

# We Are *Tomodachi*

## Summer 2016



The Government of Japan

We Are *Tomodachi*  
Summer 2016



Prime Minister Abe and President Barack Obama of the United States visited the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park and viewed the Atomic Bomb Dome (May 2016).

# *Wagashi:* Traditional Japanese Confections



© Minamoto Kitchoan

## ***Kingyoku-kan***

One of the distinguishing features of *wagashi* is the delicate sense of seasons incorporated in these confections. During the hot, humid summer months, *wagashi* makers summon their skills to create sweets that convey coolness. Among the most favored examples are the jellied confections known by such names as *kingyoku-kan*—elegant treats that invite the eye with their liquid gleam and delight the tongue with their slippery-smooth consistency.

The basic ingredient is agar, or *kanten*, a tasteless substance made from algae. Taking advantage of the substance's transparency, confectioners fashion tiny scenes of goldfish, sweetfish, green maple leaves, stars, and other natural objects associated with summer—carefully crafted from sweet bean paste (*an*) or jellied bean paste (*yokan*)—floating in cool water or a clear sky. Appealing to the eye as well as to the palate, these creations masterfully evoke the charm of summertime in Japan.

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Note: All U.S. dollar equivalents for Japanese yen amounts in this issue of *We Are Tomodachi* are calculated at 105 yen to the dollar, roughly the rate at the time of publication.

# Cool Summer Sights



© Kochi Visitors & Convention Association

## **Sada Chinkabashi: Shimanto, Kochi Prefecture**

The Shimanto River runs through the western part of Kochi Prefecture on the island of Shikoku. The river's waters are so pristine that it is called the "last clear stream in Japan," and the *chinkabashi*, or "sinking bridges," along its length are a famous sight. A *chinkabashi* is designed to become submerged when the water levels rise, for instance, in a typhoon. The lack of railings helps protect the bridge from being damaged by floating timber or masses of earth being carried downstream by floodwaters.

Sada Chinkabashi is in the city of Shimanto, roughly a two and a half hours' drive from Kochi Ryoma Airport, which is a 75-minute flight from Tokyo. Walking across it, with green mountains rising on either side and a cool breeze blowing across the clear water, you feel as if you were taking a stroll on the surface of the river.



***Kikyo* (Balloon Flower) : Kami, Hyogo Prefecture**

*Kikyo* is the Japanese name for an East Asian flower that blooms from summer through fall, known as “balloon flower” in English for the way its buds swell like balloons before blossoming. The *kikyo*’s elegant star-shaped arrangement of petals appears as a motif on summer kimonos and in family crests. The temple Henjoji in the town of kami, Hyogo Prefecture, about two and a half hours’ drive from Osaka International Airport, is renowned for its *kikyo*, with more than a thousand individual plants on the temple grounds. The *kikyo* of Henjoji begin to open gracefully during the rainy season in June, and while in bloom the blue-violet flowers present a beautiful and cooling sight.

# Better Access to the Sky for Viet Nam

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Providing Financing and Know-how for Airport and Bridge Construction

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In 2016 Japan and Viet Nam mark 43 years since the establishment of bilateral diplomatic ties. Japan resumed its Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) to Viet Nam in November 1992, ahead of other countries. Ever since 1995 Japan has consistently been Viet Nam's leading donor; in 2014 the value of its ODA totaled over JPY 100 billion (USD 950 million).

Part of Japan's assistance has been for the development of transportation infrastructure, such as roads, railways, and airports. Viet Nam's economy continues to develop, with its average growth rate for the past 10 years at 6.75%. This rapid economic growth has brought about a pressing need to respond to the demand for greater capacity in the transportation system. In particular, increasing the capacity of Noi Bai International Airport, which is located in Hanoi, the country's capital, and is a major hub for international travelers, has been an urgent issue. Japan provided assistance for construction of the new No. 2 Terminal Building, which was completed in December 2014 after a construction period of three years. The airport can now handle 17 million travelers a year, 80% more than in 2010, before construction of the new terminal.

In addition to expansion of the airport's physical facilities, Japan's assistance—conducted as a joint endeavor by the government and private sector—has included the provision of know-how for the “soft” side of airport operations. For example, advice on airport services led to an improved mind-set among those dealing directly with passengers. Other improvements included adoption of the latest security systems and methods of handling carry-on luggage, along with reorganization of the ticket sales area, where both international and domestic tickets had been mixed in together. Thanks to these measures the airport's counters are no longer congested.

Improvements to airport access proceeded at the same time as expansion of the airport facilities. The Nhat Tan Bridge, which was completed in January 2015 with ODA from Japan, functions as a vital link in airport access. The bridge has now become a landmark in Hanoi. A construction method developed in Japan was used for the bridge foundations. Steel pipe sheet piles were driven in a cylindrical well shape to create the foundations for the pylons that support the bridge. This method suits soft ground such as that in Viet Nam and makes the bridge more resistant to earthquakes.

The traffic situation in Hanoi changed greatly with the completion of additional transportation infrastructure and the airport expansion. Access to the city center now only takes about 30 minutes compared to more than one hour previously. The connecting road with four lanes in each direction means there is no worry of delay due to traffic jams or accidents. And those driving between the city and the airport no longer need to cross over old bridges in need of repair. The opening of the Nhat Tan Bridge has made travel both safer and more comfortable.

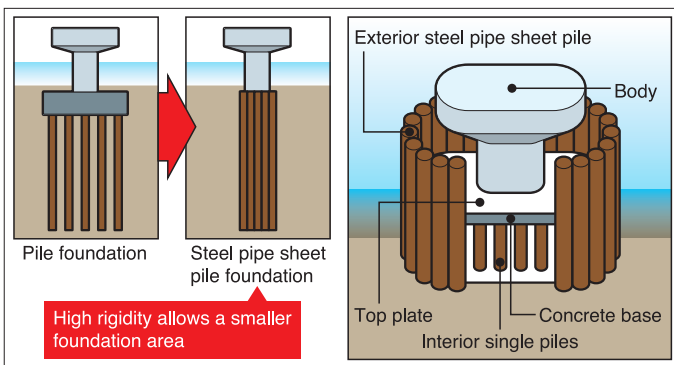
Under its 10-year Socio-Economic Development Strategy, Vietnam's goal is to become an industrial nation by 2020. At the Japan—Viet Nam Summit Meeting held in Japan this May, five areas were mentioned in regard to cooperation expected from Japan. These included infrastructure development, climate change, and improvement of the investment environment. On this occasion, Japan expressed its support for undertakings including the Ho Chi Minh City Urban Railway Project Line 1 and development of the Ben Thanh underground shopping mall.





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1. The No. 2 Terminal Building at Hanoi's Noi Bai International Airport. The airport's expansion is expected to contribute to Viet Nam's development both as a tourist destination and as a logistics hub. 2. Construction of No. 2 Terminal Building. The total construction cost was JPY 76.1 billion (USD 725 million), of which 78% was met with ODA loans. 3. Beautifully designed pylons support the Nhat Tan Bridge, which has a total length of 3,755 meters (4,100 yards). The total construction cost was JPY 75 billion (USD 714 million), of which 72% was met with ODA loans. The structure, also known as the Viet Nam—Japan Friendship Bridge, is a symbol of the warm ties between the two nations.



The steel pipe sheet pile well foundation method was used for the bridge foundations. Steel pipe sheet pile was brought from Japan as construction material. This method takes up less time and money than conventional methods, and the pylons can be erected within a smaller area.

# Improving the Commuter Experience in Jakarta

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## Sharing Japanese Train Operation Expertise

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As Indonesia's economy continues to expand, the numbers of residents and commuters in Jakarta, the nation's capital, and its environs have been rising, which has brought increased demand for transportation. Japan is providing assistance for the construction of Indonesia's first subway line to help meet this demand.

In response to requests from KAI Commuter Jabodetabek (KCJ), which operates six commuter rail lines in the greater Jakarta area, East Japan Railway Company (JR East) and other Japanese railways have been supplying retired rolling stock.

Because of this long-standing relationship, JR East decided to dispatch an employee to KCJ in 2015 to offer technical support and management advice. His mission has been to share Japan's approaches to railway services, including systems for efficient operation of rolling stock and safety improvement. KCJ is aiming to raise daily ridership from the current 850,000 to 1.2 million by 2019, and is energetically seeking to improve its operational know-how. JR East, meanwhile, has been seeking to increase opportunities for its employees to put their skills to work outside of Japan. Therefore, this arrangement effectively created a win-win situation for both companies.

Kengo Maeda, the dispatched employee, started out by exhaustively checking the railway's worksites, where he found room for improvement in the approach of employees toward maintenance. In Japan, preventive maintenance is the rule, but at the Indonesian railway it was common to fix railway cars only after trouble happened. Because of the lack of proper maintenance, parts tended to wear out quickly, causing operational problems.

Maeda acted as a bridge between management and employees on the front lines, and he conveyed the maintenance methods and procedures used in Japan. Through these efforts he supported the drafting of a new maintenance manual. The standardization and rationalization of worksite procedures resulted in a marked reduction in the number of railway car malfunctions.

One of Maeda's current projects is improvement of the timetables. Previously, they did not take into account such factors as acceleration and deceleration, waiting times, and speed limits, which resulted in train delays. As a first step, Maeda reduced the frequency of services while maintaining total capacity by increasing the number of cars per train from 8 or 10 to 12. This eliminated the cause of congestion on the tracks and greatly improved the punctuality of services.

Most of Maeda's initiatives have involved the introduction of procedures that are common in Japan, but he says that they were met with surprise in Indonesia. He declares, "Japan has good railway technology and know-how not just on the hardware side but also in 'soft' areas such as safety awareness, inspection and maintenance, and hospitality. I hope we can make this the standard in Indonesia and all around the world."



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1. Japanese-style training for all employees is being implemented at the seven KCJ depots. 2. Kengo Maeda, an employee of JR East, has been dispatched to Indonesia's KCJ railway company since March 2015, providing railway-related technical support.

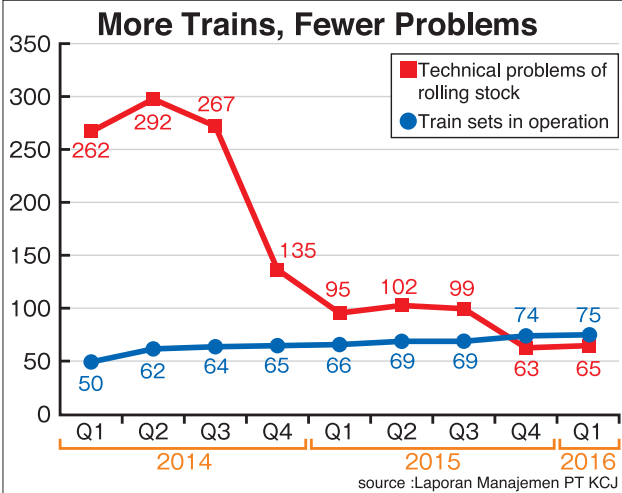
Before	Post-breakdown maintenance
	Parts replaced after a breakdown, carried from a "parts car"
	Few replacement parts bought, low quality evident

After	Preventive maintenance
Clearly defined procedures	Inspection/replacement cycles <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>----- Once in 2 years</li> <li>----- Monthly</li> <li>----- Daily</li> </ul>
	Manual setting out work content, steps, hours, no. of workers, tools required
	Logistics for supply of parts

In progress	Matching Japanese quality
Assuring retention of improvements	Repeated training in preventive maintenance
Improved efficiency	Improvement of maintenance equipment (plant facilities)
Deepening	Better ability to read car drawings
	Operational plans based on inspection records



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3. Conditions before and after Maeda's initiative to improve rolling stock maintenance; efforts now in progress. 4. A 205 series set of railway cars formerly used by JR East runs on a line in Jakarta. KCJ acquired a total of 476 such cars from August 2013 to April 2015. 5. Numbers of technical problems at KCJ.

# Supplying Safe Water to Homes in Laos

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## Support for Local Waterworks Authorities Aimed at Promoting Self-Reliance

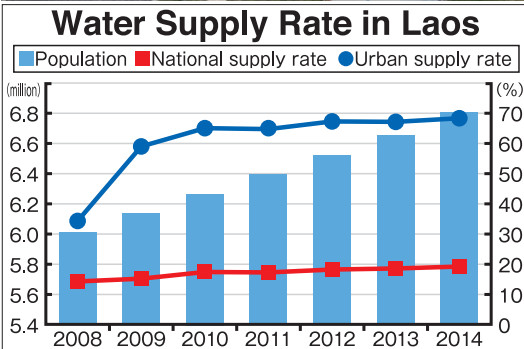
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Laos, a country of 6.7 million people, has been developing dramatically, with an estimated average economic growth rate of 7.67% over the past five years. But currently only about 20% of the population have access to safe piped water; in rural areas people depend on water from wells some of which may not be safe.

Japan, which has one of the world's highest rates of public water supply coverage, along with good reliability, has been supporting the development of waterworks in Laos. One example is the construction of the water treatment plant in Thakhek, completed in March 2016 with grant aid under Japan's Official Development Assistance (ODA) program. In addition to the financial assistance, Japan has for many years been providing assistance in close cooperation with Japanese local authorities that handle the supply of public water in Japan. The most active such effort currently underway is called MaWaSU, launched in 2012. This project aims to provide operational support to all 18 provincial water supply state enterprises (WSSEs) in Laos. In order to accomplish this in five years, the project chose and focused its support on three of the WSSEs to become mentors for the remaining WSSEs. Its full name in English is "Capacity Development Project for Improvement of Management Ability of Water Supply Authorities"; the short name is from the Japanese verb *mawasu*, meaning "cycle" or "circulate." This bilingual pair of names refers to the project's aim of enhancing the operational management capacity of WSSEs and implementing the plan-do-check-act (PDCA) cycle.

Masahiro Shimomura, serving as a long-term expert advisor from the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) in Laos, explains the distinctive approach taken under this project: "Unlike a project where the donor country simply builds waterworks infrastructure, MaWaSU focuses activities aimed at autonomous development by the local authorities five to ten years in the future." Shimomura had local waterworks employees draw up their own operational manual based on advice from the Japanese side. Putting it together themselves made them think concretely about future operations and maintenance management. As he explains, "After the waterworks network is constructed with technical and financial assistance from outside, it's important for them to develop it at their own initiative. And for this purpose it's necessary for sense of self-reliance to take root." Economic considerations are also a crucial part of waterworks management. Shimomura offered advice on the importance of finding leaks and introduced Japan's water supply volume analysis and other relevant technology. He conveyed the mind-set required to take proper advantage of technology and systems using a grass-roots approach tailored to those on the receiving side.

In areas where tap water has become available, women and children have been freed from the task of drawing water from wells, and living conditions have improved. Japanese waterworks experts are continuing to work with pride to increase the coverage of the water supply system in Laos and elsewhere, seeking to help create a world where safe tap water is a matter of course.

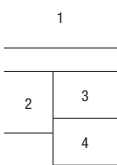
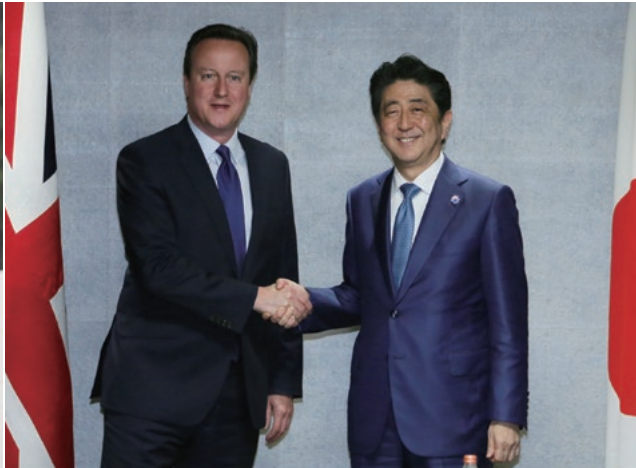


1. Masahiro Shimomura (right), an expert advisor dispatched to Laos by JICA, giving advice to staff at one of the three targeted provincial water supply state enterprises. 2. A waterworks education class at a primary school, conducted as part of the MaWaSU project. By learning about the process by which tap water is treated and supplied, children become aware of the value of safe water. 3. A new water treatment plant completed this year in Thakhek to cope with the increased demand for water and deterioration in water quality. 4. The Mekong River, which is the main source for the public water supply in Laos. 5. The share of the Lao population with access to piped tap water has risen from slightly over 13% as of 2008 to almost 20% as of 2014.

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## Moments of Prime Minister Abe

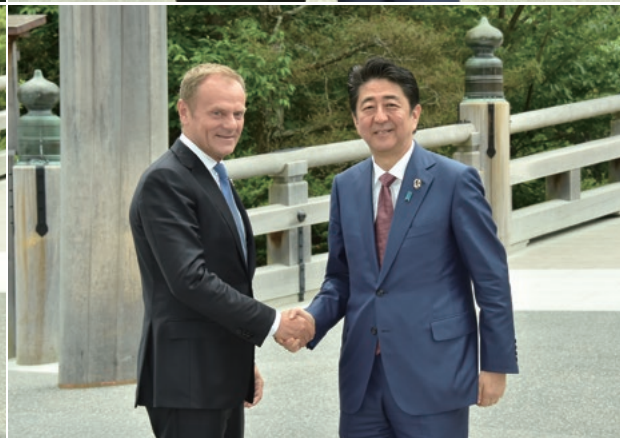


1 Prime Minister Abe hosted the G7 Ise-Shima Summit at Shima, Mie Prefecture (May 2016).  
 1. The leaders' commemorative photograph session. 2. With President Barack Obama of the United States at Ise Jingu, near the summit venue. 3. With Prime Minister David Cameron of the United Kingdom. 4. With President François Hollande of France at a side event: exhibitions about anti-terrorism and the conservation of cultural properties.



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5. Attending Session 2, on the topic of trade. 6. With Prime Minister Justin Trudeau of Canada at a side event: autonomous and fuel cell vehicle demonstrations. 7. Greeting Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany at Ise Jingu. 8. Greeting Prime Minister Matteo Renzi of Italy. 9. Greeting European Council President Donald Tusk of the European Union. 10. Greeting European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker of the European Union. 11. Holding the G7 Presidency press conference.

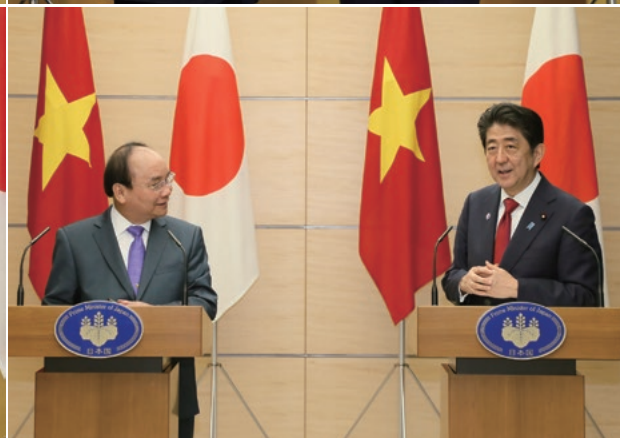




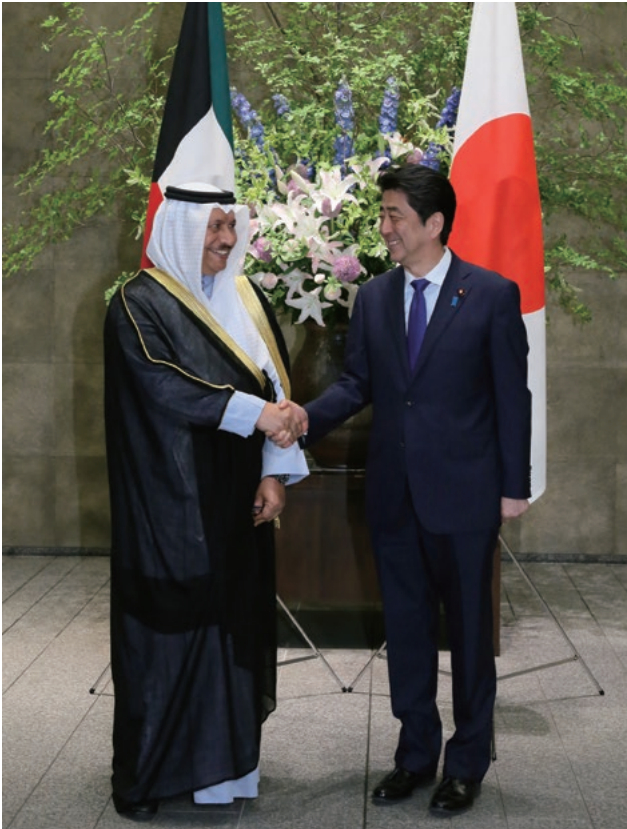
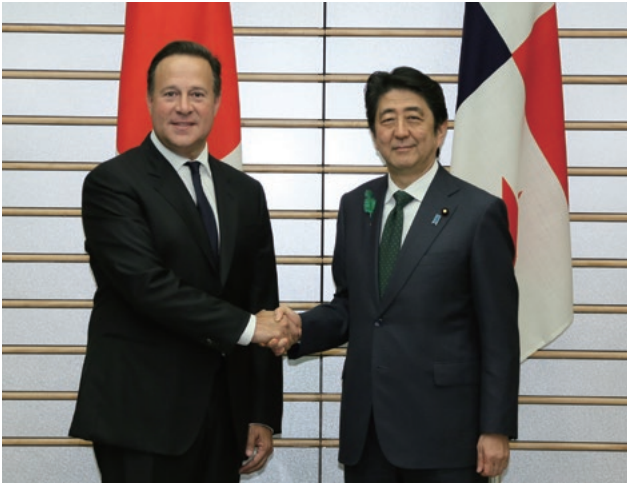
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Prime Minister Abe held discussions with the other G7 leaders and the invited outreach country leaders at Ise, Mie Prefecture and other cities (May 2016).

1. At Session 6, on the topic of stability and prosperity in Asia.
2. Greeting President Joko Widodo of Indonesia.
3. With President Maithripala Sirisena of Sri Lanka.
4. With Prime Minister Peter O'Neill of Papua New Guinea.
5. With Prime Minister Thongloun Sisoulith of Laos.
6. With Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina of Bangladesh.
7. Holding a joint press conference with Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc of Viet Nam.







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Prime Minister Abe held meetings with various foreign leaders.  
 8. Meeting with President Juan Carlos Varela Rodriguez of Panama at the Prime Minister's Office (April 2016). 9. Meeting with President Vladimir Putin of Russia in Sochi, Russia (May 2016). 10. Meeting with Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah of Kuwait (May 2016). 11. Visiting a farm in Kashima, Kumamoto Prefecture, to observe its recovery since the earthquake (June 2016). 12. Viewing photographs from the "Capture the Best Japan" G7 Japan 2016 Ise-Shima Photography Contest (June 2016). 13. Welcoming the Islamic Diplomatic Corps in Japan at the Prime Minister's Office (June 2016).

# Speech of the Prime Minister

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Excerpt from Press Conference After the G7 Ise-Shima Summit, May 27, 2016

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Full text: [http://japan.kantei.go.jp/97\\_abe/statement/201605/1217857\\_11007.html](http://japan.kantei.go.jp/97_abe/statement/201605/1217857_11007.html)

First of all, as Prime Minister of Japan, I wish to extend my heartfelt welcome to all those of you visiting Ise-Shima on this occasion from all around the world.

The peace and prosperity that we enjoy today is the result of our predecessors taking on challenges together in the belief that the future can be changed.

And, we will reliably hand down to our children's and grandchildren's generations the peace and prosperity of the present day. To do this, we who live in the present day must join hands in taking on the challenges that lie before us, never avoiding these issues. Japan and its G7 colleagues have together successfully sent out from Ise-Shima to the world a clear message that we will coordinate in tackling various challenges facing the international community.

Our main theme was the global economy.

Declines in stock markets have resulted in asset losses in excess of 1,500 trillion yen (14 trillion dollars) worldwide in less than a year. The global market is in a state of unrest.

The greatest risk is that "clouds" are now beginning to be seen in emerging economies.

The prices of commodities have experienced declines of more than 50 percent in little more than a year. This is comparable to the range of the drop suffered during the financial crisis after the Lehman Brothers' collapse in 2009.

Investment has also decreased. Last year, the rate of increase in investment dropped to a level even lower than the level during the crisis.

Moreover, delayed responses to structural challenges in emerging economies including China draw concerns that the situation may deteriorate further.

Against this backdrop, the global economic growth rate last year recorded its lowest level since 2009.

For the past few years, advanced economies have been suffering from deflationary pressure caused by a chronic lack of demand. With the deceleration of emerging economies now overlapping this situation, global demand has slumped significantly.

The greatest concern is the contraction of the global economy.

We must objectively and accurately recognize the risks that are there at present.

We the G7 leaders shared such recognition, as well as a strong sense of crisis.

In addition, with weaknesses seen in emerging economies, now is the time for the G7 to fulfill its responsibilities in that regard. The G7 will coordinate and will advance monetary policy, fiscal policy, and structural policy, and will launch our "three arrows." Abenomics will be deployed globally.

We will expand to the world free and fair economic spheres through the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) Agreement



and the Japan-EU EPA. Creating environments in which all people, notably women, are able to be actively engaged, as well as advancing global health, including responses to public health emergencies, will be the foundation for sustainable global growth. In order to support the growth of emerging economies and boost global demand, under our common Principles, it is also necessary to promote quality infrastructure investment. These commitments by the G7 have been compiled as the “G7 Ise-Shima Economic Initiative.”

Japan, as the Presidency of the G7, will also act in accordance with the G7 agreements. I am determined to mobilize all measures of policies and to once more rev up the engine of Abenomics to the greatest possible extent.

Protecting the peace and stability of the world is also a major role for us G7.

Violent extremism is a challenge towards all humankind. We will eradicate places to which terrorists can flee while wiping out the inflow of terrorist financing. The G7’s new Action Plan is a major step towards the international community acting in coordination to fight terrorism. With regard to the issue of massive numbers of refugees flocking to Europe as well, we agreed to strengthen global assistance.

All disputes must be resolved peacefully and diplomatically based on international law, not through the use of force or coercion. The G7 firmly share this principle.

Freedom of the seas must be ensured anywhere around the world. We must pursue juridical procedures and other peaceful means, never tolerating unilateral actions. And, we were in complete agreement in calling for full implementation regarding such matters.

We are also united in our conviction that the conflict in Ukraine can only be solved by peaceful and diplomatic means and in full respect for international law. The G7 urges all sides to take concrete steps that will lead to the peaceful resolution of the situation, in accordance with the Minsk agreements.

We call on Russia to play a constructive role regarding the full range of issues confronting the international community. It is important to maintain dialogue with President Putin in order to attain peace and stability in the situation in Syria and in other regions.

We the G7 condemn in the strongest terms North Korea’s nuclear test in January and its multiple ballistic missile launches. We demand that North Korea immediately and fully comply with all relevant UN Security Council resolutions and strongly urge North Korea to immediately address the international community’s concerns, including the abductions issue.

We seek a world free of nuclear weapons. We reaffirmed the G7’s strong determination towards non-proliferation and disarmament.

After this I plan to visit the atomic bombing site of Hiroshima together with U.S. President Obama.

I am convinced that this will provide significant momentum for the creation of a world free of nuclear weapons. Such a tragic experience should never be repeated anywhere in the world. This is a tremendous responsibility for us in the generation alive at this moment.

We will create a better world for our children, our grandchildren, and the children of generations still to come. At this G7 Ise-Shima Summit, the leaders of the G7 confirmed our determination in that regard and I believe it was a highly substantive Summit that will serve as a major impetus for translating into clear actions.

# Japanese Individuals Contributing Worldwide

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## Improving Lives Through Free Eye Treatment

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Tadashi Hattori is a Japanese ophthalmologist who provides free eye treatment in Viet Nam and other countries. He spends half of each month working in Japan and the other half mainly in Viet Nam, conducting examinations and operations. He has also performed medical work and given technical training in Thailand, Laos, Myanmar, Indonesia, and Cuba. To date, he has treated more than 16,000 patients overseas.

Hattori is a highly skilled practitioner, capable of performing 20–30 cataract operations or 6–8 vitrectomies per day, but he does not accept payment for work outside of Japan. Each month he earns all the money he needs for his overseas work, including travel, accommodation, and treatment expenses, by conducting operations at domestic hospitals during his two weeks in Japan, and then he flies off to overseas destinations. He has followed this schedule for the past 14 years.

Hattori set his sights on becoming a doctor at the age of 15. The cold treatment that his father received from staff when he was admitted to hospital with cancer led Hattori to resolve to become a doctor who considers the feelings of patients and their families. After going through medical school, he became an ophthalmologist, building experience at hospitals around Japan.

In 2002, he went to Hanoi for the first time at the invitation of a Vietnamese doctor. He found that both eye specialists and treatment facilities were extremely limited, and he encountered patients who had prospects for recovery but were unable to receive treatment. He had originally planned just one three-month stay, but after he returned to Japan he used his savings to buy medical equipment and went back to Viet Nam. He was able to help many people with his new equipment. But he realized that large numbers of patients were unable to get to Hanoi, so he traveled to smaller regional cities to perform many more free examinations and operations.

“Whether people can see or not decisively affects their lives. Even just healing one eye may make it possible for someone to attend school or go back to work. It can also give relief to family members who have been looking after an affected person. I can’t turn my back on people who are on the verge of losing their sight just because they lack the money to pay for treatment. My starting point as a doctor is to help people.” So declares Hattori, revealing the basis of his passion.

In 2014, Hattori founded the Japan International Eye Hospital in Hanoi. This hospital provides paid treatment to affluent patients; the income is used as a sustainable source of funds for volunteer activities. Hattori is also devoting himself to training activities. Thanks to his technical training in various locations, there are now 20–30 more Vietnamese specialists who are able to perform retinal detachment surgery and other advanced operations, and they have become available to patients in regional cities in Viet Nam. Hattori says, “By teaching young doctors, I hope to contribute to healing the eyes of as many people as possible. And by conveying the value of volunteer work to others, I hope to create an environment in which even those who lack money can receive medical treatment.”



1. Hattori can perform the particularly difficult operation of treating proliferative retinal detachment several times in one day. In Viet Nam, he is described as the “doctor with golden hands.” 2. He is working to train younger doctors in both Japan and Viet Nam. 3. The Japan International Eye Hospital opened in Hanoi in 2014. Japanese eyeglass manufacturers supported the project with financing. 4. In 2007, Hattori received the Order of Citizen’s Health from the Vietnamese Ministry of Health in recognition of his long years of effort. In 2014 he received the Medal of Friendship from the government of Viet Nam, the country’s highest honor for foreign individuals.

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**Tadashi Hattori**

Born in Osaka in 1964. Graduated from Kyoto Prefectural University of Medicine in 1993, and worked as an ophthalmologist at hospitals around Japan. Since 2002, he has continued to conduct voluntary work in Viet Nam, receiving support from the nonprofit organization Asia Prevention of Blindness Association, founded in 2003. Honorary director of the Japan International Eye Hospital, founded in Hanoi in 2014, adjunct professor at Kyoto Prefectural University of Medicine, and visiting professor at the Graduate School of Medicine, Osaka University.

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## An Acclaimed Master of French Gastronomy

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Fumiko Kono, a Japanese culinary creator, has won international acclaim in the world of French gastronomy. Kono graduated at the top of her class at Le Cordon Bleu, the famous cooking academy in Paris, in 1997. Working at L'Arpège, a three-star restaurant in the French capital, she advanced to the position of second chef. In 2000 she went independent so as to be able to create her own recipes. She quickly achieved global recognition with her successful work at parties attended by international celebrities, including a reception hosted by Bernadette Chirac, France's first lady at the time. With her cooking equipment packed in a suitcase, she flew around Europe and to more distant destinations, such as the Middle East and North America, where she delighted gourmets with her creations.

In 2005, Kono was recruited as executive chef at Fauchon, a renowned producer of gourmet foods. She continued to distinguish herself, collaborating with Pierre Hermé, the "Picasso of pastry," in creating a new menu for the rooftop restaurant at Galeries Lafayette, an upmarket department store in Paris, and teaching at the cooking school of Alain Ducasse, the grand master of French gastronomy. Ducasse sings her praises, declaring, "She has a palate with 'absolute taste' like the ears with absolute pitch that some others have. She creates recipes that magically balance the Japanese and French culinary cultures" (*L'Express*, June 3, 2015). Kono herself suggests that her work may reflect the influence of traditional Japanese cooking, citing such distinctive elements as presentation of dishes that evoke the seasons, delicate flavoring, and careful arrangement of food on the plate.

In March 2015, "Goût de France/Good France," a celebration of French cuisine, was held at restaurants and embassies in 150 countries. Kono was one of eight chefs chosen to prepare dinner for ambassadors to France and other distinguished guests at the Château de Versailles, the main site of the celebration. Looking back on this occasion, she declares, "When people from different countries sit around the same dining table, they converse about shared topics, and through food the links between countries become stronger and their relationships deeper. I felt that gastronomy is truly 'diplomacy.'"

Though she has achieved the status of a first-class chef, Kono is unique in her firm stance of continuing to work as a "traveling chef"; she has no restaurant of her own and has declined offers of posts from top-ranking establishments. She now travels regularly between Tokyo and Paris and has broadened the range of her activities, appearing on cooking programs, producing airline menus, and authoring books. Looking ahead, she says she hopes to open a salon-like café where many people will gather—a place oriented to contributing to society, where the profits will be donated to organizations like UNICEF to help children in impoverished regions. Another idea is to cooperate with relief efforts by developing preserved foods of high nutritional value. Through such activities, she would like to offer up some of the enthusiasm that she has devoted to gastronomy, putting it to work for the sake of those in need.



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1. Kono (front, third from left) was part of the team of eight chefs headed by Alain Ducasse (fourth from left) who prepared food for French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius (second from left) and other international dignitaries at the "Goût de France/Good France" celebration of French cuisine in March 2015.
2. "Soupe de Miró," one of Kono's signature dishes, was inspired by the image of a painting by Joan Miró.
3. Kono prepared the summer 2015 menu for this restaurant at the iconic Hotel Plaza Athénée in Paris and has been asked to do so again in 2016.
4. Teaching at Alain Ducasse's cooking school in Paris.

### Fumiko Kono

A Tokyo native, Kono teaches at a cooking school and is active as a culinary creator. She has attracted attention with dishes that are both subtle and elegant, bringing out the flavors of the ingredients, and has been invited to cook for celebrities in locations across the globe, including Britain and Switzerland, North America and the Middle East.



# Regional Strength

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## Kumamoto Prefecture: Seeking to “Build Back Better” Following the Quakes

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Kumamoto Prefecture, located in the central part of the island of Kyushu, has long been an administrative and economic hub. The prefecture has been energetically promoting industrial investment, and it is now home to numerous research and production facilities for the semiconductor and automobile industries. Thanks to its good access by air and sea to China, South Korea, and other Asian countries, companies from places such as the United States, Taiwan, and New Zealand have set up operations here in Kumamoto.

Kumamoto’s prefectural government has been promoting investment by companies from elsewhere in Japan and abroad with a variety of incentives. Majority-foreign-owned manufacturing companies can receive up to JPY 150 million (USD 1.4 million) in financial assistance for setting up operations in the prefecture; up to JPY 500 million (USD 4.8 million) is available as assistance for setting up inter-prefectural operation facilities such as regional headquarters and call centers. The prefecture also has investment promotion offices in Shanghai and Singapore to support companies considering setting up operations in Kumamoto.

The prefecture is also known as a place where it is easy to find talented human resources in scientific fields. It is the site of Kumamoto University, a national university, and other universities with scientific and engineering departments that altogether produce about 6,000 graduates in these fields every year. There were 735 international students as of 2015, and the prefecture is actively helping them find post-graduation jobs with Japanese companies.

Kumamoto is rich in tourist attractions, including Kumamoto Castle, the symbol of the prefecture’s capital city, the giant caldera of Mount Aso, which is registered as a UNESCO Global Geopark, and Amakusa, consisting of some 120 islands of various sizes. The prefecture is eagerly promoting tourism, and its mascot “Kumamon,” which has many international fans, encourages people to visit Kumamoto. Kumamon’s activities have extended around the world, including publicity campaigns in cities around Asia and participation in events held in France and the United States. According to a survey by the prefectural government, this mascot generated more than JPY 100 billion (USD 950 million) in sales of related goods in 2015.

In April 2016, Kumamoto was struck by a series of devastating earthquakes registering up to magnitude 7.3. The government and private sector responded with massive restoration efforts, and the Kyushu Shinkansen high-speed railway and the Kyushu Expressway were reopened in short order.

Prefectural Governor Ikuo Kabashima declares, “We want to promote the further development of the prefecture not just by restoration of the pre-quake state but also through creative reconstruction aiming to “Build Back Better.” For example, we are accelerating work on the Naka-Kyushu Odan Road and Kyushu Chuo Expressway, which serve as Kyushu’s east-west artery.”

To support the reconstruction drive, in July the government launched a system providing discounts of up to 70% for accommodations and other travel expenses. People in other countries can take advantage of this by purchasing travel packages including overnight stays in Kumamoto through hotel reservation websites and travel agencies.

Governor Kabashima adds, “I express heartfelt gratitude for the outpouring of warm support for Kumamoto from overseas in the wake of the earthquake. We would like to respond by extending our hospitality. I urge people to visit Kumamoto; by doing so, they will be giving encouragement to the people of the prefecture.”

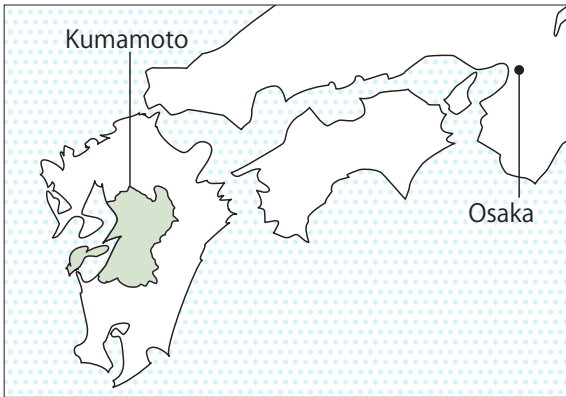


**Governor Ikuo Kabashima**

Born in 1947. Received his Ph.D. in political economy and government from Harvard University in 1979. Taught as a professor at the University of Tsukuba and from 1997 at the Graduate School of Law and Politics, University of Tokyo, where he is now professor emeritus. Governor of Kumamoto Prefecture since 2008.

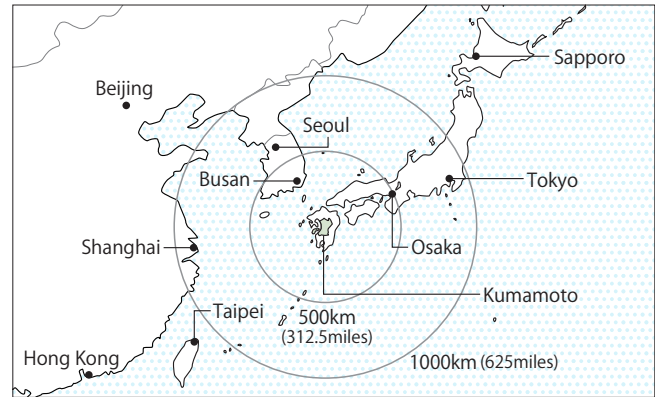


## Basic facts and figures



Kumamoto Prefecture has a population of 1.78 million. With a warm climate, it is one of Japan's top farming prefectures. Recently Kumamoto has attracted a lot of attention as a destination of business and tourism.

## Easy access to major Asian cities



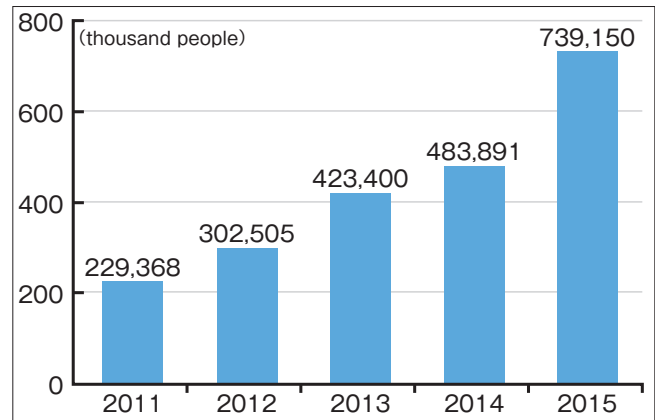
Kumamoto, in central Kyushu, is close to destinations such as South Korea, China, and Taiwan, and is favored as a base for production, logistics, and sales.

## Kumamoto Castle, symbol of the prefecture's capital



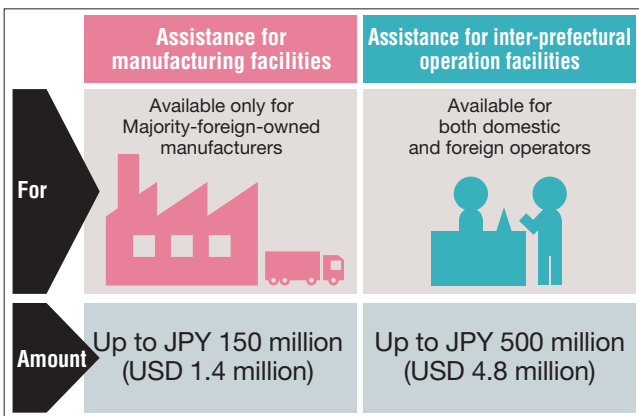
The illumination of Kumamoto Castle was resumed a month and a half after the April earthquakes. The castle, located in the central urban district of Kumamoto City, encourages local residents as a symbol of the reconstruction process.

## Foreign visitors



The number of foreign visitors who stayed overnight at lodgings in Kumamoto Prefecture rose from about 480,000 in 2014 to 740,000 in 2015, the largest increase on record. Source: Kumamoto Prefecture tourism statistics (The figure for 2015 is preliminary, based on a statistical survey by the Japan Tourism Agency.)

## Incentives for companies setting up operations



Kumamoto has established particularly generous incentives for foreign firms setting up operations and has been striving to improve its support services.

## "Kumamon" publicizes the prefecture to people in Japan and overseas



Kumamon, the official mascot of Kumamoto, serves the prefectural government with two titles, sales manager and happiness manager, and is charged with finding surprises and delights close at hand and conveying them to the world.

# Cutting-Edge Technologies

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## Making Paper from Stone

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Limex is a new material made from limestone that can be used in substitutes for paper and plastic products. It takes its name from “limestone” and “x,” a variable with no limit.

Nobuyoshi Yamasaki, an entrepreneur who had already established several businesses in his twenties, learned of the existence of the technology for producing paper out of stone in 2008. At the time it was not widely used, due to the weight and uneven quality of the paper. Yamasaki was drawn by the potential of this material, made with limestone, a globally abundant resource. He soon became involved in developing an improved version of the technology in hopes of contributing to the world. He found a partner, Yuichiro Sumi, a renowned authority in the paper industry, and together they came up with a new production method. In just nine months they succeeded in turning out a product that was light and stable in quality. In 2011 Yamasaki established TBM to develop, manufacture, and sell Limex.

Limex paper outperforms regular paper in its water-repellent quality and resistance to age deterioration. Businesses and government organs assessed it very favorably. Yamasaki recalls, “We received many positive responses based on the perspective of environmental impact, and this reaffirmed my belief in the material’s potential.”

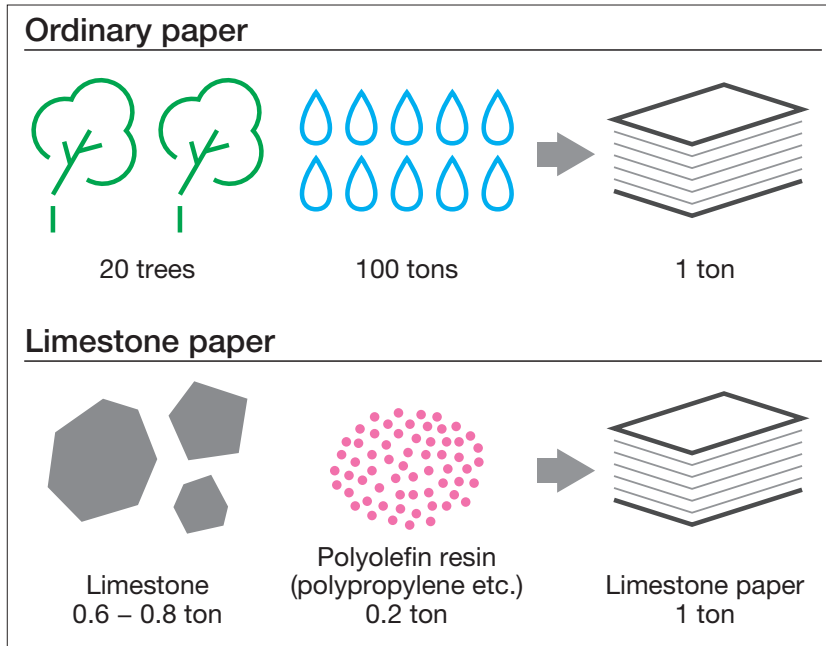
Since Limex paper does not use wood as a raw material, it can contribute to the preservation of forests. Another advantage is that it requires almost no water to produce. Limestone is readily available in places across the globe, and Limex can easily be made even in arid countries and regions. In addition, Limex paper manufacturing plants can be much smaller in scale than regular paper plants.

Yamasaki envisages future exports of Limex plants as model facilities to carry out local production for local consumption, combined with recycling. Touring the globe to find business partners, he has found great interest, with special enthusiasm from regions where water is scarce, such as the Middle East and Singapore.

Yamasaki has also won recognition for his contribution to the reconstruction effort in the area struck by the March 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake. In February 2015, TBM completed a pilot plant in Shiroishi, Miyagi Prefecture, with an annual production capacity of 6,000 tons; it also serves as a research and development facility. And a second plant is being built in Tagajo, also in Miyagi, scheduled for completion in December 2017, with a production capacity on the order of 30,000 tons.

“I was sure that this business would serve the people of the world, and so I enthusiastically tackled the technological and financial challenges,” says Yamasaki. His dream is “to build plants in countries lacking water resources and to make Limex notebooks and textbooks for their children.”

## Preserving forests and water



## Lightweight and waterproof



## A simple manufacturing process



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3	4

1. Global consumption of paper is expected to double from the present level by 2030. While 1 ton of regular paper requires 100 tons of water to produce, Limex paper can be made with virtually no water. If 5% of the world's paper can be replaced by Limex, in 2030, it will save a year's worth of water for 220 million people. 2. Limex paper is waterproof; it can be used outdoors and can be written on under water. And it is lighter in weight than existing types of stone paper. The bottom photo shows a disaster information card making use of these advantages. 3 & 4. Limex is made by mixing finely powdered limestone and polyolefin resin while adding heat. The company received a Japanese patent for its production method in January 2014, and its international patent applications have been approved or await approval in 43 countries.



5 | 6

5. Nobuyoshi Yamasaki, Chief Executive Officer; he founded TBM in 2011. 6. By setting up manufacturing plants in Miyagi Prefecture, which was struck by the earthquake in March 2011, Yamasaki aims to increase employment and reinvigorate Tohoku.

# Friends of Japan



Atop Mount Apo in Hokkaido. (Photo by Peter Neville-Hadley)

## Peter Neville-Hadley

British author. Worked in theater marketing before moving to writing. Has written multiple travel guides and reference works along with cultural features based on his travels, including trips along Japan's ancient trails. Lives in Canada with his wife and two children. Writes for the *Wall Street Journal*, Hong Kong's *South China Morning Post*, and newspapers across Canada and the United States.

## Ancient Footpaths Lead Author to Traditional Japan

Anyone who writes for a living appreciates discovering a story yet to be told. Japan, very safe, still relatively little-visited yet easily accessible, is full of such stories.

Twenty-five years ago I was unexpectedly given an immersion in Japanese culture in a manner unlikely to be repeated. I'd been working in marketing for London's National Theatre, but was now contracted to find vast audiences for the 350 Japanese cultural events across 200 locations that would make up the United Kingdom's Japan Festival 1991.

It was a frantic and stressful year, but it left me with an affection for Japanese culture that I carried with me into journalism, returning repeatedly to write on Japan for various newspapers and magazines around the world.

But in 2001 an invitation from then newly-launched Japanese cultural trekking specialists, Walk Japan, to join a trek along the ancient Nakasendo route from Kyoto to Edo (now Tokyo), introduced me to a new aspect of Japan altogether.

Visitors who merely ricochet between cities by bullet train remain unaware that Japan seems almost to have been purpose-built for trekking. Its volcanic countryside offers gentle climbs past tiny temples and through well-preserved post towns to passes with fine views that always compensate for the effort made. Mineral-rich geothermally heated spring waters, cleverly piped straight to baths at each night's accommodation, provide the perfect balm for any aches at the end of a day on foot.

Initially the point of joining a walking tour group was to soothe the nervousness of some traditional inns dealing with foreigners unfamiliar with the hopscotch of footwear changes required, the etiquette of shared bathing, and a range of foods rarely if ever encountered in Japanese restaurants overseas. Walk Japan's guides offered reassurance that the requisite education had been provided.

A recent walk on one of the Kumano pilgrimage routes to visit the three Grand Shrines of the remote Kii Peninsula, showed how such concerns have eased. Evenings were spent in historic inns seated on the tatami-matted floor while wearing a cotton *yukata* gown and *haori* jacket—as other travellers had for centuries—eating meals fit for a lord let alone a humble pilgrim. Even in remote villages, innkeepers were welcoming and eager to explain their local specialties.

The still largely deserted routes were newly signposted in English, and the occasional Japanese pilgrims encountered were warmly encouraging. Tourists descending from tour buses at major shrines expressed surprise and admiration to see us emerge from the surrounding forest having traveled the traditional way.

Tramps up hillsides and along sunlight-dappled ridges made reaching the vast cedar-built halls of the shrines, trimmed in gold, all the more rewarding. We were accompanied by a local practitioner of *shugendo*, a mountain-worshipping fusion of Shinto and Buddhism, who carried a conch blown to announce our departures and arrivals, just as would have happened in the Kumano routes' sixteenth-century heyday. However rich and entertaining the bustle of the cities, contact with ancient Japan is made on quiet, pheasant-haunted footpaths.

I never turn down an invitation to visit Japan. There are so many stories still to tell.



Kumano pilgrimage route on the Kii Peninsula.  
(Photo by Peter Neville-Hadley)

# The JET Programme: A Great Way to Experience Japan

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Sharing the Charms of Life in Japan

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I began studying Japanese in high school as a third language after English and Thai. I then went on to major in Japanese as an undergraduate and graduate student with the aim of becoming a Japanese language instructor. Desiring to experience living and working in Japan, I applied for the position of Coordinator for International Relations (CIR) in Higashikawa, a picturesque town in central Hokkaido Prefecture.

Living in Higashikawa, I have been enchanted by its abundant charms, including its delicious ground water fed by the snowmelt of Mount Daisetsu and the stunning views of Mount Asahi that greet me as I gaze out the window each morning.

Opportunities for international exchange abound in Higashikawa, which has Japan's first municipally run Japanese language school and counts around 200 foreigners among its 8,000 residents. I am one of a team of five CIRs, along with colleagues from Latvia, South Korea, China, and Uzbekistan. Our responsibilities include supporting exchange programs between Higashikawa and its sister cities overseas, promoting interaction between foreign and local residents, and sharing attractive aspects of our native countries with the local residents.

At the town's Kurashitanoshiku Festival, which promotes local products, our team of CIRs, with the help of international students from the Japanese language school, set up booths introducing the cuisines of our respective countries and offering food for sale to visitors. I decorated my booth with photos of Thailand and put up a panel with explanatory information to give visitors a sense of my homeland. The international students actively cooperated with us at this event, taking advantage of the opportunity to get to know Japanese people.

In addition, I periodically offer Thai language and Thai cooking classes. I adjust the recipes so that the dishes can be made with locally available ingredients. Hearing participants say "Oishikatta"—"That was delicious"—is my motivation.

Higashikawa, which has declared itself the world's first "Town of Photography," began holding the International High School Students' Photo Festival Exchange in 2015. The event involves participants from 10 countries who in teams of three search out and snap photos of scenes capturing the allure of the town. With the assistance of CIRs and international students as interpreters, the event serves as a wonderful opportunity for students and local residents to interact and promotes the town globally through pictures shared over the Internet.

In the future I hope to help organize events that will allow more overseas visitors to experience the charms of Higashikawa and bring together visitors and townspeople of all ages. Upon returning to Thailand I intend to share my personal and cultural experiences from Japan with as many students as I can and guide others looking to learn more about the country.



**Chidchanok Hongtipparat**

Goes by the nickname Nok. Born in Thailand. Earned a master's degree in Japanese from Chulalongkorn University. Arrived in Japan as a JET participant in 2014 and currently serves as a CIR in Higashikawa. Prior to coming to Japan worked as an interpreter for a Japanese company in Chonburi Province, Thailand.



Nok (left) served as an interpreter during the International High School Students' Photo Festival Exchange in Higashikawa. Here she stands with the team from Thailand.



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1. Nok explains an information panel about Thailand used at a recent town festival. 2. The Kurashitanoshiku Festival features a stall offering different ethnic cuisine. Here Nok serves up a Thai dish for visitors. 3. Since coming to Higashikawa, Nok has begun practicing kendo. Here she faces her partner before starting practice.

# Websites

## Official Websites of the Government and Related Organizations

The following websites offer information from various ministries, information for tourists, 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.

- <http://japan.kantei.go.jp>
- <https://www.facebook.com/Japan.PMO>
- [https://twitter.com/JPN\\_PMO](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.

- <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.

- <http://www.mofa.go.jp>
- <https://www.facebook.com/Mofa.Japan.en>
- [https://twitter.com/MofaJapan\\_en](https://twitter.com/MofaJapan_en)

### JNTO (Japan National Tourism Organization)



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#### 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.

- <http://www.jnto.go.jp/>
- <http://www.jnto.go.jp/eng/fb/index.html>
- (US) [https://twitter.com/Visit\\_Japan](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.

- <http://www.jetro.go.jp/en/>

### JET (Japan Exchange and Teaching) Programme



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#### Council of Local Authorities for International Relations (CLAIR)

Information about the Japan Exchange and Teaching Programme.

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



# Publications

## Official Publications from the Government and Related Organizations

The government of Japan and various 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/hj/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](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”

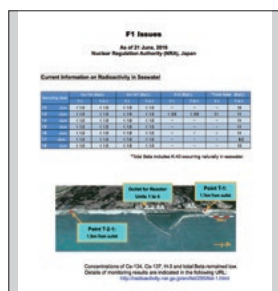
Each issue provides seasonal and updated information on three select features.

<http://japan-magazine.jnto.go.jp/en/>



Monthly

### Nuclear Regulation Authority



#### “F1 Issues Fukushima Daiichi NPS's Issues”

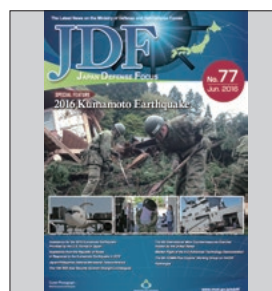
This releases information about the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station, such as details about the monitoring of seawater since the accident caused by the Great East Japan Earthquake and subsequent tsunami.

<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

# *We Are Tomodachi*

Summer 2016

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### Links to the websites of ministries

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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/>

# The Government of Japan




JapanGov website



JapanGov app

 <http://www.japan.go.jp>

 [www.facebook.com/JapanGov](http://www.facebook.com/JapanGov)

 <https://twitter.com/JapanGov>  
<https://twitter.com/Japan>

 [JapanGov](#)

You can download the JapanGov app from the following stores.

 <https://itunes.apple.com/app/japangov-official-gateway/id893574708?mt=8>

 <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=jp.go.japan.japanapp>

 <http://www.amazon.com/The-Government-of-Japan-JapanGov/dp/B00LEAM010>



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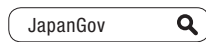
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