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Bulletin

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R-word Reactions of Japanese Mass Media and Famous Brothers, in History and Today, Saneyuki and Yoshifuru Akiyama and Tsunahide and Tsunamasa Shidei

Kimitada Miwa, President of MUA and Professor Emeritus of Sophia University

“Clouds up the Hill” by the late Ryotaro Shiba, the famed national novelist, has become an NHK TV drama. Some years ago when the idea was presented to him, he declined to give the go-ahead. The alleged reason was that he was not confident about his treatment of the first Sino-Japanese War of 1894-95. It might provoke Chinese criticism. I am quite curious how this problem was solved.

This NHK drama is to be shown off and on, but continuously for three-year stretch after the first installment was on air on November 29, 2009. That evening it was preceded by the “Close-up Gendai” that handled the Korean triumph in cultural policy known as “Kan-ryu” boom. Specifically it referred to the masterful popularity of Korean movies in Indonesia with a reigning sense of Japanese defeat in cultural influence. The remedy must lie in strong governmental support as the Koreans have been doing.

As a reflection on the Japanese side, who had been content with the Japan cool popularity that had been spontaneous without official props? But to me, it was an r-word reaction coming from the practical Japanese cultural diplomacy hub that is the NHK. A few years ago it was quite apparent to me that Japan was sinking while Korea was rising in Indonesia. I was visiting that country then on a Japan Foundation cultural engagement to give several lectures and meet with local intellectuals to exchange ideas. I gave a lecture on “Bushido and Contemporary Japanese Masculine Culture.” It was true there were some men who were well read in Bushido literature including Musashi’s *Gorin no sho*.

The NHK’s “Close-up Gendai” was not aware of a historical background for the popularity of things Korean in Indonesia. Is it not an important factor that, when Japan surrendered to the Allies in the Pacific War, Korean soldiers among Japanese Imperial troops fought on the side of the Indonesians to win independence from the former colonial powers coming back to reinstate their control?

Well now the famous brothers. The Akiyama’s were heroes of international wars of the Meiji era, which took place a few years before and after the turn of the century from the 19th to the 20th. Another idea of famous brothers came to me just about the same time when I read the obituary in a newspaper about Tsunahide, the younger of the Shidei brothers. He was a Kyoto University professor of woodland ecology who had emphasized the importance of *satoiyama*, a wooded low-rising ground, that stretches from the outer edge of the farmlands and eases into hilly mountainous areas. For the perpetually self-sustaining healthy natural environment, *satoiyama* is indispensable. As for Tsunamasa, the elder of the Shidei brothers, he was a General of the Imperial

(To be continued on Page 10)

The 28th MUA International Symposium 2009 “The Future Today’s Youth Would Build”

Date: October 6, 2009

Place: Minato City Azabu Civic Center

The annual flag-ship symposium of MUA for 2009 was kicked off by an opening address by Mr. Hiroshi Matsumoto, MUA Vice President, who is also Director & Counselor of the International House of Japan. He introduced four invited panelists to discuss the impending subject for the Japanese society - Mr. Peter Oblas (Former Professor, North American Affairs, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies), Mr. Sven Saaler (Professor, EU Affairs, Sophia University), Mr. Yuki Uchiyama (Travelling Globalist & Guitarist), and Ms. Ayumi Umeda (Curator, Art & Design Museum, Joshibi University of Art and Design). Dr. Miwa, president of MUA, took over the podium as moderator & panelist, and started the discussion with his recollection and analyses of various historical episodes relating to wartime and postwar Japan. The following is a summary of presentations delivered by the panelists.



Dr. Miwa: I'd like to share with you a personal recollection of what I have experienced as a youth during the years of military regime in Japan, along with what I have observed in the postwar years. I still remember the last words of Ryoji Uehara, an elder graduate from the same junior high school, who perished during the war at age 22. He wrote “I believe in liberalism and am aware that Japan won't win this war. Still, my life has to be sacrificed before Japan can change itself. Thus, I dared to volunteer to be a Kamikaze pilot and fulfill a death-bound mission.”



There is an episode about a young man named Katsumi Iwao. He was drafted on a military mobilization as a student of the prewar “Ichiko” high school. He also perished on a suicidal pilot mission. When Iwao visited Yoshishige Abe, the school principal, to say words of farewell, he was asked, “Are you prepared for death?” Iwao simply answered, “Not yet, sir.” Very close to the date of his departure on a suicidal mission, Iwao visited the principal again and was asked the same question. His answer was still “Not yet, sir.” We can tell from this episode that, under the societal pressure of war-time Japan, even those who were not prepared for death could not find ways to resist the mainstream. They were forced to give up their lives in the belief that “Without our sacrifice, Japan will not change.”

My senior alumnus, mentioned above, left his final words to his mother – “My soul won't go to the Yasukuni Shrine after my death. It's because my love already passed away and she is up in heaven. So I'll go straight to heaven instead. You won't be able to find me in that shrine.” Still, after his death in the war, his mother visited the shrine each year and attended a joint memorial service for the war dead because the dead soldiers were automatically enshrined into that institution. Perhaps that was the only thing an ordinary Japanese mother could do for her deceased son in those days.

Although the Tokyo Olympic Games were held in 1964 as a postwar event, it was actually once planned in the prewar years, to take place following the 1936 Berlin Olympiad. However, it was called off due to the mired Sino-Japanese War. The year 1940, which should have marked the Tokyo Olympiad, fell on the 2600th year of the Imperial reign. Therefore, a variety of commemorative events were planned and held.

One idea was to ask the governments of the U. K., the U. S., France, Germany, Italy and Hungary to compose and present to Japan a congratulatory music as a symbol of

bilateral friendship. Most countries responded favorably to this request and presented Japan with symphony pieces. However, no response came from the U. S. government which had been critical of Japan's war against China. The U. K. government expressed its criticism toward Japan in an implicit way, by presenting a piece of requiem for Emperor Jinmu. The composer was Benjamin Britain, an internationally renowned artist of national pride.

Germany under Hitler's regime responded quite favorably to Japan's request, based on the deepening bilateral relationship which had developed from the initial joint anti-Communism treaty to a military alliance. Germany presented a congratulatory piece created by Richard Strauss who was then regarded as the highest ranking composer. This piece was unique in that it started with about ten resounding tolls of temple bells, by which the composer intended to produce a Japanese atmosphere. The Japanese government gave a premiere performance of this piece, titled "Congratulations on the 2600th Anniversary of the Imperial Reign" at the Kabukiza theater, inviting distinguished guests from Japan and overseas.

This German piece was once performed in Japan after WWII by the Yomiuri Symphony Orchestra. Later on I was strongly motivated to attend a concert to be held at the Suntory Hall, which would be conducted by a young maestro of the Berlin Opera troupe who came all the way by a special invitation. The young conductor had a conviction that no other selection would be more appropriate than the 2600th anniversary congratulatory piece to perform during his visit to Japan. Thus, the 2600th anniversary congratulatory piece was chosen as the prime program and announced as such.

To my disappointment, however, as the date of the concert drew near, related ads in newspapers gave an abrupt announcement that the prime piece would not be performed. I heard that the hall management had been concerned about a possibility of agitation from both rightists and leftists, which would interrupt the music performance. On the day of the concert, when I entered the hall and received the day's program, I noticed that the prime piece was printed and not deleted. It was indeed performed as originally announced. The confusing temporary announcement to change the program turned out to be a tactic to avoid possible harassments. During the concert I was impressed with the performance of the 2600th anniversary congratulatory piece, which was composed by Richard Strauss, and which was conducted by a German maestro. Several decades had passed since the end of WWII.

This incident exemplifies how the freedom of expression has been secured in Japan, paying attention to both rightist and leftist camps. Statistics show that Japan ranks 20th in terms of the freedom of speech, and that the U. S. ranks lower than Japan. These rankings are disappointing in light of our perception that both countries have most visibly advocated the importance of freedom as nation states with people-oriented political system. Perhaps people become accustomed to unidentified restraints, without being aware of it, or come to choose voluntary self-restraint knowingly. This seems to demonstrate the limit of what we call civilization.

Mr. Uchiyama: I traveled 30,000km from Alaska to Brazil via Ushuaia, the southernmost island of Argentina, by bicycle loaded with a guitar over two years and eight months. I first wanted to pursue a guitarist career, but I was not strong enough to put it through. I decided to look around the world first, and then, try to pursue it.



I set out on a journey in which I tried to find out the career that would best fit me.

At the end of two years eight months of travel by bicycle crossing the Americas, I felt that a bud of hope for the future arouse in my mind. It is a small one, but it always

cheers me up. I believe that my confidence and unshaken will were fostered during my travel when I felt my smallness in my bones. As a result, I began to think that the answers to those questions as what is one's happiness, what is one's hope, where we are heading toward in the future exist in ourselves waiting for being awakened. The earth on which I travelled by bicycle is enormously big, and yet there expands infinite cosmic space out of it. The largeness of cosmic space that I really felt when I looked up at the aurora in the night sky of Alaska is no way comparable in size with human being or ego. Once you lose any hope that you are very tiny existence and cannot accomplish anything, such desperation goes on forever. I believe, however, that you can always find a hope or happiness in daily life, should you see something good in a roadside flower and people you meet every day.

I believe that being thankful for, hopeful for and having a dream in the environment or people around you would be the most simple and important key for building up your future.

I was regarded as mentally retarded in my early elementary school days. In spite of such disadvantage, I opened my eyes to the artistic excellence of guitar. I believe it was thanks to my parents as well as people surrounding me who did not tell me what I should do or should not, except for the minimum things I should do as a person. I am thankful for all of them.

There should be a target you should direct yourself toward in your life. There must be subjects you need to study. However, you did not notice them when you were young. You all grow up to be adults after the age twenty searching for things you like as well as the way you behave yourselves. You hit a button in yourselves, out of a whim, that motivates you to move on. You cannot hit the button without a sense of purpose. Thus, it is quite important to nurture such a sense.

Mr. Saaler: Thinking about Japan's future that today's youth will build, it is probably something completely out of imagination for us here today. 21 century is so much beyond our imagination.



But, why is 21st century so much beyond our imagination. One easy explanation would be because 21st century has just begun. But that may not be necessarily the major reason. The reason why 21st century is so much beyond our imagination is because we all have some deep doubts about lifestyle of our present society and thus probably unconsciously reject to think about the changes that might occur as a result of our actions and decisions today. Result of the unconsciousness has maybe brought about some concrete result, namely in the recent election results not only in Japan but also in Germany. In Japan, change of government took place first time in postwar Japan. In Germany, large established parties have become smaller and smaller showing a strong distrust among the people. Why have these doubts about the bright future become strong recently particularly in industrial countries like Germany and Japan,

3 major points have to be pointed out here.

- 1st; the problem of sustainability of the present economy and our lifestyle,
- 2nd the problem of accountability, and
- 3rd; the lack of bright future vision

Considering the point of sustainability, we have to realize that it will be obviously difficult to uphold our lifestyle in the age of challenges, particularly global warming and climate changes and other environmental problems. Capitalist economy has obviously entered dead-end street and it is not sustainable anymore but rather threatens to

foundation of our existence. However, only few countries have begun to enter the more sustainable outlook that is often associated with low carbon society which is the only way to stop global warming

Germany is among a number of European countries which started going toward such direction. Germany has reduced massively carbon emissions last year. Germany in the Kyoto protocol signed obligation to reduce green house gas by 8 % between 1990 and 2015. Actually, Germany has far surpassed that goal and achieved to reduce 18% of emissions at present. Although half of that is for the reason of collapse of East German economy but in West German alone emissions have been also cut by about 9% at the present point. Some countries keep the promise but most countries could not keep their promises although Kyoto protocol is a binding international treaty

One of the countries that signed the protocol but have not achieved the promised target is Japan although the protocol was signed in a symbolic place like Kyoto, an ancient capital of Japan. Notwithstanding this fact, Japanese government has not since 1990 done much to reduce the emissions in Japan. On the opposite, the government abolished in 2005 subsidies to house owners to build solar panels on their roofs and recently lowered the fees for highways that have led to traffic jams and increase of emissions.

Fortunately enough, however, new government of Yukio Hatoyama has now announced a much more ambitious target namely 25% emissions cut until 2020. Although it is not yet entirely clear how these target can be achieved but it is highest importance here that the vision of sustainability has been brought forward for the first time with a will to change Japanese economy and society in a way to allow Japan to continue to prosper in the future. This new Hatoyama initiative definitely is going to lead to very positive representation of Japan as a leader in the fight against global warming.

Reducing CO₂ and green house gas emissions are not merely to build more solar panels and windmills but in order to create a sustainable economy and society, complete restructuring of economy and society is necessary. Only such restructuring will guarantee that today's youth will have a future after all. Some people in Japan are obviously panicking these days since new Hatoyama government announced its initiative. Not only industrial associations or business associations such as Keidanren but also we could hear the labor union complaining about Hatoyama target that this would danger job security and lead to higher unemployment and would danger Japanese economy's competitiveness.

And again, here we can see greater ignorance of the problems we face at present that would influence on our children's future. First, we have to consider that economy is something abstract but present environmental threats are quite real. So, solutions must be realistic as well,

Actually quietly opposite is the case as we can see in countries like Germany and Denmark. In Germany almost 2 million jobs have been created in future-oriented sectors such as solar energy, wind energy, building heat efficiency and other sectors since 1990. Japan has a quite record of successfully restructuring its economy in the 1970s. For example, as the first industrialized country, Japan overcame the economy crisis of 1970 that came as a result of oil shock by restructuring economy, becoming technological leader in many sectors of industrial productions. And Japan is still a technological leader in many industries today. So, it is easily imaginable that Japan can do the same thing again and obtain the global leadership in the fight against global warming.

I have to come to the second point of the question of accountability. To the large degree, such step Hatoyama initiative has only been introduced quite recently has to do with the problem of accountability in the politics of modern society. For politicians, in

modern democracy, the most important issue is to be re-elected, nothing else. For issues not held accountable for their decisions and actions are particularly those related to the long term issues such as climate change and pension issues. For all these issue, politicians do not think about long term perspective because they cannot gain any profit from policies that only lead to visible and tangible success in the far future. They are rather entrenched in the short-sided agenda and policies that guarantee their chances of being reelected. The lack of interest in long term issues therefore explains why most of politicians do not have much interest in issues that are concerned about the importance of the future of the youth. Disinterest in issues of young people has to be identified as one of the main reasons for increasing political apathy of the youth.

I'd like to come to the 3rd point about the lack of vision for the future. Before I mentioned that Japanese are very interested in history in general and much more likely to read history books and know quite in detail about Japanese history. As a history professor, I am very pleased with this, but thinking about the reasons for this history boom we can witness everywhere in Japan is somewhat frightening. I think one of the main reasons for this history boom is the lack of the vision for the future. This is not only true in Japan but in many modern societies as well.

So, why are modern societies so obsessed with history? An American scholar argues that this is due to the fact that present societies are without grand future visions such as visions of socialism, capitalism or nationalism all of which have proved incapable of guiding mankind to brighter future. Thus, people turn to the past. Even though, as a history professor, I appreciate people take interest in history, I think this is quite a dangerous development, and I'd like to close by only arguing the necessity of less obsession with history but more active engagement with solutions of the contemporary problems that stand the way to the brighter future.

Mr. Oblas: Recently, I taught at the department of Asian study at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver. One of my students who majored in biogenetics answered that the reason for taking the course distant from his major was that he wanted to be a world citizen in understanding to be a Canadian. The study of diverse foreign cultures was keeping Canada as a multinational nation.



Through questioning on one's own prejudices about own national behavior models and values, one gravitated toward awareness of world cultural diversity and variety, and of appreciation of abundance of creativity of difference. Preferred final destination was familiarity with traditions and values of global linkages to solve the mankind problems rather than nation or culture-centered linkages. That is the destiny of my Canadian students' world citizens to take on a task of planet security and human security, the task disciplining poverty, climate change, disease, hunger, violation of human rights.

For the most part, both Canadian international educators and US shared this final destination perspective and what is to be achieved in youth exchanges and association with foreign cultures. According to an US based association of international education, international education is, by its nature, fundamental to fostering peace, security and well-being.

However, in Japan, international exchange policies are primarily centered on internalization of universities, schools and community rather than mobilizing and increasing cosmopolitan Japanese youth for the global village. There was a voice to need to implement reform that would recover the roots of education. Particular attention was to be placed on Japanese who can live in international community with high regard for spiritual richness of their own culture and that of others. This continuing reappraisal of international education with goals to educate the Japanese

people in richness in culture in general and west in Japan's rich cultural heritage represents national policy benchmark.

JET program represents one of these benchmark achievements. JET was launched in 1987 as Japan's exchange in teaching program. Since its practical function was English language education in Japanese school system, "E" in the JET was often understood as English. In 2008 and 2009, 4682 foreigners participated in the program mainly as assistant language teachers (ALT).

The program has responded to the need for the native speakers of English in schools for cultural awareness of school children in local communities. There has been a continuing effort to improve the English education in Japanese schools over the past years in line with Education Ministry's action plan of 2003. One of the point of the action plan was to improve the quality of English classes. ALT was positioned in this regard as providing valuable opportunities for students to learn English from native speaker and become familiar with foreign cultures. Conversation classes at elementary schools level were seen as improving communication skills but also encouraging students to study English by bringing them into contact with foreign culture and lifestyles of native speakers.

At the elementary school level, English learning has received great emphasis since 2002. Education Ministry reported in 2006 more than 90% of public elementary schools hold English conversation lessons. 2 years from now, English will be mandatory subject for 5th and 6th grades. Afterwards one can see English as a significant subject for 1 to 4.

Consequently, increasing presence of ALT at all school grades will give rise to discussions on childhood learning development in the exam system and importance of English for the Japan's future in knowledge based society.

Having served on JET selection panel in Vancouver for Canadian applicants in Vancouver, I can say that interview format stresses the awareness of the importance of culture in international exchanges. But, regardless of its accomplishments in raising cultural awareness, the JET program does not conceptualize Japanese youth as a world citizen. Exchange "E" in the JET is problematic and difficult to explain since there is no Japanese youth contention in JET action plan to send out teachers to schools of the United States and Canada.

When the program response was clear, why is it called an exchange program? It is ambiguous in the "Kokusaika" vein of helping geographically isolated country to gain contact with people of other nations. But, is Japan really geographically isolated nowadays? There are many Japanese young people studying overseas, working overseas, traveling overseas, communicating in overseas on a daily basis. There are many who have obtained the confidence in cultural awareness of highest degree and are ready to be certified by their government as the global masters capable of contributing to a new international event. In such an event, Japan will be functioning an exchange program where many Japanese youth confident in English as well as confident in the disciplines such as world geography, creative arts, science and math are performing as assistant teachers aside from language in schools in isolated localities of the United states and Canada.

But, there is a need for the teacher nation in global performance to have new mindset, not cultural awareness or cultural diplomacy alone but global diplomacy as well. Nevertheless, the JET continued to fuel Japan's concern about international education. The need to unveil the nation of its cultural resistance rather than to promote the excellent abilities of its youth on global scale was evident in 80s and 90s. Japan's efforts to internationalize the Japanese universities, especially the national universities, hold for enrollment in higher education by the beginning of 21st century of 100,000 foreign students on yearly basis. This does not power efforts to double or triple

outbound Japanese students that was in the neighborhood of 15,000 to 20,000 in early 80s.

The initiative to achieve objective of 2003 just slightly after the date of 2005 registered 121,000. Nevertheless, number of Japanese students studying overseas continued to rise. It went to 8000 level by the end of 1990s. However, one can project that by the initiative backed by the Education Ministry the number going to North America will double in 15 years in spite of overall decline in college age entrance with lower birth rate and grayer society.

Now, whereas United States and Canada understand how important it is to build human to human network and to develop international education with global objective. the associations of universities and colleges of Canada and US government both realize that they should put more and more money into sending students overseas. The US targets 1million US students across the globe in 10 years from 2010.

Whereas in Japan we have initiative by Prime Minister Fukuda in 2008 to host 300,000 international students in Japan. there was no grand announcement for Japan's students abroad initiative. Looking back, on this opportunity, the past international exchange, I guess one might misguide a hope that "E" in the JET would become exchange or more significantly "L" in ALT would be reimagined "L" in global learning. But, who knows what the future the youth will build in spite of graying philosophy and society ?

Ms. Umeda: I work as a curator at Joshibi Art Museum located at Sagamihara Campus of Joshibi University of Art and Design. I run various programs with the students that relate to the local area as well as the local community through arts.



An example that I would like to introduce first is the project to connect with the local area through arts that I ran with the students of Kanagawa Prefectural Soubudai High School. Last year's theme was "Finding Logo!" I first taught students what a logo was. Then, they went out to the nearby shopping area for a survey, and created a logo that, they felt, best fitted to the area. There were some logos that were adopted by the shops.

Under the "exciting design blitz" project that we run this year, we plan to visit neighbors and listen to their stories about the design of memories, and turn them into a book.

Now, I would like to introduce you to a program in which we enjoy looking at works with the visually impaired through exchanging words. We tell them to some extent about the dimension or the material of the works, and whether they are paintings or solid objects. Then, we talk to them about what we felt or thought by looking at them, rather than explain about the physical character of the works in detail. This is a program in which we rather try to deepen our understanding in the essence of the works, through the conversation centering on what we felt or thought by looking at them.

It is often said that the appreciation of abstract paintings is not easy. I would rather find it interesting if we appreciate them through words, as the selection of words to describe them vary quite a lot depending on who does it. When it comes to describing the color of blue, as an example, some may describe it as the color of the sky on a fine day, or some may refer to the blue color of "Doraemon."

Students participate in the program excitedly so that they would give good explanation on the works to those visually impaired. However, once they start it, it

gradually become ambiguous as to who is taking the lead. This is because how the appreciation of artistic works is done is largely affected by the life experience of the viewers, and most of those visually impaired participated in the program are older than the students and of considerable experience. Most of the students are shocked to know this.

I believe that such experience is invaluable to both students and participants in the program. I would hope that museum of art becomes a place where people pick up their cue to be interested in something new, and feel that arts have such power.

At last, I would introduce “museum of art for everybody” project. Under this project, we offer a workshop where we get together with those who seem to be alien to art museum, discuss with them on what they feel inconvenient about or feel hard to approach to art museum, and come up with an idea on a new design for familiar art museum. In coming November, we will offer a workshop at Yokohama Citizen’s Gallery Azamino where we, together with those visually impaired or those having trouble to walk, try to design a new art museum. We plan to offer same workshop at Joshibi Art Museum in March next year.

What is important for young people to consider in designing their future is to try to touch on diversified values, and try to accept them with sincerity. At the same time, try to enjoy flexibly whatever encounters them. In order for them to be able to accomplish that, I would hope them to realize that the relationship with whatever objects or whomever they meet could not be altered as intended, but could be with a mere accident. I would hope them to see a possibility there.

Dr. Miwa: Young people today seem to have a lot of interesting ideas for future that we elderly people could hardly imagine. One thing that I noticed listening to what two professors had to say is that in Japan we might be discussing various matters outside of internationally recognized, accurate information. Yet we are unaware of it and somehow become content with the outcome. I had the impression and became anxious that we might be left behind the current of the world.

Be that as it may, the Japanese people seem to have cultural strengths so to speak to survive difficult times. Even blending Japanese and foreign ways we don’t get intoxicated. There is what might be called “a sense of equilibrium.” For instance, in prewar days, it was not uncommon for people of high social status or even middle class to make at least their reception room for guests in western style when building a home. The Japanese who had a foot in both camps must have delicate receptivity. I think out of that sense came such popular software as animation, computer games, etc.

Including myself, during the postwar occupation days, most Japanese children came in contact with the American culture for the first time in their life. U.S.-led occupation forces in Japan seem to have succeeded in Americanizing Japanese culture. However, an essay I read recently disclosed that the lifestyle of middle class Japanese or above in prewar Japan was almost identical to that of the U.S. So, when American culture appeared to be pouring in, those people said, “This is exactly how we used to live.” What had appeared to be a violent change, people accepted as a matter of course.

Those who had experienced such a lifestyle were able to say that. But I had never seen Americans until after the war, and then I studied in America. The information about the U.S. that was available to us in those days was rather biased because of the way it was put out. After World War I, American delegates who sat with Europeans at Versaille Conference were surprised to find how ignorant they were of the Americans and they commissioned Hollywood to take up the task of film strategy to enlighten those Europeans.

After the Second World War, the importance of Hollywood became even greater in order for America to win the cold war. Prior to that, a movie critical of Japan's war against China was being made in Hollywood. It was a propaganda movie. The Nanjin Atrocities took place in December 1937. The Hollywood movie "Why we fight in China" released three years after the incident said some 30 thousand people were killed. The propaganda movie of the United States that was trying to establish justice in international society referred to the figure as 30 thousand.

To me as a historian, it is a meaningful numbers. A reputable quality paper, New York Times reported immediately after the incident that 30 thousand died. However, the figure grew bigger and ultimately became 300 thousand. So we learn when it comes to international affairs, reading comments from one medium or depending on reports from a single country is not good enough.

Today, we heard from four panelists scholarly talks as well as reports based on hands-on experiments: Professors from Germany and the United States, a Japanese teacher who has come up with an interesting educational program based on experiments, and a young musician who challenged a long adventurous journey — with an idea that is typically modern and only young people can come to think Not only did he think of it, he incorporated it into his life plan. Truly a representative of today's young.

In order to utilize information obtained from different sources, foreign languages are needed. The ability to read and understand English helps. Even in compulsory education, more learning hours are allocated for English even at the sacrifice of other subjects. Both teachers and students are struggling to cope with it. Can we say we have done all we should? I doubt it.

Meanwhile, it is reported that in British high schools, students who want to learn foreign languages are decreasing rapidly. Canada, where Mr. Oblas teaches, has basically been multi-cultural. If in a local library you are the only minority Canadian national, and you want to read a book written in your language, the library must, by law, meet your request. Or for example, they have to have books written in the Ukranian and Tibetan languages. I wonder if it will be the case in Japan.

(Written by S. Sano, a member of the Science & Culture Committee, and translated jointly by A. Shimizu, Y. Suda, J. Suzuki, and S. Tanahashi of the PR, Bulletin & Internet Committee)

(Continued from Page 1): **R-word Reaction of Japanese Media and Famous Brothers**

Japanese Army. When he was teaching art of war at the Army Staff College in the 1930's, he emphasized the importance of the Japanese moral codes. What a contrast — one was an environmentalist and the other a military strategist. I am very much interested in finding out what sort of family they had grown up in.

A One-day Bus Tour 2009: Visits to Koganei Park and the Buaiso Residence

Date: Sunday, September 27

Place: Koganei and Machida

For this bus tour we received as many as 120 applications but the number of available bus seats was only 42. We feel sorry for those who were not accepted this time. This popularity was partly due to the fact that people were very much interested in visiting the Buaiso residence of Jiro Shirasu, a legendary figure, who was highlighted by recent TV programs.

At 8:40 am we got together in Shimbashi and started our one-day bus tour. Fortunately we had a good weather. We arrived at our first destination, “Edo-Tokyo” Open Air Architecture Museum, in Koganei City, sooner than scheduled. This museum opened in 1993 as a branch of the Edo-Tokyo Museum in Ryogoku. Here we could see historical architectures of high cultural value. They were relocated from the original locations due to difficulty in local preservation and have been either restored or preserved at the new site for exhibition.



A volunteer guide took us to different preserved houses, including the private house of Kunio Maekawa who as a distinguished architect contributed to the development of modern architecture in Japan; the “Kodakara no yu” public bath house which was typical of such facilities in Tokyo; and the residence of Korekiyo Takahashi who was an influential political leader during the Meiji through Showa periods. For lunch we enjoyed good taste of Udon noodle served at a kurazukuri-style old house.

While we were feeling somewhat sleepy after lunch, our bus already arrived at our next destination – the Buaiso residence, a straw-thatched house in Machida. It was very crowded as we had expected. The owner was Jiro Shirasu who had purchased it from an acquaintance. In 1943 he already foresaw Japan’s defeat in the war and relocated to the site in Machida. He named the old house “Buaiso,” combining two Chinese characters from the names of two adjoining regions.

In his youth Shirasu was educated in the U. K. and graduated from Cambridge University. After the war, he was hand-picked by Prime Minister Shigeru Yoshida to work as an aide responsible for negotiations with GHQ. Because of his outspoken attitude, Shirasu was well known in GHQ as “the only disobedient Japanese.” His wife, Masako Shirasu, was known as an essayist. The old house was filled with a variety of memorabilia items of the couple, including Jiro’s hand-made desk-top electric lamp.

All of us got off the bus in Shimbashi in the evening, expressing our hearty thanks to the driver and the guide for their professional services.

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

The 2009 UNESCO Kanto-Block Study Convention

Date: October 3 & 4, 2009

Place: Ashikaga, Tochigi

The 36th two-day regional UNESCO convention was held at the Ashikaga Citizens Plaza, with the Ashikaga UNESCOs as hosts, under the banners of “Let’s expand the future-oriented UNESCO circles” and “Let’s pursue possibilities of ESD and UNESCO associated schools.” ESD stands for Education for Sustainable Development whereas UNESCO associated school means those which pursue peace and international cooperation to achieve the ideals set forth in the UNESCO Charter.

Day 1 was kicked off with a chorus presentation by the Ashikaga Boys & Girls Chorus Group. It was followed by an official opening declaration, a center-piece forum, and reports by participating local UNESCO associations. The forum was opened by a keynote speech on UNESCO schools by an official from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology. Also a case-study presentation was given by an elementary school principal from Koto City, Tokyo. Extensive opinions were exchanged during the panel discussion on “ESD and UNESCO schools.”

This year marks the mid-year of the 10-year “U. N. Education Initiative for Sustainable Development.” In this connection, new themes for activities were suggested to let the grass-roots UNESCO associations undertake active roles in linking up with school education to strengthen the interaction between schools and local communities, based on the UNESCO initiative promoted by the Domestic Committee of the National Federation of UNESCO Associations in Japan. (*Reported by Takai*)

Day 2 offered three concurrent sessions in the morning, followed by a plenary session, a closing ceremony, and optional excursion programs in the afternoon. Selected themes for the concurrent sessions were: (1) Regional heritages we should hand down to future generations, (2) How we should empower UNESCO activities, centering on the worldwide Terakoya movements, so that the learning centers can turn into the defenses of peace, and (3) ESD & UNESCO schools: collaboration of schools and communities to promote environmental awareness.

I attended Session 1 where two presentations were given. In the “Preservation of a World Heritage: the Environmental Survey of the Nikko Temples,” Nikko UNESCOs reported on their efforts to place and collect capsules which take in air pollutant substances. In the “UNESCO Youth Study Tour in Gunma,” young UNESCOs reported on a two-day tour in which a group of 37 youths, including those from the Tokyo UNESCO Liaison Council and those from Gunma associations, visited the Tomioka Silk-reeling Factories, the Abt Railway Road & Megane Bridge, etc. Based on their visits to those landmarks, which are tentatively included in the preliminary World Heritage candidate list, the youths exchanged viewpoints and deepened friendship. (*Reported by Akiyama*)

(Written jointly by M. Takai, Vice President, and M. Akiyama, Chairperson of the Membership Committee, and translated by S. Tanahashi, Standing Director, the PR, Bulletin & Internet Committee)

The World Cooking Workshop New Year's Dinner in Armenia

Date: Nov.28, 2009

Place: Minato City Gender-free Center

This year's last world cooking workshop "New Year's Dinner in Armenia" was held on the last Saturday of November, which was very warm like spring. There were five male participants challenging Armenian cooking among 25 women. Ms. Melania Nakajima, today's instructor, came to Japan 17 years ago and she speaks fluent Japanese. She was accompanied by her daughter, Anahit, on the day as her personal assistant.



She explained about the New Year in Armenia to us. According to her, all people from children to adults enjoy New Year holidays very much which lasts 7 days. Lots of dishes are served at home until the table becomes full of meals. That means the people's wish that the New Year will be of good harvest and happiness to everyone. Interesting thing is that Christmas comes on January 6th following the New Year. People spend a quiet time and eat fish and other things, but not meat during those days of the year.

This time we learned five items out of the variety of New Year's dishes; . It is said that usually at least 7 warm meals are served there. The menu of the day comprised Tolma, stewed vegetables with minced meat; Harisa, simmered chicken with wheat; Havov Salat, chicken salad; Pire Drats Sunk, oven-roasted mushrooms; and Pakhlava, honey and walnuts pie.

At first, everyone seemed to struggle to manage his/her first Armenian cooking, but after a while they started to ask Melania questions one after another or cooperate with each other. And at last, the room became filled with good smell from pots and ovens here and there.

Every participant enjoyed beautifully served New Year's dinner they cooked, together with a little bit of Beaujolais Nouveau and brandy that Melania brought from home to enjoy happier mood of the new year.

One of the students said "It's really good. Not richer than I thought". Another mentioned "Chicken is used in two meals. But taste is completely different. Different taste from the same stuff depends on the way of cooking." I believe everyone was satisfied with Armenian cooking.

I appreciate Melania very much for having prepared some ingredients such as grape leaves and brandy. And also for her kind consideration while cooking. She was kindly looking around each table to check if we were "cooking" properly, and at the same time she was answering questions at each table politely. Also I thank Anahit for helping from preparation till the end of the workshop.

The World Cooking Workshop Committee will keep introducing cultures of different countries through enjoying cooking in a good atmosphere.

(Written and Translated by A. Shinoda, a member of the World Cooking Workshop Committee)

A Visit to the German Embassy

Date: Monday, November 16, 2009

Place: Hiroo, Shibuya-ku

This year marks the twentieth anniversary of the historic collapse of the Berlin Wall. On the morning of November 16, a group of 20 MUA members visited the German Embassy which is located at a site just across the Arisugawa Park in Hiroo. At the entrance gate we were requested to show our ID's for security management. Once in the lobby, we saw many photos exhibited but the time restraint did not allow us to look at them leisurely.



Our host of the day was Mr. Joern Beissert, who is a counselor and head of Press Department. He gave a comprehensive presentation on Germany Today in fluent Japanese. Germany is located at the center of Europe and surrounded by nine countries around its border. It has a population of 8.2 million, about two thirds of Japan's, with Berlin as its capital. In 1961 the East regime started to build the Berlin Wall. However, a peace movement emerged during the 1980's and finally, on November 9, 1989, the wall was broken down. Mr. Beissert explained that the integration of the two Germany's, which followed the Berlin wall collapse, was realized within one year. We could imagine all sorts of difficult challenges German people must have faced during the process. Incidentally, on the wall along the street outside of the embassy, we could see an exhibition of photo panels describing major developments during the integration process.

Mr. Beissert's presentation also touched upon Germany's national economy and its cultural activities, including the fact that Germany today has a total of 32 UNESCO World Heritage sites. In terms of education, there are 90 universities, along with 190 specialized colleges and high schools. Tuition is free at those state-operated schools and the tuition at private institutions is controlled not to exceed 200 Euro (approx. ¥30,000) per month. As for social welfare, German citizens are protected by a complete national program.

During the Q & A session, one of us asked about consumption tax in Germany. We found that it is rated at 19 percent in general, but that it is exceptionally low at seven percent for food and books. We were all very thankful for Mr. Beissert and other embassy staff who accepted our visit.

(Written by F. Iguchi, Chairperson of the Membership Committee, and translated by S. Tanahashi, Standing Director, the PR, Bulletin & Internet Committee)

Minato City Residents' Festival 2009

Date: October 10 and 11, 2009
Place: Shiba Park Area

Minato City Residents' Festival this year was blessed with good weather after the typhoon No.18 passed away. Visitors to the festival site were all bright-eyed and bushy-tailed thanks to the good weather. Just by looking at the way they walk with cheery eyes, we could tell that this year's festival was blessed by the good weather.



We at MUA this time displayed panels prepared by each committee members. Visitors were given an opportunity to touch on both Japanese culture and Arabic/Islamic cultures through the demonstration of writing their names in Arabic calligraphy. We also ran a mini-bazaar as well as played trivia on National Flags.

Mayor Takei of Minato City kindly paid a visit to MUA's tent on October 11th. The festival successfully ended thanks to the cooperation of many people. The revenue from Arabic calligraphy and mini-bazaar amounted to ¥9,600. Thank you all.

(Written by Osamu Kitaoka, Chairman of the Minato City Residents' Festival Committee, and translated by Y. Suda, Vice Chairman of the PR, Bulletin & Internet Committee)

Fall! Season of Festival!! We have "Festi-Baloon"!!!

Date: Friday, November 6, 2009
Place: Minato-City Lifelong Learning Center

The "Festi-Baloon", a popular annual event of the Lifelong Learning Center, was held on the 6th November, Friday, on and around the playground of the center. ("Festi-Baloon" is a coined word, combining Festival and Balloon. Balloon is a popular name of the Lifelong Learning Center). It was a typical Indian summer day.

This festival is the occasion where various groups and circles using the center regularly present or exhibit the fruit of their activities. They presented their fruit in the form of performances on the stage, sales of the products, displays/exhibits, etc. from 11:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. So did we, MUA, by displaying panels introducing the wide range of activities.



The presentation covers calligraphy, painting, pressed flower, flower arrangement, haiku, senryuu, singing, dancing, musical and tai ji. What enjoyed me most among others were the crab miso-soup and pork miso-soup, which I would personally expect next time too.

(Written and translated by T. Mizuno, Secretary-General)

Minato UNESCO English Class

Minato UNESCO Association sponsors two levels of English classes: beginner and intermediate. Classes are held on Tuesday and Wednesday evenings from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m., in convenient locations in Minato City. Both classes offer affordable low admission fees of ¥22,000 per 14 lessons for UNESCO registered members, and ¥24,000 for non-members. UNESCO allows anyone to register, which gives members various privileges to its overall activities. Please visit our MUA website for more information.



American teacher, Mark Murdock, communicates to all students in a friendly and humanistic manner, addressing each student's individual language ability. During the two-hour lesson, useful expressions, in the context of real life situational English, are taught in a textbook based format. Students also have the chance to challenge additional occasional listening practices and games. During break time, students can continue to utilize their speaking skills over free conversation. This opportunity allows classmates the chance to get to know each other, despite age differences, diverse occupations and even English level abilities. Both classes cater to the international community as well, but a majority of its students are Japanese nationals.

Both of these classes offer something different from other language schools, and is the reason why most students repeat the class even after finishing the school term. If you are interested in our English classes, you can attend a one-hour free lesson. Let's enjoy studying English together!

(Written and translated by E. Yamasawa, Vice Chairperson, Foreign Languages Study Committee)

MUA welcomed the visit of the students from Yamagata:

Five students of Shinjo Junior High School, Yamagata, visited the MUA office in Shimbashi on the November 12th morning as a part of their school excursion to Tokyo. The background of the birth of UNESCO and the WTM (World Terakoya Movements) were the main themes explained for them. All of them were very active in questioning during the explanation. They are children of IT era. It was found afterwards that they had studied about UNESCO through Internet before they left for Tokyo.

Our whole-hearted thanks go to the following donors:

- Participants in the 28th MUA International Symposium who donated ¥16,000 in total for the UNESCO Terakoya Movements on October 6th, 2009.
- Participants in the 2nd Cross-cultural Awareness Workshop who donated ¥7,000 in total for the UNESCO Terakoya Movements on November 26th, 2009

(Reported by T. Mizuno, Secretary General)

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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