

Opening a door from Tohoku to Asia through designs
contributing to regional revitalization and disaster recovery
**DOOR to ASIA held
for Designers in Residence**

The Japan Foundation invited eight young designers active in ASEAN countries and one Japanese designer to the Rikuzentakata area of the Sanriku region, which was damaged in the Great East Japan Earthquake. During twelve days from December 1 (Tuesday) to December 12 (Saturday), 2015, a Designers in Residence program called “Door to Asia” was held for the first time.

Eight designers from Indonesia, Singapore, Thailand, the Philippines and Malaysia and one Japanese designer participated in communal life in residence for the twelve days. Anchor Coffee, Ishiwatashouten, Yagisawa Shouten and Three Peaks, companies in the Rikuzentakata area of the Sanriku region, collaborated with the designers.

The nine designers were given work experience in local companies’ stores and factories and discussed various issues that came up through communication. The designers devised and proposed communication designs such as corporate logos, websites and package designs based on their ideas of what would sell in their own countries. This succeeded in identifying the potential for designs that can contribute to the region and the role of designers backed by recovery from natural disasters, a common issue for Asian countries.

In addition, the companies were able to identify new value in Tohoku in this international exchange through design. The program received high praise from the companies for the ideas it generated on expanding into Asian markets in the future and turning domestic and international attention to Tohoku.

Strong relationships were developed between the designers and companies, with some business people even planning trips with a view to expansion in Asia after the program was complete. As a result, the program succeeded in creating opportunities for new beginnings that go beyond national boundaries in the medium to long term.

Overview of Door to Asia Program

Schedule: December 1 (Tuesday) to 12 (Saturday), 2015

Location: Rikuzentakata City, Ofunato City, Kesenuma City, Ishinomaki City (and Tokyo)

Designers: Adityayoga (Indonesia), Zinnia Nizar-Sompie (Indonesia),
Jonathan Yuen (Singapore), Thirada Raungpaka (Thailand),
Mali Chaturachinda (Thailand), Pom Jitpratuk (Thailand),
Dan Matutina (Philippines), Driv Loo (Malaysia), Seiji Tarumi (Japan)

Cooperating companies: (Kesenuma City, Miyagi Prefecture), Ishiwatashoten Co., Ltd. (shark fin
Ishiwatashoten) , Onodera Corporation (Anchor Coffee)
(Rikuzentakata City, Iwate Prefecture, Yagisawa Shoten (shoyu)
(Ofunato City and Rikuzentakata City, Iwate Prefecture) Three Peaks (winery,
apple orchard)

Base during stay: (Rikuzentakata City, Iwate Prefecture) Hakoneyama Terrace

Communication design proposals for businesses

● Anchor Coffee (coffee shop / Kesenuma City, Miyagi Prefecture)

Designers: Dan Matutina (Philippines), Zinnia Nizar-Sompie (Indonesia)

< Design issue >

The issues for the coffee shop, which aims to be a gathering place for locals, were to refine the shop logo and disseminate information to foreigners (Indonesians).

< Ideas to address issues >

The designers made a multi-faceted proposal including logo and gift bags using red for passion and blue for the sea based on the key phrases “happy coffee life,” “pride of Kesennuma” and “home,” pop-up shops overseas using the key word “port,” and brand communication through free newspapers aimed at Indonesians.



● Ishiwatoshoten Co., Ltd. (processing of marine products such as shark fins and oyster sauce / Kesennuma City, Miyagi Prefecture)

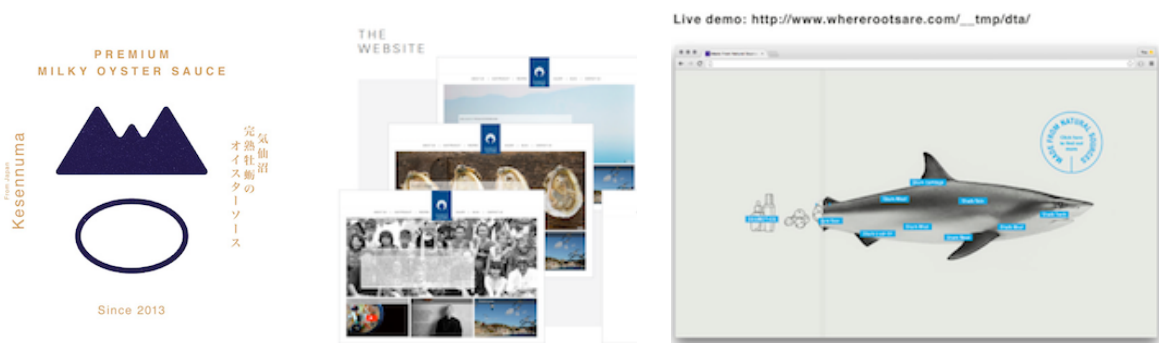
Designers Adityayoga (Indonesia), Jonathan Yuen (Singapore)

< Design issues >

The issues for this long-standing shark fin store representative of Japanese traditions were branding for its oyster sauce, package design proposals, and means of advertising overseas (design branding).

< Ideas to address issues >

The designers proposed a logo and packaging for oyster sauce designed based on the topography of Kesennuma and the shape of oysters, as well as brand communication based on an Internet campaign. In addition, in order to counter the negative image of shark fins that is common overseas due to media bias, they devised a campaign to convey the message that Kesennuma believes sharks are a marine resource and that the entire shark should be used without wasting anything.



● Yagisawa Shoten (shoyu manufacturing / Ofunato City and Rikuzentakata City, Iwate Prefecture)

Designers: Thirada Raungpaka (Thailand) Mali Chaturachinda (Thailand),

Pom Jitpratuk (Thailand)

<Design issues>

This well-established company, which has made shoyu (soy sauce) and miso with a commitment to quality for about 200 years, wanted to address communication for its expansion to overseas stores and exhibition methods at an exhibition in Paris that they are planning to participate in.

<Ideas to address issues>

The designers proposed a brand communication strategy based on viewing this shoyu manufactured from simple ingredients as “art” and “alchemy.” Using the image of the “miracle” pine tree that survived the tsunami, the designers created a product logo with a drawing of a pine tree leaf and provided a visual representation of the fermentation process for koji with overseas buyers in mind.



●Three Peaks (winery, apple orchard / Ofunato City and Rikuzentakata City, Iwate Prefecture)

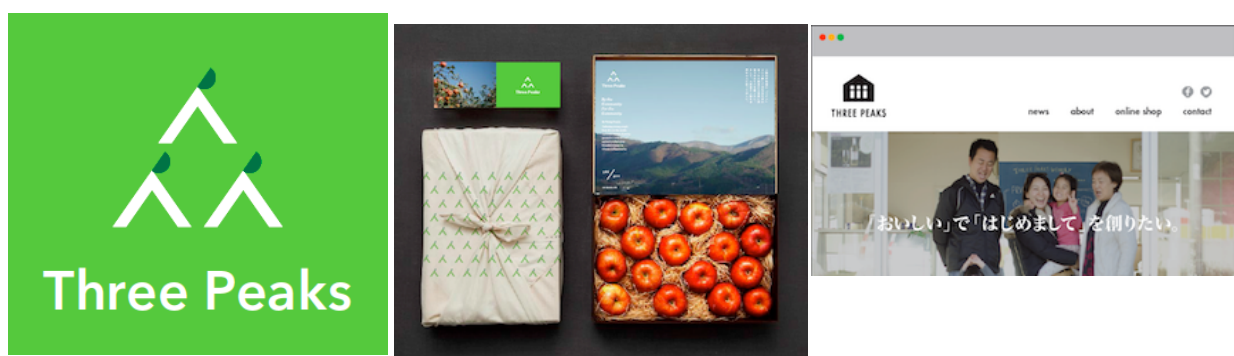
Designers: Driv Loo (Malaysia), Seiji Tarumi (Japan)

<Design issues>

This company wants to build a winery along the Miyagi coast that will create a new culture through human interactions. They hope to develop a business that can be passed on to future generations. The company wanted to standardize their brand logo and develop proposals for a strategy to attract customers.

<Ideas to address issues>

The designers created a logo design that provides a new brand image based on the founder’s desire to spread awareness of the Ofunato and Miyagi regions where it is based. In addition, the designers devised a comprehensive proposal for brand communication that included catch copy, a program that would accept people from all over the world who want to help make wine, and package designs for wine and apple juice.



What is “Door to Asia?”

“Door to Asia” is a designer-in-residence program that brings together designers from different countries and regions to stay in a community and work with local businesses to deepen mutual

understanding while creating and recommending “communication designs” for companies and products.

This is an ideal opportunity for the participating designers to form ties with designers from other countries and learn the role of design in “creating regions” and “natural disaster,” a common issue for Asian countries.

This program gives local businesses the opportunity to reaffirm the strengths of their own business and product and gain a deep understanding of their own position in the world. This enables them to imagine an entirely different path for their future.

“Door to Asia” uses design to open a door between businesses and designers leading to the future.

Sponsor: The Japan Foundation

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*Pictures of the program and the design proposals have just been released.