



MINATO TOKYO

# Bulletin

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MINATO UNESCO ASSOCIATION NEWS & CALENDAR

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## A correspondence from Canada: Does Japan's soft power flow more from Bushido or Zen?

Kimitada Miwa, MUA President and Professor Emeritus of Sophia University

I have been here in Victoria, B.C., Canada since the 24<sup>th</sup> of September. We apt to think that all the world shares the same information. But one quick browsing through a book store turns that notion not true at all.

For example a U.S.-Japan relations book published a couple years ago was not seen in Japan when I checked it with a specialist in its field. The book tells a story that on the day of Japanese surprise attack at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941 (local time), one American destroyer sank one of five Japanese navy's special submarines manned by only two persons. It was one hour and two minutes before the "the surprise air attack" would take place. The destroyer's captain allegedly reported the event to the naval headquarters in Honolulu. But nothing was done and the U.S. Pacific fleet at anchor in Pearl Harbor was totally unprepared when the Japanese air strike began, resulting in its destruction taking thousands of lives..

This book was not found in the specialized libraries both private and public in Japan. Neither was it dealt in by Amazon.com or Amazon.jp.co. Similar cases abound. You may say it is only just one book. But it has become apparent that you cannot simply leave the matter to the high-technology Internet service. You have to look around searching for the needed information on foot.

As I walked around, several interesting things were discovered. At a big book store, I looked for works by a 13<sup>th</sup> century great Iranian poet, Jalal Al-Din Rumi. None was found on the poetry shelves although his works had been found in the poetry corner at another book store which I had visited the day before. I asked about the poet's publications to a young sales clerk who happened to be there tidying up books neatly. He even did not know the poet's name.

A woman manager took me all way across the store to the religion corner. Sure enough, I found a few books by Rumi sandwiched between works by Dalai Lama and Japanese Buddhists and those by other Islamic authors. Zen books were competing with Dalai Lama's in popularity. Among them I could even find *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* which made it to the bestseller list nearly a decade before.

It is, I believe, already a well-circulated knowledge that one source of Japan's "soft power" is Japan's youth culture that is known abroad as "Japan cool." Nevertheless, I was really surprised when I discovered that Zen had made inroads on a really tiny tot. A boy of perhaps 5 or 6, in the first grade of school, was reading a book entitled *Zen of Zombie*, as seriously as a philosopher that he might surely become in the future, making grimaces and occasionally wrapping his head with his arm.

It was a Sunday brunch time in a small English country-style restaurant in the Oak Bay area of Victoria City. The interior was decorated with memorabilia from the good old England, such as big framed photographs of King George V and Queen Elisabeth as a young woman horse-back riding sometime before her coronation. From time to time, he looked up to his father sitting next to him. Otherwise he was totally immersed in the story that was unfolding before his own eyes.

Back in Japan, *Bushido: The Soul of Japan* is boosting its circulation, apparently meeting some psychological and spiritually need of the contemporary Japanese male population. Abroad, it seems that Zen gets more attention and practical support. What makes this difference? (To be continued on Page10)

**The 1<sup>st</sup> MUA Cross-cultural Awareness Workshop 2008**  
**"Today's India from its Social and Cultural Aspects:  
Religions and Communal Conflicts"**

Date: Thursday, August 28, 2008

Place: Minato City Life-long Learning Center

Our speaker for this event was Mr. Augustine Sali, Ph.D., Lecturer of the Faculty of Humanities, Sophia University. He was born in Kerala, India in 1968, graduated from Calicut Univ. (politics), JDV Univ. (philosophy) and Sophia Univ. (theology). He received a Ph.D. degree in area studies at Sophia Univ. and has been a lecturer at the university since 2007.



India has a mysterious image with a history of 5000 years. Today the country is drawing close attention from all over the world to its IT or information technology industry as well as to the market with the world's second biggest population. Dr. Sali taught us a lot of interesting facts about the country in fluent Japanese. The following is a summary of his lecture.

Since his arrival in Japan 10 years ago, Dr. Sali has been bothered with repeated questions such as why he does not wear a turban or whether he eats only curry every day. Also, he found out that many Japanese people misunderstand that ex-Prime Minister Indira Gandhi was a daughter of Mahatma Gandhi, the Father of the Nation. All in all, Dr. Sali felt that it would take more time before India would be correctly understood in Japan.

His birthplace Kerala is located in southern part of India, a beautiful town embraced by mountains on one side and by the ocean the other side, where many tourists visit. It is 50km away from the point where Vasco da Gama arrived long time ago. It is said that Francisco de Xavier was surprised at his arrival at Goa, a bit northern place, to learn that people in this area had already believed faithfully in Christianity. Today about 20% of the state population are Christians.

#### 1. Unity in Diversity

India is 9 times of Japan in land area and 10 times (1.1billion) in population. As often said, unity in diversity characterizes India as a country. It's a society where diversity abounds in peoples, religions, languages, cultures and traditions. Multi-cultural life styles co-exist here among peoples of different ethnic identities.

Administrative divisions: India consists of 28 states, 6 federally governed regions and the Capital Territory of Delhi. Each state seeks strong independence.

Language: The national official language is Hindi, which is spoken by 40% of total population, primarily in northern India. English is a secondary official language. In addition, there are a total of 21 regional official languages such as Bengali and Tamil which are authorized by the Constitution. The bank notes are expressed in 15 languages. Children start to learn their regional language, Hindi and English in the elementary school. At universities, only English is used.

Food culture: Food differs in each region. Nan, well known in Japan, is usually served as a part of high-class dishes in restaurants. Ordinary families eat home-made chapati instead.

People in the south eat bread made from rice.

Religion: Population can be divided religion-wise into 80% Hindu, 13.43% Islamic, and 2.34% Christian, followed by Sikh, Buddhist, and Jaina. India does not define itself as a Hindu country and is maintaining a policy of religious secularism without endorsing any particular faith. The objective is to avoid any risk of inviting damages to the national unity caused by internal conflicts among different religions.

From their childhood, people in India live peacefully in an environment where they hear prayers of Hindu, recital of Koran and church bells of Christianity at the same time. Children with different religious backgrounds sit side by side at schools.

Though Buddhism originated in India, the number of Buddhists is not many today. It is considered that doctrinal conflicts inside the Buddhism, the assimilation of Buddhism into Hinduism and continuous political pressure have caused a decrease in the number of Buddhists. The philosophy of nonviolence advocated by Mahatma Gandhi came into Hinduism from Buddhism.

Caste system: This system still controls extensive parts of Indian social life, ranging from the societal class and occupation of individuals to marriages and other customs. The caste class has been strictly inherited within families over generations. In most cases, therefore, the name of a certain caste will instantly tell the occupation of an individual. However, the caste system has not been exempt from the influence of modernization. Today, the interrelation between a certain caste and an occupation is weakened and not always identical.

Film industries: India produces annually the largest number of movies in the world.

Sports: The most popular sport is cricket. So far India has not been strong enough to win medals in Olympic games.

## 2. India Today

India became independent from the Great Britain on August 15, 1947. Ever since its Constitution has guaranteed the freedom of religion and prohibited any discrimination due to difference of religions. The 1976 amendment to the Constitution expressly stipulated the policy of secularism (the separation of church and state) and it has been strictly observed as the "main principle for national unity". In short India has sought its national unity through "secularism," its economic development through "socialism" and its independent diplomacy through "non-alliance" policy. However, it seems in recent years that the governance by "secularism" has not functioned successfully and the "non-alliance" policy seems to be failing.

Economy: After winning independence from the colonization by the Britain which lasted over 200 years, India has maintained its continuous growth in GDP. During the last four years, for example, it has recorded an annual growth of 7%~8.7%. During the process, India has transformed itself dramatically into a country of service industries, departing from a predominantly agricultural economy.

Education: India is putting an emphasis on education, especially on mathematics. This has produced over 600 thousand engineers with bachelor's degree and 814 thousand software specialists. Each year, more than 200 thousand engineers graduate from universities, along with 2 million graduates trained in other faculties. The country is regarded as an attractive source of human resources which boasts English proficiency, engineering skill, and relatively low labor cost.

## 3. Socio-political Challenges

India is currently undergoing a rapid change. "India Shining" is an expression used very often

to describe today's India as a future-oriented bright country characterized by globalization, IT industries, high technologies, urbanization, emerging consumerism and so forth. On the other hand, the country is confronted with many serious problems, including the presence of a vast number of poor people, a widening gap between the rich and the poor, increasing suicide cases of peasants who failed in speculative agricultural crops, shortage of energy supply, environmental contamination, and border conflicts.

Of particular importance among these is an issue described as "Ethnicity-based violent communal strife." In South Asia, especially in India, the confrontation between Hindus and Muslims is referred to as a communalism issue. The two groups are not fighting for religious reason. Riots break out because the Hindu supremacist groups react frequently against the Muslims. Motives for such riots stem from both religious conflicts (festival, demonstration marches, rituals, etc.) and secular ones (property right, troubles over female, individual hostility, etc.). The traditional Hindu-Muslim hostility developed into a struggle for political leadership during the independence movement of India. This is still the biggest internal challenge for the country. Regional conflicts between the two groups have escalated year by year. It is said that today the country needs to seriously seek the possibility of "peaceful coexistence of different religions," in view of the heavy death tolls due to violence and conflicts as well as the magnitude of the social disintegration as an aftermath.

The Indian society is divided into different groups either by language and religion or by the caste system. Each individual becomes very conscious of his/her identity depending on whichever of language, religion or the caste system is at issue. The political environment will determine which of the three is most important. Election will also involve as another dynamic factor. To gain support from a certain group of voters, it is the quickest or easiest way for a political party to emphasize the special interest possessed by the group. However, an emphasis on genuine secularism (separation of church and state) should be the only solution to sustain the multi-cultural co-existence. In other words, such politics as appeals to religious identity to get voters' support must be reconsidered.

#### 4. Future Outlook

It is imperative not only for India with its multi-cultural society but also for the whole world undergoing globalization to make more efforts to understand different cultures. In this respect, the role of education and educators are immensely important.

The friendship between India and Japan started during the leadership of Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India. The year 2007 was designated as a friendship year between the two countries. On top of the economic cooperation emphasized by both countries, it is desirable that Japan, as an advanced country, be more proactive promoting technology transfer in alternative energy and environmental solution areas. Further, bilateral cooperation in socio-political areas should be also addressed to promote the peaceful co-existence of a multicultural society.

The interesting lecture came to an end with Dr. Sali singing beautifully India's national anthem. The lyrics are taken from an impressive Tagore poem and Dr. Sali used to sing this song as an elementary school boy.

*(Written by M. Imamura, the Cross-cultural Awareness Committee, and translated by T. Mizuno, Vice Chairman, the PR, Bulletin & Internet Committee)*



**The 21<sup>st</sup> Workshop on Traditional Japanese Culture**  
**"Gozaruno-za" Kyogen presented by Mansakuno-kai**

Date: September 24, 2008

Place: National Noh Theatre

A total of 50 people, including 20 MUA members, could attend this event, thanks to kind arrangements made by Mr. Mikami, Advisor to MUA.

In Part I of the workshop, Professor Hisashi Hata of Musashino University gave lectures on Kyogen and the day's performance. First, he explained the outline of the history of Japanese performing arts, including five major intangible cultural assets – Gagaku, Noh, Kyogen, Bunraku and Kabuki. The word Kyogen is used in the old *Man'yo-shu* book, meaning nonsense or jokes.



The first record of Kyogen performance dates back to 1352 when a Buddhist priest gave a comical preaching. According to a book published in 1399, Kyogen was already performed during the Muromachi Period. Zeami, a Noh master, stated in his "*Shudoshō*" book that there were actors specializing in Kyogen in those days.

Professor Hata also taught us major differences between Noh and Kyogen. In Noh performances stories unfold by chanting and last 60 to 90 minutes on the average. Meantime, Kyogen stories conclude in about 30 minutes. Stories in Noh are generally based on historical facts, mythology, legends, military records, preaching, and poetry. In contrast, Kyogen, which develops performance by spoken words, is based on the ordinary life of nameless people and performed by a small number of actors. In short Kyogen presents snapshots of comical or tragic elements in human life, with vivid expressions of joy, anger, sorrow and pleasure. These presentations were followed by a preparatory explanation about the day's Kyogen performances.

In Part II, we took seats in the National Noh Theatre and enjoyed watching two live Kyogen performances – "Sakka" and "Kasen" – as well as a music performance played in-between by a band of traditional Japanese musical instruments.

The "Sakka" was a comedy where a swindler named "Mikoi no Sakka" put into a series of misunderstanding an absent-minded servant who wants to fulfill an assigned errand for his master. We could sympathize with the servant, reflecting on our own mistakes in daily life.

In "Kasen," a story develops involving six legendary masters of poetry in old Japan. One day they got together for a moon-viewing banquet. The gathering progressed in a friendly manner initially but, due to a confrontation between two males over the attitude of a beautiful female poet, it makes an uncomfortable turn into a sour atmosphere.

Thanks to Professor Hata's preparatory lecture, all of us could understand the meaning of the on-stage performance and had a lot of fun.

*(Written by T. Isobe, Chairperson, the Science & Culture Committee, and translated by S. Tanahashi, Standing Director, the PR, Bulletin & Internet Committee)*

## The 11<sup>th</sup> MUA Salon: Trips to Places of Different Cultures

Date: September 25, 2008  
Place: MUA Secretariat Office

Our speaker this time was Mr. Shunsuke Yamamoto who runs his own architectural design research organization. He spends his life as a designer while also participating annually in art exhibitions and sketch work exhibitions.



Mr. Yamamoto was originally a hobbyist photographer. While he was enrolled in the Japanese army's schools for boys, he started to take photos and was then nicknamed "Resident in the Dark Room." Later while at Tokyo University, he belonged to the photography club for three years. He had an opportunity to study in the U. S. and made a photo-taking trip around the country with his Nikon SP camera. Photos taken during the trip were later shown in the Asahi Journal and other publications.

While at the university, he also took a private lesson in art drawing for one year from Mr. Takuji Nakamura of the Issui-kai school. After Mr. Yamamoto joined Shimizu Corporation, a large civil engineering & construction company in Japan, he was just too busy to resume art painting. Years later, when he assumed the position of a board director and chief engineer, it became possible for him to work out time from his work schedule and take up oil painting in a committed attitude.

One year later, he also started water color sketch painting. According to Mr. Yamamoto, photography and painting have one common factor – it's critically important to grasp instantaneously the focal point of what you address and determine the most effective visual composition by zooming up the image. He feels that his possession of skills in photography and oil & water color painting has produced synergistic effects. Mr. Yamamoto says, "I take pleasure in art painting in two respects: one is self-enlightenment and the other is encounters with new people."

Each year he mails out about 1,800 New Year's cards and the number has been increasing. This is a sharp contrast with ordinary businessmen. Their network of friends would usually shrink after their retirement. All of us enjoyed Mr. Yamamoto's interesting presentation based on years of his diversified experiences. When we asked him the secret to maintaining an exceptionally youthful mind, Mr. Yamamoto answered, "I make it a rule to do anything with a forward-looking attitude." He plans to hold in 2009 a private exhibition on the Ginza in April and will also participate in an exhibition to be held at the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum in August.

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

## A Fall-season Bus Tour: To Learn Tragedy and Future of Science

Date: September 27, 2008

Place: National Museum of Emerging Science and Innovation, etc.

Science is one of the areas which UNESCO addresses. This was the first time that we made a bus tour which focused on science. Although the weather was cloudy from the morning, all participants gathered punctually at 9:00 a.m. and the bus left for the first destination of the day, namely the National Museum of Emerging Science and Innovation in Odaiba.



The museum is well known because the Director is Mr. Mamoru Mori who was an astronaut. Visitors can observe and study here the status of the earth at present and in the future, a replica of a space station, a submarine, a figure of the universe, and elementary particle models.

In each exhibition hall, guides called "interpreters" kindly explained details to us. We could also enjoy a planetarium. I thought we would never get bored of this museum even if we were to stay there the whole day. For lunch we enjoyed smorgasbord at the top-floor restaurant with a fantastic view. Then we got onboard the bus again and headed for our next destination - The Daigo Fukuryu Maru Exhibition Hall in the Yumenoshima.

Here we could see the Daigo Fukuryu Maru, the fishing boat which was exposed to radiation from the H-bomb test conducted in the Bikini atoll by the United States. Some of the crew died from the disease suspected to be caused by the radiation. Exhibited around the boat were many photographs and explanations which describe how all Japanese people were put into a panic to when scientists detected radiation in tons of fish which were caught in the Pacific Ocean. Another guide gave us additional information about details.

The last destination was the Yumenoshima Tropical Greenhouse Dome, a public Tokyo facility, located next to the Daigo Fukuryu Maru Exhibition Hall. Inside the glass-made dome, the temperature is kept warm utilizing the residual heat from a garbage incineration plant of Yumenoshima. We enjoyed watching a huge tree which almost reaches the ceiling, a variety of leaves and many colorful flowers.

I'm pleased to report that this first bus tour, focused on science, was very successful. I trust this will be the start of MUA's continued efforts to organize science-related programs that will help ordinary people feel close to the seemingly difficult subject.

*(Written and translated by S. Mochizuki, a member of the Membership Committee)*

## The 2008 UNESCO Kanto-Block Study Convention

Date: October 10 & 11, 2008

Place: Takasaki, Gunma

The 35<sup>th</sup> two-day regional convention was held at the View Hotel, with the Takasaki UNESCOs as hosts, under the banner of "Let's link up peace-aspiring minds, let's reach out for more new UNESCOs, and let's step up community power – all for the future." This annual event was attended by a total of about 350 people, representing some 40 UNESCO associations located within the Kanto block.



At first, a representative from the host group gave a welcome speech, touching upon the convention's slogan. He lamented the fact that we had seen regrettable incidents in our society, which seem to defy the UNESCOs' ideal to construct the defenses of peace in the minds of men. He emphasized the critical importance for UNESCOs to look at the reality of each community where we live. Only by such efforts we can strengthen the local networking power and focus on the fostering of next generations who will succeed and carry on our activities to the future.

It was very appropriate that the keynote speech was made by Mr. Mikio Imai, Director of the Research Center for Tomioka Silk Reeling Plants. This is because Gunma Prefecture has been exerting concerted efforts to have the Tomioka Silk Reeling Plants and Silk Production Industrial Heritages registered as a UNESCO World Heritage. His speech included many interesting historical facts.

It was followed by a presentation by a group of junior high school students from Hitachinaka, Ibaraki Prefecture. They introduced how they have studied the history of Ajigaura, their community, and how they have maintained nature-observation activities. Representatives from the National Federation of UNESCO Associations in Japan gave presentations on plans to expand UNESCO school activities nationwide, promote the Terakoya program which would observe its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary next year, and step up local heritage preservation efforts in Japan.

The final program of Day 1 was a video presentation on different activities under way at 13 UNESCO associations in Gunma. Visible challenges across these organizations included (1) how to increase membership, (2) how to lower the average age of members, and (3) how to streamline the organization and communication. These challenges seem to be shared by many of other regional UNESCO association.

In Day 2, I joined the workshop on the World Terakoya Program. Audio-visual presentations were made by UNESCO associations in Saitama-shi and Yotsukaidou. We could understand their continued assistance in literacy improvements for villagers in Cambodia, Nepal and Vietnam, with a focus on fostering local people's commitment to self-help spirit.

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

## Change of Secretary General at MUA

At the end of August 2008, Mr. Mamoru Tomogane, who had been MUA's Secretary General for over 12 years, retired from the position. Mr. Takashi Mizuno, who is Vice Chairman of the PR, Bulletin & Internet Committee, was endorsed to be the successor to Mr. Tomogane and started to attend the secretariat office on September 2. During his long tenure, Mr. Tomogane contributed tremendously to MUA's development, especially in terms of financial stability. Wherever an MUA event took place, we could always expect Mr. Tomogane's presence with his cheerful smile and active personality. On behalf of Dr. Miwa, President, and all MUA members, I'd like to extend our whole-hearted thanks to Mr. Tomogane for everything he has done for MUA. He will continue to be involved in MUA activities as Standing Director.

Mr. Mizuno has so far participated mainly in the English translation of MUA bulletin articles. Two years after his retirement from a life-time business employment, Mr. Mizuno decided to undertake the challenging MUA position. His hobby includes fishing and playing go. In August 2008, he caught a 3.8kg red sea bream in the Sea of Japan. He is a tall and smart gentleman, handy with PC, and has had a lot of international experiences in business. All of MUA members hope that, under the new leadership of Mr. Mizuno in the secretariat office, MUA will move ahead into a new era of further expansion.

*(Written by M. Takai, Vice President, and translated by S. Tanahashi, Standing Director, the PR, Bulletin & Internet Committee)*

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## Renewal of the MUA Website

Have you ever visited MUA's website or homepage on the Internet? The MUA website is run and maintained by the PR, Bulletin & Internet Committee in cooperation with the Secretariat Office. The current website has not served well enough the expected functions. For example, it was not easy to timely update or distribute MUA's event information or to provide sufficient coverage.

In order to solve those problems, MUA has decided to launch a special project during FY2008 to renew its website totally. The renewal of the website will be completed by mid-2009. We will thereafter be able to send a wide variety MUA information more quickly and extensively than before. As a much more effective and efficient publicity tool, the new website will contribute a lot to further development of MUA.

The project was kicked off in July 2008 with the participation of PR, Bulletin & Internet Committee members headed by Ms. M. Takai, Vice President. Mr. K. Shinoda also participated as an IT expert who runs the English conversation class section of the current MUA website. The progress of the project is reported as often as necessary to MUA's President, Vice Presidents and other directors. In response they are expected to provide the project members with necessary advice and information. Please feel free to direct your questions or comments concerning the project via the Secretariat Office.

*(Written & translated by T. Mizuno, Vice Chairman of the PR, Bulletin & Internet Committee)*

## The 27<sup>th</sup> Minato Citizens Festival

Date: October 11 & 12, 2008

Place: Shiba Koen Park

When I arrived at MUA's exhibition site on the rainy Saturday morning, people at neighboring sites were already preparing their tents. Once we erected our own tent, we started to hang inside different publicity panel boards, place bazar items and Islamic merchandise on tables, and prepare for Arabic calligraphy and national flags quiz. Traffic of visitors grew as the weather improved in the afternoon.



The second day was blessed with fine weather and more people came to our tent. Those who had their names written in Arabic calligraphy expressed words of joy. Some visitors responded to our banner of World Cooking Workshop, saying "I can speak Indonesian," or asking for MUA membership application forms. To our pleasant surprise, Mr. Hajime Yosano, an influential cabinet member who is also an MUA Director, dropped by to our tent to say hello.

Proceeds from the sale of bazaar items and Arabic calligraphy, added up to ¥12,800. We'd like to extend our hearty thanks to those who donated bazar items, those who helped with the tent exhibition activities, and all the other MUA members for their cooperation and support.

*(Written by O. Kitaoka, Chairman of the Minato Citizens Festival Committee, and translated by S. Tanahashi, Standing Director, the PR, Bulletin & Internet Committee)*

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### (Continued from P.1) A Correspondence from Canada

I am caught by this emergent question as I am finishing up this essay. Is it because one is "universalistic" and accepted across the seas as Japan cool while the other is a "particularistic" Japanese elitist precept which is called in to rectify the ever escalating moral disintegration of Japanese society?

While I'm looking out of the window beside our table in the restaurant, my eyes and thought are washed by the vibrant autumnal color of the trees lining up the streets and the foliage in the park blessed by the sunshine of September and the rain and cold air of October. Tomorrow, on the 21<sup>st</sup> of October, we will be heading home to Japan. (December 20, 2008)

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#### Correction:

Our English Bulletin No. 112 dated September 30, 2008 included an article titled "The World Cooking Workshop: Turkish Home Dishes." The instructor for that workshop was NOT Mr. but Ms. Mehetap Sultan Gimsyai. We apologize for this mistake.

Minato UNESCO Association is a citizens' voluntary membership organization that promotes Japanese traditional culture, holds cross-cultural workshops and present 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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