

Message from the President



I have recently assumed the position of the President of the Japan Foundation. Ever since its establishment in 1972, the Japan Foundation has played a key role in promoting cultural exchange between Japan and other countries. I am honored and privileged to have been appointed the President of an organization with such a history and tradition as this foundation possesses.

I was a diplomat for almost as long as the Japan Foundation has existed. I still clearly remember 40 years ago assisting with preparations for the establishment of the Japan Foundation while still a young diplomat assigned to Washington. In the following years I was engaged in diplomatic activities in various regions and fields around the world. I have always been deeply interested in the cultures of different countries and international exchange and have been directly involved

in major cultural projects such as the Japan Festival held in London in 1991. I am proud to have been a supporter of the Japan Foundation and its activities throughout that time.

I was selected as the President of the Japan Foundation under its first open, highly transparent application system. I am determined to respond with a grave sense of responsibility to the high hopes and expectations of you all.

Today, a swelling tide of change is sweeping across Japan and the world. At a time when the Japanese government faces extremely serious fiscal conditions and reconstruction of the nation from the devastation of the March 11 disaster has become an urgent and challenging task, the relevance of international cultural exchange programs and projects is being questioned once again. Japan needs the strength that is created by culture and its exchanges. It needs to share this uniquely Japanese strength with the rest of the world. Japan's position has been undergoing changes amidst a swiftly shifting international situation. The people and organizations involved in diplomatic affairs and international cultural exchange activities have become increasingly diverse, and the role of these exchange activities itself has drastically changed. I think the time has come when, in the face of these changes both inside and outside Japan, we have to re-examine the role of the Japan Foundation and the kind of activities it should pursue in the future.

As the President of the Japan Foundation in an age when countries of divergent cultures must coexist in a tumultuous world, I would like to listen to your views and opinions, actively express my own beliefs and convictions, discuss them all with sincerity and thus contribute to further promoting international cultural exchange. We now have to take the initiative. We cannot afford to sit idly by. As the name "The Japan Foundation" suggests, we have to think about this country as a whole and about the international community of which it is a member. I hope we can walk hand in hand with the rest of the world along a path that will lead to greater, mutual cultural awareness.

October 1, 2011

Ando Hiroyasu

President