

JAPAN ENTREPRENEURS & PRESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

February 04, 2011

Dear Sirs or Madams,

Please find below the newest version of our newsletter (No. 34, February 2011).

With compliments

JAPAN ENTREPRENEURS AND PRESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER NO.34 SUMMARIES

Reception on the occasion of Hitomi Tokuda's inauguration as Honorary Consul-General of Bhutan in Tokyo at the Foreign Correspondence Club in Tokyo

A large number of ambassadors and consuls of many countries, politicians and company presidents attended the inauguration party held in December last year at the Foreign Correspondence club in Yurakcho, Tokyo. Following please find the speech Ms. Tokuda held at the ceremony.

Thank you very much for making time in your busy schedule to be here today.

In April this year, I was inaugurated as the Honorary Consul-General of the Kingdom of Bhutan in Japan. I am very much honored at the same time as I keep myself urgent for this important responsibility.

I will do my best for the betterment of the mutual friendship between the Kingdom of Bhutan and Japan, with the great help of Mr. Tsuji and Mr. Nagata, the Honorary Consuls, Pema Gyalpo, the Adviser to the Prime Minister, Royal government of Bhutan, Katsuhiko Hibino, the Ambassador for Tourism, and Ms. Watanabe and Mr. Mori of the Japan-Bhutan Friendship Association.

Bhutan is famous for being the country of GNH - Gross National Happiness, which the fourth Dragon King (Druk Gyalpo) of Bhutan, Jigme Singye Wangchuck, introduced to the world. The concept of GNH defines Bhutan's development objective as improvement in the happiness and satisfaction of the people rather than growth of the Gross National Product (GNP). Bhutan is also so unique that His Majesty himself gave up his absolute power and brought in democracy.

While visiting Bhutan in August this year, I was honored to meet His Majesty, the fifth King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck.

In Bhutan, everyone truly adores His Majesty. His Majesty the King follows the motto of: "I have no personal goals; I will adopt your aspirations as my own and work towards fulfilling them. Therefore, you must have big ambitions and hopes for our country."

His Majesty, on succeeding to the throne, made domestic trips throughout the country rather than traveling abroad, in order to meet with the Bhutanese people face-to-face. His Majesty also visited schools and met with students, telling each one of them, "You don't need to worry. If you get in trouble, I will help you. "

In the first page of the guidelines for teachers in Bhutan, you will find the words, “You are not to teach math but you are to create human beings responsible for the future of Bhutan.” In other words, the teachers in Bhutan first need to develop into mature human beings themselves, in order to become a role model for their students.

How happy and lucky the children in Bhutan are, to experience daily the feeling of being loved, the feeling of gratitude, and the feeling of devotion.

In contrast, the environment nowadays for children in Japan is getting worse every day. According to a research done in 20 countries over the world such as America, Korea and China, it is said that out of the examined countries Japanese students respect their teachers and parents the least. In the countries other than Japan, more than 80% of the students say they respect their teachers and parents, but here in Japan, the rate is only around 20%. I feel very sorry for these children. Japan has become a very poor and lonely country.

I heard that the Bhutanese people like Japan very much. When I travel overseas, people often express their interest and reverence to the Japanese traditional culture and spirit such as ***Bushido, wabi-sabi***, etc. They also mention about the Japanese advanced technology in industrial, agricultural and many other fields. However, I feel complicated because of our realistic situation; we seem to have lost something important. In contrast, Bhutan, with its unique national identity is a country we should take as a good model for re-establishing our own identities and finding our virtue again.

Bhutan is a country of a severe geographical condition politically, sandwiched in the south and north direction between China and India. And also, it is inevitable that information from overseas gets steadily into Bhutan through the Internet. However I believe Bhutan has the intelligence and character to make wise choices and develop the country further. Japan had achieved remarkable revival after the war. I pray for Bhutan to be a country prospering as an Oriental Shangri-La from now on, referring to our Japanese experiences of success and failure so far.

In addition, I hope to guide Bhutan’s splendor to Japanese people so that I can help Japanese people to be able to regain their diligence, ability and kindness, for which they were evaluated in the world before. Furthermore I hope to take actions so that every Japanese child can live peacefully with a satisfied heart. I will try my best so that both countries can learn from each other’s strengths.

I highly appreciate that Bhutan has ordered me into such a position to become a bridge between Bhutan and Japan. It would be a great joy if you were to become even a bit interested in Bhutan and learn something about Bhutan.

I will keep on doing my best and at the same time I would like to ask your support and advice to accomplish my duty.

Thank you very much for listening.

The Delphic Games of the Modern Era

Aiming for world peace through a dialogue of cultures

The revival of the Delphic Games was initiated by Mr. J. Christian B. Kirsch from Germany and resulted in the foundation of the International Delphic Council (IDC) in Berlin in 1994. The IDC is the responsible institution for organizing the Delphic Games of the Modern Era. By promoting cultural development and exchange between nations and being a forum for peaceful dialogue of all cultures the Delphic Games are aiming for the chance of a peaceful world.

After making their successful premiere in Moscow in 2000, the third Delphic Games of the Modern Era were held in Jeju (South Korea) in 2009. Over 1,500 participants from 40 nations competed in 6 artistic categories and 18 disciplines with the motto of “Tuning into Nature” (we reported in ‘The Japan Presidents Journal’, vol. 31, 2010). We are now looking forward to the 4th Delphic Games, which will be held in 2013.

The JEPA will also support

The task of the National Delphic Councils (NDC) is to raise the popularity of the Delphic Games. The NDCs of the various countries are members of the IDC and help to support its activities and to protect its country’s culture and arts. Presently, the JEPA is aiming for the establishment of a NDC in Japan and is looking for supporting parties.

About the ancient Delphic Games

The ancient Delphic Games were a competition of the arts and cultures consecrated to Apollo, the Greek god of poetry, art, beauty and healing. They essentially were meant to complement the Olympic Games to create a synthesis of mind and body. Named after the city of Delphi, they have their origin in ancient Greece. For nearly 1000 years the Games were held in the year prior to the Olympic Games until they were abolished 394 AD.

Visit of the former President of Mongolia to Japan

In December last year the former President of Mongolia, Nambaryn Enkhbayar, visited Japan and attended a welcome dinner party in Tokyo.

At the dinner event at a restaurant in Tokyo that was organized and held by the JEPA, a number of close friends of the JEPA attended and had the chance to discuss with the President.

Former President Enkhbayar was elected in 2005 and until his resignation showed excellent diplomatic skills by neither leaning too much towards Russia nor China, despite his country being mostly surrounded by those two big nations.

Working in Japan as a foreigner

- By Sabine Neumann -

I studied international management with a focus on East Asia and especially Japan, which led me to coming to Tokyo about one and a half years ago to deepen my academic expertise. As a

start I worked one year for a big German company in Yokohama as an intern and after that started working for JEPA.

Lately the media in Japan is for various reasons focusing more and more on the topic of attracting foreign talents to work in Japan – be it because of a future shortage of young university graduates or the requirements of our modern globalized world.

I personally had many good experiences working in Japan and was always warmly welcomed; however it has to be said, that it is still very difficult for foreigners to find work in Japan. Japanese companies expect foreigners to compete equally with Japanese for a job; be it SPI exams or interviews - there is no special treatment (at least for university graduates).

One of the largest burdens is the Japanese language. It normally takes many years living in Japan and many hours spend studying in order to master the Japanese language. If Japanese companies seriously want to attract foreigners to work in Japan to help with the internationalization of their company and to gain an inflow of new ideas and values, they need to make adjustments in their very traditional hiring process and provide more support for their foreign employees.

In the following I would also like to talk a bit about the differences between working in Japan and Germany. Generally speaking Germans and Japanese have many traits in common: Both prefer a structured and regulated environment, observe rules and are hard working, reserved and precise. Nonetheless one can also find many differences in everyday business life.

Concerning working conditions, Japan is widely known around the world for its long working days and overtime. In Germany overtime is often not paid but can therefore be taken as additional holidays, therefore there is no monetary motivation to work as many hours as possible as in Japan. Furthermore, in Germany you have the right to take paid sick days if you hand in a confirmation of your doctor.

Another thing I noticed in Japan is the different mentality between coworkers. There is a much larger focus on harmony and mutual support than in Germany where people mainly care about their own career. In Japan one's company is similar to one's family and employees spend much more time outside of work together than in Germany where there is a distinctive differentiation between private and working time.

In Germany the focus on hierarchies is not as strong as in Japan. Subordinates have more room to develop their own proposals and are generally working more independently and proactively than in Japan. I often experienced in Japan the attitude of 'If my manager doesn't tell me to do something, then I won't do it'.

All in all I made many good experiences in Japan and was always warmly welcomed. I would be happy to see Japan become a bit more open to the idea of foreigners working for Japanese companies so that many more foreigners have the chance to make similar experiences as me. I am certain that both sides can learn from the customs of the other and in total create a larger value for both sides.