

Japanese Brush Dyeing (Hikizome) with Plant Dyes

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Today,

I introduce techniques of dyeing which use rice glue and brush dyeing techniques.
I use plant dyes that have been part of Japanese textile techniques since ancient times.

Brush dyeing, Hikizome is a part of Katazome, a traditional Japanese dyeing technique, in which fabric is stretched tight, water is applied and then dye is applied by hand with a brush.

Now, most of the dyeing techniques that use plant dye are immersion dyeing.
While many artists use immersion dyeing, in contrast, there are not many practitioners using brush dyeing.
Almost all introductory technique books only describe the process of immersion dyeing.

However, until chemical dyes became mainstream, brush dyeing using plant dyes was for hundreds of years often used as a basic technique of paste-resist dyeing.
Rice glue paste-resist dyeing and brush applied dyeing developed to the best techniques in the Edo period(1603-1868).

First of all, I will explain the basic structure of the Hikizome.

- 1- Carving the stencil, place it on a cloth, and apply glue to the cut-out part. This glued part stays white after dyeing. Example
- 2- Sometimes brush painting is applied to the white part after it is dry. Example
- 3- Also there are cases of applying glue after the painting by a stencil and then apply to dye. Example

I will introduce the process flow by PowerPoint and I will show you material examples.
After that, I will demonstrate some processes and Practice with volunteers.

Making the glue Ingredients Glutinous rice 100g, Rice bran 100g, Water 100-150ml, Salt water
It is important to sieve them well. Japanese "KomonNuka(Rice bran)" and "Mochi powder(Glutinous rice)" are basically smooth, but still they need to be sieved.

Mix the Glutinous rice with Rice bran.

Add lukewarm water, little by little and mix with fingers until the dough has the consistency of your earlobe.

Keep mixing it with your hands. If still too thick add a little water and continue mixing.

Continue like this until you reach the correct consistency.

Make a doughnut shape and steam it for 30 to 40 minutes.

You can make a ball shape and boil it or steam it with a pressure cooker as well.

After steaming, take the dough and strongly knead it again.

Add 10% to 20 % water to make the dough soft.

As a preservative, add salt water of 10% of dough.

There are also ways to add lime at the end.

Applying the Glue

The glue paste-resist keeps the fabric un-dyed.

The finish is affected, depending on the quality of glue and how it is applied.

Stretch the cloth, then place on a flat surface mat or panel.

Fix the stencil in place with masking tape or needles.

Next, apply a consistent layer of glue on the stencil with a spatula.
Slowly remove the stencil from the cloth.

Start Jiire(Sizing) after the glued cloth is completely dry.

This is: How to prevent irregularities in the dyeing process.
The "Jiire (Sizing)" process helps the rice glue.

Ingredients: 50ml of soybeans well soaked in water.
2g Sodium Alginate+200ml water, 1000ml water.
Soak 50ml of soybeans in water over night.
The soybeans swell to about three times their size.

Mash the soybeans and stir them with a mixer. Then strain them.
Add 200ml water to the 2g of Sodium Alginate and stir them with a mixer.
Mix the soybean water and Sodium Alginate water, and add 1000ml water.
After the rice paste is completely dry, apply the Jiire over all the fabric.

The basic way to make plant dye for brush dyeing
Ingredients: -50g of dried plant - 1000ml water or more

Boil the 50g of dried plant and 1000ml water until the water is halved.
Strain it to remove the plant fibre.
Boil the plant fibres again more fresh water until the water is halved.
Again strain and repeat a third time.
Mix the fibres and all the water together, and boil again for a short time.
The dye is completed . Leave it to settle for at least one night.

Dyeing and washing

Leave the cloth to set for more than 24 hours after the Jiire is dry.

Start brush dyeing from the glued front side, paying attention to apply the dye evenly.

Dry the cloth well.

Then brush mordant on the front side, making the colour brighter.
Steam it after drying.

After steaming,
Keep water in a sink , and then rinse the cloth with running water.
Continue this work until the glue completely washes off.

How to make natural mordant

Ingredients: - 10g alum and 600ml water

-Alum mordant: Dissolve 10g alum in 600ml water and use this solution.

Iron mordant, using old nails: for example, among other ways, put both old nails and just enough table vinegar to cover the nails in a pot and boil them.

In Japan, the craftsmen use a variety of special tools such as brushes and spatulas exclusively for dyeing. Also narrow bamboo sticks sticks called 'shinshi' are used to spread tight the fabrics.

Personally, I am not particularly concerned about the tools for katazome.

I buy many types of good quality brushes in art shops in the UK.

However, I am committed to using correct materials for each process.

For example, when I bought the rice bran in the UK, it should be roasted to remove oil, because it affects the gluing.

As for glutinous rice powder, I try various rice powders from the local Asian Supermarket and use the one that best suits the glue.

In addition, I choose organic soybeans. Because it works better for the "Jiire" sizing.

If you are interested in dyeing at home in the kitchen

Resist making: glutinous rice and rice bran.

Jiire (Sizing): Soy-beans and Sodium Alginate.

Natural mordant : Alum

A lot of water

Choose the interesting process for you.

Just for trying out, you do not need to do all the processes, jiire for example.

If you are interested in Katagami stencils, make an original Katagami with a stencil sheet. Proper Katagami paper is not necessary. You can use a similar paper from art shops.

If you are interested in brush dyeing, try art dyeing a handkerchief with a stencil.

If you are interested in natural dyeing, try making original dyes with black tea or onion skin.