



## In the Kitchen with Mari

### *Hanabira Mochi*

(Gyuhhi Skins)

*From February, 2011 Letter from Mari*

**Recipe courtesy of [www.chanoyu.com](http://www.chanoyu.com)**

In December, 2010, we enjoyed preparing a traditional Japanese New Years meal that both Kent (in Morro Bay, California) and I (in Europe) enjoyed while growing up in our respective Japanese families. This year, here in San Francisco, my mom worked with our daughter Karin, to document the process of preparing this 15-course meal. Here is one recipe and two photos to give you a sense of what this meal is like. The photos include: (1) the 'main' course, a soup called 'ozoni' which my mom makes according to her Kyoto hometown tradition; and (2) a photo of a sweet that is recognized primarily only by residents of Kyoto, which is called Hanabira mochi.

We wanted to add that the concept of this sweet was to mimic the ozoni soup, the way it is made in Kyoto. This soup base is a white miso (this is why the sweet white bean center has white miso added to it), and, of course, the wrapper is soft mochi rice cake, mimicking the roasted mochi rice cake in the ozoni soup. Kyoto ozoni also includes burdock root . The sweet includes a candied version of this root, so it has 'all' the elements of the soup. Apparently, this sweet recipe was invented for the imperial family and was only eaten by them. After a certain point in time, non Imperial family members were allowed to also eat this sweet. Today, practitioners of Urasenke-style tea ceremony in Japan adopted this sweet as part of the New Years tradition of that tea school.

The recipe for this sweet follows. It is complicated but made by devotees of Kyoto culture around the world, as its mix of flavors and textures are both refined and scrumptious.

#### **Ingredients:**

- mochiko (sweet rice flour) 100gm (3.5oz)
- water 130-150cc (approx. 2/3 cup)
- granulated sugar 100gm (3.5oz)
- 1 egg white lightly beaten
- mizuame (or light corn syrup) 1/2tsp
- shiro koshian (white smooth bean paste)



30gm (1oz)

- potato starch or corn starch
- pink miso flavored koshian 150gm (5.28oz)

**Preparation:**

Mix the water slowly into the mochiko to dissolve, making sure there are no lumps. The consistency should be like a thick marshmallow cream. You may not need all of the water so be careful not to pour it all in at once. When thoroughly mixed, place the mixture on a damp cotton cloth and steam on med/high heat for approximately 10 to 15 minutes until the white (raw) color has changed.



Transfer to a heavy bottom pot and over low/medium heat add the sugar gradually. Stir constantly to keep the mixture from burning. If the heat gets too high, turn it down. When all of the sugar is incorporated add the mizuame or corn syrup. Next add the an and continue to stir until it is mixed in well. Finally add the lightly beaten egg white mixing vigorously to incorporate completely. At this point the gyuhi will be quite stiff. Turn onto a board that has been generously dusted with the starch. (A small tea strainer works well for spreading the starch evenly.) Dust the top with more starch. When it has cooled a bit, but is still warm, roll out the gyuhi until it is thin.

**To Assemble:**

Using a round cutter that is approximately 3.5in to 3.75in in diameter cut the gyuhi into rounds. Brush off any excess starch. Add a triangular piece of sweet miso flavored smooth pink bean paste approximately 15gm (1/2oz) to the center of the skin. Add 2 pieces of candied gobo (burdock root) and fold in half. This recipe makes about 8 sweets. (If serving the sweets the next day it is better not to assemble them until just before serving.)

*NOTE – The miso flavored smooth pink bean paste is made by adding approximately 15gm (1/2oz), or a little more to taste, saikyo miso (sweet white Kyoto style miso) to the koshian. Mix the koshian and miso together in a heavy pan. Heat on low/medium heat, while stirring, until the miso is incorporated. If the bean paste seems too dry, a little hot water can be added. Turn off the heat and add a small amount of red food coloring to the bean paste and mix in until a pink color is achieved.*