

TEMAN BARU

Upcoming Events
Teacher's Training via ZOOM



2019 Japanese Speakers' Forum in Malaysia



JFKL Curatorial Workshop



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RASHOMON 2020



Malaysian Japanese Language Education Seminar



The Japan Foundation Asia Center Invitation Program for Cultural Leaders



Short Term Nihongo Partners Program



Attention to all the Japanese language teachers in Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei!
 JFKL will be conducting a Saturday Half-Day Workshop on 16 May (Saturday) ONLINE!
 For teachers who are interested to know more about online teaching, please refer to the poster below. The workshop will be conducted in Japanese.
 We look forward to meeting you!

UPDATE: We regret to inform you that the application for this workshop has been closed due to overwhelming responses. We would like to thank you for the support. Please stay tuned for more updates on our future seminars and workshop on our Facebook page.

2020年度 第1回土曜研修会

オンライン授業を活発にするには



JAPAN FOUNDATION



急に始めたオンライン授業

「うまくいかないな… 他にいい方法はないかな…」

あなたが抱える不安やモヤモヤ、いっしょに試して、解消しませんか？

本セミナーでは、オンライン授業で今困っていることを共有し、対処法を議論することで、以下のような成果が得られます。

- ❖ 自分の課題が解決できるきっかけがつかめます。
- ❖ 生徒から反応を引き出し、活発なオンライン授業にできるコツがつかめます。
- ❖ オンライン授業に対する不安な気持ちを軽減するのに役立ちます。

日時 : 2020年5月16日(土) 9:00~12:00
 参加方法 : Zoom(会場参加なし)
 講師 : 佐藤修
 対象 : マレーシア・シンガポール・ブルネイの日本語教師
 定員 : 24人(マレーシアの方優先)
 参加費 : 無料

※研修会は日本語でおこないます。

※Zoomの使用にあたってはセキュリティー対策としてパスワードとWaiting Roomを利用します。

お申込みはこちらから

⇒ <https://forms.gle/yhTWa6fTuZVoMoakA>

お問合せ ⇒ sato@jfkf.org.my (佐藤修)





LIBRARY



[おひさま - はじめてのいっぽ - 子どものための日本語 OHISAMA - First Steps - Japanese Textbook for Multilingual Children]

By Emi YAMAMOTO / Junko UENO / Yoshie MERA / Kuroshio Publishers (ed.)

Publisher: Kuroshio Publishers 2018 Library Call No.371.5T

Children of international marriage, children living overseas, foreign children living in Japan, returnees, etc... such children are surrounded by multiple languages and cultures while trying to acquire Japanese language skills.

This textbook is perfect as a starter for those children who are beginning to learn Japanese in various linguistic environments and will help them enjoy learning Japanese in schools, kindergartens or at home with parents. It focuses on not only developing their Japanese language ability but also promoting cross-cultural understanding. To stimulate their intellectual curiosity, it features varied topics of conversation and fun activities containing a lot of child-friendly illustrations and photos. Furthermore, some teaching tips are introduced for more effective approaches to nudge the children's curiosity and encourage them to explore learning capabilities.

[日本語能力試験公式問題集 第二集 Japanese-Language Proficiency Test Official Practice Workbooks Vol. 2]

By The Japan Foundation / Japan Educational Exchanges and Services

Publisher: Bonjinsha Inc. 2018 Library Call No.810.791

The first JLPT test for this year is scheduled on 5 July 2020. How is your preparation for JLPT? Have you ever practiced "the Official Practice Workbook" before?

The second volume, the Official Practice Workbook Vol.2 was released recently. Each book has its own level which is from N1 to N5 and contains almost the same number of selected questions as an actual test from among those used in tests since the 2010 revision.

It is highly recommended that one practices before taking the JLPT.

[日本語総まとめ N5 かんじ・ことば・ぶんぼう・読む・聞く Nihongo Soumatome N5 Kanji Vocabulary Grammar Reading Listening]

By Noriko MATSUMOTO / Satoko SASAKI Publisher: ASK 2017 Library Call No.810.7925

The definitive study guide for JLPT, the "So-matome" series are very popular and one of the high circulation items in our library among those taking the test.

And now, "So-matome" N5 has launched and it is available in the library.

This exercise book includes everything you need to get ready for your exam and reinforces basic knowledge and skills for taking the N5 exam. You will be able to complete all of the important points of kanji, vocabulary, grammar, reading and listening found on the N5 exam in 6 weeks.

LIBRARY NOTICE

After much consideration, we are pleased to inform you that **JFKL library membership and book lending service for certain books will be continued from 1 April 2020 onwards.**

However, due to the current situation with COVID-19, our library will be closed until further notice. Please stay tuned for updates on our Facebook and website page.



2019-2020 Malaysia Japanese Language Education Seminar

Reported by MARUTANI Shinobu (JFKL)



Dr. Walker



During the lecture



Workshop scene

One of the biggest annual events for JFKL's Japanese Language Department (JLD), the 2019-2020 Malaysia Japanese Language Education Seminar was successfully held at the JFKL library on 7 March 2020.

The theme of the seminar was "TAIGU Communication Education".

What is TAIGU (待遇 in Japanese)? It refers to a form of expression in Japanese that reflects the speaker's attitude towards the person they are communicating with or a person they are referring to. Honorific expression (敬語表現 in Japanese) is a well-known example of TAIGU expressions. However, there are more to discover under the theme of "TAIGU communication". We were proud to have our speaker, Dr. Izumi Walker from the National University of Singapore, who is an expert in "TAIGU communication".

The morning session of the seminar started with a lecture by Dr. Walker. She explained the five elements of TAIGU communication as a framework to understanding TAIGU communication systematically.

These five elements are (1) content, (2) situation, (3) form of language and behavior, (4) relationship with the person that you communicate with or whom you talk about, and (5) intention, views, feelings etc. that you have when you communicate. These elements work interactively in actual communication. One should be conscious of these elements to make communication socially appropriate and culturally meaningful.

As someone learning Japanese, can you recall when you studied about honorific expressions? At that time, you might probably have concentrated mainly on the form of language. Of course, form is important. But there is more to communicating properly. This is where elements of TAIGU communication should be taken into consideration. Unfortunately, TAIGU communication is not simple but rather complicated. However, Dr. Walker was able to give a better understanding of TAIGU communication using visual materials like drama scenes and discussing some misused examples, as well as answering questions directly from the audience.

When teaching TAIGU communication, teachers should facilitate learners with suitable materials and support, so that they can understand how the five elements of TAIGU communication work. How this could be done was shown later in the afternoon workshop session with Dr. Walker.

At the workshop, Dr. Walker introduced us to her own practical examples of classroom activities. Through hands-on experience using a variety of classroom activities including "Introduction to honorific expressions using a TV drama" and "Role plays for elementary level learners", we learnt that the concepts and methods of TAIGU communication education are applicable to honorific expression teaching and business Japanese education even from the elementary level. The participants looked excited and inspired by this workshop.

We would like to extend our gratitude to those who were able to attend this seminar. Although some could not attend due to self-precautionary measures because of Covid-19, they joined the morning lecture session via Zoom. We were glad to receive great response from the audience in Malaysia, Singapore, Vietnam and Indonesia.

From the questionnaire, more than 90% of the participants expressed satisfaction with this seminar, and we received positive feedbacks and comments as well. Last but not least, we would like to thank Dr. Walker and all the participants for making this seminar a success.

About the speaker

Dr. Izumi Walker

Associate Professor,
Deputy Director of the Centre for Language Studies
and the Convenor for the Japanese Language Program
at the National University of Singapore.

Her book, "Teaching TAIGU Communication: Noticing Speech Styles.", or 『初級日本語学習者のための待遇コミュニケーション教育—スピーチスタイルに関する「気づき」を中心に—』, is available at the JFKL library for your reference.

Nihongo Partners Went Higher Education!

Short Term Nihongo Partners Work with UMT on JLL

Reported by the Nihongo Partners Team (JFKL)

The Nihongo Partners Program dispatches Japanese natives of various backgrounds to secondary schools all over Malaysia to assist local Japanese language teachers not only with language learning but also cultural understanding. These volunteers are known as Nihongo Partners (NP) and they are assigned at their designated host schools for roughly 8 months.

On the other hand, the Short Term Nihongo Partners (STNP) Program has been introduced to higher education institutions with a different set of criteria. Applicants for STNP Program have to be university students and they must apply as a group, to name a couple. This year, four STNPs who are students from Ehime Prefectural University of Health Sciences were dispatched to Universiti Malaysia Terengganu (UMT) to assist the local Japanese language lecturers from 26 February 2020 until 23 March 2020.

Here we share their experiences through an interview!

STNPs: Ninomiya Yuri (NY), Watanabe Haruka (WH), Ikeda Reno (IR) and Nakagawa Kie (NK).



Calligraphy demonstration by one of the STNPs



STNPs having a meal with one of their host families

1. What motivated you to apply for the Short Term Nihongo Partners (STNP) Program?

NK: I strongly wanted to interact with Malaysians as a representative from one of the host towns for Olympics 2020. I knew my town (Matsuyama, Ehime Prefecture) was one of the host towns for Malaysian athletes because the Malaysian badminton players once visited my primary school.

2. What was your initial impression of Malaysia and did it change once you experienced staying in this country?

WH: At first I thought this was a country with strong Islamic beliefs. I was a little worried about Islam because of my lack of knowledge about it. However, as I stayed there, I learnt the connection between the Malaysians' daily life and their religions. This experience totally changed my view about Islam and I wish more people could know about it.

NK: I had an image that Malaysians were serious and strict before leaving Japan. But when I met them, I realized many of them are kind and friendly. I was happy to hear "Arigatou gozaimasu" or "Konnichiwa" from the local people or shop staff when we met in town.

3. What do you think about the Japanese language learning in Malaysia and the students?

WH: Malaysian students are very interested in Japanese language, not only in their class but also after school. In the Hiragana and Kanji Writing class, some of them called us to check whether the characters they wrote were correct. I felt that they were trying to understand Japanese properly.

IR: Many students are hardworking, studying Japanese by themselves. They are interested in Japanese culture, especially manga and anime, even some titles that were unknown to me!

4. What kind of preparation did you do before conducting certain activities with students/assisting the local Japanese language teachers?

WH: We made videos and presentation slides about our hometown to help Malaysians learn more about Japan. Also, since I had been told that the students' Japanese proficiency is not very high, I learnt "Easy Japanese" and tried to use it for presentations and while talking with students.

5. Were there any obstacles or difficulty in carrying out the tasks/activities during the STNP Program?

NY: I didn't have any difficulty because the CP (Japanese language teacher) was very cooperative and the students were very enthusiastic. If I had been able to learn more Bahasa Melayu (Malay language), I think I might have been able to get closer to the students and have more fun in class. I will study harder until I come to Malaysia again!



STNP teaching students how to wear Yukata



STNPs showing the handmade postcards from the students

6. What is your most memorable moment/memory during the STNP Program?

WH: The calligraphy class. The students enjoyed the activity, taking videos and asking questions while I demonstrated on the usage of tools. Using calligraphy, they made postcards and wrote a message for the CP and gave it to her as a gift.

NY: My stay with my host family. I was able to experience the local lifestyle and learnt a lot about Malaysian family and child rearing. The most memorable moment was visiting the mosque in UMT with them. It was very interesting to know new things and learning about Islam in Malaysia. My views about Islam have changed now that I have a better understanding in the religion.

7. How will this experience impact your life once you return to Japan?

IR: I have learnt about the Malaysian culture and experienced indirectly while volunteering as STNP. I realized that, due to lack of any actual experience of interacting with Muslim people in Japan, I had a very narrow view of them before. The STNP program also gave me the chance to relearn Japanese culture. I noticed that the customs or culture that I follow blindly before actually have meaning behind them.

NK: My 3-week experience in Malaysia deepened my understanding of religion. It was my first time to hear 'azan' and to see a water hose in the toilet. I am working as a nurse now and hope to respect people's faiths. I aspire to help foreigners who visit Japan when I have a chance.

8. Given the unfortunate circumstances with the COVID-19 outbreak, the program ended a week earlier than scheduled. What would you have looked forward to the most if the program had been completed within the original time frame?

IR: The onigiri making workshop. I really wanted to make onigiri to convey my gratitude towards the staff, teachers and students who helped me a lot.

9. What do you miss the most about Malaysia?

NK: I miss all teachers and students whom I met. I missed being in class and eating together as well as the many kindness shown to me. If possible, I wish to meet them soon. I want to keep in touch with them as I am doing now via SNS.

10. Do you have a message for all the Japanese language learners in Malaysia?

NY: I really appreciate those who taught us a lot of fascinating things about Malaysia and their willingness to learn Japanese with us even though we are not professional teachers. I will certainly come back to Malaysia someday.

WH: Japanese language may be a little difficult, but I hope you will do your best and come to Japan one day. I'm going back to Malaysia to learn Bahasa Melayu, so let's do our best until the next time we see each other! Thank you for learning Japanese!

IR: Thank you very much for learning Japanese. I am glad that you study Japanese. I would like to learn Bahasa Melayu in Japan. I hope to have a lot of conversations with you when I visit Malaysia again someday. Let's do our best!

NK: Thank you very much for having an interest about Japan and Japanese language. I hope that everybody will continue to learn Japanese language with pleasure and experience Japanese culture. My heartfelt support is with you. If you have a chance to visit to Japan, please come and visit me.

Due to the Movement Control Order, all activities in education institutions were put to a halt, including the STNP Program. Following this order, the STNPs safely returned to Japan on 18 March 2020.

Feedback from UMT counterpart teachers and students

This program gives me more motivation to know more about Japan and Japanese culture. I believe UMT students and even NPs were becoming more aware of the similarities and differences between Malaysian and Japanese cultures. UMT students had a good time along with the NPs. Thank you very much for sending us such excellent NPs to UMT.

2019 JAPANESE SPEAKERS' FORUM: SEMINAR CLASS IN MALAYSIA 2020

にほんご人フォーラム 2019マレーシア報告会及び勉強会

Reported by Nur Diyana Abdul Rahman (JFKL)

The Japanese Speakers' Forum (JSF) or にほんご人フォーラム (Nihongo-jin Forum) has been co-organised by The Japan Foundation and The Kamenori Foundation since 2012, as a platform for Japanese speaking teachers and students from five Southeast Asian countries namely Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, Vietnam and the Philippines, and also Japan to interact and collaborate. In 2019, JSF was held at Da Nang, Vietnam from 2 to 11 August. Two Japanese language teachers from Malaysian secondary schools along with their two students were selected for this programme.

On 24 February 2020, the JSF Seminar Class was held at Cititel Mid Valley Hotel, Kuala Lumpur for these two teachers to share their experiences during JSF and what they had accomplished after their participation in Vietnam. We also invited six participants of previous JSF to share their valuable experience and teaching outcomes since their involvement in JSF. Ms. Nishida Hiroko, Secretary-General of The Kamenori Foundation came all the way from Japan to attend as well.

This seminar class was open to all Japanese language teachers of public secondary schools in Malaysia. A total of 21 teachers from daily schools and 15 from fully residential schools attended the two sessions. Some officers from the Ministry of Education, Malaysia were also invited as the ministry has been very supportive of Japanese language education in Malaysia including the involvement of their teachers and students in JSF.

During the first session, Ms. Suriana binti Johari from SMK Putrajaya Presint 11(1) followed by Ms. Fiona Toh Shu Chew from SM Sains Miri presented their reports on their participation in Da Nang. Both shared interesting stories of how they interacted with the other Japanese speakers from fellow ASEAN countries and how their students coped with new friends and engaged in activities. They furthermore shared the changes in their students' development in learning Japanese language as well as their own growth as teachers. Both showed not only pictures, but also videos of their students.

The second session was in a different format in which the 8 past-participants of JSF conducted prolific poster presentations. The audience was split into 4 groups with a presenter stationed at each section. They did 2 rounds of presentation, with the audience moving from one section to another for each round - all done simultaneously. The other 4 then repeated the same pattern to share their experiences, opinions, exchanging ideas with the audience and Q&A session. It was a very interactive session as the teachers were able to share the situation in their own schools and gain ideas from JSF. Most of their discussions revolved around the 21st century skills incorporated into their teaching and project-based learning (PBL).

The presentation titles of the 8 former participants:

Ang Chui Yean	SMK Bukit Jambul	How PBL of JSF Brings Fun Teaching & Learning Japanese Language
Fiona Toh Shu Chew	SMS Miri	Differentiated Approach in Project-based: Maximised Learning Opportunity
Janikah Jeppy	SM Sung Siew	Presentation Mode in Promoting 2Cs in Learning
Nirmala Beletambi	SMK King Edward VII	Self-Evaluation to Enhance Active Learning
Ooi Guan Lee	SMS Kepala Batas	Inculcating Self-Directed Learning & Teamwork through PBL: How could we minimize paper-based products?
Siti Rehana Isnin	SMK Iskandar Shah	Improving Students' Confidence in Presentation with Cooperative Learning
Sugandaran Kaivaliam	SM Sultan Abdul Halim	Let's Use Japanese That We Learn in Class
Suriana Johari	SMK Putrajaya Presint 11(1)	Family Introduction: Practical & Application

Overall, it was an honour to host this Seminar Class in Malaysia with the participation of 44 optimistic Japanese language Malaysian teachers, together with the support from the Ministry of Education, Malaysia. Special appreciation goes to the Kamenori Foundation for sponsoring the event, creating a great opportunity for local Japanese language teachers to share views and learn from each other.

Of course, it will not end here, as both the Japan Foundation and Kamenori Foundation are looking forward to the next round of Japanese Speakers' Forum!



First session



Poster Presentation



All participants with JFKL and Ministry of Education officers



The lecturers, Mr. Mark Teh (middle, front), Ms. Iida Shihoko (center left) with Ms. Furuichi Yasuko (far right) and the participants

Reflections on the JFKL Curatorial Workshop

Reported by Mark Teh (Performance maker, researcher, lecturer of the workshop)



It seems barely conceivable that the three-day JFKL Curatorial Workshop began exactly two months ago – on 17 February 2020. By the end of that week, the now notorious “Sheraton Move” was in motion and by 1 March, the 22-month old Pakatan Harapan government had collapsed and Malaysia had a new Prime Minister. By 18 March, the Movement Control Order was implemented to prevent the spread of the Covid-19 virus and global attention had shifted sharply to ways of coping with the pandemic and living with lockdown or Emergency-like conditions.

Given the benefit of hindsight amidst this dizzying sequence of events, the workshop’s broad framework of ‘Era / Errata’ elicited proposals that dealt urgently with processes of excavating and correcting historical errors that have entrenched themselves across different eras. Over three days, the nine workshop participants articulated, refined and exchanged ideas, anxieties and possibilities for their diverse curatorial proposals. These included projects that seek to challenge normative frames of Malay and Sabahan identities; an experimental approach to reviving traditional Bornean boat lutes; an attempt to intersect the domains of art, ethnography and ritual; a series of provocations and conversations reconsidering the practices of censorship in Malaysia; an awareness-raising campaign around environmental sustainability and waste in Penang; and a project documenting temporal techniques by artists to ‘repair’ the world through poetic micro-tactics.

The two projects selected to be realised with the support of JFKL were Low Pey Sien’s proposal to research, exhibit and ‘stage’ documentation, recollections and critical conversations around the archives of performance events in Malaysia, and Rebecca Yeoh’s proposal dealing with the inconvenient histories, hauntings and legacies around the May 13 1969 incidents. These projects - in an impressive collection of proposals - suggest a sensitive engagement to changes and fluidities in local, regional and temporal contexts, an urgency around documentation and dialogic practices parallel to the work of art-making, and a desire to question and stretch the potential of the exhibitionary format.

This iteration of the Curatorial Workshop also marked several firsts in the series initiated by JFKL since 2014 – the participation of a young curator from Japan, a British cultural practitioner based in Malaysia for the past decade, as well as a curatorial duo – pointing to a more dynamic direction for the cultural ecosystem in Malaysia. The workshop also gained tremendously from the insight of independent curator Iida Shihoko, who presented a powerful and painful reflection of her experience as Chief Curator of the 2019 Aichi Triennale. Shihoko shared generously about the challenges of navigating complex entanglements of public funding, legal frameworks, public opinion, freedom of expression, working through differing institutional logics, and the mediatization of controversy by local and international press – all while holding onto the responsibility of maintaining care for the integrity of art and artists while the situation and controversy expands and contracts. A further zoom-out perspective was provided by Furuichi Yasuko, the long-time exhibition coordinator of Japan Foundation – reflecting on her work in artistic, curatorial and cultural exchange between Japan and South East Asia since the early 1990s.

Finally, it occurred to me that some of the curatorial proposals in the workshop would not have been possible without the socio-political and cultural changes over the past few years. As we are faced with a global crisis that has so deeply affected all facets of life including the artistic community, I believe that many of the questions and ideas found in the proposals – creating spaces for questioning received histories, reimagining future realities, and working deeply with meaningful sustainabilities – will take on even greater relevance and resonance.

“JFKL Curatorial Workshop was held from 17 until 19 February 2020 with its lectures Mr. Mark Teh, Ms. Iida Shihoko and 9 short listed participants. The workshop aims to enhance expertise in curating contemporary art and related platforms (cinema, performance, architecture, music, festivals, etc).”



The participants with the facilitators



One of the set designs by the participant



One of the light designs by the participant



Presentation by the sound design team

JAPAN-MALAYSIA TECHNICAL DESIGN WORKSHOP: 8 - 12 MARCH 2020

Reported by Seshadri Kalimuthu (Project Coordinator)



Participants of the Set Design team with the facilitator,
Mr. TOKI Kenichi (behind, left)



Participants of the Lighting Design team with the facilitator,
Ms. KAZAWA Ayako (third from left)



Participants of the Sound Design Team with facilitator,
Ms. FUJIHIRA Mihiko (center)

To bring theatre to the fore (the observation is that most performing arts introduced from Japan to South East Asia or vice versa are mainly dance or music. There is a lack of introduction to Japanese theatre. There is especially a lack of opportunity in technical theatre for exchange of knowledge) The workshop was intended to develop the skills of Malaysian theatre designers, namely in set, lighting and sound, via a collaborative process with Japanese professionals of the same discipline. Participants experienced the process from the initial creative dialogue, the conceiving of designs through a series of workshops for a possibility of a full performance in the future. They learned to respond visually and creatively from the selected text – Nukegara (Shed Skin). This workshop also aimed to develop the

professional awareness and understanding of the responsibilities of the designer and to explore various design methods. It was a guided and collaborative exploration, including the study of script from a designer's point of view, spatial exploration, design processes and challenges.

The 5-day workshop was divided into the 3 disciplines: Lighting, Sound & Set Design. Although we had a plan for the workshop, we also committed to a daily debrief at the end of the day as well as daily morning meetings in order for the entire team to be on the same page. This was to ensure we met our target goal to showcase outcomes of their sharing using a small part from the selected text.

Rashomon 2020

Reported by Ang Yue May (Head of Marketing & Communications, The Kuala Lumpur Performing Arts Centre)

The Actors Studio's relationship with Akira Kurosawa's Academy Award-winning film, *Rashomon*, began in 1970s when its Co-Founder, Dato' Dr. Faridah Merican, was part of a stage production in Bahasa Malaysia directed by Abdullah Zainol.

The Actors Studio went on to stage it four times in four different locations between 2003 and 2013. Its 2003 production won four awards – Best Lighting Design, Best Original Music, Best Set Design and Best Costume Design at the BOH Cameronian Arts Awards.

Rashomon 2020 not only paid tribute to the legendary filmmaker's legacy but also celebrated the three decade-long partnership between The Actors Studio and The Japan Foundation, Kuala Lumpur (JFKL), which also started operations in 1989.

"The history of theatre play *Rashomon* in Malaysia

1970s: DBKL, directed by Abdullah Zainol, featuring Dato' Dr. Faridah Merican (Performed in Bahasa Malaysia)

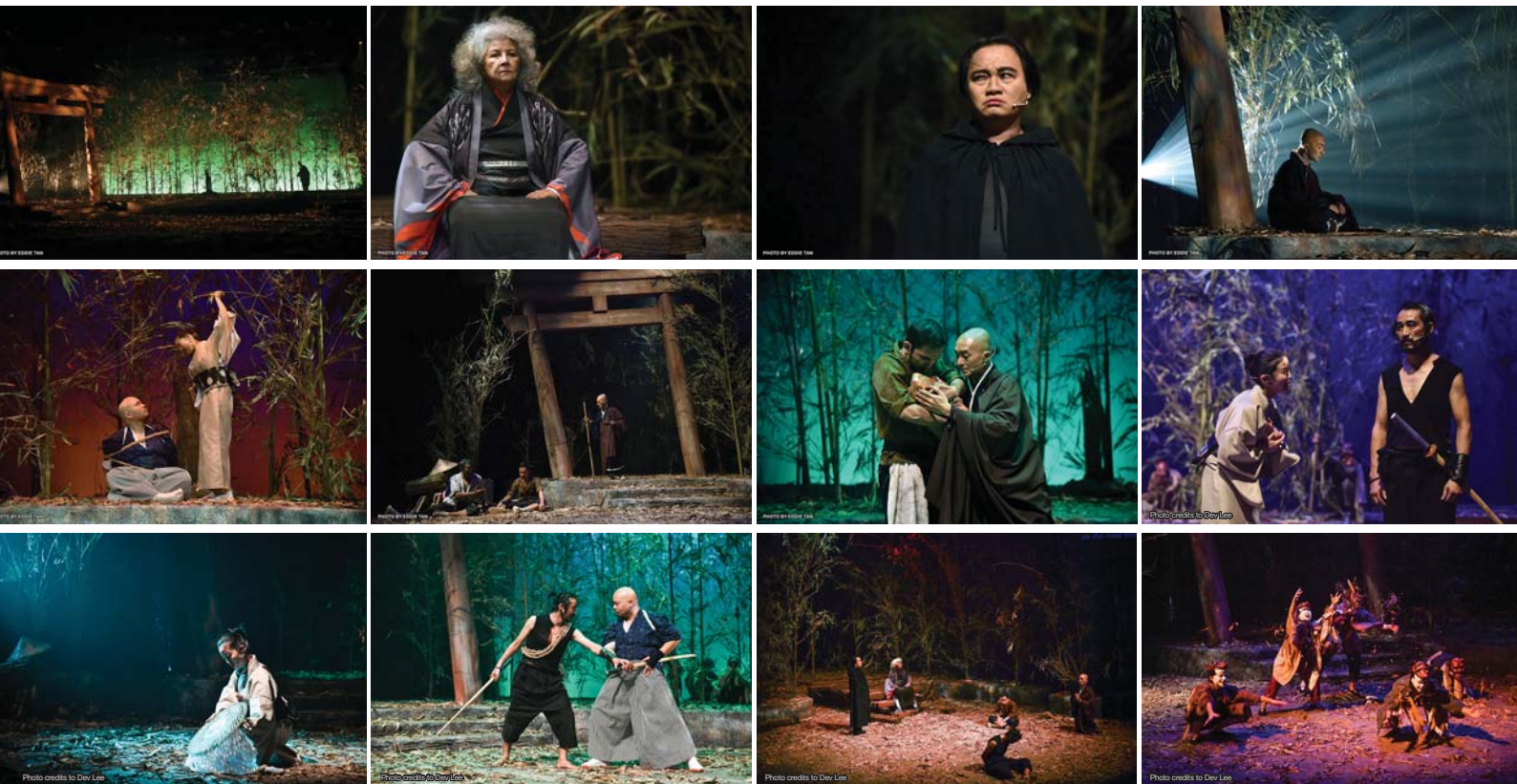
2003: The Actors Studio @ BSC, directed by Dato' Dr. Faridah Merican (Performed in English / Mandarin)

2004: Istana Budaya, directed by Dato' Dr. Faridah Merican (Performed in English / Mandarin)

2004: Cheong Fatt Tze, directed by Dato' Dr. Faridah Merican (Performed in English / Mandarin)

2013: klpac, directed by Joe Hasham OAM (Performed in English / Japanese)

2020: klpac, directed by Joe Hasham OAM (Performed in English / Mandarin / Japanese)



When The Actors Studio first adapted *Rashomon* for the stage in 2003, it was set as a period piece. A decade later, director Joe Hasham OAM completely modernised it and audiences were transported to modern-day Osaka with the story playing out against the bright neon lights.

In 2020, the production comes full circle as director Joe Hasham OAM presented it in its original form, as a tribute to The Actors Studio's and Akira Kurosawa's legacy.

For the very first time, *Rashomon* came to life as a trilingual performance in English, Japanese and Mandarin made possible by a stellar Japanese-Malaysian cast comprising both old and new actors such as Narita Doppo (who was in the 2013 version), Omar Ali (2013), Lee Swee Keong (2003), Goshima Maiya as well as a host of other talented actors. The 2020 staging also featured new music composed by Khairil Imran and movement by Ho Lee Ching.

Rashomon 2020 is a result of a 2-year labour of love beginning in 2018 when the idea was first discussed with The Japan Foundation, Kuala Lumpur. Open auditions were held from 12 to 16 April 2019 and rehearsals commenced on 20 January 2020. The show ran from 29 February to 8 March 2020 and it attracted a total of 2,026 people with 91% of its audience members rated the show 7/10 or higher.

(Photos Credit to Dev Lee & Eddie Tan)

MIRRORING AND NOURISHING - GOING TO THE FOREFRONT OF THE ASIAN CREATIVITY SCENE

Reported by Pam Lim | Date & Time: 13 – 16 February 2020 | Venue: Yuespace, Sri Hartamas



Pentas Project launched the “The Staged Reading Project” in 2020. It aims to introduce scripts with fresh themes and creative structures. This project was curated by Loh Kok Man and John Wong, inspired by a literary script exchange project between Taiwan and Japan (the “Japanese Contemporary Staged Reading Rites”). The script for the first production, “The Game Of Polyamory Life,” came from the 2019 edition of the Japan-Taiwan exchange project, as the intention was to borrow the experiences from the exchange project and to inject creative nourishment into the local theatre scene. This will allow us to connect with Asia’s scriptwriting network, to exchange and learn, and showcase to the world our local culture and strengths.

“Staged Reading” is a theatrical practice in which the actor - in the absence of a complete stage backdrop or costume - uses his voice and emotions, with minimal physical movement, to enact the lines in a script. Outwardly simpler than a formal production, it inducts the audience to appreciate the script, who can then visually imagine the unrepresented elements in even greater richness. As a double tasked director, Loh Kok Man has presented the performance with his non-conventional staging form to provide the audience with a new experience.

In Conversation: Inspirations through Stage Readings and Space

Pentas Project also invited a key speaker - Rieko Yamazaki, aka E-Run, the Chinese translator of the script “The Games of Polyamory Life” to hold a public sharing. Rieko has translated numerous Japanese scripts into Mandarin and is constantly promoting “staged readings” as she believes a script can allow us to understand a country or society.

For the sharing, she had curated a summary of interesting theatre groups in Japan and her personal works. She presented an introductory overview of Japan’s 30-year history of staged readings, from its origins when it was awakened by societal events in the 80’s to the import of American scripts for commercial staging in the 90’s, and other observations.



Public Dialogue with Reiko Yamazaki (E-Run)

MAJAS Member Lecture Series in Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS)

Reported by Sulatan Ibrahim (JFKL)



On 18 February 2020, the Japan Foundation Kuala Lumpur (JFKL), Malaysian Association of Japanese Studies (MAJAS), Japan Studies Program of Department of East Asian Studies, Universiti Malaya (UM), and Faculty of Humanities, Arts & Heritage, Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) jointly organised the MAJAS Member Lecture Series at Theatre Ahmad Nisfu, Faculty of Humanities, Arts & Heritage, UMS. This was the second in the Series held after the first one in December last year. The title was “Human Security and Japan’s Foreign Policy: A case study of

Grant Assistance for Human Security Project in Sabah from 2000 to 2015” presented by Dr. Ramli Dollah, a senior lecturer of the International Relations program.

The lecture was officiated by Deputy Dean of Research and Innovation, Faculty Humanities, Arts & Heritage Associate, Prof. Dr. Dzurizah Ibrahim representing the Dean. Among the VIPs were Vice Consul, Consular Office of Japan in Kota Kinabalu, Ms. Tsukamoto Ai. The lecture was moderated by Mr. Wan Shawaluddin Wan Hassan.

Dr. Ramli Dollah examined the significant role Japan played in world politics after its economic boom in the 1960s, by extending its commitment to other countries through Overseas Development Assistant (ODA). Tokyo’s commitment continued in the 1990s as it provided humanitarian assistance to many countries worldwide as a leading proponent of Human Security, especially in the Southeast Asia. Sabah was one of the major recipients of the Japan assistance but no study had ever been conducted. He looked at Human Security in Japan Foreign Policy, particularly Grant Assistance for Grass-Roots Human Security Projects (GGP) in Sabah. He covered several aspects such as Japanese Foreign Policy and Human Security concepts, key features of GGP and GGP in Sabah between 2000 to 2015.

This presentation was only a preliminary analysis and Dr. Ramli plans to broaden the research to look at the impact, expected further future collaboration with Japanese counterparts, and evaluations for possible budget allocations.

The Japan Foundation Asia Center Invitation Program for Cultural Leaders

Reported by Mr. Mohd Amran bin Mohd Haris, Director, Cultural Arts Development Division, National Department For Culture and Arts, Malaysia.

Mr. Mohd Amran accompanied YBhg Tan Sri Hajah Norliza Rofli, Director General of National Department for Culture and Arts, Malaysia for this invitation program.



With Mr. Mori Takayuki, Director General Agency for Cultural Affairs and Ms. Suzuki Ritsuko, Director, Office for International Cultural Exchange



YBhg. Tan Sri Hajah Norliza Rofli with Ms. Kawamura Junko, President, Japan Arts Council



Hitaru Concert Hall, Sapporo Cultural Arts Theater

There was intrigue and excitement when The Japan Foundation Asia Center invited YBhg Tan Sri Hajah Norliza Rofli, Director General of National Department for Culture and Arts, Malaysia to participate in the Invitation Program for Cultural Leaders held from 28 January until 6 February 2020 in Japan. A detailed itinerary was provided starting from day 1 of departure to Tokyo until we returned to Kuala Lumpur, with everything arranged and planned by the Japan Foundation Asia Centre. Below are some of the meetings and activities we had with various organisations in charge of the arts and culture in Japan.

Day 1: Departed from Kuala Lumpur International Airport to Haneda Airport Tokyo.

Day 2: An orientation session with Japan Foundation Asia Centre. A short briefing was given about the Programme and about Japan Foundation's activities.

Day 3: Visited the Agency of Cultural Affairs, Japan to get a better understanding about Japan's cultural and arts policy. We continued our programme with a visit to the Arts Council of Tokyo (Tokyo Metropolitan Foundation for History and Culture) to learn about the Council, cultural policies and events of the Tokyo Metropolitan Government, especially with regard to the Tokyo Olympic and Paralympics Games 2020.

Day 4: Visited the Japan Arts Council (National Theatre) which was a must for us to learn about the artistic development programme at the National Theatre, such as the training of performers and musicians for traditional theatrical arts such as Kabuki, Noh and Bunraku. We met Dr. KOBAYASHI Mari, Professor of Graduate School of Humanities and Sociology, University of Tokyo who explained the cultural and arts policy of Japan, and problems it faced. It was very impressive to know about The Saison Foundation and Morishita Studio, one of the private companies who uphold arts and culture in Japan. We were briefed about the operations of the Foundation, founded in 1987 to support contemporary Japanese theatre and dance. We then visited the Foundation's Morishita Studio in Morishita, Tokyo.

Day 5: An interview for the 'ASIA HUNDRED' Magazine. The session was conducted by Ms. TOGARI Yasuko, a lecturer from Tokyo University of Foreign Studies. Some of the topics covered were Malaysian arts and culture policy, sustainable growth of traditional arts in Malaysia and arts education in Malaysia.

Day 6: Arts appreciation. We had a golden opportunity to watch a Kabuki performance at Kabukiza Theatre. This heritage is still intact in modern Japan.

Day 7: Departed from Haneda Airport to Sapporo. After arrival, we had a tour at the National Ainu Museum and Park. The first national museum dedicated to the indigenous people of Japan, it is opening in April 2020.

Day 8: Visited the Sapporo Snow Festival, with 2020 being the 71st edition. We also toured Sapporo City, and were briefed about its cultural and arts as well as tourism policies in Sapporo City, especially their involvement in Sapporo Snow Festival (a joint cooperation with Hokkaido Prefecture and a perspective on how the acceptance of tourist from other Asian countries). We also had a glimpse of the Sapporo community plaza, the HITARU Theatre which is the biggest auditorium there with 2,300 seating capacity.

Day 9: On our last day, we had a courtesy visit with the Sapporo Snow Festival Organizing Committee. We learnt about the organising of the festival, and the close cooperation with Sapporo city and other administrative sectors. From Sapporo, we departed to Haneda.

Day 10: Departed from Haneda Airport to Kuala Lumpur International Airport (KLIA). We left Tokyo full of memorable memories. It was a wonderful experience filled with opportunities to engage in meaningful discussions that encouraged the exchange of ideas and creation of new connections and collaborations. We believe that this programme strengthened our relationship and bodes well for future business endeavours and a stronger association between Malaysia and Japan with regard to arts and culture. From the bottom of our heart, a heartfelt thanks to Japan Foundation KL for making this impeccable trip possible.

JFKL Holiday Notice:

Office:

1 May – Labour Day
7 May – Wesak Day
11 May – Nuzul Al-Quran
25 - 27 May – Hari Raya Aidilfitri

Library**:

1 May – Labour Day
7 May – Wesak Day
25 - 27 May – Hari Raya Aidilfitri
6 June – Birthday of Y.P. Agong



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*Please refer to footnote on page 3. **Due to the current situation with COVID-19, our library will be closed until further notice. Please stay tuned for updates on our Facebook and website page.

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