

The background of the page is a vibrant, textured pattern. It features a mix of floral motifs, including stylized flowers and paisley designs, in shades of orange, yellow, and red. The patterns are layered and overlapping, creating a rich, traditional aesthetic. The text is overlaid on a semi-transparent white rectangular area in the upper right quadrant.

## Arts and Cultural Exchange

Impressions transcending differences in language form a wellspring that promotes understanding of Japan by generating interest in and fellow feeling for the country. Seeking to provide such opportunities, the Japan Foundation introduces a wide range of Japanese arts and culture to people in other countries. With programs covering the arts, including fine arts, music, theater, and films, and the culture of everyday life such as food and fashion, the Foundation produces artistic and cultural exchange activities worldwide and helps build international networks in each field.

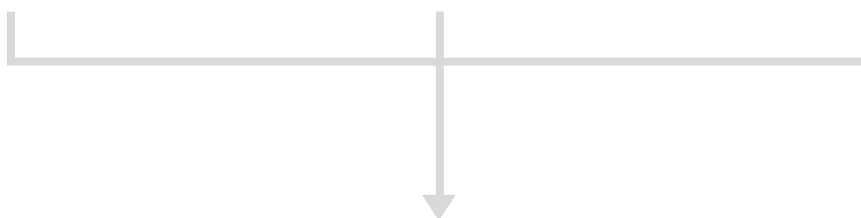
# Arts and Cultural Exchange

## Linking Japanese Arts and Culture with the World

The Japan Foundation organizes arts and culture programs designed to encourage understanding in Japanese values. Working in the four principal fields—visual arts, performing arts, films and publications, and culture and society—it promotes greater cultural links between Japan and the rest of the world.

## Providing Information and Building Networks

Effective sharing of information and vibrant networks of artists are the keys to successful cultural and artistic exchanges. The Japan Foundation supports both by providing resources and opportunities. It offers the latest information on performing arts, literature, and films through its website and newsletters, and coordinates exhibitions and trade fairs.



## Visual Arts

The Japan Foundation works with domestic and international museums to produce both major exhibitions with an extensive display, and small-scale traveling exhibits with individual themes like contemporary art, photography, craft, and architecture. It also promotes Japanese art and artists by participating in international exhibitions, funding Japanese art exhibits held abroad, and organizing exchange programs for artists and art professionals.

## Performing Arts

The Japan Foundation introduces various Japanese performing arts, from the traditional such as Kabuki and Bunraku, to contemporary dance, theater and pop music to overseas audiences. It works on international collaborative projects, supports artists and art organizations by providing grants and networking opportunities, and manages the website *performingarts.jp*.

## Culture and Society

The Japan Foundation organizes lectures, demonstrations, and workshops abroad designed to give people a first-hand experience of Japanese cultural practices rooted in daily life, such as the tea ceremony, Ikebana, and cooking. It also administers programs to assist cultural development in other countries, including sending experts to share their expertise on the preservation of cultural property or dispatching sports and music practitioners.

## Films and Publications

The Foundation aims to inspire interest in Japan through visual media and includes broadcasting Japan's TV programs overseas, providing grants for foreign-made films on Japan, holding film festivals, and supporting the screening of Japanese films at international film festivals. To promote Japanese literature, it publishes a newsletter, finances the translation and publication of Japanese books, and participates in international book fairs.

## China Center

Established in 2006 to facilitate youth exchange, the China Center manages three programs: the Long-Term Exchange Program for Chinese High School Students, in which Chinese students experience life in Japan for 11 months; the Centers for Face-to-Face Exchanges, a window for the latest information of Japan in China; and the Heart to Heart website, a platform to exchange views on blogs and message boards.





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1. "Tohoku Folk Performance Groups, Ondekoza Taiko & Musicians World Tour" Kuromori Kagura at Le Palais des Congrès de Paris / 2. Tohoku folk performance groups and Ondekoza Taiko & Musicians toured eight cities in the United States, France, and China. Workshops were held for children to make bamboo instruments prior to each performance, and the children also participated in the performances on stage. The photo is of the workshop in Los Angeles. Photo: Nobuyuki Okada / 3. Usuzawa Shishiodori in China / 4. Wakimizu Kagura performed in the U.S. (including the United Nations General Assembly Hall) / 5. "How Did Architects Respond Immediately after 3/11 – The Great East Japan Earthquake" exhibition at the Japan Cultural Institute in Paris, introducing more than 50 projects from emergency shelters to fully fledged recovery plans during the 12 months after the earthquake / 6. "Disaster and Tohoku, and its Culture" lecture in China by Professor Norio Akasaka of Gakushuin University / 7. DVD screenings of earthquake disaster documentaries, films set in Tohoku, and films on earthquakes and natural disasters held in 138 cities in 86 countries. The photo is of a screening at the Japan Society in New York Photo: Jonathan Slaif

## Organizing Various Exhibitions around the World to Introduce Japanese Arts and Culture Abroad

### ■ "Hokusai – Retrospective"

To celebrate the 150th anniversary of friendship between Japan and Germany, the Japan Foundation organized the "Hokusai – Retrospective" exhibition together with Tokyo's Sumida City and Nikkei Inc. Hokusai is renowned for his work such as *Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji: The Great Wave Off Kanagawa*, and the exhibition consisted of some 440 pieces including the collection belonging to Sumida City, where Hokusai was born, publications such as *Hokusai Manga* sketches, as well as original prints, drawings, woodblock prints, and the collection of the Museum of East Asian Art in Berlin. The exhibition offered a comprehensive look at Hokusai's 70 years of work which also had a major impact on impressionist artists. The opening ceremony welcomed Christian Wulff, President of Germany, and was a huge success, with long queues extending outside the museum. The number of total visitors exceeded 90,000 during the initial exhibition period, and since it was so well received, the period was extended by a week, showing just how popular Hokusai is in Europe.

Related projects were also held during the exhibition week: a lecture by the exhibition curator Seiji Nagata, and woodblock printing demonstrations by a craftsman of the Adachi Institute of Woodcut Prints, fascinating visitors with his skill.

[Martin-Gropius-Bau, Berlin, August 26 to October 31, 2011]

### ■ "Atsuko Tanaka. The Art of Connecting"

Atsuko Tanaka (1932-2005) has been attracting attention as a female artist representing the Gutai movement, the avant-garde art group of post-war Japan, not only in Japan but also abroad, and "The Art of Connecting" became her first full solo exhibition overseas.

Besides her signature piece *Denkifuku* (Electric Dress, 1956) with nearly 200 flickering electric lights, the exhibition featured some 100 pieces of selected work including paintings, collages, and filmed performances out of her many creative

activities spanning over half a century.

Starting in Birmingham in the United Kingdom, the exhibition traveled to Castellón, Spain, and then to Tokyo, embraced with great interest and excellent reviews by art critics at each stop. Educational programs, mainly for children, and lectures by authors related to Atsuko Tanaka were also held at all the venues. Since there has been increased interest in post-war Japanese art in recent years, the exhibition became an excellent opportunity to promote better understanding of the art work of that period and highlight Atsuko Tanaka's exceptional presence and radical style in the art movement. [Ikona Gallery, Birmingham, July 27 to September 11, 2011; Espai d'art contemporani de Castelló (EACC), Valencia, October 7 to December 31, 2011; Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo, February 4 to May 6, 2012]

### ■ "Breathing Atolls: Japan-Maldives Contemporary Art Exhibition"

The beautiful coral reef islands of the Maldives, surrounded by blue waters, mesmerize people all over the world. But global warming has caused water levels to rise, and the small islands are now in danger of being driven underwater.

This exhibition started with the idea of combining the themes of environmental issues and art, with eight artists from Japan and the Maldives exhibiting their work. While some artists actually stayed in the Maldives to produce their work on site, each chose a unique approach to create pieces befitting of the theme, interacting with the local people and understanding the current situation of the Maldives. Though art may not be the immediate and effective solution for their problem, the project hoped it would make more people stop and think about the global environment.

The exhibition was held at the National Art Gallery and the adjacent park area in Malé, the capital of the Maldives, and then in Tokyo, with partial changes to the program.

[National Art Gallery of Maldives, Malé, March 20 to April 19, 2012; Spiral Garden, Tokyo, May 24 to June 3, 2012]



Left: "Hokusai – Retrospective" exhibition  
Center: Educational program at the Atsuko Tanaka exhibition in Spain Photo: Stuart Whipps  
Right: "Japan-Maldives Contemporary Art Exhibition" in the Maldives Photo: Kenji Morita





## The Power of Music and Theater to Connect Japan and the World

### ■ "Min'yo – Japanese traditional folk songs – conveying heart and rhythms in daily life in Japan" in South America

In March 2011, the Great East Japan Earthquake devastated the Tohoku region in northern Japan, an area which is also known for its rich variety of Min'yo traditional folk songs. To support the people in the impacted areas, a tour was organized involving the top folk musicians of Japan to perform from September 14 to October 2, 2011, in the four South American countries of Chile, Argentina, Uruguay, and Brazil, world famous for their own brands of music and songs. In the three countries besides Brazil, top musicians of each country also participated in the performances in support of the cause. The Chile concert became a particularly lively event, joined by five popular musicians descended from the Nueva Canción movement of socially committed music. It was a dream-like performance, with the musicians jamming with each other's songs and conveying the beauty of their music, attracting a crowd of some 1,200 to the venue. Chileans are known to be quite modest, but the performance was so successful, the audience were on their feet dancing. Chile is also a country on the path of recovery from a major earthquake in 2010. The sight of the two countries struggling through earthquake disasters and coming together through the power of music was a sight that seemed to embody the spirit of international cultural exchange.

### ■ "World premiere of onomatopoeic play in Palestine"

Puppet actor Jo Taira wrote a new puppet play *Twinkle in the Wonderforest!* and performed it for the first time in the five cities of Ramallah, Jenin, Hebron, Nablus, and East Jerusalem, west of the Jordan River in the Palestinian territories from October 10 to 20, 2011.

This piece was created specifically for this tour, and was produced so that all of the dialog was in onomatopoeic expressions, without actual words. It is a fantasy story about fairies living in the Wonderforest, how they overcome their differences in values and views over a particular flower, and

how they finally find peace. The project also offered workshops and exchange programs to the parents and children living in the refugee camp in Hebron as well as the other children and students in the Palestinian territories. It was designed to introduce the artistic quality of Japanese puppet production and performance by a proficient craftsman, while also trying to contribute to peace-building in the region through cultural exchange.

The Palestinian territories are still ravaged by conflict and heavily regulated regarding the movement of people, but the performances, designed as educational and cultural activities for the general public and young members of society, were met with the delighted shouts of many children enjoying themselves and full of hope.

### ■ Presenting Japan at Saudi Arabia's National Festival

While Saudi Arabia has tight restrictions regarding its cultural activities for religious reasons, its people now look forward to the annual Janadriyah National Festival for Heritage and Culture (Janadriyah Festival) as an incomparable cultural event. The 26th Janadriyah Festival was held from April 13 to 29, 2011, and Japan was invited to present the Pavilion with the cooperation of the Japanese government and private sector. The Japan Foundation organized events that would give a comprehensive feel of Japanese culture, consisting of an exhibition of Japanese martial arts weapons, and demonstrations of tea ceremony, flower arrangement, and Japanese paintings at the Pavilion, as well as Iwami Kagura, "Music & Rhythms" performances by Ondekoza Taiko and Umezu Kazutoki Trio, and Kobudo and karate demonstrations outside on stage.

During the 17-day festival, the Japan Pavilion received some 180,000 visitors, and 120,000 watched the performances outdoors. We were congratulated for the great success and received words of gratitude for participating in the festival, despite experiencing the devastation of the Great East Japan Earthquake just a month ago.



Left: "Min'yo – Japanese traditional folk songs–" in Argentina  
Center: Puppet actor Jo Taira with Palestinian children  
Right: Iwami Kagura outdoor performance at the Janadriyah Festival

## Unique Programs for Japanese Films in North America and Europe Projects to Link Japanese Authors with Publishers Abroad

### ■ Benshi in Four Cities in Europe

In Japan, the screening of silent films developed into a unique art form with a performer called a Katsudo-Shashin-Benshi (Benshi, an interpreter of silent films) providing live narration, filling in the dialog or describing scenes, and musicians providing music. To introduce this Japanese Benshi culture abroad, two silent films *Kid Commotion*, directed by Torajirō Saitō (1935, 35 mins), and *The Downfall of Osen*, by Kenji Mizoguchi (1935, 96 mins), were screened in Italy, France, and Germany. The films were accompanied by one of the top Benshi today, Midori Sawato, as well as Joichi Yuasa on guitar and Shamisen, and Makiko Suzuki on flute. Besides performing in the three countries, they were also invited as a special guest to the Festival of 3 Continents in Nantes, France. The final destination of their 12-day tour was Berlin, where they performed at the Kino Babylon, known for screenings of silent films with the cooperation of Matsuda Film Productions. These performances attracted attention from the media, and articles were written in French and German newspapers. *Le Monde* published a big feature article describing the Benshi as a culture that has evolved from the narration in traditional Japanese performing arts. The performances also won favorable reception by the audience in each location.

### ■ "Nikkatsu at 100" at the Lincoln Center in the United States

As Japan's oldest film company, Nikkatsu celebrates the 100th anniversary of the founding in 2012, a major retrospective screening of Nikkatsu films was held in October 2011 at the Lincoln Center in New York. A diverse selection of 37 films, mainly prints owned by Nikkatsu, the National Film Center, and the Japan Foundation headquarters, were shown to audiences,

ranging from pre-war samurai dramas to post-war action films, coming-of-age films, and the recent works of Shion Sono, a director attracting international interest today. Joe Shishido, one of the top stars of Nikkatsu films, made an appearance at the opening ceremony, adding to the excitement of the event. The Lincoln Center screenings then led to similar events at the Nantes Three Continents Festival and Cinémathèque Française in France (both with grants), and the "Nikkatsu 100" project is scheduled to continue to tour international film festivals and Japan Foundation events in fiscal 2012.

### ■ Japanese Book News Salon

The Japan Foundation issues an English newsletter *Japanese Book News* (JBN) to provide information regarding recent publishing trends and publications in Japan to publishers, editors, and translators overseas.

In fiscal 2011, a new initiative called "Japanese Book News Salon – a talk session with contemporary Japanese writers" was launched, providing an opportunity for the writers whose works have appeared in *JBN*, and translators, as well as aspiring translators, to share their thoughts on the novels.

With Professor Mitsuyoshi Numano of the University of Tokyo, a member of the *JBN* advisory board, as moderator, the first session welcomed Mitsuyo Kakuta, author of *Tree House* (Bungei Shunju, 2010), introduced in *JBN* No.68 (summer 2011). The second event invited Hiromi Kawakami, author of *Kazahana* (SHUEISHA), introduced in *JBN* No. 58 (winter 2008). The details of the two sessions are both available on the Japan Foundation's website, *Wochi Kochi Magazine*.

[First session: September 27, 2011, at the University of Tokyo Sanjo Conference Hall (Tokyo); Second session: January 24, 2012, at the Japan Foundation JFIC Hall "Sakura" (Tokyo)]



Above: Joe Shishido surrounded by fans at "Nikkatsu at 100" in the Lincoln Center, New York. Courtesy of Nikkatsu Corporation  
Right: Screening with Benshi and musicians in Berlin

## From Japan to the World, and from the World to Japan Encouraging the International Exchange of Diverse Specialists

### ■ Risa Wataya's Lecture Tour in Germany and Italy

Risa Wataya became the youngest novelist to win the Akutagawa Prize in 2004 at age 19, for *Keritai senaka* (The Back I Want to Kick). Her work has been translated and published in many countries, and the Japan Foundation organized a lecture tour to Germany and Italy in September 2011. Besides giving lectures at the International Literature Festival in Berlin, and the Harbour Front Literature Festival in Hamburg, she also toured the cities of Cologne and Rome to meet with translators of her works, and attend public readings with an actress and local high school students, getting in touch with Japanese literature fans in each city.

### ■ Taking Wagashi Sweets to Southeast Asia

Wagashi are traditional Japanese sweets that are described as works of art. To introduce them to people abroad, three young chefs—Noriyuki Myojin, Keisuke Yoshihashi, and Naoya Koizumi with recommendation by the Japan Wagashi Association went on a mission to give Wagashi demonstrations in Bangkok in Thailand, Kuala Lumpur in Malaysia, and Manila in the Philippines. While they displayed their delicate and beautiful traditional skills at each venue, workshops were also offered for the general public and culinary experts in which participants fully enjoyed the charm of Wagashi. These events were featured in many of the local media channels, reaching an even wider audience.

### ■ Teachers Visiting from Europe, the Middle East, and North Africa

In October 2011, the Japan Foundation invited 52 educational professionals of elementary and secondary

education with much influence over the next generation of youths to Japan. During their two-week stay, participants furthered their understanding of Japan through programs offering first-hand experiences of Japanese culture, seminars, school visits, and the chance to stay with host families. The hope is that the participants will take this experience and knowledge back to their countries to help the younger generation to understand Japan better and encourage international mutual understanding.

### ■ Invitation of Experts in Restoring Japanese Paintings

Washi paper, generally believed to be used only in Japan, is actually utilized in the restoration of cultural assets and artwork all over the world. In December 2011, nine restoration experts were invited to Japan from Mongolia, Romania, and Bosnia and Herzegovina. They furthered their knowledge of Washi paper by touring Kyoto, which offers the finest of Japanese traditional culture, Kochi, the home of traditional Japanese Washi production, and Fukuoka, one of the traditional windows of cultural exchange between Japan and China.

### ■ Survey of Collections at Azerbaijan National Art Museum

The National Art Museum of Azerbaijan, the country's top art museum with a collection of some 300 pieces of Asian art, had difficulty in distinguishing Japanese artwork from Chinese and other Asian art and had been unable to put them on display. Thus, at the museum's request, the Japan Foundation sent two experts, Taishu Komatsu, director of Akita Senshu Museum of Art in Akita City, and Tomoko Emura, senior researcher at the National Research Institute for Cultural Properties, Tokyo, to examine the collection and document the details. The results are to be used for future storage and exhibition activities.



Left: Risa Wataya (far right) with German novelist Marie T. Martin (left) in a café in Cologne Photo: June Ueno

Center: Three chefs Keisuke Yoshihashi (left), Naoya Koizumi (center), and Noriyuki Myojin (right), introducing the charm of Wagashi sweets in Southeast Asia

Right: Restoration experts from abroad, learning about Washi paper at a cultural asset restoration workshop in Kyoto





## High School Students Experiencing Life in Japan, and University Students in Exchange Activities in China / Multi-angled Approach for "Heart-to-Heart Connections"

### ■ Long-Term Exchange Program for Chinese High School Students

The China Center offers Chinese high school students with the opportunity to live in Japan through an 11-month exchange program. By providing students with a first-hand experience of living and studying in Japan and a chance to interact with many Japanese people including classmates and their host family, the program hopes this grassroots activity will help the younger generation build trusting relations that will be the foundation for future Japan-China relations.

The program entered its sixth year in fiscal 2011. Though 29 out of the 38 students from the fifth year were compelled to go back to China because of the Great East Japan Earthquake, 22 later returned to Japan again, and 31 students completed their curriculum in July. At the end of August, the next sixth year group of 32 students (eight boys and 24 girls) arrived, and began the program in locations all over Japan until July 2012.

The high school students study at school, take part in extracurricular activities and school events, and live with a host family and learn independence as well as cooperativeness. The Japanese high school teachers and host families offer gentle and sometimes firm advice to the students. It is wished that each experience will lead to building a deep sense of connection among the younger generation who will be the foundation of relations between Japan and China.

The Japan-China Teacher Exchange Project was conducted in fiscal 2011, inviting teachers of Japanese and Chinese schools involved in the exchange program to visit each other's schools, so that their findings help develop and improve the exchange program.

### ■ Centers for Face-to-Face Exchanges

The Centers for Face-to-Face Exchanges (中日交流之窗 in Chinese) in China offer residents in provincial cities with limited access to information regarding Japan, with a window into contemporary Japanese culture. Nine centers

were already in operation as of 2010 in Chengdu, Changchun, Nanjing, Yanbian, Xining, Lianyungang, Harbin, Chongqing, and Guangzhou, and two new centers were opened in Dalian and Hangzhou in fiscal 2011.

Besides providing opportunities to get in touch with contemporary Japanese culture through Japanese magazines, books, CDs, and DVDs, the centers also hold many intercultural events. For example, in fiscal 2011, Japanese university students planned and implemented a student exchange program in Xining, Nanjing, and Lianyungang, while Japanese students staying in China worked with local students to form a volunteer group for planning and carrying out events at the Center for Face-to-Face Exchanges. In fiscal 2011, seven students of a high school in Sendai, which had been one of the schools in the Long-Term Exchange Program for Chinese High School Students until the Great East Japan Earthquake, visited the Center for Face-to-Face Exchanges in Changchun, the sister city of Sendai, and met with the local students. The Sendai high school students expressed their appreciation for the support from China on behalf of their hometown, and it was a moment that illustrated the strong ties between the two countries.

### ■ Heart-to-Heart Website

The *Heart-to-Heart* website ([www.chinacenter.jp/](http://www.chinacenter.jp/)), operated by the China Center, provides a blog with simultaneous translation that allows users to share their thoughts by posting entries in either language. The purpose of the interactive website is two-fold: firstly, it serves as a platform of communication where students who have participated in various exchange programs of the Japan Foundation can keep in touch with their friends and host family, and secondly, it aims to help build the foundation of a lasting friendship between the two countries by promoting mutual understanding through open and direct communication.



Above: Japanese students in cosplay at the Center for Face-to-Face Exchanges in Lianyungang

Left: The sixth group of Long-Term Exchange Program for Chinese High School Students arriving in summer 2011.