HIGHLIGHTING Japan
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MOUNT FUJI
JAPAN’S NEW WORLD CULTURAL HERITAGE SITE
Mount Fuji is the quintessential symbol of Japan. In this issue, we examine the various aspects of Mt. Fuji that have culminated in its recent attainment of UNESCO World Heritage status. These include indigenous belief, Mt. Fuji as a source of artistic inspiration, tourism, and the challenge of environmental protection posed by the expected rise in visitors to Mt. Fuji and its associated sites.

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Prime Minister Shinzo Abe visited the Kingdom of Bahrain, the State of Kuwait, the Republic of Djibouti and the State of Qatar from August 24 to August 29.

The objectives of Prime Minister Abe’s visit to the Middle East were (I) to further strengthen and expand the “comprehensive partnership towards stability and prosperity” between Japan and the Middle Eastern countries, and (II) to encourage Japan Self-Defense Forces personnel engaged in anti-piracy activities in a tough environment and strengthen Japan’s relations with Djibouti.

Based on the strong bonds with these countries, as demonstrated by the 40th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations with Japan and the heartfelt support given to Japan in the wake of the Great East Japan Earthquake in March 2011, Prime Minister Abe confirmed with their leaders plans to build a “comprehensive partnership towards stability and prosperity,” to cooperate in wide-ranging areas of the economic field beyond resources and energy, and to build multilayered relations, including political and security areas as well as cultural and personnel exchanges.

Seeds sown by Prime Minister Abe when he visited the Middle East in 2007 have borne their fruit one after another. He confirmed Japan’s policy to continue to contribute to the region in various fields, including education, infrastructure, medicine and agriculture, using its technology and know-how in coordinated efforts of public and private sectors.

The Middle Eastern leaders expressed strong hopes that the Japanese economy will become rejuvenated by utilizing the vitality of the fast-growing Middle East and that Japan will play an even more active role in the region not in the field of economy but political area as well. They highly valued the JSDF, and Prime Minister Abe affirmed the need for Japan to further contribute to the region’s peace, stability and prosperity.

Following Prime Minister Abe’s visit to the Middle East in May this year and the hosting of the Fifth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD V), Japan took a big step toward strengthening its relations with the Middle East and Africa with this latest visit. The visit marked also as a historic visit for building a new relationship between Japan and the Gulf countries.
G20 ST. PETERSBURG SUMMIT

On September 5, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, who visited the Russian Federation to attend the G20 St. Petersburg Summit, held talks in the morning with Ms. Dilma Vana Rousseff, President of the Federative Republic of Brazil, and Ms. Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner, President of the Argentine Republic.

In the afternoon, Prime Minister Abe held talks with Mr. Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin, President of the Russian Federation, and Mr. Barack Obama, President of the United States, following which the Prime Minister attended the first working meeting of the G20.

TOKYO ELECTED AS THE HOST CITY OF THE OLYMPIC GAMES IN 2020

On September 8, at the 125th International Olympic Committee (IOC) Session held in Buenos Aires in Argentina, Tokyo was elected as the host city of the 32nd Olympic Games and the 16th Paralympic Games.

Prime minister Abe gave a presentation in this session.

“Distinguished members of the IOC, I say that choosing Tokyo 2020 means choosing a new, powerful booster for the Olympic Movement.

Under our new plan, ‘Sport for Tomorrow,’ young Japanese will go out into the world in even larger numbers. They will help build schools, bring in equipment, and create sports education programs. And by the time the Olympic torch reaches Tokyo in 2020, they will bring the joy of sports directly to ten million people in over one hundred countries.

Choose Tokyo today and you choose a nation that is a passionate, proud, and a strong believer in the Olympic Movement. And which strongly desires to work together with the IOC in order to make the world a better place through the power of sport.

We are ready to work with you. Thank you very much.”

Photographs courtesy of the Public Relations Office of the Government of Japan.
Text courtesy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan website.
Mount Fuji

NOW A UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITE

ALENA ECKELMANN
RISING 3776 meters above sea level, Mount Fuji towers majestically over the landscapes of Yamanashi and Shizuoka Prefectures and stands tall as an enduring symbol of Japan. On June 22 this year, it was decided that Mt. Fuji would become the 17th place in Japan to be added to the UNESCO World Heritage list. It became formal on the 26th of the same month. Twenty-five properties, a combination of natural and historic sites located in a 20,702.1 ha area, were given the inscription, “Fujisan, sacred place and source of artistic inspiration.”

Gaining UNESCO World Heritage status for Mt. Fuji has been a long journey. One challenge in attaining this goal was to prove that the mountain and surrounding environment possess “outstanding universal values” that are important to the common legacy of humankind.

Mt. Fuji meets two of UNESCO’s registration criteria for becoming a cultural heritage site: 1) To bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared; 2) To be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance.

Mt. Fuji met these criteria after a UNESCO committee considered the evidence that the mountain and environs represented outstanding universal values on the basis that it is both an object of worship and source of artistic inspiration.

The 25 sites listed as World Heritage Site include the mountain itself, Lake Yamanaka and Lake Kawaguchi, the Oshino Hakkai springs (eight ponds fed by Mt. Fuji subsoil water), the Funatsu and Yoshida lava tree molds, the Shiraito no Taki waterfall and the Mihonomatsubara pine tree grove, as well the Oshi Jutaku Lodging Houses, Hitoana Fuji-ko Iseki and eight Shinto shrines.

Mt. Fuji's selection as a World Heritage Site will surely have a
large impact on those outside of Japan. The mountain has long been conjured as a traditional and distinctly Japanese symbol for the country, but its new inclusion by UNESCO will undoubtedly make it a more familiar landmark throughout the world. Travelers to Mt. Fuji vividly relate how moving the experience is, the beautiful, limpid vistas as you climb, the charming plant life everywhere, and the cold, soothing water that seeps out from the ground. This mountain is so beloved by Japanese that many people overseas long to see it at least once.

The inscription this year is only the beginning, however, of what will develop into a comprehensive system of planning and management for the Mt. Fuji UNESCO site. This will ensure the preservation of Mt. Fuji for the enjoyment and inspiration of citizens and visitors alike for future generations to come.

The subsequent articles will examine the outstanding universal values of Mt. Fuji as an object of worship and source of artistic inspiration, look at the current and future state of conservation, and offer some information with regard to visiting the region.

For the first time in his 66 years, on August 1, 2012, Seiichi Kondo decided to climb to the top of Mount Fuji, a pilgrimage that almost every Japanese wishes to make at least once in their lifetime. Kondo took the Yoshida Trail and like many others, arrived at the top shortly before dawn. From the summit he was able to witness the sun rising in the East, a magical moment with the sky bursting forth with intense orange rays, unveiling valleys of mist below.

Pulling himself away, Kondo had another mission in mind. Hiking around the caldera at the summit, he looked down upon Suruga Bay through the morning clouds. Although not clearly visible, he could locate a small area at the further reaches of the coast that was to become his diplomatic signature – Mihonomatsubara. For Seiichi Kondo was not just another climber, but rather the Commissioner for Cultural Affairs who had been tasked to get the nation’s most famous mountain area registered as a UNESCO World Heritage site.

Kondo’s relationship with Mt. Fuji started when he was a child, spending all of his summer holidays on the beach in the town of Numazu, Shizuoka at the southern base of the volcano. From humble beginnings, he excelled in his schooling and eventually chose to become a diplomat. He was eventually appointed ambassador to UNESCO before finally becoming the head of the Cultural Affairs Agency of Japan in 2010.

The challenges in listing Mt. Fuji with UNESCO were considerable. The committee responsible for the decision must rule in favor that the area is a culturally important asset, since
it must represent “outstanding universal values”. The conditions for the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), an advisory body to UNESCO, is very strict.

As Kondo explains, “The ICOMOS panels look for clear, scientific evidence to prove that a proposed site has cultural value and to our surprise, it was recommended in May that while Mt. Fuji deserves inscription as World Heritage, Mihonomatsubara, a pine tree grove which is 45km away from the mountain, should be excluded. We had to explain that Mihonomatsubara is an integral part of Mt. Fuji. The mountain has been the source of inspiration for many famous art works and literature throughout the ages, such as Hokusai’s ukiyo-e images, and Mihonomatsubara has frequently been depicted as a part of the mountain.”

Luckily, the Japanese government had chosen its World Heritage representative well. In fact, former Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone, president of the “National Congress for the Inscription of Mt. Fuji as World Heritage” is said to have told his close aids that he would not “leave this world” until he saw Mt. Fuji inscribed. Raising his spirits, Kondo brought his prior UNESCO relationship and strength of character to bear in convincing the various opinion leaders within the World Heritage Committee that Mihonomatsubara must be included as a part of World Heritage.

Kondo’s diplomatic skill was put to the test in Phnom Penh in June 2013 when he had to court the World Heritage Committee. He started with the least agreeable representative, taking his time to explain that there is an intangible link between Mt. Fuji and Mihonomatsubara, therefore the latter must be inscribed. He eventually swayed this member not to dissent by using the non-confrontational style that is Kondo’s trademark. The next candidate took half a day to persuade to vote in favor and the remaining committee members eventually fell in line with the consensus view. In the end, the support for the Mt. Fuji listing was unanimous – a home run for the Japan team.

The inscription of Mt. Fuji has strong personal meaning for Kondo. When he first became aware of the Advisory Body’s recommendation to support the listing in early June 2013, he called on his father, Yoshikazu, in hospital to share the good news. Having happily received the news of his son’s success, Yoshikazu passed away the following morning – a bitter-sweet moment for Seiichi Kondo.
Mount Fuji, or Fujisan as it is called in Japanese, is an object of faith for Japanese people and a place that their hearts draw support from, as expressed by the official name that it is registered as a Cultural World Heritage Site under: “Fujisan, sacred place and source of artistic inspiration”.

The culture of faith relating to Mt. Fuji can be generally classified into three types. The first is a faith expressed through actually climbing Mt. Fuji (mountain pilgrimage, or tōhai), the second is a faith expressed through viewing Mt. Fuji from a distance (worship from afar, or yōhai), and the third is a faith expressed through creating pictures or literature featuring Mt. Fuji. What follows is an explanation of two of these types—mountain pilgrimage and worship from afar—provided by Mr. Yukie Takeya, Professor Emeritus of Takushoku University and leading scholar on the subject of Mt. Fuji.
Following a route that is meant for tōhai at Mt. Fuji is itself an act of faith and is said to be a way of performing Fujizenjō (Fuji ascetic training), which is the practice of reaching enlightenment through climb Mt. Fuji. There are many tōhai routes, but only four are registered as part of the Cultural World Heritage Site: the Omiya-Murayama tōhai route, which was established as the first tōhai in the 12th century; the Yoshida tōhai route, which takes pilgrims from the base of the mountain to the peak; the Suyama tōhai route, which begins at the Suyama Sengen shrine at south east face of the mountain; and the Subashiri tōhai route which begins at the Subashiri Sengen shrine at the eastern face of the mountain.

The Ochūdō route that circles around the Mt. Fuji mountainside is a sacred path that traditionally, only those who had climbed to the top of Mt. Fuji three times were permitted to walk. Although today only part of this route can be walked due to a danger of rockslides and falling rocks, it is popular as a trekking course rich with highlights such as forests filled with greenery and the Osawa collapse, an area where erosion of the surface is in progress.
At the crater of the summit, one can find the Fuji eight peaks, which include Ken-ga-mine, the highest point in Japan, as well as Hakusan-dake. The journey around these peaks, "o-hachi meguri", is also famous.

In Japanese folklore, caves among the mountains and coasts are regarded as a metaphor for the womb, and passing through such caves is a rebirth ritual that allows one to obtain a new life. The entirety of Mt. Fuji itself can be thought of as a large womb, and the caves at the base of the mountain have the name o-tainai (inside of the womb). There are eight representative examples of these that are called the Fuji 8 tainai – of those, the Funatsu tainai and Yoshida tainai are registered as part of the World Heritage site. Since these two tainai are located beside the Yoshida tōhai route, people visit them the day before embarking on tōhai and perform rituals such as purifying their bodies in the water in the cave. They are considered sacred ground at which to express faith during the Mt. Fuji pilgrimage.

Although in the past women were not allowed to climb Mt. Fuji, women were allowed to enter the tainai, which made them important places of faith that woman of the time could access directly.

"The significance behind climbing Mt. Fuji is what you learn about yourself" says Mr. Tadokoro, kannushi at Shibuya Hachimangu shrine. "Climbing Mt. Fuji is similar to life. Reaching a goal is an uphill struggle, but there is also the descent after reaching the goal. Having the courage to aim for something and the courage to back out is important. One attraction in climbing Japan’s highest mountain is finding out one’s limits and experiencing with one’s body how strenuous the ascent is.” Tadokoro attempted his second climb at night, first paying homage at Hongu Sengen Shrine. According to Tadokoro, kannushi take it in turns to attend to the shrine at the peak of Mt. Fuji. In times past, the kannushi would place essentials such as food and water in a wooden frame lined with canvas and ascend to the peak. Tadokoro's assistant and fellow priest, Florian Wiltschko, first climbed Fuji when he was 24, considered an unlucky age in Shinto belief. During his ascent, the weather deteriorated, and the wind blew so strongly that without his stick, he would not have been able to stand. Looking back on his unlucky age, Wiltschko considers himself lucky to have descended unscathed.

Even if Mount Fuji is an object of faith, it can only be seen as a far-off mountain when viewed from Edo/Tokyo. Nonetheless, from the middle of the Edo period (1603–1868), many maps of Edo began to feature Mt. Fuji as a major landmark, and an awareness of Mt. Fuji as a symbol of Japan spread among the people of Edo. Many places in Edo began to take on names featuring the word “Fujimi” (view of Fuji), such as Fujimi town, Fujimi hill, Fujimi bridge, etc., and the yōhai of Mt. Fuji became central to the culture of the residents of Edo.
An explosive boom in the faith surrounding Fuji arose, as did a group called Fuji-kō who regarded Mt. Fuji as an object of faith. However, since it was not easy to travel from Edo to Mt. Fuji and since women were forbidden to visit at the time, only young groups of men from among the Fuji-kō group were able to perform tōhai. Thus, in order to allow men and women of all ages to enjoy Fuji tōhai, miniature imitations of Mt. Fuji called Fujizuka (Fuji mounds) were constructed. Although they are not included among the objects that make up the Cultural World Heritage Site, there are many Fujizuka that have been designated as Cultural Properties by the national government of Japan or by local governments. Famous Fujizuka within the precincts of Tokyo include the Shitaya-sakamoto Fuji (within the grounds of the Onoterusaki shrine), the Nagasaki Fuji (beside the main shrine building of the Fuji Sengen shrine) and the Ekoda Fuji (within the grounds of the Ekoda Sengen shrine).

One such Fujizuka is found at Shinagawa Shrine near Shinbanba station in Tokyo. According to the shrine’s kannushi, Mr. Suzuki, the Fujizuka, built between 1869-72, is a relatively late addition, and is said to bestow the same benefit on those who climb it as climbing Mt. Fuji.

The Sengen shrines, which are distributed in all regions of Japan from Hokkaido in the north to Nagasaki in the south, are also important relics of the foundations of the Mt. Fuji faith culture. From the late Nara period to the Heian era, an increase in Mt. Fuji’s volcanic activity led to Mt. Fuji being called the great god of Sengen rather than just a mountain, and the people’s awe and fear of the mountain (god) increased. This great god of Sengen was enshrined by the Sengen shrines, eight of which are registered as part of the Cultural World Heritage Site including the Mt. Fuji Hongu Sengen shrine (located in Fujinomiya, Shizuoka) and the Kitaguchi Hongu Fuji Sengen shrine (located in Fujiyoshida, Yamanashi).

Such aspects demonstrate the depth of the faith surrounding Mt. Fuji, and it is hoped that its registration as a Cultural World Heritage Site will serve as a chance to learn even more about the mountain of faith, Mt. Fuji.
"ALONE IN ITS UNION OF GRACE AND MAJESTY": MOUNT FUJI IN ART AND CULTURE

ROGER D. SMITH

MOUNT Fuji and its environs have inspired poets, painters, artists and travelers for generations. One criterion required for UNESCO inscription is that Mt. Fuji must reflect outstanding universal values as a source of artistic inspiration. Since the earliest portrayal of Mt. Fuji in Japan’s oldest written poetry anthology *Man’yōshū* (Collection of a Thousand Leaves) and oldest story *Taketori Monogatari* (The...
Tale of the Bamboo Cutter), the magnificent form of Mt. Fuji has inspired Japanese and foreigners alike across the ages and reflects upon the universal spirit of these artists and poets.

One of the first depictions of Mt. Fuji can be found in the *Man'yōshū*, an anthology of 4516 waka poems dating back to the 7th and 8th Centuries. “Tago no ura yu/ uchidete mireba/ Mashironi so/ Fuji no takane ni/ Yuki wa furikeru” (Passing through Tago Bay and coming to a clearing, I see snow falling, pure white, on Fuji’s lofty peak). Other waka eulogize Mt. Fuji as a divine peak that has stood “since the parting of heaven and earth.” Around this time, the image of Mt. Fuji began to appear in paintings, including the oldest example of an illustration on a paper screen from *Shōtoku Taishi Eden* (The Illustrated Biography of Prince Shōtoku) dating from the Heian period (794-1185).

When the political center of Japan shifted from Kyoto to Kamakura (Kanagawa Prefecture) in the latter half of the 12th Century, more people began to traverse the road linking the capital cities that ran to the south of Mt. Fuji. Hereafter, large numbers of people, including travelers and artists, began to record their impressions of Mt. Fuji and it consequently acquired an even greater symbolic meaning in the Japanese consciousness.

From the 14th Century onward, Mt. Fuji became a popular motif in painting, literature, crafts,

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*It is a grand scene beyond all description. It was covered in snow. In the shining of the sun, it looked like frozen silver. I even thought that its awe-inspiring, lofty form was yet more inspiring than that of the famous Dhaulagiri in the Himalayas, which I saw in January 1855.*

- Townsend Harris (1804-1878)
  First United States Consul to Japan

Below: Red Fuji, Southern Wind, Clear Morning, Hokusai, c.1830

Left: The Sea off Satta, Hiroshige, c.1858

Right: The Sea Off Miura, Hiroshige, c.1858
I stopped the palanquin to take a look at it, as the mountain stands soaring high and penetrates the blue sky like a white gem hairpin, while the lower part below the middle is shaded under the cover of clouds. It is as beautiful as the white lotus flowering in Gem Pond of Mt Huashan in China.

– Shin Yu-Han (1681-?) –
Visited Japan in 1719 as the Documentation Officer of the 9th Korea Communication Mission

?We got a beautiful view of Fuji, the “Peerless One,” springing from the ground as it seemed almost behind the inn, and lifting its beautiful head into the pale blue sky, above horizontal wreaths and stretches of cloud.

– Ernest Satow (1843-1929) –
British Diplomat

gardens and other artistic fields to the extent that it was becoming a standard image of Japan. Of the many popular representations of Mt. Fuji in popular culture, the three best known are those produced by Hiroshige (1797-1858) in the ukiyo-e prints, Tōkaidō gojūsan-tsugi (Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō Road) and the Fuji sanjurokkei (Thirty-six views of Mt. Fuji), as well as by Hokusai (ca. 1760-1849) in the 1834 publication of the ukiyo-e, Fugaku hyakkei (One-hundred Views of Mt. Fuji). The Tōkaidō Hiroshige Art Museum that houses many original Hiroshige works can be found in Shizuoka Prefecture. As pointed out by its curator, Mr. Katsunori Takahashi, “While Hokusai’s woodblock prints place emphasis on form, Hiroshige’s woodblock prints are faithful to the subject matter. The difference between the two lies in Hiroshige’s depiction of scenery as it is. Hiroshige’s depictions of Mt. Fuji leave a strong impression as landscape images, and many people have had a near life experience of viewing Mt. Fuji from different places through the woodblock prints of Hiroshige.”

The vivid images displayed in these ukiyo-e were later a source of inspiration for many western artists who were part of a new “Japonisme” movement in Europe, whereby Mt. Fuji became well-known abroad as a symbol of Japan. The iconic mountain influenced the works of Impressionists and fin de siècle artists, such as Monet, Van Gogh and Henri Riviere.

As Japan began to accept greater numbers of foreign visitors in the 19th Century, overseas explorers, traders and diplomats began to transcribe their impressions of their outings to this ‘holy’ volcano. Perhaps best expressed by Henry Heusken, interpreter and secretary to US Ambassador Townsend Harris, “Glory forever to the mountain of mountains of the Pacific Sea, which alone raises its venerable brow covered with eternal snow amidst the verdant countryside of Nippon! Jealous of its beauty, it will not suffer a rival which might lessen its splendor. Its crown of snow stands out alone above the highest mountains of Nippon.”
Nowadays, Mt. Fuji is closely associated with the “best in Japan” and “something auspicious.” Thus it is often used as a standard when comparing the magnificence of other mountains (such as referring to Mt. Rainier in the United States as the “Tacoma Fuji”) and the iconography of Mt. Fuji is still largely depicted in everything from high-class artwork to mass-produced goods and tourist trinkets. It is also a favorite choice of mural for Japan’s sentō (public bath houses) and many replicas of Mt. Fuji are incorporated into garden landscapes, much as the Daimyō (lords) had done in the 18th Century.

The scenic grandeur of Mt. Fuji’s nearly perfect, solitary volcanic cone inspires a sense of majesty, introspection and beauty that has been the subject of creative endeavors for centuries. As a volcano, it also evokes fear, respect and awe, which may be one of the reasons that it has become a widely understood symbol. When foreign travelers visit Japan from abroad, Mt. Fuji can be found not only in representations in vases and fans, but in the many portrayals displayed in popular advertisements, art posters, and murals. The UNESCO designation is an attempt to not only draw attention to this fount of inspiration, but to also provide the means to protect the high level of integrity associated with its grandeur.

“Natives and foreigners, artists and holiday-makers, alike fall down in adoration before the wondrous mountain which stands utterly alone in its union of grace and majesty.”
- Basil Hall Chamberlin (1850-1935)
Famous Japanologist

“Fujiyama, ever all-knowing, divine, and entire, rises shrouded in the color of rose like a gigantic stamen in the center of a flower.”
- Georges Bousquet (1845-1937)
French lawyer

“...The beauty of Fuji sticking out proudly into the far reaches of the sky is the most elegant spectacle in all Japan – no, it is, in fact, one of the world’s greatest spectacles. Because the foot of the mountain, free of snow, is largely of a blue that could be mistaken for the sky, people can only look at the cone-shaped mountain, bristled with the white of snow, as it reaches up to the heavens.”
- Patrick Lafcadio Hearn (1850-1904)
Japanologist and Writer
Environmental and Conservation Efforts in the new UNESCO World Heritage Site

ROGER D. SMITH

Mount Fuji is a very popular destination for visitors from home and abroad. On the other hand to reduce the mischief brought by climbers and tourists, a durable conservation plan to protect the environmental integrity of the Mt. Fuji region is required. Suitable control and protection of the mountain is requested.

During the two-month climbing season in the summer, approximately 300,000 people climb the peak. The mountain has many man-made facilities, such as lodges for hikers to stay overnight, rest stops where the weary can take a drink break, restaurants for refreshments and even a bulldozer that is used to maintain the trails, whereas the surrounding areas have many conveniences built for tourism, including golf courses, hotels, ski runs and, of course, hiking trails. It is rather unique that even a mailbox is put up on top of the Mt. Fuji during the months of July and August so that the climber can send the postcard to their friends and families. With the new World Heritage designation, however, even more tourists are anticipated in the future and one of the primary concerns of UNESCO is how to properly balance the conservation efforts of the area with the renewed interest in Mt. Fuji as a visitor destination. Local, prefectural and national governments are now coordinating efforts to conserve historic and cultural sites while also facilitating access to travelers to the region.

To protect the integrity of the mountain itself, the Prefectural governments of Yamanashi and Shizuoka passed the “Fuji Charter” in 1998 which became the origin of the national movement to instate Mt. Fuji as a Japanese symbol which Japanese are proud of. Today, however, the obligation is to protect not only the ecology of the mountain, but the various historical and natural sites in the environs surrounding Mt. Fuji that presently falls under various jurisdictions.

For the conservation of Mt. Fuji and the surrounding area as a world heritage, the “Mt. Fuji comprehensive conservation plan” was established. At the same time “Mt. Fuji cultural heritage council” was constituted for the preservation of the property and the vicinity surely. This involves the cooperation of many government ministries and levels, including the Ministries of the Environment, Cultural Affairs, Defense, Forestry and Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism as well as the Prefectural governments of Shizuoka and Yamanashi and their various city councils. Some residents, asset holders, concerned affiliates are the member of the sectional meetings which regulate the council. An academic committee has also been formed to assist investigations and counsels.

The upper reaches of Mt. Fuji has been designated as a special protection zone of the national park in order to offer the highest degree of natural conservation possible. For example, in the Shizuoka prefecture, the “Mt. Fuji Eco-Rangers” which is organized...
Introducing chefs to the gastronomic delights of Japanese food is more than just good business, it’s a mission of cultural exchange of our culinary traditions...

by local volunteers can offer guidance and lectures relating to hiking manners, the Fuji Charter and the abundant natural wildlife. Representatives of the Shizuoka Prefecture’s Group for Environmental Protection of Mt. Fuji, Bureau of the Environment, state that “Now that Mt. Fuji has been designated as a World Heritage Site, it will become even more imperative to protect and preserve the natural environment. For this reason, expectations are high to start some environmental initiatives in the area.” Moreover, road signs and interpretation boards are being installed in four languages (Japanese, English, Chinese, and Korean) and new thematic hiking courses at the lower reaches of the mountain have been assigned according to the interests of visitors.

Since Mt. Fuji is a volcano, the ground changes to sand and lava detritus beyond the 2500 meter point, but the surrounding foothills are lush in flora and fauna. The water on Mt. Fuji is well known for its clarity, freshness and invigorating coolness, and hikers passing streams and wells can enjoy drinking it as a refreshment. The water not only supports trees and vegetation, but also the many deer, bears, mountain goats and tanuki (raccoon-dog) and also a variety of butterfly and bird species that thrive in the forests and fields as well. Currently, several scientific stations have been established to study wildlife in the area, including an international fieldwork survey of butterflies as a measure of ecosystem health.

Mt. Fuji is a masterpiece of earth orogenic movements. The registration of this sacred mountain as a world cultural heritage means the original Japanese value judgement of nature and culture which finds out spirituality, artistry and religionality in nature itself was recognized internationally. The registration isn’t a goal but a new start to keep this mountain. The effort such as, environment conservation, security of the climbers, accepting visitors, all links to the succession to the mountain surely to the future generation is the essential challenge.

"Mt. Fuji Eco-Rangers"
Journeying to Fuji Country:

TOURISM INFORMATION FOR MOUNT FUJI AND ENVIRONS

ROGER D. SMITH

MANY people are inspired to visit Mt. Fuji each year, but have you ever considered the challenges of getting there or the special rewards involved? Many transportation links and tourist facilities exist for those people wishing to visit the Mt. Fuji area or ascend the peak of Mt. Fuji. The climbing season for Mt. Fuji runs for only two months between July 1st and late August each year. Approximately 300,000 people hike to the top of the mountain via one of four trails (Fujinomiya, Gotemba, Subashiri and Yoshida Routes), and many more travelers visit the Fuji Five Lakes and the surrounding areas each season.

The closest train stations are either Fujinomiya sta., Gotemba sta. or Kawaguchiko sta., you can catch local buses departing to the 5th Station of the mountain from each station. Alternatively, it is also possible to take a tour-bus shuttle that is operated by Fujikyu Shizuoka, Fuji Kyuko and Fujikyu Yamanashi bus lines that run daily during the open season.

For those hikers who wish to try visiting Mt. Fuji without climbing all the way to the peak, thirteen nature trails have been built at the lower reaches of the mountain that traverse forests, hills, streams and fields and have a longer open season than the national park at the upside. Several Prefectural parks can also be found in the vicinity of Mt. Fuji that offer options for camping, swimming, picnicking and cycling.

Guide books are available to provide basic informations related to ascending Mt. Fuji, including the guidelines for manners and safety as well as instructions on adequately preparing for the challenges of the climb. Various volunteer groups and nature studying groups formed the Mt. Fuji Network which copes with environmental conservation synthetically.

The summit stands at 3776m in height and weather can be unpredictable at higher elevations, so altitude sickness and hypothermia are concerns for mountain climbers, as well as adequate water supplies and proper boots and clothing. Visitors must come prepared, since the ascent to the top is a physical and mental challenge.

As for tourism destinations beyond the mountain itself, many cultural and natural wonders draw people to the region. For instance, the Fuji Five Lakes, the Sengen shrines, Shiraito no Taki waterfalls and Mihonomatsubara pine tree grove. You can enjoy boat riding, driving, camping in the Fuji Five Lakes. It’s not only the place for summer resort but you can also experience various kinds
of activities there throughout the year. In the spring Cherry blossoms and Azaleas, in the summer Lavenders and Hydangeas color the beautiful views of the mountain. Many foreigners look forward to see the fireworks displayed above the lake. People are delighted to see the colored leaves in the fall, the mountain covered with white snow in the winter. Not only the nature is the entertainments, numbers of museums and art galleries dotted around the Kawaguchi lake. You can relish the arts Mt. Fuji in the background.

A new recreation initiative - known as Fuji-no-kuni or ‘Fujisan country’ - offers various green tourism options to visitors. Found in over fifty locations around Shizuoka Prefecture, visitors are given an opportunity to try their hand at various arts and crafts, participate in outdoor excursions and experience a traditional Japanese inn or restaurant. Fuji-no-kuni draws upon the connection that Mt. Fuji provides in linking various locations in Shizuoka together through sights, sounds and tastes.

Prefectural delicacies are also a draw for travelers. Yamanashi Prefecture is an abundant fruit growing region that produces peaches and grapes, whereas Shizuoka is famous for its green tea, Mikan oranges and seafood, so visitors are encouraged to try these locally produced goods as well. Most travelers to the Mt. Fuji region are not only struck by the magnificence of the countryside, but also the bountiful foods and varied flavors that are on offer.

Ms. Nicole Bauer a tourist writer from America, climbed Mt. Fuji in August 2012 and had this to say about her impressions: “Watching the sunrise from the top of Mount Fuji, Japan's highest mountain, is an unforgettable experience - incomparable to any other sunrise I have ever seen. The views are magnificent and the light is magic; plus, it’s different every time, depending on general weather conditions, especially the clouds. This is my second time to climb Mount Fuji, and I’m bringing my best camera with me this time!”

THE RABBIT IN THE MOON

SELENA HOY

THE moon can be viewed in many ways. In some countries, people see a man in the moon, whereas in others, they see handprints, or a tree. But in Japan, many people think of a rabbit when looking at the moon. Do you know why? Generations of Japanese children have learnt about the origins of the moon through this traditional folk tale.

Once, long ago, there were three friends: Fox, Monkey, and Rabbit. One day, while out on walk they came across a frail old man in the road. The man was sick and weak, and the friends felt sorry for him. They decided to offer help and went in search of food.

The nimble Monkey found fruit and vegetables in the forest and brought back his bounty. The clever Fox caught some fish in the river and came back proudly. They made a fire to stay warm and prepare the food. Meanwhile, Rabbit was not able to find anything except grass to contribute and came back empty-handed and ashamed. In a desperate effort to help the old man, she threw herself on the fire, offering herself as food.

Right at that moment, the old man transformed into his true self, a god who came down from the heavens to test the friends. He quickly pulled Rabbit from the burning fire and, as a reward for her help, took her to the moon to live with him. You can see her there now where, some people say, she can be seen making mochi (rice cakes).

Today, moon-watching or otsukimi is still a tradition in Japan. People say that the most beautiful view of all is the harvest moon in fall when the moon looks bigger and more reddish than any other time. When people used the old lunar calendar, the moon-watching ceremony was held on the 15th day of the eighth month. Nowadays, we use a different calendar, but we still use the name “jūgoya,” (the night of the 15th) to refer to the moon-viewing...
This year the harvest moon was on September 19th. Most people enjoy moon watching at home. Families make dango "mochi balls" from rice flour and pile them in a pyramid shape on a raised plate. As a special offering to the moon, an altar is prepared with pampas grass (called susuki) and arranged with fall fruits and vegetables, such as persimmons and chestnuts. After that, they look at the lovely full moon while eating dango and maybe singing a song such as:

うさぎうさぎ何見て跳ねる,
うさぎうさぎ何見て跳ねる

十　月　日　月　さん　見　て　跳　ね　る

(Rabbit, oh rabbit, what do you see that makes you hop?)
(I’m looking at the full moon, it makes me hop)

Why not try your own moon viewing ceremony? Make some dango, decorate with fall fruit, and write some poetry to celebrate the beautiful fall full moon.
“K” is short for the kanji kei, meaning 10 quadrillion ($10^{16}$) that serves as the name of fourth most powerful supercomputer in the world.

Developed by RIKEN, a Japanese natural science research institute, in partnership with the electronics firm Fujitsu, the K computer is hosted at the RIKEN Advanced Institute for Computational Science (AICS) on Kobe City’s Port Island. K computer is part of the High Performance Computing Infrastructure (HPCI) promoted by the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT).

Supercomputers have tens of thousands of processors enabling a hitherto unknown speed of calculation to develop algorithms that provide solutions to science’s most difficult problems. In the case of K computer, there are 82,944 2.0 GHz 8-core SPARC64 VIIIfx processors which are contained in 864 cabinets. Each cabinet houses 96 computing nodes and each node consists of a single processor and 16 GB of memory.

“Such a speed is almost like a miracle. It makes simulations that seem impossible come true,” says Dr. Ryutaro Himeno, Director of the Advanced Center for Computing and Communication (ACCC), which manages RIKEN’s computing and communications infrastructure. Dr. Himeno has been involved in a K computer-related life science project, for six years. As a Project Leader, he contributed to the development of more than thirty software applications.

Operational since June 2011, the first public research projects with K computer were launched in September 2012. There are currently 62 projects, including 29 general use projects, 8 young researcher projects and 25 industry-related projects.

One recent other project was the development of advanced novel data software for the brain simulation software NEST. Conducted in collaboration with the German research institute Forschungszentrum Jülich, the Okinawa Institute of Science and Technology (OIST) and the RIKEN Brain Science Institute (BSI), the NEST team successfully simulated a brain network consisting of 1.73 billion nerve cells connected by 10.4 trillion synapses by using the 82,944 processors of the K computer. To complete the simulation of 1 second of neuronal network activity in real time, K computer takes 40 minutes.

International cooperation is an important component of these research initiatives. Four members hail from China, Korea, Germany and the United Kingdom. As Dr. Himeno observes, “Computer coding must have international acceptance in foreign scientific communities to survive. Utilization by foreign users provides proof of international support and trust in our work.”
One of the foreign researchers at RIKEN is Dr. Florence Tama. Originally from France, she is now a Research Unit Leader of the Computational Structural Biology unit. Her research group is trying to determine the dynamics and structure of biological molecules.

Dr. Tama notes that “Computers such as K computer provide the resources that enable us researchers to think ahead and find solutions to global problems. I can see a huge impact on society from the progress that is being made as a result of our research endeavors. RIKEN and Japan are very open to international collaboration and there are several funding mechanisms in place. Such cooperation is critical for sharing ideas within the scientific community.”

Perhaps put most succinctly by Dr. Himeno, “Different native languages exist around the globe, but computers like K computer share one common language. Even if there are borders between countries, there are no borders in science.”
A comparatively young age, Takako Yamada has already started her own company, travelled extensively around the Philippines in her humanitarian work, become a Global Shaper with the World Economic Forum (WEF) in Switzerland and has earned the kudos of her community back in Japan. In short, Ms. Yamada is one of Japan’s up-and-coming young leaders who has demonstrated perseverance and ingenuity in the face of considerable hardship.

During a trip to Cebu City in the Philippines seven years ago, Ms. Takako Yamada was still a youth who was struck by the contrasts with her own hometown in Japan in terms of wealth and opportunity. One important point of commonality, however, was the emphasis that Filipinos placed on the bonds of family, community and trust. It was this point more than any other that drew her to this southern island to start her life anew.

Ms. Yamada hails from Yugawara, Kanagawa Prefecture. She grew up in an environment that had a very supportive family, school and community that encouraged her to pursue her ambitions beyond the normal limits. Her first trip abroad as an exchange school student in Australia left an indelible impression that stoked her passion for travel. When she finally graduated from university, she was keen on living in the Philippines to assist the needy there.

Four years ago, she founded Waku Work in an effort to create work for under-privileged youth of promising talent. She hires individuals seeking future opportunities and involvement in the community, and partners them via the internet as English language teachers with university students in Japan. Presently, Waku Work has links with Meiji Gakuin University, Kaetsu University and Kyoto-Zokei University. Individuals can also sign-up to the program as well.
The university links also offer student exchanges. Japanese undergraduates are given the opportunity to visit the Philippines for a one-week tour to partake in life in Cebu and explore the city and countryside. During this component of the course - called “adventuring” by Waku Work - students take seminars that emphasize interpersonal communication, participate in local projects and develop a personal bond with their local hosts. Ms. Yamada emphasizes, “most participants learn the fundamentals required for effective communication, namely trust, love and community.”

The students are also guided by an older generation, who are dubbed “Mamas and Papas.” The elderly and women play a central role in Philippine society and this is reflected in Waku Work’s exchange program. Mamas and Papas sit in on the seminar meetings to help offer guidance and vision when necessary.

In the future, Ms. Yamada aims to provide greater opportunities to younger generations, especially disadvantaged children. “I hope to help create a world in which our children are given greater opportunities, irrespective of whether they come from cities or the countryside, are from Japan or the Philippines.” Being a WEF Global Shaper also taught her that such collaboration and having aspirations for the future are of great value and can lead to betterment of one’s station in life. “Much like one can find dandelions growing between the cracks of pavement even in the middle of Shibuya’s urban sprawl, the human spirit can survive against even supposedly insurmountable odds. It is this spirit that can then offer life and hope to a new generation.”

“I hope to help create a world in which our children are given greater opportunities, irrespective of whether they come from cities or the countryside, are from Japan or the Philippines.”
When Japanese offer recommendations on what to do and where to visit while in Hiroshima City, most people will respond with, “Hiroshima? Great food! It is a city famous for oysters and okonomiyaki.” Oysters are raised in the nearby Seto Inland Sea, whereas okonomiyaki is a dish that must be tried to fully appreciate.

In downtown Hiroshima, one may find businesspeople rushing from one meeting to the next, or fans heading to see the Hiroshima Carp baseball team at the nearby Mazda Zoom Zoom Stadium.

Taking the tram line to Hatchobori brings the traveler to the famous department store PARCO.

Behind PARCO is a building by the name of “Okonomiyaki Kyowakoku Hiroshima Mura” that contains okonomiyaki outlets grouped together.

We paid a visit to “Jigoya” on the 3rd floor of Okonomiyaki Kyowakoku. Outside the entrance, a large red lantern is hung with the name of the restaurant written in kanji, indicating that this is an okonomiyaki shop. Once inside, the restaurant features a large counter that also serves as a grill where chefs prepare their dishes in front of their customers. Hiroshima Carp memorabilia hangs on the walls, since Hiroshima is also a very large baseball town and their fans like to gather here for evening matches and beers.

Skilled chefs can fry up an okonomiyaki meal in under ten minutes with the customer watching on. Okonomiyaki is not unlike a pancake or burrito that is prepared with an assortment of batter, vegetables, meat, eggs and noodle. It is also
served with mayonnaise and sweet sauces that add flavor to this layered dish. The chef cooks the okonomiyaki on a teppan, or hot plate, that is built into the table where the diners eat. Hiroshima has its own version of okonomiyaki that differs from those made in Tokyo or Osaka, and essentially it consists of more toppings and less batter.

Another restaurant worth visiting is a cozy bistro called Kaki Tei (“oyster conclave”), located in Inarimachi on the banks of the Kyobashi River. Its quiet and intimate terrace is furnished with wooden chairs, flowers and colorful lights that add atmosphere to this riverside location. Established in 2005, Kaki Tei serves the many foreign guests who happened to visit the city while also offering a romantic environment for those who may appreciate its European decor and ambiance.

Of course, the main feature on the menu are oysters that are prepared in many variations, including “Salade de oyster et beef with vino bianco” or “Mini filet beef of matsuzaka steak with oyster sauce vino rosso.”

Both restaurants are good alternatives to the crowded fast-food outlets located in the city center. You can enjoy flavorful Hiroshima dishes in an environment that is far more memorable and stylish. Eating out in Hiroshima can be expensive, but affordable options exist if one knows where to look. Follow your nose and you may be pleasantly surprised. Bon Appétit!
Located 45 minutes outside of Kushiro in Eastern Hokkaido is Tsurui Village, a quaint little farming hamlet surrounded by rolling hills and tranquil rivers. Wedged between the Akan National Park and the Kushiro Shitsugen National Park, Tsurui Village offers one of the purest forms of sustainable living Hokkaido has to offer and happens to be a breeding ground for the majestic Japanese tancho crane. In 2008, Tsurui Village was recognized as one of “The Most Beautiful Villages in Japan,” a title reserved for villages that rely heavily on local and regional sustainable resources, and more importantly, are proactive in protecting them to ensure they continue to grow and prosper.

One example of true sustainable living is the “Heart ‘n’ Tree Cafe”. The cafe, perched on a hillside overlooking Tsurui Village, serves 100% locally sourced produce, most of which is grown in its own gardens. Mrs. Hattori, the owner and chef, carefully prepares each meal and takes the time to explain the origin of each ingredient, giving one a sense of how proud the local people are of their culture, and how important surrounding farmlands are in ensuring its sustainability.

Mr. Masahiro Wada, owner of Hotel Taito, is another passionate Tsurui local who runs early morning tours of the region. Wada is proud of the region’s accomplishments and makes a special effort to give visitors the opportunity to explore and learn about the wetlands surrounding Cape Kirakotan. The tour starts in Tsurui Village, weaving its way through rolling farmland, stopping to view elegant Japanese cranes.
raising their broods, cows grazing on the fertile land and skittish deer patrolling the meadows. The walking tour weaves its way through dense summer foliage as the sound of early morning bird-songs compete with the light tapping of raindrops on the forest canopy. Mr. Wada explains the fragility of the wetland ecosystem and emphasizes the importance of protecting it for future generations to enjoy.

Perhaps the most iconic resident of Tsurui Village is the Japanese tancho crane, one of Japan’s Special Natural Monuments which was thought to be extinct in the early 1900’s. It was not until 1924 that a small group of Japanese cranes were rediscovered in the wetlands and subsequent efforts by local citizens successfully replenished the crane numbers to over 1,000 in the Hokkaido region alone.

One location to view and learn about tancho is at the year-round Tsurumidai feeding ground located just outside the village. At Tsurumidai, cranes can be observed performing their elaborate courtship dance during the winter and raising their brood during the short summer season. Another accessible location to learn about the delicate ecosystem and its wildlife is the Onnenai High Moor Community. The visitor center highlights the importance of the wetland and showcases the different species that inhabit it. A raised boardwalk guides visitors through the ever changing wetland, allowing them to learn from various information boards that highlight the moor’s rich abundance of plant, bird and insect life.

The citizens of Tsurui Village are passionate in their commitment to use sustainable resources and protect the abundant natural beauty of the surrounding area, and it is through such efforts that one of the most beautiful villages in Japan will continue to prosper for generations to come.
Ujikintoki is a cool and refreshing dessert that is usually enjoyed during the summer season in Japan. Ice shavings are topped with a combination of green tea syrup and *kintoki* (sweet *azuki* beans), and typically eaten as a dish with a spoon. It is similar to *kakigori*, which is also a shaved-ice dessert served with a colorful variety of sweeter and fruitier toppings, such as lemon and strawberry sauces. Ujikintoki was first featured in Kyoto probably because of the area’s hot summers, but its popularity has spread throughout Japan and it is better known as a dessert of traditional flavors.