

# Shoseian "Whispering Pine" Teahouse

**Brand Library Park 1601 West Mountain St., Glendale, CA 91201**



## **"The Sakura Obsession"** **Guest Lecturer: Ms. Naoko Abe** **Japanese journalist based in London** **Sunday, April 21, 2019**

**2 PM – 4 PM**

### **The remarkable history of the Japanese cherry blossom tree.**

Cherry blossoms originated in Japan more than 2,000 years ago, and can now be seen all over the world. The role of sakura in Japanese history has been checkered and not always positive. Our guest will explain how the incredible diversity of cherry blossoms, which evolved during the two centuries when Japan was essentially closed to foreigners, was forgotten in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. She'll explain how and why cherry varieties became in danger of extinction after Japan became focused on modernization and industrialization, and how an English plant hunter, Collingwood Ingram, warned Japan's elite in 1926 that the nation was in danger of losing these national treasures. Naoko will also talk about how cherry blossoms were used as an ideological symbol during the Pacific War. And she'll give a brief history of how Japanese cherries came to the U.S. and spread throughout the country.

Ms. Abe's latest book, [THE SAKURA OBSESSION - The Incredible Story of the Plant Hunter Who Saved Japan's Cherry Blossoms](#) is available from Penguin Random House

**This event is free.**

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