

# Necessity of Traditional Culture for Art Education

## YUME-KASAFUKU Project 2018 Workshop with 477 children

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### Abstract

**I think that cultural tradition is necessary for children’s art education. My "YUME-KASAFUKU Project" is an art activity to make children realize the traditional culture by the power of art. Children learn the history and meaning of "KASAFUKU" through production."KASAFUKU" is a Japanese traditional culture. First "KASAFUKU" was a hanging decoration for girls festivals. Later KASAFUKU spread through the sea route to the Shonai district. And "KASAFUKU" changed due to the influence of indigenous culture in Shonai district. It changed as an object of "prayer", not just for celebration. The work "YUME – KASAFUKU" was made by a lot of children who participated in the workshop. It is made by "Washi". "Washi" is a Japanese organic paper with a history of 1300 years. However, we also know about the difficulty of protecting the traditional culture and passing down on traditional Japanese paper for the next generation. Children learn about the history of Japanese paper. And they can know the details of the color and texture of Japanese paper by touching them. I think that it is important for art education to open up the future by learning the importance of tradition.**

## Keywords

**KASAFUKU, YUME-KASAFUKU, WASHI, workshop.**



YUME-KASAFUKU, W1100×L2400×D1100 Finland 2018

## **Introduction** –Happy Dreams under the Umbrella–

My art object "YUME-KASAFUKU" is an attempt to explore the interaction between regional folk art and art education for children. Regional folk art must be preserved and passed down future generations. Hence, I have taken this opportunity to let children experience regional folk art as after all, children are our future.

## **What is "YUME-KASAFUKU"**

"YUME-KASAFUKU" is my original art object, designed to convey the culture of "KASAFUKU" to children. In Japanese, "YUME" means dream, "KASA" means umbrella, and "FUKU" means happiness. ("KASAFUKU" described below). My work has been created from pieces created by 252 children (12-13 years old) using Japanese paper "WASHI". "WASHI" is Japanese paper which has a long history of 1400 years. (See below for details.) Unfortunately, opportunities for children to touch Japanese paper in their daily lives are now rare. Through this workshop, the children were able to see first handedly and to experience regional folk art, by creating works using hand-made MINO Japanese paper, "MINO-WASHI". The children were given an opportunity to learn about traditional folk art and also to appreciate the beauty in traditional Japanese paper. Each individual piece has been connected with thread, and hung under an umbrella, to create one big work. By "connecting" each piece, children can visualize how individual personalities can become connected, and how one's own piece of artwork becomes an even greater and more beautiful piece of artwork by connecting their pieces with those of their many friends. Once we lose the Japanese culture of "KASAFUKU" and "WASHI", it will be very challenging to revive them. Thus, through this workshop, I hope that children were able to learn about Japanese culture, the importance of passing on the culture to future generations, and the pleasure of cooperating with others to create a work of art.

## **About KASAFUKU**

The culture of "hanging decorations" has existed for a long time in Japan. Today, this culture is being practiced only in three areas: the "KASAFUKU" of Sakata, Yamagata Prefecture, the "TSURUSHI HINA" of Inatori, Shizuoka Prefecture and the "SAGEMON" of Yanagawa, Fukuoka Prefecture. Collectively, they are called the "Three Large Hanging Decorations of



YUME-KASAFUKU  
project 2016 Japan



YUME-KASAFUKU  
Workshop Japan 2018



YUME-KASAFUKU  
-SAKURA-  
New Zealand 2018

Japan". Historically and as can be seen in the "TSURUSHI HINA" of Inatori, the "hanging decorations" were first used for the celebration of girls on the day of the Doll Festival in March. Later, as can be seen in the "KASAFUKU" of Sakata, the "hanging decorations" were used to wish for the healthy growth of children, including boys. It is said that the practice of these three "hanging decorations" started in the latter half to the end of the Edo period (the latter half of the 17th century to the mid 18th century), although this is unclear. It is also said that "TSURUSHI HINA" of Inatori was the first and original, but this is also unclear.



The "KASAFUKU" of Sakata in the Shonai district of Yamagata Prefecture has existed for a long time. Unlike the other two "hanging decorations", it is characterized by hanging ornaments under an umbrella. Since the beginning of the Edo period (from the 17th century) Sakata flourished as a port to ship rice. The Kitamae Passage (westward) allowed for exchanges between Sakata and Osaka as well as Kyoto. This allowed the Kitamae ships to bring the "KASAFUKU" culture to Osaka and Kyoto. The "KASAFUKU" is a symbol of the rich cultural exchanges made through shipping from the port city Sakata. According to records, in 1765, Sakata 's wealthy merchant, the third generation Honma or Mitsuoka Honma, learned how a town could be revitalised through the YAMAHOKO, the float ceremony used in the Gion Festival in Kyoto. He used what he learned by revitalizing Sakata by making the local Sanno festival on a grand scale. He asked craftworkers who make dolls in Kyoto to produce decorated cars to use at the festival. On top of the decorated cars were the umbrellas. It is said that hanging decorations under umbrellas came from these decorated cars.



Festival of Hie Shrine 1892, Honma collection

Thereafter, the KASAFUKU of Sakata went through its own changes in the process of developing the regional customs, culture and climate of the Shonai district. It is said that it was no longer merely an ornament for "celebration", but also an ornament used for "prayers" in accordance with the indigenous faith practiced in the Shonai district. The survival rate of babies

and children was not high due to the poor healthcare infrastructure of the time. KASAFUKU was considered a good luck ornament towards the longevity and happiness of children and their offspring. KASAFUKU was also dedicated to shrines and Kannondo to pray for deceased children. Very few of these KASAFUKU dedicated to shrines and Kannondo exist today.

If celebrating the birth or health of a child is a festive KASAFUKU, what was made for the soul of a deceased child can be said to be a prayer KASAFUKU.

### **Traditional KASAFUKU in the Shonai district**



Sannou club 2000



Kotai shrine 1892. \*1



Zouzusan shrine 1902.



Soko temple 1927. \*3

\*2

### **About WASHI (Japanese paper)**

WASHI is a paper with a very long history in Japan, created with natural materials such as the mulberry bush. This tradition has existed for 1400 years. WASHI is handmade each sheet at a time, by a skilled craftsman. It was produced nationwide until the end of the Edo period (the middle of the 19th century). Production rapidly decreased due to the modernization and mass production of paper using wood pulp as raw material, which began in 1874. The main reasons for the decline in the creation of WASHI are, it is more expensive to make compared



with paper using pulp, and there are few young successors who have the high skills needed to create WASHI. This is a very regrettable situation for the Japanese culture.



"Chochin" WASHI Lantern

WASHI is excellent as a type of paper due to its durability and long-lasting properties. WASHI has been used for books and letters in Japan since its creation 1400 years ago. Due to its durability and long-lasting properties, books and letters written with SUMI ink on WASHI have been amazingly and beautifully preserved. The "UKIYO-E", famous world-wide, is also woodblock printed on WASHI. During the Edo era, which started in the 17th century, WASHI was used not only for books but also for lighting fixtures (Chochin and Andon) and raincoats. WASHI is indispensable for people's lives.

In November 2014, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) decided to register the Japanese government's recommendation, "WASHI, the Hand-made Paper Craftsmanship of Japan" as an "Intangible Cultural Heritage". The "SEKISHU-BANSHI" (from Hamada City, Shimane Prefecture) the "HON-MINOSHI" (from Mino City, Gifu Prefecture) and the "HOSOKAWASHI" (from Chichibu village, Ogawamachi Higashi, Saitama Prefecture), are the three types of WASHI which were registered. Each are produced purely from the mulberry bush. It is with gratification and honour that the traditional WASHI

producing techniques from these local WASHI production regions have been internationally recognized and appreciated.

## How to make Japanese paper

### 1. Reaping of *Broussonetia kazinoki*

From the end of November to January when the moisture of the tree is low, the first year's tree.

### 2. Simmering

Cut the harvested stems in the same length, cover with a tub (Koshiki), steam for 3-4 hours.

### 3. Sun drying

After steaming, apply cold water and quickly peel off the black skin from the trunk. For preservation dry the black peel firmly in the sun.



Broussonetia Kajinoki



white skin



destruction of white skin

### 4. Return with water

Soaking the black skin to water such as river for about 24 hours as much as necessary to filter paper.

### 5. Simmering white peel

Use a tool like a knife (Takkiko) to peel off the skin of the black skin and make only the endothelium (white skin). Put "white peel" in a pot, boil it with wood ash, soda ash, lime etc to remove impurities and make it high purity fiber.



6. Pulling out the white skin

Soak to flowing water such as river for about 24 hours, rinse off the ash and soak the boiled white peel in water and let out the impurities. Carefully remove garbage and scratches on pierced white leather. Carefully remove scratches and fibers, dirt, etc. of fibers by hand.

7. Destruction of white skin

Strike until the fiber becomes cotton and break white skin into thin fibers one by one. In the past, it was done by hand.

8. paper making

Put the striked fiber in a water tank (Fune), add water and *Abelmoschus manihot* and stir well with a comb-like tool called a horse (Mase). (*Zaburi*) *Abelmoschus manihot* has characteristics that improve the ease of making paper and the texture of paper.

9. Squeezing wet paper

After finishing, remove "Su" from "Keta" and transfer the filtered paper to the paper floor. Place the paper on the paper floor for a day and drain the water naturally throughout the night and night. Leave the layer of paper (Kanda) you made naturally dehydrated and squeeze it mechanically.

10. Drying

Dried by sun to make good quality paper. Today I use almost iron sheet drying (thermal drying).



Abelmoschus manihot



Fune (water tank)



Su(filter)

11. Sorting

Dry paper is inspected and selected one by one with paper, broken paper, thickness.

12. finishing

After sorting, it is cut and cut according to the plan and packed in the shipping unit in a stacked manner.

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Sanno Club <http://sannou.matizukuri.info/>

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