



## [The Nippon Foundation News] December Greetings

Greetings from The Nippon Foundation. With both Tokyo and Japan recording significantly lower numbers of new infections of the coronavirus and more than three-fourths of the population fully vaccinated, the travel and restaurant sectors are beginning to see a cautious recovery. Hotels and Japanese-style inns, restaurants, and souvenir shops, which had seen their businesses practically come to a halt for much of the past year, are welcoming back tourists while maintaining infection-related protocols. One place that has been benefitting is Hakone, a hot-spring resort town near Mount Fuji. In addition to its natural hot springs, the area offers splendid scenery, art museums, and other attractions that make it a popular one-day or overnight trip from Tokyo. Two of the town's most popular places to visit are the Owakudani area around a crater created during the last eruption of Mount Hakone, roughly 3,000 years ago, and the Hakone Open-Air Museum. Owakudani offers hiking trails and a ropeway and is still volcanically active, with sulfur vents and bubbling pools of hot water dotting the landscape. The Hakone Open-Air Museum exhibits sculptures on its grounds arranged to take advantage of backdrop views of the surrounding valley and mountains, and also has indoor exhibition spaces including a Picasso Exhibition Hall.



*Visitors are gradually returning to Hakone's Owakudani area, with Mt. Hakone in the background (left), and people relaxing under sunny skies and autumn leaves at the Hakone Open-Air Museum (right).*

This is the last edition of The Nippon Foundation News for 2021. Please note that The Nippon Foundation will be closed for the New Year holidays from Tuesday, December 28, 2021, to Tuesday, January 4, 2022. We wish you a happy holiday season and all the best in 2022.

## News

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- Sign Language Game SignTown as Educational Tool (2021.11.15)
- Different Approaches to Change the World (2021.10.26)

## Emergency Support to Address the Spread of Coronavirus Infections in 3 South Asian Countries

**Providing medical equipment, food, and daily goods for the recovery of local communities**



As the threat from the spread of coronavirus infections continues to be felt around the world, The Nippon Foundation is providing emergency support to three countries in South Asia in addition to its work in Japan: food and other items to support financially struggling households and support to restore livelihoods in Sri Lanka; assistance to Sherpa families and persons affected by leprosy in Nepal; and a donation of pulse oximeters and battery-operated oxygen concentrators to Manipur State in northeastern India.

[Full Article](#)

## Sign Language Game SignTown as Educational Tool

**Elementary school students experience sign language and Deaf culture**



The SignTown game for teaching sign language uses information and communications technology and artificial intelligence to recognize hand gestures, body movements, and facial expressions using a conventional two-dimensional camera attached to a personal computer. On October 29, Wakamatsu Elementary School in Fuchu, Tokyo, held an event for roughly 110 fourth-grade students using SignTown as a way to teach sign language, and through this experience, to encourage the children to accept diversity and foster mutual understanding.

[Full Article](#)

## Different Approaches to Change the World

**Overseas students connecting Japan with their home countries to shape the future**



To develop future leaders who will build bridges between Japan and their home countries, The Nippon Foundation launched a program in 2018 to provide scholarships to graduates of UWC ISAK, an international boarding school for grades 10 to 12, who go on to study at Japanese universities. The first group of these recipients graduated from university in 2021, and on September 8, five of these new graduates gathered remotely to look back on their university experiences and discuss their goals and dreams for the future.

[Full Article](#)



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