



# Japan Now

V.13 #1



## **2017 New Year's Greeting from Consul General Masahiro Omura**

A Happy New Year to all of you!

Mr. Donald Trump won last year's fiercely fought presidential election. Regardless of the administration, the bond between our two countries, firmly tied together by the fundamental beliefs in freedom, democracy, basic human rights, and the rule of law, cannot be broken. Demonstrating this resolve, in the week following the election, a meeting was held between President-elect Trump and Prime Minister Abe before any other nation.

As the global community continues to face new issues, in order to be at the forefront of the era, Japan and the U.S. must use these beliefs as a basis to strive for the advancement and deepening of relations between the two countries and further cooperation. Towards this end, it is essential that not just initiatives between countries, but dialogue and cooperation at the regional,

private enterprise and grassroots level are pursued.

With this viewpoint, in June 2016, the Government of Japan and the State of Washington signed the Memorandum of Cooperation on Economic and Trade Relations. In addition to boosting joint activities on the ongoing development and flight testing of the Mitsubishi Regional Jet (MRJ), the MOC will encourage the development of new business ventures, workforce development, academic partnerships and joint research in a variety of areas. Interest from both sides, including by local governments, businesses and universities, has led to a new memorandum between Aichi Prefecture and Washington State among other benefits. In November of last year, the Memorandum of Cooperation on the Partial Reciprocal Exemption of Driver License Examination was signed with Washington State which is, starting this year, expected to reduce the burden of obtaining a driver license and further promote bilateral exchange. In 2017, I would like to request your kind understanding and cooperation as we further accelerate and expand on these efforts.

This year will also mark the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Kobe-Seattle sister-city relations and the 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Kumamoto-Montana sister-state partnership. We are thankful for the assistance that was quickly extended by this region during the Great Hanshin Earthquake, the Great East Japan Earthquake, and the earthquake in Kumamoto last year, and request your continued support.

I sincerely wish you all happiness and success for the New Year.

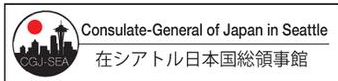
January 2017  
Consul General of Japan Masahiro Omura

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# Driver License Exemption

**Starting on January 4, 2017, knowledge and skills examinations will be exempted for holders of valid Washington State or Japan-issued driver licenses when applying for a new license in the other location.**

**Please see the Consulate's website for details.**



## Reciprocal Partial Exemption of Driver License Examination in Japan and Washington State

Starting on January 4, 2017, knowledge and skills examinations will be exempted for holders of valid Washington State or Japan-issued driver licenses when applying for a new license in the other location. See the Consulate's website for details.

English - [http://www.seattle.us.emb-japan.go.jp/itpr\\_en/00\\_000235.html](http://www.seattle.us.emb-japan.go.jp/itpr_en/00_000235.html)

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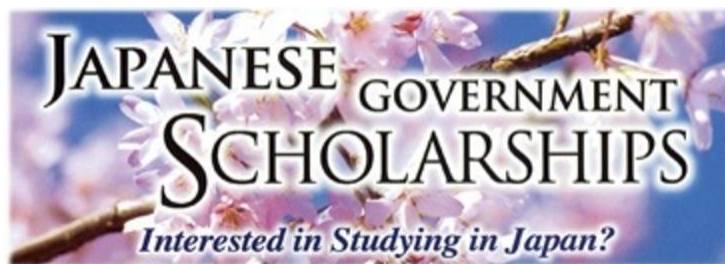
## **Pacific Northwest JET Alumni Association (PNWJETAA) Recognized for their Contributions to Japan-US Relations by the Consul General of Japan in Seattle**

On November 18, 2016, the Consulate-General of Japan in Seattle recognized one highly qualified organization for their contributions to Japan-US relations. In a ceremony held during the JET Program Welcome Back & 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Reception at the Official Residence, the Pacific Northwest JET Alumni Association was awarded the Consul General's Commendation.

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*JET Alumni with Consul General Omura*



**Japanese  
Government  
Scholarship  
Applications Now  
Available**

**Deadline: February 9,  
2017**

The Consulate General of Japan in Seattle is now accepting applications for 2017 Japanese Government Scholarship (Japanese Studies Students), available to U.S. citizens residing in states of Washington, Idaho, Montana, Oregon and Alaska.

[2017 Application Information](#)



## Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake Remembrance Day

On Monday, January 16, starting from 12 p.m. at the Seattle Center Kobe Bell, the Seattle-Kobe Sister City Association will be holding their Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake Remembrance Day, a reflective ceremony and ringing of the Kobe Bell in honor of the victims of

the terrible disaster that struck Seattle's sister city of Kobe on January 17, 1995.

The event will also celebrate the bell's new roof as well as look towards a renewed energy for our sister city future as we celebrate the 60th anniversary of the sister-city relationship this year. The Kobe Bell was created for the World's Fair 55 years ago and is a well-known landmark of the Seattle Center.

For more information

[Read More](#)



## Emperor's Birthday Reception

On December 8, the Consulate-General of Japan held its annual Emperor's Birthday Reception at the Official Residence. Nearly 250 people attended, including local government officials, Japanese-American community leaders, and Japanese business representatives. During the program, Washington State Department of Commerce Director Brian Bonlender spoke on the economic and trade relationship between Washington State and Japan, and the role that projects such as the Mitsubishi Regional Jet and the recently signed MOC

will play in furthering these relations. Washington State Senator Karen Fraser celebrated the US-Japan friendship in her kampaï to His Majesty Emperor Akihito. Guests also enjoyed a meal of various Japanese dishes, featuring rice from Niigata Prefecture.

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