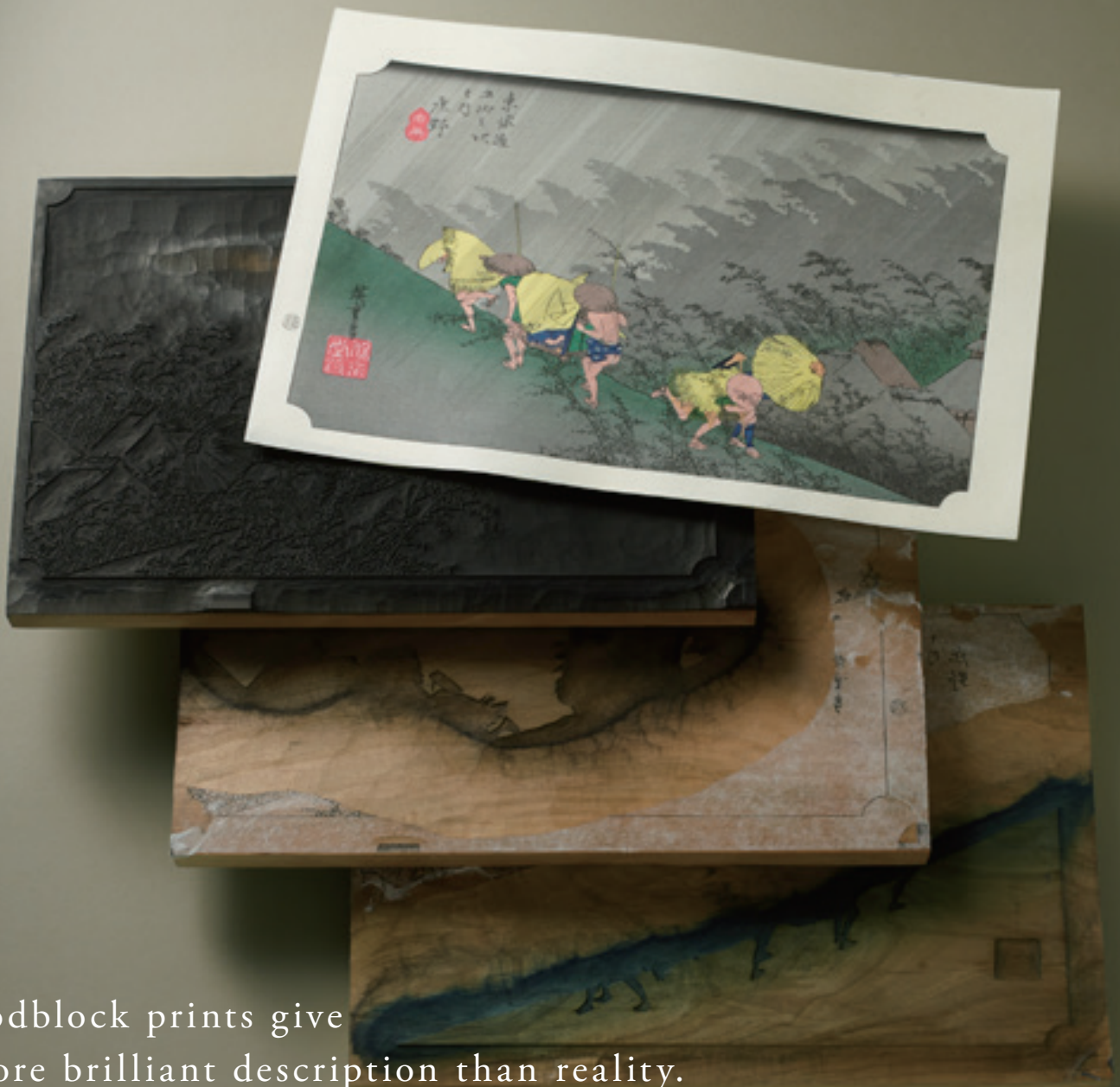




# Edo Mokuhanga (Woodblock Prints)



Japanese woodblock printing or *Mokuhanga* techniques were cultivated over a period of about 1,200 years to flourish with the establishment of Ukiyo-e in the 17th century. Mokuhanga techniques made it possible for paintings by famous artists such as Katsushika Hokusai and Utagawa Hiroshige to be carved on to woodblocks and then printed on to paper. The prints were widely distributed to become a leading form of Edo's popular culture. As a symbol of Japonisme, Ukiyo-e are very popular overseas, and due to this, many inexpensive machine printed reproductions are circulated. However, one can only come to know the true appeal of Ukiyo-e through prints made using the Edo Mokuhanga techniques that have continued to produce genuine Ukiyo-e. The printing process is carried out through the division of labor between *horishi* (carvers) and *surishi* (printers). And the highest quality washi, Japanese traditional paper, is used. The horishi carves woodblocks that correspond to each color, making it possible to produce prints using 100 or more colors. Since the appearance of pigment differs when applied to washi, the surishi carefully assesses the texture of the paper, which changes according to the temperature and humidity, as they apply layers of color. Through the surishi's sophisticated sense of color and skilled adjustment of pressure applied to the baren rubbing pad to transfer pigment to the paper, producing subtle gradation of color, the charm of Ukiyo-e that depict "a sense of realism more vivid than reality" is reproduced for the first time.



Woodblock prints give  
a more brilliant description than reality.



# Tokyo Shippo (Cloisonné Enamelware)

Shippo-yaki (cloisonné enamelware) is a brightly-colored craft made by firing colored glaze on a metal surface at high temperatures. From the 17th through the 19th century, the skills of Shippo-shi (master cloisonné artisans) who worked exclusively for the Tokugawa Shogunate were closely guarded. In the latter half of the 19th



century, Western techniques were introduced to make the government's medals of honor, and this evolved into Tokyo Shippo. Highly acclaimed for their distinct color boundaries, and elaborate, vividly colored designs, the Shippo-yaki technique has a wide range of applications, including for school badges and honorary decorations. Currently, cloisonné ware using vitreous enamel are not actively produced abroad, so you could say that Shippo-yaki is a uniquely Japanese technique. Tokyo Shippo craftspeople favor the use of glass materials because the beautiful texture and transparent finish cannot be obtained otherwise. The patterns on the cloisonné enamelware are created by firing overglazes one at a time by color and polishing the surface. The masterful combination of transparent and opaque glazes gives depth to the surface, and the resulting Shippo ware has a composed luster. Tokyo Shippo is applied for the creation of a variety of items including tiepins, cuff links, pierced earrings, pendants, and necklaces. Custom-made ukiyoe design-inspired Shippo-yaki is also possible.



A skill used to make medals of honor  
is now applied to make everyday accessories.





Only handwork could produce  
the feel of this brush.



## Tokyo Teue Brush (Handmade Brushes)



Brushes were introduced from the West along with Japan's modernization effort. They developed into a wide range of products, including clothes brushes, shoe brushes, and body brushes. While many of them are now machine-made, Tokyo Teue Brush continues the tradition of inserting the bristles by hand. The bristles of animals, such as horses and pigs, and plant fibers are used for the brushes. As the first step in brush-making, the bristles are sorted to remove all but those of the highest quality. The craftspeople's skills are especially demonstrated in the next stage: setting the bristles. The brush maker carefully selects bristles that differ in flexibility and resilience depending on what part of the body they come from, such as the belly and the base of the tail. The artisan takes and inserts the perfect amount in the holes, guided intuitively by the feel of the bristles in their hand, while considering the overall balance. They arrived at how many bristles need to be inserted in a hole after many attempts. This results in large differences from brushes made by machines, including a durability in which the bristles fall out less. Clothes brushes made of horse hair keep delicate materials such as cashmere and kimono fabric lustrous and do not damage them. Thin, soft goat hair is used for brushes that touch the skin directly, providing a special sensation of being gently embraced. With the desire to produce brushes that suit the times, the craftspeople are constantly furthering their research in pursuit of the ultimate bristles.



The sophisticated shapes  
can even change the taste of water.



## Edo Garasu (Glassware)



Combining skills imported from China and Europe, and Japanese traditional skills, Edo Garasu (glassware) made its appearance in the early 18th century. By the late 19th century, the craft reached heights of prosperity as a local industry of Tokyo. Compared to the automated, large-scale production that prevailed overseas, Japan's industry was mainly based on domestic demand, and Edo Garasu flourished by pursuing small-scale production of a wide variety of products. That the Edo Garasu masters today can make any original product just as requested and offer them at reasonable prices, even though they are produced in small quantities, owes to their experience and achievements in producing wares in a wide array of shapes. While the number of glass factories in Europe is undergoing a steady decline in recent years, Tokyo is increasingly being recognized around the world as one of Japan's leading glass production centers. The Edo Garasu tumblers and wine glasses, with rims that are pleasant to sip from, have gained high reputations. Guinomi and other glasses to drink sake, which has come into the limelight together with the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage-registered washoku (traditional Japanese cuisine), also have calculated shapes to enhance taste and flavor. The skills of the Edo Garasu masters who are trained to maintain high-quality craftsmanship have gained high acclaim on par with those of top-class European crystal brands.





# Edo Tegaki Chochin (Hand-Painted Paper Lanterns)

The paper covered *chochin* lantern projects a warm ambience with its faint glow of candlelight. It is said that its history goes back to the 16th century, and later on, the original model of the current collapsible chochin was born by covering a round frame of narrow strips of bamboo with paper. Between the 17th and 19th centuries, chochin became an indispensable lighting item among the general populace. Edo Tegaki Chochin (hand-painted lantern) carries on the method of drawing traditional font types and family crests (*kamon*) on the surface. *Kamon* is a design that nobles, samurai, and merchants put on their ornaments and armor to indicate their family lineages and ancestries, similar to the crests used by European nobility and knights. There are detailed rules for each *kamon* including the order the brushstrokes must follow. Skilled craftsmen can paint any complicated *kamon* freehand, without disturbing the “Edo pattern” in which characters and *kamon* are drawn in a perfect balance. Recently, this sophisticated craftsmanship is being applied to non-conventional drawings such as mascots, logos, and foreign names written in phonetic-equivalent Japanese characters. Edo Tegaki Chochin is easily portable when folded, and is visually impactful when expanded. This makes for a great souvenir that can be used as a lampshade or to decorate a room.



Handpainted lanterns  
become the family symbol.



Magic turning a gloomy rainy day  
into a joyful experience.

## Tokyo Yogasa (Tokyo Umbrella)



It is said that western-style umbrellas captured the attention of the public when they were brought into Japan by Commodore Matthew Perry who sailed into Uraga in 1854 to sign the US-Japan Treaty of Peace and Amity. In 1872, umbrella manufacturing companies were formed and craftspeople in Tokyo began to handcraft Tokyo Yogasa (umbrella) in full-scale. The umbrellas are produced through a division of labor, with specialists making ribs, handles, and fabric, respectively, and craftspeople who assemble them. Made with uncompromising and painstaking craftsmanship, sophisticated sewing skills unique to Tokyo, which were born in the pursuit of a uniform, balanced shape, and the craftsperson's careful attention to enhancing user comfort, are found throughout the umbrella. Combining decorative beauty and functionality, Tokyo Yogasa umbrella serves an important role as an umbrella for rain and a parasol on sunny days. Their use will turn a gloomy mood created by the weather into joy and enrich the heart.





# Tokyo Tebori Insho (Hand-Carved Seals)

In daily life and at milestones in life, "seals" have been closely related to the social life of Japanese people as a "one and only" proof of one's rights, obligations, and ownership. Tokyo Hand-Carved Seals, which have been produced since the Edo period, require different techniques such as character design, lettering, and rough engraving, all of which are carried out by a single craftsman. Only a handful of craftsmen in Tokyo are able to carve with the precision of a single hair. The seals are completed through a series of elaborate and tedious processes, and the skill of the craftsman shines through in many places. In this day and age when seals are manufactured in large quantities, the unparalleled skill of these craftsmen can be described as a "one and only" work of art that can never be imitated by machines. The tradition of beautiful Tokyo Hand-Carved Seals will continue to be handed down with the passion of our craftsmen.

All processes are for the  
"one and only".





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