

## Japanese Arts & Culture Still Preserved in Graz, Austria

Kensuke Kikuchi, Auditor, the Minato UNESCO Association

I had an opportunity last fall to stay in Graz, a city located in the state of Steiermark, Austria. It is the second largest city in the country, following Vienna. Graz, once a capital city for the Habsburg Dynasty in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, has a population of 240,000. It has many hot springs, a variety of beautiful scenery, and a countryside atmosphere. It also produces internationally reputed wine. The older part of the city has been registered as a UNESCO world heritage.



I enjoyed walking through the old city area where I noticed the presence of many cultural heritages, including the Eggenberg Castle. I was impressed with the charm of cultural variety. The Eggenberg Castle, built 380 years ago, is characterized by the internal design which the owner wished would represent the atmosphere of the universe. The castle has a total of 365 windows, including 52 on the third floor. Housed in the castle are a church for daily services, a large hall, and 24 luxurious rooms. Among the rooms is a Japanese room which looks like a treasure box, accommodating a whole range of Japanese arts and cultural pieces.

It is estimated that the exhibited Japanese art pieces were purchased by the castle owner from the East India Company or other sources. There are quite a few ceramic ware which were colored just like the old Imari pieces, and which still maintain the original shape several centuries ago. Judging from their appearance through the glass showcases, I felt that these ceramic ware are similar to the Imari works which Franz Joseph I and Empress Elisabeth often used on the frequent occasions of their formal dinner at Schonbrunn Palace. I also noticed other art pieces from the Orient, including those of chinoiserie or Chinese tastes which were fashionable in those days. It was a most rewarding cultural visit.

In the Japanese room, a part of the wall was decorated with an inlet large picture, called "Osaka-zu Byobu-e," which depicts extensive scenery, spanning the streets at the foot of the Osaka Castle and the Byodo-in in Uji, Kyoto, during the Azuchi-Momoyama period in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The combination of Byobu-e pictures vividly reproduce the busy street scenes and the thriving atmosphere in ordinary people's life during the Toyotomi Dynasty period which lasted almost ten years.

The combination pictures have been preserved as extremely important assets of archival value and have become a recent topic in Japan. I became newly aware and proud that the exhibited Japanese arts & cultural pieces continue to attract with their charm many people from around the world who visit the Eggenberg Castle.

My visit to Austria provided a good opportunity for me to observe the significance of the UNESCO world heritage. It also provided a chance to become still more aware of the importance to preserve valuable heritages. They include traditional culture, architectural/engineering models, cultural ruins, etc. which have been handed down to us from our ancestors, and which may be registered as UNESCO world heritages. I look forward to working with Minato UNESCOs to hand over our cultural heritages to our next generation, including our own children and grandchildren, who will undertake the future of Japan.

*(Translated by S. Tanahashi, VP, the PR, Bulletin & Internet Committee)*

## MUA Symposium 2012

### Our prospective living in the future energy supply and climate change Lessons learned from the 3/11 experiences (Part I)

Date: Tuesday, November 13, 2012

Place: Azabu Civic Center Hall

Moderator, Mr. Hiroshi Nagano, Professor of GRIPS and MUA Director broke the ice, saying that 3/11 earthquake has brought incomparable influences upon the country and the people in terms of severity and recovery time. People including inhabitants in big cities are required to search an ecological way of living in an era of tapering resources. We hope this event be a good chance to review our living.



After the opening remarks by Ms. Mitsuko Takai, president of MUA, Mr. Takashi Shirai, Director, Life-long Learning Promotion Section of Minato City, gave a congratulatory speech. He explained the current city policy for reducing greenhouse gas, and asked cooperation of the people for such policies.

**The keynote speech: “Aiming at Bright Society by low carbonization and other measures”** by Dr. Koichi Yamada, Vice President, Center for Low Carbon Society Strategy.

**The summary of his presentation is as follows:**

Japan seems to be covered with stagnation feelings for some two decades, and many difficult issues including environment have produced some pessimistic air among the people. I have been studying how to build a society with low carbon emission which certainly leads to a bright country. For a bright society, we need to be rich economically and spiritually with taking into condition that Japan is an ultra-aging society and in 2045 seniors aged 75 and older will account for 30 % in the population. Personally I think enough is as good as feast. We should be pioneers in the world for pursuing revolutionary strategy to create a bright future.



After the Industrial revolution, one industry after another expands rich living, but continued to emit tons of CO<sub>2</sub>, and CO<sub>2</sub> emission per GDP (Ton/1000\$) hit the peak in 1913. New technologies prevented increasing CO<sub>2</sub> emission. In the past 10 decades, Co<sub>2</sub> emission has decreased in a straight line though economic activities have kept expanding. At present, 1 billion people in OECD countries enjoy affluence, and in 100 years, 4 billion will enter such advanced living. As a result, CO<sub>2</sub> emission will increase. How much degree will ambient temperature increase in 100 years? There are many estimates, and only God knows. It is generally said some 2-3 centigrade is increasing. Then what happens in the earth? We know very well what brought to the globe by the recent temperature increase of 0.7-0.8 centigrade. It isn't difficult to imagine three times boost in the temperature will bring to the human world. We need more efforts.

Japan's figure of CO2 emission/GDP is the lowest in the world, and less than one third of the world average since Japan has a cutting-edge technology in such fields. My proposal is for realization of low carbon society; Japan should lead the world by making use of Japan's most advanced technology and introduction of a new system. Which sector should energy saving efforts be focused on?

The industry sector is most difficult in achieving more energy efficiency since it already reduced significantly. Those sectors which are directly related to our daily life like household, transportation, or commerce account for some 60% of the total emission, and maybe have some room to be cut. Our desirable living would ask us to make some efforts to cut emission more so that new industries emerge. On this occasion, Japan may be able to recuperate its centripetal force in the world. Saving energy in daily life was so slow so far that energy consumption in this sector will shrink to one fourth in comparison of 1990 and 2030, by 24% in electric appliances, 18% by next generation automobiles, 15% by solar power generation, 15% by heat pump water supply and fuel cell for home use, 2% by insulation in residential buildings.

Energy saving by installation of insulation material will bring other benefits such as fewer death numbers of seniors by high blood pressure, drastic decrease of atopic persons due to mold-free house. Technology development is tremendous. An example is solar energy. Generation by one mat tatami panel was 120 watts in 1990, but now 200 watts. This efficiency will be enhanced further in 2030. Energy saving in electric appliances will be improved further in the near future. Revolutionary improvement in both supply and demand in energy will surely be attained.

By Feed-in Tariff system of solar cell, extra electricity is purchased by power companies for ¥42 per KWH, which compares to ¥23-24/kwh of power company's rate for households. For the time being, households have to bear portion of FIT, but soon due to further improvement of solar battery, the average electricity rate will be reduced, which means investment by households will give back returns to the society. This is one example of technology development which is expected to contribute for better society. Japan has advanced R&D system, but has some room for improvement in system construction.

Further development of low carbon industries such as agriculture, medicine, education, service, commerce, real estate, finance, etc. and further lowering efforts of carbon emission in manufacturing industries

CO2 emission in manufacturing industries like iron & steel, chemical, cement, ceramics, and coal in 1985 accounted for 41% in the total emission in Japan, though the contribution share to GDP was in the level of 3%. In 2005, their contribution to GDP was 3.4%, but CO2 emission reduced to 32%.

The service sector like service, commerce, real estate, communication-broadcasting, finance accounts for some 50 % of GDP, though the CO2 emission is half of the manufacturing sector.

If Japan wishes to reduce CO2 emission with keeping continuous economic growth, it is eminent that this country needs to focus on development of a tertiary industry of low carbon emission. Japan suffered from serious environmental pollution in 1980s, but technology and policy have solved the problem, whose examples are the situation in

Kita-Kyushu and re-cleaned the Sumida. By rebuilding low-housing to tower block, CO2 emission will be reduced, roughly estimated, into close to half. In addition, construction of tower block will make use of land for greenery and result in more inhabitants. Minato city and other central areas are supposed to be pioneer of such revitalizing movement.

After the Eastern Japan Great Earthquake, saving electricity promoted vigorously and no blackout occurred. The rate of power saving was higher in Kanto district than in Kansai since Tokyo started earlier for successful appeal of power saving. Successful urban planning needs first to show a vision of desirable community, then how to achieve it on the basis of data. Center for Low Carbon Society Strategy where I work is under campaign of setting 'Smart Meter' for social experiment at as many places as possible. I want to conclude my presentation by asking you all to set the "Smart Meter" at your place since it is free.

**The 2<sup>nd</sup> presentation** was made by Mr. Eiichi Yamamoto, Director of Environment Prevention Section concurrently in charge of Power Saving Work Force, Arakawa City, Tokyo. His presentation title was **"Power Saving Measures after 3/11, what a local government alone can do, and a way to lower carbon community."**

Arakawa city has 205,000 inhabitants by 95,000 households, and is a typical downtown, featuring many subcontract plants, and friendly, but not bustling-hustling atmosphere of the Shitamachi, and Tokyo metropolitan Arakawa Line, a streetcar running. Just before it occurred, I was discussing with Mayor Nishikawa in his office how to promote 'Little Ara' a mascot boy of the City. I remember I tried to prevent books in the shelf from dropping.



Soon I was transferred to the current office where I am in charge of power saving and radioactivity. Drastic change! Tokyo Electric Power Co. exerted planned blackout since their power generating facilities were damaged. Arakawa City was designated the area for planned blackout in Tokyo together with Adachi City. We resisted with TEPCO's announcement of service interruption in vain. The city was compelled to receive five planned interruption including twice a day, and realized what our living was like without power which is almost same as air.

From his experience of blackout due to trouble in TEPCO's Kashiwazaki-Kariwa Atomic Power Plant during his service as Deputy Minister of Economic and Industries, Mayor Nishikawa had an idea that this type of hardship should be shouldered by as many people concerned as possible, instead of some limited victims alone. But, we changed to positive attitude. Since serious power shortage emerges in hot summer season of June, July and August, we tackle and overcome this challenge as a pioneer, and will showcase our success experience to the rest of the country.

We asked the citizens to exercise various kinds of countermeasures, some of which I will show you this evening. The staff at the city hall didn't know how to do it, and from his acquaintance of Dr. Yamada, we relied on the advices of Dr. Yamada. We set up city's Blackout Precaution Network by which tomorrow' interruption was reported to all citizens. The central government asked us to cut power consumption by 15% in 2011. Power saving is tough and painful. We tried to give fancy names to each event so that the people accept easily.

The followings are the city's activities for the citizens:

1. Set-up of power saving teams by citizens
2. Preparation of posters of "No power supply now. Thank you for your understanding and cooperation." with cooperation of Arakawa Association of Shopping malls.
3. Set-up of 'Power saving action in summer 2012'
4. Delivery and installation of banners of power saving
5. Participation in test of Emergency Alert System
6. Free access on the web to electricity consumption in city facilities

This evening I will pick and discuss the following two events:

1. Power Saving Competition and Collection of ideas on power saving in the households:

Those who cut power consumption up 30 % from the same month last year can receive some award, like a gift certificate of ¥2,000. This event was advertised to the mass media through the PR section for a pioneer of such activities. We resulted in realizing that if people try to, it is not easy to attain 30% power saving. Let me introduce some tips for power saving.

Electric appliances: Instead of air conditioner, use electric fan, rattan blind, or natural breeze. Use air-circulate in the rooms. Use dry function least. Unplug as often as possible.

Don't keep refrigerator open. Open it fewest. Change lighting fixtures to LED. Buy more efficient appliances. Change down the contracted ampere-capacity. Life style: Keep early hours. Get out and spend at public facilities. Stretch green curtain. Clean with broom and floor cloth, not electric cleaner.

2. Summer Resorts within the towns of Arakawa our town which meant as many inhabitants as possible make use of city facilities. In some 3 months of summer 2011, and 2012, respectively 33 and 46 city facilities were utilized by people. The direct effects were three-fold.
  - ① Power saving in households.
  - ② Prevention of heatstroke
  - ③ Increase of city facility utilization rate.

I hope some of the above measures will be applied to the other areas. Such power generation by reusable energy resources as solar or wind power will take time for completion. Power saving in the households is a sort of power generation with immediate effect, and is what a local government (a key government which we call) can accomplish with cooperation of the inhabitants. .

*(Written by M. Takai, President, the International Science & Culture Committee, and translated by H. Tomita, Secretary General)*

**Note: Part II of this international symposium will be included in the next bulletin to (No. 132) which will be published in September 2013.**

The Third Cross-cultural Awareness Lecture for 2012  
**Comparing Japanese and American Universities from an Insider's Perspective**

Date: January 25, 2013

Place: Minato Life-long Learning Center

We had the pleasure of having Dr. Bruce Stronach, Dean of the Temple University, Japan Campus (TUJC), to deliver a lecture in English on the captioned subject. We had a turnout of over 60 people, including MUA members, who were all eager to know Dr. Stronach's viewpoints.



Our readers may remember that TUJC generously cooperated with a major MUA program two years ago. That's when MUA held one of its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary commemorative programs, a stage show titled "Around the World with Songs and Dances," in Minato City. Two student groups from TUJC, named "Tink-Up-Jewels" and "Shuden Boys," gave very youthful and dynamic dance performance on the stage.

The workshop started with an opening address by Ms. Okumura, chairperson of MUA's International Science & Culture Committee. It was followed by a welcome speech by Ms. Takai, President, who introduced Dr. Stronach's profile including his professional career as an educator along with his major publications (shown below).

**Dr. Stronach's Profile:**

- Birth date & place: August 24, 1950 in Maine, USA
- Education: Ph.D. MALD, Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University and Harvard University
- Professional Career
  - 2008 – Present: Dean, Temple University, Japan Campus (Tokyo, Japan)
  - 2005 – 2008: President, Yokohama City University (Yokohama, Japan)
  - 1998 – 2004: Vice President ~ Acting President, Becker College (MA, USA)
  - 1994 – 1997: Professor of Japanese Studies, Graduate School of International Relations, International University of Japan
  - 1985 – 1990: Assistant Professor of Political Science, Merrimack College (MA, USA)
  - 1980 – 1985: Visiting Instructor, International Center, Keio University (Tokyo, Japan)
- Major Publications:
  - Beyond the Rising Sun: Nationalism in Contemporary Japan (1995)
  - Politics East and West: A Comparison of Japanese and British Political Culture (Co-author) (1992)



Dr. Stronach started his power-point presentation after attendees received a handout copy of the slides. Ms. Sasaki (photo) of TUJC provided consecutive interpretation for the audience. The lecture lasted for over one hour where Dr. Stronach expressed very clear viewpoints, often entertaining the ardent audience with good sense of humor. His lecture covered different topics extensively but due to limited page space I'm reporting on several major impressions only.

1. Vertical Japan vs. Horizontal USA in National Education Policy

In Japan the education system is totally centralized with the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science & Technology (MEXT) at the top of a hierarchy. Top-down directives travel down extremely complex organizational channels. Group conformism characterizes the day-to-day education in classes. In contrast, delegation to regional or state authority characterizes the U. S. education system, encouraging decentralized education programs.

The U. S. being a country of immigrants, diversity in ethnic, racial and religious aspects, among others, is inherent in its society. At schools, teachers traditionally encourage students to develop their individual traits. When we compare the two countries in terms of accreditation, we also notice similar differences. In Japan, the Japan University Accreditation Association and the National Institution for Academic Degrees and University Evaluation perform the function in a centralized system. In the U. S. there are a total of six regional associations, covering the entire nation, which undertake this function based on discretionary standards. The decentralized American education system is clearly shown in the amount of state and local support for higher education per student. The statistics show a visible difference in the amount, state by state.

2. U. S. Open vs. Japan Closed in University Governance

Japanese universities in general are operated in a closed environment. In the U. S., universities are expected to be open, collegial and inclusive, with the participation of all stakeholders. Through open debates and discussions, U. S. universities adhere to their mission to enhance their values as academia.

You will notice the difference in university governance between the two countries, by looking at typical selection process of president and/or other university leaders. In Japan, outsiders are not expected to participate in the process and selection will be conducted by insiders only, often by vote of faculty. In the U. S., a search committee will be initially organized in a professional manner, and it will start the recruitment of qualified candidates from both inside and outside. Final decision shall be made by the board of directors.

3. Comparison in University Entrance Exam and Scholastic Evaluation

In Japan, universities select applicants, first and foremost, by the score of entrance exam only. In the U. S., universities try to evaluate applicants from more multi-dimensional viewpoints, based on high school grades, recommendation, short essays, experiences, and SAT scores. Statistics show that American students on the average study much longer hours than Japanese students, once accepted into universities. In the U. S., students who failed in obtaining necessary credits for a grade advancement, will be typically dismissed from school. In contrast, Japanese universities offer a safety net by allowing them to stay and try again.

In wrapping up his lectures, Dr. Stronach expressed his opinion that American universities continue to be rated at leading positions in the world, and that Japanese universities are yet to be internationally competitive. He added that, because our two societies are different, Japan should not misunderstand that merely changing its education system to American way won't be the solution to enhance its international competitiveness. He concluded that the challenge for Japan to attain the said objective would be to identify and incorporate necessary changes.

(To be continued on Page 8)

## The 30<sup>th</sup> Diplomats Lecture

### Japan's Soft Power and Public Diplomacy

Date: February 12, 2013

Place: The International House of Japan

The MUA Diplomats Lecture is a flagship event which has been annually held since soon after its foundation. We invite ambassadors and diplomats from the embassies of different countries located in Tokyo. Our objective in this event is to let Japan's diplomatic policy be better understood by our guests through a lecture by qualified speakers from MOFA and other areas. Our lecturer this time was Mr. Yutaka Yokoi, Press Secretary & Director-General for Press and Public Relations, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.



We had a turnout of 26 diplomats, including nine ambassadors. During the first half of his speech, Mr. Yokoi mainly defined what he means by public diplomacy and explained how it differs from traditional diplomacy. During the second half, he explained the Japanese government's position concerning the territorial issues.

During the Q & A session, diverse questions were raised by eight diplomats, reflecting concerns over the mounting tension in Asia. Mr. Yokoi responded sincerely to each of these questions, sometimes with deliberate consideration.

*(Written by Y. Miyashita, Standing Director, the International Science & Culture Committee, and translated by S. Tanahashi, VP, the PR, Bulletin & Internet Committee)*

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(Continued from Page 7): Comparing Japanese and American Universities

During the Q & A session, a variety of questions were raised mainly from students and attendees engaged in education-related jobs. One question concerned how American educators at university level maintain the balance between teaching for students and research in their specialized fields. Another concerned the conventional format of English tests during Japanese university entrance exams. When a student became shaky midway in his English question and tried to switch over to Japanese, Dr. Stromach encouraged him to continue his question in English. We felt fine mentorship in his attitude.

We understand that Dr. Stronach has been an advisor to the Education Committee of CULCON (US-Japan Conference on Cultural & Educational Interchange). Through his lecture, we became keenly aware that Dr. Stronach is so knowledgeable about the reality of the education systems in both countries. In Japan, people often say recently that Japan is facing the third "Open Door" challenge. It would be nice if Japan could tap Dr. Stronach's expertise, as if hiring an "Oyatoi Gaijin" of the Heisei era so that we can identify the right direction for our university education system to become more competitive internationally.

*(Written & translated by S. Tanahashi, VP, the PR, Bulletin & Internet Committee)*

## The “Cha No Yu” Tea Ceremony Workshop for Youth and Foreigners

Date: January 26, 2013

Place: Minato Life-long Learning Center

The custom of tea drinking dates back about 500 years to the period when Japanese priests visited China to learn the Zen culture. That’s when they brought back to Japan tea plant seeds as well as utensils necessary for tea ceremony.

Since then the custom developed under Japan’s unique climate and aesthetic perception, and finally it culminated in the format of Japan’s own tea ceremony. Later the format was further brushed up into the so-called “Wabi Cha” sphere and this tradition has been handed down to the contemporary practice.

One motivation to hold MUA’s tea ceremony workshop was to provide an opportunity for youth and foreigners to experience firsthand the culture of tea ceremony. We were delighted to receive attendees from four different countries – Brazil, Egypt, Sri Lanka and the U. S. We hope they perceived beauty in the traditional tea-fixing manner and enjoyed the atmosphere of Japanese culture.

The workshop comprised the following four steps:

1. Lecture on the tea ceremony manner, including how to properly walk on tatami, bow, eat sweets, and drink tea.
2. Demonstration by the instructor on how to fix tea and serve it to guests with sweets.
3. Exercise: All attendees experience fixing and drinking tea properly.
4. Self-introduction by all attendees, along with their initial impression comments.

Major comments from attendees included the following:

○ The tea fixed by the instructor was tasty but my own fixed tea was bitter.

○ Sweets looked beautiful.

○ What I learned from today’s workshop will be helpful for my future job. (A comment from a young patissier)

Ms. Doaa, an Egyptian Embassy staff, who participated with her daughter, sent to MUA the following message of appreciation:

“This is Doaa Elkholy from the Egyptian Embassy. First of all I want to thank you to invite me and give a chance to attend Cha no Yu, by experiencing and realizing the big philosophy from a small tea ceremony. It was such a unique experience to me and to know more about the essence of the Japanese culture. Also my kid had enjoyed a lot, especially the sweets. Special thanks to Mr. Kiichiro Tanabe who had effort to translate to me. I appreciate a lot his time spent in order to make me more understanding. I hope I continually receive information on your events and programs through mail or through dear Nachiko-san.”

*(Written by K. Hirakata, Standing Director, the Youth Activities Committee, and translated by S. Tanahashi, VP, the PR, Bulletin & Internet Committee)*



2012 Foreign Embassy Visit Program  
**The Spanish Embassy in Roppongi**

Date: November 29, 2012

A total of 18 people attended this program, on a cloudy yet somewhat cold-free morning. The embassy was a typical Western architecture. It was designed in 1923 and built in 1927. The architect, a U. S. citizen named Gardiner designed it in his advanced age and characterized it with a “Spanish style.”

Gardiner’s Spanish style does not conform to the standard in the traditional homeland Spain. Instead, it’s a unique combination of the Spanish tradition, developed in the colonized Spanish territory in the U. S., and the element of native Pueblo’s culture. Gardiner passed away before the completion of the embassy. It was Keikichi Uemura, a colleague at Gardiner’s architecture studio, who succeeded him and completed the architecture in 1927.

The embassy garden was so beautiful with colored leaves of ginkgo and maple trees. I never expected to see so many trees planted in the embassy garden, with a serene environment surrounded by high-rise buildings.

After a tour of the architecture exterior and the garden, we were invited into the inside of the embassy. We walked down a slope to the basement, watching red and white-colored walls, until we were accommodated into a spacious hall. We enjoyed watching a DVD presentation on Spain, including basic knowledge about the country as well as the latest status of the society.

The following is a summary of major facts & points of interest about Spain:

- O Location: Spain lies on the Iberian Peninsula which is located in the south of Europe. Madrid, the capital, is located in the central part. It takes about 16 hours to fly from Japan to Spain. No direct flight is available currently. The land is bordered by France in the north, Portugal in the west, Africa in the south, and faces the Mediterranean Sea in the east.
- O Population: 47 million, approx. one third of Japan’s.
- O Territory: 500 thousand square kilometers, approx. 1.5 times larger than Japan’s.
- O Political System: Monarch under King Juan Carlos I. Prime Minister is Mariano Rajoy Brey. The national anthem does not have lyrics.
- O World Heritages: Spain has a total of 42 world heritages, the second largest holder.
- O Culture: Flamenco is the flagship culture.
- O Food: Well-known items include Paella, Spanish omelet, Iberian pork and olive oil. Spanish people take meals five times a day as follows:
  - 1<sup>st</sup> meal: Breakfast at 7 – 8 am
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> meal: Morning snack at 11 am
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> meal: Lunch at 2 – 3 pm
  - 4<sup>th</sup> meal: Afternoon snack at 5 – 6 pm
  - 5<sup>th</sup> meal: Dinner at 9 pm
- O Internationally renowned Spanish artists:  
(Painting) Picasso, Miro, Goya and Velazquez, (Architecture) Gaudi. Incidentally the “Osanbashi” or Big Pier Bridge in Yokohama was designed by a Spanish architect.
- O Sports: Soccer is the national sports. Spain also boasts its presence in tennis, F1

race, basketball, and bicycle road race.

- O Japanese culture in Spain: Young Spaniards are interested in Japanese comics which are collectively expressed as Manga. It seems that those youngsters share enthusiasm to deepen the Japan – Spain interaction and friendship.
- O Language: In addition to Spanish, the official languages in Spain include Galician, Euskara, and Catalan.

After we watched the DVD on Spain, we had a Q&A session. Many questions were raised. The following answers and comments may be informative to our readers:

- O It is said that Basque is a very difficult language to learn. Today approx. 2 million people in the region use the language in daily life.
- O Spain is famous for the bull fight but there are many young Spaniards who are against the traditional show.
- O The average number of children per family is two to three. In general both parents work while small children are taken care of at kindergartens.
- O Medical services are free at hospitals, due to the health insurance system.
- O Commodity prices are generally lower than in northern European countries. Consumption tax is 5% for food and 21% for luxury items.
- O School system: Elementary (6 years), secondary (4) and senior (2). Graduates from senior high schools advance to colleges or universities at age 18.
- O Voting right: Eligible at age 18
- O Students generally step up their soccer skills in extracurricular sports clubs. It also applies to other popular sports, including swimming, athletics and tennis.

The two Spanish embassy staff were so generous as to treat us with tasty Spanish wine after the presentation. We'd like to extend our hearty thanks to Mr. Javier Sanchez de Leon Delgado and Mr. Israel Ballano Moreno of the Culture Department for their warmest hospitality throughout the embassy tour. I'm sure that all of the participants deepened their understanding of Spain.

*(Written by S. Naruse, Chairperson, the Membership Committee, and translated by S. Tanahashi, VP, the PR, Bulletin & Internet Committee)*



## 2013 MUA New Year Friendship Party

Date: January 27, 2013

Place: Italian Restaurant "Grifon,"  
Shirokanedai, Minato City

MUA's annual kick-off event took place at the same restaurant as last year. Ms. Akiyama, Standing Director, undertook the role of MC. We had a turnout of 31 people.

President Takai gave the following opening address:

"All programs have been in good progress thanks to everyone's cooperation. For example, the English conversation classes already started this month while the English lecture by Dean Stronach of Temple University Japan Campus and the tea ceremony workshop were successfully held a few days ago, respectively. I'd appreciate your continued efforts to carry out planned programs in February and March."

Her speech was followed by Mr. Nakagawa, Vice President, who gave the following remarks and proposed an exceptional condolence toast:

"Japan was happy with good news last year, including the Nobel Prize award to Professor Yamanaka, the commercial start of the Tokyo Skytree, and the end of the extremely appreciated Yen currency, to name a few. For us at MUA, the most imperative challenge has been to reverse the decline of our membership. Lastly please join me in expressing deepest condolences to the victims involved in the recent terrorist attack in Algeria."

After these speeches, we were into the happy hour to enjoy the sumptuous Italian food as we enjoyed expanding friendship networks. Please understand that, behind the scene, the Membership Committee members had a hard negotiation with the restaurant manager to lower the fee.

Midway we had the pleasure of having a mini-lecture from Dr. Miwa, President Emeritus of MUA. The following is a summary of his speech:

Recently there was a forum on China-Japan relations, held at the International House of Japan. It was chaired by Mr. Yasushi Akashi, President of IHJ and MUA Advisor. The reporter was Mr. Wang Jisi, director of an institution for the research of international relations under China's Communist Party. We had two commentators; Dr. Kazuko Mori, Professor Emeritus of Waseda University, and Mr. Yuji Miyamoto, Ambassador to China until two years ago. Mr. Wang expressed concerns over the growing nationalism in both China and Japan. In response Professor Mori asked for Mr. Wang's opinion about the concern about China, expressed by a CIA-related institute of the U. S. The concern was over the threat of China's military buildup which may cause Japan to depart from its pacifism and pursue the course of nuclear armament. Ambassador Miyamoto also expressed a grave concern over the possibility of a military conflict at any moment if China continues its territorial violation into Japan's sea and air, causing near-miss tensions.

I am of opinion that China still maintains the tradition to adhere to its "official gazette" policy as the ground to base its claims in territorial rights. In contrast,

Japan adheres to legitimacy under the rule of international law. In retrospect, China had been pressed hard under international laws by the U. K., France, Germany, Russia and Japan for 120 years since the Opium War. China was exploited under the allegation that it had violated international laws. The logic behind the “official gazette” policy is that simply because the Senkaku islands are stated as its territory in the official gazette, the islands belong to China. Every country aspires for peaceful solutions but I am skeptical that diplomatic negotiations could work out one if the other party adheres to such logic.

The second half of the day’s program proceeded as follows, steered by Mr. Miyoshi, a very youthful and energetic chairman of our committee:

1. Self-introduction by each attendee
2. Business card exchange game
3. Mini-concert by Ms. Naomi Sonoda, a professional soprano singer
4. Introduction of Mr. Mark Murdock, accompanied by his wife. He has been the instructor for MUA’s English conversation classes for the past 15 years.

Mr. Matsumoto, VP, wrapped up the meeting with a comment that we should change our mindset, from the conventional “Think globally, act locally” to “Think locally, act globally.” A commemorative group photo was taken at the end.

*(Written by M. Tomogane, Standing Director, the Membership Committee, and translated by S. Tanahashi, VP, the PR, Bulletin & Internet Committee)*



## From UNESCO News

### 37th Session of the World Heritage Committee



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Opening ceremony of the 37th session of the World Heritage Committee which takes place in Phnom Penh and Siem Reap (Cambodia) from 16 to 27 June.

## Sites in Germany and Italy bring to 19 the number of sites inscribed on the World Heritage List this year

During the 37th session of the World Heritage Committee, which is being held until 27 June 2013, in Phnom Penh and Siem Reap (Cambodia), 19 new sites have been added to the World Heritage List. This brings the List to a total of 981 properties being divided into 759 cultural, 193 natural and 29 mixed properties, in 160 States Parties. Two new sites and one extension to a Polish site were inscribed on UNESCO's World Heritage List on Sunday afternoon, bringing to 19 the total number of sites added to the List during the 37th session taking place in Phnom Penh.

Five natural sites were inscribed: Xinjiang Tianshan (China), Mount Etna (Italy), El Pinacate and Gran Desierto de Altar Biosphere Reserve (Mexico), Namib Sand Sea (Namibia), Tajik National Park (Tajikistan)

Fourteen cultural sites were inscribed: Red Bay Basque Whaling Station (Canada), Cultural Landscape of Honghe Hani Rice Terraces, (China); Historic Monuments and Sites in Kaesong (Democratic People's Republic of Korea), Levuka Historical Port Town (Fiji); Bergpark Wilhelmshöhe (Germany), Hill Forts of Rajashtan (India), Golestan Palace (Iran), Medici Villas and Gardens in Tuscany (Italy), Fujisan, sacred place and source of artistic inspiration (Japan), Historic Centre of Agadez (Niger), Wooden *Tserkvas* of the Carpathian Region in Poland and Ukraine (Poland / Ukraine), University of Coimbra – Alta and Sofia (Portugal), Al Zubarah Archaeological Site (Qatar), Ancient City of Tauric Chersonese and its Chora (Ukraine)

Three sites received extensions: Mount Kenya-Lewa Wildlife Conservancy (Kenya), Maloti Drakensberg Transboundary World Heritage Site (Lesotho / South Africa), Wieliczka and Bochnia Royal Salt Mines (Poland).

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Minato UNESCO Association is a citizens' voluntary membership organization that promotes Japanese traditional culture, holds cross-cultural workshops and presents multicultural events and international symposia for world peace. For any questions or comments about our articles, please contact our secretariat office at:

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