



Bunka no Hi - Nov. 16th Save the Date!

On Sunday, November 16th, celebrate Japanese culture at Bunka no Hi (Japanese Culture Day) from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. This annual event is hosted by the Japanese Community and Cultural Center of Washington.

Please visit the Consulate General of Japan booth to learn furoshiki wrapping techniques; meet PARO the therapeutic harp seal robot; discover interesting facts about Japanese culture and gather travel brochures for planning your trip to Japan!



Furoshiki Workshop
(JCCCW)

[Event Details](#)

Japanese Agricultural Training Program Graduation Ceremony

-CGJ, Seattle
October 8, 2014

A special graduation ceremony was held at the Official Residence. Fifty-eight visiting trainees from Japan graduated after completing their participation in the Japanese Agricultural Exchange Program (JATP). This 19-month-long work/exchange educational program is sponsored by the Japan Agricultural Exchange Council (JAEC).



JATP 2014 Graduates(CGJ, Seattle)

[Full Story](#)

[Learn More about JATP](#)

Aki Matsuri - A Fall Festival Favorite

-CGJ, Seattle

September 6-7, 2014

The Eastside Nihon Matsuri Association welcomed the change in seasons with its annual Aki Matsuri. Attendees were treated to innovative ceramic works by Kenzaburo Kubodera and introduced to the ancient performing art of Noh presented by Professor Richard Emmert.

At the Consulate General of Japan booth, PARO the therapeutic harp seal robot once again delighted guests as he greeted them enthusiastically. Visitors were also able to learn about Japanese culture as well as study, work and travel opportunities in Japan.

[Full Story](#)

[Festival Overview](#)



School of Taiko Performance, Main Stage
(CGJ, Seattle)

Mie Prefecture and Washington State set wheels in motion for two-way economic cooperation

-CGJ, Seattle

August 25, 2014

Washington State and Mie Prefecture signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on the establishment of a partnership to promote two-way economic development, with a focus on the aerospace and life-science industries.



MOU Signing
(CGJ, Seattle)

During the reception that followed guests were able to meet and discuss future opportunities to collaborate, while enjoying special Mie Prefecture delicacies such as Iga beef, abalone and sea bream (tai).

[Full Story](#)

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's Article contributed to Financial Times, By Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, Published in Financial Times on June 30, 2014

-Ministry of Foreign Affairs

June 30, 2014

Since I introduced a package of measures to revive Japan's economy, there are three questions I am regularly asked about our country's prospects. First, people want to know whether I am genuinely committed to the "third arrow" of Abenomics. Make no mistake: I am. Our structural reforms have shifted up a gear this month. We reduced Japan's corporate taxes

by 2.4 per cent this year, and will cut the rate further next fiscal year. We aim to reduce the level of the effective tax rate to the 20s over several years. This will help growth and draw international investors. Strengthening corporate governance is also critical to enhance shareholder value.

[Full Text](#)

Cabinet Decision on Development of Seamless Security Legislation to Ensure Japan's Survival and Protect its People

-Cabinet Secretariat

July 1, 2014

Since the end of World War II, Japan has consistently followed the path of a peace-loving nation under the Constitution of Japan. While adhering to a basic policy of maintaining an exclusively national defense-oriented policy, not becoming a military power that poses a threat to other countries, and observing the Three Non-Nuclear Principles, Japan has flourished as an economic power through continuous efforts of its people and built a stable and affluent livelihood...

[Full text](#)

G7 Summit 2014 in Brussels

-Ministry of Foreign Affairs

June 4-5, 2014

A summary of the G-7 Summit in Brussels, including The Brussels G7 Summit Declaration, the G7 Leaders' Communiqué, June 2014 - Foreign Policy, and the G7 Declaration on Non-Proliferation and Disarmament for 2014.

[Full text](#)



G7 Summit 2014 in Brussels
(© Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

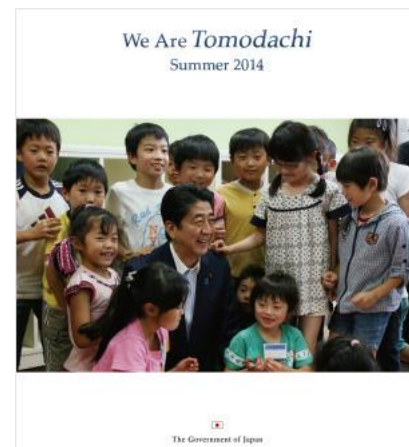
We Are Tomodachi Summer 2014 -The official magazine of the Government of Japan

**-Cabinet Secretariat
Summer, 2014**

The summer edition of We Are Tomodachi is out, and you can view it here!

[Available in: e-book format | pdf](#)

[Magazine Homepage](#)



We Are Tomodachi
(Cabinet Secretariat,
Cabinet Public Relations Office)

Visit to Japan of The Honorable Barack H. Obama, President of the United States of America

**-Ministry of Foreign Affairs
April 23-25, 2014**

A summary of the visit to Japan of The Honorable Barack H. Obama, President of the United States of America, including the U.S.-Japan Joint Statement: The United States and Japan: Shaping the Future of the Asia-Pacific and Beyond, and the FACT SHEET: U.S.-Japan Global and Regional Cooperation.

[Full Summary](#)



(Photo: Cabinet Public Relations Office)

The 13th IISS Asian Security Summit -The Shangri-La Dialogue - Keynote Address by Prime Minister Abe

**-Cabinet Secretariat
May 30-June 1, 2014**

"May I now tell you firstly how I perceive the situation that surrounds us in the region. This region has achieved tremendous growth in the span of a single generation. However, a large and relatively disproportionate amount of the fruits of that growth is being allocated to military expansion and arms trading. To me, this is extremely regrettable. We also find ourselves facing the threat of weapons of mass destruction and attempts to change the status quo through force or coercion. Clearly there exist elements that spawn instability.

"And yet nowhere do we find a need to be pessimistic. That's my approach."

[Full Text](#)

The Extraordinary Ordinary World Cup Stadium Cleanup

-Lee Cannon, Embassy of Japan

August 1, 2014

The World Cup games in Brazil have finished, but the memories have yet to fade from the world's consciousness. It's not only the stories of stellar plays and daring goal-shots that stick in people's minds, but also the stories of the fans and their experiences in Brazil. There were the fans vying for the craziest costume, there were the "World Cup Problems" hashtags that gave guests a chance-justified or not-to rant and rave, there was the Belgian fan briefly recruited as a model by L'Oreal when she was spotted on the jumbo video screen. One of the most positive memories, though, was the buzz surrounding the behavior of Japanese fans in the stadiums of Brazil.

After Japan's Samurai Blue team's loss to Côte d'Ivoire, draw with Greece, and loss to Colombia, many fans filled the Twitter-sphere not with celebrations of victory or complaints of defeat, but with laudatory Tweets about the Japanese fans cleaning up their sections of the Pernambuco Arena in Recife, Arena das Dunas in Natal, and Arena Pantanal in Cuiaba, Brazil. Tweeters posted photos with comments of praise and downright amazement that Japanese fans walked through the bleachers picking up wrappers, water bottles, and whatever else was left behind, using the same blue garbage bags they had inflated like balloons during the games.

NPR journalist Melissa Block caught up with one of the Japanese fans, Kei Kawai, after the game against Côte d'Ivoire and asked him about the Japanese side of the story. His answers treated the whole episode of the tidying fans as rather natural and un-extraordinary. "I think we have started this tradition," says Kawai, "A few games ago or a few World Cups ago. We try to do little bit of cleanup to show respect to the host country and just show off how clean things are in Japan. And we like to make it so here, too."

A very pertinent point: How clean things are in Japan. Visitors to Japan often notice the general cleanliness of the cities before they notice anything about the culture or traditions. Even in big cities, the streets are very clean and trash is kept under control. Litter is uncannily rare.

In his interview, Kei Kawai touched on the role of school and upbringing in producing such tidy citizens, which is true. In a Japanese home, family members and honored guests alike will remove their shoes at the door, both as a sign of respect and as a practical attempt to keep dirt and grime out of the house. Children are raised learning to keep their homes neat and sanitary.

This cleanliness training increases when Japanese children reach school age and begin their education. After school each day, students are responsible for cleaning their own classrooms, so by the time children graduate high school, they have become incredibly efficient at cleaning desks, wiping chalk boards, and sweeping floors.

This cleaning tradition doesn't end at graduation, as many companies expect employees to lend a hand for cleaning duties in the office. Workers in a variety of companies are expected to share in tasks such as vacuuming, disposing of trash, or even cleaning the restrooms. This phenomenon is so common, it's hardly seen as worthy of comment.

These cultural norms ensure that Japanese people are, as a group, very conscientious about cleaning up after themselves. However, it helps there are not mountains of garbage to deal

with in the first place. Other cultural norms are in place that ensure public cleanup tasks are manageable from the beginning.

Visitors to Japan may notice very few Japanese people walk and eat or drink at the same time. It is a cultural norm that eating and drinking are done sitting down in the home or a restaurant. Unless a street festival is going on and vendors are selling food on the sidewalks, it's considered rude to eat or drink while walking in public. Even during festivals, foreign visitors will see Japanese people crouching or sitting on curbs to eat, naturally preferring to sit.

In the United States, we think nothing of a passersby on the sidewalk carrying a carry-out cup in one hand and a pastry in the other. In Japan, that sight would be rare. You can certainly order a drink "to go," but there's a good chance the seller will place your cup in a bag fitted with a cardboard cup-holder, so you can carry it to your destination and enjoy it there. Also, vending machines in public places always stand next to a recycling bin, because the expectation is buyers will finish their drink immediately, then dispose of the can before continuing on. If you do catch a Japanese person carrying a drink, it will most likely be a capped plastic bottle tucked away inside a purse or briefcase.

So, in view of these cultural norms, the World Cup clean-up that garnered international attention on the Twitter-sphere-then appeared on mainstream news outlets worldwide-is a very natural extension of Japanese behavior and lifestyle. Considering how tidy Japanese people are in their own country and their own homes, it would be more surprising if Japanese World Cup fans left their litter behind than if they cleared it away and disposed of it properly.

When the Olympic Games come once more to Tokyo in 2020, even more of the international community will have a chance to appreciate the cleanliness of the Japanese in their own element. Will there be "Olympic Problems" hashtags in 2020? Anything is possible, but perhaps the hashtag to watch for in Tokyo will, instead, be #ItsSoClean!

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