

Sanuki Kagari Temari

1. Sanuki Kagari Temari Outline

Japan has four main islands and other many small islands. The smallest of the four main islands is called Shikoku and the smallest prefecture of Japan, Kagawa, is there. That region was called Nankaido Sanuki-no-Kuni from the 7th century.

Compared with other countries, Japan has a lot of rain, but within Japan, Sanuki has many sunny days and it's one of the regions with the least amount of rain. Due to this climate, the region became a producer of "The Three Sanuki Whites (sugar, salt, cotton)" from the middle of the Edo period.

"Sanuki Kagari Temari" was first made using naturally-dyed cotton string, one of Sanuki's products, around the mid 18th century as a play toy for women and children. These colorful geometric patterns of the Sanuki region were passed down by its people and are called "Sanuki Kagari Temari."



The Scene of A Traditional Craftswoman At Work

2. The History of Temari in Japan

Temari came to Japan in the mid 6th century (the Asuka period) from China. At that time it was passed down as kemari, a traditional Japanese football, and around the 10th century (the Heian period), string was wound around a core and this became temari, which was a play item among the women of nobility in the Kyoto area.

In the 14th century (the Muromachi



period), temari made by wrapping silk thread into a sphere shape started becoming popular among the nobility and geometric patterns and traditional Japanese patterns could be seen on the surface of the temari.

In the 17th century (the Edo period), temari as a play toy for samurai class children became common throughout the country. In the mid 18th century, when cotton string first became mass produced, cotton-string temari became a plaything for common people.



From the 18th century to the 19th century (the Meiji period), temari was in peak production. Each region had its method and the features of the local region could be reflected in the unique patterns. In the middle of the Meiji period, the rubber ball appeared. The luxury items became regulated before World War II and then stopped being made because all of Japan was in ruins after the war. In addition, the introduction of plastic toys during the rapid growth period caused a sudden drop in the making of temari and the tradition of passing temari from generation to generation stopped.

3. The History of Sanuki Kagari Temari

When the art of Temari was lost after World War II, Kagawa was no exception. In 1952, however, Kazuo Araki, who worked at the Sanuki Folkcraft Museum, and his wife Yakeo set out to research and revive the lost traditional art of temari made from locally made cotton string.



The temari of Sanuki has a simple design, of which there were only about 20 varieties. The process of making them, however, had almost faded from the memory for the elderly people with experience making them, and when they were given the materials, they couldn't make them. In the research records, "Sanuki Temari includes both a technique and design but we cannot determine either" was continuously written for many years. After 20 years of research and accumulation of information, the process was finally understood. The techniques like "maki (winding) mari" and "shishu (embroidery) mari" were not as common in the Sanuki region, but rather, "Kagari technique," in which the stitches are done along the datum lines on the surface of the sphere, were used.

White string is Western cotten. Brown is Japanese cotton (made in Toyohama)

In 1979 Kazuo Araki and his wife, with the help of his friends including Kichinosuke Tonomura, director of the Kurashiki Folkcraft Museum, Taro Maruyama, director of the Matsumoto Folkcraft Museum, and other folk art related people from around the country, successfully reestablished the art form and called it "Sanuki Kagari Temari." In 1982, they created the Sanuki Kagari Temari Preservation Association, with the goal of transmitting and spreading the tradition, and in 1987, Sanuki Kagari Temari was designated by Kagawa as a traditional craft and the Sanuki Kagari Temari Preservation Association became a designated manufacturer.



The core rice husks

Naturally-dyed cotton string

4. Characteristics of Sanuki Kagari Temari

Sanuki Kagari is not a traditional art that requires many years of practice to perfect. It's an art form that was almost lost in Sanuki and throughout the entire country and was later revived. It's an art form from long ago, made by grandmothers for their grandchildren, and it could be made by just anyone.



Naturally-dyed cotton string



Drawers of Temari

The characteristics of Sanuki Kagari Temari are its simple color designs interwoven with naturally-dyed string. The string is only dyed with natural ingredients which gives it its relaxing trait. The all natural ingredients give it a simple greatness. From long ago, each individual temari has been made with love to give temari their beautiful, warm design.

The 5 Sanuki Kagari Temari Characteristic Techniques

- ① Since the 18th century, Sanuki Kagari Temari has been made with local cotton string from Sanuki.
- ② We use naturally-dyed string without chemicals or the use of machines. Unlike strings like wool and silk, cotton string is difficult to dye and get bright and vibrant color.
- ③ Sanuki Kagari Temari is made



with a “kagari” style weave. It’s not wound or embroidered, but rather uses base lines such as the equator, longitude lines, latitude lines, and diagonal line and fixes the pattern between them. “Kagaru” means to overlock.

- ④ The core of Sanuki Kagari Temari is formed by wrapping Japanese paper around rice husks, and then wrapping cotton string around to form a sphere.
- ⑤ The fifth trait is the very important designs of Sanuki Kagari Temari, which are created with the color combinations of naturally-dyed cotton string.



The important style of Sanuki Kagari Temari which we cherish is an art from before the Meiji period and gives an impression that can’t be described with words or pictures.

The standard of Sanuki Kagari Temari is the quality of its overall designs formed by the patterns, the color choices, and accuracy of the stitches made by the traditional techniques. In general, the styles and color schemes from before the Meiji period and traditional designs are used. The color themes like those resembling artistic pursuits of Japanese nature and wildlife were used to establish unique Sanuki Kagari Temari.



Temari made with naturally-dyed cotton string could be found all over the country from long ago, but nowadays, this traditional art only remains in Higo, Matsue, and Sanuki. Within these three, only Sanuki has its

preservation association and Sanuki Kagari Temari is the only one that uses naturally-dyed cotton string.

5. The Sanuki Kagari Temari Preservation Association Goals

The association aims to develop successors of this tradition art so that it can be passed on for generations as well as to promote awareness of the traditional technique, and contribute to the maintenance and development of the Sanuki Kagari Temari culture. In addition, our goal is to produce Sanuki Kagari Temari and related products while maintaining a high level of quality, and to promote the traditional form of art.



Temari made from mulberry dyed string

6. The present

From long ago, each region had a unique style of temari, but because of war, people stopped making temari. In the later period of Showa, temari researchers produced a publication to standardize a unique local style of temari. A small group of people within enthusiasts were able to produce complicated temari designs that couldn't be made before, but Sanuki Kagari Temari are made as a basis of design and technique before the Meiji period.

Currently, Eiko Araki, daughter-in-law of Kazuo Araki who revived Sanuki Kagari Temari in 1982, was designated a traditional



Eiko Araki

craftsperson by Kagawa and inherited the role of representative of the preservation association.

She is working to teach the next generation the traditional technique of Sanuki Kagari Temari which has been passed down since the Edo period. On the other hand, she also works on Temari in daily life, thinking of big and small ways to reveal the charm of Sanuki Kagari temari. She teaches traditional temari techniques as well as creates new works using the traditional technique so that people can enjoy temari.

Sanuki Kagari Temari Preservation
Association