

THE MATSUMAE INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION
RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM
2026 ANNOUNCEMENT



Principles of the Matsumae International Foundation

The goal of the Matsumae International Foundation (MIF) is to provide overseas researchers who possess excellent academic ability, regardless of race, sex, religion, or ideology, with opportunities to carry out research activities in Japan, thereby contributing to academic development in Japan as well as international friendship and goodwill.

Principles behind the Establishment

The MIF was established in 1979 with the goals of inviting promising young researchers to Japanese research institutions to nurture abilities that will enable them to solve issues facing their countries and of supporting activities that build bridges between Japan and their countries. Since its establishment, the MIF has been developing its activities as a private organization, receiving support and cooperation from many Japanese individuals and organizations.

The MIF has its roots in the strong, sincere desire of the founder, Dr. Shigeyoshi MATSUMAE (1901–1991), to realize a world that is truly peaceful and safe.

‘The most pressing topic for mankind in the twentieth century is how to avoid nuclear war, how to get rid of nuclear weapons as quickly as possible and establish a truly peaceful and secure world. As a first step towards achieving this goal, it is necessary for all the nations of the world to strengthen friendship and mutual understanding through scientific and cultural exchanges. This is the principal reason why I have made what efforts I could, small though my contribution may have been, to help expand and develop exchanges of this kind.’ (The Life and Struggles of a Fighter for Peace)

Dr. MATSUMAE was active in a wide range of fields. As a telecommunications engineer, he was the pioneer of the long distance non-loaded cable carrier communication system, and as a technical official and Minister of Communications, and a Diet member, he devoted himself to the advancement of science and technology in Japan. Additionally, as an educator, he founded Tokai University on the principles of bettering Japan through education and realizing peace, and as a judoka, he served as president of the International Judo Federation.

One of his biggest focuses was realizing world peace through personal and cultural exchange. He advocated the principle that bringing people together and building trust between them will build a peaceful world. From the 1960’s onward, he put his full energy into working with governments and organizations of other countries to develop robust exchange activities, including the mutual dispatching of scientists and students, and exchange between organisations and the nurturing of leaders in sports. The MIF was established based on his passionate belief that ‘Promoting cultural and academic exchange creates opportunities for friendship and goodwill, which is the first step on the path to realizing relationships of friendship and goodwill 20 or 30 years into the future.’ (Tokai magazine, Issue 47)

The main purpose of the MIF is to provide young researchers who are passionate about contributing to solving the various issues facing their home countries with opportunities to learn from the scientific and technological knowledge that has been cultivated in Japan. We also hope that their time in Japan will deepen their understanding of Japanese culture so that in the future, they can become prominent researchers who can act as bridges between their own countries and Japan. In order to achieve our founder purpose of building links between Japan and the world through the nurturing of researchers, each year we invite young researchers from around the globe to Japan.

Features of the Fellowship Program

- This program is intended for young overseas researchers showing significant academic ability, regardless of sex, race, religion, ideology, or creed.
- Fellows are free to choose a host institution in Japan.
- Subject of research is left to the discretion of the fellows and their host professors / scholars.
- The fellows will take part in the study tour during their research stay. 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 MIF looks forward to applications from researchers who empathize with its principles.

THE FOUNDER'S CONCEPT

TOWARDS A GREATER UNDERSTANDING OF JAPAN AND A LASTING WORLD PEACE

I see the condition of the world today as consisting of conflict between the different national egoisms. The Club of Rome has identified three crises that endanger the future of mankind: lack of energy, lack of food supplies and burgeoning world population. Unless mankind learns to overcome these crises, there will be no lasting peace. The truth of the statement is undeniable, but in the conflict of national egoisms that surround us today, the road to peace is still a long one. Therefore, we are called upon to do more than stand aside from the current of history. In order for Japan to co-exist peacefully with the other nations of the world, and to facilitate the tasks that await our young people in the 21st Century, we are now trying to prepare a forum for Japan's international activities. In this way, I believe we will be able to open up a path to the future that will preserve our nation and mankind.

Following the tragic experience of the Second World War, Japan firmly resolved to reject all attempts to enhance national prestige by force of arms and instead to follow a policy of peaceful reconstruction as an industrial nation. More than thirty years have passed since then, and it is now a fact that considerable friction has arisen between Japan and several foreign countries, especially in the fields of trade and economics.

We Japanese are now making earnest efforts to face up to this problem and are studying how to open a path to peace and prosperity on the basis of mutual understanding. My search for enduring peace and friendship 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 statement of the purpose of the Foundation, I hope to invite active young research workers of outstanding character, 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. I shall therefore welcome from the bottom of my heart applications from promising young men and women who sympathize with our aims and wish to undertake research in Japan. At this point, let me acknowledge the deep impression made upon me at the time of the establishment of this Foundation by inspiring ideals and practice of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, which operates under the sponsorship of the Federal Republic of Germany, and the far-reaching influence it has exerted. I would like to take this opportunity to express my deepest gratitude and at the same time to say that I intend to make all the efforts to accomplish the purpose and mission of the Foundation.

June, 1979

Dr. Shigeyoshi MATSUMAE, Founder (1901-1991)

Brief Personal History of Dr. Shigeyoshi MATSUMAE

Shigeyoshi MATSUMAE, born in Kumamoto, JAPAN, graduated from Tohoku Imperial University in 1925. In 1935, he invented the "Long Distance Non-Loaded Cable Carrier Communication System", which greatly contributed to the development of an international communications exchange network. In 1937, he was awarded a Doctor's degree in Engineering. Subsequently he was introduced to the noted Christian thinker, Kanzo UCHIMURA, and under his influence, decided to become an educator. In 1941, he was appointed General Director of the Engineering Department of the Ministry of Communications. During the Second World War, as he pleaded for the termination of hostilities, and strongly opposed the war policy of the TOJO Cabinet, he was sent to the front line of the Philippines by then Premier TOJO as a second class private in the Imperial Army. Right before the end of the war, when conditions had changed somewhat, he was able to return to Japan. He was appointed Minister of Communications.

After the end of the war, he began to reconstruct a private college which he had founded during the war. From this base, he established what has now become the Tokai University Educational System. He was elected a member of the Lower House of the Japanese Parliament in 1952 and served for 17 years. He has established a large number of educational cultural exchanges with universities throughout the world. For his efforts, he has received numerous honorary degrees and government citations from various countries. He founded the Matsumae International Foundation in 1979. He passed away in 1991 at the age of 89.



I. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

- Applicants of non-Japanese nationality who meet all the following requirements are eligible to submit application documents.
- Applicants who empathize with the core values of the MIF.
 - Applicants must obtain acceptance from a host institution in Japan before application.
 - Applicants must hold a Ph.D. (Doctoral Degree) at the time of application.
 - Applicants must be at the age of 45 years old or younger at the time of application. (The birth year must be in or after 1980.)
 - Applicants must have sufficient English or Japanese language ability.
 - Applicants should not have past or current experiences of staying in Japan. (other than short-term stays such as for sightseeing or conferences)
 - Applicants must have an occupation in their home countries, return there upon completing their fellowship tenure, and contribute to the development of their own country.

II. RESEARCH FIELDS

Preferable research fields are natural science, engineering, medicine, etc.

III. FELLOWSHIP PERIOD

As a rule, six months between June 2026 to March 2027.
Please indicate the commencing and ending month in your Application Form (#1).
(E.g., From September 2026 to February 2027.)

IV. NUMBER OF FELLOWSHIP RECIPIENTS

Around 15

V. HOST INSTITUTION IN JAPAN

Applicants are free to choose a host institution in Japan (universities, national research institutions, or equivalent facilities in the private sector) to carry out their research.
Please be sure to obtain acceptance from the host institution before applying. The MIF is not in a position to give advice or recommendations to applicants regarding host institutions in Japan.

VI. FELLOWSHIP DETAILS

- Monthly Allowance**
A monthly allowance of JPY 220,000 is provided to cover expenses for research activities (including materials) and living expenses in Japan.
- Arrival Fund**
JPY 120,000 is provided to cover part of the initial living costs in Japan.
- Round-trip Air Transportation**
Round-trip economy class airfare is provided between the nearest international airport from a grantee’s domicile and Tokyo, Japan.
- Insurance**
Overseas travel insurance with medical treatment and death benefits is provided.
- Study Tour**
The MIF invites fellowship recipients to participate in a study tour during their fellowship to deepen their knowledge of Japan.

VII. NOTICES CONCERNING FELLOWSHIP CONDITIONS

- The fellowship will be granted only within the period specified in the grant letter, which cannot be extended or shortened.
- Only the individual specified in the grant letter is eligible for the grant. The MIF will not be involved in any way concerning the immigration procedures, airline tickets, or accommodation expenses for the family, companions, etc., of the selected applicant.

VIII. APPLICATION

Applicants must submit their application documents to the MIF via e-mail.

- Email: application@mif-japan.org
- Application Period: June 1, 2025, to June 30, 2025 (Japan Standard Time)

Applications will not be accepted for any reason before or after the application period.

IX. APPLICATION DOCUMENTS

The following documents must be submitted as PDFs to the MIF via e-mail. Please do not combine all documents into one PDF.
All documents must be typed in English.
Neither inadequate documents will be accepted nor subject to screening.
The following will be automatically rejected without notice.

- Emails over 5 MB in size.

- Emails with attachments with file extensions other than “PDF.”
- Emails with attachments in any compressed format such as “zip” or “rar.”
- Emails including any program files or downloadable links.

#1. Application Form

Please download the application form from the MIF website. An ID photograph taken within the past three months must be attached. Please make sure that the form is filled out precisely. Applications using anything but the prescribed form that has been signed and dated will not be accepted.

#2. Reason for Application

Please download the form from the MIF website and write down your application reasons within 500 words.

#3. Research Plan

You must submit the following research plan within 5 pages.

(a) The content, purpose, and methodology of the research
(b) The road map of the research project
(c) The benefit the research project will bring to your home country

(a) and (b) should be described in detail based on discussions with your host professor /scholar in Japan.

#4. Curriculum Vitae (CV) and List of Publications

Regarding the list of publications, please precisely include the authors and titles of the publications, the journal name, page(s), and year of publication. Please also clearly highlight in yellow the title of the publication related to the research project you intend to conduct in Japan.

#5. Recommendation Letter

It must be from your current home institution (employer) and written on its letterhead.
It should testify to your academic ability and achievements and confirm the availability of study leave during your fellowship period.

#6. A soft copy of the Academic Certificate for Ph.D.

If the document is unavailable in English, please attach an English translation (Self-translation is unacceptable).

#7. Letter from Host Professor/Scholar in Japan

The letter must state the reason for hosting you and indicate that the host professor agrees to arrange your accommodation during the fellowship.
The MIF will accept a letter only using the host institution’s letterhead and signed by the host professor.

< To host professors /scholars in Japan >

Please write your letter in Japanese or English using your institution’s letterhead.

(1) The letter should be addressed to the Chairperson of the Matsumae International Foundation
(2) Please write your name and institutional affiliation, including the department and faculty, in Japanese and English.
(3) Please include your contact information: postal code, address, phone number, email.
(4) Please email the applicant your signed letter so that they can include it with their application documents.

<指導教員の方へ>
以下内容にご留意の上、日本語もしくは英語で作成をお願いいたします。

(1)宛先：松前国際友好財団 理事長 宛
(2) 貴研究機関の用紙をご使用ください。
(3) 氏名及びご所属は、和英標記をお願いいたします。
(4) ご連絡先（郵便番号・住所・電話番号・メールアドレス）を必ずご記載ください。
(5) ご署名の上、当該書面（PDF）を応募者にお渡しください。

X. SCREENING PROCESS & ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE RESULTS

- The MIF Screening Committee evaluates applications.
- The application numbers of successful applicants will be announced on the MIF website in late November 2025.
- The MIF will send a grant letter to successful applicants.
- It is the policy of the MIF to neither disclose the content of discussions by the Screening Committee nor accept inquiries about individual applications.
- The MIF will not comment on the reasons for the decisions made by the Screening Committee.

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