

Japanese Millennials and Politics

An Introduction

By Robert D. Eldridge



Japanese teens hang around in Tokyo's Shibuya on Wednesday, June 17th, 2015, on the day the parliament enacted legislation to lower the voting age from twenty to eighteen. Some 2.4 million people aged eighteen and nineteen now have the right to vote. The voting age was last changed in 1945, when it was lowered from twenty-five to twenty. Source: Aflo Co. Ltd./Alamy Stock Photo.

In the summer of 2016, Japanese youngest millennials, eighteen and nineteen years old, went to the polls for the first time. Until then, the voting age had been set at twenty years old, but a 2015 revision in the legislation dating from 1945 changed this. It was the only revision in the Public Offices Election Act in seventy years, which had originally lowered the voting age from twenty-five to twenty and empowered women to vote for the first time.

For young adults in countries like the United States, who have had the right to vote for decades (having been granted it in July 1971 with the Twenty-Sixth Amendment), and Canada, which did so a year before its southern neighbor, it may not seem like a big deal. Indeed, eighteen is the voting age in most countries. Some set it as early as sixteen, in fact. But for Japan's 2.4 million young adults, it was a new chance for their voices to be heard and a further step in the process to become fully participating members of society. Some approached it with excitement, some unease, and still others with indifference.

Although the number of new voters represented just 2 percent of the overall voting population in this "super-aging society" (see Table 2), there were high expectations that their youth and optimism would help invigorate Japan's politics, which is called a "silver democracy" in light of the shift in demographics to a proportionally older population.¹ In 1997, for example, those defined as senior citizens surpassed the number of children, and in 2011, Japan's biggest diaper maker sold more adult diapers than those for

babies.² While the youngest voters did show up at a higher rate in the summer 2016 elections (46.8 percent) than those in their twenties (35.6 percent) and thirties (44.2 percent), the turnout certainly was not as high as those promoting their electoral participation had hoped.

Looking at the numbers more closely, 51.2 percent of eighteen-year-olds participated in the vote, but the percentage dropped drastically with nineteen-year-olds to 39.7 percent, lowering the total to just above the national average. There are several possible reasons, which are explored in this article, for this lower-than-expected turnout in the July 2016 Upper House election and for the discrepancies between the two close ages, but alarmingly, the participation rate dipped even lower a year later in the October 2017 Lower House contest, when only 41.5 percent went to the polls (50.7 percent for eighteen-year-olds and 32.3 percent for nineteen-year-olds). What's more, it should be remembered that the eighteen-year-olds one year were the nineteen-year-olds the following year, which means that the participation of the same group of individuals declined nearly twenty points.

This apparent lack of interest in politics by the young in Japan is in great contrast to activism and interest in North America, Europe, and other countries during the same period, which tend to dominate news, conversations, relationships, and lives. Indeed, the 2016 US presidential election, especially the Democratic Party's primary, brought an unprecedented number of millennials out, ironically for a primary candidate, Bernie Sanders, who was almost half a century older than his young supporters.³ However, it might be unfair to compare a Japanese election with the carnival-like atmosphere of the near-year-long US campaign, which gets recharged with the conventions during the summer when party candidates are formally chosen.

In any case, numerous newspaper articles and public opinion polls suggested a lack of palpable enthusiasm among Japanese youth. Worried about this, a former member of the popular girls singing group AKB48 called on young Japanese to not be silent. "If you do," goes her song ("Silent Majority"), "you lose the right, really, to say anything." A fan who is also a young conservative writer, took pen to paper in 2016 after the song came out to call on his generation to keep in mind what was at stake and to be sure to turn out to vote: "don't be the silent majority."⁴

Another difference between Japanese young people and those in other democracies was that, as described herein, there was a strong tendency for them to vote for the conservative ruling party rather than for center-left or leftist parties.⁵ While simple comparisons are not easy and reasons for this occurrence are many, it is worthwhile to note.

Indeed, there have been quite a few other elections since the new voting law went into effect, including those for local mayors and assembly members, and state (known as prefectures in Japan) contests for governors and prefectural assembly seats. In one such election, in which this writer's eighteen-year-old daughter voted for her first time, the people of Hyōgo Prefecture, located west of Osaka, reelected for the fifth time its capable, yet status quo, center-right governor. However, despite the increase in the number of new voters, the overall turnout was a dismal 40.9 percent, compared to 53.5 percent four years before.

Indeed, in an earlier race for the mayorship of Ukiha City in conservative Fukuoka Prefecture, in the far western part of Japan, the overall turnout for the first election following the lowering of the voting age to eighteen was 56.1 percent, but that of eighteen- and nineteen-year-olds was just 38.8 percent. In another election scheduled that day in Hino Town, Shiga Prefecture, to the east of Kyoto, the incumbent candidate actually ran unopposed, negating the need for an actual vote.

I suggest in this article that in addition to the lack of strong interest in politics by Japanese late teens (and their lack of understanding politics—something that is true of many older adults as well) in the first place, the fact that the reform of the law was basically done "top-down" and not bottom-up through an authentic, serious, and sustained movement may be

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another reason for the low turnout. Youth did not fight for the right to vote, per se—it was simply legislated on their behalf nominally. They don't have ownership, in other words.

Socially and politically, Japan tends to be a paternalistic society, not so much in the sense of a strong, some would say “feudalistic,” *teishukanpaku* (father figure) anymore, but in that individuality and individual freedoms are subjugated to parents, society, company, school, and government, much more than in other modern societies perhaps; and many rules, official or otherwise, are made for you rather than by you. This does not mean that there is no activism whatsoever or that there were not some student groups interested in getting out the vote in 2016, and getting the right to vote in the first place, but it does suggest that Japan's young people are not as consumed with politics as is the case with millennials in other countries.⁶ In Japan, unlike other societies fighting for freedom of speech, assembly, and the press, all these institutions are taken for granted as part of the postwar Constitution. The Japanese public tends to entrust its affairs to the government, despite the relatively low numbers of actual trust it has in the bureaucracy or in political parties.

Lowering the Voting Age

The debate over lowering the voting age has been around since the worldwide student unrest in the late 1960s, which led to lowering the age in several countries, but not in Japan. Subsequently, in 1989, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child led more than 100 other nations to reduce their minimum voting age. Still, Japan did not choose to do so at that time.

It was not until the passage a quarter-century later in June 2014 of the National Referendum Act, which called for the lowering, by 2018, of the voting age from twenty to eighteen for the purpose of constitutional amendments, that the legislative wheels were set in motion.⁷

Japanese political parties began to show an interest in doing so much earlier and placed the goal of lowering the voting age in their policy platforms around the beginning of the twenty-first century.⁸ In fact, a strong argument can be made that it was politicians, rather than voters, who were leading the efforts to lower the voting age. The Japanese public apparently included skeptics or those who otherwise did not fully embrace the idea. For example, in a late 2008 poll taken by the *Asahi Shimbun*, only 38 percent of respondents agreed with lowering the voting age, with 57 percent of polltakers opposed.⁹ Even as late as March 2015, on the eve of the deliberations in the Diet, or Japanese parliament, the number of those in favor of lowering the voting age had only increased ten percentage points to 48 percent, while those opposed dropped by eighteen points.

Reasons given for lowering age requirements included invigorating Japanese politics with young people, increasing their civic participation, and having politics better represent the youth and new lifestyles. However, the 2.4 million new voters in 2016, or those born before July 11, 1998, rep-

Table 1
Youth-Focused Policies of Major Japanese Political Parties
(As of 2016)

Party (Ruling or Opposition)	Stance on Lowering of Voting Age	Type, if Any, of Education Support*	Minimum Wage
Liberal Democratic Party (Ruling)	Yes	Establishment of Scholarship System	Seek 1,000 yen (on average throughout country)
Clean Government Party (Ruling)	Yes	Establishment of Scholarship System	Seek 1,000 yen (on average throughout country)
Democratic Party (Opposition)	Yes**	Establishment of Scholarship System	Seek 1,000 yen (on average throughout country)
Communist Party (Opposition)	Yes	Establishment of Scholarship System	Immediately pay 1,000 yen. Seek 1,500 yen
Osaka Restoration Association (Opposition)	Yes***	Free education from preschool through university	n/a
Social Democratic Party (Opposition)	Yes**	Establishment of Scholarship System	Immediately pay 1,000 yen. Seek 1,500 yen

* Japan calls its current system a “scholarship,” but in reality, it is actually a student loan system, where it is necessary to pay the scholarship back to a government-affiliated body. Currently, that is being reexamined to make a true scholarship system where funds do not need to be repaid.

** The Democratic Party and Social Democratic Party desire to also lower the age for standing for election to twenty years old in the case of the House of Representatives and twenty-five in the case of the House of Councilors.

*** The Osaka Restoration Association desires to also lower the age for standing for election to eighteen years old for both the House of Representatives and House of Councilors.

resented a mere 2 percent of all eligible voters in Japan. As such, even if all in that age group participated in the vote, as noted by some critics, this percentage would not necessarily have had a significant impact on the results.

Eventually, a bill was passed in June 2015 to go into effect the following year. Changes to other laws such as the Civil Code (twenty and above) and Juvenile Law (under twenty) relating to the age in which young people can be tried as adults in crimes, the age to conduct financial transactions, and changes in education policy to teach citizenship and voting in high schools were also considered. Other civic responsibilities, such as the review of Supreme Court justices, were permitted, but the age for jury duty remained set at twenty, as did the ability to purchase alcohol and cigarettes—the latter, in part, for fear of the disruption it would cause in discipline within high schools.¹⁰

Media Reaction

Media reaction was positive to lowering the voting age, and “editorials,” according to one assessment, “broadly welcomed the revisions,” although all noted some of the challenges to promoting civic participation.¹¹

The left-leaning *Asahi Shimbun* and *Mainichi Shimbun* both addressed the issue in their June 17th, 2015 editorials, with the former warning that “extending the parliamentary franchise to younger people would be meaningless if the step only ends up increasing the number of voters who don't go to the polls.” The *Mainichi* argued it was important for children to be permitted to discuss politics at schools, noting “schools must not discourage students from discussing specific policy measures under the name of political neutrality. Respecting different views and deepening their opinions on various issues through debate will help students learn of the rules of democracy.”

Table 2
Japanese Millennials and Overall
Population of 127,095,000
 (as of October 2015)

Age	Male (approx.)	Female (approx.)	Total (approx.)	% of Overall Population
18	618,000	588,000	1,207,000	0.9
19	612,000	582,000	1,195,000	0.9
20	618,000	591,000	1,209,000	0.9
21	614,000	587,000	1,201,000	0.9
22	600,000	576,000	1,176,000	0.9
23	608,000	584,000	1,192,000	0.9
24	606,000	584,000	1,190,000	0.9
25	616,000	596,000	1,213,000	0.9
26	631,000	611,000	1,243,000	1.0
27	653,000	632,000	1,285,000	1.0
28	671,000	651,000	1,322,000	1.0
29	684,000	663,000	1,347,000	1.0
30	709,000	693,000	1,402,000	1.1
31	732,000	717,000	1,449,000	1.1
32	744,000	728,000	1,472,000	1.2
33	745,000	731,000	1,475,000	1.2
34	755,000	738,000	1,493,000	1.2

Source: The *Statistics Japan* website of the Statistics Bureau, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications of Japan at <https://tinyurl.com/ybqcey4v>.

In contrast, the right-leaning *Yomiuri Shimbun* and *Sankei Shimbun* expressed concern about the influence teachers, especially their unions, would have over the political views of the students under their charge. The far-right *Sankei* stated that such organizations “imposing certain political opinions on students at school will impair democracy and is, therefore, intolerable,” while the center-right *Yomiuri* argued that it “is vital to systematically train the teachers in charge and to compile manuals to avoid imposing the values of specific political parties on students.” The *Nikkei Shimbun*, often described as the equivalent of *The Wall Street Journal*, similarly called for political neutrality while noting that “schools must deal with the reality of politics to a certain extent. It would be good for them to compare manifestos of major political parties and conduct debates based on such comparisons.”

In other words, policies over politics—something that older adult voters might need to go back to school for as well.

In this sense, schools could provide an important venue for students to learn not only about the political process and the importance of voting, but also what they were voting about. Ironically, political parties remain somewhat inaccessible to students. One has to be at least eighteen years old, and in some cases, the introduction of two existing members is required to join. Furthermore, there are no special discounts for students with annual dues, as there are in the United States. Politics is left for the “adults” to do.

There were, of course, some adults who were critical of the whole thing. Some of them wrote letters to and commentaries in the newspapers or in other public forums. One such man in his late sixties who agreed to be interviewed felt that “eighteen was simply too young of an age for people to vote, especially when they were still under the care of their parents and not independent yet.”¹² Politically conservative, he admitted that while the



Posters featuring candidates for the 2014 Japanese general election.

Source: Photo courtesy of the author.

ruling party did well among the new voters, the principle he was expressing was nonpartisan. Young people had to prove themselves worthy of the vote.

Political Parties and Appealing to Young People

In Japanese elections, which officially take place over a mere couple of weeks and sometimes less, the candidates put up sanctioned signs around the district, and election commissions, through the local governments, put up special official whiteboards in neighborhoods, often near voting centers, on which the candidates—or those who have enough volunteers to do so—place their posters so that all can see who is running from the district. The commission also sponsors campaign messages from the candidates and political parties that are broadcast on public television (NHK). Furthermore, parties and candidates may take out advertisements in newspapers, magazines, and commercial television.

A big trend recently, however, has been increased use of the internet by the parties, as it is cheaper; can often reach a wider audience, especially younger voters and those Japanese living abroad; and can be viewed 24/7. This latter effort is important because younger people tend to get much of their information online, subscribing less and less to newspapers and magazines and watching little to no TV, much like their American peers.¹³ And perhaps more than their American peers, young Japanese do not support a particular political party. According to one reliable poll conducted in November and December 2015, as interest in lowering the voting age was reaching a new high, some 88 percent of eighteen- and nineteen-year-olds said they did not support a party, while a mere 12 percent said they did.¹⁴

In light of these trends, in addition to the use of new technology in seeking a wider audience, political parties have adopted a number of methods beyond the traditional “youth division” and interactions with the “Junior Chamber of Commerce” to reach younger people, including participating in events attended by or put on by younger voters. Prime Minister Abe Shinzō, for example, visited the Akihabara area—popular among older teenagers and young adults—of Tokyo for one of his campaign speeches on behalf of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and spoke in front of the AKB48 Café and Shop.¹⁵ The LDP also posted a manga comic and video online for eighteen-year-olds, hoping to attract their support.

More study is necessary about the effectiveness of the above efforts, especially in light of the rapid decline in electoral participation from eighteen- to nineteen-year-olds and for those in their twenties, but it is clear that young people are not happy with the way politics is conducted. In the first-ever poll of late teens taken in fall 2015, national broadcasting company NHK found that 74 percent were “dissatisfied” with politics and only 24 percent expressed some degree of “satisfaction.” Of that latter number, a mere 1 percent said they were “largely” satisfied. Furthermore, 88 percent of respondents stated that they wanted politics to “change,” while only 11 percent said “no change” was necessary. Disappointingly, only 22 percent

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said they would “definitely” go to the polls, with 38 percent saying they would “probably” go.¹⁶

This last percentage is interesting for two reasons. First, it is of interest for the fact that the same poll respondents called for politics to change but, apparently, did not seem to want to be agents of change by participating in the voting process. Second is the fact that 79 percent recognized that their “daily lives were affected by politics” but evidently did not want to invest the time in an attempt to influence the policies having an effect on their lives. While no details were given, more than 20 percent doubted a daily life-politics connection even existed.

According to a Japanese millennial scholar specializing in international cooperation, young people’s interest in politics when he was growing up “tended to be formed through an interest in international affairs. The country was running well on its own, left up to politicians and big business. But today, the situation is different. Young people are more aware now of the problems in society and are beginning to see politics as a way to fix those problems.”¹⁷

What Millennials Are Thinking

Even if young people, including older millennials, are not interested in or actually participating in politics, it does not necessarily mean they are unconcerned about society or not involved in it, as the above quote suggests. In fact, many of them are key innovators of social change.

One twenty-eight-year-old’s work situation symbolizes the frustration that exists among young people.¹⁸ As she is among the older millennials and lives in the more conservative countryside, she is aware of the older generations’ reluctance to change, including those close to her age group, but also is aware of the desires of younger millennials to get involved. Indeed, she embodies the youthful desire for reform while working in a slow-to-change, conservative town office. In a recent election for mayor, she voted not for the favored candidate, the pro-public works projects, hand-chosen successor to the incumbent, but instead chose the candidate who was most interested in developing the talent that existed within the town. Her candidate lost, but even then, for her, the choices had still been limited—four men, whose average age was sixty. She decided to quit her job and start her own company. The town’s loss may be the country’s gain.

This is not simply an individual work situation problem, but has greater implications for the economy and politics. When someone’s opinion is not valued in the workplace and nothing is done to incorporate the views of employees, she or he will lose motivation and the company’s morale and performance will suffer. The same is true for a democracy. When voters feel that their opinions are not being heard, the result will be lowered morale among the citizenry, indifference and a lack of accountability by political and bureaucratic leadership, and poor voter turnout.

The opposite is likely true as well. When a company or office invests in its younger employees and makes their opinions and contributions feel valued, their involvement in society grows. One such company in Kanazawa includes its employees in everything to such an extent one would not know a hierarchy even existed at first glance. Every person in the company

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votes in the local and national elections, and while the political views of the company's president are well-known, he is more interested in his employees voting than the candidates they support.

The same region, Hokuriku, boasted having the youngest candidate in the forty-eighth general election for the House of Representatives in October 2017. Kasahara Reika was just twenty-five when she ran for the first time, calling for a strong national defense in light of missile and nuclear threats by North Korea, better education policies for the future, and economic revitalization for the countryside.¹⁹ The director of youth programs for a religious group, and without any political experience herself, she gained much attention despite belonging to a minor party.

One trend that has been gaining attention is millennials' desires to leave the cities and return or go to rural areas that face challenges related to depopulation primarily caused by young people leaving in favor of greater education and work opportunities in the cities. As many as 40 percent of people in their twenties expressed a desire to live in rural areas.²⁰ They are now helping rejuvenate these smaller communities. Some of them, like Kasahara above, who was originally from the Tokyo area, are also getting involved in politics in their adopted communities.

Younger people, too, have better language abilities, are globally informed, have greater access to information, and are more technologically skilled than their predecessors. They can be, in the words of one of Japan's leading social innovators, Uo Masataka, "immediately utilized (*sokusen-ryoku*)."²¹ They are rejuvenating civil society, which is a key component of democracy.

Where the skills of young people are lacking, according to some, is their connectivity to others. While their knowledge of modern technology and ability to use other forms of electronic communication can be good, much of the human interaction of young people is through social media, with so-called "friends" actually being those they have only met online.²² Some 20 percent of Japanese college students admitted having no friends with whom they could consult about personal problems, and more than 24 percent said they had no friends they could really respect.²³ A specialist on demographics expressed her frustration with young people's inability to communicate with the opposite sex and attributes this to the declining rate of marriages, and hence to the population decline affecting Japan.²⁴

The vitality of Japanese society and Japanese politics will be very much dependent on how these social skills develop and to what topics these skills are applied in the future. It almost seems as if the younger generation of Japanese are interested in policies without the politics, which is probably better than politics without policies. Ideally, however, the two need to be combined again. It will be incumbent upon the existing political parties to involve young people more and more, as they are Japan's future, and for the young people to insist on greater participation and earn the privileges they currently have. ■

NOTES

1. Sugawara Taku, "Will Lowering the Voting Age Change Japanese Politics," *Nippon*, September 25, 2015, <https://tinyurl.com/ydeg9ej2>.
2. Yuki Yamaguchi, "Elderly at Record Spurs Japan Stores Chase \$1.4 Trillion," *Bloomberg*, May 9, 2012, <https://tinyurl.com/y6upds4p>.
3. It should be noted that American millennial participation dropped in the general election due in part to their dissatisfaction with the Democratic Party's handling of the primary and their disinterest in the "lesser of two evils" voting choice they were given in the general election between Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump.
4. Shimabukuro Yūhi, "18-19 Sai no Shinyūkensha e: Tōhyō de Wakamono no Kokoroi-ki o (To the New Eighteen- to Nineteen-Year-Old Voters: Show Your Spirit by Voting)," *Sekai Nippō*, June 24, 2016.
5. "Do the Young Lean Right? *Mainichi* Polls Show Strong Youth Support for Abe, LDP," *Mainichi Shimbun*, October 9, 2017. Also see Satō Shin, "Teen Voters and Politics in Japan," *Nippon*, August 19, 2016, <https://tinyurl.com/yaogf4ku>.
6. A thoughtful article by two University of Melbourne researchers sought to highlight increased youth involvement following the election law revision, but subsequent developments show their activities were not as strong as implied. See Stacey Steele and

Aya Haruyama, "Japanese Students Wake Up to Politics," *East Asia Forum*, last modified September 18, 2015, <https://tinyurl.com/y89sa3bz>. Although not discussed in the article, one of the more vocal groups, Jiyū to Minshu Shugi no Tame no Gakusei Kinkyū Kōdō (Students for Emergency Action in a Liberal Democracy, or SEALDs), which formed in May 2015, focused its efforts on blocking the security bill being discussed in the parliament and challenging the Abe administration. Aligned with the Japan Communist Party, it did not gain the widespread support it needed to defeat the legislation, although it did generate much media attention. It disbanded in August 2016, but its website is still available for viewing (<https://www.sealds.com/>).

7. Dave Hueston, "Will Lower Voting Age Bring Youths to Polls?" *Japan Times*, June 2, 2015.
8. Haruhiko Tanaka, "Taking the Lower Voter Age as an Opportunity to Change Japanese Education and Society," *Sophia University and Yomiuri Online*, accessed March 25, 2018, <https://tinyurl.com/ybvkdqku>.
9. Miho Nakatani, "What Happened When Japan Lowered the Minimum Voting Age?" *East Asian Forum*, last modified October 21, 2017, <https://tinyurl.com/y775zpj6>.
10. Japan celebrates Coming of Age Day (also known as Adults Day) on the second Monday in January for those turning twenty that year. In line with the revision of the voting age, there are plans to conduct the ceremony (sponsored by each community throughout the country) when they turn eighteen, but there are concerns about a January date, as it is right in the middle of their preparation for university entrance exams. With regard to the purchase of alcohol and tobacco, a special committee of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party recommended in the fall of 2015 that the ages be lowered, but no decision was taken by the government at the time.
11. "Voting Rights for 18 Year Olds," *Foreign Press Center Japan*, last modified July 17, 2015, <https://tinyurl.com/y8s4aka7>.
12. Author's email interview with M.S. (for privacy reasons, only initials are used), March 1, 2018.
13. One poll found that in addition to television, Japanese young people were distanced from other things of the "past." The top twenty answers were: (1) cars (42.2 percent); (2) New Year's greeting cards (32.4 percent); (3) reading printed materials (19.4 percent); (4) television (18.8 percent); (5) beer (18.2 percent); (6) CDs (17.8 percent); (7) reading for pleasure (17.6 percent); (8) eating traditional New Year's foods (15 percent); (9) skiing and listening to radio (tie at 13.4 percent each); (11) smoking (12.4 percent); (12) libraries (11.6 percent); (13) romantic love (10.2 percent); (14) pachinko (9.6 percent); (15) sex and mahjong (tie at 9.4 percent each); (17) baseball and bookstores (tie at 8.4 percent each); and (19) luxury brand products (8.2 percent). See Krista Rogers, "The Top 20 Things that Japanese Youth are Distanced From," *Japan Today*, last modified April 9, 2015, <https://tinyurl.com/yd34l572>.
14. "Senkyoken Eru 10 Dai Seiji ni Manzoku 24 percent Manzoku Sezu 74 percent (Teens Who Will Be Eligible to Vote Are 24 Percent Satisfied with Politics, 74 percent Not)," *NHK*, accessed April 12, 2018, <https://tinyurl.com/p76gwyw>.
15. Motoko Rich, "Teenagers in Japan Can Finally Vote. But Will They?" *The New York Times*, July 9, 2016.
16. "Senkyoken Eru 10 Dai," *NHK*.
17. Author's conversation with Professor Murakami Tomoaki, January 9, 2018, Kawanshi City, Japan.
18. Author's interview with Y.S. (for privacy reasons, only initials are used), on multiple occasions in fall 2017 in Hyōgo Prefecture.
19. See, for example, Robert D. Eldridge, "The Beginning, Not the End: Japan's Youngest Candidate, Kasahara Reika," *This Week on Okinawa* 63, no. 47 (2017): 30–31.
20. "Study Shows Growing Number of Young Japanese Urbanites Want to Settle in Rural Areas," *Japan for Sustainability News*, October 25, 2014.
21. Author's conversation with Uo Masataka, January 4, 2018, Jinseki Kōgen, Japan.
22. "Netto Nomi Kōsai Demo 'Yūjin' ('Friends' Exist Just through the Net)," *Asahi Shimbun*, December 29, 2013.
23. "2-5, Tomodachi Kankei (On Friendships)," in *Benesse Kyoiku Sōgō Kenkyūsho, Dai 3 Kai Daigakusei no Gakushū-Seikatsu Jittai Chōsa Sokohōban (Third Survey of University Students' Study Habits and Lifestyles, Immediate Release Version)*, June 2017.
24. Amano Kanako, "Shizen ni Sakarawanai: Ikikata to Hatarakikata Shakai no Jitsugen o (You Can't Fight Nature: Toward a Society That [Best] Blends Living and Working)," presentation before Jitsurei Hōmu Kenkyūkai (Study Group on Legal Case Studies), December 8, 2017, Tokyo.

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