Introducing three Japanese whose work in developing countries has had a profound impact on the local communities where they live.

The Japanese working overseas profiled in these pages have won the deep respect and admiration of their peers.

Global Messengers
Sharing Japan’s Strengths

In his speech at the presentation of letters of appreciation to Japanese who have made notable personal contributions to the international community, then Minister for National Policy of Japan Motohisa Furukawa spoke of these people having “passion without borders.” This month’s Cover Story introduces several such dedicated individuals and their work in a wide range of different fields.

Celebration of the 40th Anniversary of the World Heritage Convention
Learn about this traditional print art form and answer our quiz!

Japanese researchers are developing a completely new method of power supply that combines solar cells with thermoelectric generators.

Award-winning paper cut-out artist Hina Aoyama produces works of astonishing intricacy.

Located close to Izumo-taisha grand shrine, Shimane Museum of Ancient Izumo is a treasure trove of remarkable archaeological artifacts.

On the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between Japan and India, Ambassador of India to Japan Ms. Deepa Gopalan Wadhwa explains the nature of India-Japan relations today.

German monk Muho Nölke serves as the ninth-generation abbot of the remote Antai-ji temple in Hyogo Prefecture.

Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda shares his thoughts on issues of the day on “Prime Minister NODA’s BLOG”: http://nodosblog.kantei.go.jp/
On November 5, 2012, the Ninth Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM 9) opened in Vientiane, Laos, with Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda representing Japan.

At the Meeting, as for economic and financial issues, Prime Minister Noda expressed his perception of the global economy, saying the European debt crisis was considered the most serious risk factor at present. He first referred to the International Monetary Fund and World Bank meetings which Japan hosted in Tokyo, the expansion of the IMF’s financial resources to which Japan pledged its contribution earlier than any other country, and the strengthening of Asia’s financial safety network for which Japan showed leadership. He then expressed Japan’s determination to contribute to the development of both Europe and Asia by pursuing fiscal consolidation and economic growth at the same time and realizing sustained growth.

As for the future direction of ASEM, Prime Minister Noda said ASEM being the sole forum linking Asia and Europe, discussing matters of interest to both regions and sharing common recognition are important not only for Asia and Europe but also for the peace and stability of the international community.

After the Meeting, the ASEM 9 Chair’s Statement and Vientiane Declaration on Strengthening Partnership for Peace and Development were released.

On November 19, 2012, the Fifteenth Japan-ASEAN Summit was held in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda attended the meeting. At the Summit, Prime Minister Noda emphasized that passing on their experience of the past forty years to the next generation, and building an even closer and deeper Japan-ASEAN relationship towards the future will be extremely important for the region’s stability and prosperity.

On November 20, the Seventh East Asia Summit was held. Recognizing the situation in the Asia-Pacific as a region that is going through significant change, Prime Minister Noda opened his statement stressing that the need for frank and strategic discussion among the regional leaders continues to increase. He also noted that, with the new membership of the United States and the Russian Federation since last year, the East Asia Summit has further grown into a significant opportunity to strengthen cooperation on practical issues as well as in security and political areas. He reiterated his strong commitment to developing the EAS into a leaders-led forum that reconfirms common principles and basic rules in the region, and leads to tangible cooperation.
Celebration of the 40th Anniversary of the World Heritage Convention

The year 2012 marks the 40th anniversary of the World Heritage Convention adopted at the UNESCO General Assembly. The World Heritage Convention, properly titled the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, is a convention that protects Cultural Heritage and Natural Heritage from the threat of damage or destruction and preserves them through the establishment of a system of international cooperation and assistance. Currently, 190 States Parties have ratified the Convention and 962 properties have been inscribed on the World Heritage List.

Since the official event to celebrate the anniversary year was held at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris, on January 30, 2012, numerous events have been organized by a number of States Parties to celebrate the 40th anniversary, within the overall anniversary theme of “World Heritage and Sustainable Development: the Role of Local Communities.”

On November 6–8, 2012, the Closing Event of the Celebration of the 40th Anniversary of the World Heritage Convention was held by the government of Japan at the Kyoto International Conference Center in cooperation with the UNESCO World Heritage Centre. The Closing Event attracted about 590 participants from sixty-one countries including UNESCO Director-General Irina Bokova and World Heritage Committee Chairperson Sok An.

At the Opening Session, Director-General Bokova said, “Japan is an outstanding and a longstanding champion of the World Heritage Convention. This commitment reflects values deeply held in this society—values that are sustained by local authorities, chambers of commerce and tourist offices, by ordinary people across this country.”

The Closing Event held presentations and panel discussions by experts and other stakeholders of the World Heritage under themes such as “World Heritage Convention from its Dawn,” “The World Heritage Convention at Present,” and “The Future of the Convention.”

The Closing Event presented “the Kyoto Vision.” “The Kyoto Vision” confirms that the World Heritage Convention is one of the most powerful tools for heritage conservation, with a shared vision combining the protection of cultural and natural heritage in one single instrument. “The Kyoto Vision” confirms that the sustainable development perspective and the role of community are important to implement the Convention. “The Kyoto Vision” also calls for mobilizing financial resources globally and sharing responsibility for effectively addressing threats to the World Heritage. It also calls for ensuring effective involvement of local communities, indigenous peoples, experts and youth in conservation from the preparatory phase of the World Heritage nomination process, and ensuring the sustainability of local communities through other domains such as intangible cultural heritage and cultural and creative industries.
People selected by the Global Messengers of “Japan” Project gather at an appreciation letter presentation ceremony at the Foreign Press Center, Tokyo, September 18, 2012.
Under the Global Messengers of “Japan” project of the National Policy Unit of the Cabinet Secretariat, appreciation letters were sent in September to sixty-three Japanese who have contributed to enhancing Japan’s international standing through their activities in various corners of the world. At a presentation ceremony held on September 18, then Minister for National Policy Motohisa Furukawa handed these appreciation letters directly to the recipients in attendance on the day, praising them for their “passion without borders.”

While domestically there are numerous well-known Japanese who have achieved great success overseas, there are many more whose activities in a wide range of fields around the world are not adequately recognized in Japan. The selection committee therefore included members of the foreign press—from Europe, North America, Asia, Oceania, South America and the Middle East—so as to reflect the viewpoints of non-Japanese. The committee then debated the merits of the 100-plus candidates recommended by the members from the viewpoint of how they are extending Japan’s positive aspects in their respective fields.

While those ultimately selected are active across a wide range of fields from culture and art to academia, sports and international cooperation, several common points emerge from their activities.

The first of these is an emphasis on cooperation. Their activities overseas do not force the values of Japan or the Japanese on the local people, but develop out of thoughts and actions taken together with them. Among these people operating in completely different locations and at varying ages, many have plunged themselves into the life of an ordinary citizen to engage in grassroots activities. This doesn’t mean they have merely assimilated to a particular locale; it means they have acted to make lives better for the local people while at the same time utilizing the fact that they are Japanese. Further, as we will introduce in this month’s issue, these activities also imply the sense of respect given to the host country, in one case manifest in efforts to find new value in an aspect of traditional culture undervalued by locals.

The next noteworthy quality the selectees share is a mission-oriented passion. Without thought for their own prestige or benefit, they put the local people first and act with devotion. To give one example from the field of medicine, out of the sheer desire to help people suffering from illness, one doctor abandons his stable life in Japan to spend half a month providing free medical services overseas.

In this month’s issue, we will highlight the Japanese people engaged in dedicated activities in terms of local life and culture based on actual cases from the project.
Countless Japanese people dedicate their lives to work in developing countries, where their skills can have a profound impact on the local communities where they live. This article introduces three such Japanese who have shown their "passion without borders."

The Sight Saver  
Dr. Tadashi Hattori (Vietnam)

“I can’t just stand by and watch people who are on the verge of losing their vision. I want to save their sight if possible using the skills I have,” says Dr. Tadashi Hattori. “I only want to see my patients who have regained their vision smile—that’s all I want. I have no interest in either money or recognition.”

Dr. Hattori is an ophthalmologist who has treated over 10,000 people in Vietnam for free. In Vietnam, there are not enough ophthalmologists or equipment compared to the number of patients. The shortage of ophthalmologists is especially serious in rural regions, and many patients lack access to proper medical care. Dr. Hattori started going to Vietnam after he met a Vietnamese ophthalmologist at an academic meeting in Japan in 2001, who told him, “Many poor patients have lost their sight in Vietnam because they can’t get operations, and your excellent skills would save them. Could you please come to Vietnam?” Six months later, in April 2002, Dr. Hattori resigned from the hospital he was working at and started practicing in Vietnam, a country that was completely unknown to him.

Today, Dr. Hattori travels back and forth between
Dr. Hattori performs about 800 operations a year in Vietnam, and this is just at local hospitals. He has often conducted more than eighty operations over the course of two days. Patients with cataracts account for most of these in local areas. For economic reasons, more than a few patients come to the hospital after their symptoms have worsened. This makes operations difficult.

“No matter how many operations I do, I never compromise on the quality of each operation,” says Dr. Hattori. “I believe the quality of vision with the naked eye is important because Vietnamese do not customarily wear eye-glasses in their daily life.”

Dr. Hattori has world-leading skills in vitreoretinal operations using an endoscope. Operations are carried out with an endoscope while a monitor is used to look inside the eye. The work requires patience and precision, but the excellence of Hattori’s technique made an American tell him, “With your technique, you could be a millionaire in the United States.”

Currently, Dr. Hattori is concentrating on training human resources. One advantage of endoscope operations is that other people can watch the eye operations on monitors. Vietnamese physicians can learn Hattori’s techniques by looking at their monitor, or perform an operation following his guidance. Dr. Hattori has openly taught his techniques to Vietnamese physicians through actual operations.

“I have always told young Vietnamese physicians to think of each patient as part of their own family. This prevents them from overtiring themselves while operating, and I can take over in the middle of an operation.”
operation and avoid complications,” says Dr. Hattori. “I have trained about thirty physicians so far, and I am proud to say that some of them have acquired world-class techniques. And they have started teaching young Vietnamese ophthalmologists. I am very happy about this development.”

Help for Dr. Hattori has increased in Japan as well. In 2003, willing volunteers from Kyoto Prefectural University of Medicine, from which Dr. Hattori graduated, established the Asian Association for the Prevention of Blindness, and support Hattori’s work without compensation. Also, since 2006, Vietnamese ophthalmologist trainees have started being accepted at Japanese hospitals, and about ten have trained in Japan so far. Operation equipment has been provided through the official development assistance (ODA) of the Japanese government. Then, in 2006, a bus equipped with operation and inspection rooms for ophthalmologic treatment was built with financial assistance from Nippon Keidanren (the Japan Business Federation). This bus, which is said to be the only one in the world, was donated to the Vietnamese Institute of Ophthalmology, Hanoi, and is used to treat patients in rural areas far from cities. In recent years, an increasing number of ophthalmologists and students have supported Hattori’s work directly as volunteers, visiting Vietnam at their own expense.

“In the future, I want to establish an international medical center that accepts and trains ophthalmologists from Southeast Asian countries,” says Dr. Hattori. “That way, we could save even more people throughout Southeast Asia who are about to lose their vision.”

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**A Vietnamese Patient of Dr. Hattori Speaks**

I have had eye problems since childhood. When I met Dr. Hattori at age eighteen, I had already lost vision in my left eye and was only able to faintly sense light with my right eye. I had been unable to attend school since I turned fourteen, and stayed home every day. I was thinking of committing suicide if the operation wasn’t a success.

My village is far from the hospital, and transportation to the hospital alone costs about five times my father’s annual income. But my father found a way to take me to the hospital when he heard that I could get the operation for free this time.

Dr. Hattori examined my eyes and discovered that I have proliferative vitreoretinopathy, and he operated on my eyes.

Now I can see! I can see my family’s faces. I can go out on my own. The ability to see has given me a light of hope that goes beyond just being able to see the things around me.

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to Dr. Hattori and all the people in Japan who helped with the treatment costs.
Inspiring Revolutions

Tsuyoshi Shimaoka (Tanzania)

There is a Japanese person who is known as a kauuueiji (a revolutionist) by local people in Zanzibar, an island in the Indian Ocean approximately 20 minutes by plane from Dar es Salaam, the political and economic center of Tanzania, in East Africa. His name is Tsuyoshi Shimaoka and he came to Zanzibar in 1987 to call for a revolution.

“Revolution doesn’t only mean removing a government by force,” says Shimaoka, “It can also refer to people finding opportunities to work and achieving economic independence.”

Since Shimaoka was a child, he was brought up by his father to believe that he should leave Japan and become a real revolutionist who would sacrifice his life to help poor people. Shimaoka left Japan when he was nineteen and, as a freelance writer, visited fifty-four countries, some of them in Africa. He returned to Africa when he was twenty-three. In Zanzibar, he was asked to start a fishery by a local fisherman, and so started to build a wooden boat, Kakumeiji I, using his own money. When he started doing this for the locals, without any support from the government or companies, many people were at first suspicious. But people soon started to gather around Shimaoka, who worked for the benefit of the locals without any self-interest. Today, in addition to managing his fishing business through six Kakumeiji boats, he owns trucks, manages a transportation business, and employs approximately 200 Tanzanians.

In 2000, Shimaoka established a trading company in Japan, which imports fair trade Tanzanian instant coffee, called Africafe. Africafe is a brand with a history of more than thirty years and is made of coffee beans that are grown in a region called Bukoba in Tanzania without using pesticides. Shimaoka also sells Tanzanian food such as tea and spices, kanga (colorful African fabric), and miscellaneous prod-
products in department stores, a gallery shop in Osaka, Japan and via the Internet.

“After living in Tanzania for many years, I felt it was necessary to change the situation in which people import processed products that use raw materials from Tanzania, such as coffee beans, cotton and cashew nuts, paying prices that are several times higher than the value of the original exports,” says Shimaoka. “To achieve that, I thought that we needed to produce products in Tanzania and export them as value-added products to earn foreign currency. That is why I set up a trading company.”

In addition to selling these made-in-Tanzania products, Shimaoka started to sell Tingatinga, paints art originating from Tanzania, in Japan. Tingatinga have become popular outside Tanzania for their bright and colorful touch. However, Shimaoka felt that Tingatinga artists were not earning an income commensurate with their popularity. So he began to purchase about a 1,000 paintings from more than thirty artists every year. Since 2008 he has come to Japan every year with the artists to hold exhibitions nationwide and sell their paintings. At the exhibitions, the artists paint in public and show the process of vibrant and colorful art to Japanese visitors. This year, the exhibition was held for the first time in Sendai, Miyagi Prefecture, a region hit by the Great East Japan Earthquake, and part of the earnings was donated to local residents.

“The artists were very pleased to see that Japanese people understood their paintings very well,” says Shimaoka. “In fact, meeting and communicating with Japanese people boosted their motivation.”

Although the business has grown, Shimaoka’s lifestyle has not changed. He still lives in the same old public housing estate he inhabited when he first came to Zanzibar. The ships and trucks that he purchased himself are all registered in the names of Tanzanians.

In addition to creating employment, Shimaoka has made another contribution to Tanzania, in the form of judo. Shimaoka started to practice judo when he was a primary school student, eventually acquiring a third-degree black belt. He began providing instruction in Tanzania in 1988 when he was asked to teach judo to Zanzibar youth. At that time, there were no tatami mats or judo uniforms in Zanzibar, and of course no judo facilities. Undeterred, Shimaoka started to teach using materials locally available. He made judo uniforms from material normally used for the sails of ships, and created tatami mats by stitching hemp sacks for rice and potatoes with strings. A sandy beach and farmland were chosen as venues for practice. Although most students initially did not even understand the difference between karate and judo, under Shimaoka’s energetic instruction, they steadily developed their skills. In 2002, with the support of the Japanese government’s official development assistance, a full-scale judo facility was constructed in Zanzibar.

Shimaoka became coach for the Tanzanian national judo team, and the team has been taking part in international competitions since 2003. In 2011, the national team achieved a major breakthrough.
winning the East Africa Judo Championship 2011. The first students have now started to run their own judo facilities in Zanzibar, and approximately 1,000 students train at seven facilities.

“It is my pleasure to see students, who would never otherwise have had an opportunity to even leave Zanzibar if they had not started judo, gaining broad experience through international competition,” says Shimaoka. “Although the Tanzanian team has to date not been able to participate in the Olympics, I believe that it is now strong enough to aim to qualify for the next Games.”
Angkor Wat, a World Heritage site in Cambodia, attracts a large number of overseas visitors year round. Nearby Siem Reap boasts many hotels and souvenir shops, and the city is prospering as a base for sightseeing. In the suburbs of Siem Reap, there is a workshop called Kru Khmer, a name that in Khmer means a doctor who practices traditional medical treatment. At the workshop, which is surrounded by a luscious green forest, local women are engaged in mincing and drying herbs, among other tasks. There is a space in the workshop where visitors can purchase herbal products processed on site, including soaps, bath additives, and hand cream.

“These products are particularly popular with Japanese women as kawaii [cute] souvenirs that are unique to Cambodia,” says Chihiro Shinoda, owner of Kru Khmer. “I would like visitors to learn about Cambodian traditions through our products.”

When Shinoda was a university student, she traveled in Cambodia and was captivated by local people, who seemed to live happily despite their poverty. She then started living in Cambodia in 2008 and worked for a general shop owned by a Japanese manager. While she thought about starting a business that uses agricultural products from Cambodia at that time, she chanced upon a traditional medical treatment being used by a friend who had just given birth. It was called “J’pong,” a type of steam sauna that is held in a small tent under which herb-filled water is boiled to make steam to warm the body of the bather. It is believed that this helps women regain strength after giving birth. When Shinoda saw J’pong, she hit upon the idea of starting a business using Cambodian herbs.

“I was always thinking about manufacturing that would do Cambodians proud,” says Shinoda. “If herbs were used, it would help increase the incomes of the farmers who grow the herbs.”

Cambodian traditional herbal treatments have a history of more than 1,000 years. There are more than 800 types of herbs and many farmers grow...
them in their gardens. Some herbs are used as ingredients for cooking and some are used for treating bruises and cuts. Many villages have doctors who practice traditional herbal medicine, providing treatments for local people. Shinoda visited these doctors and learned about the types of herbs and how to use them.

In 2009, Shinoda recruited four Cambodian women from local villages and started Kru Khmer. When the shop first opened, it was very difficult to maintain product quality. Rather than blaming her workers, Shinoda tried to patiently listen to her workers so that they could identify methods to solve the problems themselves. Gradually, the workers began to express their own ideas, and the quality of the products started to improve.

Shinoda has also tried to improve the living standards of her workers. For instance, she has encouraged them to save. Because saving is not a common practice in Cambodia, Shinoda has obliged her workers to put aside part of their salaries. Initially, they were not so positive to save money, but when the mother of one of the workers became sick and this worker could use her savings to help pay for medical care, other workers started to save more seriously.

“When one worker got married and was preparing to leave Siem Reap, I was really happy to hear her talk about her dream of buying a sewing machine and starting a business in her new home,” said Shinoda. “I hoped that her experience in our workshop would help her become self-reliant.”

In addition to supporting the lives of her workers through Kru Khmer, Shinoda is also trying to support the farmers as much as possible. For example, she purchases herbs from several contracted farmers on a regular basis. She also places orders with female workers in farming villages to manufacture boxes made of coconut leaves, which are used to store the products.

In addition to managing the workshop, Kru Khmer, Shinoda also runs a directly owned shop in Siem Reap, and offers mail order services through the Internet. A local luxury hotel has also started to use Kru Khmer products as amenity goods.

“We have eight employees at present, and I plan to hire two more workers in the future,” says Shinoda. “I am aiming to increase production, and sell more products both in Cambodia and overseas.”
The world has great numbers of traditional cultures rooted in regional communities. Occasionally they fuse with other cultures and this causes them to grow. This article introduces two Japanese artists who are expressing their "passion without borders," in Spain and Bolivia respectively, cultivating traditional cultures while imparting a unique Japanese sensibility in their daily work.

Realizing Gaudi’s Unfulfilled Wishes  Etsuro Sotoo (Spain)

The Basilica and Expiatory Church of the Holy Family in Barcelona is a building that epitomizes the works of Antoni Gaudí. Construction of this symbol of Barcelona, popularly known as the Sagrada Familia, began in 1882. It is still under construction, with a plan for completion in the 2020s. Etsuro Sotoo is the longest serving staff member among some 200 architects, stonemasons and other experts directly involved in the construction.

Sotoo began working on the Sagrada Familia as a sculptor in 1978, when he was twenty-five. Since then he has continued sculpting stones for the building by contracting each job from the Construction Board of La Sagrada Familia Foundation, sometimes winning contests. After 34 years of continuous work, Sotoo finally became a regularly employed sculptor at the Sagrada Familia in July 2012.

“One of my coworkers said to me, ‘You certainly had a long apprenticeship,’” Sotoo recalls with a smile. “But I always did the jobs assigned to me feeling they were hiring me on a trial basis. I felt that way because as a foreigner I had to produce better work than my Spanish counterparts in order to win contracts.”

Sotoo has produced many sculptures in the Sagrada Familia. Fifteen angel statues that decorate the Nativity Façade are among his most important works there. When they were completed in 2000 after seventeen years of work they were praised as “angels that had been waiting to be carved from the stone.”

The sculptures incorporate a twist only someone from Japan could think of. Six of the fifteen angels are playing musical instruments. The remaining nine are members of a children’s choir. Two of the choir members look to the east, and they have Asian faces.

“It would look strange if all angels have Caucasian faces,” Sotoo points out. “There must be angels from the East, too.”

Sotoo is currently working on three doors for the Nativity Façade. Seven sculptors from Barcelona took part in the competition for choosing the designs of the doors, and Sotoo’s designs emerged as the winners.

The blueprints for the Sagrada Familia
were burned in the Spanish Civil War (1936–1939), and the models for the church were also destroyed. Contemporary architects and sculptors are therefore applying their own creativity to produce the building’s design details based on Gaudí’s ideas. Gaudí left no design instructions for doors of the Nativity Façade.

In the competition for the door designs, local sculptors proposed reliefs of Joseph, Mary and Jesus as decorative designs for the doors. In contrast, Sotoo proposed plants and flowers, such as ivy, reeds, irises and wild roses, and insects that visit them or live in them, such as ladybirds, caterpillars and stag beetles. Sotoo decided on these designs after considering the meaning of the story carved in the Nativity Façade and sculptures of animals and plants positioned in the Nativity Façade, and by actually observing natural inhabitants of the area, such as plants and insects.

“If you only look at Gaudí’s works you just end up imitating him,” Sotoo explains. “Imagining directions that Gaudí would go to is essential for creating something new. Gaudí had the philosophy of learning from and respecting nature. I expressed that philosophy in the doors.”

Sotoo is working to create doors that rise to a height of five meters with a single bronze plate. Under normal conditions it is extremely difficult to produce a plate of such magnitude. Sotoo is aiming to realize the plate by using a technique known as V process casting, developed by a Japanese company, in which a vacuum pump is used to decompress sand and form a mold. He is also considering applying a technique developed in Spain for coloring the doors’ surface.

“The year 2013 will be the 400th anniversary of Japan-Spain exchanges,” Sotoo says. “I’d like to turn these doors into a symbol of friendship between the two countries.”

Fascinated by Folklore

Folklore is a traditional genre of Latin American music. “El Cóndor Pasa,” well known for the rendition by Simon & Garfunkel, was originally a folklore song. A band called Anata Bolivia is very popular in Bolivia, the home of folklore. The leader of the band is a Japanese musician, Hiroyuki Akimoto.

Akimoto came across folklore when he was a university student. He immediately became fascinated by the genre. “At first I was attracted by the sound of the quena (a sort of recorder). It sounds somewhat like the shakuhachi, a Japanese traditional flute. To me it was both nostalgic and new,” Akimoto recalls. After that, Akimoto began to play in bands and gradually became interested in learning about folklore in its home country. In 2000, after graduating from university, he moved to Bolivia at the age of twenty-two.

In La Paz, the capital, Akimoto met and asked famous folklore musician Juan Carlos to be his mentor. Carlos taught his Japanese protegé the basics, such as how to keep time and create sounds. Realizing the importance of the basics, Akimoto memorized 100 folklore classics within a year.
“One day Juan said to me, “It’s good to learn and play other people’s music. But you must remember that music is also about expressing what is inside you.” He told me I didn’t have to pigeonhole myself into one specific form of music,” Akimoto says. “This is when I broke away from existing styles and started exploring one of my own.”

Gradually gaining recognition for his guitar and vocal skills, Akimoto was offered the opportunity to work as a studio musician, where he joined numerous recording sessions and performed with many different groups. In 2005, Akimoto formed Anata Bolivia and became the band’s leader. “Anata” in Anata Bolivia combines “you” in Japanese with the local language Aymara word meaning “festival.” Consisting of seven musicians, Anata Bolivia’s members are all Bolivians except for Akimoto. Band members’ ages range widely, from their twenties to their fifties. Besides vocals and guitar, Akimoto has also taken on songwriter and composer duties.

In 2009, Anata Bolivia was nominated for three Cicombol awards, including Album of the Year, Vocal Song of the Year, and Record of the Year. (Cicombol is the Bolivian version of the Grammy Awards.)

Wanting to convey the beauty of the Japanese language through folklore, Akimoto plays some Japanese songs in a folklore style with folklore instruments. The Japanese pop and folk songs Akimoto sings in his mother tongue have been well received by Bolivian audiences. “Many people from the audience thank me profusely for transcending national borders to perform their music,” Akimoto says.

Along with being a performing musician, Akimoto runs a music store in La Paz and engages in volunteer activities, such as performing folklore for local children. This began when Akimoto visited an elementary school in La Paz as part of the activities of the culture group he belongs to. He was told to teach the children, in a lecture format, about certain serious topics, such as the purpose of life and peace. Just for a change, he began to sing folklore during the lecture. This made the children very excited. Since then, he has visited more than 100 schools, performing folklore and Japanese songs.

“We heard that folklore was becoming less familiar to Bolivian children than it was in the past. Being taught by a foreigner such as a Japanese may help renew their understanding about the value and diversity of folk music,” says Akimoto. “We performed in Japan and many other countries in 2010 and 2011. I want to make Anata Bolivia an international band representing Bolivian folklore.”
Dr. Hisataka Kobayashi, chief scientist of the U.S. National Institutes of Health, developed treatments that kill cancer cells without damaging healthy cells.

“The discoveries taking place in our federally financed labs and universities could lead to new treatments that kill cancer cells but leave healthy cells untouched.”

In his January 2012 State of the Union address, President Barack Obama made this comment about an innovative cancer treatment. A research team led by Dr. Hisataka Kobayashi, chief scientist of the U.S. National Institutes of Health, developed this new treatment method.

“We had no idea that President Obama had mentioned our research activities in his State of the Union address,” says Dr. Kobayashi. “Our associate told me immediately after the speech, which is how I found out about it for the first time. I was extremely happy.”

The method Dr. Kobayashi’s research team developed aims to only eradicate cancer cells, without harming other healthy cells in the body, by irradiating the cancer cells with near-infrared rays. The research results were announced in November 2011.

Methods to treat cancer include radiation and chemotherapy treatments in addition to surgery to remove cancer cells. However, these treatment methods have serious side effects, because healthy cells are harmed along with cancerous cells. That’s why Dr. Kobayashi’s research team uses near-infrared radiation, which doesn’t harm the body.

How is it possible to eradicate cancer using near-infrared rays? In this treatment, chemical substances that emit heat-induced shock waves when irradiated with near-infrared rays are attached to an antibody that only binds to cancer cells, and this antibody is then delivered to cancer cells. It’s like attaching a small piece of dynamite to cancer cells, then triggering the dynamite using a light called a near-infrared ray to blow out a part of the cell membrane and kill the cancer cells. This treatment is possible even when the cancer cells aren’t visible or are scattered over several locations in the body or organ.

In tests on mice, an antibody was injected into ten mice into which cancer cells had been transplanted, and the mice were then irradiated with near-infrared rays eight times, twice every week. The cancer disappeared in eight of the mice, and they survived for over a year without a recurrence.

When these results were announced, the response was huge. The research was featured in major U.S. media outlets, and countless e-mails were sent to Dr. Kobayashi from friends, researchers, business entities, and others from all over the world.

“These research results can be applied to many different kinds of treatments and biotechnologies,” says Dr. Kobayashi. “One example is the iPS cells developed by Professor Shinya Yamanaka of Kyoto University, who was recently awarded the Nobel Prize. This treatment method enables iPS cells to be used even more safely for regenerative medicine.”

Dr. Kobayashi is now working on a plan to start clinical tests of infrared-ray cancer treatment methods within two years.

Making Cancer Cells Glow

For about eight years, from the late 1980s to the early 1990s, Dr. Kobayashi had worked as a radiologist at a hospital in Kyoto. He treated many cancer patients there. At the time, however, there weren’t enough ways to effectively treat cancer, unlike nowadays.

“At the time, we were unable to save the lives of many cancer patients using radiation therapy,” recalls Dr. Kobayashi. “This experience made me feel strongly that I had to do something new to treat cancer. To do this, I knew I needed to clarify what it was necessary to do. That’s how I started researching cancer treatments.”

In 1995, he went to the United States to work as a researcher at the National Institutes of Health, where the most cutting-edge cancer research in the world is conducted.

Another thing Dr. Kobayashi did in 2011, along with developing the near-infrared cancer treatment, was develop a fluorescent probe to make cancer cells glow. This research was conducted in conjunction with Professor Yasuteru Urano of the University of Tokyo. By spraying this reagent onto an area suspected to have cancer, in about a minute just the cancer cells start to glow. If this reagent is used, even the smallest cancer cells—just a few tenths of millimeters in size, which can’t be detected by a PET, MRI, or CT scan—can’t be missed. Clinical trials using this reagent are scheduled to begin within two years.

“I am very aware that I am a researcher and at the same time I am a physician,” says Dr. Kobayashi. “I hope to save as many cancer patients as I can while I am capable of working as a physician, by putting the treatment and examination methods I have developed to practical use.”
Ukiyo-e is a traditional and representative art form of Japan that flourished in the Edo period (1603–1867). Ukiyo-e, in either prints or drawings, depicted subjects such as portraits, landscapes and animals. Famous ukiyo-e artists include Toshusai Sharaku (years of birth and death are unknown) who depicted kabuki actors, Utagawa (Ando) Hiroshige (1797–1858) who created “The Fifty-three Stations of the Tokaido,” and Katsushika Hokusai (1760?–1849) who created “Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji,” a masterpiece that is well known for its depictions of waves and Mt. Fuji.

In the Edo period, ukiyo-e was the art form most familiar with ordinary people. Works depicting kabuki actors were the equivalent to today’s pictures of popular idols. Works showing rural landscapes played the role of today’s travel guidebooks.

Ukiyo-e also significantly influenced overseas artists. This influence on nineteenth-century European painters is well known. Examples include impressionists such as Vincent van Gogh (1853–1890), Paul Gauguin (1848–1903), Claude Monet (1840–1926) and Pierre-Auguste Renoir (1841–1919). These artists were reportedly inspired by the bold compositions and bright hues typical of ukiyo-e.
1: The tool shown in the photo is called a *baren* and is used in ukiyo-e and other prints. What is it used for?

A: Printing  
B: Coloring  
C: Cutting a sheet of printing paper

2: Ukiyo-e first caught the public eye in Europe when they appeared in what?

A: Museums  
B: Newspapers  
C: Packaging

van Gogh’s “Portrait of Père Tanguy” with ukiyo-e featured in the background

See the back page for answers.
The “thermoelectric effect” is the process by which electromotive force is generated by the difference in temperature between the two ends of a metal, semiconductor or other material. It was discovered by accident almost 200 years ago, by the Estonian physicist Thomas Johann Seebeck in 1821. With the exception of specialized uses in the military and space exploration, the thermoelectric effect has never really been used to generate power, because it only generates a minute amount of electricity. With recent advances in technology enabling improved conversion efficiency from heat to electricity however, it is starting to attract more attention as a new type of generation system, one that is not reliant on fossil fuels.

“At present, we reuse one third of the thermal energy produced by the manufacturing industry, at most,” explains Professor Kunihito Koumoto from the Graduate School of Engineering at Nagoya University. “If we could convert all that waste heat into easily accessible electric energy, it would be a major breakthrough in terms of energy and environmental issues.”

In 2007, a thermoelectric material developed by Nagoya University and the Japan Science and Technology Agency (JST) amongst others demonstrated that waste heat generation had the potential to become a commercial reality. The key was to use a common oxide called strontium titanate in place of heavy metals such as bismuth, antimony and lead, which had been used previously in spite of their rarity and high levels of toxicity. By inserting a specially treated 0.4-nanometer ultra-thin strontium titanate sheet between strontium titanate insulators, researchers managed to produce a considerable electromotive force. As well as keeping costs to a minimum, this new thermoelectric material almost doubled conversion efficiency compared to existing...
thermoelectric generators.

Working in partnership with the University of Electronic Science and Technology of China, Professor Koumoto set about developing a hybrid device that would combine such thermoelectric generators with solar cells.

“Others had already carried out research based on the idea of combining solar cells with thermoelectric generators, but none of them had managed to produce solid results. The reason for that lies with commercially available silicon solar cells, which absorb the majority of the sunlight they receive rather than letting it pass through the solar panel. With that in mind, we focused on developing a dye-sensitized solar cell that would only absorb the ultraviolet rays and visible light contained in the sunlight shining down on the panel.”

Dye-sensitized solar panels enable infrared rays to pass through. Consisting of conductive glass, oxide semiconductors and sensitizing dye, dye-sensitized solar cells have a maximum electromotive efficiency of 12.3%, slightly lower than silicon solar cells. On the flipside however, they can be easily produced at a far lower cost.

The hybrid device developed by Professor Koumoto and his colleagues contains a composite material that absorbs infrared rays and generates heat, sandwiched between a dye-sensitized solar cell on top and a thermoelectric generator directly bonded underneath. This is the first time anywhere in the world that this technique has been used.

The hybrid device currently has an electromotive efficiency of around 14%, due to the fact that it uses existing thermoelectric generators. Simulations however show that a new strontium titanate thermoelectric generator could potentially increase electromotive efficiency to 20% or higher, exceeding the efficiency of regular solar cells by 50%. These new cells also differ from silicon solar cells in that they can also be freely shaped and colored. They are flexible enough to be used for a wide range of purposes, from vehicles to buildings.

“Japan leads the world in the field of thermoelectric generator development. Not many people know about it yet, but work is already underway on commercial ventures to harness heat from waste incinerators and hot springs. Thermoelectric generators will hopefully lead to greater advances in power technology in the future, improving the performance of hybrid power generation devices even further,” says Koumoto.

The idea of combining solar cells with thermoelectric generators came from a desire to fully harness energy from the limitless supplies of sunlight that shine down on the earth. This completely new breed of generation system could potentially be the key to creating a solar energy society, an ideal future society free from dependence on fossil fuels and nuclear power.

Takashi Sasaki is a freelance writer.
When did your interest in art begin?

Hina Aoyama: When I was a child I loved drawing manga. In the fifth grade, I created a small manga magazine with my classmates. I stopped drawing when I entered junior high school but took it up again when I was twenty-nine. I wanted to create a picture book for my son and began to make stories in pictures, where animals and boys were the lead characters.

Fantasies with Scissors

Hina Aoyama is a paper cutout artist who has won a number of awards at international competitions in France and Switzerland. Her fantasy-like works depicting shapes such as flowers, butterflies, fairies, and letters, are so elaborate that one may have trouble believing she cut them with only a pair of scissors. Osamu Sawaji of the Japan Journal interviewed her.

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Could you tell us about your first encounter with paper cutouts?

Around 2000, I was living in a town near Geneva, and paper cutouts, which are a traditional art form in Switzerland, were popular among the wives of Japanese men working there. A friend asked me if I wanted to make them and once I started I really got caught up in it. I enjoyed drawing figures and then cutting them out. I loved the sense of achievement when the cutouts were finished. I really couldn’t stop.

When I’m drawing my figures I generally listen to the music of Ryuichi Sakamoto while I sketch the rough draft. It usually takes me around five hours to finish the complete process of drawing figures and cutting them out.

What do people say about your works in Japan and overseas?

They often say that they are extremely feminine, while also being sturdy. I have lived in cultures completely different from that of Japan and I’ve had many different experiences that have made me strong. People overseas often say that my paper cutouts of fairies and animals are completely different from the works of Europeans, and that they have a Japanese quality and look manga-like.

Which work holds particular memories for you from among your many works?

That would be a cutout of text by Voltaire that I created at the request of the town of Ferney-Voltaire, where I’m living now, for my first personal exhibition in 2005. I created this work out of respect for Voltaire, who is closely tied with Ferney-Voltaire, and this is the first work that I sold. The woman who bought it worked for a United Nations agency. She said she had been going through some rough times and my work encouraged her. She was crying when she told me, “I want to look at this every day.” I was moved and since then I’ve wanted to continue to create works for people.

From here forward, what challenges would you like to take on?

I’m thinking about many different things. There are many very talented artists in Japan who haven’t achieved success, and I would like to produce them and help them to make their debuts.

I also have a friend who works for the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), and I’m interested in refugee issues. For example, I am considering helping the livelihoods of female refugees in developing countries by having them produce replicas of works of mine and sell them in Japan.
Encounters with Zen

Nestled in a remote area deep in the mountains of Hyogo Prefecture that receives several meters of snowfall each winter is Antai-ji temple, a training monastery for Zen Buddhism that attracts practitioners from all over the world. Serving as the temple’s ninth-generation abbot is the German monk Muho Nölke. Toshio Matsubara visited the temple to talk with him.

Antai-ji is a Zen training center where practitioners put the Buddhist adage that “practice itself is an expression of enlightenment” to work in their daily lives. Trainees cultivate the temple’s fields and practice complete self-sufficiency, continuing their learning through communal living. While Antai-ji was originally a training monastery for aspiring Buddhist monks, since Nölke became abbot in 2002, it has also opened its doors to the general public and begun accepting those wishing to become practitioners from around the world. Practitioners number more than a thousand, half of whom are foreigners, mainly from Europe.

Born in 1968, Nölke’s first encounter with Zen Buddhism dates back to his first year of high school at age sixteen. Nölke had lost his beloved mother at the age of seven, and had continued to torture himself with the question of “why do people live?” It was at that time that the teacher in charge of a Zen Buddhism club at his high school recommended zazen (seated meditation) to Nölke.

“Until then, I’d repeatedly questioned the path my life should take and never found the answer, but I felt intuitively that this path lay with Zen Buddhism. Up to that point I thought of the human body as nothing more than a tool, but I felt that breathing, the beating of my heart and everything about my body was a part of me. My hope to study more about Zen and Buddhism developed in a perfectly natural way.”

After graduating from high school Nölke went on to pursue Japanese Studies at Berlin Free University. In 1990 he attended Kyoto University as a foreign student and after graduating from university he made another trip to Japan in 1992, which was when he began full-fledged training to become a Zen monk. Including his time as a foreign student, the majority of Nölke’s training took place at Antai-ji, which had been recommended to him by an acquaintance.
There are two phrases which have served as powerful guides while living the life dedicated to training, says Nölke. The first is what he was suddenly told by the abbot when he visited Antai-ji when he was a foreign student: “Antai-ji is what you make of it.” The second is the harsh words delivered to Nölke by a senior monk at the same Antai-ji monastery after he returned to Japan a second time: “No one cares about you!”

The former meant that Antai-ji does not have some fixed and determined presence; it only exists through each person continuing to create and change it. The latter meant that unless you completely cast away the existence of “I” and forget your ego, that you will create neither Antai-ji nor your own life. Nölke recounts that while the two lines were seemingly paradoxical, he realized that they were two sides of the same coin.

“I often get asked, ‘what do you become when you practice zazen a lot?’ and there is a simple answer. You don’t become anything by practicing zazen. Unlike meditation, zazen is simply sitting. You discard everything, worries and desires alike, and hurl yourself entirely into zazen. Continuing to realize ‘now, here, this self’ is the study of Zen.”

For a period of six months from the autumn of 2001, Nölke pitched a tent on the grounds of Osaka Castle and pursued a homeless life while providing a place for the general public to experience zazen. He met his wife at this zazen training center. It was at that moment that the abbot of Antai-ji suddenly died in an accident, and on short notice Nölke was appointed to take over as the ninth abbot of the monastery. This was another turn of fate.

In the time since, Nölke set up a webpage offered in twelve different languages and began accepting practitioners of all nationalities free of charge. The texts composed on the website have gradually attracted attention, and already four books have been written by Nölke in response to requests from publishers.

“Today, the world is undergoing great change. As a recommendation to the coming new society, I hope Antai-ji becomes a model for multiculturalism. We all sweat together, live the Zen lifestyle of self-sufficiency in each other’s company and do our utmost to communicate while accepting cultural differences. I hope that through actual experiences at Antai-ji, we can create the bonds that will serve as the foundation for that new sense of fellowship.”

_Toshio Matsubara is a freelance writer._
The origins, history and even the design of Izumo-taisha grand shrine—one of the most important religious sites in all of Japan—are shrouded in mystery and legend. Close to the northern coast of what is today known as Shimane Prefecture, no written records survive of when this Shinto shrine was first built, while there has been much debate over the design of the earliest structures to grace the site.

However, described as far back as 950 CE as being around 48 meters tall, the shrine is believed to have been conceived as a place where the gods could reside.

In 2000, excavations of the site uncovered the remains of massive tree trunks that had been bound together to form the stilts upon which the structure stood, reinforcing the theory of how a shrine dedicated to the divinity Okuninushi, the “Great Land Master,” once looked.

Today, work continues at the site to determine the history of Izumo-taisha and is detailed at the nearby Shimane Museum of Ancient Izumo.

Ongoing research to determine the true origins of Izumo-taisha grand shrine are documented in dazzling style in the nearby Shimane Museum of Ancient Izumo. Julian Ryall visits the museum.
“Five groups have proposed different designs for how the shrine looked in the past, but the size of the supporting posts indicates it was at least a very large structure,” says Masashi Asanuma, curator of the museum. “We believe it stood on very high pillars and was reached by a staircase that was 109 meters long, but it is hard to know more about the design or even the color that it was painted.”

And while the history of the shrine is a central part of the exhibitions, the museum also recounts the wider history and culture of Shimane.

Visitors to the museum step back into time as we view lifelike models of the people who lived in the villages that dotted the region many hundreds of years ago. Sections are given over to the jasper and agate beads that were shaped into tubes and comma shapes and apparently used for jewelry; others show how Sueki pottery was perfected in hillside kilns and, in later centuries, how silver was mined at the Iwami-Ginzan mine. Experts believe that as much as 38 tons of silver were mined each year at the peak of the output.

Among all the items on display, however, one stands out to this visitor. A whole exhibition hall has been set aside to show off one of the most remarkable discoveries in Japanese archeological history, that of 358 bronze swords that had been buried alongside each other, as well as a number of bronze spear heads and stylized bronze bells, many etched with designs or images of deer, turtles and other animals.

The artifacts, uncovered on a forested hillside in 1984, were the work of people from the Yayoi period in history, some 2,000 years ago, and were all very similar in design.

Each of the blades had been carefully created before being laid out in neat rows and then buried. The experts are divided on why the weapons were left at this spot, but their discovery inevitably raises hopes that more such caches are waiting to be discovered in the hills that surround the museum.

Julian Ryall is the Japan correspondent for the Daily Telegraph and freelances for publications around the world.

The Shimane Museum of Ancient Izumo
Address: 99-4 Kizukihigashi, Taisha-cho, Izumo, Shimane Prefecture 699-0701.
Tel.: +81 853 53 8600 Fax.: +81 853 53 5350 Website: www.izm.ed.jp/english/
Holidays: Closed every third Tuesday, unless the day is a national holiday, when the museum is closed on the following day.
Entrance: 600 yen for adults, 400 yen for university students and 200 yen for pupils. (Note: 50% discount for foreign visitors. Pupils are admitted free of charge until March 31, 2013.)
India-Japan Ties Grow Stronger

What have been some of the landmarks in India-Japan bilateral relations?

Ambassador of India to Japan Ms. Deepa Gopalan Wadhwa: We signed the Treaty of Peace and established diplomatic relations in April 1952, so this is a landmark year in our relationship. Thereafter, we had visits by both prime ministers in 1957, but then not again for more than twenty years. Now, we have annual summits between our prime ministers. In 2000 we established the Global Partnership between India and Japan, which was the beginning of a completely new phase in our relationship, and in 2006 this was broadened into the Global and Strategic Partnership. India is the only country with which Japan has formalized annual summits at the prime ministerial level; and for India, the only two such countries are Japan and Russia. This is a great indication of the closeness in our relationship.

What accounts for this special closeness?

India and Japan have a great cultural connection which goes back 1,400 years or more to Nara and Todai-ji temple. There is a lot of positive sentiment in our bilateral relations because of the cultural connections. The other thing that marks our bilateral relationship is that we carry no historical or ideological baggage. So we have the Buddhist connection and now, in contemporary times, we share a common value system as two democracies of Asia.

Economic relations are becoming increasingly close.

India was one of the first recipients of low-interest grant aid from Japan, and this has been a mainstay of the relationship over the years. In the last decade or so there has also been a very intense investment and trade relationship. In August of 2011 the Japan-India Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) took effect, which will eliminate about 94% of the
You have served as Ambassador to Japan for three months now. Have you identified any particular targets?

My first perceptions are that the relationship is extremely high on good sentiment and aspirations. I want to look at ways to give this potential concrete form, which means getting Japanese companies to go to India or to expand their base there. I also want to make sure that back home in India there is the support of infrastructure that encourages and facilitates the entry of Japanese companies into India. In October we held an energy dialog and looked at ways to get more Japanese companies to take their energy-efficient and alternative energy technologies to India. This meshes with India's new national manufacturing policy to provide a climate for foreign investment into India, both for the domestic market and also for global supplies. The automobile experience has been a happy experience [Maruti Suzuki brought an automobile revolution to India]. Can we replicate this in other areas?

tariffs between Japan and India within ten years. Already, within one year, we have seen growth of more than 20% in bilateral trade in goods and services. Two flagship projects are the Dedicated Freight Corridor (DFC) between Mumbai and Delhi, and the Delhi Mumbai Industrial Corridor (DMIC). These will see the emergence of many new DMIC townships on either side of the corridor and will transform India. Last year Prime Minister Noda committed 4.5 billion dollars [over five years] to these projects.

The Wall Art Festival

The Wall Art Festival (WAF) is an annual international art festival featuring Japanese and Indian artists. Held each February in India since 2010, the festival is jointly hosted by the Japanese NPO Wall Art Project and the Japan Foundation. The festival aims to communicate the power of art to children and villagers and lead to the revitalization of village communities.

From February 16–18, 2013, the 4th WAF will be held in Ganjad Village in the state of Maharashtra, which runs along the Arabian Sea. Ganjad is a village home to the Warli tribe. The Warli have preserved the practice of Warli painting, an ancient wedding custom in which pigments derived from mixing rice in water are used to paint the walls of newlyweds’ future homes with images of a deity. At the coming WAF, local children will participate in a wall-painting activity to create a Warli painting on the wall of an elementary school. Events where children fly kites upon which they have written their dreams and mask-painting workshops will also be held. Three artists each from Japan and India will take part.

A Warli painting in a classroom at a school in Bihar State’s Sujita Village, where the first three Wall Art Festivals were held. The school building was constructed using donations from some fifty Japanese university students. The number of children who want to attend school is increasing.
Koma spinning tops have been spun in Japan since time immemorial. Koma come in many shapes and sizes, and are made of metal or wood, the latter often being colorfully painted. There are tops that are spun with the fingers such as those pictured here, and tops that are spun using a length of string. In the days before video games, tops would be among the most popular toys occupying children over the New Year’s holiday.