



Rotary Yoneyama Memorial Foundation

A Collaborative Program by Japan's Rotary Districts

The Rotary Yoneyama Memorial Foundation (RYMF) is a Multidistrict Activity, supported and promoted by all the thirty-four Rotary districts in Japan. The scholarship program was established in 1952, with the aim of acquainting people of the world to a peaceful post-war Japan. It's directed solely at students coming from other countries to study in Japan. Approximately 720 scholarship recipients are selected each year, at an operating cost of approximately 9.7 million dollars, making it the largest domestic private sector scholarship program for foreign students. The foundation is supported by donations from Rotarians throughout Japan.

To date the program has helped some 18,648 students from 123 countries and regions. Not only

does the program award scholarships, but it also turns attention toward international exchange and "heart to heart" interactions through community service activities.

The program also helps support recipient students in their daily lives. Each scholar has one Rotary club to serve as their "Sewa Club", or host club, and one member from that club is chosen to act as the student's "counselor".

Graduating alumni go on to play active roles in the world, and some become Rotarians themselves. There are thirty-one alumni associations established by former Yoneyama scholars in Japan. There are also six alumni

associations outside of Japan in South Korea, Taiwan, China, Thailand, Nepal and Mongolia, together with alumni networks in Vietnam, Malaysia and Sri Lanka.



Our Notable Alumni Let us take a look at some of our wonderful Yoneyama alumni, of whom we are so proud.

First Ambassador from Yoneyama Alumni

Dr. Sang-Yong Choi

Yoneyama Scholar, 1969 – 72 from Korea

After graduating from Seoul National University in 1965 Dr. Choi came to Japan as a student to investigate a workable means for bringing about a return to peace. He worked on his Ph.D. at The University of Tokyo Graduate School for three years, became a Yoneyama scholar, and poured his energy into his studies. He received his Ph.D. in law in 1972. His magnificent scholastic record includes being the first person ever, Japanese included, to get a Ph.D. in the field of International Politics at The University of Tokyo.

After returning to South Korea Dr. Choi went on to serve as assistant professor at Chung-Ang University, visiting professor at Harvard University, and full professor at Korea University. In 1998 he served on the advisory committee that helped draft the Japan-South Korea Joint Declaration of 1998. He also helped persuade



Dr. Choi made a speech at the district conference of D-2780

then president Kim Dae-Jung and his cabinet in matters pertaining to the opening of the South Korean market to Japanese culture, thus laying the historically significant groundwork for the dramatic growth in exchange between the two nations.

In 2000 he became the first private citizen to be appointed Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Korea to Japan. Relations between

the two countries were strained at that time, but during his two years of service he helped foster a deeper understanding between Japan and Korea by promoting government policy that placed emphasis on mutual cultural exchange. During Japan-Korea Friendship Year 2005 he served as head of the Korean advisory committee.

In this way he continues to serve as a link between Japan and Korea.

Professor Emeritus, Korea University, 14th Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Korea to Japan. The University of Tokyo Graduate School. Sewa Club: Tokyo Nihonbashi, Tokyo Josai

Helping to Reform Education in Mongolia **Mr. Janchiv Galbadrakh**

Yoneyama Scholar, 1998 – 99 from MONGOLIA

Mr. Janchiv Galbadrakh's dream, on which he had staked his entire future, germinated at the moment he became a Yoneyama Scholarship recipient during his third year as a foreign student in Japan. His vision was to help further development in his country by creating a high school that offered, not the traditional two-year curriculum, but rather the international standard curriculum of three years, by sending students to study at universities abroad, and by nurturing people who could make contributions in the international arena.

When his Yoneyama counselor, Mr. Mitsuru Sakamaki, and his host club members learned of this dream, they solicited contributions amongst themselves and from people in Yamagata and Miyagi prefectures. October 2000 saw the opening of the Shine Mongol High School in Mongolia's capital city, Ulaanbaatar. The following year Mongolian president Bagabandi visited the school to observe. Today it is ranked among the nation's top schools, having constructed adjacent elementary and junior high schools, and having a student population of over 1,100, with more than 250 graduating students having been sent to Japan for further study. In 2013 the



Mr. Galbadrakh conducts the Japanese prime minister's wife, Mrs. Akie Abe, around the Shine Mongol High School

Japanese government presented Mr. Galbadrakh with the Foreign Minister's Commendation for Meritorious Service for his record in contributing to the promotion of understanding between Japan and Mongolia. In 2014 he opened the New Mongol Technique and Engineering College and the New Mongol Institute of Technology in an effort to nurture technicians and researchers in the sciences. In 2011 Mr. Galbadrakh became a member of the Rotary Club of Khuree (D-3450).

Director-general, Shine Mongol Academy.
Yamagata University Graduate School
Sewa Club: Yamagata North

Promoting Corrective Education in Taiwan Prisons **Mr. Shyan-Chang Wu**

Yoneyama Scholar, 1986 – 87 from Taiwan

In 1985, while serving as head of security at Tainan Prison, 34-year-old Mr. Wu decided he would go to Japan to study because he wanted to learn more about the new corrective education for preventing crime and repeated offences in Japan, where the crime rate was said to be one tenth of that for Taiwan. During his second year as a graduate student he received a Yoneyama scholarship.

He also visited a number of prisons and reform schools throughout Japan and learned about corrective



Art activities employed in Taiwan's prison occupational program (Mr. Wu center)

education through artistic activities. He returned to Taiwan and performed several prison reform “miracles” at Hsinchu Prison and other institutions using the knowledge he had gained. “Through training in art and culture and by creation of artistic works prisoners can reawaken their true selves and hidden talents, and, looking forward with hope, set out on a new life.”

With this underlying belief, Mr. Wu began adopting artistic activities into prison routine. Buildings and works of art designed and completed by inmates now colorfully adorn the environs of Hsinchu Prison where Mr. Wu served for a time as acting warden. Thinking

it especially necessary to improve the techniques and opinions regarding the handling of prison inmates held by corrections personnel at prisons and reform schools, he subsequently established an education program for corrections personnel, and worked hard to make various improvements in conditions at corrective facilities. In 2011 he was appointed director of the Taiwan Agency of Corrections.

Former Director, Agency of Corrections, Taiwan Ministry of Justice
 Meiji University Graduate School
 Sewa Club: Tokyo Harajuku

Helping Solve the Problems of Developing Countries

Dr. Lai Yong Wong

Yoneyama Scholar, 2001 – 04 from Malaysia

Dr. Wong promised with her counselor that she strives to support education in developing countries, in order to return the support she was receiving back to the society. She became a Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) consultant



Dr.Wong holds a lecture in Japan

supporting Japanese corporations’ CSR activities in other Asian countries. She travelled widely in Asia, deepened her understanding of the issues developing countries face and began considering starting her own educational program. She founded a financially self-reliant social enterprise in 2012. She named her enterprise First Penguin after a brave penguin that leads the other penguins and is the first to dive into the sea.

In December of the same year she moved her operations to her native country Malaysia, and incorporated it in September 2013. Rather than dealing directly with the people in need of assistance, she provides personal development programs to the privileged youths, educate them the importance to know themselves and the world issues, so they will become more engaged in building the human society they live in. She also continues providing CSR consulting services and corporate trainings. She strives to inspire people to act like a first penguin, hoping these first penguins will contribute to make the world a better place.

Founder and Director, First Penguin
 Yokohama National University Graduate School
 Sewa Club: Yokohama Izumi

Erhu Performer Projects a Caring Heart

Dr. Xiao-Yan Jiang

Yoneyama Scholar, 2000 – 02 from China

During the midst of the turmoil of China’s Cultural Revolution, 5-year-old Xiao-Yan Jiang was persuaded by her father to enter an art school where she received special advanced instruction in the erhu, a 2-stringed instrument, or fiddle, played with a bow. She went on to music college and dreamed of becoming an actress, but

directed by her father, went on to study medicine.

She came to Japan in 1997 to study at the Hiroshima University Faculty of Medicine, hoping to learn superior clinical techniques so that she might become a heart specialist and save many lives. She entered the Ph.D. program at the suggestion of her teacher, but due to personal difficulties and the isolation of being a student in a foreign country, she began to suffer from depression. Two things saved her from the brink of despair: the teachings of Buddha, and the exchange with Rotary as

a Yoneyama scholarship recipient. She received a Doctor of Medicine degree in 2002, but not having a license to practice medicine in Japan, she was not able to do clinical work. Wanting to apply the Buddhist teachings that saved her in time of trouble, the music skills she learned in China, and her experiences in medicine in order to give something back to society, Dr. Jiang founded the Erhu Music School in Hiroshima.

She travels to earthquake disaster areas and hospitals, as well as to facilities for the elderly, mentally disadvantaged and atomic bomb victims, both in Japan and China, where she talks about respect for life, and comforts people's souls with the sound of her erhu.



Lecture on the value of life includes a performance on the erhu

Principle, Erhu Music School
Hiroshima University Graduate School
Sewa Club: Hiroshima Southwest

Improving Education for the Sight Impaired in Sudan

Dr. Mohamed Omer Abdin

Yoneyama Scholar, 2005 – 08 from Sudan



Students play soccer at a school for the visually impaired

Specially Appointed Assistant professor, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, Founding Director, Committee for Assisting and Promoting Education for Disabled in Sudan (CAPEDS)
Tokyo University of Foreign Studies
Sewa Club: Tokyo Kunitachi Shiroume

Due to an early childhood progressive disorder Dr. Abdin lost his sight at the age of twelve. In January 1998 at the age of nineteen he came to Japan by the invitation of the International Association For The Visually Impaired and spent three years learning massage and acupuncture at the Fukui Prefectural School for the Visually Impaired. There he encountered Braille, which he could study on his own, and this changed the course of his life.

After graduating from the school he went to Tsukuba College of Technology, where he mastered the program for reading computer displays. Hoping to learn more about civil conflict and peace in his own country, Sudan, he entered Tokyo University of Foreign Studies in 2003. He became a Yoneyama Scholar in his third year, and was influenced in various ways by Rotarian activities. In March 2007, while still at school, he founded the Committee for Assisting and Promoting Education for Disabled in Sudan, where conditions continue to be harsh. Many young people in Japan help him in planning activities, and he receives support from his host club, Tokyo Kunitachi Shiroume as well. As a 20th anniversary project the club presented a Braille printer to Sudan, the first ever in that country. The six years since 2008 have seen the establishment of a program for making educational materials in Braille, something that had never existed in Sudan.

“To learn is to live. To place restrictions on learning is to place restrictions on life itself,” explains Dr. Abdin, as he continues his efforts to aid the disabled in Sudan.