

# Nadeshiko Win FIFA Women's World Cup

In the sixth FIFA Women's World Cup soccer tournament held in Germany, the Japan team (nicknamed the *Nadeshiko* after the flower which traditionally symbolizes Japanese female beauty and strength), ranked fourth in FIFA's World Rankings, beat first-ranked USA in the final to win their first World Cup.

In the July 17 final against the USA, Japan twice fell behind, only to come back each time and force the game to a penalty shootout. Edging the shootout 3-1, they claimed the title.

After each game, the Japanese players walked around the pitch holding a huge banner which read, "To Our Friends Around the World, Thank You for Your Support," acknowledging



Prime Minister Naoto Kan holds the Women's World Cup during a courtesy visit by the Japan team on July 19.



Homare Sawa raises the World Cup for Japan and the team rejoices following their triumph on July 17 in Frankfurt, Germany.

the special support they had received following the Great East Japan Earthquake.

Japan returned home on July 19 to a warm welcome from hundreds of fans and a media throng at Narita International Airport. The team paid a courtesy visit to the Cabinet on the same day and reported their victory to Prime Minister Naoto Kan. Prime Minister Kan expressed his belief that the people of Japan were given great courage by the performance of the Japan team.

Japan has made the 2012 London Olympics their next target. The team will play in the Asian qualifiers that will take place in China from September 1.

