



**JAPAN SOCIETY OF BOSTON**  
New England's Gateway To Japan Since 1904

# Monthly Newsletter



[Become a Member](#)

Please View Entire Message in your email to see all of what we have to offer in our newsletter!

## Announcements from JSB

あけまして  
おめでとう  
ございます

2026

HAPPY NEW YEAR

FROM THE JAPAN SOCIETY OF BOSTON

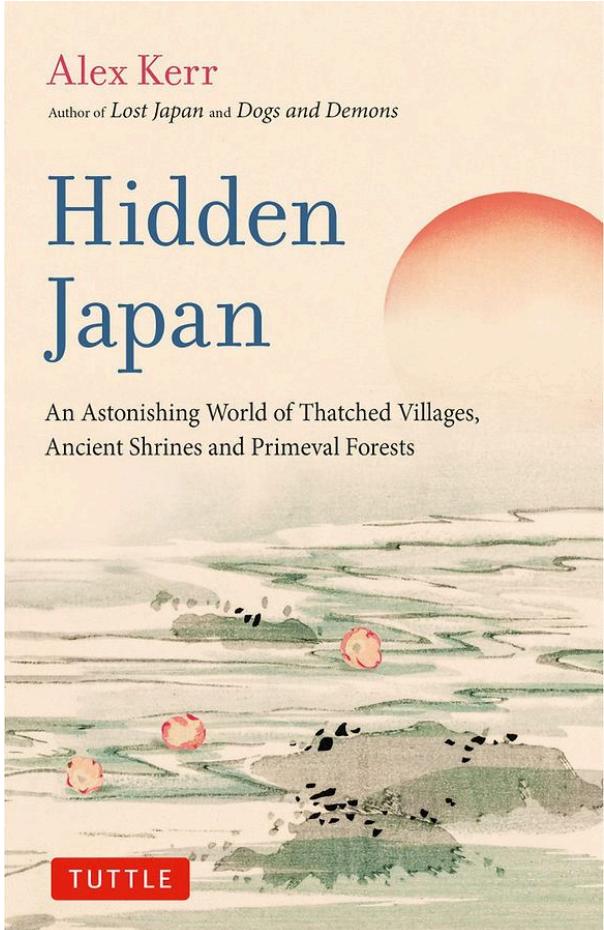
日本  
協会

Alex Kerr

Author of *Lost Japan* and *Dogs and Demons*

# Hidden Japan

An Astonishing World of Thatched Villages,  
Ancient Shrines and Primeval Forests



We are pleased to announce that the **2026 JSB Book of the Year** is *Hidden Japan* by Alex Kerr!

JSB members will receive a copy of the book as a gift upon membership sign-up or renewal in 2026.

Originally published in Japanese as a call to preserve disappearing facets of Japan's rich and ancient culture, *Hidden Japan* records Kerr's travels to various remote and lesser-known places where pockets of traditional culture can still be found.

Thanks to Tuttle Publishing for partnering to bring this book to our community. Join JSB today to get your copy!

[Become a Member](#)

Announcing a new discount partner for JSB members for 2026! Thank you to [Hotel New Otani Tokyo](#) for their support.

New Otani is one of Japan's premier chains of luxury hotels with its flagship hotel located in the heart of Tokyo.

Find a full list of special nightly rates for 2026 on the JSB Member Portal.

[JSB Member Portal](#)

日本  
JAPAN SOCIETY  
OF BOSTON

**NEW *Membership*  
DISCOUNT  
PARTNER**

**HOTEL NEW OTANI TOKYO**

*The New Otani*  
NEW OTANI HOTELS

# JSB Programming

Some events are limited to Japan Society of Boston Members. Interested in joining but not yet a member of the Japan Society of Boston? Consider [becoming a member](#) today!



## Connect with JSB! *Shinnenkai*

Tuesday, February 17, 2026 | 6:00 PM  
Hojoko



**[JSB Member Exclusive]**

### Connect with JSB! – Shinnenkai 2026

**Tuesday, February 17, 2026 - 6:00PM EST**  
**Hojoko**  
1271 Boylston St, Boston, MA

JSB welcomes all members to join us for a *shinnenkai* new year gathering at Hojoko! Celebrate the start of 2026, connect with the community, and enjoy great Japanese izakaya fare in this friendly reception-style gathering.

[Hojoko](#) is a Japanese tavern from the restaurant group behind acclaimed omakase restaurant O Ya, honoring the pulse of Japanese nightlife and izakaya by serving sushi, robatayaki, and street food small plates along with craft cocktails, premium sake, wine and beer.

Advance registration is required, and members are permitted one guest each. Tickets include assorted food, one drink ticket, and the chance to connect with other members of the JSB community!

[Register](#)

## Japanese New Year Celebration 2026

**Saturday, January 17, 2026 -  
12:00PM - 4:00PM EST  
Bow Market, 2nd Floor  
1 Bow Mkt Way, Somerville, MA**

### Japanese New Year Celebration 2026 @ Bow Market, Somerville

**SAT, JAN 17TH  
12-4 PM**

Special Zoni Soup  
\$12 each

Japanese New Year Card  
FREE workshop

DJ Set: Japanese City Pop  
by Deep Digs

Small Business Pop-up  
Candle, Upcycled T-shirts, etc.



Ring in 2026 with a Japanese New Year Celebration at Bow Market! The festivities will include zoni soup (a traditional Japanese new year's dish with mochi rice cakes) from Nagomi Bento, Japanese "city pop" music from DJ Deep Digs, and pop-up shops from small businesses selling Japanese goods.

Japan Society of Boston will host a booth where visitors of all ages can enjoy making Japanese new year's cards, or *nengajo* (年賀状). Learn about Japan's *nengajo* culture and try your hand at decorating postcards using simple *chigiri-e* (torn paper collage) and other techniques. Art supplies are generously provided by

[BLICK Art Materials](#).

We will also have a limited quantity of our [Kyoto-Boston tote bags](#) available for sale.

No registration required!

[More Info](#)

## Oshogatsu 2026 – The Japanese New Year!

**Sunday, January 25, 2026  
10:00AM - 3:00PM EST**  
**Boston Children's Museum**  
308 Congress St, Boston, MA



Join us at Boston Children's Museum for Oshogatsu 2026, the celebration of the Japanese New Year! Experience lively programs featuring taiko drumming, shishimai lion dance, omikuji fortunes, and other exciting activities. Visit the Japanese House exhibit—an authentic Kyoto home from the 1800s located on the Museum's third floor to view special New Year's decorations. Come together to welcome the Year of the Horse!

This event is held in partnership between Boston Children's Museum and the Japan Society of Boston. These two organizations proudly honor their long tradition of welcoming Oshogatsu together. Mark your calendar, bring your friends and family, and be part of a joyful celebration.



SPONSORED BY:  
**Temple**  
University  
Japan Campus

# JSB LANGUAGE ROOM

A JAPANESE & ENGLISH  
VIRTUAL LANGUAGE  
EXCHANGE



## JSB Language Room

**Thursday, January 22, 2026 - 6:00PM EST**

(日本時間では1月23日金曜日午前8時)

**Online**

Looking for a fun way to socialize and grow your language skills from the comfort of your own home? Join JSB to practice your Japanese or English at our next online Japanese / English language exchange.

Our monthly language room is sponsored by Temple University, Japan Campus (TUJ), the oldest and largest foreign university in Japan.

**This Month's Theme: 新年の抱負 / New Year's Resolutions**

Advance registration required.

**Register**

## おうちごはん ! (Ouchigohan) Gyoza & Gyoza Nabe Hot Pot

**Saturday, January 24, 2026 - 6:00PM  
EST  
Online**



[Register](#)

**Let's make gyoza, Japan's favorite dumpling!**

Adapted from the Chinese dumpling Jiaozi, the soft dough wrapper with a savory meat or vegetarian filling is not hard to make. Pinch-Pleat-Repeat as you form perfect crescents.

We will make two gyoza dishes: pan fried with a crispy bottom to eat with a dipping sauce and the other is Gyoza Nabe, where we add the uncooked savory pillows to a simmering pot of winter vegetables. Homemade dipping sauces will be part of the menu.

A full list of ingredients, recipes, and instructions for both the cake and karaage will be sent the week of the class.

JSB members can visit the [\*\*JSB Member Portal\*\*](#) for a discount code.



**[JSB Member Exclusive]**

## **JSB Film Club**

**Wednesday, January 28, 2026 - 6:00PM EST**  
**Online**

Join us for a discussion of ***Perfect Days* (2023)**, an Academy Award nominee for Best International Feature directed by Wim Wenders and starring Koji Yakusho.

In *Perfect Days*, Hirayama is content with his life as a toilet cleaner in Tokyo. Outside of his structured routine he cherishes music on cassette tapes, books, and taking photos of trees. Through unexpected encounters, he reflects on finding beauty in the world. (Synopsis from NEON)

Watch the trailer [here](#).

Films should be viewed independently in advance of our meetings. Find the film [available to stream online](#) or check out your local library.

[Register](#)



SUN

FEB. 22  
5:00-6:30  
PM ET

おうちごはん！  
Oûchigohan!  
**EHOMAKI**  
WITH SOY MILK MATCHA LATTE

\$10 | JAS/JS/JETAA Members  
\$15 | General Admission



おうちごはん！(Ouchigohan)  
Ehomaki with Soy Milk Matcha Latte

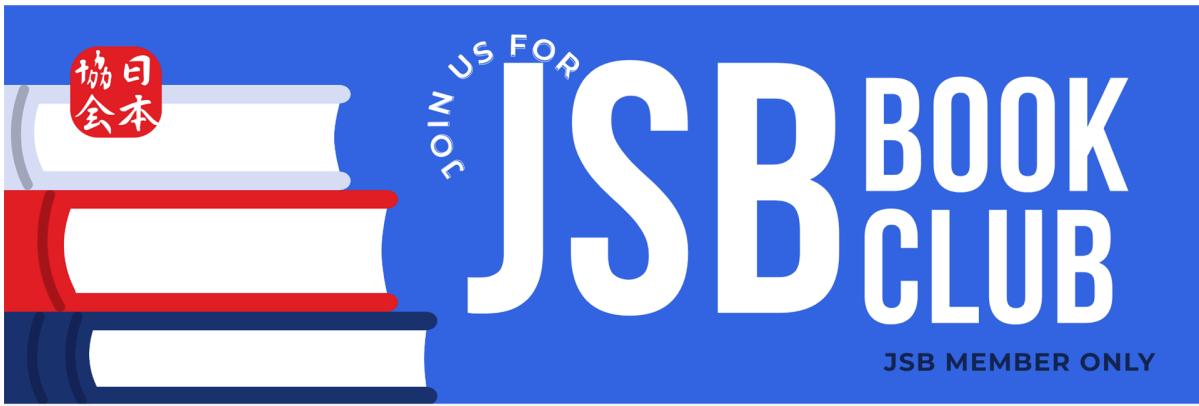
**Sunday, February 22, 2026 - 5:00PM EST**  
Online

鬼は外、福は内！Out with demons, in with good fortune!

We're celebrating February with **ehomaki**—an uncut sushi roll traditionally eaten on Setsubun (February 3) while facing the year's auspicious direction for good luck. The roll will be thickly filled with a customizable assortment of ingredients including omelette, marinated mushrooms, seafood, and other vegetables. We'll finish the meal with a cozy **soy milk matcha latte** that's perfect for warming up in the late winter weather.

Joining **Debra Samuels** as a guest instructor is **Kevin Hiromoto**, owner of the former Ebisuya Japanese Market, a beloved Japanese delicatessen in the Boston area for over 15 years. Kevin and Debra will share simple techniques, ingredient tips, and cultural context to help home cooks of all ages and experience levels enjoy this special Setsubun-themed meal!

[Register](#)



**[JSB Member Exclusive]**

## JSB Book Club

**Wednesday, February 25, 2026 - 6:00PM EST**  
**Online**

The JSB Book Club will meet in February to discuss ***The Makioka Sisters*** by **Junichiro Tanizaki**.

In Osaka, in the years immediately before W.W.II, four aristocratic women try to preserve a way of life that is vanishing. The story of the Makioka sisters is arguably the greatest Japanese novel of the 20th century, a poignant yet unsparing portrait of a family—and society—sliding into the abyss of modernity. Filled with vignettes of upper-class Japanese life and capturing both the decorum and the heartache of its protagonists, *The Makioka Sisters* is a classic of international literature. (From the publisher's description)

Find a copy [here](#). The discussion will be in English, but you are welcome to read the novel in any language.

[Register](#)

**Signature Content from JSB**

# **BOSTON:** **THE U.S.-JAPAN INTERSECTION**

Interviews with leaders bridging the U.S. and Japan



**Drew Edwards**  
Partner  
[GMO LLC](#)

## **Would you introduce yourself briefly?**

My career has unfolded at the intersection of Japanese companies, global capital, corporate governance, and shareholder rights. I first came to Japan as an undergraduate at Sophia University, an experience that set the direction for much of my professional life. After beginning my career in Tokyo at Pfizer Pharmaceuticals, I returned to the United States to earn a law degree at Northwestern University and an MBA from the Kellogg School of Management.

Today, I am a partner at GMO, where I oversee the firm's Japan investing business. ...[M]y background spans much of the United States, with Japan remaining a constant and formative presence throughout my life and career.

[Full Article](#)



**MEMBER HIGHLIGHTS**  
Showcasing stories from our vibrant community



### Christine (Chris) Brown

Chris is also the new volunteer leader of the [JSB Book Club](#)! Join us on February 25th for our discussion of *The Makioka Sisters*.

"Experiences in Japan at a young age sparked an interest and fascination which have kept me on the alert for any opportunity to enjoy Japanese culture....

Now I seek out exhibits of Japanese art, read Japanese literature, visit Japanese gardens, and take available courses. Moving to Lowell has put all the resources of the MFA within my reach, opening Japan to me in lots of new ways. Just sitting for a while in the dim ambiance of the Buddhist temple is nostalgic. And of course the JSB Book and Film Clubs have kept Japanese culture a regular part of my life and introduced me to other Japanophiles. Plus, I am able to provide Japanese words to my husband's New York Times crossword puzzles!"

[Full Article](#)



# JSB MEETS JET ALUMNI

An interview series on alumni experiences in Japan



**Allen Wan**  
**Ishikawa (1990-1992)**

"My two years as a JET were some of my most formidable years. It was where I learned to be an adult, fight loneliness and become somewhat responsible. I have spent a large chunk of my life living in Asia and don't think that would have been possible without the JET experience. I am currently a foreign correspondent for a major news company and often write about global affairs, including events in Japan. My experience as a JET allowed me to gain insight and understanding into a unique culture that still informs me today."

[Full Article](#)



# FAMOUS IN JAPAN

Celebrities from Around the World



## Famous in Japan

Studying individuals from around the world who are famous in Japan, both past and present.

This month we are featuring **Masako Shirasu**, an influential essayist and collector of fine arts (who spent time in Massachusetts in her youth!).

Masako's writings were also a major inspiration for Alex Kerr in his book *Hidden Japan*, JSB's [2026 Book of the Year!](#)

[Full Article](#)

## From Our Friends

Below are just a few featured events and opportunities from other local organizations. Check our [website](#) for many more!



## Hiroaki Umeda

**Wednesday, March 11, 2026 - 7:30PM EST**  
**Frederick C. Tillis Performance Hall, Bromery Center for the Arts**  
151 Presidents Dr, Amherst, MA

Choreographer and multidisciplinary artist Hiroaki Umeda has been a leading figure in Japan's avant-garde arts scene over the last two decades. His subtle yet visceral dance theater works have toured worldwide to audience and critical acclaim. Dancing within a gorgeous digital stage environment, Umeda choreographs optical, tonal, sensorial, and spatiotemporal elements.

UMass Amherst is the first of just five stops on Umeda's 2026 U.S. tour. His program includes two brand new works, *Moving State 1*, which will be performed by dancers from Umeda's Somatic Field Project; and *assimilating*, Umeda's solo performance. Both pieces explore behavioral design and the "attitudes" of things in motion within a dance aesthetic where refined physicality merges with cyberart.

**JSB members can get a 15% discount on tickets! Visit the [JSB Member Portal](#) for the code.**

[Tickets](#)



## **Jazz Concert: Tiger Okoshi and Truly True**

**January 11, 2026 - 3:00PM EST**  
**First Parish in Wayland**

225 Boston Post Rd, Wayland, MA

Tiger Okoshi, internationally acclaimed trumpeter from Japan and Berklee College of Music professor, plays with a new, extraordinary, and unique quintet. Tiger will be joined by violinist Louis Thélot, cellist Peter Sumner, bassist Ferran Rico Andres and Sam Cerra on vibraphone.

[Tickets](#)

# Making Sense of Japan's Defense Policy: Continuities, Changes, and Challenges with KIRIDORI Ryo

**January 28, 2026 - 5:00PM EST**  
**Boston University**

Room 220, 595 Commonwealth Ave,  
Boston, MA

*The Consulate-General of Japan in Boston and  
the Boston University Center for the Study of Asia at the Pardee School  
present*

## Making Sense of Japan's Defense Policy: Continuities, Changes, and Challenges



*Photo from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan's website.*

**with**

**KIRIDORI Ryo**

National Institute for Defense Studies & University of Toronto

Over the past decade, Japan has significantly updated its defense policy signifying shifts that would have been unimaginable only a few decades ago. How should we understand these developments? To what extent has Japan's defense policy shifted from its previous course? What do these reforms mean for the U.S.-Japan Alliance and for peace and stability in the Western Pacific? This talk examines these questions and others to provide a deeper understanding of Japan's evolving defense posture.

**Moderated by**

**Thomas Berger**

Pardee School, Boston University

**WED | JANUARY 28, 2026 | 5PM – 6:30PM**  
**ROOM 220, 595 COMMONWEALTH AVENUE, BOSTON MA**



BOSTON UNIVERSITY Frederick S. Pardee School of Global Studies  
Center for the Study of Asia

FREE and OPEN  
to the public.  
Please register  
through this QR code.

**Register**

The Japan Society of Boston is able to provide this newsletter thanks to the generosity of readers like you. If you enjoy our newsletter and programs, please consider becoming a member or donating today.

**Support JSB**

Over the past decade, Japan has significantly updated its defense policy signifying shifts that would have been unimaginable only a few decades ago. How should we understand these developments? To what extent has Japan's defense policy shifted from its previous course? What do these reforms mean for the U.S.-Japan Alliance and for peace and stability in the Western Pacific? This talk examines these questions and others to provide a deeper understanding of Japan's evolving defense posture.

This event is presented by the Consulate-General of Japan in Boston and the Boston University Center for the Study of Asia at the Pardee School.

Free and open to the public.



Follow us on social media for the latest event announcements, giveaways, and more!



Japan Society of Boston | [www.japansocietyboston.org](http://www.japansocietyboston.org)