

The Japan Foundation Asia Center Projects

The Japan Foundation Asia Center established in October 1995 with the objective of building more intimate relations between Japan and the ASEAN countries and to cultivate common values in Asia where diverse cultures exist. It is a developmental reorganization of the “Japan Foundation ASEAN Culture Center” that originally introduced the cultures of ASEAN countries. The major objectives are the following:

- (1) Promotion of mutual understanding through dialogues and exchange among all social strata of the Asian countries
- (2) Promotion of joint operations beyond the borders to resolve common issues in the Asian countries.

1. Promotion of Intellectual Exchange in the Asian Region

The Asia Center plans and conducts surveys, researches, conferences, workshops and other international joint projects to promote mutual understanding and to resolve common issues in the Asian region, and provides support through open grant programs to research institutes, NPOs and NGOs.

(1) Support for international joint research

A. Co-Initiated Programs

<Examples of FY2003>

- **Forum of Japanese and Chinese researchers to contemplate Asia in the 21st century**

This was a forum for Japanese and Chinese researchers to discuss the relations between the two countries and relevant international relations. The axis of this forum was Japan-China relations in the Asia-Pacific Region in the 21st century. At the final forum held in Beijing, China in November 2003, the participants summarized the presentations and arguments of past forums and discussed the theme “Prospects for the future development of Japan-China relations: considering the future of East Asia”.

B. Grant programs

<Examples of FY2003>

- **“Resolution of domestic regional disputes and the role of NGOs: Indonesia as an example” (Japan-Indonesia NGO network, Japan)**
- **“Research on agricultural issues in Japan, China and Korea” (Agricultural Economics Department, People’s University, China)**

(2) Intellectual exchange seminars and conferences

A. Co-Initiated Programs

<Examples of FY2003>

- **Asia Media Forum 2003 “Cooperative relations between Japan and ASEAN: Prospects for the coming 30 years”**

This was a project where journalists from various media, policy makers and researchers who have an influential role in policy making and public opinion forming met together with the objective of formulating a network beyond borders and fields through frank discussions and opinion exchange on the conditions and future issues in the relations between Japan and ASEAN. The second forum in FY2003 was hosted by the Strategic International Issue Research Institute of Indonesia and held in Jakarta in December 2003.

B. Grant programs

<Examples of FY2003>

- **“Japan-ASEAN Colloquium” (Japan Studies Center, Strategic International Issue Research Institute, Malaysia)**
- **“International Conference on Women and Immigrants in Asia” (Developing Countries Research Center, University of Delhi, India)**

(3) Next Generation Leaders Fellowship

<Examples of FY2003>

- **Next Generation Leaders Fellowship (dispatch)**

This fellowship program was established to offer opportunities for graduate students in the human and social science fields studying the Asian Region and for officials of NPO engaged in joint projects with Asian countries to stay in the Asian Region for surveys and researches. In FY2003, the Asia Center dispatched nine Fellows to Thailand, the Philippines, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos and China.

- **Asia Leadership Fellowship (invitation)**

The Asia Center selects several mainstay learned persons with influential power in the Asian countries invites them to Japan as Fellows and offers the opportunity to discuss and study common themes in their fields of interest. The Asia Center invited seven Fellows who are active in the fields of academics, journalism, arts, NGO activities, etc. from China, Korea, Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand, Cambodia and India, and conducted workshops, seminars and studies in the themes of interest for each Fellow with the comprehensive theme “Identity, security and democracy” in FY2003.

(4) Support for Asian Region Research Centers

<Examples of FY2003>

● **Southeast Asia studies regional exchange**

The Asia Center managed and conducted a (1) language education program, (2) study encouragement fellowship for masters and doctoral courses and (3) regional joint study promotion program in cooperation with the SEASREP Council and Toyota Foundation

(5) Support for Japan-Southwest Asia Joint Intellectual Project

<Examples of FY2003>

● **Japan-India Authors' Caravan**

The Asia Center supported a program for dialog between distinguished men of letters in Japan and India that was planned and conducted by the Japan-India Authors' Caravan Executive Committee.

In FY2003, the last year of this three-year program, five authors visited Japan from India in November 2003 to further discuss issues of contemporary literature with Japanese authors, attended a symposium focusing on common issues in universities in Japan and India and gave an open reading recital.

(6) Northeast Asia Intellectual Leaders' Dialog

<Examples of FY2003>

● **Japan-China-Korea Forum**

Ten to twelve leaders and learned persons assembled in Seoul in November 2003 and discussed the dynamism in culture, politics and economy in Japan, China and Korea, security conditions in the Korean Peninsula and movements of major powers, prospects in regional cooperation in Northeast Asia and the roles of the three countries.

2. Structuring of Cultural Foundation in Asian Countries

The Asia Center preserves and promotes tangible and intangible cultural heritages that are in danger of extinction in Asian countries, and conducts dispatches, invitations, on-site investigations, workshops, etc. with the objective of making use of such indigenous traditional culture in contemporary society.

(1) Support for preservation of cultural treasures

A. Co-Initiated Programs

<Example of FY2003>

● **International symposium "Cultural heritages, identity and IT: Exploitation of Angkor Wat and 3D technology"**

The Asia Center supported an international symposium with the theme of how 3D technology would work on the study,

preservation, restoration and exploitation of heritages, hosted by the Asian Human Resource Education and Research Center, Sophia University at Siem Reap in March 2004. Thirty researchers and specialists from nine countries including Japan, Asian countries, European countries and the United States assembled to give presentations and discuss the current conditions and prospects of information technology, cultural heritages, identify, local culture, 3D technology, cultural heritage management issues, exploitation of information technology, global networks, etc.

B. Grant programs

<Examples of FY2003>

● **"Popularization of Historical Materials of the Aka Tribe" (Project for Culture and Development of Mountainous Tribes in Asia, Highland Research Institute)**

● **"International Research Conference on Preservation and Popularization of Classical Documents of Laos" (Laos National Central Library, Laos)**

(2) Traditional Cultural Promotion Activists Workshop

A. Co-Initiated Programs

<Example of FY2003>

● **"Theatre Training and Research in Asia" program**

The third year was the last year of the support program for the "Theatre Training and Research Programme" conducted by the Academy of Performing Arts (Singapore) since January 2001. The Asia Center supported projects comprising lectures and workshops on Indonesian performing arts and Japanese Noh.

B. Grant programs

<Examples of FY2003>

● **"Workshop for preparation of the environment and structuring of a preservation network for historical cities in Central and Northern Asia" (Keio University, Japan)**

● **"Asian Cultural Heritage Field School" (Malaysian Institute of Technology, Malaysia)**

(3) Invitation and dispatch for secondary school students by Asian Youth Cultural Scholarship

In FY2003, twenty students from the five countries Korea, the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand studied in high schools in Japan as 8th-term students, and nine Japanese high school students studied in high schools in the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand as 7th-term students and two students studied in a high school in Korea as 3rd-term students.



International Research Conference on Preservation and Popularization of Classical Documents of Laos



Asian Cultural Heritage Field School

(4) Preparatory training for graduate school students with the Asian Youth Cultural Scholarship

This program provides preparatory training mainly through Japanese-Language for graduates and students of graduate schools in Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, Singapore, Brunei, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Bangladesh, a total of eleven countries, who are to study in Japan. Eighteen students and graduates completed the preparatory training as 8th-term students and entered graduate schools in Japan in FY2003.

3. Okinawa International Forum

The Asia Center hosts periodical forums in Okinawa as an opportunity for international intellectual dialogs on common issues in the Asia-Pacific Region. This is a joint program with the Okinawa Prefecture that in FY1998 on the basis of the results of the international forum “To consider intellectual and cultural international contribution by Okinawa” in November 1997.

The Asia Center hosted a forum in FY2003 with the theme “Utaki (sacred sites) of Okinawa and sacred areas in Asia: Considering community formation exploiting cultural heritages” in March 2004. The Asia Center invited specialists and NGO activists engaged in preservation and succession of intangible cultural heritages in Asian countries to consider the ideal community formation style exploiting tangible and intangible cultural heritages with the themes “Utaki”, a cultural heritage indigenous to Okinawa, festivals, dances and other traditional arts.

4. Promotion of Understanding of Asia in Japan

(1) Performing arts programs

The Asia Center strives to deepen understanding of Asia in Japan through the introduction of mostly contemporary performing arts that express Asia, and to contribute to the development of performing arts in Asia and the formation of a network through joint creations.

<Example of FY2003>

- **“Provoking performing arts, South Asia: Three days to investigate contemporary performing arts in India, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Pakistan and Bangladesh”**

The Asia Center selected directors from the above five South Asian countries to collaborate on the creation of one work where everyone is equal and plays a central role in representing present-day Asia. The Asia Center conducted performances of small

works by the directors as well as lectures given by their speakers at the Japan Foundation Forum from February 27 to 29, which was an important opportunity for obtaining a bird’s-eye view of contemporary performing arts in South Asia that had rarely been presented in Japan.

	Director	Performed work	Lecturer
India	Abihilash Pillai	<i>Island of Blood</i>	Anuradha Kapur
Sri Lanka	Ruwanthie de Chickera	<i>Last Bus Eke Kathawa</i>	Neloufer del Mel
Nepal	Anup Baral	<i>Aanmaya</i>	Sunil Pokharel
Pakistan	Ibrahim Quraishi	<i>Nature /Paradise</i>	Fawzia Afzal-Khan
Bangladesh	Azad Abul Kalam	<i>Jhora Phool (The Bud Withers)</i>	Syed Jamil Ahmed

(2) Exhibitions

The Asia Center hosts art exhibitions on various themes to introduce the contemporary art of Asia to Japan, and plans and conducts symposiums on relevant themes.

<Examples of FY2003>

- **Asian Contemporary Art One-Artist Exhibition Series III “Lee Bul <World Stage>” (June 7 – July 13, 2003)**

This was the third in a series of one-artist exhibitions that introduce outstanding individual contemporary artists of Asia. The exhibition this year featured Lee Bul, a Korean artist who is active in the international art scene, and who presented a new work for this exhibition <World Stage>, other drawings and a monster series at the Japan Foundation Forum.

- **8th Asian Cartoon Exhibition “Reasons to Live For”**

The Asia Center hosted an exhibition of 88 new works by 13 leading cartoonists in eleven Asian countries (China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam) with the common theme “reasons to live for” at the Japan Foundation Forum in Tokyo. Each cartoonist expressed the “reasons to live for” discovered in the daily lives of the people living in Asia. The foundation lent out the works, and international exchange associations and local governments hosted this exhibition in Mito, Tokushima, Kodaira, Saitama-shi, etc.



Okinawa International Forum

- **“Out the Window” Exhibition (January 10 – February 15, 2004)**

This was the second exhibition jointly planned by young curators in Asia. This time, three curators from China, Korea and Japan selected 45 artists mostly working with photographs and image works, and exhibited them through installation and single-channel screening at the Japan Foundation Forum.

- (3) **Film programs**

The Asia Center has acquired the rights to screen a number of works shown at the Thai Film Festival and the Southeast Asia Film Festival and plans to tour up until 2006.

<Examples of FY2003>

- **Thai Film Festival**

The Asia Center hosted the “Thai Film Festival” at the Japan Foundation Forum to introduce recent dynamic Thai films to Japan with support from the Thai Embassy in Japan and others as part of the 2003 project commemorating Japan-ASEAN Year.

- **Southeast Asia Film Festival**

The Asia Center hosted the “Southeast Asian Film Festival” at the Japan Foundation Forum jointly with the General Library of Fukuoka City and others as part of the 2003 project commemorating Japan-ASEAN Year.

- **Asian Film Lecture 11: Afghanistan in Films**

The Asia Center hosted the lecture “Afghanistan in Films” that featured Afghanistan on its way to recovery as the 11th Asian film lecture that combines screening of films and lectures at the Japan Foundation Forum.

- (4) **“Lecture for Understanding Asia”**

The Asia Center conducted the “lectures for understanding Asia”, serialized lectures introducing the culture, society, history, etc. of Asian countries. The Asia Center conducted a total of ten courses in the spring, autumn and winter of FY2003.

- **1st period (May – July)**

“Interesting Asian cultural heritage: Touring the “wisdom” of Asia”

“Let’s learn about ASEAN”

“Media culture interlacing ‘Asia’”

- **2nd period (September – December)**

“Let’s learn about Tibet”

“‘Citizens’ society’: What we can see in that composition”

“Looking into the tea culture in Asia”

- **3rd period (January – March)**

“Let’s learn about Laos”

“Modern and contemporary literature in India: Feeling the

heart and life of the people”

“Let’s learn about Bhutan”

“Agricultural problems in East Asia: Shortage, difference in income and restructuring”

- (5) **Lecture series by Asian authors commemorating Takeshi Kaiko (lecture 13)**

The Asia Center hosts lectures inviting authors from Asian countries through contributions donated by the family of the late author Takeshi Kaiko and offers the opportunity to participate in exchange with Japanese authors. This was the 13th lecture in the series. The Asia Center invited Pal Vannariraks a Cambodian author, for a two-week stay, and hosted her lectures with the title “Cambodia of a female author who lived through the tempestuous contemporary history” in Yamanashi, Kumamoto and Tokyo.

- (6) **Information exchange programs**

- A. **Management of the Asia Center Library**

The Asia Center manages the “Japan Foundation Asia Center Library”, a specialized library with the policy of collecting books on Asian culture and art, mostly of the Southeast Asian region. The collection includes around 7,500 books, 30 titles of newspapers, 180 titles of magazines, 90 titles of leaflets and around 1,400 CDs and videotapes, all available to the general public for reference.

- B. **Publication of Asia Center Newsletter**

The Asia Center publishes the newsletter *Asia Center News* with the objective of promoting understanding of Asia in Japan and publicizing the projects of the Asia Center. In FY2003, the Asia Center published 5,000 copies of No. 24 to 26.

The feature article of each issue is as follows:

No. 24: “Japan and 10 ASEAN countries connected with pops”

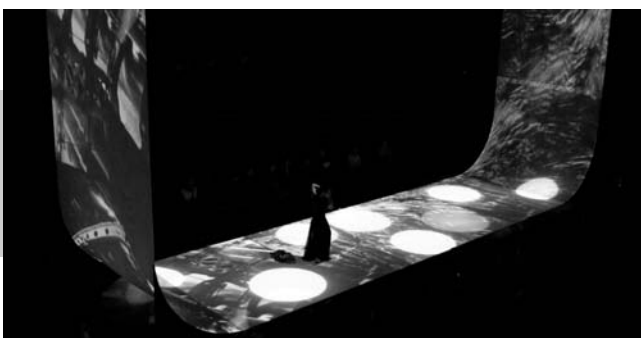
No. 25: “Christianity in Southeast Asia”

No. 26: “Future of Asian projects: feasibilities”

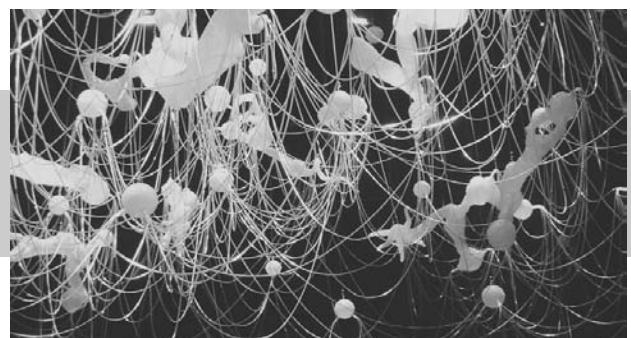
The newsletters deepen the interest in Asian art culture, current issues, etc. and have obtained a wide range of readers interested in this learning opportunity.

5. Grant Programs for Grassroots Exchange in Asia

The objectives of this program include expansion of the subject areas of “support for grassroots exchange programs for the Year of Japan-ROK National Exchange” that started in the Year of



Nature/Paradise (Pakistan)

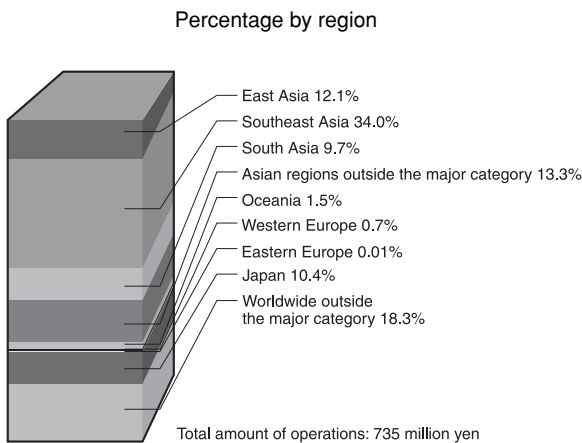


Lee Bul <World Stage>, Photograph by Keizo Kioku

Japan-ROK National Exchange 2002, the deepening of mutual understanding of the people of Japan and other Asian countries and the promotion of friendly relations. The Asia Center granted programs for part of the expenses of 82 exchange projects on the citizen and local levels between Japan and other Asian countries.

<Examples of FY2003>

- 7th Plenary Session of the Japan-India Students Conference (7th-term Japan-India Student Conference)
- “Returning the Favor with a Flying Wheelchair” (Flying Wheelchair Supporting Committee)
- “Clothes and Handcrafts in Asia” exhibition: Sharing with Asian people (Asia Female Independence Project)
- “Japan-China-Korea Environment NGO Joint Workshop”: Looking into environmental NGOs in China (East Asia Environmental Information Transmission Office)
- Japan-Korea exchange project to enlarge the circle of support for independence for the handicapped (Independence Support Center, Osaka)



Lee Bul <World Stage> (below) and <Sirene> (above), Photograph by Keizo Kioku