



Traditional Crafts Of Tohoku

Aomori Prefecture

Tsugaru Lacquerware (*Tsugaru-nuri*)
[Lacquerware] Designated in 1975

Aomori Lacquerware Cooperative Federation
〒036-8072
3-8-5 Seino Fukuro, Hirosaki-shi, Aomori
TEL. 0172-35-3629
https://www.tsugarunuri.org/



Iwate Prefecture

Nambu Ironware (*Nambu-tekki*)
[Metalwork] Designated in 1975

Iwate Nambu-Tekki Cooperative Federation
〒020-0055
64-102 Tsunagi Oirino, Morioka-shi, Iwate
(inside Morioka Handworks Square)
TEL. 019-689-2336
https://www.ginga.or.jp/nambu/
https://oshu-nambutekki.com/



Iwayado Chests (*Iwayado tansu*)
[Woodwork] Designated in 1982

Iwayado Tansu Production Cooperative Association
〒023-1131
68-1 Ebijima, Odaki, Esashi, Oshu-shi, Iwate
TEL. 0197-35-0275
https://www.iwayado-tansu.jp/



Hidehira-nuri Lacquerware
(*Hidehira-nuri*)

[Lacquerware] Designated in 1985

Iwate Prefecture Lacquerware Cooperative Association
〒028-7533
230 Kamasuda, Hachimantai-shi, Iwate
(inside Appi Urushi Studio)
TEL. 0195-63-1065

Joboji-nuri Lacquerware (*Joboji-nuri*)

[Lacquerware] Designated in 1985

Iwate Prefecture Lacquerware Cooperative Association
〒028-7533
230 Kamasuda, Hachimantai-shi, Iwate
(inside Appi Urushi Studio)
TEL. 0195-63-1065

Akita Prefecture

Cherry Bark Craft (*Kaba-zaiiku*)

[Woodwork] Designated in 1976

Kakunodate Craft Cooperative Association
〒014-0352
18 Tonoyama, Kakunodate-machi, Senboku-shi, Akita
TEL. 0187-53-2228

Kawatsura Lacquerware (*Kawatsura-shikki*)

[Lacquerware] Designated in 1976

**Akita Prefecture Lacquerware Industrial
Cooperative Association**
〒012-0105
142-1 Ocatenakano, Kawatsura-cho,
Yuzawa-shi, Akita
(inside Yuzawa City Kawatsura Lacquerware
Traditional Crafts Museum)
TEL. 0183-42-2410
https://www.kawatsura.or.jp/



instagram

Akita Prefecture

Bent Wood (*Odate Magewappa*)

[Woodwork] Designated in 1980

Odate Magewappa Cooperative Association
〒017-0843
5 Naka-machi, Odate-shi, Akita
Former Shofuda Takemura New Building B, 1F, Room A
TEL. 0186-49-5221
https://odate-magewappa.com/



Akita Cedar Tubs and Barrels

[Woodwork] Designated in 1984

Akita Cedar Casks and Barrels Cooperative Association
〒016-0895
4-3 Suehiro-machi, Noshiro-shi, Akita
(inside Tarutomi Kamata Co., Ltd.)
TEL. 0185-52-2539

Miyagi Prefecture

Miyagi Traditional Kokeshi

(*Miyagi dentou kokeshi*)

[Dolls] Designated in 1981

Miyagi Traditional Kokeshi Cooperative Federation
〒989-6827

74-2 Shiota, Naruko-onsen, Osaki-shi, Miyagi
(inside Japan Kokeshi Museum)
TEL. 0229-83-3600 http://www.kokesikan.com/
Closed from January 1 to March 31.



Ogatsu Inkstones (*Ogatsu suzuri*)

[Writing Implements] Designated in 1985

**Ogatsu Inkstone Manufacturing and Sales Cooperative
Association**
〒986-1335
2-17 Shimo-Ogatsu, Ogatsu-cho,
Ishinomaki-shi, Miyagi
TEL. 0225-57-2632
https://www.ogatsu-suzuri.jp/



Naruko Lacquerware (*Naruko shikki*)

[Lacquerware] Designated in 1991

Naruko Lacquerware Crafts Association
〒989-6835
200 Minamihara, Naruko-onsen, Osaki-shi, Miyagi
TEL. 0229-87-2361

SENDAI Tansu

[Woodwork] Designated in 2015

Sendai Tansu Cooperative Association
〒980-0014
2-7-3 Honcho, Aoba-ku, Sendai-shi, Miyagi
(inside Sendai Tansu Museum of History and Crafts)
TEL. 022-225-8368
https://www.sendai-tansu.com/



Yamagata Prefecture

Yamagata Casting (*Yamagata imono*)

[Metalwork] Designated in 1975

Yamagata Imono Traditional Crafts Association
〒990-2351
22 Imono-machi, Yamagata-shi, Yamagata (inside Chobundo)
TEL. 023-643-7141

Oitama Pongee (*Oitama tsumugi*)

[Textiles] Designated in 1976

Oitama Tsumugi Cooperative Association
〒992-0031
5-4-43 Omachi, Yonezawa-shi, Yamagata
(inside Sugano Dye Shop)
TEL. 0238-23-5044

Yamagata Prefecture

Yamagata Buddhist Altars

(*Yamagata butsudaru*)

[Buddhist Altars] Designated in 1980

**Yamagata Prefectural Buddhist Altar Commerce and
Industry Cooperative**
〒990-0031
1-7-31 Toka-machi, Yamagata-shi, Yamagata
Ohara Mansion 105
TEL. 023-632-1516

Tendo Shogi Pieces (*Tendo Shogi Koma*)

[Other Traditional Crafts] Designated in 1996

Shogi Piece Makers Cooperative Society of Yamagata
〒994-0013
1-3-28 Onomori, Tendo-shi, Yamagata
(inside Tendo Chamber of Commerce and Industry)
TEL. 023-654-3511
http://www.tendocci.com/koma/



Uetsu Shinafu (*Uetsu Shinafu*)

[Textiles] Designated in 2005

Uetsu Shinafu Promotion Council
〒999-7315
222 Mukai, Sekigawa, Tsuruoka-shi, Yamagata
(inside Sekigawa Shinaori Cooperative)
TEL. 0235-47-2502

Fukushima Prefecture

Aizu Lacquerware (*Aizu nuri*)

[Lacquerware] Designated in 1975

Aizu Lacquerware Cooperative Association
〒965-0042
1-7-3 Omachi, Aizuwakamatsu-shi, Fukushima
TEL. 0242-24-5757
http://www.chuokai-fukushima.or.jp/aizushikkikumiai/



Obori-Soma Ware (*Obori soma-yaki*)

[Pottery and Porcelain] Designated in 1978

Obori Soma Potters' Cooperative Association
〒979-1513
40 Chimeiji, Kiyohashi, Namie-machi,
Futaba-gun, Fukushima
TEL. 0240-35-4917
https://www.somayaki.or.jp/



Aizu Hongo Ware (*Aizu Hongo-yaki*)

[Pottery and Porcelain] Designated in 1993

Aizu-Hongo Ware Cooperative Association
〒969-6042
3162 Setomachi-ko, Aizumisato-machi, Onuma-gun, Fukushima
(inside Aizu Hongo Ceramics Museum)
TEL. 0242-56-3007

Okuaizu Basketry (*Oku-aizu amikumi zaiku*)

[Woodwork] Designated in 2003

Oku-aizu Mishima Amikumihin Promotion Council

〒969-7402
395 Nairi Suwanoue, Mishima-machi,
Onuma-gun, Fukushima
(inside Mishima Lifestyle and Craft Center)
TEL. 0241-48-5502
https://www.okuaizu-amikumi.jp/



Okuaizu Showa Karamushi Textiles

(*Oku-aizu Showa Karamushi-ori*)

[Textiles] Designated in 2017

Showa Village Karamushi Successor Training Association
〒968-0103
611 Nakajima, Shimonakatsukawa, Showa-mura,
Onuma-gun, Fukushima
Showa Village Office, Industrial and Construction Division,
Karamushi Promotion Section
TEL. 0241-57-2116



Fukushima Prefecture

Okuaizu Basketry

Rustic basket-weaving handed down
because of the snow country

This basket-weaving uses plants native to the
mountainous Oku-Aizu area as materials, and
its hallmark is sturdiness and simplicity. As a
handicraft during the snowy season in the
mountains, weaving of baskets and sieves used
in daily life has been passed down since
ancient times.

Spider lily, wild grape, and catnip. Each is
crafted to bring out its unique qualities, and all
processes from harvesting to completion of the
work are done entirely by hand.

Fukushima Prefecture

**Okuaizu Showa
Karamushi Textiles**

Fabric woven from carefully selected fiber

Karamushi is a perennial plant classified under
the nettle family, also called choma. In Showa
Village, high-quality Karamushi, the raw material
for superior linen, has been grown without
interruption since antiquity. It absorbs moisture
well and is quick to dry, with a smooth texture
that is comfortable to wear. Its uses range
widely, from summer clothing to small items and
accessories. As summer wear, it's said that
once you wear it, you won't want to wear other
fabrics because of its superior quality.



**Fukushima Prefecture
Obori Soma Ware**

Divine horses running in the glaze

This kiln was opened in the mid-Edo period
(1603-1868), inheriting over 330 years of
tradition. The "blue crackle" created by the
celadon glaze forms a textured pattern over the
entire vessel, giving it a rustic charm.
The painting of "hashiri-goma" (a running horse)
is symbolic of *obori soma-yaki*.
Also, the unique "double layered structure"
technique keeps hot water from cooling too
quickly, allowing you to keep the vessel hot
after filling it with hot water.

**Fukushima Prefecture
Aizu Hongo Ware**

The Oldest White Porcelain in Tohoku: Dual
Faces of Pottery and Porcelain

Pottery production is said to have begun during
the Warring States period (1467-1615) when
tiles were fired for the roof of Kurokawa Castle
in Aizu-Wakamatsu. This region is home to
Tohoku's oldest white porcelain, and produces
both pottery and porcelain. The porcelain
features numerous techniques, including
underglaze blue decoration with cobalt, and
painted designs using Japanese and Western
pigments. The pottery possesses a simple,
approachable, and deeply satisfying character,
utilizing traditional amber glaze and natural ash
glazes.



**Yamagata Prefecture
Uetsu Shinafu**

Coarse-textured bark cloth crafted by hand

Uetsu Shinafu is woven from threads made from
bast fibers extracted from the inner bark of
trees such as the linden which grows in the
mountainous areas of the Uetsu region. As it is
made from tree bark fibers, automation is
impossible, and all steps of the weaving are
done by hand, taking a year to complete.
The fabric has a coarse texture and a cool,
refined feel, and is used not only for "obi," but
also for many daily items such as bags and
hats.

Fukushima Prefecture

Aizu Lacquerware

Brilliant and diverse decorations

Authentic lacquer crafts took root in the Aizu
region at the end of the 16th century, during the
time of Lord Gamo Ujisato. Always adopting the
latest techniques, it's renowned for its vibrant
decorations such as maki-e (sprinkled pictures)
and chinkin(gold inlay). Decoration techniques
include the elegant "Tetsusabi-nuri" (a kind of
relief technique), "Kinmushikui-nuri" (its patterns
are created by scattering rice husks, and
layering metal powder and colored lacquer
make its elaborate surface) husks, "Kijiro-nuri"
displaying a beautiful wood grain, and
"Hana-nuri" with a beautiful lacquer surface.
These glamorous decorations feature
auspicious designs beloved by Japanese
people, and traditional Aizu paintings that
delight the eye.



Yamagata Prefecture

**Yamagata Buddhist
Altars**

Traditional golden Buddhist altars evoking
solemnity and master craftsmanship thanks
to specialization

Buddhist altars were introduced to Yamagata in
the mid-Edo period(1603-1868).
It was the abundance of wood and high-quality
lacquer that led to them being developed in this
region. Yamagata Buddhist altars are made in
seven stages, with lacquer painters, *maki-e* artists
and metalwork craftsmen each bringing their
finest skills to the task.
The *Kyuden* (miniature palace) structure features
intricate craftsmanship using bracket complex
joinery, while the metal fittings, decorated with
black arabesque patterns embellished with gold
inlay, add a touch of luxury as well as depth.

Yamagata Prefecture

Tendo Shogi Pieces

The beauty of the wood grain, the wood
texture, and Koma-moji calligraphy

Tendo now accounts for 90% of the national
production of *shogi* pieces.
Shogi is a strategic game, and in the late Edo
period (1603-1868), making *shogi* pieces was
encouraged as suitable side work for samurai.
The manufacturing process is divided into wood
shaping, carving, and character writing.
There are two styles of characters on the
pieces: *kaisho* (block script), and *sosho*
(cursive script). The *sosho* style is a unique and
beautiful script handed down in Tendo *shogi*.



Yamagata Prefecture

Yamagata Casting

When it comes to tea ceremony kettles,
Yamagata casting

When it comes to tea ceremony kettles, Yamagata
cast iron boasts a history of 900 years dating
back to the Heian period (794 - 1185).
The local soil and river sand are very suitable for
casting, and many kettles used in the tea
ceremony are produced in Yamagata.
The iron kettles, bronze vases, iron pots and
ornaments are thin, yet have delicate surfaces
and precise shapes thanks to excellent
craftsmanship. Stylish modern cast metal items
are also produced with skilled techniques.

Yamagata Prefecture

Oitama Pongee

Silk textiles from the castle town of
Yonezawa

Oitama Pongee is a general term for textiles
produced in this area, which flourished with the
encouragement of Lord Uesugi Yozaan of the
Yonezawa domain. There are five varieties:
Yonezawa Itajime Kasuri, *Shirataka Itajime
Kasuri*, *Weit Kasuri*, *Combined Kasuri*, and
Plant-dyed Tsumugi. All are plain weave with
pre-dyed yarns, and have a rustic, natural
texture.
Of the various plant dyes, vivid dyeing using the
local specialty, safflower, has been revived in
Oitama, from where it originated.





DO YOU KNOW THE MARK OF TRADITION?

Traditional crafts designated by the Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry can be labeled as "Traditional Crafts Designated by the Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry" on individual products, and the use of the traditional mark serves as proof of the designation.

This certification is given by cooperative associations of traditional craft manufacturers that have been certified by the Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry regarding inspection methods, inspection standards, and other inspection regulations. The inspection verifies compliance with the content designated by the Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry as a Traditional Craft Product (traditional techniques, methods, raw materials, and manufacturing region). Products that pass this inspection and bear the "Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry Designated Traditional Craft Product" mark can therefore be considered authentic traditional craft products

Traditional crafts designated under the "Act on the Promotion of Traditional Craft Industries" must meet the following requirements:

1. They must be primarily intended for use in daily life
2. The production process must be largely handcrafted
3. They must be manufactured using traditional techniques or methods
4. They must be made with traditional raw materials
5. They must originate from a specific production region

[Production and Publication]
TEAM TOHOKU CRAFT Secretariat
Tohoku Bureau of Economy, Trade and Industry,
Culture and Creative Industries Office
TEL: 022-221-4923



TEAM TOHOKU CRAFT

Aomori Prefecture

Department of Economy and Industry,
Local Business Assistance Division
Marketing Support Group
TEL: 017-734-9375
https://www.pref.aomori.lg.jp/soshiki/sangyo/chikikigyo/dento-kogei_aomori.html



Iwate Prefecture

Department of Commerce,
Labor and Tourism, Industry and Economic
Exchange Division
TEL: 019-629-5535
<https://www.pref.iwate.jp/>



Miyagi Prefecture

Department of Economy,
Commerce and Tourism,
New Industry Promotion Division
TEL: 022-211-2722
<https://www.pref.miyagi.jp/soshiki/shinsan/>



Akita Prefecture

Department of Industry and Labor,
Regional Industry Promotion Division
TEL: 018-860-2225
<https://akita-tesigoto.jp/>



Yamagata Prefecture

Department of Industry and Labor,
Prefectural Products and Trade Promotion
Division
TEL: 023-630-3316
<https://www.pref.yamagata.jp/110010/kensei/shouka/soshikianna/shokokanko/110010.html>



Fukushima Prefecture

Trade Promotion Division
TEL: 024-521-7296
<https://www.pref.fukushima.lg.jp/sec/32031c/>



TRAVEL TO TOHOKU

The Official tourism website of TOHOKU, Japan
Packed with recommended Tohoku
sightseeing spots, events, and itineraries!

For Tohoku sightseeing information.

[Travel to Tohoku](https://www.tohokukanko.jp/en/) [search](#)

<https://www.tohokukanko.jp/en/>



Akita Prefecture

Odate Magewappa (bent wood)

Elegant wood grain, and the fragrant scent of cedar

Only highly elastic Akita cedar that has endured the harshness of nature is used for *Odate Magewappa* (bent wood). The fine tree rings have a unique beauty and toughness, along with a refreshing cedar scent. Akita cedar is thinly peeled to expose the grain, and then bent into rings using a special technique, which are sewn together with mountain cherry bark. Lightweight and easy to handle, product development also focuses on meeting modern needs for daily use items.

Akita Prefecture

Akita Cedar Tubs and Barrels

Specially selected Akita cedar

Akita cedar, which grows in deep snow and harsh environments, features uniform annual rings, a beautiful fine grain and a pleasant fragrance, and is resistant to warping. Casks and barrels made from Akita cedar have a long history, and barrels believed to date back to the late Heian period (1080-1180) have been discovered at Akita Castle. However, the skill of carefully selecting the wood to match its grain and color, and fitting it into casks and barrels without the slightest deviation, is true craftsmanship. Today, the benefits of this natural, breathable material are once again being rediscovered.



Akita Prefecture

Kaba-zaiku (Cherry Bark Craft)

A technique handed down only in Kakunodate

Kaba-zaiku (Cherry Bark Craft) began as side work for lower-ranking samurai in Kakunodate during the Tenmei era (1781-1789), and has been passed down to the present under the protection of the Satake clan. Kaba-zaiku (Cherry Bark Craft), made by utilizing the texture of mountain cherry tree bark, is a technique unique to Kakunodate, and is said to be a bark craft unparalleled anywhere in the world. Expressing the unique beauty of mountain cherry tree bark, these products are strong and moisture-resistant, and the more they are used, the more lustrous they become, allowing you to enjoy their truly rustic charm.

Akita Prefecture

Kawatsura Lacquerware

Rustic, sturdy, and durable

Kawatsura lacquerware is distinguished by its rustic simplicity with an emphasis on practicality. The techniques nurtured through 800 years of tradition since the Kamakura period (1185-1333) exude a simple warmth. "Jinuri" (the base coating) is a typical undercoating process, and the careful attention to detail results in durable lacquerware. Also noteworthy are "hananuri" (flower coating) which requires a high level of skill, and the unique technique of *chinkin* (gold inlay).



Miyagi Prefecture

Naruko Lacquerware

Lacquering techniques that highlight the wood grain

With a history spanning 350 years since the early Edo period (1603-1868), Naruko lacquerware has been crafted primarily for everyday items. Naruko lacquerware is characterized by lacquering techniques that bring out the gentle wood grain. The more it is used, the more transparent the lacquer becomes, showcasing the grain even more beautifully. Techniques include "Kijiro-nuri," which reveals the wood grain with a transparent lacquer; "Fuki-urushi finish," which leaves only the color of the lacquer on the surface of the wood; and "Ryumon-nuri," which creates ink-flowing patterns. Furthermore, the traditional "Nuri-tate" finish has a moist beauty.

Miyagi Prefecture

SENDAI Tansu

A luxurious and sturdy chest of drawers representing the 'Date' culture

Said to have originated in the late Edo period (1603-1868) for samurai and merchant families, SENDAI Tansu feature a base of wood such as zelkova, finished with a *kijiro* lacquer that accentuates the wood grain, and adorned with stylish and flashy metal fittings. From the mid-Meiji period (1868-1912), luxurious fittings featuring artistic rendering of a lion and dragons, popular with foreigners, were created for export to Europe and the United States, and the advanced techniques used to create these chests have been passed down to the present day.



Miyagi Prefecture

Traditional Miyagi Kokeshi Dolls

A kokeshi culture unique to Tohoku

Originally created as souvenirs from hot springs in the Tohoku region after the mid-Edo period (1603-1868), Miyagi Prefecture has five distinct styles of kokeshi: *Naruko*, *Sakunami*, *Togatta*, *Yajiro*, and *Hijiori*. These dolls feature a simple design consisting of only a head and torso. The pristine beauty of these dolls, nurtured in the natural surroundings of mountain villages, continues to this day through the unique shapes and patterns of each production area.

Miyagi Prefecture

Ogatsu Inkstones

Cherished by Masamune Date, a local lord

Ogatsu inkstones have a long history, having been praised as superior inkstones since the Muromachi period (1336-1573). They were even favored by Date Masamune, the feudal lord of the Sendai domain. Ogatsu stone meets all the ideal qualities of an inkstone, accounting for 90% of natural inkstone raw material produced in Japan. With a well-balanced roughness and fineness of the edge, as well as hardness and softness, the inkstones are black or blue-black in color, rich in luster, and have a smooth surface, making them a highly attractive tool.



Iwate Prefecture

Joboji-nuri Lacquerware

Simplicity born out of high quality

The beauty of utility is a tradition handed down in this region, Japan's largest producer of lacquerware. Because it is lacquerware for everyday use, its defining feature is the lasting texture achieved through the use of high-quality raw materials and skilled craftsmanship. Most are single colors of plain vermilion, black or amber, with a matte finish. The name Joboji-nuri lacquerware comes from the name of the Johoji clan, a powerful clan that ruled northern Iwate Prefecture in the Middle Ages.

Iwate Prefecture

Hidehira-nuri Lacquerware

A golden diamond motif evoking the opulent heritage of the Oshu Fujiwara culture

Originating with the Oshu Fujiwara clan, who established a splendid golden culture in the late Heian period (1086 -1192), it features gold leaf in a unique diamond pattern scattered across a red and black base. As this region was also renowned for its lacquer and gold production, the technique of using gold leaf has been preserved. The satin finish enhances the inherent beauty of the lacquer, evoking a sense of both nobility and strength.



Iwate Prefecture

Nambu Ironware

Sturdy, robust, and long-lasting

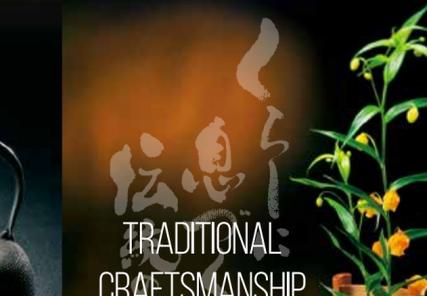
Its origins date back to the mid-17th century, when the Nambu Domain invited tea kettle craftsmen from Kyoto. Cast ironware produced in Morioka and Mizusawa is collectively called Nambu Ironware. Among its traditional techniques, "kanake-dome" (metal-like coating), which prevents ironware from rusting, is unique to Nambu ironware. Nambu ironware is valued not only for its beautiful designs, but also for the potential health benefits associated with the iron content in the metal used in its construction.

Iwate Prefecture

Iwayado Chests

Ornate metal fittings that vividly showcase exquisite patterns

The Iwayado Chests has a profound presence and elegance, harmonizing the beautiful grain of zelkova wood (*keyaki*) with elaborate and bold decorative metal fittings. Iwayado is a place with historical ties to the Oshu Fujiwara family, and traditions of metal casting and woodworking have thrived there since ancient times. The wood grain, which has endured and grown strong through severe wind and snow, gains character and depth over the years. The robust construction is further enhanced by the meticulously hand-hammered metal fittings.



TRADITIONAL CRAFTSMANSHIP WOVEN INTO EVERYDAY LIFE



Aomori Prefecture

Tsugaru Lacquerware

The northernmost traditional lacquerware in Japan

Tsugaru lacquerware is Japan's northernmost traditional lacquerware, having been produced mainly in Hirosaki, Aomori Prefecture, since the Genroku period (1688~1704). Characterized by its robust and elegant finish, it is crafted using Tsugaru cypress as the base material, and involves approximately 50 processes to complete. It employs a wide variety of techniques, including the signature "Kara-nuri" style, with its beautiful speckled pattern created by layering colored lacquer; the stylish "Nanako-nuri" with its *Edo-komon*-style patterns; the luxurious "Nishiki-nuri" with its brocade-style finish; and the sophisticated "Monsha-nuri" with its matte black finish.

