



The Matsumae
International Foundation

Principle and Activities of **The Matsumae International Foundation**



► Our History

Weaving Connection Between People One thread at a time



The MIF was established 1979, based on the idea of the founder Dr. Shigeyoshi MATSUMAE

Invite active young researchers from all over the world

With the support and cooperation of many individuals and organizations, the Matsumae International Foundation was established in June 1979. Based on the ideals of its founder Dr. Shigeyoshi MATSUMAE, who was an engineer (technical official in the Ministry of Communications), Diet member, and educator.

Dr. MATSUMAE stated the MIF's principles as follows:

‘My search for enduring peace, friendship and goodwill among all nations of the world, and for an effective reminder of the path to which we, as a peaceful nation, are committed, led to the decision to create this Foundation. As will be clear from the Foundation’s statement of purpose, I hope to invite active young people of outstanding talent working in research, without regard to sex, race, religion, ideology or nationality, to Japan. By deepening their understanding of Japan, and establishing links of

trust and friendship, I seek to make a real contribution to permanent peace throughout the world.’ (Source: Research Fellowship Program 1981 Announcement)

The inauguration ceremony, held in July 1979, was a well-attended event, with representatives from embassies and guests from many other foundations and universities gathering to celebrate the establishment of the MIF. In the following year, 1980, the MIF began its fellowship program, providing grants to eight researchers from Bangladesh,

Bolivia, China, Indonesia, Peru, and Sri Lanka in its first year of operation.

Following in the Footsteps of the Humboldt Foundation

It was a 1976 visit to the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation in Germany that inspired Dr. MATSUMAE's firm resolve to establish the MIF. At this juncture, the Humboldt Foundation was already providing its research grants for young foreign researchers showing significant academic ability, regardless of sex, race, religion, ideology, or creed, and Dr. MATSUMAE was profoundly impressed by the Humboldt Foundation's noble aims and projects, gaining a keen sense that Japan was lag-

ging behind in its reception of overseas researchers.

Dr. MATSUMAE sympathised with the Humboldt Foundation rationale that many Humboldt scholars retained friendly ties with Germany even after returning to their home countries, becoming intangible assets for their former host. He resolved to follow suit: 'If Japan is to take the path of international cooperation and peace, I believe that

it is undertakings of this kind which we must set forward as our national policy...Should the state prove unable, the task may be taken up by a coalition of interested individuals. In either case, it is essential that we actively advance such projects.' (Source: Tokai magazine, Issue 49)

Dr. MATSUMAE was 75 years old when he founded the MIF. That was a culmination of his life's work.



Seek to make a real contribution to permanent peace throughout the world

— The founder Dr. Shigeyoshi MATSUMAE

Dr. MATSUMAE's Achievements in the International Field

Dr. MATSUMAE, who lived through the turbulent 20th Century and its two World Wars, devoted himself to the pursuit of knowledge with an eye to the wider world from the time of his studies in electrical engineering in the Tohoku Imperial University (now Tohoku University) Department of Engineering. After entering the Ministry of Communications, he successfully conceived of and implemented the non-loaded cable carrier system for long-distance telephone lines in his role as communications engineer, thereby significantly impacting nations with advanced telecommunications systems

across the globe. A central pillar of research and development is the fostering of home-grown technology. In this case, Dr. MATSUMAE's development of the non-loaded cable was influenced by the 'unadorned, truthful philosophy of life' as taught to him by Kanzō Uchimura, a man whom he respected as a mentor and whose bible study group he attended alongside his work at the Ministry. In this group, he explored humanism and pacifism, proposed to attendees as the universal guiding principles of humankind; learned about the campaign for education in Denmark; and resolved to make education his mission.

Dr. MATSUMAE took up the cause of education, adding to his work in training engineers, the aim of creating a holistic education system modelled

on Danish folk high schools. With the aid of many like-minded individuals, he succeeded in overcoming significant barriers to establish Tokai University and contribute to its further growth. He went on to use university education and research to promote international exchange between educators, teaching staff, and students, by receiving overseas students and founding educational institutions overseas, all in the aim of securing world peace and the welfare of humankind.

Dr. MATSUMAE was also an active Diet member, aiming to 'introduce to the political arena a perspective which values the sciences.' In the course of his political career, he devoted himself both to the advancement of science and technology and to [→To Page 5]



The Matsumae International Foundation was established in June 1979 with the support and cooperation of many Japanese individuals and organizations. The inauguration ceremony was held next month with representatives from the embassies of many countries and guests from numerous organizations in Japan.

Dr. MATSUMAE cherished the MIF fellows. At the graduation ceremony, he always gave words of encouragement to the fellows who would lead the future of the world.



Dr. Shigeyoshi MATSUMAE is the founder of the MIF. He worked to develop grassroots exchanges, based on his conviction that deepening friendship, goodwill, and mutual understanding through academic and cultural exchanges were of primary importance in building a truly peaceful world.

The MIF study tour. This tour is organized to contact the traditional culture and technology of Japan. It also gives the fellows opportunities to think about the importance of the peaceful use of technologies and science.



The graduation ceremony is always held at the office Zelkova House “Hogestu-An” designed in a Japanese style. The fellows can enjoy the Japanese culture and garden.



At the graduation ceremony, the chairperson encourages the fellows to continue their research activities in their home countries. Even after they leave Japan, the MIF will always cherish them for years to come.

diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union and the countries of Eastern Europe. In 1966, he assumed the position of President of the Japan Cultural Association, an organization respon-

sible for exchange with the peoples of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, then on the opposite side of the Cold War. In this role, he worked to develop grassroots exchanges, based on his

conviction that deepening friendship, goodwill, and mutual understanding through academic and cultural exchanges was of primary importance in building a truly peaceful world.

Support Program for young researchers who are passionate about contributing to the amelioration of issues in their home countries

Features of the Fellowship Program

The main purpose of the MIF fellowship program is its support of young researchers who are passionate about contributing to the amelioration of environmental, social, and similar issues in their home countries. In keeping with our founder's principles, fellowship recipients (here after fellows) are free of all restriction pertaining to their country of origin, they are at liberty to select host institutions of their choice, and subjects of research are left to the discretion of the fellows and their host professors. Their research fields cover a broad range of issues directly connected to people's lives and of vital importance for humanity as a whole, such as water problems, agricultural development, and medical drug research.

Another feature of the program is the study tour which fellows attend

during their research stays. In addition to providing opportunities for contact with traditional Japanese culture in Kyoto and Nara, and allowing the fellows to garner deeper experience through visits to businesses, these tours are intended as occasions for them to build friendships with one another, and always include a visit to the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum in Hiroshima City.

Backgrounding this study tour is Dr. MATSUMAE's personal experience. He was witness to the appalling scenes in Hiroshima in the immediate aftermath of the atomic bombing of August 6, 1945; the first atomic bomb to be unleashed upon humanity. Following the bombing, an investigative committee was dispatched to Hiroshima by the Agency for Technological Advancement, and it was Dr. MATSUMAE who served as head of this group. Faced with the scenes of devastation and this evidence of the bomb's destructive power, he later recalled, 'I had no words.'

Human scientific knowledge and technologies brought the atomic bomb into being. What do its power and the terrible scenes left in its wake say about that humanity? The MIF hopes that this study tour to Hiroshima will inspire our fellows to expand the circle of their compassion to encompass the world.

Small but Steady Contributions

In order to uphold our founder's principles, the MIF has invited over 850 researchers from 120 countries and regions to Japan in the 42 years since its establishment. While our fellows hail from every corner of the globe, we provide few fellowships in comparison to other such bodies. Nevertheless, the MIF intends to persevere in our small yet steady contributions, untiringly sowing the seeds of future growth within a higher ideal of 'contributing to the establishing of world peace through human exchange.'

During the celebration marking the 10th anniversary of the MIF's establishment, Dr. MATSUMAE shared the following words: 'Our modest role is the weaving of connections between fellows and their host professors, and between their countries and ours. This may not be particularly high profile, but, in this way, we would like to deepen mutual trust and pursue the motive force for the establishment of peace and security in the world.' (Source: The International Achievements of Shigeyoshi MATSUMAE, Volume II [unofficial translation])

We keep carrying his will with us.



► Our Office

The MIF Office “Zelkova House”

Special Place to Experience Japanese Tradition and Memory of Friendship between Dr. ASHIKAGA and Dr. MATSUMAE

Zelkova House “Hougetsu-an”, the building that serves as the office of The Matsumae International Foundation, was originally home to Dr. Atsuiji ASHIKAGA and his wife, the former a friend sympathetic to the cause of our founder, Dr. Shigeyoshi MATSUMAE.

The connection between Dr. ASHIKAGA and Dr. MATSUMAE can be traced back to 1934, when both were visiting Europe as Japanese government scholarship students. At the time, the Japanese government was sending the talented young people who would be the leaders of the next generation to European countries to foster their growth. Dr. ASHIKAGA was sent to France, Germany, and Iran to research Old Persian and Sanskrit from 1932 to 1935 by the Ministry of Education, Science, and Culture. Dr. MATSUMAE was sent to Germany to study telecommunication technologies

by the Ministry of Communications. The two met in March 1934, when Dr. MATSUMAE made a brief stopover on his way back to Japan from Germany in Paris’ Satsuma Hall, a residence for students studying abroad (today the Maison du Japon: Fondation Satsuma of the Cité internationale universitaire de Paris)

Reflecting on this time in later years, Dr. ASHIKAGA stated: “Mr. MATSUMAE and I may be very different people, but we both had an attitude of unshakeable determination toward life, knowing what we planned to do, and this allowed us to gradually deepen our mutual understanding and develop a closer relationship.” (Matsumae Bunko, Collection I)

After they had both returned to Japan, the two continued to strengthen their ties, with Dr. ASHIKAGA taking up the posts of Dean of Undergraduate



Dr. Shigeyoshi MATSUMAE (Left) and Dr. Atsuiji ASHIKAGA

School of Letters and President at Tokai University after retiring from Kyoto University, continuing to be a supporter of Dr. MATSUMAE throughout his life. Zelkova House was gifted to the MIF by Dr. ASHIKAGA’s wife Sumiko, following his passing, and has been used as our office since 2002. Welcoming fellows for graduation ceremonies and training, Zelkova House, too, is supported by the “weaving little connection” forged by Dr. ASHIKAGA and Dr. MATSUMAE.



Zelkova House around 1990.

► Our Statistics

(Number of Fellows)

Asia

Bangladesh	20
Bhutan	2
Cambodia	1
China	42
India	44
Indonesia	16
Republic of Korea	2
Laos	2
Malaysia	14
Mongolia	8
Myanmar	20
Nepal	8
Pakistan	15
Philippines	15
Singapore	2
Sri Lanka	11
Thailand	27
Viet Nam	15
Taiwan	1

Oceania

Australia	4
Fiji	1
New Zealand	2

North America

United States of America	9
Canada	4

Latin America and the Caribbean

Argentina	11
Bolivia	2
Brazil	9
Chile	9
Colombia	9
Costa Rica	1
Cuba	15
Ecuador	5
Jamaica	3
Mexico	10
Panama	2

Paraguay	2
Peru	5
Uruguay	2
Venezuela	2

Europe

Albania	5
Armenia	5
Austria	2
Azerbaijan	3
Belarus	5
Belgium	2
Bosnia and Herzegovina	3
Bulgaria	16
Croatia	6
Czech Republic	9
Estonia	2
Finland	3
France	3
Georgia	6
Germany	10
Greece	5
Hungary	14
Iceland	3
Ireland	3
Italy	11
Kazakhstan	6
Kyrgyz Republic	3
Latvia	3
Lithuania	4
Moldova	2
Netherlands	3
Norway	2
Poland	21
Portugal	5
Romania	13
Russia	15
Serbia	9
Slovakia	6
Slovenia	2
Spain	10
Sweden	4
Switzerland	1
Tajikistan	1
Ukraine	14
United Kingdom	5
Uzbekistan	16

Middle East

Afghanistan	1
Iran	11
Iraq	9
Israel	7
Jordan	8
Lebanon	1
Oman	6
Saudi Arabia	3
Syria	6
Turkey	17

Africa

Algeria	2
Benin	1
Botswana	1
Burundi	2
Cameroon	14
D.R. of the Congo	2
Cote d'Ivoire	4
Egypt	34
Eritrea	1
Ethiopia	8
Ghana	5
Guinea	1
Kenya	15
Lesotho	1
Liberia	1
Madagascar	2
Malawi	2
Mali	1
Morocco	5
Mozambique	1
Nigeria	28
Rwanda	4
Senegal	1
Republic of South Africa	1
Sudan	10
Tanzania	8
Togo	1
Tunisia	6
Uganda	7
Zambia	3



The Matsumae International Foundation

4-14-46, Kamiogi, Suginami-ku, Tokyo 167-0043 JAPAN

🌐 <https://www.mif-japan.org> ✉️ e-mail: contact@mif-japan.org