



Preserving the local heart of manufacturing

The Kiryu Area Industrial Promotion Center features an extensive archive that gives a feel for the underlying vitality of Kiryu as a textile production area. The center houses 16,000 samples of Kiryu textiles, 2,000 prototype samples, and a collection of 1,900 ethnic garments from around the world—a valuable piece of cultural history. Together the center's holdings number over 24,000 items, which are managed using digital data. Complete records—including images, specs, and the name of the producer—are available for 10,000 dyeing and weaving items. Anyone can search the archive using center's computers for free. The digital data include cutting samples of export textiles stored at the Textile Products Inspection Institute of the former Ministry of International Trade and Industry. Actual items, ranging widely from samples that were exhibited at overseas expositions in the 1920s to modern pieces, are kept in the collection room. Visits and training sessions are available to companies and schools, and individual perusal is possible with reservations. It is not uncommon for people to spend the whole day in the collection room.

Textiles are a traditional industry in Kiryu. The city is proud of its development not through mass production, but rather through the concentration of skill in everything from planning to product creation, including design, twining, dyeing, weaving, embroidery, and sewing. Kiryu describes itself as being able to do it all. However, a segmented manufacturing system may complicate inheritance of the art. For that reason, the city put Kiryu City Textile Industry Material Preservation Regulations into force. The regulations make explicit public safekeeping to prevent valuable material owned by each company from being scattered and lost. Today, when donation offers are made, a committee goes to make a direct scrutiny, selecting and collecting only items of value. The center is now looking at creating contents geared toward users, including apparel and producers, as a direction for the archive's future development.



▲3フロアに渡り、膨大な資料を保管する収蔵室。The storage space for the vast archives spans three floors.

◀1960年代の桐生サンプルブック。A Kiryu sample book from the 1960s.

◀展示室では世界の民族衣装コレクションを紹介。実物に触ることもできる。World ethnic costumes are on display in the exhibit room. It is possible to touch the examples.

▼中国貴州省苗族の衣裳。Costumes of the Hmong people from Guizhou, China.



▲1960年代のサンプルより。金糸を使い、裏面の糸を切るバックカット加工を施している。華やかなテキスタイルは桐生ならではの。A sample from the 1960s. Gold thread is used, and back cut processing is used to cut the thread on the inside. The colorful textile is a perfect Kiryu example.