



## [The Nippon Foundation News] Marine Day

The third Monday in July is a national holiday in Japan known as Marine Day. This year the date will be adjusted to July 22 to coincide with the start of the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games, which are scheduled to begin on July 23. The current official public holiday was first observed in 1996 but the concept dates to 1941, when July 20 was designated as Marine Memorial Day to mark the anniversary of the Emperor Meiji's return from a tour of northern Japan in 1876. On that tour, he sailed from Aomori in northern Honshu to Yokohama, stopping along the way in Hakodate in southern Hokkaido, on a ship called the Meiji Maru, which has been preserved as a museum ship at the Tokyo University of Marine Science and Technology.

Although Japan is probably the only country where Marine Day is an official public holiday, countries around the world have designated days or weeks to encourage people to renew their connection to the ocean. The best known is June 8, which was declared World Oceans Day by the United Nations in 2008 and first observed in 2009, based on a proposal made by Canada at the Earth Summit held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. In addition, New Zealand has a Seaweeek each year, South Korea observes National Ocean Day on May 31, and in the United States, May 22 is National Maritime Day.

The Nippon Foundation launched the Umi-to-Nippon Project (The Ocean and Japan Project) in 2016 as a joint project with the Cabinet Office's Headquarters for Ocean Policy and the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism to address various ocean-related issues, and in November 2018 we started the Change for the Blue project to expand and develop new projects involving the private sector, the public sector, and academia. Change for the Blue events to be held around Japan this summer include symposiums, beach cleanup events, workshops and seminars, fish preparation classes and sailing instruction for children, and an aquatic robot competition for junior high school, senior high school, and university students.



*The Meiji Maru (left) is now a museum ship on the Etchujima Campus of the Tokyo University of Marine Science and Technology; A recycling collection box (right) based on a character from the Japanese comic series 'Attack of Titan,' recently installed in Hita City, Oita Prefecture, as part of the Change for the Blue Project*

News

- THE TOKYO TOILET (2021.06.24)
- Awareness Survey of 18-Year-Olds (2021.06.22)
- Sign Language Learning Game SignTown launched by The Nippon Foundation and The Chinese University of Hong Kong (2021.05.24)

## THE TOKYO TOILET Project

### Newest toilet, designed by Kengo Kuma, completed in Nabeshima Shoto Park

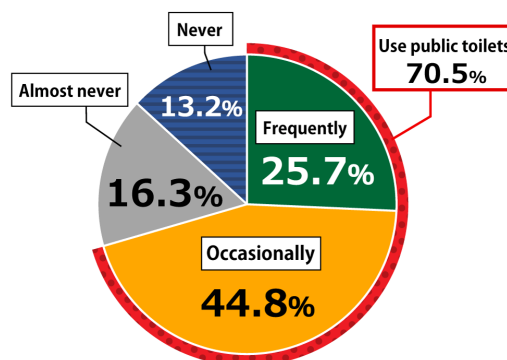


The Nippon Foundation's THE TOKYO TOILET project is building new toilets at 17 locations in Shibuya, Tokyo, as a way of moving toward the realization of a society that embraces diversity. The ninth toilet, a toilet village inside the lush greenery of Nabeshima Shoto Park evoking "A walk in the woods," was designed by architect Kengo Kuma and became available for use by the general public from June 24.

[Full Article](#)

## Awareness Survey of 18-Year-Olds

### Public Toilets



The 38th installment of the Awareness Survey of 18-Year-Olds was carried out in mid-May on the subject of the "Public Toilets." The survey found that more than 70% of respondents use public toilets when they go out, but also showed clear differences in utilization and impressions depending on where the public toilet is located. Compared with other locations, public toilets in parks and along footpaths had a particularly negative image.

[Full Article](#)

# Sign Language Learning Game SignTown launched by The Nippon Foundation and The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Google-developed AI-based recognition technology  
offers enjoyable 'gateway to deaf culture'



A beta version of the SignTown game for teaching sign language has been jointly developed by The Nippon Foundation and The Chinese University of Hong Kong in collaboration with Google and Kwansai Gakuin University. The learner makes signs and gestures while facing a camera connected to a personal computer, and the program uses artificial intelligence (AI) to determine whether the signs and gestures were made correctly. The target launch date for the full version is September 23, the International Day of Sign Languages.

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## Yohei Sasakawa Blog

Chairman of The Nippon Foundation



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[2021/06/29]

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