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## Hiroshima G7 Summit Special

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A waterfront view of Hiroshima, including the Genbaku (A-Bomb) Dome, along the Motoyasu River. GETTY IMAGES

## Japan ready to expound on city's anti-nuclear message

KANAKO TAKAHARA  
STAFF WRITER

For Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, hosting the Group of Seven Leaders Summit in Hiroshima carries special meaning.

Hiroshima, home to his electoral district, is a city that serves as a symbol of peace and nuclear nonproliferation after making an astonishing recovery from the ashes of World War II. As a politician, he has made nuclear nonproliferation and disarmament his lifework, writing "Toward a World Free of Nuclear Weapons" in 2020.

Kishida was also key in coordinating then-U.S. President Barack Obama's historic visit to Hiroshima in 2016, the first by a sitting U.S. president.

"As the prime minister of Japan, the only nation that experienced atomic bombing in a war, there is no better place than Hiroshima to send out a commitment for peace," Kishida said in May 2022 when he

officially announced the city as the venue for the next G7 Summit.

"I hope to confirm with the G7 leaders in front of the peace monument that we are united in protecting peace, global order and (democratic) values," he said. "And to send a message to the world that mankind will never again cause the catastrophe of nuclear weapons."

Hosting the summit in Hiroshima itself is likely to draw a wider spotlight — especially from foreign media — on how an atomic attack can affect a city and its people for decades, at a time when Russia is threatening to use nuclear weapons.

Kishida plans to send out a strong message on nonproliferation during the three-day discussions from May 19, alongside the leaders of the United States, Britain, Canada, Italy, France and Germany. Leaders from eight other countries — India, Indonesia, Australia, South Korea, the Cook Islands, Comoros, Brazil and Vietnam — are also invited.

The G7 leaders are also expected to talk about their unity in supporting Ukraine amid Russia's invasion. But whether they can agree on additional sanctions against Moscow remains to be seen. On other topics, making international rules on generative artificial intelligence, such as ChatGPT, will be on the agenda. Italy temporarily banned the use of the AI tool to protect personal information.

**Sounding alarm on Ukraine**

With hundreds of delegates from G7 countries gathering in Hiroshima to accompany their leaders, Kishida sees the summit as a great opportunity to send a message promoting a world free of nuclear weapons.

"We need to send out a strong message that we will not tolerate the use of force to change the status quo unilaterally as witnessed with Russia's invasion of Ukraine. ... that we will protect the international order based on rule of law," Kishida said in an exclusive interview in April with The Japan Times. "We won't allow the threat of nuclear weapons by Russia."



Prime Minister Fumio Kishida is interviewed by The Japan Times in April at the Prime Minister's Office. MARTIN HOLTkamp

About 140,000 people died from the U.S. atomic bombing of Hiroshima in August 1945 and some 80,000 more were injured. It has since been rebuilt to become Japan's 10th-largest city by population, delivering an anti-nuclear message to the world.

But with the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war, coupled with North Korea's development of nuclear capabilities, momentum for nuclear disarmament has been waning. In August last year, the review conference of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty failed to adopt an outcome document as no consensus was reached on the wording over the fate of a Russian-seized nuclear power plant in Ukraine. It was the second time it failed to agree on a document since the last conference in 2015.

The prime minister is well aware of this reality and intends to use the summit to keep the conversation going.

"I want to make this an opportunity to turn it around and boost the momen-

tum," Kishida said, adding that he hopes to gather support for a road map to nuclear disarmament he revealed last August.

The Hiroshima Action Plan calls for measures for nonproliferation, such as encouraging visits to the atomic-bombed cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki by international leaders, and maintaining a decline in the global nuclear stockpile. The Nuclear Weapons Ban Monitor, however, said in March that there were 9,576 operational warheads at the beginning of 2023 — up from 9,440 the previous year.

In addition, Kishida is reportedly arranging for the G7 leaders to meet with hibakusha, or survivors of the atomic bombings, during their visit. World leaders who have met with A-bomb survivors include Obama in 2016 and Pope Francis in 2019.

**A united front on Ukraine**

For Kishida, there is a sense of urgency over concerns that if international society is



tolerant of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, it could also be tolerant of China's possible use of force in Taiwan. On this topic, he has repeated the phrase, "Ukraine today may be East Asia tomorrow."

If the international community neglects the rules-based order and allows major powers to realize their national interests, Kishida said, developing countries like those in the Global South — a reference to emerging economies in Asia, Africa, the Middle East and Central and South America — will be greatly affected.

"As the invasion dragged on, more Global South countries started suffering from its impact, including the energy and food crises," he said. "And attempts to divide the Global South are becoming more apparent."

To ramp up support from the Global South, Kishida traveled to four African countries — Egypt, Ghana, Kenya and Mozambique — during the Golden Week holidays in late April through early May. Foreign Minister Yoshimasa Hayashi, meanwhile, visited South American and Caribbean countries.

"It's important for the G7 countries to be united and offer support for the Global South in areas of climate change and developing infrastructure in growth industries," Kishida said.

Since Russia's invasion of Ukraine, winning support from nations in the Global South, which distanced themselves both from Russia and Western countries, has become a key diplomatic issue. In February, the U.N. General Assembly adopted a resolution calling for Russia to immediately withdraw from Ukraine, with 141 countries voting in favor. But 32 nations, such as India, South Africa and Bolivia, abstained.

Cooperating with emerging economies is also key because the economic influence of G7 countries has declined in recent decades, with the percentage of their combined gross domestic product dropping to 43.7% of the global economy in 2022 compared with 61.5% in 1980.

**Reining in AI**

Another hot topic is the need for G7 and other countries to come up with ways to create international rules related to the use of generative AI software, such as ChatGPT.

Since OpenAI launched the chatbot in November, it has shown its potential across industries from customer service and marketing to news writing. But at the same time, concerns have emerged that it might be used to spread misinformation.

In a meeting with local media outlets on April 19, Kishida spoke of the need for international rules on generative AI, adding that the topic is likely to be discussed at the Hiroshima summit.

But Italy temporarily banned the use of ChatGPT in April, citing privacy concerns. Academics and business executives, including Twitter CEO Elon Musk, have also signed an open letter calling for a six-month halt to the development of AI systems until the risks can be assessed.

Still, Japan has appeared open to the new technology, with Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirokazu Matsuno telling a Lower House committee on April 14 that the government has no plans to restrict the use of ChatGPT.

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# G7 leader profiles

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Introductions to the Group of Seven leaders scheduled to attend the G7 Summit in Hiroshima from May 19 to 21. (Ages as of May 18)

## Britain

### Prime Minister Rishi Sunak

Sunak, 43, will be making his first visit to Japan since taking office in October. He rose quickly up the political ladder after being first elected to Parliament in 2015, eventually becoming the youngest British prime minister in modern history.

A former treasury chief, Sunak was seen as a safe pair of hands after the brief premiership of Liz Truss, who resigned over a political crisis caused by her economic plans.

In foreign policy, Sunak has suggested a tougher stance on China, but his government stopped short of labeling the world's second-largest economy as a threat to national security in a defense paper in March. Seeking to deepen engagement with the fast-growing Indo-Pacific region, his government has ensured Britain's participation in a trans-Pacific free trade deal that includes Japan among its members.

Sunak hosted Prime Minister Fumio Kishida in January when they signed a bilateral defense cooperation agreement aimed at facilitating joint drills.

The appointment of Sunak, whose Indian parents emigrated from East Africa, made him Britain's first British-Asian prime minister. Sunak and his wife Akshata Murty, whose father is billionaire Indian businessman Narayana Murthy, are believed to be the wealthiest couple to ever occupy 10 Downing Street.



REUTERS POOL VIA KYODO

## Canada

### Prime Minister Justin Trudeau

For Trudeau, 51, this will be his second time attending a G7 leaders meeting in Japan. He made his G7 debut in 2016, earlier than any of his counterparts, at the Ise-Shima gathering in Mie Prefecture.

First elected to the lower house in 2008, Trudeau became the leader of the Liberal Party in 2013 and was sworn in as prime minister in 2015.

Believing that diversity is Canada's strength, his first Cabinet was made up of an equal number of men and women, and also included parliamentarians of indigenous descent.

In foreign policy, Trudeau's government has been taking a tougher stance against China, calling Beijing "an increasingly disruptive global power" in Canada's new Indo-Pacific Strategy released in November.

The souring bilateral relations were visible when Chinese President Xi Jinping rebuked Trudeau for leaking the content of their bilateral talks at the Group of 20 Summit in Indonesia the same month. The clash was caught on camera.

Trudeau has also been involved in promoting avalanche safety after his younger brother died in an avalanche while skiing in 1998.

Trudeau is married to Sophie Gregoire, a former TV and radio host. His father was also prime minister.



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## France

### President Emmanuel Macron

Macron, 45, will be one of the most familiar faces at the G7 Summit, having entered his second term last year.

Sweeping into power in 2017 as the youngest-ever French president at age 39, Macron has been an active leader on the international stage, trying to flex his diplomatic muscles to resolve Russia's war in Ukraine by engaging with Russian and Chinese leaders.

Born to two doctors in the northern city of Amiens, Macron studied philosophy and graduated from the country's elite training school for leaders in French life, the Ecole Nationale d'Administration.

In both the 2017 and 2022 presidential elections, Macron beat far-right politician Marine Le Pen. The re-election of the pro-EU president was a relief to Western allies amid concerns that a different outcome could have hobbled the 27-member bloc and broken its united front against Russia over the Ukraine invasion.

An advocate of the EU's strategic autonomy, Macron recently stirred controversy for calling on Europeans not to be "followers" of either the United States or China and cautioning against being drawn into a crisis over Taiwan.

Macron is a former investment banker and is known as an amateur pianist. His wife Brigitte, 70, was his high school teacher, and they married in 2007.



REUTERS VIA KYODO

## Germany

### Chancellor Olaf Scholz

Scholz will be visiting Japan for the third time since taking office in December 2021, signaling the weight he attaches to Tokyo. Germany hosted the G7 Summit last year.

Scholz, 64, has faced the daunting task of taking over from Angela Merkel's 16 years of steady rule and has presided over historic changes to Germany's traditionally pacifist stance in the wake of Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Scholz has been a member of the center-left Social Democratic Party since he was 17. After graduating university, he worked as a lawyer before becoming a member of the federal parliament in 1998 at age 40, and serving as finance minister of Merkel's government from 2018.

He clinched the chancellor's seat following the 2021 general election, even though he was initially seen as a long shot to win.

While pushing to cut Germany's reliance on Russian energy amid the war in Ukraine, Scholz has worked to reduce his country's economic dependence on China, in marked contrast to Merkel's government, which deepened engagement with the world's second-largest economy.

Germany and Japan have been reinforcing bilateral ties. Scholz and Prime Minister Fumio Kishida met in Tokyo in March to hold their first-ever high-level intergovernmental consultations.



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## Italy

### Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni

Meloni, who chairs a right-wing party, is participating in the G7 Summit after becoming the country's first female prime minister in October 2022.

When she was 15, Meloni joined the Italian Social Movement, a party established by supporters of wartime leader Benito Mussolini. In 2012, she co-founded the political party Brothers of Italy before being elected its leader in 2014.

Despite being regarded by her critics as a radical and nationalist, Meloni has backed the European Union and NATO on their support for Ukraine following Russia's invasion in February 2022.

She visited Kyiv in February for talks with President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, who is expected to attend the G7 Summit online.

Elected to parliament in 2006, Meloni, then 31, became Italy's youngest minister in charge of youth affairs in 2008 under the government of former Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi.

A native of Rome, Meloni, 46, was raised by her mother after her parents separated. She earned money by working as a babysitter, bartender and waitress during her teen years. She has a daughter with her companion, who is a journalist.



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## Japan

### Prime Minister Fumio Kishida

Kishida is eager to leave a legacy at the G7 Summit, which he will host in his ancestral hometown of Hiroshima, by pitching his vision of a world without nuclear weapons.

The third-generation politician, who was born in Tokyo, lost relatives in the U.S. atomic bombing of the city on Aug. 6, 1945. The accounts he heard about it from his grandmother in Hiroshima motivated him to dedicate his life's work to pursuing denuclearization.

Kishida, a former foreign minister known as a dovish moderate in Japan's ruling bloc, played a key role in bringing about the historic visit of then-U.S. President Barack Obama to Hiroshima in 2016. It was the first visit made by a sitting U.S. president to the city and to Peace Memorial Park. Kishida became Japan's longest-serving foreign minister since the end of the war after serving consecutively for four years and seven months.

With Russia's invasion of Ukraine likely to top the agenda at the summit, Kishida made a surprise trip to Kyiv on March 21 amid fears that Moscow might use nuclear weapons against its neighbor.

Kishida, who is known to enjoy a drink and is an avid fan of Nippon Professional Baseball's Hiroshima Carp, became prime minister in 2021. Soon after taking office, he declared his policy of creating a "new form of capitalism" to promote a fairer distribution of wealth. A graduate of Waseda University, the 65-year-old former banker was elected to the Diet in 1993.

Kishida is married and has three sons. He is said to be responsible for dishwashing and cleaning the bathroom in the family home.



MARTIN HOLTkamp

## The United States

### President Joe Biden

Biden will be making his second visit to Japan since taking office and become the second sitting U.S. president after Barack Obama to pay a visit to the A-bombed city of Hiroshima.

Sworn in as president in 2021, the 80-year-old has been rallying allies and like-minded countries to come together to uphold the rules-based international order amid Russia's invasion of Ukraine and China's growing assertiveness in the Indo-Pacific.

Born in Pennsylvania, Biden made his way from middle-class roots to the Senate, where he served for 36 years. He was vice president under Obama, who was the first Black president in U.S. history.

Biden has frequently been described as a person with compassion and empathy, enduring the personal tragedies of losing his first wife and 1-year-old daughter in a car accident just weeks after he was first elected senator in 1972, and losing his eldest son to cancer in 2015.

At age 78 on the day of his inauguration, Biden became the oldest person ever to assume the office of the presidency. The Democrat recently announced his bid for a second term, setting him up for a potential rematch against his Republican predecessor Donald Trump.

Biden's favorite treat is ice cream.



REUTERS VIA KYODO

## The European Council

### President Charles Michel

Michel, 47, will visit Hiroshima for the second time since taking up his current post in December 2019, following a visit in May last year during his stay for a regular EU-Japan Summit.

Prior to becoming president of the EU's key decision-making body, Michel was Belgium's prime minister, after being sworn in as the country's youngest-ever leader in 2014, at the age of 38.

With his father having been deputy prime minister and a member of the European Commission, Michel began his political career at a young age, joining a provincial Belgian council at 18. He was first elected to the federal parliament in 1999 and was appointed as development cooperation minister in 2007.

He grew up listening to stories from his parents and grandparents, who experienced the devastating impact of World War II and understood how precious peace and reconciliation are, according to the European Council's website.

During his visit to Hiroshima last May, Michel said that the city, devastated by the U.S. atomic bombing in 1945, is a "stark reminder" of how urgent the task of ridding the world of nuclear weapons is.

Michel was re-elected last year. He reportedly got married to Amelie Debaudrenghien in 2021, after postponing their wedding due to the coronavirus pandemic.



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## The European Commission

### President Ursula von der Leyen

Von der Leyen is the first woman to lead the EU's executive branch. She entered politics late in life and earned the nickname "supermom" after bringing up seven children while working.

Assuming the top job in December 2019, the 64-year-old Belgian-born German politician has been at the helm of the EU as Europe deals with the extraordinary challenges caused by Russia's war in Ukraine and the coronavirus pandemic.

Despite being born to a father who served in a precursor organization to the EU, von der Leyen was a late bloomer in politics, joining the Christian Democratic Union in 1990 and being elected to the state assembly in 2003, during her 40s.

She quickly advanced through the ranks, becoming minister of family affairs in 2005 in Angela Merkel's Cabinet and the first female German defense minister in 2013.

She has advocated for women's rights, saying that sexism was behind the "sofa-gate" incident in Ankara in 2021 when she was left to sit on a nearby sofa, instead of a chair, during a Turkey-EU Summit Meeting that was also attended by European Council President Charles Michel.

Von der Leyen is a qualified medical doctor and speaks German, French and English.



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# G7 summit data

## Group of Seven meeting venues for 2023

### Climate, energy and environment ministers

April 15 to 16  
Sapporo, Hokkaido ①

### Foreign ministers

April 16 to 18  
Karuizawa, Nagano Prefecture ②

### Labor and employment ministers

April 22 to 23  
Kurashiki, Okayama Prefecture ③

### Agriculture ministers

April 22 to 23  
Miyazaki, Miyazaki Prefecture ④

### Digital and tech ministers

April 29 to 30  
Takasaki, Gunma Prefecture ⑤

### Finance ministers and central bank governors

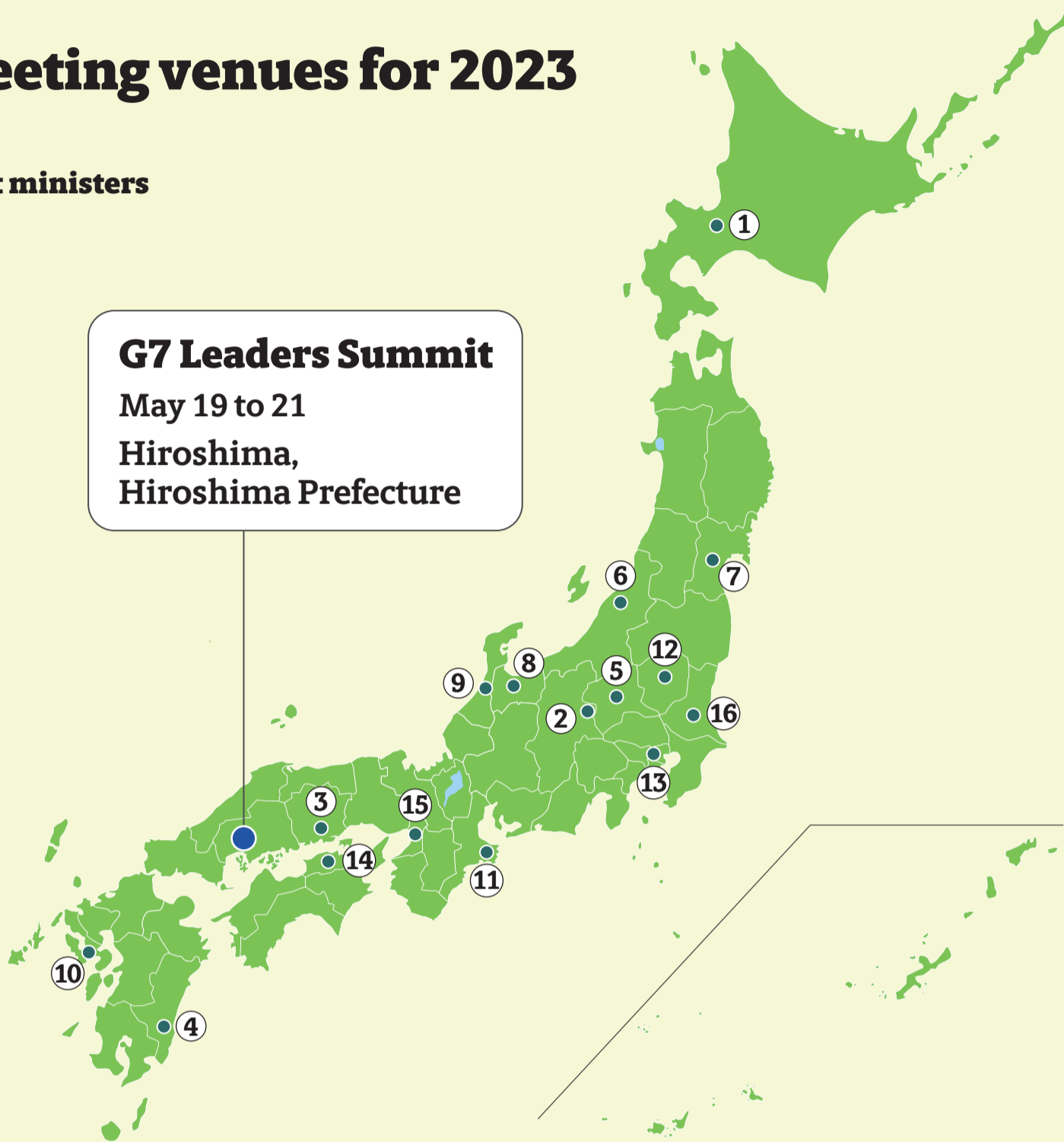
May 11 to 13  
Niigata, Niigata Prefecture ⑥

### Science and technology ministers

May 12 to 14  
Sendai, Miyagi Prefecture ⑦

### G7 Leaders Summit

May 19 to 21  
Hiroshima, Hiroshima Prefecture



### Education ministers

May 12 to 15  
Toyama, Toyama Prefecture; ⑧  
Kanazawa, Ishikawa Prefecture ⑨

### Health ministers

May 13 to 14  
Nagasaki, Nagasaki Prefecture ⑩

### Transport ministers

June 16 to 18  
Ise-Shima, Mie Prefecture ⑪

### Gender equality and women's empowerment ministers

June 24 to 25  
Nikko, Tochigi Prefecture ⑫

### Justice ministers

July 7  
Tokyo ⑬

### Urban development ministers

July 7 to 9  
Takamatsu, Kagawa Prefecture ⑭

### Trade ministers

Oct. 28 to 29  
Osaka and Sakai, Osaka Prefecture ⑮

### Interior and security ministers

Dec. 8 to 10  
Mito, Ibaraki Prefecture ⑯

## Perspectives & issues to be addressed at the Hiroshima G7 Summit

### Two perspectives

- Upholding the international order based on the rule of law
- Outreach to the Global South

### Issues to be addressed

- Regional affairs (Ukraine, Indo-Pacific)
- Nuclear disarmament and nonproliferation
- Economic resilience and economic security
- Climate and energy
- Food
- Health
- Development

\*Areas such as gender, human rights, digitalization and science and technology will also be highlighted.



Grand Prince Hotel Hiroshima, the main venue for the G7 Summit KYODO

## G7/G8 meetings since 2011

**G7 Summit June 2022**  
in Schloss Elmau, Germany

**G7 Summit June 2021**  
in Cornwall, United Kingdom

**G7 Summit March-April 2020**  
online (U.S. host)

**G7 Summit August 2019**  
in Biarritz, France

**G7 Summit June 2018**  
in Charlevoix, Canada

**G7 Summit May 2017**  
in Taormina, Italy

**G7 Summit May 2016**  
in Ise-Shima, Japan

**G7 Summit June 2015**  
in Schloss Elmau, Germany

**G7 Summit June 2014**  
in Brussels, Belgium

**G8 Summit June 2013**  
in Lough Erne, United Kingdom

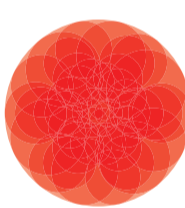
**G8 Summit May 2012**  
in Camp David, United States

**G8 Summit May 2011**  
in Deauville, France




The leaders of the Group of Seven convene for their annual summit at hotel Castle Elmau (right) in Schloss Elmau, Germany, in June 2022. POOL/GETTY IMAGES VIA KYODO; REUTERS VIA KYODO






# JFOODO

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Japanese Website



English Website

### The Japan Food Product Overseas Promotion Center

The Japan Food Product Overseas Promotion Center (JFOODO) was established by the government of Japan in 2017 within the Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO).

Through an array of promotional initiatives, JFOODO aims to convey the charms of Japanese culinary culture and enhance Japan's brand awareness to expand exports of its food products worldwide.



# Global health

## Japan remains keen supporter of universal health care

### Rapidly graying society providing vital lessons for 'human security'

When the Spanish flu flared up just over a century ago, it claimed at least 50 million lives worldwide at a time when influenza vaccines were undeveloped and other treatments were ineffective. Society fragmented as people lost trust in government institutions and national health care services, which were just as ineffectual. The disease also killed a disproportionate number of young adults, which further shredded the world's economy and social fabric.

Despite a far stronger health care environment and better immunization protocols, the COVID-19 pandemic similarly disrupted global society, killing close to 7 million people and infecting over 764 million, forcing governments, businesses and individuals to take radical measures to blunt its impact. While COVID-19 is on the wane, calls for governments to better shield their citizens from similar health care catastrophes are loud, clear and persistent.

Health is an essential element of people's lives, social stability and economic development. Japan has a robust health care system and the life spans to prove it, boasting one of the longest overall life expectancies on the planet at 84.3 years. Many called on Japan to address other issues besides the Ukraine conflict at the G7 Summit in Hiroshima, and Japan readily agreed to make health care a priority. Japan had already laid the groundwork for an update on global health in August 2022 with the formation of a task force. During the last ministerial meeting of the COVID-19 Global Action Plan initiative in February — which involved the United States and more than 50 other countries, the European Union and various organizations — Japan formally announced this facet.

### Leading by necessity

Japan is a logical choice for this spearhead role. The country's robust health care system is inclusive and has a strong preventive care element. Since the 1950s, for instance, the Japanese government has promoted X-ray exams, made tuberculosis treatments free and expanded insurance coverage to preventive medications, such as hypertension drugs. Other examples of preventive care include free screening tests and prenatal and postnatal programs that include health and dental checkups.

Having health insurance in Japan is mandatory, and what people pay for coverage is typically based on income. Their contributions subsidize the system, which in turn subsidizes treatment, generally at a rate of 70%. Since spreading the burden minimizes medical costs, being driven into poverty by a medical condition or emergency is rare.

The government created an essential grid for health care in 1973 that may have potential in other countries facing similar imbalances in regional medical services. That's when the Cabinet launched its "one prefecture, one medical school" policy to increase the number of medical schools and boost the number of physicians.

A similar policy specifically addressed a common geographic imbalance: a lack of rural physicians. Newly minted doctors would avoid less-populated rural areas, leaving them without proper medical care. Graduates from prefectural medical schools typically must commit to practicing for nine years in such regions. On com-



A child receives a COVID-19 vaccination in Fairfax County, Virginia, in November 2021. GETTY IMAGES VIA KYODO

pleting that, their tuition is forgiven.

A rapidly graying population with all its attendant health care issues also makes Japan a test bed of sorts for new ways of handling elder care and end-of-life issues. For example, Japan has been dedicated to developing care robots for over two decades, including the technologies needed to handle both the physical and mental aspects of the job to offset the high numbers of elderly and the shortage of people available to care for them.

Some robots are tasked with physical care, such as mobility and exercise, physically lifting patients and monitoring their condition. Others are meant to be companions and therapists that stave off dementia and maintain cognitive levels.

According to the MIT Technology Review, however, robotic caregivers and helpers tend to create more work for their human counterparts. They also reduce vital human interactions and relationships. Even so, according to Yano Research Institute, funding for care robots in Japan is still growing. In fiscal 2021, this market was valued at ¥2.18 billion and is expected to be worth ¥3.63 billion by 2025.

The number of Japanese over 65 reached a record high of 36.2 million in 2022, representing 29% of Japan's population of 124.9 million. According to the National Institute of Population and Social Security Research, that ratio is expected to rise to 35% by 2040. The country is also predicted to have a shortfall of 1 million medical and welfare workers by the same year.

Of course, Japan has the option of bringing in health care workers from abroad, and has deployed high-profile policies and recruiting and training programs for that. For example, Japan has brought in care workers through economic partnership agreements with nations such as the Philippines, Vietnam and Indonesia since

2008. With the EPAs facilitating their entry and training, care workers who obtain certification under the program may stay and work in Japan indefinitely. More recently, in April 2019, the government established a new Specified Skilled Worker visa category for qualified workers, including nursing professionals and those in other related services, regardless of nationality.

Working conditions for those brought in under the former initiative had been poor, unfortunately, leading to many returning home. A beneficial byproduct, however, is that they are bringing their expertise gleaned in elder care to systems that largely lack that knowledge.

### Taking the initiative

Japan has reached out internationally as well to build momentum for global health through meetings and summits. The Japan International Cooperation Agency has supported developing countries through financial contributions to international organizations and the development of skilled workers through technical and financial cooperation.

When COVID-19 began spreading in 2020, for example, JICA launched the Initiative for Global Health and Medicine, helping to strengthen therapeutic and diagnostic systems through the expansion of hospitals. Around 200 million people in 22 countries have benefited so far. JICA has also provided over 2,500 medical personnel in 11 countries with remote training in intensive care. In addition, as of May 2022, Japan has sent approximately \$5 billion to developing countries to fight the pandemic.

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, Japan was leading the fight for universal health coverage (UHC). Since the 2000s, in fact, it has consistently made the concept of "human security" an essential pillar of

its foreign policy. Since health is an integral element in human security to protect individuals, Japan is working on global health as a facet of diplomacy.

For example, infectious disease control was designated a major theme during the Kyushu-Okinawa G8 Summit in 2000, and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria was established in response to this gathering. As of January 2022, Japan's cumulative contribution to the fund totaled approximately \$4.24 billion. By the end of 2021, the number of deaths from AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria in the countries in which the fund invested had been cut in half, saving 50 million lives and increasing overall life expectancy. In 2015, to contribute to true UHC by applying the knowledge gained in Japan to global health issues, Japan formulated the Basic Design for Peace and Health, a global health strategy.

Japan also became the first G7 nation to make UHC a major theme at a summit-level meeting, at the 2016 Ise-Shima G7 Summit and the G7 Kobe Health Ministers' Meeting. The country committed itself to making UHC a reality in Africa, Asia and other regions alongside the international community and various organizations.

A year later, Japan also cohosted UHC Forum 2017 with organizations such as the World Bank, the World Health Organization, and the United Nations Children's Fund. The leaders of more than 30 countries, along with representatives and experts from international organizations, met to discuss UHC in their countries. As a group, they adopted the Tokyo Declaration on Universal Health Coverage, which includes a commitment to accelerate efforts to achieve UHC by 2050.

That declaration included zeroing in on target 3.8 of the U.N.'s sustainable development goals, which seeks to "achieve uni-

versal health coverage, including financial risk protection, access to quality essential health care services and access to safe, effective, quality and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all." The core goals are to ensure that people avoid financial hardship when accessing services, to protect them from public health crises, such as outbreaks, and to respond rapidly to those and other health emergencies.

### Life after COVID-19

When COVID-19 came along, the urgency in all of this intensified. Writing in the online edition of the weekly medical journal *The Lancet* in January, Prime Minister Fumio Kishida focused on shoring up the glaring gaps in global health architecture that the disease exposed. One imperative is to strengthen pandemic prevention, preparedness and response (PPR). Another is to create more resilient and sustainable health systems that lead to UHC. He believes the concept of human security — which focuses on the importance of global solidarity — is the key to addressing this challenge.

Kishida laid out several strategic issues in his article. For example, he cited a need to strengthen global health architecture as a key goal. At present, there is an unfortunate lack of cooperation and information-sharing among relevant international organizations. There are also limitations on large-scale and rapid fund mobilization during the spread of infectious diseases. That was one of the underlying rationales for hosting the first G20 Joint Finance and Health Ministers' Meeting in 2019 under the Japanese presidency. Monitoring and reporting on infectious diseases are also spotty, national health systems are weak and there's a lack of support for developing countries.

Kishida also stressed the importance

of developing a WHO convention, agreement or other international instrument on PPR, along with amending the organization's International Health Regulations. He added that as one of the world's rapidly graying societies, Japan bears a special responsibility to spotlight demographic challenges.

According to Kishida, the world also needs a more enabling ecosystem to make rapid research and development on medical countermeasures possible. He said Japan will follow up on the U.K.'s 100 Days Mission to develop and deploy safe, effective diagnostics, therapeutics and vaccines on a global scale within the first 100 days of a pandemic. That includes accelerating the development of research and development for PPR, and ensuring equitable access to vaccines, diagnostics and therapeutics under the overall umbrella of UHC.

Further reflecting Japan's commitment on this issue, the Japanese government launched its Global Health Strategy in May 2022. Once again, human security was made a core pillar in this quest. The policy goals set are to make global health architecture more resilient, strengthen PPR to overcome health crises and pursue UHC in a more resilient, equitable and sustainable way. The keys to all that will require better detection, maintaining surge capacity, closing gaps in access to services, and making health care systems more adaptable to demographic changes, climate change and more.

### More work to do

In his *Lancet* article, Kishida stated that driving innovation in health technologies — including the digital domain — is vital. On the basis of an assessment of global experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic, the G7 should explore ways to ensure equitable access to new technologies for future threats.

In this area, however, Japan still has work to do as a model and leader. For example, according to a December 2020 white paper from the American Chamber of Commerce in Japan, while many forms of digital data exist in Japan, prior consent is a vital one that is not often obtained. Even if the government possesses the data, it is still difficult to use because of considerations of individual dignity.

Another factor limiting the transition to a more data-friendly health care system is that Japan is not ready to switch to electronic health records because "data silos" prevent health care providers, patients and medical researchers from accessing key data. The ACCJ white paper also referenced 2016 data from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development showing that Japan ranks low in technical and operational readiness and data governance readiness to develop national information from electronic health records.

And yet Japan has many answers for a world that can't afford to be blindsided again by pandemics or other health crises, and is motivated to share them. As Kishida urged in his *Lancet* piece, the global surveillance network should be transformed into an effective early warning system for health threats. All people must have equitable access to new health care technologies, with the aim of leaving no one behind.

The expectation is that Japan's hard-won experience and knowledge will lead the world to UHC. The G7 Summit in Hiroshima will provide a solid platform for moving ahead on that and other health issues to ensure the world is a healthy place for all of us.



A robot delivers medicine and equipment at Toyota Memorial Hospital in Aichi Prefecture on April 10. KYODO



Japanese delegates voice keen support for universal health coverage during a discussion at the United Nations in February 2019. KYODO



# Hiroshima special

(Sponsored content)

## Luxury, fine food and nature await in the city of peace

Overlooking the Seto Inland Sea and surrounded by the Chugoku Mountains, Hiroshima is full of secluded nature spots, exquisite food that makes use of the bounties of the land and sea, traditional Japanese culture, and other world-class attractions that are sure to impress the dignitaries attending the G7 Summit set for May 19 to 21. For those who have yet to discover the city, here are a few of the historical sites and sightseeing spots it has to offer.

### City of peace

Hiroshima, the first city to suffer an atomic bombing, has spent more than seven decades appealing for the realization of permanent world peace and the abolition of nuclear arms, as well as conveying the reality of the bombing. The devastation caused by nuclear weapons has been preserved through several memorial establishments, including the Genbaku (A-Bomb) Dome, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Before the atomic bombing, the Genbaku Dome was the Hiroshima Prefectural Industrial Promotional Hall, where local products were displayed and sold. It is one of the few buildings remaining near ground zero.

The 12.2-hectare Peace Memorial Park, where the A-Bomb Dome is located, attracts countless visitors from around the world each year. The Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum located within the park conveys the reality of the damage caused by atomic bombs to people of all nations, contributing to the abolition of nuclear weapons and the realization of lasting world peace, which Hiroshima wishes for with all its heart. The permanent exhibit consists of personal belongings left behind by the victims, photographs and other materials that convey what happened on the morning of Aug. 6, 1945.

### Many islands

Notably, there's a high-speed boat service connecting the park with the island of Miyajima, Hiroshima's other World Heritage Site and a prime example of the treasures of the Chugoku region.

Located in the northwestern part of Hiroshima Bay, Miyajima's spectacular Itsukushima Shrine is one of the most famous places of Shinto worship in the world, thanks to its torii gate being built over water, which makes it look as if it were floating on the surface of the sea during high tide.

Legend has it that Saeki Kuramoto, a member of a clan that ruled the area, founded Itsukushima Shrine in 593. It is said that the renowned monk Kukai trained at Miyajima's Mount Misen and founded a temple there in the ninth century. After famed military leader Taira no Kiyomori became the local governor, he had the shrine restored in 1168 and made it a popular pilgrimage site for nobility, the imperial family and his own Heike clan, who have all contributed greatly to the splendor of Miyajima.

Notably, the island also has a strong connection with France. In 2008, the two countries celebrated 150 years of diplomatic relations, which have resulted in the strengthening of ties between France's Mont-Saint-Michel Benedictine abbey in Lower Normandy and Miyajima. The two have a lot in common. Both are World Heri-



Left: The numerous islands and bridges of Setouchi offer some of the most breathtaking coastal views in Japan. Right: A popular way to see the sights is through the 70-km Shimanami Kaido cycling course.

HIROSHIMA TOURISM ASSOCIATION

itage Sites on the sea and both have been known as sacred places of worship for over 1,000 years, with the abbey's beginning going back to 966. Using these similarities as a stepping stone on the road to friendship, the city of Hatsukaichi, which Miyajima is a part of, and Mont-Saint-Michel signed a sister city affiliation in 2009, promising to promote each other's tourism and to organize joint events in the future.

Miyajima is just one of about 700 islands in the Seto Inland Sea, 171 of which are part of Hiroshima. Each island is like an emerald gem of lush greenery rising above the water with gentle yet majestic elegance. It's not surprising that they have been considered wonders of the world among European and American travelers since the early Meiji Era (1868 to 1912). Today, it's possible to journey through them by boat, bike or car. Cyclists will definitely want to check out the Shimanami Kaido route connecting Onomichi in southeastern Hiroshima Prefecture to Imabari in Ehime Prefecture across many of Hiroshima's islands.

While the Shimanami Kaido offers stunning views of Hiroshima's many islands, the roughly 70-km main route might be too much for beginners. Fortunately, many shorter courses, some that can be enjoyed on e-bikes, are also available. Other destinations include Okunoshima, a small island accessible only by ferry, also known as "Rabbit Island" because of its many rabbits, as well as Sensui Island, which is said to intoxicate even the most powerful hermits with its natural beauty. Then there is Ikuchi Island, a great place to enjoy picking citrus. Those are just some examples of the Hiroshima pearls scattered around the Seto Inland Sea.

### Splendor of satoyama

Hiroshima is also known for *satoyama*, which generally refers to areas where residents coexist with and take care of the natural environment. In recent years, such areas have become popular among people



Visitors can take a relaxing break from everyday life in a traditional house.

looking for sustainable tourism experiences, such as those offered by Hiroshima's many traditional lodging facilities. Some of these facilities are available in scenic Shobara. You can find several traditional Japanese houses that guests can rent out for unforgettable stays in nature.

These renovated accommodations are over 100 years old and allow guests to take a trip back in time while enjoying the traditional landscapes of Hiroshima in a private setting. There's also a popular campground in the area with treehouses, tree adventures and other fun activities, as well as accommodations offering majestic views of Mount Hiba, Mount Azuma, the Saijo River and other features of the region.

### Bounties of land and sea

Hiroshima Prefecture is the ancestral land of world-famous wagyu that is known for its quality flavors, tenderness and delicate marbling. Since ancient times, iron smelting has flourished here, with strong-legged cattle having been utilized to transport large amounts of furnace wood up steep hills. Over time, local residents bred better and better cattle led by specialists in raising strong and easy-to-handle livestock, and Hiroshima cattle became the forerunners of wagyu, including delicious Hiba gyu (beef).



## Dedicated to preserving peace

HIDEHIKO YUZAKI  
HIROSHIMA GOVERNOR



I am extremely grateful that Hiroshima has the opportunity to host a G7 Summit and would like to extend a heartfelt welcome to leaders of the countries visiting

this city, members of the media community visiting from countries around the world, and all who are involved in the summit.

After experiencing utter devastation by the first nuclear bombing in human history, Hiroshima staged a remarkable reconstruction driven by the tenacity and the spirit of mutual help of its people and their wish for global peace.

Hiroshima has an abundance of resources, including a rich traditional culture, thriving industries and beautiful nature. These have been born, refined and inherited, at times overcoming wide-ranging difficulties, including a crisis of

resource decline.

Furthermore, Hiroshima has a wide variety of delicacies from the land and sea, which are blessed with diverse climate conditions that range from islands in the south filled with sunshine to snow-covered mountains in the north. We also produce excellent wines and sake. Popular destinations for cyclists and an active sports scene further add to Hiroshima's many charms.

There are many stories one may not hear elsewhere regarding Hiroshima's attractiveness and history that have developed over many years. My wish is that many people from around the world can meet the people, food, culture, traditions and nature of Hiroshima by visiting in person.

At this summit, restoring and maintaining peace will be at the top of the agenda. Hiroshima symbolizes the inhumane nature of the destruction of nuclear weapons as well as the prosperity that peace can bring about. My wish is that the G7 Summit will show the determination with which we chose the latter and found a way to realize the peaceful world without nuclear weapons.



ment manufacturing company, invented Japan's first power-driven rice-milling machine. This led to the creation of an entirely new category of sake called *ginjo*, in which the rice is polished to less than 60% of its original weight to refine the flavor of the sake.

Shizuhiko Kimura also contributed to the development of Hiroshima alcohol, founding a sake brewing company and a brewing engineer training school in 1918. Thanks to them, Hiroshima sake is now on a par with sake from Nada and Fushimi in Hyogo and Kyoto prefectures, respectively.

In recent years, Hiroshima has also become famous for its wine, the quality of which is thanks in large part to the considerable temperature difference between day and night, producing high-sugar-content

grapes with good red coloring as a result. Today, it can be mentioned in the same breath as wines from famous production regions around the world, and has even won a gold medal at the International Wine and Spirit Competition.

Having become a beacon of peace since its recovery, Hiroshima has also established itself as a popular sightseeing destination among visitors from Japan and abroad. The delightful culinary offerings, historical sites and traditional ways of life, and the stunning natural environment are all waiting to be experienced. Those who make the journey know what a truly special place Hiroshima is.

This page is sponsored by the Hiroshima Prefectural Government.



Itsukushima Shrine's Grand Torii Gate is one of Hiroshima's most well-known symbols. HIROSHIMA TOURISM ASSOCIATION



Blessed with rich nature and food processes developed through its long history, Hiroshima is home to some of Japan's finest oysters, sake and wagyu.





# Promising futures

(Sponsored content)

## Japan offers comprehensive assistance for Ukraine

### Help for war refugees includes housing, job, language assistance

The simmering conflict between Russia and Ukraine that actually began in 2014 exploded into a full-on invasion in late February 2022. Japan responded immediately, condemning Russia's incursion and sending an array of financial, humanitarian and nonlethal aid to Ukraine. The exodus of refugees from the embattled nation desperate to escape the chaos has brought many Ukrainians to Japan. Prime Minister Fumio Kishida will be addressing the need for peace in Ukraine at the G7 summit in Hiroshima in May. He has also invited President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to participate virtually in the G7 proceedings as a special guest, since Ukraine will be a main agenda item at the summit.

### Standing with Ukraine

At their March 21 summit meeting and working dinner in Kyiv, Kishida and Zelenskyy confirmed their solidarity in countering Russia's aggression and condemned the illegal, unjustifiable and unprovoked incursion. In their joint statement on a special global partnership, the two leaders avowed that Russia's actions undermine the very foundation of international order based on the rule of law, constitute a grave violation of the basic principles enshrined in the U.N. Charter — in particular the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity — and directly threaten security, peace and stability in multiple regions.

Poland is a staunch ally of Ukraine in this conflict. Kishida also visited Poland the day after, sitting down with Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki.

### 'Japan cannot accept the threat of nuclear weapons use by Russia, much less allow the 77-year record for nonuse to be broken.'

humanitarian, recovery and reconstruction assistance to Ukraine.

Japan's groundswell of support for Ukraine so far has taken multiple forms. This includes \$200 million in emergency humanitarian assistance to Ukraine and neighboring countries (to bolster health, medical care, food and protection) as well as about \$500 million worth of humanitarian, recovery and reconstruction assistance for fiscal 2022. Japan has also provided \$600 million in direct financial assistance to Ukraine.

Kishida stated that to supplement the humanitarian and financial assistance Japan has been providing since last year, which came to about \$1.6 billion, about \$5.5 billion more will be provided to underscore its solidarity with Ukraine on the first anniversary of Russia's invasion.

Moreover, the prime minister indicated that the government has decided to provide additional financial support, and will be funding Ukraine in areas such as electric power, mine clearance and agriculture. He also announced that he will provide \$470 million in new bilateral grant assistance for the energy sector and other areas, as well as \$30 million for nonlethal equipment through NATO trust funds.



**Above: Prime Minister Fumio Kishida inspects power generators provided by the Japanese government during his visit to Bucha, Ukraine, on March 21. Right: Kishida poses with Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy at their summit meeting in Kyiv on March 21.** CABINET PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE

As the only country to have suffered atomic bombings in wartime, Kishida also said that Japan cannot accept the threat of nuclear weapons use by Russia, much less allow the 77-year record for nonuse to be broken. He stated that he would strongly communicate this point at the G7 Hiroshima Summit as well.

### Grassroots assistance

On the humanitarian front, the Japanese government has supplied drones, bullet-proof vests, helmets, winter clothing, tents, emergency rations and medical and other nonlethal equipment. To combat the winter cold, Japan worked through international organizations to provide generators and solar lanterns (worth some \$2.57 million), reflectors and warmers for the Ukrainian National Police (worth around \$550,000), and broadcasting equipment to the Public Broadcasting Company of Ukraine.

On the diplomatic front, Japan has offered to extend the stays of Ukrainian residents here and accept evacuees from Ukraine. Other assistance includes transportation of UNHCR humanitarian relief supplies by Self-Defense Forces aircraft, as well as social contributions in fields such as medical care and health.

As of April 19, Japan had taken in over 2,200 evacuees from Ukraine. Government support for them is comprehensive, from pre-entry support and immigration assistance at the airport to temporary housing, meals, transportation assistance, living expenses and medical care, along with Japanese-language education, work-related seminars and job-hunting assistance.

After refugees are handed over to municipalities, companies and other entities, the government provides continuing aid and support in many of the same areas. If there are relatives or acquaintances in Japan who will take in evacuees, they will act as guarantors and help the evacuees in their daily lives.

In the meantime, the government has withdrawn most-favored-nation status from Russia, prohibited the import of Russian machinery and other goods, placed sanctions on exports of semiconductors and other goods, and phased out or banned coal and oil imports from Russia, among other measures.



### Extending a helping hand

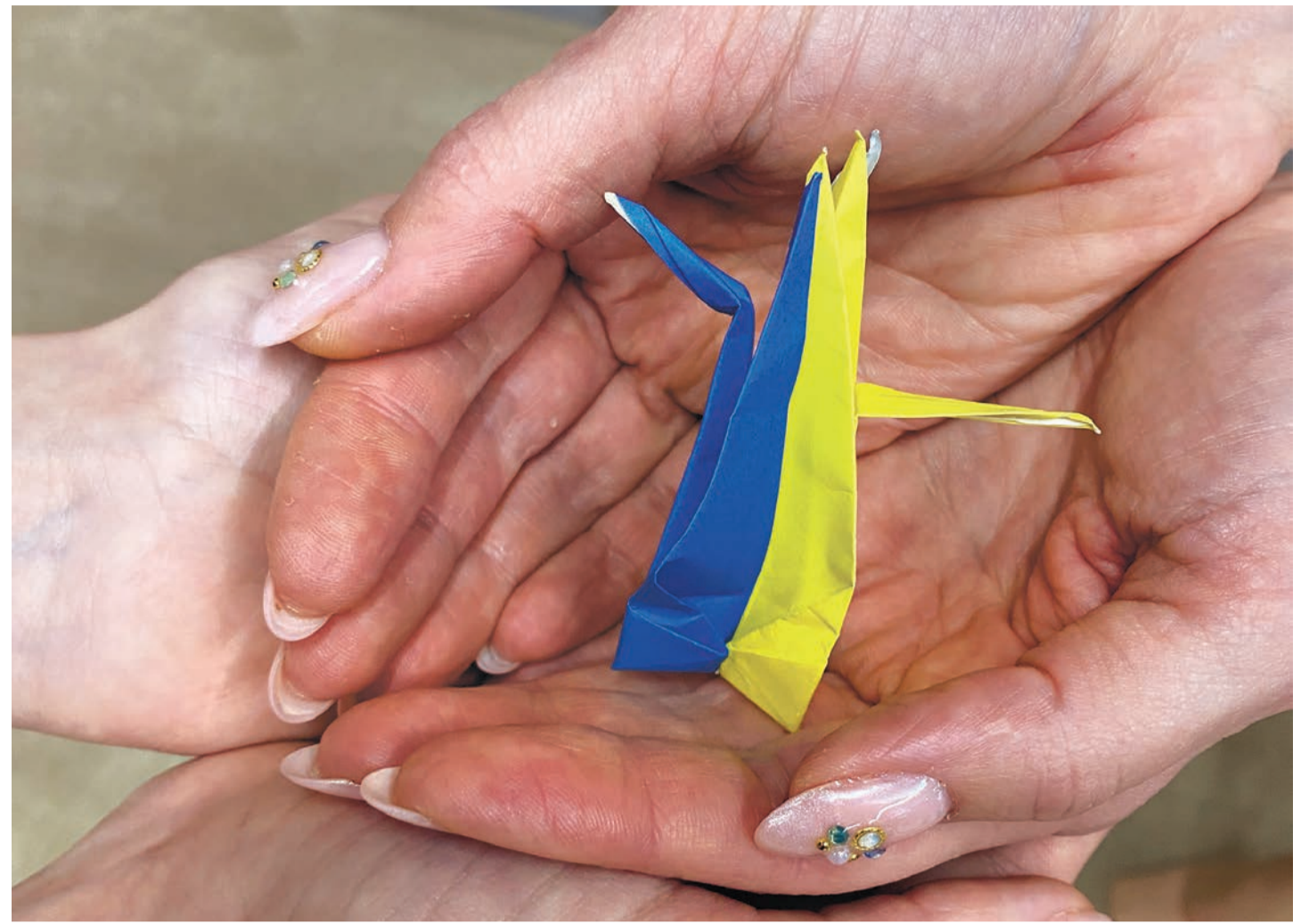
The U.N. refugee agency reports that Russia's invasion has forced an estimated 6 million people to be internally displaced, while more than 8 million had crossed into neighboring countries as of January.

Hiroshima Prefecture has expressed its willingness to accept evacuees from Ukraine and works in concert with municipalities and other entities that wish to take them in. The prefecture also accepts inquiries from residents and companies that are considering accepting or supporting evacuees. According to the February issue of the Hiroshima Municipal Government's Peace Culture newsletter, Japan began welcoming Ukrainian evacuees in early April 2022, with the first of them arriving in the city at the end of April.

The prefecture has set up a consultation system (consultation, interpretation and other services in Ukrainian) at the Hiroshima International Center. It also has provided approximately 50 units of housing for free.

To support asylum seekers in their new lives, Hiroshima's City Diversity and Inclusion Division set up a program that uses organizations who have been providing support to foreign residents regardless of nationality, as well as their know-how and resources.

This program has two main facets. One is to arrange interpreters for administrative procedures and daily life consultations at the Hiroshima City and Aki County For-



**An origami crane in Ukrainian national colors represents hopes for peace.**

eign Resident Consultation Center and for medical appointments. Evacuees planning to settle in Japan for a certain period of time must obtain visas at the Immigration Services Agency. The city sends an interpreter along to assist in this complicated process.

The second facet is to give evacuees opportunities to learn Japanese. Learning the language is essential for displaced persons who may settle in Japan to live independently. Without being able to speak Japanese, evacuees will face difficulties and inconveniences in daily life, and may become isolated. A certain level of Japanese proficiency is also required for work.

The City Diversity and Inclusion Division usually holds introductory Japanese language classes for foreign residents at the International Conference Center Hiroshima. In addition, they offer tutoring in the language free of charge.

The staff meets with evacuees several times weekly over several months in classrooms for tutorials, and can usually spot any problems and respond appropriately in cooperation with the city and other related agencies.

After acquiring the minimum necessary Japanese for daily life in beginners' classes, students will continue their studies with people in the community. The city hopes many residents will take a neighborly interest in the evacuees and other foreign residents and take the first step to extend a warm hand.

### An essential bridge

Anastasia Khotina, a teacher and web designer from Cherkasy, Ukraine — the cultural, educational and industrial center of Cherkasy Oblast and the Central Economic Region of Ukraine — came to Japan in 2002. She now lives in Hiroshima, where she raises awareness about Ukrainian culture and its charms in Japan via radio, presentations and events.

In February 2022, she was instrumental in launching the Hiroshima Ukrainian Association, which supports people in Ukraine and those who have evacuated to Japan, exchanges information and supports protests against

Russia. It also works with Ukrainian communities across Japan.

The association holds events once a month to introduce Ukrainian cuisine, culture and history, and to raise funds. Anastasia has acted as a bridge between Japanese who know the current situation in Ukraine and want to help but do not know what to do, and Ukrainians who need help. "A lot of people have expressed their sympathy and encouragement, and have come to support us," she said.

The refugees include people dear to Anastasia — her sister, Daria, and Daria's family. "There is no safe place in Ukraine," Daria explained. "I was terrified for my

children, so I decided it would be better to take them to a safe country. My sister and her husband helped us get here, and we are extremely grateful for that."

Exhibiting the resilience now closely associated with the people of Ukraine, Daria explained that the only difficulty they've had so far is with the language. "We've been trying to learn it, but it is very difficult."

The government readily stepped in. "We are constantly receiving support," she said. "We received help with language-learning, getting a private teacher to work with us, and were provided with housing. My youngest son got enrolled in a kindergarten and now he is going to school. We are very thankful for all the help!"

### An appeal for support

Japan is the only country to suffer nuclear attacks, which creates a certain affinity between the two nations, given the atomic bombs that struck Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the nuclear accident in Chernobyl. What role does Anastasia think Japan can play to bring peace to Ukraine?

"Over the past year, many people have taken an interest in Ukraine and offered to help, but Ukraine has been fighting for the past eight years," Anastasia said. "If more countries had shown that they were on Ukraine's side earlier, it might have prevented an invasion. To prevent further casualties, it is important for all countries to unite and express their support for Ukraine. For that reason, I want to do my best in Japan now, communicate the 'heart' of Ukraine through art and culture, and appeal our identity as an independent country."

When asked about her hopes and aspirations for the G7 Summit, Anastasia is frank: "Simply ending the current war is not the goal. We need a long-term, large-scale framework that will ensure the security of the people of Ukraine and its surrounding countries for many years to come. As the host of this year's G7 Summit, I would like Japan to demonstrate leadership and call on other countries to provide more active support."

Anastasia also wants to be sure that the people in Japan who are advocating for peace and justice in Ukraine know one thing. "I'm deeply grateful that many lives were saved thanks to the warm support of the Japanese people. I will never forget that you reached out to us when we were in trouble. There is still no end in sight to the war, but I would like to ask for your continued assistance to Ukraine — above all, assistance to protect people's lives and enable them to live with peace of mind."



**Participants pose with Ukrainian motanka (guardian) dolls they made at a charity event in Hiroshima in December 2022. Center: Volunteers pose with Ukrainian refugees in Hiroshima after a charity event in February.**



**A young Ukrainian war refugee enjoys the cherry blossoms in Hiroshima after starting elementary school in April.**



# Promising futures

(Sponsored content)

## Changing hearts and minds on reality of Fukushima recovery

### Hope Tourism aims to end negative portrayals of prefecture's future

At 2:46 p.m. on March 11, 2011, Japan was rocked for six minutes as a magnitude 9 megathrust earthquake struck about 70 kilometers off Miyagi Prefecture, spawning tsunami that would sweep across Japan's Pacific coastline from Hokkaido to Chiba. Combined, the quake and tsunami left nearly 20,000 dead, more than 6,000 injured and around 2,500 missing.

But for residents of Fukushima Prefecture, the misery was compounded as the natural disaster also led to the failure of the cooling systems at the Fukushima No. 1 Nuclear Power Plant. The resulting reactor meltdowns, hydrogen explosions and release of radioactive materials would eventually force more than 150,000 people to evacuate their homes. Furthermore, the name Fukushima was now associated with nuclear contamination, a blanket assessment tainting everyone and everything throughout the prefecture regardless of reality.

But time does not stand still. While a restricted zone remains in place by necessity, more and more areas of Fukushima are reopening to those who wish to return to their hometowns — whether to live, recover mementos or something in between. Yet the gap between the tainted image many people in Japan and particularly overseas may have of Fukushima and the improved reality on the ground remains an issue.

### Strong resilience

In an attempt to close that gap, the idea of conducting educational tours was proposed in 2016 to raise awareness about conditions on the ground. Dubbed Hope Tourism, the program — which is run by the Fukushima Tourism and Local Products Association — has been bringing in people from around Japan to see the devastation firsthand and meet with local residents to hear their stories and see what is being done to bring its disaster-afflicted regions back to life.

"Programs like this are often called dark tourism. That's because they go to places like Auschwitz or Hiroshima or Nagasaki, absorbing the dark lessons and passing (on) what they've learned," explained Canadian William McMichael, a long-term Fukushima resident and associate professor at Fukushima University who has been closely involved with the project from its inception. "This program is called 'Hope Tourism' because they want people to see, listen and think (about) what's going on, and through that they can feel the hope of the people who are once again living here."

McMichael himself — currently a field partner to the Hope Tourism program — is an enthusiastic Fukushima booster. "Fukushima is such a wonderful place. The beauty, the people, the unique culture. For a foreigner interested in Japan, you can really experience a lot of different things," he said. A Canadian with Japanese ancestry on his mother's side and fluent language skills — McMichael first came to Fukushima in 2007 on the Japanese government's Japan Exchange and Teaching Programme to work as a coordinator for international relations in the offices of the Fukushima Prefectural Government. "I first came here for purely work-related reasons. I had no idea where Fukushima even was! But I wanted an international experience at a grassroots level, so I convinced my wife that I wanted to go. I was going to come for one year ... but within weeks we just fell in love with it."

After his JET contract ended, and wanting to get more involved in education, McMichael landed a position in autumn 2010 at Fukushima University in its Stu-



The Fukushima No. 1 Nuclear Power Plant is visible in the far background as William McMichael stands on a beach in Namie, which was devastated by tsunami following the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake.

dent Services Department. There, he was charged with laying the groundwork for establishing the Fukushima University International Center. Then disaster struck.

"We already knew and had been to many of the communities around here," he said. "We saw what was happening to our friends, but we also saw firsthand the resilience of communities coming together. They hadn't given up. We experienced this ourselves. People were really going out of their way to help each other, and they really reminded us of why we love it. But unfortunately, the international media especially was having trouble getting hard information and putting out stories based solely on what they were hearing. With all the misinformation out there, people thought Fukushima was gone and no one would ever live here again. That made me really angry, and so I wanted to pay them back in some way."

### Look, hear, think

McMichael's first opportunity to start paying back the people in the communities he loved came in 2012, when he was finally able to open the doors on the Fukushima University International Center. One of his first projects there was to create the Fukushima Ambassadors Program. Launched in May that year, the program brings both foreign exchange students and students from other parts of Japan to Fukushima.

"For the first few years," McMichael said, "the goal was to get students to learn about Fukushima. However, starting around 2016 that changed to getting them to learn from Fukushima."

To date, more than 200 exchange students have participated, along with around 700 from across Japan. The goal, McMichael said, is for those students who have participated in the program to become ambassadors for Fukushima who can explain from their personal experience what conditions are actually like.

The Hope Tourism program has similar goals. The aim is to lead participants on a three-step journey of "seeing, listening, and considering." First, by visiting Fukushima, they can see for themselves what the actual negative and positive aspects of the situation are.

"Naturally, people have concerns about the nuclear disaster, and not without reason. But I think if people can come from overseas and see firsthand — they know

what they were confused about before and so when they go home, they can think about what they've seen for themselves and then share (that) with others," McMichael said. "This is the great thing about Hope Tourism."

The second step of the program is for visitors to listen. The Hope Tourism program brings in guest speakers ranging from disaster prevention experts to representatives of local fishing cooperatives. They talk about everything from the difficulties that Fukushima still faces, to the work that is already underway for rebuilding communities and resuming farming and fishing.

Finally, as the last step of the program, participants are invited to consider and think about what they've heard and seen. Fukushima still faces many challenges. While restrictions are being lifted for more and more areas, there are still places where radiation remains too high for people to stay for more than short periods. Communities were scattered by the evacuation, and many who could return, have for whatever reason, chosen not to. There also has been a loss of industrial infrastructure and energy problems remain a concern.

A local newspaper reported in April that the program set a record for participants in fiscal 2022 as 17,806 people took part in some 319 tours. Word about the tours is also spreading among educators, the paper reported. Specifically, 13,587 went for educational trips, while 4,219 (a 490% rise over the previous year) visited as part of corporate and other general groups. About 13,822 of the participants came from outside Fukushima, 2.5 times the number from the previous year.

### On the road to recovery

The Hope Tourism program offers a basic one- or two-day tour on a set itinerary, as well as tailor-made day tours. The basic tour focuses on Fukushima's coastal areas, where participants can learn about the effects of the quake, tsunami and nuclear disaster, and the progress made toward revitalization. One tour route passes through the town of Futaba, for example, which offers participants a chance to assess both.

One of the last communities to have its evacuation orders lifted, the area near Futaba Station is dotted with collapsing houses filled with wreckage and debris. The clock at the station is frozen at 2:46, and

here and there along the streets one notices calendars that have gone untouched since March 2011. Once home to around 7,000 residents, today the town has around only 60, according to McMichael. Next, the route goes past the remains of Ukedo Elementary School in the town of Namie, where students evacuated just ahead of the tsunami, which reached the second floor. The vast new seawall that stretches across the coast just beyond is a reminder of the terrible power of nature.

Yet, at the same time, Hope Tourism participants will also see signs of revitalization. In Futaba, adjacent to the train station and its unchanging clock, there is a new community center called Station Plaza Futaba with displays about the ongoing reconstruction work and messages of encouragement from visitors. One zone near the station has become the Futaba Art District, with street art commissioned to

### 'The goal was to get students to learn about Fukushima ... that changed to getting them to learn from Fukushima.'

decorate the walls of some of the buildings to bring color back to the town. And in 2020, the town opened the Futaba Business Incubation and Community Center, a facility that combines rental offices and conference rooms with a cafe, food court and restaurants

to bring residents, visitors and business-people together. Next door to the FBICC stands the Great East Japan Earthquake and Nuclear Disaster Memorial Museum, which offers exhibits, lectures and oral history of the disaster. In the meantime, ongoing efforts in neighboring Namie include the opening in 2018 of the Fukushima Hydrogen Energy Research Field, the world's largest facility for producing hydrogen using renewable energy as well as the establishment this April of the Fukushima Institute for Research, Education and Innovation.

Indeed, revitalization can be seen around the prefecture, perhaps best exemplified by a resurgence in exports of Fukushima products mainly to the U.S. and China. In 2021, Fukushima exports achieved a record high of ¥1.38 billion. This surge — 152% over the previous year — was driven by such goods as locally



A clock clinging to the remains of Ukedo Elementary School is frozen at the time it was struck by tsunami in the town of Namie, Fukushima Prefecture.



Many buildings around Futaba Station have been painted with murals, including this one representing the town as it was before the disaster. Below: Uplifting murals are part of efforts to spread positive messages and boost morale.



PHOTOS: RIN ONOZUKA

grown rice and flowers, sake from brewers around the prefecture, and handicrafts, such as woven goods. Indeed, on a plot near the FBICC, textile maker Asano Nenshi Co. this year opened a new mill for thread and towel products marketable in Japan and worldwide.

One of the most important things organizers hope visitors will take away from one of these tours, said McMichael, is that in some respects the problems that Fukushima is confronting are universal, rather than specific to the calamity. While the exact circumstances may differ, for example, many communities around Japan are dealing with rapidly graying and declining populations. The issue of how communities should respond and preserve their vitality is a universal one.

To date, Hope Tourism's participants have mainly been students on field trips from other parts of Japan. "Students going back home and telling their classmates what they saw is honest and authentic," he said.

### Open to more visitors

According to McMichael, the Hope Tourism program has also formed connections with the peace tourism initiatives undertaken in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, learning, for example, how Hiroshima trains its guides. "We've also learned how they use storytellers and how they archive those oral histories. We also had a project to learn from them about how they translated those histories," he added.

McMichael helped Hope Tourism arrange a tour for a group from Hiroshima University that wanted to come to Fukushima to participate in a "Peace and Hope" tour to consider the commonalities of the

two prefectures.

Starting this year, the Hope Tourism program plans to accept private travelers, rather than requiring that participants be part of a formal group, such as a school field trip. "We had wanted to start it earlier, but with COVID-19 restrictions it just wasn't possible," McMichael said.

With more opportunities for visitors to come, he added, it creates more ambassadors for Fukushima who can tell people back home about what they saw in their own words.

McMichael remains upbeat about Hope Tourism and about Fukushima. "My own hope is that people will learn to love Fukushima as much as I do," he said. "The Japanese word for tourism combines the characters for 'seeing' and 'light.' I think that one has to see darkness as well in order to really see and appreciate the light."

Pages 6 and 7 are sponsored by the government of Japan.



Left: Futaba Business Incubation and Community Center was opened in 2020 to unite residents, visitors and businesses. Right: The Great East Japan Earthquake and Nuclear Disaster Memorial Museum offers exhibits, lectures and discussions on the disaster.





# Kurashiki special

(Sponsored content)

## Kurashiki prime setting for MICE events and tourism

In hosting the April 22 and 23 Labour and Employment Ministers' Meeting ahead of the G7 Summit in Hiroshima, Kurashiki in Okayama Prefecture has secured its place as a first-class MICE destination.

MICE, which stands for "meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions," is another way of referring to the events industry that brings together professionals from every possible field and facilitates discussions to foster collaboration. Kurashiki is uniquely suited for that, thanks to its picturesque scenery, an industrial background and a wide variety of regional resources. Here are a few examples of what visitors can expect.

### Embracing old and new

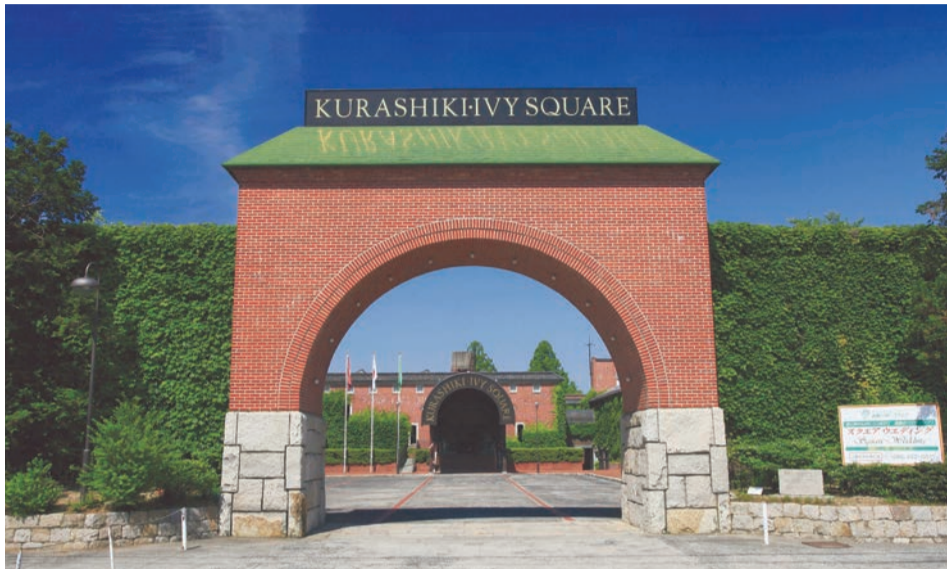
This was the second G7 ministerial meeting to be held in Kurashiki, the first being during the 2016 summit in Ise-Shima. As before, it took place in the Kurashiki Bikan Historical Area, primarily at the Kurashiki Ivy Square complex.

Ivy Square is part of Kurashiki's cultural and industrial heritage dating back to the Edo Period (1603 to 1868). Site of one of the first modern cotton mills in Japan, it earned its name as the outer walls were covered by ivy plants to lower temperatures and improve working conditions inside. The mill's second president, Magosaburo Ohara, was also the founder of the Ohara Memorial Institute for Science of Labour, which researches occupational health. While today's Ivy Square may be a multipurpose facility with a hotel and restaurants, its history lent the perfect atmosphere to the April meeting on the topics of labor and employment.

Of course, the Bikan Historical Area is much more than a historically significant MICE venue. Nor is it just a picturesque townscape along the Kurashiki River.



Kurashiki's jeans industry is drawing international attention. CITY OF KURASHIKI



A red arched gate marks the entrance to the Kurashiki Ivy Square complex. CITY OF KURASHIKI

Rather, it's a symbol of the city's enterprising spirit and the harmony between old and new best represented by its architecture, which weaves together traditional Japanese houses and Western buildings. It's also a window into Japan's past, with some sections of the area dating back more than 400 years, surviving to this day thanks to the preservation work of the city's dedicated residents. In 2017, the Bikan Historical Area was recognized as a Japan Heritage Site and continues to be a big reason why over 3 million people visit annually. Some are undoubtedly also drawn to the area's Kurashiki Archaeological Museum. Housed in a 200-year-old rice granary, the museum exhibits millennia-old items that shed light on the development of Okayama and parts of Hiroshima.

However, not all of the city's charms are confined to the past. Some may have started there but now actively contribute to its growth and prosperity, like the local jeans industry. In fact, the history of Japan's domestic jeans production starts in Kurashiki, specifically in the Kojima district, now home to the 400-meter-long Kojima Jeans



The Ohara Museum of Art, founded in 1950, is Japan's first private museum devoted to Western art. CITY OF KURASHIKI

Street and about 40 jeans stores. Every spring, a festival under the theme "Made in Kojima" is held here, attracting as many as 200,000 visitors. Travelers can also visit the Betty Smith Jeans Museum, the first and only museum of its kind in the country. How did Kojima become Kurashiki's "Denim Valley?" Four centuries ago, large parts of the city were reclaimed from the sea, but the resulting land was too saline to grow rice. It was, however, perfect for growing cotton, so over time, Kurashiki grew into one of the biggest textile production areas in Japan. Besides jeans, they're also famous for their *tabi* (traditional split-toed socks) and school uniforms.

### Something for everyone

Located in the Bikan Historical Area, the Ohara Museum of Art is the first private museum devoted to Western art in Japan. In the beginning, it was mainly dedicated to one person: Torajiro Kojima, a Western-style painter and close friend of Ohara, who founded the museum in 1930 to honor Kojima's works. With Ohara's encouragement, Kojima worked on his own pieces while



The Kurashiki Bikan Historical Area, where traditional Japanese buildings blend in with Western architecture, symbolizes Kurashiki's history of embracing old and new. CITY OF KURASHIKI



The employment ministers participating in the Group of Seven Summit pose in Kurashiki in April. CITY OF KURASHIKI

traveling through Europe and collecting the many masterpieces that would eventually become part of the museum's collection.

Today it includes works by such giants of the art world as El Greco, Monet, Rodin, Matisse, Gauguin, Renoir, Lautrec, Cezanne, Chagall, Degas, Manet, Millet, Munch, Picasso and Rousseau.

According to some sources, the museum's priceless exhibits were the reason why Kurashiki was spared from air raids during World War II. Thanks to this, guests today can enjoy the facility's Craft Art Gallery and Asian Art Gallery, which was converted from a rice warehouse and exhibits Asian antiques, or the Main Gallery, which mainly shows Western art, including Monet's famous "Water Lilies" and El Greco's "Annunciation." Special private tours are available for large groups — ideal as an attractive after-convention activity.

Those looking for beautiful sights outdoors should consider the Setonaikai National Park. Established in 1934, it is Japan's first national park and one that has since expanded to include parts of 11 prefectures. However, Kurashiki has the privilege

of being home to scenic Washuzan Hill, from which visitors can enjoy one of the "100 most beautiful sunsets in Japan" over the tranquil Seto Inland Sea. *Washu* literally translates to "eagle wings," since the mountain is said to resemble a majestic bird taking flight. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, the area attracted about 1.3 million people a year (about 400,000 in 2021), some of whom were probably visiting to also get a look at the Seto Ohashi Bridge. Opened in 1988, the 13-kilometer engineering marvel is actually made up of six bridges connecting Kurashiki with Sakaide in Kagawa Prefecture. It was recognized in 2015 by Guinness World Records as the world's longest combined rail and road bridge, as it carries train lines beneath its upper expressway.

Finally, for travelers looking for a feast of the gastronomical variety, there are many unique Kurashiki dishes featuring the bounty of Okayama and the Seto Inland Sea. *Kakushi-zushi*, for example, is

a sushi dish easily found around the Bikan Historical Area and consisting of a box that seemingly only includes rice with simple toppings. But once flipped and opened, the box reveals a beautiful and appetizing arrangement of raw fish and other ingredients that were hiding underneath. *Kakushi-zushi* was apparently inspired by Ikeda Mitsumasa, the 17th century lord of the Okayama domain, who encouraged frugality by proclaiming that people should consume single-dish dinners. Indeed, before the flip, *kakushi-zushi* does look like a simple rice dish. To not appear suspicious, people reportedly consumed the secret sushi with soup to explain why they felt so full after the seemingly humble meal.

For a once-in-a-lifetime encounter with Japanese history, industrial spirit and majestic natural wonders, Kurashiki awaits.

This page is sponsored by the Kurashiki Municipal Government.



**Tokyo to Kurashiki:**  
80 min. by plane  
3 hrs. 15 min. by bullet train  
\*All times approximate

# KURASHIKI WELCOMES THE WORLD

Japanese and Western, nostalgic and modern, Kurashiki evenings are beautiful, with many alluring sights and an attractive nightlife. Join us in Kurashiki.



Kurashiki Bikan Historical Area



Washuzan Hill



Masking tape

Jeans



Kurashiki afternoon tea

Kakushi-zushi

For more information, please visit <http://www.kurashiki-tabi.jp/for/en/>





# Hiroshima's plentiful table



## From surf 'n' turf to sweets, Hiroshima a foodie's oyster

Variety awaits in Japan's clam and lemon capital

MAKIKO ITOH  
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Situated on the western tip of Honshu between the Sea of Japan and the Seto Inland Sea, the climate of Hiroshima Prefecture is one of contrasts, with a northern side chilled by cold currents and a southern side that stays mild and warm. The mountainous areas see snow and the coastal areas can get plenty of rain, promoting the farming and fishing that give the region its unique delicacies.

### Bounty from land, sea

Hiroshima's most famous product may be its oysters. The prefecture accounts for 60% to 70% of the nation's farmed oysters, and they are plentiful in the local cuisine. Oysters are available all around the city and in other towns throughout the prefecture. They are eaten raw with *ponzu* vinegar (a citrus-based soy sauce) or plain soy sauce, breaded and deep-fried, grilled, baked, served on rice, and more. Oysters are so popular there that they are available year-round. One local specialty that uses oysters is *dodenabe* (hot pot), a fixture on dinner tables during the colder months. The insides of the earthenware pots are coated with *dote*, a bank of paste made with miso and other seasonings, while a mixture of leeks, napa cabbage, shiitake and other vegetables is blended with tofu, oysters and soup stock in the pot. The dish is eaten as the bank of miso melts into the center, providing a rich and comforting umami-filled treat.

Hiroshima-style *okonomiyaki* (a savory Japanese meat and vegetable pancake) is another dish that often includes oysters.

Hiroshima *okonomiyaki* differs from the better-known Osaka variety in that the ingredients are not mixed with the batter. Instead, a thin pancake is made, which is then loaded up with chopped cabbage and fried noodles. These are then topped with ingredients ranging from oysters and squid to pork belly and cheese, and finished off with *katsuobushi* (bonito flakes), *ao-nori* (green seaweed flakes), and salty-sweet *okonomiyaki* sauce. The dish is so popular that there is an area around Hiroshima Station called Okonomimura (Okonomi Village) that is packed with restaurants serving this local favorite. Typically, the chef makes the *okonomiyaki* in front of you and serves it piping hot right off the griddle.

The mild climate along the Seto Inland Sea is especially suited to the production of citrus, and the lemons grown here, called Setouchi lemons, are highly regarded for their juiciness and quality. It is thought that the first lemon trees were planted in the region in 1898, when a shipment of navel orange saplings from Wakayama Prefecture mistakenly contained some lemon trees. That happy accident has led to a thriving industry. As with oysters, Hiroshima dominates the lemon market in Japan, with more than 60% of domestic production.

Lemons are enjoyed both ripe and unripe throughout much of the year. They can be found in local specialties, such as cakes shaped like lemons and stuffed with lemon jam; tart lemon gelato made with fresh lemon juice; a variety of lemon beverages and more. Lemons are used abundantly in the local cuisine as a condiment, and you can find lemon condiments such as a lemon and salt paste called *namashio*

(raw salt) lemon, and a similar liquid product called *Lemosco* to take home as gifts. They are even used to make a local type of pressed marinated sushi called lemon leaf sushi from the town of Onomichi, where lemon peel is included in the rice itself, and lemons are used to marinate the fish instead of the usual vinegar. The sushi is then wrapped in fragrant lemon leaves.

### Diverse culinary variety

Regarding Onomichi, a side trip to this picturesque town is warranted for its steep paths offering fantastic views of the Seto Inland Sea, but another great reason to visit is its ramen, which is renowned around the country. Onomichi ramen has a chicken and seafood soup base that is made dark, almost black, by the addition of a soy-based sauce. The noodles are thick and hearty with a slippery texture that fans find irresistible. Onomichi is also famous for its own type of *okonomiyaki*, called Onomichi-yaki. Although it's similar to Hiroshima's variety, it is identified by the inclusion of such chewy, down-to-earth ingredients as chicken gizzards and squid tempura.

The city of Hiroshima has its own type of ramen, too, characterized by a light soup based on pork and chicken bones and seafood, lightly seasoned with soy sauce. The noodles are on the thin side, and ramen aficionados regard it as combining the best qualities of hearty Kyushu-style pork bone ramen and Tokyo-style ramen, which has a soy sauce base. Comparing Onomichi ramen with Hiroshima ramen is a must for any serious ramen gourmet.

As alternative is *tsukemen*, a type of ramen where the noodles are dipped into a well-flavored sauce rather than served in soup. Hiroshima *tsukemen* is served cold with a salty-sour chili pepper sauce. The sauce varies in spiciness, and diners can



Hiroshima offers an abundance of food, including (from top left) Setouchi lemons, *momijimanju* (maple leaf dumplings), deep-fried oysters, hotpot and Onomichi-style ramen. Above: Hiroshima-style *okonomiyaki* (savory Japanese meat and vegetable pancake) is a Hiroshima staple.

GETTY IMAGES

select the degree. *Tsukemen* is eaten with various toppings, including slices of *char siu* (roasted or boiled pork), boiled eggs, green onions, cabbage and cucumber. Hiroshima *tsukemen* is great when the weather is hot or cold, and makes a great end of to a night of bar-hopping.

The sweet tooth is certainly not neglected in Hiroshima. Besides the aforementioned lemon cakes and lemon gelato, a famous Hiroshima specialty is *momijimanju*, or maple leaf dumplings. This is a pretty little cake made with a pancake-like batter that is usually filled with *anko* (sweet adzuki bean paste) and

shaped like a maple leaf. They are a specialty of Miyajima (also known as Itsukushima), the island famous for its bright red Grand Torii Gate that seems to float in the sea at high tide, as well as its sacred Shinto shrines and Buddhist temples.

The *momijimanju* was created in the early 1900s as a symbol of Momijidani (Maple Valley), which is renowned for its spectacular red maple foliage in the fall. *Momijimanju* are lightly sweet, and perfect with a cup of tea. *Momijimanju* can be found at many shops in the city of Hiroshima as well as on Miyajima. Besides sweet bean paste, there are ones filled with

custard or chocolate cream, too.

There are many other delicacies to enjoy in Hiroshima Prefecture, such as *anagomeshi* (grilled sea eel) served on rice, another Miyajima specialty; curry rice made famous by the Imperial Japanese Navy in the port city of Kure; and small fresh sardines served as tempura or sashimi. Thanks to the abundance of seafood from the prefecture's productive waters, as well as the vegetables, fruit and other bounties of the land, wherever people go in Hiroshima they will be sure to encounter tasty and memorable meals and delectable snacks.

Sponsored by the Japan Arts Council

## Cultural expo continues to explore Japan's beauty and spirit

Seizing on the opportunity offered by the 2020 Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games, the Cultural Affairs Agency and the Japan Arts Council launched the Japan Cultural Expo in 2019. Through over 1,000 projects, exhibitions and festivals, the initiative introduced the world to the beauty of Japanese culture in all its multifaceted splendor.

Coinciding with the G7 Summit in Hiroshima (May 19 to 21) and continuing through the 2025 World Expo in Osaka and most likely beyond, Japan Cultural Expo 2.0 picks up where its predecessor left off during the COVID-19 pandemic. Its stated goals have now become even loftier and include fostering diversity, tackling social challenges and building a connection with the people of the world.

It all starts with the expo's concept of "The Beauty and The Spirit of Japan," which was reportedly developed based on the Japanese idea of *kokoro*. Various translated into English as spirit, heart or mind, the true meaning of the word is much more complex and difficult to explain, yet understanding it holds the key to understanding Japanese art and culture. Japan Cultural Expo 2.0

doesn't provide an outright definition of the word, but through all its projects focusing on community and partnerships, the undertaking aims to construct a bridge between Japan and the rest of the world and allow travelers to discover the true meaning of *kokoro* on their own.

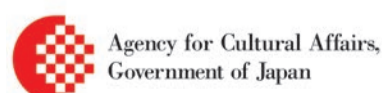
It's a big reason why the expo is a nationwide project not limited to big city centers but instead taking place all over the country in both metropolitan and provincial areas. After all, the essence of Japanese culture can be found everywhere, from national museums to the everyday lives of the country's citizens, including their clothes, food and housing.

It also, crucially, connects to the world of nature, which has been inspiring Japanese art since prehistoric times. And that past reverence for nature never went away. It can be found in products of Japanese culture from millennia ago to modern ones like anime and manga. Discover them all at Japan Cultural Expo 2.0.

Visit <https://japanculturalexpo.bunka.go.jp/en/> for more information.



High-resolution facsimiles of "Pine Forest," a pair of 16th century folding screens painted by Hasegawa Tohaku, will be shown at an interactive exhibition during the G7 Summit in Hiroshima. The exhibition offers a new way to experience this National Treasure through its reproduction and projection mapping.



<https://japanculturalexpo.bunka.go.jp/en/>





# Ishikawa special

(Sponsored content)

## Kanazawa: At the intersection of past, present and future

Kanazawa, the capital of Ishikawa Prefecture, co-hosted the Education Ministers' Meeting on May 14 and 15 ahead of the upcoming G7 Summit. It would be hard to find a more appropriate venue for a conference centered on learning, given the rich culture of this city by the Sea of Japan that blends tradition with a contemporary focus on innovation and change.

It's said that Kanazawa's history began during the Sengoku Period (1482 to 1573), a time of near-constant civil war that thankfully didn't stop the city from growing into a modern capital of industry, art and traditional Japanese crafts such as Kaga-yuzen fabric-dyeing, porcelain Kutani ware, Kanazawa lacquerware and gold leaf. That's just a quick summary of all the charms of Kanazawa. What follows is a more complete version.

### A city of history

Originally a castle town, Kanazawa was spared from the ravages of war — both the "civil" and "world" kind — and still retains many of its historical buildings and townscapes, such as the Nagamachi samurai district.

In this preserved snapshot of old Japan, visitors to this coastal city will find old-fashioned earthen walls, stone-paved alleyways, a drainage and water supply system dating back to the Edo Period (1603 to 1868), and magnificent samurai residences. During the colder months, the area becomes even more enchanting when *komogake* is performed to protect the earthen walls from snow and frost by covering them in woven straw mats. Tourists flock from all over to witness this symbol of winter preparation in Kanazawa.

That being said, there is a real sense of majesty and power emanating from the Nagamachi samurai district. During the Edo Period, Kanazawa's population grew to over 100,000, rivaling those of Madrid or Rome at the time. As the economic and administrative seat of the powerful Kaga domain (modern-day Ishikawa Prefecture), Kanazawa was a city that projected might. Nagamachi, a neighborhood near the center, was reserved for middle- to high-ranking samurai retainers of the local feudal lord, hence their grand residences, some of which, like those of the Nomura and Takada families, are fully or partially

open to the public. Nagamachi is also home to pottery stores, restaurants and museums focusing on everything from Kaga-yuzen fabric-dyeing to the duties and everyday lives of infantry troops in feudal Japan. Visit the area to take a trip back in time.

Thankfully for the city, many of its samurai residents and overseers were also patrons of the arts. It's why the city has a long history of being involved with noh theater. It's also how the Higashichaya district came into being. Translated as "the eastern teahouse district," the area has been designated as an Important Preservation District for Groups of Traditional Buildings featuring beautiful examples of Japanese architecture, such as wooden latticework. But during the 19th century, it was better known as a place where people came to be entertained by geisha trained in traditional Japanese performing arts.

A few geisha teahouses remain in operation in the district, but they do not accept customers directly. Instead, new clients are only admitted with a referral from a known guest of one of the establishments. But even without access to geisha, one can have a lot of fun in the Higashichaya district. The best way to enjoy it is by renting a kimono and taking the time to really explore the historic area. There are many stores selling Japanese sweets (including gold leaf ice cream), traditional crafts and miscellaneous goods along the main streets. But if they look harder, they might also discover a lot of shops and cafes hidden among the back alleys of Higashichaya. With the right attitude and a sense of adventure, one can spend an entire day in this slice of Kanazawa yesteryear.

### Modernity and the future

Kanazawa preserves and celebrates its past but does not allow itself to be bound by it. It's a city that is always moving forward, thinking about the here and now and beyond. Visitors will find this appreciation



Taking a stroll through Kanazawa's Nagamachi samurai district is like paying a visit to old Japan. Left: The Higashichaya district is designated an Important Preservation District for Groups of Traditional Buildings.



**ISHIKAWA PREF.**

**By bullet train**  
Tokyo to Kanazawa: 150 min.

**By plane**  
Tokyo to Komatsu: 65 min.  
Komatsu Airport to Kanazawa: 40 min. by bus

\*All times approximate

for what was, what is and what can be at the 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa. One of the stated goals of the museum is to move "in step with contemporary society" through art exhibits that are not restricted by genre, medium or any other kind of barrier to facilitate discussions and reflections on the era that we live in. By thinking about how others interpret the modern world, we can better understand our own thoughts on it and imagine what the future has in store for us.

While that's happening, the museum is also striving to serve and revitalize the community, aiming to become a place where ideas are freely exchanged for the edification of all. As the facility stated itself, its concept is to be a "Museum open to the city like a park," somewhere where people can just freely pop in, relax and even expand their minds, leaving more content than they were before coming in. This sense of endless possibilities is further expressed through the museum's circular shape representing no beginning or ending. Also incorporated into the museum's design, which won the Golden Lion for Exhibition at the Venice Biennale of

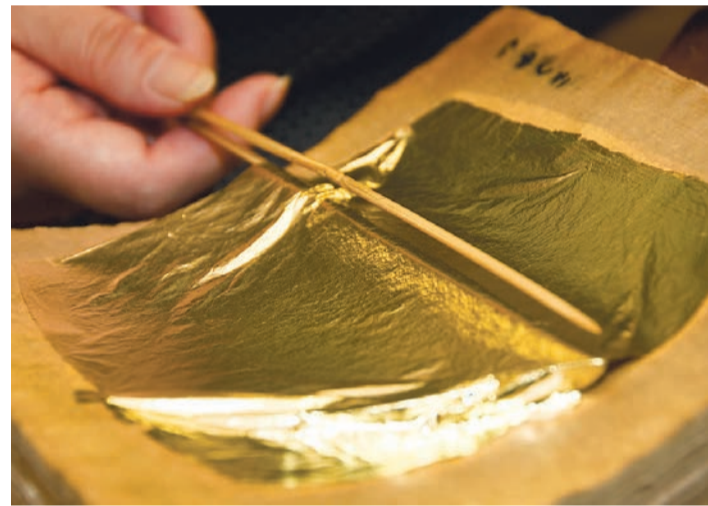
Architecture, are trees relocated from the grounds of the school that occupied the land before the museum, adeptly connecting the site to Kanazawa's past.

The city and the rest of Ishikawa have steadily become more popular not just in Japan, but around the world, thanks to the expansion of the Hokuriku Shinkansen in 2015. A little over a year after that, Travel + Leisure magazine voted Kanazawa as one of the best places to travel in the world.

But Kanazawa has had its fans even before access was made easier by the bullet train extension. Lonely Planet was singing its praises back in 2014 when UNESCO added Kanazawa to its Creative Cities Network in 2009, classifying it as a "Creative

City of Crafts and Folk Arts." The UCCN connects cities that have "identified creativity as a strategic factor for sustainable urban development," which really is the essence of Ishikawa's capital. Its culture is not stagnant. Instead, it continues to be part of everyday life while always reinventing itself and interacting with other creative fields to grow and evolve without losing any of its original essence. Standing where Japan's past, present and future meet, Kanazawa continues to be a model for cities around the world.

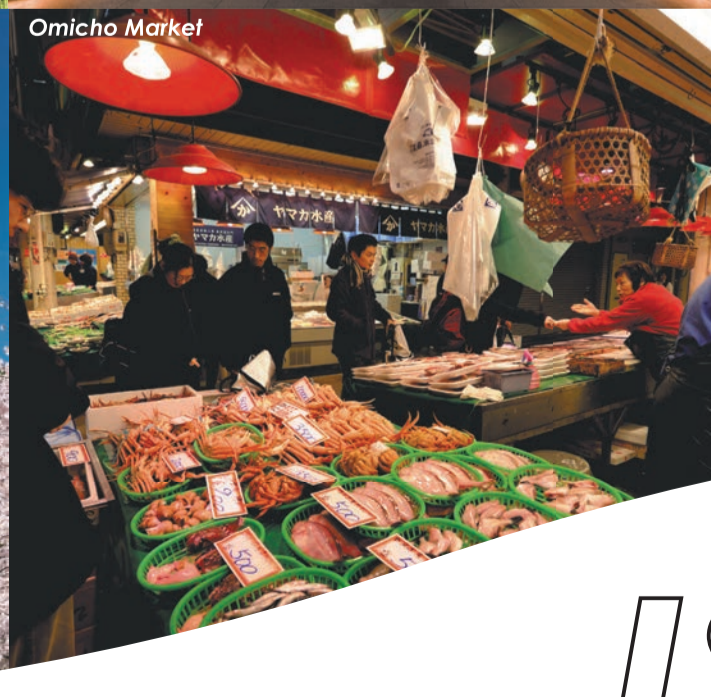
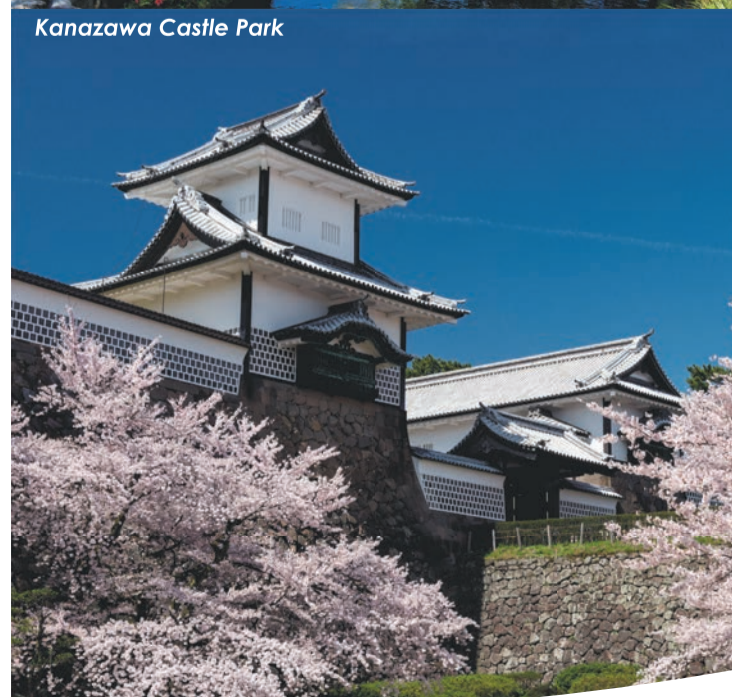
*This page is sponsored by the Ishikawa Prefectural Council for Promoting the G7 Education Ministers' Meeting in Toyama and Kanazawa.*



Kanazawa is said to make 99% of Japan's gold leaf, a material indispensable to restoring national treasures and important cultural properties. One of the production techniques is on UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage List as traditional Japanese architectural craftsmanship.



Left: Visitors gaze up from "The Swimming Pool" by Leandro Erlich at the 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa. Right: The circular shape of the museum is meant to represent the concept of having no beginning or ending.



>Welcome to  
**ISHIKAWA**



THE OFFICIAL  
ISHIKAWA  
TRAVEL GUIDE



# Toyama special

(Sponsored content)

## Spectacular vistas and natural beauty stun in all four seasons

From May 19 to 21, Japan will preside over the G7 Summit in Hiroshima, which will focus on the global economy and other key issues. Around the same time, other conferences are scheduled all over Japan, with Toyama Prefecture having co-hosted the Education Ministers' Meeting with Kanazawa from May 12 to 15. Given the topic, "Education after COVID-19 Pandemic," now seems like the perfect time to talk about everything that this prefecture in Honshu's central Chubu region has to offer.

Surrounded by mountains on three sides and facing the Sea of Japan to the north, Toyama is a place of scenic beauty with its own distinctive cuisine, majestic landscapes and traditional crafts. It is also easily accessible from major cities, such as Tokyo, Nagoya or Osaka, truly living up to its name, which, appropriately, contains the character for "abundance."

### Bountiful nature

One of the most picturesque places in the prefecture is the Tateyama Kurobe Alpine Route, a passage through Japan's Northern Alps stretching from Tateyama in Toyama to Omachi in Nagano Prefecture. It's probably best known for its towering snow walls on the Tateyama Murodo Plateau, which flank a public road and can reach up to 20 meters in height, lasting into June. The route also boasts a long fall foliage season that begins in late September at higher elevations and in late October at lower elevations, making this one of the few places in Japan where visitors get to enjoy beautiful autumn leaves for up to a month and a half.

Another famous sight along the Tateyama Kurobe Alpine Route is Kurobe Dam. At 186 meters, it is the tallest dam in Japan, taking seven years and over ¥51 billion to complete. This marvel of engineering today attracts both domestic and international tourists because of its awe-inspiring water-release events between June and October. These events discharge up to 15 tons of water per second and visitors can witness the grand display up close from a viewing deck or the Rainbow



Passengers on the Kurobe Gorge Railway can enjoy majestic views of the surrounding mountains in all seasons.

Terrace observation plaza. Kurobe Lake, which was created by the dam and is the highest in the nation, can be enjoyed amid its natural surrounds from the Garve sightseeing boat.

But Toyama's natural treasures can also be found at lower altitudes, like in the Kurobe Gorge, a deep V-shaped valley carved into the Northern Alps. One of the best ways to traverse it is via the Kurobe Gorge Railway, operating from mid-April to the end of November. The scenic 20-kilometer ride along the Kurobe River takes around 80 minutes one way and gives passengers majestic views of Toyama's seasonal displays of nature. The railway is at its best in autumn, when the entire valley is

alight with burning-red fall foliage.

Winter, on the other hand, is the best time to explore the Shogawa Gorge by boat. Designated as a prefectural park, the gorge offers amazing sights all year long and transforms during winter into something straight out of a Japanese ink painting, especially when enjoyed from the water. Various cruises with heated cabins operate in the area, taking visitors into a snow-white world of wonder like nothing they've ever seen before. A boat is also the only way to reach Omaki Onsen Kanko Ryokan, a secluded hot spring inn on the shores of the Sho River.

In spring, tulip fans should head over to Tonami's Tulip Fair, which showcases

3 million tulips in 300 varieties during the annual event, many of which are displayed in massive, breathtaking installations. Another place in Toyama that's caught tulip fever is Asahi, the birthplace of the so-called Asahi Funakawa Spring Quartet, a name given by a local photojournalist to the sight of red tulips, pink cherry trees, and yellow rapeseed flowers blooming beautifully together in early April against the backdrop of the snow-covered peak of Mount Asahi. This vivid scenery must truly be seen firsthand to be fully appreciated.

### A window into Japan's past

Gokayama is a nature-rich area in the southwestern corner of Toyama. Dotted with historic mountain villages, it was recognized in 1995 as part of the UNESCO Historic Villages of Shirakawa-go and Gokayama World Heritage Site, a beautiful, expertly preserved example of gassho-zukuri architecture. Translating to "hands joined together in prayer," this style got its name from the steep shape of the Gokayama houses' thatched roofs, which were originally designed to protect the structures from heavy snowfall. Gokayama is believed to have first been settled more than 4,000 years ago, making it a fascinating place to experience Japan's original landscape.

Speaking of UNESCO, the organization also recognizes 33 festivals as part of Japan's Intangible Cultural Heritage, and three of them happen to take place in



Left: The Takaoka Mikuruma-Yama Festival is one of the three festivals in Toyama that is registered as part of Japan's Intangible Cultural Heritage by UNESCO. Right: Inami wood carving has a history dating back more than 250 years.



Toyama Prefecture: the Takaoka Mikuruma-Yama Festival, the Johana Hikiyama Festival, and the Uozu Tatemon Festival. All three involve beautifully decorated, elaborate floats being paraded through towns and cities to the sound of music, as well as other fun activities. Also worth mentioning is the Owara Kaze no Bon Festival, held from Sept. 1 to 3 in Yatsuo, Toyama, which includes performances of a 300-year-old emotionally rich dance performed to the wistful accompaniment of classical Japanese instruments.

Takaoka bronzeware art, another integral part of Toyama's heritage, boasts an even longer history, having been perfected and handed down over the last four centuries. One of their grandest examples is the Great Buddha of Takaoka. Completed in 1933 after 26 years, the nearly 16-meter-tall, 65-ton statue is one of Japan's greatest representations of the Buddha, considered

an equal to those found in Kamakura and Nara.

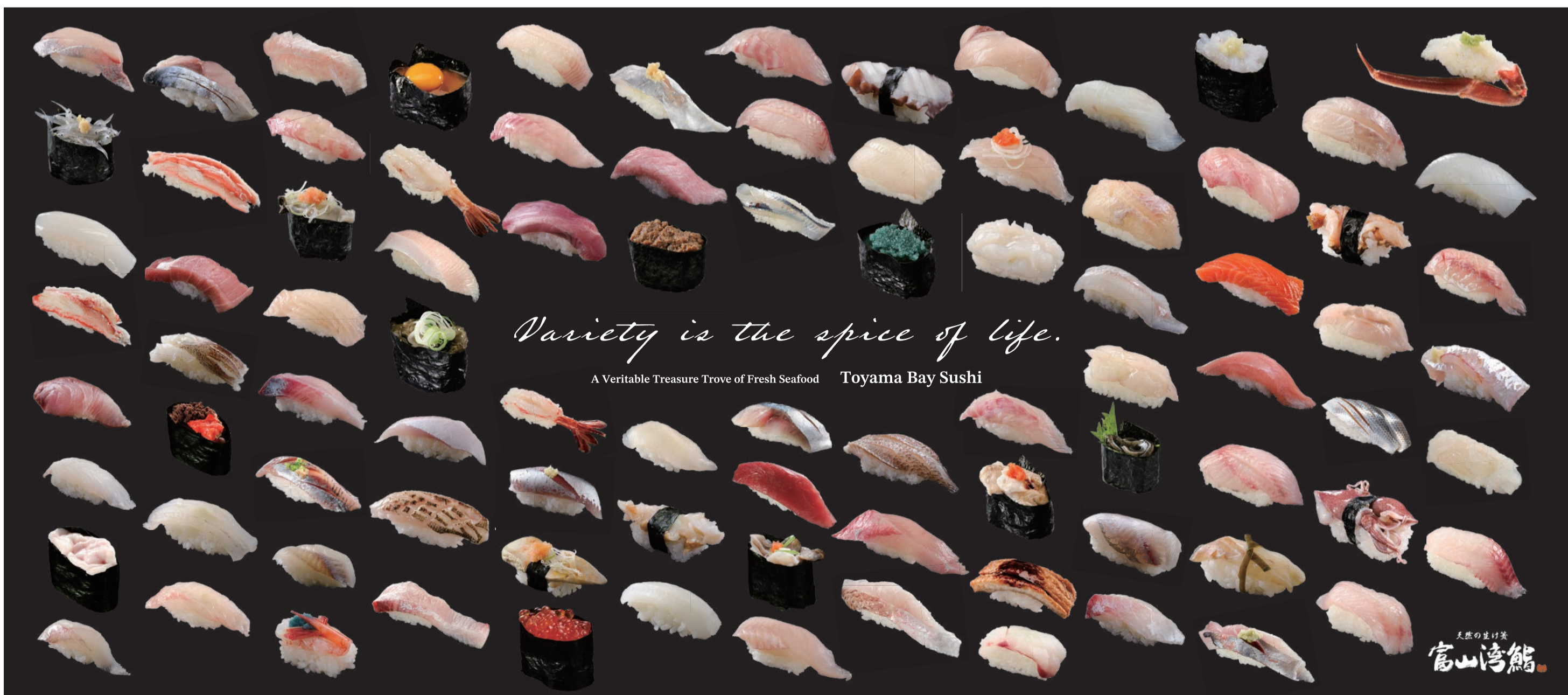
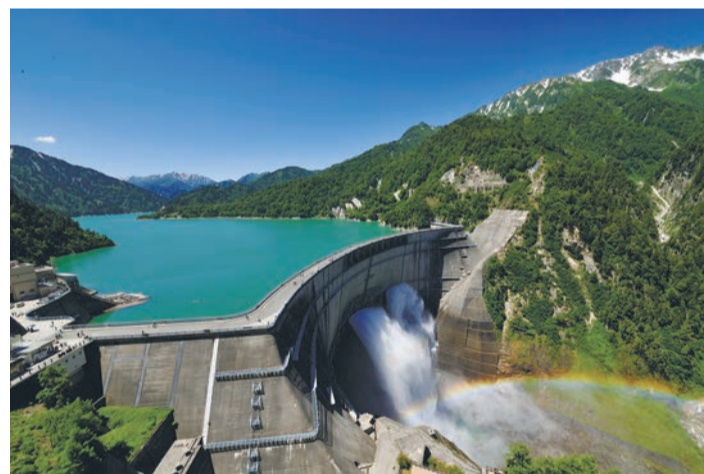
Toyama also knows how to work with wood, as it's where Inami wood carving was developed over 250 years ago. The technique, which hails from the Inami area of Nanto, is characterized by the use of high-quality natural wood and 300 different types of chisels and carving knives to create dynamic 3D designs. During its heyday, Inami wood carving was widely used for decorating Japanese homes and places of worship, such as the Inami Betuin Zuisenji temple, the main hall of which, rebuilt in 1885, is one of the largest wooden buildings along this stretch of the Sea of Japan.

All those treasures and more await visitors in Toyama.

*This page is sponsored by the Toyama Prefectural Government.*



Left: The Asahi Funakawa Spring Quartet is named after the beautiful view of the area's colorful flowers and snow-covered Mount Asahi in early April. Right: Tourists can watch huge amounts of water being released from Kurobe Dam in summer and early autumn.



富山湾鮨



# Japan Racing Association

(Sponsored content)

## Old horses thrown lifelines as new competitions grow

Retired Racehorse Cup spawns 18 events for 500 ex-thoroughbreds

NAOKI MATSUDA  
NIKKAN SPORTS

Opportunities for retired racehorses to play active roles have been steadily, if gradually, increasing.

On Dec. 18, the final round of the Retired Racehorse Cup (RRC), an equestrian competition organized by the National Riding Club Association, was held at the riding center of Tokyo Racecourse. Thirty-nine former racehorses that won in regional jumping and dressage competitions participated in the event, bringing excitement to riding fans at the end of the season. The cup is Japan's only equestrian competition for retired horses, more than 500 of which entered 18 regional competitions in the lead-up to the final. Last year, three eventing competitions were held on separate days to keep up with the cup's nonstop growth.

The post-retirement fate of thoroughbreds has always been a controversial subject. Racing is a world where only the strong survive. Nearly all horses registered with the Japan Racing Association that fail to record a win by the summer of the year they turn 3 years old are forced to be either transferred to registration with the National Association of Racing to run in competitions administered by local gov-

ernments, switch their specialization to jumping, or retire altogether. Racehorses are rarely seen competing at the ages of 7 or 8, insiders say.

After retiring, male horses can go on to life as sires if they have an admirable track record in major races. Females can become brood mares, becoming mothers and passing on their blood to the next generation. The JRA provides support money to horses that have won high-stake races but this is only for a chosen few. Every year, about 5,000 new animals are registered as racehorses while about the same number are deleted from registration. About 3,500, or 70%, of the 3-year-olds that make their racing debuts in the summer of the year they turn 2 or older leave the JRA's register without ever crossing the finish line.

Practically speaking, it is difficult to support all retired horses. Monthly administrative and feed costs at a riding club typically total ¥100,000 to ¥150,000 per horse. Costs for a retired horse total ¥70,000 to ¥100,000 per month. These go up if treatment by a vet is needed. In addition to the costs, securing land for ex-racehorses and personnel to care for them is also an issue.

Fortunately, activities to broaden the scope of support personnel have grown over the past few years. For example, there are some nonprofit corporations that promote foster programs to find caretakers for retired horses. In July 2016, the JRA, for its part, joined the International Forum for the Aftercare of Racehorses, which was started by Dubai ruler Mohammed bin Rashid Al

Maktoum's Godolphin horse-racing team. In 2022, the JRA began to sponsor IFAR's activities. In Japan, the association established in 2017 a Review Committee on Retired Racehorses, composed of members of the horse-racing community to investigate issues regarding retired racehorses and explore ways to address them.

Efforts to care for retired racehorses in Japan are focused mainly on promoting their second careers (which is also addressed overseas), and on measures to support their lives after retirement, presenting an overarching goal of developing a structure for securing places and people who can be involved with retired racehorses. To this end, in December 2018, the

JRA launched a program "to provide the support and care for the life of racehorses after retirement."

Efforts to promote second careers consist of re-employment support, in which horses are retrained for recreational riding, and environmental support. The latter includes promotion of riding and equine affairs, measures to reinforce equestrianism competition, efforts to diversify other related activities (such as the use of horse therapy and riding opportunities for children and people with disabilities), as well as support



for college equestrian teams.

Last year, the JRA budgeted more than ¥1.27 billion for subsidies as it continues to explore what it can do in this field.

The Retired Racehorse Cup mentioned earlier was first held in 2018 and originally began with six regional competitions. This year, regional competitions are planned at 27 venues, with jumping and dressage to be held at 15 and seven venues, respectively, and five venues to host eventing.

Horses 3 or older that competed in races on Jan. 1, 2020, or later, as well as 3- to 7-year-olds that have not run in such races, can qualify for this fiscal year's RRC. Inviting participation by horses that ran their final races relatively recently means fans can be reunited with familiar names.

In the past, horses that ran in derbies, in which 3-year-olds vie for the top of their generation, participated in the RRC regionals. Last year, the RRC was broadcast on YouTube for fans who could not attend in person. Name recognition from their racing years helps stimulate interest in equestrianism and creates opportunities to showcase its appeal to more people. The RRC is serving as part of the push to promote these competitions and expand the fan base.

The level of competition at RRC events is low compared with the industry's leading events. In dressage, horses are screened on whether they can handle the required movements as the first step in switching to riding horses from racehorses. In last year's finals, dressage was held at the second lowest of the five general levels. Nima, which won last year's cup, and rider Tomohiko Nishiwaki scored an overall mark of 66.13%, exceeding the 60% passing mark for the required movements.

Although it is an entry-level competition, one horse built a remarkable track record by



Top: The Retired Racehorse Cup is held at Tokyo Racecourse on Dec. 18. Above: Retired horses are able to grow old at ranches. JRA

participating. That horse, Takeru Black, ran in six competitions and retired from racing without scoring a win. In January 2022, this horse emerged No. 1 in the All Japan Domestic Horse Jumping Championship Part II event, which is aimed at giving horses-in-training and riders with relatively little experience an opportunity to demonstrate their skills. Takeru Black's former owner, trainer and stable manager from his racing days were on hand to cheer him on.

Expanding second-career options for retired racehorses will help support their lives in the future. "It's a great thing when you think about the life of horses," said Sakae Kuniieda, Japan's top trainer. He trained horses that won a total of 22 JRA Grade 1 races, including Almond Eye, which won a total of nine Japanese and overseas G1 races.

"Racehorses can be active for three to four years," Kuniieda said. "When we think of what we should do for the 10 years or 15 years after retirement, I think it would be great if there are wide-ranging uses for them, even those that don't have notable track records, for wide-ranging needs, including horse therapy."

The RRC remains small in scale and is yet to mature, but if horse welfare eventually makes business sense, it will open up a path for a second life for many of the animals. Some may be born to become racehorses, but running fast is not the only thing they are capable of. There are no doubt places elsewhere where they can shine, and the RRC is a testament to this.

This page is sponsored by the Japan Racing Association.



A former racehorse competes in the final round of the Retired Racehorse Cup held at Tokyo Racecourse on Dec. 18. JRA

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# Culture and leisure

(Promotional content)

## Temple stays offer peace and opportunities for reflection

**SIMON NOREIKA**  
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Busy, sprawling and noisy cities are often the first things that greet visitors upon arrival in Japan. Landing in Osaka, a new arrival might wade through the throngs of people in Dotonbori, mesmerized by the acres of neon lights. Eager to try the local food, the battered octopus balls called *takoyaki* might be first, possibly followed by deep-fried pork cutlets. In the following days, dizzyingly fast bullet trains whisk travelers to all corners of Japan, with a seemingly endless supply of cities with web-like train networks, modern architecture and quick yet tasty food.

A world away from these urban scenes, temples and shrines dot the mountains of Japan, offering quiet corners of serenity and contemplation. More and more, visitors feel the pull of this simple life and discover a Japan that has survived into the present day. Recently, tourists are choosing to spend more time on having memorable experiences that touch the soul. Many will still leave with carefully boxed treats and electronic gadgets for souvenirs, but plenty will value the stories and experiences that stay in their heads and hearts. Like the time they took part in a tea ceremony at a quiet temple, drinking bitter matcha from a centuries-old bowl. Or when they sat in the lotus position practicing meditation as a tranquil-faced monk doled out light swats with a long wooden stick. These become the go-to stories for friends and family, rather than tales of ultra-crowded trains and dazzling department stores.

### Legacy of Buddhism

There are plenty of temples for the would-be pilgrim to discover. Even a beginner can soon identify their common features: pagodas, incense burners, large wooden gates with statues of Buddhist deities, and statues of Buddha himself. Buddhism first came to Japan around the sixth century and permeates many parts of Japanese life, culture and society. Visiting temples can be both a religious experience and a sightseeing opportunity.

Synonymous with the religion is the philosophy of Zen and its practice of meditation. Temple guests are often invited to participate in meditation sessions, seated lotus-style on the floor in a practice known as *zazen*. The aim of *zazen*



is to guide adherents to enlightenment, a heavenly goal, with a practical result of improving physical and mental health. Along the way, guides periodically hit participants with a wooden stick to encourage concentration.

Another well-known piece of Japanese culture born at temples like this is *sado*, the Japanese tea ceremony in which the ritualized preparation of matcha encourages focusing on small details. Attuning to these details is thought to prepare the mind for meditation. Visitors should seek out the chance to try *sado* at least once, paying attention to each movement, the seasonal decorations of the tea room and the rituals of calmness.

Another cultural practice related to *sado* is *kintsugi*, a technique for mending broken pottery with melted gold. The resulting product is not only a way to recover otherwise damaged implements, but a rebirth that also produces a new appearance often more valued than the original. *Kintsugi*

workshops and hands-on experiences are recommended to anyone interested in learning something both artistic and functional.

### Temple lodging

Pilgrims and tourists are welcome at many temples to stay overnight, a practice known as *shukubo*. Whether a serious religious undertaking or as a way to find a deeper connection to Japanese culture, *shukubo* offers the chance to observe and participate in the simple, austere and peaceful life of a functioning temple. The practice traces its origins to the peaceful days of the Heian Period (794 to 1185), when upper-class nobles took an interest

in visiting temples.

Close to Tokyo, Yamanashi Prefecture offers spectacular views of Mount Fuji, a focal point for Japanese spiritualism and identity. Yamanashi's Mount Minobu is the home of the 550-year-old Kakurinbo *shukubo*. While staying at such a facility, guests sleep on futon on tatami floors and are invited to join sunrise prayers. Recently, more comfortable rooms have become available at some temples to attract more visitors. Guest Villa Ebisuya, which is an old but renovated high-class villa held by Kakurinbo, is one such lodge. It's surely a sign of the times that the humble *shukubo* is expanding to cater to a wider audience. Mount Koya, which is known for many



Far left: Temple guests participate in meditation sessions. Left: Temples serve vegetarian food to guests. Below: *Kintsugi* is a technique for mending broken pottery with melted gold.

GETTY IMAGES



beautiful kimonos, creating unforgettable memories to take home.

### Eat like a monk

At *shukubo*, a special vegetarian cuisine is often served, known as *shojin* cuisine. It is based heavily on soybeans, seasonal vegetables and wild mountain plants. Buddhist ideals forbid the killing of animals, as consumption of meat is thought to cloud the mind and interfere with meditation. Summer dishes might feature cucumber, eggplant and tomato, while autumn is the time for root vegetables like pumpkin and mushrooms. Springtime is good for wild mountain greens like butterbur. This seasonal alignment is believed to bring the spirit in touch with nature.

Tofu is a mainstay in *shojin* cuisine, and might be served raw with sesame, soy sauce and wasabi, mashed with vegetables as in the Japanese salad *shiro-ae*, or in the form of *yuba* — the soft, spongy skin that forms on the top of soy milk. *Yuba* is especially notable at Guest Villa Ebisuya, where the locally grown Akebono soybeans that are unique to the area produce an especially high-quality tofu. Gratification can be felt in body and soul after trying this healthy and spiritual meal, another experience found only in Japan.

## Urban sights and sounds give way to secluded spots

Hiroshima Prefecture has a long history and rich cultural heritage. Some of its tourist sights are known worldwide, while others remain more secluded. Situated in western Honshu along the Seto Inland Sea, the prefecture has a moderate and stable climate as well as an abundance of natural beauty.

Most visitors to the capital will first pay a visit to Peace Memorial Park near ground zero of the first atomic bombing. The park is now a green space for the city's residents and 1.7 million annual visitors, who come to learn the area's history at the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum, pay respects at the Memorial Cenotaph and Children's Peace Monument, and contemplate peace at the Atomic Bomb Dome. The city embraces its role as an anti-nuclear weapons ambassador and takes the responsibility of keeping the memory of that tragic day in August 1945 alive.

Within the city, visitors can witness the elegance of a typical Edo Period (1603 to 1868) garden at Shukkei-en. The arrangement of trees, bridges, valleys, floating islands and tea houses evokes a simpler time, while each season brings different blooming flowers. The garden was built for the first feudal lord of Hiroshima Nagaakira Asano more than 400 years ago. Those looking for a different experience might visit instead the home of the local baseball team, the Hiroshima Carp. Beloved by local residents, any game at Mazda Zoom-Zoom Stadium Hiroshima is guaranteed to be a raucous time owing to their exuberant fans.

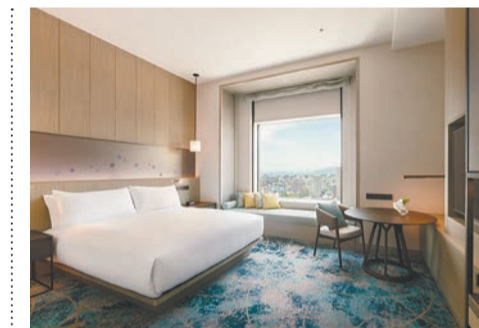
In a country better known for brewing sake, Japan is also a producer of wine. Hiroshima's location on the Seto Inland Sea creates a climate friendly to vintners. Its altitude of 300 to 500 meters and high-quality water and good sunshine allow



Hiroshima's climate is ideal for growing Sera Winery's grapes. SERA WINERY

operations like the Sera Winery to prosper. This particular vineyard is notable for cultivating the Hiroshima-native varietal called honey venus, which is said to have a mellow, fruity aroma and gentle sweetness.

Japan's reputation for *omotenashi* (selfless hospitality) is well-earned and Hiroshima is no exception. *Omotenashi* culture and the nation's high-tech image converge in Japan's modern hotel experience, with features like digital check-in, Wi-Fi, digital keys, indoor pools, fitness centers, multiple on-site restaurants and even EV charging now commonplace.



Rooms at the Hilton Hiroshima blend modern design with traditional crafts. HILTON HIROSHIMA

Integration with smartphone apps and other conveniences will exceed expectations, and world-class facilities can be found in all major areas. In the heart of the city, guests can stay at any number of modern, tech-savvy hotels within walking distance of many tourist attractions. One example is the Hilton Hiroshima, where interior design cues are taken from the gentle nature of the Seto Inland Sea and guests expect the highest standard of service and hospitality, all while appreciating the modern facilities of Japan's top-tier hotels.



Temple visitors can experience *shakyo*, which is the hand-copying of sutras using calligraphy brushes and ink. GUEST VILLA EBISUYA

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# Setouchi sights

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## HIROSHIMA

### Hiroshima Orizuru Tower

Facility offers perspective on past tragedy, shares bright hopes for the future

Hiroshima was the first city to suffer an atomic bombing. Today, it attracts many tourists from across Japan and overseas who wish to learn about peace from the repercussions of that watershed event, which destroyed the city and ushered in the nuclear age.

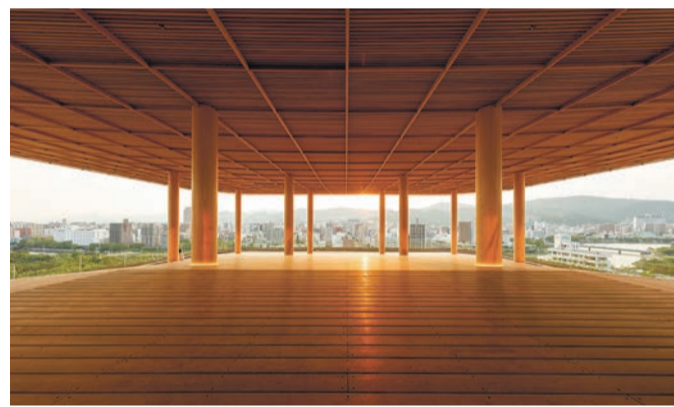
One legacy of the bombing is the Atomic Bomb Dome, which is on UNESCO's World Heritage List. Standing next to it is Hiroshima Orizuru Tower, which opened in 2016 as a tourist site.

On the roof of the facility is an observation deck where visitors can simultaneously view the dome and Mount Misen, part of Hiroshima's other World Heritage Site, the Itsukushima Shrine on Itsukushima island (popularly known as Miyajima). The observatory has a wooden deck open on all sides, allowing breezes to pass through. Visitors can admire beautiful panoramic views while considering the history of the area.

The 12th floor offers access to the top of the Orizuru Wall, a hollow glass space that extends the length of the building and is formed by glass panels along the exterior. Visitors can fold an origami crane and toss it into the space, adding their hopes for peace to the many cranes already there. Guests can also try interactive digital contents based on the motif of the cranes. In addition to a cafe, the ground floor is home to a souvenir shop where local Hiroshima-themed goods line the shelves. This floor showcases the best of Hiroshima Prefecture, all in one place.

Another notable feature of Hiroshima Orizuru Tower is the winding ramp called the "Sampo" Spiral Slope, which leads from the ground floor all the way to the observation deck. The Sampo, which is Japanese for "relaxing walk," also has a spiral slide about 70 meters long inside it so children and adults alike can take an enjoyable ride down.

Along the ramp, the "2045 Nine Hopes" project features



At the top of the building, a breezy platform overlooks the city. HIROSHIMA ORIZURU TOWER

murals created to express hopes ahead of the year 2045, which will mark 100 years since the end of World War II. Nine artists from different generations, all associated with Hiroshima in one way or another, expressed aspirations considering the past, present and future. The murals on display include those by Western-style painter Tsuneki Miura, an A-bomb survivor, and Motoi Yamamoto, a modern artist active in Japan and abroad.

Hiroshima suffered unprecedented devastation, but its people and its economy are thriving once again. Hiroshima Orizuru Tower was built with the wish that it would paint in the eyes of each visitor the strength of the people who rebuilt this city and a future full of kindness. It attracts many tourists as a spot that communicates the inspiration and charm of Hiroshima.

**URL:** <https://www.orizurutower.jp/en/>  
**Address:** Otomachi 1-2-1, Naka Ward, Hiroshima, Hiroshima Pref.  
**Hours:** Observation deck: 10 a.m.-6 p.m. (last entry 5 p.m.); Souvenir shop: 10 a.m.-6 p.m.  
**Tel:** 082-569-6803



The "2045 Nine Hopes" art project offers expressions of hope for the future. HIROSHIMA ORIZURU TOWER



Hiroshima Orizuru Tower's observation deck offers panoramic views of Hiroshima. HIROSHIMA ORIZURU TOWER

## OKAYAMA

### Ario Kurashiki

Multitude of stores and eateries make for enjoyable visit to Seto Inland Sea

Kurashiki, known for tourist sites such as the Bikan Historical Area and the Ohara Museum of Art, hosted the G7 Labour and Employment Ministers' Meeting in April.

Ario Kurashiki, a mall operated by Seven & I Holdings, is accessible directly from JR Kurashiki Station. It has more than 100 shops, including a supermarket, a drugstore, a shoe store and various clothing stores. The Cocokarafine, Akachan Honpo, Muji, Seven-Eleven, Jins, ABC Mart and Jump Shop stores in the

mall are duty-free shops. The supermarket also houses Tenmaya Furusatokan, a section featuring local specialties that is perfect for picking up souvenirs.

Ario Kurashiki's large food court, with more than 30 eateries spread across two floors and a play area for children, is sure to have something to appeal to every taste.

**URL:** <https://kurashiki.ario.jp/lang/en/>  
**Address:** Kotobukicho 12-2, Kurashiki, Okayama Pref.  
**Hours:** Ario Mall: 10 a.m.-9 p.m. (some shops open at 9 a.m.; see website for details); Restaurants: 11 a.m.-10 p.m.  
**Tel:** 086-434-1111



Diners can choose their own toppings, from hard-boiled eggs with soft yolks to freshly cooked tempura, to garnish udon wheat noodles that they heat up themselves.



The clock tower at the north exit of JR Kurashiki Station stands in front of Ario Kurashiki.

## KAGAWA

### Unpenji Ropeway

Swift cable car quickens journey to mystic Buddhist mountaintop temple

Tourists can straddle the border between Kagawa and Tokushima prefectures on the Unpenji Ropeway, which is among Japan's longest and largest. This swift, exhilarating 2,594-meter adventure in the sky takes only seven minutes to complete, allowing 101 visitors per cabin to enjoy panoramic views of the surrounding nature and sea. Upon its arrival at the top of Mount Unpenji, one can enjoy the scenery while relaxing with a cup of coffee.

This massive cable car operates daily, making runs every 20 minutes from 7:20 a.m. to 5:20 p.m. (last downhill service) from March to November, and from 8 a.m. to 5:20 p.m. (last downhill service) from December to February. Visitors can enjoy many different views depending on the season and time of day.

The fare for a round trip is ¥2,200 for adults, ¥1,650 for junior high and high school students, and ¥1,100 for elementary school students.

Travelers can enjoy a stroll around Unpenji temple, which is about a three-minute walk from the cable car terminus. The temple, perched atop 911-meter Mount Unpenji, is known as a meditative place, as it is the highest point on the 88-temple Buddhist pilgrimage known as the Shikoku Henro, surrounded by ancient trees that give it a sense of otherworldly divinity.

The ropeway can also be used to access the Sky Swing at nearby Unpenji Summit Park.

**URL:** <http://www.shikoku-cable.co.jp/>  
**Address:** Onoharacho 1974-57, Kannonji, Kagawa Pref.  
**Access:** 15 min. by car from the Onoharacho Interchange on the Takamatsu Expressway  
**Tel:** 0875-54-4968



The Unpenji Ropeway offers passengers spectacular scenery as they travel 2.6 kilometers in just seven minutes.



People on the Buddhist pilgrimage known as the Shikoku Henro make their way to Unpenji temple.



The Sky Swing at Unpenji Summit Park provides amazing views from the summit of Mount Unpenji.

## HIROSHIMA

### Denko-sekka

Savory pancake teases taste buds

Okonomiyaki is a savory pancake-like dish of vegetables and most anything you like cooked on a griddle. The Hiroshima version is synonymous with restaurant chain Denko-sekka, which takes great care sourcing its ingredients. Its mainstay okonomiyaki, called Denko-sekka, has an amusing dome-like appearance, wrapped in two eggs beaten and baked into a thin sheet. It has a soft airy texture, with finely chopped perilla adding a refined touch.

**URL:** <https://okononiyaki-denko-sekka.com/>  
**Address:** Full Focus Bldg., 6F, Matsubaracho 10-1, Minami Ward, Hiroshima, Hiroshima Pref.  
**Hours:** 10 a.m.-11 p.m. (last order 10:30 p.m.)  
**Tel:** 082-568-7851



Mouth-watering okonomiyaki, chock-full of vegetables, sits atop Chinese-style noodles.

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# Setouchi sights

(Sponsored content)



**Hiroshima**

## WELCOME TO SETOUCHI



**Okayama**



Hiroshima, the venue for the G7 summit, is a symbol of lasting peace. The city and prefecture are known for their historic sightseeing spots as well as such culinary treats as *okonomiyaki*. Hiroshima also has convenient access to transport for exploring the Setouchi area by land, air or sea. Please take this opportunity to experience the charms of Hiroshima.

PHOTOS: MATSUYAMA MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT, KAGAWA, HIROSHIMA, OKAYAMA PREFECTURAL GOVERNMENTS

### PROJECT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, ASSOCIATION OF MAYORS OF HIROSHIMA, OKAYAMA, MATSUYAMA AND TAKAMATSU

## Seto Inland Sea area boasts lush nature, bustling cities, cultural heritage

The area surrounding the Seto Inland Sea, Japan's largest inland body of water, constitutes the Setouchi area, represented by the cities of Hiroshima, where the G7 Summit will be held, Okayama, Matsuyama and Takamatsu. Spanning the prefectures of Hiroshima, Okayama, Ehime and Kagawa, respectively, all have their own unique appeal in terms of history, scenic sites and gourmet dining.

### Symbol of resilience and hope for future peace

At the western end of Hiroshima Prefecture lies Hiroshima, which among other nicknames is known as the city of rivers for the six that flow through it. Although the city has a full range of commercial and cultural facilities, beautiful nature is close by. As an international city of peace and culture, Hiroshima plays an important role in conveying a message of peace to the world after being targeted with the first atomic bomb ever used in warfare.

Among places of interest, the first is the Atomic Bomb Dome, a war relic that is permanently kept in ruins as a poignant reminder of the destructive effects of atomic warfare and as a plea for the abolition of nuclear weapons and lasting peace.

The second, Hiroshima Castle, is a 20- or 30-minute walk from the Atomic Bomb Dome. The castle was built in 1589 by Mori Terumoto, grandson of the great warrior Mori Motonari. The main keep was destroyed in the atomic bombing in 1945, but was restored in 1958. Today, the castle is a popular spot for enjoying colorful autumn foliage.

On the culinary front, *okonomiyaki*, a savory Japanese meat and vegetables pancake, is a treat that visitors shouldn't miss. At Okonomimura, diners can sample offerings from over 20 street vendor-style stores under one roof. Originally, there were 50 or so *okonomiyaki* vendors clustered around the Shintenchi district in central Hiroshima in the postwar years. However, the concept was moved indoors to this new facility to create a "village" of vendors. Today, it's a popular spot for visitors and residents alike.

### A blend of history, art and delicious cuisine

About 35 minutes from Hiroshima by shinkansen is Okayama, the capital of Okayama Prefecture.

Okayama is a hub city for the Chugoku and Shikoku regions, thanks to the area's well-developed transport network. Two scenic spots, Okayama Castle and the traditional Okayama Korakuen Garden, a three-star attraction in the Michelin Green Guide Japan, stand in the heart of the city.

Fresh from a major renovation in 2022, Okayama Castle, a three-level, six-story structure, is distinctive for its unusual irregular pentagon shape and black exterior. The main keep, destroyed in 1945 during the war and later reconstructed, offers a fine view of the verdant Okayama Korakuen Garden from its top floor. The garden, built in 1700 by then-head of the Ikeda family Ikeda Tsunamasa, is filled with seasonal blooms and, together with the



The Atomic Bomb Dome is a symbol of the enduring quest for peace.

castle, is illuminated on spring, summer and fall evenings.

Okayama is also known for the famous children's tale Momotaro, or Peach Boy. Kibitsu Jinja shrine, associated with the Momotaro tale, contains related artifacts and sites. The shrine is also worth seeing for the 360-meter-long gallery.

The city offers visitors an interesting mix of art, history, local crafts and food specialties. Inujima island, known for its art installations, is also the home of the Inujima Seirensho Art Museum. A former copper refinery, the structure is an Industrial Modernization Heritage Site that was repurposed as an art museum in 2008. Inujima also attracts visitors who enjoy camping, swimming and sea kayaking in a beautiful natural setting.

Last, Okayama is famous especially for white peaches, muscat grapes and other delicious fruits to savor at various times of the year.

Okayama actively reaches out to Muslim visitors and offers many halal options.

### Ancient hot spring contrasts with modernity

Matsuyama, which sits on the northwestern edge of Shikoku across the Seto Inland Sea from Hiroshima and Okayama, is blessed with a dry, mild climate year-round. The city offers the best of both worlds, with urban conveniences readily available and rural tranquility not far away.

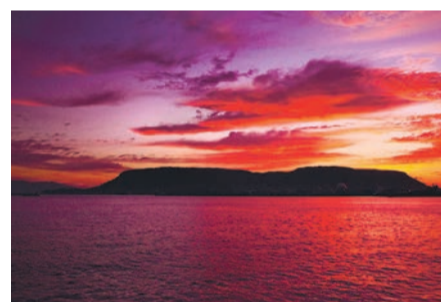
Matsuyama's Dogo hot spring resort is known as Japan's oldest hot spring, dating back 3,000 years. Although the Dogo Onsen Honkan building is currently being renovated, visitors can still enjoy a bath there. Hot spring lovers can visit Dogo Onsen Annex Asuka-no-Yu, an auxiliary building where hot springs bathing is combined with traditional local crafts and cutting-edge art to showcase artistic creations, culture and history. An art installation by photographer and film director Mika Ninagawa, featuring a dazzling display of 230 photos of flowers, will be exhibited there until February 2024.

High above the city stands Matsuyama Castle, which is listed



Visitors can enjoy Hiroshima Castle's beauty in every season.

From the heights of the Yashima Peninsula, visitors can enjoy great views of the Seto Inland Sea and Takamatsu, Kagawa Prefecture.



among Japan's top 100 castles and features as a top-ranked TripAdvisor destination. Construction began in 1603, and the main keep dates from 1852. The grounds include 21 buildings designated Important Cultural Properties. This spot offers wonderful night views of the city and is a popular destination for cherry blossom viewing.

As for food, Matsuyama is Japan's top producer of farmed *tai* (sea bream), and there are plenty of dishes featuring this delicacy on offer. One popular variation is sea bream on rice, a whole fish cooked together with rice and seasonings in a clay pot. Sea bream with *somen*, or thin wheat noodles, is another popular dish eaten on celebratory occasions.

### Pleasant mix of sea, towns, islands, mountains

At the northeast end of Shikoku is Takamatsu, Kagawa Prefecture. Although small, Kagawa boasts sea, islands, towns and mountains in a compact area. Takamatsu Port, a departure point for ferries bound for islands in the Seto Inland Sea, is close to JR Takamatsu Station, which makes it just a quick trip from the city center to a favorite island.

One of the highlights of Takamatsu is Ritsurin Garden, completed in 1745 by the local feudal lord. Designated an area of outstanding beauty, Ritsurin Garden is the largest stroll garden of its kind and rates three stars in the Michelin Green Guide Japan. The traditional garden's artfully arranged ponds, hillocks, greenery and historical structures delight visitors throughout the year.

Tamano Park is another recommended sight for enjoying Takamatsu's historic atmosphere. The former site of Takamatsu Castle, the park is surrounded by seawater moats, and visitors can board small boats to feed the fish therein. The park contains turrets designated as Important Cultural Properties, the Hiunkaku Villa, a traditional garden and a recently restored imposing castle gate.

Nearby is the Yashima Plateau, where a pivotal battle between rival samurai clans played out in the late 12th century. It was also one of the three sites to be designated as Japan's first national parks. The placid, island-dotted waters of the Seto Inland Sea and the entire city of Takamatsu are visible from the heights of Yashima.

Other nearby sights include Yashima Temple, the 84th on the Shikoku 88 Temple Pilgrimage route also known as the Shikoku



Travelers can enjoy an unparalleled travel experience aboard the Sea Paseo luxury cruiser.

Henro, the mountaintop New Yashima Aquarium and the Yashima Mountaintop Facility (aka Yashimaru), which opened in 2022.

Takamatsu is also a venue for the Setouchi Triennale (Setouchi International Art Festival). As a contemporary art event, it draws visitors from all over the world, who can enjoy the artworks displayed around the city and on the surrounding islands.

### Transport options

The Setouchi Area Pass excursion ticket offers a convenient way of traveling around the four cities. Good for seven days, it can be used on shinkansen, express and local trains, the Okayama Electric Tramway, local buses, the Meipuru-pu sightseeing bus and the numerous ferries operating on the Seto Inland Sea.

Sea routes are a great way of traveling between Hiroshima and Matsuyama and enjoying scenic vistas at the same time. Travelers can choose either a 70-minute trip by high-speed ferry or a more leisurely 160-minute journey aboard the Sea Paseo luxury cruise vessel. Foreign visitors can buy tickets at a 30% discount. We highly recommend this short trip by sea between the two cities.

### Atomic Bomb Dome

**URL:** <https://hpmuseum.jp/?lang=en>  
**Address:** Otemachi 1-10, Naka-ku, Hiroshima, Hiroshima Pref.  
**Access:** Genbaku Dome-mae stop on the Hiroden streetcar

### Hiroshima Castle

**URL:** <https://www.rjjo-castle.jp/>  
**Address:** Motomachi 21-1, Naka-ku, Hiroshima, Hiroshima Pref.  
**Access:** 15-min. walk from the Kamiyacho-higashi stop on the Hiroden streetcar or 25-min. walk from Hiroshima Station

### Okonomimura

**URL:** <http://www.okonomimura.jp/foreign/english.html>  
**Address:** Shintenchi 5-13, Naka-ku, Hiroshima, Hiroshima Pref.  
**Access:** 3-min. walk from the Hatchobori stop on the Hiroden streetcar

### Okayama Korakuen Garden

**URL:** <https://okayama-korakuen.jp/section/english/>  
**Address:** Korakuen 1-5, Kita-ku, Okayama, Okayama Pref.  
**Access:** Korakuen-mae stop, Okaden bus bound for Fujiwara Danchi

### Kibitsu Jinja shrine

**URL:** <https://www.kibitujinja.com/en/>  
**Address:** Kibitsu 931, Kita-ku, Okayama, Okayama Pref.  
**Access:** 10-min. walk from Kibitsu Station

### Dogo Onsen Annex Asuka-no-Yu

**URL:** <https://dogo.jp/en/asuka.php>  
**Address:** Dogo-yunomachi 19-22, Matsuyama, Ehime Pref.  
**Access:** 2-min. walk from Iyotetsu Dogo Onsen Station

### Ritsurin Garden

**URL:** <https://www.my-kagawa.jp/static/en/ritsurin/>  
**Address:** Ritsurin 1-20-16, Takamatsu, Kagawa Pref.  
**Access:** 3-min. walk from JR Ritsurinkoen-Kitaguchi Station

### Sea Paseo

**URL:** <https://setonaikaikisen.co.jp/newferry/>



Kibitsu Jinja shrine, with many sites related to the Momotaro tale, is known for its beautiful 360-meter gallery.



Taimeshi, or sea bream on rice, is a very popular traditional dish from Matsuyama.



Okayama Korakuen is one of the Three Great Gardens of Japan.



With a history dating back 3,000 years, Dogo Onsen is Japan's oldest hot spring.



Ritsurin Garden is a three-star attraction in the Michelin Green Guide Japan.



# Japan Climate Initiative

(Sponsored content)

## Nonstate actors issue call for stronger climate policies

The Japan Climate Initiative, a network that connects stakeholders who are taking action on climate change, held a news conference to announce the release of its message, "Overcoming Two Crises with Renewable Energy and Carbon Pricing," in Sapporo on April 12, three days before the G7 Ministers' Meeting on Climate, Energy and Environment in Hokkaido's capital.

A list of 303 Japanese companies, local governments and other organizations that endorsed it was published with the message. The news conference was intended to call on the government to enforce policies and measures that will significantly accelerate energy transition, and to show the world that there are proactive nonstate actors in Japan who are trying to address the dual crisis with the hope that government will take stronger action.

The message points out that Japan's target of converting 36% to 38% of all electricity derived from fossil fuel to renewable energy by 2030 is too low compared with the targets other G7 countries have set, and that the government's plan to implement carbon pricing after fiscal 2028 is too slow. It states that the four G7 nations of Canada, Germany, the United Kingdom and Italy have already achieved a higher renewable energy ratio than the Japan's 2030 target, and that renewable energy is projected to account for most of the electricity supply in the United States by 2035. It also mentions that the estimated carbon price level under Japan's current policy is far lower than what the International Energy Agency recommends developed countries adopt to achieve net zero in 2050.

### Three areas of focus

To bring about a drastic change to this state, there are three points that JCI strongly advocates in its message. The first is to aim

for a higher target for generating the vast majority of electricity from renewable energy sources by 2035 by introducing more effective measures and regulatory reforms.

JCI Co-representative Takejiro Sueyoshi, who is also vice-chair of the Executive Board of the Renewable Energy Institute and special advisor to United Nations Environment Programme Finance Initiative in the Asia Pacific Region, warned in the news conference that unless Japan gets on the

**Tackling the climate crisis will lead to sustainable growth for both Japanese society and the companies themselves.'**

NIKON CORP.  
DIRECTOR AND CFO  
MUNEAKI TOKUNARI

track to achieve this target, its companies will face the risk of being excluded from the global market where the use of renewable energy is already a requirement to do business.

Teisuke Suzuki, founder and president of the Network of Business Leaders and Entrepreneurs for a Sustainable Business and Energy Future, pointed out that this does not apply only to big companies. "because all businesses including small- and medium-sized companies that account for 99% of all companies, 70% of all workers and half of the gross domestic product in Japan are part of the global supply chain."

"Not only big companies, but also citizens can generate their own electricity from renewable sources," said Hokkaido Green Fund Chairperson Toru Suzuki, who detailed the achievements of the nonprofit organization, which was established in 1999 with more than 1,000 households in Hokkaido, to build and operate a wind power plant. As many as 24 windmills in the Hok-

kaido and Tohoku regions are in operation, and the number of individual investors has grown to 4,500. He stressed that Hokkaido, a broad land blessed with nature, has a lot of untapped renewable energy resources. "The government should consider using the vast potential of Hokkaido to achieve the nation's carbon neutrality," he said.

The second point is to implement an effective carbon pricing system earlier to not only achieve Japan's 2030 target, but also ensure that Japanese companies' efforts to decarbonize are recognized in the new global economy.

Sueyoshi indicated that not having a viable carbon pricing system in Japan is anything but advantageous to Japanese companies because carbon border adjustments, such as the European Union's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism, which will take force in October, will not leave any products free from carbon tax. "Not being charged for emissions in Japan doesn't make you lucky because you will then be charged abroad," he said.

He explained that the Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures, a global framework that assesses and prices corporate risks and opportunities related to climate change, sees carbon emissions from a monetary perspective, too. The number of companies and organizations that support TCFD was 1,252 as of March 27, according to the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, which is the most in the world and represents about 29% of the world's TCFD supporters. He pointed out that even though these Japanese supporters consider it necessary to participate in the international framework to be competitive, their efforts will be in vain if the Japanese government is not ready to join the discussion of creating fair carbon prices in the global market.

The third point is to play a greater role in the global effort to overcome the climate crisis, supported by collaboration among nonstate actors in Japan and abroad, which JCI is committed to creating. Sueyoshi stressed that Japan is at a major crossroads that will determine whether it can still take initiative or will be completely left behind in the global race for green transformation. "This is why we are sending this powerful message supported by 303 companies to the government," he said, expressing hope this will lead to the creation of a green transformation policy that will impress the global community.

On the occasion of the announcement, JCI received messages from many of the endorsing parties. "We are focusing our resources on taking action toward zero greenhouse gas emissions in our operations and providing decarbonizing technology services to local governments and businesses," Sandra Wu Wen-Hsiu, chairperson and CEO of Kokusai Kogyo Co., said in a video message at the news conference.

Wu said she hoped that the G7 will unite



JCI representatives Sergio Shigeo Kato (left) and Takejiro Sueyoshi are interviewed by The Japan Times.

YOSHIAKI MIURA

and strive for achievements that result in practical and effective action, such as making efforts to reach net-zero mandatory for public procurement vendors.

Mikako Suzuki, who heads up ESG and Risk Management at the ESG Strategy Division of Ricoh Co., also addressed the G7 by video message. "Ricoh has historically set ambitious science-based targets. ... The latest IPCC report indicates urgent needs for us to further strengthen and accelerate our initiatives to avoid the climate crisis. We expect strong leadership of G7 on this important matter," she said.

**'We need all countries, with the G7 leading the way in accelerating the deployment of renewable energy through regulatory reforms.'**

DSM JAPAN  
PRESIDENT KAZUNORI  
MARUYAMA

lead to sustainable growth for both Japanese society and the companies themselves. Nikon will continue to work with other nonstate actors and the national government to realize the decarbonized society."

DSM Japan President and Representative Director Kazunori Maruyama touched on the importance of swift regulatory decision-making.

"There is no 1.5-degree C future without rapid energy transformation. ... We need all

countries, with the G7 leading the way in accelerating the deployment of renewable energy through regulatory reforms." He also announced DSM's strong support for carbon pricing as an "effective key instrument for the transition."

In the six weeks over which JCI called for companies and organizations to endorse the message in public, 37 members enrolled in JCI and the number of endorsements reached 303. The total membership reached 776 as of May 10, almost 7.5 times more than at the time of its establishment in 2018.

The rapid increase represents the heightened awareness among the nongovernmental actors toward climate change and the importance of catching up with the global trend of placing environmental efforts at the core of economic growth. JCI Co-representative Sergio Shigeo Kato said: "We say that ESG (environment, society and governance) investment is about assessing the nonfinancial values of companies, but it is actually dealing with future financial values because ESG efforts will help companies avoid risk and seize opportunities in the future. The cause of protecting the Earth is no doubt the most important but this can be achieved with business success."

### Policies must change

Sueyoshi and Kato also participated in an interview with The Japan Times ahead of the news conference. In the interview, Sueyoshi said that he sees signs of change in Japanese corporate culture. "Those companies that join JCI are voicing their opinions with their names exposed," he said.

"If you look at Japan from outside, the

government may not look serious enough and so may the companies and municipal governments, but that's not true. There are companies and organizations that are starting to act on their own responsibility and are willing to do so hand in hand with other players in the world," he said. He explained that there are already various kinds of domestic partnerships among companies, such as making a group of multiple small and midsize companies to jointly purchase renewable energy electricity or sharing know-how and resources to create a zero-emission transition plan with companies in the supply chain.

He also said: "We are in an age when commercial rules control the world whatever national policies state. So, it is important that national policies keep pace with commercial rules, or at least they should not get in the way."

Kato also touched on the government's lack of speed in improving and updating laws and regulations related to renewable energy partly due to the historically monopolistic electricity market. But history also shows how "this small country tackled various issues of the postwar period with powerful force to restore the devastated land," Kato said.

"If Japan utilizes its power, which is currently not fully directed at addressing these crises, to the full extent, to think seriously about what is really effective and what kind of technologies are most wanted in order to achieve a 'just transition,' I believe that ideas with good potential will start budding," Kato said.

This page is sponsored by the Japan Climate Initiative.



The Japan Climate Initiative holds a news conference in Sapporo on April 12, ahead of the G7 Ministers' Meeting on Climate, Energy and Environment. JCI

## A call to source the vast majority of electricity supply from renewable energy by 2035

Endorsed by 303 member companies / local governments / organizations

Companies: AC Biode Co., Ltd. ADVANTEST CORPORATION AEON CO., LTD. AEON MALL Co., Ltd. AGC Inc. AMAGASAKI SHINKIN BANK Amundi Japan Ltd. Anritsu Corporation ARAKAWA CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES, LTD. Architects Regional Planners & Associates, Kyoto Asahi Broadcasting Group Holdings Corporation ASAHI GROUP HOLDINGS, LTD. ASICS Corporation AstraZeneca K.K. asueku Co., Ltd. AUCNET INC. Benesse Holdings, Inc. boost technologies, Inc. CAINZ CORPORATION Calbee, Inc. Canadian Solar Japan K.K. Change Agent Inc. CHUGAI PHARMACEUTICAL CO., LTD. Citizen Watch Co., Ltd. Coca-Cola Bottlers Japan Holdings Inc. Codo Advisory, Inc. CRE, Inc. Crosscor Co., Ltd. CSR Design Green Investment Advisory DAI-DAN CO., LTD. Dai-ichi Life Holdings, Inc. Daikin Industries, Ltd. Daitec Co., Ltd. Daito Trust Construction Co., Ltd. Daiwa House Asset Management Co., Ltd. Daiwa House REIT Investment Corporation Dassault Systems KK. Decarbonization Support Co., Ltd. DIGITAL GRID Corporation DSM Japan Dutch - Japanese Maritime Desk K.K. E-Konzal Co., Ltd. E-Square Inc. e's Inc. Earth Corporation Eco Style Co., Ltd. Eco Works Co., Ltd. ECO-PLAN Co., Ltd. Eisai Co., Ltd. EIZO Corporation energy311 ENVIPRO HOLDINGS Inc. Envision AESC Japan Ltd. ESPEC Corp. Foster Electric Company Limited FP Corporation FUJIFILM Holdings Corporation FUJITSU GENERAL LIMITED Fujitsu Limited FURUKAWA ELECTRIC CO., LTD. Future Environment Energy Plan Co., Ltd. GF Corporation Green Earth Institute Co., Ltd. Green People's Power Greener Space Planning, LLC GreenPower Corporation GRID&FINANCE ADVISORS Inc. H.U. Group Holdings, Inc. Hakuhodo Inc. Hitachi, Ltd. Hulic Co., Ltd. IDEC CORPORATION IGRID SOLUTIONS iie co., Ltd. Insource Co., Ltd. INSTITUTE FOR ENERGY APPLICATION TECHNOLOGIES, LTD. istyle Inc. ITOHAM YONEKYU HOLDINGS INC. Itoki Corporation J. FRONT RETAILING Co., Ltd. JAMCO Corporation JAPAN POST INSURANCE Co., Ltd. Japan Real Estate Asset Management Co., Ltd. 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JAPAN Earth Life Network esa Environmental Veterans Firm Ethical Association Fukui Small Hydropower Plant Promotion Council General Incorporated Association Urbanist Green Building Japan Greenpeace Japan Hokkaido Green Fund Hokkaido Green Purchasing Network Institute for Geothermal Information Institute for Global Environmental Strategies Institute for Sustainable Energy Policies Japan Association of Environment and Society for the 21st Century JAPAN CLIMATE LEADERS' PARTNERSHIP Japan Kiribati Association Japan Network for Climate Change Action Japan Photovoltaic Energy Association Japan Solvent Recycling Industry Association Japan Wind Power Association Japanese Consumers' Co-operative Union Kankyoujijutukenkuyou Kiiko Network Network of Business Leaders and Entrepreneurs for a Sustainable Business and Energy Future NPO Kitakyu Environmental Cleanup Institute NPO MEBUKI NPO NOUTOKAIGI NPO Seven Generations Oisoenshift OSAKA IZUMI CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY OSAKA YMCA Peace & Nature Renewable Energy Institute Renewable Energy Network Matsumoto Renewable Energy Organization of Hokkaido Sacred Heart Institute for Sustainable Futures SLSV CES INSTITUTE Soka Gakkai Solar Design Consortium Solarbear Fund Sustainability Forum Japan Syonan Syonenetworking The Federation of Promotion of Zero-Nuclear Power and Renewable Energy The Japan Sustainable Forest Forum The Odawara Hakone Chamber of Commerce and Industry The Research Institute for Environmental Finance Tokorozawa People's Solar Tokushima Regional Energy General Incorporated Association Utsukushima NPO Network WEATHER CASTER NETWORK WWF Japan Zeroemi

View more on JCI message





# Japan universities: G7 spotlight

FRIDAY, MAY 19, 2023

## New initiatives to increase globalization of education

KERRY FURUKAWA  
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

After a pandemic that drastically reduced the numbers of Japanese students going abroad and foreign students arriving, Japan is again on a drive to internationalize higher education. Low economic growth, a labor shortage due to the declining birthrate and lagging competitiveness in science and technology prompted the government to set new targets. Following this, many Japanese universities are likely to further promote exchanges with their counterparts in G7 and other nations. Efforts to globalize the nation's education are expected to increase.

During a Council for the Creation of Future Education meeting in March, Prime Minister Fumio Kishida announced a plan to attract 400,000 foreign students to Japan and send 500,000 Japanese students abroad each year by 2033. In its latest round of proposals, the council presented a plan to reduce the hurdles to studying abroad and promote the benefits. Kishida has cited the necessity of raising a globally minded workforce of highly skilled professionals to establish his "new capitalism" concept.

The government will work to expand mid- and long-term study plans for Japanese students, improve the environment for encouraging acceptance of promising foreign students, promote international exchanges from junior high and high school levels, review residency requirements, facilitate employment, internationalize universities and create an attractive educational environment for foreign talent, Kishida said after a council



GETTY IMAGES

meeting on April 27.

He also announced the government will implement major structural measures to increase overseas dispatches of excellent Japanese students on a large scale and bolster financial support for them. Japan is promoting mutual study abroad programs with its G7 counterparts through the G7 Summit in Hiroshima and the associated Education Ministers' Meeting, Kishida said.

Eager to promote diversity and inclusion, universities are rolling out new pro-

grams and reinforcing past ones. Initiatives include language and culture classes to prepare students for studying abroad, dedicated Japanese language centers, and an increased emphasis on issues such as gender and the U.N.'s sustainable development goals.

A 2021 study analyzing internationalization initiatives at Japanese universities included criteria related to curriculum planning as well as administration. Universities are zeroing in on areas such as foreign

faculty ratios and the extent to which information is disclosed in languages other than Japanese. Many universities have also created specific courses on global issues, built international dormitories and instituted measures to boost the employability of international graduates.

The government's new numerical targets come after a 2008 goal of 300,000 foreign students by 2020 was surpassed in 2019, just before the COVID-19 pandemic. By last year, that number had dropped to 230,000.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology reports that the number of Japanese students studying abroad peaked at around 80,000 in the early 2000s. By 2020, however, that number had plunged to just over 40,000.

Factors making this latest attempt at internationalization challenging include low desire among Japanese to study abroad. Additionally, foreign students face the hurdle of overcoming the language and cultural differences inherent to Japan.

Since 2014, the education ministry has funded 37 institutions in its Top Global University Project. According to the project's website, these universities "are leading the internationalization of Japan's education" by "developing interdisciplinary joint curricula by inviting laboratories of foreign universities; creating an environment that attracts high-caliber faculty and students; and promoting international activities." Unfortunately, the project ends in 2024.

To maintain cooperation between top global and other universities, the Japan Forum for Internationalization of Universities was launched in 2021 in association with the education ministry. To attract foreign students, 18 universities offer virtual campus tours, joint degree programs with foreign universities and business Japanese courses.

For the five years up to 2023, the government also funded virtual interaction between students in Japan and overseas through its Collaborative Online International Learning initiative. Under COIL, students held discussions and worked on joint projects.



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## A philosophy of love, peace and exchange

Ever since its founding in 1916 by Southern Baptist missionary C. K. Dozier, Fukuoka's Seinan Gakuin University has been guided by its motto "Seinan, Be True to Christ." That founding spirit, SGU President Naoki Imai said, remains core to the education that the university provides to this day.

That spirit is also why the fact that the G7 Summit is taking place in Hiroshima is particularly meaningful, he added.

"In essence, the education that we provide is based on the Christian spirit," Imai said, and "fundamental to that (are) 'love' and 'peace.'" Having suffered the world's first atomic bombing, Hiroshima today is known as a city of peace, and this, Imai observed, resonates with SGU's own founding spirit.

### International exchange

SGU is a comprehensive educational institution with about 8,400 students attending classes and participating in programs spread out across seven faculties and a graduate school in Fukuoka, in northern Kyushu. Of particular interest in light of SGU's founding spirit has been its international exchange program. Established in 1971 through the personal backing and passion of then-President Eiichi Funakoshi, the program has grown to connect SGU with 102 universities in 33 countries. More than 1,200 SGU students have studied abroad, and about 200 to 250 students from beyond Japan have made the reverse trip to SGU every year. Its international division offers courses in Japanese studies, including language, culture, history, business, and

politics, that are taught in English.

The love and peace that are the essence of the Christian spirit are what lay behind these efforts, explained Imai. It is important to learn about people who are strangers to you, he added, and providing such an opportunity for members of younger generations gives them a way "to form bonds for the future. This can contribute to creating peace among different peoples and countries."

### For a positive future

SGU was among the first Japanese universities to create such an international exchange program. While the Christian spirit remains central to SGU's own mission, Imai hastened to add that its partner institutions have not been selected on the basis of any particular religious affiliation. Rather, the focus is on finding ways to provide SGU students with a wide range of opportunities to experience different cultures. Similarly, he added, having students from many different countries on campus gives SGU students who do not choose to go abroad an opportunity to interact with peers raised in a different culture. The goal for not just SGU students but also their incoming peers is that the experience will lay the foundations for a more open and positive future.

Given SGU's origins as a university founded by a Westerner, Imai noted, many of the institutions with which it has established ties are in Western countries, including the first two, Baylor University and State University of New York, Oneonta.

However, he added, SGU has been forging agreements with more and more institutions around Asia lately, including in South Korea, Thailand and Malaysia. "An increasing number of students are interested in studying in those countries and learning about their cultures," he said.

### Chapel hour

In the era of global climate change, for an institution to be international also suggests environmental awareness. For SGU, Imai said, the Christian spirit of love is directly linked to the goals of sustainable development. Toward that end, SGU has recognized a need to manifest that love in — literally — concrete terms. It has been working to renovate and modernize existing facilities or construct new ones as a way to contribute to the realization of the U.N. sustainable development goals. The university has a new, modern library building, and a new gymnasium is slated for completion this June. There are also plans, Imai said, to create a new student union to house the university's extracurricular club offices. Such infrastructure upgrades are expected to reduce SGU's environmental impact.

There is also a curricular aspect to raising awareness about the importance of the SDGs. As a Christian institution, SGU has held chapel hour on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. Most of these convocations, which are not mandatory, last roughly 30 minutes (despite the name) and are led by speakers from within the university as well as invited guests from outside. They encourage students to think about a variety of issues, such as volunteering and environmental concerns. The attempt led to several groups of students visiting the Philippines and other

countries to do volunteer work for local communities.

Gender issues are also a particular concern, Imai noted. SGU declared this April that it will promote diversity, equity and inclusion. Among the students themselves, some have formed a group called Seinan Rainbow Pride to provide support for addressing issues faced by LGBTQ students. Plans are also underway with student backing to ensure there will be gender-free toilets when the student union is built.

### Data science education

SGU is also mindful of how students must face the need to winnow the ever-increasing flow of data from the digital realm to sort the wheat from the chaff. Toward that end, Imai said, SGU began taking a more aggressive approach to its data science education initiatives in April 2023. All students are now required to take a fundamental data literacy class this year, and a new class where students can learn practical application of data science will be available next year. This digital literacy initiative continues what many Japanese students have already begun to learn in their high school years.

"Today, students need to be able to read, interpret and then make judgments on their own about the data based on their interpretation of that data," he pointed out, and this is meant to provide them with the foundations for doing so now and in the future.

There has been much talk of late, Imai added, about what the "impact" of a university education is. How effective is it? "An education is not something the results of which are immediately apparent," he said. "You won't necessarily see a concrete impact even one or two years after some-



Seinan Gakuin University President Naoki Imai SEINAN GAKUIN UNIVERSITY

one has graduated. ... If you don't take the long view, you may not be able to recognize what impact that education has had."

### Notable graduates

In that connection, Imai pointed to a number of SGU graduates who blossomed in the years after they studied at Seinan. For example, Tomoshi Okuda, an alumnus who studied theology at SGU and is now a minister, in 1988 founded the nonprofit Hoboku group in Kitakyushu to support the local population of homeless people.

Miho Tanaka, a graduate of the university's Faculty of Literature, now works as a co-representative for Kakuwaka Hiroshima, a group that meets with parliamentarians from around the world to raise public awareness about nuclear issues and seeks to contribute to the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

And while he was a graduate not of the university itself but rather of its affiliated junior high school, Imai mentioned Tetsu Nakamura, who founded Peshawar-kai to provide medical and rural reconstruction support in Pakistan and later Afghanistan before his tragic death in 2019.

That being said, while such individuals have done work that noticeably embodies the SGU spirit, fame and notoriety are not the point when assessing the impact of an

education, Imai said. Ultimately, he added, "It's a matter of approaching the work that you are doing with those values in mind, and through that making your contribution in whatever you do."

Going back to the significance of the G7 Summit taking place in Hiroshima and SGU's values, Imai pointed to what the Department of Intercultural Studies calls the "Fieldwork on War" program. This multidisciplinary program has been sending small groups of students accompanied by a faculty member to locations around the world affected by war. While it was briefly slowed somewhat by the COVID-19 pandemic, in 2022 three separate groups went out to Okinawa, Hiroshima and Hawaii.

"Through this program, students can learn firsthand what exactly war is," Imai said. "And likewise they can also come to understand what the value of peace is."



Students participate in a group learning session at the Global Student Lounge. SEINAN GAKUIN UNIVERSITY



Seinan Gakuin University students pose during a trip to the Philippines to do volunteer work for local communities. SEINAN GAKUIN UNIVERSITY

### Seinan Gakuin University

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# Chuo University

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## Focus moves to entrepreneurship, use of online tools to encourage diversity

Chuo University in Tokyo, which has almost 26,000 undergraduate students and over 1,140 graduate students, as well as over 720 full-time teachers, was originally founded in 1885 as a law school named Igrisu Horitsu Gakko (English Law School).

With a founding spirit of "Fostering the Ability to Apply Knowledge to Practice," 18 young lawyers established the school with an aim to improve the country's legal systems. Over the 138 years while the school transformed into a comprehensive educational institution consisting of eight faculties, eight graduate schools and two professional graduate schools, four affiliated high schools, two affiliated junior high schools and nine research institutes, the founding spirit has always been at the core of the schools' practical education.

### Urban and global campuses

For Chuo University, this year represents a milestone when the Faculty of Law and the Graduate School of Law move to the new Myogadani Campus in Bunkyo Ward from the Tama Campus in the western suburb of Hachioji. At the same time, the new Surugadai Campus in Chiyoda Ward will host two professional graduate

schools, the Law School and the Business School. This will reshape Chuo University's urban campus.

The aim of the urban campus is to concentrate all the resources the university has in the fields of law and business in one area, making it easier for students and stakeholders outside the university to access, providing opportunities for new partnerships and collaborations.

The Tama Campus is moving toward becoming a global campus where both domestic and international students can gain various opportunities to experience different cultures, while focusing on values represented by diversity and inclusion, the U.N. sustainable development goals and other global standards they need to be aware of to acquire skills to create new values in society.

### Plan for new faculties

"Partly because there is some extra space at the Tama Campus due to the transfer of the Faculty of Law and the Graduate School of Law, we are planning to establish new faculties.

"Three proposals are being considered: a combination of sports and digital tech-

nology, green and digital technology, and design and communication," said President Hisashi Kawai.

"These fields are where we have many achievements or see potential growth and the possibility of collaborations with industries and communities," he said.

### Entrepreneurship program

Through these changes and efforts, Chuo University is aiming to become an "open university." Kawai touched on two elements that the university is focusing on to realize this goal. One is to serve as a hub to promote education for highly skilled professionals, including recurrent education based on partnerships among industry, government and academia. The other is to use information and communication technology (ICT) to overcome restrictions of time and space to support education, research and social contribution.

One of the efforts to embody the first element is the establishment of programs that nurture entrepreneurship. In the Faculty of Commerce, the Social Entrepreneurship Program was launched in 2019 based on a partnership agreement with three villages in the mountainous Okutama area bor-

dering Tokyo and Yamanashi Prefecture. The program, in which students spend two years creating new businesses using regional resources, aims to nurture the ability to pursue the SDGs in business practices.

In the Faculty and Graduate School of Science and Engineering, acquisition of solid expertise, high English proficiency and entrepreneurship is incorporated into the curriculum at all levels from the first year of the undergraduate program to the second year of the master's program. "What you learn and think in this faculty has a good chance of leading to concrete know-how to create new products or services," Kawai said, with the belief that fostering talented people who are ready to contribute to global society will help accelerate the social implementation of new technologies.

### Effective use of ICT

For the university to be more open to society, it promotes the effective use of ICT. By using online solutions, as well as a broad network of people, the university invites a variety of guest lecturers from remote locations, allowing students to interact with society.

The university also provides education through collaboration with other universities at home and abroad using online tools, enhancing diversity and promoting the exchange of people, knowledge and experience. This allows students to reach more resources than the university alone can offer.

Using communication tools in classrooms can remove the barrier between students and lecturers, while using them outside the classrooms nurtures an environment for peer learning, accelerating multidirectional communication and enhancing students' initiative in learning.

By giving lectures using digital technology in advance, class hours can be used for advanced learning based on group work and other means that are better conducted face to face. This way, students can study more efficiently and reinforce their knowledge and skills faster.

"The promotion of the use of ICT in education is something that we are good at because various efforts had been made before the COVID-19 pandemic to introduce online or remote solutions to maximize educational effects," Kawai said. The university also published a handbook to share its know-how on catering to student needs, ensuring the quality of learning and promoting advanced education with other universities.

### Global FLP program

Chuo University also makes various efforts to open itself up more to the world. There are many opportunities for studying abroad, both short- and long-term, via partnerships with universities and other



Chuo University President Hisashi Kawai HIROMI TAMURA, ARK COMMUNICATIONS CO.

institutions. About 100 students attend six-month or one-year programs to study abroad each year. The credits they acquire can be applied to Chuo. In addition, 250 to 300 students attend short-term study abroad programs every year, spending about a month at schools in the United States, Australia, New Zealand and other countries.

Even on campus, students can be exposed to an international environment through such programs as the Global Faculty Linkage Program that accepts undergraduate students from all faculties and offers courses taught in foreign languages with the aim of fostering "global professionals" who can demonstrate in global society the specialized knowledge and skills they have acquired through practical education at Chuo, which is a tradition of the university.

The university is also a member of United Nations Academic Impact, which is a global initiative run by a network of institutions of higher education with the U.N. to collectively contribute to solving issues the world is facing. Through such a network, Chuo continues to build ties with universities across the world. Kawai expressed his enthusiasm in forming partnerships with more universities in Japan and elsewhere to establish double degree or joint degree programs in the near future.

"We would like to increase classes taught in English at graduate schools as well and promote international exchange further. I think the university being global essentially means seeing academic work itself with a global point of view. Much of our academic work at Chuo already contains these global elements. So we would like to improve quality rather than quantity when it comes to our exchange programs and other projects," Kawai said. "It is also necessary to set the conditions under which foreign students will be able to take part in internships offered by Japanese companies. We would like to work on that," he added.

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### Chuo University

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Above: The new Surugadai Campus is home to Chuo's professional graduate law and business schools. Right: The Faculty of Law and the Graduate School of Law relocated to Chuo University's Myogadani Campus this year. CHUO UNIVERSITY



The Forest Gateway Chuo, which opened on the Tama Campus in April 2021, symbolizes interdisciplinary study at the university. CHUO UNIVERSITY



## Biz school offers support from classes to job hunt

Chuo University's Faculty of Global Management, whose motto is "Be Ahead of the World," was established in 2019 on the Tama Campus and is considered the most advanced department in terms of foreign student ratio. About 10% of the students opt for the entrance exam that does not require Japanese proficiency.

New students are accepted twice a year in fall and spring to fit the needs of those who wish to start their studies at Chuo in September, as well as those who wish to enroll in April. More than 70% of the classes are taught in foreign languages (mainly in English), and students can complete their degrees taking classes taught only in English. However, international

students are required to take Japanese-language classes.

The aim of this department is to foster young business leaders and attract talented faculty and highly motivated students from all over the world. The faculty has three key features. First, its learning structure is focused on the systematic acquisition of expertise in business management and economics, as well as global communication skills. Second, students can carry out their studies in foreign languages, especially English. Third, in addition to the foreign language exchange program, the department offers company visits and internship programs as part of the overseas short-term exchange programs.

The Faculty of Global Management conducted a campus-wide seminar last year in Japanese and Chinese to share information on job hunting in Japan, including the basic timeline, visa concerns, interview etiquette, how to write a personal statement, and how to research industries and companies. About 90 students attended the seminar, leaving positive feedback.

The school's continued efforts to be open to society have resulted in a large international presence on campus. There were 879 students from 29 countries and regions across almost all the faculties and graduate schools as of October 2022.

To support their campus life and promote cross-cultural exchange, Chuo has created G-Square, a unique lounge where Japanese and international students mingle and socialize. It provides information on study abroad programs, opportunities to interact with students with diverse backgrounds, and space for student-planned activities and events for cultural and language exchanges.

Most of the face-to-face events were canceled during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021, but activities in G-Square have since resumed. Campus tours for new foreign students and Japan Day events are regularly held to offer opportunities to experience Japanese culture.

Chuo is also aware that many foreign students seek career opportunities in Japan after completing their studies. The university offers career support programs for all students, with some reserved for students from overseas, from the first year through the fourth year.

The next-generation leaders' program is a hands-on, work experience program. Students can experience internships at participating companies and attend lectures on various business topics provided by company officers on campus. In this program, students are expected to feel and understand the gap between the ideal and the reality of working at a Japanese company.

The project-based-learning course invites participation by staffers from Japanese companies and allows students to work on various themes in groups. By making plans and giving presentations, the students get a chance to study business procedures and methods from the perspectives of Japanese enterprises. These programs are offered for both Japanese and international students in their first and second years of study.

In the third year, programs tailored to give foreign students more detailed know-how about job hunting in Japan are offered. In addition to courses on learning Japan's job-hunting culture, the kinds of qualities Japanese companies seek in candidates, and the unique hiring processes, there are programs that teach students how to apply for internships, conduct self-analysis, write up documents that need to be submitted to companies, and more.

There are also other programs in Japanese and Chinese provided in collaboration with other universities, as well as seminars organized by seven universities that gather companies who are actively recruiting foreign students, offering opportunities to get to know the various companies and industries.

For seniors, recruiting events are held on campus to match prospects with com-



Students toss their caps upon graduating from Chuo's Faculty of Global Management. CHUO UNIVERSITY

panies. These events ensure that students aren't rejected merely based on their transcripts and to have face-to-face interviews so recruiters can deepen their understanding of the applicants' character and enthusiasm.

The Career Support Center also emphasizes the importance of taking individual approaches to career planning and job-seeking. It has counselors who can conduct individual interviews and counseling in English.

To support the growing number of students entering Japan, a new international residence was opened in 2020 at the Tama Campus called International Residence Chuo, where events are held regularly to foster communication among students. The dormitory provides shared accommodations, with each unit consisting of six private rooms in addition to shared facilities, such

as a living room and a community space. The university has another international residence near Seiseki Sakuragaoka Station on the Keio Line, called the Seiseki International Residence. They accept both Japanese and international students.

Chuo has overseas offices in Hawaii, Bangkok, Shanghai and Hanoi. The Hanoi office, which opened in September 2022, is expected to be a public relations locus for Chuo in Vietnam, which sends many students to study in Japan. The Japanese International School in Hanoi, which opened in 2016, is Chuo's first international partner school, integrating K-12 education modeled on the Japanese education system. It will start sending several high school graduates with outstanding academic results to Chuo this fall or next spring.



Career support events for students are organized by the Career Support Center. CHUO UNIVERSITY



# Doshisha University

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## Diversification fueled through 'education of conscience'

In 1864, when the isolationist foreign policy of the Tokugawa shogunate was still in effect, Jo Nijijima, a 21-year-old son of a samurai, left Japan for the United States, risking capital punishment. For Nijijima, it was an adventurous quest to seek a land where greater equality, freedom and human rights were more the norm than the exception. While studying overseas, he embraced Christianity and started nurturing a dream to provide education based on Christian principles in Japan, fostering people who value freedom and conscience. Upon his return, Nijijima established Doshisha Academy (Eigakko) in Kyoto with the aim of cultivating "people of independence and autonomy." Since its foundation, Doshisha has been striving to cultivate people who use their abilities as conscience dictates, based on Christian principles.

### A global philosophy

Today, with its "education of conscience," the university still places unwavering value on individual freedom and is committed to nurturing global minds. For Doshisha, true internationalization means an immense push toward diversity, while investigating and accepting different values. In 2020, Tomoko Ueki became the university's first

female president, and declared that Doshisha would reinvigorate the promotion of diversity. It plans to do this in four main areas: gender equality and work-life balance; multiculturalism and international understanding; support for people with disabilities; and awareness of sexual orientation and gender identity.

"We've created a diversity promotion committee, and have conducted surveys among faculty members and administrative staff to find out what issues they are facing, and although it is not easy to solve all of them immediately, we are trying to find the best solutions. Diversity covers a wide range of issues, but we are committed to providing support for the most immediate ones," Ueki said.

One such effort was a training session on racial harassment that was held for all employees to address such issues as discrimination and hate speech directed at minorities. At the same time, the university realizes that an educational approach that prioritizes diversity and internationalization will be central in addressing these matters.

For this reason, in 2021, a new educational dormitory, Keishiryō Dormitory, was built as the realization of "a dormitory where both local and international

students live and study together without distinction." It offers the Residential Learning Program for its residents to participate in practical learning through involvement in the local community and to confirm their progress through presentations and reflections of what they have achieved. Ueki explained that the concept of the dormitory is to nurture individuals who understand each other's diverse values and have the ability to lead those differences to new creations through living in an environment where students from diverse backgrounds live and interact with each other in a multicultural and intergenerational manner. This year, the university will start offering an elective dedicated to diversity issues. The Doshisha Spirit and Diversity course will be open to all students. The course will emphasize respect for different values and perspectives, and in fact, each of the 15 lectures is given by faculty members from various fields of expertise on diversity.

### Co-curricular environment

The university is focusing on creating international co-curricular opportunities since "internationalism" is one of its educational principles and crucial in the promotion of diversity. The strong relationships with its

partner institutions around the world play an important role to this effect.

In 2017, Doshisha opened its EU Campus at the University of Tuebingen, a good German friend for more than 30 years.

Doshisha students in all faculties can apply for the five-month programs at the EU Campus. After debuting in 2019, the German Language and Intercultural Studies Program in the spring semester sees Doshisha and Tuebingen students taking classes together. Another track, the European Studies Program in the fall semester, offers courses on historical and contemporary issues, such as immigration and human rights in the EU. The EU Campus is a place where students from both universities can work together, but at the same time, it has an important role to play with regard to research.

"The EU Campus aims to promote comparative research and develop vibrant academic exchange not only with Germany, but also with the rest of Europe in all fields, including theology, ethics, information studies and health sciences," Ueki said.

Doshisha has proven it is possible to provide an international co-curricular environment at the university as well.

Just as many students go abroad to study at its over 170 partner universities each year, Doshisha hosts students from all over the world in Kyoto. In addition, the Associated Kyoto Program, the Tuebingen University Center for Japanese Studies, the Stanford Program in Kyoto, and the Kyoto Consortium for Japanese Studies were all established by leading foreign universities and are hosted at Doshisha University. AKP is a study abroad program in Japan with history of over 50 years. It accepts students from 13 leading liberal arts colleges in the United States, including Amherst College, Nijijima's alma mater. TCJS meanwhile celebrates its 30th anniversary this year. These four centers operate their own programs, allowing the international students to interact with local students on campus on a daily basis, which is one of the unique features of the university. Also, some of the lectures from the programs are offered as courses at the university, providing valuable opportunities for Doshisha's students to attend classes at leading foreign schools without having to leave Japan.

"It's important for students to broaden their ways of thinking. Even if they don't go abroad, I would like them to do this by interacting with various people, not only those from their own area," Ueki said.

### Vision for the future

Doshisha will celebrate its 150th anniversary in 2025. Guided by the strategic Doshisha University Vision 2025 plan, it intends to continue to launch programs to further promote their international understanding and diversity.

The co-curricular programs already underway will be enhanced by the new



Doshisha University President Tomoko Ueki DOSHISHA UNIVERSITY

academic calendar for 2024, which moves up the start of Doshisha's summer break to match academic calendars abroad.

In yet another new initiative, students have already expanded their learning options by participating in programs offered by the Association of Christian Universities and Colleges in Asia, of which Doshisha is a longtime member. Launched during the COVID-19 pandemic, ACUCA's Micro Degree Program, which is conducted online, brought students from various Asian universities together. The students and the faculty are expected to receive more opportunities when Doshisha assumes the presidency of ACUCA next year and hosts conferences and other activities during the two-year term.

Doshisha's initiatives, both big and small, demonstrate its dedication to integrating diversity in every facet of its operations. The president noted that changing mindsets is the most important, but admittedly monumental, requirement for the realization of a more inclusive society. Therefore, Doshisha's founding spirit of cultivating an education of conscience remains as important as it was when

Nijijima first started his mission.

"Now, with the pandemic, wars and various conflicts ongoing in the world, we must reaffirm the need to understand the diverse backgrounds and positions of others. We cannot exclude those who are different from us; we must instead find a new way to improve the situation for everyone. I think the education of conscience is more important now than it was 10 or 20 years ago because everything is becoming a little bit more confrontational," Ueki said.

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### Doshisha University

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Clarke Memorial Hall is one of the five buildings on campus that is designated as an Important Cultural Property. DOSHISHA UNIVERSITY



International students enjoy their time at Doshisha University in Kyoto. DOSHISHA UNIVERSITY



Students from Doshisha University and the University of Tuebingen enjoy interacting with each other at the EU Campus. DOSHISHA UNIVERSITY

## Turning carbon neutrality into reality main target of collaborative research

Doshisha University is making its contribution to Japan's ambitious goal of carbon neutrality by 2050 through its core missions of education and research. Under Doshisha Education and Research Platform for Carbon Recycling (CRPF) established in 2021, the university is actively seeking cross-industrial-sector collaborations to achieve zero net emissions. At the same time, demonstrating the benefits of its groundbreaking carbon recycling technology is also one of the institution's primary objectives.

The CRPF consists of three parts based on integrated humanities and sciences education and industry-academia collaboration. The first part is an advanced liberal arts education based on founder Jo Nijijima's desire to develop innovators and entrepreneurs. In these courses, students, instructors and businesspeople try to design the future through lectures and exercises. The second is a technical forum that acts as a venue for domestic and international players to exchange ideas on energy and environmental issues, as well as share collaborative intellectual properties. The third part is a consortium that serves as a bridge connecting industry, government and academia.

According to professor Takuya Goto, a representative of CRPF, environmental problems that involve complex factors are changing day by day, so the related technologies should also be updated with those changes. One of the results born from edu-

cation and research by CRPF is the Carbon Energy Recycle Bank. "We have developed CERB as a revolutionary infrastructure device to utilize carbon dioxide as a carbon resource and to store intermittently generated power on demand, and produce heat and electricity when needed," he said.

CERB integrates various technologies; Through CERB, carbon dioxide can be decomposed, made harmless and converted into hydrocarbons. At the same time, by storing energy and leveling supply and demand, it will greatly contribute to promoting the generation of renewable energies, such as wind and solar power.

Doshisha has originally worked on research and education with air-conditioning giant Daikin Industries. Through active partnership to offer training toward innovative solutions, the Doshisha-Daikin Next Environment Research Center was established in 2020. With "recycling-oriented" as the theme for building a future environment, the center offers courses on a variety of environmental and social issues to Doshisha graduate students and professionals from Daikin. The CRPF is an education and development institution that embodies the social implementation of carbon recycling technologies born from corporate-academic cooperation.

"One of the important missions of our university is to contribute to society by disseminating its accumulated knowledge to society," said President Tomoko Ueki. "How can we contribute to the compa-

nies in our local area? What can we do to solve social issues through academic cooperation? When we think about that, we would like to work closely together with the community."

An example of the university's success in social contribution is reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and the improvement of air-conditioner efficiency. This has been achieved through Daikin's business activities.

Additionally, the two entities will promote the development of human resources for collaborative innovation through joint research. Doshisha graduates and professionals from Daikin hone their creativity in designing the future in year-long Next Environment collaboration courses.

"The opinions expressed by Daikin professionals included realistic perspectives based on the actual business situation, which greatly stimulated Doshisha's graduate students," notes the course report. The capstone project involves researching and prototyping a future device to solve a social or environmental issue.

The program consists of foundation courses, which include environmental literacy and diversity management, and other courses in the categories of regional environment, environment technology and future design.

Last academic year, 89 participants from Doshisha and Daikin took the courses in the program under COVID-19 restrictions.



Corporate employees use avatars to interact with students as they try out virtual reality goggles during their first discussion about social and environmental issues. DOSHISHA UNIVERSITY

One of the classes used virtual reality goggles to interact in a so-called metaverse. Facilitators explored active learning and discussions were held on pressing and complex topics, such as international disputes and mediation, ecology, a nature positive economy and the U.N.'s sustainable development goals.

"The students submitted assignments for each on-demand video. Based on these assignments, active learning was conducted in the metaverse class, which enabled facilitators to accurately grasp the level of understanding and interest of the students," the course report reads. At the end of the program, some of the most promising design proposals were selected

for further research. Among them, two proposals concerned temperature-regulating clothing, and "zero energy" or carbon-neutral houses. This academic year, a special class is being planned in the Philippines. Daikin's Technology Innovation Center, Doshisha and the University of the Philippines will collaborate to develop the program.

"The Graduate School of Doshisha University is committed to the study of global issues on the ground in developing and emerging countries. By fostering individuals who can face social issues, return the results to Japan and build strategic partnerships with people from these countries," the course booklet notes.

Carbon recycling-related environmental and social issues are complex, and many of the answers remain unknown. "In addition to technological development, achieving these goals will require responses to various issues involving consumer activities, political economy, and even human psychology, such as lifestyle review. This includes changes in energy policy, social implementation, emissions trading, carbon pricing and support for developing countries. The goal to reduce carbon dioxide emissions to virtually zero is truly a challenge. It is essential for industry and academia to work together to solve specific problems in their respective fields of expertise," Goto said.





# Hiroshima University

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## Collaborative research efforts pave way for peace-based educational outlook

Hiroshima University was founded in 1949 in the first city in the world to suffer an atomic bombing. In the spirit of pursuing peace, HU's mission is to contribute to the well-being of humankind by realizing a free and peaceful international society.

This spirit is reflected in this national university's efforts both on campus and in society. Since the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the university has conducted on-campus fundraising and hosted evacuee students.

### For campus and community

In further support of the institutional mission, freshmen are required to take peace-related classes to deepen their thinking and understanding of peace from various perspectives, including war and conflict, nuclear abolition, poverty and hunger. The "Peace Lecture Marathon" launched in 2018 presents lectures on peace by government representatives and ambassadors of various countries.

In the face of the COVID-19 pandemic,

we were one of the first national universities to conduct mass vaccinations of students. The university had been preparing to start utilizing online solutions for education, which allowed classes to shift smoothly and swiftly online during the pandemic. Hiroshima was also one of the first universities in Japan to set up an emergency student aid fund, providing ¥30,000 to 1,820 students in need.

"This was made possible thanks to the funds totaling about ¥66 million donated by our alumni and faculty members, as well as residents of Hiroshima. We used the remaining funds to provide 147,000 breakfasts to students for ¥50," said HU President Mitsuo Ochi.

During the torrential rainstorm and subsequent flooding disaster in western Japan in July 2018, the university immediately sent out emergency messages containing information useful to international students, such as damage reports in affected neighborhoods and revised class and bus schedules. Halal meals were also provided

using university funds and donations raised on campus.

Off campus, HU formed a disaster investigation team five days after the rainstorms began that later became the Hiroshima University Resilience Research Center.

### Summit, SDGs on agenda

Another recent example of HU's off-campus contributions is the effort it has been making to ensure the success of the G7 Summit in Hiroshima. Ochi is serving as a director for education in the Citizens Council for the Hiroshima Summit, and as chairperson of a separate council of 21 universities in the prefecture that was formed to support the citizens' council.

"We have organized various events to boost momentum toward the G7 Summit, including a symposium on food security which was held on April 22," Ochi said. He expressed hope that the world leaders who attend the first G7 Summit to be held in an atomic-bombed city will visit the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum, feel the horror and misery of nuclear weapons and disseminate the value of peace.

"We think that the most important one of the United Nations' 17 sustainable development goals is goal 16, 'Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions,' because it serves as the basis for all the other goals," Ochi said. HU established the FE (Future Earth)/SDGs Network for Education and Research on Peace and Sustainability in 2018 to enhance research and education and form ties with researchers, businesspeople and the general public so it can serve as a center for solving issues related to key areas of the SDGs, Ochi explained.

Just as the SDGs look to a sustainable future from a long-term perspective, HU places importance on having a long-term strategy to foster human resources who will support the sustainability of the world for the next 100 years. This view is embodied in HU's commitment to become a "University of World-wide Repute and Splendor for Years into the Future," which is stated

in its plan for the first decade of its 100-year Splendor (Sustainable Peace Leader Enhancement by Nurturing Development of Research) Plan 2017.

The plan's mission states, "By establishing a new philosophy of peace science — Science for Sustainable Development — Hiroshima University will contribute to the realization of a diversified, free, and peaceful global society."

Some of the efforts that HU has been making to achieve this are accommodating various external educational and research bodies on campus, relocating some programs outside the main campus, and establishing new on-campus facilities.

### Diversified outreach

In August 2022, the Thunderbird School of Global Management-Arizona State University-Hiroshima University Global Initiative was launched. The business program allows students to study both at the HU campus and ASU campus.

The Radiation Effects Research Foundation, a U.S.-Japan joint research body, will be relocated to HU's Kasumi Campus where its Research Institute for Radiation Biology and Medicine is based. "We aim to promote the collaboration of the two research bodies to achieve world-leading research in the field of radiation," Ochi said.

The Faculty of Law and related programs have been moved to the Higashi-Senda Campus, which is closer to central Hiroshima. Ochi described the purpose of this move as facilitating closer ties between students and legal professionals, as well as legal and administrative bodies.

The Phoenix International Center Mirai Crea, an on-campus facility that serves as a hub for international, regional and academia-industry cooperation and collaborations, was opened in 2021 based on the idea that engagement with both international and local players is critical for the university's sustainability.

There are also various new efforts that make HU unique. One of them is the Inter-



President of Hiroshima University Mitsuo Ochi

national Institute for Sustainability with Knotted Chiral Meta Matter, which was selected under the World Premier International Research Center Initiative by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology last year.

"Research in this field will contribute to new green technologies to solve issues related to depletion of energy resources, and to medical innovations to cure refractory diseases. Some of the findings by our researchers are already in the process of development and commercialization for a super insulation material with high energy-saving effects," Ochi said. The institute plans to work with leading experts from research institutes from around the world, such as the University of Cambridge in the United Kingdom, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in the United States, and the Max Planck Institutes in Germany.

In 2018, the Frontier Development Program for Genome Editing was chosen as one of the doctoral programs for World-leading Innovative and Smart Education by the ministry.

Entrepreneurial education is another area HU focuses on. It launched the Hiroshima Entrepreneurship Program in 2014 to support startups that use research achievements and nurture human resources that can create new businesses

in existing companies. An internship program is mandatory for all freshmen, and some of the practical entrepreneurial courses offered by HU in collaboration with the municipal government and local chamber of commerce are available to both students and nonstudents who aspire to become entrepreneurs. In fact, entrepreneurial education became a part of the curriculum for all faculties in 2022.

With the pursuit of peace at the core of its education and research, HU will continue to evolve and contribute to communities at home and around the world.

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"Exploring Wonderland" by illustrator Hirofumi Kamigaki  
IC4DESIGN



The Phoenix International Center Mirai Crea is a campus hub for international, regional and academia-industry cooperation and collaboration that opened in 2021. HIROSHIMA UNIVERSITY



Building No. 1 of the former Faculty of Science, which survived the atomic bombing, is adjacent to the Higashi-Senda Campus.  
HIROSHIMA UNIVERSITY

## Collaboration network has wide reach

Hiroshima University has over 10,600 undergraduate students studying across 12 faculties, from the School of Letters to the School of Informatics and Data Science.

The university's START (Study Tour Abroad for Realization and Transformation) Program is designed to support undergraduates who wish to study overseas by funding roughly 30% to 40% of the expenses involved. The university also offers the e-START Program, which connects HU students with their foreign counterparts online so they can participate in lectures and workgroups together, and Collaborative Online International Learning, a program that involves six universities in Africa, including in Egypt and Zambia.

In 2018, the Department of Integrated Global Studies was established in the School of Integrated Arts and Sciences, where all classes from the first year to the fourth year are taught in English.

To further enhance students' English proficiency, HU has been providing additional support that includes coverage for TOEIC test fees. As of December 2022, the ratio of undergraduates who scored higher than 730 on the TOEIC — HU's threshold for studying abroad — was 21.4% overall, and 41.4% among medical students.

HU has four graduate schools — the Graduate School of Humanities and Social Sciences, the Graduate School of Advanced Science and Engineering, the Graduate School of Integrated Sciences for Life, and the Graduate School of Bio-

medical and Health Sciences — which, together with dozens of laboratories and research institutes, support advanced study in many fields. Joint degree programs are available between HU and the University of Graz in Austria, and Leipzig University in Germany.

Some of the prominent research bodies and projects HU is proud to be associated with include the International Institute for Sustainability with Knotted Chiral Meta Matter, a center for academia-industry collaboration in bio-digital transformation that focuses on genome editing, a field that HU is leading in Japan, and a project to unravel the effects of music on brain science, which was selected as one of the Moonshot Research and Development Programs by the Japan Science and Technology Agency.

For foreign students, HU established the Morito Institute of Global Higher Education, which focuses on teaching Japanese language and culture, in 2018. Among its offerings are the 3 + 1 Program, a one-year course that accepts students who have completed the first three years of undergraduate study at foreign universities. A branch school was set up in Capital Normal University in Beijing in 2020, allowing students to take various Japanese courses while in China.

Plans to accept scholarship students from Indonesia and design a curriculum and teaching team from HU to staff a new university in Egypt are also underway.

HU has 23 overseas offices and 399 partnerships with 355 institutes in 56 countries. Even with the impact of the

COVID-19 pandemic, 1,638 students from 84 countries are currently studying at HU.

As an institution with 75 years of history under former names and almost another 75 since it became Hiroshima University, the school has maintained its deep roots in the community and offered multiple stakeholder opportunities in human resources development, research and development and the creation of new industries and businesses.

In 2021 alone, HU started 384 joint research projects and commissioned 345 research projects. Among the results of our joint research with local companies are Setokomachi, a sweet made by Nishikido, My Flora, a probiotic drink produced by Nomura Dairy Products Co., and Chocolat Mill, a stone cacao milling tool made by Inoue Stone Mason Co. Many other products, such as an antibacterial spray and liquid hand soap containing tannin from astringent persimmons, have been created based on collaborative research with companies across the nation.

The Town and Gown Initiative launched in 2021 is one example of how we engage with communities. Through this initiative, HU and local governments work together on regional issues using shared academic and administrative resources. Since its establishment, the university has hosted a number of events, including seminars on topics spanning the fields of technology, business and sustainability in collaboration with both the public and private sectors.

The Hiroshima Love It Consortium is an open innovation platform that pro-



Hiroshima University, international exchange on campus

motes industry-academia-government-finance collaborations in the area. Under HU's leadership, several local universities joined, and the number of corporate and individual members reached 50 and 200, respectively, within a year of its establishment in 2021, providing collaboration opportunities with enterprises, open online lectures, internship programs, support for business startups, and international exchange.

In the same year, HU signed a comprehensive agreement with Sumitomo Corp.

and the city of Higashihiroshima to realize a smart city based on the concept of Society 5.0 — a sustainable and inclusive socioeconomic system supported by digital technologies. Based on this collaboration, HU declared an ambitious target of achieving net-zero by 2030 on its campus.

Since last year, HU has also been working with eight Higashihiroshima companies from various industries under the new Hiroshima University Smart City Co-Creation Consortium to implement new technologies on its main campus. These

results will be utilized to apply those technologies to the surrounding neighborhood and contribute to the sustainability of the region.

The sustainability efforts made by HU are compiled in the Hiroshima University SDGs Report 2021. According to Impact Ranking 2022, which assesses contributions by universities across the world in achieving the U.N. sustainable development goals published by the British journal Times Higher Education, HU ranked third in Japan.

### Hiroshima University

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# International Christian University

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## International experiences help to contribute to global peace

"World peace is an ideal, and that is all the more reason to strive for it," said International Christian University President Shoichiro Iwakiri. His position reflects the liberal arts college's founding charter as a school for realizing that very ideal. Over the past 70 years, this small private institution in the west Tokyo suburb of Mitaka has graduated some of the brightest minds with a global, bilingual education grounded in the pursuit of peace. The university intends to steadfastly continue on the same mission, at least until there is peace on Earth.

"Peace has probably never been realized. There may be peace in some parts of the world, but it might not be possible for the whole world to be at peace. There will always be conflicts somewhere... but human beings have the unique power to pursue the impossible," Iwakiri said.

The peace the president refers to is better known as political peace, or the absence

of war — a condition that is necessary for human beings to be able to enjoy comfortable lives. At the same time, the university realizes that internationalization, relationship-building and understanding one another, as well as oneself, are all necessary for peace to exist.

### Experience at a young age

"It is very important to interact with and understand people with different backgrounds at a young age. In this sense, internationalization is very important. To actually meet people and experience the world with others, instead of just receiving information. To visit the countries and breathe the same air as people of the same generation. If they have these experiences when they are young, they are unlikely to have problems in the future," Iwakiri said. "If they have strong human-to-human relationships, they won't want to harm anyone. This is especially important for stu-

dents to experience at a young age, when they are still very flexible."

Because of its sustained and straightforward commitment to peace, ICU was one of the first Japanese institutions to denounce the Russian invasion of Ukraine, Iwakiri said. In addition, through grant funding from the Japan International Christian University Foundation, five Ukrainian students are starting full-time degree studies at ICU this year.

"ICU was perhaps the first university to announce that it would support students until graduation. We will support them all the way. That's certainly in line with our mission of peace and it's a social contribution as well."

### Reconciliation study program

In 2018, ICU started the Syrian Student Initiative, offering annual scholarships to refugees from the conflict in Syria. A more recent partnership for the university concerns postwar societal implications. Last October, ICU established a one-semester study exchange program with South Korea's Underwood International College, Yonsei University. Under that program, 10 students from each university study together on the overall theme of "Reconciliation — a New Generation of Japan-South Korea Relations." The program involves five interdisciplinary lecture courses, class discussions and theme-related field trips.

"When peace comes after war, we are still left with the memory of our painful experiences, or even some of our own actions, so reconciliation is tied to peace, and is necessary in the context of Japan-South Korea relations," he said.

Students also have opportunities to gain real-world peace-building experience in Japan through a partnership with Nagasaki University. These events allow ICU students to participate in public service projects at the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum and the youth peace forum in Nagasaki.

At ICU, peace is at the core of the curriculum and there are specific courses that delve into the matter. The university also hosts a branch of the world-renowned Rotary Peace Center, allowing Rotary peace fellows to take courses in peace and

conflict resolution, among other subjects, with the eventual goal of earning a master's degree.

ICU students are not required to specifically study peace, but they are asked to sign the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, a document that enshrines the fundamental rights of all people, on the day of their matriculation ceremony. This underpins their journey through a true liberal arts program.

### Liberal arts education

The curriculum, which spans the humanities and natural and social sciences, emphasizes exposing students to a wide range of disciplines in their first two years of study. Students then choose from among 31 majors in the latter half of their degree.

"Through our liberal arts education, students acquire the ability to build a diverse network of knowledge within themselves, as well as the ability to build diverse knowledge pathways within society," Iwakiri said.

Such diversity is reflected by the recent achievements of two of its scientists. Professor Kenya Kubo, for example, was part of a team that last year published its analysis of the elemental composition of rock samples brought back to Earth from the Ryugu asteroid by the Hayabusa2 spacecraft. In addition, until 2025, associate professor Rekishu Yamazaki will be part of the Moonshot Research and Development Program promoted by the Japan Science and Technology Agency, developing a quantum memory that can perform the conversion between optical and electrical quantum signals.

This year, students and faculty will benefit from a new four-story building that symbolizes the university's dedication to the arts and sciences. Designed by Nihon Sekkei Inc. and Kengo Kuma & Associates, the Troyer Memorial Arts and Sciences Hall houses labs and research institutes for all fields of study, as well as classrooms and a common space where everyone can interact.

### Building basis for peace

Liberal arts programs are common, but what sets ICU apart is that its program is



International Christian University President Shoichiro Iwakiri YOSHIKI MIURA



Above: Students from ICU and South Korea's Underwood International College, Yonsei University, study reconciliation ideas together. Below: All students sign the Universal Declaration of Human Rights at ICU's matriculation ceremony. INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY



The Troyer Memorial Arts and Sciences Hall opened in April. INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

university-wide. Studying in both English and Japanese will help broaden students' viewpoints, helping to nurture them into becoming global citizens.

"Peace is not just a concept, but a concrete relationship between people, and through dialogue, there is diversity. From a critical thinking point of view, we do not impose our own ideas on others, nor do we simply criticize them. We train our students to discuss critically, to create something in the process, and to reconcile their opinions. This kind of training is an important basis for students to think about peace and how to think about things when they go out into the world," Iwakiri said.

The university does push students to internationalize through its exchange partnerships with dozens of universities around the world. It also promotes diversity, as represented through around 180 non-Japanese students enrolled. In addition, a third of its faculty hail from about 20 countries. Still, the school emphasizes learning about oneself and one's own country, which helps facilitate the dialogue needed to establish lasting peace.

"If everyone around you is doing the

same thing, then you have no need to explain yourself. At ICU, however, all the people you're in class with could have many different academic interests. This means you have to explain who you are and what you're doing, and you also have to ask questions, so you can know more about others. These things are built into our liberal arts education."

This page is sponsored by International Christian University.

### International Christian University

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## Studies spur grad to embark on no-nukes mission

The night before her elementary school trip more than a decade ago, Fukuoka native Kokoro Nishiyama was probably feeling like most of her peers: giddy with excitement. She would travel, eat, and chat endlessly with her friends — all outside of school. After the excursion, perhaps she was even more gleeful, with a stockpile of stories for anyone who would listen.

But the International Christian University graduate brought back something else from her class visit to the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum. Something that would determine her academic journey and set before her the task to which she would

decide to dedicate her life. That unforgettable keepsake was a burning curiosity about peace.

Currently, Nishiyama is studying terrorism and weapons of mass destruction at the Middlebury Institute of International Studies in the United States. She is part of the Accelerated Entry Program, which allows selected students to earn both a bachelor's degree from ICU and a master's degree from Middlebury in as little as 5½ years.

"I first started to think about peace when I visited the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum on a school trip in the sixth grade. The legacy of those who were robbed of

peace by the atomic bomb 78 years ago is what shapes who I am today in my pursuit of peace," Nishiyama said.

Upon completing her program, she intends to move on to doctoral studies. However, Nishiyama has already had somewhat of a career in peace. During her second year of junior high school, she transferred to a school 500 meters away from the hypocenter of the atomic bombing. One of the school's programs was Nagasaki peace studies.

"I was a member of the peace study club all throughout high school, and I became a youth communicator for a world without nuclear weapons for the Foreign Ministry. In that role, I worked to preserve the memories of the atomic bombings using digital archives. I continued this work in graduate school and I am currently attending a workshop on digital archiving as a facilitator."

It was also in high school that Nishiyama received the final catalyst to cement her future pursuits. She participated in the Critical Issues Forum, a program sponsored, incidentally, by the James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies at MIIS, where she currently studies.

"I had heated discussions on nuclear disarmament and peace with students from the United States and Russia. That's when I decided that I wanted to work for an international organization on solving nuclear issues."

Her intentionality of purpose was what Nishiyama used when choosing where to go after high school. She had three boxes that her university of choice had to tick.

It had to be somewhere she could study global issues, receive rigorous English-language training, and since she had always attended Christian schools, that was a requirement as well.

"That's when I came across ICU, which offers all three," she said.

"The liberal arts education at ICU helped me develop a flexible outlook and world-class English skills. Every lecture was full of opportunities to explore a single issue from multiple perspectives, which helped me to examine issues in an unbiased way. I was also able to hone my English skills by actively choosing to take courses offered in English. The experienced professors and diverse student body helped me to grow through lively discussions," she said.

In fact, having been exposed to that way of studying, when Nishiyama was deciding on graduate work, she knew she wanted a chance to study both the science and politics of nuclear weapons.

"Currently at MIIS, I take courses such as science and technology, strategic export control and other intensive courses that cover a wide range of issues surrounding nuclear weapons. Also, since I am the only Japanese student in my class, I am often asked to give my opinion on Japan as a whole, which has been a valuable experience."

"My goal in life is to repay my debt of gratitude to Nagasaki for conveying the importance of peace to me. I can carry the torch of peace in my heart despite my daily struggles because I studied at ICU. It is the university for tomorrow to me. The liberal arts education that I received there will



ICU graduate Kokoro Nishiyama studies terrorism and weapons of mass destruction at the Middlebury Institute of International Studies in Monterey, California. INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

continue to guide me toward my future self," Nishiyama said.

Each year, ICU produces a cohort of a mere 600 or so graduates. However, its alumni are some of the biggest names in many fields, including international development, academia and industry. ICU President Shoichiro Iwakiri attributes this to the strength of the curriculum, and the skills imparted at the school.

Alumni include Tetsuro Higashi, former chairman of Tokyo Electron Ltd., Japan's leading supplier of semiconductor production equipment, and Kazuo Hirai, former chairman of Sony Co., which later became Sony Group Corp. Higashi now chairs Rapidus, a new company funded by Nippon Telegraph and Telephone Corp., Toyota

Motor Corp., Sony and other big companies aimed at revitalizing chip production in Japan.

"There are people who contribute directly to peace, and there are also people in the business world, people who have become academics and people who have become teachers. The current chairman of the board of trustees is Hiroataka Takeuchi, an ICU graduate who is now a professor at Harvard Business School. Despite only having about 30,000 graduates over 70 years, they are active in many fields," Iwakiri said.

One fundamental reason for this success may be the university's liberal arts approach, which allows students to study a broad range of subjects. Nishiyama took advantage of and thrived in that diversity.



Since its foundation, ICU has offered education in both English and Japanese. INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY



# Keio University

(Sponsored content)

## Sustainability a key focal point of education and research

Keio University is harnessing its legacy of independence and academic excellence to create platforms for organic collaboration and transformative research initiatives. From inclusive sustainability projects and insightful discussions with world leaders to new cutting-edge research centers, Keio provides a wide range of opportunities for students and researchers to address society's most pressing issues.

Across its 10 undergraduate faculties and 14 graduate schools, Keio promotes its founding spirit of *jitsugaku*, or empirical science, through creative educational and research activities that promote critical thinking. The university groups these activities under three transdisciplinary initiatives: longevity, security and creativity. Guided by these core principles, Keio's global initiatives contribute to a sustainable, secure and

creative world where people can live better, longer lives.

### Goal of sustainability

Sustainability is a major theme of Keio's education and research. In February, Csaba Korosi, president of the 77th session of the United Nations General Assembly, was invited to a seminar at Keio focused on promoting the global body's sustainable development goals. Korosi, who was involved in the formulation of the SDGs in 2015, spoke with students and stressed the urgency with which the U.N. was acting to transform society. Keio University President Kohei Itoh echoed Korosi's sentiments, saying, "Improvement alone doesn't help anymore; we need to transform our way of living and update rules so that we can meet the SDG targets by 2030."

Centered on the theme of sustainability, the Keio Student Conference in 2022 assembled students from across the university's affiliates — elementary, junior high and high schools in Japan and the Keio Academy of New York — to think about how Keio can contribute to achieving the 17 SDGs. The university students formed groups with younger students to create proposals they later submitted to the president's office for review.

"The conference led to some really interesting discussions," Itoh said. "Undergraduate students had to formulate their proposals while listening to the opinions, ideas and aspirations of elementary and high school students. This challenged the undergraduate students to create realistic proposals that reflect the idealism of younger generations."

One aspiration that came out of this conference was a goal to eliminate all food waste on campus. While acknowledging this was not immediately feasible, Itoh believes Keio can leverage its strength in quantum computing research driven by artificial intelligence to fine-tune a cafeteria selection that mitigates waste. Other pragmatic proposals included the introduction of a rule to ensure that all of the fish served at the cafeteria has environmental certification. "Right now, we are preparing our response to these proposals," Itoh said. "Upon giving feedback we will work closely with students as part of working groups to try to achieve some of the targets they have put forth."

### Independence, self-respect

Like with the Keio Student Conference, Keio's initiatives embody the ideals of founder Yukichi Fukuzawa, who stressed the importance of independence and self-respect. Rather than top-down projects, Keio's initiatives focus on establishing found-

ations for collaborative, bottom-up platforms conducive to fruitful education and research activities.

In the realm of social sciences, Keio's emphasis on organic collaboration has led to the upcoming establishment of the Keio Center for Strategy. "This center is not an initiative from Keio headquarters; it is a grass-roots initiative organized by faculty," Itoh explained. "The nice thing about Keio is that around 70% of the university consists of the social sciences and humanities, and as such, our faculty body allows us to accommodate all sorts of different opinions."

As a preliminary event for the new research institute, a faculty member associated with the Keio Center for Strategy invited Jens Stoltenberg, the secretary-general of NATO, to speak at a seminar about national security and the relationship between NATO and Japan. The seminar was attended by around 100 students, who were given time to freely ask important and incisive questions.

"The purpose of this seminar was to give students a chance to speak with the secretary-general," Itoh said. "The secretary-general came to Japan to ask for support for NATO activities in Europe. He also stated that what is happening in Europe can also happen in Asia — specifically referring to the situation surrounding Taiwan." Students raised many important points to Stoltenberg, questioning the rationale behind NATO's plea for Japan to support its activities in Europe. "Of course, we want to help our friends in Taiwan, but at the same time, Japan doesn't recognize Taiwan as a legitimate country; there is no official diplomacy. These were just some of the points students brought up in their fruitful and stimulating dialogue with Stoltenberg, who gave sincere answers to all the questions raised," Itoh said.

The seminar also shined light on the importance of dialogue in achieving sustainable world peace by diplomatic means. Recognizing these values, Keio University joined the U7+ Alliance of World Universities shortly after the alliance was formed in 2019. Spearheaded by French President Emmanuel Macron, the alliance consists of university presidents who engage in concrete actions to promote a global multilateral agenda centered on students. "We want to promote an agenda that is centered on younger generations, because they are our future," Itoh explained. "The agenda covers a wide range of topics pertinent to the future of society, including diversity and inclusion; democracy; and human, national and Earth security."

Through discussions with other presidents in the U7+ Alliance, Itoh has noticed small differences that distinguish Keio. "Though we have accomplished professors in the field of medicine, 70% of Keio comprises the social sciences and humanities," Itoh noted. "Overall, we are prolific in a way that complements other alliance universities. We are able to leverage our strengths in the social sciences and humanities to



Keio University President Kohei Itoh YOSHIKI MIURA



Students take a class at Keio's Shonan Fujisawa Campus. KEIO UNIVERSITY



Second- to sixth-year medical students and third-year nursing students study and train at Keio University's Shinanomachi Campus where Keio University Hospital is located. KEIO UNIVERSITY

work with other universities whose focus is mainly in medicine and natural sciences."

A central theme throughout Keio's recent initiatives is the emphasis on interdisciplinary collaboration. No better can this philosophy be seen than in the establishment of the Human Biology-Microbiome-Quantum Research Center, which was selected by the education ministry to be part of the World Premier International Research Center Initiative. The center will utilize both quantum computing and conventional bioanalytical methods to clarify the mysteries of the microbiome's relationship with humans at the molecular level, paving the way for the development of new medications and therapies.

"There is so much biological data, that in order to make new findings, researchers rely on mathematical models as well as computational power," Itoh said. "The center will be working closely with our science and engineering experts to explore how to use AI and quantum computing in this process. Our Quantum Computing Center is one of the world's leading quantum computing centers, so we are excited to leverage their successes and incorporate them into

this discovery science."

The integrated approach of the microbiome research center reflects Keio's philosophy of organic collaboration. "We want all groups within Keio to be able to have discussions freely for the betterment of society," Itoh explained. "Being able to meet and discuss with a wide spectrum of people with different opinions is extremely important for a university to become a true platform of knowledge."

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### Keio University

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## Diverse courses aim to build international mindset

Keio University is a prestigious Japanese university renowned for its international environment and history of academic excellence. Established in 1858 by educator Yukichi Fukuzawa, Keio is one of Japan's first private institutions of higher learning. Fukuzawa emphasized the importance of honor and intellect in the pursuit of academic learning, and Keio honors this legacy by utilizing its strengths as a comprehensive university to promote multidisciplinary research based on the values of longevity, security and creativity.

The university is home to a diverse stu-

dent body, including a large number of international students, many of whom are enrolled in one of the university's 23 English-language undergraduate and graduate programs. Based on Keio's founding philosophy of *jitsugaku*, or empirical science, these programs offer creative and distinctive educational and research activities that equip students with the international mindset needed to contribute to solutions for both domestic and global challenges.

Keio's flagship English-language undergraduate programs include PEARL, or the Programme in Economics for Alliances, Research and Leadership. PEARL is grounded in the principle that economics is more than the study of the economy; it is a discipline that imparts the values of independent thinking, good governance and strong leadership. The establishment of Keio's Faculty of Economics in 1890 marked the beginning of the formal study of economics in Japan, and PEARL draws from this rich legacy to provide a curriculum that enables students to critically address global socioeconomic issues from a broad perspective.

PEARL offers undergraduates a world-class education in liberal arts and advanced economics over the course of four years, the first two of which are spent at Hi-yoshi Campus, Keio's largest campus located between Tokyo and Yokohama, where students obtain the foundation necessary to pursue their individual paths of study. The students spend the next two years at Mita Campus, Keio's oldest campus in the heart of Tokyo, where they pursue in-depth economic study across many categories,

including economic theory, economic history and international economics, among others. By the time they complete PEARL, students are equipped with the firm intellectual foundation needed to pursue a meaningful career in the global economy.

Other English-language undergraduate programs include the Global Information and Governance Academic Program. This program integrates information and communication technology and governance, training students to identify and resolve complex issues in an era of rapid progress. The program encompasses various fields, from policy design and social innovation to advanced biosciences and environmental design, all of which can be explored through a flexible curriculum available in English.

The four-year GIGA Program is offered at Keio's Shonan Fujisawa Campus in Kanagawa Prefecture. Surrounded by a rich natural environment, the campus opened in 1990 based on an entirely new concept: a future-oriented campus in balance with cutting-edge technology and nature. In addition to fundamental courses designed for students to acquire methods of thought and academic techniques, the GIGA Program offers courses on data science, where students will study statistical data analysis, modeling and simulation, as well as advanced mathematics. The program also emphasizes communication in foreign languages, offering courses in Malay-Indonesian, Arabic, Korean, Spanish, German and French.

In addition to its undergraduate programs, Keio offers a large selection of Eng-

lish-language programs across its graduate schools, covering the fields of economics, law, business, medicine and engineering, among others. The graduate schools' English-language offerings include a one-year Master of Laws program at the Law School; doctorate programs at the Graduate School of Medicine, Graduate School of Science and Technology, and Graduate School of Economics, among others; as well as master's programs at the Graduate School of Media and Governance and Graduate School of Business and Commerce.

In terms of research, Keio continues to be a leading academic force. Last year, Keio joined a small group of research institutes when it was selected by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports and Technology to be part of the World Premier International Research Center Initiative (WPI) — a government program launched in 2007 to promote globally visible research centers with uncompromising standards and outstanding environments.

Keio's selection under the WPI launched the university's Human Biology-Microbiome-Quantum Research Center, also referred to as Bio2Q (<https://bio2q.keio.ac.jp/>). It is the first microbiome research center in Japan and works with the world's top scientists to leverage Keio's research expertise in quantum computing to use both quantum computing and conventional bioanalytical methods to establish a new molecular understanding of the complex interactions between the microbiome and humans. The center hopes to utilize its research advancements to find solutions for difficult-to-treat illnesses.



Tokyo's Minato Ward is home to Keio's Mita Campus. KEIO UNIVERSITY



Students in the PEARL English-language economics program spend their first two years as undergraduates at Keio's Hi-yoshi Campus. KEIO UNIVERSITY

Bio2Q is led by professor Kenya Honda, who currently serves as director of the center. Honda has made seminal contributions to our understanding of the role of the microbiome in inflammatory diseases and cancer. He has also innovated microbiome analysis through the integration of germ-free animal models, anaerobic bacterial culture and metagenomic studies. The center will collect data on the interactions between multiple organs and the microbiome, utilizing artificial intelligence and quantum computing to develop a new interdisciplinary research area that explains the regulatory mechanisms that sustain human health.

In February, Bio2Q held its first symposium at Keio's Shinanomachi Campus. Researchers shared their work with their colleagues inside and outside the center

and discussed possible future avenues in science. The symposium had 200 attendees, including more than 40 from the Philippines, the U.K. and the United States. These presentations highlighted the exciting potential of integrating human biology, microflora and quantum computing to contribute to scientific development that helps achieve the goal of good health and longevity for all.

The new microbiome research center embodies Keio's three interdisciplinary initiatives: longevity, security and creativity. By creating opportunities to strengthen collaborative ties with the world through joint research and academic exchange, Keio is harnessing its education and research to contribute to a sustainable, secure and creative world where people live fulfilling, longer lives.



# Kwansei Gakuin University

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## Holistic education to foster an international identity

Kwansei Gakuin University, based in Nishinomiya, Hyogo Prefecture, will celebrate its 150th anniversary in 2039. Ahead of this milestone, the university has developed a concept for its long-term future. Called Kwansei Grand Challenge 2039 (KGC2039), its ultimate purpose is to cultivate students who will be "world citizens embodying the spirit of the school's 'Mastery for Service' motto," said Kwansei Gakuin University President Yasutoshi Mori.

The university has also laid out a long-term strategy aimed at achieving outcomes from learning, securing quality students and providing an education that will result in graduates securing first-rate employment. As part of the process, it seeks to provide a holistic education that will re-emphasize its internationalist identity, as well as bring a new emphasis on the hard sciences and technology while retaining its strengths in liberal arts.

"Kwansei Gakuin University has been international from the very outset," said Mori, who assumed the top post in April. "We were founded as a mission school, with strong connections to North America. In fact, at the time of our founding (1889), there were no textbooks available in Japanese, so students had to use textbooks written in English. "While internationalization is an important theme within KGC2039, as has been the case for so many institutions, the COVID-19 pandemic put a damper on the university's international exchange programs. "None of our students — and for that matter, none of our faculty — was able to travel abroad, and likewise none of our partner institutions could send students to us," Mori explained. Like other universities, KGU found itself going online. "Being able to actually travel somewhere is of course best, but working with our partners overseas we were at least able to provide opportunities for virtual exchanges," he said.

In October, KGU resumed receiving international students. This spring, the university saw off its own students, putting it back on track for the internationalization goals included in KGC2039. "While faculty can take the long view and hope to travel again before they retire, students are at KGU for only a few years, perhaps six at most. Now students will have this opportunity again," Mori said.

### Top Global University Project

KGU also plans to step up its internationalization efforts under KGC2039. That internationalization goal is one of the reasons why KGU was selected as one of the universities leading the globalization of Japanese society under the central government's Top Global University Project. Under this project, the government provides prioritized support to those universities that are leading the internationalization



Kwansei Gakuin President Yasutoshi Mori | KWANSEI GAKUIN UNIVERSITY

of Japan's education by launching new programs to encourage and deepen interactions and partnerships with the world's top universities. KGU currently has arrangements with more than 290 universities and international institutions in 58 countries. With the government's backing, Mori explained, KGU will devote more energy to bolstering and expanding those alliances.

"We hope to send as many of our students as possible to study abroad," he said, adding that KGU sends more Japanese students abroad based on affiliations with foreign universities than any other school. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, KGU ranked first in fiscal 2018 and second in 2019 for number of students sent abroad, according to survey results announced by the Japan Student Services Organization. Some students also have experiences that go beyond traditional coursework. Since 2004, student volunteers have been traveling to various developing countries to participate

in the United Nations Volunteers program. KGU launched its own separate International Cooperation program in 2013 to send students to developing countries and give them firsthand experience with various activities underway on the ground.

KGU has also been welcoming to foreign students. Those with a particular interest in Japanese studies can elect to study in the Contemporary Japan Program, but students with the requisite language skills are welcome to enroll in other programs. Currently, the university has about 800 international students studying as regular degree-track students.

To address the difficulties that international students sometimes have in finding accommodations in Japan, KGU has an international education dormitory called Yukoryo, as well as four international residences. The university also has five other dormitories — three male-only and two female-only — open to both Japanese and



Above: Students share some free time at Kwansei Gakuin University's campus in Nishinomiya, Hyogo Prefecture. KWANSEI GAKUIN UNIVERSITY

Right: Kwansei Gakuin University is working to foster experts in science and technology. KWANSEI GAKUIN UNIVERSITY



international students. This arrangement, Mori said, offers opportunities for students to have another sort of learning experience.

"Instead of only being together in a lecture or seminar listening to and discussing some particular topic, they are all living together. They are having dinner together, celebrating different seasonal events together, and so forth. Our hope is to give them the chance to experience daily life together. While it's not classroom learning per se, we think this is also important," he said.

### New schools, new facilities

As symbolized by the recent reorganization of its School of Science and Technology into four separate schools with more clearly defined areas of focus, the university has been working under KGC2039 to restructure and expand course offerings in the hard sciences as well.

"At most private universities in Japan like Kwansei Gakuin University, there is the view that such institutions are focused primarily on the humanities and social sciences," Mori said. "Conversely, national universities have been seen as having strengths in the hard sciences and technology.

However, we believe that there are certain things that we can do because we are a private institution. We believe that we

can provide a good education in the sciences as well."

"Broadly speaking, if we look at universities in, say, the United States, we see a greater acceptance of an undergraduate education that combines both the arts and the sciences. In Japan, however, it is still more strictly divided. A student chooses either the liberal arts or the sciences," he said. That sort of thinking, he points out, is still ingrained among more senior professors. However, looking ahead, Japan will need to find new ways to innovate, he said. The holistic approach that Kwansei Gakuin University takes offers a way to combine the best of both worlds.

### Other challenges

Whether liberal arts or science and technology, universities are faced with the need to protect their research results. "Universities, like companies, have extensive information networks and so of course they also need to worry about cyberattacks," Mori pointed out. Especially with the emphasis on "digital transformation" in KGC2039, the university's network needs to be protected.

Furthermore, researchers are not the only ones who need protection. "Our students, of course, have very sensitive data of their own, so we have to operate secure

systems that are problem-free," Mori added.

Especially amid growing concerns about economic security, Mori explained, universities will have to find a way to strike a balance between the openness needed for the spirit of free inquiry and the demands of guarding information and potentially sensitive technological innovations. The government has only relatively recently begun to wrestle with the issue of economic security, having added a Cabinet-level position in 2021 and having passed the Economic Security Promotion Act in 2022.

However, Mori observed, there may be specific measures that universities will have to take. Achieving a suitable balance will require careful work.

"It is meaningless for a university to be a 'closed' environment," Mori said. "We still want to accept students from other countries, for example. We will need to somehow find a way to remain 'open' while still protecting information."

This page is sponsored by Kwansei Gakuin University.

### Kwansei Gakuin University

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## Science and technology in focus moving forward

Kwansei Gakuin University was founded in 1889 by American Methodist missionary Walter R. Lambuth. Now a private, non-denominational Christian institution, the university strives to inspire its students to seek their life missions, and cultivates their creativity and ability to be global citizens who embody the school's motto, "Mastery for Service," by transforming society with compassion and integrity.

Together with its affiliated K-12 schools, KGU forms part of a comprehensive educational institution that provides training encompassing not only the liberal arts, but also the natural sciences, engineering and architecture. The university offers bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees to about 25,000 students in over 80 different

disciplines across 14 undergraduate and 14 graduate schools.

Yasutoshi Mori, president of the university, notes that under the Kwansei Grand Challenge 2039 (KGC2039) plan initiated in 2018, the university is particularly hoping to nurture more students who want to focus on science and technology. With the Japanese government providing incentives for universities to increase enrollment in such programs, KGU has begun taking concrete steps to support that drive.

In April 2021, the School of Science and Technology — based at KGU's Kobe-Sanda Campus — was reorganized into four separate schools: science, engineering, biological and environmental sciences, and architecture. The goal, Mori said, is to

more clearly define studies under those fields. KGU, he added, is also giving consideration to opening another KGU campus near the central Kobe area that would focus on project-based learning. Students here would have the opportunity and be encouraged to pursue research in a cross-disciplinary fashion rather than focusing on one specific field.

KGU has also been working to expand its physical presence in conjunction with this new emphasis. In September 2022, the university opened a new building at the Kobe-Sanda Campus. Building VIII increases the number of classrooms on campus and will accommodate the expanded coursework offerings spurred by the April 2021 reorganization of KGU's schools. Furthermore, the building has an observatory on the top

floor for use not only by students in the Department of Physics and Astronomy, but also members of the Sanda community who wish to hold more informal stargazing events.

The university also plans to complete by 2025 a new Innovation Facility at the same campus. Paired with a new student dormitory, it would give KGU a base from which to nurture industry-academia-government collaborations, offer support to local companies and industries, and provide education offerings focused on information technology.

An example of industry-academia collaboration, and one of the goals set down in KGC2039 to have its scholars produce world-class research that is well-regarded in their fields, is the work being conducted by School of Engineering professor Tadaaki Kaneko. Kaneko developed a technology called Dynamic AGE-ing to produce silicon carbide (SiC) wafers for semiconductors to use electricity more efficiently and make cooling devices more compact. This makes them particularly well-suited for such applications as electric vehicles. The development led to the founding this past March of Qureda Research Inc., in collaboration with trading house Toyota Tsusho Corp., to exploit this technology.

"We hope that this technology will find wider applications and acceptance in society at large through its use by other companies," Mori said. "We hope to see more discoveries bear fruit through university-industry collaborations."

The university and Toyota Tsusho utilize the SiC-related technology nurtured by



Kwansei Gakuin University School of Engineering professor Tadaaki Kaneko | KWANSEI GAKUIN UNIVERSITY

KGU for the past 20 years and the extensive business connections the firm cultivated to advance technological development and its practice through open innovation, allowing a wide range of clients and manufacturers to participate in these activities.

Innovations such as this one, he added, can contribute to carbon neutrality, which will help KGU meet its own goals for sustainable development while also helping society more broadly.

Such university-industry collaboration aligns with goal 17 of the sustainable development goals adopted by the United Nations, namely to "strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global

partnership for sustainable development" through collaborations in different fields, including science and technology.

The fossil fuels, coal and natural gas that support the modern lifestyle are finite resources, and in the 21st century humanity will need energy systems that are safe, clean and renewable. To that end, KGU is working to build a major research base at the Kobe-Sanda Campus to focus on sustainable energy as espoused by SDG No. 7.

Going forward, the four science schools and the humanities-oriented School of Policy Studies will combine their research findings as a campus and strive to make sustainable societies a reality.



With its rooftop observatory, recently completed Building VIII on the Kobe-Sanda Campus showcases the university's strength in the sciences. KWANSEI GAKUIN UNIVERSITY



Kwansei Gakuin University is in alignment with goal 17 of the sustainable development goals adopted by the United Nations.



# Nanzan University

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## Keeping dignity and diversity relevant in a turbulent world

Located in Yagoto in eastern Nagoya, Nanzan University opened its doors immediately following the end of World War II with the goal of providing language education to assist the Japanese in building a presence on the international stage. What missionary Rev. Aloysius Pache started as the College of Foreign Languages in 1946 has since transformed into an institution with eight faculties and six graduate schools, as well as the Center for Japanese Studies, serving over 10,000 students, 450 of them from abroad.

Nanzan President Robert Kisala said that through the fostering of diversity in its curriculum and initiatives, such as promoting dialogue, respect and international exchange, the university is only honoring the educational philosophy encapsulated in its motto: "For Human Dignity."

### Promoting human dignity

"Our motto is becoming even more relevant to the world today because of the problems that we continue to experience. We can see that human dignity is not yet recognized or promoted for all people," Kisala said. "And I think that's especially become apparent during the pandemic. I think the pandemic helps to focus on some of the inequalities or remaining inequalities in our world. And obviously with the invasion of Ukraine by Russia in the past year, we see that rights are still being violated in many parts of the world. So, in that sense human dignity becomes even more important."

Kisala added: "And from the other side, I think the emphasis on the (U.N.) sustainable development goals in recent years also points to a positive approach to promoting and preserving human dignity. I personally believe that the SDGs embody the spirit, and help to concretize the meaning of human dignity. They're common goals set by all of humanity in order to preserve and promote human dignity, and so I think this also helps to once again focus our attention on the importance of human dignity."

So fundamental is this idea, that human dignity classes are part of the program of study. Students must take at least two human dignity classes from eight different categories of such courses.

"Academically, that helps to give some

focus to what we mean by human dignity and how it has practical applications for the different fields of study here at the university," Kisala said. "Economics and human dignity might entail, broadly, the implications for economics on human dignity, and how to promote human dignity through different economic models or through different economic patterns. We have specialists in each of the fields teaching about what concrete meaning human dignity has within that field."

Maintaining partnerships with 118 universities around the world is another way this school in Aichi Prefecture upholds its motto. Many of these universities send students to Nanzan's Center for Japanese Studies, and currently, about 100 Nanzan students are studying abroad. The U.S. and Europe remain popular destinations, but students are also studying in Mexico, parts of Latin America, and in Asia. Recently, Nanzan signed an agreement with an Ethiopian university, in a move to expand to Africa.

### COIL program

Kisala pointed to this extensive network as one of the reasons that Nanzan was selected by the Japanese government as one of 10 universities to implement its Collaborative Online International Learning program in 2018. COIL uses technology to connect university students across the globe. The students may have written exchanges, real-time video interactions and work on assignments together.

"An attractive feature to our plan was diversity. For example, my understanding is that some of the other universities that were selected for the COIL program are focused on a particular faculty or particular department. Here at Nanzan it goes across all of our faculties. So, anybody at the university could be involved in the COIL program," Kisala said. "Also there is diversity in terms of the makeup of the program. We talk about three different stages of the COIL program: basic, academic and project-based learning. We begin with the basic, that's just, for example, an exchange conversation with students in the United States and students here on campus. Then there's academic, which would be one step above



Nanzan University sits on a tree-filled campus in the rolling hills of eastern Nagoya.

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that, where the students are working on a common research project together. The third stage involves problem-based learning work."

"We also partnered with some of the companies here in Aichi and asked them to propose a specific problem or a specific field that needed to be studied. The students involved here at the university and abroad through the COIL program would then work together in order to come up with a solution to this problem that was raised by the company here, so it also increases our cooperation with the business world here as well," Kisala added.

The official government COIL program ended in March, but it was such a tremendous success that Nanzan plans to continue the program on its own. For one thing, it helped to deepen its relationship with partner schools, especially during the pan-

demic when actual study abroad was not possible. In addition, all faculties at Nanzan offer a short-term study abroad program, for which COIL is now used to prepare the participants. COIL is also used to facilitate reflective learning when the students return. While the task of implementing COIL seemed daunting at first, the rewards of exposing students to various viewpoints have been well worth it. On March 15, for the first time since 2019, Nanzan COIL students were finally able to partake in a two-week visit to the University of North Georgia in the U.S.

"I teach a class in English about religion in the contemporary U.S., and for the COIL program, my students in that class have an exchange with the students at University of Denver, where they ask the Denver students about religion in the U.S. or their experience of religion today," Kisala said. "And the Denver students ask my students about Japanese culture, as they're studying Japanese language, and they have a project that they have to do involving some aspect of Japanese culture. So, the exchange was on that level, and it worked out quite well."

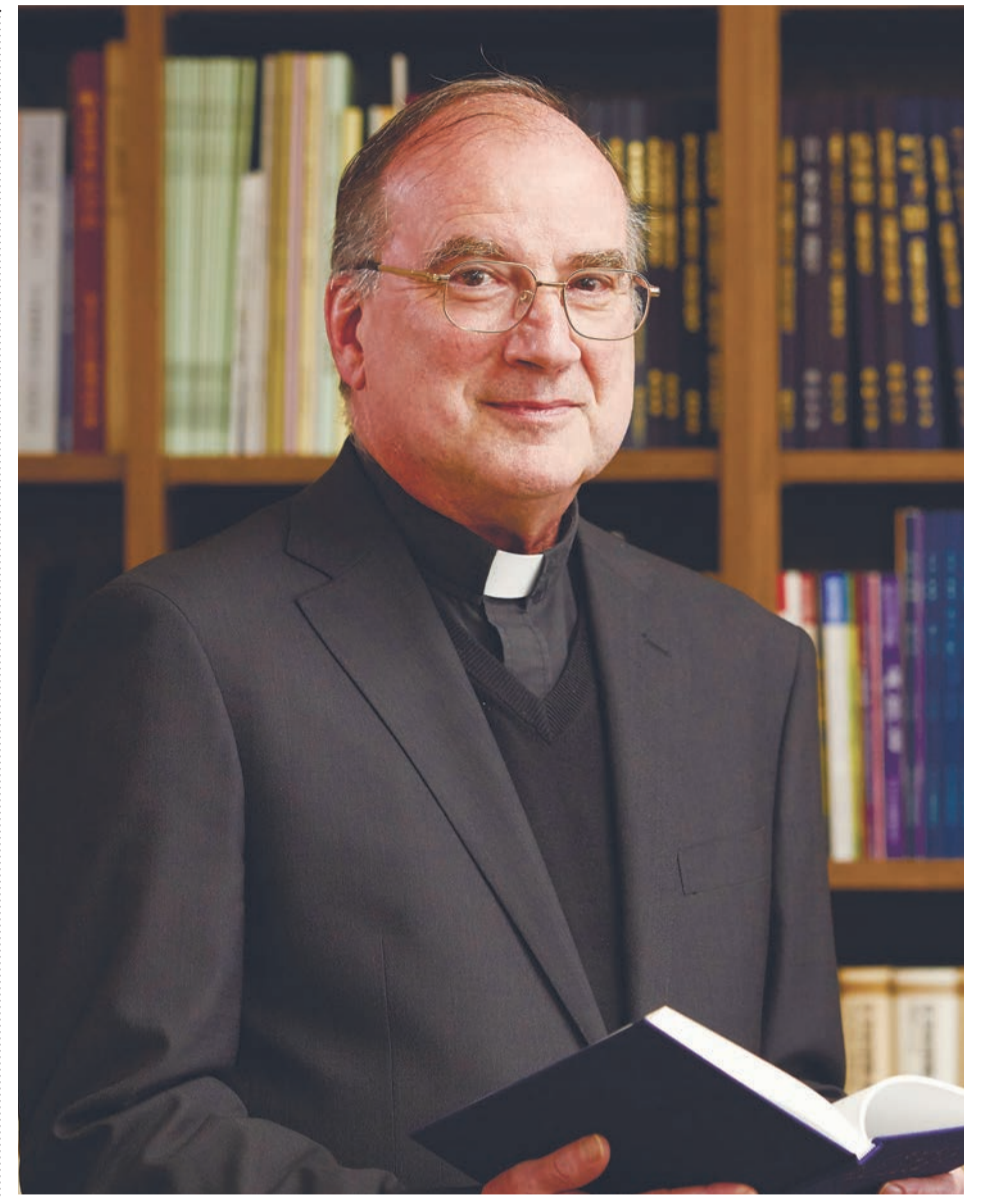
In one case, students in another class worked on a "car of the future" proposal for a well-known automaker in Aichi, Kisala added.

### 'Anime Study Tour'

Further ties with the business community are also represented by Nanzan's official partnership with Ghibli Park, a theme park that opened last year in the prefecture under the aegis of the renowned Studio Ghibli. Nanzan is currently devising ways to allow students to benefit from this alliance.

"We're hoping to establish some special programs here at the university in connection with the work of Studio Ghibli, and especially what's present at Ghibli Park," Kisala said. "In terms of the courses, I have specialized in contemporary religion, especially contemporary Japanese religion. And for many years I've been aware that a great deal of literature has been published regarding the religious themes in Japanese anime. And through our connection with Ghibli Park, I started focusing more on that, and I'm hoping to incorporate that in some of my classes as well."

Anime is a big pull for many visitors to Japan. Aware of this, Nanzan will launch its "Anime Study Tour" this year, a three-week program for overseas students that helps them explore Japanese culture and society through the lens of anime. In the mornings, they will have lectures on different aspects of anime, and the afternoons will be reserved for cultural



Nanzan University President Robert Kisala

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activities. These include two field trips to visit anime-related sites and a Ghibli Park excursion. The summer program, Kisala said, comes at a time when, fortunately, anime, "a doorway into contemporary Japanese culture," is becoming more a part of the scene in Aichi.

### Human Dignity Award

Having just celebrated its 75th anniversary two years ago, the university is now in a purposeful procession toward its 100th year. It has already established concrete goals to guide it on that path, but the anniversary provided an opportunity to recast and reaffirm its commitment to its core principles. Over the next 25 years, the university will be looking to improve academic diversity by increasing interdisciplinary study. It will also continue the Nanzan University Human Dignity Award, which was established last year to recognize contributions to the promotion of human dignity.

"Every year, we identify one person or one group that has made a special contribution to the advancement of human dignity and invite them to come to the campus to give a lecture on their work. The first recipient of the award last year happened to be a graduate of Nanzan University. But it's certainly not limited to people associated with the university," Kisala said. "The idea is that through the establishment of this award... the content or the meaning of human dignity becomes more concrete for all of us by hearing about the work of people who have made significant contributions to it."

It is also hoped that the importance of human dignity will be more apparent to people outside the university itself, and that more and more people will become aware of the importance of it.

### International exchange

The university will continue to encourage students to study abroad, but it will also continue to provide spaces on campus for international exchange. The Stella multicultural exchange lounge is one such place, with a range of casual and academic programs on offer. The lounge is staffed by students and is the center of extracurricular

interactions on campus. In the World Plaza, students are not allowed to speak Japanese. They are encouraged to speak English or other foreign languages.

On the other hand, in the Japan Plaza, students must speak Japanese. Overseas students coming from all over the world can practice Japanese language and learn Japanese culture there. There is also a Language Buddy system, in which foreign students and Japanese students have one-on-one language exchange opportunities at least once a week.

Additionally, Nanzan University opened a new residence last year called the Janssen International Residence. The large dormitory, situated right next to the university campus, can house as many as 178 students. The concept of the residence is to have students from Japan and abroad live together and learn from each other. An educational program called Skill Development Program for Diversity and Inclusion has also been developed for the residence to promote international exchanges and understanding.

### Importance of diversity

When the president first came to Japan as a young man in 1978, he studied at the Center for Japanese Studies. Thanks to this experience, Kisala appreciates the importance of diversity and the dialogue it facilitates. He encourages all students to "enjoy the diversity" that an international education affords.

"Many people have a false idea that dialogue is somehow trying to come to a compromise with our beliefs. That it's a watering down of what we believe in order to get along with other people. But I think it's quite the opposite of that. I think dialogue is a common search for the truth," Kisala said. "There are certain questions about the meaning of our lives, our purpose in this world that none of us has the final answer for, and for that reason we need each other. It's not a matter of tolerating differences, but we absolutely need each other because we all have different perspectives on that common truth. And we need to be able to share our different perspectives in order to come to a fuller understanding of it. And so, for that reason, I think diversity in many ways, not just culturally, but gender diversity and age, generational diversity, is absolutely essential for all of our lives."

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Following delays caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, students studying under the Collaborative Online International Learning program were able to meet with students at the University of North Georgia in March.

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On campus, Nanzan University students can enjoy the atmosphere of an urban park.

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Above: Nanzan University President Robert Kisala with "No-Face" of "Spirited Away" at Ghibli Park. The university is an official partner of Ghibli Park. Left: Students must speak Japanese in the Japan Plaza, giving them a chance to hone their language skills while learning about Japanese culture.

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Students enjoy cooking in the shared kitchen of the Janssen International Residence.

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### Nanzan University

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# Ritsumeikan University

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## Programs help students tackle international issues

"Challenge your mind, Change our future." Ritsumeikan University adopted this motto in 2018 as part of its vision toward 2030. In a time when it is difficult to predict the future due to the COVID-19 pandemic and increasingly complex social and political issues, the university is determined to continue expanding its global education program, giving students and researchers the tools needed to take on new challenges.

"It's important for universities of the future to contribute to solving social issues," said Ritsumeikan University President Yoshio Nakatani. "The next generation of 'research universities' will be those that continue to promote such activities."

Nakatani noted that Ritsumeikan University has two central pillars. First, it is a next-generation research university and second, it fosters human resources capable of swift innovation. "Students who are nurtured at such a university will become people who have an impact on society. Students should look ahead to the future, challenge themselves to do various things and take action to create change through collaboration with others. It is these kinds of challenges that will change the world," he added.

What is required today, Nakatani said, is a sensitivity to find new meaning in the world, and the accumulation of rich emotional experiences to support this new meaning. "Universities must continue to provide such opportunities through education and research," he stressed.

The history of Ritsumeikan University goes back to 1869 when Prince Kinmochi Saionji, then a 20-year-old international statesman, founded the private academy Ritsumeikan on the site of the Kyoto Imperial Palace. In 1900, Kojuro Nakagawa, a former secretary of Saionji, established the Kyoto Hosei School (now Ritsumeikan School of Law and Politics), an evening law school for working people. The school formally adopted the name Ritsumeikan University in 1913 and was given university status in 1922.

The spirit of liberalism and internationalism advocated by Saionji was combined with the ideals of academic freedom and innovation pursued by Nakagawa, becoming a tradition of the academy. It is with this same freedom and enthusiasm toward innovation that students pursue their studies today.

The university celebrated the 150th year since the founding of Ritsumeikan and the 120th anniversary of the establishment of the Ritsumeikan Academy in 2020. The academy consists of Ritsumeikan University, and Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University, and five affiliated schools: Ritsumeikan Primary School, Ritsumeikan Moriyama Junior and Senior High School, Ritsumeikan Junior and Senior High School, Ritsumeikan Uji Junior and Senior High School, and Ritsumeikan Keisho Junior and Senior High School.

### Steps to internationalize

One of the first universities in Japan to achieve internationalization, Ritsumeikan University has implemented advanced initiatives through its flagship Joint Degree Program, which was established in 2018 in collaboration with American University in Washington D.C. It was the first joint degree undergraduate program between the United States and Japan. Additionally, a dual degree program was formed in 2019 in the university's College of Global Liberal Arts in partnership with the Australian National University. The program allows students to earn two degrees, one from Ritsumeikan University in Osaka and the other from ANU, a center of interna-



Ritsumeikan University President Yoshio Nakatani RITSUMEIKAN UNIVERSITY

tional politics, following four years of study entirely in English.

Ritsumeikan University has also established study abroad programs, such as the Global Fieldwork Project. With the aim of deepening understanding of global society, the program gives students the opportunity to experience different cultures and review their own values and ways of thinking while experiencing the unique aspects of foreign countries.

As such, the university has gone through three phases of internationalization, according to Nakatani.

In the first phase, from the end of the 1980s to the beginning of the 1990s, the university worked on the formation of an internationalization center oriented around the establishment of the College of International Relations in 1988. It was the first university in western Japan to have such a college.

In the second phase, from the end of the 1990s to the early 2000s, it promoted the development and maintenance of a university-wide international education program, including Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University, which opened in 2000.

In the third phase, from the 2000s onward, all faculties at the university continue to promote internationalization of their educational content, and develop multilayered international education in conjunction with university-wide programs. In addition to regular courses, global education and exchange are also being promoted in extracurricular activities. Especially in the past decade, the university has seen remarkable internationalization, exemplified by the launch of the Joint Degree Program in 2019.

### East Asian perspective

Among other distinctive international programs is the Campus Asia Program that

started in 2012 as a study abroad program in both China and Korea. The program is part of the university's College of Letters and Arts, where students learn about the history, culture and society of the three countries, including Japan, in the local language of each country. Students learn Chinese and Korean and basic knowledge in their first year, and study abroad in their second and third years when they take language courses and specialized courses such as history, culture and society in Guangzhou, China, and Pusan, South Korea. Using language as a tool, students acquire specialized knowledge that enables them to consider and analyze East Asia from a global perspective.

Through these studies, the university hopes that students will develop the ability to tackle not only East Asian issues, but also global issues that transcend national and regional boundaries. With the world's problems becoming more diverse and complex, the university believes that building relationships with people with different backgrounds and values, and ultimately learning how to share those values, will serve as a major driving force in solving them.

### Collaboration with Dalian

Ritsumeikan University has endeavored to collaborate with foreign universities not only in the liberal arts, but also in science and engineering. An international information technology school, Dalian University of Technology-Ritsumeikan University International School of Information Science and Engineering, was jointly established in April 2013 by the College of Information Science and Engineering at Ritsumeikan University and the School of Software at Dalian University of Technology in Dalian, China. It is the first joint establishment and operation



Above: Ritsumeikan University has many international students. Left: Ritsumeikan University's Kinugasa Campus is located in Kyoto, the center of Japanese culture. RITSUMEIKAN UNIVERSITY

of a faculty by a university based in Japan and the first such effort by a national university in China.

The faculty is located on the Dalian University of Technology campus under the Chinese Ministry of Education. Forty of the 210 students in the first academic year transfer to Ritsumeikan University in their third year and obtain degrees from both universities. The remaining students receive degrees from Dalian University of Technology. Most of the specialized courses are taught in Japanese by faculty members of the School of Information Science and Engineering at Ritsumeikan University.

### Reaching the next level

In 2019, 2,416 foreign students were enrolled at Ritsumeikan University, and the number increased even in 2022 amid the COVID-19 crisis, with 2,604 enrolled.

"While many other universities have seen a smaller number of international students, Ritsumeikan University has seen an increase in the number," Nakatani said.

The university has also started online exchanges between Japanese students and their foreign counterparts abroad. According to Nakatani, in a popular one-month program that started in 2021 between Ritsumeikan University and the University of California, Davis, in the United States, online discussions in English such as on the theme of the United Nations sustainable development goals have proved to be "incredibly effective" for students in not only developing their language skills but also attaining a global perspective.

In addition to collaborating with overseas universities, Ritsumeikan actively

promotes international experiences to students on campus. In 2018, it opened the Beyond Borders Plaza, a program for global exchange and language learning at each of its three campuses — the Kinugasa Campus, Biwako-Kusatsu Campus and the Osaka Ibaraki Campus. Student staff members are active at each campus, holding cross-cultural exchanges, themed workshops and other events unique to the global commons.

Now, Nakatani would like to expand the program from on campus and online to real study abroad programs so that the English language would be brought naturally to "the everyday lives of the students."

The university wants to bring itself to a new level of not just internationalization, but also diversity. "The university has emphasized diversity since its founding. An example of diversity is that more than half of the students are from outside the Kinki region, where the university is based," Nakatani said. "The founding spirit of the school is based on freedom and progress. Because we are free, we are diverse, and because we are diverse, we are free."

With such a mindset, plans are underway by the university to build a space-related research center in the summer of 2023 at its Biwako-Kusatsu Campus. "Various analytical techniques and resources will be explored there," Nakatani said, adding that the university will bring in international human resources and knowledge to the research center.

### Career success

Through its various international programs, Ritsumeikan University does its utmost to cultivate globally minded stu-

dents who can take on active roles in a variety of international fields and settings. Nakatani pointed out that many graduates have gone on to work at international organizations such as the Japan External Trade Organization, and that others have succeeded at a variety of well-known global firms. "A female graduate is now the vice president of Robert Bosch in Japan, a leading global supplier of technology and services," Nakatani said. The university aims to continue fostering such human resources who can communicate with people around the world.

### Unique character

Ritsumeikan University is unique among universities in that the Ritsumeikan Academy that it is part of offers an "integrated education" consisting of a three-stage education program from elementary to high school, with the third stage preparing students for higher education and career-related activities.

"We have created a very clear and consistent education system where there is one vertical flow, moving from exploration to research," Nakatani said.

This uniqueness may have been a leading factor in the university achieving high levels in university rankings. It was ranked third for the second consecutive year among private universities in Japan in the QS World University Rankings 2023, and 201st to 300th overall globally. It also placed at the top among private universities in western Japan in the Times Higher Education Impact Rankings 2022, which evaluates universities' level of commitment to achieving the SDGs through research and social contribution activities.

As a leading institution in Japan, Ritsumeikan will continue to make efforts to flourish in all areas of academia, with an eye toward producing graduates who can contribute to global society at all levels.

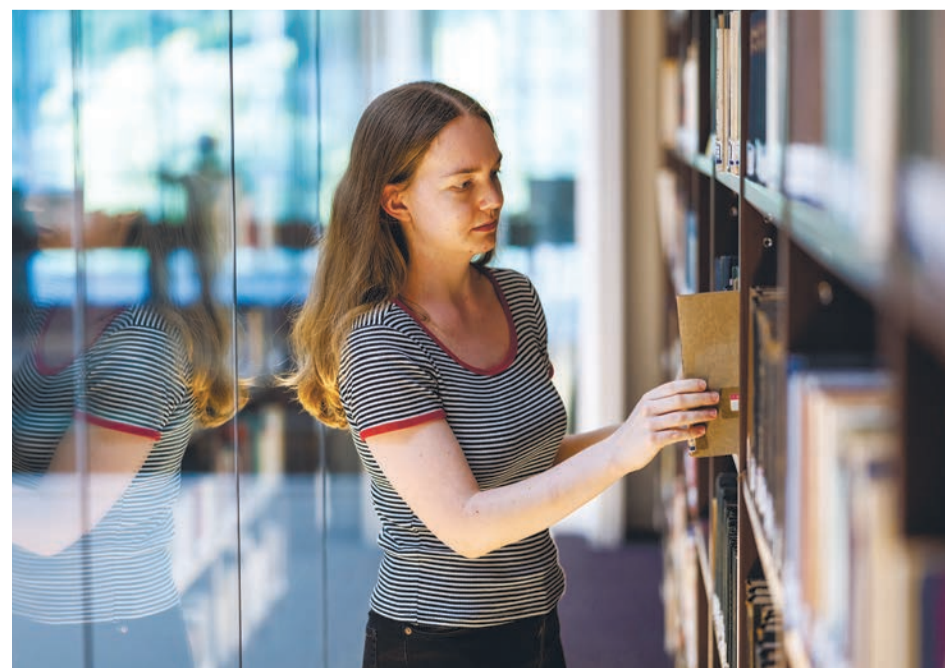
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### Ritsumeikan University

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The first students to graduate from the College of International Relations' Joint Degree Program pose at the school in March 2021. RITSUMEIKAN UNIVERSITY



Ritsumeikan's Hirai Kaichiro Memorial Library provides students with exceptional research materials. RITSUMEIKAN UNIVERSITY



The first graduating class of Ritsumeikan University's College of Global Liberal Arts poses for a group photo in March. RITSUMEIKAN UNIVERSITY



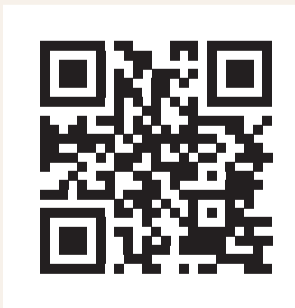
# Local angles, global perspective

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# Sophia University

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## Freedom to examine topics from various perspectives

Sophia University, the first Jesuit and oldest Catholic university in Japan, is celebrating its 110th anniversary this year. "Amid the dynamically shifting global landscape, we are questioning the role we should play in Japanese society and how we can serve the international community," said university President Yoshiaki Terumichi.

He feels the need to create an environment where students can gain insight into societal change and develop an ability to make one's point in diversified surroundings.

"To be able to respond to changes, one needs to have multilateral viewpoints and gain foresight into the future. In addition, the ability to recognize the qualities of issues and how they relate to each other from both global and local perspectives is essential," Terumichi said, emphasizing that one must go beyond just understanding where the issues lie in order to play a creative role in society.

Issues can be diverse and complex when society itself is the same. "It is no longer a question of whether you should be part of the diversified society or not. Wherever you are, you are already living in one," Terumichi said, explaining that having an area of expertise can increase credibility when trying to advocate one's thoughts in such an environment. He stressed the importance of not only deepening current thinking on the universality of academic disciplines, but also

turning this experience into wisdom and nurturing the ability to exercise and share it with other people. "Our job is not to make students understand this, but to constantly think and act to create an environment where students themselves can realize what they can gain at the university," he said.

### Acting on global issues

One of the efforts that Sophia University makes to provide such an environment is the establishment of research institutes that focus on various global issues. Among those are the Institute of Global Concern and the Sophia Institute for Human Security. Both focus on themes related to human dignity but take different approaches.

"While the former pursues how social justice can be realized from the standpoint of humanity and human rights, the latter tries to design policies and systems that can potentially solve problems that threaten human dignity in the dynamism of the economic society," Terumichi said. This embodies Sophia's strength of having resources to offer opportunities to explore one topic from various perspectives using different methods.

The Institute for Studies of the Global Environment is another Sophia-affiliated research organization that aims to contribute to the progress of humanity by doing research on environmental issues from

interdisciplinary and multifaceted perspectives. The Sophia Island Sustainability Institute was originally one of the ISGE's units, but it was made independent as part of the university's response to "Laudato Si," the second encyclical of Pope Francis published in May 2015. This document called for people to take action to address environmental degradation and global warming.

"In small island nations and regions, many different issues such as those related to environment, water, energy, economy, population and local industries tend to be intertwined with each other," Terumichi said, explaining that how each area tries to deal with those challenges is worth studying and sharing with the rest of the world. The institute aims to become a hub for such studies by connecting research organizations and universities that share the same interests. "We are also inviting private enterprises to join our network to form a consortium that focuses on the topic of sustainability in island regions," he added.

Due to the open nature of these institutes, students can have access to what is being studied and discussed there, and participate in many of the events held by those that host world-class researchers and policymakers in the relevant fields.

"It means a lot for students to be able to keep updating their knowledge this way because social issues are changing con-

stantly with time," Terumichi said.

For students to express their opinions, share insights with people from different backgrounds and enhance their creativity to find solutions to pressing issues the global community faces, it is important to explore a diverse environment and to be exposed to various perspectives. This is why Sophia offers many English-taught degree programs at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. In the 2022 fall semester, over 1,300 students from 74 countries and regions, including Japan, took such programs. Just before the pandemic, Sophia had students from 92 different countries.

### English-taught programs

The Sophia Program for Sustainable Futures is one of the English-taught undergraduate degree courses established in 2020. It offers students in six departments a common platform for studying topics related to sustainability. The platform thus comprises the education, sociology, economics, global studies, journalism and management departments.

"There are no sustainability issues that can be solved by a single area of specialization or a single social organization," Terumichi pointed out. "Experts in different fields looking at sustainability issues from various angles — this is necessary but not enough anymore. It is important for students to gain diverse and multifaceted perspectives, share what they learned with other students from various backgrounds and expertise, and stimulate their own areas of specialization," he said.

Despite the partial COVID-19 restrictions on visas and entry to Japan last year, the SPSF had 130 students from 15 countries, including Japan, in the fall semester of 2022. "Through interactions with students from different countries, students will experience moments when they think, 'I hadn't thought of it that way!' This is exactly why diversity is necessary and how diversity supports the growth of the society with new ideas and creativity," Terumichi said.

### Opposite side of self

Go to the opposite side of yourself — this is the message Terumichi shares with Sophia's Japanese students whenever he has an opportunity to speak to them.

"When it comes to finding solutions for sustainability issues, people in advanced



Sophia University President Yoshiaki Terumichi YOSHIAKI MIURA

countries, including us, need to realize that we are a minority in the world," he said. That is why he wants students to experience a life that is entirely different from what they consider normal, and Sophia's campus, an exemplar of a global community, would be an ideal starting point. He also pointed out: "For students from abroad, Japan may be the 'opposite' or at least very different, from where they are from. Japan may have been successful in some areas but has failed in others. The definition of success may also depend on perspectives. We should not be afraid of

being open to different perspectives and encourage foreign students to learn from our society. That is the role we have as a Japanese university."

Terumichi said Sophia will continue to make efforts to be open to the world and serve as a base for intellectual and educational exchange. The university aims to have both researchers and students come and go actively to and from universities, including 400 schools in 83 countries Sophia has built partnerships with plus international organizations, to make higher intellectual achievements and demonstrate wisdom in the international community.

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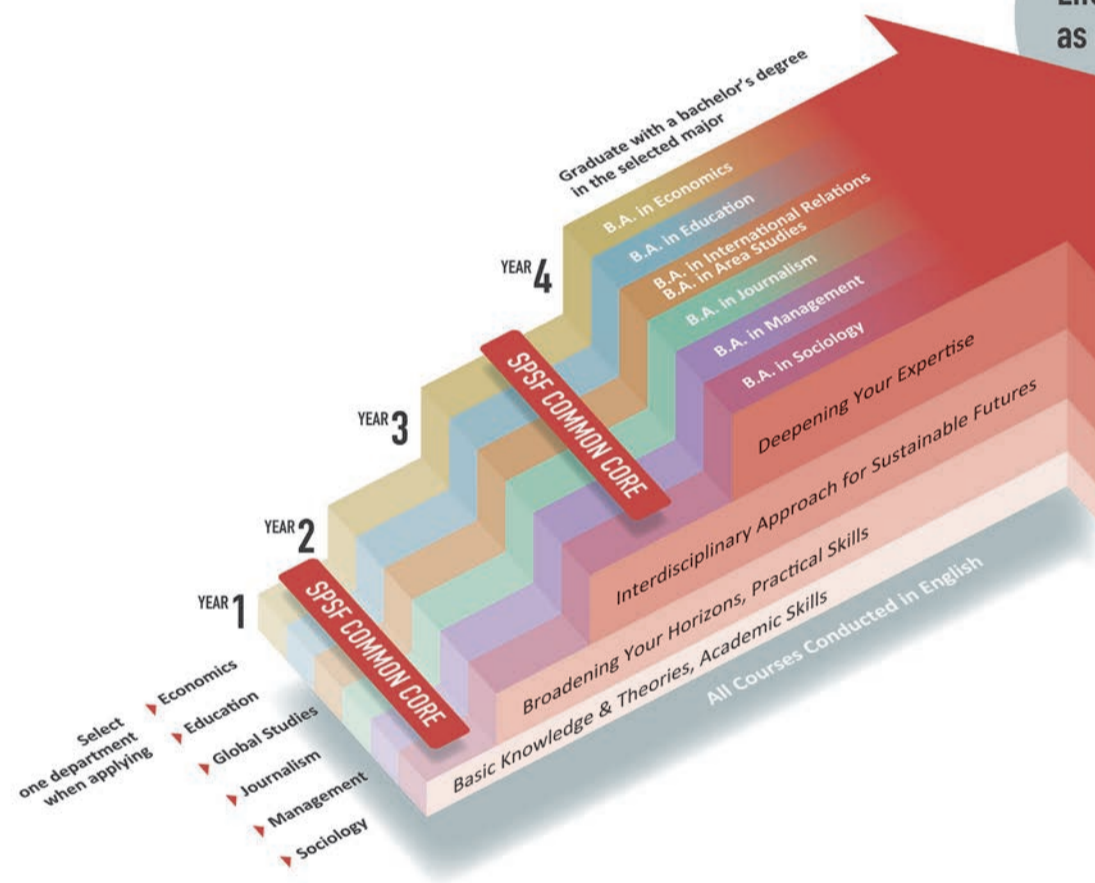
### Sophia University

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Sophia University's Yotsuya Campus is located in Chiyoda Ward, in the heart of Tokyo.  
SOPHIA UNIVERSITY

### Sustainable Futures prospectus

Lifelong Learner as a Change Agent



Students can study across many disciplines under the Sophia Program for Sustainable Futures, which is taught in English. SOPHIA UNIVERSITY

## Dedicated platform for global study

At Sophia University, about one in 11 students and one in six faculty members are foreign nationals. One of the reasons for this is the variety of undergraduate and postgraduate courses taught in English. Many of these, especially those at the postgraduate level, involve a small number of students, thus ensuring close student-faculty interaction, one of the charms of the university.

The Sophia Program for Sustainable Futures, for example, serves as a platform for learning supported by six departments: education, sociology, economics, global studies, journalism and management. Students from these departments can take both discipline-based and interdisciplinary classes in English to enhance their expertise and develop broad and diverse perspectives at the same time.

In addition to the offerings of the SPSF, Sophia has other faculties, programs and courses available in English as outlined below.

Nine undergraduate programs are offered across six faculties. The Faculty of Liberal Arts offers majors in comparative culture, international business and economics, and social studies, as well as various courses including public speaking, critical thinking and composition, to equip students with practical skills in English through a diverse environment of multinational professors and students.

In the Faculty of Science and Technology, the two English-based degree programs offered are in green science and green engineering.

The Green Science program, offered by



Sophia University's undergrads attend classes taught in English. SOPHIA UNIVERSITY

the Department of Materials and Life Sciences, focuses on acquiring the fundamentals of chemistry and biology and learning how this knowledge can be applied to overcome environmental issues.

The Green Engineering program, offered by the Department of Engineering and Applied Sciences, is designed to help students acquire the electrical and mechanical engineering and physics skills needed to develop energy-related technologies applicable to energy conservation, efficient power generation and distribution, and power transmission.

The Green Science and Engineering program offers master's and doctorate programs in English. The focus is on environmental and sustainability-related studies that require cross-disciplinary approaches. This program utilizes faculty members from the mechanical engineering, electrical and electronics engineering, applied chem-

istry, chemistry, mathematics, physics, biological science and information science programs, aiming to provide students with teaching and research guidance from these eight disciplines.

The Global Environmental Studies program also offers advanced degrees in English. The curriculum combines social and natural sciences across a broad range of academic disciplines to help students take a holistic approach to exploring the roots of complex environmental problems. To facilitate this, the program collaborates with other faculties and departments, especially the Graduate School of Science and Technology and the Graduate School of Economics, as well as external institutions.

Additionally, the Graduate School of Global Studies offers master's degrees in global studies, international business and development studies, and Japanese studies, and doctorates in global studies and Japanese studies.

The Global Studies program allows students to examine a wide range of issues, including democracy, human rights, race and ethnicity, religion, migration, environmental change, global histories, sexuality and gender from various disciplinary perspectives, such as anthropology, sociology, history, political science and social psychology. Meanwhile, the International Business and Development Studies program aims to nurture skills for handling development issues and achieving sustainable development from a business perspective, with a strong focus on Japan and Asia.

The Japanese Studies program is divided into two categories: arts and culture (art

### English-taught programs

| Program  | Degree   | Enrollment                           |
|--|--|--------------------------------------|
| Liberal Arts (Comparative Culture, International Business and Economics, and Social Studies) | B.A. in Liberal Arts                                   | April and September                  |
| Green Science  | B.S. in Materials and Life Sciences                    | September                            |
| Green Engineering  | B.S. in Engineering and Applied Sciences               | September                            |
| SPSF Journalism  | B.A. in Journalism                                     | September                            |
| SPSF Education   | B.A. in Education                                      | September                            |
| SPSF Sociology   | B.A. in Sociology                                      | September                            |
| SPSF Economics   | B.A. in Economics                                      | September                            |
| SPSF Management  | B.A. in Management                                     | September                            |
| SPSF Global Studies  | B.A. in Area Studies/B.A. in International Relations   | September                            |
| Global Studies   | M.A./Ph.D. in Global Studies                           | April and September                  |
| International Business and Development Studies   | M.A. in International Business and Development Studies | April and September                  |
| Japanese Studies   | M.A./Ph.D. in Japanese Studies                         | April and September                  |
| Green Science and Engineering  | M.S./Ph.D. in Green Science and Engineering            | April (for Ph.D. only) and September |
| Global Environmental Studies (International Graduate Course)                                 | M.A./Ph.D. in Environmental Studies                    | April and September                  |
| TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages)                                      | M.A. in Linguistics                                    | April                                |
| Education  | M.A./Ph.D. in Education                                | April                                |
| International Cooperation Studies (Bilingual Program)  | M.A. in International Cooperation Studies              | April                                |

SPSF: Sophia Program for Sustainable Futures

For admissions information, please visit: <https://adm.sophia.ac.jp/eng/admissions>



history, cultural studies and literature) and thought and society (history, religion, philosophy and anthropology). By taking courses from both categories, students can gain a balanced understanding of Japan and take an integrated approach to their areas of expertise.

TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) is an English-taught master's degree program, but many students continue on to the Ph.D. program

in linguistics, which can be completed in Japanese. TESOL allows students to take English-taught courses both in and outside the program, and to write their master's thesis in English.

The master's and Ph.D. programs in education allow students to take English-taught courses both in and outside the program, and to write their master's thesis or Ph.D. dissertation in English.

One unique master's program at the uni-

versity is International Cooperation Studies, which allows students to earn degrees by taking courses in English, Japanese, or a mixture of both.

As such, Sophia University's efforts and commitment to keeping its doors open to the world and serving as a global platform of wisdom in a wide array of ways are the embodiment of Sophia's founding philosophy, "Sophia — Bringing the World Together."



# Waseda University

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## Split education system needs a shake-up, president warns

Waseda University, one of Japan's leading private universities, began its history as Tokyo Senmon Gakko, which was established in 1882. The founder, Shigenobu Okuma, served as Japan's prime minister twice, in 1898 and 1914. Waseda has produced eight of the country's prime ministers, including Fumio Kishida, and many leading players in politics, business and industry.

Aiji Tanaka, the 17th president of Waseda University and president of the Japan Association of Private Universities and Colleges,

warns that there are two major issues facing Japan and its private universities: the declining population of 18-year-olds caused by the chronically low birth rate and rapidly aging population; and the fact that Japan lags other countries in digitalization.

"The population of 18-year-olds in Japan, which was 1.2 million in 2012, is expected to decline to less than 800,000 by 2050. The number of those who receive a higher education will be nearly half of that population, which could lead to a weakening of Japan's international competitiveness," Tanaka said.

He also believes that one of the reasons for the delay in digitalization is the country's conventional educational system, which is divided into humanities and sciences. "As a result, many people who major or majored in humanities lack knowledge of digitalization as well as science and technology, while current and former science majors who have expertise in science and technology are not well-equipped with skills to perceive people's needs and psychology," he said.

Since becoming Waseda University president in 2018, Tanaka has been making reforms that he believes are necessary "to nurture talented individuals who can be active in the world and make international contributions."

### Internationalization

Since its foundation, Waseda has accepted many exchange students, including those from China's Qing Dynasty in 1899. The campus has a cosmopolitan feel, with students from more than 100 countries and regions. "The diversity of students serves as an environment where all students can interact daily with people of various values and backgrounds when they engage in volunteer and diversity-related activities, allowing each student to experience, recognize and embrace diversity," Tanaka said. "Waseda provides an environment where everyone can find a 'place to belong' on equal footing."

Citing founder Okuma's remark on the 30th anniversary of the university's founding that "It shall not be about one's self,

one's family, or one's nation. You must have the ambition to willingly contribute to the world," Tanaka emphasized that talented individuals developed in an environment comprising a mix of diverse values should be able to demonstrate their abilities in various aspects of society and contribute to the world. "We believe that Waseda can become a university that people think of as the most effective choice if they aim to play active roles, whether in corporations, international organizations, communities or nonprofit organizations, for the benefit of others," he said.

### Aiming for carbon neutrality

One of the efforts that Waseda is committed to, with the aim of benefiting all of humanity, is the pursuit of "carbon neutrality." "Net-zero emissions is an important project that determines the survival of human beings and nature," Tanaka said. "We aim to create a new global value based on the principles of the (U.N.) sustainable development goals by integrating the findings acquired through our advanced efforts in the fields of education and research that contribute to the achievement of carbon neutrality."

To this end, he said the university declared the launch of "Waseda Carbon Net Zero Challenge 2030s" in November 2021 and has begun projects in three categories: cutting-edge research, educating capable students and the achievement of carbon-neutral campuses.

"By research, we do not just mean in the science and engineering fields. We have what we call a 'convergence of knowledge' that expands from humanities and social sciences to multidisciplinary and new fields, and we aim to create knowledge through collaborations among multiple disciplines and diverse researchers."

In December 2022, the Waseda Center for a Carbon Neutral Society was established. "This center will support collaborations between the university and external organizations and companies working on this issue, and help us give the knowledge we gained back to society," Tanaka explained.

To foster talented individuals who can lead a carbon-neutral society, the university has established courses in which all undergraduate students can systematically acquire knowledge about carbon neutrality. "We also focus on fostering graduate students to become outstanding researchers who will contribute to carbon neutrality. It is our mission as an educational institution to send out to society as many students with awareness of carbon neutrality as possible," he said.

To make the university's campuses carbon neutral, Waseda conducts various efforts concurrently, including the conversion of facilities to energy-efficient ones, using renewable energy and creating clean energy sources. "We have created a road map to 2050 with the goal of 100% reduc-



Waseda University President Aiji Tanaka WASEDA UNIVERSITY

tion of carbon dioxide emissions. We are committed to achieving this goal not only with our faculty, staff and students, but also with about 660,000 alumni of our university who are out there in the world, and also with the industrial and government sectors," Tanaka said.

### Asia and beyond

While Waseda has already established a firm position as a leading private university in Japan, Tanaka has his sights set on the rest of Asia, and the world. "We aim to become a university that people around the world consider the most beneficial place to study in Japan by 2040, and in Asia by 2050. To realize 'a Waseda that shines on the global stage,' we need to implement bold reforms from the perspectives of both education and research based on the 'spirit of progressivism' that we are proud of, which will lead to the achievement of a better society and world," Tanaka said.

He also pointed out that it is extremely important to recruit talented, world-class faculty members and researchers to make Waseda one of the top universities in the

world. "But just hoping such talent will come to us won't do. We need researchers who can conduct joint research with them, and aspiring students who are worth teaching," Tanaka said. "Creating a reward system that can adequately evaluate their research, and providing them an environment where they can concentrate on their research activities, are important. We are expediting our efforts to implement a new incentive system to achieve these goals."

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### Waseda University

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Waseda students have frequent opportunities to interact with visiting students from around the world. WASEDA UNIVERSITY



Waseda Arena at the university's Toyama Campus is designed to promote carbon neutrality. WASEDA UNIVERSITY

## Alumni known around the world for literary success

In the literary world of recent years, the international success of Waseda University literature graduates Shoyo Tsubouchi (1859 to 1935), Haruki Murakami, Yoko Tawada and Yoko Ogawa is especially noteworthy.

Tsubouchi, who established the Department of Literature at Waseda and left many accomplishments as an educator, developed the literary arts in Japan and introduced Western culture through translation. One of his most outstanding achievements is the translation of all of William Shakespeare's works, making him one of the most influential figures in the development of modern Japanese literature.

Meanwhile, Murakami is known for his

many best-selling novels, such as "Norwegian Wood," which was published in 1987 and made him famous both in Japan and abroad. His other noted works include "1Q84" and "Kafka on the Shore."

The Waseda International House of Literature, nicknamed "the Haruki Murakami Library," opened in 2021 on the Waseda Campus in Tokyo's Shinjuku Ward. The museum houses a vast number of Murakami's books published in Japan and abroad, as well as his own collection of records, which were entrusted and donated by Murakami himself.

The Waseda International House of Literature aims to become a global center

for literary research, mainly focusing on the study of Murakami's works that have been translated and published in over 50 languages. He has received the Franz Kafka Prize, the Jerusalem Prize and other prestigious international literary awards. Many of his works have become international bestsellers, making him a special figure in Japanese literature.

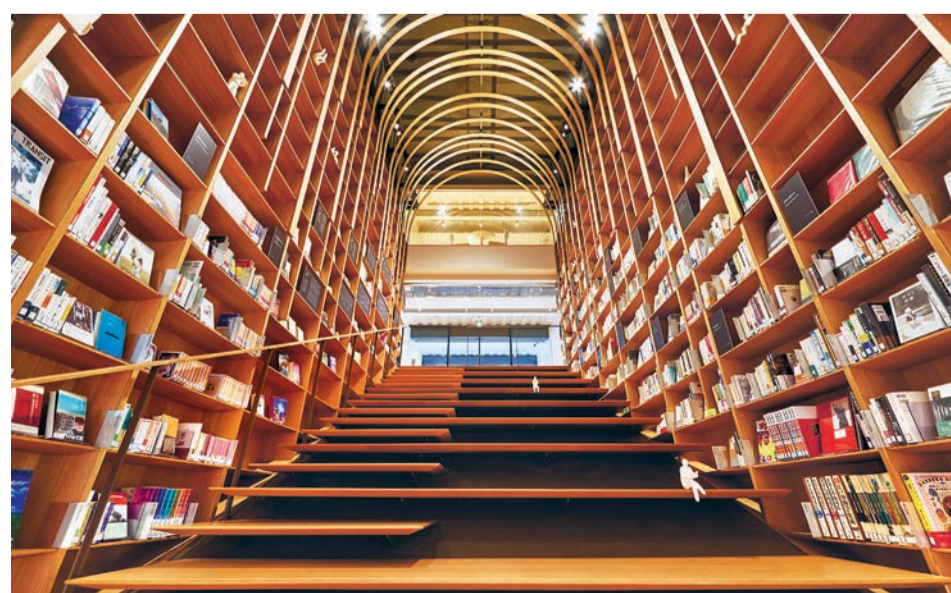
Poet and novelist Tawada has also been active both in Japan and abroad, mainly in Germany. She has won numerous literary awards, including the prestigious Akutagawa Prize named in honor of Japanese author Ryunosuke Akutagawa and awarded biannually to up-and-coming authors; the Tanizaki Prize in Japan, an annual literary award established in honor of Japanese novelist Junichiro Tanizaki; and the Goethe Medal and Kleist Prize in Germany. She also received the National Book Award in the United States in 2018. Currently, she is actively involved in fostering young talent by holding workshops for

students every year at Waseda University. In 2022, upon returning to Japan after a three-year absence due to the COVID-19 pandemic, she appeared at a reading event at the Waseda International House of Literature, where she spoke passionately about what kind of role literature can play in today's world, while touching on the current situation in Ukraine.

Author Ogawa, whose works have also won international recognition, is another winner of the Akutagawa and Tanizaki prizes, as well as the Izumi Kyoka Prize for Literature, an annual award for newly published novels.

One of Ogawa's works was made into a film in France, and her novel "The Memory Police" was shortlisted for the 2020 International Booker Prize.

The Waseda International House of Literature hosts talk and music events mainly led by Waseda students and alumni, and a talk session between Murakami and Ogawa was held in 2021.



The Waseda International House of Literature's Stair Bookshelf is a symbol of the library, with books from many genres and authors. WASEDA UNIVERSITY



Left: The Waseda International House of Literature has a relaxing atmosphere where students can focus on reading. Right: Students attend an author's workshop at the library in 2021. WASEDA UNIVERSITY



The Waseda International House of Literature, also known as the Haruki Murakami Library, opened in October 2021 with the writer's aspirations of it becoming a place of open international exchange for literature and culture. WASEDA UNIVERSITY

