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Terrorism as perceived in Japan and the U. S.

Terrorism-triggered wars and world peace

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The most popular large Japanese dictionary is entitled “koujien,” literally meaning “widely collected vocabulary.” In fact it does include katakana rendered foreign words like “tero,” a short for the English “terrorism.” But the word “tero” used to be not used like a household word or even in mass media to report an exactly terrorist violence that had taken place that day.

This does not indicate that in prewar Japan there had not been any incidents of violence that would have been reported as terrorist acts in the English speaking countries. Then in the absence of the use of “tero,” how were they identified? Yes, there were other Japanese words such as “assassination” and “coup d’ état.”



Here I would like to introduce a Japanese book about terrorism to support my contention, authored by Teturo Murobushi and published in 1962 under the Japanese title of 日本のテロリスト on its dust cover. The English title of the book, engraved on its hard cover, was “The Modern History of Assassination and Coup D’ état in Japan.”

That’s it. Tero as a word was included in a dictionary, but in daily usage assassination and/or coup d’état were the words more often heard. In that tradition of household language, when the subway sarin incident occurred in Japan in March 1995, I don’t think the Japanese mass media used the word “terrorism” in their reporting. In contrast, the U. S. media characterized it as an act of terrorism. In those days, Japan was yet to use this terminology in daily life while it belonged to the common vocabulary in the U. S.

Indeed, early on, the U. S. had perceived the Aum Shinrikyo as a terrorist cult which aimed at the takeover of the Japanese government. The U. S. security organizations were aware that the chemical weapon sarin was produced by the cult scientists. The Japanese counterpart should have been equally aware of the security risk. However, the common sense in the Japanese society then could not detect the potential risk. Ordinary Japanese citizens led a peaceful daily life without any suspicion about the wicked nature of the potential terrorist group. That’s when the sarin attack took place.

The Aum trial was finally concluded recently after years of legal deliberation. This enabled me to read summarized reports on the incident in newspapers. For example, I’ve read a series of articles about the incident, carried on the January 30 & 31 and February 1 issues of the Nikkei Shimbun. The initial forerunner of the incident was the murder of the lawyer Sakamoto’s family in November

(To be continued on P. 8)

The 2017 MUA Symposium

Cultural Programs and Revitalization of Local Communities

Date: November 28, 2017

Place: International House of Japan

Cultural programs are expected to play important roles in the 2020 Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games. Epoch-making activities led by local people of over 3,000 cities in Japan which shall install confidence and pride in their minds are currently under way. What are taking place toward the year 2020? We invited Mr. Masanori Aoyagi, an archaeologist specializes in ancient Italy and the former Commissioner of the Agency for Cultural Affairs, as well as two other specialists for the panelists of this symposium. Mr. H. Nagano, president of MUA, served as the moderator.



Keynote Speech by Mr. Aoyagi: “Let’s take cultural inventory at an opportunity of the year 2020 event”

If you walk around local cities, you shall sense that the interest of people there in the cultural programs intertwined with the 2020 Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games is quite strong. To the contrary, however, the interest of Tokyoites seems to be very weak. This country seems to lack a feeling of vitality in local areas. Living in Tokyo, you may not feel this in reality. It is true, however, that declination in local areas gradually exerts negative influence over entire nation.



In 1945 when the 2nd World War II ended, the population of Japan was 71 million people. It reached 117 million in 1980. That is, the increase of 56 million in just 35 years. This increase in the population was the biggest cause for the reinforcement in economic power. As we currently face the decrease in population, it is quite natural that we experience a shrinkage of economic scale. According to the most recent census, population decreased by 950 thousand in 2015 compared to that of 2010. This is equivalent to the extinguishment of Wakayama Prefecture in its entirety from the viewpoint of population. It is widely said that the population in Japan shall decrease by 2 million at the least in 2020. If the per capita GDP was JPY4 million, GDP in the amount of JPY4 million times 2 million people shall decrease. While the government insists obstinately that there should not be any problem if the per capita GDP increases through the technological innovation, the per capita GDP of Japan has not increased at all for these 20 years. The GDP of Japan is ranked 22nd in the world overtaken by Hong Kong and Singapore. The announcement of last year made by the Japanese government to increase the GDP from JPY500 trillion to 600 was immediately challenged by the head of Japan Association of Corporate Executives as being “improbable”. Early this year the government corrected the estimate to be JPY530 trillion as the result of alteration in the basis of GDP accumulator. However, it could be accused to be a wrong way as the alteration in the basis of statistics may not attain the purpose of grasping the population trend.

I was born in 1944. I was brought up as one of the most blessed generation including the baby boomers in the history of our country. However, this country currently suffers the cumulative deficit of JPY1.08 trillion which equals to as much as JPY8.5 million per person. Even the current powerful Abe Administration has not been successful in developing audacious policies. Figurative speaking, Japan in its entirety becomes diabetic and gradually worn away by the disease. In Sweden, where the government clearly acknowledged the decrease in population as the obvious risk, children born out of wedlock were officially given the exactly same right as legitimate children.

As the result, the children born out of wedlock at working age outnumbered the legitimate children 5 years ago. France applied the same system as that of Sweden, and as large as 40% of workers at the age of 20 to 35 are children born out of wedlock. In turn, in Japan, even dual surnames are not allowed. Only obsolete countermeasures to the falling birthrate have been enforced.

Indexes on the comprehensive national wealth assess human capital, production capital and natural capital. Japan was ranked No.1 in the world back in 2008 on the basis of per capita index. The source of the wealth overwhelmingly is the human capital, i.e., educational level and professional skills. Japan has maintained the national policy that puts emphasis on education since Meiji era. While the average expenditure of public funds to education among OECD nations stands at over 5% of GDP, Japan's expenditure is less than 4%. Thus, this situation could metaphorically be described as if the nation forces her people to become poorer here in Japan.

With the 2020 Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games approaching, we have an illusion that the economy in Tokyo is in a healthy condition. On the contrary, however, a severe reality is quickly impeding. It is expected that we shall face inconvenience such as the decrease in the number of public transportation services after the 2020, if not as serious as the food shortage. In order to maintain the spiritual affluence under such situation, it is definitely needed to excavate local cultures; thereby, a certain qualitative level can be maintained in spite of the reduction in the scale of economy of Japan. Let's reaffirm that autumn festivals for guardian god, thanksgiving festivals in summer, Shinto music and dance are valuable cultural conducts in the world.

Mr. Coubertin stated that the Olympic Games need to be carried out both from the viewpoint of sports and cultures, like the two wheels of a car. As an example, gold, silver and bronze medals were awarded in the areas of paintings and sculptures before the World War II. Those awards entirely disappeared after the WWII. After the Olympic Games in London, cultural programs were revitalized in an effort to return to the origin of modern Olympic Games. As many as 30 works produced by Shakespeare were played by people of 30 countries in their own languages. Thus, the Olympic Games in London were successful as the cultural festival as well. We would like to share the same experience here in Japan at the time of the 2020 Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games. Thus, I am advocating that it could be an excellent opportunity to once review the cultural programs. The objective of the cultural programs is to revitalize the local communities by way of implementing various programs in which everyone can take part at the level of each and every local government.

Mr. Nozawa, a hair stylist whom I saw on a TV program last year, travels to Minami Soma City every week to take care of women's hair style and holds a fashion show there. The entire city is filled with smiles. This is a culture as well. A Noh player Mr. Genshou Umewaka transformed Greek's old tales into Japanese Noh and performed the Noh play at an old theater in Greece. Nearly 10,000 people gathered at the theater from Athens to enjoy it in spite of serious economic crisis. It was a great success as audiences well understood the loftiness of Noh play while the story was widely known to them. Owara-Kaze-no-Bon Festival suddenly became known as it was taken up in a novel of Mr. Osamu Takahashi, and then, became hugely popular as a singer Sayuri Ishikawa sang in her song. Then, many people started to visit the town which changed the scenery there as well.

As many as 51 festivals are held during May and October in Suzu City in Noto Peninsula. Festival cars called "Kiriko" are carried throughout the city. Floating population of the city dramatically increased as the visitors can see a festival anytime during the period aforesaid. The city is located at the northern tip of the peninsula and is lightly trafficked. Therefore, they made the city a test site for autonomous cars accepting a proposal to do so. As the result, elderly people with bad legs became able to go to hospital, thereby do not have to move out of marginal village.

Kikai-jima Island of Kagoshima Prefecture is located very near to the northern limit of coral reef habitat. People there is trying to make this environment a pillar for the revitalization of the area. Local government of Okinoshima Island built a preparatory school named "Okinokuni Learning Center". This resulted in the increase in the high school entrance rate, and students from other

prefectures started to enter high schools in the island. Thus, the entire town was revitalized and other industries were positively affected. Observation groups from other areas visit the town frequently.

Each area has its own characteristics. We need to observe each one of those and try to appreciate them. It was the city of Nantes, a port city in western France, where people started to revitalize the area by cultural programs not by smokestack industry. The same understanding now prevails in the world and it is getting proved that cultural programs could be the powerful means for local revitalization. Each local culture needs to be reevaluated through the implementation of cultural programs not only in small villages but in larger cities as well. This may lead us to the proper way toward the post 2020 prosperity.

Presentation by the panelist Mr. Akihito Horiguchi: “Framework of Cultural Programs toward 2020”
(Mr. Horiguchi is in charge of planning and general coordination of cultural programs toward 2020 in Agency for Cultural Affairs)

Olympic Charter calls for the planning of multiple cultural programs. However, it does not offer any definition on cultural program. Thus, the host country could arbitrarily offer any programs under the name of “cultural programs”. When we surveyed the past trend, we could determine that the cultural programs entered a new era at the London Olympic Games back in 2012. Cultural programs were held at over 1,000 locations in the entire U.K. during the four-year period after the closure of Beijing Olympic Games. They were, for instance, theatrical festivals where Shakespeare’s plays were performed, an event where a circus was run at Piccadilly Circus, and UNLIMITED where art works produced by persons with disabilities were displayed. It was a great success that the number of visitors increased and the brand value of London area went up.



Japan has been largely influenced by this, and is currently planning to implement various programs including exhibition of art works produced by persons with disabilities not only on a national basis but local communities as well. An objective is established for Tokyo 2020 to implement programs exceeding those held at London Olympic and Paralympic Games. Mr. M. Aoyagi takes the responsibility as a general producer of the Tokyo 2020 Nippon Program which is the major program. Some of the programs were started last year, and the number of programs officially approved is increasing. A wide range of organizations such as an organizing committee, National Government, Tokyo Metropolitan Government, local governments, etc. are addressing the implementation of various programs. They all recognize it a common goal to lead these activities to the reinforcement of regional revitalization, harmonious coexistence, etc. rather than simple diffusion of information on various Japanese cultures. Here, let me introduce a slogan I personally created: i.e., “Culture for All, Treasure for You”.

Some of the programs which Agency for Cultural Affairs are currently working on are:

- Japanese Treasure Project in which traditional performance arts designated as Japan Heritage are played: It was played at Yomeiji Temple in the city of Tsuwano back in November when traditional performance arts and Tsuwano Dance were played by young artists in the context of Japan Heritage.
- Handicraft Hackathon (a combination of the words “hacking” and “marathon”) was held at International Hokuriku Handicraft Summit which promoted the collaboration among traditional handicraft of Takaoka City, technologies and fashion, etc.
- “Culture NIPPON” a portal site for cultural programs has been launched and, thereby efforts are extended to research local cultural programs yet to be disclosed.

Please take a look at a book titled “Toward a Nation of Cultures – Latent Potential of Japanese Soft Power” written by Mr. M. Aoyagi

Presentation by the Panelist Mr. Shinichi Koike: “Everyone’s “My Cultural Program”

(Mr. Koike is a Project Manager of 47 Cultural Programs and is in charge of cultural programs with local governments and enterprises in the Cultural Department of Kyodo News Service)

What are cultural programs? The result of my own investigation shows that they are to find out and solve social challenges and make our society better. If you think about “5W1H” on cultural programs, you shall be able to organize the concept that (When) 2020 Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games, (Where) not only in Tokyo but anywhere in Japan, (What) planning and implementation of cultural programs, (Why) to give a boost to Tokyo 2020, (How) through the utilization of power of Japanese culture. Here, however, “by whom” is not very clear. I would like to make it clear that it is “you” who is expected to do this. With this concept in mind, I organize activities in which local high school students cover cultural events there.



Some people say that participation itself is meaningful. I believe that there are two ways of participating in the event. The one is to enjoy various types of events. The other is to create “My Cultural Program”. An example of the latter is the cultural event related with baseball games in Ehime Prefecture which is the home of a poet Shiki Masaoka, or e-sport.

A week after the occurrence of the Great East Japan Earthquake, elementary school children launched the premiere issue of “Fight Newspaper” at an emergency evacuation area in Kesennuma. The paper was published daily until it hit the 50th issue under the basic policy of not touching on any dismal matters. These children were invited to the Headquarters of UNESCO in Paris and were awarded “Junior Journalists”. This triggered the acceleration of the journalistic activities by high school students and promoted the establishment of cultural program press center. We extend appreciation to UNESCO. As Agency for Cultural Affairs decided to support this movement in October of 2017, local press centers diffused nationwide. All of these are cultural programs of children. Then, what should adults do?

I can show some interesting examples; connecting people by giving away rice balls, visiting various places to find Miso culture there, rediscovering Japanese language culture by going through Kojien Japanese Language Dictionary. I personally hope that “My Cultural Program” is somehow joyful, even comical, but it makes not only local area and people but all Japan and the world revitalized.

During the questions and answers period at the end of the symposium, various opinions and views were actively exchanged between the panelists and the floor.

(Written by Y. Miyashita, Vice President, and translated by Y. Suda, the PR & Internet Committee Associate)

The 1st MUA Japanese Speech Contest

Date: January 20, 2018

Place: Minato City Life-long Learning Center

Taking the current trend of Japanese society into consideration, the settlement of foreign nationals in Japan shall continuously increase. Foreign nationals account for 8% of population in Minato City. Japanese speech contest for people from various countries in the world shall provide an invaluable opportunity for grasping refreshingly new perspectives on Japanese society and culture not only for audiences but for speakers as well. MUA decided to newly hold this event in an effort to provide an opportunity not only for foreign nationals to present the progress of their study on Japanese language but also for audiences to listen to interesting stories and findings on Japanese manners and customs observed by foreign eyes as well as to promote international exchanges. We had the pleasure of receiving over 65 participants including speakers, judges, students from Tamagawa University UNESCO Club, Mita High School UNESCO Committee, Roppongi High School, MUA members and so on.

Speech contest was carried out pursuant to the program as shown below:

1. Opening Declaration
2. Inaugural address by Mr. H. Nagano, President of MUA
3. Introduction of Speakers
4. Part One: Speeches
5. Break
6. Part Two: Exchange among speakers and audiences/Evaluation of speeches
7. Report on evaluation result
8. Awards ceremony
9. Remarks of speakers
10. General overview on the exchanges
11. Closing remark
12. Commemorative photo taking



Part One: Speeches

After the self-introduction, each speaker gave speech.

- 1st Speaker: Ms. Batsukh Onobileg (Mongol), Graduate student, Utsunomiya University
“Challenges by Mongolian grandchildren generation”
- 2nd Speaker: Ms. Ning Zhu (China), Student, MNK Japanese Language School
“Japanese Hospitality (Omotenashi)”
- 3rd Speaker: Ms. Winnie Lee Siewichi (Malaysia), Student of International Japanese School
“Advantages and disadvantages of Japan”
- 4th Speaker: Mr. Ashour Ahmed Mohammed A, Student of Masters Course, Tokai University
“Things learned and experienced in Japan; Five mindsets”
- 5th Speaker: Ms. Manuela Hartwig (Germany), Graduate student, Tsukuba University
“To pull out one’s potentials in full; challenges observed in the Climate Change”
- 6th Speaker: Ms. Shannon Wu (Taiwan), Student of Japanese Language Class in Tamachi
“Child raising in Japan”
- 7th Speaker: Mr. T. S. Burney (Pakistan), Translator & Interpreter
“Japan, a country of OMOTENASHI”

Part Two: Exchange among speakers and audiences/Evaluation of speeches

Exchange among speakers and audiences:

Mr. M. Kobayashi, Professor, Tamagawa University undertook a role of moderator. Audiences divided into three groups encircled the speakers and enjoyed the questions and answers on such topics as hardships experienced in Japan, thought on Japan, future relationships with Japan, etc.

(Evaluation on the speeches by judges took place behind the scenes.)



Report on the result of evaluation:

The result of evaluation was presented by Ms. M. Shibuya, Professor, Meijigakuin University, a chief of screening committee as shown below.



The Highest Award: Mr. Ashour Ahmed Mohammed A
MUA President Award: Ms. Winne Lee Siewichi
Screening Committee Special Award: Mr. T. S. Burney

Awards Ceremony:

Mr. H. Nagano first bestowed a letter of commendation, a trophy and a memento (a pair of lacquered chopsticks) on each one of those three winners, and then, a letter of commendation, a commemorative shield and a memento on each of the excellence award winner.



(Continued from P.1) Terrorism as perceived in Japan and the U. S.:

1989. Five years later, in June 1994, a sarin-related incident took place in Matsumoto City, Nagano Prefecture. And finally, the subway sarin attack occurred next year, in March 1995, inside the subway train which stopped at the Hibiya station. Thirteen citizens were killed and more than 6,000 people were damaged.

Because the U. S. security organizations had persistently followed the behavior of the AUM cult as a terrorist group, they correctly perceived the airborne delivery of sarin as an act of terrorism. In contrast, as mentioned earlier, I could not see any report by the Japanese mass media, which characterized the incident as a terrorist attack.

Terrorism is not just an act of violence. It must be motivated by a will to gain control of the governing power. The ruling of the initial Aum trial concluded that Chizuo Matsumoto, the guru of the cult group, did have such a will. The ruling stated, "Matsumoto is the mastermind who tried to gain control of Japan under the disguise of national relief. As their absolute leader he ordered his followers to commit the crimes to elevate him to the sanctity of a deity, and the king of the Japanese.

The final ruling disclosed the real nature of the Aum Shinrikyo-related incidents as nothing but acts of terrorism. I wonder why the word terrorism was not used at the outbreak of the subway incident. Meantime, the U. S. security experts had perceived the incident as an act of terrorism early on. Maybe the stark perception gap between the two countries indicates that Japan has lost the sensibility to detect potential danger because it has enjoyed peaceful years for so long. However, in the prewar Japan, the words assassination or coup d'état were used as synonyms for terrorism.

As mentioned above, the U. S. mass media reported the subway sarin attack as a serious death & injury incident, conducted in the central district of the capitol Tokyo, and committed by a terrorist group. Again, the Japanese mass media did not use the word terrorism to describe the incident. I wonder what words were used historically to describe the act of terrorism in Japan. There is a book titled in Japanese "Terrorists in Japan," authored by Tetsuro Murobushi and published in 1962. On the face of the hard cover, it has an English title "The modern history of assassination and coup d'état in Japan."

During the 1930's, if my memory is correct, a book titled "Government by Assassination" was published in the U. S. The author critically described the politics in Japan as one influenced by terrorism. It is interesting to know that Murobushi also translated the Japanese word terrorism as assassination in the English title.

During the prewar years, Japan's politics was overwhelmed by the military clique. This motivated the publication in the U. S. of the book titled "Government by assassination." In fact prewar Japan was characterized by acts of terrorism even before it started to wage wars of aggression overseas. The main hotbed of terrorists changed chronologically from the samurai or shizoku tier to the commoner tier while the number of terrorist incidents increased as Japan made its irregular advancement in democracy.

The U. S. in those days perceived the Japanese military as the ringleader who destabilized peace in East Asia and interpreted that terrorism was the driving force behind the military. The Pacific War, which was started by Japan's Pearl Harbor attack, antagonizing the Anglo-American and Dutch powers, was unavoidable as long as Japan could not drastically renovate its terrorism-driven leadership. Therefore, according to the U. S. logic, it was mandatory to completely destroy and break up Japan's militaristic nature to attain radical reforms in the country. Thus, the U. S. set Japan's unconditional surrender as the absolute requirement and ultimately went so far as to drop A-bombs to secure its attainment of the objective.

The A-bomb droppings should not be interpreted only as a revengeful act for Japan's war of aggression. It was also a clear manifestation to the world that the U. S. is committed to be the captain to preserve world peace. The A-bombs were the weapons of absolute terrorism obtained by mankind for the first time. With the destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki by A-bombs, the U. S. became the sole and absolute terrorist state. In hostile response, the Soviet Union worked out a successful armament with nuclear weapons. Thus, a new "Cold War" era was born where a peace-keeping mechanism prevailed between the two world leaders – the U. S. and the Soviet Union – based on the balance of power principle.

The U. S. citizens did not have the slightest idea then that their home country had become a terrorist state. On September 11, 2001, after almost a half century from the emergence of the nuclear weapons, the World Trade Center buildings in New York City were hit and destroyed by two aircrafts, an unprecedented way of attacks engineered by the terrorist group Al Qaeda. Concurrently the Pentagon building in Washington, D. C. also became the target of an aircraft crash attack. The whole U. S. society was totally bewildered how to interpret the monstrous attacks. The only association they hit upon was the sneak Pearl Harbor attack which shook the whole nation a half century ago. The U. S. citizens analogized the unlawful destruction by the state-less terrorist group Al Qaeda with the Japanese empire's attack, a sovereign state act, which started the Pacific War. Based on the interpretation that the 9.11 attacks were committed by Islamic radicals, President Bush drew on the crusaders in the medieval age and declared his commitment to wage a revengeful war of "crusade" against the enemy.

In contrast, here in Japan, some citizens might have felt a bit of sympathy toward Al Qaeda, in retrospect of the motivation behind the acts of terrorism which had been committed in the modern and contemporary history of Japan. The 9.11 could have been interpreted as an "attack to correct the world," in an effort to challenge the helpless inequality prevailing in the world which was brought about by the finance-centric capitalism under the name of globalism. However, almost none of the U. S. citizens seemed to have given a thought from such a viewpoint. Because of their analogy of the 9.11 to the sneak Pearl Harbor attack, Bush's revengeful stance must have looked comprehensible to the eyes of the U. S. public. It seems as if the U. S. leadership concluded that they could root out the anti-U. S. terrorism if they knock down the Saddam Hussein regime in Iraq.

The U. S. stance toward Iraq was based on its experience in post-war Japan. After Japan was defeated, its leaders steered the national direction toward democratic politics and free economy under the ruling of the U. S. occupation. It resulted in a successful societal reform in a short period of time. The U. S. leaders were optimistic about the postwar progress in Iraq, believing that they could work out a similarly successful reform as experienced in Japan.

However, the reality did not develop as they expected. The U. S. ruling in Iraq came to be characterized by the U. S. soldiers' revengeful acts in retaliation for the 9.11 terrorism. Their treatment of the imprisoned Iraqi POW's culminated to such a grotesque level that the ordinary citizens of the civilized nation U. S. could not look straight at the televised images. Maybe it was a symbolic scene of the clash of civilization which emerged inevitably from the revengeful war against the terrorist attack.

As mentioned earlier, the American journalism sneered at the Japanese politics in the prewar years, labelling it as the "Governance by assassination." However, we can find similar cases in the U. S. history as well. For example, African Americans had been victimized in innumerable cases of unlawful lynching but the interest of white assailants were almost always protected against criminal charges based on supra-legal judgements. Also, John F. Kennedy was not the only U. S. president who was assassinated. I've been impressed more than anything else with the terrorist-like behavior of the U. S. as a state in the international politics. Simply put, it is the intimidating stance of the U. S., with the nuclear weapons as their bargaining power. This stance is well attested by their dropping of A-bombs over Hiroshima and Nagasaki toward the end of WWII.

The U. S. politics to arouse fear in its opponents may be characterized as “A-bomb governance” or “Dominance by nuclear weapon-based terrorism.” We can verify it by reviewing how the U. S. has unlawfully demonstrated its presence as the super power during the post-WWII period. The Soviet Union developed nuclear weapons with its own expertise to challenge the U. S. dominance and this ushered in the Cold War era. More recently, the North Korean regime made a stir internationally by accomplishing nuclear armament and demonstrating the practical level of its ICBM’s. All these developments share their origin from Hiroshima and Nagasaki. I wonder if the U. S. has ever perceived itself as a great terrorist state.

Professor Avram Noam Chomsky of MIT in the U. S. shows no hesitation in calling his home country as a terrorist state. He has demonstrated impressive academic achievements as a scholar of linguistics and is counted as one of the “World’s Top Controversialists” in the field of cultural and social science. During the 1960’s, he actively participated in protest movements against the Vietnam War waged by the U. S. It was only a natural extension of the years of his criticism toward the U. S. diplomatic policy.

During his expat work in the U. S., Mr. Yosuke Watanabe, a Japanese journalist with the Kyodo News, interviewed Professor Chomsky on January 18, 2002. Starting with the 9.11 incident which involved Al Qaeda’s attacks to the WTC buildings in NYC and the Pentagon building in Washington, D. C., their dialog developed well into the definition of terrorism. This interview, summarized into an English article, was published on May 21, 2002 with the title “Chomsky states my home country U. S. is the world’s No. 1 terrorist state.”

The peace in Japan has been maintained owing much to the gigantic nuclear power of the U. S. under the bilateral alliance. To me it seems like a sinful peace. On the other hand, there are countless suffering people in other parts of the world who cannot afford even the sinful peace. It’s time that we hold more serious discussions on how to save those helpless people and take deliberate and committed actions based on the worked out proposals for solutions.

(February 24, 2018)

(Translated by S. Tanahashi, Standing Director, the PR & Internet Committee)

(Continued from P. 7) The 1st MUA Japanese Speech Contest:

General Overview of Exchange among Speakers and Audiences:

Professor Kobayashi summed up the exchange as follows; it was a very aggressive exchange of views and opinions among speakers and audiences, and was very satisfactory to all the participants.

Words of Gratitude:

On behalf of MUA, we as organizers would like to express our heartfelt appreciation for the great cooperation and assistance extended by UNESCO Club of Tamagawa University, UNESCO Committee of Mita High School and Roppongi High School.

Each one of the speeches was excellent and worthy for the commemorative 1st speech contest. Through the exchange among speakers and audiences, we positively renewed our basic concept that acknowledging the differences is the first step toward the mutual understanding, coexistence, prosperity and eventually global peace.

(Written by K. Hirakata, MUA Vice President, and translated by Y. Suda, the PR & Internet Committee Associate)

Calligraphy Workshop

Date: Saturday, Dec. 2, 2017

Place: Minato Life-long Learning Center

We had the pleasure of having a total of 31 participants in this workshop. Among them were 15 foreigners, including those who work for the Tokyo-based embassies of Azerbaijan, Czech, East Timor, Germany and Portugal as well as students. As always, our instructor was Ms. Suimu Kanada, who is a member of the Mainichi Shodo Association.

The program proceeded as follows:

1. Mini-lecture on the history of calligraphy in Japan, inkstones, brushes and papers.
2. Exercise imitating model calligraphy letters.
3. Final fair copy of letters on colored papers.

Major comments from the participants expressed in the questionnaire:

- Most rewarding experience.
- Nice to casually participate, thanks to the provided tools and papers.
- Pleased to see many foreign participants.
- I could draw many letters.
- The workshop atmosphere was excellent.
- The mini-lecture was very helpful.
- I could attain ease of mind.
- It was an ideal introductory calligraphy workshop.

Impression of MUA staff:

We are pleased with the increasing trend in the number of applications from foreigners to our calligraphy workshop over the years. At first they felt clumsy with brushes, which is quite different from pen-writing. By the time they wrap up by fair letter writing, their letters looked artistic thanks to their repeated exercise of the basics. The workshop requires lots of mental concentration and provides a good opportunity for both Japanese and foreign participants to share comradeship.



(Written by K. Hirakata, Vice President, and translated by S. Tanahashi, the PR & Internet Committee)

The 2nd MUA Zazen Workshop

Date: Friday, December 15, 2017

Place: Seishoji Temple, Minato City

MUA's second Zazen workshop was organized by the Membership Committee and received more applications than expected. A total of 46 people, including foreigners, participated in the program.

After the initial briefing by the MUA secretariat, the participants enjoyed a brief tour inside the temple premises. Reverend Kamata Mukan and the deputy priest guided us to the Sanmon Gate, the Nokyo-Do, and the pond surrounded by colored leaves.

Next we stepped into the main temple and received a mini-lecture on the history of the Seishoji Temple, the essence of Zazen, etc. Finally we walked over to the Zazen section. The place was fully packed by many participants. The deputy priest explained about do's and don'ts during the Zazen exercise. After the Hozen bell was rung, we started Zazen. Initially our minds were distracted by inner and external sounds but gradually we fell into a non-awareness state of mind.

Although the Zazen exercise lasted only for about 20 minutes, we could feel how harsh it must be sit in Zazen during the cold winter season. After the workshop, we were invited to a lecture hall on the second floor where tea, sweets and orange were served. It was a good opportunity for the participants to ask many questions about Zazen. Reverend Kamata gave a plain and to-the-point answer to each question. After the 2-hour Zazen program was completed, it was already dark outside. Everyone appreciated highly this opportunity.



(Written by Y. Ishii, MUA member, and translated by S. Tanahashi, the PR & Internet Committee)

MUA Visit to the Italian Embassy

Date: Wednesday, December 20, 2017

Place: Mita, Minato City

A total of 20 people, including MUA members and their families, visited the Italian Embassy located in the Mita area of Minato City. The place is close to the Keio Gijuku University and the Mitsui Club. The local atmosphere reminds us of the days when it once accommodated the residence of Edo-period daimyo lords. Our host was Mr. Roberto Pesci (photo shown below), the officer for cultural and publicity programs.



With his guidance, we made a short walking tour around the pond, located at the center of the spacious beautiful garden. As we walked stepping on fallen leaves, Mr. Pesci gave explanations about the embassy architecture, the garden and the stone monument, among others.

The former estate of the Matsudaira Okinokami daimyo still embraces very old trees that have survived since the Edo period. The typical Japanese garden was allegedly designed by the reverend priest Takuwan. We were particularly intrigued to know the historical fact that ten of the 47 loyal Akou Roushi samurai's, who took part in the legendary 1703 revenge assault on their master's enemy, committed harakiri in the garden.

The Italian ambassador on duty in 1939 took a great interest in the episode and erected a commemorative stone monument for the samurai's. Ever since, it has been the custom for the incumbent ambassador to hold an annual memorial service. At the end of the tour, Mr. Pesci introduced various events held throughout the year at the Italian Cultural House located in Kudan, Tokyo.



Monument for the Akou roushi



(Written by T. Kobayashi, Standing Director, the Membership Committee, and translated by S. Tanahashi, the PR & Internet Committee)

Tea Ceremony Workshop

Date: Saturday, Jan. 27, 2018

Place: Minato Life-long Learning Center

We had the pleasure of having a total of 32 participants in this workshop. Our instructor Ms. Soko Matsumura, who belongs to the Urasenke school, taught them the basic manners of the traditional tea ceremony.

The program proceeded as follows:

1. Lecture on the history of Japanese tea ceremony.
2. Demonstration & exercise of how to bow, how to eat sweets, and how to drink weak tea.
3. Demonstration by the instructor on tea-serving manners.
4. Eat the “Hanabira-mochi,” a season-specific sweet, and drink weak tea.
5. Each participant tried a part of the tea-serving manners.

Major comments from the participants written in the questionnaire:

- It was a good opportunity to learn the history of tea ceremony and how to walk.
- I've rarely had a chance like this despite my great interest. So it was a precious experience.
- By immersing myself in the traditional Japanese culture, I felt my heart was enriched.
- I enjoyed the international atmosphere.
- It was so rewarding to experience tea ceremony myself.
- The interpreter was very helpful.

Impression of MUA staff:

All the participants behaved very seriously throughout the workshop. Still they looked very happy to try the tea-serving manners.



(Written by M. Kasahara, Standing Director, the Hands-on Cultural Workshop Committee, and translated by S. Tanahashi, the PR & Internet Committee)

MUA 2018 New Year Party

Date: Tuesday, June 16, 2018

Place: Shiba Club of NEC Mita House

This time a total of 22 MUA members and their families attended the annual friendship gathering. The new year marks the 71st anniversary of the grassroots UNESCO activities in Japan. For attraction, we invited Mr. Tatsuya Sudo, who is better known as Kanariya Eiraku, a master Rakugo teller. He has delivered the traditional Japanese sense of humor in Rakugo overseas as a grassroots cultural ambassador.

First, President Nagano gave an opening remark, stating “During the current fiscal year, we have embarked on new programs, including the Zazen Workshop and the Japanese speech contest. We also added a new class to the MUA English program. Taking over the direction established by Dr. Miwa, President Emeritus, and Ms. Takai, former president, I will work with all MUA members in demonstrating the UNESCO spirit, against the backdrop of the tumultuous international environment.” Then Mr. Matsumoto, Vice President, proposed Kampai toast, wishing for further growth of MUA.

During the attraction time, Eiraku Shishou gave a traditional Rakugo piece called “Toki soba,” demonstrating a funny dialog between a soba stand owner and a cheating customer. He also gave a ukulele comic chat performance and won the applause of the whole audience. For your information, he is teaching at Kanda Gaigo University and Komazawa University while also managing his Canary Rakugo classes. He was formerly a member of the Tatekawa school of the Rakugo world and took a great interest in Osaka-based Katsura Shijaku who pioneered in English Rakugo. In addition to Rakugo and Ukulele, he also performs Dodoitsu, Zokkyoku and J-pops tunes in both English and Japanese.

After Eiraku Shisho’s performance, Mr. Gunji Shimizu, MUA Director and also the chairman of the Minato City Musicians Federation, took over the stage and entertained us with his seasoned accordion play. We enjoyed singalong of children’s songs and popular melody. With his credo that “Singing is a universally common language,” Mr. Shimizu has performed many times at senior citizens’ homes and undertaken MC roles at singalong coffee shops, etc.

At the very end Mr. Kikuchi, Vice President, wrapped up the happy gathering, wishing for the entry of more new comers to MUA.



Rakugo “Toki Soba”



Ukulele Comic Chat



Mr. Shimizu's Accordion Play



Singalong of popular tunes to kick off the New Year



(Written by T. Kobayashi, Standing Director, the Membership Committee, and translated by S. Tanahashi, the PR & Internet Committee)

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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