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Arts and Cultural Exchange

We present Japan's rich culture and diverse arts to the world in various ways. Through arts and culture, we convey Japan's heart and mind to the world and give people a chance to relate to Japan even beyond the language barrier. We also aim to spread the joy of artistic creation, thereby deepening people-to-people exchanges.





Koki Tanaka at the Japan Pavilion, 55th International Art Exhibition, the Venice Biennale. Photo: Keizo Kioku



Arts and Cultural Exchange Programs

Presenting Japan's Diverse Arts and Culture Overseas

We showcase a wide range of Japan's rich and diverse arts and culture to people around the world. They include traditional performing arts, modern art, food, fashion, architecture, lifestyles, and personal values. We hold stage performances, live demonstrations, workshops, exhibitions, film screenings, TV programs, lectures, panel discussions, and also provide translated and printed materials. Events are designed to suit the respective country or region's situation and requirements. While special attention is given to major regions and countries, we continue to present Japanese culture to all parts of the world effectively. Also, basic information about Japanese arts and culture is always available at our websites.

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Contributing to the World through Arts and Culture

We provide opportunities for specialists from different countries to meet and collaborate on joint productions or projects. This helps to build strong networks in various fields of arts and culture. While drawing on Japan's expertise and experience, we assist in the training of specialists in countries that need it to build a foundation for lasting international cultural exchange. Through arts and culture, the Japan Foundation also gives opportunities to people in Japan and overseas to think together about global issues like disaster recovery, the environment, building peace, and protecting and using cultural heritage properties. It is to deepen people's awareness of mutual interests.

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Focusing on Important Diplomatic Occasions, Countries, and Regions

Continuing Programs and Projects for the World

Youth Exchange with China

We promote exchanges between Japanese and Chinese youth, our future leaders. By providing them a chance to experience each other's lifestyle and culture, we hope them to deepen their mutual understanding and have heart-to-heart friendships. This program emphasizes two-way exchanges and mutual cooperation.

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Interactive, Collaborative Exchange Programs

Taking on Global Challenges



Presenting Japan's Diverse Arts and Culture Overseas

Focusing on Important Diplomatic Occasions, Countries, and Regions

In 2013, we held highly appealing events to commemorate the 40th anniversary of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and cooperation and the 400th anniversary of Japan-Spain relations.

Meanwhile in other countries, we held stage performances and exhibitions (jointly with local organizations) suited to the respective country as part of our ongoing efforts to present Japanese culture.

■ Drums & Voices

Drums & Voices is a joint project of twelve traditional musicians from seven countries: Vietnam, Cambodia, Myanmar, Thailand, Laos, Brunei, and Japan. They went on a concert tour to all seven countries. (In Brunei, only the Japanese and Brunei artists performed.)

To compose the songs for the tour, joint workshops were held in Thailand (June-July 2013) and Vietnam (August-September 2013) for a total of four weeks. The group then toured the seven countries from October.

In December, all the musicians were invited to Japan for a concert in Tokyo. They also performed a mini concert at the gala dinner held by Prime Minister Abe and his wife on the occasion of the ASEAN-Japan Commemorative Summit Meeting in Tokyo. The musicians' joint performance in front of ASEAN leaders and government officials was a symbol of the friendship and ever closer relationship between Japan and ASEAN countries.

It was not easy to screen and select the musicians for this project. They had to be specialists in traditional music, highly skilled at percussion instruments, and able to take part in the project for a long term. At the workshops, people even from neighboring countries still had different musical and cultural backgrounds and could not understand each



Performers from ASEAN countries. Photo: Kazunori Kurimoto



Media/Art Kitchen Exhibition in Bangkok. Photo: Sittidej Nuhoung

other's language. It was a major hurdle for making music together.

The project's music director was composer Michiru Oshima who had to first patiently understand the differences and similarities between their music during the four weeks of workshops. It was her first time to hear and collaborate with traditional Asian music.

With excellent musical skills and sincere attitudes, each musician helped to compose fifteen original songs. Each song did not represent only one country. Although the musicians had some reservations, they clearly understood the project's purpose and developed great teamwork. Their performances garnered high acclaim in all the countries they toured.

■ Sugimoto Bunraku in Europe

The Bunraku puppet play, Sugimoto Bunraku *Sonezaki Shinju: The Love Suicides at Sonezaki*, directed by contemporary artist Hiroshi Sugimoto was held in Madrid, Rome, and Paris. Two shows were held in both Madrid and Rome and eleven shows in Paris for a total of fifteen shows. They drew over 12,000 people.

In Madrid, where the shows were held to commemorate the 400th anniversary of Japan-Spain relations, there was



© Hiroshi Sugimoto, courtesy of Odawara Art Foundation

much public interest and tickets were sold out. People lined up to buy tickets on the day of the performance.

Comments from the audience included: "The visual art direction was highly refined and well composed. The contrast between light and darkness on stage was beautiful." "It was my first time to see Bunraku. The profound literary content and the *tayu* chanter and music were wonderful. And the stage presentation was perfect and beautiful." "Seeing the audience so enamored with the performance indicates that the best arts can overcome language and cultural barriers."

As one of Japan's unique performing arts, Bunraku thereby made a strong impression with its superb literary content and artistic value.

■ Yutaka Oyama Hogaku Trio's Japanese Harmonies in Central America

To mark the 400th anniversary of the Keicho Embassy arriving in Cuba and the 110th anniversary of Japan-Panama relations, the Japanese music trio of Yutaka Oyama (Tsugaru shamisen), Takuya Kato (taiko drums), and Yoshimi Tsujimoto (shakuhachi flutes) toured Central America during February 18-26, 2014.

The trio is led by Oyama who has been active internationally by performing with Japanese and Western instrument players. The trio held concerts, lectures, and live demonstrations in El Salvador, Cuba, and Panama where they presented their modern version of traditional Japanese music to music fans in Central America.

In El Salvador, they held concerts in the capital city, San Salvador, and Santa Ana. They even performed with César David Marino, a singer-songwriter perpetuating the country's traditional music. Playing to a full house, they received much applause.

In Cuba, the trio played on an outdoor stage at Havana's International Book Fair in front of almost 3,000 people. They also gave an exciting performance with a group led by David Alvarez, a popular Cuban singer aiming to revive traditional Cuban rhythms. Word quickly spread in Havana and the concert next day played to a full house at a major venue. The audience gave a standing ovation.

Before the concert in Panama, a commercial for the concert aired on the state TV station. Although there was

a power outage due to heavy rain right before the concert, the excited audience let out loud cheers after each song throughout the concert.

The trio spoke Spanish at each concert and interacted with the audience. They performed their own arrangements of famous local songs with traditional Japanese instruments. To a local people who have a rich musical culture, the trio demonstrated that Japanese music had no limits. Audience 7,300 in all attended the concerts in the three countries, the number far exceeded by that of viewers on TV.

In 2014, 400 years after Tsunenaga Hasekura visited Cuba upon being sent by Lord Masamune Date in Sendai, the Yutaka Oyama Hogaku Trio did a great job in painting a musical rainbow between Japan and Central America.

■ KAIKO: Sericulture of the Imperial Household, Ancient Textiles from the Shosoin Repository, and Exchanges of Silk between Japan and France

Co-organized with the Imperial Household Agency and the Agency for Cultural Affairs, this exhibition introduced Her Imperial Majesty Empress Michiko's sericulture that the Imperial Family has been cultivating since the Meiji Period.

Held at the Maison de la culture du Japon à Paris in France, the exhibition showed textiles from the Shosoin Repository that were restored using silk from Japan's native 'Koishimaru' silkworm raised by the empress. Artifacts related to silk exchanges between Japan and France were also displayed. A video of the Imperial Household Agency raising silkworms was also shown.

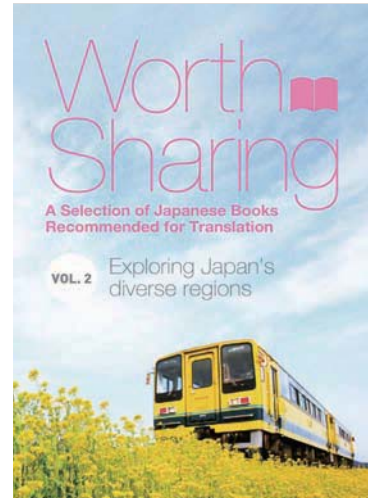
Many visitors expressed their surprise and admiration at the fact the Imperial Family have had an essential role in continuing the Japanese cultural tradition. Many thought it was wonderful to find the long-standing custom playing a part in the 21st century. The exhibition was also lauded for showing the history of silkworm and silk exchanges between Japan and France.



Continuing Programs and Projects for the World

The Japan Foundation is constantly introducing Japanese culture in many forms. Drawing on our cultural resources, we hold exhibitions and film screenings around the world. Our resources include traveling exhibitions of diverse genres and themes, a film library of Japanese movies in twelve languages, and film dramas and documentaries on DVD.

We also broadcast Japanese dramas, anime, and documentaries on TV and regularly exhibit at international book fairs, art exhibitions, and architectural exhibitions overseas. We also support the publication of translated Japan-related books.



■ Worth Sharing—A Selection of Japanese Books Recommended for Translation

Through the support program for translation and publication on Japan, the Japan Foundation has been supporting the overseas publication of Japan-related books for 40 years. This program has seen over 1,500 books translated for publication. The books are in over 50 languages covering diverse genres such as classical and modern literature, history, social sciences, politics, economics, and culture theory.

Worth Sharing—A Selection of Japanese Books Recommended for Translation is a booklet listing outstanding books we recommend to be translated and published. These books depict the current Japan and would help people overseas to understand current Japanese society and true-to-life Japanese people. Such books are a means for Japan to express itself. The books listed are selected by a selection committee well versed in Japanese literature and translation.

The books are selected according to a loose theme, with an emphasis on books about contemporary Japan that have not been introduced much in certain languages. Since no single viewpoint or aspect can tell the whole story, we aim to expose different viewpoints and aspects of Japanese culture and society.

In the booklet's first volume published in 2012, the theme was Japan's youth. Twenty youth-related books were selected for the list. Besides novels, it included research papers and essays about young people's current social issues and their aesthetic sense.

The second volume issued in 2013 had the theme of Japan's regions. Eighteen books were contemporary literature set in various regions and sceneries of Japan. And two were non-fiction.

The Translation and Publishing Support Program has been providing support to publishers that have acceptable plans to publish high-quality translations of any of the listed books. Translated books have thereby been published in many countries. We hope that this book list will enable people to meet authors, translators, and publishers and invite overseas readers to interact with Japan.

■ Lectures, Live Demonstrations, and Workshops for Travel Exhibitions

Traveling exhibitions are one of the Japan Foundation's cultural resources. They cover diverse genres and themes including art, architecture, design, and pop culture. Our

traveling exhibitions come with experts and artists to hold lectures, live demonstrations, and workshops. The exhibition becomes a multi-purpose event to help deepen people's understanding of Japan.

In fiscal 2013, the "JAPAN: Kingdom of Characters" traveling exhibition was held in Curitiba, Brazil. Japan's widely popular characters were presented in pictures and panel displays. Prominent voice actor Toru Furuya was also on hand for a lecture and voice-acting demonstration at a local art museum. He also met with local anime and pop culture people.

In Russia, the exhibition "Beautiful Handicrafts of Tohoku, Japan" was held in Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk, Khabarovsk, and Vladivostok. It spotlighted the Tohoku region's handicrafts and showed the beauty of the handicrafts made since olden times and being forgotten in modern Japan. Masahiro Miura, an expert on Japanese folk crafts, gave a lecture on Tohoku culture. Also, Kengo Yonezawa demonstrated his cherry bark craftsmanship, and Sadaharu Narita gave a lecture and workshop on 'kogin' embroidery from Aomori.



Interactive, Collaborative Exchange Programs

We provide opportunities for artists and staff in Japan and overseas to collaborate over an extended period to produce a stage performance or exhibition. We then showcase the resulting work in Japan and overseas.

For such collaborative projects, we invite to Japan or send overseas, people in a supportive role in arts and cultural activities. They include museum curators and performing arts presenters and producers. Through our international symposiums and interactive events, these experts can network and reinforce mutual ties.



Tetsuya Umeda's *Almost Forgot* at Media/Art Kitchen Exhibition in Manila.

■ MAU: J-ASEAN Dance Collaboration

The Japan Foundation planned and produced the "MAU: J-ASEAN Dance Collaboration" project as one of the events marking the 40th anniversary of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation. It brought together dancers and musicians from Indonesia, the Philippines, Malaysia, Singapore, and Japan.

Kanjuro Fujima VIII, head of 'Soke-Fujima-Ryu Nihon Buyo' dance school, was in charge of the stage direction. Elements of Kabuki were incorporated in the stage sets, music, interlude performances, and fight-scene choreography.

The ASEAN performers were mostly young dancers and musicians with experience in traditional dance from their respective countries. However, they had never experienced performing in a Kabuki style.

They held a workshop in Tokyo in June 2013, and a dress rehearsal on the completed stage in Saitama in August 2013. During their final rehearsal in Jakarta in November 2013, the stage direction was finalized before the first show premiered in Indonesia. Following Jakarta, the show delighted audiences in Manila, Kuala Lumpur, and Singapore.

The MAU Project brought Japan's Kabuki dance on the same stage as the traditional dances developed by the history and culture of ASEAN countries. Featuring the best of the styles, the performance was a unique Kabuki collaborated with neighbors in ASEAN countries.



■ Media/Art Kitchen Exhibition

As an art event to celebrate the 40th anniversary of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation, the media art exhibition "Media/Art Kitchen - Reality Distortion Field" was held. It was a collaboration of young curators and artists from Japan and Southeast Asia.

The exhibition toured Jakarta (Galeri Nasional Indonesia, KINEFORUM), Kuala Lumpur (Black Box, Map KL; Art Row, Publika), Manila (Ayala Museum, 98B COLLABoratory, Green Papaya Art Projects, Benilde School of Design and Arts), and Bangkok (Bangkok Art and Culture Centre) from September 2013 to February 2014. Thirteen curators from seven countries did research in Japan and in Southeast Asian cities and held two planning meetings in Tokyo. They then planned the project based on what today's media arts should and could be.

The project comprised three elements: exhibition, workshop, and laboratory. The programs were tailored to suit the respective cities. About 70 artists and groups from Japan and Southeast Asia participated. Each venue featured many interactive works, workshops and talks by artists, and live performances. Visitors were surprised at how diverse the works created with everyday media and technology could be.

The participating curators also placed importance on the process of creating the exhibition at each of the four cities. They used the Internet to communicate in various ways for internal discussions and coordination. They also put up a Website and updated it often to show the project's progress in each city.

The collaboration and networking between the curators and artists from Japan and Southeast Asia established a solid foundation for arts exchange in this region. In this respect, the project was very significant.

Taking on Global Challenges

Since arts and culture transcend national borders and languages, we hold events for the world to think together about disaster recovery, building peace, environmental problems, and other issues.

■ Japan-China-Korea Production of *SHUGEN* –Celebration/Expression–

In 2012, while the visible scars of the Great East Japan Earthquake still remained, this project was started to examine how we could face up to the tragedy of "3.11." Another important objective was to jointly produce a new cultural arts project with neighboring China and Korea. To this end, a team led by art director Koji Hasegawa from the Aomori Museum of Art was formed. While taking on this heavy theme, they wrote a new theatrical play.

Actors and musicians from the disaster-affected areas of Miyagi, Iwate, and Fukushima were joined by actors and musicians from China and Korea. After two years of research, pre-events, exchanges, and joint production, the project took shape. Participants from disaster-affected areas instilled their true-to-life experiences and memories.

Participants from China and Korea had to be quite brave and resolved to take on such a difficult theme. However, despite the difficulties, they all absorbed the disaster-related memories and experiences and were able to relate to each other beyond national borders. It gave rise to strong mutual feelings and respect for each other. The play turned out to be very convincing and compelling.

A total of 25 performances were held in eight cities in Japan, Korea, and China (Aomori, Daejeon, Seoul, Jeonju, Shanghai, Sendai, Tokyo, and Beijing). They deeply touched over 4,500 people. Due to popular demand, an encore performance is planned for Beijing in 2014.



■ Miyagi-New Orleans Youth Jazz Exchange

In April 2011, Kesennuma (Miyagi Prefecture), which had lost musical instruments in the Great East Japan Earthquake tsunami, received new instruments from jazz capital New Orleans, Louisiana. It was a "jazz repayment" to Japanese jazz fans for sending donations in the wake of Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

Although they are far apart, Miyagi Prefecture and New Orleans formed an unexpected musical connection through natural disasters. They have warm mutual feelings, an appreciation for each other, and a mutual desire for recovery.

This gave birth to the Miyagi-New Orleans Youth Jazz Exchange project.

In fall 2012, young jazz musicians from New Orleans toured Ishinomaki, Kesennuma, and Sendai in Miyagi Prefecture. In each city, they played with local jazz bands from the same generation. They provided genuine jazz music and encouragement to the disaster-stricken areas.

Then in summer 2013, members of a junior jazz orchestra named *The Swing Dolphins* from Kesennuma went to New Orleans. They played at local junior high and high schools, jazz clubs, exchange gatherings, and the Satchmo SummerFest jazz festival. Their talented performances received high praise everywhere. Their warm message also elicited cheers from the audience.

After performing live on a local morning TV program, the young performers from Kesennuma got famous and were recognized and greeted on the street with high fives. The mayor of New Orleans also personally gave each member a letter of appreciation. They were heroes and heroines.

The road to recovery still continues in Miyagi and New Orleans. When it comes to rebuilding your hometown, it is the youth who will play a central role. Through jazz, we hope they will continue friendly relations and share their dreams and future of their beloved hometowns.

■ 55th International Art Exhibition, the Venice Biennale

The Japan Pavilion featured Koki Tanaka in an exhibition titled, "abstract speaking – sharing uncertainty and collective acts." Curated by Mika Kuraya, Chief Curator of the Department of Fine Arts, The National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo.

The pavilion retained part of the 2012 Venice Biennale architectural exhibition (Toyo Ito Commissioner, Golden Lion recipient) with the theme of recovering from the Great East Japan Earthquake. Tanaka's single installation was fitted in with film, photography, everyday items, etc. There were videos showing multiple people collaborating on a task (like cutting someone's hair or composing a poem).

It was a poignant query for viewers on how people can work together to rebuild the social environment after the Great East Japan Earthquake. The exhibition struck a chord with many visitors and the Japan Pavilion first won the Special Mention.



Photo: Keizo Kioku

The Japan Foundation China Center

The Japan Foundation China Center was established in 2006 to promote exchanges and mutual understanding between young people in Japan and China. Since it regards young people as the future, the center holds a variety of programs for face-to-face youth exchanges and building connections between Japan and China.

The long-term invitation of Chinese high school students program has Chinese high school students live in Japan for about 11 months to experience Japanese school life and home life like ordinary Japanese students.

The center also operates Centers for Face-to-Face Exchanges in China to introduce Japanese magazines, manga, music, and the latest information. Our Heart-to-Heart Website promotes exchanges between young people, information sharing, and mutual cooperation.

Of the 237 students who completed the long-term invitation of Chinese high school students program, 95 of them (about 40 percent) returned to Japan mainly as university students. After graduating from university or starting work, many of them participate in Center for Face-to-Face Exchanges activities or university student exchange activities. Thus, the positive aftereffects of the program last a long time.



Opening of New Centers for Face-to-Face Exchanges

In 2013, the Kunming Center for Face-to-Face Exchanges and Jinan Center for Face-to-Face Exchanges opened as the eleventh and twelfth Centers for Face-to-Face Exchanges in China. At the opening event in Jinan, Japanese and Chinese university students talked about their Japanese cultural experiences in front of a large audience.

All the Centers for Face-to-Face Exchanges provide a chance to see Japanese culture and participate in cultural



The first university student exchange event at Kunming Center for Face-to-Face Exchanges.

exchange events. In fiscal 2013, a Japanese university student group planned a rich variety of exchange events featuring both traditional and modern Japanese culture at Chengdu, Guangzhou, Chongqing, and Kunming.

Activities of the Centers for Face-to-Face Exchanges are reported by our *Heart-to-Heart* Website (chinacenter.jp).

Reflecting on Student Life in Japan

In February 2014, the 30 students on the long-term invitation of Chinese high school students 8th program gathered in Osaka for a midterm seminar. They had been attending high schools across Japan for six months after arriving in late August 2013.

At the seminar, they reflected on their lives in Japan so far. Each student talked about how they matured in Japan and their trials and tribulations like the different customs, language barrier, and communication methods. On the other hand, they mentioned many positive things like making close friends in Japan and the host family being like their real family.

The seminar also had former students from the 1st group that participated in the long-term invitation program. They talked about their experiences and gave advice on how to make the most of their remaining months in Japan. With renewed confidence, the students then returned to their homes in Japan.

Japanese High School Students Visit Guangzhou Center for Face-to-Face Exchanges

Twenty Japanese high school students from host schools participating in the long-term invitation of Chinese high school students program visited China in March 2014. It was to make it a more two-way youth exchange between Japan and China.

The students first visited Guangzhou where they and Japanese-language students from Sun Yat-sen University visited Japanese companies (Guangzhou Jatco and Guangzhou Yakult) and the Guangzhou Center for Face-to-Face Exchanges. The Japanese students learned about the local lifestyle and thinking. At the Shenzhen Foreign Languages School, they observed the high school students' lifestyle by seeing their dormitory and touring the campus and observing classes. They noticed how different it was from Japan.

Their homestay and casual meet-ups enabled them to experience the heartiness of the Chinese and form close friendships. In Shanghai, they went sightseeing with past participants of the long-term invitation program.

Thanks to this trip, the Japanese students had a true-to-life experience in China not possible in Japan. They now feel much closer to their counterparts in China.



Making paper cutouts of "Double Happiness" Chinese characters with students at Shenzhen Foreign Languages School.