

Professor Yoshiaki Ishizawa, Director of the Sophia Asia Center for Research and Human Development receives the 2017 Ramon Magsaysay Award

On July 27, 2017, Professor Yoshiaki Ishizawa, Director of the Sophia Asia Center for Research and Human Development received the Ramon Magsaysay Award, known as Asia's equivalent of the Nobel Prize. The Award was established in memory of former Philippine President Ramon Magsaysay. Each year, the Ramon Magsaysay Award Foundation in Manila bestows the award on individuals or organizations that have made an outstanding contribution to society in Asia. The award ceremony will be held on August 31, 2017 in Manila.

According to the Foundation, the Ramon Magsaysay Award recognizes Professor Ishizawa's human development efforts to foster Cambodian experts to protect Angkor Wat which he initiated during Cambodia's civil war period with the strong belief that "Angkor Wat should be preserved and restored by the hands of the Cambodian people." His contributions gave the Cambodian people momentum to restore their pride in their unique cultural heritage. He is also highly recognized for widely communicating to the international community the importance of its role in preserving cultural assets like Angkor Wat as treasures of humanity.

In 1996, Sophia University established the Sophia Asia Center for Research and Human Development in Siem Reap, Cambodia, based on the philosophy that "the preservation and restoration of the sites of Cambodia should be carried out by the Cambodians, for the Cambodians." Since then, for over twenty years, Professor Ishizawa has been engaged in training local stonemasons and historical preservation officers. Sophia University has proactively accepted Cambodian students seeking to become leaders in historic site preservation and has awarded degrees to eighteen Cambodian students (7 PhD degrees and 8 Master's degrees), who have all returned home to assume high positions in their respective fields of expertise.

Since the 1958 Ramon Magsaysay Award, the Award has been bestowed on 294 individuals and 24 organizations from throughout Asia, including Mother Teresa and the 14th Dalai Lama. Professor Ishizawa will be the third award winner from Sophia University, following the 1994 awardee Fr. Jorge Anzorena, who taught at Sophia as lecturer for a long period of time, and 1997 awardee Professor emeritus Sadako Ogata, former Dean of the Faculty of Foreign Studies and the eighth United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

Profile of Professor Yoshiaki Ishizawa (aged 79):

Field of expertise: Southeast Asian History, especially Cambodian literature in stone inscriptions from the Angkor period

1937	Born in Obihiro City, Hokkaido
1961	Graduated from the Division of French Studies, Faculty of Foreign Studies, Sophia University Studied ancient Cambodian stone inscriptions at l'Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes

1977	Acquired PhD in Literature (Chuo University)
1982	Became Professor of the Faculty of Foreign Studies, Sophia University
2002	Assumed office as Director of Sophia Asian Center for Research and Human Development (to present)
2005	Assumed office as thirteenth President of Sophia University (-March, 2011)
2006	Assumed positions of member of the Council for Cultural Affairs, Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology and Chair of the Subdivision on Cultural Properties,
2010	Assumed office as Chairperson of Japan Consortium for International Cooperation in Cultural Heritage (under cojurisdiction of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (to present)
2016	Professor at Sophia University (to present)