



Spring at JICA Tokyo

It's a season to remember old days

From late in March to early in April, JICA Tokyo is surrounded by cherry blossoms in full bloom. Cherry blossom, the national flower of Japan, is the most familiar flower for Japanese people, and a row of cherry blossom trees here is one of the noted cherry blossom-viewing spots. It is so magnificent that there are visitors who come even from far away to see it and take pictures of it. In fact, these cherry blossom trees were here before JICA Tokyo was built and they have been carefully looked after by local residents so that we can see such beautiful blossoms as we see now...

Some 200 years ago, the area around JICA Tokyo was almost all fields and woods though dotted with some villas of *samurai* who served under the *shoguns*. It was 1912 when human intervention really started in this place. A forest park was developed and it became popular as a playground for citizens. And it is thought that the row of cherry blossom trees in front of JICA Tokyo was planted at that time.

And when, 85 years ago, the Great Kanto earthquake struck Tokyo, lots of people lost their homes and rapid housing development started in this area. But still a green space remained for some time around JICA Tokyo.

By the way, there may be many of you who have experience of getting lost in JICA Tokyo. After being told that your seminar room is on the 3rd floor you go up the stairs only to find yourself on the 4th floor or you walk from the Lobby to the Accommodation Wing along the corridor and suddenly you find you are on the 4th floor! This trick happens because JICA Tokyo stands on the old terrain, making use of a slope. If you go into the garden you can see it well. The place where there is a pond in the garden was once called "Wolf Valley" by local residents and it was a popular playground for children before JICA Tokyo was built. In winter when it snowed, grownups also enjoyed skiing there...

With Tokyo under constant development, the place where JICA Tokyo is located is a precious place as old nature still remains. While viewing the cherry blossoms, why don't you go into the garden and spend some time imagining scenes of olden times.

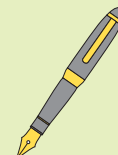


with his grandchild

(We heard this story from Mr. Noguchi, Chairman of Ohyama-cho Neighborhood Association.)

(Continued on page 8)

Have you ever imagined you cannot read or write?



What do you think the word "literacy" means?

The word which we seldom hear in Japan means the ability of reading, writing and arithmetic in a limited sense. UNESCO defines it as the ability to read, write and understand the short sentences in one's everyday life.

The literacy rate of Japan is 99.8% which means almost all the people can read, write and calculate. This is because everyone, regardless of gender, has been blessed with the opportunity to learn.

When we see the situation of the world, however, we find a lot of people who cannot get an education even though they really want to learn.

In more and more countries primary education has become compulsory and the literacy of children is gradually improving. On the other hand the illiteracy among grown-ups, those over 15 who could not go to school at their school age, remains a serious problem. The situation of women is especially serious, because in many of the developing countries women are suppose to do housework first. In a male-dominant society they also think that boys should always have priority in going to school and investment in girls is just a waste of money as they will marry and leave the family in the

future. As a result, two-thirds of the illiterate population of the world are women.

In the on-going JICA training program "Seminar on the Promotion of Education for Girls and Women", they are trying to find the solution in out-of-school education (Non-formal education) for the adults as well as in the school education.



The participants of the course are the administrative officers of Asian and African countries such as Nepal, Laos, Niger, Zimbabwe, Malawi and Gambia who are dealing with education. They are sharing each of their

own problems and having discussions and drawing on the knowledge of Japan to improve education for girls and women.

Then what happens when you cannot read and write? Let's drop in at a discussion at the workshop, "Women and literacy", held at the Asia / Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO (ACCU).

What happens when a farmer, the head of a household, gets sick and his wife is illiterate?

1. Even if they have a medicine at home, she cannot read the label of the bottle.
2. As she cannot read the sign of the bus, she does not know which bus to take when she goes to the hospital to get more medicine.
3. Even if she managed to get on a bus to hospital she does not know where to get off as she cannot read.
4. She cannot calculate the figure on a prescription at the pharmacy.
5. Even though she finally got to the hospital, she is exhausted when she gets home and has wasted a lot of valuable



Earnest discussions among participants

time.

As farmers, when they bring their products to market, they cannot get the best prices if they cannot read.

All of these incidents could be caused by the illiteracy.

Then how can women have the literacy education?

There were opinions as below at the discussion.

- 1. Have the literacy class at the public facilities of the town and villages. (Bolster the Non-formal Education system.)
- 2. Inspire the husband and the family with the importance of education and help out the household chores for women so they can spare time for going to school.
- 3. Government should encourage the literacy education and non-formal education.
- 4. Hold a campaign of literacy education involving families and local people.



They also had demonstrations of literacy educational materials which were developed by ACCU. After that, they had demonstrations of the class using the materials which they made themselves. Some participants were struggling to draw pictures or choose words to convey the message to the person who cannot read.

Most of the participants of this course are working on the girl's education at school. So the subject of illiteracy and literacy education for adults is quite a new experience for them. However I am sure today's lecture must have been very impressive.

Ms. Yoko Sadaie,
Human Development Division,
JICA Tokyo



The brightly-colored literacy educational materials developed by ACCU.



The participants of the "Seminar on the Promotion of Education for Girls and Women" course. (The writer at far left)

A train is a running treasure!

There are many train companies in and around Tokyo but I guess the Keio Line is the most familiar line with Hatagaya the nearest station for the JICA participants. What are train companies doing to maintain the safe operations? We had a chance to look at the backstage effort for the safe and comfortable transportation.

JICA Tokyo has a group training course to learn the "Railway Management". Some participants' countries have no railway but they are on the way to building one.

On a day in February in 2009 nine participants from eight countries (Bangladesh, Brazil, India, Indonesia, Iran, Laos, Turkey and Viet Nam) visited one of the factories of Keio Trains to learn about the maintenance of the train. It is located 40 minutes from Hatagaya.

Among four of the periodical inspections, two of them take place at this factory. They replace the worn parts and overhaul the railcar. They inspect 230 cars a year. They renovate the interior of a car once in 20 years and make it look as good as new



▲ This is the washing system for components under the railcar floor. It takes fifteen minutes to wash a railcar and uses only hot water of 60 degrees centigrade with no detergent, not to damage the electrical equipment.



▲ The annual schedule of the required parts is maintained by the computer, giving budget control.



Ms. Titiek Masdini Agustriana was eagerly attentive to the field observation. We have heard what she found most impressive.



In Indonesia lots of train accidents are happen because a half of the railcars are 40 to 50 years old and we sometimes use repaired out-dated parts for replacements.

At the railway management, the budgets of the maintenance division tend to be cut short; however, the Keio is financially stable. That is one of the biggest differences with my country.

It was quite impressive for me that most of the maintenance work is done by machines at Keio while we do it manually in Indonesia. For example they inspect ten-car train in 16 days at Keio but we take a month to do the same thing because of the manual work.

There is an effluent treatment facility in the factory and the water emitted outside of the factory was very clean. It is very nice to consider the neighboring environment.

Japan has developed even more compared to my last visit in 2002. I hope to see the more developed and different Japan in 10 years time!

After the field trip

Surprisingly, one train car cost about 100 million yen! And it is used for 30 to 40 years with good maintenance (average length of life of a car). It is a "running treasure" instead of just a vehicle, I thought... They do maintenance because "Maintenance means saving the passengers' lives." The car was so carefully handled at the factory that I could feel the love of the staff for the car.

Before the trip, the train was just a means of transportation for me. However, since I joined this experience I started to pay much more attention to the body of the train from the top to the bottom. And I guess I have become an enthusiastic train maniac!



Ms. Kimiko Ozawa,
Editing staff, JICA Tokyo Quarterly

SNOW VIEWING TOUR

Welcome to the Wonderland of Snow.



Mr. Kayade Olaniyan (Nigeria)

I enjoyed the snow very much, doing the slides and the snowball fight and making a snowman.

As I played a lot like a child, I was very tired and slept well in the bus on my way back to Tokyo. It was a delightful discovery that the snow was as powdery as flour and did not wet my clothes very much. I made friends on the tour, too.

In the year end season most of the training program finishes, participants go back home and there are only a few people staying at JICA Tokyo. During this season, the secretly popular tour is held. That is the "Snow Viewing Tour !" It must be an exciting experience for the people who have never seen snow to visit the snow covered mountain. There seems to be much more than that. Let's see how they enjoyed the tour.

Ms. Nguyen Huong Gian (Viet Nam)

The tour was very relaxing because I talked a lot with my Vietnamese friends and colleagues at the university during the tour.

I have never seen so much snow as this before. The snow view was very beautiful and unforgettable. But I imagine the life of people living there must be very hard with that much snow.



Ms. Tao Sokmara (Cambodia)

This is my third visit to Japan. I have visited many places in Japan including Kumamoto, Hiroshima and Kyoto. This time I visited Niigata, in the northern part of Japan, with this trip for the first time. I found out that each place is unique in its beauty. The mountains covered with snow were unforgettably beautiful.

Mr. Mundu Mwili (Zambia)

The hardest part of my stay in Japan was the first days after my arrival. It was summer and the heat was too harsh and dry for me. The coldness of winter is not so hard for me compared to the heat. I don't mind the coldness and I enjoyed the snow white mountains very much. The timing of the tour was perfect for me. I could relax after the mid term exam.





Sashimi (Raw fish)



Soba



Tempura

Tell me about Japanese food

What do you imagine when you hear "Japanese food"? Sushi must be the most popular one. Some might think that the Japanese eat only raw fish! However there are many more delicious foods like Tempura, Soba, Sukiyaki, Tonkatsu (or Pork Cutlet) and others. And a variety of ingredients are also used at home depending on the season.

The most important and the staple food for Japanese is rice. Rice is also eaten in other Asian countries and some might think that Japanese rice is a bit watery compared to that in other countries.

That is because we grow them in a paddy field but in the field. The taste of rice differs greatly depending on the temperature, the quality of the water and the environment where it grows. Even in Japan the taste of the rice differs from region to region and the way of cooking also produces its difference. Try to check the difference of the taste when you eat rice at the local towns on your field trips.

As Japan is an island country surrounded by seas we have always been eating lots of sea foods.

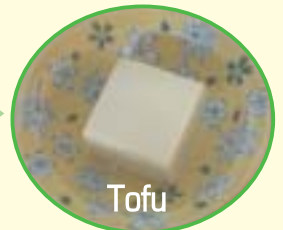
We did not use to eat animal meat under the creed of Buddhism and it is said to have been the reason for eating soy beans to take protein instead of having meat. The foods made of soy beans are Tofu (bean curd), Miso (fermented soy paste), Shoyu (soy sauce) and Natto (fermented soy beans).



The scene of rice planting



Soy beans



Tofu



Natto

Do you know **Natto**, one of the most popular and unique dishes of Japan. Natto is fermented soy beans and with soy sauce seasoned with fish soup.

The characteristics of Natto are its smell and its stickiness. It has a very characteristic smell. Because of the smell many Japanese people, do not like it, not to mention foreigners! Despite these unique characteristics natto is known as very nutritious and good for health, strengthening the bones, lowering the blood pressure and anti-ageing. Why don't you try it?

"Itadakimasu!"
(Thank you for today's food!)



"Neba neba desu..."
(gooey food...)



"Kusai desu!"
(Smells awful.)



Ms. Walaa Hassan from Egypt has been staying in JICA Tokyo for 2 years as a long term participant.

"Oh, I love Japanese food. Among many I often eat Sukiyaki and Shabu shabu.

In Japan there is a food called "Nabe", which literally means pot or pan. The food is served in a big pot and cooked over a heater at the table. People enjoy talking over eating the pot food. It is really fun and delicious. This is a custom we don't have in Egypt. It is a wonderful food culture of Japan.



Sukiyaki

Enjoy world cuisine at JICA Tokyo!

When we ask JICA participants what is the biggest problem in Japan, many of them answer that it is about food. Everybody misses the local food when they travel abroad.

There are about 90 countries' people on average staying at JICA Tokyo every day. At the Dining Hall they are trying to serve a variety of world cuisine, but it is almost impossible to satisfy such a variety of tastes of people of different countries. However they are making efforts to cook more and more tastes familiar to the participants to ease the stress of staying in Japan.

Message from the Manager of Dining Hall, Mr. Kudo

One of the most popular menus among JICA participants is fried chicken.

We have several international menus. However we cannot answer all your requests. I recommend you to try Japanese foods and other menus you have never eaten before because you are staying in Japan and at JICA Tokyo. It must be a good experience for you.

As your training schedule became shorter and shorter these days and you became busier, I have fewer opportunities to talk to you. However I would like to think about adopting a new menu if you bring us the recipe you want to eat.



We are waiting for your request!



Staff members of the Dining Hall: Mr. Kudo in the center.

One of the ingenuities is this ethnic sauce.

There are three kinds of home-made ethnic sauces by JICA Tokyo chef.

They are also popular among The Japanese.

They use hot chili of Thailand.



Prik Nam Som



Pric Chee Fah



Prik Jaew



Prik Nam Pla

"Oishii desu"
(It's good. I love it!)



Ms. Suaysom Kanjana (Thailand)



These three seasonings are quite popular in Thailand, too. I use them for my dish every day.

They are really good. I usually mix all three seasonings up and use it. If you add salt and vinegar in them, you will make a Philippine flavor.



Mr. Mamongcal Elias Garo (Philippine)

(Continued from page 1) The participants and the area surrounding JICA Tokyo

In the area west of JICA Tokyo, it is said that a lot of U.S. military officers lived after World War II. As a ship building company started to sell building lots there at the beginning of the Showa era, lots of foreigners still live there.

Just next to the Accommodation Wing, there was once a student hall for Indonesian students who were accepted as part of post-war reparations.

With such a historical background, this area seems to have had the right conditions to accept foreigners naturally from a long time ago. So it can be said that JICA Tokyo is in a favorable environment for foreigners to stay.

Please try to exchange friendly smiles with local residents. This Center is situated right in the middle of a residential area and that means it is based on a relationship of trust with the residents. We would like to ask for your cooperation to keep up that trust for yourselves and for the future participants.

KONNICHIWA



MUSEUM

The National Treasure ASHURA and Masterpieces from Kohfukuji

(興福寺創建1300年記念 国宝 阿修羅展)

Ashura, which has three faces and six arms, is one of the most famous Buddhist statues in Japan. The statue of Ashura which is put on display at this exhibition is usually enshrined at Kohfukuji (Nara Prefecture). It was carved in AD 734 to console the spirit of the deceased mother of the then empress. At that time a total of 28 Buddhist statues including Ashura were carved to represent Shakyamuni's Pure Land. In Indian myths, the Ashuras were believed to be the gods of war and generally characterized by furious wrathful expressions. But this Ashura doesn't show any such violent aspect at all. The expressions of this Ashura are thought to show the way he looks into his mind and repents.

National Treasure "Ashura" from Standing
Figures of the Eight Classes
Kohfukuji Temple, Nara

In this exhibition held as part of the commemorative events for the 1300th anniversary of the foundation of Kohfukuji, besides Ashura a lot of Buddhist statues and also items buried at the occasion of purifying the building site when Kohfukuji was constructed are exhibited.

Will you go and see for yourself the rich history and culture of the era when Buddhism was flourishing as the state religion in Japan? .

Place: Tokyo National Museum

(Ueno Park) (東京国立博物館)

Room T5, Honkan; Special Exhibition Galleries, Heiseikan

(10 min. walk from Ueno or Uguisudani Station on JR Yamanote Line; 15 min. walk from Ueno Station on Ginza and Hibiya Subway Line and Keisei Ueno Station)

Date: Until June 7 (Sun.)

Closed on Mondays. (but open on May 4 and closed on May 7)

Time: 9:30 - 17:00

9:30-20:00 (Fridays, Saturdays, Sundays & National Holidays)

Last entry 30min before the closing time.

Admission: ¥1,500

* Free tickets are available at the JICA Tokyo information desk on a first-come, first-served basis.

The Louvre Museum Exhibition - Master Paintings of 17th-Century Europe

(ルーヴル美術館展 - 17世紀ヨーロッパ絵画)

The exhibition is held in Tokyo focusing on the royal road of European painting from the Louvre. This time, 71 works from the collection of the world famous Louvre Museum are exhibited.

In all of these works, the historical background of the 17th century known as the "Golden Century" is hidden. All of these works tell us of the era's prosperity and its shadow, wealth and poverty, and growing diversity in religious beliefs. Spectators will

be overwhelmed by the profundity of these masterpieces that illustrate ordinary people's lives as well as historical figures. Why don't you get lost in the 17th century European landscape?

Johannes Vermeer 《The Lacemaker》 c.1669-70
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Place: The National Museum of Western Art
(国立西洋美術館)

(1 min. walk from the Park Exit of Ueno Station, JR Yamanote Line, or 8 min. walk from Ueno Station on subway Hibiya or Ginza Line and Keisei Ueno Station on Keisei Line)

Date: Until June 14 (Sun.)

Closed on Mondays

(but open on May 4)

Time: 9:30 - 17:30 (till 20:00 on Fridays)

Last entry 30min before the closing time.

Admission: ¥1,500

* Free tickets are available at the JICA Tokyo information desk on a first come, first served basis.