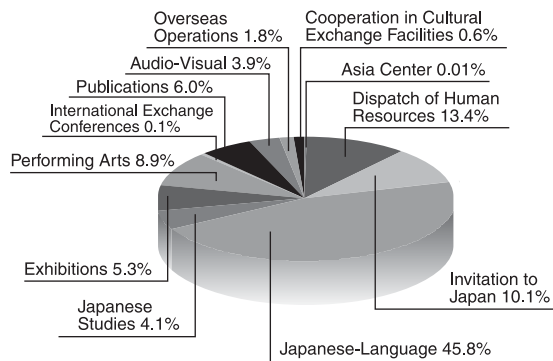


Eastern Europe

Abstract



Total amount of operations: 798 million yen

In Eastern Europe, personnel exchange and Japanese-Language occupied the majority of operation expenses. This tendency was particularly remarkable this year, with 73.4% of the total operation expense.

While movements in various fields in Eastern European countries were activated in 2003 immediately before the accession to the EU in 2004, the Japan Foundation focused on the projects to introduce Japanese culture and Japanese-Language.

In the field of visual art, the Foundation held an Eastern European tour of contemporary Japanese film festivals in Hungary, Serbia and Monte Negro showing works by young directors. Theaters were virtually full and the tour was a great success. At the Japanese Film Festival held in 4 cities in Russia, the Foundation showed a combination of contemporary and classical movies, which was extremely well received, particularly by the young.

In the performing arts field, the Foundation began with the "Japanese Culture Festival in Russia 2003" and conducted four contemporary dance performances by "H.R. Chaos" in Moscow and Saint Petersburg, which the media covered and praised most enthusiastically.

As the demand for Japanese-Language education in this region heightens, the Japanese-Language advisor residing at the Foundation, Budapest, the only office of the Japan Foundation in Eastern Europe, visited insti-

tutes in Hungary, Rumania and Croatia to give instructions. At the touring Japanese-Language seminar with an instructor invited from Japan, Japanese-Language teachers attended not only from Hungary but from Croatia, Serbia, Monte Negro and Rumania as well, and this seminar stimulated exchange among the Japanese-Language teachers in the Eastern European Region.

■ Report by the overseas office

Hungary

The Japan Foundation, Budapest

1. General

After 10 years of democratization that has changed the social system, the social infrastructure has been established and Hungary is socially and economically stable. Information exchange has become easy and massive due to the propagation of cellular phones, satellite TV and the Internet, and migration of people and transfer of products have become smoother. Large-scale shopping malls and high-class hotels have been constructed in central Budapest and the number of tourists from Japan is increasing.

As a result of the general election in April 2002, a left-centrist coalition government was inaugurated by the Hungarian Socialist Party and the Liberal Democratic League in May. At the election in 1990 immediately after democratization, the Hungary Democratic Forum won, in 1994 the Socialist Party won and in 1998 the Fidesz-Hungarian Civic Party won. The power shifted from one party to another each time a general election was held, and the Hungarian people apparently were not satisfied in 2002 as well and wanted another change.

In the economic aspect, the GNP in FY2002 was 53,702 million dollars (World Bank), the economic growth rate in 2001 to 2002 was 3.5% (OECD) and the unemployment rate in FY2002 was 5.6% (OECD).

In addition to large-scale events held every year in Budapest and local cities, concerts by music institutes, various exhibitions and many other cultural events were held throughout the year and the existence of Budapest, Hungary as a cultural city is being established.

Ten countries will accede to the EU in May 2004, and accession

of Hungary, Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia and Slovenia are approved. Croatia, Rumania, Bulgaria, Serbia and Monte Negro are also eager to accede and it is expected that the Central and Eastern European Region will grow socially and economically and increase in significance in the future.

2. Cultural Exchange with Japan

One of the new movements in understanding Japan in Hungary is the rapid increase of the interest in Japanese pop culture through propagation of electronic media. The commercial distribution of Japanese movies is conducted several times a year.

Interest continues to remain high in traditional Japanese culture through judo, karate, kendo, aikido and other martial arts, religion (Zen Buddhism), tea ceremony, flower arrangement, bonsai, haiku and Japanese music. In both contemporary and traditional cultures, many wish to approach the Japanese spirit that is the background of the culture rather than merely a superficial understanding.

Advance into Hungary in the form of building plants and investment by Japanese enterprises have increased the opportunities for the Hungarian people to come into contact with Japan, and the increase in the number of Japanese tourists and Japanese family members and students residing in Hungary have created direct human relations, which supports strengthening of understanding. At the Liszt Conservatoire, in particular, many young Japanese music students are engaged in daily training.

As of March 2004, 18 members from the Japanese Peace Corps were dispatched to Hungary from the International Cooperation Institute, 9 of whom are Japanese-Language teachers. It is characteristic of Hungary that Japanese-Language is brisk in the elementary and secondary schools, and the Japanese Peace Corps members have supported Japanese-Language in Hungary for the past ten years. Many members are also conducting direct exchange with the Hungarian people including children through martial arts and sports.

Sister city agreements have been signed between local governments, and exchange projects and events are conducted through schools and local governments.

The Japan-Hungary Friendship Association has grown from 20 members at its establishment in 1987 to over 600 members today, and it continuously conducts various events.

3. Activities of the Japan Foundation, Budapest

<Activity policies>

The Foundation supported cultural exchange activities not only between Japan and Hungary but with the entire Eastern European Region as well. The year 2003 was the time for great change in the Central and Eastern European countries, and interest in Japan was also rising. The Foundation recognized that this was the time to face the issue of how to respond to the increasing interest and how to proactively conduct the projects at such a valuable opportunity, and the Foundation conducted as many projects as possible.

As a measure to appeal to those not sufficiently interested in Japanese culture at the moment, the Foundation built up the library in the Foundation, Budapest, conducted small-scale lectures and managed Japanese-Language classes.

The Foundation also maintained close contact with the diplomatic missions in the neighboring countries, offered information, toured with projects, and planned and conducted touring panel exhibitions from the collection and touring film festivals. The Foundation proactively dispatched the Japanese-Language advisors sent to the Foundation, Budapest to neighboring countries, collected information and called attention to the presence.

<Examples of FY2003>

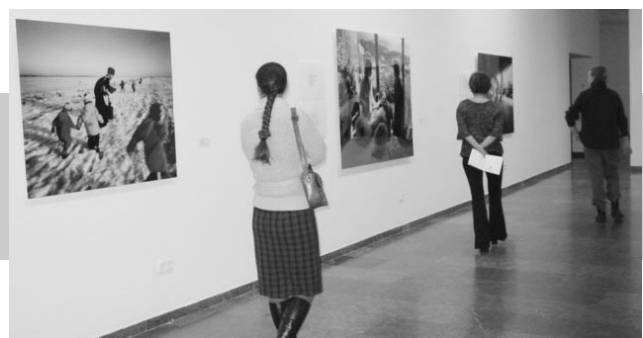
● “Tsugaru Jamisen Demonstration and Performance” (September 20, 2003 at the Liszt Memorial Concert Hall and September 21 at the Danube Palota Theater Hall)

Two shamisen players, Michihiro Sato, a representative artist who is active worldwide, and Michiyoshi Sato, who is expected to be one of the leaders in the next generation, joined by Sachiko Kaiho the so player and Masaki Yoshimi, the tabla (a Hindi musical instrument) gave a performance and introduced the charm of traditional Japanese musical instruments.

Nearly 200 people jam-packed the 130-seat concert hall on September 20. The musicians performed, introduced the musical instruments and held a Q&A session, but so many people wanted to ask questions and it was impossible to answer them all.

On September 21, the 300-seat hall was full, but at least 50 other people managed to enter and remain standing. Thunderous hand-claps to the beat continued during the performance, and the MC had to calm down the audience before proceeding to the next piece. After the last piece ended, the ceaseless applause confirmed the audience’s true enjoyment of the Japanese music.

The audience commented that they were impressed with the technique and the musical tone of the Tsugaru Jamisen, and that this



“Where the heart is: Contemporary Japanese Art Exhibition”

was their first view of the koto and they were deeply impressed by the delicate and romantic sound. It was a great success for the demonstration and performance.

- **“Where the heart is: contemporary Japanese art exhibition” (December 19, 2003 – February 8, 2004 at the Ludwig Art Museum in Budapest)**

The Foundation held an exhibition to introduce the contemporary art of Japan jointly with the Ludwig Art Museum in Budapest inviting curator Yuji Maeyama from the Saitama Museum of Modern Art. The exhibits comprised artwork by Yukio Fujimoto, Naoya Hatakeyama, Bakuhaturo Ikeda, Mikangumi, Midori Mitamura, Takashi Murakami, Eri Takayanagi, Koki Tanaka, Aya Tsukioka and Miwa Yanagi.

This exhibition was publicized by a large number of media, and 6,360 people visited during the 40 days. The results of questionnaires for the visitors showed that 43% were satisfied, 26% were very satisfied, and 63% answered that they had never seen contemporary Japanese art. Many requested that the Foundation continues this type of exhibition.

- **“Project Noism04” Dance Performance (January 30 and 31, 2004 at the Trafo Theater)**

The Foundation presented a dance performance by “Project Noism04” led by Jo Kanamori, a young representative Japanese dancer and choreographer. The 300 seats were full on both days, so the Foundation set up extra seats on the aisles and at front, where a total of 350 people appreciated the performance. The performance was in a representative theater of Hungarian contemporary performing arts and many visitors are connoisseurs, but the applause continued throughout the entire the performance and the reviews were excellent. The event was a great success.

- **Contemporary Japanese Film Festival (February 7 to 13 at the Urania Movie Theater)**

The Foundation showed nine films by young Japanese directors (4 of which were works by SABU) in the Urania Movie Theater, a representative cinema in Hungary. The Foundation invited director SABU to Budapest who participated in the opening ceremony and in the open discussion the next day. Director SABU was interviewed by many media personnel and was introduced in the newspapers, magazines, TV, mail magazines and many other media. At the opening ceremony, Director SABU, Ambassador Teruyoshi Inagawa from the Japanese Embassy in Hungary and Ferenc Kósa, a member of the Hungarian parliament delivered the welcome speech after which the film *Drive* by Director SABU was shown. The capacity of the large hall in the movie theater was around 450,

but it was nearly packed, and subsequent showings also had large audiences. The Festival ended successfully. The results of the questionnaires for the audience showed that 92% were satisfied and 8% were fairly satisfied (a total of 100% were satisfied). They commented that they wished the Festival were longer and they hoped that the Foundation would take some measures to resolve the difficulty of obtaining tickets, with the suggestion that an admission fee be charged.

This Film Festival toured to Serbia and Monte Negro after Budapest on a smaller scale.