

# The 2010 SCJ Culture Program: Report, Analysis and Suggestions

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As has traditionally been the case, the 2010 Culture Program (CP) of the Summer Courses in Japanese (SCJ) enjoyed an enthusiastic reception by participating students. Activities and lectures were generally well attended and served to provide an appropriate counterpoint to the academic work of the regular classes. This success of the Culture Program is of course due to the daily efforts of SCJ staff and student assistants and the support and assistance of ICU faculty, student club members, ICU student volunteers, as well as visiting lecturers and performers, service providers who offered off-campus experiences for the SCJ students and, most importantly, the support and guidance of Machiko Netsu, Director of Summer Courses in Japanese, and Izumi Hirata, Director of the Language Program. While serving in the position of head of the CP is always busy, challenging work, it was made distinctly pleasurable through the contributions, efforts and support of those mentioned above.

The purpose of this document is to offer reflections on the 2010 program, and includes an overview of the various components of the program: the lecture series, on-campus activities, off-campus trips, and the Culture Program Lounge. Finally, it offers a summary of significant improvements made over the previous year's program and recommendations for improvements for the future.

## **I. The Lecture Series**

This year the Culture Program was privileged to be able to offer three lectures, all of which were provided by tenured ICU faculty on topics related to ICU and Japanese history, as well as language diversity and Okinawan musical traditions. Each lecture is briefly described in the section that follows. These descriptions are then followed by a few suggestions for improvements on this portion of the Culture Program.

*Lecture 1: July 13, 1:30-3:30pm*

*“ICU Underground: Japanese Material Culture and Campus Archeology”*

*Professor Richard Wilson, ICU*

Dr. Wilson conducted his lecture in ICU's Yuasa Museum. While attendance was down compared to some previous years, with 13 students and two student volunteers participating, those in attendance were treated to a fascinating discussion of the anthropological origins of the Japanese people, according to the latest scientific consensus. This discussion also included a summary of the evolution of the thinking pertaining to the ethnic and physiological origins of the Japanese people through the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Following this discussion Dr. Wilson guided participants through a tour of the displays and artifacts of the museum, elaborately detailing the material development of peoples who lived on and around the area of the current ICU campus during the Neolithic, Jomon, and Yayoi periods. Participating students enthusiastically peppered Dr. Wilson with questions about the artifacts on display and the daily lives of the ancient peoples who produced them. These questions led to lively exchanges that greatly benefitted all participants. The experience concluded with an opportunity to handle and personally inspect some artifacts that were excavated by Dr. Wilson and brought to the lecture for just that purpose.

*Lecture 2: July 15, 1:30-3:30pm*

*“Japan and the Principle of Cool: From Metroethnicity to Multiculturalism”*

*Professor John Maher, ICU*

Approximately 35 students attended Dr. Maher's lecture on decline of cultural essentialism and ethnic orthodoxy in Japan, and the simultaneous rise of the notion that sidelined ethnicities are “the new cool.” This explained Japan's growing attraction to and acceptance of multiculturalism and multilingualism. With ample examples drawn from personal experience and systematic study, Dr. Maher used audio files, video files, images, and text to show Japanese society's evolution in attitudes toward micro-community cultures in Japan, including Deaf, Ainu, Korean, Chinese, Gastarbeiter, and Okinawan cultures. He concluded his session with a concise explanation of how the theory of multiculturalism has evolved in Japan to its current form.

*Lecture 3: July 29, 1:30-3:30pm*

*“Okinawa Music: A Minority Culture on the National Stage”*

*Professor Matthew Gillan, ICU*

A newcomer to the CP Lecture Series, Dr. Gillan is ICU's resident expert on Japanese music, from various genres of traditional music to popular music of today. With a combination of lecture presentation and performance on the sanshin, an Okinawan version of the shamisen, and in a way that was comfortably accessible to laymen, Dr. Gillan illustrated the basic features of traditional music in Okinawa, including that which was commonly performed in the royal court as well as among common folk. The presentation included some basic analysis of Okinawan musical conventions within the context of well-known and representative songs. The approximately 25 lecture participants were further immersed in the experience by joining in an example song that utilizes the distinctive call and response pattern of singing common to Okinawa.

#### *Suggestions for the Lecture Series*

The Culture Program owes a great debt of gratitude to the experts who graciously lent their time and talents to the lecture program. While the provision of facilities, equipment and materials for the lectures was sufficient to ensure smooth presentation, greater efforts at promoting this series of lectures could be made to further boost the attendance. These lectures require valuable time and energy of each of the presenters, and offer a rare opportunity to SCJ participants to take advantage of resident experts on various aspects of Japanese culture that they would not normally have access to during the period of the summer program. It is therefore important that in subsequent years program administrators consider the following:

#### *Inform program language instructors of the dates and topics of lectures at the earliest possible time:*

The content of the lectures can be related to that of the language courses at times, and with knowledge of the dates and topics of lectures SCJ language instructors can consider how to capitalize on the reinforcement of general cultural knowledge that the Lecture Series offers. Moreover, any additional mention of the value of attending the lectures made by the instructors will further boost attendance for those lectures.

#### *Greater variation among lecture topics:*

While one of the three lectures presented was on the topic of archaeology, the other two shared a focus on traditional music, one touching on musical traditions of various minority groups within Japan and another focusing exclusively on music of Okinawa. The second lecture of the three mentioned above was wide-ranging, including much discussion of linguistic, artistic, and social aspects of minorities but overall the selection of topics for the lecture series could benefit from a broader cross-section of foci.

## **II. On-Campus Activities**

The following seven activities were offered as on-campus events. For each, a summary of the activity and some recommendations for improvement are given.

### **1. Campus Tours, July 5, 2-4pm**

As an adjunct to the Welcome Party that took place on July 5, a campus tour was offered by the CP to incoming SCJ students. Twelve student volunteers in addition to the CP director escorted an estimated 70 to 80 SCJ students on the campus tours that included the Yuasa Museum, ICU High School, the sports complex, Taizanso, D-kan, the chapel, the main classroom building and other locations on campus that are of interest to new students.

In order to improve the organization of the tours and preparation of the volunteer guides, the CP staff produced and distributed a detailed itinerary that included bulleted information about each of the campus locations in the tour. By speaking from the bulleted information the volunteer guides could not only present general information about each location, but also offer practical information concerning access to the campus through its various gates, notice of where bus stops are located and which destinations each bus goes to as well as some points of interest adjacent to the campus such as convenience stores, restaurants, museums, and other points of interest.

As was done the previous year, ICU student volunteers were recruited using an online sign up form and spreadsheet created on Google. This method of recruitment is definitely recommended for future programs based on the ease of reaching a sufficient number of volunteers and the convenience of the spreadsheet in presenting a well-organized list of names and contact information for volunteers.

### **2. *Wagakki* Japanese Traditional Music, July 12, 1:30-3:30pm**

This year once again SCJ students were privileged to see and hear a lecture and performance of *wagakki*, or Japanese traditional musical instruments offered by Masters Satoko Takahara of the *sho*, Hitomi Nakamura of the *hichiriki*, and Maya Sakai of the *ryuteki* respectively. The approximately 30 students in attendance were treated to a well-organized presentation that explained the historical origins of the music, its

development into its present form in the Heian period, how the music is noted down and how to read it, as well as what functions it served in the past and the present.

As Christianson states, "The power of the instruments was breathtaking, pulling the audience into another world instantly" (2008). This power was immediately evident in the faces of the participants from the beginning of the several pieces played during the course of the presentation. The presentation concluded with an opportunity for participants to sing along with a representational piece of music under the direction of Master Nakamura and accompanied by Masters Takahara and Sakai.

Other than being exposed to a greater variety of musical instruments, there aren't any specific improvements that are recommended for this event if repeated in future programs.

### **3. *Ikebana* Flower Arrangement, July 14, 1:30-3:30pm**

Master Sousho Tsukamoto with her assistant, Eisho Sato once again joined the CP series of on-campus lecture presentations to offer a seminar on the basics of *ikebana* as practiced in the Sogetsu school. Each year this proves to be a very popular event among SCJ students and this year was no exception with more than 40 SCJ students in attendance for the lecture, 24 participating in the hands-on practice session following the lecture portion of the event, and 10 ICU student volunteers on hand to assist in the set-up, practice and clean-up of the room, materials and implements.

Master Sousho Tsukamoto started the presentation by creating four very distinct arrangements using a wide variety of flowers and boughs, all evoking the seasonal theme of summer in their palette of colors and composition. The CP director and one of the assistants served as translators for the master as she explained the techniques and creative thinking she employed while creating the pieces. This demonstration was immediately followed by a workshop in which SCJ students each had the opportunity to reproduce a basic arrangement using standard implements such as shears, the kenzan, or flower stem holders, and vases. The master, her assistant, and the ICU student volunteers assisted and guided the SCJ students through creation of the arrangement, and all participating students were able to experience first-hand this very traditional and aesthetically pleasing form of artistic expression. It strongly recommended that this event also be included in the CP series of events for 2011.

#### **4. *Chado* Tea Ceremony in Taizanso, July 20, 1-2pm, 2:30-3:30pm and 4-5pm**

The refined, elegant and very traditional art of *chado*, or tea ceremony as practiced by the Urasenke school, was presented again this year by the ICU Tea Ceremony Club, under the guidance of masters Amitani Tomiko and Ieno Chieko. As has been the case in previous years, the presentation was divided into two parts, a demonstration and accompanying lecture to show SCJ students how a tea ceremony is normally conducted along with detailed explanation of the steps taken, and a participatory experience in which SCJ students take the role of visiting guests invited to come to tea. This presentation is well-organized and conducted very efficiently, providing participating SCJ students with an excellent introduction to this very important aspect of traditional Japanese culture. The presentation is given in three sessions limited to 15 SCJ participants in each session due to the size limitation of the venue, the scenic Taizanso teahouse located on the ICU campus. It should be noted that the Taizanso teahouse and the surrounding garden area are the perfect setting for this event, providing a bucolic and thoroughly enchanting atmosphere in which to enjoy the experience of *chado*, “the preparation and drinking of tea (...) [which] became the basis for a profound spiritual and aesthetic discipline that has had a pervasive impact on Japanese civilization” (The Urasenke *Chado* Tradition). The efforts behind the scenes made by *chado* masters Amitani and Ieno, the ICU student club leader, Hitomi Wada, and members of the ICU Tea Ceremony Club deserve the profound thanks of all those in attendance. This is a wonderful and enchanting look into a key form of traditional artistic expression in Japan and should be considered a must for future incarnations of the SCJ CP.

#### **5. *Nihon Buyo* Japanese Traditional Dance, July 21, 1:30-3:30**

*Nihon Buyo*, a broad-based designation that includes a wide variety of styles of traditional Japanese dance, was presented by two masters of the Mizuki school of dance, Mizuki Waka and Mizuki Kadzuma. Assisting the two masters were two other experienced instructors of the Mizuki school, one a graduate of ICU. The program was extremely well-planned and well-presented and included selections made popular in well-known kabuki performances, Okinawan popular music and programmatic pieces featuring the use of *geta*, traditional wooden footwear of Japan, and *kasa*, the ornamental umbrellas made of oiled paper and bamboo. As was the case last year, the presentation was held in the ICU D-kan multipurpose room, a facility that is very well suited for such an event. Upon the conclusion of the pieces presented by the masters and their apprentices, the more than 45 SCJ students and ICU student volunteers were invited to learn how to put on *yukata*, the Japanese traditional garment for summer and

practice a dance routine set to the famous melody Sakura. Once the steps of the dance were modeled by Master Mizuki Waka and practiced by the participating students, the piece was repeated several times offering the SCJ students a chance to polish their movements and attain much of the timing and grace of the dance masters. This event is very engaging, highly participatory and is strongly recommended for inclusion in next year's schedule of CP events.

#### **6. *Zori* Making, July 26 and 27, 1:30-4pm**

The two-day workshop for making *zori*, or traditional woven sandals was presented again this year, and as in previous years has proven to be an extremely popular event among SCJ students, ICU student volunteers and SCJ staff. Once again members of a highly enthusiastic group of 12 local retirees organized by Ms. Sumi Tanaka volunteered to instruct 25 or more participating SCJ students and student volunteers in the now almost lost craft. ICU student volunteers served as translators for SCJ students who needed assistance in communication with the volunteer instructors. Due to the time normally required for someone new to sandal-making to produce a pair of sandals, two sessions, one each afternoon on two successive days are necessary. This event provides an excellent opportunity not only to experience a highly enjoyable craft, but also to learn through real-life interaction with local volunteers who relate to SCJ students in ways that are refreshingly natural and unaffected. Participating SCJ students could come away from the experience with a material piece of Japanese traditional culture, a colorful and very comfortable pair sandals that serve and strong reminder of their interactions with interested and interesting members of the local community surrounding the ICU campus. This program also should be included in future CP planning and events.

#### **7. *Wadaiko* Presentation and Workshop, August 3, 1:30-4pm**

A new addition to the roster of on-campus CP events for 2010 was a presentation and workshop on *wadaiko*, or Japanese traditional ensemble drumming offered by the ICU Wadaiko Club. The venue for the event was the V-gymnasium on the ICU campus, and while the acoustics of the room were less than optimal for musical performance in that room surfaces caused considerable echo, the overall effect may have contributed to a sense of almost overwhelming sonic power. In terms of space required to hold both a presentation including the number of club members involved, as many as twenty or

more performers at once, and the workshop that included between twenty and thirty SCJ students as participants the size of the room was very appropriate.

The presentation and workshop were well planned and well conducted. It was obvious that the members of the ICU Wadaiko Club had not only practiced extremely hard on the pieces of music performed, but also devoted considerable thought and planning to the workshop. Immediately after the performance of two ensemble compositions chosen carefully to accurately represent the mainstream style of wadaiko drumming, the room was rearranged with the massive larger drums arrayed in a circle. This arrangement proved to be very efficient in that it allowed the members of the club to not only offer intermittent instructions to SCJ student participants, but also be able to easily observe the progress of small groups of SCJ students in circles around each of the large drums with club members guiding and mentoring their practice of the basic drumming techniques that were explained and modeled.

The performances given by the ICU Wadaiko Club in its present form are incredibly exciting, musically sophisticated and wildly entertaining, and proved to be very popular with attending SCJ students, who have in many cases already been exposed to wadaiko. As with other events described here, it is strongly recommended that this activity be included in future CP schedules.

**Unofficial Off Campus Events:** Culture program assistants arranged and offered a number of relatively spontaneous events in the CP Lounge located on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the ICU main classroom building and locations outside within the confines of the ICU campus to provide SCJ students with an addition opportunities to relax and socialize on campus. These events included presentations of popular animated films by world-renowned director Hayao Miyazaki, an informal welcome party, a *suika-wari*, or watermelon bashing party, and a barbeque party. The movie presentations and the welcome party were held in the CP Lounge which offered the advantage of being a place where food and drinks could be consumed in air-conditioned comfort with an ample amount of tables and chairs available. The *suika-wari* event was held in the common area outside in front of the main classroom building, and included squirt gun fights, soft drinks and snacks for participants. The barbeque party was held at the campground area near the ICU sports fields and archery range.

These informal gatherings were announced in the week or two before they were held and were well attended. A debt of gratitude is owed to the CP student assistants for taking the initiative in planning and conducting these events. Their informality and



student-centered nature served to be popular and they should definitely be encouraged in future CP programs.

### **III. Off-Campus Trips**

As was the case in previous years, the series of CP events included a number of off-campus events. These events provide opportunities that are not available on-campus and considerably widen the scope of offerings within the CP. Happily, all off-campus events went as planned and were well received by the participating SCJ students.

#### **1. Osawadai Elementary School Visit, July 7, 1:30-3:30pm**

Once again this year SCJ students were invited to visit the Osawadai Elementary School to receive a close-up look at what 5<sup>th</sup> grade elementary school students, faculty and staff experience on a daily basis. Planning for this year's visit was improved based on last year's experience and included a much higher degree of consultation between the CP director and Osawadai Principal Shoji Kawabata and Vice Principal Toshiei Sawara. This visit started with a brief greeting ceremony in the school gymnasium that included welcoming comments by the school principle, Mr. Kawabata, singing of the school song by the 5<sup>th</sup> graders, speeches by representatives of both the 5<sup>th</sup> graders and SCJ students, and the grouping of three SCJ students with three to four Osawadai students and at least one ICU student volunteer as translator. After these groups were formed all groups departed the gymnasium and went on a 20-minute tour of the school guided by the 5<sup>th</sup> graders. During this tour SCJ students were able to observe classes, the facilities, textbooks, study materials, and daily activities of the Osawadai students. At the conclusion of the tour all groups once again assembled in the gymnasium. The smaller groups that were formed for the school tour were then collapsed into larger groups of 15 to 20 at which point SCJ students introduced popular childrens' games such those known in the U.S. and other countries as duck-duck-goose, red light-green light, all of which have simple rules, involve physical activity and can be played by many people at the same time. Following the 40-minute group games period a brief closing ceremony was held at which SCJ students and Osawadai students made short farewell speeches and a group photo was taken. At this point in the visit the elementary school children were released from school and allowed to return home at the customary time. SCJ students remained in the Osawadai gymnasium and participated in question and answer session with the principal and vice-principal. At the conclusion of the question and

answer session, SCJ students, ICU student volunteers and CP staff expressed thanks to the faculty and administrators and departed the elementary school to return to ICU.

The school visit this year greatly benefitted from a more meticulously planned out schedule that was developed with consultation and input from the Osawadai administration, and from more extensive pre-visit preparations within the CP. To prepare SCJ students for the visit a pre-visit meeting was held at the CP Lounge at which the schedule for the visit was explained in detail. At this preparatory meeting the 45 participating SCJ students were also put into 15 self-selected groups of three each and instructed to select two group-oriented games that could be introduced to the elementary school students and also suggest questions to be included in a question and answer session between the SCJ students and the administrators of Osawadai Elementary. At the elementary school similar preparations were also made in that the participating 5<sup>th</sup> graders were put into 15 groups that could immediately be paired with the 15 groups of SCJ students. To facilitate the question and answer session with the Osawadai administrators, questions generated by SCJ students in the pre-visit meeting were collected, translated into Japanese and sent to the Osawadai principal and vice-principal. This sharing of SCJ students' questions prior to the visit allowed the Osawadai administrators time to prepare more extensive and informative answers. It should be mentioned that the question and answer session ultimately included some off-the-cuff questions and was lively and wide-ranging.

The inclusion of a larger group of ICU student volunteers, nearly one for each of the 15 groups of SCJ students, was also a key point in the planning of the visit. The student volunteers signed up to participate through an online form and, like the SCJ students, were invited to a pre-visit meeting at which both the visit schedule and their role as translators were fully explained and discussed. This meeting was instrumental in helping the student volunteers prepare to fulfill their responsibilities as cultural and linguistic go-betweens for the Osawadai and SCJ students.

Thanks to great efforts made by Osawadai faculty and administrators, CP staff, ICU student volunteers and participating SCJ students the event turned out to be a richly rewarding experience, and should be continued in successive years.

## **2. Ghibli Museum, July 8, 1-4pm**

As has been done in previous years, a group of 45 SCJ students, two CP assistants and five ICU student volunteers were taken by bus on a tour to see the nearby Ghibli Museum, which is devoted to exhibits of Hayao Miyazaki's popular *anime* films. Also as in previous years, this event turned out to be one of the most popular in the CP calendar, most likely due to the popularity of Miyazaki's films among audiences worldwide. Sign-up for places in the tour went very quickly, and preparations were made to inform those students who could not gain a place in the CP organized tour that individuals can easily make reservations for themselves and go at almost anytime during their SCJ experience. The Ghibli Museum is informative and highly enjoyable for those students who are interested in this aspect of Japanese popular culture, and is recommended for next year's CP itinerary.

## **3. Jindai Soba and Pottery, July 22, 1:30-4pm**

Repeating another popular event, 25 SCJ students joined a tour that combined a visit to the Jindai Temple, known as Jindaiji, located near the ICU campus, with eating *soba*, or wheat noodles at the nearby Yatabeya restaurant and visiting Jindaigama pottery studio to experience *togei*, or pottery making. By prior arrangement Yatabeya sent a 28-passenger mini-bus to meet SCJ students and CP staff at the ICU rotary and ferry them to the restaurant. The *soba* lunch was served immediately upon arrival, after which participants adjourned to the pottery studio to receive a brief explanation of what pieces might be produced from the clay parceled out to each student and how these pieces can be created. Students then happily went about creating small dishes, cups, and various forms of representational sculpture. When students were finished creating their pieces they consulted briefly with the Jindaigama staff to choose glazes for their works. Finally, before boarding the mini-bus to return to campus students could take some time to stroll the area around Jindaiji and soak up its atmosphere and traditional beauty and tranquility. This event is greatly facilitated by the free bus service provided by the Yatabeya restaurant, and if this bus service is available to next year's CP, its inclusion in the event calendar is recommended.

#### 4. Kabuki, July 23, 5-10pm

SCJ students, ICU student volunteers, CP student program assistants were once again treated to an evening of foreigner-friendly kabuki at the National Theatre. Prior to departure at 4:15, the 55 SCJ students who signed up for the tour gathered in the CP together with student volunteers, the CP director and assistants to review the route to be taken, information that was previously distributed at the sign-up for the event a week earlier. The entire group was divided into four smaller groups and immediately departed to the National Theatre, each group being led by either the CP director or a CP assistant together with a student volunteer. Upon arriving at the subway station from which participants would walk to the theatre, a period of 20 minutes or so was given for students to have a light meal at one of three types of businesses within the immediate vicinity of the subway exit, a coffee shop, a convenience store and a fast food outlet. This was done to provide students with an opportunity to have a bite to eat prior to entering the theatre. While some types of food are available at concession stands inside the theatre, the selection of food is limited, more suited to Japanese tastes, and may be somewhat more expensive than food purchased at the aforementioned businesses.

The 90-minute performance given at the theatre was a sequence from the popular comedy *Migawari Zazen*. Prior to the performance two young stars of the kabuki theatre offered a fascinating demonstration of all aspects of the behind-the-scenes preparation. This demonstration was a deftly produced combination of multimedia and live performance and allowed audience to see the action on the stage as well as that outside the theatre and backstage in the theatre almost as if they had the ability to see all those locations at will in real time. While the demonstration and performance were done in Japanese, all SCJ participants and CP staff were furnished with rented earphones that provided English translation or interpretation in modern Japanese, depending on the first language of the participant. Student volunteers and CP staff were responsible for picking the earphones from the rental counter in the theatre, distributing headphones to all SCJ students, checking to see if all earphones worked properly, acquiring replacements for any that didn't, and collecting the earphones and returning them to the theatre after the performance. All earphones were accounted for and properly returned to the rental counter.

In last year's report on the CP it was suggested that a smaller number of student participants should be considered due to the difficulty of moving a group totaling 62 individuals through the Tokyo mass transportation system. In fact, with the improved distribution of information about the transportation to SCJ students, as well as the greater efforts made to explain to the student volunteer their role as guides and

facilitators, the movement to the theatre was accomplished smoothly and without any problems. This approach can and should be taken next year if this tour is included in the CP calendar again.

### **5. Zen Meditation, July 30, 1:30-7pm**

For the ninth consecutive year, a group of 30 SCJ students together with the CP director and two CP assistants were invited to Kannon-in Temple near Musashi Sakai station to experience a half-day *Zen* experience, including a temple tour, a lecture on basic Zen principles, training in how to eat a meal in the style of a Zen monk, 45 minutes of meditation, a vegetarian *Zen* style dinner, and a question and answer session presented and guided by temple master and head monk Shogyo Kuruma. As Temple Master Kuruma explained, *Zen* as practiced at the Kannon-in Temple is based on the teachings of Dogen Zenji (1200-1253) and represents a mainstream of Buddhist practice in Japan. Participating students exhibited strong interest throughout the program, and the five hours required for the experience seemed to go by very quickly. In addition to his teaching and explanations, Master Kuruma provided all program participants with printed materials that reiterated the basic principles he intended to explain and illustrate through the series and activities included in the program. Care was taken to pace the activities so that SCJ students unfamiliar with the practice of *zazen* could do so in relative comfort.

Translation for the program was provided by the CP director, and through the course of the program, SCJ students were able to largely satisfy their deep curiosity about *zazen* and its place in Japanese history, conventional thought and society. In the translation of the *Shobogenzo Zuimonki*, or Record of Answers Concerning the Treasury of the Eye of the Correct Dharma, “it is said that “*Zazen* is the premier among the essentials of cultivating enlightenment,” and this basic idea was successfully communicated to student participants as evidenced in their questions during the Q&A session, as well as in their written comments on a questionnaire concerning their view of the overall experience.

This particular event is key to understanding the cultural foundation that Buddhism provides to Japanese society and could be moved up in time to occur earlier in the CP calendar, thus earlier providing insights into Japan’s culture that could positively impact

on the ability of SCJ students to understand and gain more from other discussions and demonstrations of aspects of Japanese culture.

#### **IV. The Culture Program (CP) Lounge**

Frehan explains that the CP Lounge functions as "a meeting place and a 'cafe' for the course participants, especially during the morning hours" (2001). The primary functions of the include the following:

A comfortable and accessible area for SCJ students to relax and interact with other students, SCJ or ICU student volunteers

A convenient place to buy food such as onigiri, drinks, and snacks

A place where they can obtain information about CP events and sign up for those events they are interested in

An information resource center for living and traveling in Japan

As has consistently been the case in previous years of the CP, all of the above functions were fulfilled through the efforts of the 2010 CP student assistants. Three culture program assistants shared responsibility for the management of the lounge and the snacks and drinks concern. The CP Lounge maintained hours between 8:15 a.m. and 3:30 to 4:00 p.m. Responding to recommendations offered in last year's CP report, much stricter standards of accounting were employed in the operation of the snacks and drinks concern, with daily updating of records of outlays of money for food and drinks and intake of money through sales. CP assistants purchased food and drinks for the concern with their own funds and set prices for the sale of all items. Receipts were carefully collected, reviewed, recorded in a booklet and archived. All money paid out by CP assistants to purchase snacks and drinks was refunded in full and profits were given to the SCJ Office to be saved and used in the 2011 CP. All in all, handling of the snacks and drinks concern was significantly improved over last year's program, and this year's procedures and practices may well be regarded as a template for next year's "CP Lounge Snack Shop."

Another significant improvement in CP Lounge operation was the handling of sign-ups for CP events. This improvement was realized through the use of *seiriken*, or place-holding chits given out to students who lined up in the CP Lounge prior to classes on

days announced for specific event sign-ups, an eminently practical idea suggested by SCJ Director Machiko Netsu. Since the sign-up process consists of inputting students' names and contact information into a spreadsheet on a computer set up in the CP Lounge for that purpose and, depending on the event, paying a ticket or materials fee, the process for all participants to do so at one time would take more time than is available either before classes begin or during any of the breaks between classes through day. Place-holding chits could be easily designed, labeled, numbered, printed out, cut to size, and passed out to students in the order in which they lined up within minutes at the exact time of an preannounced sign-up, allowing students to obtain a place in an event openly and fairly on a first-come, first-serve basis and then return at a later time to complete the sign-up process at their leisure. This practice has greatly improved the management of the event sign-up procedure and is strongly recommended for the 2011 CP.

## **V. Introduction of the Culture Program Homepage**

In an effort to improve access to information about the CP and facilitate communication with SCJ staff concerning CP events and operations, a homepage was created for the 2010 CP. The homepage is found at the following address:

<[http://subsite.icu.ac.jp/scj/Culture\\_Program\\_2010/CultureProgramHP.html](http://subsite.icu.ac.jp/scj/Culture_Program_2010/CultureProgramHP.html)>

Suggested by CP Director Christopher Hoskins and created by Kentaro Sannohe, one of the 2010 CP assistants, the homepage offers information and related links about all CP events, general information about the CP and its policies, and some photos and video of past CP events. The CP homepage has the potential to become an invaluable means of promoting and informing about the CP to interested publics and should be further developed and exploited in coming years.

## **VI. Some Recommendations for the Culture Program in General**

Below are recommendations for how to improve the culture program in the future.

### *Staffing:*

As was stated in last year's CP report regarding the staffing of the CP, "The team of three program assistants seemed appropriate to meet the needs of the program with

regard to monitoring and managing events, and should neither be increased nor decreased” (Hoskins 2009).

*New Events:*

While the 2010 calendar of activities would be acceptable to repeat in 2011 as is, more attention to sport activities, especially the traditional martial arts of Japan should be included to achieve better balance in the types of events. Also recommended would be an increased focus on culinary arts and architecture. Some ideas for future additions include:

- 1) visits to *dojos* or sumo stables or other sports facilities
- 2) a visit to the Edo-Tokyo Open Air Architectural Museum
- 3) events related to food and cooking such as a sushi class at a cooking school in Tokyo
- 4) attending practices and/or matches of ICU martial arts clubs

*Management practices:*

Significant improvements made this year in the accounting practices of the CP Lounge snack shop should be continued next year. One possible improvement that probably should be made is to move the strict daily cost accounting that was performed in this year’s program to an online spreadsheet in lieu of the notebook that has been used this year and in prior years. The use of an on-line format would further facilitate archiving and lend greater transparency as well as enhance ability of SCJ staff to exercise oversight in the handling of snack shop outlays and income.

The use of *seiriken*, or place-holder chits is a practice that greatly improved the process of signing up for CP events and should also be used in the 2011 CP.

A final suggestion concerning program management would be to make much more extensive use of the SCJ Culture Program website that was developed as an information portal for students overseas who are interested in applying to the SCJ and as an online CP bulletin board for event information for students when they’re in the SCJ.



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