

To Our Readers

This booklet, *Abridged and Illustrated for Easy Understanding--Annual Report on the Environment in Japan*, is a summary of the *Quality of the Environment in Japan 2006* (White Paper), an annual report on the environment issued by the Government, published on May 30, 2006. The content of this booklet was edited to reach out to a wider readership with a more readable publication. This booklet offers an overview of several subjects including “Population Decline and the Environment” and “Fifty Years of Minamata Disease, Origin of Japan’s Environmental Problems” (in Part One) as well as a digest of environmental conservation policies and measures implemented by the Government in FY 2005 (in Part Two).

The *Quality of the Environment in Japan 2006* was printed by Gyosei Corporation. The Ministry of the Environment also intends to publish the *Annual Report on the Environment for Children* this fall, which is edited for easy understanding by primary and middle school students.

These publications are also available on the Ministry of the Environment websites:

Quality of the Environment in Japan (<http://www.env.go.jp/policy/hakusyo/>);

Annual Report on the Environment for Children (<http://www.env.go.jp/policy/hakusyo/kodomo.html>) (these two documents are available only in Japanese); and back issues of *Quality of the Environment in Japan* and *Abridged and Illustrated for Easy Understanding--Annual Report on the Environment in Japan* are available on the Ministry of the Environment website (<http://www.env.go.jp/en/w-paper/index.html>).

Besides the topics covered in this booklet, *Quality of the Environment in Japan 2006* also introduces the following websites for your reference:

- Toward the Realization of a Virtuous Circle for Environment and Economy in Japan (http://www.env.go.jp/policy/env_econo/index.html) (in large part, Japanese only)
- Ecominister (My family’s Minister of the Environment) (<http://www.env.go.jp/policy/wagaya/index.html>) (in Japanese only)
- EcoFamily Website (<http://www.eco-family.jp/>) (in Japanese only)
- Global Environment Information Centre (<http://www.geic.or.jp/geic/>)

The drawing on the front cover is the work of Misato Kato, who at the time was a freshman at the Shizuoka Prefectural Hamamatsu Enoshima High School. The drawing won the Minister of the Environment Award (General Category; high school and above) in the 2006 White Paper on the Environment Cover Page Illustration Contest sponsored by the Ministry of the Environment and the Japan Environment Association.

Ms. Kato commented, “The poster represents a landscape where we live in harmony with the riches of the air, vegetation and water as well as animals”

The drawing on the back cover is the work of Keiko Ihara, who at the time was a junior at Kagawa Prefectural Takamatsu-Kougei High School. It received the Japan Environment Association Chairman Award (General Category) in the same Cover Page Illustration Contest.

Ms. Ihara said “I would like everyone to understand all plants and animals will grow well if we have clean water.”