

# Japanese Culture Program

## No.8

The Center for International Education has conducted Japanese culture classes since 2003 to offer international students the chance to experience traditional Japanese culture and to deepen their understanding of Japan. These programs are also open to Japanese students, and so it is our hope that both Japanese and international students will benefit from this mutual exchange and acquire a global perspective through experiencing traditional Japanese culture together.

しよどうぎょうしつ  
書道教室

*Shodo Class*



いばなきょうしつ  
生け花教室

*Ikebana Class*



きょうしつ  
きもの教室

*Kimono-Wearing Class*



In this globalized world, it is essential for us to live together with people all over the world beyond the differences of language and culture. We, the Center for International Education, are here to help both international students and Japanese students communicate with each other and understand the others culture and language.

This program is designed not only for obtaining the knowledge of Japanese culture but also learning it through personal experience. Students clubs of Ochanomizu University also join the program so that international students and Japanese students are able to have an opportunity for cultural exchange. We hope it helps students to understand cultural differences, and provides an opportunity to work together over the differences of language and culture.

This booklet introduces activities that we have held in this program. Everyone is welcome. We look forward to seeing you in the class.

## Ikebana Class

Ikebana, also known as *kado* (the way of flowers), is the traditional Japanese art of flower arranging. Ikebana started to flourish in the sixteenth century, and the fundamental concept is to express the three elements of heaven, earth, and humankind in a balanced composition using natural flowers. The way of arranging flowers differs depending on the school of Ikebana.

The Ikebana Class has been held at the Center for International Education since 2004. The class is very popular among students, who can learn basic arranging with seasonal flowers and enjoy seeing advanced arrangements designed by the instructor.



### Ikebana Instructor

**Ms. Fusako Akaike**

First class grand master of Ikebana, Ryuka style

Ohara School of Ikebana

Ms. Akaike started learning Ikebana forty-five years ago from her mother-in-law, a grand master of Ikebana. She has taught Ikebana for many years, including at the Ikebana Club of Ochanomizu University. In her free time she enjoys traveling, reading, and doing *chigirie* (torn paper collage art).

### ★Interview with the Instructor

Q : What do you find fascinating about Ikebana ?

A : Ikebana can express the beauty of harmony and contrast of different colors. It can also create space using seasonal flowers and your imagination.

Q : From your point of view, what is the importance of introducing Japanese culture to international students ?

A : Through this class, I hope the students can learn some things about Ikebana that they can talk about when they return to their home countries.

Q : What do you think of the students' flower arrangements ?

A : When I first saw the students' arrangements, I felt that they had a sense for flower arranging. They arranged the flowers very nicely even though it was probably the first time for most of them.

Q : What is the impression of the students ?

A : They seem to enjoy arranging flowers very much. I am very happy to see that.

Q : What do you find difficult about teaching Ikebana ?

A : It is not easy to help them understand the spirit of Ikebana in only one lesson. But I hope that students will learn not only arranging skills but also feel something about the spirit.

Q : What do you find interesting about teaching Ikebana ?

A : I'm impressed with the uniqueness of the students' arrangements.

Q : What is most appealing thing about this class ?

A : Talking with people from different cultural backgrounds.

Q : Do you have any new ideas for the Ikebana Class in the future ?

A : It would be interesting to prepare various flower arrangement materials and let students arrange them anyway they like. Also, giving comments on arrangement to each other in class would be a good inspiration.

Q : Please let us know if you have any recommendations on publications and Web sites.

A : Publications ● *Umeno Ikebana Ohara-ryu Ikebana Soshu 4*: Ohara-ryu Publications

● *Ohara-ryu Ikebana Kihon Manual*: Ohara-ryu Publications

● *Soka* (monthly publication)

● *Kikyo* (bimonthly publication)

Web sites

● Ohara School of Ikebana: <http://www.ohararyu.or.jp/>

● Minna no Ikebana (Ikebana for Everyone): <http://www.minnanoikebana.com>

## A Look at the Class



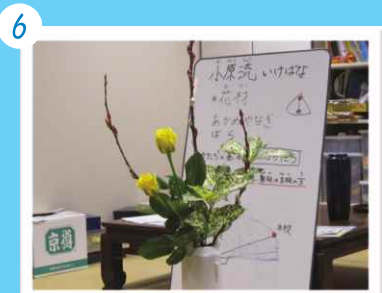
1 The instructor gives a brief explanation about ikebana.



2 Let's start to arrange flowers with the instructor.



3 The instructor helps students to arrange flowers.



6 The teacher puts theory into practice at the end.



5 Students also tried the 'inclining form'.



4 'Rising form' arrangements completed.

## Comments from participants



I learnt the beauty of flower arranging at this event. If there is another opportunity, I would definitely like to participate again.



After I tried it myself, I was able to observe the teacher arranging the flowers, which was very interesting and it helped me review what I had learnt so far. Thank you very much.



## Kimono-Wearing Class

The kimono's form has not changed for several hundred years, and it has lost almost all of its use as daily wear. However, the traditional beauty of kimonos has recently been re-evaluated in Japan, and kimonos have become popular among young people.

The Kimono-Wearing Class has been held at the Center for International Class Education since 2005. By learning how to wear a Nagoya-obi (a simple type of sash) and a yukata in the spring semester, and a Nagoya-obi and a kimono in the autumn semester, students were able to experience Japanese traditional culture. The Kimono-Wearing Class is so popular among both Japanese and international students that it is always filled with liveliness and smiles.



### Kimono Instructor

**Ms. Keiko Gabe**

Head Instructor of Keiko Gabe Kimono school

Kimono consultant

Instructor of the Kimono-Wearing Club at Ochanomizu University.

A graduate of Ochanomizu University

Studied at Sodo Kimono School

Ms. Gabe has been working with kimonos for more than thirty years, including teaching kimono-wearing classes and working as a professional kimono fitter for weddings and other special ceremonies such as Shichi-Go-San (a festival day for children aged three, five, and seven). Her hobbies include singing songs and writing haiku (a Japanese poem of seventeen syllables arranged in a 5-7-5 pattern).

### ★Interview with the Instructor

Q : Why did you decide to learn about the kimono ?

A : The first reason was simple. I wanted to be able to put on a kimono by myself. While learning, I was getting more interested in wearing and instructing. Various types of kimonos also inspired me to learn more.

Q : What do you find attractive about kimonos ?

A : Kimonos express a Japanese sense of aesthetics.

Q : Do you have any funny stories about kimono-wearing classes ?

A : A few years ago, a pretty student said that she was going out after the lesson wearing a kimono, so I asked her if she had any *geta* (Japanese wooden footwear usually worn with a kimono). She said her short boots would go well with a kimono. If I had known her plan from the beginning, I could have shown her an innovative and popular way to wear a kimono with boots.

Q : What do you find difficult or interesting about teaching kimono wearing ?

A : Nowadays, young people seem a bit clumsy with kimonos, so I have to teach each point over and over. But I feel happy when my students make an effort and get better at putting on a kimono and handling the string fasteners. It is a lot of fun to find out what young people think and how they feel; I am surprised, impressed, and sometimes flabbergasted.

Q : Do you have any new ideas for the Kimono-Wearing Class in the future ?

A : I would like to compare kimonos with traditional Korean garments in order to find commonality between them. I am also interested in teaching in English and discovering an easier way to put on a kimono.

Q : Do you have a special message for students at Ochanomizu University ?

A : I think many students here are diligent as they establish a goal and make a continual effort towards it. I would say that "steady-going" is one of ethos of this school, and this is of particular value nowadays. Even in a world changing incredibly quickly, you can find your own way if you deeply consider what kind of life you want and make an effort towards your future.

## A Look at the Class



1 First, students learn about the history of kimono.



2 The instructor teaches how to lace up an obi; then students try doing it.



3 The instructor helps to fit the difficult parts.



6 Learning how to bow and move.



5 Dressed at last!



4 A finished obi.

## Comments from participants



I was very happy to wear a Yukata (light cotton Kimono for the summer) for the first time. I had a good time and I learned a lot about the Japanese culture. I am very thankful to my instructor for teaching us so well.



It was fun learning how to put on a Kimono while drinking green tea and listening to information about it.



I learned how to put on a Yukata, so next time I would like to try dressing myself. Unlike western-style clothes, wearing a Yukata gives you the feeling of "elegance".



## Shodo Class

Shodo (calligraphy) is a form of artistic writing involving the use of a brush and India ink. Originally from China, this aspect of culture developed in Japan to incorporate a combination of *kanji* (Chinese characters) and *kana* (Japanese syllabic characters). Although writing brushes are not used in daily life, people in Japan become familiar with calligraphy from classes in elementary school, culture clubs and the like.

Calligraphy classes have been held at the Center for International Education since the autumn semester of 2003. In addition to the basic practice, in the first semester we wrote on shikishi (fancy square boards used for calligraphy) and in the second semester we are also trying our hand at writing *kakizome* (the first calligraphy of the year) on long paper.



### Shodo Instructor

**Ms. Mika Akagi**

Certified calligraphy instructor for high school

Ms. Akagi was 5 years old when she was inspired by her aunt - a Shodo teacher - to start calligraphy. She is a qualified Shodo master and teaches at the Center for International Education. She enjoys both playing and listening to classical music as a hobby, and is a keen food enthusiast.

### ★Interview with the Instructor

Q : What's the most fascinating thing about Shodo ?

A : It's focusing on and writing characters with great attention to detail, like you might do when making an intricate model of something.

Q : Why do you think it's important to introduce Japanese culture to students from other countries ?

A : Experiencing Japanese culture through Shodo gives students perspective and depth to understand the culture in which they grew up.

Q : What do you think of the students' calligraphy ?

A : They all follow the basic points, and their work has a very relaxed air.

Q : What's your impression of the students ?

A : They write in the same way as they do their research. They first come to understand the meanings of the characters, and then they start writing. I think Shodo and academic research are similar in a way.

Q : What do you find difficult about teaching calligraphy ?

A : It's really hard to maintain the right posture and breathe properly when you write to create beautiful work.

Q : What's the most interesting thing about calligraphy ?

A : I like the fact that the way Chinese characters are received differs by country, and the choice of themes is very novel and fresh.

Q : What's the most appealing thing about this class ?

A : Students can talk about characters with others on an international platform based on their own work.

Q : Do you have any ideas for Shodo class development in the future ?

A : I want to try Rinsho, which involves following well-known classic writings. Writing characters on T-shirts might also be an interesting direction to take.

Q : Do you have any favorite calligraphy books or websites ?

A : I like Souun Takeda, a famous Japanese calligrapher who brings Shodo into daily life.

(<https://www.souun.net/>)



## A Look at the Class

1



The teacher demonstrates how to use a calligraphy brush.

2



Students practice basic strokes on Japanese writing paper.

3



Write characters or words you like in line with the teacher's advice.

6



This is a copying exercise.

5



We practiced a lot.

4



Students work so seriously!

## Comments from participants



Today was really fun and interesting. I like this lesson because my mind is at peace when I practice calligraphy.



It was a nice feeling to use a brush after a long time. I am not good at it, but the process of writing letters made calmed my mind.



## Sado Class

Sado (Japanese tea ceremony) is a path to mastering etiquette through the serving of tea. Often described as a “composite art form,” tea ceremony is a profound world that combines architecture, crafts, *ikebana*, and cooking. There are 42 tea ceremony schools including the Omotosenke school, but the school with the most number of students is the Urasenke school. A tea ceremony class was started at the Center for International Education in 2011, with cooperation from the Urasenke Tea Ceremony Department of Ochanomizu University. The classes are held in a traditional teahouse in a Japanese garden, and have received high praise for providing students with the opportunity to experience authentic tea ceremony.



### Sado Instructor

**Ms. Keiko Yoshida**

Head Instructor of Urasenke style

Influenced by her grandmother and mother, Ms. Yoshida got interested in the depth of Sado and started learning it almost sixteen years ago. She enjoys reading and watching movies as her hobbies.

### ★Interview with the Instructor

Q : What do you find fascinating about sado ?

A : Sado is a Japanese composite art. Through learning sado, we also learn the better way of living.

Q : What is most appealing thing about this class ?

A : It is valuable to learn sado, but it is not easy in a short time to understand meanings of every movement in sado. I hope we will have another opportunity to lean depths of sado.

Q : What is your memorable story from teaching sado ?

A : The main act of sado is boiling water and making tea, though it's all based on rationality and insight in a scientific way. There is a story Einstein was impressed by the wisdom of sado. I felt proud of it.

Q : Please let us know if you have any recommendations of publications, Web sites and classes.

A : Web sites : Urasenke Konnichian <http://www.urasenke.or.jp/index2.html>

### ★Interview with an assistant, Japanese student who is a vice president of Sado club

Q : What do you find difficult about teaching sado ?

A : How to tell the meanings of words and movement which are unfamiliar even to Japanese.

Q : What do you find interesting about teaching sado ?

A : I was glad to see everyone enjoying making tea.

Q : What did you think of the class ?

A : We believe participants could learn the beauty of sado in this class.



## A Look at the Class



The instructor gives an explanation about *Kakejiku* and *Ikebana*.



A rare opportunity to see hidden aspects of the tea.



The teacher explains as the club leader performs the tea ceremony.



All satisfied with delicious tea.



Making tea by themselves.



Enjoying tea with manners.

## Comments from participants



All the tools that we used to make the tea were very beautiful. The teacher's and the assistant's gestures and way of walking were also lovely. Moreover, I found the tea and sweets so delicious and very interesting.



I was able to drink dark green tea for the first time and it was a wonderful experience. The teacher kindly explained a lot to us and I learned a lot.



Studying the tea culture and the tea ceremony made me learn various details. I think it is beautiful.



## Furoshiki Class

Used for wrapping or carrying things, *furoshiki* (wrapping cloths) were once indispensable in the lives of ordinary people in Japan. In contemporary Japan, they are becoming popular again as part of a Japanese culture boom in which the Japanese are taking a fresh look at their traditions. In the furoshiki class at the Center for International Education students can learn about the charms of the furoshiki, not only by studying how to use them for Japanese-style wrapping, but also by becoming acquainted with their history and tradition.



### Furoshiki Instructor

**Ms. Eiko Nakagawa**

Member of the Furoshiki Study Group.

As a consumer lifestyle consultant and a teacher of etiquette, Ms. Nakagawa conveys the possibilities of furoshiki in helping the lifestyle of future generations, by learning about its history and traditions. Interests: Japanese folk dance, *ikebana*, piano, gardening.

### ★Interview with the instructor

Q : How did your interest in furoshiki begin ?

A : From a young age, I was attracted to furoshiki wrapping, which seemed gentle yet strong. Once I saw my grandmother's casual gestures as she was wrapping something, and I felt that furoshiki embodies the hidden and precious inner feelings of Japanese people.

Q : How would you sum up the charm of furoshiki ?

A : Furoshiki embodies the diversity, spirituality and artistic nature of Japanese culture. Through the actions of using our hands to wrap and tie the cloth, it also teaches us the pleasure of creating.

Q : What is the attraction of these culture classes ?

A : Through both lectures and practical learning, they provide a great opportunity for international students to experience and share a part of Japanese culture.

Q : What aspect of furoshiki did you find difficult to teach ?

A : How to tie a reef knot. But I think this is something I find with most of the younger generation in Japan too, who don't have much experience with this kind of tying. However, the international students at Ochanomizu University pick it up quite quickly.

Q : What did you find interesting ?

A : Listening to those enthusiastic questions that only people with an understanding of the basics could ask, as well as the wonderful opinions and feedback.

Q : Could you mention any unforgettable episodes in the classes you have taught ?

A : At a lecture I gave at a university, one of the international students said she would like to give me the scarf she was wearing as a present. She said to me, "In my country we also have this culture of cloth, but I never took much interest in it. Thanks to furoshiki, I've not only learned about Japanese culture, but have also been stimulated to think about my own country. Thank you so much."

Q : How would you rate the furoshiki wrappings made by the students ?

A : They were all very enthusiastic, and each wrapping was both unique and beautiful.

Q : What would you like to try out in this culture class in the future ?

A : I am thinking of giving the participating students a questionnaire about their own awareness or awareness at their university regarding Japanese furoshiki. If we could exchange information based on the results of this survey, we could further improve the contents of the lectures.

Q : Could you recommend any books or websites about furoshiki ?

A : I can recommend the books *Furoshiki ni shitashimu* ("Getting to know furoshiki"), *Furoshiki jiyujizai* ("Furoshiki at will"), and *Gift Wrapping with Textiles*.

## A Look at the Class



1 Learning about the history and tradition of furoshiki, and the Chinese character 包み (“wrap”)



2 The teacher clearly explains how to tie a simple knot and a reef knot.



3 Thinking about how to make use of furoshiki in a natural disaster.



6 Complete!

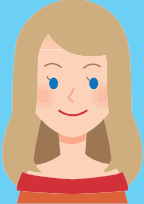


5 Wrapping a wine bottle like putting a kimono on it.



4 Let's try wrapping a gift.

## Comments from participants



I think it's a profound culture. As we live in an era of over-wrapping, I believe it is better to reconsider using wrapping cloth, as furoshiki is environmentally friendly.



In the lecture, we learned the historical background of Furoshiki as well as some recent information about it. The experience was really fun and I got to learn about Japanese culture.



## Kabuki Appreciation Class (Traditional Japanese Dance-Drama)

Kabuki is one of the main traditional Japanese theater forms. It is said to have begun around 1603 when Okuni, a shrine maiden of the Grand Shrine of Izumo, performed *Nenbutsu odori* (Buddhist folk dances) in Kyoto.

Ochanomizu University offers international students an opportunity to go on a field trip to see a Kabuki performance at the National Theater of Japan every year in June. In order to better prepare students for the Kabuki performance, the Center for International Education offers a special class. The Kabuki Class is an introductory seminar on the history of Kabuki and ways to enjoy the performances. In the class students gain a deeper understanding of the program, characters, and story.

The Kabuki Class is always popular since it is open to all students. Even if students miss the field trip to the National Theater, the seminar is still a great chance to learn about Kabuki.



## Origami Class (The Art of Paper Folding)

Origami, the Japanese art of folding paper into decorative shapes, is a traditional Japanese pastime. With origami, you can make various figures such as animals, flowers, and even household goods. Origami paper comes in a variety in sizes, prints, and materials, and it gives people enjoyment to create figures using the characteristics of each kind of paper.

In the Origami Class at the Center for International Education, students have made chopstick envelopes, animation characters, seasonal greeting cards, and so on. It is a good opportunity to try making wonderful paper crafts using your creativity.



## Comments from participants



The pieces we made of were very beautiful. It made me feel better just by looking at it. Even while we were folding, it was enjoyable and amusing.

## Assistance for the Japanese Culture Classes

Japanese culture classes are held with the support not only of the teachers who are leading the classes, but many others as well. The ikebana class is supported by members of the flower arrangement club, the kimono-wearing class by members of the kimono-wearing club, the tea ceremony class by members of the Urasenke tea ceremony club, and the koto class by the members of the koto music club. These individuals help prepare the necessary materials for the class and support the teachers.

## Koto Class

The koto is a traditional Japanese musical instrument that came to Japan more than 1,000 years ago from China, was adapted, and developed into something uniquely Japanese. It is mentioned in *The Tale of Genji* and other ancient literary works. The styles of koto playing are divided into the Ikuta-ryu school and the Yamada-ryu school, and the shape of the pick and way of playing are different.

The koto class began at the Center for International Education in the second semester of the 2015 school year. The members of the koto music club performed “Hiyaku,” “Sandan no shirabe,” and other tunes and everyone played “Sakura” together.



## Comments from participants

It was my first time seeing a Koto. It was very interesting, but it was difficult to play. I am glad I participated though. I hope I get the chance to try playing the Koto again :) Thank you very much!



## Noh theater Class

Noh is a traditional Japanese performing art and one of the world's oldest theatrical arts, with a history going back about 650 years. In 2001, Noh theater was listed by UNESCO as an Intangible Cultural Heritage. This ancient performing art, loved by many military commanders and generals in the Sengoku period (c. 1467-c.1603), is also highly admired overseas. At the Center for International Education, a new Noh class was started in the second half of the 2017 academic year. The Center invited a Noh actor of the Hoshō school to teach the class, and the students practiced the play *Takasago*, which is performed on auspicious occasions, and learned the dance that forms the basic moves of Noh performance.



## Comments from participants

We experienced Noh chants as well as the movements. It was very interesting. The teacher introduced the history of Noh Theater, costumes and props as well. I'm glad I learned a lot.



## Foreign language classes taught by native speakers

There are about 240 international students enrolled at Ochanomizu University. Foreign language classes taught by native speakers have been held at the Center for International Education in the first and second halves of the academic year since 2002 with the aims of (1) fostering international human resources, (2) promoting exchange between international students and Japanese people, and (3) providing opportunities for international students to contribute to Japanese society. At these classes held during the lunch break, students learn pronunciation, greetings, and simple everyday conversation. For the participants, they provide opportunities not only to study foreign languages, but also to deepen their understanding of different languages, cultures, ways of thinking and values. For the international students serving as teachers, these classes provide them with a valuable experience in Japan. In the 2017 academic year, an Italian class was held in the first half and an Arabic class in the second half.



Italian class



Arabic class

### Comments from participants



I had fun learning the language. There is a lot to memorize, so I think I'll try to organize what I've studied at home. Thank you very much.

I participated so that I can understand the letters and the culture better. It was very interesting to learn that greetings in Arabic have a religious aspect. I really appreciate that we were taught the alphabet repeatedly and nicely. That helped me deepen my understanding.



### Comments from an instructor

I am very happy that I was able to teach my mother tongue and culture in a fun manner through this lecture. I am also very pleased to find out that a lot of students are interested in Arabic which is one of the most difficult languages in the world. They actively participated in the lecture and they were able to learn how to read, write and talk in Arabic in such a short period of time. This experience helped me grow as a teacher. I would like to continue working hard in the future.



## Public lectures

Public lectures, inviting various teachers from Japan and overseas, are held twice a year on subjects such as Japanese language education, understanding of Japanese culture, and understanding of different cultures. In the first half of the 2017 academic year, Yuichi Suzuki (Associate Professor in the Foreign Languages Department of Kanagawa University) gave a talk titled “Measuring Second Language Knowledge in Cognitive SLA Research: Explicit-Implicit Knowledge and Automatization.” In the second half, Shinji Sato (Director of the Japanese Language Program, Princeton University) gave a talk entitled “Engaging Language: Education Open to All Languages and Cultures”



Associate Professor Suzuki's talk.



Director Sato's talk.

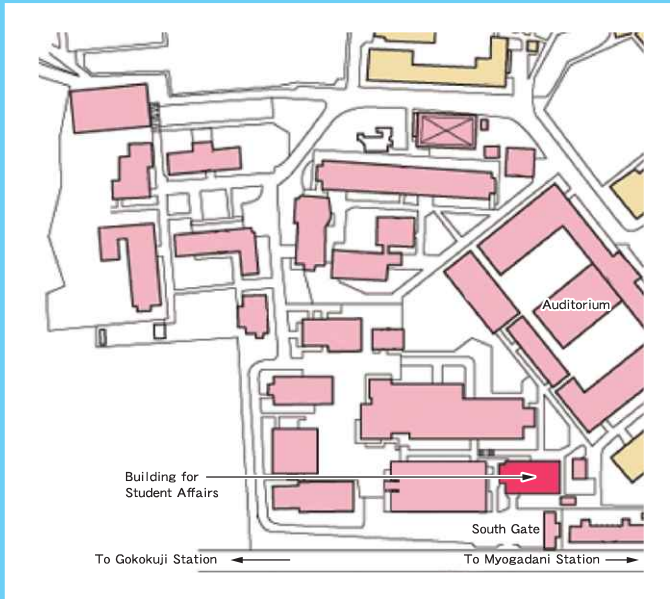


## Public seminars

In the second half of each academic year, people active in local communities, legal circles, social welfare and education are invited as guest speakers on the theme “What is Multicultural Symbiosis?” In the 2017 academic year, four speakers – Sachiyo Fujita-Round (Visiting Associate Professor, International Christian University), Osamu Nagase (Professor, Research Center for Ars Vivendi, Ritsumeikan University), Akiyoshi Kikuchi (Multicultural Society Coordinator, Sendai Tourism, Convention and International Association), and Akira Yoshino (Solicitor, Cosmos Law Office) – were invited to give seminars, in which lively discussions were held about the current situation and future challenges.



## The Center for International Education



The Center for International Education (CIE) was established in April 2001 as an education and research facility. The International Student Division offers the following programs and services :

- Courses in Japanese language and culture for undergraduate and graduate international students
- Guidance and counseling on academic research, continuing education, and campus and social life in Japan
- Creating a system and environment to promote cultural interaction between Japanese and international students

The Center for International Education home page:

<http://www.cf.ocha.ac.jp/gec-in/index.html>

Japanese Culture Program:

[http://www.cf.ocha.ac.jp/gec-in/j/menu/events/cul\\_school.html](http://www.cf.ocha.ac.jp/gec-in/j/menu/events/cul_school.html)

Foreign language classes taught by native speakers:

<http://www.cf.ocha.ac.jp/gec-in/j/menu/events/native.html>

Public lectures:

[http://www.cf.ocha.ac.jp/gec-in/j/menu/events/l\\_meeting.html](http://www.cf.ocha.ac.jp/gec-in/j/menu/events/l_meeting.html)

Public seminars:

<http://www.cf.ocha.ac.jp/gec-in/j/menu/events/seminar.html>

### Editor's Note

First, we would like to express our appreciation to the professors at the CIE for their continued support and encouragement, to the instructors for their passion and sincerity towards students and the program, to the assistants for their kind help, and to Aya Zaghloul-san, Zara Rebecca-san for working on its translation. Through creating this brochure, we have come to realize how many people have supported the Japanese Culture Program at the CIE. Thank you all very much.

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