

### **Mt. Shosha Lacquerware (Shosha-nuri)**

Lacquerware made on Mt. Shosha, known as *Shosha-nuri*, is celebrated for its beauty, light weight, and durability. Its hallmark trait is the subtle exposure of black lacquer from beneath a lustrous crimson exterior, produced by mixing tung oil into the top layer, which also gives it a characteristically smooth texture. The practice of artistically layering black and crimson lacquer goes back to Japan's prehistoric era. It was during the medieval period (roughly twelfth to sixteenth centuries), however, that the production method seems to have been perfected. This was accomplished by the monks of Negoroji Temple in the central prefecture of Wakayama, who were skilled craftsmen. Negoroji was well known for the production of lacquerware and ritual implements used in Buddhist rituals.

When Negoroji Temple was destroyed in 1585 by the warlord Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1537–1598; then known as Hashiba Hideyoshi) some of its artisan monks reportedly fled to Engyōji Temple. They continued to produce similar lacquerware on Mt. Shosha, and in 1985 several pieces of their work were discovered within the temple grounds. Since then, the production technique has been revived and the distinctive work is once again in circulation. Visitors can see and purchase dishes, trays, and utensils in Juryō'in, one of the six subtemples in the temple complex. By reservation, it is also possible to eat a vegetarian meal served on Shosha lacquerware.