

Promoting Understanding of and Participation in International Cultural Exchanges

The Japan Foundation Awards

Every year since 1973, the Japan Foundation has presented the Japan Foundation Awards to individuals and organizations that have made significant contributions to promoting international mutual understanding and friendship through academic, artistic and other cultural pursuits.

In 2014, the 42nd year of the awards, rakugo artist Sankyo Yanagiya (Japan); Australian National University Professor emeritus Peter Drysdale (Australia), Japanese Philology Department, Institute of Asian and African Studies, Lomonosov Moscow State University (Russia) were selected. The presentation ceremony was held in Tokyo in the autumn, followed by a commemorative lecture given by each recipient.

Fiscal 2014 Recipients



Japan
Sankyo Yanagiya, rakugo artist
 Yanagiya is a highly accomplished rakugo storyteller with classical stories about human sentiments and comical stories being his forte. He performs all over Japan and mentors the next generation of rakugo artists. For over 10 years now, he has been performing rakugo for Japanese-language learners in Japan and overseas and teaching them short comical storytelling (kobanashi). By presenting real rakugo to Japanese-language learners and providing a chance for them to try short comical storytelling, he has helped them improve their Japanese expressions and deepen their understanding of Japanese culture. He has therefore helped to advance Japanese-language education.



Australia
Peter Drysdale, Professor Emeritus, Australian National University
 Drysdale is a world-renown economist noted for his policy research on the economies of East Asia and Japan. His research focusing on economic cooperation within the Asia-Pacific region was a major impetus for the formation of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC). He founded the Australia-Japan Research Centre established in 1980 at the Australian National University with the cooperation of Australian and Japanese public and private sectors. He has thereby promoted better mutual understanding between Japan and Australia.



Russia
Japanese Philology Department, Institute of Asian and African Studies, Lomonosov Moscow State University
 Since its establishment in 1956, the Department has played a central role in Japanese-language education in Russia and in the region of the former Soviet Union. It has trained Japanese-language teachers and researchers and developed Japanese-language teaching materials. Its many graduates (around 2,000) are active in Japanese-language education, Japanese studies, diplomacy, economics, and promoting Japanese culture such as movies and novels. They are bridging Japan and Russia in many ways.

The Japan Foundation Prizes for Global Citizenship

The Japan Foundation Prizes for Global Partnership was established in 1985. In its 30 years of history, 94 organizations have been awarded. This prize is intended to support organizations that endeavor to strengthen networks among citizens both inside and outside Japan, share the knowledge, idea and expertise through international cultural exchange.

Fiscal 2014 Recipients



NPO AmerAsian School in Okinawa
 The AmerAsian School in Okinawa provides a bilingual education to Amerasian children growing up with a dual American and Japanese heritage. The school aims to develop the children's talents and broaden their future potential. With their plural cultural backgrounds, the children can well be expected to assume significant roles in Japanese society.



Nara International Film Festival Organizing Committee (NPO)
 The Committee holds the film festival mainly to foster the development of younger-generation filmmakers. They promote the beauty of Nara to the world and hold international exchanges. By getting many young and local people involved, the Committee's activities serve as a model for community development through culture and art.



Plus Arts NPO
 Plus Arts has created fun ways to learn about disaster preparedness in Japan. They spread awareness of the importance of disaster preparedness even overseas while matching their needs. They also strive to make disaster preparedness education universal throughout the world. To this end, they promote mutual understanding and grassroots networking and cooperation between Japan and overseas. A model organization for such activities.

Information Services

Providing International Cultural Exchange Information

The Japan Foundation provides information on international cultural exchange activities through diverse means. We use websites, e-mail magazines, Twitter, as well as public and media relations to target a wide range of people in and outside Japan. We would like people to understand the significance of international cultural exchange and get people involved in them. We also provide opportunities for cultural exchange.

Our monthly online English magazine, *Wochi Kochi*, features various themes related to international cultural exchange. In fiscal 2014, the magazine published special articles such as "Strengthen bonds among Asian Countries," "Seeking to understand human existence - Theatrical Performances Cut Across National Borders," "Discovering a New World through Japanese Language," and "Thinking about the Future of Tohoku with People all over the World." It also included many activity reports by Japan Foundation specialists and staff.

The Japan Foundation Information Center (JFIC) in our headquarters building in Yotsuya, Tokyo has the JFIC Library and Event Space.

The JFIC Library collects and stores a wide range of materials made available to the public. They include library materials about the Japan Foundation's activities, books related to international cultural exchange, and foreign-language materials about Japan. Besides offering various services, it also regularly holds lectures and book exhibitions. In fiscal 2014, we held a lecture titled, *Japanese Collection in the Southeast Asian countries: Its Usage and Distribution*, and three exhibitions from our rare book collection including *Society of Jesus Annual Report* published in 1615.

The JFIC Event Space is used to promote international cultural exchange events in collaboration with various organizations in Japan. It gives people from diverse

backgrounds a chance to get involved in international cultural exchange activities.

In fiscal 2014, various lectures, workshops and talks were held with partners from diverse fields. They included a talk session about how artists invited from overseas can meet and create with local people in the earthquake and tsunami-affected Tohoku Region as well as depopulating mountainous areas and hold joint activities to revitalize the local area.

The JFIC also sells publications such as catalogs of exhibitions held by the Japan Foundation and Japanese-language materials produced by the Japan Foundation. It also welcomes visits by university student groups, students on class trips, and other groups interested in international cultural exchange.

Right:
Potential energy of the arts to create the future of Tohoku artists



Below:
 Shinya Ominami (left) and Makoto Nakashima (right) at the *Power of Art: To connect Regions Locally and Internationally* talk session



Photos: Kenichi Aikawa

Kyoto Office

Presenting the Essence of Japanese Culture

Kyoto is a cultural treasure house of diverse traditional culture cultivated and flourished over a long period. The culture born from this "1,000-year capital" is an assemblage of Japanese aesthetics and sensibility. To convey the allure of Japanese culture to foreigners, we use our Kyoto network to introduce Japanese culture.

In fiscal 2014, with the cooperation of a local cultural organization, we held activities for invited guests from overseas. The activities included Noh and Kyogen evening plays, experiencing tea ceremony, an Ikebana flower arrangement exhibit, a traditional music performance, and a brocade factory tour.

Participants commented on their exposure to Japanese culture: "Japan's traditional performing arts have a nice rhythm," "The tea and Ikebana flowers have a healing effect," and "I realized that traditional crafts require both technical skill and heart."

In Kyoto, there are unlimited opportunities and possibilities to experience the essence of Japanese culture.



Above:
 Kyogen play *Futaribakama*



Right:
 Noh play, *Adachigahara*
 Photos: Akio Takahashi