



# SAMURAI CRAFT

Journey into the Art of Katana



# TOUR PHILOSOPHY

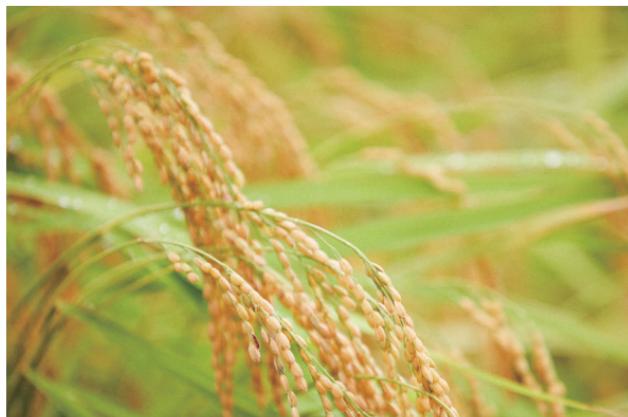
The Samurai lifestyle is best experienced firsthand. Set in the heart of Gifu Prefecture, the town of Seki offers travelers a hands-on feel for the art of Japanese steel, and the 700-year heritage that surrounds it. By listening to stories of swordsmiths and taking their craft in your own hands, this tour invites you to hone all five senses, clear your mind, and experience Japan through the eyes of a warrior.



# THE SWORD INDUSTRY IN SEKI

The town of Seki is located in the center of Japan and boasts a rich culture of sword-making tradition. Since the 13th century, this town in Gifu Prefecture was branded for its unmatched swords, a trade which is still preserved by a modern industry for knives, shears, everyday blades, as well as the work of local swordsmiths. From blacksmiths and polishers to hilt-makers and more, visitors to Seki can experience the authentic craft by meeting with five artisans who still forge new swords today.





Swordsmith

## KATANA TOSHO

# *Steel tuned by the spirit of Flame*

Tosho are master blacksmiths who painstakingly harness an immense heat of 1,300 degree Celsius to forge carbon steel blades. By the color of the flame and the sound of the iron, a tosho battles the spirit of the flame to fuse soft iron between harder iron plates.







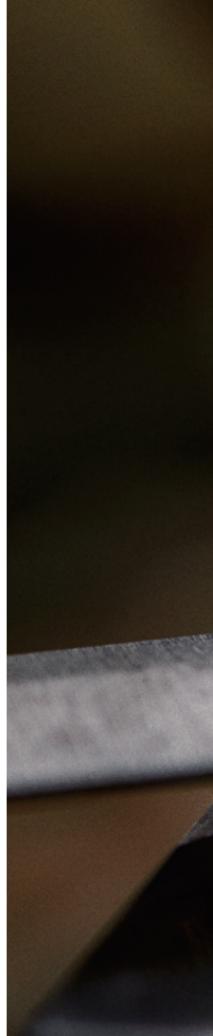


Habaki Maker

## SHIROGANESHI

# *Tiny treasures made perfectly to fit*

The shiroganeshi is a metalworker charged with the intricate task of chiseling the habaki, a metal collar made of gold, silver or bronze that sits at the katana hilt. While small in size, the habaki is a key piece in the final design, etched and fitted by hours of steady, untiring handiwork.









Hilt Wrapper

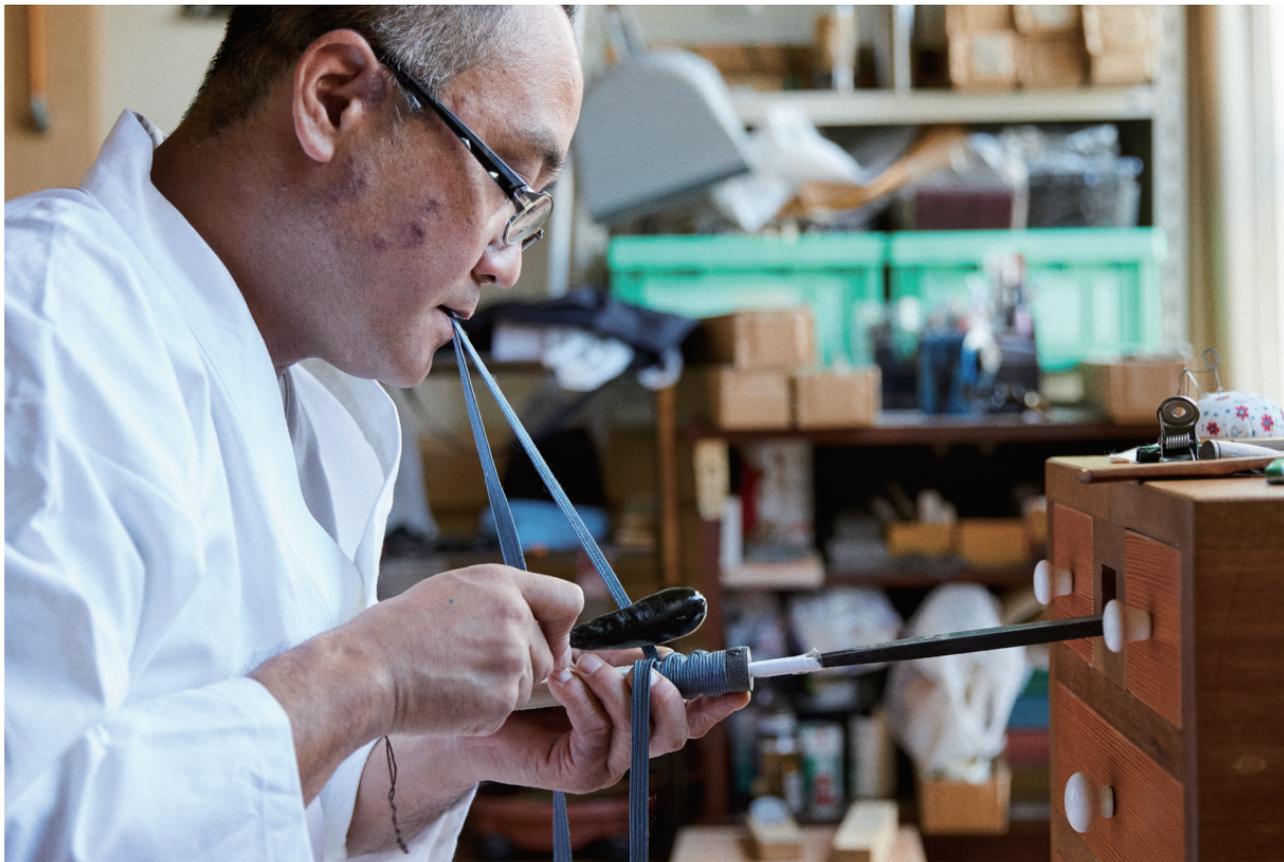
## TSUKAMAKISHI

# *Strength enwrapped in the beauty of textile*

Each katana is adorned with a tsukamaki, a hand-fitted cord around the hilt. By varying the turns and tension of the cord, the minute details within the interlocking pattern mark the expertise of a seasoned tsukamakishi artisan.









Scabbard Maker

## SAYASHI

# *Smooth wood captured by shape*

Set atop a mound of swirled wooden shavings, a sayashi specializes in chiseling the scabbard for each sword. Fastened by a glue made of sticky rice and a scabbard out of the finest wood, the final katana is fit perfectly to its one-of-a-kind casing.









Sword Polisher

TOGISHI

## *A polished look and sharpened feel*

Some togishi will boast never having cut with a sword, because it's their hours of hard work that bring the blade to its initial, utmost sharpness. The look and feel of the sword will tell the togishi when the finished product is polished and ready.







# CULTURE

The town of Seki is a cultural hub, brimming with a rich tapestry of customs you can experience. Explore centuries of history, excite your mind, and get a taste of adventure that will leave you hungry for more.



Cormorant Fishing

## UKAI

Ukai is a local fishing tradition unique to Gifu prefecture. On special request, you can ride along and watch the deep partnership of Usho fishermen and their expert river birds.



Meditation

## ZEN

Climb to new heights and learn to still your mind at the Zenkoji hilltop temple. Here in the open air you'll practice meditation and recenter yourself alongside a monk.



Iai Experience

## IAIGIRI

The history of katana and its swordsmiths comes full circle when you can feel it at your fingertips. In Seki you can put into practice all that you have learned on your cultural tour by taking a crash course in laido, the precise art of wielding katana.



Local Cuisine

## UNAGI

No trip is complete without local flavor. As one option, travelers can try Seki's coveted eel recipe as a stop along their trip and learn the thousand-year-old secret that makes this regional favorite especially delicious.

# THANKS TO:

Swordsmith  
TOSHO

*25<sup>th</sup> Kanafusa Fujiwara*

Habaki Maker  
SHIROGANESHI

*Minoru Kosaka*

Hilt Wrapper  
TSUKAMAKISHI

*Kazuyasu Toyama*

Scabbard Maker  
SAYASHI

*Masaharu Mori / Takahiro Mori*

Sword Polisher  
TOGISHI

*Toru Isaji*

Cormorant Fisherman  
OZEUKAI USHO

*Yoichiro Adachi*

Zen Monk  
ZENKOJI JYUSHOKU

*Shunkai Sato*

The Iai Master  
IAIJYUTSUKA

*Toshikazu Hayashi*

Local Cuisine  
UNAGI

*Kakumaru*

SPECIAL THANKS

*All the wonderful people in Seki*



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