HIGHLIGHTING Japan

40TH YEAR OF ASEAN & JAPAN

FRIENDSHIP AND COOPERATION
Theme for November: 40th Year of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation

2013 marks the 40th year of ASEAN-Japan friendship and cooperation. This issue aims to commemorate and highlight some of the significant steps in the development of the relationship between ASEAN countries and Japan up till the present. Light is also shed on efforts by ASEAN and Japan to further strengthen the partnership in economic, environmental and social areas.

Indonesian, Filipino and Vietnamese are the supporters of Japan’s aging population

New joint energy development programs

What it Means to Welcome Ethnically and Religiously Diverse Visitors

Japanese Abroad

Yuriko Kajiya

47 Prefectures from A to Y

Ishikawa

Iwate

Editor Veena Yoshino (Editor)
Project Manager Jonathan Grogan
Contributors Jonathan Grogan, Veena Yoshino, Selena Hoy, Louis Dai, Luca Majero, Vivian Morelli (Contributors)
Proofreader Aly Lawson (Proofreader)
Designer Payoon Worachananan (Designer, Illustrator)
Administration/Accounting Michiko Anezaki, Jeanette Komatsu (Administration)
Camerman Julio Mora, Masahito Honda

ON THE COVER

40th Year of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation

ON THE COVER

40th Year of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation
From October 28 to October 30, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe visited the Republic of Turkey.

Prime Minister Abe held a summit meeting with Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Prime Minister of Turkey, at the Turkish Prime Minister’s office in Istanbul and attended the ceremony to open the Marmaray Project, a symbol of Turkey-Japan cooperation. He said in his address at the reception of the Joint Venture for this project,

“Tomorrow, on the 90th anniversary of the Proclamation of the Republic of Turkey, service will begin on the Bosphorus Rail Tube Crossing, something which could be called a dream of the Turkish people spanning 150 years. I would like to offer my heartfelt congratulations for this historic accomplishment, achieved through the cooperation of Japan and Turkey.”

“I have also heard that it would be nearly impossible to construct a tunnel at a depth of 60 meters along the base of the Bosphorus Strait. May I again express my respect for the strength of will and passion of all people who have been involved in the project, which made the impossible, possible.

Since 1999, the Japanese Government has provided ODA loans toward this project totaling over approximately 1.5 billion dollars. I am overjoyed to have become a partner for the realization of this grand dream. It is something which makes me proud to be Japanese.

Next year marks the 90th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Japan and Turkey. I want to conclude my remarks by hoping that this Rail Tube Crossing stretching over Bosphorus will truly become a symbol of friendship between Japan and Turkey, making the relationship between our two countries even closer, and that our bilateral relations will develop further.”
A Hopeful Future for Asia

40TH YEAR OF ASEAN-JAPAN FRIENDSHIP AND COOPERATION

VEENA YOSHINO

This year marks the 40th year of the ASEAN-Japan friendship and cooperation and in celebration, a series of events are taking place in Japan. The most recent commemorative event was the ASEAN Festival held on October 5 and 6 in Yamashita Park at Yokohama City sponsored by the Japan ASEAN Center. The festival’s attractions included ASEAN foods and goods, performances by artists of ASEAN countries, culinary demonstrations by ASEAN chefs, and a number of live performances. The actual number of guests was about 100,000,
which far exceeded the expected turnout. Other planned events include seminars to promote Muslim tourism from ASEAN, career development support for ASEAN students in Japan, and the ASEAN Dream Plan Presentation.

With a total of 10 member nations, ASEAN has become one of the most powerful regional alliances in the world. The 1967 founding countries of ASEAN were Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Philippines and Singapore. Brunei was the sixth member to join in 1984, followed by Viet Nam, Laos, Myanmar and Cambodia. The relationship between Japan and ASEAN began at the ASEAN Synthetic Rubber Forum in 1973 where Japan discussed rubber export problems with ASEAN countries (five countries at that time). The discussion was positive and extremely successful. The formal relationship between ASEAN and Japan started when former Prime Minister Takeo Fukuda attended the 1977 ASEAN-Japan summit meeting in Kuala Lumpur. Fukuda set the base of the relationship and created a historic milestone with his new foreign policy toward Southeast Asia. The Fukuda Doctrine as it later became known still places great emphasis on frank conversation. Since the beginning, the relationships between Japan and ASEAN members have been strengthening and as a result, the region has seen a huge growth in economic, social and political spheres.

Japan’s cooperation in technical fields as well as in exchanges of culture and education has also been important. Furthermore, in the past 10 years especially, investment and tourism interchanges have shown great increase in activity. Japanese culture, from pop music, anime and manga to Japanese traditional sports (nihon budo), has been explosively popular in ASEAN countries. For example, if you say the word ‘manga’ outside Japan, it’s an internationally understood lingua franca referring to Japanese manga. Also, translated manga publications are on the increase in Southeast Asia. The relationship between each country’s citizens
is the ASEAN-Japan partnership’s biggest investment. Japan’s major exchange program, JENESYS Programme (Japan-East Asia Network of Exchange for student and youth) invites approximately 6,000 youths each year from overseas including ASEAN countries to foster understanding and friendship. Past examples of JENESYS program projects include the exchange between youth soccer players of Japan and five ASEAN countries in 2009. As this was the Japan-Mekong exchange year, soccer players of the U-15 national teams from Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Viet Nam and Thailand came to Japan to participate in joint practices and friendly matches.

After taking up office in January 2013, Prime Minister Abe visited three Southeast Asian countries, Thailand, Viet Nam and Indonesia for the first time.

After the summit meeting, he announced the five diplomatic principals (see p.9) for ASEAN countries, and stated that as partners of equal basis, Japan and ASEAN will continue to move forward together. He also stated that one of the main aims is “to carry out more active exchanges of young people responsible for the future” and to invite Asian youth, including those from ASEAN countries, to Japan through the ‘JENESYS 2.0 Programme’—implemented at a scale of 30,000 participants. With a view toward revitalization of the Japanese economy, JENESYS 2.0 aims to foster appreciation of Japan in Asian youth, including those from ASEAN countries, as well as stimulate an increase in foreign visitors and promote international understanding of Japanese values and the strength and attractiveness of Japanese brands including Cool Japan. Participants will visit various regions in Japan and will study and gain understanding about regional culture. Furthermore, they will experience the high level of technology of Japanese industry and understand the strengths of ‘made in Japan’ products. They will take this knowledge back to their home countries, which are expected to propel the creation of new industries. Exchange between young generations from ASEAN countries that will support the future, is an undertaking that is directed at a mutually beneficial relationship between Japan and ASEAN.

The Japan-ASEAN relationship, which began 40 years ago at the Synthetic Rubber Forum, is one of the most important relationships that both Japan and ASEAN currently have and is expected to contribute to the development of each country and the prosperity of Asia as a whole.

Mr. Dananjaya Axioma (Director of the Tourism & Exchange Division at the ASEAN-Japan Center) really empathizes with this relationship. “ASEAN has great potential; each of the countries are doing very well, not just economically but socially as well, and we see the growth in people. It is true that Japan has some of the best technology in the world but ASEAN has a huge amount of natural resources. Currently, the ASEAN-Japan relationship, I think, is most important to Japan as well as to ASEAN.”
Prime Minister Abe Visits the ten ASEAN Countries

Only approximately one year in office, Prime Minister Abe has visited all ten member countries of ASEAN to further strengthen ties with them. He will welcome all ASEAN leaders to Tokyo on December during the ASEAN-Japan Commemorative Summit.
Five Principles of Japan's ASEAN Diplomacy

From the perspective of moving forward as an equal partner with ASEAN countries, Prime Minister Abe announced the ‘Five Principles of Japan's ASEAN Diplomacy’ in January 2013. These principles are described below:

1. Firstly, to protect and promote together with ASEAN member states universal values, such as freedom, democracy and basic human rights.

2. Secondly, to ensure in cooperation with ASEAN member states that the free and open seas, which are the most vital common asset, are governed by laws and rules and not by force, and to welcome the United States’ rebalancing to the Asia-Pacific region.

3. Thirdly, to further promote trade and investment, including flows of goods, money, people and services, through various economic partnership networks, for Japan's economic revitalization and prosperity of both Japan and ASEAN member states.

4. Fourthly, to protect and nurture Asia's diverse cultural heritages and traditions.

5. And fifthly, to promote exchanges among the young generations to further foster mutual understanding.
FOR Japan and ASEAN to carve out a new history as equal partners, the important key will be to build a new relationship in anticipation of the changing era. In continuing to grow together, what will be expected of Japan? Dr. Takashi Shiraishi is the president of GRIPS (the National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies) and an expert in Asian politics and international relations, we asked him about some of the issues that Japan should tackle in further strengthening the relationship with ASEAN at the same time as looking back at the path that have been taken so far.

Shiraishi stated that in terms of its importance to Japan,
the Japan-ASEAN relationship comes second to the Japan-US relationship.

In 1977 Prime Minister Takeo Fukuda introduced what is now called the Fukuda Doctrine which has the heart-to-heart conversation at the base of the Japan-ASEAN relationship. The Fukuda Doctrine still holds a very significant place as was seen in January this year when Prime Minister Shinzo Abe released a statement that he will inherit the Fukuda Doctrine in the future diplomacy towards ASEAN.

Shiraishi explains that there were a couple of big changes that took place in the 1990s. One of which occurred after Viet Nam’s withdrawal from Cambodia and the implementation of the Cambodian Peace Settlement. Japan’s very first post-war international peace keeping operation took place then. Second is Japan’s support of the integration of the 6 ASEAN countries as well as of Indochina. Third is the Economic crisis of 1997-1998 where Thailand, Indonesia and Malaysia were severely affected. The Asia Monetary Fund to monitor East Asian economies for currency stability and to provide support in times of economic crisis was informally proposed by the Japanese government in response to the devastation but did not go through. However, what did happen was 10 years was spent in building virtually the same system, now called the Chang Mai Initiative (CMI) to prevent this region from ever getting hit by such a destructive economic crisis.

When we asked how he thinks the Japan-ASEAN relationship will transform in the next 10 or 20 years, he explains that in the past 10 years, Japan lent a hand in establishing a stable ASEAN, as well as a stable East Asia. Due to this, ASEAN’s economy is growing and according to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the economy will be approximately the same as Japan’s by the year 2030 and he states “ASEAN will become very important”. “Therefore there are a few significant discussions that need to take place between Japan and ASEAN. First and foremost, is the discussion of how to develop each individual nation in a time when liberalization of trade is taking place. Second is how to prevent their economies from getting stuck in the middle income group. To aim for a further prosperous and stable Asia, Japan and ASEAN needs to work closely with each other.”

“The most important thing currently is to welcome people who will become globally active from ASEAN as well as other parts of the world. In order to do that, Japan should make every effort in creating an environment in which even people with limited Japanese capability are able to feel comfortable” Shiraishi adds.

“The next step for Japan is to help strengthening the unity of the ASEAN, raise the capacity of each ASEAN nation in terms economic cooperation, human resource development, and the adjustment and upgrading of infrastructure.”

Furthermore, due to visas being easier to obtain or no longer required for visitors from countries such as Thailand, Malaysia, Viet Nam, Philippines and Indonesia there is a visibly large flow of ASEAN population into Japan. In such a time, Shiraishi predicts that “beginning with ASEAN, Japanese companies will start to appoint people from Asia instead of only Japanese as their senior officials. In about 10 years, it could easily be possible that the CEO of a renowned Japanese company would be a non-Japanese. As a result, Japanese companies will start doing very well outside of Japan.”

Shiraishi strongly emphasizes that “To educate people will become one of the most important tasks for Japan in playing a part in the growth of Asia as a whole.”
INDONESIA is a major ASEAN power consisting of more than 18,000 islands. The population is the largest of ASEAN countries, exceeding 230,000,000, and is on the increase. The capital city of Indonesia, Jakarta, is the ASEAN headquarters and its city center, lined with high-rise buildings, is attracting a lot of foreign industries as one of the world’s best mega-cities. Aside from being a good location for factories, Jakarta is gaining attention for its consumer-goods market and is as capital one of the fastest growing countries in Asia. Japanese experience and technology is being used to maximum effect for Jakarta’s growth. Japan and Indonesia are also working on projects to strengthen economic ties.

An outstanding example of a joint venture between Japan and Indonesia is the construction of the first Indonesian underground rail system, which is currently underway in Jakarta. The construction of the underground rail system is the most difficult section of the Jakarta Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) project. The joint venture group lead by Shimizu Corporation (Shimizu-Obayashi-Wijaya Karya-Jaya Konstruksi Consortium) received the order for construction of zone two of the Jakarta MRT Line, and execution is now underway. The project was contracted by the MRT Jakarta Company, owned by the Jakarta Special District with financial support provided by Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).

The purpose of this project is to relieve one of the major issues in the Indonesian capital; traffic jams.

The new MRT not only has a sleek and modern design but also Automatic Train Protection (ATP) systems to protect from accidents in events of human failure; also Platform Screen Doors (PSD) to avoid passenger accidentally falling off the platforms; a state-of-the-art operation control center; automatic gates, ticket vending machines and Automatic Fare Collection (AFC); and mound up entrances to prevent flooding in case of natural disaster. Jakarta is going to receive the best underground railway system that Japanese technology can build.

We talked with Naoki Kita, civil engineer and deputy director of the international division of Shimizu Corporation.

What types of cutting-edge technology are being used in this project?

First we proposed an earth pressure type shield machine, a technology with which Japanese are very well versed, and that is ideal to minimize the effect on the existing surface structures during the tunnel excavation in Jakarta.

Then there is the kind of procedure we are going to use in building the underground stations: we have to dig 20-30m beneath the city because of the structures on the surface. Normally, when digging into the ground, it is necessary to build a wall as a soil retaining system (diaphragm wall), and it is commonplace for this wall to be temporary. However, in this project, this diaphragm wall will also double up as a permanent component of

### MRT Jakarta Project

**Jonathan Grogan**

Jakarta is going to receive the best underground railway system that Japanese technology can build.
the station structure. A merit in the facilitation of this project is the fact that no additional wall will be constructed on top of the diaphragm wall, which means reduced construction time and cost.

Another example of the application of technology is found in the way the subsections of the underground station are constructed. Normally, excavation is conducted to the deepest level and then floors are built working upward. In this project, however, the floors are constructed from the top to the bottom, and each floor will support the soil retaining wall as well, before excavating the next level below. This method will also minimize ground settlement and subsequent adverse effect to the existing surface structures during the station construction in urban areas like Jakarta. Careful construction management and data analysis will be needed to control the project. In this way, cutting-edge technology provided by Japan also offers high value in terms of cost and safety.

What kind of cooperative organization do you have in place in regard to local people employed on the project?

A condition of the project is that we undertake construction work using local companies. For these companies, this is their first experience of subway construction in Indonesia. Therefore, one of our tasks is to transfer the technology needed to build the underground railway line to them. This project is implemented as a joint venture. Independence of the local companies is the ultimate objective. Thus, we consider all of the companies involved in this joint venture as one big family. An education program aimed at local employees has been put in place with particular emphasis on safety education. With the aim of zero accidents, work processes and procedures have been established that local construction workers and Japanese staff alike are following with careful attention. Furthermore, there are some difficulties of language in communicating with local employees, therefore interpreters have also been brought in to help. There is of course some complexity involved in forwarding the project with Japanese industry contracting local companies. However, in the future, local construction companies will acquire the capability to manage such projects by themselves.

What do you find satisfying about your job as a civil engineer?

The current subway construction project is one such example, but I think the role of civil engineers is to facilitate people’s lives by providing necessary infrastructures. I feel glad that I chose to be a civil engineer when I achieve this goal. For example, in a remote mountainous area in Laos, that had never seen electricity, we had a project to supply this to the local people under Japanese Official Development Assistance (ODA), and I felt great pleasure and happiness when I saw the local children’s happy faces when we completed the project.

Projects such as the Jakarta City MRT line, that strengthen economic ties between Japan and Indonesia, also link with improvement of Indonesia’s infrastructure and technology. That is to say, expansion of Japanese business overseas is not only for the benefit of Japan but also those countries that choose to form a partnership with Japan, in pursuit of the growth of a prosperous Asia.
Ever since the start of the dialogue of exchange between Japan and the 10 Southeast Asian countries that make up ASEAN, the two entities have been strengthening their relationship for the peace and prosperity of Asia. Japan and ASEAN countries are also business partners; especially in the past five years. In fields such as medical facilities and care centers in Japan, ASEAN’s bright population is helping to support.

Based on the economic partnership agreement, the intake of foreign nurses and caregivers began with the purpose for them to work and research at nursing homes and medical facilities while also obtaining the national nursing qualification or the national caregiving qualification in order to become certified and continue their work in Japan.

Currently, Japan is taking in nurses and caregivers from Indonesia, the Philippines and Viet Nam. Indonesians were the first to arrive in Japan out of the three nations in August 2008 with 104 nurses and 104 caregivers. Actual work for this group started in February of the following year. Intake from the Philippines started in 2009, and the initial numbers were 93 nurses and 190 caregivers. Vietnamese candidates are due to arrive next year.

Training and Language Program

When the intake first started in 2008, a Japanese language education program specifically for foreign employees did not exist. However, there were many requests for the provision of language courses from medical facilities and nursing homes. Thus the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare launched a learning support program. This involves providing grants for Japanese language courses and other necessary training programs. Moreover, a group training program that will take place four times a year is in the works. This would mean that candidates will be able to receive Japanese lectures from experts of the national examinations. As for caregivers, with kanji learning and national examination study as a focus, they are able to take practice tests and group training. These programs began in 2010.

A representative of the intake coordination agency JICWELS (Japan International Corporation of Welfare Services) states that “Indonesian and Filipinos are extremely kindhearted toward their patients, and they have a lot of respect for the elderly. Where Japanese tend to forget about certain gestures, Indonesians and Filipinos do not fail in doing so. For example, a seemingly small action such as being on eye level with their patients when speaking to them. At the facility, when Japanese staff

Indonesian, Filipino and Vietnamese Are the Supporters of Japan’s Aging Population

Veena Yoshino

Indonesian and Filipino trainees attend a lecture

Yamaguchi rehabilitation staff picking apples
One youth international exchange project among those conducted by the Cabinet Office is ‘Ship for Southeast Asian Youth.’ Exchange between Japanese youth and that of Southeast Asian countries is furthered on board the ship by this multinational project, where by living together, participants are involved in many types of exchange activities.

The ‘Ship for Southeast Asian Youth’ is founded on a joint declaration by Japan and all ASEAN countries. Beginning in 1974, the project will welcome its 40th time round this year. In 2013, approximately 40 youths from Japan, and 280 youths from 10 ASEAN countries, will take part in exchange activities in Japan for 10 days, followed by a visit to four ASEAN countries over a period of 41 days. On board the ship, the standard language is English. Although discussion regarding understanding foreign cultures, the environment and education form the main program, participants also give presentations on the situation of their own countries, and participate in cultural exchange and sporting activities. In the countries visited, participants pay a courtesy visit to heads of state and are involved in exchange with the youth of that country, home stays and visits to all types of institutions.

After leaving the ship, youths who participated in the project join post-project organizations in each country, where they make use of the experience gained to give back to society through regional communities as well as occupation. They also contribute to the promotion of international understanding and cooperation. They also make use of the valuable experience they gained while on the ‘Ship for Southeast Asian Youth’ project. Furthermore, in Japan, lively post-project activities are available. Japanese participants join the International Youth Exchange Organization (IYEO), where they are able to exchange information with former participants and take part in network building.
The region occupied by ASEAN countries is one of the most susceptible to natural disasters such as typhoons and earthquakes, a characteristic that is shared with neighboring Japan. Disaster preparedness strategies are a pressing issue and high on the agenda for ASEAN countries. The Japanese government is investing a lot of effort in its contribution to disaster preparedness strategies in ASEAN countries. Disaster strategy is an important field where Japanese know-how can be used to the full.

Japan International Cooperation Center (JICE) is a foundation commissioned by the administrative agencies of Japan, international organizations and foreign governments, to carry out international cooperation and exchange projects. In particular, JICE focuses on human resources development, holding seminars, managing exchange student initiatives, translation and interpreting services, international training programs, and providing support for development education and technical development projects. Among international cooperation and exchange projects implemented by JICE, there are many technical training and exchange programs that focus on natural disasters such as flooding, earthquakes, tsunami, and disaster prevention and reduction.

We talked with Kazuo Nagayama, director of the Tohoku branch of JICE.

Mr. Nagayama entered JICE immediately after graduating from Toyo University in 1992, looking for a job connected with international cooperation. Possessing a strong desire to create a world of peace and equality, Nagayama has mainly been connected with international cooperation. Of such exchange projects, Nagayama has focused on implementation of those directed at young people from ASEAN countries. Through various exchange programs contained in these exchange projects, young people from

JONATHAN GROGAN

Participants from Laos clearing snow in Tohoku
ASEAN countries and Japan alike have been able to further mutual understanding and friendship.

With recovery efforts still ongoing in Tohoku in the wake of the Great East Japan Earthquake Disaster of March 2011, Nagayama is active in communicating the effort being invested into recovery and the reality of the disaster area to young people of the world.

“We want people to see the reality of the disaster area with their own eyes and make their own decision as to whether it is safe or not. Following the disaster, people from overseas are prone to think that it’s all over for Japan. But actually, that’s really not the case. We show participants photographs of the disaster area; for example, Minami Sanriku Town and of people working on recovery. Participants are encouraged to get first-hand experience of local industries such as fishing and to talk with local people working in farming and fisheries. People in the disaster area want to show that they are in good spirits and feel it is their mission to communicate the harshness of the disaster to others. Many young people found that the reality of the disaster area was very different from what they had seen on television. These returnees went back to their local schools and are talking about what they have seen in Japan.”

Since 2012, 8,300 participants from 41 countries, including ASEAN countries, eight countries from the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), East Timor, China, Korea, Taiwan, Mongolia, the US, Canada, and 14 Pacific Island States, visited the areas affected by the Great East Japan Earthquake Disaster.

Recovery work was helped greatly by enthusiastic participants. They not only learned the many lessons gleaned in disaster prevention but were also able to study about the reality of the damage. Participants feel extremely happy about their experience and this can be seen from the fact that 99% of them said that they gained a deeper understanding about the area affected by the disaster and would like to visit again.
THE markets of ASEAN countries have experienced rapid growth in the past 20-30 years and have achieved dramatic growth as an independent economic zone. However, many countries not only do not have the capital to pay for modernization projects but also do not possess the cultural and technical know-how to continue on with these projects once started. For this reason, ASEAN countries have high expectations of assistance from Japan. In this article, we will introduce Marubeni Corp., a company that even among many Japanese industrial enterprises, has been developing electricity projects alongside many ASEAN countries from an early stage in the electricity industry, over a period of many years, in support of regional economies.

One example of this is the union of Myanmar. As of this year, Marubeni Corp. has been operating in Myanmar for 71 years. Due to a long history in the country, the company has worked with many people and is very familiar with the social and political situation. Marubeni Corp. was recently awarded a gas turbine overhaul for the Ywama Combined Cycle Power Plant, built by the company in 2005.

Myanmar lacks infrastructure with regards to power production, therefore Marubeni Corp. thinks that there is a necessity to increase domestic electrical supply projects in the country.
Furthermore, because there is limited capital for ventures such as the Ywama plant, the company provided project management and EPC (engineering, procurement and construction) for this scheme in partnership with a Japanese government organization, New Energy & Industrial Technology Development Organization (NEDO).

A representative from Marubeni Corp. power systems talked with us about issues concerning the Ywama combined cycle power plant overhaul project.

Gas is not only found in onshore oil and gas fields but also in the seabed. Originally, onshore gas was used as the fuel supply for the plant but as this started to run out, the gas supply was diverted to offshore gas extracted from the seabed. The chemical structure of onshore and offshore gas is different such that the combustion ratio and efficiency differ (this is similar to using different grades of gasoline in an engine). It was not possible to analyze the different chemical structure of onshore and offshore gas and adjust the gas turbine of the power plant. This resulted in a 20% decrease of electric output from the plant and degradation of the gas operated turbines.

Marubeni Corp., in cooperation with Hitachi (one of Japan’s major electronics manufacturer), stepped in to handle the repairs. In order to facilitate the completion of the project within the deadline, and make electrical power production in the country’s dry season possible (hydroelectric power cannot meet the demand in this season), both companies provided their technologies for various activities in many different instances.

A representative told us that the people of Myanmar are very grateful for the help they received from Japan.

Another example of successful cooperation with the locals is the San Roque Multi Dam BOT Project in the Philippines. Toshiba turbines are used in the plant (Toshiba is a world leader in turbines) and Marubeni Corp.’s partner here is Kansai Electric Power Co. (Kansai Denryoku). Both companies cooperate together on this project, and a Japanese company manages maintenance and operation of the plant. Japanese engineers are present on-site and are responsible for training the other Filipino engineers and maintaining the day-to-day plant operation. San Roque Multi Dam BOT Project has been constructed on the basis of three main items: 1. power generation, 2. flood prevention, 3. water for irrigation. The motivation behind construction of this plant is not power generation alone but prevention of flooding and stable provision of water to local farmers.

Projects such as the Ywama Combined Cycle Power Plant and San Roque Multi Dam BOT Project are doing much to meet power demands in Myanmar and the Philippines. A stable power supply will contribute to the economic development of both countries, and in the short term, is helping to improve standards of living. A bright energy future lies ahead for ASEAN.
WHAT IT MEANS TO WELCOME ETHNICALLY AND RELIGIously DIVERSE VISITORS

VEENA YOSHINO

Following the decision to make Tokyo the venue for the 2020 Olympics and Paralympics, an increase in foreign visitors to Japan is expected, including athletes from throughout the world, competition-related personnel, as well as the welcoming of travelers and provision of hospitality through inbound promotion. Among such visitors to Japan, those from Southeast Asian countries have been increasing in recent years. Comparing Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO) statistics from 2012 (January to August) and 2013 (January to August), there has been a 50% increase in Indonesian tourists, a 59% increase in Thai tourists, a 52% increase in Vietnamese tourists, followed also by a significant increase in Singaporean, Filipino and Malaysian tourists. Some of the reasons associated with the rise in visitors from these countries are an increase in LLC (low-cost carrier) flights, favorable exchange rates due to a weak Yen, greater ease in obtaining visas (or else, visas are no longer needed for some countries) and a background of astounding economic growth of ASEAN countries in recent years.

To meet the needs of the rapidly increasing number of visitors from Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand in particular, the Japan Tourism Agency is taking multiple steps to create an environment where travelers, regardless of race or religion, are able to enjoy their stay. Such steps can be seen from Muslim-friendly hotels that have slowly started to appear and that take into consideration food, prayer...
and traditions of daily life. One example is the Sakura Hotel & Hatagaya in Tokyo, where a prayer room has been newly installed for Muslim guests. Another example is the Dotonbori Hotel in Osaka, where halal foods are available even at breakfast buffets, and where prayer mats and kiblat can be rented for free by all guests. Just this year, English menus were made for all restaurants at the Kansai International Airport, which include easy-to-see logos indicating that certain dishes are pork free or alcohol free. Some of these restaurants have been given official certificates by the Malaysia Halal Consultation & Training Agency.

According to both Mr. Yakumaru (Japan Tourism Agency) and Mr. Okada (KIX terminal sales department), Muslim travelers are expressing their gratitude toward Japan’s efforts in creating a Muslim-friendly environment while also providing ideas and advice.

In response to the advice, Kansai International Airport released plans for 4 new developments to be completed by March 2014. First is the creation of new prayer rooms in the North and South Wings of the International Departure Lounge, which will be partitioned to create a separate space for each gender. Second is the import of a halal meal service for Muslim travelers who prefer to eat certified halal meals. These meals will have been prepared in a halal kitchen that also prepares in-flight halal meals for international flights. They also plan to provide a selection of Japanese food such as halal sushi. Third is the expansion of halal certified restaurants in the airport. Currently, Za-U-Don and Oraga are the only two with certification. Lastly, a pork and alcohol free corner at gift shops has just been created.

On the other hand, the Japan Tourism Agency and JNTO have produced a pamphlet entitled “Japan Travel Guide for Muslim Visitors,” which contains information on Muslim-friendly restaurants and the location of prayer rooms, hotels and mosques. These are distributed to travel agencies around Malaysia and Indonesia and can be also found on the JNTO Singapore web page (http://www.jnto.org.sg/for_muslim_visitors.html).

“We also want Muslim visitors to feel comfortable and be able to eat, pray and sleep at ease. We hope to increase halal-certified Japanese restaurants, because we want guests to be able to try Japanese food without hesitation as well as increase the option of food gifts that visitors can purchase before leaving Japan,” states Mr. Okada.
Do you know anyone turning three, five, or seven this year? In Japan, those are special ages, and there is a day to celebrate kids reaching this milestone in their lives. This is called the 7-5-3, or shichi-go-san, festival for boys and girls who turn three, boys who turn five, and girls who turn seven. The festival is normally held before or after November 15, a date that is considered to be fortuitous.

Since in times past it was difficult to bring young children up safely, they were considered to be somewhat otherworldly, halfway between gods and humans. At the age of three, a child was no longer considered a baby, and he or she graduated from infancy to childhood.
seven, it was thought that a child was first accepted as a member of society. People prayed to the gods and the ancestors to thank them for watching over the children and helping them to grow safely. Even after this, they also asked for continued good health and to keep bad luck away.

Nowadays, in the weeks leading up to 7-5-3, kids dress up in fancy costumes and take photographs to mark the occasion. Some people get professional pictures taken at photography studios. For many, this is their first time to wear formal clothing. Five-year-old boys often wear *hakama*, a kind of kimono, and girls age seven wear *obi*, a wide cloth belt, for the first time, instead of a knotted cord to fasten their kimono. Sometimes, the clothing is rented, sometimes bought, and sometimes passed down from older family members. Everyone looks fantastic!

The dressed up children and their families visit a shrine to receive a special blessing. A priest prays for their good health, and the child may also receive some good luck charms like *omamori, ema* and *chitoseame*. Everyone is thankful for a healthy, happy child.

*Omamori* means “protection charm” and is usually a small piece of wood painted with the name of the shrine, blessed by a priest, and placed in a tiny embroidered cloth bag. *Ema* is a wooden plaque where you can write wishes and leave them at the shrine for the gods to consider.

*Chitoseame*, or thousand-year candy, is a treat made especially for 7-5-3 kids. This long stick candy is colored lucky red and white and comes in a bright colorful package decorated with symbols of luck and long life such as bamboo, pine trees, turtles and cranes.

What a nice goody bag! So if you are in Japan in November and see kids dressed up in splendid costumes — with beautiful hair ornaments and old-fashioned *zori* (thonged sandals), carrying colorful envelopes decorated with cranes and turtles — you will know that they have turned 3, 5, or 7 this year and are celebrating their good fortune at having grown up safely.
THE natural disaster that occurred in Japan on the March 11, 2011 resulted in an unparalleled level of damage. In a single minute, the trench-axis of Japan's continental shelf had slipped about 50 meters, setting off 30 meter high tsunami waves that combined with the series of other disasters would claim the lives of more than 15,000 people in northern Honshu.

Adding to the exceptional nature of 3/11 was the global scientific community’s misplaced assurance that a disaster of this scale would never happen in Japan. Protecting people’s precious lives and property is an important issue in Japan, where earthquakes occur frequently. If sufficient knowledge can be gained about the mechanisms behind earthquakes, it’s expected that the damage resulting from earthquakes can be reduced. For this reason, within 13 months of the earthquake occurring, members of the Integrated Ocean Drilling Project, a consortium of 26 countries, were drilling 850 meters into the seabed at the site of the epicenter of the Tohoku disaster area, 7 km below sea level. Responsible for the deep-sea drill and extraction of core samples was JAMSTEC, the Japan Agency for Marine-Earth Science and Technology.

“Nobody had done rapid-response drilling in the ocean, nobody had drilled anything substantial under 7 km of water, nobody had placed an observatory in a fault that deep, and nobody had retrieved a string of instruments from that deep,” said Professor Emily Brodsky, from UC Santa Cruz, who helped organize the drill.

The scientific drilling vessel used was the Chikyu, constructed in 2005 to the tune of 600 million US dollars. Chikyu possess the most powerful drilling capability in the world (7.000m under sea bed), up till now the digging of mantle and major seismogenic zone had not been attained but, now that has become possible to do. Chikyu has uncovered structures of the occurrence of some major earthquakes, the origin of its existence and is aiming to attain results in global scale environmental change and opening up new sea floor resource analysis. JAMSTEC is now preparing the Chikyu for the first ever deep-sea drill into the seismogenic zone, (the area in the Earth’s crust responsible for most high-magnitude earthquakes). The designated site is the Nankai Trough, which has the shallowest access to the seismogenic zone at approximately 10 km below sea level. The trough, which is off the Kii Peninsula, is also expected to be host to a “monster earthquake” sometime in the near future.

“It’s exciting, nervous but exciting,” said Dr. Shinichi Kuramoto, Deputy Director of the JAMSTEC Center for Deep Earth Exploration. “Going that far down means we can measure the strength of the lock (of the two plates). We also plan to install a sensor into a bore-hole, so we can have real-time monitoring of the
change in strain in the plates. This real-time data will help us to mitigate potential disasters as much as we can.”

The Chikyu is able to perform this deep-sea drilling because of JAMSTEC’s adoption of an industrial development called riser pipes. These are iron pipes with an internal diameter of 50 cm that are connected to each other with the assistance of a remotely operated robot (ROV), until it reaches the surface of the seabed. The drilling pipe is then put into the riser pipes and mud fluid is circulated from the vessel to the sea floor through the gap between the two pipes to maintain balance and prevent disintegration of the sea floor.

The seismogenic zone drill will add to a celebrated list of world-firsts for the Chikyu. In 2012, Japan Oil Gas and Metals National Corp (JOGMEC) used the vessel in the world’s first ever successful extraction and production of methane from deposits found in ice below the seabed.

Methane has been one of the world’s most common fossil fuels, and recent discoveries of large deposits of ‘methane clathrate’ in Japan and India’s seawaters have led to the anticipation that the age of inexpensive gas will be extended.

Extracted from the seabed as frozen methane particles in clusters of ice, the fuel’s separation has proven elusive until the trial extraction under the Chikyu’s helm. Its huge success has led to Japan teaming up with India in another trial to remove and separate the methane in a manner viable to their commercial interests.

“People expect scientists to be able to predict earthquakes, but it’s still very far from our current knowledge. We have to take one small step at a time. Drilling into the seismogenic zone will give us direct measurements. Then, anything is possible,” said Dr. Kuramoto.

Japan is now at the forefront of earthquake research. While wave analysis using seismometers has formed the foundation of observation to date, Chikyu has been able to open up a new vista in the analysis of earthquakes from a material science point of view. Japan is once again taking the lead in this new and exciting field.
CLASSICAL ballerinas look like fleeting things, made of air, moving like butterflies, petite, delicate women that express with their body, tales without words. The reality of their story is often quite different. They are petite, that is true, but they are also made of dedication and steel.

Yuriko Kajiya left Japan at the tender age of 10. While other Japanese children were in elementary school, still fresh and not thinking as to what life and the world may have in store for them, her family sat around the living room table, had a long discussion, and decided that she would try for China's National School in Shanghai. Eight years later, she would become part of one of the five major ballet troupes in the world, the American Ballet Theatre (ABT) studio company, (this is the same company in New York where, among others, Agnes De Mille and Mikhail Baryshnikov worked). Five years after that, in 2007 she became the only Japanese soloist in ABT.

The seeds of a dancer’s tenacity are clear when we think that, just as a 10 year-old kid, she began a new life in a dormitory, with only Chinese children, no family members to keep her company, and not knowing a word of Chinese language (she managed to learn it in three months!).
China’s National School’s teachers do not feel any obligation toward foreigners who attend the courses; the families may pay for the kids (foreigners only; Chinese are admitted with a scholarship), so she felt that the school placed higher priority on students of Chinese nationality. It is because of these reasons that Yuriko was left alone, often addressed as “the worst student in the class”. Yet a month after the beginning of the courses, when her mother asked her if she wanted to come back home, she said “no”. She felt that it was necessary to complete this thing she had started, not to give up. In her own words: “I was 10. I was young and naïve. Things don’t look particularly scary or difficult at that age.”

Yet with the language barrier and differences in culture, she felt like she was being treated like an outsider and felt very uneasy at times, even as far as feeling unwanted. So she worked hard to become a good dancer, harder than her peers. As the inflexible physical conditioning of a ballerina led to variations (in classical dance, variations are the creative bits, the more artistic aspects of a performance), Yuriko found out what she truly likes to do in life. This led to a Best Performance Award at the Tao Li Bei National Ballet Competition (1997), a finalist place at the Third International Ballet Competition in Nagoya (1999), and the prestigious Prix de Lausanne (2000), which brought her to the National Ballet in Toronto.

She gets recognized on the streets, occasionally, but remains honored by these encounters and happy of her own achievements. After all, she says: “I am not a rock star!”

Laughing, she also adds that she is not good with languages, (she “only” speaks Japanese, English, Chinese and the Shanghai dialect), and that it is still funny when she goes to the gym in New York, her small figure lifting weights beside big, muscular, American macho men.

During her active career in America, she learned what it is to be Japanese, and she became proud of her home country. While also being proud of her Japanese nationality, she is also very conscious of her upbringing in China. Her talent and work ethic tells us that there is an even brighter future waiting!
DON’T let its quaintness fool you. Wedged on the Noto peninsula, the seaside town of Wajima has some of Japan’s most charming cultural treasures, which you can sample in the form of food, art and the gorgeous landscape.

Asaichi morning market: Wake up to the sounds of blaring voices coming from this centuries-old morning market. Asaichi is where sun-tanned, head towel-clad women congregate early in the morning to sell products of the sea, homegrown vegetables, handmade crafts and the local nihonshu (Japanese rice wine). The generous vendors will let you try samples of dried fish, shrimp, crab, sea urchin paste, scallops and squid mixed with yuzu and koji seeds. Should you be hungry, you can even have breakfast there; just pick the catch of the day and have it grilled in the BBQ space especially arranged for meals. One of the most fascinating aspects of the market is seeing how the friendly locals interact with each other and the numerous tourists, and how traditions have survived throughout the years, complete with the obachan (elderly lady) pushing her cart, selling drinks to the busy vendors.

Lacquerware: The town of Wajima is best known for its elegant and intricate lacquerware, called Wajima-nuri. While robust in body, it is refined in appearance, bearing ornamental designs. You can try your hand at some of the techniques used for Wajima-nuri such as chinkin; using a very sharp chisel, you can carve your own designs into the lacquerware that includes chopstick sets or bowls. After lacquer is applied thinly over the material, gold leaf or powder is inlayed to bring out the design — and you can leave with your very own, custom-designed Wajima-nuri.
**Rice fields:** One of the most scenic places in the prefecture is undoubtedly Senmaida (literal meaning: 1,000 rice fields), which are terraced rice fields stretching down a steep slope overlooking the Sea of Japan. The fields have been nationally designated as a site of extraordinary scenic beauty, and each season brings out a different kind of splendor. You can stroll through the rice fields or simply look at them from above to catch an eyeful of the geometrical patterns formed by the terraces. Every early October, locals place thousands of candles around the fields, illuminating them at night, for a spectacular result.  

**Salt:** Due to its proximity to the sea, Suzu city next to Wajima boasts not only seafood as a resource but salt as well. Don’t leave without stocking up on the condiment and don’t miss a chance to learn how the salt is extracted from the sea. At the nearby Okunoto Endenmura Museum, you can view the 500-year-old method of salt production, which is still carried out today. This hard and intensive labor can only be performed on sunny days, and very few people in the region master the art. Water is scooped directly from the sea into wooden buckets, then sprayed onto the surface of meticulously raked sand. The actual saltwater throwing is by far one of the most thrilling parts of the experience, as it’s done so carefully and methodically, in an arc-like motion.  

Whether you spend one or a few days in charming Noto area in Ishikawa Prefecture, the chances are you will have the opportunity to meet the local people and see and experience famous local products and handicrafts. And, year-round, you can feast on some of the best fish-based meals you will ever have in the country.
JONATHAN GROGAN

THANKS to the recent morning television NHK drama ‘Ama-chan’ (diving girl), set in Kuji City (the fictional Kitasanriku), Iwate Prefecture has been in the news a lot. In search of our ‘diving girl’ heroine we took the Tohoku shinkansen to Ninohe and then a local bus to Kuji station. On the way, scenery of woodland, freshly harvested rice fields, steep cliff faces and rock-strewn rapids welcomed us.

Inside a new and architecturally pleasing facility, the Dofūkan, we found Kuji’s tourist office, a display of one of the huge floats used in the city’s Fall festival, some Kokujiyaki (traditional pottery from Kuji) and numerous small shops selling local produce.

After a meal of fresh fish and locally-grown rice in ‘Retro Square’, next to the Dofūkan, we made our way up to Tatsumiyama park for a great view of the city and the sea.

A trick to travel around here is to use taxi drivers: in Kuji they are willing to drive visitors around for a set time and a small fee. Thanks to this, we arrived quickly at the Kosode Kaigan (Kosode Coast), where the Ama Center (diving women’s center) is located. On the way awaits a spectacular view of the rias coastline; the weathered Tsuriganedō is of particular note.

Next to Meoto-iwa, a pair of rocks symbolizing a husband and wife linked by a sacred shimenawa, is the ama diving area. Wearing the characteristic blue tunic and shorts, snorkel, yakkari (net) and soegaki, ama dive among the rocks and crevices searching for sea-urchins and other shellfish, which they scoop up and place in their nets.

Back in Kuji is also the amber museum, showcasing local geological history, amber
exhibits and a former amber mine. It is even possible to visit a local quarry and dig for amber yourself.

For enthusiasts of folk culture, Tōno City, to the south of Kuji is well worth a visit. The city became renowned for its folklore thanks to Kunio Yanagita’s Tōno Monogatari (Tōno Story), published in 1910.

There are many interesting places here, but we decided to focus on the Kappa Buchi or ‘Kappa Pond’ and the Chibake Magariya (Chiba family home). We rented bicycles and set off for Jōkenji Temple, where Kappa Pond is located.

The temple lies along a country lane adjacent to the entrance of the old Mount Hayachine path. Walking through the temple grounds, a small wooden bridge spanning a gently meandering freshwater stream marks the entrance to Kappa Pond. A gravel path follows along the stream to the pond, actually a section where the stream widens. While enjoying the bubbling sound of the water and view of the fish that dart along the streambed, visitors are invited to see if they can catch a kappa using a bamboo fishing rod to which a cucumber (a favorite food of kappa) is attached.

8km to the west of Tono is found a treasure of traditional Nambu architecture, the Chibake Magariya, named from the Japanese ‘magaru’, ‘to bend’ in reference to the characteristic L-shape of the layout. In times past, horse stables were in the foot of the L-shape and raised living quarters in the main body of the L. The doma, or ‘earthen floored room’, in between the two sections was used as the kitchen and main work area. Similar in construction to a small castle, the magariya affords splendid views of the surrounding hills, largely unchanged since times past.

Iwate, with its national parks, World Heritage and traditional folk culture, coupled with the honesty and warmth of the locals, is a recommended stay for any traveler.
Nabe are stew and soup dishes eaten during the cold winter months in Japan. They are commonly cooked in a large pot and ingredients may be eaten with the broth or with condiments such as ponzu. The ingredients and soup base vary by region, but they usually contain a lot of vegetables and a few different kinds of tofu. You can also include your choice of meat or seafood, but salmon is a must item for the ishikari nabe which has miso as its soup base. Huddle around a table or kotatsu (heated table) with friends and family during the winter season and enjoy your original nabe. It will no doubt warm you up and replenish your energy.