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OVERSEAS PUBLIC RELATIONS AND CULTURAL EXCHANGE

(a) Improving Understanding of Japan among the Public in Other Countries and Image of Japan

The purpose of overseas public relations and cultural exchange is to enhance understanding and trust of Japan among the public in other countries and to develop an environment conducive to the promotion of foreign policy by broadly publicizing Japan's foreign and other policies, and cultural charm to the international community. In particular, given the fact that many organizations and individuals other than the government have become involved with diplomacy in various ways due to the recent progress of globalization, there is a greater need for the government to explain Japan's diplomatic efforts and their underlying concepts to the Japanese public as well as the public in various other countries and to deepen their understanding in this regard of Japan. For example, the government has made efforts to explain its diplomatic efforts involving Afghanistan and Iraq to people overseas in the wake of the terrorist attacks in the United States (US) and the recent situation in Iraq. At the same time, the government has also worked to enhance mutual understanding between Japan and the Middle East through a wide range of activities such as cultural cooperation and dialogue with the Arab world. In responding to the development of means of communication including mass media, Western countries have also recognized the significance of public diplomacy, through which a country's attractiveness can directly affect the public opinion of other countries, and they are following this approach.

Diplomacy has traditionally emphasized hard power such as military force or economic power, which can prompt policy changes in another country. However, there has been a growing recognition in recent years that soft power, or the ability to attract another country through promoting the attraction of traditional values or culture, can improve the country's image, enhance its diplomatic resources and lead to national security in a broader sense. Moreover, international cultural exchange can revitalize Japanese society by bringing in both intellect and talent from abroad and can bring economic benefits such as increased sales of Japanese

products resulting from an improved image of Japan. In view of such significance, Japan is striving to enhance its image and foster affinity toward Japan in other countries, from a medium to long-term perspective, through a broad range of exchanges of persons, cultural and art exchanges, and intellectual exchanges including dialogue between civilizations and cultural cooperation toward developing countries.

(b) Specific Programs to Promote an Understanding of Japan**Overseas Public Relations**

In order to provide the most effective public relations activities abroad, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs considers the circumstances of each region including the degree of interest in Japan and main areas of interest, and examines the content to publicize and the most effective media for it. Furthermore, the Foreign Ministry also conducts surveys and analyses of public opinion and press coverage in the countries concerned in order to understand more accurately their attitude toward Japan.

Japan's overseas establishments conduct public relations activities such as lectures and symposia. In particular, given the importance attached to intellectual exchanges, the Foreign Ministry puts an emphasis on dispatching experts and eminent persons abroad to give presentations. Public relations targeting young generations is also an area of priority. Moreover, the invitation scheme for staff members of foreign TV stations provides support for reporting and broadcasting of Japan-related programs abroad. In addition, the Foreign Ministry invites foreign opinion leaders and prominent journalists who are expected to have influence on the formation of public opinion with the aim of familiarizing them with the current situation in Japan.

As for efforts to provide information to the foreign press, the Foreign Ministry gives briefings to correspondents in Japan whenever necessary. This is also widely done on occasions such as visits abroad by government VIPs and visits to Japan by foreign VIPs. Furthermore, the Foreign Ministry appropriately refutes foreign press reports based on misperceptions or prejudice against

Japan.

The Foreign Ministry makes use of a wide range of public relations media in order to perform effective public relations. This includes printed material such as pamphlets on the name of the Sea of Japan and reconstruction assistance to Iraq and audiovisual material such as the Japan Video Topics that introduce Japan from diverse aspects. The Internet has also become a major medium for overseas public relations. Information on Japan's diplomacy is made available on the Foreign Ministry website (English version) and general information on Japan has also been provided on a daily basis through "Web Japan" (<http://web-japan.org>) in English (also partly available in Korean, Chinese and other languages) beginning on April 1, 2004. In addition, many overseas establishments of Japan have their own websites, which provide information closely related to the local requirements in a local language or English.

The Tone of Foreign Press Reports regarding Japan

As worldwide media focused their attention on developments in the Iraqi situation, there was a great deal of interest around the world in Japan's assistance toward Iraq, including the dispatch of Self-Defense Forces (SDF) in accordance with the Law Concerning the Special Measures on Humanitarian and Reconstruction Assistance in Iraq. Leading US newspapers such as The New York Times reported that the government embarked on its decision to dispatch the SDF against the backdrop of public controversy and that there were voices within Japan that wanted to do more than "checkbook diplomacy." In addition, the media in Middle Eastern countries widely reported the dispatch of the SDF, mostly on the facts, including that the purpose of the dispatch was to provide humanitarian and reconstruction assistance. Satellite television stations Al-Jazeera and Al-Arabiya broadcast interviews with Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi, Minister for Foreign Affairs Yoriko Kawaguchi, and Minister of State for Defense Shigeru Ishiba, in which the prime minister and the two ministers explained to the entire Middle East region that the aim of dispatching the SDF was to provide humanitarian and reconstruction assistance.

Suspicious over North Korea's nuclear development also gathered much attention. The Japanese Government's stance that it was necessary to resolve this issue comprehensively, including the abduction and missile issue, was widely reported. Regarding the abduction issue, there was a report in The Washington Post about a critical comment

that US President George W. Bush had made on the abduction issue during Prime Minister Koizumi's visit to the US. Additionally, media in various countries took note of the impact that increased tensions in the situation in Northeast Asia would have on Japan's security policy. For example, People's Daily reported that the nuclear issue of North Korea was an underlying factor in the establishment of the emergency legislation and there was a widespread trend within Japanese society to become more conservative, boost its military power and become a "normal country." Furthermore, an editorial in The Wall Street Journal argued that if North Korea's nuclear development program was not stopped, then the world might well have to accept Japan's greater military role.

Major international conferences held in Japan, such as the Third Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD III) and the Japan-ASEAN Commemorative Summit, garnered strong interest particularly in African countries and Southeast Asian countries, respectively. In addition, the foreign press reported on Japan from various dimensions, including the government's structural reform policies, economic trends, new political developments in Japan as reflected in the House of Representatives elections, and increased worldwide popularity of Japan's pop culture particularly among the young generation.

Promoting Japan

The promotion of policies to spread proactively Japan's charm abroad as a brand-name and improve images of Japan is expected not only to attract more overseas people to Japan, but also to lead to the revitalization of Japan's economy, society and culture. In particular, Japan's so-called sub-culture, such as animation, movies, comics (*manga*) and Japanese cuisine, are becoming more and more popular in Europe, US and Asia.

(1) Large-Scale Cultural Campaigns in Major Countries

As a program to give priority to improving Japan's image in foreign countries, the Foreign Ministry holds "commemorative projects" concentrating on cultural exchange programs between Japan and countries or regions to observe special occasions such as a 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations.

These programs serve as opportunities for both the government and the private sector to impress Japan's charm upon the people of the other countries and dramatically enhance their affinity toward Japan.

ASEAN-Japan Exchange Starts from Now

As a part of the series of programs for ASEAN-Japan Exchange Year 2003, the "Rokkasen Concerts"¹ were held in four cities in three countries (Thailand, Myanmar, Viet Nam (Ho Chi Minh, Hanoi)). My goal was to promote exchange among musicians by performing together on stage, and I requested that each country recommend folk music masters prior to the concert date.

As all three countries were cooperative and recommended young, talented and outstanding musicians, I visited the countries for preparatory meetings two months prior to the concert dates. We chose numbers to be performed together and talked about their arrangements. There were some numbers without written musical scores and given the differences in tones between the folk music of each country, my feeling coming out of the preparatory meeting was one of unease.

Without going into the specialized details concerning the process here, the musical scores were arranged by a special musical notation and it was from these scores that the Rokkasen members began to practice for the concert thoroughly.

The first country on the concert tour was Myanmar, and a performer from the Myanmar side was a harpist as well as a professor of music representing his country. We all looked worried as we tuned up our musical instruments prior to the performance because he kept a firm expression. However, as soon as our instruments produced sounds, it was as if our minds had become one and we performed all the music gracefully and elegantly from beginning to end.

The short silence after the performance was broken by a flurry of applause. The professor exchanged big smiles with the audience for a while. All the members of the Rokkasen told me later that each of them had never had such a moving experience before. Through the help of an interpreter, the professor grasped my hand and said, "That was the first time in my musical life to have performed to such a beautiful accompaniment."

In the concerts that followed in Thailand, Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh, there were similar dramatic encounters with musicians. Nevertheless, I was most of all pleased to have made new musical friends with every one of them.

In November, I invited them to Japan, and we held concerts in Tokyo, Tsukuba, Fuchu and Saku, spending approximately ten days together. Through this experience, we all became even closer friends and there was a burst of tears when we eventually had a farewell party.

I still maintain contact with the members of the Rokkasen concerts and musicians from other countries through frequent e-mails. Their e-mails are always addressed to "my Japanese father."

Author: Yoshiyuki Kozu (composer)

(Photo)

¹ The Rokkasen concerts were a gathering of famous folk musicians of old-style musical instruments, including the koto and biwa from Japan, the Burmese harp from Myanmar and the one-string harp from Viet Nam.

Through partnerships with local Japanese companies, these programs may also contribute to improving the image of companies advancing into foreign markets. In addition, since these campaigns often have the participation of VIPs, including heads of state or government, they are extremely effective in increasing interest in Japan and promoting tourism.

In 2003, large-scale commemoration projects were held particularly with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and with Russia. As part of the ASEAN-Japan Exchange Year 2003, over 700 commemorative projects were held in a wide range of fields during the year based on the concept of building a sincere partnership of "Acting together and advancing together" between Japan and ASEAN countries in the 21st century. In the field of cultural exchange, a joint performance featuring top artists from all 11 countries in pop music, traditional dance, orchestra and other areas was presented in Japan and ASEAN countries, which revealed Asia's diversity and commonality. In addition, the Japanese Culture Festival in Russia 2003 was launched with a Japanese drum performance in April. During the festival, over 120 events introducing Japanese culture and cultural exchange programs such as *kabuki*, contemporary theater and martial arts were held not only in the capital of Moscow and the ancient capital of St. Petersburg, which celebrated its 300th anniversary, but also throughout Russia, including the Russian Far East. These events were held with the cooperation of the government and private sector and lasted until March 2004.

Major anniversary projects will cover the US, Europe, Republic of Korea (ROK) and the Middle East. The main commemorative projects scheduled for 2004 include the 150th Anniversary of the US-Japan Relationship and the Middle East Cultural Exchange Project based on the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations with Lebanon and Jordan. In 2005, the projects scheduled to be held are the Japan-EU Year of People-to-People Exchanges in 2005 involving 25 EU countries and Year 2005 of Friendship between Japan-ROK commemorating the 40th anniversary of the conclusion of the Treaty on Basic Relations Between Japan and the Republic of Korea.

(2) Promoting Tourism (Publicizing a "Charming Japan")

The entire government is striving to promote tourism with the aim of increasing the annual number of foreign tourists to Japan from approximately 5 million at present to 10

million in 2010. Taking into consideration that an increase in the number of foreign tourists will promote understanding of Japan among foreigners, the Foreign Ministry is proactively cooperating in the promotion of tourism by publicizing a "Charming Japan."

The general public relations programs and cultural exchange programs that the Foreign Ministry carries out through its overseas establishments around the world can also foster foreigners' affinity toward Japan and encourage them to visit to Japan by publicizing the country's various charms including traditional culture, contemporary culture, cutting-edge technology and beautiful nature.

Moreover, the Foreign Ministry is actively participating in the Visit Japan Campaign (VJC), a joint government-private sector campaign to promote tourism to Japan, through such means as forming local promotion committees in priority markets including the US, ROK and China. More specifically, overseas establishments, among others, are carrying out a broad range of public relations programs to attract tourists, such as distributing tourism-related material in collaboration with ordinary public relations and cultural programs and making more tourism-related information available on their websites. In terms of audiovisual material, the Foreign Ministry sponsors a program to invite staff members of television stations in various countries and provide support to create and broadcast programs on tourism. The Foreign Ministry also runs a program to create audiovisual materials introducing tourist spots throughout Japan, provides them to television stations in various countries and broadcasts them to the Asia-Pacific region via satellite.

(3) Promoting EXPO 2005

The 2005 World Exposition Aichi, Japan (EXPO 2005), which will be held in Aichi Prefecture from March 2005, is the first world exposition to be held in the 21st century. Based on the theme "Nature's Wisdom," it is an endeavor to brainstorm at the global level on various issues faced by humankind and present a new approach toward a society that coexists with nature. EXPO 2005 aims to enhance mutual understanding between Japan and countries throughout the world by the "Grand Intercultural Symphony" and can be considered an extremely significant international event on the international exchange front.

In 2003, Japan as a whole, including its overseas establishments, was actively involved in activities to invite as many countries as possible to the exposition. As a

What is EXPO 2005?

Have you already heard about the 2005 World Exposition, Aichi, Japan, in other words, Expo 2005 or Ai-Chikyu-Haku, to be held from March 25 to September 25, 2005 in Nagoya Eastern Hills (Nagakute Town, Toyota City and Seto City) of Aichi prefecture?

Since Japan World Exposition held in Osaka in 1970, Japan has already held four world exhibitions. Aichi Expo is on the same grand scale as the Expo '70, with more than 120 countries and international organizations already announcing their participation.

The Aichi Expo aims to give a place for addressing the issues the international community is facing, such as the "environment and development" and the "promotion of mutual understanding among different civilizations." It is expected that the main theme "Nature's Wisdom," and "cultural exchange" will be the main thrust of this exposition.

From ancient times, there has been a tradition in Japan not to oppose nature but to incorporate it skillfully into the art of life of human beings. At the Aichi Expo, participating countries are expected to show their natural beauty and various wisdoms on how to coexist with nature. All the participating countries are working hard to send this message and to entertain visitors to their attractive exhibits.

There are also many cultural events planned for the Aichi Expo, which does not only provide a great opportunity for Japanese people to experience other cultures, but also to make Japan a place for global cultural exchange.

Home of the exposition, Aichi prefecture has always had a reputation for "innovative manufacturing," as admirably shown in the skill of making *karakuri ningyo* (mechanical dolls), a well-known specialty of this region. The center of Nagoya City and the exposition site will be linked with Japan's first magnetically levitated linear motor car for practical use. In addition, the construction of the Chubu Centrair International Airport will be completed before the opening of the Exposition. People in Aichi have started their efforts to cooperate in making the Exposition successful, for instance, by announcing the "Friendship Program" which tries to match each municipality of Aichi prefecture with one participating country, in order to realize a grassroots cultural exchange.

Many pre-events are also planned for 2004 in the leadup to the exposition. If you see Morizo and Kiccoro, official mascots of the Expo 2005, come and join us!



Come and join us

result, over 120 countries and international organizations have expressed their intention to participate in EXPO 2005. This is the highest number of participants to attend an exposition hosted by Japan.

(c) Exchanges of Persons and Educational Exchange Programs

Exchanges of persons are an indispensable element of promoting interchange between different cultures. In particular, exchanges among the young generation, who will assume leadership in the international community in the future, are essential for developing friendly and cooperative relations based on mutual understanding between Japan and other countries.

(1) *Invitation Programs*

Japan sponsors a wide range of invitation programs that are aimed at promoting a deeper understanding of Japan by leading foreign figures and intellectuals through their firsthand observation of Japan. Special emphasis is placed on “youth invitation programs,” and every year approximately 550 promising youth from various countries are invited with a view to enhancing their understanding of Japan through activities such as exchanges with people from the Japanese Government and private sector as well as youth, together with visit programs to industrial and cultural facilities. In 2003, Japan held a

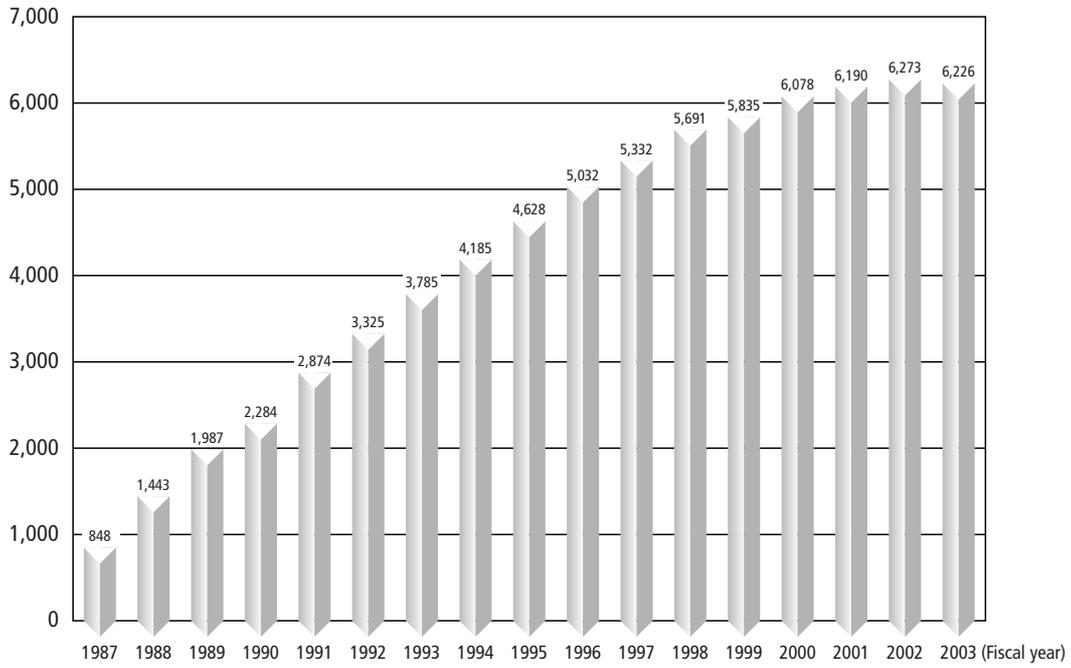
total of 54 programs including an invitation of six young writers from Middle Eastern countries, who had talks with cultural figures and experts, visits to local regions and the experience of traditional cultural activities.

(2) *JET Programme*

Many young people from foreign countries teach foreign languages, primarily English, in Japanese junior high schools and high schools. These young people are participants in the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Programme¹ that has been under way since 1987. Some of the participants serve as assistant language teachers at schools, while others carry out international exchange activities and sports instruction in local governments. JET participants come in touch with Japanese culture and nature through their teaching experiences or through their work in local governments, which lasts for one to three years, and return to their home countries with a deepened understanding of Japan. Japan has also taken steps to enable the foreign youths to maintain their relations with Japan after they return to their countries, such as providing support to the JET Alumni Association (JETAA). In 2003, Japan invited 6,226 young people from 40 countries such as the US and the UK through the JET Programme, which consequently serves as a major pillar of youth exchange.

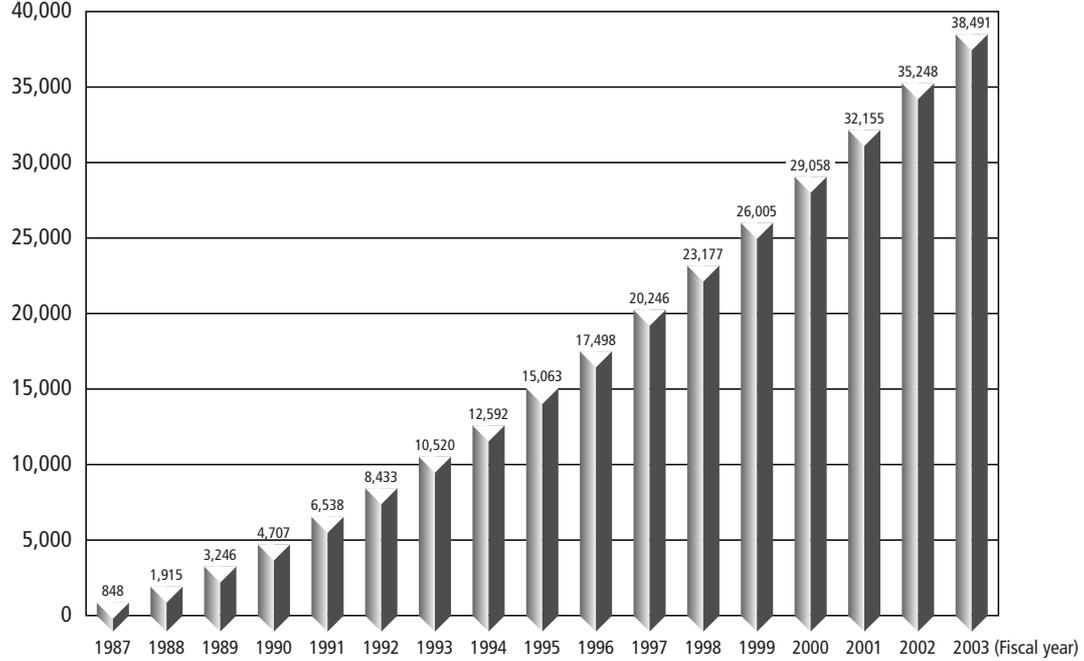
¹ (Reference) JET Programme website: <http://www.mofa.go.jp/jet/> (Ministry of Foreign Affairs) or <http://www.jetprogramme.org/> (Council of Local Authorities for International Relations (CLAIR)).

Number of JET Participants and Their Cumulative Total



(People)

Cumulative Total of JET Participants



(3) Exchange of Students

Accepting foreign students in Japan² is instrumental in deepening the understanding of Japan by promising young people from foreign countries through their experiences and internationalizing Japanese higher education. The number of exchange students in Japan as of May 2003 reached 109,508, thereby achieving the target that had been set in the Plan to Accept 100,000 Foreign Students initiated in 1983. Japan has taken various measures to promote bringing in foreign students, including providing information on studying in Japan, offering preparatory education before coming to Japan and recruiting and selecting students on scholarships awarded by the government. In addition, Japan supports worldwide more than 180 alumni associations of former foreign students in Japan so that the exchange students, with a good knowledge of Japan, will continue to serve as a bridge between their countries and Japan even after they return to their countries.

(4) Promoting the Use of Japanese Language Abroad

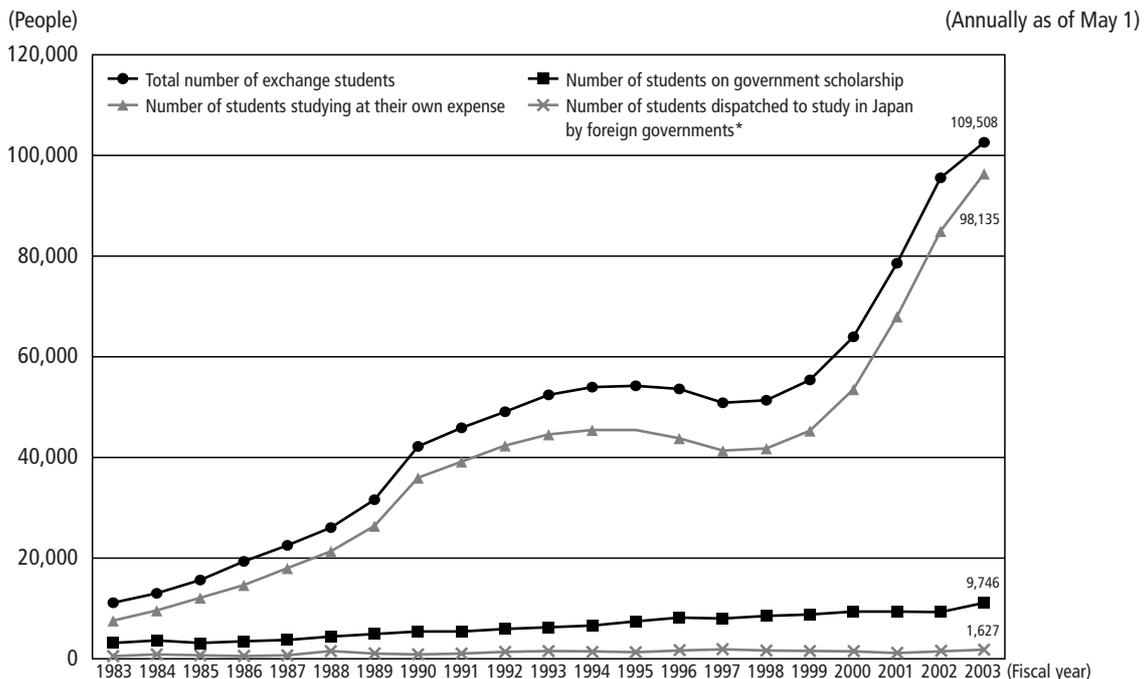
Promoting the use of the Japanese language abroad is

essential for enhancing the understanding of Japan by young people abroad. According to a 1998 survey, approximately 2.1 million foreigners learn Japanese, but in many cases, Japanese language education abroad is not profitable in the private sector. Hence, the Japan Foundation has carried out projects that include dispatching Japanese language education experts abroad, holding training sessions for foreign Japanese language teachers in Japan, donating Japanese language educational materials and administering the Japanese-Language Proficiency Test abroad.

(d) Cultural and Art Exchange

Introducing Japanese culture, works of art and performance abroad as well as introducing different facets of foreign culture to Japan is the most traditional mode of cultural exchange. Japanese culture is diverse, characterized by traditional culture and sports such as *noh*, *kabuki*, *bunraku* and *sumo*, in addition to contemporary art, design, music, architecture, animation, *manga* and fashion. Contemporary Japanese culture has attracted attention around the world as “Cool Japan.” Riding still

Change in the Number of Exchange Students in Japan



Note: The students who are dispatched to study in Japan by foreign governments come from Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, Singapore, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Uzbekistan, Laos, Viet Nam, Cambodia and the ROK.

Source: Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, *Acceptance of Foreign Students in Japan*.

² (Reference) The Study in Japan Comprehensive Guide website is as follows: <http://www.studyjapan.go.jp/en/index.html>.

As a "True" Bridge between Different Cultures

I came to Japan in 1988 after graduating from high school in Malaysia, and then in 1998, I completed my doctorate at the Graduate School of Commerce and Management, Hitotsubashi University. I currently work as a management consultant in the International Project Center of the Mitsubishi Research Institute, Inc.

The late 1980s, when I decided to study in Japan, was a time when a lot of Japanese companies had started to invest in Malaysia, and it was from that time that I developed my desire to work in a Japanese company in the future. Then I decided to study in Japan because various scholarships were comparatively available and there were more opportunities for foreign students to receive scholarships on the basis of merit than is the case in the US or European countries. So in the end, I chose Japan as the place to further my education. I was very fortunate to receive scholarships in the third and fourth years of my undergraduate course and for my master's degree. For my doctorate, I became a Monbusho (currently, Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology) scholarship foreign student. Considering the fact that more than 100,000 foreign students study in Japan, I think I was extremely privileged.

At graduate school, I chose the management of Japanese companies in Malaysia as my research theme. In the course of visiting a large number of Japanese companies for my research, I came across a perception gap between Japanese people and Malaysians. For example, the notion of "understanding without explaining" between Japanese colleagues cannot be understood by Malaysians. I think that foreigners need to be told things clearly. Believing that I should act as a bridge between the two countries, I surveyed the perception gap between Malaysian managers and Japanese executives, and continued my research to fill it.

Currently, as a consultant to Japanese companies and government, I principally carry out human resources training, education and ODA evaluations, etc. through research studies on Asia. For example, in recent years under its "Look East policy," the Malaysian government has sponsored around 200 Malaysian students every year to study in Japan. Since 2000, Mitsubishi Research Institute has been contracted by the Public Service Department of Malaysia to conduct, with regard to Malaysian government-sponsored students in Japan: 1) academic achievement monitoring, 2) counseling, 3) internships and 4) evaluations of study.

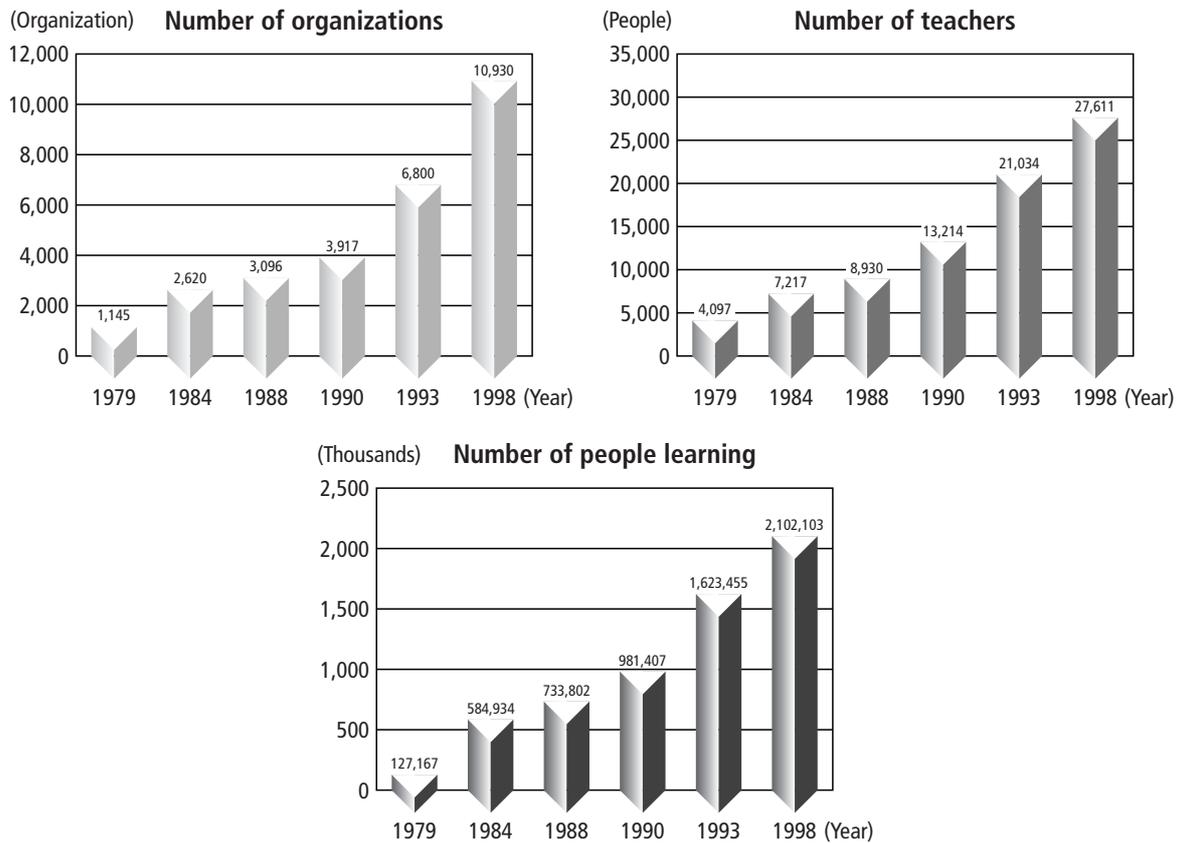
Meanwhile, for the last four years or so, as the chair of the Alumni Association of the Rotary Yoneyama Memorial Scholarship (Chiba area), I have been so much engaged in various kinds of volunteer activities as time permits. The main objective of this organization is to encourage understanding between Rotary Club members, current scholarship students and alumni. Our activities include the holding of the Yoneyama Alumni Association Seminar, world cuisine fairs, cherry-blossom viewing, and panel discussions on the role of foreign students in Japanese society. I take part in these activities as I believe that with 100,000 foreign students living in Japan today, it is essential that not only the Japanese people try to understand them, but that the foreign students also make active efforts to make themselves understood in Japanese society.

As a Malaysian who seized opportunities in Japan, I am always trying to find the true meaning of "bridge," and I will strive to contribute to mutual understanding between Japanese people and others through my career and volunteer activities.

(Photo)

Poh Soon Lim, PhD

Changes in Japanese Language Education Abroad



further on this tide and spreading Japan's new charms abroad will also lead to the revitalization of the Japanese economy.

As a core organization responsible for international cultural exchange, the Japan Foundation promotes exchange, taking regional characteristics into account with a view to fostering interest in Japan and imparting a more sympathetic image of Japan as well as the Japanese view of nature. For example, the Japan Foundation broadcast the TV program *Oshin* in Iraq, which has been pursuing reconstruction. This was a project undertaken based on previous evaluations in developing countries, which said they were encouraged to see how Japan overcame challenges after World War II.

(e) Intellectual Exchange and Intercultural Dialogue

Exchange involving intellectuals is important not only in raising Japan's academic standards but also in systematizing the understanding of Japan and other countries, and broadly conveying this across all sectors of society. Moreover, the promotion of intercultural

dialogue by Japan, whose culture is open to different values, is meaningful as a way to contribute to the peace and stability of the world.

(1) Promoting Research on Japan

Promoting research on Japan's politics, economy, culture and society in other countries is the key to enhancing their understanding of Japan. In 2003, Japan provided subsidies, dispatched teachers, financed conferences and gave other assistance through the Japan Foundation to over 100 institutions throughout the world that serve as the basis of research on Japan, including the Beijing Center for Japanese Studies in China.

(2) Dialogue with the Middle East

Given the situation in Iraq, Japan dispatched the Middle East Cultural Exchange and Dialogue Mission comprised of five experts to Saudi Arabia, Iran, Syria and Egypt in September. This mission held a symposium with experts from these countries on the theme "Tradition and Modernization" and had an exchange of opinions with VIPs of those countries. The results of the

symposiums and exchange of opinions were compiled as a proposal on the ways of promoting exchange between Japan and the Middle East and it was submitted to Prime Minister Koizumi. Furthermore, Japan and Bahrain co-sponsored the Second Seminar: Dialogue among Civilizations between Japan and the Islamic World in October. At this seminar, 29 experts from Japan, 12 Islamic countries and the League of Arab States held discussions on the theme of "peace and human development."

(3) Intellectual Exchange with Asia, the US and Other Countries

Since its establishment in 1961, the US-Japan Conference on Cultural and Educational Interchange (CULCON) has served as forum where experts from Japan and the US have held discussions and created proposals aimed at promoting exchange and improving mutual understanding in the fields of culture and education. CULCON XXI was held in Sendai, Miyagi Prefecture in 2003, and 18 experts discussed diverse efforts including the development of Internet educational material, library cooperation, comparative studies on mathematics and science education. The Japan Foundation has been also promoting intellectual exchange mainly involving the US, Asia and Europe by carrying out joint projects itself, including research studies, workshops and conferences, and providing subsidies and giving fellowships to research institutes in various countries.

(f) Cultural Cooperation

Cultural cooperation provides support for the culture of developing countries, which is the pride of the people as well as a part of their life. Extending cultural cooperation together with economic cooperation aimed at poverty reduction is an effective means by which to improve the developing countries' evaluations of Japan.

(1) Bilateral Cultural Cooperation

In the framework of bilateral cooperation, Japan offers *gratis* equipment for mainly cultural and higher education activities in developing countries through its Cultural Grant Aid programs. Japan implemented 58 projects throughout the world in 2003, including the provision of Japanese language laboratory equipment to Ain Shams University, the center of Japanese language studies in Egypt and a supply of research and audiovi-

sual equipment to the Museum of Anatolian Civilizations, the center of archaeological studies in Turkey, which has numerous world heritage properties. Japan also provides Grant Aid for Cultural Heritage to protect cultural heritage deemed as the common heritage of mankind in the same framework. In 2003, to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Japan and Viet Nam, Japan extended cooperation including the construction of exhibition wings at the My Son heritage site, which flourished for 1,300 years as the holy site during the peak of the Kingdom of Champa in central and southern Viet Nam. Moreover, Japan provides small-scale, flexible cultural cooperation at the grassroots level such as with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) (Grant Assistance for Cultural Grassroots Projects). Given *judo*'s popularity in Afghanistan, Japan offered *judo* uniforms and *tatami* (straw) mats to the Afghan Judo Federation as part of the reconstruction assistance to Afghanistan.

(2) Cultural Cooperation through UNESCO

Japan has been vigorously contributing to the preservation and promotion of tangible and intangible cultural heritage through the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

With respect to the preservation of tangible cultural heritage (heritage sites, etc.), Japan provides support through the Japanese Funds-in-Trust for the Preservation of the World Cultural Heritage. As a representative example of this cooperation, Japan continues to help preserve and restore the Angkor monuments. In November, Senior Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs Ichiro Aisawa and Foreign Minister Dominique de Villepin of France co-chaired the Second Intergovernmental Conference for the Safeguarding and Sustainable Development of the Historic Site of Angkor and of Its Region in Paris. At this conference, it was reaffirmed that the projects that Japan and other parties had implemented contributed substantially not only to the preservation of cultural heritage sites but also to the reconstruction of Cambodia. Furthermore, as part of its post-war reconstruction assistance, Japan has been supporting the preservation of the Bamiyan site in Afghanistan since 2003, and provided approximately US\$1 million as an emergency contribution for the rehabilitation of the Iraqi National Museum (laboratories to restore and study cultural properties), which possesses

valuable cultural properties from ancient civilization.

In addition, Japan provides assistance for the preservation and promotion of intangible cultural heritage (traditional arts and traditional technologies of crafts such as ceramics and dyeing) through the Japanese Funds-in-Trust for the Preservation and Promotion of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

(3) 32nd Session of the UNESCO General Conference

At the 32nd Session of the UNESCO General Conference held in October, the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage was adopted by an overwhelming majority, with 120 votes in favor, 0 against and 8 abstaining, hence reflecting Japan's vigorous contribution during the negotiations. This convention aims to preserve valuable intangible cultural heritage as a common heritage of mankind. As a

counterpart to the Convention for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (World Heritage Convention) adopted in 1972 with the objective of preserving prominent tangible cultural heritage, the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage is expected to promote the preservation of endangered intangible cultural heritage.

This session also brought to light the accelerated steps that had been made toward cultural cooperation through UNESCO. For example, the US returned to UNESCO for the first time in 19 years, and it was decided that negotiations would be launched to draft new conventions including the Convention on the protection of the diversity of cultural contents and artistic expressions and the International Convention Against Doping In Sport.

Promoting Dialogue in South Eastern Europe

As the United Nations General Assembly designated 2001 as the “Year of Dialogue among Civilizations,” UNESCO held a range of events around the world to mark the occasion. Since 2002, we have been holding regional meetings in areas of recent conflict and in areas where tensions exist in the belief that regional dialogue between civilizations should take place on a regional basis.

As part of these efforts, I believe that South Eastern Europe (Balkan Peninsula) remains a region requiring continued special attention. On that basis, a South Eastern Europe ministerial meeting was convened at UNESCO headquarters in Paris in April 2002. Ten countries were key invitees—the five countries that emerged from the break-up of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro, and Macedonia) and the countries surrounding them of Albania, Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary and Greece. Other neighboring nations also participated. The ministers of foreign affairs, education or culture from most countries joined the meeting and intensely discussed how to advance education, culture, science and communication in the region.

In August 2003, President Boris Trajkovski of Macedonia and I co-hosted a summit-level meeting of the same countries in Ohrid, Macedonia. Presidents of eight of the ten countries above attended the meeting, along with high-level attendees from other countries, and two days of valuable dialogue ensued. The most gratifying aspect of all was that the presidents of all eight countries in South Eastern Europe emphasized strengthening dialogue within the region and the importance of regional cooperation among them.

In recent years, the presidents of eight countries, especially the leaders of the former Yugoslav countries, have never assembled. President Stjepan Mesic of Croatia impressed upon me, “It is 12 years since the leaders of the ex-Yugoslavia republics met in Ohrid. The failure of that meeting and the collapse of the former Yugoslavia triggered the civil war. It is a milestone that the five presidents including me assembled for the first time in 12 years at the same place and proclaimed together with the neighboring countries’ presidents and UNESCO that we would strengthen regional cooperation.”

At the suggestion of President Georgi Purvanov of Bulgaria, UNESCO will hold a summit meeting on the subject of cooperation on South Eastern European cultural heritage in Bulgaria in 2004, and we are considering holding a conference focusing on dialogue between different religions in Albania under a recommendation from Albanian President Alfred Moisiu.

Author: Koichiro Matsuura, Director-General of UNESCO

(Photo)