

MAY, 2015: BREEZE ISSUE #91

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

GREETING FROM THE DIRECTOR



I am very excited to assume the position as Director at this very important juncture in the history of US-Japan relations as our two countries commemorate the 70-year anniversary of the end of WWII. This is a great opportunity for us to reflect upon the fact that the positive bilateral relationship we enjoy today has been the product of unwavering efforts by our forerunners with good spirits and imagination on both sides of the Pacific. These people, from every corner of society including governments, corporations, educational institutions, and civic organizations, unanimously thought the reconciliation must start with a sincere exchange of ideas and opinions between our two nations. Hence, there have been numerous avenues established through which we can closely observe and appreciate each other's culture, engage in dialogue, and collaboratively develop new ideas and solutions. The Japan Foundation has supported these endeavors since its establishment in 1972 and has been providing opportunities for cross-cultural exchanges in the fields of arts and culture, Japanese language education, and the Japanese studies and intellectual dialogue. My colleagues and I here at JFLA feel very privileged to carry on this important legacy of fostering mutual understanding, friendship and trust between the US and Japan and hope to do so for many more decades to come.

At the core of our numerous programs in Los Angeles is our support of Japanese language education. Thanks to the close partnership we have developed over the years with individual and institutional stakeholders within the field of Japanese language education in the US, more and more Americans now studying the language. We will put forth our best effort to meet their demand, but we would like

more by inviting new friends and making the language even more popular. This will only be possible by further collaborating with our diverse cultural and educational partners. Language can be a very flexible tool to observe an unfamiliar culture. It can provide a cinematographic overview of the culture in the beginning, then as you explore further, it can also work as a microscope to discover what has been completely hidden from you about it. I would like to take this opportunity to ask our friends for their hand in supporting our ever more exciting cross-cultural endeavors through the power of language learning with the ultimate goal of bringing our two nations even closer together.

Hideki Hara, Director



LECTURE SERIES 27
TALES SPUN FROM ILLUSTRATIONS OF BEAUTIFUL WOMEN: QUIET, UNCHANGING, ALL TO MYSELF
WEDNESDAY, MAY 6 @ 7PM

Professor Robert Campbell, from the University of Tokyo, will take us through the visual arts and literature of nineteenth century Japan, when the nation first opened its frontiers and struggled to adapt and succeed within the western-led global context of modernization.

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DISCUSSION AND BOOK SIGNING WITH JANICE P. NIMURA
AUTHOR OF DAUGHTERS OF THE SAMURAI
MONDAY, MAY 11 @ 7PM

Based on in-depth archival research in Japan and in the United States, including decades of letters sent between the three women and their American host families, *Daughters of the Samurai* is beautifully, cinematically written, a fascinating lens through which to view an extraordinary historical moment.

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SPECIAL SATURDAY SCREENING Q&A WITH POET CAST MEMBER
"TRUE SONGS " (100MINS, 2014)
DIRECTED BY HIROKI KAWAI
SATURDAY, MAY 16 @ 2PM (JFLA AUDITORIUM)

This documentary film titled *True Songs* (Original Title: *Hontou no Uta*) follows the artists over the course of two years as they tour Japan bringing their emotionally charged and imaginative show to the people of Japan who are still grappling with the fallout from the disaster.



© 2006 "THE LETTER" Film Partners

JAPANEMA: FREE JAPANESE CINEMA SCREENING
"THE LETTER" (121MINS, 2006)
DIRECTED BY JIRO SHONO
WEDNESDAY, MAY 27 @ 7PM (JFLA AUDITORIUM)

Tsuyoshi (Tamayama Tetsuji), the elder brother, and Naoki (Yamada Takayuki), the younger brother, have been helping each other since they lost their parents. When Tsuyoshi becomes unemployed, however, he commits a robbery in order to obtain the school tuition fees for Naoki and, in the process, kills someone by mistake. While his elder brother is serving his sentence, Naoki undergoes a rough life.

Naoki's hope to escape his troubled life fails because of his elder brother, and gradually, Naoki begins to despise his brother. Naoki later marries Yumiko (Sawajiri Erika) who always supports Naoki by his side, but Yumiko ends up being victimized by people around her because of the marriage. Naoki is no longer able to endure the unreasonable discrimination and writes to his elder brother to explain all the difficulties he has been facing, and asks to sever their ties as brothers. Tsuyoshi learns the truth from the letter and realizes for the first time the significance of his crime.



Photo: Takashi Hatakeyama

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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SUMMER CAMP FOR TEENS
DISCOVER LITTLE TOKYO
JULY 20 - 24
REGISTER NOW!

Step away from the classroom for a more interactive approach to language learning! Learn Katakana and simple expressions in Japanese through fun activities such as exploring Little Tokyo and scavenger hunts. For 14-18 year-olds with no prior experience in learning Japanese. 10% discount off of the tuition when you register by Mon. June 15.



FISCAL YEAR 2015-2016 JAPANESE LANGUAGE GRANTS

We are accepting applications for the following grants:

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

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JAPANESE LANGUAGE EDUCATION UPDATE 18: A CLASSROOM TO BE ADMIRIED

Iya Nemastil-sensei of Marysville High School in Ohio presides over a classroom stuffed to bursting with authentic Japanese stuff. Posters cover every inch of wall space, every desk has trinkets and toys, and even the window sill is overloaded with Japanese juice cans and snack boxes. Particularly eye-catching is a large, genuine map of the Kansai area transit system. Students who study in this room are surrounded by everyday objects found all over Japan, so even if their eyes stray during the lesson, they'll find themselves reading common Japanese labels or studying cute Japanese designs.

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Annual Report

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