



### **WATARI NO FUGURO-----Revival of Wataricho through handicrafts**

People in Wataricho used to put a gift in bags made by remains of kimono fabric as a token of gratitude. For example, farmers gave cupfuls of rice in the bags as a souvenir or in return for something they had received from others. The bag is called “FUGURO” with a local accent on “FUKURO” (a “bag” in Japanese). In order to revive “FUGURO”, we use old fabric from the 1940s -1980s donated by a kimono shop in Wataricho because the shop was to be demolished after the Great Earthquake. We enclosed some rice in the package as well so that you can share a sense of hospitality from the old days.

Our town, Wataricho, located in the south of Miyagi Prefecture, was severely affected by the Great Earthquake and its subsequent tsunami. Houses on the coastline were completely destroyed by the tsunami. While many people are still putting up with inconveniences of unsettled life in temporary housing, we are trying to build a community with people who wish for a revival of Wataricho through handicrafts like “FUGURO” .

Produced by : Teshigoto (handwork) Project, WATALIS Wataricho, Miyagi Prefecture ( Led by Megumi Hikichi )

### **WATARI NO ICHIGO-----Strawberry charm from Wataricho**

With heartfelt appreciation from Wataricho, our hometown. Wataricho was one of the major farming areas of strawberries in Tohoku. Bright red strawberries are a symbol of our town. To show our appreciation to many people who have lent their hands to us, we sewed our gratitude into each seam. Thank you for your helping hands and thank you for your continued support.

### **OUR HOMETOWN WATARICHO**

Wataricho is a small castle town associated with the Date clan (famous warriors in Japanese history). The town is located 26km south of Sendai City. A fertile plain spreads in the centre of Wataricho, surrounded by the Abukuma Highlands on the western side, the Kuroshio Current of the Pacific Ocean on the eastern side, and the Abukuma River on the northern side . It's mild climate was ideal for fruit farming, and it was especially famous its strawberry cultivation. In addition, the coastal area prospered as a port town blessed with a beautiful sea, representative of “Sea of Birds”, and well-known for an abundance of seafood such as tridacna, clams, salmons going up the Abukuma stream and their roe as well as surf clams.

On March 11, 2011, the land was hit by terrifying tremors of the Great East Japan Earthquake. This earthquake and its subsequent huge tsunami swallowed many lives and livelihood in an instant and deprived the people of daily activities. The coastal area was devastated with all houses washed away. Many people are still forced to live under harsh conditions in temporary housing. Agriculture such as strawberry farming and fishery , its once busy port, major sources of livelihood for many people, have not revived yet. Foundations for normal life are still lost, and most importantly, community ties are yet to be restored.

Despite this situation, some attempts have eventually come to the fore to recreate connections in the community. When people get together, talk with each other and create something together, power for mutual support wells up, which, we believe, will lead to energy to restore the town.

Wataricho's “FUGURO” is a handwork project by local women who wish for the restoration of the community. We would like to shape this continuous good and old custom and the spirit of gratitude into concrete form.



The mark of “FUGURO” symbolizes a spirit of wrapping precious things with a Japanese traditional motif “takarabukuro” (treasure bag). The strings of FUGURO embody an expression of tying and connecting hearts. “WATALIS”, the name of the project group, is a coined word of “WATARICHO” and “TALISMAN”. The name was devised with a wish to extend the heart of gratitude from Wataricho out to many people like a talisman.

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