



## Center for Japanese Studies 50th Anniversary *Hybrid Japan*

### **The Pacific War Revisited: Letters from Iwo Jima and Clint Eastwood** **January 23, 2009**

[Pacific War Revisited: Scholar's View of "Letters from Iwo Jima" — Symposium \(Video Archive\)](#)

[Pacific War Revisited: "Letters from Iwo Jima" — Interview & Award Ceremony \(Video Archive\)](#)

[All 50th Anniversary Events Video Archive](#)

On Friday, January 23rd, 2009, the Center for Japanese Studies presented a program on the "Pacific War Revisited" with a panel of distinguished scholars of Japanese film studies and Japanese history who commented on the critically acclaimed film, *Letters from Iwo Jima*. Panelists included **Takashi Fujitani** (Professor, UC San Diego), **Carol Gluck** (Professor, Columbia University), and **Akira Mizuta Lippit** (Professor, University of Southern California). Takahashi commented on the limits of using film, such as *Letters from Iwo Jima* and other Japanese colonial films, as a strategy for constituting new boundaries of inclusion in terms of sympathy, and the boundaries of diversity in the military on both sides. Gluck spoke on the importance of film all over the world in the public memory of World War II, and how every country has a national story or heroic narrative, formed during or immediately after the war, that is extremely long lasting. She suggested that cinema, like *Letters from Iwo Jima*, has the ability to depict the "truth," not the "reality," of war by occupying a middle level between academic history and heroic narrative which has the ability to convey a truth about history that is lost in a discussion of facts. Lippit commented on *Letters from Iwo Jima* and the history of the representation of Japan in Hollywood films. He suggests that Americans have become lost in their own cinema, as in *Lost in Translation* where the characters discover themselves as lost in Tokyo. In *Letters from Iwo Jima*, Americans disappear into this space of Japan that is not a historical Japan, but a particular signifier of Japan that is there to absorb a certain inability to reflect American-ness at a time when American-ness becomes completely unimaginable. The discussion was moderated by **Andrew Barshay** (Professor, UC Berkeley).

The panel discussion was followed by a screening of *Letters from Iwo Jima*, with post-screening comments by the film's director, **Clint Eastwood**, who was interviewed by **Duncan Williams** (Chair, Center for Japanese Studies). Clint Eastwood's *Flags of Our Father* and *Letters from Iwo Jima* depicted one of the most horrific WWII battles in the Pacific theater from both the American and Japanese points of view. *Letters from Iwo Jima*, based on letters written by General Tadamichi Kuribayashi (portrayed in the film by Ken Watanabe), is the first major Hollywood film on the Pacific War that managed to portray the Japanese from the perspective of ordinary soldiers and as fellow human beings.

The days events came to a close with a reception and ceremony at the Berkeley Art Museum where Clint Eastwood was honored by the Center for Japanese Studies with the **2009-2010 Berkeley Japan New Vision Award** for furthering mutual understanding between the US and Japan through his film *Letters from Iwo Jima*. The Berkeley Japan New Vision Award is a prize the Center for Japanese Studies awards to an individual who has, in recent times, dramatically transformed our vision of Japan. A toast was offered by UC Berkeley Chancellor **Robert Birgeneau** following the ceremony.

## Event Program: January 23, 2009

### Symposium

#### THE PACIFIC WAR REVISITED: SCHOLARS' VIEW ON *LETTERS FROM IWO JIMA*

Location: Berkeley Art Museum Theater, UC Berkeley

Time: 2:00pm-4:00pm

#### OPENING REMARKS

**Duncan Williams** (Chair, Center for Japanese Studies)

#### INTRODUCTION

**Andrew Barshay** (History, UC Berkeley)

#### PANEL DISCUSSION

"Cinematic Representations of Ourselves and Those We Kill: *Letters from Iwo Jima* to Japanese Colonial Films"

**Takashi Fujitani** (History, UC San Diego)

"Letters from History"

**Carol Gluck** (History, Columbia University)

"The History of the Representation of Japan in Hollywood Films"

**Akira Mizuta Lippit** (Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California)

Moderated by **Andrew Barshay**

Co-sponsored by: Department of History



### Film Screening

#### LETTERS FROM IWO JIMA AND CLINT EASTWOOD IN PERSON

Location: Pacific Film Archive Theater

Time: 4:00pm-6:30pm

#### OPENING REMARKS

**Duncan Williams** (Chair, Center for Japanese Studies)

#### FILM SCREENING

*Letters from Iwo Jima* (Warner Bros., 2006, 141 min, with English subtitles)

#### POST-SCREENING COMMENTS AND AUDIENCE QUESTION & ANSWER

**Clint Eastwood** in person

Hosted by **Duncan Williams**

Co-sponsored by: Pacific Film Archive



Clint Eastwood on stage at the Pacific Film Archive Theater offering comments on his film, *Letters from Iwo Jima*

## **THE INAUGURAL BERKELEY JAPAN NEW VISION AWARD CEREMONY**

Location: Berkeley Art Museum, UC Berkeley

Time: 6:30pm-8:30pm

### **OPENING REMARKS**

**Duncan Williams** (Chair, Center for Japanese Studies)

### **AWARD CEREMONY**

**2009-2010 Berkeley Japan New Vision Award: Clint Eastwood**

### **ACCEPTANCE SPEECH**

**Clint Eastwood**

### **REMARKS & TOAST**

UC Berkeley Chancellor **Robert Birgeneau**



*The inaugural Berkeley Japan New Vision Award presented to Clint Eastwood by CJS Chair Duncan Williams (right) and Chancellor Robert Birgeneau (left).*