



From Japan to the Northwest

News From the Consulate-General of Japan in Seattle



Dear friends of the Consulate-General of Japan in Seattle,
Happy New Year! We hope you all had a wonderful holiday!

Our bi-monthly newsletter, "From Japan to the Northwest," is intended to share important and interesting information related to Japan, our region, and the Consulate's activities. You can find current and past issues of the newsletter [here](#).

1. [Japan-U.S. Foreign Ministers' Telephone Talk](#)

On January 6, Foreign Minister Hayashi held a Japan-U.S. Foreign Ministers' telephone talk with the Honorable Antony Blinken, U.S. Secretary of State

In light of the recent COVID-19 infection status among the personnel of U.S. Forces in Japan (USFJ), FM Hayashi strongly urged the U.S. side to strengthen and enforce measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Secretary Blinken stated that he would work closely with the Japanese government, and would do everything possible to prevent the further spread of the virus.

The two ministers also exchanged their views on recent regional affairs.

2. [Signing of the New Special Measures Agreement \(SMA\)](#)

Since 1987, Japan has borne part of the costs, which the U.S. is obliged to bear under the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA), by concluding SMAs as special measures relating to the SOFA.

In light of the fact that the current SMA remains in force until March 31, 2022, both governments had discussions regarding the SMA. As a result, Foreign Minister Hayashi and Mr. Raymond F. Greene, Chargé d'Affaires ad interim, Embassy of U.S.A. in Japan, signed the new SMA on January 7 in Tokyo

As the security environment surrounding Japan has become increasingly severe, Host Nation Support by Japan based on the new SMA will play a vital role in enhancing readiness and resiliency of the Japan-U.S. Alliance including by improving the interoperability of the U.S. Forces and the Self-Defense Forces of Japan.

3. [The Holding of the Japan-U.S. Security Consultative Committee \(SCC\)](#)

On January 7, FM Hayashi and Defense Minister Kishi held the Japan-U.S. Security Consultative Committee (SCC) with the Honorable Antony Blinken and the Honorable Lloyd Austin, U.S. Secretary of State and Secretary of Defense, respectively, by video teleconference.

The four ministers discussed the security challenges facing the two countries, future cooperation toward the realization of a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific", and other topics.

[Read the SCC Joint Statement here.](#)

4. Updates on the COVID-19 Situation in Japan

[- Daily COVID Data Updates](#)

For the latest information on how travel to Japan has been impacted by COVID-19, please see [this page on the Consulate's website](#).

5. Consulate Activities

[3rd Annual SEIJIN-shiki USA, US-Japan Friendship Coming of Age Celebration](#) - Virtual Event

Please join us in celebrating the 3rd Annual Seijin-shiki USA event on January 16 at 1:20pm (PST)/4:20pm (EST). This event is co-hosted by JIA Foundation and the Consulate-General of Japan in Seattle, and endorsed by the Japan Foundation of Los Angeles, the City of Bellevue Arts Program, the Seattle Japanese School, and the Japan Business Association of Seattle.

Anyone can watch the event [on YouTube Live](#) (no registration required) .

Those who were born between January 2000 and March 2002, are welcome to register and enjoy the SEIJIN only special perks, and conversations with new SEIJINS from all over the U.S.

[SEIJINs Register here!](#)

[Japanese Restaurant Day – Indigo Cow](#)

For Japanese Restaurant Day this month Consul General Inagaki got a chance to try Hokkaido soft serve ice cream from Indigo Cow! Try this sweet and tasty soft serve and enjoy watching!

[Sake Webinar - January 20](#)

Join us at 6 pm on Jan. 20 for a free sake pairing webinar! Learn about sake pairing and how to make Chef Soma's easy-to-make appetizers that go well with Japanese sake!

Consul General Inagaki will also participate—as Chef Soma's assistant!

The webinar is free. [Register here!](#)

[Japanese Language Speech and Skit Contest](#)

There is still time to participate in this year's contest! The deadline to submit all forms is Sunday, January 23, by 11:59pm. [Click here for more information.](#)

[In Case You Missed It: CG Tries It: Gingerbread House](#)

The holidays may be over, but you can still check out the latest episode of "CG Tries It!" over on the consulate YouTube channel. In this latest episode Consul General Inagaki makes a (graham cracker) gingerbread house!



That's it for this issue of "From Japan to the Northwest."

Until next time, thank you for reading!

Sincerely,

Consulate-General of Japan in Seattle

View past issues of "From Japan to the Northwest" here: https://www.seattle.us.emb-japan.go.jp/itpr_en/08182021_e-newsletter.html

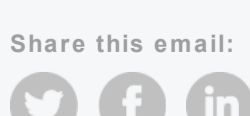
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- [Homepage](#) (English · 英語)
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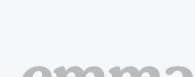
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