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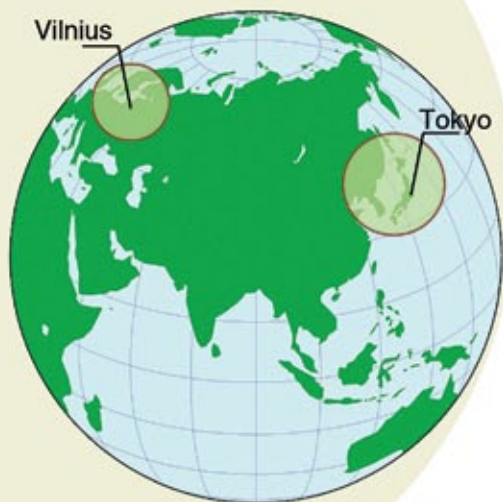
*Kizuna
Ryšiai*



The 20th Anniversary of Diplomatic Relations between Japan and Lithuania

Embassy of Japan
2011
www.lt.emb-japan.go.jp





Hokkaido 北海道

Lithuania won 1st prize at the 38th International Snow Sculpture Contest
"The world is our hive. Be responsible"

Klaipeda クライペダ



Sister Cities



Kuji 久慈

Hiroshima Peace Memorial



Hiroshima 広島

Tokyo 東京



Imperial Palace

Kyoto 京都



Kiyomizudera

Shuri Castle



Okinawa 沖縄

General Information about Japan

Population: 126,475,664 (as of July 2011)

Capital city: Tokyo

Language: Japanese

National currency: Yen (1 LT = 31 ¥, as of August 20, 2011)

Time difference between Japan and Lithuania:

7 hours (6 hours during the summertime)

Japan-Lithuania Relations

Japan and Lithuania have been maintaining a very cordial relationship in spite of the long geographical distance between them. Japan officially recognized the state of Lithuania in 1922. After Lithuania regained its independence in early 1990, Japan again recognized Lithuania as an independent state in 1991. At that time, Japan was one of the first countries to officially recognize Lithuania's independence. In 1997, the Embassy of Japan in Lithuania was opened, and two years later, the Embassy of Lithuania in Japan was established. The two countries are endeavoring to enhance their relationship with goodwill and friendship, and marked the 20th anniversary of their diplomatic relations in 2011. The mutual visits of high level officials made this relationship even stronger.



In November 2010, Lithuanian Minister of Foreign Affairs Audronius Azubalis visited Japan and met with the then Japanese Minister for Foreign Affairs Seiji Maehara. Foreign Minister Azubalis also paid a visit to RIKEN, an independent administrative institution for research under the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, and met with Nobel Prize winner Ryoji Noyori, President of RIKEN.



In May 2011, State Secretary for Foreign Affairs Yutaka Banno visited Lithuania and had extensive discussions on bilateral and regional issues with the leaders of the Government and the Seimas, including Minister of Energy Arvydas Sekmokas and Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs Asta Skaisgiryte-Liauskiene.

Japan's Assistance to Lithuania

Since the Lithuanian Independence, Japan has extended development support to Lithuania in the form of grant assistance and technical cooperation for its endeavor for democracy and a free market economy. A particular emphasis of the Japanese assistance was on the Cultural Grant Assistance Program, which was meant to deepen mutual understanding, friendship and good will between Japan and Lithuania by providing educational and cultural equipment.

There were in total 13 projects implemented here in Lithuania, aimed at enhancing cultural and educational activities, such as a grant of musical instruments to the Lithuanian Academy of Music, Japanese language learning equipment grants to Vilnius University and Vytautas Magnus University, and so forth.

Embassy staff visited the National Museum of Lithuanian and confirmed that the equipment was in good condition and effectively utilized and maintained. The Museum staff and technicians explained that they are one of the few restoration centers in Europe to be able to work with such advanced technology, and that this equipment in particular helps museums all over the country in their mission to enrich and preserve Lithuanian National Heritage.

Sugihara Museum and Sugihara Memorial Park

From 1939 to 1940, Chiune Sugihara (1900-1986), the Japanese Vice-Consul to Lithuania, was stationed in Kaunas, where he saved the lives of Jewish refugees escaping persecution by Nazi Germany by issuing transit visas to Japan according to his humanitarian beliefs. The Japanese Consulate building has been preserved in its original condition and now serves as the Sugihara Museum. There is also a park named after Mr. Sugihara in Vilnius, Sugihara Memorial Park, which has a memorial stone dedicated to his memory and more than 150 cherry blossom trees donated by Japanese citizens.

Sports Exchange between Japan and Lithuania

Many Lithuanian people love Japanese traditional martial arts such as Judo, Karate, Aikido and Kendo. There are many training schools (dojo) of Japanese martial arts in Lithuania and people train not only their skills but also the strong mentality through the daily training. Japanese organizations and individuals



Karate demonstration at Chiune Sugihara Sakura Park in Vilnius

also encourage the development of Japanese martial arts in Lithuania. In March 2011, the All Japan Kendo Federation (AJKF) donated used Kendo gears (protective armors and bamboo swords) to the Lithuanian Kendo Association in the aim of its development in Lithuania.

From Japan, the Japan's national basketball team often visits Lithuania to have friendly games for their training. The most recent visit was in July 2010, by Japan's women's national team.



Kimono show at 2nd Japanese Culture Festival

Cultural Exchange

The bonds between Japan and Lithuania are most vividly demonstrated through cultural events, which Lithuanian people are especially attracted to, be it modern or traditional.

In recent years the number of Japanese popular culture events is rapidly growing in Lithuania. Thousands of admirers today couldn't imagine their life without annual Cosplay or Anime Conventions. Cosplay, or costume play, is a type of performance art in which participants don costumes and accessories to represent specific characters often drawn from popular fiction or anime in Japan. This new type of culture is driven by youth, and each year more and more inspired young people are motivated to organize and attend such gatherings.

Yet Japan continues to preserve its ancient, rich and exceptional traditional culture, which many Lithuanian people find exotic and fascinating. As an example, nowadays more and more people are interested in the tradition of Japanese gardens, whether they be cultivated in a private backyard or created as an exposition in the park to attract customers. It has also become clear from the success of multiple events like bonsai and ikebana (the art of flower arrangement) exhibitions, sushi shows or traditional Japanese kimono (clothing) demonstrations that Lithuanians share a high appreciation for attention to detail and delicate beauty with Japanese people.



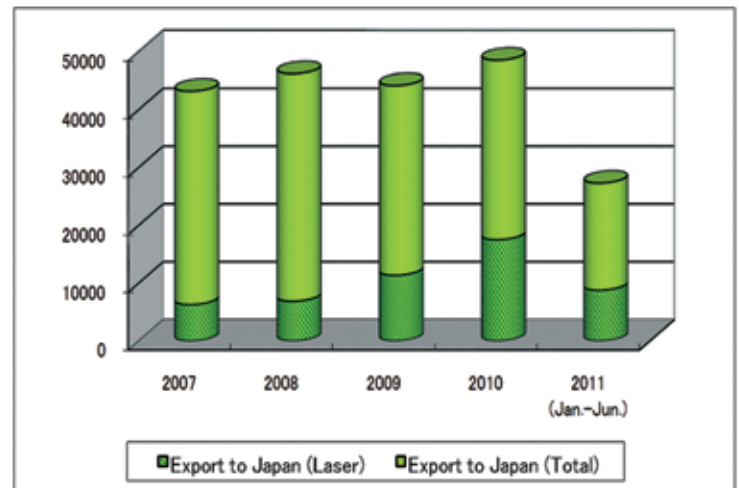
Festival „nowJapan“

Bilateral Economic Partnership

There is much potential to strengthen the bilateral partnership in the economic arena, especially in the field of high technology products. The export of laser equipment manufactured in Lithuania to Japan is increasing rapidly. Lithuanian technologies are used in both academic and industrial sectors in Japan, and "RIKEN", one of the largest research institutes in the country, has installed Lithuanian-made laser systems for its research activities. In May 2011, RIKEN and the Lithuanian state research institute, Center for Physical Science and Technology (CPST), signed an agreement on bilateral cooperation in the field of science, technology and innovation.

In the energy sector, Japan's technology is expected to help a critically important energy project for Lithuania. A Japanese company has been selected as a strategic investor for the construction of the Visaginas Nuclear

Power Plant and negotiations for the final agreement with Lithuania and other regional partners are underway. If realized this project will become by far the largest investment from Japan and the cornerstone of the economic partnership between the two countries.



Trade results between Japan and Lithuania (2007 -2011/ Jan - Jun)

Japan and Lithuania share common fundamental values in freedom and democracy, and work together to advance these values through regional or international forums. A prime example of this cooperation can be seen in Afghanistan.

In Ghor province, Afghanistan, the Lithuanian Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) has been engaged in the reconstruction and development assistance to that area. Since May 2009, a Japanese civilian team has been working together with the Lithuanian team for the development cooperation. Japan and Lithuania, along with other development partners, are implementing projects such as the reconstruction of Chagcharan Hospital and the construction of the Chagcharan Children Center.

Global Cooperation



"Groundbreaking ceremony of Afghanistan National Disaster Management Authority in Ghor"

Mr. Kęstutis Ptakauskas

Mr. Kestutis Ptakauskas has been interested in bonsai and introducing Japanese culture to others through various activities for more than 20 years. While participating in international bonsai exhibitions he also has a bonsai school for people who have a deep interest in the art.

In 2008, Mr. Ptakauskas opened bonsai studio "SENSEI," which is not only home to many bonsai but to a Japanese garden in Alytus as well. He is a pioneer of bonsai in Lithuania.

In 2009, Mr. Ptakauskas was invited to Japan by the Japan Foundation. His activity attracted the attention of media in Japan as well.

Mr. Ptakauskas continues to contribute to the promotion of Japanese culture not only in Alytus, but in Vilnius as well. In 2011 he helped to plant sakura, or cherry blossom trees, in Sakura Park.

He also organized the 2nd Japanese Culture Festival and 6th International Bonsai and Suiseki Exhibition, which included many Japanese cultural events, such as lectures about bonsai, sushi, and kimono shows.

Mr. Ptakauskas greatly contributes to the promotion of Japanese culture and developing the relationship between Japan and Lithuania.



Mr. Vytautas Dumčius



Mr. Vytautas Dumčius is the principal of Klaipėda Martynas Mažvydas secondary school. Throughout the years he published many articles on Japanese culture, especially haiku poems. In addition, he has put his utmost effort into organizing various Japanese cultural events in Klaipėda, promoting the understanding of Japan among Lithuanians. His bond with Japan has lasted for more than 20 years and seems to be growing stronger every day.

In 2010 Mr. Dumčius received the Foreign Minister's Commendation Award for his invaluable contribution to strengthening Japan-Lithuania relations over the decades. Mr. Dumčius also contributed to developing a strong sister city relationship between Klaipėda and the Japanese city of Kuji in Iwate Prefecture.

Kuji City and Klaipėda agreed to become sister cities in 1989 during the USSR era. Since then the two cities have developed close and warm relations. It began with a common interest in amber and continued with a sincere desire to help one another. After the events of January 13th, 1991, the mayor of Kuji City, Mr. Yoshiaki

Kuji, sent an official letter to the government of the USSR expressing strong support for an independent Lithuania. Kuji City also actively supported hospitals in Klaipėda City.

After the Great Tohoku Earthquake and tsunami on March 11th, Kuji City was severely affected by the disaster. This time their sister city Klaipėda was there for them. Klaipėda City Municipality and residents came together to collect donations to support the people of Kuji. A friend in need is a friend indeed!

Mr. Arvydas Ališauskas

Mr. Arvydas Ališauskas, Associate Professor of Vytautas Magnus University, has translated many Japanese books into Lithuanian. He was the first person to translate literature directly from Japanese to Lithuanian. Before he began to do so, Japanese books were translated into Lithuanian from other languages.

Mr. Ališauskas also took the initiative in establishing a Japanese Studies Centre at Vytautas Magnus University in Kaunas – an institution where people could study Japanese language and culture. He served as its head from 1994 to 2008. It was Mr. Arvydas Ališauskas who recognized the achievements of Mr. Chiune Sugihara and strove to improve Lithuanian companies by using the Japanese companies' model.

Through such activities, Mr. Ališauskas has contributed to promoting mutual understanding between Japan and Lithuania for more than 30 years. For this reason, Mr. Ališauskas received the Foreign Minister's Commendation Award in 2011.



The Road to Recovery and Rebirth

~Message from Prime Minister of Japan~

In Lithuania, since the day the earthquake took place, we have received so many messages of sympathy from many people. We have also received many offers of kind support and assistance from the Government and the people of Lithuania. The Lithuanian Government kindly sent relief materials to Japan through the EU. Besides, I have learned that a number of charity events aimed at generating contributions for supporting the affected areas have been organized and that many organizations, among others the Red Cross and the Save the Children, collected a substantial amount of donations. I wish to express our sincere thanks for all the sympathy and assistance the Lithuanian have extended to us.

The Great East Japan Earthquake and the resulting tsunami are the worst natural disasters that Japan has faced since the end of the Second World War. Reconstruction of the devastated Tohoku region will not be easy. However, I believe that this difficult period will provide us with a precious window of opportunity to secure the 'Rebirth of Japan.' The Government will dedicate itself to demonstrating to the world its ability to establish the most sophisticated reconstruction plans for East Japan, based on three principles: first, create a regional society that is highly resistant to natural disasters; second, establish a social system that allows people to live in harmony with the global environment; and third, build a compassionate society that cares about people, in particular, the vulnerable.

I believe that the best way for Japan to reciprocate the strong Kizuna and cordial friendship extended to us by the international community is to continue our contribution to the development of the international community. To that end, I will work the best of my ability to realize a 'forward-looking' reconstruction that gives people bright hopes for the future. I would wholeheartedly appreciate your continued support and cooperation.

ARIGATOU.



Let's go to Japan!



Are you dreaming about studying in JAPAN?

We can help you. Here is some helpful information about the scholarships administrated by the Embassy of Japan.
Apply! It just might be the beginning of a dream come true.

Japanese Government

(Monbukagakusho: MEXT) Scholarships

- Japanese Studies Students (12 months; apply in February)
- Teacher-Training Students (18 months; apply in February)
- Undergraduate Students (5 years; apply in May-June)
- Research Students (18-24 months; apply in May-June)
- College of Technology Students (4 years; apply in May-June)
- Professional Training College Students (3 years; apply in May-June)

For further information:



www.studyjapan.go.jp



www.lt.emb-japan.go.jp

Japan Foundation Programs

- Japanese Language Program for Outstanding Overseas Japanese Studies Students (15 days; apply in May)
- Training Programs for Leading Teachers of the Japanese Language (2-24 months; apply in November)
- Japanese Language Program for Specialists in Cultural and Academic Fields (2-8 months; apply in November)
- Japanese Studies Fellowship (2-12 months; apply in November)
- Cultural Tour for School Educators (13 days; apply in June)

If you are travelling to Japan...

- Visiting Japan Links by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs:
www.mofa.go.jp/link/visit.html
- Japan National Tourism Organization :
www.visitjapan.jp

If you are looking for information about Japan...

- Web Japan
<http://web-japan.org/index.html>
- Kids Web Japan
<http://web-japan.org/kidsweb>
- NIPPONIA
<http://web-japan.org/nipponia/archives/en/index.html>
- The Embassy of Japan in Lithuania
<http://www.lt.emb-japan.go.jp>

Still not sure?

Here's what Lithuanian students studying in Japan have to say about their experience:



Romanas

My studies in Japan are getting along pretty well. You can see the accuracy and precision of Japanese people everywhere – from origami to the most advanced technologies. Almost everywhere you can find equipment which is used to make one's daily life more comfortable – vending machines, rice cookers, water-boiling thermoses that can keep water hot enough for making tea for a long time, and even warm toilet seats :) Japanese people use a lot of products made of buckwheat – like buckwheat flour and noodles. One of my favorite dishes is nishin-soba. However, it seems it is mission impossible to find the buckwheat grits that I like so much in Japan.



Ilona

I have been studying in Japan for three years now, where, besides my studies at university, I get to learn new life lessons everyday. While going deeper into the culture and people of this far country, I actually got to know myself better. I admire the respect that Japanese people show for their country. And even though Japan is a highly modernized country, every single little piece of nature is cherished as well as old customs and traditions.



Karolis

There were no unexpected things once I arrived in Japan. Pretty quickly I was registered as an alien and without any difficulties got used to the Japanese public transportation system. Three months of intensive Japanese language courses passed before I knew it and I am very grateful to my teachers for their effort and work. Apart from my research, I continue to practice kendo.

Summer in Japan is just as hot as it is in Lithuania, and you can meet people in Japan just as kind as the people in my homeland. Rain also comes from the sky here :) In order to realize this I needed to travel more than 7000 km.