

This newsletter is being sent to current and former The Nippon Foundation fellows, and persons who have asked to be added to the mailing list or have been introduced by The Nippon Foundation staff.



## [The Nippon Foundation News] Doll Festival



*Displays of hina dolls*

Greetings from The Nippon Foundation. *Hina matsuri* is a festival observed in Japan on March 3. Referred to as both the Doll Festival and Girls' Day in English, this is a day when households with young girls display ornamental dolls to wish for the girls' health and happiness, and traditionally for a happy marriage as well (*hina* refers to the dolls and *matsuri* is the Japanese word for "festival"). The dolls are dressed in imperial court clothing of the Heian Period (794-1185) and arranged in the style of a court wedding, with the two main dolls representing the emperor and empress. The displays are covered with red cloth and can have one, five, seven, or

more tiers, with the emperor and empress on the top tier and ladies-in-waiting, musicians, and other attendants and ornaments on the lower tiers. Special, colorful foods including pink, white, and green *mochi* rice cakes, multicolored *hina-arare* rice crackers, and *chirashizushi* (seafood and vegetables scattered on a bowl of vinegared rice) are also associated with the festival, as well as *amazake*, a non-alcoholic sweet sake. An associated custom that can be seen in various places is to float paper hina dolls down a river to carry away misfortune. Although the dolls' costumes depict a Heian Period court wedding, the festival's origins date to the Edo Period (1603-1867). At that time, Girls' Day was observed on March 3 and Boys' Day on May 5, but today the two have been combined into one public holiday, Children's Day, observed on May 5.

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## New TV Commercial Features Japan's National Soccer Team Captain Wataru Endo

*'Empowering All Children' during FIFA World Cup*

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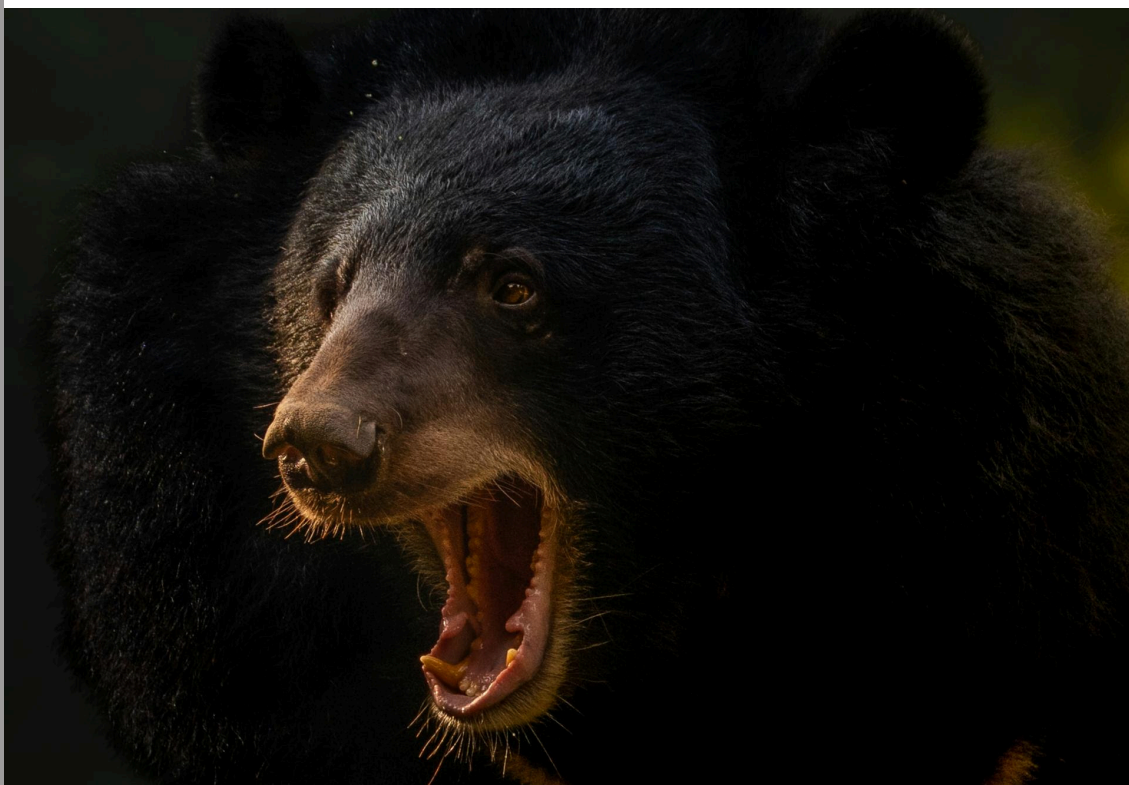


The Nippon Foundation will be airing television commercials to promote greater social understanding of issues related to and activities to support children's dreams and challenges. The commercials feature Wataru Endo, who plays for Liverpool Football Club and is captain of Japan's national soccer team, and will be broadcast on nationwide terrestrial commercial networks and internet media from March through July 2026, to coincide with the FIFA World Cup tournament.

[Full Article](#)

## Awareness Survey of 18-Year-Olds – Damage from Bears

*65% of respondents say bears should be culled*



The 75th installment of the Awareness Survey of 18-Year-Olds was carried out in late December 2025 on the theme of “Damage from Bears,” asking young people about their awareness and impressions of damage from bears and their thoughts regarding culling. Damage to crops and human casualties from bears was one of the main news topics in Japan during 2025. With bears increasingly encroaching on farms and even residential areas, a record 230 human casualties, including 13 fatalities, were reported from April to November.

[Full Article](#)

## Unlocking the Mystery of ‘Dark Oxygen’

*The Nippon Foundation launches joint research project with US and UK research institutes*



The Nippon Foundation Dark Oxygen Research Initiative is being carried out in cooperation with Northwestern University and Boston University of the United States and the Scottish Association for Marine Science. The project aims to identify the source of “dark oxygen,” previously unknown oxygen generated in the depths of the ocean where light does not reach, and closely analyze the polymetallic nodules and their surrounding deep-sea environment to determine the mechanism by which it is created.

[Full Article](#)

## Yohei Sasakawa Blog

Honorary Chair of The Nippon Foundation



[Japanese Consortium Successfully Demonstrates World's First “Zero-Carbon” Voyage Using Dual-Fueled Hydrogen Tugboat \(1\)](#)[2026/02/13]



[Global Appeal 2026 Highlights Role of Education as Key to Ending Leprosy-Related Stigma, Discrimination \(1\)](#) [2026/02/20]



[Indonesian President Prabowo Fully Supports Campaign to Eliminate Leprosy, Endorses Our Plan for National Conference \(1\)](#) [2026/02/13]

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