

KAMAKURABORI

東 147 文化 市
2025 鎌倉
OUTLINE OF EAST ASON
0025 KAMAKURA



Publisher: Kamakura City
TEL.: 0467-23-3000

This logo is used to indicate Japanese traditional crafts designated by the Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry of Japan.

Dento mark



R5-271



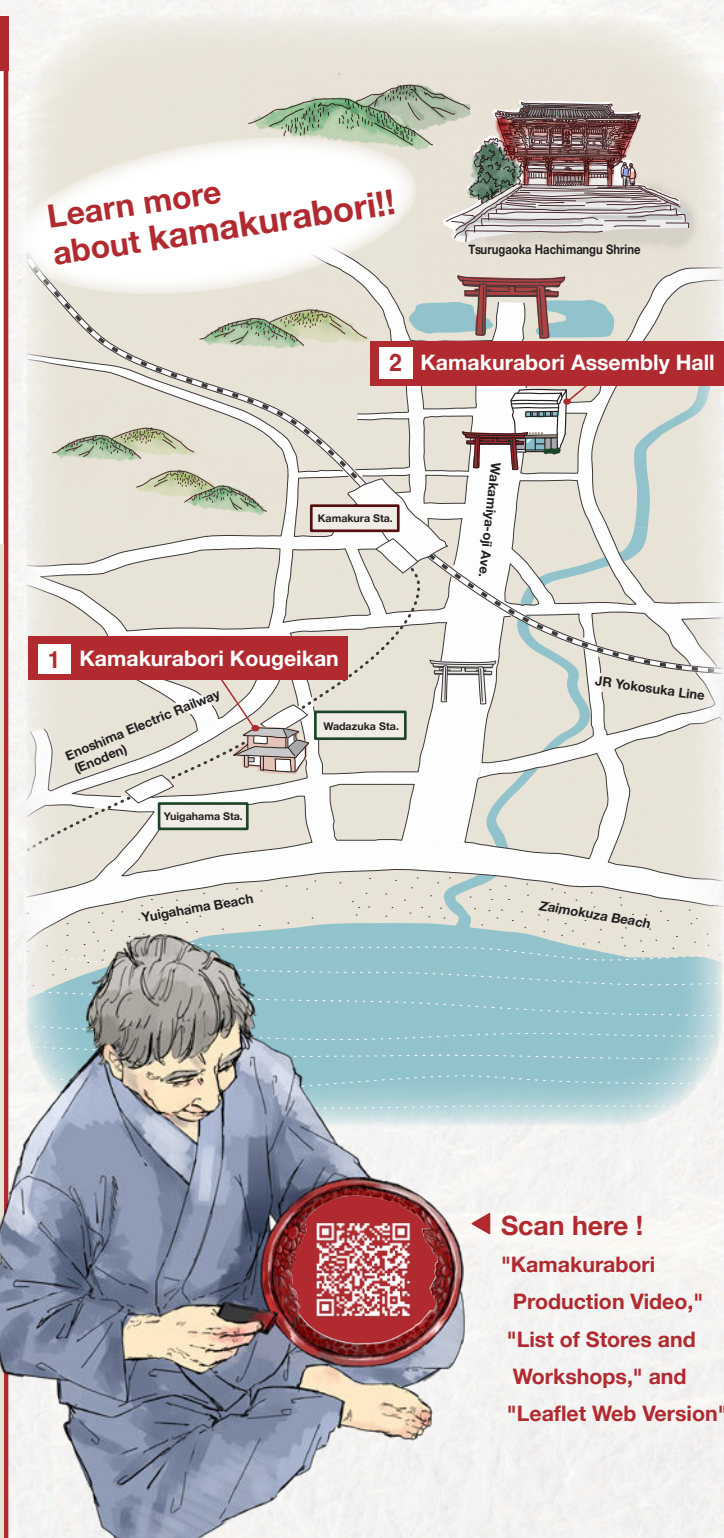
JAPAN HERITAGE
日本遺産

1 Kamakurabori Kougeikan Managed by the Traditional Kamakurabori Business Cooperative Association



Kamakurabori Kougeikan sells kamakurabori, offers custom-made & lacquered kamakurabori, sells tools and materials, and offers hands-on kamakurabori workshops (reservations required). A kamakurabori craftsperson is available at the Kougeikan every Saturday afternoon to answer any questions you may have. Please feel free to contact us for more information.

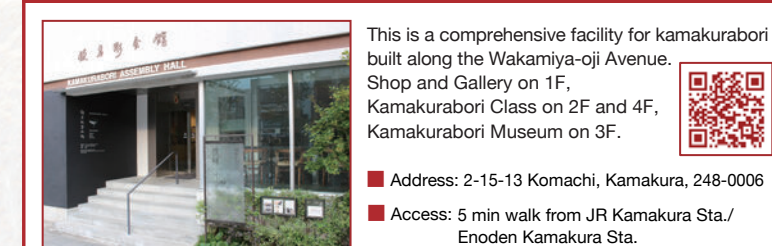
- Address: 3-4-7, Yuigahama, Kamakura, 248-0014
- TEL: 0467-23-0154 (FAX: 0467-23-9816)
- Access: 10 min walk from JR Kamakura Sta./1 min walk toward the sea from Enoden Wadazuka Sta.



1 Kamakurabori Kougeikan

◀ Scan here !
"Kamakurabori
Production Video,"
"List of Stores and
Workshops," and
"Leaflet Web Version"

2 Kamakurabori Assembly Hall

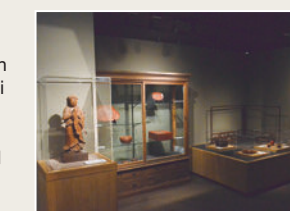


This is a comprehensive facility for kamakurabori built along the Wakamiya-oji Avenue. Shop and Gallery on 1F, Kamakurabori Class on 2F and 4F, Kamakurabori Museum on 3F.

- Address: 2-15-13 Komachi, Kamakura, 248-0006
- Access: 5 min walk from JR Kamakura Sta./Enoden Kamakura Sta.



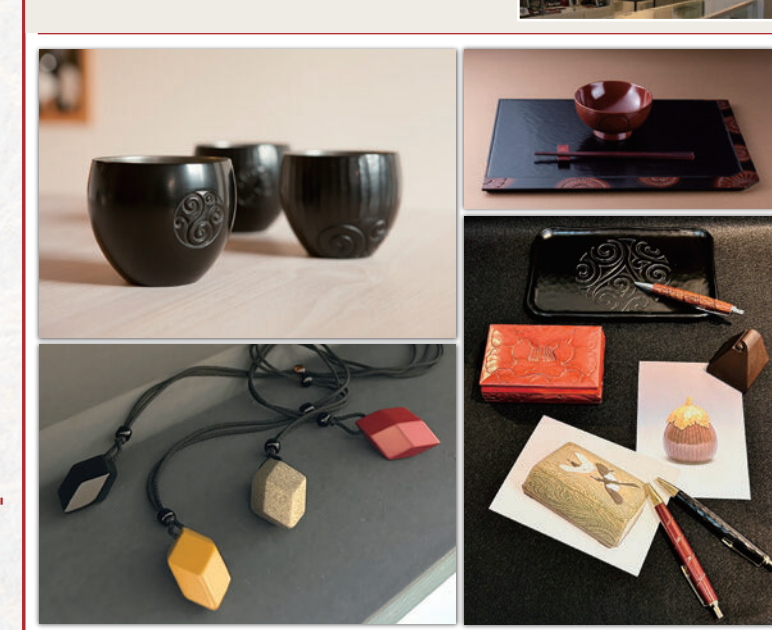
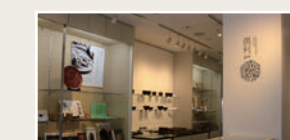
□ **Kamakurabori Museum**
This museum introduces kamakurabori, a traditional craft with 800 years of history. You can see approximately 50 works from the Muromachi period to the present day, as well as videos of the production process. Hands-on workshops (no reservation required) are held on the first and fourth Saturday of every month.
■ TEL.: 0467-25-1502



□ **Kamakurabori Class**
Kamakurabori classes are held every day. Even a beginner can enjoy learning carving with careful instruction.
■ TEL.: 0467-25-1500



□ **Shop Guri**
The shop sells original-design vessels and kamakurabori products made by craftspeople.
■ TEL.: 0467-33-5751



KAMAKURABORI





A Traditional Craft of Timeless Beauty

Kamakurabori is known for its rich, lustrous finish and hardy, durable characteristics, making these products as practical and esthetically pleasing to use today as they were centuries ago. The craft has its birth in the Kamakura Period, when Buddhist sculptors were influenced by the carving and lacquering techniques of Chinese artisans. Over the centuries the craft has been perfected to reflect uniquely Japanese sensibilities and has become a useful and esthetically pleasing art form enjoyed by people everywhere.

THE HISTORY OF KAMAKURABORI

Kamakura Period

Zen and the Origins of Kamakurabori

During the Kamakura period (1185-1333), with the migration of Zen Buddhism to Japan came many kinds of art and crafts from China, particularly plates and bowls and incense boxes created using a technique known as *yaushu*. These intricately carved wooden pieces were lacquered with many coats of raw tree sap and were highly prized for their beauty and their durability. Buddhist sculptors of the period attempted to duplicate the technique by carving and lacquering Japanese wood plates and bowls and through their efforts, the art of kamakurabori was born.



Maesukue (table)
Kencho-ji Temple



Shumidan (altar)
Kencho-ji Temple

Muromachi Period

Kamakurabori Made as Buddhist Altar Equipment

Many masterpieces were created during the Muromachi period (1333-1573). Prominent examples are Gurimon-daikogo (incense case) from Engaku-ji Temple (in Kanagawa), Shishibotanmon-kendai (inkstone box) from Kamakura Kokuhoukan Museum (in Kanagawa), and Tsubakimon-oi (baggage carrier) from Chuson-ji Temple (in Iwate). Perhaps the first use of *kamakura-mono*, literally "things made in Kamakura," to refer to this particular art form comes from the diary of Sanetaka, an imperial court noble at the time.



Gurimon-daikogo
(incense case)
Engaku-ji Temple



Shishibotanmon-kendai
(inkstone box)
Kamakura Kokuhoukan Museum

Edo Period

Popularization of the Tea Ceremony and Kamakurabori

During the Edo period (1603-1868), with the spread of the tea ceremony, demand for tea containers, incense containers, and incense trays increased. Around this time, highly elaborate *makie* (gold lacquerware) was developed, but the elegant kamakurabori was also loved by people, and the name of kamakurabori was clearly mentioned in the guide book for tea utensils called *Manpou Zensho* published in 1694. During this period, kamakurabori works with the taste of Edo culture, such as *wabi*, *sabi*, and *iki*, were created.



Botanmon-chaire (tea caddy)
Kamakurabori Museum



Mizudorigata-kogo (incense case)
Kamakurabori Museum

Meiji and Taisho Period

Kamakurabori as a Livelihood Craft

In 1868, the first year of Meiji, owing to the anti-Buddhist movement that expanded under the new government's policy to separate Buddhism and Shintoism, Buddhist sculptors lost their jobs. With this as a turning point, Itzuki Goto and Kenzan Mitsuhashi were the only two Buddhist sculptors who found a way to survive by making kamakurabori for daily use crafts. In 1889, with the opening of the Yokosuka railway line, Kamakura flourished as a holiday resort. Kamakurabori began to be made for daily necessities and souvenirs, and developed into its modern style.



Rengemon-kumotsuzara (plate)
Private collection



Arisugawa-kikumon-kotbako (small box)
Private collection

And to the Mode

During the Showa period (1926-1989), life became more comfortable after a period of high economic growth. Kamakurabori came to be loved by many people as the warmth of handwork was sought in contrast to mass-produced industrial products. It was also popular in hobby culture classes, and enthusiasm spread nationwide. In 1979, it was designated as a production area for a traditional craft by the Minister of International Trade and Industry at the time. Since then, training successors and creating new products have been actively carried out mainly by the Traditional Kamakurabori Business Cooperative Association.



THE ANCIENT CRAFT OF KAMAKURABORI



Preparing the materials
The wood used to make kamakurabori comes from the *kurumi* tree. After harvesting, it is cured and then line inked, cut, coarse lathed, weathered, and finally, carved and lacquered.



Many raw wood materials are used
A wide variety of wood materials are lathed, joined, hollowed, and rooted, and other cutting techniques are applied to create this versatile art form.



Line-inking
Designs and patterns that will later be carved are sketched in ink onto translucent sheets of Japanese paper, and then the traced images are transferred onto dampened wood surfaces by rubbing.



Preliminary carving
The piece is formed by carving along the base lines of the patterns that have been transferred onto the wood surface, creating dimension, angle, and perspective.



Rough carving
Special, flat-headed knives are used to chip away portions of the surface to create a relief pattern, exposing the designs to be created by the artist.



Finish carving
Finish carving is added to the design to produce the trademark gouging effect specific to kamakurabori art pieces.



Lacquering (foundation coating)
A raw sap *urushi* base lacquer coat is applied to the freshly carved piece, where it soaks into the wood and forms a rich undercoating for the final lustrous finish.



Lacquering
Following repeated coatings of the base lacquer coat, the surface is polished using fine-grained charcoal or other abrasive that creates a smooth surface.



Lacquering
A black lacquer is then applied in two coats followed by polishing with fine abrasives.



Lacquering
A vermilion lacquer is then applied to create the outer layer, a reddish, highly translucent finish unique to kamakurabori.



Lacquering
To temper the finish of kamakurabori lacquer ware, powdered wet out material is applied to give the finish a unique patina.



Lacquering (final polishing)
A thin layer of lacquer is applied and then wiped off, followed by a final polishing with powdered oat material. This process is repeated until the perfect finish is achieved.



Hopes for the Future of Kamakurabori

Japan has many wonderful classic works of kamakurabori. The works created by craftspeople of each era and intended to be passed on to future generations have a strong appeal to audiences. However, we should not just be satisfied with such works. Unless today's craftspeople living in tradition read the trends of the times and evolve to suit them, the long-lasting history is doomed to disappear. We have a strong desire to seriously consider the originality and techniques of our predecessors and pass on the tradition of kamakurabori to future generations. We believe that creating new products in line with the times is the path to the future.