

Talking Contemporary Japan (2006-2012; now discontinued)

'Talking Contemporary Japan' was a Japan Foundation seminar series designed for adult learners interested in updating and refreshing their knowledge about Japan whilst practising their Japanese language skills in a series of evening classes at the Japan Foundation London Language Centre. Classes are conducted in Japanese and participants should have Japanese language ability equivalent to JLPT level 2 or above.

Talking Contemporary Japan has now been replaced by our new Japanese Plus course; you can find out more information about this course as well as other Japan Foundation Japanese language courses here:

<http://www.jpf.org.uk/language/courses.php>

Past Talking Contemporary Japan courses included:

- **One-Evening Special: Japanese discussion with Director Katsumi Sakaguchi** – February 2012
Participants had the opportunity to view the documentary "Karin no le" and discuss the themes and techniques in the film with the director himself, Katsumi Sakaguchi.
- **Cross-Cultural Communication** – November 2011
Participants used their Japanese skills to explore the communication barriers that arise due to cultural difference, and how to overcome them.
- **Happy Family Plan** – June 2011
Watching the Japanese movie "*Happy Family Plan*" (2001), participants learned about how Japanese can reflect one's personality, age, social status and gender, according to the vocabulary and manner used in speech.
- **Debating Time** – March 2011
Participants explored how to engage in effective, persuasive and enjoyable debates in Japanese, building up to a real live debate in the final session.
- **Kokugo: Learn Japanese that Japanese learn** – November - December 2010
Taking the theme of *kokugo*, participants had a chance to learn about the Japanese language as school children in Japan would do.
- **'Question Time' at the Foundation. What do the Japanese really think?** - June 2010 Participants studied formal Japanese language and interviewed mystery guests in small groups.
- **Getting Down to Business! - Language and Etiquette in Japanese Society** - March 2010 This course gave participants the chance to get to grips with business language, etiquette and taboos in Japanese society.
- **Squabbling Spouses: Dramatic Comedy** - November 2009
Participants watched extracts from a contemporary Japanese comedy-drama series and took part in various activities based around its content.
- **Japan's Past Meets The Present** – June 2009
Participants read and discussed Japanese folk tales and the Tale of Genji.
- **Investigating Japanese Mysteries** – February 2009
Participants discussed Japanese mystery stories and tried to solve them.
- **Exploring Japanese Culture through Comedy** – November 2008
In this course participants learned about Japanese comedy from the Edo period through to contemporary Japan.
- **Exploring Japan through Short Stories** – June 2008
This course focused on reading and discussion of different short stories written by popular Japanese authors including Haruki Murakami, Shinichi Hoshi, Kaori Ekuni and Soseki Natsume.
- **Exploring Contemporary Japan through Kurosawa's film 'Dreams'**. – Jan-Feb 2008
This course focused on discussing a number of short stories from 'Dreams'.
Masami Torii took part in the course and later composed this excellent essay in Japanese about each of the eight episodes, as well as her overall thoughts on the film. Masami is a Japanese descendent who grew up in Ecuador and speaks Spanish as her native language. [Click here](#) to read her essay.
- **Exploring Contemporary Japan through Short Stories** – October 2007
October's course focussed on reading and discussing short stories by contemporary Japanese authors, such as Haruki Murakami, Banana Yoshimoto and Kaori Ekuni.
- **Exploring Contemporary Japan through Okinawa** – June 2007
Where does the Okinawan identity come from? How do people in Okinawa live today? Japan is often perceived as a country of harmony and homogeneity. The real Japan however is rich in cultural and social diversity. This four-week course focused on Okinawa, a region known for its distinct history and culture.
- **Exploring Contemporary Japan through Japanese Film** – January 2007
Working with extracts from three of the following films: 'Warau Kaeru', 'Hebi Ichigo', 'Kuuchuu Teien', 'Maizon do Himiko'
- **Exploring Contemporary Japan through Japanese Media** – Nov-Dec 2006
Looking at topics such as Sumo in Modern Japan, Challenges for the Japanese Royal Family. Sources will be newspapers, magazines, TV news