

## Traditional Craft “Kishu Lacquerware/Shikki” in Wakayama

Wooden products entirely covered with lacquer are the most common one seen in Japanese market. Among them, the Kishu lacquerware leaves several spots unvarnished.

Kishu Lacquerware, also known as Kuroe-nuri, is produced around the Kuro-e region northwest of Kainan City, in Wakayama Prefecture. The characteristics of Kishu Lacquerware are its simplicity, durability, and practicality. Kishu Lacquerware articles have been popular as household goods since the Edo Period, and are also famous for their random patterning made by the vermillion surface wearing away to reveal the black undercoat. This effect is said to have originated from negoro-nuri, which was made by the monks of Negoro-dera Temple in Iwade City, Wakayama Prefecture. They produced articles such as dining tables, bowls, trays and small shrines which were used at the temple. As they were simple articles for daily use, their finish was a coating of vermillion lacquer over a black lacquer undercoat. Over time and with use, the vermillion lacquer surface would gradually wear away, revealing patches of the black lacquer undercoat; the surprising random nature of the process was considered part of the charm of negoro-nuri.

Kishu Lacquerware has adapted to changing times and the needs of contemporary life by producing different types of lacquerware in addition to the traditional negoro-nuri style, including lacquerware decorated with maki-e designs and mass-produced plastic-based articles. Nowadays, it has a great variety of styles and designs. Kuroe in Kainan city is the center of Kishu Lacquer production, with a tourist information center, a museum and others promoting the art form.



Traditional Kishu Lacquerware Industry Center (Uruwashi-Kan)

