
The Folk Culture of the Rice
Cake in Japan

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1. The Word of the Rice Cake

It wins 餅/糯/糰 when we express the rice cake in a Japanese kanji. All 餅/糯/糰 pronounces it "mo- chi" in the Japanese.

In Japan, the rice cake points at the food which prepared grains of the viscosity mainly, and there is it when it points at a thing of the touch that we did stickily. However, for example, in China in the kanji zone same as Japan, the word of the rice cake means the food which used the wheat flour like "月餅" and "餅干".

According to Osamu Shinoda knowing a lot about history of Chinese food, "餅" means a wheat flour product, but "餌" points at the food which we made with the powder of cereals except the wheat. In addition, a letter of "糎" is hit with the rice cake we hull glutinous rice, and to make in Chinese (Shinoda, 1970). By the way, "糎" means シトギ (the thing which sawed raw rice with a mortar) in the Japanese.

糯 points at cereals with the viscosity in a word for 粳. Naturally there is the thing of the viscosity in foxtail millet, millet, Indian corn, corn, barley, dove wheat as well as rice as had shown earlier. 糰 is used to capture the small animals such as birds as birdlime with a strong material of viscosity gathered by an ilex. People do not need to usually eat 糰.

2. The Concept of the Rice Cake

The rice cake to appear in Japanese folk culture is not limited to only a thing to make with glutinous rice. There were many rice cakes to make with cereals elsewhere of rice once. Even if in particular the rice cake of the millet and foxtail millet entered in the 20th century, at the age of Halle such as New Year holidays or the festival, it was made with a rice cake of rice by all means.

Furthermore, there is food treated as a rice cake as well as the cereals which there is a kind of the viscosity such as the foxtail millet, Indian corn, corn, barley, dove wheat in the folk world a lot when we say. For example, when it is said that there is not the kind of the viscosity in the agriculture about the

Deccan grass, but it is said that much, and there is Deccan grass of the viscosity as a folk classification at the time if we made the rice cake of the Deccan grass in the mountain farm village region, there can be the thing.

There is the kind of the viscosity in the agriculture about the wheat, but there are many places that it points at the food which we steam it after all kneading wheat flour or baked, and call itself " ... rice cake". In addition, that a kind of the viscosity is created about wheat and the potato now by a gene manipulation (Watanabe / Fukazawa, 1998).

In other words there is the rice cake in the folk world more clearly than the rice cake clarified in agriculture over a wide area. It is still widening the range, besides. Besides, from the crops such as a persimmon of the viscosity, the soy bean of the viscosity to pork of the viscosity, the food which was able to hit "a rice cake" before the name appears up to noodles of the viscosity, sweetened and jellied bean paste of the viscosity, a processed food such as the chocolate of the viscosity again.

When we got the sticky taste that did not possess it to the food till then, as for these new rice cake food, things touched as a brand name to symbolize it are often found. It may be said that the enlarged tendency of the rice cake concept in such folk world is to have advanced throughout. It advances in speed and the range that surpass far the development (for example, corn or wheat) of the kind of the real viscosity. This shows a characteristic of the folk about the rice cake.

In the following, I show a tentative plan about the folk classification of the rice cake in Japan.

3. A Tentative Plan about the Folk Classification of the Rice Cake

It is just what the rice cakes in the folk world are classified in 2 greatly, and it shows below it.

1) A Thing to Make with Cereals Comprising the Viscosity

There is a kind of the viscosity in rice, foxtail millet, barley, dove wheat, millet, Indian corn, corn (Sakamoto, 1989). We say a rice cake to make with a kind of such a viscosity. Such a rice cake is distributed between 2 more.

① Is a rice cake made as materials, and hull cereals of the viscosity, and tsukune sleeps, and is made. A rice cake and foxtail millet rice cake of rice hit it.

② Is originally a rice cake to prepare after mixing the viscosity cereals of the fixed quantity with a thing without the viscosity. In that case, it is often that it is called " ... rice cake". In other words when viscosity cereals are used as a filler. The horse chestnut rice cake we hull it after mixing a horse chestnut with glutinous rice and glutinous foxtail millet, and to make is the model. But, for a use of the folk, the use of glutinous rice, glutinous millet, glutinous foxtail millet is confirmed in a large area, but the used range is extremely limited about the viscosity kind of barley and the corn regionally quantitatively.

In the case of a rice cake formed by cereals comprising such a viscosity, Japanese subsistence as historic development specialized it in rice growing, and the rice cakes were unified by a thing by the glutinous rice.

2) A Thing with the Taste That There is not The Viscosity, but seem to be a Rice Cake

It in itself does not own the viscosity in Japan, but there are many things called " ... rice cake" at a point

in time when it is cooked and became food. There are three methods to show such a something sticky taste.

- ① When it in itself uses a thing possessing a feeling of appetite such as the rice cake, like taro, make it. The potato rice cake which we molded since we smash the boiled sweet potato is the model.
- ② Start a feeling of appetite which did stickily by grind it to powder once, and process it variously, and cooking it. This is related with the development of the flour milling technology, and it is the method that developed taking advantage of the spread of stone mills in particular. We knead it with water and boiling water, and form it after sawing soba, wheat, rice, barnyard millet to powder once. It is it with the touch of such something sticky so that gluten is formed in the case of the wheat said to that there is not a viscosity kind in the agriculture in particular by kneading it. Furthermore, the cooking method that we boil it, and it is sultry understands that there was a meaning to increase feelings more stickily of the food.
- ③ Is a rice cake prepared with it since expose it to water, and take out only starch. For example, a kudzu starch cake and a bracken rice cake hit it.

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