Abe hoping to prove to the world that Japan truly is back

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‘Summer Davos’ Special

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The prime minister has plenty on his plate these days. Handling the downside of Abenomics is one of the many challenges he is facing. The prime minister has already made it clear that he wants to achieve what he has promised. He has expressed his will to work on the details and materialize the growth strategies. "He has come a long way," said a Japanese official, "but he still needs to convince the public that his plans are feasible."

In response to such voices, Abe has tagged the new Diet session, scheduled to kick off on October 4, as an "assembly to materialize the growth strategies." He has also said that the Diet will pass legislation regarding the growth strategies, and that the government will aim to cut the government's budget by 20% in the next fiscal year. However, the public is skeptical about the government's ability to implement the growth strategies.

The growth strategies are "designed to stimulate the private sector's creativity in doing business and to boost global innovation in Japan," Abe said when unveiling the contents of the growth policies in early summer. "Reactivation is the right policy," the prime minister explained. "Japan's miracle cure may not be..."

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Japan's symbolic mountain, Mount Fuji, as well as the surrounding Miho no Matsubara grove are listed as UNESCO World Heritage through the longtime efforts of advocates such as former Cultural Affairs Agency chief Seiichi Kondo. But there is much more to it than that, "he said. "We have to go back to the 11th century but 19th century who made it happen."

Kondo says. "It is a true monument to the people of Japan and the near future. The mountain's environment may deteriorate and the culture of Fuji's culture cannot be achieved reading some facts about these places."

"I think that the uniqueness of Mount Fuji, especially since it came from an ancient mountain, is something people believe in," Kondo said.

"We have to look at the fact that in order to promote and appreciate our own culture, we need to look at the history of our culture."
The Tokyo Foundation has been holding the G1 Global Conference in the University of Tokyo in September since 2000. The conference aims to bring together business, politics, media and other fields. It is an opportunity for participants to exchange ideas on global issues in a free discussion about various topics. The conference is also an opportunity for participants to meet each other and exchange information.
Shizuka Wakashita
Japan Sake and Shochu Makers Association

T he JSS has a busy year, with plans to launch several initiatives to promote sake. For example, the JSS has recently conducted a survey on the popularity of sake in Japan and is planning to use the results to develop new marketing strategies. The JSS is also working with the government to establish a new category for sake under the Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System (HS Code). This will help to encourage the recognition of sake overseas and also enable the industry to obtain accurate figures of sake imports to foreign countries.

One of the advantages of creating a special committee to deal exclusively with foreign markets is that they can tackle legal matters with the Japanese government. In this way, something individual brewers would have a hard time doing. The committee submitted requests to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which in turn negotiated with the US government to increase the amount of sake that could be imported into the United States. In addition, the committee has been trying to create a new category for sake under the HS Code and also to enable the industry to obtain accurate figures of sake imports to foreign countries.

People overseas are now seeking out further information and resources to learn more about sake. They want to know more about authentic sake and how to enjoy it. “We want people to know more about sake overseas,” said Sake Society President, Izumihiko Masuda, who also heads the JSS’s Overseas Strategic Committee.

The first sake seminar targeting foreign residents of Japan is held in the Nebukuro area of Tokyo in June. A large turnout attends a sake seminar and tasting event in New York in February.

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Education helps bring the taste of sake to the world

One of the key challenges facing sake makers wishing to expand abroad is the hefty tax levied on imports, which raises the cost of sake to consumers. In order to reduce the tax burden, the JSS has been lobbying the government to create a new category for sake under the HS Code. This will help to encourage the recognition of sake overseas and also enable the industry to obtain accurate figures of sake imports to foreign countries.

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