

## Montana and Eastern Washington Japanese Culture Caravan

From October 9 to October 12, stopping at three universities, a caravan to introduce Japanese culture began. Stopping at Montana University (Missoula, MT), at Montana State University (Bozeman, MT), Gonzaga University (Spokane, WA). The Japanese culture caravan presented the JET Program, calligraphy, and robot technology.



During the Japanese Culture Caravan, calligraphic artist Kimura Tsubasa, a calligraphic artist, gave lectures on the formation and history of kanji and hiragana as part of her ongoing world tour “A Trip Around the World – A Calligraphic Journey.” Additional lectures included collaborative performances featuring the traditional Japanese instrument, the *shakuhachi*, and also had participants drawing calligraphy using water (this was done using a kit that where water is used to draw characters on paper instead of ink).



Japan's cutting-edge technology was represented by Paro, a therapeutic robot who takes the form of a sea otter. Paro was developed by the National Institute of Advanced Industrial Science and Technology in Japan, and is recognized by the Guinness Book Records as the "World's Top Therapeutic Robot." Also, movie screenings of *Fukushima Hula Girls*, and *Wanko: The Story of Me, My Family and My Dog*, were held. Through these screenings the audience was introduced to the restoration of Japan after the Great East Japan Earthquake, and could understand the humanity of Japanese people helping each other in the face of hardship.



We would like to thank everybody who assisted in making this Japanese Culture Caravan a success.