

The Benibana Museum

The
Safflower Museum



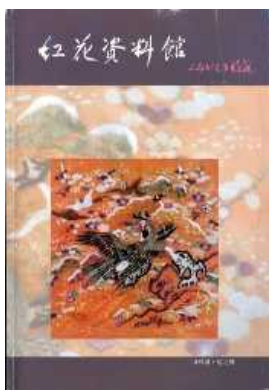
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1. Benibana (Safflower : *Carthamus Tinctorius*) Revived (蘇った紅花)

Kahoku Town is called “the country of benibana”. In Edo period, Mogami (最上) safflower was in cultivation in this area (in those days, a present Murayama (村山) area was called Mogami). And the flower leaves were processed into a cake of lumps and transported up to Kyoto. There, the lumps were made into the red cosmetic for cheeks and lips and used to make up the lips of noble ladies. Furthermore, people dyed the costumes in bright or faint crimson with benibana color. The mysterious beauty of its color was the longing of ladies all through the ages.

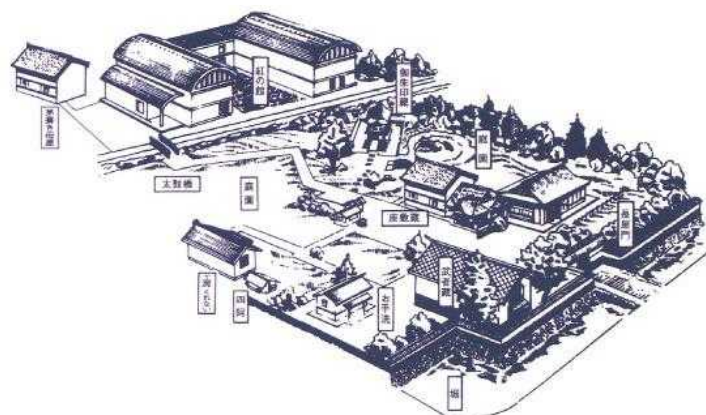
In spite of such valuable materials of colors as these, the flower was forced to disappear in Meiji era under the influence of the chemical materials which were brought into this country. But even after that, the costumes that have been used in the Imperial Palace or its various ceremonies slightly continued to be dyed with the safflower dyeing materials produced in Yamagata Prefecture.

In 1981, when Kahoku Town decided its town’s flower, the people did not hesitate to nominate benibana as a town’s flower. Also in 1984 they opened “the Benibana Museum”, consisted of “the Benibana House” in 1986 and other properties in 1984. The beautiful color of benibana has charmed people and the faint and vanishing beauty of it has been miraculously revived by benibana loving people.

2. From the Horigome Residence of a Wealthy Farmer to the Museum

(豪農堀米邸から資料館へ)

This Benibana Museum was once the residence of Shirobe Horigome (堀米四郎兵衛) – a wealthy farmer around this area in Edo period. The total of the farm land was about 80 ares of the land and the residence had 6 warehouses and 7 wood-made warehouses. But, up to now, the most of the warehouses and the dwellings were withdrawn because of their advanced ages. But even now about five thousands of stuffs of the weapons and life necessities and old documents were preserved. In 1982 after the Town was donated these historic stuffs and properties, they restored and consolidated them in a good order. The Town opened them as “the Benibana Museum” in May, 1984.



The Benibana Museum

The Horigomes began to build its fortunes to purchase the farm lands around the area about Genroku (元禄) <1688-1703> in Edo period and took the role of the headman of a village. During these periods, they dealt the buying and selling of rice,

aoso (青苧) and benibana. Especially, benibana was increasingly dealt in Bunka (文化) <1804-1818> and grew up the status of this family as one of the richest one in Kahoku Town. The fortunes accumulated through the ages was partly used for the land developing and a financial capital to loan money to some of the Daimyos (大名). This is proved by the fact that this families preserved the some valuable stuffs that were sent by the Date Clan (伊達藩) who was the land lord of Shiroishi (白石城主). At the end of Edo period, the total capitals of the Horigomes were approximately 60 hectares farm lands and 100 hectares wood forests and 8,500 ryos for loan. The family had, at that ages, 20 servants and 200 peasants. This proved the Horigomes was one of the upper class farmers around the area.

The remarkable achievement of the family was the support and practice of the farmers' system of military action at the end of Edo period. In 1863, when the society of Japan was thrown into the political confusion, the Shogunate (幕府) gave an order to conscript to rich farmers of the country. Receiving this order, Shirobei, the sixth owner of the family, promptly made the system of conscription prior to the other parts of Tohoku areas

The arms' warehouse (武器庫) contains various weapons the family accumulated. During five years since 1863, 7 cannons, various weapons and armors were kept in storage. When the end of old political power came close, the Horigomes didn't show its color for and against both the governments. So the cannons and armors there were confiscated by both armies – the Sakai Clan of Shonai (庄内・酒井藩) and the Imperial Army (官軍). The latter even arrested Shirobei as their enemy. But soon after that, he was released and changed his name Minoru Horigome (堀米実). He became the member of a prefectural assembly and later he was appointed its vice president. Thereafter, Yasutaro (康太郎), the eighth owner of the family, moved his house to Tokyo to promote the children's education. Kohei (耕平), his eldest son, graduated from Waseda University, the second and third son, Teiji (悌二) and Yozo (庸三), graduated from Tokyo University and the eldest daughter, Miho (美穂), graduated from the Ochanomizu University. The fourth son, Tetsuya (鉄也), graduated from Keio University. Yuzuko (ゆず子), who is a daughter of Tetsuya, is a famous violinist.

Goshuin-gura (御朱印蔵) was built in the wide and the most calm corner of the garden surrounded by the moat. As the name shows as it is, this house is the container of the authorized document published by the Shogunate government. This house is constructed of godown and styled in Irimoya (入母屋造). The master builder was Nisaku Matsuda (松田仁作) and the planning and the wood carving was in charge of Tokichi Hosoya (細谷藤吉), the statue of a lion was carved by Bungoro Takayama (高山文五郎). Bungoro was a distinguished wood carver who made the carvings of Sojiji Temple (総持寺) in Noto (能登) with his son Tomishige (富重). The level of the techniques of carving of Yachi (谷地) was highly proud of at that age. But generally, most of the Goshuin-guras were destroyed when the Meiji era began, because those were the symbol of the Shogunate rule. Fortunately, that of Kahoku Town like these got rid of destruction because the place was so remote from the capital. To make the matter lucky, the authorized document was misaddressed so that the Imperial Army took it unimportant. The house is the only one Goshuin-gura that is preserved and it is said that the house is very valuable all over this country. But the house is not designated as the important cultural national treasure, because it was remodelled when it was restored.

The main building in the residence had once a thatched roof and it was bigger – 29 meters wide in front and had more than 15 rooms. But the present one was made its

size smaller. The main room called Zashiki-gura (座敷蔵) was built as a closet, which was one of the oldest styled room at the middle of Edo period in this Town. The room was restored at the head of Meiji era and the carvings of a crane and a tortoise are decorated in the alcove. The pictures of fusuma (襖) was painted by Shinsai (縉斎) who was a painter of the Date Clan (伊達藩) in 1854. The picture of the backside of a shutter box was put a gold foil and its pillar was equipped with a peel of wood. The whole of the room is luxurious in an invisible parts. Many of daily accommodations are exhibited to show the daily life of benibana merchants.

At the bottom of the residence, “the Benibana House” was built in 1986 and the process from planting and growing to its merchandizing is exhibited there.

The traditional dance, Bugaku (舞楽), which succeeded by the Hayashis (林家) from Heian (平安) period, is dedicated on the 14th and 15th of September every year at the Yachi Hachimangu Shrine (谷地八幡宮). One of the dances, “Ryooou” (陵王) is the most bravest one and the costumes used for dancing are dyed with benibana.

Inside of the Museum, the discrimination of coloring of benibanas is shown. Benibana produces both red and yellow pigments and these colors are used for red and yellow dyeing. The crimson color becomes thicker and thicker by layering its color. Every coloring spends a cake of lumps of benibana and a deeper red needs ten times' cost if it is done with ten layering process. The color “Ouni” (黄丹) produced with red and yellow dyeing material is used for “Hou” (袍) whose color is adjusted for the ritual costume of the Crown Prince. The cloth duplicated with red and indigo is called “Futai” (二藍) and is used for a lining of the Emperor's ritual costume, which is forbidden to wear by other people. In Heian period, a roll cloth of a deeper red dyeing was said equal to a residence of noble men. This story tells us that costumes of benibana dyeing was priceless in old days.

By the laser-disc system, “Growing and Merchandizing” “Dyeing Process” and “Yachi Donga Festival” are presented so that the history of benibana and its commercial and trading and its dyeing process are clearly shown respectively. The flower was transported to Oishida (大石田) by horse to get rid of hard routes of the Mogami River (最上川). A horse usually conveyed 120 kilograms called “Ichida” (一駄). This was the unit for merchandizing of the flower and cost, at that age, 50 ryos (両) equal to 100 pyos (俵) of rice. The ship conveyed them to Sakata (酒田) by the river and Kitamae-bune (北前船) brought them to Tsuruga (敦賀) from there, and the cargo was carried by land and shipped to Kyoto. It spent almost a full month and the Mogami-benibana which was occupied the 50% of production in this country spread its fame all over Japan.

The ships which conveyed benibana, in its return, brought back various kinds of Kyoto cultural goods and necessities of daily life to flower's native town. The costumes dyed with benibana that were the longing of ladies, lipsticks which colored pretty lips of women, porcelains, Kyoho Dolls (享保雛), Kokin Dolls (古今雛) and Takeda Dolls (竹田雛), Goshou Dolls (御所人形) have been preserved their lives in the remote Tohoku (Michinoku) country and they resumes their reopening stage in revival light.

3. Horigome's Former Residence (旧堀米邸)



Nagaya-mon

(1) Nagaya-mon (長屋門)

This front of the residence was built at the end of Edo period. The wall was once processed with red oxide of iron conveyed from Kyoto and at present it is restored by the same process of what it was. In those days, the style of Nagaya was permitted for the head of a village and the same status of farmers.



Musha-gura



1st floor



1st floor



2nd floor

(2) Musha-gura (a warehouse of weapons) (武者蔵)

This warehouse was constructed in 1853. From 1863 to 1868, the house was used as a house of arms of agrarian soldiers.



Zashiki-gura



Guest room

(3) Zashiki-gura (座敷蔵)

This house (godown) was built in the style of the middle age of Edo period. In the

residence, this was called No.1 godown among six ones. The house was one of the oldest house in this Town, and in later time this is restored as a guest room. The carvings are seen at the bottom of an alcove and its pillars are ornamented by the peel of wood.



Goshuin-gura



Goshuin-bako

(4) Goshuin-gura (御朱印蔵)

This house was the warehouse to preserve the authorized documents which were given by the Shogunate. The documents were inherited by the Shinzan Shrine (新山神社) of neighboring Yoshikawa (吉川) Village. Norikatsu Shirobe Horigome, the sixth owner of the residence was permitted to built it in 1863. The godown is Irimoya style (唐破風向拝付入母屋造) and Nisaku Matsuda as a head carpenter, Tokichi Hosoya as a planner and carver in front, Bungoro Takayama took part in the construction. They are all native-born master craftsmen.



Studio Kurenai



1st floor



2nd floor

(5) Studio Kurenai (工房くれない)

This studio takes advantage of benibana dyeing practice, painting kokeshi dolls and a straw crafts exercising.



Sawabata Kobuishi

(6) Sawabata Kobuishi (沢畑こぶ石)

The stone usually called “Sawabata-no-Kobuishi”, which seems to have been erupted presumably 2,000,000 or 3,100,000 years ago. On the surface of it, moss is easy to grow. This makes the stone tasteful especially in the area of Kyoto and Osaka. Even today, in Kahoku Town, it is available for Hibukuro (火袋) or Chozubachi (手水鉢) as a stone craft.



Stone Monument of Haiku

(7) Stone Monument of Haiku (俳句)

On the monument, a line of haiku by Kyusha Hosoya (細谷鳩舎) who was born in Kahoku Town is carved. The line tells that in the season of picking benibana, a yellow tint just comes faintly in a flower. And its figure are like a young woman who is waiting for her lover.



Flower Bowl



Stand

(8) A Bronze Flower Bowl and a Stand made in China with Lamina Decoration sent by the Shiroishi Clan.

Once the Horigomes loaned money to some Daimyos (大名). Daimyos borrowed money, but when its return was impossible, they brought such treasures as a mortgage. The family called them “a gift from the lords” (拝領品).



Meal Sets

(9) Meal Sets (御膳類)

These sets were usually used for the guests like a local governor (代官) or an officer on patrol (巡検使). They put a painted paper box which was painted as a seasonal picture on them.



Sawabata Swords

(10) Sawabata Swords (沢畑刀)

The sixth owner of the family, Shirobe invited a sword forger Morikuni (守国) who was born in Date (伊達) and let him forge many swords at the smithy of the backyard of the residence. The swords which were forged at that time were carved as “Ushu-Yachi-Fujiwara-Katsumitsu” (羽州谷地住藤原勝光). The swords almost belonged to Keio period (慶応年間).



Hibachi (火鉢)



Ryuzu-bricks (龍頭煉瓦)

(11) Sawabata Pottery (沢畑焼)

In 1871, the sixth owner of the Horigomes built a kiln at Hoshimori (法師森) and used its soil as potter’s clay. And also he invited five ceramists of Sendai-tsutsumi potter (仙台堤焼) to product daily wares called Sawabata pottery. The periods of its production covered about ten years, but some unglazed conditions were forced to stop its production. The kiln is still remained even now.



Shishikari-monnishiki

(12) Shishikari-monnishiki (<Houryuji Temple> replica) (獅子狩文錦 <法隆寺> 複製)

This tapestry is said to have been sent by Youdai (煬帝) of Zui (隋) Dynasty to Ono-no-Imoko (小野妹子) who was sent for as a Japanese envoy to China under the order of Shoutokutaishi (聖徳太子) at the head of 7th century. This is secretly stored in the Yumedono (夢殿), Houryuji Temple. Heizo Tatsumura (龍村平蔵), who is a remarkable textile worker, spent a lot of time to restore this replica. A technique of benibana dyeing can be found also in this tapestry.



The Benibana House



Hayashi-ke Bugaku

4. The Benibana House (紅の館)

(1) Hayashi-ke Bugaku (林家舞楽)

Hayashi-ke Bugaku was conveyed to this country in 860, when Risshakuji Temple (立石寺) was founded at Yamadera (山寺) and the dance shows the old magnificence. The dance of “Ryouou” (陵王) stems from the one paragraph of “The pleasure of Ryouou” (陵王の喜び), which is adopted from the old opera written by Kainichiou (戒日王) of India. The crimson color of the costume was dyed with benibana.



Koukai-bune

(2) Koukai-bune (model) (小鵜飼舟 <模型>)

The boat was innovated strong for the rapid river of the Mogami River (最上川) and the boats of this style was used for transporting of benibana and rice at the area of the Abukuma River (阿武隈川). It was operated by three men and its head was streamline-shaped so that it took the principal role of conveyance because of its speed.



Kitamae-bune

(3) Kitamae-bune (model) (北前船 <模型>)

These cargo ships took a main role of conveyance at the Japan Sea from the middle of Edo period to the beginning of Meiji era. But when they didn't have a favourable wind, the ships needed many seamen to row.



Funadansu

(4) Funadansu (船箆筒)

This chest was made for the protection of fragil stuffs in a turbulence of a wild sea. Its corner and drawers were protected by an iron craft and its materials were zelkva (欅) outside and paulownia (桐) inside.



Old Documents

(5) Old Documents (古文書)

The benibana merchants of Yachi (谷地) spent money in collecting benibana and piled them up to Oishida (大石田) and shipped them up to Kyoto via Sakata. Many of the documents about benibana trading were preserved at the Horigomes.



Benibana Stone Lanterns

(6) Benibana Stone Lanterns (紅花燈籠)

This stone lantern were dedicated to the Sumiyoshi Shrine (住吉大社) in Osaka in 1836 and has been called the “Benibana Stone Lanterns”. They are 6.7 meters high and were made of granite.



Choumei Stone Lanterns

(7) Choumei Stone Lanterns (長明燈)

These stone lanterns were dedicated to the Sumiyoshi Shrine in 1862 by twenty-two of benibana wholesaling merchants of Yamagata. They are 6.9 meters high and the whole of the figures gives something of magnificience.

(8) Ohinasama Dolls (お雛様)

The return ships from Kyoto brought back various things to the native area. “Ohinasama” was one of them so that many dolls were, even now, seen in these areas. On April 2nd and 3rd, every year, of a lunar calendar, they are prosperously exhibited in private houses. The parts of the costumes were dyed with benibana.



Kyoho Dolls

· Kyoho Dolles (Middle of Edo period) (享保雛 <江戸中期>)

An noble face and slant eyes make a character of mysterious Noh (能) masks. They wear very elegant and gorgeous costumes of gold brocade.



Jirozaemon Dolls

- **Jirozaemon Dolls (Middle of Edo period) (次郎左衛門雛 <江戸中期>)**

These dolls were designed by Jirozaemon, a doll maker of Kyoto and their faces are characteristic of oval face, slant eyes and a hook nose. And their mouths are pretty.



Kyoho Dolls



Kokin Dolls

- **Male Doll's right, Female Doll's left**

In the traditional way of old Japan, the position of the dolls is decided after the fashion of the Court. The Emperor sits facing to the south (天子南面) after this traditional manner. Therefore, in the Court, the male doll sit at the right side, the female doll at the left side. But the position was changed in 1928, when the Emperor Shouwa (昭和天皇) was acceded to the throne. The doll makers of Tokyo turned the position the other way.



Benibana Holding Screen(left)



Benibana Holding Screen(right)

- (9) **Benibana Holding Screen (Replica) (紅花屏風<複製>)**

This pairs of screens were painted by Eikou Aoyama (青山永耕 1814-79) who was born in Rokuta Village (六田村) of this prefecture and studied under Nakahashi Kanou Eishin (中橋狩野永真) in Edo. On the screen, the vivid figures of benibana trading are shown from planting and growing to its tradings. (The original is stored in the Yamadera Basho Memorial Hall.)



Costume

(10) Costumes Dyed with Benibana (紅染衣装)

A lot of benibana was shipped for the dyeing materials from Mogami area (now Murayama area) to Kyoto and there the magnificent costumes were manufactured. In return, the costumes were brought back to the native area of benibana.



produced by Fukumi Shimura
(Kyoto)



produced by Takao Suzuki
(Kahoku Town)

(11) Benibana Costumes Today

The benibana dyeing was fading away by the prevalence of chemical dyes, but at present it revives as a traditional magnificent costumes.



produced by Masaru Toya in 1985 (Yonezawa City)

Two parts of construction to show the production to its currency by Eikou Aoyama – “Benibana Holding Screen”, which is designated as a tangible cultural property of Yamagata Prefecture.



produced by Sometake Co., Ltd. (Kyoto)

This costume was used at the 47th National Athletic Meeting – “Benibana Athletic Meeting” held in Yamagata Prefecture in 1992.



Makeup Utensils



Bunraku Doll (飾文楽)

(12) Makeup (化粧)

In old days, “beni” was used as cosmetic for face and lips. Since Genbun (元文) age, it was used in a special occasion and usually powder was put on the face. “Beni” was only used to paint lips. About Tenmei (天明) age, “Tsuya-beni” (艶紅) and Sasa-beni (笹紅), which shines like a jewel beetle, were in fashion, but they were fade away by the end of Edo period. “Kyo-beni” (京紅) was produced around Kyoto and the ladies put it on the plate and pick it up with the third finger. They put (painted) it at the edges of eyes (Mebiki 目弾き) or on nails (Tsumabeni 爪紅) and its painting was thick at the center of underlip and faint on both edges of lips.



Uchishiki

(13) Uchishiki (打敷)

“Uchishiki” is usually a tapestry. Since Heian era, its material was the spirit cloth of a gorgeous Japanese brocade and a diagonal cloth. It became to decorate up and down of furnishings. It usually was manufactured for daily furniture to show the dynasty cultures, and the sense of the court ladies natured such a beautiful decoration.

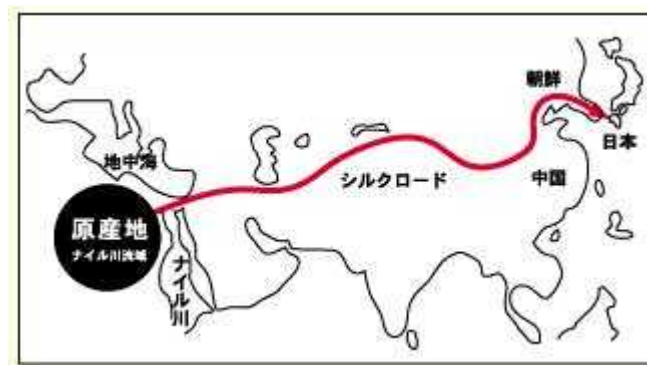


Crape Wrapper

(14) Crape Wrapper (袱紗)

The cloth is used at the tea ceremony to clean up tea things and to appreciate the tea utensils of the guests. “Dashifukusa” (出し袱紗) is also used to serve a thick tea and then the cloth of brocade, figured satin, wool are highly praised.

5. Place of Origin of Benibana (紅花の原産地)



At present, when call a “flower”, it usually means a “cherry blossom”. But once it was a “benibana”. “Benibana” bears the relation with “a flower garden” “a flower gathering” and other manners to treat flowers.

Benibana is a composite plant and its origin is said in the coast of the Mediterranean Sea or in Egypt. It has a character of a winter hardy plant and its height is one meter or so. It bears a pretty and bright yellow flower like a thistle at the beginning of July.

What route did this flower take to reach this country from the origin place, then? In the famous Chinese book “*Seiki Monogatari*” (『西域物語』), the following line can be found: “Twenty-two hundred years ago, a Choken (張騫) brought back the seeds when he visited the Central Asia”. He was sent for by Butei (武帝) as a delegation of Kan (漢)

in 139 B.C. from Choan (長安). Butei was ambitious to invade the Kyodo (匈奴) in the combined operation with Daigesshi (大月氏). Choken was unfortunately captured by the Kyodo's army. But he was so strong enough to escape by himself and to come back to Choan.

This story tells us that he was a great man and the truth is that the prevalence of growing of this flower depended on the many people who were living along the long Silk Road.

The silk produced in China charmed the European people and it was brought there via the Silk Road. And benibana also was brought to China from the West to the East along the same road of silk conveyance.

Benibana, trailing of culture to eastward, was prevailed to India via the Central Asia and in the days of Emperor Suiko (推古天皇 <593-629>) it was transported to this country with other Chinese cultures.

6. Flora of Benibana (紅花の植物誌)

Botanical name <Carthamus Tinctorius L.> this was named by Linnaeus in 1753.

(Carthamus: to dye in Arabic) (Tinctorius: for dyeing in Latin)

Benibana has 0.5 ~ 1.2 meters high stem and the leaves are hard and alternated. The tip of leaves was thick green and widethorn. And the edge of leaves has prickles and it bears a bright yellow flower like thistles at the head of July. Soon its petal turns red. The flower comes to bloom at the head of a stem and forms flowers at the tip like 2.5 ~ 4.0 centimeters diameter and they are tubular. At first, the flower comes at the main stem and then spread from other branches. An involucre is bigger outside and it becomes leaves and has a thorn at the edge and its hypothecium is white and lucid. Its length is 6 millimeters and the plumes is very short and it matures at the beginning of August. The diameter is deep and the plant dislikes to be transplanted.

Benibana is cultivated for dyeing material and cosmetics like lipstick and so forth.

7. Kinds of Benibana (紅花の品種)



Mogami-benibana



Thornless Benibana

The kind of benibana now growing in Yamagata Prefecture is called “Mogami-benibana” (最上紅花) which is mostly separated by the Yamagata Agricultural Laboratory from the mesomorph kind of Dewa (出羽在来種の中生種). Another separation is being done as a “Thornless benibana” which is selected from a nature kind. This kind is used for cut flowers. Further, “Yellow kind” which is colorless flower and “White kind”, which is one of the variety, an “Early ripening kind” “Slow grower kind” “American kind” “Okayama kind” “Chinese kind” “Israel kind” “Brazil kind” are counted.

Mogami-benibana	items	Thornless benibana
sharp thorn at the tip of leaves	thorn	not grown
about 1 meter	height	about 70 centimeter
7 ~ 15	branches	few
small	corolla	big
faint	color of leaves	thick
at the head of July	flower season	at the end of June

8. Its Use and Effect (用途と効用)

- Flower
 - a natural flower, a dried flower (for appreciation)
 - a dried benibana (for medicine, cosmetics, tea, sake)
 - a red pigment (for color agent, dyeing, cosmetics, medicine, art agent)
 - a yellow pigment (for color agent, dyeing, art agent)
- Seed
 - a benibana oil (for cooking, medicine, painting, benibana ink)
 - a stained lees (for fertilizer, fodder)
- Leaves
 - (for cooking, tea)
- Stem
 - (for tea, fodder)

The color pigments contained in the petal of benibana are divided into two: one is called saffrole-yellow, which is melted into water, the other is called carthamin and it is not melted in water, and both are used for dyeing.

If the high purity of carthamin is used for lipsticks, it prevents the roughness of lips and it promotes the circulation of blood. As the cloth dyed in a red color is worn on the body, it promotes to keep the body's temperature, so it was used for a health band, socks, a loincloth and a stomach band. It was also used for ascetic devotees to wear and was very effective to women whose health is adversely affected by the cold.

The seeds of benibana have an effect to get rid of cholesterol of blood vessel and the quality of safflower oil is good for prevention of high blood pressure. They are used for salad oil, fried oil (天ぷら油) and margarine oil. Also the oil produced from the seed is used for kerosene and its soot can be made into a high quality of sumi (墨).

Young stem of the flower are good for cooking and the flowers is used for a flower arrangement or dried flowers.

9. How to Grow Benibana (紅花のそだて方)

Sowing

4 kilograms of matured manure per a meter square, 100 grams of chemical fertilizer, 700 grams of garden lime. From the rear of March to at the head of April, 3 ~ 4 seeds are sown in a grainy field and thinly covered by the soil.

Culling out

Twice or three times' culling out is done when benibana grows about 20 centimeters high at the middle of April and adjust about 25 benibanas per a meter square. (The leaves after culling out are eatable for boiled greens)

Additional fertilizer

The mature must be given as a chemical fertilizer from the end of April to the rear of May and cover the roof with soil.

Prevention of the breeding and extermination

Benibana is weak against anthracnose. Give proper hydrating agent diluted 600 times and spray it each 7 or 10 days.

Flower

Flowers come at the beginning of July. When the petal is opened enough, a flower can be cut. The petal turns red after opening, pick the petal and make a dried flower.

Dried flower

Hang the cut flowers in the shade not be rained for a month, then beautiful dried flowers can be made.

Seeds

To gather the seeds, keep blooming to the dried flower and thresh them.

10. Variety of Dyeing Materials (染料の種類)

There are two kinds of dyeing materials: one is natural and the other is chemical. The latter was invented in 19th century and it was imported at the end of Edo period and also called aniline dyes. That invention was an epoch-making, because its treating was easy and had many ranges of colors. Soon it made benibana dyes vanished. But the deep tone of color of benibana dyes is lingering, and the long and traditional technique of benibana dyeing has been recognized by the benibana loving people.

Plants dyes are typed into two: one is the plant itself to produce colors, the other is made after various processing. The colors are produced from leaves, stems, trunks, peels, flowers, seeds and roots. The color pigments are both direct dyes and mordant dyes.



A Piece of Cloth

11. Main Plants Dyes (主な植物染料)

- Red
benibana (flower), sappanwood (wood), madder (root)
- Yellow
amur cork (peal), kariyasu(刈安) (stem, leaf, root), turmeric (stem, root), cape jasmine (seed), benibana
- Blue
indigo (leaves, stem), day flower (flower)
- Purple
gromwell (root)
- Brown, Black
kind of oak (peal, root-peal, calyx), betel palm tree (seed)

12. Technique of Benibana Dyes (紅花染めの技法 <色の出し方>)

Benibana contains the pigments of red and yellow, so red color is faded out easily against a sun light and it has a warm and soft elegant color.

To dye cloth clearly, yellow color must be got rid of as much as possible. A red color easily catches cotton or silk, but a yellow color is easy to dye silk and hard to cotton. By the quality of silk, hemp and cotton thickly dyed red turns pink or yellow.



Discrimination of Coloring of Benibanas

- Yellow
Dye with yellow pigment of benibana
- Faint red
Dye once with red pigment of benibana
- Thick red
Dye several times with red pigment of benibana
- Orange
Dye several times with red pigment of benibana and after that put yellow color on it. (This is used for color fixing.)
- Rose
Dye with red underneath and put the thinner dyeing liquid of boiled chestnut bur. And finish with copper mordanting.
Reddish brown···Do the same procedure of Rose, but as for finish, use iron mordanting.
- Green
Dye with yellow of benibana underneath and dye with indigo on its surface.

13. Benibana Dyeing for Everybody (誰にでもできる紅花染)

1. Pluck the petal. (At the time when the color of flower turns to bright yellow and becomes crimson.)
2. Rinse them in water.
3. Wring slightly and close tight in plastic bag.
4. Take them after overnight and grind them in a mortar.
5. Wring tightly the ground flowers and take a shape of coin and dry them for one week or so in a ventilated shade. This coin shaped is called “beni-mochi” (紅餅).
6. Take “beni-mochi” into a cotton bag and “beni-mochi” and cloth needs an equal weight. Put them in water and give an occasional wring and leave them overnight.
7. After overnight, the water has yellow color. Take out the cotton bag from water and wring. This yellow water is used for yellow-water dye.
8. Change the water again. Put the bag in the water for five hours or so and

- wring again. Repeat this three times a day.
9. Continue the previous process (8) about a week, till the yellow water doesn't come out.
 10. Get 8% potassium carbonate liquid at a drug store. And put the previous bag into the liquid.
 11. Squeeze out the water every ten minutes and wring after 30 minutes' rubbing.
 12. Return the No.11 process in newly changed liquid.
 13. Return the No.12 process and make enough liquid of dye for three times.
 14. Gather the liquid. This is the dye for red color dyeing.
 15. Put the cloth to be dyed into water and give a slight wring.
 16. Begin dyeing the cloth.
 17. Make liquid of a tea cup full of 10% citric acid that was bought at a drugstore. And take the cloth up from water and pour two cups of the liquid and soak the cloth.
 18. Repeat the No.17 process until a tea cup full of citric acid is all consumed. (To pour the liquid little by little prevents the unevenness of dyeing.)
 19. Move the cloth sometimes not to make an unevenness.
 20. Take the cloth out of the liquid after the red color is changed to yellow.
 21. Make the 10% citric acid liquid again and soak the cloth about ten minutes and settle the color.
 22. Rinse the dyed cloth and dry it in the shade.

14. How to Make Benibana Wine (紅花酒のつくり方)

1. Prepare 1.8 liters spirituous liquor (70 proof<U.S.>), five cakes of benibana, 500 grams of granulated sugar. Put them together in tightly closed bottle. And leave it for 20 days.
2. Shake the bottle once in a day to melt the sugar enough.
3. After 20 days, percolate it with a cotton filter and take the petal off.
4. Put it in the refrigerator and leave it for ten days. If this cooling is not enough, the color will be faded.
5. About ten days leaving makes the wine at its best. Try to drink it as it is or mix it with soda.

Effectiveness ... for a digestive ailment, a female disorder, neuralgia and other diseases.

15. How to Make Rouge (紅粉<口紅>の精製法)



1. Give a slice cut to a cake of benibana. And soak them into water overnight. Put them in a cotton bag and crumple well, then take off the yellow colored water.



2. Put them in a bamboo basket and put lye over them and make beni-color liquid. And add plum (梅) vinegar to make the red color thicker.



3. Soak aoso cloth (青苧布) into the liquid and repeat soaking and wringing again and again to settle the beni-color on the cloth.



4. Rinse the colored cloth with water and put a hot lye over it and take the red pigment out of it.



5. Add the plum vinegar again to this beni-pigment and pour into the silk clothed wood-made pail.



6. After repeating this process, scoop up the beni settled on the silk cloth and gather them in the porcelain.

16. History of Benibana (紅花の歴史)

“Benibana” appears in the “*Kojiki*” (『古事記』).

The name of “Silk Road” was settled by Ferdinand von Richthofen, a German geographer. “Benibana” is thought to have been brought from the Central Asia to China after long periods. Grapes, cucumbers, peas and sesames as well as benibana and also music instruments, dancing and magic are thought to have been conveyed along the same route.

After benibana arrived in China, it was said to be delivered to Japan, but the period is not certain.

In Japan, the “*Kojiki*” is one of the oldest literary classics, which was compiled 711 by O-no-Yasumaro (大伴麻呂) under the order of Emperor Genmei (元明天皇). The book is composed by three volumes. The last volume contains the historic events from Nintoku Dynasty (仁徳朝) to Suiko Dynasty (推古朝), where the word of benibana is described four times. This is the oldest description about the name of benibana.

The time of arriving of this flower is also slightly presumed. It was 538, the thirteenth year of Emperor Kinmei (欽明天皇), that benibana appeared in this country about the same period of the first year of the delivery of Buddhism via Kudara (百濟) Dynasty.

17. Benibana Charmed the Noblemen (貴族を魅了した紅花)

Benibana was transported from Korea. Besides the seeds and the way of growing were conveyed, the crafts men also moved to Japan who could manage the technique to make a cake of lumps of the flower and to product the bright red pigment, to dye cloth. It could be said that the delivery of benibana was the import of new dyeing culture.

The beauty of rouge must have charmed the many noble ladies. A beautiful lady painted in “Torige-ritsujo-no-byoubu” (鳥毛立女屏風) in the Shosouin (正倉院), and a lady of “Kisshoten-zo” (吉祥天像) and the “Bosatsu-zo” (菩薩像) are all ornamented by lipstick and cheek rouge. That clearly shows that benibana caught the mind of upper class people and colored their daily lives.

The noble men who were charmed by the beauty of benibana founded the office to manage the dyeing work soon. In 701, they declared the “Taihou Ritsuryo” (大宝律令) and settled the officer, the chief of weaving, under whom the dyeing craftsmen worked for wearing and dyeing.

In Heian period, they made the rule “Engishiki” (延喜式) <50 vols.> that was compiled to perform various political rules. This rule contains the minute practical ways which were already stipulated “Yorou Ritsuryo” (『養老律令』) in 967. In the fourteenth volume of the rules, the detailed record about weaving and dyeing can be seen. In those days, people had already known “purple dyeing” (紫染) and “indigo dyeing” (藍染) in addition to “beni-dyeing” (紅染), but the “beni-dyeing” was appreciated to be the most elegant and valuable one.

Soon after “beni-dyeing” was delivered to this country, that was authorized in the formal political systems.

18. Benibana for Tax Obligation (納税義務化された紅花)



The Map of old Japan

Where was benibana planted and grown in this country? How did the official get its seeds? According to the “Engishiki”, they gave the obligation of tax to the male of 17 years old to 20 years old. Each had to pay 20 “monmes” (匁) of the flower. The map above shows the areas to adopt this rule. Twenty-four out of sixty-eight countries were counted for its tax.

Iga(伊賀),Ise(伊勢),Owari(尾張),Mikawa(三河),Suruga(駿河),Kai(甲斐),Sagami(相模),Musashi(武蔵),Awa(安房),Kazusa(上総),Simofusa(下総),Hitachi(常陸),Shinano(信濃),Kouzuke(上野),Shimotsuke(下野),Echizen(越前),Kaga(加賀),Ecchu(越中),Inaba(因幡),Houki(伯耆),Iwami(石見),Bingo(備後),Aki(安芸),Kii(紀伊)

The old countries above belong to the present next prefectures.

Mie(三重),Aichi(愛知),Shizuoka(静岡),Yamanashi(山梨),Kanagawa(神奈川),Tokyo(東京),Chiba(千葉),Ibaraki(茨城),Nagano(長野),Gunma(群馬),Tochigi(栃木),Fukui(福井),Ishikawa(石川),Toyama(富山),Tottori(鳥取),Shimane(島根),Hiroshima(広島),Wakayama(和歌山)

Yamagata Prefecture was not obliged to pay tax. “Engishiki” told that some countries remote from Kyoto were provided an exception to this rule. Benibana seemed to be planted except Kyushu(九州), Shikoku(四国) and Oou(奥羽) areas. At those ages, the circulation of benibana industry was not so largely merchandized. The consumption of benibana in noble society seemed to be accumulated high, but it was too luxurious for the common people to enjoy.

19. Nobunaga Oda Made a Present of Benibana (信長、紅花を贈る)

Benibana charmed the noble men with its beauty, but it was beyond for the common people, who were forced to bear a hard life. The history tells that the life standard was enhanced after the latter part of Muromachi period(室町時代)(the 15th ~ 16th century). The prevalence of benibana cultivating was also increased in line with its necessity.

Now let's back the story concerning in this area, Juro Shiratori(白鳥十郎), the land lord of Yachi(谷地), presented the excellent steed “White Lark”(白雲雀) to Nobunaga Oda, who was holding sway over this country. At that days, to present a horse meant that the presenter should be obedient to the presentee. Nobunaga was so pleased that he, in return, gave Shiratori 30 rolls of damask and so forth besides 50 kins(斤) of beni-rouge. The description are still preserved in the Makis(槇家). Damask was imported from China at that period and a kind of silk textile and other gifts were all expensive stuffs. We can easily suppose the beni is valueless things among them.

The unit of weight 1 kin(斤) is 160 monmes(匁) and 50 kins are equal to 8 kans(貫). The flower was thought dried benibanas, so 8 kans was a considerable weight. Benibana researchers say that the flower was begun to rear just at this time.

Nobunaga naturally did not know the flower was already cultivating in Dewa (出羽), the remote country of northern Japan.

20. Supplication of Yoshiaki Mogami (最上義光の祈願文)

At the time when Nobunaga was given a gift of an excellent horse from Shiratori, Yoshiaki Mogami (最上義光) was suffering from a serious illness. Yoshiaki prayed Yudono-san (湯殿山) to donate benibana if he could recover his health.

This document is preserved even now. The document was dated on August 28, 1579, and titled “Wishes to a reverential avatar”. He sent for Fukusenbou (副泉坊) with the document, telling he would donate a horse and matured benibana on April 8 of the following year after his wish should come true. Benibana mentioned in the document would be dried one.

This date would have something to do with the opening of the Yudono-san, the mountain of asceticism. At that period, the mountain was opened on April 8 and closed on August 8. As Yoshiaki prayed after the mountain finished its course of rites, he postponed his gift to the next year. Another document tells that he recovered his health by virtue of the praying. Benibana seemed to be cultivated in Mogami area, but its technique of cultivation was not prevailed. So it is a wonder how they treated them at the Yudonosan. Anyway, this benibana document is very valuable one and this story tells that benibana was already valueless thing.

21. Anrakuji Temple Documents of Benibana Donation (紅花志納の安楽寺文書)



Anrakuji Temple Document

At about the same age of Nobunaga Oda and Juro Shiratori, the rare documents are preserved the Anrakuji Temple (安楽寺) to show Kahoku people donated benibana to the head temple of the Shinshu Sect (真宗本山).

These documents were discovered by the priest and Mr. Isao Suzuki while they were restored the old documents in 1978 to show the devotees' gift to the head temple mentioned above. (In those days the money or articles were donated for gratitude.) One of the five documents is decoded below.

The flower mentioned here is , needless to say, benibana. The devotees were Josin (浄心) who opened this temple and other common devotees who lived in Iwaki Village (岩木村). The priest was Sosuke Nawa (名和宗介) as a layman and was a descendant of the famous Nagatoshi Nawa (名和長年), who closely connected in this village and opened the temple. This document tells that benibana cultivation already started in this part of the areas. The documents are the oldest one to have the relation with benibana and are designated the cultural property of Kahoku Town.

22. Evaluation of Mogami Benibana (最上紅花の評価)



List of Productions after the Sumo Rank
(諸国産物見立相撲番付)

Benibana was begun to be raised at Shiratori's ruling reign, but its production largely increased in Edo period. Its brand was "Mogami-benibana" that was highly evaluated in both its quality and quantity. In those days Murayama (村山) area was called "Mogami" and the parts of now Shinjo City (新庄市) was called "Murayama". "Mogami-benibana" was a general brand which was raised at the inland of present Yamagata Prefecture.

Now, look at the historic documents to prove the evaluation of this flower. "Wakan-sansai-zue" (和漢三才図絵) published in 1712 tells the producing district of benibana like "Mogami and Yamagata is the best one and Ise (伊勢) and Chikugo (筑後) is the second best and Imabari (今治) and Sesshu (摂州), the third best". And in 1691 "Nihon-kanoko" (『日本鹿子』) says the more six countries are counted as a producing districts. Also in 1697 in "Nihon-kokka-manyoki" (『日本国花万葉記』) the same description is found.

As the time went down, in 1784, the document informs that the northern parts of Tohoku area like Sendai and Yamagata produced a good quality of benibana. In 1827, Nobuhiro Sato (佐藤信淵) evaluated the benibana of Mogami and Murayama and recommend to raise the seeds there. Mogami-banibana was the best qualified one, though its quality was a little declined.

23. Prosperity of Flower Market (花市の賑わい)

Mogami-benibana got the best evaluation in the quality and quantity at the beginning of Edo period and Yamagata was its central exchanging place. At the earliest time of benibana cultivation, all the process of growing and drying of the flower would be done by each farmer, but the increase of its producing tended to manage by some brokers and the most of processing came to be done in the intensive works. Enough space and warehouse were needed to process from cultivation to production. So it was impossible for small-size farmer of merchants to produce an accumulated quality of benibana. Large scale merchants and traders who live around Yamagata came to manage all the trades of benibana industry.

"Hana-ichi" (花市) was the place where the traders bought the flower from farmers and its flower markets seemed to settle at about 1624-46. "Meibutsu-beni-no-sode" (『名物紅乃袖』), the document to tell the prosperity preserved in Jifukuji Temple in Yamagata, described below.

"At Yamagata, the remote place from Kyoto, the buyers and traders were all crazy: some were almost naked, some came from other countries and enhanced its trading".

Kyoto merchants came all the way from to merchandize benibana. The descriptions of “*Furyu-matsunoki-makura*” (『風流松木枕』) in 1764 is like this : A lot of the people – men or women – were crazy to trade, because they could earn their living of the whole of a year”.

The prosperity of benibana markets seemed to be tremendous.

24. “Mebaya” and “Sanbe” as Traders (仲介業の目早とサンベ)

Behind the prosperity of benibana trading, “Mebaya” and “Sanbe” took an important role of its process. Both were a unique name in this district and the former was a trader to settle the price of benibana after checking the condition of the flowers’ harvest and the latter was a broker to collect the cargos by request of benibana merchants.

At the beginning of Edo period, both business were not divided, but the increase of the business separated the role to manage the business of production from merchandizing, and these situation created the work of “Mebaya”.

As the character and its stand became stable, the official of the Yamagata Clan publicly approved their works in 1731 and after this Mebayas founded their guild to pay a constant tax and concluded agreement between them. At about 1781, Mebayas in Yamagata area were counted 50 persons and Sanbes about 100 persons, especially about 25 Sanbes lived near Yachi.

But the public recognition of both business men caused various troubles, because the distribution system gradually became changed. In the part of currency, Mebayas and the traders of the native area became too tight, the flower markets gradually declined. Specially buyers from Kyoto or Osaka could not get the raw benibana flower because Mebayas began their trading before the harvest time for the purpose of their profit.

Anyway, Mebaya and Sanbe took the important role till the beginning of Meiji era.

25. All the Fields Covered with Benibana (満地朱をそそく)

In 1788, Koshoken Furukawa (古川古松軒) who was followed with an officer of patrol of the Shogunate (幕府) described the impression of looking down over the Murayama Basin (村山盆地) from the ridge of Akahage (赤羽毛), Hasedou Village (長谷堂村) via Kaminoyama (上山) on June 16.

“We look down the villages just below our eyes. The fields are very well cultivated and nurtured as a rice paddy. The season is its highest of benibana flower, all of the ground was covered with red color. The beauty of it is beyond description and nowhere is found all over China and other, western parts of this country”.

An officer of patrol here was sent for by the Shogunate to check the situation of the countries and the authority divided the whole of this country into 8 parts and a team consisted of three persons. Koshoken was surprised at the beautiful scene of the basin. The color of benibana is not exactly red, but a field of the highest blooming of benibana gave a deep impression to him.

The main production part of benibana was the most fertile plain along the Mogami River and Kaminoyama and it was the southern limit and the northern limit was Yamagata-Tendo (天童)-Yachi to Higashine(東根) and the western limit was Sagae (寒河江). As benibana has thin thistles, the plucking time must be misty early morning. The districts along the Mogami River were easy to be misty, along where the cultivation

was prosperous.

A team of the patrol passed Yamagata and Tendo, and they arrived at Yachi on June 19, and stayed at Goroemon Tamiya (田宮五郎右衛門), Yaemon Shibata (柴田弥右衛門) of Omachi (大町) and Tahe Wada (和田太兵衛) at Kudo Koji (工藤小路).

26. Two Haiku Lines of Benibana (紅花二句)

- ・眉掃を俤にして紅粉の花
- ・行末は誰が肌ふれむ紅の花

These two haiku lines are said to be created by Basho Matsuo (松尾芭蕉) three hundreds years ago, in 1689 on the way of the tour around the Tohoku districts. It was on May 17 when he arrived at Obanazawa (尾花沢) and left for Oishida (大石田) on June 1. At this season, benibana seemed to be in full bloom, he visited Yamadera on May 27 and 28, in the solar calendar on July 13 and 14. He had been advised to visit there. The full bloom along the road seemed to charm him deeply. Mr. Shinichi Konta (今田信一氏), who is a researcher of benibana says that if we appreciate these two lines, “Mayuhaki” (眉掃) line comes from his impression of a pretty flower and “Yukusue” (行末) line is produced a gorgeous bloom of the flower”.

Benibana’s northern growing limit is Higashine, but, there, they laid the seeds at the beginning of April and then a flower usually comes at the middle of July. On the other hand, they laid the seeds on April 4 or 5, then a flower usually comes on July 2 or 3. To think of the appreciation of two lines above, the first line expresses Higashine blooming and the second one expresses the prosperous blooming along Yamadera area.

Basho created these two lines via visiting Risshakuji Temple(立石寺) of Yamadera, where he went down from Obanazawa and also created one of the most famous haiku line “Cicada” (“静けさや岩にしみいる蝉の声”).

27. Yield of Benibana (紅花の収量)

In Edo period the demand of benibana was increased rapidly and the yield of it also was of further growth. The Mogami-benibana won one of the best qualified production. What large harvest could be got around this area per an are?

“Mebaya” and “Sanbe” collected benibana flowers from farmers at the beginning of July and then buyers sent them, after making a cake of “beni-mochi” (紅餅), to Kyoto. The Inamuras (稲村家) of Owarabi Village (大蕨村) was the biggest merchant and the head of this family entrusted Kishichi Inamura (稲村喜七) to collect the flowers and process of making a cake of beni. In 1800, he reported the Inamuras that the total of collecting flowers amounted 1,374 kans (貫) and its price was 174 ryos (両). Its cakes were accumulated 4 das (駄). The total of men to work for the job was 60 men and 40 women and he spent 15 days to make cargos, for which straw mats needed were more than 2,000 sheets. He gathered them from all of the neighboring houses. In this case, the upper limit of weight of a cake of benibanas was counted 9.3% of raw flowers and it cost 7 kans 900 monmes (7貫900匁) for a ryo (両).

The benibana harvest quiet depended on the weather condition of the year. Generally, the harvest of raw flowers was from 30 to 40 kans (貫) and the process of making cakes needed 10% of it at its best. But the worse case was only 7%. The production of the cakes, as an average, was commonly 3 kans (貫) per 9.9 ares.

28. Area under Cultivation of Mogami-benibana (最上紅花の栽培面積)

What was the area under cultivation of benibana at that age? In Edo period, the demand of benibana goods rapidly increased and in answer to the demand, its cultivation area was also grown, but it had naturally a limit, because its cultivation needed a favourable soil besides keeping daily necessities like rice crop. And the matter's worse, plucking of flowers needed much of farmers' labour. The old document tells that the ratio of benibana cultivation was 30% of all farming fields in 1692.

And during 1789-1800, the ratio was 20% of all the farming lands. These show that benibana cultivation was 10%, the lower limit, to 30%, the upper limit, according with on the manner of proper farming at the age.

29. Price of Mogami-benibana (最上紅花の値段)

Mogami-benibana was a strong cash crop and its sales was favorable to the producers and the tax of selling was a big amount of financial resource of the Shogunate and the Clan. Then, what was the price of Mogami-benibana ?

The transaction between wholesale dealers of Kyoto and producers was done by "da" (駄). Dried flowers were packed in a special-processed paper bag in the weight of 20 "monmes" (匁). Sixteen backs make one "kon" (梱) and four "kons" was called 1 "da" (駄). "Da" meant the one package to be conveyed on horse back. The weight of "da" depended on its goods.

Needless to say, price relies on demand and supply and the quality of goods. During Edo period of 260 years, the price of benibana was to be changed. Especially, benibana was much swayed by the weather.

In 1777, the price of a "da" in Yachi was 97 ryos to 105 ryos at the highest, but in 1802 the lowest was 24 ryos to 28 ryos,

However, something was on our minds that the price of Mogami benibana was 10 ryos cheaper than those of Musashi (武蔵), Shimofusa (下総), Hitachi (常陸) and Sendai (仙台). At first, Mogami's price was the highest but this proves that the quality became lower than other producers because of the indiscrete mind of the cultivators.

30. Route of Benibana Conveyance (最上紅花の輸送経路)

Benibana collected in Yamagata and Yachi was conveyed to Kyoto. What was its conveyance route? Dried benibana was packed at the senders by 1 Kon (4 kans) and it was transported on horse back to Oishida, which was made a shipment down the Mogami River to Sakata(酒田). There, packages were brought up a sea cargo to Tsuruga. From Tsuruga they were conveyed by land to Kaizu (海津) or Shiotsu (塩津). The packages were conveyed to Kyoto via the Biwa Lake (琵琶湖) and the Yodo River (淀川). In those days, the rice which was conveyed Edo or Osaka took the sea route called "the western sea route" (西廻り), but benibana took the partly by sea and partly by land. That was because benibana was valuable thing and if the land transportation was taken, it was still more profitable.

The trading was done by the wholesalers who were patrons of shippers at the important spots. The shippers put the plate of its brand and sent with the approximate prices.

The wholesalers sent them to the following trader after subtracting the settled

price.

This system of conveyance aimed at protecting the native post towns and stations.

31. Deterioration of Mogami Benibana (最上紅花の品質低下)

The qualification of Mogami benibana had the best evaluation of all the countries, but as its demand was spread larger, the production was also increased and its deterioration was gradually deepened at about 1716s. In 1738, the wholesalers in Kyoto sent the letters to tell its deplorable low qualification. The people concerned here gave an innovation idea for them.

First, to pluck the flowers at the proper time of the season and to finish it before 10 o'clock in the morning. In fact cultivators plucked the flower earlier than its maturing and plucked them even after noon. That aimed only at profit.

Second, don't put the good flowers on the top of withered ones.

Third, don't leave the flowers overnight after plucking.

Fourth, don't mix other flowers and finish the trading as soon as possible. The brokers asked the authority to observe these innovations but it did not bear the fruit, because such a deed occurred in running for profit.

32. Decline of Domestic Benibana (国産紅花の衰退)

Benibana was a valuable cash crop. At the end of Edo period, though its production lasted its increase, it came close, because a silk industry and tea cultivation were prevalent. The benibana industry was begun to be defeated gradually. This inclination was a nation-wide.

But the quantity of demand of benibana did not decreased, because its shortage was imported from foreign lands like China and India. The amount of imports rose 24,000 kilo grams in 1876 at the highest.

But the final blow for domestic production was an import of chemical dyes from Europe. Carmin acid cochineal extract, which was already imported at Nagasaki about 1790, was good for bright red dyeing and more it was used for an edible stuff.

And aniline dyes was also imported, which thoroughly drove out the old benibana colors. Because the price of produce of benibana colors had no match against those chemical dyes.

Mogami-benibana, besides other domestic benibanas, also began to decline and disappeared as the time went on.

33. Life of Mogami-benibana (最上紅花の命脈)

Though benibana thoroughly lost its value of trading in Meiji era, some industry planners of Yamagata Prefecture exhibited the flower to the First Domestic Industry Exhibition, but the current of the times was unfavorable.

Meanwhile, some cultivators in Dewa Village (出羽村、現山形市), who continued to raise the flower, accepted the solicitations from the Imperial Household for Imperial Events. Both in 1908 and 1919, the people in Dewa dedicated an important part of duty.

At the beginning of Meiji era, the new government had the slogan : "Wealth and Military Strength". But "the Military Strength failed at the World War but the economic growth after the war are partly accomplished. Among the enriched society,

benibana is counted as one of the beautiful colors and it can capture the appreciation mind of the beauty loving people again.

・ Benibana Production and Cultural Exchange(紅花生産と文化交流)



The Map of Benibana Production

34. Kahoku Town – Town of Safflower (紅花のまち河北町)

When Kahoku Town decided benibana a Town Flower, the phrase of “Benibana Country - Kahoku” came from the historic fact that Mogami-benibana was once collected and distributed here since the middle of Edo period. This Town had the old documents to show that the “beni” production during Tensho period (1573-92) . And other two periods – from 1789 to 1801(寛政年間) and from 1854 to 1860(安政年間)-Murayama area occupied the half of the whole production of Japan.

Benibana was transported from China and gradually its cultivation areas were spread to Tohoku of deep snowy districts.

The northern limit of its cultivation was the south of Iwate Prefecture, but the reason of its prosperity in such a cold land comes from the adaptability of the land, and its industry was closely connected with benibana’s cost crop.

There lived more than twenty of benibana dealers in Kahoku at its highest and twenty-five to thirty “Mebayas” and “Sanbes” were counted here. Kahoku Town was the second largest collecting spot next to Yamagata City.

35. Benibana Tradings (紅花交易)



The Course of Transportation

Benibana produced in Kahoku area was conveyed to Kyoto and Osaka. During

Kanbun period(1661-73), Zuiken Kawamura (河村瑞軒) proposed the trading of the Mogami River conveyance to Sakata. Then the flow of the conveyance automatically focused to Kwansai (関西) areas by sea. The Ise (伊勢) merchants and Mogami merchants settled their branch shops in Kyoto and Osaka as a center of trading. Rice, benibana and so on were exported there and the ships brought back, in return, textile, cotton, porcelain, salt, sugar and other daily necessities. Especially, furniture, books, Kyoto dolls and other artificial goods were brought back as valuable properties. Many of them are preserved at present in Kahoku.



Benibana Jizo

36. Benibana Jizo as a Guardian (紅花を見守る紅花地蔵)

At the Futsukamachi (二日町) of Kaminoyama City near Zao Mountains(蔵王連峰), there used to be a fifty centimeters tall little statue of Jizo. In the blooming season of benibana, many visitors from neighboring village came and were given an amulet to get rid of stem germs of benibana. People called this statue “Benibana Jizo” and they prayed the safety of growing of the flower as well as other crop harvests.

37. Color of Twelve Official Ranks (冠位十二階制の色彩)

This rank system was said to have been created by Shotokutaishi(聖徳太子) in December of 603 of Emperor Suiko (推古天皇) reign.

The ranks were decided by the colored cap and settled the clear seats of the Court. The names of each rank were divided into major and minor virtues, colored by purple, blue, red, yellow, white and black respectively.

38. Rich Benibana Traders and Road of Culture (紅花大尽と文化の道)

Hachiemon Suzuki(鈴木八右衛門) in Obanzawa, who was called a rich benibana trader, had the following episode.

At about Genroku(元禄) period, this wealthy trader shipped many packages of benibana to Edo. But the Edo merchants made a league not to buy benibana, then he burnt those packages at the coast of Shinagawa(品川). (In fact the contents of the packages were stained cotton trashes or so.) But this news rapidly ran all through the Edo streets and its price suddenly raised up. He could earn lot of money. People of Edo were surprised at his bold doing and they sang Hachiemon’s gorgeousness in a cant song.

Thus, he was called a benibana wealthy merchant, who played important role of finance and trade. Of course, the story above might be a legend. Because Mogami

benibana was usually conveyed to Kyoto and Osaka, not to Edo. Nevertheless, this story delivers us the prosperity of the trading.

He was also familiar with haikai(俳諧) and named himself “Seifu”(清風). The famous haiku master, Basho Matsuo visited his residence by way of touring around Tohoku area. The master stayed there over ten days. During the stay, he visited Yamadera and sometimes held a haiku party. Now, many historic materials are preserved at the Basho-Seifu Memorial Museum in Obanazawa. The route of benibana was, so called “the way of culture”.

39. BENIBANA CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE (紅花關係年表)

A.D.	Events
927	“Benibana” appeared in the “Engishiki” (延喜式), but any tax was not obliged to Dewa (出羽) country.
1573 ~	Benibana cultivation was prevalent around Kahoku area. (The Anrakuji Temple documents)
1577	Nobunaga Oda gave fifty kins (斤) of beni to Jurou Shiratori as a return of tribute of a steed.
1672	The official rice piled cargos was begun to sail from Sakata by the western sea route.
1680	The return cargo of benibana was wrecked at the offing of Sado Island (佐渡ヶ島). The principal image of Buddha of the Jionji Temple(慈恩寺) was lost. (The Jionji Temple documents)
1682	A wholesaler of benibana in Kyoto made the system of a mutual finance “Inarikou” (稻荷講).
1683	A wadded silk garment came into vogue in Kyoto, and the regulation of garments was issued for women.
1689	Basho Matsuo made the tour to Tohoku.
1699	Articles of benibana were begun to be recorded. (The record of Omachi <河北町大町>)
1703	The prosperity of Oishida along the Mogami River could be seen.
1711	The foundation of beni-dyeing was used as a souvenir.
1716	Rainless weather. The price of benibana rose up. The Kyoho Reform (享保の改革) was started.
1719	A heavy rain and a big flood occurred. A chain of ship-wrecks also happened. Lack of benibana made its price rise up. Eighty ryos per a “da” (駄).
1722	High price of benibana in Kyoto. The merchants there got a lot of profits. The Ordinance of Thrifty was issued.
1725	A big flood occurred in May. The lack of benibana was counted about 400 das.
1729	The long drought lasted. Farmers and merchants were at a loss because of lack of benibana.
1730	“ <i>Meibutsu-Beni-no-sode</i> ” (『名物紅乃袖』) was written.
1733	The prosperity of Yudono-san visiting (湯殿山詣で).
1735	The Shogunate recognized benibana wholesaling right. The direct selling of the producers was prohibited.
1738	Benibana wholesalers made a complaint to the shippers for the deterioration of benibana.
1740	Jinemon Hiiragiya (柊屋甚右衛門), with six members as a representative of wholesalers, sued “Inarikou” to the Kyoto Office of the Shogunate, but the decision was not done.
1741	The Authority permitted “Beni-ko-ya” (紅粉屋) to buy benibana in cash.
1752	Kyube and Gihe (久兵衛、儀兵衛) of Yachi made a movement to found “Benibana market” in Kyoto. In this year, benibana was a good harvest. Yachi area had also a good rice harvest.
1755	About 340 to 350 “das” were produced in Yachi area. A big famine suffered the farmers and other people.

- 1765** The monopoly of benibana trading in Kyoto was broken. Mogami-benibana's price rose up, which pleased the farmers in Mogami. About this period "*Furyu-matsunoki-makura*" (『風流松の木枕』) was described.
- 1766** A benibana cargo was upset on June 29 and eleven sailors were dead.
- 1772** The benibana wholesalers in Kyoto applied to the Shogunate for monopolization of benibana.
- 1788** Koshouken Furukawa (古川古松軒) described "*Touyu-zakki*" (『東遊雜記』).
- 1789** The sumptuary law for furniture, beni-dyed costumes, and utensils was issued.
- 1801** Benibana was a bad harvest, because of a slight drought. In Kyoto, economic condition was stagnated.
- 1802** The weather was unstable. A benibana cargo was wrecked at the offing of Noto Peninsula (能登半島). The Yachi merchants were given lot of damage.
- 1806** A big flood occurred in May. Lot of benibana were flowed away.
- 1808** Dried benibana's price went down. Many flowers were left in the lands. The people in Mogami were depressed.
- 1822** Kiemon Ota (太田幾右衛門) in Atosawa (後沢) was ordered the beni-mochi by Prince Fushimi (伏見宮).
- 1824** A spell of dry weather lasted. The seeds of benibana were sown twice but it was a poor harvest. The farmer suffered from it.
- 1830** A big flood occurred and benibana was a poor harvest. Lot of insect plagues also occurred.
- 1833** The terrible famine attacked people. A poor benibana harvest. Benibana seeds were forbidden to convey to other areas.
- 1836** The benibana traders donated Benibana Stone Lanterns to the Sumiyoshi Shrine.
- 1840** Two ships were wrecked at the offing of Imamachi (今町), Niigata. Many Yamagata merchants were seriously damaged.
- 1841** The Tenpo Reform Bill (天保の改革) was issued.
- 1842** The remove of control of the Mogami River's sailing. Yachi regained the prosperity. A big fire at Aramachi Village (荒町村). The Deity Shrine (神明宮) was refounded by benibana merchants.
- 1853** The Stone Lanterns were built at the Shimomaki-hakusan Shrine (下槇白山神社) by Rinbe Motoki (本木林兵衛), and Himeji (姫路) merchants. Musha-gura (武者蔵) was built at the Benibana Museum.
- 1854** "The picture of fusuma" (襖絵) was painted in the Zashiki-gura.
- 1855** A benibana cargo was wrecked at the offing of Wakasa (若狭). Merchants of Yachi and Yamagata were greatly damaged.
- 1856** Five hundred of Buddha's disciples statues were donated to the Jourinji Temple (定林寺) by benibana merchants.
- 1859** The Ansei Treaty of Opening Country to the Western World was concluded. Foreign dyeing agent (beni) was begun to be imported.
- 1863** A drought let benibana harvest slight. The benibana diary was begun to be describes. The Goshuin-gura was built in the Benibana Museum.
- 1864** A normal harvest of benibana. A big fire broke out in Kyoto. The price of benibana was raised up.
- 1866** A big fire in Yachi and a big flood occurred. Lot of benibana was swept away. Sawabata-swords were prosperously forged.

- 1875 A big flood along the Mogami River. Many benibana cultivators were suffered from being carried away of benibana. Mulberry trees were begun to be planted.
- 1877 The 1st Domestic Industrial Exhibition was held. Yamagata Prefecture exhibited benibana as a prefectural flower.
- 1881 No records of the market price of benibana from this year on.
- 1899 Eiji Iwabuchi (岩淵栄治), the late proprietor, donated beni-mochi at the Ceremony of Koutai Shrine (皇太神宮).
- 1916 A new benibana song was sweeping.
- 1928 The Farmer's Association of Dewa Village dedicated beni-mochi to Emperor's Coronation Ceremony via Takada Company.
- 1965 The Benibana Production Allied Corporation of Yamagata Prefecture was founded.
- 1980 The name of "Kahoku Benibana Country" was adopted.
- 1984 The Benibana Museum was opened.
- 1986 The Benibana House was opened.

40. Conversion Table

1 monme	3.75 g	0.13 oz
1 kin	0.6 kg	1.32 lb
1 kan	3.75 kg	8.27 lb

41. Access



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