



43rd Niwano Peace Prize Awarded to Benki Piyako, Indigenous Spiritual Leader of Ashaninka People in Brazil's Amazon Rainforest

Descrizione

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TOKYO, March 10, 2026 /PRNewswire/ - The Niwano Peace Foundation will award the 43rd Niwano Peace Prize to Benki Piyako, an indigenous spiritual leader of the Ashaninka people in Brazil's Amazon rainforest, in recognition of his sustained leadership defending indigenous land and culture while pioneering reforestation and environmental protection for 15 years.

An award ceremony will take place in Tokyo on May 12. Piyako will receive a trophy and a cash prize of 20 million yen along with a certificate. The Foundation said that Piyako has advanced education, community-based ecological restoration, and the transmission of traditional knowledge, mobilizing youth and communities for large-scale reforestation and biodiversity conservation. Guided by indigenous spirituality and committed to intercultural dialogue, he has become an influential voice for environmental stewardship nationally and internationally.

In selecting Piyako for the award, the Niwano Peace Prize Committee said that he is "a pioneer in the sustainability and ecology movement at a critical time when the environment and the physical world are in crisis." He "has continued to serve not only his tribe but all people around the world who receive the benefits of a healthy Amazon rainforest," according to the committee. "Piyako stands as a vital figure in a world increasingly marked by the indiscriminate destruction of nature for economic gain and self-interest."

Niwano Peace Prize: The Niwano Peace Foundation established the Niwano Peace Prize to honor and encourage individuals and organizations that have contributed significantly to inter-religious cooperation, thereby furthering the cause of world peace, and to make their achievements known as widely as possible. In this way, the Foundation hopes both to enhance inter-religious understanding and cooperation and to encourage the emergence of still more persons devoted to working for world peace. The prize is named in honor of Nikkyo Niwano, the founder and first president of the lay Buddhist organization Rissho Kosei-kai.

Niwano Peace Foundation: The Niwano Peace Foundation was chartered in 1978 to contribute to the realization of world peace and the enhancement of a culture of peace. The Foundation promotes research and other activities based on the spirit of religious principles and serves the cause of peace in such fields as education, science, religion and philosophy.

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