

Pursuant to indent 7 of paragraph 1 of Article 107 of the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia and point 5 of Article 7 and Article 10 of the State Decorations of the Republic of Slovenia Act, the President of the Republic of Slovenia, Borut Pahor, has issued an order for the conferral of a State Decoration of the Republic of Slovenia.

For his contribution in acquainting the Japanese public with the historical and social circumstances of the Slovenian path to independence,

THE MEDAL FOR MERITS

is conferred upon

DR NOBUHIRO SHIBA

Dr Nobuhiro Shiba, Emeritus Professor of the University of Tokyo, is one of the most distinguished Japanese historians and experts in the history of South-Eastern and Central Europe, and an excellent connoisseur of the history of the former Yugoslavia. With his scientific work and widely read professional monographs he has significantly contributed to the understanding of historical and social processes in Central Europe and the Western Balkans, in particular to understanding the circumstances surrounding disintegration of Yugoslavia. In his works he has also explicitly addressed the position and role of Slovenia in Yugoslavia and the Slovenian path to independence.

Dr Shiba has been particularly engaged in writing the history of the South-Eastern European and Central European countries in the course of the past two decades. During that period, he has actively supported Slovenian-Japanese academic and scientific cooperation and offered all the necessary professional support to Slovenian students and experts in their studies in Japan. He has also helped clarify the role of Japan in the allocation of Prekmurje to Slovenia after the First World War and the fate of Slovenian war prisoners, Austro-Hungarian soldiers and seamen in Japanese military camps.

At the same time, Dr Shiba has encouraged Japanese scholars specialising in Slovenian language and historians to study Slovenian and South Slavic history and learn the languages. Upon his initiative lectures in the Slovenian language were introduced at the University of Tokyo, which was the basis for the subsequent institution of Slovenian language lectures at the Tokyo University of Foreign Languages. Dr Shiba has also closely cooperated with Slovenian historians for over two decades. The results of this cooperation have been two successful Slovenian-Japanese scientific projects. The first one focused on a comparative analysis of historical textbooks in Slovenia and Japan, and the second one on the Japanese and Slovenian methods of addressing the history of the 20th century. Together with his Slovenian and Japanese colleagues Dr Shiba has recently also written a short popular presentation of Slovenia in Japanese.

Through his academic, research and educational work, Dr Shiba has made an impressive presentation of Slovenia in Japanese historiography and introduced Slovenia to the general Japanese public, thus contributing significantly to the visibility of the Republic of Slovenia in Japan.