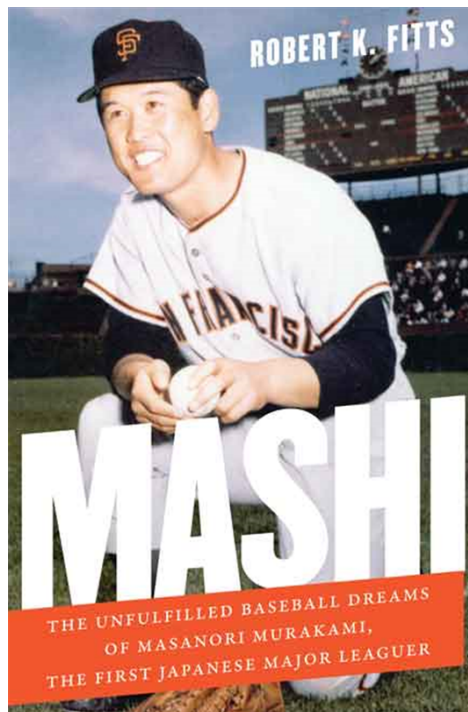




# THE FIRST JAPANESE MAJOR LEAGUER MASHI MURAKAMI MEET & GREET WITH BOOK SIGNING

***LECTURE BY ROBERT FITTS AND BOOK SIGNING WITH  
MASANORI MURAKAMI***



**DATE:  
MONDAY, JULY 6, 7PM**

**VENUE:  
THE JAPAN FOUNDATION, LOS ANGELES  
(5700 WILSHIRE BLVD. # 100, LOS ANGELES, CA 90036)**

Street parking is available near JFLA. [Click Here for Parking info](#)  
(NO PARKING VALIDATIONS PROVIDED)

# ADMISSION: FREE

***\*NO PERSONAL ITEMS WILL BE SIGNED AT THIS EVENT.***

Join us for the 50th anniversary celebration of the first Japanese baseball player in the Majors. Meet the legend **Masanori "Mashi" Murakami** and author **Robert Fitts** of the recently published *"Mashi: The Unfulfilled Baseball Dreams of Masanori Murakami, the First Japanese Major Leaguer"* for a discussion on Japanese baseball and Mashi's career and importance to U.S.-Japanese relations.

For nearly a century and a half the shared love of baseball has bound the United States and Japan together. Baseball exchanges have been used to forestall war in the 1930s, reunite the two countries in the late 1940s, and seal political alliances in the 1950s and 60s. More recently, the dozens of Japanese playing in the Major Leagues have allowed the two countries to share their diamond heroes.

In March 1964, the Nankai Hawks, Japanese professional baseball team sent three teenagers to the United States to train with the San Francisco Giants' minor league teams. To everybody's surprise 19-year-old reliever Masanori Murakami became the California League's top pitcher, earning him a September call up to the Big League club. With an inning of relief against the New York Mets on September 1, 1964, Murakami became the first Japanese to appear in a Major League game. Mashi went on to become the Giants top left-handed reliever and one of the most popular players on a star-studded team.

For additional details, visit [Mashi's facebook page](#)

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR: ROBERT FITTS



I fell in love with Japanese baseball my first night in Tokyo. I had just arrived after a sleepless flight when I was taken to Jingu Stadium to watch the Yakult Swallows take on the Hanshin Tigers. Bands played; fans pounded rhythms in unison with plastic tubes and sung fight songs; and the old ball park literally shook. I had never experience a game like this. I spent the next few years learning all I could about Japanese baseball and soon began sharing its history with American fans. My articles have appeared in *The National Pastime*, *Baseball Research Journal*, *Journal of American Culture*, *Nine*, *Sports Collector's Digest*, *Tuff Stuff* and on MLB.com. I have

also published four books on Japanese baseball: *Remembering Japanese Baseball: An Oral History of the Game* (winner of the 2005 Society of American Baseball Research & The Sporting News Award for Best Baseball Research); *Wally Yonamine: The Man Who Changed Japanese Baseball*; *Banzai Babe Ruth: Baseball, Espionage, and Assassination during the 1934 Tour of Japan* (winner of the Seymour Award for best baseball book of 2012); *Mashi: The Unfulfilled Baseball Dreams of Masanori Murakami, the First Japanese Major Leaguer* (April 2015 by the University of Nebraska Press).

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Annual Report

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