



GIRLS OPPORTUNITY ALLIANCE. Former U.S. first lady Michelle Obama and female students at Can Giuoc high school hold their arms in heart shapes as they say goodbye in Long An province, Vietnam. Mrs. Obama visited Vietnam to promote education for adolescent girls. (AP Photo/Hau Dinh)

Michelle Obama promotes girls education in Vietnam school

By **Hau Dinh**
The Associated Press

LONG AN, Vietnam — Former U.S. first lady Michelle Obama spoke to students at a school in southern Vietnam while promoting education for girls to help reach their full potential.

Obama, accompanied by actresses Julia Roberts and Lana Condor and “Today Show” co-host Jenna Bush Hager, met with girls at a high school in Long An province by the Mekong delta, where they listened to the students talk about their schoolwork and challenges.

“We are gonna shine a light on you and the work that’s going on here ... so that there are people around the world, who understand that when you educate a girl, you’ll give them power and a voice and an opportunity to improve their lives and the lives of their families and the lives of their communities,” Obama said.

The visitors also joined the students in a life-skills training session where the girls practiced perseverance, critical thinking, and negotiating and leadership skills that could ensure the girls are able to advocate for themselves in and out of their classrooms.

Michelle Obama started to work on promoting girls education while her husband was president. She continues the charitable work through the Obama Foundation, with Girls Opportunity Alliance as one of its initiatives.

She announced that she would donate \$500,000 from the sale of her book, *Becoming*, to the initiative’s fund.

After her visit to Vietnam, Obama and her husband, former President Barack Obama, spoke at a meeting for their foundation in Malaysia that brought together about 200 young leaders across the Asia Pacific region. The couple also planned to visit Singapore.

Huawei moving U.S. research center to Canada

BEIJING (AP) — The founder of Huawei says the Chinese tech giant is moving its U.S. research center to Canada due to

American restrictions on its activities.

In an interview with Toronto’s *Globe and Mail* newspaper, Ren Zhengfei

said the restrictions would prevent Huawei from interacting with American employees.

Huawei is one of the biggest global makers of smartphones and network gear for phone companies. The U.S. government accuses the company of being a security risk, which Huawei denies, and announced curbs in May on access to American components and technology.

Ren gave no details of how many jobs might be affected. Huawei operates a research and development center in Silicon Valley in California. It confirmed in June it was cutting jobs following the U.S. sanctions.

Shinto festival carries on centuries-old tradition in Japan

Continued from page 4

emperor is a descendant of the sun goddess Amaterasu Omikami.

It also has a dark recent past. During World War II, Shinto was elevated to the state religion and the war effort was fought in the name of the emperor, who was considered divine. After the war, the emperor was stripped of his divine stature, and the U.S.-drafted constitution ensures freedom of religion and the separation of religion and state.

Imperial family

But Shinto’s ties to the imperial family, and some religious rituals performed by the emperor, have generated controversy.

Last month, newly enthroned Emperor Naruhito spent the night in a makeshift shrine built (and which will later be demolished) with public funds in a ceremony called *Daijosai*, or the Great Thanksgiving. According to authorities, in this most important succession rite, he gave thanks for harvests, prayed for the peace and safety of the nation, and hosted the imperial family’s ancestral gods.

All told, the event will cost 2.7 billion yen (\$25 million) in public money. A group of 200 people filed a lawsuit last year against the government over the expenditure.

Crown Prince Akishino, Naruhito’s younger brother, said last year that he was against using state money for the ritual and raised questions about whether this was permissible under the separation of religion and state.

Visitors to the Chichibu festival were divided over the issue.

“It’s a waste of money,” 27-year-old Naoko Osada said of the ritual.

“According to the constitution, using public money for this is out of bounds,” said Akihiko Suzuki, a 73-year-old retired man. “But as Japanese, we entrust these sorts of things to authorities.”

Others said they believed Naruhito was fulfilling his duties as symbolic head of the country and that spending public money on such rites was acceptable so long as Shinto isn’t imposed on people.

“He’s our symbol, and it’s important to keep this tradition. So I don’t think it violates the constitution,” said Nobuyuki Negishi, 44. “It’s OK for them to use state funds as long as they don’t use too much.”

Shinto’s two aspects

Sophia’s Shimazono said it’s helpful to view Shinto today as having two parts: state Shinto as a lingering political philosophy and the Shinto of the masses who go to shrines at New Year’s.

“State Shinto was rejected as a state religion after the war, but some of that sentiment remains today,” he said. “It has a large influence in politics.”

Rightwing groups such as Nippon Kaigi, which has ties to the ruling Liberal Democratic Party and Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, who is a special adviser to the group, would like to revise Japan’s pacifist constitution and see Shinto increase its



ANNUAL RITUALS. Half-naked shrine parishioners using wooden tubs throw cold water on themselves during an annual cold-endurance festival at the Kanda Myojin Shinto shrine in Tokyo. Pouring cold water on their bodies is believed to purify their souls. (AP Photo/Eugene Hoshiko, File)

prominence.

That includes official visits to Tokyo’s Yasukuni Shrine, where Japan’s war dead, including war criminals, are memorialized. Politicians have avoided visiting Yasukuni because China and South Korea say that doing so glorifies Japan’s wartime leaders and past.

Abe drew attention to Shinto by hosting the 2016 Group of Seven summit in Ise-Shima and took fellow leaders to visit the Ise Grand Shrine, dedicated to the sun goddess. He also attended a once-every-20-years event at Ise in 2013, only the second prime minister to do so.

When you combine those political undercurrents with the cultural traditions maintained by millions who visit shrines every year — most of whom likely embrace freedom of religion — Shinto still “has a fairly large role in Japanese society,” Shimazono said.

Such political or even religious convictions, however, were far from the minds of most visitors to the Chichibu Night Festival. None of the two dozen people interviewed wanted a return to state Shinto, and few said the festival held religious significance for them, although some would say it held spiritual meaning.

“It’s so majestic!” exclaimed Tsuyoshi Koyama, a 47-year-old onlooker as all six huge floats with glowing lanterns gathered in the park at the festival’s climax and fireworks filled the sky. “Every day we have these mundane lives, and to see something this grand really stirs my heart.”

Koyama said he doesn’t consider himself devout and “prays only when I need help.” But he does believe spirits live in the natural world around us, and “feels something spiritual in the atmosphere here.”

“Westerners tend to embrace one religion, but if you reduce it to one, that can cause conflicts,” he said. “The good part about Japan is that there are many gods, and they share generously with us.”

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			1	7	5		
6					4	1	
					9	3	6
			5	4			9
			3		9		
5				8	1		
4	8	9					
	5	7					2
		3	6		4		

Difficulty level: Hard

#17564

Instructions: Fill in the grid so that the digits 1 through 9 appear one time each in every row, column, and 3x3 box.

Solution to last issue’s puzzle

Puzzle #83832 (Medium)

All solutions available at <www.sudoku.com>.

8	3	7	4	1	2	9	6	5
9	1	6	5	8	7	4	3	2
5	4	2	9	6	3	8	7	1
3	9	1	2	5	6	7	8	4
4	2	5	8	7	9	6	1	3
7	6	8	1	3	4	2	5	9
1	8	4	6	2	5	3	9	7
6	7	9	3	4	1	5	2	8
2	5	3	7	9	8	1	4	6

Department of Consumer & Business Services



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