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The Japan Foundation, Los Angeles Newsletter

Breeze Issue #138 | April 2019

Breeze #138

Director Greeting



Greetings!

At the onset of my fifth year in LA, I would like to thank all the organizations and individuals who have been generous enough to collaborate with us in various forms during the past four years. Two weeks ago, I was at the El Rey Theater here in LA hosting an extraordinarily successful performance of Awa-Odori and urban street dance, and I was strongly reminded of the importance of being free of any preconceived notions about culture. Both dance groups we invited, while being faithful to their respective traditions, were willing to take risks and try out new things in this unprecedented collaboration. What resulted on stage was an unstoppable flow of energy and creativity and the joyful sense of freedom. While some people may want to seek 'authenticity' in cultural presentation, I would argue that there is no such thing as '100% pure Japanese' or 'genuinely traditional' culture, because culture keeps evolving and that is the only way it grows.

Our job is not to let culture die in confinement, but to let it grow through creativity and risk-taking. The biggest by product of that will be a great sense of freedom that inspires every member of the audience and possibly spawns new forms of self-expression from them. I can assure you that we will continue to organize many more events that inspire you during the upcoming year.

Sincerely,

Hideki Hara
Director

Special Announcement

2019-20 GRANTS NOW AVAILABLE!

[Salary Assistance Grant](#) : April 10th Deadline!!

The following grants are also available:

1. [Japanese Language Learners Event Grant](#)
Deadlines: 3/1/2019, 9/1/2019
2. [Japanese Teaching Material Purchase Grant](#)
Deadlines: 3/15/2019, 9/15/2019
3. [Japanese Language Education Project Grant](#)
Deadline: Two months prior to the project start date

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**Grants
Available
In The US**

Events

MEDITATION WITH JAPANESE SINGING BOWL WEDNESDAY, APRIL 3 12:30PM, 1:00PM (20MIN SESSIONS) FREE ADMISSION

Mid-week fatigue is a familiar foe to many of us. Why not maximize your relaxation and join us for a Sound Bath at Lunchtime!

The singing bowl used for this program harmoniously combines the healing qualities of the Tibetan singing bowl and its Japanese traditional singing bowl. Relax and feel your stress dissipate into thin air as the sounds of the singing 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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DEMONSTRATION & WORKSHOP A REVOLUTION IN MOVEMENT: THE TRADITIONAL AND INNOVATIVE WORLD OF DANCE LECTURER/PERFORMER: UMEKAWA ICHINOSUKE MONDAY, APRIL 8, 7PM FREE ADMISSION, [REGISTRATION REQUIRED](#)

A demonstration of both classical Japanese dance and innovative unique "Buyo" will be given by Dance Master Umekawa Ichinosuke. In his performance, he will showcase the distinctive features and nuances of each dance move. Not only will participants witness two forms of art merge together, forming a cultural bridge between East and West, they will also be able to see the magical and musical flow of energy. At the workshop, Master Umekawa will show movements and techniques to master basic performance.



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FREE JAPANESE CINEMA SCREENING

Penguin Highway (118mins, 2018)

Directed by Hiroyasu Ishida

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 10 @7PM

**FREE ADMISSION, NO
REGISTRATION REQUIRED**



***Seating is on a first come first serve basis and subject to capacity. Please arrive early for best seating.**

An animated sci-fi fantasy adapting Tomihiko Morimi's identically titled novel. Budding genius Aoyama is only in the 4th grade, but already lives his life like a scientist. He has a great rapport with The Lady at his dentist's office.

[Watch Trailer](#)

JAPANESE CONVERSATION CAFE: TEA TIME

SATURDAY, APRIL 13 @12-2PM

FREE ADMISSION, [REGISTER NOW](#)



Our popular Tea Time event is coming back again, this time on a Saturday afternoon! 100 people get together and you will enjoy Japanese snacks and tea while you chat with native Japanese speakers. All levels welcome! Japanese language experience is not necessary-this event is open to everyone, ages 18 and up.

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Bilingual Yoga At Lunchtime

Wednesday, April 17

12:30PM & 1:00PM (20 Min Sessions)

Free Admission



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

April 17 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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JFLA LECTURE SERIES 60

CHERRY BLOSSOMS ODYSSEY

LECTURER: NAOKO ABE
THURSDAY, APRIL 18, 7PM
FREE ADMISSION, [REGISTRATION REQUIRED](#)

Cherry blossoms are symbols of beauty. They originated in Japan more than 2,000 years ago and can now be seen all over the world. But the role of sakura in Japanese history has been checkered and not always positive.

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Applications

JF NIHONGO SPRING 2019
APRIL 20 - JUNE 29
REGISTER NOW!

Study Japanese this spring! The registration for JF Nihongo Spring term has started!

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!

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News

**Japanese Language Education Update 65:
Report from AATJ/AAS 2019**

Hello from Denver! A number of our staff are now here to attend the AATJ and AAS Spring 2019 conferences from March 21 to March 23!

As always, AATJ has scheduled a great day packed with highly informative sessions. One thing that we always enjoy is seeing how teachers constantly upgrade their classes to stay up-to-date with changes in society. Topics were varied, and we listened to presentations on topics such as on the diversifying Japanese classroom. We find, for example, more international students learning Japanese. Through experiential learning, international students are offered not only a fun experience, but also something valuable to learn beyond the superficial, to compel them to seek a deeper level of understanding Japanese culture and society.

In the same vein, bringing social justice into the classroom is still something that simply makes sense for connecting students to critical 21st century skills. As all of us around the world find ourselves interacting - and sadly at times in conflict with - other cultures more and more, greater global awareness is needed in a diversifying and multicultural world. This involves a more nuanced view of society, where we seek a more egalitarian and just future. The Japanese class that implements issues of social justice will be able to provide students with critical thinking skills to use beyond the classroom.



Our JFLA director Hideki Hara gave a presentation titled “21st Century Skills and New GEN-J Program to Promote Networking Among Industry, Government, and Education.” Japanese teachers, unconsciously or not, provide many intangible skills to students. They give students the skills to be attuned to a company’s work culture, to be flexible and adaptable in navigating cultures and “reading the room,” and importantly, to have a psychological safe space for students. Therefore, qualities that are embedded in today’s 21st century skills are already being taught in the Japanese classroom, and the Japanese teacher would certainly benefit from being cognizant and indeed, proud of their contribution!

The AAS sessions also began right after AATJ, and boy did it start strong! As always, Japan-studies scholars are finding a lot of sessions of high interest here, too, from tourism in rural Japan, to immigration in Japan and the shifting definitions of “foreigner,” “Japanese,” and “international student.”

What ties all these presentations together is the fact that Japanese teachers and researchers in the field of Japanese studies are preparing us for a rapidly changing and diversifying society, as any good educator would. Through this, the student will gain the skills and qualities to not only learn Japanese, or to gain important job skills, but to also grow as a person in today’s society.

2018-2020 J-LEAP: Participant Voices

Although the application period for 2019-2021 J-LEAP ended, we have a few more articles from participants that we will be highlighting in the next few issues of Breeze.

This month, we would like to welcome [Shino Ueo](#) who is currently team teaching with Nathan Bynum sensei at The Obama Academy of International Studies in Pittsburgh, PA. Follow the link below to read about her experiences!

[Read More](#)

