

# Inauguration of Prime Minister Koizumi's Third Cabinet

After being re-elected as Prime Minister of Japan in September, Junichiro Koizumi reshuffled the members of his Cabinet as a further step towards promoting reform.



On October 31, Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi reshuffled his Cabinet for the third time since taking office in April 2001. The previous reshuffle, a wide-ranging one, took place in September 2004. The latest reshuffle also brought a lot of changes, with 11 of the 17 Ministers being replaced and only two Ministers from the previous Cabinet retaining their posts.

At a press conference held after the formal launch of the new Cabinet, Mr Koizumi expressed his determination to push forward with reforms, "I have tried to make sure that the right person has been put into each position. I want to move forwards while retaining the reforms that have already been implemented, to further stabilise the foundation of the LDP-New Komeito Party coalition and to continue the reforms on the basis of this solid foundation."

The new Minister for Foreign Affairs, Taro Aso, has been elected nine times to the House of Representatives. He has previously been Minister of Internal Affairs and Communications, Minister of State for Economic and Fiscal Policy and Minister of State at the Economic Planning Agency. Mr Koizumi said that Mr Aso's experience in these positions would help him in his new post at a time when "diplomacy is directly linked to internal affairs."

Heizo Takenaka, the only member who has served in the Cabinet throughout Mr Koizumi's four and a half years as Prime Minister, was moved from Minister in charge of Economic and Fiscal Policy to the key role of Internal Affairs and Communications Minister. However, he retains the role of Minister in charge of Postal Privatisation, a position created in

September last year.

Shinzo Abe, the former acting Secretary-General of the Liberal Democrat Party, has been promoted to the post of Chief Cabinet Secretary, making him the top government spokesman. At his first press conference in this role, Mr Abe said the Cabinet was formed to "implement reforms," and stated that its members are experts on the areas they have been appointed to oversee.

In the first Cabinet meeting following the reshuffle, Prime Minister Koizumi laid out the five issues that will form the basic policy of the new Cabinet: (1) a thorough devolution of programmes from the government to the private sector and from the centre to the regions; (2) revitalisation of the economy; (3) ensuring safety and security in national life; (4) diplomacy, security and crisis management; and (5) political reform.

In particular, the Cabinet will seek to ensure that the following measures are implemented: the smooth privatisation of postal services in October 2007; the 'trinity reforms', which cover state subsidies, the local allocation of grants, and the transfer of tax resources to local authorities, within fiscal 2006; bold streamlining of government activity; coordinated revision of the pension and social security schemes; reformation of the medical system from fiscal 2006; and gaining the understanding and cooperation of local governments and residents for the transformation of US forces in Japan. ■



Prime Minister Koizumi with the members of his new Cabinet

## New Cabinet profile (as of October 31)

**Junichiro KOIZUMI (R)**: Prime Minister **Heizo TAKENAKA (C)**: Minister of Internal Affairs and Communications, Minister of State for Privatisation of the Postal Services **Seiken SUGIURA (R)**: Minister of Justice **Taro ASO (R)**: Minister for Foreign Affairs **Sadakazu TANIGAKI (R)**: Minister of Finance **Kenji KOSAKA (R)**: Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology **Jiro KAWASAKI (R)**: Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare **Shoichi NAKAGAWA (R)**: Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries **Toshihiro NIKAI (R)**: Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry **Kazuo KITAGAWA (R)**: Minister of Land, Infrastructure and Transport **Yuriko KOIKE (R)**: Minister of the Environment, Minister of State for Okinawa and Northern Territories Affairs, Minister in Charge of Global Environmental Problems **Shinzo ABE (R)**: Chief Cabinet Secretary **Tetsuo Kutsukake (C)**: Chairman of the National Public Safety Commission, Minister of State for Disaster Management, Minister of State for National Emergency Legislation **Fukushiro NUKAGA (R)**: Minister of State for Defence **Kaoru YOSANO (R)**: Minister of State for Economic and Fiscal Policy and Financial Services **Kouki CHUMA (R)**: Minister of State for Administrative Reform, Regulatory Reform, Special Zones for Structural Reform, and Regional Revitalisation **Iwao MATSUDA (C)**: Minister of State for Science and Technology Policy, Minister of State for Food Safety, Minister of State for Information Technology **Kuniko INOGUCHI (R)**: Minister of State for Gender Equality and Social Affairs  
(R) indicates a member of the House of Representatives (C) indicates a member of the House of Councillors

**in JAPAN**

THE EMBASSY OF JAPAN NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2005/06

Issue No.735

[www.uk.emb-japan.go.jp](http://www.uk.emb-japan.go.jp)

## The Japanese Government honours Dame Elizabeth Esteve-Coll



On November 3, the Japanese Government announced that the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold Rays with Neck Ribbon, was to be bestowed upon Dame Elizabeth Esteve-Coll DBE, in recognition of her outstanding contribution to the promotion of Japanese culture and studies to the British people. The award was presented by Ambassador Nogami on behalf of His Majesty the Emperor of Japan on November 28.

As Director of the Victoria and Albert Museum, Dame Elizabeth dedicated herself to enhancing relations between Japan and the Museum by hosting major exhibitions and encouraging the expansion of the Japanese collections in the Toshiba Gallery.

As Vice-Chancellor of the University of East Anglia, she established teaching posts for Japanese Art History and Japanese Language.

Her passion for Japanese arts was instrumental in the establishment of the Sainsbury Institute for the Study of Japanese Arts & Cultures (SISJAC) in 1999.

Please see the related article 'Interview with Dame Elizabeth Esteve-Coll' on page 4. [▶](#)

## Olympic Partnership Agreement

On September 15, Tsunekazu Takeda, President of the Japanese Olympic Committee, and Craig Reddie CBE, President of the British Olympic Association, met in London to sign a Partnership Agreement.

The Agreement is based on the mutual desire to develop cooperation and strengthen the existing amicable relationship between the athletes of Japan

and the UK, and promote understanding between the two peoples. It states that both parties will maintain the principles of their mutual advantages, share information on the Olympic Movement, and support and cooperate with each other.

Both sides have also agreed to support the exchange of athletes and coaches through their National Sports Federations, for bilateral and multilateral competitions and training, and for officials, staff, trainers, judges, experts and scientists to participate in areas such as seminars, courses and consultations. Also, in conformity with the international fight against doping, the parties obligate themselves individually and cooperatively.

The Agreement will remain in effect until December 31, 2008. [▶](#)



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JOC President Tsunekazu Takeda with BOA President Craig Reddie

## Privatisation of Japan Post set to go ahead



Post office services



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Six bills to subdivide and privatise Japan Post were approved by the Lower House on October 11 and by the Upper House on October 14. This privatisation programme is at the centre of Prime Minister Koizumi's reform initiatives: he has stressed that reform of the postal services, along with other structural reforms, will help to revitalise the Japanese economy.

Postal services – delivery, savings and life insurance – have been managed by the government since the

Meiji era in the late 19th century, and played an important role in underpinning the infrastructure of Japan's economic growth and social development. Nowadays, however, these services can also be provided by private companies, and there is no particular Japan Post function that only the government is capable of fulfilling. In privatising Japan Post, the government is seeking to balance the convenience of services to the public with profitability and the generation of tax revenues in the wider national interest.

The basic policy on privatisation was originally announced by the Cabinet on September 10, 2004. This policy has three main elements. The first is to make it possible to exploit the latent potential of the main business areas of Japan Post – over-the-counter services, postal services, postal savings and postal life insurance. A high-quality service in these areas can be offered more economically when the business is freed from public-sector constraints. The second point concerns the ¥340 trillion (roughly £165bn) of funds – the largest single pool of assets in the world – in Japan's postal savings and life insurance system. Until now, vast sums have been directed into the public sector, for instance as funds for public corporations such as those involved in road and bridge construction, or for the purchase of government bonds. This allocation of funds has not always proved fruitful or produced adequate returns. Such funds will now be channelled into the private sector, thereby allowing personal savings to attract higher returns and contribute more effectively to revitalising the economy. Third, the transfer of Japan Post's huge workforce – 270,000 people, constituting 30 per cent of government employees – will contribute significantly to the Koizumi administration's goal of realising "smaller government".



Tokyo Central Post Office

### The privatisation process will work in three stages:

- Currently, Japan Post is wholly owned by the government, and is divided into two broad areas: postal services and financial services (postal savings and insurance).
- In October 2007, Japan Post will be privatised. Four independent companies will be established, each to administer one of Japan Post's four functions (over-the-counter services network, postal services, postal savings and postal life insurance). Each company will be a 100% subsidiary of a government-owned holding company. A separate entity will be set up to hold pre-privatisation savings and insurance assets.
- By October 2017, the government will have disposed of its stakes in the savings and insurance operations, which will be independent private companies. However, the government will retain a minimum 1/3 stake in the holding company which will own the postal delivery and over-the-counter services firms. [▶](#)

# An overview of the Japanese economy towards the year's end

Economic historians are increasingly likely to look on 2005 as the year in which Japan emerged from 15 years of economic stagnation. Three factors underpin this conclusion: the breadth of the current upturn; the addressing of long-standing structural problems; and the lifting of the burden of deflation.

Since the beginning of the long downturn in 1990 there have been a number of temporary upswings, but all were short-lived because all rested on narrow foundations. For domestic demand, they depended on government-led initiatives; for export demand, on other countries' appetite for imports. Domestic demand from companies and consumer spending remained weak. The result was that the upswings did not last long and were felt mostly in areas other than the private sector.

This time, however, it is the private sector that is actually leading the expansion. Particularly noteworthy are the record profits in the corporate sector following a period of drastic restructuring. These in turn are leading to healthy levels of investment. In addition, the rise in personal incomes, though modest, is starting to stimulate consumption. For the first time since 1990, the recovery has become self-sustaining. This recovery has been visible since January 2001, and in September this year it officially became Japan's third-longest period of growth, after those of 1965-70 and 1986-91.

Second, the measures designed to tackle structural problems that have hamstrung the private sector in the past are taking effect. A telling example is non-performing loans. This issue, one of the major causes of Japan's longest recession since the war, has now been largely resolved. The Koizumi administration's goal of halving the volume of such loans in the three years from March 2002 had been far surpassed by March this year: over this three-year period, the percentage of non-performing loans declined from 8.4% to 2.9%. Furthermore, the overstaffing which used to plague some sectors of industry is now scarcely an issue. In March 2005, the Bank of Japan's Tankan survey of the short-term economic outlook showed that for the first time in 13 years, more companies were reporting labour shortages than an excess of staff, while the number of companies planning to recruit new graduates is rising sharply.

Third, the long-standing burden of deflation seems close to being lifted. The consumer price index has recently been touching zero, and in October the Bank of Japan forecast that price movements would enter positive territory this fiscal year for the first time in eight years.

These trends have led to changing perceptions of the Japanese economy overseas. In the IMF's World Economic Outlook published in September, Japan stood out: while for other industrial countries the projected economic growth rates for this year were revised down because of factors such as rising oil prices, for Japan the figure was revised up to 2.0%, from the 1.2% forecast made in April. Strong demand for stocks is another indicator of optimism. Share prices have risen substantially, with the Nikkei 225 index up 17.5% from the beginning of January through the end of October, supported by a sharp rise in investment from overseas.

Japan's economic prospects look brighter than they have done for 15 years.



There are undoubtedly tough issues still to be dealt with – not least the need to reduce the level of public debt, and demographic trends such as the declining birth rate and the ageing of society – but the economy clearly appears to be on course for further growth. ■



Arrows, Tokyo Stock Exchange Market Centre

## Japan's emergency assistance following Pakistan earthquake

Following the earthquake in northern Pakistan in October, Japan has undertaken an extensive programme of emergency assistance.

A Japan Disaster Relief Rescue Team was dispatched immediately to engage in search and rescue operations, whilst two Medical Teams



Japan Disaster Relief Medical Team in Pakistan

have been providing medical care. Japanese Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) have also been assisting. Relief supplies to the value of ¥25 million were provided, and six Ground Self-Defense Force (SDF) helicopters and over 100 SDF personnel were dispatched to transport these from Islamabad to the areas hit by the disaster.

Japan has also provided financial assistance in the form of grant aid of up to US\$20 million: US\$12 million to the Government of Pakistan, and US\$8 million through United Nations agencies and international organisations.

To promote reconstruction in the area in the medium to long term, study teams have been sent from the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC). ■

## Japan at the 2005 World Travel Market



The Japan stand at the WTM

At the 2005 World Travel Market, held at London's ExCel from November 14 to 17, Japan was represented by the Japan

National Tourist Organisation (JNTO) and Japanese travel experts in the fields of transport, tours and accommodation.

Supported by the Japanese Government's 'Visit Japan' campaign, JNTO and its twelve co-exhibitors promoted Japan by offering information and advice to people working in the travel industry and the media.

Visitors to the Japan stand were able to sample Japanese treats such as sake, and were entertained by *maiko* (apprentice geisha) performing elegant dances.

This year, in cooperation with Japan's three main international airports – Narita, Kansai and Chubu – JNTO has been promoting newly introduced transit tours to help transit and stopover passengers make the most of their short time in Japan. These stopover promotions will continue in 2006. The tours are available from an amazing ¥200 (£1) from Kansai, and ¥500 (£2.50) from Narita. ■

# DAME ELIZABETH ESTEVE-COLL

On receiving a decoration from the Japanese Government, Dame Elizabeth Esteve-Coll spoke to *On Japan* about her devotion to promoting the study of Japanese art and culture in the UK.

## How did you feel when you heard that a Japanese honour had been bestowed upon you?

I was completely amazed by the news and immediately felt humble and quite undeserving and then of course, hugely proud and honoured to have been selected for such a prestigious recognition of my small contribution to a better understanding of Japanese life and culture in Britain.

## Please describe how your fascination with Japanese art and culture began and how it has developed over the years.

Whilst a student at Trinity College, Dublin, I visited the Chester Beatty Library and was intrigued by the hand scrolls. In 1963 I made my first visit to Tokyo and went to a traditional theatre performance. The complexity and subtlety revealed by the layers of meaning intrinsic in this art form made a very powerful impression on me. My visit in 1988 as Director of the Victoria and Albert Museum renewed and deepened my interest in Japanese art forms.

## Which aspects of Japanese art and culture are you personally most interested in and why?

The V&A has a very fine collection of Japanese ceramics and textiles. I was privileged to learn



Visions of Japan exhibition at the V&A in 1991

about these from Dr Rupert Faulkner, a senior curator in the Japanese Department.

Visiting the Mingeikan Museum with Dr Yanagi Sori in 1988 was another milestone in learning about the relation-

ship between Japanese and English ceramicists in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The flagship *Visions of Japan* exhibition hosted by the V&A during the Japan Festival 1991 was most memorable. Its revolutionary and unique style attracted an unprecedented number of visitors. This highly inventive, powerful and entertaining exhibition produced by the famous Japanese architect Arata Isozaki was a milestone in the history of Japan-UK cultural relations – it opened up people's minds to Japan, past, present and future. It had a timeless quality – even if were put on today or in the future, it would still appear fresh and innovative.

## What do you think makes Japanese art so special?

The unique interplay of discipline, technical mastery and spirituality, which informs Japanese art and culture on so many levels. An example which intrigues the British public is of course the tea ceremony – both a complex ritual and a profound meditation.

## What was the motivation behind the establishment of SISJAC?

Sir Robert and Lady Sainsbury wished to create a major centre in the UK which would nurture research and scholarship between British and Japanese scholars. I was privileged to be included in the early discussions and wished to lend my enthusiasm and energy to this visionary project. Sir Robert asked me to become a Trustee of the new Institute and help to guide it. The Sainsburys were keen to foster greater awareness of Japanese art in the wider public and so SISJAC has always tried to be a focus for research and dissemination of information to the general public.

## What are the basic principles and the main purpose of SISJAC's activities?

SISJAC was founded to promote the study of the material and visual cultures of the Japanese archipelago and to be a catalyst for international scholars, postgraduate students and staff in collaborative and active research networks. Through seminars, symposia and publications, SISJAC facilitates and disseminates research on Japanese arts and culture to the widest international scholarly community.



Dr Nicole Rousmaniere, Dr John Carpenter, Ms Louise Cort, Professor Craig Clunas and Dr Simon Kaner at the Toshiba Lecture, Norwich

Its recent activities include: the Toshiba Lectures in Japanese Art, this year by Ms Louise Cort from the Smithsonian Institution on the subject of 'Towards a better tea bowl: art, industry and ambition in 17th century Japan'; the Publication of *Hokusai and His Age: Ukiyo-e Painting, Printmaking and Book Illustration in Late Edo Japan*; a Visiting Fellows programme; and monthly lectures for a general audience on the art and culture of Japan.

SISJAC is an independent charity and is affiliated with the University of East Anglia (UEA) in associa-



Ambassador Nogami presents Dame Elizabeth Esteve-Coll with her medal and certificate

tion with the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London, and The British Museum.

## What do you envisage for the future of SISJAC?

The future of SISJAC looks very bright.

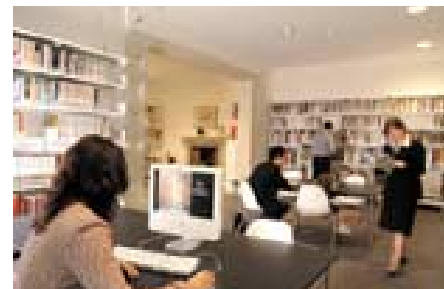
It has already established itself as

a major player in

international scholarship. Through its website it will broaden and deepen the shared expertise of contributing researchers. At its core is the Lisa Sainsbury Library, currently the leading library in Europe for the study of Japanese arts and archaeology. The Library began with a collection of 15,000 books generously donated by a Japanese scholar and has expanded to a current total of around 25,000. This number is set to increase as the Library expands its already strong collection on Japanese art and culture.



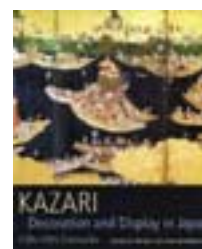
Third Thursday Lecture Series, Norwich



Lisa Sainsbury Library, Norwich

We are trying to look at Japan from its roots and in all its manifestations. Japan is a multi-faceted country with great diversity. By understanding the dynamism of Japanese cultural history, we can better comprehend the aesthetics of contemporary Japanese art, and perhaps foresee what lies in store in the future. 📖

[www.sainsbury-institute.org](http://www.sainsbury-institute.org)



Kazari and Jomon Reflections book covers



## Relaxing in the TOHOKU region DAVID ATKINSON

David Atkinson is a freelance travel writer who has previously lived and worked in Japan. A member of the British Guild of Travel Writers, he has extensive knowledge and experience of travelling in rural Japan.



### Where is your favourite place to relax in Japan?

I like Tohoku in northern Honshu, home to some of the best *onsen* (hot springs) in Japan that hark back to the traditions of rural life. In Tohoku, travellers can eschew the neon cityscapes and soak up real countryside Japan. Expect beautiful scenery, great country fare and exciting *matsuri* (festivals).

### What are the healing properties of *onsen*?

These rural retreats were traditionally places to ease the aching muscles of rice farmers post-harvest, with thrice-daily bathing and mountain hostel hospitality. Today, *onsen* remain integral to Japanese culture, and *onsen* resorts have become major tourist attractions. It is such a positive experience to try *onsen*. You can interact with the locals, relax and have fun all at the same time. When I lie in the mineral-rich waters, the stresses of the day ebb and flow away with each gush of hot water bubbling up from the underground source.

### What was your first impression of *onsen*?

My first proper Japanese *onsen* experience was just as I had imagined: wooden bathhouse, the smell of sulphur coming off the water and a host of aged regulars lolling around in *yukata* (cotton kimono). They had, no doubt, already achieved the state of post-soaking nirvana known as *yude-dako*, 'boiled octopus.' If cleanliness is next to godliness, then, truly, I was in *onsen* heaven!

### Which are your favourite *onsen* in the Tohoku area?

There are over 2,000 *onsen* in Japan, from the frozen north to the tropical south. Tohoku,



Dai-Rotemburo, Zao

however, is home to the holy trinity of Japan's bathing culture:

Zao (Yamagata prefecture), 40 minutes by bus from Yamagata train station, is an Alpine-style village with an almost all Zen calm about it, famous for the azure waters of its rustic *Dai-rotemburo* (trio of outdoor pools).

Naruko (Miyagi prefecture) is known for its medicinal hot springs research facility and its crowning glory, *Taki-no-yu*, a fabulously atmospheric wooden bathhouse, which has



Taki-no-Yu, Naruko

hardly changed in 150 years.

But, for the *onsen* cognoscenti, Aoni (Aomori prefecture) makes for both the

most atmospheric and isolated bathing in the north, with its time-warp oil lamps replacing electricity. It's a simple place, close to nature, with thermal waters containing a hint of radium.

### Is the Tohoku region easily accessible from Tokyo?

The extension to Japan's supremely efficient *shinkansen* (bullet train) network in December 2002 helped open up the relatively unexplored far north of



Hayate on the Tohoku Shinkansen line

Japan to domestic and international tourists. The new JR East Tohoku Shinkansen

line now extends north from Tokyo Ueno station to Hachinohe, cutting the journey time from Tokyo to about three hours. Be sure to make use of a JR East rail pass.

### What else interests you about Tohoku?

For me, Tohoku still feels very unexplored, and has retained a kind of innocence. The area would appeal to the adventurous who don't wish to follow traditional routes of tourism and want to get away from the crowds. But despite the cultural attractions and hiking routes, it's the bathing that remains the main draw to Tohoku.

### Could you recommend any other areas which might appeal to British tourists?

I liked Morioka as a base for travel in Tohoku; the capital of Iwate prefecture is a nice castle town, with some great dining and nightlife. I also really enjoyed a trip to Kinkazan Island (Miyagi prefecture). Go hiking over the mountain, visit the ancient shrine or just enjoy the tranquillity – Kinkazan is the ultimate getaway from the grind of daily life, and high-speed catamarans run from Onagawa at the terminus of the JR Ishinomaki line.

Another must-see in Tohoku is Lake Tazawa (Akita prefecture). Take a stroll around the deepest lake in Japan at



Lake Tazawa

sunset, then soak in the herbal bath at the Heart Herb spa. Tazawa is a 30-minute train ride from Morioka or Akita on the Akita Shinkansen line.

### Did you find any difficulties travelling in the Tohoku area without much knowledge of Japanese?

A few words go a long way, and people are generally very willing to help. Even in the wilds of the north, while a few words of Japanese are useful, many local tourist offices have an English speaker on the staff, and lots of signs are also in English. ☑

[www.atkinsondavid.co.uk](http://www.atkinsondavid.co.uk)

### TOHOKU MAP



## Teachers' workshops Exploring Japan

In November, the Embassy and Japan 21 co-organised a workshop entitled 'Exploring Japan' in Birmingham, to provide geography and primary teachers with practical skills and knowledge for teaching about Japan. Experts encouraged teachers to explore new and imaginative ways of incorporating information about Japan into the National Curriculum and of promoting a better understanding of the country.



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Geography teachers looked at Japan and the Key Stage 3 strategy, with practical ideas for classroom activities. They considered an urban case study based on Tokyo and examined trends in the Japanese

Primary teachers had a session on strategies for teaching haiku in literacy lessons and they were also introduced to *Ready Steady NihonGO!* – new introductory Japanese language and culture teaching materials for KS2.

From feedback, it was clear that teachers who had previously been unaware of the breadth of support available were inspired to make the most of this hands-on experience and introduce Japan to their pupils.

The next workshops will take place in Durham on January 19 and in London on January 27. For further information, please see [www.japan21.org.uk](http://www.japan21.org.uk)



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Educational resources

economy. They were then introduced to the wealth of Japan-related teaching resources available on the Internet.

### GRASSROOTS

## The Original Sushi Competition 2005

The final of this year's Original Sushi Competition took place at a top London restaurant on November 7. This marked the climax of the EAT-JAPAN 2005 festival which, from July to November, celebrated the food, drink and culture of Japan in the UK through a series of events supported by the Embassy.

Now in its fourth year, the competition attracts entrants of all ages and backgrounds. This year there were 598 entries, almost 80% from non-Japanese.

The four recipes selected for the final were prepared by professional chefs. Jean-Christophe Novelli, who led the panel of judges, said, "This is a fantastic event that raises awareness of how exciting sushi can be." Ambassador Nogami, also on the judging panel, said, "Sushi is one of the most prized forms of Japanese cuisine and is increasingly appreciated in this country."

This year's Grand Winner was Cynthia Awor-Ojera, a catering student from west



The winning dish 'Crunchy makizushi'

© CROSS MEDIA



© CROSS MEDIA

Competition winners and judges

London who was encouraged to enter the competition by her teacher. Her winning dish was 'Crunchy makizushi': rolled sushi with a filling of chicken breast fillet and rolled in crushed chilli crisps. Cynthia said, "I have always liked the creativity that goes with making sushi." She is now preparing to visit Japan for the first time.

## Embassy Webmagazine Subscribe now!

As part of the Embassy's continuing efforts to disseminate Japan-related news and information in the UK, a new initiative – the e-mail *Webmagazine* – was launched in early November. *Webmagazine* is an information gateway providing a view at a glance of what's new in Japanese current affairs at home and abroad, whilst highlighting the wealth of Japan-related resources available on the internet.

If you would like to keep up to date with what's going on in Japan's foreign policy, economy, social trends, cultural events and travel, as well as Japan's relations with the UK, please subscribe to the *Webmagazine* by filling in the form via the Embassy's website:

[www.uk.emb-japan.go.jp/en/webmagazine](http://www.uk.emb-japan.go.jp/en/webmagazine)



## Japan-EU Seminar on Youth

Japanese and European delegates gathered at the British Council in London on November 23 and 24 to participate in the Japan-EU Seminar on Youth. Timed to coincide with the 2005 Year of People-to-People Exchanges, the seminar, entitled 'Enhancing young people's participation in society through non-formal education', offered a good opportunity to initiate dialogue and an exchange of views between youth administrations and organisations on youth policy and work in Japan and the EU member states.

After opening remarks and introductory presentations, the seminar participants split into working groups to discuss the following themes: 'The contribution of non-formal education to young people's employability'; 'The inclusion of youth at risk in society'; and 'Volunteering and intercultural dialogue'.

As well as facilitating contacts and creating networks, the seminar enabled delegates to draw conclusions and make recommendations for building further cooperation among youth organisations and young people in Japan and the EU.

## Ready Steady NihonGO!



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Ready Steady NihonGO! in the classroom

On October 19, the *Ready Steady NihonGO!* Project was launched at the Embassy of Japan. This project is aimed at promoting Japanese-language education at primary schools in the UK.


In 2002, the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) announced its commitment to providing foreign-language education by 2010 to all pupils at Key Stage 2 level (7-11 year olds). With this in mind, the Japan Foundation London Language Centre and Japan 21, in coopera-

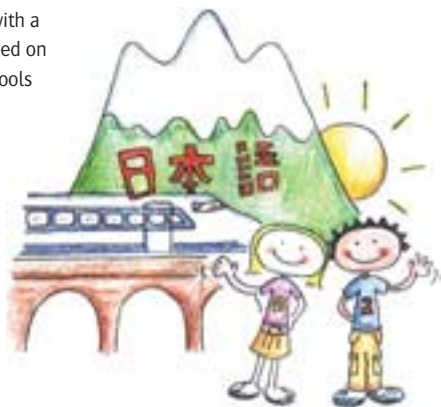
tion with the University of Nottingham's School of Education, have devised a course of ten 45-minute lessons in Japanese, tailor-made for the UK classroom.

The main aims of *Ready Steady NihonGO!* are to provide pupils with insights into Japan to allow them to develop a sensitivity towards less familiar cultures, whilst encouraging them to view their own way of life from a different perspective. It is also hoped that an early introduction to Japanese will give them a sound basis for any future study of the language.

Intensely practical, the course is designed to be team-taught: it recognises that, while few class teachers speak Japanese, many schools have Japanese nationals living nearby, and enables schools to tap into this valuable human resource.

*Ready Steady NihonGO!* is a complete resource, including detailed lesson plans, background notes, worksheets, flashcards and sound files. Depending on their class situation, teachers may either print out these materials or use them directly from source on interactive whiteboards.


*Ready Steady NihonGO!* has been piloted by eleven schools in two phases over the autumn term 2004 and spring term 2005; both teachers and pupils enjoyed the experience of working with a language relatively unfamiliar to them. Based on lesson observations and feedback from schools and teachers, the contents and support materials have been thoroughly reviewed and revised and will be available on CD and via the internet from the end of 2005. For further information on the *Ready Steady NihonGO!* project, please visit: [www.japan21.org.uk](http://www.japan21.org.uk) 



## Cross-cultural communication in the workplace

On November 4, a dialogue entitled 'Cross-Cultural Communication in the Workplace: Japanese Companies in Britain' was held at the Euro-Japan Social Science Research Centre of Glasgow University. The purpose was to explore issues of communication between people of different cultures and suggest advice to facilitate communication in the workplace, thereby further promoting understanding between the peoples of Japan and the UK. The event was chaired by Bert Moorhouse, Academic Director of the Centre, and held with the support of the Embassy of Japan.

The dialogue featured the screening of a film and talks by two Japanese panellists.

Eisei Ito, Auditor of Toyota Body, Japan, spoke about 'Cross-Cultural Communication and the Toyota System', while Takahisa Yokoo, Managing Director of Ricoh UK, talked about his own experiences on this subject. In addition, Fumiko Nakabachi, Honorary Research Fellow of Glasgow University's Faculty of Law, Business and Social Science, presented the outcome of a pilot survey she had undertaken. 



Organisers and sponsors of the dialogue

## The 16<sup>th</sup> Sir Peter Parker Awards for Spoken Business Japanese



Speech contest winners, judges and supporters

The final round of the Sir Peter Parker Awards for Spoken Business Japanese took place at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London, on November 9.

Now in its 16th year, the contest was established by the Japan External Trade Organisation (JETRO) and SOAS to promote mutual goodwill and understanding of Japanese business culture among business people in the European Union. The Awards are recognised as contributing significantly to the use of Japanese in business, as well as benefiting participants professionally. The judging panel was led by Masaki Takahashi of the Japanese Chamber of Commerce and Industry.


Six out of eight of the finalists were ex-JET Programme participants. The winner was Mark Boyle, who spoke on 'Life as a UK correspondent for a Japanese newspaper: challenges, rewards and the media's role in UK-Japan relations'. Mr Boyle, an



Mark Boyle, winner of the contest

ex-JET, reports on Britain's multicultural society, international affairs and other issues to readers in Japan and the

UK. He expressed his surprise at having won the award, and said that it would encourage him to study Japanese further to help communication between Japanese and British people.

Edward Cole, the runner-up, works at the law firm Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer. He spoke about 'The perils of efficiency'. Third prize went to Debbie Warrenner of the Overseas Development Institute, whose topic was 'Observations from building bridges between Japan and the UK to improve international aid'. 

GRASSROOTS

# 2005 EU-Japan Year of People-to-People Exchanges

## A celebration of friendship



Stringraphy Ensemble

The 2005 EU-Japan Year of People-to-People Exchanges drew to an official close in the UK on November 29, with an enchanting performance by the Stringraphy Ensemble, led by Kazue Mizushima, at a reception at the Embassy.

Throughout the year, there have been around 1,700 events aimed at bringing together the people of Japan and the 25 EU member states. Of these,

about 400 took place in Japan and some 1,300 at various locations in the EU. Events were both large and small-scale and of immense variety, including exhibitions, concerts and film screenings, as well as lectures, business seminars, school exchanges and Japanese-style festivals.

The UK has played a prominent part, hosting around 200 events celebrating the arts and culture of Japan across the country during the past year. All had the aim of developing exchanges, contacts and mutual understanding between the peoples of Japan and the European

Union. The existing strong foundations have been built on to encourage further friendships and cooperation over the long term.

Minister Hiroyuki Kishino of the Embassy summed up the success and positive outcome of the Year by saying, "People-to-people exchanges between Japan and the

UK go back well over a century. The friendship between our two peoples is now at a very sophisticated level indeed. These warm ties can surely



Ikebana at the Northern Ireland Matsuri

serve as a model for Japan's relations with other EU member states and with the European Union as a whole, with the thriving links at the grass-roots level enabling us to develop relations even further." □



Taiko workshop at the Oxford Matsuri

### ART AT THE EMBASSY Embassy of Japan Foyer Gallery, London

#### Manga Manufacturing

30 January – 24 February 2006

An exhibition of comic strips revealing the process of manga creation by Japanese comic artist Kiriko Kubo. There will also be an overview of Japanese manga by critic Paul Gravett.

From *Sanbiki O-uchi ni iru* published by Fukuinkan Shoten Publishers, Inc.



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#### ASHIDE – A Second Nature

20 March – 14 April 2006

A collection of impressionistic photographs, including innovative panoramas, by Carol Ballenger and related haiku by John Powls on the theme of Japanese-style gardens in the UK.



The Japanese Garden & Bonsai Nursery, St Mawgan, Cornwall

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### EVENTS

#### Samurai to Manga: Japan across the centuries

12 December 2005 – 5 February 2006

The Asahi Shimbun Display,  
The British Museum, London  
[www.thebritishmuseum.ac.uk](http://www.thebritishmuseum.ac.uk)

Set of Samurai armour,  
16th-19th centuries



© TEZUKA PRODUCTIONS, BRITISH MUSEUM

Astro Boy and Astro Girl, by Studio Tezuka Osamu, c.1970

A small display of objects that show the extraordinary continuity of tradition in Japanese culture, from archaeological finds to modern and contemporary works. The main aim of this experimental exhibition is to allow visitors of all ages to consider juxtapositions of objects across time. The display will challenge the visitor by highlighting the often unexpectedly old roots of something they might have thought was quite new. □



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#### Nihongo Cup 2006 Japanese speech contest for secondary schools

Co-organised by the Japanese Language Committee of the Association for Language Learning, the Japan Foundation and the Embassy of Japan, the Nihongo Cup offers the opportunity to win great prizes including a trip to Japan for the best speaker in the Key Stage 5 category. The theme for 2006 is *My World* for KS3 & 4 candidates, while KS5 candidates are free to choose their own topic. Application forms will be available in January and the deadline for taped entries is Friday March 31. Finals will be held at the Embassy of Japan in London on Saturday June 24. For further information please e-mail the Project Manager: [cml@japanesematters.co.uk](mailto:cml@japanesematters.co.uk) □

### Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from the Embassy of Japan

For the latest news and information on Japan-UK relations, please visit the Embassy's website [www.uk.emb-japan.go.jp](http://www.uk.emb-japan.go.jp)

Published by the Japan Information and Cultural Centre, Embassy of Japan, 101-104 Piccadilly, London W1J 7JT Tel: 020 7465 6500 Fax: 020 7491 9347  
E-mail: [info@jpembassy.org.uk](mailto:info@jpembassy.org.uk) Website: [www.uk.emb-japan.go.jp](http://www.uk.emb-japan.go.jp)

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