

HIGHLIGHTING
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EXPLORE THE UNIQUE CHARM OF
MANGA IN JAPAN

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Explore the Unique Charm of Manga in Japan

Japanese manga fascinates people all over the world. As a comic genre, it is highly regarded, and many manga works have been translated and are widely read worldwide. This issue of *Highlighting Japan* features an interview with Japan Cartoonists Association President SATONAKA Machiko, who is one of Japan's leading manga artists, about what makes the originality of Japanese manga so captivating. Also included are features on art galleries and museums around Japan that exhibit original manga art; libraries that specialize in manga; the Comic Market, which is the world's largest fair for *doujinshi* (non-commercial, self-published manga works); and an interview with an expert who translates Japanese manga into English.



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Japanese names in this publication are written in Japanese order: family name first, personal name last.

FEATURES

Explore the Unique Charm of Manga in Japan



Above left: The second floor houses the permanent exhibition area, featuring displays on the history of manga and manga from around the world. (Kyoto International Manga Museum) Above right: The Yokote Masuda Manga Museum today. The museum renovated and reopened in 2019 following renovation.

Below left: Exterior view of the Tokiwaso Manga Museum, which recreates the conditions of the time when Japanese manga masters lived there. Below right: View of the reading room, where visitors can read the manga they want. (Yoshihiro Yonezawa Memorial Library of Manga and Subcultures/Contemporary Manga Library)

Japanese manga fascinates people all over the world. As a comic genre, it is highly regarded, and many manga works have been translated and are widely read worldwide. This issue of *Highlighting Japan* features an interview with Japan Cartoonists Association President SATONAKA Machiko, who is one of Japan's leading manga artists, about what makes the originality of Japanese manga so captivating. Also included are features on art galleries and museums around Japan that exhibit original manga art; libraries that specialize in manga; the Comic Market, which is the world's largest fair for *doujinshi* (non-commercial, self-published manga works); and an interview with an expert who translates Japanese manga into English.



The Originality of Japanese Manga-Making Captivates the World

In recent years, Japanese manga have received international acclaim, sparking widespread curiosity about the origins of their conception and the process by which they are created. We interviewed SATONAKA Machiko, one of Japan's leading manga artists and President of the Japan Cartoonists Association, about what makes the originality of Japanese manga creation so captivating.

Comics are widely published in different countries around the world. What are the distinctive features of Japanese manga compared to foreign comics, from the perspective of the creative process?

First of all, in countries other than Japan, comic artists are basically regarded as illustrators, and their work is considered mainly to be drawing pictures. For example, as I witnessed during a visit to the United States, the creation of American comics is very similar to Hollywood movie production. The mainstream approach in the US is for the publisher to control the copyright and create the manga under a division of labor system, assigning one artist to draw the main character, another to draw the female counterpart, a writer to create the script, and so on. The person whose role is closest to that of a manga artist in Japan in fact only draws pictures according to the publisher's direction. This means that even for the same comic title, there are several artists in charge of creating drawings. I was surprised when an American comic artist I met told me, "I worked on the main character of Batman for a while," because this approach is different from the common practice in Japan.

In Europe, particularly in the French cultural

sphere, a pictorial style of comic called "*bande dessinée*" ("drawn strips" or "BD" for short) developed. This style emphasizes the power of the image as the main narrative tool. In it, each frame stands on its own as a single drawing, and I feel that this method of creation is a way to "presenting the image as the main element."

On the other hand, in contrast to American comics, Japanese manga is, in principle, created by the writer/manga artist alone. In other words, like novelists, manga artists are responsible for the entire creation process, from the conceptual stage of deciding what kind of work to create, to drawing the finished original artwork and submitting it to the publisher. In addition, there is a continuity between all the frames, and on the premise of this continuity, the artist creates a conceptual draft called a "name"¹ (*neimu* in Japanese), which is both a script and a storyboard and serves as the basis for the creation of the manga. Each work is essentially a unique

world developed by the artist, so in Japan, the death of the artist means the end of all the manga series they authored. Unlike animation, which is the product of a division of labor, every single line of the drawings and every single quip of the characters can only be created by that particular artist. These elements make up the unique world of Japanese manga.

As you just mentioned, there is an originality in the creation of Japanese manga that sets it apart from that of other countries. What do you think is the main reason for the development of this unique style that has captivated the modern world?

Particularly significant in the rapid development of Japanese manga after the end of World War II was



SATONAKA Machiko

Manga artist. Made her professional debut in 1964 while still in high school with *Pia no Shozo* ("The Portrait of Pia"). Won the Kodansha Publishing Culture Award for *Ashita Kagayaku* ("Tomorrow Will Shine") and *Hime ga Yuku* ("There Goes the Princess"). Her manga *Kariudo no Seiza* ("Constellation of the Hunter") won the Kodansha Manga Award. SATONAKA Machiko is also the author of numerous historical manga, including *Tenjo no Niji* ("Celestial Rainbow") and *Jotei no Shuki* ("Memoirs of the Empress"). She also serves as a professor at Osaka University of Arts and President of the Japan Cartoonists Association.

the influence of TEZUKA Osamu.² In Japan, TEZUKA Osamu is considered the “God of Manga,” not only because he created many fascinating works, but also because he broke away from the conventional wisdom of the manga world and expanded the expressive methods of the genre. Before TEZUKA, the structure of manga was similar to that of stage plays, consisting of relatively simple compositions in which movement was mainly lateral. In comparison, the composition of TEZUKA Osamu’s manga was three-dimensional and had a depth to it. In addition, TEZUKA was always coming up with highly innovative compositions, such as drawing from a bird’s-eye view and inserting frames with close-ups of the eyes.

TEZUKA Osamu was also a genius at creating plots. Until then, manga consisted of stories that were comprehensible to children, or funny in an innocent, somewhat silly way, or easy-to-follow tales of “justice always triumphs over evil”. In TEZUKA’s works, on the other hand, the main characters were the kind of figures typically looked down upon by society, understood by no one, lonely, even sacrificing themselves to save the world. Depicting a robot instead of a human as the main character was also an innovative approach.

TEZUKA’s originality could be explained with the fact that during the period when he was active, magazines for boys and girls were the main platform for the publication of his works, so his readership consisted

mainly of junior high school and high school children. So he drew stories that taught children, in an accessible way, that the world is a complicated place where things do not always go the way you want them to, and that there is more than one kind of justice. This approach prompted readers to think about the question, “What on earth do people live for?” In other words, the power of storytelling is what gave TEZUKA’s works their unmatched originality. The reason why today’s Japanese manga is not presented through drawings alone, but relies heavily on narratives, scenarios, and frame layouts, is because a single genius, TEZUKA Osamu, came along and drastically changed the conventional wisdom and concept of manga.

So what is the normal process that goes into creating Japanese manga, a genre that has captured the imagination of people worldwide?

In Japan, when creating a manga, the author first



Set in the 21st century, *Mighty Atom* (*Astro Boy*, *Tetsuwan Atomu* in Japanese) is a sci-fi hero manga about a 100,000-horsepower robot boy.

© Tezuka Productions



A pencil draft of SATONAKA’s work in *Kojiki* (“Records of Ancient Matters”)



The drawing after the draft has been inked



The completed drawing with the background, screentone,⁴ and hair filled in

Photos: SATONAKA Machiko



Photo: SATONAKA Machiko



Photo: SATONAKA Machiko

The draft image (left) and the finished version (right) beautifully completed through the post-processing inking work (from *Tenjo no Niji* (“Celestial Rainbow”))

comes up with a story. They imagine the setting and worldview of the work they want to depict, and the characters who will appear in the story. This process of putting together the concept of a manga takes a long time, sometimes even decades, depending on the work.

Next, to convert the concept into an actual manga, the artist begins a process of creating a rough draft called a “name,” which is both a script and a storyboard. They think about the composition of each page, the frame layout,³ and the dialog. The most important thing of all is the design of the characters. What do they look like, how do they dress, how do they speak? Unlike novels, visual design is also important in manga.

Once the “name” is roughly finished, the author creates a pencil draft. Through a process of trial and error, they decide whether to draw a close-up of the main character or change the composition after comparing the right page with the left page. Then comes the inking process.

In analog drawing, the artist uses a pen filled with ink or *sumi* ink, but some artists prefer to use brushes or markers. Recently, many artists also draw manga digitally, using a personal computer. After drawing the characters, the next step is to draw the background. Sometimes the artist draws scenery such as buildings, trees, and the sky, and sometimes they add effects such as fills or patterns. This work is sometimes done by assistants. Through these different stages, the manga comes to life.

Many of your works have an epic worldview and storyline. What do you consider important when creating manga?

In the case of historical manga based on facts, for example, I strive to incorporate a sense of respect for historical figures who really lived in the past into my work. For instance, when I was a teenager I started working on the concept for a manga based on *Manyo-shu* (“Collection of Ten Thousand Leaves”),⁵ an anthology compiled roughly in the late 8th century. Ancient



Photo: SATONAKA Machiko

Tenjo no Niji (“Celestial Rainbow”) (published by Kodansha Ltd.) depicts the life of Empress Jito (the 41st imperial ruler of Japan, who reigned from 690 to 697), using *Manyoshu* as a motif.



Photo: ©Kazuyoshi Takeda / Hakusensha, Incorporated

Peleliu: Guernica of Paradise (by TAKEDA Kazuyoshi) tells the story of young people on the battlefields of World War II.



Photo: SHUEISHA

GOLDEN KAMUY (by NODA Satoru), a bestselling manga set in Hokkaido in the late Meiji period

Japan was considered a male-dominated society with a strict status system, but that was the Japan after the establishment of the samurai society. As a young girl, I was very impressed by the completely different, open and free world depicted in *Manyoshu*. In working on this project, I was inspired by a desire to spread awareness of the unique Japanese sensibilities and ideas that have been passed down since ancient times, as expressed in the *waka* poems of poets of *Manyoshu*.

Your work reflects your passion for Japanese culture. What other works would you recommend to those interested in reading Japanese manga?

It is wonderful to see more and more ambitious Japanese manga taking on difficult and complex subjects.

I am especially amazed by the depth and intensity of war manga created by young artists. A recent example is *Peleliu: Guernica of Paradise* (by TAKEDA Kazuyoshi), which is set on the battlefields of World War II. Some of the other recent manga works whose authors amaze us with their choice of challenging themes include: *Orb: On the Movements of the Earth* (by UOTO), a story about people researching the heliocentric theory in 15th century Europe; and *GOLDEN KAMUY* (by NODA Satoru), an adventure story set in Hokkaido in the late Meiji period and depicting the Ainu⁶ culture. I hope that readers will have a chance to discover this world of outstanding Japanese manga that breaks free from the constraints of conventional wisdom and creates new values and originality. 📖

1. A rough draft of the frame layout, frame-by-frame composition, dialog, character placement, etc., created when drawing a manga. It is also known as frame layout, rough name, rough draft, or, in some cases, storyboard.
2. TEZUKA Osamu (November 3, 1928 – February 9, 1989) was a Japanese manga and animation artist who also held a medical degree. He was a leading figure in story manga in Japan. His notable works include *Astro Boy* (known in Japan as *Mighty Atom* (Japanese: *Tetsuwan Atomu*)), *Phoenix*, and *Black Jack*.
3. The grid lines that divide manga drawings into scenes or sections of dialogue are called frames.

Determining the size and positioning of each drawing is called “frame layout.”
4. An adhesive-type transparent sheet with various patterns and gradations printed on it, used in graphic design, illustration, manga, etc.
5. The oldest existing anthology of *waka* poems in Japan, said to have been compiled in the late 8th century. *Waka* is a short poem style of literature unique to Japan.
6. Indigenous people of the northern part of the Japanese archipelago, particularly in Hokkaido, who have developed a unique culture. Their language is also called Ainu, and it belongs to a linguistic family unrelated to the Japanese language.

Yokote Masuda Manga Museum: First Museum in Japan Devoted to Original Manga Illustrations

The Yokote Masuda Manga Museum in Akita Prefecture has a collection of manga *genga* (original illustrations) drawn by nearly 100 manga artists on permanent display where visitors can view them up close. This article introduces this special museum, the first in Japan to feature a manga *genga* theme. (Text: MOROHASHI Kumiko)



Photo: ISHIZAWA Yoji

The Yokote Masuda Manga Museum today. The museum renovated and reopened in 2019 following renovation.



Photo: ISHIZAWA Yoji

Example of an exhibit. The exhibit is arranged with a series of *genga* in separate cabinet drawers so that visitors can pull them out one by one, starting at the top, to view one episode from the manga.



Photo: ISHIZAWA Yoji

Interior of the Yokote Masuda Manga Museum. Admission to permanent exhibitions is free, visitors can relaxingly enjoy the exhibition.

Akita Prefecture is situated along the Sea of Japan in Japan's Tohoku region. Yokote, a city famous for *kamakura*¹ snow domes in winter, is located in the southeast of the prefecture. In 2005, seven surrounding towns and villages, including the town of Masudamachi, were merged into Yokote City. The Yokote Masuda Manga Museum, located in Yokote City, opened in 1995 as part of a project commemorating the 100th anniversary of Masudamachi's establishment, before the merger. OOHINATA Reina, who oversees public relations at the museum, looks back at how the museum came to be established.

"At the beginning, there was a plan to establish a YAGUCHI Takao Memorial Hall to recognize the achievements of YAGUCHI Takao,² a manga artist from Masudamachi. YAGUCHI's reaction was, 'The manga that influenced me are works of pure art. I would love to convey that with exhibits of original *genga* artwork created by first-rate manga artists. His suggestion led to the establishment of this current museum featuring a theme of manga *genga* — the original illustrations."

After its establishment, the museum attracted notice for its efforts to collect, preserve, and exhibit manga *genga* and was recognized as a pioneer on the national level. Later, after completing renovations to further enhance storage and exhibition functions for its *genga* collection, the museum reopened in 2019.

"Manga *genga* are the original drafts that have been drawn as *hanshita*³ artwork layout pages to be used in printing the manga in magazines, book form, and so on. Originally, not much value was placed on the *genga* themselves, actually. Individual manga artists would carefully store their own as pieces of art they had put their heart and soul into creating. In recent years, manga has come to be highly regarded throughout the world, yet here in Japan, there still has not been a particular value assigned to original *genga* illustrations. The situation surrounding them has many risks: they may get discarded or scattered to various locations,


even overseas, and some will ultimately be lost."

OOHINATA warns of the crisis, saying that the loss of the original drawings, which are the foundation of Japanese manga culture, would essentially lead to the loss of Japanese culture itself.

"The museum has put a lot of effort into collecting and preserving *genga* since it first opened in 1995. We currently have a collection of over 480,000 *genga*, and we still receive many requests for *genga* to be added to our collections. That led us to establish the Manga Genga Archive Center under a commission from the Agency for Cultural Affairs, providing the only consultation service regarding the collection and storage of manga *genga* in Japan. Besides offering consultation about storing *genga*, we also engage in projects concerning temporary *genga* storage in cooperation with other similar facilities and institutions."

OOHINATA says, "While visitors to the museum from overseas are still relatively limited in number, sometimes fans of certain artists or works of manga will make the trip here, and we can see how impressed they are by the magnificence of the *genga*."

"*Genga* have such impact and beauty in ways that just cannot be matched by the printed forms one ordinarily sees in books and other publications, not

limited to the color and monochrome versions. I think visitors from overseas will experience the unique ways *genga* convey the creativity and passion the artists put into the work. When lovers of manga visit Japan, I hope they will make the trip here to the museum for the opportunity to view *genga* up close. They will appreciate the distinctive frame layouts, as well as the delicate and beauty of the artwork with the way it expresses emotions and the feel of the scenes so realistically." 



Visitors can also observe archival work in progress, including the documentation of detailed information contained only in *genga* and digitization of the artwork.



The museum's library contains about 25,000 volumes of manga that visitors are free to browse. Exhibits are also displayed here, featuring *genga* from works of current interest, works by manga artists from outside Japan, and more.



Exhibits in the Manga Culture Exhibition Room feature arrangements inspired by manga frame layouts. A smartphone-based multilingual audio guide (in Japanese, English, and Chinese) is partially available in places.

1. Snow domes about 3 m in height called *kamakura* are created for an event held every February in Yokote City to honor Sujin, the god of water. About 60 *kamakura* are made in the city, offered as prayers for family safety, business success, abundant crops, and so on.
2. Japanese manga artist and essayist. His work featured themes depicting life in nature, with his representative works *Fisherman Sanpei* (*Tsurikichi Sanpei*) and *The Mysterious Wonder Snake Bachihebi* (*Maboroshi no Kaija Bachihebi*) sparking interest in fishing and the *tsuchinoko*, a mythical, snake-like creature.
3. Completed Draft artwork for use in platemaking, a pre-press stage in the printing process.



Photo: Yoshihiro Yonezawa Memorial Library of Manga and Subcultures/Contemporary Manga Library

One of Japan's Largest Manga Libraries Operated by a University in Central Tokyo

A dedicated manga library operated by a university sits in a district of Chiyoda City, central Tokyo. It boasts a comprehensive collection of manga volumes and valuable resources for researching Japanese manga, with a collection numbering approximately 410,000, one of the largest in the country. We spoke with a member of the library's staff about its features.

(Text: TANAKA Nozomi)

In a corner of Meiji University's Surugadai Campus¹ in Chiyoda City, Tokyo, is the Yoshihiro Yonezawa Memorial Library of Manga and Subcultures/Contemporary Manga Library operated by the university. The current library had two predecessor facilities. In October 2009, the Yoshihiro Yonezawa Memorial Library, housing a collection of a manga critic, was opened at the Surugadai Campus. In March 2021, the Contemporary Manga Library, previously located elsewhere, was relocated to the same site, marking the start of integrated operation, which con-

tinues to this day.

In June 2022, Prime Minister Kishida visited the library, inspecting the facilities. Following his visit, a gathering with prominent Japanese manga artists, including CHIBA Tetsuya², SATONAKA Machiko (see "Originality of Japanese Manga Creation Fascinates the World"), and HIROKANE Kenshi³, was held. The event was marked by lively conversations on a variety of topics, according to Serena STOKES from the Yoshihiro Yonezawa Memorial Library of Manga and Subcultures/Contemporary Manga Library.



Photos: Yoshihiro Yonezawa Memorial Library of Manga and Subcultures/ Contemporary Manga Library

Manga magazines are wrapped in plastic bags, preserving them in excellent condition.



Photos: Yoshihiro Yonezawa Memorial Library of Manga and Subcultures/ Contemporary Manga Library

View of the reading room, where visitors can read the manga they want.

She explains the background of the library's establishment. "NAIKI Toshio⁴, a former rental bookstore owner, established Japan's first dedicated manga library, the Contemporary Manga Library, in 1978. In 2009, he donated his collection to Meiji University, leading to the launch of the Contemporary Manga Library in 2010." She added, "Currently, the library boasts approximately 270,000 volumes. Meanwhile, the Yoshihiro Yonezawa Memorial Library established at Meiji University's Surugadai Campus, houses a collection of 140,000 volumes donated by YONEZAWA Yoshihiro, a manga critic and one of the founders of Comic Market (Comiket) (see "Comic Market, The World's Largest *Doujinshi* Convention"). These two libraries were combined to form the Yoshihiro Yonezawa Memorial Library of Manga and Subcultures/ Contemporary Manga Library, which was established in March 2021 as a specialized manga library with a total collection of around 410,000 volumes."

The collection includes not only manga volumes and manga magazines but also valuable rental manga⁵ from the 1950s to 1960s, collected by NAIKI over a span of 50 years. In addition, YONEZAWA's collection features rare materials such as fanzines (*doujinshi*), magazines on social trends, and anime magazines, which are also available for viewing.

"Although the library is small in terms of its building, the number of manga volumes it holds is unparalleled. We regularly host exhibitions of original artwork and sketches by renowned manga artists. We receive many requests from international visitors for access to Japanese manga magazines and fanzines that are difficult to find in their home countries, as well as requests for copies of these materials. Some even read up to 50 fanzines in a single visit. The number of group tours from foreign schools is also increasing. One international user described our collection as being 'like

a wonderland of manga,' due to our extensive range from widely circulated magazines to rare and hard-to-find manga, which has left a lasting impression on me," says STOKES, who was born and raised in Japan.

As part of Meiji University's Tokyo International Manga Library project, which aims to become one of the largest archives for manga, anime, and games in the world, this library serves as the foundational facility. "We aspire to be a key institution for the scholarly exploration and cultural utilization of Japan's famous subcultures," comments STOKES.

This valuable specialized library in the heart of the city attracts manga enthusiasts from both Japan and abroad.

You can spend your time exploring the exhibitions at a relaxed pace or browsing materials on your favorite authors and genres. We encourage you to visit and immerse yourself in the world of manga. **■**



Above: Special exhibitions are held approximately three times a year on the first floor of the library.



Below: The library holds many valuable materials and operates as a closed-stack library where items must be requested for viewing. These boxes are packed tightly with materials.

1. Located in the northern part of Chiyoda City, near the center of Tokyo.
2. Born in 1939, CHIBA Tetsuya is a Japanese manga artist with notable works including *Ashita no Joe* (original story by TAKAMORI Asao), *Harris no Kaze*, and *Ashita Tenki ni Naare*.
3. Born in 1947, HIROKANE Kenshi transitioned from a company job to become a manga artist. His notable works include the *Kosaku Shima* series and *Ningen Kosaten*.
4. NAIKI Toshio was born in 1937 and died in 2012. At the age of 18, he started a rental bookstore. In 1978, he established the Contemporary Manga Library, dedicating his personal wealth to collecting manga with the philosophy to preserve all types of manga semi-permanently. In 2009, he donated his collection to Meiji University, leading to the opening of the Contemporary Manga Library in 2010. The library is now known as the Yoshihiro Yonezawa Memorial Library of Manga and Subcultures/Contemporary Manga Library.
5. Refers to the books and magazines lent by rental bookstores. Around the 1950s, there was a boom in rental manga, and rental-specific manga were also published. At its peak, there were approximately 30,000 rental bookstores across Japan. (While rental bookstores still exist online in Japan, physical stores have almost disappeared.)

Museum Recreating the Legendary Tokiwa-so Apartment Building where Japanese Manga Masters Lived

The apartment building known as ‘Tokiwa-so,’ where Japanese manga masters including TEZUKA Osamu¹, FUJIKO F. Fujio, FUJIKO Fujio (A)², AKATSUKA Fujio³, ISHINOMORI Shotaro⁴, and others spent their youth, has been recreated as a museum. The museum conveys the atmosphere of the manga artists’ creative activities and daily lives during that era.

(Text: MOROHASHI Kumiko)

Tokiwa-so, located in the former Shiina-machi⁵ near Ikebukuro Station in Tokyo, is a legendary apartment building where Japanese manga masters spent their younger years. Built in 1952, it remained a significant hub for manga artists until the early 1960s. Because of aging, Tokiwa-so was demolished in December 1982. However, many local residents and fans of the manga artists expressed a strong desire to see Tokiwa-so revived. In response to these requests, the local government of Toshima City estab-

lished the Tokiwaso Manga Museum, which opened in 2020 and faithfully recreates the conditions of the original building. TAKAHASHI Mayu, responsible for the museum’s public relations, provided insights into the appearance of Tokiwa-so during that time.

“During the 1950s and 60s, Japan was experiencing a period of high economic growth. However, compared to today, it was also a time still affected by the Second World War and ongoing poverty. In such an era, the neighborhood where Tokiwa-so was located



Exterior view of the Tokiwaso Manga Museum, which recreates the conditions of the time when Japanese manga masters lived there.



Exhibit on the second floor recreating the working conditions of manga artists at the time, including work desks and manuscripts.



A recreated display showing the interior of a manga artist’s room.



Photos: SHIZAWA Yoji

Left: A display recreating a kitchen from the 1950s-60s with authentic cooking utensils. At the center of the table is a ramen bowl from the actual Chinese restaurant, Matsuba⁷ where the residents frequently ordered home delivery.

Right: The room of MIZUNO Hideko⁸, the only female manga artist among the residents.

had a lively atmosphere, with movie theaters and public bathhouses,” explains TAKAHASHI. “Tokiwa-so was an ordinary apartment building for its time, and with manga artists such as TEZUKA Osamu and others who would later become popular residing there, it served as a base for emerging and dynamic manga creators.”

Tokiwa-so, where notable figures such as ISHINOMORI Shotaro and FUJIKO F. Fujio, FUJIKO Fujio (A) gathered during the early days of manga in Japan, has been carefully recreated to capture its original atmosphere. The second floor of the museum, with its retro feel, authentically reflects the space that once existed in Tokiwa-so.

“Room 18 has been recreated as the room of YAMAUCHI Johji⁶, who was an assistant to ISHINOMORI Shotaro. The shelves are filled with film reels and paperback books, which are replicas of ISHINOMORI’s personal belongings. ISHINOMORI, who loved new gadgets, kept buying televisions and 8mm cameras, eventually running out of space in his own room and placing them in his assistant’s room instead,” says TAKAHASHI.

In addition to the recreated workspaces where the artists created their works, the museum also features displays that provide insights into their daily lives.

“The museum also displays cooking utensils and other items to convey the daily living conditions of the time, including the shared toilet and kitchen. Since there were no baths in the individual rooms, there are stories of ISHINOMORI Shotaro and AKATSUKA Fujio taking midnight water baths in the communal kitchen sink on hot days.”

According to TAKAHASHI, the lifestyle of these

manga artists appears very fresh to visitors from abroad. “Some international visitors come because they love manga and anime, including the works created by the artists of Tokiwa-so. They are often surprised or fascinated by aspects of old Japanese life, such as the four-and-a-half-tatami mat rooms. There are also guests who have started studying Japanese because of their interest in manga.”

TAKAHASHI hopes that going to the museum will deepen visitors’ understanding of manga. “Through the recreated Tokiwa-so, we want visitors to experience the environment where the manga masters created classic works during their early years. The second floor of the museum mainly features displays recreating the conditions of the time, while the first floor includes a special exhibition room and a manga lounge where you can view materials and books related to the artists connected to Tokiwa-so. Please note that visits are prioritized by reservation, so be sure to apply through the official website.” 7



Photo: SHIZAWA Yoji

The manga lounge on the first floor, featuring exhibits related to the manga artists connected to Tokiwa-so.

1. TEZUKA Osamu (November 3, 1928 - February 9, 1989) was a Japanese manga and animation artist who also held a medical degree. He was a leading figure in story manga in Japan. His notable works include *Astro Boy* (known in Japan as *Mighty Atom* (Japanese: *Tetsuwan Atomu*)), *Phoenix*, and *Black Jack*.
2. FUJIKO F. Fujio (real name: FUJIMOTO Hiroshi, December 1, 1933 - September 23, 1996) and FUJIKO Fujio (A) (real name: ABIKO Motoo, March 10, 1934 - April 6, 2022) worked under the pen name 'FUJIKO Fujio' at the time and shared a workspace. FUJIKO F. Fujio is known for the iconic series *Doraemon*, while FUJIKO Fujio (A) is renowned for works such as *Manga Michi*.
3. AKATSUKA Fujio (September 14, 1935 - August 2, 2008) was a prominent author who laid the foundation for post-war gag manga. His notable works include *Osomatsu-kun*.
4. ISHINOMORI Shotaro (January 25, 1938 - January 28, 1998) was a leading figure in Japanese

manga from the 1960s, alongside TEZUKA Osamu, known for his stylish work. His notable creations include *Kamen Rider*.

5. This area is now known as Minami-Nagasaki 3-chome, Toshima City, Tokyo
6. YAMAUCHI Johji (November 24, 1940 -) became independent after working as an assistant to ISHINOMORI Shotaro and AKATSUKA Fujio. He is considered the last resident of Tokiwa-so among the manga artists.
7. A Chinese restaurant frequently used for takeout by the residents of Tokiwa-so. It also appears in FUJIKO Fujio (A)'s work *Manga Michi*.
8. MIZUNO Hideko (October 29, 1939 -) is a pioneering Japanese female manga artist known for her work in *shojo* manga, a genre of Japanese manga aimed primarily at a young female audience. Her notable works include *Hoshi no Tategato*.



The second floor houses the permanent exhibition area, featuring displays on the history of manga and manga from around the world.



Photo: Kyoto International Manga Museum

The museum is housed in a renovated elementary school building. The former schoolyard has been turned into a grassy area, ideal for reading.

Kyoto International Manga Museum, a Comprehensive Cultural Facility for Manga in Kyoto

The Kyoto International Manga Museum, which opened in Kyoto in 2006 as Japan's first comprehensive cultural facility dedicated to manga, houses approximately 300,000 manga-related materials. This collection includes both numerous manga volumes from Japan and abroad, as well as studies on manga. It attracts around 300,000 visitors annually, with 10% coming from abroad. A museum staff member provided us with an overview of the facility.

(Text: TANAKA Nozomi)

The Kyoto International Manga Museum is located in the heart of Kyoto, just a short distance from Karasuma Oike Station on the subway. Established in 2006 as a joint project between Kyoto Seika University and the City of Kyoto, the museum was founded following a proposal from the university, the only one in Japan with the Faculty of Manga. The university suggested creating a manga library to preserve and utilize valuable manga-related materials. The museum originally opened with approximately 200,000 items donated from individual collectors and bookstores, including those that offered lending services. Since its opening, the collection has grown to around 300,000 items.

We spoke with NAKAMURA Hiroko, responsible for the museum's public relations, about its features. "The museum combines the functions of a museum and a library. It features permanent and special exhibitions that introduce the history and industry of manga, based on research insights. Additionally, it offers a library-like function where visitors can freely access and read manga. We also hold workshops and events to expand visitors' understanding and enjoyment of manga," says NAKAMURA. "Our visitors come from both Japan and abroad, including manga fans and those interested in manga culture. They often share their favorite manga stories and questions openly. Since manga titles and character names can change in translated versions, there have been times when staff have had to work together to determine which work was being discussed. The passion for manga is universal. We have staff who can speak English,



Bookshelves of manga installed along an entire wall, known as the 'Wall of Manga.'



The section called the 'Manga Expo' allows visitors to read manga from various countries as well as Japanese manga translated into different languages.

Above and middle: A section where visitors can view the process of creating Japanese manga.


Below: A section where visitors can have their portraits drawn by manga artists. International tourists often enjoy this as a souvenir of their visit.



so we interact directly with visitors, and sometimes our conversations are conducted through pictorial dialogue, true to manga style, without using spoken language."

One of the features of this manga museum is that it utilizes a renovated elementary school building, which was constructed about 100 years ago. The three-story building includes the main gallery and several other galleries on the second floor, where both permanent and special exhibitions are held. The permanent exhibition answers the question 'What is manga?' by explaining the history and development of manga and the manga industry. The exhibits include explanations in English. Also, in the retro former school building, around 50,000 manga volumes (from the 1970s to about 2005) are packed tightly on bookshelves along the walls from the first to the third floor, creating what is known as the 'Wall of Manga.'

There is also a section known as the 'Manga Expo,' designed to be accessible to international visitors. "This area features Japanese manga translated into various languages, including English, German, French, Thai, and Chinese, as well as bandes dessinées¹ published primarily in France and comics from Spain, South Korea, and other countries," explains NAKAMURA.

Visitors can select their favorite manga and read it freely on the spacious lawn that once served as the schoolyard. "We would be delighted if visitors to Kyoto could also visit our museum and experience the diverse manga culture, works, and creators," NAKAMURA added. 

1. Refers to manga published in French-speaking regions. These are often large-format, hardcover, and printed in full color.



A life-sized figure of one of MATSUMOTO Leiji's iconic characters, Captain Harlock from *Space Pirate Captain Harlock*, greets visitors at the museum entrance.

Kitakyushu Manga Museum where You Can Not Only Watch, but also Read and Draw Manga

Located in Kitakyushu, the gateway to Kyushu in the southwestern part of Japan, the Kitakyushu Manga Museum is dedicated to manga. It hosts exhibitions of popular manga and anime, offering a paradise for manga enthusiasts with a collection of around 70,000 manga volumes available for unlimited reading. The museum's permanent exhibit is accessible through multilingual audio guides, including English, making it a favorite among international visitors. We spoke with a museum staff member to learn more about its unique features.

(Text: TANAKA Nozomi)



A permanent section where visitors can relax and enjoy a variety of manga

Kitakyushu City in Fukuoka Prefecture is a major city in Kyushu, comparable to Fukuoka City, with a population of approximately 910,000² (as of July 2024). It takes about 4 hours and 40 minutes by Shinkansen from JR Tokyo Station to Kokura Station, the city's central hub. Near Kokura Station is the Kitakyushu Manga Museum, dedicated entirely to manga. Why was a manga-focused museum

established in Kitakyushu? HIRANO Yuko, in charge of the museum's public relations, explains the background behind this.

"After Moji Port³ in Kitakyushu developed into an international trade port and the city became an economic hub of western Japan in the 1900s, several newspaper and advertising company headquarters were established in Kitakyushu. At that time, illus-



Photo: Kitakyushu Manga Museum

The Manga Time Tunnel exhibition area showcases the history of Japanese manga and society from 1945 to 2012.

trations for newspapers, magazines, and advertisements were hand-drawn, creating a strong demand for artists in the area,” says HIRANO. “After World War II, Kitakyushu was known for having a high number of rental bookstores and movie theaters, and people were very interested in visual arts like manga and films. The city has produced many renowned manga artists, including MATSUMOTO Leiji¹ and HOJO Tsukasa⁴. Additionally, Kitakyushu has a long-standing manga culture, evidenced by a manga fan club that has been active since 1966. These factors all contributed to the establishment of the museum.”

The manga museum, with its theme of “watch, read, and draw,” features exhibitions of popular manga and anime and offers unlimited access to approximately 70,000 manga volumes. The museum also hosts a variety of fun events, including opportunities to experience manga drawing using professional tools.

The number of visitors averages approximately 100,000 per year, and in fiscal 2023, around 4,000 of them were from overseas. “We often hear requests to see the original manga of anime that has been broadcast overseas,” comments HIRANO. “For example, *Galaxy Express 999* and *Space Pirate Captain Harlock*, both based on MATSUMOTO Leiji’s works, were broadcast in countries like South Korea and Italy. Visitors are often moved when they see the permanent exhibit.”

Visitors can listen to the content of the permanent exhibit using multilingual audio guides (available in English, Chinese, Korean, and French) on their own smartphones, a service that is widely used.

The photo spot known as the Manga Panels area is particularly popular among international tourists (see photo). In Japanese manga, a unique feature is the use of effect lines, which replace the background to express characters’ movements and emotions, as well as the use of onomatopoeia⁵ to convey the atmosphere

or emotions. A key feature of the Manga Panels is the use of effect lines in place of backgrounds to convey characters’ movements and emotions. In addition, words known as onomatopoeia are used to represent the atmosphere or shifts in a character’s feelings, enhancing the sense of realism.

Visitors can take commemorative photos with manga panels featuring uniquely Japanese effect lines and onomatopoeia in the background, so it attracts many tourists.


“Recently, we’ve seen an increase in visits from overseas school trips and university study programs,” says HIRANO. “More people are reserving our workshops, where they can receive direct instruction on various manga techniques, from copying existing works and digital drawing to creating four-panel comics, experiencing what it’s like to be a manga artist’s assistant⁶, and learning how to draw backgrounds and add shadows for depth—catering to everyone from beginners to those looking to advance their skills.” If you’re a fan of Japanese manga, be sure to visit this specialized museum in Kitakyushu during your trip to Japan. 



Photo: Kitakyushu Manga Museum

Permanent exhibit “Manga Panels.” (Left) The background of a panel features the onomatopoeia “dododo,” depicting the forceful movement of a large object or a large number of objects. (Right) The background showcases the onomatopoeia “kira kira,” representing a sparkling or glittering effect.

1. Born in 1938 and passed away in 2023. Many of his works were adapted into anime during the 1970s and were loved worldwide. His notable works include *Galaxy Express 999* and *Space Pirate Captain Harlock*. He spent his childhood in Kitakyushu.
 2. Estimated population by Kitakyushu City Hall (as of July 1, 2024).
 3. After being designated as a special export port by the government in 1889, Kitakyushu began trading coal. By 1916, it had the highest number of foreign trade ships entering and leaving port in the country. Many buildings with an exotic atmosphere were constructed, and today, these historical structures have been preserved as popular tourist destinations.
 4. Born in 1958. In the 1980s, he achieved massive success with *Cat’s Eye* and *City Hunter*, gaining a

passionate following. Both works have been adapted into anime and live-action formats, attracting many international fans. He was brought up in Kitakyushu City.

5. Onomatopoeia refers to words that imitate the sounds they represent, like “buzz” for a bee. Japanese has approximately 4,500 such words, making it a language rich in onomatopoeia compared to others globally. In manga, onomatopoeia enhances the sense of immediacy by adding auditory expression to the visual representation through illustrations.
 6. In Japanese manga production, tasks are often divided among team members. The main characters are usually completed by the manga artist, while backgrounds, speech bubbles, and other elements are often handled by assistants.

Comic Market, The World's Largest *Doujinshi* Convention

Comic Market, commonly known as “Comiket,” began in 1975 and is the world’s largest comic exhibition and sale of *doujinshi* (non-commercial, self-published works). This article introduces the world of *doujinshi* manga, a genre that allow readers to enjoy the free thinking and expressions of each individual amateur creator.

(Text: MOROHASHI Kumiko)



A look at the Comic Market that was held in the summer of 2024

*Doujinshi*¹ have been a grassroots force behind Japan’s manga boom, and the Comic Market (Comiket), a convention where these self-published *doujinshi* are exhibited and sold, is an essential part of this movement’s story.

Comiket is held twice a year, in summer and winter, usually in mid-August and at the end of December. Most recently, Comic Market 104 was held at Tokyo Big Sight on August 11-12, 2024, attracting a total of about 260,000 visitors over the two days, with around 24,000 circles (groups or individuals who create the works) exhibiting and distributing *doujinshi*. Since the first one held in December 1975, the event’s scale has gradually continued to grow. Participation at Comic Market 97 (December 28-31, 2019), held just before the COVID-19 pandemic, reached a record high of about 750,000 visitors and 32,000 participating circles over the four-day period; many companies, including publishers and game companies, also exhibited, making it one of the world’s largest *doujinshi* manga sales events.

ICHIKAWA Koichi, co-chairman of the Comic Market Preparatory Committee, which organizes the

event, said, “Japan’s towns have always had many printing houses with advanced printing technology, making it easy for anyone to place their own self-publishing order. In the 1970s, when the popularity of manga was growing, manga research clubs at universities and other institutions all over Japan published nicely printed *doujinshi*,” he recalls. Back then, there were no social networking services like we have today, and the only way for manga fans to communicate with each other was through the Reader Pages of magazines. The first Comiket was held in December 1975 to try to create a forum where these like-minded people could meet together.

Above: A look at an early Comic Market, when it was still small in scale

Below: Cosplayers at the venue of Tokyo International Trade Fair in the 1990s play Hana Ichi Monme.⁵



Photo: (left) ISZAWA Yoji, (right) Comic Market Preparatory Committee

Photos: Comic Market Preparatory Committee



Photos: Comic Market Preparatory Committee

A look at setting up the event the day before. Numerous volunteers contributed to the setup, starting their work early in the morning.

“We rented a room in a hall in Tokyo, held an exhibition and sale, and 700 people came from all over the country,” ICHIKAWA says.

In the 1980s, the anime boom heated up. *Captain Tsubasa*² and a great number of other fan-fiction³ works came out, attracting female fans and giving Comiket’s popularity a boost. According to SATOMI Naoki of the Preparatory Committee for Public Relations, it was around this time that more and more cosplayers⁴ pretending to be characters from their favorite works began to attend the event.

“Every year of the 1990s saw over 200,000 participants, and the number eventually broke 400,000. This made a larger venue a necessity. Now, the event is held at Tokyo Big Sight in Ariake, Koto City, Tokyo. We now have to provide a huge number of changing rooms for the cosplayers.”

In 2019, just before the COVID-19 pandemic, there were 700,000 total visitors and over 30,000 circles. Add a total of 20,000 to 30,000 participating cosplayers, and Comiket had become one of not only Japan’s but also the world’s largest events. Nevertheless, the event is still run by volunteers, just as it was first launched. This is both surprising and admirable.

“The Comic Market Preparatory Committee runs the event, and it has about 3,000 people. Even so, the general public and volunteers from circles help free of charge with setting up the day before and taking down the exhibits after the event.”

“It has continued for nearly half a century because it has been an important place to so many people, and I hope it will keep going into the future. I’m also truly proud and happy that Comiket has popularized people like HIRANO Kouta⁶ and YOSHINAGA Fumi,⁷ who are now active as professional manga artists.”

ICHIKAWA says that with more than 50,000 different *doujinshi* available at a single event, “The appeal of Comiket is that you can always find something you like.” SATOMI adds that recent years have seen many participants from outside Japan.

“Since we receive so many inquiries from overseas participants, we have set up a special department called the International Department to handle them. At the most recent event, we had participants from at least 75 countries. However, participation in this event as a circle (booth exhibitor) is limited to those who possess a Japanese address for receiving our documents. A lot of booth exhibitors from overseas make books in Japanese, which is not their native language, and some distribute *doujinshi* in Korean and Chinese. Before, we had quite a lot of visitors from overseas who came just to sightsee, but recently so many people are diligently researching the circles of the authors in whom they have an interest before they come. People from Africa and South America also come, which makes me sense the international popularity of Japanese manga. Anyway, there are many people, and you’ll have to wait in line at this event more often than you might imagine. Comiket is held whether it is hot or cold out, so I hope everyone will take all possible measures to protect themselves from heat and cold and participate safely and happily.” 7



Photos: ICHIKAWA Yoji Photography cooperation: ARIMA Shunjiou, KOZUMI Azu

The booth of a participating circle

1. A booklet produced, at their own expense, by a group of friends who share the same interests and hobbies. It is said that its roots in Japan date back to the Meiji period (1868-1912). There are records that writers of literary works at the time enjoyed making booklets with their friends.

2. A Japanese soccer manga by TAKAHASHI Yoichi. Also including fan-fiction works based on it.

3. Refers to the expressive act of creating a new work based on an existing work. A manga, anime, game, etc., which is adapted from an earlier manga, anime, game, etc., in a style of expression unique to each secondary creator, and distributed in various forms, including *doujinshi* and illustrations.

4. Cosplay is an abbreviation of “costume play,” the act of dressing up as a character from a manga,

anime or game. People who do it are called “cosplayers” or “layers.”

5. A traditional Japanese game passed down from olden times. Participants are divided into two groups, and each group walks hand in hand while singing a song and exchanging members with the other group. In the 1990s, it was popular for cosplayers to interact by playing Hana Ichi Monme.

6. HIRANO Kouta is a manga artist who mainly creates action and comedy works. His major works include *HELLSING* and *DRIFTERS*.

7. A Japanese manga artist whose major works include *Ooku: The Inner Chambers* and *What Did You Eat Yesterday?*



Photo: Tomo Kimura

Japanese-English translator
KIMURA Tomo

A Japanese-English Manga Translator Describes the Challenges and Fun of Her Work

We interviewed KIMURA Tomo, a translator of Japanese shōjo manga (comics written for girls and young women) including *NANA* and *Black Butler*, about what makes the work challenging, as well as fun and interesting aspects of translating the unique Japanese form into English.

(Text: MOROHASHI Kumiko)



The popular *Black Butler* series has a total worldwide circulation² of 35 million copies. At left is the Japanese edition, at right the English translation.



©Yana Toboso/SQUARE ENIX

KIMURA Tomo, an active translator of Japanese manga comics into English, began her career with the translation of *Full Moon o Sagashite* (Japanese title: *Full Moon wo Sagashite*¹), released by US publisher VIZ Media in 2004. Since then, she has translated over 300 volumes of manga into English. While she had prior experience translating in corporate settings, she did have some uncertainty when she first began working with manga, she says.

“When I was translating documents like software specifications, the work required accuracy and certainty. With manga translation, potential interpretations tend to vary so widely that 10 translators might come up with 10 different translations for the same expression. The need to consider which wording is the most fitting for the particular work is what sets manga translation apart and what makes it so challenging.”

Her specialty, shōjo manga — comics written primarily for an audience of girls and young women — tends to feature particularly nuanced descriptions of emotional states. Finding just the right expressions in English requires her to consider the options very carefully.

“For example, there are a number of first-person pronouns male characters might use in Japanese — *watashi*, *ore*, *boku* — and each one reveals something about their personality. In English, though, they all turn into ‘I.’ That means I need to work with the nuances of the wording in other ways with expressions different characters seem like they would use, expressing their individual natures and identities through the dialogue as a whole.”

She says that it’s also challenging to find ways of translating unique Japanese expressions into English.

“Distinctions between honorific language, humble speech, polite expressions and so on that are typi-



A scene conveying the nuances of the butler’s original Japanese speech in English. (From *Black Butler*, vol. 32, pg. 112)

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©Waco Ioka 2016 ©Midori Yuma 2016 ©Laruha 2016

Kakuriyo: Bed & Breakfast for Spirits. At upper is the Japanese edition, at lower the English translation. The manga is based on a best-selling novel series with over 2.5 million copies sold in Japan.

cal of Japanese are not found in English. That was one aspect that made translating the dialogue in *Black Butler* (Japanese title: *Kuroshitsuji*)³ challenging. There is also the fact that the work is set in 19th-century England. To convey the right atmosphere, I incorporated expressions and modes of speech from the time that are no longer in use today.”

Japanese manga also makes wide use of richly varied onomatopoeia – words that imitate various sounds – that bring vividly expressive feelings to the work. English, however, seems to have much more limited options for

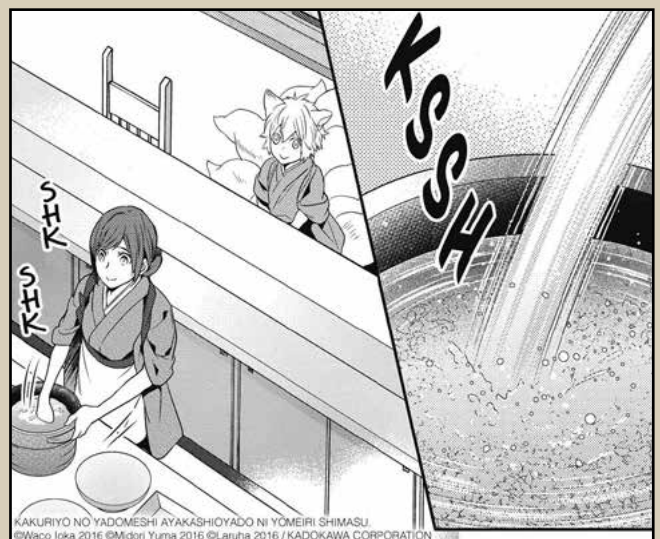
these kinds of imitative effects.

“The translation of *Kakuriyo: Bed & Breakfast for Spirits* (Japanese: *Kakuriyo no Yadomeshi: Ayakashi Oyado ni Yomeiri Shimasu*),⁴ which I am working on right now, features a wide range of scenes showing foods being prepared. In it, the sound of rice-rinsing is expressed as ‘shaka shaka’ in the original Japanese. Finding the right translation gave me trouble, as there is really no equivalent in English. My solution was to take the vowels from the word ‘shake’ and make it ‘SHK SHK’ to give it a suitably manga-like look. I try to come up with inventive approaches like this, finding or making up words with sounds that more closely resemble the original Japanese.”

KIMURA is also very careful to translate in ways that help readers understand Japanese culture and customs that appear in the manga works. When translating ingredients unique to Japanese cuisine, she will choose words that make it easy to picture the shape or appearance of the foods, using wordings like “daikon radish” rather than simply “daikon,” for instance.



©Waco Ioka 2016 ©Midori Yuma 2016 ©Laruha 2016



KAKURIYO NO YADOMESHI AYAKASHIOYADO NI YOMEIRI SHIMASU ©Waco Ioka 2016 ©Midori Yuma 2016 ©Laruha 2016 / KADOKAWA CORPORATION

In the English translation, “SHK SHK” expresses the sound of shaking and stirring during rice-rinsing, taking the vowels from the word “shake” to give it a suitably manga-like look. (From *Kakuriyo: Bed & Breakfast for Spirits*, vol. 1, pg. 154)

“One of the things that makes Japanese manga so appealing has got to be the wide range of genres it covers. I want to keep challenging myself to carefully convey to readers the unique charms of each individual work I translate, from among all the colorful diversity of manga I do.”

1. Japanese version: *Full Moon wo Sagashite*. (Story and art by TANEMURA Arina.) Published by SHUEISHA Inc., 2002.
2. Total number of copies in circulation worldwide of comic series by single author.
3. *Black Butler*: published by Yen Press. The Japanese version (story and art by TOBOSO Yana) is a

popular manga series that has been published by SQUARE ENIX since 2007.
4. Published by VIZ Media. Japanese version: *Kakuriyo no Yadomeshi: Ayakashi Oyado ni Yomeiri Shimasu* (art by IOKA Waco, based on novel series by YUMA Midori, character design by Laruha) that has been published by KADOKAWA since 2016.



Group photo
Photo: Ministry of Justice

The Ministry of Justice of Japan convened the 1st ASEAN-G7 Next Leaders Forum

The 1st ASEAN-G7 Next Leaders Forum was held in Tokyo from June 26 to July 2, 2024. This is the forum that young officials from Justice Ministries and relevant government institutions from 18 countries and organization of ASEAN and the G7 gathered to discuss policy issues and efforts related to promoting the rule of law, among other topics. An overview of the conference and its outcomes follows.

Significance and Overview

The ASEAN-G7 Next Leaders Forum is an initiative proposed by Japan at the ASEAN-G7 Justice Ministers' Interface held last July, aimed at promoting and strengthening the rule of law in the international community. Participants at the Interface supported Japan's proposal to establish the forum.

The forum aims to foster "horizontal" or "inter-regional" connections promoting mutual understanding and forming partnerships that will serve as a foundation for future cooperation in the field of law and justice by facilitating discussions on policy issues and efforts beyond the cultural, social and institutional differences of ASEAN and the G7 countries. Additionally, it seeks to establish an alumni network, creating "vertical" or "inter-generational" connections to establish long-term trust and provide a basis for future cooperation.

For its inaugural forum, 55 young officials from the Justice Ministries and other relevant government institutions from 18 countries and organization of ASEAN and the G7

participated. The participants engaged in group discussions and presented their findings on policy issues in the field of law and justice within their respective countries. They also discussed strategies on "how to ensure and develop human resources in the law and justice field, taking into account gender perspectives".

Additionally, to support the discussions, lectures were delivered by Mr. TAKASHIMA Ryosuke, Mayor of Ashiya City, Hyogo Prefecture, Ms. Mildred Bernadette B. Alvor, Assistant Chief State Counsel, Department of Justice of the Republic of the Philippines, and Ms. KAWAMOTO Yuko, President of the National Personnel Authority of Japan, on the qualities necessary for leaders involved in policy-making in their respective countries.

At the sideline of the forum, participants visited multiple law and justice institutions in Japan such as correctional facilities, the Supreme Court, the National Diet, and offender rehabilitation facilities to gain deeper understanding of the Japanese legal systems.



Group discussion



Group presentation

Achievements and Outlook

The first forum concluded successfully, with participants commenting that “working with colleagues from ASEAN and the G7 and learning about the similar challenges each country may face in the legal and judicial fields was very helpful in bringing differences and deepening our understanding and appreciation” and “the personal connections that were made among the participants will facilitate future cooperation”.

The forum effectively built mutual understanding and trust beyond ASEAN and the G7 frameworks.

The Ministry of Justice of Japan hopes to continue hosting this forum regularly, so that participants can leverage the experience and networks gained to promote the rule of law as leaders in the field of law and justice in their respective countries. The Ministry also anticipates that the forum will act as a bridge for cooperation between ASEAN and the G7 countries.



Excursion to correctional facility



After the completion of all programme

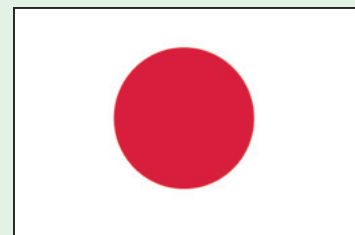
Photo: Ministry of Justice



The logo of the ASEAN-G7 Next Leaders Forum



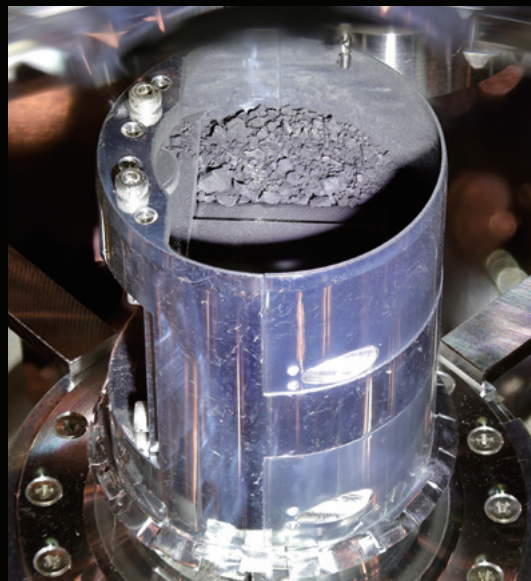
The 1st ASEAN-G7 Next Leaders Forum is supported by the Japan-ASEAN Integration Fund (JAIF).





The asteroid Ryugu and the shadow of Hayabusa2 (center right) photographed from a 70m altitude.

Photo: JAXA



The sample catcher of Hayabusa2. The inner diameter of the container is approximately 48mm.

Photo: JAXA

Probing the Birth of Earth and the Origin of Life: The Asteroid Exploration Technology of Hayabusa2

In December 2020, JAXA's Asteroid Explorer Hayabusa2 successfully returned to Earth and brought back some rock and sand samples from the asteroid Ryugu, after a long journey of 5.24 billion kilometers. The samples from Ryugu, which orbits the sun between Mars and Earth, are expected to provide important clues to solving the mysteries of the formation of the solar system, the birth of Earth, and the origin of life.

FUKUDA Mitsuhiro

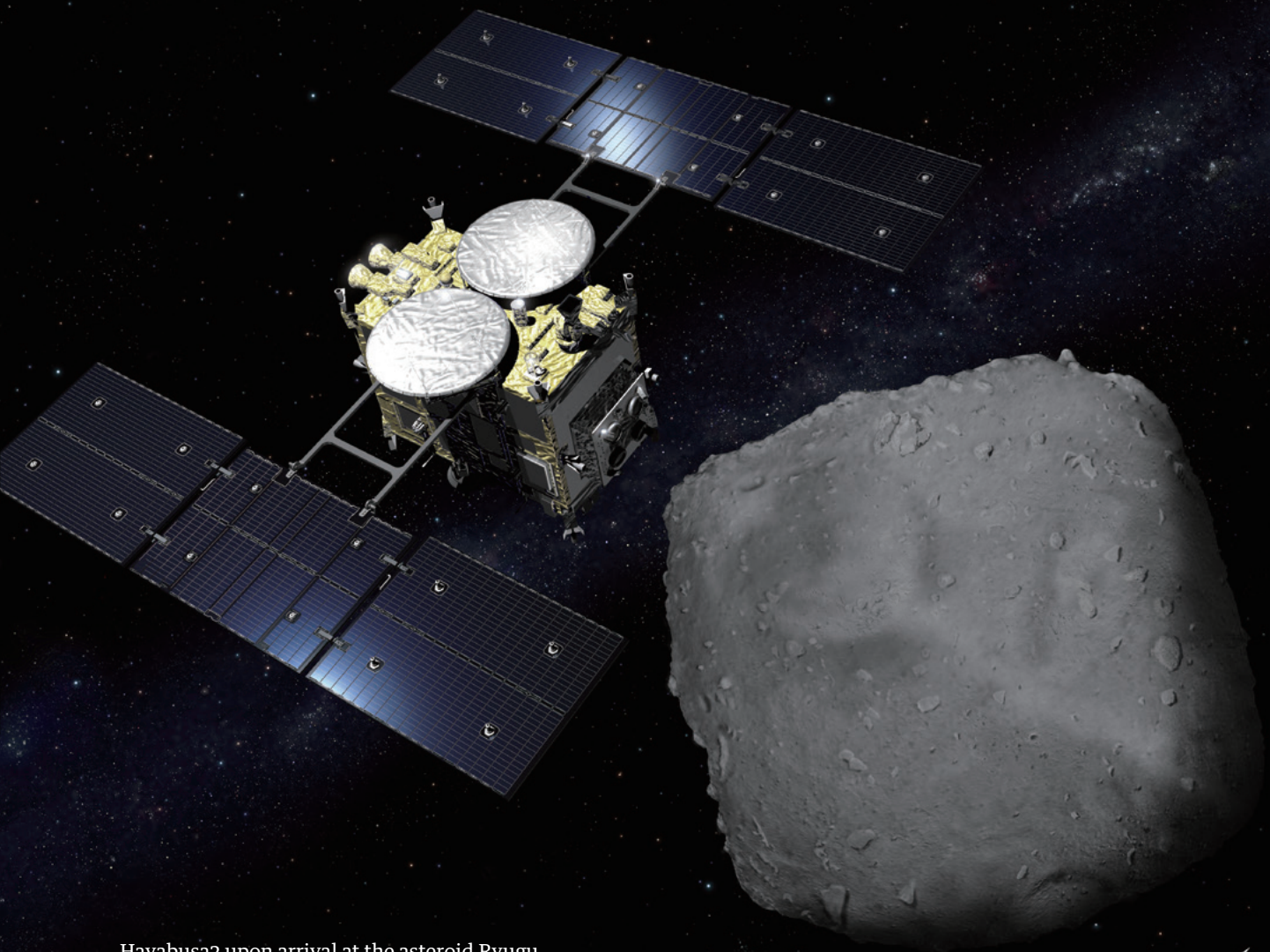
Hayabusa2 is the much-improved successor to the first Hayabusa, an unmanned probe that in June 2010 became the world's first spacecraft to successfully retrieve samples from the surface of the asteroid Itokawa.¹ In order to refine the technology for asteroid exploration, the mission took on various challenges using methods such as a guidance and control technology for ultra-precise pinpoint touchdown, an impactor for artificial crater formation experiments, the first Ka band² high-speed communication technology on a Japanese deep-space³ spacecraft, and four on-board surface

exploration robots.

The 1.3 million asteroids discovered to date are classified into different types according to their main components, which are inferred from their color through telescopic observations. Ryugu has been classified as a C-type (carbonaceous) asteroid, meaning that it is rich in carbon. Scientists have speculated that Ryugu has primitive characteristics that date back to the formation period of the solar system.

Hayabusa2, which left Earth in December 2014 and arrived at Ryugu in June 2018 after a journey of approximately three and a half years, began preparations for a touchdown to collect samples of the asteroid's composition matter. The original plan

was to find a flat area 100m in diameter in which to execute a touchdown. However, there was no flat area large enough on Ryugu, and the one that was finally found was a circle with a diameter of 6m, a much smaller space than anticipated. There, the probe first dropped a target marker, a small artificial ball, at the intended landing site and then thoroughly measured its location with relative to the landing target point using the on-board camera. The team also drastically modified the spacecraft onboard software to refine the landing accuracy, until at last a successful touchdown was achieved. The high-precision touchdown had an error range of just 1m. At the subsequent second touchdown, the impactor was



Hayabusa2 upon arrival at the asteroid Ryugu.

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A. Ikeshita

detached from Hayabusa2 and collided with the surface of Ryugu at high speed, creating an artificial crater and allowing the exposed subsurface material to be collected.

After the long journey back to Earth, Hayabusa2 released the reentry capsule containing the collected samples of rock and sand, including subsurface material over the Woomera desert region in South Australia, where it was safely recovered. The weight of the collected samples was 5.4 grams, significantly more than originally planned. Analysis and research of the samples is still ongoing, but the presence of water and dozens of types of amino acids has already been confirmed. Amino acids are organic substances that form the basis of life. This is expected to pro-

vide an important clue in unraveling the mystery of the origin of life in the earliest days of the solar system.

This Hayabusa2 mission was awarded the FY2024 Commendation for Science and Technology by the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (Development Category) for its contribution to the advancement of solar system exploration technology and the others. Based on the results of this mission, Hayabusa2 is now taking on the challenge of new asteroid exploration. Since asteroids are believed to be the parent bodies for most of the meteorites that fall to Earth, the establishment of technology to accurately navigate probes around asteroids and the acquisition of observational data



Rock and sand samples brought back by Hayabusa2 from the asteroid Ryugu. The largest specimen exceeds 10mm. The diameter of the Petri dish is 60mm and the grid spacing is 5mm.

Photo: JAXA

from close range are expected to contribute to planetary defense, a set of measures to avoid possible future meteorite impacts.

1. An S-type asteroid (composed mostly of silicates) orbiting close to Earth.
2. A high-frequency band used to communicate with satellites, enabling high-capacity, high-speed data transmission.
3. An area in the solar system outside Earth's gravitational sphere. Generally, space where the distance from Earth is more than 2 million kilometers.

Traditional Gardens from Various Periods throughout Japan: Gardens in Nara, Hiraizumi, and Fukui

ONO Kenkichi is a professor at Osaka University of Tourism, specializing in garden history and cultural heritage preservation. In this month's issue, he explains traditional gardens from the 8th, 12th, and 16th centuries in different parts of Japan.

Toin Garden (Eastern Palace Garden) at Heijo-kyu (Nara Palace), a venue for imperial banquets in the 8th century (Nara City)

Photo: Nara National Research Institute for Cultural Properties



ONO Kenkichi

Many people think of Kinkakuji Temple or Ryoanji Temple in Kyoto when they think of traditional Japanese gardens. In fact, Japan has many gardens from different historical periods preserved all over the country, which is rare even on a global scale. Here, I would like to introduce 8th-century gardens in Nara, 12th-century gardens in Hiraizumi, and 16th-century gardens in Fukui.

The design of the traditional Japanese garden as we know it today was born in the 8th century in then capital Heijo-kyo (present-day Nara City and Yamatokoriyama City, Nara Prefecture). While being influenced by the gardens of the Tang Dynasty of China, gardens were created based on natural landscape motifs in accordance with the climate and topographical features of Japan. Today there are two gardens from this period that have been excavated and restored through archaeological research and are open to the public. Toin Garden (Eastern Palace Garden) at Heijo-kyu (Nara Pal-

ace) was used as a venue for imperial banquets. The garden features buildings and bridges arranged around the pond which is an intricate shape by a series of jutting like peninsulas and recesses like inlets. On the northern shore of the pond is an authentic stone arrangement dating back to the 8th century. The Garden at Block 6, East Second Ward on Third Street of Heijo-kyo capital site was also an official facility for banquets. The highlights of this garden are the long,

meandering pond in the shape of a dragon and the stone arrangements on its banks. The entire pond including stone arrangements, from the bottom covering to the banks, are original and dating back to the 8th century. These two gardens, both constructed nearly 1,300 years ago, are rare examples around the world and a must-see for anyone interested in gardens.

After Kyoto became the capital of Japan in the late 8th century, it rose to prominence as the center of a dis-



The dragon-shaped pond in the Garden at Block 6, East Second Ward on Third Street of Heijo-kyo capital site (Nara City)

Photo: ONO Kenkichi



ONO Kenkichi

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tinative garden culture in which gardens were built as part of Buddhist temples. Under the influence of this culture, magnificent Buddhist temple gardens were created in Hiraizumi (now Hiraizumi Town, Iwate Prefecture), which was the stronghold of the Oshu Fujiwara clan that ruled the present-day Tohoku region in the 12th century. The garden of Motsuji Temple has been well preserved in its original appearance from that time. On the south side of the now-lost main hall is the Oizumi-ga-ike pond, which stretches 200 meters from east to west with an island in the center. Of particular interest are the spot likened to a cape and the single standing stone rising above the surface of the water in the southeastern part of the pond, the stone arrangement on the *tsukiyama* artificial hill in the southwestern part, and the *yarimizu* stream that was excavated and restored in the northeastern part. All of these structures were built in the 12th century and remain largely intact. The beauty of the garden is especially striking during the seasons of lush young leaves and colorful fall foliage. I would also like to recommend the garden of the nearby Kanjizaioin Temple Site and the recently restored garden of the Muryokoin Temple Site.

The late 15th and 16th centuries were a time of civil war in Japan. During this period, the warlords who held military control over their respective provinces also paid special attention to maintaining their cultural power and created unique gardens in their residences and castles. Ichijodani (present-day Fukui City) was the stronghold of Asakura, a warrior clan that ruled Echizen Province (part of present-day Fukui Prefecture)



The Oizumi-ga-ike pond at Motsuji Temple, the view from the spot likened to a cape and the standing stone in the southwestern part of the pond (Hiraizumi Town, Iwate Prefecture)

Photo: ONO Kenkichi



The powerful arrangements of massive rocks at the Suwa Yakata (Residence) Site Garden in Ichijodani, the stronghold of the Asakura clan (Fukui City)

Photo: ONO Kenkichi

for about 100 years, and its ruins are generally well preserved. The garden excavated at the site of Asakura Yakata (Residence) is small in area, but has a sophisticated design with an arrangement of rocks that resembles a waterfall. The Suwa Yakata (Residence) Site Garden and the Yudono Site Garden, both characterized by arrangements of massive rocks projecting power,

also demonstrate the Asakura clan's taste in gardens. A short trip on a scenic route through a delightful rural landscape by local train from Fukui Station, which is also a stop on the Hokuriku Shinkansen Line, will take you to the ruins and gardens of Ichijodani to discover a Japan you never knew existed.



Washi, a traditional Japanese paper, is painstakingly crafted sheet by sheet by artisans using traditional tools (right). “The Japanese sense of beauty can be experienced in the simplicity of the natural texture of the paper,” says Ruth Marie Jarman. The photo on the left, showing Mino Washi, is an example of how *washi* paper can have many different textures.

Photos: PIXTA

The Japanese Sense of Beauty: Appreciating Simplicity

Ruth Marie Jarman, born in North Carolina but raised in the US State of Hawaii, has lived in Japan for over 35 years. She has worked on projects supporting the inbound strategies of Japanese companies and local governments and has a deep knowledge and understanding of the appeal of Japan. This month, we requested her to discuss the Japanese sense of beauty.

Ruth Marie Jarman

Most people who visit Japan for the first time are surprised by the clean and comfortable bathrooms at train stations and the fact that the streets are clean despite the lack of trash cans, and that there are no unpleasant smells. At the same time, they probably wonder why Japan is such a clean place.

Of course, in every country there are many people who like to keep things clean. However, there are very few cities in the world where public spaces such as train stations and streets are virtually garbage-free and kept as clear and clean as in Japan. What is the difference between Japan

and other countries?

In Japan, children are taught by their parents, as part of their character building, to use things with care and to keep public spaces clean. They learn not to litter in the streets, to tidy up after themselves as much as possible in restaurants such as putting the dishes in order, and to be considerate of others in public places so as not to inconvenience them. This commitment to cleanliness and consideration for others is a spirit shared by many Japanese and has become established as natural behavior that most Japanese people can truly take for granted.

In my life in Japan, I have often been surprised by this aesthetic that I find is common among Japanese people. For example, I once saw elemen-



Ruth Marie Jarman wearing a kimono. “As a traditional Japanese garment, the kimono features a variety of colors and patterns that reflect the changing seasons,” she explains. “The simple yet profound sense of beauty and the exquisite craftsmanship that goes into a single piece of fabric is a joy to behold.”

Photo: Ruth Marie Jarman



Ruth Marie Jarman

An American-born entrepreneur raised in Hawaii, Jarman joined Recruit Co., Ltd. in 1988 and has lived in Japan for over 35 years. She began her career in translation and interpretation as a small business owner in 1992. She is currently the CEO of Jarman International KK and has published six books on Japan. She serves as an Independent Director on boards at three publicly listed Japanese corporations, is one of the rare non-Japanese holders of the Japanese Takken Real Estate license and appears in various media including NHK World Radio's "Living in Japan". In 2024, she was appointed a member of the NHK International Broadcast Programs Council and continues to support Japan's internationalization in a variety of capacities.

 Ruth Marie Jarman



Examples of trash cans installed on the streets of Japan. Before disposal, waste is separated into combustible, noncombustible, plastic bottles, etc. If people cannot find a trash can, they take their trash home or to places where there are trash cans, helping to keep the streets and train stations clean.

Photo: PIXTA

tary school children practicing baseball on a field along a walking route I often take. Their bags were lined up in front of a wall, neatly organized to the point of perfection. The experience left me in awe of this wonderful culture and made me realize that the practice of turning this kind of behavior into a habit from early on has created a deep culture of care and consideration that is somewhat unique to Japan. In my experience, if this were in the US, bags would be laying around in a haphazard, less organized way (which can also be freeing for kids).

It seems too simple to answer the question, "Why are Japanese cities so clean?" with, "Because Japanese people like to keep things clean." By delving deeper into the cultural background of this aptitude for tidiness, I feel that the Japanese sense of beauty, which appreciates simplicity, may be at its root.

For example, the Japanese dish *osuimono*¹ is sometimes decorated with small flower-shaped ingredients

in a clear broth to represent the four seasons. Traditional Japanese *washi* paper is also extremely simple, yet, filled with elegant beauty. The Japanese sense of beauty, which places great value on the pursuit of simplicity in the finished product despite the complexity of the creative process, seems to reflect the mentality of "love of a clean look,." This aesthetic naturally encourages utmost tidiness in all aspects.



In Japan, children learn the importance of tidiness and order at an early age, both in school and at home. (Left: An example of children putting their bags in order at baseball practice, as described in the article. Right: Children neatly arranging their shoes at the entrance of their home).

Photos: PIXTA

1. *Osuimono* is a type of traditional Japanese soup. It contains fish or chicken, *kamaboko* (a seafood product made from pureed fish that is steamed and formed into various shapes), and other ingredients in a broth of *katsubushi* (dried bonito flakes), *kombu* (kelp), etc., with aromatic Japanese herbs such as *sansho* (Japanese pepper) and *yuzu* (a type of citrus fruit). Flower-shaped *kamaboko* are used to add color to *osuimono*.



Sword, unsigned Masamune (celebrated Kanze Masamune)



Sword crafted by Masamune, a renowned swordsmith of Sagami Province
(Dimensions: approx. 65cm blade length)

Photo: ColBase (<https://colbase.nich.go.jp/>)

The celebrated “Kanze Masamune,” a National Treasure, is an unsigned *katana* sword considered to have been crafted by Masamune, a well-known swordsmith of Sagami Province (the greater part of present-day Kanagawa Prefecture) in the Kamakura period¹ around the first half of the 14th century. Masamune is known for perfecting the Soshu-den² school, which was a renowned school of Japanese sword-making.

An evaluation of this sword describes “the fine quality of the finish and the glitter of fine particles (J. *nie*) are matchless.”³ This style well represents the characteristics of the Soshu-Den school. “The piece is called Kanze Masamune because it was originally in the possession of the Kanze, a prominent family active in the world of Noh theater. However, according to the Kyôhō Era Handbook of Famous Works (J. Kyôhō meibutsuchō), an Edo-period (1615-1868) sword manual, Tokugawa Ieyasu (1542-1616) took it from the Kanze family and gave it to his son Hidetada (1578-1632). ... After the Meiji Restoration (1868), the Tokugawa family presented it to the Arisugawa-no-miya family, and it was passed down within the house of their successors, the Takamatsu-no-miya.”⁴ Currently, it is in the Tokyo National Museum’s collection.



The *nakago* or part of the sword that fits into the handle,⁵ features engravings, including lettering in the Siddham script *Bonji*.⁶

Photo: ColBase (<https://colbase.nich.go.jp/>)

1. The period from the late 12th century (starting from 1185 or 1192, according to different interpretations) until 1333.
2. A school of Japanese sword-making that is said to have been created in Kamakura, Sagami Province (present-day Kamakura City, Kanagawa Prefecture) from the mid to late Kamakura period.
- 3.4. Quoted from the explanatory text on the e-Museum website (<https://emuseum.nich.go.jp/top?langId=en&webView=>)

Terms used in quoted sections of this text

Jigane (finish): The surface pattern on a sword blade created by repeatedly applying a process called *orikaeshi tanren* that involves heating a type of steel called *tamahagane*, the raw material used for making Japanese swords, hammering it thin, folding it in half and hammering it thin again.

Note that “J.” in the text indicates the Japanese way of saying it.

Nie (fine particles): A variety of fine particles that make up the *hamon* (temper patterns) formed by the *yaki-ire* (tempering or hardening) process when a heated sword blade is inserted into water. Types of such fine particles include *nie* and *nioi*. While the larger *nie* particles gleam when exposed to light, *nioi* particles have a hazy appearance. Because of the relative coarseness of *nie* particles, they are visible to the naked eye.

Noh theater: A classical Japanese performing art with a history of performance of over 650 years, starting in the Muromachi period (1336-1573). *Nohgaku*, which includes the *noh* and *kyogen* theater forms, has been designated an Intangible Cultural Heritage by UNESCO. The Kanze family is the head of the Kanze School, one of the schools of *noh*.

Edo period: The period from the early 17th century to around the middle of the second half of the 19th century. Hidetada was the second shogun of the Edo Shogunate.

Meiji Restoration: Refers to a series of political and social reforms that took place in Japan in the late 19th century, when the ruling system of the Edo Shogunate collapsed and was replaced by the new Meiji government.

Arisugawa-no-miya and Takamatsu-no-miya families: Both families were one of the houses of Imperial princes.

5. The part of the Japanese sword that is held in the hand is called the *tsuka*, and the blade that fits into it is called *nakago*.
6. A script used in ancient India for writing Sanskrit and other related characters. The script was introduced to Japan through Asian Continent together with Buddhism. It has a history of use in Japan, particularly in Buddhist temples.

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