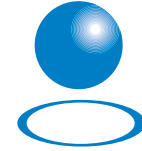


JAPAN

CALLING



September 2009



Prime Minister of Japan and his Cabinet (inaugurated on 16 September 2009)

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CONTENTS

• Inauguration of the Hatoyama Cabinet	P. 2
• Video Message delivered by H.E. Mr. Hideaki Domichi	P. 3
• Indo-Japan Friendship~Role of NGOs	P. 4
• Japanese Community in Delhi Celebrates Summer Festival 2009	P. 4
• JACAR (Japan Center for Asian Historical Records)	P. 5
• Japan Supports Polio Eradication Project in India	P. 5
• Study in Japan	P. 6
• Fukuoka Study Abroad Fair in Delhi	P. 7
• The JENESYS Experience	P. 8
• Autumn in Japan	P. 9
• The Asian Youth Exchange Program in Okinawa 2009	P. 10
• Trends in Japan	P. 12

INAUGURATION OF THE HATOYAMA CABINET



Mr. Yukio HATOYAMA, Prime Minister of Japan
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Mr. Yukio HATOYAMA, a member of the House of Representatives, was designated as the next Prime Minister of Japan on September 16, 2009. Prime Minister Hatoyama became the 93rd Prime Minister (the 60th person to assume the



Mr. Katsuya OKADA, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan

post) since Hirobumi Ito, the first Prime Minister of Japan. Immediately after the designation, Mr. Hatoyama formed a new Cabinet at the Prime Minister's Office. The Hatoyama Cabinet was inaugurated on September 16, 2009.

Mr. Katsuya OKADA assumed the position of Minister for Foreign Affairs in the Hatoyama Cabinet on September 16, 2009.

Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet LIST OF MINISTERS

Prime Minister	Yukio HATOYAMA
Deputy Prime Minister	
Minister of State for National Policy	Naoto KAN
Minister of State for Economic and Fiscal Policy	
Minister of State for Science and Technology Policy	
Minister of Internal Affairs and Communications	Kazuhiro HARAGUTI
Minister of State for Promotion of Local Sovereignty	
Minister of Justice	Keiko CHIBA
Minister for Foreign Affairs	Katsuya OKADA
Minister of Finance	Hirohisa FUJII
Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology	Tatsuo KAWABATA
Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare	
Minister of State for Pension Reform	Akira NAGATSUMA
Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries	Hiroataka AKAMATSU
Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry	Masayuki NAOSHIMA
Minister of Land CInfrastructure CTransport and Tourism	
Minister of State for Okinawa and Northern Territories Affairs, and Disaster Management	Seiji MAEHARA
Minister of Environment	Sakihito OZAWA
Minister of Defense	Toshimi KITAZAWA
Chief Cabinet Secretary	Hirofumi HIRANO
Chairman of the National Commission on Public Safety	
Minister of State for the Abduction Issue	Hiroshi NAKAI
Minister of State for Financial Services	
Minister of State for Postal Reform	Shizuka KAMEI
Minister of State for Consumer Affairs and Food Safety, Social Affairs, and Gender Equality	Mizuho FUKUSHIMA
Minister of State for Administrative Reform	
Minister of State for Civil Service Reform	Yoshito SENGOKU
Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary	Yorihisa MATSUNO
	Koji MATSUI
	Kinya TAKINO
Director-General of the Cabinet Legislation Bureau	Reiichi MIYAZAKI

(Source: www.kantei.go.jp/foreign/index-e.html)

Video Message Delivered by
H.E. Mr. Hideaki Domichi, Ambassador of Japan,
on 27 July 2009, to Participants of the 2nd Annual Session of
Visionary Leaders For Manufacturing (VLFM) Programme

Good Afternoon, Ladies and Gentlemen,

My name is Domichi, Japanese Ambassador to India. I appreciate that you have given me this opportunity to speak to you through this video message.

I am pleased to learn that the 'Visionary Leaders For Manufacturing' program is running with great success, supported among others by the actual participants, CEOs, and by such partner organizations like JICA, National Manufacturing Competitiveness Council, Ministry of Human Resource Development, CII, IIT Kanpur, Madras, and IIM Calcutta.

On this occasion, I would also like to express my thanks for the invaluable support rendered by Mr. Godrej, Chairman of Godrej Boyce Mfg. Co.

As I have learnt from Prof. Shiba who visited me more than once, I find that this program is very unique. It is designed to create visionary leaders in the field of manufacturing in India.

The program includes series of lectures by the prominent Japanese who have made big breakthroughs and success in the Japanese manufacturing. Indeed, much of the strength of the Japanese economy lies in manufacturing, and I believe that the purpose of this program is to transfer a certain culture or spirit that is integral in manufacturing. But what is unique to this program is that it focuses more on self-awareness or self-discovery of the quality for success in manufacturing. This is why I think that the program is called Visionary Leaders Program, and I believe that the quality of the leaders that is thus awakened has universal application.

The other day, I had a chance to have a dinner with Mr. Osamu Suzuki, Chairman of Suzuki Motors of Japan. I was very much impressed by his leadership, how quickly he acted in the wake of such prime loan problems. At that time, people were still arguing whether the sub-prime loans problem would spread to affect our real economy beyond the financial sectors of America or Europe.

Instead, he came straight to India and conducted a thorough review about the inventory of Maruti Suzuki cars. He instructed to look into the retail figures, and not on the wholesale figures, which was more or less the practice. As a consequence, he told me he could save a lot of money by adjusting the actual size of the inventory.

In the same spirit, there are many leaders of Japanese manufacturing who take no time to adjust to meet the new circumstances. They are invariably vigilant and visionary. Not only to safeguard the business from the effects of the economic downturn, they also consider turning the crises into new opportunities. In Japan, shift to the new technologies that are more energy efficient or environmentally friendly has already begun. Despite the overall decline of car sales, the newly-introduced hybrid models have a strong demand, and use of solar-energy is increasing.

India is also a new destination. Prospects of the Indian economy are promising. India is growing with its strong internal demand, and how manufacturing in India would grow is the key for future growth pattern of India. From the Japanese point of view, they are looking for a new market to invest within their global strategy. It is not surprising that the Japanese direct investment into India is increasing dramatically in recent years. India will soon be the destination of the largest Japanese direct investment.

I hope that there will be a strong alliance between the Japanese and the Indian manufacturing companies. I also hope that the best technologies that will suit the Indian market will be encouraged through the collaboration of the Japanese and Indian companies. Setting up of R&D in India will be more common. I hope that the brilliant brains of young Indians will join hands with the strength of Japanese manufacturing technologies. In this sense, I hope that the visionary leaders and their alumni would be the first to pave the way, and I wish each of you a great success.

Thank you.

INDO-JAPAN FRIENDSHIP : ROLE OF NGOS

Dr Yoshiko Y. Nakano, President, OISCA International, Japan, underscored the need for India and Japan coming together to give a creative leadership to the world in undertaking sustainable development programs. “Indian philosophy and vast experience in implementing people-centric programs can combine with Japanese technology to usher in a world order wherein Earth-related issues and poverty alleviation occupy center stage”, she added.

Dr Nakano was delivering the 4th D.N Sinha Memorial Lecture on 24th July 2009 in Delhi, on the subject “Indo-Japan Friendship-Role of NGOs”. The distinguished speakers at the meeting included Mr. Bhupinder Singh Hooda, Chief Minister, Haryana. She disclosed that as a part of strengthening OISCA activities in India, a resource center has been set up in India for training youths from all over the world, particularly from Africa, for capacity building and sustainable development in Wayanad, in Kerala State.

Pledging the support of OISCA-International for promoting and strengthening the ties and friendship between India and Japan, Dr Nakano hinted that her organization was contemplating linking India with Africa at the NGO level for capacity building to produce more food on a sustainable basis. The expertise developed by OISCA South India will be emulated in implementing food programs in Africa, she added.

Speaking at the occasion, Mr. Bhupinder Singh Hooda, Chief Minister of Haryana, stated that 70% of Japanese invest-



Ambassador Domichi addressing the audience on the occasion

ment in India is in Haryana, and assured OISCA Foundation that all possible help will be extended for furthering their activities in the State for sustainable development. He concurred with Dr Nakano that material wealth should be judiciously blended with spirituality to pave the way for a balanced growth.

Mr. Hideaki Domichi, Japanese Ambassador in India, underscored the need for OISCA Foundation focusing more on rural areas in India to help the poorer sections, while recalling the friendship and cordiality between India and Japan. “Such efforts can be taken to a higher level once the governmental and non-governmental efforts converge”, he added.

JAPANESE COMMUNITY IN DELHI CELEBRATES SUMMER FESTIVAL 2009

Members of the Japanese community in Delhi, including official staff members posted at the Japanese Embassy as well as personnel from Japanese corporations functioning in Delhi and surrounding areas, gathered with their families to celebrate the **Summer Festival 2009**, at the Japanese School Ground in Vasant Kunj, New Delhi, on Saturday, 26 September 2009, from 5 pm to 8 pm.

It was a fun-filled evening for the Japanese



and Indian visitors, especially children, who enjoyed the evening with dances, games and other interesting activities. Many kinds of stalls were put up in the school ground, with everybody's favorite ones being those serving different varieties of Japanese food and drinks.



JAPAN CENTER FOR ASIAN HISTORICAL RECORDS

National Archives of Japan

Welcome to the JACAR website.

The Japan Center for Asian Historical Records (JACAR), established on November 30, 2001 as an institution of the National Archives of Japan, has the mission of providing people all over the world with the access through the Internet to materials from collections kept by various ministries and agencies of the Japanese Government on the modern history of relations between Japan and various other countries, primarily neighboring Asian countries. A broad and in-depth study on how to constitute the Center started in 1995, 50 years from the end of World War II. The Japanese Cabinet decision on November 30, 1999, entitled "On promoting the project for maintenance of Asian historical records," set the course for JACAR's eventual establishment as an institution "with a mission of making materials kept by the Government on the history of relations between Japan and neighboring Asian countries and other countries more accessible to the Japanese public and to the people of the countries concerned, as well as of promoting mutual understanding between those countries and Japan." Accordingly, the Center assembles a wide and impartial variety of materials kept by Japanese Government institutions, and enables their perusal free of charge through the Internet.

A full-fledged digital archive

In accordance with the decision by the Japanese Cabinet, the Center is first digitalizing and providing access through the

Internet to Asia-related records dating from the early Meiji era to the end of the Pacific War in the possession of important collecting institutions of pre-war official documents, The National Archives of Japan, The Diplomatic Record Office of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Library of The National Institute for Defense Studies of the Ministry of Defense. The number of image data produced from the materials these institutions possess alone is estimated to exceed 28,000,000. As of January 2008, users now have ready access to 14,300,000 pieces of image data and a catalog database of 1,030,000 items, which will be augmented on an ongoing basis.

Merits of the English-language search system

As the title of catalog items are translated into English, English keywords can be used for searching through the titles in English. English translations of basic historical terms such as "Pacific War" and "Sino-Japanese War" have been registered as synonyms and related words to their counterpart terms in Japanese, and thus catalog items in Japanese can be found through search by English words as well by activating the synonym and related-word functions. English translations of historical terms were determined after examination of terms appearing in the indices of English-language books concerning modern Japanese history, such as the Cambridge Modern History, Japan and China.

<http://www.jacar.go.jp/english/index.html>

JAPAN SUPPORTS POLIO ERADICATION PROJECT IN INDIA

Grant to UNICEF

The Government of Japan agreed to extend to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) a grant assistance of 205 million yen for the Intensified Pulse Polio Immunization (IPPI) project to eradicate poliomyelitis from India. Notes to this effect were signed and exchanged between H.E. Mr. Hideaki Domichi, Ambassador of Japan to India, and Ms. Karin Hulshof, Representative of UNICEF India country office, on August 5, 2009.

India is one of the 4 countries (Nigeria, India, Pakistan, Afghanistan) in which wild polio virus still remains, and is the most populous country among them. Therefore, a joint international effort is being made, involving the Government of India,

UNICEF, WHO, donor countries and agencies, together with state governments and NGOs.

Japan's Commitment

Japan has been supporting an Intensified Pulse Polio Immunization (IPPI) project in India since 1996. The cumulative amount of grant assistance up to this year will reach 8.0 billion yen.

Utilization of the Grant

Japan's grant will be used for the purchase of oral polio vaccine.

Accomplishment of the aid

As a result of massive endeavour by the agencies involved, polio cases in India dropped to 874 cases in 2007 and 559 cases in 2008.

STUDY IN JAPAN

Prioritized Financial Assistance for the Internationalization of Universities Launching the Project for Establishing Core Universities for Internationalization (Global 30)

The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology has launched the “Global 30” Project for Establishing Core Universities for Internationalization, for the purpose of selecting universities that will function as core schools for receiving and educating international students. In 2009, thirteen universities were selected. These core universities will play a major role in dramatically boosting the number of international students educated in Japan as well as Japanese students studying abroad.

1. What is the Global 30 Project for Establishing Core Universities for Internationalization?

Japan formulated the 300,000 International Students Plan in July of 2008, with the aim of receiving 300,000 international students by 2020. The “Global 30” Project for Establishing Core Universities for Internationalization is being implemented to realize this goal by selecting measures for the internationalization of universities including the recruitment of international students, along with forming Japan’s centers of internationalization. Selected universities will receive prioritized financial assistance of 200 to 400 million yen per annum over the next 5 years. Endowed with this aid, each university will strive to recruit 3000 to 8000 international students.

2. Thirteen Universities to Lead Japan’s Internationalization!

In 2009, the following 13 universities were selected as global centers:

Tohoku University, University of Tsukuba, The University of Tokyo, Nagoya University, Kyoto University, Osaka University, Kyushu University, Keio University, Sophia University, Meiji University, Waseda University, Doshisha University, and Ritsumeikan University

3. Action Plans for the Core Universities!

Core universities will take the following steps to create an attractive educational and research environment for international students.

1. Expansion of course programs by which degrees can be earned through English -only classes

Establish courses at the universities selected through which English-only degrees can be obtained: 33 undergraduate courses and 124 graduate courses over the next 5 years

2. Enhancement of systems for receiving/hosting international students

Enhance systems for receiving/hosting international students, such as specialist support in studying and academics, as well as for completing various procedures and formalities both in/out of the university; and provide internship programs at Japanese corporations, etc.

3. Provide international students with opportunities to learn about Japanese language and culture

A plan to provide high-quality instruction in Japanese language and culture

4. Promotion of strategic international cooperation

Establish two separate overseas offices per core university, to enable local recruitment through admissions tests, etc., and boost the number of Japanese students studying abroad through exchange study programs, etc.

4. Establish an “Overseas Office for Shared Utilization by Universities” as the liaison for Study in Japan!

Establish an “Overseas Office for Shared Utilization by Universities” as the liaison for Study in Japan; in 8 cities in 7 countries. Upon completion, these offices will provide comprehensive information on Japanese universities overall, including enrollment seminars, admissions tests, etc.

Tunisia (Tunis) [University of Tsukuba], Egypt (Cairo) [Kyushu University], Germany (Bonn) [Waseda University], Russia (Moscow, Novosibirsk) [Tohoku University], India (New Delhi) [Ritsumeikan University], India (Hyderabad) [The University of Tokyo], Uzbekistan (Tashkent) [Nagoya University], Vietnam (Hanoi) [Kyoto University]

* The name in the [] indicates the operating university. For information on details of office preparation, please contact the corresponding university.



FUKUOKA STUDY ABROAD FAIR IN DELHI

Fukuoka Prefecture - NCT of Delhi Friendship Agreement Commemorative Event

November 13, 2009 (Friday) 12:00-18:00
November 14, 2009 (Saturday) 11:00-18:00.

at The Japan Foundation, New Delhi

Presented by

**Fukuoka Prefectural Government of Japan
The Japan Foundation, New Delhi**

*In collaboration with the
Embassy of Japan*

Fukuoka Prefecture is located on the northeastern coast of Kyushu Island in western Japan. Geographically close to the Asian mainland, Fukuoka has been a major political, economic, cultural, and diplomatic center since ancient times.



Fukuoka Prefecture with a population of 5.06 million is one of the most prosperous prefectures in Japan and contains the only two cities in Kyushu with a population over one million (Fukuoka City and Kitakyushu City).



Fukuoka Prefecture is surrounded on three sides by the sea and blessed with an abundance of natural beauty in mountains, rivers, and fertile plains.

Fukuoka was listed in Newsweek as one of "The World's Hottest Cities" in July 2006. The GDP of Fukuoka is US\$152 billion (equal to Norway and Denmark) with 3/4 of its industrial structure dedicated to the service industry.

Fukuoka Prefecture and the NCT of Delhi signed a Friendship Agreement on March 5, 2007. Since then, the two regions have engaged in a variety of fruitful exchange activities in the fields of business, tourism, environment, culture, and youth exchange.

There are currently about 6,000 international students from 90 countries studying in Fukuoka Prefecture. The Fukuoka Study Abroad Fair will have presentations from various universities and Japanese language schools in Fukuoka as well as opportunities to ask questions about studying abroad in Japan. There will also be introductions of the culture, tourism, and industry of Fukuoka Prefecture to give guests a taste of what Fukuoka has to offer.

University Introduction

Fukuoka is known for having a large concentration of universities in Japan and students from all over the world come to study here.



The Fukuoka International Student Support Center (FISSC) opened last July as part of a program to facilitate the studies of international students in Fukuoka.

The Fair will have presentations from the FISSC, local universities, and Japanese language schools as well as the Embassy of Japan in India. Additionally, there will be opportunities to ask questions about studying abroad in Fukuoka and Japan.

Lottery

Guests will have a chance to win handicraft items via prize drawing.

Handicrafts

Many handicrafts such as dolls and textiles are displayed here. They reflect the beauty and tradition of Fukuoka Prefecture as well as the impressive skills of the craftsmen who made them.

Samples of Japanese tea and sweets

Among all the green teas in Japan, the taste and aroma of Yame tea in Fukuoka Prefecture is considered first-class.

Guests at the Fukuoka Fair can sample Yame tea as well as famous sweets from Fukuoka.

Tourism

With its remarkably clean city air, Fukuoka Prefecture has many reminders of the good old days through its nature, history, and culture. The many charms of Fukuoka Prefecture are explained in panels and movies.

Industry

Fukuoka Prefecture has created many policies to promote the development of next generation industries such as automobile, robot, and biotechnology production. There will be a DVD explanation of these policies which support the economy in Fukuoka Prefecture.

THE JENESYS EXPERIENCE

-K.M.Vikram, Student of The American College, Madurai

The JENESYS programme aims “...to deepen mutual understanding among young people who will assume important roles in the next generation in each East Asian country, in matters such as politics, diplomacy, economics, society, culture.” The program seeks to invite about 6,000 young people to Japan mainly from the EAS member states (ASEAN, Australia, China, India, New Zealand, and the ROK) every year for five years, with a view to establishing a basis of Asia’s stalwart solidarity by expanding youth exchange.

Being a part of the programme as one of the participating students was a standout experience. The students were divided into groups and each group was allocated a different prefecture within Japan. Although our itinerary only encompassed 10 days, the schedule was packed with an invite to the Indian embassy, exchanges with university students, presentations, group discussions, homestay and an array of visits to places of interest. Every imaginable creature comfort was provided and the atmosphere was most hospitable.

Representing the group at the Indian embassy in Japan and presenting a paper at the Mukogawa Women’s University on measures against environmental pollution, marked a reverie to reality.

Although little time was afforded to the students to make local trips on their own, I managed to get on the metro every evening and visited places such as Sannomiya, Ikebukuro, Roppongi and Akiba, to name a few. This was a revelation, and played a major role in shaping my understanding, not about Japan, but about the nature of an organized programme, such as JENESYS, on how it provides but a mere primer to the country, and could not possibly serve in dismantling stereotypes.

While the notions of politeness, cleanliness and a drive for technological innovation, while delicately balancing traditional arts and culture, holds valid under specific circumstances as something inherently Japanese, such pigeonholing, as was most often witnessed, seems to obscure the target of the programme, which would be geared toward mutual understanding among the youth. Mutual understanding for the future stems not from enforcing stereotypes and customs but from the freedom of interaction among the youth.

Sharing time with the host family, with the JICE coordinators, with the students of the Mukogawa University, with random people on the metro, shops and streets, provided great personal insight; in that, I came to realize how futile it was to try and seek to understand that which is constantly changing and unique. Every individual and location was distinctive, and ascribing them a common expression would be to undermine their imitability.



The author with other participants of the JENESYS Program

It was also interesting to note the extent to which the mind relies on comparative judgement, which provides a filter to any understanding of national cultures. The focus needs to shift toward long term freedom of interaction and collaboration between the youth, which could be achieved by furthering the reach of similar programmes within both countries. Understanding of cultures is but an observation, and could happen in days or months, in the duration of a trip; but mutual understanding among youth, among citizens of countries, could only occur by intricately building and forging close relationships, gradually, over decades.

While the status quo among the relations between Japan and India seems to rest largely on politically supervised economic, infrastructural and technological aid and exchange, this system largely excludes the deepening of familiarity at the local level.

The influx of youths permanently residing and working inside local communities within both countries, would be the only means of exchange that strives to scratch the surface of delving deeper toward reciprocated absorbing of values.

Such interest among the youth is not generated with ease, as what appeals to the current generation of students is constantly in flux with each passing year.

It is heartening that steps in this direction have been taken, and it’s vital that the momentum gained through programmes like JENESYS gets stronger in the near future. It is my hope that we shall reach a landmark tipping point in the long term, where such programmes would play a secondary role, and when the enthusiasm and the means for exchange, rest entirely with the youth of both Japan and India.

True exchange provides the best of both worlds, appeals to every mindset, and establishes the foundations for real mutual understanding and ensures a superior future.

AUTUMN IN JAPAN

... *Ashish Lahoti*

My parents had recently visited China on a ten-day leisure package tour and they wanted to come to Japan to meet me and see Japan. I was a bit confused and in a dilemma as to when to call them, but more so, over the point as to what they could see in Japan.

Being in Japan for almost one and a half years, and carrying out my post graduate research in the field of Urban Design and Urban Planning, I knew that every place has its own unique flavor. So does Japan and I have to find out what it is? I tried to start recollecting about my experiences in Japan which make it different and unique. Thanks to the digital camera that I have taken hundreds of snaps of Japan, and while seeing them, the first and most obvious thought that came to my mind was Sakura - Cherry Blossom. But since both my parents are artists (drawing and painting), I knew that there has to be something more that Japan can offer. Another issue related with Sakura is that they do not last for more than one week, and its time can vary depending on sudden climatic change.

The second possibility that came to my mind was during the Obon festival, when the entire atmosphere is charged and lots of activities like beautiful fire works, dancing, bazaars, etc. take place... Suddenly I hit across a picture, and seeing it instinctively and without a delay of a second I decided that autumn is the time when my parents would visit Japan.



View of the Maple from Shrine Gate



Maple Leaves

Japan has four very distinct seasons of spring, summer, autumn and winter. Unlike India, these seasons have a very notable impact on the natural settings in Japan. The extent of impact of season on natural settings is so high that if photographs of the same place are clicked during the peak times of these four different seasons, then the same place would have a totally different character and mood in the four respective snaps. The photograph which hit my eye and made me decide on the autumn season for my parents' visit was that of a Shrine on Mount Takao on the outskirts of Kyoto, which I had clicked in late November the previous year.

The autumn of Japan is an altogether different and unique experience, especially for those coming from tropical countries. The air is cold and has an amazing mystic quality; the sky colors are changing frequently, and most of the trees are changing the colors of their leaves in shades of yellow, orange and reds. It seems that in this particular season, God has plenty of free time and is himself holding the color palette, and is painting the scenes of nature.

It was my first autumn in Japan, and having heard and read so much about it I decided to make it a life time memory by going to Kyoto (Cultural Capital of Japan). One of the best places to experience the autumn are the older temple com-



Reflection of the Maple in Pond

plexes along the outskirts of the main city, which are critically located on the mountain tops and along axial viewpoints, and are beautifully integrated with the nature around. These temple complexes are no doubt masterpieces of architecture; however, visiting them in autumn with the colored natural background enhances its beauty manifold. It's not just tourists but also the local people that go to these temples and shrines to enjoy the sublime beauty of nature and architecture. In Japanese language, the act of going to see these colored leaves is called 'momiji gari suru' which is a very interesting term and literally means going on a pleasure trip to hunt for the colored leaves. Sitting in a tea house in the temple and drinking Japanese tea is a life time experience. The view of the beautiful Zen garden of the tea house with stark white stone gravels with simple raked wave patterns on it; the water pond beside it reflects the beautiful colors of the sky and the maple trees above it, which are a total contrast of material, color and texture. However, these together synthesize with the pin-drop silence, to give birth to a sublime form of beauty which has to be felt and experienced.

plexes along the outskirts of the main city, which are critically located on the mountain tops and along axial viewpoints, and are beautifully integrated with the nature around. These temple complexes are no doubt masterpieces of architecture; however,

It is not just the outskirts of the cities that abound with the beauty of Autumn, even within the cities special avenues are planted with maple trees and people walk along them not just in leisure time but also during daily commuting to work, thus making it a part of daily life. Recently, the maple trees and avenues are lit up with light at night, thus making it possible to enjoy the autumn beauty not just during daytime but also at night. Youngsters and working people often go to parks and close by temples to enjoy the night time maple avenues. In late autumn, when these colored leaves start falling, the entire floor starts appearing like a maple leaf carpet with yellow, orange and red colors.



A lighted-up Maple Tree

The shrines and temple complexes with colored maples in the background, beautiful Japanese paper lanterns, occasionally seen cute Japanese women in traditional outfit of Kimono..... is a scene meant to be stored in the deepest corner of the mind, and to be relished again and again for a lifetime!

THE ASIAN YOUTH EXCHANGE PROGRAM IN OKINAWA 2009

- Farhan Abrol, Springdales School (Dhaura Kuan), New Delhi

My name is Farhan Abrol, and this year, my partner Ms. Rijuta Lamba and I went to Okinawa, Japan, as a part of the **Asian Youth Exchange Program**. The theme of the program was "Water Problems Facing The World Today".

This was a very unique program, which gave us the opportunity to interact and learn from eminent scientists and environmentalists, as well as to discuss the water problems we face in India, with youth from all over Asia. This gave us new perspectives on how to solve various issues, and also showed us the importance of having a pan-Asian exchange of ideas and technology, which can help solve many a problem.

The first session of the program, from 4-9th August, was held at the Itoman Youth House in Itoman City. It all began with the opening ceremony on 5th August, which featured a memorial

address by Mr. Monte Cassim. This session was on Water Issues in the World. We had many lectures by environmentalists such as Ms. Junko Edahiro and Mr. Seita Emori, both from the University of Tokyo. There were many more lectures on varied issues, to give us a briefing of the problems that exist in our world today, and to sensitize us towards them.

The second session of the program, from 9th-13th, was on Marine Environment, and was held at Tokashiki Island. We learnt about the phenomenon of coral bleaching, mangrove destruction and drift garbage. A beach cleanup drive was organized, wherein all the participants removed drifted garbage from one of the beaches in Tokashiki Island. We also went snorkeling, which gave us a chance to see the beautiful ocean and the corals first hand.



Ms. Rijuta Lamba and Mr. Farhan Abrol addressing the other participants

The next program was the home-stay at Ie-Jima island, on the 13th and 14th. This was a truly memorable experience. The warmth and affection shown by our host families truly touched our hearts. We learnt more about true Japanese culture and lifestyles, and found it to be very similar in many aspects to our lives in India.

The third session on Conservation of Fresh-Water Ecosystem and Seawater was from 15th to 18th August. We visited the Churaumi Aquarium and saw the marine life of Okinawa first-hand. On the evening of the 15th, we also had our cultural presentation. We gave a short presentation on India and its culture, and sang the national anthem. We also sang a popular song from the Hindi movie, Rang De Basanti, called “Roobaroo”. Our presentation was well received. On the 17th, we had a lecture on Mangrove Ecosystems and a site visit to the Mangrove forests of Okinawa. On the 18th, we had a lecture on Seawater Desalination and a site visit to the Chatan Water purification plant, which uses this technology to produce clean drinking water for the people of Okinawa.

The fourth and final session was the Summary Session. On the 19th, we visited the Okinawa Institute of Science and Technology, and got a tour of their facilities and research labs. We also interacted with the researchers and learnt a lot about their field of study, and why Okinawa was a great place for the scientific community. On the 20th, we had a very interesting and interactive lecture by Dr. Kiyoshi Kurokawa on the importance of innovation and how each one of us could make a difference. His ideas and viewpoints were indeed fascinating.

On the 22nd and 23rd, we had the Open Seminar, organized in the local government hall, which students from Okinawan schools attended as well. There were many inspiring lectures, but perhaps the most interesting of them all was the lecture by Mr. Mamoru Mori, ex-astronaut and scientist. He talked about science and how it connects all of us, and also showed us some very interesting live experiments. He epitomizes the spirit



Group photograph - Asian Youth Exchange Program in Okinawa 2009

which all of us should develop, to be able to succeed in life and make a difference in the world.

From 18th-20th, all the seven groups also had to prepare their group declarations. Each of the groups chose a different theme such as mangrove destruction, water pollution, etc., and prepared a document which listed their vision for the future of that issue, and various ways to achieve the set goal. One representative from each of the groups was taken to form the Declaration Committee. I was fortunate enough to be chosen for this honour. Our job was to compile all the various points listed in each group’s individual declaration, and prepare a final document which would contain three parts: our vision for the future, steps that each individual and government can take to solve the current water problems; and a message to the people of Okinawa.

On the 24th, we had the Closing Ceremony, which was attended by many government officials including the Governor of Okinawa. I, and the other declaration representatives, read out the declaration that we had prepared and presented a copy to the local government officials.

In the evening we moved to the airport and flew back to Tokyo. After an overnight stay in Tokyo, we departed on the 25th morning to head back home.

This program has changed me forever and given me a broader outlook on the world. The bonds of friendship that we made in these three weeks will last for a lifetime. All of the participants are members of a social group for the program on the social networking site “Facebook”, which helps us stay connected. The Cabinet Office of Japan has set up a website for the program, which also features the Hisai Diary - a daily account of our experiences along with photographs.

I hope I can implement all that I have learnt from this program in my locality and school, and maybe, make a difference in my own little way.

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LEAVE YOUR CHORES TO A ROBOT

Development of Housekeeping Robots Accelerates



The Home Assistant Robot. (C)IRT Research Initiative, The University of Tokyo

Researchers at the University of Tokyo are integrating information technology and robotics to develop robots that can perform household chores. Their work on the Information and Robot Technology Research Initiative, or IRT, has already resulted in

public demonstrations by some housekeeping robots.

At its public demonstration the robot performed such tasks as operating a washing machine and mopping the floor. First off, it picked up a tray of dishes and carried them from the dining

table to the kitchen sink. Then it demonstrated its ability to use a washing machine by grasping a shirt hanging over the back of a chair and taking over to the washer. At that point, however, it was unable to pinpoint the location of the button to open the washer's lid. It did not give up, though; it retreated momentarily and made two or three further attempts before succeeding in opening the lid.

When mopping the floor, meanwhile, the robot deftly moved a dining room chair with its right hand while using its left to mop under the table. Thereafter it resumed using both its hands to mop the areas free of furniture.



The Kitchen Robot. (C)IRT Research Initiative, The University of Tokyo

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