

# The allure of Yamanashi's gleaming jewelry

● One of Japan's few producers of jewelry, with everything necessary found locally.

## JEWELRY

Yamanashi's jewelry industry got its start with the discovery of crystal in the prefecture's northern mountains, centered on Mt. Kinpu. It's said that between 1830 and 1843, bead craftsmen coming to purchase Koshu crystal passed along emery polishing techniques to the priests of Kanazakura Shrine, deep in the Shosenkyo Gorge. Not long afterwards, the crystal was combined with precious metalworking methods to make highly desirable personal accessories. In the 20th century, gem-cutting techniques improved and machinery was developed for the mass production of accessories, and all of Japan came to know of Yamanashi crystal. War, notably WWII took a heavy toll on the industry, but occupying forces generated demand for jewelry as souvenirs, and the jewelry industry bounced back with the Tokyo Olympics and rapid economic growth. To this day, Yamanashi remains one of the few prefectures known for producing jewelry. There is little doubt it owes this image to the diligent work of its craftsmen. Now, Yamanashi jewelry aims to establish a brand to compete on the global market.



Crystal cluster from Suishotouge (University of Yamanashi collection)



Citrine obi buckle (1910s)  
(University of Yamanashi collection)



No. 10 angled twin crystals from Masatomi Village  
(University of Yamanashi collection)



[Above] Stone magatama, tube beads  
[Below] Crystal cut beads, jasper tube beads  
(Yamanashi Prefecture Archaeological Museum collection)

[Above]"Think... Afureru"  
(Koo-fu Collection 2016 SPLASH) Designer: Keiko Iijima  
[Below]"Cube"  
(born jewelry) Gem Sculptor: Koji Takuma

## TOPICS #1

Yamanashi's glittering  
"Koo-fu" world of jewelry



Photo provided by Yamanashi Jewelry Project

"Koo-fu" is a Yamanashi jewelry brand based on "natural, elegant refinement." It stakes these qualities as the true and proper form of jewelry. Products of Yamanashi-developed high quality materials, techniques, and talented jewelry designers are advertised via the "Koo-fu Collection," which has drawn attention from around the world. In a rare instance of unified production lines, Koo-fu's planners, designers, materials, production, and distributors are all in Yamanashi. Their beautiful, glittering creations combine artisanal spirit and Yamanashi pride.

## TOPICS #2

Yamanashi Jewelry Museum promotes  
the brilliance of Yamanashi jewelry



Part of the Yamanashi Prefectural  
Institute of Gemology and Jewelry Art

This museum explains the history of Yamanashi's jewelry industry and what makes the jewelry great. Here, you can see everything from the history of when Yamanashi was united in its jewelry industry, displays of crystals and minerals, the tools that refine them, and the works of local artists in the form of exhibitions and videos. There are also demonstrations and workshops with craftsmen, enjoyable by both children and adults. As a facility belonging to the Yamanashi Prefectural Institute of Gemology and Jewelry Art, it serves to foster the next generation of jewelry artists and strengthen Yamanashi's continuing jewelry industry.

## TOPICS #3

Passed down traditional methods;  
the passion of craftsmen



Yamanashi is home to all manner of jewelry-related craftsmen, with skills in precious metalworking, gem grinding, crystal carving, and more. The latest tools offer new developments, but in the end, jewelry is given life only by the craftsman's skilled hand. Their honest passion and diligence for creating jewelry has kept traditional methods alive, passing from one generation to the next. Skilled fingers are made through endless trial and error: the accumulation of experience. Each generation masters their art and creates new, glittering art to meet the market of their age.

## TOPICS #4

Combined skills create the brilliance  
of Koshu gem cutting



The collaboration of Yamanashi's two top craftsmen brought about "Koshu Kiseki Kiriko" (gem cutting), and a potential new wave for Yamanashi's exports. Their unbelievably brilliant gems are given multifaceted surfaces though traditional "tezuri" grinding, while the "kiriko" process gives them highly reflective pavilions. These two craftsmen respect one another as they aim ever higher in their art, with the goal of empowering a new generation with traditional methods that can be advanced upon to create new jewelry and support Yamanashi's jewelry production. The uncompromising and proud art of Koshu Kiseki Kiriko moves people with its beauty.