

Arts and Cultural Exchange

The Japan Foundation introduces diverse aspects of Japanese culture to people all over the world, by promoting human exchanges that bring together artists and eminent persons as well as people at the community level. The Japan Foundation has promoted such exchanges through a wide range of cultural events and programs in the visual arts, performing arts, media, and publications. From traditional fine arts to contemporary art, these activities present the richness and diversity of Japanese culture, and in keeping with the true sense of international exchange, help to promote understanding among cultures in a borderless world.



How Children Can Benefit from the Performing Arts

The International Festival OKINAWA for Young Audience 2007 (Kijimuna Festa) was held in Okinawa City. The festival's executive committee and the Japan Foundation hosted an international symposium on July 27 and 28, to which overseas experts in young people's theater were invited.

Panelists from Germany, the UK, Russia, the US, and Korea were invited to participate in International Symposium I, "Young People's Theater and Education: Bringing Young People into Contact with the Theater." Discussions were centered on the significance of bringing young people into contact with the theater, in the context of the societies of today, in which poverty, violence, and family breakdown are issues.

The panelists invited to International Symposium II, "Children in Regions of Conflict: What Is the Task of Youth Theater?" were artists working to expand the performing arts for children in Northern Ireland, Croatia, Palestine, Jordan, Iraq, and Zambia - six places located in regions affected by conflict or unrest. The panelists discussed how children can benefit from the performing arts, and whether the performing arts have the potential to bring peace to the world.



The Introduction of Japanese Culture, and International Cultural Cooperation

Wide-ranging activities are undertaken to introduce aspects of Japanese culture such as lifestyle and sports, in order to deepen understanding of Japan. These activities include inviting to Japan people and groups involved in the cultural field to promote exchange and a broad understanding of Japan, as well as workshops and human exchange programs.

In FY2007, the Japan Foundation has undertaken 24 projects in which specialists were dispatched to 65 cities in 44 countries around the world to give presentations and demonstrations. The 60 individuals participating in these projects included specialists in judo, kendo, anime, Japanese cuisine, and various other arts. Besides its own projects, the Foundation also provided assistance for a further 54 projects during the past fiscal year.

The Japan Foundation also invited 29 leaders in various cultural arenas from 23 countries to visit Japan, in order to observe and experience Japanese culture firsthand.

These cultural leaders were able to meet and exchange opinions and ideas with their Japanese counterparts and with specialists in a variety of fields.

In international cooperation for arts and culture, the Japan Foundation implemented four projects for six countries in total, such as dispatching specialists to countries in Asia and the Middle East to help train local personnel in visual arts, anime and preservation of cultural assets and heritage. Besides its own projects, the Foundation also provided assistance for a further eight projects.

TOPIC Animation Workshops and Lectures Overseas

Dispatch of Specialists to Develop Digital Anime Human Resources in the Middle East

From January to February 2008, anime creation workshops were held in Jordan, Qatar, and Syria by Shinkai Makoto, one of Japan's leading young anime directors, Kawaguchi Noritaka, CEO of CoMix Wave Films Inc., and Sunami Kazuki, Board Director and Producer of the same company. Each workshop had between 10 and 25 participants, all young aspiring animators from the Middle East. Over the course of one to two weeks, the participants in each country learned about the steps in anime creation such as storyboards, background art, and composites, from the perspectives of both technique and artistic expression. Also instruction from a business perspective was aimed at local producers. In addition to these workshops, lectures and anime screenings were held around the same time in each region.

Support for Pop Culture Creation

There have been a great many requests from overseas for projects from Japan relating to pop culture such as manga and anime. In response to this, the Japan Foundation dispatched specialists to hold lectures, demonstrations, and workshops in countries including Russia, Spain, and the United Arab Emirates. In this

way, the Japan Foundation is showcasing the cultural background and history of manga and anime, which cannot be communicated through written materials or television alone.



The workshop by Shinkai Makoto in Japan.
© Yamashita Susumu



At the University of Qatar. © Sunami Kazuki

Promoting Better Understanding of Different Cultures in Grass-roots Levels

To promote international mutual understanding at youth and citizenship levels, the Japan Foundation dispatches and invites individuals and groups in the field of culture to enhance dialogue and collaboration.

In 2007, the Japan Foundation organized two community youth exchange projects. In addition to them, the Japan Foundation also provided assistance to a further 117 Japanese exchange projects initiated and undertaken by community groups.

The Japan Foundation also invited 196 junior and senior high school teachers from 52 countries to engage in school exchange programs all over Japan, and to visit important cultural institutions.

To promote the understanding and appreciation of different cultures, the Japan Foundation held 12 public lectures.

The Japan Foundation has organized annual lectures “Kaiko Takeshi Memorial Asian Writer’s Lecture Series,” through an endowment from the family of the late Kaiko Takeshi.

In 2007, Li Rui, the novelist from China, gave lectures at four locations in Japan.



Teachers visiting Japanese school



Li Rui in Osaka



Group Involved in Youth Issues Sent to the Republic of Korea

Following the invitation of the Korean community groups aiming to strengthen the interchange between Japanese and Korean NPO/NGO members struggling to solve common social problems last year, the Japan Foundation dispatched to Korea (Seoul) six Japanese NPO/NGO members supporting youth independence.

In addition to the study tour and exchange of opinions, the Japan Foundation also organized a lecture by Woo Sookhun, the economics scholar and author of the Korean best-seller “880,000 Won generation,” for an audience of 70 from Korean community groups, as well as introductory presentations by Japanese participants and branch sessions divided by three themes. As a result, this program succeeded in promoting mutual understanding and contributing to the achievement of the 5-year plan “the strengthening of NPO interchange between Japan and Korea.”

Also this program has been introduced by various media

as a unique example of NPO/NGO interchange between Japan and Korea.

After this program, those in charge from the Japan Foundation and the Japanese participants held a meeting at which they gave reports.



Visiting the work experience center for youth

Visual arts

Exhibitions Abroad, Exhibitions in Japan, and Sharing Information

The Japan Foundation not only sponsors its own planned exhibitions through cooperation with galleries and museums both at home and abroad, but also provides aid for outstanding exhibitions that introduce Japanese art and culture.

During FY2007, the Japan Foundation organized three art exhibitions in partnership with overseas art museums and galleries: “Beautiful New World: Contemporary Visual Culture from Japan” in China, “Cubism in Asia: Unbounded Dialogue” in France and “Crafting Beauty in Modern Japan” in England.

The Foundation took part in the 52nd International Art Exhibition at the Venice Biennale and organized “Is There a Future for Our Past?: The Dark Face of the Light” in the Japanese Pavilion.

Approximately 20 sets of Traveling Exhibitions toured in

122 cities in 63 countries, including “The Spirit of Budo: The History of Japan’s Martial Arts”. The Foundation also gave assistance for 40 exhibitions throughout the world.

The exhibition “Architecture of Terunobu Fujimori and ROJO” was organized in Tokyo, after its success at the Venice Biennale. Furthermore, 10 exhibits introducing the arts and culture of other countries to Japan were realized with the Foundation’s assistance.

The Foundation sent art professionals to “The Third Asia Young Curators Conference” in Manila, the Philippines.



Beautiful New World: Contemporary Visual Culture from Japan: China

To commemorate The Japan-China Exchange Year of Culture and Sports 2007, this exhibition showcased works by 34 creators, ranging from contemporary art, media art, architecture, and fashion to popular culture such as manga and anime. The exhibition examined contemporary Japanese society from many angles, and represented expressions that were inspired by the words “beauty” and “new world.” It was held at the 798 Art District in Beijing and the Guangdong Museum of Art in Guangzhou, and was visited by a total of 70,000 people.

This first ever comprehensive show of Japanese

contemporary art in China was not only highly praised by the art world, but was also well received by the young



people in their teens and early 20s who grew up well acquainted with Japanese subculture.

The exhibition held at the Guangdong Museum of Art in Guangzhou



The 52nd International Art Exhibition at the Venice Biennale

The Japan Foundation has represented Japan at the International Art Exhibition at the Venice Biennale by staging the exhibitions in the Japanese Pavilion since 1976.

In 2007, taking the theme of “Is There a Future for Our Past? The Dark Face of the Light,” commissioner Minato Chihiro (professor at Tama Art University) and artist Okabe Masao (professor at Sapporo Otani University) covered the walls of the pavilion with approximately 1,100 works, mainly of frottage. On the floor, they arranged curbs from the platforms of a former Japanese National Railways station. This station was the place

from which vast quantities of goods and huge numbers of people were transported to the Asian mainland

from the First Sino-Japanese War up until the end of World War II, and at the same time it was also a scene of devastation from the atomic bomb. More than 200,000 people visited the pavilion, and the comments of visitors included “powerful” and “peaceful,” as well as expressions of gratitude.



Visitors to the Japan Pavilion try out the frottage technique

Performing Arts Abroad and Exchange

Japanese culture has given birth to many different arts. They constitute a rich heritage that ranges from traditional to contemporary forms, including dance, music, and drama. The performing arts exchange programs of the Japan Foundation respond to international interest in Japanese arts and culture by introducing various genres to overseas audiences. The exchange program also serves to introduce overseas stage arts that are relatively unknown to Japanese audiences. Aid is provided in the form of sponsorship and assistance extended to the private sector for carrying out such projects.

In FY2007, the Japan Foundation has dispatched to 43 countries a total of 22 productions, including contemporary dance, Japanese traditional marionette theater, Japanese traditional music, and jazz. The Foundation has also provided funding to performance groups to enable them to stage an additional 89 events.

For American non-profit organizations, the Foundation provided assistance to 16 productions on the basis of their applications for funding through an open recruitment process. The Foundation similarly provided assistance to 11 European festivals and presenters.

During the past year, the Japan Foundation also introduced to Japan comparatively unknown stage and performing arts of foreign countries. In 2007, the Japan Foundation sponsored three international joint productions, including one by artists from India, Iran, Uzbekistan and Japan.

In addition, the Japan Foundation conducted or assisted 17 projects for promoting information exchanges and building networks among performing arts groups, including “The Tokyo Performing Arts Market 2008.” The Japan Foundation has also managed and operated the Performing Arts Network Japan website, which provides information about the performing arts in Japan (<http://www.performingarts.jp/>). Moreover, the Foundation published the English edition of *THEATER IN JAPAN: An Overview of Performing Arts and Artists*.



Performance of Yukiza, Edo Marionette Theater, performed in Brazil © Kajisako Akinori



Performing Women: Three Reinterpretations from Greek Tragedy

Intercultural Theater Collaboration

The Japan Foundation has conducted collaborative theater projects with other Asian countries since the 1990s. By strategically shifting regions, and each time changing its methodology as well, the Foundation has continued to pose the question of what can be achieved through theater in terms of knowing the world. *Performing Women: Three Reinterpretations from Greek Tragedy* is a collaborative work with artists from India, Iran, Uzbekistan, and Japan, in which three directors explore the modern age through the women of Greek tragedy. Part I was *Medea*, directed by Ovlyakuli Khodjakuli from Uzbekistan; Part II was *Jocasta*, directed by Mohammad Aghebati from Iran; and Part III was *Helen*, directed by Abhiliash Pillai from India. Participants from Japan included contemporary artist Nakayama Daisuke, who designed the sets, and Kunihiro Kazuki, who composed and performed the music. A year and a half in the making, the completed work was

performed at the ninth National Theater Festival in New Delhi, India, in January 2007, and at Bunkamura in Tokyo and the seventh Seoul Performing Arts Festival in Seoul in October, 2008. Each part will be staged in the participating countries, as well as at international theater festivals.



Part I: *Medea*. Photograph © Furuya Hitoshi

Promoting Films, Japanese TV Programs and Publications

The Japan Foundation promotes the broadcasting of Japanese TV programs and the screening of Japanese films abroad, providing materials translated in foreign languages. We also screen foreign films and Japanese films with English subtitles in Japan. To promote and to introduce books on Japan, we participate in international book fairs, and support foreign publishers who wish to publish Japan-related books.

During FY2007, the Japan Foundation provided assistance for the translation of outstanding Japanese works in the humanities, social sciences, and the art into foreign languages. The Foundation has also subsidized the publication of works on Japan originally written in foreign languages. In all, we provided assistance for the translation and/or publication of 56 works in 20 countries.

In order to introduce Japanese publishing culture abroad and promote greater understanding of Japan, the Japan Foundation also participated in 12 international book fairs.

To promote the overseas broadcast of Japanese television programs, the Japan Foundation provided programs to 28 broadcast stations in 28 countries. The Foundation also provided assistance toward the cost of producing 10 films

/TV programs about Japan, in order to promote foreign countries' understanding of Japan.

The Foundation played active roles in film festivals as well, organizing 55 events and providing grants for a further 50 events overseas. In Japan, we introduced films from Asia and the Middle East, held film festivals and invited eminent persons from the world of cinema, and hosted lectures. We also organized two film events, showing Japanese movies with English subtitles, and assisted in the presentation of an additional nine film screenings.

The Japan Foundation also publishes *Japanese Book News* as a quarterly journal, as well as *New Cinema from Japan* jointly with UniJapan to provide up-to-date information in English on Japanese publishing trends and films.



1st International Manga Award Award Winners Invited to Japan

The International Manga Award was established in May 2007 in order to honor manga artists who contribute to the spread of manga culture overseas. The Japan Foundation invited Lee Chi Ching from Hong Kong, winner of the first Gold Award, to Japan from July 1 to 10, 2007, along with Madeleine Rosca from Australia, Benny Wong Thong Hou from Malaysia, and KAI from Hong Kong, who each won the Silver Award.

The four award winners were presented with trophies shaped like speech bubbles, which were the work of graphic designer Satoh Taku, at an award ceremony on July 2. During their stay in Tokyo and Kyoto, they visited manga- and anime-related museums and organizations, as well as manga publishers and creators, to exchange views and information.



The award winners visited Kyoto Seika University, which has Japan's first ever Faculty of Manga.