Becoming a Papermaker: Best Practices from Japan to the US
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Abstract:
Papermaking, with a history of over two thousand years, is one of the most impressive technologies of human history. Similar to digital technology today, the invention of paper caused massive shifts in the way that people thought, worked, communicated, and saw the world. However, the mechanization and industrialization of paper has squeezed out most hand papermaking practitioners. Like so many traditional crafts and art practices, papermaking traditions around the world have become extinct or are highly endangered. Because of my work in documenting and spreading awareness of Korean papermaking, I am sensitive to the overall state of paper arts, and am committed to papermaking education in the United States. Often we must leave home for discoveries that will help us improve conditions at home. In that spirit, I went to Japan for eight days in November 2014 to investigate how people become papermakers. Some methods were systemic while others happened more organically, but they all required a great deal of hard work and dedication to the craft. I hope that looking at best practices in Japan, whose hand papermaking tradition remains one of the strongest in the world, will offer support to American papermakers and artisans with their own succession models. I came to this research as a specialist in Korean papermaking. Though I understand the techniques and tools of the Japanese craft, I cannot profess Japanese language skills or deep familiarity with the culture. The state of the craft in Japan, though shaky, is less dire than in Korea, so my visit to Japan painted a more hopeful picture than I am accustomed to in my regular research. That said, I also believe that traditional handicrafts are in peril—not only in Asia, but around the world. Because I am also a papermaker, I included some technical information as it may be useful to American practitioners, as well as Japanese terms that are italicized at first appearance. Japanese names are rendered in the western tradition with surname last; all mistakes are my own.

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Introduction to Human Resource Management Practices in Japan and in the USA. From a historic perspective, Human Resource Management (HRM) has been identified as a key ingredient for the success of Japanese companies on world markets during the 1980s. In this decade, suggestions as to how Western managers could learn from Japanese HRM practices were plentiful. Only one decade later, however, Japan went into a recession from which its business model has not yet fully recovered. Oddly enough, these formerly superior HRM practices are now being viewed as the root of the malaise of the underperform

Over generations, Shiroishi's farming community became good — very, very good, in fact — at making paper. Strange luxury of wearing paper. After we hear the sound of padded footsteps and rustling paper, Tokuriku appears carrying a paper package almost as tall as he is. He lays it down, opens it up and stands back, letting the bruised garment do the talking. The damage is total. In this future scenario, the countryside becomes a prop, a nostalgic landscape that reminds visitors of their relationship to nature, and a tool for connecting people to traditions and crafts. In that scenario, the countryside and its traditions become technologies for generating myths about Japan — but only if they stay linked to the premodern past. China and the United States are the world's leading paper makers, each producing close to 80 million tons of paper per year. Photo by Simon Tsuo courtesy of US DOE/NREL (US Department of Energy/National Renewable Energy Laboratory). Here's the basic idea: you take a plant, bash it about to release the fibers, and mix it with water to get a soggy suspension of fibers called pulp (or stock). The best known type of papermaking machine is called a Fourdrinier machine (named for the two English brothers who invented it at the start of the 19th century), though there are alternatives (including the cylinder machine developed a few years afterward by John Dickinson).