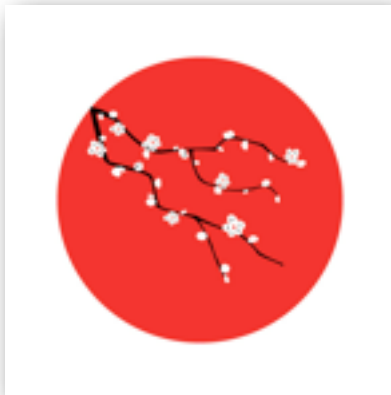


Sounds of Japan

日本の音



Tomoko Warren on the koto

On Friday February 22, 2013 the East Asia Institute (EAI) hosted "Sounds of Japan." This event, filled with musical performances and educational presentations, was attended by over 150 people ranging from children to adults. The East Asia Institute would like to express their thanks to the Japan Foundation for their generous grant that helped create this event. We also would like to thank Tomoko Warren, Martha Fabrique, Antoinette (Toni) Gustafon, and Randall Nadeau for their participation in the event.

Without their help, this event would not have been possible.

The event began promptly at 5:30 with opening remarks given by EAI Associate Director Mimi Yu. The first performance of the night was a set of three songs on the *koto* given by the elegant Tomoko Warren. Warren grew up with the sounds of *koto* and received lessons from her mother when she was young. She opened with a very traditional song, which left the audience captivated. Her second song was one associated with the holiday *hina-matsuri*. Her

third song, composed by her grandfather, was a fusion of traditional *koto* style and modern *koto* style. Warren also took time to answer the audience's questions including the creation of the instrument and the reading of Japanese sheet music. Warren explained that the music theory in comparison to western instruments is somewhat different and she explained how to read the sheet music by showing the audience each chord. Other questions Warren answered were about the origins of the *koto*.

Types of Japanese instruments and performances at the event:

- Koto (Traditional stringed Japanese musical instrument)
- Shakuhachi (Japanese flute)
- Kamishibai (story-telling)



The *koto* originated in China and was introduced to Japan around the 7th or 8th century. It was originally court music played by the noble people. Interestingly, *koto* also used to be played by the blind, who went to a special school to learn to play. There are 13 strings on the *koto*, though some have 17. Warren's performance and information about the *koto* was well received by the audience.

The second musical performance was given by the very talented Martha Fabrique. She played a set of three songs on the *shakuhachi*, or Japanese flute. The first two pieces she performed were traditional Zen Buddhist light meditation music. The last piece she performed was titled "Lonely Heart", which was more modern and conflicted in sound. After her performance the audience asked various questions about the *shakuhachi*, like what the flute is made of and how the sound is made. Fabrique explained that the instrument is made with one single piece of bamboo in which there are four holes in front and one thumbhole in the back to make the sound. It is a minimalist instrument

with a five note scale, so the person using the flute must do other things like moving the head and angling the head to achieve other sounds and pitches. Fabrique also explained that the mouthpiece is cut across the top of the bamboo and it is blown into the same way as a normal flute. The audience enjoyed Fabrique's performance as it seemed to relax them.

After the musical performances, the audience was told to choose which event they would like to go to next. Half of the audience went with their kids to the *kamishibai* storytelling presented by Antoinette (Toni) Gustafon and the other half attended Randall Nadeau's lecture on shinto. Gustafon's *kamishibai* was really exciting for the children. She is a very lively person and caught the children's attention by making them laugh and adding anticipation in the story. Even parents and students enjoyed her performance. This event was the first time Gustafon was able to perform *kamishibai* and she did a wonderful job at entertaining the audience. Leo Costales, a





Making *onigiri*



Making *onigiri*



a participant of the event, said his favorite part was the *kamishibai*. "I am a teacher at Northside", said Costales, "and the story Gustafon performed appears in anthologies, which I found to be very interesting." Gustafon is also a teacher at Northside, though she told the audience her true passion is *kamishbai* storytelling.

The other event at the same time as the *kamishibai* was the lecture on Shinto given by Randall Nadeau. His lecture was titled "Dimensions of Sacred Space in Japanese Shinto." To begin the discussion, Mr. Nadeau talked about the art of Sumo wrestling. He described the blessing of the ring before the match, in which a sumo wrestler will throw salt into the ring to honor the gods and ask for a blessing to be protected from injury. After which, he touched upon some of the basic sumo techniques. The next part of the lecture was about the different concepts of *Kami* (god/gods) in Shintoism such as mythological creators, exceptional persons, extraordinary things, and even natural objects and implements. This lead straight into the theory of sacred

space. Mr. Nadeau expressed that this concept is the separation between the sacred and the profane. Many distinctive characteristics of shinto were integrated into the topic to help expand upon and explain the idea. At the end of his lecture, Mr. Nadeau opened the floor for a short Q&A session to which many of the guests responded positively.

The last event of the evening was the making of *onigiri*, Japanese rice balls. The participants gathered around tables and waited in anticipation to make their *onigiri*. There were helpers at each table to help the ones who did not know how to make the *onigiri*, though most already knew how. The room filled with laughter and smiles as people were pleased at how well their *onigiri* turned out. Lauren Hicks, a japanese student, shared her favorite part of the night as she made *onigiri* to take home, "I liked all of it, but mainly I enjoyed the music and being able to socialize with the people here." The event ended with everyone happily taking *onigiri* home and their new cultural knowledge of Japan.



Toni Gustafon performing *kamishibai*



Toni Gustafon performing *kamishibai*



紙芝居

かみしばい

kamishibai storytelling

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