



# Kaleidoscope

## MEGURO



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## Coming of Age in Japan

Are you aware of the Japanese holiday *Seijin-no-hi* which occurs on the second Monday of January? On this day, ceremonies are held all across the country to celebrate the coming of age of Japanese youth who have turned or are turning 20 years old in the current school year. You may not be familiar with it since there are not a lot of similar events in other parts of the world. So for this issue, we decided to speak with one such youth who will be attending the ceremony in Meguro Persimmon Hall on Jan 13th, 2020, to hear what he thinks about this special day in Japan.

### Interviewee Profile

Name: Tetsuo Matsunaga Born: 1999 Hometown: Meguro City Affiliation: 1st year law student at Keio University



Tetsuo in Hakama, a traditional Japanese clothes, on his commemorative photograph to celebrate his coming of age.



Coming of age ceremony in Meguro City, 2018. ©Meguro City

### How do you feel about attending the upcoming coming-of-age ceremony?

I am really looking forward to it since it is going to be a new experience for me. I am excited about being able to celebrate with my childhood and hometown friends this special occasion of turning 20.

### What do you think if I tell you that there does not seem to be a lot of similar events overseas.

I did not know that. That is surprising because I consider coming of age a very important milestone.

### Last year the minimum voting age in Japan was lowered from 20 to 18. The legal age of adulthood will follow suit in 2022. What do you think about these changes?

In fact, the lower minimum age for voting came into effect when I was in high school and so I voted at 18. But to be honest, people my age, myself included, do not pay that much attention to politics. Nevertheless, since I think our system of not recognizing someone as adult until they reach 20 is behind the times, these changes are in the right direction.

### In closing, what are your aspirations going forward?

You often hear that young people these days lack motivation and do not venture out of their comfort zone. So I want to take an active role in thinking about what we can do for the future of Japan and put it into action.

We thank Tetsuo for the interview and look forward to seeing him realize his aspiration.

\*This interview was conducted on September 23rd, 2019.