

A Brief Introduction

to

THE NIPPON FOUNDATION



The Nippon Foundation

For Humankind, for the Future

THE NIPPON FOUNDATION was founded in 1962 as an organization that concerned itself primarily with the maritime industry. However, the last few years have seen our sphere of activity expand inland from the oceans to the point where now it encompasses most of the globe. The fruits of our labor can be found nearly anywhere on earth where members of the human race live and dream. To us, this work is the obligation, and the joy, of being human.

Rebuilding our World

Here, at the beginning of a bright new century, Japan and the world in general stand confronted by problems which are larger than any of us can handle alone. Health care for the aged and disabled, the effects of environmental destruction on society at large, natural disasters: it is imperative that these and other challenges be addressed with urgency so that the human race can have a solid footing as we continue our walk into the future.

At the same time, as we heal the wounds of the past and present, we cannot neglect investment in the future. Our children must be nurtured and educated in a wholesome way. International understanding and cooperation must be transformed from ideals into norms. Communities must be empowered through the strengthening of local identity. To build better societies, all of these components are essential.



Mega-floats, developed with funding from The Nippon Foundation, are an environmentally friendly, inexpensive alternative to land-reclamation.



The Nippon Foundation is providing funding to eliminate leprosy as a global public health problem by the year 2005.

As The Nippon Foundation works with these problems, we also realize that sometimes it is not viable for us to handle a situation on our own. Indeed, many issues thwart the efforts of entire countries. At these times, concerted action by governments, private organizations and individuals is the only way to arrive at effective solutions. Sometimes, the interests of these groups conflict, but our goal is always to solve a problem. Thus, one key tenant of our foundation is to not allow such artificial boundaries as those of state, religion or economics to interfere with our work.

The Special Role of the Third Sector

All of the traditional sectors have their limitations. Governments and international agencies must consider national or multilateral interests. Businesses are motivated by profit. Individuals have inadequate resources. Thus there are a myriad problems that do not draw their attention. These are left to the Third Sector to address.

Non-governmental organizations and volunteer groups are independent of the interests that motivate the traditional sectors. They can move into neglected areas, acting for the public welfare with a much greater degree of freedom and interaction. However, as a group they need guidance to attain their potential synergy.

To this end, The Nippon Foundation works closely with other organizations to fuel, coordinate and channel the powerful but often-disparate energies of the Third Sector. We try to give it direction and greater impact—maximizing the intended effects of its philanthropy.

Building a Future with Foresight and Creativity

For such goals to become reality, human networks are invaluable. They enable us to promote public welfare projects, encourage communication and enhance cooperation between the various sectors and regions of the world.

To build these networks, The Nippon Foundation strives to serve as a guide and catalyst. It moves with foresight, creativity and decisiveness, responding to new challenges in innovative ways. In this way it works to realize the full potential of the third sector.



Our regional funds, such as the Sasakawa Central Europe Fund, are helping to advance the stability and promote the culture of the areas they reach.

An Overview of The Nippon Foundation's Four Arms

Speaking concretely, the activities of The Nippon Foundation are divided into four basic areas:

- ◇ Overseas Cooperative Assistance;
- ◇ Maritime Development;
- ◇ Volunteer Support;
- ◇ Domestic Social Welfare.

The pages that follow are a rough outline of our activities in these fields. More detailed information can be found at our Website:

<http://www.nippon-foundation.or.jp/eng/index.php3>

Overseas Cooperative Assistance



The Nippon Foundation provides support for a Cambodian school of prosthetics to train South-East Asian prosthetists and orthotists.

Nippon is the Japanese word for Japan. However, The Nippon Foundation, belying its name, has been deeply involved in a wide range of international projects for most of the time since its founding. Over the years, these have grown in number, scope and the degree to which the Foundation has directly involved itself in them. Overseas cooperative assistance programs span the globe. Further, strong effort is made to affect areas that have been avoided by other organizations for political, religious or other reasons related to the artificial boundaries that our

human societies have set up. Whatever the beliefs or history of a particular region, the human beings within it deserve the same basic access to food, shelter, safety and education as people around the world.

While these efforts have broadened in scope, we are still able to delineate them into a number of general categories, including efforts to aid international cooperation, the promotion of friendship among countries, global education and the satisfaction of basic human needs around the world. Additionally, we support many more immediate and concrete endeavors: social welfare programs, medical, health and hygiene programs, disaster relief and human resource development, to name a few.

Regional Networking

The Nippon Foundation believes that, while relations between the governments of the world are vital to peace and prosperity, the roots of these relationship lie at a much more fundamental level—among the people. Programs in this area specifically attempt to reach those people who have a strong affect on the intellectual and moral climate of their country or region. These people include artists, academics, media professionals and politicians, but the real list includes anyone who has a strong public voice. By connecting these people with their regional or global counterparts, we are attempting to weave the strands of our worlds many cultures together into something that can truly be called an international tapestry.



SG-2000 is a program under which we are helping to rebuild the agricultural base in Sahelian Africa.

Nurturing Talent

The Foundation puts considerable effort into fostering talent in individuals who can be expected to assume international leadership roles in the future. To this end, we provide funding so that top-level universities may provide fellowships to their best students. We also assist programs aimed at building human resources in developing countries. These programs reach all groups, but are most specifically aimed at the basic levels, where we can expect to have the strongest and most positive effect.



Education is one of the most important ways to aid a region. The Nippon Foundation is providing funding for 100 new elementary schools in the formerly Pol Pot-controlled region of Cambodia.

Medical Aid, Health and Hygiene Projects

Our foundation provides assistance to projects which are intended to free people from the scourge of disease: to achieve a healthy life, both physically and psychologically. We do this by offering support to developing countries in the improvement of their primary health-care systems and programs that encourage self-reliance of the disabled. Additionally, we work with the World Health Organization toward the elimination of such diseases as leprosy and Buruli ulcer.

Battling Starvation

In Sahelian Africa, The Foundation is conducting a major project aimed at solving the food-shortage crisis through improved agricultural methods. This project has had the effect of doubling or tripling food production in many of the areas that it has reached. In impoverished areas of Asia and Latin America as well, we have been assisting agricultural, crop-research and farm-training programs.

Promoting International Understanding, Goodwill and Friendship

To promote harmony between Japan and other nations, our foundation has established institutes and special funds for various countries and regions to stimulate cultural and educational exchange. These programs have an impact on bilateral as well as regional relationships, resulting in things like Forum 2000, a five-year international conference that aimed to establish peace for the world of our children.

As you can see, our overseas cooperative assistance programs reach all levels of society, from the grass roots to the governmental. Behind them lies two fundamental ideals—that all people in the world deserve to have their basic needs met, and that they deserve a chance to make the most of themselves. The Nippon Foundation is proud to be able to work for humanity in this way.

Shipbuilding and Maritime Affairs

Japan has always been heavily reliant on the ocean as a source of livelihood and revenue. This will not change as we move further into the 21st Century. Building on this fundamental fact, The Nippon Foundation has deeply involved itself in formulating plans for the prudent use of our increasingly stressed ocean resources. Our perspective is long-term. What this means is that we are continually looking to advance and diversify the maritime industry while at the same time preserving the marine environment. Both of these facets are vital to the sustainable development of the industry, and are pursued with equal vigor.



Our support has enabled the development of exciting new technologies such as this Techno-Superliner, which is capable of transporting freight at speeds of up to fifty knots.

Aid for Research and Development

The Nippon Foundation provides financial resources for R&D in the shipping industry. For example, this funding has gone to develop such innovative technologies as floating airports, high-speed freighters and electromagnetic propulsion systems. Additionally, we cooperate on many related activities such as international exhibitions to introduce Japanese shipping technology abroad.

Improvements in Maritime Technology and Safety

Our Foundation cooperates with other international bodies in funding such things as development of safety-related technology for ocean-going vessels and systems for preventing maritime disasters. These programs have a strong effect on such areas as piracy, oil-spill clean-up and the navigational safety of vital sea-lanes.



We worked with the governments of Russia and Norway to develop a year-round sea route that will traverse the Arctic Ocean.

A Comprehensive Plan to Care for our Seas

The sea is vast, and its depths sometimes make it seem limitless. However, our millennia-long exploitation has picked up pace at an exponential rate as our technological development has raced ahead. It is time to stop and think about what we must do to if we are to continue to be able to reap our bounty from the sea. To this end, The Nippon Foundation is building a network of researchers, aiming at the creation of a think-tank to look into systems that will combine sustainable utilization of our marine resources while at the same time preserving the natural ocean environment. Our work is relevant around the world, but given our geographical location, we especially support projects that focus on the Asia-Pacific region.

Public Understanding of Ships and the Ocean

Popular understanding of issues related to ships and the sea is on the rise in Japan, thanks in part to a national campaign which included the establishment of Marine Day as a national holiday. Our Foundation also does its part in promoting awareness of these important topics. Education at an early stage is very important for this. Thus, we have supported the building of a large maritime museum on Tokyo Bay, education programs for children, and public events which pull entire families into the education process.



Eighty percent of Japanese oil comes through the treacherous Malacca Strait. We have been working for thirty years to improve the safety of this area.

Marine Research and Information Resources

Information is essential if we are to progress. Moreover, that information must be available on demand to people around the world who know how to use it. Only in this way can we combine all of our mental resources and truly advance. Thus, in order to address such issues as marine pollution and to support efforts at deep sea exploration, the Foundation cooperates in international efforts to build and maintain global nautical-information networks.

Capital Lending Projects

The shipbuilding industry is perhaps more important to Japan's economic wealth than any other sector. To support this field, The Nippon Foundation provides long- and short-term financing for cutting-edge ship-building technology within Japan. It also provides a certain amount of the operating capital necessary for business stability within the industry. In this way, it contributes to the stimulation of the shipbuilding industry.

Domestic Volunteer Support

The islands of Japan lie on the dangerous intersection of three major tectonic plates. The country thus experiences minor earthquakes nearly weekly, and at some times hourly. However, in 1995, South-Western Japan was struck by the most devastating earthquake of the late Twentieth Century. More than five thousand people died. But along with all of the destruction, the Hanshin Earthquake brought to Japan a new awareness. It was this quake that first focused the attention of Japanese society on volunteer work.



Our programs to improve the mobility of the physically disabled have had a strong effect on Japanese awareness and acceptance of this important part of society.

At a time when the Japanese Government stood paralyzed with infighting and embarrassment, the grassroots volunteer groups promptly moved in and rescued the region from further administrative disaster. That year was dubbed “The Christening of Volunteer Activity in Japan.” The incident helped us perceive a change in public awareness—the rather late arrival of a new era.

Changing Society

Until recently, Japan’s development has almost exclusively been conducted through official initiatives, drawing heavily on the close relationships between big business and the government. Today however, people are beginning to notice what real affluence means; they are reconsidering the process and system of social decision making. Further, with new values and greater means at their disposal, they are engaging in a restructuring of the social makeup, changing Japan into a “civil society,” in which citizens play the main role, independently of government. The key to this new society is citizens’ activities, voluntarily directed by individuals who shoulder responsibility. From now on, these civil groups should be considered as a new, important sector of society.



We are helping local groups to protect the environment in their areas, in a program similar to the British BTCV.

The 21st Century holds a number of challenges. Our declining birthrate. Our increasing ratio of elderly people. The destruction of the global environment. In order to construct an affluent civil society in which people can live with hope, it is necessary to prepare an environment that allows volunteer groups to become the core sector of society.

Civil Activity Infrastructure

The Nippon Foundation assists diverse volunteer activities around the country which are oriented toward building a more humane society. While the energy of these groups is phenomenal they are also remarkably diverse and have disparate goals. They are often cut off from one another and thus unaware of each others' activities. In this situation, groups can often be focused on the same problems or even work at loggerheads. Their efficiency can thus be compromised at times. For this reason, one of our most fundamental of projects in this area has been the development of a civil society infrastructure. Small versions of such an infrastructure exist around the country, providing information exchange between volunteer groups, government and businesses. In addition to providing assistance to these networks we are working toward the creation of a way to further join them into a national infrastructure of civil activity.

Disaster Relief

Disasters are usually disasters because they come unexpectedly and are met with insufficient preparation and ineffective response. Through long experience, we have learned that there are two areas of primary importance in disaster management: preparedness before the event, and prompt response after. In order to encourage preparedness, we have provided the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs with a fund to be used to honor the disaster prevention efforts of groups around the world. This fund has had the effect of encouraging groups to put forth extra effort in preparation.

The World's Best Hope

The list of areas that volunteer groups are active in, supported by our aid, is far too long for this brochure. Just to give an idea of some of the other areas we are working in, our recent activities have also included conservation, and the self-reliance of the disabled. The world's volunteers are perhaps its best hope.



It was volunteers in Japan who made the difference when the Russian tanker Nahodoka overturned, spilling tons of crude oil onto Japanese shores.

Domestic Social Welfare and Public Health

An aging society. Growing internationalization. An increase in leisure time. Diversification of attitudes and values. It is against this complex social backdrop of today's Japan that The Nippon Foundation aims to help build a society that offers peace, freedom and fulfillment for all. To achieve this end, we promote and assist in a wide range of activities for the public and social good.

The Improvement of Quality of Life of an Aging Society

It is a common thing for the population of a country to age as the country's financial stability increases. In Japan's case, this is true in the extreme. Currently, the growth of the population over age sixty-five is outpacing that under age fifteen for the first time in history. Japan is graying. For this reason, it has no choice but to realize a viable system of social welfare for the elderly, renovating the current one. It must also create an environment in which senior citizens can continue to



"Careports" are Japan's newest and most innovative form of homes for the elderly. They have been built with funding from The Nippon Foundation, and provide a model for the next generation of such facilities.



Life does not end at sixty. As our society grows increasingly gray, it is becoming more and more necessary to change its services to accommodate the elderly.

enjoy a sense of purpose in life, in which they can achieve peace of mind. Toward this end, we assist in activities such as the construction of what we call "careports:" facilities designed to elevate the quality of life of the aged. We are aware that lifestyles and values vary from region to region within the country, and have designed our careports with this in mind. Every facility is different, tailored to the atmosphere and needs of the community that houses it. In addition to this, we have developed Japan's first privately run hospice, setting the pace for the government and the rest of the country in this important area of humanitarian work. Only with such flexible and innovative methods can we hope to meet the needs of our rapidly expanding community of seniors.

Improving the Lifestyles of People with Disabilities

The Foundation is currently working on many programs geared toward aiding those with physical, mental and emotional disabilities. Until just a few years ago, people with disabilities were hidden away in homes out of families' fear of social repercussions. However, the situation is changing. Social acceptance of these people is increasing rapidly, due in part to programs like the ones we have pioneered. Among these are the creation and support of welfare facilities for the disabled, vocational-training centers which empower and encourage the mentally disabled so that they can participate more fully in society, and the promotion of athletic activities in which people with physical disabilities participate along side people without such difficulties.

Promoting Sports as an Essential Part of Daily Life

Athletics are essential to attaining a vigorous and fulfilling life. Yet, as our society becomes more and more affluent, we find ourselves getting less exercise. We thus have less energy with which to enjoy our lives. This is an important malady of modern society. The Nippon Foundation has thus developed programs and facilities that give ordinary people greater chances to exercise and enjoy sports. By nurturing and promoting sport, by providing people with opportunities to participate, we are contributing to the creation of a healthy society.

Assistance for Art, Culture and Education

As people grow healthier, their demand for a broader range of experience increases. They realize that the world is full of emotional, intellectual and spiritual riches that they can partake of. The Foundation's activities extend even to this realm. In our pursuit of richer, more fulfilling lives for society in general, The Foundation carries out a wide variety of activities supporting art and culture. We promote the preservation and development of traditional arts, promote cultural exchange, and help provide educational opportunities for young people to appreciate quality artwork. In doing this, we both enrich our society and provide stimulation for today's artists and craftsmen so that we might also have something to pass on to our children.



Physical fitness is vital to the full enjoyment of life. Our programs help all people to participate in activities that provide exercise, fun and companionship.



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