

(Copy of JASS Web article 2011)

Friends of Asian Students along the Tojo Line (FAS)

<http://www.geocities.jp/asianogakusei/> (In Japanese Only)

— What was the reason for founding this organization?

In the winter of 1987, there was a sad incident in which an international student (who was a pre-college student at the time) starved to death at an apartment in Niiza City in Saitama Prefecture. This inspired us to create the Friends of Asian Students along the Tojo Line, with the goal of having members (mainly salaried workers and homemakers) give support to international students. Since its establishment, the main activities of this organization have included exchange between international students and Japanese people in the region, as well as providing scholarships.

—Who can apply?

International students from Asia who are attending professional training colleges, or universities (*) along the Tobu Tojo Line (the railway that connects Ikebukuro Station [Tokyo] and Yorii Station [Saitama Prefecture]) are eligible for the scholarship.

(*) note: Only undergraduate students, except for those in post-graduate courses etc. For details, please consult FAS.

— What are the characteristics of your organization?



Because we don't accept applications for scholarship recipients from throughout Japan, our scale is quite small. We are a citizens' group that provides support through exchange between Asian international students and Japanese people in the region. The Friends of Asian Students directly hands over scholarship funds to recipients at scholarship award ceremonies held when scholarship recipients and members get together, such as

at events.

—What is the amount of the scholarship?

We provide 240,000 yen over one year. The sources of the scholarship funds are mainly donations, membership fees from members, financial assistance from corporations, etc.

—What are the selection criteria?

Firstly, we consider what amount of financial assistance is required. Afterwards, we award scholarships to international students who feel the importance of exchange with Japanese people. Anything is acceptable as exchange with Japanese people – club activities, volunteering, part-time jobs, etc. Please tell us about these experiences and what sort of activities you want to do in the future.

Applicants must also submit an approximately 1,200-character essay in Japanese. In 2011 applicants submitted essays on one of two themes: “Exchange with Japanese People” or “Something Unfavorable that Happened to me in Japan.”



—How can one apply?

Applications are taken from late April each year. Applicants first send us their documents. Afterwards, applicants who pass the paper screening are interviewed and selected. There are many cases in which exchange continues with international students who weren't selected, such as by having them participate in the activities of the organization.

— What sort of projects do you do in addition to scholarships?



In addition to holding bazaars for which earnings are used as scholarship funds, we also carry out activities to deepen friendship several times a year, such as cooking events for tasting food from the home countries of international students and the Kimono Project.