



京きんばら
ないそ



The History of Naito

- Supporting Feet for Five Generations -

In 1875 (the 8th year of the Meiji era), our history began when Jubeimon started timber and textile businesses, and made *geta* sandals using the leftover materials.

When the Edo era governed by the Tokugawa shogunate came to an end, and in the midst of the chaos of transformation into a modern nation, which included banning men's topknot hairstyles (*chonmage*) and samurai swords, most Japanese wore kimonos and women put their hair up in the Japanese style.

At this time, Napoleon III drove a revolution in The City of Lights, Paris, and completed the Palais Garnier opera house in the same year.

Geta

Geta is a Japanese traditional footwear that looks like clogs or sandals. It has a raised wooden sole and holds the foot with a cloth strap. Now many people wear *geta* with Japanese kimonos and *yukata* or summer kimonos. In the past, mainly monks and Shinto priests wore them.

Zori

Zori is also a Japanese traditional footwear that consists of a sole and a strap. Mainly they are worn with Japanese traditional clothes, but these days many people wear *zori* with European clothes, too.

These days, we see *geta* with casual summer kimonos, and *zori* with rather formal kimonos. But in days of old, *zori* meant a footwear for dressing and was worn inside houses, and *geta* meant wooden clogs to wear outside. On the streets, only people who serve gods and Buddha, and people of high status could wear *geta*. Normal people wore straw sandals but now they are used for special occasions like traditional festivals and *zori* and straw sandals are seen as practically the same.

1897 (the 30th year of the Meiji era): Nishijin, Kyoto, a Leading Brocade Town in Japan

As a symbol of the new era, the fifth International Exposition was held in Paris (the first prize went to an American inventor Charles Seeberger who introduced his trademarked “escalator”).

Bushido by Inazo Nitobe and *The Book of Tea* (1906) by Tenshin Okakura introduced not only Japanese paintings and artwork but also our spiritual nature to the world.

Nishijin is a leading brocade producing city that was expanded after the Onin War (1467 to 1477) and the “Nishijin” brand was built under the protection of the government in 1548.

Nishijin brocade reached full bloom at the beginning of the 18th century with overwhelming support from rich merchants and artisans. Then, with the promotion of modernization, they created the unique Jacquard weave and even now, Nishijin is one of the best Japanese brocades. In this city, we continue our study and education.

1930: from Nishijin to Gion, the Most Famous Entertainment District in Japan

Salvador Dali, Pablo Picasso, Henri Matisse, Alberto Giacometti, Jean Genet, and Henri Michaux... When Paris made the stage for many artists, writers, and poets, Naito moved its office into Gion where it had a branch office. Gion is among the most famous entertainment districts of Japan. It continues to have many *maiko*, or apprentice geisha and geisha from the Meiji era and still retains its gorgeousness and class. Starting our business in a watershed of Japanese culture, we have pursued and served beauty derived from functionality that is unique to Kyoto to support good old practices, and strive for beauty in ordinary life.

Japanese footwear has such traits as minimal and perfect shape as a tool, a variety of colorful and rare materials on a global basis, and to implicitly express the day's purpose, tone, and situation.

Customarily, we take off our shoes. This is characteristic of Japanese culture. The origins of our life come from a worldview to coexist with nature, and where the border between in and out is ambiguous.

After carrying their master to the destination front door, footwear is arranged nicely and represents people's awe and thankfulness in peace.

Gion Naito appreciates beauty coming from spirit and continues to support footwear based on the roots of Japanese culture.

Our late fourth Naito owner regarded “footwear as a vase to give flowers life” and said “Feet are roots to grow buds, so take good care of them”.

Our products are all handmade by artisans. We measure every customer’s feet and understand their physical features. And we create footwear that has a reputation of “intoxicating from the soles of the feet” through conversations with customers.

Footwear is a tool and a decoration. As brocade craftsmen, Naito has a spirit to create things through understanding each user’s situation.



Effects and Features of Japanese Footwear

These days children are encouraged to wear *geta* or *zori* with the belief that footwear with straps strengthen feet. The foot muscles can be strengthened by grabbing a strap and holding onto a sole and that helps developing the arch of the foot and preventing bunions.

With oriental medicine, acupuncture points between fingers are important to vitalize the flow of all over body life force, or *qi*.

Balancing on the big toes and placing the center of gravity on the lower abdomen are basic features for Japanese classical dance, martial arts, and other actions.

The shape of the foot reveals important characteristics.

The hooves of huge cows and muscular horses have characteristics on their own to show the importance of toes. Cows with cloven hooves can turn around on the spot, but horses with whole hooves need to make a big U-turn to change directions. A small difference in shape makes a big impact on movement.

Rikyu
(Occasion: Formal)

利久





Paper Flower

(Occasion : Formal)

紙の華



Traditional
Formal Wear

御正装

Kyoto Zori

京草履



Party Wear

御会席





Ceremonial Wear

御訪問

S JOTO



mana
PROJECT

The Future

Producing top quality Japanese style footwear, our customers include kabuki actors, famous actresses, writers and intellectuals, and our products have appeared in many well-known magazines and TV and radio programs in Japan.

To bring our many years of well-rounded knowledge to the world, we set up The Mana Project in 2012. Through this project, we aim to produce stories (goods) by presenting materials, techniques, and methods to help our life and build a bridge to the future. The first project is the footwear “JOJO”.

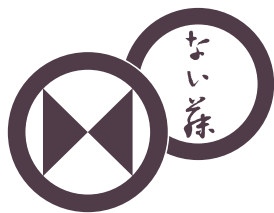
What is Mana?

Mana means spirituality and vitality in all people in Hawaii. In Melanesia, it means the origin of mystical power.

In Indo-European culture, Mana suggests food given by the sky. And also means mind, moon, and Magna Mater in women, and blood of wisdom.

Magna Mater is a goddess who brings fertility and productiveness and thoroughly represents earth. The Japanese famous guardian deity is Toyokebime which blesses clothing, food, and housing.

<http://www.jojo-manaproject.com/>



GION NAITO

KYOTO JAPAN

<http://gion-naitou.com/en>