

Press release

## **Kyoto Prize 2015: Inamori Foundation announces this year's laureates**

The Kyoto Prize, alongside the Nobel Prize one of the world's highest honors for the lifetime achievement of outstanding personalities in the fields of culture and science, is being awarded this year to Dr. Toyoki Kunitake, Chemist; President, Kitakyushu Foundation for the Advancement of Industry, Science and Technology, Dr. Michel Mayor, Astrophysicist; Professor Emeritus, University of Geneva, and Mr. John Neumeier, an American-born choreographer; Intendant and Artistic Director, The Hamburg Ballet. Each worth 50 million yen (around €360,000/£290,000\*), the prizes are awarded each year by the Inamori Foundation, which was initiated in 1984 by Dr. Kazuo Inamori, founder of the Japanese technology corporation Kyocera.

**19 June 2015** – Kyoto, Japan/Neuss, Germany – With its Kyoto Prize, the Inamori Foundation pays tribute to the lifetime achievement of personalities who have excelled in their fields through outstanding accomplishments. In accordance with tradition, the presentation ceremony will be traditionally held in Kyoto on 10 November 2015.

### **Kyoto Prize Laureates 2015**

The Committee awards the Kyoto Prize in the categories “Advanced Technology”, “Basic Sciences” and “Arts and Philosophy”. This year the laureates are being honored in the related prize categories “Materials Science and Engineering”,

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“Earth and Planetary Sciences, Astronomy and Astrophysics”,  
“Theater, Cinema”.

### **Dr. Toyoki Kunitake (Japan)**

Dr. Toyoki Kunitake, a pioneer in the field of Materials Science, is best known as the first scientist to discover synthetic bilayer membranes and as the creator of the new field of chemistry based on molecular self-assembly. After his epoch-making discovery in 1977, Dr. Kunitake helped to illuminate the formation of bilayer membranes as a universal phenomenon. He is credited with developing various methods for bilayer membrane immobilization, synthesizing two-dimensional polymer and two-dimensional ultrathin silica films using thin layer structures built by organic molecular assembly as molds, and developing a technique for manufacturing large, free-standing nanostructured thin films. His molecular self-assembly is widely recognized as one of the most useful concepts in advanced materials design. A native of Fukuoka Prefecture, Dr. Kunitake, 79, is a recipient of various awards and honors, including the Chemical Society of Japan Award, Japan Academy Prize and Person of Cultural Merit.

### **Dr. Michel Mayor (Switzerland)**

Dr. Michel Mayor has made outstanding contributions to a new vision of the universe by discovering the first extrasolar planet orbiting a Sun-like star. He achieved this feat by continuously refining and improving observation technology, including the development of a series of spectrographs. He deployed a technique known as the radial velocity method with the use of the spectrographs to measure the velocity of exoplanets. The exoplanet research stimulated by Dr. Mayor is raising expectations

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that an exoplanet similar to Earth will be discovered in the not-too-distant future. Dr. Mayor, 73, from Lausanne, Switzerland, has received many prizes including the Albert Einstein Medal, Shaw Prize in Astronomy and Gold Medal of the Royal Astronomical Society, and is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, European Academy of Sciences and National Academy of Sciences.

### **John Neumeier (Germany, USA)**

Mr. John Neumeier is a globally known choreographer who has successfully applied traditional ballet techniques and vocabulary to maximize the potential for bodily expression and capture the details of human psychology. He has combined the essence of two genres, dramatic ballet and abstract ballet, raising the art to a new level. A native of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, Mr. Neumeier studied English Literature and Theater Studies in college before moving to Europe, where he quickly established himself as a full-fledged choreographer. His masterpieces, such as Illusions – like “Swan Lake”, are performed not only in Germany but around the world.

Mr. Neumeier, 73, has been artistic director and chief choreographer of the Hamburg Ballet for more than four decades. He is a recipient of many awards including the Nijinsky Award and German Dance Prize.

### **About the Kyoto-Prize**

The Inamori Foundation was founded in 1984 by Kazuo Inamori, founder and now chairman emeritus of Kyocera Corp., a widely diversified fine ceramic and semiconductor components and electronic devices company based in Kyoto. The foundation awards the Kyoto Prize annually to people who have made significant contributions in the categories of Advanced Technology, Basic Sciences and Arts and Philosophy.

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### About Kyocera

Headquartered in Kyoto, Japan, Kyocera Corporation is one of the world's leading manufacturers of fine ceramic components for the technology industry. The strategically important divisions in the Kyocera Group, which is comprised of 226 subsidiaries (as of March 31, 2015), are information and communications technologies, products which increase quality of life, and environmentally friendly products. The technology group is also one of the largest producers of solar energy systems worldwide, with more than 6 gigawatts of solar power having been installed around the world to date.

The company is ranked #552 on Forbes magazine's 2015 "Global 2000" listing of the world's largest publicly traded companies.

With a global workforce of over 68,000 employees, Kyocera posted net sales of approximately €11.74 billion in fiscal year 2014/2015. The products marketed by the company in Europe include printers, digital copying systems, microelectronic components, fine ceramic products and complete solar power systems. The Kyocera Group has two independent companies in the Federal Republic of Germany: Kyocera Fineceramics GmbH in Neuss and Esslingen and Kyocera Document Solutions in Meerbusch.

The company also takes an active interest in cultural affairs. The Kyoto Prize, a prominent international award, is presented each year by the Inamori Foundation — established by Kyocera founder Dr. Kazuo Inamori — to individuals and groups worldwide who have contributed significantly to the scientific, cultural, and spiritual betterment of humankind (converted at present €360,000 per prize category\*).

\*Exchange rate from 18 June 2015

### For more information about Kyocera:

[www.kyocera.eu](http://www.kyocera.eu)

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