

NOVEMBER, 2011: BREEZE ISSUE #49

A FREE MONTHLY E-NEWSLETTER FOR FRIENDS OF JAPAN & TEACHERS OF JAPANESE

GREETING FROM THE DIRECTOR



In Japan, winter begins during the month of November with the first dusting of snow occurring later in the month in colder regions. As November is called Shimotsuki (a month of frost), my warm thoughts are extended to the people in the Tohoku region. Here at the Japan Foundation, Los Angeles, we are gearing up for yet another busy month with the 2011 Japan Foundation Invitational Group-Tour Program for Educators in North America, BUDO: United States Martial Arts Festival 2011, the ACTFL Conference, and we will also start accepting applications for the first JF Nihongo Course, which will start in January of 2012. We are very excited about all the upcoming activities organized by our office and hope you can come out and support our efforts.

Misako Ito, Director



GREETINGS FROM HIROYASU ANDO THE NEW PRESIDENT OF THE JAPAN FOUNDATION

I would like to inform you that I, the former Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to Italy, was appointed to serve as the President of the Japan Foundation as of October 1, 2011.

Throughout my career for forty-one years in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, I have devoted efforts in improving Japan's relationship with foreign countries. I hope to apply my experience in nurturing cultural and intellectual exchanges that will lead to enrich people's life and broaden people's perspectives.

Under the globalization, the role of the Japan Foundation will change significantly in the future. I firmly believe that in the broader and cross disciplinary areas, our cultural and intellectual exchange programs will be able to contribute more profoundly and greatly. I am determined to utilize innovative ideas for achieving our mission.

I appreciate your continued support and am looking forward to working with you in the very near future.



REGISTER FOR JF NIHONGO COURSES

The Japan Foundation, Los Angeles, will be offering original Japanese language and culture courses starting in January of 2012 at the Japanese American Cultural and Community Center. Our courses are designed for new language learners as well as those interested in improving their language skills. Registration will start on November 8th, so please check back on our website for more information.



2011 ACTFL CONFERENCE IN DENVER, COLORADO

The 2011 ACTFL Annual Conference will take place from November 18th-20th at the Colorado Convention Center in Denver. This will be the fifth consecutive year that we will be hosting a booth in the Japan Pavilion and we hope that all Japanese language teachers will come out to support languages. The second part of the Leadership Workshop will also take place during the conference. If you plan on attending, please do not forget to visit our booth (#7062) and pick up some Japanese-language promotional goods. We look forward to seeing you there!



BUDO: UNITED STATES MARTIAL ARTS FESTIVAL 2011

Saturday, November 5th, 2011, 12 PM (Doors Open at 11 AM)

Redondo Beach Performing Arts Center

1935 Manhattan Beach Blvd., Redondo Beach, CA 90278

Panel Discussion and Japanese Arts programs in the Lobby are admission free.

Tickets for Martial Arts Performances Only

VIP \$30 | Orchestra \$15 | Terrace \$10

For tickets, please visit All American Tickets | <http://www.mafest.org/>



'JAPAN RISING' CONFERENCE

Against the backdrop of devastating losses from the March 11 earthquake and tsunami, the daylong tiered conference will focus on Japan's future economic outlook and its continuing influence in the global marketplace across industries

November 10, 2011 - 7:30am - 7:30pm

California Science Center - Donald P. Loker Conference Center

700 Exposition Park Drive, Los Angeles, CA

General \$95 | Students \$25

<http://asiasociety.org/calendars/japan-rising-conference>



J-LEAP REPORT: PART 2

This month, we have invited Seiko Mori, a teaching assistant at Elkins Pointe Middle School in Georgia and Mayumi Furutsu, a teaching assistant at William Annin Middle School and Ridge High School to share their experiences at American high schools. As you may recall, we sent 15 Japanese teaching assistants to assist Japanese-language teachers at select high schools all over the country. Each month, two participants will report on their experiences.



SEIKO MORI (ELKINS POINTE MIDDLE SCHOOL, GA)

Hello, I'm Seiko and I work at Elkins Pointe Middle School in Roswell, Georgia, as a Japanese teaching assistant. This is my first experience in education and it has been so wonderful trying out new things every day such as learning new teaching methods, managing classes with my supervisor and sharing Japanese culture with our students.

There are about 1,500 students at my school and 97 of them are currently taking Japanese because they think that Japanese is a more unique and challenging language to study compared to other languages (our school also offers Spanish and French) and they love to learn about Japanese culture as well. We teach 5 classes each day with 35 sixth graders in first year Japanese, 22 seventh graders in second year of Japanese, and 40 eighth graders in second year and third year Japanese. In every Japanese class, students seem to enjoy learning the language and culture, especially through class activities such as singing, dancing, playing games, etc. They also like the handouts and class materials with my drawings, which encourages me to work harder!

My supervisor and I started introducing new class activities, which focus on different learning levels. One of the activities we developed for eighth graders is called "*Sushi Shugyo*," which motivates our students to learn different topics by rewarding them if they can pass quizzes based on the topic they select. Once a student has acquired the knowledge for their topic, they can take the test, or "*Shugyo*," and if they pass, they receive a picture of sushi to paste on the wall, similar to a trophy. Within a week of starting this activity, about 10 students have already passed two tests covering basic hiragana and simple expressions while several more students have even collected a sushi picture for passing their "*Shugyo*" on the unit they just finished. With this activity, we can easily see who is struggling on which topics by looking at the number of sushi pictures each student has on the wall and we will continue to encourage our students to keep studying and taking "*Shugyo*" until they master what they have learned in class. We are looking forward to seeing our entire wall fully decorated with our students' Sushi pictures.

As a cultural introduction, we celebrated Japanese "Sports Day" by having a dance competition in October. Our students enjoyed dancing to many popular Japanese songs including "Maru-Mori Dance" and "EXILE". In November, we are planning to have a Nail-Art Workshop on "Cultural Day". I'm glad that I have been given this opportunity to take advantage of my skills and I hope that these events will also increase our students' and their parents' interests in Japan while motivating them to continue studying Japanese language and culture.



MAYUMI FURUTSU (WILLIAM ANNIN MIDDLE SCHOOL & RIDGE HIGH

SCHOOL)

The leaves are turning color beautifully and I am enjoying the autumn here in Central New Jersey. You can enjoy the gorgeous fall in Japan as well, but there are few trees where I come from, in a suburb of Tokyo, so I really appreciate the beauty of nature here. One thing I do miss right now is Yaki-imo, which is Japanese baked sweet potato. It is my all-time favorite snack to eat during fall. In Japan, you can hear the sound of Yaki-imo carts wandering the streets as sellers use loud speakers to let people know they are open for business. The sweet potatoes are also baked inside the cart.

But that is enough about Yaki-imo. My name is Mayumi Furutsu and I am an assistant teacher at William Annin Middle School and Ridge High School in Bernards Township School District, New Jersey. I teach one 8th grade class at the middle school and three classes with seven different levels at the high school. This includes one Intermediate Japanese class with 1st year, 2nd year and pre-advanced Japanese, a second class with intermediate Japanese 1st year honors and 2nd year honors, and a third class with pre-advanced Japanese honors and AP. I have never taught classes with multiple levels, so it's been not only a great challenge, but also a great experience for me to grow as a professional Japanese language teacher. Together with my supervisor Kennedy sensei, I am learning the varied instructions little by little, day by day.

Before meeting my students, I kind of expected them to be big fans of Japanese *anime* or *anime otaku* (geek), but surprisingly, my expectations did not match reality. I came to realize that I had a misconception of American high school students who were studying Japanese and because of that, I would like to apologize to my students. The main reason most of them decided to take Japanese varied, but I found out from a survey I conducted that the majority of the students have great interest in languages that use non-Roman characters. The world languages offered at the schools I teach at include Italian, Spanish, French, Latin and Japanese, but what if our schools start offering Chinese or any other language that doesn't use the Roman alphabet? I have a feeling that many students would choose Chinese, because China has a strong presence in the US. I think it is great that the students have many choices when it comes to world languages, but because I am Japanese and cherish my own culture I would like my students to expand their interests in Japan and its culture.

As Mr. Hokonohara wrote in his article in the last issue of Breeze, I would also like to give my students a lot of opportunities to experience as much Japanese culture as possible using their 5 senses. Tomorrow my students will make *onigiri* in class and I hope everyone will enjoy a taste of Japan.



NEW BOOKS IN THE NIHONGO LIBRARY

This month, we have two new books in the Nihongo Library, which are listed below. If you are a general member, you can visit our library Monday through Friday, from 10AM to 5PM (Except Holidays), to check these out. For mail-circulation members, you can search for these books along with all our other print and audiovisual materials through our new online catalog.

Judo in the U.S.

A Century of Dedication

Michel Brousse and David Matsumoto

ペリーを訪ねて

中野昌彦

東京図書出版会2006年刊



JET MEMORIAL INVITATION PROGRAM - PARTICIPANT'S ESSAYS PART 3

This is the third part of an eight part series that will highlight the experiences of 32 participants of the 2011 JET Memorial Invitational Program. Through this program, participants travelled to Japan in July of 2011 for a 10 day exchange that focused on Japanese language and culture with the purpose of fostering friendship and goodwill between the youth of both countries. This month, we will be featuring the essays of Alexa VanDemark, Brandon Dong, Kyra Perez, and Tim Lee.



2011 GROUP-TOUR PROGRAM ORIENTATION REPORT

To prepare for the upcoming Group-Tour Program for North American Educators, an orientation was held for the 22 participants selected to be part of the tour. This year, the orientation was held on Sunday, October 9th, at the Japanese American National Museum. The orientation was divided into two sessions, with presentations during the morning session by Ms. Mari Shogase about the work of our organization, Dr. Douglas Joines about the Japanese Economy & Politics and Ms. Paula Patrick, who talked about her experiences in the program last year. During the afternoon session, Councilwoman Jan Perry gave a motivational speech to the participants, followed by Dr. Yasu-Hiko Tohasaku's presentation on Japanese Language and Japanese-language education in the United States, and wrapping up with Ms. Maki Watanabe Isoyama's crash course on Japanese-language and culture. The nine-day group tour portion of the program will start on November 5th, and we plan to feature articles by the participants in a future issue of Breeze.



2011 JLPT VOUCHER AND VITAL INFORMATION UPDATE

There is roughly one month remaining until the big day and we hope everyone is busy studying for the test. We are planning to mail out Vouchers and Vital Information sheets starting on the week of November 7th and all registered test takers for the 2011 JLPT should be receiving a letter from us by Thanksgiving. If you do not receive yours, please email us at noryoku@jflalc.org starting the week of November 28th so we can send you a copy via email. We wish you best of luck and hope you are able to meet the challenge of the level for which you are registered.



LA EIGAFEST: REMEMBRANCE OF TOHOKU EARTHQUAKE

This documentary on the aftermath of the Tohoku earthquake is jointly commissioned by the Japan Foundation, the Meteorological Research Institute, and the Asia-Pacific Tourism Exchange Center. While the earthquake and its aftermath are fresh in our minds, this film seeks to show significant efforts made in the following months at relief and reconstruction. Specifically, it is a token of appreciation to the many volunteers and charities who donated their time, money, and compassion to help Japanese families and communities recover from this unbearable tragedy.

Dates/Times/Locations: Sunday, November 13, 1:40 PM, Chinese Theatre (Free Admission)



AFI FEST 2011

The Japan Foundation, Los Angeles, is a proud supporter of AFI FEST 2011. As the longest running international film festival in Los Angeles, AFI FEST showcases the best of world cinema, documentary films and new works by emerging international directors, including Oscar contenders. Among all of these excellent films, we are supporting one Japan-related documentary film titled "JIRO DREAMS OF SUSHI," directed by David Gelb. It is the story of the Michelin Three-Star Restaurant Sukiyabashi Jiro, in Tokyo, and its 86-year old chef and his son. For more information, please see www.AFI.com/AFIFEST.

Dates/Times/Locations: Tuesday, November 8, 4:30 PM, Egyptian Theatre / Wednesday, November 9, 7:15 PM, Egyptian Theatre

Past Issues (2020)	▼
Past Issues (2019)	▼
Past Issues (2018)	▼
Past Issues (2017)	▼
Past Issues (2016)	▼
Past Issues (2015)	▼
Past Issues (2014)	▼
Past Issues (2013)	▼
Past Issues (2012)	▼
Past Issues (2011)	▼
Breeze #50	
Breeze #49	

Breeze #48


Breeze #47

Breeze #46

Breeze #45

Breeze #44

Breeze #43

Past Issues (2010) 

Breeze Past Issues

Breeze Issues #1-#36 (PDF)

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Annual Report

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