



JAPAN FRESH NEWS

No. 13 (April 2015)

by the Embassy of Japan in Slovenia

(*Sakura: see at the end)

~ fresh news, recent events and useful sites ~

(This newsletter will be issued every end of month, and if your colleagues/friends want to receive this, please tell them to send their email address to: info@s2.mofa.go.jp.)

(If your institution/group is organizing a Japan-related event, we welcome to include it in this newsletter! Please send your info to matej.crnjavic@s2.mofa.go.jp.)



- * **Prof. Takagi's lectures** on Security Situation in East Asia drew a lot of attention. (Sec. III)
- * Yet another Japanese whisky has been awarded the "**World's Best**". (Sec. V)
- * **German Chancellor Merkel** visited Japan. (Sec. I)
- * Mr. Miloš Bizjak, State Secretary at the Ministry of Defence, attended the **Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Sendai**. (Sec. I)
- * Future events: **Rakugo workshop** at Economy High School Ljubljana & **Japan evening in Maribor!** (Sec. IV)



I. Fresh/important news

~ Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Sendai ~

From 14th to 18th March 2015, Japan hosted the third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (WCDRR) in Sendai, following the first conference in Yokohama in 1994 and second conference in Kobe in 2005. This year, the conference was attended by Prime Minister Abe and Foreign Minister Kishida as well as heads of states and ministers from all over the world. From Slovenia, Mr. Miloš Bizjak, State Secretary at the Ministry of Defence participated at the conference. [Details](#)

~ Address by PM Abe at the Symposium of the 70th anniversary of UN ~

On 16th March 2015, the Symposium of the 70th anniversary of the United Nations was held at the United Nations University Tokyo, where Prime Minister Abe made a speech titled "What the United Nations means for Japan". In his speech, PM Abe announced that Japan will make the current two years as "years for taking concrete actions" in respond to the 70th anniversary of the UN this year and the 60th anniversary of Japan's accession to the UN next year. [Details](#)

~ 70 years since the end of World War II ~

70 years have passed since the end of World War II. In February, Prime Minister Abe attended the first meeting of the Advisory Panel on the History of the 20th Century and on Japan's Role

and the World Order in the 21st Century and expressed his view that Japan will make greater contribution to international peace based on its remorse regarding World War II and under the flag of "Proactive Contribution to Peace". [Details](#)

~ German Chancellor Merkel's visit to Japan ~

From 9th to 10th March 2015, Dr. Angela Merkel, Chancellor of Germany visited Japan and had a summit meeting with Prime Minister Abe. In the meeting, the two leaders agreed to further strengthen the cooperation between the countries, including the issues on Ukraine, East Asia, the reform of the UN Security Council, etc. [More info](#)

~ Progress report on the reconstruction efforts after the Great East Japan Earthquake ~

The magnitude 9.0 earthquake that struck off the pacific coast of Japan's Tohoku region on March 11, 2011, resulted in a triple disaster (earthquake, tsunami and nuclear accident) that had a broad impact throughout the nation.

The Reconstruction Agency is responsible for planning, coordinating, and implementing reconstruction and revitalization measures in response to the earthquake. For detailed information on the progress on the reconstruction efforts check the [Agency's website](#).

~ Update on Japan's Response to the Ebola Outbreak in Western Africa ~

"We must stop this outbreak any way we can. Japan is determined to put forth its best in the fight against the Ebola virus disease." (Remarks by Prime Minister Abe at the UN Meeting on the Response to the Ebola Outbreak on September 25, 2014)

Japan has been actively implementing financial, in-kind, and personnel contribution to the Ebola Outbreak in Western Africa. [Detailed information](#)

II. Economic/Business News

~ Matchmaking website between Japanese SMEs and overseas businesses ~

The "J-GoodTech" website posting information on Japanese SMEs with outstanding niche-top or unique products and technologies, prepared a [leaflet](#) to help you get more information on their activities, find products and technologies you are looking for and facilitate your registration procedure. For detailed information about the "J-GoodTech", check their [website](#).

III. Recent events

~ Lectures on Security Situation in East Asia ~

On 13th March 2015, with support of the Faculty of Social Sciences of the University of Ljubljana and the Slovenian Association for International Relations, professor Seiichiro Takagi, from the Japan Institute of International Affairs and the National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies, held lectures about the security situation in East Asia, which drew a lot of attention by the Slovenian audience. [Details](#)



~ Hina-matsuri at Ambassador's Residence ~

For the traditional "Hina-matsuri" (Doll Festival or Girls' Festival) celebrated each year on 3 March, the Embassy displayed a set of ornamental dolls ("Hina-ningyo") representing the Prince, Princes, attendants, and others in traditional court dress of the Heian period. On this occasion, the wife of Ambassador of Japan, Mrs. Jomori hosted two receptions (3 and 11 March), which Mrs. Barbara Miklič Türk also joined.

[Details](#)



~ The 4th Alumni Association meeting ~

Around 20 former Slovenian students in Japan gathered on 18 March 2015 for the already 4th annual Alumni Association meeting. Members were greeted by Dr Andrej Bekeš, President of the Alumni Association, Ambassador Jomori, and Luka Culiberg, Secretary-General. The official part of the gathering was followed by an informal discussion on how to make the association more active. [Details](#)

~ Urasenke tea ceremony demonstration in Ljubljana ~

Masters of the Urasenke School in Kyoto, dispatched to Slovenia by the Japan Foundation, demonstrated the traditional Japanese tea ceremony on 24 March at the Slovene Ethnographic Museum in Ljubljana, with the support of the Slovenian Foreign Ministry. Many visitors, among them foreign diplomats and officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, observed this aesthetic ritual, as well as tasted Japanese green tea and typical sweets. Dnevnik published an [article](#) about the event. [Details](#)

IV. Future events

~ Rakugo workshop at Economy High School Ljubljana ~

Ms. Diane Kichijitsu, master of rakugo will prepare a presentation and workshop of this traditional Japanese comic story-telling for students and teachers of the **Economy High School in Ljubljana**. The event will take place on **1 April 2015 at 10:00**. Besides listening to the explanation about this traditional performing art, participants will also be invited to perform a short part and learn some rakugo gestures!



~ Japan Evening in Maribor ~

The Student Organisation of the University of Maribor is planning a special evening dedicated to Japan taking place on **23 April** between 18:00 and 21:00 at the **Event Center ŠTUK**. Visitors will discover Japanese culture, including Japanese food, origami, calligraphy, language, and much more. The Embassy of Japan is supporting this event and we hope to see you there! Attendance is free of charge. [Details](#)

V. Other

~ Yet another Japanese whisky awarded the "World's Best" ~

After the Japanese whisky Yamazaki was named "Best in the world" last December, now Nikka Whisky **Taketsuru Pure Malt 17 Years Old** was awarded the "World's Best Blended Malt 2015". "The strength of this whisky lies in the way the subtle aroma of peat builds up over time," says

world-renowned British whisky critic Jim Murray in appreciation of Taketsuru 17 Years Old.
Available in Maxi, Havana Cigar Shop in Ljubljana.

For more information about Japan, please visit these websites:

- ①. Prime Minister Abe's government policies
 1. [Abenomics](#) (Prime Minister Abe's economic policy)
 2. [Proactive Contribution to Peace](#)
 3. [A Society in Which Women Shine](#) (Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality)
 4. [Keynote speech at the 13th IISS Asian Security Summit](#) ("The Shangri-la Dialogue")
 5. [Speech at the Sixty-Ninth Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations](#)
- ②. Issues related to Japanese territory:
 1. [Senkaku Islands](#)
 2. [Takeshima](#)
 3. [Northern Territories](#)
 4. [Sea of Japan](#)
- ③. Tourist information:
 1. [Japan National Tourism Organization](#)
 2. [Visit Japan Links](#)
 3. [Guide to Japanese Visas](#)
 4. [Japanese Inn Group](#)
- ④. Study in Japan:
 1. [Study in Japan](#)
 2. [Gateway to Study in Japan](#)
- ⑤. Cultural exchange:
 1. [Japan Foundation](#)
 2. [Japan: Fascinating diversity](#)
- ⑥. Other useful sites:
 1. [JETRO \(Japan External Trade Organization\)](#)
 2. [The Slovenia-Japan Business Council](#)
 3. [J-GoodTech \(Matching website for leading companies\)](#)
 4. [World Heritage in Japan](#)
 5. [Web Japan](#)
 6. [Nihongo Starter \(Online Japanese Course\)](#)
- ⑦. [Japanese restaurants in Slovenia](#)



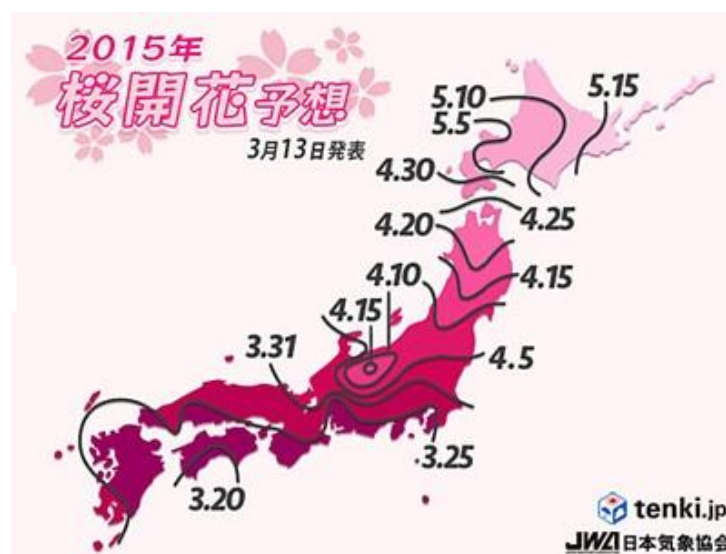
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info@s2.mofa.go.jp.

* **Sakura:** 桜, **cherry blossoms**

- 1) **Sakura** means a cherry blossom. In spring in Japan we have blossoms of Plum tree (UME), following Peach tree (MOMO), then cherry tree (SAKURA). Among them Sakura is becoming more and more popular in the world and during this season many foreigners come to Japan to admire our Sakura blossoms. At that time many places in city or countryside are transformed into a pink fairyland.
- 2) **Sakura forecast:** to admire Sakura efficiently, Japanese people created the **cherry blossom front** (Sakura front). Like the weather forecast, you can find precise information when Sakura in your place will begin to bloom each year.

The blossoming begins in Kyushu in March and typically reaches Kyoto and Tokyo at the end of March or the beginning of April. It proceeds into areas at the higher altitudes and northward, ending in Hokkaidō in May. There are many Japanese and foreigners, fanatic Sakura fans, who are travelling through Japan from south to north along the Sakura front.



〈Sakura forecast 2015〉

- 3) **Hanami:** When there are beautiful cherry blossoms why not to go there to drink a little bit of Sake? So that kind of Party is called **Hanami** (li. cherry blossom viewing) and it is a very old Japanese tradition. There are many old poesies, from more than 1,000 years ago, admiring Sakura. One of the very famous one is saying "if possible I want to die under full bloomed Sakura".

Nowadays you can see our Hamami scene like in this photo. People in large numbers occupy parks, shrines, and temples with family and friends to hold flower-viewing parties. These picnic parties are one of the most popular events of spring in Japan. In U.S., Washington Cherry Blossom Festival on the bank of Potomac River is also very famous, with 3 thousand cherry trees gifted by Japan.



- 4) **Somei Yoshino**: Sakura in Japanese photos is pale pink. But in Japan we have about 600 types of Sakura blossoms and they differ by shape of petals, the colour and the blooming period. They can be white, pink, yellow and green! (See next section)

Among them the most popular cherry tree variety today is the particularly pretty "**Somei Yoshino**". These pink Somei Yoshino are planted for the Sakura festival all over the world. This Sakura tree was created in the mid-19th century in Japan. Somei Yoshino cannot be reproduced. When you want another tree, it must be grafted. It means it is a clone, genetically identical, so they can bloom at the same timing. More than 80 percent of Japanese cherry trees are Somei Yoshino originally grafted from several original trees and above mentioned Potomac River cherry trees too. All the Somei Yoshino cherry trees in the world are clones!!



Somei Yoshino

- 5) Some other cherry trees:

- **Yae-zakura** - trees with blossoms of more than five petals and are typically the last ones to open their blossoms, with large pink petals
- **Yama-zakura** – before Somei Yoshino, a typical cherry blossom was this Sakura. This Sakura tree grows wild in nature and has a pinker colour.
- **Shidare-zakura** - weeping cherry trees with drooping branches. Not so many, but beloved cherry trees in Japan



Yae-zakura



Yama-zakura



Shidare-zakura



Green cherry blossoms
(Gyoikō)



Yellow cherry blossoms (Ukon)