



From Japan to the Northwest

News From the Consulate-General of Japan in Seattle



Our 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 [past issues of the newsletter here](#).



Credit: Japan National Tourism Organization

Happy New Year, and welcome to the January 2025 edition of From Japan to the Northwest!

In this edition, we will cover Prime Minister Ishiba's New Year's remarks, his congratulatory letter to President Trump on his inauguration, and his visit to the site of Expo 2025 in Osaka. We also have remarks from the Consul General here in Seattle at the end, so be sure to read to the bottom.

We will continue a **once-a-month publication schedule** to bring you the most important news from Japan and our region. Please be sure to **follow us on social media by clicking the icons below** for more frequent updates on local Japan-related events and the Consulate's activities.



1. Prime Minister's New Year's Greeting

New Year's Reflection by Prime Minister ISHIBA Shigeru



Credit: Prime Minister's Office of Japan

Happy new year to one and all.

In the oriental zodiac, 2025 is the year of the “wood snake.” The “wood” represents the strength to progress towards goals while maintaining harmony with one’s surroundings, and the “snake” has long been considered a symbol of fertility and vitality.

The previous “wood snake” year was 1965, the year Japan began the “Izanagi Boom,” and the whole country was brimming with vitality. Although Japan was not as affluent as it is today, there were smiles on everyone’s faces—elderly people, young adults, and children alike—radiating energy and vitality. In keeping with the spirit of the “wood snake,” the Ishiba Administration aims to pool collective wisdom and make this year one that brings prosperity and smiles to everyone.

I will work to tackle three key policy areas to bring about happiness for all citizens.

First, we will address issues in diplomacy and security. In light of Russia’s aggression against Ukraine, North Korea’s repeated missile launches, and other challenges, the international state of affairs surrounding Japan is severe and complex. Against this backdrop, we will protect Japan’s interests by taking diplomacy and defense as two sides of the same coin. We will also work to improve the living and working environments as well as the treatment of Self-Defense Forces personnel, who form

the central core of our defense capabilities.

Second, we will restore vitality to Japan as a whole. The “silent contingency” of the serious decline in our population has resulted in diminishing vitality for both our regions and our economy. By setting Regional Revitalization 2.0 into motion, we will rectify the excessive concentration in Tokyo and build a Japan where attractive regions and cities are interconnected and where the happiness of a diverse public can be realized. Furthermore, we will transition to a growth-driven economy led by wage increases and investment by encouraging wage increases and capital investment in Japan, in order for people to feel in tangible ways that their lives have become prosperous. Additionally, we will work to build up a social security system that provides the public with peace of mind well into the future.

Third, we will address public security issues and natural disasters. Insofar as Japan is one of the most disaster-prone countries, we will make the utmost possible preparations for natural disasters, which can occur at any time. We will also move forward steadily in our work to establishing the Disaster Management Agency by the end of fiscal year 2026. Furthermore, we will protect people’s lives from harm caused by robberies or fraud involving so-called “shady part-time jobs.”

The Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan, will begin in April. We hope that many people will visit and feel for themselves the hope held for the society of the future.

This year as well, I will sincerely and humbly take on issues in order to protect the safety and security of the people, taking the coalition between the Liberal Democratic Party and Komeito as the foundation while also listening carefully to the views of other parties, enabling the broadest possible agreement to emerge.

I ask for the public’s further understanding and cooperation.

I hope most sincerely that 2025 is a magnificent year for one and all.

ISHIBA Shigeru
Prime Minister of Japan
January 1, 2025

2. United States Presidents

[Congratulatory Letter from Prime Minister Ishiba to President Trump of the United States of America](#)

On January 21, Mr. ISHIBA Shigeru, Prime Minister of Japan, sent a congratulatory letter to The Honorable Donald J. Trump, President of the United States of America. In this letter, Prime Minister Ishiba extended his congratulations on President Trump's inauguration. He also expressed that he would like to work closely to further strengthen the Japan-U.S. relations and to realize a free and open Indo-Pacific.

[Visit to Offer Condolences Following the Passing of The Honorable Jimmy Carter, the 39th President of the United States](#)



Credit: Prime Minister's Office of Japan

On January 8, 2025, Prime Minister Ishiba, following the passing of The Honorable Jimmy Carter, the 39th President of the United States, visited the U.S. Embassy to pay his respects and sign the condolence book.

3. 2024 Noto Peninsula Earthquake

[Memorial Ceremony for the Victims of the 2024 Noto Peninsula Earthquake and the 2024 Oku-Noto Heavy Rains](#)



Credit: Prime Minister's Office of Japan

On January 1, 2025, Prime Minister Ishiba attended the Memorial Ceremony for the Victims of the 2024 Noto Peninsula Earthquake and the 2024 Oku-Noto Heavy Rains, which was held in Wajima City, Ishikawa Prefecture.

The Prime Minister delivered a memorial address, offered a moment of silence, and offered flowers.

4. Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai

[Visit to the Venue of the Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan](#)



Credit: Prime Minister's Office of Japan

On January 19, 2025, Prime Minister Ishiba visited the venue of the Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai in Osaka City, Osaka Prefecture.

Prime Minister Ishiba visited the Signature Pavilions, the Japan Pavilion, the Grand Roof (Ring), the Osaka Healthcare Pavilion, and other facilities at the venue of the Expo, followed by a meeting with Mr. YOSHIMURA Hirofumi, Governor of Osaka Prefecture. Finally, the Prime Minister spoke to the press regarding his visit to the venue of the Expo 2025, Osaka, Kansai and other matters.

Prime Minister Ishiba shared his impressions of his visit, expressing excitement about the event's potential to revitalize the Kansai region. He recalled the impact of the 1970 Osaka Expo and hopes the 2025 Expo will inspire hope for Japan's future. He highlighted unique exhibits, like a globe featuring Noto Peninsula lacquerware and a rock from Mars, as key attractions that will draw visitors. Despite current ticket sales being below expectations, he remains optimistic that awareness will grow and attendance will increase over time, especially as people experience the event.

Ishiba also discussed the importance of creating a lasting legacy for the Expo, including repurposing materials from the venue and ensuring the event benefits regions beyond Osaka. Efforts are being made to promote ticket sales through regional strategies, while also making the process more accessible, especially for older citizens.

In his meeting with Governor Yoshimura, Ishiba emphasized the need for collaboration among government, local authorities, and the private sector to ensure the Expo's success and its continued impact, such as by holding an annual

international health conference. Both leaders agreed on making the Expo a catalyst for presenting Japan's future vision, with ongoing cooperation from various ministries.

5. Consulate News & Activities

New Year's Greeting from Consul General

Happy New Year!

This year marks the 130th anniversary of the establishment of the Consulate-General of Japan in Tacoma, the predecessor to our current Consulate-General of Japan in Seattle. Delving into our history, the Japanese Consulate-General was established in Tacoma in 1895, largely due to the existing regular shipping routes and railroads in the city at that time. In 1896, with the opening of NYK Line's regular route to Seattle, Japanese immigration began to increase significantly, leading to the relocation of the Consulate-General to Seattle in early 1901. Although it was closed on December 30, 1941, due to the impacts of World War II, it reopened on June 12, 1950, and continues to serve the region today.

In an effort to restore and expand two-way tourism that had declined due to the Covid pandemic, Japan and the United States designated 2024 as the "U.S.-Japan Tourism Exchange Year." Throughout the year, both governments and private-sector tourism stakeholders have collaborated closely to implement initiatives and events in both countries. Our consulate has actively promoted inbound tourism to Japan through Japanese cultural events and social media, among other means. As a result, the number of American visitors to Japan is expected to exceed 2.5 million, marking an all-time high. Japan also reached a record with approximately 3.3 million international visitors in July 2024, and the annual total is projected to surpass 35 million—both record figures.

In Japan, the 2025 World Expo will be held in Osaka at Yumeshima Island from April 13 to October 13. Anticipation for the Expo is growing in both Japan and the U.S., and we hope many people will visit Japan to discover the country's hidden charms, including those highlighted by the Expo.

This year, as last year, will feature not only sister city exchange events but also grassroots cultural exchanges such as mutual visits by middle and high school students who represent the next generation. Capitalizing on these opportunities, we aim to showcase the allure of Japan in Washington, Montana, and northern Idaho, fostering even deeper connections and exchanges in the realm of business, culture, tourism between our regions.

Wishing you all good health and happiness in the coming year.

January 1, 2025

IYORI Makoto

Consul General of Japan in Seattle

Consul General Iyori's Celebratory Message on Ichiro Suzuki's Induction to the Baseball Hall of Fame

On behalf of the Japanese community in Seattle, I am overjoyed and immensely proud to celebrate Ichiro Suzuki's induction into the Hall of Fame - a groundbreaking achievement as the first Japanese player to earn this prestigious honor.

Ichiro joined the Seattle Mariners in 2001 and spent nearly two-thirds of his extraordinary 19-year MLB career with the team. Known for his magical bat control, astounding speed that transformed routine grounders into singles, and his legendary defensive prowess as a right fielder - including his agility, wide coverage, and the iconic "Laser Beam" throws - Ichiro captured the hearts of fans and redefined excellence on the field. His unique combination of skill, athleticism, and precision left an unforgettable legacy not only for Mariners fans but also for baseball enthusiasts across the United States and Japan.

Over his storied career, Ichiro amassed countless accolades, including Rookie of the Year, American League MVP, two batting titles, a record-breaking 262 hits in a single season, and ten consecutive Gold Glove Awards. Yet, for so many of us, it's not just the records but the unforgettable moments of brilliance on the field that will forever be etched in memory.

Amid the somber days following 9/11 and the challenging fight against terrorism, Ichiro's electrifying presence brought hope, inspiration, and unity to fans in both Japan and the United States. His contributions transcended the sport, fostering a connection that bridged cultures and uplifted spirits worldwide.

Congratulations, Ichiro Suzuki, on this historic and well-deserved honor.

Makoto Iyori

Consul General of Japan in Seattle

Honoring 30 Years: Kobe Earthquake Remembrance

Honoring 30 Years: Kobe Earthquake Remembrance



Consul General Iyori delivers remarks at the Kobe Earthquake 30th Anniversary Remembrance.



Consulate-General of Japan in Seattle
Sharing Japan with the Northwest Since 1895

Credit: Consulate-General of Japan in Seattle

On January 16, Consul General Iyori delivered remarks at the 30th Anniversary Remembrance of the Kobe Earthquake, held at the Kobe Bell on the Seattle Center grounds. Here is Consul General Iyori's message shared during the ceremony.

"Ladies and gentlemen, good afternoon.

"Thirty years ago today, my wife, who was expecting our first child the following month, woke me up in our small Tokyo apartment to show me the TV. I still vividly recall the shock of the buildings collapsing, fires raging across the city, and highways crumbling into ruin. Those haunting images of devastation remain deeply etched in my memory.

"The Great Hanshin Earthquake claimed over 6,000 lives and disrupted daily life in the Hanshin region, particularly in the city of Kobe. It would take months to begin rebuilding from Japan's second-worst earthquake of the 20th century, and far longer to heal from the profound grief of those who lost loved ones.

"In the aftermath of the disaster, over one million volunteers from across Japan and around the world came together to provide aid. In moments of immense tragedy, we

witness the incredible strength of the human spirit - the power of unity and compassion to rebuild communities and restore hope.

"Ichiro Suzuki, who is widely expected to be inducted into the Hall of Fame next week, was playing for the Kobe-based Orix BlueWave and was reportedly living in the team dormitory in Kobe when the earthquake struck. I clearly remember how the Orix BlueWave, wearing jerseys that bore the words "Ganbarou Kobe" ("Let's preserve, Kobe"), dominated the Pacific League that year. Led by Ichiro, who had won his first Pacific League batting title the previous season, the team brought inspiration and hope to the people of Kobe. The following year, they went on to win the Japan Series, lifting the city's spirits even further.

"Here in Seattle, Kobe's first sister city, the Kobe Bell stands as a lasting symbol of solidarity and friendship. Gifted to Seattle in 1962 as a gesture of goodwill between Japan and the United States, this bell has served as a memorial site since the Hanshin earthquake struck 30 years ago. Today, as we gather to honor the memory of those lost and the resilience of those affected, let us also express our gratitude for the goodwill and strength that have allowed the Hanshin region to rebuild and heal.

"Thank you."

Thank you for reading the first issue of "From Japan to the Northwest" for 2025!
That's all for this month's newsletter. Until next month!

Sincerely,
Consulate-General of Japan in Seattle

View [past issues of "From Japan to the Northwest" here.](#)

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- [Homepage \(English・英語\)](#)
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