

Okuaizu

Where is
Oku Aizu?



The morning mist drifts over the fields.
Harvested bean branches are hanging to be dried.
They will be beaten by a stick after some time in the sun.
Then the beans will be ready to come out easily.
The sound <shara,shara> made when the beans are beaten
is also a sign they are perfectly dry.
Today will surely be a beautiful day.



Playing in the field

Picking wild pears



After white flowers have bloomed in the spring, *wild pears* drop to cover the field. They look delicious but in truth the taste and texture are not so good. Still, I cannot stop picking them up when I see them because I am reminded of the word Crab-bomb, from the story written by Kenji Miyazawa.

HARVESTING RADISH

(DAIKON IN JAPANESE)



Piles of radishes have been harvested and are ready to be stored over winter. The radishes are washed in cold water, piled together, and then covered with straw to keep them from freezing. They will be served at the family dining table all through winter.

Tools of Living

Photo & essay
by Yoshikazu Takeshima



Winnowing machine

Threshing buckwheat.

After the buckwheat seeds are dropped, they are sifted with a winnowing basket to remove any unwanted scraps (branches, dried leaves, small rocks, etc.)

Then using the winnowing machine (*Toumi* in Japanese) the buckwheat seeds are separated by wind power. Wind blows rhythmically with every step on the machine's pedal.

I admire the ingenuity of the person who invented this machine only using wood and simple craftsmanship. However, these days the machine and other tools of natural living rest at the back of the shed, perhaps waiting to be used again. (Tarabu, Kaneyama-town October 1982)

Cooking Okuaizu

Mukago Rice



Mukago rice is one of the seasonal words for Haiku poems about late autumn in Japan. The yam buds growing on the vines are very nutritious and the texture is pleasurable. It is a very simple dish that only requires mukago and rice cooked together, but with newly harvested rice, you can truly create the authentic taste of autumn.

Animals in Okuaizu

Grey Heron



Photo & essay by Isamu Nikkuni

The *Grey Heron* has been seen in Okuaizu only over the last 30 years. It originally inhabited the coast, but gradually moved inland. This is because the natural rivers have been taken over by new development. *Grey Herons* can stand on the shallows of man-made rivers and easily catch fish.