

# LONDON SHAKUNAGE KAI

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Mr. XXX XXXX

XXXXXXX

XXXXXX

1<sup>st</sup> August 2013

Dear Mr. XXXX

Re: PROJECT OKIAGARI KOBOSHI – Fukushima Disaster Relief

I am writing to you in respect of the above project to ask whether you can help us in delivering charity exhibitions in London and other cities in the world.

Back in February this year, a summit of nineteen Fukushima prefectural associations which operate in nine different countries in the world was held under the initiative of the Fukushima Prefectural Government. Consequently, we have decided to strengthen our worldwide networks and operate in cooperation with each other in order to effectively and actively contribute to the restoration of our hometown Fukushima. We have established 'World Prefectural Association' and will hold a summit every two years to discuss plans of how we could help further restoration of Fukushima.

Related to the above movement, a French non-profit organisation called 'PROJECT OKIAGARI KOBOSHI' was launched by Mr. Kenzo Takada, internationally successful Japanese fashion designer, in Lyon France on 11 March 2013 on the second anniversary of the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami and subsequent Fukushima nuclear disaster. The objective of this project is to socially and psychologically support the inhabitants of Fukushima following the natural and nuclear disaster. Celebrities or public figures in and outside Japan have been asked to decorate a traditional Japanese doll, called 'Okigari Koboshi', to be used for non-profit making exhibitions in various cities around the world. The dolls were exhibited in Lyon and Madrid earlier this summer and hopefully in London too before being gifted to people in Fukushima.

I, on behalf of London Shakunage Kai, the Fukushima Prefectural Association in the UK, would like to present this proposal to you with the hopes that you will be willing to be part of this significant cause. Please decorate a doll and provide photos and/or videos of you (as exemplified in separate information attached) to be used for exhibitions in various cities and then to be donated to Fukushima. For more information about the project and details of how to participate, please see separate information attached. We would be very pleased to deliver or post a plain doll for you to decorate. Once the doll is decorated, our representative or courier will be sure to collect it from you.



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'*Okiagari Koboshi*' (meaning "getting up arising little priest") is a Japanese paper doll which is traditionally made in Fukushima with its origin going back to more than 400 years ago. It is a lucky charm for sound health and safety of family members. The doll has some weight inside which causes it to return to an upright position when it is knocked over. The doll is a symbol of perseverance and resilience. Similarly, there is a Japanese proverb saying '*Nana Korobi Ya Oki*'. It literally means "fall down seven times, stand up eight times". This proverb teaches the spirit of 'NEVER GIVE UP'.

Two years on from the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami, people in Fukushima still suffer enormous damage caused by the earthquake, tsunami, nuclear plants and harmful rumours regarding radiation. The damage has been extremely severe:

- The death toll reached as many as 2,987 people.
- 93,106 houses were completely or half destroyed.
- About 160,000 people have been forced to evacuate and to be displaced from their homes.
- The evacuees have been forced to remain within or outside of the Fukushima prefecture due to the on-going nuclear plant issue and economic difficulties caused by negative rumours that relate to radiation safety.
- Many farms and fisheries shut down because of economic pressure; many consumers still avoid Fukushima produce fearing it may be contaminated despite the scientifically proven safety.
- The stigma attached to Fukushima produce is devastating the local economy and livelihood, which is traditionally dependent on agriculture and fishery.

The spread of harmful rumours and misinformation regarding radiation has been obstructing restoration efforts and causing huge damages in people's lives. Social and psychological support such as what this project tries to provide has been needed. For the past two years Fukushima has been a symbol of disaster, but with your support, and importantly, trust, Fukushima will be transformed to become a symbol of revitalisation and hope.

I thank you for the time to read this letter and look forward to your favourable reply. Should you require any further information, please feel free to contact me at [ymitsuyama@londonshakunage.com](mailto:ymitsuyama@londonshakunage.com) or call on my mobile +44(0)7958 955 931.

Yours sincerely

Yoshio Mitsuyama

President

London Shakunage Kai / World Prefectural Association

