

# Hand-designed *Kyo yuzen* -dyed Fabrics



Hand-designed Kyo Yuzen approved by the minister of economy and Industry

Traditional industrial arts craftsman

Kozo OKAYAMA

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The term 'Yuzen'-dyeing comes from the name of a popular artist, Yuzensai miyazaki, who drew pictures on fans in the late 1600s. Today, it is used as a proper noun to describe Japan's beautiful dye patterns. The gorgeous and elegant 'yuzen' of Kyoto and Kanazawa, where the quality and amount of flowing water is ideal for vivid color, has continued to make use of these techniques to this day.

## The main stages of production



**1. Formulate a plan**  
The first step is to decide on the kimono's design, considering its fabric, type, and the age of its intended wearer, as well as what kind of pattern and color to use.



**2. Designing a rough draft**  
This stage is similar to designing the blueprint of a house. The foundation of how the pattern will be dyed is set here.



**3. Make a rough sketch using dye from spiderwort flowers**  
The pattern is drawn directly on the fabric using blue ink processed from spiderwort flowers.



**4. Apply paste**  
A metal is attached to the end of a tube of paste, allowing a thin thread-like line of paste to ensure that the yuzen dye applied in the next step does not run outside its intended area.



**5. Protective paste**  
A protective layer of starch paste is applied to areas that have been colored so when the earth-color dye is applied, it does not enter the colored patterns. The protective paste is soft like an earlobe and it is used in a semi-dry state at earth-color dyeing.



**6. Earth-dyeing**  
In this stage, earth-color dye is applied with a brush. Because the surface area to be dyed is very large, it is easy for irregularities to occur. A quick hand that dyes evenly is necessary. After dyeing, steam is applied to set the earth-color.



**7. Steaming**  
During the coloring stage, dye is applied to the fabric. In order to permanently set the dye and finalize the coloring, the fabric goes through a steaming stage. 200-300 m of 94-99 degrees Celsius.



**8. Coloring (yuzen drawing)**  
It is in this stage of the process where the most beauty is added. Dye is applied within the lines of protective paste to form gorgeous patterns.



**9. Steaming**  
This stage was once known as "Yuzen washing in the Kamo River," a seasonal tradition in Kyoto. In this stage, all the paste and unfixed dye is washed away with water. Although it is now forbidden to wash fabric in the river, huge tubs are constructed for indoor use, and fabric is washed in these.  
**Stretching**  
Fabric is steamed and made softer, more flexible, and wrinkles are brought out.



**10. Gold pressing**  
This is a final stage in the Yuzen process. Gold or silver leaf or powder is applied, and fine lines are covered over with lines of gold.



**11. Embroidery**  
This is also a final stage. Just like the gold pressing, further value and beauty are added with Kyoto-style embroidery.

### Company Profile

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#### Fushimi Atelier

Fukakusa Taniguchi-cho, Fushimi-ku, Kyoto-shi

Established September, 1968

Capital 100 million yen

Type of business

Manufacturing of Hand-designed Kyo Yuzen

No. of Exclusive Cooperative Companies 180

#### Main products

Wide-sleeved kimonos, ceremonial kimonos,  
semi-formal kimonos, kimono obi-sashes,  
collars, other kimono accessories, coats, shawls

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