

## Encounter with the Minato UNESCO Association

- The birthplace of my leadership -

Yoshiko Nagato

Director of MUA, President of Inter-Cultural Community Life Association,  
and President of the Utsunomiya UNESCO Association

Meeting with wonderful people enriches our life several fold. I lived in a company's house in 3chome, Mita, Minato City for over 7 years since the end of December, 1974 due to my husband's transfer. I was absorbed in activities of PTA of my son's school, Meiji Gakuin High School, and a variety of seminars held in Asahi Culture Center, or hosted by the Minato City Education Committee. It was the time when I woke up to commitment to the society. A then global new wave, 'UN decade for women' served as a tail wind for the housewife, and as a member of a steering committee for Minato City Women's Academy, I worked with wonderful friends to plan and hold events, which gave me a lot of precious opportunities for my growth.



I attended 1st Meeting of Promoters for Establishment of Minato UNESCO Association at International House of Japan on May 22, 1981, in accordance with a request from City Education Committee. The majority of the attendance was well-known celebrities, and I felt nervous since I was a housewife. But, it was soon after my father who had been actively working as General Secretary of Ashikaga UNESCO Association suddenly passed away due to a traffic accident, and I decided to contribute to the Association believing in the amazing coincidence.

The Inaugural Meeting was actively held on October 17, 1981 at Shirogane Guest Palace. Under Dr. Kenzo Tange, the First President, and Dr. Kimitada Miwa, the second President, I as Standing Director and Chair of the Ladies Activities Committee, helped leading the infant organization by working for the following events, Charity Party for introducing Japan's New Year Events to foreign residents in January 1983, One-day Camping on the Children' Land for refugees from Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia in August 1983, International symposium in June 1982 on 'How should women live in the international era of '80s?' The success of these events would not have obtained without support by the whole executive committee and without cooperation of Minato Junior Chamber Inc. and friends in the above-mentioned Academy, and leaders in the camping. Mass media passed on them.

It is the driving force of my activities in Utsunomiya that I learned in MUA the gist of organizing a private entity and volunteer activities. On June 6, 1983, I succeeded in establishing Iccla, Inter-cultural Community Life Association with setting the mission of UNESCO after seeking volunteers through mass media. President Miwa kindly named it as such. Our interaction beyond the borders in 30 years to promote bonding of global families has reached that with over 130 countries, thanks to dedication of friends, helpers, and cheer-squads. (To be continued on P. 11)

The 16<sup>th</sup> MUA Salon  
**My Visits to 100 Foreign Countries**  
- Safari in Africa and 100 Marathon Experiences –

Date: June 28, 2012

Place: Minato Lifelong Learning Center



Our speaker this time was Mr. Shunsuke Morimura, an MUA Director. He is currently chairman of Morimura Bros., Inc. which has a well-established international presence. He generously presented to each attendee a book he authored, which describes his experiences in visiting 100 foreign countries. He also distributed handout materials, including (1) an essay he contributed to the Savanna Club (Friends of East African Association), of which he has been a member, (2) his complete marathon run records in a total of 47 prefectures in Japan, and (3) Ten most recommendable marathon events of his own choice in Japan. We were all excited to listen to his

unique presentation.

Mr. Morimura talked mainly about two subjects; one on his visits to a total of 100 foreign countries, and the other on his participation in over 100 marathon events. Incidentally, he is also an excellent contract bridge player and won the championship in an international tournament held last year. His victory was reported by newspapers. The following is a summary of his presentation.

**Part I. Visits to 100 foreign countries**

I visited Europe for the first time as a 19-year old university student and was hooked by the delight in traveling overseas. After graduation from the university, I joined a financial company and worked for over ten years. Because of an insatiable desire to visit more foreign countries, I decided to quit the job. Thus I started on a new life course, with an objective to visit a total of 100 foreign countries by age 60. At age 52, I visited three major islands – Borneo, Greenland and Iceland. I visited Cuba when Castro was still the state leader. The 99<sup>th</sup> country I visited was the Guiana Highlands and the 100<sup>th</sup> was Croatia.

The following is a short list of the world's five most attractive places of my own choice, out of the Best Ten I mentioned:

**No.5 The Valley of the Kings (Egypt)**

I visited this landmark because of Agatha Christie, my favorite writer. It is located in Luxor, Egypt and well known for wonderful wall paintings.

**No. 4 Kathmandu**

There are many temples and people hold many festivals. Local dishes were tastier than I had expected. Frankly I like their dishes better than Indian dishes. Because of the presence of Mt. Everest, a variety of support programs are available.

**No.3 The Okavango Delta**

It is located in Botswana, a South African state. The weather is very comfortable. It is a country in Savanna where tourists can enjoy safari even in a small group.

**No. 2 Ngorongoro Conservation Area**

It is located around a crater in Tanzania, an East African country, where tourists can enjoy safari.

### **No. 1 The Maasai Mara National Reserve**

It is located in Kenya, another East African country, which offers an excellent safari experience for tourists. You can see a wide variety of horses. There is a facility called Mpata Lodge which was built by a Japanese guy, and which is ideal for safari.

### **Part II. Marathon experiences**

I think there are many different ways to enjoy marathon. I don't place much importance on marathon racing over a 42.195km distance. Therefore I have intentionally participated in such marathon events where we can enjoy scenic beauty of the host community and local people's hospitality to runners.

In the past I have participated in a total of 100 marathon events, including those held overseas. They vary in distance, ranging from a short distance to a 100km distance. I've made the following short list of ten favorite marathon events based on my own preference.

### **No. 1 Lake Saroma 100km Ultra Marathon**

I felt a strong feeling of accomplishment in this marathon. I got up at 2 a.m. and started on the marathon. Our objective was to reach the goal within 13 hours. At the 74km rest place, they served a cup of Oshiruko for runners. The route abounds in changes and the scenic beauty is mysterious. I've run the course three times and each time the happy feeling of accomplishment lingered on.

### **No. 2 Shimanami Seacoast 100km Ultra Marathon**

The view from the long bridge spanning over the Setonaikai Sea was the most spectacular one I've ever seen, especially just before the sunset. Runners were impressed with the community's hospitality to serve orange juice, Oshibori towels, and Sohmen noodle.

### **No. 3 Yamaguchi 100 Hagi U-turn Marathon**

Runners can participate in any of the 70km, 140km and 250km courses. I completed the 140km course in 23 hours but could not make it in the 250km distance. We runners appreciated thoughtful services offered by local aides who are volunteers from either private homes or restaurants.

### **No. 4 Tokyo Marathon**

Because so many people participate on a large scale, this event attracts the attention of mass media and highly motivates all runners. I have participated three times and each time I felt very pleasant partly because I'm familiar with the marathon course.

### **No. 5 Shimanto River 100km Ultra Marathon**

The Shimanto River is well known for its clean water and scenic beauty. The hospitality which the organizers extend to runners has been superb. I strongly recommend this course to those who want to run an ultra marathon for the first time.

No. 6 Nagano Marathon (full distance)

No. 7 Yoron Marathon ( ditto )

No. 8 Nara Marathon ( ditto )

No. 9 Osaka Marathon ( ditto )

No. 10 Sanuki-no-shima Ultra Marathon (100km)

(To be continued on P. 6)

## Diplomacy and Humor

- Lecture by former Ambassador of Japan to Sweden -

Date: August 8, 2012

Place: Minato Lifelong Learning Center

We had the pleasure of having Mr. Otsuka, a retired career diplomat, for this workshop. Ambassador Otsuka joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) in 1966 and dedicated himself to a diplomat career during the ensuing 41 years. His major assignments in a total of seven foreign countries include Japan's first consul general in Edinburgh (Scotland), consul general in New York, Ambassador in Sri Lanka, and Ambassador in Sweden.



Our readers may remember but Ambassador Otsuka generously cooperated with another MUA's program last fall. That's when MUA held one of its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary commemorative programs, a stage show titled "Around the World with Songs and Dances," at Takanawa Kumin Center Hall in Minato City. Ambassador Otsuka and his son Seisuke, a university student, joined the stage and demonstrated an impressive Dad & son's duo bagpipe performance.

Ambassador Otsuka entered the lecture room, clad in the valiant traditional Scottish attire for men, wearing a kilt. The audience was all eyes at the exotic sight. Ambassador Otsuka started his talk in a manner as if answering "Frequently Asked Questions." For a starter, he explained that there are many different tartan designs for kilt in Scotland, each of which expresses the symbol of various clans. During the battles in the past between clans, soldiers in kilt used to blow the bagpipes in the battle field. The purpose was to intimidate the enemy and to uplift the fighting spirit of your soldiers, just like the way "Horagai," or trumpet shells were blown during the age of civil wars in Japan's history. He told us interesting stories, one after another, as he cracked witty jokes here and there.

Ambassador Otsuka's lecture proceeded according to the four major subjects listed in the handout he had kindly prepared for us. They were (1) Prime Minister Yoshida Shigeru's sense of humor, (2) Japan's mediation efforts in Sri Lanka in a civil war, (3) Positive & negative sides of Sweden, a forerunner in social welfare, and (4) A lesson learned from a Scottish friend who survived POW hardships with a spirit of humor. We were truly enlightened by each and every episode Ambassador Otsuka unfolded based on his firsthand experiences. At the same time we were impressed with his personality which enabled him to maintain a sense of humor even in extremely challenging situations. It was a wonderful lecture which enabled us to share most meaningful and motivating experiences of a seasoned diplomat.

We had a turnout of more people than the initially planned 60 attendees. Thanks to witty icebreakers from Ambassador Otsuka which he modestly calls "cheap jokes," the whole audience burst into laughter after laughter. As his talk progressed, we heard about his tireless efforts to negotiate with the leader of the Tamil Tigers in a jungle in Sri Lanka. We could not help feeling deep respect for his courage and enthu-

siasm to work out peace. Toward the end of his talk, we learned how Ambassador Otsuka came to know Mr. James Russell in Scotland who was put to a forced labor as a POW in the construction of a railroad between Thailand and Burma (now Myanmar) during WWII. We were truly moved to know the process of how Mr. Russell came to override his tragic personal experience and finally became a friend of Ambassador Otsuka's based on mutual trust.

The highlight of this event was Ambassador Otsuka's bagpipe performance. He played gallantly "Scotland the Brave," the well known "Amazing Grace" as well as two popular Japanese tunes – "Aka Tombo" and "Hama Chidori." We were all enchanted by the exotic sound. We at MUA were pleased to know from attendees' survey that they greatly enjoyed Ambassador Otsuka's lecture & bagpipe music.



**Note: The handout information prepared by Ambassador Otsuka is translated into English and shown below for our readers' convenience.**

### **(1) Prime Minister Shigeru Yoshida's sense of humor**

I joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1966. There were 24 cadets who entered the ministry in that year. Once we were invited to lunch by ex-Prime Minister Shigeru Yoshida at his residence in Oiso. During the meeting we learned that he was truly a man of good sense of humor. He taught us the importance of a sense of humor in diplomacy. When we were about to leave, Mr. Yoshida told us, "Don't forget 'Isshuku ippan no ongi' (A debt of gratitude for just one meal or one night lodging). I will visit to see you next time. Remember me then."

Regrettably, Mr. Yoshida passed away in October of the following year, leaving all of us unable to reciprocate his favor. I made up my mind to inherit Mr. Yoshida's sense of humor and expand an international network of my friends through a good sense of humor. I hope I can live up to Mr. Yoshida's expectation by doing likewise to my friends.

### **(2) Japan's peace-making efforts amid a civil war in Sri Lanka**

I was in Sri Lanka as the Japanese Ambassador from 2000 to 2003 when the country was in a civil war. I often visited the headquarters, located in a jungle, of the anti-government rebel group called the Tamil Tigers (LTTE) to negotiate with the leader. Thanks to Norway's mediation efforts, a series of peace talks were held and in March 2003 a peace negotiation was held for four days at Prince Hotel in Hakone under the sponsorship of the Japanese government. We could work out a reasonable progress.

Later, a general election was held in Sri Lanka in 2005, which resulted in the change of government. However, the new government led by President Rajapaksa decided to seek a military solution of the conflict, abandoning a negotiated political settlement. In May 2009, the government finally defeated LTTE by military offensive. It seems too early to conclude whether or not a true sustainable peace has been established in Sri Lanka. I will talk about my own experience as a diplomat who was directly engaged in the peace process.

### **(3)Bright and shady sides of Sweden as an advanced social welfare state**

People often praise Scandinavian countries, including Sweden, Norway, Finland and Denmark, as advanced states in social welfare. The consumption tax in Sweden is currently 25%, the highest rate in the world, and symbolizes the realities of “high tax burden for high welfare.”

However, we must be mindful of the historical evolution. The consumption tax was only 4.2% when it was introduced 50 years ago in 1960 as the initial value-added tax. This rate was gradually raised with citizens’ consensus until it came up to 25% in 1990. The rate has since been maintained at this rate. Frankly speaking, medical service system in Sweden is not good although this fact is not well known. The quality of the doctors in Sweden is undoubtedly good but the medical service system is rather poor. We should pay careful attention to both bright side and shady side of Sweden as an advanced social welfare state.

### **(4)A Scottish friend who taught me the value of humor under extreme hardships**

While I was working in Edinburgh in Scotland, I met a 72-year old former POW named James Russell. During WWII, he was forced to labor by the Japanese military for the construction of a Thailand-Burma railroad. Our contact started when I visited his home. He taught me that there were soldiers who did not forget a sense of humor even under a hellish wartime environment.

Separately I learned that among the Jewish wartime victims who were put into the Auschwitz concentration camp in Poland, there were those who possessed a sense of humor and practiced it even in the most extreme hardships of life in the concentration camp. A Jewish writer named Viktor Frankl, who made a miraculous return from such a camp, wrote in his book titled “Ein Psychologe erlebt das Konzentrationslager” (Japanese edition was titled “Night and Fog”) that humor could be a spiritual tool which enables us not to lose ourselves.

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

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### **(Continued from P. 3) MUA Salon: My Visits to 100 Foreign Countries**

Before I conclude my presentation, let me touch upon my experience in contract bridge. In a way I’m lucky to be placed high because there are not many contract bridge players in Japan. Sometimes we do have a bit of difficulty to secure enough number of partners.

All of us enjoyed sharing Mr. Morimura’s interesting experiences in worldwide travels, marathon and contract bridge. During the Q&A session, Mr. Morimura passed around a book titled “Africa,” which is a collection of animal photos he has taken.

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

## World Cooking Workshop 2012 Brazilian Home Dishes

Date: Sat. June 30, 2012

Place: Minato Gender Equality Center

We had the pleasure of having Ms. Amelia Nishimura, a second-generation Japanese Brazilian, as the instructor for this workshop. She is married with a Japanese businessman who works for an import/export company, and has lived in Japan for 18 years. She has a sociable personality with Brazilian generosity and speaks fluent Japanese.



At first, Ms. Nishimura gave a talk on the history of Brazilian cooking, focusing on chronological changes in food culture. The transition started with the food culture and cooking practices of the indigenous Brazilian Indio tribes, merged later by those of slaves taken from Africa as well as those of immigrants from Europe and Asia. Those heritages were blended and gave birth to a new Brazilian food and cooking culture. As Brazil is a geographically vast country, there are differences in food culture by region. Indeed the same food materials are called differently in each state.

The following dishes Ms. Nishimura taught us this time are typical items in Rio de Janeiro:

### **Salada de Cenoura** (Carrot Salad)

Slice a carrot with a slicer, wash the sliced carrot with pineapple juice, and you'll have a plain-taste salad seasoned with pineapple flavor and dressing of your choice. It's important to use the slicer so that the dressing will sink into the carrot.

### **Arroz Com Banana** (Banana Rice)

This is the main dish. You have to use Thai rice, not Japanese rice, because it should not be sticky. Average Brazilians eat red or black rice but not Japanese rice. On top of the steamed rice, you place meat sauce, banana, Parmesan cheese, and cover the surface with Mozzarella cheese. Put it in the oven to bake.

### **Pao de Queijo**

Put egg, milk, water and butter into tapioca flour and mix it up. Grind cheese over it and, after shaping it round, put it in the oven to bake. The cheese which Ms. Nishimura ordered from Aichi Prefecture tasted quite new to us. Perhaps thanks to the cheese flavor, the final product was highly appreciated by everyone.



### **Olho de Sogra** (Eyes of a mother-in-law)

Mix coconut powder, added by egg yellow, condensed milk and butter, and shape it round. Wrap it around a rum-seasoned prune and make the whole shape look like an eye. The taste of this item is popular across all ages and regardless of gender. You are expected to make it with your own hands.

(To be continued on P. 9)

## Tokyo Visit by a Mongolian University Students Delegation

- One-day “Discover Tokyo” Program -

The year 2012 marks the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the start of diplomacy between Japan and Mongolia. Ms. Yoshiko Nagato, an MUA Director who lives in Utsunomiya which has had a strong connection with Mongolia, invited a delegation of the University of the Humanities Mongolia to Japan on a 10-day itinerary (June 16 – 25) as a part of the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Inter-Cultural Community Life Association which she heads.

Professor Purevsuren, head of the delegation, visited Japan for the first time in 1993 as a trainee on a program sponsored by Japan’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs. She completed the training course held in Utsunomiya and returned home. She has been engaged in the education of the Japanese language to Mongolian youths for many years. Associate Professor Batsaikhan, assistant head of the delegation, completed a doctor’s degree course in the Department of International Relations at Utsunomiya University.

Mr. Zorigoo, a member of the delegation, is a graduate from the Faculty of Engineering at the same university. They were active members of the UNESCO study group at Utsunomiya University and speak fluent Japanese. The delegation included six university students (one male and five female), ranging from the first grader to fourth grader, who are all studying Japanese.

The delegation members enjoyed home-stays in Utsunomiya City, experienced the Japanese way of life and learned the Japanese culture. They also attended a Japanese-language class at Utsunomiya University and a Japan-Mongolia student dialog meeting on the subject of cross-cultural interaction in quest of global bondage as families. The delegation also visited Tohoku and talked with students of an elementary school which was damaged by the Great East Japan Earthquake.

The delegation members very much wished to visit Tokyo, even on a one-day tour as it’s the capital city. In response MUA decided to invite them on a program to promote cross-cultural understanding. Mr. Naota Takahashi, Mr. Tomoya Seki and Ms. Kasumi Maeda of the Youth Activities Committee organized a somewhat time-demanding yet very resourceful one-day Tokyo tour route as follows:

Start from Tokyo Station – Mita Senior High School – NHK (Japan Broadcasting Corporation) – National Museum of Emerging Science and Innovation – Tokyo Tower – Back to Tokyo Station

### Mita Senior High School

The Minato City-based senior high school, headed by Principal Ryoichi Oikawa, has been a designated UNESCO school and places a great importance on cross-cultural education. For example, the school holds a cross-cultural symposium and provides foreign-language classes. Ms. Yuka Fujimura was the school’s contact to accept the delegation. During their visit to the school, the delegation members observed with great interest in English and calligraphy classes (photo above).



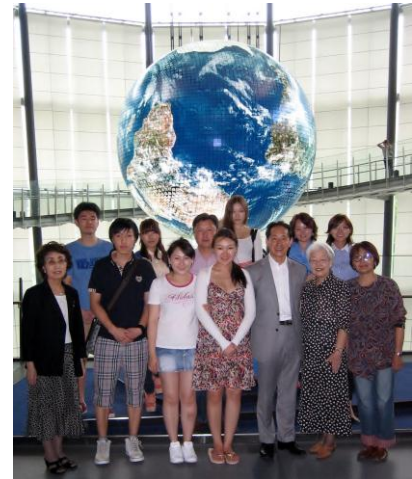
### NHK (Japan Broadcasting Corporation)

The delegation members taking lunch inside the NHK building, Mr. Yoshiyuki Aoki, Director of International Department in the broadcasting bureau, guided the visitors to

one of the news studios where “NHK World,” a round-the-clock international broadcasting program, is being aired. It was a very rare opportunity and all the Mongolian students were excited to see the actual scene of TV program production. The TV programs aired from this studio are watched in Mongolia and, in particular, the live Sumo broadcast has been especially popular among the Mongolian audience.

### **National Museum of Emerging Science and Innovation**

After their visit to NHK, the delegation members took an unmanned “Yurikamome” mono-rail train ride to the National Museum of Emerging Science and Innovation, located in Odaiba area, across the Tokyo Bay. Dr. Mamoru Mohri, Chief Executive Director, was generous enough to work out time out of his very busy schedule, to welcome the delegation. We became aware later that this special accommodation was made possible thanks to friendship between Dr. Mohri and Ms. Nagato.



Each of the Mongolian students did a self-introduction. Dr. Mohri asked a question to the students, “Have you heard of Jugdermed Gurragehaa, the first Mongolian astronaut?” When all students unanimously answered yes, Dr. Mohri looked very satisfied with a big smile. Dr. Mohri even joined the students when they took a commemorative group photo (shown above) before their departure. All the students expressed thanks, saying “This visit will remain as a life-time precious memory.”

### **Tokyo Tower**

The last place to visit on the day was Tokyo Tower. The students went up to the observatory floor and enjoyed a panoramic bird-eye view of Tokyo, the capital of Japan.

When I invited comments from the Mongolian students of their impressions of the one-day trip, they unanimously responded, “We’ve had a most enjoyable experience” or “I’d like to visit Tokyo again.” One student kindly invited me to visit Mongolia in the future.” I trust that the delegation’s visit to Tokyo further deepened our mutual understanding between Mongolia and Japan.

*(Written by N. Takahashi, the Youth Activities Committee, and translated by S. Tanahashi, VP, the PR, Bulletin & Internet Committee)*

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### **(Continued from P. 7) Brazilian Home Dishes**

Ms. Nishimura was kind enough to order almost all cooking materials from a supermarket which serves Brazilians who live in Aichi Prefecture. Among the participants in the workshop, there were people of different nationalities. For example, conversation in Portuguese was heard from time to time. We are very grateful for well-prepared Nishimura-san as well as for cooperation from all the participants.

*(Written by Y. Kanazawa, a member of the World Cooking Committee, and translated by S. Tanahashi, VP, the PR, Bulletin & Internet Committee)*

## **Visits to MUA by 30 students from Mita Senior High School which has been a UNESCO School**

A total of 30 members of the UNESCO Committee of Mita Senior High School in Minato City in two separate groups accompanied by schoolteachers Ms. Yuka Fujimura and Ms. Reiko Ihara visited the office of MUA on Tuesday June 12 and Thursday June 14. Ms. Mitsuko Takai, President of MUA, received them.



Ms. Takai started her explanation with the background of the birth of UNESCO. “UNESCO was founded in 1946 right after the WWII as a specialized agency of the United Nations based on the idea that the best way to avoid the occurrence of such a miserable war was for the people in the world to understand mutually, get rid of any prejudice and contribute together for the peace and welfare in the world, through education, science and culture.

At the time of war defeat, people in Japan were defeated in spirit, and, so, they were greatly moved by the concept laid out in the preamble of UNESCO Constitution that since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defenses of peace must be constructed. The UNESCO activities originated in Sendai for the first time in the world and it gradually expanded to other areas in Japan. This activity for peace in Japan was highly recognized and Japan was allowed to become a member of UNESCO 5 years later which marked the first step toward getting back to the world society.”

Then, her discussions moved on to her childhood when she had a harsh experience during the WWII. She concluded her discussions that she counts on young and hopeful students like them for mutually understanding and supporting for attaining the peace in the world.

They submitted to MUA the below shown comments later on.

- Miss Imamura, Chairperson of the Committee, a junior student  
Please let me express sincere appreciation for giving us a splendid presentation out of your busy schedule for us UNESCO Committee members of Mita Senior High School. That was a good opportunity for me as I really did not know what I should do. I would try my best to pass the main points of your presentation to as many friends as possible.  
What stood out in my memory was your experience in the WWII. As Japan is presently not at war with any countries, it extends various supports to children in those countries at war. I learned for the first time that there are people here in Japan who experienced hardships during the war time.  
Though I did not believe that the war Japan was involved in had anything to do with UNESCO, UNESCO was organized in Japan as Japan experienced the war. I really appreciate that I was given an opportunity to listen to the presentation of a great value to me.  
We plan to collect spoiled postcards in Mita High School this year. However, we were not ready for it as we have not prepared collecting boxes, posters, etc. While looking at those prepared by our senior students in the office, I felt that I have to quickly prepare them. We will do what we decided to do. We will be more than happy if we can be of any assistance for those who are in need.
- Miss Soyama, Vice-chairperson, a freshman  
I would like to thank you for your precious presentation at the occasion of our visit the other day. I have not understood UNESCO well as I am quite new to the UNESCO Committee. As the result of the visit to MUA, I was able to have a consciousness of being a member of the Committee. I heard the same comments from other freshmen.



I was also able to figure out what kind of activities UNESCO leads in the world, and what kinds of activities I am supposed to do as a member of the UNESCO Committee, rather than vaguely recollecting the world heritage or world peace when thinking of UNESCO.

I strongly felt that the members of the UNESCO Committee of Mita Senior High School are responsible for spreading the knowledge obtained here at MUA, as students of the one and

only UNESCO school among public senior high schools in the metropolitan area,.

UNESCO Committee of Mita Senior High School plans to carry out the activity to express the deepest respect and gratitude for the countries which extended support for recovering from the disaster of an earthquake this year.

I would be most grateful if MUA kindly extend support when our activity hits the wall.

Thank you very much.

- Miss Okazaki, secretary, a freshman

Thank you for your presentation out of your busy schedule for us members of the UNESCO Committee of Mita Senior High School. I really had a fulfilling time which was beyond my expectation.

What led me to join the UNESCO Committee was when I saw those who were raising money for UNESCO, I thought it was very nice to be of any help of other people. We raised money in Mita Senior High School as you might know. That increased my interest in UNESCO activities. Thus, it provided me with a good experience to have visited MUA. At the Committee, we made presentation each other of what we thought through the visit to MUA, many of them said that they should have given more questions about UNESCO.

After listening to the speech of the President of MUA, we all came to have more interest and questions about what were presented in the speech. I really look for another opportunity to visit MUA in the future. Through the school festival as well as the Committee activities, we will do our best in spreading out the information that brings attention to UNESCO from as many people as possible. Thank you for sparing time for us out of your busy schedule.

I had a good time talking with the members of the UNESCO Committee of Mita Senior High School.

*(Written by M. Takai, President of MUA, and translated by Y. Suda, the PR, Bulletin and Internet Committee)*

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### **(Continued from P. 1) Encounter with the Minato UNESCO Association**

The number of trainees on the Invitation Program of Young Foreign People by Ministry of Foreign Affairs reached 180 in 14 years. They came from 13 countries of North-east and Central Asia. Ulan Bator Iccla established by some Mongolian trainees cooperated with Iccla to carry out a 30 year anniversary event of Iccla, by which Mongolian mission visited Utsunomiya on June 16-25. MUA invited them to one-day Tokyo tour, which was a nice present for them. Youth group of Utsunomiya UNESCO Association and Utsunomiya University UNESCO Group provided a UNESCO Youth Forum in Utsunomiya 2012 on July 27. I have been enjoying and appreciating such precious experiences in such a local area.

*(Translated by T. Tomita, Secretary-General of MUA)*

## UNESCO Youth Forum in Minato 2012

-Exchange with Foreign Students from the Graduate School of Utsunomiya University-  
(Co-sponsored by the UNESCO Study Group of Utsunomiya University and  
the Youth Group of the Utsunomiya UNESCO Association)

Date: July 21, 2012

Place: Minato Gender Equality Center

The 2<sup>nd</sup> UNESCO Youth Forum in Minato 2012 was held, for the 1<sup>st</sup> time in two years, on Saturday, July 21<sup>st</sup>, with a hope that many young people participate in the Forum.

### For the Opening of the Forum

Activities by the young members at the Minato UNESO Association have long been in dormant state due to steep decrease in the number of young members. Under such circumstances, the wishes that young members be back in the UNESCO activities have become stronger.



Ms. Y. Nagato, a founding Director of MUA, currently lives in Utsunomiya City, and is the President of Utsunomiya UNESCO Association. As she taught the foreign students at Utsunomiya University, she takes good care of those students ever since. She has been running the UNESCO Youth Forum in Utsunomiya operated by UNESCO Study Group of Utsunomiya University, Youth Group of Utsunomiya UNESCO Association, targeting at junior high and senior high school students in Utsunomiya City, every year since 2006.

The Forum provides foreign students with opportunities to introduce their own countries, while it provides junior high and high school students with precious opportunities to meet foreign students and exchange words with them. Foreign students take a lot of time for the preparation of their presentation in Power Point.

There are many foreign students who go back home without visiting Tokyo even once, while Utsunomiya City is located within an hour ride by Shinkansen bullet train, as they are busy with part-time jobs and also the round trip bullet train fare costs much for them.

Thus, I requested Ms. Nagato to bring the Youth Forum to Minato City. Foreign students showed enthusiasm for the Forum, as they are provided with an opportunity to introduce their home country in the capital city Tokyo and to experience the Shinkansen bullet train, which resulted in the opening of the Forum in Minato City.

Nine foreign students accompanied by K. Yoshida, Professor of International Studies Department, and Ms. Nagato left Utsunomiya early on the morning of July 21<sup>st</sup>, and arrived at Minato Gender Equality Center located closely to JR Tamachi station at 10:00am. Then, they helped preparations for the opening and had a dry run until 12:30pm when the doors opened.

As Ramadan started on the very day, Mohamed, a Muslim from Morocco, Barry Aadema Abdelahi from Islamic Republic of Mauritania, and Ms. N from Middle East were in prayer during the lunch time, and they never had a bite. We heard that while fasting in Ramadan Muslims refrain from eating and drinking from dawn until sunset.

### **The Forum was kicked off at 1:00pm**

Naota Takahashi and Tomoya Seki, both are the members of MUA, played the role of MC.

The program consisted of three parts:

1. Introduction of their home countries by the foreign students
2. Panel discussions by foreign students
3. Let's sing all together



### **Part 1: Introduction of their home countries by the foreign students**

Each and every student introduced their home with humor in Power Point, showing interesting videos of their home as well.

Lkhmsuren and Undaral, both study at Faculty of International Studies, gave a presentation on “Lifestyle and traditional culture in urban and grassland Mongolia”. They reported that people living in the urban area like Ulan Bator seldom visit grassland. Undaral, a good singer, sang one of the most popular song “Happy Birthday, Mom!”

Barry Adema Abdelahi, from Islamic Republic of Mauritania, who studies at Faculty of Agriculture, presented “Tradition and culture of nomad”. Barry gave the presentation in English as it is only one and a half year after his arrival in Japan. Professor Yoshida kindly translated. Audience listened attentively to the lifestyle both in the city as well as the grassland as it seldom appear on the TV program here in Japan. Audience also learned that people of the same ethnic background live across the same degrees of latitude beyond the national borders.

Liuchang and Liuyuan, presented the “Daily lives of Chinese living in the Inner Mongolia of China”. They are both Han Chinese from the Inner Mongolia and each studies in the master’s course of Faculty of Education as well as International Studies. However, as they live in the east end and west end respectively of Inner Mongolia which is 3 times bigger than Japan, it takes as long as 20 hours by train to visit each other. We learned that even in the Inner Mongolia, ethnic Mongolian occupy only 17% of the population, and the remaining 79% is occupied by Han Chinese.

Fanhuiyuan presented the “Employment situation surrounding university graduates in China”. She studies in the master’s course of Faculty of Education. Her generation was given birth and raised in a loving home with a shower of deep affection from their parents and grandparents under the one-child policy, and, therefore, they are all in all rather clinging. As the number of university abruptly increases, only 60% of university graduates get jobs of their choice. She also touched on the common situation surrounding young people both in China and Japan, which was very interesting.

Mohamed presented “The tradition and culture of Kingdom of Morocco and nomad of Morocco”. Mohamed studies architecture in the master’s course of Faculty of Engineering. Though he understands 6 different languages, he spoke in English as has not stayed in Japan long enough and is not good enough in giving complicated explanation in Japanese. Professor Yoshida helped him in Japanese. He picked up Japan as the overseas study destination as he was greatly attracted by the famous architect Tadao Ando.

Subagojoeva Asel introduced and played the Komuz, the traditional stringed instrument of Kirghiz, nomadic people in Central Asia. She studies at the graduate school of Faculty of International Studies. The Komuz is quite similar to the Japanese Shamisen and is the instrument every kid learns how to play with songs. You can see it in every house in Kirghiz. It creates somewhat gloomy but beautiful sound. This instrument might have been imported to Japan after a long journey through areas along the Silk Road. Asanov Nurbol who attends the nursery school which is attached to the university joined the Forum with his mother. He wore traditional hat and ethnic costume.

## Part 2: Panel discussions by foreign students

Thanks to the MC by N. Takahashi in a non-serious way, all the foreign students exchanged their views very actively.



The following are examples of topics discussed:

- The reason why Japan was selected as the overseas study destination
- The image of Japan before the arrival in Japan
- What was difficult in Japan
- What were the most surprising in the common practices of Japanese
- Where and how they expect to live their lives in the future

Audience gave them various questions. The floor was bumped up for the humorous exchanges among foreign students.

## Part 3: Let's sing all together

Mr. Shimizu, Director of MUA, first played his accordion and sang songs. Then, all the people there sang Japanese songs to the accompaniment of Mr. Shimizu's accordion.



We learned that the Japanese song "The one and only flower in the world" is sang in Mongolia with the purpose to learn Japanese.

The Forum adjourned in a conciliatory mood.

### Subagojoeva Asel kindly offered a word of thanks as a closing remark as follows:

Once I departed from my home country, I go through such various experiences as touching different culture, speaking in different language, making new friends and families, feeling homesick, etc. It goes without saying that what I learned in Japan may become what I continue to study throughout my life. However, the most enjoyable opportunity during my stay in Japan is when I introduce my home country to my friends in Japan. I believe that everyone introduced his country with pride. As we do not have much opportunity to exchange people other than friends at the university, I joined the Forum this year again so that I can introduce my country Kirghiz to as many people as possible. This is my second time I participated in the Forum sponsored by MUA. I was very grateful for being invited to Tokyo by Shinkansen bullet train. On behalf of all the foreign students participated in this Forum, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to all the members of MUA.

### I would like to list hereunder the comments received from the participants at a later date.

- (1) Barry Adema Abdellahi, from Islamic Republic of Mauritania, who studies at Faculty of Agriculture

The UNESCO Youth Forum in Tokyo on 21 July and in Utsunomiya on 27 July, 2012 were great chance for me to meet more international students and Japanese of different ages. This exchange gives me a good impression from these two events. Unfortunately, in Tokyo the presence was feeble but it was interesting.

In Utsunomiya the presence and organization were much better. The participation of secondary school students gave the event a different taste. I recommend such implication of students at that level because it has good impact in building their personalities and could shape their future orientations. Finally, I thank very much Mme NAGATO for her kindness. I thank also all the Utsunomiya UNESCO staff and I hope to have more chance to participate in such kind of events.

(2) Risa Hatanaka, a junior student of Futaba Gakuen High School

It was my first experience to have participated in this international exchange event, and was a very good experience. Especially, as I stated in the Forum, it was my great pleasure to have had an exchange with people from other countries whom I seldom have an opportunity to do so. I felt the strong will of foreign students that they intend to do their best in Japan, which led me to think that I should do my very best as a member of the generation who eventually have to lead the society. I really enjoyed the exchange of the honest opinions. I learned the importance of the exchange with other cultures through this Forum, and I would like to be a woman who can positively exchange with other world like the foreign students I met this time.



(3) Mana Sato, a junior student of Seishin Joshi Gakuin High School

I had an opportunity to participate in the UNESCO Youth Forum in Minato 2012, and to exchange with foreign students. Foreign students gave presentations on their home countries in fluent Japanese using Power Point. I was able to learn a lot about the language, traditional culture, rich natural environment, and so forth of countries which I only knew by name.

I remember a questions presented by one of the foreign students that stand out in my memory; i.e. is it really true that only a few Japanese students intend to study abroad? Though I heard about before, I many students around me are interested in knowing more about foreign countries. I was disappointed a little by that Japan might be seen as a country which is not very positive about the international exchange. It is certainly true, though, that many Japanese have difficulty in communication in English.

I actually felt the benefit of communication in a common language in understanding with people of different nationality.

Knowing the other countries seems to be the first step toward the coexistence of different cultures as well as the international exchange. My experience here became the precious memories of mine. It is really a good experience to listen to the people from other countries whom I do not have many opportunities to exchange with.

I am grateful for the opportunity to think about the real international exchange through the Forum. I am determined to devote ceaseless effort to refine my ability for the international exchange.

**Wrap-up Comment by M. Takai, the President of MUA;**

I was very anxious about the slow registration for participation until very close to the opening of the Forum. However, I was at last very glad to hear such encouraging comments as “it was a very enjoyable gathering,” “it provided me with an opportunity to think various issues,” and “it was a very good gathering.” I am grateful from the bottom of my heart for the participants from Utsunomiya.

I learned that there are not so many opportunities to exchange among foreign students, Japanese junior high or university students even in Minato City, Tokyo. I would be more than happy if I could continue presenting this type of gathering in the future.

*(Written by M. Takai, MUA President in charge of the Youth Activities Committee, and translated by Y.Suda, the PR, Bulletin & Internet Committee)*

### **Director-General highlights the role of education, culture and science in reducing poverty and promoting sustainable development in her meeting with the President of the World Bank** (21.12.2012 – ODG)



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**On 20 December, the Director-General of UNESCO, Irina Bokova, met with the President of the World Bank, Jim Yong Kim, to discuss UNESCO's cooperation with the World Bank. At the meeting, the Director-General highlighted UNESCO's unique expertise in the field of education, recalling that UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon, appointed her as Executive Secretary for the Steering Committee of Education. First, his new global initiative.**

His Initiative aims to spur a global movement to put quality, relevant and transformative education at the top of the social, political and development agenda. It is designed to accelerate the achievement of the Education for All and Millennium Development Goals, and to inform the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda. Quoting UNESCO's 2012 EFA Global Monitoring Report, the Director-General underlined that 200 million young people still lack basic numeracy and literacy skills.

Mr Kim noted that sustainable economic growth is embedded in the quality of our education systems. He informed the Director-General that he would like to engage in discussions with UNESCO and other stakeholders on learning strategies in higher education and that more innovative approaches were needed in this area. He also highlighted the importance of organizing higher education systems for economic growth. They both agreed on the importance of higher education and the necessity for more investment in this area.

The Director-General also discussed the important role of culture and development in creating jobs and promoting social inclusion, peace and reconciliation. In 2011, UNESCO and the World Bank signed a Memorandum of Understanding to develop joint activities in this area. She further emphasized the importance of promoting culture as an enabler for development in the Post 2015 UN Development Agenda, noting, for instance, that cultural industries make up 8% of Brazil's GDP. To showcase the real, socio-economic impact of culture, UNESCO will be organizing a Conference in Hangzhou in May 2013 on Culture and Development.

The Director-General went on to highlight the importance of science for sustainability and underlined the need to strengthen the science-policy interface. The UN Secretary-General has entrusted UNESCO with the establishment of a Scientific Advisory Council, in consultation with the wider UN system. The objective of this Board will be to advise the UN Secretary General on science-related issues, and enable him to provide advice to UN Member States in these areas.

It was agreed that UNESCO and the World Bank would work together on the Education First initiative, on strengthening the quality of education, and on the Post 2015 UN Development Agenda.

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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