

This newsletter is being sent to current and former The Nippon Foundation fellows, and persons who have asked to be added to the mailing list or have been introduced by The Nippon Foundation staff.



[The Nippon Foundation News] New Year's Greetings

Greetings from The Nippon Foundation, and best wishes for the New Year. Under the traditional Chinese zodiac, 2025 is the Year of the Snake. Characteristics associated with the snake include wisdom, calmness, elegance and subtle strength, and people born in the Year of the Snake are said to be intuitive, strategic, and intelligent. In Japan, snakes are also said to symbolize renewal, transformation, and steady progress because of the way they shed their skin as they grow.

One of the biggest events that takes place in Japan over the New Year holidays is the Hakone Ekiden relay marathon, which was held for the 101st time this year. Hakone is a hot spring resort town near Mt. Fuji, roughly 100 kilometers from central Tokyo, and the race is held over two days, with 21 collegiate teams of 10 runners each competing. The course is divided into five legs of slightly more than 20 kilometers each, with each runner competing in one leg. On January 2, the race begins in central Tokyo and ends in Hakone, and on January 3 the course is reversed, finishing in Tokyo. In place of a baton, each team has a sash that the runners wear while running their leg and pass on to the next runner at each relay station. The runners put so much effort into the race that many collapse from exhaustion as soon as they have passed the sash on to the next runner. Many people come out to cheer on the runners along the course and the live broadcast is one of the holiday period's most popular television events, with the results being one of the top news stories on both days.



Runners in the last leg of this year's Hakone Ekiden, with less than four kilometers to go to the finish line

INDEX - January 10, 2025

News

- [The Nippon Foundation MEGURI2040 Fully Autonomous Ship Program Introduced at Meeting of IMO's Maritime Safety Committee \(2024.12.15\)](#)
- [Community Halls in Tonga Completed \(2024.11.29\)](#)

The Nippon Foundation MEGURI2040 Fully Autonomous Ship Program Introduced at Meeting of IMO's Maritime Safety Committee

Making solid contribution to creation of rules for autonomous navigation



The Nippon Foundation launched the MEGURI2040 Fully Autonomous Ship Program in February 2020 to address Japanese ship crew shortages and to enhance navigation safety. The project was recently introduced to roughly 250 delegates from around the world at the 109th meeting of the International Maritime Organization's Maritime Safety Committee. The presentation began with an introduction of the project and was followed by updates from representatives of development partners on the project's current status, technological development, and initiatives for social implementation.

[Full Article](#)

Community Halls in Tonga Completed

Built with donations from Tonga Emergency Relief Fund



The gigantic eruption of the underwater volcano Hunga Tonga-Hunga-Ha'apai in January 2022 caused major damage in the Kingdom of Tonga. In response, The Nippon Foundation has used the many donations received to support the construction of a community hall in each of three areas designated as resettlement zones for people whose homes were damaged. These halls will be important facilities for supporting the rebuilding of the lives of residents who experienced particularly major flood damage. A ceremony for the handover of two of the community halls was held in June 2024 and a ceremony to mark the handover of the third community hall was held in November.

[Full Article](#)

Yohei Sasakawa Blog Chairman of The Nippon Foundation



[\[Photo Diary\] \(2\) Visit to India](#) [2024/12/27]

[\[Photo Diary\] \(1\) Visit to India](#) [2024/12/27]

[The Nippon Foundation Hosts the Third Asia Philanthropy Congress in Tokyo Under Theme of "Diversity, Equity and Inclusion" \(2\)](#) [2024/12/20]

[The Nippon Foundation Hosts the Third Asia Philanthropy Congress in Tokyo Under Theme of "Diversity, Equity and Inclusion" \(1\)](#) [2024/12/19]

[Australian Government Body Joins Seabed 2030 Project to Advance Mapping of World's Entire Ocean Floor \(2\)](#) [2024/12/13]

[Australian Government Body Joins Seabed 2030 Project to Advance Mapping of World's Entire Ocean Floor \(1\)](#) [2024/12/12]

Yohei Sasakawa Blog Top Page

Please send your comments or suggestions by e-mail to
The Nippon Foundation Global Communications Team
email : info_global_communication@ps.nippon-foundation.or.jp



[Remove an existing address](#) | [Add a new address](#)

To change an existing address, [remove an existing address](#), then [add a new address](#).