

PRESS ANNOUNCEMENT For Immediate Release

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Wagashi Workshop with Kimika Soko Takechi and Larry Sokyō Tiscornia

SAN FRANCISCO (August 28, 2009) The Japanese Cultural and Community Center of Northern California (JCCCNC) is pleased to announce a Wagashi (Japanese Sweets) Workshop with Kimika Soko Takechi and Larry Sokyō Tiscornia on Saturday, October 10, 2009 from 1:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. in the Issei Memorial Hall of the JCCCNC, 1840 Sutter Street, San Francisco.

Wagashi (Japanese sweets) are usually served before drinking *matcha* (powdered green tea) during a traditional *Chanoyu* (tea ceremony) gathering. *Wagashi* can also be enjoyed with good quality Japanese steeped green tea such as *sencha*.

Some of the first dry sweets made with sugar came to Japan with the first Portuguese who arrived in the 16th century. During this time tea masters like Sen Rikyu used dried fruits, such as persimmons, and various nuts as an accompaniment to tea. Sugar was very scarce during this period so its use was limited to the upper class and a select group of Kyoto sweet makers. Seasonal sweets began to be made and used by tea masters in Kyoto during this time.

Today in *Chanoyu*, sweets made from beans and sugar, as well as various rice flours and other starches, are the basic ingredients for

traditional *wagashi*. As the season changes, so does the look and taste of the various sweets.

Participants will learn how to prepare two autumn sweets, *koimo konashi* and *hatsugari*. The class will include both demonstration and hands-on practice.

Koimo konashi is a traditional Kyoto autumn sweet made with kneaded sweet bean paste and then hand formed into *koimo* (taro) shaped sweets. The finished sweet is lightly dusted with cinnamon giving it a realistic appearance. This sweet is often served during autumn tea



ceremony gatherings. *Hatsugari* (first goose) is made with *kuzu* [kudzu starch] and black sugar. Chopped pieces of *nagaimo* (long yam) are added before steaming to represent geese flying in the autumn sky. Easy to follow recipes will be provided.

The cost of this workshop is \$25 for members and \$30 for non-members. This workshop will be limited to the first 15 participants. A bowl of *matcha* will be served to each participant, as they enjoy the *wagashi* that is made in class. For more information or to register for this workshop, call the JCCCNC at 415.567.5505 or e-mail programsevents@jcccnc.org.

About Kimika Soko Takechi and Larry Sokyō Tiscornia

Kimika Soko Takechi and Larry Sokyō Tiscornia are instructors of the traditional Japanese art of *Chanoyū*. They teach *Chanoyū* and its many related arts in San Francisco and travel to many places sharing their knowledge with others through lectures and demonstrations. They received their professional tea names in 1985 from Sen Soshitsu XV, then the head tea master of the Urasenke School of Tea, in Kyoto, Japan and

both received the *Junkyoju*, associate professor, degree in 1994. The name *Soko* translates to "fragrance" and *Sokyo* to "bridge."

Kimika is from Iyo City, in Shikoku, Japan, and came to the U.S. in 1976 to study English at Holy Names College and the University of San Francisco. She worked as an artist in traditional kimono design in Kyoto and has been studying and teaching tea for 40 years. She is also an accomplished artist specializing in watercolors.

Larry, a San Francisco native, attended both City College of San Francisco and Los Angeles. Larry began his tea study in 1976 and trained for 6 years at the Urasenke School headquarters in Kyoto from 1979 to 1985. He graduated from both the international and professional Japanese divisions of the school and returned to S.F. in 1985 as an instructor at the Urasenke Foundation of S.F. Since 1988 he and Kimika have been teaching *Chanoyu* privately in San Francisco and share the joy of tea with many.

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About JCCCNC

Envisioned by the Japanese American community, JCCCNC will be an everlasting foundation of our Japanese American ancestry, cultural heritage, histories and traditions. The JCCCNC strives to meet the evolving needs of the Japanese American community through programs, affordable services and facility usage. The JCCCNC is a non-profit community center based in San Francisco.