

Joboji Urushi Workshop

Japanese Traditional Urushi Lacquer Kintsugi Makie Urushi-e



Kintsugi Repair

We can repair your broken pottery by the traditional Japanese method of Kintsugi.

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Transform your broken pieces and heirlooms, or create new works of art and wearable art with this fascinating method.

We are to live in the moment and accept life as we celebrate our flawed history. As those who practice kintsugi say, broken is better than new.

We can embrace history as we become proud of our imperfections and even scars. The mark of usage and wear is not to be hidden or a source of discomfort. It is not a source of shame or defect. We are not inferior because of those imperfections. It is the reality of our world, and we are to value the damage since it increases our own spiritual value: we survived, and while we may have been broken, the wisdom allows us to put ourselves back together. With that, there is no reason for fear, because the act of reconstruction makes us far more valuable than we were whole.



Urushi has long been loved in Japan as a precious lacquer since ancient times. However, domestically produced urushi is in danger of extinction. Of the urushi used in Japan, 97% was produced overseas, whereas only 3% was produced domestically.

Takuo Matsuzawa, then an employee of the prefectural government, was alarmed by such a situation and established Joboji Urushi Workshop Co., Ltd., in 2009, to disseminate the attraction and beauty of urushi, a special product of his local Iwate Prefecture. He is now President and Representative Director of Joboji Urushi Workshop, which undertakes the refining, processing and sales of urushi lacquer as well as the planning of production, retail and wholesale of urushi lacquerware. The company achieved its shift to a stock company in 2012 (Head Office: Morioka, Iwate).

In fiscal 2015, the Agency for Cultural Affairs of Japan determined that domestically produced urushi lacquer should be used for the maintenance and repair of designated National Treasures and Important Cultural Properties of Japan, in principle. Although this policy has become a tailwind for this company, domestic urushi production remains in short supply.

To address such a situation, He has worked to establish an urushi collecting method that multiplies the urushi production volume. He is working on a development project based on “shockwave tree bark busting technology” together with Shigeru Ito, Professor Emeritus of the National Institute of Technology, Okinawa College.

Although urushi tree sap was gathered previously by cutting into the tree bark, a new method is expected to allow urushi sap to be collected by busting the cells of the tree trunk and roots by applying shock waves. This new method is expected to enable the production of more than double the volume of sap compared to the conventional method. In addition, although it used to take approximately 15 years for an urushi tree to grow to the stage ready to collect sap using the conventional method, the new method allows urushi sap collection even from five-year-old trees.

Mr. Matsuzawa envisions the utilization of abandoned lands and forests to produce urushi. If it becomes possible to collect tree sap in only five years from the tree planting, this technology signals the birth of an epoch-making business model in the forestry industry, which usually takes many years from planting to cutting and shipping.

He believes that if the low-cost mass production of urushi lacquer becomes possible in Japan, the uses of urushi will further expand. He says, “If urushi is viewed as a lacquer produced from nature with low environmental burden, we can see completely new value for urushi. We might be able to sell urushi lacquer to Europe and other areas where focused efforts are ongoing to tackle the problem of ocean pollution by microplastics.” His expectations for the new method grow.

Joboji Urushi Workshop already has received requests for business collaboration from major automakers and railroad companies. In addition, it has launched the “Urushi Next,” NPO to conduct social contribution activities through urushi, implementing an activity to plant urushi sprouts throughout Japan together with Japan Airlines Co., Ltd., which is engaged in initiatives to contribute to local communities and protect Japanese traditional culture.

葆光庵

Hoko an



故知止其所不知、
至矣、孰知不言之辯、不道之道、
若有能知、此之謂天府、
注焉而不滿、酌焉而不竭、
而不知其所由來、
此之謂葆光



(莊子 齊物論第二)

Our Business Activities and the SDG