

# JAPAN



## Ambassador opens library for Japanese arts

A new library, devoted exclusively to works on Japanese arts, culture and archaeology, was officially opened by Ambassador Masaki Orita on May 12.



Ambassador and Madame Orita with Sainsbury Institute Director Nicole Rousmaniere

Housed within the Sainsbury Institute for the Study of Japanese Arts and Cultures based in Norwich, the Lisa Sainsbury Library, which currently holds some 20,000 volumes, is the first library solely dedicated to Japanese arts and archaeology in the UK.

The Sainsbury Institute was founded in 1999 by Sir Robert and Lady Sainsbury with the aim of promoting the study of the material and visual cultures of Japan, and in so doing to act as a catalyst for international research in the field. The Institute is affiliated with the University of East Anglia and operates in

association with the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London.

During his visit, Ambassador Orita also attended a special viewing of the 25th anniversary exhibition at the Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts, a museum with a collection of world art including many Japanese works, which is part of the University of East Anglia.

On June 10, the Embassy hosted an evening of Japanese archaeology, in conjunction with the Sainsbury Institute. Dr Noriyuki Yamamoto, who is currently Handa Fellow in Japanese Archaeology at the Institute, gave a lecture entitled 'Reflections on Jomon Pottery', which provided a rare opportunity outside Japan to learn about the archaeology of the period.

## Anglo-Japanese history in the making

The completion of the Anglo-Japanese History Project was marked by a reception at the Japanese Embassy on Thursday, May 29, hosted by Ambassador Masaki Orita.

The project, which was administered by The Japan Society, stemmed from the Peace, Friendship and Exchange Initiative launched by Prime Minister Murayama in 1994. Since then, two teams of scholars, one British and one Japanese, have worked together to produce authoritative histories of relations between the two countries on the themes of Political/Diplomatic, Military, Economic & Business and Social & Cultural.

A commemorative set of the English language publications was presented to Ambassador Orita at the reception.

Speeches were made by the Ambassador, Chairman of the Project Steering Committee Sir Sydney Giffard, and Series Editor Professor Ian Nish. All paid tribute to the great efforts and expertise which contributors, many of whom were present at the reception, had put into the project.

This was one of many events organised by the Japan Society recently. Another highlight was the London Treasure Hunt on May 10, in which some 40 competitors raced around London to find answers to questions on UK-Japan relations. The top prize was two return tickets to Tokyo, while runners-up received vouchers for Japanese meals.

*Copies of the publications can be obtained from Palgrave Macmillan (tel: 01256 329242).*



**G8 DEBATE** – Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi joined the Heads of State of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, the UK, the US, the Russian Federation and the European Union at the G8 Summit which took place in Evian-les-Bains from June 1 to 3. China was invited as an observer to the Summit for the first time. A wide range of economic, political and security issues were discussed, including the situations in Iraq and North Korea and corporate governance as well the Partnership for Africa and Access to Water for All initiatives.

NEWS IN CONTEXT

# Japan aids fight against SARS

With concern over severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) continuing around the world, many countries are taking measures to avoid the spread of the disease which, according to the World Health Organisation (WHO), has now affected 32 countries worldwide.

Up to now, there have not been any confirmed cases of SARS in Japan (as of June 11), but with economic and human losses taking their toll overseas, the Japanese Government has joined the fight against the virus.

At the beginning of May, ¥100 million was earmarked to conduct emergency research into the diagnosis and prevention of SARS. At the height of the crisis, a team of health experts was dispatched to Beijing to help contain the virus in China, where more than 5,000 probable cases have been diagnosed to date.

The Government has also been formulating measures to combat the risk of SARS entering the country. Sophisticated temperature-scanning equipment has been installed at airports to enable passengers who arrive in Japan with unusually high body temperatures to be identified and given medical examinations. Japanese nationals returning from China have been advised to remain at home for 10 days, the estimated incubation period for the virus. In the meantime, 250 medical institutions around Japan have prepared facilities for dealing with patients should the need arise, and local governments have drawn up their own action plans.

With WHO reports varying week by week, Japan continues to support the fight against SARS both financially and technologically in order to help its neighbours and prevent the virus from entering the country.

## Letter from Japan

Ask a Japanese person what June means to them and they will probably reply with a frown: *tsuyu*, referring to the rainy season which most of the country endures from early June to the middle of July, when it rains almost every day and is hot and humid.

While June may bring lots of rain, it also brings love, since many people in Japan consider it to be a lucky month for getting married. Ceremonies are scheduled to fall on auspicious days according to the ancient Japanese calendar, with the two most favoured being *taian* (the day of great peace) and *tomobiki* (friendship day). Finding a venue for your wedding party on one of these days in June is an especially tricky undertaking, not to mention very expensive.



Marital bliss: couple in traditional wedding kimono



Although these days most young people prefer to find their own partners, the arranged marriage (*omiai*) still continues, albeit in a different way from yesteryear. Like many traditional activities in Japan, *omiai* is now a thoroughly modern business, with specialist agencies using multimedia resources to help clients find their perfect match. The age-old method of introductions through friends is still central to the process, however.

Traditionally, Japanese weddings involve a ritual in which a Shinto priest purifies the couple, dressed in wedding kimono. After vows are performed, the bride and groom take part in an ancient sake-sharing custom known as *san san kudo*.

These days, weddings are celebrated in a wide variety of ways with many people opting for a mixture of Japanese and Western elements, giving the bride an opportunity to wear any number of beautiful outfits. As a result, Japanese weddings do not come cheap and the cost of a ceremony can run into several million yen (£15,000-£25,000). It's perhaps not surprising therefore that simple weddings have grown in popularity recently.

## J-trends

### Alternative Therapies



Chilled out: a cat gets the minus ion treatment

PHOTOGRAPH: PAAG LIMITED

Amid the stresses of modern life, people in Japan are turning to alternative ways of improving health and happiness, leading to the so-called 'iyashi boom', which has been gathering pace since 1999. *Iyashi* comes from the verb *iyasu*, meaning to alleviate pain or cure disease, but the phrase 'iyashi boom' now encompasses any product thought to be physically or mentally soothing.

One particular growth area is aromatherapy. This has recently expanded to include the use of herbs in the diet, with dedicated stores providing advice on their properties as well as dieticians who blend herbs exclusively for each customer, according to their physical condition, preferences and mood.

Winnie the Pooh has been an unlikely beneficiary of the iyashi boom. Known for his laid-back approach to life, Pooh has been putting up stiff opposition to Hello Kitty in the cuddly toy stakes, perhaps reflecting public admiration for such a determinedly relaxed character. Gardening, English-style, is also a popular trend, with many home-owners keen to transform their gardens into oases of tranquillity in which to escape from the pressures of the modern world.

Minus ion products are another new hit. For the uninitiated, minus ions are particles occurring naturally around pure water and clean air which are said to benefit the body by relieving stress. Minus ions can be produced artificially, and the boom began in 2000 when a major manufacturer produced a minus ion air conditioner. Since then, minus ion hairdryers, vacuum cleaners, fridges and even dustbin liners have proved big consumer favourites. The jury is still out on the exact benefits of minus ions, but for the moment rocketing sales suggest that the public is convinced.

## interview

ANTIQUITIES AND THE JAPANESE AESTHETIC

**Victor Harris**

*Victor Harris, who has recently retired as Keeper of Japanese Antiquities at the British Museum, is highly regarded for his knowledge of Japanese artefacts and in particular his expertise in Japanese swords. His publications include a translation of A Book of Five Rings, in which Musashi Miyamoto, a Japanese swordsman of the 16th Century, discusses the finer points of duelling.*

**What inspired your first journey to Japan?**

I remember exploring Japan through travel-books at school, but it wasn't until I discovered Suzuki's writings on Zen Buddhism at university that I made up my mind to go there. He gave me the sense that there was a greater world and that I had to go and look for it. After graduating in engineering, I took the first opportunity to go to Japan. During my three years there, I practised kendo and studied swords because Suzuki clearly indicated that sword-fencing was one of the ways to spiritual enlightenment.

**Could you outline your role at the British Museum?**

After some years as a translator and engineering consultant, I started working at the British Museum in 1977 as a research assistant in the Department of Oriental Antiquities. I took over as Keeper of Japanese Antiquities in 1996. The role of the Keeper is to run the Department and to be responsible for the safety of the collection, to add to it, to catalogue it and to present it to the world, as well as to maintain the Department as the centre for specialist enquiries.

**What can the artefacts at the British Museum teach us about Japan?**

Japanese artefacts are the guideline for the culture. Also the Japaneseness of the items is unmistakable, and this is something that one can explore forever since Japan's whole culture and sense of aesthetics are reflected in its artefacts.

**What is particularly distinctive about Japanese objects?**

In Japan, cultural activities are very closely linked with the artefacts. This means that objects associated with cultural activities are still used and respected today, forming part of the ongoing Japanese aesthetic, even if they are many hundreds of years old. This provides a remarkable sense of continuity.



18th Century Itomaki tachi style sword from the British Museum's Japanese Collection

**What impact has Japanese art had on the West?**

In the Meiji period, when rough hand-built ash-glazed pottery came from Japan, it was not very highly regarded in the West. Japan has understood for centuries that it is the unity between man and nature that produces the beauty in objects and this has created the unique Japanese aesthetic that is evident in the polished sword-blade, the pot, even the movement of a Noh dancer's hand. This aesthetic has had a profound impact on the world although it has taken time for it to be understood.

**What role has the Japanese Collection played?**

It has been highly significant, in particular since the Japanese Gallery was built in 1990, with so much help from our friends in Japan, enabling us to put on at least three exhibitions a year and raise the profile of Japanese art. Tailor-made to display Japanese objects, the Gallery has made it possible to show-case material from Japan as well as to show the Museum's collection to its best advantage. Despite economic difficulties, I hope the Gallery will continue to maintain the profile of Japanese art both within the Museum and in the UK as a whole.

**If you could take one artefact home with you, what would it be?**

It is interesting because working in a Museum helps you to get beyond the stage of wanting to possess objects since your responsibility as a curator is to treat every tiny thing with the same respect that you treat the greatest treasures. With Japanese artefacts, since the aesthetics they reflect are so intimately linked to nature, the object itself is almost secondary.

**You describe yourself as an 'amateur' – what perspective does this give?**

I think it is wonderful to be an amateur because you can approach a field with few preconceptions. Of course it has its downside, because if your work is your hobby, then you have no rest! The other advantage is that you do in fact have another profession. I was trained as an engineer and so when I look at a pot, I see silicates, parallelograms of forces, temperature gradients – I can see the before and after of an artefact, something which an art historian might not be able to appreciate.

*Interview by Caroline Lewis*

*The Department of Japanese Antiquities was merged with the Department of Oriental Antiquities to create a new Department of Asia at the beginning of April. Timothy Clark is the new Head of the Japanese Section. For further information, visit the British Museum's website at [www.thebritishmuseum.ac.uk](http://www.thebritishmuseum.ac.uk).*

## JICC at your service: spotlight on the library

Located on the ground floor of the Embassy, the JICC library houses some 6,200 volumes on a wide range of Japan-related topics. Seventy percent of the publications are in English and subjects represented include history, economics, culture and literature as well as aspects of Anglo-Japanese relations.

Japanese daily newspapers are available, as are back copies of the *Statistical Yearbook* and a range of Japanese Government publications including a collection of White Papers dating from 1990.

Two video booths offer the chance to view documentaries on aspects of Japan and Japanese culture. The library also has facilities for listening to Japanese CDs, with a collection of music including modern, traditional, folk and classical.

The library is open to the public and visitors range from pupils working on school projects to journalists carrying out specific research. Even if the library does not have exactly what you are looking for, the Librarian can tell you where to find a particular publication and who to contact. Information sheets and pamphlets on Japan-related subjects are available on request, and up to two books can be borrowed on presentation of an introductory letter from an academic or official institution.



Epicentre of learning: JICC's up-to-date and fully equipped library is open to all

Library opening hours are from 9.30am to 12.45pm and from 2.30 to 5pm, Monday to Friday, with the exception of British and some Japanese national holidays (please call to avoid disappointment). For details, contact the Librarian on 020 7465 6500.

## Embassy Information Day

Careers officers and representatives of Japanese Studies departments from around the UK attended an Information Day at the Embassy on May 28.

The Information Day, the first of its kind to be held at the Embassy, was designed to provide university staff with up-to-date information on a range of Japan-related scholarships and exchange programmes, to enable them to inform interested students about the options available.

Following a brief slide introduction to Japan, individual presentations were given on the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET)

Programme, the Japanese Ministry of Education (MEXT) Scholarships, the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS) Scholarship Programmes and the Daiwa Scholarships. Japanese academics currently based in the UK were invited to give presentations on their universities in Japan. These included Tokyo University, Tokushima University, Asahikawa Medical College and Toyohashi University of Technology.

Information on the Working Holiday Scheme and the newly launched Volunteer Visa was also provided. A question-and-answer session gave participants the opportunity to find out more, while the reception which followed enabled participants to meet counterparts at other universities, as well as to speak to representatives from the various Japan-related organisations involved.

For further details of the programmes and scholarships mentioned above, contact Susan Meehan at [education@embjapan.org.uk](mailto:education@embjapan.org.uk) or on 020 7465 6583, or call the JET Desk (020 7465 6668).



Participants talk to Minister Takeuchi from the Embassy

## Co-operation on security

An International Conference on UK-Japan Security Relations, held in London on May 29 and 30, provided a forum for exploring the potential for both countries to co-operate on a range of issues relating to security.

Organised by the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) in association with the National Institute for Defence Studies (NIDS) of Tokyo, the event brought together representatives of government, business and academia from Britain and Japan to discuss the long-term prospects for the security relations of the two countries. Bill Rammell MP, Minister of State at the Foreign & Commonwealth Office, and Kyoji Yanagisawa, President of NIDS, gave an overview of bilateral security co-operation from the perspective of the UK and Japan respectively. Among the common security interests then discussed were international peacekeeping, conflict prevention, missile defence, counter-proliferation and combatting international terrorism.

# Japanese Studies in the UK

Japanese Studies has become a popular subject for students in the UK, leading to a dramatic expansion in provision since the 1980s, when only four British universities offered courses in what was then known as Oriental Studies. There are now almost 50 Higher Education institutions teaching Japanese and/or Japanese Studies as part of an accredited course, offering a wide range of options to potential students.

The British Association for Japanese Studies (BAJS) has produced a booklet called *Japanese Studies in the UK*,



which offers an insight into the range of Japanese Studies undergraduate degree courses currently available in this country. The publication is designed for Year 11 pupils, who may have an existing interest in Japan but are perhaps unsure about committing themselves to a degree course dedicated entirely to Japanese Studies. There are sections addressing questions such as: Why study Japan? What sort of people study about Japan? What are the job prospects?, as well as short profiles of some of the major centres of Japanese Studies in the UK.

The booklet also contains a listing from the UCAS website of UK academic institutions offering degrees with a significant Japanese element.

An invaluable source of information on Japanese Studies courses at Higher Education level in the UK is *Japanese Degree Courses 2001-2002*, published by The Japan Foundation and The Daiwa Anglo-Japanese Foundation in November 2002. This publication provides a comprehensive overview of Japanese degree courses at higher education institutions across the UK, including details of course content, graduate numbers and financial provision as well as student and staff ratios. The directory can be downloaded free of charge from the Japan Foundation London Language Centre website at [www.jpf.org.uk/language/](http://www.jpf.org.uk/language/).

## Voices from the classroom

To find out more about the actual experiences of undergraduates studying Japanese at university level in the UK, we spoke to two students from the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) at the University of London. Costas Brammer is just coming to the end of his first year, while Alice Wright is busy taking final exams at the end of her fourth year.

The BA Japanese course at SOAS consists of four years of study. The first year focuses primarily on language learning, with three levels of Japanese provided to cater for students' previous knowledge of the language. The second year is based in Japan, at one of many universities with which SOAS has exchange agreements. For students entering in 2003, the year abroad programme will be in the third year. At present, the third and fourth years are spent applying the language learnt in the first two years to Japanese texts and other aspects of Japanese culture.

Costas decided to study Japanese at university as a result of a long-standing interest in Japanese culture although he had initially planned to continue with subjects he had taken for A-level. "When I realised that a single-subject degree in Japanese was available at a few universities in England, I decided to pursue this great passion of mine academically. For the first time, I realised that I had the opportunity to work on a subject that I had a great enthusiasm for, and that was enough to convince me."



So far, he has found the course "excellent in many respects. The work is rather intense at times, but with a lot of effort, much can be gained from the course. It is amazing to think that 10 months ago I had next to no knowledge of the Japanese language, but now I can hold conversations with my Japanese friends, write letters, and will be making my way around Japan next year!"

Alice Wright agrees that studying Japanese at university requires a high level of commitment but, looking back over the



course, she feels her hard work has brought ample rewards: "In the second year when I was using my Japanese in everyday life, it was well worth the effort.

The whole experience of living in a different culture and being able to use the language to step inside a world hidden from the average tourist has been invaluable. I've also learned to read my favourite author Haruki Murakami in the original. People say that learning any new language opens doors. From my experience of Japan, if you make the effort to open the door, you won't find a more welcoming people waiting to say hello."

Alice has been selected to participate on the JET Programme as a Co-ordinator for International Relations and will leave for Japan later this summer. She is excited at the prospect of beginning the next chapter of her Japan experience and making use of the knowledge gained at SOAS.

## Oxford University Japan Society

Oxford University Japan Society (OUJS), established almost 40 years ago, is a vibrant, dynamic organisation with around 200 members run by a committee of 10 people. Its main objectives are to allow members of the university to find out about Japan and its culture as well as to provide greater opportunities to meet Japanese people.

The Society runs a host of activities including film-nights, dinners, sports events, lectures and food events (including making your own sushi), as well as joint events with other Asian societies. Members also have the opportunity to learn Japanese at weekly language classes run by the Society itself, an activity that has proved extremely popular.

OUJS has established good relationships not only with Oxford Brookes Japan Society but also with the Anglo-Japan Society at Cambridge University and The Japan Society in London, which makes it possible to offer members a wider spectrum of activities and opportunities.

For further details please email the Society at [ojs@herald.ox.ac.uk](mailto:ojs@herald.ox.ac.uk) or visit the website at <http://users.ox.ac.uk/~ojs/>.

# Issues facing Japanese Studies in the UK

**Janet Hunter, President, AJS**  
**Glenn Hook, Former President, AJS**



Like most academic disciplines, Japanese Studies in institutions of higher education in the UK has been subject to the many shifts and tensions in higher education policy over the past 40 years. It has also been profoundly influenced by changing perceptions of the importance of Japan in the world, an importance that is, for most UK observers, mirrored in the relative strength or weakness of the Japanese economy. Indeed, Japanese Studies emerged as a modern discipline in Britain in the wake of the famous 1962 article in *The Economist* calling on its readership to 'Consider Japan' and its startling economic advances.

In the 1980s, before the collapse of the Bubble Economy, higher education provision in Japanese Studies expanded rapidly. From a relatively small number of major centres, provision of courses in Japanese language and on numerous aspects of Japan mushroomed at dozens of universities, both old and new. In most cases these courses were one-off options aimed at broadening student choice, but in some institutions new degrees were set up wholly or partly containing a Japanese language or Japanese Studies element. Some, but not all, of this expansion in provision was supported by funds from Japan, particularly from Japanese business.

The picture at the start of the 21st Century is less optimistic. Some of the earlier initiatives have proved to be short-lived; a large number of university courses on Japan and Japanese ceased to be offered during the 1990s, victims both of Japan's own recession and of retrenchment pressures in British higher education. More seriously, closures have hit leading centres of Japanese Studies. The closing of the Contemporary Japan Centre at the University of Essex in 1996 has been followed more recently by Stirling University's decision that it could no longer maintain the existence of its Scottish Centre for Japanese Studies.



PHOTOGRAPH: UNIVERSITY OF SHEFFIELD

Education excellence: students at Sheffield's School of East Asian Studies

Given the funding constraints on universities, the high number of hours required to teach a character-based language like Japanese means that the subject is a loss-making one for most institutions, making it hard to guarantee future provision. More insidious is the damaging assumption that we no longer need to study Japan and Japanese, an assumption based on the belief that the Japanese economy has had its day and that we ought to switch resources to the study of other, potentially more important, countries.

It would be a mistake, however, to paint too grim a picture. In 2001/2 over 2,500 students were studying Japanese to a greater or lesser extent as part of their degree course. Japanese Studies initiatives have been generously funded by grant-giving bodies, including the Japan Foundation, the Japan Foundation Endowment Committee, the Daiwa Anglo-Japanese Foundation and the Toshiba International Foundation. Student demand for university places on Japan-related degrees remains buoyant. Some of that demand rests on a phenomenal growth in Japan-related education at school level, the real educational success story of recent years as far as Japan is concerned.

A combination of new initiatives, innovative staff (many of them former members of the JET programme) and support from bodies such as the Japan Foundation London Language Centre has generated a dramatic increase in the number of school students studying Japanese in the UK. This increase will not only sustain interest in Japan at further and higher education levels, but will also help to spread awareness of, and knowledge about, Japan more broadly. It is a highly positive picture that looks likely to be sustained, with BAJs actively recruiting new students at the annual undergraduate fairs.

The profile of Japanese Studies in the UK is therefore a mixed one, but it is important to be vigilant in sustaining what we have and to recognise the need to build up resources for the future. Readers of *On Japan* will need no reminding that Japan, despite its economic problems, still has the second highest per capita income in the world and that Japanese is the 10th most widely spoken language in the world. What happens in Japan matters to all of us, and as a country we cannot afford to disregard it.

*BAJS was established in 1974 to encourage and support Japanese Studies in the UK. To find out more about the activities of the Association, visit the website [www.bajs.org.uk](http://www.bajs.org.uk) or contact the Secretariat on 01206-872543 (answerphone) or by e-mail: [bajs@bajs.org.uk](mailto:bajs@bajs.org.uk).*

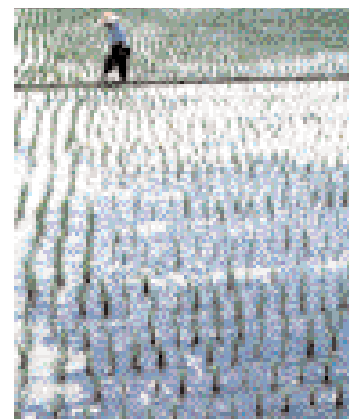
## what is **taue** ?

The arrival of the rainy season in June means that it is time for *taue*, or rice planting in Japan. *Ta* is the alternative reading of the character *hatake*, meaning field, and *ue* is an abbreviation of *ueru*, meaning to plant or sow. Thus *taue* literally means 'to sow the fields,' although it is generally used to refer to the June rice planting.

The 2,000-year-old tradition of cultivating rice in Japan is believed to have started in northern Kyushu, where it arrived from Korea and China. It is thanks to the warm and wet Japanese summer that these initial crops were successful and rice growing spread through-

out the country. Traditionally, planting rice was a spiritual act accompanied by various rituals. Some of these are still practised today and during the *taue* season festivals are held throughout Japan. On such occasions *saotome*, young women wearing white kimonos with red skirts and sashes, plant the seedlings, helped by *tachido*, young men whose role is to hand them the plants.

Over the years, various machines have been designed to ease the labour-intensive work. Perhaps the most remarkable is a planting device which uses the global positioning system to plant seedlings at exact intervals.



Precise planting: Japan's climate is perfect for rice

### kanji of the month

米 [kome]

This month's kanji is *kome*, which refers to rice as a plant, grain crop or uncooked foodstuff. *Kome* has six strokes and is a radical in its own right. In addition to its *kun* reading *kome*, the character can also be pronounced *bei* (as in *Beikoku* – America) or *mai* (as in *genmai* – unmilled rice). When

rice is cooked (usually steamed) and served in a bowl, it is known as *gohan*, which is also the word for 'meal'. *Raisu*, on the other hand, refers to cooked rice served on a plate as part of a meal that is considered to have originated outside Japan, as in *karee raisu* (curry rice).

### On Line

This month, we would like to introduce the two Japan National Tourist Organisation (JNTO) websites, which should be your first online port of call if you have any questions on places to visit, accommodation, or on the practicalities of travelling to and around Japan. Log on to the London office website at [www.seejapan.co.uk](http://www.seejapan.co.uk) or the main website at [www.jnto.go.jp](http://www.jnto.go.jp) to find all the information you need for an enjoyable trip to Japan.

### Ask the Embassy

#### Are there any Shinto shrines or Japanese Buddhist temples in the UK?

Since the Shinto religion is intrinsically linked to the land, there are no Shinto shrines in the UK and no Shinto priests registered as long-term residents in this country. Buddhist temples with a connection to Japan include Battersea Park (The London Peace Pagoda, tel: 020 7228 9620) and Milton Keynes (tel: 01980 663 652). The temple at Donnington Grove also has links with Japan. Further information is available from the Enquiries Section on 020 7465 6500 or [info@embjapan.org.uk](mailto:info@embjapan.org.uk). Do you have a question on Japan? Send it to JICC or e-mail [onjapan@jpembassy.org.uk](mailto:onjapan@jpembassy.org.uk).

### gallery



This is a scene from *Manshu-in*, a *monzeki* temple garden of the Edo period located in north east Kyoto. *Monzeki* refers to a type of temple where the head priest was traditionally an imperial prince. The *kareansui* (dry landscape garden) design is surprisingly informal with a predominant use of curves. Rising from the raked gravel, which represents water, is a turtle island (*kamejima*) and a crane island (*tsurujima*). The turtle and crane have come to symbolise immortality, and at *Manshu-in* the crane is represented by a pine tree with an unusually extended lower branch.

*This photograph was sent in to the Gallery by Malcolm Raggett, IT Manager at SOAS in London. If you have a striking image of Japan that you would like to appear in On Japan, send it to us at the address on page 8 with a short caption.*

## Japanese Sanctuary Garden

Mental health trust opens up to green therapy

Rabbi Julia Neuberger, Chief Executive of the King's Fund, an independent charitable foundation whose goal is to improve health, opened a Japanese Garden in the grounds of Goodmayes Hospital, Ilford, on Wednesday, May 14.

The official opening ceremony was the culmination of two years of creativity and hard work by members of staff and service users (including assistant gardeners Charlie and Albert, pictured right) under the direction of UK-based Japanese garden designer Takashi Sawano. The garden, which is the first of its kind to be constructed within the NHS, was made possible by a fundraising campaign.

Dr Annie Lau, Medical Director at Goodmayes, is delighted by the successful completion of the project: "The therapeutic benefits of Japanese gardens have long been acknowledged. The newly-created garden sits in the English parkland setting of the hospital and provides an ideal space in which service users and staff can walk and reflect."



From left to right: Takashi Sawano, Rabbi Neuberger, Charlie Stone, Jimmy Bell, Dr Annie Lau and Albert Buckland at the opening of the new Japanese Garden

## Miki Miyara's Hanging Origami Garden

As part of its celebration of summer, the Pump House Gallery in Battersea Park commissioned Japanese artist Miki Miyara to create a site-specific installation using the ancient art of origami. In response, she designed a hanging fantasy-garden of paper flora and fauna that used the architecture and location of the building to create an ethereal waterscape (pictured left). Miki, who is currently studying for an MA in Sculpture at Wimbledon School of Art, is particularly interested in how abstract paper forms can successfully conjure realities with the help of the viewer's imagination. The installation, which was on display from May 16 to June 15, proved popular with visitors, who had the chance to learn origami for themselves during two family workshops.



PHOTOGRAPH: WWW.JAMESFINLAY.COM

## Readers Forum

### Green thoughts

I was pleased to read about *Midori no Hi* (Green Day) in your April issue. Not only was the article perfectly timed and complemented by the *Midori* Kanji and beautiful image of a bamboo grove, but it reminded me of spring rites involving the Green Man (or Jack in the Green), practised for thousands of years in this country. Recently, there has been a growth in the awareness of this mysterious figure, who symbolises our unity with the natural world. The image pictured on the right is a stonemason's

carved head of the Green Man, found in many churches and cathedrals throughout Europe. The love of nature reflected by *Midori no Hi* is paralleled in the UK by an ecological revolution, with people participating in green movements old and new.

Dr John Forster,  
Komyokan Aikido Association

Send your letters to: *On Japan*, JICC, Embassy of Japan, 101-104 Piccadilly, London W1J 7JT or email to [onjapan@jpembassy.org.uk](mailto:onjapan@jpembassy.org.uk).



## Inspired by Calligraphy

Shoko Ono, whose striking works were displayed in the Foyer Gallery in May, spoke about the tradition of calligraphy in modern Japan and her career as a calligrapher at a seminar hosted by the Embassy on May 12.

More than 50 people gathered to hear the talk, which focused on her original encounter with *shodo* and its spirituality as well as the main differences between Japanese and Chinese calligraphy and the various tools used by calligraphers.

Ms Ono's first contact with the UK was in 1991, when she demonstrated her art at the opening ceremony of the Japan Festival. Over the weekend of the first Matsuri in Hyde Park, she introduced calligraphy to a remarkable 8,000 people through a series of workshops. Since then, she has made great efforts to promote cultural exchange between Japan and the UK.

Among the guests at the lecture was 16-year old Karin Stone, who first met Shoko Ono during a school workshop at Hendon in London four years ago. It was the start of a friendship which inspired Karin to continue with her Japanese Studies – she is now planning to take an A-Level in the subject and is hoping to spend time in Japan in the future.



Sowing the seeds: Ms Ono with Karin in Hendon four years ago