



Asian Productivity Organization “The APO in the News”

Name of publication: Sri Lanka The Treasure Island (February-March 2015, Sri Lanka)
Page: p. 44-45



Small, young and old traditional performers, on the mobile platform in collaboration performing dance, song and music at the Nanbu town Autumn Festival 2014.

17 lucky press and electronic media journalists from 13 member countries of the Asian Productivity Organization received the unique opportunity of visiting Japan, the beautiful country of sun-shine in early September 2014. They were in a Multicountry Observational Study Mission on Best Practices in Promoting Innovation and Productivity in Agriculture for Mass Media Practitioners organized by the Asian Productivity Organization, the APO Headquartered in Tokyo, Japan. Following feature is an experience shared on how Japan has productively and effectively included a festive cultural component in the booming trade of tourism.

Most regions of Japan have four distinct seasons and autumn months are basically September, October, and November. Leaves beautifully turn red, orange, and yellow, and they are so beautiful. Fall foliage is called "koyou" in Japanese which literally means red leaves. It's said that Japan's earliest fall foliage happens in the Daisetsuzan mountains, Hokkaido. Other popular fall foliage destinations include Nikko, Kamakura, Hakone, and more. Kyoto and Nara, which were Japan's ancient capitals, the colorful leaves match their historical architectures and attract many visitors. Old temples and shrines are good places to visit during fall foliage season.

Our destination for last year's Japanese Autumn Festival was Nanbu town in the Aomori prefecture. Nanbu Town is an area where scents of fruits and moving experiences await.

Nanbu town operates several popular farm-direct shops in the area, including the Nagaxia Cherry Centre, which is managed by a people's association. The sign for the centre features a painting of cherries, the area's most famous product. Nearly 100 varieties of fresh vegetables, fruit, cut flowers, pickles, snacks, juices, jam and more are always available.

As the late evening falls the journalists visited to observe the enchanting and colourful Nanbu Autumn festival. At Nanbu town's Happy Longevity village



A beautiful cloth of literature written in red is taken of goodwill from the Mayor for the journalists.



Nanbu town traditional theatre hall



Participating journalist Harisman from LPP TVRI Television of the Republic of Indonesia pauses for a picture with two kids in traditional Japanese costume the Kimono



A traditional mask dancer wishing good health and long life to a father and son



Young dancers performing a ritual dance in front of a village shop wishing success



- people gathered in colorful yet unique Japanese traditional costumes along the street to join the festive feasts. As traditional Japanese drums and music were played, a group of young boys performed a ritualistic dance in front of the business centres in the town wishing them success in their business activities. On a colorful mobile platform, beautiful Japanese performers were showcasing traditional Japanese dance, song and music. Many skilled performers of Japanese dance and music traditions from little kids to young and old were seen performing on one stage for the spectators at the same time.

The welcome of the Mayor of Nanbu Town Sukenao Kudo in his traditional costume won the hearts of everyone at once. Visitors loved to pause for several photo sessions with him and sometimes even with his Samurai swords. This smiling gentleman won the hearts of everyone there, for his ingenuity and warm-hearted smile. "Our town, Nanbu, which has been moving forward step by step since its formation while paying respect to the achievements of those who came before us, is known to be where the Nanbu Domain was located in the early modern period. It is also one of Aomori Prefecture's leading fruit producers. I am willing to take bold initiatives to overcome the mountain of problems we face and to think and act creatively to proactively implement a wide variety of measures in order to realize a town administration that meets local needs and make the most of our town's characteristics by placing great emphasis on keeping conversational ball rolling with residents," he says.

At the Nanbu town traditional theater hall journalists came to know much about the history, future prospects and present-day developments being carried out for the socio-economic and socio-cultural development of the people in Nanbu town area. The Japanese Government's dedication to continuously uplift the quality of Japanese citizens was transparent throughout.

As the Aomori Prefecture was searching



Nanbu town traditional theatre hall

Participating journalists pause for a photograph with Mayor of Nanbu Town Sukenao Kudo. Joeselito C Bernado - Director Agriculture Department of APO is also in the picture



for local exchange activities to promote tourism and due to the vivid differences in the area, the Prefectural Government has selected the Nanbu town to develop even an innovative concept of tourism that goes exactly parallel to the agro-home-stay concept.

During the lectures, at the Nanbu town traditional theatre hall, the mayor sent his goodwill to everyone who visited the autumn festival in nanbu. It was a beautiful cloth of literature written in red, a token of goodwill and everyone wrapped it around their heads to show respect and say they attended the festival. They did not even think to remove it even after reaching their accommodation that night at the Hachinohe Daiwa Roynet Hotel.