

Kakunodate Cherry Bark Work Museum: Sharing the History of Kakunodate's Artisanal Crafts

The Kakunodate Kaba-Zaiku Densho-Kan (Kakunodate Cherry Bark Work Museum) opened in 1978 to promote the area's principal traditional artisanal craft, *kaba-zaiku*, or cherry bark work. When it opened, it was one of only three traditional artisanal crafts centers in Japan.

The museum itself is a modern building built in Kakunodate's traditional architectural style. Besides displaying cultural and historical items, it holds demonstrations of cherry bark work, displays finished items and artwork in the exhibition room, and hosts various special cultural exhibitions.

In addition to cherry bark work, the museum also showcases other artisanal works, such as *shiraiwa-yaki*, a distinctive style of blue glazed pottery first brought to the area in 1771. Examples of Kakunodate *shunkei*, a type of lacquerware made with transparent lacquer to allow the woodgrain to show through, and *itaya-zaiku*, wickerwork baskets and other items made with thin strips of maple wood, are also on display. These two crafts are believed to have originated around 1790. Footwear and baskets made of straw, vine, and bark are among the attractive products of local craft available for purchase at the museum.

To help visitors better understand local craft traditions, the museum offers several types of craft workshops. Visitors can make a miniature cherry bark work wall-hanging or an *itaya-zaiku* wickerwork horse under the guidance of the resident experts.