

# MAY, 2015: BREEZE ISSUE #90

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

## GREETING FROM THE DIRECTOR



*Though nothing can bring back the hour  
Of splendour in the grass, of glory in the flower;  
We will grieve not, rather find  
Strength in what remains behind;*  
(William Wordsworth)

March is the season for departures and arrivals in Japan. I arrived in Los Angeles last March just before news of the cherry blossoms, and will now be returning to Japan at the end of March. In fact, this was my fourth post abroad after Brussels, Paris and Dakar. My tenure as director is complete after having enjoyed all four seasons in Los Angeles, and I look forward to admiring the cherry blossoms, which I missed last year, with my husband in Tokyo who will accomplish his third term as a “geographic bachelor”. I am also delighted to rejoin my old colleagues of the Japan Foundation in Japan and continue my work there.

Thanks to the partnership with many experts and institutions, I really enjoyed every moment of my time here. Exhibitions co-organized with LACMA, Getty and UCLA, shamisen and rakugo performances, screenings of Japanese movies, seminars and symposia on Japanese language and Japanese studies, youth exchange programs such as the JET Memorial Invitation and the Kakehashi project, production of Japanese advocacy kits, booths at both TarFest and the Farmer’s Market, conversation with students of our Japanese classes and many other activities! Through so many lovely encounters all over the U.S., through such a colorful tapestry of cultural landscapes woven by the memory and history of American people that I had never imagined before my arrival in the U.S., I feel so happy to have been engaged in cultural exchange activities here in the U.S.

As I mentioned in the January 2015 edition of Breeze, it is often said that cultural exchange is an everlasting journey without an end, which links and ties people, generations and nations and develops infinite networks of human beings worldwide. I was so thrilled to broaden and deepen our partnerships with many professionals while organizing cultural projects in the US. Keeping in my mind the precious memories of this country, I am now set to continue my never-ending journey in Japan.

My successor is Mr. Hideki Hara from Japan Foundation in Tokyo. He has extensive knowledge and experience in New York and Toronto, and will arrive in Los Angeles on April 9. I would be grateful if you could kindly extend the same dedication and support, to him, which you have provided me up until now.

The only thing that I regret is not to be able to write any more greetings in Breeze. It has been an enjoyable and stimulating process to express myself in English with careful editing by my native English speaking colleagues. Keeping a happy souvenir of *splendour in the grass, of glory in the flower* in my heart, I say adieu to JFLA.

Naomi Takasu, Director



Photo: Masayuki Miyahara

**RAKU: THE COSMOS IN A TEA BOWL  
THROUGH JUNE 7 , 2015  
PAVILION FOR JAPANESE ART, LOS ANGELES COUNTY MUSEUM OF ART**

The Japan Foundation and the Raku Museum are very pleased to announce Raku: The Cosmos in a Tea Bowl, an exhibition presenting 450 years of Raku ware to be held at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

Raku ware, a type of Japanese ceramics first made in the 16th century by founding father Chōjirō, has continued to be made by 15 successive generations of heads of the Raku family, and with its distinctive aesthetic, holds an unparalleled place among Japanese pottery. Featuring work by past Raku masters and by the brilliant Honami Kōetsu, a close associate, as well as the wide-ranging activities (not limited to ceramics) of the current master Raku Kichizaemon XV and pieces by his son Atsundo, the future family head, this exhibition is a comprehensive survey of the unique aesthetic and philosophical realm of Raku ware, providing fascinating glimpses into each of the eras it covers.

This exhibition presents 94 works, from the serene, monochromatic tea bowls of founder Chōjirō, which most directly reflect the wabi tea ceremony ideals of legendary tea master Sen no Rikyū, to the strikingly original innovations of the current Raku master. We are confident that this first full-fledged show of Raku ceramics on American soil will draw much attention and acclaim.

After its run in Los Angeles, the exhibition will travel to Russia and appear, with partially modified content, at the Hermitage Museum and the Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts.

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**JAPANEMA: FREE JAPANESE CINEMA SCREENING**  
**WHY DO THERE EVEN HAVE TO BE SUCH THINGS AS GEISHA?**  
**"SISTERS OF THE GION" (69MINS, 1936)**  
**DIRECTED BY KENJI MIZOGUCHI**  
**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 8 @ 7PM (JFLA AUDITORIUM)**

This film follows the parallel paths of the independent, unsentimental Omocha (Isuzu Yamada) and her sister, the more tradition-minded Umekichi (Yoko Umemura), both geishas in the working-class district of Gion. Mizoguchi's film is a brilliantly shot, uncompromising look at the forces that keep many women at the bottom rung of the social ladder.



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**JAPANEMA: FREE JAPANESE CINEMA SCREENING**  
**EVERY FAMILY HAS ITS SECRETS**  
**"TOKYO SONATA" (119MINS, 2008)**  
**DIRECTED BY KIYOSHI KUROSAWA**  
**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 22 @ 7PM (JFLA AUDITORIUM)**

From internationally-renowned director Kiyoshi Kurosawa, this film hauntingly tells the story of a contemporary Japanese family torn apart after its patriarch Ryuhei (Teruyuki Kagawa) unexpectedly loses his job. Ashamed, Ryuhei keeps the truth of his unemployment a secret, but as he grows more despondent and alienated from society, his family resorts to dramatic measures to break away from their fractured lives.



**REMINDER: 2015 JET-MIP APPLICATION DEADLINE**  
**DEADLINE: WEDNESDAY, APRIL 15, 2015**  
**JOIN US FOR A TRIP TO TOHOKU THIS SUMMER**

We are happy to announce that we will be selecting 32 high school students from all across the United States to visit Japan this summer on the 2015 JET Memorial Invitation Program. If you are a Japanese teacher and plan to apply for this program, please make sure to send your application so it arrives at our office by Wednesday, April 15. The last day to administer the National Japanese Exam (NJE), one of the eligibility requirements, is on Friday, April 10, so please make sure your candidate takes the test by then (DO NOT wait until the last day to do this). If you have any questions or issues, please let us know in advance



## **JAPANESE LANGUAGE COURSES SPRING TERM**

**APRIL 25 - JUNE 25**

**[REGISTER NOW!](#)**

Your potential blooms this spring! We are accepting registrations for our popular Japanese courses which will begin on April 25! Our courses are designed for new Japanese-language learners, as well as those who are interested in improving their existing language skills. You can get 10% discount off your tuition when you register before April 12.

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## **FISCAL YEAR 2015-2016 JAPANESE LANGUAGE GRANTS**

We are accepting applications for the following grants:

1. Salary Assistance Grant for Japanese Language Courses (Deadline: 4/10/2015)
2. Japanese Language Learners Event Grant previously known as "Speech Contest Grant" (Deadline: 9/1/2015)
3. Japanese Teaching Material Purchase Grant (Deadline: 9/15/2015)
4. Japanese-Language Education Project Grant (Deadline: 2 months prior to project start date)

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## **JAPANESE LANGUAGE EDUCATION UPDATE #17: ADVOCACY IS IN THE AIR!**

Children's songs, manners, and business brochures! Our [Real Advocacy Stories page](#) has been updated with three new submissions from Yukiyo Moorman from Walt Whitman High School (MD), Aki Tsugawa from Chesterton High School (IN) and Professor Sadatoshi Tomizawa from Ball State University (IN). Check out the projects they do in and out of the classroom to showcase Japanese language and culture in their communities. You can also [submit your own Advocacy Story](#) to showcase the work you're doing for your language program! And don't forget: [SPEAKJAPAN.org](#) is a great tool to use while you advocate.

[Read More](#)



## **2014 JET MEMORIAL INVITATION PROGRAM: PARTICIPANT ESSAYS PART 8/8**

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.

[Joshua Warnick](#)

[Jayson Wood](#)

[Konou Xiong](#)

[Angela Zhu](#)

Past Issues (2019)



Past Issues (2018)



Past Issues (2017)



Past Issues (2016)



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Annual Report

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