



# Arts & Crafts

## Stamps



### Stamp Books

One fall, my husband and I were walking toward the Hakone Shrine when we noticed a man, an American, sketching in a book using a special brush and palette. After he finished, he explained to me that the book is called the shu-in-cho. Soon after, my husband asked some Japanese friends if they knew about the shu-in-cho. One did, and even gave him one as a gift.

The shu-in-cho is a special note stamp book. When closed, it's about 6" x 4". Ours has a hard cover with a colorful design depicting a view of the shrine from which it came. The pages unfold accordion style, so it is really one piece of paper about 8' long. Some others we've seen have plain covers with a place to put the shrine's name. The Americans at the Hakone shrine were able to include their own artwork with the stamps, since their shu-in-cho was about 12" tall.

The purpose of the book is to collect stamps (hanko) from shrines and other places you visit. Shrines, temples, museums and historical buildings are good places to look for stamps. We've even found stamps and stamp pads at some rest areas. The pages should be stamped and read from right to left. On our first outing, armed with our new shu-in-cho, we stopped at a "booth" at the shrine and asked the person behind the counter if there was a stamp. You can usually find the stamp and pads on a table. They might also be in a gift shop, where shrine items are sold, or sometimes just in a corner by themselves.

Our earliest stamps include a picture of Matsumoto Castle, a shogun, and stamps of each of the museums we visited in Ueno. On one trip to a shrine in Kyoto, we were able to get a monk to not only stamp our book, but also decorate the stamp and surrounding page with fancy design lettering using brush and ink (shodo). The books can usually be purchased for Y500 (and up) in the same place the stamps are bought or in a temple or shrine. If you purchase one at a shrine, ask the calligrapher to write the name of the shrine on the book's cover using brush and ink. This costs about Y300-Y400. The stamps are free. Your shu-in-cho can hold a treasure house of special memories. Think of the fun you'll have looking for a calligrapher to write in your book— it'll really add zest to your sightseeing days in Japan!

Judith McKay, Rita Mayer 7/97

## Pottery

### Mashiko Pottery

Various styles of earthenware or porcelains are found in nearly every prefecture of Japan. Each place has its characteristic styles and colors, depending upon local clays, diverse glazes, different traditions and geographical locations. Mashiko is one of many pottery towns in Japan. This village is located in Tochigi prefecture, 90 miles north of Yokota, 36 miles southeast of Nikko (about 4 hours away depending on traffic). Traditionally, Mashiko produced solid, rustic kitchenware for the Kanto and Tohoku areas until Shoji Hamada, world-renowned potter (later named a national intangible human treasure), arrived in this village and established his kiln in 1924. Hamada promoted traditional Mashiko-ware as folk art and eventually improved its creative and artistic aspects. The pottery is hand-made and worked with kick-wheels (rokuro). Its glazes are made from materials and ashes which are abundantly produced in this area. It is baked in climbing kilns (norigama in Japan).

Shop at 'Mashiko Toge Village (Togeimura), which consists of six or seven shops including Cage Eru, beautifully decorated with Mashiko-wares and folk crafts produced in this vicinity. Stop there for a coffee break, light lunch, or snack. 'Tsukamoto' is one of the most beautiful display houses in the town. The first floor is a shop and the rooms upstairs are where gallery shows are held. Another place to visit is the Cooperative Center (Kyohan Center). Also visit the Mashiko Reference Collection (Mashiko Sankokan) which houses Hamada's art and craft collection from all over the world.

For tours to this area, check with the Yujo Recreation Center or be adventurous and drive (the Japan Expressway map in English and the Tohoku Expressway map in Japanese which are available free at larger rest areas and can be cross-referenced with the Road Atlas of Japan for road details).

**DIRECTIONS:** Turn right on Route 16 out of the Terminal Gate toward Kawagoe, Omiya, and the Tohoku Expressway. (In two places, Route 16 will split but bear left each time, staying on Route 16.) At approximately 36 km from the Yokota Terminal Gate, Route 16 intersects with Route 17. When Route 16 splits off from Route 17 (17 goes to Tokyo), continue on Route 16 (the Higashi Omiya Bypass) to the Tohoku Expressway at the Iwatsuki interchange. Go north on the expressway for 36 km to Exit 7 for Sano Fujioka. Turn right on Route 50 and go east for 32 km to Route 294. Turn left onto Route 294. Continue on it through the town of Moka. Look for signs to Mashiko using the Kanji shown above.

An alternate route (taken by MWR drivers) is to leave the Tohoku Expressway at Exit 9 for Kanuma and drive through Utsunomiya to Route 123 (via Route 4) for Mashiko. However, Utsunomiya can be complicated, especially if you are unfamiliar with the local geography and do not read Japanese.

Ritsuko Taylor, Sharon Kernstock

## Hanno Gama Kiln

Hanno City has a long history of pottery making, commonly referred to as "yakimono." Many years ago, utilitarian

pottery was created in Hanno and business thrived. For a variety of reasons, such as war and lack of interest in the old ways, along with growing interest in new techniques and materials (plastic), the pottery town stopped producing Hanno-Yaki.

The sources of clay, however, remained. Approximately 80 years ago, interest in Hanno-Yaki was renewed through the interest of university professors and students. Today there are many pottery shops throughout the city. Each potter has his own style in use of glazes and clay. Many potters use local clay, while others prefer the clay from Shigaraki. Some shops do very fine porcelain pieces.

I would recommend going without children. There is no admission fee. The pottery is open 10am-5pm and closed on Tuesday. It is also closed during the week of New Years. Parking is available.

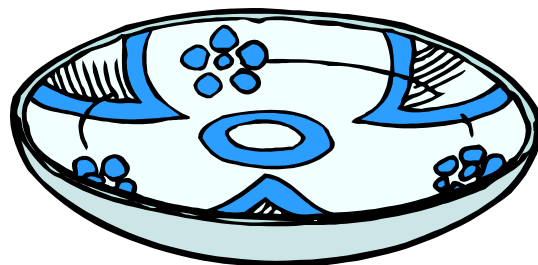
**DIRECTIONS:** From the Terminal Gate, turn right on Rt. 16. Stay in right lane and go through the underpass. Turn left at the 4<sup>th</sup> light after the underpass onto Ome Kaido (2.8km from Terminal Gate, McDonald's on left). After the second blue walkover, the road splits. The left side turns wide to the

left. The right side has a signal light. Bear right. Follow this road to the signal light before the railroad tracks. Turn right on Nariki Kaido. Nariki Kaido passes a school on the right and then comes to a signal light where the road forks. Turn right and continue to a "T" intersection, Osogi Kaido. Turn right. Follow Osogi Kaido for 5.7 km. Start looking for pink and black signs with the kanji for Hanno Gama Kiln printer horizontally. At the second pink and black sign, the road forks with the main road going to the left. You want to turn right. This road will narrow, but keep going. Look for white guardrails on the right. The road will slope down to the right. Turn right at the white guardrail.

Look for the rectangular sign, black on wood, on the right. This is the entrance to Hanno Gama Kiln. Torazawa is the featured artist at the kiln. Many of his pieces are on display and for sale. His works range from utilitarian to abstract. Prices range from ¥500-¥2,000,000. Most of the pottery is stoneware or earthenware, but Torazawa does some special pieces from porcelain with celadon glazes. He also has some pieces which follow the traditional Hanno-Yaki designs. Many other artists have pieces displayed in the showroom. Students are often working, so less expensive wares are available.

It's also a great place to sight see. The grounds are very picturesque with a stream running through the back. Sack lunches could be enjoyed, but it is not really a picnic area. Located out back is a nobori-gama kiln to interest those who relish having the opportunity to observe the specifics of pottery making. In the spring, a festival features many artisans from woodworking to textiles, as well as potters.

Sharon Kernstock



# Craft Stores

So you've been to the Skills Development Center and the Yokota Community Center, but you just can't find that special piece of material, or those little drawer pulls, or a tea box that is just the right size? Not to worry! The stores outside the gate have every art and craft supply you ever dreamed of...and many more you never even imagined! Here's a few of our favorite stores .. just to get you started!

## Tea Boxes

Want one of those tea boxes? A tea shop with plenty of parking on a QUIET, wide residential street is located just 5 minutes from base. Turn right out the Terminal Gate and go under the overpass, staying on Rt. 16. Go to the 3rd light (MizuhoNishiMatsubura Intersection. Marufuji Bldg. on your right) and turn left. Just 200 yards down on your left is the Tea Shop with beautiful tea boxes stacked for display. There is plenty of parking available for this large store and lots of goods inside.

Marcia St. John, Karen Sexton 1/97

## Midorikawa: Best Little Frame Shop

Although little English is spoken, it's easy to have that special piece of art, needlework or treasured memento expertly framed. Midorikawa is the name and it's a short trip from Yokota and easy to find. Go out the Supply Gate and continue straight until you cross the two sets of tracks. At the first traffic light after the railroad tracks turn left. Watch for the brick wall after you turn. The shop is on the left. Parking is available.

Hours: Monday-Saturday  
9-12:30 and 2-7pm  
Phone: 0425-57-6845

Thora Davidson-White

## Tokyu Hands Stores

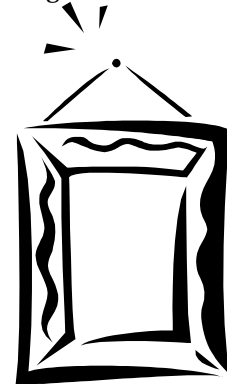
A chain of great craft stores, the Tokyu Hands closest to us are located in Machida, Shibuya, Shinjuku and Ikebukuro. The Machida store is said to be the least crowded of all the stores in the Tokyo sphere and nicely organized unlike the original Shibuya store. The Ikebukuro store is also large while the Shinjuku branch is smaller.

In Machida, the fabric department is quite good, especially if you are looking for "traditional designed" fabric like the fourteen-inch wide indigo cotton. The nice thing is you can buy it by the meter here rather than the whole roll. The kitchenware department is also great fun with both utensils and food products of all sorts. The fibers department is a dream for knitters, crochet fans and weavers. The washi selection is adequate; the basketry supplies are good. There are leather working supplies, jewelry supplies, stationery, etc.

Just give yourself plenty of time to go through and plenty of yen to buy all the great items you'll see. They do take credit cards such as Visa, MasterCard and American Express

**DIRECTIONS:** For people who don't care to spend half their day driving down Rt. 16 to Machida, take the train. Get on at Higashi Fussa station to Hachioji and change to the Yokohama line. Machida is the eighth stop and clearly marked in English as all JR stations are. Look for signs for Tokyu Hands and follow the long enclosed walkway there. Easy!

Jill Jones



## Yuzawaya

If you are looking for a craft store with a large variety of items, then Yuzawaya is the place is for you. This store carries items for just about any craft.

The following is a brief highlight of merchandise. On the 4<sup>th</sup> floor, there is a wide variety of fabrics and sewing notions. The 5<sup>th</sup> floor has the widest variety of drapery cording I've ever seen. You can also find carpets on this floor. For the artist, the 6<sup>th</sup> floor carries a huge selection of art supplies. You'll also find an extensive selection of rubber stamps here. The 7<sup>th</sup> floor will be bead heaven for anyone who uses beads in crafting. If you're interested in washi paper, they have a good selection as well as numerous kits. Knitting and crochet enthusiasts will enjoy the selections of yarns. This floor also carries a variety of other craft notions. The 8<sup>th</sup> floor has stained glass and leather work supplies.

Yuzawaya is open 10-7, closed the second Wednesday of every month. Tel 0422-79-4141.

**DIRECTIONS:** Take the Ome Line from Fussa. If you get on the local train, change to the Chuo Line in Tachikawa. Take the Chuo Line towards Tokyo and exit at Kichijoji (don't take a Special Rapid; they don't stop here.) At Kichijoji, follow the signs for the central exit. You'll see several entrances for Yuzawaya along the way with signs in red. If you choose to drive, take your atlas! Yuzawaya is located just south of the Kichijoji train station. Parking is free for one hour if you buy over Y2,000 and have your parking ticket validated at the third floor service counter. Additional time costs Y300 per thirty minutes.

Cynthia Fox 7/97



# Fabric Stores

## Cotton Field

Cotton Field, a fabric store in Kichijoji, is really made up of two stores, one across from the other. One store carries fabrics and the other store carries sewing notions. It's about a 10 minute walk from the Kichijoji station.

**DIRECTIONS:** Take the Central Exit from the Kichijoji train station and turn left. Follow along this road, passing PARCO. You will then turn right at the intersection after you come to the AM/PM store. You will see both stores a little ways up the road. Store hours are 10am to 7pm. They have sales on the first Monday of the month from 10am until 2pm. Tel: 0422-21-1406.

## Ishikawa - in Fussa

From the Seiyu department store, walk over the train tracks (through the Fussa station) and exit onto the traffic circle/bus turnaround in downtown Fussa. Continue down the main street (west) to the first traffic light. The second store on the left side after the light is Ishikawa. You will find the fabric department on the third floor.

## Chigusa - in Fussa

This store has a limited selection of fabric but it also has various notions needed for many fabric-related crafts. You will also find finished craft projects for sale. To get there, drive past Seiyu and continue north for 1.4 km. Look for large plastic greenhouses (florist) on your left. Chigusa is approximately 200 meters past them on the right hand side of the road. The dark green vertical sign is in English.

## Lilyan Discount Fabric - in Fussa

Drive past Seiyu, continue north 2 km (about half a kilometer north of Chigusa). The store is on the left side of the road directly across the street from McDonalds (gives Dad and the kids something to do while you shop).

Melody Hostetler, Cynthia Fox

## Okadaya – in Shinjuku

Are you looking for a place to make your sewing and needlework dreams come true? You can find just that in Shinjuku, in two stores named "Okadaya." There are 11 floors of sewing supplies, ribbon, trims and more.

In the original store, the first floor has cotton fabric and at Christmas there is a good selection of American holiday fabric. You will find the prices much higher than those at the BX, but keep in mind these items are imported to Japan from the States. The second floor is strictly buttons, belts and buckles, as well as supplies to make earrings and other jewelry. You will find beads, sequins and snaps on the third floor. Lace,

ribbon, appliqués and the like are located on the fourth floor. The fifth floor has notions including zippers and thread. There is also a section on this floor that has evening fabrics and silk. You can find nearly any type of dressy fabric here unless you need bridal fabric. For that you need to head up to the sixth floor where you will find everything you need for the bride: fabric for dresses and veils, as well as silk flowers.

You can find what need for pillow making here too. In another section on this floor you will also find craft kits and yarn for knitting and crocheting.

If you have not found what you need in this store, you can make your way over to the new store. Here you can find sewing notions on the first floor. The second floor has buttons and sequins. Cross stitch materials are found on the third floor and you will find yarn, knitting and crocheting items and patterns on the fourth floor.

**DIRECTIONS:** Get on at Fussa and change in Tachikawa to the Chuo Line going to Tokyo (usually track 4 & 5). Get off at Shinjuku. Take the East exit out of the train station. As you exit and go up the stairs there will be a forty-foot television screen (Studio ALTA) in front of you on the wall across the street. There is a small market on the corner and Okadaya is on the left side about five doors down. Across the street you will see the new store.

Cindy Drossner, Viki Paulson-Cody

## Indigo Dye Workshop - in Ome

Just across the Tama River from Ome is a factory/store where you can buy indigo-dyed products and watch the traditional methods of dyeing the fabric. The rich blue color is produced from indigo root with four other products including sake and lime. Shades of blue are produced when fabric is dipped into the dye and brought out to oxidize in the air. The more it is dipped, the darker the shade. Rice paste is applied to the fabric to create the various designs.

**DIRECTIONS:** Turn right out of the Fussa gate onto Rt. 16, turn left at the second light. Continue through a red blinking light, then turn right at the "T" (1.6 km) onto Okutama Kaido. Drive 4.1 km, (11 lights), and turn left at the intersection with Mobil and Cosmo gas stations just before a hill. Cross the Tama River and turn right at the first light. You are now on Route 411 (Yoshino Kaido) which you follow for 3 km. Turn left at the seventh light (sign says Itsukaichi, left and Central Ome, right). The indigo workshop is a block past the light on the right with a bright blue sign.

Melody Hostetler



# Folk Crafts and Folk Art

## Bingoya

Bingoya is an attractive folk craft shop in a building designed to resemble a traditional storehouse. It contains six floors brimming with folk toys, baskets, pottery, hand-dyed fabrics, lacquer ware and country furniture. The items Bingoya carries are practical things made simply and strongly for everyday use; they are usually unsigned by the maker. They include woven bamboo baskets, baskets woven of the akebi vine, hand woven obis and "ai some" or natural indigo dyed fabrics in traditional Japanese designs.

**Shopping Hints:** A set of lacquered soup bowls are priced from ¥1500 to ¥13,000. Hand-dyed cloth begins at ¥1500. Many kinds of kokeshi dolls are from ¥500 to ¥6000. There are also drums, masks kites, straw raincoats, tea bowls, vases, boxes made from the bark of cherry trees and washi.

Bingoya is open Tuesday-Sunday from 10am to 7pm. It is closed on Japanese holidays. Admission is free. Call 03-3202-8778.

**DIRECTIONS:** Take the Chuo Line toward Tokyo until Mitaka station, switch to the Tozai Line and get off at Waseda station. Take the exit to the far left. You will see a sign that says "Waseda University." Go up the steps and make a left and up another short set of steps. When you come out, you should be facing McDonalds. Cross the street using the crosswalk toward your left. You should be crossing toward KFC. Once in front of KFC, walk toward the intersection on the left, then turn right. The street you will take is called Natsu-mezaka Dori. Head uphill. You will go past the fork with a gas station on the corner, continue straight on Natsu-mezaka Dori. The road will fork again. Go right for about a 5 minute walk. You will come to an intersection that looks like an "X". Follow the arrows on the diagram through the intersection and on the right, you will pass a 7-11 store and a tall parking structure with a driving range behind it. Bingoya is on the right.

Edie Dean, Mavis Hara



## Japan Traditional Craft Center

A visit to the Japan Traditional Craft Center in Tokyo is a must if you are into crafts. They always have a display of 100-150 craft items officially designated and "traditional craft products" including textiles, pottery, lacquer ware, bamboo and much more. Almost all items are on sale and the prices are not extremely high (it is not cheap however). In addition to the standard items on display, at least two special showings are happening at all times with special crafts from certain areas on display and sale. The special display always include the craftsmen themselves who sometimes demonstrate their work. An information desk is available (no problem with English), and the library and videotape corner both have English selections.

Melody Hostetler

**DIRECTIONS:** Take the JR to Shinjuku Station. Transfer to the Yamanote Line. Go 4 stops to the Ikebukuro Station. Come out of the "Metropolitan" exit located on the 2nd floor.

Address: Metropolitan Plaza Building 1-11-1 Nishi-Ikebukuro, Toshima-ku, Tokyo 171-0021

Phone: 03-5954-6066. Fax: 03-5954-6036

URL: <http://www.kougei.or.jp/>

Hours: Daily 11:00am-7:00pm. Last day of each special exhibition (Tuesday) closes at 5:00pm.

Admission: Free

Parking: Metropolitan Plaza Building Parking, Tobu Department Store Parking.

Brochure 5/02

## Traditional Craft Exhibition

Recently, each year at the beginning of March, the Japan Traditional Craft Center organizes a Japan Traditional Crafts Exhibition is held at the Tokyo Dome City Prism Hall. Craft representatives from all over the country demonstrate their skills and exhibited pieces are sold at 20%. Many of the culture groups take their western friends who purchase obi cords, iron pots, and gift items. For information, check the website [www.kougei.or.jp/](http://www.kougei.or.jp/) or call 03-5954-6033.

Theresa Negly 5/02



# Japanese Theater

## Bunraku

“Bunraku” is the modern name for the traditional puppet theater of Japan. It is one of the three major surviving forms of art – “Haiku” poetry and the “Kabuki” theater being the other two – developed during the Edo period (1600-1868), when their country was isolated from all other nations.

The Bunraku theater presents both serious and entertaining dramas. The puppets are approximately one-half to two-thirds human size. Each puppet portraying a major character is operated jointly by three men. A chanter transforms the text into a dramatic performance. Music accompaniment is by traditional Japanese instruments. Bunraku is usually presented in three parts. Normally one part is sufficient to experience this art.

Osaka is the home of the Bunraku theater, but performances are also held at the National Theater, 4-1 Hayabusa Cho, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo. Telephone is 03-265-7411. Bunraku is not recommended for children under 12. Tickets for one part are ¥1500. The chanter uses traditional Japanese and is difficult for even native speakers to understand. Do not attempt to enjoy Bunraku without renting English headphones for ¥500. There is a ¥1500 security deposit, refunded upon return of the headphones.

**DIRECTIONS:** Parking is available, but riding the trains or subway is recommended. The nearest subway station is Hanzomon on the Hanzomon line. The nearest JR station is Yotsuya on the Chuo Line. A taxi is reasonable to the National Theater from Yotsuya station. There are buses waiting in front of the theater after each performance to go to Shinjuku or Yotsuya station.

Judy Brooks

## Kabuki-za Theater

Have you ever been to Kabuki? What is Kabuki, you may ask? Having become an expert after attending four performances and writing a term paper for my latest course at the University of Maryland, I'll tell you a little about this uniquely Japanese form of drama and maybe pique your interest in experiencing it firsthand.

Kabuki is live theater; a form of drama indigenous to Japan. Kabuki is exciting, exotic and, most of all, good entertainment. Kabuki gives a taste of Japan; an insight into Japanese history and society. It is easy to get to and easy to understand. Later, I will tell you where to go and what to do. But first, a little history.

Kabuki dates from the early 17<sup>th</sup> century when a Buddhist priestess brought a troop of folk dancers to perform at religious festivals in Kyoto. Although her shows were based on earlier skits and dances, she called them “avant garde”, or “Kabuki” in Japanese. Almost immediately, Kabuki was popular. Rich patrons began to fight over sponsorship of dancers

and groups. To prevent the fierce competition, the government banned women from the stage in 1629. Young men began to play the female roles, and soon the uproar grew just as ferocious as before. By 1653 the government decreed that only mature males could perform.

Forced to rely on acting skills rather than pretty faces, actors began to develop the dramatic elements that make up Kabuki today. As audiences began to demand more interesting presentations, actors updated older forms of theater and looked to history for exciting stories. Many of today's plays date from the 17<sup>th</sup> century and are based on events from a thousand years ago. During the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Kabuki faced serious competition from a new form of theater featuring puppet plays imported from China. These plays are now known by the name of a famous puppet theater, Bunraku. Kabuki rose to the challenge and adapted many Bunraku plays, costumes and theatrical devices, such as the revolving stage. Much of the lost audience was soon enticed to return.

At the same time, the center of the Kabuki world moved from sedate Kyoto to Edo (Tokyo), capital of the Tokugawa Shogunate's government. Perhaps the rough and tumble samurai who clamored around the shogun and the increasingly wealthy merchant class were a more receptive audience for the colorful and raucous Kabuki plays.

In quiet Kyoto, the Emperor's court continued to sponsor what they considered to be more refined styles of entertainment. Even today Kabuki fans still shout encouragement to the actors, eat bento box lunches during the performances and generally make themselves at home in the theater.

Until the late 1800's, Kabuki was tremendously popular to all levels of society except the nobility. Audiences in Edo increased in numbers, and new theaters thrived in the provinces. But rapid westernization during the Meiji Period, be-



ginning in 1864, brought Europeans forms of entertainment that made Kabuki appear old-fashioned to the general public. In the twentieth century, just as movies closed vaudeville theaters in the United States, interest in Kabuki declined in Japan. World War II destroyed the remaining theaters. Television has since preempted many other forms of entertainment.

Now only Kabuki-za Theater in Ginza features daily shows, except for the last week of each month. The new National Theater in Akasaka has frequent Kabuki presentations alternating with other types of entertainment.

Enough history for now. Let's talk about what you will see at a Kabuki show. Kabuki is a spectacle. Costumes are gorgeous, sets are overwhelming; and events are very showy. Even when the action gets a little slow, you can settle back and marvel at the intricate details of the scenery on stage.

The Kabuki stage has several standard elements. From the left front corner is a long runway extending through the audience to the rear of the auditorium. On this runway amazing events thrill the audience: the hero makes a dramatic entrance on horseback along the hanamichi; the evil witch disappears in a puff of smoke; or the young prince sails away in his ship. In the left corner of the stage, a grill hides the small orchestra providing background music. The instruments are flutes, drums, bells and gongs. As the actors move around, the musicians accompany the action with a fascinating combination of sound effects and music.

The stage features several trap doors, a large elevator platform and a huge revolving center section. Special effects that are possible with these unique features include sinking ships, earthquakes destroying castles, monster fish eating the hero or saving him (or her), ghost palaces magically appearing or the sudden entrance of a pivotal character.

To the right of the stage, two key performers sit on a platform or behind a high screen. The first person narrates the action, sings songs, speaks some of the parts, and puts on a performance more important than most of the actors. In the process, he cries, bows, sways, sputters, whispers and wipes his brow, much to the delight of the audience. The other person accompanies the narrator on the shamisen, a three string banjo-like instrument.

At the right front corner of the stage sits a wood block player. With two wooden clappers, he signals the beginning and end of each scene by rapidly building to a crescendo. He also emphasizes footsteps, beats along with the orchestra and accompanies dances.

In some plays, a large orchestra sits on a red draped platform in the center rear of the stage. In other plays, the orchestra will sit to the left rear of the stage. This orchestra contains several kotos, the long horizontal stringed instrument that everyone associates with Japan.

Kabuki music is an introduction to sounds, rhythms and styles totally different from western traditions familiar to us. They sound harsh and disorganized. For a long time the music will seem like an intrusion instead of an accompaniment to the action. However, music is an essential element of the performance.

The visual impact of Kabuki comes from the costumes. Women (played by men, remember) are dressed in beautiful

kimonos and wear fantastic wigs weighing up to 30 pounds. Male characters wear a variety of costumes ranging from formal court dress to samurai armor. All are magnificent. The most amazing costume is the formal court dress of heavy brocade with long pants covering the actor's feet and stretching a yard or two behind. Imagine walking in something like that! Although some of the costumes are historically accurate, fantasy often conquers realism. Costumes don't just cover the actor and show who he is. They are also integral to the action. When the actor is in an intensely dramatic situation, such as the frequent suicide, he indicates his mood change by removing part of the costume to reveal a contrasting pattern beneath. Like a butterfly emerging from a cocoon, a hateful witch can turn into a lovely princess.

Are you concerned about complicated plots? Well, the story is usually the least significant part of the Kabuki. The performance, the drama, the music, the costumes and the settings are much more important than who is chasing whom, or why. However, to truly appreciate the performance, you must have an idea of what is happening. At both theaters, you can rent earphones to hear a running commentary of the play, the plot, the actors, the music and any other information. Even Japanese rent earphones because often the dialogue is archaic Japanese and impossible to understand without serious prior study. Rental is about 600 yen, but you have to pay a refundable 1000 yen security deposit.

Call the theaters to check on shows. Remember that titles illustrate another characteristic of Kabuki. The story of a medieval power play sometime in the annals of Japanese history is often represented in terms of clouds or blossoms. Some knowledge does make viewing the play more meaningful. Check out the Kabuki Handbook at Yokota Library; a good source of information.

Performances begin at 11am and 4:30pm. They run about five hours, with several long intermissions to give the audience time to eat and drink. Tickets are about 3,000 yen and higher. Cheaper tickets are for seats in the second balcony. Arriving late is common since the performances are so long. You can get one-act (an hour or so) tickets to the left of the main door, but they are for the third balcony where no earphones are available. For details, the phone number is (03) 3541-3131.

**DIRECTIONS:** Take the subway to Higashi Ginza Station on the Hibiya Line. This station is a straight shot from Hiroo Station near the New Sanno Hotel and is only one stop beyond Ginza Station.

Bob Kuhlo



# Kimono

One of the oldest traditions still seen in modern Japan is the art of kimono dressing. Just as in Western dress, there are all types of kimonos from super casual (Yukata) to very formal (Tomosode) and even a special kimono that is only worn on your wedding day. The kimonos are usually handmade from silk and range from \$500 - \$20,000; the obis range from \$200 - \$10,000. Obis are the decorative centerpiece of the kimono and a glance tells an onlooker whether the woman is married or single by the way they are tied.

Most women in Japan cannot put on a kimono by themselves and hire professional dressers for special occasions. The average fee is 10,000 yen. The dressers train for approximately three years and not only learn how to properly layer each of the segments of the kimono but how to combine colors for various seasons. These are true professionals.

There are even competitions for the adventurous kimono dressers. These contests are based on speed and beauty. The categories are broken down to kimono type and each woman dresses herself. Japanese contestants have a five minute time limit and the foreigner category has a ten minute limit. There is one regional contest and one national contest every year. If you just want to view this contest, it is held at NHK Hall in April as well as televised on Japanese television. If you want to train for this contest, it is possible. In 1991, fourteen foreigners out of over two hundred contestants competed and even though English is not spoken, everyone was more than helpful and gracious. It is best if you are a sponsored, since lessons run about 10,000 yen a month and you must train for a minimum of six months before you can compete. The base periodically offers mini-classes in kimono dressing which are a good basic overview without the expense of professional training.

If you are interested in training professionally, there are kimono sections in most big department stores where you can inquire about lessons. They are not offered in English but if you can pantomime and have good nerves and a sense of humor, you can do it and it is fun!

Kimono dressing is an art and a beautiful tradition in Japan. It has its own etiquette and poetry. I admire the diligence and grace that is involved in preserving this form of dressing. Every time I slip on my tabi (footwear) or tie my obi, I feel somehow connected to a much older history and it will be that part of Japan that I will take with me wherever I go.

Monique Moten

## Decorating with Obi

People have found many unique ways to incorporate the obi into the decorating of their homes although the obi by definition is "a broad sash, worn with a kimono and fastened in the back."

Probably its most popular use is for table decorating. Because of the variance in design and wide range of color, they lend themselves to enhancing any décor, creating any mood, or conveying any theme or idea that you wish. With a set of basic white dishes and a wardrobe of obi you can create a table as elegant or casual as you like. You can also make beautiful (dry-cleanable) place mats from the wide, double sided obi (Maru or Fukuro).

Obi can hang alone if the pattern particularly pleases you or you have something long and narrow that you want to conceal. Fashion a bow from the upper portion of the obi – most likely you will have to cut this part of the obi to accomplish this – and let the rest hang down to be enjoyed.

Obi make wonderful bows to adorn almost anything. The woven Sake obi look great festooning a large grapevine wreath, or a pretty basket. A big bow fashioned from a brocade-type obi will look wonderful on top of a cabinet or bookcase "standing up" with the tails attractively arranged. They can be tied and used to accent a large mirror, screen or a grouping of Korean windows. Speaking of windows, they can be used to drape a long, narrow window; or swaged over curtains or drapes; or tacked, stapled or glued to the cornice board. To really coordinate your window treatment, make tie tacks for

your drapes from the scraps. To do this, of course, you would have to use your scissors. Sometimes you will find a beautiful obi that is stained or has "worn" places. They are perfect to use for these projects.

Tea boxes look beautiful when padded and covered with an obi. Fabulous pillow covers can be made using obi. If coordinating with your window treatment, you might cover the pillow with a complementary solid color and trim with obi scraps left over from covering cornice boards or making tie backs.

A wide, double-sided obi is a Maru obi. It is the most elegant and expensive of the obi. It is usually made of silk and is very formal in design. Another popular style is the Fukuro obi. It is less formal in fabric and design, and patterned only on one side. The Nagoya style is often seen at shrine sales. One third the length of this obi is the same width as the Maru and Fukuro obi, but the remainder is just half as wide. There are two styles of Han Haba obi. These are characterized by being half as wide as the Fukuro obi. The first style is a very formal silk obi, and the second was made by using the fabric scraps from the construction of the more formal obi. The result is the colorful oven casual Sake obi – a perfect accent to country décor and informal entertaining.



## Obi ties – East and West

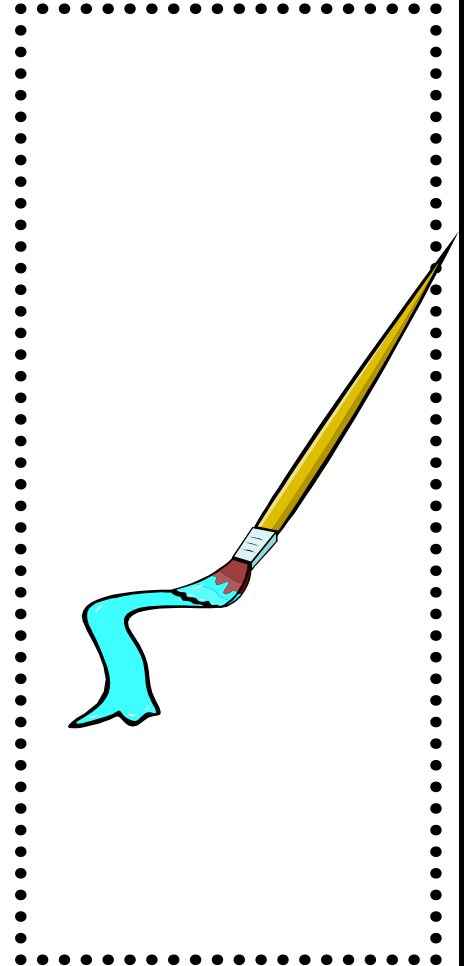
The Yokota Officers Spouses Club published the definitive guide to decorating with obi in 1997. The hard bound book features beautiful color illustrations and complete instructions. A superb gift, especially when accompanied by an obi, the books are sold at the Yokota Thrift Shop, AAFES bookstores and OSC Bazaars.

## Oriental Brush Writing - Shodo

Like so many who have come to Japan for only a short period of time, I decided to leap into every opportunity to absorb just as much of the Japanese culture as I could in a scant 3-year tour. Because I am an artist, my special interest has been in learning all that I could about the arts of Japan, especially those that use the brush. Because I have been a watercolorist for many years, I anticipated being somewhat proficient in using Japanese brushes. It was with some surprise and not a little chagrin that I discovered controlling a Japanese brush was going to be quite a challenge. Further, I found that just mastering the materials and the techniques was not going to be the sum of my educational experience. I was going to have to learn something about what author and artist William Reed uses to define Shodo. One of the best sources of information and guidance is William Reed's Book, *Shodo, the Art of Coordinating Mind, Body and Brush*.

Shodo is Oriental brush writing or the art of painting Chinese or Japanese words with a brush. It differs from calligraphy, which is simply the writing of Chinese or Japanese characters. The word "Shodo" literally means "Way of the Brush". The suffix "-do" is also used in other words indicating the "way of" something – "Kendo" (the Way of the Sword), "Judo" (the Way of Softness), "Sado" (the Way of Tea), "Kyudo" (The Way of the Bow), "Kado" (The Way of the Flower), and "Gado" (The Way of Painting). Each of these "ways" involves more than just mastering materials and techniques. They include at the core, a philosophy that forms the basis for the "way".

In Shodo, as in the other "ways", one strives to achieve what sounds to most Westerners like an impossible contradiction – a state of full concentration and relaxation at the same time. Proper breathing and posture are essential, as is an atmosphere of quiet and simplicity. The writing of Shodo is a creative experience very much like performing a dance or singing a song. In fact, Shodo can be enjoyed both when completed or as it is being done. Like music and dance, it depends on a sense of rhythm and emotional expression as well as on technical expertise. One might say that Shodo does for the eye and the imagination what music does for the ear and the soul.



### Tools and Materials

- **Fude** – the brush, is usually made of bamboo for the stem/body, and hair or animal fur for the bristles. Difficult to control because it is so soft and flexible; it is therefore very responsive to nuances of our own feelings and state of being. If one is rigid, the strokes will be rigid. If one is slack, the strokes will be weak and poorly controlled. The brush is an extension of yourself.
- **Fudemaki** – brush mat used for storing the fude. It is made of bamboo slats and is rolled around the brushes and tied.
- **Kami** – thin paper stretched across a "shitajiki", a black felt undercloth that cushions the paper and protects the work area by absorbing excess ink. Practice paper is called "hanshi".
- **Suiteki** – small water containers, which have two small holes. These allow the artist to add water a drop at a time to the ink. They are often very beautiful and are wonderful collector's items.
- **Bunchin** – paper weights that hold the paper in place. Some of these, like the "suiteki" are beautiful collectors' items.
- **Suzuri** – a stone with a flat surface for rubbing the ink stick and a well or sunken area for water.
- **Sumi** – ink that usually comes in solid form, sticks or blocks, and is made out of soot that is held together with a binding agent. It can also be bought in liquid form, which is convenient; however, rubbing the ink stick on the stone "suzuri" is a slow thoughtful process that helps prepare ones mind for the creative experiences.

Lynn Kemper, Reprinted from the Yokosan



# The Art of Bonsai

For a spectacular view of a large variety of plants and a great appreciation for bonsai, adventure out and visit Bonsai Village. Bonsai-icho (Village) is a small beautiful town within Omiya City in Saitama Prefecture. After Tokyo's earthquake in 1923, a group of nursery owners moved to Omiya and formed their own village. This village of bonsai nurseries exhibits one of the many arts perfected by skilled Japanese. Bonsai Village is a delightful place and is surprisingly quiet because it is separated from the hustle and bustle of the city of Omiya. The nurseries are open daily from 8am – 5pm except the first and third Thursdays. Examples of bonsai range from inexpensive popular ones to very expensive, distinctively unusual ones. One nursery had a bonsai over 300 years old. Most nurseries do not allow photographs and have signs that relay this message.

**DIRECTIONS:** Set your odometer at zero as you turn right out the Terminal Gate, going north on Rt. 16. Stay on Rt. 16 following signs to Kawagoe. At 7.1 km the road splits, and 16 bears left. Stay on 16. At 7.8 km you will see the Hoya Crystal Factory on your right. At 9.6 km the road splits again and Rt. 16 goes toward the left. Stay on 16. At 20.9 km you will pass under the Kan-Etsu Expressway, and at 25.6 km you will see a large, round hotel straight ahead. Stay on 16. At approximately 36 km, Rt. 16 intersects with Rt. 17. Continue on Rt. 16. At approximately 40 km, you will be in the city of

Omiya and will cross a large green bridge over railroad tracks. Above will be the 'Bullet Train' tracks and below will be regular train tracks. On your right as you come off the bridge will be a tall glassy-looking modern building. Turn left at the first light after the bridge (toward Ageo). Counting signal lights, at the second light (just before going under the train overpass) turn right. You will see a Torii (red gate) ahead. Go .6 km passing Omiya Park. The pond on your right is part of the park.

At the first stop sign, turn left because you have a "Do Not Enter" sign straight ahead of you. Cross the railroad tracks and turn right immediately onto a narrow street, which parallels the tracks. At the first stop sign, go straight. At your fourth street, turn left. Counting streets again, turn right on your third street. At the first intersection go straight. You are in Bonsai Village. Parking is on your left. This parking lot is for the House of Four Seasons, a place of rest for visitors to the Bonsai Gardens. Maps and restrooms are available.

Manga-Kaikan Omiya Municipal Cartoon Exhibition Hall is an additional sight to see within the Bonsai Village. Directions to it are on the map obtained from the House of Four Seasons. The Cartoon Exhibition Hall is open 9am – 4pm, Tuesdays – Sundays.

If you like Bonsai, the Takagi Bonsai Museum in Ichigaya is a must see. (See Museums.)

## Flower Arrangement - Ikebana

Ikebana is one of the best known and most widely exported traditional arts of Japan. Americans who come to Japan and study Japanese flower arrangement under the patient instruction of teachers from any of the several popular Ikebana schools can learn a variety of techniques that have evolved from the contributions of thousands of individual Ikebana devotees over hundreds of years.

### **Kuge (floral offering)**

Ikebana's roots lie in Kuge, floral offerings associated with the Chinese Buddhism that was introduced to Japan in the 6<sup>th</sup> Century, AD. During this period, flowers were arranged not for the sake of decoration but for use in religious ceremonies. Sometimes flowers were simply piled high in a bowl, or only a few petals were scattered about.

During the 9<sup>th</sup> Century, the most common practice was to place flowers upright in a vase. The representative arrangement of this type – three stems rising firmly almost as one from the water with the tips of the three flowers forming a triangle – was derived from the Buddhist triad image with Buddha flanked by two smaller figures and exerted a very important influence later in the Muromachi Period (1336 – 1573) when the rules for Ikebana were formulated.

Another influence was the Tanabata Star Festival, which originated in the Kamakura Period. This festival was celebrated with flower offerings and a game called Hana-awase (matching flowers). Originally observed as a religious rite in which flowers were offered to heavenly star deities, this activ-

ity gradually grew into one in which people competed in expressing the beauty of flowers and branches.

### **Tatebana & Rikka (standing arrangement)**

Priests, the intellectual and artistic leaders of the Muromachi government, were responsible for creating Tatebana, the next form in the development of Ikebana. This standing arrangement was developed primarily for decoration of the "shoinzukuri" architecture and was carefully placed and coordinated with painted scrolls, containers, furniture, and accessories to create a pleasing over-all aesthetic result.

The Rikka form, a more complex standing arrangement, was developed between the late 16<sup>th</sup> and early 17<sup>th</sup> Centuries. Because of its size and materials, this form was usually used in sumptuous settings and was very fashionable among the warriors, members of the imperial family, nobles and priests of the upper class.

### **Nageire or Heika (informal arrangement)**

The Rikka form of Ikebana gradually degenerated into a stilted formalism in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> Century at the same time that another, very informal style, Nageire or Heika was evolving within the merchant class and the general public. This free-style form of arrangement followed no set rules; in fact, these informal arrangements could be placed anywhere.



### **Chabana (tea arrangement)**

The tea ceremony, with its emphasis on achieving and maintaining a tranquil mind and on making a good cup of tea, exerted a deep influence on Ikebana during the 16<sup>th</sup> Century. The flowers chosen for the tea ceremony were simple in order to properly represent one's 'kokoro' – one's heart or spirit – and reflect one's innermost feelings. A single branch or two were chosen and seemingly arranged casually; however, they were actually very carefully selected to express the essence or spirit of the flowers. Rikka filled the need for ritual and formality, while Chabana emphasized the individual and free form arrangements with the objective of the arranger to become one with nature.

### **Shoka or Seika**

The Shoka form, developed during the Edo Period (1603 – 1867), grew out of a combination of the Chabana, Nageire and Rikka forms, incorporating an asymmetrical form based on the triangle, the use of three principal stems appearing as one at the mouth of the container, and an adherence to the natural, individual characteristics of the flowers. This style became very popular with the rising merchant class and was even encouraged by the government in its effort to educate the public. In fact, along with renga (linked poems) and the tea ceremony, it became a mandatory accomplishment for all young women. By the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, however, the arts of the feudalistic Edo culture had begun to stagnate.

### **Moribana (piled flowers)**

The Meiji Restoration of 1868 brought to Japan not only the culture of America and Europe but Western flowers such as tulips, daisies, and dahlias as well. The incorporation of these vibrantly colored flowers into Japanese floral arrangements required a new form of Ikebana. That form came from Unshin Ohara around 1890 with his creation of the Moribana form of Ikebana, in which arrangers used a flat container that allowed the arrangement to spread out and made use of a wider space and depth than had been used in earlier, primarily vertical arrangements.

### **Ikebana Schools**

Of the almost 3,000 different schools of Ikebana currently active in Japan and other countries, the three best known are the Ikenobo, Ohara, and Sogetsu schools. The most conservative of the three, the Ikenobo school founded in the mid-15<sup>th</sup> Century, is still deeply steeped in Japanese tradition, symbolism, and philosophy. The Ohara School was founded in 1911 by Unshin Ohara, who developed the Moribana form to accommodate flowers imported from the Western world at the turn of the century. The Sogetsu School, which was founded in 1926 by Sofu Teshigahara, emphasizes freedom of expression and perceives Ikebana as an art form closely related to sculpture. Although it is probably the most innovative and experimental of the three schools, the Sogetsu School still conforms to some of the criteria of traditional Ikebana.

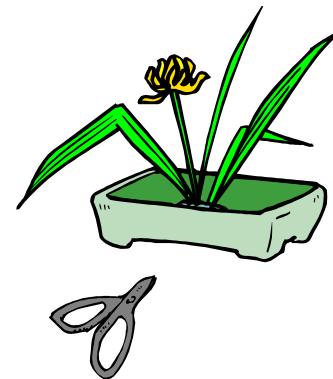
For the brief time that we are visitors in Japan, we have an opportunity not only to appreciate Ikebana but also to

learn how to make beautiful and interesting floral arrangements for ourselves and for others. Those of us who are dedicated to learning Ikebana well can even earn certificates at various levels of study that will qualify us to teach Ikebana ourselves. Here at Yokota, Ikebana classes are available through the Arts and Crafts Center and from instructors who offer classes through the Yokota Officers' Spouses' Club.

Lynne Kemper

### **Recommended Books about Ikebana**

If you are interested in studying Ikebana on your own or in adding books on the subject to your library, there are several good books on Ikebana available at the base library, through local Ikebana instructors, and at the Stars and Stripes Book Store. The following are just a few that I have found interesting – and beautiful to look at as well: Flower Arrangement: The Ikebana Way by Ohi, Ikenobo, Ohara and Teshigahara, edited by Dr. William C. Steere; Ikebana: Spirit & Technique by Komoda and Pointer; Ikebana: A New Illustrated Guide to Mastery by Wafu Teshigahara; and Ikebana for Everybody by Houn Ohara.



# Sado - Tea Ceremony

Sado, also known as cha-no-yu, is the “way of tea”. Although there are several recorded versions of the origin of the tea ceremony, all share a common source: tea was introduced to Japan in the early part of the eighth century (along with Buddhism). The men who traveled to China to study Buddhism brought tea back to Japan.

At first, tea was imported from China and used solely for medicinal purposes by court nobles. Two centuries later, this practice died out and tea drinking disappeared from Japan. Then, in the twelfth century during his studies in China, a Buddhist priest named Eisai recognized that tea was an indispensable part of Zen temple life. Consequently, he returned to Japan with seeds. Tea eventually flourished in present-day Fukuoka Prefecture and in Kyoto. As availability increased, families of rank drank it as a refreshment.

By the fourteenth century, tea drinking had filtered down through many social classes and samurai, Buddhist clergy and some commoners enjoyed drinking it. At the same time, Shunke, a Buddhist monk, created the rules of cha-no-yu for his congregation. By applying the four elements of Zen (harmony, reverence, purity, and serenity) and the principles of refined and chaste simplicity, he created a precise and simple ritual, reflecting the monastic life of priests.

The rituals of tea ceremony as practiced today were instituted by Sen-no Soeki or Rikyu, who is considered the greatest tea master of all time. Of Sen Rikyu’s great-grandchildren, three continued the tradition and established individual schools while residing in the same compound. Due to the mutual origin, the basic rituals of the schools are quite similar with differences seeming to be the location of the guest in relation to the host and the direction in which the teacup is presented, etc. In learning how to be an appreciative guest (or host), one also learns much of the Japanese etiquette in use today.

If you are invited to a tea ceremony, be aware that the cups and decorations are quite valuable, often hundreds of years

old. Wear a full skirt instead of tight slacks (men may need a coat and tie) because you may be sitting immobile for some time. Remove most of your jewelry before participating. If given a sweet, try to eat it all (or wrap it in the white paper napkin and put it away); the tea can be quite bitter. When bowing to the host or server, place your hands flat on the tatami in front of you and bow deeply to demonstrate respect.

Yokota Library Info Sheet, Teresa K. Negley

## Tea Ceremony Cha-no-yu Utensils

- **Kama and Furo:** The kama (kettle) containing the water is placed on the furo (brazier) to boil. In the winter, a ro (inset hearth) is exposed by removing part of the floorboards.

- **Mizusashi:** A ceramic container of water. The water in the mizusashi is used to wash the chawan (teacup) or poured into the kama.

- **Kensui:** A pot in which the water used to wash the chawan is poured.

- **Hishaku:** A ladle for water.

- **Chawan:** A teacup or bowl.

- **Usuki or Natsume:** A lacquerware container of matcha (powdered tea).

- **Chasen:** A bamboo whisk.

- **Making the tea:** Use the chashaku to transfer matcha to the chawan. Pour hot water from the kama into the chawan with the hishaku. Stir with the chasen. Turn the tea bowl so any design faces the guests.

- **Drinking the tea:** Bow and receive the chawan, placing it in front of you, nodding to the guest after you. Pick the chawan up with the right hand, and place it on the palm of the left hand. Rotate it clockwise three times. After drinking the tea, wipe the part of the chawan that the lips touched with a tissue in your right hand. Rotate the chawan counter-clockwise, so it may be returned to your host.

Marja Weaver





