

Kaga *Maki-e*

Kaga *maki-e* is a style of decorated lacquerware developed during the Edo period (1603–1867) in Kaga domain (present-day Ishikawa and Toyama Prefectures). Kaga *maki-e*, which evolved into present-day Kanazawa lacquerware, was known for its intricate and ornate designs made with *maki-e*—a technique in which metallic powders, such as gold dust, are applied to soft lacquer.

During the Edo period, Kaga domain was governed by the wealthy Maeda family. Maeda Toshitsune (1593–1658) invited *maki-e* masters Shimizu Kuhei (?–1688) and Igarashi Dōho I (?–1678) to move to Kanazawa and establish lacquerware workshops under his patronage. The two men created some of the most celebrated works of Kaga *maki-e* and trained their successors in its techniques. This established Kanazawa as a major center of lacquerware production.

Maki-e application can be done in several ways, and the design can be left flush with the surface or raised to various degrees. Kaga *maki-e* is noted for combining these methods in order to create three-dimensional compositions. Its designs often incorporate iridescent mother of pearl and crushed white eggshell as well.

Kaga *maki-e* pieces reflected the tastes and interests of the ruling Maeda lords. Motifs from nature were common, particularly those that made tasteful references to famous poems or auspicious images from folklore. Kaga *maki-e* decoration was applied to martial gear, such as horse tack, armor, and scabbards, as well as luxury household objects, such as bookstands and tea ceremony implements.