

WASHI

by Julie M. Yamamoto



9:30am-10:00am
on Saturday
on Chukyo TV



Along with kimonos and lacquer ware, "washi", or Japanese handmade paper has long been one of the more fascinating traditional crafts of Japan. Generally, washi conjures up quaint images of Japanese paper dolls or shoji sliding doors in a typical old-fashioned Japanese home, but washi has been used in a number of ways in Japan since before the Heian period.

As with many Japanese crafts, the actual techniques

for creating washi were borrowed from China. Nowadays, most washi is



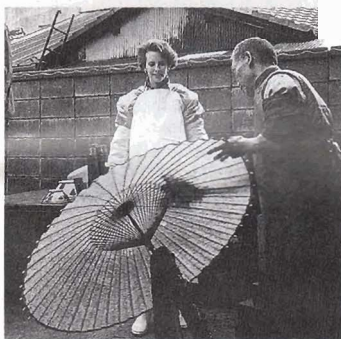
machine-made, in a variety of forms and colors, but there are still a few craftsmen left who are engaged in making the traditional white washi paper. It is a very labor-intensive process that can only be carried out in extremely cold temperatures, so it often became the winter work for agricultural villages. The cold temperatures are important for various reasons. First, the raw fibers, bound together in strips, are laid out in the snow for one week to whiten naturally. They have to be turned over daily, and this can be quite a task, especially if fresh snow has fallen on top of them in any depth. Once the fibers have whitened, they are rinsed out in cold water. To remove any remaining trash, they are then hand-picked through by the women in the village. Throughout this whole process, they are left in very cold water. Apparently the cold temperature not only affects the quality of the final product, but

it also prevents infestation by insects (which would occur if the process were carried out in the summer). Additionally, the glue used in the final paper making step is made from plant materials, and it is less-effective in warm temperatures. The final product of this labor-intensive process is extremely strong and durable, and there are documents produced on traditional washi that are in excellent condition despite being over 500 years old.

Washi was originally used in Japan in kites, umbrellas, shoji doors/windows, and writing paper, but other uses, such as paper dolls and origami (Japanese paper folding art) were probably also common (although present-day origami paper is generally not washi). Surprisingly, it was also common to make clothes from washi as well, and some of these garments can be viewed in the Japanese Paper Art

Work Gallery in Obara village (see below for details). Although paper may seem to be a strange choice of a material to use in weather-protecting items such as clothes or umbrellas, in fact, washi made in the traditional way far surpasses other types of paper in strength and durability. Once a protective coat of oil has been applied, the items could be used even in the rain with little worry of damage.

While it is very difficult to view the increasingly rare traditional washi-making, there are, fortunately, other avenues open to those who wish to enjoy an experience with washi. In Nagoya, for example, there is a store in Atsuta-ku is dedicated to washi-enthusiasts. Not only is the entire inventory composed of washi and other types of paper, but they also sponsor various classes, open to the public, in paper crafts (instruction in Japanese). It is an easy walking distance from the Tenmachi station on the Meijo line. Call Paper House, Kami no Ondo, at 671-2110 for further information.



For an actual paper-making experience, however, Obara Paper Art Museum is the place to go. Obara was originally a traditional washi-making village, but they created

a unique washi art-form after World War II in an effort to prevent the industry from dying out. Now Obara is famous for the various types of washi art produced there. For a small fee, visitors are allowed to make their own washi design to take home. To get there, take the Kaminigi bus from Toyota-shi and get off at "Washi no Furusato", or it is a fifteen kilometer drive from Nakayama Interchange at Sanage Green Road. Call (0565) 65-2953 or (0565) 65-2151 for further information.

One of the greatest parts of TAIKAN WONDERFUL NIPPON is to be able to experience and observe traditions and customs that most people don't have the chance to experience, and my washi TAIKAN was no exception. Fortunately, Kami no Ondo and Obara Village make this experience available to anyone who is interested in washi, and I highly recommend a visit to both places. You certainly won't regret a fascinating TAIKAN of washi! ■

CONCERTS/THEATRE

JUNE

Wednesday,
1st

Ichikawa Ennosuke's super Kabuki "Hakkenden" at Chunichi Gekijo at 11:00 am **Saigo Teruhiko Tokubetsu Koen** (play) opens thru 26th at Misono-za at 11:00 am & 4:00 pm **T-Square** in concert at Aichi Koseinenkin-kaikan at 7:00 pm **Katia Ricciarelli with Vincenzo Scalera** (piano) in soprano recital at Aichi Arts Center at 6:45 pm **By-Sexual** in concert at Aichi-ken Kinro-kaikan at 6:30 pm **Taniguchi Soichi** in concert at Hamamatsu Forte Hall ☎(053-458-2111) at 6:30 pm **Kodály Zoltán with Jenő Jandó** (piano) at Salamanca Hall ☎(0582-77-1111) at 7:00 pm **Futagami Jiro** in tenor recital at Denki Bunka-kaikan at 7:00 pm **Shibata Goro** in concert at Heart Land Studio at 7:30 pm **Johnny Yoshinaga** in concert at Club Diamond Hall at 8:00 pm

Thursday,
2nd

Yusa Mimori in concert at Club Diamond Hall at 6:30 pm (and on 3rd) **Taniguchi Soichi** in concert at Aichi-ken Handa Kinro Fukushi-kaikan ☎(info. 320-9999) at 6:30 pm **The Alfee** in concert at Nagoya Shimin-kaikan at 6:00 pm (and on 3rd) **Judy and Mary** in concert at Club Quattro at 7:00 pm **Yomiuri Japan Orchestra** at Aichi Koseinenkin-kaikan at 6:30 pm **Yukadan** in concert at Aichi Arts Center at 6:30 pm **The Boat People** at E.L.L. at 7:00 pm

Friday,
3rd

"Inugami-ke no Ichizoku" (play) open thru 26th at Meitetsu Hall at 11:00 am & 3:30 pm **Kyung-Wha Chung** in violin recital (Nagoya International Music Festival) at Aichi Arts Center at 6:45 pm **Jazz Is My Life '94 Concert** at Geijutsu-sozo Center at 6:30 pm **Lä-Ppisch** in concert at Aichi-ken Kinro-kaikan at 6:30 pm **Kevin Lettau** in concert at Club Quattro at 7:00 pm **Otake Yoshizumi** in concert at Heart Land Studio at 7:00 pm

Saturday,
4th

"T-R-A-I-N" (play) at Meien Sho-gekijo at 3:00 pm & 7:00 pm (and on 5th at 1:00 pm & 4:30 pm) **Billy Ban Ban** in concert at Aichi Koseinenkin-kaikan at 6:30 pm **Taniguchi Soichi** in concert at Igaeno Maeda Kyoiku-kan ☎(info. 320-9999) at 5:30 pm **Kodo** in concert at Gamagori Shimin-kaikan ☎(0533-67-5151) at 6:30 pm **Cassandra Wilson** in concert at Club Quattro at 7:00 pm **Volleyball** etc in concert at Bottom Line at 7:00 pm

Sunday,
5th

Alfred Hause & His Tango Orchestra at Aichi Arts Center at 2:00 pm **J-Walk** in concert at Aichi Koseinenkin-kaikan at 6:00 pm (and on 6th at 7:00 pm) **Taniguchi Soichi** in concert at Gifu-ken Kawabe-cho Chuo Kominkan ☎(info. 320-9999) at 5:00 pm **Gargoyles** in concert at Bottom Line at 7:00 pm **Hashimoto Eiji** in cembalo recital at Studio Runde at 3:00 pm **Rabbit** in concert at E.L.L. at 7:30 pm

Monday,
6th

"Sasameyuki" (play) opens thru 28th at Chunichi Gekijo (time varies) **"Nakanai de"** (musical) at Kameyama-shi Bunka-kaikan ☎(05958-2-7111) at 6:30 pm **Cho-Liang Lin & Li Jian** in violin recital at Telepia Hall at 7:00 pm **The Mamas & The Papas** in concert at Bottom Line at 7:00 pm & 9:30 pm **Culture Beat & Melody MC** in concert at Club Diamond Hall at 7:00 pm

Tuesday,
7th

Miyako Cho-cho Tokubetsu Koen "Yome & Shutome" (play) at Handa Fukushi Bunka-kaikan ☎(0569-23-7331) at 1:00 pm & 6:00 pm **"Swan Lake" by the Moscow City Ballet** at Aichi Arts Center at 6:45 pm **Sanyutei Koenzo Dokuen-kai** (rakugo) at Ensho Hall ☎(971-8566) at 6:30 pm **Tokunaga Hideaki** in concert at Rainbow Hall at 6:30 pm (and on 8th) **Mikhail Lidsky** in piano recital at Denki Bunka-kaikan at 7:00 pm **Kato Izumi** in concert at Geijutsu-sozo Center at 6:30 pm **Radiohead** in concert at Club Quattro at 7:00 pm **Taniguchi Soichi** in concert at Tsu Region Plaza ☎(0592-29-3300) at 6:30 pm **Tsujii Jinsei** in concert at Club Diamond Hall at 7:00 pm **Fujii Fumiya** in concert at Nagoya Shimin-kaikan at 6:30 pm (and on 8th at 6:00 pm) **Tiger Okoshi & Bela Fleck** in concert at Bottom Line at 7:00 pm & 9:30 pm

Wednesday,
8th

Takarazuka Hanagumi Koen "Take Kurabe" at Aichi Koseinenkin-kaikan at 6:00 pm **Miyaki Reiko** in soprano recital at Denki Bunka-kaikan at 7:00 pm **Taniguchi Soichi** in concert at Gifu-shi Bunka Center ☎(0582-62-6200) at 5:00 pm **Stratovarius** in concert at Bottom Line at 7:00 pm **Alfred Hause & His Tango Orchestra** at Seki-shi Bunka-kaikan ☎(0575-24-2525) at 6:30 pm **Luna** in concert at Club Quattro at 7:00 pm