

The Japan Foundation China Center



In April 2006, the Japan Foundation established a China Center. The purpose of this initiative is to build a foundation for future Japan-China relations through exchanges with young people and others in communities throughout China. Three programs constitute the backbone of the activities implemented by the Japan Foundation China Center: the Invitation Program for Chinese High School Students, the Japan-China Community Network Improvement Program, and launching “Cultural Exchange Centers” in China’s regional cities.

Invitation of Chinese High School Students

In September 2006, the Japan Foundation welcomed 37 Chinese high school students as the very first participants in its new “Long-term Invitation Program,” an 11-month exchange program. In January 2007, the Japan Foundation brought an additional 40 high school students to Japan for a month-long “Medium-term Invitation Program,” featuring a variety of activities.

The focus in both of these programs is on giving high school exchange students a firsthand opportunity to get to know Japanese society and people, through their everyday experiences living in Japan and interacting with Japanese

students their own age. In 2007, the Foundation plans to extend invitations to 40 participants in each program.



Interim seminar in Hiroshima; interacting with high school students from Aki Fuchu High School

“Heart to Heart” Website

“Heart to Heart” is a new community website in Chinese and Japanese, launched in July 2006 for the purpose of promoting exchanges between China and Japan on a wide range of subjects. One of the site’s most popular features is the “Diary of foreign students in Japan,” in which Chinese exchange students living in Japan write about their day-to-day experiences. These “diary” entries

provide Chinese readers with insights into the students’ lives in Japan.

<http://www.chinacenter.jp>



“Heart to Heart” community website

Enhancing Japan-China Community Network

In addition to “Heart to Heart,” the Japan Foundation is also developing “Ryukanet,” a network for Chinese exchange students presently in Japan, students in China

who are alumni of Japanese exchange programs, and Chinese participants in training programs in Japan.

Centers for “face-to-face exchanges”

Information about Japan is not always available in the cities of China’s outlying regions. The Japan Foundation therefore plans to establish and operate a number of “Face-to-Face Cultural Exchange Centers,” where the latest Cultural information on Japan can be accessed. On April 10, 2007, we opened the first such center in Chengdu, Sichuan Province, where aspects of modern

Japanese life and aesthetics are currently featured under the theme of “Cool Japan.” We plan to open our second center in Changchun and Nanjing in the near future.



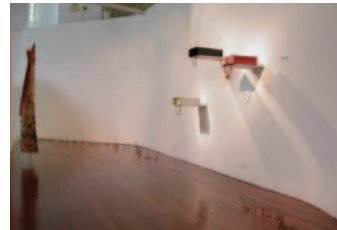
Opening of the “Face-to-Face Cultural Exchange Center” in Chengdu

2006 Australia-Japan Year of Exchange

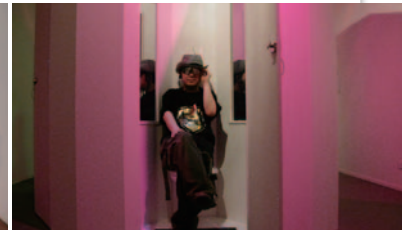
The 2006 Australia-Japan Year of Exchange took place in Australia and Japan to commemorate the thirtieth anniversary of the signing of the Basic Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation between Australia and Japan, and to promote more lively interaction between the two countries.

Rapt!—20 Contemporary Artists from Japan

The Japan Foundation collaborated with approximately 20 art institutions throughout Australia to organize *Rapt!—20 Contemporary Artists from Japan*, a program aimed at connecting young Australian and Japanese curators. The project explored Australian perceptions of contemporary Japanese culture. It focused on four processes: curatorial exchange; thinking; artist-in-residence; and, finally, exhibition.



"re:order" by Teruya Yuken



"Dr. Toilet's Rapt-up Clinic" by Ukawa Naohiro

A Group Invitation to Specialists in Multiculturalism

From January 18 to 30, 2007, the Japan Foundation hosted 4 specialists in multiculturalism, each of whom hold leading positions on the Community Relations Commission of New South Wales in Australia. Throughout their 13-day tour of Japan, the specialists were enthusiastically received at a variety of events organized by the Japan Foundation in Tokyo, Sendai and Nagoya, including forums and international symposiums, as well as discussions with local leaders and people interested in multicultural coexistence.

Today, Japanese society is deeply concerned about coexistence and harmony with other countries and cultures, and there is considerable interest in the social policies and supporting programs that Australia has implemented in its efforts to promote multicultural coexistence. This tour was an opportunity for the

specialists, local leaders, and citizens to exchange opinions in a lively manner.



Symposium at Nagoya International Center



WONDERBUS Japan 2006

To promote direct interaction with Australian children in outlying cities and towns where there are few opportunities for firsthand contact with Japanese culture, *WONDERBUS Japan* went on a two-week tour of Queensland in May 2006. Wherever they went, the volunteer crew engaged children in stimulating activities and workshops, including Japanese *taiko* drumming, Japanese dances, and *origami*. A total of 9,000 children took part over the course of the tour.



Tour route of *WONDERBUS Japan 2006*

Japan-India Friendship Year 2007

The year 2007 has been designated as the year for promoting friendship between Japan and India. Equipped with a multipurpose hall, the Japan Foundation's Japan Cultural Center in New Delhi opened in December 2006, and presented *taiko* drumming performances by the Oedo Sukeroku Taiko group: a befitting start to a year of friendship and cultural exchange.

Five-year Plan for Cultural Exchanges between Japan and South Asia

To strengthen cultural exchanges with South Asia, particularly India, the Japan Foundation has formulated a Five-year Plan for Cultural Exchanges between Japan and South Asia. As part of the plan's framework, the Japan Foundation signed an agreement of cooperation with the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) in December 2006.



Signing ceremony with the ICCR (Director-General Dr. Varma and Japan Foundation President Ogoura, with Dr. Singh, President of the ICCR, in attendance) © Seki Akira

Japan-Middle East Friendship Years (2004–2006)

To deepen mutual understanding between Japan and the Middle East, the Japan Foundation enhanced its efforts to promote cultural exchanges with that region.

Middle East Group Invitation: "Development and Education"

In order to give promising leaders an opportunity to gain firsthand knowledge of Japanese society and culture from various perspectives, the Japan Foundation invited young researchers, journalists, and NGO staff from the Middle East. In 2006, under the supervision of Professor Sakurai Keiko of Waseda University, 7 fellows participated in the program under the general theme of "Development and Education."

As many people are battling against poverty and cannot



Visiting and interacting with junior high school students in the city of Hiroshima

legislate into primary education, or young people facing difficulty to get a job is becoming serious social problems in the Middle East, the fellows expressed strong interest in Japan's economic vigor and technology. The participants produced a report on their stay and gave a presentation to a broad audience before leaving.

Tokyo International Arts Festival— Introducing Central Asia and the Middle East

In March 2007, contemporary theatrical productions from Uzbekistan, Tunisia, and Lebanon were performed at the Tokyo International Arts Festival, co-organized by the Japan Foundation and the Arts Network Japan, a nonprofit organization. The performances, each of which featured a high level of social commentary on politics and society in those countries, made a strong impact on Japanese audiences.



"How Nancy Wished that Everything Was an April Fool's Joke" directed by Rabih Mroué (Lebanon) © Matsushima Kohei



"Imitations of The Koran" directed by Mark Weil (Uzbekistan) © Furuya Hitoshi