



JAPAN INFORMATION  
AND CULTURE CENTER  
在米国日本大使館広報文化センター

# TEACHING TUESDAY

## KIRIKO

During the Edo period, the art of glass cutting was introduced to Japan, and later became so refined locally that it is now considered a traditional art of Japan. Called kiriko (切子 cut glass), the art fashions glass designs by cutting glass by hand, using layers 1 to 3 millimeters in size. This is the most unique characteristic of Satsuma Kiriko. There are two famous styles of kiriko: Edo Kiriko and Satsuma Kiriko.

Edo kiriko (江戸切子) refers to a specific type of glass craft that involves cutting patterns into the surface of the transparent glass. The art was believed to have been started by renowned Edo glass wholeseller Kagaya Kyubei in the nineteenth century. The style of edo kiriko is marked by complex patterns of leaves, latticework, and other motifs. But it is most often distinguished by the smoothness of the cuts, the edges of which are often rounded. Today, it also uses “irokise” (color coated) glass, similar to the satsuma style.

Satsuma kiriko (薩摩切子) is an offshoot of edo kiriko that developed when an artisan from Kagaya travelled to Satsuma. Satsuma kiriko is markedly different from edo kiriko because of its brilliant colours; it employs use of overlaid colored glass to create its designs. It starts by using a clear crystal glass and overlaying color glass on top. Extra layers of colored glass are then added to create a graduation of color called bokashi (暈し). The original production of Satsuma kiriko ended in the early Meiji era, but faithful reproductions are still produced by hand today.