

地球を守る、日本古来の智恵
Japanese traditional wisdom will protect the earth

FUROSHIKI

Reduce

Reuse

Recycle

風呂敷

3Rにかなう日本古来の布

風呂敷は、日本古来より幅広く使われてきた暮らしの布。運搬や収納をはじめ、贈り物を包んだり、敷物、掛け物として活用されてきました。風呂敷は、その歴史や伝統からも日本の暮らしの文化の象徴とも言えます。

英語でいうなら Bath Mat にあたる布が、風呂敷と呼ばれるようになったのは、江戸時代(1603-1868)中期以降のこと。当時、庶民の社交場として栄えた銭湯で、湯上がりに敷いていた布がいつしか着替えなどを運ぶ布となりました。その頃、庶民の生活が活発化し、商いや旅や物見遊山が盛んになり、物の運搬に風呂敷が普及していきます。

また風呂敷は、婚礼とも係わりが深く、江戸中期以降、昭和(1926-1989)の中頃まで、嫁入りの荷物を包んだり、嫁入り道具として、吉祥文様を染めた大中小の風呂敷が親によって用意されました。

The Furoshiki

A Traditional Japanese Cloth achieves the 3Rs

A *furoshiki* is an oversized square cloth, dyed in one of any number of colors and patterns, used for carrying and storing things, as well as for wrapping gifts, spreading on the floor, or even decorating a room.

The word *furoshiki*, literally meaning "bath spread," dates from the mid-*Edo* Period (1603-1868). *Furoshiki* were first used at public bathhouses – then a social center for the common people – as a wrap to hold the bather's clothes. Gradually, it came to be used as a wrap for carrying a change of clothes and toiletries. The use of *furoshiki* as a way to carry things spread quickly as commerce became more active and people moved around more for both commerce and pleasure.

Furoshiki were used during weddings as well. From the mid-*Edo* Period until the mid-*Showa* Period (1926-1989), the parents of the bride would often prepare *furoshiki* with patterns such as cranes, other symbolic birds, fans, pine trees and waves, as they were all believed to usher in happiness and fortune.

After *furoshiki* gained greater popularity in the *Edo* Period, people came up with various

江戸時代に普及した風呂敷は、人から人へと使い継がれ、知恵や創意工夫によっていろいろな形のを包む布として活躍し、昭和後期1975年頃まで日本の暮らしになくてはならない存在でした。しかし、その後、風呂敷は衰退の道を辿ります。近年、環境保全や日本の文化を見直そうとする市民活動が起こり、伝統的な使い方だけでなく、新しい風呂敷の提案がなされ、袋物として、ギフトラッピングとして、インテリアや食卓の演出など、活用の幅はさらに広がりを見せています。

風呂敷の大きな特長は、再使用できることです。風呂敷には捨てるという動詞はありません。風呂敷を活用することは、包装材の減量や無駄な包装の抑制をもたらし、省資源、省エネルギーにも貢献します。また、風呂敷はその存在そのもので循環のかたちを見せてくれます。人の手で包み結び、目的に合わせて使った風呂敷は、解くとふたたび、もとの一枚の布に戻ります。

世界的な規模での地球環境保全への対策が急がれ、基本的なライフスタイルとして3R(発生抑制、再使用、再利用)が広く叫ばれる今、日本古来の風呂敷がふたたびはばたく時なのかもしれません。

ways to wrap things and handed the tradition down through generations until it became an indispensable tool for the life of the Japanese. However, the custom and culture of using *furoshiki* faded away in about 1975, the mid-*Showa* Period. It is just a very recent trend to revive the use of *furoshiki* as movements to conserve the environment and re-evaluation of Japanese traditional culture have become more prominent. A number of new and innovative uses of *furoshiki* have been proposed on top of its conventional techniques. The *furoshiki* is becoming more and more versatile, being used, for example, as a gift wrapper or as a table covering or other interior decoration.

An important feature of *furoshiki* is that it is always reused. One would never throw away a *furoshiki*. Using *furoshiki* will thus reduce the use of raw materials to create packaging and decrease the use of excessive packaging, and thus contribute to saving resources and energy. The *furoshiki* itself symbolizes a kind of circulation – people wrap things with a *furoshiki*, tie the ends of the cloth and make a knot which differs depending on the *furoshiki*'s current role, but once the knot is untied and the cloth is spread, the original form of the *furoshiki* – a simple cloth – comes back.

A lifestyle based on the 3Rs (Reduction, Reuse and Recycling of wastes) plays an important role as one of the measures to conserve the environment, and this lifestyle is truly necessary today. It may be a time for the Japanese traditional cloth, the *furoshiki*, to flourish again.