

Towns are now places to experience Traditional crafts in Kawagoe



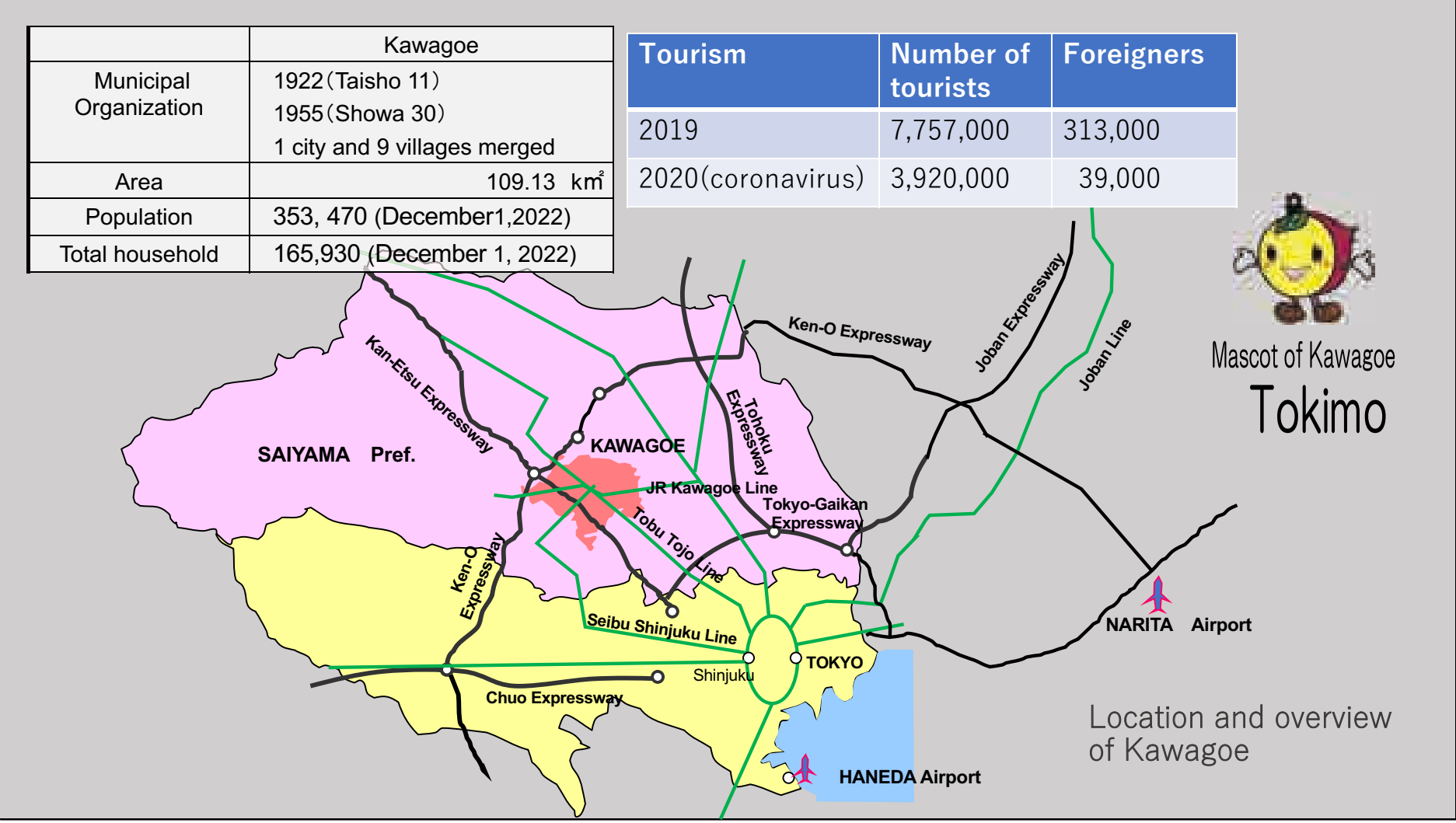
'Important Intangible Folk Cultural Property: float events at the Kawagoe Hikawa Festival'
Registered as UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage 16 Nov 2016.

14th Jan. 2023

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Kawagoe is the closest town to Tokyo, retaining many historical assets. Although there are not many traditional industries, I would like to introduce some examples.

This picture shows the Kawagoe Festival held in the traditional buildings preservation district, known as "kura-zukuri no machinami" townscape lined with storehouses. This festival is registered as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The festival had been canceled for the past few years due to the coronavirus, but last year it was held for the first time in three years. This float belongs my neighborhood association.



Next, let me confirm its location with Tokyo.
 It is about an hour away from central Tokyo by train.
 It is also easily accessible by expressway and is about 2 hours away from international airports such as Narita and Haneda Airports.
 For the size of the city, please refer to the table above left.
 The number of incoming tourists is shown in the table above right.



Next. Here is the situation of the historic city area.

In modern times, it was the core of the region as a castle town.

Therefore, the castle palace architecture, as shown in the upper right photo, still remains.

Historical museums and art museums have been built on the site where the castle once stood, as shown on the upper left.

There are also many shrines and temples, many of which are national important cultural properties.

On the lower right is a section called “Kashiya Yokocho”, where stores selling old-fashioned sweets for children are clustered.



On the other hand, the area around the railroad station is as you can see, this is a modern city with many high-rise buildings.

The shopping district in the upper center photo is one of the most prosperous in the local city.

Construction of high-rise residential buildings continues in this area.



In order to maintain historical townscapes, it is essential to have artisans who can work on them. However, the number of craftsmen with traditional skills is decreasing in Japan. Furthermore, opportunities to experience their skills are also decreasing.

To address this situation, the NPO Kawagoe Kura no Kai, to which I belong, organized an event to experience the skills of craftsmen.

As shown in the upper left photo, a carpenter craftsman who builds houses out of wood made a jungle gym using only wood, without using nails. Above center is planing to flatten the surface of the wood. The lower right photo shows the shavings from the planing process used to make artificial flowers. Above right is a sawyer sawing a log. In the blacksmithing experience at the bottom right, participants made paper knives by pounding nails.

Other participants included plasterers, furniture makers, roof tile makers, and landscapers. The experiencers are people of all ages, from children to adults.

They were also enjoyed not only by residents but also by tourists who happened to pass by.

We sent out invitations to nearby primary schools.

I think the largest number of participants were parents and children.

Soy sauce factory open to the public

Matsumoto Shoyu(Soy sauce)

A tour of the brewery



Storehouse
Cultural property
designated by
Kawagoe City
<freshly squeezed
soy sauce



Brewery storehouse *Tempogura* (built around 1830)
Important landscape building



Product description and tasting



Sugidama-zukuri(Production of cedar balls) for
the *sake* (Japanese wine) brewery next door

Next, let me introduce you to a store that offers a variety of hands-on experiences.

This is a soy sauce factory built about 190 years ago.

Here, you can learn how soy sauce is made by looking around the factory.

The center photo below shows an explanation of the products made here and a taste of them.

On your way home, you can't help but buy some of the store's products.

	<p>Glass Studio Blue Moon glass blowing experience Cups, vases, and other vessels Glass blowing experience 4200 yen</p>	
<p>Produced under the guidance of craftsmen in the workshop Required time: about 30 minutes</p>		<p>Participated in the Challenge Shop held by the Chamber of Commerce and Industry in 2001 Independent after that</p>
	 <p>Activities in a rented Matsumoto soy sauce storehouse; Cultural property designated by the city</p>	

Glass craftsmen have rented a corner of this soy sauce factory to open a store where the guest could experience the glass blowing.

He became independent about 20 years ago after attending a training course organized by the Kawagoe Chamber of Commerce and Industry for people who wanted to start their own stores.

At the workshop, you can make your own glassware under the guidance of craftspeople.

Even if it is warped, it is your one and only vessel in the world.

The woman working now is a craftspeople.

She's one of the people who will teach you how to make it.



This photo shows another glass workshop.

Here, they make “Tonnbo-Dama” which resemble the eyes of insects, dragonflies, and are therefore called “Tonnbo-Dama” "dragonfly balls.”

The workshop is where you can experience making small glass beads with pictures on them.

Everyone who is experiencing the process is concentrating on the tip of the flame.



Here, visitors can experience baking "Senbei", a typical Japanese baked snack
 "Sembei" is one of the confectionery products made by kneading rice, stretching it flat, and baking it.
 When baked, it expands, and depending on its size, it is ranked as Superman, Master, Veteran, or Rookie.
 It is a fun game for everyone from adults to children.



This is a hands-on pottery class run by a long-established pottery store. In conjunction with the renovation of the store, we utilized a traditional warehouse, an earthenware storehouse, that was no longer in use. It just so happens that a group of women dressed in "Kimono", a traditional Japanese costume, are trying their hand at pottery making. Under the guidance of a potter, they are making shapes while looking at a sample. After drying, they are coated with a glaze of their choice and fired. A small kiln is located on the premises. The finished pieces will be mailed to you at a later date.



Next example is a craftsman who works with iron.

His workshop is located in Tokyo, but he uses a traditional building in Kawagoe as an antenna store.

Although it is called a workshop, it is actually a factory because it handles hard iron.

In front of the store, an anvil is set up where visitors can experience making their own medals by tapping brass if they wish.

He chose Kawagoe because of its interest in using traditional buildings.

The three pictures on the left are gateposts made for my house.

The lower left is the family crest of the Aramaki family made in three dimensions.

The middle left is a letter of the nameplate.

The upper left is my daughter tapping the nameplate.



The woman in green in the center photo is a person who teaches how to wear the "Kimono", a traditional Japanese costume.

In Japan, until the middle of the 19th century, people wore a traditional dress called a "Kimono"

It is also called a "Wahuku" "Japanese clothes".

"Kimono s" are difficult to wear, and if you are not familiar with them, it is difficult to put them on by yourself.

Therefore, it is necessary to have someone teach you how to wear it.

Just that day, a parent and her child were coming to participate in a traditional event called Shichi-Go-San, which celebrates the growth of children.

She dressed the children in Kimonos.

Today, Japanese people no longer wear "Kimono"s on a daily basis, but only on special occasions.

However, in Kawagoe, "Kimono" can be enjoyed as a fashion item!

As shown in the photo above left, it has become fashionable for young people, especially those who have never worn "Kimono" before, to enjoy an unusual fashion in Kawagoe.

Many "Kimono" rental stores have sprung up, where visitors can get dressed in "Kimono s" and enjoy strolling through the historical streets.



Leather craftsmen have also opened stores.
 He came to Kawagoe because he always liked old towns.
 He demonstrate leather bag repair at various places.
 Many people from outside of Kawagoe visit this workshop.
 Recently, he has been trying our hand at artificial flowers made from leather.
 As shown in the photo below right.
 He is the one who opened the store because it is a traditional building and he
 was attracted by the atmosphere of the building.



In the suburbs of Kawagoe, cultivation of sweet potatoes has flourished since the 18th century, and the brand as "Kawagoe-imo(sweet potato)" was established in Tokyo, which was called Edo at that time.

Many products have been developed using the sweet potato as a keyword.

The traditional way to eat sweet potatoes is to bake, steam, or dry them.

In Kawagoe, the traditional sweet potato snack was called "Imo Senbei," which was cut into thin slices, sprinkled with ginger sugar, and baked.

Other varieties included thinly sliced and fried in oil, or cut into round slices and sprinkled with sugar.

Later, "imo donuts," doughnuts made from sweet potatoes, were also made.



The sweet potato itself has been used only in limited ways as an ingredient. Though nowadays, sweet potatoes are used as a key ingredient in a variety of processed sweets, including those made into potato chips, soft-serve ice cream, and “Manju” (Lower right photo, A pastry made by kneading wheat flour, wrapping the filling, and steaming it). Moreover, it is served on restaurant menus, including noodles, and in a variety of cooking methods. As shown in the top right and top center photos. And now, as shown below left, it is also used to make beer. Developed by a company in Kawagoe, it is now one of the most famous beers in Japan.

Development of Kawagoe *Tozan* (Cotton fabric with vertical stripe pattern)



Collection of Kawagoe City Museum



Next, let us introduce "Kawagoe tozan," a textile that established its brand in the mid-19th century.

This textile is made of cotton and is characterized by its vertical stripe pattern. Around the middle of the 19th century, "Kawagoe Tozan" established a brand so strong that it was called "Kawagoe Touzan" when talking about cotton fabrics with vertical stripe patterns.

However, it has since fallen into decline.

In recent years, kimono-loving citizens' activities have attempted to revive the brand, resulting in its revival as a new brand.

The photo on the left shows a kimono tailored and worn by a man.

I am ashamed to admit that this man is me.



They wondered if this textile could be applied not only to the traditional way of wearing “Kimono”s, but also to modern life.

The “Tozan-reborn Project” was organized by the Kawagoe Chamber of Commerce and Industry in 2014.

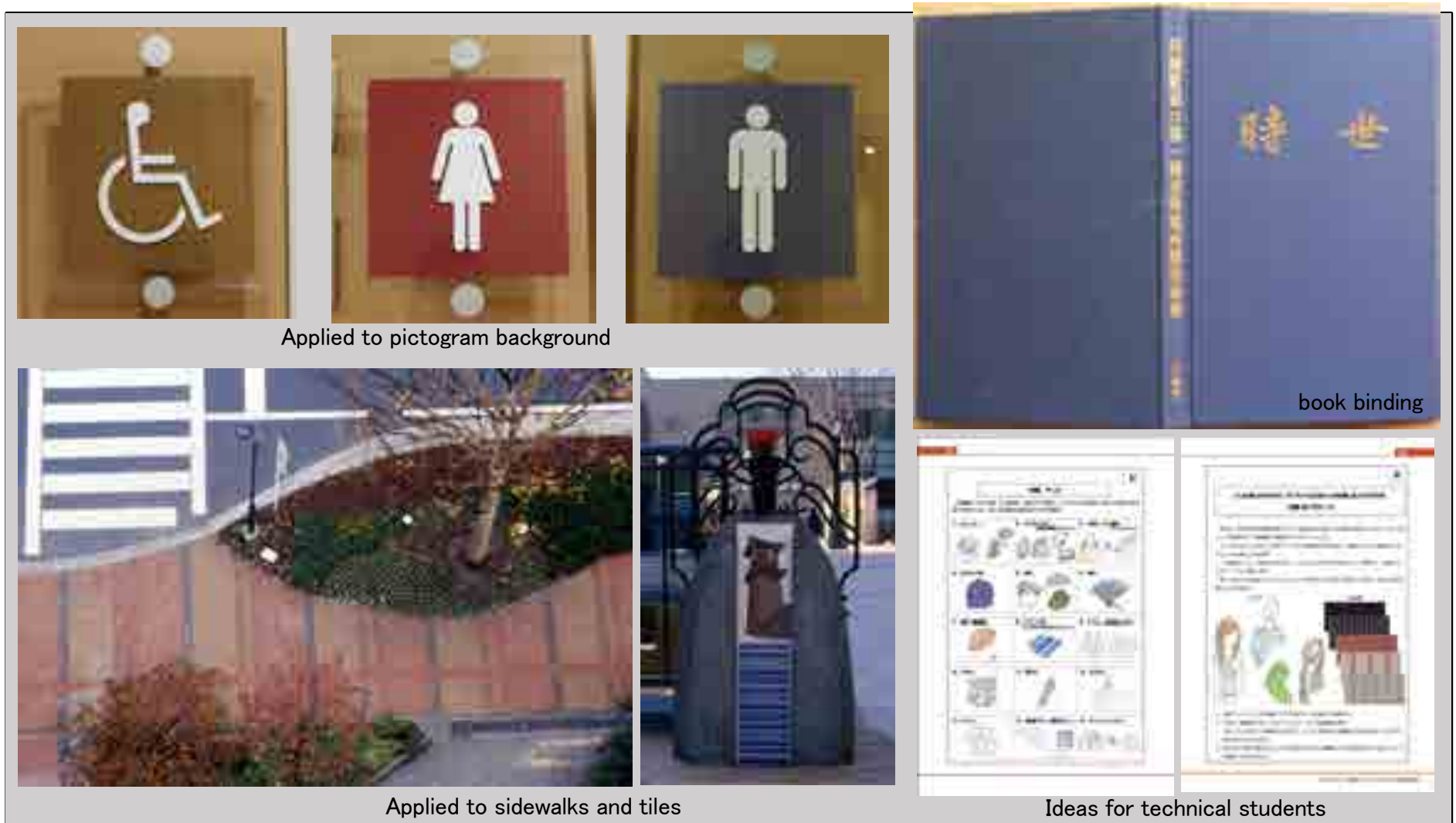
Until then, wallets, business card holders, and other small items had been developed by the private sector.

The Chamber of Commerce and Industry took the lead in this project.

The upper photos are show windows of a “kimono” store.

The bottom show the products developed in this project.

The shirts were featured in a major Japanese economic newspaper.



The stripe pattern of "Kawagoe tozan" can be applied in various ways. The upper left photo is a pictogram of a restroom, with real "Tozan" sandwiched between acrylic panels as a background. The upper right is an example of book binding. These are made of actual textiles. The lower left is an example applied to the design of a sidewalk surface. The lower middle is a representation on tile as a design for the main pillar of a bridge. I was involved in these as part of my work.

The illustration of the lower right is an idea sketch by a student from a local technical high school who participated in the Chamber's project. As you can see, even traditional textiles can be applied to modern times by using their designs. And with the participation of the younger local generation, it will be possible to pass them on to the next generation.



Taking advantage of traditional crafts that have lived in the region will be an important issue for promoting sustainable urban development with historical scape.

Thank you for your kind attention.



Towns where traditional crafts continue to exist have the potential to create a uniqueness.

Industrialization and globalization may be inexpensive and convenient, but they tend to be uniform and characterless.

It is difficult to feel the warmth of human touch.

Many traditional crafts are manual by their hands.

You can see the face of the person who made it.

The connection between people brings a sense of security.

With memories that can only be experienced on the spot, they will be loved for a long time to come.

However, it is also important not to settle for tradition, but to develop and apply traditional things as keywords.

I hope this case study will be of help to all of you.

This concludes my report.