



(*Oshōgatsu: see at the end)

JAPAN FRESH NEWS

No. 10 (January 2015)

by the Embassy of Japan in Slovenia

~ fresh news, recent events and useful sites ~

(This newsletter will be issued every end of month, and if your colleagues/friends want to receive this, please tell them to send their email address to: info@s2.mofa.go.jp.)



- * On 14 December 2014, the 47th General Election of the House of Representatives was carried out in Japan. Prime Minister Abe's coalition won two thirds of the Lower House. <Sec. I>
- * Reception on the occasion of the birthday of His Majesty the Emperor was held on Tuesday, 2 December 2014 in Hotel Union. <Sec. II>
- * NEDO and SPIRIT launched a feasibility study for a smart community system demonstration project in Slovenia. <Sec. I>
- * Japanese stall at SILA Bazaar attracted a lot of visitors. Many Japanese goods were sold there for donation to Slovenia. <Sec. II>



I. Fresh/important news

~ The 47th General Election of members of the House of Representatives ~

On 14 December 2014, the 47th General Election of the House of Representatives was carried out in Japan. The current coalition parties (LDP and Komeito) got a two-third majority of the lower house seats. PM Abe is expected to launch the 3rd Cabinet on 24 December 2014. Current Ministers are expected to remain on their posts.

~ Launch of Feasibility Study on Smart Community Demonstration Project ~

On 5 December 2014, NEDO (The New Energy and Industrial Technology Development Organization of Japan) and SPIRIT launched a feasibility study for a smart community system demonstration project in Slovenia. During the one-year feasibility study, NEDO and SPIRIT will develop specifications of a detailed plan for a possible future demonstration project. [Details](#)



~ Japan's Response to the Ebola Outbreak in Western Africa ~

"We must stop this outbreak any way we can. Japan is determined to put forth its best in the fight against the Ebola virus disease." (Remarks by Prime Minister Abe at the UN Meeting on the Response to the Ebola Outbreak on 25 September 2014)

Japan has been actively implementing financial, in-kind, and personnel contribution to the Ebola Outbreak in Western Africa. Detailed information on measures taken by Japan can be found on the Foreign Ministry's [website](#).

II. Recent events

~ National day of Japan ~

The Embassy held a reception on the occasion of the National day of Japan on Tuesday, 2 December 2014 in Hotel Union, Ljubljana. Around 330 invitees, among whom many representatives of Slovenian Government, Ambassadors, Japanese companies and other organizations related to Japan, attended this celebration of the birthday of His Majesty the Emperor of Japan. Guests were able to enjoy Japanese food and drinks and listen to the traditional koto music. [Details](#)



~ SILA Bazaar ~

The Slovenian International Ladies Association (SILA) organized their 21st annual international charity bazaar on Saturday, 29 November 2014 at Gospodarsko razstavišče. This year, more than 30 countries participated, including Japan. The beautifully decorated Japanese stall attracted a lot of people with its exhibited kimono, Japanese dolls, ikebana and other traditional objects. Fresh sushi was one of the most popular goods our stall was offering, along with calligraphy, Japanese traditional dishes and children toys. More information [here](#).



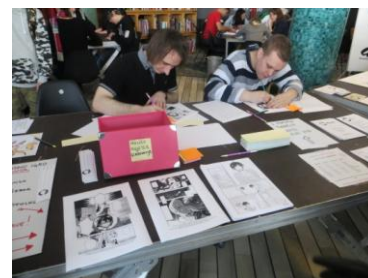
~ Traditional rakugo performance in Slovenia ~

On 8 December 2014, SiTi Theatre staged a performance of rakugo, Japan's traditional art of sit-down comic storytelling. Katsura Sunshine, a Canadian with Slovenian roots, who has completed an apprenticeship and is the only non-Japanese engaged in the art, has brought the audience to big laughter in his two-part program. [Details](#)



~ Makkon 2014 ~

An event centred on anime, manga and Japanese culture organized by Makkon association and supported by Embassy of Japan was held on 13 December 2014 at Kino Šiška. The event attracted a few hundred young people, who participated in various lectures, presentations, workshops, performances and competitions. [Details](#)



~ Inform us about your Japan-related event! ~

If your institution/group is organizing a Japan-related event, we welcome to include it in this newsletter! For more information, please send an e-mail to matej.crnjavic@s2.mofa.go.jp.

For more information about Japan, please visit these websites:

- ①. Prime Minister Abe's government policies
 1. [Abenomics](#) (Prime Minister Abe's economic policy)
 2. [Proactive Contribution to Peace](#)
 3. [A Society in Which Women Shine](#) (Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality)
 4. [Keynote speech at the 13th IISS Asian Security Summit](#) ("The Shangri-la Dialogue")
 5. [Speech at the Sixty-Ninth Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations](#)
- ②. Issues related to Japanese territory:
 1. [Senkaku Islands](#)
 2. [Takeshima](#)
 3. [Northern Territories](#)
 4. [Sea of Japan](#)
- ③. Tourist information:
 1. [Japan National Tourism Organization](#)
 2. [Visit Japan Links](#)
 3. [Guide to Japanese Visas](#)
 4. [Japanese Inn Group](#)
- ④. Study in Japan:
 1. [Study in Japan](#)
 2. [Gateway to Study in Japan](#)
- ⑤. Cultural exchange:
 1. [Japan Foundation](#)
 2. [Japan: Fascinating diversity](#)

⑥. Other useful sites:

1. [JETRO \(Japan External Trade Organization\)](#)
2. [The Slovenia-Japan Business Council](#)
3. [World Heritage in Japan](#)
4. [Web Japan](#)
5. [Nihongo Starter \(Online Japanese Course\)](#)

⑦. [Japanese restaurants in Slovenia](#)



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*** Oshōgatsu (正月, New Year)**

- (1) New Year is the most important holiday in Japan. Homes and entrance gates are decorated with "kadoomatsu", ornaments made of pine, bamboo and plum trees.
- (2) For New Years, many Japanese dress into the traditional kimono and visit shrines to pray for happiness and a healthy year. This custom is called the "Hatsumode" (first shrine visit of the New Year).
- (3) Various kinds of special dishes are served afterwards, like: Osechi-ryōri, otoso (sweetened rice wine) and ozōni (a soup with mochi rice cake).
- (4) On New Year's Day, Japanese have a custom of giving money to children. This is known as "otoshidama". It is handed out in small decorated envelopes and the amount of money given depends on the age of the child.
- (5) One of the Japanese New Year's traditions is also "Hanetsuki", a game, played with a wooden paddle called "hagoita" and a shuttle called "hane". The game resembles badminton, played without a net. Every year, the Hagoita Market (Hagoita-ichi) is held at Sensoji Temple in Asakusa, Tokyo, where ornamented wooden paddles (hagoita) are sold. The paddles come in different sizes, and most of them feature portraits of kabuki actors and beautiful Edo ladies.



(1) Kadomatsu



(2) Hatsumode



(3) Osechi-ryōri



(4) Otoshidama



(5) Hanetsuki



(6) Hagoita