

A foreign traveler looks for a souvenir at Sakura in Narita International Airport.

Souvenirs to Remember

ALL PHOTOS YUICHI ITABASHI

The final screening for the Charming Japanese Souvenir Contest 2011 took place on February 18, 2011 in Tokyo. From among approximately 100 souvenirs passing the documentary screening out of 755 applications received from all over the country, one Grand Prize, nine Category Awards, fifteen International Awards and one Special Award—for the International Year of Forests—were selected.

The Grand Prize was awarded to the City Postcard series of cards which, when folded according to guideline indentations, stand up to illustrate a traditional Japanese wooden building such as a candy store, bathhouse or restaurant.

Chairman of the Screening Committee Kong Yi, who is representative director of Ten-I (interpreters and exchange program consultants) and a Visit Japan ambassador, said of the City Postcard series, "It incorporates the Japanese technique of paper cutout

to create excellent reproductions of scenes of Japan. The cards can be used to write messages to family and friends about recollections of scenes encountered when traveling."

Susumu Yamaoka, designer of the City Postcard series, commented, "I'm honored to win the Grand Prize. Postcards are easy to accept because they are such everyday tools. Traditional wooden cityscapes are gradually disappearing, and it's important that we hold on to and cherish these buildings. I'm happy that such a familiar product as the postcard is still able to evoke fond memories among people both at home and abroad of Japan's traditional cityscapes."

Most of the prize-winning products are on sale at the Japanese souvenir shop Sakura in Narita International Airport, where previous prize-winning products are also on sale.





Grand Prize

City Postcard

This city postcard series illustrates traditional Japanese buildings such as a candy store, bath house or restaurant. One set of four cards: 1,260 yen.
(Made by Susumu Yamaoka.)

Available from Wise-Wise Tools in Tokyo Midtown, and Tei Park Museum Shop at the Communications Museum in Chiyoda Ward, Tokyo.



Traditional Japan Category Gold Prize

Handmade miniature kimono

Miniature kimono 30 cm high. Hand-sewn and made in almost exactly the same way as a real kimono. Includes freestanding rack for hanging. Price: 5,000 yen (Nishida Shoten).

Tel/Fax: 81(0)771-54-0024

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Cool Japan Category Gold Prize

Sushi-shape USB memory souvenir set

A souvenir that combines an authentic-looking sushi display model with a USB flash drive. The packaging is in the shape of a bento lunchbox. Price for USB flash drive and package set: 3,150 yen (Kyoto Silk).

Available from Kyoto Silk, a Kyoto store specializing in Japanese souvenirs. Also on sale at the store's website: www.japanesegift.jp/



Essential Japan Category Gold Prize

Set of three cases of twenty triangular toothpicks with fine pattern

The cross-sectional surface of the wooden toothpicks is shaped like an isosceles triangle to match narrow interdental spaces. 315 yen (Koeisha).

Available from Mitsukoshi, Takashimaya, Seibu, Daimaru and other Tokyo department stores.