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Saying Sayonara to 2010

Bounenkai follows Tunes of Japan event

by Stephanie Smith



Enjoying good food and conversation at Bush Garden.

"Forgetting the year" is what is supposed to happen at Portland's JET Alumni Association annual Bonenkai event held each December, but 2010's extraordinary combination of the "Tunes of Japan" and "Bonenkai" events is not going to be soon forgotten by anyone in attendance. Beginning the evening seated in the lounge, with a lively stage graced by *koto*, *shamisen* and *taiko* players, guests couldn't help but forget their busy schedules and lives outside the doors of the downtown classic, Bush Garden restaurant.

Both JET Alumni and Portland resident musicians entertained the large crowd with their Japanese instruments and collaboration of east-meets-west song list. Within the audience, fresh faces to the JET Alumni community as well as Japanese natives packed the "Closed for a Private Party" house. Guests freely roamed the lounge enjoying drinks, happy hour delights and delicious conversation with the large group of music fans.



Vicki Bridges offers up some tasty meat.

(continued on page 7)

In April,
why not join us at the

Hanamikai



Held together this year with
Sakura Sunday

@ Tom McCall Waterfront Park

Sunday, April 3rd

12:00 to 3:00 pm

(see website for more details)

From the Kaichou...

Kim Miyake

As my presidency comes to an end, I want to thank everyone who has been involved for their help in planning events and making JETAA Portland such a great chapter. I've been involved in some way or another since I returned from JET in 2003 and it's been an important part of my life. I found my first job after JET through JETAA contacts and even met my husband through friends of JETAA. It's been a great way to remember my time spent in Japan as well as make many new connections with the Japanese community in Portland, all the while having a great time.



JETAA Portland
President
Kim Miyake

There are many opportunities to create events that fit our mission as well as your individual interests. Some of our best activities have come out of a personal interest – the Book Club and Tabemashou! are just two examples.

Are there things that you want to do, but need to find others who share the same interest? Joining JETAA Portland is a perfect opportunity to create events and activities that appeal to you. I know there are a lot of you out there who have some great, new ideas and I encourage you to run for a position as an officer or as a committee chairperson for 2011-2012.

If you haven't been involved in JETAA recently you're missing out. It's a great way to relive your time in Japan with people who really know and understand. It's also a great way to network and just have fun. I hope everyone enjoyed this year as much as I did!

Kim

We Need Your Involvement!

Become a JETAA Portland Officer or Committee Chair

We are looking for JETAA members to step up and create new leadership for JETAA Portland. If you've been thinking about getting involved, now's your chance!

The success of our chapter depends on the strength of leadership as well as the involvement of every member of the chapter. We hope you consider an officer or committee chair position in our upcoming elections.

If you are interested in learning about any of the positions, check out our JETAA Elections page for previous platforms, bylaws, and a list of positions (jetaaportland.com/about).

New Returnees: this is a great way to network & meet people! JETAA Portland is not just a social organization but also a network for like-minded people to help each other out. Becoming an officer or committee chair is a great way to become involved in the Japanese community and network in

the Japanese circles that are very hard to find on your own. Many of our members found their jobs through their connections to JETAA & the Japanese community. You could too!

Platforms for Officer Positions accepted between March 1st and March 15th.

Officer Positions: President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer.

If you are interested in running for an officer position, please send your platform to President (president@jetaaportland.com) and Webmaster (webmaster@jetaaportland.com). Make sure to include the following information:

- Full name
- When and where on JET (ex. Hiroshima-ken, 2000-2003)
- A nice picture of yourself
- Your platform stating why you feel you would like to be considered for a JETAA Portland position

JETAA Portland Contacts

Officers:

<i>President</i>	Kimberly Miyake	president@jetaaportland.com
<i>Vice President</i>	Veronica Adversalo	vp@jetaaportland.com
<i>Secretary</i>	Brooke Muetzel	secretary@jetaaportland.com
<i>Treasurer</i>	Beth Schnyder	treasurer@jetaaportland.com
<i>JET Coordinator</i>	Matt Turner	culture@cgjpd.org

Committee Chairs:

<i>Cultural</i>	Amanda Gray	cultural@jetaaportland.com
<i>Community</i>	Stephanie Smith	community@jetaaportland.com
<i>J-Kaiwa</i>	Vicki Bridges, Scott Klein	jkaiwa@jetaaportland.com
<i>Sports</i>	Britt Sexton	sports@jetaaportland.com
<i>Career</i>	Red Gillen	career@jetaaportland.com
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The JETAA Portland Newsletter is published by the Portland Chapter of the JET Alumni Association. Information presented and views expressed herein do not necessarily reflect those of the JET Program, the government of Japan, or any of its entities. For comments and questions please contact the JETAA Portland President. Please direct newsletter comments and submissions to the JETAA Portland Newsletter Editor. Keep up on all current JETAA Portland activities and events by visiting the official website at www.jetaaportland.com.

Mochitsuki 2011

Tickets this year include stage show performances

by Stephanie Smith

Southwest Portland's Scottish Rite Center was the location of the 15th Annual Mochitsuki event to celebrate Japanese New Year traditions right here in Portland. Booths, vendors and community members flooded the historical building throughout the afternoon of Sunday, January 30th, to experience, celebrate and learn more about how the Japanese and Asian-American community celebrate the New Year.



Proudly displaying the fishing rods from the fishing game.

Stage shows presented a variety of live music and dance performers, and story-tellers provided a balance of tradition and modern culture. Mochitsuki classic performers such as Portland's own Portland Taiko shared the stage with newcomers like the energetic acrobatic group, Nanda.

This year's celebration organizers planned for all in attendance to be able to see one of the three stage shows, as event tickets included performance entrance. A wonderful addition to the event!

Food vendors provided the scrumptious smells from the main floor, stirring up Japanese and Asian



Pay no attention to the man next to the curtain - these fish are real!

delights such as curry, sushi and oh so many varieties of mochi, the event's namesake. It was a great treat to see new Japanese restaurants Kale and Shigezo represented with not only staff, but the restaurant owners serving the community their specialties. Mochi was pounded all day by the Utsuki-

kai, letting only the strongest pound the sacred snack.

The Portland JET Alumni Association was asked to provide the community favorite, "Fishing Game," to entertain kids, but more than that, attract parents and adults to their booth highlighting the JET Program by enticing children with candy prizes. This year, more than ever, adults were asking questions about teaching in Japan, sharing a love for Japan and hope for spending time abroad. Several college students' eyes bulged at the idea of going to Japan right after college graduation and being able to combine their love for Japan and getting an entry-level job.

JET Alumni from around the Portland area volunteered at the booth to take shifts taking the small game charge, working the "fishing game," and speaking with interested community members. Benefits from volunteering include event and stage show admission, as well as being able to connect with JET Alumni and share stories of "The Good Ole Days in Japan," while stirring up interest in younger generations of future JET participants.

Look for Mochitsuki 2012 information on the JETAA Portland website in January of next year.



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Tea Ceremony Experience

JETAA members get a taste of the Urasenke tradition

by Veronica Adversalo

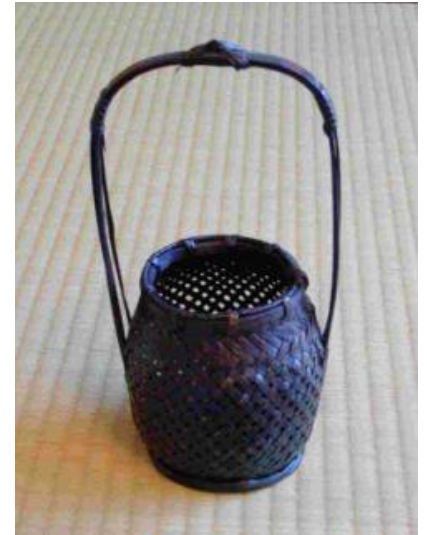
On February 22nd, JETAA members had the opportunity to attend a tea ceremony hosted by Portland's Waikai Tea Association, a local chapter of the *Urasenke* Tradition of Tea in Kyoto, Japan. Dedicated to promoting the history and culture of this Japanese art, Wakai Tea Association hosts authentic and intimate tea ceremonies that are open to the general public through their monthly guest nights.

At this tea gathering, after washing their hands, guests entered a *tatami* tearoom. Inside a *tokonoma* held a bamboo arrangement and a scroll of calligraphy which read "everyday heart is the place for practice." Guests were offered sweets in the form of red bean *yokan* and pressed sugar, before receiving a frothy bowl of *usucha*, or thin tea. A hearth built into the *tatami* floor provided the hot water used to make the tea.

Once they had finished their tea, the guests were invited to view the utensils used in the tea ceremony. Japanese tea ceremonies generally recognizes two seasons, summer and winter, therefore this tea ceremony's utensils were chosen to suggest a sense of warmth. For example, the *chashaku* or tea scoop used in the ceremony was made from a deep, red-colored bamboo.

Wakai Tea Association's guest nights are an excellent way to experience Japanese tea ceremony in Portland. To learn more about Wakai Tea Association or to RSVP for one of their monthly guest nights, visit www.wakaitea.org.

(Editor's note: Sorry, we don't have any pictures from this event.)



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The Intercultural Communication Institute
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We Need Your Involvement!

(continued from page 2)

Last year's JETAA officer platforms are online for reference. View them here: www.jetaaportland.com/general/jetaa-portland-elections-platforms-2010-2/ Voting for officer positions will take place online between March 16th and March 31st. New officers and committee heads will be announced in April.

Committee Chair Interest accepted between March 1st and April 7th. Committee Chair Positions: Social, Newsletter, Website, Career, Cultural, Community Service, Sports and J-Kaiwa.

If you are interested in a committee chair position, please send your interest to President (president@jetaaportland.com) and Webmaster (webmaster@jetaaportland.com). The Committee Chairs will be appointed to their positions by the President-elect, with the approval of a majority of the Officers-elect, before the first scheduled meeting following the conclusion of elections.

Questions? Need more information? If you have any questions or would like more information on officer/committee head positions, please contact President (president@jetaaportland.com) and Webmaster (webmaster@jetaaportland.com).

Book Club Book Review: *The Thousand Autumns of Jacob de Zoet*

David Mitchell's detailed drama set in early 19th century Nagasaki

by Steve Thenell

British author David Mitchell was unfamiliar with the tiny Japanese island of Dejima before stumbling upon it while visiting Nagasaki.

A one-time man-made fan-shaped island built just offshore from the city of Nagasaki and connected by bridge, the island is now fully integrated into the mainland, due to landfill.

Inspired by the island's history he read there, Mitchell took copious notes and tucked them away as an idea for a future novel.

Becoming his fifth book, *The Thousand Autumns of Jacob de Zoet* is set in turn of the century Nagasaki (that is, from the eighteenth to the nineteenth). In that environment, Mitchell gives us a detailed glimpse into the lives of both Dutch traders restricted

to the island of Dejima, as well as the Japanese who live just across the bridge in Nagasaki.

The title character is a new arrival to Nagasaki, coming there to partake in the limited trade allowed out of the country. De Zoet quickly learns that the Japanese are serious about their ban on Christianity, and also sees firsthand that corruption is rampant among traders in this part of the world.

Barely letting us get off the island in Part 1, Part 2 strays from de Zoet's story and gives us an extended look into life on the Japanese side of the bridge.

Throughout, Mitchell provides lush exposition, and glimpses into the lives of the many diverse characters inhabiting this world. We even sometimes learn the backstories of

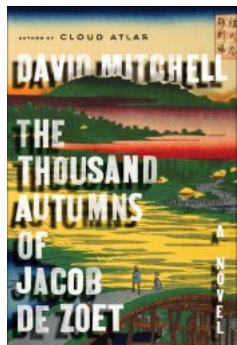
minor characters not mentioned more than a few times. You may find yourself needing a scorecard to keep up with all the players.

Although at times rather disturbing in content, but also sometimes rather pedestrian in its plotting, Mitchell's brilliant writing causes us to overlook any of its shortcomings.

Be warned, though, that this is a difficult book to get into. Mitchell provides excessive, but certainly interesting, detail whenever introducing us to a new location. He refuses to do any handholding, too, requiring the reader to be actively engaged in order to follow the story.

Already receiving many accolades for his writing, including twice being shortlisted for the Man Booker prize, Mitchell is establishing himself as one of the preeminent authors working today.

JETAA Book Club Rating: 本本本本



Life After the B.O.E.

BY DAVID NAMISATO (AOMORI-KEN, CIR. 2002-04)



You can find more of David's comics at www.lifeaftertheboe.com.

Fun with Kanji

by Steve Thenell

Sometimes, all it takes is one simple memory trick, and you can remember something forever.

This is the character meaning face / surface:

面

It's rather complicated, isn't it?

But by the time you get to studying it, you've probably already learned the characters for head and neck:

頭 首

Note the part that they all have in common:

百

Pay attention to this part, and then look at the face character again. You can see that it is made up of this common part, (representing a head) with something attached to each of its sides. If you think of the attached part as the face attached to the head, now you've got a way to visually remember this character.

I bet you can even write it now, too!

Tabemashou!

Restaurant review group drops in on *Ikenohana* and *Miho Izakaya*

by Steve Thenell

The monthly Tabemashou! gatherings are still taking place. Please join us when you can. Here are our reviews of two recent restaurants:

Ikenohana

Located in a Beaverton strip mall, Japanese-owned and run Ikenohana offers a broad menu of typical Japanese fare.

Inside, Ikenohana is reminiscent of a typical, small town Japanese restaurant with wood trim, lantern-style lighting, and Japanese music playing (songs from Ghibli, in our case).

The night we ate there, the small restaurant was packed and the staff seemed well undermanned for the crowd. Getting our waitress to our table consistently took plenty of time.

With their food, Ikenohana is not trying to win any creativity awards. The dishes consistently looked straight out of a typical eatery in Japan. One of our reviewers described the food as "unpretentious, homestyle Japanese fare". Another as "lots of teishoku favorites".



The gyoza at Ikenohana.

Our group sampled quite a variety of menu offerings, including *sashimi*, *gyudon*, a *bento* box, *hamachi kama*, *tempura*, and *tonkatsu*. Favorite dishes among our group were the *gyoza* (pictured) and *agedashi tofu*. The group found the portions to be large and the pricing quite fair for the size.

Overall, Ikenohana seems like a great place to visit when wanting to reexperience the comforts of Japan.

Miho Izakaya

Located in a cute little converted house in North Portland with close access from I-5, Miho Izakaya has a friendly atmosphere. It offers one *tatami* room, which we were able to get easily on a Tuesday night.

As suggested by "izakaya" in the name, Miho Izakaya is not quite a restaurant and not quite a bar. The food is certainly restaurant quality, but served in smaller portions typical of a Japanese *izakaya*. As such, you will probably order in installments, rather than all at once. And that makes this place well-suited for a group wanting to eat family style.

The waitstaff were friendly from the get-go, were always around to take another order, but not pushy or too intrusive. All the dishes we ordered arrived rather quickly.

As for the food, Miho Izakaya is certainly the kind of restaurant where you can't go wrong. The cuisine was essentially Japanese but with a distinct Hawaiian influence. Some of the favorite dishes in our group included the

"loko-moko" burger (a Hawaiian dish including a burger with egg on top), togarashi seared salmon, miso-butter grilled asparagus, firecracker mussels, and sea calamari salad. They even offer a vegan spam musubi. It doesn't taste quite the same, but was very good.

The price structure is very simple. Dishes basically are priced at \$2, \$4, \$6, \$8, or \$10 (or more for specials). Many of good selections are available at the \$4 and \$6 price points.

All the members in our group expressed a willingness to come back. Our group strongly recommends this restaurant.



Togarashi Seared Salmon at Miho Izakaya.

Ikenohana Rating

Menu Selection:



Food Quality:



Service:



Ambience:



Value:



Tabemashou! Overall Rating:



on the web: www.ikenohana.com

Miho Izakaya Rating

Menu Selection:



Food Quality:



Service:



Ambience:



Value:



Tabemashou! Overall Rating:



on the web: www.mihopdx.com

Saying Sayonara to 2010

(continued from page 1)

Once the tunes on the stage ended, guests for the evening's second event found their seat on the tatami mat floor in the dining area of Bush Garden. Tables covered with plates of raw meat and vegetables, guests at the Bonenkai party honed their hashi skills to prepare the main event, the great Sukiyaki spectacular.

Staff at Bush Garden went above and beyond themselves to satisfy every need. So much food was prepared and stewed in a nabe pot for each table of approximately four guests, that doggie-bags were filled for late-night snackers. Well done and *gochisosama deshita* Bush Garden!

Most of the hollering and hooting occurred during the annual "White Elephant Gift Exchange," when the average gift given is a combination of 100yen shop finds and left-over re-gifts from previous years. Several gifts hit the maximum two-steal mark and went home with their third and final receiver. If you plan on attending Bonenkai 2011, don't over-think it, just bring a silly gift that looks as if you got it in Japan. Your real luck will be decided when you draw the number that determines the order in which you will choose a gift.

A deep bow goes to the first-time double-event coordinator Beth Schnyder. She worked many hours to ensure that Portland's legacy event (that she and her husband started) continues and even thrives throughout these trying times. *Arigatou gozaimashita* and *otsukaresama deshita!*



JET Alumnus Sarah Coomber entertains on the koto.



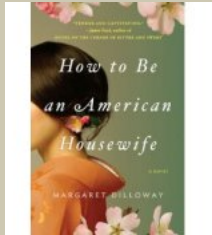
Kouhei Kimura plays the shamisen, accompanied by Yumi Torimaru on taiko.





JETAA Portland
P.O. Box 8772
Portland, OR 97207

Like books? Like tea?
 Us too. Even more so together.
JETAA Book Club



Next meeting:
Sunday, April 17th
 @ Jade Teahouse
 Our next book:
 How to be an American Housewife
 by Margaret Dilloway
 (see website for more details)

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 Japanese getting rusty?

Join us at the next **J-Kaiwa**
Fri 3/4 @ Lucky Lab Brew Pub (on Hawthorne)
7:00PM - 9:30 PM

Would you like to contribute
 to the next newsletter?
 All contributions are welcome:
 articles, essays, art, comics,...



write to us at
newsletter@jetaaportland.com

Upcoming Events

(JETAA Portland-run events are in **bold**)
 (visit www.jetaaportland.com for more details)

- 3/1-3/15 JETAA Portland Officer Candidates' Platforms Accepted**
- Fri 3/4 J-Kaiwa @ Lucky Lab (on Hawthorne), 7:00 PM**
- 3/5-3/6 Bamboo Fence Building Workshop @ Japanese Garden
- Tue 3/8 Tabemashou! - Miho Izakaya, 6:00 PM**
- Sun 3/13 JETAA Book Club @ Jade Teahouse, 1:00 PM**
Book: "Norwegian Wood" by Haruki Murakami
- Wed 3/16 Noh and Kyogen Plays @ PSU, 7:00 PM
- Mon 3/28 Volunteer Orientation @ Japanese Garden, 10:30 AM
- 3/16-3/31 JETAA Portland Officer Elections**
- Thu 3/31 Film Screening: "Miracle Banana" @ PSU, 7:00 PM
- Fri 4/1 J-Kaiwa @ Lucky Lab (on Hawthorne), 7:00 PM**
- Sun 4/3 Hanamikai @ Sakura Sunday**
- Tue 4/12 Tabemashou! - Bara Sushi House, 6:00 PM**
- Wed 4/13 Ronin Club Career Event @ Deschutes Brewery, 6:00 PM**
- Sun 4/17 JETAA Book Club @ Jade Teahouse, 1:00 PM**
Book: "How to be an American Housewife"
by Margaret Dilloway
- Fri 5/6 J-Kaiwa @ Lucky Lab (on Hawthorne), 7:00 PM**