



# Japan's Gift of **250** Cherry Trees to Celebrate America's **250<sup>th</sup>** Birthday

—Grassroots Exchange and Public Diplomacy

**Masatsugu ODAIRA**

Minister for Public Affairs

Embassy of Japan in the United States of America









*What is*

**Public  
Diplomacy**

**?**

*Why*

**Public  
Diplomacy  
matters**

**?**

*Who*  
Carries out

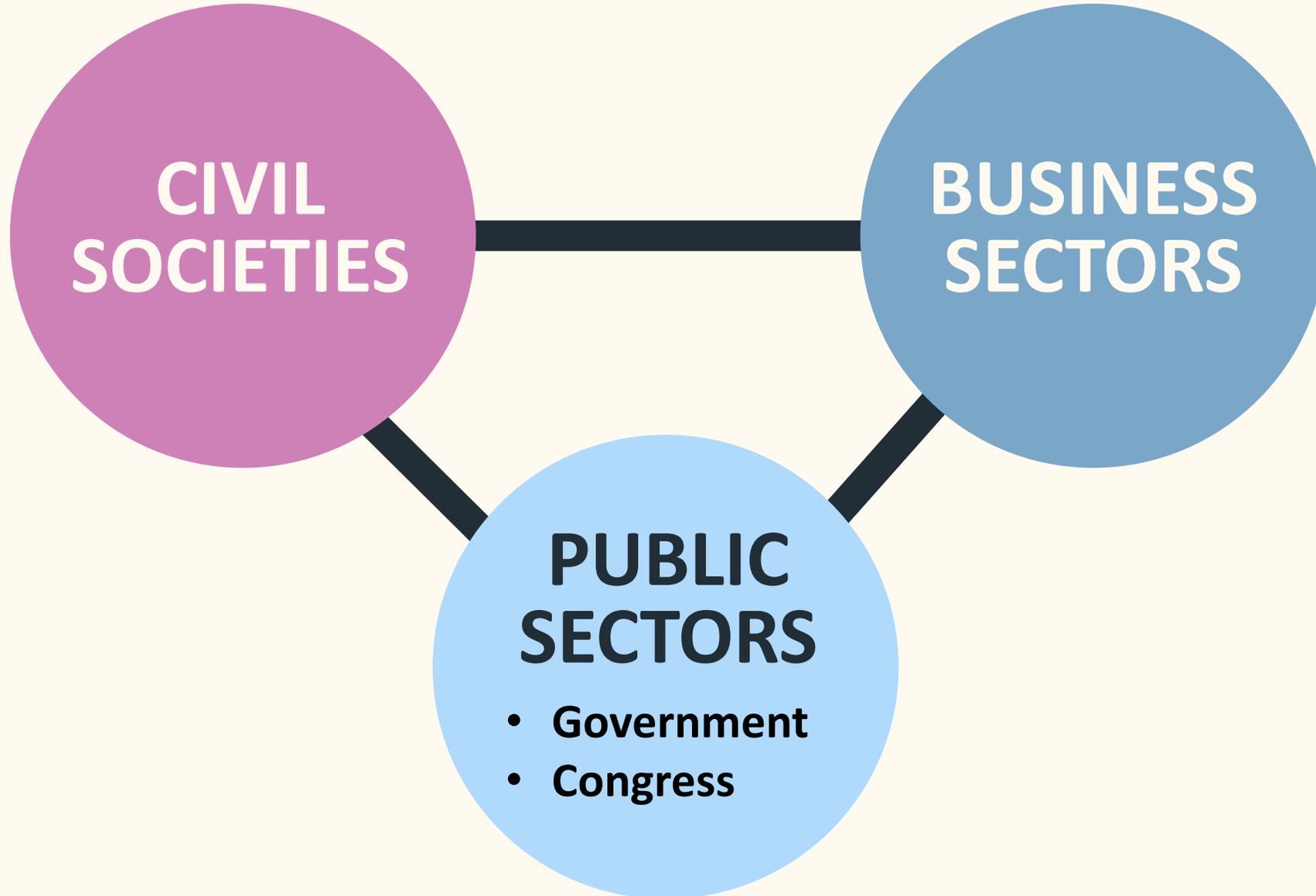
**Public  
Diplomacy**

**?**

*How*  
do we  
promote

**Public  
Diplomacy**

**?**





# The Story of the Cherry Blossoms in Washington DC



# Eliza Ruhamah Scidmore

(1856-1928)

- Journalist and Travel writer
- Fell in love with cherry blossoms in Japan
- Campaigned for over 20 years to bring cherry blossoms to Washington DC



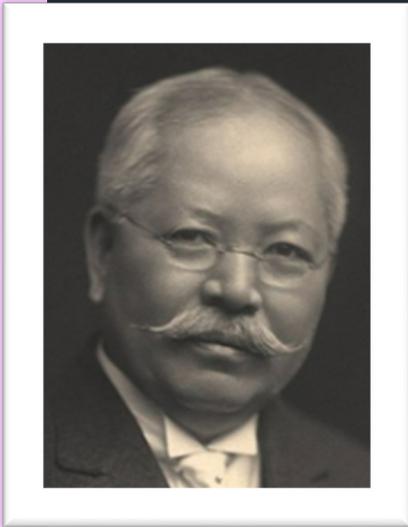
Sumida Park, Sumidagawa river  
©Tokyo Convention & Visitors Bureau



# Helen Herron Taft

(1861-1943)

- First Lady (1909-1913)
- Launched a campaign to beautify Washington by planting trees along the Potomac
- Embraced Scidmore's cherry trees proposal



Jokichi Takamine

## Jokichi Takamine (1854-1922)

Chemist, Entrepreneur, discoverer of Taka-Diastase medicine and the hormone, adrenaline

## Kokichi Mizuno (1873-1914)

Consul-General in New York



Kokichi Mizuno

- 1909: Meeting between Scidmore, Takamine, and Mizuno
  - Scidmore informed them of First Lady's support
  - Takamine offered to donate 2,000 trees
  - Mizuno proposed making them an official gift from the Mayor of Tokyo
  - Mizuno then advised Foreign Minister Komura (1901—1911)

# Yukio Ozaki (1858-1954)



- Mayor of Tokyo City (1903-1912), “Father of Parliamentary Democracy in Japan”
- Amb. Takahira and the US Secretary of State confirmed the plan
- Mayor Ozaki obtained the approval from the Tokyo City Council to donate 2,000 cherry tree saplings
- The Nippon Yusen Shipping Line transported the trees free of charge

# 1910

## The First Trees Fall Short

2,000 cherry  
trees arrived

Trees were  
found to be  
diseased  
and then  
*burned!*

Japan  
supported a  
US inspection  
and tried again

# 1912

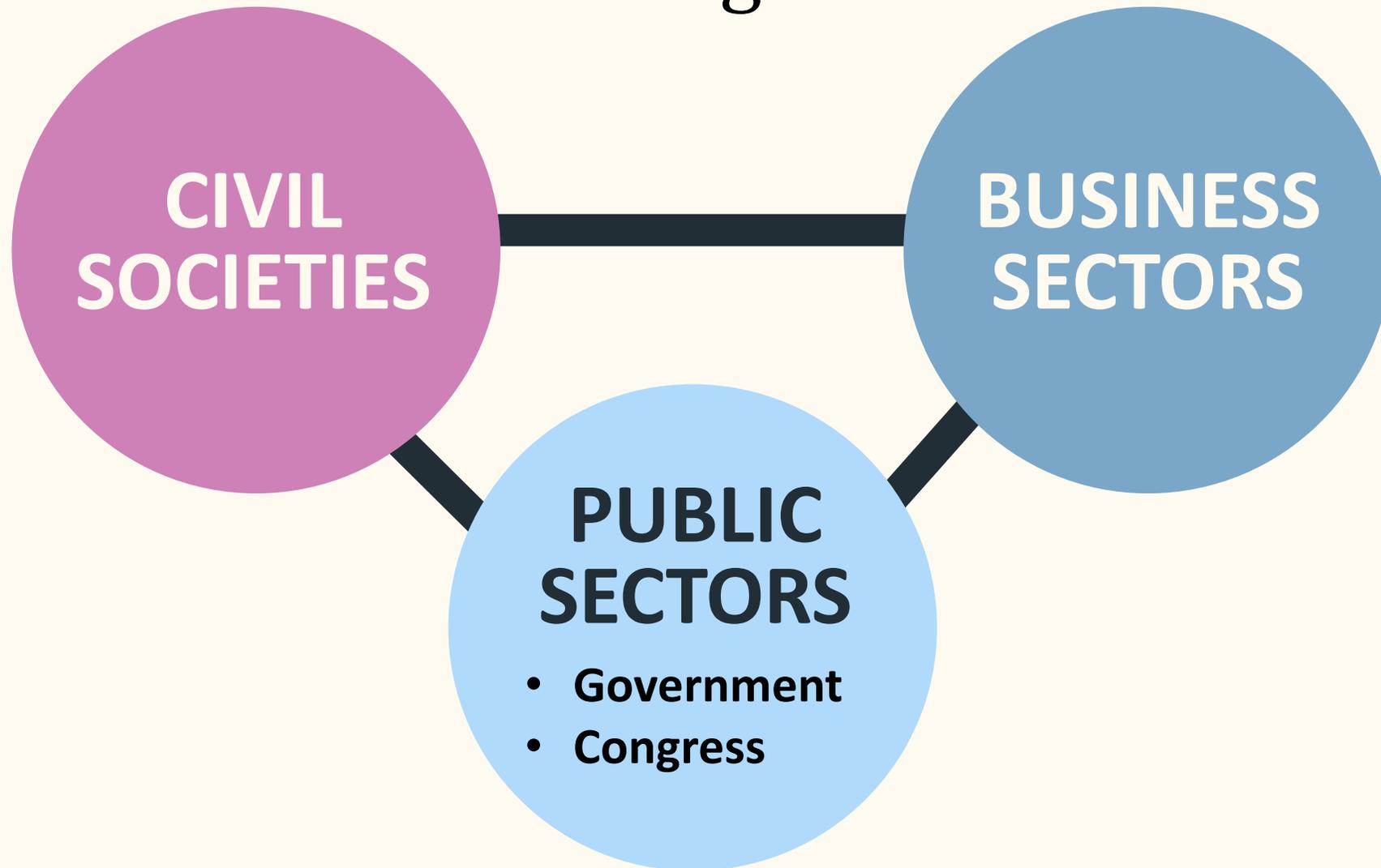
## From Failure to Credibility

3,020 trees  
were specially  
grown under  
strict control

A science-based  
preparation  
succeeded in  
delivering the trees

Trees were  
planted by  
First Lady Taft  
and the Japanese  
Ambassador's  
wife, Chinda

# Convening Power



**Symbol → Platform**



Photos from Library of Congress

*Under the cherry trees,  
None are utter strangers.*

—Kobayashi Issa

the 18th-century haiku master

はな  
かげ  
花の陰

たにん  
あかの他人は

なかりけり

小林  
一茶



The peak bloom brings out thousands of sightseers beneath a canopy of cherry blossom branches along the Tidal Basin on April 9, 1944. (Photo by AP scanned from Post archives) (AP)

# National Cherry Blossom Festival

March 20 – April 12, 2026

- Celebrating the gift of 3,020 Cherry Blossom Trees delivered in 1912
- Various events including Parade, Street Festival, Delegate Program, etc.



**National Conference  
of State Societies**



**THE JAPAN-AMERICA SOCIETY  
OF WASHINGTON DC**





*What is*

**Public  
Diplomacy**

**?**

*Why*

**Public  
Diplomacy  
matters**

**?**

*Who*  
Carries out

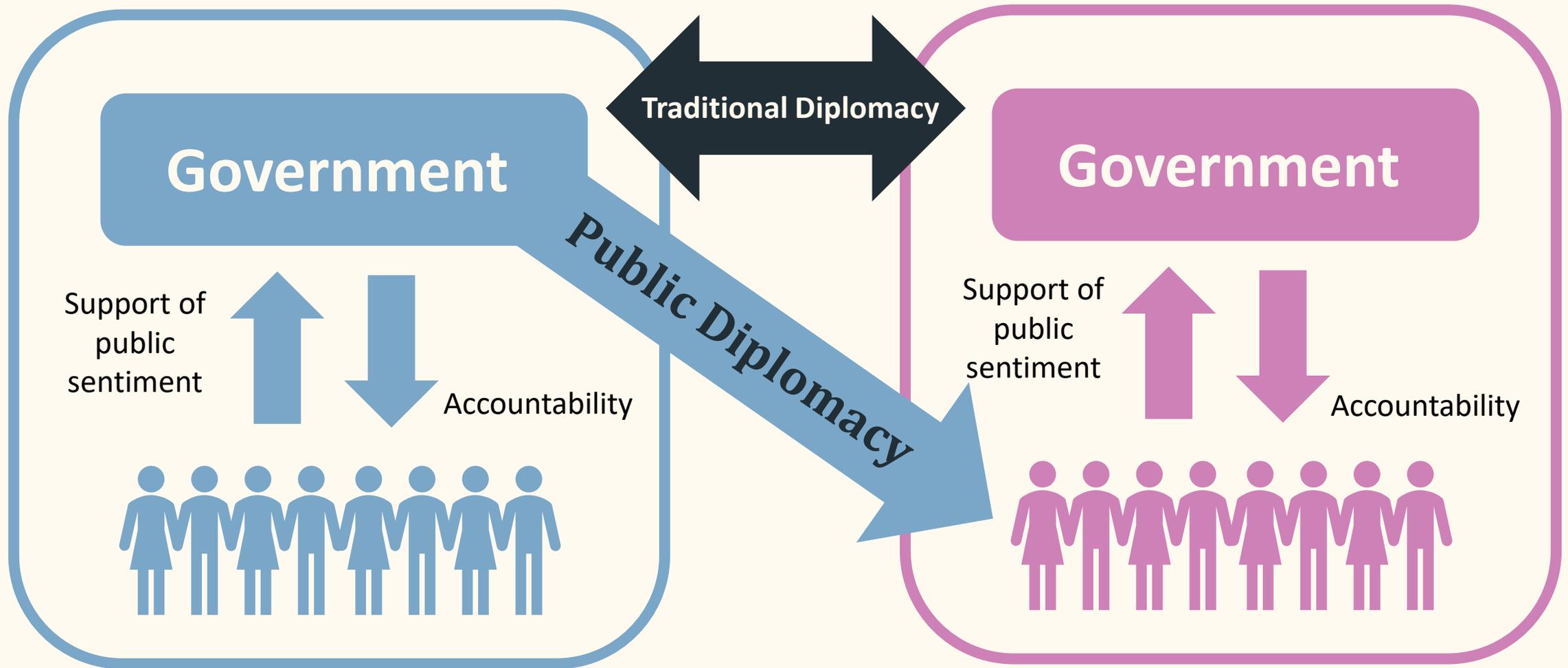
**Public  
Diplomacy**

**?**

*How*  
do we  
promote

**Public  
Diplomacy**

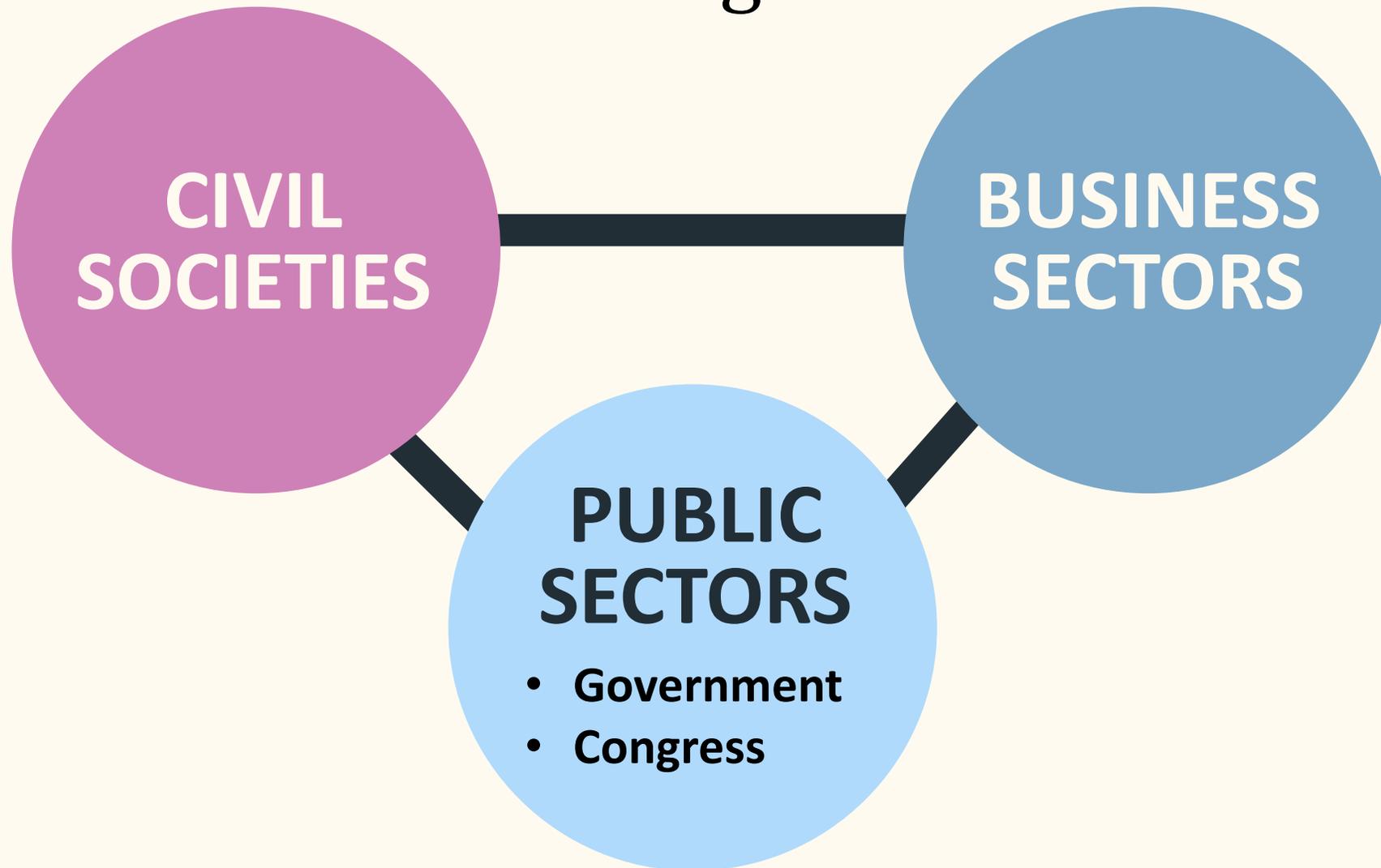
**?**



“In the information age, the mark of a great power is not just whose army wins, but also whose story wins.”

By Joseph Nye - “The Future of Power”

# Convening Power



**Symbol → Platform**



National Association of Japan-America Societies

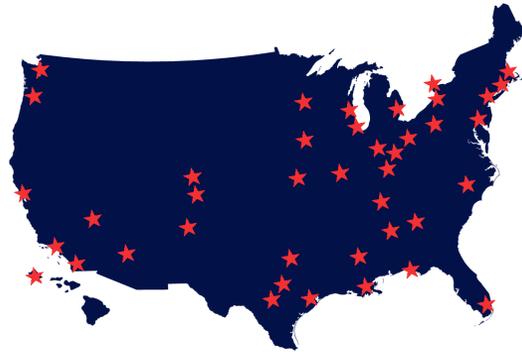
39 Societies / 9.9K individual members

2.2K corporate members / 100K participants

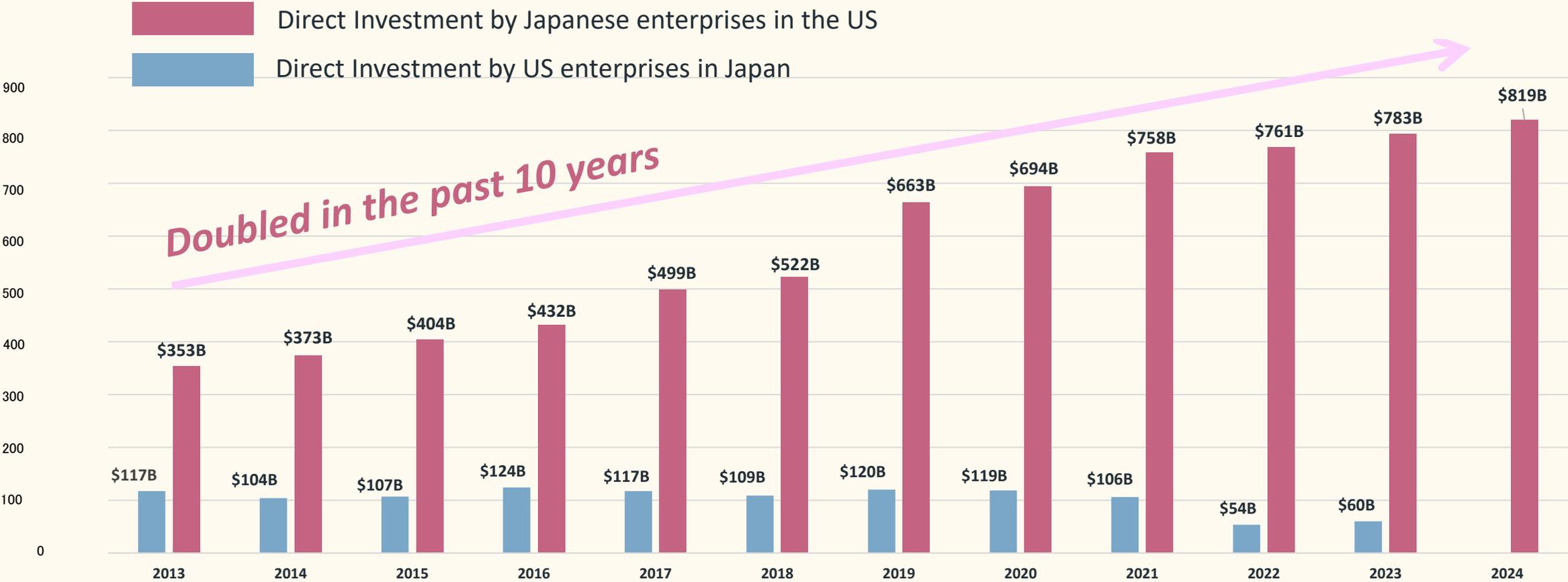
2K+ cultural, business and educational programs



40K JET Alumni / 19 JETAA Chapters



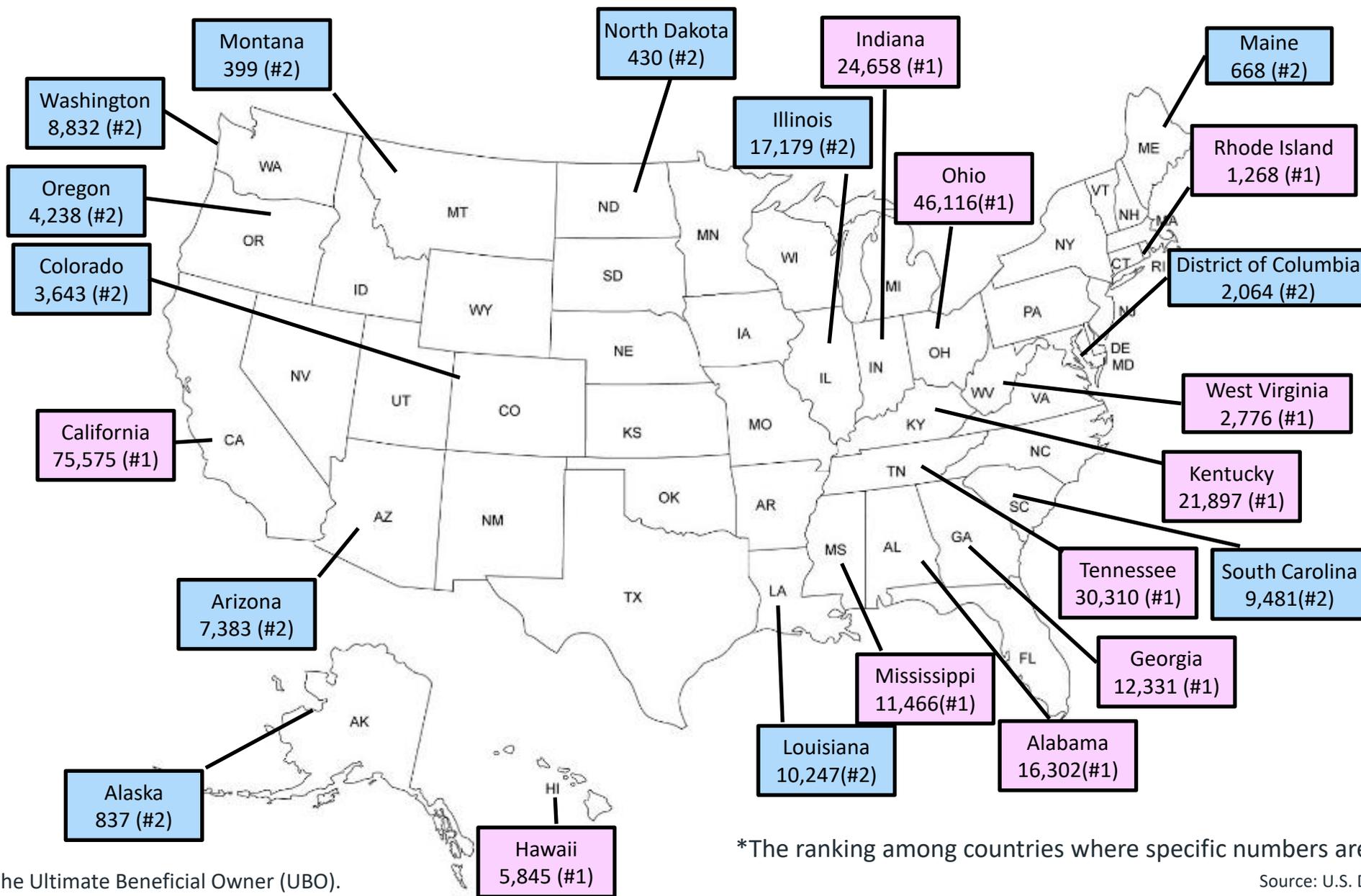
# Direct investment by companies



The stock of direct investment in the United States by Japanese companies has been on a consistent **upward trend**, reaching approximately **\$819.2 billion** in 2024. Japan has remained **the largest foreign investor in the United States** for the sixth consecutive year since 2019.

# Japan is the biggest (#1) investor in 11 states, and the 2nd biggest (#2) in 12 states\*

## Property, Plant and Equipment of Japanese Companies in the U.S in 2023 (million of dollars)



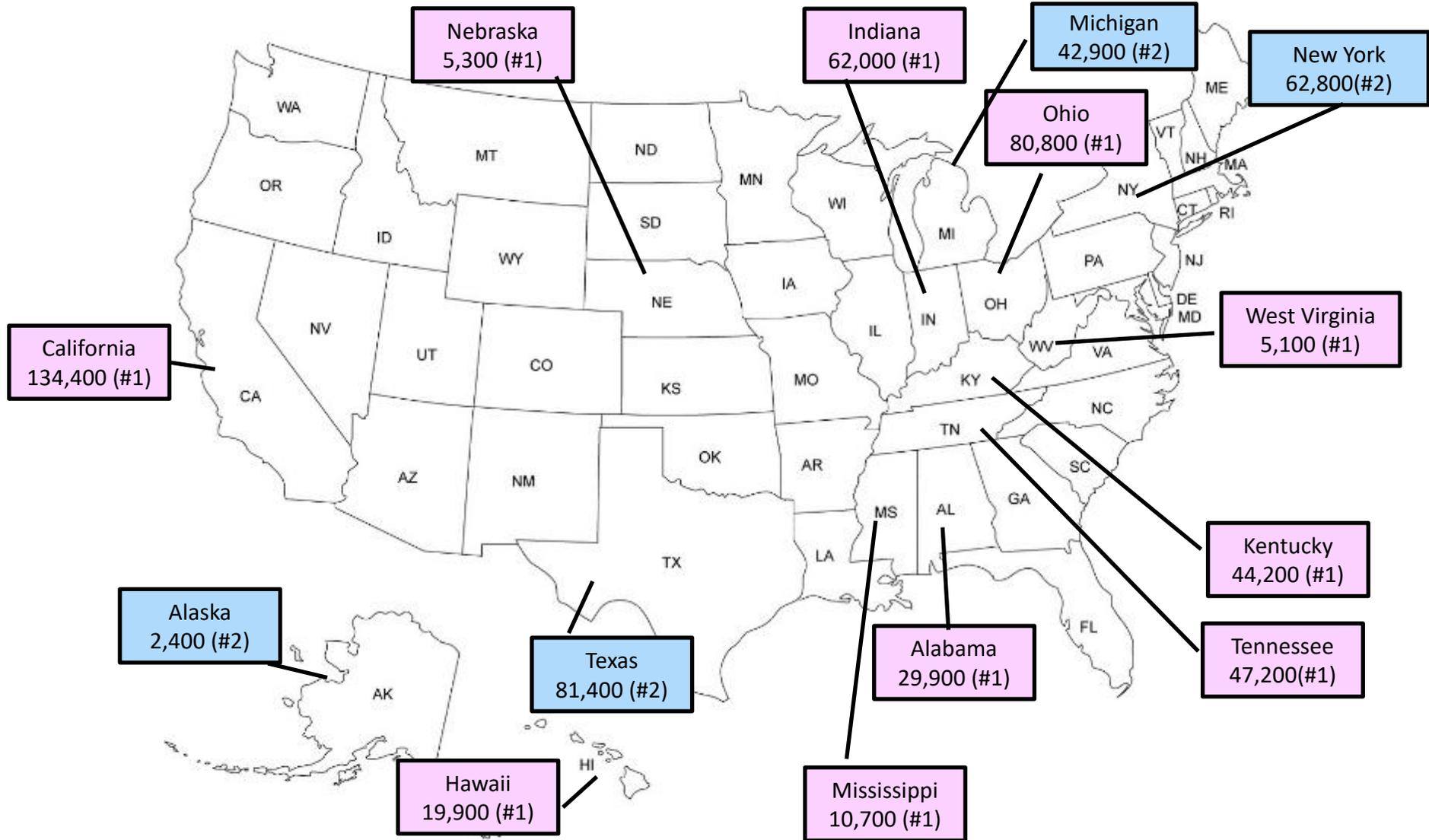
\*The ranking among countries where specific numbers are clearly indicated.

Figures based on the Ultimate Beneficial Owner (UBO).

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce

# Japanese Companies are the top job creators in 10 states and 2<sup>nd</sup> in 4 states\*.

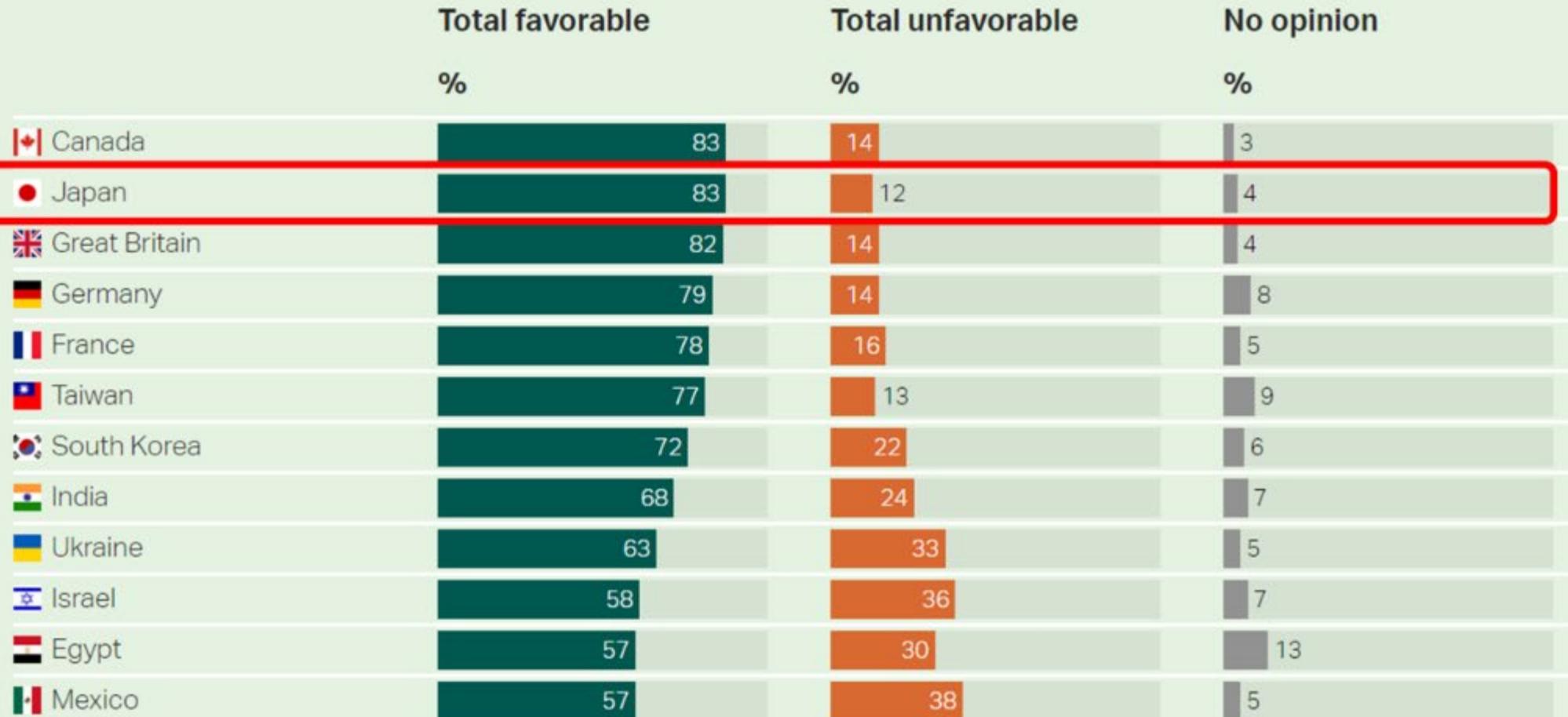
Employment of Japanese Companies in the U.S in 2023 (Number of employees)



\*The ranking among countries where specific numbers are clearly indicated.

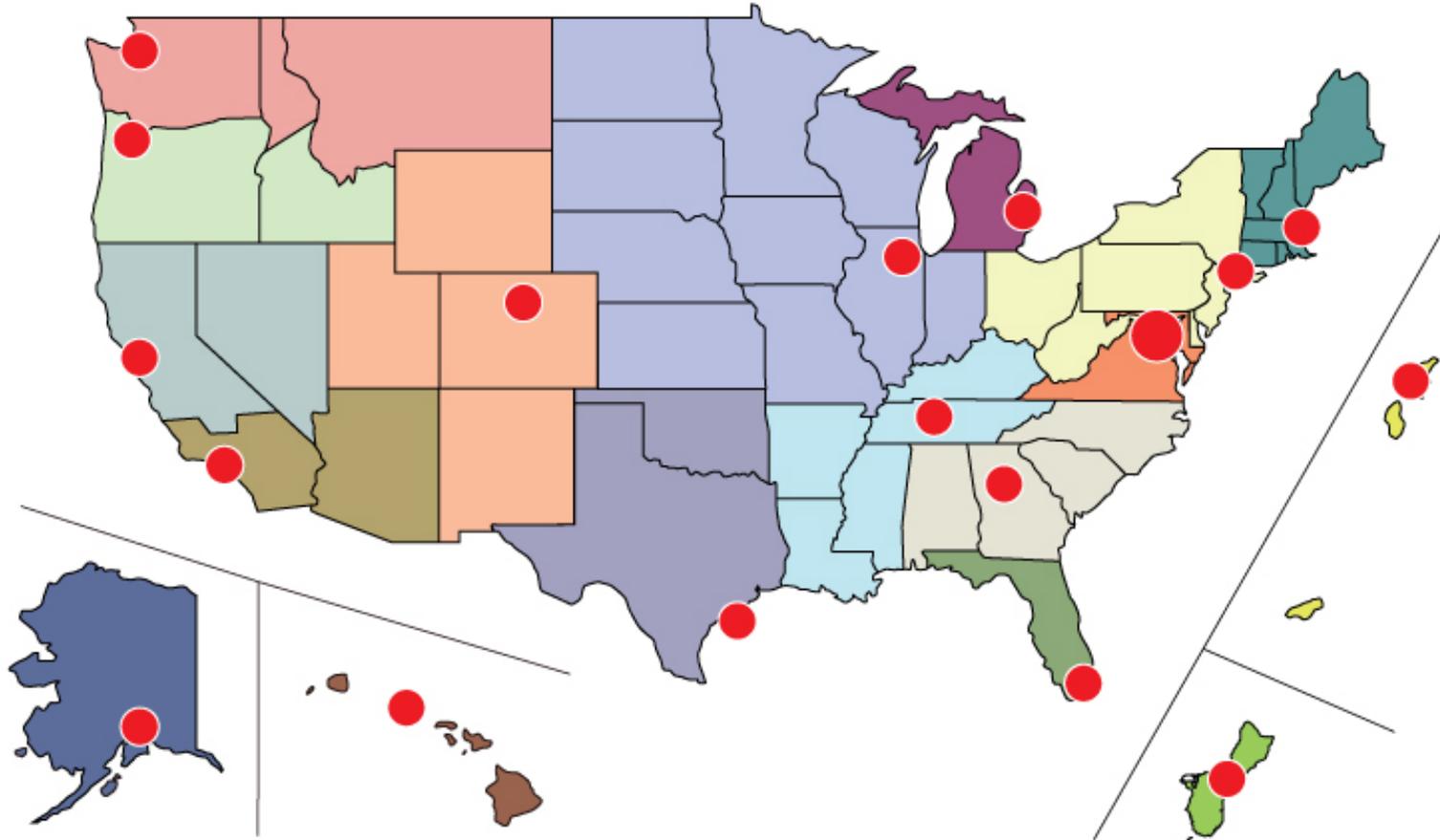
## Americans' Overall Country Ratings

Next, I'd like your overall opinion of some foreign countries. What is your overall opinion of [RANDOM ORDER]?  
Is it very favorable, mostly favorable, mostly unfavorable or very unfavorable?



**18**  
LOCATIONS

# JAPANESE EMBASSY and CONSULATES



# Japan Information & Cultural Center (JICC)



## Embassy-Based Public Diplomacy Platform in DC

- Lectures
- Movie screenings
- Art exhibitions
- Music Performances
- Educational programs

# Overseas offices of the Japan Foundation



# Japan House



JAPAN HOUSE



Multi-purpose hall & room  
for lectures or seminars



Gallery for exhibition



Multimedia library  
with internet access



Shop



Restaurant / Cafe



São Paulo

(c) JAPAN HOUSE Sao Paulo / Rogerio Cassimiro



Los Angeles

(c) JAPAN HOUSE Los Angeles



London

(c) JAPAN HOUSE London / Lee Mawdsley-highres

# Ranking of SNS Accounts and Followers of Ambassadors/Consul-Generals and Embassies/Consulates

(As of October 2025)

Rank	Embassy / Consulate	SNS	Language	Number of followers
1	Embassy of Japan in China	微博 (Weibo)	Chinese	1,992,000
2	Embassy of Japan in Philippines	Facebook	English	530,000
3	Embassy of Japan in Brazil	Facebook	Portuguese	500,000
4	Embassy of Japan in Argentina	Facebook	Spanish	470,000
4	Embassy of Japan in Mexico	Facebook	Spanish	470,000
6	Consulate-General of Japan in São Paulo	Facebook	Portuguese	410,000
7	Embassy of Japan in Indonesia	Facebook	Indonesian	300,000
8	Embassy of Japan in Myanmar	Facebook	Myanmar	280,000
9	Embassy of Japan in Cambodia	Facebook	Cambodian	270,000
Rank	Ambassador / Consul-General	SNS	Language	Number of followers
1	Ambassador of Japan in China	微博 (Weibo)	Chinese	259,000
2	Ambassador of Japan in the United Kingdom	X	English	159,000
3	Ambassador of Japan in Indonesia	Instagram	Indonesia	135,000

# Together We Bloom

