

Yumihama *Kasuri*

Yumihama *kasuri* is one of the best-known local variants of the traditional *kasuri* dyeing and weaving technique. It typically features white pictorial patterns on a deep indigo background. The cotton thread is dyed prior to weaving, after careful calculations to ensure that the contrasting pictorial patterns will form when it is woven. Though ultimately derived from the ancient ikat technique of mainland Asia, the widespread use of *kasuri* in the Yonago and Yumigahama regions was stimulated in the late eighteenth century by the local cultivation of cottons and the availability of indigo dye in wholesale quantities. Initially, simple geometric patterns were used, but by the beginning of the nineteenth century, pictorial *kasuri* textiles were being woven by women in rural households throughout the region. The bold designs frequently feature motifs intended to bring good fortune, or to celebrate auspicious occasions. Although the finest Yumihama *kasuri* is impeccably crafted and luxuriously detailed, it retains a simple honesty that acknowledges its rural roots.