

Japan Focus



*Consulate General of Japan, Los Angeles
Japan Information & Culture Center
December 2020, Vol. 12, Issue 12*



Prime Minister Suga Explains Japan's Efforts to Fight COVID-19 at UN Session

On Dec. 4th, Prime Minister SUGA Yoshihide delivered a speech via video at the General Debate of the Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly in response to the COVID-19 Pandemic. The prime minister said that to overcome the pandemic, multilateral cooperation schemes such as the Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) accelerator are of critical importance. He also explained that it is also essential to revive the damaged global economy and realize economic growth in order to create a new society in the COVID- and post-COVID-era. To bolster economic activities in developing countries, Japan is also committing COVID-19 Crisis Response Emergency Support Loans totaling \$4.5 billion dollars over the course of two years.



[Prime Minister Suga Urges Multilateral Cooperation to Fight COVID-19 at G-20 Summit](#)

G20 leaders attended the Riyadh Summit on Nov. 21-22, where they discussed the global response to COVID-19. Regarding the G20's response to COVID-19, Prime Minister Suga underscored the need to take a holistic approach for securing access to therapeutics, vaccines and diagnoses. Prime Minister Suga also described Japan's active role in promoting multilateral cooperation through becoming an original member to launch of the Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator and supporting the COVAX facility.



[LA Times Brand Publishing Article: The 'Japan Model' Goes Global as Japan's COVID-19 Response Trascends Its Borders](#)

Read about the 'Japan Model' COVID-19 strategy, the lessons it may offer and the country's leadership in global efforts. LA Times Brand Publishing interviewed Dr. OSHITANI Hitoshi, Professor of Virology at Japan's Tohoku University Graduate School of Medicine and a member of Japan's Government Advisory Panel on COVID-19, about Japan's COVID-19 strategies. The country's response to the pandemic has contrasted sharply with that of the U.S. and many other countries. To minimize the social and economic impact, Japan has not implemented any mandatory lockdowns, and yet its COVID-19 cases and deaths are remarkably low. The

LA Times featured the branded article in its Sunday, Dec. 20 edition, page A13. Please click the title to read the online version.



[Prime Minister Suga Signals Support for Hydrogen](#)

As part of a comprehensive post-COVID spending package announced prior to the first new Parliamentary Session for the Suga Administration, much attention is being paid to the economic stimulus arising from research and investments in green technology, including ¥2 Trillion (about \$20 billion) in spending on hydrogen energy over the next decade. The Suga Administration recommits to leadership in the ambitious global effort towards building a Hydrogen Society within this statement of December 4. Click the headline to read his statement.



[Japan Hydrogen Association Launched and Growing](#)

With a board of some of Japan's most influential firms, and a membership of nearly 90 companies so far such as [Toyota Motor Corp.](#), the Japan Hydrogen Association (JH2A) aims to accelerate the development of a Hydrogen Society in Japan, and worldwide. Stated goals include: Building global alliances and developing the hydrogen supply chain; Rolling out initiatives for the creation of hydrogen demand; Reducing hydrogen costs through technological innovation and scaling-up production; Partnering with businesses, organizations, and financial institutions

to create a viable business model for the industry; Promoting the decarbonization of a wide range of sectors with hydrogen.



[Japan Joins Second Green Hydrogen Forum for Los Angeles](#)

On December 10th, the VerdeXchange Institute held the second in a series of discussion forums, proposed and supported by Consul General MUTO Akira, focused on the creation of a hydrogen energy sector in Los Angeles and California. California Energy Commissioner Karen Douglas joined the discussion, along with many top business and regulatory leaders. Among issues covered were the creation of hydrogen energy activity clusters at ports (as exhibited by Toyota led projects at the Port of LA), the LADWP and other regional utilities large-scale hydrogen powered electricity generation project (utilizing a Mitsubishi Power gas turbine), and very promising distributed generation technologies, utilizing fuel cells, presented by Toshiba Energy Systems. [Link to the full forum by clicking the headline.](#)



[Hayabusa2 Capsule Brings Soil Sample From Ryugu Asteroid Back to Earth](#)

Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency's (JAXA) Hayabusa2 space probe successfully dropped over the Australian desert a capsule containing soil samples of the Ryugu asteroid and gas. [Learn more about Hayabusa2 project by clicking the headline.](#)



Recap of Tokyo 2020 Webinar Series - "Why Resilience Matters: How Adversity Molds Us"

The Consulate General of Japan in Los

Angeles, JAPAN HOUSE Los Angeles and Japan America Society of Southern California are co-presenting a new webinar series, "Why Resilience Matters: How Adversity Molds Us" which will dive into the latest news regarding the Olympic and Paralympic Games Tokyo 2020.

Two events were held this month, with more to come ahead.

Part 1 | Facing Setbacks Like a Champion - Dec. 2, 2020

Apolo Ohno, the most decorated US Winter Olympian in history, took the stage with surfing prodigy Kanoa Igarashi and World Champion Judoka Aaron Phillip Wolf to discuss the competitor's mindset. The discussion was moderated by KABC TV Anchor David Ono.

Part 2 | The Power of the Games for Communities - Dec. 10, 2020

John Harper, COO of LA28, and Hidemasa Nakamura, GDO of the Tokyo Organising Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games engage in a dialogue moderated by President and CEO of the LA84 Foundation Renata Simril to explore how planners work together across geographies to create the experience of the Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Spotlight on the Legacy of Chiune Sugihara

The Consulate General of Japan is marking the 80th anniversary of 'Visas for Life' issued by Chiune Sugihara, a Japanese diplomat posted in Lithuania, who issued thousands of transit visas to Japan, granting escape to safety for thousands of Jewish refugees. His act



of compassion saved thousands of lives and has been celebrated worldwide by authors, journalists, world leaders, and descendants of the Jewish refugees he rescued.

On Nov 17, the Consulate General of Japan in Los Angeles, American Jewish Committee Los

Angeles and JAPAN HOUSE Los Angeles co-presented a special webinar entitled "[Visas for Life](#)" 80th Anniversary: The Legacy of Chiune Sugihara." The speakers at the special event marking the 80th anniversary of the "Visas for Life" included California State Senate Majority Leader Robert M. Hertzberg; Leo Melamed, Chairman Emeritus of the Chicago Mercantile Exchange who is visa recipient and survivor; and Nishikawa Akinori, director of the Port of Humanity Tsuruga Museum in Fukui Prefecture, Japan. Richard S. Hirschhaut, Regional Director of AJC Los Angeles moderated the event.

On Dec. 15, JAPAN HOUSE Los Angeles, Japan National Tourism Organization and the Consulate General of Japan co-presented "[Journey Through Japan - Chiune Sugihara Story of Compassion](#)," which featured speakers Marian Goldberg and Bryan Takano, who provided an evening of insights and ideas to travelers interested in exploring the profound legacy and life of Vice Consul Chiune Sugihara. The presenters offered many touchstones to the story which can be visited in Japan.

[2020 Foreign Minister's Commendation Awarded to Ms. Teruko Weinberg](#)

On Dec. 1, 2020, (Japan Standard Time), the Government of Japan announced the recipients of its 2020 Foreign Minister's Commendations. From the jurisdiction of the Consulate General of Japan in Los Angeles, Ms. Teruko Weinberg, President of Teruko Weinberg, Inc. and Los Angeles Nagoya Sister City Affiliation Chairperson, was awarded. The Foreign Minister's Commendations are awarded to individuals and groups of



outstanding achievements in international fields, to acknowledge their contribution to the promotion of friendship between Japan and other countries. The Commendation also aims to promote the understanding and support of the Japanese public for their activities.



Little Tokyo Community Council Updates

LTCC continues to respond to the needs in the community during the ongoing pandemic. Community Feed Community providing free meals for those facing hardship due to COVID-19 will run through early January, and the Small Business Relief Fund will

provide 25 businesses with grants of \$2,000 each. In this season of cheer and giving, Go Little Tokyo for the Holidays and Little Tokyo Holiday Lights are promoting holiday shopping and bringing hope to the neighborhood.

Upcoming RAND Webinar to Focus on Japan and US Telework Amid COVID-19, Policy Questions

On. Feb. 4, 2021, the RAND Corporation will convene a conference that will bring together experts on work and society from the U.S. and Japan to discuss such issues as



how the two sides of the Pacific are adapting to the challenges of working on-line during COVID, and any policy lessons the two countries can learn from each other's experiences and responses. Former U.S. Secretary of Labor Robert B. Reich, Chancellor's Professor of Policy, University of California at Berkeley will provide a set of

keynote remarks..



Amb. Jeffrey Bader Discusses Implications of the New Biden Administration for the Asia Pacific

On Nov. 30, Consul General MUTO Akira moderated a discussion session by Ambassador Jeffrey A. Bader, Senior Fellow of Foreign Policy in the John L. Thornton China Center at the Brookings Institution, who discussed the implications of the new Biden administration for the Asia-Pacific region, with a special focus on U.S.-China

relations, policies and its impact on Japan.

A promotional banner for the "CHANGE LAUNCH EVENT" on 23 November 2020. The banner has a red background with white and blue text. It features six small portrait photos of speakers from different cities: Barcelona, Freetown, London, Los Angeles, Mexico City, and Tokyo. The text includes "CITY HUB AND NETWORK FOR GENDER EQUITY" and a registration link: "REGISTRATION LINK: RB.GY/UP2CJO".

CHANGE LAUNCH EVENT
23 NOVEMBER 2020
CITY HUB AND NETWORK FOR GENDER EQUITY
REGISTRATION LINK: RB.GY/UP2CJO

BARCELONA FREETOWN LONDON LOS ANGELES MEXICO CITY TOKYO

Tokyo Governor Speaks at CHANGE Launch Event, Discusses Gender Equality

On Nov. 23, Governor of Tokyo KOIKE Yuriko joined City of Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti in the City Hub and Network for Gender Equity (CHANGE) Launch Event. Tokyo and Los Angeles are two of six cities which co-founded CHANGE – the world's first international city network dedicated to the pursuit of gender equality. At the event, leaders from each city discussed their vision and efforts to address gender equity in their cities. Governor Koike stressed the importance of collaborating with other cities not only as a means to advance the cities but also to resolve global challenges.



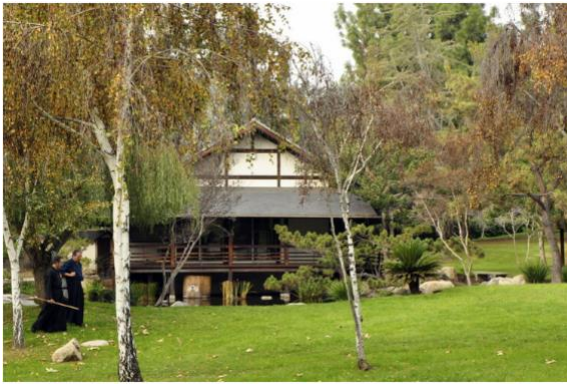
Holiday Schedule for 2021

The Consulate General of Japan's schedule of holidays in 2021 is now online. Please check the calendar before making an appointment for a visit.

Japanese Gardens and Tea Rooms

We are highlighting Japanese gardens/tea rooms in our jurisdiction. Please check each location's website for operating hours and current offerings.

[Shoseian Teahouse and Japanese Friendship Garden \(Glendale, CA\)](#)



Courtesy of: Friends of Shoseian



Courtesy of: Friends of Shoseian

Built in 1974, Shoseian ("Whispering Pine Teahouse") is an official Tearoom that was named by the Fifteenth Grand Tea Master of the Urasenke School of Tea in Japan. The teahouse sits beside a koi pond in a beautiful and tranquil Japanese garden setting. In 2019, Shoseian underwent a major renovation through cooperative efforts by the City of Glendale, Friends of Shoseian and the Japan Foundation. Shoseian's mission is to host events, ceremonies and classes that promote understanding and appreciation of Asian arts and culture. While the teahouse remains closed to events at this time, the Friendship Garden is now open to the public, according to the Shoseian website.

Japanese Culture: O-toshi-dama (New Year's gift allowance)



On New Year's Day, children in Japan eagerly await o-toshi-dama, or a special New Year's allowance from relatives and other adults. Money is placed in an envelope that is usually decorated. Depending on the age of the child, the tally of funds collected from relatives can be high (the equivalent of several hundred dollars in some cases). In many cases, that money is placed in a bank account or saved for use throughout the year.



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