

President's Message



Ogoura Kazuo, President
The Japan Foundation

In the five years since it was granted the status of an independent administrative institution, the Japan Foundation has focused its efforts on carrying out effective projects in line with the spirit of the times.

First of all, the Japan Foundation has enhanced its projects aimed at Japanese-language education overseas. The Japanese-Language Proficiency Test, which is carried out at the same time across the whole world, now has some 530,000 examinees. To date, the test has been held once a year, but starting in 2009 it is to be held twice a year. In addition, the Japan Foundation is aiming to improve the services it offers over the Internet and has set up the Center for Japanese-Language Testing. It has also embarked on the construction of a network linking Japanese-language education centers around the world.

Next, the Japan Foundation has enhanced its system of assistance for Japanese studies overseas. In order to ensure that the limited funds are used effectively, a research institution in each country has been designated as the base for that country, and this becomes the focus for assistance. The Japan Foundation has also worked to build up networks of researchers.

In the fields of arts exchange and intellectual exchange, the Japan Foundation is working to establish the new concept of cultural exchange

for peace building. The Foundation has already undertaken cultural exchange projects that comfort children traumatized by conflict and a project to invite young people from regions that have been affected by conflict to Hiroshima to help them reflect deeply on the meaning of peace. In order to further develop the concept, the Japan Foundation established a joint research center together with Aoyama Gakuin University in April 2008.

The Japan Foundation is thus working proactively to carry out projects that meet the demands of a new age. At the same time, given the harsh situation of the Japanese economy, the Foundation has also made great efforts to economize and to optimize its operations. The relocation of our headquarters is just one example of the Foundation's efforts to economize. The Foundation has also strengthened its flexible fund management policy, thus increasing its income.

In response to the demands of the time, the Japan Foundation has been making efforts to conduct its activities in closer contact with actors in various fields. As part of these efforts, the Japan Foundation is making proactive efforts to provide information by updating its website and establishing an information center (the JFIC) that is open to the public. Collaboration with companies is also important, and the Japan Foundation is bolstering its collaborative actions

with the CSR (corporate social responsibility) activities of Japanese companies that have entered overseas markets.

Finally, lest the Japan Foundation become complacent about the efforts it is making, it is working with specialists and researchers to develop evaluation indices so that its projects can be evaluated by third parties.

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to all those who have kindly shown their understanding and support for the ideas and actions of the Japan Foundation as it meets the demands of the age while at the same time carrying out reform in line with the spirit of the times. It is also my earnest desire that more and more people will come to understand and support the Japan Foundation. (December 2008)

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This report refers to the fiscal year 2007 (FY2007) that run from April 1, 2007 to March 31, 2008.

Japanese names follow the practice of surname first.

What is the Japan Foundation?

The Japan Foundation is a Japanese public organization dedicated to implementing comprehensive international cultural exchange projects in every region of the globe. Through its activities, it contributes to the deepening of mutual international understanding and the building of peace in the international community. These activities are implemented in the following three areas.

Mission of the Japan Foundation

The mission of the Japan Foundation is: to contribute to the improvement of a good international environment, and to the maintenance and development of the harmonious foreign relationships with Japan, by the efficient and comprehensive implementation of activities for international cultural exchange, which will deepen

other nations' understanding of Japan, promote better mutual understanding among nations, and contribute to the culture and other fields in the world. ("The Law of the Japan Foundation Independent Administrative Institution, Article 3").

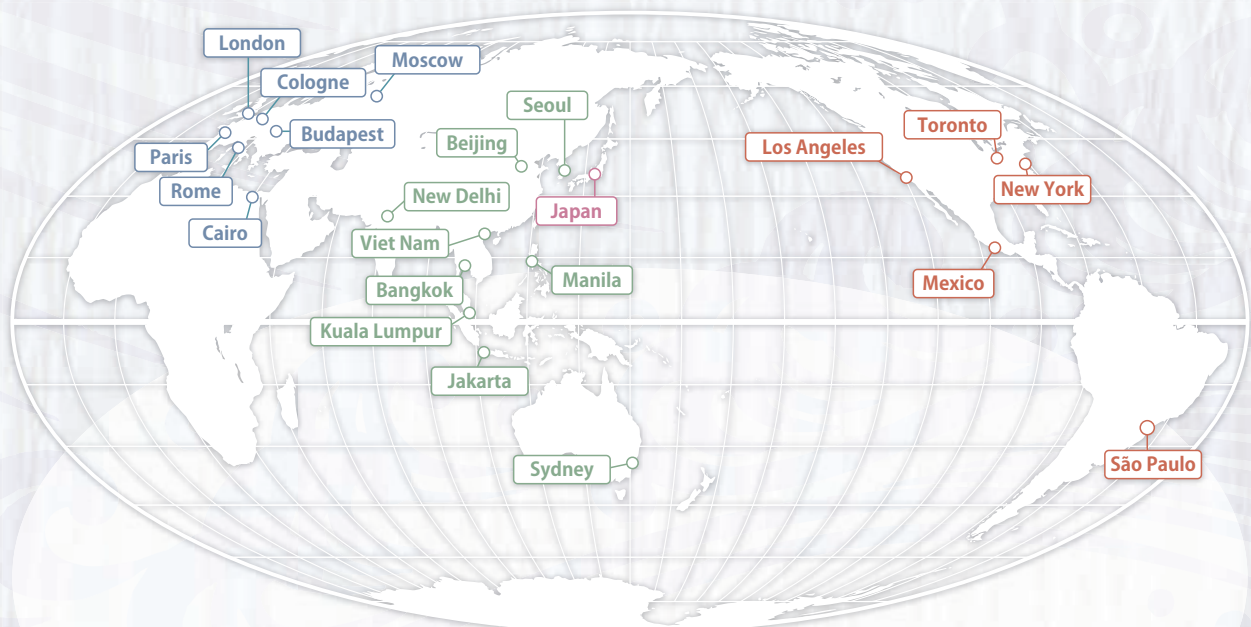
Outline of the Organization

In 1972, the Japan Foundation was established as a special legal entity under the auspices of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Since then, the Japan Foundation has continued to expand its activities as a public organization representing Japan in the field of international cultural exchange. In October 2003, it became an independent administrative institution. Currently, in addition to the headquarters in Tokyo and an office in Kyoto, it also operates two affiliated organizations (the Japan Foundation Japanese-Language Institute, Urawa and the Japan Foundation Japanese-Language Institute, Kansai) in Japan. Globally, the Japan Foundation's reach extends to 21 offices in 19 countries, and it has a number of active

partnerships with external organizations.

Based on a financial foundation of government investment (¥113 billion), the Japan Foundation's operations are funded by revenues from investment income from this capital, by government subsidies and by donations from the private sector. As of March 31, 2008, the Japan Foundation has 230 staff members.

The Japan Foundation's Network



The Japan Foundation also benefits in its activities from the cooperation of Japan's diplomatic missions. The Japan Foundation cooperates with various cultural exchange organizations overseas in its efforts to deepen relations, including the Goethe-Institut (Germany), the Japanese-German Center Berlin (Germany), Casa Asia (Spain), the Korea Foundation, and the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR). It has also overseas advisors in South Africa, Iran, South Korea, and Turkey.

New Development of Activities

As an organization at the heart of Japan's international cultural exchange, the Japan Foundation continually expands its cultural exchanges in line with the demands of society and of the times.

Proactive Efforts for Japanese-Language Education Overseas

There are some three million students of the Japanese language around the world, and this number is expected to rise further in the future. The Japan Foundation sees overseas Japanese-language education activities as an extremely important means of strengthening relations between Japan and other countries, and furthering understanding of Japan around the world. (→P11)

Introduction of Pop Culture and Other New Areas of Japanese Culture

The Japan Foundation is proactively disseminating contemporary Japanese culture in response to requests from many people overseas who wish to know more about Japanese manga, anime, food, etc.

Peace Building through Culture

The Japan Foundation is making use of the tremendous power of culture for the reconstruction of regions damaged by conflict or disaster, and is working on new attempts to contribute to peace building through culture.

Strengthened Collaboration with the Private Sector

The Japan Foundation works with a variety of actors in the private sector, for example by collaborating with the CSR (corporate social responsibility) activities of Japanese companies overseas.

The Japan Foundation is Evolving through Continual Reform

Since the change of the status to an independent administrative institution in October 2003, the Japan Foundation has been reforming its activities and its management methods in order to effectively carry out projects that meet the demands of the times.

During the period of the first mid-term plan (October 2003 to March 2007), the Japan Foundation worked to cut its management expenses and to reform its organizational structure, project design, and human resources systems. The Foundation is judged officially to have made good progress in achieving its targets in these areas.

The FY2007 is the first year of the second mid-term plan, which covers a new five-year period. The Japan Foundation has embarked on new reforms aimed at making the implementation of projects even more efficient.

Optimization and Strengthening of Business Management

- A 15% reduction in general management expenses over five years from FY2007: A 3.8% reduction was achieved in FY2007.
- A reduction of at least 1.2% every fiscal year in the expenses of programs to which management grants are allocated by the government: The Japan Foundation is working to cut its expenses by facilitating collaboration with other organizations, promoting price competition, and strategically focusing on programs. In this way, it aims to cut costs without sacrificing quality.
- Optimized management: The Japan Foundation has proactively worked on co-hosting and cooperation with other organizations in order to make the best use of external resources. It has also expanded its revenue through donations and by carrying out contracted work.
- Flexible and efficient business management: The Japan Foundation reviewed the organization of the administrative and project planning divisions, and in April 2008 it established the Overseas Policy Planning Department in order to improve flexibility and ensure consistent project development across the countries and regions where projects are carried out.
- Reforms toward an ability-based personnel system and personnel cost containment: The Japan Foundation reviewed its system of personnel appraisal. At the same time, it activated its organization and fostered human resources from a mid- to long-term perspective by making use of private-sector and other external human resources, and improving the level of expertise of personnel.

The Japan Foundation Awards 2007

Since 1973, we have annually presented the Japan Foundation Award to individuals and groups who have made an outstanding contribution over a period of time, while the Japan Foundation Special Prizes are presented to individuals and groups who have demonstrated rich creativity and a pioneering spirit with significant potential for future contributions. The Japan Foundation Special Prizes are presented in the three fields of arts and culture, Japanese-language and Japanese studies, which represent the three pillars of the Japan Foundation's operations.

The Japan Foundation Award 2007



Royall TYLER [Australia]

(Former Professor and Head of the Japan Centre, Faculty of Asian Studies, Australian National University)

For his contributions to the understanding of Japanese literature and culture in foreign countries through his long-term research into and teaching of Japanese literature, including translations of a collection of Noh plays and "The Tale of Genji."

The Japan Foundation Special Prizes 2007



The Japan Foundation Special Prize for Arts and Culture

KITAGAWA Fram [Japan]

(Art Director Chairman, Art Front Gallery Co; General Artistic Director of Naoshima Fukutake Art Museum Foundation; Director of Niigata City Art Museum; Professor, Joshibi University of Art and Design)

For organizing pioneering art exhibits and projects, and his role as General Director for the Echigo-Tsumari Art Triennial, collaborating with foreign artists and local residents to promote sustained regional development through the power of modern art.

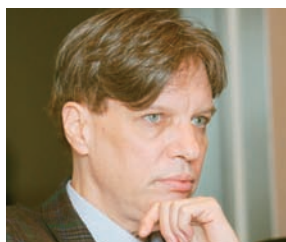


Photo courtesy of The Asahi Shimbun Company

The Japan Foundation Special Prize for Japanese Language

LEVY Hideo [U.S.A.]

(Novelist; Professor, Hosei University)

For introducing Japanese literature to foreign readers through his translation of the *Man'yōshū* and his contributions to the expansion of the possibilities of the Japanese language through his authorship of many novels and critical essays in Japanese.

*This category, which was limited to Japanese-language education until 2006, has been widened to include those who are achieving outstanding works using the Japanese language.



The Japan Foundation Special Prize for Japanese Studies

Ayçe Selçuk ESENBEL [Turkey]

(Professor, Bosphorus University; President, Japanese Studies Association)

For organizing Japan scholars in Turkey through her activities with the Japanese Studies Association, education of junior scholars, and contributions to academic and intellectual exchange between Turkey and Japan.

Note: Memorial lectures were held as follows:

Lecture by Royall Tyler: *Genji monogatari* and "The Tale of Genji", October 5, 2007, Hongo Campus, The University of Tokyo. Co-organized by the University of Tokyo (Department of Japanese Language and Literature; Department of Contemporary Literary Studies). The contents of the lecture have been posted on the Japan Foundation website.

Lecture by Hideo Levy: *Nihongo no Jinsei*, (The Life in Japanese Language), November 17, 2007, The Japan Foundation International Conference Hall.

Lecture by Ayçe Selçuk Esenbel: *Japanese-Turkish Relations and Comparison from the Perspective of World History*, October 5, 2007, Kinugasa Campus, Ritsumeikan University. Co-organized by the College of International Relations, Ritsumeikan University.