

niponica

Discovering  
Japan

# にほにか

no. 23



Special Feature

## Style in Japan





Scenes from the 2017 fashion show at Bunka Fashion College in Tokyo. Globally active designers like Kenzo and Yoji Yamamoto graduated from the college. (Photos courtesy of Bunka Fashion College)

niponica  
にぽにか  
no. 23  
contents



*niponica* is published in Japanese and six other languages (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian, and Spanish) to introduce to the world the people and culture of Japan today. The title *niponica* is derived from "Nippon," the Japanese word for Japan.

Special Feature

## Style in Japan

- 04 Keywords for Understanding Japanese Artistic Sensibilities
- 08 The Japanese Bride: Wrapped in a Vision of Beauty
- 10 Japanese Cosmetics through the Centuries
- 14 Cutting-Edge Medical Technology for Beautiful Skin
- 16 From Glamour to Vitality

- 22 Tasty Japan: Time to Eat! *Hana-zushi*
- 24 Strolling Japan *Aizuwakamatsu*
- 28 Souvenirs of Japan Japanese-Style Combs

Cover: A present-day Japanese woman in traditional bridal attire. (Model: Kinari; Photo: Shimozono Keisuke, courtesy of DE & Co. and The Kimono Shop)

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Special Feature

## Style in Japan

The Japanese philosophy of beauty encompasses attention to fashion, hair styling, and cosmetics. This issue of *Niponica* unveils historical trends in Japan's unique fashion culture, highlighting some of the ways the Japanese have perpetuated and renewed the art of looking good.



# Keywords for Understanding Japanese Artistic Sensibilities

When they want to dress up, the Japanese tend to be guided by their deeply intuitive aesthetic tastes. These sensibilities have been passed down from one generation to the next, expressing what is beautiful and important in appearance.

優美  
yuubi



Delicate, graceful beauty. Modest, yet dynamic in form and movement. Ready to adapt with optimism as things change.

*Kyo Bijin no Zu* ("Kyoto Beauty"), by Uemura Shoen, done sometime between 1932 and 1935. The kimono-clad woman with the *uchiwa* fan in her hand gives us a good idea about the changes of the season. (Property of Yamatane Corporation)

壮麗  
sourei

Elegantly dignified. Behind the gorgeous, ornate look lie true sophistication and refinement.

The colorful embroidery brings radiant beauty to a *kimono*, a type of traditional Japanese clothing. (Model: Kinari; Photo: Shimozone Keisuke, courtesy of DE & Co. and The Kimono Shop)







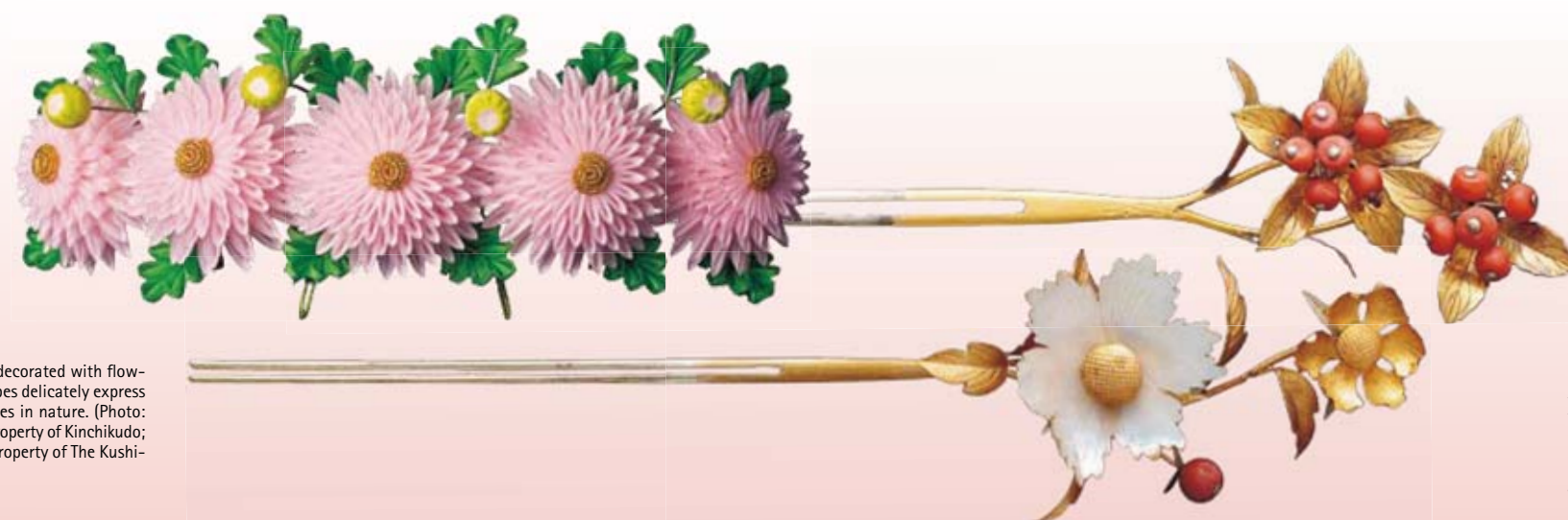
Takabatake Kasho's *Utsuri-yuku Sugata* ("Changes in Fashion"), 1935. (Illustration courtesy of The Yayoi Museum). This screen shows women in four seasons from the late 19th century to the early 20th century. Here we see women's fall and winter apparel.

# 雅

miyabi

Tasteful, intuitively refined. A sensitivity that combines attention to detail with exquisite taste, exhibiting subtlety and an artistic atmosphere.

*Hana kanzashi* are hairpins decorated with flowers of the seasons. Their shapes delicately express the charm of changing scenes in nature. (Photo: Nomura Seiji; top *kanzashi* property of Kinchikudo; *kanzashi* on opposite page property of The Kushi-kanzashi Museum)



# 繊細

sensai

Skillfully thought out, detailed, ephemeral. Paying careful attention to subtleties that might not be noticed at first sight, while exhibiting a sophistication that combines small elements to make a complete look.





## White kimono

The bride and groom are attired in tradition on their wedding day. White is the bridal color for wedding ceremonies in many countries, and in Japan the bride may be clothed entirely in white. The color white conveys a sense of purity. White also has another meaning: it is readily dyed to the hue of the home the bride marries into.

# The Japanese Bride: Wrapped in a Vision of Beauty

Aesthetic preferences were developed over the centuries in Japan, and even today they make the bride glow on her wedding day.

Photos courtesy of amanaimages, PIXTA

## Patterns

Woven into the white bridal kimono are good-luck patterns wishing the bride a happy wedded life. Rising to the surface of the soft silken cloth, the patterns create a sense of quiet beauty so typically Japanese.



## Colorful design

After the wedding vows, the bride changes into a colorfully ornate robe, then enters the reception hall to greet family and friends. The white cap that has veiled her head and face is removed, and now she shows her uncovered face to the reception guests.



## Hair decoration

The traditional hairstyle for the bride starts with a bountiful coiffure. Her hair decorations use *kanzashi* hairpins crafted by hand for splendor and detail.



# Japanese Cosmetics through the Centuries

White facial powder, lipstick, rouge, tooth-blackening dye... These pages show how Japan's cosmetic traditions have evolved over time, adapting to changes in the social environment while always reflecting a sense of beauty all their own.

From a conversation with Murata Takako



1

1. Ukiyoe woodblock print of a woman applying rouge to her lips with a brush. First half of the 1800s.  
2. Gorgeously decorated box for cosmetics. It once belonged to Hojo Masako, the wife of the warrior Minamoto no Yoritomo, who established the Kamakura Shogunate in 1185.

2



It is hard to say when cosmetics were first used in Japan. *Haniwa* figurines colored with a red pigment on their faces and bodies have been discovered in tombs dating from soon after the middle of the 3rd century, in the Kofun period. But one theory says that the color red was thought to protect the dead from harm, in which case the pigment would have been used for a purpose entirely different from that of cosmetics today. Anyway, we can be confident in saying that personal beauty products were in fashion in Japan at least as far back as the late 6th century. *Beni* rouge, white powder, perfume—we have ancient documents showing that they were part of a beautifying regime for court ladies back then. By the end of the 9th century, in



3

## 9th to 12th centuries

3. Part of a picture scroll depicting women in *juni-hitoe* multi-layered kimono. Note the faces made up with white powder.

## 13th and 14th centuries

4. Man from the aristocratic class wearing makeup even on the battlefield.



4

the Heian period, noble ladies let their hair grow long, and on special occasions they wore multiple layers of clothing in a beautiful kimono array called *juni-hitoe*. To contrast with this lavish, colorful costume, the face was covered with a thick layer of white powder. The eyebrows were shaved and replaced with artificial ones drawn above, and the lips were outlined to appear small. The *o-haguro* custom, where women dyed their teeth black to show they were married, apparently began around the same time.

In the 12th century, social prominence shifted from the aristocracy to powerful clans. Women took on a more active role, wearing clothes that made moving about easier. They fastened their long hair at the back, and applied only

a thin layer of white powder. Interestingly, it became the fashion for men in aristocratic society to also wear makeup.

When a new era was ushered in with the Edo period in 1603, commerce blossomed and cultural trends became defined more by the merchant class than by the military elite. The age of the common folk had begun, and women were soon incorporating cosmetics into their daily lives.

In 1868, the curtain rose on the Meiji period, and with it began the "Civilization and Enlightenment" movement that encouraged modernization through rapid Westernization. The world of cosmetics also went through tremendous changes, and the traditional practices of shaving one's eyebrows and blackening one's teeth were actually





5

## Late 1800s

5. Following the new trends of the "Age of Civilization and Enlightenment," members of the upper class dance in Western attire in a social setting.

## Early 1900s

6. Takehisa Yumeji is still known for his Nihonga (Japanese style paintings) of beauties, like this one applying makeup.



6

banned. New trends stressed eyebrow fashions that enhanced a woman's facial features, and favored the beauty of naturally white teeth.

As the economy picked up in the 20th century, a growing number of women began working outside the home environment. To make moving about in the workplace easier, Western clothing and short hair styles became the norm. Soon after came the *moga* ("modern girl") look, leading the way in the women's fashion of the day. And manufacturers came out with stick lipstick—this was just one of the changes facilitating and popularizing makeup products.

This brings us up to the post-war modern period. In the economic boom times of the late 1980s and early 1990s, vibrant pinks with purplish tints were in style for lipstick, but then, after the disastrous earthquake and tsunami struck eastern Japan in 2011, popularity shifted to softer hues that would help bring back feelings of serenity, and to makeup that would create a gentle, warm-hearted mood.

All this goes to show that fashions and makeup have adapted to the changing times. In today's "I'm happy to be myself" age, emphasis has turned to expressing one's own choice of fashion.

## After 1945

7. Skirts to below the knees were the fashion when women became active in the workforce outside the home.

## Today

When it comes to fashion and cosmetics in Japan, preferences are certainly not uniform—diversity and a variety of trends abound.



7



8

8. Office apparel for women, by the illustrator Nakahara Junichi in 1955. He was a leading force in the fashion design world.

**Murata Takako**

Born in Tokyo in 1950. Senior researcher at the Pola Research Institute of Beauty and Culture. Specializes in the history of Japanese and Western cosmetic and hairstyle culture.



9

9. Striking makeup was a feature of the dazzling days of Japan's bubble economy in the late 1980s. 10. Actress Ishihara Satomi was included in the global ranking called "The 100 Most Beautiful Faces." 11. Comedienne Watanabe Naomi is known around the world for her unique attire and makeup.



10



11

1 Azuma Nishiki Bijin Awase ("A Collection of Eastern Brocade Beauties"). Drawn by Torii Kiyomine. (Courtesy of the Adachi Foundation) 2 Ume Makie Te-bako ("Lacquered Cosmetic Box with Plum Design"). National Treasure. Property of Mishima Taisha Shrine. 3 Genji Monogatari E-maki Azumaya Ichi ("Tale of Genji Picture Scroll"). National Treasure. Property of The Tokugawa Art Museum. © Tokugawa Art Museum Image Archive / DNP Art Communications 4 Moriyoshi Shinno Shutsujin Zu ("Prince Moriyoshi Shinno Rushing Off to War"). Part of a private collection. 5 Kiken Buto no Ryaku-zu ("A Glimpse of Dignitaries Dancing"). Drawn by Yoshu Chikanobu. Property of the Kobe City Museum. Photo: Kobe City Museum / DNP Art Communications 6 Shimoba Chiru ("Fallen Leaves in November"). Drawn by Takehisa Yumeji. Property of the Takehisa Yumeji Museum 7 From a 1952 newspaper article entitled "Fashion Design: Long Skirts Are In." (Photo courtesy of The Asahi Shimbun Company / Jiji Press Photo) 8 Nakahara Junichi's Blouse Collection. Drawn by Nakahara Junichi. Property of Himawariya Inc. © Junichi Nakahara / Himawariya Inc. 9 Women out in the city, sporting the "big silhouette" fashion popular at the time. (1989, Photo courtesy of Kyodo News and amanaimages) 10 Ishihara Satomi (Photo courtesy of Hori Pro Inc.) 11 Watanabe Naomi (Photo courtesy of Yoshimoto Kogyo Co., Ltd.)





# Cutting-Edge Medical Technology for Beautiful Skin

Japanese beauty products use the latest medical technology to alleviate a variety of skin problems, including wrinkles and sagging caused by age and inflammation caused by damage from UV rays.

Photo courtesy of amanaimages  
Cooperation: Ludia Co., Ltd., MTG Co., Ltd. and CosMED Pharmaceutical Co., Ltd.

## 1 Herbal ingredients for rejuvenation

Extracted in trace amounts from the licorice root, the herbal medicine isoliquiritigenin (ILG) is gaining a great deal of attention in the field of medicine. Research at Kagawa University has found that this herb effectively suppresses the oxidation and inflammation that cause cellular deterioration, giving it promise as a cosmetic ingredient. ILG was delivered successfully in a commercial skincare product for the first time in 2011 and is recognized for effectively improving spots and wrinkles and treating sensitive or rough skin.



Ludia I'LG-b Serum contains ILG to improve skin tone in a variety of ways. (Apply to skin after moisturizer.)

**Use:** After applying moisturizer to cleansed skin, rub 5 ml or so into the skin, concentrating on problem areas.  
**Efficacy:** Improves age-related skin problems such as dryness, sagging, spots, and wrinkles.  
**Feature:** World's first cosmetic product to contain isoliquiritigenin (ILG) extracted from licorice root and used as a herbal medicine.

## 2 Reactivation at the cellular level

Widely used in medicine, microcurrent treatments are extremely effective in promoting cellular recovery, suppressing pain and relieving fatigue. The original solar panel technology employed in this facial massager generates microcurrents for a deep roller massage that leads to tighter skin.



For illustrative purposes



**Use:** Roll along contours, cinching soft skin in trouble areas such as face, neck, and waist. (Orbs at the tip of the massager roll across skin.)  
**Efficacy:** Solar panels in the handle take in light to generate microcurrents.  
**Feature:** Gives general consumers access to the microcurrent technology used in the medical field.



Experience microcurrent technology at home with Refa brand products from MTG Co., Ltd.

## 3 Microneedle cosmetics

Microneedle technology is used in medical patches to deliver medicine directly through the skin. As effective as injections and infusions, microneedles are expected to be a useful method for fighting infectious disease with vaccines and delivering insulin for diabetes patients. CosMED Pharmaceutical is the first company in the world to successfully form microneedles from hyaluronic acid to create moisturizing sheet masks. The moisturizing hyaluronic acid penetrates the skin to prevent spots and wrinkles. These unprecedented beauty masks are really capturing the spotlight.



**Use:** Apply sheet masks below the eyes or to other areas of the face.  
**Efficacy:** Hyaluronic acid dissolves into the outermost layer of the epidermis, boosting the layer's moisture-holding capacity and leaving the skin firmer and suppler.  
**Feature:** World's first use of microneedle technology to crystallize hyaluronic acid, the skin's natural moisturizing substance, into needle-like shapes.



When sheet masks lined with fine hyaluronic acid needles are applied, the hyaluronic acid needles are dissolved by the skin's fluid to deliver hydration into the layers of the skin.



CosMED Pharmaceutical's Quanis brand dermafiller features microneedle technology.



# From Glamour to Vitality

Applying makeup not only creates a more beautiful you; it can also be effective in boosting the spirits of people in need of personal care, and it can add allure to sports.

Photos: Kohara Takahiro, courtesy of Aflo  
Collaboration: KOSÉ Corporation, Shiseido Company Limited

## Pizzazz in the pool

Japan's national synchronized swimming team, nicknamed Mermaids Japan, has a KOSÉ Corporation makeup artist working for it behind the scenes: Ishii Isao.

The conceptual goal of KOSÉ is to "Show off beauty when active in sports too." KOSÉ has developed water-repellant techniques to help prevent makeup from smearing even on top of perspiration. Its trendy cosmetics combine original resinous ingredients for extra stability and endurance.

KOSÉ became the official cosmetic partner of Mermaids Japan in April 2006, and for more than 10 years since then it has been involved in makeup development and guidance for them.

Ishii has been working as a top-ranking makeup artist for years. Each time the team has a new choreographed program, he talks things over with the national team's coach and supporting staff, then comes up with makeup that works well with the new swimsuits, the music and the synchronized theme. He aims for makeup that will look good when seen from far off where the audience and adjudicators sit.

"I always try to incorporate the swimsuits' most vibrant color in the makeup color. That way, the overall visual effect is one of harmony, even when viewed far from the action. That gives the performance even more punch."

Ishii says it is important for the highlighter makeup to create a three-dimensional effect. He has all team members line up in a single straight line, then examines the effect from the front, the side and every angle in between, checking for optimal visual uniformity among all swimmers. And he makes sure to show each one of them ways to touch up their makeup on their own.



The contestants' movements in the water can be frenzied, and the amazing thing is that there are no smears to their makeup, even though it is not a special type—Ishii says he uses cosmetics that you can buy in a store.

Ishii's secret, of course, lies in how the cosmetics are applied on the swimmers' skin.

"For example, the eye makeup starts with a waterproof liquid eye color, followed by a powdered eye color to emphasize the effect, with more liquid eye color on top of that. That gives stability and reduces the chance of smearing."

The final effect, he says, may be achieved with colors not found on the market and the application of individual colors in sequence.

Alluring makeup for visual uniformity and one-on-one instructions from a top makeup artist strengthen the confidence of Mermaids Japan members and help them concentrate during the competition. Behind their energy and elegance is the technology of Japan's cosmetics.



Each time the choreographed program changes, makeup lessons begin. Mermaids Japan members get their own rigorous instructions.



"Achieving the final effect requires teamwork and good communication with backup staff and team members," says the team's chief makeup artist, Ishii Isao.



## Cosmetic therapy for elderly people in long-term care

Keeping cosmetic habits as one grows old may lead to better physical and mental health. Data shows this is attracting attention in Japan, where the population is aging.

Research linking cosmetic use with improvements in mental alertness and muscular strength is making strides thanks partly to Ikeyama Kazuyuki of Shiseido Company, Limited.

“From our research results, we’ve learned that when women apply makeup, the motion of their fingers, hands and arm muscles uses two to three times more energy than when they eat a meal. We tell medical staff that when women in long-term care apply makeup and have fun looking after their appearance, there can be a rehabilitation effect without them realizing it. Professionals had tended not to give much thought to makeup until they heard that, but now it has caught their attention.”

Drawing from his own experience as a personal care worker, and the positive results of personal beauty classes

held by Shiseido over the years, Ikeyama has developed a cosmetic therapy program that is being introduced by long-term care facilities. “We saw that even people suffering from a fair amount of dementia began looking more optimistic, and increased their level of independence.” This is just one of the upbeat results he says they are finding.

Today, more local governments are starting to offer cosmetic therapy programs, not only to give enjoyment through beauty products but also to slow the onset of the need for extra care and extend healthy lifespans (the length of time one lives a satisfying life without a major health problem).

“Taking care of one’s skin and dressing well are good for both the mind and the body. I’m keen on getting more people to realize this, to take up the slogan ‘Let’s stay interested in our appearance,’ which can translate into aiming for a healthy lifespan.”

Ikeyama’s eyes light up as he says this.



A scene at a personal beauty class for the elderly. Putting on makeup is about more than good looks. It can also increase mental alertness, physical fitness and everyday life skills.



“Women in their later years can really brighten their days by having a little fun with beauty products,” says Ikeyama Kazuyuki. (Photo: Kohara Takahiro)



## Beauty for Men, Too

Photos: Ito Chiharu, courtesy of Afilo

Although beauty standards for men in Japan are much broader and more varied today than they have been in the past, the ideal male beauty is still rooted in the traditional Japanese value of cleanliness. Grooming for men has moved beyond the conventional shaving and hair styling to include many different types of cosmetic products formulated specifically for men. More and more Japanese men use specialized cleansers to wash their faces, as well as skincare products to soothe rough skin or reduce oiliness, concealers to cover blemishes and spots, sunscreen to protect against UV rays for outdoor sports, and deodorants and antiperspirant sheets to prevent sweatiness and body odor.

Salons have also responded to demand from male customers for hair treatments, body and facial hair removal, and properly groomed nails by offering beauty treatments and manicures especially for men.

Japanese people do not use perfume and cologne in the way most Westerners do, because the ideal in Japanese culture is to eliminate odors rather than add scent. This is equally true of men’s grooming, and most of the new techniques and products in the market are designed to keep men clean and odor-free.



1. Cooling antiperspirant sheets. 2. Cooling face cleanser. 3. Moisturizer containing hyaluronic acid. 4. Pen-style beauty lotion to reduce spots and freckles. 5. Nose pack for clearing pores. 6. Roll-on antiperspirant. The most popular men's beauty products are easy to carry on the go in a pocket or bag.



# Local Cosmetics to Make You More Beautiful

Areas across the country make use of traditional Japanese craftsmanship to produce local cosmetics from natural ingredients such as flowers and fruit. Discover new items unique to these parts of Japan and enhance your beauty and relaxation regimes.

Photo: Ito Chiharu

## 愛媛 Ehime

### Bath Salt (Ponkan orange)

These bath salts are made with oil extract from the peel of citrus grown in Ehime Prefecture, an area of Japan famous for its citrus varieties. Relax in a richly scented, moisturizing bath.  
<http://yaetoco.jp>  
(Available in Japanese)



## 大分 Oita

### Organic Clay Mud Pack

A mud pack made from blue clay found in Beppu hot springs. Rich in natural spring agents and minerals, blue clay removes excess oils from the skin and hydrates with natural spring water for firmer, more even skin tone.  
<http://only-sge.co.jp>  
(Available in Japanese)



(Photo courtesy of ONLY Corp.)

## 奈良 Nara

### QUON Body Powder

Manufactured to the highest standards from all-natural, pesticide-free tea grown in Nara Prefecture. This body powder is made with rice and kudzu starch powder for smooth, comfortable skin.  
<http://www.quon-cosme.jp>  
(Available in Japanese)



## 富山 Toyama

### Marine Mineral Mist

This moisturizing facial mist is made with deep seawater from Toyama Bay. One of the areas in Japan with the most snowfall, Toyama's snowmelt contains a wealth of minerals to generously hydrate skin.  
<http://www.goshu.co.jp/tqw/>  
(Available in Japanese and English)



## 新潟 Niigata

### Nail File Shiny

Known for its metal industry, Tsubame City puts its famed stainless steel polishing techniques to work crafting this nail file. Fine grooves intersect diagonally on the curved surface for a nail file that has a loyal customer base among men as well as women.  
<http://www.yasuri.net>  
(Available in Japanese)



## 岩手 Iwate

### Kesen Tsubaki (Camellia) Hand Cream

With camellia oil extracted from camellia seeds gathered by people in the Kesenuma area, this hand cream was developed as part of a project to support communities affected by the Great East Japan Earthquake.  
<https://hollywood-jp.com/product/kesentsubaki>  
(Available in Japanese, English, and Chinese)



## 北海道 Hokkaido

### Asparagus Multi Balm

This body balm, which contains asparagus extract produced in Engaru-cho, is especially effective on face, lips, and other areas that are prone to dryness.  
<http://www.e-mystar.jp>  
(Available in Japanese)



## 京都 Kyoto

### Gofun Nail

Made from whiting powder, an ancient Japanese paint made from shells. Developed at Japan's oldest paint shop in Kyoto, this nail polish has no irritating odor and is gentle on the nails.

<https://www.gofun-nail.com>  
(Available in Japanese and English)



(Photo courtesy of Ueba Esou)

## 群馬 Gunma

### kinu soap

The word "kinu" means silk, which is a local specialty in Gunma Prefecture. Formulated with extract from silk cocoons, kinu soap provides antioxidants and boosts the skin's ability to hold moisture. This soap is made from cocoons produced in Tomioka and was developed in collaboration with the dermatology department at the local medical university.  
<http://kinu-kiryu.com/>  
(Available in Japanese)



## 三重 Mie

### Oisesan Purifying Spray

An aromatic spray made with mineral-rich naturally dried salt and natural essential oils to cleanse and purify both body and soul. Available at shops along the approach to Ise Jingu Shrine, one of Japan's most venerated shrines.  
<http://www.oisesan.co.jp>  
(Available in Japanese)



## 東京 Tokyo

### Komachi Beni

This traditional Japanese lip rouge is still produced by the long-established shop in Tokyo's Nihonbashi with the original methods used since 1825. Made only with natural red pigments from safflower petals.

<http://www.isehanhonten.co.jp>  
(Available in Japanese and English)



(Photo courtesy of Isehan shop)





# Hana-zushi

## Traditional Flower Sushi to Make You Smile

Photo: Ito Chiharu  
Collaboration: Hanamiyui



Miyauchi Masako has been making *hana-zushi* for half a century.

*Hana-zushi* (meaning flower sushi) is a type of rolled sushi in which the ingredients are used to “draw” flowers and other colorful patterns in the rice. On Boso Peninsula in Chiba Prefecture, *hana-zushi* made with local ingredients is served at festivals, seasonal events, and other special occasions. Traditionally, *hana-zushi* featured flowers and decorative geometric patterns, but today animals and famous characters are popular with children and adults alike.

Basic rolled sushi—vinegared rice with various ingredients rolled in a sheet of seaweed using a *makisu*, or mat woven from thin strips of bamboo and cotton string—is said to have originated in the late Edo period (18th–19th century). These rolls are generally rolled thin with less filling in the eastern region of Japan, where the Boso Peninsula is located, while people in the western region enjoy thicker rolls. *Hana-zushi* is thicker

than the typical rolls of the region, which is why it is thought that the decorative rolls were introduced to the Boso Peninsula by sardine fishermen from further west.

*Hana-zushi* patterns are generally created using the same ingredients found in regular rolls—long, thinly sliced gourd *kampyo*, pink-colored fish flakes *denbu*, dried shiitake mushrooms, assorted raw and pickled vegetables, and seaweed or fried egg used to wrap the vinegared rice.

It may look complicated, but *hana-zushi* is actually quite simple to make. Place a thin sheet of fried egg or seaweed on the bamboo mat and add a layer of vinegared rice, with little mountains from edge to edge. Place desired ingredients between the mountains of rice and use the bamboo mat to roll into a cylindrical shape. Cut the roll into slices, each revealing the same design.

Nearly surrounded by ocean, the people of the Boso Peninsula have long enjoyed seaweed as part of their diet. Chiba Prefecture is also the largest producer of eggs in Japan. *Hana-zushi* instructor, Miyauchi Masako says, “I use lots of local fresh eggs and wrap my *hana-zushi* in a thick layer of fried egg.” *Hana-zushi* is, after all, a special dish that celebrates the natural blessings of the communities where people live.

Hanamiyui (<http://www.hanamiyui.com/>) in Kamogawa, Chiba Prefecture, offers visitors first-hand experience making their own *hana-zushi*. In these comprehensive workshops, participants can choose their favorites from among more than 30 types of rolled sushi and learn to roll their own sushi rolls in about an hour. Limited only by their imaginations, students work together to create a variety of patterns in *hana-zushi* they can take home and eat.

Design your own *hana-zushi*

1

Spread vinegared rice on *makisu* mat. Create little mountains of vinegared rice extending from edge to edge.

2

Cover the mountain ridges with cut sheets of seaweed. Fill the valleys in with pink *denbu* fish flakes. Line from edge to edge with cooked vegetables.

3

Use the *makisu* mat to roll into a cylindrical shape. Slice.



Left: Create little mountains of sushi rice, cover with seaweed and fill in with red ginger and pink-colored fish flakes. Roll neatly and carefully to create the flower pattern shown at the center of the photo on right.

Opposite page: Roll up the layer of seaweed or thick fried egg and slice the sushi roll for gorgeous *hana-zushi* patterns.







Sakkahama beach on the western shore of Lake Inawashiro is a great summer spot for watersports and camping.



# Aizuwakamatsu

Located in western Fukushima Prefecture, Aizuwakamatsu City is home to impressive historical buildings dating back to when it was a samurai warrior castle town. It also boasts stunning mountain surroundings that make it one of Japan's top tourist destinations. Any time of year, visitors are sure to encounter the natural beauty of the season and a plethora of colorful arts and crafts.

Photos courtesy of Ito Chiharu, amanaimages

The iconic symbol of Aizuwakamatsu, Tsuruga Castle, was built in the late 14th century (1384) and served as the seat of the feudal lord of the Aizu clan during the Edo period (17–19th century). The original castle was demolished in 1874, but its beauty and majesty was revived when it was rebuilt in 1965. The lookout on the castle's uppermost floor offers an exquisite view of all of Aizuwakamatsu City with its colorful hues unfolding year round: cherry blossoms blooming in the spring, the vivid greens of new leaves in summer, red and gold leaves in autumn, and snowscapes in winter.



Above: Tsuruga Castle, the seat of the Aizu clan's feudal lord. Spring cherry blossoms in full bloom.  
Left: A prosperous *samurai* warriors castle town at one time, Aizuwakamatsu is still home to buildings that evoke the Edo period.  
Middle: Beautifully glossy Aizu lacquerware boasts a 400-year history.  
Right: Soak up the heat in outdoor hot spring baths surrounded by snowscapes, a special winter experience at Higashiyama Onsen. (Photo courtesy of Mukaitaki)





Aizu Railway connects Nishiwakamatsu Station in Aizuwakamatsu City and Minami Aizu Kogen Ozeguchi Station in Minami-Aizu-cho.



Top left: *Kozuyu* soup packed with vegetables such as taro root and carrots is often served at celebratory occasions.  
Top right: *Wappameshi* rice with vegetables is steamed in rounded containers made from cedar or cypress.  
Left: *Yukishita* cabbage, which is actually grown under the snow, is a local specialty known for its fruity sweetness. (Photo courtesy of Fukushima Shinhatsubai)  
Above: Aizu *kogiku kabocha* (pumpkin-like squash) and Aizu *maru nasu* (round eggplant)—two traditional vegetables grown in Aizuwakamatsu.

Mt. Bandai to the northeast ranks among the “100 Famous Japanese Mountains.” With an elevation of 1,819 meters, it is a popular destination for mountain climbing in the summer and skiing in the winter. The mountain is also home to a lush array of alpine plants like Japanese azalea and to rare insects like the Bandai stag beetle.

Lake Inawashiro lies in the southern foothills of Mt. Bandai. Approximately 49 kilometers in circumference, this is the fourth-largest lake in Japan and offers great swimming, fishing, and boating. On the western bank of the lake, Sakkahama beach enjoys stunning views of Mt. Bandai looking back across the lake. Swimmers flock to the area in the summer, and they are replaced by flocks of swans from Siberia in the winter.

Mt. Seaburi, located between Aizuwakamatsu and Lake Inawashiro, is known for its gorgeous sunrises and sunsets. From the mountaintop, majestic views unfold—Lake Inawashiro gleaming far below in the morning sun, or the sun setting in exquisite hues behind another mountain in the distance.

Higashiyama Onsen, a popular hot spring area dating as far back as the 8th century, is about a 10-minute ride from the city by car. Long extolled by eminent persons and literati, dozens of hot spring inns and hotels along the Yugawa River offer visitors the opportunity to soak in the ambience of a traditional old hot spring town.

In Aizuwakamatsu, people still love the traditional local dishes that originated centuries ago—the wonderful

flavors of *kozuyu* soup topped with plenty of vegetables, and *wappameshi*, a steamed rice dish packed with local vegetables and soup stock. Area farmers have also recently begun reintroducing the traditional vegetables that were commonly grown here as far back as the Edo period.

Aizuwakamatsu offers beautiful mountains, luxurious hot springs, lush nature, as well as food and crafts born of the samurai culture. The colorfully majestic scenes that unfold here are truly unforgettable.



Held each year in September, the Aizu Autumn Festival features groups dressed as samurai in period costume. (Photo courtesy of Aizuwakamatsu City government)



Left: The round-bottomed *okiagari-koboshi* doll may wobble, but it won't fall over.  
Below: *Akabeko* bobble head doll. The name is derived from “*aka*,” which means red, and “*beko*,” which means cow in the local dialect.  
Right: Known for its famous striped pattern, Aizu cotton is extremely durable.



## Map of Aizuwakamatsu Area

● **Access**  
By train: Take the JR Tohoku Shinkansen from Tokyo Station to Koriyama Station. Transfer to the Ban-Etsu-West Line and continue to Aizu-Wakamatsu Station. The trip takes approx. 2 1/2 hours. Alternatively, take the Tobu-Yagan Railway to Aizu Kogen Ozeguchi Station and transfer to the Aizu Railway train bound for Aizu-Wakamatsu Station. The trip takes approx. 4 1/2 hours.

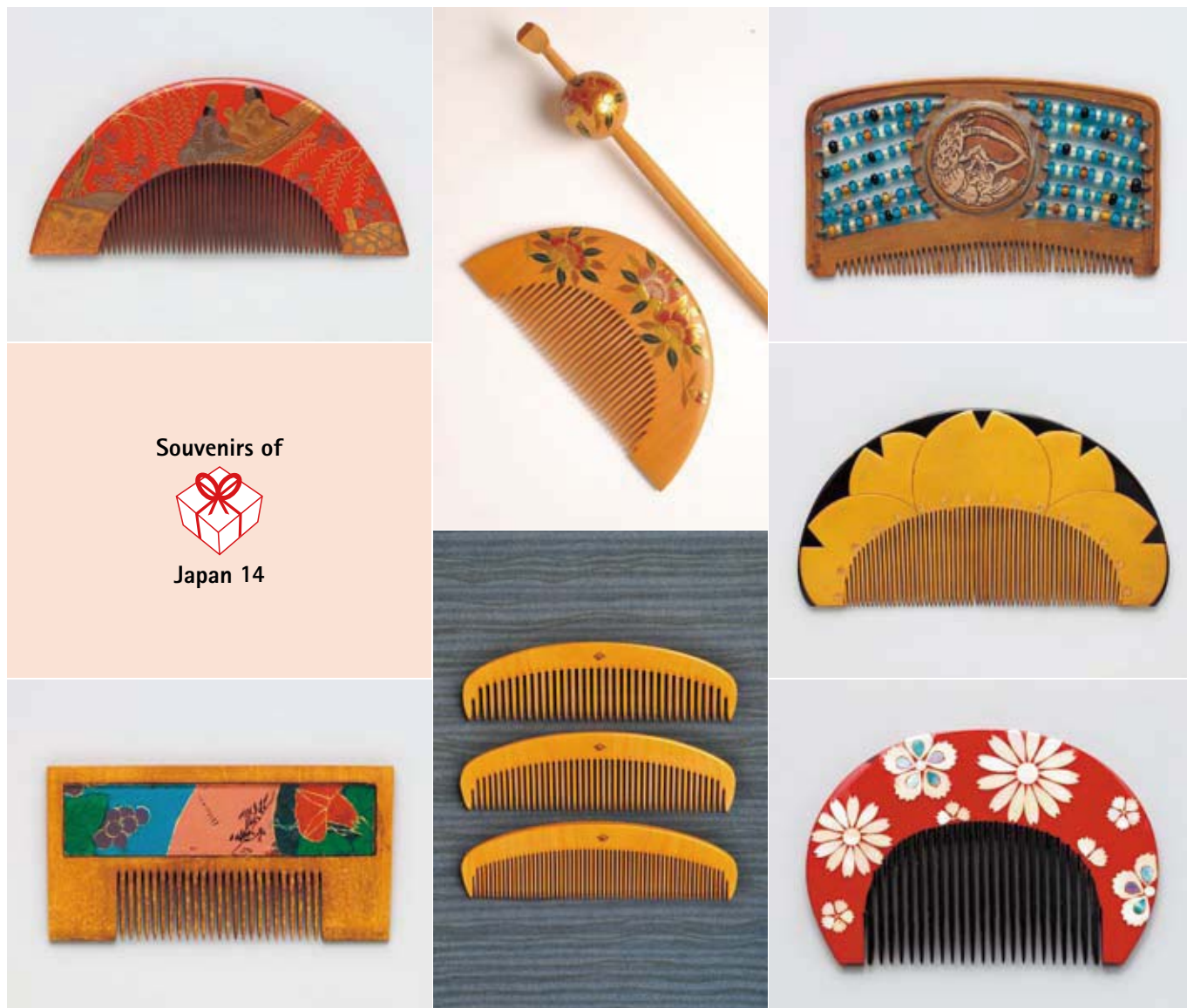
By car: Take the Tohoku Expressway from Tokyo (Kawaguchi JCT) and change to Aizuwakamatsu I.C. at the Koriyama JCT. The trip takes approx. 3 hours.

● **Information**  
Aizuwakamatsu Tourist Bureau  
<http://www.tsurugajo.com/>

Higashiyama Onsen Tourism Association  
<http://www.aizu-higashiyama.com/>

Aizu Railway Co., Ltd.  
<http://aizutetsudo.jp>





## Traditional Ornaments to Embellish Hair

# Japanese-Style Combs

Photos: Ito Chiharu, courtesy of The Kushikanzashi Museum

The comb has quite a long history in Japan. The earliest find is a wooden comb dating back about 7,000 years, which was discovered at some ruins in Saga Prefecture. Its thin vertical shape suggests it was a decorative piece worn as a hair ornament. During the Heian period (8th to 12th century), Japanese women wore their hair long and straight. The comb was both a practical and decorative item for pinning the hair and for holding it away from the face.

It was in the Edo period (17th century) that the hairstyle now known as the classic traditional Japanese woman's hairstyle emerged. This style required waxy oil to help pull locks of hair together into complicated shapes. This took a great deal of time and effort and meant that Japanese women at the time did not often wash their hair. Combs were therefore not only decorative, but also served as a tool to remove dirt and to smooth loose ends and fly-aways.

Flexible yet strong, Japanese boxwood is said to be the best wood for Japanese combs because the teeth do not break even when pulled through the hair with force. These traditional combs are carefully crafted, sanded and polished with a file. They are also designed with great attention to the spacing of the teeth, which differs depending on the length of hair the comb is intended for. Finally, the combs are rubbed with camellia oil for a smooth and shiny finish.

Since the Meiji period (19th century), as women's hairstyles have become increasingly diverse, traditional Japanese combs have become more practical than decorative. Today, these combs come in an assortment of shapes depending on their purpose, including compact combs carried by men and combs with long, thin handles for making neat parts.

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Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan

2-2-1 Kasumigaseki, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 100-8919, Japan

<http://www.mofa.go.jp/> (Ministry's official website)

<http://web-japan.org/> (Website providing information on Japan)