

# The Aging Population and Aged Society

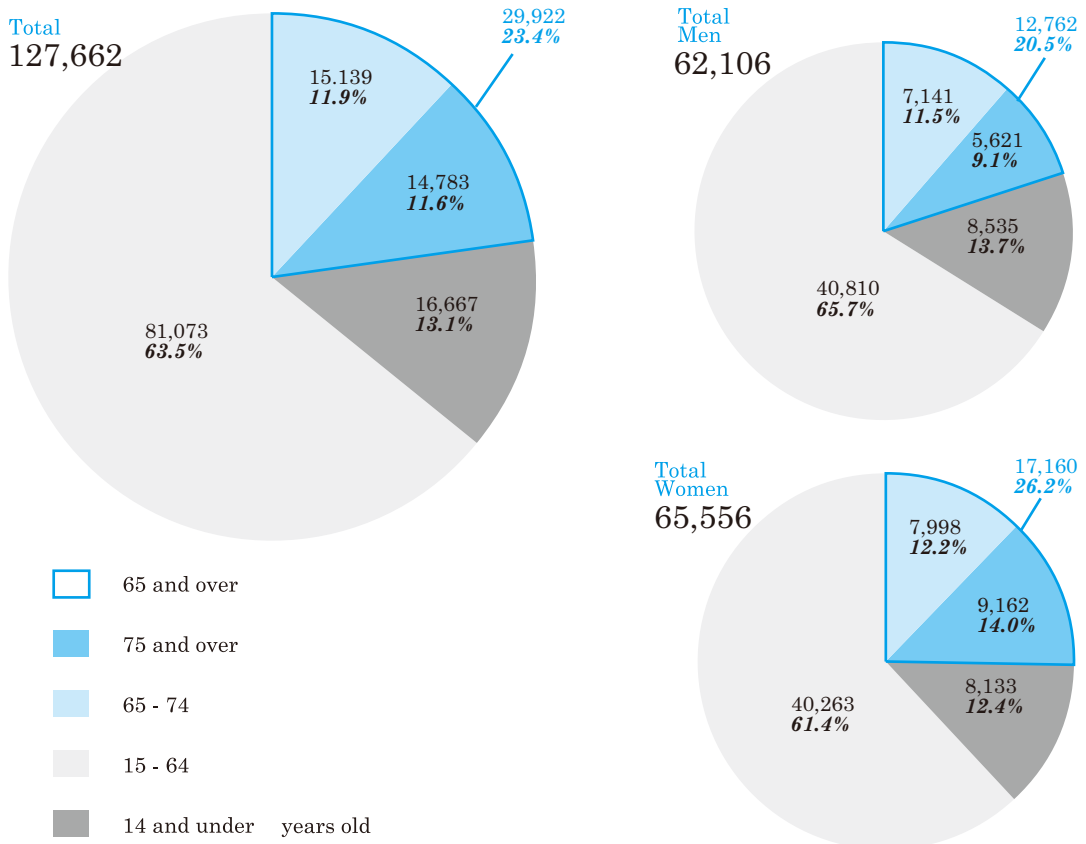
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# Population Aging and Life Expectancy

The total Japanese population as of 2012 is 127.66 million (62.11 million men and 65.56 million women); about 29.92 million are aged 65 and over and 14.78 million are 75 and over. Older Japanese (aged 65 and over) represent 23.4% of the population, and people aged 75 and over represent 11.6%. In other words, more than one in every 5 persons is 65 and over, and more than one in every 10 is 75 and over. Women are overrepresented due to their longer average life expectancy; for example, there are 16 women for every 10 men in the group aged 75 and over. (1-1)

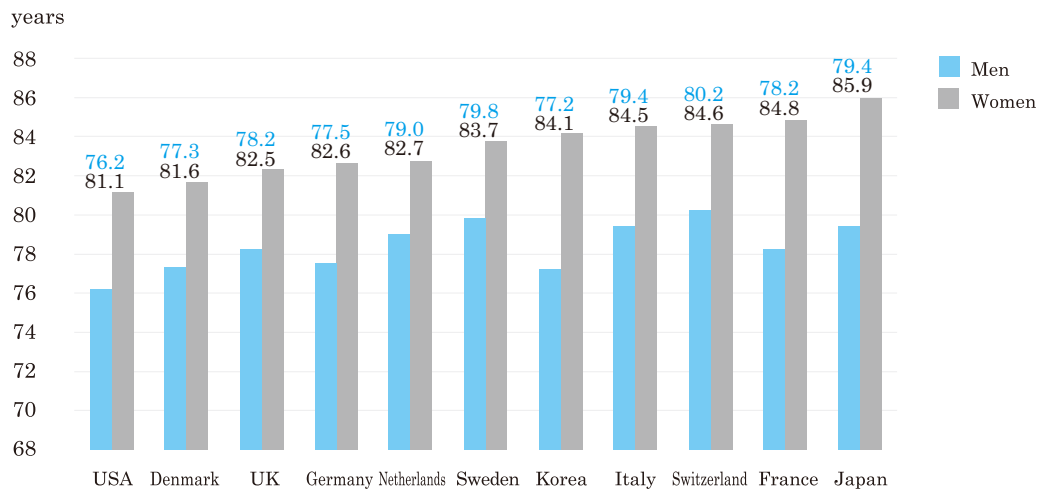
One reason for the growth of the elderly population is that people now live longer. Japan has one of the highest life expectancies in the world with average life expectancy at 79.4 years for men and 85.9 years for women. (1-2)

## 1-1 Population Aging in Japan (1,000 people, %)



Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, *Population Estimates*, January 2012

## 1-2 Life Expectancy at Birth



UN, *Demographic Yearbook*, 2009-2010

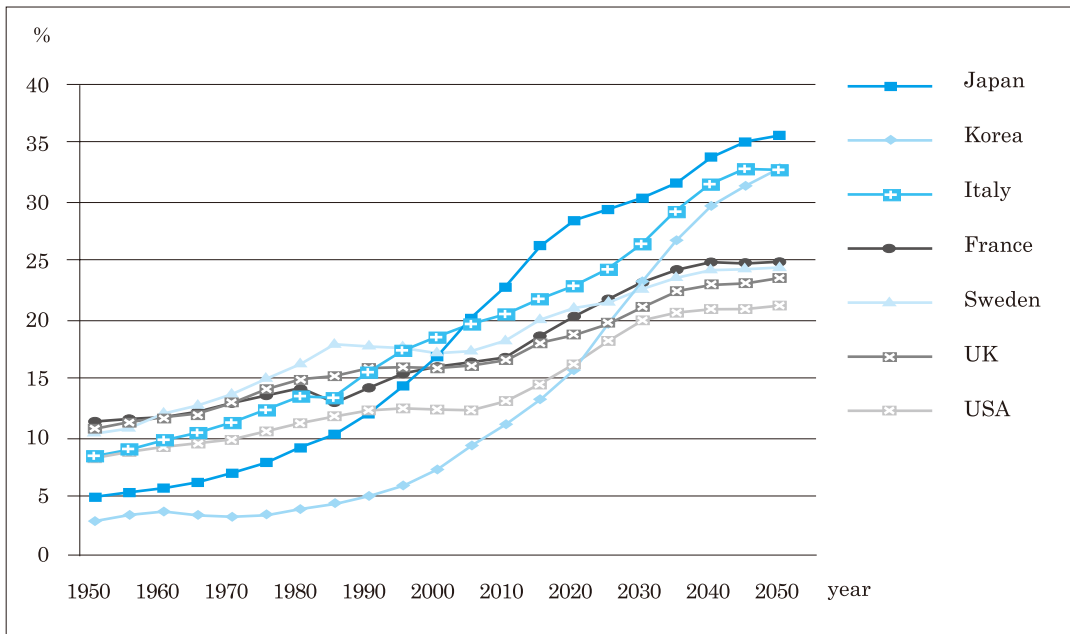
Note : Some data are offered by governments.

## Increase in Life Expectancy

Several factors have contributed to higher life expectancies. Direct factors include improved nutrition and living conditions, as well as public health. Also, advances in medical and pharmacological technology led to dramatic changes in the nature of prevalent diseases. More generally, after World War II, Japanese people experienced an era of peace and prosperity along with their economic growth, which was probably conducive to long life.

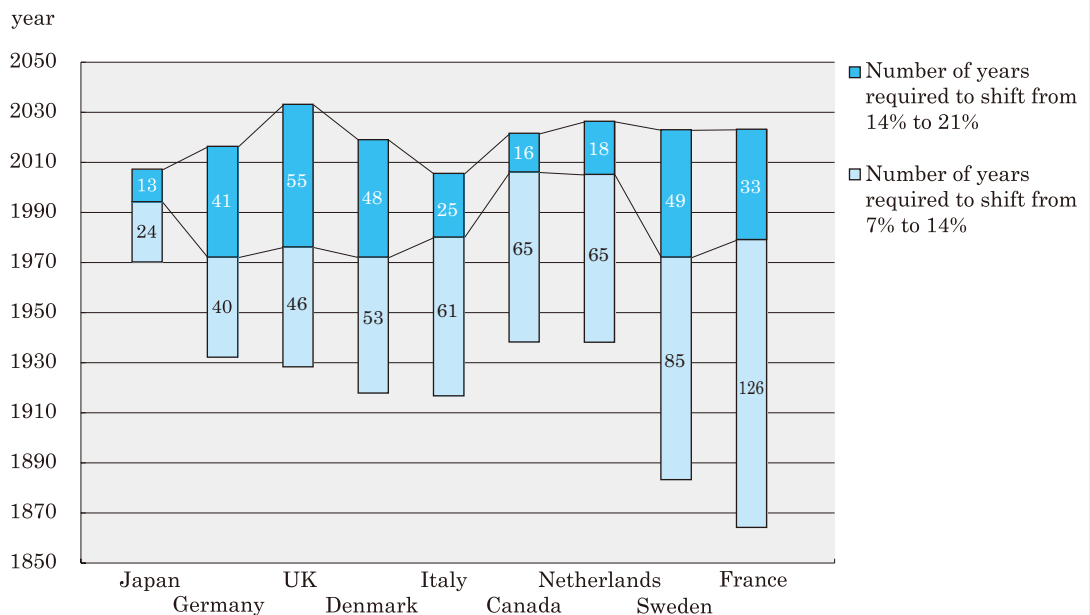
Japan became an “aging society” in 1970. An aging society is defined by WHO as one with 7% or more of people aged 65 and over. Still, compared to other advanced nations Japan remained relatively young until the 1980s. In 1994, Japan became an aged society, meaning 14% 65 and over. The proportion of older persons had doubled in just 24 years in Japan, a process that took about 126 years in France and 40 years in Germany. In 2005, Japan became the country with the highest proportion of people aged 65 and over at 20% by surpassing Italy. (1-3 , 1-4)

### 1-3 Trends of Population Aging (Population 65 and over, Medium variant) (%)



UN, *World Population Prospects: The 2010 Revision*

### 1-4 Speed of Population Aging : International Comparison (year)



1950 and before except Japan : UN, *UN Aging of Population and Its Economic and Social Implications (Population Studies, No.26, 1956)* and *UN Demographic Yearbook*.

After 1950 except Japan: UN, *UN World Population Prospects : The 2010 Revision*

Japan : Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, *National Population Census Survey* and National Institute of Population and Social Security Research, *Population Estimates* (2012)

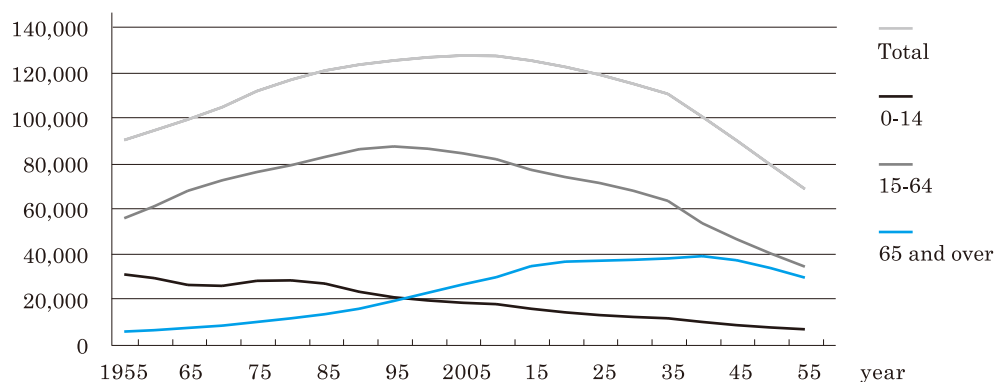
# Decrease of Population and the Growth in Rate of Population Aging

In the future, the population is projected to drop to 125 million in 2015, when 34 million people, (27% of the population, or 1/4 people) will be aged 65 and over. By 2035, the total Japanese population is expected to decline to 111 million, of which 37 million (34%, 1/3 people) will be 65 and over. By 2055, with a total population of about 68 million, 29 million (42%) will be 65 and over. That year is expected to be the peak of population aging in Japan.

An interesting point is that the rapid growth in the 65 and over population is almost over. From 1980 to 2005 the number of elderly people more than doubled, but the rate of increase will moderate sharply from about 2010. However, the old-age share of the population will continue to go up because the total population is shrinking. (1-5)

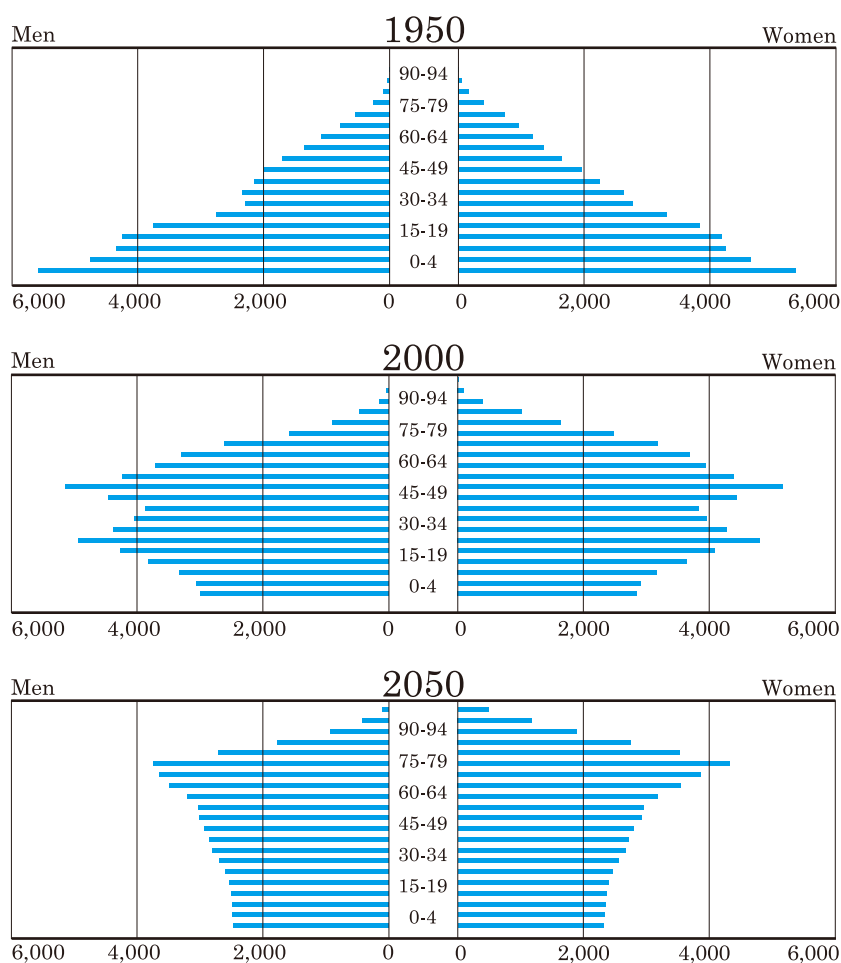
The radical transformation of the Japanese population structure over one century is dramatically shown in the “population pyramids” for 1950, 2000 and 2050 (younger cohorts estimated). Japan went from being quite a young nation, to a middle-aged nation, to a remarkably old nation. (1-6)

## 1-5 Trends with Population in Japan (1,000 people)



Statistics Bureau, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, *Population Statistics of Japan*, 2010

## 1-6 Population Pyramids of Japan 1950, 2000, 2050 (1,000 people)



UN, *World Population Prospects : The 2010 Revision*

## The Aging Population and Aged Society

# Declining Number of Births

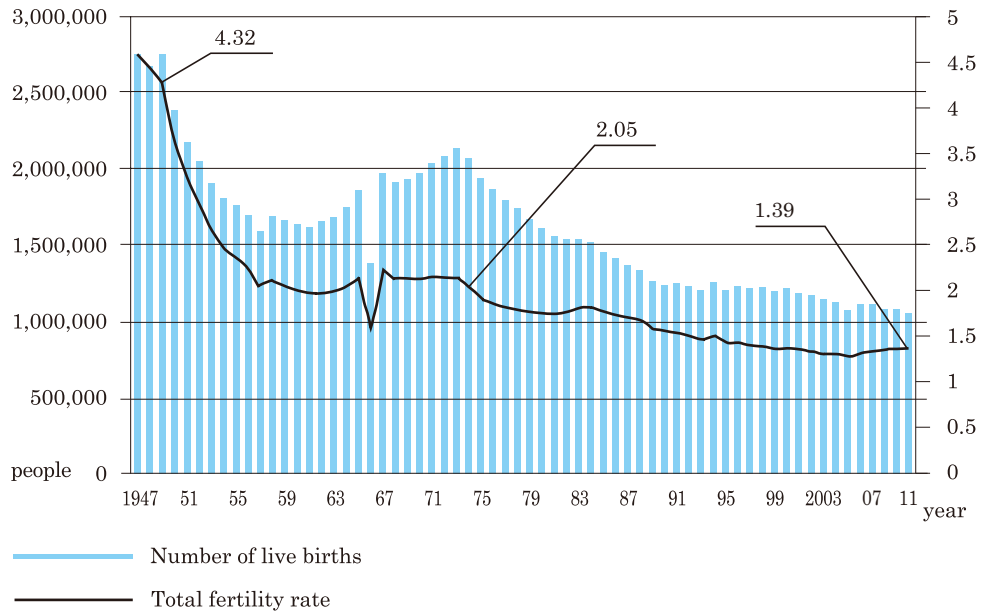
The primary reason for the rapidity of aging in Japan is the declining number of births. The total fertility rate (TFR) had been over 4.30 in the late 1940s, when the baby-boom generation was born, but in 1974 it declined to 2.05, which is the replacement fertility rate, and continued to fall to 1.39 in 2011. (1-7) The primary reasons for this trend are fewer and later marriages, and fewer births among married couples.

In comparison with other countries, Japan's TFR is lower than in the US, France and the Scandinavian countries, and similar to that in Germany and Italy. TFRs in Singapore, Korea and Taiwan are currently lower than in Japan. (1-8)

The government has initiated several programs to raise birth rates, but so far they have been ineffectual. In any case, even if the fertility rate were to rise, the number of women able to have babies will be declining rapidly once the "secondary baby boom" (aged 25-29 in 2000) passes out of its fertile years.

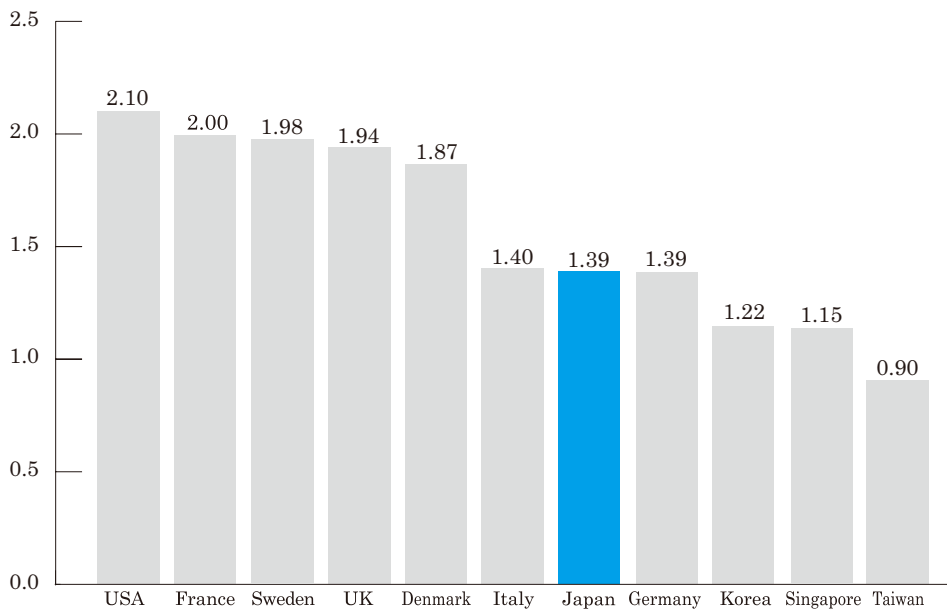


## 1-7 Declining Fertilities in Japan (1947-2011)



Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, *Vital Statistics*, June 2012

## 1-8 Total Fertility Rates: International Comparison (2010-2011)



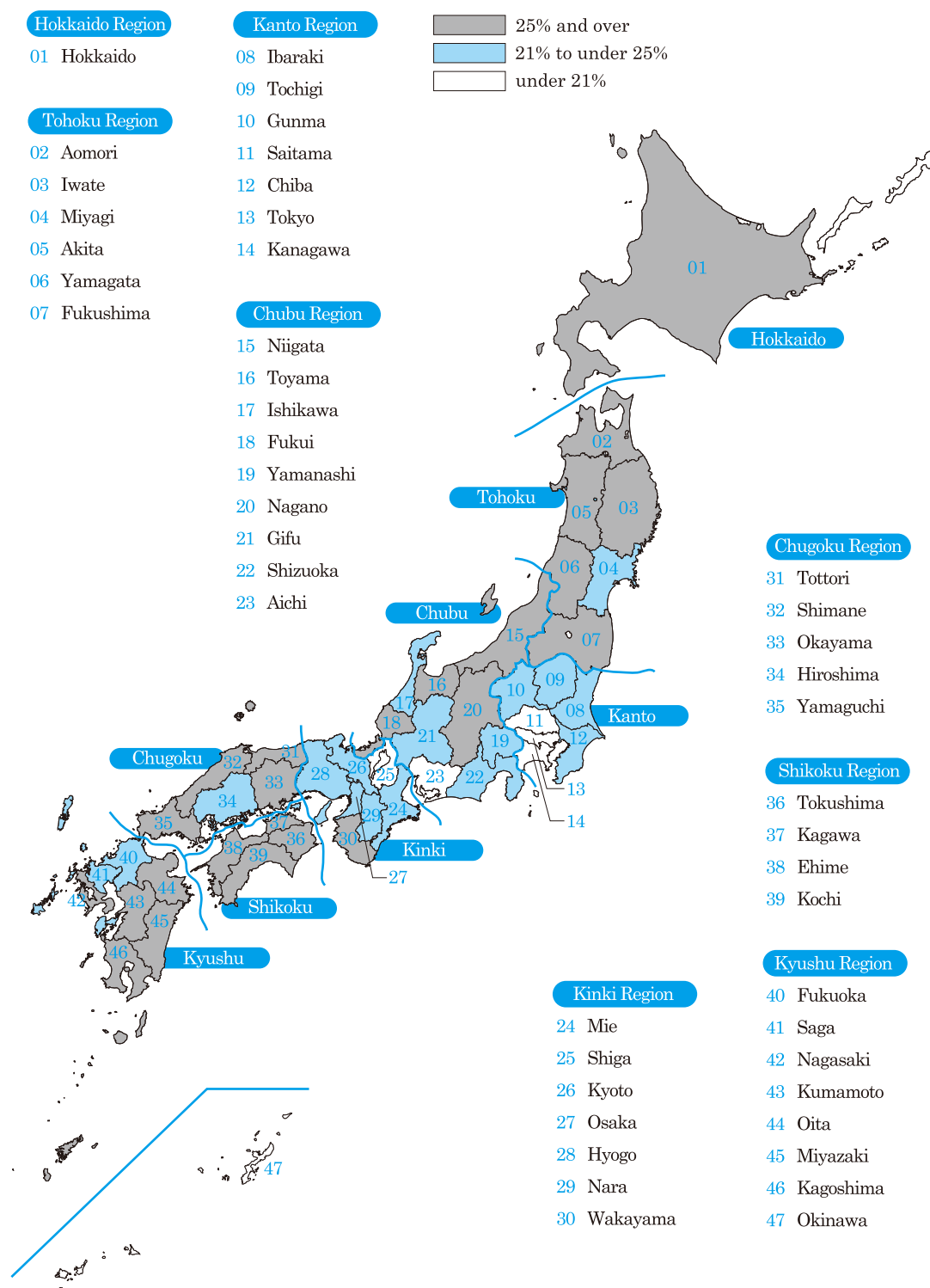
Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, *Vital Statistics*, September 2012  
 Directorate-General of Budget, Accounting and Statistics Taiwan, *Statistical Yearbook*  
 World Bank, *World Development Indicators*

## The Aging Population and Aged Society

# Population Aging by Prefecture

Demographic changes have not been evenly distributed across Japan. For many decades young Japanese have moved from the countryside into big cities in pursuit of better jobs. As a result of these long-term trends, the urban population (in big cities and their surrounding suburbs) is much younger than the rural population of Japan. In 2010, while 23.0% of the Japanese population was 65 and over, it was the lowest proportion of older people in Okinawa (1-9 No.47) in the most south part of Japan (17.3%). The oldest prefecture was Akita (29.7%) in Tohoku region in the north-east part of Japan (1-9 No.05).

## 1-9 Proportion of Population Aged 65 and Over by Prefecture



Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, *Population Estimates*, 2011

## Great Centenarians

〈Population Aged 100 and Over〉 (People)

1972	405	2030	253,000
1992	4,152	2055	657,000
2012	51,376		

Source: Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare and National Institute of Population and Social Security Research, *Latest Demographic Statistics*, 2012



### Kishie Yoshida

Born in 1912 (Gifu)

Kishie, the youngest daughter of four sisters, was born in the family which mainly engaged in forestry, burning charcoal and gathering firewood. She worked in a velveteen factory from 12 through 25 years old. Being able to spend all her salary on her own, she could buy kimonos and enjoy *Nikkatsu* (one of the major Japanese movie companies) cinemas, etc.

Married at 25, she had 4 children.

In the past she worked with her husband with the horse and wagon, buying in charcoal and firewood in the mountain regions to sell them on the plain, while buying in rice, vegetables, *sake* (Japanese liquor), groceries, etc. on the plain to sell them in the mountain regions.

She has a denture now, but she eats same meals with her family—such as a cutlet or meat, and also has hips and legs strong enough to weed or sweep.