

Current status and issues of the shogi piece manufacturing industry

Tendo's shogi pieces have a long history and tradition, and have played an extremely important role as a cornerstone of the city's development in all aspects, including its industry, economy, culture, and education. In particular, during the cherry blossom festival, there are shogi events such as the Ningen Shogi (human chess game) and Hyakumen-zashi (100 children play against professionals) held on Mt. Maizuru, product exhibitions and demonstrations inside and outside the city, etc. Tendo's shogi culture is disseminating to the whole country. It can be said that shogi pieces are the symbol of Tendo City, where traditional handicraft skills and power are alive and well. In recent years, however, demand has been sluggish due to the diversification of leisure activities and changes in needs, which impacted production and sales. In the future, in order to transmit and develop the technology and techniques of shogi-piece making as a traditional craft to future generations, there is a need to "train and secure successors," "improve inheritance of technology and techniques," "develop sales channels," "strengthen organizational activities and joint projects," among others. While solving the above problems, it is necessary to encourage further promotion of shogi-piece making as a traditional local industry. Under these circumstances, in April 1996, Tendo Shogi pieces were designated as a "traditional craft" by the Minister of International Trade and Industry. As a result, government subsidies and support can now be obtained for projects such as successor training and demand development, among other various institutional benefits. Taking advantage of these, Tendo City will implement various measures such as training courses for successors so that Tendo Shogi pieces will continue to develop.