

Hinode TIMES

Going behind the scenes at Hinodeya!



Our team listening to Mr. Akira Fukuchi (on the right) explaining about the *adzuki* beans used at Hinodeya.

Hinodeya is very selective about the ingredients they use. To prepare the *anko* (red bean paste) for the sweet bun (*manju*), they use only *erimo adzuki* beans from Hokkaido.

For their bean jam wafers (*monaka*), the shop uses *dainagon adzuki* beans from

Okayama. Unfortunately, this year, it has been difficult to obtain these beans because of the heavy rains in Western Japan.

Hinodeya also offers various types of confectionery and flavors that complement each season. The *hanami dango* (rice

Ingenuity in creating Japanese confectionery

Since its establishment 60 years ago, the Japanese confectionery shop – Hinodeya – in Kogai, Inawashiro Town, has been popular with not only the community but also others from within the prefecture and all around Japan. Besides their existing line of products, including their most popular item, *tempura manju* (deep-fried sweet bun), which is made with specially selected ingredients, the key to their popularity has been their ability to introduce new products and tastes. In recent years, the addition of items such as rice cake stuffed with fresh cream and *dorayaki* (butter pancakes) has helped Hinodeya gain greater popularity among young people. During our visit, we gained a deeper understanding of the activities of the Japanese confectionery shop which continuously tries to find new ideas while maintaining the traditions that made the shop popular.

(Reporter team)

Using Hokkaido and Okayama beans Conscientious about quality

dumpling) offered in spring and the *mizu yokan* (red bean jelly) in the summer are particularly popular. In autumn, the shop offers confectionery items using chestnuts.

All confectionery items made by Hinodeya are free of artificial additives.

Although the shelf life might be shorter, Hinodeya wants to ensure customers can consume their products without worry.

Hinodeya has also established an eat-in space inside the shop to enable customers to enjoy their products, such as freshly fried *tempura manju*, to provide a space where elderly customers can take a short rest. This kind of thoughtfulness and consideration for customers is another reason for their popularity.

One of the confectionery items newly introduced last year was the cream cheese rice cake containing locally produced blueberries. “We are always in search of ideas for new types of confectionery that can only be made using local ingredients,” enthused Mr. Akira Fukuchi, the president of the shop.

(Kodama, Nagasawa)

More than 60 years of history First started as a tofu shop

Founded in 1950, Hinodeya is a long-established shop with a history of over 60 years. The shop's name Hinodeya (consisting of the Japanese words for sunrise and shop) was chosen in the hope that the shop will prosper and grow like the glow of the rising sun.

Hinodeya was started after the war, by the grandfather of the shop's current president who started peddling tofu at Nakanosawa hot springs. With the opening of the new road, the Bandai Azuma Skyline in November 1959, the shop began selling *sasa dango* (rice dumplings wrapped in bamboo leaves) from the nearby mountain to passengers traveling on the new road. This marked the start of Hinodeya as a confectionery shop.

Eating *tempura manju* during Buddhist services is a tradition in Aizu. Hinodeya's *tempura manju* was born following a customer's comment about the possibility of making tempura from an *onsen manju*. It has grown in popularity and now accounts for more than half of the shop's revenue. Currently, the shop is managed by four members of the family, Mr. Akira (48), his wife Rie (43), his father Masatoshi (77) and his mother Mitsuko (76).



(From the right) Akira, Rie, Mitsuko and Masatoshi.

Aiming to create more delicious confectionery

Mr. Akira said he does not want to become complacent. Not content with what the shop already offers, he samples popular confectionery from all over Japan and is constantly trying to create new ideas and tastes. He also takes part in workshops and trainings to apply what he learned as inspiration to produce new products.

There are also many subtle improvements and changes to products, such as

Dairy-infused confectionery for all ages

seasonal adjustments to the amount of sugar used that is not necessarily obvious to customers. To ensure that people of all ages can enjoy the shop's confectionery, Hinodeya has developed new products that contain butter and cream, suitable for all ages to consume. We look forward to new creations in future. By promoting its products in Fukushi-

ma Prefecture's antenna shop “Midette” in Tokyo's Nihonbashi and utilizing the internet, Hinodeya plans to continue to increase its customer base within and outside the prefecture. “We will make every effort to come up with more delicious confectionery,” said Mr. Akira, with a sparkle in his eyes.

(Nakajo, Kokubun)

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