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POSTED ON
31 OCT 2014

1st Toga Asian Arts Festival staged in Japanese mountain village



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The village of Toga, in the mountains of Japan's Toyama Prefecture is becoming a magnet for artists, theatre companies and audiences from Asia. Theatre director **Tadashi Suzuki** wants to make Toga a true centre for Asian theatre, and organised the first Toga Asian Arts Festival this summer.

The Toga Asian Arts Festival 2014 attracted 150 participants from 18 countries. Chinese and South Koreans accounted for most of the international contingent.

"I would like to expand the event to attract people from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, India and Russia," Suzuki said. He stressed his desire to "nurture this village as a theatrical center, a gathering place for the young, talented people who will determine the future of theater."

This is not the first time the 75-year-old Suzuki has sought to make Toga the world's stage. Suzuki, who began working in theater overseas in his 30s, hosted an international event called the Toga Festival from 1982 to 1999.

After working in the West, he shifted his focus to Asia and has been teaching the "Suzuki method" in China, Taiwan and South Korea. In May of this year, at the request of the Shanghai Theatre Academy, he directed Chinese actors in a production of "Cinderella." The connections he made proved helpful when he set about organizing the new festival.

On the heels of the arts festival, this year's Asian Theater Directors' Festival was held Sept. 1-3 with four troupes from Japan, China, South Korea and Taiwan. Suzuki's philosophy appears to be of great interest to young artists across Asia; after all, he created his own brand of theater in Japan and presented it to the world.

Other efforts to increase the village's capacity for hosting artists are underway. In summer 2013, a committee was established and tasked with turning Toga into a center for the arts. The panel is led by Tadahiyo Yoshida, chairman and CEO of YKK, the zipper and fastener maker. It is working on a plan to build training and accommodation facilities.

Read [full article](#) on Nikkei Asian Review

Image: South Korea's Yohangza Theatre Company, led by Yang Jung-ung, took part in the Toga Asian Arts Festival with an interpretation of "A Midsummer Night's Dream."

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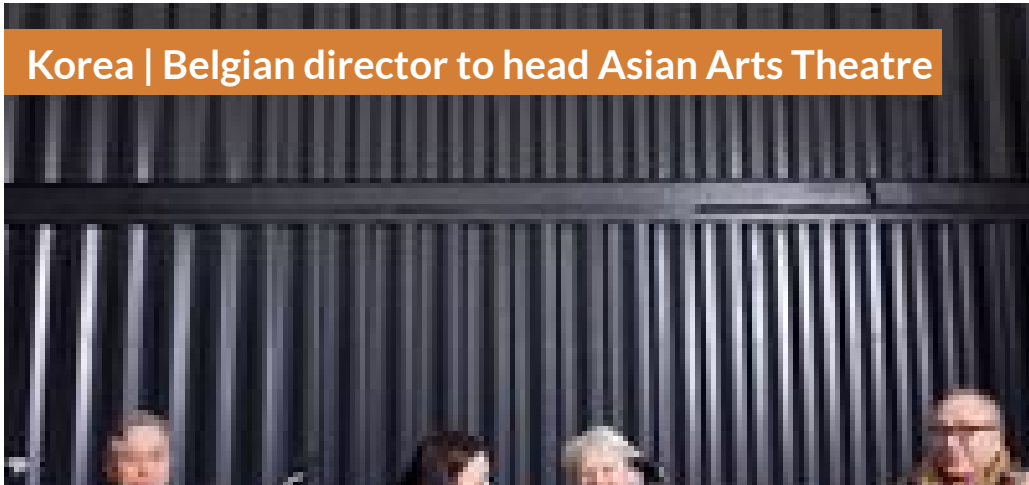
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