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The Japan Foundation, Los Angeles Newsletter

April, 2018: Breeze Issue #126

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Greeting From The Director



Greetings!

As we start a new Japanese fiscal year on April 1st, I am renewing my conviction that the kind of support we provide toward cultural and educational activities throughout the country has way more positive effects than what they seem to suggest on a list of events in an annual report.

For example, a salary grant to a Japanese language teacher is on the surface just that, a grant to an individual teacher. But behind the teacher's back, there are tens of hundreds of students whose encounter with Japanese culture would never have happened if not for our grant. What this story tells us is we cannot just simply count the number of grants or events to gauge our outreach for the year.

Indeed, my staff already calculated the scale of our outreach using the 'who's behind our support' approach and came up with the answer that we have made an impact on the lives of more than 130,000 people in the United States in the 2016 fiscal year. This may sound small compared to the entire population of the country, but given the latest statistics that states only 7 in 100 students in American higher education is taking a foreign language course at school, and given the size of my staff, only eleven in total covering the whole country, I think this is an impressive number.

I am hoping we have connected with more people during the 2017 fiscal year, but no matter what the number might be, the important thing for us is to keep reaching out to the lives of people through inter-cultural experiences. Because numbers are still just numbers unless they come with a meaningful story to tell.

Sincerely,

Hideki Hara, Director

Events



Sakura Matsuri (Cherry Blossom Festival)
Newly-renovated Japanese Friendship Garden
Located in [Brand Park, Glendale](#)
Sunday, April 15, 2018, 10am-3pm

April is Cherry Blossom Time in Japan. The word "Matsuri" means joyful festival. Please join us, in conjunction with Friends of Shoseian, to enjoy a full day of many exciting and fun activities, including Taiko drums, martial arts, tea ceremony, calligraphy, music, dance and learning the Japanese language!

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Sweet Bean (113mins, 2015)
Directed by Naomi Kawase
Wednesday, April 11, 2017 @7:00PM
Free Admission, NO RSVP REQUIRED

Sweet Bean is a delicious red bean paste, the sweet heart of the dorayaki pancakes that Sentaro (Masatoshi Nagase) sells from his little bakery to a small but loyal clientele. Absorbed in sad memories and distant thoughts, Sentaro cooks with skill but without enthusiasm. When seventy-six-year-old Tokue (Kirin Kiki) responds to his ad for an assistant and cheerfully offers to work for a ridiculously low wage, Sentaro is skeptical about the eccentric old lady's ability to endure the long hours.

[Trailer](#)



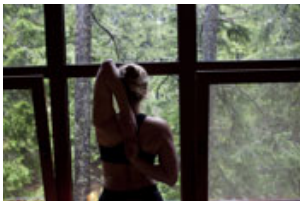
Life is Fruity (91mins, 2017)
Directed by Kenshi Fushihara / Narrated by Kirin Kiki
Friday, April 13, 2017 @7:00PM
Free Admission, NO RSVP REQUIRED

In-person Discussion with Kirin Kiki (Narrator), Kenshi Fushihara (Director) and Katsuhiko Abuno (Producer)

Enjoy Fresh Sunkist Oranges & Marmalade (prepared by food expert Naoko Takei Moore)

Documentary produced by Tokai TV and directed by Kenshi Fushihara of Journey with the Gods: The Rebuilding of Ise Jingu Shrine that follows the lives of an architect and his wife. Narrated by Kirin Kiki of An. A 90-years-old architect Shuichi Tsubata lives with his wife Hideko in a one-storied house in the woods in Aichi prefecture. He built this house after the house of his master, Antonin Raymond. They grow many kinds of vegetables and fruit in their garden and harvest the crops to make their living. Their lives embody the ideal of people in this modern age.

[Trailer](#)



Bilingual Yoga at Lunchtime
Wednesday, April 4
12:30/1:00PM (2 sessions, 20 min/session)
Just Show Up!

Wellness Wednesdays: We offer Wellness programs on Wednesday at lunchtime!

April 4 is Yoga day! In this program, no need to change clothes or use a yoga mat; you will be seated in a chair receiving relaxing instruction from a bilingual (English and Japanese) instructor. Learn simple Japanese phrases during the instruction and stretch your mind as well as your body.

There will be two free sessions beginning at 12:30pm and 1:00pm. No reservation necessary, all are welcome.

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Meditation With Japanese Singing Lin Bowl
Relax With Sound During Lunch
Wednesday, April 18
12:30/1:00PM (2 Sessions, 20 Min/Session)
Just Show Up!

Wellness Wednesdays: We offer Wellness programs at lunchtime!

The Singing Lin Bowl harmoniously combines the healing qualities of the Tibetan singing bowl and its Japanese counterpart, the Lin bowl. Relax and feel your stress dissipate into thin air as the sounds of the singing-Lin bowl lead you into a meditative state.

There is no charge and no reservation required. All are welcome to come, sit, listen, and refresh!

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Applications



Japanese Conversation Cafe: Tea Time Tuesday, April 17 (7-9PM) Free Admission, Register Now

Come join our casual conversation café and meet new friends! You'll enjoy chatting with native Japanese speakers. All levels are welcome. Japanese learning experience is not necessary. We are open to everyone, ages 18 and up.

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JF Nihongo Classes - Spring Term April 28 - July 7 Register Now!

Your potential blooms this spring! People interested in learning Japanese at JFLA will have three beginner-level Japanese-language courses. In each class, students will learn concepts and communication skills which are essential to having a well-rounded understanding of everyday Japanese! Register by April 13th and get a 10% early bird discount!

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2018-19 JAPANESE LANGUAGE GRANTS ARE NOW AVAILABLE

We still have grant programs available during our Fiscal Year 2018-19 to support Japanese-Language Education in the United States.

They include the following:

1. Learners Event Grant previously known as "Speech Contest Grant" (Deadline: 9/1/2018)
2. Teaching Material Purchase Grant (Deadlines: 9/15/2018)
3. Salary Assistance Grant for Japanese Language Courses (Deadline: 4/10/2018)
4. Japanese-Language Education Project Grant (Deadline: 2 months prior to project start date)

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News



Japanese Language Education Update #53: Report from AATJ and AAS Spring Conferences

From March 22 to 25, JFLA attended the American Association of Teachers of Japanese (AATJ) and Association of Asian Studies (AAS) conferences in Washington DC. At AATJ, we attended a lot of great sessions from Japanese teachers; we wish we could attend them all!

In addition, JFLA director Hideki Hara (center) chaired a panel for teachers attending the AATJ conference, discussing the educational value of manga together with translator, recipient of the 2017 Japan Foundation Award, as well as the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold Rays with Rosette, Mr. Frederick Schodt (second from left) and Baruch College, CUNY professor Shige (CJ) Suzuki (second from right).

Manga provides an abundance of opportunities to make connections to and learn about contemporary society. Did you know that one of the earliest, if not the earliest manga title to appear in America was a manga published in 1931, called [The Four Immigrants Manga](#), which chronicles the Japanese immigrant experience in San Francisco during that time period? Likewise, we find manga today dealing with themes of bullying, LGBTQ identity, disability, and more; as such, we find a great variety of stories that students can relate to. Thus, to help incorporate manga into the class, Professor Suzuki's presentation drew on prominent cartoonists such as Gene Yang and Scott McCloud in explaining how manga as a medium can be effectively used in teaching and engaging students, while also providing useful resources for the classroom.

Director Hara presented our Manga Edutainment initiative. Since last year, JFLA has been collaborating with the Nippon Foundation, who started the [Gakushu Manga project](#). There, they selected 200 manga titles that provide insights into different aspects of society such as "diversity," "science and learning," "history," and "arts and culture." We found that many themes in these titles would resonate with an American audience, so we are making efforts to introduce these manga for use in the classroom. When you stop by our office, please be sure to take a copy of our booklet that introduces a sample of these inspiring manga titles!

At AAS, we met with our colleagues from JFNY and CGP, who set up a booth introducing their Japanese studies grants and more to participants. Many thanks to them for introducing our

language learning materials and grants, also! Be sure to check out the sites for [JFNY](#) and [CGP](#) for more information!



JFLA Congratulates Toshiko Kishimoto, professor emerita, for being awarded the Japanese national medal of distinction

Toshiko Kishimoto, associate professor emerita of languages, has been awarded a national medal of distinction - the Order of the Sacred Treasure, Gold and Silver Rays Medal - by the Emperor of Japan in a ceremony at the Royal Palace in Tokyo. An honorable certificate signed by Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe also was presented to Kishimoto for her longtime efforts to promote Japanese language and culture, especially in the United States.

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