



## [The Nippon Foundation News] Spring Greetings

Greetings from The Nippon Foundation. In Japan, April 1 is the beginning of the fiscal year for the government and most companies and other organizations, and also of the school year. This time last year, schools were closed and public gatherings were canceled to prevent the spread of coronavirus infections. Although the pandemic continues, it is now better understood and K-12 schools have mostly resumed in-person classes and events have resumed with social distancing and other preventive measures in place. This includes entrance ceremonies that have taken place across the country this week for students beginning their first year of elementary, junior high, and senior high school. *Sakura* cherry trees are usually in full bloom at this time, and are associated with these entrance ceremonies as a backdrop for photographs of a proud new student, often wearing a new school uniform, with his or her parents. The blossoming of the cherry trees is also a popular time for friends and coworkers to gather for *hanami* picnics under the trees, a ritual that for many people signals the beginning of spring. This year, however, hanami events have been canceled for the second year in a row because of the pandemic, so instead of eating and drinking under the trees, people enjoyed the blossoms while walking through parks and other scenic locations.



*'Sakura' cherry trees in full bloom in Tokyo*

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## Ties Created Through Historic Photograph

Photographer Nobuko Ota continues to preserve memories

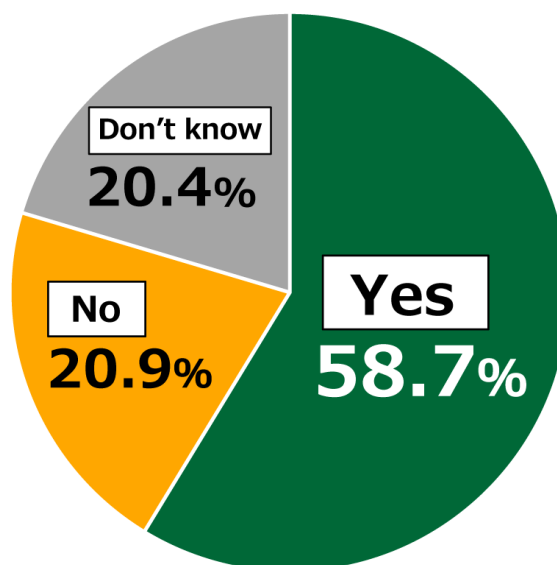


Nobuko Ota is a photographer who took a photograph of Israeli violinist Ivry Gitlis playing a violin next to the “miracle pine,” a single pine tree that survived the March 11, 2011, earthquake and tsunami. In May 2012, The Nippon Foundation held a photo contest as a way of preserving the memory of the disaster, and this photograph won first prize. We recently caught up with Ms. Ota to discuss her recollections from that time.

[Full Article](#)

## Awareness Survey of 18-Year-Olds

### Coronavirus and Stress



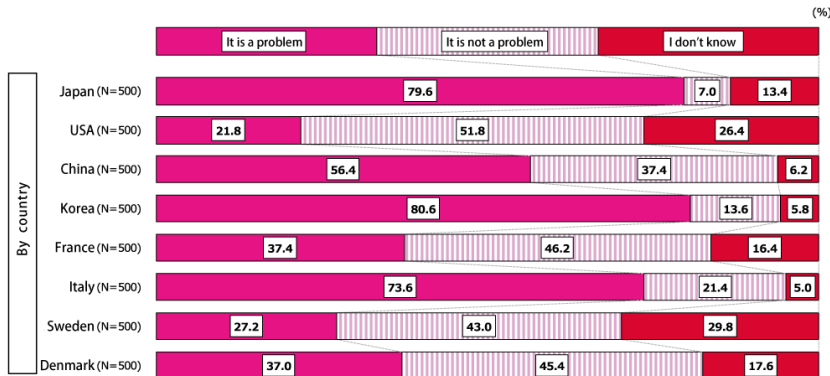
The 35th installment of the Awareness Survey of 18-Year-Olds was carried out in mid-February on the subject of “Coronavirus and Stress.” When asked about an increased sense of confinement caused by the coronavirus, 59% replied that they sensed that people around them felt confined and 50% felt so themselves, while 37% cited a “continued sense of uneasiness and irritation” and 34% noted “continued fatigue.” Additionally, 23% replied that the pandemic has had a negative effect on

their pursuit of higher education or employment, and 18% reported a negative effect on family and personal incomes.

[Full Article](#)

## 3rd Awareness Survey of Women

### Declining Birthrates



In January, The Nippon Foundation carried out an awareness survey of women in eight countries on the subject of “declining birthrates.” The survey asked respondents about the current situation and causes of the declining birthrate in their own country, problems they see, the cost of raising children relative to their household budget, and their evaluation of their country’s policies to address the declining birthrate. A common theme that emerged was “creating a favorable workplace environment” as the most cited measure for reversing declining birthrates.

[Full Article](#)

## Stories from Past Olympics and Paralympics

### Women’s long road to Olympic participation



On February 18, 2021, lawmaker and Olympic speed skater and track cyclist Seiko Hashimoto was named as the new president of the Tokyo Organising Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games. Japan is considered to lag behind much of the rest of the world in terms of women’s social participation, and her appointment was seen as a step

forward in this area. Looking back through history, until recently the Olympics have not been accommodating toward women.

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## Yohei Sasakawa Blog

Chairman of The Nippon Foundation



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