

VOICES From THE NEW YORKERS

Banzai, Prof. Donald Keene! KIA CHELEEN

Last week, I was in Tokyo to attend the memorial service of one of the most prominent Japanese studies scholars, Professor Donald Keene. I met him when I was the Assistant Director of his named Center at Columbia University several years ago. I had simply, and quite embarrassingly known Professor Keene to be "some famous Japanese literature guy." Eventually, I came to know this gentle, highly intelligent, funny man, who had endless stories that fascinated any audience. Practically any country you could name in the world - he had traveled there and had vivid memories of the people, the food, and his experiences there.



Most people knew Professor Keene through his scholarly achievements, translations, and a multitude of commentaries and newspaper articles. He was also known widely for his unique abilities to bridge Japan and the United States with soft diplomacy.

I honestly don't know all of Professor Keene's academic achievements. I can't name all of the famous people with whom he had connections. But I know what a sweet tooth he had. I know how he liked his steak cooked. I know what he truly thought about different Japanese traditions and international affairs. I used to comb his hair, straighten his tie, and pull up his socks before each lecture or interview. We used to sit around, talking for hours about anything and everything.

Banzai, Professor Keene! It was an honor and pleasure to have known you, traveled with you, and laughed with you. You will be greatly missed, but your legacy will live with us for generations to come. (Kia Cheleen is an inter-cultural consultant and a Japanese/English writer, translator and interpreter. Visit her at www.gillespieglobal.net or e-mail kcheleen@gmail.com)

THE JAPAN VOICE

COOL JAPAN from New Yorkers' Viewpoints



Mr. Yamanaka made a speech about N High School in Japan at the UN

Infopoverty World Conference N Highschool Introduced at the United Nations Engagement in Sustainable Development Goals of an Online High School

On April 12, the "19th Infopoverty World Conference" was hosted by NGO OCCAM at the UN headquarters. There, Chairman Shinichi Yamanaka (former Vice Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology) of Educational Institution Kadokawa Dwango Gakuen N High School (main campus located in Uruma City, Okinawa; 9,727 enrolled students; Principal Hirokazu Okuhira) presented the school's engagement in SDGs, titled "N High School, the futuristic high school giving subsumptive yet fair high-quality education to all people."

The school opened as a correspondence school in April of 2016 and is approaching its fourth year. With more than 4,004 enrollees this April, the school has the highest number of enrollees of all high schools in Japan, including those with correspondence courses.

Many students successful in

numerous fields attend this school, such as female figure skater Rika Kihira, who won six consecutive titles in international competition, including the Four Continents Championship, in the 2018-19 season. The classes are brief and intensive, with 10 minutes per lecture on a smartphone.

Mr. Yamanaka explained the infopoverty disparity of education by contrasting the status between urban areas with depopulated areas such as



remote islands and mountainous regions. "A system where anyone can receive a high school diploma with an affordable price: I would like this to be a hint to correcting and improving educational inequality between developed and developing countries around the world," Mr. Yamanaka asserted to the

representatives of the countries in the UN conference room.

Before and after Mr. Yamanaka's lectures, representatives of Unicef and Officer Makiko Tagashira of the Economic and Social Council reported the UN member states' efforts in improving educational inequality, which accentuated N High School's achievement in abolishing infopoverty within a short period of time.

Most graduating students have

been accepted into universities, such as Kyushu, Tsukuba, Keio, Waseda, Sophia, Rikkyo, Aoyama Gakuin, Hosei, and Chuo. There are students enrolled from overseas, since it is possible to obtain a diploma of a Japanese high school with online courses while attending a local American school. In the future, this may become a popular educational option for Japanese people living in America.

OCCAM, or the Observatory on Digital Communication, which hosted the event, is a nongovernment organization established by UNESCO. Mr. Toshihiko Murata, Permanent Representative of OCCAM to the UN, mentioned, "We would like to continue to provide more opportunities to recognize the works of Japanese institutions that would contribute to UN causes."

(Ryoichi Miura/Translated by Ai Omas)

The Blossoming Spirits

Noh lecture and Demonstration at Tenri Cultural Institute

Noh Society, an organization introducing the classical performing arts of Japan (Setsuko Bouteille, President), will present a Noh lecture and demonstration on May 1 and 2 at 6:15 pm at the Tenri Cultural Institute (43A W 13th St.).

Titled "The Blossoming Spirits," it will feature Kinue Oshima, the first female Kita School actor, and Teruhisa Oshima, her brother who is also a Kita School actor. They will be joined by Narumi Takizawa from the Isso School of Japanese flute, and Naoko Takahashi from the Ohkura School of the small hand drum.

Noh Society sponsored a lecture and demonstration by Kinue Oshima titled "The Heart of Noh" in 2015. This event will build on the popularity of this past event and delve further into the world of Noh.

With flowers as the theme, a dance from "Tadanori" and excerpts from "Hashitomi," a play about the love between Genji and Yugao from "The Tale of Genji," will be performed. This will be accompanied by a lecture and demonstration to make the mysterious



world of spirits in Noh accessible even to those who are encountering Noh for the first time.

This event will also be held in Washington DC on April 30 at the Japan Information & Culture Center, Embassy of Japan, under joint sponsorship with the Fukuyama Kita Association and The Tokyo Club.

Admission is \$40 for adults, \$20 for students. (Noh Society members receive a \$5 discount.) Tickets may be purchased at https://noh2019.brownpapertickets.com. For inquiries, contact info@nohsociety.org (Kaoru Komi/Translated by Janet Abraham)

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