

We Are *Tomodachi*

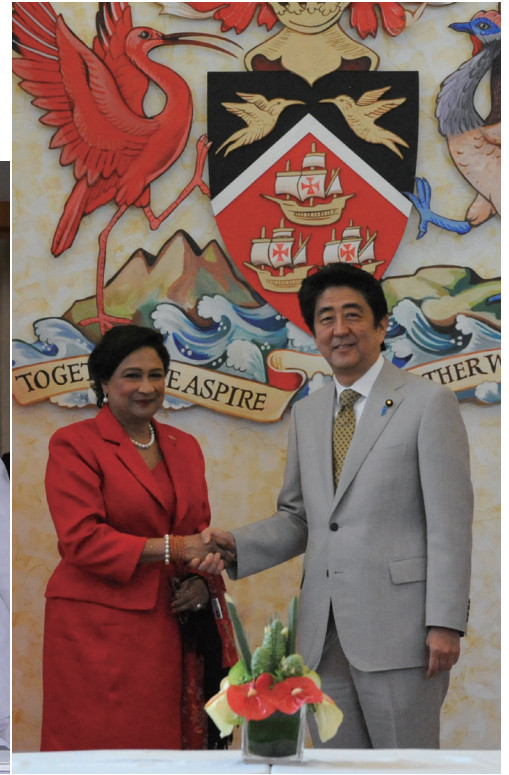
Womenomics Edition 2014



The Government of Japan

We Are *Tomodachi*

Womenomics Edition 2014



Prime Minister Abe Meeting with Foreign Counterparts



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1. With Prime Minister, Simpson-Miller, at Japan-Jamaica Summit Meeting. (July 2014) 2. With Prime Minister, Persad-Bissessar, at Japan-Trinidad and Tobago Summit Meeting. (July 2014) 3. With President Bachelet at Japan-Chile Summit Meeting. (July 2014) 4. With President Rousseff at Japan-Brazil Summit Meeting. (August 2014)

Kagayaku



The character 「輝」 is pronounced *kagayaku*, which means “to shine.”

The kanji itself is made up of two components: the one on the left signifies a person holding up fire and means “light,” while the one on the right means “to encircle.” Together, they take on the meaning of “light encircling a center” and “light spreading outward,” or in other words, to shine.

“Womenomics” plays a crucial part in Abenomics—the economic program advocated by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. Japanese women have traditionally played a supportive role in the home, but by breaking down the barriers that have prevented women from participating in activities outside the home and allowing them to shine more brightly, Japan will be able to achieve further growth.

Once Japanese women make up their mind to do something, nothing can stop them—just look at the Japan women’s national football team which won the FIFA Women’s World Cup and the female athletes who held their own in the Olympics. In the years to come, the women of Japan will only shine brighter, casting their light across the entire world.

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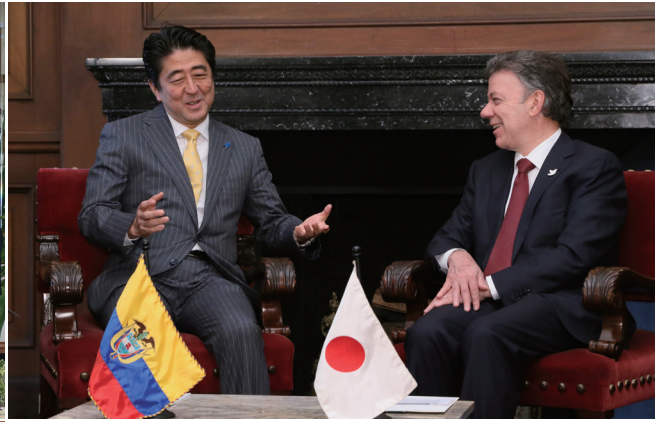


Moments of Prime Minister Abe in Summer/Autumn 2014



1. With Australian Prime Minister, Tony Abbott, visiting the West Angelas mine in Western Australia. The two leaders continued their friendly dialogue aboard the Australian Prime Minister's plane. (July 2014) 2. With New Zealand's Prime Minister, John Key, and rugby players. New Zealand, with its All Blacks, is well known as a rugby powerhouse. (July 2014) 3. Prime minister Abe was afforded a rare opportunity to address the Australian Parliament. (July 2014) 4. With Papua New Guinea's Prime Minister, Peter O'Neil, at a gala event that he hosted. Prime Minister Abe was greeted by people in traditional costumes. (July 2014) 5. With Mexican President, Enrique Peña Nieto, at the Teotihuacan site. It was like a scene from a film. (July 2014)

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1. Summit meeting of the leaders of Japan and CARICOM (Caribbean Community) held in Trinidad and Tobago. Since many Caribbean countries are island nations, Japan shares with them a history of facing natural disasters. (July 2014) 2. With Colombian President, Juan Manuel Santos, at their summit meeting. Abe's visit was the first to Colombia by a Japanese prime minister. (July 2014) 3. With Trinidad and Tobago's Prime Minister, Kamla Persad-Bissessar, and her husband at a welcome dinner. This year marks the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Japan and Trinidad and Tobago. (July 2014) 4. With Chilean President, Michelle Bachelet, heading for a summit meeting after a welcoming ceremony in Chile. (July 2014) 5. With Zico, the former manager of Japan's national soccer team from 2002 to 2006. The Prime Minister expresses gratitude to Brazilian soccer players, who had done so much to advance soccer in Japan. (August 2014) 6. The Prime Minister met with Brazilian politicians of Japanese heritage. Leaving their homeland behind, immigrants from Japan have sunk deep roots in Brazilian society, and many are active in politics. (August 2014)

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Juntos! Bringing Infinite Depth to Japan-Latin America and the Caribbean Cooperation

Excerpts from the Speech by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe
Delivered in Brazil, August 2, 2014

The Three Guiding Principles of Japan's Latin American and Caribbean Policy

Full text http://japan.kantei.go.jp/96_abe/statement/201408/140802seisaku_en.html



Progre^{dir} juntos (progress together), liderar juntos (lead together), and inspirar juntos (inspire together). I call these “juntos” the “three guiding principles.”

I emphasize the importance of “juntos,” of sharing, hand in hand and hearts united, hardships, efforts, and, hopefully, jubilations between Japan and Latin America and the Caribbean.

This is a call to further deepen the economic ties between Japan and Latin America and the Caribbean.

“Abenomics” is now shooting its third arrows of private investment stimuli. Once-in-decades reforms are taking place in a number of areas. Count on Japan as your partner.

During this visit, quite a few top executives from the Japanese business community have been with us. Let us aspire that Japanese and Latin American and Caribbean companies could “progre^{dir} juntos,” bearing many fruits.

Japan has the capacity to make a unique contribution, in particular, in human capital development. It is the particular characteristic whereby shopfloors become akin to schools that inculcate the joys of labor.

That labor could bring joy was the message of the Chilean poet Ms. Gabriela Mistral. This is exactly what Japanese companies bring with them.

Japanese companies have their eyes fixed as intently as ever on Latin America and the Caribbean. According to the latest data, Latin America and the Caribbean make up the region that, more than any other, Japanese companies have chosen to enter.

Therefore, progre^{dir} junto—Count on Japanese companies as your partners.

Friends of Latin America and the Caribbean, as Japan seeks to widen its diplomatic horizons, you are the partners we look to count on.

There is a commonality between us of values, of visions. There is cohesion in our unwavering pursuit of peace, our respect for liberty, the honoring of human rights, and the upholding of democracy, and the rule of law.

Disarmament, nonproliferation, and environmental protection are real exemplary area of “liderar juntos,” of countries that are confronting international challenges hand-in-hand to lead international society in a positive direction.

I have decided to put in place a new legal arrangement concerning security so that Japan may contribute more proactively to regional and world peace.

Our experiences in Latin America and the Caribbean (Haiti and Honduras) led to self-confidence, which nurtured our resolve to advance the principle of “proactive contribution to peace.”

I call on my friends of Latin America and the Caribbean; let us lead the way in clearing the world, step by step, of grief, danger, and the violations of laws.

Japan has extended Official Developmental Assistance (ODA) exceeding \$30 billion to this region. These were investments to benefit future generations.

Previously, young Japanese have pursued youthful dreams, confident in the great potential of Latin America and the Caribbean. If we are to carry on the will of pioneers, the mindset that is called for is inspirar juntos.

To deepen our bonds with the young leaders of tomorrow in Latin America and the Caribbean, we will reinforce our exchange programs. This fiscal year, we’ve decided to offer various exchange programs to more than 1,000 young leaders and Japanese descendants in these areas.

From this moment on, we look forward to expanding our projects that promote exchanges between the generations. With the help of Japanese descendants, we have decided to invest further in Japanese-language education.

Between April and May 2013, Shinkai 6500 submerged in the depths of the blue sea off the coast of Brazil. Japanese scientists found that the joys of collaborating “juntos” even exceeded those of their scientific discoveries.

It is the fact that Professor Pellizari and her colleagues collaborated with Japanese scientists and experts under the spirit of “juntos” that I find so admirable.

Come 2016, there will be the Olympic games, a festival of youthful vigor. Tokyo will carry on the torch of dreams from Rio de Janeiro.

With this goal in sight, we will urge our youths from Japan to go out into the world, to interact with the world. Our program, “Sport for Tomorrow,” seeks to spread the spirit of sports. Of all the places in the world, we are giving priority to Latin America and the Caribbean.

Let us progress together; let us work side-by-side to make this world a better place.

Let us promote personal exchanges, so that we may cultivate a deep empathy, soul to soul, as the foundation for all.

Coastal Cleanup by People Who Are Embracing the Sea: Tackling Trash Washed Ashore on the Coast of Japan

To Change the Sea's Name or to Protect Sea from Debris?

In a small coastal town on the Sea of Japan, a group of people is working diligently to keep the beaches clean. We followed the cleanup efforts led by a woman in the Hokuriku region.

Debris from current in the Sea of Japan often washes ashore on the popular beach destination that is on a bay that faces northwest. We asked a woman, who leads the beach cleanup efforts, about what kinds of things turn up.

She explained that trash typically consists of things like fishing gear, plastic bottles, and polyethylene tanks. And sometimes they find medical waste such as syringes. More than half of the debris comes from outside of Japan, and most of that has Korean writing on it. What is more surprising is that sometimes several items of the same thing wash ashore—leading one to suspect that they were disposed of systematically and intentionally. She also said that medical waste and polyethylene tanks contain residual hazardous substances, such as caustic soda, and are extremely dangerous; because of this they have to take special care to keep children away during their clean up activities.

People who throw such things away must not have given any thought to where they will end up. “In the past when waste was dumped into the sea it eventually dissolved and returned to nature because it was made from organic materials such as straw and wood. By contrast, these days more materials are man-made, and they do not break down when thrown away; they just float along with the current. I think that people’s way of thinking has not kept up with such changes. We want to convey a simple message to Koreans: Don’t dump into the ocean! Don’t pollute the ocean.”

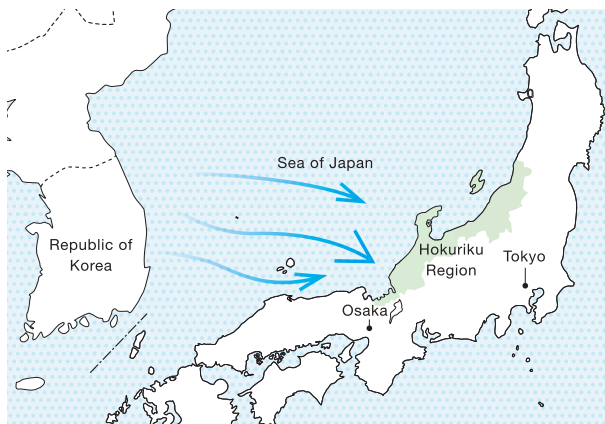
She went on to say, “Some time ago when I heard that trash from Japan was washed ashore in Hawaii, it made me feel ashamed. If people who throw trash into the sea understand that such garbage causes problems far away and share a sense of shame, perhaps things will change.”

The group currently has around 30 members, who conduct cleanup activities once a month. They work with the local government, which supports them by collecting the trash free of charge. They also work to educate children about the importance of keeping the environment clean by having parents pick up trash with their children, especially during school summer holidays and after local events.

The west-facing bay is the final destination for debris that drifts in on the ocean currents, and because the garbage never stops coming, some members comment that the work is never-ending. Despite this, the group continues to work with the following conviction: “If we keep up these efforts, in the end there will be no more trash.”

In this way, the marine environment is protected by the diligent efforts of people who are embracing the sea. People who throw trash into the sea need to be conscious of what is happening and understand the negative consequences of littering.

Recently, a movement to change the name of the Sea of Japan to the East Sea has gained attention in the United States. However, we have to think about this carefully. If we truly care about these waters, preserving the marine environment is far more important than trying to change its name. The ocean transcends national borders. Every person who benefits from the ocean’s bounty must think about the ocean as a whole as well as those on the other sides of it and join together to protect our global marine environment.



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1. The Hokuriku region of Japan is facing the Sea of Japan. 2. People engage in cleanup activities undaunted by the vast amounts of trash that wash ashore.



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3. Korean-made TV that washed ashore. 4. Even refrigerators wash up on the beach. The labels on most of them are in Korean. 5-8. Plastic products like polyethylene tanks and fishing gear, such as rope and buoys, are inorganic and therefore not biodegradable. A considerable amount of trash, such as bottles containing chemicals that you wouldn't even want to touch, also wash ashore.

Also please read the article:

“Sea of Japan,” A Name Created by Countries Around the World

http://japan.kantei.go.jp/letters/pdf/summer_2014/30/Tomodachi_summer_new_30_31.pdf

Seasons and Customs: Fireworks Festivals



Sumida River Fireworks Festival, Sumida & Taito Wards (Tokyo), July 26

In 1733, Tokugawa Yoshimune, the eighth shogun of the Edo Period (1603–1867), decreed that a water-god festival, *suijinsai*, “be held on the Sumida River every year on July 9 to mourn those who had died in famine and other disasters. Fireworks were launched at the event, and that event is now recognized as the start of the Sumida River Fireworks Festival, Japan’s most famous fireworks festival, which boasts a history of almost 300 years.

In the beginning, the Kagiya guild of fireworks makers was in charge of the rockets, but in 1810, some members of the group broke away to form the Tamaya guild and the two guilds entered into competition with each other; their rivalry is widely believed to have spurred the unique development of Japanese fireworks. From 1961, due to traffic congestion and worsening pollution of the river, the festivities were discontinued for 17 years, but there was a strong desire among local residents to bring back the fireworks. In 1978 the launch site was moved upstream, and the festival was revived under its modern name, the Sumida River Fireworks Festival. The event attracts over a million spectators every year, and, as it is held on the last Saturday of July, it makes people feel right at the heart of summer!

Japan has four distinct seasons, and the pride of each one is the wide variety of flowers (*bana*) that bloom at the respective times of year. The Japanese love these seasons and especially the changes from one season into another, and they take great pleasure not only in the flowers themselves, but also the beautiful depiction of the flowers in many of the arts and crafts. To the Japanese, even fireworks appear to them as beautiful flowers and the word for fireworks in Japanese, *hanabi* means “flowers of fire.”

The Japanese know that summer has truly arrived when they see a succession of “fire-flowers” open their petals in the night sky, in a similar way to their floral namesakes. If you happen to hear a distant booming sound in summer in Japan, look up to the night sky. A magnificent bouquet of fire-flowers will surely be welcoming you to the Japanese summer!



Festival of Fire (Honō no Saiten), Toyohashi (Aichi), September 13

At most fireworks festivals, the fireworks are launched from mortar tubes on the ground, but the fireworks at this event are very different. These fireworks are from the eastern part of Aichi Prefecture and are known as *tezutsu hanabi*. They are said to have originated from the beacon fires of the Sengoku period (1467–1568).

To make these fireworks, gunpowder is packed into bamboo tubes that are up to a meter in length. The tubes are then hand-held, and the fuse is lit by a man who holds the tube aloft and stands calmly as the *tezutsu hanabi* spouts a roaring column of fire. The sight of such bravery is tremendously impressive! The flames project up to 10 meters from the mouth of the tube, and the spectacle ends with a loud “crack” as the bamboo tube splits apart. At the Honō no Saiten festival, you can enjoy not only the impressive sight of a long row of men launching their *tezutsu hanabi* simultaneously, but also starmines, set-piece fireworks (*shikake hanabi*) and many other kinds of fireworks.

Seasonal Attraction: Fireworks

Fireworks seen in Japanese fireworks displays can be categorized into four types according to their construction: *warimono*, *han warimono*, *katamono*, and *shikake hanabi*. *Warimono* is a typical Japanese fireworks. When the casing breaks, the pyrotechnic pellets (stars) packed inside scatter to form a sphere. With *han warimono*, on the other hand, the stars packed inside the shell fall downward when the shell splits in two in the air. *Katamono* fireworks form letters or a variety of patterns in the night sky. There are many kind of *shikake hanabi*. For example, they can be constructed with the help of wooden frames and wire or launched from over the water. The crowds at fireworks festivals are always delighted by the dynamic patterns and pictures they form.

Warimono



Chrysanthemum

This typical *warimono* forms a round flower shaped like a chrysanthemum in the night sky. Long plumes spread out from the center while maintaining the spherical shape in every direction.



Peony

Chrysanthemum and peony are the two most typical *warimono*. Stars packed inside the casing emit flames that flare straight out without leaving a trail, and the core being a distinctive feature. Usually, two or three colors are layered so that the changing shades of the core and petals can be enjoyed.

Han warimono



A Thousand Chrysanthemums

When the shell splits in the air, there is a momentary delay before variously colored chrysanthemum-shaped stars burst open in unison, filling the night sky with color. This kind of fireworks first appeared in the mid-Taisho era (late 1910s) in single colors.



Flower Thunder

This is one of a type of fireworks known as *otomono*, which produces a very loud bang, and emits a strong light studded with sparks. Sports festivals in Japan are customarily announced by the flare and accompanying loud, thundering boom of *otomono* fireworks.

Katamono



Butterfly

The stars in the shell are distributed in such a way as to form the shape of a butterfly. Since it opens out in three dimensions, it looks like a butterfly from some angles, but from other angles it appears to be round fireworks opening out.



Heart

A typical heart shape. Technical advances from the early Meiji period on have made it possible to create *katamono* with many variations and complex shapes.

Shikake Hanabi



Waterfall

A picture of a waterfall is evoked by using wire to suspend narrow tubes packed with pyrotechnic pellets at regular intervals and igniting them all at once. Generally called Niagara, this *shikake hanabi* is a popular set piece at fireworks displays.



Water Fireworks

Often featured in fireworks displays held near water, various methods are used to set off the fireworks. For example, *warimono* can be launched from in the water to create a fan-shaped flower blooming over the surface, or a launch pad for the fireworks can be set up over the water.



**Toronagashi and Fireworks Festival,
Tsuruga, Fukui Prefecture
August 16**

In an extension of traditional summer *obon* rituals, this festival started in 1950 as a way to give solace to the souls of those who had lost their lives in World War II. A sutra is chanted as around 6,000 paper lanterns float out to sea, with the largest fireworks display on the Sea of Japan coastline. The sea and the night sky look mysterious and otherworldly as they are illuminated by the lanterns and fireworks.



**Omagari National Fireworks Competition,
Daisen, Akita Prefecture
August 23**

The Omagari Fireworks began in 1910 with a hiatus during the war years. This event has had a long history and will take place for the 88th time in 2014. The festival also looks to the future, and the yearly unveiling of new and innovative fireworks also attracts much attention.



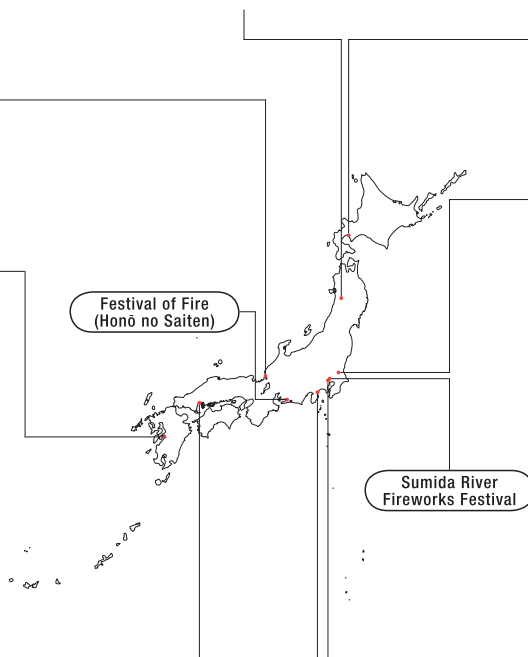
**Lake Toya Long-Run Fireworks Display,
Abutagun, Hokkaido Prefecture
April 28–October 31**

For the enjoyment of visitors to hot-spring (onsen) towns on the shores of Lake Toya, fireworks light up the sky above the lake for 20 minutes each evening. The fireworks displays are repeated from spring to autumn, and can even be enjoyed while one is taking a relaxing hot springs bath at a hotel.



**Yatsushiro National Fireworks Festival,
Yatsushiro, Kumamoto Prefecture
October 18**

There are a number of events across the country that gather together Japan's fireworks specialists in competition, but this is the most significant such occasion in Kyushu. Spectators come from all over the country to see the latest and the best creations of the participating pyrotechnicians.



**Tsuchiura All Japan Fireworks Competition,
Tsuchiura, Ibaraki Prefecture
October 4**

Akimoto Baiho, the head priest of Jinryuji Temple, who had close ties with the local flying corps, established this festival in 1925 with two goals. He wanted to give repose to the souls of those who had died in aerial combat and boost the local economy. The event was created on the banks of Lake Kasumigaura from private donations and has by now become one of the three largest fireworks displays in Japan, drawing attention from all over the country.



**Miyajima Marine Fireworks Display,
Hatsukaichi, Hiroshima Prefecture
August 11**

As a world heritage site, Miyajima enjoys great popularity with many visitors to Japan from overseas. At full tide, the area from the bright red *torii* gate to the inner sanctuary of the Itsukushima Shrine becomes submerged by the rising ocean. In the momentary flash of exploding fireworks, the shrine and the *torii* gate rise from the darkness and are reflected for an instant on the surface of the water like a fantastic illusion.



**Atami Sea Fireworks Festival,
Atami, Shizuoka Prefecture
July 21, 26; August 5, 8, 17, 20, 29;
September 15; December 7, 14, 23**

Atami is located less than an hour by bullet train from Tokyo. The convenient location and the opportunity to enjoy both hot springs and fireworks combine to make Atami a popular resort town. The finale of the fireworks displays is Daikuchu Niagara, which takes its name from the Niagara Falls. It is a huge fireworks display that cascades from the sky like the famous waterfall, lighting up the festival site as brightly as if it were daytime.



**Tokyo Bay Grand Fireworks Festival,
Chuo Ward, Tokyo
August 10**

This festival has many highlights, from the chance to watch fireworks against the backdrop of the famous Rainbow Bridge and the Tokyo evening skyline to the hundred or so large-scale fireworks and others that burst in the shape of various flowers or other unique and artistic patterns. The wide choice of viewing spots, including from rooftops or boats, all adds to the enjoyment. With advance reservations, the fireworks can be seen from really close up.

The Spirit of a Distinguished Traditional Fireworks Maker Lives On

The arrival of summer means that fireworks festivals are held all across Japan. Every time fireworks go up, cries of “Kagiya!” can be heard mingled with the applause and cheers. Kagiya is the name of an old established fireworks guild that has been in continuous existence since it was founded in 1659 by Yahe. Its long proud history spanning more than 350 years includes participating in the Ryōgoku Kawabiraki (now the Sumida River Fireworks Festival) in 1733, held at the order of the eighth Tokugawa shogun, Tokugawa Yoshimune.

The present fifteenth-generation head of this old established fireworks guild, Soke Hanabi Kagiya, and the first woman ever to succeed to the position, is Akiko Amano. Amano was surrounded by fireworks and professional fireworks-makers ever since she was a child, vowing to become one herself since second grade in elementary school. The daughter of a fireworks maker, she chose instead to be trained in demanding conditions in workshops away from her family’s business. In those days, only men could handle explosives. She learned to handle these explosives and also endured great hardship in excessive heat conditions. As a result in 2000, she succeeded to the position as the fifteenth-generation head of Kagiya at the age of 29. Such a rapid rise to this traditional position was unprecedented in the long history of Kagiya.

One may marvel at Amano’s mettle, and therein lies her secret. Not only does she make fireworks, but she also wears another hat as an accomplished judo player and referee. Her father and grandfather were both judo players. Amano holds a black belt and was an international referee of judo competitions at the Beijing Olympics. She attributes her backbone to judo.

Amano spoke about the feeling she puts into her fireworks. “Nowadays fireworks can be fired by computer, but I believe that the appeal of Japan is the cultural appreciation for timing (*ma*). That’s why I value the sense of staging a live performance, and we stick to remote push-button ignition. In the course of a display lasting one hour or more, we’d send signals to say, “Now!” more than 200 times. In Japan we take exceptional care with every single shot. Our work is extremely precise.”

In answer to the question “What are fireworks?” Amano replied: “Fireworks have something that energize us. I believe that good fireworks can make the audience feel positive about the future.”

With a body and spirit toughened by judo, Amano carries on the traditions of Japanese culture and the traditional art of fireworks. Behind the soothing summer scene of a night sky dotted with fireworks in full bloom, is the spirit of Japan.



Akiko Amano

Akiko Amano was born in 1970, the second daughter of the fourteenth generation head of Soke Hanabi Kagiya. In 2000 she succeeded to the position of fifteenth generation head. She has a black belt in judo and is an International Judo Federation referee. She also holds a doctorate in art from the College of Art, Nihon University. Her website is: www.souke-kagiya.co.jp



At the Beijing Olympics, Amano was the first Japanese woman to serve as an Olympic judo referee. A competition judo player as a student, she won a bronze medal at the women's world judo championships in Fukuoka.



"Wild Cherry Blossoms" (*Yamazakura*), a fireworks display staged by Amano at the Edogawa-ku Fireworks Festival. Cherry blossoms on a mountainside bloom and fall, an effect achieved by setting off a peony behind a mountain formed by a waterfall fireworks.

“Walk in U. S., Talk on Japan”

A Program to Promote People-to-People Diplomacy in the United States Japanese Women Stand Up

The goal of “Walk in U.S., Talk on Japan” was to increase awareness about Japan in the U.S. and to develop U.S.—Japan relations through people-to-people diplomacy. To achieve these aims, the program asked for the support of Japanese citizens. Its participants travelled to many cities in the U.S. and talked about Japan’s many attractions, including its culture. They spoke to members of the U.S.—Japan Council, university students, and organizations with a connection to Japan. They also met with members of the community and talked about U.S.—Japan topics and themes.

Most recently, 15 participants, between 18 and 82 years old, travelled with former high-ranking Japanese diplomats to 9 states 16 cities such as Philadelphia, Columbus, Richmond, Kansas City and many others.

One of them was 82 year old Ms. Ryoko Yoshioka. A calligraphy artist and former schoolteacher, she lived in New York and Bangkok and has been teaching Japanese to non-Japanese women in Japan. When she visited the Johnson County Community College, Overland Park, Kansas, Ms. Yoshioka talked about the important position of women in Japan. She said the traditional image of Japanese women was that of smart, quiet, and patient homemakers. Modern Japanese women, she continued, are working in increasing numbers instead of staying at home.

Another participant in the program was Ms. Yukiko Nakamura, a company CEO. Ms. Nakamura spoke about Japan’s recovery after the Great East Japan Earthquake of 2011. She also talked about Japanese women in business.

Japan has less than 10 percent of women who are CEOs, Ms. Nakamura said, and the number of Japanese women who have become business owners is less than that. To this end, she talked about the challenges Japanese women face to reach the top levels of a company. Some of them, she said, were due to social reasons. Others were due to lack of confidence in women. To empower these women, she said, they should participate in internationalization by, for example, training in the U.S.

Having lived and worked in the U.S., Ms. Nakamura said that an ability to communicate globally is an important skill for Japanese women who want to be CEOs. To do this, they have to know the feelings and thoughts of their audience. These skills will also help when developing international collaborations. Ms. Nakamura’s participation in the program inspired her to work with people in Indiana and establish an NPO. One of the organization’s main goals will be to support the aspirations of Japanese children with ADHD and other learning difficulties. The NPO will develop its programs via cultural and educational exchanges with partners in the U.S.

Another leading voice in the program was an I.T. expert, Ms. Tomoko Yamane. Raised in the U.S. and Japan, Ms. Yamane spoke about her experience of culture shock when she first entered the Japanese workplace. As an MBA candidate, she was inspired by her experience of working in Japan to start empowerment seminars for Japanese women.

Ms. Miyake Tokuro was another participant in the program. A Kyogen actress, she amazed her audiences with tales of Kyogen – a “comedic” theater which has a 600 year old history. Ms. Tokuro’s performances impressed audiences of all age group from the U.S.

“Walk in U.S., Talk on Japan” did not just change perceptions about Japanese women in society. The program also made people-to-people collaborations stronger and promoted future international activities and diplomacy between the U.S. and Japan.

Ms. Yoshioka’s inspiring speech is presented on the next page.



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1. Ms. Nakamura giving a talk on female entrepreneurs in Japan at Xavier University, Sisters Center, Banquet Room. 2. Ms. Miyake giving a talk on Kyogen (and a live performance) at the North Carolina Japan Center. 3. Ms. Yamane giving a talk on what can be achieved after experiencing both Japan and the U.S., at the North Carolina Japan Center. 4. Ms. Yoshioka giving a talk on her life and the increasing participation of Japanese women in society at Johnson County Community College, Overland Park.

The Spirit of Aizu in the United States

The Voice of a Participant in the “Walk in U.S., Talk on Japan” Program



Ryoko Yoshioka

Ms. Ryoko Yoshioka is an 82-year-old calligraphy artist and a former English teacher of middle and high school from the town of Aizu, Fukushima, who used to live in both New York and Bangkok. She now provides Japanese-language education and support to overseas students and women in Japan.

My son recommended that I participate in the “Walk in U.S., Talk on Japan” program. I applied only two days before the deadline and was delighted to be accepted. I was deeply moved by my experience. I learned the value of democracy, of having a positive attitude toward minorities, and the importance of volunteering. I met many people who really love Japan! This was especially true in Kansas City, MO, which is a sister city of Kurashiki in Japan.

I really admired what was said by Tsuda Umeko, the founder of Tsuda College, one of Japan’s oldest women’s universities. She believed that women should take on challenges in life. I am an alumna of Tsuda College, and my passion for taking on challenges was one of the reasons I decided to participate in this program.

In my hometown of Aizu in Fukushima Prefecture, we have an old saying that my mother taught me when I was a child, which reflects the Aizu spirit. It goes: “If people ask you, you must go as far as Echigo (now Niigata Prefecture) to help with growing rice.” Basically, it means that if you are asked, you must travel even the distance from Boston to New York to help others. My going to the United States was like going to Echigo, although the United States is much farther away! I would be happy if Americans could someday visit and learn more about Japan and the spirit of Aizu.

I believe that this kind of people-to-people diplomacy is really important. We can become friends with people from other countries at an individual level and learn about each other’s cultures. I really hope that Japanese can enjoy the benefits of participating in programs like this one.

My message for young women today is that we may find ourselves in work situations that are not ideal. But we must always do our best in each situation and strive to overcome all difficulties. Only then will a flower blossom in our lives!



	<h3>The Spirit of Aizu in the United States</h3>	<p>The Spirit of Aizu in the United States Walk in U.S., Talk on Japan http://youtu.be/GwaYIQLdc98</p>
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- *Women's participation going forward* -

Please allow me to share my personal story. I hope it will help you understand the importance of the “participation of women” in Japan.

From 1960 to 1962, I lived in New York with my family. At the same time, one of my friends used to say that Japanese ladies are elegant, modest, patient, and that they always stayed at home for the housework. I think this is the image some of you may still have about Japanese women today.

Though in some respects these comments may still be true, nowadays young women in Japan are very active, positive, and willing to work outside of the home. At the same time, the working population is decreasing. Therefore, I feel there are now more chances and greater opportunities for women in Japan.

“Womenomics” is currently a popular expression in Japan.

Prime Minister Abe shot three policy arrows to make Japan strong again and to support the growth of the economy. He often says advancement of women's role in the workforce is indispensable for his Growth Strategy.

Therefore, in achieving Japan's economic recovery, the needs and potential contributions of working women are expected to play a strong role.

Some women who once retired from work for various reasons are now returning to work. Some of them are flourishing as leaders or executives of big businesses. However, the majority still stay at home because they feel uneasy, and know it is difficult to go out working with their small children at home, or with elderly parents to look after.

I know that the government is helping to improve the working environment for women, but I still feel there is more work to be done. If the environment surrounding mothers develops extensively, particularly in terms of childcare facilities, women will be able to return to their former positions. I am sure that they will become a great force to advance the country's economic growth.

What's more, if men are more involved at home, women will be more able to work full-time, or start a business, or even go to school again to advance their careers. If their husband is able to help to take care of their sick child, or prepare dinner for kids, she can seek career opportunities and participate more to enhance the economy. I truly think that “Womenomics” is not only a women's issue, but a men's issue too.

I feel that the situation for women in Japan is beginning to change. However, progress is still needed to balance men and women in the workplace.

I am very pleased, finally, to say thank you to the United States and American people for the education given to Ms. Umeko Tsuda about 150 years ago. Ms. Tsuda went on to establish Tsuda College, where I graduated from, in order to provide higher education for women.

She was struck by, and greatly admired, the position of women in American society. She and her friends devoted themselves to encouraging and educating Japanese women, with earnestness and diligence.

Under the Constitution promulgated after World War II, the Japanese have been enjoying the benefits of democracy with fundamental human rights given to women, such as voting rights, and equality of employment and education.

Once again, “Womenomics” will be a key factor for Japanese women to fulfill the fruits of their education.



Based on her experiences as a graduate of Tsuda College and a former expat in the U.S. in the 1960s, Ms. Yoshioka talked about the active participation of women and education in Japan. At the same time, she also discussed the importance of people-to-people exchange between Japan and the U.S.

Keiko Ihara: A Woman with Drive

On June 15, 2014, Ms. Keiko Ihara became the first Asian woman to complete the 24 Hours of Le Mans. Her team finished fourteenth in the 82nd round of the most prestigious auto endurance race in the world. Ms. Ihara, the top-ranked woman in the 2013 Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA) World Endurance Championship, already had major achievements. But even to her, finishing the Le Mans was a thrill unlike any other.

"It's the most grueling race in the world," she said. "For racers and mechanics, it's like the ultimate test of their human capacity."

Her first encounter with motor sports came when she was a university student. At that time, she had difficulty finding a clear direction in her life. She had a part-time job in the circuits and this gave her a taste of the thrill of motor racing. "All of the people involved, not only racers but also engineers and pit crew, were totally focused on their tasks. Watching them at work, I decided to be a part of auto racing."

But entering the world of motor racing turned out to be more difficult than Ms. Ihara had imagined. "It wasn't just that I was at a physical disadvantage. At that time, in Japanese motor sports there was still a lot of prejudice against the entry of women drivers. When I went to Europe to enter the racing world, I discovered that it was based on merit. But I came up against language and cultural barriers. I was very discouraged at first, but I decided that I should overcome all these difficulties and become number one."

Interestingly, Ms. Ihara says her solution was "to stop trying to be a perfectionist." Instead, she focused on what she was capable of doing. In Britain, she learned that she could overcome seemingly insurmountable obstacles by taking things step-by-step. When she came up against racial discrimination, she overcame that as well through friendly persistence. Personal experience taught her that, given enough time, people can always reach an understanding through dialogue.

At Le Mans this year, Ms. Ihara's persistence paid off as she drove for a full eight hours, working hand in glove with her French and American teammates to complete the famous 24-hour marathon. And for her next challenge, Ms. Ihara is aiming for a World Endurance Championship title.

As someone who has pursued her dreams vigorously, what does Ms. Ihara think of Japanese women? "When I take part in educational programs on university campuses, I feel that these days women are more enthusiastic and open to the outside world than men. But they aren't sure how to apply their interests and abilities. Given the opportunity, I think a lot of Japanese women would start playing a more prominent role in society. They're very well educated, and they have patience and ability. The potential is definitely there."

"I've accomplished as much as I have by putting myself in situations that demanded passion and ambition. I think today's young women need to place themselves in those situations and build up experience in order to reach their full potential." As Ms. Ihara sees it, one of her key missions going forward will be helping other Japanese women fulfill their dreams by inspiring them to place themselves in the same demanding situations that fostered her in the past.



Keiko Ihara

Ms. Keiko Ihara made her auto-racing debut at the age of 25 in the Ferrari Challenge and became the first woman to post a pole-to-flag victory in an FIA-licensed international event. She has raced in 70 countries, competing in Formula Three, Le Mans, the World Endurance Championship, and other series. When not on the track, Ms. Ihara teaches university classes in media innovation; she also teaches English to local children.



"I needed the understanding of my family before going out to face challenges overseas. It took some time to persuade them, but now they are my biggest supporters," Ms. Ihara says.



Greeting a cheering crowd after completing the 24 Hours of Le Mans.

Womenomics Is Pushing Abenomics Forward

Woman Play an Increasingly Active Role in Japan

“Japan is back!” These were the words of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, at the New York Stock Exchange on September 25, 2013, displaying his strong determination to return Japan to a central role in the world economy.

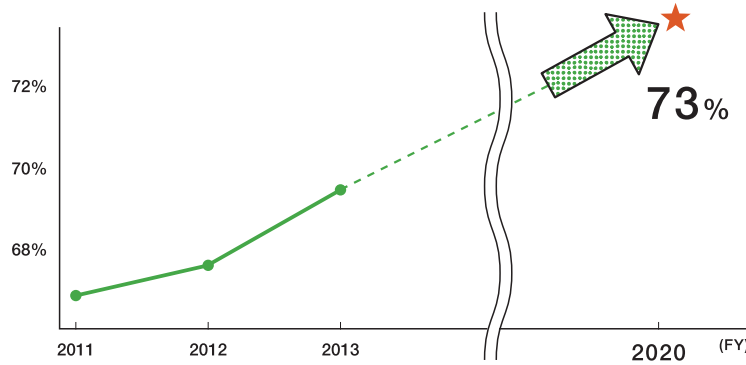
Returning to such a core position in the global economy meant lifting the Japanese economy out of deflation through a set of policies known as Abenomics. Prime Minister Abe’s positive strategies for reviving the economy are called the “three arrows” of Abenomics.

The first arrow was aggressive monetary relaxation and the second was flexible application of fiscal stimulus. As a result of these policies, the Japanese economy has been overcoming deflation, recording positive real GDP growth for six successive quarters after the Abe administration came into office. Robust corporate performance was accompanied by the highest level of wage increases and annual bonuses in 10 years, demonstrating Japan’s emphatic reemergence onto the world economic stage.

To build a new Japan, the government is now implementing its third arrow, a growth strategy to stimulate private investment. One factor creating some uncertainty as to whether the new Japan can remain strong, however, is the declining birthrate, which is leading to an aging society. As the working population gets smaller, even if the economy temporarily recovers its former strength, it may be difficult to maintain momentum over the longer term. One solution to this problem is “womenomics,” which we introduce in this section.

Compared with other developed countries, Japan has some way to go in promoting active female involvement in the workplace. Through measures to address this, it can increase its growth rate. Data also shows that in some developed countries, high female employment rates are accompanied by high birthrates. Steadily promoting policies that help women to participate more actively in society can bring about economic growth at a time when Japan is struggling with a low birthrate and aging population.

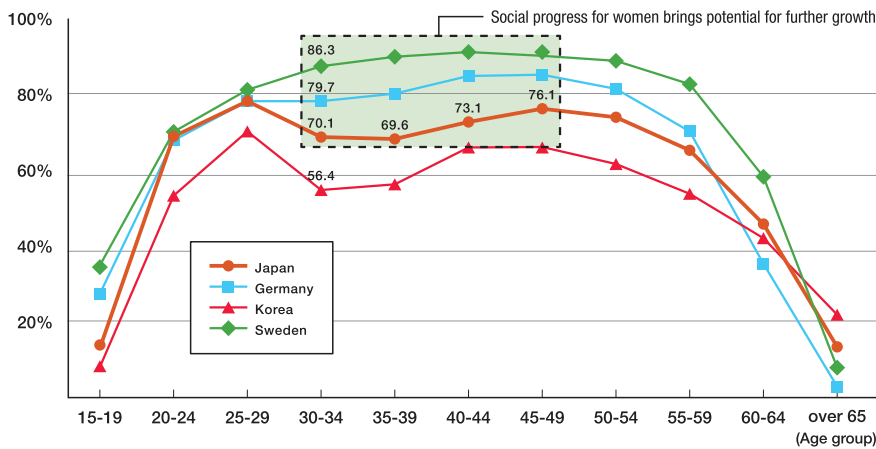
Proportion of Women (Age 25–44) in Work: Trends & Targets



Figures from 2013 show that the proportion of women in work in Japan increased by 1.8% to 69.6% in the period since the government of Shinzo Abe came to power in December 2012, a major improvement on the previous year's 0.9% increase. The growth strategies laid out in the government's Abenomics economic policies are aimed at accelerating this existing positive trend, and the target is to lift the overall figure to 73% by 2020.

*Compiled using figures from Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications Labor Force Survey 2013. Proportion of women in employment calculated relative to overall population.

Female Labor Participation Rate: Age Breakdown & Comparison in International Trends

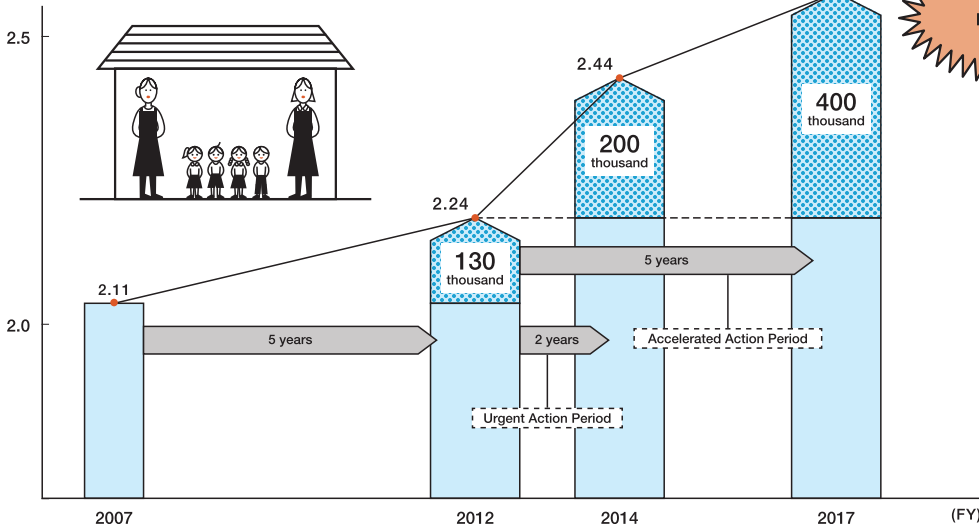


In comparison to a number of European countries, the high proportion of women in the 30-34 age group who leave work after the birth of their first child produces a distinctive M-shaped curve in Japan. There is significant potential for economic growth in Japan if this trend can be addressed and the proportion of women in their 30's and 40's who are employed or seeking work is brought in line with the figures seen in several Western countries.

*Compiled using figures from Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications Labor Force Survey 2013. International figures taken from International Labour Organization ILOSTAT Database data from 2012. Female labor participation rate calculated relative to overall population, combining number of women in employment with those seeking employment.

Expansion of Preschool Facilities to Eliminate Nursery School Waiting Lists

Total Required Number of Nursery School Places Nationwide (million)



Eliminating Nursery School Waiting Lists

In Japan, 2017 is expected to see a peak in the number of children hoping to enter nursery schools. Plans are already underway to ensure that these needs can be met, thereby eliminating instances of children being placed on waiting lists due to a lack of available nursery school places. In the period from 2007 to 2012, the government provided 130,000 extra nursery school places to address the shortfall in availability. Urgent action was taken in the two years to the end of fiscal 2014 to increase this figure to 200,000 places. The government aims to boost such action further to ensure that 400,000 additional nursery school places are available by the end of fiscal 2017.

Policy Measures

The policies detailed below were announced to promote the active participation of women as part of the growth strategy. One element is to provide more opportunities for integral involvement, while another is to provide strong support to women.

The Abe administration is working to expand female participation in the workforce. It aims to increase the employment rate for women age 25–44 from 68% in 2012 to 73% by 2020, and to increase the percentage of women in leadership positions to 30%.

To ensure that this is more than just a target, Prime Minister Abe is taking every opportunity to push for the selection of women in corporate management positions. At the same time, the Abe administration has consistently been taking the initiative in government, speeding up the appointment of women to positions as high-ranking national public officials. In July 2013, Ms. Atsuko Muraki was appointed to the top bureaucratic position of administrative vice-minister of the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare. And several women have been appointed at the director-general level. The administration is also working to ensure corporate disclosure of figures regarding numbers of female executives and managers, and has launched a website to make that information public. This will help investors understand the level of female participation at different companies.

The Abe administration is supporting women's careers in other ways, too. At present, the employment rate drops dramatically for women in their 30's with children, as around 60% of women quit their jobs when their first child is born. To reduce that drop in Japan as in other developed nations, the administration will provide strong support for women raising children.

Specifically, it will provide tax and other incentives to companies that support active female participation and a balance between work and family. It will also implement the Plan to Accelerate the Elimination of Childcare Waiting Lists, which will establish 200,000 new nursery school places by 2015 and 400,000 by 2018, thus addressing the waiting lists that now face parents who cannot find facilities to look after their children.

Additionally, to address the issue of after-school care for elementary school students, particularly those in the first grade, the administration will create 300,000 more places for them over the next five years.

Furthermore, the government will expand the range of services offered by job centers to mothers who wish to return to work while raising their children. These centers introduce jobs allowing a balance between work and family and provide other services aimed specifically at meeting the needs of mothers. The administration is also advancing subsidy programs for working mothers, such as by revising the system of incentives to boost trial employment of new non-regular employees to include mothers who quit full-time positions to look after their children.

Ms. Christine Lagarde, managing director of the International Monetary Fund, has said that if Japan were to raise its female labor participation rate to that of most G7 countries (excluding

Italy), GDP per capita would rise by 4%. She has also stated that raising the rate further to equal that of Northern Europe would increase GDP per capita by 8%. In a letter to Prime Minister Abe, Ms. Hillary Clinton wrote that if women had the same labor participation rate as men in Japan, GDP would grow by 16%.

Our country is now making rapid progress toward turning those words into reality by creating a Japan where women can shine.

“Thank you for recognizing the important link between women's economic opportunity and broad economic growth, and for making the case for policies that better support working women. ... Onward!”

on for a future in which
izens.
or the future I am proud to be your partner
at I can. Onward!
am
incerely yours,
Hillary Rodham Clinton
Hillary Rodham Clinton

A letter from Ms. Clinton to Prime Minister Shinzo Abe dated October 1, 2013.



1. Prime Minister Abe at the Women in Business Summit 2. Abe stands with U.S. Ambassador to Japan Caroline Kennedy and other participants at the summit

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Japanese Women Making a Big Impact in the Business World

Women Begin to Shine

In April 2013, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe met with representatives of the business community to exchange ideas on growth strategy. In order to realize his goal of having no less than 30 percent of leadership positions filled by women by 2020, Prime Minister Abe told those in attendance that he “would like all listed companies to proactively appoint women to executive and managerial positions.” The prime minister added that, as a start, he would like each of these companies to appoint one female executive officer.

In response to Prime Minister Abe’s leadership in striving to create a new future for Japan, female executives who embody the ideals behind womenomics are beginning to emerge at major companies.

One woman attracting attention as one of the first female executives at a large trading company is Ms. Mitsuru Chino, an executive officer at Itochu Corporation. Ms. Chino joined Itochu as a corporate lawyer at the age of 33. There were those who questioned her decision to give up a career as partner at an international law firm to move to a private corporation in Japan, but Ms. Chino had no doubts: “The chance to enter such a dynamic world, work globally in a wide range of fields, and find new challenges together with my division really spoke to my heart,” she says.

The year 2003 became a major turning point for Ms. Chino, as the World Economic Forum placed her on its list of 100 Global Leaders of Tomorrow. “The chairman asked me why I thought I had been selected,” she recalls. “It gave me the chance to take a good look at the way I wanted to live my life.” Ms. Chino says that, until that point, her guiding principle had been “doing what I wanted to do,” but she realized that she needed to consider how she could contribute and examine “what is required of me by my organization and by those around me.”

In April 2013, Ms. Chino was appointed as an executive officer at the age of 46. Having decided in her heart to take any opportunity that came her way, she says that she had no hesitation in accepting the offer.

Nearly 30 years have passed since Ms. Chino began her career in 1986, the same year that Japan’s Equal Opportunity Employment Law came into effect. She is part of a generation of women who have carved out their careers at a time of growing female participation in society. “In many places and in many fields, the women of Japan have been gathering their strength, and now they are preparing to fly,” she says. “I have great belief in the government’s advocacy of a society in which women can truly shine.”



Mitsuru Chino

Executive Officer, General Counsel, Itochu Corporation

Joined Itochu as a corporate lawyer in 2000. At the age of 46, was appointed the company’s youngest-ever executive officer in April 2013.

A Proud Procession of Female Executives

In April 2014, Japan Airlines (JAL) appointed Ms. Hoshiko Nakano to the dual roles of executive officer and senior vice president in charge of the company's Western Japan Headquarters.

Ms. Nakano joined JAL's international sales division in her 20's, and what she achieved from her dedication to accommodating business partners' needs gained her recognition as one of the company's top female employees, and she became an inspiration to her female colleagues. In her forties, she oversaw a number of large-scale projects, including the introduction of Japan's first standardized system of air-fare pricing. "The company has given me a position of great responsibility, so I give my all to see every task through to a satisfactory conclusion," Ms. Nakano explains. "This company is working toward greater equality and has set targets for increasing the number of women in management positions. Having more female leaders will create new company values and a new corporate culture, revitalizing the whole organization and ultimately making it more competitive in the marketplace."

April 2014 also saw the first appointment of a female head by a Japanese bank, when Ms. Chie Shimpo became president of Nomura Trust and Banking. Ms. Shimpo joined Nomura Securities in 1989 and spent time in the firm's Capital Markets Department and Secretarial Office before she was appointed an executive officer at Nomura Holdings at the age of 46. Two years later, she became president of Nomura Trust and Banking.

Tokyo Electric Power Company also recently appointed its first female executive officer, Ms. Rieko Sato. In the aftermath of the Great East Japan Earthquake, Ms. Sato worked to provide guidance on financial support and compensation to victims of the disaster.

At Daiwa Securities, Ms. Keiko Tashiro is also drawing attention for the way she built up overseas experience before being appointed corporate executive officer and executive managing director in charge of the firm's operations in the United States.

In May 2014, Ms. Chino and Ms. Shimpo were joined by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe at the Women in Business Summit in Tokyo, where many female professionals from Japan and the United States came together to exchange ideas.

With a highly motivated female workforce that also boasts increased experience in senior management roles, it would not be an overstatement to say that these women are helping Japan to realize its as-yet untapped potential for growth.



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1. Hoshiko Nakano: Japan Airlines, Executive Officer and Senior Vice President, Western Japan Headquarters

2. Chie Shimpo: Nomura Trust & Banking, President & CEO and Nomura Holdings, Senior Managing Director (Banking)

3. Rieko Sato: Tokyo Electric Power Company, Executive Officer, TEPCO Customer Service Company, Vice President

4. Keiko Tashiro: Daiwa Securities, Corporate Executive Officer, Executive Managing Director, Deputy Head of Overseas (Head of Americas Region)
Daiwa Capital: Markets America, Chairperson

Saving Mothers' Lives

Japanese Assistance Improving Cambodian Healthcare

In 2006 a pregnant woman died in a small village in Kampong Cham Province, about 120 kilometers northeast of the Cambodian capital of Phnom Penh. The cause of death was severe blood loss. She had been unable to receive treatment even though her fetus had died in the womb.

The woman knew that something had gone wrong, but she could not consult a doctor. "I can't spend money on transportation to a hospital when my husband earns a pittance," she reasoned. Moreover, Cambodia had no system to get emergency patients to key hospitals. By the time she was brought to the National Maternal and Child Health Center (NMCHC), the woman had already stopped breathing.

Just eight years ago, fatalities like this were very common in rural Cambodia. *Chlong tonle*—that is how the Cambodians refer to childbirth. The expression, which means "crossing the river," compares giving birth to crossing a large river at the risk of losing one's footing in a deep spot or rapids and thus losing one's life. In Cambodia, childbirth was a matter of life and death.

Swift Japanese Assistance for Birthing Facilities

Civil war ended in Cambodia in 1991. Many healthcare professionals had died, and facilities were in disrepair, so women had no choice but to deliver their babies at home. Making birthing facilities available and training midwives and other medical professionals formed an important pillar of the country's reconstruction at the time.

Japan was quick to extend assistance. In 1992 it dispatched a medical advisor to Cambodia's Ministry of Health, and in 1995 it launched a project for developing human resources for better maternal and child health. In 1997, Japan built the NMCHC in Phnom Penh with grant aid. A project enhancing midwife-training capacity in the provinces has also been under way since 2007.

Pediatrician Yuriko Egami, who currently works at the NMCHC as chief advisor, says, "The Cambodian Ministry of Health has finished assigning midwives to all of the country's roughly one thousand health centers, and now it's working on increasing the number of midwives to two per center."

These efforts reduced maternal mortality rates from 900 per 100,000 births in 1990 to 437 in 2000 and still more to 206 in 2010. The target of reducing maternal deaths to 250 per 100,000 births by 2015, part of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, was achieved five years ahead of time.

"What is great about Japanese assistance," Egami continues, "is that it develops the entire package, including the institution and the systems to make it work." Japan's international cooperation does not just build facilities; it also develops the human resources to operate them, with the aim of ultimately handing over all operations to the people of that country. Japan follows through with this spirit in many of its international contributions.

Locals in Cambodia affectionately refer to the NMCHC as the Japan Hospital. The friendly nickname will endure even after the hospital no longer has Japanese staff.

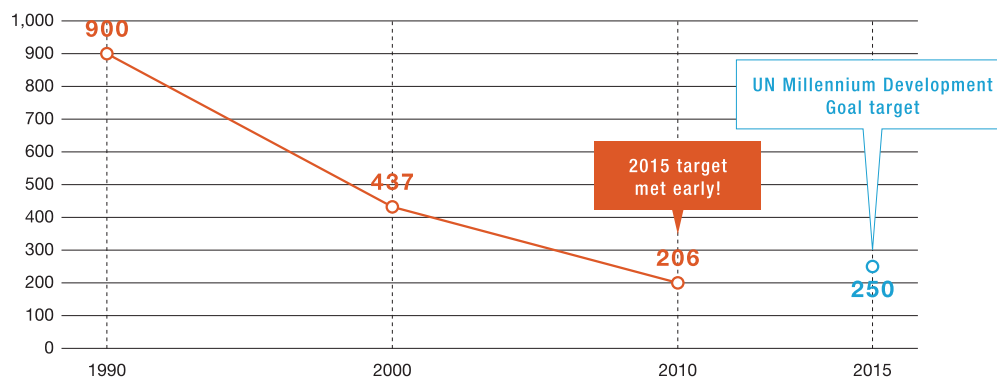


1.National Maternal and Child Health Center (NMCHC) chief advisor Yuriko Egami escorting Prime Minister Abe around the center. 2.Prime Minister Abe visiting the NMCHC and smiling at an infant. 3.Training at the NMCHC. 4.A proud mother watches over her safely delivered child.

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Cambodia's Maternal Mortality Rate

(mortality rate per 100,000 live births)



The graph shows how the United Nations Millennium Development Goal of reducing maternal deaths to 250 per 100,000 births was achieved five years ahead of time.

Japanese Women Contributing Worldwide

The Power of Japanese Women Is Changing the World

“I want to help people not only in Japan but all over the world!”

There are many women who think this way and are making contributions overseas. Below we introduce some Japanese women who are active on the international stage.

Dr. Ritsuko Komaki pioneers new cancer treatments and helps children as a professor of radiation oncology at the M.D. Anderson Cancer Center in Houston, Texas. The center is one of the world’s largest treatment facilities, known for its cutting-edge medical care. In 2006, Dr. Komaki introduced proton therapy, which was at the time attracting attention as a new form of treatment, to the center.

Dr. Komaki’s career has its origin in painful childhood experiences. She was born in Amagasaki and raised in Hiroshima. When she was 10, a friend died of leukemia as a result of exposure to the radiation of the atomic bomb dropped on the city. As she puts it, “I knew that I couldn’t let this death be for nothing.”

The years passed and she qualified as a doctor, choosing to work in a facility that made use of the world’s latest treatments. She faced the reality, however, that existing treatments damaged healthy tissues, and many people continued to die from aftereffects. It is particularly important to prevent such aftereffects in children, as they can significantly affect the quality of life of children, who have long lives still ahead of them.

While searching for a treatment that would effectively target only diseased tissue, Dr. Komaki learned about proton therapy. The Houston center has achieved excellent results since introducing the technique in 2008, with patient numbers more than doubling by 2013. Today the facility treats cancer patients from all over the world.

“There’s nothing that makes me happier than the moment when smiling children thank me after they’re better.” Dr. Komaki dreams of making even more children smile in the future.



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1. “I want to give children a future,” says Dr. Komaki. 2. No happier sight than patients’ and their parents’ smiles. 3. Crane artwork in hospital lobby is a symbol of wish to save children’s lives.

Ritsuko Komaki
Professor in the M.D. Anderson Cancer Center
Department of Radiation Oncology.
Graduated from Hiroshima University, where she studied medicine. Went to the United States to study radiation oncology at the Medical College of Wisconsin. Has since spent around 40 years working as a doctor in the United States.

Some of Japan’s globally active women are contributing in emerging countries. Ms. Marumi Osaka has been working together with local residents in Panama to improve their living conditions. She first moved to Panama as an environmental education volunteer with the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and started a project with local women making soap from waste oil.

While Panama is enjoying high economic growth, problems remain, including income disparity, poverty, and a gender gap. “I thought my initial goal would be environmental protection, but when I actually arrived I felt the need to boost incomes as a part of improving people’s living conditions,” Ms. Osaka says.

She tried a number of initiatives in the search for a breakthrough, but nothing paid off at first. Then a meeting with women from the village of El Cacao led to the plan that has become so successful. “Panamanian people fry food every day, producing large amounts of waste oil. I worked with the women of the village to turn that oil into soap and sell it for profit.”

It took two entire years before the local women could make soap by themselves. As these women had never worked outside their homes, it took even longer before they could talk about the product to customers and sell it. But their efforts paid off. “I was so happy when the local women told me of their pride in learning and being able to earn money for themselves,” says Ms. Osaka. “I knew that they would keep it up after I left.”

After three years in Panama, Ms. Osaka returned to Japan, where she is studying the lives of Panamanian farming village residents at graduate school. She wants to learn more and contribute to emerging countries around the world. Based on what she has gained from her Panamanian experience, she is starting to set her sights on her next target.



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| 1 | <div style="text-align: center; margin-bottom: 10px;">2</div> <div style="text-align: center;">3</div> | <p>1. “I want to contribute more to other countries,” says Ms. Osaka. 2. Ms. Osaka teaching the soap-making process 3. Soap made from waste oil contributes to improving incomes and decreasing the gender gap.</p> |
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Marumi Osaka
 Panama Recycling Project
 After working at a major transportation company, spent three years in Panama as an environmental education volunteer with JICA. Now studying at the University of Tokyo Graduate School of Agricultural and Life Sciences.

Friends of Japan

In this report we introduce the life and work of two friends of Japan.



Nhat Minh Be

Nhat Minh Be is a student of the Graduate School of Public Policy
at The University of Tokyo.

Japan: The Perfect Meeting Place for Students From All Over the World

I came to study in Japan in 2012 at The University of Tokyo, Graduate School of Public Policy. Before that I used to work for a Japanese logistics company in Hanoi and had to interface with custom officers and government officers, and I realized there was a lot of corruption everywhere. Bribing is just part of the system and even I myself had to bribe tax officers in order to get anything done. I decided I would like to make a change in the system and make my country a better place; Japan seemed like the ideal place for me to come to study as it has made great advances in developing its country, and that is the reason I chose to come here.

I have been studying here now for two years and it has been a marvelous experience. The University of Tokyo is the best place to study. The faculty and staff are really professional and kind and the university has excellent facilities. The academic standards are very high and we get an excellent training.

I think that Japan and Viet Nam have a lot of things in common and we can learn a lot of lessons from Japan. Japanese public policy is based on the Japanese spirit of everyone working together in harmony, which is an excellent model for my country.

For an introvert Asian like me, Japan is an ideal place to study. I always feel safe in Japan, and it is easy for me to communicate with the Japanese. I think Japan shares with my country a knowledge of the importance of not having to talk all the time, and also I love the fact that Japanese are comfortable with silence. People in other Asian countries are also very comfortable with silence, and I think that makes for deeper communication in the long run.

I really enjoy living in Japan. The Japanese are so well-mannered, and one can see this especially in public spaces. People queue properly and do not eat on trains, and respect the others in public spaces. In Viet Nam people sometimes have less respect for public space. In Japan people show great respect for the space of others.

I hope many students and westerners come to Japan and accept this society as it is. I have some American friends who are studying with me. When they first came to Japan they were confused for the first month but they could find themselves here. They learned about the beauty of silence and came to enjoy a really precious time in Japan.

After getting some work experience I really want to come back to Japan to do my doctorate, and it would be great if there were an opportunity to work here. I would like to be a professor and teach public policy.

Japan is a bridge between the East and West; it is a perfect meeting place for students from all over the world. Studying here is such a precious time in my life. I really hope that students from all over the world will come to this great country to study.



Shen Minghua

Shen Minghua, a fluent speaker of Japanese, Korean and Chinese, supports Japanese manufacturing businesses expanding into Asia.

Supporting Japan's Deepening Ties with Asia

“Convenience stores and ATMs are available 24 hours a day and the trains always arrive on time. Everything runs so smoothly and convenience is taken so seriously in Japan that I think it's really a great place to live.” These are the words of Shen Minghua, a Korean Chinese who has lived in Japan for eight years and works for an IT company in Tokyo. She uses her fluent Japanese, Chinese, and Korean to support small and medium-sized manufacturing businesses from Japan as they expand into continental Asia.

“When you visit a traditional Japanese inn (*ryokan*) you are taken aback by the courteous and meticulous customer-centered service. The meals have a planned order so dishes arrive at the perfect moment. I'd only read about the spirit of Japanese hospitality (*omotenashi*) in books so I couldn't quite imagine it before. It's something that I think foreigners can only understand for the first time if they actually come to Japan and experience it for themselves.”

Shen first became really aware of Japan when she was in high school. She was spellbound by the glamorous city lives depicted in the Japanese TV drama, *Tokyo Love Story*, when it was broadcast in her hometown in Jilin Province, China.

“I wanted to go and see the streets from the drama for myself. I longed for a lifestyle where people got together and had fun with their friends after work.” She immediately began to study Japanese on her own and later majored in Japanese at university. Later she could fulfill her dream to study in Japan.

After studying in Japan, Shen thought she would return to China and become a Japanese teacher, but she got used to her life in Japan; she came to understand the way Japanese people felt, and decided to stay in Tokyo.

“In Japan, it's considered very important not to cause any inconvenience to the people around you.” At first, she thought this tendency was excessive, leading to a society where people rarely show their individuality. However, as she adapted to her environment, she changed her mind. “If you follow this rule, ultimately it's a quick route toward feeling good and living an easy life.”

At the same time, she came to sense the rich individuality of Japanese people through working with business managers in her job. “I've been responsible for dealing with around 30 companies, and the majority of the presidents have displayed strong personalities and clear preferences. But when we talk, they will also quietly discuss their problems and listen to advice. I don't find it difficult to talk directly person-to-person, so it's very motivating,” Shen stresses.

“I like China as well, but my life in Japan is also full and satisfying, and my mother lives in South Korea now, so that's where I go to visit her.” A new generation who can easily operate across international borders, like Shen Minghua, is supporting Japan's deepening economic ties with other Asian countries.

The JET Programme: A Great Way to Experience Japan

JET Programme Changed My Perspective on Life



Penelope Fox

Born in Sydney, Australia. Arrived in Japan as a JET participant in July 2009. Now in her fifth year as an elementary and middle school ALT in Shiraishi, Saga Prefecture.

Like many people participating in the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Programme, I was super-excited to come to Japan and embrace its culture and language head on. In fact, for me personally, the JET Programme represented the realization of a long-term dream: to live in Japan for an extended period and combine my love of teaching, children, and Japanese language, and experience “real” Japanese life in the countryside.

The JET Programme has been everything I hoped it would be and more. My schools have all been fantastic, my Japanese co-workers have been very welcoming and accepting of me, my supervisors have been kind, and my communities have embraced having a foreigner in their midst.

For my first placement, I worked in a small city of 20,000 people surrounded by mountains in Saga Prefecture. Coming from a dry, mostly flat continent like Australia, I never ceased to be amazed by the beauty and vividness of the greenery. At first, my focus was on my work and understanding what it meant to be an assistant language teacher (ALT). As time went by, I cemented personal and professional relationships, and came to love my quiet country life in Japan.

At the end of my third year, I was lucky enough to be granted a transfer to a neighboring city in the same prefecture. My neighbors and co-workers epitomize what I believe to be one of Japan’s core strengths—the friendliness of the people.

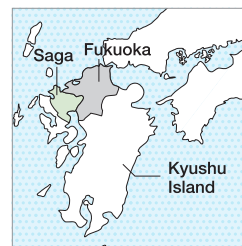
But what I did not really expect participating in JET was that my whole perspective on life would be changed.

Looking back, I think it all started when a JET friend of mine decided to start a volunteer activity called Circle Time—an initiative based on the concept of reading circles, in which a group of us would read English picture books to toddlers (and their families) in Saga, initially at the city library. I enthusiastically volunteered for this activity when I could.

Later, I read about other JET groups in Japan who initiated visits to orphanages in their local communities. I had already been part of a Charity Christmas Party Project that donated money to an orphanage in Saga, and I wanted to “spread the love” to other disadvantaged children. I canvassed for local support from people in Saga and approached two orphanages with the idea of undertaking regular visits to play with the children. Now in their second year, the orphanage visits have been a huge success with my team of volunteers, the orphanage staff, and, of course, the kids themselves.

Aside from the wonderful opportunity to live and teach in a country I love, I thank the JET Programme and all its participants with whom I have had contact for making me think more about the world in which I live and how I can make a difference. Whether traveling the world or at home in my local community, I will find or make opportunities to contribute in a volunteer capacity—something that I would never have done before.

That’s what JET has really meant to me: a change of perspective.



The JET Programme

The Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Programme began in 1987 with the goal of promoting grass-roots international exchange between Japan and other nations.

The JET Programme is primarily sponsored and administered at the local level by local government authorities in Japan, which are also the direct contracting organizations of JET participants. At the national level, the JET Programme is administered by the Council of Local Authorities for International Relations (CLAIR) in cooperation with three Japanese government ministries, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology.

JET participants are placed in every region of Japan and work as one of three job types: assistant language teachers (ALTs), coordinators for international relations (CIRs), or sports exchange advisors (SEAs).

Now in its 28th year, the JET Programme has gained high acclaim both domestically and internationally for its role in advancing mutual understanding and for being one of the world's largest international exchange programs. In 2013, the JET Programme welcomed 4,372 participants, and today, approximately 55,000 alumni from over 60 countries are spread all over the world.

Official Website <http://www.jetprogramme.org/>



1. An ALT team-teaching in the classroom.
 2. Saga Prefecture Charity Christmas Party 2012. 3. A CIR interpreting for a local authority representative and visitors from overseas. 4. Dressing up as models using newspaper at an orphanage. 5. A SEA teaching soccer during club activities.

1	2
3	4
5	

Websites

Official Websites of the Government and Organizations

The following websites offer information from various ministries, tourist information, and other information relating to the contents of this magazine.

Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet



Cabinet Public Relations Office, Cabinet Secretariat
Information in English about Japanese government policies, speeches and statements by the prime minister, and press conferences by the chief cabinet secretary.

WEB <http://japan.kantei.go.jp>
f <https://www.facebook.com/Japan.PMO>
t https://twitter.com/JPN_PMO

Japanese Government Internet TV



Public Relations Office, Cabinet Office
Videos from the Japanese government relating to the prime minister, press conferences by the chief cabinet secretary, videos of the imperial family, and more.

WEB <http://nettv.gov-online.go.jp/eng/>

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan



Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Information from Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with links to embassies and consulates overseas.

WEB <http://www.mofa.go.jp>
f <https://www.facebook.com/Mofa.Japan.en>
t https://twitter.com/MofaJapan_en

JNTO Japan National Tourism Organization



Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO)
Information about tourism in Japan, including videos and photos. In English and many other languages, including Chinese, Korean, French, and German.

WEB <http://www.jnto.go.jp/>
f <http://www.jnto.go.jp/eng/tb/index.html>
t (US) https://twitter.com/Visit_Japan

JETRO Japan External Trade Organization



Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO)
Information about how JETRO supports Japanese companies overseas, attracts foreign companies to the Japanese market, contributes to Japan's trade policy and conducts activities in developing countries.

WEB <http://www.jetro.go.jp/>

JET Japan Exchange and Teaching Programme



Council of Local Authorities for International Relations (CLAIR)
Information about the Japan Exchange and Teaching Programme.

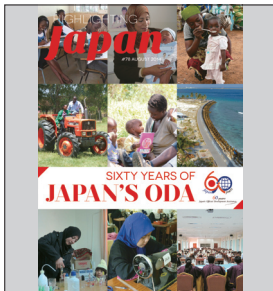
WEB <http://www.jetprogramme.org>
f <https://www.facebook.com/pages/JET-Programme/219440938121634>
t (US) <https://twitter.com/JETProgram>

Publications

Official Publications from the Government and Organizations

The government of Japan and organizations publish the following periodicals.

Cabinet Office



“Highlighting JAPAN”

Aimed at people in other countries, this regular publication introduces the latest major government policies.

<http://www.gov-online.go.jp/eng/publicity/book/hlj/index.html>



Monthly

Ministry of Foreign Affairs



“niponica”

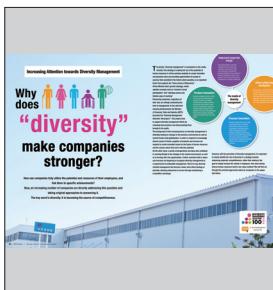
Using beautiful photographs, this journal illustrates the appeal of present-day Japan.

http://web-japan.org/niponica/index_en.html



Three times a year

Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry



“METI Journal”

Explains policies being instituted by the Ministry of Economy, Trade, and Industry (METI) in an easy-to-understand manner.

<http://www.meti.go.jp/english/publications/index.html>



Bimonthly

Japan National Tourism Organization



“Monthly Web Magazine”

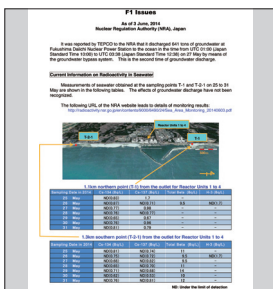
Transmits seasonal and updated information on the Internet every month on three features.

<http://www.jnto.go.jp/eng/indepth/exotic/JapanesQue/>



Monthly

Nuclear Regulation Authority



“F1 Issues Fukushima Daiichi NPS's Issues”

This releases information about the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station, such as details about the monitoring of seawater since the accident caused by the Great East Japan Earthquake and subsequent tsunami.

<http://www.nsr.go.jp/english/>



About once a week

Ministry of Defense



“Japan Defense Focus”

A monthly magazine that introduces various activities of the Ministry of Defense and Self-Defense Forces.

<http://www.mod.go.jp/e/jdf/index.html#sub01>



Monthly

Let us update you on recent happenings in Japan.
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We Are Tomodachi
Womenomics Edition 2014

<http://japan.kantei.go.jp/letters/>

Published by



The Government of Japan

Edited by

Public Relations Office, Cabinet Office
and
Office of Global Communications, Cabinet Secretariat

1-6-1 Nagatacho, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo
100-8914, Japan

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Please send us your comments.

https://www.kantei.go.jp/foreign/forms/comment_ssl.html

Links to the websites of ministries

Cabinet Office <http://www.cao.go.jp/index-e.html>
Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries <http://www.maff.go.jp/e/>
Ministry of Defense <http://www.mod.go.jp/e/>
Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry <http://www.meti.go.jp/english/>
Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology <http://www.mext.go.jp/english/>
Ministry of the Environment <http://www.env.go.jp/en/>
Ministry of Finance <https://www.mof.go.jp/english/index.htm>
Ministry of Foreign Affairs <http://www.mofa.go.jp>
Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare <http://www.mhlw.go.jp/english/>
Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications <http://www.soumu.go.jp/english/index.html>
Ministry of Justice <http://www.moj.go.jp/ENGLISH/index.html>
Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism <https://www.mlit.go.jp/en/>
Reconstruction Agency <http://www.reconstruction.go.jp/english/>
Nuclear Regulation Authority <http://www.nsr.go.jp/english/>

We Are Tomodachi

Womenomics Edition 2014

<http://japan.kantei.go.jp/letters/>



The Government of Japan

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