

To the press and whom it may concern,



National Printing Bureau of Japan Receives “Commissioner for Cultural Affairs Special Award”

The National Printing Bureau, Incorporated Administrative Agency, has been awarded the “Commissioner for Cultural Affairs Special Award” in recognition of its contributions to the promotion of Japanese culture and art, including the production of "banknotes" that combine artistry and technology at a high level over the years, as well as the delivery of lectures on the techniques of "Designers", who are specialized technicians, at art and fine art universities in Japan.

The “Commissioner for Cultural Affairs Special Award” has been newly established this fiscal year and is awarded by the Commissioner for Cultural Affairs to individuals and organizations that have the ability to influence others among those who have achieved excellent results in cultural activities and contributed to the promotion of Japanese culture, or those who have contributed to promoting Japanese culture to the world and international cultural exchange.

This award to be given to the National Printing Bureau is the first to be awarded by the Commissioner for Cultural Affairs to a national institution, including ministries and agencies and Incorporated Administrative Agency, since the “Commissioner for Cultural Affairs Award” was established in 1989.

[Summary of lectures at art and fine art universities in Japan]

The National Printing Bureau is an organization that produces products closely related to the lives of the people, including the production of Bank of Japan notes, official gazettes, and passports. The National Printing Bureau was founded in 1871 as the Paper Money Office (Shiheishi) under the Ministry of Finance, and celebrated its 150th anniversary in 2021, supported by public trust. The National Printing Bureau employs specialized staff called “Kogeikan (Designer)” who have advanced artistic skills. They are responsible for designing and producing original plates for Bank of Japan notes and passports, which are indispensable social infrastructure to the national economy.

The National Printing Bureau started delivering lectures for students at art and fine art universities in Japan in FY 2022 as part of its cultural and educational activities. The aim of this initiative is to pass down the high skills of Designers who have a high level of artistic skills and their fine engravings to the next generation. Lectures were held at two universities in FY2022, six universities in FY2023, and four universities and one vocational training school in FY2024, as an opportunity to provide possibilities and options for career plans of art and fine arts students. Some of these universities commented that the power of art plays a central role in the production of Bank of Japan notes, which function as the infrastructure of the real economy, and this is a good opportunity to learn for us that art can contribute to society as a great example of the ultimate fusion of art and business.

These efforts are aimed at presenting the image of Japanese traditional culture that has brought results in a unique industry as information necessary to maintain public trust in banknotes. In addition, manufacturing at the National Printing Bureau has been providing a place for confirming and passing down ancient Japanese culture and traditional skills, and the high quality of the art of Designers is the foundation of anti-counterfeiting technology, these efforts are part of our social contribution activities aimed at raising the public awareness of the high level of Designers' techniques that the National Printing Bureau has developed over the years.

[Lecture (April 2023)]



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