

Japan Awaits a Democratic China

The following is a condensed version of an Op-Ed piece by Japan's Foreign Minister Taro Aso, which recently ran in the Wall Street Journal

I am positive on China. Already the biggest trading partner in our history if combined with Hong Kong, China has powered our recent economic recovery. Going forward, our codependence will only become more pronounced. I welcome China's return to center stage in East Asia – as long as China evolves into a liberal democracy. And I believe it will.

Democracy in Asia is spreading. Not so long ago, a Japanese prime minister would have to fly south overnight to Canberra to meet our nearest democratic neighbor. Now, he can fly west for only two hours to Seoul, capital of one of the world's most vibrant democracies. China's turn is imminent, and I am positive on the prospects for this evolution. The question is no longer "whether," but "at what speed" China will metamorphose into a fully democratic nation. I can assure our friends in China that Japan is committed to China's success to that end.

In 20 years, China's influence in Japan will be enormous. Chinese holiday makers, from students to the retired, will be the largest consumers of Japanese tourism, filling favorite tourist spots like Kyoto. China will be one of the largest investors in Japan's economy. In truth, there is little new or surprising about these scenarios. China is not emerging



Foreign Minister Aso meets Chinese Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs Dai Bingguo

afresh; it is, in fact, reclaiming its historical prominence. My hope is that China recognizes that there is no longer a place for an empire.

Crucially, China can learn from Japan's missteps – we have "been there, done that." Japan has experienced extreme nationalism twice in the last century. A telling incident occurred in 1964, shortly before the opening of the Tokyo Olympic Games, when a Japanese teenager stabbed Edwin O. Reischauer, then American ambassador to Japan. At the time, Japanese emotions still ran high at the thought of U.S. power and influence. Beijing's leaders can learn from such Japanese experiences to better manage their own rising nationalism. Environmental degradation, which suffocated Japan in the 1960s and 1970s, is another

area where China can learn from Japan's mistakes.

In terms of military presence, Japan is Asia's natural stabilizer. The U.S. and Japan have the world's longest-standing security partnership. It is transparent and a relationship between two democracies. Acting alone, the Japanese or the Americans might raise a few eyebrows; acting together, there is no room for misunderstanding. China and every other Asian nation can continue to count on the built-in stabilizer provided jointly by Japan and America, a common good that is readily available to Beijing. Hence my request that Beijing fully disclose its defense spending, which has remained opaque yet – as Beijing admits – has more than trebled over the last 10 years.

I would like these thoughts to resonate widely, especially with the citizens of China. For this reason, I have asked to create a multi-year student-exchange program. I would very much like Japan's youth to look warmly at China. Our new program will facilitate the exchange of thousands of Japanese and Chinese high school students, planting the seeds of mutual understanding. In 20 years' time Japanese men and women with first-hand knowledge of China will view the Chinese among their closest friends. And many more Chinese will feel the same about Japan.

Finance Minister Sadakazu Tanigaki Speaks on Japan's Economy

On January 9, Japan's Minister of Finance, Sadakazu Tanigaki, gave a speech at the Japan Society entitled "Japanese Economy Revived: Challenges and the Way Ahead".

According to Minister Tanigaki, the most notable feature of Japan's current economic recovery is that it is being led by the private-sector. The economy has



Finance Minister Sadakazu Tanigaki

gained new life as the corporate sector spearheads the recovery and the effects of increasing employment and wages spread to the household sectors. Japan's improving economic outlook is the culmination of structural-reform programs undertaken in the fields of finance, regulation, taxation, and government spending.

Still, the Minister stressed that the global economy faces short-term risks and structural challenges. Japan will be required to enhance its competitiveness in an era when having an "open society" and strong investment in education, science, and technology will be extremely important.

Mr. Tanigaki also said that Japan must grapple with fiscal reform. Through reductions in spending, Japan's government is currently aiming to achieve a

primary surplus by early 2010. On the revenue side, public debate on reform of the entire tax system can no longer be avoided.

Mr. Tanigaki summed up his remarks up by saying that the goal must not be a society that values cold efficiency or where the strong feed on the weak. Rather, it should be a place where respect, mutual understanding, and competition co-exist and where members support each other under the sense of the Japanese word "Kizuna", which means "community bonds".

The Minister concluded by pointing out that as the world's economy becomes truly global, interdependence and collaboration among nations will be increasingly important.

Best of Friends: Buckminster Fuller and Isamu Noguchi

A special exhibition devoted to the long friendship and collaboration of visionary designer and inventor Buckminster Fuller and acclaimed sculptor and designer Isamu Noguchi opens at The Noguchi Museum on May 19, 2006. Fuller's emphasis on the humanistic use of science and technology strongly influenced the younger Noguchi. For over fifty years, the two men together explored ideas that have particular relevance today, including the search for renewable energy sources and "green" architecture.

Best of Friends will provide a rare view into the ongoing discourse and dynamic imagination that informed the work of both men. On view will be models,

sculptures, and drawings that reveal the design, philosophical, and mathematical concepts that Fuller and Noguchi shared. Film footage, photographs, and letters will further illuminate the history of these shared ideas, as well as the affection and respect the two men felt for each other.

The Noguchi Museum

Since its opening in 1985, The Noguchi Museum has exhibited a comprehensive selection of the artist's sculptures, as well as models for public projects and gardens, dance sets, and Akari Light Sculptures. These are complemented by diverse temporary exhibitions that illuminate both Noguchi's art and the historical context in which it was created.

The Noguchi Museum offers a full



R. Buckminster Fuller, 1929
Chrome plated bronze, 13 x 8 x 10 inches
© F.S. Lincoln

roster of public programs for adults and children. On the Second Sunday of every month, a free gallery talk is offered in both English and Japanese. Group tours are also available in both languages.

Information: 718-204-7088, or www.noguchi.org 9-01 33rd Rd. (at Vernon Blvd), Long Island City, New York

Lecture • Film

Through April 30th

**Film Series: Against the Tide:
 Rebels and Mavericks in
 Contemporary Japanese Cinema**
The Japan Society
333 E. 47th St., NYC

Once rigidly enforced ideals of conformity, obedience and hierarchy hold less sway over social behavior in Japan today. The films in this series feature protagonists who are unable or unwilling to adhere to social conventions and must define their own rules. Surviving on their wits, their stubborn independence, and a healthy sense of the absurd, these rebels and mavericks reflect profound fissures tugging at Japan today.

Schedule:

Kaza-hana (April 11th, 8:45pm)

Maison de Himiko (April 12th, 6:15pm)

Knock Out (April 12th, 9pm)

Canary (April, 13th, 6:15pm)

Wild Berries (April 13th, 9pm)

Believe (April 14th, 6:15pm)

Preparations for the Festival (April 14th, 8:30pm)

The Owl (April 15th, 4pm)

Yakuza Graveyard (April 15th, 6:30pm)

Rikidozan: A Hero Extraordinary (April 16th, 4pm)



Maison de Himiko
 © 2005 Maison de Himiko Film Partners

Bullet Ballet (April 16th, 6:45pm)
 Info: 212-715-1270, 212-832-1155 or
www.japansociety.org

April 12th
**Donald Keene Prize Award
 Ceremony**
Low Memorial Library
535 W. 116th St. (at Broadway), NYC
**(Columbia University Morningside
 Campus)**

The Donald Keene Prize for the Promotion of Japanese Culture recognizes individuals and organizations that have made significant contributions toward expanding awareness of Japanese culture in the world at large. The Donald Keene Prize honors Japanese culture in all its forms, both traditional and contemporary, and this diversity is recognized in the selection of Prize recipients. The Prize, which is awarded annually, was established in 2006 to mark the Twentieth Anniversary of the founding of the Donald Keene Center of Japanese Culture. Starts at 5:30pm. The tea demonstration is held from 4pm before the ceremony. Please RSVP to 212-854-0656 or Donald-keene-center@columbia.edu

Info: 212-854-503 or www.donaldkeenecenter.org

April 18th & 22nd & 23rd
**30th Anniversary of the Essex
 County Cherry Blossom Festival**
Branch Brook Park, Newark, NJ

Branch Brook Park's display of Japanese flowering cherry trees, located in Newark and Bellville, NJ, is among the most distinguished collections nationwide for its resemblance to the countryside in Japan. Designed by the Olmsted Brothers firm from 1927 to 1937, the cherry groves arch gracefully over the basin of the Second River. Mature trees with beautiful form, single and double flowering, as well as weeping varieties are equally present. Run (April 9), Gala (April 18), Bike Race (April 22), and Celebration (April 23), will be held.

Info: 973-268-2300 or www.branchbrookpark.org

April 27th
The Evolving U.S.-Japan Alliance
The Japan Society
333 E. 47th St., NYC

The U.S. – Japan alliance is facing an increasing number of challenges early in the 21st century. Japan has responded to many of these issues, including continued tension on the Korean Peninsula and China's extraordinary economic growth and increased defense investments, by demonstrating an increasingly proactive role in regional and global security. U.S. Ambassador to Japan, J. Thomas Schieffer will highlight many of the issues affecting U.S. – Japan relations today and point out opportunities for closer collaboration in the coming years. Noon to 2pm.

Info: 212-832-1155 or www.japansociety.org



U.S. Ambassador to Japan: J. Thomas Schieffer

April 27th to May 10th
Mikio Naruse Cinema Event
BAMcinémathèque at BAM Rose Cinema
30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn, NY

Along side Ozu and Mizoguchi, Mikio Naruse was one of the great stylists in Japanese cinema. Identified by Kurosawa as his favorite director, Naruse examined the territory of realist, humanist dramas; seemingly similar to Ozu's milieu, but steeped in a looser visual style and an even more bittersweet sense of melancholy. The films include *Wife!*, *Be Like a Rose!*, *Sound of the Mountain*, *Repast*,

Mother, Flowing, Anzukko, Late Chrysanthemums, Summer Clouds, Floating Clouds, When a Woman Ascends the Stairs, Her Lovely Lane, Scattered Clouds
Info: 718-636-4100 or www.bam.org

May 1st & 13th

Japanese Garden Tour

The Mansfield Freeman Center for East Asian Studies At Wesleyan University

343 Washington Terrace, Middletown, CT

Tour of the Freeman Family Japanese Garden is held by the landscape designer, Mr. Stephen A. Morrell. He designed the Freeman Family Japanese garden. He explains the history and ritual of the tea ceremony as well on May 1st. At the close of this program guests will quietly observe the tea ceremony process.

Info: 860-685-2330 or www.wesleyan.edu

May 6th

Celebrating Japan's Children's Day through Kamishibai Storytelling & Tachie Puppet-Making

The Japan Society

333 E. 47th St., NYC

At this weekend family event, children are invited to a special program for Children's Day (Tango no sekku). Participants learn firsthand about this special annual event for children in Japan through kamishibai storytelling presented by renowned artist and storyteller Tara McGowan and child storytellers from Kamishibai Kidz, a troupe of children ages six to 12, who create and perform their own kamishibai stories. A kamishibai demonstration will be followed by tachie puppet-making (the original form of kamishibai), where participants try their hands at creating puppets from their own original characters or using characters from stories introduced during the program. 2 to 4:30pm

Info: 212-832-1155 or www.japansociety.org



Illustration from the One-Inch Boy by Hisao Suzuki
© Kamishibai for Kids

Exhibition

Through April 13th

Flying West to Go East:

New York City Opera on Tour in Japan

An exhibition by award-winning photojournalist Joe McNally

New York State Theatre, Mezzanine and Promenade Levels

Lincoln Center

Columbus Ave. (at 63rd St), NYC

The photograph exhibition by award-winning photojournalist Joe McNally commemorates New York City Opera's tour as U.S. Cultural Ambassador to Aichi World EXPO 2005. The tour performances in Tokyo and Nagoya cities included the Asian premiere of one of America's most successful and critically acclaimed new operatic works, *Little Women*, by City Opera Composer-in-Residence Mark Adamo, and conducted by Music Director George Manahan. The event, as *The Daily Yomiuri* stated, "Represents an important milestone in Japanese opera history." Also to be performed is Puccini's timeless classic about the tragic relationship between an American naval officer and a former geisha, *Madam Butterfly*, which is conducted on the tour by the first Japanese conductor in the company's history, Atsushi Yamada. The 185 touring members were followed by McNally, who photographed performances, dress rehearsals, backstage activities, educational sessions and diplomatic engagements. The City Opera company also engaged in educational activities in conjunction with schools and universities in Tokyo, Nagoya, and Osaka.

Info: www.lincolncenter.org or 212-875-5350

www.nycopera.com or 212-721-6500

Through April 29th

Myohseki Shimura

The Tenkoku ? Eyes in a dream Beyond the world of tenkoku

Medialia.... Rack and Hamper Gallery, Space II

335 W. 38th St., 4Fl., NYC

Myohseki Shimura is a master of

traditional tenkoku and a calligrapher who stepped beyond the tradition, and created the new world of *The Tenkoku*. His interest in the traditional tenkoku started when he was 16. He recognized the simplistic beauty and contrast between the special red ink on the white paper, which is the basic structure of the tenkoku world. Shimura has developed techniques to a contemporary sensibility, creating his unique world. The sensitive line for seal engraving which are usually contained within one square inch into powerful yet sensitive lines.

Info: 212- 971-0953 or www.medialiagallery.com



Tenkoku, seal engraving, originated in China. This ancient and delicate art is a universe expressed within a square inch.
© Yoshikazu Nishijima

Through April 29th

Sepia at Seven, A Celebratory Group Show

Sepia International

148 W. 24th St., 11Fl., NYC

Sepia International explores the juncture between the photograph as art form and as historical document. This exhibition highlights the extent and diversity of artists Sepia exhibited over the last seven years and resulted in exhibitions showcasing a broad range of artists, from emerging talent to established practitioners, all united by a fundamental belief in the capacity of photographs to illuminate the world around us. Among the artists included will be Martin Brading, Alison Bradley, Edward Grazda, Miyako Ishiuchi, Kenro Izu, Sookang Kim, Jungjin Lee, Annu Palakunnathu Matthew, Osamu James Nakagawa, Neal Oshima, Yukio Oyama, Stuart Rome, Marissa Roth, Raghubir Singh, Ketaki Sheth, Akiko Tobu, Katherine Westerhout, and Masao Yamamoto.

Info: 212-645-9444 or www.sepia.org

Through April 29th
Schoolgirls ? Tomoko Sawada
exhibition
Zabriskie Gallery
41 E. 57th St., NYC

This unique exhibition consists of three recent series of color photographs by the young Japanese photographer Tomoko Sawada. Sawada's work is primarily an exploration of costume and identity, of social badges and belonging, and the malleability of an individual's image. School Days presents, through small high-school class pictures, the power of institutions and social pressures to form a mask over identity. cover deals with the wide-spread adoption of drastic fashion fads by teenage girls in Japan and cover/Face uses (self-)portraits of such individuals to illustrate the tension between public image and the inner individuality.

Info: 212-752-1223 or www.zabriskiegallery.com



Tomoko Sawada
 cover/face 2002/2005 set of 20 photographs
 12 X 10 inches (30.5 X 20.5cm) each edition 10

Through May 6th
The Matrix of Space
Artist: Yasufumi Takahashi
Ise Cultural Foundation Gallery
555 Broadway (bet Prince and Spring St), Basement Fl., NYC

Takahashi Yasufumi presently resides and works in Japan, exhibiting his sculpture and installation works throughout the country. He has explored the ambiguity and interdependency between the body and the world through his large-scale installations. In his work, he often utilizes old clothes, plaster and latex gum as mediums to acknowledge the obscure boundary of the human body and uncertainty in defining individuality in our modern world. His solo exhibition



Image:
 Yasufumi Takahashi,
 Selma, 2005,
 Cardboard, 64" x
 16" x 10"

HANAMI

– Celebrating the Cherry Blossom Season

This spring, the Brooklyn Botanic Garden hosts Hanami, the Japanese cultural tradition of viewing and cherishing each moment of the entire Cherry Blossom season for the first time, to celebrate its 25th Annual Sakura Matsuri, which is the highlight of this Hanami event. Fondly referred to as "New York's Rite of Spring," the festival will be celebrated with a series of market events that pay tribute to the Garden's iconic collection of Japanese flowering cherry trees while honoring the impact of Japanese culture on the American way of life. This two-day event commemorates the striking beauty of the Garden's flowering cherry trees and their magnificent blossoms with a special weekend of nature related events. More than 60 entertainment and educational events will be devoted to Japanese culture, arts, and performances for all ages. The Hanami event also features 25 years of Mizue Sawano's exceptional oil paintings of cherry trees. Following the first buds to the brilliant blossoms, to the petals



© Barbara Alper
 Courtesy of The Brooklyn Botanic Garden

falling like pink snow, the web-based Cherry Watch is virtually the most comprehensive Hanami experience in New York.

The Brooklyn Botanic Garden
Hanami April 8th to May 28th
Sakura Matsuri April 29th & 30th
 Info: 718-623-7200 or www.bbg.org

"Matrix of Space," is comprised of twelve new sculptural works from his "Section" series and a large-scale installation.
 Info: 212-925-1649 or www.isefoundation.org

Through June 30th
Exhibition: "Yuuga: Contemporary Botanical Watercolors from Japan"
Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation
Hunt Library, 5th Fl. @ Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh, PA

Flowers have always played an important role in Japanese culture. Indeed, botanical art classes now are offered in cultural centers throughout Japan. In recent years

The Japan Association of Botanical Illustration has inspired artists, produced exhibitions with catalogues, and issued a journal. JABI has generated additional exhibitions and books, even bringing exhibitions to Japan from abroad. The Hunt Institute displays its growing collection of Japanese botanical art. Yuuga means elegant and gorgeous and aptly describes these contemporary botanical paintings. The exhibition includes 43 works—the majority of them donated—by 33 artists.
 Info: 412-268-2434 or <http://huntbot.andrew.cmu.edu>

April 19th to May 1st
Japanese Modern Imari /

The Shine of Pure Platinum Ichiro Yamamoto in New York

**The Nippon Gallery
145 W. 57th St., NYC**

This exhibition shows the masterpieces of Mr. Ichiro Yamamoto, who invented the "pure platinum painting" on Imari ceramics, using almost 100% platinum which is now recognized as modern Imari and is one of the most popular types of Japanese ceramics.

Info: 212-581-2223 or www.nipponclub.org



Courtesy of Ichiro Yamamoto

Performance

April 14th

**The Haru Matsuri
(Spring Festival)
Kent Hall, Columbia University
2960 Broadway, NYC**

The Haru Matsuri ("Spring Festival") is modeled after traditional Japanese festivals. Hundreds of Columbia University students will participate in cultural performances, such as "sakubun" (essays), haiku, "rakugo" (traditional comic dialogue) and "kamishibai" (Japanese "paper theater"). Top performers receive prizes.

Info: 212-854-8345 or www.columbia.edu

April 25th

**Concert: Midori, Violin and
Robert McDonald, Piano
Zankel Hall at Carnegie Hall
57th St. (at 7th Ave.), NYC**

World renowned violinist, Midori, performs WEIR Music for 247 Strings, YUN Violin Sonata, GOEHR Suite for Violin and Piano, Op. 70 (NY Premiere),

GYÖRGY KURTÁG Tre pezzi, Op. 14e, LUTOSLAWSKI Partita with the acclaimed pianist, Robert McDonald. The concert starts at 7:30pm and the pre-concert talk starts at 6:30pm in Zankel Hall: Midori in conversation with Ara Guzelimian.

Info: 212-247-7800 or www.carnegiehall.org

April 27th

**12th Annual Cherry Blossom
Festival**

**City College of New York
W. 138th St (bet Amsterdam and
Covent Aves.), NYC**

This annual event celebrates City College's historic connection to Japan. Townsend Harris, founder of the Free Academy of the City of New York (subsequently renamed City College) in 1847, later became first US envoy to Japan in 1856, residing in Shimoda, Japan during the early years of Japan's opening to the West. The opening of the program will include a ceremonial planting of a cherry blossom tree by CCNY President Williams and representatives from the Consulate General of JAPAN. The event is sponsored by the CCNY Asian Studies Program and the Division of the Humanities and Arts, as well as the Freeman Foundation. Starts at noon.

Info: Charles Parker, Asian Studies, CCNY 212-650-6378 or www.cuny.cuny.edu

May 4th

**Recital: "Taemi Kohama:
Soprano Recital (Piano: Bradley
Moore)"
Zankel Hall @ Carnegie Hall
57th St. (at 7th Ave.), NYC**

Taemi Kohama is one of the most successful sopranos of her generation, having achieved extraordinary international acclaim as a soprano singer. The program will consist of Gratitude, Love, Dream and Pray. 7:30pm

Info: 212-247-7800 or www.carnegiehall.org

May 12th & 13th

**Tzadik Label Music Series: New
Voices from Japan - Haino Keiji,
Makigami Koichi and Yamataka
Eye**

**The Japan Society
333 E. 47th St., NYC**

These two evenings of extreme vocalist-musicians launch Japan Society's new music series collaboration with Tzadik, the nonprofit record label founded in

1995 by John Zorn. The boldest vocal works in Japan's new music scene will feature vocalist-composer, Theremin-player and pioneer in avant-noise-music, Makigami Koichi. Known for leading the longest-running underground band Hikashu; disturbing iconoclast Yamataka Eye, who first garnered public attention with his violent noise group Hanatarash and later as the front man vocalist for the Boredoms will also perform. Underground noise guitar-hero Haino Keiji, Japanese wizard and a true star will also make an appearance.

Info: 212-715-1258 or www.japansociety.org



Yamataka Eye Courtesy of the artist

May 31st to June 4th

**Traditional Dance Intensive:
From Edo, Kyoto, to Okinawa
By Sachiyo Ito Dance Company
The Japan Society
333 E. 47th St., NYC**

Sachiyo Ito has continued to devote herself to bringing together the East and West through the art of dancing. She leads an intensive workshop on a variety of traditional dance forms. Participants learn the fundamentals common to all Japanese traditional dance forms such as Kabuki Buyo (Kabuki dances), Ame no Goro, Fuji Musume, Jiuta mai (Dance to jiuta song), Kurokami Ryukyu Buyo (Okinawan dances), Kajadefu, Menuhama, Nuchibana, including postures, and step patterns, hand gestures as well as dances and some sections of the traditional dances. May 31st to June 2nd (6 to 9pm), June 3rd and 4th (Noon to 3pm)

Info: 212-715-1258 or www.japansociety.org

Chiune Sugihara : Still Making A Difference

The Anti-Defamation League recently sponsored its annual “Do the Right Thing” essay contest among public high school students in New York City. The contest was created as a tribute to Chiune Sugihara, the Japanese Consul to Lithuania during WW II, who issued exit visas to ensure the safe passage and survival of thousands of European Jews. Students were asked to write about Sugihara’s heroism and how it influenced their way of thinking. Five candidates won a trip to Japan. One of the winners, Ms. Rachel Shepard, wrote her impression of Japan:

My trip to Japan changed me as a person and the way I see others. I saw breathtaking buildings, such as the golden

pagoda, and met inspiring people. I visited museums, and learned that “peace” is much more than a word to the Japanese; it is a goal that they strive to achieve. The one aspect of my trip that will have a lasting impact on me is the mystique of the country itself. Never before have I seen a place that can be so forward moving and yet remain so peaceful and beautiful. I looked forward to my daily bike ride to Kunijima High School and my

train rides throughout the country, just so I could take in as much of the atmosphere as I could. The nights I spent with the Nagata family were by far my favorite part of the trip. I cannot imagine how difficult it must be to host someone without being able to communicate, but somehow, this family pulled it off. Not only was my stay there comfortable, but it was warm and welcoming.



Rachel Shepard with Sensu (Japanese folding fan)

VISITJAPAN

SHIMANE 島根



The Origin of Japanese Traditions

Shimane Prefecture is an hour away from Osaka by plane, located in the Southwest of Honshu, the largest island in Japan. Shimane is full of everlasting history and an abundance of nature that reflects the traditions and origins of Japan.

The history of Shimane goes back to the myth of the creation of Japan. Izumo,

the old name for Eastern Shimane, is known as one of the oldest civilizations, as written in the Kojiki, the earliest Japanese book. The Izumo Grand Shrine is dedicated to the god of marriage, Okuninushi, and many youths come to pray for a suitable mate and happy marriage. It is also the place for the Shinto gods from all over Japan to gather every October.

Matsue, the prefectural capital, is renowned for keeping Matsue Castle, parks, and a part of the city’s ancient tradition from Edo era intact and vibrant. Matsue has an annual Cherry Festival, Castle Festival, and it is one of the biggest tourist attractions. Tourists can try green tea and Japanese seasonal sweets, while they enjoy the quiet and mysterious atmosphere. Lafcadio Hearn, the author

of Kwaidan, is one of the people who was fascinated with the city. He later introduced the Japanese traditional culture to the world.

Shimane has many great places to visit, including the historic Silver Mine of Iwami, the Adachi Museum of Art, which is well known for its superb Japanese gardens, Oki Island, where you can enjoy marine sports and rich nature, and lots of hot springs. But what attracts the tourists most is a warm welcome from the residents of Shimane.



Matsue Castle



SHIMANE

Asian Artists Get an Assist

The Consulate General of Japan is pleased to announce that Asian Artists and Concerts, Inc. (AAC) launched on February 8, 2006, in New York City. The performing arts organization was created to support young Asian nationals and Asian-American musicians. Originally conceived by AAC's Artistic & Music Director, Atsushi Yamada, the organization's goal is to serve as a bridge for young Asian artists as they transition from musical training to a musical career by helping them gain performance experience while pursuing their professional goals. AAC also helps to educate its members in various business aspects of the music industry.

The music market in the New York metropolitan area is the largest and most competitive in the world. The availability of scholarships and various "Young Artist Programs" allows some students access to a wonderful environment for education.

At the same time, New York can be a difficult place for young musicians to find performance opportunities once they have left school to begin a career. Without practical training in a proper venue, a young musician may not get the opportunity to build a performance history and reputation. Without the opportunity to perfect their craft, many young musicians may be forced to shelve their dreams or in some cases, return to their homeland due to stringent visa requirements. AAC will fill in this gap with the support of its various generous Japanese corporate and private supporters.

Membership in AAC is based on the results of a live audition and personal interview after preliminary requirements are met. Foreign nationals will need a valid visa to participate in the AAC Orchestra.

AAC's first season will be from May 8-June 22, 2006. It will feature 10 salon



Press Conference at Kitano Hotel

concerts and an orchestra finale concert at Alice Tully Hall on June 22, 2006.

For more information about AAC or to apply for AAC membership please visit www.aacinc.org.

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Please visit our website at www.cgj.org
Send your comments to japaninfo@ny.cgj.org

See the answer on page 6.

Japan had 5,100,000 visitors from abroad in 2004. How many of those visitors were from the U.S.??



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