MINATO

みなとユネスコ会報 Bulletin

MINATO UNESCO ASSOCIATION NEWS & CALENDAR

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Small Steps Toward Peace: Modest Activities of UNESCO

UMENE Keiichiro, Standing Director, Minato UNESCO Association



Approximately four years ago, I had the opportunity to attend a Minato UNESCO Association Salon entitled *Letters from the Gracious City of Rome*. I was deeply inspired by both its global perspective and the richness of its content. That experience led me to participate in a number of subsequent events, and eventually to become actively involved in the work of the Minato UNESCO Association.

For many years, I had hoped to contribute, however modestly, to the promotion of international friendship and mutual understanding. This aspiration grew out of my own experiences living and working overseas, as well as my professional career organizing and leading numerous international study tours, particularly within the retail sector. Those experiences reinforced my belief that meaningful dialogue across cultures is one of the foundations of lasting peace.

Today, as a member of the International Science & Cultural Committee, I help plan lectures, symposiums, and cultural programs that encourage international understanding among people who live, work, or study in Minato City. Together with many dedicated volunteers, we carry out these activities as part of UNESCO's civic movement, seeking in our own modest way to foster dialogue, understanding, and friendship among people of different backgrounds.

The Preamble to the Constitution of the UNESCO declares:
*"that since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed."*These words continue to guide our activities. I believe that the first step toward peace is to learn about one another—to understand each other's countries, cultures, histories, and everyday lives. Mutual understanding creates mutual respect, and mutual respect lays the foundation for peaceful coexistence. Regrettably, when we look at the world today, we often witness national interests taking precedence over dialogue and cooperation. At such times, the importance of UNESCO's grassroots initiatives becomes even more evident. Even small efforts to deepen international understanding can contribute to building a culture of peace, which lies at the heart of UNESCO's mission.

Our lecture series embraces a wide range of subjects, introducing the cultures and traditions of countries around the world, exploring the history of music through talks and performances by professional opera singers, presenting lectures by university scholars and museum specialists, and addressing UNESCO-related themes as well as issues concerning peace and sustainable development.

Through these diverse programs, we strive to offer opportunities for learning, reflection, and meaningful exchange that enrich the lives of all participants.
Another important aspect of our work is nurturing the next generation of UNESCO volunteers. We collaborate with university students and local high school students who are already engaged in UNESCO-related activities, organizing symposiums and public events on the theme of peace. These young people play leading roles in discussions and in presenting proposals for the future. Their

(To be continued on P, 9)

The Second 2025 Cross-cultural Awareness Workshop
"Welcome to the World of Italian Opera"
"Experiencing La Traviata Through Voice and Piano - Discovering the Secrets of Opera"

Lecturers:
Mr. WATANABE Dai, Tenor Opera Singer
Ms. WATANABE Yuriko, Pianist
Date: Sat., October 25, 2025, 2:00–4:00 p.m.
Venue: Libra Hall, Minato City Gender Equality Center

Part I: The Secrets of Opera



- The Birth of Italian Opera (16th Century)
  Claudio Monteverdi pioneered a style that used intricate musical notation to vividly portray movement and emotion.
- Experiencing *Recitativo Secco* ("Dry Recitative")
- A style in which words flow freely over simple, "dry" chordal accompaniment. Widely used in 17th- and 18th-century operas, *recitativo secco* is typically accompanied by a harpsichord and a bass instrument such as the cello, allowing singers to deliver the text in a speech-like, flexible rhythm.

  Vocal Performance: Mozart, *The Marriage of Figaro*, Act I (immediately before No. 7)

- Secco vs. Accompagnato: Two Faces of Operatic Storytelling
  Unlike *recitativo secco*, *recitativo accompagnato* is supported by the orchestra, creating a more dramatic and expressive form of sung narration.

  Vocal Performance: Excerpt from Act I, No. 2 of Mozart's *Don Giovanni*

- The Maturity of Opera Buffa and the Art of Bel Canto
- *Opera buffa*, a comic form of opera depicting everyday life, reached its artistic peak alongside the development of *bel canto*. Meaning "beautiful singing," *bel canto* is the traditional Italian vocal style established in the 17th and 18th centuries, characterized by a warm, lyrical tone and smooth, flowing melodic lines.

  Vocal Performance: "Una furtiva lagrima" from Donizetti's *L'elisir d'amore*

- Verdi's Iconic Melodies and Dramatic Irony
- Verdi's unforgettable melodies often carry hidden dramatic significance, transforming memorable tunes into emotional "poison arrows" within the story.

  Vocal Performance: "La donna è mobile" from Verdi's *Rigoletto*

- Opera's Rhythm and Poetry
- An introduction to the Italian tradition of syllabic verse, in which poetic lines are measured according to the number of syllables and the placement of accents, while taking vowel combinations into account.

  Piano Performance: "Mi chiamano Mimì" from Puccini's *La Bohème*

- A Bridge to Modern Opera: Cilea's *L'Arlesiana* and the Weight of Verismo
- The lecture explored how Francesco Cilea's work represents the realism and emotional intensity of the verismo tradition.
- The Legacy of Melody After World War II: Ennio Morricone
- After World War II, government support helped stabilize opera houses, but commissions for new operas declined, leading to an increasingly conservative repertoire. Many leading composers turned their attention to new forms of musical theatre, while the rapid expansion of the film industry created fresh opportunities. As a result, numerous composers—including Ennio Morricone—made their greatest contributions through film music rather than the operatic stage.

  Piano Performance: Excerpt from Morricone's *New Cinema Paradiso*

- Finale
  Vocal Performance: "Nessun dorma" from Puccini's *Turandot*

Part II: The World of *La Traviata*



- Opening: Prelude — The Theme of Transience
- The audience was invited to experience *La Traviata* through the combined power of music, words, and stage performance.
- The Opera
  Composed by Giuseppe Verdi with a libretto by Francesco Maria Piave, *La Traviata* premiered in Venice in 1853.
- The Main Characters
  - Violetta – a celebrated courtesan and the star of Parisian high society
  - Alfredo – an honest and sincere young man
  - Germont – Alfredo's conservative father, who values family honor above all else and interferes with the lovers' relationship

Act I – The Evening Party: Love at First Sight and a Hint of Tragedy

In mid-19th-century Paris, the elegant home of the renowned courtesan Violetta is the setting for lavish evening parties. At one such gathering, the young Alfredo enlivens the celebration by singing the famous "Libiamo ne'lieti calici" (Drinking Song). When the two are finally alone, he confesses the love he has long cherished for her. His heartfelt sincerity deeply moves Violetta, who begins to question the life she has always known. The joyous drinking song marks the beginning of Alfredo's determined pursuit and Violetta's inner conflict.

Vocal Performances: " Libiamo ne'lieti calici (Drinking Song)" / Love Duet
Piano Performance: "Sempre libera"

Act II (First Half) – The Country: Happiness and the Beginning of Sacrifice

Living happily together in a country house outside Paris, Violetta secretly supports their life by selling her possessions. While Alfredo is away, his father Germont arrives, determined to rescue his son from what he believes is a destructive relationship with a courtesan. Despite Violetta's

desperate pleas, he persuades her to sacrifice her own happiness for Alfredo's future. She writes a farewell letter and leaves him. Unaware of the truth, Alfredo reads the letter, is overcome with anger, and rushes back to Paris in pursuit of her.

Vocal Performances: "Di Provenza il mar, il suol" (Burning Heart) / "Amami, Alfredo"

Act II (Second Half) – The Ballroom: A Father's Calm and a Public Tragedy

That evening, Violetta arrives at a party hosted by one of Alfredo's friends, accompanied by her patron, Baron Douphol. After winning a large sum of money at the gaming tables, Alfredo begs Violetta to return to him. When she refuses, he publicly humiliates her by throwing his winnings at her feet before the assembled guests.

Piano Performance: "Di Provenza il mar, il suol"
Vocal Performance: "Questa donna conoscete?"

Act III – The Sickroom: A Letter, Reunion, and the Final Promise

Several months later, Violetta lies gravely ill with tuberculosis in her Paris home, facing the end of her life. Alfredo, having finally learned the truth from his father, rushes to her side. He begs for her forgiveness, and the two dream of beginning a new life together. But it is too late. Violetta dies peacefully in Alfredo's arms.

Piano Performances: Opening excerpt / "Parigi, o cara" (excerpt)
Vocal Performance: "Parigi, o cara"

After forgiveness comes one brief moment in which hope returns before Violetta quietly transcends this world.

Piano Performance: Closing excerpt



(Written by UMENE K., International Science and Culture Committee, and translated by SUDA Y., PR & Internet Committee Associate)

2025 Minato UNESCO Association Symposium

What Can Be Done for Peace through UNESCO's "Memory of the World" Initiative

Date: Wednesday, Feb. 4, 2026
Venue: International House of Japan
Organizer: Minato UNESCO Association
Co-organizer: Minato City Board of Education

Speakers:
KOBAYASHI Miho, Deputy Director-General, Japanese National Commission for UNESCO
SHIBATA Taizan, Researcher, Jodo-shu Research Institute
Panelists: Tokyo Metropolitan Mita High School UNESCO Committee
GOTO Yuua (2nd grader), MARUYAMA Taisei (1st grader), FUKAI Sayaka (2nd grader), TAKAHASHI Kaho (1st grader)

The symposium was held on the theme of the significance and role of UNESCO's "Memory of the World" Program, following the 2025 inscription of the *Tripiṭaka* preserved at Zōjōji Temple—head temple of the Jōdo-shū located in Minato City. After a video message from Minato City Mayor Ai Seike, Ms. Miho Kobayashi of the Japanese National Commission for UNESCO introduced the "75th Anniversary Project of Japan's Accession to UNESCO" and delivered a lecture. This was followed by a lecture by Mr. Taizan Shibata of the Jōdo-shū Comprehensive Institute, and proposals from students of Tokyo Metropolitan Mita High School. A summary follows.

Ms. KOBAYASHI Miho

"About UNESCO's 'Memory of the World' Initiative"

The initiative began in 1992 (the inscription system started in 1995). Its objectives are:

1. To protect and preserve documentary heritage of global significance.
2. To make such heritage accessible to as many people as possible.
3. To raise awareness of the existence and importance of documentary heritage in member states.

Public recognition in Japan is still developing, but the recent inscription of Zōjōji's scriptures has drawn attention, and we hope to build on this momentum. Below is an outline of the inscription system.

Application Process: Organizations that hold the materials submit an application to the Japanese National Commission for UNESCO, where it is reviewed. The cycle occurs every two years. The Commission selects up to two candidates and recommends them to UNESCO. The final decision is made by a committee at UNESCO Headquarters.

Inscription System: Inscription is not the goal but the starting point. Once materials are internationally recognized, full-scale efforts to preserve, utilize, and disseminate them begin. Inscription marks the beginning of actions to ensure that the materials serve the future.

Eligible Materials: Handwritten manuscripts, books, newspapers, posters, maps, films, photographs, digital records, etc. Examples include the Gutenberg Bible, Chinese oracle bone script, and Beethoven's handwritten score of the Ninth Symphony.

Current Numbers:

- International inscriptions: 570
- Regional inscriptions: 86 **Japan:**
- International inscriptions: 9
- Regional inscriptions: 1

Under Review (2026–2027 International Cycle): *Fūshi Kaden*, Zeami's treatise on Noh, transmitted by the Kanze family. The decision will be announced in spring 2027.

Future Outlook: A major challenge is the small number of applications. We aim to identify suitable cases that align with the purpose of "Memory of the World," organize them into a list, and develop a system within the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology to support applicants. Through such efforts, preserving records will help transmit the past, and making them public will deepen intercultural understanding. International dissemination will foster cross-border dialogue and mutual respect, nurturing an attitude that embraces diversity.

Although political tensions have arisen in the past—such as those related to "historical recognition"—the programme is not meant to create conflict. Its fundamental philosophy is to safeguard humanity's shared documentary heritage, deepen mutual understanding, and build the defenses of peace. We believe that continued efforts will ensure that "Memory of the World" contributes steadily to UNESCO's mission of building peace.

Mr. SHIBATA Taizan

"What Can We Do Now, Starting from the 'Memory of the World' Inscription of Zōjōji's Tripiṭaka?"

Religious Scriptures

Twelve thousand woodblock-printed volumes of the Tripiṭaka have been inscribed in UNESCO's *"Memory of the World." This was made possible thanks to the Ministry of Education and the* UNESCO Association. These scriptures were donated by Tokugawa Ieyasu. Sutras originally composed in India were translated in China and written entirely in Chinese characters.

If we consider the Tripiṭaka not merely as Buddhist texts but as "religious scriptures," then Christianity, Islam, and other religions also possess significant documents. There may be no other example of religious scriptures being inscribed in "Memory of the World." Religious scriptures are believed to contain ultimate truth or divine words, serving not as mere reading material but as guides to life and explanations of the world's origins. They are where believers encounter the divine and hear sacred words. In this sense, one hears God's words in the Gutenberg Bible or the Qur'an, and one hears the Buddha's voice in the Tripiṭaka. The significance of the inscription lies in the recognition of religious scriptures as global cultural heritage.

The Tripiṭaka and Zōjōji's Three Editions

The Tripiṭaka consists of the Buddha's teachings (Sūtra), monastic regulations (Vinaya), and commentaries (Śāstra), collectively called the "Three Baskets." Translators were known as "Tripiṭaka Masters." Buddhism, a world religion, has scriptures translated into Sanskrit, Pali,

Tibetan, and Chinese; Zōjōji preserves the Chinese versions. The three editions are:

1. Song edition
2. Yuan edition
3. Goryeo edition Together known as Zōjōji's "Three Tripiṭakas."

They represent the culmination of printing culture, Chinese-character culture, and movable-type culture. Zōjōji, as the Tokugawa family temple, preserves the history of the shogunate and the Jōdo-shū tradition.

Peace as Seen Through Zōjōji's Tripiṭaka

- Recognizing the existence of others requires diversity, plurality, cooperation, and tolerance. Different cultures and faiths must respect and coexist with one another.
- The Tripiṭaka teaches ways to overcome suffering and advocates prayers for peace and tranquility.
- "Prayers for peace" reflect humanity's desire for peace and its ability to create peace. This aligns with UNESCO's founding spirit. These constitute the significance of the Tripiṭaka's existence.

Tokyo Metropolitan Mita High School UNESCO Committee

"Expectations from the Younger Generation"

GOTO Yuua (2nd grader)

I am truly grateful for the opportunity to speak here today as one of the younger participants. I will introduce our committee and share the current level of awareness among young people regarding "Memory of the World," followed by our proposals and expectations for the programme. First, our committee chair will introduce our activities.

MARUYAMA Taisei (1st grader)

I am Maruyama, the committee chair. The Mita High School UNESCO Committee works daily to engage students and parents. We operate in four teams; today I will introduce two that were active during our school festival. At the September festival, we held a bazaar and a fundraising campaign. Before fundraising, we invited the international NGO "Earth Stage," which provides support in Gaza, to speak about the current situation there. This deepened our understanding and strengthened the meaning behind our activities. We raised 60,000 yen through the bazaar and donations, and with additional student council proceeds, donated a total of 160,000 yen to Earth Stage. This became an opportunity for students to reflect on wars and conflicts around the world. We hope to continue expanding our activities and contributing to society.

GOTO Yuua (2nd grader)

Our school is located near Zōjōji. Learning that the Tripiṭaka had been carefully preserved over centuries and recognized by "Memory of the World" made me realize that preserving and transmitting records is not only the responsibility of people in the past. The inscription represents accumulated knowledge handed down through generations and a message to each of us for the future. Yet, as I myself did not know about it, the reality is that "Memory of the World," despite its value, remains largely unknown among younger generations.

To assess awareness, we conducted a survey at school (101 students, 1st and 2nd year):

1. Do you know UNESCO's "Memory of the World"? Yes: 2.8% / No: 97.2%
2. Do you know Zōjōji's Tripiṭaka? Yes: 2.8% / No: 97.2%
3. Would you like to learn more about the programme? Yes / Somewhat: 85%
4. What would be suitable candidates? "Hiroshima photographs," "The Tale of Genji," "Ukiyo-e," "Photographs of the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake"
5. Effective ways to promote awareness? Examples: SNS, exhibitions, films, collaboration with companies

The survey showed strong interest among students—they want to learn, deepen understanding, and share. The issue is not lack of interest but lack of opportunities. Therefore, we believe it is essential to create mechanisms that allow students to engage personally, not merely receive information.

FUKAI Sayaka (2nd grader)

Next, we propose experiential activities to make "Memory of the World" more accessible. Workshops can serve as important entry points. The Tripiṭaka has value not only as preserved material but through understanding its words and background, and considering how we interpret it today.

TAKAHASHI Kaho (1st grader)

We also propose collaboration with local communities and national institutions. Specifically, establishing special information booths at events held at Zōjōji. The temple hosts many events throughout the year, attracting visitors from Japan and abroad. Providing an information hub in such settings would allow people unfamiliar with "Memory of the World" to encounter it naturally. This would help reposition the programme from specialized knowledge to familiar cultural resources.

Summary: Proposals and Expectations from High School Students

1. Workshops

- Experiential workshops using the Tripiṭaka
    - Translation and interpretation activities: not professional translation, but rephrasing into modern language and considering how the words connect to today's society.
- Four thematic workshops:

    1. **Choosing:** Compare historical materials and consider what one would select as "Memory of the World."
    2. **Time:** Record present-day experiences and imagine how people 100 years later would perceive them.
    3. **Things we cannot afford to lose:** Imagine a world without recorded culture or values and recognize that records are not guaranteed.
    4. **Presentation of records:** Create exhibition plans or explanatory texts from a student's perspective.

2. Collaboration with Local and National Institutions

1. Establish special booths at Zōjōji's 30+ annual events.
2. Use public facilities (libraries, community centers) for exhibitions and experiential learning.
3. Review the national selection process: currently the Ministry selects candidates, but in the future, citizens could propose candidates and experts could evaluate them.

3. Expectations: Creating Opportunities to Learn

- Workshops and selection methods for "Memory of the World."
- Activities within Mita High School to ensure learning does not end with awareness.
- Expanding the meaning of records:
    - Records are not only preserved for future generations;
    - Choosing, preserving, and recording are actions we ourselves must engage in.
    - Meaning grows when we think and act for ourselves.

4. Final Expectation

If various initiatives encourage more people to take interest in "Memory of the World," the significance of the initiatives' registration system will grow even further.



We are very grateful for the two speakers, Ms. Kobayashi and Mr. Shibata, as well as for the Mita High School UNESCO Committee students who jointed as panelists.

(Written by SATO Ritsuko, the International Science & Culture Committee, and translated by TANAHASHI S., the PR & Internet Committee)

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(Continued from P. 1: Small Steps Toward Peace: Modest Activities of UNESCO)
thoughtful perspectives, careful analysis, and genuine commitment to creating a better society give us every reason to be optimistic.

Looking to the future, I hope to continue strengthening cooperation with younger generations, as well as with other UNESCO Associations and UNESCO Clubs in schools and universities. By working together across generations and communities, we can continue to build peace from the grassroots, one meaningful step at a time.
Although our efforts may seem small, I firmly believe that every act of dialogue, every opportunity for learning, and every new friendship contributes to the construction of peace. This, to me, is the true spirit of UNESCO.

(Translated by SUDA Y., the PR & Internet Committee Associate)

"2025 Annual Tokyo Council of UNESCO Associations Training Seminar"
Youth and Student Seminar Theme: "The Kind of Peace We Aspire to Create"
Tokyo Council of UNESCO Associations Seminar Theme: "Eighty Years After the WWII: What Does Peace Mean to Us?"

Date: February 23, 2025, 13:00-17:00
Venue: Asagaya Regional Community Center

In 2025, Japan marked the 80th anniversary of the end of World War II and the 75th anniversary of its membership in UNESCO. To commemorate these milestones, the 2025 Annual Tokyo Council of UNESCO Associations Training Seminar featured a special lecture by Ms. KUBOTA Tomoko, President of the Suginami Koyukai Association, an organization representing survivors of the atomic bombing. Ms. KUBOTA shared her personal experiences as an atomic bomb survivor and spoke about the importance of preserving memories of war for future generations.

Following her presentation, representatives from six UNESCO Associations and Clubs shared their own experiences and memories related to war. From the Minato UNESCO Association, President TANABE delivered a presentation entitled *"Memories of the Prewar and Postwar Years,"* reflecting on his personal experiences and observations of Japan before and after the war. After these presentations, participants were divided into nine discussion groups, where they engaged in active exchanges of ideas on the theme of peace. During the final plenary session, each group shared proposals for concrete actions that could contribute to building a more peaceful society.

To further develop these ideas into practical initiatives, participants agreed to organize a follow-up meeting entitled *"Connecting to the Future,"* where they will discuss how to transform the proposed actions into meaningful activities. The seminar brought together 33 participants for the Youth and Student Seminar, 85 participants for the Tokyo Council of UNESCO Associations Training Seminar (including seven members from the Minato UNESCO Association), and 39 participants for the exchange gathering.)



(Written by SATO R., Standing Director, and translated by SUDA Y., the PR & Internet Committee Associate)

2025 Tokyo Metropolitan Mita Senior High School Symposium
Theme: "Eighty Years After the War II: What Can We Do Today?"

Date: Sat., March 28, 2026　9:30a.m.
Venue: Music Auditorium, Tokyo Metropolitan Mita Senior High School



Following the success of last year's event, Tokyo Metropolitan Mita High School Symposium was held again this year. A total of ten members from the Minato UNESCO Association and the Tokyo Council of UNESCO Association participated in the event.
The symposium was organized and operated by members of the school's UNESCO Committee, including students who had participated as presenters at the Minato UNESCO Association's 2025 symposium.

The theme of this year's symposium was: *"As memories of war gradually become more distant, what can we learn from the past and what can we pass on to future generations as we mark the 80th anniversary of the end of World War II? Through dialogue, let us reflect together on what we can do today and on the meaning of peace."*

In the activity report of their UNESCO Committee, the students shared their experiences of participating in the Minato UNESCO Association's symposium. They explained that presenting their ideas in front of a large audience had been a valuable learning experience. They were encouraged by the positive responses from participants and gained a deeper appreciation of the importance of incorporating young people's perspectives into discussions about peace and society. The students also reported on their experiences serving as facilitators for group discussions during the Japanese Speech Contest and Cross-cultural Awareness Workshop organized by the Minato UNESCO Association.

Following the activity report, a storyteller from the Shokei-kan, a national facility that collects, preserves and exhibits verbal testimony, historical materials, books and information about various hardships experienced during and after the war by sick and wounded servicemen, as well as their families, etc., and provides an opportunity for posterity to learn about those hardships, delivered a talk on the memories and experiences of those affected by war, where group discussions under the theme *"Reflecting on Peace Through Memories of War"* were held in which students exchanged their thoughts and impressions.

The UNESCO Committee at Tokyo Metropolitan Mita High School consists of two representatives from each class. The school has many students who have a strong interest in international understanding, making the committee one of the most popular and active student organizations. Its members are engaged in a wide range of activities aimed at promoting peace, dialogue, and global awareness. In their closing remarks, the students expressed their hope to continue organizing the symposium in the coming year. A student who had presented at last year's symposium and has since entered university also expressed interest in participating in future events organized by the Minato UNESCO Association. We look forward to further exchanges and cooperation with these young people, whose enthusiasm and commitment embody the future of UNESCO activities.



(Written by Sato R., Standing Director, International Science and Culture Committee, and translated by SUDA Y., PR & Internet Committee Associate)

Introducing Global Culinary Cultures

West Indian Cooking Class

Instructor: Ms. Purva Ponkshe

Date & Time: Saturday, February 28, 2026, 12:00 PM – 3:30 PM

Venue: Cooking Room, Minato City Gender Equality Center "Libra"

Participants: 18 local residents, 1 instructor, 8 staff members



Following the highly acclaimed West Indian cooking class held in July 2023, we hosted a second session. This time, the class focused on traditional West Indian cuisine using Japanese winter vegetables. Once again, the instructor was Ms. Purva Ponkshe, a native of Pune in the state of Maharashtra, western India. Ms. Ponkshe first came to Japan in 1993 after getting married. She passed the former N1 level of the Japanese Language Proficiency Test in 2004 and currently teaches West Indian home cooking while continuing her own studies of Japanese kanji.

Today's menu:

① Puri (crispy deep-fried bread with spinach)

② Refreshing Indian-style salad with sprouted beans

③ Fluffy, spiced Indian-style cabbage rice

④ Home-style butter chicken curry

⑤ Semiya Payasam (an Indian-style dessert made with vermicelli noodles)

⑥ Masala Chai (Indian-style milk tea)

① "Puri" is a deep-fried flatbread made from a dough of whole wheat flour (atta), spinach, and potatoes. It is crispy yet chewy, offering a distinct, savory spinach flavor. It is served alongside a piece of deep-fried, salty papad.

② The "Refreshing Indian-Style Sprouted Bean Salad" features green beans and Indian moth beans that Purwa-san sprouted herself, starting the process the morning before bringing them in. A generous amount of these sprouted beans is tossed with fresh vegetables—such as red onion—and dressed with lemon juice, seasonings, and a final touch of oil infused with heated spices like mustard seeds. It is a salad that delights the palate with the contrasting textures of tender beans and crisp raw vegetables, all brought together by the tang of lemon and the aromatic flavor of spices.



③ "Indian-style Cabbage Rice with a Subtle Spiced Flavor" was made by cooking Basmati rice, a blend of spices, and Japanese winter cabbage in a rice cooker. I used 2.5 times the amount of water relative to the rice, but since the cabbage releases moisture, I think using slightly less water would have better achieved the characteristic of fluffy, distinct-grain texture of Indian rice.

④ For the "Home-Style Butter Chicken Curry," we used tandoori chicken that Purva-san had marinated overnight in spices and Greek yogurt. We simmered this with onions sautéed in ghee (Indian clarified butter), a paste made from fresh blended tomatoes, and heavy cream. I was deeply

impressed by the complex depth of flavor—a wonderful harmony of aromatic spices, the savory taste of the chicken, and the fresh acidity of perfectly ripe tomatoes.



⑤ "Semiya Payasam" is a sweet dessert made by sautéing crisp, dried vermicelli (semiya) in ghee, simmering it in milk until tender, and adding sugar, cardamom, and saffron. The vermicelli offered a delightful texture—soft yet retaining the distinct feel of noodles—and the flavor was gentle, making it the perfect conclusion to a spicy meal.

⑥ "Masala chai" is an Indian-style milk tea made by heating water and sugar in a pot and adding black tea leaves, grated ginger, cardamom powder, and milk. The ginger is said to be added for its aroma and to help prevent colds.

In India, where there is a large vegetarian population, people obtain protein from legumes; Purwa-san explained that she regularly selects from various types of beans depending on the dish she is preparing. Incidentally, she noted that Japanese soybeans are not used in Indian cuisine. She also explained that there are specific rules regarding which ingredients are permitted or forbidden for different occasions—such as offerings to the gods, New Year's meals, or family gatherings. The participants asked Purwa-san a wide range of questions, and she answered each one enthusiastically and without hesitation, drawing on her deep knowledge of food culture.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to Purva-san for the advance preparation and for introducing us to such a delicious and hearty spread of Western Indian cuisine. Thank you very much.



(YAMASAWA Emi, World Cooking Committee, and translated by Miyashita Y,. Standing Director, the PR & Internet Committee)

The 2026 Annual General Meeting of the Minato UNESCO Association

Date: Wednesday, April 15, 2026

Venue: Minato City Life-long Learning Center

We had the pleasure of having the attendance of our Association's Advisor, Ms. SEIKE Ai, Mayor of Minato City (pictured on the right). We were also joined by Ms. HONJO Noriko of the Minato City Board of Education Secretariat, Lifelong Learning and Sports Promotion Division; Ms. KOJIMA Masae, Section Chief; and Ms. HORIUCHI Otono, staff member. With 23 members present, the meeting was convened with a total of 29 participants.



Following the opening remarks by Mr. TANABE Kiichiro, President of the Minato UNESCO Association, Mayor Seike delivered the following message:

"I would like to express my heartfelt appreciation to the Minato UNESCO Association for your continuous efforts to promote international mutual understanding and goodwill, and for your contributions to building a cooperative and vibrant local community. You have provided opportunities for international exchange through programs such as world food culture and opera lecture concerts. In the Japanese-language speech contest, you brought together young event assistants from Tokyo Metropolitan Mita High School, Aoyama Gakuin University, and Tamagawa University, helping to elevate the quality and impact of speakers' presentations. Through calligraphy and tea ceremony programs, you have sparked interest among foreign residents and offered them opportunities to experience traditional Japanese culture—this is the foundation of mutual understanding. In Minato City, home to 80 embassies, many foreign companies, and a richly international community, we will continue striving to create an international city where people can live with open hearts, embracing diversity. We look forward to the continued support and cooperation of the Minato UNESCO Association."

We were deeply honored to receive such generous words of recognition from Mayor Seike for our years of UNESCO activities in collaboration with Minato City.

The meeting then proceeded to deliberations of Agenda Items No. 1 through No. 9 which were presented for resolution. All items were unanimously approved.

1st Agenda: Fiscal 2025 Activities Report, Introduction of New Members

2nd Agenda: Fiscal 2025 Stipulated Meetings Report

3rd Agenda: Fiscal 2025 Financial Report

4th Agenda: Fiscal 2025 Auditor's Report

5th Agenda: Report on MUA's cooperation with National Federation of UNESCO Associations in Japan and Tokyo Metropolitan Liaison Council of UNESCO Associations, along with Fiscal 2026 Plan

6th Agenda: Fiscal 2026 Activities Plan

7th Agenda: Fiscal 2026 Budgetary Plan

8th Agenda: Fiscal 2026 MUA Officers Plan

9th Agneda: Partial revision of MUA's membership categories and annual membership fee

(Written by KOBAYASHI T., Vice President, and translated by TANAHASHI S., the PR & Internet Committee)

Visit to Minato City Mayor Seike

Date & Time: Thursday, May 28, 2026, at 3:00 PM



We visited Minato City Mayor Seike to express our gratitude for the video message she provided for the Minato UNESCO Association's FY2025 symposium. Ms. Mayor also presented the symposium's findings (proposals) on behalf of the students from Tokyo Metropolitan Mita High School.

The meeting took place in the Mayor's reception room. It began with Advisor Nagano introducing the participants and outlined the symposium. Subsequently, four students presented the symposium's findings and proposals, followed by an exchange of views between the students and Mayor Seike.

The symposium was held on Wednesday, February 4, 2026, to mark the occasion of Zojoji Temple's "Tripitaka" (Buddhist scriptures) being inscribed in the UNESCO Memory of the World Register in 2025. The theme was "What Can We Do for Peace? Insights from UNESCO's Memory of the World." The students from Tokyo Metropolitan Mita High School who participated in the event offered several proposals aimed at raising awareness of Zojoji Temple's "Three Great Tripitaka" collections.

The discussion took place in a cordial atmosphere, with students offering proposals and exchanging views. Mayor Seike shared several thoughts, including: (1) Minato City has launched an "Innovation Lab" initiative to solicit policy proposals from junior high and high school students; (2) utilizing "high school student ambassadors" might be a good idea; (3) translating the *Daizōkyō* (Great Canon of Buddhist Scriptures) into modern Japanese could be a meaningful endeavor; and (4) Minato City would like to convey these proposals to Zōjō-ji Temple as well. We extend our deepest gratitude to the ward office staff who arranged the venue and to Ms. Doran, the supervising teacher from Tokyo Metropolitan Mita High School.



(Written by SATO Ritsuko, Standing Director, the International Academic and Cultural Committee, and translated by MIYASIHITA Y., the PR & Internet Committee)

Minato UNESCO Salon

"Bonsai through the eyes of an American; Encounters and Fascination"

Speaker: Megan Scarlet Keys, Coordinator for International Relations, the Omiya Bonsai Art Museum

Date: Saturday, May 30, 2026
Venue: Minato City Life-long Learning Center



As the Minato UNESCO Association, we have held several "Bonsai: Demonstration and Hands-on Experience" events over the years under the guidance of Seikōen. Through this connection, we were given the opportunity to host a program jointly with the Omiya Bonsai Art Museum, located in the historic Omiya Bonsai Village with a history of over 100 years.

Scarlet-san is originally from Utah, where the 2002 Winter Olympics were held (and scheduled again for 2034). At age 19, she spent a year and a half in several rural areas of Kansai as a volunteer missionary for her church. She fell in love with the Japanese language, and after returning to the U.S., majored in Japanese in both university and graduate school, later becoming a Japanese-language teacher. Until last spring, she had been teaching Japanese in the United States. After that, wishing to live in Japan and further improve her Japanese, she applied for the JET Program and was assigned to Omiya—where she unexpectedly encountered the world of bonsai. Since last July, she has been working as a Coordinator for International Relations (translation and interpretation) at the Omiya Bonsai Art Museum. She has now become completely captivated by bonsai and shared its charm with us.

"What is Bonsai?"

Bonsai is not a special species or variety of tree. Any tree can be planted in a shallow pot to restrict root growth, and its shape is refined through pruning. That is bonsai. So, does creating bonsai mean starting from sowing seeds, watering, repotting, and waiting decades? Of course, that method exists, but bonsai is also created through *yamadori* (collecting trees from the mountains), as well as cuttings and grafting. If you start bonsai today, *yamadori* allows you to skip about 20 years.



Teire (Care)

Daily watering—this is everything. In addition, repotting every three to four years is essential.

Types

They are broadly divided into two categories:

- **Shōhaku (conifers)**
- **Zōki bonsai (deciduous trees):** flowering, foliage, and fruit-bearing varieties

Jukei (Forms)

She explained various bonsai styles—such as *moyōgi*, *kengai*, *hankengai*, *fukinagashi*, group plantings, *hōkizukuri*, *chokkan*, *sōkan*, *bunjingi*, rock-grown, *shakan*, clump style—through a quiz that matched photos with names. This helped participants discover their own preferences.

Midokoro (Points of Appreciation)

First, lower your posture and look up from below to feel the presence of a great tree. Observe the

16 roots, the trunk's rise, the branching (the art of pruning), and each leaf's color and shape. **Jin (dead branches) and Shari (dead trunk sections):** Parts of the trunk or branches may die and remain as they are. The exposed white wood creates a beautiful contrast with the green foliage. **Front and Back:** Like a face and a back, bonsai has a front and rear. The front is determined by how the trunk rises. Bonsai that appears to bow slightly is especially charming.

At the end, she concluded her talk with the question: **"What does bonsai mean to me?"**, using a metaphor from life.



A tree in an orchard had grown freely without care—its branches overgrown, bearing no fruit. Seeing this, a gardener pruned it drastically. The tree looked weak and shabby. The tree protested: "Why did you make me look so disgraceful? I wanted to live freely." The gardener replied, "This is for your sake. When you bear fruit, you will understand." "Sometimes pruning is necessary. It is guidance for growth." A gardener—like a mentor in life—must prune at times to help one grow.

Bonsai, too, is just a tree. It may dislike being pruned or wired. But a bonsai artist cherishes the tree and understands what is best for it. Without that necessary pain, it may not be worthy of display. When we endure hardship and overcome it, we become better human beings.

To her, bonsai symbolizes **resilience, elegance, and strength**—a powerful emblem.

Eighteen participants attended Scarlet-san's salon, held in Japanese, where she conveyed the charm of Japan's traditional culture, bonsai, discovered through her encounter with Japan. She engaged the audience with quizzes on various themes, drawing interest and curiosity—truly the work of a "teacher."







(KOBAYASHI Takayuki, Vice President, and translated by TANAHASHI S., the PR & Internet Committee)

FY2026 1st Lecture on International Understanding

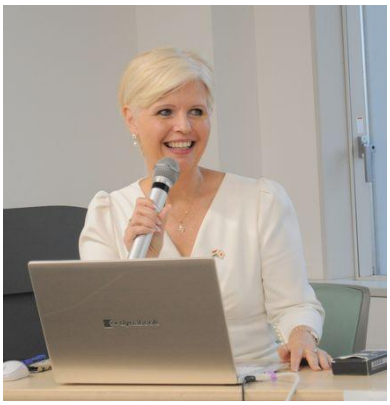
"A Journey to Discover the Charms of Hungary: Exploring History, Culture, and Cuisine"

Speaker: Ms. Krisztina Merényi, Counsellor at the Embassy of Hungary /

Director of the Liszt Institute – Hungarian Cultural Center

Date & Time: Saturday, June 13, 2026, 14:00–16:00

Venue: Minato City Gender Equality Center "Libra



Ms. Krisztina Merényi gave a presentation—delivered in excellent Japanese and filled with humor—introducing Hungary's history, culture, cuisine, and tourism highlights. All participants also had the opportunity to taste the traditional baked pastry known as *Kürtőskalács* (chimney cake).

Basic Information about Hungary

・Located in the heart of Europe (Central Europe); approximately 9,100 km and a 17-hour flight from Japan. Situated in the center of the Carpathian Basin.

・Area: 93,030 km²; Population: Approx. 9.5 million (as of June 2026). Capital: Budapest.

・Major rivers: Danube, Tisza. Highest mountain: Kékes (1,014 m).

・Climate: Continental (hot summers, cold winters); no high mountains; four distinct seasons; an agricultural nation.

・Language: Hungarian belongs to the Uralic language family and shares grammatical similarities with Japanese; the people originated as nomadic tribes migrating from the region of Mongolia.

・Currency: Forint; exchange rate as of June 2026 is approximately 530 JPY for 1,000 Forints.

【History of Hungary】

・1st–5th Centuries: During the Roman Empire era, the capital was Aquincum ("City of Waters"); many Roman-era ruins still remain in the Buda district today.

・Nation founded in 896; crowned by the Pope in 1000, marking the birth of the Kingdom of Hungary; a country founded on Christian culture, with the majority of the population being Roman Catholic.

・The first king was Saint Stephen; August 20th marks the founding of the nation (Saint Stephen's Day).

・Ruled by the Mongols from 1241 to 1242; many fortresses were constructed during this period.

・Ruled by the Ottoman Empire for 150 years (1541–1686); Turkish baths and mosques were built.

・Following the Second Siege of Vienna (1683) and the Great Turkish War, the territory came under Habsburg rule in 1699.

・After the Hungarian Revolution of 1848, Franz Joseph established the Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1867 and recognized the autonomy of the Kingdom of Hungary.

・Empress Elisabeth married Franz Joseph at the age of 16. She spent her summers living in a palace in Hungary, having moved there from Vienna. Born in Germany, she became proficient in Hungarian and excelled at horse riding and dancing.



・Lost two-thirds of its territory under the Treaty of Trianon following World War I (1920).

・Hungary and Germany were defeated in World War II; approximately 70% of the buildings in Budapest were destroyed.

・The Hungarian People's Republic era (1949–1989): a socialist period under Soviet influence.

・Russian language instruction was part of compulsory education.

・During this time, the Hungarian Revolution of 1956 saw an uprising against the Soviet Union, but the country was subsequently invaded by Soviet troops.

・Transitioned to democracy in 1989, becoming a free republic. Joined NATO in 1999 and the EU in 2004.

【Capital City: Budapest】

・Composed of 23 districts and divided by the Danube River into the Buda and Pest sides; population of approximately 2 million.

・Budapest was established in 1873 through the merger of the three towns of Buda, Óbuda, and Pest.

・Budapest's Danube riverbanks, the Buda Castle District, and Andrássy Avenue are designated World Heritage Sites; the city is known as the "Pearl of the Danube."

・Key attractions include the Chain Bridge; the Buda district's Castle Hill and Fisherman's Bastion; the Pest district's Parliament Building and St. Stephen's Basilica; the oldest subway line in continental Europe (Line 1); the Castle Hill Funicular; the Children's Railway; sightseeing dinner cruises; the Hungarian State Opera House; the House of Music (designed by Japanese architect Sosuke Fujino); and the Liszt Academy of Music (with its 150-year history).

【Budapest Suburbs and Regional Areas】

・Szentendre (known as the "Artists' Town"), the Pannonhalma Abbey and Church, and Lake Balaton.

・Northeastern region: Eger (a key Catholic center known for dry red wine), Tokaj (famous for noble rot wines), and Hollókő Village (featuring a fortress and traditional costumes worn during Easter events).

【Hungary: A Nation of Thermal Baths】

・Boasts some of Europe's most abundant thermal water resources, with 1,300 springs and over 200

thermal bath facilities.

・Key thermal sites include Lake Hévíz (the world's largest thermal lake) and Budapest's Király, Rudas, Gellért (currently closed long-term), and Széchenyi baths.

・Bathing in Hungarian thermal waters typically requires swimwear; many facilities offer exercise areas, and the waters are used for therapeutic and medical purposes.

・Thermal elements are utilized in beauty and wellness products, such as cosmetics, creams, and mud packs.

【Hungarian Cuisine, Wine, etc.】

・Famous dishes featuring paprika include veal stew, goulash soup, and *lángos* (deep-fried dough); these are popular choices for souvenirs. The country is also a major producer of foie gras.

・Hungary boasts a thriving café culture and a wide array of signature sweets, such as *kürtőskalács* (chimney cake).

・There are 22 Hungarian wine regions, producing renowned varieties like *Bikavér* (Bull's Blood) and *Tokaji Aszú*.

【Others】

・Notable composers include Liszt, Bartók, Kodály, Lehár, and Kálmán.

・Watch a video performance of Franz Liszt's "La Campanella."

・The country has produced a large number of Nobel laureates, boasting one of the highest per-capita rates of winners in the world.

・Participated in the Osaka-Kansai Expo, and welcomed a large number of visitors.

・There are 27 Liszt Hungarian Cultural Centers worldwide, including one in Azabu-Juban, Minato City, Tokyo.



(Written by UMENE Keichiro, Standing Director, the International Science & Culture Committee, and translated by MIYASHITA Y., Standing Director, the PR & Internet Committee)

MUA Officers, Directors, Auditors, Advisors and Counselors for Fiscal 2026

President	NEWELL-Tsuboya Ikuko
Vice President	ISHII Yoshiaki, KOBAYASHI Takayuki, FURUICHI Yoko*
Standing Director	UMENE Keiichiro*, OKUMURA Kazuko, KASAHARA Masako, SATO Ritsuko, TAGAWA Junko, MIYASHITA Yukari
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Auditor	TANAHASHI Seiichi, NAKAGAWA Norio
Advisor	AKASHI Yasushi, ITO Kohei, TAKAI Mitsuko, SEIKE Ai, TANABE Kiichiro*, NAGANO Hiroshi,
Counselor	KIKUCHI Kensuke, KISO Isao

Note: The asterisk denotes a new appointee. The tenure lasts until the next annual general meeting to be held in April 2028

(Continued from P. 22: UNESCO Press Release)

Underlining the importance of UNESCO's mandate, the Pope recalled that 2027 will mark the 75th anniversary of the Holy See's presence at the Organisation through its Observer Mission, an important moment to reaffirm a shared commitment to human dignity, human development and international cooperation.

Pope Leo XIV cautioned that technological progress, notably artificial intelligence, must serve humanity rather than become an instrument of domination, exploitation or exclusion. While AI systems can process data, he noted, they cannot answer the fundamental human questions of truth and meaning. In this context, he welcomed UNESCO's work on Media and Information Literacy and urged greater efforts for the protection of children and young people in the digital environment, highlighting the role of UNESCO.

I encourage the international community as a whole to devote particular attention to the protection of children and young people. In the digital age, their vulnerability must never become an opportunity for exploitation. May these technologies support their growth, education and relationships, safeguarding their freedom to think and discern, and always remaining at the service of the dignity of the human person.

His Holiness Pope Leo XIV

In his speech, UNESCO Director-General Khaled El-Enany highlighted the longstanding partnership between Holy See and UNESCO to build peace through education, sciences, culture, communication and information, underlining the vital imperative of bringing people together and safeguarding human dignity in an era of profound global transformation. In this, the Director-General reaffirmed that at the heart of UNESCO's mission and all of its work are people, including students, teachers, scientists, researchers, innovators, artists, cultural professionals, journalists, local communities, and Indigenous Peoples.

Referring to the AI revolution, the Director-General stressed that human intelligence, discernment, moral responsibility, creativity and empathy cannot be replaced by machines, referring to UNESCO's longstanding work to place human rights and dignity at the heart of the ethical development and use of AI. (Excerpted)

At UNESCO, Pope Leo XIV addresses the world with a resounding message of peace and human dignity

During his historic visit to UNESCO Headquarters today, His Holiness Pope Leo XIV called for renewed international cooperation to build a more just and peaceful world, highlighting the special role that UNESCO has to play.



© UNESCO / Sacha Heron

:28 September 2026

Invited by UNESCO, Pope Leo XIV made his first visit to a UN agency outside Italy, 46 years after Pope John Paul II visited UNESCO on 2 June 1980.

In his address to more than 1400 people, His Holiness reaffirmed the Holy See's commitment to UNESCO's founding mission, describing UNESCO as both an instrument and a forum in which humanity reflects on its history, its shared identity and its future.

The visit follows the audience of the UNESCO Director-General Khaled El-Enany with Pope Leo XIV at the Vatican on 5 June 2026, continuing the dialogue between the Holy See and UNESCO on the vital importance of peace, human dignity and artificial intelligence.

Speaking before UNESCO Member States, National Commissions, and members of the UNESCO family from across the world, Pope Leo XIV recalled the opening of the UNESCO Constitution that "since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed," and stated that peace cannot be secured by treaties or political compromises alone – it must be rooted in justice and ethical responsibility.

(To be continued on P. 21)

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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