



JETAA  
SA

# Newsletter

## September 2010



### Greetings fellow Jet Alum

Can you believe it? Spring is finally on its way; although I have to admit that it has thrown me for a bit of a loop – last week I was still snuggling my hot water bottle under three layers of blankets and last night all three blankets and the hottie were tossed in favour of summer PJs! Aah, got to love life in South Africa!

After all the anticipation and excitement, the FIFA World Cup is also a thing of a past, but one that I think that many of us will remember for a lifetime. As well as uniting our country in a rare display of patriotism, the World Cup also provided an unparalleled opportunity to introduce our country to the world and to show all of our foreign visitors the time of their lives.

I was lucky enough to attend two of Japan's matches (one in Durban and one in Pretoria) and was pleasantly surprised by just how many Japanese supporters had come to SA to support the Samurai Blue. While the matches themselves were amazing to watch, the highlight for me was to walk around before and afterwards and chat to all the fans. It was the most amazing experience to speak Japanese again and to interact with so many excited Japanese fans. It truly was internationalisation at its very best and I hope at least some of you had the same magical experience of welcoming the Japanese to our country.

I am also very pleased to say that Japanese media reports (as monitored by the Japanese Embassy in Pretoria) were increasingly positive about South Africa as the tournament went on. This was a major shift from pre-tournament reports that focussed mainly on the crime rate. Here's hoping that all the Japanese fans who were shown such a fabulous time in SA, as well as all the positive media reports about our country, encourage even more Japanese visitors to travel to South Africa, and experience our own special brand of hospitality.

On that note, I wish you a wonderful spring and an even better summer.

*Ja ne, Nicky*

### Imperial Visit

As well as the Japanese National Football Team, and hordes of Japanese supporters, South Africa had one more very special Japanese visitor during the World Cup. Her Imperial Highness Princess Takamado – a member of the Japanese imperial family – visited South Africa during the World Cup in order to support the Blue Samurais as the Honorary Patron of the Japan Football Association.

During her visit, the Princess attended the Japan vs Denmark match in Rustenburg (where the Blue Samurai did her proud by winning the match 3-1) and visited some charity organisations. The Princess, who is a keen bird watcher and the Honorary Patron of Birdlife International, also took the opportunity to go bird watching while she was here.

During a reception at the Japanese Ambassador's residence in Pretoria, the Princess commended the Jet Programme and lauded it as one of the Japanese Government's greatest success stories.

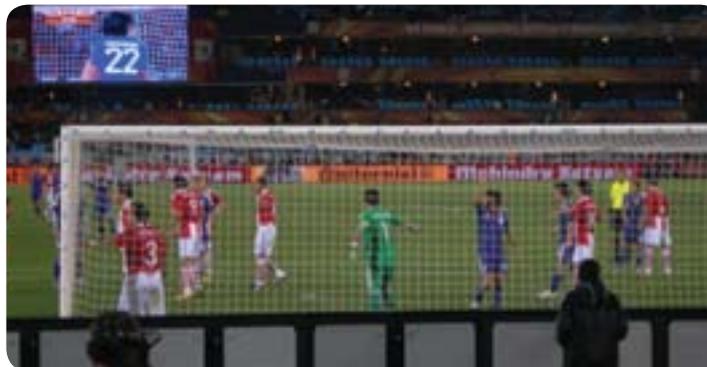
While her visit was unofficial, Princess Takamado was the first member of the imperial household to ever visit South Africa and we hope – based on her positive experience here – that more members of the Japanese imperial family will follow.



## Well Done Samurai Blue!

The Japanese National Football Team certainly did themselves and Japan proud during a very spirited and hard fought campaign at the 2010 FIFA World Cup earlier this year. Even though the Samurais lost to the Netherlands (who eventually qualified for the finals) during their second match, they outclassed Cameroon in their first match and dominated Denmark in their third with a 3-1 drubbing. This performance helped to ensure that the team easily progressed to the next stage of the competition (round of 16), where they faced Paraguay.

The Samurai Blue, who are known for their exceptional ball handling techniques and lightning speed, produced another plucky performance, which saw the score level at 0-0 at the end of added time. Eventually the match came down to a disappointing penalty shoot out which saw Paraguay narrowly snatch victory to move on to the next round. It was a very unfair way to exit the tournament – and many of the crowd at Loftus shed a tear; Japanese supporters and South Africans alike – but with an overall 9<sup>th</sup> place in the tournament, I think the Samurai Blue can certainly hold their heads up proud. Based on this stellar performance, I for one can't wait to see how they do in the next World Cup. Gambatte Samurai Blue, Gambatte!



## Help Save the Jet Programme!

It was recently reported that the Japanese Government – under pressure from the global economic recession – is seriously reconsidering the future of the JET Programme in Japan. I know that most of us credit the Jet Programme for changing our lives – for some of us, in the most fundamental of ways.

In order to prove to the Japanese Government that JET Programme does indeed make good on their investment, JETAA International is asking all their chapters around the world to contribute stories from their members about how the JET Programme has changed their lives and has contributed positively to internationalisation in Japan.

If you feel strongly about how the JET Programme has impacted positively on *your* life; have become wildly successful (career/family/community service) or have a heart-warming story about how your time in Japan helped to promote internationalisation in your Japanese community, please send us your testimonial to: [jetaasa@yahoo.com](mailto:jetaasa@yahoo.com).

All of the testimonials we receive before 30<sup>th</sup> September, will be sent to the JETAA International conference in Edinburgh to add our voice to the call to protect the JET Programme. We will also post some of them in our newsletter.

So PLEASE do your part to save Jet and send us your stories!



## Japan/South Africa Centenary Celebrations

As well as the year that Africa hosted the FIFA World Cup for the first time, 2010 is also auspicious as it marks the 100 year anniversary of diplomatic relations between Japan and South Africa.

Both countries have celebrated the occasion with a number of commemorative events. In Japan, the South African embassy hosted a photographic exhibition, a martial arts competition and a South Africa/Japan friendly rugby match, among other events. Still to come is the SA Flower Show in Nagoya in October and a South African film festival and fashion show in November.

In South Africa, the Japanese Embassy in Pretoria has been equally busy planning and hosting events. These included the 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Japanese Film Festival, a Jazz Shamisen concert and the planting of three sakura (cherry blossom) trees. Two of these trees were planted in the Johannesburg Botanical Gardens and the other was planted in the Japanese School in Emmarentia. The trees were part of a larger plan to plant 100 sakura trees in South Africa, but the remaining 97 trees are still in quarantine in Japan. However, if they do arrive they will be divided between these two locations. I hope that many of you have had the opportunity to take part in some of the events, as they offer a fantastic opportunity to reconnect with Japan and Japanese culture, as well as to make some new Japanese or Jet friends.

For those of you have yet to attend one of the centenary events, there are still a few to look forward to.

On the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> of September, as part of the Capital Arts Festival at the State Theatre in Pretoria, two Japanese dance (Awaodori) and drumming (Wadaiko) performances will be held. This is a fantastic chance to see one of Japan's best dance troupes (Kikusuiren) and one of its most famous taiko groups (Hibikiza) in action. The shows are scheduled as follows:

Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> September at 20h00 (Drama Theatre)

Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> September at 15h00 (Drama Theatre)

Tickets are available from Computicket at only R60 a performance.

An art exhibition (entitled "East meets West") will be held in the foyer of the State Theatre from 28<sup>th</sup> August to 5<sup>th</sup> September, and will be joined by an Ikebana (Japanese flower arranging) exhibition from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> September. Both exhibitions are free to the public.

On 2<sup>nd</sup> October, the Johannesburg Botanical Gardens will be hosting an Ikebana exhibition, with a bonsai exhibition to follow on 30<sup>th</sup> October. For more information, email [bonsaikebana@mweb.co.za](mailto:bonsaikebana@mweb.co.za).

In late October, the new Centre for Japanese Studies will be launched and in November, another Japanese Film Festival will be screened in Johannesburg, Pretoria and Cape Town. Watch this space for more details!



# Samurai Fever

