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Religions Clear the Way for Politics?

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

Christian religions are exploding with a growing number of converts in Asia and Africa. This phenomenon is called the Bible diplomacy. So it was reported in a research publication of the Institute of National Self-Defense Forces. It reminded me of several things.

When Japan was defeated in the Asia-Pacific War of 1937-1945, many Christian missionaries arrived with the occupation forces. They had the intent of making Japanese repent their recent follies and outright atrocities and learn to embrace the love and peace of Jesus Christ. Especially they wanted to go immediately to Hiroshima.

But the Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers in Japan, U.S. General Douglas MacArthur, would not give the go. Yet he allowed the Catholic priests to do so apparently because some of them had stayed in Japan during the war years and even suffered the atomic radiation.

On the main street of the Ginza, I myself encountered some missionaries handing out beautifully bound miniature Bibles. Its blue fake leather cover with the letters of New Testament inscribed in gold leaf looked and smelled incomparably like high cultural presence of the American civilization. From this experience of my own I could infer that the explosion of Christian conversion was also a result of the needs of embracing Christ's salvation as well as the civilization emanating from it.

What is a religion? When I was a student at a Catholic university in the United States, a definition of religion was given as "the relationship between man and God." According to a Japanese dictionary, it is given as "faith in the transcendent existence." I see some significant difference between them. "Relationship works both ways," while "faith" seems only one way.

Now who said "Religion leads the way for politics"? It was said by a key minister of a protestant churches national league.

The former U.S. President Bush caused quite a flurry of criticism when he pronounced that he was about to unleash armed forces of "Crusaders" against Saddam Hussein of Iraq. However, for him it was a natural spontaneous reaction to the devastation wrought over Americans in the terrorist attacks of 9/11. He was and is a born-gain Christian fundamentalist. While serving as governor of the State of Texas, he formulated a statute to inaugurate one particular day of the year for the Texans to observe as the day to remember the stations of Jesus Christ's life, death and resurrection, and to do good to their communities.

Come to think of it. What that protestant minister said seems to illustrate how the U.S. foreign policy works in practice to a significant extent.

The 2nd Cross-cultural Awareness Workshop 2009
Organized by MUA and supported by the Minato City Education Board

A GLIMPSE INTO THE OTHER SIDE OF JAPAN'S MID-EAST DIPLOMACY
- Completing 39 years of service for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs -

Date: Thursday, November 26, 2009
Place: Minato City Life-long Learning Center

We had the pleasure of having Mr. Hiroshi Shiojiri, a former Ambassador to Libya and currently an Executive Board Member of the Middle East Research Institute of Japan, as the lecturer at this workshop.



The resource diplomacy that started in the seventies aroused Japan's interest in oil producing countries of the Middle East. Later, as more presence of the area came to be felt in international society, Japan's Middle East policy also needed to change qualitatively. As one of the Middle East specialists in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Shiojiri spoke on changing Mid-east diplomacy of this country, the back-up setup in the Foreign Office to support it as well as interesting back-stage stories. The Ambassador certainly provided us with a good opportunity to deepen our understanding of Middle East problems.

Profile of the lecturer

Born in Osaka, Mr. Shiojiri graduated from the Osaka University of Foreign Studies, Arabic Department in 1967. In April same year, he entered the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Thereafter, he assumed the positions of Director, Information & Culture Center, Japan's Embassy in Egypt; Consul, Consulate General in Boston; Senior Assistant Director, Technological Cooperation Division, Economic Cooperation Bureau; Regional Coordinator, 2nd Middle East Division, Middle East & African Bureau; Director, Newly Independent States Division, Europe & Oceanic Bureau; and Consul General in Dubai. In 2003, he was assigned as Ambassador to Libya. In 2006 he retired from the diplomatic service and assumed the current position in June same year.

1. About the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

☆ **Gaimusho** (Ministry of Foreign Affairs), created in 1885 under the ministerial system, is one of the oldest offices in the Japanese government system. Its annual budget is 670 billion yen (The year 2008 general accounting: 83 trillion 613 billion yen.)

Prescribed manpower: 5,500 (one of the smallest ministries). Of this staff, 2,200 work in the headquarters and 3,300 are stationed in overseas posts.

A total of 124 ambassadors are assigned to 117 embassies and seven delegation offices (to UN, EU and others). Also 65 consul generals are at work at 65 consulate generals.

The Embassy negotiates with its accredited government on such issues as political, economic and other matters. The Consulate General protects and supports Japanese nationals staying in its appointed area.

☆ **Middle East and African Bureau** is in charge of 67 countries in the Middle East and Africa. However, because of wide cultural and social differences existing between Middle East - North African region and Sub-Saharan Africa, 48 African nations south of the Sahara are under the jurisdiction of Director General for African Affairs.

☆ **The First and Second Middle East Divisions** are in charge of 20 Middle Eastern and North African nations as well as Palestine.

☆ **Middle Eastern region and Japan's role:**

Accounting for 47% of world's oil export, and 86% of Japan's oil import in 2002, the Middle East is one of the most important energy suppliers of the world.

On the other hand, this region has many problems such as the Middle East problem arising from conflicts between Arab nations and Israel, reconstruction and rehabilitation of Iraq and Afghanistan, etc.

If Japan could play a positive role for peace and security of the region, it would be to the benefit not only of Japan but of the whole world.

With that end in mind, Japan has maintained friendly relations with most of the countries of the region. Its wide ranging diplomatic activities include such exchanges as economic, technological, people-to-people and cultural programs, in addition to efforts for restoring peace in the region.

2. The trend in Middle East after the Second World War

☆ **After the First World War and before the Second World War**, the lands in Middle East were colonized by world powers (United Kingdom, France, Belgium, Italy, etc.). But after World War II, the world situation changed dramatically. People of this region started self-determination movements and became independent one after the other. Also many countries changed its regime by revolution from the monarchy to the republican. Furthermore, the Jewish people founded Israel and that caused the first Mid-East war (Arab-Israel War) to break out.

☆ **After the Second World War**, the Soviet Union emerged as a great power and the communism spread over the world. Antagonism grew bigger little by little between the capitalism represented by the old powers and the communism backed by the Soviet Union, and the East-West cold war started.

☆ **From the 70's**, energy resource changed from coal to petroleum. At the same time, Middle East countries with rich oil reserve came to attract the attention of the world. Competition to acquire oil resources became intensified and there was a move to lure Arab nations into their camps.

☆ **As oil conglomerates** began to earn enormous amount of profit, Arab countries began to think that they themselves should earn more money. Thus resource nationalism grew bigger and it led to the nationalization of their resources.

There was also a move among oil producing nations to unite in solidarity so that they can use oil resources more strategically. OPEC was organized in 1960 while OAPEC was set up in 1968. With regard to Arab-Israel war, OAPEC nations took a strategy to supply oil only to the countries that support them and this started the first oil shock in 1973. As a member of the Western camp, Japan was also involved in this incident. However, diplomatic measures taken by Prime Minister Kakuei Tanaka, dispatching the Middle East mission headed by Deputy Prime Minister Takeo Miki, secured necessary oil supply to Japan.

☆ **From the latter half of 1970's**, the Soviet's politics and economy began to crack and it became less influential than before. The Soviet's degeneracy brought decline of its supporting countries. Among Middle Eastern countries, some began to give priority to their national interest rather than solidarity with other countries.

☆ **As a result of the Soviet's collapse**, a change occurred in the global power balance from two superpowers to only one superpower. At the same time, there also was a repercussion against the hegemony of America as only one super power and it led to serious border disputes and local struggles mainly in the Mid-East region..

3. Glimpse at back stage of Japan's Middle East policy

☆ **Hijacking JAL plane at Dubai (July 1973)**

On July 20, 1973, JL404 (Boeing 747: 123 passengers and 22 crew members aboard) leaving Paris for Tokyo via Anchorage was hijacked. Five criminals including Osamu Maruoka (Japan Red Army + PFLP) demanded 4 billion yen as ransom and release of the two fellow members. This incident ended without any victims, but when they stopped over at Dubai Airport in UAE, I was involved as an interpreter for Prime Minister Kakuei Tanaka who negotiated over the telephone with Sheikh Mohammad bin Rashid, who was Defense Minister of UAE (At present he is the Ruler of Dubai and UAE Vice President). In a tense atmosphere involving human lives, the Defense Minister of UAE seemed to have thought that the Japanese Prime Minister himself was conversing in Arabic.

☆ **The first oil crisis (October 1973) and how Japan coped with it.**

On October 6, 1973, the 4th Middle East War broke out and on October 17, Arab oil producing countries (OAPEC) announced that they would invoke their oil strategy and would reduce their oil supply to unfriendly nations. Since Japan had been categorized as unfriendly, people got panicky for fear that the oil supply could be cut off.

On November 6, Chief Cabinet Secretary Susumu Nikaido said in a pro-Arab statement that Japan is against acquisition of territory by force, that it hopes Security Council resolution 242 be totally administered as soon as possible, and that it supports General Assembly Resolution which recognizes self-determination rights to Palestinians. There was, however, a perspective that it was not sufficient. So, with the view to domestic situations and reactions from the Arab side, Chief Cabinet Secretary Nikaido released an even more Arab-inclined statement in addition to what he said in his previous statement. It read (1) Japan deplores occupation by Israel, (2) that it demands withdrawal from the occupied land, and (3) that depending on the

development of future situations, Japan will have to reconsider its position towards Israel. Prior to releasing this statement, US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger hurriedly visited Japan to see Prime Minister Kakuei Tanaka for some diplomatic adjustments. This is one example that shows how delicate a situation Japan was in.

☆ **Sending Special Envoy Miki to the Middle East (December 1973)**

Even after making clear Japan's pro-Arab position with the statements by Chief Cabinet Secretary Susumu Nikaido, the oil supply reduction measures by the Arab side was not lifted for Japan. On November 28, Prime Minister Tanaka asked Deputy Prime Minister Takeo Miki, who was concurrently Environment Minister, to visit major Arab states as Prime Minister's special envoy to explain Japan's difficult position and to ask for their understanding. As a staff member of the division in charge of the Foreign Office, I spent about ten days for arranging a special plane for them and for translating Prime Minister's personal messages into Arabic. Just before their departure, I was instructed to go with the special envoy as a chief interpreter.

Special Envoy Miki's itinerary was to visit the heads of major oil producing countries in the Middle East such as Saudi Arabia and UAE as well as those of Egypt, Syria, and Iran during the period between December 10 and 28, and to explain to them how crucial it is for Japan to secure a stable supply of oil from them. Thanks partially to pro-Japanese sentiments in the Middle East, the Arab side lifted the oil supply reduction measure to Japan while Mr. Miki was still in the Middle East. The oil crisis was over.

☆ **Chairman Arafat's visit to Japan (October 1981) and a proposal by Fahd**

When Chairman Yasser Arafat of PLO visited Japan for the first time, I was involved in his arrival procedures and took charge of interpreting his talk with Foreign Minister Sunao Sonoda in Arabic. This meeting caught the attention of the public because a few days before, Prince Fahd of Saudi Arabia had made a peace proposal in which the Arab side recognized Israel's right to existence for the first time, though indirectly. Chairman Arafat gave his honest impression about Fahd's peace plan during his talk with Foreign Minister Sonoda, and Mr. Sonoda disclosed in his reply to a question in parliament the real intention of Arafat. This invited an international sensation, wondering whether Chairman Arafat's political posture might have changed. At the end, it was straightened out so that Chairman Arafat never made such remarks, but it was caused by misinterpretation.

☆ **The opening of the Cairo Education and Culture Center (commonly known as Cairo Opera House) (August 1988)**

While I was stationed in Egypt, I was involved in the construction of the Cairo Education and Culture Center. The project was funded by a grant aid program for cultural cooperation. The total fund needed for this project was 6.5 billion yen, an exceptionally large amount at that time. For the opening ceremony held in the summer of 1988, fire work demonstration and Kabuki performance were invited from Japan. What is to be particularly mentioned is that the Kabuki performance was the first in the Middle East and North African region and it gave an enormous cultural shock to the people of Egypt.

☆ **Japanese kidnapped in Kyrgyz (August 1999 ~ October 1999)**

On 23 August 1999, four Japanese JICA experts and a local interpreter were

kidnapped in Kirgis by a squad of Uzbekistan Islamic Movement members. When the Foreign Office set up immediately an on-site task force in Kirgis, Parliamentary Vice Foreign Minister Keizo Takemi was traveling in Central Asia on a mission. He also set up a local base of operation in neighboring Tajikistan to support operations of the task force. I was accompanying Mr. Takemi at the time, and joined with Ambassador Kyoko Nakayama to Uzbekistan in strongly appealing to such key personalities as Presidents of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, Mr. Nuri Said, Chairman of the Peoples Conciliation Council and Mr. Mirzo Ziyaef, Minister of Emergency, to exercise their influence for a safe release of the hostages. After all these efforts, all the hostages were freed safe two months later in September 2003

☆ **Lifting of UN economic sanction on Libya and abandonment of its plan to produce weapons of mass destruction**

Three months after I arrived in Libya as Ambassador, U.N. economic sanction on Libya was officially lifted. Additional three months later, Libya announced to the world that it would abandon its plan to produce weapons of mass destruction. As a result, Libya returned to international society and began to improve its relations with the United States and Europe. I chanced to be in Libya to witness a dramatic change of the country, which was once suspected of possessing nuclear weapons and of supporting terrorists.

Being tall, Mr. Shiojiri has a stately air of ambassador. Yet once he starts talking, he is full of humor with good smiles. Even when talking difficult topics, his speech often invited laughter. He repeatedly said that a government official is of the service sector, and demonstrated himself as a frank and friendly person. The question-and-answer session was quite impassioned and I could feel deep interests the audience had in the region. Due to the distance between the Middle East and Japan and the difference in both religion and culture, we are yet to be as familiar as we should be with Middle East. I keenly felt that more bilateral efforts should be made for promoting mutual understanding..

(Written by M. Takai, Vice President, the Cross-cultural Awareness Committee, and translated by T. Suzuki, the PR, Bulletin & Internet Committee)

(Continued from Page 9): **Food Banking for All People**
organizations.

Mr. McJilton emphasized that his food banking system is a win-win arrangement for all parties involved, and that all people benefit from the food recycling system. At the end of his presentation, Mr. McJilton expressed his conviction that more than anything else he minds the importance for 2HJ to establish a mutually trustful human relationship with all people it works with.

It was a great experience for all attendees to understand the origin of Mr. McJilton's motivation to establish 2HJ as well as the tireless efforts and enthusiasm with which he has pursued his mission. In conclusion Mr. McJilton cited for us his favorite words from Martin Luther King's preaching. MUA is thankful for those attendees who either donated food items in our food drive or made monetary donations (a total of ¥5,000) during this event.

(Written by K. Auckerman, Chairperson, the Cross-cultural Awareness Committee, and translated by S. Tanahashi, VP, the PR, Bulletin & Internet Committee)

The 13th MUA Salon
“Let’s Visit the Fishing World”

Date: December 9, 2009
Place: MUA Secretariat Office

The speaker of this salon was Mr. Mizuno, MUA’s Secretary-General since September 2008. He kindly accepted to talk about his hobby of “fishing in the sea” in this MUA salon in response to the request from MUA members. A total of 23 MUA members, including Dr. & Mrs. Miwa, attended this salon.

He started fishing back in the 1980s when he was staying in Stockholm with his family on an overseas assignment. Either his Swedish neighbor or business colleague took him or his whole family out for fishing in the lakes in and around Stockholm or the Baltic Sea. It seems that smoking a fresh fish is the typical cooking in Sweden.



After coming back to Japan in 1990, he started fishing with his drinking colleagues at around the Miura Peninsula. This anglers’ group was named “Once-a-month club” after the frequency of the fishing. Nowadays, Mr. Mizuno is said to be enjoying fishing mostly on his own in the Japan Sea (from Naoetsu or Teradomari port) and in the Pacific Ocean (from Kashima port).

He had prepared some handouts for us, such as his fishing record of the past 4 years, a map of Honshu showing several ports from which he used to take fishing boats, and the resume for today’s salon. He also gave a demonstration of fishing tackle (fishing rod, electric reel, etc.). The kind of fish popular in each season of the year, the unforgettable fishing for himself, and his interesting experiences and episodes among other topics were presented.

According to Mr. Mizuno, the catch in fishing is influenced largely by the water temperature and the tidal current, both of which directly affect the activeness of fish, as well as the seating position on board depending on the fishing. The boat usually carries about 4 – 16 anglers depending on the size. Their positions on board are said decided by lottery or on a first-come basis. He wonders every time which position he should take. The Internet is very helpful for anglers nowadays to get timely information on the forecast of weather, wind, tide etc. and on the latest catch of the boat which they are going to take.

Talking about some fish he is challenging, a filefish (***Kawahagi***) is a difficult fish to catch, since it is very good at stealing the bait separating from the hook, according to Mr. Mizuno. He said that the excitement is beyond description when he feels a powerful bite of a red snapper or Japanese sea bream (***Madai***). Every part of its body pleases our palate with nothing to be wasted. Its heart or the soft-roe is prized and the scales can be a good snack to go with drinking. When he wants to fish a flatfish or flounder (***Hirame***), he uses live bait such as a sardine or a horse mackerel. Once you felt a bite, you have to be cautious and patient until the fish is surely hooked. Other eating treat for anglers includes Sashimi of Spanish mackerel (***Sawara***), the liver of ***Kawahagi***, and the roe of ***Hirame***.

According to his fishing record, Mr. Mizuno goes fishing 2 – 3 times a month on average throughout the year. In many cases, he also catches various fish on top of the target fish of the day. The heaviest fish he has ever caught was a ***Madai*** which weighed 6.3kg.

This salon turned out to be an enjoyable introduction to the fishing world thanks to Mr. Mizuno’s presentation. Active questions & answers followed.

(Written by S. Tanahashi, VP, the PR, Bulletin & Internet Committee, and translated by T. Mizuno, Secretary-General)

2010 MUA New Year's Party

Date: Sunday, January 17, 2010

Place: Gotenyama Garden Hotel Lafore Tokyo

A total of 39 people, including MUA members and their families, attended the annual internal friendship program. This year the event was held at a Chinese restaurant called "Beijing" inside a fancy hotel in central Tokyo.

At first Dr. Miwa, MUA president, gave the following opening address:

Happy new year, everyone! I'm pleased to see all of you in good health. This year marks the 30th anniversary of MUA's foundation on October 17, 1981. In the past we commemorated the 10th, 20th and 25th anniversaries by holding special events.

In retrospect, MUA's first anniversary was observed on October 20, 1982. A general members meeting was held under the chairmanship of Dr. Kenzo Tange, MUA's first president, followed by commemorative programs, at the large hall of the Japan Red Cross. An invited speaker was Professor Ezra Vogel of Harvard University who gave a lecture on "World Order and Japan's Role." His book titled "Japan As Number One" symbolized Japan's international presence in those days.

Almost three decades have passed since then. Japan could not attain the No. 1 position as an economic power although it has contributed to world peace as a No. 2 country. It is expected that China will take over the No. 2 position by the end of this year. Be that as it may, MUA should be proud of its achievements accumulated over the past 30 years. Let us utilize our ample creativity and make further contributions to the establishment of world peace and order.

Mr. Hiroshi Matsumoto, Vice President, proposed a "Kampai" toast after wishing that all MUA members actively engage in respective volunteer activities throughout the new year. We started to help ourselves to the tasty Chinese dishes, served one after another, as we enjoyed lively round table conversation. A while later each of us stood up in turn and made a brief self-introduction to promote mutual understanding.

Soon Mr. Shimizu, Vice President and a great MUA musician, started to play the accordion, inviting all of us to join a sing-along of familiar songs with his accompaniment. We all appreciated Mr. Shimizu's musical talent, mixed with a good his sense of humor in his talk. Toward the end of the program, we tried our New Year's luck by a bingo game. It was a moment of great excitement for both winners and losers.



The happy gathering was concluded by a wrap-up speech by Mr. Nakagawa, Vice President. He wished for continued good health of all attendees and encouraged their still more active participation in MUA activities.

(Written by M. Tomogane, Standing Director, the Foreign Language Study Committee, and translated by S. Tanahashi, Vice President, the PR, Bulletin & Internet Committee).

The 3rd Cross-cultural Awareness Workshop 2009
“Food Banking for All People”

Date: Thursday, January 28, 2010
Place: Minato Life-long Learning Center

Our speaker for this workshop was Mr. Charles E. McJilton, founder and president of a non-profit organization (NPO) called Second Harvest Japan (2HJ). Mr. McJilton delivered in fluent Japanese a video & powerpoint presentation on the birth, growth and current activities of 2HJ. It was established in 2002 with a universal mission to provide food to needy people.



Profile of Mr. McJilton: He was born in Minnesota, U. S. A. in 1963. His family was a big one and he often felt hungry as a boy. At age 16 he became addicted to alcohol and drug but his strong will for self-correction saved him. In 1982 he joined the Navy and was sent over to Japan in 1984 for the first time. In 1986 he enrolled in Minnesota University. In 1991 he visited Japan again to study at Sophia University. While researching East Asian Security Policy at the university, he started to live with a preacher in the San-ya district of Tokyo, which is known as a slum. From 1997 to 1998, he joined homeless people and experienced outdoor living in a tent. In 2000, he became a representative of food banking activists. In 2002, he made a comparative study about food banking organizations in Japan and the U. S. at Sophia's graduate school. He founded Second Harvest Japan after obtaining a certification as a specified nonprofit corporation.

During the first half of his presentation, Mr. McJilton showed us a video of a TV documentary program, which was aired in March 2007, and which featured daily activities at 2HJ. Initially Mr. McJilton set his eyes on the massive volume of food which are wastefully dumped by convenience stores and other food channels. Such food items were left unsold by the designated date for consumption. He was overwhelmed by the reality. In response he made up his mind to do something about it. The TV program introduced a scene where convenience stores' lunch boxes, collected by 2HJ before the due date for consumption, were being donated to the kitchen of an NPO which helps needy people. Lunch at the NPO was priced only at ¥300.

During the second half, Mr. McJilton explained by powerpoint further details about 2HJ, which is the first food banking system in Japan. As mentioned earlier, he became aware that food manufacturers and large-scale retail chains dump at high costs those food products which became unmarketable just because the wrapping materials were partly damaged, for example. However, there is no problem with food content itself. 2HJ collects those unmarketable food products, free of charge, and delivers them, through an elaborately planned distribution network, to those who are economically challenged and cannot purchase food. We learned from the TV program how Mr. McJilton and 2HJ people establish a mutually trustful relationship with food manufacturers. The successful fulfillment of 2HJ's mission is symbolized by the thankful faces of recipient NPO people and the happy attitude of children at such

(To be continued on Page 6)

The World Cooking Workshop
-Home Dishes from Brazil-

Date: Saturday, January 30, 2010
Place: Minato City Gender-free Center

We had the pleasure of having Ms.Kazama and Ms.Martins as our instructors in this workshop. The day's menu- whole pumpkin with shrimp sauce / Brazilian salad / garlic rice / coconuts pudding & Brazilian coffee

Brazil is located on the other side of the earth from Japan and occupies about a half of the South American continent. The land area is 22 times as large as Japan. Ms.Kazama explained Brazilian culture to us, showing the map of Brazil.



Brazil has a lot of immigrants from all around the world. So Brazilian food varies greatly by region, people and climate. In Japan, popular Brazilian foods are churrasco, acai and guarana. Meanwhile, SUSHI and YAKISOBA are very famous in Brazil. Brazil is influenced by Japanese food, and actually there are more SUSHI restaurants than churrasco restaurants in some areas. From such a wide variety of Brazilian food, this time we learned typical home dishes of Brazil.

“Whole pumpkin with shrimp sauce” is often served at home parties so it was gorgeous. Brazilians don't waste food and they cook whole part of food stuff. We also cooked whole shrimps, and no shrimp shell was wasted. In this way we learned Brazilian spirit. Ms.Kazama brought some rare Brazilian food, especially Brazilian chill which is very rare in Japan. We were interested in cooking it. “Brazilian salad” is a vivid dish with Brazilian mango. The recipe was specially devised by the instructors for this workshop. It matches the image of Brazil which has plentiful tropical fruits.



For “Garlic rice”, we learned a Brazilian way of boiling the rice. At first we washed the rice in the colander without soaking rice, and fried it before boiling. Desert is “Coconuts pudding” made from kudzu vine and coconuts. Coconut is often used in home cooking in Brazil. At the end, Ms.Martins offered us a very delicious cocktail made of “Cachaca” and lime. “Cachaca” is Brazilian liquor distilled from sugar cane. We proposed a toast in Portuguese and enjoyed the meal.

One of the participants said, “Today's menu is quite delicious.” Someone said, “I have renewed my image for Brazilian food now.” Finally I would like to express my deep appreciation to Ms.Kazama, Ms.Martins and every participant in the workshop.

(Written and translated by Yumi Yamamoto, Vice Chairperson, the World Cooking Workshop Committee)

The 27th Diplomats Lecture
Japan's Public Diplomacy and Soft Power

Date: Tuesday, February 2010
Place: International House of Japan

The speaker for this annual lecture was Mr. Kenjiro Monji, Director-General for Public Diplomacy, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA). A total of 42 diplomats, including 12 ambassadors from different countries, attended this event.



Mr. Monji graduated from Tokyo University, Faculty of Law, in 1975 and immediately entered MOFA. During his diplomatic career, he served mainly in the areas of international law and national security, holding such posts in Tokyo and Deputy Director-General of the Treaties Bureau of MOFA and Director-General for international Affairs of the Ministry of Defense as a secondment.

Mr. Monji has been posted overseas in Australia, Belgium, France and the U. K. as well as to the European Union. Most recently, he was Ambassador of Japan to Iraq from 2007 to 2008. While being a diplomat, he has a title of Sake Samurai, awarded from the Junior Council of the Japan Young Sake Brewers' Association.

Mr. Monji has been keenly aware of the critical importance for Japan to strengthen its public diplomacy efforts because Japan's presence in the international arena has been relatively lackluster and the general attention paid to Japan has been on the decline. On top of that, the budget for such activities has been downsized year by year. Despite such adverse environment, Mr. Monji has been promoting Japan's public diplomacy, making the best use of its soft power.

Different people present different definitions about "Soft Power." Some interpret it only as animation and manga. Mr. Monji defines it more broadly. For example, he regards the "Omotenashi" and "Mottainai" mentality, shared by Japanese people, as a part of Japan's soft power. He hopes that Japan can contribute to the preservation of natural environment and to the solution of aging society issues in the world, by spreading such Japanese mentality.

Mr. Monji's lecture included interesting visual presentations as well. They included a slide show of photos taken in Iraq, videos of "Kawaii Ambassador" initiatives promoted internationally as a part of public diplomacy, as well as images of his efforts to promote sake as a "Sake Samurai." All of us at MUA wish to extend our best wishes to Mr. Monji's continued efforts to invigorate Japan's public diplomacy.

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

UNESCO World Heritage and Georgia

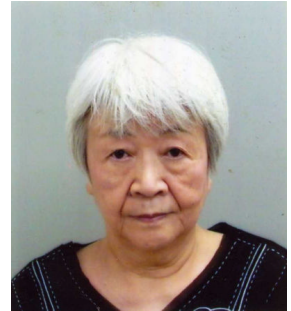
Hiroko Kako, Director of MUA

Georgia has three world's cultural heritages and one intangible cultural heritage designated by UNESCO.

I. Cultural Heritages

(1) Bagrat Cathedral(built in 1003) and Gelati Monastery(1130)

They are located in Kutaisi, the western region of Georgia. Kutaisi was the biggest academic center, at the height of Georgian prosperity during the 12th and the 13th centuries, where, in terms of art, books carrying miniatures as well as icons were produced. Outward walls of buildings were decorated by a magnificent relief technique, and interior walls were filled with scenes from mural paintings and historical figures. However, they were seriously damaged by the attacks of Ottoman Empire in 1691. Monks returned there around 1990 and they carry on their activities in the partially remained monastery since then. Restoration of the sites has long been continued, but it seems to me that there still remains long way to go. Not only these two but many of Georgian monuments were destroyed by the attacks of such eastern and western powerful countries as Greece, Rome, Persia and Mongolia.



(2) Historic area in Mtskheta

Mtskheta is located approximately 20 kilometers north of Tbilisi and prospered as the capital of the early Georgian Kingdom of Iberia built in the eastern part of Georgia during the 3rd century BC and 5th century AD. There is the Dzhvari Church which is said to have been built right on the location where in the early 4th century Saint Nino, a female, credited with converting Georgian people to Christianity, erected a large wooden cross. Christianity was proclaimed the state religion of Iberia in about 327. Iberia was the second state after Armenia which proclaimed Christianity the state religion. There exists Svetitskhoveli Cathedral built back in the 11th century. It has long been the principal Georgian church and functions as the seat of the archbishop of Mtskheta which remains as the religious center of Georgian people. October 14th is the national holiday. In Mtskheta Christians get together to celebrate Svetitskhoveli festival on that day.

(3)The Tower of Ushguli (built in 12th century)

There lie various styles of tower hither and thither in the mountainous region of Georgia. As any house there has such towers, the entire village sometimes looks like heavy mass of towers. The most famous one among them is the Tower of Ushguli. It is located in Svaneti region the steep mountainous area in the western part of Georgia, to which the traffic is brutal even today. The stone-built tower was used in various ways, to watch the invaders, protect regional property, store foods preparing for winter times. Peculiar cultures and way of lives are preserved there. There are no other places in Europe where people built many towers and lived all year long in mountainous area over 2,200 meters high.

II. Intangible Cultural Heritage

The Georgian polyphonic singing was designated as the first UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) in 2001. ICH is the institution which preserves and transmits from generation to generation such intangible cultures as oral traditions and expressions, traditional music, dances and theatres as the common human heritages. Georgia is a small country with a land a bit smaller than Hokkaido, but its cultural diversity is amazing. One of them is polyphonic singing. Its origin goes all the way back to uncertain ancient ages and utterly differs from other singing techniques. This singing is not only performed by specialists but by ordinary people in daily lives at churches, schools and homes. It became widely known to the world when the gramophone record of Georgian folk songs was included in such well known works as Symphony No. 9 of Beethoven and masterpiece of the Beatles which U.S. astronauts on Voyager II took to

(To be continued on Page 13)

Making an appearance on NHK TV program “Tameshite Gatten”

On December 2nd, 2009, I made an appearance on the NHK TV program “Tameshite Gatten (Try and Become Convinced). It was a special on Nabe Kakumei (One-pot Meal Revolution) with the selection of Best 3 Original Nabe dishes. I was chosen as the winner in the category of the “Kattei-ryu Nabe Contest” (Home-style Nabe Contest).

In the contest, 8 teams, chosen through a screening of the documents submitted from applicants across the country, demonstrated their cooking skill respectively at a kitchen studio in Tokyo, with Ms.Fumie Ono as the hosting announcer, and with professional chefs and the producer of the “Gatten” program as judges. It was filmed on location.

My “Yama-no-sachi Bukkake Nabe (One-pot meal with woodland delicacies poured)” is a meal with thin noodles served in a Japanese bowl on which simple boiled vegetables featuring mushrooms are poured. That is an old meal that my grandfather used to cook.

The subject for performers was to elaborate the method for more delicious one-pot meal and present it at the studio for film recording. So, with cooperation from the staff, I tried to improve the recipe by repeating a trial-and-error process that could serve as the scientific basis, including a comparison of tastes of meals as cooked with different heating conditions at my home. All those scenes were filmed on location.



The cooking method was something unprecedented and not existent in recipe making by my own taste which I found it very interesting personally. In the film recording at the studio, I could meet with the host Shinosuke Tatekawa, announcer Fumie Ono, and the guests Ikue Kashiwabara, Dacho-club and Mami Yamase. All the people including the staff had a nice time in a down-home atmosphere. I was especially moved by the master Shinosuke who spoke to me caring about us not accustomed to such event.

Filming was conducted not only at the studio but also at my home where 92 years old aunt and my elder sister rushed to join all the way from my hometown in Nagano. There were scenes of happy family sitting around the Nabe memories of my grandfather, as well as a scene with Jimon –san of Dacho Club visiting my home.

Immediately after the program was broadcasted, I received glad calls from my kin saying “We saw it!” and we had nice chats.

(Written by H. Komatsu, former Chairperson of the World Cooking Committee, and translated by A. Shimizu, an associate with the PR, Bulletin & Internet Committee)

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the space as “the memories of the 20th century.”

For your information, Noh play, Ningyojoruri (puppet ballad-drama) and Kabuki of Japan are also designated by UNESCO as Intangible Cultural Heritage like Georgian folk songs.

Note: Ms. Kako is one of the founding members of MUA, former Special Assistant to the Chairman of the International House of Japan, and the President of Japan-Georgia Association.

(Translated by Y. Suda, Chairman of the PR, Bulletin & Internet Committee)

Irina Bokova signs agreements that expand the outreach of UNESCO's cultural programmes

On Friday, 25 June 2010, UNESCO Director-General Irina Bokova signed two agreements that further strengthen the Organization's actions in the field of Intangible Cultural Heritage around the world.



© UNESCO/Andrew Wheeler - UNESCO Director-General Irina Bokova after signing a Memorandum of Understanding with Mr Mohammed Khalaf Al Mazroui, Director-General of The Abu Dhabi Authority for Culture and Heritage (ADACH).



© UNESCO/Andrew Wheeler - UNESCO Director-General Irina Bokova after signing the agreement for the establishment of the 'International Information and Networking Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Asia and the Pacific region' in the Republic of Korea, a UNESCO Category 2 centre.

Irina Bokova signed a framework agreement with Mohammed Khalaf Al Mazroui, Director-General of the Abu Dhabi Authority for Culture and Heritage (ADACH), which aims at strengthening capacities in developing countries of Africa and the Arab States. With the signature of this agreement, the United Arab Emirates become a key financial supporter of the intangible cultural heritage programme and one of the main donors for UNESCO's activities in this field.

The Director-General signed with Jang Ki-won, Permanent Delegate of the Republic of Korea to UNESCO, an agreement for the establishment of the 'International Information and Networking Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Asia and the Pacific region'. It is a UNESCO Category 2 centre that is to be created in the Republic of Korea and is expected to play an important role in UNESCO's overall strategy for strengthening national capacities for safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage.

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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