



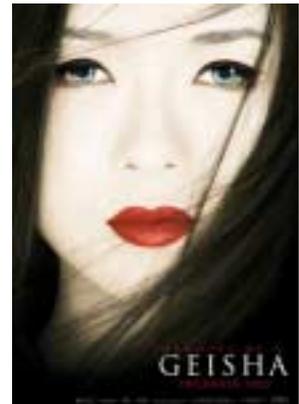
**Japanese Language Center**  
6011 152nd Ave. SE, Bellevue, WA 98006  
Phone: 425-891-2129 Fax: 1-612-241-9652  
Email: info@japanese-language.net  
Website: http://www.japanese-language.net/

# J L C 通信

Japanese Language Center (つうしん)  
Newsletter February 2006

## \* 文化 (ぶんか) \* Culture 芸者 (げいしゃ) Geisha

**Geisha** are not prostitutes. Because they entertain men behind closed doors in an exclusive manner, there has been much speculation about the underpinnings of their profession. The confusion that surrounds this issue has been complicated by Japanese prostitutes who wish to co-opt the prestige of the geisha image, and by inaccurate depictions of geisha in Western popular culture. Although an individual geisha may choose to engage in sexual relations with one of her patrons outside of the context of her role as geisha, traditional and codified geisha engagements will never involve sexual activity.



Traditionally the major income for a Geisha was by taking a **Danna** (an old fashioned word for husband) or patron, which is typically a wealthy man who has the means to support the very large expenses related to arts training and living of the Geisha, and in turn would attain a more intimate long running affair with the Geisha. Although a geisha may fall in love with her danna, the affair is customarily contingent upon the danna's ability to financially support her lessons and performing costs. The traditional conventions and values within such a relationship are very intricate and not well understood, even by many Japanese. Because of this, the true intimate role of the geisha remains the object of much speculation, and often misinterpretation, in Japan as well as abroad.



**Okiya** (Geisha houses) sometimes took in young girls from poor families and took responsibility for raising and training them. During their childhood, apprentice geisha, called maiko, worked first as maids, then as assistants to the house's senior geisha as part of their training and to contribute to the costs of their upkeep and education. This long-held tradition of training still exists in other traditions in Japan, where a student lives at the home of a master of some art, starting out doing general housework and observing and assisting the master, and eventually moving up to become a master

in her own right. The Flower and Willow world is one of the rare areas of Japan where women hold all the power, mostly the men in the Geisha world are dressers, wig makers and other artisans. Most of the businesses particularly the tea houses and Okiya are run and serviced by women, and it is a reverse situation to the rest of Japan where women children are preferred since they can be enveloped into the business.

Geisha take lessons in several arts forms for their entire lives, not to entertain customers but as a lifetime vocation in and of itself. The course of arts study encompasses a wide variety of arts, including the shamisen (3 stringed instrument), percussion, flute, singing, dance, tea ceremony, **Ikebana** (flower arranging), poetry, and literature. In addition, by watching and assisting senior geisha, the students also become skilled in the complex traditions surrounding selecting, matching, and wearing precious kimono, in various games and the art of conversation, and in dealing with clients. Geisha are often hired to attend parties and gatherings, traditionally at **Ochaya** (tea houses) or at **Ryotei** (traditional Japanese restaurants).

## \* 諺 (ことわざ) \* Proverb 「痘痕も笑窪」 (あばたもえくぼ) Abata mo ekubo.

Love is blind. Pimples look like dimples. If you become calm down, it's easy to find the truth, but when you are in love, your judgement often makes mistake.

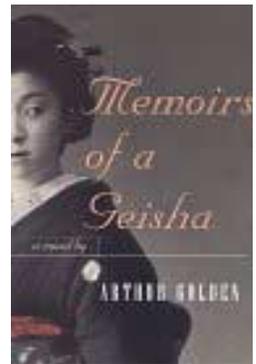
❁ 歌舞伎 (かぶき) ❁ Kabuki

番町皿屋敷 (ばんちょうさらやしき) Bancho Sarayashiki **A tested love**

The year is 1655, the place is Edo (Tokyo), and it is the cherry blossom season. Aoyama Harima is a member of the Shiratsuka Group, an elite band of young vassals of Shogun Tokugawa Ietsuna (1641-1680). He leads a rambunctious, flamboyant life and is quarreling every day with a group of chivalrous gangsters in town. Harima has secretly fallen deeply in love with Okiku. He is Okiku's very first lover, and she is as much in love with him as he is with her. They promise each other that they will be married.

One day Harima receives a proposal of marriage by way of his aunt. Knowing this, Okiku gets carried away by her imagination and cannot sit still. Wild fantasies, one after another, occur to her. In order to ascertain Harima's true mind, she finally breaks one of ten precious plates, heirlooms that have been handed down through many generations of the Aoyama family.

In those days, whoever broke such an heirloom, whether on purpose or by mistake, would be beheaded without fail. Yet Okiku dared to commit just such an unpardonable act. Consequently, the whole house is thrown into great confusion. When Harima first hears of the incident and is told that Okiku has mistakenly broken a plate, he pardons her. Vowing that his love towards her hasn't change in the least, he insists that she is his only sweetheart. Later, however, when he comes to know all the facts, and she has confessed directly to him, his mind suddenly changes. He flies into a rage and castigates her, saying, "You may be satisfied to have confirmed my devotion, but I am chagrined that you suspected the purity of my heart." Finally, he breaks the nine remaining plates, kills her, and throws the body down a well. (Jeff Blair)



❁ 本 (ほん) ❁ Book **Memoirs of a Geisha** by Arthur Golden

For many this is the point at which they discover the world of Geisha. Arthur Golden has written a wonderful story, though some attribute it to the memoirs or a now rather annoyed retired Geisha (see *Geisha: A Life* by Mineko Iwasaki). The story is captivating and even has some historical truths about it, but to own the truth this book really irritates me. The tale of a past era, Sayuri's story is one of slavery and bondage; sold to an **Okiya** and forced to pay for her own freedom. This book has given many people the wrong idea of the Geisha life and sees the Japanese people as barbaric in a sense. Combined with an ending that makes me grit my teeth I consider this book a good read \*if\* taken with a grain of salt.

❁ 先生の紹介 (せんせいのしょうかい) ❁ Instructor of JLC

Junko, a Japanese native, has been teaching and translating Japanese in the United States for more than fifteen years. She is a former Professor of Japanese Language in the Modern Language Department at Morehouse College. Morehouse College students received the first/second prizes at the Japanese Speech Contest sponsored by the Japanese Consulate General and the Japanese American Society every year during her tenure at Morehouse College.

Junko was also an instructor of the nationally televised Georgia Public Broadcasting Japanese language program for 5 years. Her teaching method and skill are unique and outstanding. Her instruction has won high praise and trust among her students and peers. She has presented at international conferences as a guest speaker on Asian Studies and provided translation and corporate training to various companies doing business in the United States and Japan.



❁ レストラン ❁ Restaurant **いづみ Izumi**

Their food is really authentic and service is good. Their lunchtime bento box is excellent. I like the traditional way of serving, with steaming hot tea brought to your table as soon as you sit down by a kimono clad waitress, (A) Mon-Thu 11:30-1:30pm, 5-9pm Fri 11:30-1:30pm, 5-9:30pm Sat 5-9:30pm Sun 4:30-9pm

12539 116<sup>th</sup> Ave NE, Kirkland, WA 98034 ☎ (425) 821-1959

## 📅 コーススケジュール 📅 Course Schedule

All classes listed on the schedule of our website have space available. We will close enrollment and remove the class from the list when a course becomes full. Please sign up early. To enroll in the class you have to complete your registration and payment \$220 no later than 72 hours before the first class of each course. We don't accept payment for enrollment on the first day of the course.

Courses with less than 4 registrants will be transferred from the regular group course to the Special Offered Course automatically. The Special Offered Course provides 5 private lessons or 6 semi-private lessons with the same tuition that you paid for group course. Depending upon the skill level and number of students class may be combined.

The schedule may change without notice, so please visit the website for the updated schedule, <http://www.japanese-language.net/schedule.htm>.

### Japanese Language Center

6011 152<sup>nd</sup> Ave. SE, Bellevue, WA 98006 Phone: 425-891-2129

Course	Day	Time		Term
		Start	End	
JPN 101	Mon	7:10	9:00	3/6
JPN 101	Sat	11:10	1:00	2/25
JPN 102	Wed	7:10	9:00	2/15
JPN 103/104	Wed	7:10	9:00	2/15
JPN 201/202	Sun	9:10	11:00	3/19
JPN 203/204	Sat	9:10	11:00	3/11
JPN 301/302	Fri	7:10	9:00	2/24
JPN 303/304	Sun	9:10	11:00	3/19
Teens 101	Fri	4:40	6:30	2/3
Teens 102	Sun	11:10	1:00	2/3
Teens 200	Wed	4:40	6:30	3/1
Teens 300	Mon	4:40	6:30	2/6

## \* 日記 (につき) \* Diary of JLC students

### 平成十八年一月十二日 (木) 雨

今晚、兄とサミットさんと一緒に「前川」で晩御飯を食べた。前川は超安くて、おいしい和食のレストランだ。シアトルのうわじまやの近くのビルの二階にある。僕は食べに行く前に僕の彼女と電話で話した。その時、ちょうど彼女の昼休みで、彼女がラーメンを食べていたので、僕もラーメンを食べることにした。前川のラーメンは、前東京で食べたみそラーメンほどおいしくなかった。腹がへったのでたこやきや、やきなすや、やきおにぎりや、いろいろなものを食べた。三人でも高くなかった。晩御飯の後で兄の新しいアパートの近くのコーヒーショップへ行った。私はそこから仕事に戻って、二時まで働いた。時差ぼけが大変だったよ。(D)

### 平成十八年一月十三日 (金) 雨

仕事が終わった！土日の休みがよかった。今晚スカイプの IP 電話で日本の彼女と話した。日本ではもう午後一時だけど、彼女は風邪を引いてまだ寝ていた。明日の晩、僕は兄と僕の同僚と七人くらいでポーカーをする。最後にポーカーをしたのは一ヶ月間位前だった。ズーと長い間、たぶん七時間くらいしていた。終わった時には僕がかったけど、今回はどうかなあ～。日曜日にそうじをして、ちょっと卒論を書いて、それから本を読むつもりだ。(D)

### 1月14日

毎日雨が降っているので、私はだんだん憂鬱になってきた。その上、仕事が多過ぎて、遊ぶこともできない。いつも会議に出席しなければならないようだ。なんでこんな仕事を選んだのかな。もうすぐ辞めるよ！けれど、この仕事にはひとついいことがある。夏になると、三ヶ月の休みがある。冬休みもある。

私はこの冬休み家族と船でメキシコを訪ねた。両親の特別の記念日だったので、両親はこの旅行をみんなにプレゼントしてくれた。船はマイアミから出た。最初に止まったところはキーウエストだった。そこは作家として有名なヘミングウェイが住んでいたところだ。次は、メキシコに着いた。そこでは古いマヤの建物を訪ねて、海で泳いだ。弟はスペイン語がペラペラなので会話には何の問題もなかった。

船の中ではいろいろ遊ぶことがあった。私はギャンブルをしたり、飲んだり、買い物をしたりした。妹はビンゴをやって、アラスカのクルーズを当てた。妹は運がいいと思う。(B)





\* **短歌 (たんか)** \* **Poem from Midaregami (Tangled Hair)**

Yosano Akiko in her *Midaregami* expressed the sexuality of women's bodies without hesitation. Women's bodies had been considered reproductive machinery, possessed by families and husbands. The ideas of womanhood and femininity had been defined by society, but Akiko recreated them and expressed them in the world of Tanka poetry.

The flood of emotion and overwhelming feelings of love are expressed through hair. The movement of hair was used as a perfect means of expressing such feelings as anger, frustration, confusion, and jealousy that were caused by romantic relationships with men. While using a traditional poetic image of hair, she exposes the vivid emotion of realistic woman. Her poetic creativity is revolutionary; Akiko instills female selfhood in the framework of traditional poetry. Her works combine the physical beauty of Western painting and the erotic beauty of traditional Japan. While she breaks conventional poetic taboos, she maintains the values of the traditional poetic world. The mixture of Western and Eastern images makes her poetry novel and uniquely romantic.

「黒髪の手筋の髪のかくれ髪 かつ思ひ乱れ思ひ乱るる」  
(*Kurokami no sensuji no kamino midaregami katsuomoi midare omoi midaruru*)

A thousand lines  
Of black black hair  
All tangles, tangles --  
And tangles too  
My thoughts of love!



Izumi Shikibu, a poet from 11th century, also presents an emotional hair image.

「黒髪のかくれも知らずうちふせば まづかきやりし人ぞ恋ひしき」  
(*Kurokami no midaremo shirazu uchifuseba mazukakiyarishi hitozo koishiki*)

My black hair tangled  
As my own tangled thoughts,  
I lie here alone,  
Dreaming of one who has gone,  
Who stroked my hair till it shone.



\* **おしらせ** \* **Remarks**

- Lesson fees for Group Lessons are \$220, however an early registration with payment by check/cash before your present course ends can get \$7 discount.
- Please bring your friends to JLC. Any referrals signing up for a class results in a 20% discount of your next block of lessons.
- JLC supports a Japanese Language conversation group in the community and JLC's instructor Junko is the organizer of **Bellevue-Factoria Japanese Language Meetup**. The regular monthly meet up session is on the second Tuesday at the Bellevue region Library. Our monthly Field Trip is on the fourth Tuesday. Please visit the website, <http://japanese.meetup.com/17> for more information.



あいうえおかきくけこさしすせそたちつとせにぬのほひへふぶねのめもやゆよりるろわんあいうえおかきくけこさしすせそたちつとせぬのほひへふぶねのめもやゆよりるろわんあいうえおかきくけこ



**日本語センター (JLC)**  
住所: 6011 152<sup>nd</sup> Ave. SE, Bellevue, WA 98006  
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メール: <http://www.japanese-language.net>  
ウェブ: <mailto:info@japanese-language.net>

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