



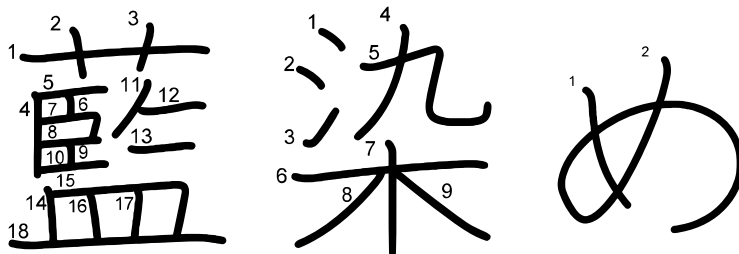
# TEACHING TUESDAY

## AIZOME

MARCH 26, 2019

Japanese indigo dyeing, 藍染め (aizome), creates many unique shades of blue sometimes referred to as Japan Blue. These shades are produced by dipping cloth multiple times in fermented indigo leaves (スクモ; sukumo).

Aizome cloth dates back to the Heian period (794-1185) when they were worn solely by the aristocratic class. Over the next few centuries, samurai wore aizome cloth under their armor due to its antibacterial and insect repelling effects. A major boom in aizome cloth occurred in the 17th century when Daimyo (war-lords) encouraged cotton production. As a result, aizome cloth became accessible to the working class. Various Aizome products such as aizome hand towels and expensive aizome kimono were produced. Today, traditional aizome techniques are honored in modern Japan by incorporating blues unique to indigo dyeing in Tokyo Skytree's coloring and the checker-patterned logo for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics.



**Reading:** Ai Zome

Ah-ee  
 Zoh-may