

Vol. 51
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UNZAN

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Color
Special Issue

Kirie Art Featuring Wondrous Light Filtered Through Colored *Washi* Paper

Explore

Sustainable Natural Fiber
Kaminoito OJO+

Advance

Ultra-Lightweight “Waltz” Mannequin Made with
Nishinouchi Washi Paper, an Intangible Cultural Asset

TSUNAGU is a public relations magazine published by Kokusai Pulp & Paper 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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Shihen o Kazashite (“Holding Up Bits of Paper”)

Kirie Art Featuring Wondrous Light Filtered Through Colored *Washi* Paper

Dramatic compositions evocative of stories... Hand-dyed *washi* permeated by beautiful, nuanced light... *Kirie* paper-cutting artist Shinobu Ohashi continues to fascinate fans from Japan and around the world with her artwork. She not only employs sophisticated techniques to make cuts less than 0.5 mm thick, but expresses a lyrical worldview imbued with wondrous beauty as well. Here we take a closer look at how Ohashi’s standout *kirie* art is created and what the wellspring of her creative activities might be.

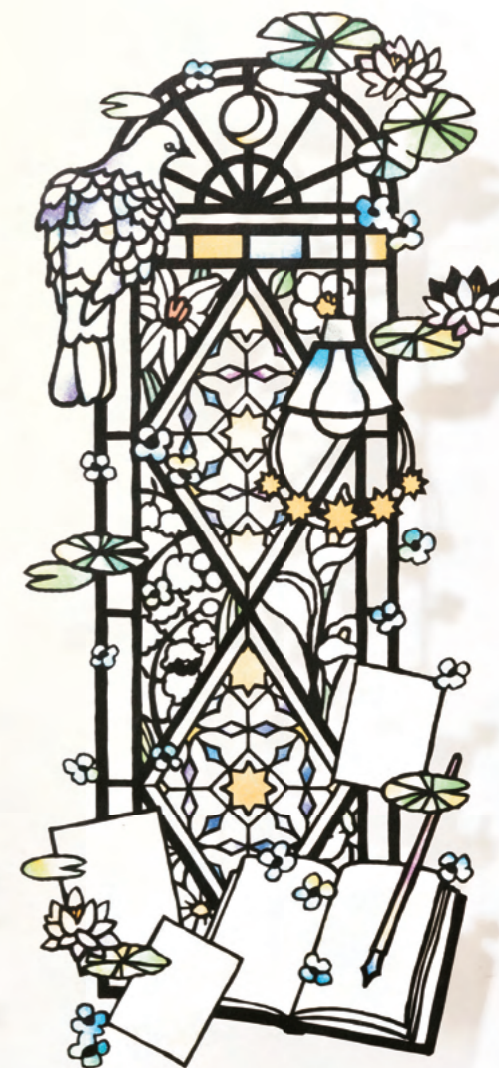


Hikari iru Adabana (“Useless Flowers in the Light”)

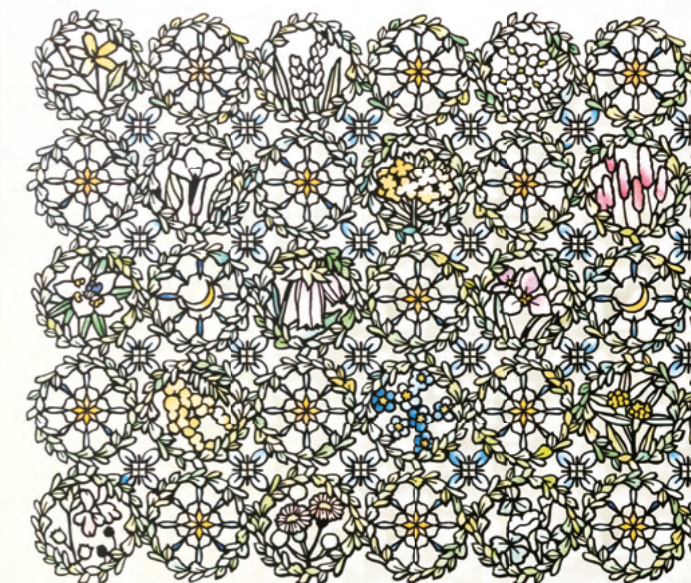


Shirahane o Yuri
 (“Shake the Feathers”)

Oseki no Shizumu (“The Past is Infiltrated”)



Shiyoubu Madobe (“Cotyledon Windowside”)



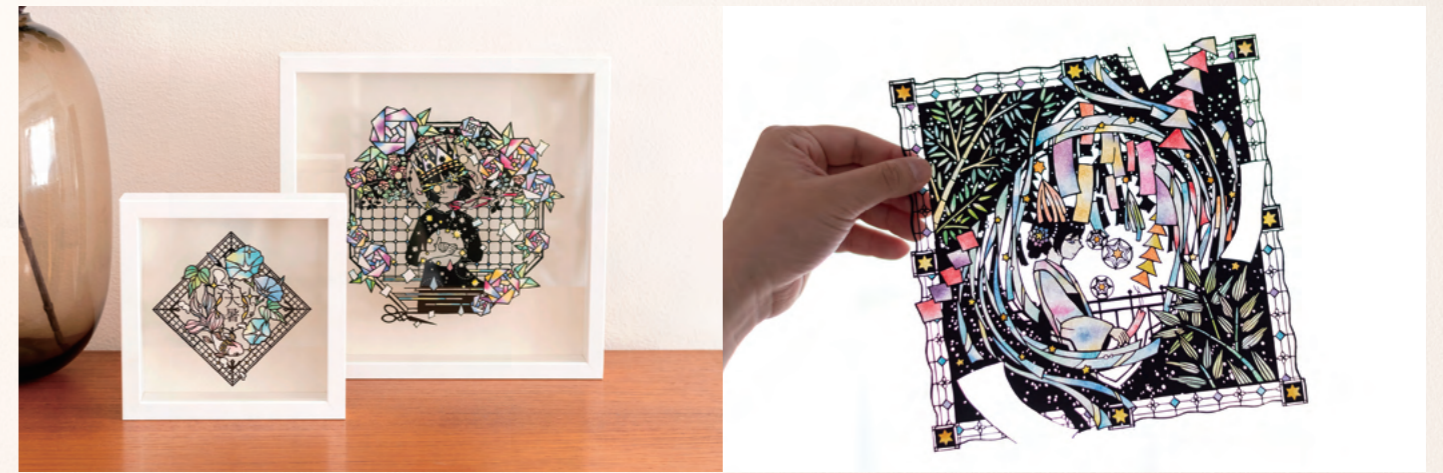
Hoshi Tsuki Kusabana (“Starry-Moon Flowering Plants”)



Shinobu Ohashi *Kirie* artist

Born in Fukushima Prefecture, she began making *kirie* with black drawing paper and colored *washi* soon after admittance to Bunsei University of Art and presented her original work on social media and at exhibitions. After an experience working as a company employee following graduation, in 2015 she published *Utsukushii Kirie* ("Beautiful *Kirie*," MdN Corporation), her first design collection of newly commissioned work. This attracted attention to her artwork, which is expressive of her unique worldview, and led to its use in many corporate advertisements. Since then, she has actively participated in a range of fields, from producing goods featuring motifs from her artwork and publishing books to designing title logos for comics and anime works.

URL: <http://ohashi-shinobu.com/#en>



Paper art featuring short stories condensed onto single sheets and *washi* permeated with colorful light

Using a special design knife with a thin blade, she creates single-sheet images with seamless lines, leaving just the outlines of her design sketches. Expressing lines that are sometimes powerful and sometimes delicate, *kirie* is a popular form of paper art that can be started with a bare minimum of tools. Most commonly, black paper is used to create monochromatic imagery in black and white, but *kirie* artists are employing an increasingly broad range of expressive techniques as well, with brilliant multi-colored pieces, materials other than paper, dimensional work with countless layers of paper and more.

Shinobu Ohashi is a popular *kirie* artist who is attracting notice with her beautiful pieces made with uniquely distinctive use of color and delicate lines. Her pieces have gained popularity from being featured in various forms of media, including social media. With her designs depicting flowers, plants, and animals associated with the traditional 24 divisions of the solar year* appearing in media outside Japan as well, even more active involvement around the world can be anticipated from her in the days ahead.

One charming feature running through Ohashi's pieces is a lyrical worldview that seems to extract and capture particular scenes from stories. "My approach is to settle on certain 'words' as themes for my pieces, then start putting together an image of the colors and design from there." The literary expressions she uses in her titles stand as testament to this: *Akari ni Sosogu*

("Rinsed in Light"), *Ikuha Meguru* ("Around Some Feathered Wings Come"), *Hanaryokusho Daku* ("Emerald Green Embrace"). "A lot of the themes in my work come from feelings that well up in me reading novels or listening to music. It's like those feelings will mix with my own memories, and the imagery starts to develop and expand from that," she explains.

There seems to be an unexpected background to the way ideas for her surprising motifs and designs and creative use of color occur to her as well. "This might sound a bit dubious, but are you familiar with 'synesthesia'? It's a mental phenomenon where certain colors appear in conjunction with different letters or numbers, or with sounds you hear. Apparently, there are many different types. In my case, when I see letters or numbers, I automatically get a sense of the 'color' attached to each one. For example, the letter 'a' will be associated with the color red, 'i' with light blue and white, 'u' with pink... When I read novels or listen to music, colors, lines, and designs will pop into my mind. My approach is akin to a process of incorporating those into my work." The colors linked to each letter can change depending on the word or sentence, so the nuanced coloration varies from one piece to another, she says.

* The 24 divisions of the solar year (*nijushi sekkki*): An ancient Chinese calendar system indicating 24 seasonal divisions, with each year divided into four seasons (spring, summer, autumn, and winter) and each season further divided into six solar terms.



She uses a sketchbook to draft the design for the piece she has in mind.



Hand-dyed *washi* is cut out to match the design sketches.



Minutely detailed portions are cut first, and finally the outer outlines.



Ohashi imports preliminary drawings into her computer to make layout adjustments. After printing collaged sketches on white paper, she overlays them with black drawing paper and begins running the design knife along the outlines of the motifs, lettering and so on. “The black drawing paper I use is Muse High Black. It’s matte black paper and tends to give a clean cut, plus it’s nice and strong, so it’s long been a favorite of mine,” she explains. Ohashi goes on making cuts to reveal minutely detailed portions like little leaves on trees and gently curved lines, as if drawing them with a pen.

She then proceeds to the next stage in her creation process. With superfluous portions trimmed away, the drawing paper is left with only the outlines of the image’s component parts, and on the back, she starts affixing *washi* with nuanced tones of color.

“I use hand-dyed *washi* to reveal the subtle beauty of the light that passes through it. Up through high school I used off-the-shelf *washi*, then I came to start dyeing my own based on advice from a university professor. I’ve tried out all different kinds but decided to go with Wakasa Washi, which stays strong when moistened with water and doesn’t warp when dried. I really like the way the color spreads when I dye it.” From the stained glass-like beauty of the work to its air of gentleness and lyrical quality, the *washi* plays a pivotal role in expressing the unique worldview that characterizes Ohashi’s art.

Surprisingly enough, though, she reveals, “When I was little, I didn’t care for drawing or arts and crafts all that much.” Praise she received for a picture of plants she drew for a homework assignment led her to realize the pleasure of drawing, though there was then also a time when she lost her confidence in middle school seeing the abilities of other members in her art club.

“I was self-conscious of the fact that I wasn’t so skilled at drawing and struck on the idea of making *kirie* as a method of expression that could make up for my lack of drawing skills. As I kept making *kirie* throughout my high school and university years, the turning point came when an editor from a publishing house approached me at the Design Festa exhibition. Publishing a design collection of my own helped forge connections with a range of different people for me.”

Each of the works she has published since then, at a pace of one a year, have become bestsellers. In addition to having her work featured in many corporate advertisements, both in Japan and around the world, she has been inundated with requests to supply her *kirie* artwork for projects or to participate in collaborations. While too numerous to list, these have included having her work used for the title logo of the popular anime television series *Fumetsu no Anata e* (“To Your Eternity”) and the lettering used on the cover of the popular comic *No Problem Kazoku* (“No Problem Family”).

Ohashi is energetic and busy—producing her artwork, holding solo exhibitions, creating designs to include in her books, responding to collaboration requests for all different types of media, and also managing the production and sales of her own original goods. When asked what she would like to try her hand at next, she replies, “I’d like to take a shot at stop-motion animation made with *kirie*, and one other thing I’d like to do is start offering *kirie*-making lessons in my own studio. I would love for more and more people to come to know the special charms of this artform and the joy of creating it.” The artwork and activities Ohashi has to offer in the days ahead should not be missed.



Recent work: *Stained Glass Kirie—Utsukushii Nihon no Shunkashuto* (“Stained Glass Kirie: The Beautiful Four Seasons of Japan,” Kodansha Ltd.)

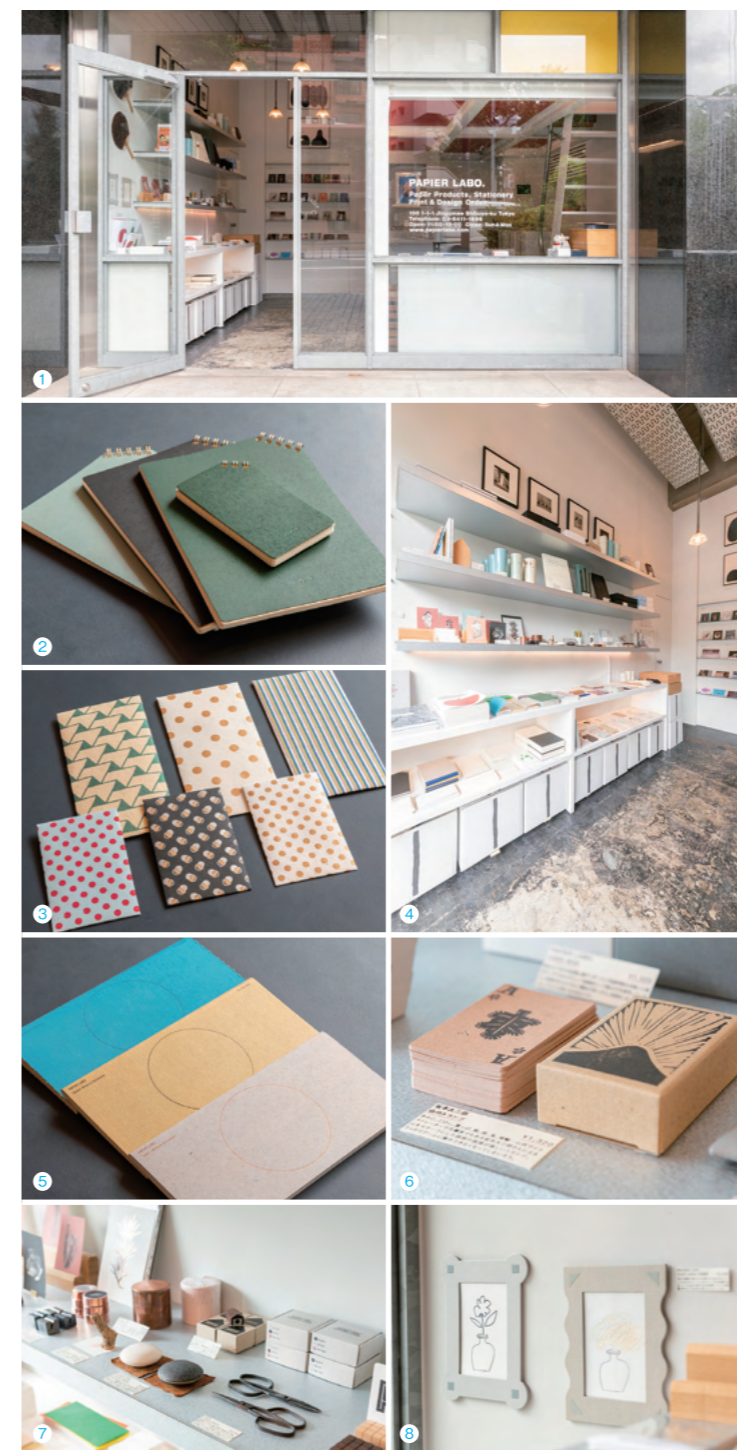


A variety of original goods featuring motifs from Ohashi’s *kirie* artwork are available for purchase. URL: https://suzuri.jp/shinobu_kirie

Expand

Paper trivia

Experience a diverse range of paper products curated with a unique aesthetic at this specialty store



① The store boasts a simple and stylish glass-fronted exterior. ② RINGNOTE/RINGMEMO offers a comfortable writing experience in which the rings do not get in the way. ③ The HATAGUCHI COLLECTIVE series of envelopes and cards are made of cotton pulp paper produced by up-cycling cotton waste from Indian textile manufacturers. ④ The interior design of the store with its high ceiling creates a relaxed atmosphere for customers to freely choose products. ⑤ The TATAMI MODULE NOTEBOOK is one-tenth of the size of a real tatami mat (91×18 mm). ⑥ MOUNTAIN TRUMP, a set of playing cards designed after the illustrations of Daizaburo Sakamoto, a mountain ascetic and artist. ⑦ The store also offers a diverse line-up of pens, scissors, storage boxes and other paper-related products. ⑧ The POST CARD FRAME is made of cardboard so it can be attached using double-sided tape. * All products can be also purchased via the PAPIER LABO website.

PAPIER LABO.

Address : #106 1-1-1 Jingumae, Shibuya-ku, Tokyo
TEL : +81-3-5411-1696
Business hours : 12:00–18:00
Closed on Sundays and Mondays
URL : <http://papierlabo.com/en/index.html>



About a seven-minute walk from the Takeshita Exit of Harajuku Station in Tokyo is Papier Labo, a specialty store that offers a line-up of variety goods and stationery from Japan and overseas curated with a unique aesthetic, as well as originally produced items. The selection is inspired by the common theme of paper and paper-related items. Ever since its opening in 2007, Papier Labo has become a well-known destination for a base of discerning customers composed mainly of creators in search of exciting products that will stimulate their sensibilities.

“My standard in stocking up the store with products has never been salability,” says Kimiaki Eto, the owner of Papier Labo, who also designs and directs the creation of original products. The interior of the store is neatly lined with a selection of paper items with distinctive designs and specifications and products reminiscent of craft works with outstanding artistic properties. “I make sure to choose only objects that I truly like. I select products that give me a sense of affinity with the creator regarding the most basic elements of their work, such as attitude towards the creative process, personal qualities, and sensitivity.”

PAPIER LABO also provides made-to-order printing services for personal and store business cards and direct-mail advertising materials. “As a provider of the full-range of printing services, we give our customers comprehensive proposals, from the selection of the paper through the design, all the way to the printing and processing, in order to bring out the appeal of the printed product. For instance, if an ordinary person wants to have business cards made, they may not know how to approach a printing company. I believe that our mission is to become the intermediary that connects these two parties.” Products printed using the letterpress technique are held in particularly high esteem. According to Eto, the relief texture, the bleeding of the ink, and other interesting material features unique to letterpress tend to attract customers.

Finally, when asked about his future plans for development, Eto laughs. “To be honest, I have not given much thought to the future. We just want to create and promote products that we like, using methods that meet our aesthetic standards. This, however, does not mean that we will try to persuade customers to buy products that we think are good. A product that is good for one person may be of no use for another. The best way is for customers to freely choose and use products.” It is this lack of eagerness and the attitude of placing a high value on their own sensibilities that explains the support that PAPIER LABO receives from their broad customer base.

Waltz



Magnets embedded in each of the four paws allow the figures to be stuck to wall surfaces to which magnets will stick. Coloring can also be applied to make the figures even more life-like.

Eco-Conscious, Ultra-Lightweight “Waltz” Mannequin Made with Nishinouchi Washi Paper, an Intangible Cultural Asset

Set in shop windows and storefronts, mannequins are used to display clothing and accessories. They not only give a sense of how the items will look when worn, but also serve as indispensable display tools in creating a shop’s atmosphere. And now, a new product has appeared on the scene, drawing attention with ground-breaking new characteristics poised to upend conventional wisdom in the industry. The company that developed it is TOMANE Co., Ltd. a mannequin manufacturer with a history of over 80 years, and the Waltz mannequin they produce achieves considerable weight reduction by using Nishinouchi Washi paper—an intangible cultural asset—as its material. It has also attracted notice as an environmentally friendly product with the way it reduces the amount of waste plastics generated during disposal and so on. Here we will introduce the merits of the Waltz mannequin made with traditional Japanese *washi* paper as well as the background of its development.

—What led to the development of the “Waltz” mannequin?

Since around 1958, fiber-reinforced plastics (FRP) have been used in the manufacture of mannequins, without change. Now, Japan is the only country in the world where a rental system for mannequins and other displays has been established, and full resource circulation actually has been realized. When the mannequins are disposed of, the FRP parts are recycled as a raw material used in cement manufacturing, the metal parts are targeted for material recycling and so on. However, with the passage of the Plastic Resource Circulation Act in Japan this past April, we sensed the need to make mannequins with a different material. As we searched for a way to express the gratitude we felt for all the support we have enjoyed up until now, we began developing the Waltz mannequin.

—What was it about Nishinouchi Washi paper that caught your attention as the new material to use?

There were three points we prioritized in making our selection: (1) a material produced domestically in Japan with a universal sense of familiarity; (2) something that would make a regional contribution to Ibaraki Prefecture, where our factory and warehouse have long been located; and (3) a manufacturing method conducive to a good working environment and environmentally friendly, as well. Nishinouchi Washi, which has been registered as an intangible cultural asset, is a traditional Japanese paper with a 350-year history produced in Hitachi-Omiya City, Ibaraki Prefecture using 100% local Nasu paper mulberry. As it is resistant to water and tearing and has long fibers as well, we thought it might be suitable for molding mannequins.

—How was the process of developing it into a product?

We made prototype after prototype, conducting tests with pieces of the paper to find out how humidity or drying would affect it. Also, to bring out strength in it, we developed digital data on the properties of the material, such as its compatibility with adhesives, and continued to research methods of adhesion and of splitting the paper, ways to shorten the process and more.

—What are some of the advantages of the Waltz?

Whereas a conventional female mannequin made with FRP weighs approximately 8 kg, the Waltz comes in much lighter, at about 1.6 kg—about 20% the weight of one of those. This lowers shipping costs and lessens the workload of assembly. The material used to form a Waltz mannequin can also be recycled into more *washi* paper. Not only that, but these mannequins are made in a safe work environment with clean air, since no organic solvents are needed in the manufacturing process at all and no fine particulate matter is generated from polishing. The Waltz is also imbued with the hope that more widespread use might call attention to the crafting tradition of Nishinouchi *Washi* as an intangible cultural asset and its special appealing qualities.

—What kind of aspirations do you have looking forward?

We hope to apply our special process to produce molded objects other than mannequins as well, as we have patented our process of working with *washi* as required to adhere the paper to manufacture the Waltz.



The weight is so light the mannequin can be picked up with a single hand, making it easy to transport and change the clothing being displayed on it.



Extensive research on expressive posing makes the Waltz able to display clothing with elastic properties. Photo shows prototypes.

Manufacturing Process for the Waltz

After the *washi* paper with its slight mass is laminated in countless layers into the molded form of the mannequin, a tool of proprietary design is used to stroke the surface until no bumpiness or unevenness remains. When a smooth surface is achieved, the joints of the various parts are affixed together, and the mannequin is complete. Each one takes about two weeks to manufacture, including the time required for drying.



Joint sections can be secured with magnets, making the mannequin take up less space when displayed.

Inquiries Regarding the Waltz

Manufacturing & sales : TOMANE Co., Ltd.
 Representative : Sawako Iwashita, President's office
 Address : Higashi Kyobashi Bldg., 1-11-1
 Ginza, Chuo-ku, Tokyo
 TEL : +81-3-6367-9860
 E-MAIL : sawako.iwashita@tomane.co.jp
 URL : www.tomane.co.jp/en/company.html



Waltz mannequin on display at SEIBU Ikebukuro Store

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

KPP Sustainable Times

The recirculation and recycling of finite resources and energy has become an urgent concern in contemporary society. At KPP, we are determined to increase our corporate value by ensuring that our business operations help to build a sustainable society. This effort is grounded in our management mission to realize a recycling-oriented society.

topics

01

Kaminoito OJO+ is attracting attention as a sustainable natural fiber



In addition to the reduction of plastic waste discharge, sustainable practices that consider the environmental impacts of all processes from production to recycling and disposal are spreading rapidly. Paper is also getting newfound attention as a low environmental impact material.

OJI FIBER Co., Ltd, which became a group company of Kokusai Pulp & Paper Co., Ltd. in April this year, manufactures a natural paper yarn fiber called Kaminoito OJO+. The raw material is Manila hemp, which is steamed in a kettle to extract fibers, which are then used to make thin, strong rolled paper. The paper is slit into long, thin tape-like strips, which are then twisted into yarn (see POINT 2 on the page to the right). The OJO+ paper yarn made this way is lighter and more fuzz-resistant than other fibers, and can be washed repeatedly in water due to its water resistance, the lack of which is typically considered a weakness of paper. Further, since each fiber is porous,* OJO+ is lightweight, breathable, quick-drying, and cool in summer and warm in winter. This material's light texture has garnered widespread attention, especially in the apparel industry, and it is being used for a wide range of products, including clothing, bags, and shoes, as well as furniture, wallpaper and other interior items, plus sheets and other bed linens.

Expectations for plant-derived OJO+ to contribute to the building of a sustainable, low-carbon world are increasing, since its carbon dioxide emissions are low and it is decomposed in the natural environment by microorganisms. In addition to promoting the building of a comprehensive recycling-oriented business model, the KPP Group will continue working to promote the use of OJO+ and other environmentally friendly products (green products).

*Porous: Having minute holes (pores) through which liquid or air may pass.



A note from the manufacturer printed on OJO+ paper, which is woven into the denim fabric as paper thread. The paper with the message is also used for the product tag.

MESSAGE



Hiroyuki Shiraishi
President CEO
OJI FIBER CO., LTD

Kaminoito OJO+ is the ultimate ecological product—created by combining the principles of traditional *washi* Japanese paper making with cutting-edge papermaking technology. We are confident that OJO+, which makes the most of the inherent properties of paper, is a promising material. It could become the global standard for the next generation, as it poses no harm to health and can contribute to reducing global environmental impact. OJO+ has already been adopted in a wide variety of applications, mainly by fashion brands in Japan and abroad. Currently, we are making further improvements with a view to introducing artificial turf made with OJO+ for indoor and outdoor fields. We hope to popularize the use of OJO+ around the world so that we can bequeath to the next generation a global environment that is comfortable to live in.

OJI FIBER CO., LTD

Address : 7F OJI Holdings 1st building
5-12-8 Ginza, Chuo-Ku, Tokyo
President CEO : Hiroyuki Shiraishi
Established : November 1, 2002
TEL : +81-3-5550-3003
FAX : +81-3-5550-0621

Visit the website
www.ojifiber.co.jp/en/



PICK UP POINT

Features of environmentally friendly Kaminoito OJO+, a material made from 100% organic natural fibers

POINT 1

Made from Manila hemp

The raw material used is Manila hemp from Ecuador, which is considered to be of the finest quality. It has obtained organic certification after meeting strict requirements, including zero pesticide use for more than three years. Since it grows quickly—from seedling to a height of 5 to 6 meters and a thickness of 20 to 40 centimeters in about 3 years—its cultivation does not lead to reckless deforestation. It also absorbs carbon dioxide during the growth process, contributing to greenhouse gas reduction. When burned, it generates almost no toxic substances, and the action of microorganisms biodegrade it in the natural environment. In the end, it gets turned into water and carbon dioxide and is circulated back to nature.



POINT 2

A mix of cutting-edge equipment and new technology



1. Cultivation

Manila hemp takes about three years to grow to a height of 5-6 meters and a thickness of 20-40 centimeters.



2. Fiber extraction

Stems are cut down from the root, and leaf sheaths are split open to extract the fiber.

POINT 3

Combines numerous features

- Lightweight and strong
- Bouncy, firm, light and smooth to the touch
- High dyeability due to the fibers' good compatibility with dyestuff
- Fuzz-resistant
- Breathes well and dries quickly
- Natural deodorizing and antibacterial properties
- High heat retention and moisture absorption
- Cuts ultraviolet rays
- Extremely water-resistant, washable



POINT 4

Used in a wide range of products

Widely used for clothing such as shirts, pants, informal summer kimono, socks, and handkerchiefs, general apparel such as shoes and hats, and accessories such as bags and umbrellas. Demand is also expanding for a variety of uses in fashion, general sundries, and lifestyle products, including furniture, wallpaper, office partitions and other interior products, as well as artificial turf and putting mats.



3. Pulping

The Manila hemp is boiled and evaporated in a huge spherical kettle to produce pulp.



4. Paper making

The pulp is passed through a papermaking machine to produce the base paper for the yarn.



5. Slitting

Washi yarn base paper is cut into thin strips of 1-4 mm and processed into tape.



6. Yarn twisting

The slitted tape is twisted to finish the Kaminoito OJO+.

INFORMATION

Kaminoito OJO+ will be on display at an exhibition in Tokyo in October. This will be an opportunity to see the products up close and take them in hand. We invite you to come and experience these OJO+ products in person.

The 2nd Sustainable Fashion Expo – Autumn Exhibition

Dates : Oct. 18 (Tue) – Oct. 20 (Thu), 2022
Venue : Tokyo Big Sight (3-11-1 Ariake, Koto-ku, Tokyo)

Check QR code for details



*Admission via invitation only. Please request an invitation ticket from the Expo website.
*Because the Expo is for business meetings, it is not open to the general public and anyone under 18.

topics 02

Introducing examples of installing BMecomo, which supports maximization of revenue from biomass power plants



BMecomo is a service that helps maximize the profitability of biomass power plants, which are in daily operation, by utilizing the latest technology to collect and analyze all kinds of data from a plant, and thoroughly “visualizing” the information. In this issue, we introduce details of the service we provide to Biomass Power Technologies Inc. and Mie Enewood Co., Ltd., which have adopted BMecomo for actual use.

Typical features of BMecomo	
Centralized data management	Centrally manages all plant-related data, including past operating history and equipment data.
System integration	Performs system integration of plant control systems and various sensor data.
Remote monitoring	Provides a dedicated dashboard that enables monitoring of a plant's operating status from anywhere at any time.
Alerts	Users have the option to set alerts and create trend graphs that immediately notify the relevant personnel of signs of abnormalities.
PICK UP Dedicated mobile app	Provides a dedicated application that enables collective management and operation for walk-around checks, operating instructions, and alert information.
Data analysis	Analyzes data from various perspectives and provides data analysis and feedback on analysis results in line with customer needs, thereby optimizing plant operations.
Advanced facilities management	Provides advanced facility management functions based on Enterprise Asset Management (EAM), and optimizes facility management.
PICK UP Sensor solutions	Provides consistency of services from selection of the necessary sensors to installation, data collection, analysis, and feedback.

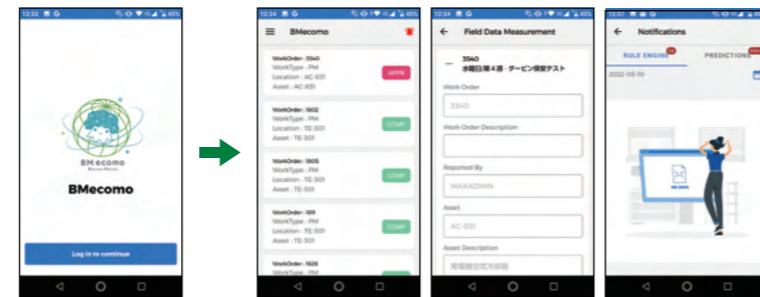
PICK UP Dedicated mobile app

Each BMecomo feature can be used from a smartphone or tablet device, and these devices are being used to perform tasks such as remote monitoring when away from the office, and management and registration of on-site work information.

Until now, users have accessed BMecomo with a Web browser to use each feature, but to improve useability, we have developed a dedicated mobile app for some BMecomo features.

The mobile app can be used to perform maintenance tasks such as work request management, daily on-site inspections, and management of abnormality alerts. Among other things, the mobile app can be used to notify the operator of trouble alerts, facilitating prompt notification of trouble information and work requests to the responsible personnel.

Mobile App Sample Screens



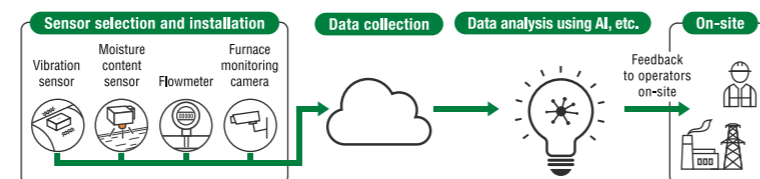
PICK UP Sensor solutions

Information based on an accurate grasp of equipment operating status and conditions is essential to strategic facility maintenance. BMecomo's sensor package solutions provide consistent services from sensor selection, to installation, data collection, data linkage, analysis, and feedback of results.

It is exceptionally strong in data collection, data linkage, analysis, and results feedback, and we utilize our proprietary technologies to support the realization of advanced maintenance and management such as CBM¹ and RBM.²

¹ CBM: Condition Based Maintenance. A method of monitoring equipment conditions and performing maintenance based on such conditions.

² RBM: Risk Based Maintenance. A method of analyzing the risks faced by a facility and performing maintenance in accordance with the risk level.



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(Hours: M-F 9:00-17:00)

Scan QR code to check out
BMecomo website!

https://bmecomo.com/about_en.html

Video about services here ▶



KPP Chairman & Chief Executive Officer Madoka Tanabe Visits Exhibition on the Late C.W.Nicol's Legacy

Kokusai Pulp & Paper Co., Ltd. is a company engaged in a recycling-oriented business that helps conserve the environment. It is only natural, then, that KPP endorses C.W.Nicol's dream of restoring Japan's natural environment to its original beautiful form. This is why the company has, since 2015, supported activities related to this cause as an official sponsor of the C.W.Nicol Afan Woodland Trust. KPP has enjoyed the support and cooperation of the Trust, which has acted as a bridge linking the company with all stakeholders, in a range of ways. Our support has helped to provide hands-on washi paper-making lessons at the *Mori no Gakko* ("Forest School") in Higashi-Matsushima City, Miyagi Prefecture as well as an address given by Nicol at the KPP Exhibition.

On two occasions this past April and May, an exhibition called "The Forest will Thrive Once More — The Future C.W.Nicol Bequeathed to Japan" was held at Isetan Shinjuku and Tachikawa Green Springs. KPP extended its support as a special sponsor in an expression of gratitude for the relationship we have enjoyed. Chairman & Chief Executive Officer Madoka Tanabe, who made visits to the exhibition at both venues, provides details about the exhibition and venue spaces.

To help fulfill Nicol's dream of preserving beautiful forests "100 years into the future," we will continue to support the activities of the C.W.Nicol Afan Woodland Trust.

"The Forest will Thrive Once More" — The Future C.W.Nicol Bequeathed to Japan" Exhibition

The Afan Woodland was restored over the course of 36 years through the efforts of C.W.Nicol, who was driven by his enchantment with Japanese nature and deep concern about the state of increasing environmental destruction. This exhibition introduced visitors to the forest and the way its restoration came about. With concepts that "The forest will thrive once more" and "The future can be changed" if people use their imagination and put it into action as main themes, the exhibit sought to present the state of the Afan Woodland—which has come to provide habitat for over 60 endangered species—and to share the words left behind by Nicol.



Isetan Shinjuku Venue

April 13 (Wed) – 26 (Tues)
1F Promotion Space

This space, near the entrance to the department store, housed the exhibition. Amid the surrounding rows of famed fashion brands, this corner shone with a unique, conspicuous presence, greeting visitors with C.W.Nicol's words, which exude his passion to protect the forests, and related exhibits. It has been about seven years since KPP first crossed paths with Nicol, and still there was quite a lot on display here that I was seeing for the first time, from press coverage of an open letter he sent to the Forestry Agency¹ to details on his process of restoring the Afan Woodland.

¹ In 1986, C.W.Nicol sent an open letter protesting the harvest of timber from natural forests to the director of the Forestry Agency of Japan.



Tachikawa Green Springs Venue

May 18 (Wed) – 26 (Thurs)
2F Atrium

Held in May, the exhibition was planned to coincide with the International Day for Biological Diversity.² The venue here faces out onto the Showa Kinen Park area where abundant natural verdure and glass-fronted buildings merge seamlessly. At the entrance were displayed photographs of children participating in the Five Senses Project³ and taking delight in activities they would be able to enjoy nowhere but in the forest.

² An international observance established by the UN to spread awareness of biological diversity-related issues.

³ A program hosted by the C.W.Nicol Afan Woodland Trust where children in need of emotional or psychological care are invited to the Afan Woodland to take part in healing experiences of nature in the forest using all five senses.



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. 29: Hideo Onchi

Hideo Onchi, my friend for nearly half a century, has passed away. I have difficulties remembering who introduced us to each other. Back then, I was assigned to the Programming Department of TV TOKYO Corporation, and also served as planning producer of a program called *Kinyo Special* ("Friday Special"). My friendship with Onchi must have begun in that context, which means that the person who introduced us was perhaps Matsuo Takahashi, the producer of *Noriko wa Ima* ("This is Noriko"), *Biruma no Tategoto* ("The Harp of Burma"), and many other movies.

Onchi, Takahashi, and I would often discuss projects for TV programs over a meal. My nearly two years' worth of experience working at a film company had developed in me an attachment to auteurism, so I tended to emphasize the presence of the director. I liked Onchi a lot, as he was a cerebral director who did not concern himself with the commercial aspects of filmmaking.

After graduating from Keio University, Onchi joined Toho Co., Ltd., where he worked as an assistant director to Hiromichi Horikawa, the director of *Kuroi Gashu: Aru Sarariman no Shogen* ("The Black Book"). He was promoted to

director at the young age of 27. His directing debut was the 1961 film *Wakai Okami* ("Young Wolf"). Starring Yosuke Natsuki and Yuriko Hoshi, the film was publicized as a pioneering work in the Japanese *La Nouvelle Vague* (New Wave) movement. The following year, he directed *Kokosei to Onna Kyoshi: Hijo no Seishun* ("High School Student and Woman Teacher: Merciless Youth"), starring Reiko Dan. Critics apparently declared both films to be "conceptual" and "esoteric," but I have not seen them.

Onchi was, if anything, an unprolific creator, and directed a total of 15 films throughout his life. For a period of ten years after his debut, he brought new movies into the world at a rate of almost one per year, but if asked about his most popular works, it would be *Akogare* ("Once a Rainy Day"), *Izu no Odoriko* ("The Dancing Girl of Izu"), and *Meguri-ai* ("Two Hearts in the Rain") that usually come to mind. Released in 1966, *Akogare* is a romance story about the pure love between the protagonists, a young man and woman who each come from a complicated family background. Adapted from the original story of Keisuke Kinoshita, the film is written by Taichi Yamada and stars Ryo Tamura as the young man and Yoko Naito as the young woman. I had the opportunity to see it at a movie theatre not long after Onchi passed away, and I think it was a neat and refreshing *seishun-eiga* (a Japanese genre of "youth movies").

Izu no Odoriko is, needless to say, a film adaptation of the famous novel of the same title by Yasunari Kawabata, but how many such adaptations have been made before it in the history of Japanese cinema? Tatsuyoshi Ehara plays the part of the young male student, and Yoko Naito is the traveling dancer.

Meguri-ai was released in 1968. Set in the Kawasaki Industrial Zone during the postwar period of rapid economic growth, the film depicts the story of Tsutomu, a worker at an automotive plant, and Noriko, who works at a component factory. Despite their poverty, the two protagonists are energetic and courageous. Toshio Kurosawa stars as Tsutomu, and Wakako Sakai plays the part of Noriko.

It was perhaps around that time that we became friends, so back then I had seen only this one film. Considering, however, that these youth movies are counted among his representative works, were highly acclaimed, and became large hits, I believe that they express most truthfully the essence of his talent. "Friday Special" was a TV program focused on documentary films that mixed headline views with moderate concepts. For the directing, we enlisted the services of Shohei Imamura, Kihachi Okamoto, Kei Kumai, Yoshishige Yoshida, Junya Sato, and other first-rate directors. The times were shifting from the age of motion pictures to the television age, so many film directors who had lost their platform of expression in cinema moved to TV. It might be said that "Friday

Special" sparked this trend. Putting the quality of the program aside, I was very happy simply to be able to work together with such talented directors. For one of our projects, I had numerous meetings with Onchi, and we agreed on following the public and private affairs of the Prosecutor-General, but the Public Prosecutors Office did not give us permission to film.

Judging from Onchi's filmography, it appears that, due perhaps to the dwindling opportunities to make feature films, he poured all his efforts into the creation of TV series. In the period from the late 1960s through the late 1980s he worked on NTV's *Kayobi no Onna Series* ("Tuesday's Women Series") and *Kizu Darake no Tenshi* ("Wounded Angel"), ANB's *Dayo Wide Gekijo* ("Saturday Night at the Mysteries"), and other TV series.

The 1973 *Garasu Zaiku no Ie* ("Glasswork House") of the *Kayobi no Onna Series* was a wonderful suspense drama. It tells the story of a peaceful, happy family that is brought to the verge of collapse by the kidnapping of their nine-year old younger son while his father (played by Masaya Takahashi) is away on an overseas business trip. Kyoko Kishida played the role of the wife. It won a Galaxy Award for Highly Recommended Programs that year.

Kizu Darake no Tenshi was made the following year, 1974, and gained great popularity as a youth TV series co-starring Kenichi Hagiwara and Yutaka Mizutani.

As for Onchi's works for my former employer, TV TOKYO Corporation, there are not many. One of them is the 1988 documentary drama *Uchu-Hikoshi Ellison Onizuka to Haha* ("Astronaut Ellison Onizuka and his Mother"), which depicts the US astronaut Ellison Onizuka, who died in the fatal explosion of the Space Shuttle Challenger I, and his mother. Onchi liked this documentary drama and it was well received, eventually winning a Galaxy Award for Highly Recommended Programs. In 1993, when I was in charge of programming, I established the slot *Nihon Meisaku Dorama* ("Japanese Masterpiece Drama Series"). My idea was to invite talented directors to adapt into TV series literary masterpieces written since the start of the Meiji period (1868) that had not been picked by other TV stations. As part of this project, I had Onchi take, once again, the challenge of adapting *Izu no Odoriko*. He must have really loved the original novel. It was the first appearance of Takuya Kimura in a TV series. His co-star was Misato Hayase.

I forgot to mention it, but Onchi appeared as an MC in *Dokusen! Otona no Jikan* ("Exclusive for the Adult"), a TV TOKYO Corporation infotainment program that aired on Saturday nights, for a full year starting in October 1980. He gained critical acclaim for his intellectual and natural style as an MC.

I searched for letters from Onchi, but all I could find were two postcards. One is a New Year's greeting card, and the other is a picture postcard designed after the binding of the hardcover edition of Yasunari Kawabata's *Izu no Odoriko*.

"Look at the postcard I got. As I wondered whom I should send it to, for some reason your face came to mind. I want to see you. Please make time."

The postmark reads "94 Oct. 31." This means that Onchi sent it in 1994, when he was 61 and I was 56. Looking at his filmography, I cannot find any notable works that he created that year. So, perhaps after turning 60, an age of special significance in Japanese culture, believed to mark the completion of one full life circle, he felt the need of human companionship. I do not know how many picture postcards of *Izu no Odoriko* he got, but I am truly happy that he sent one of them to me.

Our friendship continued as we grew older, and on numerous occasions we were joined by Tsutomu Tomari, the former President and Chairman of Toei Animation Co., Ltd. Tomari was my department supervisor at the film company that I joined after graduating from university, and for the past several decades has also been my good rival in the game of go. Onchi did not play go, but he went to the same university as Tomari and helped him write his employment paper when Tomari faced the prospect of becoming an unemployed university graduate. That is why Tomari was always humble in Onchi's presence.

After hearing Onchi modestly mention that his son managed a delicious seafood restaurant, the three of us occasionally visited the restaurant, called Uotetsu, in Nakameguro. His last feature film was *Warabinoko* ("To the Bracken Fields"), released in 2003. It is based on an Edo period folk story about the custom of abandoning old people to die. The subtitle of the movie is "The Democracy to Die." This is Onchi's other masterpiece of a youth movie. Around the end of 2021, the three of us, Onchi, Tomari, and I, made a promise to go for a meal of *unagi* (eel) together in the beginning of the new year, but unfortunately Onchi passed away and the promise remained unfulfilled.



Hideo Onchi

Film director
1933-2022



Born in 1933 in Tokyo City (present day Setagaya City). Graduated from Keio University in 1955 and joined Toho Co., Ltd. In 1961, Onchi made his directing debut with *Wakai Okami* ("Young Wolf"), a movie for which he also wrote the screenplay. His directing career spans a broad range of genres: from so-called *seishun eiga* ("youth movies"), such as *Akogare* ("Once a Rainy Day"), *Izu no Odoriko* ("The Dancing Girl of Izu"), and *Meguri-ai* ("Two Hearts in the Rain"), which depict Japanese youth in fresh and vibrant terms, to TV series in the 70s, such as *Kizu Darake no Tenshi* ("Wounded Angel") and *Ningen no Shomei* ("Proof of the Man"). His most famous works include *Ikite Mitai Mo Ichido: Shinjuku Basu Hoka Jiken* ("I Want to Live Once More: Shinjuku Bus Fire Incident") and *Shimanto-gawa* ("Shimanto River"). Onchi won the Japan Movie Critics Award in the Best Picture category for *Warabinoko* ("To the Bracken Fields"). In 2005, he was awarded the Order of the Rising Star. Hideo Onchi passed away in 2022 at the age of 88.



Brief Biography of the 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.

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A “book cafe” where you can read and enjoy nature in the four seasons

Kamakurayama was developed as a villa area, and many famous people, including prominent figures in politics and business, as well as writers, have taken up residence here. So-common is a book cafe located in this residential area, and fits right in to its abundant green spaces and elegant atmosphere. This magnificent environment is one reason So-common has been beloved by so many book lovers, especially those in the Kamakura area, since it first opened in May 2021. With the sound of a piano playing quietly in the background, the interior is laid out so as to maintain a comfortable sense of distance. Counter seats offer a panoramic view of Kamakura's natural scenery, and slightly raised sofa seats provide a beautiful view through the window. On sunny days, the roughly 990m² wooden deck, which extends out into a bamboo grove, is especially recommended. The cool rustling of bamboo leaves, the chirping of birds, and the squirrels flitting through the trees create a relaxing atmosphere in a space where time flows calmly, far from the hustle and bustle of the city.

“I opened this place because I wanted to create a spot where the people here could gather,” says the owner, Hitoshi Karasuno. “Books are a very effective tool for initiating communication, and I was hoping that providing SDGs-informed books would result in opportunities for people who are interested in the SDGs to get together.” Many of the books on the bookshelves are related to sustainable lifestyles, with titles such as, “Communities of the Future,” “Taking Environmental Issues Seriously,” and “Connections between Food and Living Things.” Karasuno adds, “But the collection will change depending on the people who use the cafe, and I hope that we will end up with a collection of books that our customers want to read.” A portion of the bookshelves houses a mini-library with a collection of books owned by individuals. “For example, we have books that retired foreign literature professors let us keep here. While each book is interesting in its own right, when you put them together on a bookshelf, it's also fun to discover that person's life and way of thinking,” says Karasuno.

So-common's buyback program is also unique. “After a book that was purchased here has been read, we will buy it back at 70% of the original price in cash (or with cafe points equivalent to 80% of the original price). We started this system because we wanted to circulate these books, which tend to just sit in somebody's home, in order to share them with as many people as possible. With books, there's no difference in content between used ones and new ones; you can't really say there is a balance between new and used prices, as you can with cars. So, we decided to try a new way of doing business with the customers who agree with our thinking—one that sets us apart from the general used book market,” says Karasuno. In addition to taking on the challenge of forging a new type of bookstore, So-common offers a unique community by hosting various events that promote interaction among local residents. Please drop by on your next stroll through Kamakura.

TOPICS

Sendai Tanabata decorations created by Narumiya Kami-shoji Co., Ltd., a group company of KPP are on display at the 1st floor entrance of the KPP head office through the end of August.



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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