

1

Article :**Renowned for Eyewear, Sabae Boasts Japanese Craft ‘Easy to Wear’ Wristwatches**

Directions: Read the following article aloud.

“I love wristwatches, but because I have disabled fingers, I can’t put them on myself”. Such words led to the creation of a wristwatch that can be worn using just one hand.

SANYOU, an urushi (Japanese lacquer) manufacturer in Sabae City, Fukui Prefecture—the world’s leading eyewear manufacturing district—creates and sells these “bangle watches”.

Is there a way to put on a watch as one would hook eyeglasses around their ears? This idea led to the development of a new product that incorporates the manufacturing technology of eyeglass frames, which Sabae prides itself on.

Casual Comment at an Exhibition

Founded in 1982, SANYOU started off as a traditional Echizen lacquerware company. Kazuo Igarashi, 52, the second president of the company, has been creating wristwatches with lacquer dials, with hope of increasing the opportunity for people to appreciate the traditional lacquering techniques.

It was about five years ago, when Mr. Igarashi showed watches at an exhibition to promote the product. He was approached at the time by a visitor who said the following: “I love wristwatches, but because my fingers are disabled, I’m unable to put on leather band watches by myself. I wish there was an easier way to wear them.”

These words stuck in Mr. Igarashi’s mind. Having always wanted to integrate local technology into making wristwatches, he wondered, “Glasses are placed on the face. Can eyewear technology be used to place them on wrists?”

With this idea, he was inspired to apply the company’s skills in manufacturing eyeglass frames, the pride of his local city, Sabae City, Fukui Prefecture, to creating the watches.

With help from a local eyeglass frame maker—Plus Jack Inc.—Mr. Igarashi embarked on the development.

[GO TO THE NEXT PAGE]

Trial and Error Eventually Led to the Perfect Design

The shape of the watch was quickly decided. It was in the form of a “bangle”, a type of bracelet without a fastener. Made from metal or resin, a bangle can be worn with the gap on the bracelet widening when pressed against the wrist. The idea was to attach a watch onto the bangle.

However, productization is not a simple matter. Although the material was chosen, because they could not form the bangle into a shape that could be easily removed, prototypes had to be made over and over again. Despite their efforts, Mr. Igarashi said, even a year after starting, the design wasn’t working. At one point, he even thought about giving up on the project, but roused himself to continue and vowed to “go all out”.

In 2017, the product was finally completed when the team arrived at the optimal 0.6mm thickness for the titanium plate, which plays the role of a spring on the watches and determines the comfort of the wearer. At that thickness, it doesn’t feel too tight on the wrist but it won’t come off, either, even if you swing your arm.

Although a customer’s single comment triggered the birth of the product, Mr. Igarashi explained, “Solving a problem is the origin of manufacturing. I was given a big break.” In March of 2018, the watch launched for sale under the brand name, IGATTA COLLETTI. The watches are priced from 38,000 yen including tax, and an increasing number of variations in designs and sizes, such as smaller models for women have been added. Sales channels have expanded at the same time through online shops and souvenir stores in Tokyo and Fukui Prefecture.

For Those Yearning for Home

Then, the coronavirus pandemic struck. Although the company was also affected, when summer came around SANYOU was able to recover sales as Mr. Igarashi realized a new need surrounding the watch.

“There were many people who wanted to purchase craft products from Fukui for themselves, or as gifts, because they could not go home this year. It seems nostalgia for their hometown grew stronger due to the pandemic.”

Mr. Igarashi happily says, “I’m glad to see people choose the watch because they are made using the technology of Fukui lacquerware and eyeglasses, both of which are local industries.”

He continues, “The making of these watches involve a wide variety of steps, such as lacquering and metal and resin processing. Just selling one watch alone means jobs will be commissioned in Sabae. This also feels rewarding.”

Source: Renowned for Eyewear, Sabae Boasts Japanese Craft ‘Easy to Wear’ Wristwatches
<https://japan-forward.com/renowned-for-eyewear-sabae-boasts-japanese-craft-easy-to-wear-wristwatches>

2 Key phrases and vocabulary

Directions: First repeat after your tutor and then read aloud by yourself.

1. lead to (ある物ごとが)～のきっかけとなる、～に導く、～につながる、～を引き起こす

It is believed that stress can lead to physical illness.

2. pride oneself on ～を誇りとする、～を自慢する

He prides himself on his success.

3. appreciate ～を十分に評価する、～の真価を認める、称賛する、感謝する

It seem that universal popularity is rarely appreciated by film critics.

4. over and over (again) 繰り返し

The appalling images of the accident was replayed over and over on the TV screen.

5. give up on ～に見切りをつける、(人や物を助けることや信じることをあきらめて)さじを投げる

Don't give up on your relationship just because you two have different lifestyles

3 Questions

Directions: Read the questions aloud and answer them.

- 1. What made Mr.Igarashi decide to create the new style of wristwatch?**
- 2. What manufacturing is Sabae famous for ?**
- 3. When did the new product go on the market?**
- 4. According to Mr.Igarashi, why do people want to purchase these locally made craft products during the coronavirus pandemic?**

4

日本語関連記事：

眼鏡産地・鯖江が誇る腕時計「指が不自由でも簡単装着」

「腕時計が好きなのに、指が不自由だから一人でつけられない」。こんな声をきっかけに、片手で装着できる腕時計が誕生した。眼鏡の世界的産地、福井・鯖江の漆器製造販売「サンユー」が製造、販売する「バングルウォッチ」。眼鏡を耳にかけられるように、腕時計を装着できないか。こうした発想から、鯖江が誇る眼鏡フレームの製造技術を盛り込み、開発にこぎつけた。

展示会の一言

昭和57年創業のサンユーは、伝統工芸の越前漆器の工程のなかで漆を塗る作業を担ってきた会社。その中で2代目社長の五十嵐一男さん(52)は、漆の技術が目に触れる機会を増やしたいと文字盤に漆を用いた腕時計を手がけてきた。

その腕時計をアピールするため、5年ほど前に展示即売会に出展したときのことだった。来客者の一人にこんな声をかけられたという。

「指が不自由で、腕時計が好きなのに、革ベルトだと一人でつけられない。簡単につけられるようにならないか」

この一言が心に留まった五十嵐さん。かねて地元の技術を腕時計に取り込みたいと思っていたこともあり、「顔にかけるのは眼鏡。眼鏡の技術で、腕にかけられないか」と考え、地元の福井県鯖江市が誇る眼鏡フレームの製造技術を活用することを思い立った。

同市の眼鏡フレームメーカー「プラスジャック」の協力を得て、さっそく開発に乗り出した。

ものづくりの原点

形状はすぐに決まった。ブレスレットの一種で、留め具のない「バングル」。金属製や樹脂製で、隙間を腕に押し付けると、隙間が広がり装着できる。このバングルに時計を取り付けるイメージだ。

とはいえ製品化は簡単ではない。素材を決めたものの取り外ししやすい構造に落とし込むことができなかったため、試作を何度も繰り返したが「1年やってもダメだった」(五十嵐さん)。

断念することも頭をよぎったが「徹底的にやろう」と奮起。バネの役割を果たし着け心地を左右するチタンプレート厚さを、窮屈ではなく、腕を振っても外れないという最適な0.6ミリにたどり着き、平成29年に完成した。

客の一言をきっかけに商品が誕生したが、五十嵐さんは「困り事を解決するというのが、ものづくりの原点。大きなきっかけを与えてもらった」と話す。「イガッタコレッティ」のブランド名で30年3月から販売を開始。価格は税込み3万800円からで、デザイン、女性向けサイズなどバリエーションを増やししながら、インターネット通販、東京や福井県内の土産店と販路を広げてきた。

故郷への思いも込めて

そんな折、新型コロナウイルス禍に見舞われた。同社も影響を受けたが、夏になり売り上げが回復する中で、五十嵐さんは、この時計をめぐる新たなニーズに気づいたという。

「今年は帰省できないから、福井の工芸品を買いたい、プレゼントしたいという声が多かった。コロナ禍で、より故郷への思いが強くなったようだ」

「福井の漆器と眼鏡、地場産業の技術で作った腕時計だからこそ選んでもらえ、うれしい」と喜ぶ五十嵐さん。「この腕時計は漆の塗り、金属や樹脂の加工と工程は多岐にわたっている。1つ販売できればそれだけ鯖江に仕事が生まれることにもなる。それもやりがいに感じている」と話している。

出典：<https://www.sankei.com/news/201107/wst2011070003-n2.html>

眼鏡産地・鯖江が誇る腕時計「指が不自由でも簡単装着」