

ASJA International

1. Background and Mission

Based on Japanese policies, which reviewed the critical importance of the relationship between the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and Japan, the Japanese government in cooperation with Japan Alumni associations from respective ASEAN countries established a special ASJA scholarship system differing from the normal Japanese government scholarship system. The ASJA scholarship was provided to privately funded ASEAN students.

Asia Japan Alumni International (ASJA International) is an international organization which was established in Tokyo in April 2000, in order to manage this special scholarship system. It also acts as the Japanese counterpart to ASEAN Council of Japan Alumni (ASCOJA).

ASJA began its journey initially with the participation from 5 countries; Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand. Later in 2004, Myanmar joined, followed by Cambodia and Vietnam in 2007, Laos in 2012 and finally Brunei in 2013 which completes all 10 ASEAN countries.

****ASCOJA (ASEAN Council of Japan Alumni)***

In 1974, under the initiative from the late Prime Minister Takeo Fukuda (Minister of Finance at that time), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs invited former ASEAN students to a “Reunion of South East Asian Graduates from Japanese Universities”. The participants who had deepened their relationships through the reunion, together established ASCOJA in June 1977 with the purpose to foster the relationship and exchanges among Japan Alumni associations from the respective countries.

ASCOJA acts as an umbrella body for Japan Alumni associations in ASEAN countries. Together with the Japanese embassy from each respective country, it also acts as a conduit to promote Japanese culture and Japanese language.

ASCOJA consists of 10 ASEAN countries: Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Philippines, Brunei, Myanmar, Cambodia, Vietnam, Laos. (In ascending order of joining ASCOJA)

With the support of the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, since its establishment in 2000 ASJA has annually accepted one student nominated by each ASCOJA chapter of the respective country. Apart from supporting recipients' university life, ASJA program ensures that the recipients are provided opportunities to acquire adequate Japanese language ability, knowledge regarding Japanese social culture, traditional culture, and lifestyle through exchange programs and interactions with local Japanese people. The ultimate goal of ASJA is to nurture future leaders who will play an important role in bridging not only Japan but also fellow ASEAN countries.

As of March 2020, 181 scholars have completed their terms as ASJA students. In April 2020, ASJA International as an organization has marked its 20th anniversary, since its establishment.

A 15th Year Memorial Book was published in March 2015 to introduce ASJA and its 15 years running history.

2. Adapting to changes

After the Democratic Party took over the government in 2009, the party began reviewing and screening its existing national projects and budget. As a result, the Government Revitalization Unit conducting the screening process sentenced ASJA to be abolished by March 2014. Following the result, ASJA ceased to accept new ASJA scholars as of Fiscal year 2011. As a provisional measure, ASJA decided to accept Japanese Government (MEXT) scholars nominated by each Japan Alumni association to participate some of the programs organized by ASJA.

In response to the above, ASJA Directors, ASCOJA governors, and former and current ASJA students during the time, submitted a petition to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Japanese government for the continuation of ASJA.

Following the petition, ASJA made a strong emphasis on its mission and achievement as to dated, to related organizations and members such as Japanese Business leaders, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and others. With the cooperation of H.E. Former Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda, Ambassador Takashi Tajima and involved members of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, ASJA was able to proceed with discussion of its future proceedings.

3. Renewal of ASJA

Although the original ASJA scholarship system was abolished, as of fiscal year 2014, ASJA managed to secure its budget under the category of ‘ASEAN-Ryugakusei-Koryutou-Kyoshutsukin’ (Contribution to ASEAN international student exchanges) of the Japanese government budget. With the new budget, ASJA was able to continue on as an organization to implement exchange programs provided to selected ASEAN students who are receiving MEXT scholarship as ASJA-MEXT scholarship.

Since the renewal, ASJA changed its policy to accept 2 graduate and 1 undergraduate recipients of Japanese government MEXT scholarship from each ASJA member country (all 10 ASEAN countries). For Fiscal Year 2020, ASJA has accepted a total of 18 students nominated by ASCOJA leaders. (15 graduates, 3 undergraduate).

As an ASJA student, the acquisition of Japanese language is highly prioritized, hence it is compulsory for postgraduate recipients of ASJA-MEXT scholarship to undergo a 6-month preparatory Japanese Language course in Tokyo Japanese Language Education Center, JASSO. During the 6-month period of the preparatory Japanese Language course, they will also live in the dormitory provided by JASSO.

4. FY2020 ASJA Exchange Programs

*All scheduled dates are subject to changes where necessary

(1) Welcome party for ASJA-MEXT students, and Orientation

◇ Orientation**April**

◇ Welcome Party **May**

New ASJA-MEXT students will join a 3-day 2-night orientation program, where you will deepen your knowledge on the establishment of ASJA and its mission, 20 years history of ASJA, details of past and current programs provided and so forth. Also, an official welcome party will be commemorated. Distinguished guests such as officials from the Japanese government and ASJA stakeholders from other related organizations will also be invited.

(2) Network Construction for Cross-Cultural Exchange

Programs to showcase of your culture, interaction and discussion with Japanese students, experiencing Japanese culture (e.g., Traditional Culture and Performing Art) are implemented annually.

✧ Elementary School Visit**June**

You will be dispatched to introduce your country and its culture to local elementary schools. This will help elementary students not only to deepen their understanding of ASEAN countries, but also for the purpose of creating opportunities for young generations to learn about the diversity of cultures.

✧ Japanese Cultural Experience.....**June**

Opportunities not only to experience but also to deepen your understanding and knowledge of Japanese traditional crafts and culture. Some of our past activities includes: Performing Arts such as Kabuki, Bunraku and Noh, Traditional culture such as Japanese Tea ceremony, Japanese dessert (Wagashi) making, Edo Tokyo Museum tour and Japanese Food culture, Martial Arts such as Sumo Training Room tour and Judo exhibition tour at Kodokan.

✧ Workshop and exchange with Japanese university students

..... **September 19-22**

As expecting future leaders of ASEAN countries, ASJA-MEXT students will participate in a 4-day 3-night English discussion session. The workshop will be held in the National Olympic Memorial Youth Center. Together with prospective local Japanese university students who will play a key role as future global human resources, you exchange opinions on future issues and cooperation between Japan and ASEAN countries. This is also an opportunity to create networks and cultural understanding among fellow ASJA students and Japanese students.

✧ ASEAN Cultural exchange program (ASEAN Festival) **Year 2021**

All operations for this event will be planned and implemented by ASJA students. Through this event depending on the theme, ASJA students will showcase their national culture, dance, fashion, travel destination and many more, to the general public.

(3) Homestay Program (Only for 1st Year).....**July**

For about 5 days, you will homestay with local Japanese family. Here you can experience the daily life and culture of a Japanese family.

- (4) Prefectural local Industries and Cultural Study Trip (Only for 2nd and 3rd Year).....**Late October – Early December**
 2nd and 3rd year ASJA-MEXT students will be given the opportunity to go on a 4-day 3-night study trip to local Prefectures to experience, study and learn about the local industries, products and unique cultures.
- (5) ASJA Completion Ceremony..... **March 12, 2021**
 Certificate awarding ceremony for ASJA-MEXT students who have completed their terms with ASJA.
- (6) Commemoration Event for 20th Anniversary of ASJA International
 ✧ Reunion for ASJA Graduates..... **March 14, 2021**
 A commemorative event to gather ASJA graduates across generations since the beginning of ASJA International in Tokyo, Japan. Not only past but present ASJA students and stakeholders of ASJA and ASCOJA around the world will gather and proactively exchange and discuss prospective future activities. Provide opportunity for expansion and strengthening of individuals' network. This event will be organized by the ASJA students (Past and Present) themselves. With ASJA graduates at its core, students are to plan and implement all the programs for the reunion event. Creating strong rapport and bonds between the past and the present students.

5. Organization and management

(1) Board of Directors

The Board of Directors is the highest decision-making authority comprising one director from each country: 10 ASEAN countries and Japan. Most if not all Directors also serve as President of Alumni association back in their country. The Board meets normally once a year in Tokyo to discuss the programs and budget for the next fiscal year, and also reports the programs and expenditure of the previous fiscal year.

Organization of the Board

Director for Japan	Mr. Gotaro Ogawa	Former Ambassador of Japan to Cambodia Former Ambassador of Japan to Denmark
Director for Indonesia	Mr. Hidekie Amangku	Secretary General of Association of Indonesian Alumni from Japan (PERSADA)
Director for Malaysia	Mr. Gary Tang Kok Lian	President of Japan Graduates' Association of Malaysia (JAGAM)

Director for Philippines	Ms. Junelyn A. Pagunsan	President of Philippine Federation of Japan Alumni (PHILFEJA)
Director for Singapore	Mr. Yee Jenn En	President of Japanese University Graduates Association of Singapore (JUGAS) ASCOJA Chairperson
Director for Thailand	Assoc. Prof. Dr. Prakrit Tangtisanon	President of Old Japan Students Association, Thailand (OSJAT)
Director for Myanmar	Prof. Dr. Myo Khin	President of Myanmar Association of Japan Alumni (MAJA)
Director for Cambodia	Dr. Penghuy Ngov	President of Japan Alumni of Cambodia (JAC)
Director for Vietnam	Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ngo Minh Thuy	President of Vietnam Association of Japan Alumni (VAJA)
Director for Laos	Dr. Bandaxay Lovanxay	ASJA Chairperson President of Japan Alumni of Laos (JAOL)
Director for Brunei	Ms. Hajah Najmina Fairuz Binti Haji Abdul Latif	President of Brunei Association of Japan Alumni (BAJA)

(2) Advisors

Mr. Takashi Tajima	Former Ambassador of Japan to Canada and Myanmar
Mr. Jiro Sato	President of Association for the Promotion of Japanese Language Education

(3) The Secretariat

Secretary General	Mr. Kazuhisa Matsuoka
Manager	Chikako Hagihara
Administrative staff	Naomi Arima
Student staffs	Marvin Ang (ASJA graduate, Brunei) Holanouphab Sisouda (ASJA student, Laos) Lai Thanh Hoa (ASJA student, Vietnam) Truong Thi Minh Trang (ASJA student, Vietnam) Pinjavee Rienmora (ASJA student, Thailand) Boungnong Nilandone (ASJA graduate, Laos)

ASJA (Asia Japan Alumni) International Secretariat Office
c/o Tokyo Japanese Language Education Center
3 Chome-22-7 Kitashinjuku, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo 169-0074
Tel: 03-5338-1285 / Fax: 03-5338-1286

6. Other Projects Conducted By ASJA

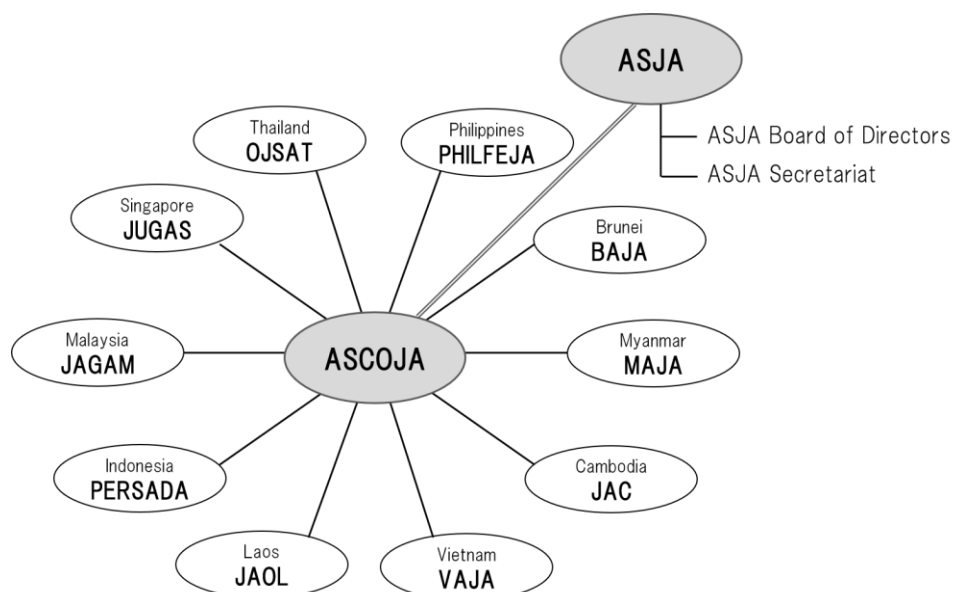
ASJA, as a counter part of ASCOJA, has been supporting the activities of ASCOJA and Japan Alumni Associations in each country. In addition, ASJA also carries out supportive projects for strengthening ASJA and ASCOJA network.

(1) Supporting ASCOJA and Japan Alumni Associations

- ① Invitation of Japan Alumni Associations consisting of ASCOJA Leaders
ASJA holds an annual Board of Directors meeting in March. Not only ASJA Directors but also executives of ASCOJAs are invited to Tokyo to attend the ASJA Board of Directors meeting. ASJA also supports ASCOJA to hold ASCOJA Governors meeting during the duration of the ASJA Board of Directors meeting.
- ② Participation in ASCOJA conference and ASCOJA Governors meeting
ASCOJA Conference and ASCOJA Governors meeting is held annually, which ASJA is invited to participate as an observer. ASJA also works closely with ASCOJA throughout the year.

(2) ASJA-ASCOJA Network strengthening support

- ① Online Platform
As a part of the network strengthening plan, ASJA and ASCOJA will cooperate and share related information on ASJA website. Since Fiscal year 2015, ASCOJA related information are readily available from ASJA website.
- ② ASJA-ASCOJA Symposium
Since Fiscal year 2015, themed symposiums co-hosted by ASJA, ASCOJA and Japan Alumni Association of the host country are held annually. Each symposium is field specific such as Human Resource and Business.



7. Participation in ASJA Programs and Submission of Reports

1) Participation in ASJA activities

- Participation in ASJA activities are **COMPULSORY** in principal and priority should be placed **ABOVE** personal leisure.
- If you are unable to participate the activities, you **MUST** contact the secretariats prior to the event stating your reason for absence. You may also be asked to submit a formal letter of absence and evidence if required.
- Please read “**アスジャ事業の欠席に関するガイドライン**” carefully for more details.
- Japanese places great emphasis on punctuality, so please always be on time.
- If you know that you will be late for any reason, you must inform the ASJA secretariats immediately.

2) Report

- Every program comes with a report. The usual flow of the reports are to write your impressions and the things you have learned through the program.
- Reports are compiled annually to be published and submitted to important stakeholders and also ASEAN country alumni associations. Hence, we expect your full cooperation to submit your reports on time.
- Reports are to be submitted in Japanese. However, if you have difficulties writing them in Japanese, you may consult the secretariats to have it written in English. (note: This does not mean you can write **ALL** your report in English. As ASJA scholars, you are expected to improve your Japanese language skills.)
- Guidelines are provided for writing the reports such as formats, file names and the word limits for each report. We expect you to strictly follow the guidelines.
- It is important to make it a habit to submit within the given deadline.
- IF for any reason, you are unable to complete the report within the deadline, you **MUST** contact the secretariat days prior to deadline.

3) Communication with ASJA secretariats

- Notifications and Communications are mostly conducted by email or phone calls. Hence, please check your email on a daily basis. You are also required to respond to our emails once you have received them.
- Please kindly CC the following admin email whenever you send an email to the secretariat. This is to ensure that all email received by the secretariat is shared.

ASJA Secretariat	admin@asja.gr.jp
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- Secretariat staff will also send you emails through their personal secretariat email. Please make sure to check your spam mails frequently, in case the following mail from the sender below is filtered out.

ASJA Secretariats	
Name	Email
Chikako Hagihara	asja.hagihara@gmail.com
Naomi Arima	asja.arima@gmail.com

- If you have any changes to your address, contact number, email addresses or etc., you MUST inform the secretariats.