



Japan 日本
NOW

Official Newsletter of the Consulate General of Japan, Seattle
601 Union Street, Suite 500, Seattle, WA 98101
www.seattle.us.emb-japan.go.jp | info@se.mofa.go.jp

Volume 12, No. 2
March 9, 2016

TOPIC

Status Update on Tohoku Recovery

-CGJ, Seattle



Dear Friends,

As we approach the fifth anniversary of the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami, coming up on March 11, 2016, I would like to take this opportunity to update you all on the current status of reconstruction in the Tohoku Region. The following points present an overview of recovery operations, including relocation of evacuees, restoration of public infrastructure, revival of industry, and revitalization of Fukushima.

- The number of evacuees has decreased from approximately 470,000 to

approximately 180,000.

- Planning for housing reconstruction has finished and construction work has been accelerated. Relocation and public housing are scheduled to be at 70% and 86% completion, respectively, within the next year.
- Medical and school facilities are restored to 95% and 98%, respectively.
- Industrial production indices have recovered to the pre-earthquake level, 85% of seafood processing has restarted, and 74% of the tsunami-affected farmland is again available.
- Disaster debris removal has been completed in Iwate and Miyagi Prefectures, and completed in Fukushima Prefecture except for in the areas still under evacuation orders.
- Power plants at Fukushima Daiichi remain in cold shutdown. Fuel removal of unit 4 was completed in 2014 and decommissioning and contaminated water management operations are progressing steadily.
- Atmospheric radiation in Fukushima is equivalent to that of other major cities around the world, except for the immediate area around Fukushima Daiichi.
- Radiation levels in seawater outside the port at Fukushima Daiichi are consistently well below the density limit specified by the Reactor Regulation.
- Japan's food safety limits are among the strictest in the world and no food exceeding these limits enters the market.

As you can see, the recovery is proceeding well, Japan is safe and ready to welcome visitors, and Tohoku is going through a strong restoration. On behalf of the government and people of Japan, I would like to express our sincerest gratitude for all the support from around the world, including the United States and notably the people of the Pacific Northwest.

With the 2020 Tokyo Olympics approaching, I hope you will all consider visiting Japan and buying Japanese products, so you can experience this revitalization firsthand.

For more information on the post-earthquake recovery, please visit the Recovery Agency's English language website:
http://www.reconstruction.go.jp/english/topics/Progress_to_date/index.html

Sincerely,

Masahiro Omura
Consul General of Japan in Seattle

AWARDS

OBON SOCIETY Recognized for its Contributions to Japan-U.S. Relations by Japan's Minister for Foreign Affairs

-CGJ, Seattle



On January 21, 2016, the Consulate-General of Japan in Seattle recognized one organization for its contributions to Japan-U.S. relations. In a ceremony held during the New Year's Reception at the Official Residence, Consul General Masahiro Omura presented Rex and Keiko Ziak, founders of OBON SOCIETY, with the Foreign Minister's Commendation in Honor of the 70th Anniversary of the End of the War.

[Full Details](#)

Three Individuals Recognized for their Contributions to Japan-U.S. Relations by the Consul General of Japan in Seattle

-CGJ, Seattle



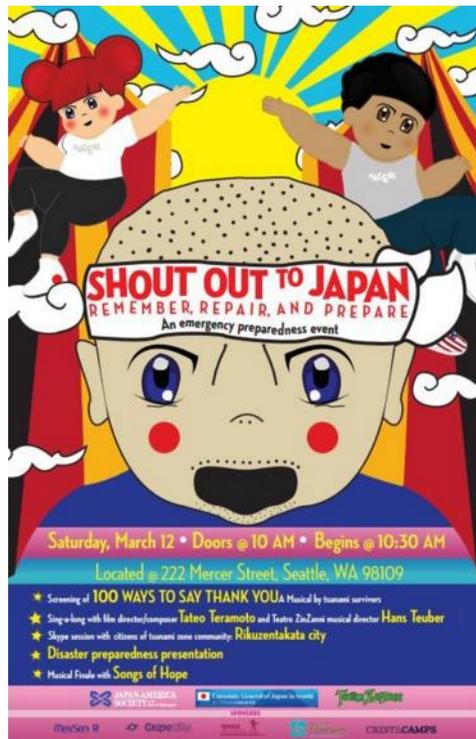
On January 21, 2016, the Consulate-General of Japan in Seattle recognized three highly-qualified individuals for their contributions to Japan-US relations. In a ceremony held during the New Year's Reception at the Official Residence, they were each awarded the Consul General's Commendation. The recipients are Mrs. Tsuchino Forrester, Dr. Tetsuden (Tetsu) Kashima and Ms. Barbara Sanchez. The Consul General's Commendation is awarded in recognition of outstanding achievements in and contributions to the promotion of good relations between Japan and the United States.

[Full Details](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS

**The Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami Commemoration
Event at Teatro ZinZanni March 12, 2016**

-CGJ, Seattle



Join us as we mark the 5th anniversary since the Tohoku earthquake and tsunami in Japan. We will screen the musical "100 Ways to Say Thank You" made by tsunami survivors, and hear from students at Tohoku University about new disaster technology in Japan and learn about disaster preparedness in the Pacific Northwest and how we can prepare for the next Great Earthquake that might come during our own lifetime.

This event is free to the public and will include speeches from Japanese dignitaries and emergency preparedness experts, along with a sing-a-long of a song from the musical with Tateo Teramoto and Hans Teuber, director of the Teatro ZinZanni band. It will close with a number from the Songs of Hope chorus, sung every year since the disaster. We encourage you to join us to Remember, Repair and Prepare.

[Full Details](#)

[Catch the Consulate at Sakura-Con, March 25 - 27, 2016](#)

-CGJ, Seattle

The Consulate-General of Japan in Seattle will once again be joining what is now the oldest and largest anime convention in the Pacific Northwest: [Sakura-Con](#). Included in the wide array of activities and performances will be presentations by the Consulate ranging from ancient samurai and traditional gift-wrapping techniques to modern-day opportunities to study and work in Japan. Sakura-Con is presented by the [Asia Northwest Cultural](#)

[Education Association](#) and will be held in the Washington State Convention Center.

[Full Details](#)

Seminar on Japan's Biomedical Industry and New Business Opportunities, March 25, 2016

-CGJ, Seattle

Recent policy changes affecting Japan's pharmaceutical and medical-device industries and a new investment program present opportunities to foreign biomedical businesses considering entry into the Japanese market. The Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) and Infra Innovations are organizing a free event on Friday, March 25 at the University of Washington Bothell Campus to introduce pathways for U.S. biomedical companies considering doing business in Japan.

Date: Friday, March 25, 2016

Venue: University of Washington, Bothell Campus, Room DISC-162, 18115 Campus Way NW, Bothell

Time: 10:00am - 12:00pm

RSVP: rsvp@infra-innovations.com

[Full Details](#)

Japan's Importance in the Future of Asia at the Hilton Hotel, March 31, 2016

-CGJ, Seattle

Time	Format	Theme	Speaker
12:00	Lunch Session	Abenomics and the future of the Japanese Economy*	Daisuke Karakura
13:00	Lecture	International Maritime Law and Regional Security in Asia*	Mariko Kawano
14:00	Lecture	Japan and International Development in the Postwar Period*	Akihiko Tanaka (Keynote)
15:30	Panel Discussion	Japan's role in Asian regional security*	Bonji Ohara
			Toshihiro Minohara
			James Auer
			Glen Fukushima (Moderator)

On March 31, several of Japan's top political scientists, professors, and security specialists will hold a half-day conference at the Hilton Seattle to discuss the current state of the country and projections for Japan's role in Asia's future. The Japan-America Society of the State of Washington and the Consulate-General of Japan in Seattle invite you to attend this free "Update on Japan" event and take advantage of the chance to engage with some of Japan's foremost researchers and top political minds in the areas of economics, geopolitics, and international relations.

There is also a tie-in essay contest where you can win two round-trip tickets to Japan! For those attending the Association of Asian Studies 2016 Annual Conference, what better way to launch your academic week than getting the current perspective from Japan? This event is conveniently located only a block away from the AAS conference venue.

We welcome you to attend the sessions for as long or short as you are able.

Date: Thursday, March 31st
Venue: Hilton Hotel, 1301 6th Ave, Seattle, 98101
Time: 12:00pm - 5:00pm

[Full Details](#)

Seattle Cherry Blossom and Japanese Cultural Festival Celebrates its 40th Anniversary at the Seattle Center, April 22 - 25, 2016!

-CGJ, Seattle

Join the Consulate-General of Japan at the Seattle Center to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the [Seattle Cherry Blossom and Japanese Cultural Festival!](#) This year's festival will feature the world premiere of the Japan Foundation Traveling Exhibit "Yakishime", which will tentatively run from April 19 - May 1, 2016, at the Seattle Center Pavilion. The Festival will also host the [33rd Washington State Japanese Speech & Skit Contest](#). There will be a wide variety of activities, displays, performances, and special anniversary surprises for

visitors to enjoy!

This is a free event open to the community.

[Full Details](#)

PAST EVENTS

Sake Tasting and Meet the Brewers Reception

-CGJ, Seattle

On February 20, the Sake Tasting and Meet the Brewers Reception was held at the Consul General's Official Residence. The reception gave guests from local restaurants and distributors the opportunity to taste exquisite sake samples from brewers throughout Japan, as well as to learn more about the sake industry and how to enjoy drinking sake through on-site lectures. The sake was paired with dishes made with local ingredients to show that it works well not just with Japanese food, but also with other types of cuisine. This event was an important step toward further advancing local sake appreciation.

Tomodachi Reception held for Army and Air Force Personnel Stationed in Japan

-CGJ, Seattle



On February 19, at the Official Residence, the Consulate-General of Japan in Seattle held its first Tomodachi Reception to build and strengthen connections with U.S. Army and Air Force personnel who have the shared experience of having been stationed in Japan.

[Full Details](#)

Haptic Game Controller: Unlimited Hand Seminar

-CGJ, Seattle



On February 16-17, we welcomed Emi Tamaki, head researcher at H2L Inc. and associate professor at Waseda University, and Kenichiro Iwasaki, CEO of H2L Inc., to Seattle to introduce their video game controller that senses finger motion and gives real-time haptic feedback. Seminars at the University of Washington and Digipen demonstrated this new technology to enthusiastic crowds. We look forward to their collaborations with the game industry and the release of the device for the general consumer.

Find more information at <http://unlimitedhand.com/>.

Oshogatsu in Olympia

-CGJ, Seattle



On January 23, Oshogatsu in Olympia was held in Olympia, Washington, to celebrate the Japanese New Year. Inside the main hall, visitors were treated to taiko, shamisen, kabuki performances, and kimono fittings that captured the spirit of Japanese New Year, as well as booths presenting tea ceremony, flower arranging, calligraphy, and other elements of traditional culture.

[Full Details](#)

U.S.-JAPAN RELATIONS

U.S. Congressional Delegation's Visit to Japan

-Cabinet Secretariat



(Photo: Cabinet Public Relations Office)

The strong relationship between Japan and the U.S. has been built on a foundation of

personal trust and understanding between officials from both countries. To further that communication, Congressman Jim Sensenbrenner, Congressman Jim McDermott, and Congressman Hank Johnson visited Tokyo as part of both the US-Japan Legislative Exchange Program and the US-Japan-South Korea Legislative Exchange Program and discussed important political, economic, and security issues.

During their trip, the Congressmen met with Prime Minister Abe, who expressed his appreciation for their long-time contribution to the Japan-US alliance and exchanged opinions on Japan-US cooperation.

Outside of the official meeting, Congressman McDermott, who serves as a Co-Chair for the US-Japan Legislative Program, took advantage of the opportunity to experience a sumo tournament for the first time.

The Embassy of Japan will continue to exert efforts to further strengthen the people-to-people exchange between our two countries, including legislative exchange.

Prime Minister Abe's Speech: Universal Health Coverage in the New Development Era

-Ministry of Foreign Affairs



(Photo: Cabinet Public Relations Office)

"I would like to lead the discussion on the health challenges that the world faces in close cooperation with the other G7 countries."

This is what Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said in his speech at an International Conference entitled "Universal Health Coverage in the New Development Era: Toward

Building Resilient and Sustainable Health Systems" which was held in Tokyo in December. Various governments, international organizations, private foundations, and intellectuals gathered to discuss the creation of a resilient and equal universal health coverage (UHC), providing valuable input for the upcoming G7 Ise-Shima Summit and the sixth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD VI).

Prime Minister Abe announced his intentions to take up health as a priority agenda at the G7 Ise-Shima Summit and lead the discussion on health issues, particularly by improving the response to public health emergencies.

[Full Details](#)
