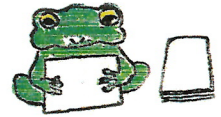
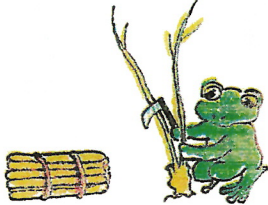


How to make washi (ex.Kozo)



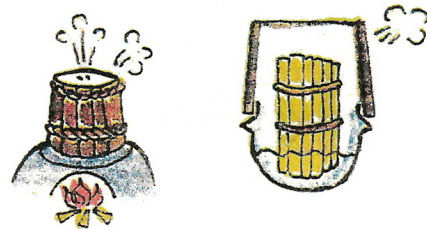
① Cutting down Kozo trees

Kozo trees lose their leaves in autumn and they are usually cut down in December and January.



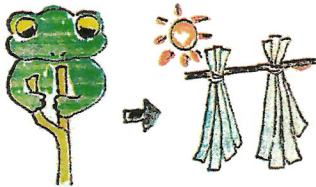
② Steaming the branches

Branches of Kozo are steamed in a large cauldron. Well-cooked Kozo branches are easy to peel compared to fresh branches.



③ Peeling the branches

The bark is peeled off hand while the Kozo branches are still warm after steaming. The outer layer of the bark is removed and left to dry. The inner bark is used to make Washi.



④ Washing the inner layer

The inner layer of the bark is washed in a stream or in a water pool.



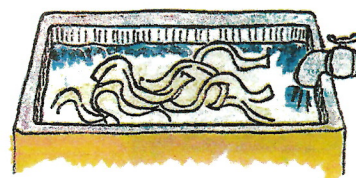
⑤ Boiling the bark

The Washed bark is boiled for about two hours in an alkali solution. Traditionally the alkali used was extracted from wood ash, but nowadays lime, soda ash, or caustic soda are generally used instead. With the help of alkali solution the connections between the fibers is loosened.



⑥ Washing the bark

The cooked bark is washed in running water. Dirt, soda, and other unnecessary substances are washed away at this stage. Its color becomes brighter.



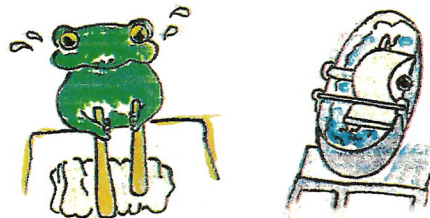
⑦ Removing impurities

Bits of the outer layer of the bark, the flaws and impurities of each skin are removed while soaking them in clean flowing water. Although there are usually only a small amount of them, they have to be removed.



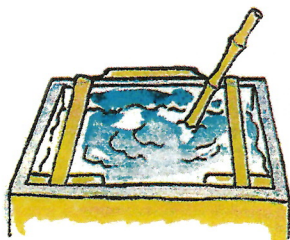
⑧ Mashing the bark

The Kozo fibers are beaten with a wooden hammer on a woodblock or on a stone board. This is time-consuming hard work to make each fiber separated.



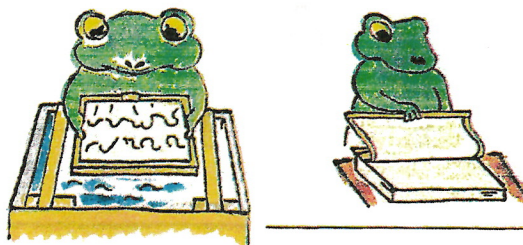
⑨ Putting the prepared bark into "Sukibune"

The well-mashed bark is put into water in a large rectangular container called a "Sukibune". A slimy liquid, "Neri" is put into the water. The neri is most commonly derived from the roots of the troro-aoi plant.



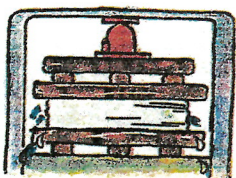
⑩ Making sheets of paper

A tool called "Sugeta", which works like a sieve, is used to scoop up the fiber from the water. In order to form a sheet of paper to fit your needs, you have to scoop several times. As the water drips out after each scoop, you should swing the "Segesta" back and forth as well as side to side.



⑪ Drain the layer of wet paper

Every sheet of paper is put on the top of a previous sheet to form a layer of wet sheets. This layer of paper is set aside to drain and then squeezed by a pressing machine.



⑫ Dry the sheet of paper

Each sheet of paper is torn off and dried on a wooden panel. They are softly pressed onto the panel with a brush so that they remain stuck to it. Wet papers on the panels are left under the sun until they are dried completely.

