

Press Release

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On Sunday, April 29, the Aurora Japanese Language Scholarship Foundation and Kasloff Foundation in association with the Japanese American Cultural & Community Center, will present the benefit screening, "Homeland – Sokoku," written by Yoji Yamada; and, "Itsukushimu Inochi," a documentary feature about Taro Yashima, painter and the father of Mako Iwamatsu. Both films will be shown in memory of the late Mako Iwamatsu at the George & Sakaye Aratani Japan America Theatre located in Little Tokyo, Los Angeles, showing for one day only. The Kasloff Foundation will present the "Second Kasloff Foundation Japanese-American Pioneer Award" to the late Taro Yamshima and late Mako Iwamatsu. The award will be presented to Momo Iwamatsu, the daughter of Taro Yashima / sister of Mako Iwamatsu on behalf of both of them. Both movies are in Japanese (No English subtitles)

"Itsukushimu Inochi" a documentary about painter, Taro Yashima (1994) (45 minutes)

Japanese Language version (No English subtitle)

Show: 1p.m. (House open: 12:00pm)

"Homeland- Sokoku"(2005) (108 minutes)

Japanese Language version (No English subtitle)

Story and Screenplay by Yoji Yamada

Directed by Tonko Horikawa

Sunday, April 29, 2007

Show: 2:30p.m.

Location: Aratani Japan America Theatre
244 S. San Pedro St. Los Angeles, CA 90012

\$15 General Admission

For 10 or more tickets, discount is \$1.50 per ticket

For Aurora Club /JACCC members, discount is \$1 per ticket

For student discount, bring your valid student ID to the Will Call booth on the day of the screening, and we will refund \$5 to you)

Plot of "Homeland – Sokoku"

Trading company employee Onodera takes a business trip to Tinian in the Micronesian Islands to implement downsizing and cutbacks. There, he meets an old local pilot, Leo, on his way home. Onodera becomes friends with Leo and invites him to stop by anytime he is in Japan. Three months later, they meet again in Japan. Onodera invites Leo over and they spend a pleasant time with Onodera's wife, Reiko, and daughter, Eri. Since Leo wants to visit Leo's home town of Noto and Onodera arranges a hotel for him. Leo never arrives at the hotel in Noto and Onodera becomes worried about him. After three years, half-Japanese beauty Yuki comes to see Onodera. She introduces herself as Leo's granddaughter and reveals that he was a skilled pilot. Yuki gives Onodera a notebook containing Leo's last will and testament. Onodera finds the signature "Ryo Moriya," Leo's real name, on the cover...

Profile of Yoji Yamada: He directed the film, "The Twilight Samurai" that was nominated for an Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film in 2003, now writes and dramatizes a touching story "The Homeland." He also directed the long-running hit series Tora-san, "Otoko wa Tsuraiyo" as well as "The Yellow Handkerchief," "A Class to Remember" and the "Hidden Blade" are other films.

Profile of Mako Iwamatsu: The lead role in "The Homeland." He immigrated to the U.S. at age 15 and became the first Japanese to receive a green card after World War II. He was nominated for an Academy Award as Best Supporting Actor for his role in "The Sand Pebbles," (1966) and remained a leading Asian actor in Hollywood. He passed away in July, 2006 at the age of 72.

Introduction of the "Itsukushimu Inochi"

Taro Yashima (1908–1994) always had his theme, "praising one's life," and expressed it through his paintings in the 20th century. As a student, he was a strong activist expressing his views through proletarian art at the Tokyo Fine Arts School before World War II when freedom of speech was oppressed in Japanese society. The war between the USA and Japan started right after he moved to the US to pursue his studying in art. While people in the USA believed Japanese were fascists who liked war, he wrote

a book “New Sun” to introduce American people to the idea that there were many Japanese people with a conscience, and the book received the attention of the media.

Yashima worked for the Office of Strategic Services in the US during the war, and was engaged in designing printed flyers which were made to encourage Japanese soldiers to surrender using such phrases as “Do not die” and “Live & Reconstruct Japan after the war.”

After the war, he began writing and illustrating children's books based on his childhood memories of Kagoshima in books, such as “Crow Boy,” “Umbrella” and “Seashore Story,” for which he won the Caldecott Medal, one of the most prestigious awards for the children’s book industry. His books are still enjoyed by children today.

This documentary film features Taro Yashima himself and his two sons, actor, Mako Iwamatsu and non fiction writer, Chihiro Isa. They talk about Taro Yashima's life from their own points of view.

The AURORA JAPANESE LANGUAGE SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION (Dr. Akiko Agishi, Founder and President) With an eye toward the future of global peace, and a deep passion for contributing to a better world, the Aurora Japanese Language Scholarship Foundation was established in 1998 as a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization. So far, through our scholarships and grants, our 13 scholarship recipients and 8 grant recipients have experienced living in Japan and have had the opportunity to further their understanding of the Japanese language and culture. These recipients have been generating immeasurable goodwill for USA/Japan relations, and we believe that their efforts and accomplishments will continue to influence younger generations now and into the future.

The KASLOFF FOUNDATION (Mrs. Masako Togo Kasloff, Founder and President) was established in 2002 as a non-profit 501(c) (3) organization. The history of the lives of the Issei, Nissei, Sansei (1st -3rd generations) Japanese Americans are recorded and kept in the Japanese American National Museum as the precious part of Japanese American history. However, not many new Isseis are recorded and acknowledged. The foundation believes that the history of new Isseis who came to the US after WWII, is also a great treasure for future generations. The foundation is awarding “The Kasloff Foundation Pioneer Award” to new Isseis who have been playing an important role to construct today’s friendly US-Japan relationship by bridging the US-Japan goodwill and cultural exchanges.

Tickets are available at:

All American Tickets 1-888-507-3287(www.allamerican-tkt.com)

Kinokuniya Bookstores [Little Tokyo (213) 687-4480 Costa Mesa (714) 662-2319]

Sanuki no Sato (310) 324-9184

Sanseido Costa Mesa (714) 556-2200

Kaede Shobo (310) 324-9892

Book Value Rolling Hills Store (310) 530-5343

Yama Seafood (626) 281-8045 (San Gabriel)

Babel Cake Class(714) 847-7404

Okinawa Shop(213)200-8116

Asahiya Bookstores [Sawtelle (310) 575-3303 Torrance(310) 375-3303 * The store moved in the corner between Sepulveda Blvd. Hawthorne Blvd. : 3832 Sepulveda Blvd. Torrance

Aratani/Japan America Theatre Box Office: (213) 680-3700 (\$4.00 handling charge by phone order.) (Mon.-Sat. 12pm-5pm, Sun. - Performance days only)

Supported by:

Consulate General of Japan Los Angeles; Japan America Society of Southern California; Japanese Chamber of Commerce of Southern California; Japan Business Association of Southern California; The Japan Foundation, Los Angeles; JETRO Los Angeles; Japanese Prefectural Association of Southern California; LA TOKYO-KAI; Nanka Kagoshima Kenjinkai; Japanese Community Pioneer Center; Orange County Japanese American Association

For more information, including sponsorship, please contact the Aurora Foundation at (323) 882-6545 or Kasloff Foundation at (310) 457-6281

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Please check the JLSF website at www.jlsf-aurora.org.