

Tenugui

Rectangular cotton gauze cloth primarily used as a towel or headcovering. A tenugui is approximately 37 centimeters (13 in) wide; its length varies, as it is cut according to design from a dyed bolt of fabric. Tenugui were originally made of undyed linen but from the Edo period (1600-1868) cotton was used. Red or indigo dyeing, tie-dyeing and other techniques for adorning tenugui were gradually developed. With the increasing popularity of kabuki, the practice arose of printing tenugui with the crests of famous actors. Soon schools of traditional dance and music began designing their own tenugui, and even today these are sold or given as souvenirs. Often shops and business firms distribute tenugui at their openings, and almost all localities print souvenir tenugui for tourists. Tenugui have been used as towels and as headbands for tying up the hair or for absorbing perspiration. As head coverings, tenugui were draped and tied in numerous styles which often indicated the wearer's status, or, in the theater, the character type being portrayed. Although they haven all but been replaced by terry cloth for use as towels, tenugui are still used as head-coverings, rags, souvenirs, and advertisements.

Kodansha Encyclopedia of Japan Vol. 8



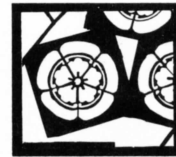
Old North Church (Boston)



Yasaka Pagoda and Daimonji (Kyoto)



Seal of the City of Kyoto



*Crest of the Oda Family:
"Gohamokko"*



Seal of the City of Boston



*Logo of the Japan Program of
The Children's Museum*



*Crest of the Sumiyama Family:
Original owner of Kyo no
Machiya*