Plum work in the rainy season

I helped to harvest the neighborhood’s small plum grove for the ripe season.

Even though the plum blossoms were cared for just recently, time flies fast.

Hiding inside their green shells and hydrated by the small raindrops, before anyone had noticed they had already grown plump.

The fruits were collected by hand, first from the branches that had fallen.

The bucket was immediately filled to the brim.

After returning with their share and pouring it into a basket, the kitchen is filled with sweetness and bitterness.

Every year, this aroma is well suited for the rainy season.

It’s called “plum work”, such as preserving with vinegar, or distilling with liquor.

It’s a word you wouldn’t be able to find in your on-hand dictionary, but one filled with a certain flavor.

Now there’s quite a lot of people who enjoy handmade dishes with these and vegetables, like boiled plums or juice.

We also used the fruits with cuts to make jam while we pickled the untouched ones.

When you see the vinegar rising from the salted plums inside the bottle, you will be blessed with the wisdom of your ancestors

Although it looks like the rising sun with a simple soft shape, when using in preparation, it’s pretty thick on the inside.

There’s something called “The Pickled Plum Song”.

In an abridged version, it begins with “In February and March, the flowers bloom” and continues with “In May and June, when the fruits are ripe, they are shaken off the branches, sold by volume, pickled in salt, and stained with the red of perilla….”

They continue singing that throughout the life of the plum.

Once the rainy season ends, they await 3 days and 3 nights of a dry summer air.

For one serving of pickled plum to be made, a great deal of time and effort has been used.

And so, each drop helps the appetite to stimulate and to prevent food poisoning.

In this annual plum work, I remember a phrase often forgotten, “Raise your salt by hand” meaning to bring one up under someone’s care.

For the rainy season in Japan, this is the harvest filled with the most sincerity and joy.