

"Ladakhi style Yokoyama family Soba(Buckwheat) Nabe(pot) for my 2017 New Years Eve"

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Continuously for the past two years (2015-2016) in the month of September, I participated in a study tour conducted by NGO JULAY LADAKH to Ladakh in India to research the roots of Buckwheat(Soba in Japanese).

When we stayed at the temple of Skyurbuchan village; a Tapu (the food made of buckwheat flour as a form of buckwheat seed (triangular shape) and boiled. Later mixed with walnut and onion sauce that is produced as a paste by grinding on the stones).

With that experiences, I made a similar form of Ladakhi Buckwheat Nabe(pot) soup. I named it as "Ladakhi style Yokoyama family Soba(Buckwheat) Nabe(pot) for my new year's eve"

My Recipe;

First, I repeatedly poured cold water into the buckwheat flour that I bought the 100% buckwheat flour of Oku-aizu Mishima-machi village at sobashubou Fukushima restaurant which is special for buckwheat food items and Japanese traditional sake (alcohol) drinks.

I kneaded the buckwheat flour as firm as possible into a stick form and tear it off little by little and mold into a triangular shape similar to buckwheat seed) with the finger-tips and a palm. *(We were told by a local monk there that a high level Buddhist monk seems to put blood like power in this form in Ladakh and there seems to be implications to say that it protects life by not getting hit from bullets in the armed forces during wars.)*

I then boiled the Buckwheat Tapu with hot water for 20 minutes.

(In Ladakh, the remaining Soba(Buckwheat) soup after boiling is thrown away which is a waste finally...Wow! MOTTAINAI... *MOTTAINAI means: not to waste. The merits of buckwheat soup; it being nutritious and good for health because it contains Rutin in it. It is also beneficial for reducing high blood pressure, preventive for lifestyle diseases such as depression ,hardening of the arteries etc. Therefore, it is better to consume all including the soup without waste.)*

I then filtered the boiled buckwheat seed form from the soup and poured into a Nabe(pot).

The soup stock which I cooked was based on seaweed and vegetables.

The Nabe (pot) was added further with Tofu(The Japanese traditional food which is made from a soybean), Radish, Carrot, Burdock, Japanese green onion, Konnyaku(made from potato starch), Shirataki(different form of Konnyaku.yam noodles) and the

Buckwheat. We take soup and the ingredient materials on a serving plate each other, and add Yuzu pepper(condiment paste made from yuzu and chili peppers), Korean Gouchujang(red chili paste) for preference.It was all delicious!

Of course, it's far delicious together with Japanese Sake drinks.

I later thought that it would have been better if I added **beans**, mushrooms and Chinese cabbage as well.

I selected the above menu based on my practice of Macrobiotic for several years; I am a Macrobian.(※)

This way, I was able to prepare it quite similar to Guthuk which is consumed during the New Years Eve in Ladakh.

☆About "Guthuk" of Ladakh region, in India.

"Guthuk" is a soup similar to the Japanese Nabe (pot) is eaten in Ladakh on the eve of the year-end (Tibetan calendar, 29th day of 10th month). Gu means nine and thuk means the soup and thus it is being prepared with nine different kinds of ingredients in it.

It may be said that "Thukpa" is the generic name of the noodles like dish/food of Ladakh.

A reason of "Guthuk" seems to be something like below.

The whole family members eat together and there is no strict rule on how to eat and what ingredients it must have in. The nine varieties of ingredients are poured in so that the person crossing into New Year does not end the year without eating varieties of food. Therefore, they eat varieties of food so that no regrets left and welcome the New Year happily.

Guthuk has the following ingredients.

1. Wheat flour, 2. Water, 3. Bean, 4. Meat (usually goat & sheep), 5. Cheese, 6. Reddish, 7. Spinach, 8. Carrot, 9. Onion, 10. Garlic, 11. Ginger, 12. Spice (turmeric, garamasala, chillipowder, etc), ... and 13. Salt.

Originally in Japan, people eat Soba (Buckwheat Noodles) on the New Year's Eve's.

According to the original Japanese traditional beliefs, the Soba (Buckwheat Noodle) easily falls into pieces in comparison with other noodles, similarly we drive off devil spirits of a person for the past year by breaking into pieces and eating the Soba (Buckwheat Noodle).

There are other meanings in Japan as well because the noodle being thin and long, similarly it is wished to have a longer life.

The craftsman using gold leaves, it is said in Japan that the craftsman collected the scattered pieces of gold leaves with the dough of a buckwheat which believed to mean that it is wished that the person to be lucky economically or saves more money easily.

The buckwheat plant grows strong and it is wished to have a strong and healthy life of a person.

However, the Soba (Buckwheat) that I prepared this time from the form point of view, it is not long and thus it may not contribute to long life but I made it in a buckwheat seed shape and wished to contribute in generating money as well as having a strong and good health.

After all, I wish for all people that the most important thing is to eat them deliciously and to be happy and keep smiling for the whole of year 2017.

Also I pray for world peace.

(※) Macrobiotic

It is basically like a vegetarian food consuming lifestyle without meat or fish. Macrobiotic is a food's therapy to eat unpolished rice and cereals, vegetables and the seaweed which Yukikazu Sakurazawa (1893 - 1966) who studied the food culture and promoted first in Japan and then later spread in Europe and America. It was called the longevity method. Macrobiotics as an original food therapy spread with the name as macrobiotic or Macrobiotique in the world.

☆World peace through the foods.

This is a word of Michio Kushi, leader of Macrobiotic, who died the year before.