

和菓子

- ★ The Golden Gate Award, 1966 San Francisco International Film Festival
- ★ Selected by the Ministry of Education
- ★ Recommended by Japan Film Society
- ★ Award for Educational and Cultural Film, the 20th Annual Japanese Motion Picture Concours
- ★ The Gold Prize, the Educational Film Contest
- ★ The Silver Award, IX Contest for Cultural and Documentary Film on Japan

SWEETS OF JAPAN

Color, 3 Reels



... Cut it anywhere...the same smiling face.

Sakura Motion Picture Co., Ltd.

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INTRODUCTION

Sweets of Japan traces the history and development of an unusual folk tradition. The folk in question are in the broadest sense all Japanese, and the tradition is a form of refreshment so perishable that it is scarcely known outside the country. On the one hand an exacting aristocracy drew exquisite creations from sensitive confectioners, and on the other hundreds of tradesmen catered for a busy and hungry populace, who yet enjoyed variety of form, flavor, and texture.

Through a seemingly insignificant and certainly insubstantial little sweet, and, perhaps one should add, salt and piquant, the film explores an unusual expression of a singular civilization.



1, 2 Making a sweet that calls to mind yellow spring flowers.

3 Autumn leaves.

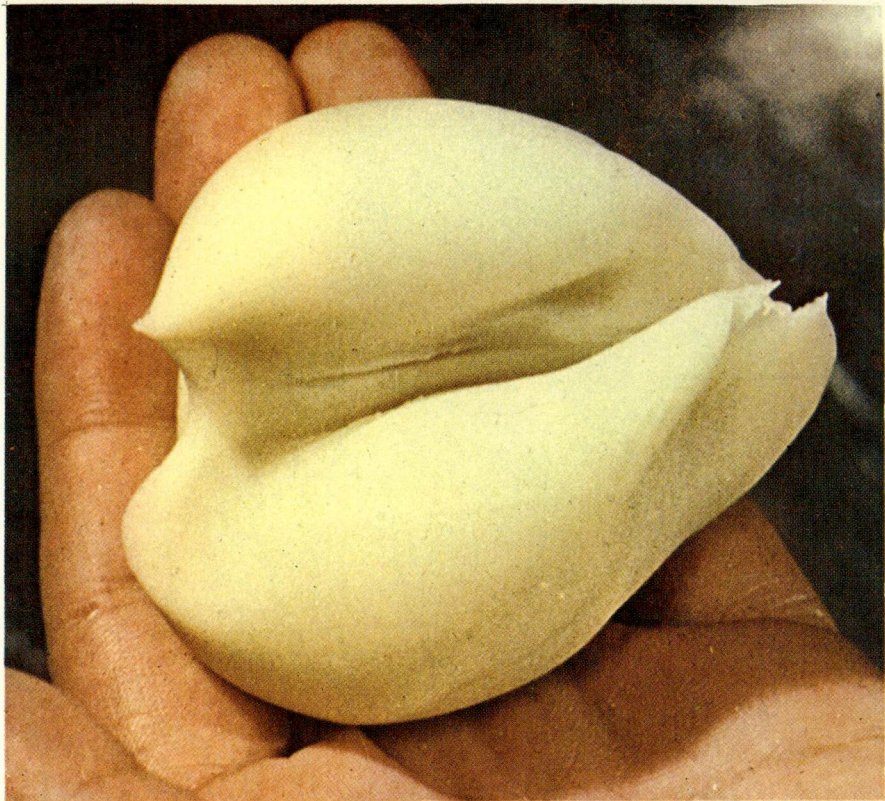
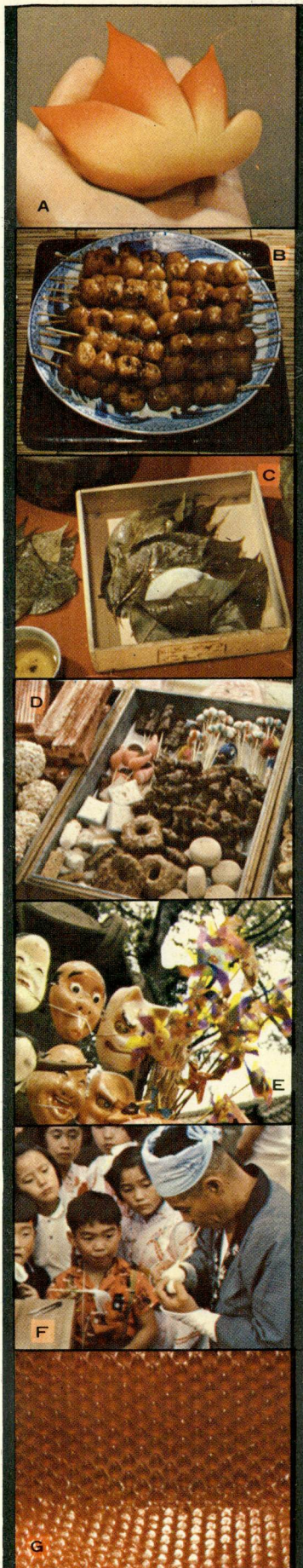
4 Japanese sweets are closely associated with tea.

5 Boy's festival—May 5th.

Boys eat a sweet paste wrapped in fragrant bamboo leaves.

6 A modern candy factory.





Decorative confection...A gull.

SYNOPSIS

Opening with a presentation of sweets typical of spring, summer, autumn, and winter, the film moves to Japan's remote past as represented in archaeological findings to trace the beginnings of a distinctive tradition of confectionery. Wild fruits were probably the earliest desserts, but at an early stage of rice culture, men learned how to pound cooked grain to make a kind of rice cake that remains a staple today.

Japan's first lessons in more refined pastry making came from China in about the eighth century, and though the physical evidence has long since been devoured, tradition has it that the style of certain deep-fried cakes still used as offerings at ancient shrines is essentially unchanged since this time. The forms were unusually attractive, and if we may believe the evidence of novels of a slightly later period, such pastries found special favor with the aristocracy. Later, Zen monks introduced the cultivation of tea from China, and by the thirteenth century the plant was well established in Japan. Drinking tea was almost an aspect of the practice of meditation, and the custom of taking some light refreshment with tea stimulated the search for sweets that went well with tea.

Meanwhile, at the other end of the world in Europe—interestingly enough as another aspect of Chinese cultural influence—Portuguese explorers and merchants were preparing expeditions to the East, and eventually in the sixteenth century they reached the Japan that Marco Polo had fancifully described in his *Travels*. With the foreigners came a European tradition of sweets; they introduced the methods of manufacture and stocked the necessary sugar at the port of Macao.

Out of the mingling of these several currents of confectionery Japanese cake makers devised the principal forms that persist today. A Kyoto palace provisions ledger, dating from the seventeenth century, lists a score of sweets, including the then recent imports from the West. The old capital of Kyoto was then, and in a sense remains, the confectionery center of Japan, an exacting clientele calling forth the best in form, taste, and suitability to season and occasion, whether for court ceremonies, theatre parties, or gentle gatherings in quiet rooms for tea. However, in Edo, the new seventeenth century political center, which a hundred years ago became Tokyo, cake makers catered for a more earthy public. Food value meant more than fine appearance, and countless varieties of hard crackers and cakes in as many flavors poured from hundreds of small manufacturers. An occasional shrine festival today may still bring forth a rare maker of edible toys for children, but this unusual and poetic style is now a thing of the past. Although marvellously executed hand-made confections are still produced, the trend today is toward mechanization. Over the years strands of Chinese and western influence have blended with Japanese invention to form a distinctive style, and even mass-produced sweets today retain a taste and quality reminiscent of the tradition that brought them into being.

- A Decorative confection—a maple leaf.
- B A popular sweet from pre-modern Tokyo.
- C A sweet cake wrapped in brine-pickled cherry leaf.
- D Popular crackers dating from the Edo period.
- E Masks and windmills at a shrine festival.
- F Children's toys—to be eaten.
- G Factory-made candy drops, the modern version of a 16th century import from Europe.

PLANNED BY EITARO CONFECTIONERY



Girls' doll festival—March 3rd.

Planned by
Eitaro Confectionery

Produced by
Sakura Motion Picture Co., Ltd.

Staff

Producers.....

Eiji Murayama
Michiyoshi Takashima

Scenario.....

Eiji Murayama
Yasuo Matsukawa

Directors.....

Yoshito Yonai
Seiichi Kizuka
Eiji Murayama

Photography.....

Seiichi Kizuka

Music..... Michio Mamiya

Guidance... Yuzuru Okada
Tadashi Moriyasu
Kaichi Tsuji

Cultural Documentary Films Sakura Motion Picture Co., Ltd.

"Children's Songs of Japan" (In color, 3 reels)

- Planned by The Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Version (English, French, German, Spanish)
- * First prize, Roma Radio TV Contest, Children's Department.
 - * First prize, Argentine, the 2nd International Children's Film Festival, Department of Shorts.
 - * Third prize, Mexico, the 3rd International Short Film Festival.
 - * Jean Benoit-Levy prize, Spain, the 5th Cidalc International Film Festival.

"Secret in the Hive" (In color, 3 reels)

- Version (English, Japanese)
- * The Highest Prize, the 4th Science and Technology Film Festival.
 - * The Bronze Medal, Venice Film Festival, Italy.
 - * The Bronze Bucranium, the 8th International Educational and Scientific Film Festival, Padova, Italy.
 - * Special Award, the 6th Vancouver International Film Festival.

"Industrial Japan Today" (In color, 4 reels)

- Planned by Japan External Trade Organization
Version (English, Spanish, Russian)

- * The Highest Prize, the Cultural Documentary Film Contest.
- * The Asahi Shimbun Prize.

"Handicrafts-Beauty of Japan" (In color, 2 reels)

- Planned by Japan External Trade Organization
Version (English, French, Russian)
- * Gold Mercury Prize, Venice Film Festival.
 - * Tourism Film Contest Prize.
 - * Prize for excellence, Contest for Cultural Documentary Film on Japan.

"Education in Japan" (In color, 2 reels)

- Planned by The Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Version (English, French, Spanish, German)

"Living Arts of Japan" (In color, 3 reels)

- Planned by The Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Version (English, French, Spanish, German, Portuguese)
- * The Highest Prize in 7th Contest for cultural Documentary Films on Japan.