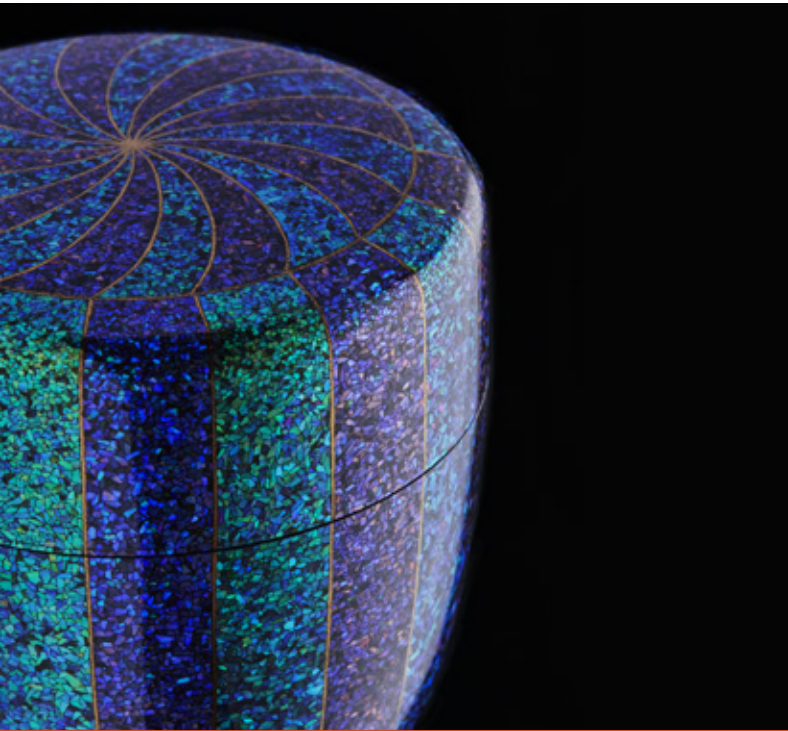


Asai Yasuhiro's *Aogai natsume* tea caddy (7 cm x 7 cm)
Photo: ©T.MINAMOTO



A three-tiered Kyo lacquerware box for food
Photo: Courtesy of Zohiko



Beautiful and Durable Japanese Lacquer



A lacquer tapper collects small amounts of sap oozing from a lacquer tree
Photo: Courtesy of Ninohe City



Flowering Stars of the Heavens (lacquered folding screen, detail) (1992) by Takahashi Setsuro, featuring motifs from the nature and scenery of Azumino City, Nagano Prefecture (length 176 cm x width 173 cm)
Photo: Courtesy of Takahashi Setsuro Art Museum of Azumino

L

acquer has been deeply connected to the culture and lives of Japanese people since ancient times. Sourced from the sap of the lacquer tree, lacquer has long been used to coat everyday wooden utensils such as bowls and tools, and since at least the eighth century, it has also been used for the creation of ornamental boxes and objects of art.

Lacquerware has excellent practical and decorative qualities, and with advances in technology lacquer is now even applied to industrial goods on non-wooden surfaces such as camera bodies and watches. In this month's issue of *Highlighting Japan*, we zoom in on some examples of the beauty and durability of Japanese lacquer.

