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願いを込める手しごと

願いを込めたミツトリヒトギと幸せになる「三つの秘訣」

画竜点睛

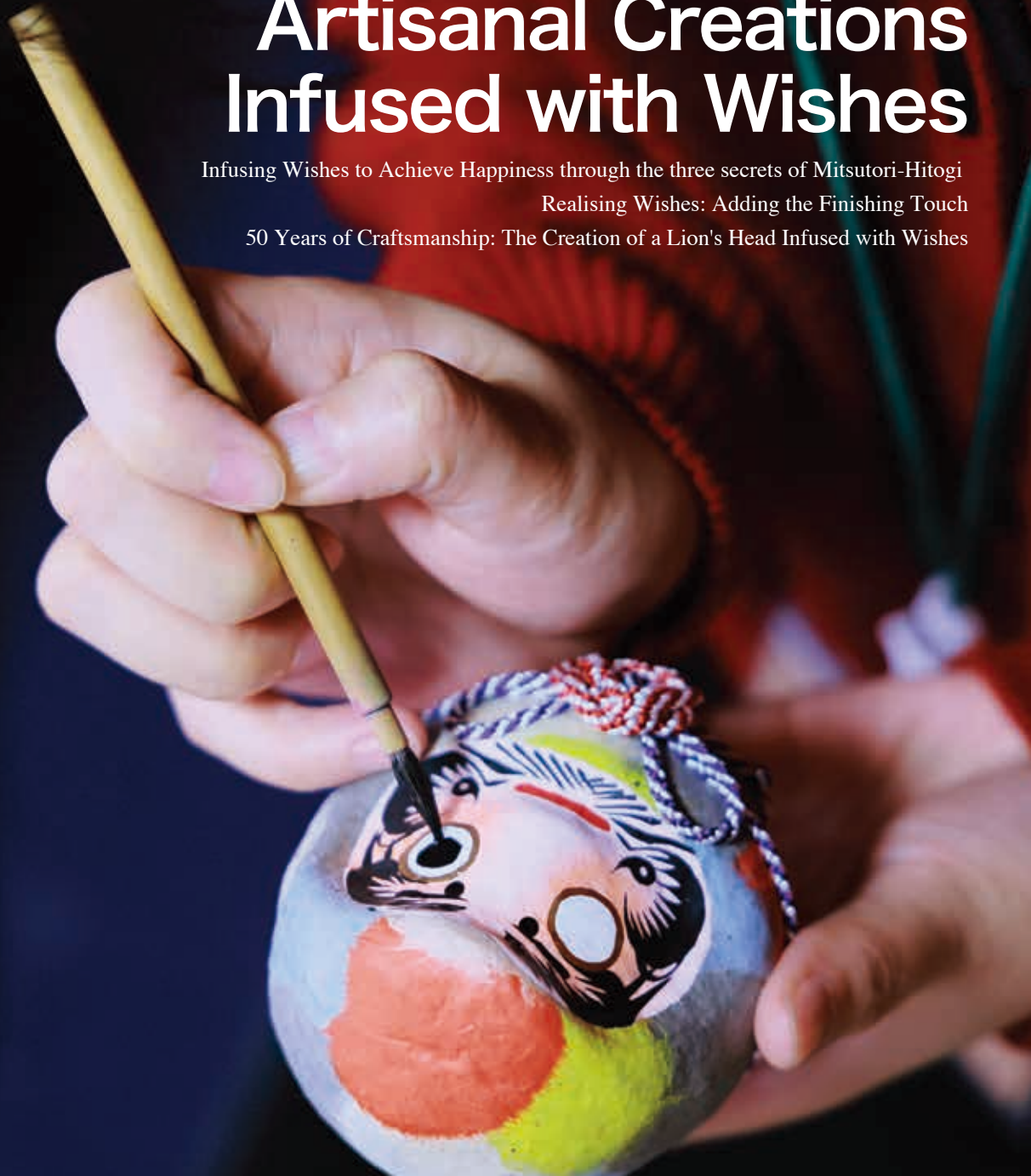
願いを込めて獅子頭を製作し、50年

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Infusing Wishes to Achieve Happiness through the three secrets of Mitsutori-Hitogi

Li Mengqun

The feeling when appreciating an artwork is perhaps as Ms Makiko Tabei, the designer of Mitsutori-Hitogi, said: even without explanation, even if you don't really understand it, you will be overwhelmed with its greatness and brilliance. For instance, one might feel a sense of mysterious gentleness in 'Mona Lisa', derive passion and hope from Van Gogh's 'Sunflower,' and always get energy and courage from the power of the creatures to grow from the silk-screen works designed by Mitsutori-Hitogi.

Our visit to Ms Tabei's studio, nestled in a renovated old folk house in Izumo City, was a delightful experience. Listening to the stories behind her works enriched our understanding of her artistry and aspirations. The more we got to know her, the more apparent it became that Ms Tabei has always been driven by wishes – both in the roots of her creative pursuits and in her personal experiences. This, we realised, is perhaps the secret to her happiness.

願いを込めたミツトリヒトギと幸せになる「三つの秘訣」

李 孟群

芸術作品を鑑賞する時の感じは、たぶんミツトリヒトギのデザイナー田部井眞子さんが言った通り、説明がなくても、よく分からないけれど、すごいと圧倒されるものである。例えば、「モナリザ」に神秘的な優しさを感じる、「ヒマワリ」から情熱と希望をもらえる、ミツトリヒトギがデザインしたシルクスクリーンの作品を見ると、決まって生き物が伸びていく力で元気と勇気をもらえる。私たちは出雲市内にある古民家を改装したスタジオを訪ね、田部井眞子さんから作品の物語を聞き、幸せに思っている。知れば知るほど、田部井さんは制作活動の原点でも、経験と展望においても、ずっと願いを込めて前に進んでいるのだと感じる。それが田部井さんの幸せの秘訣なのであろう。

秘訣一：どこまで進んでも、初心を忘れない

ワサビ、生姜とシソという三つの香辛料を一緒に出されると、和食が好きな人はたぶんそろそろ「刺身」が来るかなと思うかもしれない。しかし、玉葱、山椒と唐辛子を加えると、「薬食同源」が思い浮かぶであろう。ただし、その家庭料理でよく目にするトッピングのような植物は、田部井さんによる「薬味」という作品の

中では、文芸的かつ独特な主役となっている。この作品は、「リポート」の手段で長さ25mの生地に大きさが違う10種の薬味がバランスよく並べられ、薬味本来の色ではなく、「黒、黄、グレー」の色合わせで染められたものだから、カッコいい雰囲気は少し可愛さがある。このジェンダーレスファッションのようなデザインは一石二鳥、つまり、ミツトリヒトギが表現したい生き物の力強さのモチーフに合致し、かつ男性にも使いやすいということである。この生地ができるまで、コンセプトやモチーフを繰り返して考え、下絵を描き、また染め上がりなど、たくさん工夫をして、3~4ヶ月くらいかかったそうである。この生地で作ったアイテムは、ヘアゴム、ポーチ、バッグ、縫いぐるみなど様々ある。生地の切り方や縫い方によって、商品のデザインは異なる。散々思いを込めて作ったものだから、田部井さんは展示されているオリジナル商品を見ながら、「すべて愛着があるもの、無駄なものがない」と誇りを持って言った。しかし、一番好きな作品と言えば、「それは大学の時の卒業制作で、大きな布を自分で大きく染めたもの。ミツトリヒトギの時の物ではないけど、それが自分にとって方向性を決める一番鍵になる作品でした」と言った。振り返ると、最初が親友の柳本真穂さんの励みで二人がコラボ

Secret One: No matter how far you go, never forget your original intent.

When three spices - wasabi, ginger, and shiso - are served together, Japanese food lovers may think it is probably time for some 'sashimi'. However, when onions, sansho (Japanese Pepper), and chili are added, you probably come to mind of something good for your health such as yakuzen cuisine (medicinal cuisine) which is focused on the idea of 'medicine and food from same origin'. However, these plant-based toppings, which are often seen in that home-cooked dish, play a significant and unique role in the artwork titled 'Condiments' by Ms Tabei. This piece, characterised by the technique of repetition, features ten different condiments arranged on a 25-metre fabric. The careful selection of colours - black, yellow, and grey - lends a stylish yet endearing atmosphere to the design, akin to genderless fashion. Achieving two goals at once: it aligns with the motif of strength that Mitsutori-Hitogi wishes to express while also being user-friendly for men. Until this fabric was created, there was a lot of conceptualisation and repetition, drawing of sketches, and many other innovations involved, taking about 3 to 4 months to complete.

Items made with this fabric include hair ties, pouches, bags, stuffed animals, and more. Depending on the way the fabric is cut and sewn, the design of the products differs. Having put so much thought and effort into creating them, Ms Tabei proudly remarked while looking at the original products exhibited, "They all hold sentimental value; there is nothing wasteful." However, when asked about her favourite piece, she said, "That would be my graduation project from university, where I dyed a large piece of fabric myself. It wasn't from Mitsutori-Hitogi, but it was the most key piece that set the direction for me".

The establishment of Mitsutori-Hitogi all started with the encouragement of her close friend, Ms Maho Yanagimoto, and together



they collaborated in Tokyo. When they approached the milestone of nearly 10 years, Ms Tabei decided to move to Shimane with her family. There, she experienced another decade of balancing both their business and family life in an old folk house in Izumo. Although the workspace changed, her wish to create something that empowers others through the strength of living beings remained unchanged. Instead, being surrounded by nature hundreds of times more than in Tokyo, she finds herself constantly in a state where ideas flow as if they are raining down, conscious of the seasons and drawing out the charm from everyday sights. Ms Tabei uses kiwis and other plants she grows in her garden as motifs to bring her work to life. The gradually increasing sense of fulfilment undoubtedly serves as a well-deserved reward for her life.



しミツトリヒトギを東京で創立し、10年目近くになった時、家族と一緒に島根に引っ越した。そして、出雲にある古民家で事業も家庭も両立するもう一つの10年間を経験した。作業の場所は変わったが、「生き物の力を借りて、見るひとの力になるもの」という願いを変えていない。むしろ、東京より何百倍も自然に囲まれて、季節を意識し、普段目にしていないものの中から魅力を引き出すアイデアが降ってくるような状態に常にある。田部井さんが自宅の庭に育てるキウイなどをモチーフとして作品を生き生きとさせ、だんだんと満ちてくる幸福感は、生活にもたらされたご褒美に違いない。

秘訣二：最も大きな願いは、他人の願いを叶えることだ

ミツトリヒトギの手仕事の中で、デザインと実用的な機能を完璧に結びつけるのは、キュービッドではなく、依頼主の願いである。黄色い雲が漂っている出



雲の空というデザインだが、モノによってイメージが異なる。トートバッグとなると、着物の姿で持ちながら青石畳を散策する雰囲気になり、傘となると、雨の日も晴れやかな気分になる。また、収納機能を求めても、使う人に応じて別々に作るようにする。例えば、デートに行くお洒落な女性にとって、カード、スマートフォン、鍵、お札など細かいものが全部一つ小さくまとまるポーチが似合う。それに対して、赤ちゃんがいる母親にとって、両手を空けて赤ちゃん用のお出かけセッ

Secret Two: The greatest wish is to fulfil the wishes of others.

Within the handcrafted work of Mitsutori-Hitogi, perfectly intertwining design and practical functionality is not the work of Cupid, but rather the wish of the client.

The design of the fabric depicts the sky of Izumo with yellow clouds drifting, but depending on the item created, the image differs. For a tote bag, it creates an atmosphere of strolling along Japanese old-style blue cobblestone streets while wearing a kimono, and for an umbrella, it brings a cheerful mood even on rainy days. Additionally, when it comes to storage functionality, they ensure to create each item separately according to the needs of the user. For instance, for a stylish woman going on a date, a pouch that neatly holds small items like credit cards, smartphone, keys, and banknotes would be suitable. Conversely, for a mother with a baby, a mother's bag that accommodates a baby's outing set, allowing her to keep both hands free, can be incredibly helpful. There is absolutely no problem in leaving it to the professional to decide how one fabric is being used to suit the needs of the client. However, Ms Tabei would be more than happy to discuss the idea with the client over a long period of time, as they have many ideas and are passionate about it and she would really like to make it



happen.

Clients include not only individuals but also requests from institutions and companies, and there have been occasions where she has created designs for exhibitions and logos. Since 2014, she has participated in the annual 'Matsue Water Lantern Festival' event, creating numerous lanterns to adorn the fantastical nights. She also provides designs for 'Goshuincho' (a stamp book for shrine and temple visitations), allowing people to record their journeys of faith and wishes when visiting shrines and temples.

Secret Three: Scatter wishes like seeds, cultivating them deeper, wider, and with warmth.

In the living room of her old folk house, visitors can experience silk-screen printing first hand, surrounded by screens that Ms Tabei has meticulously created over the past two decades. As Ms Tabei said that printing is probably the simplest task, she showed us how it's done. The moment the blue ink was pressed out and the pattern was visible was as fun as watching magic for us who had never seen it before.

When asked about taking on apprentices, Ms Tabei happily recounted, "Since my time in Tokyo, I've been teaching middle school students aspiring to attend art universities, right up until their university entrance exams. In the end, they achieved their dreams, graduated from university, and are now active in Tokyo." She added, "If there are children in Shimane Prefecture who also want to pursue a path in art, they are more than welcome. Because I want the children who want to fulfil their dreams to be like me when I was little, to be honest and value the heart within them



that wants to create something." What Ms Tabei wants the next generation to inherit is not just a technique or style, but the spirit of staying true to oneself, passionately pursuing what they love. She believes that ultimately leads to happiness. Regarding her ambitions for 2024, Ms Tabei expressed, "I hope that Mitsutori-Hitogi, like seeds, will sow the power of life, take root in the hearts of more people, and blossom." She continued, "There are many wonderful things in Shimane Prefecture. I hope that Mitsutori-Hitogi can contribute to making Shimane better known and loved by more people through design. I will continue to work harder and harder."

On a clear winter day, the majestic outline of Mt Daisen looms into view, casting a sense of awe from within Ms Tabei's shop. Bathed in the warm midday sunlight, as you sway gently on a swing, the delicate fragrance of wintersweet (Japanese allspice) embraces you, carried by the gentle breeze. It's on Fridays and Saturdays that the shop extends its warmth even further, offering visitors a chance to savour a delightful lunch. Whether it's the satisfaction of your appetite or the enchantment of Ms Tabei's creations that captures you first, one thing remains certain: as long as Mitsutori-Hitogi continues to spread its wishes, happiness will forever permeate this place.



トが入るマザーバックを持つと悩みを解決できる。一つの生地が何に作られるか、プロの職人に任せれば問題ない。田部井さんはこれに対して、「依頼主の思いが多く、長い時間をかけて案を話し合っても、熱い思いがあれば何より嬉しいので、どうしても実現させたいです」と言った。クライアントは個人だけではなく、機関や企業からの依頼があり、展示会や、ロゴデザインを制作したこともある。毎年開催される『松江水燈路』に2014年から出展し、数々の行灯を作り幻想的な夜を飾ってきた。神社やお寺を参拝した人々が、自分の信仰や願いの旅を記録できる御朱印帳デザインを提供している。

秘訣三：願いを種のように撒き、より深く、広く、温かく

古民家のリビングに、シルクスクリーンが体験できるコーナーがあり、田部井さんが20年来作ってきたスクリーンがそこに集めてある。田部井さんは印刷が一番簡単な手作業かなと言いつつ、それを見せてくれた。ブルーインクが押し出され、柄が目に見える瞬間は、初めての私たちにとって、マジックを見るように楽しかった。弟子を受けるかと聞くと、先生は「東京の時から美術大学を志望する中学生を大学受験まで教えていた。結局夢を叶えて大学を卒業し、今東京で活躍中です」と楽しそうに話した。それに、「もし島根県にも美術の道へ進みたい

子がいいたら、大歓迎です。夢をかなえたい子が小さい頃の私みたいに、自分の中にある何か生み出したいという心をすごく大切に、素直になってほしいから。」田部井さんが次の世代に受け継いでほしいのはただの技術やスタイルではなく、自分の心に忠実に、好きなことを一途にやり続けるという精神である。それが最終的には幸せにつながると思う。2024年の抱負について田部井さんは、「ミツトリヒトギが種のように、生きる力を蒔き、より多くの人の心に根を張り、花を咲かせてほしいです。」そして、「島根県にいいものがたくさんあります。ミツトリヒトギは、より多くの人が島根をわかって、好きになってもらうように、デザインで良くて行けたらいいなあと思いますので、もっともっと頑張り続けたいです」と語った。

冬の晴れた日、田部井さんのお店の中から、大山の輪郭がくっきりと見える。真昼の日差しの中、プランコに揺られ、風は臘梅の香りを運ぶ。金・土曜日には、店でランチも提供している。先にお腹が満足するか、それとも、先に田部井さんの作品にほろ酔い気分させられるか、楽しみにしよう！ミツトリヒトギが願いを持って歩き続ける限り、幸せはずっとそばにいと信じている。



Realising Wishes: Adding the Finishing Touch

Men Juan

Humans create art when they encounter emotions and experiences that cannot be expressed solely through words. By incorporating their own emotions, thoughts, and beliefs into artistic creation, they produce works that resonate with the spirit of the times, becoming beloved and sought after by people.

In Matsue City, Shimane Prefecture, there is a craftsman named Tsutomu Horie, who chose not to follow the hustle and bustle and instead chose to be true to his heart and passions and became a Daruma doll craftsman.

Upon entering Mr Horie's home, the first thing that catches your eye is a huge Daruma doll standing about 50 centimetres tall. At first glance, you can tell that it is a time-consuming and challenging job. When asked, he says that it was given to him by his master as a commemoration of his wedding. The Daruma doll is lined with handwritten words, and when you go closer, you can see numerous blessings and well-wishes from family, friends, and even the children who wish and look forward to Mr Horie's happiness through this Daruma doll. The Chinese proverb 'a trifling present with a weighty thought behind it' indeed encapsulates the



meaning of this Daruma doll perfectly.

Entering the back of the house, there is a Japanese-style room in the corner of the ground floor. This is the studio where Mr Horie creates his Daruma dolls. The room is crammed with colourful Daruma dolls of various sizes, from red to gold, with or without black eyes. The temperature and humidity of the room are intentionally maintained to foster the creation of intricate Daruma dolls. The studio is filled with paints, brushes, unpainted Daruma dolls, and partially completed pieces, yet it also seems to maintain an inexplicable order. It provokes one's eagerness to hear about all

画竜点睛

人間は自らの感情を表現するために、言葉で言い表すことができないことにぶつかって芸術を生み出すものである。自らの感情や思想、宗教などを芸術創作に取り入れることで、時代の空気に沿った作品となり、人々に愛され、求められる作品として開花する。

島根県松江市に、雑踏の流れに乗らず、その代わりに、自分の趣味と心に忠実であることを選び、だるま職人になった堀江努さんという職人がいる。

堀江さんの家に入ると、まず目に飛び込んでくるのが、高さ50センチほどの巨大なだるまだ。一目見て、手間がかかり、チャレンジ的な仕事だとわかる。聞けば、堀江さんの結婚の記念に師匠から譲り受けたものだという。だるまには、手書きの文字が並んでいるが、よく見ると家族や友人、さらには自由奔放な子供たちからの祝福の言葉がたくさん書かれており、このだるまを通して堀江さんの幸せを願い、楽しみにしている人たちの気持ちが伝わってくる。「贈り物はささやかでも、その気持ちはあたたかい」という中国のことわざは、まさにこのだるまの意味を表現しているだろう。

家の奥に入ると、1階の一角に和室がある。堀江さんが「だるま」を制作しているアトリエだ。赤から金、黒目が入っているものから入っていないものまで、大小さまざまな色とりどりのだるまが所狭しと並んでいる。和室の温度と湿度

門 娼

も、より精緻なダルマを生み出すために意図的に保たれている。アトリエには絵の具、筆、何も色付けがされていないもの、半完成品があふれているが、また不可解な順序があるようで、ここにあるすべてのものと主人についての話を聞きたくてたまらなくなる。

堀江さんがだるま制作に取り組んださまざまな理由はすでに予想していたとはいえ、趣味を一生の仕事にしたと聞いて感動し、アーティストの比類ない能力と忍耐力にやはり驚かされた。

だるまは仏教に起因し、達磨法師が座禅を組む姿勢を模した魔除けの品として生まれたもので、邪気を払うとされることから、当初から宗教的な意味合いが強かった。社会の発展とともに、だるまは徐々に装飾品の一種へと進化し、眉と頬は「鶴」と「亀」をイメージしたものが多く、「鶴」は縁起を、「亀」は長寿を表し、現代のだるまは祈願のための縁起物としての意味合いが強くなっている。

芸術の創造には絶え間ない革新と変化が求められる。堀江さんの「出雲だるま」の顔は「龍神」、「勾玉」、「国引き物語」をイメージしたデザインが特徴である。たくさんのだるまの中で、特に注目に値するのは、堀江さんが「神在だるま」を生み出したことである。島根県の出雲大社が古くから全国的に名を馳せていることから、島根県には「神在(じんざい)餅」や「神在(ぜんざい)だるま」

the things here and their masters.

Although I had already anticipated various reasons for Mr Horie's commitment to Daruma production, I was deeply moved to hear that he turned his interest into a lifelong career, and I am still amazed by his unparalleled ability and perseverance.

The Daruma doll originated from Buddhism, modelled after the posture of Bodhidharma meditating. Initially created as a talisman to ward off evil spirits, it was believed to dispel negative energy, hence it had strong religious significance from the beginning. As society evolved, the Daruma gradually transformed into a form of decorative item. Many Daruma dolls



など、神在からの派生物も多いように思う。それは縁起を担ぐだけでなく、地域の特色を際立たせ、地元への恩返しもあるだろう。また、堀江さんの温厚で寛大なイメージを思い浮かべると、「だるま」制作における堀江さんの影響なのか、堀江さんのイメージが作品にマッピングされているのかわからないが、作者と作品との間にある共鳴を感じる。これはまさに運命の職人のだろう。

だるまの右目を黒いペンで描きながら願い事をすると、だるまのご加護で願いが叶うと言われていたので、見学の最後に運良くとても素敵なだるまのプレゼントをもらった。堀江さんの指導のもと右目を描き、機会があれば左目も一緒に描いてもらおうかどうか躊躇しているうちに、堀江さんはすでにだるまの制作工程を始めていた。堀江さんが集中してペンを走らせる姿は、中国の詩人、張雨が書いた「木工の名や玉工の彫りは伝えられ、巧みな技は天に勝る。」のように匠の心と奇想があって、美しいものが作り出せるのだろう。天の職人技のように精巧な言葉でも、時にはその雰囲気や正確に表現できないことがあることがわかった!

now feature eyebrows and cheeks resembling 'cranes' and 'turtles', with the 'crane' symbolising good fortune and the 'turtle' symbolising longevity. In modern times, Daruma dolls are primarily seen as lucky charms for prayers and wishes.

The creation of art requires constant innovation and change. Mr Horie's 'Izumo Daruma' doll stands out for its unique design inspired by the *Ryujin* (Japanese Dragon God), *Magatama* (curved, comma-shaped beads), and the Legend of Kunibiki (an Izumo Area local legend). But among all his creations, what comes as the most special is the 'Zenzai Daruma'—a Daruma doll with *Zenzai*, a traditional Japanese dessert soup, balanced on its head. The Kanji characters are written as 'Jinzai - God is present', linking to Izumo's myths, particularly the Myriad Deities Arrive at Izumo Taisha Shrine during the tenth month of the lunar calendar. This shrine, located in Shimane Prefecture, holds a significant reputation, leading to various products inspired by its culture, like 'Jinzai (zenzai) mochi (rice cakes)' and 'Zenzai Daruma'. (In the local Izumo dialect, 'Zenzai' is pronounced as 'Jinzai' and also written in Kanji characters as 'God is present'). These not only bring good fortune but also highlight the local characteristics and perhaps serve as an appreciation to the community. Also, when I think of Mr Horie's gentle and generous image, I feel a resonance between him and his work, although I do not know whether it is because he was influenced by the production of the Daruma or whether his image is mapped onto his work. But this must truly be a destined career for him.

It is said that when you make a wish while drawing the right eye of a Daruma doll with a black pen, your wish will come true with the Daruma's blessing, so I was lucky enough to receive a very nice Daruma present at the end of my visit. Under Mr Horie's guidance, I drew the right eye, and as I hesitated whether to ask him to draw the left eye together if there was an opportunity, Mr Horie had already begun the process of making the Daruma doll. Mr Horie's concentration on his pen is reminiscent of the Chinese poet Zhang Yu, who left words to describe one's marvellous creations that excel nature as surpassing even the works of God. But I feel these words sometimes fail to accurately describe the creation of Mr Horie!





50 Years of Craftsmanship: The Creation of a Lion's Head Infused with Wishes

Bianca Chan

During the New Year in Japan, a traditional Japanese lion dance – *shishi-mai* is performed to ward off evil spirits, and the most crucial element of this dance is the lion's head, known as 'shishi-gashira.'

For over five decades, Mr Yoshio Nakao, known by his carving name Hōzan Nakao, has poured his passion into the art of carving, giving life to the extraordinary 'Izumo Shishi-gashira' – the country's sole lion head that gracefully moves its ears with every open-mouthed gesture. The exceptional craftsmanship of Mr Nakao earned the Izumo Shishi-gashira the prestigious designation as a traditional craft of Shimane Prefecture in 2005.

With an awareness of the notable differences between Japanese

and Chinese lion heads, my curiosity was piqued. The captivating detail of the ears swaying in tandem with the opening mouth triggered a sense of déjà vu with the lively Chinese lion head. Given my roots in Hong Kong, where the vibrant pulse of traditional Chinese Lion Dance courses through the cultural veins, I couldn't help but feel deeply connected to its dynamic Chinese counterparts

The production of the Izumo Shishi-gashira begins with the careful selection of wood, followed by a meticulous five-year drying process and various stages of craftsmanship. Devoting eight hours daily for one to two months, each creation emerges as a testament to the delicate dance of

願いを込めて獅子頭を製作し、50年

お正月やお祭りの際に邪気払いのために舞われる獅子舞。その中でも「獅子頭」が注目を集めています。50年以上にわたり、中尾芳雄さん(彫号：中尾芳山)は情熱を注ぎ、全国で唯一、口を開けると一緒に耳が動く獅子舞「出雲獅子頭」を生み出しました。その優れた工芸技術が認められ、平成17年には島根県ふるさと工芸品に指定されました。

ビアンカ・チャン

出雲獅子頭の製作は木材の厳選から始まり、5年間乾燥させ、様々な工程を経て完成します。毎日8時間かけ、1か月から2か月かかる製作プロセスを通じて、軽くて丈夫な獅子頭が誕生します。また、注文を受けた獅子頭は必ず2つ作るのだそうです。1つの作品に対して、実は2つ分の労力がかかっています。中尾さんが毎回2つ同じものを作ることで、お客さんがどちらかを選ぶことができるし、また将来の修理の際の参考にもなります。

獅子頭の形態、顔や表情、色は地域や神社により異なり、それぞれの独自の特徴を持っています。頭部の毛には馬のたてがみが使われ、一般的に白、黒、茶色になっています。歯の形や色、頭部の髪などの組み合わせによって、神社それぞれが独自の獅子頭の顔を作り上げています。これらの特徴は、地域ごとに異なる獅子頭の個性を形成し、祭りや行事において地域の文化や伝統を豊かに表現しています。出雲獅子頭は伝統工芸であり、昔からの顔が守られていますが、最近一般の人が注文する際に顔を変えたいと考えることも許容されているそうです。

中尾さんによると、獅子頭を製作する際、最も難しい工程の一つは目を作り上げることだそうです。目玉は非常に丸く滑らかに仕上げなければならず、それを真鍮の板に取り付ける必要があります。その真鍮の板を獅子頭の目

craftsmanship, birthing a shishi-gashira that is not only ethereally lightweight but also robust in its presence. According to Mr Nakao, one of the most challenging steps in crafting a shishi-gashira is bringing its eyes to life. Crafting perfectly rounded and smooth eyeballs is no small feat, and attaching them to a brass plate adds an extra layer of complexity. Mr Nakao skilfully hammers the brass plate into the precise shape of the shishi-gashira's eyes, showcasing his mastery. It's through these meticulous techniques and years of experience that the Izumo Shishi-gashira acquires its unique expression, almost as if a breath of life has been imparted.

In the process of fulfilling commissioned orders for shishi-gashira, it has come to light that Mr. Nakao consistently produces a pair rather than a singular piece. Surprisingly, the creation of one shishi-gashira entails the labour equivalent of two. Mr Nakao's recurring practice of crafting identical twin pieces serves a dual purpose that goes beyond mere duplication. Firstly, this approach introduces an element of client involvement in the artistic journey. Upon placing an order for a shishi-gashira, clients are presented not with a solitary masterpiece but with a pair, each possessing subtle differentiations in expression. This intriguing facet grants clients the agency to choose the piece that resonates most with their aesthetic preferences. Yet, the significance of this creative twinning extends beyond the point of sale. In practical terms, having a twin shishi-gashira becomes an invaluable asset when considerations shift towards potential future repairs or maintenance. The duplicate piece becomes a point of reference, offering insights crucial for ensuring a seamless restoration process.

In the realm of shishi-gashira, their forms, facial expressions, and colours exhibit a captivating diversity influenced by regions and shrines. Each bears its distinctive features, creating a tapestry of uniqueness. The mane, which uses horsehair, typically adorns the heads in



shades of white, black, or brown. Through a blend of tooth shapes, hues, and variations in head hair, individual shrines sculpt their exclusive shishi-gashira appearances. These characteristics give rise to a kaleidoscope of regional shishi-gashira personalities, enriching local culture and tradition during festivals and events. The Izumo Shishi-gashira, a traditional craft, proudly preserves the countenance of history. Yet, in the modern era, when ordinary individuals commission these artful pieces, the desire to tweak the shishi-gashira's face is a permissible and welcomed.

The belief "I've never considered giving up. Even if my eyesight weakens, I'll persist," resonates through Mr Nakao's hands, leaving an indelible mark on the crafting of the Izumo Shishi-gashira. With years of experience and honed skills, he has earned high praise in the realm of shishi-gashira and various other crafts. Even at the age of 82 this year, Mr Nakao continues to wield the passion of a true artisan, enriching local culture and tradition.

The shishi-gashira transcends mere craftsmanship, evolving into a symbol of warding off evil and dispelling misfortune—a quintessential representation of Japan's culture and spirit. As a traditional craft, the lion head embodies Mr Nakao's unwavering convictions, infusing vitality into people's lives with wishes and hopes. It plays a vital role in fostering peace and prosperity within the community, carrying the weight of aspirations for a brighter future.



元の文化や伝統を豊かに彩り続けています。獅子頭は単なる工芸品を超え、魔除けや厄払いの象徴として、日本の文化と精神を代表する存在となっています。伝統工芸としての獅子頭は、中尾さんの信念が込められ、願いと希望を持って人々に活気をもたらし、地域の平和と繁栄を祈る大切な役割を果たしています。



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