

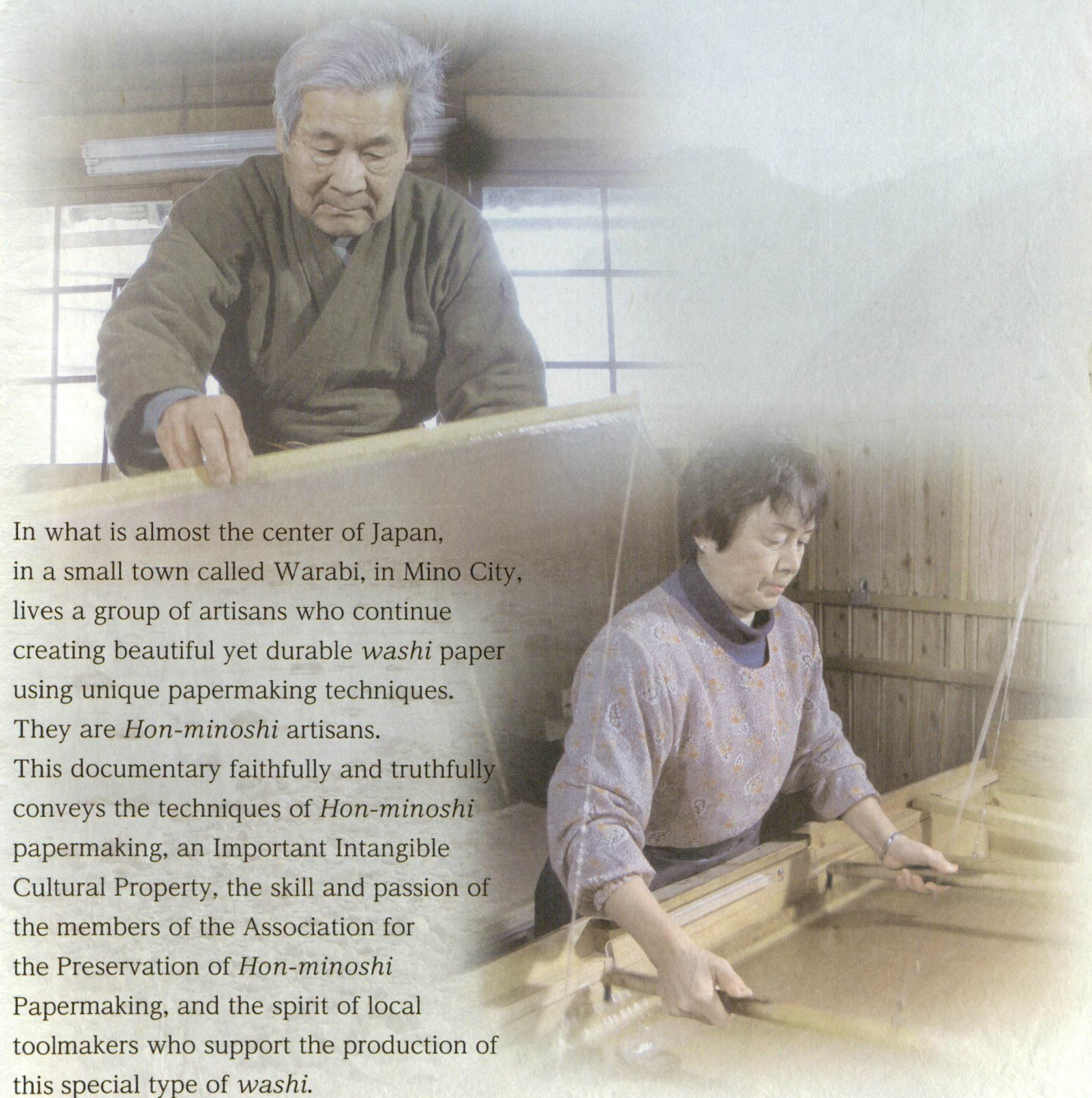
35mm,Color,34min.

FY 2011 Craft Technique Documentary

# *Hon-minoshi*

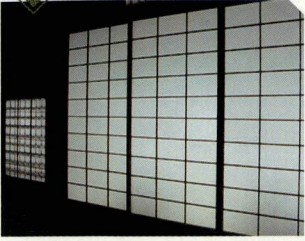
Planned by the Agency for Cultural Affairs

Produced by Mainichi Productions



In what is almost the center of Japan, in a small town called Warabi, in Mino City, lives a group of artisans who continue creating beautiful yet durable *washi* paper using unique papermaking techniques. They are *Hon-minoshi* artisans. This documentary faithfully and truthfully conveys the techniques of *Hon-minoshi* papermaking, an Important Intangible Cultural Property, the skill and passion of the members of the Association for the Preservation of *Hon-minoshi* Papermaking, and the spirit of local toolmakers who support the production of this special type of *washi*.

## 1 *Hon-minoshi*, Important Intangible Cultural Property



Since the Edo Period, *Hon-minoshi* has been considered the finest paper for use on *shoji*, or sliding doors. The technique of *Hon-minoshi* papermaking was designated an Important Intangible Cultural Property in 1969, and today, the Association for the Preservation of *Hon-minoshi* Papermaking is recognized as its Holding Group.

## 2 *Kawazarashi* (stream bleaching)



*Hon-minoshi* is made from high-quality *Nasu kozo*, or paper mulberry plant, from Ibaraki prefecture. The white *kozo* bast is soaked in the pristine waters of the Itadori River for two days and two nights to remove any soluble elements.

## 3 *Kamini* (boiling)



Plant or soda ash is added to boiling water, and the bast is then simmered in the mixture, removing impurities and softening the fibers.

## 4 *Chiritori* (cleaning the bast)



Small specks and tiny bruised areas are carefully removed from the bast. Mrs. SUZUKI Hagi has been doing this work since she was a child.

## 5 *Kamiuchi* (beating process)



The bast is then beaten with hammers with radial grooves that resemble a chrysanthemum flower. With each beating, the fibers are broken up into individual strands.

## 6 Making *Kyoma-ban*, or large sheets of paper



After adding the fibers and *neri*, a viscous extract of the *tororoaoi* root, to the water, Mr. SAWAMURA Masashi stirs it to make the paper. In addition to the normal front-to-back motion of the *keta* (frame) used in papermaking, he incorporates a side-to-side swing, which spreads the fibers in a uniform grain and increases their strength.

## 7 Crafting a *sukizu* (bamboo screen)



The screens used in Mino have a very fine weave. The bamboo strips are just 0.5 to 0.7 millimeters wide. Mino screens have a standard density of about 26.5 strips per 15 millimeters. Here, Mrs. ITO Hiroko weaves the screen using a method called *sogitsuke*. She first cuts the tips of the bamboo strips at an angle, then splices them together into longer strips.

## 8 Making *Mino-ban* paper



*Mino-ban* is the name given to *Hon-minoshi* in a smaller, traditional size. A small frame is divided in half, and two sheets are produced at the same time. It is made in the same way as *Kyoma-ban* using both side-to-side and front-to-back swinging motions.

## 9 Making *Usu-mino* (thin sheets of paper)



*Usu-mino* paper is used to restore historical documents and paintings and to provide mountings for paintings and calligraphy. Here, Mrs. SUZUKI Toyomi makes *Usu-mino* paper through *konashi-yuri*, or the process of keeping the water moving vigorously in the frame as she works.

## 10 Crafting a *keta* (frame)



The frame is an essential papermaking tool that keeps *sukizu* firmly in place and provides an outer edge for the paper. Mr. SHOJI Kazunari, who lives in Mino, makes frames of the finest Kiso cypress.

### 11 Crafting a clasp



Mr. FUNATO Keizo, who lives in Seki, a city next to Mino, makes the metal clasps that go on frame handles.

### 16 Cutting



The paper is then stacked. The craftsman puts his weight on the paper and cuts it.

### 12 First *kamihoshi* (drying)



The freshly-made *washi* is left out overnight, then carefully removed one sheet at a time, and brushed over a board of chestnut wood.

### 17 Training workshops



The valuable technique of *Hon-minoshi* papermaking is being passed on to the next generation through training workshops held in Mino.

### 13 Crafting a brush



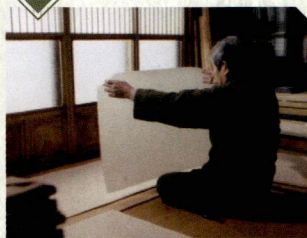
Mr. SUKEGAWA Yoshihisa makes brushes using hair from a horse's mane. The most important thing is making sure all of the horse hairs are carefully aligned.

### 14 Second *kamihoshi* (drying)



The drying boards to which the *washi* is attached are set out in the sun to dry. As it dries in the sun, the paper grows whiter.

### 15 Sorting



The newly-made *washi* is held up to the light and sorted. Hands and eyes are used to determine differences in weight and thickness.

The Itadori River, a tributary of the Nagara River

### Special Thanks:

Association for the Preservation of *Hon-minoshi* Papermaking

ITO Hiroko SHOJI Kazunari SUKEGAWA Yoshihisa FUNATO Keizo OHTA Masaru

MINO-WASHI Museum

Mino City Board of Education

Office of the Shosoin Treasure House, Imperial Household Agency

### Production Staff:

Producer:	KOGURE Tadahiro	Narration:	Chris Koprowski
Director:	KUROSAKI Yoichi	Music:	YAMAZAKI Shigeyuki
Filming:	NAKAI Masayoshi	Title Design:	TSURUOKA Akiiku
Lighting:	YAMADA Kazuo	Editing:	NAGANUMA Yoshiko
Recording:	NAKANO Takayoshi	Sound Editing:	KADOKURA Toru (Tokyo TV Center)
Filming Assistant:	SAITO Sota	Film Development:	YOKOCINE D.I.A.
Lighting Assistant:	SATO Saisuke		
Production Facilitator:	KAKINUMA Satoshi		