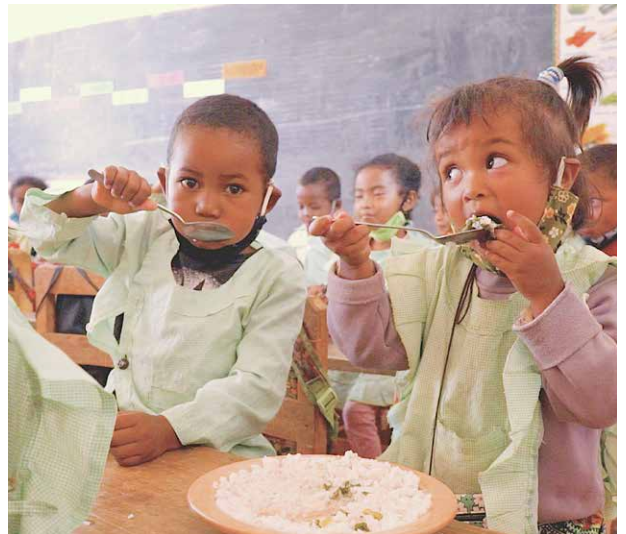


KIZUNA

Winter
2021

Linking Japan and the World



New Kishida Administration /
Nutrition for Growth Summit



JAPANGOV
THE GOVERNMENT OF JAPAN



Welcome to KIZUNA, the official magazine of the Government of Japan.

This bold work of calligraphy is 絆 (*kizuna*) written in Japanese. *Kizuna* means the enduring bonds between people—close relationships forged through mutual trust and support.

Originally describing the rope used to tether domestic animals such as horses and dogs, the meaning of *kizuna* has evolved over the years. A passage in *The Tale of the Heike*, compiled in the 13th century, uses the term to refer to the bonds of love between a father and his children. More recently, *kizuna* has gone beyond bonds tying together family and close acquaintances; it is now used in a broader sense of human ties and connections. Of particular note is the *kizuna* born among people during natural calamities, which fosters feelings of solidarity and serves as the underlying strength to overcome hardships.

Similarly, the *kizuna* cultivated among the countries of the world has the power to deepen cooperation for a better future. By reporting on a wide variety of topics concerning Japan, we hope that this magazine will provide opportunities for Japan and the rest of the world to connect and build strong *kizuna*.



KANAZAWA SHOKO
Calligraphy Artist

Born in Tokyo in 1985, she started learning calligraphy from her mother when she was five years old. One of the notable young calligraphers of today, her solo exhibitions have been held throughout the world, in cities such as New York, Singapore, and Prague. She was selected as one of the official poster artists for Tokyo 2020.

CONTENTS

NEW KISHIDA ADMINISTRATION

- 04 The First Policy Speech by Prime Minister
KISHIDA Fumio
 - 06 Prime Minister KISHIDA Fumio's Personal Timeline
 - 08 Prime Minister's First Overseas Trip:
COP26 World Leaders Summit Statement
 - 10 Toward a New Form of Capitalism:
Outline of the Emergency Proposal from the Council
of New Form of Capitalism Realization
-

PORTRAITS OF JAPAN

- 12 Tranquility and Serenity: A Peaceful Japanese Winter
-

NUTRITION FOR GROWTH SUMMIT

- 14 The Journey Toward a World Without Malnutrition
 - 16 School Lunches: The Key to Children's Health
and Prosperity
 - 18 Recovering Farmland Devoured by Locusts in Pakistan
 - 20 Meals to Solve the Global Food Imbalance
-

HEALTH & WELFARE

- 22 Bringing the COVID-19 Vaccine to All Corners
of the World

PORTRAITS OF JAPAN

- 24 Beyond Tokyo 2020: Leading the Way Toward an
Inclusive Society

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

- 26 Tech Innovations at Tokyo 2020

LIFE & CULTURE

- 28 Behind the Scenes of a First Paralympic Appearance
at Tokyo 2020

HEALTH & WELFARE

- 30 Technology Brings the Joy of Going Out to People
with Disabilities

PORTRAITS OF JAPAN

- 32 Discovering the Unknown Japan with Isabella Bird

LIFE & CULTURE

- 34 Linking the Cultures of Kanazawa and Ghent

KIZUNA

Winter 2021

COVER

In Japan, nutritionally balanced school lunches are provided in almost all elementary schools, supporting the healthy growth of children. Japan also supports community-based school-lunch programs in developing countries, such as Madagascar, increasing students' motivation to study (photos were taken in Tokyo and Madagascar). MADAGASCAR PHOTOS BY JICA

THE FIRST POLICY SPEECH

BY PRIME MINISTER KISHIDA FUMIO

AN EXCERPT

OCTOBER 8, 2021

Full Text: https://japan.kantei.go.jp/100_kishida/statement/202110/_00005.html

Introduction

I am resolved to invest all my heart, mind, and strength to overcome this national crisis, the battle against COVID-19, together with the Japanese people, carve out a new era, and hand down to the next generation a Japan that is spiritually rich.

What is required of us now is to engage in politics worthy of trust and sympathy that reacts to citizens' voices with sincerity and gives those voices concrete shape. I will place importance on having thorough discussions with the citizens. I myself and indeed all the members of my Cabinet will repeatedly sit down in a circle with various kinds of people to have discussions. Beyond that, I will instruct them to do comprehensive checks on whether or not we are advancing policies well-tailored to the people's needs.

It will be upon the trust and sympathy earned through this process that I aim to foster a society that respects diversity. My mission is to arouse the power of the bonds Japan enjoys.

Measures to counter COVID-19

The essential element of crisis response is assuming the worst possible situation at all times. Now that the number of new infections is holding at a low, steady level, this is the time for us to anticipate various situations and take comprehensive steps to ensure peace of mind. We will reliably secure hospital bed capacity and medical personnel and thoroughly set measures in place to assist patients recuperating at home.

We will forge ahead with administering a second vaccine dose to all those wishing to receive one while also making careful preparations to enable the administration of a third round of vaccinations. We will also aim to have orally administered pharmaceutical treatments enter into practical application within the calendar year. Alongside this, we will work to make active use of digital vaccination certificates and expand free-of-charge testing for which

advance reservations are not required.

To support business owners who have suffered significant impacts, we will provide subsidies in proportion to the size of the business, in a form that does not impose limits on the location or type of business. We will also implement support in the form of subsidies and other assistance to protect those in need, including non-regular employees and families with small children.

Bringing a new form of capitalism into realization

What I aim to do is to bring a new form of capitalism into realization. The concept is this: a virtuous cycle of growth and distribution, and developing a new post-COVID-19 society. I will establish a Council of New Form of Capitalism Realization and shape that vision into something concrete. Aiming for growth is absolutely critical, and we will make every possible effort towards actualizing it. However, without distribution, there will be no subsequent growth; this point too, I thoroughly endorse. We will extricate ourselves from the barren argument of "growth or distribution" and conduct a general mobilization of all possible policies to bring about "growth and distribution."

Our growth strategy and our distribution strategy are two sides of the same coin by which we bring about a new form of capitalism.

The first pillar of my growth strategy is realizing a science and technology nation. We will boldly fund research and development in advanced science and technology, including in the areas of digital, green, artificial intelligence, quantum, bio, and space.

The second pillar is revitalizing regions and a Vision for a Digital Garden City Nation, which will link to the rest of the world. We will advance the implementation of digital transformation beginning with our local regions and give rise to a wave of new reforms.

The third pillar is economic security. Under a newly

established ministerial remit, we will advance our efforts to secure strategic goods and materials and prevent outflows of technology, while will materialize an autonomous economic structure.

The fourth pillar is putting to rest people's anxiety about the era of hundred-year lifespans. We will make social security and the tax system neutral with regard to ways of working and endeavor to make universal workers' insurance a reality. Looking ahead, we will work to build a social security system oriented to all generations in which all people, from children and those raising a family to the elderly, can feel assured.

Next is our distribution strategy.

The first pillar is strengthening the function for distributions to working people. We will fundamentally strengthen our support within the tax code for companies that raise wages in an effort to increase the percentage of distributions allocated to labor.

The second pillar is enlarging the middle class and addressing the declining birth rate. We will reinforce our support for educational expenses and living expenses to provide support for families with small children.

The third pillar is increasing the incomes of those working at facilities providing medical nursing, elderly care, childcare services and the like. We will examine public prices and fundamentally review the state of public prices.

My fourth pillar is correcting the harmful effects resulting from deciding public finances on a single fiscal year basis, which determines public distribution.

In addition to these, we will actively invest in building up basic infrastructure as a step towards regional revitalization. Without reconstruction from the Great East Japan Earthquake, there will be no revival of Japan. In keeping with my strong feelings on this, we will work exhaustively to realize assistance for disaster victims, the rebuilding of industries and livelihoods, and the reconstruction and revival of Fukushima.

Diplomacy and security that fully protect the Japanese people

On the basis of trust we enjoy from the international community, I will pursue resolute diplomacy in three areas in which I hold strong determination.

The first of these is my determination to fully defend the universal values of freedom, democracy, human rights, and the rule of law. I will vigorously promote a free

and open Indo-Pacific.

Second is my determination to fully safeguard the peace and stability of Japan. We will undertake revisions to our National Security Strategy, National Defense Program Guidelines, and Mid-Term Defense Program. The cornerstone of Japan's diplomatic and security policies is the Japan-U.S. Alliance, which I will raise to an even greater height. The abductions issue is one of the highest priority issues of the Kishida administration. I will do everything in my power to realize the return of all the abductees to Japan at the earliest possible date.

Third is my determination to lead the international community by confronting global-level issues and contributing to humankind. As a prime minister hailing from Hiroshima, the site of an atomic bombing, I will do my very utmost to bring about a world free of nuclear weapons.

New economic countermeasures

I instructed my Cabinet to take all possible measures to respond to COVID-19 and to formulate new economic policies in order to trigger a new form of capitalism. We will swiftly compile comprehensive and bold economic policies.

Conclusion

"If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together."

We must overcome the divisions arising from economic disparities, regional disparities, and the like and carve out a new era. To make that possible, we will forge one team aimed at all of us moving forward together. Every night eventually turns into dawn. Holding hands together with you, the citizens, we will take a step towards tomorrow. ●



PRIME MINISTER KISHIDA FUMIO'S PERSONAL TIMELINE



On October 4, Kishida conducted his first press conference as prime minister.

July 29, 1957 Born in Tokyo

Kishida was born in Tokyo in the early years of Japan's economic boom—when the country was getting back on its feet after the war—as the son of KISHIDA Fumitake, a government official at the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (currently the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry). His grandfather, KISHIDA Masaki, was a successful department store proprietor who also served as a member of the House of Representatives.

1963 Moves to New York

When his father was assigned to work in the United States, the family moved to New York. Kishida attended a local public elementary school from the first to third grades, where he was impressed by the liberal ambience of the U.S. and learned to respect diversity.



Kishida (top row, second from right) with classmates in Queens, New York.

1973 Student Days

After returning to Japan, Kishida attended public elementary and middle schools before going on to Kaisei Senior High School, a prestigious private academy. He was an enthusiastic member of the baseball team, an experience that taught him the importance of working together as a team. In 1978, he entered the School of Law at Waseda University. When his father ran for the House of Representatives for the first time the following year, Kishida helped him to campaign.



Kishida (center) played second base for his high school team.

1982 Gains Work Experience at a Bank

After graduating, Kishida joined the Long-Term Credit Bank of Japan (currently Shinsei Bank). He worked in foreign exchange in Tokyo and was subsequently transferred to the city of Takamatsu in Kagawa Prefecture where his clients included maritime shipping firms. He gained firsthand knowledge of the unfavorable economic reality there by watching small and medium-sized enterprises sometimes founder and fail due to cash-flow problems.

1993

Joins the Political World

Helping his father's campaign and working for a bank awakened in Kishida an urge to serve the people directly by protecting their lives and improving society as a whole. That set him on his way to politics. In 1993, after his father's death, he ran for his father's seat in a district in Hiroshima and won his first political battle. He valued political stumping as a way to speak directly to voters—an approach that broadened his appeal and led to his winning the seat 10 times.



Kishida receives his parliamentary badge after being elected to the House of Representatives for the first time.

2007

Receives First Cabinet Posting

Kishida joined the Cabinet for the first time as a Minister of State for Special Missions, a position in which he took on assignments in various fields including Okinawa and Northern Territories Affairs, Quality-of-Life Policy, and Science and Technology Policy. He became Minister for Consumer Affairs in 2008, a position from which he worked for the establishment of the Consumer Affairs Agency.



Kishida favors a hands-on approach and has visited many places throughout the country.

2012

Appointed as Minister of Foreign Affairs

In 2015, Kishida strove for the bilateral agreement between Japan and the Republic of Korea regarding the issue of comfort women which was "resolved finally and irreversibly." In 2016, he helped to actualize a visit to Hiroshima by President Barack Obama, the first ever such visit by a sitting U.S. president. Kishida served as Minister of Foreign Affairs consecutively for four years and seven months, making him the longest-serving foreign minister in postwar Japan.



Top: Kishida visited New York in 2016 to attend a G7 Foreign Ministers' Meeting as the chair.

Left: Kishida explains the symbolism of the Atomic Bomb Dome to U.S. President Obama.

October 4, 2021

Becomes Prime Minister

Upon winning the election for Liberal Democratic Party president, Kishida was appointed Prime Minister of Japan by an extraordinary session of the Diet. He vowed to lend a sincere ear to the voices of the Japanese people and to conduct politics in an attentive and broad-minded manner.

Kishida filled nearly 30 notebooks in 10 years with comments and appeals from the people of Japan.



His favorite food is Hiroshima-style *okonomiyaki* (Japanese savory pancake). He ate the dish on the day that he was elected to head the Liberal Democratic Party. "I'll never forget how wonderful it tasted," he says.

PRIME MINISTER'S FIRST OVERSEAS TRIP

COP26 WORLD LEADERS SUMMIT STATEMENT

NOVEMBER 2, 2021

https://japan.kantei.go.jp/100_kishida/statement/202111/_00002.html

On November 2, Prime Minister KISHIDA Fumio visited Glasgow, the United Kingdom on his first overseas trip to attend the World Leaders Summit of the 26th session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP26) and other events.

On that occasion, the prime minister held bilateral summit meetings with the leaders of the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, and Viet Nam, and with the Secretary-General of the United Nations. He also exchanged words with many other heads of state.

In his speech at the World Leaders Summit, Prime Minister Kishida expressed his own determination that Japan would work in full force to take on climate change, a common challenge of humankind. The following is the full text of his speech.



Prime Minister Kishida attended the World Leaders Summit of the COP26 in the U.K. There, he pledged to provide up to an additional 10 billion USD in the coming five years to support the decarbonization of Asia and beyond.

At the outset, let me start by commending my friend, Boris, for his leadership in hosting the COP 26.

I have come all the way to Glasgow to convey my own determination that Japan will be working in full force to take on climate change, a common challenge of humankind.

Six years have passed since the adoption of the Paris Agreement. At that time, under the leadership

of then President Laurent Fabius, we had renewed our resolve. We must not forget that very moment. “Fumio, I really want to give this to you.” To this day, I have been keeping and cherishing the gavel that my friend Laurent presented to me as a testament to my own resolution to confront the climate issue seriously.

To achieve our goal, this coming decade will be critical. Together, with high ambitions, let us do all

we can go forward!

“Net-zero by 2050”; Japan will realize this goal under our newly adopted Long-term Strategy.

I assure that Japan aims to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 46% in the fiscal year 2030 from its fiscal year 2013 levels, and that Japan will continue strenuous efforts in its challenge to meet the lofty goal of cutting its emissions by 50%.

Mr. President,

To bring about a decarbonized society, Japan will introduce renewable energy as much as possible, and lead the way in the clean energy transition, with a particular focus on Asia.

Since solar power plays a major role in the transition to renewables in Asia, to help stabilize electrical frequency in the region, converting existing thermal power generations into zero-emission power generation is a necessary path. To this end, Japan, through the Asia Energy Transition Initiative, will develop leading projects worth 100 million USD to transform fossil-fuel-fired thermal power into zero-emission thermal power such as ammonia and hydrogen. Developed countries are collectively committed to the 100 billion USD per year goal of climate finance. However, we have not yet achieved this target. In order to lead the initiative in fulfilling this financial gap, today, I am pleased to announce our additional contribution. Japan announced last June our contribution to provide support worth 60 billion USD, both in public and private finance, in the next five years. On top of that, Japan will provide up to 10 billion USD in the coming five years, which would include our contribution to the launch of Innovative Financial Facility for Climate as we partner with the Asian Development Bank and others to support the decarbonization of Asia and beyond.

Together with Boris, Japan will call on other developed countries to join us in our collective efforts.

Capitalizing on these initiatives, Japan will press onward to undertake efforts toward net-zero emissions in Asia, the engine of global economic growth.

With an aim to realizing a future where vehicles, the world's essentials, will become zero emission, Japan will take advantage of all the available options of technologies.



Top: At a high-level event on infrastructure and climate change, Prime Minister Kishida said that he would lead the international community's commitment to achieving a better recovery from COVID-19.

Right: In between the meetings, the prime minister actively engaged in summit diplomacy including talks with President Joe Biden of the United States.



By utilizing our own 2 trillion yen Green Innovation Fund, Japan will develop next-generation batteries and motors, hydrogen, and synthetic fuels, which all hold the key to the spread of electric vehicles.

While spreading the fruits of these innovations across Asia, Japan will spearhead global efforts.

Furthermore, Japan will be participating in the Global Methane Pledge. As we are moving forward in the transition to decarbonization, the ongoing issue of rising energy prices also calls for our joint discussions among leaders to meet the challenge.

For adaptation to climate change, Japan will double our assistance to approximately 14.8 billion USD such as in the area of disaster risk reduction. Concerning global forestry conservation, I hereby announce that Japan will provide financial assistance worth approximately 240 million USD, utilizing advanced technologies and working in collaboration with the international organizations.

No one must be left behind as we confront the issue of climate change. Japan will dedicate all its strength to undertake actions and contribute to the future of humankind.

Thank you.



TOWARD A NEW FORM OF CAPITALISM:

OUTLINE OF THE EMERGENCY PROPOSAL FROM THE COUNCIL OF NEW FORM OF CAPITALISM REALIZATION

NOVEMBER 8, 2021

https://japan.kantei.go.jp/ongoingtopics/_00001.html

At his inaugural press conference in October 2021, Japan's new prime minister KISHIDA Fumio announced his aim to realize a new form of capitalism.

There is a growing trend around the world to search out a capitalist economy for the new era in which corporations and governments make bold investments, while protecting the middle class—which forms the core of a healthy democracy—and preparing for global-scale crises such as climate change. The new initiative of the Kishida administration aims to take the lead of that global trend, focusing on sustainability and human capital.

The core concepts of the new initiative are “a virtuous cycle of growth and distribution” and “developing a new post-COVID-19 society.” Growth strategy and distribution strategy will work in tandem to realize them.

On November 8, the emergency proposal was formulated by the Council of New Form of Capitalism Realization, which was established to shape a vision toward the realization of a new form of capitalism and translate it into concrete measures. It emphasizes that growth must be realized first—positioning the growth strategy as the trigger for the virtuous circle of growth and distribution—while also stating that the distribution strategy serves as an essential foundation for sustainable growth. The proposal urges Japan to mobilize all possible policies toward the realization of the virtuous cycle of growth and distribution.

* * * * *

Outline of the basic ideas of the emergency proposal

Since the 1980s, a growing emphasis has been placed on short-term shareholder value, resulting in a sluggish growth of the middle class, widening disparities, an increasing burden on subcontractors, and adverse effects on the natural environment and others. Thus, the government, private sector,

universities, local communities, and citizens and consumers should all play their respective roles to solve pending issues. Private companies are requested to enhance their mid- to long-term earning power by strengthening their investments in the future in areas such as human capital, and to achieve sustainable growth by circulating their profits through wage increases and other distributions, as well as through further investment in the future. We are committed to building a sustainable capitalism focused on various stakeholders. While our basic principle is to realize economic growth by utilizing market functions, it is also important for the public and private sectors to work together to create an economy for a new era, with the government providing a supplementary response in areas that are not sufficiently addressed.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, people's mindset about their work style and lifestyle has changed, with digital transformation—which



Prime Minister Kishida established a Council of the New Form of Capitalism Realization to discuss concrete measures to realize a new form of capitalism.

The emergency proposal was formulated at the meeting held on November 8.



until now had not proceeded very far—suddenly beginning to make rapid progress. Now is the time to reform conventional socioeconomic practices and restrictions as well as institutions to build a new society premised on coexisting with COVID-19.

As a trigger for a virtuous cycle of growth and distribution, it is necessary to realize growth in the first place. We need to promote efforts to realize a science and technology nation, including those for digital transformation (DX) and growth of the green sector toward a solution to the climate change, thereby drastically strengthening our capacity for innovation. We also need to provide comprehensive support for startups as the driver of innovation that will carve out the future of Japan. It is also important to use innovation to solve social issues in a bid to create a highly convenient society and to promote the improvement of productivity in a wide range of industries and enterprises, thereby helping to create of a prosperous middle class.

Our distribution strategy serves as an important foundation for growth. Consumption is expected to increase through distribution to employees in the form of wages, which then stimulates demand, leading to improvement in corporate earnings and sustainable growth. In order to realize growth and distribution at the same time, it is necessary to strengthen investment in people through efforts ranging from those in childcare and early education, to those within companies. We must also respect diversity and inclusivity to create a society where all citizens can participate and play an active role and establish an environment where each individual can create added value.

From such perspectives, Japan should mobilize all possible policies toward the realization of a virtuous cycle of growth and distribution that will then achieve subsequent growth. To this end, it is essential to increase productivity through our growth strategy and to distribute the fruits of that growth in the form of wages to working people, thereby raising the income level of a broad range of citizens.

Issues to be addressed as an utmost priority

The emergency proposal outlines the multiple measures that should now be given utmost priority by the Kishida administration.

Under the growth strategy, the top priority is promoting the realization of a science and technology nation, to which end, a university fund will be established at a scale of 10 trillion yen during the current fiscal year. The second priority is promoting the revival of the dynamism of Japanese companies and providing comprehensive support for startups as the driver of innovation while simultaneously strengthening tax support for large companies assisting startups. The third priority is launching a Vision for a Digital Garden City Nation by implementing digital technology such as telework, drone delivery and autonomous driving, beginning with local regions. The fourth and final priority is promoting economic security. A fund will be established, with innovative technologies to be developed in crucial areas such as artificial intelligence and quantum technology.

Under the distribution strategy, the first course of action will be to provide support to the private sector to strengthen the distribution of wealth. Support will be drastically strengthened within the tax code for companies that raise wages to increase the percentage of the distribution allocated to labor. The second course of action will be to strengthen the distribution function in the public sector. Public prices will be revised to increase the incomes of those working at facilities providing medical nursing, elderly care, childcare services, and the like.

In response to this emergency proposal, the government will make a concerted effort to immediately address the matters outlined. The Council of a New Form of Capitalism Realization will continue to conduct brisk discussions to compile, by next spring, a grand design and an outline of the approaches to substantialize it, and will keep the world informed of its progress. ●



TRANQUILITY AND SERENITY:

A PEACEFUL JAPANESE WINTER

Surrounded by seas, the Japanese archipelago is surprisingly cold in winter, with plenty of snow. Its climate has given birth to fantastical scenery, fostering local, technical solutions.



H_YASUI/GETTY IMAGES

SEA FOG

The Seto Inland Sea is rimmed Honshu and the Island of Shikoku. On cold, bright winter mornings, this long, thin body of water produces a layer of fog when air laden with moisture becomes chilled. Superb views of the phenomenon can be enjoyed from the observatory in Mihara City, Hiroshima Prefecture, looking out over more than 700 islands and islets dotting the fog in a tapestry that never repeats itself, creating a magical fantasy world.



SNOWY GARDEN

Owing to the winds blowing in from the sea, the area facing the Sea of Japan has heavy, moist winter snows. At Kenroku-en Garden (Kanazawa City, Ishikawa Prefecture)—one of Japan’s finest with over 300 years of history—numerous pine trees are trussed with rope during the winter, giving extra support to branches laden with the heavy snow. The beautiful conical shapes, produced through traditional wisdom and skill, are topographical poems symbolizing the Japanese winter.



NEW YEAR'S DELICACIES

The Japanese New Year comes with special delicacies. The custom of placing lucky foods in tiered boxes and eating them at seasonal milestone originated as a way of expressing the concept “stacked with luck.” Each of the foods is made with long-lasting ingredients, enabling the entire family to eat leisurely during the New Year holiday period. In that way, Japanese people celebrate the beginning of the year in peace.

THE JOURNEY TOWARD A WORLD WITHOUT MALNUTRITION

The Tokyo Nutrition for Growth Summit 2021 will convene in December as part of global efforts to end malnutrition. It will offer a crucial opportunity to accelerate multi-sectoral efforts to tackle a problem that calls for increasingly complex solutions.

The Olympic and Paralympic Games present an invaluable opportunity to draw people's attention away from day-to-day matters to the wider world, by way of sports. Taking advantage of the momentum that the Games create, the Nutrition for Growth Summit is held in conjunction with them, in their host city, offering the opportunity to think globally about nutrition and instigate action.

With the first summit having been held in London in 2013, following the London Olympics of the previous year, the third—

the Tokyo Nutrition for Growth Summit 2021—will convene on December 7 and 8. Leaders of governments, international organizations, businesses, civil groups, and academia, and other relevant stakeholders from around the world will gather to discuss five themes: health (making nutrition integral to Universal Health Coverage); food (building food systems that promote safe, healthy diets and nutrition); resilience (addressing malnutrition effectively in fragile and conflict-affected contexts); accountability (promoting data-

TOKYO
**NUTRITION
FOR GROWTH**
SUMMIT 2021

Food, Health, & Prosperity for All

driven accountability); and financing (securing new investments to tackle malnutrition). The overall goal is to indicate the future direction of global efforts to tackle malnutrition through the following actions: adopting stronger, evidence-based nutrition policies at global, regional, and country levels; pledging to increase financing for proven nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive interventions; and making commitments to align



A broad spectrum of leaders will come together at the Tokyo Nutrition for Growth Summit 2021 to work toward a world where everyone is adequately nourished. They will make new financing available for nutrition, announce new nutrition commitments, and work to make those commitments achievable.

ALIVE & THRIVE

and harmonize actions across sectors and stakeholders.

Japan, host of this year's summit, has reserves of knowledge and practical expertise regarding nutrition that were gained through years of experience. After World War II, the country was quick to rekindle the training of nutritional specialists and establish a cadre of qualified professionals, as well as to monitor the nutritional well-being of its citizens. Not only does Japan provide school lunch programs and nutritional counseling, both of high quality, but it also participates in a wide array of international efforts to improve nutrition. "I think Japan has a lot to share," says Gerda Verburg, United Nations Assistant Secretary-General and Coordinator of the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement. SUN was established by the UN to tackle the world's nutritional problems and will play a vital role in the upcoming summit by addressing the ways in which participants can commit to the solution to these problems. "In the 1950s and 1960s, Japan learned a lot about the importance of not just food security, but also the



Left: Japan is committed to international cooperation in improving nutrition. For example, a cooking lesson was provided by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) to teach practical recipes using common ingredients in Madagascar in 2018. SHINICHIKUNO/JICA



Right: Japan deploys specialists to provide nutritional guidance at schools, childcare centers, hospitals, and other places where nutrition is key. Photo shows a day-care center for infants and children. JAPAN DIETETIC ASSOCIATION

quality of food and what food nutrition can do for physical health, cognitive development, and mental well-being."

Nutrition has become an increasingly complex problem in recent years, with many countries facing what is called the "double burden of malnutrition," where undernutrition, which stunts growth, coexists with overnutrition, which causes lifestyle-related illnesses and other problems. One in every 10 people in the world suffers from hunger, and one in every three suffers from obesity. "If someone has been stunted as a child, it will affect their metabolism, and then they may be more vulnerable to becoming overweight or obese later in life. In the same families, you can see stunted children and obese adults," Verburg explains.

Nutritional problems are also deeply linked to serious global issues such as flaws in the food system and climate change. "Our food system is one of the root causes of malnutrition. Our current, imbalanced way of feeding ourselves is bankrupting our health systems and exhausting our planet," declares Verburg.

A cross-sector approach—involving health, agriculture, the food industry, and education—is essential if we are to deal with such a complex issue. Government-led efforts are not enough; innovation and awareness-raising within the business community and the civil sector are also needed. At the summit, governments, international organizations, businesses, civil groups, and all other stakeholders are expected to make commitments that are both specific and achievable. A successful outcome is greatly desired if we are to accomplish not only the SDG (Sustainable Development Goal) of achieving food security and improved nutrition for the world by the year 2030, but all SDGs, as nutrition drives healthy economies and prosperity. Verburg emphatically says, "I want countries to be extremely ambitious in order not to fail to meet the goals. We need a doubling down on ambition." ●



The Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement, launched in 2010, works globally to bring together people and organizations in government, business, and civil society—as well as across the United Nations system—to improve nutrition. Gerda Verburg (right), formerly Minister of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality in the Netherlands, was appointed United Nations Assistant Secretary-General and Coordinator of SUN in 2016 by the UN Secretary-General.

Lunch at school is a fun time for children. Before they start eating, they express their gratitude for the food and for those who made it.



SCHOOL LUNCHES:

THE KEY TO CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND PROSPERITY

The healthy growth of children in Japan owes much to the provision of nutritionally balanced school-lunch menus and a long standing commitment to nutrition education. Japan also offers school-lunch support internationally, leading to improved nutrition and higher quality learning.

When the morning lessons end, several students quickly change into white clothes and race down the hall as it is their turn to serve meals to their classmates at school lunch, a much-awaited time of the

day. Although everyone must eat without engaging in conversation due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there are plenty of smiles around as the children take big bites of nutritious food prepared with seasonal ingredients.

Nutrition is essential to any child's healthy growth. While undernutrition is a deep-seated problem for those living in poverty, in recent years, many countries, regardless of their wealth, have faced complex issues, including overnutrition.

After World War II, Japan instituted school lunches to improve children's nutrition. This photo was taken in Tokyo in 1947.



To make progress toward solving that global problem, Japan will hold the Tokyo Nutrition for Growth Summit 2021 in December. Today, more than a century since the founding of the National Institute of Nutrition in Tokyo in 1920, Japan expects to leverage its experience in nutritional policy to build international momentum surrounding better nutrition.

The three important pillars of Japan's nutritional policy are diet, specialists, and evidence. The policy recommends that meals consist of a balanced combination of staple dishes—such as rice or bread—that provide the body with energy, along with main dishes—such as meat, fish, or soybeans—that supply protein, and side dishes that deliver

Diet and nutrition teacher NAKADA Tomoko finds joy in watching children eat happily.





Children harvesting rice. Growing and harvesting one's own food is an important part of food and nutrition education.



This school lunch contains chestnut as a seasonal ingredient.

vitamins and minerals. After World War II, Japan promptly eliminated nutritional deficiency with support from international organizations. The country's nutrition policy, developed in response to the malnutrition of its citizens, became the foundation for an expanding economy.

Japan's policy also focused on training of nutritional specialists including nutritional education and food-service management. Diet and nutrition teachers and dietitians play a key role in settings where school lunches are served. Most elementary schools in the country provide well-balanced school lunch menus devised by nutrition teachers and school nutritionists. These are based on national standards for nutritional intake in the implementation of school lunches, which are set according to the stage of a child's growth. Menus are also creatively devised to consider children's favorite foods.

NAKADA Tomoko, a member of the board of the Japan Dietetic Association, is a diet and nutrition teacher in Tochigi Prefecture. She says, "I take care to transform school-meal menus into learning materials. For example, if children learn in their home economics classes that traditional local cuisine is made by using ingredients in a

non-wasteful manner, they will be aware of the need to reduce food waste and will be more likely to finish their meals." Nakada makes it a point to impart children with appropriate knowledge through food and nutrition education. "A meal can have consequences for an individual's entire life span, starting with the time spent in the womb. Nothing gives me greater joy than to see children learn about nutrition through school lunches and grow into healthy adults."

Japan also helps introduce lunches at schools in other countries. For the children receiving those meals, the assistance not only improves their nutrition but also enhances the overall quality of their education.

For example, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) has been aiding local communities in Madagascar

since 2017, helping them serve community-based school lunches to children. The assistance is part of the School for All project, which seeks to improve a learning environment in which parents and guardians take turns preparing school lunches. By 2019, the program had expanded to 146 schools. While nutritional deficiency is still a pressing issue for children in Madagascar, many can now get the meals they need from their school lunches, which boosts their motivation to learn. A fourth-grade teacher says, "The children can concentrate in class on days when we serve lunch. Community-school lunches clearly encourage them to attend school and participate in the various activities there."

The children unflinchingly smile when they eat the school lunches that help them to grow and create happy memories. ●



JICA assistance helps local residents provide school meals in Madagascar. JICA

RECOVERING FARMLAND DEVoured BY LOCUSTS IN PAKISTAN

In Pakistan, agriculture—a major part of the country's economy—has experienced grave destruction due to swarms of desert locusts. Japan has taken action to assist the beleaguered farmers.



Countless locusts form swarms and take to the air, totally blocking out the sky. Not satisfied with just eating the vegetation in forests and savannahs, they migrate from farm to farm, devouring produce wherever they go. The formation of the locust swarms every few decades is related to an

imbalance in the delicate natural environment caused by extreme weather events—droughts, heavy rains, and the like.

Swarms of desert locusts that formed in eastern Africa and the tip of the Arabian Peninsula from 2018 to 2019 arrived in Pakistan in both 2019 and 2020. They damaged a

total of 17.8 million hectares of farmland in the country, making it the largest and most destructive locust disaster ever.

The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), which has long been implementing agricultural cooperation activities in Pakistan, started to provide



Swarms of locusts caused severe damage to agricultural land in Pakistan. XINHUA/AFLO



Left: JICA distributed wheat seeds and fertilizer to 3,000 Pakistani small farmers, who also received instruction on fertilizer use. JICA
 Right: The signing ceremony for a partnership between JICA and the FAO. Due to COVID-19 travel restrictions, meetings before the ceremony were held online. Hagiwara is shown standing second from right in the back row. JICA

emergency support in 2020—primarily aid to small farmers who had suffered heavy damage from the locusts. HAGIWARA Ritsuko of JICA’s Pakistan Office says, “At first, agriculture extension officers wanted us to send pesticides to control the locusts. However, considering the various circumstances brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic such as the inability to provide proper guidance on how to use pesticides, we decided to distribute wheat seeds in time for the fall 2020 planting season to help restore farmers’ livelihoods in the affected areas.” Therefore, instead of pesticides, JICA sent seeds and fertilizer to 3,000 small farmers. Harvesting the crops from these seeds should provide enough income to offset the locust damage.

To implement the support, JICA leveraged the network that it had built up in the country over the years. It has enlisted help from Pakistan’s local government officials and technical experts to decide which farmers should receive the aid and how to

fairly select, store, inspect, and distribute the supplies. The transport of seeds between provinces—otherwise limited on account of the COVID-19 pandemic and Pakistan’s food policies—was thus smooth.

JICA has also partnered with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), which possesses specialized knowledge on controlling locusts. As part of a one-year plan that began in March 2021, they have enhanced the monitoring and control capabilities of government officials in Pakistan to help them quickly identify new locust groups and share information about them nationwide, which will lead to more effective countermeasures, such as the timely distribution of pesticides. An information network has been set up across Pakistan to measure locust density and predict swarms by collecting

photos with GPS metadata taken and sent in by local observers. AZEGAMI Tomohiro from the JICA Economic Development Department says, “We need to keep up a steady pace of training to prepare for future locust swarms. I hope to use this experience going forward so that we can support even more countries when the next locust swarm strikes.”

Although the next outbreak of locusts may be decades away, Japan will continue to offer support to Pakistan and elsewhere to help people avoid similar difficulties whenever they may occur. ●



Top: Local government officials conducted locust-control operations with the supplies provided by the FAO. A training program gave instruction on how to find locust eggs and larvae, and so forth. FAO
 Left: Trial application of the latest technologies, such as using drones to monitor locusts and spray pesticides, is also in progress. FAO



Left: KOGURE Masahisa of TFT is on the left. Although he has been unable to visit aid recipients during the pandemic, he has kept in close contact with NPO partners on the ground to keep abreast of the latest issues. TABLEFORTWO
Top: Kogure says, “Food assistance increases educational opportunities. Our ultimate goal is to cut the chains of poverty.”
TABLEFORTWO

MEALS TO SOLVE THE GLOBAL FOOD IMBALANCE

Some people in the world today have difficulty getting enough food to eat, while others struggle with obesity as a result of eating too much. One Japanese NPO seeks to resolve that food imbalance, helping individuals on both ends of the spectrum.



How wonderful would it be if two people—one living in a developed country and another in a developing country—were able to share their food equally? TABLE FOR TWO (TFT), a Japanese

NPO established in 2007, has created a system to do just that. For each nutritionally balanced TFT meal selected by a diner at an employee cafeteria or a restaurant, a donation of 20 yen is generated. TFT



For every meal a diner eats from the TFT menu, a donation is made to a developing country. The photo shows a TFT meal at a Toyota Motor Corp. employee cafeteria. TOYOTA MOTOR CORP.

works with partner organizations to turn that 20-yen donation into a school meal in a developing country.

Many people in developing countries still cannot get enough food to obtain the nutrition they need to live. According to reports by UNICEF and other international organizations, since 2020, soaring food prices and distribution network disruptions caused by the rampant spread of COVID-19 have exacerbated the situation. As a result, about 10% of the world's population is now underfed. To achieve the SDG of zero hunger by 2030, much remains to be done. Meanwhile, the percentage of obese people in developed countries continues to rise owing to higher calorie meals and a lack of exercise due to the prevalence of desk work.

Resolving that global food imbalance is TFT's goal. According to its executive director, KOGURE Masahisa, "Many people can't make big donations on a continual basis. That's why TFT created a system that lets them contribute a little bit every day." The amount of each donation is small and manageable and can therefore be included within the price of a single meal, making it possible for individuals to contribute while enjoying a delicious and healthy dish—these advantages to the system eliminate the psychological and economic obstacles blocking donations. As of April 2021, around 650 companies and organizations are involved with TFT. In addition, TFT has offices not only in Japan, but also in the U.S. and Germany, where it is recruiting more sponsors.

TFT helps serve school meals mainly in Uganda,

Rwanda, Tanzania, Kenya, and the Philippines. With the donations collected in 2020, the organization delivered about 5.5 million school meals. More than just offering children better nutrition, those meals also provide the motivation both to attend school and to study while there. According to one of the students, "Thanks to the school meals, I can really focus on my studies."

In addition to assistance with school meals, TFT helps plant vegetable gardens for schools and communities to create a sustainable food supply system. Kogure says, "We often hear from recipients that they want to be able to produce their own food rather than just relying on aid. But they lack the technology and funds. So, we started to help plant vegetable gardens with the idea of assisting them in producing food." Along with improving food self-sufficiency and economic independence, such organically cultivated vegetable gardens provide places for teaching children about nutrition and food safety.

Kogure enthusiastically says, "We want to recruit partners beyond our own current field of activities so that we can provide even more assistance to developing countries." As the waves of TFT's influence spread, we will come much closer to a world without hunger or obesity. ●

Right: TFT helps local schools plant vegetable gardens to teach children how to make their own food. TABLEFORTWO
Bottom: Dietary education programs in the U.S. teach children lessons such as how to prepare nutritionally balanced Japanese food. TABLEFORTWO



BRINGING THE COVID-19 VACCINE TO ALL CORNERS OF THE WORLD

As the world continues to face shortages of COVID-19 vaccines, the Japanese government is actively working to deliver vaccines and contribute to “Last One Mile Support” by building cold chain systems in developing countries and establishing equitable vaccine access in every corner of the world.

Vaccination on a global scale is essential for the early containment of COVID-19. Recognizing the urgency of this need, the Japanese government is conducting various support measures to accelerate fair and equitable vaccine access for people in all countries and regions.

Key among these measures is the distribution of vaccines to developing countries. Japan has disbursed 200 million dollars to the COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access (COVAX) Facility, an international framework for the joint purchase and rapid and equitable distribution of vaccines to people in all countries. At the COVAX AMC Summit, co-hosted by the Japanese government in June this year, Japan announced an additional sum that would bring its total contribution to 1 billion dollars. Furthermore, Japan has distributed vaccines to countries and regions in need through such channels as COVAX. So far, a total of 25 million doses have been delivered, with plans to provide up to approximately 60 million doses in total.

Japan has been supporting the development of the cold chain system, an effort known as “Last One Mile Support,” to ensure the safe delivery of vaccines to developing countries. Those countries often lack suitable infrastructure for transporting and storing COVID-19 vaccines, which must be kept at low temperatures.

In addition to supplying materials, equipment, and so forth to 57 countries in Asia, the Pacific, Latin America, and Africa through UNICEF, Japan

also supplies six countries and one region with grant aid through the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).

Bilateral grant aid through JICA normally takes more than a year to be finalized due to the time required to work out the details of the aid specification. In this particular case, however, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and JICA have been able to accelerate the process, reducing the time to just four months. KUBOKURA Ken, director of the Office for COVID-19 Response at



Japan has delivered vaccines to developing countries through the COVAX facility. The photo shows vaccines manufactured in Japan arriving in Sri Lanka.



Vaccine transport boxes developed by Twinbird Corporation are among the equipment provided by Japan. Since the boxes can draw power from a car's cigarette-lighter socket and are resistant to shaking, they are already being used in Timor-Leste to store and transport vaccines in areas where the power supply is unstable. JICA



JICA, says, "I believe that our longstanding relationship of trust with the health and medical sectors in the partner countries enabled us to obtain the necessary details from them within a short time frame. That is why we were able to start the cooperation promptly."

JICA's cooperation goes beyond providing materials and equipment, extending to technical cooperation and human resource development. For example, a webinar in which a Japanese expert offered a variety of information on COVID-19 vaccines was attended by 494 people from 68 countries. Also, this past June, JICA supplied 15 high-quality vaccine transport boxes to the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste and held training sessions on the operation and handling of the equipment. "We load the boxes onto vehicles provided by the Government of Japan. The temperature of the

boxes is properly controlled, and they can be powered from the vehicles, which is beneficial when we deliver vaccines to remote areas where there is no electricity," a local official commented. "On behalf of the people of Timor-Leste, we really want to thank Japan for supporting us in the very difficult time of COVID-19. Going forward, we will work closely with Japan to improve health care for our people."



In its fight against COVID-19, Japan will continue to actively address the challenges of developing countries and provide comprehensive support for the delivery of vaccines to every corner of the world. ●



Toyota Tsusho Corporation has obtained WHO's medical equipment Performance, Quality and Safety (PQS) prequalification for its refrigerated vehicle for vaccines based on Toyota Motor's Land Cruiser—a first of its kind. The top photo shows a vehicle in use in Ethiopia.



Some 11,000 athletes from 205 countries and regions and the Refugee Olympic Team participated in the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games, giving inspiring performances and setting numerous records. (Photo: Closing ceremony of the Olympic Games, August 8) AFLOSPORTS

BEYOND TOKYO 2020:

LEADING THE WAY TOWARD AN INCLUSIVE SOCIETY

The Tokyo 2020 Games, which reached a safe conclusion even under the difficult circumstances presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, made a significant step toward the realization of an inclusive society—one in which everyone respects one another regardless of gender, age, or ability.

It was precisely because the world had been facing great difficulties due to the COVID-19 pandemic that Japan determined to fulfill its responsibility as host country to hold the Tokyo 2020 Games, even without spectators, and to provide the world with a sense of solidarity and to offer hopes and dreams, especially to children, who hold the future in their hands. Firmly intent on making this happen, many

people throughout Japan worked in unison, striving to implement measures for safety and security to ensure that Japan bring the Games to a safe conclusion.

The Tokyo 2020 Games not only moved and inspired many people through sports, but also advanced the Games' core concept of "Unity in Diversity," serving to promote the further growth of this movement. The percentage of female

athletes participating in the Olympic Games was a record 48.8. Moreover, the number of athletes who identified themselves as LGBTQ+ was reportedly over 180—more than triple that of the Rio 2016 Games—and they won more than 55 medals among them. In order to promote gender equality, the number of mixed-gender events was doubled to 18. Seeing men and women teaming up to compete for their country was like a breath of fresh air. The Paralympic Games, which was held in Tokyo for the second time, served as an opportunity to convey to the world and cultivate the “barrier-free mindset” that is at the foundation of an inclusive society, in which everyone, with or without impairments, can lead a vibrant life.

Supporting the success of the Games from behind the scenes were more than 70,000 Games volunteers, who ranged in age from 19 to 91. These volunteers, regardless of age, gender, or disability, played the vital



Top: MIURA Hisashi (left), who has a hearing impairment, participated in the Games as a volunteer. Through the assistance of the Nippon Foundation Volunteer Support Center, which provides support to volunteers with impairments, he worked on a team together with an individual (right) who was able to offer sign-language interpretation at the venue to support the athletes. THE NIPPON FOUNDATION VOLUNTEER SUPPORT CENTER

Bottom: With the help of volunteers, Slovenian sprinter Anita Horvat exits the venue after the competition. Volunteers offered their assistance to athletes and Games personnel not just at the competition venues, but also at various locations around the country. XINHUA/AFLO



Left: Tom Daley (foreground), an openly gay athlete who won the gold medal for Great Britain in the men’s synchronized 10-meter platform, told the press, “I’m incredibly proud to say that I’m a gay man and also an Olympic champion.”

PICTURE ALLIANCE/AFLO
Top: The Japanese duo of MIZUTANI Jun and ITO Mima won the gold in a new event, mixed doubles table tennis. REUTERS/AFLO

role of actuating the concept of “Unity in Diversity” by providing hospitality and supporting athletes and staff from around the world. MIURA Hisashi, who has a hearing impairment, was one of these volunteers. Wanting to contribute in some way to this historic event, he performed reception and maintenance duties, among others, at the residential buildings and fitness center at the Olympic and Paralympic Village. “As I actively offered my own opinions and shared sign-language skills, my teammates also naturally started to communicate more openly, showing their care for one another using both spoken words and sign language. Ultimately, I felt that we made an excellent team, and were able to fulfill our role. It was also unforgettable to have the chance to communicate with players and staff visiting from all around the world using gestures and body language. I’m glad that I was able to support them, even if only in a small way”, says Miura.

Respecting and supporting one another regardless of differences is crucial to the realization of an inclusive society. At this year’s Games, this notion was reiterated to many people throughout the world. Miura says, “The Tokyo 2020 Games offered an opportunity to make great progress in terms of ‘Unity in Diversity.’ I am thankful that I was able to make my personal contribution as a volunteer at the Games, and I believe it is important to continue building up such experiences, not just at the Olympics and Paralympics.”

Each of us embracing diversity will create a vitality that will lead to the realization of a world where everyone can live comfortably. The Tokyo 2020 Games were a sure, significant step in that direction. ●



Top left: Sports spectatorship is evolving with the use of high-speed, high-capacity 5G technology. Spectators at swimming competitions gain access to real-time data. TOKYO 2020
 Top right: Spectators at a golf competition can simultaneously view multiple players scattered along the course on a hand-held device. TOKYO 2020
 Bottom left: The autonomous FSR has a built-in sensor that can detect obstacles. It selects the optimal route to a chosen object and retrieves it in the minimum amount of time. TOKYO 2020
 Bottom center: Human Support Robots (HSRs) were also equipped with cameras to take commemorative photos at various locations, and were popular among competitors and volunteer staff. TOKYO 2020
 Bottom right: The HSR, equipped with a foldable arm, was developed to assist physically impaired and elderly persons. At Tokyo 2020, HSRs distributed water bottles and collected garbage. TOKYO SHIMBUN

TECH INNOVATIONS

AT TOKYO 2020

At this year's Tokyo 2020 Games, 5G technology enhanced the viewing experience, while robots assisted operations at various events, entertaining all those involved. Such cutting-edge technologies point to the exciting future that awaits us.

The Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games set out to be the most innovative Games ever and bring a positive legacy to future generations. 5G technology and robotics, finely tuned to meet the needs of the Games, expertly demonstrated what the future has in store by providing behind-the-scenes support for the massive event and enhancing the viewing experience.

The increased bandwidth and higher capacity made possible by 5G networks paved the way for a new type of experience for viewers. At a swimming competition venue, for example, 5G's low latency and AR (augmented reality) technology sent real-time data about contestants and their relative positions to viewers wearing goggle-type devices. The data informed the spectators instantaneously about which swimmers were leading at any moment, letting them cheer on the athletes all the more enthusiastically. At a golf competition, a "multi-live broadcasting system" allowed spectators with hand-held tablets to watch, in real time, the participating golfers scattered across various holes along the golf course. Although the decision to hold Tokyo 2020 without spectators limited those experiences to a small number of officials, the few who were there could glimpse the future of sports viewing.

Robots also played a remarkable role at Tokyo 2020. HIRUKAWA Hirohisa, a robotics specialist of the National Institute of Advanced Industrial Science and Technology (AIST) and leader of the Tokyo 2020 Robot Project, says, "We hoped that this year's Games would be more than just a showcase for technology. Our aim was to show how useful robots



Tokyo 2020 Robot Project leader HIRUKAWA Hirohisa reflects, "The harmonious coexistence of human beings and robots depends on whether humans utilize robots wisely. In that respect, I think Tokyo 2020 represented an excellent example of useful robots in action."

can be." Robotic support in conducting various events garnered special attention. For instance, Field Support Robots (FSRs) retrieved and transported projectiles at events such as the javelin throw and shot put. The robots could move autonomously, avoiding obstacles and choosing optimal routes, thus saving time and reducing the workload for support personnel. Similarly, the Power Assist Suit, which can relieve wearers of up to 10 kg of a physical burden, played an important part in powerlifting competitions at the Paralympic Games. Support personnel, who wore the suit like a backpack, were able to change the powerlifting plates on barbells with speed and ease. "The staff were incredulous at first, but the suit gained a reputation for being easy to use and reducing fatigue," recalls ARAI Koji, senior director of the Innovation Promotion Office of the Tokyo Organizing Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Because the Games took place during the COVID-19 pandemic, being "safe and secure" was an important theme. Considering its potential concerning avoiding unnecessary human contact, robotic technology thus found itself useful to an unprecedented degree. Hirukawa reflects, "We realized that robots could take over a great many tasks in security, cleaning, and in guiding visitors. From now on, we will be able to reduce needless contact between people by using robots."

Tokyo 2020 illustrated a fast-approaching future characterized by advanced technologies such as 5G and robotics. Japanese technology continues to evolve and will support efforts toward a more productive lifestyle. ●



Power Assist Suits reduced back stress and helped officials pick up shots at shot-put venues, while also aiding personnel in the exchange of weight plates during powerlifting competitions. TOKYO 2020

BEHIND THE SCENES OF A FIRST PARALYMPIC APPEARANCE AT TOKYO 2020



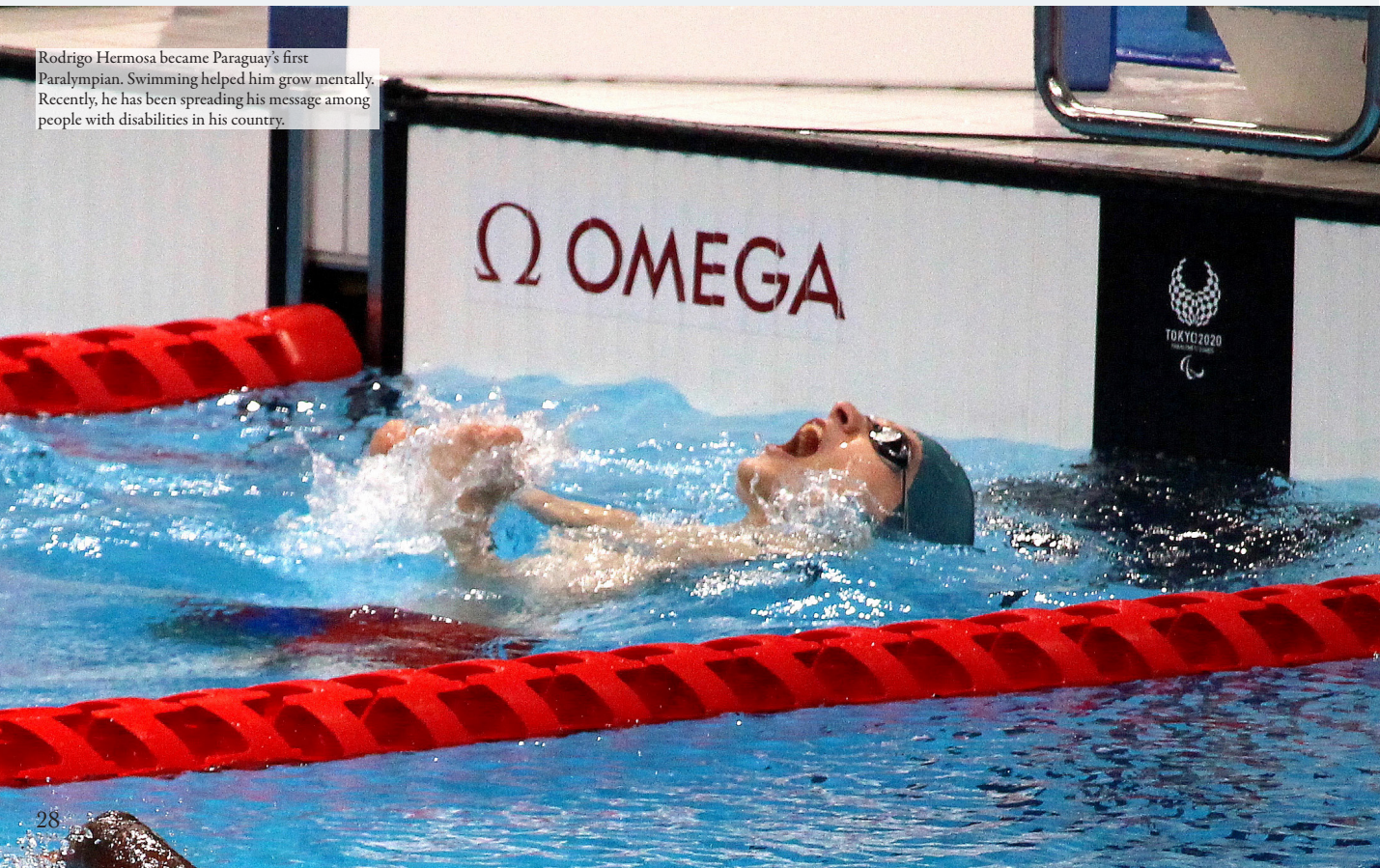
The Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games highlighted intense athletic competition among 162 participating delegations, six of which made their first Paralympic appearance with support from a Japanese University.

When Rodrigo Hermosa saw his time on the electronic scoreboard—29.72 seconds—he unleashed a roar and pumped his fist. As Paraguay’s first ever

Paralympian, he had just broken the 30-second barrier for the first time, setting a personal best on the big stage, while participating in a heat of the men’s 50 m freestyle S9 (physical impairment class) at the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games on August 29.

There were several Japanese people among those cheering Hermosa on: faculty and researchers from Nippon Sport Science University. As an institution that began undertaking projects for the Japan Sports Agency in 2017, the university helped para-athletes from all around the world reach this year’s

Rodrigo Hermosa became Paraguay’s first Paralympian. Swimming helped him grow mentally. Recently, he has been spreading his message among people with disabilities in his country.



Paralympics. Hermosa is one such person.

ITO Masamitsu, a professor at Nippon Sport Science University who runs the support program, met Hermosa in Paraguay in 2018. At the time, Hermosa was only 14 years old. Born without his right arm below the elbow, he was an inexperienced swimmer and wasn't ready to be an athlete. However, after joining a camp organized by the university and appearing in an international competition, he began receiving domestic media coverage. That planted the seed of Hermosa's identity as an athlete.

Many countries, like Hermosa's, face difficulties in sending delegations to the Paralympics due to small numbers of athletes, and in some cases, weak committee-management capabilities—a National Paralympic Committee is a requirement for participation in the Paralympics. Therefore, the university assigns staff to various regions and



Top: Nippon Sport Science University provided wide-ranging assistance, from athlete scouting and instruction to coaching-staff development, as well as nutritional and psychological support for athletes.

Bottom: The university's support of other countries includes National Paralympic Committee administration and classes on coaching and other subjects. Second from right is Professor ITO Masamitsu, researching coaching studies at Nippon Sport Science University.



With aid from Nippon Sport Science University, Bhutan made its first Paralympic appearance and sent a delegation wearing ethnic costumes to the Opening Ceremony. The country's three para-athletes competed in the shot put and archery athletics events.

THE MAINICHI NEWSPAPERS

provides a wide range of assistance tailored to each country's situation. Its support has reached a total of 43 countries, six of which made their first-ever Paralympic appearances this year: Paraguay, Bhutan, the Maldives, Grenada, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and Guyana.

The goal of Nippon Sport Science University is for those athletic endeavors to continue after their support concludes. To that end, it is essential to change attitudes on the local level. As Professor Ito says, "If they're happy with just making an appearance at the Tokyo 2020 Paralympics, then there's no point. To connect with what comes next, we've engaged in numerous discussions with athletes, coaches, and National Paralympic Committee members about the purpose of sending someone to the Paralympics. Thus, we shared the bigger goal of 'building a society where people with disabilities can live comfortably' with them. I do believe that they will make further progress toward making that happen."

Hermosa said, "For many people in Paraguay, these Paralympics were the first ones that they had ever watched. After I returned home, I heard people say things like, 'I was impressed to see athletes with all sorts of disabilities playing sports so intensively.' Looking ahead I want to achieve even better results in international competitions." His future performance will no doubt embolden people with disabilities. The Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games were a precious step forward, influencing attitudes toward the creation of an inclusive society.



TECHNOLOGY BRINGS THE JOY OF GOING OUT TO PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Barrier-free accessibility is crucial to realizing an inclusive society. In attempting to achieve that goal, innovative products and services are being launched one after another. How do their developers envision a barrier-free future?

One of the principles of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is to “Leave No One Behind.” In Japan, where various efforts have been made to realize that principle, many products and services are being developed to help people with disabilities move around the city freely.

One of those is Ashirase, a navigation system for the visually impaired. Attached to the user’s shoes and linked to a smartphone application, the small device instructs the user

where to go via vibrations. A former engineer at Honda Motor Co., Ltd., CHINO Wataru founded Ashirase Inc.—the first venture company to emerge from Honda—to develop the system. He has also participated in demonstration tests using the Quasi-Zenith Satellite System (QZSS), an original Japanese satellite positioning system.

Through numerous interviews with the visually impaired, Chino learned that they live their lives by making full use of all their

senses other than sight. The aim of Ashirase is thus to support visually-impaired people as they walk by providing navigation from their feet, without interfering with the use of their senses. By ensuring an environment where individuals can pay close attention to their surroundings, even visually-impaired people will be able to walk outside safely on their own.

Chino says, “Walking is the basis of mobility. I hope to support the independence of the

Left: ODA Yuriko is a wheelchair user herself. She has been expanding her activities by cooperating with the central and local government’s barrier-free initiatives based on the information gathered by WheeLog!.

Right: CHINO Wataru was involved in the development of the electronic control of electric vehicles (EVs) and automatic driving systems at Honda. Following an accident that involved a close relative, he began developing a tool to assist the visually impaired to walk.

visually impaired by providing them with the freedom and safety of walking using technology.” He is developing the product rapidly for commercial launch in 2022, with an eye to eventually deploying it overseas.

In the same vein, WheeLog! is an application based on the experience of its developer, ODA Yuriko, who was diagnosed with the intractable disease of “distal myopathy” in her early 20s. It is the world’s first app that uses maps to record and share the routes that users have taken with their wheelchairs, allowing other users to see wheelchair-accessible routes at a glance, even in cities they have never been to before. In addition, various types of barrier-free-related information, such as the location of wheelchair-accessible

restrooms, elevators, and ramps, is collected through user posts to support wheelchair users in their active outings.

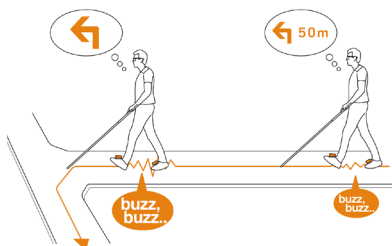
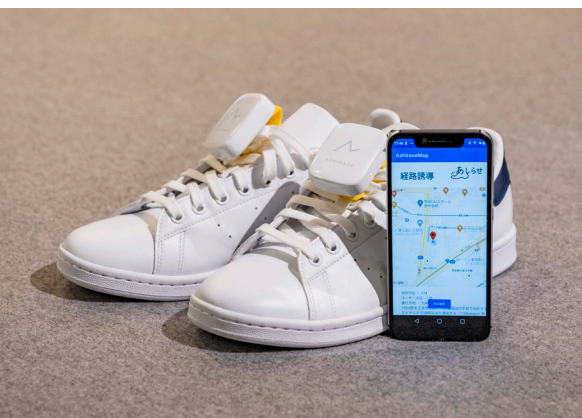
At the beginning of her wheelchair life, Oda thought it would no longer be possible to go out like she used to. However, when she later learned that there was a barrier-free beach near to her home, she realized the importance of sharing information broadly with everyone, which gave her the idea for the map app. “The barrier-free environment is rapidly improving in Japan, making it more important for everyone to gather information and use it together.”

Oda has come to realize that even people with disabilities can help others by sharing information and having others



Top: The WheeLog! workshop gets all participants to experience the city in a wheelchair. Not only does it provide an opportunity to survey the barrier-free situation, but it also helps able-bodied people understand what information wheelchair users need by showing them the latter’s perspective.

Bottom: WheeLog!, which also has many able-bodied users, has become a tool for sharing barrier-free information with everyone, regardless of whether they have disabilities or not. The app is available in 10 different languages and can be used outside of Japan as well.



Top left: Ashirase is scheduled to be released at the end of 2022. The basic functions have been made simple to keep the price low, but there are plans to develop an array of optional functions, too.

Top right & Left: Ashirase uses location information from smartphones to determine users’ routes. The device, with a built-in motion sensor and electronic compass, vibrates to guide the user to the destination.

use it through WheeLog!. She continues to take on the challenge of solving social issues using the power of information toward the realization of Goal 11 of the SDGs, Sustainable Cities and Communities.

One element of an inclusive society is an environment in which people with visual impairments and those in wheelchairs can go out on their own without having to give anything up. Aiming to realize such a society, the barrier-free movement is gaining momentum, driven by passion and innovative ideas. ●

DISCOVERING THE UNKNOWN JAPAN WITH ISABELLA BIRD

The female English traveler Isabella Bird traveled Japan in the second half of the 19th century, penning a travelogue on the country's hitherto unknown culture and natural features. What was the real Japan she observed and why does it enthrall the reader still to this day?

Travel remains difficult as the COVID-19 pandemic continues, but the world of exploration and adventure can still be experienced via the pages of a travelogue. A high-quality travelogue offers the reader information about a land's allure that is not available through daily news sources or regular guidebooks. Isabella Bird was a pioneer of such travelogues about Japan, having first visited from her home country of England in 1878.

At the time of this visit, Japan had already been exposed to the outside world for more than two decades (having ended its more than two-century policy of isolation in 1854), and Western culture was rapidly entering and transforming the country. In the "interior," however, the culture had remained largely unchanged. In response to a request by the British consul-general in Japan, Harry Parkes, who wanted to show the world the real Japan, Bird embarked upon a roughly seven-month journey covering more than 4,500 km, traveling north from her base in Tokyo to Hokkaido, then west through the Kansai region to Ise Shrine. Her two-volume, 800-page travelogue, *Unbeaten Tracks in Japan: An Account of Travels in the Interior Including Visits to the Aborigines of Yezo and the Shrines of Nikkō and Isé*, was published in 1880,



When she first visited Japan in 1878, Bird had already been celebrated for her travelogue of the Hawaiian Islands. By applying all her prior experience and her keen sense of duty, she successfully completed the arduous journey at a time when movement around Japan by foreign visitors was heavily restricted (Photo taken in 1881).

KANASAKA KIYONORI

and is filled with invaluable stories from her traveling experiences.

Bird recorded extensive accounts of the indigenous Ainu settlements at Biratori in Hokkaido, one of the major Ainu centers, detailing everything from daily life to familial relationships and religious beliefs. Meanwhile, at Ise Shrine and at Nishi-Hongwanji Temple in Kyoto, she wrote in detail about the buildings' interiors, which were known to very few people, even among the Japanese. "These special experiences were possible thanks to Parkes enlisting the support of the Japanese government and making thorough preparations," says KANASAKA Kiyonori, professor emeritus at Kyoto University, who in 2020 published the highly acclaimed reprint *Unbeaten Tracks in Japan: Revisiting Isabella Bird*. Due to Bird's visually



At the time, a special permit was required for foreigners to travel in the "interior," the area beyond the 40 km radius of the two open cities and the five open ports (the four shown on the map plus Nagasaki).

illustrative portrayals formed from her keen powers of observation and her unparalleled meticulous accounts—often based on the research available at the time—her work still serves as a valuable resource for understanding what Japan was like in the late

19th century.

Bird vividly described customs and cultural practices that she experienced through encounters on her travels. With the cooperation of locals, she had the rare opportunity to attend a wedding and a funeral and to have children show her traditional games. In her lively depictions of the various people she interacted with, Bird clearly presented Japanese values such as *omotenashi* (the spirit of hospitality) and Japanese politeness. In an account of her stay

“ The long-fire lights up as magnificent a set of venerable heads as painter or sculptor would desire to see.....I hope I shall never forget the music of their low, sweet voices, the soft light of their mild, brown eyes, and the wonderful sweetness of their smile. ”

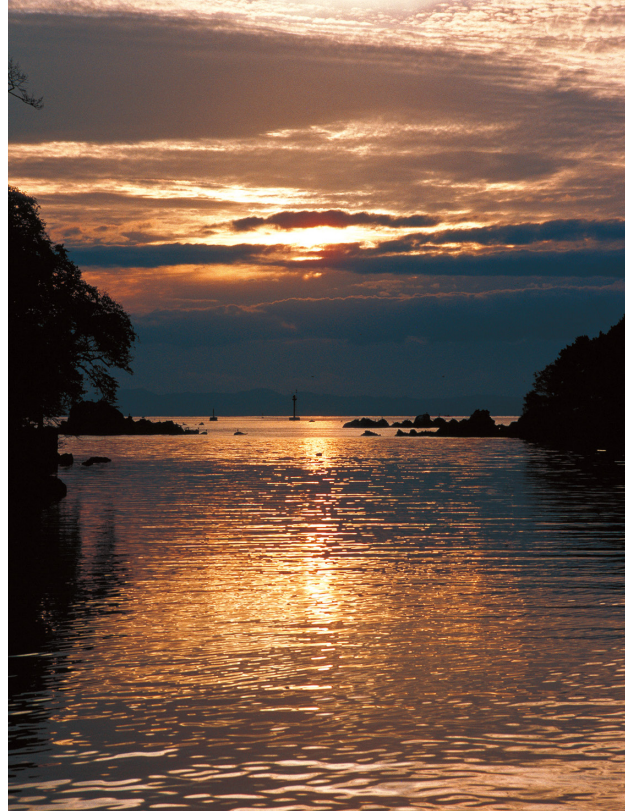


KANASAKA KIYONORI, ISABELLA BIRD AND JAPAN: A REASSESSMENT

“ From this court another flight of steps ascends to the Yomei gate, whose splendour I contemplated day after day with increasing astonishment. The white columns which support it have capitals formed of great red-throated heads of the mythical Kirin. ”



KANASAKA KIYONORI, IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF ISABELLA BIRD: ADVENTURES IN TWIN TIME TRAVEL



KANASAKA KIYONORI, IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF ISABELLA BIRD: ADVENTURES IN TWIN TIME TRAVEL

“ Usu is a dream of beauty and peace..... In the exquisite inlet where I spent the night, trees and trailers drooped into the water and were mirrored in it, their green, heavy shadows lying sharp against the sunset gold and pink of the rest of the bay. ”

in Tenoko, Yamagata Prefecture, she wrote: “When the women of the house saw that I felt the heat they gracefully produced fans and fanned me for a whole hour. On asking the charge, they refused to make any, and would not receive anything... I told them truly that I should remember them as long as I remember Japan, and went on, much touched by their kindness.”

The appeal of Japan that Bird repeatedly described throughout her writings can be felt as strongly now as it could then, whether it be at the stately Nikko Toshogu Shrine or Hokkaido's Usu Bay with its beautiful scenery. Professor Kanasaka says, “From nature to people, society, and culture, Bird richly depicted the distinctive and inherent qualities she perceived in her observations. That is the most captivating thing about her travelogue.” What better way to experience Japan from afar than to delve into Bird's travel writings? ●

LINKING THE CULTURES OF KANAZAWA AND GHENT



Kanazawa in Ishikawa Prefecture has a sister-city relationship with Ghent, Belgium. Rani Verellen, a Coordinator for International Relations, dreams of bringing together the cultures of Japan and Belgium.

Riding along one of the rivers that flows beside the city of Kanazawa, the woman on the bicycle is reminded of a city in her faraway homeland. The downtown area demarcated by rivers on both sides, the rainy weather, the copious art and culture, and so forth... Given that Kanazawa in Ishikawa Prefecture and Ghent in Belgium—both ancient cities with centuries of history—have much in common, the two have formed a sister-city relationship.

Rani Verellen has been working as a Coordinator for International Relations (CIR) for the JET Programme at the Kanazawa City Office since

the summer of 2019. Born and raised in Belgium, a country with three official languages, she first took an interest in the Japanese language—which is completely different from the Germanic

and Romance languages—after watching anime. Verellen then decided to enroll in Japanese classes at university and spent a year studying in Fukuoka, located in western Japan. Propelled by the

Before joining JET, Rani Verellen was already familiar with many elements of Japanese culture. Here, she performs the tea ceremony. “I’ve come to realize that the tea ceremony, Japanese archery, and calligraphy are all based on the spirit of Zen.”



RANI VERELLEN

Born in Antwerp, Belgium. Majored in the Japanese language at university out of an interest in Japan born from anime. After studying for one year in Fukuoka, she applied to the JET Programme, which assigned her to Kanazawa in 2019. She continues to work as a CIR there today.



Top: The Saigawa River in Kanazawa. On her days off, Verellen enjoys walking and cycling along its banks.

Right: The Higashi Chaya District, founded in the Edo period. The street, which consists of lined-up houses with distinctive latticed windows, is a popular sightseeing spot.

KANAZAWA CITY



idea of building a career through her language skills, she was drawn to the JET Programme and the opportunity that it offered to network with JET alumni who now work in many different fields around the world.

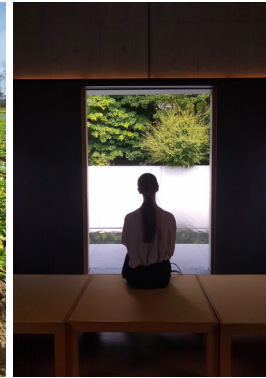
As a CIR, Verellen's primary duties include fostering cultural exchange and the sister-city relationship between Kanazawa and Ghent, along with making Kanazawa "linguistically barrier-free" for tourists visiting the city from elsewhere in Japan and abroad. Walking around famous sightseeing spots and cultural facilities in the city, she uses her international perspective to suggest ways to make touring Kanazawa more enjoyable for foreign visitors, such as installing signs with text in foreign languages and pictograms. Verellen said, "It's sad we couldn't welcome visitors during exciting times like Kanazawa Jazz Street and the Kanazawa Marathon because of COVID-19. I'll be happy once the pandemic is under control and the tourists come back." In the meantime,

she helps the many international students at the city's universities by translating important government documents on city life into other languages and providing convenient access with QR codes, thereby offering them peace of mind during their stay in the city.

In Kanazawa, the sea and the mountains are only a short distance away from the city, while historical cityscapes can be found along the narrow streets that branch off from the main avenues. Close to Kenrokuen Garden, where visitors can take in the beauty of a traditional Japanese garden, is the 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa, one of Japan's leading modern art museums. Verellen said, "One of Kanazawa's charms is that it brings together the city and nature, past and present."

While studying in Fukuoka, Verellen engaged in Japanese archery and the tea ceremony. Then, after being assigned to Kanazawa, she started learning calligraphy and seal engraving. She has also come to take

an interest in the traditional Kanazawa crafts of Kutani ware, Kanazawa lacquerware, and Kaga Yuzen silk dyeing. While eagerly studying various aspects of Japanese culture, Verellen has also come to better appreciate the music, cuisine, and festival culture of her home country of Belgium. "I think a fusion of Japanese and Belgium cultures would be fascinating. I hope my work can help connect our two cultures." ●



Left: Kaga vegetables have been cultivated in Kanazawa since long ago. Verellen said, "I was surprised to learn that every part of Japan has its own local specialties and cuisine, just like the meals you can only make with Kaga vegetables."

Right: The D.T. Suzuki Museum, designed by architect TANIGUCHI Yoshio, whose work includes the redesign of the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York City. Here, the glass and concrete materials express the Zen perspective. It is one of Verellen's favorite spots.

ABOUT THE JAPAN EXCHANGE AND TEACHING (JET) PROGRAMME



The JET Programme began in 1987 with the goal of promoting grassroots international exchange between Japan and other nations, and is now one of the world's largest international exchange programs. In 2019, the JET Programme welcomed 5,761 participants, and there are currently more than 70,000 alumni from 75 countries living in all parts of the world.

The JET Programme official website >> <http://jetprogramme.org/en/>

KIZUNA

Winter 2021

Published by



JAPAN GOV
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

Available in electronic format.
<https://www.japan.go.jp/kizuna/>

eBooks **amazon**kindle

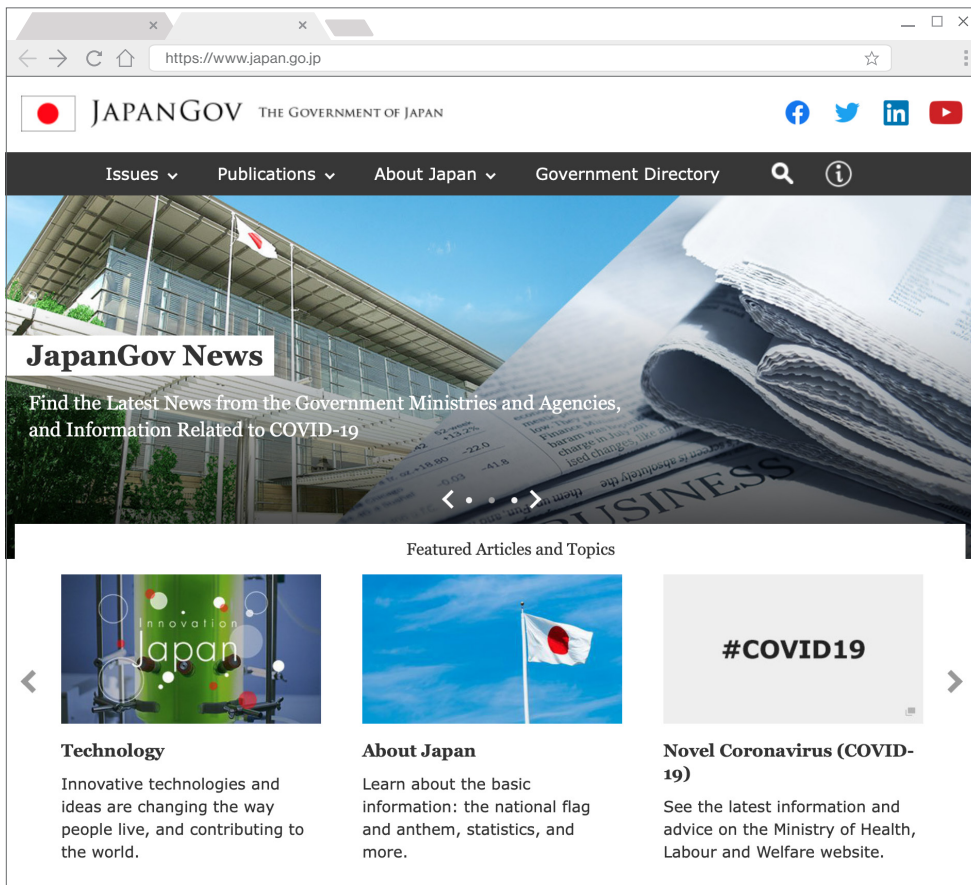
We would be delighted to have your feedback.
Please send us your comments.
https://www.kantei.go.jp/foreign/forms/comment_ssl.html

Links to the websites of ministries

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

JapanGov (<https://www.japan.go.jp>) is your digital gateway to Japan. Visit the website and find out more.

JapanGov, the official portal of the Government of Japan, provides a wealth of information regarding various issues that Japan is tackling, and also directs you to the sites of relevant ministries and agencies. It introduces important policies that the government is addressing, such as economic growth, innovative technology, and diversity, among others, with many videos and infographics.



The screenshot shows the JapanGov website homepage. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the JapanGov logo and the text "THE GOVERNMENT OF JAPAN". Below the navigation bar, there is a large banner image featuring a modern building and a newspaper. The banner text reads "JapanGov News" and "Find the Latest News from the Government Ministries and Agencies, and Information Related to COVID-19". Below the banner, there is a section titled "Featured Articles and Topics" with three cards: "Technology", "About Japan", and "Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)".

JapanGov News
Find the Latest News from the Government Ministries and Agencies, and Information Related to COVID-19

Featured Articles and Topics

- Technology**
Innovative technologies and ideas are changing the way people live, and contributing to the world.
- About Japan**
Learn about the basic information: the national flag and anthem, statistics, and more.
- Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)**
See the latest information and advice on the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare website.

You'll also find the official web magazine "KIZUNA"
(<https://www.japan.go.jp/kizuna/>).

Follow us to get the latest updates!





Japan. Sharing tomorrow.

KIZUNA

<https://www.japan.go.jp/kizuna/>



JAPAN GOV
THE GOVERNMENT OF JAPAN