



INFOJAPAN

Embassy of Japan in Nepal

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Ambassador Mr. Takahashi Presents His Credentials

H.E. Mr. Kunio Takahashi, the new Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Japan to Nepal, arrived in Kathmandu on October 24, 2011. On October 31, he presented his Letter of Credence to the Right Honorable President Dr. Ram Baran Yadav. Mr. Takahashi replaced Mr. Tatsuo Mizuno, the former Ambassador of Japan to Nepal.



Ambassador Mr. Takahashi presenting his credentials to President Dr. Ram Baran Yadav



Message from the Ambassador

First of all, I would like to express, on behalf of the people, my sincere gratitude to the government and the people of Nepal for the sympathy and support extended to us when Japan was hit by a big earthquake and tsunami in March of this year.

I arrived here in Kathmandu late in October and I am very happy to see a very solid foundation of good and cordial relations between our two countries. Many Japanese tourists come to Nepal to enjoy the wonderful nature such as the Himalaya mountains, and historical heritage sites. From the Nepalese side, many young students go to Japan to study. These facts are just some examples of how both countries enjoy good relations with each other.

Looking at such good relations between Japan and Nepal, we might easily misunderstand that there is nothing more for us to do. I don't agree with such a view. For example, at present the bilateral economic relation between our two countries is not as large as we expect. Once Nepal becomes a more peaceful and stable country, I believe more foreign companies, including Japanese ones, will surely pay attention to forming business with Nepal. So it is quite timely that the Nepalese Government has decided to make 2012-13 "Investment Year".

With this in mind, it would be my great pleasure if I could make some contribution to widen and deepen our bilateral relations during my tenure of office.

Kunio Takahashi

Kunio Takahashi

Ambassador of Japan to Nepal



Japan Extends Grant Assistance for Japanese NGO Projects Scheme for Prevention and Reduction of Child Labor

Signing Ceremony: November 17, 2011

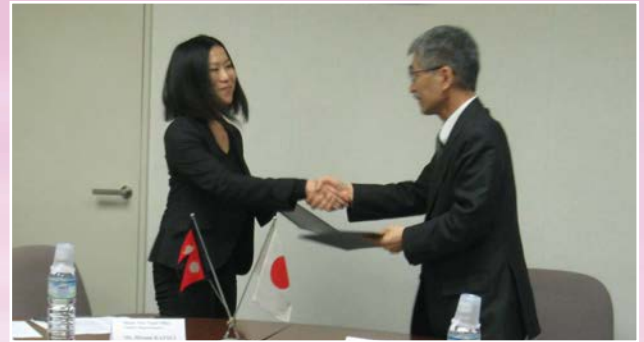
Amount: ¥ 9,256,159 (approx. US\$117,959 or NRs.10,000,000)

Project name: Prevention and Reduction of Child Labor in the Restaurants of the Kathmandu Valley

Recipient: Shapla Neer - Citizens' Committee in Japan for Overseas Support (in coordination with the District Education Offices and Child Workers in Nepal Concerned Centre, CWIN-NEPAL)

Shapla Neer commenced its work, focusing on people's empowerment in Nepal, in 1994. In the past 15 years of activities in Nepal, the organization has supported various fields as such poverty alleviation through income generating, disaster preparedness activities, and the protection of child rights.

Since 2004 the organization's research was focused towards working children, especially in restaurants in the Kathmandu Valley. This included awareness campaigns and improving working children's environment through such things as supporting their formal/ non-formal education and offering health/ sanitation service support. Focus was given to these activities through past programs, which were also implemented under the Grant Assistance for Japanese NGO Projects Scheme of the Government of Japan. Through its dedicated activities, the organization came to realize that it is time to strengthen Nepal's local government in its role, responsibilities and capabilities to prevent and reduce child labor.



Ambassador Mr. Takahashi and Ms. Katsui, Representative of Shapla Neer-Nepal office exchanging the contract

Therefore, one of the major components of the current project is to help set up a Monitoring Unit within the municipality offices of Kathmandu, Bhaktapur and Lalitpur Municipalities. The project includes strengthening human resources development of municipality officers to look after the Monitoring Unit through working together with CWIN-NEPAL staff for one year. Targeted officers are expected to absorb know-how and experience from CWIN-NEPAL staff and be independent enough to sustain all activities continuously on their own in the future. Also heavy awareness campaigns will take place through media such as TV, radio, CM, and advertising, as well as direct posting of posters in restaurants. It is believed that through the monitoring activities by municipalities and the information provided through media, positive information can reach each child at their work place.



Japan's Assistance (GGP) for Improvement of Medical Service Provision in Pokhara

Signing Ceremony: November 24, 2011

Amount: ¥ 9,830,139 (approx. US\$ 110,451 or NRs. 9,000,000)

Project name: Improvement of Medical Service Provision in Pokhara City

Recipient: Pokhara Sub-Metropolitan City Office



Signing ceremony at the Embassy

Pokhara Sub-Metropolitan City Office is constructing the Pokhara-Komagane Maternity and Child Friendship Hospital at Battulechaur in the northern area of Pokhara Sub-Metropolitan City. The Grant will be utilized to partially support the construction of the hospital, and will be used to construct the emergency room, the laboratory, the pharmacy, reception, and the waiting hall of the hospital.

To cope with various health related issues, especially maternal and child health care, the Pokhara Sub-Metropolitan City Office started a mobile clinic service by utilizing an ambulance and medical equipment which were donated by the Citizen's Group from Komagane City of Japan in 2008. The mobile clinic service provides basic maternal and child health care such as pregnancy checkups and immunization for infants of the residents of the surrounding villages as well as other citizens, particularly from economically disadvantaged backgrounds.

However, these services are not sufficient to provide people with adequate facilities and medical environment during perinatal periods due to the fact there is no proper medical institution where people can receive emergency and prolonged medical services. For this reason, the Pokhara Sub-Metropolitan Office decided to construct a 25-bedded maternity and children's hospital equipped with an emergency room, a laboratory, a minor operation theatre, an ultra sound room and an ECG room. An obstetrician-gynecologist will also be available at the hospital. The hospital is expected to benefit more than 200,000 residents within and around Pokhara Sub-Metropolitan City.

“What We Learned from Japan”

Four Nepali university students from Tribhuvan University and Kathamandu University visited Japan for 10 days to participate in various exchange programs as a part of the Japan-East Asia Network of Exchange for Students and Youths (JENESYS Program) which has been implemented by the Government of Japan since 2007. The purpose of the program is to acquaint graduate students or post-doctoral fellows of science and technology with Japan's leading-edge technology and establish a network with Japanese human resources to enhance mutual cooperation. Below is an excerpt of report presented by the students:

“We had already some knowledge on Japan through TV, books, internet, etc and developed our own images before visiting. However, all the information we got did not make sense after experiencing Japan first hand. The program broadened our horizon. We learned a lot of things interacting with students, researchers and other participants of different ethnic groups. We realized we live in a very limited world in Nepal. We wish we could expand the exchange internationally and share the views with people of different ideas. We believe that it will develop our research and eventually contribute to world peace in the future.

In addition, we experienced a lot of valuable things such as the exchange with Japanese students and researchers from different fields, and the observation of cutting edge technologies; which was a rare chance. All of the activities such as visits to cultural sites and industries and the report presentation impacted positively on us and helped us grow as people. All Japanese students were very kind and cheerful, and we learned the importance of a positive attitude in communicating with different people. During the presentation session, it was very interesting to know about other researchers and the education system in Japan, where we found many differences between Japan and Nepal. Particularly I was overwhelmed that when we talked with Japanese students we learned of their large output capability.

We were exposed to the current state of the environment, economy and society through the visits to research centers, industries;



Participants of JENESYS Program 2011

all of which deepened our understanding of Japan's science and technology, traditional Japanese culture, Japan's natural environment and Japan's contribution to international efforts to stop global warming and climate change. We learnt about different technologies which were mostly related with clean and green energy. Nepal is rich in natural resources but we don't know to utilize sustainable use of these resources. Though Nepal lags far behind in the path of development, the concept of Japan in creating an eco city with an eco friendly environment can be applicable in our country, to some extent. We were really impressed by the new technologies of Japan and the friendly behavior of the Japanese people so we are thinking of applying to study for our PhDs in Japan in future in our fields.

To sum up, it was a valuable experience for us to join the JENESYS program and get to know Japan, because we experienced people and culture firsthand; which is better than learning out of books. Our experience helped increase our interest not only in Japan but also in Asia and it will continue in the future.

We are very proud of the fulfilling experiences and assets we gained from Japan!”



Japanese Language Seminar for Teachers

On August 6th and 7th, an intensive seminar for teachers was organized by JALTAN (Japanese Language Teachers' Association, Nepal) in cooperation with the Embassy of Japan and the Japan Foundation. Mr. Tomonari Tanabe, Japanese language advisor of the Japan Foundation, New Delhi gave lectures on learning Japanese with fun; grammar for N4 and N5; and teaching Japanese using the 'Can-do' website (<http://jfstandard.jp/cando/top/ja/render.do>) recently launched by the Japan Foundation.

The two day seminar guided teachers on building a foundation for preparing a proficiency-oriented curriculum; ways to develop teaching materials; course designing, and lesson plans. Participating teachers from different Japanese language institutes stated that it was an excellent experience for them to learn various methods to measure student's progress and effective teaching strategies.



Seminar at the Embassy Hall

“My Experience as a Japanese Language Student in Japan”

Every year, the Japan Foundation offers outstanding students of Japanese language the opportunity to visit Japan and to deepen their understanding of the language, culture and society through lectures, study tours, and exchange programs with Japanese youths. This year, Ms. Nabina Maharjan from the Campus of International Languages took part in the program from August 31 to September 14. Below is a summary of the interview with Ms. Maharjan.



International students in the program

1. Please tell us one of the most memorable experiences from your visit to Japan.

It was my dream to go to Japan once in my life time, and thanks to this program, it came true. I am so happy and thankful for that. The best of the best was the friendships formed with Japanese language students from around the world. I felt as if I got to see the whole world in two weeks. The language program, socio-culture programs, tours, etc were all very amazing and I wish I could have stayed much longer and learned many more things.

2. How was the Japanese language program?

Before landing in Japan, I was worried if the two week program would be boring. But, upon arriving in Japan, my worries were gone. All the teachers and staff members in the Center were so kind and helpful that we had no trouble at all. During my stay in Japan, my Japanese improved a lot, because I had a lot of opportunities to use the language. Learning the Osaka dialect was real fun. At the end of the program I think my Japanese language and understanding of Japanese people, culture and life has much improved.

3. What are the similarities and differences between Japan and Nepal?

Honestly speaking, there are too many differences between Nepal and Japan to be able to mention here. Japan is clean, quiet and organized. I was so amazed that there was not even a speck of dust in the whole town. The roads are big and organized; both pedestrians and vehicles follow the rules. This is something we never get to see here in Kathmandu. A visit to an aquarium was another wonderful

experience. To be frank, I knew only two or three kinds of fish. However, I just lost my voice when I saw hundreds of kinds of fish there. In addition, people are soft-spoken and diligent. But, they are too busy to spend time on leisure. It was shocking to see people working the whole night in the Center. I felt like saying “Please take some rest for the sake of your mental and physical health”.

4. How was your daily life in Japan?

Daily life in Japan was very enjoyable and the food was delicious. Two weeks was a short span, but I experienced many wonderful things and learned more of the fascinating Japanese language. Because of advanced technology, living in Japan is very convenient. When we went to Kyoto and Hiroshima, we took a bullet train and ferry. Impressed by its speed and stability, I couldn't help shouting “Wow!!” And, people are very kind. When my shoes got damaged in the hotel, they kindly got them mended at once. The moments I spent in Japan are something I will forever cherish.

5. What did you learn from the program?

All in all, it was a fruitful and memorable experience for me. Each day offered a chance to experience and learn innovative things. I realized how language and culture are inter-connected. It's very important to understand culture in order to correctly understand and speak a foreign language. The other thing that deeply touched my heart was the politeness and hospitality of the Japanese people. I will share the experience and knowledge gained in Japan with as many people as possible and make an effort to be a bridge between Nepal and Japan.

Karaoke Competition

On November 26, JALTAN, supported by the Embassy of Japan and JICA Nepal Office, hosted a karaoke competition at Nachghar, bringing together many Japanese language students from different institutes. A special stage was set up, where the students presented dynamic singing performances. The participants were judged on creativity, pronunciation, and singing ability. Prizes were given to the best solo and group performances. Students at all levels were encouraged to participate. The contest was anticipated to promote language learning and creativity.



Fukuoka Prize 2011

In 1990 the Fukuoka Prize was established by Fukuoka City in Japan to annually honor the outstanding work of individuals or groups/ organizations to preserve and create unique and diverse cultures of Asia. The aim is to foster and increase awareness of the value of Asian cultures as well as to institute a broad framework for exchange and mutual learning between the peoples of Asia. 2011 marks its 22nd anniversary.

On November 13 of this year, a press conference to announce Prof. Niels Gutschow as the Arts and Culture Prize Laureate for the Fukuoka Prize 2011 was organized at Mul Chowk, Patan Durbar Square. The award was made in recognition of Prof. Gutschow's devotion and commitment to the conservation and restoration, along with Nepalese people, of historical architecture in Nepal for more than four decades.

Present at the ceremony were Prof. Niels Gutschow; Prof. Keiyo Fujihara of Kyusyu University; Mr. Takanori Hyakutake, Secretary General of the Secretariat of the Fukuoka Prize Selection Committee; Ambassador Mr. Kunio Takahashi; Mr. Bishnu Karki, Director General of Department of Archaeology; Ministry of Youth, Sports and Culture, Dr. Shaphalya Amatya, Executive Director of Heritage Nepal; Mr. Ram Dayal Rakesh; the academic Prize laureate of the Fukuoka Prize 2004, journalists and correspondents from the national and foreign media.

At the conference, a panel discussion about conservation and restoration with Nepalese guests who have been involved in conservation work, took place. They talked about the problems and challenges in conservation and restoration in Nepal. The report of the award ceremony and related official events in Fukuoka were also showcased in the press conference.



Press conference at Mulchowk, Patan Durbar Square

Japanese Language Proficiency Test (JLPT)



On Sunday, December 4, the JLPT was conducted by JALTAN. A total of 635 Japanese language learners took the test. The JLPT is held worldwide to evaluate and certify the proficiency in Japanese of non-native speakers. Since 2010, the JLPT is held twice a year, in July and December. In addition to this, the test was expanded to five levels in 2010: passing Level N5 denoting simple language abilities, and Level N1 denoting advanced language abilities. For details, please visit the official JLPT website at <http://www.jlpt.jp> or JALTAN website <http://www.jaltan.org.np>.

People with physical disabilities can take the test by notifying JALTAN in advance so that special arrangement can be made.

Japanese Film at the Embassy Hall



JUAAN (Japanese Universities Alumni Association, Nepal) screened a Japanese film with English subtitles, Nonchan Noriben (The Recipe of Fortune) at the Embassy Hall on October 14. It is a story of a young housewife who fights back against the challenges of her life and finally finds her 'life's work' - to open a takeout bento (lunch box) store; bringing people happiness through her delicious bentos. JUAAN members said that the movie provided a fascinating insight into Japan's present society.

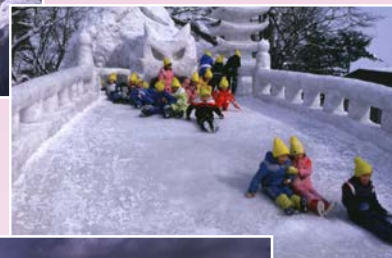
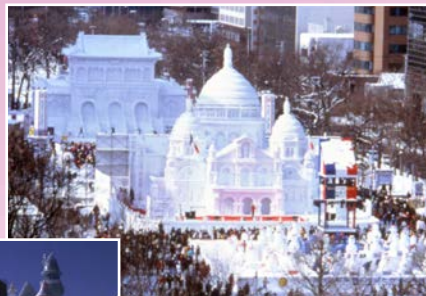


On Japan: Sapporo Snow Festival

The Sapporo Snow Festival held every year in early February is one of Japan's largest winter events. The Festival transforms the city into a wonderland of ice and snow sculptures. The festival is said to have begun in 1950 when local high school students created six snow sculptures in Odori Park, which is located along Sapporo's main avenue. Through the following years, the festival gradually became a part of life in Sapporo. Today, the festival has evolved into an international event, attracting a growing number of visitors from Japan and abroad.

Some two million people flock to Sapporo every year to see the hundreds of beautiful snow statues and ice sculptures created by international teams, Japan's Self-Defense Forces and Japanese citizens. At the festival, the participants compete to create gigantic and elaborate sculptures, whose themes range from famous landmarks to mythical creatures. Not only do citizens create statues and sculptures, but also hundreds of them participate as volunteers in providing tourist information, serving as foreign-language guides and interpreters for foreign visitors.

The Festival spreads across three sites (Odori Park, Susukino and Sapporo Satoland), with snow sculptures, mazes, slides, ice carvings, and events, such as snowboard jumping, music concerts, dancing, karaoke, and more. Visitors can also enjoy a variety of regional foods from all over Hokkaido, such as fresh seafood, potatoes and corn, and fresh dairy products. During the Festival the entire venue is lit up at night, turning the city into a magical fantasyland.



Huge snow sculptures in Odori park



Noh Performance

On February 11, 2012 the Embassy of Japan is going to host a Noh performance by Tsurukameza in Kathmandu. Dating from the early 17th century, Noh is one of Japan's oldest and most magnificent art forms. It is a classical Japanese performance combining elements of dance, drama, poetry and music, featuring elaborate costumes and masks.

While the field of Noh performance is extremely codified with an emphasis on tradition rather than innovation, the Tsurukameza Noh composes new plays or revive historical ones. Tsurukameza Noh since its founding in 2003, has carried out numerous activities to introduce Noh to the general Japanese public, especially children, as well as to international audiences abroad.

Embassy of Japan

Tel. 4426680, E-mail: culjpn@mos.com.np, URL : <http://www.np.emb-japan.go.jp>