

ISSUE NO. 61 December 2011 - January 2012
The Japan Foundation, Kuala Lumpur



JAPAN FOUNDATION 国際交流基金

Temam Baru



Hanamas Tour

Hanamas Profile



Chie Hanawa

Chie Hanawa

- Actively performs at live concerts, TV and Radio in Japan.
- Also performed overseas, including concerts at Carnegie Hall in New York, Cannes Lions International Advertising Festival, Music Festival in Malaysia, etc.
- In 2000, became the youngest winner at the *Tsugaru-shamisen* National Competition in Japan.
- In 2005, graduated from the Department of Traditional Japanese Music, Tokyo University of the Arts.
- Made her first recording, "*Tsuki no Usagi* (Moon Rabbit)", for Columbia Music Entertainment in Japan.



Natsumi Okimasu

Natsumi Okimasu

- Graduated from the Department of Instrumental Music (Violin), Tokyo University of the Arts.
- During her university studies, formed an instrumental unit called "para-e-sola" with Ryo-hei (keyboard); released a CD and performed at live concerts in Tokyo.
- In April 2007, became a member of classical music group "Dualis"; started playing at world cruises and received favorable reviews for her shows, which introduced a new genre called "New Classic".
- Became a "Heaven Artist", certified by the Tokyo Metropolitan Government.
- Currently studying the tango under Ms. Machiko Komatsu, one of the leading tango pianists in Japan.



Hanamas Tour

The young and talented duo **Hanamas** is starting to make waves in their home country, Japan, and now they are bringing their unique and captivating brand of fusion music to Malaysia. The Japan Foundation, Kuala Lumpur is proud to present a series of concerts by Hanamas; at Kuala Lumpur on 12 December 2011, and at Penang on 14 December 2011.

Chie Hanawa, who plays the *tsugaru-shamisen*, and **Natsumi Okimasu**, a violinist, joined together in 2009 to form Hanamas. Both of them, who are graduates from the Tokyo University of the Arts, have been active in playing a variety of music genres. Within their pop sounds and melodies, Hanamas brings out the best from each of their instruments, and, at the same time, fuse them to create a harmony of Eastern and Western sensibilities. Having won the Prize for Encouragement at the 1st Neo Classical International Competition in 2010, they are definitely the duo to look out for, when it comes to fusions of great music!

Don't miss this opportunity to have your heartstrings tugged by the stirring melodies of the shamisen and the violin, specially performed by Hanamas!



Meet & Greet Session

Date & Time : **11 December 2011, 1:00pm & 7:00pm**
Venue : New Wing LG, Oval,
1 Utama Shopping Centre,
1, Lebuhraya Bandar Utama, Bandar Utama,
47800 Petaling Jaya

Open to Public

Kuala Lumpur

Date & Time : **12 December 2011, 8:30pm**
Venue : **Dewan Filharmonik PETRONAS**
Level Two, Tower Two, PETRONAS Twin Towers,
Kuala Lumpur City Centre,
50088 Kuala Lumpur

Admission : RM30 for all / RM20 for students and JFKL members

*For more information on tickets, please visit <http://www.jfkl.org.my> or call 03-2284 6228, and <http://www.dfp.com.my> or call 03-2051 7007.

There will also be a **Lecture & Demonstration** by Hanamas on **13 December 2011, 2.00pm**. For inquiries, please contact Dewan Filharmonik PETRONAS Box Office at 03-2051 7007.

Penang

Date & Time : **14 December 2011, 8:30pm**
Venue : Dewan Budaya,
Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM),
11800 Penang

Admission : Open to Public*

*For inquiries, please contact Universiti Sains Malaysia (Ms. Siti Rayuan bt Sapar, tel. 04-653 3751), or The Consulate-General of Japan at Penang (tel. 04-226 3030)



Organized by:



Co-organized by:



In Cooperation with:



Embassy of Japan in Malaysia



The Weekend Japanese Film Show

With English subtitles
at Pawagam Mini P. Ramlee
FINAS
Admission is FREE!!!
*Titles are subject to
change without prior notice

December 2011



"Glasses" めがね (2007, 106 min, Color)

Saturday, 3 December 2011

starting 3pm

**Venue : Pawagam Mini P. Ramlee, FINAS (next to Zoo Negara)
Jalan Hulu Kelang, 68000 Ampang**

Director : OGIGAMI Naoko

Starring : KOBAYASHI Satomi, MOTAI Masako, KASE Ryo

Taeko steps out of the airport onto a quiet tropical island. No one is there to pick her up, but she drags her suitcase down the beach. She has a map that leads her to the pension Hameda, a quiet inn run by a man named Yuji. He is surprised she didn't get lost along the

way; everyone else does. The only other visitor is an older woman named Sakura, who comes every spring and runs a *kakigori* flavored-ice stand on the beach. The two are amazed at the size of Taeko's suitcase; she tells them it is filled with books she wants to read while she's on vacation, which they tell her is very unusual for visitors on the island. Sakura also leads local children in their own brand of morning stretches, which she calls "merci exercises". Taeko hates *kakigori*, and she refuses to take part in the exercises. She tells Yuji that she would like to do some sightseeing in the area, and he is floored—there's nothing to see, and most people who come to stay are more interested in "twilighting". Despite Taeko's best efforts to get them to explain to her, no one can express exactly what "twilighting" is, although they assume that she is doing it whenever she sits on the beach and looks out at the ocean and setting sun.

JANUARY 2012



"The Blue Bird" 青い鳥 (2008, 105 min, Color)

Saturday, 7 January 2012 (Date subject to change. Please visit our website for any updates)

starting 3pm

**Venue : Pawagam Mini P. Ramlee, FINAS (next to Zoo Negara)
Jalan Hulu Kelang, 68000 Ampang**

Director : NAKANISHI Kenji

Starring : ABE Hiroshi, HONGO Kanata, ITO Ayumi

Higashigaoka Junior High School is in turmoil as one of the pupils, Noguchi, who had been bullied, attempted suicide last term. On the first day of the new term, a substitute teacher arrives to take the second year class. When the teacher, Murauchi (Abe Hiroshi), introduces himself, the pupils are surprised by his stutter. He has a speech impediment. Unable to speak eloquently, Murauchi faces his pupils with 'words of truth'. His first instruction to the pupils is to return Noguchi's desk and chair to the original place in the classroom. Every morning Murauchi greets the empty desk, "Good morning, Noguchi." This causes a ripple beyond the classroom and among other teachers and parents, but Murauchi will not stop doing it. Eventually the day comes when Murauchi must leave.

unit asia

COMING SOON

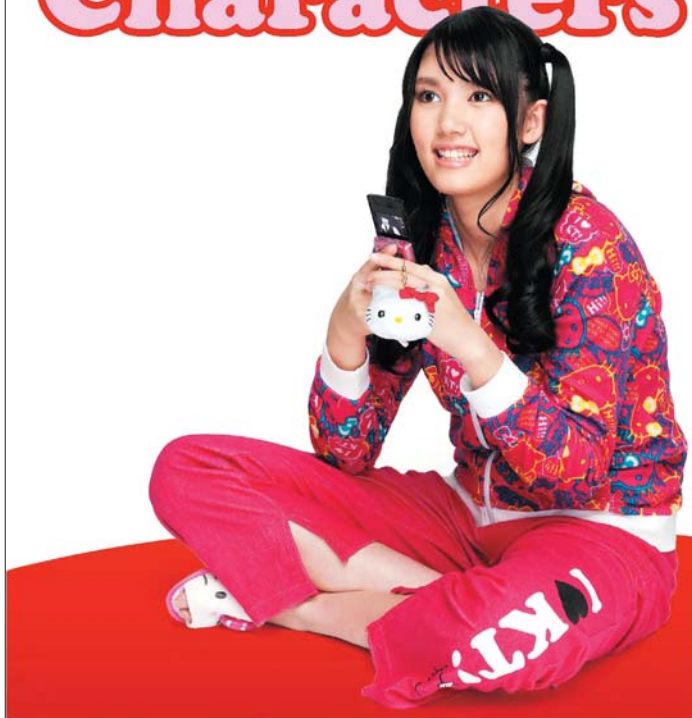
After their extraordinary debut in 2008, **unit asia** – the Asian jazz group with members from Japan, Thailand and Malaysia – will be back to wow Malaysian audiences in February 2012! Stay tuned to the next issue of *Temas Baru* for more details on the upcoming jazz performance by the one and only **unit asia**!

Date & Time: 9 February 2011, 8:30pm

Venue : KL Life Centre



JAPAN Kingdom of Characters



In recent years, a subculture related to Japanese anime and manga has rapidly attracted worldwide attention. To make the most of this trend, the Japan Foundation presents **JAPAN: Kingdom of Characters** – a traveling exhibition which examines characters as one radical aspect of this subculture.

What exactly is a character? Why are they so popular? What kind of society do these characters reflect and what kind of influence do they exert on that society? And finally, where is Japanese character culture headed? In this exhibition, as the intimate relationship between characters and Japanese people is introduced, visitors will gain a better understanding of the cultural and historical background behind the Japanese love of characters as well as the future of characters in contemporary Japan.

Penang

Date : **26 December 2011 – 4 February 2012**
Venue : Muzium & Galeri Tuanku Fauziah (MGTF),
Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM),
11800 Penang
Admission: Open to Public

Kuala Lumpur

Date : **20 February – 20 March 2012**
Venue : **Balai Seni Visual Negara**,
2, Jalan Temerloh, Off Jalan Tun Razak,
53200 Kuala Lumpur
Admission: Open to Public

Shingo Tokihiro Costume Exhibition

After his well-received costume exhibition and opening performance in February 2011, **Shingo Tokihiro** is back once again to present his exquisite theatre costumes, as well as his extensive knowledge on costume design. In conjunction with the Opening of the Performing Arts Centre of Penang (penangpac), Mr. Tokihiro's lavish costumes will grace the premises as part of his Costume Exhibition which begins from 17 December 2011. And then, on 19 December 2011, Mr. Tokihiro will be presenting a Textile Talk and Theatrical Fashion Performance, entitled "**Whispering of Water, Wind of Memories**", at the National Textile Museum in Kuala Lumpur. Don't miss this chance to be inspired by Shingo Tokihiro's fabulous costume designs!

About Shingo Tokihiro

Costume Designer. The costume and the styling he creates with his creative sensibility are often described as "literary lyric" and have been receiving recognitions from home and abroad. Started out as a fashion writer, he first started his career as a costume designer in 1991 with Mozart's "The Magic Flute". Since then, he has participated in various performances from theatre, contemporary dance to drum concerts and poetry readings as a costume designer. Some of the major productions he has participated in overseas are, "Rashomon" at Istana Budaya, Malaysia in 2004 and International Shakespeare Festival, Romania in 2006, "Tanabata Star Story" in Zhenjiang, China in 2011. He has also conducted costume making or styling workshops in various cities in Japan as well as in the Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam and Malaysia.



Penang Costume Exhibition

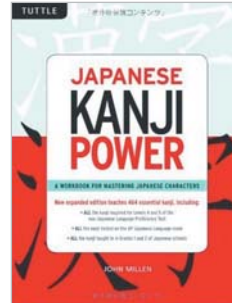
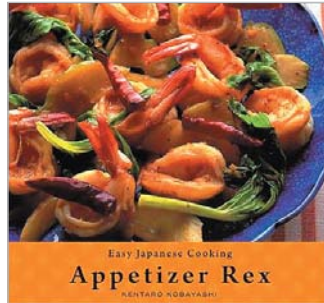
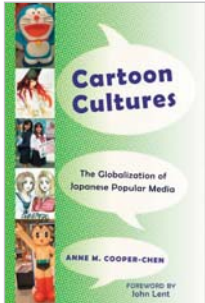
Date : **17 December 2011 – 1 January 2012**
Venue : **Performing Arts Centre of Penang (penangpac)**
3H-3A-1, Straits Quay,
Jalan Seri Tanjung Pinang,
Tanjung Tokong, 10470 Pulau Pinang
Admission : Open to Public

Kuala Lumpur Textile Talk and Theatrical Fashion Performance "Whispering of Water, Wind of Memories"

Date & Time : **19 December 2011, 8.30pm**
Venue : Mezzanine Floor, Saindera Gallery, Level 1,
National Textile Museum
Jalan Sultan Hishamuddin, 50050 Kuala Lumpur
Admission : Open to Public



English Books



[Japan-ness in architecture] / by Arata Isozaki; translated by Sabu Kohso; edited by David B. Stewart; foreword by Toshiko Mori. London: MIT PRESS, 2006. Library Call No. 720.952 ISO

[Kimi ni todoke. = From me to you. Vol. 8] \ by Karuho Shiina. San Francisco, California.: VIZ media, 2011. Library Call No. 726.1

[Kaze Hikaru. 1] / by Watanabe Taeko. San Francisco, California.: Viz Media, LLC, 2005. Library Call No. 726.1

[Sushi and beyond: what the Japanese know about cooking] / by Michael Booth. London: Vintage, 2010. Library Call No. 813.5952 BOO

[Kissing the mask: beauty, understatement and femininity in Japanese Noh theater] / by William T. Vollmann. New York: Ecco, 2010. Library Call No. 792.0952 VOL

[Cartoon cultures: the globalization of Japanese popular media] / by Anne M. Cooper-Chen. New York: PETER LANG, 2010. Library Call No. 306.0952 CHE

[The Japanese Devil Fish Girl and other unnatural attractions] / by Robert Rankin with illustrations by the author. London: Gollancz, 2010. Library Call No. 823.914 RAN

[The Book of Heroes] / by Miyuki Miyabe; translated by Alexander O. Smith. San Francisco: Haikasoru, 2010. Library Call No. 895.635 MIY

[Japanese kanji power: a workbook for mastering Japanese characters] / by John Millen. Tokyo: Tuttle Pub. 2010. Library Call No. 811.2T

[Appetizer rex] / by Kentaro Kobayashi; photography by Hideo Sawai; [translation, Jessica Bezer]. New York: Vertical, 2009. Library Call No. 641.81252 KOB



Japanese Books

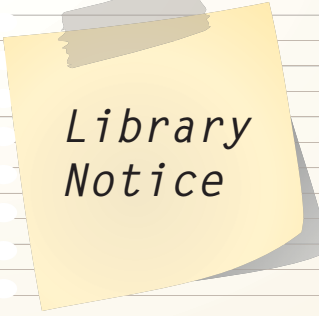



Japanese Language Studies

『初級日本語表現文型ドリル』	Jリサーチ出版	2010年 Library Call No. 815
『日本語上級へのとびら漢字力800』	くろしお出版	2010年 Library Call No. 811.2
『日本語応用力を伸ばす使うことば』	研究版	2011年 Library Call No. 810
『外国人のためのパソコンのきほん』	スリーエーネットワーク	2010年 Library Call No. 548.29
『初級日本語文法の復習: 英語版』	スリーエーネットワーク	2010年 Library Call No. 810.7

Japanese Language Teaching

『敬語パーフェクトマニュアル』	小学館出版	2010年 Library Call No.815.8
『文章には道があるPart2』	スリーエーネットワーク	2011年 Library Call No.817.5
『とりあえず日本語で』	スリーエーネットワーク	2010年 Library Call No.810.7
『日本人でも知らない!?外国人の大疑問』	アルク	2010年 Library Call No.810.0





Please be informed that the JFKL Library will be closed for stocktaking on the following dates: -

5 to 28 December 2011

- During the stocktaking, members who wish to return borrowed materials may do so through the library "Book Drop Box", but it is advisable to return all borrowed materials to the library before 3 December 2011.
- The last day for borrowing library materials is on 19 November 2011 (Saturday).
- The JFKL Library will re-open on 4 January 2012 (Wednesday).

(Sorry for any inconveniences caused. Please call the JFKL Librarian for any assistance.)

Of Dreams in Reality ----- Japan by Voon Sui Yien

This was the first time I came to Japan. To be able to visit Japan has been my long-yearned dream since I was a kid. I was thrilled when I was given the chance to take on this fully-sponsored study tour. And this wonderful journey turned out to be an unbelievably sweet, unforgettable and most blessed memory ever.

The most exciting part was getting the chance to meet the other nine speech contest winners from various countries in South-East Asia. In this study tour, we were brought to most of the famous tourist places and of course, study tours to Kao Company and Tokyo Kita City Disaster Prevention Center, where I had learned and gained precious knowledge and experiences.



Mount Fuji



Tokyo Tower

The view of Tokyo Tower at night was fantastic! It lit up the night sky around it, showing its impeccable beauty and mesmerized all of us even from afar. The night scene of the ever-bright, sleepless Tokyo from Tokyo Tower was out of this world! The maple leaves along the road to the 5th lookout point of Mt. Fuji and the whole view of Mt. Fuji itself were truly amazing. We were disappointed earlier, as it was a rainy day, so we couldn't see Mt. Fuji itself all the way when we were heading towards it. When we left Mt. Fuji and went on our way to the next destination, we were thrilled as Mt Fuji could finally be clearly seen.

Of all the places, Meiji Shrine was the most magnificent place for me. A historical shrine stood in a man-made jungle. Once I took my steps walking on the path to the shrine's main hall, it seemed like I wasn't in Tokyo anymore; like I just had time-traveled back to the Meiji Era. The air was so fresh and the scenery made me feel like I was taking a walk in heaven. Lucky us! We witnessed three pairs of couples having their traditional wedding ceremony when we reached the main hall.

In the midst of fun and tours, nine of us were required to present our speeches in a Japanese Speech Recital. This time, not as opponents but as fellows, sharing our enthusiasm towards Japanese Language and Japan itself! Our speeches were overflowing with feelings of love, gratitude and appreciation of what we had found, gained and learned after we were exposed to Japan regardless of language or culture. After the speech recital, there was a session for us to mingle with the audience, making new friends and exchanging our own unique cultures and points-of-view or finding what we have in common.



Japanese Traditional Wedding Ceremony

Farewell was inevitable, but the bond forged between the nine of us was deep. People from different corners of the world came together and connected by one common language-----Japanese. This was indeed a wonderful encounter. For the time we spent together and the beautiful memories we had, I'm sure, it is engraved in our hearts deeply, forever it will be.....

Ms. Voon Sui Yien was one of the winners of the 27th Japanese Speech Contest held on 24 September 2011 at SMK (P) Jalan Ipoh, Kuala Lumpur. She was invited to a one-week educational tour in Tokyo during October 2011 where she delivered her speech again, along with 9 other speech contest winners from various South-East Asian countries.



Group photo taken in Kao Company

JFKL Japanese Language Programme

JF Standard Courses for Elementary Level

This October, JFKL launched new Elementary-level Japanese language courses targeting learners with no prior knowledge – who are interested in Japanese language and culture – using specially-designed textbooks called “MARUGOTO”. Participants seemed to have fun learning basic conversations as well as studying basic grammar and vocabulary.

On the first day in the “KAIWA NYUUMON” class (“Conversational Japanese” class), the participants enjoyed exchanging greetings in Japanese and trying to read Japanese scripts; Hiragana, Katakana, Kanji and Romaji. One of the participants said, “I was excited when we were initially asked to figure out the basic rules in differentiating Japanese scripts. But some Katakana letters look like simple Kanji. This is hard to distinguish.”

Participants will receive a certificate when they complete the course.

(If you are interested in JFKL elementary level courses, please visit our website: <http://www.jfkl.org.my/>)



Integrated Course in Japanese:

Pre-Intermediate Level (30 Hours)

9 January – 2 April 2012 (Mondays & Wednesdays, 6.30pm – 8.00pm)

The Pre-Intermediate Level course is aimed at preparing post-beginner learners to further their studies at the intermediate level. This course will focus on the forms and grammar which most beginners would have problems with. Ample opportunities will be given to practise and improve listening, reading and speaking skills.

Target Learners : JLPT N4, or its equivalent
Max Participants : 20
Course Fee : RM 360
Application Deadline : 12 December 2011 (Monday)
Entrance Test : 14 December 2011 (Wednesday), 6.30pm – 7:30pm

For more information, please call 03-2284 7228
(Monday to Friday, 8.30am – 4.30pm), or e-mail nihongo@jfkl.org.my

JFKL New Classrooms

Mezzanine Floor, Tower A
(Northpoint Building, Mid-Valley City)

This new facility shall open in January 2012 to cater for the increasing needs of students wishing to study Japanese in Kuala Lumpur.



The 9th Japanese Speech Contest For Secondary School Students National Final: 29 April 2012 (Sunday) @ Kuala Lumpur

Write a speech in Japanese (not longer than 5 minutes) based on the theme
“Things That Are Close to My Heart”.
Tell us what they are and why. Relate your experiences and thoughts
as well as what you have learned from them.

Your script must reach us by **Friday, 25 February 2012**.
Top winners will get an all expense paid Study Tour to Japan.

For details, rules & regulations and a contest form, please log on to www.jfkl.org.my

Note: If you are a student who is studying Japanese as a subject in a public secondary school, please submit your application to the Ministry of Education Malaysia via your Japanese language teacher.

Win yourself an
all expense paid
Study Tour to
Japan!

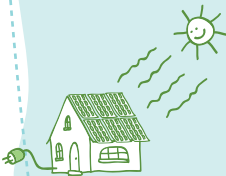
Energy Security Part 2: Observations by Nurhaniza Binti Hamzah



The large scale solar (photovoltaic) power station called "Mega-Solar" at Sakai city

One of the places I visited during the JENESYS tour was Japan's first major solar power station commercially operated by Kansai Electric Power, which is a joint effort with the Sakai city. The large scale solar (photovoltaic) power station is called "Mega-Solar", and it is built on an industrial waste landfill. The construction work was divided into three parts; the first part of the power station (about 2.9MW) started operations on 5 October 2010; the second, (about 3.4MW) on 8 March 2011; and the third one (3.7MW) will be completed in October 2011. Upon completion, there will be approximately 70,000 solar panels generating electricity. The direct current electricity generated by solar panels is converted to alternate currents, boosted up to 22kV and then sent to substations with an approximate peak output of 10MW. The entire project uses local technology.

The other power plant we visited was the Hachobaru Geothermal Power Stations of Kyushu Electric Power Company. Its total capacity is 110MW, making it the biggest geothermal power plant in Japan. It is unattended and controlled remotely by the operators stationed in Otake, about 2km away. Although the geothermal power share in the energy mix is small, it provides stable power supply without any anxiety regarding energy storage or supply. The steam and hot water are readily available underground to be taken to the ground surface for power generation. Besides that, it is a clean energy as it prevents global warming by reduced CO2 emissions. But it is not without some challenges. It is costly to construct large capacity geothermal power plants and the sites are often situated in natural places such as national parks.



It was really cold at Hachobaru Geothermal Power Stations

Every country has different risks and strategies in securing energy. In my opinion, one of the main strategies for many countries including Malaysia is to increase use of renewable energy.

During my trip to Japan, I was privileged to stay for dinner at a local family home in Tokyo. Through our conversation, I got a glimpse of the family's lifestyle that emphasized on energy efficiency and energy conservation. They have to, for the average selling prices of electricity in Japan is the highest in Asia. The family's average monthly electricity bill is about ¥10,000 (RM380) for a 3-bedroom apartment. Comparing that to my sister's (which is of a similar type), her bill is only about ¥3,800 (RM100).



Familiar bins in most hostels

Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohamad admires the Japanese work ethic which is based on their refined culture of thoughtful precision. When my JENESYS group and I visited the Panasonic Center in Tokyo, we saw product innovation that emphasized on 'eco ideas'. The main ideas are to promote lifestyles with virtually zero CO2 emissions, and business-style optimization of resources and energy. One of the products shown was the toilet. It sounded funny at first but the improved "toilet flushing mechanism" saves more water used per flush than the standard ones. It is a noble virtue to not be wasteful, said the Prophet Muhammad s.a.w. and hence, I think highly of the Japanese people.



Save water, save space and save money



Guideline provided by the city council on proper recycling

Ms. Nurhaniza Binti Hamzah from the Ministry of Energy, Green Technology and Water, Malaysia, was invited to Japan from 16 – 27 May 2011 under the JENESYS Program 2011, under the theme of: "Energy Security: Advancements in Cooperation in the East Asian Region".

Amazing Japan! Wonderful Asia!

by Derek Kho Lip Teck

A blessed morning filled with joyful news- Invitation from Japan Foundation's JENESYS Programme to Japan for graduate students! I was so delighted and happy to receive such an invitation, and thanks to Japan Foundation for giving such a golden opportunity. The trip's duration was 43 days, which consisted of a 1 week trip to visit places in Tokyo, Kyoto and Hiroshima, 3 weeks to study in a prestigious university, Sophia University, and 2 weeks for individual research in Japan.

We were pleased to receive welcome and hospitality from the Japan Foundation staff especially during our arrival. On the first few days, our accommodation was an apartment style hotel, Tokyu Stay Yotsuya, which is located in the heart of Tokyo, a place that is described as a food paradise. This is because along the street in Yotsuya, you can find a lot of food shops and restaurants, and it is pretty convenient for us to have our daily meals here.

First week trip around Tokyo, Hiroshima and Kyoto (July 22nd- 25th)



Courtesy call to Hiroshima's City Mayor



Photo with atomic bomb survivor



JENESYS participants group photo at Kinkakuji

Our trip to Hiroshima and Kyoto was really an unforgettable one. We were welcomed by Hiroshima's City Mayor, and Japan Foundation had specially arranged one session to meet and talk with one of the Hiroshima atomic bomb survivors; a healthy old lady who is already 80 years old. Of course, we were touched by the story shared by her, and we value the importance of world peace after this incident!

Kyoto has amazed me with the people's traditional style of living. With its population of approximately 1.5 million people, you may find a big difference in terms lifestyle between Tokyo and Kyoto. In Tokyo, the life is fast paced and stressful, but when you go to Kyoto, you will find a peaceful and quiet, yet relaxing life. Also, Kyoto is important as a cultural landmark, where you can find Japanese girls wearing Yukata or Kimono walking on the streets, especially on weekends.

Summer course in Sophia University (July 28th – August 17th)

University summer courses started right after our return from the trip. It was stressful as described by Inami-san (Japan Foundation's Coordinator) to us on the first day. Though, I still treated it as a wonderful experience and yes, studying is always fun especially in university where we can meet a lot of foreign friends and share with them stories about our home country! This was such a valuable chance as we got to make friends with foreign students from various countries such as America, Europe, India and so on, who came over to take the summer courses together.

Throughout the days, we also had a chance to watch a Taiko Drum (Japanese traditional drum) performance. Other than watching the performance, we were also given the chance to learn how to play as well. What a wonderful experience indeed, as we learned some basic techniques of playing the Taiko!



(Development studies class coursemates with Professor John West)



Individual research presentation in Japan Foundation office



Farewell party in Sophia University

Individual research. final presentation and farewell (August 18th-30th)

The trip ended with individual presentations of the research results. The presentation ceremony was held successfully with each participant's presentation at the Japan Foundation office. A million thanks to Japan Foundation's staff in Japan and Malaysia. Without your cooperation and efforts, this program would not have been a successful and memorable one.

Mr. Derek Kho Lip Teck, a postgraduate student from Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS), was invited to Japan under the JENESYS Special Invitation Programme for Graduate Students. He spent over a month in several places in Japan from 20 July to 31 August 2011 to complete his research *"Effective System for the Employability of Senior Citizens. A Case Adapting Experiences and Lessons to Implement in Malaysian Context"*.

MUGENJUKU Troupe Tour: Traditional Sounds of Shamisen

Traditional Japanese music troupe "Mugenjuku" came down to Malaysia for a series of performances from 31 October to 2 November 2011. The troupe first went to Penang, then headed to Kuala Lumpur, and lastly, ended their tour at Terengganu. In all three states, Mugenjuku performed for the audiences of the fully-packed auditoriums with all their hearts.

With 25 shamisen players, a taiko drummer, a shakuhachi (Japanese flute) player, a dancer and a singer, Mugenjuku was truly a sight to behold on stage. They were almost like an orchestra, but with a focus on the distinct sound of the shamisen. A variety of traditional Japanese songs were played, accompanied by beautiful dancing, performed by the dancer who waved her arms elegantly while holding two fans. Speaking of fans, a few lucky (and maybe shy!) members of the audience were invited to perform side-by-side with the dancer for some time. Apart from traditional Japanese songs, probably to the audience's surprise, Mugenjuku also played a Malaysian song: *Bisikan Hati*. It was indeed a treat to hear songs Malaysians are familiar with on the shamisen – it was an unexpected but pleasing combination.

Halfway through the performance, the members of Mugenjuku took a break to spend time with the audience to show them how to play the shamisen, as well as allow them to try it out for themselves! No doubt, many people were excited to actually get a first-experience to play the musical instrument which has captivated them.

All in all, the Mugenjuku troupe really made an impact during the performances at all three venues. The audiences were also impressed with the young members (some as young as 13 years old!) who performed like true veterans. With a turnout of around 2,500 people at the final venue, Terengganu, Mugenjuku indeed left a lasting impression on Malaysians who witnessed the beauty of the shamisen.



JFKL Holiday Notice

Please be informed that JFKL will be closed on the following days:

2011

26 December (Monday) Christmas (Replacement Holiday)
29 December (Thursday) – 31 December (Saturday) Year End Holiday

2012

2 January (Monday) – 3 January (Tuesday) New Year's Holiday
23 January (Monday) – 24 January (Tuesday) Chinese New Year

"We wish you
a Merry Christmas
and a
Happy New Year!"



JAPAN FOUNDATION 国際交流基金

"TEMAN BARU" is distributed to JFKL members.
JFKL membership is available upon application. Membership fee is RM10 per year.

The Japan Foundation, Kuala Lumpur (JFKL)

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