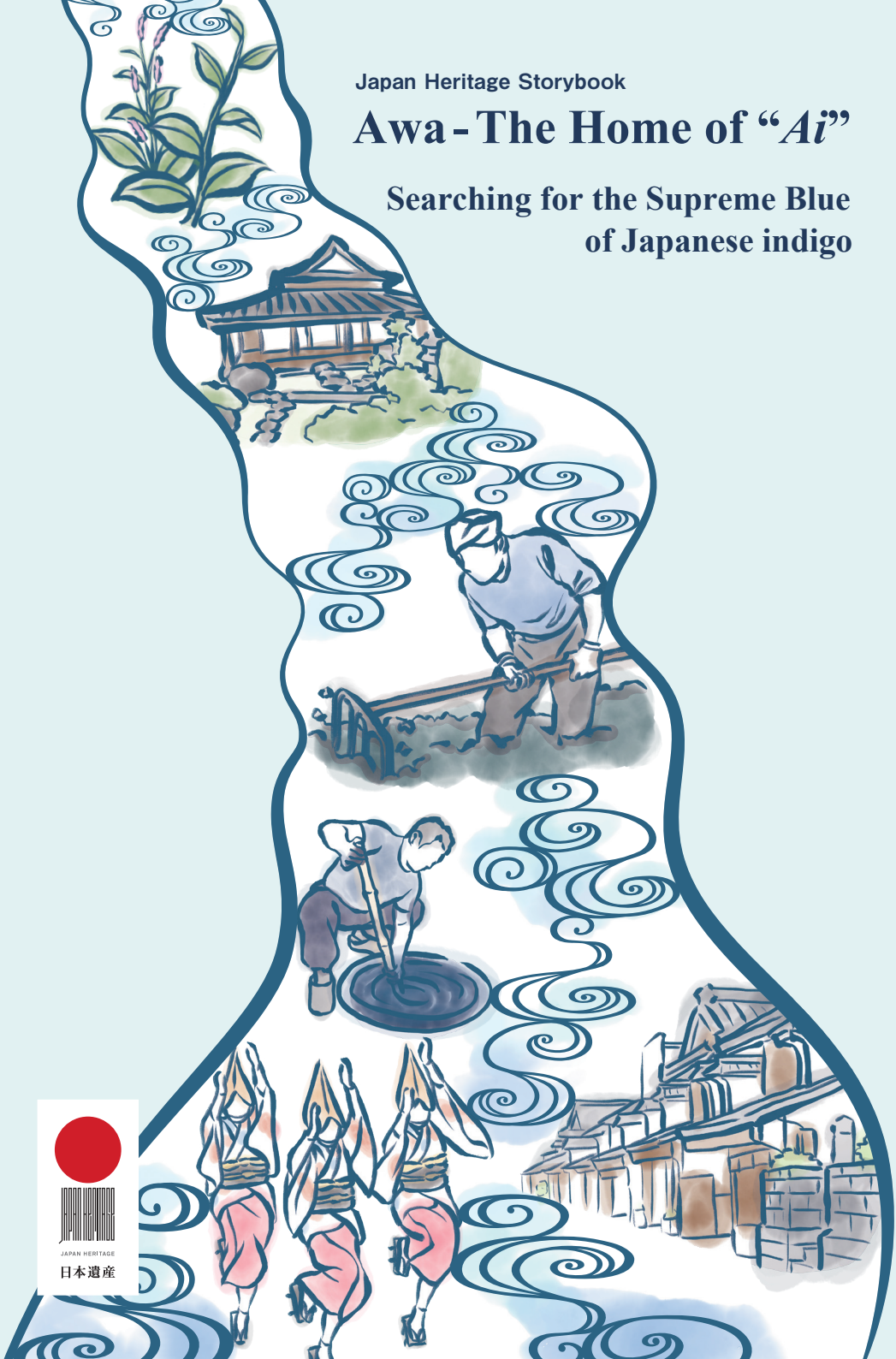
Japan Heritage Storybook

Awa - The Home of "*Ai*"

Searching for the Supreme Blue of Japanese indigo



JAPAN HERITAGE
日本遺産

Japan Heritage Storybook

Awa - The Home of "*Ai*"

Searching for the Supreme Blue of Japanese indigo

Tokushima Prefecture (Tokushima-Shi, Yoshinogawa-Shi, Awa-Shi, Mima-Shi, Ishii-Chō, Kitajima-Chō, Aizumi-Chō, Itano-Chō, Kamiita-Chō)

Supervised by Promotion Council for "Ai no Furusato Awa (Awa-the home of Ai)"

JAPAN HERITAGE

日本遺産

Contents

Introduction

In May 2019, "Awa – The Home of "*Ai*"," a story from our homeland, was recognized as a Japan Heritage.

Blue – or *ao* – is one of the most ubiquitous amongst the traditional colors of Japan. It is a color produced through indigo dyeing, a traditional craft of the country. In the past, indigo dyers – or *kōya* in Japanese – practiced their craft all over Japan, coloring the whole country blue. Foreigners who visited Japan during the Meiji era admired Japan as "a country of mysterious blue." The blue coming from natural indigo exhibits rich variation, captivating the world with its multitude of shades and hues.

Where, then, did the source of that "mysterious blue" come from? The answer is the Awa Province, or present-day Tokushima Prefecture.

Tokushima is home to a traditional technique called "Awa indigo production (*Awa ai seizō*)" which has been chosen as a Selective Conservation Technique (*sentei hozon gijyutsu*) by the state. "*Awa-Ai*" refers to the indigo dye – or *sukumo* – produced in Tokushima. Even today, craftspeople called *Ai-Shi* continue their production of traditional *Sukumo*, maintaining the foundation of Japan's textile culture.

This book tells the story of *Sukumo* production. Loved by many as "authentic Japanese indigo (*Hon-Ai*)" in olden days and as "Awa indigo (*Awa-Ai*)" today, *Sukumo* has been produced by people who preserved and passed down the technique for generations. In addition to this history, we will also introduce you to the landscape and culture of Tokushima brought about by indigo production.

Rediscovering the charm of Japan through Japan Heritage

The Japan Heritage certification is an initiative by the Japanese Agency for Cultural Affairs. Its aim is to rediscover the historical charm of various domestic regions by packaging together disparate tangible and intangible cultural assets. Between its launch in 2015 and 2020, 104 entries have been accepted and recognized.

The Agency expects Japan Heritage recognitions to boost regional vitalization efforts while functioning as opportunities for sharing the appeal of Japan with international tourists.

Components of our story: the 32 cultural assets from the Yoshino River basin's nine cities and towns

Awa – The Home of "*Ai*" came to life from a joint application effort between nine cities and towns – Tokushima-shi, Yoshinogawa-shi, Awa-shi, Mima-shi, Ishii-chō, Kitajima-chō, Aizumi-chō, Itano-chō, and Kamiita-chō – located in the Yoshino River basin of Tokushima Prefecture. The story features tangible and intangible cultural assets which have been cherished and passed down in the region. For detailed explanations of each asset, please refer to Chapter 5.

A Japan Heritage Story: Awa – The Home of "*Ai*": Searching for the Supreme Blue of Japanese indigo

Indigo, hailed as the mysterious blue, has been an integral part of Japanese life since the olden times. The basin of the Yoshino, a majestic river flowing through the north of Tokushima Prefecture, produces the largest amount of indigo dye in Japan. The plain area of this region is home to estates of wealthy farmers surrounded by high stone and white-plaster walls. The old town of Wakimachi boasts a gorgeous streetscape decked with *Udatsu* barriers. The

region is also famous for the lively rhythms of the *Awa-Odori* dance. All of the above allow us to taste the past glory of the indigo merchants who distributed their product all over Japan. Even today, the region uses traditional techniques to produce indigo dye whose colors continue to captivate the hearts of many.

Chapter 1: Indigo and the World

The Japanese "*ai*" is a general term for plants from which we can source blue dye. It also refers to dye made from such plants as well as the color from the dye. *Aigusa*, or indigo plants, grow naturally around the world and have been used in the daily lives of various peoples. Before we begin the story of *Awa-Ai*, let us explain the basics of "*ai*/indigo" and the practice of dyeing.

The history of mankind and coloring

Firstly, when did humankind begin to color things?

The global history of coloring goes way back. The oldest evidence is 60,000 years old, which equates to the Paleolithic Age* in Japanese history. What first comes to your mind might be the vivid colors used in European cave paintings. The colors come from mineral pigments sourced from minerals such as red iron oxide or loess. These pigments are believed to be the oldest colorants used by mankind.

Such coloring practices gave birth to textile dying, believed to have started around 3,000 BC. (i.e., about 5,000 years ago). The oldest indigo-dyed product, which is the bandage of a mummy found from the ruins of the historical Egyptian city Thebes, dates to 2,000 BC. (i.e., about 4,000 years ago).

Indigo around the globe

There are several species of plants from which we can source indigo dye, such as *Persicaria tinctoria* (Aiton) H. Gross, Syn: *Polygonum tinctoria Lour* from the buckwheat family (used for *Awa-Ai*), *Indigofera tinctoria* L. and *Indigofera suffruticosa* Mill from the pea family, *Strobilanthes cusia* O. Kuntze from the

The Paleolithic Age

This term refers to a period when humans used knapped stone tools and survived by means of hunting and gathering. Later, in the Neolithic Age (about 9000 years ago), humans started using earthenware and polished/ground stone tools while engaging in agriculture and stock raising.

Persicaria tinctoria (Aiton) H. Gross, Syn: *Polygonum tinctoria Lour*

family Acanthaceae, and *Isatis tinctoria* L. from the family Brassicaceae, all of which contain the blue pigment "indigo." Each species of indigenous indigo plant is adapted to the unique natural conditions in their corners of the world, from hot and humid areas to cold-weather regions. In Japan, China, Indonesia, Taiwan, India, Middle and South Americas, and Europe, people began cultivating these plants for use in daily life. Such practices eventually evolved into industries.

◆ India

In India, the native *Indigofera tinctoria* L. has been used as a dye since approximately 2,000 BC, when cotton cultivation had already begun in the Indus Valley Civilization. By 600 BC., chintz emerged as one of India's representative textiles.

Since *Indigofera tinctoria* L. thrives under strong sunlight in the equatorial tropics, it contains a large amount of pigment that results in a deep-colored dye. As the vivid colors of *Indigofera tinctoria* L. spread globally to Asia, Europe, the Middle East, and Africa through the Silk Road* trade, the word "indigo," derived from *Indigofera tinctoria* L., became the general term for indigo plants around the world.

The Silk Road

While the trade route connecting China and Europe varied between time periods, traffic was especially active via the Steppe Route, the Oasis Route, and the Maritime Route. Unique regional goods, techniques, and culture from the East and the West came and went through each pathway. The term "Silk Road" was coined by 19th-century German geographer Ferdinand von Richthofen. In 2014, it was named a World Heritage along with adjacent ruins.

◆ Asia

In China, indigo-dyed clothes were widely worn by different classes including those in power as well as the commoners. And so, such clothes were prevalent amongst commodities traded along the Silk Road. In countries such as Indonesia and Vietnam, textiles such as Java chintz are dyed with indigo. In Central Asia, there are peoples who wear indigo-dyed clothes and scarfs with unique patterns and embroidery. These beautiful products are passed on as daily wear as well as traditional festive clothes.

◆ Europe

The *Isatis tinctoria* L. plant is native to Europe and was used not only for dyeing but also as medication. The plant was widely cultivated along the Mediterranean coast since the sixth century, and merchants amassed great wealth from the trade. However, in the 16th century, people started importing the *Indigofera tinctoria* L. which enabled more vivid coloring, and *Isatis tinctoria* L. cultivation died out. This was a huge blow to the region, causing some countries to ban *Indigofera tinctoria* L., calling it "devil's dye." Still, it was Indian cotton textile and advanced dyeing techniques that catalyzed the development of textile culture around Europe.

Starting from the 17th century, the region saw a series of warfare that boosted the demand for blue dye which were used to dye military uniforms. This led to the increase of indigo plantations* across regions such as India, America, and Brazil.

◆ North America

In the North American continent which was discovered by Europeans during the Age of Explorations*, the indigenous peoples dyed their clothes with native

Plantations

Large-scale farms that major powers such as England and France established in tropical colonies from around the Age of Exploration. Coffee, tobacco, cotton, and fruits were produced in large quantities by locals working for a low wage as well as by slaves.

The Age of Exploration

A time period between the mid-15th and mid-17th centuries when European countries, especially Spain and Portugal, found their way into the Americas, Africa, and Asia. The world known to the Europeans expanded with the discovery of the American continents as well as the publication of *The Travels of Marco Polo* which described "Zipang (Japan)" to its readers.

indigo plants. Since indigo-dyed clothes repelled bugs and snakes, they dyed durable cloth to make work attire. This is said to be the origin of the widely loved jean trousers.

Indigo plants as medicinal herbs

Indigo plants have been utilized not only for dyeing but also in medicine. *Shennong Bencaojing*, believed to be the oldest Chinese text on herbal medicine, describes the benefits of *Persicaria tinctoria* (Aiton) H. Gross, Syn: *Polygonum tinctorium* Lour "*Ranjitsu** detoxify the body from the inside. If taken for a long period, your hair will not turn gray, and your bodily movements will be nimble." In Japan, *Honzō Wamyō** describes the seeds as an antipyretic, while *Wakan Sansai Zue** from the Edo period states that they improve the condition of internal organs.

In the 1st century BC, Julius Caesar* stated, "[Celtic] Briton* warriors painted their bodies in blue to intimidate their enemies." Since *Isatis tinctoria* L. leaves have hemostatic potentials, it can be assumed that the warriors painted their faces and bodies not only to scare their enemies but also to treat battle wounds.

In such ways, we humans have experientially learned the power of indigo plants which naturally grow in our immediate surroundings. Such knowledge integrated into cultures where indigo plants are not only used in daily jobs of dyeing and healing but also on the battleground.

Column: Classifying indigo dye

Dyes are grouped into natural dyes and synthetic dyes, and dyes made from indigo plants belong to the former. Natural dyes are further classified into those that are mineral-derived, plant-derived, and animal-derived. Dyes made from

Ranjitsu
The name for indigo seeds as herbal medicine. Leaves are called "*ranyō*" in the same context.

Honzō Wamyō
The oldest existing Japanese medicinal dictionary.

Wakan Sansai Zue
The first Japanese illustrated encyclopedia published in 1712. Terajima Ryōan, a doctor, complied the encyclopedia modeled on the Chinese *Sancai Tuhui*. It covers a variety of topics including nature, medicine, the lives of ordinary people, and entertainment.

indigo plants are plant-derived dyes. Indigo dyes are especially suitable for dyeing cotton with the extra perk of increasing the durability of the fabric. This made indigo dyes widely popular around the world.

Column: Indigo, the origin of "pastel"

The genus Isatis, native to South Europe, contains the blue-colored indigo pigments. *Isatis tinctoria* L., which belongs to said genus, was alternatively called "pastel" and was powdered to manufacture paints. Artists used a stick-shaped paint which was made with indigo from *Isatis tinctoria* L. and calcium carbonate. As time passed, people started calling any paint made with the same procedure "pastel" regardless of color. This is the origin of what we know as "pastel crayons" as well as the word "pastel colors."

Julius Caesar

A Roman Republican politician and general who was active around the 1st century BC, known for quotes such as "Ālea iacta est" and "Et tu, Brute?"

Celtic Britons

The indigenous people who lived in Great Britain around the 5th-3rd century BC.

Chapter 2: Indigo in Japan

Indigo plants have been used around the world since the ancient times for dyeing and medicinal purposes. *Persicaria tinctoria* (Aiton) H. Gross, Syn: *Polygonum tinctorium* Lour, the most common variety of indigo plants in Japan, was introduced from the Asian continent in or before the Nara period. Its cultivation became a full-fledged industry in the Edo period which continues to the present day. Despite its many ups and downs, cultures pertaining to indigo still live on, adapting to the unique circumstances of each region – just like in other countries.

The history of indigo in Japan

◆ The Asuka, Nara, and Heian periods (late 6th century – 1185)

In ancient Japan, mud was used to dye a primitive type of cloth woven from thinly shredded grass and bark. Later, people started coloring fabrics by scrubbing flowers and leaves onto them. Madder and Tyrian purple pigments have been detected in silk goods excavated from the Yoshinogari Ruins*, which tells us that natural dye was already in use around the mid-Yayoi period.

In the year 603, Prince Shōtoku established the Twelve Level Cap and Rank System, assigning specific colors (purple, blue, red, yellow, white, and black) to different ranks of government officials. The dyeing technique used at the time is said to have been brought to Japan by immigrants from continental Asia. It is also worth mentioning that *hanadanoru*, a silk cord dyed in a light indigo color, is counted as one of the treasures of Shōsōin*. Used in the consecration ceremony of Tōdai-ji's Great Buddha Statue, the cord is believed to be the oldest existing indigo-dyed article in Japan.

The Yoshinogari Ruins

The Yayoi-period historical ruins lying across Kanzaki-shi and Yoshinogari-chō of Saga Prefecture. The ruins represent a sedentary life anchored in rice cultivation typical of the Yayoi period which continued for about 600 years from around the 3rd century BC. Sparked by the construction plan of Kanzaki Industrial Park during the Shōwa 50s (1975-1984), great strides were made in excavation and conservation of the ruins as well as the development of a historical park with restored buildings.

Restored half-buried jars used by kōya (Ichijōdani Asakura Family Historic Ruins)

Samurai armor dyed with indigo

In the Heian period, culture unique to Japan flourished, which brought about *jūnihitoe*, a gorgeous type of dress for noblewomen consisting of layered colorful robes. This era also saw the emergence of techniques like *kasanezome** using plant-based dyes as well as shading.

◆ Kamakura, Muromachi, and Azuchi-Momoyama periods (1185-1603)

In the Middle Ages, people started producing *sukumo*, an indigo dye made of fermented indigo leaves, and forming *Neaiza* which were guilds that held the exclusive right to sell the dyes. The most famous among such guilds was *Kujō-Neaiza* of Kyoto. The area used to boast a large-scale indigo cultivation, and the southern wetlands where the Kamo river and Katsura river met was especially well known for it.

The earliest mentions of *kōya* appears in the Medieval literature. *Kōya* refers to craftspeople who dye fabrics with *ai-eki* (indigo solution) produced by fermenting *sukumo* in *aigame* (indigo-dye vats). Records also show that peasants sold ash which was one of the ingredients needed for *ai-eki* production. Excavations of ruins from this era reveal remnants of jars half-buried in the ground in a systematic order, which is thought to have been a *kōya* workshop. These are

Shōsōin

The treasure house of Tōdaiji Temple, Nara, known for its takayuka-shiki ("raised floor") architectural style. It is home to the personal items of Emperor Shōmu (701-756) dedicated to the temple by his mourning wife Empress Kōmyō. Since his reign was unstable with plagues and domestic strife, Emperor Shōmu erected the Great Buddha Statue of Tōdaiji to rely on the power of Buddhism. In addition to the emperor's belongings, Shōsōin holds approximately 9,000 valuable goods including daily items used by noblemen as well as articles that came to Japan through the Silk Road

evidence of the flourishing indigo-dyeing industry. The Middle Ages was also the time of samurais. *Kachi-iro*, a type of indigo blue, was favored and used for battle attire by samurais since the name was a homonym of *kachi* (victory).

Like indigo plants around the world, Japanese indigo was also used outside the purpose of dying. For example, there seems to have been folk medicine utilizing indigo plants from around the Muromachi period. Moreover, in regions where indigo has been grown traditionally, there are indigo-related folk medicinal beliefs such as dressing babies in indigo-dyed underwear to prevent heat rashes or eating fresh *Sukumo* to cure pufferfish poisoning.

◆ The Edo period (1603-1868)

The Edo period is when cotton became popular among commoners. Cotton cultivation was introduced to Japan in the mid-15th century. The easy-to-weave, easy-to-dye, soft yet warm fiber became extremely popular, and domains across Japan encouraged their people to grow cotton.

The demand for indigo dye grew rapidly due to its great compatibility with cotton. From cotton clothing to *noren* curtains for shops to *furoshiki* wrapping cloths, various commodities were dyed with indigo. The town name Kōyachō, which still exists in more than 40 locations around Japan, signifies that many *kōya*, or dyers, lived in the area. This is another proof of how indigo-dyeing craftspeople were thriving throughout Japan.

The natural dye crisis after the Meiji period

◆ Meiji and Taishō periods (1868-1926)

The opening of Japan during the final years of the Edo period marked the start of full-scale trades with foreign countries. International indigo trades also began during this time; in the 1866 Tariff Convention between Japan, Britain,

Kasanezome

Kasanezome, or layered dyeing, refers to the technique of layering several different colors of dyes. Indigo dye was indispensable for this practice since colors like green, purple, and black were made by combining blue with yellow and/or red dye. In the book Engishiki, which describes political customs of the Heian era, details out the amount and ratio of dyes needed for kasanezome.

France, USA, and Russia, “Indian indigo” is listed as one of the imported items. The deep-colored and cost-effective *Indigofera tinctoria* L., which had already impacted indigo cultivation in Europe, started affecting the industry in Japan too.

Japan tried to regulate *Indigofera tinctoria* L. at the national level, and chaos ensued between those who supported importing them and those who pushed for regulation. Entrepreneur Godai Tomoatsu*, who led the business community of Osaka, attempted to aid indigo producers in Awa who were facing a crisis due to imported *Indigofera tinctoria* L. In 1874, he opened an indigo dye factory in Myōdō-gun, Awa Province, which adopted the efficient production methods used for *Indigofera tinctoria* L. However, since the production methods of *Persicaria tinctoria* (Aiton) H. Gross, Syn: *Polygonum tinctorium* Lour dye and *Indigofera tinctoria* L. dye were fundamentally different, the factory’s products were inferior in quality, technique, and cost. The factory ended up short-lived. Later, in 1900, the import of *Indigofera tinctoria* L. hit an all-time high.

Another big blow to domestic indigo production was the imported synthetic dyes. Synthetic dyes were first discovered by British chemists in 1856. In 1880, German scientists successfully synthesized indigo which were only found in natural indigo plants. From around 1902, cost-effective synthetic indigo dyes (artificial indigo) started coming into Japan in place of *Indigofera tinctoria* L.

This was a time when the Meiji Restoration introduced Western techniques into the dyeing/textile industry to enable mass production. Artificial indigo, which allowed for a significant abbreviation of the dying process, met the needs of the time.

Godai Tomoatsu (1836-1885)

A samurai from the Satsuma domain who succeeded as an entrepreneur in the Meiji period. As a leading figure in the Meiji Restoration where Japan opened itself to new technologies and ideologies from the West, he worked in a variety of fields including mine development, spinning, and education, and ran an indigo factory called Nishi-Chōyōkan in Osaka. He is also known as the first president of Osaka Chamber of Commerce.

◆ The Showa period (1926-1989)

With the outbreak of World War I, the import of artificial indigo halted. However, there still were demands for dyes for military uniforms among others. The state worked on producing artificial indigo domestically, successfully self-supplying them by 1932. Even the *Ai-Shōnin** who made a fortune by trading natural indigo could not swim against the tide of the time and shifted away to artificial indigo production or other businesses. Despite its convenience, however, the dyeing quality of artificial indigo was a far cry from that of natural indigo. The *kōya* who prided themselves in using natural indigo branded themselves using terms like a *shōaizome* (genuine indigo dyeing) or *honzome* (authentic Japanese indigo dyeing).

During World War II, the government prioritized cultivation of edible plants, therefore banning indigo. After the War, *Ai-Shi** who knew the traditional production techniques revitalized the industry. However, since the companies that once thrived with indigo dye trading were all gone by then, the now small number of *Ai-Shi* started covering the entirety of the industry's process, from indigo cultivation to production and sales of dye.

◆ From the Heisei era to today

As described in earlier sections, indigo dye production and indigo dyeing have been practiced all over Japan from ancient times. However, areas that produce commercially available indigo dye have steadily shrunk.

According to a 2018 survey (conducted by the Tokushima Prefecture Lucrative Brand Promotions Division), Japan's indigo hectarage amounts up to 24.6ha, nearly 70% of which belongs to Tokushima. Tokushima still has professional *Ai-Shi* who make a living by production and sales of indigo dye, which is very rare even on a global scale. In recent years, people of younger generations drawn to the appeal of

Ai-Shi and *Ai-Shōnin*

Ai-Shi refer to craftsmen who produce indigo dyes. There even were *Ai-Shi* who grew indigo plants themselves. *Ai-Shōnin* refer to merchants who bought dye from *Ai-Shi* to sell them around Japan. Some merchants broadened the scope of their businesses, such as by working on indigo cultivation themselves, to great success.

natural indigo are working to inherit the techniques of indigo cultivation and dye production.

Hokkaido Prefecture is the largest producer of indigo after Tokushima. The history of indigo cultivation in Hokkaido goes back to the Meiji era when settlers from Tokushima, who knew how to grow indigo and produce dyes therefrom, started their craft in the area. Additionally, the Harima area (a part of present-day Hyōgo), where Hachisuka Iemasa was posted before he became the first lord of Tokushima Domain, used to be another big producer of Indigo dye. The craft then fell into a decline but was later revived. Today, traditional production techniques are still passed on in Harima, just like in Tokushima and Hokkaido.

Column: Does the color blue represent Japan?

Robert William Atkinson, a British chemist who was invited to Japan by the Meiji government in 1875, praised the beauty of blue curtains and *kimonos* he witnessed all around town. The writer Lafcadio Hearn (1850-1904), known in Japan as Koizumi Yakumo, also writes of how the abundance of blue in the cityscape surprised him. Moreover, the official emblem of the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games features a dark blue checkered pattern. Blue seems to evoke nostalgia and reassurance in the hearts of Japanese people, so much so that we could say the color represents the country.

Column: Traditional colors: A Japanese sense of beauty

Japanese traditional colors have beautiful names using *kanji* (Chinese characters) that represent a uniquely Japanese sense of beauty. Even if we simply focus on indigo-dyed blue, the lightest and darkest shades have different names (*aijiro* and *tomekon*), and there are various color names in between –*kamenozoki*, *shirahana-iro*, *shira-ai*, *shikon*, *nasukon*, and *kachigaeshi* to name a few

– that describe subtle differences. Indigo dying consists of repeatedly dipping fiber or fabric in a vat filled with dyeing solution, then extracting them. The fact that a quickly dyed pale blue is called *kamenozoki* (“peeking in the vat”) is quite playful.

Column: The Mingei Movement’s rediscovery of indigo handwork

The Mingei Movement, initiated by philosopher Sōetsu Yanagi (1889-1961) in the early Shōwa era, recognized *yō-no-bi* (the beauty of usage), meaning that crafts are the most beautiful when used in daily life. Yanagi’s book *Teshigoto no Nihon* includes his remarks on indigo handwork which can be summarized as below: “While artificial indigo is convenient, it is no match to natural indigo when it comes to the beauty of the colors and durability. We should seriously reflect on the fact that, until about 50 years ago, even the poorest people used to wear real indigo-dyed *kimono* as daily wear in Japan. The fact that there once was a time where the fake stuff did not exist while the real things were affordable poses a huge question for us.”

Column: Kusakizome

Novelist Akira Yamazaki (1892-1972), who found it regrettable how imported synthetic dye was replacing natural dye such as indigo, started a movement in 1929 which was aimed at restoring traditional methods of dyeing and weaving. The now commonly used term “*kusakizome* (vegetation dying)” was coined by Yamazaki to further classify the different methods of natural dyeing. *Kusakizome Nihon Shikimei Jiten* (The Encyclopedia of Japanese *Kusakizome* Colors) compiled by his son, Seiju Yamazaki, includes 432 entries, 102 of which are indigo-based colors. This is great evidence of how indigo is indispensable in the world of Japanese traditional colors.

Chapter 3: Awa and Indigo

In this chapter, we will talk about the history of indigo production in Tokushima and the culture that materialized from it.

Tokushima* is largely divided to *Kitakata* and *Minamikata* regions based on commonly accepted area classifications. The plains of the Yoshino River* basin area is called *Kitakata* and was mainly used for dry field farming. Meanwhile, if you trace the coastline to the south, you will reach the plain areas of the *Minamikata*. This area equates to the basins of the Katsu'ura River and the downstream of Naka River and was mostly used for rice cultivation. Indigo was produced in the Northern area, and the region is home to a townscape that is reminiscent of its prosperity in the olden days. We can even say that the culture of Tokushima was nurtured through indigo production.

The townscape of the indigo country and the history of dye production intertwined with the climate

Coexisting with harsh natural conditions

As you walk through the pastoral scenery of the plains of *Kitakata*, Awa, you will find estates here and there whose grounds are raised with high stone walls. The mansions are surrounded by imposing structures with *honkawarabuki*-style tile roofing and white plastered walls, giving off an impression similar to a castle. Such estates are called *Ai-Yashiki* and form a characteristic part of the local townscape. *Ai-Yashiki* fulfilled many roles for *Ai-Shi* and *Ai-Shōnin* who worked on indigo dye production, processing, and distribution between the Edo and Meiji periods. The estates were their places of residence, manufacturing

Tokushima Prefecture

The prefecture is home to 723,524 residents and is constituted of eight cities, fifteen towns, and one village (as of May 2020). 80% of the total area (4146.79 km^2) is forest land. Tokushima prefecture came to existence in 1871 with the abolition of the han (feudal domain) system in the Meiji era. Since ancient times, the *Kitakata* area in the north of the Yoshino River (consisting of seven commanderies: Myōdō, Myōzai, Itano, Awa, Oe, Mima, and Miyoshi) has been a dry field farming area while the southern *Minamikata* area (consisting of three commanderies: Katsuura, Naka, and Kaifu) produced rice.

facilities for indigo dye, and spaces for business negotiations.

The Yoshino, a river which flows through the *Kitakata* area of Awa, is counted amongst the three "raging rivers*" of Japan and is nicknamed *Shikoku Saburō* ("the third son from Shikoku"). The basin area of the Yoshino repeatedly suffered great damage from floodings until continuous embankment was put in place during the early years of the Showa period. Also, since the difference between maximum and minimum flow of the river is drastic, it is difficult to utilize the water resources of the Yoshino even with modern technology. It used to be impossible to draw water from this river for irrigation*, making the area of *Kitakata*, Awa, unsuitable for rice cultivation. Thus, *Kitakata* used to be a dry field farming area. However, the abundant underflow and the fertile soil brought about by the floodings were perfect for indigo plant farming which, in turn, boosted the local indigo dye industry.

Since the people who worked on indigo plant cultivation and indigo processing needed to stay on this land, they put many creative ideas into practice when building their estates. Let us take a quick look.

◆ Premises raised with high stone walls

Using high stone walls to raise the grounds upon which the estates are built is a measure against flooding. In the case of the Tanaka Family Residence in Ishii-cho, the walls go as high as 2.7 meters. Most notably, when it comes to the *Nedoko* buildings where the indigo dye is produced, the floors inside the buildings are also raised high to minimize damage from flooding. Moreover, Mainakashima island of Mima-shi, which used to be a big producer of indigo, is home to residential buildings and temples surrounded by high stone walls in addition to *jizō* statues with high pedestals. Mainakashima is a river island in the middle of the Yoshino, and as a measure against the recurring floods, the mansions even have an emergency bathroom to use when the residents are flooded.

The Yoshino River

The source of the Yoshino is Mt. Kamegamori (summit elevation: 1897m) of the Ishizuchi mountains located in the north of Kōchi prefecture. The river flows towards the east along the Shikoku Mountains and es the Tokushima plains into the Kii Channel. The 194km-long river's basin spreads across all four prefectures of the Shikoku Island. The wider part of the river which starts at the Tenth Weir (approx. 14km from the mouth) is an artificial discharge channel which took from 1907 to 1927 to complete. Before the channel was created, another river called Bekku River meandered here from north to south without an embankment, which made its basin prone to inundation when upstream area flooded.

Ai-Yashiki (Okumura family residence)

Yoshino River (Kawashima beach)

Tanaka Family Residence

An estate of the Mainakashima District

◆ Boats hung from the eaves of *Nedoko*

To prepare for the frequent flooding, people hung boats from the eaves of the *Nedoko* buildings. When actual floodings happened, they evacuated by boat or even rowed out to rescue victims.

◆ Even the roof is prepped for floods

The Tanaka family residence has a thatched roof which, surprisingly, doubles as a measure against flooding. The four corners of the roof are secured with ropes, and although the family has never done this in real life, cutting the ropes will allow the roof to float and function as a boat.

Let us look at how a typical *Ai-Yashiki* is configured. In the middle of the premises, there is the main building with a spacious courtyard in front. People used to dry indigo leaves and prepare indigo dyes for shipping in the courtyards. Indigo dye production facilities called *Nedoko* surround the courtyard with their characteristic, largely protruding eaves.

Since these estates were also a place for business negotiations, they also built tea rooms and reception parlors so that they could give the best welcome to

The “Raging Rivers”

Japan has been a flood-prone country throughout its history, and riparian improvement has always been an issue. The Tone River of the Kantō area, the Chikugo river of Kyūshū, and the Yoshino of Shikoku are collectively called the Three Raging Rivers of Japan. These rivers were treated as “brothers” and were each nicknamed *Bandō Tarō* (“the first son from Kantō”), *Tsukushi Jirō* (“the second son from Kyūshū”), and *Shikoku Saburō* (“the third son from Shikoku”).

Irrigation

Managing water by, for example, drawing necessary water for plowing fields from waterways.

The evacuation boat (Tanaka Family Residence)

Drying indigo leaves in the courtyard of an *Ai-Yashiki* (Takechi Family Residence)

merchants who come to purchase indigo dye from all over Japan. To gain their customer's trust, the *Ai-Shi* and *Ai-Shōnin* vied with one another to build the most gorgeous estate and used a lot of money for hosting purposes.

Such is the historical background behind the castle-like *Ai-Yashiki* found all over this region.

The beginning of indigo cultivation and processing

We do not know for certain when indigo cultivation in Awa started. In 1445, during the Muromachi period, the *Hyōgo Kitaseki Irifune Nōchō* records state that a massive amount of "indigo" was shipped from Awa and unloaded at Hyōgo Kitaseki (near present-day Kobe port). There are no records of indigo being shipped from any area other than Awa, and we can speculate that "indigo" was already a specialty of Awa. There also is a record of *kōya* (indigo dyers) donating to the Ōasagū temple (Ōasa-chō, Naruto-shi) in the 1487 *Ōasagū Konryū no Shidai*, which tells us that indigo dying took place in Awa back then.

The existence of *neaiza* in Kyoto around this period is enough for us to assume that people already had the technology to produce *sukumo*. However, it is unclear whether the "indigo" shipped from Awa back then was in *sukumo*

The inside of an *Ai-Yashiki* (The Okumura Family Residence)

The inside of an *Ai-Yashiki* (The Okumura Family Residence)

The outside of a *Nedoko* (Takechi Family Residence)

A massive *Nedoko* (an *Ai-Yashiki* of Suwa, Yamakawa-chō)

form or indigo leaves. According to one theory, the techniques of *Sukumo* production were bought to Shōzui, which was the center of Awa back then, around the latter half of the Muromachi period.

Although the lack of historical records leaves us guessing, it can be said that the Muromachi period is when the basis was built for Tokushima to become a great producer of indigo dye.

Awa indigo establishing its position in the Edo period thanks to the Tokushima domain's* protection and promotion

In the Edo period, the Tokushima domain protected and promoted indigo production as an important source of revenue and actively worked on improving its quality. In the mid-Edo period, as a result of the popularization of cotton throughout Japan, the production of indigo dye was boosted. An appraisal of Awa indigo back then is found in the *Wakan Sansai Zue* which was compiled in 1712: "Based on consideration, those produced in Kyoto Rakugai are superior. Those produced in the Higashinari commandery, Sesshū, are the [next] best. Those produced in Awa and Awaji follow." In other words, indigo dye produced in the outskirts of Kyoto were thought to be the best. Dye produced in Higashinari, Osaka, was

The Tokushima Domain

The domain was established by Hachisuka Iemasa. In 1585, Iemasa and his father Hachisuka Masakatsu, who used to be retainers of Toyotomi Hideyoshi, built the Tokushima Castle. Iemasa were further gifted the Awaji Province for his distinguished service in the Siege of Osaka and became a *daimyō* (lord) with an income of 257,000 koku.

crowned second, and dye from the Awa and Awaji areas ranked third. However, later in 1781, Inubushi Kyūsuke improved the production method of *Sukumo*, resulting in a stable production of high-quality dye. Indigo dye from Awa started to receive higher recognition; it was dubbed as "authentic Japanese indigo (Hon-Ai)" and captured all the attention in markets around the country. The *Ai-Shōnin* of Awa, who were granted monopoly rights, started bringing in huge profits to the domain.

The techniques of *Sukumo* dye production

In the *Kitakata* region of Awa, people continue to produce indigo dye using the same methods from back in the Edo period.

In early spring, when the swallows fly over to Japan, the nursery beds are seeded. When it is no longer covered in frost, the grown seedlings are planted in the fields. Around when the rainy season is over, we can see a vast expanse of fully green-colored indigo fields. From early summer to the end of the season, indigo leaves are harvested, chopped finely, and dried under the sun. The dried leaves are piled up inside the *Nedoko* – the dye processing facility – and are watered and mixed for fermentation. The fermenting process is repeated again and again between fall and winter, and thus indigo dye is created. This process does not happen without the craftspeople who put their hearts and souls into creating indigo dye that produces the most beautiful color.

The indigo leaves are fermented at over 60 degrees Celsius. The inside of the *Nedoko* during the fermentation process is filled with steam, warm air, and the pungent smell of fermenting leaves. The temperature and the smell are, in fact, indicators of how well made the dye is. Around the time when we have the first frost of the season, the indigo leaves fully fermented through the manual work of the *Ai-Shi* turn into what looks like black chunks of dirt. This is how *Sukumo*, an indigo dye with greatly concentrated blue pigments, are made.

Piles of indigo leaves inside a *Nedoko*

Ai-Shi checking the indigo leaves

Replanting seedlings

An indigo field

The production process of *Awa-Ai*

◆ Cultivating and harvesting of indigo

Early March

Around the time when swallows fly over to Japan, *Persicaria tinctoria* (Aiton) H. Gross, Syn: *Polygonum tinctorium* Lour seeds are sown in nursery beds on auspicious days. These seeds are as small as sesame seeds. About a month later, the two-to-three-centimeter-tall sprouts are thinned out.

Mid-April to early May

When the seedlings are about 20 centimeters tall, four or five of them are bundled together and pulled out of the bed. The bunch of seedlings are then bound with straw and replanted to the main fields at intervals of 40 centimeters. Prior to the replanting, the main fields composted, sprinkled with lime, and plowed well.

Late June to early July

The fields are composted, weeded out, and earthed up. Pest control measures are also taken. When the rainy season ends, the leaves will have grown, and the

Ai-Konashi

Watering the indigo leaves

seedling will be as high as 60 centimeters. Then, the first harvest (*ichiban-gari*) takes place on a sunny day.

Late July to early August

The post-ichiban-gari root clumps are composted and weeded out, followed by pest control measures. This allows the leaves to grow again for another round of harvest (*niban-gari*). In some cases, harvests are done thrice (*sanban-gari*) until around early September.

After harvesting

The harvested indigo plants are cut and sorted into stems and leaves by wind power by weight. The leaves are then dried for about two days when the weather is good (this process is called "*Ai-Konashi*"). The dried indigo leaves are stored in a straw bag called *Zukin*.

The process of *Kirikaeshi*

A pile of indigo leaves with a *Futon* over it

◆ *Sukumo* production in the *Nedoko*

Early September

In the *Nedoko*, the *ichiban-gari* leaves (indigo leaves, *Ha-Ai*) are wetted with an adequate amount of water and mixed. The leaves are piled up to about a meter high and left to ferment (*Nesekomi*).

Mid-September to early December

Once every five days, the pile of leaves are broken down with a wooden four-tooth rake (*Yotsu-Kumade*), turned with a shovel called *Hane*, and mixed and piled back to the original height with another rake called *Komazarae*. This process is called *Kirikaeshi* (literally "cut and turn") and is repeated about 20 times in total. When the temperature starts to go down, the leaves are covered with a straw mat called *Futon* to support the fermentation.

At the time of the fourth of fifth *Kirikaeshi*, the *niban-gari* leaves are added before further *Kirikaeshi* takes place.

In late October (after *Kirikaeshi* is repeated about 13 times), indigo leaf clumps are loosened up so that fermentation will take place thoroughly (this process is called *Tōshi*).

Sukumo

A stone lantern donated by *Ai-Shōnin* who did business in Osaka (Kotohira Shrine, Seimi, Tokushima-shi)

The *Tōshi* process takes place again in late November (after the 17th or 18th *Kirikaeshi*) to finetune the indigo. *Kirikaeshi* takes place for an approximate total of 20 times until the dye production is complete.
Around October to November, the indigo plants regrown after *niban-gari* will have bloomed. While *Sukumo* production continues in the *Nedoko*, seeds are harvested.

After early December
Sukumo production takes about a hundred days after the *Nesekomi* takes place. The finished product is packed into a straw bag called *Kamase* stamped with the *Ai-Shi's* name and are shipped to clients such as dyers around Japan. One bag of *Kamase* is as heavy as 56.25kg.

February to March
After the shipping is complete, the *Nedoko* floor is prepped for next year. Ingredients are layered in the order of crushed stones, sand, rice husk, sand, and clay to create an environment suitable for fermentation.

The distribution of Awa indigo and the prosperity of the area

Awa indigo dye spreads across Japan

Indigo dye from Awa spread across Japan, thanks in part to aid from the Tokushima domain as well as improvement in quality. In the earlier years of the trade, Awa dye was mainly sold in Osaka and Edo (present day Tokyo). However, major merchants already held power in these cities, which was a disadvantage for Awa *Ai-Shōnin* (indigo merchants). Nevertheless, the Tokushima domain supported the merchants from Awa, even though it meant causing friction with the shogunate. Initially, indigo dye were consigned to wholesale dealers in Osaka and Edo. However, this method did not bring much into the Tokushima domain since the wholesalers had the rights to determine the price and thus the *Ai-Shōnin* did not get much in profit. In 1731, the domain decided to authorize direct and wholesale distribution of *Ai-Dama* (Japanese indigo cakes) and started dealing directly with the *kōya*. This allowed the *Ai-Shōnin* to gain wealth and power, and they started expanding nationally beyond the two largest markets of Osaka and Edo.

The Awa *Ai-Shōnin*, who expanded their business across Japan, went on business trips to Edo and Osaka. When in the cities, they invited their clients to *kabuki* and *bunraku* (puppet theater) performances and entertained them enthusiastically. The extravagant ways of the *Ai-Shōnin* apparently were the subject of envy from ordinary people and even became a topic of a *kabuki* play.

Ai-Shōnin as the fosterers of Awa as “the land of performing arts”

The *Ai-Shōnin* did not spend all of their time amassing fortune; they also were leaders of cultural exchanges with other areas of Japan.

Take the *Awa-Odori* dance for example; this dance incorporates various

Furiuri

A style of peddling where a merchant puts products like fish or vegetables in wooden buckets or baskets and hangs them from both ends of a shouldering pole to carry them around.

Present-day Awa Odori

Present-Day Awa Ningyō Jōruri

elements from across Japan, starting with the *niwaka-odori* (impromptu skits) that used to be popular in the Kamigata (Kinki) area. "*Awa Yoshikonobushi*", a popular folk song to dance to, is said to have its roots in "*Itakobushi*" from Ibaraki prefecture. The rhythm of Awa Odori has similarities with those of "*Rokuchō*" from Amami Yaeyama, the Okinawan "*Kachāshī*", "*Haiyabushi*" from Kyūshū, and "*Yassabushi*" from Hiroshima. The dance is a testament to the fearless ventures of the *Ai-Shōnin* of Awa.

The *Ai-Shōnin* also frequently invited puppet theaters from Awaji to Tokushima. It seems that *Awa-Ningyō-Jōruri* (puppet theater) was already performed in the early Edo period. The merchants often invited the theater groups to their *Ai-Yashiki* courtyards to perform. The towns had training halls for *gidayū-bushi* (a style of Japanese narrative music used in ningyō jōruri), and some merchants even enjoyed performing on the side. There also were those who employed puppet theaters themselves, had them give brief performances in parties (this practice was dubbed "Awa's one-bite *jōruri*"), and sponsored tours.

Awa-Ningyō-Jōruri is a puppet theater which consists of *gidayū-bushi jōruri* songs, shamisen music, and *san'nin-zukai* puppets where three people are required to move one puppet. Since outdoor performances were common, large

Udatsu barriers

Shamisen mochitsuki

puppets with a lustrous finish are used. The movements of the puppets are also big and pronounced (the technique is referred to as *Awa-no-te* or "the hand of Awa"). Moreover, there still are many craftspeople who make the puppets.

Due to such popularity of puppet theater, Awa is home to a strong *deko* (puppet) culture. One example is a form of folk performing art called *Awa-Deko Sanbasō-Mawashi* which is still practiced today. The puppets used for this performance are of *Sanbasō* (an old man) and *Ebisu* (a god of fishing and luck). The puppets are put in two wooden boxes which are then hung from a shouldering pole. Two performers – a puppeteer and a drummer – carry the boxes around town and perform *yoshuku** wishing for sound health and good business. Even today, these performers visit nearly a thousand houses on new year's. They also visit *Nedoko* to wish for successful indigo dye production.

The townscape of the indigo distribution hub

Wakimachi-Minamimachi of Mima-shi, which used to be a distribution hub of indigo, is home to a classic townscape built by the *Ai-Shōnin* since the Edo period and is recognized by the "Preservation District for Groups of Important Historic Buildings" scheme. The townscape has beautiful details including

Yoshuku

The custom of celebrating something in advance in the hopes of bringing happiness and realizing wishes.

white plastered walls, abundant use of lattices, *shitomido**, and *mushikomado**. The roofs are *honkawarabuki* style where curved tiles and flat tiles are used in combination. Most notably, the buildings have *Udatsu* barriers on both ends of the second-floor level. The *Udatsu* were originally fire barriers for blocking fire from neighboring houses. However, they gradually turned decorative for the purpose of flaunting prestige and wealth, and merchants of Minamimachi started installing gorgeous *Udatsu* as if it were a competition. That is why many buildings have luxurious *Udatsu* decked with dignified *honkawarabuki* tiling and topped off with a *oni* demon tile glaring down at passersby. The townscape represents the wealth of the merchants who flourished through the Awa indigo trade. Since installing a *Udatsu* cost a considerable sum of money, the Japanese expression "*Udatsu ga agaranai*", or "there's no sign of *Udatsu*", was born to describe someone who struggles to succeed in life.

Looking at the townscape with the luxurious *Udatsu* or wealthy merchants' estates that comes with a wharf, the prosperous lives of the olden days are evident. And on New Year's Eve, the jaunty rhythm of *Shamisen mochitsuki* (mochi pounding), which is accompanied by a song about the thriving indigo business, tells us about the past prosperity.

Shitomido

A door consisting of a board attached to a wooden lattice. The structure is meant to block rain and wind like a window shutter. The board was flipped up during the daytime for natural lighting. *Shitomido* were originally used in mansions of the nobility but were later introduced to shrines, temples, and houses of commoners.

Mushikomado

A window with lattice as fine as insect cages (*mushiko*).

The Historic *Udatsu* Area

A wharf which used to be a distribution hub

Inugai Nōson Butai playhouse (Goō Shrine, Hata-chō, Tokushima-shi)

Column: Locally enjoyed *Awa-Ningyō-Jōruri*

In the indigo cropping area of the Yoshino basin, professional puppeteers invited from the Awaji region used to hold paid performances in makeshift playhouses. Meanwhile, in the rural farm villages, puppet theater took place on stages put up in shrine grounds for occasions such as spring and fall festivals. Such performances entertained the farmers during their brief breaks from harsh agricultural labor. It is said that about 70 puppet theaters were active in the height of the culture. Even today, there are about 40 active puppet theaters. From homemakers and people with day jobs to students involved in theater as an extracurricular activity, the puppeteering culture connects locals from various walks of life.

A statue of Inubushi Kyūsuke

Teitagami paper

Chapter 4: The Rise and Fall of Awa-Ai

Quality: the reason behind Awa indigo's prosperity

When fermenting indigo leaves to produce *Sukumo*, deciding the amount of water to use, regulating the temperature, and determining when to stop fermentation is extremely difficult. Due to these factors, the production of *Sukumo* had been unstable. Seeing this, an *Ai-Shi* named Inubushi Kyūsuke decided to work on improving the production techniques. He studied the use of water for optimal fermentation and trained mizushi, technicians dedicated to managing the watering process.

Also notably, there was a unique method used in the Edo period when scientific quality control was unavailable. This method for appraising the dye, which contributed to improving techniques and consequently upkeeping the quality, is called *Teitahō* ("the hand-board method"). First, a small amount of *Sukumo* is kneaded with a few drops of water. The feel against the hand while kneading will tell the quality and characteristics of the *Sukumo*. The liquid produced by kneading the *Sukumo* is applied to a glass board for appraisal. The liquid is

Indigo appraisal (reconstructed model)

then stamped onto washi paper (*Teitagami*) to look at other aspects such as the strength of color. The result of the *Teitahō* appraisal was used not only to improve production techniques but also as standards to identify exceptional *Ai-Shi* and to decide the market price through the coming year. It is said that indigo wholesalers across Japan, who traded with many different *Ai-Shōnin*, referred to the *Teitahō* results to make business decisions.

The *Sukumo* indigo dye from Awa, produced through such a process, was praised as *Hon-Ai* ("authentic Japanese indigo") in the Edo period due to beauty of the dye job using them. *Kōya* from all over Japan are said to have inquired about the *Sukumo* from the region. An 1848 petition submitted to the Hiroshima Domain by a group of *kōya* from the castle town of Mihara clearly proves the popularity of Awa indigo. Back then, the Hiroshima Domain had banned the use of Awa indigo dye as a part of their economic policy. However, the *kōya* of Mihara, which was a part of Hiroshima Domain's territory, came together to request for permission to use Awa-produced dye. They petitioned that, since the neighboring Fukuyama Domain allowed the use of dye from Awa, customers of Mihara were being stolen by *kōya* of Fukuyama to the detriment of the Hiroshima Domain. The low indigo content of Hiroshima indigo was also a problem

The *Ai-Ōichi* (reconstructed model)

Shōhaiban

since it resulted in a significantly higher dyeing cost. The earnest petition tells us indeed how acclaimed Awa indigo dye was.

The beginning of *Ai-Ōichi* and the growth of the Awa indigo industry

The Awa indigo industry saw a great deal of growth after Hachisuka Shigeyoshi, the 10th lord of the Tokushima Domain, started *Ai-Ōichi* as part of his economic policy during what is called the Reform of Hōreki and Meiwa.

The *Ai-Ōichi*, or the Great Indigo Market, was a week-long event held in the castle town of Tokushima. Wholesalers and brokers from Osaka, Edo, Kyoto, and other locations all around Japan gathered in Tokushima to decide on the best product of the new fiscal year from among the Awa indigo dye which were appraised using the *Teitahō* method. The standard price for the coming year was also decided here. It was a competition and an occasion for business. The winning dyes were divided into three categories: *Zuiichi*, *Junichi*, and *Tenjō*. The *Ai-Shōnin* who won were gifted a *shōhaiban* which equates to a modern trophy. Winning in this contest was the biggest honor for them.

During the *Ai-Ōichi*, decorative lanterns and *nobori* banners were put out around the venue where free sake and snacks were served. The *Ai-Shōnin* never

failed to ask the wholesalers and brokers from Osaka, Edo, and Kyoto to vote for them, and the requests always came with an invite to dinner or a package of sweets. When a business deal was struck, the merchants hosted their clients lavishly in restaurants or their *Ai-Yashiki* mansions. This reception was called *irozuke* ("coloring").

Thus, the town of Tokushima flourished. There were more than 40 high-class restaurants in town at the end of the Edo period.

The decline of the indigo economy and the career changes of the *Ai-Shōnin*

Even in the Meiji period, the demand for indigo dye continued to grow. When Tokushima-shi was born based on the new municipal organization system of 1889, the population of the city counted 60,861, establishing itself as the 10th most populous city in Japan back then. This is a proof of how the city was flourishing with indigo dye production. In 1903, the crop acreage and indigo leaf production marked an all-time high. The acreage amounted to 15,000 *chōbu*; this was more than twice the acreage at the end of the shogunate era (approx. 7,000 *chōbu*) and amounted to nearly 70% of all domestic acreage. Indigo dye production was booming.

However, when the country opened up for international commerce upon the Meiji Restoration, the import of *Indigofera tinctoria* L. started to increase. Moreover, in 1900, affordable synthetic indigo dye (artificial indigo) started coming into Japan. Back then, the *Ai-Shōnin* had already embarked on diversifying their business; examples include setting up banks, soy sauce and *sake* brewing businesses putting the *Nedoko* to new use, silk-reeling, railway business, electric lamp business, and agricultural land development. Following the change in circumstances surrounding import, the merchants quickly shifted to new business focuses. Around the end of the Meiji era, most of the *Ai-Shōnin*

discontinued their indigo business. However, some of the merchants overcame recessions and wartime chaos and continued to grow their business domestically and internationally, growing into companies that influence not only the economy of Tokushima but also that on the national level.

The Kujime family, who built a fortune trading indigo and timber, opened a private bank in 1879. The bank boasted the second largest capital domestically after the Mitsui Bank, and the family always ranked high in the list of the richest people. The bank was run alongside the family's indigo business and was an attempt to modernize the business practices of the *Ai-Shōnin*. The Kujime family were later forced to suspend their banking business due to Japan's first economic crisis, but the bank later became the present-day Awa Bank.

The history of Nishino Kinryo Corp. of Kagawa Prefecture, known for their brand of refined *sake* "Kinryo", goes back to an Awa indigo merchant who launched their business in 1658. They started *sake* brewing as their second business in 1779. In the Taishō period, the company was separated into two branches, one working on *sake* brewing and the other specializing in chemical dye and industrial chemicals.

The Miki family started their business in 1674. In 1904, they became the first in the industry to acquire the rights to sell artificial indigo in the Kantō region. After briefly directing a joint venture that was set up out of concern towards the disarray in the industry, the family worked on selling dyes and industrial chemicals. They later set up a stock corporation in 1918. The company then experienced some stagnation, but their business results recovered after the war. They focused their efforts into overseas operations, establishing themselves as a trading company with 300+ years of history that specializes in chemical goods.

Today, the *Ai-Shōnin* of the olden days are no more. Nevertheless, the enterprising spirit of the *Ai-Shōnin* are inherited by the people of Tokushima Prefecture.

Column: Agriculture, manufacturing, and distribution: *Ai-Shōnin* and the modern "senary sector of industry*"

The business practices of *Ai-Shōnin* were diverse; while some specialized in selling the indigo dye they purchased, others took on the entire process of cultivating indigo plants (agriculture), producing the indigo dye (manufacturing), market development and sales (distribution and service). Managing agriculture (the primary sector) and manufacturing (the secondary sector) as well as distribution and service (the tertiary sector) altogether equates to what is called "senary sector of industry" in modern Japan. Since indigo plant cultivation and indigo dye production took place in the middle and lower basins of the Yoshino River, the river also functioned as a transportation route to ship out the products. With regional resources and geographical advantages utilized to the fullest, streamlined and cutting-edge management and sales strategies were formed in the area.

Column: The protection and succession of indigo by the *Ai-Shi* of Awa

While indigo cultivation was banned during World War II, a small number of *Ai-Shi* secretly grew indigo plants to pass down indigo dye production techniques. In 1966, the indigo acreage decreased to a mere four *chōbu*, and people realized the need to protect and promote the industry. In 1967, Tokushima Prefectural Awa Indigo Production and Conservation Society was established to study indigo cultivation, processing, and new usages. As a result, the indigo acreage quadrupled within a year and quintupled by 1985. PR efforts and study sessions also took place thanks to groups like research societies and technical preservation societies. Thus, indigo dye production in Awa rose from its ashes. Today, there is a heightened interest in passing on the genuine work by *Ai-Shi* and dyers to posterity.

Senary sector of industry

A business form encouraged in Japan since the announcement of the Senary Industrialization and Local Production for Local Consumption Law in 2010. The aim is for businesses to handle the entire process of agricultural/forestry/fishery production (the primary sector of industry), manufacturing the produce into food items (the secondary sector), and distribution and sales of the products (the tertiary sector). The word "senary", or 6^{th}, comes from adding the numbers associated with the primary, secondary, and tertiary sectors.

The Tanaka Family Residence

The view of the yard from the front gate

Chapter 5: The Cultural Assets Constituting Our Japan Heritage

In relation to our story Awa – The Home of "*Ai*": Searching for the Supreme Blue of Japanese indigo joint-submitted by nine cities and towns located in the Yoshino River basin of Tokushima Prefecture (Tokushima-shi, Yoshinogawa-shi, Awa-shi, Mima-shi, Ishii-chō, Kitajima-chō, Aizumi-chō, Itano-chō, and Kamiita-chō), 32 cultural assets that constitute the story were recognized as Japan Heritage.

1. The Tanaka Family Residence

[Nationally Designated Important Cultural Asset. Designated on 3rd February 1976]

The Tanakas are a family of *Ai-Shi* and *Ai-Shōnin* who produced and sold indigo dye for generations. The history of the family started when Harimaya Yoemon settled in Awa around 1624-1645 during the early Edo period.

The Tanaka Family Residence was built over nearly 30 years from 1854 (late Edo period) to 1887 (Meiji period). The estates of *Ai-Shi* and *Ai-Shōnin* are called *Ai-Yashiki* ("indigo estates"). The Tanaka estate is structured in a style

The Takechi Family Residence

The main building and the garden

called *Shiro-Gamae* that is unique to *Ai-Yashiki*; in the estate grounds with a width of 50m from north to south and 40m from east to west, *Ao-Ishi* (greenschist) and *Muya-Ishi* (sandstone) from Tokushima are piled high, and the main building is built in the ctnter surrounded by *Nedoko* and warehouses. Upon entering the front gate, you will find yourself in a big yard which is indispensable in indigo production. You will also see the *Nedoko* which comes with *Obuta* (a spacious annex). The whole view might indeed look like an indigo production factory. The estate also comes with many measures against floods including a stone wall that towers towards the northwest, a thatched roof that floats, a boat hanged from the roof of the *obuta*. It is a breathtaking *Ai-Yashiki* optimized for the location that is the indigo country of Awa.

2. The Takechi Family Residence

[Nationally Designated Important Cultural Asset. Designated on 25th December 2018]

The Takechi family started its indigo business in 1726 (mid-Edo period) when Motobē, a local peasant, established a branch family and renamed himself Temmaya Motobē. The family has produced and sold indigo dye as *Ai-Shi* and

Ai-Shōnin until today. Their residence was built over about 25 years between 1851 and 1876.

Like the Tanaka estate, the Takechi estate is structured in a style unique to *Ai-Yashiki*; high stone walls enclose the estate grounds which is 80m wide from north to south and 70m wide from east to west, and the main building at the center is surrounded by other buildings. The main building is especially known for its majestic appearance which shows the wealth of the *Ai-Shōnin* back then. The estate is also home to historical documents about the indigo business which formed the economical basis for building and maintaining this *Ai-Yashiki*. These documents are also a part fo the cultural assets that constitute our Japan Heritage. The estate is also a rare example where traditional *Sukumo* production takes place even today with the workplaces, tools, and methods of the golden age of *Awa-Ai* integrally passed down. The Takechi Family Residence is a highly important cultural asset not only because of its value as a building but also because of its multi-faceted historical significance including the historical documents and the *Sukumo* production practice.

3. The Okumura Family Residence

[Tokushima Prefecture Designated Tangible Cultural Asset (Building). Designated on 3rd April 1987]

The Okumura family grew its business since the Bunka years (1804-1818) under the trade name "*Yamaka*" and "*Aiya*." In addition to selling *Ai-Dama* (Japanese indigo cakes) in Osaka, they continued to expand their market by acquiring *Chikuzen-uri** rights around the end of the shogunate era and later opening a branch in Fukagawa, Tokyo in 1873.

The Okumura Family Residence is a representative example of *Ai-Yashiki* which are the magnificent estates of *Ai-Shi* and *Ai-Shōnin*. Its construction

Chikuzen-uri
Refers to selling merchandise in the Chikuzen area (present-day northwest Fukuoka).

The Okumura Family Residence

begun around the Bunka years (1804-1818), which is when the family's indigo business picked up, and was completed in 1887. The south-facing main building is located on the northern side of the wide estate grounds and is surrounded by 13 buildings on the south, east, and west sides. The surrounding buildings include *Nedoko* which are the manufacturing spaces for indigo dye, an extravagant parlor on the west side, and a room for employees which is quite rare even in the whole prefecture. The 19.8m-wide and 9.9m-long main building is a two-story structure with a hip-and-gable roof that comes with *honkawara-buki*-style tiling. According to the *munafuda** sign left on the building, it was originally built in 1808 and the second floor was added in 1827. The three *Nedoko* are buildings unique to *Ai-Yashiki*, and various measures are put in place to facilitate the *Nesekomi* (fermenting) process.

Ai-Yashiki with buildings preserved nearly in their entirety are rare, and thus, the Okumura Family Residence is an important asset that tells us about the indigo-producing culture.

Munafuda

A wooden sign hanged on higher spots (such as ridgepoles or beams) inside temples or residential buildings to keep records of construction and repair projects.

The Wariishi Family Residence

4. The Wariishi Family Residence

The Wariishi family has a long history which goes back to the Empō years (1673-1681). After establishing themselves as a branch family during this era, the Wariishis practiced agriculture in the southern foot of the Sanuki Mountains until the fourth family head, Wauemon, decided to move to their current location that is the north bank of the Yoshino River. The family's trade name "*Bōshiya* (Hatter)" comes from the cotton headwear business they started. In the Kansei years (1789-1801), the fifth head, Takichi, started manufacturing and selling gaiters. The family also started a sake brewing business during the Bunka years (1804-1818).

The Wariishi Family Residence, reconstructed between 1888 and 1898, is a typical modern-Japanese architecture which, while preserving the tradition of upper-class residential buildings from the Edo period, adopts complex floor-plans and decorative features in addition to making excellent use of newer design techniques. The main building is located slightly off the center of the grounds. Situated on its south side is a *nagayamon* gate constituting of a barn, a room for servants, and the main entrance. On the north edge of the grounds, there is an east-west oriented *inuikura* warehouse and some rooms. The west

The Fujita Family Residence

edge is home to a north-south oriented *nishikura* warehouse and *Nedoko* used for *Sukumo* production.

5. The Fujita Family Residence
[Nationally Registered Tangible Cultural Asset. Registered on 29th November 2016]

The Fujita Family Residence is located on the alluvial plain of the Yoshino River estuary. The estate grounds feature a main building in the center with a garden to its south, a stowage-cum- annex to its north, a warehouse to its west, another stowage to its east, and a nagayamon to its southwest. The buildings were constructed between the mid-1890s and the early Showa era. The two-story main building has a gable roof with *honkawarabuki* tiling, and the second floor comes with a large storeroom which allows residents to swap door- and window-fittings as the seasons change. The warehouses are well prepared against floods with floors raised by high-piled foundation stones and the outer walls plastered up to the eaves.

Surrounded by the old Yoshino River and Imagire River, Kitajima-chō has been blessed with plentiful water and fertile soil and used to be a great indigo

The *Ai-Yashiki* of Suwa, Yamakawa-chō

cropping area. With the rivers being highly navigable, large-scale factories were invited to set up plant during the Showa era. As a result, the town has flourished as an industrial area. Now that the town is establishing itself as a residential area too, houses with traditional features unique to the area are becoming rare. The Fujita Family Residence is praised as "a great example of a modern farmhouse in our area which hands down the rural townscape to today's generation."

6. The *Ai-Yashiki* of Suwa, Yamakawa-chō

The Oe District (present-day Yoshinogawa-shi) used to be a significant indigo cropping area between the Edo and Meiji periods, during which the crop yield per one *tan* (991.7m^2) ranked at the top level within the prefecture. An estate of a wealthy farmer remains at a location near the Yoshinogawa River in Yamakawa-chō, Yoshinogawa-shi. This is an *Ai-Yashiki* built in the Meiji era when the production of *Awa-Ai* hit an all-time high. The main building at the center is surrounded by adjunct facilities including *Nedoko* used for indigo dye production plus a gate at the south of the estate grounds. To protect the estate from floods, an elongated *Nedoko* is situated on the west side, and the floors of the buildings on the estate grounds are raised by approximately one meter.

The Kudō Family Residence

The *Nedoko* of this *Ai-Yashiki* measures 15 *ken** (approx. 30m) long, making it one of the largest in the prefecture. The two-story *Nedoko* uses thick timber for pillars and beams, enabling a sturdy structure that can take a significant amount of weight. From the spectacle of the grand estate, we can see the success of the *Ai-Shi* and *Ai-Shōnin* who built the foundation of Awa's prosperity.

7. The indigo-related cultural assets centered around the Kudō Family Residence
[The Kudō Family Residence, Nishioe station, Nishioe Hachiman Shrine]

・The *Ryōbu-Torii* gate of Nishioe Hachiman Shrine
[Yoshinogawa-shi Designated Tangible Cultural Asset (Building). Designated on 15th July 1982]

・The arched bridge of Nishioe Hachiman Shrine
[Yoshinogawa-shi Designated Tangible Cultural Asset (Building). Designated on 15th July 1982]

・The *Komainu* of Nishioe Hachiman Shrine
[Yoshinogawa-shi Designated Tangible Cultural Asset (Craftwork). Designated on 1st December 1981]

Ken

A unit for measuring length in the Japanese traditional *shakkanhō* measurement system. According to the 1891 Meteorological Standard Law, six shaku makes one ken, and one ken approximately amounts to 1.82m.

Nishioe Hachiman Shrine

The Kudō family of the Nishioe area established themselves as *Ai-Shi* and *Ai-Shōnin*. The elegant atmosphere of the *Ai-Yashiki* is a testament to the prosperity of the olden days. In 1903, Kudō Torakichi who sent his *Ai-Dama* to the 5th National Industrial Exhibitions won the first prize and was awarded with a gold cup. The Nishioe station situated near the Kudō Family Residence was built thanks to Kudō Gensuke and Torakichi footing most of the expense. The *tamagaki* fence surrounding the inner sanctuary of Nishioe Hachiman Shrine is engraved with the names of *Ai-Shōnin* such as Kudō Gensuke, Kudō Torakichi, Kudō Wakita, and Oe Shōtaro as well as Kondō Renpei who was the president of Nippon Yusen. Moreover, the Bizen ware *komainu* statues, the arched bridge, and the *Ryōbu Torii* gate of Nishioe Hachiman Shrine (all designated as Tangible Cultural Assets of Yoshinogawa-shi) were all donated by powerful *Ai-Shōnin* of the area. The stone monuments commemorating donations and sacred lanterns are also engraved with the names of local *Ai-Shōnin*. These are all proofs of how *Ai-Shi* and *Ai-Shōnin*, including the Kudō family, have greatly contributed to the development of the region.

Randen Kansui no Zu

8. Color-on-silk agricultural painting "*Randen Kansui no Zu*"
[Awa-shi Designated Tangible Cultural Asset. Designated on 19th January 1999]

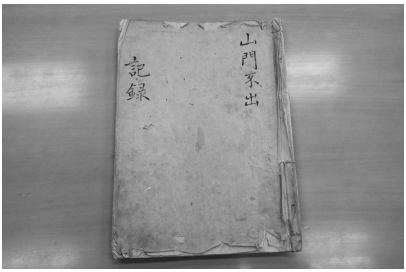
Randen Kansui no Zu was painted by Ōhara Donshū in 1843. Depicting youngsters watering an indigo field with a shadoof and estates with a number of *Nedoko* lined up on stone walls, the picture indicates what the area looked like during the golden age of *Awa-Ai*.

The picture comes with a *san** (caption) by Gyokkan, the chief priest of Kōgenji Temple. According to him, the picture was painted to tell future generations of the hardship that the Ōiso family of the Kakuen village (present-day Ishii-chō) went through in their inception. When the elder of the Ōiso family was young, he worked for other indigo farmers to help his poor family. Therefore, presumably, one of the young men depicted in the picture is the elder himself. He later accumulated enough wealth to build the Ōiso family and their estate with the many white-plastered *Nedoko*.

It is likely that indigo cultivation as Awa's main industry was draped in secrets, since there are very few documents that describe the actual process of growing indigo plants as crop. Considering this, this picture which tells us of indigo cultivation back then is a significant historical source.

San
Eulogy added to a work of art, mostly by an appreciator, and considered a part of the original work as a calligraphic or literary work.

Ainōkōsaku no Fūkei Ryakuzu



Kenshō-ji Temple Documents

9. *Ainōkōsaku no Fūkei Ryakuzu*

Ainōkōsaku no Fūkei Ryakuzu is a picture scroll about *Awa-Ai* cultivation and production drawn in 1943 by Sakase Senshū, a painter of Kamojima-chō, Oe District. On 38cm-wide and 511cm-long washi paper, Senshū depicted the entire process of seeding, indigo leaf harvest, "*Ai-Konashi*" (chopping and drying leaves), *Nesekomi* (fermenting), and indigo pounding. Each process flow comes with a legend (description) by the painter. The scroll is a rare source of information where scenes from traditional indigo production are depicted with a lively, light, and witty tone.

10. Kenshō-ji Temple Documents

[Aizumi-chō Designated Tangible Cultural Asset. Designated on 10th January 1988]

The Kenshō-ji Temple Documents are a cluster of documents owned by Ryūon-zan Kenshō-ji in Aizumi-chō. One of the documents titled *Kenshō-ji Kiroku* contains a sentence that says "Zuikei Sōzu planted dye leaves from China." It is assumed that "dye leaves" refer to indigo plants.

Shōzui Castle remains and *Shugo-machi* Shōzui ruins

Zuikei is a monk who established Hōju-ji Temple in present-day Iwakura, Mima-shi in 1247. Later during the Eishō years (1504-1521), Hōju-ji was moved to Shōzui (present-day Aizumi-cho) by samurai Miyoshi Motonaga as a place for Miyoshi Yukinaga's grave and was renamed Kenshō-ji after Yukinaga's Buddhist name.

11. Shōzui Castle remains and *Shugo-Machi* Shōzui ruins

・Shōzui Castle remains

[Nationally designated historical site. Designated on 29th January 2001]

Shōzui, Aizumi-cho, which used to be the stronghold of the Hosokawa family as Awa's Shugo Daimyo as well as the Awa Miyoshi family, flourished as the center of Medieval Awa's politics, economy, and culture.

In *Miyoshiki*, a war chronicle written in the Edo period, it is documented that a dyer called Shirobē became rich by successfully importing indigo dying techniques from the Kamigata area to Awa. However, there is proof that indigo dyeing techniques had already existed in Awa by the time of Shirobē. Therefore, it can be assumed that the "techniques" brought from Kamigata at this point were for producing *Sukumo* indigo dye.

Tokushima Castle remains and Tokushima castle town remains

Additionally, Niki Yoshiharu, a former vassal of the Hosokawa family, was appointed Head of the Kōya Office upon the Hachisuka family's takeover of Awa. These historical records all show the strong relationship between indigo and Shōzui as the center of Medieval Awa.

Excavation efforts have been taking place in Shōzui since 1994, and its relics and artifacts remind us of Awa's most glorious days under the Awa Hosokawa and Miyoshi families. Accordingly, the Shōzui Castle remains are an important site in the history of Medieval Awa.

12. Tokushima Castle remains and Tokushima castle town remains
[Nationally Designated Historical Site. Designated on 26th January 2006]

The Tokushima Castle was built in 1585 by Hachisuka Iemasa who became the lord of Awa Province and remained Tokushima Domain's political base throughout the feudal era. The castle town of Tokushima flourished thanks to the *Awa-Ai* economy, and when the new municipal organization system was put into effect in 1889, the town's population ranked 10th in Japan.

Indigo, which was protected and promoted by the Tokushima domain, was gathered to the castle town of Tokushima, and the wharf of the castle town

Statue of Inubushi Kyūsuke

became the foothold for *Ai-Shōnin* merchants. The Shinmachigawa River functioned as the main artery of water transportation around Tokushima Castle. The river's wharf used to be a huge indigo business area with indigo wholesale stores, indigo and fertilizer warehouses, and the Great Indigo Market. The wharf today is home to Awa Bank's main building. Awa Bank's predecessor is the Kujime Bank established by the Kujime family, famous indigo merchants of Awa. The current main building of the Awa bank is a modern architecture inspired by sailboats going up and down the Shinmachigawa River, reminiscent of the prosperity of the olden days. Also, to wish for safe maritime trades to the Kotohira Shrine of Seimi, merchants who used to ship *Ai-Dama* to Osaka donated a large stone lantern. The lantern is nicknamed the "brother" of another stone lantern in Osaka Sumiyoshi-Taisha Shrine. This is yet another relic that quietly speaks of the dynamic nature of the *Ai-Shōnin*.

13. *Aizen-An and the Statue of Inubushi Kyūsuke*

・Statue of Inubushi Kyūsuke

[Itano-chō Designated Tangible Cultural Asset. Designated on 1st February 1974]

In the Aizen-An monastery of Matsudani, Itano-chō, there is a wooden statue of Inubushi Kyūsuke who was a key figure to the development of the indigo industry in Awa. Born to an indigo farming family in Itano-chō, Inubushi Kyūsuke worked on indigo cultivation and dye production and was nicknamed "Aikyū-san." Seeing that indigo dye production methods were highly varied, Kyūsuke worked on improving those methods and succeeded in 1781. This in turn resulted in the improvement of quality, and indigo dye from Awa became known throughout Japan as *Hon-Ai* ("authentic Japanese indigo"). Instead of keeping the methods to himself, Kyūsuke trained disciples, educated peers, and worked hard to spread the new techniques, contributing greatly to the development of indigo production in Awa.

The name of *Aizen-An* monastery is now written using the kanji "藍 (indigo)", but originally, the kanji "愛 (love)" was used instead after the deity Rāgarāja (Aizen-Myōō). People working in the indigo industry worshipped Rāgarāja, believing that offering the deity indigo leaves will grant them fine indigo dye. Later, Kyūsuke's disciples set up their mentor's statue to commemorate his work. At some point, people started worshipping Kyūsuke himself as a guardian deity of indigo, calling the monastery "*Aizen-An*" as in "indigo-dyeing monastery." The indigo merchants who accumulated great wealth thanks to the improvement of indigo dyes gathered to Aizen-An from all around to pray, give thanks, and repay for protection.

14. The Okumura Family Documents

[Aizumi-chō Designated Tangible Cultural Asset. Designated on 10th January 1988]

The history of the Okumura family goes back to the Meireki years (1655-1658) with Keikōin Chiryū-Koji being the founder. The sixth head of the family,

The Okumura Family Documents

Kadoya Nikki

Kazō, went into the indigo sales business during the Bunka years (1804~1818) and acquired *Ōsaka-uri** rights. This allowed the Okumuras to grow into a great family of indigo merchants.

The Okumura Family Documents are a set of documents that were donated by the family to the town. It is a massive collection involving approximately 130,000 historical records. Various complete sets of records documenting the family's business operations are included, ranging from their *Ai-Shi* and *Ai-Shōnin* business to the fertilizer, *sake* brewing, and land-leasing businesses they started between 1877-1887. It is also noteworthy that there are a significant number of records on the locality and the feudal government since the Okumuras became *guntsuki-rōnin* (i.e., de facto samurais) and took on the role of land tax collectors. Further including records on politics and education as well as 30,000+ letters, it is an extremely rich collection like no other.

15. The Motoki Family Document: *Kadoya Nikki*
[Ishii-chō Designated Tangible Cultural Asset. Designated on 13th April 2004]

The Motoki family, based in Takahara-son village, was a powerful *Ai-Shōnin* family that had already expanded into the city of Edo during the Kyōhō years

Ōsaka-uri
Refers to selling merchandise in Osaka.

The Takechi Family Documents

(1716~1736) which equates to the mid-Edo period. The family rises to greater power around the late-Edo period, having been appointed to the samurai class as *kodakatori* in 1829. The Motoki Family Document, also known as *Kadoya Nikki*, is a three-volume personal diary which used to be the possession of the family. The memoir was written from 1808 to 1872 by the fifth head Motoki Usaburō and his successor Motoki Rinbē. Penned by apparently ready writers, *Kadoya Nikki* describes various topics from their daily lives from business memoranda, culture and arts, and social landscapes in shrewd style. The diary is an extremely significant historical material for learning what the folk culture was like around the end of the shogunate.

16. The Takechi Family Documents

The Takechi family, based in Tenjin-mura village, produces and sells indigo dye as *Ai-Shi* and *Ai-Shōnin* ever since their founder, Tenmaya Motobē, started his own branch family in 1726 (mid-Edo period). In 1838 (late Edo period), the family rose to the samurai class as *kodakatori* while working on diversifying their business, expanding their indigo sales to the provinces of Sanuki, Bizen, Bicchū, Bingo, and Iyo. The Takechi family owns several tens of thousands

The Hayashi Family Documents

of archival documents spanning from the late Edo period to the early Showa era. While the majority of the documents are account books on the family's businesses including indigo sales, it also includes records on domain and village politics as well as land-books. The documents are extremely significant in learning about the early-modern and modern history of the indigo industry through the actual practices of indigo production and sales back then.

17. The Hayashi Family Documents

The Hayashis are a wealthy farmer-cum-landlord family of Ishii-mura that held important posts such as *mandokoro*, *shōya*, *kumigashira-shōya*, *dairichō*, and *kuchō* between the early feudal era and the Meiji era. As *Ai-Shōnin*, the family joined the *Kantō-uri* Ai-nakama* association in 1812. The collection of documents stored by the Hayashi family include indigo- and village politics-related records. An example of the latter is *Myōzai-Gun Bungen-Gunzu* which is a Tangible Cultural Asset designated by the town of Ishii-chō. *Myōzai-Gun Bungen-Gunzu* is a map created in June 1812 which depicts the entirety of Myōzai commandry including Ishii-chō. With accuracy that bares comparison with modern counterparts, the map is a valuable source of information.

Kantō-uri
Refers to selling merchandise in Kanto.

The Tezuka Family Documents

Other unique features include documents from the "Yatsugamura lawsuit" related to flood control projects of the Yoshino River. The lawsuit was filed by Hayashi Motoshige who was one of the regional leaders from the around the end of the shogunate to the Meiji era. As such, the Hayashi Family Documents include significant records regarding river improvements and industry in modern Tokushima.

18. The Tezuka Family Documents

The Tezuka family flourished as a large landowner of Kakihara-mura, Awa Commandry, as well as a major indigo merchant whose business spanned to Kagoshima and Miyazaki. Heizaburō (previously known as Chūzaburō), who became the second family head in 1905, is known not only as a businessperson but also as a philanthropist* who was later awarded the Medal with Purple Ribbon from the state. His known contributions include donating land for the newly opened Prefectural Awa Junior High School (present-day Awa High School).

The Tezuka Family Documents are business records from the Meiji 30s (1897-1907) to the Taishō era. The records show the wide sales practices of Tezuka Kagoshima and Miyazaki branches during the late Meiji era as well as

Philanthropist
A passionate practitioner and/or supporter of social service and charities.

The Indigo-related documents owned by Kitajima-chō

how the family embarked on dyeing businesses and sales of medicine sourced in Osaka.

While Awa indigo dominated the market during and after the Edo period, there aren't many documents that tell us of the actual business practices of *Ai-Shōnin* during this era, and the Kyūshū market is virtually untouched in past studies. In this respect, the Tezuka Family Documents are extremely valuable as historical materials.

19. The Indigo-related documents owned by Kitajima-chō

These are old archival documents on indigo cultivation, dye production, sales, purchase, and distribution between the mid-Edo period and modern times, mostly donated by Mr. Yasuhira Miki, a local historian of Kitajima-chō. The collection includes not only documents on the Shinoharas which is Kitajima-chō's local *Ai-Shi* family but also on other various areas around the country.

Kitajima-chō is a town in the downstream basin of the Yoshino River, sandwiched between the old Yoshino River and the Imagire River, and was prone to flooding before modern times. However, the flooding granted the town fertile soil which is indispensable in indigo cultivation. Moreover, the town's

The Takahashi Family Documents

closeness to rivers turned out to be greatly beneficial when shipping goods, allowing the town to prosper. The documents, which show how the *Ai-Shōnin* of Kitajima-chō worked all around Japan, are kept and displayed at the Kitajima-chō Town Library and Sōsei Hall.

20. The Takahashi Family Documents

The Takahashi family, based in Takahara-son village, used to be a mid-scale farmer. However, after shifting their focus to indigo farming, they flourished as an *Ai-Shōnin* family active in the Hokuriku market. The family simultaneously worked on accumulating land and grew into the biggest indigo merchant-cum-landlord in Takahara-son by the late Edo period. The Takahashi family owns about 700 old archival documents, starting with records on Awa indigo production and sales between the late Edo and Meiji periods. The collection further includes business documents of the family, such as those on land leasing and tenant farming, which indicate how the Takahashis accumulated land as a landlord, in addition to documents regarding loaning and finance. These are all significant materials for studying the ways of a typical wealthy farmer and landlord who, while placing indigo sales at the core, diversified their


Sukumo production

business focuses by leasing land to tenant farmers and delving into financial services such as loaning.

21. Awa Indigo Production

[National Selective Conservation Technique. Selected on 9th May 1978]

Indigo, which has been widely adopted as dye since ancient times, is used in many historical textiles. This makes indigo indispensable for restoring such works as well as keeping traditional dyeing techniques alive. Therefore, the advanced processing techniques of *Awa-Ai*, which was touted as *Hon-Ai* ("authentic Japanese indigo") in the late Edo period, was recognized as one of Japan's National Selective Conservation Techniques in 1978. Awa Indigo Production Technique Preservation *Hozonkai*, whose members constitute of *Ai-Shi* within Tokushima Prefecture who has kept the tradition alive, is in charge of conserving the techniques.

Today, high-quality *Sukumo* (indigo dye) is hard to come by, and it is nearly impossible to obtain indigo dye from outside Awa. Nevertheless, the *Hozonkai* members are working hard to preserve the *Sukumo* production techniques, hand down the traditional methods, and train the next generation of *Ai-Shi*.

Some tools used for *Awa-Ai* cultivation and processing

Tools for collecting insects

22. Tools used for *Awa-Ai* cultivation and processing
[Nationally Designated Important Tangible Folk-Cultural Property. Designated on 22nd April 1955]

Indigo is a representative cash crop of Tokushima and used to play a significant role in the prefecture's industrial economy. While Awa's Minamikata area was famous for rice cultivation, the Yoshino River basin in the Kitakata area was known for its extensive indigo farming. Indigo was the defining feature of Kitakata's local characteristic. Indigo cultivation starts in early March when seeds are sown to the nursery bed. When the spring wind blows, the seedlings are replanted to the main field. After earthing up the roots, fertilization, and watering, the leaves are harvested during the midsummer period. The harvested leaves are minced and dried (*Ai-Konashi*), and the dried leaves are packed into a straw bag and stored in the *Nedoko* building. In September, the leaves are taken out of the bag, piled up in the *Nedoko*, watered, and left to ferment. A process called *Kirikaeshi* is repeated for approximately a hundred days. The resulting *Sukumo* dye is appraised and distributed nationally. A set of tools used for the indigo cultivation and sukumo production processes is archived and displayed in "*Ai-no-Yakata*" Aizumi Town History Museum. These tools from back when

Awa-Odori

everything was done manually is a testament to the struggles, wisdom, and ingenuity of the people back then.

23. *Awa-Odori*

Awa-Odori, a dance to comfort ancestral spirits during Bon (Festival of the Dead), is said to have its roots in a type of *Bon-Odori* dance enjoyed in and around the castle town of Tokushima during the beginning of the early modern era. In the mid-Edo period, people practiced *Kumi-Odori* which was derived from *Fūryū-Odori* that was popular in the Kyoto/Osaka area around the end of the early modern times. Every town around the Tokushima castle prepared elaborate stage performances, dances, and gorgeous costumes. By the end of the Edo period, the practice shifts to *Zomeki-Odori* where everyone dances freely to the exhilarating rhythm of *Zomeki**.

The popularization of cotton during the Edo period revolutionized fashion and boosted demands for Awa indigo to the extreme. The *Ai-Shōnin* merchants bustled about the country to distribute *Ai-Dama* dyes. While forming markets in various locations such as Osaka, the merchants also became active mediators of entertainment around the country. Additionally, *Ai-Ōichi* ("the Great Indigo

Zomeki
Originally meaning "*noisy*", zomeki is a name for flamboyant and lively dances.

Performing the “Pilgrim Song” scene from *Keisei Awa no Naruto*

Market”) took place in the castle town, and customers from all around the country flocked to purchase high-quality *Ai-Dama*. In the geisha district where those customers were hosted, performing arts from around the country were widely appreciated, and *Awa-Odori* was formed as Awa’s own style of entertainment.

24. *Awa-Ningyō-Jōruri*

[Nationally Designated Important Intangible Folk-Cultural Property. Designated on 21st December 1999]

Awa-Ningyō-Jōruri is a type of stage performance where three elements come together: *gidayū-bushi jōruri* song which tells the storyline and dubs the character’s lines, *shamisen* music which accompanies the storytelling, and *ningyō* puppets that are worked along with the story. The three elements have unique histories of independent development until the Bunroku and Keichō years (1592-1615) when they merged to form the art of *Ningyō-Jōruri*.

After distinguishing themselves in the Siege of Osaka, the Tokushima Domain was awarded the land of Awaji. The domain created a new social rank called *Dōkunbōmawashi-Hyakushō* (“puppeteer peasants”) exclusively for the peasants of Awaji and allowed them to travel around Japan for puppet theater


Awa-Deko Sanbasō-Mawashi

performances. In 1693, Uemura Gennojō-Za, a puppet theater company with the longest history in Awaji, put up a 25-meter-long makeshift playhouse at "*Higashi-Tomida Sōjōsho*" in the castle town of Tokushima to perform with authorization from the Domain. In the castle town of Tokushima as well as the wealthy indigo-farming area of the Yoshino River basin, puppet companies from Awaji performed frequently in similar makeshift theaters. Thus, *Awa-Ningyō-Jōruri* became a part of the indigo farmland's landscape as entertainment for the commoners.

25. *Awa-Deko Sanbasō-Mawashi*

[Tokushima Prefecture Designated Intangible Folk-Cultural Property. Designated on 12th February 2015]

Awa-Deko Sanbasō-Mawashi is a type of puppet theater performed at the doors of residential houses. Four *Deko* puppets – namely *Senzai*, *Okina*, *Sanbasō*, and *Ebisu* – are put in two wooden boxes, and a puppeteer and a drummer carry them around as a pair to perform. A traditional puppet theater where Ebisu is added to the *Shiki-Sanbasō* trio is exclusive to this area. From the beginning of the early modern period, people living in the middle basin of the Yoshino River

Mainakashima District

actively cultivated cash crops such as indigo leaves and *Sukumo* dye, tobacco leaves, and sugar. The monetized economy of the area then gave birth to unique types of performing arts.

Between the Edo and Meiji periods, the most notable industry in Tokushima had been indigo dye production and sales. In *Ai-Yashiki* estates, *Sanbasō* was performed to wish for high-quality *Sukumo*. The dance of *Sanbasō* was performed in special parlors where only VIPs of the domain and important clients were invited in, and *Ebisu* gave advance blessings in the accounting office. Since the quality of *Sukumo* dyes greatly influenced an *Ai-Shōnin's* income, having a great indigo leaf harvest and producing high-quality *Sukumo* were the biggest interests of *Ai-Shōnin*. Therefore, *Sanbasō* devotions at the altar where the family worships the god of indigo dyeing as well as the *Nedoko* buildings where *Sukumo* is made were taken extremely seriously.

26. Mainakashima District

Mainakashima of Anabuki-chō, Mima-shi is a river island sandwiched between the Yoshino River (one of Japan's three "raging rivers") and its tributary, Myōren River. The island is situated across the river from Wakimachi-Minamimachi

Preservation District for Groups of Historic Buildings of Mima-shi (also known as "The Historic *Udatsu* Area"). The unique location of Mainakashima as a river island has made it prone to flooding. At the same time, people were able to fully utilize the fertile soil brought about by the flooding of the Yoshino. This, in addition to the convenient water transport over the Yoshino, made Mainakashima a significant area for indigo production between the Edo and Meiji periods. People delivered indigo leaves and medicine to other areas including "The Historic *Udatsu* Area" on the opposite bank.

After indigo farming saw a decline, the indigo fields were repurposed as mulberry fields for sericulture and were further turned into rice paddies following the completion of irrigation canals. In present-day Mainakashima, you can still find estates in slightly elevated areas with high stone walls as anti-flooding measures. Main buildings, *Nedoko*, and traditional warehouses are available for tours. The island is also surrounded by simple embankment and trees for flood control.

27. The landscape connecting indigo farmland and its distribution hub

This refers to the landscape between Mainakashima of Anabuki-chō, Mima-shi which was famous for indigo production and Wakimachi-Minamimachi Preservation District for Groups of Historic Buildings of Mima-shi which was a distribution hub for indigo. The riverbank used to be home to Mainakashima Ferry which helped the people from both sides of the river go back and forth. *Hiratabune* boats travelled across the river carrying indigo leaves, *Sukumo* dye, and daily supplies.

In 1961, a low-water crossing was constructed, which is still used daily by the local community. When the river swells with storms or typhoons, the low-water crossing gets submerged under the turbid waters, hinting us at the power of the

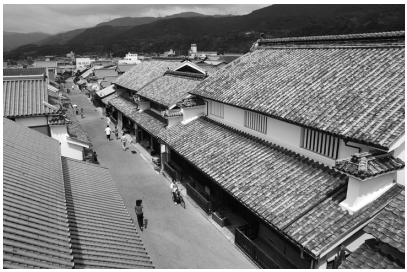
The low-water crossing of Yoshino River

Yoshino as one of the "raging rivers" of Japan. When the weather is calm, we can enjoy a beautiful view of the Yoshino with the Shikoku Mountains in the background, allowing us to reminisce of the days when indigo brought prosperity to this land.

28. Wakimachi-Minamimachi Preservation District for Groups of Historic Buildings of Mima-shi

[Nationally Designated Preservation District for Groups of Important Historic Buildings. Designated on 16th December 1988]

Wakimachi-Minamimachi Preservation District for Groups of Historic Buildings of Mima-shi, also known as the "The Historic *Udatsu* Area", is a merchant town which flourished with distribution of indigo dye. This area was a transportation hub where the Muya Highway extending from east to west on the north bank of the Yoshino River crosses another highway running towards Sanuki. Thanks to the Yoshino located on the south of the town, people were also able to utilize water transportation by building a river port. Moreover, on the other side across the Yoshino, there was Mainakashima island which used to be a major indigo production area. This allowed the town to flourish as a hub for distributing products such as indigo.




"The Historic *Udatsu* Area"

The indigo merchants built luxurious mansions with *Honkawarabuki* tiling, plastered walls, *mushikomado* windows, lattices, and *Udatsu* with dignified and magnificent decoration. *Udatsu* refers to fire barriers installed on the edges of the second floors of buildings. Since it cost a significant amount of money to install these barriers, this gave birth to the Japanese idiom "*Udatsu ga agaranai*" ("there's no sign of *Udatsu*") which describe someone who is struggling to succeed in life. Even today, people continue to lovingly maintain this townscape that once flourished with the indigo industry.

29. The Yoshida Family Residence
[Mima-shi Designated Tangible Cultural Property (Building). Designated on 2nd April 1999]

The Yoshida Family Residence is an *Ai-Shōnin* mansion in Wakimachi-Minamimachi Preservation District for Groups of Historic Buildings of Mima-shi or "The Historic *Udatsu* Area." The Yoshidas, known by their trade name "*Sanao*", was a family of great wealth that worked on distributing indigo via the waters of the Yoshino River. From the main building facing the Minamimachi Street towards the Yoshino River, there is a row of buildings including two

The Yoshida Family Residence

Shamisen mochitsuki

mortar-walled storehouses, an indigo warehouse, and an annex. To the south of the back gate next to the annex, there remains a port in complete form. All in all, the mansion indicates what a typical *Ai-Shōnin* house in "The Historic *Udatsu* Area" looked like during the area's golden age. Today, the mansion is open to the public as Designated Tangible Cultural Property of Mima-shi. The main building is used as a venue for various events, and the indigo warehouse houses a souvenir shop and a café.

30. *Shamisen mochitsuki*

[Mima-shi Designated Intangible Folk-Cultural Property. Designated on 28th December 1972]

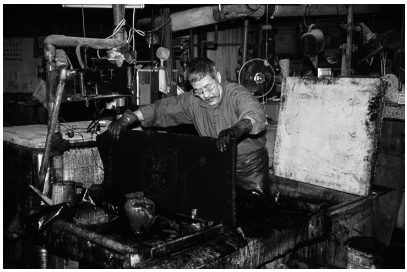
This practice started amongst wealthy merchants including *Ai-Shōnin* who came up with various ideas to liven up the end of the year through an extravagant *mochitsuki* (*mochi* rice cake pounding) event. While preparing *mochi* for the coming new year, the merchants made skilled performers play the *shamisen*, sing songs, and accompany the music with other instruments such as flutes, drums, and bells. This became today's *Shamisen mochitsuki* which is still practiced on special occasions such as events or the final business day of the year.

A dyer working on the *aidate* process

31. Lye- fermented *aidate* dyeing

Aidate refers to the practice of producing liquid dye by dissolving indigo in water. Since indigo does not dissolve in water on its own, people originally fermented *Sukumo* indigo dye in lye obtained from wood ash to perform the *aidate* process. In the olden days, the only option people had was obviously to perform *aidate* using *Sukumo* and natural ingredients. However, now that it is possible to dye with non-Japanese indigo or chemicals, people started using the word *Shō-Aizome* ("genuine indigo dyeing") and *Hon-Aizome* ("authentic Japanese indigo") upon designating indigo dyeing as a Cultural Property.

Similarly, in recent years, the term "lye-fermented *aidate* dyeing" is used to refer to a dyeing process where *aidate* is performed using lye instead of chemicals. Other natural ingredients, such as wheat bran, alcohol, lime, and shell lime can also be added to aid the fermentation. Due to the difficulty of handing down traditional techniques that do not rely on chemical dyes and other chemicals, lye-fermented *aidate* dyeing once neared extinction in the face of synthesized and chemical indigo dyeing. Nevertheless, people today are starting to take a fresh look at the charm of natural materials.



A dyer working on *chūsen*

32. *Awa-Ai chūsen*

[Tokushima Prefecture Designated Intangible Cultural Property. Designated on 22nd March 2018]

Awa-Ai chūsen, which started in the early Meiji period, is a type of resist-paste dying using a mid-sized pattern paper. Using the pattern paper, the resist paste is applied by stages to the fabric which is folded after each application step. The fabric is then sandwiched between cloths and placed on a duckboard work-bench, and liquid dye is poured from above to complete the dyeing.

The *chūsen* technique is for dyeing both sides of a fabric and involves inverting the pattern every 98cm. When made into a *yukata* (a type of *kimono*), this length of 98cm allows the wearer to hide the areas where the pattern ends. The *chūsen* technique is mainly used for dyeing *yukata*. Since the resulting fabric has no right or wrong sides, *chūsen*-dyed products were found very useful back in the days when people altered and wore the same *kimono* for a long time.

Furushō Toshiharu, who has mastered the *Awa-Ai chūsen* technique, uses wood ash lye, shell lime, lime, molasses, and hard flour for the *aidate* process. Furushō's indigo dyeing is characterized by the vivid contrast of white and indigo blue, the rich shading, and the deep and warm texture.

Chapter 6: People and Places Passing Down Awa-Ai

Ai-Shi and dyers passing down the *Awa-Ai* tradition

The craftspeople of Awa, who inherited professional pride from their predecessors, are working towards building a new era.

Real *Sukumo* and reliable dyeing techniques come together, immortalizing the tradition of *Awa-Ai*.

Ai-Shi

The traditional *Sukumo* production technique of Tokushima was recognized as Japan's National Selective Conservation Techniques in 1978 by the Agency of Cultural Affairs. In charge of conserving the techniques is Awa-ai Seizō Gijutsu Hozonkai whose members consist of four *Ai-Shi* workshops. Despite the disappearance of indigo-related jobs after the Taisho period, these craftspeople – who used to be indigo farmers, *Ai-Shi*, or *Ai-Shōnin* in the Edo and Meiji periods – have continued their family business until today. Since *Ai-Shōnin* like in the olden days do not exist anymore, *Ai-Shi* work on the entire process from growing indigo plants, processing them to make *Sukumo*, and selling them to *Sukumoshi* (*Sukumo* producers) and dyers across the country.

From seeding in early March to the completion of *Sukumo* production in early December, an *Ai-Shi*'s job proceeds along with the change in nature as well as the traditional seasonal calendar cherished by people of the past. Families that have been aishi for generations all have their own traditions. For example, one family says that one should move on to the next step of *Sukumo* production when the ginkgo trees of the mountain seen from their window turn yellow.

The farming and production steps are especially susceptible to the weather and environment, which means that they cannot do the same things on the same day each year. In the indigo production house we visited, the head *Ai-Shi* worked along with about ten craftspeople, directing them with the wisdom handed down by their predecessors, his own experience, and intuition.

Except for the now-automated cutting and sorting of indigo plants, the present-day *Sukumo* production process is no different from what people did in the days past. People spread out indigo leaves in the spacious courtyards like in the olden days. The *Nedoko* and estate buildings that surround the courtyard are renovated but still looking almost exactly like when they were first built. Even when working on the *Kirikaeshi* process of the indigo leaves, which are heated to 60-70 degrees Celsius because of fermentation, *Ai-Shi* still continue work barefoot with knee-length trousers. The leaves touching the bare soles are extremely hot. Regular people will not be able to handle the heat, but experienced *Ai-Shi* continue their work in utter silence. This is because they uphold the

Nedoko after *Sukumo* production is completed

teaching handed down from their ancestors: An *Ai-Shi* should feel everything through their skin as they work.

Sukumo production is a process that continues through almost the entire year. In December, people work on shipping the *Sukumo* out to Kyoto, Kantō, and Kyūshū as well as prepping the nedoko for the coming new year. After that, they pray to the god of the *Nedoko* and prepare for New Year's celebration. The act of giving thanks for a smooth year of *Sukumo* production and praying for another fruitful year is proof of the *Ai-Shi's* gratitude towards all things under the sun and their strong desire to protect and pass down the tradition that was established by their predecessors.

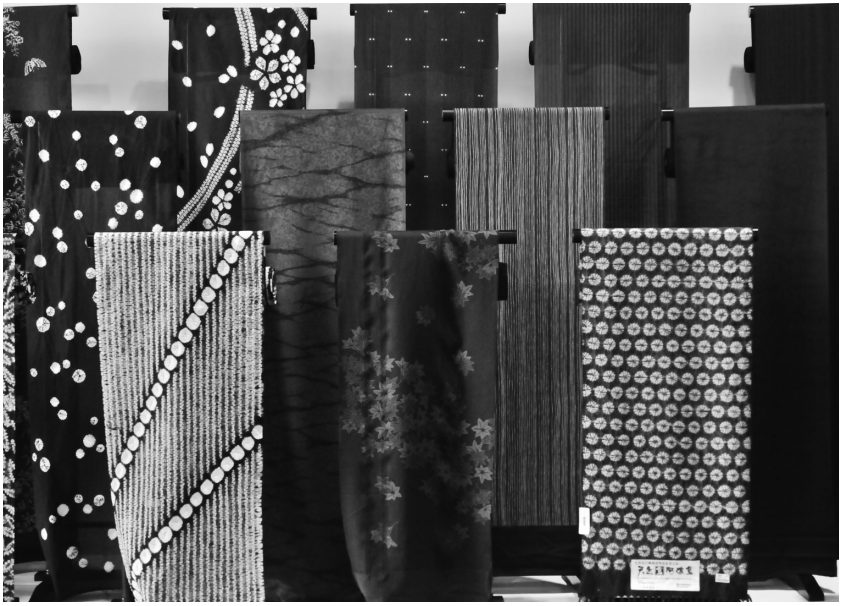
Dyers

The colors, textures, strength of the materials, and benefits on the skin unique to natural indigo dye are only achieved when real *Sukumo* is used by reliably skilled dyers. One dye-production technique to achieve such results is "lye-fermented aidate."

In "lye-fermented *aidate*", lye from wood ash is added to *Sukumo* and left to ferment for about a week. As the fermentation progresses and the liquid dye nears completion, if you mix the liquid with a bamboo stick, bubbles resulting from fermentation will gather around the center of the jar. This concentration of bubbles is called *ainohana*, or "indigo flowers." Dyers check the condition of the indigo dye through the state of the "indigo flowers", the temperature and sliminess of the liquid, the fading of color on the skin, and the scent coming out upon opening the lid of the indigo jar. As they dye pieces of fabric, pigments are taken from the dye liquid inside the indigo jar. Since using up the pigments entirely will weaken the indigo, they need to let the indigo rest before that happens. After resting, the dyers will adjust the liquid dye with lime and shell lime. They resume dyeing when the color starts comes back. Fermentation happens thanks to microbes, which means that liquid dye is alive. To deal with a living creature that is liquid dye, a dyer needs to have solid techniques.

A dyer's job is to elevate the *Sukumo* received from *Ai-Shi* to the best liquid dye possible. They put their all into the task of dyeing with indigo.

“Indigo flowers” floating in indigo jars



Pieces of fabric dyed with *Awa-Ai*

Ai-no-Yakata

Visit *Ai-Yashiki* estates and museums to learn about the history

Here are some museums and cultural facilities where you can learn about the profundity of *Awa-Ai* culture as well its history.

● "*Ai-no-Yakata*" Aizumi Town History Museum

A museum where you can learn about the history of indigo dye making. The museum neighbors the *Ai-Yashiki* estate of the Okumuras, an indigo merchant family, where you can see the tools and *Nedoko* buildings that were used in real life as well as the inside of the mansion. You can also try indigo-dyeing handkerchiefs and scarfs yourself.

Hours: 9:00-17:00

Closed: Tuesdays (except national holidays), between 28th December and 1st January

Admission: Adults – 300yen / Junior high and high school students – 200yen / Elementary school students – 150yen / Infants – free

Address: 172 Tokumei-aza Maezunishi, Aizumi-chō, Itano-gun. 771-1212

Mima Tourism Center

● Mima Tourism Center

A tourist facility in “The Historic *Udatsu* Area” where you can try indigo dyeing and Japanese traditional parasol making. The facility also houses a restaurant that servers dishes made with local produce.

Hours: 9:00-17:00

Closed: Every second Wednesday of the month

Address: 45-1 Wakimachi Ōaza Wakimachi, Mima-shi, Tokushima. 779-3610


WAZA NO YAKATA

● WAZA NO YAKATA

Kamiita-chō boasts the biggest acreage for indigo and is the biggest producer and shipper of *Sukumo* dye. Located in such a town, the WAZA NO YAKATA facility houses a workshop where visitors can try indigo-dyeing and an exhibition on indigo. Additionally, there is a closed-type LED plant factory on the facility grounds where you can learn about cutting-edge *Awa-Ai* production.

Hours: 9:00-17:00 (indigo dyeing desk closes at 15:30)

Closed: Mondays (Tuesdays if Monday falls on a national holiday), New Year holidays (29th December – 3rd January)

Address: 32-4Izumidani-azaHarahigashi,Kamiita-chō,Itano-gun,Tokushima. 771-1310

Cultural facilities about cultures and arts brought about by *Awa-Ai*

● Tokushima Prefectural Awa Jūrōbē Yashiki

A facility where you can enjoy *Awa-Ningyō-Jōruri*, Japan's Nationally Designated Important Intangible Folk-Cultural Property. In addition to regular performances held every day, there are special performances featuring a variety of


Tokushima Prefectural *Awa Jūrōbē Yashiki*


A *Jōruri* performance

programs. The facility is also home to a permanent exhibition on the history of *Awa-Ningyō-Jōruri*.

Hours: 9:30-17:00 (9:30-18:00 between 1st July and 31st August)

Closed: 31st December – 3rd January

Admission: Adults – 410 yen (330 yen) / High school and university students – 310 yen (250 yen) / Elementary and junior high school students – 200 yen (160 yen)
*The brackets ( ) indicate rates for a group of 20 or more.

Address: 184 Miyajima-Honura, Kawauchi-chō, Tokushima-shi, Tokushima. 771-0114

● Awa Wooden Puppet Hall

A general exhibition hall displaying approximately hundred *Deko* puppets along with materials on these puppets. You can learn about the history of *Deko* puppets and their mechanism.

Hours: 9:00 – 17:00

Closed: Sundays, the first and third Mondays of the month, 30th December – 4th January *Temporary closings may occur

Awaodori Kaikan

Admission: Adults – 500 yen / Students – 400 yen / Children – 300 yen
Address: 226-1 Miyajima-Honura, Kawauchi-chō, Tokushima-shi. 771-0114

● Awa Wooden Doll Museum

A facility inside Tokushima Arts Foundation for Culture which showcases Awa-Deko puppets and Ningyō Jōruri. The number of materials owned by the museum – more than 600 in total – is one of the largest in the country. Enjoy narrative-centered exhibitions, including the one about *Awa-Nōson-Butai* play-houses.

Hours: 9:30-17:00
Closed: 29th December – 3rd January (plus temporary closings once every two months)
Admission: Free
Address: 2-14 Aibachō, Tokushima-shi, Tokushima. 770-0835

● *Awaodori Kaikan*

A facility where visitors can enjoy *Awa-Odori* throughout the year. *Awa-Odori* performances are held every day in the *Awa-Odori* Hall – you can even

dance along with the performers. Other attractions include a museum where you can learn about the history and culture of *Awa-Odori*, a shop selling souvenirs from around the prefecture, and a cable car station.

Hours: *Awa-Odori* Museum: 9:00-17:00
Awa Odori Hall: 11:00-21:00 (depending on the performance schedule)
Admission: Awa Odori Museum: Adults – 300 yen / Elementary and junior high school students – free
Awa Odori Hall: Adults – 800-1,000 yen / Elementary and junior high school students – 400-500 yen *Different between performances
Address: 2-20 Shinmachibashi, Tokushima-shi, Tokushima. 770-0904

● Tokushima Castle Museum

A museum exhibiting historical materials regarding the Tokushima Domain and the Hachisuka family. The permanent exhibition displays significant cultural assets such as a restored model of the Tokushima Castle's state chamber, art materials related to the Hachisuka family and Awa, and more.

Hours: 9:30-17:00
Closed: Mondays (except for national holidays), the day after national holidays (except for Sundays and national holidays), the New Year holidays
Admission: Adults – 300 yen / High school and university students – 200 yen / Junior high school students and younger – free
*Fees for special exhibitions not included.
Address: 1-8 Tokushima-chō Jōnai, Tokushima-shi, Tokushima. 770-0851

Written and Produced by
Promotion Council for “Ai no Furusato Awa
(Awa-the home of Ai)”

Translated by
Mana Sato

Japan Heritage Storybook

Awa - The Home of “*Ai*”

Searching for the Supreme Blue of Japanese indigo

Tokushima Prefecture (Tokushima-Shi, Yoshinogawa-Shi, Awa-Shi, Mima-Shi, Ishii-Chō,
Kitajima-Chō, Aizumi-Chō, Itano-Chō, Kamiita-Chō)

Supervised by Promotion Council for “Ai no Furusato Awa (Awa-the home of Ai)”

Published by Promotion Council for “Ai no Furusato Awa (Awa-the home of Ai)”
Contact information Social Education Division,
Aizumi Town Board of Education ☎ 088-637-3128

文化庁