

Japan Focus



Consulate General of Japan, Los Angeles
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Foreign Minister MOTEGI's Overseas Travels: [the UK](#), [Singapore](#), [Papua New Guinea](#), [Cambodia](#), [Laos](#) and [Myanmar](#)

Foreign Minister MOTEGI Toshimitsu visited the UK

from Aug. 5-8, meeting with counterpart Foreign Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs and First Secretary of State Dominic Raab. Meanwhile, on Aug. 13, Motegi visited Singapore and met with Dr. Vivian Balakrishnan, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Singapore as well as Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong. During his Aug. 20-25 trip to Papua New Guinea, Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar, Motegi discussed such issues as resuming cross-border business travel and promoting a "[Free and Open Indo-Pacific](#)."



(at Feb. 15 meeting in Germany)

[Foreign Minister Speaks With Chinese Counterpart in Phone Meeting](#)

On July 29, Foreign Minister Motegi spoke with his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi, State Councilor and Foreign Minister of the People's Republic of China, on the phone. Regarding COVID-19, the two ministers confirmed that Japan and China

will continue to collaborate through diplomatic and other channels, including sharing information, lessons learned, and insights in a free, transparent and timely manner.



Entry of Foreign Nationals, Phased Measures for Resuming Cross-Border Travel

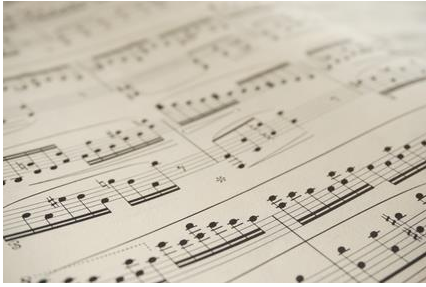
The Government of Japan has implemented multi-layer border control measures in order to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. On June 18, the government announced "Phased Measures for Resuming Cross-Border Travel." Learn more [HERE](#). Separately, for information about [re-entry of foreign nationals with the status of residence](#), and [entry and re-entry of foreign nationals with special exceptional circumstances](#), please click the links and [read guidance issued by the Consulate General of Japan in Los Angeles as of July 29](#).



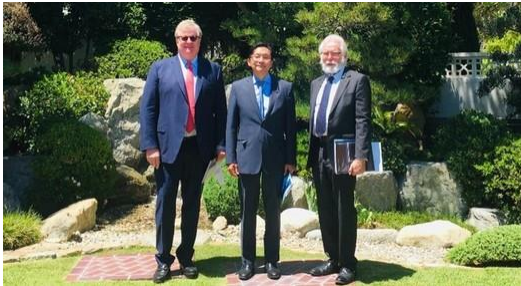
One More Year to Go Until the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games

On Aug. 24, the Tokyo Organizing Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games marked "one year to go" until the Paralympic Games with comments by committee President MORI Yoshiro. "I am convinced that one year from today, the performances of para-athletes from around the globe will have special value as a symbol of solidarity, and a demonstration of human strength and the power to persevere," he said.

Los Angeles and Hiroshima Connected Through "Music for Peace"



This year marked 75 years since the U.S. dropped atomic bombs on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. LA Philharmonic violist Richard Elegino and five other LA Phil artists had planned to participate in Hiroshima Symphony Orchestra's "An Evening of Peace Concert - Music for Peace," but were forced to cancel their trip to Japan due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Hiroshima Symphony hosted the event online on Aug. 6, performing its song called Piano Concerto No. 4 "Akiko's Piano." This work was inspired by the story of KAWAMOTO Akiko, a Nisei born in Los Angeles to Japanese parents, who lost her life to the atomic bomb in Hiroshima when she was 19 years old, and her piano, which miraculously stayed intact. For more information about Akiko's story and the piece, click [here](#).



[Hydrogen Society Progress in Lancaster, CA](#)

Although not one of California's largest cities, under the leadership of Mayor Rex Parris, Lancaster has an explicitly clear vision of becoming one of the most sustainable cities in the US. Consul General Muto recently hosted a discussion to share Japan's continuing efforts in building a global hydrogen energy sector with Mayor Parris, whose impressive early leadership in this new energy sector already has attracted global collaboration. A potential southern California center and hub of the burgeoning new Hydrogen Society.

Consul General Webinars

Consul General of Japan in Los Angeles MUTO Akira discussed Japan's approach to COVID-19 and other topics as a webinar speaker. Learn more below:



- **Wednesday, July 29, 2020:** ["Japan's Strategy to Respond to the COVID-19 Pandemic" webinar organized by the Consulate General of Japan, Global Chamber and Arizona Consular Corps](#)
- **Monday, Aug. 3, 2020:** ["COVID-19 Lessons from Japan and Mexico: Culture and the Responses to the Pandemic" organized by the Consulates General of Japan and Mexico in Los Angeles](#)



"My Global LA" Partnership Comes to a Virtual Close

The Consulate General of Japan in Los Angeles' year of educational partnership with the International Studies Learning Center in South Gate, through the "My Global L.A" project organized by the Los Angeles Mayor's Office of International Affairs with the help of Los Angeles Unified School District, came to a virtual close. During the year, Consulate staff presented various aspects of Japanese culture and society including New Year's traditions and Japanese-style hospitality in the practice of tea.



Rancho Palos Verdes, Sakura-city in Tochigi Pref Are Now Sister Cities

The cities of Rancho Palos Verdes and Sakura-city in Tochigi Prefecture, Japan held a virtual ceremony on Aug. 4 to become sister cities. Watch video of the ceremony [here](#). Since 2001, more than 300 students from Ujiie Junior High School and Kitsuregawa Junior High School in Sakura City have traveled to Rancho Palos Verdes to attend Miraleste Intermediate School, staying with host families on the Palos Verdes Peninsula and build cross-cultural friendships.



Credit: Nisei Week Foundation

Nisei Week Virtual Series

Celebrate Nisei Week virtually with online programming launched on August 15, to be continued throughout the year. Watch the [kick-off weekend videos here](#), which include musical performances, culinary and cultural demos, and traditional festival favorites such as ondo

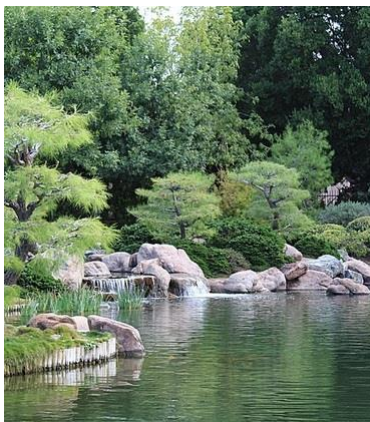
dancing.

Japanese Gardens and Tea Rooms

Starting this month, we will highlight Japanese gardens/tea rooms in our jurisdiction. Please check each garden's websites for operating hours and offerings.

Japanese Friendship Garden of Phoenix (RoHoEn)

Also known as RoHoEn, the Japanese Friendship Garden symbolizes the friendship between the sister cities Phoenix, AZ and Himeji, Hyogo Prefecture. The garden provides educational and artistic programs and events that aim to deepen relationships and celebrate the history and culture of Japan. RoHoEn is a Japanese Stroll Garden with a tea garden and tea house, but don't forget to check out its flowing streams, waterfall and Koi pond!



Credit: Japanese Friendship Garden of Phoenix



Credit: Japanese Friendship Garden of Phoenix

Japanese Friendship Garden of San Diego

Located in Balboa Park, the Japanese Friendship Garden of San Diego represents the deep friendship between sister cities San Diego and Yokohama, Japan. The garden offers educational programs, exhibits, festivals and classes that aim to deepen appreciation for Japanese culture. In addition to its beautiful landscape, the garden features stone arrangements, koi ponds, water features and the Inamori Pavilion.



Credit: Japanese Friendship Garden of San Diego



Credit: Japanese Friendship Garden of San Diego



Haiku Poetry From Arizona

This Arizona Matsuri, held every February, also features a Haiku poetry contest. The Haiku poetry has a structure based on measure, or rhythm, and typically references images of nature. The Arizona Matsuri Haiku Expo Japanese poetry contest features entries that uniquely reflect the landscape and scenery of Arizona. The winning Haiku selections from the 2020 Haiku Expo and previous years can be viewed in a free eBook. Click on the headline to read these eBooks and to learn more about the annual contest!

Survey of Japanese Firms in US During COVID-19



Japan External Trade Organization

As California's largest foreign investors, with a particularly strong presence in southern California, the operations of Japanese companies have an outsized impact on the economy of this region. While COVID-19 is at the root of a global

economic slowdown and certainly impacted the worldwide operations of Japanese companies, the rather optimistic news is that Japanese firms in the US are overwhelmingly looking towards maintaining or even expanding their operations here. Read the survey results in ["JETRO's Fifth Quick Business Survey: Summary of Responses of Japanese Companies in the United States" \(June 26-July 1, 2020\)](#).



7-Eleven and Speedway Merging US Businesses

The Japanese owner of 7-Eleven is buying the Speedway chain of gas stations from Marathon Petroleum (MPC) for \$21 billion. Japanese retail giant Seven & i Holdings announced this to be the largest acquisition in the company's history. Currently the largest convenience store chain operator in Japan, with 21,000 stores, it also owns nearly 9,800 stores in North America. This transaction adds 4,000 stores and a significant expansion of North American operations.



Culture: Bon Holiday

The Bon holidays, celebrated in mid-July or mid-August depending on the region, are a time to pray for and remember one's ancestors, not unlike the observance of the Mexican holiday Day of the Dead. During the Bon holidays, ancestral spirits are believed

to revisit to be reunited with family. To guide them back, a welcoming flame, or *mukae-bi* is lit outside the house. Displays of *Shouryouma*, created by sticking wooden chopsticks and toothpicks into cucumbers and eggplants, are also a common site that represent a way for the ancestral spirits to come and go.

[The Little Tokyo Historical Society's 2020 Short Story Contest Awards](#) winning essay in the Japanese language category, "The Last Visit" is themed around the Bon holidays.

Read the English translation of that story [HERE](#).

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