

No. 133: December 20, 2013

## Words to Remember

Hiroshi Nagano, Vice President, Minato UNESCO Association

When I am asked to identify a favorite proverb, I find it difficult to answer because I am not familiar with very many sayings of that kind. However, I am fond of quotations from prominent people. Here is an example which struck me: *“Anyone who closes his eyes to the past is blind to the present.”* In the original German, it is as follows: *“Wer vor der Vergangenheit die Augen verschliesst, der wird am Ende blind für die Gegenwart.”*

This phrase appears in the speech of the then West German president Dr. Richard von Weizsäcker at the German Parliament, on the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of the end of the war, on 8 May 1985. This speech was delivered while I was serving in the Japanese Embassy in West Germany.



To begin with, questions had been raised about the appropriateness of having a commemoration at that particular time, rather than waiting until a full half-century had elapsed since the end of the war. In replying to these questions, Dr. von Weizsäcker cited a story in the Old Testament, as follows:

*“The Israelites were to remain in the desert for forty years before a new stage in their history began with their arrival in the promised land. Forty years were required for a complete transfer of responsibility from the generation of the fathers. Elsewhere, too (in the Book of Judges), it is described how often the memory of deliverance and rescue lasted only for forty years. When that memory faded, tranquility was at an end.”*

The president, who had served as a member of the Synod and the Council of the Evangelical Church in Germany, also stated in his speech that *“Remembrance is experience of the work of God in history and it is the source of faith in redemption, and whoever forgets this experience loses his faith.”* He then added that *“All of us, whether guilty or not, whether old or young, must accept the past, we are all affected by its consequences and liable for it, and whoever refuses to remember the inhumanity is prone to new risks of infection.”*

He finally concluded his speech, saying that *“Our young people are not responsible for what happened over forty years ago. But they are responsible for the historical consequences. We in the older generation owe to young people not the fulfilment of dreams but honesty. We must help younger people to understand why it is vital to keep memories alive.”*

It is at this point that I recognize the link between the words of President von Weizsäcker and the famous phrase in the preamble of the UNESCO Charter *“Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed.”* And this is probably one of the critical reasons why I am interested in participating in UNESCO activities.

## Asia is dashing at a galloping speed

- Views on the current status of Asian contemporary arts undergoing changes -

Date & Time: 18:30 – 20:30 on July 2, 2013

Place: Minato Azabu Civic Center Hall

We had the pleasure of having Mr. Fumio Nanjo, Director of the Mori Museum of Arts as the lecturer for this workshop. He is a man of extensive viewpoints combined with professional expertise on arts. Drawing on many illuminating examples, he enlightened us on the latest dynamic movements under way in contemporary arts of Asia and Middle East regions, with which not many of us have been familiar. He also touched upon the inflationary trend in the arts market in China, with his interpretation of the background for the phenomena. Mr. Nanjo also expressed his insightful foresight into the relationship between economy and arts as well as the future interaction between Japan and Asia.



### Profile of Mr. Fumio Nanjo:

Born in 1949. Graduated from Keio University (Faculty of Economics initially followed by Faculty of Literature with a major in aesthetic and art history studies in the philosophy section). Worked for Japan Foundation from 1978 to 1986. Deputy Director of the Mori Museum of Arts in 2003; Director of same museum in 2006; Assumed the position of art director or evaluation committee member at numerous international art exhibitions; Supervised the plan to establish the Towada City Museum of Modern Arts and provided directions for many public art programs; Worked as a member of different wise men committees entrusted by the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Agency for Cultural Affairs, etc.; Member of the International Council of Art Museums and the International Federation of Artists; Instructor at Keio University and other institutions; Authored books including “Shissosuru Asia – Gendai art no imawo miru” (2010, Bijutsu-nenkan-sha) and “Art wo ikiru” (2012, Kadokawa Shoten).

Mr. Matsumoto, MUA Vice President, described Mr. Nanjo as a “flying curator” based on his personal perception of the lecturer. According to Mr. Matsumoto, Mr. Nanjo has developed and maintains an extensive network with over 300 leading figures in different fields. Mr. Nanjo sets a successful model for contemporary Japanese, to lead a daily life of aesthetic pleasure by making a casual access to various arts. The following is a summary of Mr. Nanjo’s most illuminating audio-visual presentation:

### From Modern to Postmodern

Modernism is a Judeo-Christian perception of the world which originated in Europe. It was sustained by belief in several universal values. One example is the chronological concept that history makes progress. In the world of arts, the same concept has been accepted and this gave birth to the word “Avant garde” in arts. The universal value in the world of arts, which can be accepted anywhere, was eventually boiled down to the issue of color and shape. As long as arts are the function of color and shape, they will be understandable for anyone in any country so that everybody can join discussions. It seems to represent the universal nature inherent in arts.

### Postmodernism

After the end of WWII, countries in Asia, Africa and South America started to emerge, after getting out of the colonized status. It ushered in an age of cultural multi-polarism where different cultures received equally important respect in their own right. During the pre-war years, European cultures, which people thought were centered in London and Paris, were regarded as the world’s center. In the new age, regional cultures started to assert their own presence with respective characteristics and importance. Philosophers such as Gilles Deleuze and Jacques Derrida called the new world

development “rhizome” or root plant because they felt that the entire globe seemed to be covered by something like a hierarchy-free network.

In this analogy, potatoes, which grow at certain locations of the root, represented large cities. In the past, large cities in Europe and the U. S., such as London and New York, were regarded as important centers. Today cities like Mumbai, Shanghai and Tokyo are regarded as equally important centers. Thus people no longer maintain a Euro-America-centric viewpoint. Simply put, large cities in the world with their own history, culture and society, are linked up today like a huge mesh, capitalizing on the international information and transportation.

### **Change in the World Structure**

Francis Y. Fukuyama expressed in his book “The End of History” a viewpoint that the ideological confrontation between capitalism and communism came to an end, due to the following historical incidents – the fall of the Berlin Wall (1989), the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the emergence of Asian countries’ presence. He concluded that history would end because history had always moved forward driven by conflicts of different world viewpoints. In his analysis, the relative importance of nation states as societal units had declined and a new age has emerged, characterized by competition among cities.

Today international events including biennales, which originated in 1895, and music festivals are used as a kind of sales tools by which cities try to enhance their global recognition through cultural power. This triggered competition in international art exhibitions. In an in-depth analysis of culture, we notice that it breaks up into smaller units, which respectively assert themselves. Those units have evolved into smaller frameworks than nation states. In contrast, economy has pursued a larger framework than nation states and grown into a huge being such as EU.

Biennales are international art exhibitions which take place every two years as cultural events with different cities as their platforms. The number of biennale has grown during the years since 1990 and tops 300 today. They include those which originated in Asia. The emergence of economic powers in Asia has fostered the development of contemporary art and provided encouragement of its further expansion.

### **Slide Presentation of Specific Examples**

Singapore – 1:

Tsai Chia-Wei, a Taiwanese female artist, created an art piece, writing Chinese characters on a lotus leaf, at a Buddhist temple. This type of art piece won’t be comprehensible for those who cannot read Chinese characters. However this is an age where the creator would suggest to such viewers, “If you cannot read Chinese characters, why don’t you study them?”



\*The photo shows Tsai Chia-Wei writing Chinese characters on a lotus leaf.

Singapore - 2:

Colonial-style architectures in Singapore represent hybrid culture, combining Singaporean and European styles. In Japan we can also see many examples of similar hybridization between modernism-based culture and inherent local culture.

Taiwan:

I noticed hybridization of Japanese and Western elements in the modern paintings which were exhibited in the National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts. I guess it’s because many of the Taiwanese artists learned from the Japanese style. Indeed a similar hybridization existed in Japan.

China -1:

The most successful artists in China are relatively young. Yet the price of their art works ranges

from 100 to 500 million yen a piece. One characteristic is their large scale. For example I once saw a creation which included a real commuter train installed on the gallery site. Inside the trains, we could see on each window a stream of monochrome images of historical news in China.



\*The left photo shows the entrance to the Beijing 798 Art Zone in Beijing. The gallery houses were formerly manufacturing plants.

#### China -2:

Freedom of speech is still controlled in China today. A contemporary Chinese artist named Ai Wei-Wei was placed under detention because he had frequently criticized the government on his blog. In 2009 he staged a solo exhibition in the Mori Museum of Arts. Although he is an extremely popular artist today, he has been home-prisoned and cannot leave his country.

#### China -3:

The Three Shadows Photography Art Centre is owned and operated by a young photographer, Rong Rong, and his Japanese wife.

#### China -4:

A Belgian collector established an art museum in Beijing. Among the attendees on the opening day were many directors from art museums in Europe and the U. S. We can hardly expect this to happen in Japan.

#### China -5:

In Shanghai a modern artist named Zhang Huan creates his works on a large scale. His personal studios stretch over about eight rows of manufacturing plants where a brook flows.

\*The right photo shows Zhang Huan's extensive studio along a brook.



#### China -6:

Major art piece auctions in China have relocated to Hong Kong, due to tax and other reasons. The number of art fairs held in Hong Kong is outstanding among such activities in Asia. Hundreds of galleries offer their art pieces and many of them are sold immediately. Thousands of people, including collectors and ordinary viewers, visit art fairs from around the world. Galleries and artists concentrate their promotional marketing efforts to impress the audience.

#### China -7:

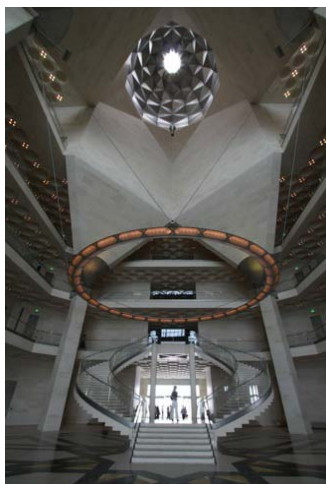
The NY-based Asia Society once held a fundraising auction party in Hong Kong. The fee to attend the gala dinner was 1.5million yen per table. Galleries purchased seat tickets to occupy single tables and entertained their regular clients on an exclusive invitation basis. I wonder if the same format could succeed in Japan. During the dinner hours, the proceeding of the auction was visually presented on the room walls. Bidding prices rose at each call out and everyone at the dinner tables could see who was bidding how much to purchase what they wanted. This arrangement was effective to heighten the festive atmosphere and the whole environment itself was a kind of performing art.

#### Indonesia -1:

With a population of 300 million and the average age of the populace at 29, Indonesia has huge

potential for market growth. The Indonesian society is ethnically diverse, with the presence of indigenous Islam, Chinese and other races who believe in Buddhism, Hindu and other religions.

Indonesia -2:



There is a so-called fab-labo in Yogyakarta which was established to familiarize digital art to ordinary people. From early morning each day, about 30 artists start to work on the creation of new art, utilizing the latest technology and tools such as 3-D printers. Public art museums in Indonesia do not seem to offer much service.

\*The left photo shows the inside of Dr. Oei's private art museum which is located in the suburb of Yogyakarta. It exhibits about 1,000 pieces of contemporary art which Dr. Oei has personally collected.

India:

An artist in Mumbai created a paper miniature of the local slum streets. It seems ironical that this art work is exhibited inside Grand Hyatt, a top-class hotel in Mumbai.

Middle & Near East

In 1983 Hassan Sharif returned home from London, introduced contemporary arts, and gave a far-reaching influence. Many artists were originally designers, including not a few female artists. In Abu Dhabi, four magnificent art museums are being built which were designed by internationally renowned architects. New art museums have been also built in Qatar and Bahrain.

\*The right photo shows the lobby of a museum of Islamic art, built in Doha, Qatar, which was designed by I. M. Pei.



Egypt:

During a biennale held in Cairo, the whole concept of kitchen cooking and providing dishes to poor people was produced into a performing art and was integrated with the audience.

### Challenges to the Contemporary Asian Arts

I'd like to list up the following issues as major challenges to be addressed:

- Capitalism: Can it be an appropriate system?
- Urbanization: About 60% of the world population is expected to live in large cities.
- Increasing population: Growth in population will give rise to various problems.
- Environmental changes : Such changes will cause expanding slums in large cities while also causing energy problems.
- Cultural issues: Aesthetics will be a deciding factor to shape our future life style.

Although Japan has been a leading country in terms of contemporary arts, its market is quite fragile as it has been supported by collectors in neighbor countries, including Australia, Indonesia and Taiwan. More museums of arts will be built in Asia. I'd like to suggest that Japan provides support to such projects. Why don't we commit ourselves to an ideal for Japan to grow with Asia, based on its own concept of "LOVE?"

### What can we do now?

In commemoration of the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its foundation this year, the Mori Museum of Arts is holding an exhibition focusing on "LOVE." Today the world is experiencing many conflicts, disasters, economic challenges, etc. It must be a meaningful response to advocate "LOVE" because love has much to do with the concept of collaboration or sharing. It will become a message to motivate people to join hands in creating the future. (To be continued on P. 10)

# Welcome, Mita High School UNESCO Committee Members

Dates: June 18<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>, 2013

Place: MUA Secretariat Office

Following the previous year, about 30 UNESCO Committee members of Tokyo Metropolitan Mita High School, 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> graders paid a visit to our office in separate two groups with leading English teachers, Ms. Yuka Fujimura and Ms. Hisako Nagamine.

I explained for the first half hour about how UNESCO was born, and the fundamental spirit and the activities of UNESCO, and for the latter 30 minutes, I and the students discussed mutually interested issues.

Later, the students conveyed their impressions to me. Every letter was full of youthful splendid sensitivity and reason.

Having read them, I realized young power is dependable, and the future is full of hope.

I want to share with you their impressions disclosure of which was granted by the young writers:

## 1. Ms. Noel Yamamoto, President of the Committee, 11<sup>th</sup> grader

Thank you for your precious talk.

This is the first opportunity to be UNESCO Committee member, and I became a member of the committee for the first time this year, and was elected the Chair. Because everything was new to me, I couldn't tell anything about what our UNESCO Committee must do. But, in 3 months after my assumption of the Chair, I felt I was accustomed to what Chair should do little by little partly due to supports by more experienced members.



Visiting MUA Office this time was a good opportunity for me to know what UNESCO is like. Furthermore, we could discuss what we should do or what we want to do during our visit to MUA. The interim conclusions were that we can make fund-raising activities and let other students know UNESCO Committee and UNESCO activities more. If you have good idea for those, please give us advice. We'll do our best as UNESCO Committee members.

## 2. Ms. Aya Kato, Vice President of the Committee, 10<sup>th</sup> grader

"The cycle of the poverty can't be cut"—this expression made us consider many things. The cycle of poverty begins by being unable to receive proper education, and then those people cannot get stable job with illiterate condition. Finally they can make enough money to send their children to schools. I was very much surprised at the number of 760 million illiterate adults in the world. It is 8 times of the population in Japan.

It is necessary to prepare such an environment as every person can be educated to terminate the cycle of the poverty.

Even though I have been a member of the UNESCO Committee, I didn't know the fundamental spirit of UNESCO.

Thank you very much for your precious talk which was easy to understand. From now on, I want to work for UNESCO as a committee member, and at the same time, I'd like to participate in various kinds of UNESCO activities from the bottom of my heart.



### **3. Ms. Misaki Kadowaki, Treasurer, 11<sup>th</sup> Grader**

Thank you very much for your valuable talk to us, Mita High School, UNESCO members. The most impressive was how to grasp the concept of peace. Until yesterday, my Peace is the image of the world situation of no war and no conflict. But, today I could grasp a new concept that Peace is the world in which all the peoples can live equally recognizing each other way of living. It is hard to make all the people live in the peace, but, in this meeting, I could recognize that it would lead to peace in the future if we could realize that not quite a few people suffer from shortage of dignity and human rights. As a member of the UNESCO Committee, I'd like to share with other students how to grasp peace, which I learned. Thank you very much again for your splendid talk.

### **4. Ms. Tomoko Shioda, Treasurer, 11<sup>th</sup> grader**

Thank you very much for your precious talk for us, Mita High School UNESCO Committee members, the other day.



It was my second visit, and it was a very good opportunity to make me consider many things like the first one. What impressed me most was how to grasp 'Peace'. 'Peace' is likely to be considered as a situation without any war, but there is another situation where human dignity or human rights are oppressed by for example, poverty, suppression to human rights, or environmental pollution. We learned from you that it is important to "construct the defenses of peace in the minds of men."

Though our activity of the Committee is small, but, we will do our best to work for many people. Thank you very much for giving us your precious time.

### **Ms. Mitsuko Takai, President of Minato UNESCO Association**

Separated from his children aged 6, 3, and 1, my father was drafted in 1943 and was sent to Manchuria. He died while he was detained in Siberia by USSR after the defeat of the Second World War. My homeland, Wakayama City became a burnt-out area by the fire bombs from B 29 in July, 1945.

There are uncountable numbers of people and families who became war victims in the world. No more war, no more madness. I hope young people make efforts to understand each other beyond the border of the nations to actualize the society where the peace comes true. I appreciate the chance of meeting with you all.

*(Written by M. Takai, MUA president, and translated by T. Nagakura, the PR, Bulletin & Internet Committee)*

## World Cooking Workshop Home cooking of Bhutan

Date and Time: Saturday, July 20, 2013, 12:00~15:30

Place: Minato City Gender Free Promotion Center

For this workshop, we had the pleasure of having Dr. Leki Choden, a graduate student at Yokohama National University, as the instructor, along with Ms. Chieko Watanabe, Secretary General for Japan Bhutan Friendship Association, as her assistant. Ms. Choden, a PhD in engineering, has been in Japan since April 2011 on a scholarship of Japanese Government. She brought her 5 year old daughter, Igin, on the spot. She has both features of softness as a mother and such braveness as sends herself to Japan in the chaotic period just after the 3/11 earthquake. Ms. Watanabe contributed a lot to the success of the event by helping us in preparation, assistance and interpretation. She showed love towards Bhutan on and off.



In Bhutan, the ninety percent of the people engages in agriculture. Their staple food is rice. Red peppers are the most important vegetable and are grown among mountains. There are many kinds of red peppers which are different in color, size, shape and hot level. In the country, the red peppers are a 'vegetable' and people don't use any other seasoning than peppers except salt. Salt is an import item since it is not produced in Bhutan. People chop vegetables without using chopping board like how we cut bean curd in Japan. We tasted with guest every dish we cooked on the day, but, we heard the hot level in the country is 10 times stronger than what we cooked in the workshop. Here is the menu.

\* Pagsha Pa (Stewed pork and radish)

Ms. Choden said pork in Bhutan is very delicious.

We started to boil the pork in the hot water with salt, and then, put the vegetable in the pot until the pot becomes almost dry.

\* Nosha Pa (Stewed beef and vegetables)

It was my first experience to tear kidney beans lengthwise for dishes. The recipe and ingredients are similar to the above Pagsha Pa.

\* Kkewa Datshi (Stewed potatoes and cheese)

Adding cheese gave a different flavor and taste to the stew from the above two, and we heard this dish is popular among children.

\* Hogey (Bhutan style salad)

A salad with flavorful Japanese pepper, cheese, and coriander. Simple and tasty. It is the way of Bhutan to serve all of them in one plate with rice, and to eat them by hand.



Listening to Bhutan music, we enjoyed every dish. Igin sang several songs in the official language of Bhutan, Zonga, in English and in Japanese. A young couple who attended this event volunteered to put on folk costume the instructor brought. In Bhutan, they say everyone can wear it by themselves, but it was so hard for the couple to wear it that they were helped by the instructors. We had a splendid time and felt Bhutan is very close to us.

*(Written by Y. Kanazawa, the World Cooking Committee, and translated by T. Nagakura, the PR, Bulletin & Internet Committee)*

The 17<sup>th</sup> MUA Salon  
**“Korean and Japanese –significant differences in various aspects”**

Date & Time: 18:30 – 20:30 on July 19, 2013

Place: MUA Secretariat Office

Speaker: Mr. Masaaki Shiose (MUA member)

MUA Salon, being different from the Cross-cultural Awareness Workshops which is supported by the subsidy from Minato City, is the educational meeting over light supper of MUA members who do not meet quite often. We had 18 attendees this time sitting shoulder-to-shoulder around the table.

There is not a single day recently when the shaky relationship between Korea and Japan is not taken up in such media as TV or newspaper. Korean TV programs are broadcasted everyday that are quite popular here in Japan and Korean foods are well received as well. However, Koreans and Japanese do not deal very closely nor do they understand each other on their daily lives or mindsets.



Thus, we tried to have an opportunity to better understand Korea as a country as well as Korean as human being at MUA salon. The speaker was Mr. Shiose who joined MUA two years ago.

Mr. Shiose was transferred to the Korean subsidiary of a major Japanese corporation in 2003 and stayed there until 2009. During his stay in Korea, he worked together with Korean colleagues and dealt with Korean people day to day. He presented what he saw and heard as well as what he felt on the daily lives of Koreans.

Please see below the list of items that the writer felt most impressive:

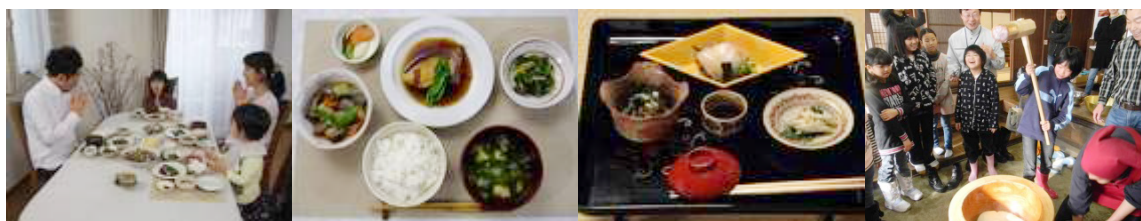
- National land is almost equal to Kyushu; population is 50 million; GDP per capita is approximately JPY 2 million.
- Census registration is advanced; their family trees can trace back to 500 years; every Korean is enrolled in family register system.
- There are only 287 family names; among which 3 major names like Kim, Lee, Park, etc. occupy 50% of them; you need to call people either by full name, first name or his/her social title to identify them.
- Funeral takes precedence among others; graves are built not in temples but in hills; place for digging graves is running short recently.
- The computerized personal data system is in place; individual record can be traced easily.
- Credit cards are widespread; cards are preferred even for tiny payment.
- Teachers are positioned very high in the society; textbooks are all government-designated; thus, there is only one type of textbook per subject which can be bought at a book store.
- National history is thoroughly taught at school; on the contrary, Japanese are quite ignorant about their own history; the gap between two countries in this light is quite large.
- Students are taught at school that those listed later are either stolen or trampled under colonial domination by Japan; 1. Sovereignty, 2. Royal dynasty, 3. Human life, 4. National language, 5. Family name, 6. Land and 7. Resources.
- Voter turnout exceeds 60% at election; vote is carried on weekdays.
- Korean spirits could be represented by the following four key words, which was not quite easy to understand for us Japanese:
  1. Unequal society;”Yangban “– academic and military bureaucrats(academic is always superior to military)
  2. Centralization of power; undiversified – similarity prevails
  3. Self animosity not resentment or spite against others
  4. Unity through blood tie (“Hongan” – birthplace of a clan)

(To be continued on P. 10)

## UNESCO Media Services Photos: Intangible Photo Gallery 2013 - Japan

Washoku, traditional dietary cultures of the Japanese, notably for the celebration of New Year (Japan)

Washoku is a comprehensive set of skills, knowledge and traditions relating to the preparation and consumption of food, and respect for natural resources. Typically seen during Japanese New Year celebrations, it takes the form of special meals and beautifully decorated dishes using fresh ingredients, each of which has a symbolic meaning. These are shared by family members or collectively among communities. The basic knowledge and skills related to Washoku are passed down in the home at shared mealtimes. (Excerpted photos only)



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**(Continued from P.5) Asia dashing at a galloping speed**

Many young attendees, who are interested in contemporary arts, listened attentively to Mr. Nanjo's presentation. We were impressed with Mr. Nanjo's enthusiasm toward contemporary arts as well as the extensive international network he has maintained with artists in different countries. I fully endorse his view that education is the first step to motivate young people to take interest in arts. I hope that the market for young artists in Japan will see further growth in the future.

*(Written by K. Okumura, Standing Director, the International Science & Culture Committee, and translated by S. Tanahashi, VP, the PR, Bulletin & Internet Committee)*

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**(Continued from P.9) MUA Salon**

Writer's impression:

I used to feel that two countries are located far apart while they actually are neighboring countries. Under the current shaky situation surrounding two countries, I doubted that the theme could be too heavy. Thanks to the way Mr. Shiose spoke, however, I was so taken into his speech and eventually enjoyed a sense of affinity toward Korea and Koreans. I also strongly felt that people of two countries need to exert increased efforts to understand each other. I wish there was much more time allocated for Q & A session. I would like to express my sincere appreciation for many people participated in the salon this time. Do not miss next one!

*(Written by S. Naruse, Chairperson of the Membership Committee, and translated by Y. Suda, the PR, Bulletin & Internet Committee)*

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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:

Tel: 03-3434-2300, Tel & Fax: 03-3434-2233, E-mail: [info@minatounesco.jp](mailto:info@minatounesco.jp)

URL: <http://minato-unesco.jp/>