

Coping with the 100-year-life society

More than half of Japanese babies can expect to live to 100. This prospect would have **horrified** today's pessimists. They worry that, as the country ages and its population **shrinks**, health bills will soar, the pension system will **go bust**, villages will empty and there will be too few **youngsters** to care for the elderly.

horrify 使恐惧; 惊骇

shrink 收缩

go bust 破产

youngster 年轻人

Yet for most people, not dying young is a blessing. Japan's prime minister, Shinzo Abe, says he wants his country to be a model of how to make ultra-long lives **fulfilling**—and affordable. He talks of “designing the 100-year-life society”. But to achieve that Mr. Abe, in his last three years in office, will have to adopt reforms that are far **bolder** than he currently envisages.

fulfilling 能实现个人抱负的

bold 大胆的; 英勇的

The key is to have enough people working to support those who no longer can. There are three ways to achieve this: persuade current workers to labor longer, encourage more women to enter the workforce and let in more immigrants.

Japan has made progress on all three, but it is not enough. If Japanese people are going to live to 100 they will have to retire much later than 70. Women are too often **stuck in** part-time or badly paid jobs. Nearly 70,000 immigrants a year may sound like a lot, but Japan's population is declining by almost 400,000 a year and there are a **stunning** 1.6 **vacancies** for every jobseeker.

stuck in 陷于

stunning 使人晕倒的; 震耳欲聋的

vacancy 空缺; 空位

ageing 老化的

An **ageing** society need not be a **decrepit** one. As Mr Abe notes, today's elderly Japanese walk as fast as those ten years younger once did. But for Japan to stay **solvent** as it turns silver, he too must move faster than he has done thus far.

decrepit 衰老的; 破旧的

solvent 有偿付能力的