



Winners of the 3rd ASIA COSMOPOLITAN AWARDS

The 3rd Asia Cosmopolitan Awards

Grand Prize:

HE U Thein Sein

Former President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar

**Economic and
Social Science Prize:**

Professor Masahisa Fujita

Professor, Konan University

Project Professor, Institute of Economic Research, Kyoto University

Cultural Prize:

HE Prof Herman Van Rompuy

Haiku Ambassador for Japan-EU Friendship

President Emeritus of the European Council

The Asia Cosmopolitan Awards Selection Committee is proud to announce the winners of the 2016 Asia Cosmopolitan Awards (ACA). The prestigious ACA prizes will be awarded at a ceremony in Nara Prefecture, Japan in January 2017. The Grand Prize is awarded to HE Thein Sein, the former President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar for his leadership during Myanmar transitional period. The Economic and Social Science Prize is awarded to Professor Masahisa Fujita, for his work in the field of Economic Geography. The Cultural Prize is awarded to HE Mr Herman Van Rompuy, the first fulltime President European Council and an accomplished Haiku poet, for his Haiku poetry, an Asian art that promotes harmony and mutual understanding.

This award aims to recognize on a biennial basis individual(s) or organization(s) that have made substantial and significant contributions to the development of a peaceful and stable East Asian Community, to narrow the developmental gaps in the region, as well as to establish the sustainable social growth towards cultural and economic integration within East Asia. The Selection Committee of the ACA is composed of distinguished representatives of several East Asian countries from various backgrounds. According to Hidetoshi Nishimura, the “awards strive to become the East Asian Nobel Prize.”

The Nara Forum 2017 will be held on 15 January, 2017 to congratulate the laureates. This event will feature awarding ceremony, commemorative keynote speech and dialogues by the laureates. We cordially welcome your participation. Details will be announced later on Nara Prefecture website at <http://www.pref.nara.jp/35317.htm>.

※Please refrain from contacting the laureates and Selection Committee members directly about the awards.
Contact the Asia Cosmopolitan Awards Secretariat in Jakarta. (e-mail address: asiacosmopolitan@eria.org)

Press Release

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Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA): ERIA is an international organization that supports the ASEAN Secretariat by making policy recommendations at regional governmental meetings such as the East Asian Summit (EAS), aimed at furthering East Asia's economic integration.

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Press Release

<Laureates of the 3rd Asia Cosmopolitan Awards>

❖ Grand Prize



Name: HE U Thein Sein

Affiliation: Former President, Republic of the Union of Myanmar;
Chairman, The Union Solidarity and Development Party

Country: Republic of the Union of Myanmar

Categories: Economic and Social Science

Field of Work: Social, Politics

Profile (Official Biography)

HE U Thein Sein joined the Army in 1963 and graduated from the Defence Services Academy with a Bachelor of Arts in 1967. He served in the Army as Second Lieutenant to General from 1967 to 2010.

His Excellency also served as Secretary (2) of the State Peace and Development Council in 2003 and as Secretary (1) in 2004. In October 2008, he became Prime Minister of the Union of Myanmar and served to March 2011.

In 2010, His Excellency retired from the Army and became Chairman of the Union Solidarity and Development Party. At the General Election held on 7 November 2010, he represented as a candidate of Zabuthiri Township Constituency in Nay Pyi Taw and he was elected as a representative of the Pyithu Hluttaw (House of Representatives).

On 4 February 2011, he was elected as President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar by Presidential Electoral College of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw (Union Assembly). After taking the oath, on 30th March 2011, he became President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

On 30th March 2016, he made a smooth transfer of power to the new President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar. Now, he is the Central Board of Patron of the Union Solidarity and Development Party, Party Leading Committee.

Press Release

Description of the Achievement Deserving of Award

As President, HE U Thein Sein committed to transform Myanmar through economic development and a series of reforms aimed at making the country more open and prosperous. Under his leadership, Myanmar was able to take several important steps towards democracy including much-needed domestic reforms. He guided Myanmar's Chairmanship of ASEAN, successfully concluding summits and many ministerial meetings, showing the world the commitment of ASEAN to develop the ASEAN Community post-2015. Because of this combination of domestic and international leadership, the Asian Cosmopolitan Awards Selection Committee is proud to choose HE U Thein Sein for the Grand Prize.

HE U Thein Sein embarked on the transformation of Myanmar, his government undertook gradual democratic and market-oriented economic reforms, making efforts to materialize solid results to address a wide range of challenges in accordance with the law and the will of people. The government adopted socially-oriented economic reforms that were designed to ensure secure livelihoods and create job opportunities for citizens thereby improving living standards and the social and economic status of the general public. During his presidency, free primary and secondary schooling was introduced.

Instead of a strictly linear approach of accomplishing each task, his government employed a multifocal approach. In the Framework for Economic and Social Reform (FESR), they set a prioritized agenda that included monetary and exchange rate reforms which ensured greater macro-economic stability. The FESR also established rules on foreign investment to improve the investment climate for foreign investors. A key step toward fiscal stability was taken in 2011 when the government decided to use a market exchange rate for hard currency components of receipts and expenditures in its 2012-2013 budget instead of the overvalued official rate, thus becoming significantly more pro-growth.

In response to the reforms, western sanctions were lifted or suspended providing more support to the country's political and economic transition.

The highlight of his presidency with regard to the international arena was Myanmar's chairmanship of ASEAN in 2014, tasking Myanmar for the first time as a leader of regional diplomacy. The successful execution of the Summits and related meetings were an extraordinary accomplishment given the fact the country was in isolation for such a long time. *The Nay Pyi Taw Declaration on the ASEAN Community's Post 2015 Vision* adopted in 2014 during Myanmar's chairmanship provided an important framework for creating the *ASEAN Community's Vision 2025*.

The success of the Chairmanship instilled confidence in the people of Myanmar and sent a clear signal that Myanmar was open and more engaged in regional and global relationships.

It is his leadership and care for domestic and international issues that make HE U Thein Sein the most suitable winner of the Grand Prize of the Third Asia Cosmopolitan Awards.

Press Release

❖ Economic and Social Science Prize



Name: Prof Masahisa Fujita
Affiliation: Professor, Konan University
Project Professor, Institute of Economic Research,
Kyoto University
Country: Japan
Category: Economics & Business
Field of works: Urban Economics, Regional Economics,
Spatial Economics

Profile

Prof Fujita currently serves as Professor of Konan University and Project Professor at the Institute of Economic Research at Kyoto University. He has been a member of the Japan Academy since 2010. He previously served as Professor in the Department of Economics and Regional Science at the University of Pennsylvania; Professor at the Institute of Economic Research at Kyoto University; President of the Institute of Developing Economies – Japan External Trade Organization (2003-2007); and President of the Research Institute of Economy, Trade and Industry (2007-2016). He also served as the President of the Japanese Economic Association (2009-2010). He holds a PhD in Regional Science from the University of Pennsylvania. His research and teaching interests are urban economics, regional economics, international trade, and spatial economics.

His major works include: *Urban Economic Theory*, Cambridge University Press, 1989; *The Spatial Economy: Cities, Regions, and International Trade*, MIT Press, 1999 (with P. Krugman and A.J. Venables); *Economics of Agglomeration: Cities, Industrial Location, and Regional Growth*, Cambridge University Press, 2002 (with J. Thisse), 2013 (2nd edition); *Regional Integration in East Asia: From the Viewpoint of Spatial Economics* (editor), Macmillan, 2007.; *The Economics of East Asian Integration: A Comprehensive Introduction to Regional Issues* (co-editor), Edward Elgar Publishing, 2011.

Press Release

Description of the Achievement Deserving of Award

Prof Fujita has produced pioneering works in regional and urban economics, and made vital contributions to establishing ‘new economic geography’ or spatial economics. His seminal book, co-authored with Paul Krugman and Anthony J. Venables, *The Spatial Economy: Cities, Regions, and International Trade*, is cited by more than 8,000 studies. Economic geography investigates reasons for spatial agglomeration and dispersion especially the role of transportation costs in generating agglomeration and dispersion forces that affect industrial location, flows of population, international division of labour, and so on. His studies provide theoretical foundations to understand potential benefits of East Asian economic integration.

Prof Fujita emphasizes the importance of not only theoretical but also empirical and field studies. His theory and enthusiasm for research encourage East Asian scholars to conduct policy-oriented studies and evidence-based policy making. Prof Fujita’s initiatives have made significant contributions to promoting various ASEAN’s initiatives such as the *Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity* and the ASEAN Economic Community Blueprint 2025, and East Asian economic integration.

The Asian Cosmopolitan Awards Selection Committee is pleased to award the Third ACA Economic and Social Prize to Prof Masahisa Fujita.

Press Release

❖ Cultural Prize



Name: HE Mr Herman Van Rompuy
Affiliation: Haiku Ambassador for Japan-EU Friendship
President Emeritus of the European Council
Country: Belgium
Categories: Christian Democratic and Flemish Party
Field of Work: Culture, Politics

Profile

Elected as the first full-time President of the European Council in November 2009, HE Herman Van Rompuy took office when the Lisbon Treaty came into force on 1 December 2009. In 2012, he was re-elected for a second (and last) term starting on 1 June 2012 and running until 30 November 2014.

At the time of his first election, HE Van Rompuy was Prime Minister of Belgium. Prior to that he had served in Belgium as Speaker of the House of Representatives (2007-2008) and in several government positions, including as Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Budget (1993-1999). He was Minister of State (2004) and Secretary of State for Finance and Small Businesses (1988).

A former economist at the National Bank of Belgium, HE Van Rompuy began his political career in 1973 as national Vice-President of his party's youth movement. He was President of the Flemish Christian Democrats (1988-1993). He served in the Belgian Parliament, in turn as Senator (1988-1995) and Member of Parliament (1995-2009).

HE Herman Van Rompuy holds a Bachelors in Philosophy and a Masters in Economics from the University of Leuven.

He was born in Etterbeek (Brussels), on 31 October 1947.

He is now professor at the universities of Leuven and Louvain, the College of Europe in Brussels and Sciences Po in Paris and he is the President of the European Policy Centre.

On 3 November 2015, he received the Grand Cordon of the Order of the Rising Sun from Japan.

On 21 July 2015, the Belgian King Philip announced that HE Herman Van Rompuy would be honoured the title of Count and his wife the title of Countess. This title is personal and his children would get hereditary nobility.

In addition to his native Dutch, he speaks English, French and German.

Press Release

Description of the Achievements Deserving of Award

HE Van Rompuy is a Haiku lover and has published two books from his Haiku collection: *Haiku*, Poeziecentrum Vzw, 2010; and *Haiku 2*, Poeziecentrum Vzw, 2013. The latter was translated into Japanese. Attracted by the charm of this form of poetry, he wrote his first Haiku in 2004 and since then he has devoted his time to Haiku even during the busy days as President of EU Council.

In the complicated modern world where skepticism is widespread, the ‘simplicity’ of haiku stands out. In the face of today’s competition, hostility and jealousy, he believes that Haiku’s ‘harmony’ is a valuable presence. His leadership as the President of the EU Council reflected the belief in peace, reconciliation and unity. He emphasized those characteristics overlap with the appearance of the EU which promotes shared values beyond the differences of race and principles.

Haiku revitalized his faith and became an important part of his life. In fact, he says Haiku changed his life. As Haiku spread to Europe from Japan, it has become increasingly incorporated into the system of thought of Europe. Haiku can express the preciousness of peace and everybody can easily recite this short poem format.

Quoting Fyodor Dostoevsky’s famous statement ‘Beauty will save the world,’ HE Van Rompuy stated “Haiku is also a form of beauty. If people enhance the sensibility of beauty, I think it would help to suppress disputes in the world.”

Although the problem of the movement of people has become very pronounced in the EU, HE Van Rompuy has shown that when people interact from their hearts, beyond the pursuit of mere economic profit, it creates a foundation for accepting the movement and engagement of people. It is therefore more important than ever to bring harmony through beauty and the recognition that Haiku has the capacity to accept different cultures and natures while respecting diversity.

HE Van Rompuy claimed "the philosophy behind Haiku is the world's common good" and should be promoted as a UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage.

His major Haiku that have received high praise are as follows:

Peace Haiku

Who looks at the sun
At the sea, at the stars
Loves peace

For the Victims of Great East Japan Earthquake in March 2011

The three disasters
Storms turn into a soft wind
A new humane wind

Others

Two wild ducks	Wandering clouds
Alighting on my pond	Full moon and black heaven
A brace forever	Chiaroscuro

The Asia Cosmopolitan Awards Selection Committee is proud to present the Cultural Award to HE Herman Van Rompuy.

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