



All five designs in the series are inspired by Imabari's history, nature and climate. The abundant color variation ranges from trendy to stylish.

## Oriza Imabari Ito Ito Stoles by Oriza Kobo

Photography: Satoru Naito, Text: Dai Furusawa

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Beautiful stoles created  
by combining textile basics  
with new challenges  
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Imabari was known as a cotton-producing area from the Edo period (1603-1868) through to the late 1800s before it turned to fabric manufacturing as a result of industrialization and the increased popularity of machine-woven fabrics. But times again changed, and the textile industry moved to China and countries in South-east Asia. Most fabrics sold in Japan today are woven overseas. The looms – many manufactured before WWII – were doomed for the scrap heap. Masatoshi Takeda established Oriza Kobo seven years ago after leaving his job at an established Imabari towel manufacturer. He traveled the country gathering these obsolete looms, cleaned

each of their parts and created a machine that produced standard-length kimono fabric. These reassembled machines – slow looms – can weave fabric with rich textures that modern high-speed looms cannot match. The Ito fabric range produced by Oriza Kobo is a new brand established in 2010 and is inspired by Imabari's history, nature and climate. Until now designs could only be vertical or horizontal, but two world-first weaving methods developed by Oriza Kobo are changing this. The 'diagonal leno weave' method makes diagonal designs possible, and the 'staggered vertical-horizontal leno weave' can produce geometric designs with texture by forming curves. These beautiful designs can only be woven on a 'standard-length kimono loom.' Since these methods are based on the 'leno

weave,' it is more difficult for the weave to distort, and the fabric itself is stronger. The fabric is beautiful and practical – soft with excellent heat-retention. Since this standard-length kimono loom is a low-speed loom, it can only produce between 10 and 30 products per day. This production method is labor intensive and anything but efficient. But the craftsman's dedication to his art as his hands spin the fabric shows us what true quality is all about.



Wave (l): The staggered vertical-horizontal leno weave recreates the image of a wave. Flash (r): The diagonal leno weave expresses light, sparks and stimulation. (13,650 yen each)

● Enquiries: Oriza Kobo, 55 Onibarako, Tamagawa-cho, Imabari, Ehime 794-0117 <http://ito.oriza.jp>

Oriza Imabari Ito

Flash 13,650 yen  
Size: approx. 34 cm x 190 cm (incl. fringe)  
Color: Grey  
Material: 100% silk  
Weave: Diagonal leno weave