

奈良県の産地 (N A R A)



TAKAYAMA-CHASEN

(TEA WHISK)

Ikoma-shi, Nara Prefecture

Takayama-chasen is said to date back to the mid-Muromachi Period, when Takayama, the second son of the feudal lord of Takayama, made a piece upon the request of Murata Juko, the founder of sado (ceremonial tea). Thereafter the tea whisk manufacturing techniques have been established in Takayama. At present the Takayama whisk shares 90% of domestic demands.

The process of tea whisk making is as follows: a piece of bamboo material is split by a knife to give 60 to 240 slats. Then the heads of slats are carved and bent, in the hot water, so that each of the slats has a gradual taper; then, the slats are chamfered and they are bent in and out alternately, and woven with tread. There are 120 kinds of tea whisks by school or by the usage including the ones for usu-cha (thin tea), koi-cha, ken-cha, nodate, hako-cha etc., each of which causes subtle differences in the taste of tea. The elegance of the curves of the tea whisk, which is made by hand all through the eight manufacturing processes, dazzles one's eye.

NARA-FUDE

(BRUSH)

Nara-shi and environs, Nara Prefecture

The making of Nara-fude is said to have been initiated by the priest Kukai, who, while studying Buddhism in Tang Dynasty China about 1200 years ago, acquired the techniques of its manufacturing. Upon returning to Japan, he introduced the techniques to this region. Some ten different kinds of animal hair are so combined to provide the best results considering the particular nature of each, such as elasticity, strength, length and others. The material is then kneaded with ash, collected, water-soaked, shaped, assorted, equipped with a core, and, covered with the hair called uwage. When dried up, the base of the hair bundle is bound with hemp thread and burned tight to complete the ear tip. The tip is gummed up into the holder. Then the holder is inscribed with the maker's name to complete the brush making.

