

Tango Futamata Paper

The Futamata area, in the former province of Tango in northern Kyoto Prefecture, has produced handmade Japanese paper (*washi*) for centuries. Papermaking was a common side occupation for farmers during winter months, and at one point at least two hundred households in the area were producing *washi*. Records show that the region paid taxes with paper, rather than rice, during the Edo period (1603–1867). Due to a number of factors, including the introduction of mass-produced paper, only one papermaking business in Futamata remains.

Tanaka Paper Manufacturing Factory is a family business and has preserved the traditional handmade craftsmanship and production techniques through five generations. They painstakingly cultivate and process paper mulberry, the raw material for *washi*, to ensure a high-quality finished product. Their paper has evolved over the years, with the creation of new products to meet market demands and the innovations of each successive generation. Originally manufacturing *oni* (ogre) shoji paper, known for strength and durability, the company later began producing an urushi (lacquer) filtering paper for craftspeople nationwide. Recently, they have focused on making paper for arts and crafts. Notably, Tango Futamata Paper is used in art conservation for a number of nationally recognized cultural properties.

Visitors to Tanaka Paper Manufacturing Factory can see the artistry of Japanese papermaking up close. There is also a small gift shop where visitors can purchase souvenirs made of handmade paper. The Oe Washi Museum next door showcases *washi* artwork and production techniques. Workshops in which you make your own *washi* can be arranged for groups of 10 or more.