

HIGHLIGHTING *Japan*

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FROM MEIJI TO THE PRESENT:
LOOKING BACK ON 150 YEARS OF PROGRESS

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THEME FOR **OCTOBER:**
**FROM MEIJI TO THE
PRESENT: LOOKING
BACK ON 150 YEARS OF
PROGRESS**



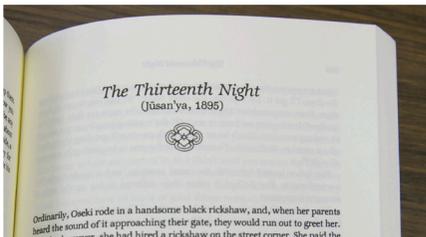
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Three young Japanese girls absorbed U.S. educational and societal practices and returned to transform women's education here



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Japan's most influential writers chronicled the often-painful changes Japan's swiftly modernizing society experienced during Meiji



Japan's ability to rapidly assimilate everything from technology to architecture to food and come up with singular, successful and often superior variations of its own has astounded the world since the Meiji Period. In this issue, we introduce some of the most noteworthy of these accomplishments, and how the country's openness to ideas took it from being a feudal society to one of the world's most modern and influential in the world.

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ON THE COVER
From Meiji to the Present: Looking Back on 150 Years of Progress

JAPAN-ECUADOR SUMMIT MEETING



The Japan-Ecuador Summit Meeting

ON September 5, 2018, Mr. Shinzo Abe, Prime Minister of Japan, held a summit meeting with H.E. Mr. Lenín Boltaite Moreno Garcés, President of the Republic of Ecuador, who was making an official working visit to Japan.

Prime Minister Abe expressed his happiness at being able to welcome President Moreno to Japan this year, which is the 100th anniversary of the establishment of Japan-Ecuador diplomatic relations, and expressed his respect for the political and economic reforms that President Moreno is actively pursuing. In addition, Prime Minister Abe explained that, at the occasion of this President's visit to Japan, he hopes to develop the relationship between the two countries in a large number of areas, including political and economic relations and people-to-people exchanges, toward the next century.

In response, President Moreno expressed the view that the 100th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations is a beginning for both countries, explained that he is happy to visit Japan, which is a model for many countries, and expressed gratitude for the welcome he received.

Prime Minister Abe noted that high-level exchanges are continuing this year, beginning with Cabinet ministers and Diet members, and expressed his intention to further advance cooperation. In addition, with regard to the development cooperation field, Prime Minister Abe welcomed that they were able to sign the exchange of notes on the provision of 70 million USD of loans for electricity distribution, the first such financing in approximately 20 years, along with explaining that Japan will continue to cooperate in the fields of disaster-prevention and human resources training that are needed by the Ecuadorian side.

President Moreno began by expressing his condolences over the damages caused by recent typhoon (Typhoon No. 21), and then mentioned bilateral exchanges such as Dr. Hideyo Noguchi's research in Ecuador, and noted that Ecuador and Japan share views on a large number of challenges such as disarmament, the environment

and human rights. President Moreno also expressed gratitude for the cooperation extended by Japan thus far, and expressed expectation over ongoing cooperation from Japan in the field of the economy.

Prime Minister Abe conveyed his congratulations on the appointment of H.E. Mrs. Maria Fernanda Espinosa Garcés, former Minister for Foreign Affairs and Human Mobility of Ecuador, as President of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) for the 73rd session, and the two leaders shared the view that they will deepen the cooperative relationship in the UN. They also exchanged views on regional affairs, including North Korea. With regard to North Korea, they confirmed the need for the complete, verifiable and irreversible dismantlement (CVID) of all weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles of all ranges by North Korea. In addition, they shared the view that they will continue to coordinate toward the full implementation of UN Security Council resolutions. Prime Minister Abe sought understanding and cooperation on the early resolution of the abductions issue, and obtained the support of President Moreno.

FOR INFORMATION

For information regarding recovery after the heavy rain event and earthquake, please check the Important Notice section of the Japan National Tourism Organization's website:

<https://www.japan.travel/en/#notice>

For regional information, the following sites also provide updates:

- Recovery updates in local areas of Western Japan
- Messages from tourism officials in Western Japan
- Messages from tourism officials in Hokkaido

From Meiji to the Present: **LOOKING BACK ON 150 YEARS OF PROGRESS**

The year 2018 marks the 150th since the dawn of the Meiji Period, and offers a chance to look back and honor all that Japan has achieved.

This era of change and growth marked the beginning of the rapid modernization of Japan and may provide hints for the country's future.



MEIJI AND THE DAWN OF MODERNIZATION IN JAPAN

TAMAKI KAWASAKI

A century and a half after the Meiji Period (1868-1912) began, we wondered what value the period had for Japan, and whether the path the country took as a result had meaning. We asked political history scholar Takashi Mikuriya about the period's changes, the path to modernization, and Japan's parliamentary system.

It has been 150 years since the start of Meiji. What value and meaning did the period have, and how did it lead to the modernization of Japan?

In this day and age, many young Japanese think in years according to the Gregorian calendar. However, the emperor's upcoming abdication—which will end Heisei in its thirtieth year—has revived interest in the names of Japanese eras, along with an interest in history.

Political history scholar Takashi Mikuriya





Mikuriya looks back on the swift modernization brought about during the Meiji Period.

To put it simply, the 150 years that started with Meiji brought about the modernization of Japan. During the Middle Ages, Japan was the land of the samurai. After the Meiji Restoration in 1868, however, Japan transformed itself from a monarchy into a global community and created the Meiji Constitution, which became the constitution of Japan. That was when Japan went from being a monarchy to a democracy.

From the first twenty years of Meiji, you can vividly see what kind of nation the politicians envisioned building. The push for industrial development, land development through afforestation, flood control and infrastructure maintenance, the rapid establishment of a constitution, development of a cabinet and parliament—early Meiji was a time when people sought to create a nation that could govern.

The reason Japan quickly established itself—despite being a country of sword-bearing samurai only a few decades before—was the nature of the Japanese people, who made a huge, concentrated effort, basing their values and society on the Western world. Along with a strong motivation to learn, they were conscious of the gaze of the Western world upon them. Japan was also nervous about being the first example of modernization in Asia. Many students, politicians and engineers went abroad to Europe and America to obtain knowledge of society and technology, which then led to Japan’s modernization.

In 1968, the hundredth year since Meiji began, Japan was in the midst of an economic boom. In the five decades between then and the 150th anniversary, Japan has experienced an economic drop, the change of the millennium from the twentieth to the twenty-first century, and many natural disasters. However, when one thinks about it, at the turn of the previous century Japan was still in the Meiji Period. From there, you can see how the path of the 150 years from Meiji played an essential role in Japanese history.

In light of post-Meiji modernization, what are important factors to know to understand Japan?

During the Meiji Period, many young men and women wanted to study abroad in Europe or America. The knowledge and communication skills they obtained were essential during the period of “Rokumeikan diplomacy” and political conferences. During this time, Japan created facilities for female teachers and fostered human resources regardless of workers’ birthplace and gender, simply according to their abilities, and made schools with equal education.

Buildings constructed during the Meiji Period are highly rated due to the Japanese learning from Western professionals that were invited to Japan to educate local architects. The Japanese used those skills to develop their own techniques with a combination of Japanese and Western styles. The Yawata Steel Works and Tomioka Silk Mill have been added as World Heritage Sites for their historical value, but Japan was also talented at flexibly adapting metalwork, railways and architectural skills.

Most of all, though, Japan did not reject the parliamentary system and created a political party that made the structure of this country. Western countries thought it would take two hundred years for us to move away from a system of monarchy, but Japan managed to accomplish that in twenty years. From there, we created two major political parties, and despite international volatility in the early 1900s Japan became Asia’s first country with a modern constitutional monarchy. One can say that after the Meiji Period what supported Japanese democracy was the nature of making decisions by group consensus. ■

JAPAN'S RAILWAY LEGACY



1

TAMAKI KAWASAKI

Japan's railways have made massive technological advances since the first line opened during the early Meiji Period. The superb rail network that now extends across the country—with shinkansen (bullet trains) running as frequently as commuter trains—offers a treasure trove of technology and know-how that is also being exported overseas.

RAIL technology first reached Japanese shores in 1853, when Japanese people were astounded by the technical sophistication of a model of a Russian steam locomotive brought on a ship that landed in Nagasaki. Japan's first train line opened nearly two decades later in 1872—twenty-nine kilometers of rail connecting Shimbashi in Tokyo with Yokohama. The railway became a symbol of Japan's efforts to Westernize, and was even depicted in *ukiyo-e* woodblock prints.

The Tokaido Main Line, completed in 1889, stretched all the way from Shimbashi to Kobe. Traveling from Tokyo to Kyoto by train shortened the journey from around twelve days—stopping at inn towns along the way—to a single

day. The advent of the *shinkansen* in 1964 cut that time radically, and is now under two and a half hours—spawning technology, techniques and know-how that Japan exports overseas.

Naofumi Nakamura, professor at The University of Tokyo's Institute of Social Science, explains that international factors greatly influenced the railway's quick spread during the Meiji Period. Japan's drive to construct a railway began in earnest in 1869, the same year that saw a revolution in the world's transportation systems, including the Suez Canal and the opening of the transcontinental railway in the U.S.

Japan also took the plunge into railway construction because transatlantic communication

cables were being laid, and the country feared being left behind by accelerating markets and the globalization of information the transport and information revolutions had enabled. When competition intensified in the global market, railway materials became cheaper and more available, which boosted Japan's ability to purchase them. Many leading overseas manufacturers from countries like England, the U.S. and Germany entered the Japanese market, supplying excellent machinery and locomotives. Japanese engineers learned sophisticated techniques from these exemplars, leading to the development of Japanese-built locomotives toward the end of the Meiji Period.



2



3



4

- 1 The Linear Chuo Shinkansen Line is expected to reach speeds of 500 kilometers per hour | Photo by Central Japan Railway Company
- 2 Yasujiro Shima helped devise a locomotive adapted to Japan's narrow rails | Photo by kyoto railway museum
- 3 A test carriage for Japan's famous bullet train | Photo by Railway Technical Research Institute
- 4 Yasujiro Shima led the government's railway construction department for decades | Photo by Railway Technical Research Institute

One person who played an instrumental part in advancing rail technologies domestically was railway engineer Yasujiro Shima. Shima learned about railways in Germany, and in 1906 took control of the Japanese government's railway construction department after it was nationalized. He later helped devise a compact locomotive adapted to Japan's narrow-gauge tracks. The outbreak of World War I decimated global markets, consequently creating favorable conditions for Japanese railway development to flourish without the threat of imports.

The Tokaido Shinkansen began service in 1964, the pivotal year of the Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games, racing

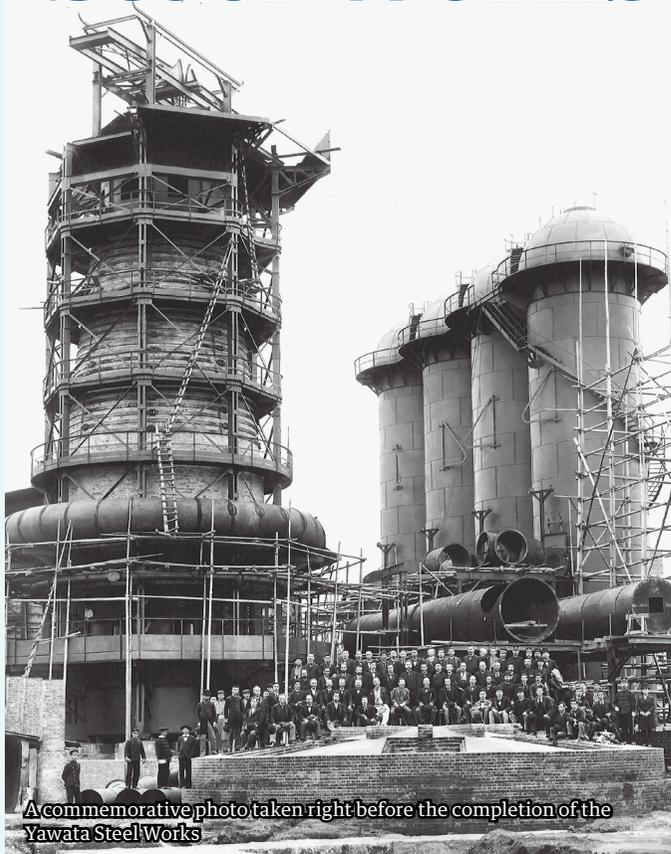
between Tokyo and Shin-Osaka in just four hours. Narrow-gauge tracks had hindered transportation capacity during this period of burgeoning national power, but Shinji Sogo—who became president of the national railway after the war—was able to lay wider, standard-gauge tracks for the *shinkansen*, enabling rapid, high-capacity transport.

A strong rail network spread through the country, and today the *shinkansen* runs at three-minute intervals and travels at 300 kilometers per hour. Nakamura asserts that the singularly safe and punctual operation of Japan's railways owes its development to high population density and the high frequency of travel. In

this mountainous nation the people congregate on flat land, and they ride the rails at an exceptionally high rate, even on an international scale. In the process of adding carriages and increasing the number of train services, Japanese railways became increasingly precise.

“The *shinkansen* network—Japan's artery—is now reaching its limit, and we need to add routes,” Nakamura says. One such route is the Linear Chuo Shinkansen Line, which is still under construction. It is a track for maglev trains capable of traveling at speeds of 500 kilometers per hour, so it seems that Japanese railways will continue to stun the world with its technological advances. **7**

Meiji Innovation Heats Up The Yawata Steel Works



A commemorative photo taken right before the completion of the Yawata Steel Works

HIGHLIGHTING JAPAN EDITORIAL TEAM

In 2015, UNESCO registered a collective World Heritage Site representing Japan's Meiji industrial revolution in iron and steel, shipbuilding and coal mining that includes twenty-three components spanning eight prefectures. One of them—the Yawata Steel Works in Kitakyushu—is a prime example of the first successful technology transfer from the West to a non-Western nation.



The Onga River Pumping Station is still in use

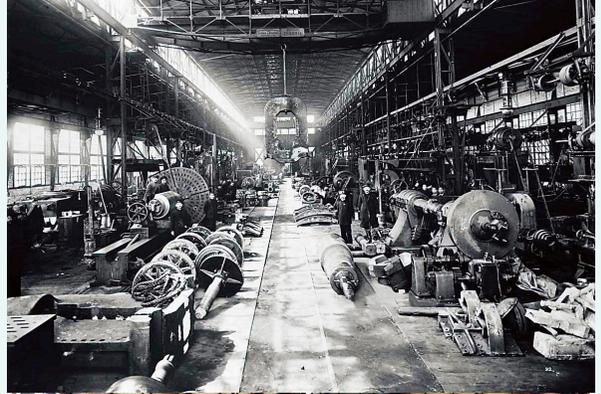
JAPAN's steel, iron, shipbuilding and coal-mining industries made great strides from the end of the Edo Period (1603-1867) until the end of the Meiji Period (1868-1912). That progress started at Japan's first reverberatory furnaces in Saga, spreading to Kagoshima, Hagi, Nirayama and Mito. Japan's first charcoal blast furnace was built in Kamaishi, which led to the creation of the Yawata Steel Works. Rapid railway construction and the rise of various industries at the outset of the Meiji Period were generating intense demand for iron and steel.

The government therefore decided to establish a state-run steel mill, and chose the village of Yawata—which faces Dokai Bay in Kitakyushu and is near the Chikuho coalfield in Fukuoka Prefecture—as the site. The first technical supervisor of what would become the Yawata Steel Works, Michitaro Oshima, traveled to Gutehoffnungshütte of Germany to order the necessary equipment. Construction started on the planned facility with a blast furnace that would produce 160 tons of pig iron, along with an integrated iron and steel works factory that would turn the metal into products. Three years later the No. 1 blast furnace was completed, blown-in the following year, and began operating in 1901.

Just a year and a half later, however, the No. 1 blast furnace was shut down, plagued by inadequate funding, construction problems and poor operating technology. Since the German engineers who had provided technical guidance had gone home, the Japanese staff tried to



Photos of the Onga River Pumping Station during the Meiji Period and now



The former repair shop, which is still used as an operations facility

fix the issue themselves. Unfortunately the second blowing-in was also a failure.

Enter Dr. Noro Kageyoshi, a central figure on the country's steel industry research committee who had rebuilt the blast furnace in Kamaishi. He investigated the causes of the Yawata failure, remodeled the blast furnace, and finally stabilized its operation with the third blowing-in. The No. 2 blast furnace was completed the following year. The No. 3 blast furnace—the first built solely by Japanese—stabilized immediately after going online in 1909. The following year, its tenth, the Yawata Steel Works turned a profit for the first time.

Nippon Steel & Sumitomo Metal Yawata Steel Works incorporates some of the old facilities, and some are still in operation. One is the former repair shop, which is currently used as an operations facility. Built in 1900, it is Japan's oldest existing steel-framed building and has undergone three expansions.

The other World Heritage Site here, the Onga River Pumping Station, is on the east bank of the Onga River about eleven kilometers from the steelworks. It supplies most of the water needed for production at Yawata. Its power source has changed from steam to electricity, and the pump has been replaced, but the red-brick outer walls and the roof are as they were.

In addition, the first head office is a beautiful red-brick building with a dome-shaped roof and Western architecture, and was used until 1922. The former forge shop was completed in the same year as the repair shop, and following expansion and relocation it became the steelworks museum. The most famous steel building at the time was the National Diet Building. It required 9,500 tons of steel, which was transported to Tokyo by ship. The steel framework was completed in 1927, and the Diet Building was finished in 1936.

In 1910, the Yawata Steel Works opened a training institute and established an in-house research organization. It was rare anywhere at that time for a business to conduct its own research. Their unwavering efforts and a broad, forward-thinking outlook led to better technology.

Yawata is a symbol of what elevated Japan to a technological superpower, and the people employed here take pride in the accumulated history and accomplishments of their predecessors. While reinforcing its role as a production source of steel exports to other Asian countries, the Yawata Steel Works continues to refine its manufacturing values and competitiveness, looking to the future as well as the past. **7**



THE DAWN OF MODERN JAPANESE ARCHITECTURE

Modern Japanese architectural design began to take shape at the end of the Edo Period (1603-1867) and developed in tandem with the Meiji government's rise. One of the new design movement's main proponents was Kingo Tatsuno, who revolutionized the way Japan built and lived.

AKIKO KAWAGUCHI

AS Japan modernized during the Meiji Restoration in the late nineteenth century, the Department of Public Works established the Imperial College of Engineering to promote technological studies and engineering as a way to accelerate the advance of architectural studies. Japan had been relying on foreign architects, and this new policy was designed to have Japanese students absorb European architectural skills and techniques. The hope was that they would construct modern architecture that Japan could take pride in and show off to the world.

Josiah Conder was a British architect who taught at the architectural department of the Imperial

College of Engineering (now the University of Tokyo's Department of Architecture). Invited to Japan in 1877, he remained here even after completing his commission and became a permanent resident. Conder designed many buildings—including the Rokumeikan, Iwasaki Residence and Holy Resurrection Cathedral—and was referred to as the “father of Japanese architecture.”

“Besides incorporating European architectural techniques and teaching Japanese architects,” architectural historian Yoshiyuki Kawahigashi says, “Conder also made major contributions by setting principles for constructing foundations on soft soil and enforcing earthquake-resistant construction—both essential for an earthquake-prone country like Japan.”





Conder had many disciples here, and one of the first was Kingo Tatsuno, who went on to design the Bank of Japan building. After graduating at the top of his class, Tatsuno went to study in England. After returning to Japan, he became an instructor at the Imperial College of Engineering in Conder's place and helped design a variety of Western-style architecture. The Bank of Japan became a symbol of Japanese abilities and progress in making a national structure. "The British Neo-Baroque and Renaissance style exterior is simple but sturdy, a perfect way to present a national structure," Kawahigashi says.

Influenced by the 1891 Mino-Owari earthquake, which struck after construction had started, the exterior of the second and third floors was made with lighter materials to make the building more earthquake-resistant.

Tokyo's main train terminal, which is still in use as Tokyo Station, has an impressive British Queen Anne style dome. The white granite stripes along the red bricks were later called the Tatsuno style, and can be seen in other structures he designed. Applying Conder's teachings, Tatsuno focused on earthquake-resistant structures, using over ten thousand pine pillars in the building's foundation.

Thanks to that sturdy base, the building survived even the Great Kanto Earthquake in 1923. The station's dome, roof and interior were unfortunately destroyed in the firebombing of Tokyo during World War II. The original three-story station was reconstructed as a two-story building after the war, but was restored to its original three-story design in 2012. During the restoration process, many were surprised to find the original pine pillars still standing strong and supporting the building.

Not limiting himself to modern buildings, Tatsuno also created traditional Japanese-style wooden buildings like the Nara Hotel. Despite the traditional temple-like exterior, there are many Western-influenced touches throughout the building, such as vertically sliding windows, pillars framing the walls, and a chandelier. Formally referred to as the "state guesthouse of Kansai," the hotel was regarded as the perfect place for royalty and government guests to stay.

Tatsuno was one of several new-wave architects and Conder disciples to refashion the look of Meiji Japan. One of his contemporaries, Tokuma Katayama, designed the massive and ornate Togu Palace in Tokyo, showcasing the best architectural skills, aesthetics and technology of Japan at the time. Known as the Versailles of Tokyo, the palace was the high point of modern European-style architecture achieved during the Meiji Period. Now known as the Akasaka Palace, it serves as the State Guest House, welcoming dignitaries from all over the world. The State Guest House is sometimes open to the public, and visitors can see the marvelous structure and the many fine artworks on display firsthand.

Josiah Conder taught his pupils about European architecture, the starting point from where they went on to create their own Western-influenced styles that became the basis of modern Japanese architecture. Tatsuno, Katayama and other key architects used what they learned from him to continue to strive to create national buildings that harmoniously fused Japanese and Western sensibilities and have stood strong for well over a century. **1**

- 1 In 2012 Tokyo Station was restored to its former glory (Kingo Tatsuno, 1914)
- 2 The Bank of Japan (Kingo Tatsuno, 1896)
- 3 The Akasaka Palace is also known as the "Versailles of Tokyo" (Tokuma Katayama, 1909) / Photo courtesy of Cabinet Office, State Guest Houses of Japan website
- 4 The elegant Nara Hotel harmoniously incorporates Japanese and Western elements (Kingo Tatsuno, 1909)



HOW NIKKO BECAME A PRIME RESORT DESTINATION

The room where travel writer Isabella Bird stayed in 1878

KATSUMI YASUKURA

Foreign diplomats, merchants and missionaries who visited during the early Meiji Period undoubtedly influenced the development of summer resorts in Japan. One such resort, the stylish yet welcoming Kanaya Hotel in Nikko, was the creation of a young court musician. Japan's oldest Western-style resort hotel, it offers glimpses of a genteel and storied past.



J. Kanaya, Hotel, Nikko. 耶一善谷金舎旅

A photo of the Kanaya Cottage Inn, circa 1888

NIKKO is a place of singular natural charms that include the Senjogahara Marshland, Lake Chuzenji and Kegon Falls, and offers historic depths in the forms of World Heritage Site Toshogu Shrine and the Shinkyo Bridge. For almost 150 years the Kanaya Hotel, one of the city's oldest and finest establishments, has provided lodging to travelers from inside and outside Japan who have come to see Nikko's sights. Kanaya Hotel History House project manager and curator Kiyomi Sakamaki recounts the origins of this venerable hotel.

"In 1870, Zenichiro Kanaya—who was descended from the Kanaya family of Toshogu Shrine court music performers—offered a room in his home to Dr. James C. Hepburn, an American who had come to Nikko to sightsee but could find no place to stay," Sakamaki says. "Dr. Hepburn told Zenichiro that many more international



The Kanaya Hotel continues to welcome guests from across the world | Photo by Takanori Chiba

tourists would be coming to Nikko, and that he should build a hotel for them. That was the origin of Japan's oldest Western-style resort hotel, the Kanaya Hotel."

British diplomat Ernest Satow had written about Nikko's appeal in Yokohama's English-language newspaper the previous year, and Nikko was drawing the attention of foreigners living in Japan. "Zenichiro renovated part of his home, a former Edo Period samurai residence, and in 1873 opened it as the Kanaya Cottage Inn," Sakamaki notes. "He was just twenty-one then. In an age when even seeing a Westerner was rare, the decision to open a hotel for foreign guests in a location outside Tokyo was quite outside the ordinary."

According to Sakamaki, the hotel's reputation in the English-speaking world soared after English travel writer Isabella Bird stayed there in 1878.

"In her travelogue *Unbeaten Tracks in Japan*, she introduced

the rare and uniquely Japanese samurai residence, kept scrupulously clean down to every nook and cranny, the wonderful natural beauty Nikko is blessed with, and the hospitality of Zenichiro's family, which surpassed any language barriers," Sakamaki explains. "The book led to a huge upswing in the number of Western guests at the inn.

"In 1893, twenty years after the inn opened, the current Kanaya Hotel was opened in Nikko's central Kamihatsuishi neighborhood, close to Toshogu Shrine," Sakamaki continues. "After that, from the end of the Meiji Period (1868-1912) through to the Taisho (1912-26) and Showa (1926-89) periods, many famous and esteemed guests stayed there, including Albert Einstein, Charles Lindbergh and Helen Keller."

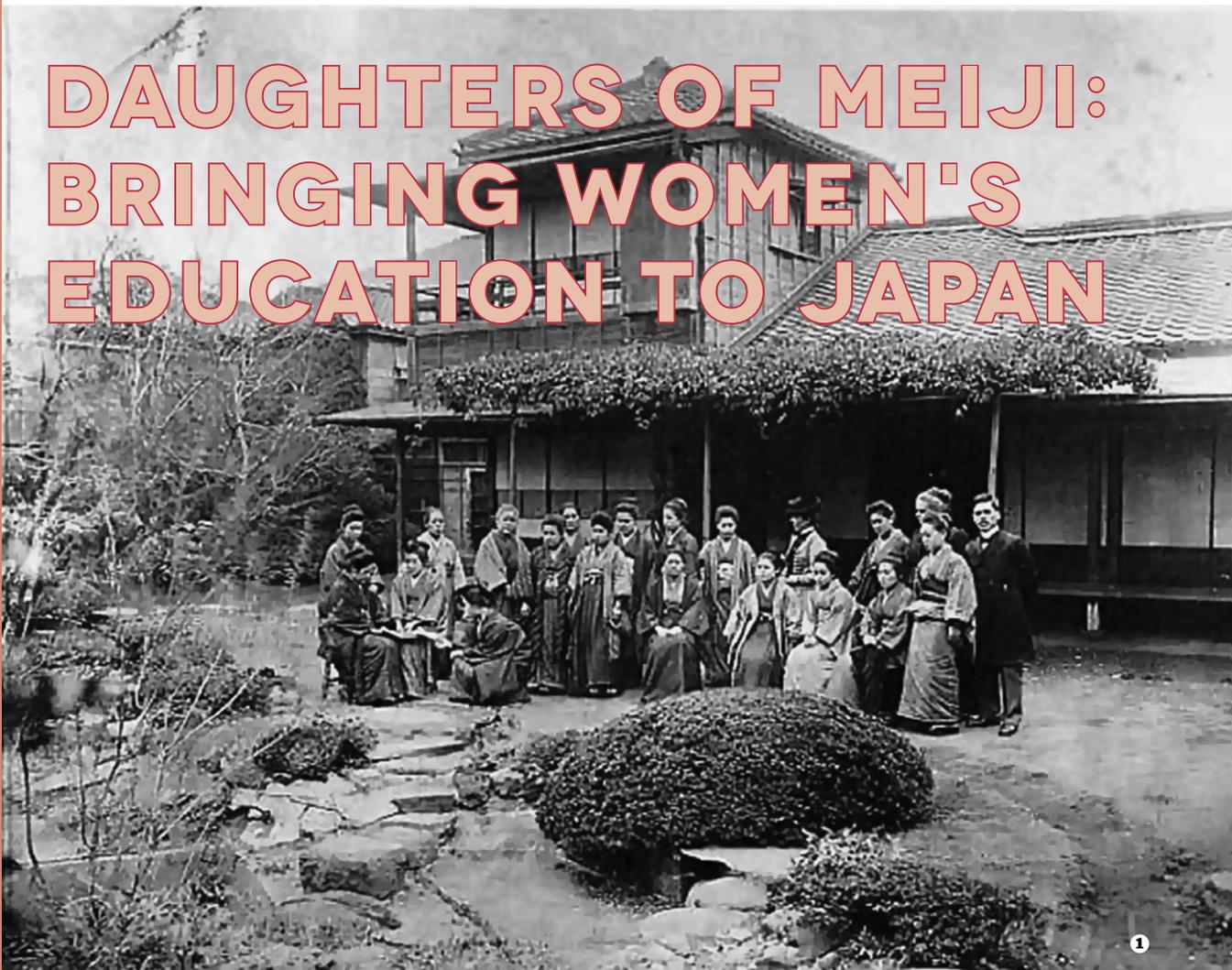
The hotel's appearance fuses Japanese architectural beauty with Western furniture and

fixtures, and retains a distinctly Meiji Period atmosphere that transports guests regardless of origin back in time. In the elegant, European-inspired main dining room, guests can feast on traditional French cuisine made from recipes passed down through generations of head chefs.

In 2003, screenwriter Kundo Koyama began consulting for the hotel, starting new plans such as reviving old recipes long left dormant in the storehouse and creating a suite entitled a "hotel within the hotel." The resulting media coverage put the hotel in the spotlight and attracted a wide variety of clientele, including couples and families.

The spirit of hospitality that Zenichiro kindled during the early Meiji Period and the place he established to welcome guests from afar have survived unchanged to present-day Nikko. **7**

DAUGHTERS OF MEIJI: BRINGING WOMEN'S EDUCATION TO JAPAN



1

At the dawn of the Meiji Period, three young girls were sent to live in the United States to experience American education and society firsthand and bring their knowledge back to Japan. Author Janice Nimura discusses their cross-cultural journey and their influence on Japanese society.

CHIARA TERZUOLO

WHEN the Iwakura Mission set off for the United States and Europe in 1871, their goals were to gain recognition for the newly created Meiji government, renegotiate unequal treaties, and research industrial, political, military and educational systems across the Western world.

Three young girls were among the statesmen and students sent to find ways to modernize Japan. The empress of Japan set them the task to bring back the methods needed to jumpstart women's education in Japan. The youngest,

Umeko Tsuda, was just six years old at the time.

For Janice Nimura this episode encapsulates the topsy turvy nature of the Meiji Period (1868-1912), noting that the effects of Eastern and Western cultural currents crashing together make it a fascinating period in Japanese history.

In her book *Daughters of the Samurai: A Journey from East to West and Back*, Nimura brings the women's extraordinary cultural journey to life.

"It was a perfect lens for examining the Meiji Period and



- 1 The Women's School of English in 1901
- 2 Tsuda matriculated at Bryn Mawr College in 1889
- 3 Tsuda posing with Yamakawa and Nagai, two other women from the Iwakura Mission, and friend Alice Mabel Bacon

Photos courtesy of the Tsuda University Archives

telling a story from the point of view of women, who are often overlooked in history,” she says. “You don’t need an interest in Japan to be drawn in by the story of these girls and their remarkable situation.”

Sent to a country for a decade where they couldn’t speak the language and charged with becoming educators seems almost unbelievable today, especially when considering that Tsuda was only six years old. However, despite her youth and the many hurdles she faced, her mission was a success: in 1891 she created a scholarship system for women to study in the United States, and in 1900 went on to found the English School for Women.

“They never questioned their mission or tried to shy away from their responsibilities,” Nimura notes, touching on Tsuda’s discipline and ability to handle a mission assigned at such a tender age.

“Tsuda believed in the importance of educating the next generation,” says Yuko Takahashi, the university’s president. “She had a broad, long-term outlook, and she was a driving force for education who excelled at getting things done. She was a real role model, using her international network to contribute to society.”

After briefly returning to Japan to teach at a women’s school, she eventually sailed back to attend Bryn Mawr College. The tenets of that institution, such as service to one’s community and leadership, provided the foundations for her own school, which still flourishes today as Tsuda University.

Takahashi also notes that thanks to Tsuda’s scholarship system, twenty-five women were able to study abroad. “One after the other, they became leaders in their fields, contributing to society as a whole.” This philosophy of giving back remains a core tenet of the school, which instills the importance of making a difference and lifelong learning on its students.

“We can all learn from their flexibility, ability to take tradition and use it in unexpected settings, and sheer discipline regarding education,” Nimura says. This grit, determination and samurai spirit allowed Tsuda to spearhead women’s schooling in Japan, and bring East and West closer together. **W**



The Meiji Period (1868-1912) produced a string of literary masters whose novels are still read and appreciated today. Here are four examples of distinctive literary works set in that period that examine the society, culture and public notions of the time.

TOMOKO NISHIKAWA

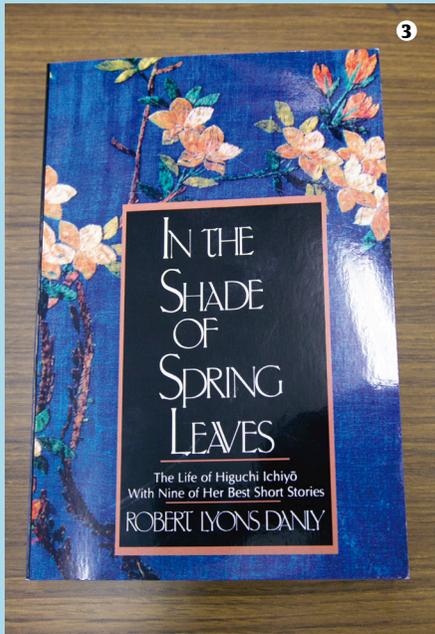
THE Meiji Period was a time of rapid modernization. One novelist who outlived it, Natsume Soseki, said the Japanese were trying to develop “in just ten years the civilization of today that took Western nations a century.” According to Kochi University associate professor and modern Japanese literature researcher Kazuma Tagusari, since literature tends to be closely related to individuals, it often reveals personal aspects of those perplexed by rapid modernization. Many writers of the period sought to write in a more colloquial style instead of the conventional literary style, and to unify the written and spoken language. They produced novels in an easy-to-read style, which gradually spread the culture of reading among the populace.

Tagusari cites Soseki’s *Kokoro* for brilliantly depicting the lifestyle changes of the period.

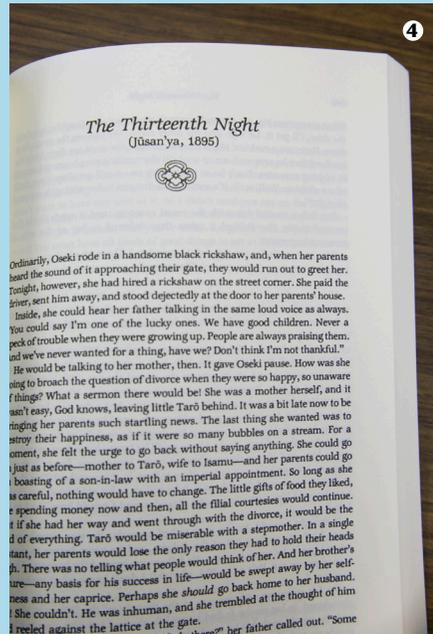


Although serialized in a newspaper in 1914 (the third year of the Taisho Era), the account begins with the narrator interacting with a teacher he met in Kamakura. The novel reveals changes in dining, from people eating a meal from their own trays at individual tables to people sitting together around a dining table. He finds it interesting that the new era’s premise—that having everyone sitting around the table should be fun—exposes the frictions in human relations and amplifies a sense of awkwardness.

Tagusari recommends Ichiyo Higuchi’s *The Thirteenth Night* as a period work that depicts Japanese customs. Unable to endure her unhappy marriage to Harada, a high-level bureaucrat, the heroine Oseki returns to her parents’ house. Her father, who doesn’t want the family to lose their connection to the higher ranks of society, admonishes her and sends her back to her husband. On her way home, she reunites with Rokunosuke, a



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4

- 1 All the recommended books have been translated into English, so readers can get a taste of Meiji society through their pages
- 2 Associate professor Kazuma Tagusari of Kochi University's Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
- 3 *In the Shade of Spring Leaves*, a collection of nine stories by Ichiyo Higuchi
- 4 The beginning of Ichiyo Higuchi's *The Thirteenth Night*

Photos 1, 3, 4:
From the collection of the Kochi University Integrated Information Center (Library)

former lover, but love does not reignite and the two again go their separate ways.

The novel depicts the annual practice of moon viewing on the thirteenth night of the lunar calendar's ninth month. Modernization, however, has reduced the observance of the custom, and we are led to believe that even a high-level bureaucrat like Harada no longer follows the tradition. The tradition does continue at Oseki's family home, which has fallen behind the times, showing the sharp contrast between the enlightened new world and the old world of shadows. Higuchi parallels the melancholy figures of those unsure about how to live properly in the new era with the thirteenth night's imperfect moon. This is not depicted negatively, but rather conveys the sensitivity of the Japanese in grasping the substance of the human condition in the way that, like the thirteenth night, is somehow lacking.

Tagusari cites *Golden Demon* by Koyo Ozaki as a work that reveals love between the sexes and opinions on marriage during the time. Although Omiya had promised to marry Kanichi, she marries a wealthy man instead. Kanichi angrily kicks Omiya to the ground and disappears.

Before the Meiji Period, the word *love* in

Japan often had negative nuances of sexual love and obsession. Even *The Tale of Genji* never mentions the word. Western influences changed this view, as exemplified in *Golden Demon* where Kanichi's enduring love for Omiya is shown repeatedly, and the word *love* is used in the positive sense it is today. We can also sense something of the difficulty Japanese people have in expressing affection and building relationships. It reveals that even as modernization progressed, women's happiness was still dependent on marriage.

The professor's final selection, Ogai Mori's *The Dancing Girl*, portrays the writer's visit to the West. Rushing to create legislation as a modern state, the Japanese government sends Toyotaro to study in Berlin. His ego awakened by contact with European freedom, Toyotaro falls in love with the beautiful dancer Elise. Ultimately, however, he abandons love in favor of his career, but this novel shows the conflict of the individual forced by rapid modernization to live as a cog in the nation's gears.

These pivotal works have been translated into English, and they allow readers to get an idea of the society and public ideas of the time. 

Tonkatsu, one of Japan's most beloved soul foods



The Roots of Tonkatsu: A Delicious Fusion of East and West

KATSUYA YAMADA

Tonkatsu—the breaded, deep-fried pork cutlet so popular with the masses—was originally one of many Japanese twists on Western recipes imported to Japan, in this case France’s *côtelette de veau*. Here is the history of tonkatsu according to the first restaurant in Japan to put the dish on its menu.

STARTING in the Meiji Period (1868-1912), Japan made rapid strides to establish itself as a modern nation, and along the way adopted many food-related cultural practices from the West. One recipe imported to Japan at that time was a French dish known as *côtelette de veau*, a veal cutlet coated in breadcrumbs and fried in a pan with butter.

The Western-style restaurant Rengatei, which opened in 1895 in Ginza and is still serving customers, felt that method made the cutlet too oily and overwhelming for Japanese tastes. *Tonkatsu* was born when Rengatei borrowed a technique from a Japanese culinary staple, *tempura*, deep-frying the breaded cutlet in a pot full of hot oil instead of pan-frying it. The product was crisper and lighter, and more appealing to the Japanese palate. The breadcrumbs used in the batter also changed from stale breadcrumbs to soft fresh *panko* breadcrumbs,

and coating the meat all over in *tempura* fashion made it even more tender and delicious. And instead of veal, comparatively cheaper cuts of pork were used. *Tonkatsu* debuted in 1899 under the name “pork cutlet” on the Rengatei menu.

Rengatei’s pork cutlet dish continued to evolve to fit the tastes of the times. To deal with a lack of cooks, the restaurant substituted finely chopped cabbage for the hand-cut *château* carrots and potatoes originally served alongside the meat. The restaurant replaced its own demi-glace sauce with a mix of two types of imported Worcestershire sauce, which produced a clean, tangy flavor that matched Japanese people’s preferences.

Despite the dish’s evolution being due largely to a lack of staff, *tonkatsu* is a great example of Western-style Japanese cuisine that has become a beloved standby. It also inspired the creation of a whole new range of dishes. The *katsu* sandwich, which uses *tonkatsu* as a sandwich filling, as well as the invention of *katsu*



Rengatei opened in 1895 and is the birthplace of *tonkatsu*



The cutlets are coated with fresh breadcrumbs and deep fried to perfection



Katsu curry was born when a customer asked for *tonkatsu* covered in Japanese-style curry



Katsu sandwiches remain a popular dish to this day

curry, which was the result of the chef indulging a customer's wishes and secretly making an off-menu item—are just two of many whimsical culinary options derived from *tonkatsu*.

“What’s most important is for our diners to think of it as a nostalgic, familiar flavor,” says fourth-generation Rengatei owner Koichiro Kida. Although the recipe is actually the result of a series of improvements meant to suit the needs of a certain era, Rengatei’s goal is to give their *tonkatsu* a timeless taste.

For example, Kida asserted that selective breeding has made the pork used today better quality than that available during the Meiji, Taisho and Showa periods, but that while the quality has improved the taste should remain unchanged. When asked about the secret to deep-frying perfect *tonkatsu*, head chef Masaki Osawa replied that he balances the needs of the current era with the taste from long ago.

“We don’t throw out used oil—we preserve it to bring out a deeper flavor,” he explains. “We also sprinkle salt and pepper on only one side of the meat and place it in the refrigerator overnight to draw out the *umami* and tenderness. Those techniques haven’t changed since Rengatei’s beginning. On the other hand, we do try to go along with current trends like cutting off the fatty parts from pork loin to make it healthier.”

By the Meiji Period, pork farming was also flourishing in the Kanto region, but meat was still an expensive option that most commoners couldn’t obtain or afford. And as it turned out, the *côtelette de veau* dish was a bit too rich for the Japanese palate. After a period of trial and error, however, Rengatei created *tonkatsu*, which has gone on to become a dish beloved by many for more than a hundred years, both when cooked at home and as a popular meal when eating out. **17**

KATSUMI YASUKURA

The year 2018 marks the 150th anniversary since the Meiji Period began. Countless government offices, local community organizations and businesses throughout Japan are working on “Meiji 150th” projects to commemorate the spirit of a pivotal era in the nation’s history.

RESTORING THE MEIJI SPIRIT 150 YEARS AFTER IT EMERGED



Photo courtesy of Nagasaki University Library

“THE ‘Meiji 150th’ project has two main goals,” says Yasuhiko Uekusa, the cabinet secretariat in charge of projects related to the anniversary. “The first is to have the next generation of young Japanese learn about the spirit of Meiji, to prompt them to think about the future of Japan. The Meiji Period (1868-1912) began after the confusion that marked the late years of the Edo Period (1603-1867). It was a time when people got hired according to their abilities, and young men and women created new opportunities for themselves.

“Interestingly, Japan’s current situation—a high rate of aging, low birth rate, and unsettled international relationships—is very similar to the beginning of the Meiji Period, when the way forward was unclear,” Uekusa points out. “It would therefore

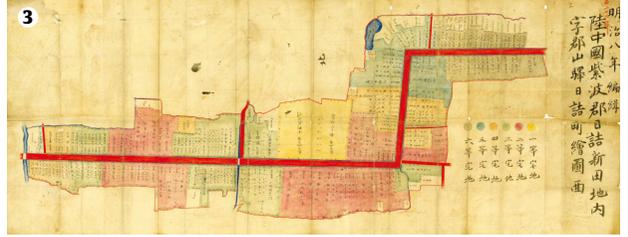
be beneficial to have the younger generation rediscover the Meiji spirit, to find the grit to face new challenges head-on.”

Uekusa says the second goal is to preserve a record of later Meiji achievements for the next generation.

“We want people to think about the Meiji Period as a whole,” he explains. “Major changes in Japan’s political system, technological development, industrial progress and innovations in education came about during this period. With that in mind, we’ve been collecting and digitally archiving documents and photos from the whole Meiji Period as well as restoring and fixing buildings so that the younger generation can comprehend this part of their past.”

Photo courtesy of the Chido Museum

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- 1 View of Tokyo's Ginza Street during the Meiji Period
- 2 The Former Tsuruoka Police Station in Yamagata Prefecture
- 3 Documents and photos from the Meiji Period are being preserved digitally
- 4 Built in the late Meiji Period, the elegant Akasaka Palace is open to the public



4

Photo courtesy of the Cabinet Office, State Guest Houses of Japan website

There are many projects related to the Meiji 150th in progress: As of June 2018, the government has 159 of them, private groups have 391, and local communities another 3,659. Each government division and organization has incorporated local color, history and culture, so there are a great variety of projects.

Uekusa adds: “The Meiji Period is often associated with revolutionaries from the southern areas of Japan—current Kagoshima, Yamaguchi, Kochi and Saga. While there are many related projects in those areas, many other regions are noteworthy as well.”

For instance, during Japan’s period of isolation during the Edo Period, Nagasaki was Japan’s only point of access to the outside world. After the capital was moved to Tokyo, Kyoto sought to regain dynamism through the construction of the Lake Biwa Canal. Fukushima was the battlefield where the government and shogunate fought. Hokkaido, which is also celebrating its 150th anniversary, was named by a late Edo- early Meiji Period explorer,

Takeshiro Matsuura. Tokyo boasts the Togu Palace, home to the crown prince, and the Akasaka Palace State Guest House, which is now open to the public.

“We want people to feel the spirit of Meiji from various sides,” Uekusa notes. “Not only Japanese visitors, but international visitors as well, perhaps will see Japan from another perspective.”

According to Uekusa, while the Meiji 150th celebration holds a powerful message for the next generation, it is also a great tool for strengthening local tourism in regions around Japan. “We expect an economic boost from people visiting historical buildings, special exhibitions and important locations,” he says. Looking to the past to find inspiration for the future, Uekusa hopes that many people will get the opportunity to experience the Meiji 150th events.

Although there are only two months left to the 150th year since the beginning of the Meiji Period, events are scheduled to continue into 2019. Uekusa hopes those interested will contact local tourism offices and visit the many sights. **1**

For more information: https://www.japan.go.jp/tomodachi/2018/spring2018/the_origin_of_japans_modernization.html

THE FUTURE OF REGENERATIVE MEDICINE FOR HAIR FOLLICLES

TAMAKI KAWASAKI

Organ Technologies and RIKEN have developed large-scale technology that stimulates hair follicles to produce hair, and have begun preclinical safety tests on a potential cure for the plague of baldness.



Dr. Takashi Tsuji (left) of RIKEN and Yasuhiro Sugimura (right), president of Organ Technologies

REGENERATIVE medicine employs stem cells, which can generate differentiated cells for various systems and organs of the body and restore functions lost due to disease or injury. Researchers have recently been able to artificially create multiple types of stem cells, and related research is progressing worldwide. The end goal is to use the right signals to manipulate stem cells into regenerating various organs such as kidneys and hearts. Among the countries engaged in this research, Japan's technology shines, and in fact Japan has produced many kinds of organoids (mini-organs cultivated from stem cells in a test tube).

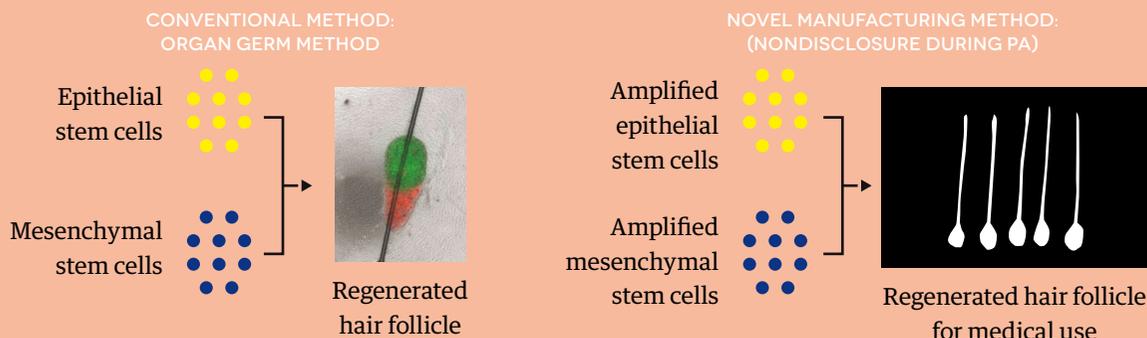
Expectations are high for research on regenerative medicine, which is slated to become the next major evolution in medical treatment. The first generation of regenerative medicine involved introducing stem cells into the body as a treatment, and the second generation was artificially regenerating tissues. The current generation of regenerative therapy is highly focused on three-dimensional organ regeneration. The organ

regeneration team at RIKEN's Center for Biosystems Dynamics Research, led by Dr. Takashi Tsuji, was the first to regenerate teeth, hair follicles, and salivary and tear glands. In June of this year, RIKEN and Organ Technologies began preclinical testing of a hair-loss cure that uses a hair follicle that grows hair in cycles. They hope to use the world's first regenerated organ treatment to launch Japan's regenerative medicine industry.

"Male pattern baldness afflicts approximately eighteen million men in Japan, and the healthcare market for products to treat thinning hair and baldness is 440 billion yen (\$4 billion)," Tsuji says. "People's interest is high, and because it's such a huge, wide-ranging industry, with everything from hair-growth products to surgical hair follicle transplant treatments, we'd like to develop products that have a scientific basis and improve quality of life."

The road from research and development to preclinical testing was not easy. There were not many hair follicles available, and it took seven years to increase the number of hair follicle anlage (an

ESTABLISHMENT OF A NOVEL MANUFACTURING METHOD



By working with other companies, RIKEN's scientists have been able to manufacture anlagen on a mass scale

REGULATIONS OF HAIR SHAFT DENSITY

28 bioengineered hair follicle germs were transplanted in 1cm² skin area



Bioengineered hairs were 128 hairs/cm²



Hair density: 60-120 hair shafts/cm²

ERUPTION



LATE ANAGEN



The transplantation of bioengineered hair follicle germs would be adoptable as a treatment for alopecia patients.

organ or tissue in its earliest recognizable stage of development) for practical application via stem cells. Manufacturing the anlagen was done by hand on a micro scale, but they were able to achieve stable mass production by working jointly with other companies. To keep hair growing and stop the pores from closing, thin nylon fibers are inserted, which also enabled them to regulate hair density.

At the same time, Yasuhiro Sugimura, the president of Organ Technologies who is tasked with developing the business side of hair follicle regenerative medicine technology, stresses the importance of creating the regenerative medicine industry on the free market, away from any national finance pressures. Organ Technologies aims for regenerative medicine to be applied not just to cure

disease but also as pre-symptomatic or preventive care, a wellness innovation that will prolong healthy lives in an aging society.

Regenerative medicine is at the core of twenty-first century medical treatment and it is strategically important for Japan to develop this high-value industry.

“We pursue innovations in this area of research and development at a world-class level, and it is our mission to make it happen both within and beyond Japan,” Tsuji and Sugimura agree. “Regenerating hair follicles is the beginning of that road, and after preclinical and safety testing our goal is to implement it by 2020. Starting by curing baldness, our intention is to develop an industry aimed at improving quality of life.” 

Samantha Lassaux, international sales manager at Meiji Kinenkan



A French Employee at a Japanese Event Venue

Frenchwoman Samantha Lassaux is a sales manager for Meiji Shrine's event hall, known as Meiji Kinenkan. Lassaux talks about her work at the historic venue, which was built in the Meiji Period and originally served as a state guesthouse.

TAMAKI KAWASAKI

SAMANTHA Lassaux has lived in Japan for the past five years. Originally from France, she came to Meiji University as an exchange student from Aix Marseille University. She now serves as the international sales manager in the corporate sales department of Meiji Kinenkan, the splendid event hall associated with Meiji Jingu Shrine. Lassaux also promotes tourism in Japan in French and English through various media and at business seminars.

“I was interested in Japan and began studying Japanese when I was at university,” Lassaux recalls, “and then I was selected as an exchange student. These days I’m surrounded by my Japanese colleagues and mostly speak Japanese all day, aside from the times I converse in English with non-Japanese-speaking customers. Because of that, I’m gradually starting to lose my French,” Lassaux adds with a laugh.

She returned to France to attend graduate school and took a position for a short period



Japanese culture and business are now second nature to Lassaux



Lassaux manages banquets and public relations with foreign businesses for the event venue

in a French company, but her longing to work in Japan was overwhelming, and she used a working holiday visa to return. As she continued to study Japanese culture, she became more interested in Shintoism, shrines and temples. Her desire to work at Meiji Kinenkan was strong. She took on the challenge, conducted her job hunt like any Japanese person would, and was hired. With the 2020 Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics coming up and with them a great influx of inbound customers, Lassaux plays a pivotal role at Meiji Shrine and Meiji Kinenkan.

Constructed in 1881 as a state guesthouse for foreign dignitaries, Meiji Kinenkan was later used as the meeting hall for the Meiji Constitution deliberations, making it a place of great historical value. Opened to the public as a wedding hall in 1947, the hall has retained its tradition of high etiquette and impeccable service.

Lassaux has gone all out to balance her own values and work style with Japanese values and manners within a work environment rich with history and culture. Now in her third year at the wedding hall, she manages banquets as well as public relations with foreign businesses. Thanks to understanding colleagues, her ability to perceive Japan as a non-Japanese and her curiosity and creativity for work, Lassaux has fashioned a career she enjoys and feels good about.

In Japan, many people are involved in the decision-making process when planning a banquet. This very controlled process typically ensures a perfect result. Since Lassaux comes from a different background, at first she was surprised at the Japanese practice of having people representing their business or organization apologize, even if the representative hadn't done anything wrong themselves. Now she understands that this is part of Japanese organizational manners. Unlike France, Japan often still assigns jobs according to gender and age. After studying about work, temples and shrines, Lassaux has realized that Japanese culture has the rare distinction of incorporating two religions harmoniously, Buddhism and Shintoism, and therefore does have the flexibility and adaptability that can lead to change.

To gain more physical strength and an ever greater understanding of the culture, Lassaux has been thinking of studying aikido. Focusing on the upcoming 2020 Olympics and Paralympics, she says: "I hope I can assist visitors from outside Japan that visit Meiji Shrine, or perhaps take on projects at international research centers, stadiums and museums." As an expat living in Japan, Lassaux clearly wants to share her love and fascination for her adopted country with the world. 🇯🇵

THE MANY CHARMS OF JAPANESE STATIONERY GOODS

AO YAMAMINAMI

Japanese stationery goods are known for their high quality and creative designs. Lately their fun, playful designs and sheer variety have been captivating consumers internationally.



THANKS to a winning combination of practicality, variety and exuberant creativity, the popularity of Japanese stationery goods is growing worldwide, with many visitors from outside Japan buying stationery items as souvenirs and more people abroad purchasing articles for personal use.

One place that reveals all of this clearly is Bunbougū Café in Tokyo's Omotesando area, a "stationery café" where you can enjoy a cup of coffee and eat while trying out different types of stationery goods before purchase. The café's owner, Toru Okuizumi, confirms that the reason local writing supplies have gained attention is their functionality, creativity and designs.

Plenty of Japanese stationery items have become major sellers worldwide due to functionality alone. In recent years, for example, Pilot Corporation's

FriXion, a pen with an eraser on its end, has gained a large fanbase. FriXion was first sold in Europe in 2006, and in Japan from the following year. Since then, over two billion of these pens have been purchased worldwide.

"In Europe, students use ballpoint pens or fountain pens rather than pencils," Okuizumi explains. "Every time they made a mistake, they would have to use white-out. FriXion was therefore very convenient for European students. The functional properties and convenience led to its popularity."

Another trait of Japanese stationery is wildly creative design. Non-Japanese who visit the stationery café or take part in stationery-related events regularly talk about how cute and colorful they are. Bunbougū's staff receives plenty of comments about how excited people are about using the innovative stationery.



Notepads that look like tofu packages bring an element of humor to everyday life



Over two billion FriXion erasable pens have been purchased worldwide



Both cute and useful, these pinwheels are actually magnets

“If you look at non-Japanese stationery items, you’ll notice there is a limit on color variations and that there isn’t much product variety,” Okuizumi says. “For instance, in Japan there’s a colorful magnet inspired by a toy windmill that moves with the wind. There’s also a notepad that looks like a block of tofu, and is sold in tofu packaging. You can’t really find such innovative examples of stationery in other countries. There are many cases in which people are surprised when they find out the products are actually stationery items, and buy them for their novelty.”

After witnessing these reactions, Okuizumi realized that Japanese stationery goods are seen a little differently from overseas.

The stationery market in Japan will soon face difficulties due to the reduced use of paper in offices and the switch to online and computerized

communication, as well as the increased use of electronic tablets in schools and the decrease in population. Japanese stationery makers are therefore refocusing on overseas markets.

“Overseas sales are growing, but there isn’t a huge lineup of Japanese stationery goods in shops as of yet,” Okuizumi says, “so there’s still a chance for growth and expansion. For that to happen, though, Japanese stationery companies will need to continue promoting the usability, quality and unique designs—as well as the entertainment factor when using these products—to differentiate them from more common writing tools.”

The status and desirability of Japanese stationery items are sure to continue rising as customers overseas discover their singular charms. **7**

Enjoy Hokkaido's Coastline and a BBQ Feast from the Land and Sea

As dusk falls, Hokkaido's Nagamare Kaikyo train takes riders on a leisurely run past the Tsugaru Strait and Mount Hakodate. The beautiful dark-blue sightseeing car that allows passengers to enjoy singular regional hospitality and cuisine was named Japan's best train journey of the year for 2016.

KATSUYA YAMADA

THE South Hokkaido Railway's Donan Isaribi Tetsudo Line runs for 38 kilometers from Hakodate City alongside the Tsugaru Strait to Kikonai, a town of roughly four thousand people. The opening of the Hokkaido Shinkansen in 2016 nearly put this older railway running parallel to it out of business, but the line was revived as a third-sector venture to ensure that citizens living along the route could get around.

To generate buzz for that venture, the line runs a one-car sightseeing train twice a month between May and October called the Nagamare Kaikyo. *Nagamare* means "to take it easy" in the local south Hokkaido dialect, and true to its name this train runs at a relaxed pace. Because it operates on a shoestring budget, the Nagamare Kaikyo was once called "Japan's poorest tourist train." After the service began incorporating clever ways to highlight the best characteristics of the area along the line and interactions with local people, however, it won Tetsutabi (Train Journey) of the Year in 2016.

Passengers boarding the Nagamare Kaikyo at Hakodate Station are sure to smile at the decorations bursting with handmade charm, such as brightly colored fisherman's flags and stuffed squid plush toys. When it departs at exactly 3:51 p.m., railway staffers send passengers off with a banner that



Donan Isaribi
Tetsudo Line

The Nagamare Kaikyo was selected as the best train journey of the year in 2016

reads, “Have a good trip!” These heartfelt touches and the fact that the one-car train quickly fills up with around fifty passengers add to the sense of excitement.

When the Nagamare Kaikyo reaches its first stop, Kamiiso Station, *happi* coat-clad vendors from the local shopping street come to the train windows to peddle their wares—snack boxes stuffed full of local delicacies, such as *hokki* clam dumplings and sweets. They do this right through the open windows, since the KiHa 40 series train is an older model, which is refreshingly different and welcoming in this day and age.

After the train departs Kamiiso, the Tsugaru Strait spreads out before you. The train stops for a few minutes to allow all aboard to savor the breathtaking views of Hakodate Bay at the foot of Mount Hakodate, the first of many such pauses and slowdowns for the scenic spots the train passes.

Passengers typically get off the train at Kikonai where the route loops back around to buy souvenirs at the roadside station Misogi-no-Sato Kikonai. When they return to their seats, they find a “South Hokkaido Pasta Set” there—a specialty of an Italian restaurant in the station. In addition to a mini version of the daily special short pasta, there’s a salt bun, which is the pride of Kikonai.

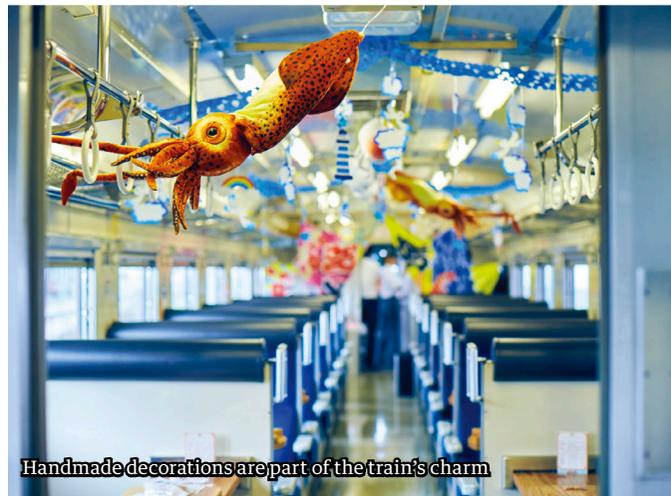
Those are just appetizers, however, because when the train pulls in to Moheji Station at 7 p.m. a mouthwatering aroma and feast await. Locals are grilling seasonal seafood, meat and vegetables right on the platform. On that particular day they were arranging whelk, Sakhalin surf clams, lamb meat, corn and May Queen potatoes into BBQ bento boxes, all still hot from the grill.

For the last thirty minutes of the journey, the train lights are dimmed so that everyone can get a perfect view of Hakodate City’s captivating lights along the coastline. Between July and September—the squid-fishing months—fires set at night to lure sea creatures can be seen along the coast. The train slides into Hakodate Station at 7:47 p.m., and South Hokkaido Railway staffers are there to greet its riders again, this time with a hearty “Welcome back!”

“On this train line you can enjoy hospitality built on a cozy ambience and friendly communication,” says Michihiro Harui of South Hokkaido Railway’s



Locals grill seasonal vegetables, seafood and meat right on the platform



Handmade decorations are part of the train’s charm



Vendors cluster around the train to sell local snacks and sweets

operation and planning division. “We’d love it if interacting with the locals leads you to explore the area along the train line.”

If you decide to follow up on Harui’s suggestion, it might be fun to board a local train, stop at the stations this train bypasses, and explore as far as the famous Trappist monastery in Hokuto City. **7**

NAGASAKI KUNCHI FESTIVAL



Nagasaki Kunchi is a major autumn festival that celebrates the three deities of Suwa Shrine. Each year, from October 7 to 9, one of seven performing groups (also known as *odoricho*) dedicate their dance performances to the gods. The seven *odoricho* are made up of dance groups from fifty-nine districts in Nagasaki City and rotate annually, with each group performing once every seven years. Each *odoricho* has its own unique dance that incorporates cultural influences from China

and the Netherlands. These multi-cultural performances have been designated as Important Intangible Folk Cultural Properties of Japan. The traditional encore cheer of “*Motteko!*” called out by the crowds will help you sense the spirit of the festival and the unity of the community. To best experience these performances at any of the four locations, the best plan is to buy a reserved seat. However, these tickets tend to sell out quickly once available.

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