

The Hyakkō Hishō: A Collection of Decorative Craft Samples

The Hyakkō Hishō is a seventeenth-century collection of samples representing decorative arts and crafts throughout Japan. It includes swatches displaying craft techniques, craft illustrations, and many small, crafted objects. There are over 2,000 items in total, spanning approximately 50 years of the early Edo period (1603–1867).

The collection has 11 boxes. The first two boxes hold mainly folding books, but there are also drawers containing samples of wood and lacquer. The remaining boxes contain stacked drawers of items and craft samples.

There are samples of *maki-e* lacquer, metalwork, woodwork, paper, leather, and cloth, as well as illustrations of different types of *haori* jackets and family crests (*kamon*). Highlights include the square samples of *nashiji nuri-iro*—one of the earliest *maki-e* lacquering techniques—in Box One, and the elaborate decorative nail covers from the Maeda family's residence in Edo (now Tokyo) in Box Six.

The fifth lord of Kaga domain, Maeda Tsunanori (1643–1724), engineered the creation of the Hyakkō Hishō. He was a meticulous, scholarly man who valued collecting books and documents, and later his interests grew to include decorative arts and crafts.

Approximately 85 to 90 percent of the collection was gathered by Tsunanori; the rest was collected by his successors. Tsunanori had samples made and also collected items from the Maeda family's residences. He even purchased items from other domains, and when an owner refused to sell, had copies made or illustrations drawn.