

### ***Mabushi*: Cocoon Supports**

Once a silkworm is ready to spin a cocoon, it is transferred to a special structure called a *mabushi*. The Shimada *mabushi* is made from straw twisted into zigzagging bunches. The small openings between the straw encourage the silkworms to build their cocoons, the finished cocoons were easy to cut out of the *mabushi*. Shimada *mabushi* were cheap to make, but they had to be remade every year.

By the 1920s the Shimada *mabushi* had effectively been replaced by the easy-to-fold, easy-to-open *kairyō mabushi*. In the mid-1960s, these were replaced by the ingenious *kaiten mabushi*, literally “revolving *mabushi*.” The *kaiten mabushi* consist of a set of square cardboard frames containing over 100 tiny cubbies. Silkworms are attracted to the top when looking for a place to spin their cocoons, so as the cubbies at the top of the *kaiten mabushi* fill with cocoons, the added weight spins the structure around a central axis, moving open cubbies to the top. This type of *mabushi* is still commonly used today.