“Kabuki, Chikamatsu, and Shakespeare”

a lecture by
Mr. Wataru Nishigahiro
Ambassador of Japan to Luxembourg

Thursday, 7 February 2013 at 18:30 hours
hosted by the National Museum of History and Art Luxembourg

(Venue: "Salle Kutter " on the 1st floor of the museum)
Marché-aux-Poissons, L-2345 Luxembourg
Admission Free

On the occasion of the “Kamigata Woodprints Exhibition,” where many of Kabuki actors’ magnificent portraits are shown, Mr. Nishigahiro would start the talk with the introduction of traditional Japanese performing arts of Noh, Kabuki, and Bunraku. Their development and different styles are explained, making use of slides.

The Exhibition also presents a portrait of Monzaemon Chikamatsu (1653-1725), a famous Japanese playwright. His life and works will be presented. Did he prefer to write for Kabuki or for Bunraku? He wrote more than 100 plays. The style of his works will be explained through his major plays like “The Love Suicides at Sonezaki,” “The Battles of Coixinga,” and “The Love Suicides at Heavenly Amijima.”

Then his talk will turn on to William Shakespeare (1564-1616), the world-famous poet and playwright, who lived nearly 100 years before Chikamatsu. The discussion will cover the commonality in their life and styles of their works. Finally, he will mention the speculation on the possible manner of influence of Shakespeare on Chikamatsu’s works.

Wataru Nishigahiro, born in 1950, first completed his studies in Economics at the Hitotsubashi University in 1974, and three years later, read PPE at Corpus Christi College, Oxford University. During his long diplomatic career he became Counsellor of the Mission of Japan to the EU in 1989, Minister of the Mission of Japan to the UN in 1997, and Minister Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary in the United Kingdom in 2007. Prior to his arrival in Luxembourg in June 2012, he served as the Ambassador to Libya.

Mr. Nishigahiro has passionately studied Shakespeare’s works since he discovered the play “Hamlet” at the age of 11. As a theater connoisseur, he has also written many play reviews and in 2009 published a book under the theater name of Masahide Yuuki entitled “Shakespeare, His Life.” His comprehensive understanding of the Japanese culture, and more specifically, of the Kabuki Theater led him to analyze the links between Shakespeare and Chikamatsu, one of the most prominent Japanese dramatists.

Information (Embassy of Japan): 46 41 51 51
http://www.lu.emb-japan.go.jp/index_f.html