



JAPAN FRESH NEWS

No. 12 (March 2015)

by the Embassy of Japan in Slovenia

(*Ukiyo-e, Sharaku: see at the end)

~ 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.)

(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.)



- * **Tokyo is the safest** urban destination. (Sec. IV)
- * Interested in **the security situation in Asia**? Don't miss out the lectures on this topic by the renowned Dr. Seiichiro Takagi on 13 March 2015 in Ljubljana. (Sec. III)
- * Experience the traditional **Urasenke tea ceremony** demonstration on 24 March at 18:00, at the Ethnographic Museum in Ljubljana. (Sec. III)
- * An exhibition "**Sharaku Interpreted by Japanese Contemporary Artists**" is still on display until 22 March 2015. (Sec. II)
- * **Japanese football player** Yuto Kubo is now playing for **FC Celje**. (Sec. IV)



I. Fresh/important news

~ Murder of Japanese Hostages in Syria ~

Japanese nationals Mr. Kenji Goto and Mr. Haruna Yukawa were murdered as victims of inhumane and despicable acts of terrorism. We feel greatest sorrow and profound grief. As Prime Minister Abe mentions in his [statement](#) Japan will never give in to terrorism and will continue to take all possible measures to ensure the safety of Japanese nationals at home and abroad. [Details](#)

~ New Videos on Japan's Foreign Policy ~

New videos on Japan's Foreign Policy are now available on the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan:

1. [Proactive Contribution to Peace: Japan's Efforts for a Better Global Security Environment](#)
2. [Nation Building in the Post War Era: Japan as a Reliable Partner](#)
3. [To Make Women Shine: WAW! From Japan to the World](#)
4. [To Make Women Shine: Japan's Efforts in Developing Countries](#)

~ Cabinet decision on the Development Cooperation Charter ~

On 10 February 2015, the Japanese Cabinet adopted the "Development Cooperation Charter" which defines the future direction of the Japanese official development assistance (ODA). Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan Fumio Kishida stated that "based on the new framework, we will promote more strategic development assistance and further contribute to the peace, stability and prosperity of the international community." [Details](#)

~ Update on 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

~ Exhibition opening: Sharaku Interpreted by Japanese Contemporary Artists ~

The Japan Foundation traveling exhibition "Sharaku Interpreted by Japan's Contemporary Artists" was opened on 12 February with speeches by Ms. Milena Čeko Pungartnik, Director of Zavod Celeia Celje, Mr. Stane Rozman, Celje Deputy Mayor and Ambassador Jomori. Around 50 people attended the event, enjoying reproductions of Sharaku's works and reinterpretations by contemporary Japanese artists. You can still catch the exhibition at the **Gallery of Contemporary Art in Celje until 22 March. Free entrance.** [Details](#)



~ Japanese woodblock print (ukiyo-e) demonstrations in Celje and Ljubljana ~

Masters of Japanese woodblock print (ukiyo-e) demonstrated this traditional Japanese art at the Gallery on Contemporary Art in Celje on 19 February and at the Slovene Ethnographic Museum in Ljubljana on 20 February. Both demonstrations attracted many interested visitors, who learned about the production of these remarkable pieces of art. [Details](#)



III. Future events

~ Lectures on Security Situation in East Asia ~

On **13 March 2015**, the Embassy of Japan is organizing lectures on the security situation in East Asia with support of the Faculty of Social Sciences of the University of Ljubljana and the Slovenian Association for International Relations. The Lecturer is **Dr. Seiichiro Takagi**, a Japanese prominent professor from one of the biggest think tanks, the Japan Institute of International Affairs. Attendance is free of charge. Check [details](#) about the time and place of lectures.

~ Urasenke tea ceremony demonstration in Ljubljana ~

Have you ever wondered about the rules and the predefined movements of the aesthetic ritual of preparing and serving Japanese green tea? Now you have the unique opportunity to observe true masters of the tea ceremony from the Urasenke School in Kyoto, and taste Japanese green tea and sweets! Join us on **24 March at 18:00 at the Ethnographic Museum in Ljubljana**. The event is supported by Japan Foundation and is **free of charge**. Translation from Japanese to English will be provided.

IV. Other

~ Tokyo selected the safest major urban destination ~

The newly published Safe Cities Index 2015, compiled by the Economist, names Tokyo the safest major city in the world, despite being also the most populous city. Tokyo ranks top in fields of digital security, health security, infrastructure and personal safety. Another Japanese city – Osaka – is ranked third. See the complete list [here](#).

~ Japanese football player Yuto Kubo for FC Celje ~

The promising Japanese football player Yuto Kubo signed a three-year contract with FC Celje. The 22-year old attacking midfielder is the first foreigner to join the club competing in the first football league of Slovenia. Kubo, who in recent seasons played for the Tokyo Gakugei University, was assigned the number 25.



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. [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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* **Ukiyo-e: Japonism: Sharaku**

1. **Ukiyo-e** is woodblock prints and was very popular in 17th-19th centuries=Edo period in Japan. It was a culture of citizens (not of/for Samurai). They described almost everything, everyday life, nature, events, etc., but most popular themes were Kabuki stars, Sumo wrestlers and beautiful women.
2. Ukiyo-e was also an amusement for Edo people, like "picture print", where you could enjoy nice pictures of your favorite Kabuki stars with the latest fashion. Or you could admire beautiful scenes of faraway places in Japan, where you could never visit. Or you could be informed of famous events/happenings visually through Ukiyo-e.



The Great wave off Kanagawa
(Hokusai)



Kakegawa
(Hiroshige)



Hairdresser
(Utamaro)

3. Once introduced in Europe in latter half of 19th century, Ukiyo-e, with other Japanese culture, made a new culture movement in Europe: **Japonism**. It influenced many European artists, mainly impressionists, Manet, Monet, Whistler, Van Gogh, Degas, Gauguin, Lautrec etc. Claude Debussy grew inspiration from Hokusai and Hiroshige most prominently in "La Mer" (1905). Ukiyo-e, with its curved lines, patterned surfaces, and contrasting voids and flatness of their picture plane, also inspired Art Nouveau. Thus Japonism involved the adoption of Japanese elements or style across all the applied arts, from furniture, textiles and jewelry to graphic design.

(Bellow is an oil painting of Van Gogh after Hiroshige.)



Sudden Shower Over Shin-Ohashi Bridge and Atake (Hiroshige)



Bridge in the rain (Vincent van Gogh)

4. There are many famous artists of Ukiyo-e, but **SHARAKU** was an extreme. He is known for his portraits of Kabuki actors and Sumo wrestlers with emphasized poses of dynamism and unusual realism for prints. Moreover he is a very mysterious master. We don't know who Sharaku is. His identity was not known yet and his working period was only 10 months. It is said "Sharaku" was a pseudonym of some another famous artist. Anyway nowadays his masterpieces are highly appreciated and a fine original print of Sharaku can have a price of 100,000 euro (396,000 euro in auction in Paris in 2009).



Kabuki star (Sharaku)



Sumo Wrestlers (Sharaku)

5. Please visit **"Sharaku Interpreted by Japan's Contemporary Artist"** at the Gallery of Contemporary Art in Celje (open till 22 March). Where you can enjoy the "Reproduction of Sharaku", 28 famous works with Kabuki Stars, etc., the "Sharaku in Graphic art" by famous Japanese graphic designer and the "Homage to Sharaku".

