

Prime Minister Abe and President Bush Hold First Bilateral Talks

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and President George W. Bush met in Hanoi on November 18. It was the first face-to-face meeting between the two leaders since Mr. Abe became Prime Minister in September. Both men were in Vietnam as part of the annual Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Forum.

The bilateral talks were an opportunity for Prime Minister Abe to outline his new administration's basic policies with his American counterpart. At a working lunch after the meeting, President Bush praised Prime Minister Abe for his fresh start and his leadership. For his part, the Prime Minister cited the strong convictions behind President Bush's leadership style.

Bilateral Relations

During their extensive discussions both men agreed on the central importance of their partnership and the need to promote a Japan-US alliance "for the world and Asia" by working together on global issues.

President Bush reaffirmed US commitment to the Japan-US security arrangements. The leaders agreed to accelerate cooperation on ballistic missile defense and to continue the steady implementation of the restructuring of US forces in Japan.

On the economic front, they stressed



the importance of mutual economic ties. President Bush praised the work of APEC and proposed a free trade agreement that includes all APEC members. Prime Minister Abe reiterated his belief that the presence of the US in Asia guarantees security and is crucial for the region's continuing economic development. He stressed that Japan too is committed to APEC and called for the study of a free trade agreement program.

Regional Issues

President Bush welcomed progress promoting Sino-Japanese and Korean-Japanese relations following Prime Minister Abe's earlier visit to those two countries in October. Furthermore, both men touched on their joint ties with Australia and India, efforts to promote closer relations with ASEAN, and ongoing reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan.

Speaking at length about the situation in North Korea, they agreed that a nuclear North Korea will not be tolerated and that denuclearization must be achieved through the coordinated approach of Six Party Talks. Mr. Abe also appealed to Mr. Bush on the abduction issue which he said must be fully resolved as quickly as possible. The President expressed clear support for Japan's position on this matter.

United Nations Reform

Prime Minister Abe shared his hope for progress towards comprehensive United Nations reform, and asked for US cooperation. President Bush again reaffirmed his desire for a Permanent Seat for Japan on the Security Council.

Other topics of discussion included the Iranian nuclear issue, support for reconstruction in Iraq and World Trade Organization Doha round negotiations.

APEC has become an important venue for diplomacy and discussions of major political and economic issues facing Asia and the globe. For Japan in particular, the annual meeting is extremely significant as growing economic ties move it closer to the Asia-Pacific region. In the security realm, APEC provides an important outlet for regional diplomacy, as seen by this year's extensive discussions surrounding the North Korean nuclear issue.

Amb. Sakurai's Visit to Pittsburgh

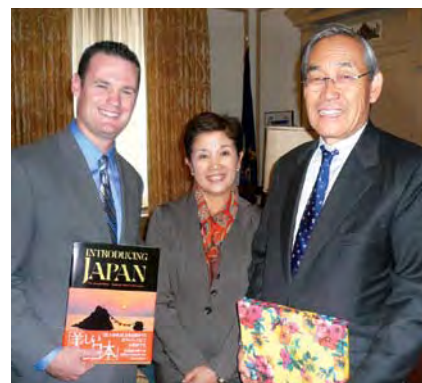
Just in time for the autumn leaves, Ambassador Sakurai and his wife visited Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania on October 26th. This was the Ambassador's first trip outside New York since assuming his post at the Consulate General.

The Ambassador visited the Westinghouse Corporation, where Mr. Stephen Tritch, the President and CEO, talked about the history of the company, its current construction projects, and the state of nuclear power generation in the United States.

Ambassador Sakurai also met with Mayor Luke Ravenstahl, who at 26 is the youngest mayor of any major city in the United States. Mayor Ravenstahl spoke energetically about his vision for

rebuilding the downtown area of Pittsburgh.

That evening, the Ambassador delivered the keynote speech at the annual dinner of the Japan-America Society of Pennsylvania (JASP), held at the Duquesne Club. Mr. Steve Ceurvorst, Chairman of the Society, and Ms. Sally Wiggin, an anchor of a local Pittsburgh television station, hosted the dinner. Some 200 members of JASP, a group of Americans and Japanese dedicated to networking and learning about their cultures, were in attendance. In his speech, Ambassador Sakurai discussed the current state of Japan-US relations and shared his vision of how Pittsburgh, a city famous for its bridges, could build



Amb. Sakurai and his wife meet Mayor Ravenstahl

a "bridge across the Pacific" bringing the people of Japan and the United States closer together. He also discussed Japan's ongoing economic recovery, the role of Japanese foreign direct investment in the US, the current situation surrounding North Korea's nuclear program, as well as recent domestic political developments in Japan and the growing influence of Japanese culture around the world.

Centennial Celebration at Japan Society

In 2007-08 Japan Society will celebrate the 100th anniversary of its work to improve understanding between Japan and the United States. In a recent statement, the President of Japan Society, Richard J. Wood, said:

"The work of Japan Society matters because the relationship between Japan and the United States matters. The mutual understanding Japan Society fosters is a continuing project of great importance."

"Japan Society is a major producer of high-quality content on Japan for the U.S.," says Mr. Wood, "and we continue to increase our endeavors beyond our landmark building in Manhattan. Wherever possible, our exhibitions and performances travel widely in North Amer-

ica. One of our goals for the immediate future is to enhance Japan Society's ability to share its programs electronically, for the benefit of other Japan-America societies, schools and colleges. This year we are inaugurating a new partnership with Keio University in Tokyo to enable ultra high-speed, high-definition video broadcasting. We will also seek support for streaming video, podcasting, and webcasting to create new on-line communities focusing on Japan."

Japan Society is planning over a year of outstanding events to celebrate the centennial. There will be two major gallery exhibitions: *Awakenings*, opening in March 2007, which will provide new insights into the tradition of

Zen Buddhism through its figurative painting in Japan's middle ages; *Making a Home*, starting in September, featuring contemporary Japanese artists in New York. Important performing arts



Richard J. Wood
© Ken Levinson

events will include the Big Dance Theatre's *The Other Here*, in February, Benjamin Britten's drama inspired by Noh theatre, *Curlew River*, in April, and *Noh and Kyogen in the Park*, in July. There will be a set of Centennial Lectures, featuring such leaders as Fujio Cho from Toyota Motors and Paul Volker, former Chairman of the Federal Reserve. A contemporary Japanese film festival, *Japan Cuts*, will feature new films, and *Tech Epoch* will highlight new Japanese technology.

EVENTcalendar

Dates, time or admission fee might be subject to change. Please make sure to update the latest information on our website www.cgi.org

Lecture Forum Film Festival Workshop

January 14, 2007

Japan's New Year's Day Celebration: Oshogatsu, Fall 2006/Winter 2007

Japan Society

333 East 47th Street, NYC

Celebrate Japan's New Year's holiday with lion dancing (*shishi-mai*) accompanied by live taiko drumming. There will be lots of traditional New Year's activities for children, including special New Year's calligraphy (*kakizome*), kite-making/flying (*takoage*), fukuwarai games and rice pounding (*mochi-tsuki*). Recommended for all ages. 2 to 4pm
Tickets: \$15 per family (up to five people), \$10 per family, with at least one Japan Society member. For tickets, please call the Box Office at (212) 715-1258.

Info: 212-715-1258 or www.japansociety.org



Children enjoy traditional *shishimai* (lion's dance) at Japan Society
Courtesy of Japan Society

March 3, 2007

Doll Festival (Girls' Day) : Hinamatsuri, Fall 2006/Winter 2007

Japan Society

333 East 47th Street, NYC

Doll Festival in Japan (*Girls' Day*) is a time to wish for the health and future happiness of young girls. Learn the basics of koto performance, participate in dance and songs, and enjoy festival-related snacks and drinks. Ceremonial dolls (*hina-ningyo*) will be displayed, and families will create their own origami dolls to take home. (Boys are welcome to participate!). 2 to 4pm

Tickets: \$10 per family (up to five people), \$7 per family, with at least one Japan Society member. To purchase tickets, please call the Box Office at (212) 715-1258.

Info: 212-715-1258 or www.japansociety.org



© Kazuko Minamoto

Exhibition

September 29, 2006 thru January 21, 2007

Contemporary Clay: Japanese Ceramics for the New Century

Japan Society

333 East 47th Street, NYC

This show celebrates some of the finest potters working out of Japan's best medieval ceramic centers today as well as works by

those influenced by the avant-garde Sodeisha group. In Contemporary Clay, approximately 100 works by 40 artists will explore the significant history of Japanese ceramics and those artists who have enriched and contributed to it in the last half century.

Info: 212-832-1155 or www.japansociety.org

October 20, 2006 thru Feb 4, 2007

Ehon:

The Artist and the Book in Japan

The New York Public Library

Fifth Avenue and 42nd Street, NYC

Ehon, a Japanese word meaning "picture book" is usually filled with calligraphy, essays and poems. This exhibit will show Ehon, from its origin to contemporary design in a display of the genre's book art, major influences and popular themes. With the many changes this art form has endured, this Japanese literary tradition, dating back to the



From : The Green Branch (Sakaki), Chapter of 10 of The Tale of Genji (Genji Monogatari). Kyoto, ca. early 17th century.
The New York Public Library, Spencer Collection
Courtesy of The New York Public Library

8th century, has some of the most mesmerizing, detailed and fantastic artwork in the world. The New York Public Library's exhibition features many works from its collection of Japanese books, prints, and manuscripts. Topics include Buddhist sutra's to The Art of the Book covering many periods throughout the history of this fine art.

Info: 212-704-8600 or www.nypl.org/press/2006/ehonLL.cfm

February 13, 2007

Culture Program

Fashioning Kimono

Horticultural Society of New York

148 West 37 Street, 13th Floor, NYC

Textile artisan and Japanese art historian, Ms. Annie Van Assche who literally wrote the book on kimonos ("Fashioning Kimono: Dress and modernity in Early Twentieth Century Japan") host's the event. Ms. Assche will present a slide lecture highlighting the influence of the Kimono on French fashion at the turn of the twentieth century based on her book, which highlights the Montgomery Collection of 150 Kimonos, including formal, semi-formal, and casual kimono's, dating from the late 19th to mid 20th centuries. There will also be a mini flower show. Tickets to the show will cost \$20 and an Obento

lunch by reservation, for \$15.

Info: 646-314-9597 or info@ikebanany.org



Courtesy of Ikebana International NY Chapter

October 7, 2006 - Spring 2007

Japanese Literati Culture in the Edo Period

Philadelphia Museum of Art

Benjamin Franklin Parkway at 26th St., Philadelphia, PA
In response to the Chinese literati culture, in the 17th century the Japanese created their own literati culture and in this exhibition, the major works of art that have come out during the Edo period will be shown. While collaborative works became an important part of the culture, with images of gatherings being front and center in many works, so too did individuality, eccentricity, and experimentation, which gained popularity in 18th cen-

tury Japan. The works included here will show all of this along with a rare hand scroll of calligraphies by fifteen early leaders of the sect, established in 1661 near Kyoto, Japan, along with albums, sets of fans, and images of poetic gatherings.

Info: 215-235-SHOW or www.philamuseum.org



The Dragon Sings, The Tiger Roars
Nukina Kaioku, Japanese, 1778 - 1863
Edo Period (1615-1868), c. 1850
Ink on paper; mounted as a two-fold screen
64 1/2 x 66 1/4 inches (163.8 x 168.3 cm) framed
Philadelphia Museum of Art

October 21, 2006 - January 21, 2007

"The Enigmatic Existence"

Toshiko Nishikawa

Agora Gallery

530 West 25th St., NYC

Toshiko Nishikawa's mixed medium artworks are playful abstractions employing pastels and whites, the mood of which represents her worldview. There is a timeless, organic quality to Nishikawa's art as streaks of white haze flow downward or across muted pastel backgrounds. Nishikawa's artwork nods to natural phenomena, recalling clouds, snow and water. Done mostly in small to medium sized formats, layers do not intermix but drip and conceal the colors below.

Info: 212-221-4151 or www.agora-gallery.com

January 4 to 14, 2007

MEDEA performed by Company East

The Annex Theatre at La MaMa ETC

74 A East 4th Street, NYC

MEDEA performed by Company East from Japan. Directed and choreographed by Kenji Kawarasaki. Thursday thru Sunday, starts at 7:30pm. On Sunday matinee at 2:30pm

Info: 212-475-7710 or www.lamama.org

January 16 to 21, 2007

Japanese Contemporary Dance Showcase

The Joyce Theater

175 Eighth Avenue at 19th St, NYC

For the last nine years, Japan Society has presented its annual showcase introducing the most cutting-edge, emerging dance companies to audiences in New York. To celebrate its 10th year, the showcase takes over New York's most prominent dance venue, The Joyce Theater, and features the cream of the crop in contemporary dance. Artists include reknowned genre-bending Pappa Tarahumara led by visionary director Hiroshi Koike; Kim Itoh and the Glorious Future, leader in the next generation of post-butoh and post-modern dance. The dissociative multimedia collages of Leni Basso, led by choreographer/dancer Akiko Kitamura, named one of the "top 50 choreographers in the world" by Dance Magazine; and the pure physical aestheticism of Noism 07, led by choreographer Jo Kanamori, will be performed. Performances on Tuesday and Wednesday include Noism 07 (Nina); Kim Itoh and the Glorious Future (Dead and Alive: Body on the Borderline). Thursday and Friday's performances include Leni Basso (Finks); Pappa Tarahumara (Three Sisters).

Info: 212-242-0800 or www.joyce.org

January 20, 2007

Concert: "String Quartet-in-Residence Tokyo String Quartet"

Kaufmann Concert Hall

Lexington Ave. at 92nd St, NYC

Chamber works, songs and piano music form the soul of Schumann's intensely personal Romantic art. The Tokyo String Quar-

Performance

tet marks the 150th anniversary of the composer's death with a series of concerts built around Schumann's most treasured chamber works. Distinguished artists from both sides of the Atlantic join the Tokyo String Quartet, performing works for strings, piano and voice that illustrate Schumann's mastery of many genres and his deep love of literature.
Info: 212-415-5500 or www.92y.org

January 24, 2007

Asian Artists & Concerts performance at Jazz at Lincoln center

Rose Theater at Lincoln Center

Broadway at 60th St, Time Warner Center 5th Floor, NYC
Marking the AAC's First Gala Concert, this performance will feature Walter Hautzig on piano accompanied by Atsushi Yamada who will conduct along with a full orchestra. Works by Johann Straauss, Jr., Edvard Grieg, and Antonin Dvorak will be performed. The AAC is a program that gives young Asian and Asian-American musicians the opportunity to transition from years of musical training into professional careers by providing invaluable performance opportunities. The young performers also get a chance to learn from some of the best artists in classical music during master classes.

Info: 212-397-5298 or aacinc.org



Courtesy of AAC, Inc.

January 28, 2007

Mika Yoshida, Marimba, and Friends

Zankel Hall

Carnegie Hall

881 Seventh Avenue, NYC

INTERNATIONAL RESTAURANT AND FOODSERVICE SHOW OF NEW YORK 2007

Whether you like Japanese cuisine for its interesting and exotic flavors, its majority of health-conscious menu items, its recent surge in popularity and "coolness" factor or even for the neat tableware, then heading over to the Japanese Demonstration Theater and Pavilion, part of the International Restaurant and Foodservice show of New York 2007 will have something for you. This year's event will take place on March 4-6, 2007 at the Jacob K. Javits Convention Center, in New York.

For people who work in the food service industry, there will be an unending amount of representatives promoting everything from Japanese food and ingredients to tableware and cooking utensils, along with the food service industry itself. In other words, this is a great opportunity to learn more about the industry that you are in as well as the people in it.

If you are not in the food service industry, don't think that there's nothing for you here. Where there's a food service show, there is going to be food, and lot's of it. With some of the biggest and best high-end food professionals representing their restaurants from all over, this will be a fantastic opportunity to sink your teeth into some of the most delectable dishes in the world, and talk with the chefs who made them.

New to this year's food exhibition is the

Japanese Demonstration Theater and Pavilion, hosted by the Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO), and will feature demonstrations of a variety of old and new innovative Japanese cooking styles, along with celebrity chef appearances.

If that isn't enough for you, there will even be a symposium about Japanese food culture, "Flavors of Japan-Gastro-nomic Discovery" which will be held offsite. With some of the best restaurants from all over the world along with some of the best food under one roof, this exhibition will delight your taste buds and teach you about Japanese food, two things that every health conscious food lover should know about.

International Restaurant & Foodservice show of New York 2007

March 4 (Sun) - 6 (Tue), 2007

10:00am - 5:00pm (-4:00pm/last day)

**Jacob K. Javits Convention Center,
New York, NY**

www.internationalrestaurantny.com



Mika Yoshida on marimba performs with guests, works by Bill Douglas, Lloyd G. McNeil, Michiru Oshima, Bill Cahn, Bach, Peter John Stoltzman, Eddie Gomez, and Piazzolla.

Info: 212-247-7800 or www.carnegiehall.org

February 14, 2007

Distinguished Artists in Recital Jenni-

**fer Koh, violin / Reiko Uchida, piano
Kaufmann Concert Hall**

Lexington Ave. at 92nd St, NYC

Virtuoso violinist Jennifer Koh and pianist Reiko Uchida perform a new piece written especially for them by popular contemporary composer Jennifer Higdon. Other works by Schubert, Poulenc, Kurtag, and Schumann will be performed as well. Previ-

ously performed works as diverse as Mozart and Ornette Coleman, Ms. Koh will no doubt transform these classical masterpieces into her own. A pre-concert talk for ticket holders will be held at 7:15pm with Louis Rosen, composer and lecturer, at the 92nd Street Y School of Music.

Info: 212-415-5500 or www.92y.org

February 20, 2007

Ingrid Fuzjko Hemming, Piano

Sumi Jo, Soprano

American Symphony Orchestra

Stern Auditorium, Perelman Stage

Carnegie Hall

881 Seventh Avenue, NYC

Works by Ingrid Fuzjko Hemming on piano, Sumi Jo on soprano, and the American Symphony Orchestra. Born to a Japanese mother and a Swedish-Russian father in Germany but educated in Japan, Hemming began learning to play the piano at a young age from her mother, quickly advancing in skill. She was identified as a child prodigy. During a concert in Vienna in 1971, Hemming lost her hearing from a bout of high fever. She relocated again to Stockholm, Sweden to take advantage of its medical facilities. She performed many more concerts throughout continental Europe before returning to Japan in 1995. Hemming had performed at every major musical centers in the world.

Info: 212-247-7800 or www.carnegiehall.org

March 17

"The Flower" - Modern dance performed by Keiko Fujii

The Kaye Playhouse at Hunter College

695 Park Avenue, NYC

The acclaimed Osaka-based dance troupe returns to the Kaye Playhouse with The Flower, a creative dance drama performed using a combination of Japanese and Western dance styles. Starts at 8pm.

Info: 212-772-4448 or <http://kayeplayhouse.hunter.cuny.edu>

March 22 to 24, 2007

Mitsuko Uchida Plays Mozart

Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts -

JAPAN DAY @ CENTRAL PARK

The New York metropolitan area is one of the world's great centers of business, media, and arts. In recent years, Japan's culture in the Big Apple -- from sushi to anime to comics to video games -- has exploded in popularity.

To build on this trend and bring a taste of Japan to a wide audience, a special day of international exchange called "Japan Day @ Central Park" is scheduled for Sunday June 3, 2007. Members of New York's thriving Japanese community will share their culture and show their appreciation to the city they call home in Central Park -- an urban jewel where New Yorkers from all walks of life gather to relax and enjoy themselves.

This daylong event will transform the Park into a slice of Japan. It will feature "Japan Run", a four mile race coordinated by the New York Road Runners, "Japan Village", where on-stage performances and food stalls will welcome visitors with the traditional sights, sounds and tastes of Japan. Also planned is "Contemporary Japan", which will give participants the chance to experience the latest and greatest in cutting-edge technology and pop culture from across the Pacific.

The Japan Day @ Central Park Executive Committee, (chaired by Mr. Yoroku Adachi, President & CEO, Canon U.S.A., Inc.) was formed to organize and support Japan Day Activities. It is working closely with the Japanese community and organizations from around New York and the Tri-State area to make Japan Day a success.

It is hoped that this major cultural event will become an annual tradition to be enjoyed by New Yorkers for years to come. So please mark your calendars for Japan Day @ Central Park!

More info: www.japandaynyc.org



Courtesy of Japan Society



Courtesy of New York Road Runners

Avery Fisher Hall

165 West 65th Street, NYC

Japan's favorite pianist and one of the best interpreters of Mozart's sonatas, Mitsuko Uchida comes to Lincoln Center to perform the works of Haydn, Mozart, and Schubert. With conductor Sir Colin Davis, who is also no stranger to the works of Mozart nor the stage of Avery Fisher Hall. Performances

include Haydn's Symphony No. 85 "La reine de France" (1785), Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 19, K. 459 (1784), and Schubert's Symphony No. 4, "Tragic" (1816). With Uchida and Davis at the helm, the night will be filled with classical masterworks being interpreted by today's masters at work.

Info: 212-875-5656 or www.nyphil.org

100 Years of Community Service



A Historical Overview of the Japanese American Association of New York, Inc.

JAA is excited to celebrate its “100 Years of Community Service” this year. While the beneficiaries of JAA’s services and the organization itself have evolved over the years, JAA remains true to its original mission – to serve the Japanese and Japanese-American community.

The Japanese Mutual Aid Society (Nihonjin Kyosaikai) was established by Dr. Toyohiko Takami in 1907 and bought space in Mt. Olivet Cemetery in Queens to bury Japanese people. Memorial Day services continue to be held there annually. In 1914, Dr. Jokichi Takamine, Dr. Takami and other community leaders formed the Japanese Association of New York (New York Nihonjinkai) to take

over and expand upon the goals of the Nihonjin Kyosaikai. After World War II, the organization was restored to collect and send food and clothing to Japan. In 1950, as conditions improved in Japan, the organization’s activities turned towards local needs, assisting Japanese-Americans settling in the New York area after leaving internment camps and the Japanese immigrants who moved to the US. After merging with the Japanese American Welfare Society, the organization was renamed the Japanese American Association of New York.

JAA provides social welfare services to the Japanese and Japanese American community through its network of dedicated volunteers. In 1994, with the con-



JAA awarded 11 H.S. graduates scholarships in May '06.

struction of its new quarters at 15 West 44th Street, JAA has been able to expand its community activities, which among other things include free consultations on legal and health-medical matters, Apple Kids Group activities and Keirokai (luncheon for over 100 seniors and lunch delivery to bed ridden seniors). And with help from other organizations, JAA organized the Committee on Aging Issues, further expanding its community activities and service to the Japanese and Japanese-American community.

VISIT JAPAN

MIYAGI 宮城



Miyagi, The Jewel of Northern Japan

Miyagi Prefecture is located in northern Japan, less than 2 hours from Tokyo by the Tohoku Shinkansen (bullet train). With a population of approximately one million, Sendai, the capital city of Miyagi, is the political and economic center of the Tohoku region. Despite its small size, the city features an abundance of natural beauty that does not diminish with each season. Sendai’s nickname ‘Mori No Miyako’, literally translated, means “the

city of trees” which fits the city perfectly.

Considered one of the three most beautiful landscapes in Japan, Matsushima has been written about in waka and haiku poetry since ancient times. As with many other prefectures in Japan, the seasons in Miyagi bring beautiful changes to the environment as well as festivals and activities to accommodate a variety of interests. Frost covered trees in the winter, Jazz festivals in autumn, Tanabata in summer and cherry blossoms in the spring all contribute to the beauty of the area.

There is an abundant variety of delicious food that serves to attract visitors to the prefecture as well. Besides its famed grilled beef tongue, one can enjoy astonishingly fresh seafood including tuna, oyster and scallops from Sanriku. Furthermore, Miyagi is one of the leading pro-



ducers of rice. The prefecture’s rich, fertile soil is ideal for rice cultivation. Miyagi’s rice has a sweet flavor and is often used in other food products. Sake from Miyagi is made from quality rice and receives high praise for its smooth, mellow flavor.

The beauty of year-round attractions, food and activities are surely make Miyagi a great destination for tourists who want to enjoy the seasons and sights in Japan.

For more information, please visit the Miyagi Prefecture Government website-www.pref.miyagi.jp/english/index.htm



Matsushima

A Sweet Tradition

By Elisa Herr (Food Journalist)

Wagashi are sweet Japanese confections that may be baked, steamed, jellied, or pressed into shapes that delight the eye, focus the mind, and have just enough sweetness to perfectly balance and offset the bitterness of matcha, the powdered green tea used in the tea ceremony.

Although wagashi's origins predate the sixteenth century tea ceremony, the Zen Buddhist ritual catalyzed wagashi's modern development in the same way that it stimulated artistic and aesthetic developments in pottery, calligraphy, gardening, kimono, incense, and flower arrangement. Recently these beautiful, seasonal, and low-fat treats have become more accessible in New York City.

There are hundreds of distinct variations within the main types of wagashi: namagashi, monaka, yokan, manju, and higashi. Sweeteners include anko, cooked and mashed white and red azuki bean paste that is to Japan what chocolate is to

the West. Other sweeteners are dried persimmon, plum, apricot, and Japan's own aromatic, ivory-colored wasanbon sugar.

Namagashi are seasonal and characterized by their evocative forms such as cherry and plum blossoms, or autumn foliage. Monaka are made with azuki bean filling inside of crisp rice wafers and are apt to be flower-shaped. Yokan gets its firm texture from kanten, a seaweed-derived gelatin, and is likely to have fruit and azuki within. Manju are steamed buns made often from yam flour, and filled with azuki, and higashi are dried sweets made from rice flour, sugar, and starch pressed into molds that give them a textured and decorative surface.

Most wagashi are small expressions of a Japanese aesthetic sensibility, superb craftsmanship, and reverence for seasonality. Wagashi may be white like snow in winter, pink in color and shaped like a cherry blossom in spring, or suggest a cool

CULTURE CONNECTION



mountain stream rendered in blue jelly in summer. Among samurai, they were viewed as today we might view wine, and still today, on traditional Japanese holidays such as New Year's and Obon, wagashi are the gift of choice.

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Please visit our website at www.cgj.org
Send your comments to: japaninfo@ny.cgj.org

See the answer on page 4.

Soybean is the main ingredient in Tofu. From which country does Japan import the most soybeans? (A) U.S.A. (B) Brazil (C) China

Mini Quiz



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