



# JAPAN FRESH NEWS

No. 16 (July 2015)

by the Embassy of Japan in Slovenia

(\*Gion matsuri: see at the end)

~ fresh news, recent & future 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](mailto:info@s2.mofa.go.jp).)

(If your institution/group is organizing a Japan-related event, we welcome to include it in this newsletter! Please send your info to [matej.crnjavic@s2.mofa.go.jp](mailto:matej.crnjavic@s2.mofa.go.jp).)



- \* **Members of Slovenian National Assembly visit Japan** (Sec. I)
- \* 3rd Business Forum "**How to do successful business with Japan**" in Ribnica. (Sec. II)
- \* **Japan Day** attracted a lot of visitors! (Sec. III)
- \* **Katsura Sunshine** appointed to **Friendship Ambassador for Slovenia and Japan** (Sec. III)
- \* Slovenia's Buckwheat Culture also in **Japanese newspaper NIKKEI** (Sec. III)
- \* **Japanese swordsmanship** on 18 July 2015 near Maribor (Sec. IV)



## I. Fresh/important news

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### ~ G7 Summit 2015 in Schloss Elmau ~

On 7 and 8 June 2015, the G7 Summit was held in Schloss Elmau in Germany, where PM Abe attended. In the opening address, PM Abe pointed out that this year marks the 70th anniversary since the end of World War II and that the G7 has underpinned the order of the international community based on the fundamental values of freedom, democracy, human rights and the rule of law. PM Abe also held bilateral meetings with UK, Italy, Germany and France. [Details](#)

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### ~ Presidents of Japanese and Slovenian Parliamentary Friendship Groups meet in Japan & IPU Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians ~

On 27 and 28 May 2015, the [Inter-Parliamentary Union \(IPU\) Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians](#) was held at the National Diet of Japan in Tokyo, with three MP attendants from Slovenia; President of the Parliamentary Friendship Group with Japan Mr. Branko Zorman, members of the Friendship Group Ms. Korenjak Kamnar and Ms. Škopac. During their visit in Japan, they also had a meeting with President of the Parliamentary Friendship Group with Slovenia Mr. Yasuhisa Shiozaki (Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare of the current Abe Government).

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### ~ Visit of PM Abe in Ukraine ~

On 5 and 6 June 2015, PM Abe paid an official visit to Ukraine. It was the first visit of Japanese PM to Ukraine. In the summit-meeting with Ukrainian President Poroshenko, PM Abe stated that Japan would not tolerate any attempts to change the status quo by force and as the next G7 chair country, Japan would play an even more proactive role towards achieving a diplomatic and peaceful solution of the situation in Ukraine. [Details](#)

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### ~ Japan-EU Summit ~

On 29 May 2015, the 23rd Japan-European Union Summit Meeting was held in Tokyo. Among the attendants from the Japanese site there were also PM Abe, FM Kishida, President of the European Council Tusk, President of the European Commission Juncker, High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Mogherini and so on. The leaders discussed Japan-EU relations including the negotiations of Japan-EU EPA as well as global agendas and issued joint statement as a result of the meeting. [Details](#)

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### ~ The 7th Pacific Islands Leaders Meeting (PALM7) ~

On 22 and 23 May in 2015, the 7th Pacific Islands Leaders Meeting (PALM7) was held in Fukushima in Japan. Pacific Islands Leaders Meeting is a summit-level meeting which has been held every three years since 1997. Leaders openly discussed various issues that Pacific island countries are facing such as climate changes, sustainable development, trade and investment promotion. [Details](#)

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### ~ Japan Foreign Policy Forum ~

"[Discuss Japan, Japan Foreign Policy Forum](#)" website presents translations of essays and discourse by Japanese specialists in fields including politics, economics, culture, and science and technology. The editorial board of "Discuss Japan" selects essays from Japanese magazines and newspapers to provide a wide-ranging picture of domestic views about Japan today.

[Register your e-mail address](#) to receive updates from Japan Foreign Policy Forum.

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## II. Economic/Business News

### ~ 3rd Business Forum organized by Slovenia-Japan Business Council ~

On June 12, the 3rd Business Forum "How to do successful business with Japan," organized by Slovenia-Japan Business Council was held in Ribnica with the participation of two State Secretaries: Mr. Aleš Cantarutti from the Ministry of Economic Development and Technology and Mr. Franc Matjaž Zupančič from the Government Office for Development and European Cohesion Policy.

During the opening remarks, Ambassador Jomori encouraged the further expansion of business cooperation utilizing the high technologies, and emphasized the importance of NEDO Smart Community Project as well as the Japan-EU Economic Partnership Agreement. [Details](#)

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### ~ Ambassador Jomori at “Japan Day with Konica Minolta” ~

On June 16, Ambassador Jomori participated “Japan Day with Konica Minolta,” which was held at Brdo. In his opening remarks, Ambassador Jomori presented current economic situation in Japan, as well as status of business cooperation between our two countries. Ambassador also stressed the importance of Japan-EU Economic Partnership Agreement for promoting the economic relations of our two countries. [Details](#)



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### ~ Latest information on the progress of “Abenomics”. ~

On June 8, the Government of Japan released the latest informative material entitled “[Abenomics is Progressing](#)”, a summary of growth strategies towards the reinvigoration of the Japanese economy.

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## III. Recent events

### ~ Japan Day 2015 ~

The traditional Japan Day, dedicated to Japanese culture took place on Saturday, 30 May 2015 at the Ljubljana Exhibition and Convention Centre. The already fourth edition was organized by the Embassy of Japan with co-organizer Genki center and in cooperation with various associations and individuals associated with Japanese culture, Japanese companies in Slovenia and many volunteers, fans of Japanese culture. The event attracted more than 2,500 people and was very successful. [Details](#)



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### ~ The Embassy’s school program “Cultural Study of the Rising Sun” ~

In April and May 2015, the Japanese Embassy organized lectures and workshops about Japan and Japanese culture at the following three schools in Slovenia:

1. On 13 April, Mr. Kuno, Japanese tea ceremony teacher, held a workshop on tea ceremony at the UTŽO Sežana.
2. In April and May, Ms. Keiko Vahčič, Japanese artist, held workshops on Japanese culture (Origami and Calligraphy) at Gimnazija Lava, UTŽO Sežana, Osnovna šola Poljane and Gimnazija in srednja kemijska šola Ruše.
3. On 29 May, Mr. Luka Culiberg, Japanese language lecturer at the Faculty of Arts of the University of Ljubljana, held a lecture about Japanese culture and society at Osnovna šola Dravlje. [More details](#)



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### ~ Katsura Sunshine appointed to Friendship Ambassador for Slovenia and Japan ~

Mr. Katsura Sunshine, a Japanese traditional comic story teller, was appointed as Friendship Ambassador for Slovenia and Japan by the Embassy of Slovenia in Japan on 2 June 2015. At the ceremony of the appointment, he mentioned the Slovenian hospitality and expressed his desire that more Japanese people visit Slovenia. He is Canadian, who was born to Slovenian parents. Last year, he performed Rakugo (Japanese traditional comedy) at the BTC SiTi Teater in Ljubljana. [Details](#) (in Japanese only)



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### ~ Buckwheat culture and Prof. Dr. Ivan Kreft in NIKKEI ~

On 7 June 2015, Japanese newspaper "NIKKEI" published an article about the expansion of international exchange of Slovenia's Buckwheat culture with several comments of Prof. Dr. Ivan Kreft, who is one of organizers of the 1st International Buckwheat Symposium in 1980. In this article, Dr. Kreft mentioned the history and some typical dishes of buckwheat in central-eastern Europe, and pointed out that the consumption of buckwheat is steadily increasing in Slovenia. Buckwheat noodles or »soba« in Japanese, is a very popular Japanese dish, and »soba-ya«, restaurants serving these noodles, can be found in every corner.

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### ~ Literary evening at Sanje bookstore ~

On Wednesday, 10 June 2015 the Embassy of Japan and Sanje publishing house organized a literary evening, introducing Japanese authors whose works were translated into Slovenian and published by Sanje. The evening attracted 70 visitors and started with a musical performance on koto as an introduction to the discussion between Tjaša Koprivec, editor-in-chief of Sanje publishing house, and her guests, translators and experts on Japanese language and literature, Iztok Ilc and dr. Luka Culiberg.



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## IV. Future events

### ~ Reinvigoration of Pruh with the help of Japanese samurai ~

**Association LOSI** is kindly inviting to an afternoon, dedicated to Japanese culture, culinary and sport. Join them **on Saturday, 18 July 2015 from 14:00** at the former limestone excavation site **Pruh**, situated on the border between Slovenia and Austria, near Maribor, and discover some interesting aspects about Japan. Watch the Japanese swordsmanship and kendo demonstrations and test yourself in the role of a samurai, try delicious Japanese food and stay for the Orkestrada concert at 19:00. Entrance is free of charge. [Details](#).

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**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)



- 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. [J-GoodTech \(Matching website for leading companies\)](#)
  - 4. [World Heritage in Japan](#)
  - 5. [Web Japan](#)
  - 6. [Nihongo Starter \(Online Japanese Course\)](#)
- ⑦. [Japanese restaurants in Slovenia](#)



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### **\*Gion Matsuri: 祇園祭, Gion Festival**

Gion Matsuri, the festival of Yasaka Shrine (Gion-sha), is Kyoto's biggest and most important and one of Japan's three largest festivals. It's a festival originating from the 9<sup>th</sup> century; its history is therefore more than 1000 years old.

Gion Matsuri is a long lasting festival, going for the entire month of July and reaching its highlight on **Yoiyama** (Yama by night). The streets are crowded with people, many in traditional dress and many stalls are set up along the main streets. Even 400 thousand people come to admire this Yoiyama.





The ***Yamaboko Junko***, grand procession of floats on July 17 is also one of the particularly spectacular events of the festival following the Yoiyama. Some 30 floats called ***yamaboko*** are proceeding along the main streets of Kyoto.



There are 25 *Yama* floats and 7 *Hoko* floats. **Yama** are the smaller floats. They weigh about 1.5 tons and are usually about 6 meters high. Yama floats are usually carried by many people on their shoulders. The Yama floats usually depict scenes from Chinese and Japanese history and mythology and often bear pine trees, shrines, and sacred mannequins.



**Hoko** are usually the massive 2-storey floats. Most weigh from 5 to 12 tons and can be as high as 25 meters. Most have large wooden wheels and are pulled by 12 to 50 people dressed in



traditional outfits. It is topped with a long pole shaped like a spear. During the parade, musicians playing the flute, drums and bells are seated on the second level of the float.

