

「平成 25 年度外務大臣表彰」の受賞について

当香港日本語教育研究会が日本国外の受賞 25 団体のうちの 1 団体として、平成 25 年度外務大臣表彰を受賞致しました。伝達式及び祝賀会は 2013 年 10 月 24 日（木）に総領事公邸で行われました。

同伝達式では、野田仁総領事(大使)より当研究会の略歴及び香港地区における日本語教育の向上と促進に対する貢献の概要を紹介していただきました上で、外務大臣による表彰状がマギー梁安玉会長へ手渡されました。

野田仁総領事(大使)の祝賀スピーチを下記のように転載させていただきます。

Ms. Maggie Leung, President of the Society of Japanese Language Education Hong Kong,
Former Presidents of the Society,
Mr. Chan Che Shing, Honorary Advisor of the Society,
Members of the Society,
Distinguished guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good evening,

Thank you all for gathering here for this wonderful occasion.

This gathering is indeed one of the most exciting occasions for me since I arrived in Hong Kong earlier this year as Japan's Consul-General. Maggie, and all the members of the Society, past and present, many, many congratulations.

It is also my greatest pleasure, actually simply due to the luck in the timing of my assignment here, that I am the one who happens to be tasked to deliver, on behalf of Japanese Foreign Minister Mr. Fumio Kishida, this year's Foreign Minister's Commendation Award to the Society of Japanese Language Education Hong Kong.

The Commendation Award of the Japanese Foreign Minister is presented for significant contributions by individual persons or organizations in various fields of Japanese foreign relations. This year Foreign Minister Kishida has found the achievements made by the Society over many decades to be particularly important and remarkable for the spread and promotion of the Japanese language and Japanese studies in Hong Kong and has decided to express his deep appreciation for this.

Again, being the head of the Consulate-General in Hong Kong, I am extremely delighted with this important recognition.

Of course, the Society fully deserves it.

Please allow me to quickly remind all of us of some of the Society's many, many accomplishments.

I am sure everyone here fully knows everything, but I hope this will be a good opportunity for recalling and acknowledging the great achievements throughout the history of the Society because this ceremony is a very special occasion for all of us.

It was already 35 years ago in 1978 that a group of scholars and instructors of the Japanese language in Hong Kong such as Professor Chan Ging Wo of the Chinese University established the Society in cooperation with the Consulate-General. It was not an easy endeavour. But those pioneers worked very hard on the important mission of promoting Japanese language education and Japanese studies and also providing a platform for academic and pedagogic exchanges in Hong Kong and its neighbouring areas.

Thanks to the high spirit and unswerving commitment in the great missions of these founding fathers, and I understand there were some founding mothers as well, and their successors, the Society has continually been very active and helpful in fostering mutual understanding and friendship between Japan and Hong Kong.

A few years later in 1984 the Society took on the important duty of implementing the organization of the Japanese Language Proficiency Test in Hong Kong and Macao and has been carrying on this important responsibility ever since. The Test has become very well-known these days, and, for instance, the number of applicants for the Test has grown from 1,200 in the first year to more than ten times larger last year. This Proficiency Test has always been one of the core activities of the Society in its mission.

In 1994 the Society held the first International Symposium on Japanese Language Education and Japan Studies for the purpose of stimulating active academic exchanges and advancing innovative research. By organizing this Symposium nearly ten times so far the Society has become the center of Japanese education and Japanese studies in Hong Kong.

Moreover, in 2005, the Society also started the Secondary School Students Japanese Language Speech Contest. This is another extremely important initiative for future generations. Amazingly to me, even poetry recitation for primary school pupils was included this year. We all know that poems are one of the most elaborate and difficult styles of literature for non-native speakers of any language, or perhaps even for native speakers. I am looking forward to reading many poems written in the Japanese language by Hong Kong people in the near future.

Talking about offering encouragement and motivation for future generations, the Society started in 2010 to give scholarships and project awards to outstanding students in the Japanese language and Japanese studies of high schools, associate degrees and higher diploma programs. These schemes offer strong support for secondary and post-secondary students to work hard to upgrade their levels both in their language studies and in the understanding of Japan in general.

In recognizing all these initiatives and achievements of the Society, in the year of 2007, the Government of the Hong Kong SAR granted the status of Non-Profit Making Organization, a clearest indication of the contribution of the Society for the whole of Hong Kong.

Now, looking back on these decades and achievements, which are on-going, I feel no doubt or hesitation in paying a deepest tribute and gratitude to the significance of these efforts of the Society. I do repeat that I am deeply honoured to join all of you here tonight in acknowledging and appreciating all the hard work and accomplishments of the Society throughout its long history. I would like to pay my heartfelt thanks to all the members of the Society since its establishment for their continuous and widening commitment and efforts.

I also admire the close relationship in which the Society works with its friend organizations. Its cooperation with such organizations as the Government of the Hong Kong SAR, many universities and higher education institutions in Hong Kong, the Japan Foundation, the Japan Society of Hong Kong, the Japan Universities Alumni Society Hong Kong and of course my office, the Consulate-General, is cordial and effective. I understand most of these organizations are represented here tonight and would like at this opportunity to express our gratitude to these organizations as well.

Thank you for your patience.

Let me conclude by briefly discussing some challenges that we have in front of us.

For example, we must turn the tide of the recent decline in the number of people studying the Japanese language at educational institutions in Hong Kong. The Government of Japan and my office are of course fully determined to redouble our efforts in this direction and even to expand the community. The Society's contribution in this regard is very helpful. We look forward to continuing to work together with the Society and many other friends toward further development of the study of the Japanese language and mutual understanding between Hong Kong and Japan.

I hope some of the additional elements such as the revitalization of the Japanese economy, the designation of Mount Fuji earlier this year as one of the World Heritage Sites of UNESCO and the exciting news of Tokyo's successful bid for hosting the Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2020 will also be helpful in this direction.

So, once again I congratulate the Society of Japanese Language Education Hong Kong on being awarded the Japanese Foreign Minister's Commendation 2013.

Also, I wish further development and achievements for the Society in the years to come and also continued health and success for all its members.

Thank you very much.

Speech by Mr. Hitoshi NODA, Consul-General of Japan in Hong Kong (Ambassador)

マギー梁安玉会長の感謝スピーチを下記のように転載させていただきます。

Good Evening,
Consul General Mr Ambassador Noda,
Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an immense honour and my great pleasure to be here with you all at this evening's ceremony for the presentation of the "Foreign Minister's Commendation for the year 2013" 平成 25 年度外務大臣表彰 by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan to our Society in recognition of the Society's effort in the "Promotion of Japanese Language Education in Hong Kong".

On behalf of the Society, I would like to express our sincerest thankfulness to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan. It is an enormous privilege and honour to receive such as a prestigious award. This is an award not only for our Society, but for everyone who has been working hard in contributing to the promotion of Japanese Language Education in Hong Kong all these years. It is an enormous privilege and honour to receive such as a prestigious award.

I would like to take this special opportunity to thank the Consulate General of Japan in Hong Kong for your continuous magnanimous support.

Thank you to Mr Ambassador Noda's very generous account of the works done by our Society in the past three and a half decades.

May I take this opportunity to share with you a couple of our new plans in the coming year? For the purpose of stimulating active academic exchanges and advancing innovative researches, in November 2014, the 10th International Symposium on Japanese Language Education and Japanese Studies will be held under the theme of "Challenges and Opportunities in a Changing World". We look forward to your generous support and active participation.

In view of the increasing number of young learners, in order to stimulate more students to participate, we plan to include a new section of group story-telling in the 2014 Secondary School Students Japanese language speech contest.

The Society is extremely grateful to the continuous support of the Consulate General of Japan in Hong Kong, the Japan Foundation, the Japan Society of Hong Kong, the Japan Universities Alumni Society Hong Kong, the Universities, Higher Education Institutes and Japanese Language Schools in Hong Kong, and of course, our executive committee members, our office's colleagues and our members, who are vital in the smooth and successful commencement of all our events and activities.

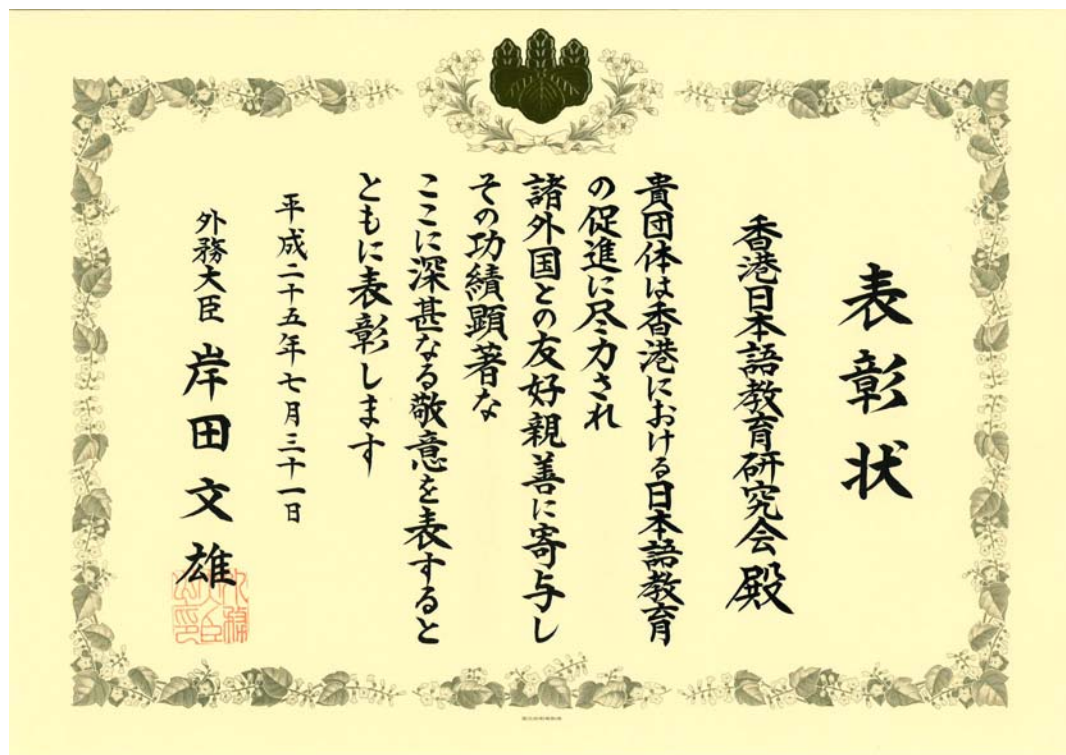
Once again, I would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan for awarding our Society the “Foreign Minister’s Commendation for the year 2013”.

We look forward to the continuous generous support from the Consulate General of Japan and all of you. As a non-Profit Making Organization, we will persist with our hard work and our mission of promoting Japanese language education and providing a platform for academic and pedagogic exchanges in Hong Kong and the nearby districts.

I wish you all an enjoyable evening. Good health and prosperity. Thank you.

Speech by Maggie LEUNG, President of Society of Japanese Language Education Hong Kong

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