



## Making Waves With Local Fashion: Toyooka's SDGs Handbag Project



In addition to being home to one of Japan's **oldest and most picturesque hot spring towns** ([Kinoshaki Onsen](#)), Toyooka City is also making a name for itself in the realms of fashion and sustainability. As the home to approximately 80 percent of Japan's handbag production while also recently being awarded a spot on the [Top 100 Green Destinations List](#), Toyooka is currently partnering with [Alliance For The Blue](#), a Japan-based organization focusing on ocean waste reduction and recycling.

Through the partnership, beginning on October 1, Toyooka Kaban's artisans have begun to sell a variety of specially-crafted bags **created from discarded fishing nets** polluting the ocean with a portion of the profits being donated to Alliance For The Blue. Available in deep blue and ocean blue, customers can purchase a bag by visiting one of Toyooka Kaban's vendors, including [Toyooka Kaban Artisan Atelier](#) located on the famous Caban Street.



Along with having certified top-quality craftsmanship, an additional plus to these bags is that they are designed with the **United Nations' specific SDGs** (Sustainable Development Goals) in mind. For Toyooka's citizens, creating products that are in line with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals is not just viewed as a noteworthy achievement, but as a necessity for the protection of the local environment and future generations.

Approximately 8,000,000 tons of plastic waste enter ocean waters every year, with an estimated 20,000 to 60,000 of those annual tons originating in Japan. According to a survey conducted in 2016 by the Japanese Government's Ministry of the Environment ("Survey of Debris Drifting Ashore at Ten Spots in Japan"), fishing nets and ropes account for anywhere between 20 to 30 percent of all human-produced ocean waste washing up on Japan's shores. To combat these numbers, **promoting sustainable fashion and waste upcycling** is regarded with the utmost importance for the future development and prosperity of Toyooka's residents.

For more information about Toyooka Kaban's newly-released bags, check out [Toyooka Kaban's website!](#)

## International Exchange Through Local Efforts

On Daikai Street in the center of Downtown Toyooka, visitors can discover a **locally-acclaimed** coffee shop with a vintage flair. [Higurashi Coffee](#), a cozy sanctuary providing locals with fragrant and flavorful coffee for over 90 years, is currently in partnership with a [local handbag artisan](#) through a project involving transforming **imported coffee bean sacks into handbags**.



As one of Toyooka's most popular spots for a hot cup of coffee, Higurashi Coffee imports beans from multiple countries across the world for their variety of blends including Ethiopia, Brazil, and Colombia. The beans arrive with their rich flavors and wonderful aromas in burlap sacks printed with imagery and wording **distinct to each country of origin**, presenting a unique opportunity to combine waste reduction with Toyooka's famous bag-making industry. Visitors to Toyooka are encouraged to [stop by the artisan's shop](#) to take a look at these fun handbags during their stay before walking over to Higurashi Coffee for a drink!

## Citywide Initiatives

Toyooka is a city known not only for its fantastic variety of Japanese countryside views, nor is it only noteworthy for its centuries-old hot spring town of Kinosaki. The people of Toyooka have made it their mission to build a name for their town as a **sustainable tourism destination**. Throughout the years, citizens have undertaken multiple sustainability efforts in Toyooka, such as returning the Oriental White Stork to the wild, [developing stork-friendly rice farming methods](#), and adopting an [ideology of coexistence and co-prosperity](#) amongst local businesses.

As one of Toyooka's primary economic industries, multiple handbag shops throughout the city are doing their part in sustainability efforts through **procuring materials from recycled resources**. Visitors to Toyooka are encouraged to take a look at these products during their stay by visiting the historical Caban Street, a 10-minute walk from JR Toyooka Station. No matter the occasion, a handbag from Toyooka is sure to make a wonderful souvenir to commemorate an unforgettable trip!



A Sustainable Process Towards Perfection

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[Kinosaki Onsen](#) is a town of time-honored hot springs dating back 1300 years ago. It is home to seven public bathhouses, all located within walking distance of each other and the train station. Guests are encouraged to wear yukata and geta, stroll through the town, and go onsen-hopping.

[Toyooka](#) is a downtown area home to the Oriental White Stork, a bird that was revived from extinction in this very town. The city's efforts restored the Oriental White Stork population, and now over 260 fly the skies of Japan. Toyooka is also known for the Genbudo Caves.



[Izushi](#) is the resident castle town, popular for its nostalgic atmosphere of Edo-era Japan. It is home to many interesting attractions such as castle ruins, a samurai house, a kabuki theater, and a clock tower. The town's specialty is Izushi Sara Soba, buckwheat noodles served in small portions on small plates.

[Kannabe](#) is a mountainous area with fun activities year-round. In the winter, one can go skiing, snowboarding, snowshoeing, and sledding. In the warm months, one can go camping, paragliding, fishing, tree climbing, and more. Kannabe is the perfect destination for adventurers.



[Takeno](#) is a quaint fisherman town that is a hidden gem among the northern coast of Hyogo Prefecture. The beach has clear, blue waters while the mountains surrounding it offer great hiking opportunities. It is encouraged to stroll through the peaceful town, where one can find small shops and traditional landscapes.

[Tanto](#) is a quiet countryside town with magnificent nature—including a giant field of tulips in the spring and brilliant red-leaved trees in the fall.

