



Title: *Bakery Scene*  
 Artist: Utagawa Kunisada (1786 – 1865)  
 Date: 1850  
 Dimensions: 19 ¼” x 34 ½” (Framed); 14” x 28 ¾” (Image)  
 Medium: Woodblock Print  
 Acquisition #: 2011.5.46  
 Additional Works by the Artist: Yes X NO     



**MOFA**  
 Florida State University Museum of Fine Arts

**Artist’s Biography**

Utagawa Kunisada was born in 1786 in Edo, Japan, now Tokyo. He joined the famous art school of Utagawa Toyokuni and studied art under the famous artist Toyokuni I. Unlike some of the other students at the school, Kunisada found early success in art. He produced his first illustrated book in 1807 and his first actor prints in 1808. He would become the most commercially successful woodblock printmaker of all time. Utagawa Kunisada explored many different genres of his style of Ukiyo-e starting with portraits of famous actors of the kabuki theater while also dabbling in landscapes as well as scenes of his time. Kunisada died in Edo, Japan in 1865.

**Ukiyo-e**

Ukiyo-e is an art form originating in Japan during the Edo Period, which lasted from 1615 to 1868. Ukiyo-e translates to “Pictures of the Floating World.” This term came to describe the culture that was glorified during the Edo period. The genre includes paintings and woodblock prints that mostly depicted beautiful women and famous kabuki actors, but artists explored other topics such as landscapes and historical scenes.

**New Year’s Celebrations**

The new year in Japan is a holiday full of traditions just as such traditions are celebrated in the United States. Mochi is a Japanese treat enjoyed during the new year’s time, made for family, friends and the general public. Nengajyo accompanies the mochi tradition in Japan. These are post cards sent to loved ones also as a celebration of the new year. Nengajyo cards were traditionally handmade. Otoshidama is another Japanese tradition for the new year in which money is given to children and employees receive bonuses from their companies.

**Kunisada Print**

**Present Day Mochi Making**

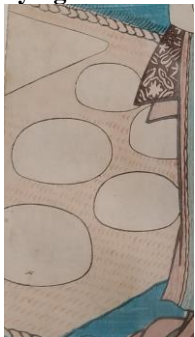
**Straining the steamed rice and transferring it to the usu:**



**Kneading and shaping mochi:**



**Drying mochi:**



**Mochi**

As the print by Kunisada shows, some in nineteenth century Japan specialized in making mochi, which are Japanese rice cakes. Mochi is traditionally eaten at New Year’s, but is enjoyed year round. Historically the cakes are made from mochigome, short-grained japonica glutinous rice that is washed and soaked overnight. The next morning the rice is steamed and placed in an usu, which is essentially a large mortar. The rice is pounded with a kine, or wooden mallet, in the usu until it becomes a soft and smooth mass. It is then stretched and molded into various shapes and sizes. Finally, traditional mochi is set out to dry, not baked, before being eaten, and often toasted or cooked at home later. The mochi cakes can be filled or topped with bean paste, fruits, or vegetables, to be enjoyed in a variety of ways. A common filling for mochi is a red or a white bean paste; the treat is known as daifuku. Traditionally radish is grated to add to or create a dip for mochi. The radish helps people digest the mochi as it is a very chewy treat. In this print, a woman at the bottom left can be seen grating a radish, in Japan called a daikon.

**Resources:**

- <http://education.asianart.org/explore-resources/background-information/new-years-japan-mochi-pounding>
- [https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/plea/hd\\_plea.htm](https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/plea/hd_plea.htm)
- [https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/ukiy/hd\\_ukiy.htm](https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/ukiy/hd_ukiy.htm)
- <https://www.thejapanguy.com/do-you-know-these-14-famous-japanese-new-year-traditions/>

**Completed Summer 2018 by Michael A. Avila**

**Nengajyo**  
Activity Lesson Plan K – 5

**Session Activity:** Japanese culture is rich in traditions. In the print, *Bakery Scene*, Kunisada explores one of the traditions of Japanese New Year in his depiction of mochi-making. Other new year's traditions include Nengajyo, which involves sending postcards for the holiday. Students will explore the Japanese tradition of Nengajyo by creating their own new year's postcards to give to loved ones.



**Objective:** The students will link traditions within American culture to the long-standing traditions from Japan by creating their own Nengajyo, or new year's postcards, to give to loved ones.

**Materials:** blank postcards, drawing materials (crayons, colored pencils, or paint)

**Activity Procedures:**

1. Discuss Kunisada's print titled *Bakery Scene*, Discuss the making of mochi.
2. Explain mochi as a traditional treat of Japanese New Year's and discuss other traditions of Japanese New Years.
3. Discuss the way the Japanese New Year's traditions are similar and different than American traditions.
4. Explain the tradition of Nengajyo and the way postcards are created and look at Japanese examples.
5. Pass out a blank postcard, drawing materials to each student.
6. Have the students create their own Nengajyo with drawings and "Happy New Year" messages to loved ones.

Enduring Understanding 1 **VA.68.H.1**  
: Through study in the arts, we learn about and honor others and the worlds in which they live(d).

**Food Timeline in Art**  
Activity Lesson Plan 6 – 12

**Session Activity:** Food has always been a big part of art. From still lives to genre paintings, artists have shown food in a number of different settings. Show the students Kunisada's print *Bakery Scene* and explain how he used the mocha scene to depict the new year holiday. Discuss how artists have used food in their art over the many decades and periods of art history. Discuss how different cultures use food within their art.

**Objective:** The students will research a given decade or time period in art history to research and pick a painting from to compare to the way Kunisada used food in his print. Each student will create a slide or two of a PowerPoint that highlights the similarities and differences between the print and the student's chosen artwork. When finished the slide will be put together in one PowerPoint to form a timeline of food through artworks.

**Materials:** Research material, Writing material, PowerPoint, Computer

**Activity Procedures:**

1. Show the students the Kunisada print *Bakery Scene* and explain how he has depicted mochi making.
2. Discuss how mochi making is a Japanese tradition and how Kunisada had used the scene to express the Japanese new years.
3. Explain how artists have used foods to convey many different ideas in their works.
4. Assign or have each student pick a time period that they could choose an artist and artwork that has food in the subject matter. (For example: *Campbell Soup Cans* by Andy Warhol, *Freedom From Want* by Norman Rockwell, *Still Life with Fruit Basket* by Paul Cezanne, paintings by Willem Kalf, *Last Supper* by Leonardo Da Vinci, etc.)
5. Have each student research their artwork and the food associated with it.
6. The students will make a PowerPoint slide where they will present their research and compare and contrast the work they picked to Kunisada's print.
7. The slides will then be arranged in chronological order to present them as a timeline.

Enduring Understanding 2 **VA.5.H.2** : The arts reflect and document cultural trends and historical events, and help explain how new directions in the arts have emerged.

