New Year Off to a Great Start

The year of the dragon hits the ground running here at JASM as we once again celebrate an incredibly successful Shinnenkai and the beginning of what we hope will be a fortuitous year for everyone! The event was held on Sunday, January 15 at the Hopkins Eisenhower Community Center and featured a wide array of Japanese activities and events that all age groups could enjoy. Just under 300 participants were in attendance.

The main highlights of the Shinnenkai were the performances which had three newcomers this year, welcoming a flute-player and two traditional dance groups. One of the favorite performances of the evening was the Mu Daiko Drum trio, who gave a mini “how-to” lesson to a few, lucky audience members. Also a big hit was the food bar with a delicious range of Japanese cuisine including sushi, mochi, gyudon (seasoned beef), gyoza (dumplings), and cream puffs. The traditional New Year’s Ozoni Soup was available to everyone for free. Other activities included the Children’s area (piled with mountains of origami and coloring paper), an Oriental Bazaar with Japanese goods for sale, a Children’s Bazaar (candy!), a Calligraphy booth, traditional mochi making, and the Nihonjinkai cards and handicrafts table.

The Shinnenkai also serves as a chance for attendees to learn more about Japanese resources and events happening within our local community. Plenty of exhibitors were in attendance, ranging from local Japanese-themed community groups, language and travel info., and martial arts. For a complete list of exhibitors, see our “Acknowledgements” section on page 2.

As always, we want to give a special thanks to all of the volunteers who dedicated their time and effort in running the booths, and helping us with set-up and tear down! The abundance of enthusiastic and devoted help we received this year did not go unnoticed, so we hope everyone was able to enjoy their time at the Shinnenkai. Additionally, we would like to acknowledge the performers, exhibitors, contributors, and sponsors who played an important role in making the New Year a culturally enriching experience for all. (Names and groups listed on page 2)

Finally, we invite you to check out our Facebook page at http://www.facebook.com/MNJAPAN for event updates, information, and photos. Shinnenkai pictures coming soon!

J-Quiz Participants Get Ready!

Only a couple more weeks until high school students from Minnesota and Wisconsin converge on the Twin Cities area to compete in the J-Quiz with hopes of qualifying for the national Japan Bowl in Washington, D.C, where they can then vie for a chance to win a trip to Japan. With almost 90 students registered so far, participants will team up into groups of two or three and attempt to reach the top spot in their level. There are three levels of difficulty and questions range from a number of cultural topics about Japan to language translation, including a preliminary essay.

J-Quiz is hosted and sponsored by JASM and the Minnesota Council of Teachers of Japanese. The event will be held Saturday, February 18, 2012 at Normandale Community College (see below). Competitors will arrive early in the morning and complete all but the final rounds, which will then be opened to the public for viewing. The final round is scheduled to start at 12:30 pm, and is free for anyone to come. This is a great opportunity for non-participating high school students to come and learn more about J-Quiz, especially if they are interested in participating next year. Also available to the public (and students) will be an Oriental Bazaar of donated Japanese goods and T-shirts for purchase run by JASM. Proceeds will go towards supporting the J-Quiz winners’ trip to Washington, D.C. We encourage you to bring cash or check for purchases, but a credit card machine will be on hand if needed.

If you would like to learn more about the Japan Bowl held in Washington, please visit the Japan-America Society of Washington, D.C. website at http://www.us-japan.org/dc/japanbowl.php for more information. Additionally, if you have any questions about J-Quiz or would like to donate Japanese curios or goods for the bazaar, please contact our office at (612) 627-9357 or visit the JASM website: www.mn-japan.org. You can also connect with us through our Facebook page at: www.facebook.com/MNJAPAN. Hope to see you there!

Normandale Community College
France Ave. South & 98th St, Bloomington, MN
February 19th 8:00am-3:30pm
Sign-in for teams begins at 7:30am.
Finals begin at 12:30 - Free and Open to the Public.
I want to express special thanks to the planning team for their leadership in planning the different activities for the event:

Planning Team Co-Chairs: Matt Schoenfelder and Tom Haeg
Entertainment: Alexandra Howes
Exhibitors: Kanna Sato
Food: Tomoko Drake
Nihonjin-kai: Toshie Metzger
Oriental Bazaar: Heidi McCalla
Technical Support: Marc Blehert
JASM Office Team
Oriental Bazaar/J-Quiz Sadie Cornforth
Registration Steve Kosta
J-Quiz and Children’s Area Sukanya Momsen
JASM Booth Laura Ullery
Children’s Aria Richiko Kamata

Also, special thanks to the following individuals for their help with the program:

Emcee Liz Brailsford
Karaoke Judges: Deanna Bassett, Takuze Ishida and John Omori

We would also like to express our appreciation to the parents and friends of the Minneapolis Japanese School who volunteered their time and energy to prepare delicious Japanese food and perform the Mochi Tsuki (rice pounding) demonstration.

These volunteers helped to shape the program and to coordinate the event to help everyone have a traditional and fun start to the New Year for the JASM community.

Sincerely,

Ben van Lierop
Executive Director

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**Acknowledgements for Shinnenkai 2012**

**Performers**
- Ryusuke Jono
- Sansei Yonsei Kai
- Sakurakai
- Kaishin Dojo
- Karaoke Participants
- Mu Daiko Taiko Drumming

**Food**
- Tomoko Drake
- Minneapolis Japanese School; parents and families
- Kikugawa Restaurant

**Photos**
- Jon Wilbrecht

**Booths**
- Tetsuya Shimano
- Nihonjin-kai

**Exhibitors**
- Minnesota Bonsai Society
- Aikido of Minnesota
- Anime Detour
- J-Quiz
- St. Paul-Nagasaki Sister City Committee
- Kaishin Dojo

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**Thank you to Shinnenkai Volunteers!**

We would like to thank all the people who contributed their time, energy, and creative talents to making Shinnenkai a successful and meaningful event to start the New Year.

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- Kaishin Dojo

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**JASM Membership News**

Many thanks for your continued support to enable JASM to develop and expand programs that build bridges of understanding and cultural awareness.

Please welcome the following new JASM members:
- Helen Daniels, Jeffery A. Dobberpuhl, Akira Matoba, Riker family, Aaron Medina & Tieu Quyen Phan, Michelle Norman, Rachel Mahanay, Naoko & Douglas Carlsen, Steve Borchardt, Stephenie Loo, Greg & Kyle Johnson, Beard family, Tselote Abebe, Alex & Valerie Marschner, Johnny Nengchhu

Thanks to the following renewing JASM members:
- Suzuko Erickson, Michiko Burke, Hioe Hosna, Hiromi Mizuno, Barbara Shields, Makiko & Eiji Ikeda, Akiko Sako, Richard Russell, Maureen Rafferty, Marcia Sanoden, Jane Powers, Masako Potter, Liz Brailsford, Laura Johnson & Jose Rivera Perez, Virginia Jensen, Helen Daniels, Brian Hanninen, Naomi LeBeau, Sarah Walbert, Mindy Rechelbacher, John Pettingill, Sarah Kaufman, Deborah Hanson, Nobly & Megan Hashizume, Yuko Heberlein, Dan Gilbertson, Toshie Metzger

Thanks to our renewing corporate members:
- Davisco Foods International, Inc., St. Jude Medical

**Total Private Members:** 321
**Total Corporate Members:** 60

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Dick Stahl, Kanna Sato, and Ben van Lierop - by Dean Potter
We are pleased to welcome JASM member Richiko Kamata to the JASM Office Team to assist with the J-Quiz event. Richiko is serving as the J-Quiz Administrative Coordinator, a special role that helps with the details and organizational duties for the J-Quiz event.

By way of introduction, Richiko graduated from Minnesota State University in Mankato with a degree in psychology in early 2000. After graduation Richiko worked in Minnesota with Digital River Inc., and then moved back to Japan. Richiko got married to Takehito Kamata, a doctoral student at the University of Minnesota and returned to Minnesota in 2011. Richiko also has a personal connection to JASM: her sister, Yukiko, is married to Darryl Magree, former JASM Executive Director.

We appreciate Richiko’s administrative assistance in preparing for J-Quiz. Many thanks, Richiko-san!

初めまして: Meet the New Intern!

Hello everyone, it’s nice to meet you. My name is Sadie Cornforth and I am very excited to join the JASM team as its newest Media Relations intern. I am a senior at the University of Minnesota where I major in Global studies - my particular focus being in International Politics and Economics in East Asia. Currently I also work at the Global Programs and Strategy Alliance Dean’s Office on campus, and it is my goal to work in international relations in the future. My interest in joining JASM came after attending one of the networking events and meeting many young professionals who have the same interest in Japan as I do. My hope in being part of the JASM community is to build lasting relationships with its members and to learn what it really means to participate in an international community. So, please feel free to talk to me at Kanna Club or events. I would love to know what you own Japan-America relationships are and maybe even put them in the Tsushin!
Foreign reporters in Japan in the wake of the March 2011 9.0 earthquake observed a common resolve among the stricken Japanese recovering from the turmoil. It was revealed in their calmness, patience and sense of duty in rescuing their communities. The Japanese refer to this spirit as fukutsu no seishin - never give up. Some claim it is genetic. Others, learned. I was thinking about this while reading The Good Fight.

The Good Fight traces Walter Mondale’s five decade odyssey in public life as the liberal standard bearer. It recounts in narrative detail the political challenges he faced as a lawyer, Minnesota attorney general, U.S. senator, U.S. vice-president and U.S. ambassador to Japan. It is about an American, with Norwegian ancestry, exhibiting a Japanese fukutsu no seishin attitude.

The JASM reader will be particularly attracted to his term as United States Ambassador to Japan from 1993 to 1996. The time was quite significant. The United States and Japan were the two largest economies in the world. They accounted for over 40% of the world’s output. However, Japan was in the early phase of its lost decade. And, America was reasessing its military commitments around the world. Their relationship was on the watch list. Diplomatic skills were at a premium.

Interestingly, Mondale recalls that he was originally offered the ambassador assignment to Russia. He tentatively accepted and then declined. Fortunately, the Clinton transition team called back, “Fritz, how about Tokyo?” He asked to talk to his wife, Joan. Well, as it turned out, Joan had a special affinity for Japanese art. And, she was related by a branch in her father’s family, the Oldfathers, to a former U.S. ambassador to Japan. It is about an American with Norwegian ancestry, exhibiting a Japanese fukutsu no seishin attitude.

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By his own admission, Mondale was no initial expert on Japan. But, he was a quick study. He thoroughly immersed himself in Japanese history and culture prior to presenting his papers to the Tokyo Foreign Ministry. He especially focused on Japan-United States relationships after World War II. He observed, “…we had an informal bargain promising that we would maintain military bases there and the two nations would form an alliance to preserve stability in the region.” He was keen to note that this alliance was hinged on an informal bargain. Any good lawyer knows that an informal bargain is just as enforceable as a formal written agreement.

Immediately upon his arrival in Tokyo he faced several challenges. America was running a huge, intolerable trade deficit with the Japanese. American products simply could not reach Japanese markets. He had to figure out a way to measure this against the real politik to maintain America’s defense responsibility. He reckoned that Japan was situated in a very nasty neighborhood shared with three totalitarian regimes, -North Korea, Communist China, and the erstwhile Soviet Union. Japan was an export driven economy. It was dependent on free trade without the benefit of any natural resources. Mondale’s ambassador role - as he saw it - was to preserve the alliance as a card against these regimes, to maintain the robust Japanese economy, to reduce the trade deficit, and to preserve our super power status.

He was not shy about achieving the desired ends. He broke tradition by going straight to the CEOs of the major Japanese corporations to avoid delays and obstructions. He was well aware of the Japanese tendency to avoid any overt confrontation by passing decision-making to Tokyo bureaucrats. But, the immense trade deficit was simply unacceptable. After two years of his leadership, Japan and the United States negotiated over seventeen major market-opening agreements ranging from cell phones, finance, semiconductors, and insurance.

He then presided over three major crises testing the U.S.-Japan relationship.

One. In June 1994 North Korea announced its intention to withdraw from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. This prompted an immediate American response as to how we would support Japan’s defense. He assembled his staff to immediately implement a strategy to bring the Allies together to confront North Korea. He enlisted the help from an old friend, Jimmy Carter, to go to North Korea to begin talks. The Allies were able to contain Pyongyang and diffuse the threat.

Two. In September 1995, three U.S. soldiers were accused of kidnapping and raping a 12-year-old Okinawa school girl. In brilliant detail, he recalls all the events dealing with this very sensitive matter. In my opinion, his response to this incident represents perhaps the finest display of American statesmanship. He marshaled his ambassadorial role to directly communicate America’s outrage to the Japanese citizenry. He personally contacted every necessary public official in Japan. He visited the victim’s family to show sympathy and resolve. He exercised civilian control over the military. In the end, our military alliance remained intact, an outcry became civil, and justice was served.

Three. In March 1996 China declared that it would test-fire missiles over the Taiwan straits, an international waterway and crucial Asian shipping lane. The U.S. reaction was seriously watched by the Japanese. It tested America’s resolve to protect its dear ally. Mondale took this sentiment to the highest levels of the State Department. Washington’s response: a navy aircraft-carrier task force was dispatched forthwith. The Chinese backed off. The missiles were removed. The Japanese were reassured.

Perhaps the best legacy of Mondale’s accomplishments as U.S. ambassador can be seen right here in Minnesota. It is no coincidence that Japan is now the third largest export market for Minnesota corporations (right after Canada and Europe). Minnesota medical device companies have a dominating presence in Japan. Minnesota commodities have a huge impact on the Japanese food diet. Our Fortune 500 companies have a significant role in the Japanese economy. And, Greater Minnesota manufacturers are taking Japanese language courses and going back to Niigata, Fukuoka, and Aomori.

The Good Fight follows a young boy from Ceylon, Minnesota, who ushered a sense of decency, a curiosity, and steadfastness onto the world stage. The world is now a better place for him. After reading the book, the JASM reader will pause to consider just how he was able to accomplish these feats over five decades. I submit: fukutsu no seishin.

-Tom Haeg

(Scribner, Copyright 2010; 375 p.)
Skybridge Marketing Group has an immediate opening for 2 part-time call center representatives.

This position will be responsible for handling incoming calls for one of our major clients. The positions can be home based and will be 20-30 hours per week. Monday through Saturday.

Requirements

- The ideal candidate must be able to speak English and Japanese (Kanji)
- Able to work hours that coincide with the Japanese business day.
- Have strong customer service and computer skills.

Interested candidate can submit resumes to gfhr@skybridgemg.com or call Human Resources at 763-477-7806

If you missed the Mu Daiko performance at the Shinnenkai or you just want to see more, check out this concert being held this month in Downtown St. Paul! Tickets on sale now!

Mu Daiko
15th Anniversary Concert

Feb. 9—19th, 2012
McKnight Theatre
at Orway Center for the Performing Arts
345 Washington Street, Saint Paul, MN 55102
Ticket Office: 651.224.4222
www.ordway.org

“Mu Daiko celebrates fifteen years of taiko with its biggest performance yet. Kicking off its Minnesota tour, the Twin Cities-based drum ensemble brings its signature blend of tradition and innovation to the Ordway with familiar favorites and original compositions. “

Kanna Club

Last month’s Kanna Club was at the Sajiya Restaurant in St. Paul on Jan. 24th with 28 participants coming out to partake in delicious food and good company. It was a memorable event that welcomed many new faces and JASM members as well. After sampling the appetizers and unwinding in the warm atmosphere of Sajiya, everyone had the chance to meet new people through a game. Upon pairing off according to matching colors, members were given the chance to swap information and advance their network one-on-one. Partners then each other and shared the information to the whole group enabling everyone to learn new points of interest, or unusual experiences in Japan, about the person who was introduced. Participants enjoyed the game very much and perhaps made a new friend. We hope you will come to the Kanna Club for the February event and join others in a fun gathering to make friends and share your interests and connections to Japan.

Interested in Kanna Club? Find us on the JASM website: www.mn-japan.org, Facebook, or follow us on Twitter (@MNJAPAN) for updates on next month’s Kanna Club and how to register!
遅ればせながら明けましておめでとうございます。あっという間に過ぎた2011年ですが、東北大震災で被災された方々には、長い一年であったかも知れません。また今現在も不確かな放射能汚染の影響など、2012年もまだ乗り越えなければならない多くの難題をかかえている出発です。干支は辰年。昇り龍のように勢いのある一年になてくれると願っております。

さて、まずは便利な情報から。

TVジャパンのニュースプログラムで昨年紹介されていて、これは知っておくと便利だと思ったブログサイトです。「あめいろぐ」は研修医として米国の医療機関で働く若手医師たちがブログやコラムで在米の日本人などのための情報を提供する医療情報サイト。アメリカでのお産や小児科にかかる知識や、日本とは違うシステムに対する質問などへの回答など、在米日本人にとって非常に助かるサイトです。また、医学的な話題を簡単に紹介していたり、読み物としての面白さもあり、ぜひウェブのブックマークにしておきたいものです。

これは長い冬にはつきもののDVD鑑賞ののおのおのおめめめ。日本やアジアの文化、歴史を違った角度から知る内容のドキュメンタリーや映画をご紹介します。

まず日本の伝統の折り紙を突き詰める科学者やアーティスト、建築家などの西欧の折り紙エキスパートとその哲学を紹介したユニークなDVD「Between the Folds」。子供の頃から誰もが知っている折り紙が、創造性あふれるオブジェとしてのアートや、サイエンティストたちの学問的な研究となっているという様々なエピソードに唸らされます。紙一枚に潜む可能性に驚嘆する内容です。

「The Cats of Mirikitani」フィルムメーカーの暖かく根気のある姿勢が映像の隅々にまで感じられ、映像のサブジェクトである年老いた路上生活者のジミー・ミリキタニをストリートから救い、友人となり、彼の過去にせまっていきます。アーティストであるミリキタニさんの失われた過去と家族が明らかになっていく仮定に、日系アメリカ人のたどった歴史が一体化していきます。

ミネアポリスでも上映され、観衆を驚愕させた問題作「City of Life and Death」は中国タイトルが「南京！南京！」という、まさに歴史のダークサイド、日本軍による南京虐殺を真っ向から描いた映画です。日本人には見るのがためらわれるかも知れません。また、意見を異にする人もいるでしょう。この映画は、6週間にわたる歴史的な悪夢の日々を数キャラクターの目線でとらえた物語です。その中にはもちろん犠牲になった中国人の登場人物もいますが、侵攻した日本兵の一人の眼に映った状況も描かれています。日本が語る歴史物語ではなく、時には別の国から見た日本の歴史の暗部を直視することも必要ではないかと思います。
Advertise in the Tsushin!

Advertisement Rates

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Ad production and design available in both Japanese and English for an additional charge. Deadline for completed ads and classifieds is the 15th of every month.

Questions? Contact Sadie Cornforth, Tsushin Editor, at the JASM Office
Tel: 612-627-9357
jasm@us-japan.org

Japan America Society Calendar

February

Saturday, 18th - J-Quiz
Come see the final round of this high school Japanese Language Competition. It is a fun and educational experience, and you’ll have the chance to purchase some Japanese souvenirs!

T.B.A. - Kanna Club
Take advantage of this great networking opportunity or just have fun with friends and enjoy Japanese food at a great restaurant! Information for the February Kanna Club will be announced on the JASM website: www.mn-japan.org

Japanese Speaking Club

The Japanese Speaking Club is an informal meeting place for those wishing to practice Japanese. We encourage those just beginning the language as well as native speakers to gather at Espresso Royale Café in Downtown Minneapolis to meet new people, discuss experiences in Japan, or simply to speak Japanese. Come when you can, leave when you must. Date/Time: Every Saturday, any time after 3:00 p.m.
Place: Espresso Royale Café
1229 Hennepin Ave., Minneapolis, MN 55403

2月のお楽しみ会  2月13日

Nihonjin-kai Pot Luck-日本人会において下さい。
毎月第二月曜日お昼から持ち寄りの昼食会を行っております。ミネソタ在住の日本人との交流を楽しむことができます。毎月第四日曜日一時からは、お菓子と飲み物で素晴らしい名案を話し合いましょう。
場所4231 Bloomington Ave S. MPLS, MN 55407
(日本語図書館では、本、ビデオ、DVDの貸し出しは無料です)

Please come along to the Nihonjin-kai Pot Luck!
We are having a pot luck party the 2nd Monday of every month at noon. You can mix with Japanese people who are living in Minnesota. Every 4th Sunday of the month, join Nihonjin-kai for great discussion with snacks and beverages beginning at 1p.m.
Location : 4231 Bloomington Ave S. MPLS, MN 55407
(Use of the Japanese Library is FREE and open to the public.)

To list Japan-related events in the Tsushin, email information by the 15th of the month to:
jasm@us-japan.org

Corrections

Please report any inaccuracies you find in this publication to jasm.interns@gmail.com. We are always striving to provide our members with the best possible product and your input is important to us!

Japan America Society of Minnesota
- Membership Application
- Change of Address
- Tax-deductible Donation

Name

Name (2nd adult of a household membership)

Address

City
State
ZIP

E-mail

Phone

I would like to make an additional tax-deductible donation of ______

Amount Enclosed: ______
(Please make checks payable to JASM)

Japan America Society of Minnesota
43 Main Street SE Suite EH—131
Minneapolis, MN 55414

Advertisement Rates

Style        Size     Cost/issue
1/4 page     5 x 3.5 in      $50.00
1/2 page     5 x 7.5 in      $90.00
Full page    10 x 7.5 in     $150.00
Classified   80 character line $10/line (min. 2 lines)
The Japan America Society of Minnesota is a non-profit, non-political association engaged in bringing the peoples of Japan and the United States closer together in mutual understanding, respect, and cooperation. Through programs and interchange, it endeavors to promote an appreciation of cultural, educational, economic, public, and other affairs of interest to both peoples. Membership in the society is open to individuals, corporations, and other organizations interested in furthering its programs.

The Japan America Society of Minnesota is a member of the National Association of Japan-America Societies.

Thank you for your support of the 2012 Shinnenkai New Years Celebration!

Special thanks goes to Evan Williams & the Williams Family Foundation for their generous sponsorship.

We also thank Aveda, Breadsmith, Dave Steffens Automotive & Conway Auto Clinic, Great Harvest, IACE Travel, Tetsuya Shimano, Tomodachi for their item donations to the raffle.