

## Wokashiya *Nerikiri* Classes

(attended by Fumiko Kimura)

*Nerikiri* classes at “Wokashiya” started in November 2017. Participants make two different types of *nerikiri*, three of each kind. After the class students eat one of the desserts with tea and bring the rest home. The *nerikiri* can be preserved for about three days in the refrigerator, or roughly three weeks in the freezer.



Students make seasonal variations of *nerikiri*, such as the autumnal “*Kouyou*” and “*Aki no yama*” featured in the November classes.



Winter *nerikiri*, “Poinsettia” and “Snowman”, made in December.



The *nerikiri* and the *anko* (sweet bean paste) are prepared before the class. The *nerikiri* are already colored and divided in necessary portions. Japanese sweets have a standard size to fit into specified boxes. This is why all the *nerikiri* and bean paste are shaped beforehand in balls of an exact weight.



※ November's “Aki no yama” and “Kouyou”. The black object is the *anko* (dark bean paste).  
In December, a white bean paste with yuzu was used.

The tools used for making *nerikiri* are placed in a box made of paulownia wood. Each person is given their own set that includes a cutting board with a measure, a needle to draw lines on the *nerikiri*, and a wet towel.



※The tool box is on the left. On the right are easy to follow instructions. The model *nerikiris* given to students are in the black box, and on the top right is the plastic box to take home the Japanese sweets.

The *nerikiri* easily dry out during winter. They stick to the tools and your hands, which is why it is important to keep them damp with a wet towel. The first one is a poinsettia. The picture shows “Kouyou” from November. The only difference is the color since they are made the same way. You put the red *nerikiri* inside and cover it with an orange *nerikiri*.



Students stretch it into a leaf shape to fit into the designated box. You can see the slight change in color since there are two different colors combined.



You put it on your hand and cover the *anko* (sweet bean paste) with it.



Leaf lines are drawn with a needle. It is important to keep the needle in place; instead the *nerirkiri* is moved to form lines.



Powdered sugar, resembling snow, is sprinkled on “Poinsettia” *nerikiri*. For those without experience it can be quite difficult to sprinkle gently and the sugar sometimes looks like a big chunk of snow.



※The teacher here is sprinkling snow by softly tapping the tea strainer.

At the end, gold flakes are added with toothpicks to make “Poinsettias” look more Christmassy.



※Sizes are checked on cutting boards to match that of the gift boxes.

After making the first one with the instructor, students make two more on their own so they can commit to memory the steps.

To make a “Snowman”, the sweet bean paste is covered with the *nerikiri* and shaped into a ball.



The round ball shaped *nerikiri*. Tobe san’s ball is very pretty. It is easier to see the technique differences in simpler shapes. A red *nerikiri* is used to make a hat, an orange *nerikiri* to make a carrot nose on the round face. Black sesame, dotted with a toothpick, become the eyes. The instructions explain how the facial expression of the snowman can vary depending on the location and direction of the eyes.



※This is Kimura’s first try at a snowman. The top left pink *nerikiri* are used for the cheeks by making them very small and thin.

Finally, the mouth is drawn with a needle.



※The one on the left was made by Tobe san, a professional artisan. The one on the right is Kimura’s.

Same with the snowman, you make the last two by yourself. After making all of them you choose one and drink tea served by Tobe san. Most of the people choose to eat their least attractive *nerikiri*. Tobe san says, “Everyone tries to hide the ugly evidence”. Students choose a plate to display their *nerikiris*.



※Even if they are not attractive, when you place them into the special boxes, they start to look more legitimate.



Like a traditional Japanese bar, tea is served in a sake bottle, and consumed from a Ochoko (sake cup). After our lesson, we drank yuzu scented Hoji tea. Typically, students sit and talk enjoying their *nerikiri* and tea, for about a half an hour following the class. Like other traditional Japanese sweets, *nerikiri* have seasonal designs to be enjoyed throughout the year.

Following the Chinese zodiac, on New Year's the class made a dog *nerikiri* as well as a winter camellia *nerikiri*.



A number of people from restaurants and other food related communities participate in the classes.

