

## Japan's Traditional Crafts and Mask Culture as Seen in Noh Masks

Date: November 18-30, 2015 Sites: Slovenia, Croatia, Austria, Romania

### ■ Dispatched Expert: Hideta Kitazawa



Noh Mask Sculptor/Traditional Craftsman, Kitazawa Wood Sculpture

Mr. Kitazawa is a traditional craftsman certified by Tokyo's Katsushika Ward and an enthusiastic Noh mask sculptor involved in the production of Noh masks for the house of Manzo Nomura, a living national treasure. In addition to creating traditional Noh masks, he has also been highly received outside of Japan, earning great praise for the masks he sculpted for a Noh interpretation of Shakespeare's King Lear performed in San Francisco in 2011.

### ■ Review of Activities

#### Slovenia

- November 19: Appeared live on Slovenia's state-run "Good Morning" TV program. Gave a lecture at a Slovenian Folklore Museum and delivered a lecture on the features of Noh masks and tools for the University of Ljubljana's Department of the Humanities.
- November 20: Traveled to Ptuj, a city known for its traditional Kurentovanje festival. Visited shops that make the masks used in the festival and interacted with artisans.
- November 21: Visited the Slovenian National Opera and Ballet Theatre. Met with the stage art staff to exchange technical ideas and discuss the masks used in opera.

#### Croatia

- November 23: Appeared live on Croatia's state-run "Good Morning Croatia" TV program. Gave a lecture at the Croatian School Museum in Zagreb, and delivered a lecture at a Zagreb Folklore Museum. The event included an explanation of the mask culture in Croatia and Europe by a professor from the University of Zagreb's Department of Ethnology. Exchanged ideas with Museum Director and researchers.

#### Austria

- November 24: Gave a lecture at the Austrian Museum of Applied Arts. Attendees had the opportunity to make direct contact with Japan's culture of wooden sculpture.
- November 25: Gave a lecture at the University of Vienna's Japanese Language Department. Also held a workshop on improvisational theatre using Kyogen masks for students from the University's Japanese Language and Drama departments.

#### Romania

- November 26: Participated in an interview on Romania's state-run radio station, and then gave a lecture and exchanged opinions following an introduction on traditional crafts and mask culture by Angela Hondru, an ethnologist and leading Japan researcher, at the Museum of the Romanian Peasant.
- November 27: Exchanged ideas with the Sibiu Mayor and the Assistant of the Museum of Traditional Folk Civilization in Sibiu.
- November 28: Toured the Museum of Traditional Folk Civilization and gave a lecture.

### ■ Achievements

Local media sources, including live broadcasts by state-run stations, discussed the events. These events raised interest in Noh theater and improved cultural ties with the local areas, as later seen in the example of the Osaka Noh Theatre's attempted participation in the Sibiu International Theatre Festival, one of Europe's three major theatre events.

