



## The color of eternalness

While our ancestor recognized invisible meanings and values behind the things more than visible, they gave the meanings to the things by taking "black" into their life and expressed their will dressed in black. Though there have been many interpretations on color black, "black" is especially never dyed by other colors, so it is often treated as the color of eternalness. For example, the daily clothes of Buddhism monks are black frocks called *sumizome*. Black is the color that includes warnings in order to achieve the sacredness by the scared will of gods and Buddha, free from carnal desire, and it plays the role of the skin, which shut out the color of the world. And it is said that the custom that Japanese women in the Edo Era (1603-1867) painted their teeth black was derived from the samurai's custom in the Sengoku Era (1497-1573) that samurais showed their allegiance to their sovereign, their single-hearted devotion.

This notion of "black" as the color of eternalness is widely common in the world, so it still remains strongly. Even today, a clerical garment of judge is black, as a symbol of the absolute fairness, for the black color *cannot be dyed by any other color*.



\*1 plant dyeing : Flowers and grasses contain excellent pigments. Dyed with the liquid extracted from flower petals, leave, trunk and so on, there are various colors according to the kind of the plants. Indigo, safflower and turmeric(Indian saffron) are representative.

Dorozome : This is the oldest dyeing technique in Japan, and it is said that Japanese already performed this before Nara period(710-794). In Dorozome, we break down mud containing substances into smaller particle as tiny as possible to use. Amami Islanders and Kume Islanders are performing this technique even now.

\*2 Kurogo : In Japanese traditional play , for example, Joruri , Bunraku(puppet play) and Kabuki and so on, *kurogos* assist the movements of puppets or actors and take properties in and out. They are all in black dress head-to-toe and never appear on center stage.