

Diary Dates

## President's Report December 2016

Saturday 10th  
December

*To finish the year, we are holding a Bonenkai at Weston Park, just opposite the Railway line.*

*The timing is 6:00 pm.*

*BYO meat and drink.*

*Salad will be provided.*

*We would welcome you all to attend.*

*I am sure it will be a time to catch up, reflect and enjoy our final event for the year. The Venue and details are posted on our Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/ajsact/>*

If you didn't attend the AJS Annual Dinner, you certainly missed a wonderful evening. We welcomed Ambassador Kusaka and Mrs Kusaka, Australia Japan Society Federation President Mr Philip Mitchell, Mr Yokoyama the Director of the Japan Information and Cultural Centre, Mr Hideki Onagi CJC representative, Ms Liz Watts from DFAT and Mr Onagi a friend of the Ambassador, who is a journalist for Nikkei Inc.

We were treated to an address from Ambassador Kusaka. There were other addresses from Mr Philip Mitchell and Ms Erin McCullagh also spoke about the ANU Kabuki Tour to Japan, in particular the Tohoku region (her report is included here). We had a delicious dinner accompanied by a performance by a pianist from Radford College, Miss Vivienne Tran. To top off the music program for the evening, Mrs Misako Piper sang a beautiful song popular in the Tohoku region. During the dinner, we presented a cheque to the new Rotary Exchange student, Ms Caitlin Carroll who is going to Gifu for 2017. Our raffle was generously supported so we had many prizes and I think most people went home with something special. It was great that many of the parents who had hosted the Tohoku children attended

I would encourage you all to make sure that when the date is announced for the 2017 dinner you put it your diary!

November proved to be a busy month, with AJS teaming up with Sailability ACT, to help host the Hiroshima Peace Cup. 49 Japanese people came from Sailability Japan, which included contingents from Hiroshima, Enoshima, Tokyo and Nagoya. Amongst the Japanese were wheelchair bound participants, other disabled participants, friends, parents and caregivers. For those who aren't aware, Sailability ACT, provides the opportunity for disabled people to compete against able bodied sailors on even terms. AJS provided a welcome Reception, which I was able to host at Radford College. Mr Miyashita, Minister at the Japanese Embassy and Mr Alistair Coe MLA, Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Assembly of the ACT, spoke. A barbecue was provided by the Rotary Club of Woden and we enjoyed a wonderful time in late evening sun.

Saturday and Sunday were racing days, and the AJS provided volunteers to help with translation in regards to sailing and also general help with the Japanese contingent during the two-day event. This included some of our volunteer's tour guiding for a couple of tours during the day while others were on the water competing. I would like to publically thank those who volunteered for such a wonderful event in the ACT. I for one, learnt a lot about sailing and had lots of fun with the Japanese, both at Lake Tuggeranong and at dinner on the Sunday night. I would also like to thank Mr Terry Peek and his Committee, who worked tirelessly over the weekend to produce a spectacular result.

Thanks to the AJS Committee members and AJS members who have worked tirelessly this year with all our events. It has been another year of promoting positive relationships between Australia and Japan. I look forward to 2017 and having more of you involved. A new venture is for our Members will be a bus trip to Cowra. So stay tuned! Have a very relaxed and Merry Christmas Season and Happy New Year for 2017.

## ANU Za Kabuki Clubs tour of Japan

### Excerpts from Erin McCullagh's speech at the Annual Dinner

“we visited four cities, two of which were heavily affected by the earthquake and tsunami of March 2011. We did three performances, firstly at Akita International University, an institute which has strong ties with ANU through exchange programs, then at Kesennuma in Miyagi prefecture, and then at Ishinomaki, also in Miyagi prefecture. Our three performances all took place in three very different places, we worked with and met different people each time, and I can say that overall it formed a very special experience for all those involved.”

...”After getting our bearings, our first stop was Akita. Going to Akita was, for many of us, quite a nostalgic experience, as four of the nineteen who performed there, including myself, had previously been to the university there on exchange, and were delighted to have the experience to return and meet our teachers and classmates once again. In addition, a student who had been on exchange to ANU last year, and a teacher at AIU were some of those who volunteered to be a part of the show, playing samurai retainers or palanquin bearers. ... the palanquin that we used for the performance, which is actually a 250-year-old palanquin which was borrowed from the Aoyagi samurai family from Kakunodate. We were very privileged to use it for our performance. We were also able to borrow a real horse costume from a professional theatre company called Warabi-za. Many students, teachers and locals came to see our performance and it was a big success. Afterwards, we had a small celebration in which residents of Shiraiwa gave us gifts. Two years ago, four of us went to the small village of Shiraiwa to participate in a local festival. Even now, those local people still remember us and came to see our performance, even giving us presents. We were very touched.

From Akita, we then travelled to Kesennuma. Kesennuma is one of the towns which suffered the most in the 2011 earthquake and tsunami. On the way to Kesennuma, we also visited the disaster affected areas, where we could see with our own eyes the impact that it had on the community. Not only this, but we were able to talk to local residents and hear their individual stories. The people of Kesennuma were incredibly friendly, and received us warmly even after they'd been through such awful things. We also had the opportunity to have a meal with people from the town of Karakuwa, try out some taiko drumming and go on a fishing boat to see the oyster farms. When we were in Kesennuma we didn't just have the experience to visit the disaster zone and learn about its impact, but we also were able to join in with the local people to celebrate the great things that Kesennuma has to offer. The people that we met lost their houses, their belongings, everything they had, but after only five years they were able to welcome us so warmly and treat us with such hospitality, that it made me think how strong the people of Tohoku really are. When we performed, we had a full house, and everybody laughed, took photos, had conversations and enjoyed themselves to the full. ... I would truly like to go back again to visit the warm and loving people of Kesennuma.

Our final performance was in Ishinomaki. Ishinomaki was another place that was severely affected by the 2011 disaster. There were many casualties (and many lives lost). But even then, rather than talk about the impact of the disaster itself, there was more talk about how Ishinomaki can be revived. Even though the people of Ishinomaki experienced terrible things in the past, they are looking towards a bright future, and while the memory of the earthquake and tsunami lingers, we felt strongly that they were working hard towards reconstruction and recovery for the town. Just like the people of Kesennuma, the people we met in Ishinomaki seemed to be very resilient people. We also had the opportunity to talk with students from the Ishinomaki Senshu University, where we learnt about Ishinomaki, and where we taught them about our traditions in the kabuki club. It was here that we did our final performance. It made me a little sad to see the production we had worked hard on since February finally come

to an end. But what an end it was. The people of Ishinomaki thoroughly enjoyed our performance, and so did our cast members.

(when) the performances were over, everybody was in need of a rest, yet we still had free time to explore Tokyo. A few of us went to Kabukiza in Higashi Ginza to see real live kabuki. Most of the people who went had never seen kabuki before, and this was an incredible experience.

The reason we decided to perform in the disaster affected areas of Tohoku was mainly because we wanted to fully understand the effects of the disaster. Every year at our Canberra performances, we take donations for the Tohoku Youth Program, yet none of us really knew what it was actually like in the Tohoku region, in the areas we were donating money to. The extent of our knowledge about the disaster came from the television broadcasts we saw, and nothing beyond that. Yet the aim of our kabuki club is to enable our members to better understand Japan, so we wanted to try and understand the Tohoku disaster and its effects on a deeper level as well. 17 years ago, our club did performances in Kobe and Nara, and we decided that now was the time to once again perform in Japan. (S)We wanted to help put smiles on the faces of those in the small towns affected by the disaster, and so we decided we would have to perform in Tohoku. In Tohoku, we met the people of Kesennuma and Ishinomaki and had unforgettable experiences, as well as created a bond of friendship, and memories that will always remain in our hearts. Already, some of our club members have said to me, “when I graduate, I want to go and volunteer in Tohoku”. I am very glad to hear this. Something that I learned in Tohoku was that the strongest things in life are the bonds between people. And when we went and performed in Kesennuma and Ishinomaki, we created some of those bonds. That was, to me, the most remarkable thing about this trip.

Thank you very much for inviting me here tonight, and thank you for all your help in ensuring our performances could go ahead. Thanks to everybody’s hard work, our performances, both in Canberra and in Japan, were a great success.



## **JAPANESE LANGUAGE & CULTURE COURSE**

### **Kanazawa, JAPAN, April 2017**

The Australia-Japan Society of the ACT (AJS ACT), in conjunction with the Ishikawa Foundation for International Exchange (IFIE), is again calling for applications for the two-week in-country course in Japanese language/culture in Kanazawa. This will be the 26th course that has been run under this program.

The course will run for 2 weeks from Sunday 9 April to Friday 21st and includes intensive language lessons, cultural activities and home stay accommodation with a Japanese family - this latter is one of the outstanding features of the program and will certainly give a boost to your language skills.

During the course, mornings are spent in formal language classes and, most afternoons, opportunities are provided to explore the local culture, either in organised classes and expeditions or by exploring on your own. There are excellent facilities and very helpful teachers at the language school.

There is a Youtube video about the various Ishikawa Foundation's courses at <http://youtu.be/wiv2YBPQ4p4> The AJS two week course doesn't, of course, cover the full range of activities shown for the longer courses in the video, but there are many common features.

The classes are tailored to the individual participant's language skills – participants are assessed on the first day and placed in groups according to their language abilities. The April course is limited to participants with, at least, elementary Japanese language skills (beginner places are available in the October course).

Applicants for this two week course must be at least 20 years old, must be a member of an Australia – Japan Society or an affiliated organisation (or join one) and must be prepared to stay in Japan for the duration of the course.

The course and accommodation cost per participant, including all course fees, textbooks, cultural activities and accommodation for the duration of the course (**but NOT including fares to and from Kanazawa, Japan, lunches or your spending money in Japan**) will be, depending on fluctuations in the \$/yen ratio, around \$950 - \$1,000. A deposit of \$400 is payable by 3 February 2017. The balance is payable by 3 March 2017.

This is a great chance to commence, refresh, improve or develop your Japanese language skills and, if your profession is appropriate, the cost may be tax deductible as a self-education expense.

Contact the coordinator of the program, Mr Michael Hodgkin, for a more detailed outline of the program and for homestay application forms.

E-mail: [ajsificourses@gmail.com](mailto:ajsificourses@gmail.com)

or snail mail: IFIE Program Coordinator, c/o Australia – Japan Society (ACT), PO Box 1066, Canberra, ACT 2601

## SAILABILITY AND THE FRIENDSHIP CUP

Sailability is a program to encourage sailing especially for people with a disability. In Canberra it is located in the Sea Scout boathouse and jetties on the shores of Lake Tuggeranong, and this year it was their turn to host the Friendship Cup which involved teams from all over Australia and included this year sailors from Japan.

A group of 46 Japanese sailors and helpers came to Canberra and on the Friday evening a reception we held on the deck of the Senior School at Radford College, organised by our indefatigable President Diane Fitzpatrick. Teams were welcomed by Mr Tadayuki Miyashita, the Minister at the Japanese Embassy, and by the ACT Government Leader of the Opposition, Alistair Coe MLA, as well as by Diane. Rotary provided an excellent barbecue which was much appreciated by the visitors and locals alike.

Competition took place on Saturday and Sunday on Lake Tuggeranong, and Canberra turned on the perfect weather with sunshine and a stiff breeze. We are not too sure what all the divisions mean, but the following results show how well the Japanese team fared. In the Singles Division 3 Expert 2.3 Koji Hamada was second and Yui Fujimoto third. Division 4 Double Class was won by Eiko and Keita Takeshita with Yuji Kageyama and Osamu Goriki second. In the Expert 303 Single Class Kazumi Iwana was 5th, and Division 8 Doubles saw Tatsuya and Hiroyuki Hiraga come second and Ituo Mizume and So Fukimoto third.





## OSUMO

There's a changing of the guard in Sumo-land and while the top three in the recent season-ending *Basho* in Fukuoka were all Mongolian but there is a new name at the top: Kakuryu. He's already at *Yokozuna* status and this year has realised his potential, even defeating the former champ Hakuho on the last day of the tournament as an extra. Kakuryu finished 13-1 and like he did two years ago won ten in a row but this time he was able to go on with it. The other Mongolian in the top three was Haramafuji.

There's another promising Mongolian in the *komsubi* ranks Tamawashi who defeated one *yokozuna* and three *ozeki* earning a Technique Prize.

*Makuuchi* division debutant Ishiura and *maegashira* Shodai both won Fighting Spirit prizes.

Goeido had been aspiring to promotion to *yokozuna* but while he started well he was unable to go on with it and finished 9-5 so will have to wait further for his promotion.

## KEIBA

The Japan Cup has just been run at Fuchu. There were three overseas entries for this year's cup - Erupt from France and Iquitos and Nightflower from Germany. Erupt and Nightflower had both run in last year's cup and were hoping to improve on that showing but it was not to be.

Japanese runners filled the first six places, headed by the handsome son of Black Tide Kitanan Black. He was ridden by Yutaka Take who took his mount from gate 1 straight into the lead and there they stayed with Take riding a perfectly judged race to win by 2 1/2 lengths from Sounds Of Earth, the ride of Mirco Demuro, and Cheval Grande.

Kitanan Black is owned by the famous singer Saburo Kitajima who treated the Fuchu crowd to a rendition of "Matsura" at the prize giving ceremony, and Cheval Grande is owned by former baseball star Kazuhiro Sasaki.

Kitanan Black will probably go to the Arima Kinen in December and next year may travel to Dubai and France for the Arc.

Two horses came to Australia for the Spring Carnival with Curren Mirotic running in the Melbourne Cup. Unfortunately he is still running.

Nuovo Record went to America for the Breeders' Cup but didn't have any luck in that but stayed on in America and won a Group 3 at Del Mar. She will now go to Hong Kong.

There's a big Japanese contingent heading for Hong Kong for their international meeting in early December and in addition to Nuovo Record they include the two champions Maurice and A Shin Hikari.(pictured)



[www.ajsact.com.au](http://www.ajsact.com.au) is the link to our website and for facebook go to

<https://www.facebook.com/ajsact/>

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