

Consul General Remains Upbeat in 4th JASC Address

On January 30, 2002, Consul General Mitoji Yabunaka addressed the Japan America Society of Chicago (JASC) and guests for the fourth time. With such a history, he faced the challenge of engaging his repeat listeners while remaining true to the optimism of his past remarks.

The talk was cast in the context of the post-September 11 world and how that tragedy has impacted Japan's diplomatic relations around the world. Specifically, Mr.

Yabunaka talked about the changing role of Japan's Self-Defense Force (SDF), relations with the United States and Asia, and Japan's international initiatives.

The speech also included optimistic but realistic remarks concerning Japan's domestic situation. Comments regarding the current financial difficulties were prominent, but he also touched on education reform and the effect Japan's aging society is likely to have in the future.

Consul General Yabunaka has addressed the JASC at the beginning of each of the past four years, and he has consistently maintained a balance between the realistic assessment of Japan's slow recovery and his optimistic assurances that it will come.

*Read the complete text
of the prepared speech
on our website at
www.jchicago.org*

Murray Language Academy Gets a Second Chance to See Japan

Last summer, students and teachers from Murray Language Academy were planning to travel to Hiroshima as part of the Manjiro Grassroots Summit. The Summit is an annual event, held alternately in America and Japan, that brings citi-

zens from both countries together for a series of friendship-building workshops, tours, and homestays.

As one of a handful of Chicago Public Schools offering Japanese as a foreign language, Murray was a perfect fit for the summit.

However, in the new climate of caution following September 11, the Chicago School Board cancelled the trip, fearing for the children's safety. So, in order to compensate the kids for their disappointment, and to encourage them to pursue their interest in Japan, Consul General Mitoji Yabunaka invited them to the Japan Information Center to experience a sample of Japanese culture.

The students witnessed a demonstration of *kendo*, the Japanese sport of sword fighting, watched a video about kids in Japan their own age, and saw traditional Japanese musical performances on the *taiko* (drum) and *shinobue* (wooden flute).

After the morning of activity, the kids were anxious to dive into the lunch of Japanese food, including sushi, Japanese fried chicken, and a Japanese sweet for dessert.

Of course, a few hours of such activities cannot replace a full week in Japan for the students, but hopefully their enthusiasm and interest will continue to grow and one day they will all be able to make the 3000-mile journey.



Consul General Yabunaka poses with kids from MLA.

Japanese *Chameleon Dreams* is Gallery's First Group Exhibition

The Julia Friedman Gallery is presenting *Chameleon Dreams: Trans/Forming Identity in Contemporary Japanese Photography*, running through April 27, 2002. As the first group exhibition at Julia Friedman Gallery, which opened May 2001, this landmark show is the first in a series of annual international surveys to be featured at the Gallery. Curated by Eric Shiner, *Chameleon Dreams* includes work by Miwa Yanagi, Yasumasa Morimura, Tomoko Sawada, Akira the Hustler, Yuki Kimura, and Yoshiko Kamikura.

Chameleon Dreams will present the work of six ground-breaking Japanese artists working in the field of photography today. Based on the Japanese word *henshin*, which means to "change or transform the body," this exhibition will feature photographs which transcend the boundaries of gender, age, race and sexuality. From the humorous and playful gender-bending images of Yoshiko Kamikura to the computer generated images of Miwa Yanagi's "My Grandmothers" series, the artists in *Chameleon Dreams* portray a metamorphosing human body. These artists incorporate performative elements such as drag, masquerade, and impersonation to dramatically depict the evolving physical manifestation of human expression.

Since the time the first camera



prototypes were introduced by Dutch traders in the 1760s, the Japanese have had a constant fascination with the photographic image. Over the centuries, technology relating to the field advanced, making cameras more readily available to the public at large. In recent decades, a number of Japanese photographers have experimented with the medium itself, and have taken advantage of computer-enhanced imagery. These art-

ists found that the possibilities for the photographic image are endless.

Date	Through April 27
Place	Julia Friedman Gallery 118 N Peoria Chicago IL 60607
Info	312-455-0755 info@juliafriedman.com www.juliafriedman.com

Manjiro Grassroots Summit in Hiroshima Rescheduled for October 2002

The application deadline for the 11th Japan America Grassroots Summit was June 29, 2001. Participants were to travel to Japan in October later that year. But like so many other things, the trip was disrupted by the terrorist attacks on September 11.

However, if you missed last year's deadline, perhaps you will have renewed reason to make the new deadline: **July 15, 2002**. As its

name implies, the Grassroots Summit is designed to bring together citizens of the two countries, fostering relationships and furthering mutual understanding at the personal level.

The dates for the new Summit are **October 7 through 15, 2002**. During that time, participants will have opportunities to tour areas of Japan, attend traditional performances, engage in hands-on activities,

join group discussions on a choice of topics, and stay with a Japanese host family.

For a registration form or more information, contact Paul K. Maruyama at:

Japan America Society of
Southern Colorado
2955 Blodgett Dr.
Colorado Springs CO 80919
719-266-5625
pmaruyama@earthlink.net

Int'l Shinto Foundation Offers Essay Contest

The International Shinto Foundation is sponsoring an essay competition for university students.

Students are encouraged to submit an eight- to ten-page essay by **May 31, 2002** to the foundation.

Essays can cover any of the following topics:

- Shinto's influence on art and culture
- The role of rituals in Shinto
- Comparative study of Shinto myths and mythologies

First prize for the contest is \$1000, second prize is \$500, and

third prize is \$300. Winners will be announced and prizes awarded in October 2002 in New York City.

The International Shinto Foundation, Inc. is a non-profit organization established to promote understanding of Shinto, which has exerted a fundamental influence on the spiritual make-up of Japanese people and culture.

For further details about the contest, call **212-661-9117** or email **NewYork@shinto.org**. More information about the foundation is also available online at **www.shinto.org**.

"International Dinner and a Movie" to Show Kurosawa's *Yojimbo*, Serve Japanese Cuisine

International Dinner and a Movie at the Chicago Cultural Center will present Akira Kurosawa's film *Yojimbo* as its May selection. Many may be familiar with the story as the Western remake *A Fistful of Dollars* starring Clint Eastwood.

Japanese cuisine will be served for the dinner, and the Chicago Tribune film critic Michael Wilmington will deliver the introduction for the film.

Date	Friday, May 17
Time	6 pm dinner 7 pm movie
Place	Chicago Cultural Center 78 E. Washington St. Chicago IL 60602
Cost	\$15
Info	312-744-6630

East Meets West in *The Kyogen Plautus*

Plautus is a classical Roman author of comedic plays. *Kyogen* is a Japanese comedic form usually found as comic relief within the more serious *noh* dramas. In this play, *The Kyogen Plautus*, June Compton has adapted the comedies of Plautus, borrowing his plots and characters, to the form of *kyogen*.

The production is presented by the Theatre Conservatory, Chicago College of Performing Arts at Roosevelt University.

Date & Time	April 5 and 6 at 7:30 pm April 7 @ 2 pm
Place	O'Malley Theatre Roosevelt University 431 S. Michigan Ave. 7th Floor Chicago IL 60605
Cost	\$10 general \$6 seniors and students
Info	312-341-3814

Three Minnesota Teams Going to National Japan Bowl

At the 4th Annual Minnesota Regional Japan Bowl on February 23, three high-school teams qualified to travel to Washington, D.C. to compete at the National Japan Bowl on March 30.

The winning teams were Apple Valley High School (Level 2) with Alaina Conner, Rebecca Gabriel, and Jassie Li; St. Paul Harding High School (Level 3) with Alaina Werkhoven and William Yang; and Minneapolis Patrick Henry High School (Level 4) with Summer Dien, Kwangjung Lee, and Dang Vang.

Japan Bowl pits students in Japanese language classes against each other to answer questions about Japanese society and culture, as well as language. The Japan-America Society of Washington, D.C. established the contest to:

- help standardize Japanese language instruction by exposing teams to competition,
- reinforce students' interest and determination in learning Japanese,
- expose teachers and students to a day of cultural activities directly related to Japan, and
- bring teachers together to exchange ideas and information on teaching Japanese.

Last year, 16 Japan-America Societies across the United States held regional Japan Bowl competitions, including Alabama, California, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Indiana, Massachusetts, Minnesota, North Carolina, Pennsylvania and Texas. Finalists from these competitions travel to the National Japan Bowl.

Organizers of Japan Bowl are expecting record numbers of participants this year: approximately 400 students from more than 60 high schools. We congratulate all the teams and wish them good luck!

“Deai Kit” Brings Japanese Language and Culture to Life for Students

The Japan Forum (TJF), a non-profit foundation dedicated to promoting mutual understanding among young people, recently produced an expansive educational tool. *Deai: The Lives of Seven Japanese High-School Students* is a kit that includes a text, two CD-ROMs, hundreds of photo aids, and supplementary materials available online.

Designed as a pedagogical tool for Japanese language instructors,



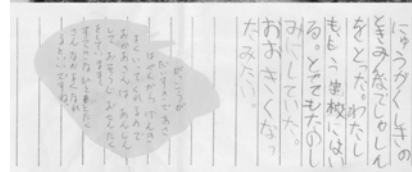
“Day in the Life” photos such as this one portray the real-life, day-to-day culture of today’s Japanese youth. Eating cup noodles on the run is a more accurate portrayal than the stereotypical fish and rice for every meal.

the seminal concept of *Deai* is that language is best learned as a communication tool with a real function. At the same time, it is essential to learn language as it manifests itself in the native culture.

TJF has captured the lives of seven Japanese students ages 15 to 18 and used them as real models for language learning and cultural exchange with American students of Japanese. The seven Japanese students provided the photographs and the text of their own segments, so the language and culture lessons are real—not distilled stereotypes. With this approach, TJF hopes to engage students more effectively and to provide more accurate information.

Perhaps best of all, TJF is making the kit available **free of charge** to secondary schools engaged in Japanese language education (limit one per institution). To learn more about the product or to find out how to order, visit the TJF website at www.tjf.or.jp, send a fax to **81+3-5322-5215**, or write to:

The Japan Forum
Shinjuku Dai-ichi Seimei Bldg.
26F
2-7-1 Nishishinjuku
Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo 163-0726
Japan



“Profile” photos provide the background of each of the *Deai* students. Through such examples, students of Japanese get to know the real people in the *Deai* kit and make connections with their own lives.

Deai Workshop at the JIC

In conjunction with the release of the *Deai* product, The Japan Forum (TJF) is hosting a series of workshops this year. One of them is tentatively planned to take place here at the Japan Information Center (in May).

The workshops will focus on how to use the *Deai* materials in the United States. They are free, but pre-registration is required. Those interested in attending should contact TJF for further details (contact information appears above).



<http://fifaworldcup.yahoo.com/en/>

This official site for the 2002 FIFA World Cup soccer tournament (co-hosted by Japan and South Korea from May 31 to June 30, 2002) offers everything a soccer enthusiast might like to know about the tournament, from the games themselves to the surrounding hoopla! Tournament news, participating teams, match schedules, ticketing and hotel information, information about host cities and links to city home pages, pictures of venues, and entertainment information such as musical acts, mascots, games, and images for downloading are all provided.

In addition to this year’s tournament, the site also provides general information about the history of soccer, FIFA, and the World Cup, plus biographies of famous players and even video clips of classic games.



JASC Offers Salads and Sushi Classes

The Japanese American Service Committee (JASC) is offering Japanese cooking classes in April and May. The April class will focus on Japanese dressings for salads. The May class will teach participants how to make the quintessential Japanese food: sushi.

Classes are limited to 15 participants each, so sign up early!

Date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Salads: April 13 Sushi: May 11
Time	10 am to 1 pm
Place	Japanese American Service Committee 4427 N. Clark St. Chicago IL 60640
Cost	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Salads: \$22 members, \$28 non-members Sushi: \$27 members, \$33 non-members
Info	773-275-0097



Storyteller from Japan Entertains with Folktales

Hiroko Fujita is back!

Ms. Fujita is a professional storyteller, educator, and author who shares traditional stories, sings songs, and plays games from Fukushima Prefecture.

She will be at the Japanese American Service Committee (JASC) to entertain audiences young and old with her special knack for storytelling.

Advance registration is required.

Date	Friday, April 5
Time	7 pm
Place	Japanese American Service Committee 4427 N. Clark St. Chicago IL 60640
Cost	\$7 adults \$3 children 12 and under
Info	773-275-0097

Library Seeks Display Gallery Worthy of Japanese Potter's Gift

Illinois State University's Milner Library recently received a wonderful collection of ceramics from renowned Japanese potter Mitsuya Niiyama. The library now has only one problem: making sure their display matches the quality of the pottery.

The 100 pieces are Niiyama's interpretation-in-clay of the famous "Ogura Hyaku-nin-issu," a collection of 100 poems written by 100 Japanese poets between the 7th and 13th centuries. The pottery, created over a period of 10 years, includes plates, trays, and other objects decorated variously with illustrations and the text of the poems in Japanese.

The library hosted a reception on January 13, 2002 formally announcing receipt of the gift. Over 250 people attended the ceremony.

Currently, the university is seeking funding to design and build a gallery that will exhibit the works in a setting suitable to the collection. Ideally, the display will span the library's six floors. Glass cases at each landing of the stairway would allow the 1 million passersby each year to encounter and appreciate this trans-lingual cultural gift.

Questions about the collection or about how to make a donation should be addressed to Ms. Dorothy Witte, Director of Development for Milner Library, at **309-438-7681** or dmwitte@ilstu.edu.



"Beauty of Japan" Showcases Martial Arts

The New Chicago Japanese American Association (NCJAA) will present an afternoon of martial arts demonstrations focusing on the beauty inherent in the disciplines.

The free event will include several exhibitions of martial arts, a lecture on Japanese swords, and other cultural performances.

Although still tentative, the planned groups include the following...

Isshin Daiko will play *taiko*, the Japanese drum.

Choyokan Kendo Dojo will demonstrate *kendo*, a sport of fencing with bamboo swords.

Sekiguchi-ryu Iai Jutsu will demonstrate *iaido*, the art of drawing and wielding a Japanese sword.

Midwest Aikido Center will demonstrate *aikido*, a martial art focused on using an opponent's energy against him.

Chicago Koto Group will play *koto*, a traditional Japanese stringed instrument.

The Mizuki School will perform classical Japanese dance.

Date	Sunday, April 14
Time	2 to 4 pm
Place	Northside College Prep H.S. 5501 N. Kedzie Ave. Chicago IL 60625
Cost	Free admission, but donations are appreciated
Info	312-642-4366 773-728-3395

More Japanese Audio Arrives at JIC

We recently received nearly 50 new audio tapes for the Japan Information Center (JIC) listening station. We now offer a total of more than 100 audio selections, ranging from traditional Japanese music to the latest in J-Pop to recitations of *rakugo* (Japanese comedy routines).

Visitors are welcome to listen to the tapes here—we provide a player and headphones free of charge—or check them out if they have completed a library application.

“Hello!” from the JIC’s Newest Member

Hello, I am Yayoi Sonoda, the new staff of the Japan Information Center (JIC). I started work as the Special Advisor for Cultural Affairs about a month ago. I came from Tokyo originally, and this is my first time to live in America.

My name, Yayoi, is the old Japanese name for the current month, March. Because my birthday is in this month, it is my favorite season. It is also the month during which the beautiful flowers of the Japanese apricot bloom in Japan. I miss Japan in springtime, but I can’t wait for my first spring in Chicago!

I like Chicago very much because the people are so nice and kind, and there are a lot of cultural things to do. For example, I would like to see the symphony, go to a jazz show, and visit many American museums. In fact, I have already been to the opera. I saw “Parsifal.” I appreciate that we can share Japanese and American culture. So, I would like you to join our cultural events in the future!



Correction

Last issue, “The Field Museum’s *Cultural Connections* Compares Hebrew and Japanese Writing” on page 4 incorrectly reported the time of the event. The time for both days should be **6 to 8 pm**. For more information about the event, please call The Field Museum at **312-665-7474**.

FRIENDLY REMINDERS...

- Japan House at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign will hold its Spring Open House on Saturday, April 20 from 10 am to 4 pm. Attractions include tea ceremonies and *ikebana* displays. Free and open to the public. Call Nancy Lockmiller, Assistant Director, at **217-244-9934** or visit www.art.uiuc.edu/japanhouse/ for more information.

JAPAN INFORMATION CENTER

www.jchicago.org/jicmenu.html

The Japan Information Center (JIC) is the educational and cultural branch of the Consulate General of Japan at Chicago. Established in 1978, the JIC aims to promote knowledge of Japan in our four-state jurisdiction of Illinois, Indiana, Minnesota, and Wisconsin.

SERVICES

The JIC distributes Japan-related materials; maintains a lending library of books, videos, films, and slides; answers inquiries; and sponsors lectures, concerts, art exhibits and other cultural events related to Japan.

BUSINESS HOURS

9:15 am to 5 pm Monday through Friday

We are open until 7 pm every Thursday.

The office is closed on most American holidays and between December 29 and January 3 (Japanese year-end and New Year holidays).

CONTACT INFORMATION

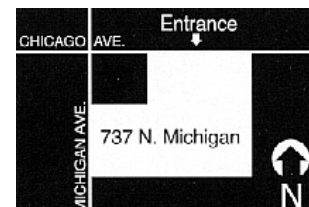
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