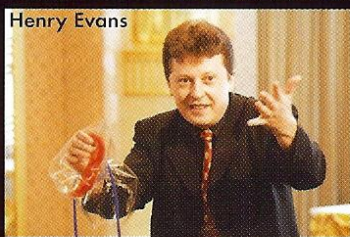


Kojo Sugaya



Johnathan Neal Brown



Henry Evans



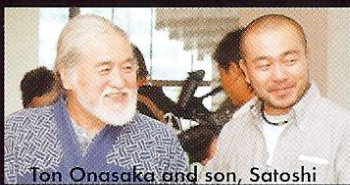
Derek Rutt



Kyoko



Neo Magic



Ton Onosaka and son, Satoshi



Japanese magician, Fukai, who performed magic with silks and the Dancing Cane.

The second lecture was given by Kojo Sugaya, another magician from Japan, who also lectured on stage magic. Magicians in the United States who attended the S.A.M. convention in Boston in 2005 will remember Mr. Sugaya as the performer who brought his *Zombie/Girl* to life.

My Japanese "papa," Ton Onosaka (who has been the driving force organizing of the AMA), suggested I try the Japanese buffet for lunch. One of the remarkable things about Thailand is how inexpensive everything is. My hotel room was enormous, with a king bed, a sitting area, desk, and could easily accommodate a cocktail party of 15—it was easily two to three times the size of the average American hotel room. In the U.S. an equivalent room would cost \$400 to \$700 a night; in Thailand it's \$100. Anyway, back to the Japanese buffet (which was packed with hungry people) ... I had an enormous plate of Tempura (batter dipped and deep fried shrimp), followed by a plate of Tempanyaki (grilled filet mignon, shrimp, and vegetables), followed by a plate of Gyoza (pan-fried pork dumplings) and Yakisoba (grilled noodles). This feast set me back \$12, and believe me when I say that there was no need to eat dinner that evening!

The contest began at 1 p.m. and here you experience one of the advantages of a 350-person convention: it's intimate—even the stage shows give you a much better view of the acts and it's easier to generate energy in the room. With 17 contestants, this event ran for four hours.



Fukai

The first day's contestants were, from China: Liao Xiao Run, Li Junjie, and Jiang Yaping. From Hong Kong: Lee Hang Chai and Tang Ssz Leung. From Indonesia: Silvan Prayogo. And from Japan: Maebeya Kyoko, Ito Shinichiro, Yamada Kazuhito, Yabushita Tomoko, Konishi Tasuku, Kawashima Toshiyuki, Chiaki Masakatsu, Tezuka Hiroshi, Maeda Masataka, Nishimura Houryu, and Onishi Akira.

The first part of the contest ended at 5 p.m. and everyone ran back into the dealer room for a half hour before breaking for dinner.

At 7 p.m. all conventioners were invited to an international buffet dinner, consisting mostly of Thai food, with tables set up at the rear of the grand ballroom.

The evening show, labeled a "Welcome Party," began at 7 p.m. Emceed by Derek Rutt (an expatriate Brit who is now a magic dealer in Thailand), we were treated to traditional Thai drumming and dance (a bunch of fellows in costume did some minor acrobatics while the guy in the center whacked a huge drum and two guys on the sides did their thing with cymbals). The host of the convention, and the head of Siam Magic, Pairuch Trarasansombut, spoke a few heartfelt words about his major magical influences and why he wanted to put on a magic convention. He was followed by the first magician, Sonic Magic, performing a well-done thimble act. The second act was a male and female duo known as Neo Magic, wearing costumes out of the film *Hellraiser* and performing some weird things that would be hard to describe. The balance of the show consisted of some of the dealers touting their wares.



Pairuch Trarasansombut and his daughter