

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] Year of the Horse

New Year's greetings from The Nippon Foundation. According to the Chinese zodiac, a 12-year cycle with each year represented by an animal, 2026 is the Year of the Horse. Each 12-year cycle is also associated with one of the five elements – wood, fire, earth, metal, and water. (A person's 60th birthday is therefore considered particularly significant because they have completed the full cycle of 12 years and five elements.) Characteristics attributed to people born in the Year of the Horse include strength, power, speed, bravery, and independence. This year is the Year of the Fire Horse, and there is a superstition in Japan dating to the Edo Period (1603 – 1867) that girls born in the Year of the Fire Horse will grow up to be stubborn and temperamental and even pose a threat to their husbands. As recently as the previous Year of the Fire Horse (1966), there was a one-year, 25% decline from the previous year in the number of births in Japan. Arranged marriages were more common in Japan at that time than they are today, and this drop in births was said to be a reflection of couples refraining from having children during that year out of concern for girls' marriage prospects. With traditional arranged marriages accounting for a smaller percentage of all marriages, however, awareness of this superstition appears to have declined in recent years and the pattern would appear unlikely to repeat to the same degree in 2026.



A New Year's illumination display at a train station (left) and a banner welcoming the Year of the Horse in a shopping arcade (right) in residential neighborhoods of Tokyo

News

- **Asia Philanthropy Congress 2025** (December 4, 2025)

Project Update

- **Nagisa-no-Koban (Seaside Patrol Stations) Project**

Asia Philanthropy Congress 2025

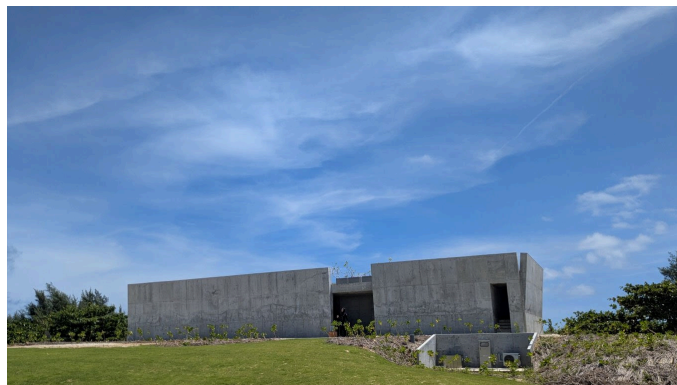
Leaders from around the world gather to address philanthropy's role in a fragmented and uncertain world



Organized by The Nippon Foundation, the 4th Asia Philanthropy Congress was held in Tokyo on December 4 under the theme “Philanthropy’s Role in a Fragmented and Uncertain World.” Roughly 220 participants from across Asia attended the one-day event that featured a musical performance, a morning plenary session, and 10 breakout sessions. Speakers and attendees shared their ideas and experiences with a focus on cultivating regional coordination to address problems that are too great to be solved by any single country or organization.

[Full Article](#)

Nagisa-no-Koban (Seaside Patrol Stations) Project



A *koban*, commonly translated as “police box,” is a small, neighborhood police station with one or two officers usually on duty. Designed to foster ties with the local community, people can visit the koban to ask for directions, report lost items or turn in found items, or report crimes like a stolen bicycle. *Nagisa* is the Japanese word for “beach” or “seaside.” *Nagisa-no-Koban* are seaside patrol stations that serve as a focal point for community activities related to the ocean, creating ocean environments that are accessible and enjoyable for everyone. The project’s 17th Nagisa-no-Koban opened in 2025 in Yoron Town, Kagoshima Prefecture.

Yohei Sasakawa Blog

Honorary Chair of The Nippon Foundation



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