



SAKURA

No. 91

May - June 2015



せんいち かんがく いちいち がくしょう
千日の勤学より一日の学匠

Better than a thousand days of diligent study is one day with a great teacher



The members of Nihongo Kaiwa Kyookai Society celebrated their 30th "In-Nichi-Bunkasai" at the Birla Academy for Art and Culture auditorium on the 14th of March, 2015. The occasion was graced by Prof. D. J. Chattopadhyay, the Pro Vice Chancellor of Calcutta University as chief guest, and Mr. Kazumi Endo, Consul General of Japan in Kolkata as the guest of honour.

A number of items were arranged for the evening. The show started with a beautiful solo Bharatanatyam dance performance, accompanying the song "Basanto eshe geche" which is "heralding the onset of spring". This was followed by a short speech by the President of NKKS, Mr Jayanta Saha. There were inspiring speeches by the Consul General and the Pro V.C of Calcutta University. This was followed by two group songs; one of them was a translation of 'dhitang dhitang' and the other was a rendition of the famous Japanese song- "sekai ni hitotsu dake no hana". Some Japanese children from the Japanese Supplemental School of Kolkata sang songs under the supervision of their teachers.

Teachers and members got together for the



skit 'Mind your Japanese Language' Part VII. The audience was pleasantly surprised when they heard the students trying to speak and write Japanese and their teacher correcting their 'machigatta Nihongo'. The participants of the 18th India Japan Students' Conference, which was held in Japan last year, also shared their experiences. Next it was time for some scintillating Indian modern dance with peppy songs by Khushboo and Akangsha, enjoyed by all.

Any Japanese programme is incomplete without a reference to the anime. A special programme was staged by the Consulate General of Japan in Kolkata depicting Doraemon and Nobita in a Bengali version of the famous anime. The spectators laughed and clapped at the way Nobita (Suprotik Sil Roy) and Doraemon (Seiya Ozawa) danced and sang. This was followed by a sitar recital by Keisuke Muto and accompanied on the tabla by Ayako Ikeda San. Everybody was awestruck by the way the Japanese duo had mastered the art of playing Indian Classical Music. The "Youkai Taisou Dai Ichi" dance performance by Tulika, Deya and Anunita was innovative and cute. The best was reserved for the last. It was time for the Japanese drama "Tora ga kita", conceived and directed by Alope Basu, inspired by Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyay's "Chhinath Bohurupi". Everybody enjoyed the hilarious act put on by the participants when they came face-to-face with a tiger.

The evening came to a close with the NKKS

Song and a vote of thanks to all those who made this show possible.

Last, but not the least, we are very grateful to our Nigam Sensei, whose untiring efforts made the show a resounding success.

Babli Chowdhury

AN INTERVIEW WITH AYAKO IKEDA

The audience of the 30th In Nichi Bunkasai must have noticed this blonde girl. With that colour of hair many, from a distance, thought that she is European. But then they had the least idea that she was going to play the Tabla in accompaniment to the Sitar, played by a Japanese Sitar player. Indeed she mesmerized us with her nimble and expert hands. She is Ayako Ikeda from Kanagawa prefecture of Japan. Should we say a frequent visitor to India? Why not, from 2004, September, she has been coming to India every year in December and stays here up to March. She arrived in the green room of Birla Academy with the Japanese Sitarist. We talked about the superb performances by the duo. She smiled shyly with a smile that was infectious. We congratulated both of them but it really intrigued us as to how a Japanese lady chose to play the Tabla. Though in the In Nichi Bunkasai last year too, I had met a Japanese lady playing Tabla. I had interviewed her also. In India not so many girls tend to play Tabla and here were two Japanese ladies playing Tabla in two consecutive Annual Functions! Ayako san cheered our Japanese skit and drama. Then our Sensei told me to meet Ayako san at Sensei's residence and take an interview for "Sakura". Ayako san can speak Bengali and her Bengali is very sweet and lilting. She has learnt Bengali from her landlady in Kolkata. I asked her in Bengali- *Kolkata kemon lage?* (How do you like Kolkata?) She answered *Kolkata amar khub bhalo lage* (I like Kolkata very much) very sweetly.



Excerpts from the interview:

Q: Ayako san, why Tabla?

A: From my childhood I was very interested in music- mainly classical music after watching a video of the Indian Tabla maestro Ustad Zakir Hussain. It was so mesmerizing that I was completely swept off by the enigma of musical resonance of his rendition.

Q: Yes he has a charismatic clientele and fan-following throughout the world. So Zakir Hossain played a huge role in your starting Tabla playing?

But how you start playing Tabla in Japan?

A: When I was determined to pursue this I started to learn from the famous Japanese Tabla player U-zhaan san. From my *guru* I then heard the name of the Indian Tabla player Anindya Chatterjee and I planned

to come to India. I came to India and became his disciple. Now I am training under both Anindya Sir and also his son Anubrata Sir in India.

Q: You said that from childhood you are interested in European classical music.

A: Yes I learned percussion. I also learned how to play the Drum. I entered an ``ongaku gakko''--- a music school. Actually as I was used to beating the Taiko (Drum) which more or less has a resemblance with *Tabla* so seeing Zakir Hussain playing I was readily drawn to that. Then again the rhythmic resonance initiated me as if to a trance, a celestial, musical realm.

Q: So music is with you from the very childhood. Are your parents also in this profession or are they just music-lovers.

A: No no, my father is a serviceman and my mother is a housewife. But both of them like music very much. When I was twelve I was introduced to Taiko but at the age of seven I started to participate in chorus. Every week, I used to participate in chorus groups of various music- Japanese or foreign.

Q: When did you decide to pursue Tabla playing so seriously and assiduously and what was the reaction of your parents? Didn't they object?

A: At first they were to some extent startled but then they gave their assent. They were worried but they didn't object.

Q: For many years you have been coming to India frequently so you must have gone to various places of India or Kolkata?

A: No, not at all. Even in Kolkata where I stay as a paying guest I don't move so much except for concerts or programmes. In the room I practice Tabla playing as much as I can. Once I went to famous *Maihar* concert in Madhya Pradesh. I liked the place.

Q: Have you any future plans about Tabla?

A: I would like to spread the joy of the Tabla to many people in Japan. I would like to live life performing concerts and giving lessons actively.



(contd.from Page 2.....)

(contd. on Page 3.....)

Q: What's your hobby?

A: Painting. I make various designs. I like *Oshibai*, *Anime*, especially *Doraemon*.

Q: Are you a movie- buff, I mean fond of movies?

A: I am a fan of Jacky Chan. His action films are really superb engrossing and mind-blowing. I have also seen Shahruk Khan-starrer movie *Om Shanti Om*.

Q: Oh that's great. Do you read books?

A: Yes. I like to read very much. I have read a lot of Haikus written by Housai Ozaki and poems written by Sakutarō Hagiwara as I am very fond of those.

Q: Your *Tabla* accompaniment to the *Sitarist* was highly appreciated and applauded. How do you like NKKS programmes in In Nichi Bunkasai?

A: I liked the skit very much .It was *omoshiroi* (interesting).

Q: Are you a god-fearing person?

A: I believe in *Kamisama* (God). I enjoy the Saraswati Puja very much, and also the sweet custom of offering *anjali* (offering to God joining both hands) in that *Puja*.

Q: Your life is devoted to music. Do you know or hear any Tagore songs?

A: Yes yes, I know one Tagore song.

Aloke Basu

A MEETING OF YOUNG MINDS



On the 7th of March, the Japanese learning students from Kolkata, met with students from Momoyama Daigaku and Jouchi Daigaku from 6pm onwards at Sarat Samity for a casual exchange and conversation. To begin with the Japanese students were separated into groups and the Indian students were asked to join in threes or fours. The conversations began with self introductions and flowed into general discussions of hobbies, our day to day lives and the often faced question- "Why did you start studying Japanese?" The Japanese students wished to learn a few Bengali words and words in Hindi, though they all seemed to know "namaste" and "dhanyavad", much to our surprise. Anime was a general topic of discussion and these discussions were particularly exciting and enthusiastic. The Japanese students also enjoyed a bite of *samosa* and sweets.

With each group there came a time when the Indian students were asked to change to a different group so as to meet more students. It felt strange to have grown a bond in such a short time span and it was rather saddening to leave to another group, only for the process to repeat each time the group was changed.

The meeting ended with a photo session. It was a short meet, no doubt, but resulted in newly forged friendships with young people from a different land, but with similar mindsets.

Aleya Chanda



MONTHLY PROGRAMME

- ◆ **Lecture on Japanese Grammar:**
20th May 2015
At Sarat Samity 6:30pm
- ◆ **Annual General Meeting:** 20th June 2015
At Sarat Samity 6:30pm

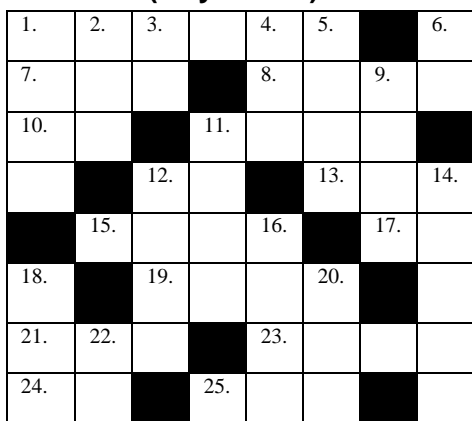
Get set for....

The 19th INDIA JAPAN STUDENTS' CONFERENCE At Kolkata (in August 2015)

Interested students (18 ~ 23 years of age) may kindly contact Ruma Sensei/Partha S. Mitra san.



JAPANESE CROSSWORD
(May - June)



ACROSS

- 1) Impudent
- 7) Straw bag
- 8) Porcelain
- 10) Crime
- 11) Navy
- 12) Bamboo
- 13) District court
- 15) Corruption
- 17) Ivy
- 19) Room for rent
- 21) Game
- 23) Drawing paper
- 24) Street corner
- 25) Moon viewing

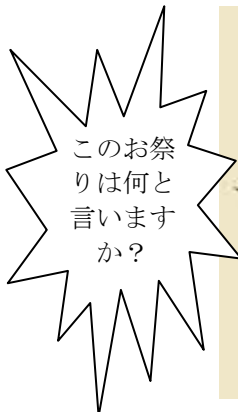
DOWN

- 1) Red soil
- 2) Knob
- 3) Lend
- 4) Municipal Administration
- 5) Clue
- 6) Horn
- 9) Door plate
- 11) Suspension bridge
- 12) Grand meeting/mass
- 14) Horrible
- 16) Stone wall
- 18) Mistake
- 20) Strong point
- 22) Taste

Mahashveta Basu Mukherjee

WORD JUMBLE - 37

Unscramble the following words, and join the circled letters to find out the answer:



1. りよくいた (Strength/Stamina)

○				
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2. べいなん (South America)

○			
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3. ばさく (Desert)

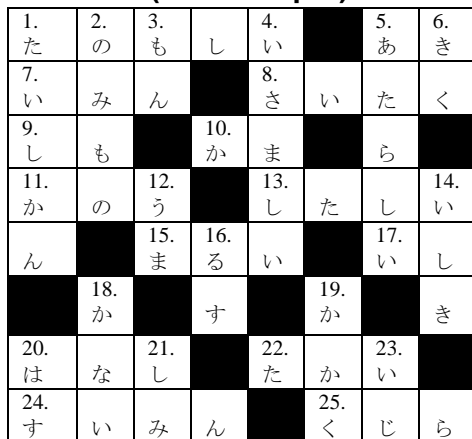
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4. びたびた (Often)

○			
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Sontu Debnath

Answers to
JAPANESE CROSSWORD
(March - April)



ANSWERS TO WORD JUMBLE - 36

- 1. おんしつ
- 2. りれきしよ
- 3. かがみ
- 4. みしず

お	り	が	み
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A HANAFUDA
&
The Actual Flower

(Send your answers to
write2nkks@gmail.com)
Answer: (March)- Sakura

Don't forget

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EDITORS: Tanusree Chatterjee & Alope Basu

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