

Message from Ambassador Sakurai

It is a great pleasure to introduce myself to the readers of Japan Info. This past April, I assumed the post of Ambassador and Consul General of Japan in New York.

I previously enjoyed a long career in the private sector, working for a Japanese corporation for thirty-eight years. However, this is my first experience in the public realm and I know my new duties here will be very challenging. I hope the experience I gained during more than two decades living and working in the U.S. will serve me well, as I work to assist

Japanese nationals and promote overall Japan-U.S. relations in New York and the entire consular region.

Our Consulate's main responsibilities are fostering better political, economic, and cultural relations and providing consular and visa services. However, after the tragic attacks of September 11, 2001, I believe one of our biggest missions must also be crisis-management, i.e., protecting Japanese nationals in case of emergency.

I will also do my best to enhance human and cultural exchange between the U.S. and Japan. Our two nations

enjoy very healthy relations at this time, but mutual understanding must be continuously nurtured if it is to thrive. And lastly, owing to my background, I feel



Ambassador Sakurai

a strong responsibility to support Japanese companies operating in our region.

When I first arrived at our offices in New York I announced that my door will always be open. I want to encourage communication and listen to as many voices as possible. I welcome your comments and opinions too. The Consulate General of Japan in New York is here to serve you.

United Nations at a Crossroads

by Dr. Shinichi Kitaoka, Ambassador, Deputy Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations

There is no Japanese Embassy in New York, but we have four Japanese ambassadors here. That is because the Consulate General in New York is led by the Consul General, with the rank of ambassador, and the Japanese Mission to the United Nations has three ambassadors. The responsibility of the Consulate General is to protect and promote the interests of Japanese nationals and businesses in this area, and the role of the Mission is to represent Japan in deci-

sion-making at the United Nations.

The United Nations is a huge and complex organization. There are the main bodies, the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council; many subsidiary bodies of those main bodies; and other bodies established by international treaties. According to one estimate, more than 10,000 meetings are held at the United Nations each year! It is quite common for important meetings that require the participa-

tion of ambassadors to be convened at the same time. That is why the Japanese Mission has three ambassadors, while the US Mission has five and the Korean Mission, three.

The Mission of Japan has 52 diplomats and 40 local employees. It occupies the position, together with Germany, of the fourth largest mission to the United Nations, after the US, Russia and China.

The United Nations is quite often crit-

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icized as being inefficient. Certainly it is not very efficient. It has a great many activities but does not have autonomy. The UN does not have its own military or financial resources other than the contributions it receives from the Member States. The power of the Secretary-General is quite limited; he cannot do much without the support of the Member States.

Indeed, garnering the support of the Member States is the crux of the problem, because the UN has 191 Member States with widely varying backgrounds and interests, and all Member States are considered equal.

Important decisions are made by adopting resolutions, but that process is very difficult and time-consuming, because consensus is favored and determinedly pursued. Except for cases in which the five permanent members of the Security Council have the prerogative to exercise their right of veto, resolutions can be adopted, theoretically, by a vote, but it is in all cases deemed preferable to have a face-saving solution that does not divide the Member States into winners and losers. Thus, while the majority group on a particular issue will make efforts to gain broader support from the member countries, the minority group, if it finds itself isolated, will often be disposed to conces-



sions and compromise.

A good example of this tendency was the establishment of the Human Rights Council in March. During the discussion in the GA, the US opposed the proposal, but found itself without significant support for its position, and at the final stage weakened its opposition. The result was 171 in favor and 4 opposed (US, Israel, Marshall Islands, and Palau), with 5 abstentions.

In that connection, it was really exceptional and alarming that a budget-related resolution was adopted in early May by a majority of 121 to 50, with 20 others abstaining or absent. The defeated 50 countries are wealthy nations that together shoulder 87% of the budget burden. This was the first decision by a vote on a budget-related issue since 1987.

Why has the UN come to face such a situation? The UN was rather inactive during the Cold War because of the rivalry between the East and the West. Since the end of the Cold War, however, UN activities have expanded rapidly, while its budget has quadrupled.

It is clear that the UN requires some drastic changes in its organization, mandates, culture, decision-making system, and related areas.

The most important and most difficult part of UN reform will be the reform of the Security Council, the most powerful and important body in the UN. The power of the permanent members has expanded along with the growth of UN activities. The best example is the budget for peacekeeping activities, which are decided by the Security Council. Formerly the peacekeeping budget was one-third of the regular budget; now it is more than three times the regular budget. The permanent members of the Security Council currently contribute only 37% of the regular budget and a little more for the PKO budget, as compared with nearly 70% of the budget when the UN was established in 1945. The frustration level of the



Ambassador Kitaoka greeting at the UN Tea Ceremony (April, 2006)

general membership is high. This is the background of the confrontational atmosphere at the UN today. Unless the Security Council is reformed to include new, influential countries that understand the frustration of the UN Member States, it may become difficult for the United Nations to continue to be a relevant organization.

Japan's efforts to bring change to the Security Council represent a very important part of UN reform as a whole. Those efforts did not meet with success last year. Nevertheless, I am not disappointed at all. The composition of the Security Council is a world order unto itself. Like other world orders, it was decided after the war by the victor countries. The reform of the Security Council is an effort to change the current world order without resorting to war. It will not succeed so easily. But there is a widespread perception that the Security Council needs to be expanded, including the permanent member category, and Japan should be the number one candidate in that case. We have a just cause, and we have wide and strong support. We will continue to persevere in our efforts to reform the Security Council.

EVENTcalendar

Dates, time or admission fee might be subject to change.
Please make sure to update the latest information on our
website www.cgj.org

Lecture • Forum Film • Festival Workshop

July 8

Japan's Star Festival (Tanabata): Legend & Customs Celebrating Japan's Children's Day through Kamishibai Story- telling & Tachie Puppet-Making The Japan Society

333 E. 47th St., NYC

A live performance introduces children and adults to the Tanabata legend, which originated in China, presented by two Japanese performers, Mitsuteru Matsuda and Suzue Nitobe. The performance is followed by a hands-on session practicing Tanabata's exquisite customs, which include decorating bamboo trees with paper ornaments and tanzaku, thin paper strips for writing wishes, led by origami artist Gay Merrill Gross. From 2 to 4:30pm
Info: 212-832-1155 or www.japansociety.org



Illustration from The Story of Tanabata (Tanabata Monogatari) by Yukihiro Mitani: Copyright © Kamishibai for Kids. Used with permission of the copyright holder.

July 10 to 14, July 17 to 22 Summer Immersion workshop for High School Students, Sum- mer/Fall 2006 Japan Through Film: Making

Short Documentary Film

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

This very interesting approach to discover Japan is provided to high school students. They are invited to explore and discuss issues portrayed in contemporary Japanese cinema with professional filmmakers. In this 10-day workshop, students learn how to produce short documentaries on Japan-related themes through lectures/discussions with independent producers and directors, hands-on training in production, and screenings of great Japanese films, including features and documentaries. Student films will be screened on the final day of the program, followed by a reception. Participants must be high school students as of September 2006. Monday-Friday, July 10-14 & Monday-Friday, July 17-21, 10 am - 4 pm every day. Student film screening and reception, Saturday, July 22 at 2 pm
Info: 212-832-1155 or www.japansociety.org



Photographs courtesy of Downtown Community Television

July 22

Bon Odori Japan Society of Fairfield County Jesup Green, adjacent to the Westport Library, CT

Bon Odori will be held at Jesup Green, adjacent to the Westport Library and just south of the Post Road on the east bank of the Saugatuck River. This summer tradition, the Bon dance (Japanese folk dance) with the beat of the Taiko Masala drummers brings you joy at a time in which our ancestors and their sacri-

fices are remembered and appreciated. Japanese food will be available at Matsu Sushi Restaurant on Jesup Green. 2:30 to 4:30pm. Please confirm the details on the website below.

Info: 203-431-0697 or <http://home.earthlink.net>

August 11

Otsukimi – Moonviewing Concert & Fundraiser with Silent Auction The Hammond Museum and Japanese Stroll Garden

28 Deveau Road, North Salem, NY

Moonviewing is one of Japan's most refined customs. August is the best month for watching the moon, as this is when it seems to shine most beautifully. At the Hammond Museum the annual Moonviewing party is a tradition that was begun by Natalie Hays Hammond in 1966. The Japanese stroll garden, lit by paper lanterns, is a magical setting for this ancient custom, which every August brings together people and traditions of the East and West. A koto and shakuhachi concert is performed as well. The event starts at 6:30pm and the concert starts at 8:30pm. Please call for reservation.

Info: 914-669-5033 or www.hammondmuseum.org

August 21 to 25

Professional Development Course for K-12 Educators From Emaki to Manga: The Development of Japanese Literary Art and Multi-Function- alism

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

This 30 hours course takes an in-depth look at the development of Japanese illustrated literary art from emaki (illustrated hand-scrolls) of the Heian period to modern manga (graphic novels). It also examines multi-functional aspects of Japan's art forms that have been widely accepted by the masses, including byobu (folding screens) and ukiyo-e (woodblock prints), addressing art forms that flourished in different periods as well their social and lit-

erary implications. Course materials, topics and assignments are designed for 8-12 grade educators, especially art, literature and social studies teachers. New York City Department of Education 3-P credits are available. Lunch will be provided, tuition includes all materials.

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

September 8 to 10

Introduction of Zen weekend

Dai Bosatsu Zendo Kongo-Ji

223 Beecher Lake Road, Livingston Manor, NY 12758-6000

DBZ offers an incomparably beautiful setting for those who wish to acquaint themselves with Rinzai Zen Buddhist practice in a monastic environment. Introductory workshops emphasize the basics: zazen (sitting posture and breathing), chanting, formal procedures for meals, and work. Each workshop begins on Friday late afternoon with orientation class, and the weekend includes Morning Service (chanting), zazen, work, vegetarian meals, tea and free study time. Saturday evenings include a talk given by Abbot Eido Shimano Roshi or a senior student.

Info: 845-439-4566 or www.daibosatsu.org/dbzindex.html

Exhibition

Through August 18

The Japan Connection: The 150th Anniversary of Townsend Harris' Arrival in Japan

Cohen Library Atrium

160 Convent Avenue, NYC

In August 1856, Townsend Harris arrived at the port of Shimoda, Japan, to bridge the gulf between two different cultures. Eleven years prior, he had created the means for the youth of New York to form a bridge from the culture of the streets to the world beyond the slums, through education at the Free Academy. Documents, correspondence, journal entries, and images illustrate the remarkable career of a visionary diplomat and educator.

Info: 212-650-7609 or www.cuny.edu/library/exhibits.html

July 5 to August 26

Summer Festival

Art Students Exhibition in NY 2006

Ise Cultural Foundation, NY gallery

555 Broadway, NYC

This special exhibition features art works by some of the top art students from Japan and the United States. Some of the most celebrated art professionals in New York will give awards to selected works.

Info: 212-925-1649 or info@isefoundation.org or www.isefoundation.org

September 11

10th Anniversary New York-Tokyo Friendship Ceramic competition 2006

The Ceramic Artist Friendship Association, Inc.

The Nippon Gallery at The Nippon Club

145 W. 57th St., NYC

This exhibition is brought by the objective to further the cultural ties between the sister cities of New York and Tokyo by encouraging and honoring the creativity of their ceramic artists. Over 100 works are selected by the eminent judges of the competition.

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



Courtesy of The Nippon Club

Through October 15

Best of Friends: R. Buckminster Fuller and Isamu Noguchi

The Noguchi Museum

32-37 Vernon Boulevard, Long Island City, NY 11106

The exhibition "Best of Friends" documents through text, sculptures, photographs, drawings and models the close friendship and shared values of R. Buckminster Fuller and Isamu Noguchi. Each in his own way was dedicated to improving the lot of the common man. Fuller's approach was to improve the environment through the advances in the sci-

ences and technology while Noguchi's approach was to emphasize in his work the responsibility of the artist to society. Both strived in their respective way to support and encourage the vision and dream of the other to make this world a better place for humanity.

Info: 718-204-7088 or info@noguchi.org or www.noguchi.org



Isamu Noguchi, Challenger Memorial, Bayfront Park, Miami, Florida, 1985-1987.

Photograph by Kozo Watabiki.

Courtesy The Noguchi Museum, NY

Performance

July 8 and 9

Samurai Musical by Ryuji Sawa, New York Premiere Performance

Kraire Theatre

85 E. 4th St., (bet 2nd and 4th Ave), NYC

Ryuji Sawa, who debuted on stage at the age of four, has been pursuing his dream of creating an original Japanese musical. Since the huge success of Yume no Wataridori he has been performing as the head of his own traveling samurai musical company in Japan and overseas, appearing in Los Angeles and Las Vegas. This off-Broadway performance entitled SAMURAI MUSICAL, is a step towards an



Courtesy of TKO Entertainment, Inc.

appearance on Broadway in 2007. Ryuji Sawa and his company will show the best of Japanese popular theater including Kabuki dance, instant costume changes, Taiko drumming and sword fighting. Also Sawa will conduct a workshop of Kabuki Dance and Sword Fighting.
Info: 212-206-1878 or www.tkonyc.com

July 27 to 30

Geisha

Gerald W. Lynch Theater at John Jay College
 Amsterdam Ave. between 58th and 59th Sts.



Geisha directed by Ong Keng Sen
 (Artist Gojo Masanosuke)

TAKING CHANCES AND TELLING STORIES

Bones in Prague performed by Saburo Teshigawara

A wall made up of one thousand books, with pages flapping in the wind, a pile of hundreds of discarded shoes, and a surreal arrangement of furniture is the setting of *Bones in Prague*, by contemporary dance master Saburo Teshigawara. It's a rare North American appearance and his first New York engagement in more than a decade.

Created in 1991 at TAT Frankfurt (Theater am Turm) as a solo work for a gallery setting, the piece is a world Teshigawara created himself. In the solo show, he erupts into movements of extreme energy making his body a sculpture, contorting it with movements just as surreal as the backdrop. Manipulating time and space, while creating contrasts and extremes with his body, he has built a work where anything can happen, and it does as sight, sound, and movement collide.

A professional dancer since 1981, and a cult figure in Japan, he formed his own company called KARAS (crow in Japanese) in 1985 with co-founder, dancer Kei Miyata, and began creating fantastic visionary dance-art, with a focus on making works that fuse movement, visual arts, and music by ignoring the norm.

This work is not what you would expect from an ordinary "dance" presentation. Our own violent world seems to be the underlying basis for the setting and performance Teshigawara has us watch, and like an accident, it is something that makes a performance like this even more worth seeing, which might have been his intention in the first place.

Saburo Teshigawara

July 21 and 22nd at 8pm

Rose theatre

Lincoln Center Summer Festival

www.lincolncenter.org



© Bengt Wanselius

Info: 212-721-6500 or www.lincolncenter.org

August 20 September 23

Annual Summer NYC

Beginners Honkyoku Intensive

KiSuiAn Shakuhachi Dojo

625 Greenwich St., NYC

This intensive is for beginners (no experience necessary), and will consist of learning an entire Zen piece (HONKYOKU). Known as a meditation piece, it comes from the ancient Komuso (wandering Zen monks of emptiness) emptying their lives into sound, maybe four or five hun-

Explore the secret world of the enigmatic geisha as Singaporean director Ong Keng Sen returns to the Festival and weaves together a tapestry of tea house stories from geishas, maikos (apprentice geishas), clients, their wives, and the ever-looming Okamasan (mama-sans). Geisha, a new production by TheatreWorks Singapore, takes us on a panoramic journey—from the geisha's innocent childhood, to the stressful years of learning to excel at everything from flower arranging to proper kimono styling, to intricate wig and make-up techniques, to the subtle art of engaged conversation.

dred years ago or more. Ronnie Nyogetsu Reishin Seldin will teach them at the Ki Sui An Shakuhachi Dojo. On September 9th, at Rochester Dojo, another Honkyoku Intensive workshop will be held. Kurahashi Yoshio-Sensei will teach the classes as well.

Info: contact Nyogetsu at 212-207-6724 or nyogetsu@nyogetsu.com

September 27

Gagaku Performance

NPO Gagaku

Institute for Medieval Japanese Studies

Miller Theatre at Columbia University

2960 Broadway at 116th St., NYC

To celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Donald Keene Center of Japanese Culture, a performance of Japanese classical music, Gagaku is presented. NPO Gagaku will perform at Miller Theatre at Columbia University. Gagaku has been performed for over 1200 years and was carefully preserved and handed down to the present as music of the Japanese Imperial Court. Although you can hear it sometimes at Shinto-shrines or Japanese style wedding ceremonies, it is rare even in Japan.

Info: 212-854-7403 or www.columbia.edu/cu/ealac/imjs/

September 30

50th Anniversary Concert: Japanese Classical and Contemporary Dance



Courtesy of Sachiyo Ito Dance Company

THE EVOCATIVE SOUNDS OF THE ASIAN ARTISTS & CONCERTS ORCHESTRA

In a room where people argue daily, making decisions that affect nations all over the world, it's nice to see and hear the sounds of an orchestra whose only agenda is to tackle Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 5, among other pieces, while the loudest voices that are heard are those of opera vocalists. It may sound like an odd place for classical music, but considering that the performance marks the anniversary of Japan's 50th year as a member of the United Nations and the 60th anniversary of the organization, it just makes perfect sense that it takes place in the general assembly hall.

The Asian Artists & Concerts (AAC) orchestra was already in tune and ready to go when its conductor and musical director, Atsushi Yamada stepped out on to the stage, applauded by the audience. A concert of western opera pieces followed with the likes of Sibelius' "Fin-

landia, Op. 26," that was beautifully performed. Highlights of the event soon came as guest singers included sopranos Jee Hyun and Wei Huang, Gerard Powers, and baritone Daniel Ihn-Kyu Lee, singing variations from famous opera scenes including Verdi's La Traviata, Puccini's Madama Butterfly, and Gounod's Romeo et Juliet, while being backed by the evocative sounds of the orchestra.

It was a night filled with magnificently orchestrated music, familiar compositions and talented artists in the inaugural performance of the orchestra. The AAC is an organization that supports young Asian musical artists, and with a group of musicians like this, they have a bright future.

AAC concert at United Nation

May 22 and fall

<http://aacinc.org/>



The Inaugural Concert of the Asian Artists & Concerts orchestra at the UN General Assembly Hall

The Michael Schimmel Center for the Arts, Pace University, NYC

1 Pace Place, NYC

Commemorating several anniversaries, including the 50th of Sachiyo Ito's debut in Japan, there will be a lot of celebrating going on. With a presentation featuring Japanese classical, contemporary, and Okinawan dance, there will be a host of dances for this special occasion. The dances will include traditional pieces like

the Kabuki styled Shigure Saigyo (Saigyo in the Autumnal Rain), performed by Sachiyo Ito and Shogo Fujima along with smaller and newer pieces called "Small Works" with two revivals on the theme of the moon, choreographed and performed by Ito. With guest artists from Okinawa, this will be a night of various dance forms by way of Japan.

Info: 212-627-0265 or www.dancejapan.com

Government of Japan to Confer Awards

In the coming months, three distinguished New York area individuals will be honored for their outstanding contributions to the promotion of the understanding of Japan.

Jagdish N. Bhagwati, University Professor, Columbia University, is the leading international trade scholar today. He is widely recognized for his seminal theoretical research as well as for his work with international economic organizations such as the WTO and GATT. During the era of trade disputes between Japan and the U.S., his scholarly and popular writings helped to strengthen



Jagdish N. Bhagwati

Japan's international standing. Professor Bhagwati will receive The Order of the Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Star.

Also from Columbia University, Professor Carol Gluck, George Sansom Professor of History, today's leading scholar of the cultural and intellectual history of modern Japan, will be awarded The Order of the Rising Sun, Gold Rays with Neck Ribbon. Professor Gluck has inspired generations of students and has made extraordinary efforts to promote the development of Japanese studies in the United States and internationally.



Carol Gluck

Isaac Shapiro was born in Tokyo and educated in Japan until 1945. He later

came to the United States, attended Columbia University Law School, and embarked on a successful legal career. Mr. Shapiro served as an officer and director of Japan Society of New York for a total of 14 years. During his tenure, Japan Society underwent major expansion, including the construction of Japan House. The Order of the Rising Sun, Gold Rays with Neck Ribbon will also be conferred to Mr. Shapiro.



Isaac Shapiro

Ambassador Motoatsu Sakurai will award the decorations during special conferment ceremonies to be held at his residence.

VISIT JAPAN

OKINAWA 沖縄

“Mensore!” Welcome to Our Subtropical Resort

Okinawa is Japan's southern most prefecture, and is comprised of 160 islands of which 49 are populated. Two and half-hours away from Tokyo by plane; Okinawa is Japan's only semitropical area. Its bright sunshine, beautiful beaches, historic castle ruins and assorted activities make Okinawa an ideal



Emerald Beach, Ocean Expo Park
©Okinawa Commemorative National Government

resort destination. Geographically separated from Japan, Okinawans developed their own cultural traditions, which tourists can fully enjoy when they visit the region.

“Unique” is the best word to describe Okinawan culture. As an independent country, the Ryukyu Kingdom lasted until the 19th century (1879). During the “era of great trade” from the 14th to the 16th century, Okinawa prospered due to its favorable geographical location and vigorous maritime trade with China, Korea, and other Asian countries. Okinawan culture was influenced by those countries but developed its own “unique” style, which is presently reflected in traditional crafts (pottery, textiles, and lacquerware) and

performing arts (traditional dances).

Visitors can also sample Okinawan cuisine, which contributes to the longevity of the Okinawa people, highest in the world. The Okinawan diet is well balanced, rich in protein, and vegetables. An unhurried pace of life and temperate climate throughout the year also contributes to their prolonged existence. People get together to sing and dance while enjoying “awamori” sake and locally brewed beer. Known for their gracious hospitality, Okinawans are friendly people who welcome everyone.



OKINAWA

Visit Japan Campaign Gets A Push from JETS

Alumni of the Japan Exchange and Teaching Program (JET) are doing their part to promote tourism to Japan. On May 2, at a ceremony at Ambassador Motoatsu Sakurai's residence, the Japanese government officially named former JET participants in New York "Special Representatives" for the Visit Japan Campaign.

The campaign's goal is to attract ten million foreign tourists annually to Japan by 2010. The new representatives join the



Japan's Goodwill Tourism Ambassador Puffy AmiYumi

Japanese pop music duo Puffy AmiYumi, who were appointed "Goodwill Ambassadors" for the Visit Japan Campaign earlier this year. The group is known in the U.S.

for the animated series *Hi Hi Puffy AmiYumi*, shown on the Cartoon Network. The shows cute cartoon anime and futuristic fashion highlight the cool image of Japanese pop culture. Puffy AmiYumi performed on a float during the 2005 Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade; this summer they will tour the East Coast as part of a Visit Japan Campaign promotion.

Since 1987, the JET program has given young people around the world a chance to live and work in Japan. Placed in schools and local government offices throughout the country, they promote foreign language education and international exchange.

With cross-cultural perspectives, former JETs are perfectly suited to promote travel and tourism to Japan. During the ceremony, Ms. Jennifer Olayon, President of the JET Alumni Association of New York which has 1,000 active members, said "Drawing on our past experience living in



JET Alumni at Amb.'s Residence

Japan, we would like to promote its wonderful culture and become a model for others to follow." The Special Representatives will encourage tourism to Japan in their day to day activities and provide ideas and advice to help attract more international visitors to Japan.

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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 4.

Mini Quiz The top two reasons Americans travel to Japan are to visit historical/traditional sites and to experience Japanese culture. What would be the 3rd?

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