**Tamba Urushi Harvesting**

Urushi (lacquer) harvesting is a technique with a history of more than 1,300 years in the Tamba region. Coating materials with urushi makes them more durable and gives them a lustrous finish. Urushi is made from the sap of lacquer trees, which is extracted by making a series of cuts in the bark and collecting the sap that oozes out with specialized tools. Harvesting urushi was traditionally men’s work, and was performed by farmers as a side occupation from June through October.

Tamba Urushi is known for its superior quality. Artisans have noticed it is easy to work with and note its exceptional aroma and color profile. The quality of lacquer depends largely on the stage of the harvesting process in which it was extracted, as well as the skill of the urushi harvester. The high quality of Tamba Urushi is attributed to the extraction techniques, which emphasize the exactness and straightness of the cuts that are made in the tree.

To preserve the cultural heritage of this region, Kyoto Prefecture recognized the extraction process as an Intangible Folk Cultural Property. Urushi harvesting tools and displays on the extraction process can be seen at the Yakuno Woodware and Lacquerware Facility (Yakuno Ki to Urushi no Yakata). The facility also has a small shop and gallery featuring lacquerware products, some of which contain Tamba Urushi.