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Two Awakenings

Shosaburo Kimura

President, The Toyota Foundation

Today, as the Toyota Foundation looks back on its 30 years of existence, it is clearer than ever that the group needs to dedicate itself to the goal it set out to accomplish in 1975—to achieve an “increase in human happiness.” All around the world, people are increasingly traveling beyond their own borders in pursuit of future sources of happiness, of the wisdom and enjoyment they can find in life and living.

Nearly 700 million people have traveled to foreign countries—more than 1 out of every 10 people in the world. This year Japan’s Aichi Prefecture is playing host to the 2005 World Exposition, with “Nature’s Wisdom” as its main theme. Another



official description of the Expo—“A Grand Intercultural Symphony”—was chosen because this is an age of exchange on such a large scale. Around the globe a number of countries—particularly the BRICs nations of Brazil, Russia, India, and China—are rising to new prominence on the world stage. The steady growth in global ties will require Japan to concentrate on exchange, communication, and friendship building, especially with its Asian neighbors.

In 2003 the Japanese government announced a plan to make the nation a global tourism power by increasing the annual number of foreign visitors to 10 million by 2010. The world is composed of different lands with different cultures and ways of life, and exchange activities or tourism bringing these lands closer together will be essential ways to secure our happiness and prosperity in the years to come.

One key issue now is how we can craft specific communication efforts aimed mainly at Asian nations. The modern age is one of great change, and now more than ever we are called on to study ways to communicate and make friends with one another—ways that are rooted deeply in our lives and

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Participants at the Toyota Foundation's Tenth Anniversary Symposium in October 1984. From left: President Eiji Toyoda, Executive Director Yujiro Hayashi, and American foundation expert Waldemar A. Nielsen. Mr. Nielsen is holding a copy of the Japanese translation of his book *The Big Foundations*, which was translated and published in Japan as a project to mark the Foundation's tenth anniversary.

cultures, that are firmly grounded in reality, and that are concrete, not abstract.

I recently had two eye-opening experiences that relate closely to the points described above. The first of these valuable experiences was a passage I read in a recently published book, a collection of photographs and writings by Kenji Aoyagi titled *Ajia no tanada Nihon no tanada* (Asian Terraced Fields, Japanese Terraced Fields, Heibonsha, 2004). This book is filled with moving essays and beautiful photographs of paddies and scenes of human life taken in Yunnan and Guizhou Provinces and the autonomous ethnic region of Qiwan in Guangxi Province in China, as well as in South Korea, Vietnam, Laos, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Japan.

Lugging his heavy camera gear from one remote location to another, the author showed formidable physical strength, a quick wit, and a powerful spirit. While visiting Yunnan Province's Yuanyang, near the Vietnamese border, Aoyagi photographed the Hani people as they celebrated their "feast of the long street." In this festival tables piled high with food are lined up in a long row. The villagers gather to eat at this row, which stretches for an amazing 200 meters. While shooting his photos, Aoyagi began to walk be-

tween two of the tables only to be stopped by a village elder, who told him firmly not to break the line.

The old man explained that to break the line of tables would be to break the unity of the villagers lined up along it. When I read this passage, I could not help but nod my head as I finally grasped the significance of that long row of tables. In 1989, to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the French Revolution, people across France lined up tables right across the land, bisecting the country on a line going through Paris. Citizens came to these tables to share bread, cheese, and wine. Here, too, the gathering symbolized the solidarity of the people.

In Japan as well as Europe, the image of people joining hands to dance in a circle is a powerful image of solidarity. When such a circle is formed, it goes against all etiquette to break its links. Henri Matisse's 1910 masterpiece *La Danse* depicts five nude women dancing upon the grass, but shows two of them to have lost their grasp of each other's hands. Their outstretched arms, striving but unable to reach one another, are a magnificent portrayal of the loneliness and unease that modern humanity feels.

My second eye-opening experience came when I read a book written by a young friend of mine, China expert Seiichiro Aso. I had the pleasure of teaching him when he was a university student; today he is a young man in possession of a unique view of history gained through his experiences living as a laborer among some of the poorest people in China.

One often hears stories of Chinese exchange students who come to Japan and leave with only anti-Japanese sentiment, having been unable to make any real friends during their time here. I had always thought this was because they found the Japanese to be standoffish or cool to strangers. But Aso's second

book, *Kokoro atsuku bukotsu de uzattai Chugoku: Kaku koto o kinjirareta nagatabi* (Excitable, Uncouth, Annoying China: The Tale of a Long Journey That Could Not Be Written, Joho Center Publishing, 2004), showed me that this was not the case.

A Chinese person might have a close Japanese acquaintance for 10 years or more, spending long hours in friendly chat and taking part in events together. But this will be enough only to



President Shuichi Iijima addresses the Exhibition of Champa Kingdom Ruins and Culture, held in Tokyo in January 1995 to mark the Foundation's twentieth anniversary.

make the Chinese see the Japanese as something more than an acquaintance and something less than a real friend. Why does the feeling of true friendship not develop between these two? The answer lies in the fact that Chinese people give the title *pengyou*, or friend, to people who are willing to invite them into their homes. Even a very recent acquaintance can be greeted as a friend if he makes this overture, inviting the Chinese person to his home and offering him a meal. This makes it difficult for Japanese people—who will usually make excuses like “my place is too cramped and messy to have you over”—to achieve the status of “friend.” To Chinese people it does not matter whether your home is large or small, spotless or filthy. The important thing is for you to show your willingness to invite them into it.

As I read this it was like a light coming on for me. During the short time I spent in France I experienced something similar to this, sensing the deeper message that a person delivers through such an invitation: “From now on I intend to treat you like a member of my own family.” A visitor from China who does not receive any invitations from his Japanese acquaintances can only see this as a total lack of willingness to become true friends. This may indeed be the case for most peoples of the world—it may be the Japanese who are out of the ordinary in this respect.

I find it most heartening that these enlightening experiences of mine were brought about thanks to the statements of energetic young people who are out there in the world, taking an active part in it. I see this as an encouraging sign for the Toyota Foundation as well.

Celebrating the Thirtieth Anniversary of the Toyota Foundation

Tatsuo Ota

President and CEO, Japan Association of Charitable Organizations

I have many memories from the time when the Toyota Foundation was established, probably because it was just then that I first encountered philanthropy.



Thirtieth Citizen Contest “Observing the Community Environment: The Past Ten Years and the Future of the Research Contest” (November 1991). Toshitaka Hidaka, former chair of the selection committee (left); Hideo Obara, chair of the selection committee (center).

I had contributed an essay on charitable trusts to a magazine, which led to a joint research project on the practical use of charitable trusts undertaken by the Prime Minister’s Office, the Trust Companies Association of Japan, and the newly established Japan Association of Charitable Organizations. As part of that effort, from 1973 to 1974 I visited well-known charitable foundations and umbrella organizations, including some in the United States and Britain, to study charities and philanthropy. That was when I became acquainted with legal and tax systems and learned the meanings of some terms and concepts I had previously known nothing about, such as semi-public joint ventures, altruism, enlightened self-interest, and corporate citizenship. With JACO as my base, I was able to draw on the knowledge of numerous philanthropists and scholars.

It was at just this time that the Toyota Foundation was established, and I had a number of opportunities to speak with Yujiro Hayashi and Iwao Aida. They were kind enough to listen patiently to the half-baked ideas of a rookie in the field of philanthropy. I also became friendly with some excellent up-and-coming young people, such as Ms. Iwamoto, Mr. Yamaoka, and Ms. Wakayama, who gathered at Ryozanpaku. These are precious, unforgettable memories from three decades ago.

The emergence of the Toyota Foundation marked a new era in the activities undertaken by private corporations for the public good in Japan. The Foundation had so many revolutionary features—its multiple objectives, its appointment of distinguished researchers to act as CEOs, its introduction of a program-officer system and of methods for actively de-

veloping grant programs, and its sheer size as a foundation. Although all these things were taken for granted in the United States, I have nothing but admiration for the keen vision of Eiji Toyoda, the founding president, in making them a reality in a Japanese context.

I worked for 44 years for a trust bank, but when we talked about what trust really means, the thing that was always cited was Sakichi Toyoda's definition in January 1926 of the trust that encourages invention. Toyoda pledged to pay ¥1 million to the person who could develop a machine that weighed 60 *kan* (225 kg) or less, had a volume of 10 cubic *shaku* (a *shaku* is about 30 cm) or less, could generate 100 horsepower continuously for 36 hours, and could be put to industrial use. Truly, this was the model for public trusts.

The role of the Toyota Foundation, which stems from the influence of Sakichi Toyoda, who paved the way for the pursuit of the public trust, will be even more important in the future.

A fundamental revision of the public-interest corporation system, which was established in 1929, is currently underway and is proceeding at a rapid pace. At JACO, we are working to create a public-interest corporation system that is of the people, by the people, and for the people. I ask for your continued assistance and guidance in making the Toyota Foundation the leading private-sector public-interest corporation.

Our 13-Year "Golden Age"

Yujiro Hayashi

Trustee, The Toyota Foundation

Served as the first executive director of the Toyota Foundation from 1974 to 1987.

"Today I've come to offer an apology."

I launched into my speech without any preamble, standing before Eiji Toyoda, the president, who wore a baffled expression. "In the past, at meetings of the board of directors and elsewhere, I've cited the Ford Foundation as a precedent, but the Ford Foundation is a family



foundation, completely different from the Toyota Foundation, which is a corporate foundation, so I was wrong to use it as a model . . ."

I carried on in this vein for a while. The president listened in silence until I finished and then said, "I've known this all along. It's nothing to worry about. Please continue to do whatever you think is best. This is nothing to trouble yourself over." With these words, he resumed his customary genial countenance, without the slightest hint of concern.

I have done a lot of different things, and when I look back now I feel that I have been deeply fortunate in the people I have worked with. I have been truly happy, but particularly so during my 13 years with the Toyota Foundation, and especially in making the acquaintance of Eiji Toyoda. Far more than me, as the preceding anecdote shows, he had a very deep and broad understanding of all of the principles and actual circumstances of philanthropy and firmly upheld those principles. And yet, without ever showing off his knowledge, he entrusted everything to me. He was inimitable. For me those 13 years truly were a golden age.

"Doing What It Has Done Thus Far"

Hideo Yamaguchi

Auditor, The Toyota Foundation

Served as secretary general of the Toyota Foundation from 1981 to 1992 and as managing director from 1990 to 1994.

When I came over to the Toyota Foundation from Toyota Motor Corporation in 1981, President Eiji Toyoda told me that the Foundation would "do well to go on doing what it has done thus far." By that he meant unconstrained activities that respect the Foundation's independence, transcend the corporate framework, and actively address the needs of society.



When I made the rounds of the company offices to say my goodbyes after receiving my new assignment, however, I found that some of the executives were hoping the Foundation would not go on doing what it had done before. Later on, the president lamented the fact that certain people

were saying “Yamaguchi isn’t doing anything to help the company.” After Mr. Hayashi, the executive director, stepped down, people appeared around me who openly questioned whether the company wanted us to continue on the same course as in the past. It was generally considered to be common sense for a corporate foundation to do the bidding of its founding company.

In spite of this, I tried to ensure that the Foundation continued to do as it had always done, not for the sake of clinging to old ways but in the interest of continually preserving the original spirit that inspired the Foundation’s establishment.

Now, 30 years later, it seems to me that the Foundation has become a little more mature. Has its splendid stature as an independent foundation, true to Eiji Toyoda’s convictions, faded away? And what of the brilliant impression that prompted one American foundation expert to remark that “foundations in the United States could learn a lot from the Toyota Foundation”?

As the saying goes, we learn from the past, and the Foundation’s 30-year history offers an excellent opportunity to do so. Let us return to our starting point, to once again be told to go on doing what we have done thus far.

Hopes for the Toyota Foundation

Ishii Yoneo

President, National Institutes for the Humanities

Has chaired the selection committees for the International Research Grant Program and the “Know Our Neighbors” Translation-Publication Program. Has served as a director since 1992.

There is a way of thinking called “idealistic realism.” At first glance it may seem self-contradictory, but for me it is a motto for life. Never to forget one’s ideals is a simple rule, and it also sounds good. If one never gets beyond simply talking about ideals, however, then those ideals can’t be realized in the world we live in. The process of realizing ideals actually requires the kind of hardcore realism that most idealists abhor. But how



The first International Grant Program Symposium was held in Bangkok, Thailand, in November 1990. Yoneo Ishii, Director, The Toyota Foundation (far left).

does one get past all the slurs and criticism heaped upon realists and attain the initial resolve to realize ideals? This is the true test of the caliber of an individual—or an organization—dedicated to ideals.

Thirty years ago, the Toyota Foundation was established for the purpose of pursuing lofty ideals. In Japan, a nation with scarcely any tradition of philanthropy, the Toyota Foundation directed its efforts toward realizing the true meaning of philanthropy. Those efforts have been manifested in the Foundation’s activities thus far, and I believe they have been adequately rewarded in the words of praise bestowed on the Foundation by grant recipients both in Japan and in other countries. The question is: What next?

Organizations are in constant danger of becoming inflexible in spite of the sincerity and good intentions of the people involved and must continually reform themselves if they are to achieve their ideals. In the absence of mechanisms for constructive criticism, the risk of making innocent mistakes is great. Is there a disparity between the Foundation’s ideals and its performance? Inquiries of this sort must be conducted unceasingly.

Recently the Foundation, now marking its thirtieth anniversary, completely revised its programs. This was a wise and courageous move. Thirty years is about the length of one generation. History teaches us that “movement” is necessary to bring about “new life” to invigorate organizations that have grown rigid with age. I sincerely hope that the Toyota Foundation will use its thirtieth anniversary as an opportunity for new “movement,” providing the spark for creativity during the next 30 years.

Plan for Establishing a Southeast Asia Program Secretariat in Rural Southeast Asia

Yoshiaki Ishizawa

President, Sophia University

Chaired the International Research Grant Program selection committee from 1992 to 2001. Has served as a trustee since 2002.

I may be inviting harsh criticism by presenting a proposal like this one prior to seeing the final report of the Advisory Committee on the Toyota Foundation's Vision and Initiative, but I'm hoping it will be viewed as a strategic pipe dream.

I offer the Sophia University Asia Center for Research and Human Development as an example. The Center, where researchers and contract employees are now stationed, was established in October 2002 in Siem Reap, Cambodia. It has four departments—education, research, international exchange, and public relations—and transmits information from



Asia to the rest of the world. It also serves to receive and compile information and is connected by networks to the world at large. Unexpected information pours in, and there is a strong sense that the Center has assumed its place in Southeast Asia.

In the past, such Asian research has been based in Japan, so researchers have had to go back and forth to present their findings. This has meant conducting research in other Asian countries without having a research base where the studies were carried out. This is akin to carrying out astronomical research without an observatory.

The Center conducts ongoing studies and research in Asia and serves as a sort of stationary observation post as well as a venue for international exchange. Researchers there can witness firsthand the wave of globalization openly spreading through Cambodia, study on an ongoing basis the aspects that are painful or contradictory to Cambodians and the advantages and disadvantages of globalization, and present findings and field inquiries. Viewed from Cambodia, the benefits of globalization may seem to accrue only to the affluent, leaving most of the people of the world untouched.



The Gyoutoku Bird Observatory's "Restoration of Shinhama: Cleaning the Water and Bringing Back Birdlife" won the fourth Research Contest in 1987. The photo shows a water wheel used to mix oxygen into the water, increasing the oxygen content of a polluted river.

Living in Southeast Asia means experiencing the winds, the sun, and the humidity through your own sensory apparatus, and this enables you to get a vivid, immediate sense of the climate and the physical world. It may not be something you can see, but I think the setting enables you to somehow be in sync with the Southeast Asian mindset. Having a base like this would surely give the Foundation's Southeast Asia Programs firm roots in Southeast Asia.

Constructing a Discourse on Global Civil Society

Aiko Utsumi

Professor, Keisen University

Chaired the Research Grant Program (Individual Research) selection committee from 2002 to 2004. Has served as a member of the Grant Program for Community Activities selection committee since 2004.

Michael Moore's film *Fahrenheit 9/11*, while harsh, explained in an easily comprehensible manner why the United States invaded Iraq. The events of September 11, 2001, have, under the banner of the "war on terrorism," temporarily suspended the expansion of global civil society. I believe, however, that the trend toward such a so-



ciety cannot be reversed. From Indonesia to Thailand to South Korea, NGOs are carrying out pioneering activities aimed at creating a global society. The establishment of an Internet media channel called *Ohmynews* as an alternative to the mainstream media played a major role in the recent election upset in South Korea, and the Internet has also figured prominently in a movement to establish a peace museum. The subject of atrocities committed by South Korean soldiers in the Vietnam War has been taken up, and in a related effort, a movable peace museum has been created. Researchers and NGO officials speak passionately about these developments, overwhelmed by the energy, the wealth of ideas, and the unique nature of these movements in South Korea. In Indonesia and Thailand, too, NGOs are passionately setting out dreams for the future.

When traveling around Asia, one is struck by the feeling that scholars and NGO activists in Asia who have been bloodied in the struggle for democracy, human rights, and regional progress are seeking ways to establish civil societies and making dynamic efforts to bring them about. The vision of these Asian pioneers extends to concepts of civil society that go beyond those advanced by NGOs in Japan and Western nations.

Together with the people in other Asian countries, we can create dynamic research and activities directed toward formulating a theory of a global civil society. I hope the Toyota Foundation will continue to be a foundation I can march along with, supporting research and activities brimming with the energy to break through the status quo.

Turning the Spinning Wheel in a Time of Upheaval

Kazuyoshi Fujita

President, Daichi-o-Mamoru-Kai (Association to Preserve the Earth)

Chaired the Grants for Citizen Activities selection committee from 2002 to 2004. Has been a member of the Grant Program for Community Activities selection committee since 2004.

The twenty-first century is here, but the world has not achieved peace; war and bloodthirsty terrorism continue. Humanity hasn't even found a clue to solving its population, environmental, or food-supply

problems. Japan itself is undergoing a period of political and economic confusion. Every day I see the newspaper or watch television and ask myself what I should and can do.

Shin'ichi Tsuji, a professor at Meiji Gakuin University, tells a story about a letter that Mahatma Gandhi received from a young person. In the letter, the person noted that great movements were taking place in the world but that Gandhi did not talk about politics or economics, talking instead about the importance of a balanced diet and other inconsequential subjects. The letter writer asked him why.

In his reply, Gandhi noted that his correspondent seemed to think that people should not clean their houses until the great changes referred to in his letter had taken place. People who can't even manage small changes are in no way capable of achieving big changes, he wrote.

Gandhi used to spin his own thread, turning his own spinning wheel, and he recommended this practice to others. That's how people in the Gandhi household had lived since his grandmother's time and long before. The little things that make up everyday life are important. Gandhi taught that the way we live can provide us with the power to change the world. This year the Toyota Foundation marks the thirtieth anniversary of its founding. I hope its future activities will continue to illuminate the true roots of society, just as Gandhi taught us to do.



Nurturing the Next Ryoma Sakamoto

Yoshikazu Takaya

Professor, Seisen University

Received grants for "An Experiment to Improve the Economic Viability of Traditional Sago-Producing Communities" in fiscal 1983 and 1985 and for "Reconstructing the Agro-Aquacultural Way of Life from Excavations at the Yayoi Site in Moriyama City, with the Aim of Fostering Pride in Local Communities and Community Development" in fiscal 2003.

At Ehime University, Associate Professor Katsuya Osozawa is busy providing opportunities to middle and high school students in an effort to raise the next

Ryoma Sakamoto. When he was a graduate student, Osozawa received a grant from the Toyota Foundation and traveled to the tropical forests of Sulawesi. The theme of the project he took part in was "An Experiment to Improve the Economic Viability of Traditional Sago-Producing Communities" (fiscal 2003).



In the years since then, he has spent a great deal of time living in the villages where people subsist on sago, creating sago factories, forming a union of sago producers, and going through various changes hand-in-hand with the villagers.

During this time, there was a major clash among the young people of the village that resulted in a complicated and intractable situation. Osozawa, who found himself entangled in the dispute, suddenly hit on an idea and suggested that he would bring a large sailing ship to the village. Immediately one of the village leaders agreed that going out to sea would bring everyone together again, and the mood changed completely. For the people of the area, the sea is a place for learning skills, testing one's fortitude, and earning a livelihood.

Osozawa then set about the task of constructing a ship. His plan was to build a 70-ton *pinisi* sailing ship and then use it to circle Wallacea with a crew of 20. The goals of the voyage would be to conduct commercial activities, study the lives of seafarers, and train the crew in body and mind. The crew of 20 is a mix of Indonesians and Japanese. The ship has been completed, and the crew has set sail on its voyage.

Osozawa says that he wants to raise the next Ryoma Sakamoto. I am pleased to report how far his project has come since he received a grant more than 20 years ago.

Program. At the time, the focus of the program was "Preserving and Revitalizing Indigenous Cultures" in Southeast Asia. I was in charge of the Philippines, but every one of the committee members felt a responsibility that extended to all of Southeast Asia, so the passionate debates that took place during our committee meetings always went well over the originally allotted time.

In Southeast Asia in the 1980s, while there was a lot of international assistance relating to development economics and development politics, there was little money available to support research in such areas as culture and history. Much was therefore expected of the Toyota Foundation and of its pioneering commitment to research in these relatively neglected fields.

Program officers and members of the selection committee felt a sense of mission and togetherness as they went about the task of identifying and supporting serious research projects and scholars that would steadily drive forward research in the various countries. And all of us were young enough to turn our goals into action. Looking back on what we did, those feelings are even stronger now. To pursue its mission, the Foundation needs insight based on a broad, accomplished vision, as well as the passion of youth.

During the 1980s the Toyota Foundation actively provided assistance for research on regional culture, literature, and history in Southeast Asia based on the theme of "Preserving and Revitalizing Indigenous Cultures." The Foundation's unstinting support for research in these areas produced substantive results in terms of delving into the origins and current state of the multilingual and multicultural societies that exist in Southeast Asian countries.

In the 1990s, meanwhile, the Toyota Foundation began providing grants to research projects that address regional themes spanning national borders and to projects designed to build networks among the researchers and scholars of Southeast Asian countries. As with any organization, the role of the Foundation has indeed changed with the times, but what is important in any age is to maintain the passion and vibrant spirit of finding and nurturing creativity on the frontlines of research.



Memories of the Toyota Foundation

Setsuho Ikehata

President, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies

Served as a member of the International Grant Program selection committee from 1984 to 1996.

From 1984 to 1996 I served on the selection committee for the Toyota Foundation's International Grant

Looking Beyond Corporate Logic to the Needs of Society

Minoru Kashiwagi

Japan Wetlands Action Network

The Japan Wetlands Action Network received Grants for Citizen Activities for the project "Preservation and Conservation of Japan's Wetlands" in fiscal 1991 and 1992 and a Research Grant for the project "Action to Protect Breeding Grounds and Staging Areas Used by the Spoon-billed Piper and Red-backed Sandpiper" in fiscal 2001.

I first heard of the Toyota Foundation in the late 1970s, soon after it was established. I was part of a support group for a seriously ill patient in the town in which I lived, and among the others in the group was one of the key figures in a comprehensive survey on Minamata disease funded by the Foundation. I was surprised that one of the largest corporations in the world was supporting a survey on environmental pollution caused by corporate activities.



Some 20 years later, I became the conduit between the Toyota Foundation and a group receiving grants through my connection with the late Hirofumi Yamashita, who was the head of the Japan Wetlands Action Network. What pleased me most was the fact that the program officer was readily available for consultation not only on how to write an application but also with regard to our goals and plans, as well



Members of the Study Group on Hakodate Color Culture, which won the top prize in the fifth Research Contest (July 1988). The club investigated the color of paint used on wooden houses, which are a feature of the Hakodate landscape, and used this information to promote urban regeneration.

as how we might express individual conditions.

In addition to encouraging in me feelings of friendship toward the program officer personally, this made me realize that this was the way the Toyota Foundation had conducted its affairs ever since its inception. This may just be my own opinion, but I wonder whether this is not a manifestation of the Foundation's attitude of standing alongside those who step away from concerns of corporate profitability and conduct surveys and projects based on the needs of society, and of providing the funding to ensure such efforts succeed. This stance leads to the realization of the things that society needs most by the most appropriate methods.

It is my wish that the cooperative undertaking of providing grant funding is one that will lead, however gradually, to a situation in which both private corporations and citizens' groups can accept each other's different means of expression and can work together to realize a better society.

Meeting the Toyota Foundation

Masako Sakai

Dandansha

Received 14 grants under the "Know Our Neighbors" Translation-Publication Program during the period from 1982 to 2002 for the translation and publication of literary works from Southeast and South Asia.

The first time I met people from the Toyota Foundation, I was very unsure of myself, tentatively explaining that I wanted to publish a series of works by Asian woman authors. The immediate reaction of Kazue Iwamoto, the creator of the "Know Our Neighbors" Program, was to ask, "So, how about using women translators?" Without asking a single question about my professional background, Iwamoto moved the conversation forward and smiled as she told me that she wanted me to create better-than-average books. I was deeply moved by the big heart of this slim woman.

That was in 1983, and over the next 20 years we published





Over 600 books have been published through the "Know Our Neighbors" Translation-Publication Program.

some 14 books, mainly in the series on Asian woman authors, using the Toyota Foundation grants we received. All of them were translated from local Asian languages. There are very few translators of Asian languages in Japan, and there are few opportunities for those who do exist to show what they can do. I think this gave the translators a sense of mission and joy that their work would become a book, leading them to give the translations their all.

It usually took three or four years between the selection of a work and the publication of the translation, and during this time there were many issues relating to contracts and editing to be dealt with. I was working as a one-person publishing company, and I took counsel from translators, friends and acquaintances, and related organizations when problems arose. If a problem got out of hand, I turned to the Foundation for guidance. My liaison with the Foundation changed from Mr. Makita to Ms. Himemoto to Mr. Honda and then to Ms. Ogawa. But through it all, the human response that transcends questions of organization remained the same. We were always encouraged by the assistance the Foundation provided, which included both the grant funds and the intangible extras.

We were fortunate in that we were able to get all 14 of the selections turned into books, and the Modern Asian Woman's Literature Series won the fortieth Annual Translation Publishing Award of JST (Japan Society of Translators). I accepted this award on behalf of the Foundation and the translators. On that first day 22 years ago, I was a housewife with no funds and no organization, but the Foundation took me seriously as a grant applicant. If they had not done so, Dandansha would never have come into existence.

Learning from History

Norio Kanie

Managing Director, The Toyota Foundation

(1) Thankful for 30 Years of Support

In October 2004 the Toyota Foundation celebrated its thirtieth birthday. The Toyota Motor Corporation had lofty goals in mind when it established the Foundation. These goals are spelled out in the Prospectus issued on September 19, 1974, which described Toyota's desire to contribute to the good of society and stated: "This philosophy guided Toyota in its decision to commemorate its fortieth year in the automobile industry by establishing The Toyota Foundation in 1974. The goal of the Foundation is to contribute toward the realization of a more people-oriented society and a resulting increase in human happiness." From its very beginning, the Toyota Foundation has kept its gaze firmly on these public benefits—the happiness of humans and the creation of a society whose focus is on the people within it.

The Foundation was fortunate to begin its existence with a most generous endowment of ¥10 billion—an exceptional amount for that time. Thanks to interest rates that seem unthinkable high when viewed from the present day, we were able to receive some ¥800 million to ¥900 million annually for our operating budget. Interest rates plummeted following the crash of Japan's bubble economy at the beginning of the 1990s, dealing a great blow to our funding, but Toyota Motor stepped up in the second half of that decade to provide an additional ¥20 billion for the principal endowment. Thanks to this generosity we now have an endowment of ¥30 billion, among the largest in Japan for organizations like ours, and we can once again maintain a steady pace in our grant-making activities. I must take this opportunity to thank the company for its warm support over these three decades.

Over the 30 years of the Foundation's existence, we have been proud to put together programs that are regarded very highly, both in Japan and around the world. Broadly speaking, these programs have focused on areas including support for researchers in Japan, support for researchers throughout Southeast





Nature photographer Michio Hoshino presents the findings of his project "Visual Documentation of the Changes in the Seasonal Migration of Caribou and in Hunting by Eskimos as a Result of Arctic Oil-Field Exploitation" at the Twenty-Seventh Citizen Contest in May 1990.

Asia, translation and publishing activities aimed at strengthening cultural ties between Japan and Southeast Asian nations, and assistance for citizen groups active in Japan. We have made around 6,000 grants in all, distributing more than ¥13 billion in pursuit of these goals. The Toyota Foundation has operated on a scale rarely seen among foundations in Japan.

These operations have been made possible by our support from Toyota Motor. The Foundation has also enjoyed strong support from its directors, auditors, and trustees, as well as the members of the selection committees and external advisors who work on awarding the grants. Last but certainly not least, the grant recipients themselves have played an important role in keeping us going and making us what we are today. I believe the Toyota Foundation should take the time to thank these people—the parents of the organization, in a sense—as it looks back on its 30 years of existence to date. In an expression of this gratitude, we have asked a number of people to write commemorative essays for this newsletter. It has been a great pleasure to receive the many encouraging and inspiring manuscripts, and I thank the writers as well.

The people who have handled the Toyota Foundation's day-to-day affairs must not be forgotten in all of this. Their dedication and hard work are key to the Foundation and have been instrumental in bringing it from its inexperienced state in 1974 to where it stands today. I hope to see the present staff tackle their work with just as much passion as those who have gone before them.

(2) Learning from History

(A) Looking at the history of the Foundation

"To learn from history" may sound like a needlessly grand undertaking for an organization like ours. But I believe that from time to time we need to sit down and take a lengthy look at what the past has to offer. In recent years the pace of our activities has been frenetic, and we tend to forget what took place back when the Foundation was first established. We need to reexamine that era, though—to humbly take our lessons from the reasons for the Foundation's birth and the sort of expectations people had of it. The people involved with the organization in those early days must have had many ideas about what sort of entity it should be. For the provider of the Foundation's funding, Toyota Motor, these thoughts were likely the same ones expressed in the Prospectus described above. It is also worth remembering the enthusiasm and passion of the people in charge of the Foundation in its infancy. Rather than rely exclusively on input from Toyota Motor, government agencies, and established, experienced foundations, they worked as hard as possible to do things on their own. This dedication—this energy—was truly impressive.

Today, in this milestone year in its existence, the Toyota Foundation is taking a serious look at ways to reform itself. The time has come for the organization to adapt to the changing environment in which it finds itself and to rethink systems that are out of sync with the present. While tackling these tasks, it will be most important to differentiate between those things that must remain unchanged and those that require change. No matter how many years slip by, we must never alter the principles and aspirations on which the organization was founded. At the same time, there will always be areas that need retooling to bring them in line with changing eras, societies, and environments. As we consider what forms the Foundation should take from now on, we will need to analyze the strengths and weaknesses of the managerial resources at our disposal today, selecting and focusing on certain areas in order to improve the organization. We must find ways to make efficient use of the limited resources that we have.

The Toyota Foundation is pursuing these reforms through two main agencies. The first of these is the 30-Year History Compilation Committee, established in April 2003 to work for a three-year period on creating a written history of our three decades of opera-

tion. The second group, the Advisory Committee on the Toyota Foundation's Vision and Initiative, was formed in October 2003 to work for two years on the question of what fundamental direction the organization should take from now on. Both of these committees have as their core mission the task of learning from the Foundation's past and crafting the message it will broadcast for the future.

(B) The Foundation's independence

In the course of the work carried out by the 30-Year History Compilation Committee, we have learned a great many things. Indeed, this process has been so educational that it cannot be fully described in a short newsletter such as this. The knowledge obtained by the committee will be treated more fully in the 30-year history itself when it is published; here I will touch very briefly on the fruits of this committee's discussions.

One of the important lessons we have learned concerns the independent nature of the Foundation. As the Compilation Committee has discovered through its careful research, from the very beginning Toyota Motor took a very hands-off approach to the entity it had established, leaving the management of the Foundation up to the Foundation itself. The first half of the 1970s was an era of strong public criticism of large corporations in Japan, and the automaker was the scene of vigorous internal debate on the societal responsibility of companies. This debate led Toyota Motor to the conclusion that simply establishing an organization working for the public good was not enough; that organization should also be given the freedom to chart its own course.

The first president of the Toyota Foundation respected this hands-off approach of the founding company, keeping clear of the day-to-day operations of the Foundation and watching quietly over its progress. He was nicely complemented in this by the first executive director, who admirably performed the wide-ranging role the president had assigned him. The Compilation Committee's research has turned up valuable information on the perfect match between these two early leaders of the organization. Thanks to the wise decisions that Toyota Motor made concerning its relationship with the Foundation, the latter had considerable independence from the very beginning and has enjoyed a free hand in its activities, which have been more meaningful as a result. I hope to see the Toyota Foundation give deep thought to how it will build on this sturdy base as it plans its future moves.

(3) My Thoughts on the Foundation's Future

The Advisory Committee on the Toyota Foundation's Vision and Initiative is now working on a mid-to long-term vision to guide the Foundation. All grant-making organizations are today grappling with the worrying problems of shrinking pools of funds for their activities and the ongoing government reforms of the system governing nonprofit organizations, which may take a wrong turn and start doing harm to that system. Still, I would like to take a more optimistic view of the future of the Toyota Foundation.

Now that we have moved into the twenty-first century and left the twentieth behind, the Foundation will increasingly need to focus on new themes that are central to the modern age. Everyone in the Foundation, from its directors to its staff, will need to work together to pursue goals that benefit the public. In terms of the interface between the Foundation on the one hand and communities and society on the other, we will see the Foundation serving as a medium for growing exchange between a wide range of people. Information on the grants provided by the Foundation and the accumulated results of those grants will also be shared widely, with the organization itself at the hub of these networks of exchange. I would like to direct the Toyota Foundation down these paths as it considers its best form for the future. We will need to broadcast accessible messages if we are to win the understanding of all members of society. I ask humbly for your support as we move ahead with these efforts.

The Toyota Foundation welcomes responses from readers of the *Occasional Report*. Comments and questions should be addressed to the International Division, The Toyota Foundation, Shinjuku Mitsui Building 37F, 2-1-1 Nishi-Shinjuku, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo 163-0437, Japan. The articles in the *Occasional Report* reflect the authors' opinions and do not necessarily represent the opinions of the Foundation.

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