We Are *Tomodachi*

Autumn 2018

FEATURE

Seeds of SDGs

Together tackling challenges to improve relations and contribute to a stronger global economy

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We Are *Tomodachi*
Autumn 2018

"We Are *Tomodachi*" is a magazine published with the aim of further deepening people's understanding of the initiatives of the Government of Japan and the charms of Japan. *Tomodachi* means "friend" in Japanese, and the magazine's title expresses that Japan is a friend of the countries of the world—one that will cooperate and grow together with them.

COVER

In November 2017, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe visited Manila in the Republic of the Philippines to take part in the ASEAN-related Summit Meetings. Prior to the commencement of the Summit Meetings, he attended a gala dinner in celebration of the 50th anniversary of ASEAN, wearing the "barong tagalog," the traditional formal shirt of the Philippines, along with the various other participating heads of state.

Thank you for your support!

KIX Airport Resiliently Bounces Back and Welcomes the World

Kansai International Airport (KIX) suffered severe damage during the typhoon in early September. However, through advanced technology and single-minded determination, it was able to carry out restoration work at phenomenal speed. As a result, it managed to resume all services in just two weeks. Arriving and departing flights are now fully back to normal, and the airport is again bustling with many travelers and airport visitors. KIX appreciates the warm support it received from all over the world. In the future, flood control measures will be strengthened.

Colorful fuselages of airliners from around the world grace KIX, which serves as the gateway to western Japan.

KIX quickly took measures against flooding, and rapidly implemented a strong emergency response, with water and food rations for emergencies already on hand, and battery power for communications and other equipment. KIX maintains readiness to fully accommodate foreign travelers, increasing its multilingual staff and multilingual communications equipment.

PORTRAITS OF JAPAN
岡山／広島

Late Autumn, When Nostalgia Whispers in the Wind

During its long history, Japanese culture has evolved in ways not seen elsewhere. The heritage sites where this distinctiveness can be encountered exert an endless fascination over people from all around the world.

Kurashiki | OKAYAMA 岡山

Traditional beauty lingers over a placid sea

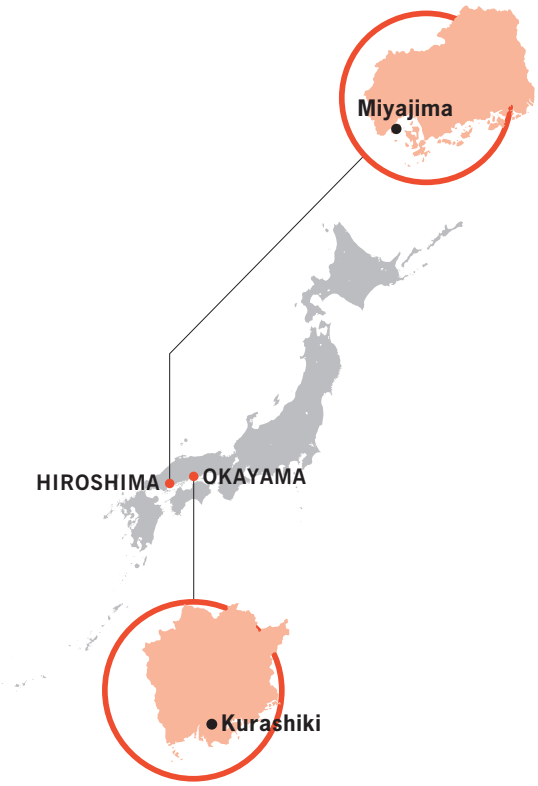
Hiroshima Prefecture, which faces the Seto Inland Sea, has approximately 140 islands and islets. Miyajima (formally, Itsukushima), is a sacred island that is home to the Itsukushima Shinto Shrine, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, having a history of over 1,400 years. The large vermillion *torii* (sacred gate) that stands on the tidal flats is a symbol of Hiroshima, along with the Hiroshima Peace Memorial (Genbaku Dome, also a UNESCO World Heritage Site). The *torii* is about 16 meters high, the main pillars of which have a circumference of about 10 meters, and there are about seven tons of rock inside, allowing it to stand on its own weight. Long counted as one of the three most scenic spots of Japan, its sublime aura becomes even more enchanting as evening draws near during the late autumn.

http://visit-miyajima-japan.com/en/

Neighborhoods with stories to tell

Okayama Prefecture is a thriving fruit-growing region, renown for its grapes and peaches. Benefiting from the topography and warm climate of the Seto Inland Sea, a distinctive cultural zone has developed over the centuries in Okayama Prefecture, where traditional neighborhoods have been preserved in many communities. The Bikan Historical Quarter in Kurashiki City is particularly famous, with over three million visitors yearly. Old Kurashiki, developed over several centuries under the direct governance of the Edo shogunate, can be seen in the sumptuous residences and warehouses on the old road that runs along the Kurashiki River, with their *namako*-patterned tile-and-plaster walls. Kurashiki also has modern Western-style buildings, such as the Ohara Museum of Art, the first art museum in Japan with a collection of Western art. Sightseeing boats, which are even available for weddings, offer another way of experiencing the eclectic local history with its intricate blend of Japanese and Western culture.

https://www.kurashiki-tabi.jp/for/en/



Shinzo Abe: Join Japan and Act Now to Save Our Planet

Contributed to *Financial Times* on September 24, 2018

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe giving a speech at COP21 Summit Meeting in Paris, the French Republic, November 30, 2015

Opinion: Unprecedented rain, heat, landslides and hurricanes show that time is running out

Unprecedented torrential rain and landslides ravaged the residents of western Japan this summer, killing more than 200 people, and ruining hundreds of thousands of livelihoods. Meanwhile, severe scorching heatwaves struck the country and resulted in approximately 160 deaths. Fierce heat also gripped North America and Europe, and hurricanes and typhoons hit the US and Philippines.

Global warming increases carbon dioxide and acidifies the ocean, damaging its ability to self-purify. Even worse, proliferating marine plastic pollution threatens marine ecosystems and eventually, our own health.

The international community has taken steps to address climate change with forward-looking and long-term goals. An agreement was adopted in Paris in 2015 with the participation of all major economies including China and India. The following year, I went a step further at the Ise-Shima summit in Japan, as G7 members committed to devising long-term strategies.

Climate change can be life-threatening to all generations, be it the elderly or the young and in developed and developing countries alike. The problem is exacerbating more quickly than we expected. We must take more robust actions. And swiftly.

The way forward is clear. We must save both the green of the earth and the blue of its oceans.

Our goals must be firmly based on the latest scientific knowledge.

As we learn more, through the work and expertise of the scientists at the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the entire world should take appropriate measures accordingly.

All countries must engage with the same level of urgency. Some are still increasing greenhouse gas emissions and emit more than 2bn tonnes annually according to the International Energy Agency. All countries must put promises into practice. Developed countries should provide support to developing countries for fulfilling their obligations.

As part of their long-term strategies, governments should promote innovation to drive new growth and spread the net widely for new ideas.

No alternatives should be excluded. Japan has goals such as creating ultra-high-capacity storage batteries, further decentralising and digitising automated energy control systems, and evolving into a hydrogen-based energy society. Countries should also rank the competitiveness of a company based on its development and dissemination of future-oriented technologies. This would encourage companies to invest for the long term.

Momentum is already growing in the private sector. The number of companies engaging in environment, social and governance-focused investment or issuing green bonds is rising dramatically. Japan's Government Pension Investment Fund is one of them. Investors now require businesses to analyse environmental challenges and disclose potential risks as well as opportunities.

We must also focus on reducing emissions from infrastructure. In Japan, our *Shinkansen* high-speed rail network prevents congestion and boosts the overall fuel efficiency of transportation nationwide. We also have set our carmakers a goal to cut the greenhouse gas emissions per vehicle they produce by 80 per cent by 2050 so as to realise "Well-to-Wheel Zero Emission".

We must simultaneously boost economic growth and reduce the use of fossil fuels. That means cutting the costs and improving the reliability of renewable energy.

In Japan, the volume of electricity generated from renewable sources has increased 2.5-fold in the past four years. Japan will host the world's first ministerial meeting focused on hydrogen energy. We cannot overlook safe nuclear power generation and controls on emissions of methane and hydrofluorocarbons.

Manufacturers with large-scale greenhouse gas emissions should be encouraged to update their production methods. Countries should stop excessive steel production, which causes massive greenhouse gas emissions and creates imbalances in markets.

Finally we should tap data processing and communications advances to speed up the innovation cycle. Investing in energy transition and the sharing economy will ensure economic growth and dramatically reduce greenhouse gases.

Addressing climate change, marine pollution, and disaster risk reduction are critical pillars for achieving the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. Japan will preside over the G20 next year and focus on accelerating the virtuous cycle of environmental protection and economic growth.

When the seventh Tokyo International Conference on African Development is held in Japan, we will extend support to African countries. We invite the rest of the world to join us in tackling this tough challenge. ✻

The writer is prime minister of Japan

An LRT operating in the city. The trackwork such as the stations and overhead cable poles all follow a unified and elegant design, becoming a symbol of the city.

Toyama City Demonstrating a Solution for SDGs

Cities across the globe, working toward
the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for 2030,
are looking to Toyama City's aging-society-friendly town planning

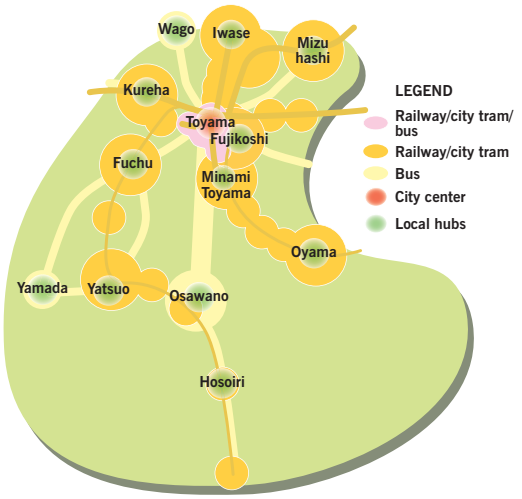
Japan.
Committed to SDGs

Masashi Mori was born in Toyama City in 1952, and elected member of the Toyama Prefectural Assembly in 1995. In 2002, he was elected mayor of Toyama City.

Covering an area of about 1,242 square kilometers from the coastline of the Sea of Japan to the mountains, Toyama City is the capital city of its namesake prefecture. Supporting a population of 420,000, it is a medium-sized provincial city, and like many cities in Japan, Toyama is feeling the effect of the country's rapidly aging society. Its long experience in tackling this problem has led to it to become a model for cities the world over.

The decreasing population that is accompanying this trend has caused the decline of the city center. This is exacerbated by excessive dependence on motor vehicles, which also leads to the deterioration of the environment. The city's proactive stance in tackling these problems led to its selection as one of Japan's SDGs Future Cities.

At the base of these efforts is the "Compact City Concept"



The community center of the model block is equipped with monitors that display the amount of power used and generated in the entire town block to raise awareness among residents.

formulated in 2002. Under this concept, Toyama revamped its Light Rail Transit (LRT) system and developed projects to concentrate the city's services and population along the rail lines. The city aims to ease the burden of administrative costs and make the city an easier place to live in for citizens without cars. This policy has already led to the number of new arrivals to the city to overtake the number of people leaving, as well as a reduction in CO_2 emissions. In June 2012, Toyama City was among the five world-leading cities cited in *Compact City Policies*, a report by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

In 2017, the city began a new initiative called Safe & Environmentally Smart Model Town Blocks. Under this initiative, the city is establishing housing estates, community centers and childcare centers on unused land along the LRT route. The city has adopted an environmentally-friendly design for the public facilities, and each housing estate unit is fitted with three kinds of battery: solar cell, lithium-ion cell and residential fuel cell. In the future, the city aims for the entire residential block to be a "net-zero energy town."

The city is actively spreading the word about its technology and know-how across the world. In March 2014, the city reached an agreement with the Tabanan Regency of Bali, Indonesia, regarding a project to reinvigorate its agriculture using renewable energy, helping solve its agricultural decline and electricity shortage. In September 2018, Toyama received a special letter of gratitude from the Indonesian government for this support. Toyama City has also provided on-site support in Malaysia, and the mayor has been asked by both Chile and Romania to give talks on solutions for aging societies. Mayor Masashi Mori says, "Today's citizens must make sacrifices for the future citizens of three or more decades from now. I believe part of my work is to effectively persuade the citizens of today to come on board."

"The aging society and population decline that Japan faces right now will most likely be an issue that many other cities across the world will also face. We therefore believe that we must spread our methods and experience far and wide. This is our responsibility as an SDGs Future City," Mayor Mori explains. The initiatives of Toyama City are expected to become world-leading solutions. ✻

Many personnel were dispatched to Indonesia, where they provided technological support, serving the joint roles of local government and business.

Japan. Committed to SDGs

Opening the Way to a Hydrogen Society

The world's first demonstration projects for hydrogen supply chains aims at the wider use of carbon-free, next-generation energy

Given the urgent desirability of climate action—one of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)—hydrogen is increasingly seen as part of a green energy that does not emit CO_2 when used for energy. Beyond being green, hydrogen can be produced from many different resources, and strengthens energy security by making it possible to diversify procurement risk.

Japan has long taken hydrogen seriously as an energy source and already leads the world in fuel cell vehicle technology. Now it is working to promote the global utilization of hydrogen, such as by hosting the Hydrogen Energy Ministerial meeting in October 2018, in which 21 countries, regions and organizations participated.

To realize a hydrogen energy infrastructure, costs must be lowered. With the goal of building a global supply chain that can produce and convey large quantities of hydrogen, procured from inexpensive resources anywhere in the world, two demonstration projects, subsidized by New Energy and Industrial Technology Development Organization (NEDO), are scheduled to launch in 2020.

One project involves transporting hydrogen from Brunei Darussalam to Japan. Hydrogen produced from surplus natural gas will be liquefied by chemical reaction, transported by ship at ambient temperature and pressure to Japan, and extracted at a plant in Kawasaki City using technology developed by Chiyoda Corporation, so it can be used in thermal power generation.

CG image of the hydrogen production and hydrogenation plants in Brunei Darussalam at which hydrogen will be created by the project led by AHEAD*. Construction has been underway since April 2018, and operations are scheduled to begin in 2020.

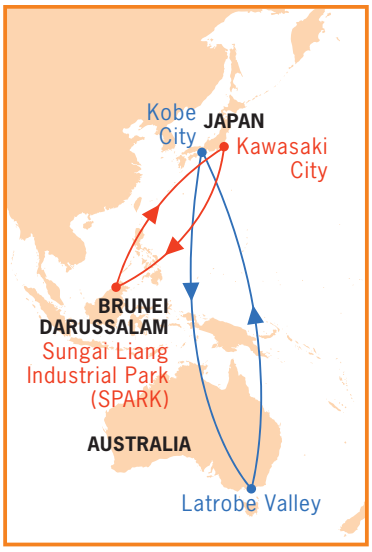
Hideki Endo, the president of AHEAD, says that by 2040, renewable energy will be the main source of CO_2-free hydrogen.

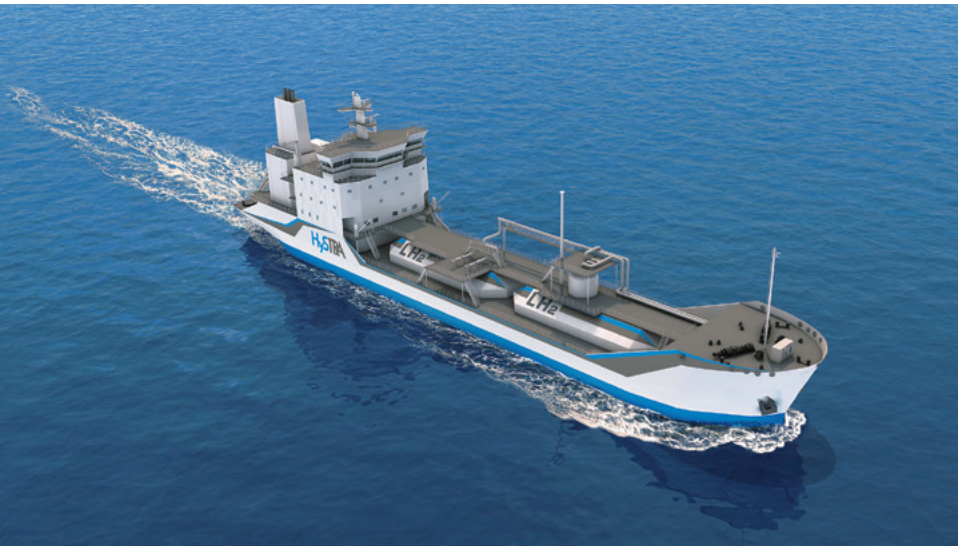
According to Hideki Endo, president of the Advanced Hydrogen Energy Chain Association for Technology Development (AHEAD*), which is organizing the demonstration project, "Liquefying hydrogen by chemical reaction reduces its volume by a factor of 500, which allows large quantities to be transported efficiently. Because this can be done at ambient temperature and pressure, the existing infrastructure can be used."

The other project is being organized by the CO_2-free Hydrogen Energy Supply-Chain Technology Research Association (HySTRA**), which aims to utilize brown coal from Australia. Brown coal—the sleeping giant of global energy resources—contains so much moisture and spontaneous

*AHEAD; Chiyoda Corporation, Mitsubishi Corporation, Mitsui & Co., Ltd., Nippon Yusen Kabushiki Kaisha

The first Hydrogen Energy Ministerial Meeting, held in Tokyo, will bring together ministers of major countries committed to hydrogen-related efforts worldwide.





CG image of the world's first liquified hydrogen carrier that will be used by the project led by HySTRA**. In the future, even these hydrogen carrying ships will run on hydrogen.

Motohiko Nishimura, chief administrative officer of HySTRA, says that successful commercialization is linked to understanding what the world will require in 2030.

ignition properties that it cannot be transported efficiently, and thus has no place in international trade, but HySTRA is working on a project to produce hydrogen from brown coal, liquefy hydrogen like LNG, and then transport it to Japan. If the project is successful, a stable supply can be expected.

"Not only do we hope to produce hydrogen from brown coal," says Motohiko Nishimura, HySTRA's chief administrative officer, "but also to create a supply chain that includes the efficient transportation of cryogenic liquefied hydrogen, and most-advanced cryogenic storage tanks in Kobe City."

Both projects offer major benefits to the supplying countries, including the possibility of utilizing hitherto unused resources, and creating employment.

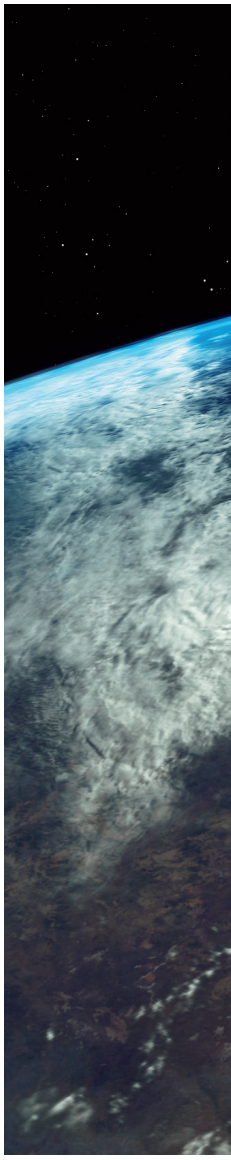
Before hydrogen can become a common energy source, many problems must be solved, such as assuring that it can be handled safely, creating demand, and implementing the capture and storage of the CO_2 generated during production. But given the great expectations of hydrogen as a carbon-free source of energy, the projects to demonstrate the feasibility of constructing a global supply chain deserve close attention. ✻

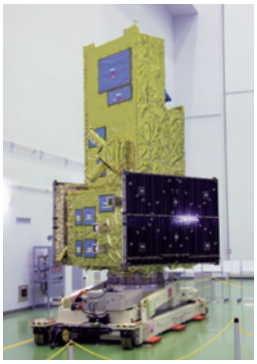
A system for supplying hydrogen will not have an impact unless demand is also stimulated. In April 2018, in Port Island of Kobe City, Kawasaki Heavy Industries, Ltd. and Obayashi Corporation successfully conducted the world's first demonstration of supplying heat and electricity in the urban area using a gas turbine fueled by 100% hydrogen.

**HySTRA; Kawasaki Heavy Industries, Ltd., Electric Power Development Co., Ltd., Iwatani Corporation, Shell Japan Ltd., Marubeni Corporation

Contributions to the Paris Agreement from Outer Space

GOSAT (Ibuki) is the world's first satellite for observing greenhouse gases. To help achieve SDGs, windows on global warming have been opened in outer space.





The next-generation GOSAT-2 will also estimate the concentrations of PM 2.5 (fine particulate matter) and black carbon in the atmosphere, thus helping to monitoring air pollution.

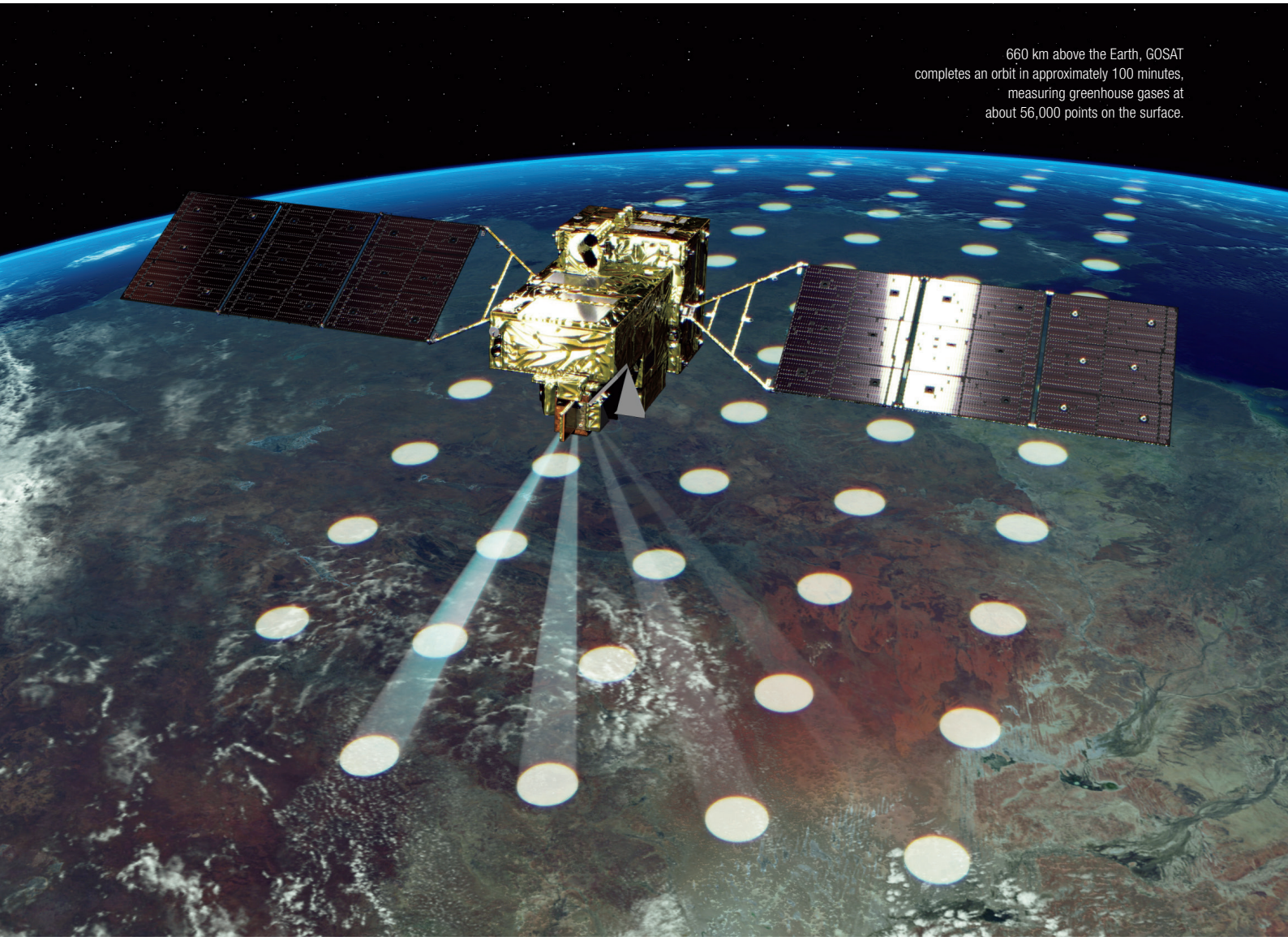
Akiko Suzuki is director of public relations at the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA). She has been active for many years in promoting the full utilization of data obtained by the agency's satellites, such as GOSAT and the Advanced Land Observing Satellite (ALOS), and also in the capacity of coordinator for international cooperative projects.

Japan. Committed to SDGs

On October 29, 2018, the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) launched the second Greenhouse Gases Observing Satellite (GOSAT-2) from its Tanegashima Space Center. The original GOSAT, launched in January 2009, was the world's first satellite for making observations from outer space of greenhouse gases such as CO_2 and CH_4, which are major causes of global warming. The development project started in 1997, pursuant to the Kyoto Protocol that specified greenhouse gas reduction targets for each nation. The nickname "Ibuki," meaning "breath" in Japanese, reflects the satellite's mission to monitor the Earth's breath (i.e, the various gases circulating in the atmosphere).

Previously, greenhouse gases had only been measured by surface stations and aircraft, and the limited number of measurement points made global-wide observation of greenhouse gases densities difficult. In contrast, GOSAT collects data across most of the globe accurately and uniformly, because measurements are taken by a single sensor from outer space. These measurements are then supplied for free to many countries as basic data for studying the actual state of our planet. These data could also help to monitor the actual greenhouse gas emissions of each country, based on the Paris Agreement, which is the international framework for addressing global warming issues.

At first, many scientists and other experts were skeptical about the idea of taking measurements from outer space. But following GOSAT's



660 km above the Earth, GOSAT completes an orbit in approximately 100 minutes, measuring greenhouse gases at about 56,000 points on the surface.

launch, they increasingly accepted the importance of monitoring the atmosphere from space as each new batch of data was analyzed. One after another, the U.S., Europe, China, and others launched their own observation satellites. All of these data are presently being made available to all scientists researching climate change and related topics.

The next-generation observation satellite, GOSAT-2, measures CO_2 with greater precision. Additions to the measurement wavelength region now make it possible to measure concentrations of CO. Akiko Suzuki, director of public relations at JAXA, explains, "To gain an accurate understanding of how the Earth is changing, it's vital to collect this kind of observational data under identical conditions, to accumulate long-term, consistently reliable data. In this sense, the original GOSAT, which has taken continuous measurements for almost 10 years, has been a great success. With the cooperation of other countries, our goal is to continue to accumulate consistent measurements."

For the time being, both GOSAT and GOSAT-2 will continue to make observations assuming a two-satellite system. The data they obtain will be useful as scientific evidence for preserving the sustainability of our planet. Suzuki adds, "Our technology at JAXA keeps and use evolving through the development of observation satellites that get better at doing this. Going forword, we hope that we can contribute to a better world for all." ✻

Japan. Committed to SDGs

Optimal Medical Treatment for Everyone

In Japan, research into the new field of precision medicine is advancing, and a goal has been set "to achieve good health and longevity," which is one of Japan's priority areas for the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

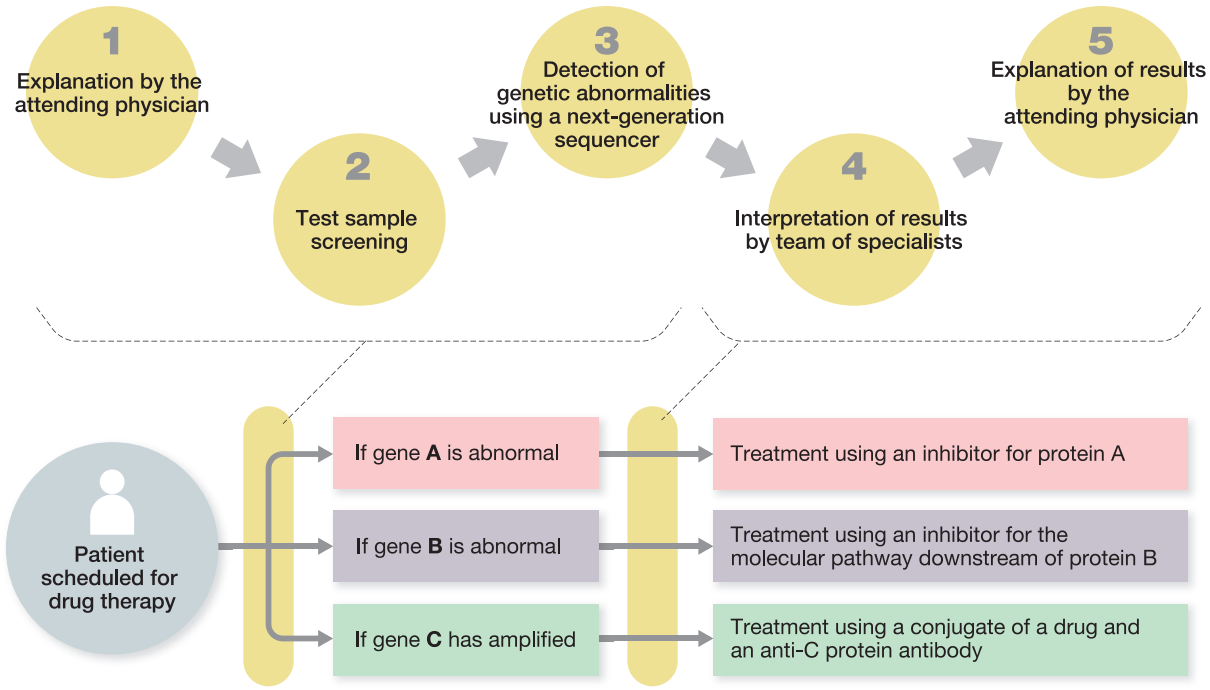
In terms of being a super-aging society, Japan is ahead of the rest of the world. Facing problems that other nations will confront in the near future, Japan is promoting research into the latest medical technologies, with a goal "to achieve good health and longevity." One such technology is precision medicine. "Genomic data from the tissue of individual patients are analyzed, and an appropriate treatment is selected based on any genetic abnormalities that are present," explains Dr. Kuniko Sunami of the National Cancer Center, Japan, which is the leading Japanese institution in this field.

At Japan's National Cancer Center, several projects are underway to apply precision medicine to cancer, which continues to affect a growing number of people around the world. One of these, TOP-GEAR (Trial of Onco-Panel for Gene-profiling to Estimate both Adverse events and Response), which started in 2013, involves clinical research that uses a next-generation sequencer—a device that reads large amounts of genetic data at one time—with the goal of detecting cancer-related genes and structuring treatments on that basis. So far, about 100 cancer-related genes have been analyzed, and this data has been usefully linked to treatments pertaining to genetic abnormalities in approximately 15% of the patients. This means that the days of "cancer drug therapy" referred to cytotoxic chemotherapy are over, because now therapies such as molecularly-targeted therapy, which is highly

Next-generation sequencer capable of sequencing DNA much faster than earlier models (©Illumina). The National Cancer Center is using this device to create role models for treatment systems.

The National Cancer Center Hospital—the main hub in Japan for conquering cancer.

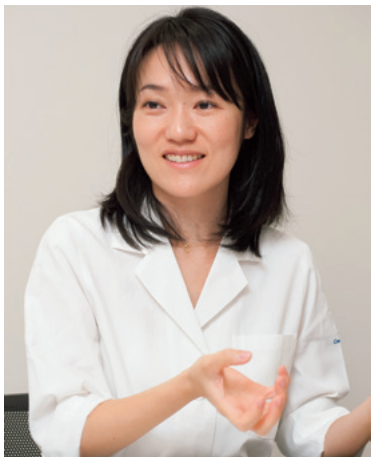
How TOP-GEAR Project Genetic Screening Works



tailored to individuals based on genetic data, have become possible.

Similar therapies are being promoted in other countries, but Japan has the major advantage of having universal health insurance, in which all citizens are enrolled in some kind of medical insurance. In the world today, medical decisions are based on limited sets of data obtained from clinical trials. Under Japan's health system, it will be possible in the future to establish unprecedented access to health-related real-world data by gathering information from vast numbers of citizens. Sunami points out, "By accumulating data obtained by gene panel screening, we can look forward to new drug designs and treatment methods being developed, and by better analyzing cancer itself, we will be able to prevent and discover it earlier."

Although gene panel screening for precision medicine is not presently covered by health insurance, there are plans for partial coverage, possibly as early as next year. The stage is being set for full-fledged precision medicine in Japan. This project holds many promises, some obvious, such as allowing the best treatment to be selected for each individual, and others more latent, because by shedding new light on disease itself and suggesting new lines of treatment, it has the potential of contributing to the good health and longevity not only of Japanese citizens, but of people all around the world. ✻



Dr. Kuniko Sunami is a specialist in genetic diagnosis and therapy in the Department of Pathology and Clinical Laboratories, National Cancer Center Hospital, Japan. She participates in the TOP-GEAR project as a clinician, and is active in outreach and creating awareness for building up a national system for treating cancer based on genomic medicine, which is currently being developed.

The Life-Saving Blue Mosquito Net

Data from WHO show that malaria infected 216 million people in 91 nations and regions in 2016, with 445,000 deaths.[1] Aiming to eradicate the "devil's disease," Sumitomo Chemical Co., Ltd. of Japan offers an "insect-proof mosquito net."

Japan. Committed to SDGs

Center: Teaching Ethiopian children how to use Olyset™ Nets. Hirooka says, "It's essential to instruct children properly: 'When you tuck yourself into bed, make sure you're completely surrounded by the net.'"
Left: An insecticide-treated mosquito net can save the lives of young children, and bring peace of mind to their mothers.

Atsuko Hirooka is the executive officer of Sumitomo Chemical Co., Ltd. in charge of environmental health. She is responsible for the long-lasting insecticidal net business as well as other vector control products' R&D, manufacturing, marketing and sales.

The vivid blue mosquito net is called "Olyset™ Net." Created in 1994 by Sumitomo Chemical Co., Ltd., it is the world's first mosquito net in which an insecticide is incorporated into threads made of polyethylene resin. Atsuko Hirooka, the executive officer who heads the vector control business in the company's Environmental Health Division, says, "Malaria can be prevented by a modern lifestyle. Anopheles, mosquitoes the malaria disease vector, are active at night, so encounters can be avoided by sleeping in a tightly-built house that is difficult for them to enter. Also, if an insecticide is used, many mosquitoes that manage to come inside can be eliminated."

However, that lifestyle is beyond the reach of many people. One solution is an insecticide-treated mosquito net, which gives maximum benefit for a minimal investment. The Olyset™ Net is the first to incorporate an active agent, which persists for at least three years, and that has now become the mainstream approach. As design considerations, the net must be comfortable for humans to use every day, having good air permeability. For that reason, Olyset™ Net has a wide mesh but does not allow mosquitoes to pass through due to the effect of the insecticide, which also provides knockdown and repellency effects. In addition, Olyset™ Net is especially designed to make the insecticidal effect persist through repeated wash cycles. Such a net will keep people safe, and even children under five years of age, who have a particularly high risk of dying from malaria in homes with open

Photographs©M. Hallahan/Sumitomo Chemical

"Rather than giving a person a fish, teach him how to fish."
The decision to supply the royalty-free technology to a local business in the United Republic of Tanzania was made promptly. This has become an important step in addressing Africa's economic burden from malaria, estimated to be 12 billion dollars annually. [3]

doors or windows, are safe as long as they remain inside the net.

However, a new problem has recently emerged: mosquitoes can develop resistance to insecticides. It is reported that mosquitoes have developed resistance against pyrethroids, the active ingredients used in the Olyset™ Net and other insecticide bednets. In order to offer a second-generation mosquito net, Sumitomo Chemical has developed Olyset™ Plus, in which a synergist is added that enhances the effect of pyrethroids such as permethrin. Hirooka explains, "We are not a mosquito net company, but a chemical company that is always ahead of the game. Our goal is to apply chemical technology against mosquitoes at multiple points in their life cycle, from before their immature stage until after their emergence, and maximize the synergistic effect of our products to ensure safer environments for humans. Thanks to the availability of insecticide-treated nets, medicines, diagnostic reagents and kits, the death rate due to malaria has dropped from one child every 30 seconds in 2006 to one every 90 seconds today. But to completely eradicate malaria, research and development need to continue."

One of the noteworthy effects of Olyset™ Net is the economic benefit achieved by the early transfer of production to sub-Saharan Africa, which shoulders 90% of the global burden of malaria.[2] Sumitomo Chemical provided the royalty-free technology to a Tanzanian manufacturer, whose production facility generated as many as 7,000 jobs during peak periods, and where the annual production of mosquito nets alone is approximately 30 million nets. Almost all the staff was hired locally, and Hirooka says, "This shows that there is no lack of talented personnel in Africa." Stable employment is a factor that helps the workers transition to a modern, malaria-free lifestyle.

In 2018, Sumitomo Chemical joined in the "ZERO by 40" joint declaration to eradicate malaria by 2040. The blue mosquito nets have the potential of enveloping not only beds, but also the entire lives of everyone involved with a greater peace of mind.

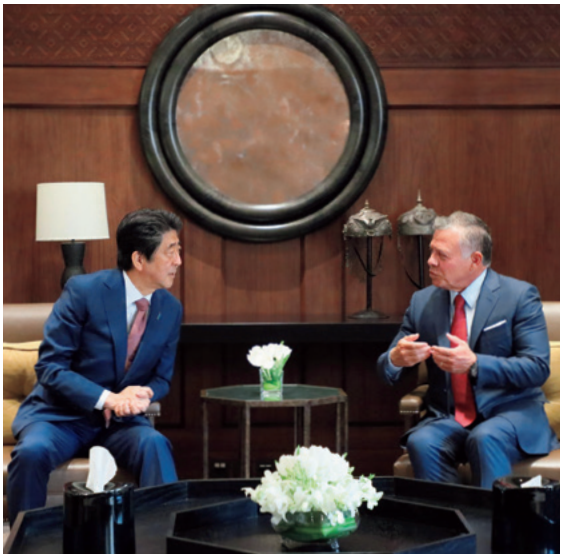
[1] WHO Malaria Key facts (last updated: June 11, 2018)
[2] WHO News Release, Media Centre, April 24, 2017
Prevent malaria - save lives: WHO push for prevention on World Malaria Day, April 25
[3] The World Bank, "Malaria in Africa", October 2010.

Prime Minister in Action

Prime Minister Abe continues to actively engage in “Diplomacy That Takes a Panoramic Perspective of the World Map.” From April through September, he attended the G7 Summit, Eastern Economic Forum and United Nations General Assembly and held summit meetings with world leaders, visting Canada, the Russian Federation, the United States of America, and countries of the Middle East.
In Japan, he hosted the Pacific Islands Leaders Meeting, signed the Japan-EU Economic Partnership Agreement, and held talks with numerous world leaders who visited Japan.

Met with His Majesty the King Carl XVI Gustaf and Her Majesty the Queen Silvia of the Kingdom of Sweden, at Akasaka State Guest House. (April 2018)

Met with H.H. Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, in the United Arab Emirates. (April 2018)



Met with His Majesty King Abdullah II Ibn Al Hussein, in Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. (May 2018)

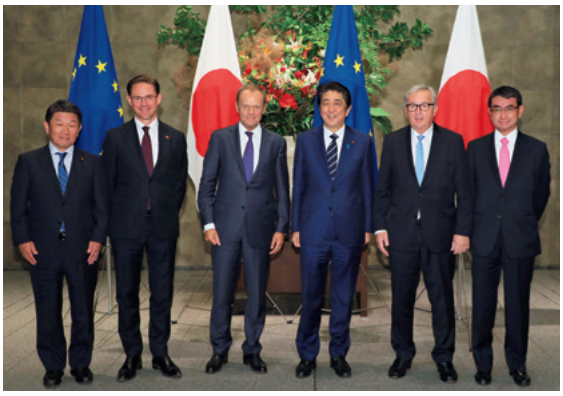
Met with H.E. Mr. Emmanuel Macron, President of the French Republic, in the Russian Federation. (May 2018)

Attended the Eighth Pacific Islands Leaders Meeting (PALM8) at Iwaki, Fukushima Prefecture and met with attending leaders. (May 2018)

Attended the G7 Charlevoix Summit and met with attending leaders, in Canada. (June 2018)

Met with Tun Dr. Mahathir bin Mohamad, Prime Minister of Malaysia, at the Japanese Prime Minister's Office. (June 2018)

Met with H.E. Dr. Thongloun Sisoulith, Prime Minister of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, at the Japanese Prime Minister's Office. (June 2018)

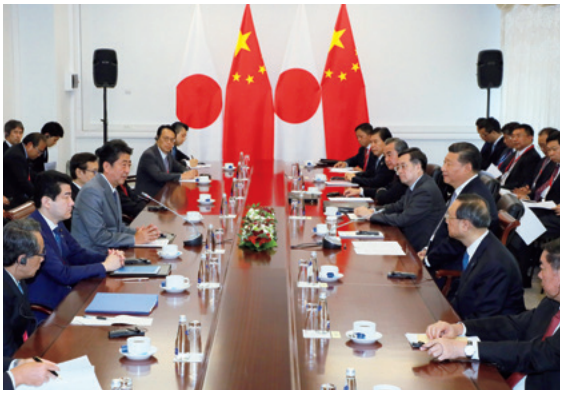


Met with H.E. Mr. Donald Tusk, President of the European Council and H.E. Mr. Jean-Claude Juncker, President of the European Commission and signed the Japan-EU Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) and Strategic Partnership Agreement (SPA), at the Japanese Prime Minister's Office. (July 2018)

Met with H.E. Dr. Joseph Muscat, Prime Minister of the Republic of Malta, at the Japanese Prime Minister's Office. (August 2018)

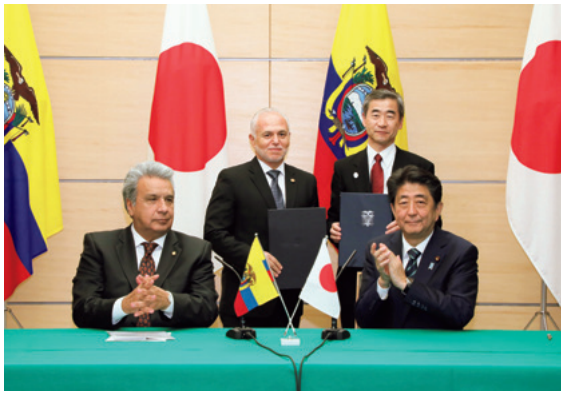
Met with Dr. the Hon. Ralph Gonsalves, Prime Minister of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, at the Japanese Prime Minister's Office. (August 2018)

Met with H.E. Mr. Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin, President of the Russian Federation and attended the 4th Eastern Economic Forum in the Russian Federation. (September 2018)



Met with H.E. Mr. Xi Jinping, President of the People's Republic of China, in the Russian Federation. (September 2018)

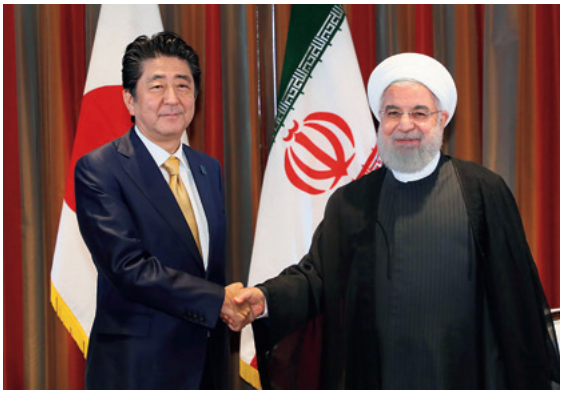
Met with H.E. Mr. Khaltmaa Battulga, President of Mongolia, in the Russian Federation. (September 2018)



Met with H.E. Mr. Lenín Boltaire Moreno Garcés, President of the Republic of Ecuador, at the Japanese Prime Minister's Office. (September 2018)

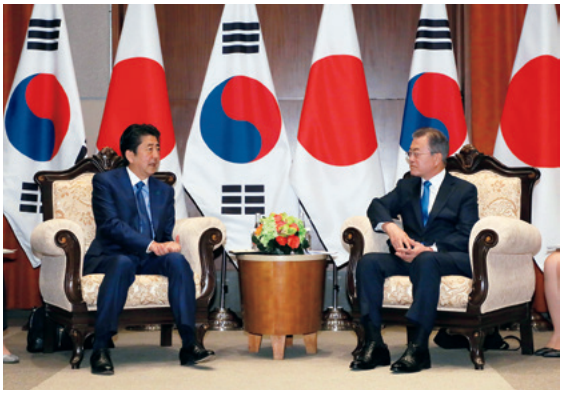
Met with the Honorable Donald J. Trump, President of the United States of America, in the United States of America. (September 2018)

Met with H.E. Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, President of the Republic of Turkey, in the United States of America. (September 2018)



Met with H.E. Dr. Hassan Rouhani, President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, in the United States of America. (September 2018)

Attended the United Nations General Assembly and met with H. E. Mr. António Manuel de Oliveira Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations, in the United States of America. (September 2018)



Met with H.E. Mr. Moon Jae-in, President of the Republic of Korea, in the United States of America. (September 2018)

Niigata's Proud Tradition

Facing the Sea of Japan, Niigata Prefecture, watered by clean mountain streams, offers quality food, cultural beauty and history as an industrial pioneer

From mother to daughters: the 175-year-old tradition of Hasegawa Shuzo, a sake brewery in Nagaoka City, is being passed down to the future.

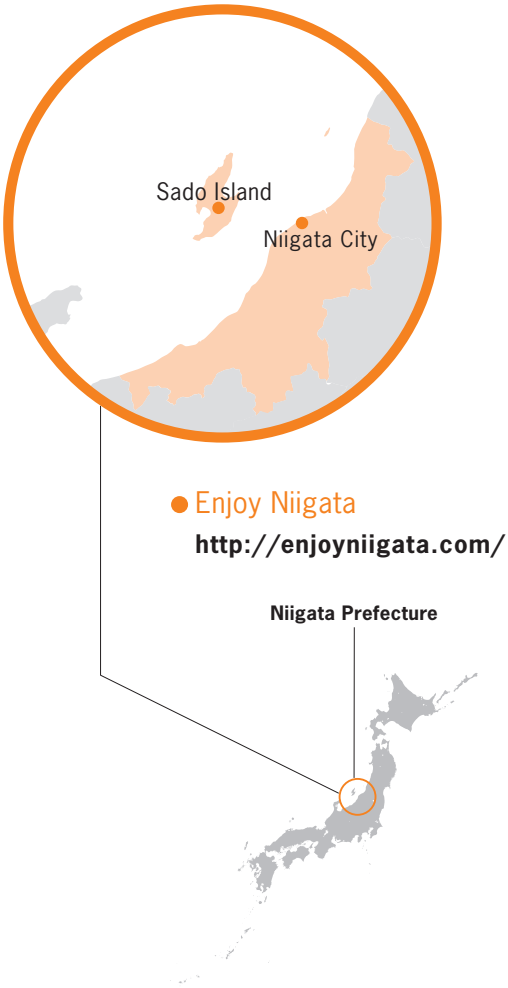
PORTRAITS OF JAPAN
新潟

Niigata's rice and water make an elegant Japanese sake

Niigata Prefecture's Uonuma City is home to the *Koshihikari* variety of rice, Japan's most popular. Blessed with such rice and clear mountain water, it is little surprise that this region is also famous throughout Japan for its sake. There are as many as 90 breweries in Niigata producing its characteristically dry but silky tasting sake. In recent times, a growing number of smooth sake brewers are helping to give sake a new appeal and promote it to the world.

Sado Gold and Silver Mine which contributed to modernization

Sado Island is a sizable island in the Sea of Japan about 30 km from the coastline. Gold was discovered in 1601, and as Japan's biggest gold and silver resource, the island supported the public coffers of the Tokugawa shogunate in early-modern Japan. The relics of mining that remain in the north of the island are recognized as an Important Cultural Property.



Ornamental carp captivating admirers worldwide

The Japanese term for ornamental carp is *nishikigoi*, which means "carp with fancy brightly colored clothes." Ornamental carp have been raised in Niigata Prefecture since the Tokugawa shogunate. Sometimes referred to as "swimming works of art," they are becoming increasingly popular worldwide as a representation of Japanese beauty.

Specialty processed foods of Niigata

In Niigata Prefecture, Japan's premier rice-growing region, foods made from rice have also become regional specialties. Rice snacks, such as *sembei* crackers, made by kneading and thinly spreading rice flour batter and baking it with flavorings like soy sauce, support the attractiveness of *Washoku* (Japanese food) traditional dietary culture, which is recognized by UNESCO as an Intangible Cultural Heritage. The crab-flavored *kanikama* seafood sticks are also immensely popular worldwide.

Did a Japanese Ship Rescue Hundreds of Greek Refugees from Smyrna a Century Ago?

Some Greeks have orally passed down the story of the rescue of many Greek refugees by a Japanese ship during the Smyrna disaster of September 1922. Nanako Murata Sawayanagi, professor at Toyo University has researched the matter and has this to say.

Nanako Murata Sawayanagi

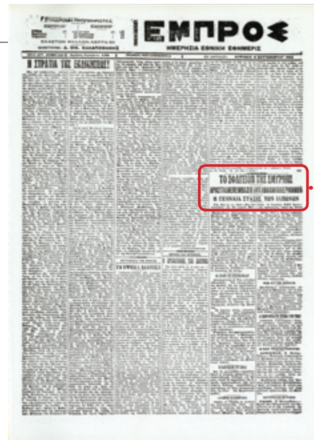
After graduating from the Faculty of Letters at the University of Tokyo, Sawayanagi received a Ph.D. in history from New York University (NYU). Specializing in modern Greek history and the history and culture of the eastern Mediterranean, she now is a professor in the Faculty of Letters at Toyo University.

Some say that no good deed goes unrewarded, but what happens if no one recognizes that good deed? Almost one hundred years have passed since a Japanese ship is said to have rescued scores of Greek refugees in Asia Minor. Normally, such a deed would be widely applauded, but the scantiness of the records mean that the event has been lost in the mists of history.

The stage for what happened lies in post-WWI Smyrna (now Izmir, Turkey), an Aegean port city in western Asia Minor, with roots harking back to Ancient Greece. After the war, the Ottoman Empire was partitioned, with Greece and its allies rushing in to claim territory. Turkey eventually gained its independence in October 1923, but at the high cost of forcing various long-established non-Turkish ethnic groups to abandon their homeland. That brings us back to the event.

On the night of September 13, 1922, five days after the Greek army had retreated, the Turks allegedly set fire to the residential district, which spread rapidly, forcing the inhabitants to swarm to the port to escape. Bertram Thesiger, a British-national captain of the George V at the time, recounts the scene as follows: "It was a terrifying thing to see even from the distance. There was the most awful scream one could ever imagine. ... Many did undoubtedly jump into the sea, from sheer panic. ... Mothers with their babies, the fire going on over their heads, and many of the bundles of clothes also on fire, and the people all screaming."[1]

From the July 2016 issue of the Greek newspaper *Ethnos*. With the inscription of "Much Gratitude 94 Years On," a plaque was given to the Japanese Ambassador to Greece at the time by descendants of the refugees to convey their appreciation for the rescue efforts by Japanese at Smyrna.



An article entitled "Massacre in Smyrna: Japanese Act Bravely" was printed in the Greek newspaper *Empros* on September 4, 1922 (September 17 in the Gregorian calendar), describing the efforts by a Japanese freighter to rescue Greek refugees.

Afterwards, the fire turned into a carnage, with the Greek population of the city at the time of 600,000[2] or more instantly transforming into refugees, many of whom are said to have lost their lives. This tragic incident is referred to as the "Asia Minor Disaster" in modern Greek history, as it drew the curtain on the 2,500-year history of Greek history in Anatolia.

At the time of the fire, some Allied warships were in the harbor, along with countless other merchant ships. But most of them refused to pick refugees up. Amidst all the chaos, a Japanese freighter was reported to have unloaded all its precious cargo to take on as many refugees as it could, transporting them onward to the Greek mainland.

According to a *New York Times* article of September 18, 1922, "There were six steamers at Smyrna to transport the refugees, one American, one Japanese, two French and two Italian. The American and Japanese steamers accepted all comers without examining their papers, while others took only foreign subjects with a passport."[3] The American consul general in Smyrna verified that on the same day, telling the U.S. Secretary of State, "Passengers on the ship speak in the highest terms of the kindness of the Japanese officers and men."[4] Later articles in *The Atlanta Constitution*[5] and *The Boston Globe*[6] echoed those statements.

The Greek newspaper *Empros* reported the incident with the headline, "Massacre in Smyrna: Japanese Act Bravely," saying that "The brave actions by the captain of the *Tokei-maru* are worthy of note. Despite being threatened by the Turks, he succeeded in rescuing 825 of our Greek comrades. After he unloaded all the small boats aboard, the Kemali soldiers surrounded them, threatening to sink them. In response, the captain told them, 'If you dare touch a hair on the head of any of the refugees, I shall regard it as an affront to the Japanese flag and a threat to the Japanese government.'"[7]

The fact that reputable media and diplomatic sources mentioned it several times leads to its plausibility. Perhaps because it happened amidst the chaos of war, there are inconsistencies among the reports about the dates and the number of ships, making it impossible to take any one particular account of the rescue by the Japanese as a "historical fact."

I believe that when it comes to saving human lives, nationality ought to make no difference. However, when placed in certain historical situations, it is hard to stick to one's beliefs. It is precisely because of the courageous reality of someone having done so, however, that I feel this action is still being talked about today. During my continued research on this topic, I have received many grassroots reports from people whose relatives had been rescued. Soon a century will have passed since the tragedy at Smyrna. Before that milestone is reached, I would like to see this good deed inscribed in history. ✾

[1] Michael Llewellyn Smith, *Ionian Vision: Greece in Asia Minor 1919-1922* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2000), 309-310. [2] According to Greek Patriarchate Statistics in 1912, there were 1,782,582 Greeks in Asia Minor. Among the provinces in Asia Minor, Smyrna had the largest Greek population. i.e. 622,810. Dimitri Pentzopoulos, *The Balkan Exchange of Minorities and Its Impact on Greece* (London: Hurst & Company, 2002). 30. TABLE III 15. [3] "Smyrna's Ravagers Fired on Americans," *The New York Times*, September 18, 1922. [4] Documentary Evidence (767.68/450) cited from "Stavros Stavridis Special to *The National Herald*." [5] *The Atlanta Constitution*, October 15, 1922, A9, cited from "Stavros Stavridis Special to *The National Herald*." [6] *The Boston Globe*, December 3, 1922, E4, cited from "Stavros Stavridis Special to *The National Herald*." [7] "Massacre in Smyrna," *Empros*, September 4, 1922.

Kutchan: Hottest Winter Town

A wonderland of powder snow, the resort town of Kutchan in wintertime is abuzz with the exuberance of skiers and snowboarders from around the world looking for a memorable winter experience

At Hirafu, the largest resort area of Kutchan, visitors can enjoy a dynamic skiing experience enhanced by the grandiose presence of Mt. Yotei (Hokkaido's Mt. Fuji).

Kutchan is located in southwestern Hokkaido, about a two-hour drive from Sapporo or New Chitose Airport. This world-famous destination is the core resort town of the Niseko-Kutchan resort area. Its main attraction is its fluffy powder snow. The easily accessible ski slopes that reach as high as 1,300 meters often receive large dumps of snow from clouds carried by winds traversing the Sea of Japan. Kutchan's location guarantees a constant supply of virgin snow from December through February.

"If you visit Kutchan in the winter, you will certainly be awestruck," says Kutchan Mayor Eiji Nishie proudly. "Every morning when you wake up, virgin ski slopes are waiting for you. Come and slide down toward Mt. Yotei, Hokkaido's Mt. Fuji! It's an amazing and thrilling experience! In the afternoon, you can warm yourself by soaking in a hot spring. Then at night, there are bars and restaurants where you can share fun times with people from around the world. The hotels offer high-quality Japanese hospitality, and overall, it is a rare and unique experience."

The number of overseas tourists visiting Kutchan began to rapidly grow from around 2000 onward, and the entire town suddenly began to transform. In winter, roughly 80% of hotel guests are from overseas. It is easy to get around town using only English, even at the hospital or town hall, with English used on road signs, and in bars and restaurants. Of the more than 15,000 registered town residents during winter, a significant portion, which may soon reach 20%, are foreigners comprising 47 different nationalities. Australians were the first foreigners to "discover" Kutchan and its first-rate ski fields. For some time now, the local community has grown accustomed to coexisting with the overseas visitors. The town's reputation soon reached Europe and North America,

"Visitors often marvel, 'What a wonderfully cosmopolitan town amidst such beautiful nature!'" says Kutchan Mayor Eiji Nishie. It is the town's pride that visitors from Australia, Hong Kong, Singapore, the United States and many other countries are so drawn to Kutchan.

Above: The condominiums around town come in various styles. Aya-Niseko's penthouses are equipped with a kitchen and private hot-spring bath, and offer gorgeous views of Mt. Yotei.
Right: With culinary treats on offer all year round, sitting down to a selection of dishes made from Hokkaido ingredients is a great opportunity to savor delicious food and enjoy multicultural exchanges.

and with this new-found fame has come a rapid influx of investment. Even today, the construction of luxury condominiums and hotels is continuing. Families are staying in condominiums with all kitchen amenities and blurring the line between tourist and resident. Some stay for weeks, while others settle in for much longer. For many, Kutchan is Asia's one and only winter resort.

Dominating the scenery at Kutchan is Mt. Yotei. Known also by its nickname Ezo Fuji (Hokkaido's Mt. Fuji), it appears as a solitary mountain peak whose base flares out widely and beautifully. Its pure and plentiful mountain-fresh water is the secret to the town's delicious produce. The vegetables, rice, wheat, livestock and dairy produced at the foot of the mountain are known throughout Japan for their exquisite quality, and Kutchan has the luxury of being able to use springwater for its water supply. From autumn through winter, with such delicious supply of flavorful in-season vegetables like special local potatoes, as well as cold-water fish and shellfish fresh from nearby fishing ports, the taverns, sushi restaurants and premium restaurants—some even bringing in world-renowned Michelin-star chefs—dish up delicious, mouthwatering menus.

In 2019, Kutchan will take on a new role as an international host, having been selected to host the G20 Tourism Ministers' Meeting. "This is a precious opportunity for us, and we are working on a plan that will treat guests to everything that gives Kutchan its special charm, including its amazing nature, international character, and Japanese hospitality. In addition to giving guests a special experience, I also want our efforts to boost Kutchan's attractiveness for the long term," explains Mayor Nishie. A bright future lies ahead for the town, which has prospered on people's love of pristine nature. ✻

G20 Japan 2019

Kutchan to Host Tourism Ministers' Meeting on October 25-26, 2019

In 2019, Japan will host the G20 Summit & Ministerial Meetings for the first time. In addition to the G20 Summit being held in Osaka, other ministerial meetings will be held as follows:

- Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors' Meeting (Fukuoka, Fukuoka Pref.)
- Labour and Employment Ministers' Meeting (Matsuyama, Ehime Pref.)
- Tourism Ministers' Meeting (Kutchan, Hokkaido Pref.)
- Agriculture Ministers' Meeting (Niigata, Niigata Pref.)
- Ministerial Meeting on Trade and Digital Economy (Tsukuba, Ibaraki Pref.)
- Ministerial Meeting on Energy Transitions and Global Environment for Sustainable Growth (Karuizawa, Nagano Pref.)
- Health Ministers' Meeting (Okayama, Okayama Pref.)
- Foreign Ministers' Meeting (Nagoya, Aichi Pref.)

https://www.japan.go.jp/g20japan/

Kutchan's Hanazono area will be the main venue for the Tourism Ministers' Meeting. This cosmopolitan area is popular for its backcountry skiing and snowboarding.

Meidensha has long contributed to building the infrastructural foundations that Singapore's remarkable expansion rests upon.

POWER OF INNOVATION

Close, Long-Standing Public-Private Partnership

Japanese company offers technology and attentiveness as a reliable partner for Singapore's growing urban transport and water infrastructure

Since its independence in 1965, Singapore has prided itself on being a country based on technology and trade, and has plowed forward with establishing infrastructure that supports economic activities and its citizens' lives. Working behind the scenes, Japanese company Meidensha Corporation has been instrumental in providing the essential technology for the electricity and urban transport grids and the reuse of water resources.

Meidensha first forayed into Singapore in the 1960s during Japan's long period of advanced economic growth, a time when many Japanese companies expanded their activities overseas in the search for business opportunities. Initially engaging in electrical work, Meidensha expanded its business as it steadily gained trust and began to supply transformer equipment. Within a short period,

Director of Meidensha, Nobuaki Tamaki is in charge of the management of the entire overseas business. In Singapore, he was involved in establishing the transformer business and establishing MRT's electric power supply system.

It's been about 40 years since Meidensha started manufacturing in Singapore. With its roots having sunk deeply, and the company provides employment at its factories and construction sites (train station construction site).

Meidensha has provided Singapore, which has depended on imported water from its neighbors, with some of the technology needed to boost its capability to reuse water.

it set down roots in the country; founding a subsidiary in 1975, and just four years later, started making transformers there for the expanding electric power utility.

Then in 1987, Meidensha started working on the power distribution system for the north-south and east-west railway lines of Singapore's first Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) subway. These lines became the blueprint for establishing Singapore's extensive rail network that exists today.

The Singapore government is currently focusing on the reuse of water. As a small country, Singapore has limited water storage capabilities, and the securing of water resources is a major challenge. Up until now, Singapore has relied heavily on importing water from Malaysia, but the authorities have set a target to raise its ratio of domestically recycled water in the water supply to 50% by 2030.

Having built a track record in establishing electric power infrastructure, Meidensha is now demonstrating its capabilities in water recycling. So far, two demonstration plants that filtrate and reuse industrial wastewater using ceramic flatsheet membranes have been put into operation.

The Singaporean government has been constantly developing infrastructure under highly visionary plans. "The level of technology required is also high, and delivering it is not easy," says Nobuaki Tamaki, director & senior managing executive officer of Meidensha. At the same time, there is the continual pressure of cost reduction. However, Tamaki believes that the strengths of Japanese companies are their willingness to respond flexibly to requests to customize, the careful attentiveness in their responses when troubles arise, and their technology to integrate systems. Meidensha is one of such companies, responding to the strict, dualistic demands of technology and cost through intensive communication and the exhaustive utilization of technological capability.

Through these infrastructural projects, Singapore has become one of the main pillars of business for Meidensha in the important Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) market. Singapore is valuable to Meidensha, not only as one of its production bases, but also for the experience and products developed there that can be used in other countries. Conversely, Meidensha can offer Singapore its expertise gained in other countries.

On the significance of creating infrastructure, Tamaki says, "Being involved in the construction of cities by contributing to the provision of electricity and a rail network brings me tremendous joy." Regarding Singapore's perspective, he says, "I think we are thought of as partners who have created something together."

In the Japanese style of business, all ears are on what the other parties have to say, and solutions are conceived based on close-knit cooperation. This brings happy outcomes for both parties. ✻

Important figures from the Singapore government attended the 40th anniversary of local subsidiary Meiden Singapore Pte. Ltd.'s founding, symbolic of the long-standing cooperative relationship between the country and campany.

"My wish is for Yangon to become a city full of charm in the eyes of its residents and the world," says Osawa.

GRASSROOTS AMBASSADOR ››› Japanese Individuals Contributing Worldwide

Urban Planner Passionate for Myanmar's Future

In Yangon, a city whose population is growing significantly, a Japanese female urban planner is helping create a comfortable and highly livable city rich in individuality

"All the Myanmar people I met in Japan were really down-to-earth and friendly. Then, when I first visited Myanmar in 2007, all the local people I encountered went out of their way to be kind," says Shiki Osawa of her first impressions upon arriving in Myanmar. She then started visiting Myanmar once a year, and her fondness for the country steadily grew. "I began to think how I could use my expertise for the people of Myanmar," she says.

After gaining experience in a large redevelopment project in the center of Tokyo as a Japanese real estate developer, Osawa joined Yoma Strategic Holdings Limited, one of Myanmar's leading real estate development companies. Three years have passed since she started working there as the only Japanese employee among a staff of about 9,000, and the only real estate development planner.

Myanmar is rapidly achieving urban development. "Yangon's population is expected to double in a few decades," Osawa states.

Serious problems will arise if such rapid urbanization is left to take its own course. For example, slums may pop up from a lack of housing and employment, traffic may become congested or paralyzed, and air pollution may become increasingly problematic. To prevent such situations from happening, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) has helped to formulate a strategic urban development

Unplanned development brings with it deep problems to the city. Osawa shares a long-term, holistic view of city planning with her Myanmar colleagues.

Shiki Osawa

Arriving in Yangon in 2015, she has partaken in two urban development projects by the real estate development company Yoma Strategic Holdings Limited, a member of a large Myanmar conglomerate. She also has worked on a new city development project by New Yangon Development Co., Ltd., which was established by the Yangon Region government.

plan for 30 years of future growth in Yangon's metropolitan area. Through this initiative, Japanese know-how regarding grand-scale urban development, particularly environmental-friendly compact cities that utilize public transit networks, can be put to use in Myanmar.

At Yoma Strategic, Osawa is helping to develop a business and commercial district in central Yangon and a large-scale residential area neighboring the city center. Both projects began with an analysis based on the target area's JICA-formulated master plan. Osawa is also playing a leading role in a new city development plan by a public company established by the Yangon Region government. These plans, which constitute city planning from scratch, begin with the building of roads and bridges, and the provision of water and electricity supplies.

"My experience working in real estate development in Japan taught me that city planning is not simply the work of constructing buildings but rather the work of refining plans while predicting the future shape of the city and thinking about the people living there," says Osawa.

Therefore, the most common point of debate between Osawa and her colleagues is not deciding how to resolve the tasks at hand, but rather thinking about "what we want Yangon to become." "When everyone talks about what is Yangon's special charm and what they want to remain for the future generations, the discussion always becomes so lively," Osawa states. "Everyone loves the city and is very proud of it."

The future Yangon that Osawa envisions is not simply a city that is safe and functional. "Yangon still has much religious architecture and many historical buildings as well as a rich culture such as wearing traditional garments in daily life. I hope that we can work with the people of Yangon to create a city that preserves its vibrant traditions unique to Yangon," she says.

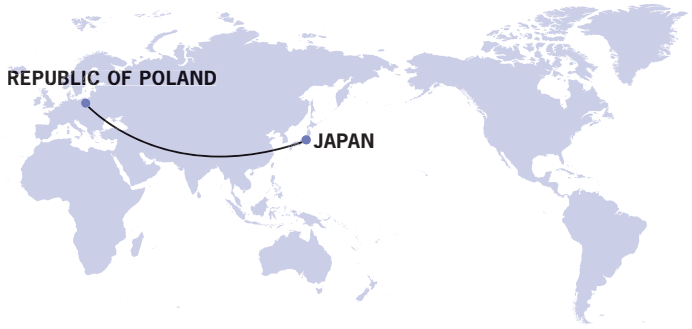
Immensely fond of both Yangon and Myanmar, Osawa's eyes light up as she talks. The city planning of Yangon, which is experiencing the most rapid urbanization of any city in Myanmar, will surely be the first step in the unfolding of this country's future. ✻

Japanese developers are assisting in the huge mixed-use development project "Yoma Central," which is soon to be the new landmark of downtown Yangon. (3D rendering of Yoma Central)

Conveying Local Charm with Warm Hospitality

Uwajima is a stunningly scenic town in Shikoku. Our guide to a revived historic inn is a Pole who loves Japanese culture. Through his eyes, we find new charms in Uwajima.

Despite the heavy rain disaster that occurred in July in western Japan, the tourist facilities such as Kiya Ryokan were unaffected. The inn continues to delight tourists with warm hospitality and its Meiji Period charm.



"Take a look at the ceiling. Clear acrylic panels have been installed, so now you can see from the ground floor all the way up to the arrangement of the roof beams."

The explanation in fluent Japanese is given by Bartholomeus Greb, a Pole who serves as the sales and marketing manager of the Kiya Ryokan in Uwajima City, Ehime Prefecture. This *ryokan* (traditional Japanese inn), founded in 1911, during the Meiji Period, was loved by literary giants and statesmen early in its history. Although it had closed its doors due to obsolescence, it reopened in 2012 through the concerted efforts of local volunteers and creative experts.

Uwajima Castle, built in 1601, is one of only 12 original castles in Japan.

Having moved from Poland to Germany, Greb was raised in Freiburg, and became attracted to Japanese culture at the age of 11. Karate lessons were followed by an increasing fascination with the spiritual culture of Japan, including *bushido* and other arts. Later he had an opportunity to study in Matsuyama, which is a sister city of Freiburg, followed some years later by a working holiday in Japan. Learning swordsmanship, tea ceremony, and other skills, he was increasingly drawn to traditional culture, and felt a sense of loss at the disappearance of well-constructed old-style Japanese buildings as they were pulled down one after another. About this time, he heard that the Kiya Ryokan was hiring staff and applied without hesitation.

"I knew nothing about the hotel business, but I knew that showing traditional Japanese hospitality is the most important thing, so I just keep giving my best."

Nowadays hospitality tends to be mixed with services that entail separate charges, but hospitality is really about making a guest feel comfortable, which intrinsically does not relate to a fee schedule, as Greb is keen to point out. Some time ago, an elderly lady in Uwajima had invited him to her home, where the *tokonoma* (alcove) was decorated with flowers from her yard. She served him a home-cooked meal of vegetables grown in her garden, simple but straight from the heart, which impressed Greb as authentic hospitality. "Avoiding

Bartholomeus Greb

Born in Poland in 1980, Greb was raised in Freiburg, Germany. He first came to Ehime as an exchange student, and later during a working holiday, and since 2012 has been employed as the sales and marketing manager of the historic Kiya Ryokan. He also serves as an advisor on international tourism to Uwajima City.

pretentiousness, while treating the things at hand with respect. I want to tell people about the structure of the inn, already a hundred years old, as well as the special places in Uwajima."

A castle town with a history, blessed with the natural bounty of the sea and the hills, Uwajima is a place where traditional culture, such as the production of *washi* (Japanese paper) and festive banners, is still alive and well. Greb, who also serves as an advisor on international tourism to the city, says that even a slight change in outlook will generate a greater appeal. "For example, even though Uwajima Castle, a symbol of the city, is relatively small, it is a treasure trove of 400 different types of plants." These kinds of unique facets of local attractions, having impressed Greb, are communicated to the rest of the world on his web magazine, called "Uwajima Deep."

And indeed, intrigued by what they find on the website, more than a few have come to Uwajima in search of deep experiences.

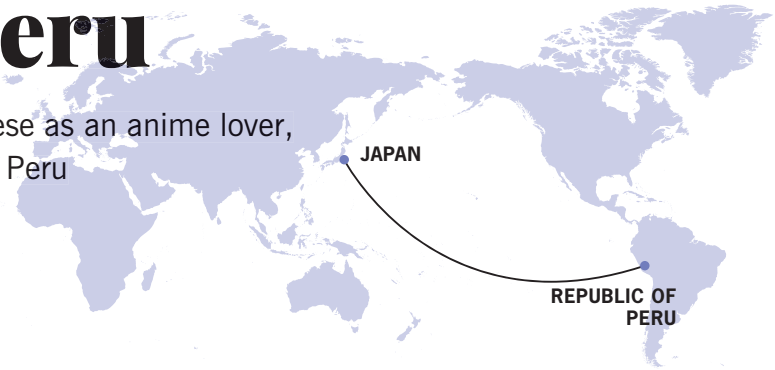
To help visitors enjoy the charms of Uwajima, fee-based guided experiential tours are being planned. Greb adds, "I think it would be interesting to invite artists from Germany and from my homeland, Poland, to design packaging for Uwajima's unique products."

His local friends, who affectionately call him "Baru-kun," appreciate the original proposals he generates, saying that "It's gotten hard to think about Uwajima without Baku-kun." It is certain that "Baru-kun" will continue to communicate the charms of Uwajima with a heart full of traditional hospitality. "Uwajima suffered damage during the torrential rains of July, but thankfully, the city has recovered," he says, hastening to add that, "The ryokan is operating with its usual hospitality—and you could be the next visitor!" ✻

The Kuroda brothers are the fourth-generation proprietors of the Kuroda Festive Banner Shop, in business since 1907. Discussion becomes lively when Greb, who also serves as an advisor on tourism, suggests, "Let's hold the Big Fishing Catch Flag Art Exhibition again!"

Bringing Okinawans Closer with Peru

Alejandra Falconí Peña, who learned Japanese as an anime lover, feels a connection with her home country of Peru as she works as a CIR in Okinawa



Alejandra Falconí Peña

Graduated in translation and interpreting from the Universidad Femenina del Sagrado Corazón. After graduating, she worked in Peru as a Spanish teacher and also at a translation company. Since April 2017, she has been working as Coordinator for International Relations for the JET Programme at the Department of Culture, Tourism, and Sports, International Exchange Division, of the Okinawa prefectural government.

Alejandra Falconí Peña, who hails from Peru, has been working for the Okinawa prefectural government as a Coordinator for International Relations (CIR) in the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Programme since 2017. Her main work there is to translate documents created by the prefecture and serve as an interpreter when staff go on business trips to South America. She also gives visiting lectures teaching students Spanish and familiarizing them with Peruvian culture, and she also reads out picture books in Spanish at public libraries.

What inspired her to learn Japanese was her encounter with anime. "I like Japanese anime, and I would sing anime songs without understanding their meaning by just imitating the sounds." Upon seeing this, her father encouraged her to take up Japanese language studies. Ever since Falconí started studying Japanese, she wanted to live in Japan. When she learned about the JET Programme, she applied immediately. "I had been working as a part-time worker until then, so there were many things I did not know about working full

Left: In her office at the Okinawa prefectural government office.
Center: She is wearing Peru's national costume and telling the children about Peruvian culture.
Right: Kokusai Dori, which is just a few steps from the prefectural government office, is crowded with tourists even on weekdays. It is one of Falconí's favorite places.

time in an office. I had an especially hard time handling calls."

Upon coming to Okinawa, I learned about the depth of the relationship between Peru and Okinawa. Like in other South American countries, there are many immigrants from Okinawa in Peru. In August 2018, Falconí served as an interpreter at ceremonies in Argentina and Bolivia commemorating the 110th anniversary of the emigration of Okinawans to South America. "Thanks to these immigrants, strong and valuable ties were born between Peru and Okinawa. I was amazed by these relations of friendship that transcend borders and time. I count myself lucky to have been sent to Okinawa." Falconí says that she feels the connection between Peru and Okinawa on a daily basis, as "people in Okinawa are very warm in how they deal with people. If someone is in need, Okinawans will go out of their way to provide support. I feel that they are similar to Peruvians in this regard."

The culture of drinking parties is another aspect of life in Japan that made an impression on her. "The custom of getting together at informal drinking parties rather than more formal affairs is great. It allows people to be more relaxed and have fun communicating with one another. This strikes me as a really nice aspect of the culture. But I have heard that Okinawa's local alcoholic spirits, *awamori*, is very strong, so I have not worked up the courage yet, but I'd like to try it sometime." One of her favorite places in Okinawa is Kokusai Dori, the main street of Naha City, where the prefectural office is located. "It even has a specialized anime shop called 'Animate,' which to me was a paradise."

On the other hand, she is keenly aware that her Japanese language skills are still insufficient and she is thinking about going on working in Japan even after completing her JET stint. Ultimately, her goal is to improve her Japanese language skills and become a Spanish teacher in Japan in the future. Falconí Peña says that she would like to also teach about Peruvian culture in addition to the Spanish language. "When I ask Japanese people about their impression of Peru, they often reply 'it's far away.' I have learned that Machu Picchu and the Nazca landmarks are popular among Japanese people, but there are many other sightseeing spots in Peru. I would like for people in Japan to learn about Peru and feel more familiar with it. I want to become a bridge between Peru and Japan." ✻

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.
JET participants are placed in every region of Japan and work in one of three positions: assistant language teachers (ALTs), coordinators for international relations (CIRs), or sports exchange advisors (SEAs).
In 2016, the JET Programme welcomed 4,952 participants, and currently there are approximately 62,000 alumni from 65 countries living in all parts of the world.

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

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