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THE COLORS OF JAPAN

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THEME FOR **OCTOBER:**
THE COLORS OF JAPAN

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ON THE COVER
The Colors of Japan

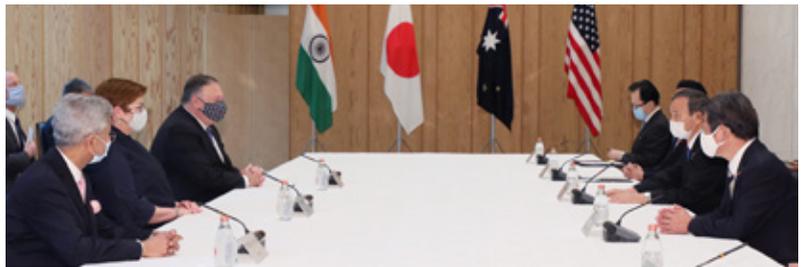
EDITORS’ NOTE
Japanese names in this publication are written in Japanese order: family name first, personal name last.

COURTESY CALL ON PRIME MINISTER SUGA BY AUSTRALIAN FOREIGN MINISTER, INDIAN EXTERNAL AFFAIRS MINISTER AND U.S. SECRETARY OF STATE

ON October 6, Mr. Suga Yoshihide, Prime Minister of Japan, received a courtesy call from Senator the Hon Marise Payne, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Commonwealth of Australia, H.E. Dr. Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, External Affairs Minister of India, and The Honorable Mike Pompeo, Secretary of State of the United States, who are visiting Japan to attend the Japan-Australia-India-U.S. Foreign Ministers' Meeting. The overview of the courtesy call is as follows.

Mr. Motegi Toshimitsu, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Sakai Manabu, Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary, Mr. Adachi Masashi, Special Advisor to the Prime Minister and others attended the courtesy call.

After welcoming the visit by foreign ministers from the three countries, Prime Minister Suga stated that various challenges facing the international society after the outbreak and spread of COVID-19 make it all the more necessary to further deepen ties with many more countries which share the vision of "Free and Open Indo-Pacific" and build up



Photographs of the Prime Minister receiving the courtesy call

concrete cooperation with them.

Foreign ministers from the three countries congratulated Prime Minister Suga on his appointment and agreed to the importance of reinforcing a rules-based, free and open international order through cooperation among Japan, Australia, India and the United States as partners shar-

ing fundamental values. They confirmed further collaboration among the four nations for the peace and stability in the region.

In addition, Prime Minister Suga expressed his expectation for the four ministers to have free and candid discussions at the Japan-Australia-India-U.S. Foreign Ministers' Meeting.



The Colors of Japan

The colors that exist in nature and which change with the passing seasons stir a variety of emotions in Japanese people. In this month's Feature, we introduce some of the quintessential colors of Japan—indigo, the reds and yellows of maples in autumn, the light of the moon, *makie* lacquerware and more. We also look at some of the ways in which the feelings such colors engender have been and continue to be expressed in arts, crafts and literature, as traditions are protected and handed down.

A sixteenth-century *makie* screen restored using original techniques by Shimode Yutaro
Photo: Courtesy of Shimode Yutaro

Dyeing by Natural Color



Shimura Yoko (left) and mother Fukumi
© Fukumi Shimura Inc., by Takashima Katsuo

SHIMURA Fukumi is a dyeing and weaving artist who dyes silk thread with natural plant materials to create hand-woven kimonos, tapestries and other works. In addition to being recognized as a holder of Important Intangible Cultural Properties, also known as a Living National Treasure, she has received numerous awards, including the Order of Culture¹. We spoke with her daughter, Shimura Yoko, who has inherited her mother's techniques and ideas.

You create textiles using threads made from plant-based dyes. Can you tell us about their allure?

For our plant-based dye work, thread is taken from silkworm cocoons and immersed in a dye extracted from plants. These threads are then submerged in water mixed with lye made from the ash of burned wood or other materials to set the color. We can experience the mysteries and beauty of nature through plant-based dyes made only from natural materials. All the colors created by this process are excellent. My mother, Fukumi, expresses this by saying that we, “humbly receive color from plants.” It is said that the allure of plant-based dyes is the fact that the life taken from living plants is reclaimed as a beautiful color.

I think that nowadays, there are fewer and fewer countries around the world where textiles dyed with plant-based dyes are still passed on as traditional techniques as in Japan. Upon seeing the brilliantly colored kimono when coming to tour our atelier, the CEO of a famous European clothing brand asked how we printed the designs on our textiles. It seems he didn't believe it was possible to express detailed *kasuri*² (ikat) patterns with plant-based dyes.

What color do you particularly treasure?

Indigo. Indigo is one of the colors that represents Japan, and has been loved by Japanese people since ancient times. My grandmother says that there is nothing that makes a Japanese woman more beautiful than an indigo-dyed kimono, and she always wore a kimono with an indigo *kasuri* pattern. The reason I came to enter the dyeing world is that I was fascinated by the indigo dye that my mother had worked with for many years.

It is possible also to create a green color from indigo. In fact, it is not possible to dye fabric with a beautiful green color from the green leaves of

plants. The color green is created by combining indigo with a yellow color. Thread is dyed with a brilliant green color by immersing thread dyed yellow by a type of grass called *kariyasu* (*Miscanthus tinctorius*) in an indigo dye vat.

Purple is another one of my favorite colors. Purple has had noble connotations since ancient times, reflected in the name Murasaki Shikibu (*Murasaki* means “purple”), the author of *The Tale of Genji*, which was written in the eleventh century. Purple color is made by using a dye extracted from the root (*shikon*) of the *murasaki* plant (*lithospermum purpurocaeruleum*), which blooms with lovely white flowers. I think that people appear more elegant when wearing a kimono dyed from shikon.

Colors dyed from plant-based dyes do not fade, but rather change as time passes. The colors subtly increase in depth and the kimono begins to show a distinct character. It is as if the colors are living.

Tell us about the expressions characteristic of plant-based dyes and how they have been handed down.

We were once requested to make a kimono dyed using a cherry blossom tree cherished by a deceased relative that had to be cut down from the garden. Cherry blossom pink dye is extracted not from the cherry blossom petals, but from the trunk and branches that have been finely cut. The life of the cherry blossom tree was resurrected by being made into a pale rose color kimono, and has been passed down in the family along with its memories. Being able to see this circle of life through color is precisely because of plant-based dyes.

In 2013, we established an arts school in Kyoto. We offer education that fosters the sensibilities necessary to express oneself through textile arts by having students acquire not just the techniques of dyeing and weaving, but also through learning



Autumn haze (1958) (made by Shimura Fukumi)
Dye: indigo
© Fukumi Shimura Inc., by Shikata Kunihiro



*Dream of Zenmyo*ⁱⁱⁱ (2009)
(made by Shimura Yoko)
Dyes: *shikon*, indigo,
and *kariyasu*
© Fukumi Shimura Inc.,
by Takayama Hiroshi

about philosophy, literature, and by getting in touch with nature. At the graduation ceremony, everyone wears a kimono that they wove themselves using thread that they dyed themselves. Since 2016, we have been teaching classes four times a year to fourth year students in a primary school in Kyoto where we dye fabric using seasonal plants, such as cherry blossoms and chestnuts. In addition to dyeing, we have the children give the colors a name of their own. We will continue to pass on the traditions and spirit of plant-based dyes to the next generation through these kinds of activities. 

Interview by SAWAJI OSAMU

- i The Order of Culture is awarded to individuals who have made outstanding contributions to Japanese culture.
- ii *Kasuri* are textiles that show patterns through weaving with threads that have been separately dyed beforehand
- iii Zenmyo is the name of a woman transformed into a dragon who appears in the thirteenth-century Buddhist (Kegon) story and picture scroll *Legends of the Kegon Sect*.

The Colors of Fall Captured in Waka Poetry

The colors of the autumn leaves and the moon are typical subjects in the classical poetry of Japan known as “*waka*.”

SANO KENTARO

Colors of autumn leaves:
Image from the scene of
Harumichi no Tsuraki's *waka*

WAKA is a form of Japanese classical poetry in which the poems generally consist of 31 syllables, divided into five parts with five, seven, five, seven and seven (5-7-5-7-7) syllables in each. The oldest anthology of *waka* poems—the *Manyōshū* (“Collection of Myriad [Ten Thousand] Leaves”)—is said to have been compiled from around the second half of

the seventh century, and contains a wide assortment of *waka*, ranging from poems composed by emperors to those composed by common people. *Waka* poetry spans over 1,300 years.

In the introduction to the *Kokin Wakashū* (“Collection of Ancient and Modern Poetry”), which was compiled at the beginning of the tenth century, it says that “the seeds in people’s minds grow into

tens of thousands of leafy words, and that is the essence of *waka*.²¹ The distinctive character of *waka* is that they express the beauty of nature as it changes with the seasons, combined with the feelings of the poets. The poems handle topics such as the emotions experienced in life and love, employing various motifs from the natural world—what the Japanese call *kacho-fugetsu* (literally, “flowers, birds, wind, moon”)—to express their emotions. In particular, many *waka* are composed on the subtle changes in the colors of the leaves and the moon, both of which are symbols of autumn. Here, we introduce two *waka* poems that describe the colors of autumn leaves and the light of the moon (pages 10-11), taken from *Hyakunin Isshu* (see the framed article on page 11).

*Yamagawa ni
kaze no kakataru
shigarami wa
nagaremo aenu
momiji narikeri*

—Harumichi no Tsuraki [?-920], *Hyakunin Isshu* 32

The weir that the wind
has flung across
the mountain brook
is made of autumn’s
richly colored leaves.

—Trans. by Peter MacMillan, *One Hundred Poets, One Poem Each*

Yamagawa (mountain river) is a type of fast-flowing river or brook found in the valleys between mountains. *Shigarami* (weir) is a kind of fence-shaped barrier that is installed across a river by driving in stakes between the banks and then joining them horizontally using the tied-together branches of trees or bamboo. The premise of the poem is that what the poet at first took to be a colorful weir built across the mountain brook was actually a collection of richly colored autumn leaves gathered across the river by the autumn wind. The source of this poem is the *Kokin wakashu*.

Peter MacMillan, who wrote the English translation featured here, explains his interpretation of the appeal of this poem as follows:

“From ancient times the Japanese have loved the reds and yellows of the autumn maples. In the *One Hundred Poets, One Poem Each*, one of the most famous poems is poem 17. This poem begins with the word *chihayafuru*ⁱⁱ which gave the title to a famous manga of the same name. The word *chihayafuru* is a pillow word used in tandem with the word ‘god’ or ‘gods.’ It is thought to mean ‘awe-inspiring’ or ‘raging.’ I have translated it as ‘the raging gods.’ The poem depicts the maple leaves tie-dyeing the water in autumnal colors and states that nothing as beautiful has been seen since the age of the raging gods of ancient times. The maples are not only beautiful but are also often associated with the gods.

“In another poemⁱⁱⁱ the poet states that as he has nothing to offer the gods he will offer the beautiful brocade of the maples. Such is the sublime beauty of the maple leaves of autumn—they are a fitting gift even for the gods! In the poem by Harumichi no Tsuraki, the poet plays on the great beauty of the maples to end with a marvelous surprise: The weir that we believed the poet to be writing about in fact turns out to be made of the beautiful and much-loved maple leaves of autumn. There are many poems about the maples, so I sometimes change the wording. Sometimes I translate the maples of autumn as ‘brocade’ and sometimes, as here, as ‘richly colored leaves.’”

The *kotobagaki*, or foreword, to this poem in the *Kokin wakashu* says that the poet composed the *waka* on his way along a mountain road heading from Kyoto to a neighboring province. (Omi Province, present day Shiga Prefecture). 

i The *kana* preface to the *Kokin wakashu*, the translation from the Japanese-English Bilingual Corpus of Wikipedia’s Kyoto Articles/the National Institute of Information and Communications Technology (NICT) https://alaginrc.nict.go.jp/WikiCorpus/index_E.html

ii Such beauty unheard of/even in the age of the raging gods—/the Tatsuta River/ tie-dyeing its waters/in autumnal colors.

Translation by Peter MacMillan, *One Hundred Poets, One Poem Each*

iii On this journey/I have no streamers to offer up./Instead, dear gods, if it pleases you,/may you take this maple brocade/of Mount Tamuke’s colors.

Translation by Peter MacMillan, *One Hundred Poets, One Poem Each*

The Light of the Moon

SANO KENTARO

*Akikaze ni
tanabiku kumono
taema yori
moreizuru tsukino
kageno sayakesa*

—Fujiwara no Akisuke (1090-1155),
Hyakunin Isshu 79

Autumn breezes blow
long trailing clouds.
Through a break,
the moonlight—
so clear, so bright.

—Trans. by Peter MacMillan,
One Hundred Poets, One Poem Each

In autumn, the air is clear and the moonlight (described as “*tsukino kage*” in *waka* or Japanese classical poetry) shines brightly. In writing the Japanese poem above, Fujiwara no Akisuke expresses the purity and crispness of moonlight streaming from a break in the clouds on a breezy autumn night.

According to the translator Peter MacMillan, “The Japanese have been enamored with the moon since ancient times. They are particularly fond of the autumn moon, which is the subject of this poem. However, the Japanese use of *waka* poetry extended beyond writing about the moon in autumn, taking in love, farewells, and every other aspect of the

Japanese psyche. There are, of course, many poems about the full moon, but there are also poems written about the crescent moon or a playful moon peeking out from a veil of clouds, or even the moon that is hidden, which we must imagine in our hearts. This love of the moon is one of the unique characteristics of Japanese culture.

“In this poem, a substantive ending expresses the joy at suddenly seeing the moon emerge from the clouds; I use a dash to express this in the English translation. It is difficult to translate the sense of the Japanese word *sayakesa* into English. I have translated it as “so clear, so bright” but in Japanese it has connotations of elegant spiritual purity as well.

“Because there are countless descriptions of the moon in classical Japanese literature, I sometimes feel that instead of being called the “Land of the Rising Sun,” Japan should be called the ‘Land of the Beautiful Moon.’” 

An image of the moon appearing from behind the clouds as in the poem by Fujiwara no Akisuke



Hyakunin Isshu (One Hundred Poets, One Poem Each)

In his later life, medieval poet Fujiwara no Teika (also known as Fujiwara no Sadaie) selected one poem by each of 100 celebrated poets and compiled the *One Hundred Poets, One Poem Each (Hyakunin Isshu)*, the most popular anthology of *waka* in Japan.* This collection of poems—also referred to as the *Ogura Hyakunin Isshu*—is said to have been selected by Teika at a retreat at the foot of Mount Ogura in Kyoto. The poems in the collection were turned into a set of *karuta* playing cards that divides the *waka* into the first part, or *kaminoku* (the first three lines with a 5-7-5 syllable pattern), and the second part, or *shimonoku* (the last two lines with a 7-7 syllable pattern). As the first part of the poem (the *yomifuda* or “reading card,” with the whole poem on it) is read aloud, players compete with each other to find the matching ending of the poem (*torifuda* card). Even today this card game is still played by many people.

Peter MacMillan is one of many fascinated by the *Hyakunin Isshu*. He has published *One Hundred Poets, One Poem Each* and has also produced an English version of *Hyakunin Isshu karuta* titled *WHACK A WAKA*. Based on his strong belief that the *Hyakunin Isshu* represents the heart of the Japanese people, MacMillan also organizes *karuta* competitions around the world and hopes that the card game will one day become an Olympic event. (See the February 2018 issue of *Highlighting JAPAN*.)

* The Japanese anthologies of *waka* poetry include the oldest anthology, the *Manyoshu*, compiled in the middle of the eighth century; the twenty-one *Chokusen wakashu*, and private collections of *waka* poems compiled by a single editor (poet). *Chokusen wakashu* are anthologies of superior *waka* poems produced at the Japanese court collected by imperial command in a series of compilations such as *Kokin wakashu* and *Shin kokin wakashu*, and dating from the early tenth century to the middle of the fifteenth century.



Hyakunin Isshu karuta: yomifuda card (right) and torifuda card.

Photo: The Japan Journal

THE GOLDEN RICE FIELDS OF OWARABI

Local farmers and volunteers are working together to preserve the iconic rice terraces of Owarabi in Yamanobe, Yamagata Prefecture, which in autumn turn a magnificent, *kogane-iro* gold.

SASAKI TAKASHI

TOHOKU is a rice-growing area representative of Japan. Vast plains covered in fields spread across the countryside, and the mountainous areas are dotted with terraced rice paddies on reclaimed slopes. They shine green in the spring when the rice is planted, and turn a golden color in the fall harvest season. *Kogane-iro* is the Japanese word describing a golden color (*iro* means color). Another word for this golden color is *yamabuki-iro*, which is derived from the reddish yellow color of the *kerria marigold* (*yamabuki*) bushes that blossom all over Japan in spring. For example, in the Edo period (1603-1867), the oval gold coins *oban*¹ and *koban*² were described as being “yamabuki-iro.”

Rice is cultivated throughout Japan, and the

full-grown rice plants shining in the autumn sun are gratefully and joyfully associated with the phrase “*kogane-iro*.” During harvest, the rice paddies stretching across the plains appear as a *kogane-iro*-colored carpet, and the terraced rice paddies on the mountains move like golden waves in the wind.

The terraced rice paddies in Owarabi in Yamanobe, Yamagata Prefecture, take on their beautiful golden color against the green backdrop of the surrounding mountains. The paddies are known for their *kuigake*, rows of piled rice plants drying in the sun along the ridges during the fall harvest.

“The *kogane-iro* rice panicles undulating slowly in the wind while the reaped rice plants are piled up in layers on the terraced rice paddies is a view that epitomizes how fruitful the fall is in Japan,” says

Inamura Kazuyuki, a representative of Group Nofunokai (group of farmers), an association of volunteers committed to the reconstruction of the terraced rice paddies and revitalization of the local community. In winter, the surface of the land is entirely covered with pure white snow. In spring, the water-filled terraced rice paddies, ready for the planting of rice, reflect the blue sky and white clouds like a mirror. In summer, the rice grows as the greenery on the mountains thickens. And, in the fall, the rice plants take on their kogane-iro color. The terraced rice paddies please the eye in every season. Nevertheless, it is fall that impresses Inamura the most, since this is when the panicles bow down under the weight of the full-grown grains of rice, indicating that they are ready for harvest.

The Owarabi rice terraces date back to the early Edo period, but have suffered from a decrease in the number of farmers in recent years. With Inamura's concern growing, he established Group Nofunokai in 2011 and brings in volunteers to preserve the terraced rice paddies together with the local farmers.

The kogane-iro colored rice plants grow abundantly right to the top of the terraced fields, where golden rows of kuigake piled along the ridges shimmer against the green backdrop of the mountains. Inamura works together with likeminded people to preserve the outstanding beauty of Owarabi. 

-
- i *Oban*: large-sized old Japanese gold coin
 - ii *Koban*: small-sized old Japanese gold coin

Photo: AFL0



A sixteenth-century *makie* screen restored using original techniques by Shimode Yutaro

Gold, Silver, Platinum and Black

The Timeless Art of *Makie*

***Makie* is a technique developed in Japan in which *kacho-fugetsu* (traditional themes of natural beauty in Japanese aesthetics) and other scenes of the four seasons are created by sprinkling gold, silver or platinum powder over jet-black lacquer. The glittering effect continues to fascinate people around the world.**

YANAGISAWA MIHO

MAKIE is a handicraft that uses lacquerⁱ. The origins of this craft remain unknown, but a work made more than 1,200 years ago still exists todayⁱⁱ, and it shows the unique development of the craft in Japan over a long period of time. Christian missionaries from the West who came to Japan in the sixteenth century were captivated by the beauty of *makie*, and *makie* objects came to be widely known in the West due to their use in the church. *Makie* then charmed the royalty and nobility and they became highly valued. This is why *makie* and other handicrafts that use lacquer were often called “japan” in Europe and the United States. According to one theory, many pianos even today are a shiny black color because of the black of lacquer.

i Lacquer is the sap harvested from the trunk of the Japanese lacquer tree or something that has been refined from this sap

ii A decoration created by a technique considered to be the origin of *makie* is found on the sheath of a *tachi* sword, stored at Shosoin, made in the eighth century

All photos: Courtesy of Shimode Yutaro

Shimode Yutaro is a lacquer craftsman who was born into a family of *makie* artists in Kyoto and is known for being the creator of *Yukyu no Sasayaki* (“Eternal Whisper”), a decorative stand which is placed at the Kyoto State Guest House. He says, “New value is created by creating a pictorial representation through the combination of materials with completely different properties: lacquer—organic matter made from sap—and gold or silver—inorganic matter. People are fascinated by the fact that this elaborate expression is created by hand.”

Makie involves decorating deep black and glossy lacquer with gold and silver powder, and sometimes platinum powder. Using the powder based on the shape and roughness of its particles, artists express the differences in distances in scenes and even the differences in light shining down from the sun and light reflecting off the surface of water. There are about eighty types each of gold and silver powder to create something so elaborate. The *kacho-fugetsu*



Shimode Yutaro at work



and other scenes drawn change based on lighting and viewing angle, endlessly enchanting the eye.

Shimode says, “The black color, which is called ‘jet black,’ is a persistently deep black color, yet it offers not a coldness but a warmth. I think this is because the black of this jet black color contains a variety of reds or greens. The gold used in makie is not simply a ‘gold color,’ but produces a warmth through the use of the various eighty types of particles based on shape and size, and it can also produce profound feelings. I think that this balance leads to

the beauty of makie.”

A representative work of Shimode, *Yukyu no Sasayaki* (“Eternal Whisper”), shows a reflection on the surface of water and produces harmony using 70,000 particles of platinum and gold powder. The sparkle that glitters out from among the jet black calls to mind a galaxy that exists among the macrocosm rather than the flow of water on Earth. It is as if you can hear a whisper from the eternal cosmos from the glitter of platinum and gold that stand out from the jet black. 



Yukyu no Sasayaki (w. 240 cm x h. 60 cm x d. 50 cm), a decorative stand by Shimode on display at the Kyoto State Guest House

Kimono Combinations

The Seasons in Layers of Silk

The kimono worn by women of the Heian court were arranged in layers in accordance with a color code that borrows from the changing hues of the passing seasons.

KATO KYOKO

PLUM blossoms heralding the coming of spring change color gradually, from deep red buds to soft pink flowers. Drawing on such natural seasonal changes of colors, in the Heian period (late eighth to end twelfth century) the nobility drew up a set of rules for the color combinations of the layers of silk kimono that were worn by women and men in the imperial court. Presented in “layer color combination” charts called *kasane no irome*, more than 100 possible color patterns are enumerated. For the nobility of the Heian court, how to dress appropriately and elegantly to match both the season and the occasion based on *Kasane no irome* was indispensable knowledge.

The *kasane no irome* are most strikingly put to use in the *itsutsuginu-karaginu-mo* set of robes collectively called *junihitoe*, the formal court dress for women worn at ceremonies and on other important occasions. In the *junihitoe* arrangement, five different colored robes, called *itsutsuginu*, are layered on top of the *hitoe* undergarment. Each of the *itsutsuginu* layers is only slightly visible at the collar, sleeve edges and hemline. At first *junihitoe* comprised twelve or more layers of kimono, but five layers became standard around the end of the Heian period. Women took pride in the elegance and timely beauty of the color combination of the robes they selected.

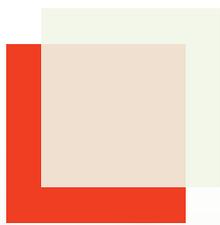
Shoji Reiko, principal of the Kokusai Bunka Technical College of Hairdesign, Tokyo, returns to the plum blossom example.

“The combination of the colors of plum blossoms that change over time is called *kobai no nioi* (gradation of colors of red plum). In the five layers of kimono worn in this arrangement, a red layer blends

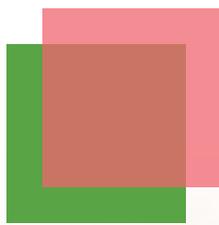
The *kobai no nioi* (gradation of color of red plum) combination from the *kasane no irome*

Photos: Itabashi Yuichi

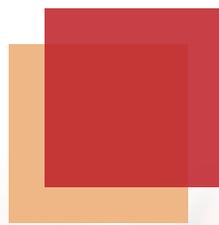
Color combination examples from the *kasane no irome*



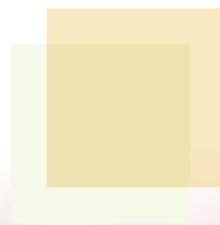
Example for spring
(cherry blossom)



Example for summer
(dianthus)



Example for autumn
(fallen chestnuts)



Example for winter
(Koorigasane or ice
in layers)

into four layers of lightening shades of pink. This color combination is appropriate for special occasions celebrated in early spring.”

According to Shoji, safflower and other natural pigments were used to achieve the subtle color gradations.

By using layers of silk with a white outer layer and dark colored inner layers, the outer layer of some kimono take on certain shades of color. For example, a kimono with a white outer layer and a red inner layer has a pale red tone, the color of cherry blossoms.

Shoji says, “The aristocrats of the Heian period created *kasane no irome* to treasure the transience of the four seasons. The shades or expressions of the color red, for example, are of great variety. We can say that this is a culture that recognizes and enjoys the beauty of various colors, a natural feature of Japan where the seasons are constantly changing in subtle ways.”



1



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- 1, 2 The five layers of the *junihitoe* are visible at the collar, sleeves and hemline. Pictured, the *kurenai no nioi* (gradation of scarlet) color combination
- 3 The *kobai no nioi* (gradation of color of red plum) combination from the *kasane no irome*

VERMILION TUNNELS OF THANKS

Vermilion-colored *torii* gates in their thousands form tunnels on the grounds of Fushimi Inari Taisha Shrine in Kyoto.

SATO KUMIKO

FUSHIMI Inari Taisha is the head shrine of all the Inari shrines, dedicated to the god of the harvest, which are said to number more than 30,000. The paths on the shrine grounds are lined with vermilion-colored *torii* gates. Torii mark the boundary between the temporal world where people live and the holy precincts of the deities. The tunnels formed by the torii of Inari shrines are regarded as sacred places where people can purify themselves as they pass through.

Fushimi Inari Taisha, built in 711, is located at the foot of Mt. Inariyama in Fushimi Ward, southern Kyoto. Mt. Inariyama in its entirety forms the

All photos: Courtesy of Fushimi Inari Taisha

precinct of the shrine. Along the paths that encircle the mountain, approximately 10,000 large and small torii stand in rows. One path with especially tightly clustered torii forming a tunnel is known as Senbon Torii, meaning “thousands of torii.” Surrounded by the ever-changing beauty of the mountain colors—the greens of spring and summer, the reds and yellows of the autumn leaves and the white of the winter snow—the shrine attracts many worshippers and visitors throughout the year.

Fushimi Inari Taisha enshrines Inari Okami, “a deity who feeds, clothes and houses us and protects us so that all of us may live with abundance

Senbon Torii, the
vermilion *torii* of
Fushimi Inari Taisha



1



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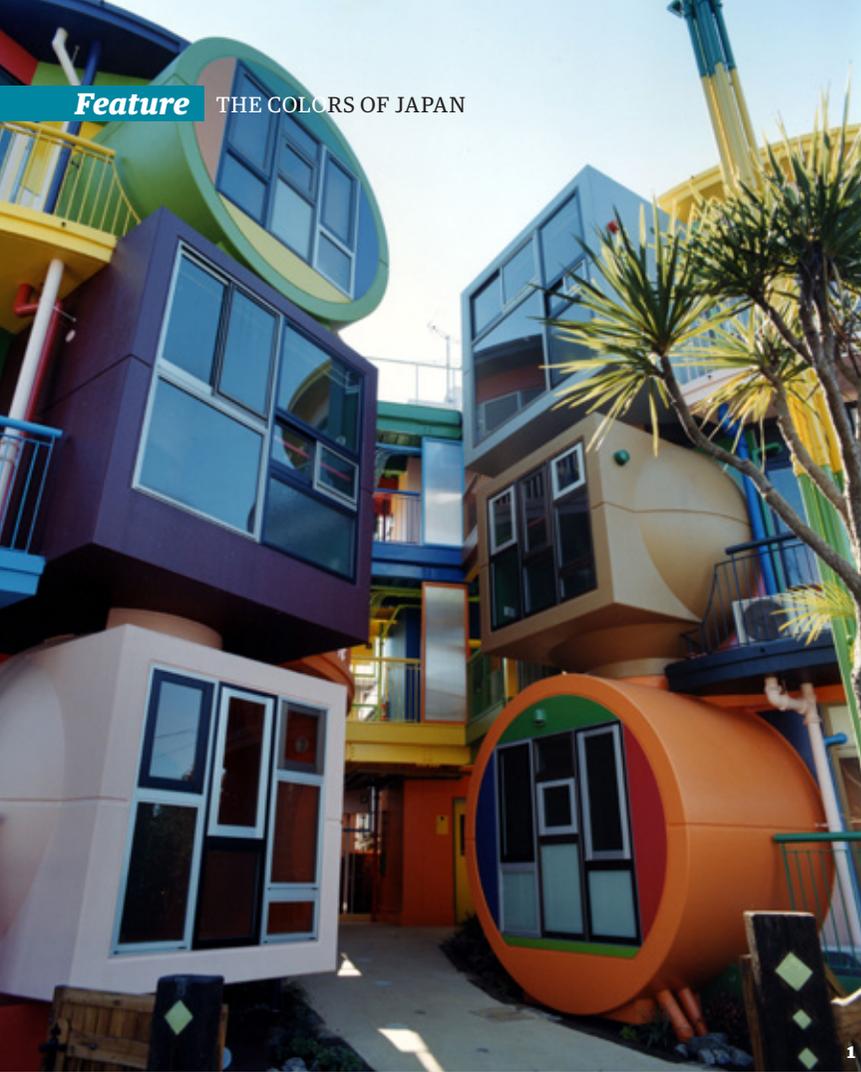
- 1 The main shrine (Honden) at Fushimi Inari Taisha
- 2 Statues of foxes, the messengers of Inari Okami, stand guard at the Tower gate

and pleasure,” according to shrine texts (<http://inari.jp/en/saijin/>). In the Edo period (1603-1867), Inari Okami became popular for bringing blessings to ordinary people, such as by ensuring the prosperity of businesses and peace for households. Over time, Fushimi Inari Taisha came to be known affectionately by the name “O-Inari-san.” People visited the shrine to wish for many things or pray for help to overcome misfortune. When their wishes were fulfilled, in return some individuals and companies donated a vermilion torii inscribed with their name. In this way, the number of torii have steadily increased over the years, forming ever-growing torii

tunnels along the paths on the shrine grounds.

Tradition dictates that the shrine pavilions and torii are painted vermilion. The color is believed to counteract evil forces and has been used in many palaces, shrines and temples since ancient times. As such, the very color of the shrine and torii itself evokes a powerful sense of spirituality.

The vermilion tunnels of O-Inari-san speak of people’s gratitude and honest hopes for good fortune, prosperity and guidance in overcoming the challenges we face in this mortal world. **7**



A Candy-Colored Residence

An apartment complex on the outskirts of Tokyo doubles as a work of art, stimulating the senses of its residents, short-stay visitors and local people alike.

SASAKI TAKASHI

IN Mitaka City, a quiet residential area in the suburbs of Tokyo, stands a colorful and rather peculiar-looking building. Called “The Reversible Destiny Lofts Mitaka (In Memory of Helen Keller),” the building was jointly designed by Arakawa Shusaku (1936-2010) and his partner Madeline Gins (1941-2014), artists and architects who were active internationally from the 1960s into the early 2000s.

Completed in 2005, the building is based on Arakawa and Gins’ hallmark concept of “reversible destiny.” As such, it is designed “not to die,” by

continually stimulating those who live in or visit it. The design was inspired by Helen Keller, a deaf-blind person revered by the artists for the kind of “reversible destiny” she achieved through her way of life.

The complex comprises nine units in three shapes: spherical, cylindrical and cubic. Conventional steel beams were not used anywhere in the construction, except for the lofts’ connecting hallways and stairs. The exterior is painted in fourteen vivid hues. The interior, too, is an organized riot of color.

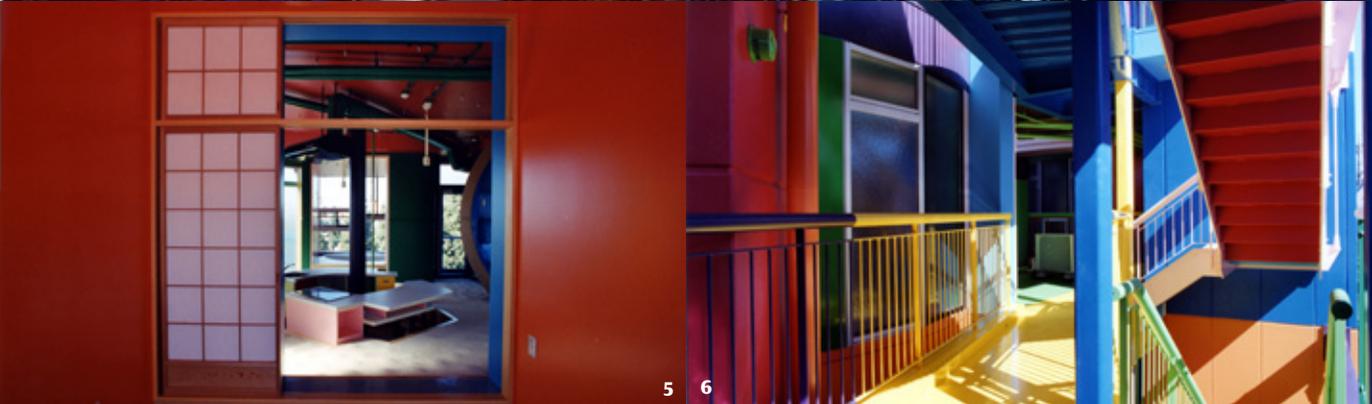
Matsuda Takeyoshi, Manager of The Reversible Destiny Lofts Mitaka, says, “Locals and taxi drivers call this the ‘colorful house,’ and it has become a landmark.”

The Reversible Destiny Lofts Mitaka is a work of functional art intended to activate the senses through colors and shapes. Although the color scheme of the interior appears at first glance to be

Reversible Destiny Lofts Mitaka -In Memory of Helen Keller- © 2005 Estate of Madeline Gins. Reproduced with permission of the Estate of Madeline Gins. All photos by Nakano Masataka



4



5

6

- 1 The housing complex comprises nine units of different shapes
- 2 Interior of a short-stay loft
- 3 Children play on a bumpy floor
- 4 The Reversible Destiny Lofts Mitaka
- 5 Six or more colors are visible at any one time
- 6 Colorfully painted hallways and stairs

chaotic, in fact it was designed so that at least six different colors are visible at once. The effect is oddly relaxing. Matsuda explains, “Just as in nature, which is teeming with a limitless number of colors, when six or more colors enter our field of vision, we unconsciously recognize them as color as a whole and not as individual colors.”

It is not just through the eyes that the building stimulates the senses. Among the unusual interior features are the bumpy floors, which softly force users to be continually aware of their own feet when walking.

Five of the nine lofts are rented as homes, while the others can be rented for a short stay of a minimum four days. Guided tours can also be arranged.

For Arakawa and Gins, the artwork that is Reversible Destiny Lofts “can only be completed once people live in it.” Inspiring by this idea, every year, around 1,000 people from Japan and around the world visit the lofts. 

Preparing for Disasters Together

Japan is prone to natural disasters, including earthquakes, tsunami, typhoons and floods. The national and local governments, citizens and all other stakeholders are collaborating in measures for disaster risk reduction and management.

SAWAJI OSAMU

PUBLIC AWARENESS ACTIVITY FOR RAISING THE DISASTER CONSCIOUSNESS OF CITIZENS BY THE JAPANESE GOVERNMENT

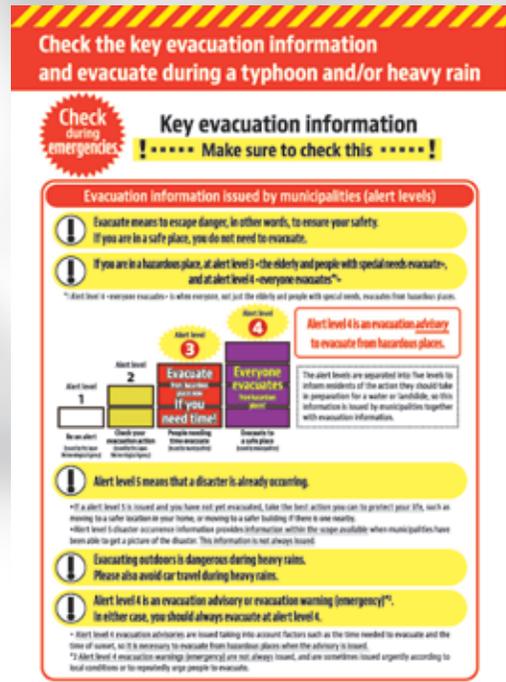
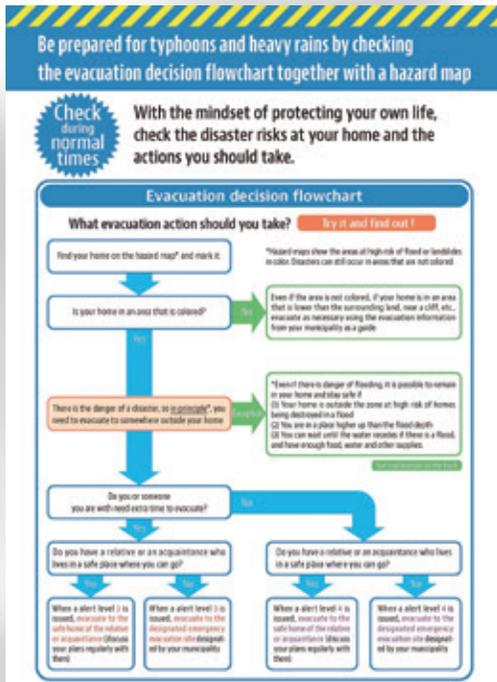
To increase people's awareness of the need to protect their own lives, it is important to ensure on a regular basis that each individual recognizes their own disaster risks and understand what kind of actions should be taken in the case

of emergency. To achieve this, the government led a Disaster Evacuation Awareness-raising Campaign throughout Japan in April and May 2020 in participation with many stakeholders. The campaign aimed to raise public awareness to encourage people to evacuate appropriately and in a timely manner in the event of a disaster.

NATIONAL CONFERENCE FOR PROMOTING DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

Since 2016, the Japanese government has been holding an annual

National Conference for Promoting Disaster Risk Reduction, one of the largest disaster preparedness events in Japan, in cooperation with local governments, private businesses and other entities that are working to prepare for disasters. The 5th National Conference for Promoting Disaster Risk Reduction was held on October 3, 2020. Due to novel coronavirus (COVID-19), the conference was held online. A total of 117 entities participated in the conference, including the national government, local governments, research institutions, private businesses,



■ Municipal governments have distributed evacuation-related leaflets to households. The evacuation decision flowchart (left) helps each individual decide what actions to take, considering the risks faced in his/her home. The key evacuation information sheet (right) helps individuals understand alert levels and other evacuation information so as to decide when to evacuate.



■ Scene from the National Conference for Promoting Disaster Risk Reduction 2020 (held online on due to COVID-19), October 3, 2020
See the website.
(<https://bosai-kokutai.com/>)



Publicity for the Tsunami Preparedness Day and World Tsunami Awareness Day. November 5th was chosen based on the true story of the present-day town of Hirogawa in Wakayama Prefecture. When a large earthquake in western Japan struck on November 5th, 1854, one resident in the town set fire to rice sheaves to lead others escaping in the dark to safe elevated land.



■ The painting that won the 2019 Disaster Management Poster Contest, Minister of State for Disaster Management Award in the division for sixth grade elementary school students and first year junior high school students. The text reads, “Don’t look back. Just hurry!”

NPOs and other entities taking up the challenge of disaster risk reduction and management. The conference included a talk with the governors of Hiroshima and Mie Prefectures, discussions among disaster preparedness experts, and presentations on themes such as Disaster Risk Reduction Education and the use of advanced technology to reduce disaster risk.

TSUNAMI PREPAREDNESS DAY

The tsunami that followed the Great East Japan Earthquake in March of 2011 took the lives of many people. In Japan, November 5th has been designated Tsunami Preparedness Day, to deepen understanding of and interest in tsunami countermeasures. In 2015, a United Nations resolution declared the day to be World Tsunami Awareness Day.

During the period before and after Tsunami Preparedness Day, events and evacuation training are held around the nation to raise people’s awareness and ability to take correct actions regarding tsu-

nami preparedness.

EVACUATION IN THE EVENT OF A DISASTER AND COVID-19 CONTROL MEASURES

If a disaster occurs while COVID-19 remains a concern, it is necessary to take measures to thoroughly control COVID-19, such as reducing the density of evacuees at evacuation shelters and securing adequate space. The government has advised local authorities regarding points that must be addressed regarding evacuation centers’ COVID-19 control measures, including the layout of the evacuation centers.

As for if or how to evacuate, people in hazardous places should evac-

uate in principle, even if COVID-19 has not subsided. However, those who are in a safe place do not need to go to an evacuation shelter, but should consider evacuating to a hotel or a relative’s or acquaintance’s home that is safe. The government has taken measures to raise residents’ disaster awareness, including the dissemination of leaflets in fourteen languages that describe five points to keep in mind during an evacuation. 7

See the multi-lingual leaflet.

(http://www.bousai.go.jp/kokusai/evacuation_points/index_en.html)



■ Evacuation shelters incorporating COVID-19 control measures. Cloth partitions and cardboard beds are placed apart from each other to ensure social distancing.

■ Butterflies and *The Great Wave off Kanagawa* produced with OM technology without using ink
Photo: Courtesy of Kyoto University

High-Precision, Full-Color Printing without Ink

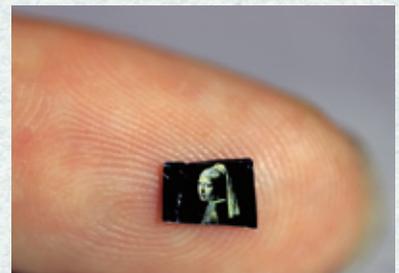
A research team at Kyoto University has developed a new technology for recreating ukiyo-e prints and other multicolored artworks through high-precision printing without the need for ink. The group is now working to develop the technology for practical use.

UMEZAWA AKIRA

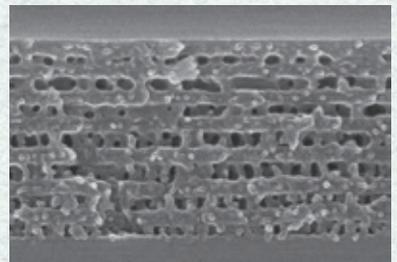
A compact disc (CD) sometimes appears to have a rainbow-colored surface, even though it is not actually colored itself. This is because the light hits the minute irregularities that have been placed on the CD's surface in a well-ordered fashion for the sake of recording data, and the wavelengths of the reflected light “interfere”¹ with each other so that they look like light exhibiting various colors—red, blue and so forth. Since the colors come from the

surface structure patterns, they are called “structural colors.” Representative examples of structural colors are the glossy green and red of jewel beetle bodies and the eye patterns on peacock feathers. In the case of the jewel beetles, the surface of their bodies consists of multiple overlapping films that create the appearance of a colored surface as the reflected light from the different films interferes.

The research group of Professor Easan Sivaniah and Program-Specific Assistant Professor Ito



■ Vermeer's *Girl with a Pearl Earring* printed with OM technology
Photo: Courtesy of Kyoto University



■ Cross-section of the multilayered polymer structure that generates the structural colors, made using OM technology
Photo: Courtesy of Kyoto University

¹ Interference of light is a phenomenon where multiple light wavelengths overlap to make the light stronger and weaker.

Masateru at Kyoto University has developed new technology that can artificially create such structural colors and has realized multi-color ultra-high-precision printing that does not use ink.

One full-color product that the research group made using the new technology is *The Great Wave off Kanagawa* by Katsushika Hokusai, a world-famous ukiyo-e piece. The original has a bold composition that depicts three small boats on a raging sea expressed in white and blue as well as Mt. Fuji on a block measuring 25.7 cm x 37.9 cm, but the research group was able to recreate this in structural colors without ink on a minimal scale only 1 mm wide.

To create the structural colors, it is necessary to artificially create patterns or multiple layers on a material surface to reflect the light in various colors, just like CDs and jewel beetles. It was for this purpose that the research group developed technology based on the phenomenon of “crazing.” Crazing refers to the making of a structure consisting of fibers on a nanometer scale (one-millionth of a millimeter) called “fibrils” by beginning the cracking process inside plastic and other polymers through the application of pressure. An everyday example of crazing is how a clear plastic folder turns white at the crease if you bend it. The white color does not come about because the creased plastic actually turns white, but because the fibrils created by the crazing change the structure of the creased part so that light is reflected to look white.



■ CD rainbow colors, which are examples of structural color.
Photo: keiphoto / PIXTA

The technology, called “OM” (organized microfibrillation), developed by the research group, causes crazing by radiating LED light on polymers to form preferred cracking areas before exposing the polymers to a solvent. This process creates multilayered fibrils that generate structural colors, just like the surface of a jewel beetle’s body. Using this technology will make it possible to create fibril structures that reflect red, blue, or light in other colors in specific locations.

Regular printing creates images by aggregating small dots. Smaller dots and more dots make it possible to achieve higher-precision printing. The pieces recreated by the research group this time are also images that consist of aggregations of dots that generate structural colors.

Ito of the research group explains, “In order to make higher-precision images, we struggled to make the dots smaller and smaller. In the end, we achieved an image resolution of 14,000 dpi [14,000 dots per inch]. Structural colors give off color through a delicate control

of light, so it can realize light and color effects that can’t be done with ink, such as color changes depending on the angle you’re looking from. Also, the colors won’t fade with time since we’re not using the chemical substance that is ink, and it can be said to be environmentally friendly since we’re keeping down the waste products that come from ink production and printing.”

At present, the research group is working to develop the technology for practical use by increasing the capabilities of the device that radiates the light that causes the crazing. The device is currently unable to radiate anything bigger than 10 cm², but if that can be expanded to several square meters, then it becomes possible to do large-scale high-precision printing. According to Ito, “We’re aiming for the OM technology to have practical applications in the security printing field. We think that it can be used to prevent forgery of gift certificates and identity documents since the fibrils, which are cracks inside polymers, are difficult to copy.” 

Hungarian Embroidery and Japanese Indigo Dyeing in Harmony



□ Hanga Yoshihara-Horvath
Photo: Courtesy of Hanga Yoshihara-Horvath, by Nishimoto Kyoko

Hanga Yoshihara-Horvath, an embroidery artist living in Tokushima Prefecture, combines age-old Japanese indigo dyeing techniques with the embroidery techniques of her home country, Hungary, to create new fabric designs drawing on tradition.

SATO KUMIKO

A*i-zome*, or indigo dyeing, has been practiced all over Japan for centuries. The plant *tade-ai* (leaf indigo), which is the raw material for the dye, grows in many parts of the country. However, the indigo plant which grows in Tokushima Prefecture (formerly Awa) in Shikoku is held in particularly high regard for the vivid blue of the dye it produces. Known as *Awa ai*, the dye is made from *tade-ai* which benefits from Tokushima's mild climate and fertile soil fed by the Yoshino River.

Hungarian native Hanga Yoshihara-Horvath is an embroidery and indigo dye artist living and work-

ing in Tokushima City. The fabrics Hanga makes using *Awa ai* are as light as a breeze and soft to the touch. Depending on the dyeing method used, the indigo imparts a variety of blues on her fabrics, from light blue to navy blue. Leveraging the diverse colors that indigo makes possible and techniques such as tie-dyeing¹ and stencil dyeing,² Hanga produces fabrics in many different patterns.

During a stay in the UK, Hanga learned about Japanese indigo dyeing from a book, and was impressed by the rustic beauty of *sashiko*,³ a traditional Japanese handicraft in which geometric patterns are embroidered onto

indigo-dyed fabric. The experience inspired her to visit Japan, she says. Hanga attended art college in Hungary where she majored in knitting in the textile department. At last, in 2008, she had an opportunity to visit Japan as a scholarship student. She chose to study at Shikoku University to learn the traditional indigo dyeing techniques of Tokushima.

“We also have indigo dyeing in



□ Hanga uses only locally produced, chemical-free indigo dye in her work

Photo: Courtesy of Hanga Yoshihara-Horvath, by Peter Orosz



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3

Hungary, but it involves the use of synthetic dye. In the past, imported natural indigo (West Indian indigo) was used, but that also partly involved the use of chemicals. In Japan, a completely chemical-free indigo dyeing technique has been preserved. This is wonderful,” says Hanga, who explains the dyeing technique as follows.

“Cut and dry indigo leaves, wet and stack them and stir them every few days to ensure that they evenly ferment. After a few months of natural fermentation, they become the indigo dye called *sukumo*.”

This dye is then further fermented by adding lye and sake to the pot. As the final step, cloth and thread are immersed in the pot filled with the finished dye.

Having experienced this entire process in a dye studio, Hanga wrote her thesis and earned a doctorate in Hungary.

After graduation, she married a Japanese man who studied indigo at the Tokushima Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries Technology Support Center. The family lives in *satoyama* countryside on the outskirts of Tokushima City, surrounded by nature.

In addition to her activities as an artist, Hanga organizes embroidery workshops for adults and children. In particular, her Hungarian embroidery course is well-received. Classes are held at a facility called “Aiyakazo” adjoining Ai-no-Yakata, a museum established in the renovated former home of an indigo-dyeing merchant.

In Hungary, different regions have preserved different embroidery cultures. Some of them have been inscribed on the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage list. Hanga teaches Hungarian embroidery techniques in which her own grandmother was skilled, such as Sárköz hímzés,⁴ Irasos hímzés and Kalocsai hímzés. Hungarian embroidery techniques are characterized by the richness of their color, but Hanga uses only blue thread dyed with Awa ai. Her beautiful embroidery is a magical harmony of traditional Hungarian plant patterns and the indigo dye of Japan, which is similarly steeped in history.

“Both dyeing and embroidery take a lot of effort, but bring happiness in the process. This is also true for traditional Japanese indigo

- 1 Hungarian embroidery in the Kalocsai hímzés style
- 2 *Sashiko*
- 3 Hungarian embroidery in the Irasos hímzés style

Photos: Courtesy of Hanga Yoshihara-Horvath

dyeing,” says Hanga. “Months are required for the indigo plant to grow and then ferment, and then the used dyes are returned to the soil. This cycle is pleasant.” 



-  Hanga guides students at an embroidery class

Photo: Courtesy of Hanga Yoshihara-Horvath, by Mubariz Khan

1 The technique of making a pattern by partly tying a piece of cloth or using similar methods to apply pressure and prevent dyes from soaking into the cloth

2 The technique of creating a pattern by controlling the spread of dyes using a paper stencil and glue

3 The act of embroidering cloth with geometric or other patterns

4 The traditional embroidery of Sárköz, a region west of the Danube River in Hungary. It is characterized by its unique stitches.



▣ Whisky on the rocks
(image photo)

Whisky Made the Old-fashioned Way —in Hokkaido

In Yoichi, a town nestled in the rich nature of Hokkaido, whisky that has earned high praise around the world for its flavor is made using traditional Scottish distilling techniques.

KATO KYOKO

Yoichi, Japan's leading premium single-malt whisky¹, is made at Nikka Whisky Distilling Co., Ltd.'s Yoichi Distillery in Yoichi, a Hokkaido town often buried in deep snow facing the Sea of Japan. Its bold, complex flavor has received high praise at the World Whiskies Awards (WWA) and other spirits competitions around the world, where it has won many prizes.

Taketsuru Masataka, the Nikka Whisky founder known as the father of Japanese whisky, established the Yoichi Distillery.

"Taketsuru Masataka was born to a sake brewing family in Hiroshima Prefecture in 1894. He trav-

eled alone to study abroad at the University of Glasgow in Scotland, spending about one year on an internship at several local distilleries," explains Kiriya Shuichi, a representative of Asahi Breweries, Ltd. responsible for the marketing of Nikka Whisky. "After returning to Japan, Taketsuru looked for an ideal place for making whisky. His search brought him to the town of Yoichi."

Yoichi's cool, humid climate is very much like Scotland, and it features an abundant water source and clear air. It is also a place where peat, which gives whisky its smoky aroma, is in plentiful supply².

Whiskies become marketable



▣ Nikka Whisky's first whisky, "NIKKA WHISKY," launched in 1940

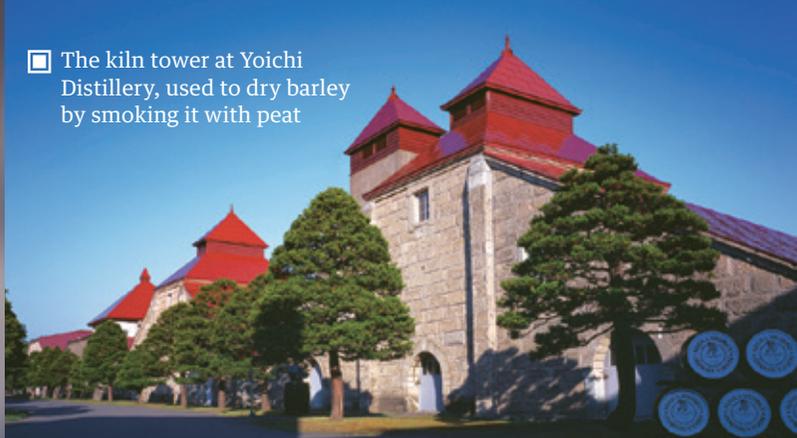


▣ Nikka Whisky founder Taketsuru Masataka

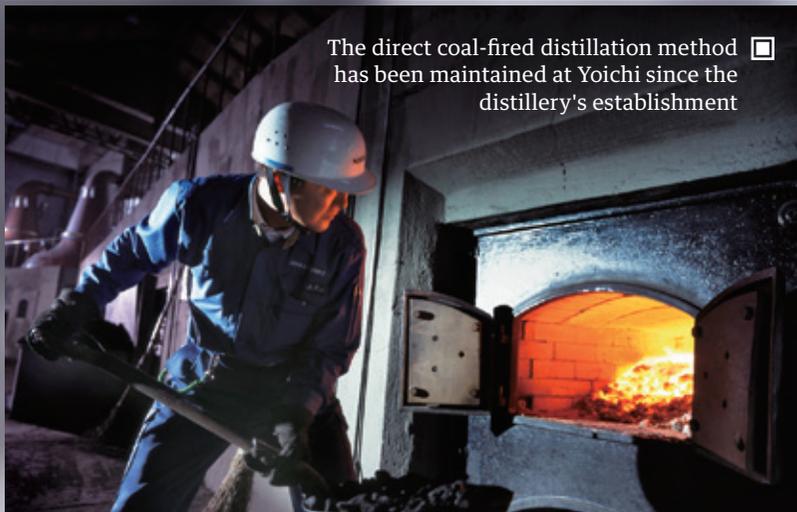
1 Whiskies made from only barley malt are called malt whiskies. Bottled whiskies from a single distillery are referred to as single-malt whiskies.

2 Peat is wild grasses, water plants and the like that have been carbonized to a low degree found in plenty in the wastelands of Northern Scotland known as heaths.

▣ The kiln tower at Yoichi Distillery, used to dry barley by smoking it with peat



The direct coal-fired distillation method has been maintained at Yoichi since the distillery's establishment ▣



after the distilled, unblended whiskies are aged for long periods. To support the business before the first whisky launched, Taketsuru established a company producing and selling apple juice in 1934. He began distilling whisky at the Yoichi Distillery two years after this³.

The Yoichi Distillery has kept its tradition of direct coal-fired distillation alive since its establishment. It's a technique that is rarely used today, even in Scotland.

Kiriya explains, "In direct coal-fired distillation, "moromi" (mash)⁴ is put in a pot still that is heated to more than 1,000°C. The mash is stirred continually to keep it from getting burned. The

process requires skilled, experienced technicians who continue feeding the fire with coal to ensure that adequate heat is maintained throughout distillation. It may be an inefficient technique, but it gives Yoichi Single Malt its bold and complex character."

Wooden casks enable the whisky to age over a long period.

Kiriya says, "The whisky aging process, in which water is lost from the cask through transpiration, is faster in dry, hot conditions. Yoichi's climate is cold all year round so the whisky ages slowly."

The whisky thus takes on many of the characteristics of the

wood of the new casks that are mainly used for aging whisky at the Yoichi Distillery, which produces its rich, vanilla-like aroma. The casks absorb the winds blowing in from the Yoichi bay, and this sea breeze then blends into the whisky over its long aging period. For that reason, Yoichi Single Malt has a faint briny scent along with a smoky, peaty aroma which owes to the peat fires used to dry the malted barley. These characteristics enable Yoichi Single Malt to pair with seafood and smoked foods excellently.

There are nine historic buildings on the distillery premises, which the Japanese government has registered as Tangible Cultural Properties. The distillery offers guided tours, and there is also a restaurant where visitors can enjoy popular Hokkaido foods together with Yoichi Single Malt. Pairing this complex whisky and local foods amid the rich nature of Hokkaido where the products were nurtured is an experience not to be missed when there is an opportunity to visit. 🍷



▣ A lunch set showcasing Hokkaido produce including salmon

³ Distilling is the cooling and liquefying of a vapor produced by heating a liquid.

⁴ The yeast added to wort in the fermenting process breaks down the sugar in wort, changing it into alcohol and carbon dioxide and produces flavors peculiar to whiskies. The product created by fermenting wort for about 60 hours is called "moromi" (mash).

▣ “Special Historic Site:
Former Shizutani
School”

The Shizutani School Proves Its Durability Over 350 Years

The Shizutani School was intentionally built as a sturdy structure in the early Edo period, using the most refined architectural techniques of the day. The building has not lost its luster, 350 years since its construction.

UNO MASAKI

▣ The stone fence



In the mountains of Bizen City in eastern Okayama Prefecture stand the buildings of the “Former School for the Common People.” This is the Shizutani School, which was built by combining the most refined architectural techniques of the Edo period (1603-1867). At present, the buildings, which include the Lecture Hall, are preserved as the “Special Historic Site, Former Shizutani School” just as they were built some 350 years ago. Most public schools in the Edo period were “clan schools” that taught the children of the samurai retainers (vas-

sals of local lords) in the various domains across Japan. However, the feudal lord of the time, Ikeda Mitsumasa (1609-1682), thought that the domain could develop by educating children of the common people in addition to samurai children and so he ordered his retainer Tsuda Nagatada to establish an open school for the common people. That was the start of the Shizutani School, Japan’s first public school for children of common people. The name Shizutani comes from its location in a quiet valley.

Tsuda Nagatada spent about thirty years completing a building that was sturdy and looked splendid. The grounds, covering some 38,000 square meters, were mostly cordoned off by a 765-meters long stone fence that was completed in 1701. The stone fence has a smooth curvature that comes from the precise matching of stones with different shapes by stonemasons.

More than 300 years since its construction, the stones show almost no irregularity or deviation, with not even a single plant growing in-between the stones. The stone fence has retained its beautiful shape and has avoided sinking due to its weight because stones have also been buried beneath to match the height above ground. If you go through the school gate (Kakumeimon: the gate of the crane crying) that leads into the school, you are met by buildings that look as they did when they were first built, including the Seibyō (Sacred Hall, dedicated to Confucius) and the Lecture Hall. Starting with the Lecture Hall, which was designated a national treasure in 1953, almost all the buildings have been registered as important cultural property or registered tangible cultural property.

Surprisingly, the Lecture Hall and other buildings were used as



□ Interior of the Lecture Hall



□ The Kakumeimon entrance gate

part of the (then) Okayama Prefectural Wake High School Shizutani Branch until 1964. That means this school built in the Edo period had functioned as an actual school up until half-a-century ago. In other words, the high schools of the time were studying inside a national treasure. Moreover, current students of Shizutani School's Youth Education Center are studying the *Analects* inside the national treasure Lecture Hall.

The Lecture Hall that stands at the center of the Shizutani School buildings demonstrates the firm architectural thought of Tsuda Nagatada, who was the one leading the construction.

The foundation uses Japanese cement mixed with red clay, lime from burning seashells, pine resin, and alcohol to prevent corrosion by water and supports the massive *irimoya-zukuri* (hip-and-gable roof).¹ Bizen ware produced in the Bizen area of Okayama Prefecture was used for the roof tiles. Normal tiles are said to last sixty years, but the durable and waterproof Bizen ware is still intact, is enduring the rain and wind, and shows little wear and tear even after 300 years.

The Lecture Hall is supported by ten round pillars made from Japa-

nese zelkova. There are *katomado* (windows with a rounded design on the upper frame) on all four sides, ensuring that light shines in during lectures. Tsuda was most afraid of fires and so did his best to take in natural light so that there would be no need to use fire for illumination, such as paper-enclosed lanterns for indoor use. The fireplace in the Inshitsu room, where teachers and students took breaks, was also only for charcoal fires while it was strictly forbidden to burn wood.

The lacquered floor of the Lecture Hall has been polished by people gathering there for hundreds of years and now reflects light like a mirror. It is said that the floor has not been relacquered and the boards not replaced even once since the original building was completed.

Kiyama Junrou from the Preservation Association in Honor of the "Special Historic Spot: Former Shizutani School" describes Tsuda's architectural thought as follows.

"In charge of the construction was Tsuda Nagatada, who looked ahead to the future when the finances of Okayama Domain may deteriorate and it may become difficult to run the school, and made sure to use what we would now call maintenance-free materials and

techniques to build a robust structure that would not collapse owing to rain, wind or earthquakes."

The Lecture Hall remains a space for various events even today and is sometimes used for classical music concerts. More than 150 years have passed since the disappearance of the feudal system, but still protected and vitalized by the local community, this year the former Shizutani School celebrated its 350-year anniversary. 



□ Locally made Bizen ware roof tiles



□ View from the Lecture Hall

¹ *Irimoya-zukuri* is a traditional style of roofed construction. Seen from the long sides, the top of the roof slants to the front and the back, while the bottom slants front, back, right and left.

Hokkaido is the northernmost of Japan's main islands and renowned for its majestic mountains, stunning national parks, and wide-open spaces. Due to its relative remoteness, the island was only settled by Japanese from the mainland in the 16th century. Before that, it belonged to the indigenous Ainu, whose traditional culture can still be experienced here. In particular, the culture of Ainu from the Kamikawa region has been designated as a Japan Heritage.

The Kamikawa region lies at the heart of Hokkaido and is dominated by the towering Daisetsuzan Volcanic Group. This range—which is also part of a national park of the same name—includes many peaks over 2,000 meters in height and is home to many rare flora and fauna, including over 250 species of alpine plants. It is a place of spiritual importance to the Ainu, who believe that deities (or *kamuy*) reside in animals and natural phenomena. Long ago, the Ainu of Kamikawa named this beautiful area Kamuy Mintara, or “The Playground of the Gods.”

Kamikawa's rich Ainu heritage can be seen in the many districts, rivers, cities, and towns with Ainu names. Until about 150 years ago, many Ainu lived in settlements along the upper stretches of the Ishikari River, and many of their descendants still live in the Kamikawa region today. The Ishikari River, which has its source in the Daisetsuzan mountains, was a key transport route for the Kamikawa Ainu. They used it to interact with other Ainu and to acquire both goods and information. Even in the 19th century, it was not unusual to see Ainu canoes loaded with goods on its waters.

Although large numbers of people from the mainland only came to Kamikawa in the 19th century, recent research has revealed vigorous trade between north and south before that. Leather goods in particular were an important export for the Ainu. Another was salmon, which the Ainu would catch in autumn as they migrated upstream. Some they preserved for themselves and others they sold to their mainland trading partners. With the money they received, they bought lacquerware and foodstuffs such as rice.



JAPAN
HERITAGE

The Daisetsuzan Mountains and Kamikawa Region



Mountain Deities and the Sacred Land of the Indigenous Ainu



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