

Koyaguchi Pile Fabrics

The Koyaguchi area has been producing pile fabrics for over 100 years. The technique used by local weavers was originally popularized in Europe. Pioneering weaver Maeda Yasusuke came across an imported example in 1877 and figured out how to produce the intricate patterns of warp and weave.

His reverse-engineered method for producing *saiori*, or double-woven chenille, involves cutting a woven fabric into threads, then reweaving them into a new fabric. There is only one factory in Wakayama that still creates this nubby fabric. It is highly sought after for small towels, particularly in the retro flower patterns inspired by the original European pile fabric designs.

Pile weaving creates small raised loops or tufts of thread, resulting in a soft and highly resilient fabric. The technique has been adapted to create realistic fake fur and the upholstery for certain bullet train seats.