

## Urushi Coated Wooden Bowl That Reached the Summit

Recently, I find myself regularly using the phrase “*urushi* coated wooden bowl with rice” in my lectures. *Urushi* bowls are different from the ceramic ones, as they have low thermal conductivity and keep the heat longer. As *urushi* absorbs the moisture of the delicious warm rice, you can eat even the last grains of it. After one of my talks on *urushi* bowls, Yûta Miura approached me and mentioned that his father, Yûichirô Miura, is to climb Mount Everest.

Mountaineers in the base camp typically use vessels made of aluminum and synthetic materials. These are very light and easy to carry, but at 8,000 metres the soup poured into these bowls gets cold very quickly. That is why Yûta wanted to know more about the *urushi* bowls. Yûta explained that under the extreme conditions of the high altitude, a warm meal is very important both mentally and physically, and a hot bowl is essential to keep the body warm. I wished them success in their endeavour by presenting them with *urushi* bowls so they could enjoy delicious hot meals on the summit. I was also curious to see what happens to the *urushi* on high altitude. As a parting gift, I prepared sets of large and small *urushi* bowls for 15 members of the team.

On May 23 2013, Yûichirô Miura at the age of 80 successfully reached the summit of Mount Everest at 8,848 metres. After their return, Yûta Miura visited my studio and showed me the photographs taken on Mount Everest and he also brought along the bowl. The photos served as proofs of the fact that the team members always had hot meals such as *nabe*, *donburi* etc. using the *urushi* bowls. It made me very happy. The bowl that returned from the top of the world is intact, despite of the extreme temperatures: 50°C at daytime and -40°C at night. The *urushi* coating withstood the severe conditions and protected the wooden bowl. This demonstrates the strength and beauty of *urushi*. Only the best wooden bowl, the one coated with *urushi* could survive the trip to the top of the world.

Most of us became familiar with the qualities of *urushi* through the bowls we often use. This time I made exactly the same bowls that the mountaineers used on Mount Everest, so please enjoy the warmth and strength of the *urushi*.

Murose Kazumi

## 頂点を極めたお椀

近年、講演などでは必ず「漆椀でご飯を」と話しています。「陶磁製の茶碗と異なって木製である椀は熱伝導率が低く、中に入れたものが冷めにくいんです。そして塗ってある漆が適度に水分を吸うので、ご飯が最後の一粒まで温かく美味しく食べられますよ」と。やはりお椀の話をしたある講演会終了後、三浦雄大さんという方に出会いました。「実は私の父・三浦雄一郎が、今度エベレスト(チョモランマ)に登るんです…」との話に驚きました。

通常、ベースキャンプ等で使用する食器は軽くて持ち運びやすいアルミ製や合成樹脂製ですが、8000m級ともなると、温かなスープもあっという間に冷めてしまうのだそうです。そこで講演を聴いた雄大さんが漆椀だとうとうでしょうか、と尋ねてきたのです。体力的にも精神的にも極限の状態での楽しみは何と言っても食事、特に身体を温めるには鍋物が欠かせないとのこと。ぜひ美味しい食事を摂って登頂に成功して欲しい、そして漆椀の利点を極地で試してみたいと思い、大小入れ子の漆椀をアタックする人数分の15組づくり、はなむけにすることにしました。

2013年5月23日。三浦雄一郎さんは80歳にして8848mのエベレスト登頂に成功しました。帰国後、雄大さんがお椀と共に現地での画像を届けてくれました。鍋物、丼物、汁物とマルチに使用でき、いつも温かく食べることができたという報告は、画像からも伝わってきて、とても嬉しいものでした。戻ってきたお椀には全く問題ありません。山頂付近の気温は、昼はプラス50度、夜はマイナス40度前後。そうした厳しい環境でも、美しい塗膜を保持している漆の強さが証明されました。まさに頂点を極めたお椀です。

漆器の良さを一番身近で最大限感じることができるのがお椀です。登頂隊と同形のお椀で、漆の強さと温かい感触を味わってください。

室瀬和美