Asian Party is a social gathering bringing together all the people, things, and information of Asia, under the concept of "Create with Asia."

This year the three main events—the Fukuoka Prize, the Focus on Asia Fukuoka International Film Festival, and the Fukuoka Asian Party—highlighted the festivities, with a total of 20 events supported by private companies, organizations, and some 670,000 participants.

Issued by Fukuoka City Secretariat of the Fukuoka Prize Committee
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Organized by: Fukuoka City/ Fukuoka City International Foundation
Supported by: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan/ Agency for Cultural Affairs, Government of Japan.

Create with Asia. Think about Asia.
Background of the Fukuoka Prize

Asia is home to a diversity of ethnic groups, languages, and cultures, which exist with each other and depend on each other. These diverse cultures have served not only as guardians of the priceless legacy of our long history and tradition, but also as sources of inspiration. However, in the current era of globalization, there is a danger that Asian cultures may lose their distinctive features due to the encroaching standardization of culture. It is therefore vital to preserve, develop, and promote the harmonious coexistence of the diverse Asian cultures.

As Japan’s cultural gateway, Fukuoka City has since antiquity played a significant role in promoting exchanges with other regions of Asia. This history, and a determination to promote and understand the distinctive features due to the encroaching standardization of culture, has made outstanding contributions in the fields of social sciences, such as history, archaeology, cultural anthropology, economics, and political science.

The Fukuoka Prize was established to honor outstanding achievements by individuals or groups in preserving and creating the unique and diverse cultures of Asia. The aim is to foster and increase awareness of the value of Asian cultures as well as to establish a framework within which Asians can learn from, and share with, each other.

Objective

1. Prize Categories

- **Grand Prize**
  - Prize money: 5,000,000 yen
  - To be awarded to an individual who has made outstanding contributions to the promotion and creation of Asian culture and has exhibited the significance of Asian culture to the world through the international, universality, popularity and creativity of their work.

- **Academic Prize**
  - Prize money: 3,000,000 yen
  - To be presented to individuals and organizations that have made outstanding contributions in the field of Asian studies, contributing to the world’s understanding of Asia. It covers the fields of science, social studies, such as history, archaeology, cultural anthropology, economics, and political science.

- **Arts and Culture Prize**
  - Prize money: 3,000,000 yen
  - To be presented to individuals and groups that have made outstanding contributions in the cultural and/or advancement of the unique and diverse arts and culture of Asia. It covers the fields such as fine arts, literature, music, dance, film, architecture, and traditional and ethnic culture.

3. Geographical Scope

East Asia, Southeast Asia, and South Asia

Fukuoka City, Fukuoka City International Foundation

4. Organizing Bodies

Fukuoka City, Fukuoka City International Foundation

Timeline of the Fukuoka Prize 2015

As of December 2015

**Fukuoka Prize Committee**

Chair: SHIMIZU Hiroshi

Member: SATO Yasunori, CHIBA Tomohiro, HIROMI Shinya, YAMAMOTO Ikuo, KASAI Masahito, KAWAZOKA Masayoshi

**Fukuoka Prize Jury**

Chair: SHIMIZU Hiroshi

Member: SATO Yasunori, CHIBA Tomohiro, HIROMI Shinya, YAMAMOTO Ikuo, KASAI Masahito, KAWAZOKA Masayoshi

**Academic Prize Selection Committee**

Chair: SHIMIZU Hiroshi

Member: SATO Yasunori, CHIBA Tomohiro, HIROMI Shinya, YAMAMOTO Ikuo, KASAI Masahito, KAWAZOKA Masayoshi

**Arts and Culture Prize Selection Committee**

Chair: CHIBA Tomohiro

Member: SATO Yasunori, CHIBA Tomohiro, HIROMI Shinya, YAMAMOTO Ikuo, KASAI Masahito, KAWAZOKA Masayoshi

As of September 2015
Dr. Thant Myint-U, an exceptionally outstanding historian, beautifully records the history of his ancestral homeland, Myanmar (Burma), with analytical clarity from a global perspective. Based on his own experiences in United Nations peace-building operations in Cambodia and the former Yugoslavia, he is now engaged in efforts, in cooperation with the national government, to gather the peace in his own country.

Dr. Thant Myint-U was born in 1966 in New York City. After graduating from Harvard University, he enrolled at Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies, from which he received a Master’s degree in International Relations and International Economics. From 1992, he was involved in peace-building activities in Cambodia and Bosnia-Herzegovina etc., and in 1996, he received his Ph.D. in Modern History from the University of Cambridge.

In his first masterpiece, *The Making of Modern Burma* (2000), he argues that Burmese national identity and the fragmentation of Burma as a modern nation-state came into being from the late 19th century until the Burmese colonial rule. His brilliant analysis has provided much discussion in this field. In his next work, *The River of Lost Footsteps: A Personal History of Burma* (2006), he explores the history of Burma from multiple angles, tracing the footprints of various Burmese people, including those of his own family. His latest work, *China Meets India: Where China Meets India: The Making of Modern Burma* (2011), describes the history of Burma and China, which is a country situated between two rising powers—China and India—from the viewpoints of people at the bottom of the social pyramid and those living in remote regions, due to international borders. This book, in his own words, is an attempt to present the history of Burma as if the country was a character. He demonstrates the potential of the and the India-Myanmar-China cooperation in the future, which is a very important agenda.

The book has been translated into Japanese and won the 26th Asia Pacific Award Special Prize (Representative by the Asian Arts Research Council and Mainichi Newspaper) (When China Meets India: The New Crossroads of Asia) in 2011. The book has been translated into many languages, having been highly appreciated in the academic community, and is also one of the highest public intellectuals of the world. The book was able to connect with wide range of people, including top government officials, in order to analyze the history of his society and the contemporary world. In a global sense he has gained respect through his Vice Chairmanship of the World Economic Forum Global Agenda Council on Southeast Asia, and his membership in the Council for the next generation to give at the United Nations University in Tokyo, promoting intense dialogue with young people in 2014.

Myanmar is the focus of Asia today. What sort of future is in store for the people of Myanmar? How will they open up their society to the wave of globalization? How will they manage future development? After decades of isolation there are obviously tremendous challenges for them and numerous tasks to be overcome. At this crucial moment in history, however, Dr. Thant Myint-U appears as a leading historian and intellectual, narrating the voices of the people of Myanmar and connecting them with the wider international community. With fresh and distinguished contribution to Asian and world society, Dr. Thant Myint-U is a truly worthy recipient of the Grand Prize of the Fukuoka Prize.
**Arts and Culture Prize 2015**

**Minh Hanh**  
*Vietnam/Fashion Designer*

**BIography**

1961 Born in Pleiku, Vietnam  
1983 B.A. (Graphic Design), Ho Chi Minh City Fine Arts University, Vietnam  
1994 Director, Legamex Fashion Center, Vietnam  
1997 Awarded the Special Award in Asia Collection, Makuhari, Japan  
2000 Director, Vietnam Fashion Design Institute  
2004 Founder, Vietnam Fashion Collection Grant Prix  
Senior Advisor and Art Director for Art Programs in Hue Festival and Hue Traditional Craft Festival  
2001 Founder, Vietnam Fashion Week  
2006 Confirmed the Award of Chevalier dans l’Ordre des Arts et des Lettres  
Member of the Executive Board, Vietnam Textile and Apparel Association  
Assigned by the Government as a designer for Vietnam APEC uniform, Vietnam  
2014 Founding member, Italy-Vietnam Fashion Council

**Major Fashion Shows and Exhibitions**

- *Hue minorities show*, Lorient, France, 2011.

**Award Citation**

Ms. Minh Hanh, a leading fashion designer in Vietnam, produces contemporary fashion design based on her deep insight of the many ethnic cultures in Vietnam. Her works fuse ao dai and time-honored embroideries and fabrics inherited among Vietnamese ethnic minorities. At the same time, she organizes various fashion shows and other cultural events inside and outside Vietnam. Moreover, she is committed to developing young designers, apparel markets, and the fashion industry, thereby significantly contributing to the creation of elegant costumes unique to Asia.

Born in 1961 in Pleiku (central Vietnam), Ms. Minh Hanh moved to Hue, Da Nang, and Saigon in the Vietnam War. Amid the intensifying warfare, she always found herself surrounded by colorful costumes of various ethnic minorities. As a child, she began making dresses for her dolls. When she was only 11 years old, she sewed her school uniform of ao dai.

After graduating from Ho Chi Minh City Fine Arts University in 1983, she joined a newspaper company as an illustrator. She exhibited her exceptional talent in fashion design when she was engaged in the planning and editing of a fashion newspaper. Following introduction of the Doi Moi Policy (economic and social reforms) in 1986, she became involved in the management of the Legamex Fashion Center, the first fashion institute in Vietnam. This experience led her to develop her career in the area of fashion design. In addition to creative activities, she worked to establish the Vietnam Fashion Week and Vietnam Collection Grant Prix with the aim of fostering young designers and developing the fashion market further in Vietnam.

Meanwhile, she has revived traditional Vietnamese craft industries, such as silk weaving, by adopting their products into her own works. In her designs, she adopts embroidery and fabrics that have been passed on for generations among ethnic minorities, while concurrently employing bold and modern color palettes and design compositions. Rather than simply inheriting traditional designs, Ms. Minh Hanh produces a wide variety of her original works by fairly evaluating traditional Vietnamese costumes and craftsworks and relativizing them to the overwhelming influence of Western fashion.

In recognition of her outstanding achievements, in 1997 she was honored with the Special Award in Asia Collection, Makuhari, Japan, which was the first international competition that she joined. In 2002, she produced a fashion show held at the royal palace in Hue, which was Vietnam’s first World Heritage site inscribed. Currently, she serves as Senior Advisor and Art Director for Art Programs at the Hue Festival and the Hue Traditional Craft Festival. In 2003, she also organized the Ao Dai Collection at Kyomizu Temple in Kyoto, Japan on the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Japan and Vietnam. In 2006, she received the Award of Chevalier dans l’Ordre des Arts et des Lettres from the Government of France. To introduce attractive features of Vietnamese fashion and culture to the world, she continues to organize many fashion shows in various parts of the world, particularly in Asia, North America, and Europe.

In addition, representing Vietnamese designers, she designed cabin attendants’ uniforms for Vietnam Airlines, and the costumes for national leaders at the meetings of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) held in Vietnam in 2006.

While engaged in creative activities that proudly represent traditional Vietnamese culture with contemporary sensibilities, Ms. Minh Hanh has also been committed to fostering young designers. Her contribution to the development of Asian fashion culture is truly worthy of the honor of the Arts and Culture Prize of the Fukuoka Prize.
The 26th Fukuoka Prize award ceremony was held in honor of the laureates in the presence of Their Imperial Highnesses Prince Akishino, Fukuoka citizens, foreign guests and representatives from various fields. The ceremony began with video introductions of the laureates.

The three laureates received tremendous applause as they walked through the audience seats up to the stage, demonstrating the warmth of their reception. Mr. TAKASHIMA Soichiro, Mayor of Fukuoka City, began by explaining that over one hundred people had already been honored with the Fukuoka Prize. He expressed his resolve to serve the Asian region as a center for international change through the “Asian Party”, including the Fukuoka Prize and other events, under the concept of “Create with Asia.”

His Imperial Highness Prince Akishino then congratulated the laureates on their winning the prize. His address was followed by the report on the selection process by Prof. KURO Chiharu, Chair of the Fukuoka Prize Jury and President of Kyushu University. Mayor TAKASHIMA then presented award certificates and medals to the laureates. A university student offered a congratulatory message on behalf of the people of Fukuoka City, after which children from Fukuoka International School presented the laureates with bouquets, accompanied by thunderous applause.

The second part opened with speeches by the laureates. In response to questions from city residents, they presented their thoughts on “Democratization in Myanmar,” “Diverse India and Gandhi’s Philosophy in the Modern Era,” and “Tradition and Country.” The speeches were followed by a collaborative live performance of Indian ink art by Yu-I NISHIMOTO and the Kyushu University School of Design. Painted ink flow from the paper to the screen, spreading to transport the audience into a dynamic and changing space, serving as a moving conclusion to the ceremony.

Celebration Banquet
Following the award ceremony the celebration banquet was held, welcoming guests from various countries and interested parties. Professor KURO commenced the banquet by explaining that it had been made possible by the long interchange between Fukuoka and other regions of Asia, and expressing his wish that it would lead to new encounters and new friendships. Next, VU Quoc Tye, Consul General of the Consulate General of Vietnam in Fukuoka, presented a toast to congratulate the laureates and start the banquet in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere.

I wish to extend my heartfelt congratulations to the distinguished laureates on this auspicious occasion of The Fukuoka Prize 2015 Award Ceremony. I am pleased to learn that the total number of Fukuoka Prize Laureates has exceeded 100 this year, and I am profoundly impressed by the broad range of these laureates. I wish to express my sincere respect for the tireless endeavors of all concerned over the years in earning the prestige of this Prize. The advancement of globalization in recent years has brought an increasingly uniform way of thinking and lifestyle. On the other hand, it has also led to a growing interest in the uniqueness and diversity of indigenous cultures, and a deeper appreciation of their importance.

Under these circumstances, I believe that The Fukuoka Prize honors those of distinguished achievements in an extremely meaningful cause that respects the distinctive and diverse cultures of Asia and contributes to their preservation and continuation, creates new culture, and promotes academic research on Asia.

This year’s laureates, like their predecessors, have devoted deep study to the cultures and societies of Asia, and represent advances in the understanding of cultural diversity that have also led to the creation of new culture. This Prize acknowledges, not just within Asia but throughout the rest of the world, the significance of their outstanding achievements, which will contribute to developments in the future, and will be shared with society as a whole as a valuable asset of mankind to be handed on to future generations.

In closing my address, I would like to congratulate the distinguished laureates once again, and I hope that the Fukuoka Prize will continue to enhance the understanding of Asia and its respective regions, and further promote peace and friendship throughout the international community.
Acceptance Speeches

**Grand Prize**

**Thant Myint-U**

Myanmar: Isolated for Too Long, Now Faces New Challenges

Your Imperial Highnesses, Mr. Mayor, honored guests, ladies and gentlemen,

I am deeply honored to receive this year’s Grand Prize. This is my first time to visit Fukuoka.

I feel already that Fukuoka is a green and livable city, dynamic and modern. I am certain that Yangon can learn much from the city planning of Fukuoka.

When I look back on the history of Myanmar, it is clear to me that the nation thrived and developed when it was interconnected to the world, because Myanmar was ever ready to learn new things, and to adopt them. Myanmar is finally escaping decades of isolation, modernizing rapidly, and changing in many ways. I feel that it is of crucial importance to protect the traditions, arts, and architecture of Myanmar during this time of dramatic change.

Where are the strengths of Myanmar? It is important to realize that they are not in a unified tradition or culture, but in the very diversity of our culture.

Many people live in many different ways in Myanmar, making the land rich in diverse ethnicities, cultures, and religions. This is a gift, and the people of Myanmar must meet the challenges of today by overcoming barriers of prejudice to realize the full strength of diversity, and develop a comprehensive identity for the 21st century. Only when we achieve this will our long period of isolation truly end, and we will be able to fully utilize the advantages of our geographic location at the crossroads of Asia.

It is an honor to be included in the distinguished company of laureates of the Fukuoka Prize. Thank you.

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**Academic Prize**

**Ramachandra GUHA**

Surpassing Narrow Views to Become a Moderate Historian

It is a great honor today to receive the Academic Prize.

Historians must surpass prejudice and narrowness in their thinking. In research, it is crucial to read not only official documents issued by the government, but also newspapers, testimonies, social media comments, and all sorts of media information. Learning from the perspectives of people in other fields of study is also important. It is essential to see beyond the barriers of patriotism and ideology.

I am an historian of Indian history, but am committed to looking at history evenly. When I study Indonesia, for example, I look at it from their perspective. The fact that Indonesian historians have access to an enormous quantity of history books on the Java kingdoms, and the Dutch colonial era, for example, had a deep impact on me.

The Fukuoka Prize surpasses national boundaries, and recognizes people who have made a contribution to all of Asia. I must express my thanks to my family for having made it possible for me to receive this prize, and to all those who assisted me, my professors and colleagues at school, and so many historians.

I also express my appreciation to Professor SATO Hiroshi, who translated my book so ably. It is the finest translation of my work so far, and printed and bound beautifully in outstanding Japanese taste.

The Bhagavad Gita, a Hindu religious text, warns us not to give up the robust lifestyle of fulfilling our personal daily duties. I do the work I do because I love it, and I thank you all very deeply for this prize.

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**Arts and Culture Prize**

**Minh Hạnh**

Studying the Cultures of Many Lands, Because Culture Will Save the World

Your Imperial Highnesses, distinguished guests, I am deeply honored by being selected to receive the Arts and Culture Prize, not only for myself, but also because I believe it was earned by the whole of Vietnamese culture.

The Fukuoka Prize is a respected award with a long history. I must express my appreciation to all those who have strengthened and continued the prize for so long, including Fukuoka City, the Fukuoka Prize Committee, and the people of Japan.

Through your efforts over these 26 years, you have supported the fundamental development of Asian culture. I would also like to thank the people living in tiny villages hidden deep in the mountains using wood looms, weaving. I believe that this prize is an important validation of their culture. I am confident that this contribution will open the hearts of people everywhere to new culture, and promote exchange between the people of Vietnam, and the people of Fukuoka, and Japan.

If the world were flat, I think culture would define a single ethnic group. And if each nation understood the cultures of other nations, and brought together all of the people of all of the nations through culture, I think humanity would find happiness.

I would like to conclude my speech with my belief that culture will save the world.

Thank you.

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**Interview**

Q: Is Myanmar seeking the same type of democracy as practiced in Europe and America?
A: I don’t think there are any major differences. In democracy the citizens elect their leaders, and Myanmar also hopes to elect its leaders through free elections. The people are poor, and they look to democracy to improve their economic situation.

Q: What role will Myanmar play in the future of Asia?
A: Myanmar is a weak, poor nation, and unless we open our doors we will lose greatly. Myanmar has made great strides toward the future. If you look at a map you will see that we are situated at a crossroads for Asia, and we could provide an important interface for many nations. I think the next five or ten years will be the turning point.

Q: How is Gandhi’s philosophy carried on in modern Indian society?
A: India has many languages and religions, and Gandhi encompasses them all. I think that India is doing a good job of respecting diversity. Gandhi’s achievements have affected not only India, but citizens rights movements around the world. Leaders like Aung San Suu Kyi of Myanmar, for example, were influenced by his work.

Q: How do you achieve unity in such a diverse nation?
A: There are three directions of progress:

A: India is successfully respecting diversity, as evidenced by the fact that there are 17 languages on our currency. The European Union is facing similar issues, with many languages and religions, and I think they can learn much from India, which successfully met the challenge 50 years ago.

Q: What are the characteristics and meanings of your unique clothing?
A: The women who weave this cloth are from ethnic minorities, living near the border between Vietnam and Laos. Their inspiration comes from their hearts, and from the trees and flowers of their daily lives. Their lives are simple, with life and death, as shown in the patterns they create.

Q: What do you think about tradition?
A: Tradition is new. It is tradition for the old to be replaced by the new. Tradition forms the basis of an era, and is accepted by the people, but if youth cannot love the past, changes the history of the people, and refuses to accept tradition, then they can no longer see their future, either. They forget their roots, and forget themselves. I hope to bring tradition and modernity together in one. Fashion is culture, and without your own culture there is no future. Unless we can value tradition and culture, there is no future.
Cooperation by Japan and the Rest of International Society is Essential in Advancing Democracy in Myanmar

Myanmar is in a period of dramatic change, and there is growing hope for peace and stability. The change in government has made possible a new constitution, and the political environment enjoys new freedoms. Economic reform is also advancing, and things are looking up for the first time in a long time. Following a prolonged “black hole” of isolation, the rapid changes in recent years are promising.

November 28, 1885 was an important day in the history of Myanmar. It was the day that the thousand-year-old dynasty was toppled by the British, and until about 1940, Burma was governed as a part of India. Myanmar is a fertile land, and over the years, hundreds of thousands, millions of immigrants from China, India and elsewhere came. Most of the Burmese were reduced to the lowest rungs of society, and they held considerable enmity against the immigrants and foreign corporations among themselves.

After independence, the military gained strength, and military rule took effect in 1962 to suppress democratic movements as for foreign influences. The nation grew poor under dictatorship and international isolation. From about 1988, however, movements began to gain strength to end military rule.

We transitioned to a civilian government in 1990, and are now working to return to the community of nations. Myanmar is today open to the world, and the Isanese hope for a new democratic future. One of our pressing issues is how to nurture a sense of national identity.

Democracy, peace, and economic development are all interconnected. To make possible a peaceful, stable advancement toward democracy, we must continue to advance peace in 2020s with 20 different armed groups, while investing into infrastructure such as electricity and rail, as well as health and education. Our proximity to both India and China proves the potential for rapid development.

International cooperation is an important as international competition. There is a long history of interaction between Myanmar and Japan, and the government is also interested in personal exchange. I am confident that relations between our nations will grow stronger in the future. I hope that you will all visit my country as tourists, and meet the non-government organizations, universities, and common people of Myanmar.

Speech by AKASHI Yasushi

As the first Japanese employee of the United Nations, I worked under the secretaries-General of the United Nations, Mr. U Thant, who was the grandfather of my son Dr. Thant Myint-U. In the 1990s, when I was in charge of crucial peacekeeping activities, one promising staff working under me was Dr. Thant Myint-U. He brilliantly described the complex history of his nation in his lecture just now, expressing confidence that if international society would provide aid and assistance, democracy would surely succeed in Myanmar. I hope that Japan will support their efforts, and take appropriate action to fulfill its role and responsibility toward that end.

Participation in International Society: Issues and Potentials

The dialogue between Dr. Thant Myint-U and his former superior at the United Nations, Dr. AKASHI Yasushi, was moderated by Professor TAKENAKA Chiharu.

Dr. Thant Myint-U explained some of the changes in Yangon, pointing out an explosion in smartphone users from 500,000 to 1.2 million people recently. “As the people of Myanmar, especially the young generations, become global consumers, it is crucial to consider what elements of Myanmar we need to preserve,” he commented. The discussion touched on the effects of Buddhism, and Dr. AKASHI explained that “Buddhism is a way of degrading mutual understanding and friendship between Japan, Myanmar and the other nations of Southeast Asia.” Dr. Thant Myint-U continued that his nation needed “improvements in government employees, in the land ownership system, and in national energy strategy,” and expressed his hopes for elections, the first time after over 50 years.

In response to a query from the audience as to what Japan can do to help Myanmar, Dr. AKASHI replied that “The entry of Japanese corporations into Myanmar will be to the benefit of both parties. Japan can also make contributions in education and social welfare. It is important to provide aid with sincerity, to support long-term development.”

School Visit

Dr. Thant Myint-U introduced his work at the United Nations, and his efforts today, together with reminiscences about his youth, to about 1100 girls in High School. He talked of the fascination and significance of working with international society, stressing that “The fact that you are Japanese, and are women, are both to your advantage when working in the international scene.” He shared all that they could do to help peace and peace, and how they “can make an enormous contribution in cybersecurity.”

School Visit

Dr. Thant Myint-U introduced the state of Myanmar today, with reference to its history and stressed key points such as issues in international relations and implementing democracy, and the effects of its powerful neighbors, China. When asked why he decided to get involved in the preservation of historic buildings, he replied that many old buildings in Bangkok were torn down for redevelopment when he was there, and he didn’t want to lose the “philosopher’s stone” of the architecture and dynasty of Yagon.
Minh Hanh

Vietnam/Fashion Design

**Public Lecture**

Creativity in Asia discovered through fashion: Attractive features of Vietnamese fashion and culture formed and expressed by Minh Hanh

- **Date:** Sunday, September 20, 2015 (14:00-16:30)
- **Venue:** Event Hall B1F, ACROS Fukuoka
- **Participants:** 400

**New Fashion Dimensions From Fabrics of Ethnic Minorities and Japanese Tradition**

The population of Vietnam is about 80 million people, and about 14% of that total consists of 53 ethnic minorities. The people of these ethnic minorities are simple and straightforward. Their feelings change with what they see and feel in their daily lives, and as a result the colors, materials, and patterns of their fabrics change, too. What they make during the day will be different from what they make at night. As a designer, this is a wonderful characteristic and one to be treasured, but it is very difficult for us to change our designs to match our mood as they do. When I work with the Hmong, I talk to them, sleep in their homes, and I empathize with them. As a designer, I gain powerful inspiration from that empathy.

My apprentices often ask me what we can do to preserve and protect their traditional work. I reply that this is a never-ending battle. It is difficult for young designers to appreciate the value of tradition, because it is very difficult to successfully incorporate traditional elements into modern fashion. If they can come to appreciate traditional values, however, they will treasure them forever. We must continue to fight for this battle.

I was born in the old city of Phnom Penh. The region is home to many ethnic minorities, and I often spent time with them. I lived there after graduating an arts university. I began to pursue a career in fashion, and nobody would accept the use of traditional ethnic elements in fashion designs. They asked me why I would use materials nobody wanted to wear, and make designs that weren’t fashionable. I never gave up, though, and if I worked with traditional elements always felt the inspiration flow. I brought this back as a child. Later, that style of weaving was recognized as authentic Vietnamese culture, and began to be used in tourist souvenirs, giving the minorities a source of income, and pride in their heritage.

My goal is to create fashion that integrates and ripples multi-cultural trends and regions. The modern era needs authentic value born from tradition, and I work to pass that on to the next generation.

**School Visit**

Ms. Minh Hanh came up with ideas based on models wearing designs by herself, and invited the students to notice the fabrics, embroidery, and weaving. As she introduced ethnic minorities, she advised students to “Treasure your roots and your identity. Japan has, Hakata-ori and Kurume kasuri, and you should utilize this cultural heritage in your own creations.” She added that “When you want to be a designer, remember that ‘thinking about designs every minute of the day can be lonely thinking by yourself, but if you really like design you’ll willingly make the sacrifices. You have to love design from the bottom of your heart.”
Press Conference

The press conference was held on September 17, in advance of the award ceremony. At the beginning, Mayor TAKAGISHIMA spoke in English on the unique features of Fukuoka City, which has developed as a link between Japan and the rest of Asia, and its lush natural beauty, fine food, and rich culture. He powerfully promoted “Creative Fukuoka” in front of representatives of foreign media, then introduced the three laureates. This was followed by the laureate speeches, and then a Q&A session. This year students from Fukuoka Girls’ High School also participated, asking questions such as “If you could go back in time, what advice would you give yourself as a high school student?” Reporters from Hakataasso Press, composed of foreign students in Fukuoka, questioned laureates from their respective nations. The laureates advised students to actively get involved in what interested them, and to establish a firm personal identity.

Press Conference
- Date: Thursday, Sep. 17 12:00-13:20
- Venue: Fukuoka International Congress Center

Other PR Activities

- Press tour for foreign media
  A press tour for foreign media was held for the first time this year, in collaboration with the Japan Foundation Asia Center. Reporters from Myanmar, Vietnam, Indonesia, the Philippines and other Asian nations were invited to Fukuoka, as well as from nations such as the UAE, to ensure widespread coverage on Fukuoka and the Fukuoka Prize.
  - Participating media: Tribune News (Indonesia) • Prothom Alo (Bangladesh) • WAM (UAE news agency) (UAE) • PINOY GAZETTE (Philippines) • The Myanmar Times (Myanmar)
  - Date: Thursday, Sep. 17 and Friday Sep. 18
  - Itinerary: Award ceremony, School visits, Focus on Asia Fukuoka International Film Festival opening ceremony, Fukuoka Asian Art Museum, etc.

- Formation of a reporting team by foreign students
  The Hakataasso Press was formed, consisting of foreign students from the laureates’ nations: Myanmar, India, and Vietnam. They reported on the award ceremony and other events via SNS and other media, both domestically and internationally.

Media Reports

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Laureates of the Fukuoka Prize

<table>
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<th>Year</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Field</th>
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<td><strong>Grand Prize/Thant Myint-U</strong></td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Myanmar</td>
<td>Literature</td>
<td>Writer of &quot;Waves of History&quot;</td>
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<td><strong>Academic Prize Ramakrishna Guha</strong></td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>India</td>
<td>Literature</td>
<td>Writer of &quot;Rashomon&quot;</td>
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<td><strong>Arts and Culture Prize Minh Hạnh</strong></td>
<td>2014</td>
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<td>Visual Arts</td>
<td>Sculptor of &quot;The Dream of Yukinoshita&quot;</td>
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</tbody>
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After the announcement of the laureates in June, press conferences were held in countries and region where the laureates are from, with representatives from local government agencies and the Japanese Embassy past laureates and local media in attendance. At these occasions, the significance of the Fukuoka Prize, the laureates’ achievements and the city’s profile were introduced and received extensive local media coverage.