

We Are *Tomodachi*

Summer 2019

FEATURE >>>

Japan in Africa

Working to advance sustainable relationships with Africa



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You'll also find the articles of all past issues of "We Are *Tomodachi*" (<https://www.japan.go.jp/tomodachi>).



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COVER

In August 2016, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe attended the Sixth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD VI) in Nairobi, Kenya, the first conference held in Africa. At the opening session, he announced that for a period of three years, Japan would invest approximately 30 billion dollars under public-private partnership for the future of Africa.



Summer Castles and Gardens: Reminders of Ancient Dreams

The castles and gardens that have survived the centuries in various parts of Japan are ideal places for getting a first-hand feeling of Japanese history and culture. Shimmering in the rays of the summer sun, the dreams of feudal magnates who once ruled these lands momentarily appear and vanish.

Okayama | **OKAYAMA** 岡山





A magnificent palace restored to life

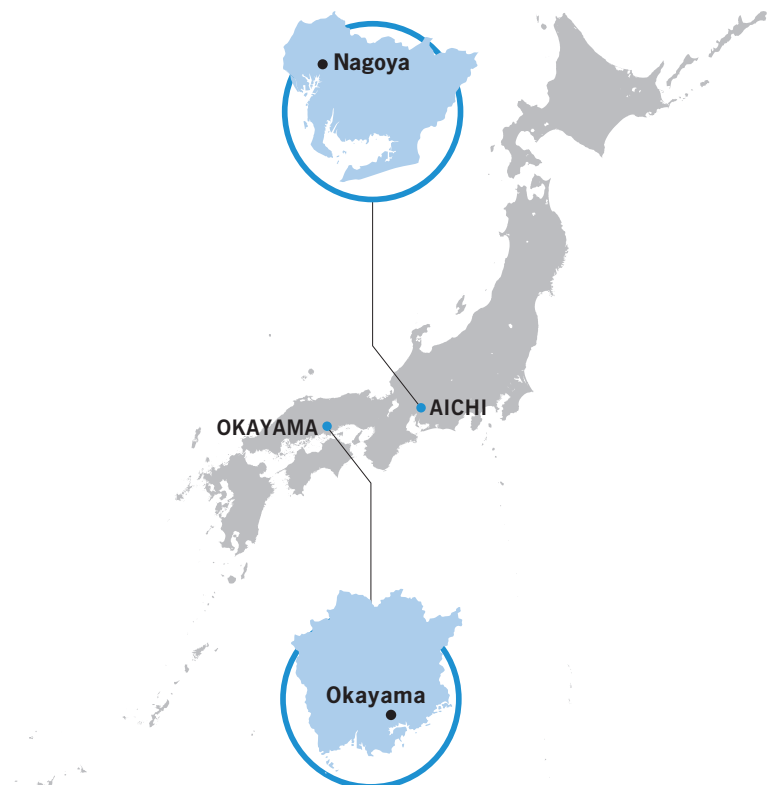
As central locations that flourish in great conurbations, Tokyo and Osaka are followed by Nagoya City in Aichi Prefecture, historically connected to the shogunal clan of the Edo Period (1603-1867). Nagoya Castle was constructed using the most up-to-date technology available at that time. In front of the five-story *tenshu* (castle tower), the Hommaru Palace (inner domainal palace) was constructed in 1615 and decorated with ornamental fittings and murals by the best painters of the day. Although burnt down at one time, it has been splendidly restored, radiating a brilliance that has not changed over the years. The G20 Foreign Ministers' Meeting will be held here in Nagoya on November 22 and 23, 2019.

<https://www.nagoyajo.city.nagoya.jp/en/>

Graceful lotus flowers ushers in the summer mornings

The Health Ministers' Meeting of the G20 Summit will be held in Okayama City, Okayama Prefecture, on October 19 and 20, 2019. One of the Three Great Gardens of Japan, the Okayama Korakuen, is considered to be the city's symbol. The spacious garden, created under the command of the local lord about 320 years ago, has long been loved as a place for enjoying the flowering of the seasons. In the early summer, visitors will encounter adorable pink lotus blossoms. In the background of the photograph is Okayama Castle, once the residence of the feudal lord, with its beautiful black lacquer walls.

<https://okayama-korakuen.jp/>





FEATURE >>> Japan in Africa

Partnerships for Africa's Future

The Seventh Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) will be held in Yokohama during August 2019. This is a Summit-level international conference on Africa's development which was initiated by Japan since 1993.



In May 2019, in fair-weathered Yokohama, many people gathered to celebrate “Ima no Africa” (Africa Now), an event where visitors engage in African culture through music and fashion. The success of this year's event, the second time it was held, was testimony to the friendly relations between Japan and Africa.

Yokohama is the host city of TICAD7, the Seventh Tokyo

International Conference on African Development, held from August 28 to 30, 2019. What is striking about TICAD is that rather than being a stage for bilateral relations between Japan and African countries, it uses a multilateral framework involving the participation of international organizations. It is also broadly accessible to diverse stakeholders, including those from private enterprise, academia, and civil society, with the number of

participants at TICAD VI held in Nairobi, Kenya exceeding 10,000. TICAD is also a place where African ownership is given serious regard. In addition, follow-up meetings at ministerial level are held annually to enable the respective ministries to properly stay abreast of the status of ongoing projects resulting from commitments adopted at TICAD. Those meticulous efforts have drawn strong praise from African countries.



Ima no Africa, an event to deepen understanding of Africa, was held in Yokohama in May. Some 38 African countries set up booths at the lively event, treating the many visitors to not only culture and food, but also stage performances of African music and traditional dance.

As Africa's politics and economies have advanced through different stages of development throughout the event's 26-year history, TICAD's role has also changed. In addition, Japan's assistance to Africa also shifted its emphasis from government development assistance to economic development.

At TICAD VI, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe announced that over the three years from 2016 to 2018, Japan would invest approximately 30 billion dollars under public-private

partnership for the future of Africa centering on developing quality infrastructure, promoting resilient health systems and laying the foundations for peace and stability. These measures develop human resources to 10 million people ("Empowerment") by making use of the strength of Japan ("Quality").

At TICAD7, various issues will be discussed, especially the three key themes of economic transformation and improvements in business environment and institutions through private investment and innovation, the promotion of resilient and sustainable society for human security, and peace and stability. The private sector must

also play a crucial role in Japan's efforts to assist in Africa's transition to a new industrial structure. We therefore can expect to see a further strengthening of public-private partnerships aimed at business expansion. There will also be lively discussions concerning ways to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Against the backdrop of Africa's solid economic growth, the improvement of the business environment has become one of the important issues, and we can expect expanding investment in Africa and a strengthening of economic cooperation to support that.

As Africa has abundant resources and enormous potential for economic growth, it is also attracting great interest from Japan's private sector. Looking ahead, it is hoped that Japan will continue to actively cooperate in creating Africa's future. ✱



TICAD is a strategic and important process in Africa's industrialisation efforts

Dr. Ibrahim Assane Mayaki

Chief Executive Officer of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD)
Former Prime Minister of Niger

The needs of both Africa and Japan have taken a new turn in the face of changing world dynamics that call for adjustments and changes in the way strategic partnerships are conducted. The African Union (AU) has recently been undergoing a fast-paced reform process, which means that there should be alignment with the TICAD process so that the partnership reflects the new development trajectories shaping the future for Africa and Japan.

Holding the TICAD VI in Africa in August 2016 demonstrated the growing African ownership of the TICAD

process, which attracted the attention of African States and all TICAD partners. The last TICAD has allowed for a greater involvement of the AU structures in the TICAD process, while providing Japan with a better understanding of Africa's decision-making mechanisms and processes as well as priority areas, at the multilateral level and existing bilateral engagements.

It is expected that TICAD7 will focus more on business aspects giving priority to business engagement. Moreover it is vitally important for TICAD to respect the AU frameworks for regional solutions.

TICAD has played and will contribute to play the role as catalyst for linking of national, regional, continental and global value chains to promote connectivity and enhance the capacity of Africa's private sector through technical support, experience-sharing on SMEs (small and medium enterprises,) promotion of agro-industry expansion, and learning from Japan's kaizen experience to leapfrog technical development for Africa. TICAD is therefore a strategic and important process in Africa's industrialisation efforts.

Young Bridge-Builders Uniting Africa and Japan

The ABE Initiative awards talented young Africans with post-graduate scholarships and internships, to provide them with opportunities to work in Japan or pursue careers that connect Japan and Africa

Marieme Lette works at a development center at Toyota Boshoku Corporation, a developer and manufacturer of automobile and aircraft interiors. Lette, who is from Senegal, came to Japan in 2015 in the second batch of the Master's Degree and Internship Program of the African Business Education Initiative for Youth (ABE Initiative). Her field is mechanical engineering. While studying at the graduate school of Shibaura Institute of Technology, she had the chance to participate in multiple academic conferences, where she met people from Toyota Boshoku, leading to her employment there. "When I found out about the

ABE Initiative program, I thought it was right for me. The program not only allows me to study but also gives me the opportunity to meet people at Japanese companies. My main focus right now is to build my professional experience, and that is why I am staying here," Lette explains.

The ABE Initiative started in 2014. The initiative was announced by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe at TICAD V in 2013 as an initiative to provide a program of up to three years of post-graduate education including an opportunity for an

internship in a Japanese company. Equipped with new specialized skills and personal networks acquired in Japan, participants who completed the program are now commencing their careers in various fields.

While some, like Lette, get jobs in Japan, others choose to find work in their home countries and start creating links with Japan there. Kenyan Christopher Maitai, who was in the first batch, studied at the Graduate School of Engineering of the University of Miyazaki. Returning to Kenya, he resumed his career as a

"When I saw
the program,
I told myself this is
the right opportunity"

Marieme Lette

ABE Initiative alumnus

Lette is developing a base material for door trim. She says she wants to hone her business skills through working at a Japanese company.





“ABE Initiative opened my world. It was a WOW! kind of experience”

Christopher Maitai

ABE Initiative alumnus

Maitai conducts marketing for a Japanese company's e-learning business in Kenya. He aims to improve the quality of education through long-distance lessons using presentation material, audio, pointing, writing, etc.



consultant, and also began providing educational assistance utilizing ICT by partnering with KJS Company Ltd., a Japanese e-learning company. Fate led Maitai to KJS when he met the CEO by sitting next to him at his university café, and this chance meeting led to an internship at KJS. The company's software ThinkBoard, a video content creation tool, is proving particularly useful in Kenya where there is a teacher shortage. After returning to Kenya, Maitai has served as a bridge-builder between KJS and Jomo

Kenyatta University of Agriculture & Technology, while actively promoting KJS's software locally.

Even after they finish the program, participants can use the connections they acquire in Japan to build their careers. One such networking opportunity is the annual African Business Networking Fair, where many companies participate. In 2019, 114 ABE Initiative participants and approximately 200 corporate participants representing about 100 companies attended the event. At each

of the corporate booths, young Africans were enthusiastically discussing business development in Africa while promoting their experiences and their home countries' unique potential.

Another advantage of the ABE Initiative that both Lette and Maitai point out is that it enables participants to build networks with fellow participants. The alumni of the ABE Initiative have established Kakehashi Africa, which allows alumni to share information via social media and regularly meet up after they return to their home countries. Various ways of matching participants and alumni with Japanese companies have begun to emerge.

Maitai says, “The ABE Initiative opened my world. The education, the personal friendships, the business network, etc., etc. It was a WOW! kind of experience!”

We can expect the alumni who have had the similar WOW! experience through the ABE Initiative to steadily expand their horizons as bridge-builders between Africa and Japan. ✨



Above: Scene at the African Business Networking Fair held in March this year. The fair offers opportunities to network with Japanese companies.

Right: Members attending a meeting in Tokyo of Kakehashi Africa, which was established by alumni of the ABE Initiative.





At a pumping station of the Ahero Irrigation Scheme, a project site of CaDPERP, together with local farmers association members.

FEATURE >>> Japan in Africa

Transferring Fertile Knowledge of Irrigation in Kenya

Irrigation is key to improving Kenya's rice production capacity. An irrigation expert dispatched from Japan to work in the Kenyan government is transferring knowhow accumulated over Japan's long history in paddy rice cultivation.

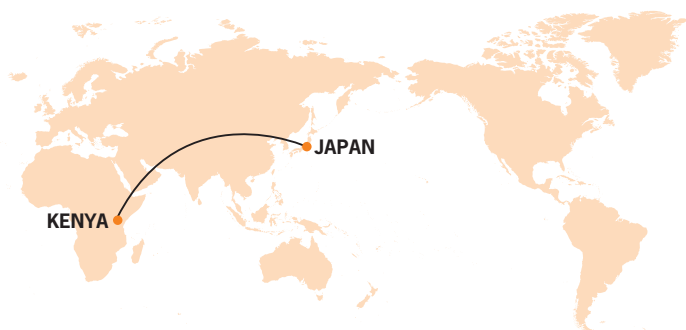
Located on the east coast of Africa, the Republic of Kenya generates roughly 30% of its GDP through agriculture, forestry and fisheries, and these industries employ more than 40% of the workforce.^[1] The traditional staple food of Kenya is *ugali*, made from cornmeal, but in recent years, rice consumption has been growing due to its great taste and simple preparation. However, Kenya's self-sufficiency ratio of rice is between 10 and 20%,^[2] and

the need to improve Kenya's rice production capacity has become an urgent issue.

As most of Kenya is arid or semi-arid land, irrigation is essential for expanding agricultural land. In 2017, the Kenyan government set the objective of at least doubling the area of irrigated land over the period from 2018 to 2022.

Japan has assisted in those irrigation development efforts as part of the economic and technical

assistance provided to Kenya over the years. Significant results have been achieved, particularly in the Mwea Irrigation Scheme, Kenya's largest paddy rice cultivation area. TICAD VI held in August 2016, recognized the need to further strengthen agricultural cooperation with Africa. That led to the launch of an innovative new scheme to dispatch abundantly experienced JICA experts to governments with the aim to transfer advanced technologies,



provide training, and further strengthen collaboration with Japan.

As a result, irrigation expert Junichiro Yamada was dispatched to Kenya in May 2018.

Yamada was posted to the Kenyan government's Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and Irrigation, where he conducts surveys and plans for irrigation. His position enables him to stay informed on what is happening in the higher levels of government, allowing for quick decisions on appropriate strategies.

As rice is a traditional staple, paddy rice cultivation has a long history in Japan. That accumulated knowhow proves useful in Kenya, not only in infrastructural development such as rice paddy construction, but also for administrative tasks such as improving water management rules

for farmers.

However, "Kenya cannot apply techniques from Japan or other parts of Africa without making adjustments," explains Yamada.

"Properly listening to the local authorities and farmers is particularly important. My advice must be appropriately suited for the specific local regions because the needs and outlook of each region are shaped by its unique characteristics and circumstances. Therefore, my stance is always to work together with the local people. Also, I share the challenging aspects of projects with my associates back in Japan so that it may provide a flow on effect for future activities."

Launched in early 2019, the Capacity Development Project for Enhancement of Rice Production



Above: Onions are also being grown in a field irrigation scheme.

Below: In the Mwea Irrigation Scheme, construction of a dam and waterways is steadily proceeding as a Japanese ODA loan project.

in Irrigation Schemes (CaDPERP) is providing further support to the national government for rice production in Mwea. This project is also advancing irrigation development along the eastern shore of Lake Victoria, which is another area with high potential for paddy rice cultivation.

"Both the government and the farmers in Kenya are extremely enthusiastic. While conducting onsite surveys, we often worked without so much as a break for lunch, and I didn't get to eat lunch until work finished, either!" Yamada chuckles. "Kenya has both ample land area and good soil, giving it excellent agricultural potential. With Japan's assistance, I think Kenya can further develop its agriculture, which will contribute to raising its overall standard of living." ✿



Kenya is expanding rice production to meet growing consumer demand. Japan is providing support in multiple ways, including not only irrigation but also new rice strain development and cultivation techniques.

[1] Economic Survey 2018, April 2018, by Kenya National Bureau of Statistics. [2] From the Rice for Africa Website, operated by the Coalition for African Rice Development.

The Spillover Benefits of Clean Water in Africa

A compact water purification system developed by Yamaha Motor, simple enough to be operated by the residents themselves, is changing life in Africa

There are 840 million people in the world who do not have access to safe drinking water, and they must obtain water from such sources as rivers, lakes, and poorly maintained wells. Half of those people are concentrated in African nations south of the Sahara (sub-Saharan Africa).

Japan has long been providing

comprehensive water resources support in both knowhow and equipment, utilizing technology and experience. One example is Yamaha Motor Co., Ltd., which has been promoting “safe, clean water for everyone” and deploying water purification systems in Africa and Asia. The company has developed a simple system that utilizes a

traditional technique called “slow sand filtration.”

Introduction of the water purification system to Africa began in 2011, with the installation of a system for a village on the outskirts of the city of Saint-Louis in northwest Senegal. Unlike inland areas, the Senegal River is nearby, and the region was late in benefiting from support services.

Children now enjoy access to clean water, and their well-being is also improving.



Features of the Yamaha Clean Water Supply System

- **Low cost**
- **Easy to maintain**

By using natural processes, no membrane filters or chemicals are required

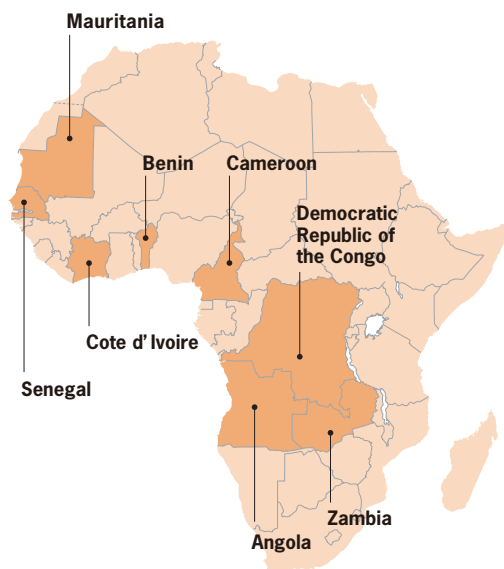


- **Local people can operate it by themselves**



The system is operated independently by a committee formed by the residents.

The system has been introduced in eight African countries



The Yamaha Clean Water Supply System produces safe water at the rate of 8,000 liters per day, which meets the needs of approximately 2,000 people. The greatest urgency for meeting water needs is in poor agricultural communities, and the system permits simple daily maintenance at a sustainably low cost for such regions. The system

utilizes gravity in a way that reduces electrical consumption.

Masashi Kanemaru, Yamaha Motor's Clean Water Project Group supervisor, says, "Our role does not end with installation; we want to contribute to the region over the medium and long term. The key to this is ownership by the residents. A model for self-administration by the residents is in place, and rather than being available for free, a fee is levied for the water. The program allows them to build up the funds for offsetting periodic maintenance expenses."

Thanks to clean drinking water, the villagers' health has improved and the village is slowly becoming more prosperous. For women and children who had been accustomed to carrying water from distant water sources, more time is now available for agricultural work or commuting to school. As the news of the village with clean water gradually spread, more people started migrating from nearby areas, and new schools have been built.

In 2018, under an aid grant from

the Japanese government, 10 more systems were installed in Senegal. This is a concrete expression of the pledge made by the Japanese government at TICAD V, to provide grants to "improve access to safe water and sanitary conditions for 10 million people." As of June 2019, 21 systems have been installed in eight African countries.

Ensuring access to safe water is an objective of SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals). Water is also indispensable for eliminating poverty and improving health, which are also SDGs. Providing safe water in close association with the local residents supports younger generations who are responsible for the future. ✨



Women accustomed to fetching water from distant sources can now use that time in other ways.

A Cup of African Coffee Filled with Happiness

Japan is one of the biggest coffee-loving countries in the world, and African brews are especially popular here thanks to happy relations between Japan and African nations



If you walk down the streets of Tokyo, you may see several coffee shops lining a given block, with coffee beans from around the world on display. These days, coffee is an everyday essential for the Japanese, and Japan is the world's sixth-largest importer of coffee by total volume.^[1] Most of those imports come from Central and South America, Asia, Oceania and Africa. Beans from Africa in particular have been garnering increasing attention over the years.

Japanese connoisseurs are increasingly exploring the beans in search of more diverse flavors, as each kind of African coffee has unique traits that depend on its country of origin. Mocha beans from Ethiopia have a characteristically mellow sourness, while Kilimanjaro coffee beans from Tanzania feature a wilder flavor. In Japan, even scarce Malawi coffee, which used to be a rarity, has become easy to find.

The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) has

adopted various approaches to support the African coffee business. JICA has been involved in coffee cultivation trials in Uganda since 2002 and technical training in Malawi since 2004, and it has been helping businesses in Ethiopia gain international certifications and export certified coffee beans since 2012.

Furthermore, in 2016, JICA launched the Project for Strengthening the Coffee Value Chain in Rwanda in response to a request from the Rwandan government.



A Japanese expert explains to producers the differences between good and flawed beans at a coffee-washing station.



A Japanese expert with producers. By providing in-person support on site, they build up trust. Those efforts are also improving coffee bean quality.



Producers have few opportunities to drink the coffee brewed from their beans. That contact with the end-product made from their crops helps them understand what they are achieving and fosters their self-esteem.



These fruits, called coffee cherries, contain beans that are processed into coffee beans for delivery to consumers. African coffee beans exhibit a diversity of traits that vary according to place of origin.

The intent of this project is to raise awareness about quality standards among the people in the business while boosting the production volume and international competitiveness of Rwandan coffee. Support to improve their business extends to all processes: production, selection, processing, distribution, and sales. Japan sends experts and Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers to work hand-in-hand with locals.

Efforts are made to implement the best improvements that will not burden the producers with extra cost or labor, and emphasis is placed on carefully explaining the reasons for the value chain while listening to the producers' needs. This support covers all aspects of the plantation, from soil improvement to guidance on water-washing based coffee processing.

Since many producers do not have direct experience drinking

coffee, the project also aims to better inform producers on what makes a delicious cup of coffee. This is done by holding tasting sessions to compare good and faulty beans and provide instructions on how to brew. When producers know what makes for a tasty cup of coffee, they are motivated to make delicious coffee beans and feel greater pride when rated highly according to global



Tomoyuki Otsuka, a young entrepreneur and founder of Sarutahiko Coffee, is a leading authority on specialty coffees that are even tastier than mainstream coffees. He has introduced quality coffees with rich flavors to a wide swath of the Japanese market.

standards.

Sarutahiko Coffee is a popular Japanese coffee chain with 13 stores nationwide. It handles African coffees from countries such as Rwanda, Ethiopia and Burundi. The company's founder, Tomoyuki Otsuka, has been especially interested in Rwandan coffee. He said, "Rwandan products are special coffees that delight you with berry-like flavors. I often mix them in to accentuate a blend."

Otsuka says he was first fascinated by coffee because of African products. "It was eye-opening to drink intensely tasty coffees with a flavor that's elegant like wine, or with a floral accent like a rose."

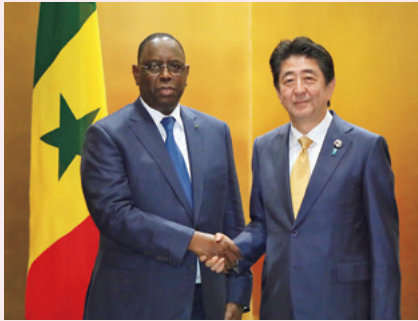
Nothing would make a cup of African coffee more deeply flavorful than for Japan's assistance to bear delicious fruit in Africa and yield returns that make life better for African producers. ✿

[1]World's Top Exports, "Coffee Imports by Country," April 17, 2019

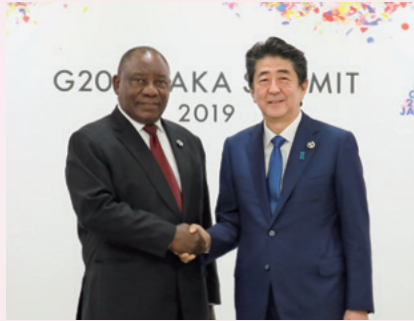
Prime Minister in Action

Prime Minister Abe continues to actively engage in “Diplomacy That Takes a Panoramic Perspective of the World Map.” From March through June 2019, he visited countries of Europe and North America, and Iran. In Japan, he hosted G20 Osaka Summit as a chair and held talks with numerous world leaders who visited Japan.

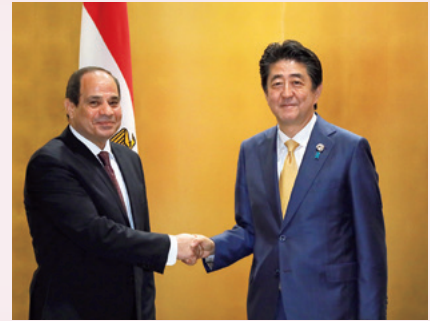
African leaders met during the G20 Osaka Summit



Met with H.E. Mr. Macky Sall, President of the Republic of Senegal.



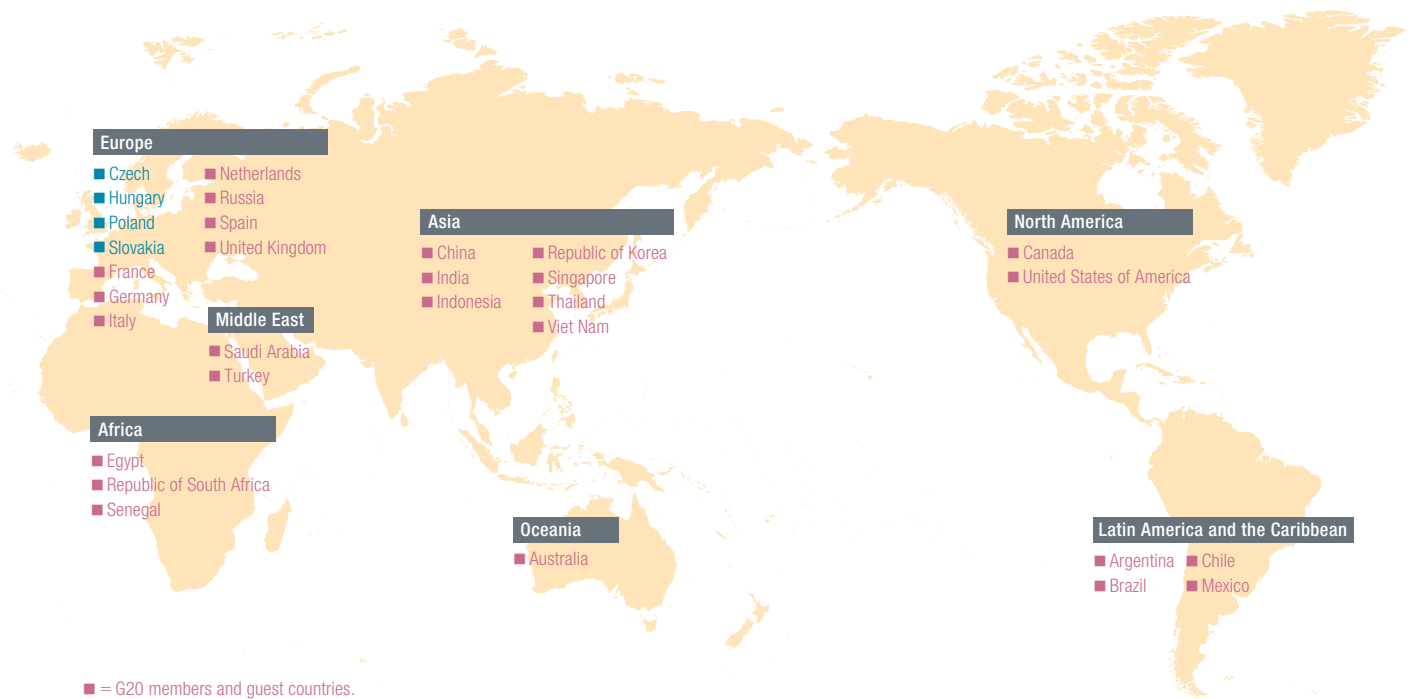
Met with H.E. Mr. Cyril Ramaphosa, President of the Republic of South Africa.



Met with H.E. Mr. Abdel-Fattah El-Sisi, President of the Arab Republic of Egypt.



Hosted G20 Osaka Summit and met with attending leaders. (June 2019)



Met with the Honorable Donald J. Trump, President of the United States of America, at Akasaka State Guest House. (May 2019)



Met with H.E. Mr. Donald Tusk, President of the European Council and H.E. Mr. Jean-Claude Juncker, President of the European Commission, in the Kingdom of Belgium. (April 2019)



Attended the Visegrad Group (V4) plus Japan Summit Meeting and met with leaders of V4 countries, in the Slovak Republic. (April 2019)




 Met with H.E. Mr. Emmanuel Macron, President of the French Republic, in the French Republic. (April 2019)



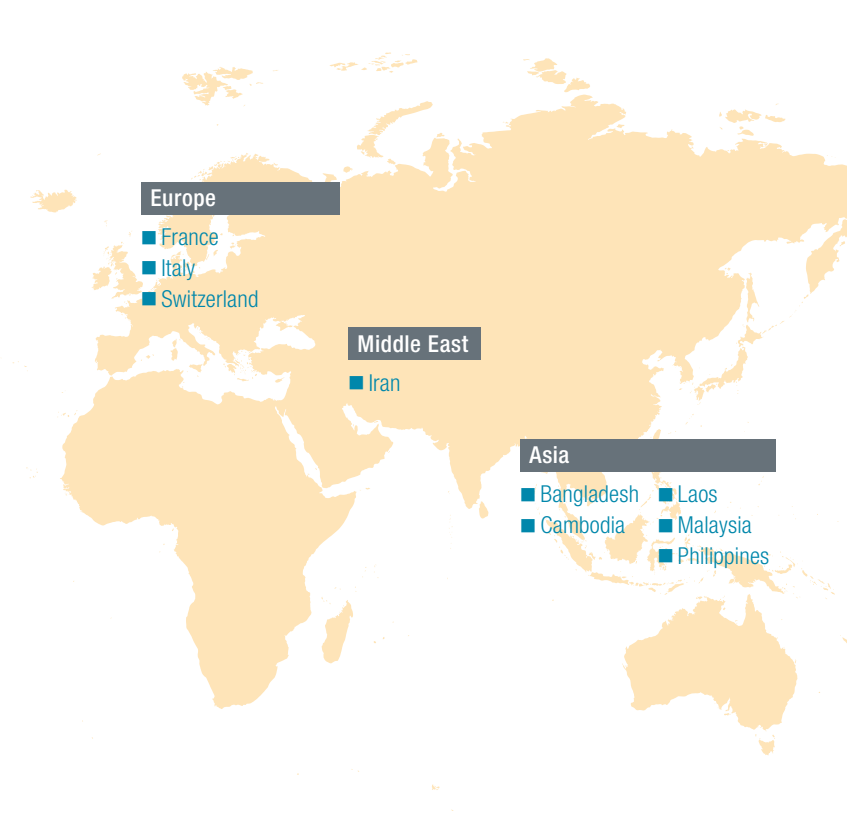
 Met with H.E. Prof. Giuseppe Conte, President of the Council of Ministers of the Italian Republic, in the Italian Republic. (April 2019)




 Met with H.E. Mr. Ueli Maurer, President and Head of the Federal Department of Finance of the Swiss Confederation, at the Japanese Prime Minister's Office. (June 2019)




 Met with H.E. Dr. Hassan Rouhani, President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, in the Islamic Republic of Iran. (June 2019)



 Met with H.E. Sheikh Hasina, Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, at the Japanese Prime Minister's Office. (May 2019)



 Met with Tun Dr. Mahathir bin Mohamad, Prime Minister of Malaysia, at the Japanese Prime Minister's Office. (May 2019)



North America

■ Canada

Oceania

■ Palau

Latin America and the Caribbean

■ Panama



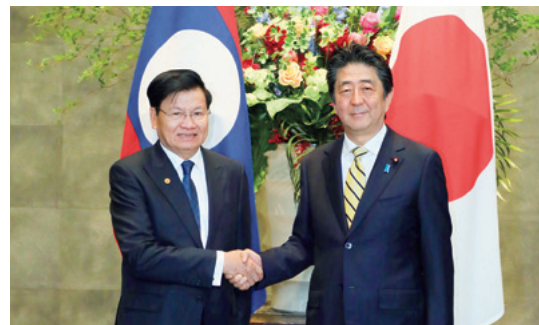
Met with the Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada, in Canada. (April 2019)



Met with H.E. Mr. Juan Carlos Varela Rodríguez, President of the Republic of Panama, at the Japanese Prime Minister's Office. (April 2019)



Met with Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia, at the Japanese Prime Minister's Office. (May 2019)



Met with H.E. Dr. Thongloun Sisoulith, Prime Minister of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, at the Japanese Prime Minister's Office. (May 2019)



Met with H.E. Mr. Rodrigo R. Duterte, President of the Republic of the Philippines, at the Japanese Prime Minister's Office. (May 2019)



Met with H.E. Mr. Tommy E. Remengesau, Jr., President of the Republic of Palau, at the Japanese Prime Minister's Office. (March 2019)

Coastal Cleanup by People Embracing the Sea

Located beside the Sea of Japan, Fukui Prefecture is known for its crystal-clear ocean water. However, large volumes of ocean debris are washing up along this beautiful coastline. In response, local citizens are making admirable efforts to protect the ocean.

In a small coastal town on the Sea of Japan, a group of people is working diligently to keep the beaches clean. Because Mikuni Sunset Beach, a popular summertime ocean bathing spot, faces west, debris carried by currents in the Sea of Japan often washes ashore. We asked a female surfer, who leads the beach cleanup efforts, about what kinds of things turn up.

She explained that trash typically consists of things like fishing gear, plastic bottles, and polyethylene tanks. And sometimes they find medical waste such as syringes. Much of the debris has Korean writing on it. What is more surprising is that sometimes several items of the same

thing wash ashore—leading one to suspect that they were disposed of systematically and intentionally. She also said that medical waste and polyethylene tanks contain residual hazardous substances, such as caustic soda, and are extremely dangerous; because of this, special care needs to be taken to keep children away during the cleanup activities.

“In the past, coastal debris was entirely comprised of organic materials such as grass and wood, which would eventually decompose

and return to nature. These days, there is an increasing amount of plastic materials in ocean trash that just floats along with the currents and never breaks down. I think that people’s way of thinking has not kept up with such changes. We want to convey a simple message to Koreans: Don’t dump into the ocean! Don’t pollute the ocean.”

She went on to say, “Some time ago, when I heard that trash from Japan was washed ashore in Hawaii, it made me feel ashamed. If people who throw trash into the sea understand



Rubbish dumped on the other side of the Sea of Japan is carried to the shoreline of Fukui Prefecture.



TVs and refrigerators with Korean labeling wash up on the beach.





If beached plastic debris is not immediately collected, it will return to the ocean. Persistent and regular efforts are essential. Once a year, surfers from around Japan converge on Mikuni Sunset Beach to engage in a concerted cleanup.



that such garbage causes problems far away and develop a sense of shame, perhaps things will change.”

The group, which currently comprises around 45 members of the Fukui Branch of the Nippon Surfing Association, conducts cleanup activities once a month. They work with the local government, which supports them by collecting the trash free of charge. Local children are learning about the importance of keeping the environment clean in various ways. Parents pick up trash with their children, especially during school summer holidays and after local events, and cleanup activities are also incorporated as part of surfing classes. The west-facing bay is the final destination for debris that drifts in on the ocean currents, and because the garbage never stops

A considerable amount of trash, such as bottles and drums containing chemicals that are too hazardous to touch, also wash ashore.



coming, some members comment that the work is never-ending. Despite this, the group continues to work with the following conviction: “If we keep up these efforts, in the end there will be no more trash.”

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

Recently, requests have begun to change the name of the “Sea of Japan,”

a name that even South Korea has not objected to in bilateral meetings or international conferences, to the “East Sea,” which is a name that is only used domestically inside South Korea. However, if we truly care about these waters, preserving the marine environment is far more important than trying to change its name. The ocean transcends national borders. Every person who benefits from the ocean’s bounty must think about the ocean as a whole as well as those on the other sides of it and join together to protect our global marine environment. ✱



These single mothers, who blamed themselves for not being able to get stable jobs, work in the bag workshop and are able to smile again for the first time in a long while.

GRASSROOTS AMBASSADOR >>> Japanese Individuals Contributing Worldwide

African Print for Women's Self-Reliance

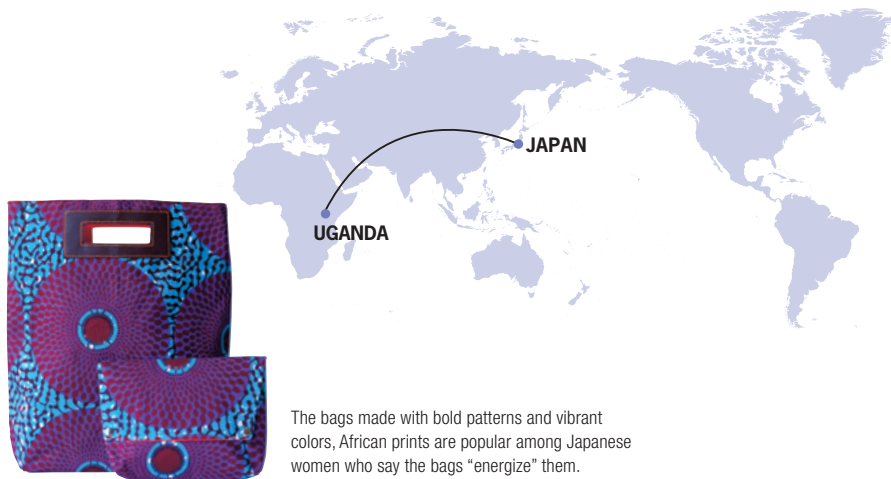
Japanese woman establishes bag workshop in Uganda's capital, Kampala, to support both unemployed single mothers who are unable to send their children to school, and impoverished former child soldiers who lack dreams for a better future

Arranged within a newly opened store in a prime location in Tokyo are bags of vibrant colors and rich patterns and they give off tremendous energy when held. Chizu Nakamoto, a resident of Uganda, launched a project to solve social issues through sustainable business, with the primary goal of preventing people from being forced into conflict.

You may ask yourself, what does

the business of selling bags and peace-building have in common? Nakamoto says, "In Africa, where living conditions are severe, there are many young people who are dissatisfied with society and are easily attracted to joining armed groups. But, I believe if they lived under different conditions, they might not have to make such a decision. For this reason, I thought in order to create peace, I must create jobs."

When Nakamoto was stationed in Uganda as an NGO staff member, she directly saw the light and dark sides of the country for herself. Even when there is no employment, many people gathered their wisdom to build their own businesses and live their lives vigorously. She was impressed by their positive outlook on life and the fact that they believed, from the bottom of their hearts, that tomorrow would be a better day than today.



The bags made with bold patterns and vibrant colors, African prints are popular among Japanese women who say the bags “energize” them.



Chizu Nakamoto

In graduate school, she mainly studied conflict and peace-building in the sub-Saharan Africa region. After graduation, she got a job at a major bank, but in 2011 left the bank to work for an African agricultural support NGO. In 2014, she launched her bag workshop while working at the NGO office in Uganda and the following year she established RICCI EVERYDAY, a bag manufacturing and sales company in Japan. This was followed by her creation of a local company in Uganda in 2016.

On the other hand, in Uganda, life is very difficult and challenging for many single mothers living in urban areas, and they often cannot afford to educate their children. From among these women, Nakamoto met one person who was just making enough cash to get by, running her own small business through trial and error. For Nakamoto, this encounter was a turning point and became a chance for her to realize what she had been pondering in her mind until that time.

“I thought to myself, ‘With this person, I just might be able to launch a new business.’ With my own pocket money, I sent her to school to learn sewing, and from that point, we started the bag workshop.”

Nakamoto, who was always a lover of fashion, was fascinated by the charm of the vibrantly colorful African print fabrics, having seen

them by chance while visiting Kampala’s city marketplace with a friend. As she was excitedly choosing fabrics with her friend, she became convinced that if she crafted bags using these fabrics, this could surely become a business in Japan.

Japanese consumers love and give high praise to the bags and travel goods that are crafted with a sophisticated design and made with high quality and functionality. In a mere four years, the business has grown to the point where they have established direct management stores in Tokyo. As for the management, Nakamoto endeavors to keep relationships on a level plain, without creating a hierarchical relationship between herself and her staff. “I respect the women’s skills, and they alone are responsible for their sewing and work arrangements. I try to express

my gratitude in words, no matter what they do.”

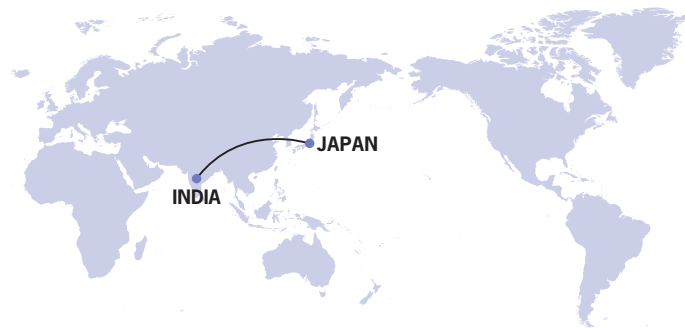
She has also put in place social security systems that help single mothers, such as interest-free education loans and subsidies for medical expenses. “I think we can develop a strong relationship of trust by providing a wide range of support, not just the relationship of paying salaries for their work.” Improving the living conditions of single mothers and supporting the education of the next generation will reduce the numbers of young people who have no future dreams.

“Setting up a successful brand is not the end. We want to expand the creation of sustainable support in countries beyond Uganda.” Nakamoto continues her journey toward the realization of a society in which women are proud and young people have dreams, believing that tomorrow will be better than today, and the day after tomorrow will be better than tomorrow. ✨



Nakamoto says nothing when it comes to the allocation and procedures of work on the job site. This is because she respects the women as professionals.

New Breeze Blowing in Bollywood



Bringing a new style of supple sensibility, a Japanese female director of photography is constantly receiving offers in Bollywood, the home of India's giant movie industry

The mention of Bollywood movies conjures an image of brightly-clad and gorgeously made-up beautiful women singing and dancing in dazzling movies shot with light hitting every nook and cranny to prevent shadows. However, Japanese director of photography (DOP) Keiko Nakahara applies shadow with near-natural light and uses handheld cameras to

bring subtle nuance and reality to Bollywood.

In the biopic *Mary Kom* (2013), which depicted the first half of an Indian female boxer's life, Nakahara had the camera pursue the movements of a character through completely dark rooms and expressed the twilight of early morning. For the boxing ring scenes, she used a handheld camera to move in concert

with the boxers' movements and capture an effect more intimate than any tripod camera could achieve.

The use of such realism in filming technique used to be unpopular in India, but Nakahara's style has disproven this assumption by charming not only Bollywood directors but also the audiences and media as well. She asserts, "But it's never been my intention



Bollywood is based in the large city of Mumbai. Although female DOPs are not that common in Bollywood, Nakahara reports that she never felt it was hard working there as a woman.



As her style of freely walking among the actors carrying a heavy camera is rare in India, it surprised the rest of the film crew.

Keiko Nakahara

Having studied filmmaking at San Diego State University, she was honored, in 2011, as a rising star by the American Society of Cinematographers. She is currently active as a director of photography in Mumbai, India.

to stubbornly insist on my way of doing things and say, this is my style, because the DOP's job is to visualize 'the image in the director's mind.'"

Happenings are a daily occurrence on film sets. Rather than getting caught up in the chaos, however, Nakahara remains calm as she joins in discussions with the director and gives instructions to the crew. "Japanese people consider it more virtuous to listen to another's opinion rather than to assert oneself. But rather than submissively following what someone says, I search for the path in which everyone, including me, can be happy, and work to do things well to get good results. I think this kind of Japanese culture I was raised with is proving useful in movie making, where good teamwork is essential," Nakahara muses.

From a young age, while growing up, Nakahara relocated many times on account of her father's work. When she was having a hard time settling into a new place, it was movies that saved her from her

worries. During the two hours she spent watching a movie, she could forget all her troubles and immerse herself into the world created by it. Nakahara says this fostered a wish to someday make movies that lift people's spirits, and after graduating from high school, she went to the United States, the homeland of movies.

Nakahara began to gain recognition as a DOP in the United States. Then, several years after beginning work, she received an offer from an Indian movie producer who had seen her cinemaphotography. This led her life down an unexpected path. Nakahara later moved base to India where she has worked as a DOP. She has now been involved in over 10 films. Although most have been serious dramas, *Total Dhamaal*, released in February 2019, is a typical Bollywood comedy. Nakahara tells how she went and saw it at the cinema after its release.

"The audience really loved it. They laughed raucously, clapped

Nakahara claims to have been saved many times by the cheerfulness of her work colleagues in India. If she gets stuck thinking about something on the movie set, someone brightens her day by telling her, "Don't worry, we'll work it out somehow!"



and cheered. At that moment, it felt like I had achieved what I had long wanted to do!"

Nakahara says, "The Indian people are truly rich in emotional expression." Although a rich mix of emotions can bring forth stormy behavior on set, the same richness is also why India has a culture that enjoys movies wholeheartedly. Seeing their smiling faces is what drives Nakahara's work. ✿

Spreading the Charm of Sake in Germany

Susanne Rost-Aoki, a sake popularizer in Berlin, desires to convey to many people her feelings of surprise and exhilaration when first encountering Japanese sake



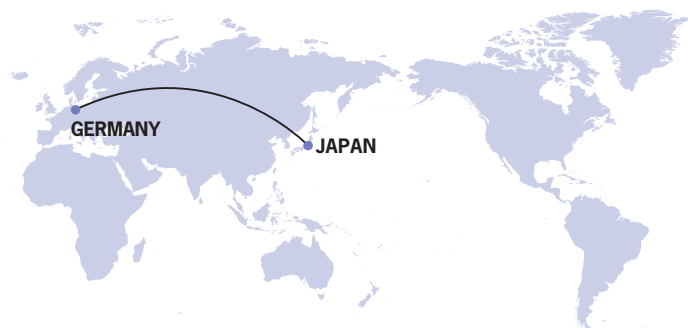
Rost-Aoki courteously greets each customer. This customer, who came from Munich, purchased seven bottles on this day.

Susanne Rost-Aoki took her first drink of sake at a sushi restaurant in Berlin. She ordered the sake, imported from the United States, to be served as “hot sake,” which was the favorite way for people to drink it in Europe.

She said, “Later, when visiting Japan, I tried *daiginjo* sake (made with highly polished rice) with oysters, but it was completely different from any hot sake I had had in the past. Its flavor was refreshing and fruity, and it was served extremely cold. It also went amazingly well with the oyster dish we had ordered. That experience really opened my eyes to the delicious taste of sake.”

After returning to Germany, she tried to obtain high-quality Japanese sake, similar to those she had been drinking in Japan, but realized that there was no store or outlet handling such sake. Therefore, Rost-Aoki, being someone who, once having decided on something, takes action to implement it, launched an import wholesale and sales business for sake that same year. The year was 2004.

In order to gain specific knowledge about Japanese sake, she read many books and participated in seminars. She also visited various breweries in Japan, and built relationships to steadily increase her knowledge and experience.



Sake Kontor with its red logo. The shop window is also lined with sake to pique the interest of those passing by.



Susanne Rost-Aoki

German sake-expert and owner of Sake Kontor in Berlin. She lives in Berlin with her Japanese husband. Fascinated by Japanese sake, she established Sake Kontor in 2004 to import and sell Japanese sake. In 2010, the company opened its first sake shop in Berlin.

As Japanese cuisine becomes trendier throughout the world, the presence of sake is also growing in Germany. However, there are many people who are unaware of its bountiful varieties and deep attraction. By conveying the back-story of sake, her goal is for more people to understand its merits. In 2010, Rost-Aoki opened her first high-end Japanese sake specialty store, called Sake Kontor, in Berlin's Ostkreuz district.

When you step inside the store, you will see a breathtaking masterpiece of lined up Japanese sake bottles covering the entire wall. There you will find placed a wide variety of sake bottles from *daiginjo* sake to *Junmai* sake (made only from rice), which can easily be picked up by those who are interested, and the staff can explain the characteristics of each brand directly to customers. Sake Kontor is a unique place where you can actually sample sake, and it is now famous among the local

residents as well as throughout Germany.

A wide variety of visitors frequently visit the store, such as passersby who drop in because they are curious, and fans of sake coming from other cities and foreign countries, and people who are looking for unique

products, other than wine, as a gift. At the tasting parties, which are held once every two or three months, applications always exceed the 20 people limit. Participants learn the goodness of sake, and after taking part in a tasting party often become regular customers afterward. "I want to make sake a popular beverage, like wine or beer," says Rost-Aoki. There are still many people who misunderstand sake thinking that they should drink it like taking a shot, or that it must always be served hot. By carefully gaining knowledge about the production methods and ingredients of Japanese sake, such people may lose their preconceptions. It is a great pleasure for Rost-Aoki to hear that "the view towards Japanese sake has changed." She hopes that as many people as possible will be able to experience the excitement she felt long ago when discovering the "real palatability" of sake. ✿



Above: The store also sells a book written by Rost-Aoki about sake.
Below: Regular tasting sessions are held, with the capacity said to be quickly reached.

At the Olympic and Paralympic Games Tokyo 2020, local municipalities will become host towns welcoming athletes of teams from all over the world with the spirit of *omotenashi* (hospitality). The city of Nagai,



The Tanzanian team made a special appearance at the Nagai Marathon held in October 2018. Fans lining the roadside were treated with the spectacle of their exceptional speed.

located in the northern part of Japan, became the host town for the Tanzanian team. This is likely because, for more than 20 years, Nagai City has maintained friendly relations with the Republic of Tanzania via its Yamagata-Tanzania Friendship Association.

Bahati Rodgers, a Tanzanian native, was assigned to work on the project and conduct international cultural exchange through sports. As one of the few Sports Exchange Advisors (SEA) in the JET Programme, he provides sports instruction to people of all ages, from children to senior citizens, in Nagai City. In the fall of 2018, he also played his first significant role as a

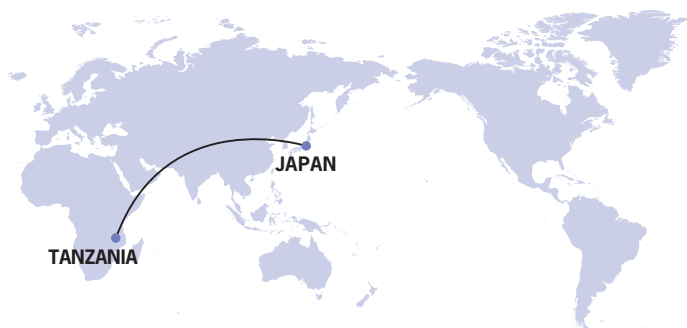
SEA. As a member of the host town project, Rodgers supported the stay and participation of the Tanzanian team when they were invited to take part in a local marathon. He said, “The team was very impressed with the hospitality of the people in the town. Nagai City will be able to provide everything the Olympic teams need for the upcoming 2020 Olympic Games.”

Rodgers had no idea about Nagai City until he came to Japan. Upon arriving to Nagai City and experiencing the city, he said, “I was very impressed with the attraction of Nagai’s nature, its mountains, and beautiful paddy-field scenery. The up-and-down terrain is excellent

GRASSROOTS AMBASSADOR >>> The JET Programme

Tanzanian Athlete Builds Bonds of Friendship with Japan

Yamagata Prefecture’s Nagai City will be the host town for the Tanzania team at the Olympic and Paralympic Games Tokyo 2020. Bahati Rodgers, who was assigned to work in this area, is engaged in international cultural exchange through sports.



Bahati Rodgers

Born in Tanzania. He studied Physical Education, Sports Science at the University of Dar es Salaam. Since childhood, he has been fascinated by Japanese culture and technology, so he applied for a job as a Sports Exchange Advisor for the JET Programme. He has been assigned to Nagai City since August 2018.



training for marathon runners.” In the winter, Nagai is covered by heavy snow. Being from a tropical country, Rodgers experienced snow here for the first time in his life. He also tested his reflexes by challenging himself to ski.

For the 2020 Olympic Games, he enthusiastically says that he will not only provide the necessary assistance for the Tanzanian team, but also will assist in all preparations for Nagai City as a hosting town. He is passionate about learning Japanese in order to act as a go-between being able to use both Japanese and Swahili.

At the same time, he would like the townspeople of Nagai to become

Right: Nagai City is rich in nature and embraced by beautiful mountains. The local line that goes leisurely through the city is also popular with tourists.

Below: Rodgers says that the allure of sports is being able to communicate through using one's body. Children asking him to, "Come every day" is a testament to his popularity.



more familiar with the country and people of Tanzania. He is also busy interacting with residents of the city beyond sports, doing such activities as teaching Swahili on a local radio program and holding an

English conversation café. He says, "I hope that the friendship between Tanzania and Japan will continue to further flourish even after the 2020 Olympics." ✿

The former school building of Nagai Elementary School is protected as a cultural asset. Currently, it is being used as a venue for the townspeople to gather, and Rodgers also holds an English conversation café here.



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 2018, the JET Programme welcomed 5,528 participants, and currently there are more than 68,000 alumni from 73 countries living in all parts of the world.



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

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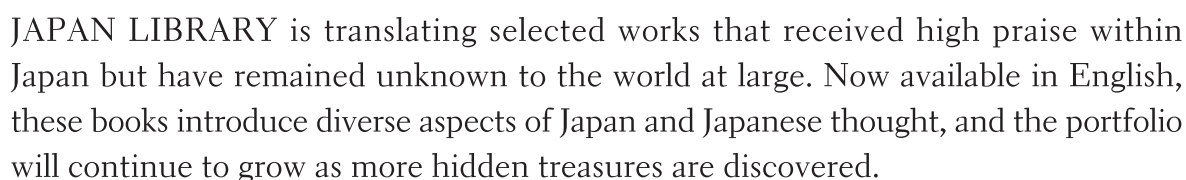
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