



SAKURA

No. 137

May - June 2021



あした あした きょう きょう
明日は明日、今日は今日

Tomorrow is tomorrow, today is today



IN NICHU BUNKASAI 36 - virtual

The evening of 13 March 2021 was a beautiful one, when the 36th Mini In-Nichi Bunkasai was held online, organised by Nihongo Kaiwa Kyookai Society (NKKS), celebrating the long friendship between India and Japan. This was the first time that the programme was held virtually, in its decades-long history of being conducted every year. This was necessary because of the ongoing pandemic, and ensured that all the organisers, performers and viewers could enjoy it from the safety and comfort of their homes in these trying times. Although such an undertaking was a first venture, it was immensely successful. A wonderful digital invitation card was designed by Sumitra Ghosh. The programme was attended and enjoyed by an audience consisting of ninety-eight people. Performances were pre-recorded and edited, and presented for all to watch online. Except a few network issues, it continued smoothly without a glitch.

With Mr. Supratik Sil Roy introducing the performers, the programme commenced with a melodious violin medley performed by Abhrajit Banerjee consisting of tunes from both Bengal and Japan. After this wonderful performance, we were greeted with a short speech by the President of NKKS, Mrs. Poonam Nand Dey, in which she shared some words of positivity in our current situation of the pandemic. She highlighted how amazing it was to have been able to hold various events and organise the 36th Mini In-Nichi Bunkasai even in times like these, using an online platform. Her speech was followed by a beautifully rendered a cappella performance by Dolan Sinha, of the song, "Itsumo Nandodemo", originally by Yumi Kimura. Next up, was a lovely haiku performance where the duo of Susmita Sutradhar and Riya Chatterjee recited a few

few haikus written by famous Japanese haiku poets. After this elegantly flowing rendition of Japanese literature, came a graceful traditional Bengali Rabindranritya dance performance by Kasturi Adhikary, accompanied by the Rabindrasangeet, "Neel Digonte Oi Phuler Agun Laglo". This was followed by a vocal and harmonica performance by Jhuma Chakraborty, of the Japanese version of the famous song, "Country Roads", originally by John Denver. After this, a very emotional and thought-provoking anime short film selected by Neha Halder, "Dareka no Manazashi", directed by the acclaimed anime film director, Makoto Shinkai was played. This was followed by a medley of four songs titled "Voice of Spring", by Rohan Bhattacharya, Anoubhav Bhaduri and Ankana Basu was performed, in both Bengali and Japanese. Following this, a skit, "Nihonjin no Sannin Musume", was performed by Resmi Banerjee, Aniya Barua, Moshina Khan, Subhandu Mal, Debolina Das, Enakshi Ghosh, Mina Rajbanshi, Smritiman Barua and Babli Chowdhury. The issue of the actors not being able to physically interact during the skit was brilliantly solved by animating the actions accompanied with voiceovers by the performers. It was an enjoyable comedy, about initial miscommunications between some inhabitants of rural Bengal and some Japanese visitors, owing to the language barrier between them. A series of photographs and clips of past In-Nichi Bunkasai programmes held from 1985 to 2020 were screened, evoking nostalgic memories of times gone by, but still remembered fondly.

Contd. on page 3

CONGRATULATIONS!



Kolkata boys (NKKS members) win short-film competition - adjudged second in South Asia

Read more at:

http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/articleshow/81727134.cms?utm_source=contentofinterest&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=cppst

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...So says Ms RISA TAMURA



Good day!

Thank you for having me today. I am very pleased and honoured to appear at Sakura newsletter.

My name is Risa Tamura. I heard from my parents that my name, Risa, has the meaning of 'good wife'. This is because Japanese Kanji for 'Ri' is also used in the word for cooking as

ryouri. And a sewing thread is included in the Kanji for 'Sa.' Basically my name means cooking and sewing.

Oftentimes people say my name Risa sounds like a Bengali name like 'Risha.' Does it?

I was born in Saitama prefecture in Japan but I lived in Shinjuku, Tokyo alone before coming to India.

I had aspired to a pedagogy and an educational career, and graduated from Waseda university in Tokyo. I am qualified as a teacher and can teach English as a licensed teacher at schools in Japan. I think that education is to realise the right to learn which all human beings should be equally given, and that education is the fundamental of the development of humankind and nations. I believe that without education, no man would grow, and at the same time, in many ways, the world would not be enriched.

Therefore, I truly respect the Japanese language teachers here and those who help students in any way. It is a very pride-taking and noble deed to teach not only the language skills and knowledge of Japanese that you have acquired by yourself, but also the manners and cultural background of Japan to a new generation.

In addition, I am always interested in the military field where the cutting-edge technology and ideas of the era are applied. I also take keen interest in international cooperation activities and their principles such as Peace Keeping Operations by the Japanese Self-Defense Forces (JSDF). Consequently, I chose a job at Ministry of Defence.

I had hoped to be a part of the training / education of the JSDF members who contribute to international cooperation activities at the JSDF camps and bases, but working in a large organization does not quite go as planned or wished, and I got assigned to completely different missions at the Ministry of Defence Headquarters located in Shinjuku, Tokyo.

To be more specific, I was engaged in Foreign Military Sales with the US military, which is one of the defence cooperation schemes based on the Japan-US Security Alliance. This is to procure defence equipment / weapons, tanks, battleships, fighter aircrafts, etc. of the same type as the US military from the Pentagon, for the purpose of interoperability between the JSDF and the US military. This procurement includes not only goods but also services such as training, maintenance and educational know-how as well as technical support. Due

to military secret information, it cannot be done by the private sector. It is done through a special agreement between governments.

Related to this mission, although I'm not a JSDF officer, I studied at a US military school in America. Since it was an international course, I met military personnel and defence officials from all over the world like Africa, South America, the Middle East, European and Asian countries. We became friends and are still in touch with each other. At that time, I had no connection with India yet.

For several years after that, I was engaged in defence cooperation between India and Japan until I came to Kolkata. Above all, my responsibility was to improve the interoperability of the defence equipment / weapons between the Indian Armed Forces and the JSDF in case of an emergency. Since India and Japan are the partners with the same goal of achieving a free and open Indo-Pacific, it is very important to share a basic military system.

Specifically, under this defence cooperation the Japanese defence industry's advanced manufacturing technology of defence equipment / weapon is transferred to the Indian defence industry such as DPSUs and OFs. In this way, the domestic production of defence equipment / weapons in India is promoted, which will make it easier for the Indian Armed Forces to deploy the defence equipment / weapons that have an interoperability with the JSDF within the country. When you see it from a broader perspective, this also leads to the overall industrial development in India at the same time.

Well, the story has become quite complicated, so let's move on to another topic.

This is my fifth visit to India. It takes about 9 hours to fly between Tokyo and Delhi in one way trip, so I often traveled to several cities in one visit. Due to the above-mentioned work, I visited Delhi several times for meetings with the Indian Defence Ministry and the Indian Armed Forces Joint Integrated Headquarters. And I also visited DSPUs and DRDO in Mumbai, Bangalore, Chennai, etc. However, this is the first time for me in Kolkata. I never thought that I would be staying in Kolkata for a long time as Foreign Service official for Japanese culture and public relations. Destiny is something you can never tell.

I have been in Kolkata for 20ish months since 2019. But needless to say, as we all know, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, 12 months out of that is equivalent to the 'lost time.' Not only traveling across India but I haven't been able to fully explore even the city. This makes me feel very sad. Soon, I wish to go travel to tourist attractions in India such as Taj Mahal, Jaipur, Jaisalmer, Kerala, Goa, Varanasi, Assam, Darjeeling, etc. to see and experience new and many things.

However, we must not forget the fact that we lost countless lives all over the world due to this new virus. I understand that we need to be aware that you and I are asymptomatic viral carriers, and not to spread the

Contd. on page 3

Contd. from page 2

infection is the utmost essential thing right now especially for the lives of the elderly and small children. To that end, I tell myself every day that I should give my priority to social wellness, not selfishness, and refrain from going out unnecessarily until the risk of infection disappears. I hope the situation will get better as soon as possible. And once again, I pray for the deceased and their families.

Well, to refresh my mood, I listen to Bollywood music. In addition to Hindi songs, I also like Punjabi songs. I sometimes listen to Gujarati songs as well. The only Bengali song I know is a cover of my favourite Hindi song 'Duniyaa' by Bangladeshi singer Nishi. Unfortunately, I don't know much about Bengali songs, so I'd be happier if you could tell me your recommendation. If there were an Indian language singing contest, like the Japanese singing contest we had, I would participate with the song of Ms. Dhavani Bhanushali. I love her songs that much. 'Vaaste, Leja Re, Nayan etc.' every single song of her is just so beautiful.

Last but not the least, I would like to express my sincere gratitude for the NKKS' recent initiatives as represented by the Japanese Singing Contest and the In-Nichi Bunkasai. I hope that many Japanese language learners who read this sakura newsletter would cultivate a broader international perspective and prosper as human beings through learning foreign languages and experiencing different cultures. I am also very much looking forward to seeing you at Japan related events in the near future. Please stay safe and take care of yourself.

*Ms Risa Tamura
Vice Consul, Cultural*

The Consulate General of Japan in Kolkata

IN NICHU BUNKASAI 36 – virtual

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Near the end of the programme, we were addressed by the Chief Patron, Mrs. Kazuko Nigam, who reminisced about fond memories of years past, and requested younger members to take the initiative in adding all the performances throughout the years to an archive, recording it all so that it is not lost to time. The programme was concluded with a vote of thanks from the Vice-President of NKKS, Ms. Anjana Banerjee, who expressed appreciation and gratitude for all involved in making the 36th Mini In-Nichi Bunkasai a huge success, despite the difficulties. She expressed hopes of being able to hold the programme normally next year, when we can all meet each other again, and get together to do rehearsals and carry out performances.

The 36th Mini In-Nichi Bunkasai was a great success and we could all enjoy it online just as much as we would have in person. We thank the wonderful endeavors and hard work of the organisers and performers, without whom it would have been impossible to conduct and attend this

year's programme. We hope the next In-Nichi Bunkasai will be one where we will all be able to meet physically again.

Doel Nath

EXPECTATIONS AND EXCITEMENT- THE 24TH INDIA JAPAN STUDENTS CONFERENCE-2

With the pandemic being a problem, the mode of conducting the India Japan Students Conference became a topic of concern among the students and conductors of it alike from both the countries. But, technology is being developed each and every day so that interaction can become easier for everyone. Hence, the 24th India Japan Students' Conference is being held through a virtual format between 20th and 21st of February, 2021, with 10 students participating from Kolkata and 10 students participating from various parts of Japan.

It is of course very difficult for students to interact just through messages and through a video format without any real life interaction. Real life interactions between the India and Japan side during the conferences over the years have brought students life-long friends from each of the countries. But everyone participating in the conference this year has the same indomitable spirit that students possess each year while having face-to-face interactions with the other students! The reason due to which the 40th anniversary of the India Japan Diplomatic Relationship's movie was discussed at the beginning is because, the 24th India Japan Student's Conference is also taking the help of movies to create a bridge of understanding between students of either side. The main goal of the conference is to discuss the Sustainable Development Goals and each student carries their own expectation for this conference. As the communicator from the India side, Deepro Banerjee has mentioned, that he wants to create 'long lasting bonds between both the nations', and this happens to be the expectation of most of the students. Most students expect to make new friends from the Japanese side and understand their culture more deeply. Some students who are interested in pop culture of Japan are also looking forward to seeing a cultural side and a diplomatic side of the nation and how the students of the other side are willing to understand the same for India. Students who have participated in IJSC before are looking forward to experiencing a newer version of the conference on an entirely different platform since the beginning of the conference. As I have been given the honour of serving as the President for the conference from the Indian side, I am genuinely looking forward to understanding how the Japanese youth are tackling the pandemic and their strict lifestyles while also understanding their culture. Alongside others, I too am looking forward to making some lifelong friends, and

Contd. on page 4



UNLOCK Diaries-2



SUMANA BHATTACHARJEE SAYS

This Covid - 19 pandemic has changed my life drastically. Previously, I could have never imagined staying at home for such a long time. But, now, it has become a new normal. I step out of the house if and only if it is necessary. Though unlock process has started in June, I still maintain the routine. I still spent time reading books, listening to music, watching movies and web series and learning new things. I have spent all the festival at home. I still avoid gathering. Whenever I have to go out, I follow all the Covid guidelines.

Covid cases were becoming less in January and February, but due to the callousness of the people and the upcoming vote festival, it's again going high. As per the report, in new cases, many people don't have the proper Covid symptom. We cannot afford another lockdown. I hope people will understand the crisis, and follow the guidelines.

I just hope everything will be fine very soon, and we will be able to meet each other soon.

The 24th IJSC: Deliberations, Exchanges, & Friendships

The 24th IJSC was the first to be held completely online in a virtual medium since its inception in 1997. Through some snags it all went smoothly without a hitch or difficulty, the Japanese members went to great lengths to accommodate and make everyone feel at ease and if any issue rose they solved it with alacrity. Leading up to the main days of the conference, during our interactions and meetings online; we learnt about the student lives of students in India and Japan, we discussed at length about our food and taste, and also about our societies and their similarities, differences, problems, and significant cultural occurrences. We had countless interactions and meetings to meet members and forge new ties and friendships, a bit shy at first, we soon grew to know more about each other and learn not only about the problems of both societies and suggest solutions for them in accordance with the official proceedings and workings of the conference but also began to make new friends and know about them and know from them about their experience in their everyday lives as students. Food, tourism, travel, culture, and popular culture such as animations, cartoons, comics or manga, and films were of particular interest to all members who talked about them for hours on end learning and listening from each other; Japanese members' tales about visiting and touring India and their experience and stories of visiting India and the same by the members on the Indian side who were part of the Indian delegation in the 23rd IJSC which was held in Tokyo; we also spoke about our preferences and choices in food and of our experience in having the food of both nations, levels of spiciness were a particularly hot topic of discussion, pun intended. Divided into groups for the conference and to discuss the Sustainable Development Goals; we were eager

and keen to learn about each other's nation and suggest ideas on how to solve them; we found common problems and came up with unifying solutions for both nations to benefit our fellow people. Discussing films was an important part in this conference, as films are a form of art, and art is nothing but a reflection of society and life itself. Both the Japanese and Indian delegations suggested appropriate films which showcased and portrayed the problems of both societies which we worked on in accordance with our SDG goals and respective groups. After the main conference came the time of bidding farewell and promising to keep in touch, the farewell party was a emotional moment for some, as it was their last time participating in the venerable event of IJSC; however for all it was a time of looking on our journey from meeting for the first time and eventually growing close and developing a sense of friendship, working together, and bringing the two nations a bit closer.

*Shuvam Dewanjee,
Leader of the Indian Delegation, Group 1*

EXPECTATIONS AND EXCITEMENT- THE 24TH IJSC-2

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thankfully with the help of applications like Facebook and Instagram this will be possible!

To end, as Naotaro Moriyama says in his song 'Sakura', the following lines, 'さらば友よ またこの場所で会おう さくら舞い散る道の上で'

(*Saraba tomo yo mata, Kono basho de aou, Sakura maichiru michi no ue de*) which translates to 'Farewell, my friend --Let's meet here again, on a road lined with cherry blossom trees...', all of us can say the same about the upcoming conference in a virtual mode, and stay excited to meet our friends from Japan in person sometime in the future!

Ratula Datta

JAPANESE CROSSWORD (May - June)

1	2		3	4	5
6			7		
8		9		10	
		11	12		
13					
		14			

ACROSS

- 1) One way trading
- 6) Cotton
- 7) Short term
- 8) Logical theory
- 10) Furniture
- 11) To listen attentively
- 13) Job relocation
- 14) Manly/brave

DOWN

- 1) Completely changed
- 2) To play drums
- 3) Song
- 4) Banquet
- 5) Unpleasant to hear
- 9) Constant attendance (Medical)
- 12) Interest rate

Mahashveta Basu Mukherjee

ANSWERS TO JAPANESE CROSSWORD (March - April)

1 あ	2 て	3 は	ず	4 れ	5 な
6 わ	か	る		7 い	た
8 た	が		9 す	き	ま
10 だ	み	11 ご	え		め
し		12 は	る	13 か	
14 い	あ	ん		15 き	り

WORD JUMBLE – 71

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

What's the proverb?



1. みずね (Mouse)

○		
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2. じもこ Small letter)

○	○	
---	---	--

3. はちしゃく (Japanese bamboo flute)

○	○	○		
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4. のもかし (Items for rent; for loan)

	○	○	
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Sontu Debnath

ANSWERS TO WORD JUMBLE – 70

- 1. みょうじ
- 5. かるがるしい
- 2. ざるをえない
- 6. わざをみがく
- 3. きかい
- 7. るすばんでんわ
- 4. けいざい

み	ざ	る	き	か	ざ	る	い	わ	ざ	る
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MONTHLY PROGRAMME

- ◆ Online Freshers' Welcome: 16th May 2021 From 5pm
 - ◆ Learn Japanese Online using "Apps" by Mr Soham Pal 13th June 2021 From 5pm
- (Link available on NKKS Facebook and website)

Editor: *Tanasree Chatterjee*