

Maekake Shuho



Maekake is the traditional sake brewer's apron and each brewery has its own. Always blue in color, it is a 500 year old tradition. Here, it is that of the brewery of Shuho Shuzojo in the locality of Yamagata which is proposed to you.

The elegant Maekake of the Shuho Shuzojo brewery

The history of Maekake

The Maekake is this apron, traditionally made of indigo and thick cotton, that you have undoubtedly already seen in Japan (for the lucky ones) or a food store. This harmless accessory still carries 500 years of history. Its appearance dates back to the Muromachi period (14-16th century), when it was found in rice, soy sauce or sake shops. It was then called "homaekake" - "ho" for canvas, "mahe" for front and "kake" for hanging. It circulated exclusively in the world of the merchants of which it became the emblem. Originally longer, it was often worn thrown on one shoulder from the hips to protect the upper body when transporting barrels or the famous "taru". It was later shortened with the appearance of packaging in glass bottles. The wooden or plastic crates in which these are placed are carried at arm's length and no longer on the shoulders.

The maekake protects clothing from dirt, but it also protects the back thanks to its strong strap worn tight at the hips. It blocks the lumbar vertebrae acting as a belt of strength. It is "kohaku" color, red (or almost orange) and white, a composition that brings luck in business.

But it is also and especially a promotional element. The maekake wears the emblem of the brewery which offers them to its best customers, sakaya or restaurants.

Last detail, the end of the fabric is not finished by a seam, the bangs are free. This tradition to intervene as little as possible on the fabric corresponds to a form of respect which goes back to the time when cotton was rare compared to hemp materials.