

“Cool Japan: Wisdom of Japan” Symposium and Workshop & Traditional Japanese Kyogen Art Performance



“Cool Japan: Wisdom of Japan” Symposium and Workshop was held at the Sri Lanka Foundation Institute (SLFI) Auditorium, Colombo 7 on Wednesday 19th February 2014. Honourable Alavi Moulana, Governor of the Western Province and Ven. Korin Ohtani, Senior Counsellor of Honganji Foundation, Japan, graced the occasion as Guests of Honour.

The symposium was co-organized by the Honganji Foundation, the Japan Foundation, the Executive Committee of Cool Japan: Wisdom of Japan, the Western Province Governors’ Office of the Government of Sri Lanka, the Embassy of Japan together with the support of the Kyoto National Museum, City of Kyoto, the Center for Traditional Industries in Kyoto and the local assistance of UB Finance PLC and Softlogic Finance PLC.

“Cool Japan” is relatively a new notion of contemporary Japan. The symposium explored the roots of Japan’s spiritual culture, thought and philosophy as well as other manifestations of the Japanese heart and mind – particularly in terms of revealing “Cool Japan” on a deeper level and was designed to promote a wider understanding and deeper appreciation of the cultural heritage and spirit of the Japanese people.

Two DVD presentations featuring salient aspects of “Neo-Japonism and the Historic Roots of “Cool Japan” and “The Wisdom of Japan: Harmony, Gratitude, and the Syncretistic Tradition” as well as a special performance of a traditional Japanese Kyogen play entitled “Bo-Shibari” by professional Kyogen actors of Mansaku Nomura & his Company, a popular Kyogen theatre company from Kyoto, Japan was also featured as part of the Symposium.

Panelists for the symposium included His Excellency Mr. Nobuhito Hobo, Ambassador of Japan in Sri Lanka, Dr. Ryu Murakami, Director, Kyoto National Museum, Dr. Sunil Wijesiriwardena, Writer and Visiting Lecturer of Colombo University and Kelaniya University and Prof. H.D. Karunaratne, Professor of the University of Colombo as well as Mr. Yukio Ishida, Kyogen Player from Kyoto, Japan. The panel discussion was led by His Excellency Mr. Nobuhito Hobo, Ambassador of Japan while Mr. Kenji Miyata, First Secretary, Embassy of Japan was the moderator of the symposium.

The second segment of the symposium was the “Cool Japan: Wisdom of Japan” traditional Japanese “Kyogen” plays and workshop which was held at the Sri Dharmaloka Hall of the Kelaniya University on Thursday 20th February 2014. Ven. Korin Ohtani, Senior Counsellor of Honganji Foundation, Japan, Mr. Hideki Ishizuka, Minister, Embassy of Japan and Prof. Sarath Amunugama, Vice Chancellor, Kelaniya University graced the occasion as Guests of Honour.

Professional Kyogen actors of Mansaku Nomura & his Company, performed “Kyogen – *Busu*” while Kyogen plays entitled “*Waha*” (ඉහ or Poison) directed by Priyankara Ratnayake and “*Kimbul Kandulu*” (කිඹුල් කඳවුර or Tears of a Crocodile) directed by Professor Patrick Ratnayake were also staged by the students of the Drama Theatre and Image Arts Unit of the Kelaniya University. Lectures on traditional Japanese Kyogen art and the Sri Lankan form of Kyogen were delivered by Mr. Yukio Ishida of Nomura Mansaku Art School and Prof. Patrick Ratnayake respectively. An appreciative packed audience of over one thousand were seen enjoying the comedy entertainment of Kyogen.