

Happy New Year!

We wish you all a very happy and healthy new year! The Kodo group has started 2013 with enthusiasm and really hit the ground running after a dynamic 2012 season. We will use this positive energy throughout the busy year ahead.

In January, with artistic director [Tamasaburo Bando](#) at Kodo Village for two weeks, the rehearsal hall was buzzing as we created and rehearsed an array of productions. For details of our upcoming performances in 2013, please see page 3. Tamasaburo Bando was recognized as a National Living Treasure in Japan in 2012, and during the past year many Kodo members had opportunities to see his acclaimed plays, dance, and Kabuki performances, which gave us further insight to his skills and sensibilities. We plan to share more details of his activities in Kodo eNews, so our readers have a chance to learn more about our ensemble's artistic director.

This month, two Kodo casts are performing abroad. [Kodo One Earth Tour 2013: Legend](#) is on tour in the



Palais Garnier, Paris

USA now through March, and in February, a cast of seven is performing the music for ballet "[Kaguyahime](#)" with the Paris Opera Ballet in France. The majority of our performances this year will take place in Japan, and we certainly hope that many of you will join us in Japan for our [One Earth Tour](#), [Earth Celebration](#), [Amaterasu](#), concerts on Sado Island, etc, and to see how Japan is doing after the earthquake and tsunami of 2011. This year, we will continue to remember Tohoku and through our "[Heartbeat Project](#)," we will continue to aid disaster recovery and maintain awareness about the long road to restoration of the affected area.

We look forward to sharing Kodo's activities, in person, through eNews, and online with you all this year.

Kodo Brings New Sound to Palais Garnier

Kodo performers made history on February 1st when we became the first taiko players to perform at Palais Garnier, the world's highest-ranked theater and home of the Paris Opera. This month, Kodo is taking part in ballet performances of "[Kaguyahime](#)" held by France's leading opera and ballet ensemble, Opéra national de Paris. We hope you will join us at this very special venue for these



"Onidaiko" (Kodo One Earth Tour 2013: Legend)

performances, held until February 17th. For further details, please see our [website](#). (L' Opéra Garnier Photo: Jean-Pierre Delagarde / Opéra national de Paris)

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“Legend” in December

Thank you to everyone who joined us for our December performances in Japan of [Kodo One Earth Tour 2012: Legend](#). This special version, featuring Distinguished Members and popular veteran performers, enjoyed sell-out concerts for the finale at Tokyo's Bunkyo Civic Hall. We really appreciate your enthusiastic attendance despite the snow and cold and hope that the taiko brought extra joy to your holiday season.

Tamasaburo Bando Performances in Paris

While Kodo is in Paris performing in ballet “Kaguyahime” at Palais Garnier, our artistic director, Japanese living national treasure [Tamasaburo Bando](#) will appear in dance and classical Chinese opera performances at [Théâtre du Châtelet](#).

Dates: February 5 (Tue) - 16 (Sat), 2013 Ten performances in total

1. *Jiuta (Dance)* **SOLD OUT**

Dates: Feb. 5 (Tue) - 7 (Thu) One performance each day (three performances)

Start: 20:00

Program: “Yuki (Snow)”, “Aoino-ue (The Tale of Genji)”,
“Kanega-misaki (Remorse)”

Appearing: Tamasaburo Bando

2. *The Peony Pavilion (Classical Chinese Opera Kunqu)*

Dates: Feb. 10 (Sun) - 16 (Sat) One performance each day (seven performances)

Start: 20:00 *Except Feb. 10 (Sun), when start is 16:00

Program: “Botantei (The Peony Pavilion)”

Appearing: Tamasaburo Bando, Suzhou Kunqu Opera Theatre

Further details and box office information available in French and English on the [Théâtre du Châtelet website](#).

Tamasaburo Bando “Jiuta” (Photo: Kishin Shinoyama)



Coming Up in 2013

Kodo is looking forward to new challenges and sharing new forms of expression with you all throughout the year. Here is an overview of our performances coming up in the Year of the Snake.

Abroad

USA

Kodo One Earth Tour 2013: Legend

This is the first time that the inaugural work by artistic director Tamasaburo Bando "Legend" is being performed outside Japan. We will spend February and March touring around 27 cities in the United States of America.

FRANCE

Ballet Performance "Kaguyahime"

Currently seven Kodo members are making a guest appearance in ballet performances of "Kaguyahime" held by France's leading opera and ballet ensemble, Opéra national de Paris. The last performances in Paris were held three years ago when Kodo took part in "Kaguyahime" at Opéra Bastille from June to July in 2010.



Kenta Nakagome plays "O-daiko"

Around Japan

Kodo One Earth Tour

2013: Legend

This is the last tour of the first production by our ensemble's recently-appointed artistic director Tamasaburo Bando. The finale will be held as consecutive performances at Asakusa Public Hall in Tokyo. All eyes are on this area with the recent opening of Tokyo Skytree, the tallest tower in the world, and we hope to many people will see our performance there, too.

May - June: Ibaraki, Shizuoka, Aichi, Nagano, Kyoto, Osaka, Toyama, Niigata, Kanagawa, Gunma, Saitama, Tokyo

School Workshop-Performances

For the first time ever, this year our tour will continue in winter, too.

May - June: Chubu, Chugoku, Shikoku, Kyushu areas

December: Chugoku, Kanto areas (TBC)

Tamasaburo Bando & Kodo

Collaboration "Amaterasu"

Performed originally in 2006 and followed by an encore season in 2007, this production is back with a brand new cast.

July 4 (Thu) - 28 (Sun)

Akasaka ACT Theater, Tokyo

September 5 (Thu) - 28 (Sat)

Hakataza Theater, Fukuoka

October 5 (Sat) - 27 (Sun)

Minami-za Kabuki Theater, Kyoto

Kodo One Earth Tour 2013 (New Production)

At the end of this year, we will present a new production, the second work by our artistic director Tamasaburo Bando. As well as the familiar year-end locations, this tour will also hold performances in Okayama and Nagaoka.

November - December

Sado Island, Nagoya, Osaka, Okayama,



Tamasaburo Bando & Kodo in "Amaterasu" (2006 season)

Nagaoka, Niigata, Yokohama, Tokyo (TBC)

On Sado Island

Kodo Special Performances on Sado Island

Join Kodo on Sado Island for performances in the various seasons centered on our ensemble's Distinguished Members.

*April 26 (Fri) - May 6 (Mon)

Performers: Yoshikazu Fujimoto, Chieko Kojima, Motofumi Yamaguchi, Eiichi Saito, & others / Director: Chieko Kojima

*July 13 (Sat) - 21 (Sun)

Performers: Yoshikazu Fujimoto, Chieko Kojima, Motofumi Yamaguchi, Masami Miyazaki, Rai Tateishi, & others / Director: Chieko Kojima

Earth Celebration 2013

This year's Shiroyama Concerts will build on last year's dynamic program. The highlights will be a reunion performance with Tsugaru Shamisen player Hiromitsu Agatsuma and an enhanced outdoor version of Kodo "Dadan."

August 23 (Fri) - 25 (Sun)

Ogi, Sado Island, Niigata

Yoko Goes West

Kodo eNews' Johnny Wales talks to Yoko Fujimoto about her big move from Sado Island to rural Kyoto

Tokyo-born [Yoko Fujimoto](#) joined Kodo's predecessor group *Sado no Kuni Ondekoza* in December 1976. After years of gracing the stage with her dancing, haunting alto voice and koto, her life took a big change in 1984. In spite of her limited English at the time, she was pressed into service as the road manager for part of the infamously stressful six-month tour of the world that year. When tempers boiled over she saw how a simple and judicious word by [Yoshikazu Fujimoto](#) would often diffuse a situation and clear the air. Though Yoshikazu had asked for Yoko's hand in marriage several times, she had refused, considering their personalities too dissimilar: Yoshikazu the natural man of few words, she the pensive type who likes to speak her mind. Upon returning to Sado Island she found herself still wound up from the pressures of the tour, and it became too much. She took to her room and brooded over whether or not she should quit the group. It was Yoshikazu who talked her around. Yoko then decided that as he had accepted her

without judgement at her very blackest moments — than if she were to marry anyone — surely it was him. She wrote Yoshikazu a note asking if his proposal of marriage was still good ... and the rest is history.

Yoshikazu was born in Wachi, a mountain village about two hours by car from Kyoto City. His father, who

turns 91 this year and his mother 88, live in the old farmstead. They grow vegetables and now lend out their rice paddies for a share of the harvest. As the eldest son Yoshikazu feels a very strong responsibility to take over the household and care for his still healthy parents. Leaving the life of Kodo and the home he and Yoko have built in Sado however, makes this an extremely difficult decision for both of them.

His father is becoming a bit forgetful, and Yoshikazu is approaching retirement age from the group, so a difficult decision needed to be made. Last May, Yoko was talking with a friend about this problem and told her how loathe she was to leave Kodo and Sado. Looking through a book of prayers that serves as an inspiration, she read, 'Shouldn't you do naturally the things you consider to be necessary and right?' In a flash Yoko realized that it is both necessary and right that she should live together with Yoshikazu's parents in Wachi. She was overcome by tears of relief.



Yoko today with her headlight-equipped reading glasses



Sado no Kuni Ondekoza's Eitetsu Hayashi, Yoko (then) Umezawa and Roberto Martella, generous host to the group on their trips to Toronto in the early days.

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Yoko Goes West

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Kodo's [Motofumi Yamaguchi](#) said to Yoko that Tokyo was her original home town, then it became Sado. When she next moves to Wachi she will be able to consider the world her home town. She realized that she does feel as if she is blessed with more than one home, and not only in Japan, but around the world. This is particularly true among the taiko groups of North America. On her first trip there she became aware of *Nikkei* culture (meaning of Japanese people who emigrated from Japan and their descendants). She heard how they were searching for their identity within the taiko, about the difficulties faced by each generation and about their will to survive. She feels they have so much to teach Japanese living in Japan.

So even as she leaves Sado, Yoko looks forward to creating as many opportunities as possible to meet fellow taikoists in their home towns, to invite them to Japan, and to be of whatever

use to them she can. She feels deeply indebted to all those who have offered her so much support over the years, from home stays, to putting together joint projects. The *Nikkei* taikoists also taught her that one can be made to feel at home not only on the other side of Japan in a place called Wachi, but even on the other side of the world.

So Yoko is now in the process of moving her base to Wachi, though she will be back and forth to Sado a number of times this year. Yoshikazu plans to join her there in a couple of years. As recently appointed '[Distinguished Members](#)' of Kodo they will both continue to be involved in special projects with Kodo and teach periodically at the [Apprentice Centre](#). They will continue their own projects from Kyoto, so keep an eye on Kodo's [website](#) for news of their future activities.

So for Yoko moving to Wachi is but a new chapter in her life's adventure and an exciting prospect. She plans to teach singing privately and compose music, too. She is keen to begin composing theme songs for various taiko groups around the world, hold workshops and small concerts, and is keen to go anywhere she is invited, as long as her schedule meshes with her commitments in Wachi. She looks forward to making the time she has never had to explore the cultural gold mine that is Sado Island ever more deeply. Also to perform, teach and learn, and to make new songs about the island home where she has spent more than half her life. And when she is in Wachi she will not only learn how to care for the elderly, but also to dig deeply into the local history and culture to serve as a source of continued growth and new musical inspiration.

The village of Wachi. The Fujimoto home is among the group of houses to the right

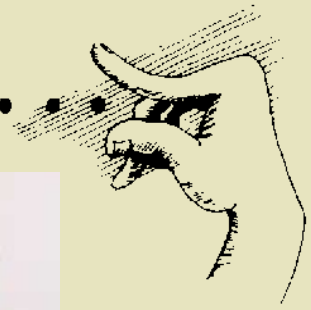


Spider Lillies bloom at the Fujimoto's farm in Wachi



Yoshikazu is pleased to see Yoko also receive a 60th Birthday Commemorative Kodo red sweatshirt. Only three members have reached this age in the group to date.

in brief...



Yoshikazu Fujimoto and Chieko Kojima left Japan on January 21 to travel to China and Spain respectively for their work as “Japan Cultural Envoys from the Agency for Cultural Affairs.” They will spend a month holding workshops and demonstrations, etc, and Chieko will also visit London and Antwerp for workshops during her time in Europe. We look forward to reports on their return to Japan in the spring.



Yoshikazu Fujimoto



Chieko Kojima

January 1st marked the beginning of life as fully-fledged Kodo members for five former junior members. They are Shogo Komatsuzaki from Fukushima, Akiko Ando from Akita, Yosuke Inoue from Nara, Yuta Sumiyoshi from

Kagawa, and Tetsumi Hanaoka from Tokyo. All five just made their foreign debut in Las Vegas on the current USA tour Kodo One Earth Tour 2013: Legend. Four of them had to get their first passport made especially for the occasion, so they were nervous and excited just to get on the plane. We hope everyone who comes along in the USA will cheer them on, and we look forward to everyone's support of this new generation in the years to come.



New members greet the Kodo group in early January



Happy New Year and Best Wishes for 2013!



From the entire Kodo group: Members of taiko performing arts ensemble Kodo, the staff of Kitamaesen Co., Ltd. and Kodo Cultural Foundation, and our supportive families.

Photographed at Shukunegi, Ogi Peninsula, Sado Island on January 9, 2013.

Kodo Performance Schedule 2013

KODO ONE EARTH TOUR 2013: LEGEND

February - March: [U.S.A.](#)

Nevada, California, Washington, Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota, Iowa, South Carolina, North Carolina, Florida, Ohio, D.C., West Virginia, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Connecticut, New York

May - June: [Japan](#)

Ibaraki, Shizuoka, Aichi, Nagano, Kyoto, Osaka, Toyama, Niigata, Kanagawa, Gunma, Saitama, Tokyo

KODO IN BALLET PERFORMANCE "KAGUYAHIME: THE MOON PRINCESS"

February 1-17: [Paris, France](#)

AMATERASU

Tamasaburo Bando & Kodo collaboration

July-October: Tokyo, Fukuoka, Kyoto

EARTH CELEBRATION 2013

Annual performing arts festival hosted by Sado Island and Kodo

August 23 (Fri) - 25 (Sun): Sado Island, Japan (Details TBA May 2013)

NEW KODO ONE EARTH TOUR 2013 (New production, title and details TBA)

November - December: Japan

Sado Island, Nagoya, Osaka, Okayama, Nagaoka, Niigata, Yokohama, Tokyo (TBC)

SOLO & SMALL GROUP PROJECTS, SPECIAL EVENTS, WORKSHOPS, NEWS & INFORMATION

Please visit the [top page of our website](#) and scroll down for details.

Kodo Features in Ballet Performance "Kaguyahime" at Opéra National de Paris' Palais Garnier



- Feb. 1 (Fri) Start: 19:30
- Feb. 2 (Sat) 2 performances
Start: 14:30 / Start: 20:00
- Feb. 3 (Sun) Start: 14:30
- Feb. 5 (Tue) Start: 19:30
- Feb. 7 (Thu) Start: 19:30
- Feb. 8 (Fri) Start: 19:30
- Feb. 10 (Sun) Start: 14:30
- Feb. 12 (Tue) Start: 19:30
- Feb. 14 (Thu) Start: 19:30
- Feb. 15 (Fri) Start: 19:30
- Feb. 16 (Sat) 2 performances
Start: 14:30 / Start: 20:00
- Feb. 17 (Sun) Start: 14:30

For further details, including box office links,
please visit the [Kodo](#) or [Opéra National de Paris](#) website.
L' Opéra Garnier Photo: Anne Deniau / Opéra national de Paris

Kodo One Earth Tour 2013: Legend

~ U.S.A. ~
February - March

Schedule is subject to change. For up-to-date schedules and box office details, please visit our [website](#).

- February 1: Las Vegas, NV
- February 3: Berkeley, CA
- February 5: Los Angeles, CA
- February 7: Davis, CA
- February 9: Seattle, WA
- February 10: Seattle, WA
- February 13: Chicago, IL
- February 15: Ann Arbor, MI
- February 17: Minneapolis, MN
- February 19: Des Moines, IA
- February 21: Milwaukee, WI
- February 23: Greenville, SC
- February 25: Chapel Hill, NC
- February 28: Gainesville, FL
- March 2: Clearwater, FL
- March 7: Fort Pierce, FL
- March 8: Boca Raton, FL
- March 9: Miami, FL
- March 11: Naples, FL
- March 14: Columbus, OH
- March 16: Washington, D.C.
- March 18: Morgantown, WV
- March 20: Easton, PA
- March 22: Princeton, NJ
- March 24: Newark, NJ
- March 25: Philadelphia, PA
- March 27: Storrs, CT
- March 29: Schenectady, NY



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In the wake of disaster, Kodo started the Heartbeat Project, a multifaceted undertaking designed to support relief efforts and the people of the regions affected by the Tohoku Pacific Earthquake.

We are making new recordings and participating in charity concerts, fund-raising events, etc. Thank you for your continued support. For updates, please visit our [website](#).

KODŌ

Latest Album:
Kodo Akatsuki



Traditional block wall on a winter's day

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