

Satoyama & ESG Awards

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Conservation, environmental efforts gain recognition

The Japan Times Satoyama and ESG consortiums have selected Obata Sake Brewery in the satoyama category and Fuji Oil Holdings Inc. in the ESG category as the Grand Prize winners of The Japan Times Satoyama & ESG Awards 2020.

In its second year, the awards are given to companies, organizations and individuals who have made notable achievements in satoyama and ESG-related activities. The awards aim to showcase the successful undertakings of those recipients in and outside Japan.

ESG stands for "environmental, social and governance." These factors are increasingly considered essential for corporate management and activities as investors place more importance on this nonfinancial information.

"Satoyama" refers to rural mountains and forests tended by residents for the sustainable use of existing natural resources.

"Through these awards, we hope to introduce Japanese organizations that are not necessarily well known in the world and are trying to create a sustainable society," said Minako Suematsu, president of The Japan Times, who heads the two consortiums.

In the satoyama category, Fisherman Japan and the city of Toyooka in Hyogo Prefecture received the Excellence Award. Mie Prefecture was presented with the Special Award.

Obata Sake Brewery, based on Sado Island in Niigata Prefecture and headed by Rumiko Obata, has contributed to community development by producing special sake rice and sake in its brewery for some 130 years. It also turned a closed elementary school into a sake brewery in 2014, where it now offers sake production lessons and workshops.

Fisherman Japan is actively making connections between the fishery industry and consumers, helping to brand new fishery products. They also offer training programs for future fishermen. Their work is based

on three principles: "Be cool, successful and innovative."

Toyooka, led by Mayor Muneharu Nakagai, worked hard to successfully revive the natural stork population while also promoting art-related events and education by setting up an art university and center. Mie Prefecture won the accolade for utilizing its rich ocean produce and preserving traditional fishing methods by ama female divers.

In this category, judges were Kosuke Motani, chief senior economist at the Japan Research Institute Ltd. and Takashi Mitachi, senior adviser of Boston Consulting Group K.K.

In the ESG field, Fuji Oil won the top prize for its efforts in ESG management and working to eliminate child labor at cacao farms by 2030. It also uses satellite images to prevent child labor and to protect the environment.

The Excellence Award winners were Suntory Holdings Ltd. and Shizen Energy Group. Suntory promotes energy saving and the recycling of pet bottles. Their two plants in Japan had also received certification from the Alliance for Water Stewardship, which confirms that it has met the global benchmark for sustainable water management.

Shizen Energy Group has helped local communities build renewable energy power plants and engaged in many overseas projects to generate power by natural energy.

Nonprofit organization ACE was presented with the Special Award. The organization supports low-income families and education for their children in India and Ghana, and researches human rights violations, as well as corporate social responsibility.

Mitsuyo Morisawa, Japan head of Principles for Responsible Investment; Takatoshi Kato, adviser of the Japan Center for International Finance; Naonori Kimura, partner and managing director at Industrial Growth Platform Inc.; and Ken Shibusawa, chairman of Commons Asset Management Inc., selected the ESG awards winners.



Brewers produce sake using traditional methods at Obata Sake Brewery.

Satoyama: Grand Prize winner

OBATA SAKE BREWERY

We are honored to have been awarded the Grand Prize in the satoyama category in The Japan Times Satoyama & ESG Awards.

We are extremely grateful that our brewing activities have been highly acknowledged.

A sake brewery can only come to fruition when there is good water and rice in the area, and with such gifts of local produce, it's been possible to continue our business.

In 2014, we transformed an old elementary school that was closed in 2010 into a sake brewery known as Gakkogura (school brewery). With an aim to only use produce from Sado, we intend to brew sake sustainably while taking advantage of Sado's rich environment and using renewable energy.

In recent years, such sustainable efforts have attracted much attention from overseas. We are highly encouraged by



Rumiko Obata, executive vice president of Obata Sake Brewery, holds the Grand Prize trophy in the Satoyama category at Gakkogura brewery, which used to be an elementary school, on Sado Island, Niigata Prefecture. OBATA SAKE BREWERY

this award, and we are determined to continue disseminating the charm of satoyama in Sado.



Fuji Oil Holdings Inc. employees pose with local farmers in Burkina Faso in July 2018. Fuji Oil Group is conducting research on sustainable procurement of soybeans, as well as improving the health of area residents through development of soybean meat substitutes. COURTESY OF FUJI OIL HOLDINGS INC.

ESG: Grand Prize winner

FUJI OIL HOLDINGS INC.

We are delighted to be selected for this honorable grand prize. Fuji Oil Group is a business-to-business food ingredient manufacturer. We promote ESG Management to achieve sustainable growth while contributing to the realization of a sustainable society.

Environment and human rights issues may arise at production sites for crops such as palm oil and cacao, which are our key raw materials. We promote sustainable procurement while respecting stakeholders' expectations, including the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. As an example, we aim to achieve NDPE (no deforestation, no peatland development and no exploitation) described in our Responsible Palm Oil Sourcing Policy. To put this policy into practice, we operate a grievance mechanism that enables our stakeholders to inform us of any issues

FUJI OIL HOLDINGS INC.



Fuji Oil Holdings Inc.'s President Hiroshi Shimizu holds the Grand Prize trophy in the ESG category at the company in Osaka. FUJI OIL HOLDINGS INC.

in the supply chain. This allows us to take appropriate corrective action.

Under the leadership of the chief "ESG" officer, a position established in 2019, we will continue to improve our ESG performance to meet our stakeholders' expectations.

the japan times

SATOYAMA & ESG AWARDS 2020

Satoyama: Excellence Award winner

FISHERMAN JAPAN

Our approach is only one such option for the revitalization of Japan's fisheries industry. For better or worse, the fisheries industry has not changed over time. As a result, we now have a situation that doesn't provide any alternatives for growth. Twenty or 30 years from now, the problems facing fisheries will probably be very different from what we are currently facing. That's why we must create options so future generations can feel, "This industry can face new challenges!"

We will continue our activities working with the sea while enjoying the benefits

of doing so. We'll try to create as many options as possible for the fisheries industry for many more decades to come.



Fisherman Japan has not only young fishermen, but also professionals who design, take photographs, dive and cook, as its members. FISHERMAN JAPAN



Satoyama: Excellence Award winner

TOYOOKA CITY

We are honored to receive the Excellence Award in the satoyama category in The Japan Times Satoyama & ESG Awards.

In many parts of Japan, "density" is now losing its value, while, conversely, "sparsity" is regaining its importance. Such trends are becoming more prominent.

Cities must increase their value as a "place for living" as opposed to being a "place to earn." It is now necessary to pursue new possibilities or shift emphasis toward the benefits of being in an area with a lower population.

Toyooka City aims to be a "Local & Global

City." Using the city's activities as a driving force, such as reviving the natural stork population and bringing theater and other art forms to the city, we will continue to further advance the excellent benefits of living in Toyooka.



The city of Toyooka is seen in this aerial photo. TOYOOKA CITY



Satoyama: Special Award winner

MIE PREFECTURE

We would like to express our sincere gratitude for Mie Prefecture's selection as a Satoyama Special Award winner.

Mie Prefecture boasts various attractions such as Ise Jingu Shrine, Japan's spiritual home; the Kumano Kodo pilgrimage route, a UNESCO World Heritage site; and its beautifully scenic sea, mountains, rivers and villages.

The prefecture is hoping to further refine such attractive offerings as outlined in the "Mie Marugoto Shizen Taiken Plan 2020" ("Mie's Full Nature Experience Plan 2020"). Operators of nature workshops in the

prefecture are making every effort to prevent the spread of the coronavirus.

As such, we hope many people will come to Mie, which is said to feature "original old hometown Japanese scenery," and experience the prefecture and its diverse charms to the fullest.



Mie Prefecture's Kashiko Island was the venue for the 2016 summit for the Group of Seven economies. MIE PREFECTURE



ESG: Excellence Award winner

SUNTORY HOLDINGS LTD.

The Suntory Group established our Sustainability Vision in 2019 to help realize our corporate mission to create harmony with people and nature.

Our initiatives related to water sustainability and climate change are a part of this vision. Initiative examples include reducing water usage at our plants, conducting cultivation activities in water-stressed areas and aiming for net-zero greenhouse gas emissions across the whole value chain by 2050.

Our Plastic Policy is also a part of this vision. The policy outlines how we will provide innovative solutions in aiming to use fully recycled or plant-based materials for all polyethylene terephthalate (PET) bottles by 2030. It also guides our employees to take initiative in bringing about a sustainable society through recycling and commu-



The Suntory Okudaisen Bunanomori Water Plant was the first in Japan to receive certification by the Alliance for Water Stewardship with regard to its sustainable use of water in the basin around the plant. SUNTORY HOLDINGS LTD.



ESG: Excellence Award winner

SHIZEN ENERGY GROUP

We are deeply grateful to receive the ESG Excellence Award from The Japan Times.

At Shizen Energy Group, we will do our best to promote the energy transition to renewables to allow people to live happily on this beautiful, blue planet well into the future.

We aim to realize an autonomous and sustainable society, creating a "100 percent renewable energy" world. We will join forces with partners and others who share the same feelings to pass on our planet to future generations. We strive to work closely with people who have a shared perspective to tackle diverse problems, maximizing our impact on society.

On the other hand, to achieve such a soci-



Shizen Energy Group began offering in May the Minimum Grid service, which is a solar power generation system that combines solar panels, storage batteries and an Energy Management System. SHIZEN ENERGY GROUP



ety, it is essential to build systems that consolidate capital for economic, cultural and social arenas for the earth's future and future generations. We would bring new value that inspires and motivates people all over the world through innovative systems. With this, energy businesses can connect local communities across the globe.

We welcome people to co-create values for the future. Together we can take action for our planet.

ESG: Special Award winner

ACE

ACE is a Japanese nongovernmental organization that strives for "a world where children and youth can shape their own lives and build a society they want to live in," by solving social issues to that end.

Since our establishment in 1997, we have focused on the issue of child labor, involving an estimated 152 million children globally (as of 2017), and specifically the cacao industry in Ghana and the cotton industry in India. We facilitate collaboration between communities, corporations and consumers to eradicate child labor together.

By supporting the formation of the child labor-free zone system with the Ghanaian government, we aim to scale-up the safe-



Indian girls smile in 2018 in southern India where ACE works to resolve child labor issues. ©NATSUKI YASUDA / DIALOGUE FOR PEOPLE

guarding of more children from dangerous and harmful labor and ensure wider access to quality education.

2021 is the United Nation's "International Year for the Elimination of Child Labor." With this honorable award, we call for more governments, companies and people to commit to solving the issues toward the achievement of sustainable development goal 8.7.

