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Expand
Special Issue

Kaga Mizuhiki: Three-Dimensional, Elegant Expressions of Respect

Deepen
Celebration of 100th Anniversary
of KPP Group Founding

Advance
Quiet Voices Help Create Comfortable
mahora Notebooks

TSUNAGU is a public relations magazine published by KPP GROUP HOLDINGS CO., LTD. An exploration in rediscovering a fascination with paper, we link paper and culture, paper and business, and paper and people.

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Kaga Mizuhiki: Three-Dimensional, Elegant Expressions of Respect

Mizuhiki, the traditional Japanese craft of decorating gifts and envelopes with paper cords, is part of many of life’s milestones, including celebrations such as engagements and weddings, as well as solemn occasions. In recent years, *Mizuhiki* has become increasingly popular, going beyond formal events such as weddings and funerals to make a splash in everyday life. *Mizuhiki* is in the spotlight as an aesthetic art form that can be embodied in accessories that go well with both Japanese and Western fashions, and even as interior decorations that add color to various spaces. Tsuda Mizuhiki Orikata is the only atelier that uses Kaga Mizuhiki, the paper cord technique designated as a rare traditional craft of Ishikawa Prefecture. This article introduces the appeal of Kaga Mizuhiki, which is steeped in the elegance of Kaga Hyakumangoku (a popular name for the Kaga domain during the Edo period, literally meaning “a yield of one million koku of rice”), interspersed with explanations by Rokusuke Tsuda, the fifth generation master of this atelier.





1. A gorgeous sake barrel decoration for wedding receptions and other occasions 2. Congratulatory envelopes sold at Tsuda Mizuhiki Orikata. The atelier also offers writing services tailored to the shape and design of the envelope. 3. A complete set of armor made from *mizuhiki* cords by the second generation master Urne Tsuda. 4. Imperial Hina dolls (*dairibina*) made about 100 years ago by the founder of Kaga Mizuhiki, Sokichi Tsuda. In 1924, he presented the Hina dolls and a set of armor to the emperor. In 1926, he presented Hina dolls to his childhood friend, the writer Kyoka Izumi.

Kaga Mizuhiki is a wrapping style that expresses sentiments with beautiful wrapping instead of words. My wish is to continue to foster connections between people in a way that emphasizes the communication of feelings, which is the essence of this craft.

Mizuhiki is a traditional craft born out of Japan’s unique etiquette of respecting others. It has become deeply rooted in our lifestyle in the form of gifts for weddings, births,

or engagements, as well as decorations to welcome in the New Year. “Simply put, *mizuhiki* is traditional Japanese wrapping,” says Rokusuke Tsuda of Tsuda Mizuhiki Orikata, the heir to the rare traditional craft Kaga Mizuhiki in Kanazawa City, Ishikawa Prefecture. As the fifth generation master of a venerable Kaga Mizuhiki atelier with over 100 years of history, he continues to create traditional engagement gifts and congratulatory envelopes using the folding patterns and *mizuhiki* techniques invented by the atelier’s founder, Sokichi Tsuda. “Many people associate *mizuhiki* with red-and-white or black-and-white decorative cords attached to paper-wrapped gifts. They are not wrong, but the basis of Mizuhiki Orikata is to ‘wrap’ the gift in white washi Japanese paper, ‘tie’ it with *mizuhiki* cords and ‘write’ the giver’s sentiments and name. Only when all three

elements are present is the *mizuhiki* complete. Rather than using direct words to convey their sentiments for the recipient, the giver uses a combination of wrapping techniques and *mizuhiki* craftsmanship, colors and knots, and elegant brush strokes to communicate feelings indirectly. *Mizuhiki* is a style of wrapping that expresses the graceful sensitivity and discreet consideration that is unique to the Japanese,” says Rokusuke Tsuda. Japanese culture is also known as a “culture of perception.” As a way of expressing one’s feelings indirectly and with a modest attitude, *mizuhiki* can be described as a sophisticated culture born out of the elegance, aesthetics, and delicacy that the Japanese people have always cherished. *Mizuhiki* is made by twisting long, thin strips of paper into cords, coating them with water-based glue and leaving them to dry

until the cords have hardened. There are *mizuhiki* cords wrapped with silk threads instead of paper, cords made of twisted colored paper wrapped with a film of lamé threads, and hundreds of other varieties of *mizuhiki* that combine different colors, materials, gloss, and wrapping techniques. As a craft, *mizuhiki* has a long history. One theory places its origins in the Asuka period (592–710), another in the Muromachi period (1336–1573), when trade between Japan and Ming Dynasty China (1336–1568) commenced. “There is a theory that the origins of *mizuhiki* can be traced back to the time of Prince Shotoku during the Asuka period and the red-and-white cords used to tie and decorate the gifts brought back to Japan by Ono no Imoko, the official envoy to the Chinese Sui dynasty. There are various explanations for the original purpose of these cords, including that they were used as amulets to protect against pirates and maritime accidents in Sino-Japanese trade, to prove that the gifts were unopened and the contents had not been

exchanged, and to wish for a long-lasting friendship between China and Japan,” explains Tsuda. The custom of wrapping gifts with cords became a prestigious practice of the aristocracy through the Ogasawara school of etiquette. In the late Meiji era (1868-1912), the founder of Tsuda Mizuhiki Orikata, Sokichi Tsuda, studied the principles of the Ogasawara school and later, around 1915, set up his own business arranging the exchange of gifts at traditional Japanese engagement ceremonies. However, the intricate shapes of the engagement gifts and congratulatory envelopes made it difficult to fold and wrap them tightly, so after much trial and error he decided to leave them looking plump and deliberately unfolded, wrapping them instead with *mizuhiki* cords. The result was voluminous and gorgeous-looking forms with no noticeable technical imperfections. The *mizuhiki* craftsmanship involved in this process also developed into an original style, using the basic “*awaji* knot,” to create three-dimensional representations of

auspicious symbols such as cranes and turtles, as well as pine, bamboo, and plum trees. When asked about the style of his work, Sokichi Tsuda apparently described it as “*mucha kucha* (chaotic) style.” However, this new style that offered gorgeous arrangements based on the principles of the Ogasawara school was widely accepted by the public and Sokichi Tsuda received



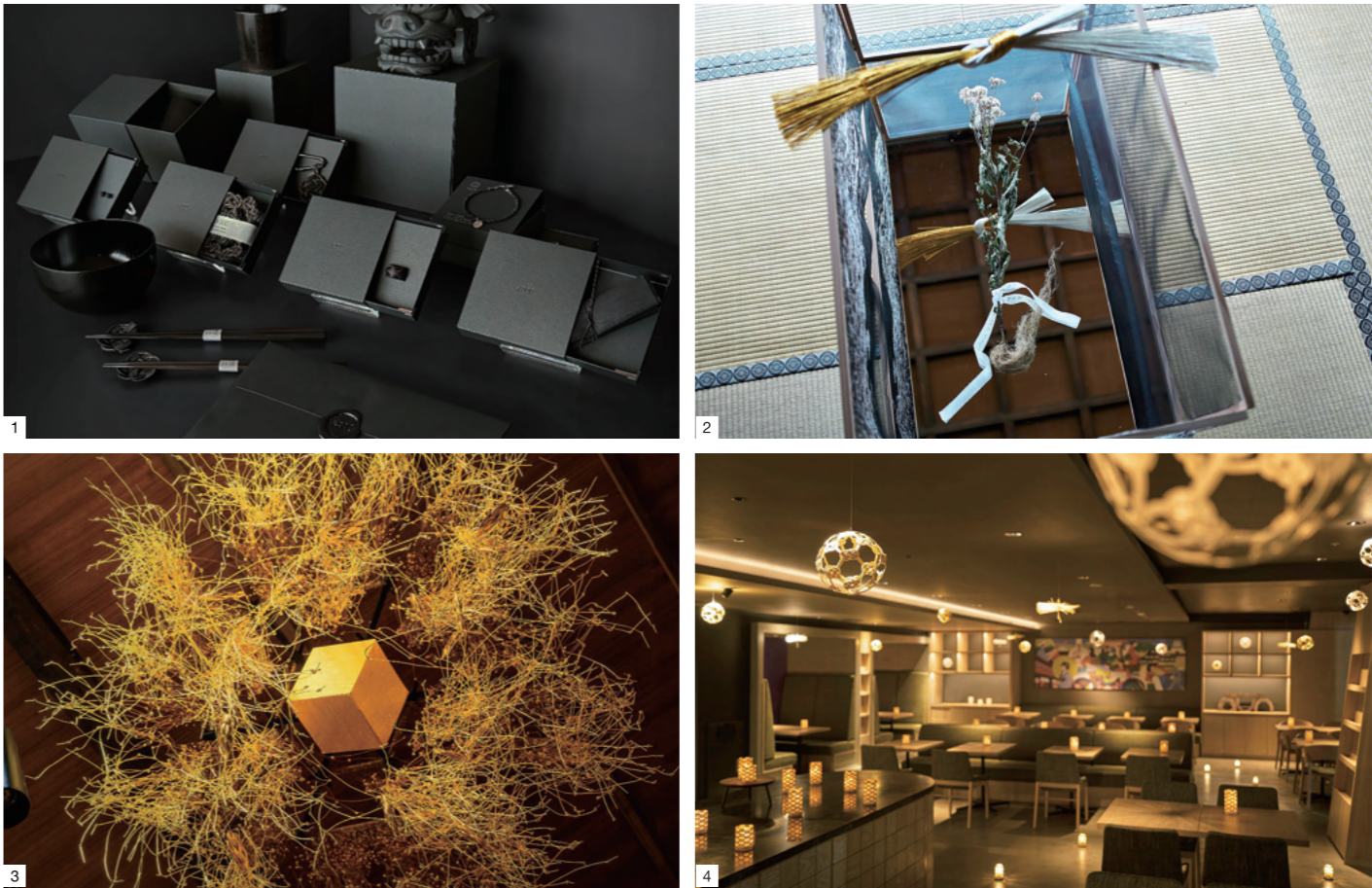
Rokusuke Tsuda
Fifth generation master of Tsuda Mizuhiki Orikata
Kaga Mizuhiki



Collection of Kaga Mizuhiki designs created by the founder Sokichi Tsuda. The handwritten notes include techniques for three-dimensional gift wrapping and three-dimensional *mizuhiki* weaving methods.



1. The *mizuhiki* accessory brand “knot.” In addition to accessories, the brand also offers a range of tableware and wedding products. 2. The “wrap” celebratory envelope, designed as a “wrapping to present banknotes.” 3. *Mizuhiki* corsages are suitable for both Japanese and Western clothing. 4. A snake, the Chinese zodiac sign for 2025, created by weaving *mizuhiki*.



1. The “#000 BLACK KOGEI” features an all-black lineup of craftworks. 2. An installation created jointly by Rokusuke Tsuda and artist Tomoko Hayashi 3. *Mizuhiki* work by Rokusuke Tsuda displayed as part of the interior at a hotel in Kanazawa City. 4. The interior of a Kaga Mizuhiki-themed collaboration cafe, with spatial decorations by Tsuda Mizuhiki Orikata. Open at night only on the 1st floor of OMO5 Kanazawa Katamachi by Hoshino Resorts.

numerous honors, including an order from the Imperial Household. By the second generation, this style had become established as “the rare traditional craft Kaga Mizuhiki” and was well known throughout the country.

The brilliant founder Sokichi Tsuda also visited Iida City in Nagano Prefecture, a region known for the production of paper threads used to make elaborate *mizuhiki* cords, with a collection of designs he had created. In exchange for sharing with local manufacturers the ideas that inspired his original designs, he asked them to produce paper cords in new colors, thereby expanding the expressive range of the craft.

Rokusuke Tsuda was born into the Tsuda family, the sole heirs to the Kaga Mizuhiki craft, and after graduating from university he joined an Internet-related company without taking over the family business. He worked in web planning and design, programming, and online shopping for about 10 years. The incentive to take over the family business came with the opening of the Hokuriku Shinkansen line between Tokyo

and Kanazawa in 2015. He decided to pursue *mizuhiki* as a career, believing that more and more people would visit Kanazawa, and that its traditional crafts would definitely attract attention. “I have enjoyed making things since childhood and have had the opportunity to observe the *mizuhiki* craft as part of my daily life, but it was not until I started working here that I began to learn all the fundamentals. What helped me even more than learning the techniques was, quickly becoming aware of the essence of *mizuhiki*. It is important to preserve the traditional craft of Kaga Mizuhiki, which has been handed down from generation to generation for more than 100 years, but what is essential is not the technique, but the ability to convey the respect the giver has for the receiver and to create a communication that connects hearts and minds. I have come to believe that if we use this as a starting point to determine what can and cannot be changed, we can develop a new style of craftsmanship.”

Having intuitively identified the true

purpose and meaning of *mizuhiki*, Tsuda began to develop new products to meet the needs of the times in parallel with the production of traditional *mizuhiki*. He launched a brand of accessories such as earrings, necklaces, and hair ornaments using the techniques of *mizuhiki* craftsmanship. The name of this brand, “knot,” not only conveys the nature of *mizuhiki*, but also superimposes the negative word “not” to represent the brand’s deviation from the original essence of the craft. “I think it would be great if these accessories could provide an opportunity for people to learn about the beauty of *mizuhiki* and its original meaning. Many customers buy them because of their attractive appearance, but I think that rather than having the nature and background of the craft explained to them on the spot, people who become interested will learn more by looking it up later.”

The atelier offers many other products that were developed as modern communication tools, while retaining the true essence of the craft as a way of conveying the sentiments

and thoughts of the giver to the receiver. It has developed a series of products that focus on the essentials, such as “wrap,” a brand of congratulatory envelopes stripped of unnecessary functions, and “#000 BLACK KOGEI,” a brand of traditional Kanazawa craftworks such as Kaga lion heads and Kaga embroidered balls colored entirely in black to highlight the beauty of their forms. “We also produce and supervise one-off works of art using *mizuhiki* craftsmanship commissioned by companies and hotels, and conduct exhibitions of installation pieces, all with the aim of raising awareness of the essential nature of *mizuhiki*, I would be happy if my *mizuhiki* work could bring people closer to the essence of this craft, even if only in a small way.”

Kaga Mizuhiki is a paper craft that transforms gifts into something much more personal and thoughtful. We invite readers to consider it when giving a gift to a loved one.

INFORMATION

Kaga Mizuhiki Tsuda Mizuhiki Orikata

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Ishikawa Prefecture
Tel: +81-76-214-6363
Open hours: 10 a.m. – 6 p.m. (weekdays)
10 a.m. – 12 p.m. (Sat)
Closed: Sunday and national holidays
Reservations and enquiries for *mizuhiki*
hands-on classes must be made at least
two business days in advance
Website: <https://mizuhiki.jp/>



EVENT INFO

Exhibition events

Scheduled exhibitions showcase the “knot” and “#000 BLACK KOGEI” brands

1. Kanazawa, Kaga, Noto Exhibition

Period: Jan 11 (Sat) – 17 (Fri)
Venue: Hankyu Department Store
Umeda Main Store 9F

2. Fun Traditional Crafts

Period: Feb 25 (Tue) – Mar 3 (Mon)
Venue: Sogo Yokohama Department Store 6F

3. Kyoto Crafts Exhibition DIALOGUE

Period: Mar 12 (Wed) – 15 (Sat)
Venue: Hotel Kanra Kyoto

Listening to quiet voices to create notebooks designed for universal comfort

“It is difficult to write on white paper because the glare it reflects is blinding.”
 “The line changes as I write, and I lose track of where I am writing.”
 Listening to the concerns of people with developmental disabilities and paying close attention to both function and design has resulted in the development of the mahora notebooks. A product of high quality manufacturing technology combined with meticulous, gentle care, the mahora notebooks continue to expand their base of loyal users year after year. We interviewed Kayoko Ohguri, Director of OHGURI SHIKOU Co., Ltd., about the vision behind the development of the product.

—What inspired you to develop the mahora notebooks?

At a seminar I attended, I was approached by the lecturer with a request to hear out people with developmental disabilities who seemed to have difficulty using off-the-shelf notebooks. The lecturer himself was a supporter of an organization that helps people with developmental disabilities, and arranged for me to meet with the head of the association UnBalance. It was a shock to learn that people with developmental disabilities find notebooks difficult to use but put up with them, and as a person working at a company that manufactures notebooks, I felt a desire to lend a helping hand. That is what inspired the development of this product.

—What difficulties did you encounter in the product development process?

Until then, our company had only produced notebooks to order and to the specifications of large stationery manufacturers, so we had no experience of product development. We had no idea even where to begin, so we decided to start by surveying the wishes and needs of people with developmental disabilities themselves via the UnBalance network. We repeated the cycle of creating prototypes based on the problems and requests we received, and making improvements that reflected the feedback and opinions provided by actual users. Finally, in February 2020, about eight months after the start of the project, we managed to complete the mahora notebook.

—What were the selection criteria for the paper you used?

After receiving feedback from people with developmental disabilities who said they could not take notes on white paper because of the glare, we first prepared samples of Japanese high-quality color paper in 13 different colors. We asked users to consider criteria such as “no glare,” “less eye fatigue” and “colors you would like to see,” and to choose from a range of light colors selected with attention to the legibility of written characters. The colors we adopted were lemon and lavender. A year later, we added mint. For the inside pages of the notebook, we opted for a material that is 10% thicker than normal notebook paper and provides a smooth writing experience. We chose paper that would not easily transfer writing to the reverse side, even for users with strong writing pressure, and that would not easily wrinkle or become messy when writing is erased. For the cover, we chose a paper that is often used in packaging because of its soft and smooth feel. We also paid particular attention to the binding, and in response to comments that the edges of the threads in thread-bound notebooks were distracting, or, in the case of ring-bound notebooks, that users disliked the way the rings got in the way, we opted for an optimal binding method, where the sheets are glued directly to the cover while ensuring smooth opening.



OHGURI SHIKOU Co., Ltd.

Since its foundation in 1930, this company has developed a business focused on the manufacture of paper products, primarily notebooks, producing around 20 million of them a year, including on an OEM basis. In 2020, OHGURI SHIKOU established the original brand OGUNO. It is attracting a great deal of attention for its range of products, which are packed with ideas to help solve problems faced by users.

—What were the key points you focused on in terms of design?

One point we focused on is the simplicity of the design of both the cover and the inside pages. We received feedback that the information printed on the notebook was distracting and overwhelming to users, so we decided to remove all excessive design elements. In addition, to solve the problem of users losing track of where they are writing halfway down a line, we created unique ruled line designs, such as alternating thick and thin horizontal ruled lines and shaded horizontal ruled lines. These features make it easier to distinguish between lines.

—What is your current product lineup available for purchase?

In response to demand for notebooks that fit in the palm of your hand or in your pocket, we offer four sizes: semi-B5, B6, A6, and B7. Each size is available in three color variations (lemon, lavender, and mint) and two line patterns (alternating thick and thin horizontal ruled lines and shaded horizontal ruled lines), providing a range of 24 products to choose from. We also offer A4 size mahora sheets (12 varieties in total), which are handy for filing.

—What does the product name “mahora” mean?

The word *mahoroba*, which means “a pleasant place to live” or “a perfect place or country,” was derived from the ancient Japanese word “mahora,” which means “a pleasant place to live,” or “a perfect place or country.” We named this product “mahora notebook” in the hope that our notebooks will provide a comfortable and pleasant experience for many users.

—What kind of feedback have you received from customers who have purchased your product?

Many people with developmental disabilities use our products, and we get positive feedback from users who say that they can take notes for the first time because of our notebooks. Others say that they realized for the first time that they could not use ordinary notebooks because they were made of white paper, or that now they are able to re-read their notes because they are written neatly. We also have a growing number of repeat customers who are not visually hypersensitive, but who find that our products are easy to write on and cause less eye fatigue.

—What are your plans for the future?

In response to widespread demand, we are in the process of launching a plain mahora notebook (in three color variations). Our product concept is “Creating notebooks with people in mind.” For the future, we are committed to contributing to society through sustainable manufacturing that takes the user’s perspective into account.

Characteristics of the mahora notebooks

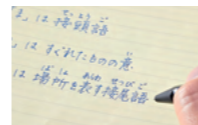
Colors

A total of three color variations (lemon, lavender, and mint), which reduce glare caused by light reflection.

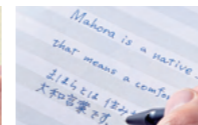


Ruled lines

Two patterns: alternating thick and thin horizontal ruled lines and equally spaced shaded horizontal ruled lines.



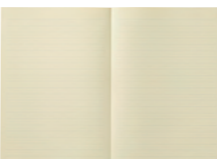
Alternating thick and thin horizontal ruled lines



Shaded horizontal ruled lines.

Binding

The perfect binding method combines ease of use with durability and ensures smooth opening.



PICK UP!



Sustainable pad made by reusing discarded rice

A notepad made using “kome-kami,” a paper material made from rice that has become inedible during distribution, processing, and storage and would otherwise be discarded. With the soft texture and supple elasticity unique to rice, it offers a smooth writing experience. “We hope that this product will inspire many people to take an interest in the concept and operation of a recycling-orientated society” (Kayoko Ohguri).
 B6 size / four design variations + plain type



Mahora Exercise Book for Relaxed Use

An exercise book for elementary school students that retains the features of the mahora notebooks, but adds a touch of ingenuity to the design of the ruled lines. A small dot is printed in the center of each square to make writing easier for children who say they cannot write well because they are distracted by the dotted cross lines traditionally used to indicate the center of the square. Students can relax and write characters freely, without getting distracted by the ruled lines.



For elementary school students

OHGURI SHIKOU Co., Ltd.

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 Corporate Website: https://og-shiko.co.jp/
 Brand Website: https://www.oguno.jp/

OGUNO brand products are available from the official online store on BASE and Amazon, as well as from retailers nationwide.



List of retailers



Official online store

Presenting the KPP Group's Diligent Efforts toward Realizing a Sustainable Society

KPP Sustainable Times

The circulation and recycling of limited resources and energy is an extremely important issue in today's world. Based on the KPP Group mission of "Contributing to the realization of a recycling-oriented society," we are working to build a sustainable society through our business activities.

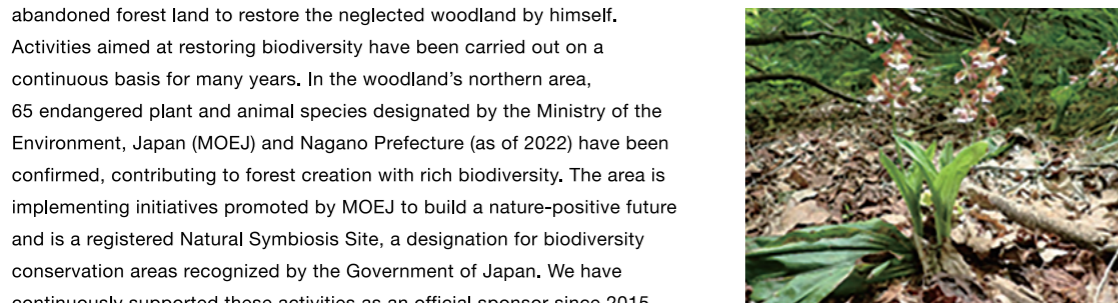
A 100-Year Vision of Forest Creation: The Afan KPP Forest is Born



From left: C.W. Nicol Afan Woodland Trust Senior Managing Director Risako Noguchi, Kokusai Pulp & Paper Co., Ltd. President & Executive Officer Tadashi Kurihara, KPP Group Holdings Co., Ltd. Chairman & Chief Executive Officer Madoka Tanabe, President & Chief Operating Officer Yasuyuki Sakata, and Trust Acting Chairman & Managing Director Izumi Morita

On October 7, 2024, we entered into a forest creation agreement with the C.W. Nicol Afan Woodland Trust, designating part of the Afan Woodland's southern area the Afan KPP Forest, with a signing ceremony held in the town of Shinano-machi, Nagano Prefecture. We will work in cooperation with the Afan Woodland Trust to restore the southern area of the previously neglected forest, making use of the site for biodiversity research and environmental education, as well as forest restoration. The agreement is positioned as part of a forest caretaker system promoted by Nagano Prefecture, with the prefecture acting as a witness.

The grand Afan Woodland project traces its beginnings to 1986 when C.W. Nicol, founder of the Trust, made a privately funded purchase of abandoned forest land to restore the neglected woodland by himself. Activities aimed at restoring biodiversity have been carried out on a continuous basis for many years. In the woodland's northern area, 65 endangered plant and animal species designated by the Ministry of the Environment, Japan (MOEJ) and Nagano Prefecture (as of 2022) have been confirmed, contributing to forest creation with rich biodiversity. The area is implementing initiatives promoted by MOEJ to build a nature-positive future and is a registered Natural Symbiosis Site, a designation for biodiversity conservation areas recognized by the Government of Japan. We have continuously supported these activities as an official sponsor since 2015.

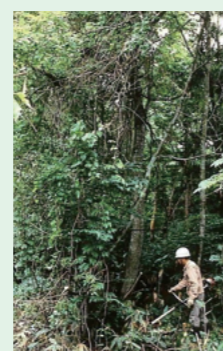


The ebine orchid has been designated Threatened IA status in the Red List for Nagano Prefecture as a species facing extremely high risk of extinction.



Northern area of the Afan Woodland

BEFORE



Formerly neglected, overgrown land

AFTER



Tree-thinning and undergrowth-trimming lets sunlight in for a forest rich in biodiversity

The newly designated Afan KPP Forest consists of 3.54 hectares (8.75 acres) allotted from the approximately 18 hectares (44.48 acres) of the southern area. Rare species have been confirmed in the area, including the ebine orchid (*Calanthe discolor*), which we have classified in the Threatened IA category signifying extremely high risk of extinction in the wild in the very near future. This connects with the 30 by 30 Alliance for Biodiversity, which we have taken part in since 2022.

We will pursue a vision of forest creation looking 100 years into the future in cooperation with the Afan Woodland Trust.

Promoting Material Recycling of Paper Cups Used at Shoda Shoyu Stadium Gunma



Kokusai Pulp & Paper Co., Ltd (KPP), has been promoting a material recycling effort that turns paper cups used at the Shoda Shoyu Stadium Gunma in Maebashi City, Gunma Prefecture into facial tissue boxes, Shoda Shoyu Stadium Gunma serves as the home stadium for Thespa Gunma, a club in the Japan Professional Football League (J. League) 3rd Division. Since 2022, KPP has worked in cooperation with the club to implement and promote efforts to collect paper cups used at the stadium and recycle them into usable raw materials. In a further development, since the summer of 2024, we have worked to successfully turn those recycled materials into new products, as well.

Previously, used paper cups were not allowed in paper recycling collection and were treated as industrial waste instead, as they had plastic coating to give them water resistance and were often contaminated with food and drink residue as well. For this project, used paper cups from the stadium are collected, sorted and washed. After converting the paper cups' fibers back into pulp for use as recycled raw materials and remaking them into facial tissue boxes, we achieved success at turning them into new products.

The tissue boxes are currently available for sale through the Thespa Gunma online shop and a number of physical retail outlets. Be sure to check them out on your next visit to the area.

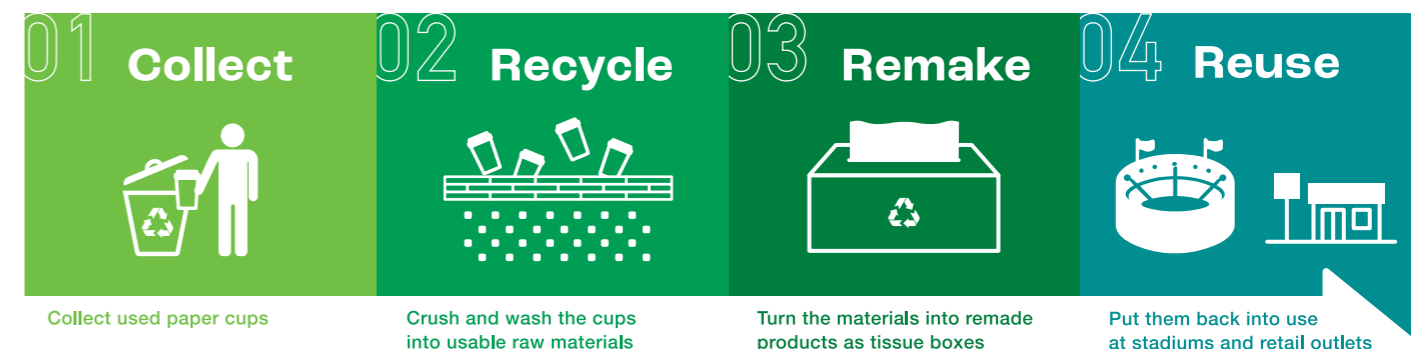


Retail Outlets:

- GCC Thespark 1F Thespa Gunma official shop
- Thespa Gunma home game goods booth
- Thespa Store: Thespa Gunma online shop
- CAINZ Super Center Maebashi Yoshioka



Stages of Material Recycling



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Making Letters Speak

Tomone Uemura

Humans are creatures who express their thoughts. I feel that letters are the most profound and noble form of human expression. When it comes to letters, hand-written letters are best. When we try to read between the lines, we can see the personality of the writer.

Vol. 39: Taichi Yamada

Taichi Yamada died on November 29, 2023. Already over a year has passed. A short time after he left us, I wrote an essay titled *About Yamada-san* for a small economics magazine. At that time, I organized some letters from Yamada that had been scattered in a cardboard box and reread them. There was a total of 16 letters from him. I can't say that Yamada and I had a really close relationship. It was a nearly 20 year relationship, from 1992, when I was director of the Programming Section at TV Tokyo, until sometime after I quit my job as president of an affiliated program production company. Looking back now, it seems like a short time, but 10 years is a long time in itself, and you can't call twice that length of time "short."

Among the 16 letters are 13 postcards and three letters sent in envelopes. There are five New Year's cards among the 13 postcards. All five have the same text, "I humbly wish you a happy start to spring," and each has a note attached to it. I was introduced to Yamada by freelance producer Saburo Takakura and station producer Akira Sasaki in 1992. Three years later, in 1995, Yamada's original drama *Setsunai Haru* ("Painful Spring") was broadcast on the anniversary of the station's opening. It depicts the daily life of a man in his fifties (acted by Tsutomu Yamazaki) who is torn

between work and family, and won many awards, including one from the Japan Commercial Broadcasters Association. The trio of Taichi Yamada, Saburo Takakura, and Akira Sasaki produced and broadcast five dramas over the next 20 years, winning high praise and many awards. TV Tokyo also had some popular dramas such as *Oedo Sosamo* ("Oedo Dragnet"), *Playgirl*, and *Harenchi Gakuen* ("Shameless School"), but there were almost no studio dramas portraying the daily lives of ordinary people, and Yamada's dramas contributed greatly to improving the station's image. A creator's intent is essential to creativity. I think it's sad that there are so few programs these days that give such a sense of intent.

I left TV Tokyo in 1999 and was the president of a related program production company for several years. I have one regret. It was that the production of a Taichi Yamada drama starring Keiko Kishi on the affiliate Television Osaka that we were preparing was rejected due to the wishes of the head office not to do anything excessive. One of Yamada's three letters mentions this.

"Thank you for your kind letter. I don't know the details, but since I was asked to do this, I was prepared to write a completely different piece for you on the premise that I had other types of work with Akira Sasaki, so I was disappointed. That said, it was an honor to be asked, and I also heard that my work with Mr. Sasaki couldn't continue without your support. I was grateful and happy to get to know you as a person. It was in no way a waste of time..."

I quit my desk job at the age of 65 and chose to write in my second life. I wanted to put "to live is to express oneself" into practice. I got off to a good start. My first book, *Naoki Sanjugo-den* ("The Life Story of Sanjugo Naoki"), a biography of my uncle, won the Ozaki Hotsuki Memorial Popular Literature Research Award, and my second, a biography of my father titled, *Rekishi no Kyoshi Uemura Seiji* ("Seiji Uemura, Teacher of History") won the Japan Essayist Club Award. Rather than the power of my writing, this was all due to the fact that I was able to have a slightly unusual novelist named Naoki for an uncle, that I was able to spend half my life with a father who was a pure and open-hearted teacher all his life, and that I was blessed with the chance to describe each of them. Each time I won an

award, an event to commemorate its publication was held at Tokyo Kaikan, and I was riding the wave, but now when I think about it, it's embarrassing. I invited Yamada to the event commemorating the publication of *Naoki Sanjugo-den*, but one of the sixteen postcards from him had a checkmark next to "Will not attend." He wrote, "I cannot attend due to a personal matter. I am delighted with the success of your book." I was to find out later that Yamada had decided not to attend any event commemorating a publication unless it was connected with someone with whom he had a very good relationship. Instead, he told me that he would be happy to add his name to the list of the organizers of the event commemorating the publication (organizers don't have to attend).

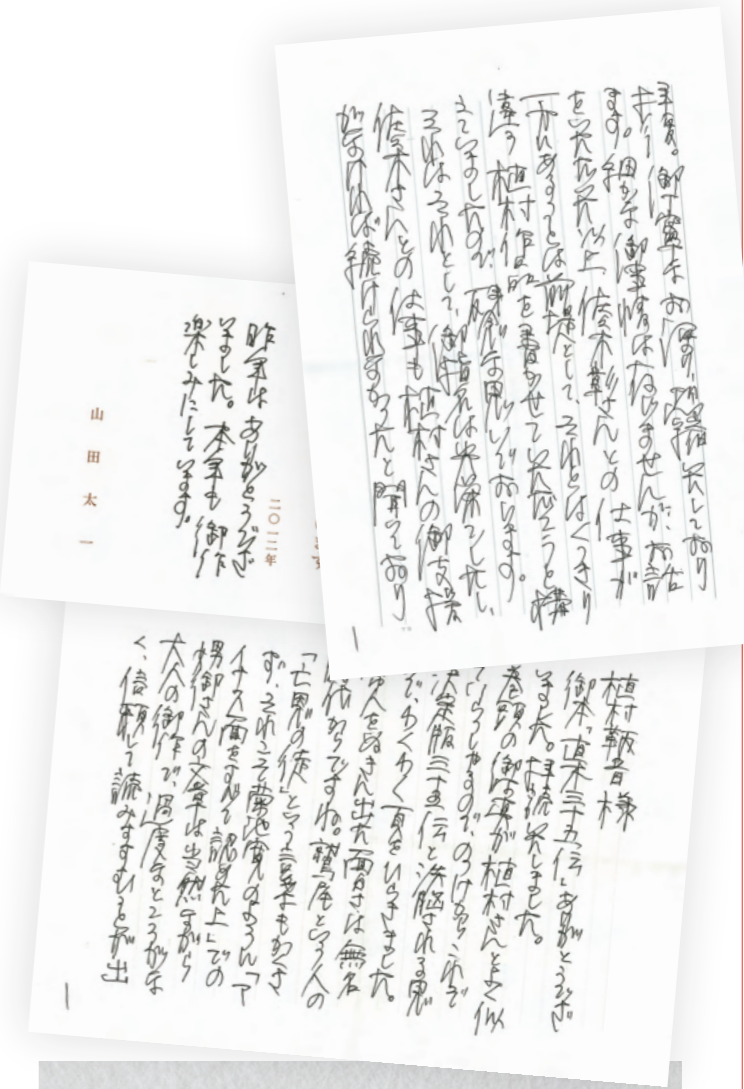
Almost every time a book of mine was published, I would send it to his home. Each time, I would receive a polite response with his impressions after reading them.

"Thank you for your book, *Naoki Sanjugo-den*. I read it. The photo at the beginning of the book looks a lot like you, so it was as if I was brainwashed into thinking this was the definitive publication of Sanjugo's story, and I excitedly opened it to the first page. The qualities that make him more compelling than the ordinary person have been there since he was an unknown. You didn't hide that Washio called Sanjuko ungrateful, and just like Kan Kikuchi, in your writing, as his nephew, 'acknowledge all his negative aspects.' That is naturally the work of an adult, with nothing excessive, and I was able to continue to read your work with confidence...."

The only book of mine that I am proud of is *Rekishi no Kyoshi Uemura Seiji*, about my father. I must have sent it to Yamada, but I can't find any mention of it in the letters. The last book I sent was a critical biography of Saburo Shiroyama, titled *Kikotsu no Hito Shiroyama Saburo* (Saburo Shiroyama: A Man of Determination). Yamada wrote back to me in a letter. "Your thoughts on Shiroyama fill every page, and I was impressed by the personality of Shiroyama, who was blessed to have someone speak of him in this way after he died."

Yamada and my last job together was for a panel discussion series called "Toward the Future of Broadcasting" in the magazine *Gekkan Minpo* (Commercial Broadcasting Monthly) of the Japan Commercial Broadcasters Association (JBA). The articles were published in the magazine every other month for two years, starting in March 2010. I had felt there was a need for a program theory, and proposed this to the editor-in-chief, Nishino. This series is an oral history of what Katsumi Oyama (dramas), and Ryuji Sawada (variety shows), and I talked about regarding TV programs over the years. We got together 12 times, and Yamada was our first guest. Our discussion centered on *Kishibe no Arubamu* ("Riverbank Album," Taichi Yamada's work depicting a family falling apart), which had been popular in dramas to date. During the discussion, Yamada seemed to predict the transition away from television due to the coming of the mobile

phone era. It seems that I sent him a note of thanks afterward. "I am so grateful to receive your magnificent postcard. On the way home, I again felt my lack of ability because I couldn't follow your lead well..." This was Taichi Yamada—a man who was humble and sincere, and who always made me feel his intent.



Author
Tomone Uemura
Essayist

After graduating from the Department of History, the Faculty of Letters, Arts and Sciences at Waseda University in 1962, he worked at Toei Co., Ltd. before entering TV Tokyo Corporation, where he was later appointed to managing director of TV Tokyo and president and representative director of PROTX.

Taichi Yamada

Scriptwriter, novelist
1934-2023

Photo: Mainichi Shimbun/Afio



Born on June 6, 1934, Asakusa Ward, Tokyo (now Taito City, Tokyo). After graduating from Waseda University, he found work at Shochiku Ofuna Studio. After working as an assistant director for Keisuke Kinoshita in the directing department, he went independent in 1965. Since then, as a scriptwriter, he has worked on numerous great television dramas, including *Otokotachi no Tabiji* ("Men's Journey"), *Kishibe no Arubamu* ("Riverbank Album"), and *Fuzoroi no Ringotachi* ("The Irregular Apples"). He was also active as a novelist and won the Yamamoto Shugoro Prize for *The Discarnates*. He won many awards, including the Japan Academy Film Prize for Screenplay of the Year for his script for the film *Childhood Days*. His real name was Taichi Ishizaka. He died of old age on November 29, 2023. He was 89 years old.

▶ Commemorative Party to Celebrate the 100th Anniversary of the Founding of the KPP Group

On November 27, 2024, a celebratory party was held to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the company's founding. In this issue we report on the event.

01 100th Anniversary Commemorative Party November 27, 2024 (Wednesday) Venue: Imperial Hotel Tokyo

On November 27, 2024 (Wednesday), the 100th anniversary of the company's founding, we held a commemorative event at the Peacock Room of the Imperial Hotel Tokyo, inviting about 700 guests and business partners from Japan and overseas.

Panels explaining our operations and our recycling-oriented business model were displayed at the entrance. Visitors were also greeted with the warm light of lampshades made by third graders from Kyobashi Tsukiji Elementary School, children living in Chuo City, and employees and their families at the three 100th anniversary *washi*-making workshops described in this column of the previous issue (Vol. 60).

After Madoka Tanabe, Chairman & Chief Executive Officer of the company, delivered an address as the host of the commemorative event, the guests of honor, Hiroshi Tsuchiya, Director, Material Industries Division,

Manufacturing Industries Bureau, Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, and Hiroyuki Isono, Representative Director of the Board and President, Oji Holdings Corporation, gave congratulatory speeches. Then, 11 guests of honor, retired executive alumni of the company, and directors took the stage. They performed a traditional *kagami-biraki* ceremony, using wooden mallets to break the lids of two sake barrels to a chorus of "Yoisho" calls that filled the venue with vibrant energy. Next, Toru Nozawa, Chairman, Japan Paper Association, and President and Representative Director, Nippon Paper Industries Co., Ltd., gave a toast to mark the start of the reception. Guests and participants spent valuable time interacting and getting to know each other, and the event ended on a high note with closing remarks by Yasuyuki Sakata, President & Chief Operating Officer of the company.



The event venue



Each speech received a vigorous round of applause



Panels explaining the company's business were displayed at the entrance



Handmade *washi* paper lampshades



String quartet performance



A *kagami-biraki* ceremony was held to express wishes for continued growth and success

Speakers



Madoka Tanabe
Representative Director of the board
Chairman & Chief Executive Officer
KPP Group Holdings Co., Ltd.



Hiroshi Tsuchiya
Director, Material Industries Division,
Manufacturing Industries Bureau,
Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry



Hiroyuki Isono
Representative Director of the Board
and President, Oji Holdings Corporation



Toru Nozawa
Chairman, Japan Paper Association,
and President and Representative
Director, Nippon Paper Industries
Co., Ltd.



Yasuyuki Sakata
Representative Director of the board
President & Chief Operating Officer,
KPP Group Holdings Co., Ltd.



Tadashi Kurihara
Representative Director of the board
President & Executive Officer,
Kokusai Pulp & Paper Co., Ltd.

02 Commemorative Event for Employees and Alumni November 30, 2024 (Saturday) Venue: Shinagawa Prince Hotel

On November 30, 2024 (Saturday), a celebratory event for employees and alumni of the company was held at the Prince Hall on the 5th floor of the Shinagawa Prince Hotel Annex Tower. In addition to business presentations by the CEOs of group companies Spicers and Antalis, the event included award ceremonies, a quiz competition, and other activities that created a great deal of excitement, and attendees celebrated the milestone day by enjoying a buffet-style banquet.

Speakers



David Martin
CEO, Spicers Limited



Hervé Poncin
CEO, Antalis S.A.S.



KPP Group Awards Ceremony

A ceremony was held to present the KPP Group Awards, which were introduced to solicit outstanding activities across the Group to mark our 100th anniversary.



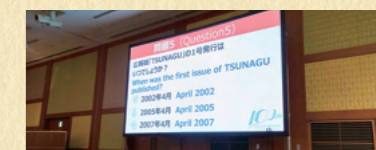
Rilakkuma x SPOGOMI Award Ceremony

A ceremony was held to announce the results and present the awards for the Rilakkuma x SPOGOMI Competitions organized to celebrate our 100th anniversary. Teams of KPP employees and their families, teams of business partners, and teams of local people from the community took part in the competitions. At the event, the top three teams of KPP employees and their families with the highest point totals in all six competitions were awarded and presented with certificates by President Kurihara.



KPP Group Quiz Competition

In addition to the quiz competition about our company, a screening of countdown photos submitted by KPP Group employees from around the world brought excitement to the event.



The quiz featured questions about TSUNAGU!



Screening of a brand film

The event included the screening of a brand film on the theme of "Sustainability and the Future of Paper." We have also released to the public a history film that summarizes our journey over the past 100 years. We invite readers to explore the history of our Group and the values that connect us to the future.



Brand film



History film



Editorial postscript

I think for most people, the word "packaging" conjures up images of cardboard boxes used to deliver mail-order purchases. What counts is the contents of the box, so when it arrives, people usually rip the packaging to shreds and throw it away. If such an ephemeral use is the thing of everyday life, then what is its opposite, as symbolized by the wrapping of a gift for a special occasion? The answer I came up with is "presence" — the presence and consideration that a gift conveys and the elements that represent it.

Mizuhiki, the traditional Japanese wrapping craft that uses paper cords to decorate gifts and envelopes, is only complete when all three elements — wrapping, tying

and writing — are in place. If one is missing, it falls short of the true nature of the craft. Wrapping your thoughts and feelings for the recipient, pouring your heart and soul into the knot, writing the reason for the gift and your name: this meticulous attention to detail is perhaps the essence of the Japanese sense of beauty that we cherish today.

Rokusuke Tsuda, the representative of Tsuda Mizuhiki Orikata, said at the end of his interview: "You do not have to choose mizuhiki because it is a traditional craft. It is enough to simply discover the beauty of something that happens to be a traditional craft." This magazine also uses paper as a gateway, and we put a lot of

emphasis on the cover, which is the first thing the reader sees. In recent years, TSUNAGU has been made available in various places, and when the cover catches someone's eye, they may not realize that it is paper art, but if they find it beautiful and pick it up, I suppose that would be our true mission in the way of providing opportunities to encounter paper. This is what I realized on my way back from the interview as Rokusuke Tsuda's words suddenly came to mind, and I superimposed them on the concept of this magazine.

We aspire to make TSUNAGU a publication that will nurture your interest in paper and your appreciation of beautiful things.

Tomoka Kato



Books & Cafe Dreadnought

2-3-21 Hirano, Koto City, Tokyo

Tel: +81-3-5809-9008

Open: 11:00 – 20:00
(last order at 19:30)

Closed: Mondays and Tuesdays

*Cafe holidays and business hours can change when events, etc., are held. Please check the website for details.

<https://www.dreadnought-2019.com/>



A book cafe with valuable history books for exploring today's international affairs

Kiyosumi Shirakawa is an area that possesses a seamless blend of late Edo period downtown ambience and sophisticated designs created by the Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo and other art galleries. Cutting a unique figure in this district, which also bustles with coffee fans as one of Tokyo's leading "cafe battle zones," is Books & Cafe Dreadnought. "I wanted to open a welcoming book cafe stocked with my own favorite books," says the owner, Hironori Suzuki. Technical books on history and international politics which he has collected over the years fill the cafe's traditional style interior. "We handle new and used books focusing on modern and contemporary history, military and war history, but you'll also

see some rare books that can only be found here in Japan. In addition to books, we also display and sell models of ships throughout history and around the world." He adds that he also displays a highly rare reproduction of a painting that depicts the arrival of the fleet for the coronation review of King George V of Great Britain (1911), and many experts and military buffs visit the shop to see it.

There is also a donation box in the store calling for support for Ukraine. "The former Soviet Union suffered the most deaths of any country in the world during World War II. Russia should have known the pain of war better than anyone else, but it repeated the same thing. It breaks my heart because I have friends in both

countries," says Suzuki. With the world currently facing the most conflicts and crises it has since the end of World War II, the cafe is a space to reconsider what is going on in the world.



Everything on the food menu is prepared in the cafe kitchen. The naleśniki, a Polish crepe (see photo), is a popular menu item made with a slightly thick dough and accented with a refreshing sour raspberry flavor.



We have adopted a bookbinding method free of staples, paste and heat, taking into consideration recycling and the risk of injuries.



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