

2017

A Friendship Bridge Between Bosnia and Herzegovina and Japan

Japanese Calligraphy for Peace at Stari Most: A World Heritage Site



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December 4, 2017

I was moved by an article I read on the internet during August this year. It was about Stari Most in your country, written by a Japanese reporter traveling world heritage sites all over the world. When I read this article, I strongly thought that Stari Most would be the best place to perform Kigo (Writings in Fude (brush used for Japanese calligraphy)) for world peace and announce WA Project TAISHI to the world. Kigo is similar to Zen and is one of the unique spiritual culture of Japan. Japanese calligraphers will write words of prayers or words that come up to their heart on a very large paper, while praying together with audiences.

Stari Most is not a famous place for Japanese but it is a beautiful place with a historical meaning, that we WA Project TAISHI think we should share our WA Spirit (the spirit of circulation, tolerance and harmony) at this important place, with the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina and pass it on to all over the world.

I've also heard news of your attendance at the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Ceremony held on August 6th, the 72nd anniversary of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima. I would like to extend my thanks to you for your excellent words saying that victims of atomic bombing should never be forgotten and should remind us of the need to conduct policies of peace and dialogue, that will promote and respect the highest human values, and that it is the World Leaders' duty to prevent such tragedies in future by denuclearization. We at WA Project TAISHI quite agree to you. Your presence at the ceremony was truly an honor, and made it all the more memorable.

To close, I would again like to express my gratitude and to congratulate you on the remarkable progress you have made to strengthen the bilateral relations between Bosnia and Herzegovina and Japan. We truly hope we can work together to make the world a truly more peaceful place.

Sincerely yours, Wada Kasen, ●Kasen Education●,

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【What we have learned】

"World heritage" Stari Most

The Stari Most Bridge is said to be a "legacy of tragedy" for it was destroyed in the Bosnian War. In Japan, there is also a "legacy of tragedy" in Hiroshima, Hiroshima Peace Memorial (Genbaku Dome). Mostar, a small town in Bosnia and Herzegovina, there spreads exotic and beautiful scenery in the old town. The city with its oriental atmosphere that is unlike Europe, Muslims and Catholics coexist from ancient times due to historical and geographical background.

- "Stari-Most Bridge", a stone made bridge, the symbol of Mostar



「DON'T FORGET '93」

Stari Most, meaning "old bridge" in Bosnia and Herzegovina local language, was built in the 16th century when the town was ruled by the Ottoman Empire. On the west side of the bridge lives Croats (Catholic), and on the east side lives the Muslims (Islamic). They have been coming and going crossing the bridge for a long time, coexisting peacefully. But a tragedy attacks this town.

In 1991, Yugoslav War broke out. In this civil war, also to be called an "ethnic conflict", a frightful conflict was waged between Croatian, Islamic and Serbian inhabitants living in their soil, In this town where the races are mixed, many citizens lost their lives. The Stari-Most Bridge, which has been wishing for peace of both races, was also blown up by Croatian Catholic militia on November 9, 1993.

Though withholding such a sad past, the Stari Most Bridge was rebuilt in 2004, with the effort of the two races and cooperation of the UNESCO, One year after, it was registered as a world heritage under the name of "Old Bridge Area of the Old City of Mostar". Near the bridge, there is a monument written "DON'T FORGET '93". Even now, there remain destroyed buildings, and houses with marks of bullets everywhere in the town. The peaceful and beautiful town bustling with tourists, makes the shadow part more eminent. People in the town are cheerful and bright, we cannot imagine that a miserable incident occurred recently. Mostar is a town we can enjoy beautiful streetscapes, but it is also a town that teaches us something important.

What is WA Project TAISHI?

"和" (WA) of WA Project TAIAHI stands for Japanese culture and also "spirit of WA" (WA Spirit meaning the spirit of harmony). "TAISHI" has 3 meanings: Prince Shotoku (Shoutoku Taishi), Aspiration (same sound with taishi in Japanese), and Ambassador (same sound with taishi in Japanese) to convey spirit of harmony and love to the world.

The root of the "spirit of WA" (WA Spirit) is from Prince Shotoku, who lived 1400 years ago. He established the "Seventeen-Article Constitution", and the first article is "the spirit of Harmony" (WA Spirit).

The aim of this project is to make "Seventeen-Article Constitution" in which the "spirit of WA" was first written, to be listed in UNESCO's "Memory of the World" or "Intangible Cultural Heritage" in 2022. It is the year since Prince Shotoku passed away exactly 1400 years ago. We would like to share the "spirit of WA" inside and outside the country, and contribute to the realization of human happiness and world peace.

Greeting from the President: Tatsuhiko Miyamoto

I have launched "WA Project TAISHI" in 2014, to introduce "WA Spirit" to the world as the "spirit of circulation, tolerance and harmony" which Prince Shotoku established 1400 years ago. If the thought of global terrorism that makes the whole world hopeless, is the negative pole, then we would like the "WA spirit" to be the positive pole that offers hope to the world.

We have made a plan of the Japanese calligraphy performance, to introduce the "WA spirit" to your home country, and to contribute to world peace and cultural exchange, and hope to become a bridge of friendship between Bosnia and Herzegovina and Japan. We hope your people and the world would experience the Japanese traditional culture and feel the spirit of "WA" through this event.

●Tatsuhiko Miyamoto (President of "WA project TAISHI")

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*all events below are yet to be confirmed.

Date: 9th November, 2018 (tentative)

Venue: On Stari Most(tentative)

Content:

Japanese calligraphy for peace and friendship (Japanese calligraphy performance)

Other content:

Perform calligraphy of “和”(“WA” meaning harmony) together with about 50 children, representatives from both east and west sides of the bridge.

*reference image



*Reference

•WA Project TAISHI official website

<http://tatsu.ne.jp/wa/index.html>

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Kasen Wada takes full responsibility for the wording and content of this article.