

JANUARY, 2015: BREEZE ISSUE #87

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A Free E-Newsletter for Friends of Japan & Teachers of Japanese

GREETING FROM THE DIRECTOR



明けましておめでとうございます。今年もよろしく申し上げます。

Akemashite Omedeto Gozaimasu. Kotoshi mo Yoroshiku Onegai Shimasu.

The year of 2014 was exciting in terms of cultural exchange. The number of Japanese language learners worldwide reached 3,980,000, including 156,000 learners in the US. Over 4,000 candidates took the Japanese Language Proficiency Test. Japanese traditional paper *Washi* has been classified as a World Intangible Heritage, as have Japanese cuisine *Washoku*, and Japanese traditional performance art forms *Kabuki*, *No* and *Bunraku*. Many Japanese terms like *Dashi*, *Umami*, *Bento*, *Taiko* as well as *Oishii* and *Kawaii* are now very popular among Americans. We at the Japan Foundation, Los Angeles are connected to more than 20,000 friends via our Japanema film screenings, lecture series, Japanese language activities, exhibitions and performing arts as well as library reference services. Thank you for your constant interest in and collaboration with Japanese culture!

I feel so happy being engaged in cultural exchange activities here in Los Angeles. It is often said that cultural exchange is an everlasting journey without an end, which links and ties people, generations and nations as well as develop infinite networks of human beings worldwide. In this sense, it is so thrilling for me to broaden and deepen the partnerships with many professionals to cultivate cultural projects in the US.

Needless to say, US-Japan relations have been the cornerstone of our activities since the inauguration of the Japan Foundation in 1972. From the very beginning, we have been maintaining and deepening our respect and friendship with eminent intellectuals and Japanologists such as Serge Eliseef, William Fulbright, Edwin Reischauer, Donald Keene, Edward Seidensticker and many other outstanding individuals with whom we have kept ongoing partnerships. They loved and contemplated Japanese culture and

people, and “their” beloved Japan has been accepted and shared worldwide as “our” Japan. The seeds that they planted continue to grow even now, through their personalities, through their works, and through their disciples, successors and partners, thus creating a rich and flourishing forest for US-Japan friendship.

American people – our most precious friends – have been respectfully keeping a beloved piece of Japan in their hearts. Every American has a special *KAKERA* (small pieces) or *KIZUNA* (bonds) of their own with Japan and the Japanese people, bridged and succeeded from generation to generation. Of course I have also kept a beloved piece of America in my heart as well, given to me by my many beloved American friends. In this context, the younger generations in both the US and Japan can create together a brilliant future by maintaining and polishing their *KAKERA* mutually, that succeeds the previous generations.

Now we are all set for our trip.

Let’s continue our never-ending journey of cultural exchange together in 2015!

Naomi Takasu, Director



JF NIHONGO TEA TIME: CONVERSATION CAFE SATURDAY, JANUARY 17, 2015 @ 1PM

Come join our casual and informative conversation café that starts off the new term of our language courses! You'll enjoy a chat with native Japanese speakers! All levels are welcome!



JF NIHONGO JAPANESE LANGUAGE COURSES WINTER TERM: JANUARY 21 - MARCH 20, 2015 [REGISTER NOW!](#)

Let's learn Japanese this winter! Our courses are designed for new Japanese-language learners, as well as those who are interested in improving their existing language skills. Enjoy the friendly, interactive, and above all, fun courses!

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JAPANEMA: FREE JAPANESE CINEMA SCREENING
THE WOW CHOTEN HOTEL (136MINS, 2006)
DIRECTED BY KOKI MITANI
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 14 @ 7PM (JFLA AUDITORIUM)

Director Koki Mitani continues to hone his screwball skills with this crowd-pleasing comedy about a hapless hotel accommodations manager juggling multiple responsibilities in preparation for the forthcoming New Year's Eve celebrations set to take place in the lavish Hotel Avanti. New Year's eve has arrived, and as the clock ticks towards midnight detail oriented accommodations manager Shindo (Koji Yakusho) prepares the Hotel Avanti for the Stage Director's Association's Man of the Year award ceremony, a press conference for a respected politician, and, of course, the massive bash that will ring in the new year. As things turn hectic and former theater director Shindo's ex-wife Yumi (Meiko Harada) turns up on the arm of the soon-to-be-honored Man of the Year, the whirlwind energy also sweeps up such quirky characters as Shindo's loyal deputy (Keiko Toda), a platinum-wigged prostitute (Ryoko Shinohara), a crooning bellhop (Shingo Katori), a deeply depressed entertainer (Toshiyuki Nishida), and a chambermaid (Takako Matsu) who is mistaken as the mistress of a wealthy guest. (text from Jason Buchanan, *The New York Times*)



JAPANEMA: FREE JAPANESE CINEMA SCREENING
PING PONG (114MINS, 2002)
DIRECTED BY FUMIHIKO SORI
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 28 @ 7PM (JFLA AUDITORIUM)

Best friend Peco (Yosuke Kubozuka) and Smile (ARATA) have been playing ping pong since they were little kids. While the unique and brazen Peco plays to win and loves the sport, the quiet and introverted Smile thinks of it as just a way to kill time with friends, but plays only because he looks up to Peco as his hero. However, after Peco is badly beaten by his old pal Demon (Koji Okura) in an important inter-high school tournament and quits the game, Smile becomes the newest celebrity of ping pong. Smile begins training for the next championship, waiting for the return of his hero, whom he is destined to meet in one last match.



THE KAKEHASHI PROJECT BRIDGE FOR TOMORROW & COMMUNITY ADVOCACY BY YOUNG PROFESSIONALS

From January 18 – 24, the Kakehashi Project for Community Advocacy by Young Professionals from Japan, will bring young people from Japan to the US to share knowledge and promote dialogue about local revitalization. The six community leaders are representatives of six different prefectures (Iwate, Miyagi, Fukushima, Aichi, Wakayama, and Oita) of Japan and they will journey to Los Angeles and Denver to share their knowledge and promote dialogue about local revitalization in order to enrich their communities.

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PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBITION AFTER MIKIKO HARA: FLOATING IN THE MOMENT FEBRUARY 6TH – MARCH 6TH, 2015 (JFLA AUDITORIUM)

Photography students from College of the Canyons and Pierce College participated in a master class lead by photographer Mikiko Hara at the Getty Center last fall. This exhibition showcases the fruits of those students' hard work, which were inspired by Mikiko Hara.



ANNOUNCEMENT FOR JAPANESE TEACHERS: 2015 JET-MIP JOIN US FOR A TRIP TO TOHOKU NEXT SUMMER

On March 11, 2011, two Americans participating in the JET Program as assistant English language teachers lost their lives during the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami. Taylor Anderson, who was in Ishinomaki City and Montgomery Dickson, who was in Rikuzentakata City will be forever remembered as cultural ambassadors representing the U.S. They had a positive influence on the people and communities they served and JET-MIP was created immediately following the disaster to commemorate their work. This is the fifth year of this program and we will provide a group of high school students with the opportunity to visit Japan, with a focus on the Tohoku region, and learn about Japanese language and culture first hand.

Note: To apply, applicants must take the [2015 National Japanese Exam](#) organized by AATJ (**Registration Deadline: February 17, 2015**).



**2015-2017 J-LEAP
NOW ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS
DEADLINE: WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 21, 2015**

Invite a Japanese Assistant Teacher (AT) into your K-12 classroom for up to two consecutive academic years to give your students an opportunity to hear and learn Japanese from a native speaker. This program was started in 2011 with the help of the Laurasian Institute (TLI) with the goal of nurturing a new generation of highly qualified Japanese language teachers in the United States. We currently have a total of 23 ATs in 19 different states nationwide.

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JF AWARDS SALARY ASSISTANCE GRANT TO INTERCULTURAL MONTESSORI LANGUAGE SCHOOL (ILLINOIS)

On Wednesday, November 19, 2014, Deputy Consul General Keiko Yanai and Consul Ayako Yamada of the Consulate-General of Japan in Chicago visited the Intercultural Montessori Language School to make a formal presentation of the Japan Foundation's Salary Assistance Grant of \$20,000 to maintain their Japanese Language Program. On hand to receive the award were Executive Director Edina McGivern and Japanese teachers Yukie Saucedo, Ryoko Uechi, Kyoko Ogata, along with two student representatives. We wish them the best of luck during the rest of the current school year.



JF AWARDS SALARY ASSISTANCE GRANT TO PICADOME AND STONEWALL ELEMENT. SCHOOLS (KENTUCKY)

The Japan Foundation has awarded a \$45,000 grant to provide salary assistance for Japanese language courses at Picadome and Stonewall Elementary Schools in Lexington, KY, and a grant presentation ceremony was held at Picadome Elementary School on November 20.

Consul-General Motohiko Kato from the Consulate-General of Japan in Nashville attended the ceremony. He stressed the importance of learning Japanese at a primary education level and shared that more than 150 Japanese companies are operating in Kentucky, making Japan the largest foreign investor and creating about 40,000 jobs in the state. Consul-General Kato also introduced that the Japan-America Society of Kentucky (JASK) actively organizes Japan-related events such as a Japanese speech contest.

As many as 200 guests, including Principal Jennifer Hutchinson of Stonewall, Principal Bill Gatliff of Picadome, David Carpenter, Executive Director of JASK and Honorary Consul of Japan in Lexington, and families of students enjoyed the performances of Japanese songs by 2nd grade students.

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JF AWARDS SALARY ASSISTANCE GRANT TO THOMAS JEFFERSON HIGH SCHOOL (VIRGINIA)

On Wednesday, December 3, 2014, Minister for Public Affairs Masato Otaka from the Embassy of Japan in Washington DC presented the Japan Foundation's Salary Assistance Grant of \$20,000 to Japanese teacher Mr. Koji Otani along with Principal Dr. Evan Glazer from Thomas Jefferson High School and World Language Coordinator Dr. Gregory Jones from Fairfax County Public Schools in Virginia. The funding will be used to maintain the Japanese language program at one of the top high schools in the nation. We hope our grant will contribute to the world class education provided through this school and look forward to seeing the progress made by the students as they become future leaders in the country.



Japan is America's 4th largest trading partner. Two-way trade of goods and services exceeded \$280 billion

JAPANESE LANGUAGE EDUCATION UPDATE #14: NEW RESOURCE ROUNDUP

It's a New Year! In the spirit of a fresh new start, let's explore some brand new (free!) resources available for Japanese language teachers. Student enrollment season is right around the corner, but how can you show potential students that learning Japanese is fun? How do you show parents that learning Japanese can open doors? Send them to [SPEAKJAPAN!](#) It's full of **reasons to study Japanese** and cool photog

which will get potential students excited for the language. If you're not sure how to spread the word about the website, visit our [How to Use SPEAKJAPAN](#) page. It features downloadable **SPEAKJAPAN** posters, flyers, and a customizable brochure.

[Read More](#)



2014 JET MEMORIAL INVITATION PROGRAM: PARTICIPANT ESSAYS PART 5/8

In July of 2014, 32 US high school students participated in the JET Memorial Invitational Program (JET-MIP). They travelled to Japan for a two week study tour of the Tohoku region, focusing on the cities of Rikuzentakata and Ishinomaki (Due to Super Typhoon Neoguri, the trip to Rikuzentakata was cancelled). These were the cities that Montgomery Dickson and Taylor Anderson were assigned during their tenure as JET Assistant Language Teachers. Sadly, they lost their lives during the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami in March, 2011 and JET-MIP was created to commemorate their work. Participants took part in exchanges with local elementary and high school students as well as local community groups with the purpose of fostering friendship and goodwill between both countries. Each month, we will feature four essays written by the participants describing their experiences in Japan. Click below to read about their unforgettable journey.

[Gwenyth Nicoloro](#)
[Claire Nord](#)
[Thomas O'Donnell](#)
[Michelle Peterson](#)



J-LEAP REPORTS PART 4/5

For the 2014-2015 school year, we invited nine assistant teachers (AT) to various schools around the country as part of the Japanese Language Education Assistant Program (J-LEAP). This is the fourth year of this program where schools around the country are given the opportunity to invite an AT for up to two

years to aid in strengthening their Japanese language program. This month, we will feature the reports from the following ATs detailing their experiences at American schools.

[Shunji Iwasaki, Shaler Area High School \(Pittsburgh, PA\)](#)

[Hiromi Nagai, Thomas Jefferson High School \(Cedar Rapids, IA\)](#)



NEW LIBRARY ACQUISITIONS

This month, we are back to our normal hours and have several new books in English and Japanese as well as some Japanese-language study materials and children's books. Make sure to drop by and apply to become a member if you haven't already done so. Our annual library membership fee is only \$2 and you get a free cloth book bag.

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Annual Report

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