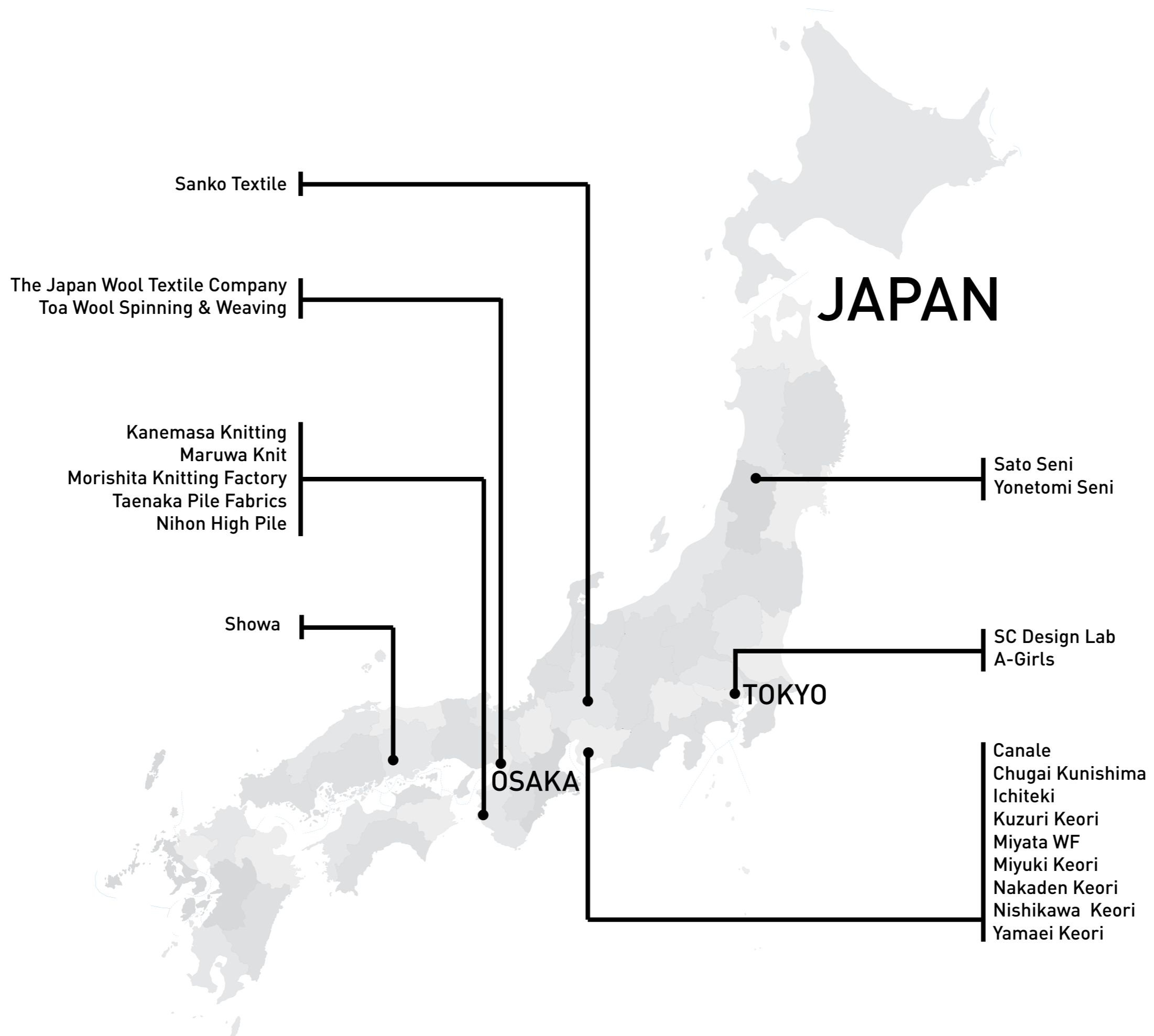


# WOOL SOURCING GUIDE JAPAN EDITION



THE  
WOOLMARK  
COMPANY





**WEAVERS**

# CHUGAI KUNISHIMA CORPORATION

Established in 1850, Chugai Kunishima Corporation is considered to be the oldest weaver in the iconic region of Bishu, near Kyoto. Not only has the company produced high-quality suiting textiles for the likes of 170 years, Chugai Kunishima also specialises in garment making for local and international markets. As well as fine micron suiting, high-density textiles and blends are where this company's strengths lie.

## MACHINERY

12 Rapier looms  
28 Projectile looms

## PRODUCTION CAPACITY

700,000 metres/year

[www.ckktex.co.jp](http://www.ckktex.co.jp)

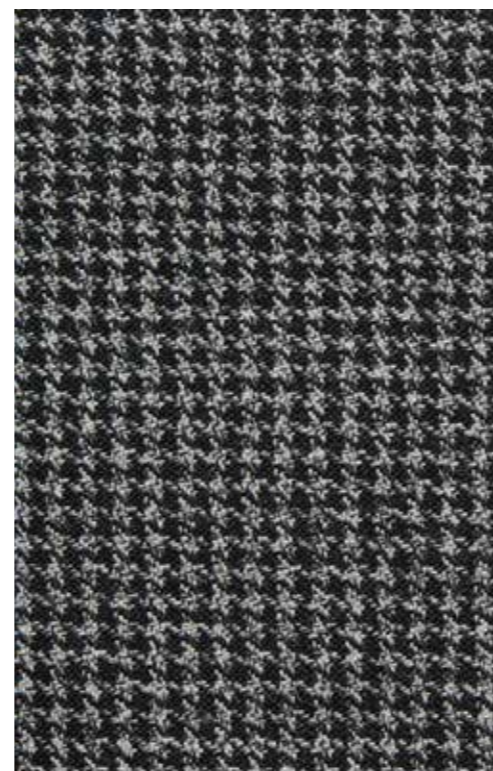
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*I visited ateliers in Bishu, Japan and it was so inspiring! I met artisans in the wool factories there and we worked on custom fabrics. They also allowed me to have access to fabrics I would not have otherwise been able to use, meaning I've been able to mix wool with both sportier and more artisanal designs.*

Christelle Kocher of Koché

”



# NAKADEN KEORI

Nakaden has fully integrated production mills to create a wide range of wool fabrics including Super 100s-180s wool in worsted and woollen yarn, and circular and flat knits. The company also has large yarn-dyeing capacities and a finishing mill. This extensive set up allows the company to take on small and large orders, with their machines running 24 hours per day. Founded in 1960, Nakaden also partners with almost 100 other manufacturers in the Bishu region.

## MACHINERY

74 Looms (selvage, double-warp, leno system)  
39 Single & Double machines (5G to 40G)  
4 flat-bet machines (SRY 12G)  
1 whole-garment mini (7G)

## PRODUCTION CAPACITY

Weaving 2.5 million metres/year  
Knitting 140,000 kg/year  
Yarn: 250,000 kg/year

[www.nakadenkeori.co.jp](http://www.nakadenkeori.co.jp)

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## THE JAPAN WOOL TEXTILE COMPANY

Commonly known as NIKKE, The Japan Wool Textile Company was founded in 1896 right when western style clothing started becoming popular in Japan. Across its 120-year history, NIKKE has evolved into a specialist for womens and mens wovens, as well as military and school uniforms, establishing NIKKE with an outstanding reputation for quality and as a true wool specialist. NIKKE often recreates fabrics from its extensive archive as part of the Heritage Series, and just as often, innovated with the newest machinery and finishing technologies with Wool Denim and the Functional Wool Series.

### MACHINERY

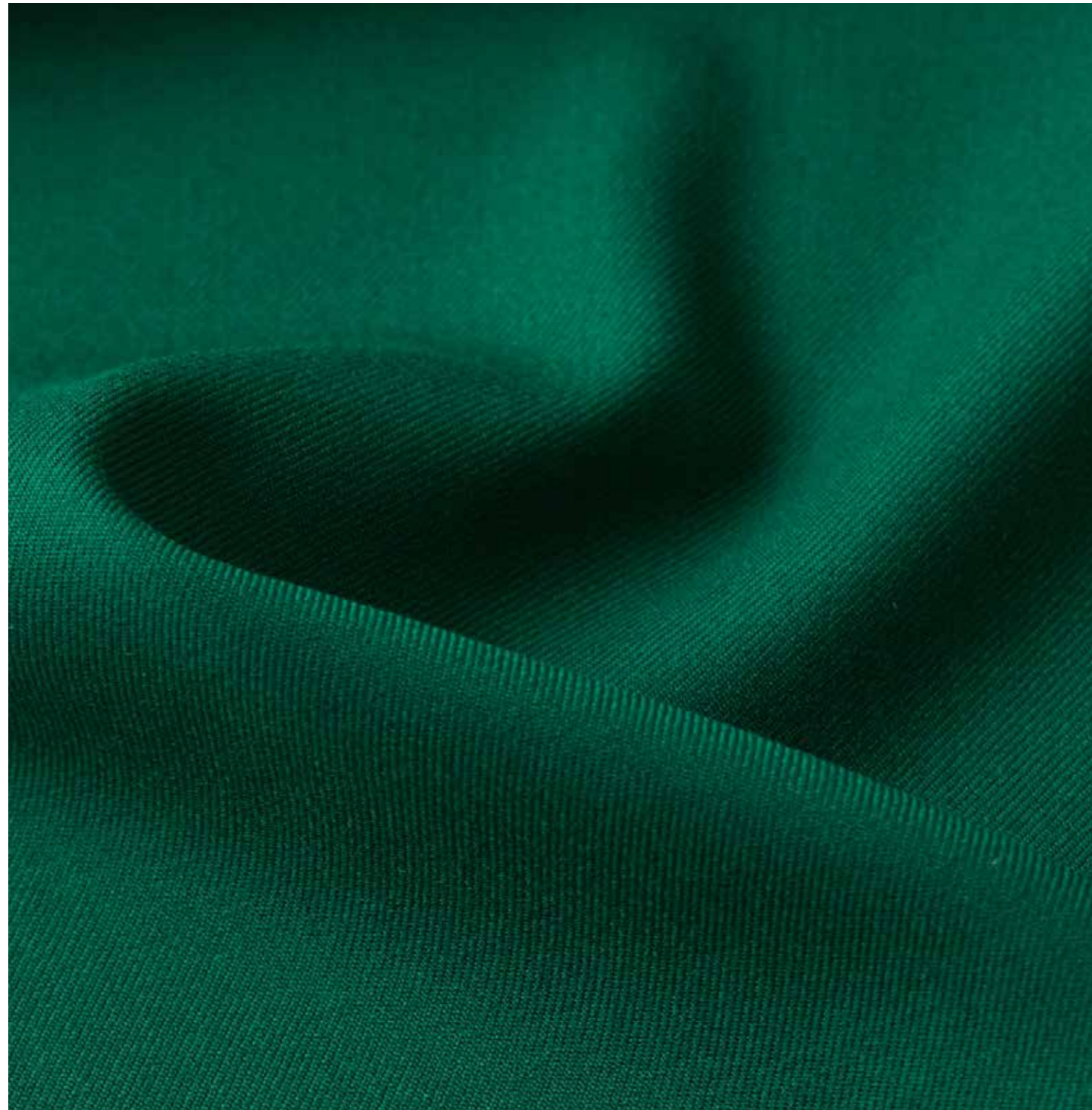
32,000 Spindles  
7 Dryer lines  
154 Looms

### PRODUCTION CAPACITY

Yarn: 3 million kg/year  
Fabric: 10 million metres/year

[www.nikke.co.jp](http://www.nikke.co.jp)

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## TOA WOOL SPINNING & WEAVING

Coming up to its 100th anniversary in 2022, Toabo, as it's commonly known, has extensive spinning, Miyazaki prefecture. Specialising in worsted spinning – with both pure and blended compositions – Toabo also has circular knitting facilities. In terms of weaving, Toabo's capacity covers fine micron suiting, functional textiles and uniforms.

### MACHINERY

13,500 spindles

### PRODUCTION CAPACITY

Yarn: 1 million kg/year  
Fabric: 1 million metres/year

[www.toabo.co.jp](http://www.toabo.co.jp)

**WOOLMARK CERTIFIED SUPPLIER**





## ICHITEKI

Specialising in woven textiles with woollen yarns, Ichiteki focuses on textiles for casual outerwear, jackets, coats and pants, including tweed, dobby, melton and flannel. Founded in 1993, Ichiteki has also branched out into worsted fabrics and blends in recent years. Operating under the Nishikawa group in the Bishu region, which is known as the Biella of Japan for its concentration of high-quality woollen manufacturers, Ichiteki has the resources to create custom textiles at varying scales, with consistently tight quality control.

### MACHINERY

4 Looms at own factory  
30 Looms at partner factory

### PRODUCTION CAPACITY

300,000 metres/year

[www.nishikawa-keori.co.jp/  
company/ichiteki.html](http://www.nishikawa-keori.co.jp/company/ichiteki.html)

## CANALE

Canale operates differently to a typical manufacturer, as it produces textiles though doesn't own any machinery. Considered the king of fancy tweeds, company specialises in making things happen, and often takes on highly complex orders declined by all other weavers. During the past 25 years, this approach has allowed Canale and its five main manufacturing partners in Bishu to enhance its expertise through increasingly more challenging projects, especially with fancy yarn and tweed, dobby cloth and shuttle loom production. Still with no website or active promotion, Canale's reputation is from word of mouth, which has spread to major luxury houses both locally and abroad.

### PRODUCTION CAPACITY

18,000 metres/year

[www.woolmark.com/about-wool/  
wool-processing/jp-canale/](http://www.woolmark.com/about-wool/wool-processing/jp-canale/)



“ *Kuzuri blew me away. Their looms were purchased from Victorian Britain and I've honestly never seen anything like it in the world, ever. It was like something from a steam punk manga comic, whizzing whirring and clattering all in a Victorian x Japanese collab with post-punk sound. And then at the end: the most beautiful wool I have ever seen.* ”

**Matthew Miller, 2018 International Woolmark Prize Menswear Winner**

## KUZURI KEORI

Founded in 1912, Kuzuri Keori Kogyo is a historical and highly respected weaver that creates the kinds of textiles that mass production simply cannot. Due to its relatively small scale, the company is able to adapt to challenging orders and deliver beautiful results with their shuttle loom, some of which have been in operation since 1932. Kuzuri is a preferred manufacturer among many Japanese designers and some of Europe's top couture houses who value craftsmanship over all else.

### MACHINERY

11 Shuttle looms

### PRODUCTION CAPACITY

60,000 metres/year

[www.woolmark.com/about-wool/  
wool-processing/kuzuri/](http://www.woolmark.com/about-wool/wool-processing/kuzuri/)



## MIYUKI KEORI

Miyuki Keori is a Nagoya-based weaver founded in 1905 as a highly specialised manufacturer for woven wool fabrics for Kimonos, the 'Miyuki Serge' in fact putting the company on the map as a champion twill in 1913. Miyuki Keori has evolved with the times, and now specialises in men's luxury textiles, with weaving, spinning, finishing and top-dyeing facilities, and is able to create fine micron suiting, uniforms, functional textiles and high-density wovens.

### MACHINERY

Finishing facilities

Top dyeing facilities

### PRODUCTION CAPACITY

Wool Fabric Finishing: 600,000 metres/year

Wool Top Dyeing: 120,000 kg/year

[www.miyukikeori.co.jp](http://www.miyukikeori.co.jp)



## NISHIKAWA KEORI

Nishikawa Keori mainly produces worsted textiles for formalwear including dresses and fine micron suiting, though are perhaps best known for its 'ultra-black' dyed wool and wool blend fabrics. Also creating functional fabrics, Nishikawa is able to meet high standards of performance and quality control for uniforms. Founded in 1953, the company is still a family-run business, and is based in Nagoya.

### MACHINERY

12 Looms (Picanol rapier)

4 Air jet looms (Toyota)

### PRODUCTION CAPACITY

6.5 million metres/year

[www.nishikawa-keori.co.jp](http://www.nishikawa-keori.co.jp)



# EDWARD CRUTCHLEY MEETS HIS MAKERS

Edward Crutchley was the first designer to ever receive two International Woolmark Prizes when he was announced the winner of the Menswear and Innovation awards at the 2019 final in London. As Tim Blanks said: "I don't think there has ever been a designer like Edward Crutchley in the competition."

For the Woolmark Prize, Crutchley used his innate understanding and appreciation of artisanal textiles, which he's honed through years of experience working with Kim Jones, Claire Waight Keller and Kanye West. By pushing the boundaries of what is possible with 100% Merino wool, the designer developed every fabric exclusively for this collection with his suppliers, many of whom are based in Japan. One such innovation was a tie-dyed knit created with the head of the Kyoto Guild of Shibori Masters, another an incredibly intricate screen-printed lace.

So upon the launch of his collection, it made sense then for Crutchley to join The Woolmark Company on a journey to Kyoto where he was able to meet with some of his suppliers for the first time, adding an emotional, human element to the fashion production process, and providing an important opportunity for cultural exchange.

"The trip was really exciting because we got to see the whole process of how this lace discharge fabric was made and see the actual screens they had used to do the printing," explains the designer. "Then we went on to see all of the washing, the dyeing, and all of the different hand processes that I think are a really good reflection of the nature of traditional Japanese textiles and how involved artisans are in this process. It really was such a joy."

Reflecting on his process, Crutchley mentioned, "I think that if you're going to be producing clothing today there has to be a reason for it. One of the things that struck me in Kyoto was that most of the artisans we met were older, and there's no new generation coming up behind them, so if I can do anything to promote and preserve the skills that exist then that's a real honour for me."

The designer's appreciation for the human skill is integral to his approach to sustainability and ingrained within his business practice. "The way I use wool [commands] a quite large supply chain, which I think is really exciting in that you



can think about the hand from the shearer to the washer to the carder to the spinner, and then on to the weaver and the checker to the finisher and on to the printer, all the way to the factory to the cutter. If I want to, I can get all of the names of the people along that process, and I think that's about relationships with suppliers, being open and transparent with people, and letting them know that you value their part in the process."



# SHOWA

Founded in 1941 and based in the iconic denim region of Okayama, Showa specialises in premium denim textiles using cotton, as well as cashmere, silk, linen and of course wool yarns. Showa's wool denim was in fact awarded the Handle Prize at Première Vision in 2009. The company is the only manufacturer in the region with a full production line of dyeing (mostly indigo), weaving and finishing (washing), and therefore creates denims, dungarees, double gauze and doobby cloth.

## MACHINERY

- 2 Rope dyeing machines
- 2 Sectional warper sets
- 1 Sizing machine
- 49 Looms
- 1 Washing machine

## PRODUCTION CAPACITY

1.2 million metres/year

[www.showatex.co.jp](http://www.showatex.co.jp)



“ Showa rolled out the Japanese ‘omotenashi’ and walked me through all their special techniques at the mill - even their secret techniques - and also discussed in detail their willingness to push the envelope to create something totally new. I was blown away by their Tasmanian wool denim. ”

**T-Michael, director and designer of T-MICHAEL and Norwegian Rain, and design consultant to Y. & Sons (Yamato Ltd)**



# SANKO TEXTILE

Sanko's vertical supply chain is admirable processing everything from raw material to the final textile managed in-house, allowing for Sanko's wide range of product and production developments to thrive. As well as spinning, weaving and finishing, Sanko's dyeing facilities cover top, yarn and anti-dyeing, and capacities range from 1kg to 660kg, so orders can vary greatly. Founded in 1914 and based in Gifu, the company's extensive archive is also accessible and covers their specialty areas of suiting, functional textiles, high-density fabrics, uniforms and flannels.

## MACHINERY

- 7,200 Spindles
- 69 Looms
- 3 Finishing lines

## PRODUCTION CAPACITY

2 million metres/year

[www.sanko-textile.co.jp](http://www.sanko-textile.co.jp)

# TAENAKA PILE FABRICS

Taenaka is one of the oldest suppliers in the Koyaguchi (Wakayama) production area, known as the pile fabric specialist region in Japan. Founded in 1950, Taenaka has consistently innovated and remodelled their own weaving machines to achieve uniquely high performance not only for apparel textiles like woven pile, woven wool fur and velvet, but also for upholstery for the automobile and interiors industries. Taenaka's woven pile textile is in fact used in trains in the Kyoto, Osaka and Kobe areas for its high quality and abrasion resistance.

## MACHINERY

7 Machines (24 gauge)

## PRODUCTION CAPACITY

200,000 metres/year

[www.maruwa-knit.co.jp](http://www.maruwa-knit.co.jp)



# YAMAEI KEORI

A true weaving specialist, Yamaei Keori is located in the iconic Bishu region of Japan. Founded in 1915, Yamaei Keori was one of the first manufacturers in Japan to create woven fabric for dark formal suits, and while its textile offering has since expanded into name selvage, melton and flannel, many of their same looms continue to be used today. With their team of highly-specialised technicians, Yamaei Keori creates wovens for some of the top luxury houses in the world.

## MACHINERY

19 Looms (shuttle, rapier, name selvage)

## PRODUCTION CAPACITY

100,000 metres/year

[www.yamaeikeori.jp](http://www.yamaeikeori.jp)





**KNITTERS**

## NIHON HIGH PILE

Nihon High Pile is the only company in Japan that produces high-pile knitted fabrics, and has been supplying local and international markets with high-pile fur alternatives from Wakayama since 1970. Thanks to the company's original technology, designers and developers are able to create original fabrics with complex colour and material variations.

### MACHINERY

- 10 Carding Machines
- 14 High-pile machines
- 2 Pile jacquard machines (10 gauge)
- 6 Pile jacquard machines (14 gauge)
- 3 Double-shearing machines
- 1 Single-shearing machine
- 1 Digital design-shearing machine
- 5 Polisher
- 5 Raising machines
- 2 Tenter dryer machines
- 7 Tumble dryers

### PRODUCTION CAPACITY

120,000 kg/year

[www.nihon-highpile.jp](http://www.nihon-highpile.jp)

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## A-GIRLS

As the winner of the Première Vision Grand Jury Prize in 2017, A-Girls is a large-scale world-renown knitter with a showroom in New York and presence at annual international tradeshows. A-Girls specialises in base-layers in 100% and blends, though a special wool yarn it created named 'Cloud' significantly accelerated the company's overseas business, resulting in special collaborations with designers and sports brands across the world.

### MACHINERY

- 70 high gauge machines (32 – 46 gauge)
- 200 low – middle gauge machines

### PRODUCTION CAPACITY

5 million kg/year

[www.agirls.co.jp](http://www.agirls.co.jp)



## KANEMASA KNITTING

Specialising in high-gauge jacquard knits, Kanemasa Knitting focuses on woven-like knitted fabrics including low-stretch and stripe patterns, hard and solid finishes, and mercerised wool, often focusing on outerwear due to the comfort and wrinkle resistance of its output. Based in Wakayama Prefecture, Kanemasa has gained strong support from domestic and overseas fashion houses, with its customised knitting machines and meticulous support for the development of original yarns.

### MACHINERY

- Single machines:  
14 – 46 gauge (jacquard: 28 – 46 gauge)
- Double machines:  
10 – 22 gauge (jacquard: 18 – 22 gauge)
- French terry machines: 8 – 28 gauge

### PRODUCTION CAPACITY

700,000 kg/year

[www.kanemasa-inc.jp](http://www.kanemasa-inc.jp)



## MARUWA KNIT

Since its establishment in 1934 in Wakayama, Maruwa Knit has focused on the development of new yarns and knits, while making use of its traditional machines. Maruwa has become known in particular for their *Balancircular*® textile, which is a 'woven knit' combining both woven and knitted techniques in the one textile. The result is a lightweight, shape-retaining and highly wearable textile of superior quality.

### MACHINERY

7 Machines (24 gauge)

### PRODUCTION CAPACITY

85,000 kg/year

[www.maruwa-knit.co.jp](http://www.maruwa-knit.co.jp)



## MIYATA WF

Miyata was founded in 1954 and is well-known in Japan as one of the best manufacturers of jersey cloth, with 140 circular knitting machines. Due to this high-volume capacity and expertise, Miyata has produced fabrics for countless underwear, outerwear and sportswear brands in Japan and abroad, and in fact provided the fabric for the official jacket of the Japan Olympic Team in 2012. Miyata also derives strength from its connections with dyeing and finishing companies in the Bishu region, and is seen as one of the most innovative makers of knitted wool textiles in Japan.

### MACHINERY

35 Single machines (8 - 32 gauge)

105 Double machines (8 - 40 gauge)

### PRODUCTION CAPACITY

2.7 million kg/year

[www.miyatakeori.com](http://www.miyatakeori.com)



## MORISHITA KNITTING FACTORY

Morishita Knitting Factory is a knit textile manufacturer founded more than 110 years ago in Wakayama. Specializing in circular knitting, the company creates a wide range of high-quality knit fabrics with more than 200 single and double machines. Supplying to the likes of Issey Miyake, and with offices also in Tokyo, Morishita also regularly participates in the Première Vision trade fair.

### MACHINERY

200 circular knitting machines (6 - 40 gauge)

### PRODUCTION CAPACITY

264,000 kg/year

[www.morishitaknit.jp](http://www.morishitaknit.jp)



“

*I loved our day-trip lead by Woolmark, introducing us to the complete process from fibre to yarn through to some of the biggest knitters in Japan. Especially intriguing was the recycling steps taken for the yarns showcased at one of the suppliers. We would love to find a way to work with the suppliers we were introduced to.*

**Borre Akkersdijk, co-founder  
and designer of BYBORRE**

”

# KOCHÉ'S JOURNEY TO JAPAN

Beginning with Pre-Fall 2018, Christelle Kocher created three collections for her brand Koché in partnership with The Woolmark Company, exploring new developments in wool for all seasons. "Woolmark has acted like a real partner with me, and as such it's been a really strong collaboration," says Kocher.

By introducing the French designer to a handful of manufacturers in Japan, Kocher was able to rework her approach to handmade hybridity with new suppliers. "I visited ateliers in Bishu and it was so inspiring. I met artisans in the wool factories there and we worked on custom fabrics. They also allowed me to have access to fabrics I would not have otherwise been able to use, meaning I've been able to mix wool with both sportier and more artisanal designs: to embroider it, and to print over it too."

Some pieces even combined Woolmark-certified fabrics with Lemarié techniques, Kocher's former workplace and highly specialised atelier supplying Parisian couture houses. "For me it's very beautiful to mix those two worlds. And I love that wool allows you to create very bright colours, as it holds the dye so well."



In Koché's Spring Summer 2019 collection, "We worked together on a special check jacquard in Bishu," explained the designer, of a multi-chequered wool development striped through with red, yellow, orange and green bands, and then flocked with a sportswear treatment. "We made a trench coat, different trouser styles and a jacket where the Japanese wool is spliced with nylon: it's somewhere between a windbreaker and a deconstructed jean jacket."

"It was an homage to countries I have visited, but also to imaginary places," said Kocher. "It's never really literal, everything is a hybrid. Even my tattoo prints started with Japanese references then became mixed with contemporary art, so in the end it becomes a cultural appropriation with authentic origins that takes on its own identity."

Indeed, Koché's universality is in many ways a new proposition, in the which east and west, high and low, and the hand and the machine all meet with playful synchronicity.





## SATO SENI

Sato Seni, a long-established spinner and knitter based in Yamagata since 1932 and now run by the fourth generation of the Sato family, operates about 130 flatbed knitting machines. As an ODM and OEM, Sato Seni is constantly improving its machine's capacities and has created a range of its own textiles including complex three-dimensional knits that previous to their endeavours were impossible to create.

### MACHINERY

10,000 Spindles

130 Shimaseiki flatbed machines (3 – 18 gauge)

### PRODUCTION CAPACITY

Spinning: 500,000 kg/year

Knitwear: 200,000 pcs/year

[www.satoseni.com](http://www.satoseni.com)

## YONETOMI SENI

Based in Yamagata, Yonetomi Seni has the largest knitting production system in Japan with 43 fully automatic flatbed knitting machines. Uniquely specialising in low-gauge knitting, the company's in-house programmers and machinists are able to create new fabrics and complex samples, and then scale up for production. Obsessed with innovation and with an outward approach to the market, Yonetomi was the first company to obtain computerised knitting machines in Japan in 1952, paving the way for the knitter's extensive development since.

### MACHINERY

9 Shimaseiki flatbed (3 gauge)

11 Shimaseiki flatbed (5 gauge)

11 Shimaseiki flatbed (7 gauge)

7 Shimaseiki flatbed (10 gauge)

5 Shimaseiki flatbed (12 gauge)

### PRODUCTION CAPACITY

58,000 pcs/year

[www.yonetomi.co.jp](http://www.yonetomi.co.jp)





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[woolmark.com](http://woolmark.com)

If you're interested in sourcing from any of the suppliers featured in this guide, or wish to receive more information, please contact The Woolmark Company's Japan office.

[Woolmark.Japan@wool.com](mailto:Woolmark.Japan@wool.com)

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