

Oshogatsu in Olympia

January 18, 2014

An estimated two thousand five hundred people celebrated the New Year Japanese-style at *Oshogatsu in Olympia*, which was held on Saturday, January 18, 2014. The event was hosted by the Olympia-Kato Sister City Association and the Consulate General of Japan in Seattle.



Inside the main hall, visitors were treated to a variety of traditional Japanese musical and cultural performances: aikido; mochitsuki (rice cake pounding); traditional music, including taiko drumming and shamisen; calligraphy; and tea ceremony. With the help of volunteers, children were able make “nengajo”, traditional New Year’s postcards, and other crafts, which they were able to take home as souvenirs.



Distinguished guests including State Senator Karen Frasier, Olympia Mayor Steven Buxbaum and an eight-member delegation from Kato City in Japan attended the main ceremony at noon. Outside the main hall, Japan-related organizations and business distributed information to visitors.

Representatives from the Consulate General of Japan answered questions related to visas and travel, government scholarships and research opportunities, and the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) program.

We would like to express our gratitude to the Olympia-Kato Sister City Association, and all the organizers and volunteers who made this event possible.