



[The Nippon Foundation News] Sakura and Hanami

Greetings from The Nippon Foundation. *Sakura* (Japanese cherry trees) are a well-known symbol of Japan, and *hanami* picnics under the trees when they are in bloom are a popular way of celebrating the arrival of spring. In much of the country the trees bloom in late March or early April, and the blossoms are only on the trees for about two weeks. The trees start to bloom on the southwest island of Kyushu, and the “front” of blooming trees moves northeast across the country, eventually reaching the northern island of Hokkaido in mid to late April. The front’s progress is included as part of television news programs’ weather forecast, and is closely followed as people plan their hanami events. March 31 is also the end of both the academic year and the fiscal year for the government and many companies in Japan, so hanami season coincides with graduation ceremonies and parties to welcome and say farewell to new and departing work colleagues. Coronavirus-related restrictions have meant that most hanami events were canceled during the past three years, and this year was the first time in four years hanami could be enjoyed without restrictions. Unfortunately, however, this year Tokyo had rainy weather during the last weekend in March, when the trees were in full bloom.



People enjoying sakura in Soshigaya Park in Tokyo’s western suburbs (left) and in Hibiya Park next to the Imperial Palace in central Tokyo (right)

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**MetLife Foundation Ratan Opens as First
Children’s 3rd Place in Unzen, Nagasaki**

“MetLife Foundation and The Nippon Foundation: ‘Better Life Better Place’ for the Elderly and Children” program

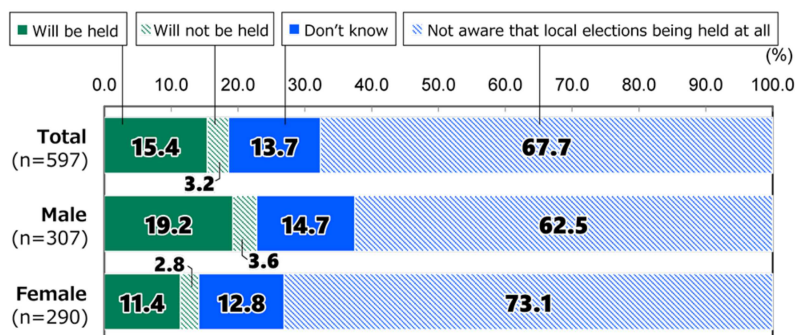


MetLife Japan and The Nippon Foundation held a ceremony on March 21 to mark the opening of MetLife Foundation Ratan in the city of Unzen in Nagasaki Prefecture. This is the first Children’s 3rd Place (places that are neither school or home, where children can spend their after-school hours with peace of mind) to open in Unzen, as well as the first to open as part of the “MetLife Foundation and The Nippon Foundation: ‘Better Life Better Place’ for the Elderly and Children” program. The program intends to open a total of 12 hospices for older people and Children’s 3rd Places over three years.

[Full Article](#)

Awareness Survey of 18-Year-Olds - Local Legislative Assemblies

Results of 55th installment announced



With local elections to take place across Japan in April, the 55th installment of the Awareness Survey of 18-Year-Olds was carried out in late February on the subject of “Local Legislative Assemblies.” The survey found that, of young people aged 18 and older who are residents of prefectures or municipalities where elections are scheduled, roughly 15% were aware of the upcoming elections. Of those respondents, more than 80% intend to vote, but that still means that only roughly 12% of all young people will vote.

[Full Article](#)

THE TOKYO TOILET - Creators discuss their thoughts on each public toilet

10 designers discuss their work



Continuing our series of discussions with the creators involved in THE TOKYO TOILET project, being carried out by The Nippon Foundation and the Shibuya City government to renovate 17 public toilets in Shibuya to make them accessible for everyone regardless of gender, age, or disability, 10 designers share their thoughts on the project: Nao Tamura (Higashi Sanchoe public toilet); Fumihiko Maki (Ebisu East Park); Takenosuke Sakakura (Nishihara Itchome Park); Tadao Ando (Jingu-Dori Park); NIGO® (Jingumae); Kengo Kuma (Nabeshima Shoto Park); Kashiwa Sato (Ebisu Station, West Exit); Toyo Ito (Yoyogi-Hachiman); Kazoo Sato (Nanago Dori Park); and Tomohito Ushiro (Hiroo East Park).

[Full Article](#)

Yohei Sasakawa Blog

Chairman of The Nippon Foundation



[Only 15% of Japanese Youths Aware of Nationwide Local Elections in April: The Nippon Foundation Poll](#) [2023/04/06]

[Only 20% of Japanese Youths Pin High Hopes on Politics: The Nippon Foundation Poll](#) [2023/03/31]

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[\[Photo Diary\] \(1\) Visit to Norway and Portugal](#) [2023/03/16]

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