



1. Japanese Society and Japanese Citizens Deepening Their Ties with the World

Increasing the number of people both to and from Japan leads to stimulating the economy and promoting mutual understanding among different cultures. Based on this view, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs places a premium on facilitating the smooth entry and visit of foreign nationals in Japan and encouraging interpersonal interaction with people from foreign nations.

Although the number of foreign nationals entering Japan in 2011 decreased significantly from the previous year due to the Great East Japan Earthquake, however 7.14 million (9.44 million in 2010) people still visited Japan, which is approximately 1.4 times the number of visitors in 2000 (approximately 5.27 million). Furthermore, the number of long term foreign residents in Japan (registered foreign nationals) has decreased from a peak in 2008, following the Global Financial Crisis. However, at the end of 2011, approximately 2.08 million long term foreign residents were in Japan, which is approximately 1.2 times the number in 2000 (approximately 1.69 million).

Foreign nationals wishing to enter Japan are required to obtain a visa. Japanese diplomatic missions overseas issue visas to those foreign nationals who would not be judged to harm the interests of Japan. In response to the increase of foreign nationals visiting Japan in recent years, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has been working to expedite visa issuing procedures.

As for the rapidly growing ASEAN countries, Japan commenced the issuance of multiple-entry visas to visitors from Thailand in June 2012 and to visitors from Malaysia and Indonesia from September.

Furthermore, in 2011 Japan commenced issuing

Okinawa multiple-entry visas to Chinese tourists on condition of visiting Okinawa. Additionally, Japan commenced the issuance of Tohoku multiple-entry visas in July 2012 on condition of visiting one of the three prefectures in the Tohoku region (Iwate, Miyagi and Fukushima Prefectures).

As Japan faces low birth rate, aging and declining population not only attracting international tourists to Japan but also securing the human resources from both within and outside of Japan for supporting the Japanese economy has become more and more important. Against this backdrop, since 2005 the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has held international symposiums and workshops on acceptance of foreign nationals and their integration, to provide opportunities for discussion on potential issues and their countermeasures, and to encourage participatory national discussion on the topic.

Today the connection between Japanese people and the rest of the world has become closer than ever. Consequently, developing "All-Japan" diplomacy, where the strengths of non-governmental actors are utilized, has become more important. For example, the importance of NGOs as bodies providing assistance to developing countries has become more important in recent years with the increasing public interest in international cooperation. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs positions NGOs as crucial partners in international cooperation and as such has been striving to enhance relationships with NGOs in promoting international cooperation. Japanese NGOs provide thorough assistance tailored to local residents' needs for poverty reduction and humanitarian assistance, in Asia as well as in other regions of the world including Africa and the Middle East. NGO operations are not limited to providing

on-site assistance, but they are also engaged in a wide range of activities such as forming NGO networks and making policy recommendations in various fields like human rights, education, health, and the environment by making the most of their expertise on subjects such as the present condition of developing countries.

Participants of JICA Volunteer Programs such as the Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCVs) and Senior Volunteers (SVs) are also important players in international cooperation. They put themselves in the shoes of the locals and earnestly working toward the resolution of problems faced by developing countries. These volunteers are visible representations of Japan's ODA in developing countries and widely appreciated around the world, playing significant roles in promoting economic and social development of these countries, and fostering mutual understanding and friendship between Japan and developing countries. These programs gain further significance as the knowledge and experience of those returning volunteers are brought back to Japanese society. Moreover, in this age of globalization of corporate activities, Japan has been providing support for the efforts made by SMEs and other actors to develop internationally competitive personnel through JICA's volunteer programs. One example of this was the establishment of the Private Sector Partnership Volunteer system (2012), which is designed to meet the needs of SMEs seeking to expand their business overseas.

Local Governments and communities play a major role in developing positive international relations in a wide range of fields. In recent years, local governments, organizations and community members have been involved in active and wide-ranging international exchange. Local governments and communities are playing an extremely important role in diplomacy from the perspective of fostering international mutual understanding, developing relationships of trust and strengthening Japan brand.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs regards local governments and communities as important partners in promoting diplomacy and aims to work with them to direct all-Japan efforts toward enhancing the country's comprehensive diplomatic capacity. To this end the Ministry of Foreign Affairs implements various cooperative measures with local governments and other concerned parties, placing particular emphasis on (1) communicating the attractions of local communities to the world, (2) supporting the internationalization of local communities, and (3) providing a broad range of information on international exchanges. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has been undertaking various measures, particularly in order to contribute to supporting communities in countering damage by harmful rumors resulting from the Great East Japan Earthquake, and supporting for revitalization of local industry and local economies as well as assisting Japan's efforts in "open reconstruction."



A "Fufu" cooking machine utilizing solar power generation invented by a member of Senior Volunteers. "Fufu" is a staple diet which is made from banana and cassava (in Ghana, Photo: JICA)

2. Supporting Japanese Nationals and Companies Overseas

In 2011 approximately 16.99 million Japanese nationals traveled abroad, while there were approximately 1.18 million Japanese citizens residing overseas as at October 2011. Meanwhile, the types and places of risk and danger that Japanese nationals may encounter have increased and diversified. Protecting and enhancing the lives, safety and interests of Japanese nationals abroad is one of the important missions of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Ministry has been undertaking various initiatives to this end.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs provides citizens with information on incidents, including terrorism and kidnappings, accidents, wars, conflicts, natural disasters, infectious disease, etc., as necessary, while also urging them to take necessary safety measures. The Ministry also seeks to strengthen its capacity and measures to provide as much assistance as possible to Japanese nationals who stray into danger.

Moreover, Japanese embassies and consulates-general provide fundamental administrative services such as issuing passports and various types of certificates, and handling of overseas voting for Japanese residents abroad. Additionally, these Japanese embassies and consulates-general support the daily lives of Japanese nationals residing overseas by, for example, providing assistance to their local Japanese schools and supplementary education schools.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs also assists Japanese immigrants and people of Japanese ethnicity, who have acted as "bridges" between Japan and their respective country, contributing to the development of closer relations among the

countries.

In order for Japan to maintain a vibrant economy in the current environment, where domestic demand is on the wane as the domestic population decreases, utilizing overseas growth to drive Japanese economic growth is becoming more important than ever. As such, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has been proactively undertaking numerous initiatives designed to support Japanese companies. These initiatives include promoting overseas business expansion of SMEs and other Japanese enterprises, encouraging the export of infrastructure, and encouraging foreign countries and regions to lift or ease restrictions imposed on imports of Japanese products following the earthquake. More specifically, contact points for support to Japanese companies have been designated at embassies, consulates-general, and other diplomatic missions overseas to gather opinions widely from Japanese companies on issues they are facing overseas and respond to their inquiries and requests. Furthermore, the Ministry facilitates dialogues and discussions with other countries on regulatory reforms and the improvement of the business environment, calling on them to initiate improvements. In addition, the Ministry has been working to improve the legal frameworks--such as investment agreements, tax treaties, social security agreements, etc.--that provide a platform for Japanese companies and Japanese nationals operating overseas.

The Ministry also makes the most of its diplomatic missions abroad to support Japanese enterprises by, for example, co-hosting receptions to market Japanese products with them.

3. Diplomacy with the Support of the Public

In order for Japan to implement foreign policy smoothly, the understanding and support of Japanese nationals are indispensable. Therefore it is crucial that the government provides current, up-to-date and easy to understand explanations of policy details and the role of the government. Furthermore, as the influence of public opinion on foreign policy increases, so has the impact that social networking services have on society in recent years due to the advancement of information technology. As such, it is necessary for the government to proactively and comprehensively communicate with the public. With

this understanding, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs strives to enhance information communication by utilizing newspapers, magazines, TV, internet and other media outlets to facilitate agile and effective communication that integrates public relations, good communication with the press, and cultural and interpersonal interaction.

In addition to press conferences by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Parliamentary Senior Vice-Ministers for Foreign Affairs and the Press Secretary, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs releases statements by the Minister for Foreign Affairs or

Press Secretary in which the stance of the Japanese government on particular issues is presented. Moreover, the Ministry frequently issues press releases that provide information on the activities of the Ministry. The Minister, the Parliamentary Senior Vice-Ministers and the Parliamentary Vice-Ministers for Foreign Affairs appear on TV and other media to make the viewers understood on Japan's foreign policies.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs strives to effectively utilize the Internet to communicate information accurately, swiftly and in an easy to understand manner via its official website (<http://www.mofa.go.jp/>). Furthermore, the Ministry places an emphasis on multi-lingual communication, for instance the official website communicates information in English while websites of Japanese diplomatic missions overseas provide information in the respective local languages.

Moreover, as part of the Ministry's efforts to promote public relations through dialogue with Japanese nationals, the Minister for Foreign Affairs delivers speeches. The Ministry also organizes lectures by its officials at universities and high schools throughout Japan as well as debate sessions on foreign policies with the aim of human resource development for Japan's next generation. The Ministry also strives to improve communication with the public through its public relations activities that include receiving comments and opinions on the website.

In its efforts to promote further understanding and trust in diplomacy by Japanese nationals, in May 2010, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs formed the Committee for the Promotion of Declassification of the Diplomatic Historical Records, in which the Ministry listens to the opinions of experts and make decisions on declassification of historical diplomatic records, taking into account multiple aspects.

Through this, the Ministry has been actively working on smooth and expeditious transfer of these historical records to the Diplomatic Archives and the declassification of these records. The Ministry

has thus accelerated this process since autumn 2011 in particular.

Moreover, the Ministry is disclosing information pursuant to the Act on Access to Information Held by Administrative Organs, while giving due consideration to Japan's security and relationship of mutual trust with other countries.

In order to advance flexible diplomacy that meets the changes in both domestic and international affairs, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs mobilizes its limited resources for matters of highest priority while also strengthening its foreign policy implementation structures.

The Ministry completed its organizational reforms in August in order to develop a structure that facilitates communication with the press, public relations, and international cultural exchange, for which the Ministry is responsible from comprehensive and broad perspectives. The number of Japanese diplomatic missions overseas remains fewer than other major countries and therefore the Ministry is committed to strategically improving this situation. The number of staff deployed at those missions is also insufficient compared to other major countries and therefore the Ministry has been attempting to increase its capacity by redeploying human resources to emerging countries, resource producing countries and countries in which our new diplomatic missions are established. In order to support the above mentioned foreign policy implementation structures, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs allocated 617.3 billion yen in the 2012 budget with priority given to (1) initiatives for "open reconstruction" and "new growth," (2) the development of a multilayered network and further contribution to the international society, and (3) strengthening of foreign policy implementation structures overseas. From 2013 onward, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will remain committed to efforts of further streamlining and will strive to ensure a level of foreign policy implementation structures comparable to other major countries.

Professionals Supporting Japan's Diplomacy: Chefs for Ambassadors / Consuls-General

Diplomacy is not only conducted at international conferences, bilateral meetings and other places of negotiation and consultation. There are people who employ their profession and use their culinary skills to attract leaders from different sectors to the official residence of Japanese ambassadors / consuls-general, to create an important venue for sharing information, and even to spread Japanese culture to increase the number of fans of Japan in the country they work. These people are called Chefs for ambassadors / consuls - general.

As a part of diplomatic activities, the official residence of Japanese ambassadors and consuls-general hold dinners and receptions for government officials and other leaders from different sectors of their respective countries. These occasions provide valuable opportunities for networking, sharing information, and making diplomatic requests. The main responsibilities of the chefs are to prepare and serve meals at these dinners and receptions, and it is not too much to say that the skills of these chefs directly influence the diplomatic activities and their success at these events.

For instance, in Italy the Japanese cuisine prepared by Ambassador's Chef Bunshiro Hirano is so well-reputed that it is now even becoming a status symbol for leaders from different sectors there to be invited to the official residence of the Japanese Ambassador in Rome. Mr. Hirano has made a number of TV and magazine appearances for feature articles in and interviews in Italy. Furthermore, with his skills he has impressed Italian cuisine specialists and wine experts, who are renowned for being extremely fastidious. In this way Mr. Hirano has promoted understanding and popularization of Japanese cuisine, and is successful in a way that rivals real diplomats. "Everyday I gain first-hand experience of how important meals are in diplomacy and truly feel that I am a part of the diplomatic process", says Mr. Hirano.

It is also the food that, to varying degrees, Chefs for ambassadors / consuls-general often have difficulty sourcing the ingredients for their dishes, particularly for Japanese cuisine. Mr. Yasuyuki Shinozaki, Ambassador's Chef at the Japanese Embassy in Zimbabwe says "I always keep an ear to the ground to source ingredients and visit multiple markets in search of specifics. I grow vegetables such as oba (*Japanese basil*) and edamame (*green soybeans*), in the garden of the official residence for use in my dishes. I also use common local fresh water fish called 'tilapia' for tempura and another dish known as *nioroshi*." The strenuous efforts and the creativity of these chefs are supporting the day-to-day diplomatic activities of Japan.

The arenas for these chefs are mainly Japanese embassies and consulates-general overseas, so those living in Japan may rarely get to enjoy their meals. But, don't worry. Many former Chefs for ambassadors / consuls-general open their own restaurants or continue their career at hotels or restaurants after completing their duty overseas, which means that meals prepared by these chefs can also be enjoyed in Japan. So why not see if you can find one of these restaurants for yourself?



Ambassador's Chef Hirano demonstrating cooking appetizers in front of Italian cuisine specialists and wine experts (in Italy)



Mr. Shinozaki preparing tempura at the reception celebrating the birthday of H.M. the Emperor (in Zimbabwe)

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