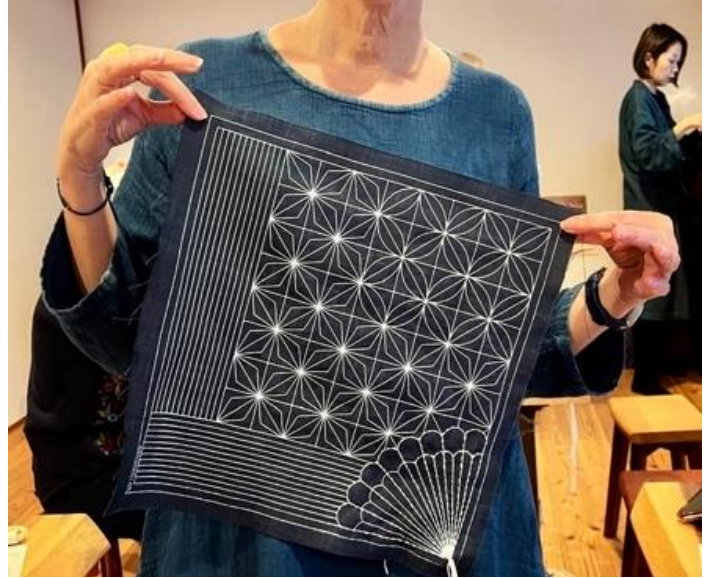


Kyoto Sashiko Workshop



USEFUL INFORMATION

retreat | recreate

GENERAL

- Japan is a country where traditions and rituals such as bonsai, geisha, tea ceremonies and sumo coexist with contemporary modern society and cutting edge technology. The old is respected but the new is embraced; quirky anime culture and high tech gadgets sit peacefully alongside the spiritual serenity of monasteries, temples and shrines, and time honoured handcraft traditions
- Japan is heavily forested and mountainous so much of the population live in the coastal cities. It is one of the most densely populated countries in the world, and most people are used to living in small spaces with a heavy reliance on an excellent efficient public transport system
- Hotel rooms are usually *smaller* than expected
- The weather in Japan in October and November will be cool to mild. Bring clothing you can layer and be prepared for all kinds of weather including rain
- The currency is the Japanese yen – JPY. Japan is predominantly a cash society and some shops may not accept credit cards. Cash can be withdrawn at ATMs in most convenience stores and post offices
- Visitors to Japan are exempt from paying the 8% consumption-tax when they spend more than 5000JPY in a single purchase at a single shop on the same day, at participating stores. Show your passport to pay the tax free price
- Time zone is GMT/UTC + 9hrs
- Electricity voltage is Type A (2-flat-pin)
- Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs (entry restrictions and procedures etc)
<https://www.mofa.go.jp/index.html>

OUR HOTEL

Urban Hotel Kyoto
74-59 Chome Fukakusa, Nishiuracho, Fushimi-ku, Kyoto
Ph +81 75 647 0606

EMERGENCY CONTACTS

- Your retreat|recreate host is Susan Rees-Osborne. Susan's WhatsApp number is +61 423 040 887
- Our Japan operator is A&F Japan. Their emergency telephone number is: +81 3 4500 375
- Ambulance/ Fire: 119
- Police: 110

EMBASSIES AND CONSULATES

- Australian embassy: 2-1-14 Mita, Minato-ku, Tokyo 108-8361. Telephone 03-5232-4111
- US embassy: 1 Chome-10-5 Akasaka, Minato-ku, Tokyo 107-8420. Telephone 03-3224-5000
- UK embassy: 102-8381 Tokyo, Chiyoda City, Ichibancho, Telephone +81-3-5211-1100
- Irish embassy: 102-0083 Tokyo, Chiyoda City, Kijomachi 2 Chome-10-7. Telephone +81 3-3263-0695
- Canadian embassy: 7 Chome-3-38 Akasaka, Tokyo 107-0052. Telephone: +81 3-5412-6200
- New Zealand embassy: 150-0047 20-40 Kamiyama-cho, Shibuya-ku, Tokyo. Tel: +81 3 3467 2271

Visit www.smarttraveller.gov.au or your country's travel site for the latest health and travel updates

HEALTH AND SAFETY

- We strongly encourage all our travellers to be up to date with the recommended flu and Covid vaccination schedules
- Take sensible precautions with foods you are unused to, to avoid travellers' diarrhoea
- Tap water in Japan is safe to drink. Please bring a reusable water bottle and refill it as you travel. Stay hydrated!
- With so much to see and do while travelling, it's easy to forget to drink enough water. Carry electrolytes or rehydration powder/tablets
- Carry and wear insect repellent
- Carry and wear sunscreen, a hat and sunglasses
- Carry your own personal medical kit at all times (bandaids, pain relief, etc)

GENERAL ETIQUETTE

- Shoes - it is customary to remove your shoes before entering homes, ryokans and some restaurants (Easy to remove shoes are useful). Never wear shoes on tatami mats, only wear socks or slippers
- Bare feet are not appropriate in homes, some restaurants, and some temples. Please make sure you have socks with you for when you remove your shoes
- Photography – always ask and receive permission before photographing people, particularly children
- Eating - do not leave chopsticks standing upright in a bowl of rice, or use them to pass food directly to another person's chopsticks. These actions are reminiscent of rituals associated with funerals and the dead. Slurping of noodles and tea is encouraged!
- Tipping – not customary in restaurants, shops, taxis
- Bargaining –not customary except occasionally at flea markets
- Temples and shrines – most are open to the public. Ladles are provided to rinse your hands before entering shrines. Speak quietly and respectfully in temples and dress modestly
- Meeting and greeting – it is customary to bow rather than shake hands. The deeper the bow, the more respectful
- On the street and public transport – eating, drinking, blowing your nose and talking loudly are impolite
- Use both hands when giving or receiving money, food, gifts, business cards etc



ONSEN ETIQUETTE

- Onsen literally means 'hot spring' and is a natural hot water bath rich in minerals
- Women's and men's onsens are separate
- Complete nudity is required. No swimsuits!
- Modesty is appreciated. Use the small towel/cloth provided to cover yourself as you move between changing room to shower area to onsen and back again
- Please wash yourself in the shower area before entering the bathing area
- Never dip your towel/cloth in the water. Keep it on top of your head or on the edge of the bath
- Don't put your face or hair in the water
- If in doubt, ask an onsen attendant or follow the behaviour of other Japanese bathers
- Some onsen do not permit entry to those with tattoos

USEFUL PHRASES

- Hello - Kon nichi wa
- Goodbye - Sayōnara
- How are you? - O-genki desu ka?
- Fine, thank you. - Genki desu. Arigatō.
- What is your name? - O-namae wanandesuka?
- My name is ____ . - Watashi no namae wa ____ desu.
- Nice to meet you - Hajime mashite
- Please - Dōzo
- Thank you - Arigatō
- Thank you very much – Arigatō gazaimusou
- Thank you for the food/drink – Gochiso sama deshita
- I gratefully receive this food – Ita daki masu
- You're welcome - Dō itashi mashite
- Yes - hai (high)
- No - ie (ee-eh)
- Excuse me – Sumi ma sen
- I'm sorry - Gomen nasai
- I don't understand - Wa ka ri ma sen
- 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 – ichi, ni, san, yon/shi, go

Suggestions for free time

Please note that the following list is the result of many hours of research and is made available to retreat/recreate tour participants only, as an additional resource. We would be grateful if you would please refrain from sharing it.

KYOTO - MUSEUMS & GALLERIES

- **Gallery Gallery.** Kotobuku Building, 5F, Kawaramachi, Shijo-sagaru, Shimogyo-ku. Tiny gallery in a building of lots of fascinating shops.
- **Kawai Kanjiro's House and Museum.** Home of the co-founder of the mingei movement (handcraft). 569 Kaneicho, Gojozaka, Higashiyama-ku.
- **Kodai Yuzen-en Gallery,** 600-8354 Takatsujidori. Kimono gallery and workshop.
- **Kyoto Handicraft Center,** near the Heian Jingu Shrine. 17 Shogoin Entomicho, Sakyo Ward, Kyoto, 606-8323.
- **Kyoto Museum of Traditional Crafts** (Fureaikan) – museum, demonstrations, workshops.
- **Kyoto Shibori Museum,** a small family-run museum, gallery and shop. 127 Shikiami-cho, Nakagyo-ku, Kyoto 604-8261
- **Marumasu Nishimuraya** – yuzen classes. Housed in a traditional wooden townhouse, also with a café. 457 Tsuboya-cho, Ogawadori, Oike-sagaru, Nakagyo-ku.
- **Nishijin Textiles Centre,** 414 Korikawa dori, Tatemonzencho, Kamigyo-ku. A textile showroom in a mid-century building. Weaving demonstrations, regular kimono shows, and upstairs you'll find furoshiki, tenugui, kimono, obi, silk ties
- **Orinasukan Museum of Handweaving,** a small family run silk obi and kimono weaving studio in the Nishijin district. 693 Daikokucho, Kamigyo-ku, Kyoto 602-8137
- **Raku Museum,** museum of raku ceramics. Aburanokôji-dôri Ichijô sagaru Kamigyo-ku Kyoto 602-0923. Open 10am-4pm, closed Mondays.
- **Yamahon Gallery,** 2nd Floor, 95-3 Enokicho, Nakagyo-ku, Kyoto 604-0931. Ceramics and handcrafts gallery. Open 11am – 6.30pm daily except Thursdays.

KYOTO – HANDCRAFTS SHOPPING

- **Aizenkobo** indigo textiles and clothing, 215 Yokoomiyacho, Kamigyo-ku 602-8449, Kyoto. Open 11-4 except Sundays.
- **Babaguri** clothing shop, Osaka Zaimokucho 686-2, Nakagyo-ku, Kyoto. Open 11am-7pm
- **Bunzaburo,** traditional shibori textiles. 10am-6pm, 221 Hashibenkeicho Takoyakusidori Karasuma Nishiiru Nakagyoku, Kyoto.
- **CASane Art Space.** Communal retail space – ceramics, jewellery, textiles, papercraft. Next door to Sarasa Nishijin café which is also highly recommended.
- **Habu Textiles,** high end yarn shop and linen, also some ready to wear clothing. On Gokomachi Dori, between Oike Dori and Aneyakoji Dori.
- **Inagaki Kiryou weaving supplies,** 602-8317 Kamigyo-ku, open 9-5 except Sundays.
- **Itoroku,** beautiful sashiko threads. 298 Tamatsushimacho, Shimogyo-ku, 600-8427. (Near Tanaka dye supplies).
- **Kamiji Kakimoto,** Fuyacho-dori, Nakagyo-ku 604-8085 www.kyoto-kakimoto.jp 9am-6pm – beautiful washi paper and stationery shop.
- **Kamisoe,** 10-1 Kuramaguchi dori, Murasakino, Higashifujinomoricho, Kita-ku (north Kyoto), Tues-Sun 12-6pm. Exquisite handmade papers for shoji screens and stationery. Same district as Nishijin Textile Centre.
- **Kin No Hitsuji** – wool/yarn/spinning shop with supplies, books & tools. 600-8086 Higashinotoin Higashiiru Matsubara St, Shimogyo-ku.
- **Kitamura Tokusai Fukusa Chanoyu textiles** shop, 602-8411, Kyoto-fu, Kyoto-shi, Kamigyo-ku (in the Nishijin textiles district). Look for the small orange fukusa cloth hanging out the front. A fukusa is a small silk cloth used in the tea ceremony. Kitamura Tokusai have been making fukusa for 300 years.

- **Kitone** shop/teahouse/café – 1F, 589 Torochō, Shimogyō-ku, 352 2428. www.kitone.jp. Open Fri-Tues 12pm-dusk
- **Kyukyodo Stationery**, calligraphy painting and stationery supplies. Near our hotel – 604-8091 Teramachi Arcade, Nakagyo-ku. 10am-6pm
- **Linnet**, specialising in linen. Tominokojinishiiu, 562 Aneyakoji dori (by Tominokoji dori), Nakagyo-ku. 11am-6pm
- **Misuya-Bari Needle Shop**. The famous tiny 400 year old shop selling handmade pins and needles. *Update: temporarily closed in 2026.*
- **Mustard**, 588 Higashinotoin dori, Torochō, Shimogyō-ku. Fri-Tues 11am-6pm. Beautiful clothing, textiles & accessories.
- **Nomura Tailor** – multi storey fabric mecca! 362 Shijo dori (between Fuyachō dori and Gokomachi dori), Naramonochō, Shimogyō-ku. Daily 10am-7pm. There's a smaller branch on Taramachi dori in the covered arcade section.
- **Saiundo Traditional Art Supplies**, brushes, pigments, art supplies. 552 Anedaitochō, Nakagyo-ku, 604-8092 (1.5 blocks west of Teramachi). Open 9:30 – 18:00 except Wednesdays.
- **Sou Sou** fashion and textiles, 583-3 Nakanochō, Nakagyo-ku. Daily 11am-8pm. 7 branches all located in the same street.
- **Tanaka Nao Senryoten** (dye supplies), 312 Tamatsushimachō, Shimogyō-ku, 600-8427. (Near Itoroku).
- **Tezomeya**, organic clothing boutique and natural dye studio. 456-2F, Sasaya-cho, Nakagyo-ku, Kyoto. Browse the clothing or do a dye class.
- **Walnut** - yarn shop, 745 Kikuyachō, Shimogyō-ku. (Street Wakamiya dori, Matubara-agaru). Tues-Sat 11am-6pm
- **Yamaguchi Chubee**, fabric, patterns and notions. 600-8086 Shimogyō-ku, Hontorochō, 20.

KYOTO – CLASSES & WORKSHOPS

- **Adachi Kumihino Gallery**. Try a kumihimo (braided cord) braiding class from Y2160 per person. www.adachikumihimokan.com
- Cooking classes www.cooking-sun.com
- **Kyo Gokoro**, Japanese calligraphy class. Y2000 Open 10am-5pm www.kyo-gokoro.com
- **Kyoto Traditional Craft Tour**, walking tour held every Tues and Fri at 9am. Meet at Noku Kyoto Hotel Reception. Y2000 per person. Tour the neighbourhood around the Imperial Palace, visiting traditional craft studios including bamboo crafts, woodwork, traditional dolls, gold lacquer. Recommended! Bookings: <https://kyotovisitorshost.com/en/noku.html>
- **Matsuda Book Binding Works**, 57-7 Kitanoshimohakubaichō, Kita-ku, 603-8326. www.matsudaseihon.com Gets fabulous reviews!
- **WAK Japan (Women's Association of Kyoto)**. Classes in ikebana, kimono wearing, tea ceremony, home cooking. www.wakjapan.jp
- **Yamadamatsu** Koboku-ten. Make your own incense class. www.yamadamatsu.co.jp/en
- **Yamamoto Roketsu Dyeing**. Wax resist dyeing class – dye a t-shirt, furoshiki, noren curtain etc. www.roketsu.com

KYOTO – GARDENS & TEMPLES

- **Heian-jingu Shrine**, an important Shinto shrine. A giant orange tori gate ushers you towards Heian Shrine, built in 1895 but in the style of the medieval Heian Period. But it's the gardens (Shin-en Gardens) that are the drawcard, with their lily ponds and roofed wooden bridge, where you can sit and hear frogs plop. This type of garden is designed for strolling, opening up unexpected vistas among the trees. Okazaki Nishitennocho, Sakyo Ward
- **Okoshi Sanso Villa and Garden**, 8-Tabushiyama-cho, Saga Ogurayama, Ukyo-ku, Kyoto. Villa and magnificent gardens with beautiful views of Kyoto. 1000 yen entry includes matcha tea and sweet in the teahouse. Could be easily combined with visit

to the bamboo grove. 9am-5pm. 15 min walk from Arashiyama station

- **Ryoanji temple** is the world's most famous rock garden
- **Shoren-in.** Famous Buddhist temple with beautiful garden. 69-1 Awataguchi Sanjobocho, Higashiyama Ward
- **Tenryuji Temple**, another World Heritage UNESCO site with magnificent gardens. In Arayashima. Pair with a visit to the bamboo forest.

KYOTO – FOOD & DRINK

- **% Arabica** Higashiyama – for your coffee fix. 87-5 Hoshinocho, Higashiyama Ward
- **Café Bibliotic Hello**, open 11.30am – midnight. 650 Seimeicho Niji Yanaginobanba Higashi iru Nakagyo-ku, Kyoto 604-0951. Bookshelves and plants line the walls.
- **Chao Chao Sanjo Kiyamachi**, 117 Ishiyacho, Nakagyo-ku. Classic, casual izakaya serving gyoza and drinks
- **Inoda Coffee Honten**, 140 Doyucho, Nakagyoku, 604-8118
- **Ippudo Noodle Shop**, popular ramen eatery 653-1 Bantoya-cho, Higashitoin, Nishikoji-higashi-iru, Nakagyo-ku
- **Kamehameha**, 278 Enpukujimaecho, Nakagyo-ku. Fri-Wed 4pm-9pm. Serving okonomiyaki (Japanese omelette)
- **Katsukara**, 16 Ishibashicho, Nakagyo-ku. Serving tonkatsu
- **Kei's Caffee oggi**, 190-1 Kiyomizu cho-me Higashiyama-ku, Kyoto 605-0862
- **Kitone** shop/teahouse/café, 1F, 589 Torochi, Shimogyo-ku. Fri-Tues 12pm-dusk
- **Manzara-tei**, traditional Japanese fare. 321 Kawaramachi-dori, Ebisugawa-agaru Sahimono-cho, Nakagyo-ku
- **Mo-An**, 8 Yoshidakaguraokacho, Sakyo-ku, Kyoto 606-8311. Tues-Sun 11.30am-6pm. A teahouse in a treehouse!
- **Monk** restaurant, along the Philosophers Path. Closed Mondays and first Sunday of the month.
- **Motoi Gyoza**, best gyoza in town. 470-2 Setoyacho, Nakagyo-ku 604-8122. Recommended.
- **Muni Restaurant**, 176-3 Zaimokucho, Nakagyo-ku, Kyoto 604-8017. Closed Mondays.
- **Musashi Sushi**, 440 Ebisucho, Nakagyo-ku. Thurs-Tues 11am-9pm. Classic sushi train restaurant
- **Omen**, udon noodles, just down the road from Ginkaku-ji temple. 74 Ishibashi-cho, Jodo-ji, Sakyo-ku. 11am-9pm
- **Sarasa Nishijin Café**. A café in an old sento (public bath house) 11-1 Murasakino Higashifujinomoricho, Kita Ward, Kyoto, 603-8223. Closed Wednesdays
- **Vermillion**, espresso bar. 8 5 Fukakusa Inarionmaecho, Fushimi-ku, Kyoto. Near the Fushimi Inari Shrine
- **Wife & Husband**, little tempura eatery. 188 Sendocho, Nishikiyamachi Shijo-dori Kudaru, Simogyo-ku
- **Yayoi**, 434-3 Ebisucho, Nakagyo-ku. Serving inexpensive, traditional meals.
- **Yojiya Café Ginkakujiten**, traditional tea and coffee café. 15 Shishigatanihounenincho Sakyoku 606-8421



JAPANESE TEXTILES & HANDCRAFTS

Boro

Japan's mended and patched textiles are referred to as *boro*, or ragged, both in Japan and abroad. *Boro* textiles are usually sewn from nineteenth and early twentieth century rags



and patches of indigo dyed cotton. The diversity of patches on any given piece of clothing or household cloth is a veritable encyclopedia of hand loomed cotton indigo from old Japan. In most cases, the beautiful arrangement of patches and mending stitches is borne of necessity and happenstance, and was not planned by the maker. *Boro* textiles were stitched in the shadows of farmhouses, often at night by the light of one dim *andon*, on the laps of farm women. This unselfconscious creative process has produced hand-made articles of poignant, utilitarian beauty.

Sashiko

Sashiko, meaning literally 'little stabs', is a quilting technique using a running stitch to reinforce and prolong the life of a fabric or to stitch and recycle old pieces of cloth into a new garment. *Sashiko* created warmer and more durable fabrics for the Japanese farmer



who originally used the stitch for practical reasons. Decorative *sashiko* stitching developed out of this need for warmth and durability and functions to embellish while strengthen the garment or object.

Shibori

Shibori is a general term which encompasses a wide range of shape-resist dyeing techniques including tie-and-dye, binding, stitching,



and clamping, etc. By using these techniques a fabric resists dye and creates surface patterns, some extremely intricate and innovative. We'll encounter exquisite *shibori* techniques at The Little Indigo Museum during our visit there. (Indigo group*)

Sakiori

Sakiori weaving uses a rag weft against a warp of either bast fiber or cotton. The weft material is often made from shredded kimono or other recycled garments which can be of cotton, silk or other material. *Sakiori* clothing was first woven by Japanese peasants around 1750 for its warmth and durability as newly minted cotton cloth at that time was too rare and expensive for a farmer or fisherman. The home manufacture and use of *sakiori* clothing and hearth covers in rural areas of Japan disappeared anywhere from 50-100 years ago, although a few individuals and some historical preservation societies still weave this cloth today.

Kasuri

Kasuri is the Japanese term for what is commonly known as ikat weaving. The *kasuri* process involves yarns being tied before they are dyed. The areas where yarns are tied are "masked" and will resist dye. The way in which yarns are tied will determine the look of the finished patterns which will be woven into the cloth. Sometimes just the weft yarns are tied. Sometimes both the weft and warp yarns are tied, and this is called double *kasuri* – a technique which can yield quite complex designs.



Katazome

Katazome is a method of dyeing fabrics using a resist paste applied through a stencil, typically a rice flour mixture applied with a brush or tool such as a palette knife. Unlike *yuzen*, stencils are used repeatedly to make a repeating pattern. Pigment is added by hand-painting, immersion dyeing, or both. The area of the fabric covered and permeated by the paste mixture resists the later application of dye, thus creating undyed areas within the fabric.

Katazome was first invented as an inexpensive and faster alternative to highly patterned woven brocade fabrics. Over time, *katazome* evolved into a respected fibre art form of its own.

Thin fabrics dyed in the *katazome* style show the fabric's design on the back of the fabric, whereas thicker or more tightly woven fabrics generally have a solid colour underside, typically indigo blue for cotton fabrics. Futon covers made from multiple panels of *katazome* fabric, if the stencils are properly placed and panels joined correctly, can display a seamless stencilled pattern. Besides cotton, *katazome* has been used to decorate linen, silk and fabrics that are entirely or partially synthetic.

Yuzen Dyeing

The *yuzen* dyeing method was introduced to Japan in the 8th century. Tradition has it that hand-painted *yuzen* was first made by the artist Miyazaki Yuzensai of Kyoto. Many colors are used and *yuzen* dyeing used to dye kimonos in picturesque designs developed with the cultural life of Kyoto townspeople. In modern times craftsmen developed *Utsushi-yuzen* (tracing) in which a *yuzen* design is dyed using paper patterns and stencils. *Yuzen* dyeing is used for kimonos and coats and these days is produced in the cities of Kyoto and Uji, part of greater Kyoto.

Saori Weaving

Saori is a form of weaving featuring creativity, spontaneity and free expression with no rules. The philosophy behind *saori* weaving emphasizes that there are no 'mistakes', only the self expression of the weaver. This is quite a departure from the usual precision involved in Japanese crafts. The founder of *Saori* was Misao Jo, born in 1913 in Osaka, Japan and sadly passed away at 104 years old on 10 January, 2018. Misao began her weaving career at the age of 57 after studying and teaching Ikebana and rearing a family. Her son Kenzo Jo developed the *Saori* loom and associated equipment and many members of the family continue the *Saori* tradition.

Maki-e

Maki-e (literally: sprinkled picture) is Japanese lacquer sprinkled with gold or silver powder as a decoration using a *makizutsu* or a *kebo* brush. The technique was developed mainly in the Heian Period (794–1185) and blossomed in the Edo Period (1603–1868). *Maki-e* objects were initially designed as household items for court nobles; they soon gained more popularity and were adopted by royal families and military leaders as a symbol of power.

To create different colours and textures, *maki-e* artists use a variety of metal powders including gold, silver, copper, brass, lead, aluminium, platinum, and pewter, as well as their alloys. Bamboo tubes and soft brushes of various sizes are used for laying powders and drawing fine lines. As it requires highly skilled craftsmanship to produce a *maki-e* painting, young artists usually go through many years of training to develop the skills and to ultimately become *maki-e* masters.

Takamakie (or “raised *maki-e*”) is one of the three major techniques in *maki-e* making. Developed in the Muromachi Period (1336–1573), the technique of *takamakie* involves building up design patterns above the surface through a mixture of metal powder, lacquer, and charcoal or clay dust. Another special kind of *maki-e* is *togidashi maki-e*, where a black lacquer without oil is put on the metal decoration as an additional coat.

Kintsugi

Kintsugi (golden joinery) is the Japanese art of repairing broken pottery with lacquer dusted or mixed with powdered gold, silver, or platinum, a method similar to the *maki-e* technique. As a philosophy, it treats breakage and repair as part of the history of an object, rather than something to disguise. Lacquerware is a longstanding tradition in Japan, at some point it may have been combined with *maki-e* as a replacement for other ceramic repair techniques.

One theory is that *kintsugi* may have originated when Japanese *shogun* Ashikaga Yoshimasa sent a damaged Chinese tea bowl back to China for repairs in the late 15th century. When it was returned, repaired with ugly metal staples, it may have prompted Japanese craftsmen to look for a more aesthetic means of repair. Collectors became so enamoured with the new art that some were accused of deliberately smashing valuable pottery so it could be repaired with the gold seams of *kintsugi*. *Kintsugi* became closely associated with ceramic vessels used for *chanoyu* (Japanese tea ceremony). As a philosophy, *kintsugi* can be seen to have similarities to the Japanese philosophy of *wabi-sabi*, an embracing of the flawed or imperfect. Japanese aesthetics values marks of wear by the use of an object. This can be seen as a rationale for keeping an object around even after it has broken and as a justification of *kintsugi* itself, highlighting the cracks and repairs as simply an event in the life of an object rather than allowing its service to end at the time of its damage or breakage. *Kintsugi* can relate to the Japanese philosophy of “no mind” (*mushin*), which encompasses the concepts of non-attachment, acceptance of change and fate as aspects of human life. Not only is there no attempt to hide the damage, but the repair is literally illuminated... a kind of physical expression of the spirit of *mushin*. *Mushin* is often literally translated as “no mind,” but carries connotations of fully existing within the moment, of non-attachment, of equanimity amid

changing conditions. ...The vicissitudes of existence over time, to which all humans are susceptible, could not be clearer than in the breaks, the knocks, and the shattering to which ceramic ware too is subject. This poignancy or aesthetic of existence has been known in Japan as *mono no aware*, a compassionate sensitivity, or perhaps identification with, [things] outside oneself.

— Christy Bartlett, *Flickwerk: The Aesthetics of Mended Japanese Ceramics*

Bamboo

The Japanese word for bamboo is “*take*”. Bamboo is a very strong plant. Because of its sturdy root structure, it is symbol of prosperity in Japan. For years, people were told to run into the bamboo groves in the event of an earthquake, because the bamboo’s strong root structure would hold the earth together. Simple and unadorned, the bamboo is also symbolic of purity and innocence. “*Take o watta youna hito*” literally translates into “a man like fresh-split bamboo” and refers to a man with a frank nature.



A chasen is a tea whisk made from a single piece of bamboo, split into an array of delicate tines, used to whisk the matcha powder into a foamy usucha, or knead it into a thick paste as koicha. Though some form of tea whisk was used to whip up *diancha* in Song dynasty China and brought over to Japan, it is unclear what this tool looked like or how it was made. The first record of bamboo chasen in Japan dates back to 1336-1573, where high-quality chasen from Takayama were requested by tea master Murata Jukō. These whisks were so good, they were later presented to the emperor. Since then, chasen artisans in Takayama have refined their craft and passed their skills on from generation to generation, with some chasen masters being of the 18th or even 25th generation. Today, however, only 18 such chasen masters remain, and to prevent their traditions from being lost, they have begun taking apprentices from outside of their family.

Chasen come in a variety of shapes and sizes. As almost every school of tea ceremony has its own preferred styles, there are dozens if not hundreds of chasen shapes. Each chasen starts its life as a piece of bamboo that has been dried for at least one to two years. The variety of the bamboo used determines the final appearance of the whisk. Typically, chasen are made from three varieties of bamboo: white (白竹- shiratake), soot-coloured (煤竹-

susudake), or black (黒竹-kurotake). After the bamboo is dried, there are eight steps taken that transform the raw material into a delicate instrument.

www.tezumi.com

Ceramics

From utility wares to aesthetically pleasing sculptures, traditional Japanese ceramics, known as *yakimono*, literally "fired thing" or "burned thing") has remained one of the country's oldest art forms. Traditional ceramics are found everywhere in Japanese culture: tea ceremony enthusiasts and flower arranging masters, among others, often skillfully choose pieces that demonstrate not only basic utility, but also profound beauty.

Known as one of the oldest earthenware traditions in the world, the *yakimono* tradition began around at least 12,000 years ago during the Jōmon Period the time of hunter-gatherer culture in prehistoric Japan. Pieces created during this time period are identified with the name "Jōmon," meaning "cord-marked" or "cord-patterned," because of the way pottery was decorated by impressing cords onto the surface of jars or containers. But the Jōmon style was just the beginning of something much more complex and varied. Since its early beginnings, Japanese ceramics has evolved considerably over the centuries, having been significantly influenced by neighboring countries and cultures.

If we fast-forward in time to the Muromachi Period (1336-1573), we find the earliest forms of recognizable styles of Japanese ceramics often seen today in fine dining and the most exclusive international art galleries. During this period, interaction with artists, traders and intellectuals from China and Korea had a profound influence on the evolution of *yakimono* in Japan. Having absorbed techniques and artisanal skills from countries such as China and Korea, domestic Japanese ceramic artists began experimenting with and creating uniquely Japanese styles. But there isn't just one style of pottery - an assortment of different techniques was developed throughout the nation. It is thanks in part to the combination of foreign and regional techniques with the varied chemical composition of the clay in each region that we have the plethora of unique *yakimono* styles that exist today.

According to Tokyo-based Japanese ceramicist Masahiro Maeda, there is no country that has a more profound appreciation for the art of pottery than Japan. This is thanks to *chadō*, or the art of the tea ceremony. In other words, tea bowls play a leading role in the *chadō* performance. In the 16th century, ceramic tea cups began to attain a high aesthetic value. In tandem with the wide practice of the tea ceremony, the iconic ceramic style of *wabi-sabi* emerged. *Wabi-sabi*, a concept derived from Buddhist teachings, represents the Japanese appreciation for all things natural, imperfect, impermanent, aging, and

incomplete. Popularised by the renowned Japanese tea masters of the period, artisans began to mould tea bowls according to *wabi-sabi* aesthetics. Today, we refer to them as *juraku* ware, or simply *raku* ware.

During the 20th century, Japan underwent a rapid period of urbanisation and industrialisation in the wake of the Second World War. Unfortunately during this critical time period, there was a steep decline in the popularity of *yakimono*. In the period of only one generation, Japan's pottery heritage almost entirely disappeared. True—Japanese ceramics and porcelain production was considered an elite yet traditional art. But during the Edo and Meiji eras, a government-led Westernisation of Japan led to the decline of many traditional practices, and pottery creators and pottery consumers alike were not spared.

However, all was not lost. The Mingei, or literally "folk") movement, started in 1926 by philosopher and artist Yanagi Sōetsu, almost single-handedly saved *yakimono* and other important traditional crafts from being lost forever. Soetsu and a group of entrepreneurial potters wanted to revive an interest in Japanese ceramics by demonstrating that even "humble goods could be inherently beautiful." Aware of the rapid modernization that was occurring simultaneously, *mingei* artists found ingenious ways of asserting traditional Japanese identity without disavowing all of the important changes that were happening in society at the time. For example, by hosting elaborate collections and encouraging the newly rich urban middle class to embrace *yakimono*, proponents of the movement became essential in helping to preserve and elevate the standards of Japanese ceramics to the haute status that it has in the art world today.

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