

# JET Programme Video Contest Award Ceremony

MC : And now, something we've all been waiting for. The awards ceremony for the JET Programme Video Contest, held to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Programme.

The JET Programme Video Contest, one of the events held in celebrating the 30th anniversary of the Programme, adopted the theme, 'JET Participants Introducing the Charms of Japan's Local Regions'. The aim is to promote the charms and appeal of Japan's local communities as discovered through the eyes of people coming from other cultures in the form of videos.

For this contest, entries were solicited twice, for autumn/winter and spring/summer. For the autumn/winter contest, 50 videos were entered; then another 57 videos were entered in the spring/summer contest, for a total of 107 videos from various parts of Japan.

The entered works were screened carefully by a panel of seven judges active in various fields, headed by Mitsuko Okamoto, Professor in the Graduate School of Film and New Media, Tokyo University of the Arts. They chose ten outstanding works for awards, including four works for the Best of Season Awards, one each for the Best Idea Award, PR Award, and Most Voted Video Award, two Special Judges' Awards, and one First Prize.

The contest was honoured to receive sponsorship cooperation by Nippon Travel Agency Co., Ltd., Kinki Nippon Tourist Co., Ltd., Tokio Marine & Nichido Fire Insurance Co., Ltd., and Keio Plaza Hotel.

Let's begin with the Best of Season Awards. One video was selected for each season, as the work most fitting our impressions of that season.





First let me introduce the award presenter. Presenting these awards is Tadahiko Fujihara, mayor of Kawakami Village in Nagano Prefecture, and as the chairman of the National Association of Towns and Villages represents the towns and villages in Japan. Mr. Fujihara, please come to the stage. Winners of these awards receive a certificate, medal, and other prizes. And now for the winners of the Best of Season Awards.

There are four award winners. First is Sarah Laverty, for 'Kagura in the Shimane Highlands'. Ms. Laverty, please come to the stage.

Next is Arum Jung, for the work, 'Definitely More Fun in Hiroshima'. Ms. Jung, please come to the stage.

Next is Dana Nyberg, for 'Nishiizu, My Little Sunset Town by the Sea'. Ms. Nyberg, please come to the stage.

And finally, Aaron Jones, for 'Senri no Michi mo Ippo Yori (Little by little, one goes far)'. Mr. Jones, please come to the stage.

And so these are the four winners of the Best of Season Awards. Now Mr. Fujihara will hand out the awards.

He will present the first award to Sarah Laverty.

**Mr. Fujihara :** Congratulations!

**MC :** Congratulations! Could you say a few words on your receipt of this award?

**Ms. Laverty :** This was a work from the heart, made with the cooperation of many people. I hope it conveys even a little of my feelings toward the town of Iinan in Shimane Prefecture. Thank you so much.

**MC :** Thank you! Our next Best of Season award winner is Arum Jung.

**Mr. Fujihara :** Congratulations!

**MC :** Congratulations! Please say a few words.

**Ms. Jung :** Thank you very much! I am truly grateful to receive such a wonderful award on this significant occasion of the 30th anniversary of the JET Programme. There are so many good things about Hiroshima, and I want to go

on doing the best I can to let people know about them. I also plan on discovering the many charms of Japan, both the enjoyable, and the delicious things. Thank you very much!

**MC :** Thank you! And the next Best of Season award winner is Dana Nyberg.

**Mr. Fujihara :** Congratulations!

**MC :** Congratulations! Could we ask you to say a few words?

**Ms. Nyberg :** Thank you for this award. I'm very pleased that a small town like Nishiizu could win and be noticed in such a large scope of a contest. But Nishiizu is also one of the many small towns in Japan that are suffering from depopulation. So I would really like to thank the kind people and students of Nishiizu, and also the government officials, and the tourism industry that brought this whole contest together, because I think it's through small opportunities like this, and small efforts, that we can try to help Japan with this really large problem that they have. Thank you!

**MC :** And the final Best of Season award winner is Aaron Jones.

**Mr. Fujihara :** Congratulations!

**MC :** Congratulations! Mr. Jones, could you say a few words?

**Mr. Jones :** I'm grateful to receive this wonderful award. As I'm sure you can tell from watching the video, I really love Japan, Oita, and the city of Kitsuki where I live. I made the video in the hope of conveying that love. I am very glad for the chance to take part in the JET Programme. Thank you so much!

**MC :** Thank you! Congratulations once again to all four winners of the Best of Season Awards.

Now I wonder, Mr. Fujihara, if we could ask you to give us your thoughts about this video contest.

**Mr. Fujihara :** I was highly impressed with how the four winners can truly identify themselves with Japanese people, and have perhaps even captured moments that a Japanese person would have missed, seizing the chance to create these great videos. People of Japan who see them will appreciate the wonderful images, and I hope the videos will be used to show the rest of the world what Japan has to offer. Thank you very much!



MC : Thank you, Mr. Fujihara. Congratulations to each of the winners.

Up next is the Best Idea Award. This award is given to an innovative work that uses the video medium creatively.

Let me introduce the award presenter, Mr. Shinichi Aida, who is representing the cities in Japan. He's the mayor of Moriya City in Ibaraki Prefecture, and advisor to the Japan Association of City Mayors. Mr. Aida, please come to the stage. The winner of this award will receive a certificate, medal, and other prizes.

And now for the winner of the Best Idea Award. The Winner of the Best Idea Award is Sooyoung Park. Her work is, 'A Gourmet Tour of Aomori'. Congratulations! Please come to the stage.

Mr. Aida will present the award. Mr. Aida, please. The Winner of the Best Idea Award, Sooyoung Park.

Mr. Aida : Congratulations!

MC : Congratulations! Please say a few words on receipt of this award.

Ms. Park : I am very happy to receive this award. I wish to express my heartfelt thanks. Aomori Prefecture is famous as an apple-growing region, but it has many other food delights besides its apples. I made the video because I wanted to introduce these and I hope it will inspire many people to visit Aomori. Thank you very much!

MC : Thank you! Congratulations once again to Sooyoung Park for winning the Best Idea Award.

Next is the PR Award. This award is given to a work that is especially effective at conveying the appeal of a local region. The winner of the PR Award will receive a certificate, medal, and other prizes.

Announcing the winner of the PR Award. The PR Award goes to Emily Rose Eisemann, for her work, 'Tanegashima This is Our island'. Congratulations! Ms. Eisemann, please come to the stage. I'd also like to ask Mr. Yoshimura, Director of International Affairs Division, Tourism Promotion and International Exchange Bureau in the Kagoshima Prefectural Government, to come to the stage.

This award will also be presented by Mr. Aida. The winner of the PR Award, Emily Rose Eisemann.

Mr. Aida : Congratulations!



MC : Congratulations! Ms. Eisemann, could you please say a few words on receipt of this award?

Ms. Eisemann : I wish to express my appreciation to CLAIR and the other ministries here today, not only for this award but for providing me with the opportunity to support myself and my family through the JET Programme. I would also like to thank the other contestants of the video contest, many of whom have skill and talents that leave me humbled. Most of all I would like to thank the people of Tanegashima Island who dedicated their time and support to the creation of this video. If there's anything that I'm most proud of tonight, it's that I can try to give something back to the community that has given me so much. So this is for them, this is for my students, whom I love when they are being brilliant, and when they are being themselves and driving me up the wall. And lastly, this is for my mother, who made all things possible. Thank you.

MC : Congratulations once again to Ms. Eisemann for winning the PR Award.

This video is full of the attractions of Tanegashima in Kagoshima. Mr. Yoshimura, as Director of International Affairs Division of the Kagoshima Prefectural Government, what is your impressions of this work.

Mr. Yoshimura : First, it is a great honour that the video from Ms. Eisemann's from Kagoshima Prefecture was chosen for the PR Award. As you were able to see, her work introduces the people, daily life, and culture of Tanegashima with just the right tempo. I heard that in making this video, she received the cooperation of the local people, her friends, and her students, all of whom joined in creating it together. I believe this perfectly shows the JET spirit of contributing to the internationalisation of local communities.

As the video shows, Tanegashima is located on the Kuroshio, the Japan Current, which over time has brought many different people and things to the island as well as sending them to other places. In the 16th century, for example, a ship from Portugal drifted to the island and brought the technology of firearms to Japan. I believe this helped the advance of domestic unity of Japan and brought us a step closer to modernization. History also tells us that Francisco Xavier, who brought Christianity to Japan, stopped in Tanegashima on his journey back to India following his missionary work here. More recently, the island became home to the Tanegashima Space Center, which has been called the most beautiful such facility in the world. Last week the H-IIA Launch Vehicle No. 31 successfully lifted off for space from this Center.

In such ways, Tanegashima is also a place for international exchange, with all kinds of things arriving from all over the world, while also sending things widely including to outer space. I hope that introducing Tanegashima will lead to even greater global exchange. It's that beautiful a place. It is also full of attractions for tourists. I hope everyone



will make one opportunity to visit Tanegashima. It's just right for making a stop on the way back from the Goto Islands. Please come see us at least one time. Thank you!

**MC :** Thank you very much. Mr. Yoshimura, if you had to name the most fascinating aspect of Tanegashima, what would that be?

**Mr. Yoshimura :** I'd have to say it's the land, the people, and the food.

**Ms. Eisemann :** It's a fantastic island; it's got, as was mentioned, a rocket center; it's a surfing center; and the most amazing thing to me is that it's unique even within Japan, it's got a Bohemian type of culture, with the music and the surfing; and it integrates quite well with its traditional agricultural culture as well.

**Mr. Yoshimura :** Please visit us!

**MC :** I see that it has many different attractions. Everyone should definitely go there. Thank you! Thank you, Ms. Emily Rose Eisemann, and Mr. Yoshimura. Congratulations!

Now let's move on to the Most Voted Video Award. This award is given to the work that received the most votes from viewers in the general public. The winner of the Most Voted Video Award will receive a certificate, medal, and other prizes.

Announcing the winner of the Most Voted Video Award. The Most Voted Video Award goes to Ms. Rochelle Mighty. The title of her work is, 'THIS IS JAPAN'. Congratulations! Please come to the stage, Ms. Mighty.

Congratulations! This award will also be presented by Mr. Aida. The winner of the Most Voted Video Award, Ms. Rochelle Mighty.

**Mr. Aida :** Congratulations!

**MC :** Ms. Mighty, we would like you to say a few words on receiving the Most Voted Video Award.

**Ms. Mighty :** As the Tokyo Olympics draw closer, millions of people from around the world are using videos to learn more about Japan. Thousands of people viewed my video, so this was a good chance for me to showcase Japan while doing what I love. I'd like to thank God, I'd like to thank the JET Programme, my husband Michael, and

other family and friends who made this possible. Thank you.

**MC :** I'd just like to ask you, if I may, how you came to think about coming to Japan.

**Ms. Mighty :** Actually, my friend, she came before me and she said Japan was a great cultural experience. And so far, she's been right. I'm really enjoying Japan so far.

**MC :** Could you tell us what Japanese food you especially like?

**Ms. Mighty :** Ooh, that's difficult. I would say yakisoba. It's easy to make at home, too.

**MC :** So you make it yourself?

**Ms. Mighty :** Yes, that's right.

**MC :** Do you drink sake?

**Ms. Mighty :** I don't drink it often, but yes, I like plum sake from Niigata.


**MC :** Finally, please tell us what you find appealing about Japan.

**Ms. Mighty :** The most interesting, I would say, are the festivals. I really, really enjoy Japanese festivals.

**MC :** Thank you! Congratulations, Ms. Rochelle Mighty, on winning the Most Voted Video Award.

**Mr. Aida,** could we ask you to give us your thoughts about the video contest?

**Mr. Aida :** First of all, the video that won the Best Idea Award introduces some delicious-looking local foods of Aomori, but I myself have never had a chance to eat Senbei-jiru or Shiru-yakisoba. I'd definitely like to try them. I thought she researched the place thoroughly and produced a wonderful video. As for the winner of the PR Award, I thought she made a great effort to become a part of Tanegashima. I was also impressed by how well she engages in the night-time social life. Her choosing not to show her students in the video clearly shows how much she treasures them and looks out for their interests.



If I may add a personal note, I feel a connection to Tanegashima, as I believe there is a company there called Ichimaru; is that right? And the head of the hospital my family runs is also Mr. Ichimaru. He is a relative of the family operating that company. 'THIS IS JAPAN' is a work that did a great job of showing the appeal of Japan. For anyone seeing that video, I felt that it really distils all the beauty of Japan. Thank you sincerely for showing all those wonderful things of Japan. I hope you will continue with your efforts. Thank you very much.

MC : Thank you, Mr. Aida.

Next we go to the Special Judges' Awards.

Of the works entered in this contest, there were many quite excellent videos besides those being awarded today, and the judges strongly wished to give recognition to other works, as well, so it was decided to create this additional category the Special Judges' Awards.

Let me introduce the award presenter. These awards will be presented by Mitsuko Okamoto, who headed the review panel for the JET Programme Video Contest. She is a Professor in the Graduate School of Film and New Media, Tokyo University of the Arts. Ms. Okamoto, please. Winners of these awards receive a certificate, medal, and other prizes.

And now for the winners of the Special Judges' Awards. There are two winners of these awards. The first is Amanda Wayama, for her work, 'The Kotatsu Train of Iwate'. Congratulations! Ms. Wayama, please come to the stage.

The second award goes to Edouard Brena, for his work, 'Tonneru wo Nukeru to Soko wa Hare no Kuni de atta'. Congratulations! Mr. Brena, could you also please come to the stage?

Ms. Okamoto will present the awards. Ms. Okamoto, please. A Special Judges' Award will be presented first to Ms. Amanda Wayama.

**Ms. Okamoto :** Congratulations!

MC : Congratulations! Let us ask Ms. Wayama to say a few words.

**Ms. Wayama :** I'm feeling really nervous. I am truly grateful for this wonderful award. I first came to Iwate seven years ago as a CIR [Coordinator for International Relations] on the JET Programme. My life changed dramatically



as a result. When the Great East Japan Earthquake of 3.11 hit, Japan, Tohoku, and Iwate Prefecture suffered enormous damage. Nonetheless, even though the road to recovery is still very long, the people who were victims of the disaster are the kind of people who will continue to work hard toward that recovery, while not forgetting to smile. That's what I wanted to convey in the video. Thank you so much!

**MC :** Thank you. I would also like to ask Ms. Wayama why you chose Japan, and what you see as the attractions of Japan.

**Ms. Wayama :** Like many others, there was Pokémon when I was young, and I got into anime and the so-called subcultural aspects of Japan, so I decided to study Japanese. At first I came to Japan to study, but I wanted to work in Japan, which led me to seek employment through the JET Programme.

**MC :** What do you like best about Japan, or find most appealing?

**Ms. Wayama :** Of course that would be Iwate, and especially the beauty of nature in Iwate Prefecture. The coast is absolutely gorgeous. There's a place called Jodogahama which has really great scenic beauty. Please come and visit there at least once.

**MC :** Thank you very much.

The second winner of a Special Judges' Award is Edouard Brena.

**Ms. Okamoto :** Congratulations!

**MC :** Congratulations! Could you say a few words on receiving this award?

**Mr. Brena :** I'm also feeling quite nervous! It gives me great joy to receive such an award on this occasion. I would like to express my appreciation first to my colleagues, who worked so hard with me to present the attractions of Takahashi City. Thank you very much. The city of Takahashi in Okayama Prefecture, to which I was assigned, is an even more wonderful place than could be conveyed in this video. I hope you will definitely visit. The people of Takahashi have many different interests and a willingness to take on challenges. I strongly believe Takahashi will advance to a bright future. I intend to continue acting as a bridge between Japan and my home country, France, for both France and of Takahashi. Thank you very much.



MC : Thank you. Mr. Brena, could you tell us how you happened to choose Japan?

Mr. Brena : Maybe it's because I grew up watching Ghibli films.

MC : So you like anime.

Mr. Brena : That's right, I like anime.

MC : So have you seen a lot of anime also while you are in Japan?

Mr. Brena : Since coming to Japan, my work has kept me busy, with little time to watch them.

MC : Well, I hope you will be able to watch many anime in the future. Thank you, and congratulations! Let's hear another round of applause for the two winners of the Special Judges' Awards.

I would now like to ask Ms. Okamoto, head of the review panel, for her thoughts on this video contest. Ms. Okamoto, please.

Ms. Okamoto : I am Mitsuko Okamoto, head of the review panel for this contest. First of all, on behalf of the review panel, I would like to offer heartfelt congratulations and thanks to those who entered works in the JET Programme Video Contest, to the award winners, and to all those who helped with this event.

For this contest 107 videos were entered over the course of one year. All the judges were surprised at the diversity of themes and at the high quality of the images. No matter which of them we chose for the awards, all of them would have been deserving any of the awards, but we nonetheless narrowed the winners down to those receiving awards here today.

By the way, if you will just indulge me for a moment, I took it upon myself, based on my own humble opinion by listening to the views of the other judges, to pick the three most common motifs that were taken up in the JET Program videos. I'd like to announce these now. A motif is the subject in the case of a drawing, or in the case of a video, the subject or theme covered. I thought that by sharing this best three list with you, I could give you a hint at the kinds of things that interest the JET Programme participants.

First is number three. What do you suppose was the third most common motif in the JET Video Contest? Number three is fireworks. Fireworks are not all that unusual, being seen throughout the world. As you know, however,



fireworks are really famous in Japan as a summer tradition, and Japan is a place where many events take place to mark each of the four seasons. This is something that the participants in the JET Program very beautifully captured in their videos.

Speaking of seasons, the video ‘Senri no Michi mo Ippo Yori’ beautifully portrayed the four seasons of Kitsuki City in Oita Prefecture. ‘Tanegashima This is Our Island’ likewise did a great job of showing the beauty of nature on Tanegashima Island. ‘THIS IS JAPAN’ was excellent in showing the festivals held in spring, summer, fall and winter.

Next, number two. What do you suppose was the second most commonly depicted motif? The answer is, festivals and traditional events. We’ve seen many videos here today, so I’m sure you have come to see how the participants in the JET Programme Video Contest are really part of their communities and have recorded in detail the festivals and traditional events taking place there. Among these, the Ekin Kabuki tradition still preserved in Akaoka, Kochi Prefecture, is probably one most Japanese have never heard of, but it has been depicted with great care as a documentary. Then there is ‘Kagura in the Shimane Highlands’, showing the Kagura tradition kept alive in Iinan, Shimane. These and other videos have captured valuable images most of us normally do not get to see.

And finally, what is the motif most commonly seen of those taken up by JET participants? Those of you in the audience, if you yourself were to make a video, think about what you would most like to capture. What do you think is number one? I’m going to tell you, OK? The number one motif taken up by JET participants is...the people of Japan. As you can tell from having seen so many videos, the people living in each town, for example, in ‘Nishiizu, My Little Sunset Town by the Sea’, and the expressions on the faces of children playing, so full of life, are so beautiful, aren’t they?

Also, in the video that won a Special Judges’ Award, ‘The Kotatsu Train of Iwate’, the expression of the people of Iwate as they bravely try to overcome the Great East Japan Earthquake, are really wonderful.

One other work was chosen for a Special Judges’ Award, ‘Tonneru wo Nukeru to Soko wa Hare no Kuni de atta’. This is the one about Takahashi City in Okayama. What made me laugh the most was that during the day, the streets are mostly quiet; but at festival time, for some reason everyone comes out. The video clearly shows the lives of people who have a deep love of festivals, and then in preparation for the festival, the people from the city hall and various others are seen practicing their dances with all their heart. I think the way he was able to get up close to the people and capture these kinds of moments produced a really wonderful result. So we were truly impressed by the way the videos succeeded in depicting people’s lives so vividly.



I believe it shows the importance of communication between people, and that more than any other memories, the connections built between one person and another are what remain strongest in our hearts. At the same time, the participants in this video contest showed us very powerfully some things that we Japanese need to value and cherish. Thank you so much for this.

Finally, now that we have so many of the concerned people assembled here today, I would like to conclude by making one proposal. This year, the video contest attracted 107 entries. That's not such a surprising number for one year, but if this pace were to continue for ten years, the number would reach 1,000 videos. In 20 years it would be 2,000, and as this is the 30th anniversary of the program, in 30 years it would reach 3,000 videos. I think archiving these videos would be a very big deal.

Imagine this, for example. On a map of Japan, you decide where you want to go, say the Goto Islands of Nagasaki, and when you click on that region, you can see works about that place entered in the video contest. Whenever you click on some place, you can see videos about that place. What's more, what you see is not simply a travel guide video, but images that were captured by people like you who have become rooted in the community. Imagine being able to call these up on the internet. I believe it would become that kind of really invaluable archive. So along with the JET Programme, I truly hope the video contest will go on for another 20 years or 30 years, enabling wonderful images of Japan to continue being used as a resource.

Once again, congratulations to all of those who took part in the video contest. And thank you very much.

MC : Thank you, Ms. Okamoto.

And now finally, it's time to announce the winner of the First Prize. The winner of the First Prize will receive a certificate, medal, and other prizes.

And now for the announcement. The winner of the First Prize is Alexander Barnett. The title of the winning entry is, 'Ekin Kabuki Festival, Akaoka Japan'. Congratulations!

Let's now watch the First Prize work, 'Ekin Kabuki Festival, Akaoka Japan', by Alexander Barnett.

(Showing of First Prize winning video)

MC : We have just seen the First Prize work, 'Ekin Kabuki Festival, Akaoka Japan', by Alexander Barnett.

Let me introduce the presenter of this award. The award will be presented by Keiji Yamada, President of the Council of Local Authorities for International Relations (CLAIR), Governor of Kyoto Prefecture, and President of the National Governors' Association. Mr. Yamada, and First Prize winner Alexander Barnett, please come to the stage.

And now for the award ceremony. Mr. Yamada will present the award. Mr. Yamada, please. The first prize winner, Alexander Barnett.

**Mr. Yamada :** The certificate for the First Prize. To Alexander Barnett. I hereby present you with this certificate in recognition of your First Prize work in the JET Programme Video Contest hosted by CLAIR. November 7, 2016, President of the Council of Local Authorities for International Relations, Keiji Yamada. Congratulations!

**MC :** Congratulations! I would now like to ask the First Prize winner, Alexander Barnett, to say a few words on receiving this award. Mr. Barnett, please.

**Mr. Barnett :** Thanks first of all to JET, CLAIR, and the others involved in putting on this video contest, for this award. I think it was a great idea to hold a video contest to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the JET Program.

Video is such a powerful and also accessible tool for us to all share our stories and our culture. I think telling stories is so important for this. Our experiences, our memories of our lives are constantly reinforced, even validated, by the stories that we share with one another. I hope with this Ekin Kabuki story I was able to capture the community spirit at the heart of the Bentenza Theater, and also the JET participants in Kochi Prefecture, Japan.

Recently I have gone back to working as a freelance video editor. If anyone in the audience needs to have a video made, I'm sure you know whom to contact. (laughs)

Finally, to David Crowther and Mayu Hosoda, who cooperated in making this video, and to the people of the Bentenza Theater, Otsukaresama, and Kanpai! Thank you very much.

**MC :** Thank you. Mr. Barnett, what is one thing that you find appealing about Japan. What do you like about Japan, or find fascinating?

**Mr. Barnett :** A place?

**MC :** A place, or a food, whatever you like.



**Mr. Barnett :** I worked for two years as a JET Programme ALT [Assistant Language Teacher] in Kochi Prefecture. I lived in the city of Shimanto in Kochi. I think it's a great place. I especially like the famous foods from the Shimanto River, like river shrimp and aosa nori tempura, and of course the most famous food of Kochi Prefecture, Katsuo no tataki. I think these are really tasty.

**MC :** Thank you. If I may ask one more question, how did you come to choose Japan?

**Mr. Barnett :** Actually, I had the experience of a home stay in Nagoya when I was 17. I lived there for 10 weeks. While I was there, I met an American ALT at Nagoya Kita High School. She told me about the JET Programme. From that time I became interested in returning to Japan one day.

**MC :** So you were able to fulfil that wish. Thank you very much. That was Alexander Barnett. Congratulations!

**Mr. Barnett :** Thank you very much.

**MC :** And that ends the awards ceremony for prize-winning works. I would like to ask each of the award-winners and the presenters to come on stage one more time. Please give them all a round of applause.

**MC :** And now, we will conclude today's events with remarks by Keiji Yamada, President of the Council of Local Authorities for International Relations (CLAIR). Please give us your impressions of the video contest, and an overall assessment of the JET Programme 30th Anniversary Commemorative Ceremony.

**Mr. Yamada :** Today we have celebrated the 30th anniversary of the JET Program, followed by the announcement of accomplishments and the video contest. These events have, I believe, shown us much about the 30-year history and the greatness of the JET Programme that has continued for these thirty years.

The final work we saw in the video contest was about Ekin Kabuki in the town of Akaoka, Kochi Prefecture. This video truly probed into the essentials of what feels like the innermost place in Japan. Having actually worked in Kochi, I was familiar with Akaoka. They have a festival there, called Dorome, where the participants drink up large bottles of sake. Even for Kochi, it's a place that goes all out. Today we were able to enjoy a presentation of the attractions of this beautiful part of Kochi by someone who spent time there. All the others were also very fine videos in their own way.

This is said to be an age of regional revitalization. What kind of people does it take to revitalize a community? As

the saying goes, wakamono, bakamono, yosomono, literally, ‘young people, fools, and outsiders’. It’s true that if there is someone willing to pursue a thing even if thought a fool or simple, and an outsider comes along and adds a different point of view, and then young people follow, they will be able to make a community come alive once more, which is the reality behind this saying. The people in the JET Programme do in fact come to communities in the role of outsiders. Besides this, however, the participants have built strong ties with the locals, and have created these videos out of love for the community. For those of us who manage local municipalities that are working toward regional revitalization, I feel that this video contest has shown us the things we need to pay most attention to, focus on, and treat as important.

As Ms. Okamoto noted earlier, while we tend to think of tourism in terms of places like temples and shrines, or various art objects, the most important tourism asset we have to get tourists to see is the people of Japan. This is something the entrants in the video contest clearly grasped, and it shows in the kinds of images they captured for us. By continuing to compile an archive of these videos along with the history of JET, I feel the JET Programme will advance further in the future that lies ahead.

In conclusion, I would like to say a few words about today’s festivities as a whole. As we marked our 30th anniversary we were honoured with the presence of Their Imperial Highnesses Crown Prince Naruhito and Crown Princess Masako. In addition, three Ministers in highly important positions took time from the busy Diet proceedings to offer their congratulatory words to us. The presence of these dignitaries at the 30 year anniversary of the JET Programme shows clearly just how important the programme has been. Nonetheless, we will need to advance the programme even further going forward. And that truly means person-to-person ties.

In that sense, the reception coming up next may be an important part of the JET Programme 30-year celebration. At the reception, if we are able, looking back at the 30 years of history, to strengthen our person-to-person ties so that we go ahead with the JET Program for the next ten, twenty, and thirty years, sharing the same hopes and desires, that will be the greatest way to conclude today’s event. So I would like to ask you to attend the reception, while also once more expressing my appreciation to all of you who are carrying on the JET Programme. And with that, I end my remarks. Thank you all very much for coming today.

MC : Thank you very much. And congratulations once again to each of the winners. Let’s hear a round of applause for all of today’s award winners. Congratulations!

And with that, we conclude the JET Programme 30th Anniversary Commemorative Ceremony.