

Japanese Red and Blue :

Cultivation and Dyeing of AKANE(*Rubia Akane*) and TADEAI(*Polygonum tinctorium*)

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AKANE(*Rubia Akane*), which was described as the sunset red in Manyoshu(Ten Thousand Leaves, a poetry collection of the 8th century), and TADEAI(*Polygonum tinctorium*) called "Japan Blue", are recognized as dyes that are known for fastness to sun light, so many regional textiles dyed with it remain in many places and museums around Japan and abroad.

These indigo textiles were dyed using a fermented indigo vat "SUKUMO" made from dry leaves of *Polygonum tinctorium* and water.

Indigo pigments were also produced and sold exclusively under the mentorship of pharmacology doctors around 1870~1900.

TADEAI is easy to cultivate with no use of pesticides, so it has started to be used not only for dyeing and painting but also for many various uses like quasi-drugs, soaps, cosmetics and others.

In Hokkaido, the northernmost area of Japan, we cultivated TADEAI in summer, and produced indigo pigments in small quantities with cold water and tried to learn how the color and smell changes by changing ph levels.

We have also cultivated Akane for 8 years and now can harvest mature roots, and also its germinating rate has become 80%. In the case of Akane, it is known from experience that the dyeing color will become better if we dye with fresh roots. We did research and found that red pigments are broken down when the root becomes dry. (I.Fumoto 2008),(R.Laursen, C.Mouri 2012).

At this conference I will present information about using various ph levels in order to make clearer indigo pigments and also about dyeing with fresh roots of Akane.



Rubia Akane



Polygonum tinctorium