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Japan Society & Portland Japanese Garden Present

Japanese Pop Culture: Connecting the World through Manga and Anime

Fifth and Final Live Webinar of the *Living Traditions Series*, A Five-Part Program
Designed to Examine Iconic Facets of Japanese Culture
From Ancient Roots to Modern Day

Tuesday, February 15, 7–8:00 pm EST (4–5:00 pm PST)



Images: SeanPavonePhoto / iStock

New York, NY (January 12, 2022)—Japanese pop culture, symbolized by manga and anime, has become an increasingly significant part of the cultural conversation across the globe. **Julia Mechler**, manga creator and Content Production Group Manager at mixi, inc., and **Roland Kelts**, author of *Japanamerica: How Japanese Pop Culture Has Invaded the U.S.*, provide their insights into the current state of the industry, from pen to paper to screen, unpacking some of the latest trends and emerging technologies in Japanese pop culture. This webinar covers the historical development of manga and anime, the global influence of *otaku* culture, and what the

future may bring inside and outside of Japan. Moderated by **Bill Tsutsui**, author of *Japanese Popular Culture and Globalization*, the fifth and final event in our five-part Living Traditions webinar series invites you on a journey into the sprawling Japanese pop culture grounded in a unique cultural DNA.

Agenda 7–8:00 pm EST (4–5:00 pm PST) Discussion and Q&A

Program Details: This is a free event, with advance registration required. The program will be live streamed through YouTube, and registrants will receive the viewing link by email on the day before the event. Participants can submit questions through YouTube during the live stream. Register [here](#).

Julia Mechler works for mixi, inc., a Japanese mobile gaming company, as a business development manager overseeing US-based teams that produce gaming app content. Julia also creates manga, publishing her first comic book, *Hymn of the Teada*, an Okinawan-themed comic book released by *Heavy Metal Magazine*. She began her career as a motion graphics designer at the Los Angeles branch of a Japanese anime/gaming company. Though her career focuses on digital entertainment, she is also an expert on Okinawan traditional performing arts, producing shows in Okinawa that mesh traditional dance and digital entertainment.

Roland Kelts is a Tokyo-based Japanese-American writer, journalist, scholar and authority on Japanese and Western cultures. His best-selling first book, *JAPANAMERICA*, is considered the ultimate guide to Japan's pop culture juggernaut — required reading for many Hollywood producers, artists and academics worldwide. His writing is published in *The New Yorker*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Guardian*, *The New York Times*, *Zoetrope: All Story*, *The Times Literary Supplement* and others, and he is a primary source on Japan for *CNN*, the *BBC*, *NPR* and *NHK*. He is also a columnist for *The Japan Times*, a contributing editor of *MONKEY: New Writing from Japan*, and a professor at Waseda University in Tokyo. He has given speeches on Japan for think tanks, embassies, universities, pop culture conventions and private events in the US, Europe and Asia, including TED Talks and The World Economic Forum. Kelts has taught at The University of Tokyo, New York University, Columbia University and Sophia University. He has won several awards and fellowships, including a 2017 Nieman Fellowship in Journalism at Harvard University.

William Tsutsui is an award-winning scholar and teacher, specializing in the economic, environmental, and cultural history of modern Japan. Educated at Harvard, Oxford, and Princeton Universities, he has published widely on Japanese popular culture and globalization, the Japan's postwar "imagination of disaster," and giant monster movies in Japan and the United States. His 2004 book *Godzilla on My Mind: Fifty Years of the King of Monsters* was called a "cult classic" by the *New York Times* and a Japanese translation was published by Chūkō sōsho. He has received Fulbright and Marshall Fellowships and was awarded the John Whitney Hall Prize of the Association for Asian Studies in 2000. He currently serves as President and Professor of History at Ottawa University, and previously taught at the University

of Kansas, Southern Methodist University, and Hendrix College. In 2020-2021, he was the Edwin O. Reischauer Distinguished Visiting Professor at Harvard.

About the *Living Traditions* Series

Many of today's most popular and newest trends are rooted in ancient Japanese tradition going back centuries, if not millennia. Through five distinct, single-topic webinars, the *Living Traditions* series unravels the historical journeys of some of the most iconic facets of Japanese culture through conversations between thought-provoking experts and cultural stewards on how they maintain deep-rooted traditions in the present day. [Japanese Pop Culture: Connecting the World through Manga and Anime](#) is the fifth and final event of the five-part Living Traditions series.

About Japan Society

Japan Society is the premier organization connecting Japanese arts, culture, business, and society with audiences in New York and around the world. At Japan Society, we are inspired by the Japanese concept of *kizuna* (絆)—forging deep connections to bind people together. We are committed to telling the story of Japan while strengthening connections within New York City and building new bridges beyond. In over 100 years of work, we've inspired generations by establishing ourselves as pioneers in supporting international exchanges in arts and culture, business and policy, as well as education between Japan and the U.S. We strive to convene important conversations on topics that bind our two countries together, champion the next generation of innovative creators, promote mutual understanding, and serve as a trusted guide for people everywhere who seek to appreciate the rich complexities and abundance of Japan more fully. From our New York headquarters, a landmark building designed by architect Junzo Yoshimura that opened to the public in 1971, we look forward to the years ahead, which will be defined by our digital and ideational impact through the *kizuna* that we build. Our future can only be enhanced by learning from our peers and engaging with our audiences, both near and afar.

This year, Japan Society is celebrating our heritage through the 50th anniversary of our landmark building with the launch of a new distinct modern logo and visual identity. The “JS” monogram is created via overlapping, interconnected lines, and shapes, reinforcing the idea of *kizuna* and that Japan Society acts as a platform that connects across, cultures, people, and time.

Connect With Us!

Follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#), and [YouTube](#). For further information, please visit www.japansociety.org.

About Portland Japanese Garden

[Portland Japanese Garden](#) is a nonprofit organization originally founded in 1963 as a place for cross-cultural understanding following World War II. A hallmark in the City of Portland, the Garden was founded on the ideals of peace and mutual understanding between peoples and cultures. Portland Japanese Garden is considered the most authentic Japanese garden outside

of Japan and offers programming that seeks to use Japanese gardens, arts, and culture as a lens for engaging diverse people and helping them transcend their differences to embrace commonalities. The Garden is a place for convening and collaborating across the community and globe, attracting nearly half a million visitors each year. Follow the Garden on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#), and [YouTube](#).

Living Traditions webinar series is co-presented with Portland Japanese Garden and supported by the Government of Japan. Talks+ Programs at Japan Society are generously sponsored by MUFG (Mitsubishi UFJ Financial Group) and ORIX Corporation USA. Additional support is provided by an anonymous donor, the Sandy Heck Lecture Fund, and Helen and Kenneth A. Cowin.

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