



INFOJAPAN

Embassy of Japan in Nepal

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Kathmandu-Bhaktapur Road Inaugurated



Inauguration ceremony

The Hon. Prime Minister, Jhal Nath Khanal; Ambassador Mr. Mizuno; Minister for Physical Planning and Works, Mr. Top Bahadur Rayemajhi, and Chief Representative of JICA Nepal, Mr. Mitsukoshi Kawasaki jointly inaugurated the Kathmandu-Bhaktapur Road on May 3.

Approximately a 9.1km segment of the Kathmandu-Bhaktapur Road section of the Araniko Highway was upgraded by expanding the previous two-lane road to four-lanes. The road is designed to serve not only to ensure smooth transportation of goods and people between Kathmandu and Bhaktapur, but also to play an important role linking the Kathmandu Valley with the Eastern Terai via the Araniko Highway and the Sindhuli Road (which connects Dhulikhel-Sindhuli-Bardibas on the East-West Highway).

It is expected that this road project will help save time and reduce fuel expenses considerably for road users, who used to face very congested traffic, especially during rush hours. Furthermore, it is expected that it will bring a positive impact to the Nepalese economy and also improve access to health and education institutions for the residents along the road.



Expanded Kathmandu-Bhaktapur Road

Hiroshima and Nagasaki Mayors Conferred with the Lord Buddha International Peace Award



Gautam Buddha International Peace Award Ceremony

On May 17, Buddha Jayanti, the former mayor of Hiroshima Dr. Tadatoshi Akiba and the mayor of Nagasaki Mr. Tomihisa Taue were conferred with the 1st Gautam Buddha International Peace Award at a ceremony held in Lumbini, the birth place of Lord Buddha. The awards were made in recognition of their bold and visionary leadership for promoting human solidarity and world peace.

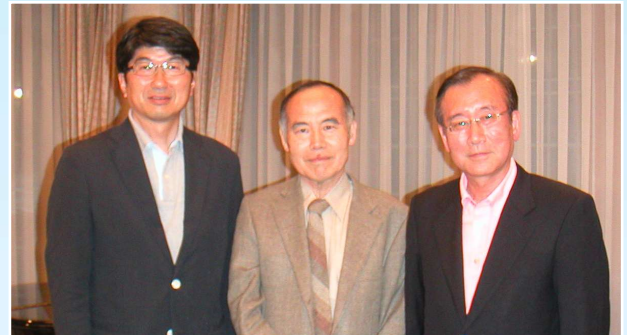
The award comprising of a gold medal, a Certificate of Award and a cash prize of US\$50,000 (US\$ 25,000 each) was conferred by the Right Honorable President Dr. Ram Baran Yadav. The Hon. Vice President, Permanendra Jha, Cabinet Ministers, Head of Diplomatic Missions, monks, nuns, and dignitaries from different walks of life attended the ceremony.

In accepting the award, the mayors dedicated it to *hibakusha*, or A-bomb survivors, citizens of Hiroshima and Nagasaki cities, as well as to every mayor who are the members of 'Mayors for Peace'. "Thank you very much for recognizing the efforts towards

creating a nuclear weapon free world, in the form of the Gautam Buddha International Peace Award," they said and outlined the history of their efforts and indicated where they are headed.

Working closely with like-minded nations, NGOs, and the United Nations, Mayors Akiba and Taue played a leading role to make the 2010 Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference a success, and have championed the widest possible acceptance of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). In doing so, the mayors represent the dreams and sentiments of hibakusha and millions of peace-loving people around the world who support the anti-nuclear weapons convention and call for the total abolition of nuclear weapons by 2020.

Furthermore, they have encouraged various governments of the world to take a stronger global role in support of nuclear disarmament, reduction of military expenditure and the peaceful resolution of conflicts around the world.



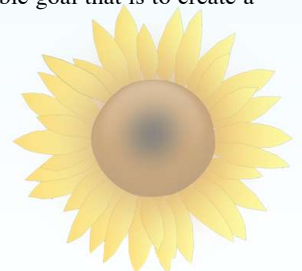
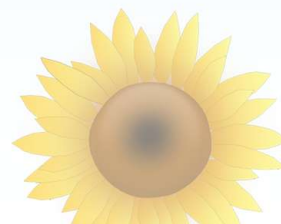
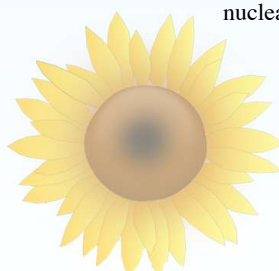
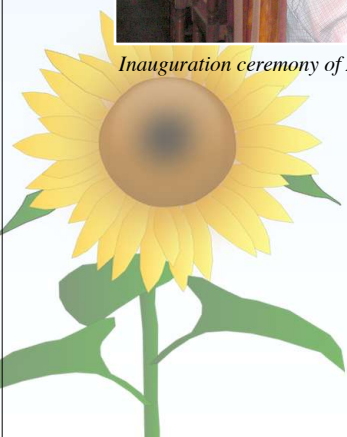
Ambassador Mr. Mizuno with Mr. Taue (L), mayor of Nagasaki and Dr. Akiba (R), former mayor of Hiroshima

Atomic Bomb Photo Exhibition in TU



Inauguration ceremony of Atomic Bomb Photo Exhibition in TU

On May 18, Nagasaki City Mayor, Mr. Tomihisa Taue and Minister for Education, Ganga Lal Tuladhar jointly inaugurated the 'Atomic Bomb Photo Exhibition' at the Memorial Hall in Tribhuvan University (TU). The exhibition was supported by the United Nations Regional Center for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific and was open to the public till May 21. The purpose behind the exhibition was to spread awareness of the need for a nuclear weapon free world and the devastating effect of war and nuclear weapons and their aftermath. At the inaugural ceremony and talk program the mayors and Mr. Toyokazu Ihara and Ms. Kiyomi Iguro, the Special Communicators for a World without Nuclear Weapons, who are survivors of the atomic bomb disaster, sought cooperation from all peace-loving people to help realize the noble goal that is to create a nuclear-weapon-free world by 2020.





Japan Approves the Utilization of the Counterpart Fund of KR 2

The Government of Japan has, based on the request made by the Government of Nepal, recently approved the utilization of the Counterpart Fund of six million Nepalese Rupees (NRs. 6,000,000) for the implementation of the following project:-

Sericulture Development Program

The objective of above mentioned program is to develop commercial sericulture in order to diversify and commercialize agriculture by increasing the production and productivity of silkworms. It has also the objective of developing and strengthening cooperatives and private entrepreneurs to establish income generating seri enterprises/cottage industries in rural areas.

It is expected this program will help in the production of silk worm eggs, farm management and procurement and marketing of cocoons produced by the farmers. About one thousand farmer households will benefit under the program.

The Counterpart Fund was established through financial assistance extended by the Government of Japan to increase agriculture production under KR2 (the grant assistance for underprivileged farmers). The Government of Nepal has procured fertilizer through this assistance, and sold it to the domestic market to prevent acute shortages and unexpected price hikes. The amount collected from selling the fertilizer was deposited as a Counterpart Fund. The Fund can be utilized for implementing various social and economic development projects through consultation between the two governments.



Ambassador Attends Foundation Laying Ceremony of Shree Janata Higher Secondary School in Udayapur



Students welcoming Ambassador Mr. Mizuno



Ambassador Mr. Mizuno participating in foundation laying ceremony

On June 8, Ambassador Mr. Mizuno attended the foundation laying ceremony of Shree Janata Higher Secondary School in Udayapur, where he was warmly welcomed by hundreds of students and teachers, as well as the Chief of the School Management Committee, Mr. Arnan Dev Chaudhari, the Head Master of the School, Mr. Shiv Narayan Chaudhari, and local residents.

The School was established in 1961 in Hadiya VDC, Udayapur District as a primary school and upgraded to plus two level in 2008. Constructed by the local community, the buildings are now in a dilapidated condition and suffering from a shortage of classrooms. To serve the community's need and to improve the learning environment, the construction of a two-storey school building with eight rooms, suitable for maximum 360 students from nursery to class five, will take place. The Government of Japan has extended financial assistance of USD 98,545, equivalent to approx. NRs. 6,954,359 under the Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects (GGP) scheme.

With the extension of the school building, it is expected that there will be a tremendous increase in the enrollment of students not only from Hadiya, but also from surrounding VDCs. It is also expected that the project will contribute to reduce the educational gap between urban and rural areas.

30th Japanese Language Speech Contest

The 30th Japanese Language Speech Contest hosted by Japanese Language Teachers' Association, Nepal (JALTAN) and supported by the Embassy of Japan and the Japan Foundation was held at Ashok Party Palace on June 18. Ambassador Mr. Mizuno was the chief guest. A total of 12 contestants who are learning Japanese in various language schools presented their speeches in two categories: senior and junior. The contestants were those who passed a strict initial screening at their language institutes as well as at JALTAN.

This year the senior 1st prize was awarded to Ms. Nabina Maharjan from the Japanese Language and Education Culture Center for her speech entitled 'Literacy Education in Nepal'. The 2nd and 3rd prizes went to, respectively, Mr. Sonam Dangol from the Asian Language Institute speaking on 'Environment Friendly Bonsai' and Ms. Sangita Maharjan from the New Japanese Language Institute for her speech on 'Traffic Jams in Kathmandu'.

Similarly, the Junior 1st, 2nd and 3rd prizes went to Mr. Purna Bahadur Lama from Bhaktapur Japanese Language Institute who spoke on 'Japanese Language in Nepal', Ms. Juna Lama from the Asian Language Institute speaking on 'Japanese Language' and Ms. Luna Thapa from the Yasashisa Japanese Language School for her speech entitled 'What I Learned from Japanese Culture'.

The speeches, 3-5 minutes in length, were judged on content, grammar, pronunciation and presentation skills. The purpose of the speech contest is to provide Japanese learners in Nepal with the opportunity to display their language skills and to inspire other students to improve their proficiency in Japanese.



Ambassador Mr. Mizuno distributing medals to winners

Japanese Language Learners Training Program

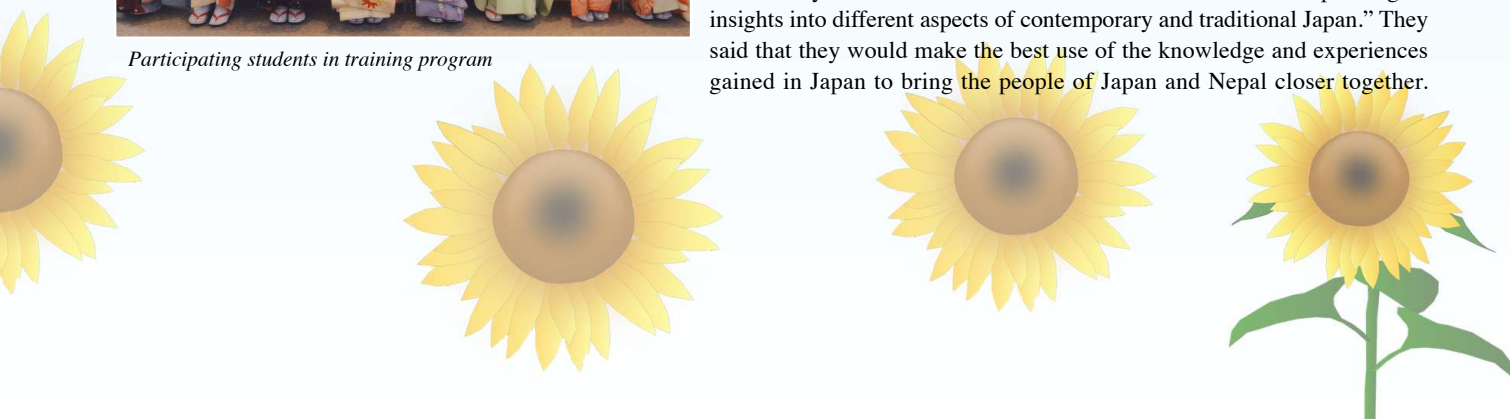


Participating students in training program

Every year the Japan Foundation invites Japanese language learners from SAARC countries to a training program in order to provide them with an opportunity to come to Japan and to participate in a Japanese language course to deepen their knowledge of the Japanese language, culture and society. This year eight Nepali students from different language institutes in Kathmandu took part in the program from March 2 to 29.

The course was designed to improve the Japanese language proficiency of participants so that they will be able to use complex linguistic skills, as well as daily conversation. In addition to this, the program included, a home-stay in a local family; an exchange program with university students and people of neighbouring communities; a study trip, and demonstrations of calligraphy and other traditional arts and culture of Japan, etc.

The Nepali participants commented, "Sharing knowledge and experiences with Japanese teachers and participants from different countries enriched our knowledge of Japan and improved our language skills. Cultural programs, a home-stay and visits to universities and historical sites have helped us gain insights into different aspects of contemporary and traditional Japan." They said that they would make the best use of the knowledge and experiences gained in Japan to bring the people of Japan and Nepal closer together.



Learning Ikebana



The Embassy of Japan, in cooperation with the Japanese Universities Alumni Association, Nepal (JUAAN), offers Ikebana Classes in the Embassy as part of the promotion of Japanese culture in Nepal. This time 16 participants completed the 8th Ikebana Class held from July 4th to 25th. Till date more than 130 Nepalese have learned the Japanese traditional art of arranging flowers and it is gaining popularity among the learners. Those interested in the unique art of flower arranging are requested to contact the Cultural Department, Embassy of Japan (Tel: 4426680, Ext: 232, 233).



Japanese Language Proficiency Test (JLPT)



The second July JLPT was held on Sunday, July 3 by the Japanese Language Teachers' Association, Nepal (JALTAN). A total of 335 people took the test. The JLPT was expanded to five levels in 2010, with passing Level N5 denoting simple language abilities, and Level N1 denoting advanced language abilities. For details, please visit 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 the JALTAN in advance so that special arrangements can be made.

JUAAN Benkyokai

Benkyokai, a regular interactive forum of the Japanese Universities Alumni Association, Nepal (JUAAN), was organized on June 11. The invited guest speaker of the program was Professor Dr. Hisanobu Shishido, Policy Cluster Leader at the World Bank, Kathmandu office. Speaking on the topic 'Elements of Growth and Development Strategy in Nepal', he pointed out Nepal's inadequate performance in economic growth with a 'constant' US\$ 200 GDP per capita since 1960. Citing some examples of neighboring countries, he said equal opportunity, stable macro-economy and leadership credibility committed to growth policy are important ingredients of high catch-up growths.

Dwelling on Nepal's present situation, Professor Shishido emphasized three issues to consider: (i) transition to federalism, (ii) large scale migration and remittances, and (iii) law and order. Pointing out how policy making, migration and labor shortage in the country are related, he opined that regional policy should be in line with labor mobility and people should be free to move to different parts of the country for new jobs.

On Japan: Tanabata

Tanabata, the Japanese Star Festival on 7 July celebrates the coming together once a year of two star lovers who are separated by the Milky Way. Tanabata originated more than 2,000 years ago with an old Chinese tale entitled Kikkoden. Once there was a weaver princess named Orihime and a cow herder prince named Hikoboshi living in space. Legend has it that they fell in love and neglected their work, leading the God of the Sky to separate them by placing them on either side of the Amanogawa (Milky Way). He later relented, and allowed them to meet once a year, on July 7.

Thus, as 7th July gets closer, people write their wishes on colorful, small strips of papers and hang them on bamboo branches in the hope that the wishes become true. Depending on the region, it's celebrated on July 7 or August 7 in Japan. Colorful Tanabata festivals are held across Japan in early July and August. Among the biggest and most famous ones are the Tanabata Festivals of Sendai in August and Hiratsuka, near Tokyo, in July, which attract millions of visitors every year. The decorations traditionally come in red, yellow, green, white and black paper. The poems and decorations are hung on bamboo trees or branches and are offered to the stars along with prayers. In some regions, people use bamboo leaves or light lanterns and float them on the river.

The belief that the two star lovers cross paths only once a year is very appealing to young Japanese girls and they eagerly pray during the Tanabata Festival for the success of their own love and also pray that the weather will be fair. If it rains, the Milky Way becomes flooded and the two stars can not meet for another year. Rain on the evening of Tanabata is considered bad luck for couples. It is believed that prayers uttered and hung on bamboo trees on the evening of Tanabata will be granted. Nowadays, Tanabata is celebrated throughout Japan with a variety of carnivals and customs. Many regions hold decoration competitions or parades.



Colorful tanabata festival



Colorful, small strips of papers hang on bamboo branches with wishes



Photo: AFLO

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