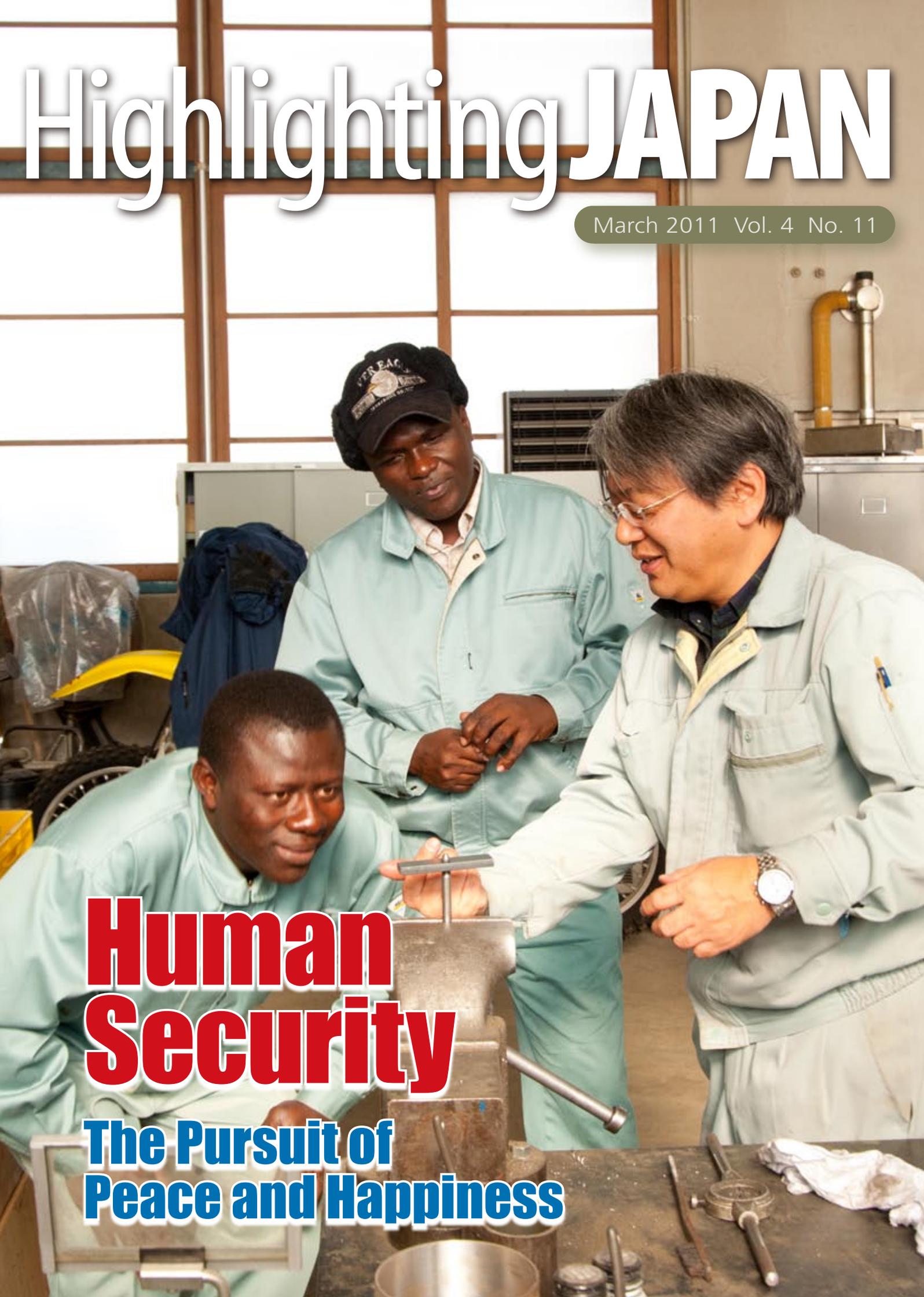


Highlighting JAPAN

March 2011 Vol. 4 No. 11

A photograph of three men in a workshop. Two men, one Black and one Japanese, are wearing light blue work jackets. The Black man is wearing a dark cap with 'VTS EAG' on it. They are gathered around a workbench, looking at a metal part being held by the Japanese man. The background shows a window with a grid pattern and some industrial equipment.

Human Security

The Pursuit of Peace and Happiness

COVER STORY

4

Human Security The Pursuit of Peace and Happiness

The concept of human security entails enabling people in all countries to live with "freedom from fear," "freedom from want" and "freedom to live in dignity." We introduce some of the ways in which Japan is working to build human security in the international arena.



MASATOSHI SAKAMOTO

Front cover: Training participants at JICA Obihiro International Center learn how to make their own screws.

6

Giving Substance to Human Security

Japan International Co-operation Agency (JICA) President **Sadako Ogata** explains her commitment to developing the concept of human security.



YUICHI TABASHI

8

Returning Peace to Ituri

Jean-François Dubuisson of the UNDP Field Office in Bunia, Democratic Republic of Congo, reports on activities to return peace to the war-torn region by the Trust Fund for Human Security.

10

Disaster Relief for Haiti

Following the devastating earthquake in Haiti of January 2010, what role has the Japan Self-Defense Forces played in disaster relief and recovery activities?

12

When the Tractor Breaks Down...

At JICA Obihiro International Center in Hokkaido, agricultural leaders from developing countries come to learn some of the engineering skills needed to sustain farming in their countries.

14

Love for Haiti

Artists from Japan's music and art worlds have come together to form the Love for Haiti movement.

16

Old Shoes Bring a Smile to Africa



MASARU SUZUKI

Shoes that Japanese children have out-grown are making their way to impoverished regions of Africa via the SMILE AFRICA project.

18 Building Trust in Human Security

Yukio Takasu, a UN special advisor on human security, shares his thoughts on diplomatic efforts to promote the human security concept, in particular by Japan.

20 TOPICS

The 14th Japan Media Arts Festival

This year's Japan Media Arts Festival received 2,645 submissions from forty-nine countries and regions, the highest number ever. We review the exhibition and interview two of the prizewinners.

26 TOPICS

The 4th International MANGA Award

The International MANGA Award received 189 entries from thirty-nine countries and regions this year. We take a look at some of the winning works.

28 SCIENCE

DREB Genes to Boost Harvests

A genetic modification technology developed by Professor **Kazuko Yamaguchi-Shinozaki** some twelve years ago is now close to practical application, offering real hopes for improved food production in areas of difficult and worsening environmental conditions.

30 MONODZUKURI

Cutlery for All

Tableware produced by small enterprise **Aoyoshi Co.** in Tsubame, Niigata Prefecture is making eating easier for dexterously challenged elderly and disabled people.

32 NEW TOURISM

Creative Breaks



MASATOSHI SAKAMOTO

A trip to any of Japan's craft-making hotbeds is not complete until you've tried

your hand at the craft yourself. We visit workshops in the pottery-making town of Mashiko in Tochigi Prefecture and a cut glass-making quarter of Sumida Ward in Tokyo.

INFORMATION

Prime Minister Naoto Kan shares his thoughts on issues of the day on "**Prime Minister KAN's BLOG**":

<http://kansblog.kantei.go.jp/>



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WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon speaks at a session on the theme of human security at the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting in Davos, January 28.

Human Security

The Pursuit of Peace and Happiness



WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM

Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) President Sadako Ogata speaks as host of the session on human security at Davos.

T

The World Economic Forum Annual Meeting (Davos Conference) was held in the Swiss municipality of Davos from January 26 through January 30. More than 2,500 politicians, businesspeople, nongovernmental organization representatives and other delegates from over 100 countries and regions attended the conference and its sessions on matters such as IT, energy, the environment and employment.

Sadako Ogata, president of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), and Mark Malloch Brown, former deputy secretary-general of the United Nations, hosted a session on human security on January 28. It was attended by about thirty leading delegates, including UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, World Health Organization Director-General Margaret Chan, and Peter Sutherland, chairman of Goldman Sachs International. Direct transnational threats to individuals such as conflicts, terrorism, infectious diseases and environmental destruction continue to intensify. By complementing existing security frameworks targeting nations with activities focusing on each individual, the concept of human security aims to provide people with "freedom from fear," "freedom from want" and "freedom to live in dignity." Japan plays a leading role in disseminating and implementing the concept of human security in the international community.

Participants in the session made such comments as: "Human security is an important guiding concept for dealing with all of the problems in the international community," and "Businesses and the private sector need to be actively involved with the further promotion of this concept."

In a special address the day after the session on January 29, Prime Minister Naoto Kan spoke of the "new bonds" needed to achieve a "society with the least unhappiness."

"Japan has been emphasizing the concept of 'Human Security,' which is also being discussed here in Davos," Prime Minister Kan said. "It is exactly what the notion of 'creating new bonds' is all about. Because its objective is to reach out to respective individuals and to enable them to live their lives with dignity through their protection and empowerment. Based on this concept, and with a view to contributing to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), we are focusing on enhancing health and education."

This month's cover story looks at Japan's international cooperation through the creation of "new bonds" including those related to human security.

Prime Minister Naoto Kan speaks at the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting alongside leaders including JICA President Sadako Ogata and, to her left, former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan.



Giving Substance to Human Security

*In recent years, human security has emerged as a major issue in the international community. **Sadako Ogata**, president of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), has devoted her energies to developing the concept. The Japan Journal's Osamu Sawaji asked Ogata for her thoughts on human security and on related activities in which Japan is involved.*

Japan International Cooperation Agency President Sadako Ogata



YUICHI ITABASHI

Why has human security come to the fore in the international community in recent years?

Sadako Ogata: In the 1990s when I served as United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the Cold War ended, and regional conflict broke out in various regions followed by the disintegration of federal nations such as the former Soviet Union and the former Yugoslavia, and large numbers of refugees fled across national borders to other countries. The state, which should protect people inside its own boundaries, was not able to do so due to conflicts. Furthermore, in the countries into which the refugees fled, there was no obligation to protect those who were not countrymen. Refugees were no longer protected by anyone. In light of these situations, the view gradually spread that the traditional state-centric approach alone is insufficient when it comes to the safety of human beings, and that

perhaps what is required more is the human-centric perspective.

How did the Commission on Human Security, of which you used to be co-chair, come to be established?

In 2001, Kofi Annan, the then secretary-general of the United Nations, paid a visit to then Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori. Wishing to accomplish “freedom from fear” which was freedom from military conflict, and “freedom from want” which was freedom from blights such as poverty and infectious disease, he sought the cooperation of Japan, which had a track record of nonmilitary international cooperation. Prime Minister Mori, who had been thinking about adopting human security as a specific policy goal, agreed to this request. Thus, the Commission on Human Security was established as a result of their proposal.

The Commission on Human Security pub-

lished its final report as a commission in 2003. This report suggests two broad strategies of achieving human security. One is that states must assume responsibility for protecting people, that they must conduct policies that take into consideration the survival, dignity, and livelihood of people, and that they must strengthen those policies. In concrete terms, this applies to such things as legislation, governance and decisions on systems. However, this alone cannot achieve the safety of human beings. What is also required is the empowerment of people. This is, in other words, the strengthening of the power of people to think for themselves about what is needed, and then take action. The report points out that the combination of these two things will accomplish human security.

How has Japanese official development assistance (ODA) changed in accordance with the concept of human security?

In 2003, I assumed the post of president of JICA, which implements Japan's ODA. In the same year, the Japanese government revised the ODA Charter, and stipulated that the perspective of "human security" should be incorporated into ODA. In response to this, JICA reviewed the projects that they implement based on the notion of human security.

Firstly, JICA decided to enhance the approach of putting together a support program while holding detailed discussions with recipient governments on what kind of support was required, and then implementing it. The agency had previously carried out support and de-

velopment for specific individual goals, such as building schools for children's education, or building hospitals to help sick people, but by incorporating the perspective of human security, this changed to providing multi-faceted support from the viewpoint of "what should be done to enhance the livelihood of this person in a comprehensive way?"

Could you give us some recent examples of JICA support based on the notion of human security?

For example, there had been ongoing civil war for years in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in Africa, with many people suffering from violence and poverty. The United Nations Peacekeeping Operations (PKO) are now being deployed in the Congo in an effort to maintain public order, but in the future, PKO withdrawal is anticipated. When this happens, the people will have to maintain public order by themselves. So since 2004 JICA has been conducting training for police officers in cooperation with the United Nations. This training is a re-education program on the role of police officers in protecting citizens, the rules of correct conduct of police officers, police activities that respect human rights, and so forth. So far, more than 17,000 police officers have participated in the training.

In this region, through the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security (see p. 9), primary schools are being renovated and built, and activities are being carried out for infectious disease prevention. By combining several approaches such as these, JICA aims to accomplish human security.

Returning Peace to Ituri

A collaborative project by four agencies of the United Nations is helping to re-establish security in the war-torn region of Ituri in the Democratic Republic of Congo. **Jean-François Dubuisson** of the UN Development Programme reports from Ituri.

The Ituri region of northeastern Democratic Republic of Congo was devastated by the armed clashes of 1999–2007 between the Lendu and Hema ethnic populations. More than 50,000 people were killed in the clashes, and hundreds of thousands displaced. Today, four United Nations agencies are working together to return safety and security to the local population.

The Community Empowerment and Peace-building in Ituri (CEPI) project is the first joint UN project to be implemented in eastern DR Congo. Funded by the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security (a total disbursement of 5,022,817 dollars) (see **box**), it aims at consolidating lasting peace and reconciliation between the antagonistic communities.

The activities implemented through the project relate to the different pillars of human security: economic development, access to basic social services and the promotion of peaceful co-existence between communities. The simultaneous combination of complementary interventions is intended to restore the socio-economic, physical and legal security of local communities.

Particular attention has been given to the social integration of young people. In the absence of qualifications and jobs, young people can be tempted to join armed groups and, thus, represent a threat to community stability.



The UNDP's Jean-François Dubuisson talks with villagers on a field trip in Ituri.

COURTESY OF UNDP

Therefore, the UN, in close cooperation with the local authorities, has built and equipped training centers where—once fully functional in the course of 2011—780 young people will benefit every year from training in fields such as plumbing, carpentry, farming and engineering.

The National Congolese Police (PNC) is another key beneficiary of the project. In the cities of Bunia, Mahagi and Djugu, the PNC forces are now accommodated in three brand-new police stations equipped with solar panels. They have at their disposal motorcycles and vehicles in good condition, equipment which affords them mobility and the opportunity for rapid intervention.

Among the various and numerous achievements of the project, the revitalization of three strategic locations (crossroads for different ethnic groups) was made effective further to the rehabilitation of their local markets. Moreover, crop multiplication and diversification has

strengthened economic exchanges between the communities and helped to reduce hunger.

Thanks to the CEPI project, the people of Ituri feel hopeful again. Alphonsine Omoy from Bunia, for example, deeply appreciates that policemen now patrol the streets on a daily basis. “Security is coming back little by little,” she says. “The situation is not perfect yet, but I must say that our freedom of movement is much better.”

Juvenal Bideko, a major in the PNC, explains that his working conditions have improved a lot since the building of the new police stations: “We used to work in shacks. Now, all officers have their own office. In addition, a special office has been devoted exclusively to sexual violence cases, which require anonymity.”

Charles Nobirabo, chief of the PNC in Djugu, adds that crime is on the decrease in areas where police stations are operational.

Eugenie Angeango, a greengrocer at the new Komanda open-air market, says, “Now we have stalls our products are protected from bad weather conditions. I am convinced that the market will attract more customers and that I will increase my earnings, which will

allow me to pay my children’s school fees. Moreover, the market, because of its central geographical position, should link different ethnic groups from North-Kivu and Ituri.”

CEPI is being jointly implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), with the UNDP being in charge of interagency coordination.

Each agency has brought its own expertise to the project and has implemented its activities with partners ranging from the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), international and national NGOs, UN-HABITAT, and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to Congolese authorities. At the community level, local peace and development committees have been established in order to ensure the planning, follow-up and adherence to the project by the beneficiaries themselves.

Jean-François Dubuisson is acting head of the UNDP’s Field Office in Bunia, Democratic Republic of Congo.

The Trust Fund for Human Security

In his policy speech at the ASEAN Summit in Hanoi in December 1998, late Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi announced that a Trust Fund for Human Security would be established in the United Nations. The Government of Japan fulfilled this commitment and founded the Trust Fund for Human Security in March 1999, with an initial contribution of about 500 million yen. By fiscal year 2009, total contributions amounted to some 39 billion yen, making the Trust Fund one of the largest of its kind established in the UN.

The objective of the Fund is to translate the concept of human security into concrete activities implemented by UN agencies through supporting projects that address diverse threats including poverty, environmental degradation, conflicts, landmines, refugee problems, illicit drugs and infectious diseases such as HIV/AIDS, thus to secure people’s lives, livelihoods and dignity in the real world.

Source: www.mofa.go.jp/policy/human_secu/index.html



Members of the Japan Self-Defense Forces at work in Haiti

JSDF

Disaster Relief for Haiti

The magnitude 7.0 earthquake that hit the Republic of Haiti on January 12, 2010 (local time) caused more than 310,000 deaths. One third of the population, or 3.7 million people, were directly affected in some way.

Immediately after the earthquake, the Japan Self-

Defense Forces entered Haiti to conduct international disaster relief operations, helping to transport refugees to safe locations and offering medical assistance. From February the same year, a unit engaged in recovery work of the country began its peacekeeping operations under the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti.

In the capital, Port-au-Prince, rubble from collapsed buildings covered the ground following the earthquake, often blocking roads. Approximately 350 members of the Self-Defense Forces' Engineering Unit worked to remove rubble, restore roads, and build refugee camps and orphanages. The city, qui-

JSDF members took time out to play with displaced children in Haiti, and even taught a little Japanese.



ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

escent when the Self-Defense Forces arrived, quickly saw the return of human and vehicle activity once the rubble was removed and the roads restored.

"Looking from the truck on the way to our work site, I felt the city gradually regain its bustle," recalls Yasushi Kawahara, sergeant first class of the Japan Ground Self-Defense Force's Northern Army Engineer Unit Tunnel Company, who entered Haiti on February 2010 and was involved in recovery work until September the same year.

"I sensed the strength of the people, as they worked diligently towards recovery, thinking about the future instead of losing heart and strength over the destruction from the earthquake."

Sergeant First Class Kawahara said that he was seeing exchange develop with the local people as they proceeded with their operations. The troops learned the local words for "hello" and "thank you" from their Haitian word list and talked to the local people using body gestures. The local people who watched the Self-Defense Forces work also began approaching the troops to talk. The unit gradually began encountering people who would ask how the unit would use certain heavy machinery that the Self-Defense Forces brought with them, or who would ask to have debris in a certain area removed.

"What was encouraging were the words of appre-

ciation from the local people, like 'Thank you' and 'You saved us,'" says Kawahara. "We once had a local person who supplied us with fruit while we were working. I was touched that somebody would care for us like that in a stricken site."

Safety First

"We paid particular care to work that used heavy machinery," recalls First Lieutenant Takanori Iri, former platoon leader of the Tunnel Company. "When we were dismantling damaged buildings with heavy machinery, there were times when a part of the building we never thought would collapse came down. I focused on determining which parts to demolish in what order with extreme care, giving out detailed commands so as to avoid damaging surrounding buildings and to ensure the safety of my men."

The Self-Defense Forces' reconstruction support efforts continue to this day. Since the earthquake, approximately 900 Force members have participated in the reconstruction support efforts to February of this year.

First Lieutenant Iri says he worries constantly about how Haiti is doing, even after his return to Japan. "I would love to participate in the operation again if I ever have the chance."

JDR Team in Christchurch

In response to a request from the government of New Zealand, Japan dispatched a Japan Disaster Relief (JDR) team to Christchurch on February 23 following the magnitude 6.3 earthquake of February 22. The team comprised sixty-six rescue workers in total, including doctors and nurses, a structural damage assessor and coordinators, as well as three rescue dogs. The team arrived in the devastated area on February 24 and, in cooperation with the rescue team from New Zealand, immediately set to work on rescue operations at a collapsed building in which over 100 people were believed to be trapped.



JDR team members at work in Christchurch, New Zealand

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When the Tractor Breaks Down...

At Obihiro University of Agriculture and Veterinary Medicine in Obihiro, Hokkaido, three training participants are learning how to fix, maintain and adapt common agricultural machinery and equipment. One training participant is carving a screw thread into a thin rod which he has stabilized in a vice. Dominic Kamau, from Kenya, is clearly engrossed in the task.

"It's very nice!"

Associate Professor Tadatashi Satow's exclamation



Dominic Kamau learns how to make a screw under the tutelage of Associate Professor Tadatoshi Satow at Obihiro University of Agriculture and Veterinary Medicine.

BOTH PHOTOS: IMASATOSHI SAKAMOTO

ricultural machinery and equipment. Making screws is one of the basic skills they learn to this end. Studying alongside Kamau is another training participant from Kenya and one from Benin.

Kamau is working at the Agricultural Technology Development Center in Kenya, promoting the use of agricultural machinery and equipment. "Most of our agricultural machinery and equipment are from other countries, so we need to fix them to make them suitable for Kenyan soil," says Kamau. "On this course, I'm learning techniques and ideas to achieve this."

Kamau's parents work in agriculture, and Kamau himself has also helped out in the fields since his childhood. His feelings for agriculture are therefore strong.

"I try to talk directly with farmers and identify their problems in planting methods and farming machinery." Kamau says he feels particular joy when this helps him to resolve a problem.

"Agriculture is the backbone of Kenya's economy. When I return, I would like to take what I learned here and encourage the use of machinery in Kenyan agriculture. Once machines become common and improve production efficiency, it should increase farmers' incomes and improve their lives."

after seeing the finished screw causes Kamau's face to light up in a smile.

Kamau is taking part in a training program on agricultural techniques that JICA hosts for training participants from developing countries. Based at JICA Obihiro International Center, the course offered practical training, field trips, and lectures from January to March, 2011 designed to teach training participants the techniques needed to maintain and improve ag-



Dominic Kamau and fellow training participants learn how to operate a tractor.



The Love for Haiti Final Stage concert caught the imagination of fans of artists in various genres.

Seventeen acts from Japan's pop, rock and reggae worlds performed in a fundraising concert for Haiti on January 12, 2011 at the Shibuya-Ax venue in Tokyo's Shibuya district. Reggae musicians Wakadanna and Minmi along with candle artist Candle JUNE organized the Love For Haiti Final Stage event. The three artists launched the Love For Haiti movement shortly after the massive earthquake in Haiti on January 13, 2010 (Japan time) to support victims of the temblor. On February 13, one month after the earthquake, they held a concert in Kobe, a city devastated by the 1995 Great Hanshin-Awaji

Earthquake. This was followed by more events in Tokyo in March and April. The artists asked some of their contemporaries to perform, and the number of artists involved gradually increased. At the same time they held fundraising auctions and appealed for assistance for the earthquake victims. The money collected from the events was donated to the victims through a non-governmental organization working on the ground in Haiti. One year after the huge earthquake struck Haiti, the members of the Love for Haiti movement hoped to revitalize public interest in the stricken area, and organized Love For Haiti Final

Love for Haiti

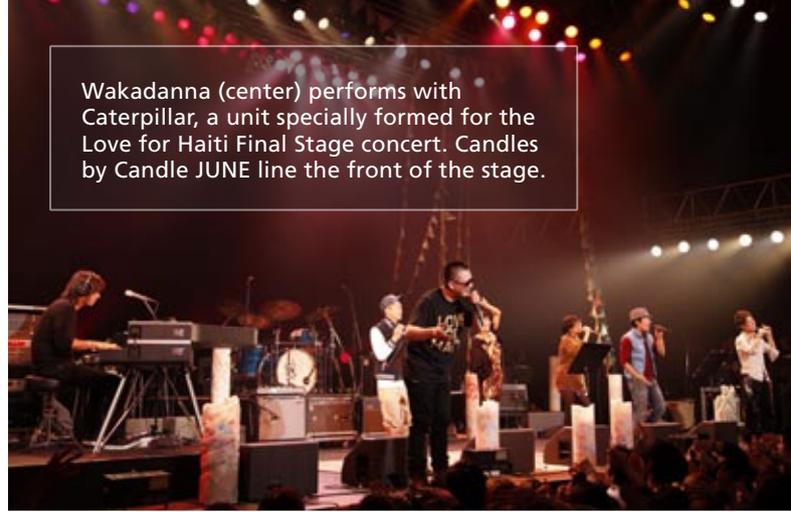


Stage—the biggest event to date.

On stage were fifteen large candles, created by Candle JUNE. The event opened with a slideshow portraying the current situation in Haiti playing in the glimmering candlelight. Following the slideshow, Minmi yelled, “Let’s send our love for Haiti,” and the show commenced.

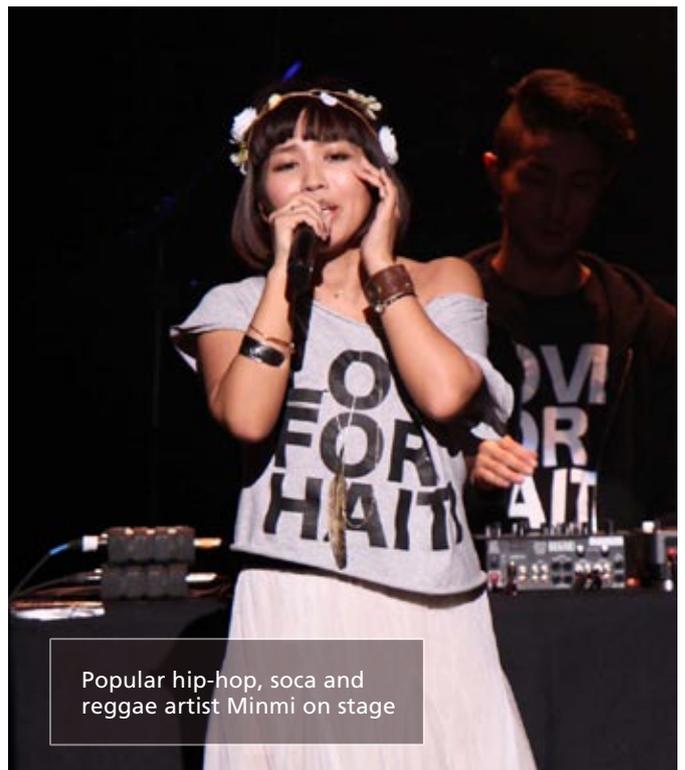
Wakadanna performed “Inochi—Sakura no Kioku” (Life—memories of cherry blossoms), a track he wrote in the wake of the earthquake in Haiti. The song expresses his thoughts: “Thinking of a far away country when I wrote this song, I realized you have

Wakadanna (center) performs with Caterpillar, a unit specially formed for the Love for Haiti Final Stage concert. Candles by Candle JUNE line the front of the stage.



to value those closest to you.” In this song, Wakadanna gave thanks to his parents and emphasized the importance of cherishing life. Sold as a limited-edition single, the song reached No. 1 on the USEN cable radio chart following the success of the concert. Wakadanna and his counterparts planned to end their Love For Haiti activities after the show, but having received support from many people, they are now reported to have decided to carry on.

A woman in her twenties at the concert said, “I came because artists I like were performing, but I was surprised as I had no interest in Haiti before this. I’d like to help in any way I can,” before heading to a collection box in the venue.



Popular hip-hop, soca and reggae artist Minmi on stage

Old Shoes Bring a Smile to Africa

Naoko Takahashi, the winner of the women's marathon at the Sydney Olympics, is one of the key members of SMILE AFRICA, a project that involves

sending shoes that Japanese children have outgrown to children in Africa who don't have shoes or can't afford to buy them.

The project got underway in 2009, after the Kenyan athlete Douglas Wakihuri, the silver medalist in the men's marathon at the Seoul Olympics and a key figure in the corporate athletics scene in Japan, spoke to his friend Kazumi Oguro, editor of the monthly Japanese magazine *SOTO-KOTO*, about providing assistance for people living in slums in the Kenyan capital, Nairobi.

The biggest issue in implementing the project was how to collect shoes in Japan. The person chosen to address that issue was Naoko Takahashi. Having just retired, she was particularly busy with her new circumstances when the organizers first contacted her. Nonetheless, she readily agreed to take part, commenting, "I've always wanted to do my bit to give something back to society, but I never knew what I could actually do, so count me in!"

In May 2009, Takahashi visited the Kenyan slums in person, taking shoes collected in Japan with her. She was shocked by the sight of children who had



Naoko Takahashi helps fit a Kenyan boy with a pair of used running shoes.



SMILE AFRICA leaders Naoko Takahashi and Douglas Wakiihuri stand among a throng of children in a Nairobi slum.



BOTH PHOTOS MASARU SUZUKI

lost their toes after running around barefoot in areas littered with animal feces and picking up bacterial infections through sores in their feet.

“That sort of thing could be prevented if only the children had shoes to wear. As so many of my rivals came from Kenya, I could hardly believe that children there were living in such conditions,” recalls Takahashi. “As a marathon runner, I have always thought of shoes as a tool to enable me to run. For those children, shoes could actually save their lives.”

Since returning to Japan, Takahashi has made sure that she talks about the SMILE AFRICA Project every time she takes part in public marathons as a guest athlete. She also goes out to visit elementary schools taking part in the project to tell them about condi-

tions in Kenya and encourage them to donate their old shoes.

There is one thing in particular that Takahashi hopes to get across to children in Japan via this project. “When we’re young, we get new shoes every time we outgrow the old ones. That’s just the way it is. In other parts of the world however, there are people who have to walk around barefoot because they can’t even afford to buy one pair of shoes, let alone new pairs. I think we should all be more thankful for the things that we take for granted and make the most of everything we have.”

As of the end of January 2011, a total of 24,464 pairs of shoes had been sent over to Africa as part of the SMILE AFRICA Project.

Building Trust in Human Security

*Japan is making multifarious diplomatic efforts to promote the concept of human security around the world. Striving to establish this concept in the international community centered on the United Nations for more than a decade, **Yukio Takasu**, a diplomat appointed by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon as a special advisor to the UN Secretary-General on human security in December 2010, gives his thoughts on the concept to the Japan Journal's Osamu Sawaji.*



Yukio Takasu, UN special advisor on human security

Please tell us about Japan's historical involvement with human security.

Yukio Takasu: The concept of human security was first brought into the public domain with the publication in 1994 of the United Nations Development Programme's Human Development Report. But the report, at the time of publication, did not lead to a large movement to make this concept a guiding principle in the globalized world.

However, the 1997 Asian financial crisis led to a major reduction in government spending on medical services and education across Asia, bringing about a situation under which people's livelihoods were threatened. Keizo Obuchi, the Japanese prime minister at the time, saw this as an important opportunity to take specific action to support socially vulnerable people focusing on human security, and in 1998 Obuchi announced, in addition to his intention to promote bilateral assistance, that the UN Trust Fund for Human Security would be established in the

United Nations.

The Japanese government also proposed to the international community the creation of a framework to discuss and disseminate human security as a universal concept. This led to the establishment of the Commission on Human Security in 2001, co-chaired by Sadako Ogata, then UN high commissioner for refugees, and Amartya Sen, then master of Trinity College, Cambridge.

Please tell us about recent United Nations' efforts regarding human security.

The importance of human security was first referred to in the World Summit Outcome, a resolution agreed on by heads of state at a UN summit meeting in 2005. This was followed by the establishment of Friends of Human Security, an informal forum initiated by Japan with the objective of creating a common understanding of human security. In July 2010, the UN General

Assembly adopted a resolution on human security, which stated UN member nations would “recognize the need to continue the discussion and to achieve an agreement on the definition.” It also requested the UN Secretary-General to submit a report in the general assembly in 2012 that would summarize the views of member states on human security, including a possible definition of human security.

What kind of debate is taking place in the international community regarding the definition of human security?

Nearly all member states agree with this way of thinking—addressing global issues from the people-centered perspective—but some countries have expressed concerns, namely the possibility of national sovereignty being infringed in the name of human security. To be more precise, they fear that if a country has failed to realize human security sufficiently, organizations such as the United Nations would flex their muscles to intervene and rectify the situation in that country.

One of my roles as the UN Secretary-General’s special advisor on human security is to meet with representatives of these countries with concerns and get them to understand human security is absolutely not a concept which aims to intervene in a state’s affairs.

It is also my role to develop a common understanding on human security in close collaboration with non-state actors, which include regional organizations such as the African Union and the Organization of American States, and non-governmental organizations, academic societies and private companies. I think that the

role of private business is especially important. Through participating in various gatherings, I hope to put forward the case to business people in the world of doing business while placing serious consideration on human security.

What kind of activities focusing on human security are Japanese companies conducting?

Sumitomo Chemical is producing mosquito nets to prevent the spread of malaria in Africa. This is not a charity. It is producing the mosquito nets as a business, and is also creating jobs locally. Takeda Pharmaceutical Company, through the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (advocated by Japan and founded in 2002), established a program in 2010 to collect donations for the development and augmentation of healthcare personnel in Africa. Hitachi Construction Machinery is another company making efforts through its development of safe landmine removal equipment. These can be said to be examples of businesses practicing human security.

What about domestic activities regarding human security?

The Junior Chamber International Japan has designated 2011 as a year to disseminate the concept of human security in Japan. Steps include having member companies actively hold lectures and other events in communities across the country.

The establishment in Japan of an academic society for human security is also planned for September. I feel the concept of human security is steadily spreading across Japan.

The 14th Japan Media Arts Festival

Art Division Grand Prize
Cycloid-E by Michel Décosterd/
André Décosterd

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The exhibition of the 14th Japan Media Arts Festival was held over twelve days from February 2 to 13 at the National Art Center and Tokyo Midtown, Roppongi. The Festival invites entries from a broad base of creative works in the fields of art, entertainment, animation and manga. As well as awarding prizes for outstanding media art works, the Festival also provides opportunities to exhibit and appreciate these works, with the Agency for Cultural Affairs, National Art Center and CG-ARTS Society sponsoring the event each year.

This year's Festival, the fourteenth, received 2,645 submissions from forty-nine countries and regions, the highest number ever. The works exhibited were those presented as works completed between the last date of the submissions period for the previous event, September 26, 2009, and September 24, 2010. Approximately 170 works of art including all the prize-winning works were exhibited or screened at the exhibition. Various symposia were also held by the award-winners and jury members.

Cycloid-E by Michel Décosterd / André Décosterd (Switzerland), which was awarded the Grand Prize in the Art Division, is an installation composed of five metal tubes each one meter in length, which move in an irregular way, with sound resonating in four directions from speakers attached to the ends of the tubes in sync

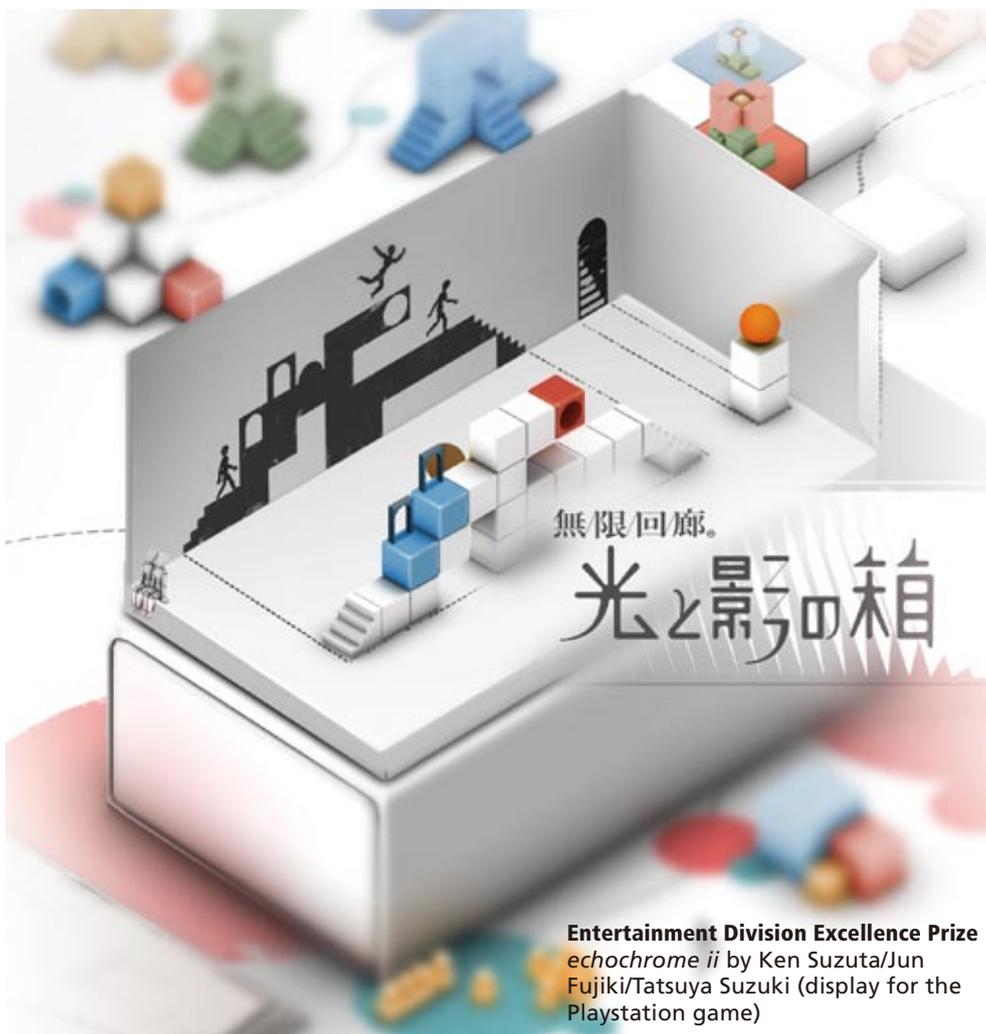


TADASHI AIZAWA

The exhibition of the 14th Japan Media Arts Festival at the National Art Center in Roppongi, Tokyo

with this motion. It is an enormous installation, with the overall diameter of movement of the arms reaching 10 meters. The jury gave the following comments in respect of this work.

"This sound sculpture is unique with its over-



Entertainment Division Excellence Prize
echochrome ii by Ken Suzuta/Jun Fujiki/Tatsuya Suzuki (display for the Playstation game)

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TOPICS

whelming material touch, which is seen as an inverse image of the invisible realms symbolized by the Internet, particularly against the backdrop of the global expansion of the worldwide web... What matters is the transfiguration of space, time and our consciousness and physical sensitivity triggered by the sound sculpture."

In the Entertainment Division, many works use analog motifs that are somehow nostalgic, such as shadow and paper cutting. *echochrome ii* (Ken Suzuta/Jun Fujiki/Tatsuya Suzuki), winner of the Excellence Prize, is an action puzzle game inspired by the theme of light and shadows. Using the controller as a flashlight, players freely manipulate the shape of shadows toward the ultimate goal.

In the Animation Division, submissions from overseas were particularly prominent. Of the 425 works submitted, 169 were from overseas, with



Animation Division Grand Prize
The Tatami Galaxy by Masaaki Yuasa

©THE TATAMI GALAXY COMMITTEE



Manga Division Grand Prize
Historie by Hitoshi Iwaaki

submissions from France accounting for 56 of these, a rapid increase from the 21 submissions in the previous year. The Grand Prize was awarded to Masaaki Yuasa, who also worked on the popular animations *Crayon Shin-chan* and *Chibi Maruko-chan* for his work *The Tatami Galaxy*. All eleven stories were screened at the Tokyo Midtown venue, to popular acclaim.

In the Manga Division, works were selected from a variety of artists, from veterans to younger artists. Prominent among these were works that were based on historical fact while at the same time reconstructing those facts in an original way and in the distinctive style of the author, such as the Grand Prize winner *Historie* (Hitoshi Iwaaki), a historical manga set in the Ancient Orient, and *Red* (Naoki Yamamoto), a multiprotagonist drama about young student revolu-

tionaries. At the awards ceremony, winner of the Grand Prize Hitoshi Iwaaki commented, "The Media Arts Festival has an extremely advanced image, but the drawing of manga itself is an unsophisticated task using pen and paper. I want to remember this feeling as I continue to draw in the future."

Yoshiyuki Kurihara was awarded the Special Achievement Prize for his involvement in editing *Shonen Magazine* since the 1970s, and his services to international cultural exchange by introducing overseas

writers to Japan. In his address at the awards ceremony, Kurihara said, "Japanese manga flowered all at once in the postwar years of high economic growth [late 1950s–1970s], and I believe that it has now entered its adolescence in the true sense. I often speak with writers overseas, and they say that the characteristic of Japanese manga is an awareness of how frames connect. Japanese manga evolved by discovering the appeal of the frame. We should continue to value that inherent characteristic."

Words with the Winners

The Japan Media Arts Festival awards one Grand Prize, four Excellence Prizes and one Encouragement Prize in recognition of works of outstanding artistry and creativity in the four divisions of Art, Entertainment, Animation and Manga. Shin Sakurai interviews two of the winners in the 2010 (14th) Festival.

Art Division Excellence Prize "The Tenth Sentiment" Ryota Kuwakubo

In a darkroom-like space, a model train with a light bulb attached to the front slowly navigates through various household objects such as clothes pegs and baskets. The shadows of the objects are projected on the walls, floor and ceiling, and keep changing like the scenery seen through a carriage window. Ryota Kuwakubo, who has presented media art using electronics in Japan and overseas, has succeeded in creating a captivating work that produces "a personal experience" for all who see it.

It could be seen as a work that



Ryota Kuwakubo in the doorway to his installation

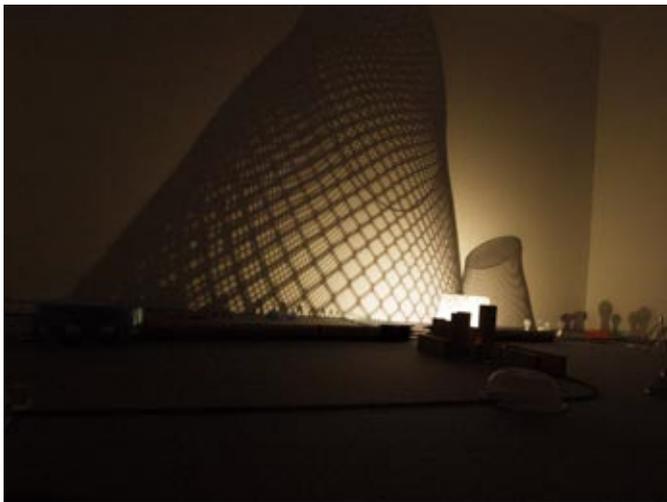
TADASHI AIZAWA

evokes the nostalgia of traveling in the past, or a futuristic image, but where did the concept come from?

Ryota Kuwakubo: I think many people made shadow pictures when they were children... It

TOPICS

originated in the simple idea of what would happen if you saw shadows objectively, disconnected from your hands. It was difficult to create a simulation of what to place where in relation to the model train railway track to get the shadows I wanted, so I made it at the site by actually put-



"The Tenth Sentiment"

ting things in place.

"The Tenth Sentiment" is different from what we normally understand by interactive artworks, isn't it?

Yes, because the viewer does not move, but simply looks at the work. However, what happens is that while they are looking, some kind of interaction occurs inside the viewer.

I wonder if the reason you used an analog flavor such as this is because with progress in digital technology, interactive has become the norm?

Technically speaking, I think it would have been possible to make this thirty years or more ago, but thirty years ago there was probably no

one who wanted to make it. As media have evolved, so people's sensibilities have been renewed, so that the traditional technique of shadow play once again seems like something new, perhaps. The exhibition space setting has been darkened to the point that people's faces are invisible, so the viewer's experience of it is totally individual. Even I don't know what image is created in the mind of the viewer. Someone came and told me about the scenery they had once seen while traveling, which makes me very happy. This year, exhibitions have been planned at three overseas locations. Who knows, there may be viewers who look at it in the context of the Japanese culture of *mitate* [seeing an object, not in the form that was originally intended for it, but as another thing] or *shakkei* [borrowed scenery]. I am looking forward to their reactions.

Entertainment Division Grand Prize IS Parade

Tomohiko Hayashi, Kensuke Senbo,
Tomohiko Koyama

When Twitter users register their ID with IS Parade, the icons of their followers turn into characters with arms and legs, who parade with the user at the center. Created as a promotion for smartphones, 13.5 million parades were generated during the approximately six months between 30 April and 15 November, 2010. It has been tweeted to prominent figures in Japan and overseas, including Biz Stone, the co-founder and creative director of Twitter, and the parade seems likely to continue. Web planner Tomohiko



IS Parade creators (from left) Tomohiko Koyama, Tomohiko Hayashi, Kensuke Senbo

Hayashi, the key member of the creation team, says, “I would like to design new networking communication [tools].”

You normally work in an advertising agency, so would it be correct to understand this work too as part of an advertisement ordered by a client?

Tomohiko Hayashi: In the scheme of my work it is a piece of advertising, so I was not creating it with the awareness of creating an “art work.” I never thought that it would be awarded the Grand Prize at the Japan Media Arts Festival. I have always taken an interest the Animation and Manga Divisions, so I am extremely pleased to have received it.

Was the decision to have Twitter followers turning into characters and

parading easy?

It was decided at a relatively early stage. It is an unmistakable fact that relationships between people and communication styles have changed with the spread of smartphones and Twitter. In this context, I thought about what would make the users of this technology happy, what they would enjoy. People who use Twitter will understand what I mean when I say that they get pleasure simply from seeing their followers grow in number. When I expressed this in a visual form, this was the result. With your own icon, your alter ego, at the center, the icons of your followers carry you in a portable shrine, and parade with musical instruments playing around you. I wondered if, by visualizing online connections in three-dimensional form, I could express the fun and pleasure of connections with other people. The fact that this kind of design for the purpose of communication is also recognized as art perhaps symbolizes the current times.



MANGA Award Committee Chairperson Machiko Satonaka presents the Gold Award to Xiao Bai for *Si loin et si proche...*

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MASATOSHI SAKAMOTO

The 4th International MANGA Award

Japanese manga such as *Doraemon*, *Dragon Ball* and *Naruto* fascinate people across the world, inspiring many to become manga artists themselves. As part of the active use of pop culture in public diplomacy, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan established the International MANGA Award in 2007 to honor non-Japanese manga artists who have helped spread the culture of manga overseas.

The 4th International MANGA Award was held earlier this year. It received 189 submissions from thirty-nine countries and regions. By country, the most applications came from Thailand and Brazil, with twenty-eight apiece; followed by Belgium and Spain, fourteen apiece; and eleven from Kazakhstan. From these entries, judges selected the winner of the Gold Award for the best work, the three winners of the Silver Award, and other award winners as well. The winner of the top prize was the French-language *Si loin et si proche...* (2010) published in Belgium by

artist Xiao Bai (China). It is a story about a university student living in her dormitory in Beijing whose future son one day suddenly appears before her.

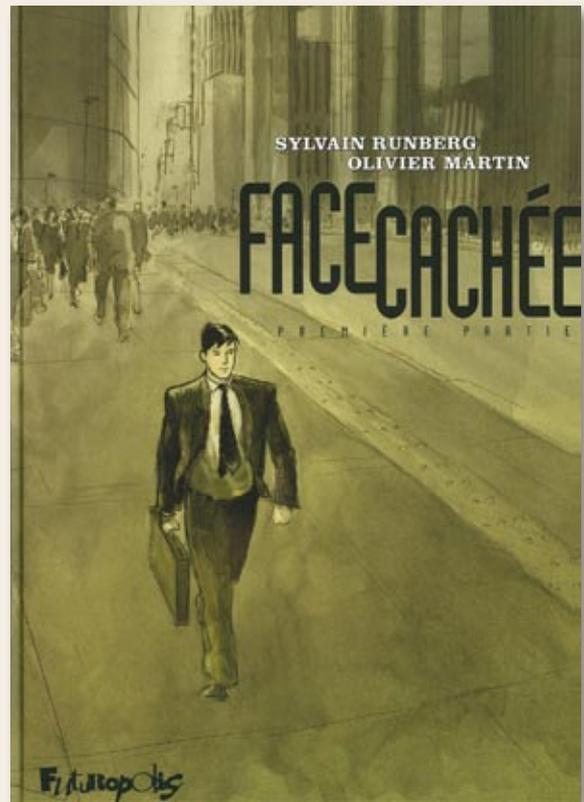
The three Silver Awards were picked up by the French pairing of Olivier Martin (artist) (France) and Sylvan Runberg (author) for *Face cachée*; artist Enrique Fernández (Spain) for *La Isla sin Sonrisa*; and artist VERACHAI DUANGPLA (Thailand) for "THE STORY BEGINS WITH..." The 4th International MANGA Award ceremony and reception were held on February 23 in Tokyo. Then Foreign Minister Seiji Maehara, the executive committee chairman, and well-known manga artist Machiko Satonaka, award committee chairperson, presented certificates and trophies to the award winners.

"Today has been an unforgettable day," Xiao Bai said at the award ceremony. "Creating manga is like a journey for me. Winning this award is the most wonderful scenery along this arduous trip."



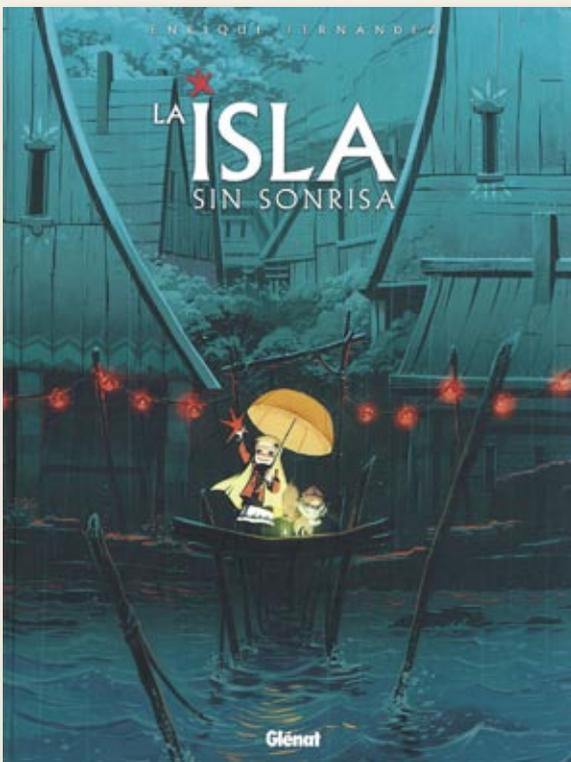
Si loin et si proche...

by Xiao Bai, published by KANA (DARGAUD-LOMBARD s.a.), Belgium.



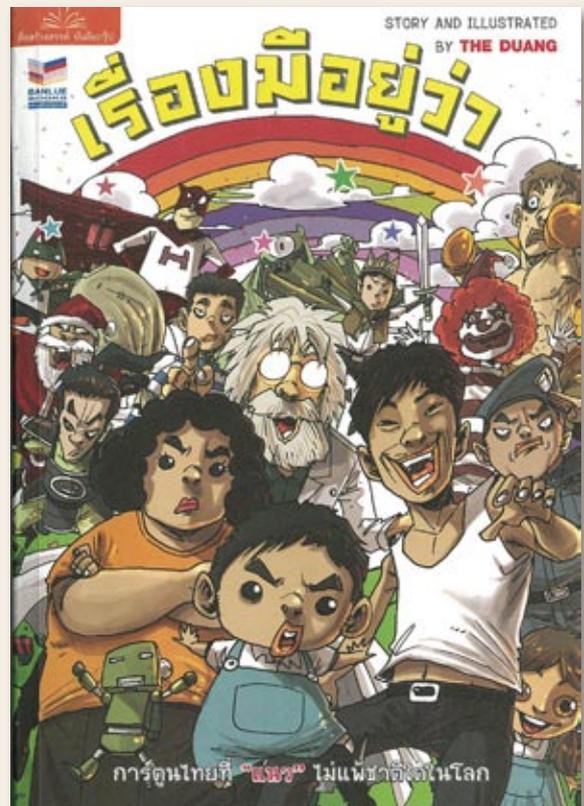
Face Cachée

by Olivier Martin and Sylvain Runberg, published by Futuropolis, France. The home life and romances of Japanese businesspersons.



La Isla sin Sonrisa

by Enrique Fernández, published by Ediciones Glénat Spain, Spain. A geologist has built an emotional barrier following the loss of his family. He visits an isolated island to carry out a survey when he encounters a young girl living on the island who opens up his heart.



"THE STORY BEGINS WITH..."

by VERACHAI DUANGPLA, published by Banlue Publications, Thailand. A humorous satire and lessons pertaining to the daily life and events of a young boy, his family and others around him.

DREB Genes to Boost Harvests

*University of Tokyo Professor and Japan International Research Center for Agricultural Sciences Chief Researcher **Kazuko Yamaguchi-Shinozaki** has developed a genetic modification technology that creates plants resistant to various changes in environmental conditions. Takashi Sasaki reports on this technology that is expected to have applications for increasing food production and, in the future, prevent desertification.*

To date, the European Union and countries such as the United States, Russia and Canada have led the world in cereal production, but in recent years South American nations such as Argentina and Brazil have also seen rapid growth in production. However, as such emerging nations are incapable of developing sufficient irrigation facilities in agricultural areas that extend into semi-arid land, large-scale droughts can suddenly occur in years of low rainfall, leading to a cycle in which there is a sharp decrease in the harvest yield once every few years. The genetic modification technology developed by Kazuko Yamaguchi-Shinozaki of the University of Tokyo's Graduate School of Agricultural and Life Sciences has garnered a great deal of global attention as a means of preventing such crop damage.

"Currently, rapid environmental change and abnormal weather is emerging all over the world," Yamaguchi-Shinozaki says. "This has led to the issue of how to stabilize crop harvests. The objective of our research is to resolve this problem using genetic modification."

Through a long evolutionary process since they first began growing on land, plants have developed a tolerance to a range of environmental stresses, such as high and low temperatures

and aridity. When Yamaguchi-Shinozaki began her research nearly twenty years ago, about fifty resistance genes that build this tolerance had been identified. The figure now stands as high as 3,000. These genes work in ways such as closing stomata (pores that transpire water), making leaves thicker to store water, and forming special proteins that protect cells from aridity. However, this tolerance is normally inactive inside genes as it can impede plant growth.

This tolerance has to be activated to grow plants with a high resistance to environmental stress. However, to develop strong plants that can survive under various environmental conditions, such as sudden aridity or temperature changes, it is necessary to simultaneously activate all these innate tolerances.

"Genes have components that are like keyholes and can turn this function on and off," Yamaguchi-Shinozaki says. "Because of this, we narrowed our target down to command genes that work on these various resistance genes, or in other words, those genes that play the role of a common key when placed under stress."

Breakthrough with Thale

Yamaguchi-Shinozaki's research team studied thale cress, an annual which is part of the

Brassicales order of flowering plants. The plant's genome is small and simple, and furthermore, it is a fast-growing plant that seeds in six to eight weeks after germination. However, even thale cress, which was thought to be the smallest flowering plant, has more than 26,000 genes. Identifying the key command gene required a lot of patience and repeated laboratory cultivation and verification. After four years of research, the command gene—DREB, or Dehydration Responsive Element Binding protein—was discovered.

Yamaguchi-Shinozaki experimented with placing the thale cress that had been genetically modified to create large volumes of DREB in a range of environmental conditions. She found that 99.3% of the genetically modified thale cress did not wither when kept in cold conditions of -6°C for two days as opposed to 0% before genetic modification; 65% did not wither when not given a drop of water for two weeks (0% before genetic modification); and 79.7% did not wither when only given sea water (13.8% before genetic modification). When these research results were published in *Plant Cell*, a U.S. botanical journal, in 1998, Yamaguchi-Shinozaki was reportedly flooded with inquiries and offers of joint research.

According to Yamaguchi-Shinozaki, the most advanced research on the applications of DREB is on soybeans resistant to aridity. Types of soybeans that have been genetically modified to have an innate tolerance of herbicides and pests have proliferated, and this technology is



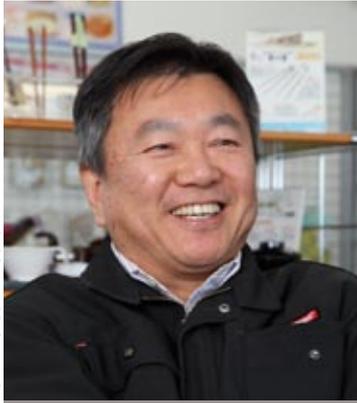
TAKASHI SASAKI

In her laboratory at the University of Tokyo, Kazuko Yamaguchi-Shinozaki holds a Petri dish containing thale cress, the key command gene for which her research team discovered and is now utilizing with a view to producing "mighty crops that have large harvests."

relatively easy to apply to new genes. Joint research with an institution in Brazil has reportedly got the technology almost at a level of practical implementation. While the implementation objectives have yet to be met, experiments are being carried out across the world on the application of DREB on a range of other plants, including rice, wheat, eucalyptus, tobacco and peanut plants.

"The application of DREB genes is leading to the birth of mighty crops that have large harvests, are resistant to pests and herbicide, and are also tolerant to aridity and low temperatures. If they can be stably harvested on land in severe environments, the world food situation will change significantly," Yamaguchi-Shinozaki says. "Perhaps DREB gene technology can help to prevent desertification in the future through the development of plants that are tolerant to extreme aridity."

Takashi Sasaki is a freelance writer.



BOTH PHOTOS BY MISUZU AYAYAMA

Akimoto Kohei, senior managing director of Aoyoshi Co.

Cutlery for All

Located in the cutlery producing center of Tsubame in Niigata Prefecture, **Aoyoshi Co.** has received a lot of attention in recent years for its manufacturing. In particular, Aoyoshi is well known for its innovative knives, forks and spoons for use by elderly people. Miho Yanagisawa visited the company.

Aoyoshi developed its first welfare-purpose spoons in 1986 at a time when the local industry of Tsubame was suffering a slump. There was one catalyst that spurred Aoyoshi to start manufacturing these products. Yoshiro Aoyagi, then the president of Aoyoshi (now chairman), was privately manufacturing tableware for his daughter, who suffered from a hand disability as a result of polio. Based on this experience, Aoyagi thought spoons for people with hand disabilities would benefit the public.

However, the spoon did not sell well initially. Sales remained poor because the dominant hand, hand sizes and disability level differed from one person to another, and Aoyoshi was unable to manufacture cutlery in shapes that precisely satisfied their diverse needs. The company worked hard to find product designs and materials that disabled people would find easy to use, pursuing a process of trial and error. During this time, the company became aware of a new material that had been developed by Mitsubishi Heavy Industries, called “shape-memory polymer,” which changes shape freely and endlessly with the application of heat.

“I thought the material might help realize our idea,” says Kohei Akimoto, senior managing director of Aoyoshi, looking back. “I visited Mitsubishi Heavy Industries to propose a plan for joint development.”

Shape-memory polymer was a material developed by Mitsubishi Heavy Industries, an important player in Japan’s high-growth period, for use in engine parts for its mowing machines. Aoyoshi, a small company in a provincial part of Japan, brought Mitsubishi an idea to use this material in the entirely different field of products for welfare. Aoyoshi’s proposal surprised a Mitsubishi official in charge of the technology’s development. However, the official understood Akimoto’s passion for the proposal, and readily agreed to joint product development.

Cutlery Stimulates Appetite

WiLL-1 (one), a welfare-purpose spoon whose “U-shaped” grip can be freely adjusted

Trade name	Aoyoshi Co., Ltd.
Representative	Kohei Akimoto, senior managing director
Address	5143 Koike, Tsubame City, Niigata Prefecture
Number of employees	41
Website	http://www.casualproduct.com/top.html

to fit the shapes of users' hands, was created in October 1991 as a result of the joint product development described above.

Polymer used for the grip part of spoons softens like rubber when it is soaked in hot water at or above 70°C. The softened polymer can be molded easily. The molded polymer is then soaked in cold water at or below 20°C wherein it solidifies. Spoon grips that fit users' hands are manufactured in this way.

The Philadelphia Museum of Art selected this spoon as an exhibit at Japanese Design: A Survey Since 1950, a themed exhibition it sponsored in 1994, based on the high marks it gave to the product's functionality and design qualities. Aoyoshi kept improving WiLL-1 in the subsequent period and won many prizes with it, including the (then) Minister of International Trade and Industry's Good Design Award and the Kids Design Award.

The "light spoon" released in 2004 became the second hit for the company. The type of spoons widely used in Japan are modeled on Western spoons. These spoons are too heavy for elderly people. They are said in some cases to make such people less willing to eat.

To solve this problem, Aoyoshi began developing a spoon that elderly people would find easy to use. Commonly spoons scoop up 25 grams of food each time they are used. This volume is too large for elderly people, who have lost some of their ability to swallow. Recognizing this, Aoyoshi studied the sizes of Japanese people's mouths and the chewing ability of elderly people, flattened the spoon shape, and brought the volume of food scooped per spoon



The WiLL-1 and (inset) WiLL-3 range of tableware by Aoyoshi. The WiLL-3 range was developed especially for children with disabilities.

use down to 18 grams. The company also reduced the weight of the spoons by hollowing out their grips. Demonstrating its ingenuity, Aoyoshi also created an assortment of spoons with necks angled in various ways. The spoons allowed users to bring food to their mouths from the best angle.

In Search of Functionality and Beauty

Both the WiLL and "light spoon" series of Aoyoshi products catch the eye with their use of many brilliant colors and streamlined designs that create a soft impression while offering high functionality.

"I think Japanese people have a sophisticated aesthetic sense when it comes to food," notes Akimoto. "We lose our appetite when we find unappealing tableware on a nice dining table. We hope to help disabled people enjoy eating their food more by listening to the opinions of many more tableware users and reflecting their requests in our products in the future," adds Akimoto.

Miho Yanagisawa is a freelance writer.



BOTH PHOTOS: MASATOSHI SAKAMOTO

Creative Breaks

Wherever you travel in Japan, you will find workshops where traditional crafts made using local natural resources continue to turn out beautiful, unique products for discerning customers. Quite often, visitors to these workshops are able to try their hand at the crafts themselves. We visited two such workshops, in Mashiko, Tochigi Prefecture, and in Sumida Ward, downtown Tokyo.

Mashiko-yaki Pottery

About two hours drive north from Tokyo lies

Mashiko, a town in Tochigi Prefecture that is well known for its pottery. The town center has rows of stores selling Mashiko-yaki pottery and ceramics and was bustling with tourists visiting to shop or make pottery.

Mashiko-yaki's origins lie at the end of the Edo period (1603–1867), when everyday items such as water bottles, teapots and pots were produced there. Mashiko-yaki began to be considered as artistry when Shoji Hamada (1894–1978), a leading Japanese potter, moved to Mashiko and started making



At Mashiko Ceramic Art Club, people from all walks of life gather to make pottery using the world-renowned Mashiko-yaki process.

pottery there. The pottery is now well known both in Japan and overseas. The town's reputation is one of the reasons why about thirty foreign potters from places such as the United States and Australia are living and practicing in Mashiko.

"The attraction of Mashiko is that anyone is accepted. This is the free nature of the place," says Ry-ochi Furuiki, the owner of the Mashiko Ceramic Art Club and one of 400 potters in the town. "Many people come together here, giving rise to the various styles of Mashiko-yaki."

The process of making Mashiko-yaki takes about one month. Items are first shaped from clay using a pottery wheel. Then after drying, they are fired in a kiln and glazed using glaze made from materials such as ash, limestone and iron mixed with water. Items are completed after baking in a kiln once more.

Mashiko has many workshops in which visitors can experience this process for themselves. The Mashiko Ceramic Art Club also offers accommodation, and residents are said to include people lovingly tending to their ceramics. A half-day plan at the Club involves participants making pottery with a wheel, allowing even beginners to feel comfortable making a visit. For an additional fee, it is possible to have the item fired and sent on to you later.

"Touching the clay feels really good," says a thirty-year-old woman from Tokyo making pottery for the first time. "It was comforting. I'd definitely like to try it again."

Many overseas visitors have visited the Mashiko Ceramic Art Club in recent years, from countries including the United States, France and China. Last year about 1,230 people are said to have made pottery at the Club, with about 260 of them being non-Japanese.



Before glazing, a potter at Mashiko Ceramic Art Club inscribes her design.

NEW TOURISM

Edo-Kiriko Cut Glass

Edo-Kiriko glassware is believed to have first been made by glass merchant Kagaya Kyubei in Edo (present day Tokyo) in the nineteenth century when Kagaya cut a pattern into glass. The basic production method involves cutting out a delicate pattern on colored glass cups or dishes using a disc-shaped blade. This method has not changed despite advances in automation and material research. The pieces are created one by one by an experienced craftsman, meaning that no two items are ever the same.

Visitors can try their hand at the glass-cutting process at the Sumida Edo Kirikokan, a flourishing Edo-Kiriko workshop in Tokyo's Sumida Ward. After drawing a pattern on the glass using a white pen, participants cut it out using a diamond wheel. At first the participants had trouble aligning the blade with the pattern that they had imaged, but after about ninety minutes, one of them was able to cut out a star shape on a cup. "I thought it was difficult at first," laughs a female company worker. "But it was fun and I kept quiet, concentrated and managed to finish it."



"It is said to take ten years to become a fully fledged craftsman," instructor Eiichi Yoshikawa says. "I want people to have fun even if they can't do it very well and hope they gain an interest in Edo-Kiriko." The number of foreign participants has reportedly increased recently with many said to attempt daring designs.

Sumida Edo Kirikokan is located in the vicinity of the Tokyo Sky Tree and is developing and selling products such as those with a Sky Tree motif to tie-in with the tower's opening next year.



An instructor at Sumida Edo Kirikokan teaches visitors to the workshop how to cut glass.



A visitor to Sumida Edo Kirikokan tries her hand at making Edo Kiriko cut glass.



One example of some of the wide range of Edo Kiriko glassware on sale at Sumida Edo Kirikokan



March 3 is the Doll Festival, a day to pray for the healthy growth of young girls. On this day, dolls are displayed on a dais wearing the costumes of Heian-period aristocrats—with the emperor and empress at the assemblage center. Another popular Doll Festival display is that of multiple small fabric figures and objects suspended on strings. The basic forms for the decorations are peaches, as a symbol of longevity; a monkey, to ward off evil spirits; and triangles, in imitation of medicine bags or incense pouches. These *tsurushibina* (hanging dolls) have their origins in the Edo period (1603–1867) in the Izu-Inatori region of the Izu Peninsula, Shizuoka Prefecture, as decorations hung from the ceilings of households. Inatori is a hot spring resort and home to the *Kawazu-zakura*, a famous early blooming cherry. The cherry blossoms and Doll Festival displays together attract some 1 million visitors to Inatori each year between January 20 and March 31.

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