

SCHOOL-PTC NEWSLETTER



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NEWSLETTER SPRING-2016

PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

Time flies, and it is already February. Belated Happy New Year to JLS families! Currently, people in many parts of America are experiencing severe winter weather caused by blizzards, thunderstorms, tornado and hail. Yet, we are enjoying nice and comfortable temperatures here in the South Bay. I hope everyone is doing fine.

At the beginning of every year, I get to go back to Japan. During the last visit, I went to Kusatsu Onsen (hot-spring resort) in Gunma prefecture. I'm sure our parents and children visit



Onsen in Japan from time to time. The Japanese islands are located in the middle of so called "Ring of the Fire", a large series of volcanoes encircling the Pacific Ocean. It is notorious for frequent earthquakes and volcanic eruptions. Looking back at Japanese history, Japanese have suffered enormously from earthquakes and volcanic eruptions. On the other hand, there are abundant of hot-springs throughout the Islands. Since ancient times, Japanese have made use of hot-springs

for medical purposes. They have made trips to various Onsen and enjoyed bathing, often visiting Shinto shrines and Buddhist temples, going on jaunts, and eating the delicious food of the area. There are over 27,000 sources of hot spring throughout the islands, and over one hundred million people visit Onsen, hot-spring resort areas, each year now.

As a result, going to an Onsen has become part of Japanese culture, and taking a bath at home everyday has developed into a custom. Shinto priests used to purify themselves from malicious spirits by washing their bodies in the river, ocean, spring water or waterfall before ceremonies and rituals of Imperial Court. The purification is called "misogi." Now, visitors of shrines and temples wash their hands and rinse their mouth at "chozuba", a water basin before entering sacred spaces. That is an informal way of purification. Japanese use salt for purification purposes, too. Sumo wrestlers throw generous amounts of salt onto the Dohyo, fighting ground, before each match. People throw salt onto your body before entering home after attending a funeral to cleanse the person from evil influences from death. The Misogi purification taking place in the ocean (purifying with salt) remains in such daily customs to this day in modern Japan.

From the ancient times, Japanese also have practiced throwing human-shaped objects (hito-gata) into the river as a substitution of oneself in order to let the river take away one's sin and impurities.

We also have an expression of "mizu ni nagasu." It's direct translation is "let the water carry it away." It also means, lay aside one's grudge or let

bygones be bygones. Mika Kinose explains the expression as follows:

The expression of "mizu ni nagasu" (lay aside one's grudges) originates from the Shinto prayer for the ritual of Oharae. The purpose of Oharae is to purify people's sin, evil deed or crime against the gods or a breach of taboo moral acts.) The meaning of "mizu ni nagasu" is not only a moral act, but also is consistent with the circulation of Nature. Harboring ill feelings forever is against a happy dispensation of Nature. In order to let water carry away one's ill feeling and live in accordance with dispensation of Nature, Shintoism has wisdom of "hate the sin not the sinner."

Japanese beliefs that "water purifies one's sin or impurities of mind," the emphasis on "keeping places clean and tidy" and "one must not keep one's grudges against others" came from Shintoism and also Buddhism.

Taking a bath daily is believed to be one of the key reasons for Japanese longevity. It rains and snows a lot in Japan, so Japanese use plenty of water to keep things clean. Japanese also take their shoes before entering a house, and put on slippers for inside. We take off the inside slippers and change them to another slippers designated to just for the bathroom (toilet) use. But, for a tatami-mat room, we don't use any slippers. We don't like the idea of putting a shower, bathtub and toilet together in one room for sanitary reason. So, normally a toilet is placed in a small room separately. It is difficult for some foreigners visiting Japan to understand these practices. Most Japanese wash the dishes using running water from the faucet. So the water is fresh and clean. Recently, I watched a TV program of one country

in Europe. In the program, people washed the dishes with dish soap and the dishes were very soapy. But, they put the very soapy dishes into the basket without any rinsing at all for drying. When I saw someone doing the dishes in that way, I was very flabbergasted. It is interesting to see different cultures, customs and practices in each country in the world. I used to assume everybody bathes everyday, but not everybody does, depending on the people of the area.

Taking a bath warms up your body, improves the blood circulation, helps you relax and relieve anxiety and stress. Everyone is busy, but it is nice to take time to soak yourself in a nice warm bath sometimes for better health and prevention of illnesses such as flu and cold.

————— Madoka I. Hull, Principal

Reference:

Kinose Mika no Yamato Nadeshiko na Seikatsu

<http://kinosemika.blog134.fc2.com/blog-entry-1935.html>

Mika Kinose ... Scholar of Japanese classical culture and ancient Shinto, and the representative of Japanese ancient Shintoism

Ancient Shintoism ... Japanese native Shinto religion before it was influenced by Confucianism, Buddhism, and other foreign ideas and thoughts

CLASS OBSERVATION-TEACHER-PARENTS CONFERENCES

We had a great turnout of parents on the day of the class observation and teacher-parents conferences held on January 22nd and 23rd. Although the observation was short, I hope parents enjoyed watching their children study Japanese. I also hope that the parents had a chance to see all of our teachers who spend countless hours creating curriculum for their classes.

For the elementary division class, some parents needed to have conferences for their children's behavior issues in the class. I suggest that parents talk positively to their children about learning Japanese every Friday night, so they are



fully ready to come to Japanese school and listen to their teacher and study seriously. We appreciate parents for their sincere cooperation in order to make everyone's time worthwhile.

TOY DRIVE

For the Toy Drive, a community project of the city of Gardena during the holiday season last year, we received toys from many JLS and preschool parents. It was very generous and kind of them. Thank you very much to all.



Mr. Kishimoto, GBC & JLS School Board member, did such a great job organizing and taking care of this drive. Thank you, Mr. Kishimoto!

KUSATSU ONSEN (HOT-SPRING RESORT)

Kusatsu Onsen is one of Japan's most famous hot spring resorts and is blessed with large volumes of high quality hot spring water said to cure every illness but lovesickness. Well known as a hot spring resort for many centuries, Kusatsu's fame was further boasted by German doctor Erwin von Baelz, who served at the imperial court in the late 1800s and recommended Kusatsu for its water's health benefits.

Kusatsu is situated at an altitude of 1200 meters above sea level in the mountains of Gunma Prefecture, and offers skiing in winter and hiking during the rest of the year to be enjoyed in combination with hot spring bathing. Kusatsu is also located along Japan's Romantic Road.

Japan-guide.com

<http://www.japan-guide.com/e/e7400.html>

SUMMER SCHOOL NOW ACCEPTING ENROLLMENT

Let's make good use of summer vacation by learning Japanese. The program includes Japanese learning, arts and crafts with summer themes, exercise, cooking, making shaved ice, a field trip and many more fun activities. It is an enriching program and the best chance for your children to review, learn new things and catch up. The registration forms are available at the office.

[Summer School]

- ◆ Daily Class:
June 27 (Mon) - Aug 5 (Fri)
- ◆ Saturday Class:
July 9 (Sat) - July 30 (Sat)

Let's enjoy
Summer with us!



PTC NEWSLETTER

Happy New Year greetings to everyone!! We hope that you all enjoyed the holidays and had a restful winter break. The PTC would like to thank all of the parents that came out to volunteer at our annual mochitsuki. The students, teachers, and parents, alike, ALL had a great time!! There is nothing better to eat than freshly-made mochi!!! We thank everyone for their support. With a successful mochitsuki, we were all able to ring in a wonderful 2016!

The PTC would also like to extend our thanks to Mutual Trading Company and Marukai for their generous contribution and support. And also a big thank you to Mr. Inouye, who took care of the kites and shaved them down for us this year!

With the new semester, the next PTC event will be our spring chicken teriyaki sale, and the Yochien division will be having their annual Undokai event. Please be on the lookout for school notices for further information. The next PTC meeting will be on Saturday, February 6th. We look forward to seeing you all soon.

Nancy Hamasaki, President

CAJLS SEMINAR

On February 13th, the teachers of the language division and Saturday preschool division will attend the annual study seminar held by the California Association of Japanese Language Schools. The key-note speakers are Prof. Kataoka and Prof. Douglas from the CSULB. The study theme is "Curriculum and Lesson Planning Using Backward Design, Part II" We will study effective curriculum design including lesson planning, based on concrete objectives and assessment planning. Due to the seminar, school will be closed on that day.

2016-2017 NEW SCHOOL YEAR ENROLLMENT

Registration for the 2016 - 2017 school year will start. The notice and the re-registration form will be distributed in the classes in april. Please submit the re-registration form to your class teacher, A.S.A.P. The dead-line for the enrollment:

JLS Daily division ... Friday, June 3
JLS Sat. division Saturday, June 4
 * After these dates, \$20 late fee will be charged.

To Preschool 4-year-old parents:

Please note that for the preschoolers who are entering the kindergarden class of the Japanese language division from this fall, the dead line is different.

Deadline - Saturday, May 14

After the dead line, \$100.00 registration fee will be charged for it is treated as a new registration. Please read the detailed information letter that will be distributed in each class at a later time.

SPRING SALE

PTC
FUND-RAISING

- Daily Cookie Sale
Friday, March 18
- Chiken Terriyaki & Cookie Sale
Saturday, March 19

Tickets are available
NOW!





SCHOOL CALENDAR



FEBRUARY

- 8th Mon Lincoln - **School closed**
- 13th Sat CAJLS Seminar - **School closed**
- 15th Mon President Day - **School closed**

MARCH

- 18th Fri PTC Spring Sale (Cookies)
- 19th Sat PTC Spring Sale (Cookies/Teriyaki Chicken)
- 26th Sat Daily & Sat combined Speech Contest

APRIL

- 1st Fri Daily Div. 2nd Trimester Ends
- 2nd Sat Sat Div. 2nd Trimester Ends
- 4~9th M-Sat Spring Break - **School closed**
- 11th Mon Daily Div. 3rd Trimester starts
- 16th Sat Sat Div. 3rd Trimester starts
- 30th Sat Fujimatsuri - **School closed**

* The date of Fujimatsuri has been changed from May 7th.

★ Feb 8th - Regular session for Preschool