

About this column

Silence has long been upheld as a virtue in Japan. Perhaps for this reason, the Japanese are not quite used to stating their opinions and expressing themselves clearly. However, as globalization proceeds apace, it has become necessary for the outside world to understand what the Japanese are thinking, what kind of society they envision and how they wish to engage with the international community. To this end, it is important for the Japanese to express their views clearly in their own words, thus presenting Japanese perspectives on issues facing us. Active Japanese engagement in international public discourse would help foster new perspectives and deeper recognition and insight that cannot be gained through inward-looking discourse aimed only at the domestic public.

To meet these needs of the times, the English-Speaking Union of Japan (ESUJ), established the column “Japan in Their Own Words (JITOW)” on its website in 2000. Since then, public intellectuals and pundits from various segments of Japanese society have kindly extended their cooperation by contributing to this column opinion articles on a wide range of issues and themes. We hope and believe that this column will help the non-Japanese audience at home and abroad have a better understanding of Japan and also provide new perspectives to the Japanese public.

Let us add that ESUJ is a non-profit, non-political organization and its activities are sustained by private funds only. The opinions expressed in this JITOW column are therefore strictly those of the individual writers.

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