

### **Finishing Touches: Drying, Sorting, and Trimming**

On sunny days in Mino, large wooden boards for drying paper are propped against beams in front of the washi studios. Each board is close to 2 meters long, a little over 60 centimeters wide, and weighs almost 20 kilograms. A drying board is made from a single plank of horse chestnut, which is a wood known for its fine grain, free of defects that might imprint on the paper. The trees that are large enough to yield boards of this size can be as much as 300 years old, and the drying boards are hard to replace.

The sheets are stacked together and pressed overnight to remove any excess water. Each sheet is then positioned on a drying board, gently brushed to remove any air bubbles or creases, and then moved outside. After several hours, the sheets are turned over to dry the other side.

Each sheet is held up to the light for inspection, and any paper with flaws such as tears, marks, or impurities is discarded.