

15 November, 2011. **The Okinawa Traditional Performing Arts will conclude its South Pacific Tour in the Kingdom of Tonga with a LIVE and FREE performance in the evening of Wednesday, November 23rd, 2011 at the Queen Salote Memorial Hall. Doors for the live and free**

**performance on Wednesday, November 23rd will be open at 7:00pm.**

The South Pacific tour wishes to express the uniqueness of Okinawa traditional arts and to also share diversity of culture through arts. Performers are all based in Okinawa, the southernmost prefecture of Japan where the PALM 6, Sixth South Pacific Islands Leaders Meeting will be held in May 2012. Okinawa has a similar environment surrounded by a beautiful ocean to the South Pacific.

Okinawa used to be an independent kingdom called the Ryukyu Kingdom from the 14th to the 19th century. The spirit of the arts that was cultivated during this time is very much alive today in Okinawa's traditional performing arts.

The South Pacific Tour hopes to also strengthen emotional bonds that bring people together to pray for recovery and provide encouragement to citizens of disaster-struck countries.

Performers will perform three segments for audience in Nuku'alofa:

1). Traditional Ryukyu Dance:- a recreations of graceful, dynamic dances of beauty that were performed for the king and his guests during the time the Ryukyu Kingdom ruled.

2). Shimauta Songs:- bringing variety of shimauta or traditional island folk songs composed of words and melodies unique to Okinawa that have been passed down through the generations and continue to be sung today in the fifty or so populated islands of Okinawa.

3). Creative Dances:- were performers express the future potentials of Okinawa performing arts through lively and sometimes mellow songs and dances.

Japan Foundation, an organization that promotes cultural exchange between Japan and the world together with the Embassy of Japan and in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, Women's Affairs and Culture of the Kingdom of Tonga warmly welcomes the people of Tonga to this cultural performance.

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*For further enquires please contact: Embassy of Japan in Tonga.*

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