

2005 SCJ Culture Program Final Report

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Introduction

The 2005 Summer Courses in Japanese were held over six weeks from July 5 to August 16, with a total of 142 students from twenty different countries taking classes. Once again the Culture Program (CP) of the SCJ provided a range of events, activities and services to help students enjoy a wider Japanese experience and to smooth their entry into the overall SCJ program. The components of the Culture Program included a series of lectures on Japanese cultural topics, campus and local tours, off-campus excursions, on-campus cultural events, and a staffed 'CP Lounge' offering a range of services to students and staff. This is a report on the 2005 SCJ Culture Program activities. It will incorporate my own observations, representative comments and survey statistics from SCJ students, and suggestions for future SCJ programs.

I. Lecture Series

In 2005 five voluntary-attendance lectures were offered. As is usual the topics covered a variety of culturally relevant and important issues. This year the recruitment of presenters was a little problematic as a number of past presenters were unavailable, however the 2005 lecturers fielded a very interesting set of topics. We greatly appreciate their time and effort. In order of appearance they were:

- Professor Hidenori Fujita (ICU) - "Japanese Education at the Crossroads"
- Professor Hara Takahashi (Rissho University, Tokyo Women's Christian University) - "The Nature of Religion in Contemporary Japan"
- Professor Yoshio Ishio (ICU) - "Introduction to Japanese Politics"
- Professor John Maher (ICU) - "Japan and the Principle of Cool: from Metroethnicity to Multiculturalism"
- Mr. Kristofer Bayne (ICU) - "A Traditional Japanese Game: *Karuta*, History and Incarnations"

All the lectures not only presented general information on the respective topics but also offered unique and stimulating perspectives as well. Questions and comments from the floor were very interesting and there was much, at times, animated discussion and interaction. As noted in previous CP reports, these voluntary lectures are, unfortunately, not particularly well-attended. Generally interest wanes quickly as students become both busier with SCJ

studies and/or more active in their new environment, and this year was no exception. The initial lectures attracted around 20-25 students, however the last few had between 6-10 people were in attendance. Based on the final survey only 31 students (out of 96 who responded) attended any lecture. Around half of those (15) attended two or more. Compared to other CP events the lecture series received a largely positive but mixed response (see below). The one student who attended all five lectures had this to say, "Pretty mediocre. Useful as broad introductions. Lecturers unable to answer questions satisfactorily" . As CP Coordinator I attended three of four (and gave one myself). I found them fascinating, but I can see where a lack of background to some of the deeper issues might affect how they were perceived.

Two valid points raised by students about the lectures were the topics and duration. Some students did suggest that they would have enjoyed (and attended) lectures on more 'up-to-date' topics such as fashion and 'pop culture' . On this point I would agree that while the cross-section of topics usually offered by the CP are culturally central, they do not reflect the interests of the SCJ students, particularly considering other pressures on their time. If the voluntary lectures are to attract more students they need to be more attractive to the potential audience and possibly reduced in time to one and a half hours or even one hour (with an extended Q & A).

Some student comments on lectures:

"Lectures were interesting and knowledgeable."

"Wish I had attended more."

"Times made attending hard."

"Hard to attend right after class" .

"Very busy - 1 or 1.5 hrs better."

"Dull, hard to understand, just followed handout - Q & A would be better."

"Non-native speaker profs need more interactive approach."

"Different lectures would be nice."

"More specific lectures."

Survey Results:

Number of lectures attended (N = 96):

0	1	2	3	4	5
65	16	10	4	-	1

Overall were you satisfied with the lectures you attended? (N = 31)

Very Satisfied	1	2	3	4	5	Not Satisfied
Rated	3	10	6	6	3	

II. Off-Campus Excursions

Excursions offered in 2005 were:

- *Kabuki* at Kokuritsu-gekijyo
- Ghibli Museum, Mitaka
- Osawadai Elementary School
- Kannon-In Zen Temple
- Pottery at Jindai-ji

The off-campus trips required sign-up and as is usual there were many students on the waiting lists. These were 'standard' for the program and very well-received by the attendees. A number of slight changes were made from 2004. As suggested by the 2004 CP Coordinator, Ms. Chiyo Hayashi, *Kabuki* was offered on a Saturday to avoid the problematic 'rush' that occurred from classes during weekdays. This was very successful, allowing time that inevitably is required in moving a large group of people through a number of train stations. Also students could make their own way back home if they choose (most did). *Zen* was offered as a late-afternoon/evening session. This also was successful, both allowing participants to better prepare (rather than coming soon after classes) and providing a more interesting atmosphere generally in the evening. (Head Priest Kuruma kindly arranged for students to do fireworks in the temple grounds after the session and many students stayed



to chat.) *Pottery* was offered as one session instead of two in 2005. Instead of the second session to paint their works as a group, this year students made their own way back to Jindai-ji during a designated four-day period to do this. Almost all students did this as maps were offered at the CP Lounge. *Osawadai* dropped a walking tour from their program in favour of more interaction

in small groups.

In surveys, the excursions were very popular and highly rated. Roughly 60% of the students who returned surveys attended excursions, with half of those attending two or more. A number of students did state that they could not attend certain excursions (and on-campus activities) due to missing sign-up and suggested that (i) more places be offered and/or (ii) multiple excursions be offered. The former might be something to consider if the events are ticketed – a number of the events are at the number limits.

Some student comments about the off-campus trips:

“Fascinating, well-organised, affordable – thanks.”

“Great experience of out of country visitors.”

“Good idea – need more slots.”

“Not enough activities offered and very limited.”

“Like wide range of opportunities.”

“Try Hirpon Factory – Japanese pop-art.”

Survey Results:

Number of off-campus trips attended (N = 96):

0	1	2	3	4
34	31	20	9	2

Overall were you satisfied with the off-campus trips you attended? (N = 62)

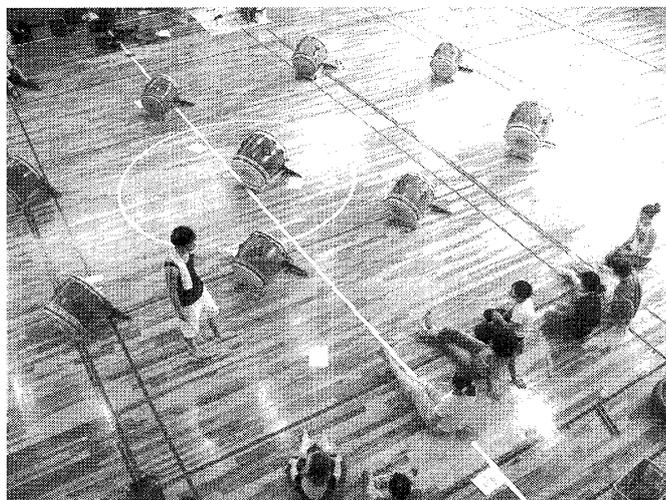
Very Satisfied	1	2	3	4	5	Not Satisfied
Rated	31	20	4	1	3	

III. On-Campus Events

Activities offered in 2005 were:

- Tea Ceremony at Taizanso
- *Zori*-making Workshop
- Calligraphy
- *Wadaiko* Drum Clinic

Tea Ceremony and *Wadaiko* were conducted by the relevant ICU clubs and *Zori* and Calligraphy were offered by long-time CP participants from outside. As with the off-campus excursions these were sign-up events and were very popular. The range of



SCJ student comments was very positive and ratings high, with students relishing the chance to actually *do* something. A number were a little disappointed they could not try to do the tea ceremony themselves, however. I personally see no need to change the range of events for 2006. We do need to ensure that translation for events which do not directly involve CP staff is up to standard as a number of students mentioned it was not so good.

Some student comments about the off-campus events:

“Hands on activities – feel involved in the culture.”

“Should have more places available, fill up too fast.”

“Make clear about payment – thought ‘Culture Program’ fees had been paid in tuition.”
 ‘Translation not good enough…’”

Survey Results:

Number of off-campus events attended (N=91):

0	1	2	3	4	5
44	22	17	8	-	-

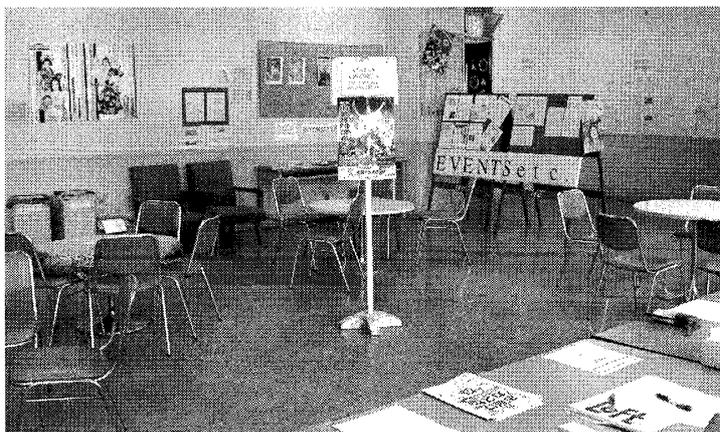
Overall were you satisfied with the off-campus trips you attended? (N = 62)

Very Satisfied	1	2	3	4	5	Not Satisfied
Rated	26	14	1	4	-	

IV. CP Lounge

The Culture Program was directed from the CP Lounge located on the 2nd Floor of the Honkan. A number of services were offered, among them:

- Campus & Local Walking Tours
- Wall Message & Bulletin Board
- Front Desk for questions & advice
- Events sign up
- Food & Drink purchase and Bento orders
- Information Boards
- SCJ-ICU student liaison



The Lounge was well-patronized.

Survey Results:

How often did you use the CP Lounge? (N = 96)

Never	Rarely	1-2Wkly	2-3Wkly	Once a day	Couple a Day	3+ a Day
0	12	9	18	38	14	5

As for the purpose of their visits to the Lounge, ‘food and drinks’ was by far the main, however it seems that the students used the CP Lounge for social purposes as well, such as waiting for friends and chatting. Beside its role in excursions (sign-up and departures) the informational services were also well-used.

Survey Results:

What was your purpose if you visited? (Multiple answers from N = 96)

Food/Drink	Information	Sign-up	Wait for friends	Talk with CP Staff	Meet Teachers
79	48	51	45	31	5

In survey we asked for examples or comments on the usefulness of the CP Lounge and services. General areas were as follows:

- o Staff (dealt with in the next section)
- o Food/Drinks
- o Information
- o General

Food and drinks figured highly in the reason why students visited the CP Lounge. As is the case every year the CP Lounge operated a small ‘shop’ where students and staff could buy a range of refreshments and light snacks at any time. *Onigiri* were on sale from 8:30 and a range of pastries from the 10:30 break. Lunch *bento* could be ordered from Gusto (and also this year from a local café ‘Creatoh’). Comments were overwhelming positive, but the selection below does represent a cross-section.

Some student comments on the food and drinks available in the CP Lounge:

- “Very cheap – more *onigiri* needed.”
- “Would have loved being able to get a hot coffee in the lounge.”
- “Good selection.”
- “Not enough food.”
- “Sold out too fast.”
- “Healthier choice – fruit would be nice.”
- “Bento service was very helpful.”

Survey Results:

Overall were you satisfied with the food and drinks in the CP Lounge? (N = 95)

Very Satisfied	1	2	3	4	5	Not Satisfied	Did not really use
Rated	42	30	10	3	2		8

Informational services included a range of ‘read-only’ guide books, pamphlets etc., an ‘Events’ notice board up-dated with current and local events (*hanabi, awa-odori*, etc.), and a Wall Bulletin/Message Board for student to use freely.

Some student comments on the useful information available in the CP Lounge:

- “Bike rental, cell phone service, food/drinks.”
- “Putting up up-dated events was great.”
- “Info on local things.”
- “Message board, the different CP events.”

Also in 2005, besides the walking tour of the ICU Campus we organized a tour of the area beyond the ICU High School 'back' gate - roughly the area near Shin-Koganei Station and Higashi-Koganei Station.

In general SCJ students seem very satisfied with the Lounge, describing it as "A place to relax was nice." And "CPL a good place to hang out". This comment perhaps sums up the variety of views and comments on the usefulness of the Lounge for, "ideas about what to do, getting food, talking to people."

V. CP Assistants and Volunteers

The Lounge was permanently staffed on rotation by CP Assistants and the CP Coordinator. Survey results showed that the students were very satisfied overall with the CP Lounge and Staff as the results below attest. For this year we had three CP Assistants. One assistant was drawn from the Service Learning Centre at ICU, two were paid positions. After the withdrawal of one assistant before the program began and then their subsequent replacement, both due to private reasons, we settled with the Service Learning intern and two experienced Assistants from previous years. From the point of the CP Coordinator the latter was an immense help.

This year saw the first use of the Service Learning Centre internship in Mari Aoyagi. This was successful, I feel, and should be continued. I also think it is vital that all efforts should be made to have at least one assistant continue into the next year (if their performance warrants it). It may also be prudent to recruit additional assistants via the continuing assistant(s) to ensure a smooth working relationship. Much of the success of the CP Assistants and the CP Lounge this year was, I feel, due to both the experience of the paid assistants and the ability of the three assistants to fit as a group.

Some student comments on the CP Staff:

"Great attitude & Great help."

"Volunteers/Staff excellent! Extremely helpful and very fun to chat with."

"Very friendly - tolerant of broken Japanese. Main reason to visit the CP Lounge."

"Easy to approach."

"Very pleasant and helpful - always in a good mood."

"Great help in adjusting to Japan."

"Staff so friendly & helpful. Made so many feel at home at ICU."

Survey Results:

Overall were you satisfied with the help/information in the CP Lounge & from CP Staff?
(N=94)

Very Satisfied	1	2	3	4	5	Not Satisfied	Did not really use CP Lounge
Rated	57	20	4	2	-		11

In 2005 we encouraged, or attempted to encourage, more interaction between SCJ and ICU students. The Wall Message & Bulletin Board, a suggestion from 2004, was part of this whereby any students could post messages about plans or queries. SCJ students used this regularly to organize trips or activities. While there is much initial interest in volunteering and involvement from ICU students unfortunately not much was forthcoming over the six weeks. An attempt to designate 'Friendly Fridays' as times for ICU students to come to the Lounge did not work.

Before the start of the program we set about organizing volunteers from among ICU students to assist in various parts of the program. Recruitment posters were placed around ICU and announcements were made via ELP teachers to Freshman and some Sophomores. A web site was also created to give more information and to explain how to become a volunteer. A list of around 100 students was compiled. Quite a number of these hoped to be Language Assistants (CP does not have any information on exactly how many participated in this capacity). While we were able to fill our requirements for volunteers for our various events, we were surprised by the number of volunteers who either did not respond to requests or were very limited in when they could attend. The 2004 CP Report identified the coordination between ICU and SCJ as an issue. We hoped that the idea called 'Friendly Fridays' would encourage ICU volunteers to come in to meet SCJ students. The idea was explained at a meeting for volunteers (attended by 60 students) and suggestions were made for activities. The International Week Committee also held a Pizza Party on the first Friday and the volunteer list was aware of this. However, this participation did not eventuate, except for a few students.

VI. Overall and Other Suggestions

The Culture Program, with its Lounge and services, the on-campus and off campus excursions is a successful and essential part of the overall Summer Courses in Japanese. While the visiting students' focus is to study Japanese language, the Culture Program makes this goal an easier one to attain for many students. The 2005 Final survey asked a number of questions relevant to the overall organization and the future. The response was overwhelming with almost every survey have something to contribute, usually positive. The following are a cross-section of the written comments.

Some student comments on the CP Staff:

"Very enjoyable and special - thanks."

“Well-suited to people new to Japan.”

“Too busy to attend all but what I did do was great.”

“Difficult to get into so events.”

“More modern culture (J fashion etc.)”

“More events.”

Survey Results:

Overall were you satisfied with the Culture Program? (N=86)

Very Satisfied	1	2	3	4	5	Not Satisfied	Did not really use CP Lounge
Rated	31	25	14	3	1		12

It is clear from the surveys that the students appreciated, enjoyed and found very useful all the services offered in the Culture Program. As one could expect (and as in past years) the limitations for the sign-up events was the main criticism, this however reflects more their enthusiasm for the CP rather than a dissatisfaction. A final survey question asked participants, “What would you like to see included to make the Culture Program better? Predominant in responses was the issue of spaces available for attending events, a frustration clear throughout the surveys. SCJ students also crave more contact with Japanese people.

I would like to conclude the 2005 Report with some thoughts on aspects of the Culture Program for 2006.

On Volunteers

Once e-mail lists for Volunteers are compiled regular messages should be sent encouraging participation, particularly based on messages posted by SCJ students on the Message Board. This should be a duty of one of the CP Assistants. If the idea is continued, more information and suggestions should be posted early for volunteers and permanently on the proposed SCJ Web-site. Also, related to the Excursions below, attempts should be made to connect unofficial-CP excursions with volunteers.

On Lectures

If the Lecture series is to continue as a part of the Culture Program, changes need to be considered:

- make the lecture duration one hour with extended Q & A.
- mix in some ‘pop’ topics - *anime*, fashion, music etc.
- start looking earlier and wider for lecturers to fill spots.

On Services

The services already offered are wide and highly rated by SCJ students. Additions could be embellishments to existing services could be considered:

- Bring in a cell-phone company on a given day (we had many enquiries in 2005)

- Subscribe to magazines such as 'Tokyo-Q' or 'Tokyo Weekender' (multiple copies if possible)
- Create files of do-it-yourself excursions, including lesser-known sites around Tokyo (Lonely Planet Japan or the LP Tokyo edition are a good place to start)
- include a wider range of drinks and possibly fruit
- increase the supply of *onigiri* and pastries

On CP Lounge

The Lounge should be brightened up with Japan-related posters. Contact should be made with JTB or other tour companies (1) to send info in English on affordable tours and (2) request posters.

On Excursions and events

The current range of excursions, both on- and off-campus should be retained. However, SCJ students are very ready, willing and able to do things for themselves as the numerous postings on the Message Board for trips showed. With some more guidance and hints to lesser known events, the 'dissatisfaction' with space limits may be dealt with. Decide on 'weekend' events (trips to Kamakura, Ameyoko etc.), perhaps with ICU volunteers involvement, to enable with students to conduct themselves. This would require the creation of 'self-tour' packages on the computer & use the Bulletin Board to announce them.