



**INTERNATIONAL MOTION PICTURE CO., INC.**

Shirakawa Bldg., 5F-E, 3-23-6 Nishi-Shimbashi, Minato-ku, Tokyo 105-0003 Japan  
Tel: +81-3-5405-7401. Fax: F: +81-3-5405-3130.  
<http://www.impc.jp>

**Japan Video Topics 2009/2010 No.7 January '10 English Summary**

**The Miniature Appeal of *Netsuke***

**3'51"**

Most Japanese have a small ornament hanging from their cellphone strap. This modern trend is in fact an old tradition, originating in 17th century *netsuke* - tiny toggles used to secure pouches or boxes to kimono sashes. At first these were functional objects, necessary to carry items on a pocketless kimono, but custom designs became fashionable and antique *netsuke* are highly valued for their artistic beauty. Modern *netsuke* designers continue to find new uses for this old idea.

**Nature's Beauty at Lake Akan**

**3'51"**

Lake Akan, in eastern Hokkaido, is a beautiful lake set among mountains and primeval forest that has become a popular year-round leisure destination. One unusual pastime is to sit in tents to fish through holes in the ice when the lake freezes in winter. This also the home of unusual green spheres of algae called *marimo*. Formed by the rare conditions in the lake, *marimo* found here are larger than anywhere else in the world. A festival at the lakeside town features songs and dances in praise of nature by the local Ainu people.

**Keeping Frozen Cells Alive – CAS**

**3'30"**

CAS stands for Cells Alive System, a revolutionary freezing technology that's now practically available. CAS freezes without destroying cellular structure - CAS frozen flowers will even begin blooming again after defrosting. This makes a huge difference to the taste, color and texture of frozen food products. Conventional flash freezing breaks down cells, so much taste is lost in liquid runoff after defrosting. Chefs are welcoming this technology, especially for marine products to be served raw far from the sites where they are frozen.

***Wazuma* – Japanese Traditional Magic**

**3'43"**

Japanese stage magic is possibly one of the oldest in the world, originating as far back as the 8th century and with manuals of techniques surviving from 300 years ago. Old woodblock prints show *wazuma* magicians performing the same tricks you can see on stage today – illusions using traditional Japanese items such as *washi* paper, folding fans and of course, gorgeous kimonos. Most spectacular is the *mizugei*, where performers dexterously manipulate spouting columns of water.

## The Miniature Appeal of *Netsuke*

3'51"

### 01 (Cell phone)

In Japan, almost everyone has a strap on their cell phone with some kind of ornament on the end.

### 02 (Old print)

This is actually a tradition dating back to the 17th century, when people began using objects called *netsuke*. Because *kimono* have no pockets, people in those days carried things in small pouches or boxes, suspended by cords from their *kimono* sashes.

### 03 (Hands and belt)

*Netsuke* are small toggles attached to the end of the cord, to stop it slipping out of the sash.

### 04 (White circle)

It became fashionable to decorate these functional objects, and today *netsuke* are widely collected for their artistic and antique value. Widely varying motifs were chosen to reflect the personalities of their owners.

### 05 (Hand holding netsuke)

This unique example shows a monkey fighting an octopus. *Netsuke* were designed to look beautiful from any angle. The detail is amazing – we can clearly see each sucker on the octopus's tentacles.

### 06 (Hand holding netsuke)

This is a *karasu-tengu*, an imaginary creature, half-man, half-bird. It's shown just emerging from its egg. Because of the way they were used, *netsuke* are usually rounded in shape, with no sharp angles.

### 07 (Rabbit)

Made from materials as diverse as wood, bone and lacquer, *netsuke* were made in an enormous variety of colors and textures.

### 08 (Four netsuke)

And *netsuke* are still made today. Using all kinds of new designs and materials, they are called "contemporary *netsuke*" to distinguish them from the "antique *netsuke*" produced between the 17th and 19th centuries.

### 09 (Red airplane)

Today's designers often favor unusual motifs, like this airplane and this colorful rabbit.

### 10 (Glass)

Glass is another popular contemporary material. Here the artist has used glass to portray a jellyfish swimming in water.

### 11 (Hand holding netsuke)

In addition to the artistry of their designs, contemporary *netsuke* are still shaped and sized to be used as functional accessories.

### 12 (Threading cord)

And designers continue to find new practical ways to use them.

### 13 (Craftsman)

Today's *netsuke* are produced the same way as they were 400 years ago, with each detail painstakingly carved by hand.

### 14 (Interview - M)

"They may be tiny, but if you really examine a *netsuke* closely, it draws you in and makes an even bigger impression than much larger ornaments. For me, this is one of the main attractions of *netsuke* and it's why I think I'll always enjoy creating them."

### 15 (Sumo netsuke)

Originating in the 17th century as practical accessories, *netsuke* are now highly appreciated for their artistic qualities.

### 16 (Frog)

Tiny and exquisitely detailed, *netsuke* are a concise expression of the Japanese sense of beauty.

## Nature's Beauty at Lake Akan

3'51"

### 01 (Map)

Lake Akan, near Kushiro in eastern Hokkaido.

### 02 (Forest from air)

This beautiful lake, set among mountains and primeval forest, is a popular year-round leisure destination.

### 03 (Tents)

In winter, when the lake freezes over, people come to catch small fish through holes in the ice.

### 04 (Fish on ice)

Every season brings fresh ways to enjoy nature at Lake Akan.

### 05 (Pan L over lake)

This lake is the only place in Japan where a rare organism grows – the mysterious green spheres called *marimo*. The easiest way to see *marimo* is at the visitor center on an island at the north of the lake.

#### 06 (Interior)

*Marimo* are entirely composed of filaments of algae, and grow using photosynthesis.

#### 07 (Moving balls)

Their beautiful spherical shape is caused by gentle waves produced by the lake's volcanic springs. It's a rare phenomenon, and nowhere else in the world do *marimo* grow as large as here. Big ones reach 30 centimeters across.

#### 08 (Zoom back from bird)

Every October, the Marimo Festival is held at the town beside Lake Akan. The festival centers on the Ainu people, who have long lived around this lake.

#### 09 (Dancers)

The festival expresses their gratitude for the blessings of nature.

#### 10 (Headman)

The Ainu headman makes offerings in thanks for the continuing health of the *marimo*.

#### 11 (Lake)

His people have always respected and lived in harmony with nature. Watching the Ainu traditional dances, visitors can appreciate their lifestyle and love of Lake Akan's nature.

#### 12 (Dancers)

These dancers are imitating the mating rituals of the Japanese crane.

#### 13 (Two musicians)

This performer is playing an Ainu mouth harp called the *mukkuri*. It's a versatile instrument used to express natural sounds like the wind or river waters, or human emotions such as the feelings of a young girl for her lover.

#### 14 (Archer)

In this dance, a hunter deep in the mountains spots a bird high above. Amazed by the bird's beauty, all thoughts of shooting it vanish from his mind.

#### 15 (Lake and mountain)

The beauty of Lake Akan casts a similar spell, capturing each visitor's heart with its amazing natural beauty.

## Keeping Frozen Cells Alive - CAS

3'30"

### 01 (Interior)

A room full of freezers. But not the kind of freezers you know. These use a revolutionary new technology called the Cells Alive System, or CAS, which allows materials to be frozen for storage without destroying their cellular structure.

### 02 (Fish in plastic tray)

These fish have been frozen and stored in a conventional freezer.

### 03 (Chopsticks)

Defrosting causes liquid to leak from the fish and much of the flavor is lost.

### 04 (CAS fish)

When CAS frozen fish are defrosted, we see almost no liquid. This is because CAS doesn't break down the fishes' cells during freezing.

### 05 (Diagram)

In conventional freezing, the material freezes from the surface inward. During this process, water molecules in the interior are absorbed into the outer ice, which breaks down the cell structure.

### 06 (Diagram 2)

In CAS freezing, the material is quickly and uniformly frozen. No cell breakdown occurs, and the material's freshness and taste is preserved.

### 07 (Pouring water)

With CAS technology, we can chill water to below zero degrees without becoming ice. A slight stimulation causes instant freezing.

### 08 (Frozen water)

Instant, uniform freezing like this avoids the problem of cell breakdown and preserves materials in their original state.

### 09 (Interview - M)

"We have been developing freezing technology for a long time. I realized that the key to retaining flavor and nutrition was to preserve the cell structure. Conventional flash freezing always breaks down cells. So we focused on developing a technology to freeze while keeping the cells intact."

### 10 (Two trays of meat)

Two samples of defrosted frozen meat. The conventionally frozen meat has a poor color and has dried out around the edges. The CAS frozen meat looks fresh and juicy.

### 11 (Edamame)

If you look closely at these defrosted green soybeans, you can see how CAS freezing has even preserved their fine downy hairs.

12 (Worker in blue)

CAS technology has a wide range of applications.

13 (Continued)

It's especially suitable for preserving the freshness of marine products frozen far from their final markets.

14 (Continued)

CAS is so effective at retaining freshness and flavor that chefs are welcoming it even for foods that will be served raw.

15 (Hand and flower)

In a world first, CAS technology has been successfully used to freeze flowers that continued to bloom after defrosting.

16 (Continued)

This revolutionary Japanese freezing technology has now left the laboratory and is becoming widely available for practical applications.

### ***Wazuma* – Japanese Traditional Magic**

**3'43"**

01 (Magician)

The traditional Japanese magic art of *wazuma* originated as far back as the 8th century, and was enormously popular in the 1800s. *Wazuma* features many uniquely Japanese magic techniques, with gorgeous traditional costumes, accessories and stage scenery.

02 (String of paper squares)

The magician places a rolled-up ball of paper on his fan. Watch carefully and see if you can spot the instant the paper transforms into an egg.

03 (Old book)

The same trick is described in the oldest surviving *wazuma* manual, written over 300 years ago.

04 (Open book)

Of all the world's stage magic traditions, *wazuma* is unique in having such a long oral and written transmission.

05 (Rings)

Here the magician joins and separates metal rings.

06 (Print)

We can see this trick in woodblock prints from 200 years ago.

07 (Interview - M)

"There are lots of records showing the old magicians doing these tricks. I base my performances on the old manuals, and at the same time I also enjoy thinking up new ways to entertain my audiences."

08 (Magician and assistant)

Accompanied by comical banter with his assistant, the magician amazes his audience by making red balls vanish and reappear.

09 (Water show)

Perhaps the most gorgeous act is *mizugei*, or the water show. Backed by musicians, the performers use the entire, highly decorated stage to demonstrate amazing tricks using water sprays.

10 (Pan R)

An art where every gesture and stage device utilizes unique traditional magical skills, *wazuma* remains a popular family entertainment today.

## Japan Video Topics 2009/2010 No.7 January, Contact List

### **The Miniature Appeal of Netsuke**

Hanakagesho

Rainnezu 202, Nezu 1-1-14, Bunkyo-ku, Tokyo

113-0031 JAPAN

TEL: 03-3827-1323

<http://www.hanakagesho.com/>

Sagemonoya

Yotsuya 4-28-20-704, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo

160-0004 JAPAN

TEL: 03-3352-6286

<http://www.netsuke.com/>

Tobacco & Salt Museum

Jinnan 1-16-8, Shibuya-ku, Tokyo

150-0041 JAPAN

TEL: 03-3476-2041

<http://www.jti.co.jp/Culture/museum/Welcome.html>

### **Nature's Beauty at Lake Akan**

Akan Tourism Association & Community Development Promotion Organization

Akan-Ko Onsen 2-6-20, Akan-cho, Kushiro-shi, Hokkaido

085-0467 JAPAN

TEL: 0154-67-3200

<http://www.lake-akan.com/en/index.html>

The Akan Ainu Industrial Arts Association

Akan-Ko Onsen 4-7-19, Akan-cho, Kushiro-shi, Hokkaido

085-0467 JAPAN

TEL: 0154-67-2727

<http://www.marimo.or.jp/~akanainu/info.html>

### **Keeping Frozen Cells Alive – CAS**

ABI Co., Ltd.

Judayu 238-1, Nagareyama-shi, Chiba

270-0133 JAPAN

<http://www.abi-net.co.jp/>



Furusato Ama Co., Ltd.  
Fukui 1365-5, Oaza, Ama-cho, Ogi-gun, Shimane  
684-0404 JAPAN  
TEL: 08514-2-1105  
<http://www.ama-cas.com/>

**Wazuma – Japanese Traditional Magic**

Wazuma Shikkaiya  
Ishizaka 291, Hatoyama-cho, Saitama  
350-0311 JAPAN  
TEL: 049-298-3961  
<http://www.wazuma.jp>