

“The Spirit of Budo” Exhibition- History of Japanese Martial Arts



A rare exhibition on Japanese martial arts culture entitled “*The Spirit of Budō: The History of Japan’s Martial Arts*”, was held at the J.D.A Perera Gallery of the University of Visual and Performing Arts, No.46, Horton Place, Colombo 7 from 22nd to 27th February 2014. This exhibition is classed among a series of travelling exhibitions of the Japan Foundation which engages in international cultural exchange activities in cooperation with over 130 countries around the world.

On display at this exhibition were 80 exhibits consisting of a variety of reproductions and originals of historical weapons such as bows and arrows, suits of armor and helmets, swords and their mountings etc. and was designed to provide viewers with an understanding about the brief history of Japanese martial arts- from battlefield combat techniques (*bujutsu*) to popular sports or physical exercises tempering body and spirit (*budō*). The exhibition also showcased the development and changes of Japanese martial arts from 8th century to 19th century and the reorganization of *bujutsu* to *budō* in the 19th and 20th centuries and how the spirit of martial arts is still inherent in the daily lives of Japanese people today. The exhibition was an excellent opportunity for viewers not only to become aware of Japanese martial arts, but also appreciate the Japanese people’s aesthetic awareness and creativity, Japan’s social history and the Japanese way of thinking from a new angle.

His Excellency Mr. Nobuhito Hobo, Ambassador of Japan graced the occasion as Chief Guest at the opening ceremony and viewed the exhibition as well

as the demonstrations of martial arts such as Judo, Aikido, Kyudo, Kendo and Iaido (traditional Japanese swordsmanship). The exhibition was organized by the Embassy of Japan and sponsored by the Japan Foundation. A large number of guests visited the exhibition and enjoyed the martial arts demonstrations performed by members of martial arts organizations from Japan and Sri Lanka. Japanese martial arts associations currently active in Sri Lanka promotes these respective disciplines and thereby contribute to further strengthening the friendly ties between Japan and Sri Lanka.