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The Japan Foundation, Kuala Lumpur



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Japan-Malaysia Jazz Collaboration Concert

TOSHIKI NUNOKAWA &
MICHAEL VEERAPEN TRIO



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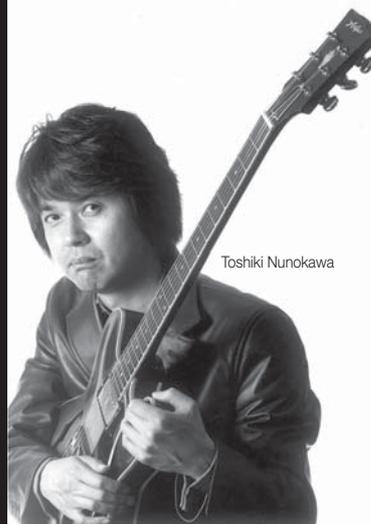
The Japan Foundation, Kuala Lumpur (JFKL) and No Black Tie proudly present "Toshiki Nunokawa & Michael Veerapen Trio", to be held on 13 – 15 May 2010 at No Black Tie.

It was the riffs of Wes Montgomery that set Toshiki Nunokawa off on his journey of jazz discovery whilst still a social engineering student at the Tokyo Institute of Technology. Today, Nunokawa is more than just Japan's pre-eminent jazz guitarist. He is also a roving band member, the author of many best-selling instruction books, CDs and DVDs and instructor at the Senzoku Music College in Japan. As a recording artiste, Nunokawa contributed to five full and well-praised albums with the band VALIS, a solo album and several guitar trio albums. He also released three albums for cult TV series, Ultraman.

Lucky for us here in Kuala Lumpur, we're in for a superb treat. For Nunokawa has signed in to play three shows at No Black Tie with Michael Veerapen, one of Malaysia's foremost jazz pianists with a career spanning over 25 years.

Veerapen has earned the greatest respect of his colleagues and the popular acclaim of a discerning and growing jazz audience both at home and abroad. He is one of Malaysia's true musical treasures.

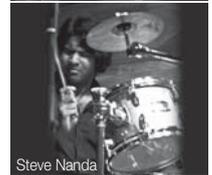
Nunokawa and Veerapen will also conduct a free public workshop for aspiring jazz guitarists and music lovers.



Toshiki Nunokawa



Michael Veerapen



Steve Nanda



Wan Azfarezal

Performances:

13 May (Thursday)

9.30pm, RM30 (students RM20)

14 & 15 May (Friday & Saturday)

10.30pm, RM40 (students RM20)

Workshop:

15 May (Saturday)

4.00pm – 6.00pm (FREE ADMISSION)

Venue & Reservations:

No Black Tie

7 Jalan Mesui, off Jalan Nagasari, 50200 Kuala Lumpur.

Reservations: 03-21423737 (after 5pm)

Please contact No Black Tie at 03-21423737 or email to admin@noblacktie.com.my for more details



The Weekend Japanese Film Show

"NITABOH – The Founder of Tsugaru Shamisen" (2003, 100 min)

Saturday, 3 April 2010

starting 3pm

Director: NISHIZAWA Akio

Starring: HINO Satoshi, HANAMURA Sayaka, KATSUKI Masako



Nitaroh (Nitaboh) was born to a poor family of a waterman, a man who lets people on his boat and helps them to cross the river, living in rural Aomori prefecture, at the very northern tip of Japan's main land. Nitaroh has an extremely humble background and Nitaroh's mother died just after his birth. In spite of being in such a sorry plight, he is a healthy child. However, when he is 8 years old, he catches smallpox which was epidemic at the time and loses his eyesight. Nonetheless, he is looking for his way through life with an interest to flute and Shakuhachi (traditional Japanese bamboo flute).

One day, Nitaroh was fascinated by the shamisen performance by Tamana, a blind woman playing the shamisen and singing for her living, and decides to learn how to play it from her. Tamana was on a half way of her trip with her daughter, Yuki, but decides to stay there for a while and teach Nitaroh.

When Nitaroh is 11 years old, his father, Santaroh, passes away. Nitaroh has no parents or relatives left around him, but he makes his mind to make his living by playing the shamisen.



The Rainbow Seeker (1996, 120 min)

Saturday, 1 May 2010

starting 3pm

Director: YAMADA Yoji

Starring: NISHIDA Toshiyuki, YOSHIOKA Hidetaka, TANAKA Yuko



After having a fight with his father, Ryo leaves home in Tokyo and gets to the small town. There he finds a job at a small cinema run by Katsuo SHIROGANE. Katsuo dedicates himself to making people happy through the movies. Katsuo introduces Ryo to Yaeko, a widow who runs a coffee shop. Katsuo longs for her secretly.

Ryo soon tries to quit the theatre due to the bad condition of employment, but knowing Katsuo's devotion to the movies, he changes his mind and keeps working with him. Ryo's first job is advertising the Saturday film, "Nuovo Cinema Paradiso (New Cinema Paradise)". The showing goes well, but the theatre is nowhere near as full as in the days of Katsuo's youth.

One day, Yaeko's father dies suddenly. Her family suggests her that she remarries and she decides to leave the town, knowing how Katsuo feels about her.

Due to the discontinuation of production of 16mm film projectors in Japan, replacements of such damaged prints are difficult. Your kind understanding would be very much appreciated.

Japanese Design Today 100 ~ Kuala Lumpur to Penang ~



“JAPANESE DESIGN TODAY 100” exhibition has successfully opened on 8th March at National Art Gallery (Balai Seni Lukis Negara) officiated by YB. Datuk Jacob Dungan Sagan, the Deputy Minister of International Trade and Industry. The opening ceremony was also attended by H.E. Mr Masahiko HORIE, the Japanese Ambassador to Malaysia and YBhg. Dato’ Seri Abdul Azim Mohd Zabidi, the Chairman of the Board of Trustee National Art Gallery.

The exhibition is still on-going at National Art Gallery until 11th April, and it will travel to Penang after that. The Exhibition in Penang will be co-organized by Muzium & Galeri Tuanku Fauziah, School of Arts, USM and Consulate-General of Japan at Penang. The details of the exhibition in Penang are as follows:

Duration: 19 April (Mon) – 14 May (Fri)
Opening Hours: 8.30am – 5.00pm
Venue: Adiwarna Gallery, School of the Arts,
Universiti Sains Malaysia, 11800 Penang
Tel: 604 657 7888 Fax: 604 656 0461
www.usm.my
Admission: Free



Children’s Day Tea Gathering

On 5th May, Japan celebrates the national holiday “Children’s Day”, which was originally called “Tango no Sekku 端午の節句” (Boy’s Festival). It celebrates children’s growth and success in life (formally celebrated by boys only, but today children in general).

To enjoy and celebrate this Japanese seasonal event, we will hold a tea ceremony hosted by Ms Takano, an Urasenke instructor.

Date: Saturday, 8 May 2010
Time: 2:00pm, 2:45pm & 3:30pm (3 sessions, 30min per session)
Venue: The Japan Foundation, Kuala Lumpur (JFKL)
Ticket Fee: RM 5



How to get your ticket...

1. Please call JFKL during the following hours for your ticket reservation
Telephone reservation: From 21 to 23 April 2010 (8:30am - 12:30pm & 2:00pm - 4:30pm)
Telephone number: 03-2284 6228 (Ms Wai Yee / Ms. Kugai)

2. **Ticket collection by 30 April 2010 (Mon-Fri: 8:30am-6:30pm; Sat: 10:00am-6:00pm)**

*On first-come-first-served basis.
**Max 2 tickets per person due to the limited number of seats.
***No walk-in participants are allowed on the day of the event.

“All Together Now: Conversations without End” Exhibition by Sharon Chin



View from Horohira Bashi, Sapporo

Some places are good for the body and the mind, and after spending two months there as artist-in-residence at S-AiR, I feel Sapporo is one of them. Perhaps it has to do with the river that runs through the city. Every day I would cross the main bridge to get from my apartment to the studio, which was on the other side of the river. One day I happened to look down and noticed that people had scrawled graffiti and messages all along the bridge.

The bridge became a metaphor for communication. I took pictures of it and asked people to write messages on the photos – with a twist. They would write the message with their finger on my back, and I would try to write what they had written on the image of the bridge they had chosen. Through this project, I managed to have brief, but meaningful, moments of connection with many people in Sapporo.

Almost a year has passed. I think back on that time with wonder and happiness. This exhibition will present the project I did in Sapporo, but further developed to explore wider themes of communication and conversation. This is reflected in the choice of venue, which is a shopping mall. Shopping malls have become places where most urban Malaysians hang out and spend their leisure time. Although through consumerism they encourage focus on the self and individuality, we can consider them the new public spaces. My experience in Sapporo taught me that it’s not so much what we say that is important, but the fact that we continue to talk to each other.

By Sharon Chin

*** This exhibition “All Together Now: Conversations without End” will be held at Bangsar Village II from 14 - 30 May 2010.**

Everyone is excited and at the same time concerned over the changes in the new Japanese Language Proficiency Test, which will commence this year. Well, here are the 3 main features in the test, which are different from the old JLPT.

Increased focus on communicative competence

The test comprehensively measures the learner's Japanese communicative competence by assessing both the learner's knowledge of Japanese (including vocabulary and grammar) as well as his competence in using this knowledge in practical communication. Thus, for each level, the learner is tested on the followings:

Test Sections & Duration

Level	Test Section & Duration		
N1	Language Knowledge (Vocabulary/Grammar) • Reading 110min		Listening 60min
N2	Language Knowledge (Vocabulary/Grammar) • Reading 105min		Listening 50min
N3 [NEW]	Language Knowledge (Vocabulary) 30min	Language Knowledge (Grammar) 70min	Listening 40min
N4	Language Knowledge (Vocabulary) 30min	Language Knowledge (Grammar) 60min	Listening 35min
N5	Language Knowledge (Vocabulary) 25min	Language Knowledge (Grammar) 50min	Listening 30min

The new test does not include sections to directly measure speaking and writing proficiencies.

The number of test levels is increased to 5

The increase in the number of level allows examinees to select a test level closer to their proficiency. The new test has 5 levels (N1, N2, N3, N4 & N5), instead of 4 levels (Level 1-4). The newly created N3 level, is equivalent to that of between Level 2 and Level 3 in the old test.

Level	A Summary of Linguistic Competence Required for Each Level	As compared to the old JLPT
N1	The ability to understand Japanese used in a variety of circumstances	Approximately the same level as Level 1, but designed to measure slightly more advanced abilities
N2	The ability to understand Japanese used in everyday situations, and in a variety of circumstances to a certain degree	Approximately the same level as Level 2
N3	The ability to understand Japanese used in everyday situations to a certain degree	Positioned at a level bridging the Level 2 and Level 3 [NEW]
N4	The ability to understand basic Japanese	Approx the same level as Level 3
N5	The ability to understand some basic Japanese	Approx the same level as Level 4

The new scoring method to reflect more accurate measurement

Examinees have to pass all the test sections in order to pass the exam. The new method also ensures the examinees having the same competence would gain the same score irrespective of the year they sit for the test.

Level	Scoring Sections	Range of scores	Level	Scoring Sections	Range of scores
N1	LK (Vocab/Gram)	0 ~ 60	N4 N5	LK (Vocab/Gram) • Reading	0 ~ 120
N2	Reading	0 ~ 60		LK (Vocab/Gram) • Reading	0 ~ 60
N3	Listening	0 ~ 60		Listening	
	Total Score	0 ~ 180		Total Score	0 ~ 180

The "Listening" section contributes a third of the total score (60/180) as compared to a quarter in the old JLPT (100/400).

Details of the new JLPT: <http://www.jlpt.jp/>
 The 2010 New JLPT will be held in Malaysia on Sunday, 5 December 2010.



Japanese Books



Fiction

- 『運命の人 1-4』山崎豊子 文藝春秋 2009年 Library call number: 913.6
『イノセント・ゲリラの祝祭』海堂尊 宝島社 2008年 Library call number: 913.6
『ナイチンゲールの沈黙』海堂尊 宝島社 2008年 Library call number: 913.6
『風が強く吹いている』三浦しをん 新潮社 2009年 Library call number: 913.6
『仏果を得ず』三浦しをん 双葉社 2007年 Library call number: 913.6
『錦』宮尾登美子 中央公論社 2008年 Library call number: 913.6

Essay

- 『美は惜しみなく奪う』林真理子 マガジンハウス2009年 Library call number: 914.6
『あたし主婦の頭の中』カータン アメーバブック新社 2008年 Library call number: 914.6
『いろいろあるのよ、主婦だって!』カータン アメーバブック新社 2009年 Library call number: 914.6
『佐賀のがばいばあちゃん』島田洋七 徳間書店 2008年 Library call number: 914.6

Society

- 『女女格差』橋本俊詔 東洋経済新報社 2008年 Library call number: 367.21
『「集団主義」という錯覚』高野陽太郎 新曜社2008年 Library call number: 361.42
『おひとりさまの老後』上野千鶴子 法研 2008年 Library call number: 367.7

Japanese culture

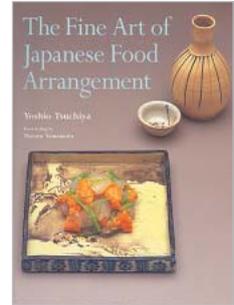
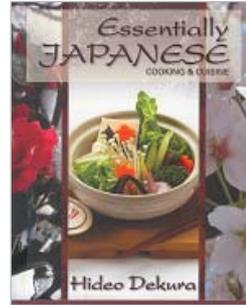
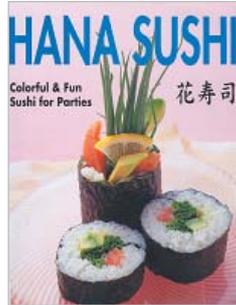
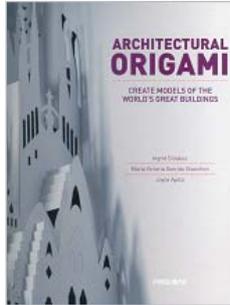
- 『日本人の思い』ほぼ日刊イトイ新聞編 幻冬舎 2008年 Library call number: 361.41
『私は日本のここが好き!』加藤恭子編 河出書房新社 2009年 Library call number: 302.1
『日本のうた101』野ばら社編 野ばら社 2007年 Library call number: 767.7
『ちりめんのつまみ細工』穂積和代 日本ヴォーク社 2006年 Library call number: 594.9
『くらしの折り紙』主婦の友社編 主婦の友社 2004年 Library call number: 754.9

Comics

- 『Naruto 33-45 (English)』Masashi Kishimoto Viz Media 2009年 Library call number: 726.1



English Books



Cooking

[Hana sushi: colorful & fun sushi for parties] by Akiko Namiki. Tokyo: Distributed by Japan Publications Trading Co.; Distributed in the U.S. by Kodansha America through Oxford University Press, 2004. Library call no. 641.5952 HAN

[Fresh Japanese: over 80 healthy Japanese recipes] by Yasuko Fukuoka. London: Hamlyn, 2007. Library call no. 641.5952 FUK

[Morimoto: the new art of Japanese cooking] by Masaharu Morimoto and photography by Quentin Bacon. New York: DK Publishing, 2007. Library call no. 641.5952 MOR

[Essentially Japanese: cooking and cuisine] by Hideo Dekura. London: New Holland, 2008. Library call no. 641.5952 DEK

Arts

[Architectural origami: create models of the world's great buildings] by Ingrid Siliakus, Maria Victoria Garrido Bianchini, Joyce Aysta. Singapore: Page One, 2009. Library call no. 736.982 SIL

[Complete origami: easy techniques, 25 great projects] by David Mitchell. Richmond Hill, Firefly Books, 2009. Library call no. 736.982 MIT

[Origins: the creative spark behind Japan's best product designs] by Shu Hagiwara; photography by Masashi Kuma; translated by Philip Price. Tokyo: Kodansha International, 2006. Library call no. 745.20952 HAG

[The making of modern Japanese architecture: from the founders to Shinohara and Isozaki] by David B. Stewart. Tokyo: Kodansha International, 2002. Library call no. 521.6 STE

Fiction

[Inside and other short fiction: Japanese women by Japanese women] with a foreword by Ruth Ozeki; compiled by Cathy Layne. New York: Kodansha International; Distributed in the United States by Kodansha America, Inc., 2006. Library call no. 895.630 INS

[Itsuka] by Joy Kogawa. New York: Anchor Books, 1994. Library call no. 813.54 KOG

Culture

[Japanese for travelers: useful phrases, travel tips, & etiquette] by Scott Rut Herford. North Clarendon: Tuttle Pub., 2009. Library Call no. 495.683421 RUT

Martial Arts

[The secrets of Okinawan karate: essence and techniques] by Kiyoshi Arakaki. London: Kodansha International, 2002. Library call no. 796.853 ARA

[Budo: The martial ways Of Japan] edited by Alexander Bennet. Tokyo: Nippon Budokan Foundation. 2009. Library call no. 789 BUD

Notice for Closure

Please note that the library will be closed on the following day:

Labour day (Saturday) – 1 May 2010
Wesak day (Friday) – 28 May 2010



Japan Foundation Japanese Studies Fellowship Program

Every year, through the Annual Grant Program, The Japan Foundation offers the Japanese Studies Fellowship Program to individual researchers in the field of social sciences and humanities for the purpose of promoting Japanese studies overseas. One successful applicant from Malaysia, Ms. Lie Pek Hung has completed her research entitled "Takemitsu Film Music: An Analytical Study of Musical Aesthetics in Relation to Art Film". She is currently attached with the Music Department at the School of Arts, Universiti Sains Malaysia and went to Japan from 22 November to 31 December 2009 under this program to complete her research. This essay is about her experience throughout the research project in Japan.



With Professor Funayama, the first living Takemitsu specialist, at a meeting in Waseda, Tokyo.

A Delightful Meeting with Takemitsu in Kamiyacho by Lena P.H. Lie 16 January 2009

As I was strolling along an exceptionally small stream in the hilly garden of Koke-dera (苔寺), I couldn't help wondering what was on Takemitsu's mind when he was here in this beautiful moss garden some sixty years ago. What did he see? What did he hear? And which tune was he whistling in his mind as he stopped to contemplate on the 120 species of moss that spread across the entire temple ground? Visiting Koke-dera, also known as Saihō-ji (西芳寺), was the first priority in my Kyoto trip because this temple garden was so special to Takemitsu Toru (武満徹; October 8, 1930 – February 20, 1996) that he had named his orchestral piece *Dream/Window* (夢窓; 1985) and one of his last films *Dream Window: Reflections on the Japanese Garden* (1992) after its landscape designer Musō Kokushi (夢窓国師; 1275 - 1351).

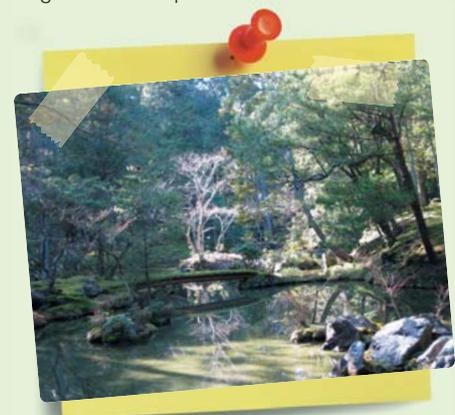
Takemitsu drew inspiration from nature; and he often compared listening to his music "to walking through a garden and experiencing the changes in light, pattern and texture". Largely a self-taught composer, Takemitsu was the first and only art music composer that had successfully integrated nature and the sounds of nature in his music. His unique approach to nature has propelled him as the first Japanese composer to gain international status.

After nature, I believe ... films must be his second love for he had boasted that he watched three films a day and one of his favourite activities upon arriving in a foreign country during his world travels was to head straight to a cinema to watch a local film. It did not matter whether he spoke the local language or not, for Takemitsu, films were a representation of a culture and by watching a film one would have an opportunity to experience that culture and its people. I was dumbfounded when I read that on top of a large number of art music that covers different genres and several volumes of articles and books, he had also scored for more than 100 films. And I could not imagine how on earth a man with no formal music education could become such a prolific and influential world class composer.

Although I have read a lot about Takemitsu, listened to his music and watched a number of films in which he scored both the music and sound, I had not seen his manuscripts other than those duplicated in books and articles. And this made seeing the scanned copy of the composer's original sketches and film scores at Nippon Kindai Ongakukan in Kamiyacho, Tokyo an exclusive experience. On my seventh visit to this documentation centre, I finally saw the original sketches in their physical form. As the librarian was carefully removing the large music manuscripts, approximately 35cm x 50cm, from a grey folder with the Kanji character "心中天網島" (Double Suicide) written on its cover, all kinds of thoughts ran through my mind. And when these manuscripts were finally handed over to me I was speechless. I had butterflies in my stomach because at long last I was about to spend a few quiet moments with these original sketches. It was like I was face to face with this great man and I could feel Takemitsu's presence through these sketches. Seeing, touching and studying these original sketches was the closest anyone could ever get to the composer. In these original manuscripts I saw Takemitsu's neat hand writing in Kanji, Hiragana, Katakana and English. He always sketched with a pencil and his notations were small but very clear and with great precision. He also colour coded some of the manuscripts with colour pencils, mainly in red and blue, and black pen for annotation purposes. From his notation I could somewhat sense his calmness, urgency, and flow of thoughts when he was at work composing the music.

Seeing is believing, I saw and I was not only convinced, I was much affected. However, listening is even more crucial because music is an aural experience. The library of the National Film Center in Kyobashi was where I did all my listening of Takemitsu's music for films. His music for films covers a wide spectrum of style, ranging from jazz to late Romantic chromaticism, Renaissance counterpoint, *musique concrète*, traditional *biwa* and *shakuhachi* repertoire, and the sounds of nature. There are many beautiful soundtracks and many thought provoking ones also. Among my favourites are the soundtracks for *Antonio Gaudi*, *Dodeskaden*, *The Man Who Left His Will on Film* (東京戦争戦後秘話), and the theme song for *Face of Another* (他人の顔).

continues >>



The magnificent golden pond in Koke-dera, Kyoto. The temple garden was designed by Musō Kokushi whom Takemitsu had great respect for.



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With Professor Hori at an interview in Shimbashi, Tokyo



With Professor Nishioka, the principal advisor for this research trip. At Tokyo University of the Arts, Kitasenju campus.

Takemitsu was a very meticulous composer; although he gave Professor Hori Shinji, the sound engineer whom he had worked with for nearly 20 years, the liberty to handle all the recording and mixdown, he was always present to give instructions in every recording session. Professor Hori commented that since 1979 when he started working with the composer, no one had approached him for an interview about Takemitsu and I was the first person to do so. That was indeed my honour.

Living in the heart of Tokyo Metropolis for over a month has allowed me to absorb some elements of the Japanese culture. My meetings with Professor Nishioka Tatsuhiko, Professor Funayama Takashi, Ms. Ono Mitsuko, Mr. Hojo Masato and Mr. Tochigi Akira have given me the opportunity to better understand Takemitsu the composer and his film music, the current state of contemporary art music in Japan, the film production industry and last but not least, the Japanese culture. The very polite and disciplined way of life in the Japanese culture is something that I have not encountered anywhere else in the world. I managed to get by with my limited spoken Japanese mainly because the locals were most accommodating and utterly helpful. I talked to people I chanced upon in the subway stations, eateries, Daimaru, Lawson, police koban, and I learned from them. Every morning as I stepped out of my 20sqm apartment, I looked forward to another productive day, another great meeting. And all my meetings are wonderful events, but that particular one in Kamiyacho is the most delightful and memorable episode that I will cherish for a long, long time.

Lena P.H. Lie a.k.a. Lie Pek Hung is a musicologist at the School of Arts, Universiti Sains Malaysia. Her research on "Takemitsu Film Music: An Analytical Study of Musical Aesthetics in Relation to Art Films" was fully funded by The Japan Foundation Japanese Studies Fellowship Program 2009.

Courtesy Visit by Professors at Nihon University

2 March 2010, at ASWARA

Professor Emeritus Dato' Dr. Mohamed Ghouse Nasuruiddin - Chairman of the Board of Directors of Akademi Seni Budaya dan Warisan Kebangsaan (ASWARA) was invited to Japan for two weeks from 29 June to 12 July 2009 under the Japan Foundation Invitation Program for Cultural Leaders.

During his stay in Japan, Prof. Ghouse visited Nihon University, and gave a lecture titled "Malaysian Traditional Dance" to its students and lecturers. Prof. Ghouse also learned about the on-going research on Asian traditional arts which was implemented at Nihon University, and he himself experienced "motion capture" equipment which can digitalize and analyze his movements.

On 2 March 2010, as a following-up meeting of his visit to Japan, the delegation from Nihon University (Department Theatre, College of Art) - Prof. Mieko MARUMO, Prof. Masami CHIHAYA, and Assoc. Prof. Naoya KOBATASHI - visited ASWARA to observe its educational facilities and environment, and had a discussion with Prof. Ghouse and faculty members.

Professors from Nihon University received a warm welcome from Prof. Ghouse, representatives of each faculty, and administrative staffs of ASWARA. They shared each other's academic situation and ideas, and discussed the possibility of future exchange and collaboration between Nihon University and ASWARA. They agreed, as a first step, to start discussion for realizing some of ideas such as 1) mutual exchange of academic staff, 2) contributing articles in each other's journals, and 3) possible joint production.



(From left) Prof. Mieko MARUMO & Prof. Ghouse



Group photo of the delegation from Nihon University with dancers from ASWARA



Discussion between Nihon University and ASWARA



Invitation Program for Young Muslim Intellectuals in Southeast Asia

The Japan Foundation has launched a new program to invite young Muslim intellectuals to Japan from the Southeast Asian countries to deepen understanding about Japan among Muslim intellectuals, which will contribute to a better relationship with the Southeast Asian countries in the long run. The program also aims at contributing to the creation of a mutual network of Muslim academics not only between Japan and Southeast Asian countries, but also among Southeast Asian countries, themselves. The first program was held from 4 to 13 November 2009 in Tokyo, Kyoto and Kobe under the theme of "Learning from Japan's Modernization: A Case Study of Modernization Experienced by Non-Western Country". Malaysia was represented by Mr. Yusri bin Mohamad, a lecturer at the Ahmad Ibrahim Kulliyah of Laws, International Islamic University Malaysia. Here is an essay by Mr. Yusri about his experience throughout the program.

By Yusri Mohamad:

The invitation from the Japan Foundation to join this program has proven to be an invaluable learning process and an unforgettable experience for me. From the lectures, discussions, tours and visits that have been thoughtfully arranged for us, I observe many impressive aspects regarding Japan's modernization process which I briefly describe below:

1. Educating and Empowering the People

In order for a nation to succeed in its modernization process, the people must be first empowered to be active participants at all levels of the society. Japan has managed to engineer this aspect through its stress on education and opening the space for the Public Sphere, using the term used by Professor Hiroshi Mitani in his very enlightening lecture. It is clear that Japan has always regarded education as its most strategic area of investment and the standard of education is still amongst the best in the world. The high level quality of the human capital that it enjoys, allows Japan to embark upon a modernization project quite unparalleled in modern human history. Having good people alone would not be enough but also require space and initiative for them to fully utilize their potentials. Thus another important factor emerging here is the formation of a sufficiently wide and vibrant Public Sphere. With this in place we find a situation in Japan where people were fully engaged and involved in pushing the nation forward as they feel that this is their own project.

Excellent education and culturalization agendas have also equipped the people of Japan with exemplary spirit of innovation and perseverance. Thanks to this, despite the various setbacks that Japan has endured in the past due to its own misadventures or natural disasters, Japan has been able to bounce back stronger than before. The visits to the various museums in this program have left this impression in my mind.

2. The Need for Effective 'Engines' and 'Brakes'

Another major lesson that may be observed from Japan is that for a modernization process to be successful, there must not only be powerful push factors being the 'engine' to the process but at the same time there must also be factors acting as effective 'brakes' to control and guide the nation in its forward trajectory. In my observation, these brake factors can be found in the case of Japan, in the form of numerous values and norms such as Nationalism, Monozukuri, Bushido and the commitment of Buddhism and Shintoism. The other side of higher culture can also be clearly exemplified in the unique appreciation of age old traditions such as the Japanese Tea Ceremony and preservation of ancient temples and shrines. Additionally, Japan has achieved a technological and economic growth at a very high level. Due to this, any imbalance and negative side effect resulting from the rapid modernization has been moderated and limited.



At Cultural House Kyoto



Temple visit

3. Internal Stability and Cohesion

Another factor which I believe contributes significantly to Japan's pace of modernization and progress is its internal stability and cohesion as a nation. Japan is largely homogenous in various respects ; race, religion, culture, language and national aspirations. This feature has allowed Japan to avoid disruptive and distractive internal conflicts and tensions. Instead Japan has been able to channel its resources and potentials to its economical and technological advances to the fullest. In other words, Japan as a nation has been able to achieve the key factor behind any successful venture i.e., Focus.

4. Valuing the Perspective of the Rank-and-File

During one of the lectures in the program, Prof. Kasaya drew our attention to an interesting Japanese approach to management that places more value to the perspectives of the people on the ground. The specific case that we were studying was the communication and decision making practise of a traditional Japanese military regiment. We were informed that since the people up-front and on the ground are more in touch with the actual situation where they are stationed, they are given the right to decide and may even overrule a decision made by a higher ranking officer if the decision is within their area of command. This is a very sensible approach to decision making in an organization where the views of the rank-and-file matter most. Needless to say this culture will contribute to an increase in a sense of responsibility and belonging amongst the work force towards their organizations. Maybe this factor is also partly responsible behind Japan's ability to remain stable as a nation despite frequent changes at the political helm.

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5. Local Cultures not a Hindrance to Modernization

I am also impressed with the loyalty of the Japanese to local cultures and traditions regardless of their push for modernization. One clear example of this is the paramount position of the Japanese language in all the major fields. The Japanese experience is a strong argument against sacrificing the local language in favour of international languages especially English. It can be argued that preserving the role and place of the national language will contribute significantly to internal cohesion and stability, a crucial success factor that we have stated above.

6. Hierarchy and Meritocracy in Appropriate Doses

Despite being a modern and open society, Japan does not shy away from up-holding hierarchy, classification and division of labour where it is needed and established amongst the society. Traditional Japanese society is clearly divided by classes based on the different roles to be played with the Samurai class being the key class. Over time meritocracy has been injected in this approach when an individual who performs may advance himself from a lower class to a higher class. In this manner, we are able to keep people focused on their specific roles in the society without killing the spirit of initiative and industry.

Along with these many factors, there are few aspects which I feel further analysis and contemplation are required. Firstly in this age of Globalisation, will Japan be able to keep itself closed and protected enough to preserve what it has already achieved or succumbed to more radical changes. If that happens, will Japan be able to sustain its pace of progress? Secondly, I believe that religion is a powerful natural factor in any equilibrium of success or progress. It is quite clear that the position of religion and religious commitment of the Japanese is quite unique and different. Again in the reality of a more open and global world, how will this factor impact Japan in the future. Related to the same issue, I sensed that the Japanese have a very established set of values and way of life. I sometimes wonder whether within that environment, alternative lifestyle based on other religious and cultural values is able to find sufficient room to prosper. Thirdly, I am interested to know more about Japan's strategy in the wake of China's rise since countries in Southeast Asia also share the same concern.

Moving on to look at possible approaches to apply and implement the experiences obtained from this program back home, a number of ideas comes to mind. Amongst them:

1. Reinforcing the Importance of Internal Strength and Cohesion

There is a need to encourage commitment to national aspirations and idealism, religious and traditional values as an important ingredient of an ideal modernization process. Often, developing nations are unduly pressured to loosen their hold to their heritage even when they are not necessarily contrary to modernization and progress.



Briefing at Kobe Natural Disaster Museum



Dinner after Tea Ceremony

2. Encourage Education and Innovation

Japan has clearly shown the incomparable strategic value of investing in education. This must be coupled with a recommitment to creativity and innovation in science and technology in order to stay competitive. Those who want to follow Japan's footsteps must be willing to persevere and channel sufficient and continuous resources to sustain the focus on education.

3. Importance of Values of Focus, Industry and Discipline

I am reminded that these key inner values are not an option but must be consistently practiced at the level of the individual, society and nation. Drawing from their own heritage and culture, nations must ensure effective internalisation of these values.

4. Specific Comparative Analysis with situation in Malaysia

There is a need for more in depth and detailed comparative study on selected aspects of the modernization and nation building models of Japan and Malaysia. The points that we have briefly touched in this report call for further research and analysis.

5. Continuous Study and Research on Japan

Despite the emergence of various countries and regions, this program has convinced me that there still so much that can be discovered and learned from the Japan of the past, present and future. I would certainly encourage such efforts at all scales, personal or formal.

In summary, this program had been able to achieve the broad objectives and had fulfilled the expectations of the participants. I hope that this program will spark various follow-up initiatives besides future series and the continuing friendship, goodwill and network that has nurtured amongst all the wonderful people that have made this possible. I take this opportunity to record my deepest gratitude to the inspired leaders of the Japan Foundation in Tokyo and in Kuala Lumpur as well as their fabulous team for their excellent planning and execution for this program. A special note of thanks is also due to all the participants from Indonesia and the Philippines who have collectively made the whole experience so rich and fruitful.



Noh Workshop, Public Lecture and Demonstration by Professor Richard Emmert

Pentas Project Theatre Production, supported by The Japan Foundation, Kuala Lumpur and some other sponsors, organized a Noh workshop, public lecture and demonstration by a well-known American expert in Noh studies and performance, Professor Richard Emmert. He is currently a professor at Musashino Women's University in Tokyo, Japan but also actively writing and speaking about Noh, mainly to English-speaker audience outside and inside Japan. He is a certified Kita school instructor who has studied, taught and performed Noh in Japan and many other countries since 1973. He has co-authored a series of Noh performance guides published by the National Noh Theatre in Tokyo. He has also composed, directed, and performed in many English Noh performances in several countries around the world.

The event was organized from 27 to 31 January 2010 at two different venues in Kuala Lumpur. A Public Lecture and Noh demonstration was held at PJ Live Arts on 27 and 28 January 2010 respectively. Around 120 public audiences who were mainly the art students and lecturers from various institutions gathered at the Studio of PJ Live Arts to attend both the lecture and demonstration. The audiences had the opportunity to learn the history and current situation of Noh theatre apart from the detail explanation about the structure of Noh theatre itself. They were very much excited when the speaker came out with costume, masks and instruments for the Noh demonstration on the second day. Due to the limited space and time, the workshop was opened only to 20 participants despite the overwhelming response from the public. During the 5-day workshop, participants were taught on the basic philosophy of the Noh theatre, with the concentration in movement and music. They were also taught the way to sing and introduced to some basic instruments of a Noh performance. At the end of the sessions, they were able to perform one scene of Noh in groups while wearing the masks and perform the singing by themselves.

Professor Richard Emmert's visit to Malaysia has given the opportunity and experience to Malaysian people to understand the art of Noh from the perspective of a non-Japanese expert. It is uncommon to have the English-speaking Noh expert coming to Malaysia, thus the event has successfully created a new platform of networking and cultural exchange, especially among the local performing artists.



Language, Theatre, Nation: Imagining the Nation-A 3 Day Forum and Workshop with Playwright Sakate Yoji and Dramaturg/Critic Matsui Kentaro.



This event was organized by The Instant Café Theatre (ICT) and partially supported by The Japan Foundation, Kuala Lumpur. It was held at ICT's House of Arts and Ideas (CHAI) in Petaling Jaya, Selangor from 8 to 10 January 2010. Two experts in performing arts were invited from Japan to conduct theatre forum and workshop. One of them was a notable playwright and director, Mr. Sakate Yoji, who is known as one of the most socially conscious and politically active artists in Japan. Born in Okayama in 1962, he graduated from Keio University in Japanese Literature before founding Rinkogun Theater Company in 1983. Since then, Mr. Sakate has written and directed most Rinkogun's production and won the prestigious 35th Kunio Kishida Award for a play entitled "Breathless" that addressing the sanitation problems in Tokyo. Besides number of winning awards and prizes, he currently serves as the chairman of Japan Playwright's Association since 2006. The other guest from Japan was Mr. Matsui Kentaro, a producer, dramaturg and theatre critic, who was the producer of Black Tent Theatre from 1980 to 1996. He took part in the planning of Setagaya Public Theatre since 1989 and has led the theatre's academic projects since its opening in 1997. He has worked in many collaborative projects with Asian and European directors and choreographers including Mr. Sakate Yoji.

A total of 35 Malaysian playwrights, directors, producers, actors, critics and theatergoers participated in this 3 day event. The event was divided into several sessions of reading, playwriting workshop, forum, informal exchange and discussion. Through the event, the participants had the opportunity to share knowledge of the Japanese and Malaysian theatre scene and history, and deepen understanding towards the roles of dramaturg, producer, playwright and activist in developing theatre for society. The presence of two prominent experts from theatre industry in Japan has also provided the participants a great chance to exchange ideas and create a new platform of networking. Approach to the relation between language, nation and performing arts through workshop and talk sessions was very fruitful in enhancing the development of Malaysian theatre.

Public Lecture on Japanese Studies by URATA Shujiro



A public lecture on Japanese Studies entitled “Regional Economic Integration in East Asia and Japan’s FTA Policy” by Professor URATA Shujiro was organized on 10 and 11 March, 2010 in Kuala Lumpur and Penang respectively. Professor URATA Shujiro is currently a Professor of Economics at the Graduate School of Asia Pacific Studies, Waseda University, Japan. He received his B.A. in Economics from Keio University and his M.A. and Ph.D. in Economics from Stanford University .

The first lecture was held at the University of Malaya , followed by a closed meeting with government officials at the Institute of Strategic and International Studies (ISIS) in Kuala Lumpur . On the next day, Professor URATA delivered his lecture at the Universiti Sains Malaysia , Penang . About 250 people attended the lecture at the three venues. This lecture reviewed the recent developments and special characteristics of regional economic integration in East Asia . It then discussed FTA policies of East Asian countries with a focus on Japan ’s FTA policy and commented on future prospects of a region-wide FTA. Most of the audiences gave warm response to the lecture by making comments and questions during the Q & A sessions.



Gift presentation at the Universiti Sains Malaysia, Penang

This event was jointly organised by The Japan Foundation, Kuala Lumpur (JFKL), Malaysian Association of Japanese Studies (MAJAS), University of Malaya and Universiti Sains Malaysia.



At the University of Malaya



At the Institute of Strategic and International Studies (ISIS)



At the Universiti Sains Malaysia, Penang

New Head of Japanese Language Department for Japan Foundation Kuala Lumpur

Mr. ISOGAYA Hiroyuki is now the new Head of Japanese Language Department of Japan Foundation Kuala Lumpur, succeeding Ms. TOSHIMORI Maki, who had left Malaysia to take up a new role in Japan Foundation Headquarters, Tokyo.



With Tun Dr. Mahathir at Waseda University, Tokyo

Dear Teman Baru readers,

It was in 1998 when I visited Malaysia for the first time, and it was my first visit to a foreign country. I was fascinated by its friendly people, appetizing local foods, rapidly developing bandaraya, colonial pekan and calm kampung.

Since then I have visited Malaysia every year, and witnessed historical moments including the retirement of Tun Dr. Mahathir, the 50th Independence Anniversary and others.

While in my home town, I have engaged in traditional activities, administering and participating matsuri (local festival), bon-odori, mochi-tsuki (rice-cake making) and so on.

Now I am most excited to be able to work here as a bridge between Malaysia and Nippon, and looking forward to meet you soon.

I SOGAYA Hiroyuki



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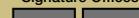
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