

JAPAN

CALLING



March 2009



Japanese Prime Minister Mr. Taro Aso addressing the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting in Davos, Switzerland, on January 31, 2009

Photo Courtesy: Cabinet Public Relations Office, Japan

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JAPANESE PRIME MINISTER'S PRESCRIPTIONS FOR REVIVING THE WORLD ECONOMY



Japanese Prime Minister Mr. Taro Aso (centre) along with other eminent dignitaries at the WEF Annual Meeting in Davos

Photo Courtesy: Cabinet Public Relations Office, Japan

H.E. Mr. Taro Aso, Prime Minister of Japan, made a Special Address entitled **“My Prescriptions for Reviving the World Economy”** on the occasion of the Annual Meeting of the World Economic Forum (WEF), held at the Congress Center in Davos, Switzerland, on January 31, 2009.

Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Aso said that “the world economy is now facing a crisis that is said to occur only once a century. Today, I wish to share with you my thoughts on what the world should do, and the role of Japan within that context.”

Given below is an extract of Prime Minister Aso’s speech, in which he refers to the Asian Economy in particular:

The Asian Economy

It is Asia that holds the greatest potential of anywhere in the world with about 40% of the world’s population and an average economic growth rate of roughly 4% in recent years. It is

important for this region to contribute to the world economy as a center of growth open to the world. I have already incorporated funding of 10 billion yen (approximately US\$100 million) into our supplementary budget as emergency assistance to Asia. Furthermore, it will be necessary to strengthen regional cooperation towards strengthening Asia’s growth potential and expanding domestic demand.

For example, Japan has been proactively cooperating with sub-region-wide developments, such as Mekong region development or the Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor. In addition, toward the upcoming East Asia Summit, Japan will consider various concrete measures together with Asian countries, including utilization of the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA). Needless to say, Japan will support Asian countries by mobilizing funds ranging from Official Development Assistance (ODA), Other Official Flows

(OOF) to private capital. For that purpose, Japan is ready to provide ODA not less than 1.5 trillion yen in total (US\$17 billion equivalent).

Meanwhile, in Asia, there has been progress in the strengthening of the Chiang Mai Initiative, a regional financial cooperation initiative. In addition, last December Japan hosted the Japan-China-Republic of Korea (ROK) Trilateral Summit Meeting, which was held independently of other meetings for

the first time. The combined economies of Japan, China, and the ROK, at 15.9% of the total global GDP, exceed the combined figure of Germany, the UK, and France. This trilateral summit will be held on a regular basis, with strengthening of future trilateral cooperation to be advanced directly by the leaders. This is a historic first step, and I am firmly convinced that a deepening of Asia's regional cooperation such as this will also lead to the recovery of the world economy in due course.

(The complete text of Prime Minister Aso's above speech can be accessed at: http://www.kantei.go.jp/foreign/asospeech/2009/01/31davos_e.html)

STATEMENT BY PRIME MINISTER TARO ASO

(Concerning the “Draft Law on the Penalisation of Acts of Piracy and Measures against Acts of Piracy” and the Cabinet Decision on the Approval of the Prime Minister concerning Maritime Police Operations)

13 March 2009
(Provisional Translation)

(excerpt)

Today, the Cabinet took the decision to approve the “Draft Law on the Penalisation of Acts of Piracy and Measures against Acts of Piracy”, also known as the “Anti-Piracy Measures Bill”. This bill establishes a legal system for measures against piracy, consistent with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

The Cabinet also took a decision “On the Approval of the Prime Minister concerning Maritime Police Operations”. This is a decision to dispatch the Self-Defense Forces, as an emergency measure during the short term, to conduct maritime police operations provided for in the Self-Defense Forces Law so as to counter piracy off the coast of Somalia and in the Gulf of Aden.

For Japan, which is surrounded by the sea and for which foreign trade holds a high degree of importance, including its dependence on the importation of a large proportion of major resources, ensuring the security of maritime traffic is critical for its economy and society and for the daily lives of its people.

In particular, acts of piracy have recently been frequent and have increased rapidly off the coast of Somalia and in the Gulf of Aden. These waters are a major route for vessels related to Japan, and these acts of piracy constitute a threat to both Japan and the international community and are an issue that must be addressed with great urgency. In these waters, there have been not only damage to the vessels of Japanese companies but also

incidents of Japanese nationals being taken hostage, and there is concern that further such incidents may arise. The Japanese Shipowners' Association and others have urged the government to reinforce its measures against acts of piracy, including the development of a legal system.

In keeping with the responsibilities that Japan should clearly discharge as a member of international society, the Anti-Piracy Measures Bill which the Cabinet took the decision to approve today establishes acts of piracy as criminal acts under Japanese law and establishes punitive provisions for such acts while also stipulating among other things the expansion of protection to vessels of all countries, not just those of Japan. I am determined to devote my utmost efforts to the enactment of this bill.

In particular, with regard to piracy off the coast of Somalia and in the Gulf of Aden, countries have been requested *inter alia* to dispatch naval vessels, based on a series of resolutions including Resolution 1816 of the United Nations Security Council. In response, international measures to counter piracy have already begun, with countries and organisations in Europe, North America, Asia and elsewhere dispatching *inter alia* naval vessels. In order to protect Japanese lives and property, as an emergency measure in the short term until the Anti-Piracy Measures Bill is enacted, Japan, for its part, has decided first to dispatch its Self-Defense Forces to these waters to conduct maritime police operations provided for in the Self-Defense Forces Law.

International Conference on “Changing Global Profile of Japanese Studies: TRENDS AND PROSPECTS”

held at JNU

By: Dr. P.A. George, Professor – Japanese Language & Culture Studies, JNU

The Centre for Japanese, Korean and North East Asian Studies (CJKNEAS), School of Language, Literature and Culture Studies (SLL&CS), Jawaharlal Nehru University, organized a 3-day International Conference on “Changing Global Profile of Japanese Studies: Trends and Prospects” from 6 March to 8th March 2009. Professor B. B. Bhattacharya, the Vice Chancellor of Jawaharlal Nehru University, inaugurated the conference in the presence of H.E. Hideaki Domichi, Ambassador of Japan to India, and Mr. Nao Endo, Director General, Japan Foundation, New Delhi Office. Prof. Savitri Viswanathan, retired professor of Japanese Studies in Delhi University and one of the pioneers of Japanese studies in India, and Prof. Kazuhiko Komatsu, a renowned professor of Cultural Anthropology and Folk Culture Studies in Japan, delivered keynote addresses, representing India and Japan respectively.

Funded by the Japan Foundation and the Jawaharlal Nehru University, this conference was aimed:

1. To bring eminent scholars and academics of Japanese studies (including Japanese arts, society, language, linguistics, literature, culture, economics, history, foreign policy, etc.) from various countries to a common platform to discuss about the status of Japanese studies in their respective countries, and to share their experiences in the light of changing profile of Japanese studies abroad.
2. To discuss about the existing limitations and practical problems which obstruct the smooth proliferation of Japanese studies in various foreign countries including India.



H.E. Mr. Hideaki Domichi, Ambassador of Japan to India, making his address at the Conference

3. To analyze conventional and unconventional modes of Japanese study programs offered in various countries and their impact.
4. To discuss about the role of area studies and cultural studies for cementing bilateral or multilateral relations.
5. To promote Japanese studies in India and other developing countries for a better understanding of Japan. This will promote better relationship between Japan and other countries, specially, in the developing world.
6. To develop a global network among scholars and academics of Japanese studies, using the latest technology.

Experts of Japanese Studies from France, Greece, the Netherlands, Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam, Japan and India participated in this conference. Forty research papers were presented in a total of ten academic sessions. State and prospects of Japanese studies in various countries around the world, Japanese language education and teaching methodology, comparative linguistic studies, Japanese literature, grammar, society, religion, art, Japanese popular and high culture, Japan’s foreign policy, cultural diplomacy, Japan’s relations with India, Korea, Russia, Europe, etc., were the major focus of discussions during this conference.

The three-day conference was concluded with an enlightening valedictory speech delivered by Professor K. V. Kesavan, yet another pioneer of Japanese studies in India.



A view of the eminent speakers at the inaugural session of the Conference

PATH FROM INDIA, PATH FROM JAPAN

Lecture Series on India-Japan Relations

The Year 2007 was celebrated as Japan-India Friendship Year to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the conclusion of Japan-India Cultural Agreement. A variety of events numbering over 400 were held in India and Japan throughout the Friendship Year.

One of the important events of the Friendship Year was a LECTURE SERIES ON JAPAN-INDIA RELATIONS from ancient times to the modern times. The lectures were held every month from January to December 2007. The speakers, who are well-known authorities in their respective fields both from Japan and India, delivered lectures on cultural, political, and industrial exchanges between the two countries. The themes of the lectures and the names of the speakers are as follows:

Todaiji and Bodhisena

Dr. Kosei Morimoto
Chief Abbot, Todaiji Temple

Hindu Gods and Goddesses Rooted in Japan

Prof. Lokesh Chandra
Director, International Academy of Indian Culture

Gion Matsuri (Gion Festival) and India-Japan Exchange through Fabric Dyeing Technology

Mr. Sachio Yoshioka
Fabric Dyeing Artist

Indian Calicoes - Its influence in East Asian Countries with Special Reference to Japan

Ms. Sujata Parsai
Coordinator-Textiles, TAPI Collection

Indian Ideas Rooted in Japanese Mind

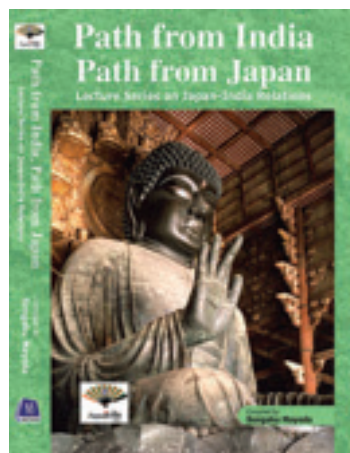
Prof. Sengaku Mayeda
President, Eastern Institute

Legends of the Indian Gods in Japan - The Transformation of the Seven Gods of Good Fortune and Daikoku (Mahakala)

Prof. Yasuaki Nara
Professor Emeritus, Komazawa University

Sanskrit, Kana, Siddham

Prof. Chisho Namai
Former President, Koyasan University



Meeting of Okakura Tenshin and Rabindranath Tagore as a Great Opportunity

Prof. Kazuo Azuma
Professor Emeritus, Reitaku University

The Indian Impacts on Japanese Traditional Performing Arts

Prof. Takako Inoue
Faculty of International Relations, Daito Bunka University

Medieval Commercial Activities in the Indian Ocean as Revealed from Chinese Ceramic-sherds and South Indian and Sri Lankan Inscriptions

Prof. Noboru Karashima
Professor Emeritus, University of Tokyo

Netaji and Japan

Prof. Krishna Bose
Chairperson, Netaji Research Bureau

Rash Behari Bose: Between Nation and "People's Asia"

Prof. Nobuko Nagasaki
Ryukoku University

Japan-India Exchanges through Manufacturing

Mr. Osamu Suzuki
Chairman & CEO, Suzuki Motor Corporation

The texts of this historic lecture series were compiled by Prof. Sengaku Mayeda, President, Eastern Institute, and published in Japanese under the title of "*Indo kara no michi, Nihon kara no michi*" by Shuppan Sinsha, Japan, in 2008. The English translation of the lecture series has now been published under the title of "PATH FROM INDIA, PATH FROM JAPAN" by Northern Book Centre, New Delhi. The Foreword for the book is written by Mr. Yasukuni Enoki, former Ambassador of Japan to India, and the Afterword is written by Mr. Nobuo Ohashi, Chairman, Japanese Executive Committee for the Japan-India Friendship Year.

We sincerely hope that these publications, which trace, introduce and enlighten us about the varied dimensions of Japan-India relations from ancient times to modern times, will help in further strengthening our historical bonds.

Taking this opportunity, we express our profound gratitude to all the speakers for their invaluable contributions. We would also like to place on record our sincere appreciation for the whole-hearted support of the local collaborators, namely, India International Centre and FICCI in New Delhi; Calcutta University and Netaji Bhawan in Kolkata; University of Madras and CP Ramaswamy Iyer Fund in Chennai; Indian Merchants Chamber in Mumbai; and Pune University in Pune. We also convey our thanks to the Indian Council for Cultural Relations for their cooperation.

VOYAGE TO JAPAN - THE NIPPON

By: Prerana Saharia - X, CSKM Public School
(2008 JENESYS participant)

It was a thundering moment for my friends and me, when I got the news that I have been selected to visit Japan for a study-tour for ten days. The programme was organized by the Embassy of Japan in India and the International Cooperation Exchange Center, International Exchange Division, under the programme called, "Japan-East Asia Network of Exchange for Students & Youths." The objective of the programme is to deepen mutual understanding among young people who will assume important roles in the next generation in the East Asian countries, and to promote mutual understanding among the peoples of East Asia Region.

Our programme (27th May to 5th June '08), consisting of 54 students from different parts of India, included cultural and educational exchange. We all got together at Hotel Samrat, New Delhi. After the orientation and DVD presentation by the officials of the Embassy, we all rushed into our Japan Airlines flight like chirping birds and buzzing bees.

Our First Day: We were at the Narita International Airport, Tokyo, my dream place, and after a while, we were at the Imperial Palace which lies in the heart of Tokyo City. The way from the airport to the city was full of breathtaking sights and we got a glimpse of the Tokyo Disneyland and the Giant Ferris Wheel. The stop at the 'Service Area' along the highway tinged with restrooms, restaurants and commodity shops was eye-catching. We all got exhausted and checked in at the Hotel Grand Palace.

The Second Day: Had a wonderful sightseeing around the city and drove across the Suspension Bridge over the Tokyo Bay and then towards Tokyo Tower, Supreme Court, the Kabuki Theater Hall, and other beautiful government office buildings. Besides, we got to visit the Miraikan -The National Museum of Emerging Science & Innovation, where we got a chance to see the first humanoid robot - Asimo.

The Third Day: We were blasting on Kyushu Region at Miyazaki Prefecture. An orientation was given by the officials about the Miyazaki Prefecture, and later checked in at Hotel Seasons in Nichinan city having a panoramic view, overlapping the Pacific Ocean. The touching moment was when we interacted with the students of the Nichinan Kuroshio Special Needs School and the Nichinan High School. We took part in a slew of workshops and cultural exchange programmes in both the schools, including exchanging Indian & Japanese food.

In the evening we were introduced to our hosts and were escorted to our respective host families. It was a melting moment when I went on a shopping spree with them, and there were invaluable gifts showcased at 100-Yen shops where we would get every item from food to drinks, toiletries, utensils, and many more. It was an exciting and inspiring overnight spent with them, enjoying homely food, wearing Japanese kimonos, and learning their customs, apart from learning some broken Japanese words.

The Fourth Day: Our vibration of thought dragged us back to Nichinan High School and we took part in a workshop on environment and related issues. After the farewell lunch party with everyone's host families and a few students of the Nichinan High School, we played a variety of party games like Antaakshari, Dumb Charades, etc. Then we exchanged emotional farewells and moved towards Miyazaki city. On the way, we got a golden chance to stop on the wayside and spend some good time on the sands of the Pacific.



JENESYS participants at Asakusa, Tokyo

At Miyazaki, we were exposed to the Miyazaki Science Centre, The Eco-Green Plaza, and a Recycling Plant where we were taught to make bookmarks from recycled paper. We were also given a demonstration on various techniques used to operate and recycle wastes, including paper, cans, plastic and other garbage, as well as water. It shows the Japanese concern and love for hygienic environment and their belief in their culture and traditions. In the evening fiesta, we attended a traditional Japanese wedding, a rare opportunity for Indians, and witnessed traditional Japanese folk songs, namely, Murakami Sagendo.

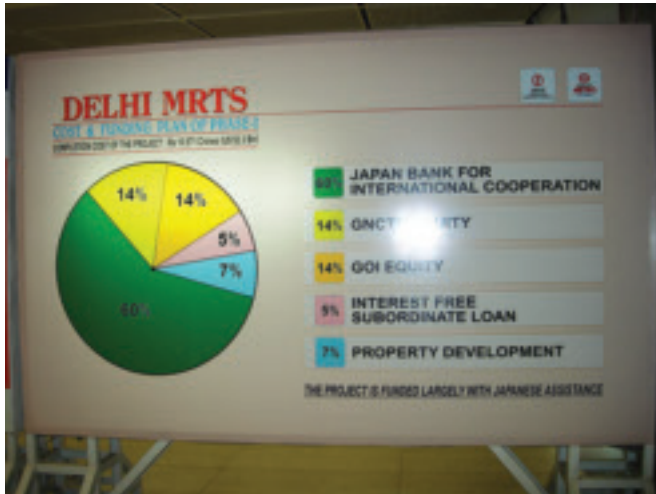
The Fifth Day: We spent in Hayakawa learning about the organic farm developed in that area and, in between, the rain brought a lot of fun feeling, very much close to the nature. Later, we had a workshop on our daily findings during our stay in Miyazaki.

The Sixth Day: We flew back to Tokyo and visited the Aqua City - Odaiba, located on the banks of Tokyo Bay. Then, we attended a seminar at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and gave a brief presentation of our workshop findings.

The Seventh Day: The day began with a trip to the Asakusa Temple and did some shopping. In the afternoon, we visited the Edo-Tokyo Museum which depicts the ancient history of Japan. For a moment, everyone trembled, shook, and stood still! We were honoured with a farewell party at Hotel Grand Palace before the countdown started for our return to India.

The Eighth Day: We were escorted to the airport to fly back to India. At the airport, while bidding farewell, Manahos, my host family, Umeshi, the guide, and officials of the Japanese Government, everyone was shedding tears, some for the joy of returning home but more than that for the sorrow of departing from the people who are so keen about learning more about our country, people who are so loving and hospitable, the people who reside in "The Land of the Rising Sun."

OPENING OF THE METRO MUSEUM, DELHI



Plaque at the Central Secretariat Metro Station

On January 1st, 2009, the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation opened South Asia's First Metro Museum at the Patel Chowk Metro Station. The museum depicts the story of the Delhi Metro and how it revolutionized India's public transport scenario. The Museum is open for visitors from 10 am to 4 pm on all days except Mondays, and entry for visitors is allowed with tokens or smart cards only.

The Museum chronicles the history of the Delhi Metro through various exhibits, showing how the project commenced and progressed through the years to its present level, and also outlines the future plans for expansion of the metro network in Delhi and the National Capital Region in the coming years.

Interestingly, the inauguration of Delhi Metro's service took place in the year 2002, when Japan and India were celebrating the 50th anniversary of the establishment of their



The Museum Curator explaining about the exhibits to Mr. Kojiro Uchiyama, Director – Japan Information Centre, Embassy of Japan

diplomatic relations. As is commonly known, about 60% of the project cost of Phase-I was financed by the Government of Japan by way of a soft loan through the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA, former Japan Bank for International Cooperation), and the Government of Japan continues to support Phase-II of the project through a JICA loan. There is a plaque at the Central Secretariat Metro Station, acknowledging Japan's contribution to the project.

The exhibits at the museum include some defining moments in the metro's history including a dateline and flags used to flag off the first train in December 2002. Also on display is the management style and work culture adopted by DMRC along with detailed panels explaining technological marvels like the extra-dosed bridge and construction of the Chawri Bazaar station, 25 metres below the ground. Besides, a model of the metro train, a strip of the rail track, models of key stations like Tees Hazari, framed certificates of the numerous awards the DMRC has bagged, and a 'tooth' taken from a tunnel boring machine, are among other exhibits on display.

During a recent visit to the Metro Museum by staff members of the Japan Information Centre, the Museum Curator explained in detail about the various exhibits and provided several bits of interesting information on the Delhi Metro, such as, the Delhi Metro is the only Metro system in the world to use both standard as well as broad-gauge tracks; that the Delhi Metro was recently awarded a certificate by the UN for preventing the emission of 90,000 tons of carbon, and that the Delhi Metro has 7 lady drivers operating its trains, etc.. He also mentioned that the museum is expected to move to its new permanent location within the next 2 years.



Exhibits at the Metro Museum

IMPORTANT EMBASSY EVENTS HELD IN THE RECENT PAST

GOVERNMENT OF JAPAN EXTENDS US\$ 145,180 GRANT ASSISTANCE FOR TWO GRASSROOTS PROJECTS

The Embassy of Japan in India, under its scheme 'Grant Assistance for Grassroots Projects', decided on 25th February 2009 to extend grant assistance totaling US\$ 145,180 (approximately equivalent to Rs.70 lacs) to two Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) to support their respective projects as detailed below:

- (1) **The Akshaya Patra Foundation:** A sum of US\$69,078 for their project to set up new chapatti/roti making machineries in Jaipur to provide free mid-day meal service for around 40,000 students studying at government primary schools.
- (2) **College of Continuing and Non-Formal Education, Allahabad Agricultural Institute-Deemed University:** A sum of US\$ 79,102 for their project for the extension of their building, in order to provide effective training programs for rural women, sustainable agriculture training and food processing activity in Allahabad, Uttar Pradesh.

GOVERNMENT OF JAPAN EXTENDS US\$ 76,845 GRANT ASSISTANCE TO ISHWAR CHARITABLE TRUST FOR ITS GRASSROOTS PROJECT

The Embassy of Japan in India, under its scheme 'Grant Assistance for Grassroots Projects', decided on 15th December 2008 to extend grant assistance totaling US\$ 76,845 (approximately equivalent to Rs.38 lacs) to the following Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) to support their project as detailed below:

- (1) **Ishwar Charitable Trust:** A sum of US\$76,845 for their project to upgrade conditions of their facility, which provides ophthalmic services free of charge or at nominal fees to the underprivileged and aged people in rural areas in Haryana, NOIDA, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, and the slum areas in Delhi.

VISIT OF SPECIAL ENVOYS OF THE PRIME MINISTER OF JAPAN TO INDIA

Special Envoys of the Prime Minister of Japan, Mr. Masakazu TOYODA and Ambassador Yoshinori KATORI, met on December 12, 2008, with H.E. Mr. Kamal Nath, Minister of Commerce and Industry, Mr. Shivshankar Menon, Secretary of the Ministry of External Affairs, and Mr. Montek Singh Ahluwalia, Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission. The Envoys expressed their condolences in respect of the act of terrorism that occurred in Mumbai, to which the Indian side expressed its appreciation and stressed its intention to cope with terrorism in cooperation with the relevant countries including Japan.

The Envoys also exchanged views on the appropriate policy to pursue in order to promote economic growth and development in Asia in light of the current global financial and economic crisis.

The Indian side welcomed Japan's views explained by the Envoys, and stressed the importance of the early implementation of Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor project, which will be a good precedent for the sub-region-wide development in Asia, as well as the necessity of the East Asia Summit and ASEAN plus 3 Summit meetings to be held as soon as possible.

We are pleased to inform the readers of Japan Calling about the forthcoming exhibition

SHARAKU
interpreted by Japan's
Contemporary Artists

On view from
28th March to 9th April, 2009

At
Lalit Kala Akademi
Rabindra Bhawan, Ferozeshah Road
New Delhi 110001

Exhibition Timings
11:00 am to 7:00 pm

Organized by:
The Japan Foundation, New Delhi

MY VISIT TO JAPAN

By: Sangeeta Prabhu,
Consulate General of Japan, Mumbai

As a participant of the 'Study Program for Local Staff in Cultural and PR Section' of Japanese overseas diplomatic establishments, I had an opportunity to visit Japan from 30th October to 6th November, 2008. The program was conducted by the Public Diplomacy Planning Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA).

I experienced the courtesy and hospitality of the Japanese throughout my stay in Japan. Our schedule was meticulously planned by MOFA. The program gave us an in depth understanding of the culture, education, technology of Japan, and its society.

Japan is ecologically balanced and environmentally friendly, in spite of being the most advanced and industrialized nation. The measures taken to conserve nature and preserve environment is evident almost everywhere.

Passing through the streets of Tokyo, we observed the line of skyscrapers, the well-maintained roads, gardens, office premises and shops. Everything looked very well planned and perfect – discipline of the pedestrians and vehicle drivers and the people too in their formal attire.

In Tokyo, we first proceeded to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) for an orientation program. Our schedule was study-based and we visited the offices of Japan National Tourist Organisation (JNTO), Japan Student Services Organisation (JASSO), Japan Foundation, Foreign Press Centre (FPC), and NHK Radio and Television to learn about their roles and functions

During our visit to the National Diet, we could understand the political structure of Japan. At Kitajima Shibori, a small scale industry, the workers worked diligently whilst the proprietor of the company took us around his factory. At the Kojimachi Junior High School, we met the Principal who explained about the Japanese education system. It was amusing to see the school children in their English conversation class and the music class.

The commitment of the Japanese towards energy conservation was obvious at National Panasonic. The high tech Eco & Ud House with intelligent security systems, bio-active bathroom, laundry room, and kitchen with advanced equipments and gadgets were labor saving.

Japan is famous for its anime and at the Animation Studio we enjoyed the director editing the sounds of the animation characters.

Many international students go to Japan to study a wide range of subjects. Recently, 'Digital Content' is fast gaining



Maiko and Geiko at Gion, Kyoto

popularity with the students of mass media, film and advertising industry. At Digital Hollywood University in Akihabara, we saw the works of many Japanese and international students. Later, we explored the electronic shops at Akihabara which have a huge variety of equipments. We noticed that many tourists were enthralled with the goods that were sold at very reasonable prices.

At Harajuku, we could feel the pulse of the Japanese youth culture as we strolled around the streets lined with trendy shops with colourful clothes and accessories.

Our ex-Consul General offered to guide me around Asakusa, a district famous for the Sensouji Temple and Ginza which is Tokyo's famous shopping district with restaurants and has the best of the world's most exclusive and expensive fashion stores and the famous Mitsukoshi Department Store. Later that night, I went with my friend to the Tokyo Tower and from the Observatory I watched Tokyo city with its colourful neon lights.

Transportation in Japan is well developed and the train transportation is well organized. The rail transportation network of Japan Railways is widely connected. While traveling from Tokyo to Kyoto, we had to take the local subway which was jam-packed due to the peak hour rush. But we were excited at the prospect of traveling by the Shinkansen (Bullet Train) to Kyoto. The Shinkansen with a high speed of 300 km per hour, serves as the core of Japan's rail transportation and is the key to comfortable and speedy travel in Japan.

Most Japanese live a modern way of life. But the culture and traditions in Japan are deep-rooted and have flourished for thousands of years and still survive.



In Kyoto, we traveled around the city by bus. Kyoto is the old capital of Japan lined with many beautiful temples and shrines. We visited the elegant and breath taking Kinkakuji Temple (Golden Pavilion) built in the 14th century and the wonderful Daitokuji Temple. This was followed by a visit to Nishinjin Textile Industrial (Kimono) Association, where we watched the artisans weaving beautiful fabrics in gold brocade using the traditional handloom and saw many exquisite kimonos on display and sale. We also witnessed a Kimono Fashion Show and bought some handicrafts as souvenirs.

At the Hosomi Museum, we experienced the traditional tea ceremony (cha-no-yu). The demonstration of tea-making was soothing and taught us how to appreciate and drink the green tea with sweets. The Hosomi Museum has many arts works of

different eras including paintings, calligraphy, sculpture, ceramic, lacquer ware, textiles and metal objects. In the evening, we went to the Kyoto International Manga Museum and saw thousands and thousands of manga for all ages and groups. We also had the opportunity to see exhibits of participants of the World Manga Exhibition.

At night, we walked the Hanami-Koji, a street lined with beautiful old buildings, tea houses and restaurants in Gion where we spotted Maiko (apprentice Geisha) and Geiko (Geishas) and requested them to pose for some pictures.

The following day we visited the magnificent Kiyomizu Temple. We considered ourselves lucky to see Buddha idol which we learnt was open to public once in 25 years. As we came down the temple, we were enchanted with the line of shops selling many Japanese souvenirs and sweets.

At the Gekkeikan Ookura Memorial House, we learnt about the traditional process of sake brewing. While enjoying the exhibits, we heard sake brewing songs and were later offered sake for tasting.

Eagerly looking forward to our home stays, the perfect opportunity to experience first hand Japanese life, we traveled from Kyoto to Osaka by bus.

In Osaka, I met my host family at the International Centre. She was an elegant and energetic lady, and immediately took me to the splendid Osaka castle. On returning home, she cooked Japanese food taking into consideration my restriction of pork and beef. I watched her with admiration as she laid an



Kiyomizu Temple, Kyoto

elaborate spread of delicious Japanese food. The following day she drove me to Nara, introduced me to her brother, and together they showed me around Nara Deer Park and the magnificent Todaiji Temple, treated me to a sumptuous lunch and brought me back to Shin-Osaka Station where I met my co-participants for our return trip to Tokyo.

In **Hiratsuka City**, I had an extended stay at my Japanese friend's home in Kanagawa Prefecture. My friend and her parents drove me to Hakone (famous for hot springs) and Kamakura (famous for shrines and temples) for sight-seeing, showed me a Sumo wrestling practice in Hiratsuka, a dolphin show at Enoshima, took me to a karaoke bar, and helped me with all my shopping. I was very much moved with the kindness and affection of all the adults and children who made me a part of their family.

During my trip I had the chance to relish a variety of Japanese cuisine which I found very delicious and healthy. However, food is very expensive in Japan.

My visit to Japan was an enriching experience. The study program helped me understand the various aspects of Japan and its people. I am impressed with the infrastructure, technol-



Sumo Practice at Hiratsuka City, Kanagawa Prefecture

ogy, time management, hospitality, and culture of the Japanese. I am very touched with the courtesies extended to me officially and the kindness of my personal friends. The study program opened my vision to Japan and the Japanese people who are modern but simple, friendly and family oriented, with a willingness to always assist and help.

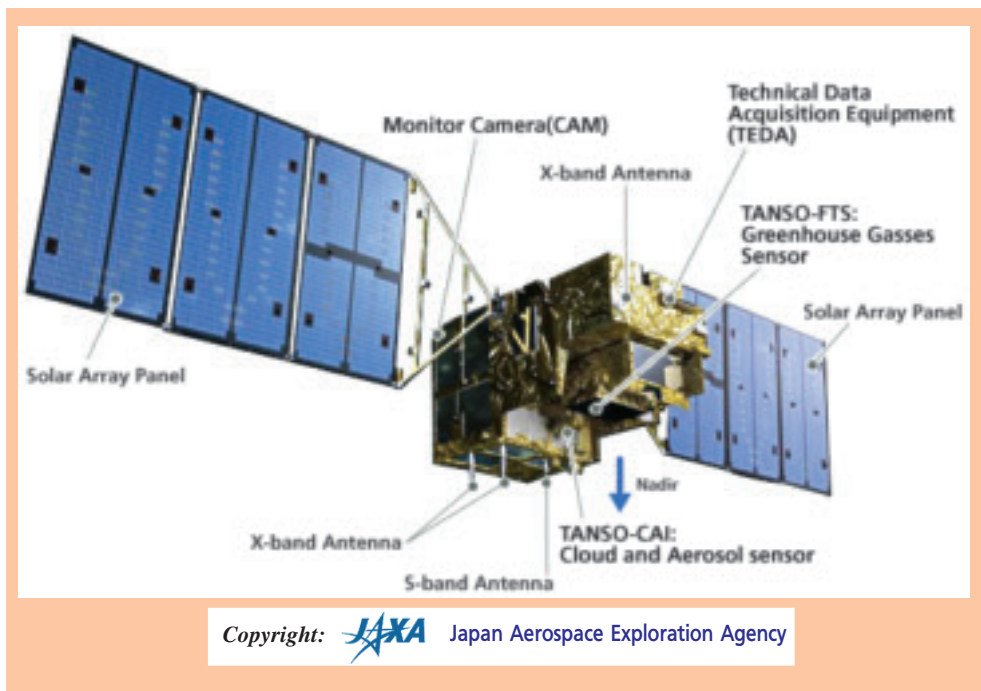
JAPAN LAUNCHES IBUKI (GOSAT) SATELLITE

Mitsubishi Heavy Industries, Ltd. and the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) launched the Greenhouse Gases Observing Satellite "IBUKI" (GOSAT) aboard the H-IIA Launch Vehicle No.15 (H-IIA F15), at 12:54:00 p.m. on January 23, 2009 (Japan Standard Time, JST) from the Tanegashima Space Center.

The launch vehicle flew smoothly and, at about 16 minutes after liftoff, the separation of the IBUKI was confirmed.

At the time of the launch, the weather was cloudy, a wind speed was 11.4 meters/second from the northwest, and the temperature was 12.4 degrees Celsius.

The Greenhouse Gases Observing Satellite "IBUKI" (GOSAT) is a collaborative project by JAXA, the National Institute for Environmental Studies (NIES,) and the Ministry of the Environment (MOE) to provide the world's first satellite



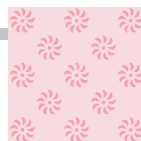
Copyright:  Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency

to observe global greenhouse gasses from space. Data acquired by the "IBUKI" will be utilized to learn the "current" status of the earth concerning global warming and to contribute to a better future for all mankind.



Web Japan, a Premier Online Source of English-language Information on Japan and the Japanese

<http://web-japan.org>



Web Japan for Japanophiles

If you need the latest information on Japan or the Japanese people, or when you require highly reliable information, we suggest that you start by accessing Web Japan. Web Japan provides information concerning Japan, in various fields, including traditional and contemporary Japanese culture and social circumstances.



NIPPONIA

<http://web-japan.org/nipponia/index.html>

NIPPONIA is a quarterly magazine introducing contemporary Japanese culture and society to people all over the world. The print version of the magazine is available at Japanese Embassies and Consulates.

Japan Fact Sheet

<http://web-japan.org/factsheet/index.html>

Concise introductions of typical topics related to themes such as Japanese geography, economy and culture.



Trends in Japan

<http://web-japan.org/trends/index.html>

Short, engaging dispatches on the latest trends in Japanese business and economy; lifestyle; science and technology; fashion; arts and entertainment; sports; and people. Monthly features give you a more in-depth look at what's happening in Japan.



Kids Web Japan

<http://web-japan.org/kidsweb/index.html>

Kids Web Japan provides fun content that helps children learn about Japan and the Japanese. The site is widely used in elementary and middle school classrooms around the world as a learning material.



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