

# Investigation of Historical Japanese Book Binding and Paper from the Edo Period (1603-1867)

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Kazuko has researched the book bindings and paper making from the Edo period, and experimented to replicate the hand-made recycled paper. This talk will give a brief history of these books and papermaking, and present the results from the experiment. Samples including 18-19<sup>th</sup> century Japanese books and recycled paper made from the experiment will be distributed.

Mystery of Japanese papermaking and bookbinding in the Edo period:

- Processes and raw materials used for recycled paper
- Strength and durability of the 18<sup>th</sup> -19<sup>th</sup> century hand-made Japanese paper
- Techniques of book cover decoration such as embossing and burnishing

Until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, **paper in Japan** was handmade out of tree bark fibers, mainly paper mulberry. The paper is thinner but stronger and more durable than today's wood-pulp paper. The Japanese papermaking grew tremendously during the Edo period – there were over 68,000 household papermakers in 1903. The abundant paper supply contributed to the growth of publications. Over 10,000 titles were published, and millions of copies were circulated **amidst** the population during the Edo period. These texts were almost exclusively printed on Japanese paper by wood-block, and bound in Japanese paper covers. Usually, low quality paper was used for printing text, and the lowest quality paper -- **recycled paper**-- was used for the book covers. Edo (current Tokyo) **had** already developed a network of recycling system (very primitive though), and used paper was one of the most valuable **waste resources**. Rise of recycled paper production was documented (mentioned) in historical documents, however, the processes, raw materials used, and makers **are not** well known. **Today**, no hand-made papermakers make recycled Japanese paper.

**Time: 1:45 PM, May 12<sup>th</sup>, 2015**

**Location: OHR 112**

**Oliver H. Raymond Civil Engineering Building**