

Origin and Discovery

Toyooka is suitable for growing "Koriyanagi (willow)" thanks to its climate, wetlands, and fertile soil provided by the Maruyama river. Willow can be used as a material after a long process. Willows are mowed down in autumn and planted temporary in rice fields to pass the winter. In spring, they are peeled after putting out shoots and dried until late summer. Willow craft has deep lusters on its ivory or plant-dyed colours. It is flexible as well as moderately firm. It will make you warm and provide discoveries of new impressions.



杞柳
KIRYU

●Contact
Hyogo Pref. Kiryu-product
Cooperative Association
1362 Akaishi, Toyooka, Hyogo, 668-0801, Japan
TEL.0796-23-3821
FAX.0796-24-0913
<http://genbudo-museum.jp/>

●Publisher
Hyogo Pref. Kiryu-product Cooperative Association

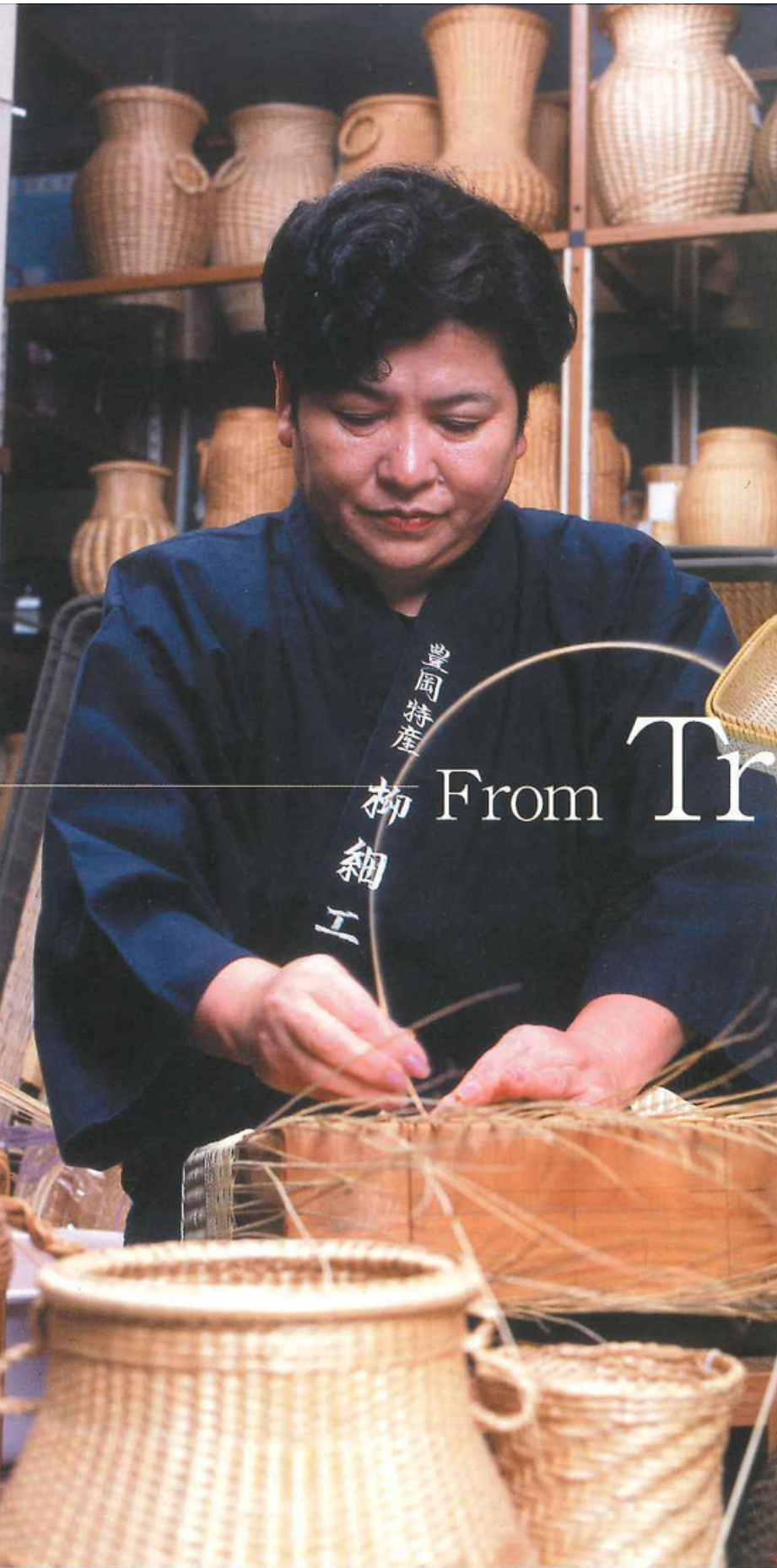
From Tradition to Creation

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KIRYU

Toyooka Kiryu Craft





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Tradition is not only
a transmission.
It is always created
with the times.

From Tradition to Creation

Historical Development of Kiryu Craft

~with history of Tajima region, Japan~

Kiryu craft is a traditional local industry started in Tajima region that is still successful to this day. People have found out that it dates from A.D.27. It is said that Amenohiboko, the prince of Shiragi (a nation of China) who was naturalized in Japan and started Tajima region, introduced Kiryu craft. People started making baskets with wild willow "Koriyanagi" naturally growing in a wilderness area by the Maruyama River. During the Edo period (1603~1867), feudal retainers protected and encouraged the willow craft as industry, and it became well-known nationwide. Willow trunks were particularly popular.

Around the Meiji period (1868~1912) and the Taisho period (1912~1926), people started making Kouri kaban (willow suitcase) and Taisho basket (basket bag).

During the war, the great demand from soldiers supported and established the Kiryu industry. After the war, people assimilated a new sense of new age and created many things such as interior decorations, lady's hand bags or sandals.



Kiryu crafts from Edo period



"Koriyanagi" (Kiryu)

Traditional Craft of Japan
"Toyooka Kiryu Craft"

Toyooka Kiryu Craft was registered as "Traditional Crafts" (issued by the Minister of International Trade and Industry in 1974) in October, 1992.

"Toyooka Kiryu Craft" Traditional Craftsmanship and Warmth

Following over 1200 years of history and traditions, "Toyooka Kiryu Craft" has been made in the area around Toyooka. Nowadays, thanks to its simplicity and warmth, it is revalued as a daily goods to enrich our lives. Craftsmen are weaving handicrafts one by one with their traditional skills to make the most of the characteristics of natural willow such as softness, strong and flexible texture.

Intergenerational Transfer of Craftsmanship and Challenge for New Works

We are trying to bring up people to succeed traditional craftsmanship. Young artists are learning and trying to produce new crafts at a weaving class of Kiryu, instructed by active traditional craftsmen.

Modern Kiryu Crafts

