



CONSUL-GENERAL OF JAPAN

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2015 Year-end Letter from the Consul-General of Japan in Toronto



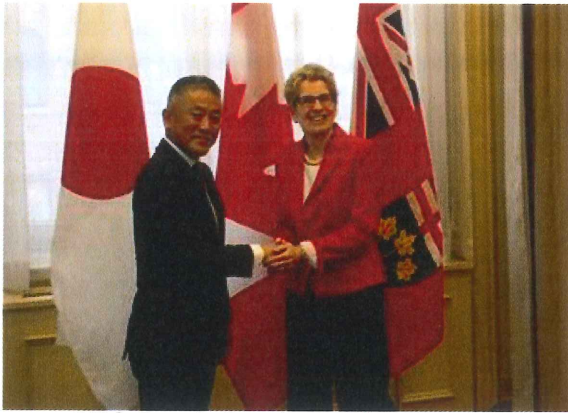
Dear Friends:

As Consul-General of Japan in Toronto, I am very pleased by the tremendously positive relations enjoyed by Japan and Canada. Please allow me to take this opportunity to review some of the highlights of 2015.

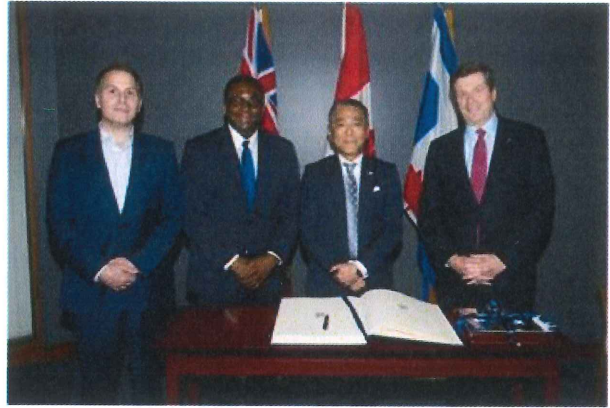


Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and Prime Minister Justin Trudeau
at the APEC meeting in Manila

At the federal level, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe had his first bilateral meeting with newly elected Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau at the APEC meeting in Manila on November 18th. They have agreed to renew their efforts in further strengthening our bilateral relations in wide-ranging fields, as members of G-7 countries that share common values.



With Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne



With Toronto's Mayor Tory and Councillors Michael Thompson and Josh Colle

At the provincial level, Ontario Finance Minister Charles Sousa and Economic Development Minister Brad Duguid led missions to Japan in September and October respectively. I was greatly encouraged to learn that both Ministers returned from their trips with even stronger resolve to further develop our economic ties. A visit by Premier Kathleen Wynne to Japan will hopefully take place sometime in the near future. While I know some Mayors in Ontario have already visited Japan, I hope many more will do so in the near future, including Mayor John Tory of Toronto.



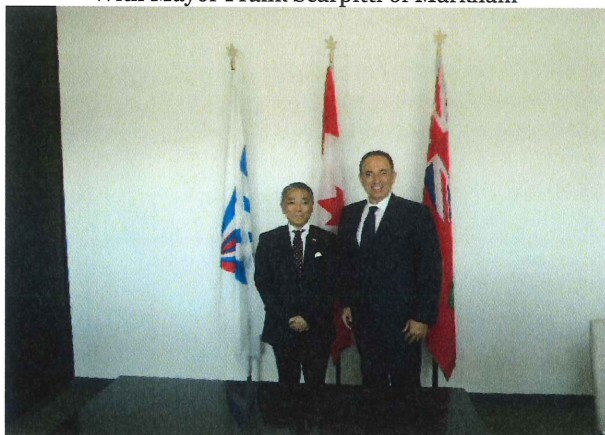
In Oshawa with Mayor John Henry



With Mayor Frank Scarpitti of Markham



With Mayor Bonnie Crombie in Mississauga



With Mayor Maurizio Bevilacqua of Vaughan

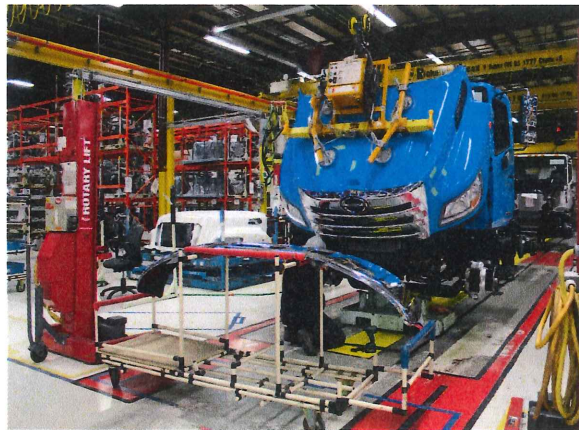
On the business side, continuous and significant Japanese investments by the automobile and auto parts industries have been the central pillar in Japan-Ontario economic relations. I believe that Japanese commitments in this sector will continue well into the future, as shown by the fact that Honda's Ontario facility is now the global lead plant in the production of the new model of Civics, with the large new investment made since last year. Fields such as life science, aerospace, information and communication technology and finance are also growing as other pillars in terms of investment to Ontario from Japan. This flow of Japanese investments to Canada and Ontario is expected to further expand once the Trans Pacific Partnership (TTP) Agreement is put into effect.



(Photo courtesy of Toyota Canada)

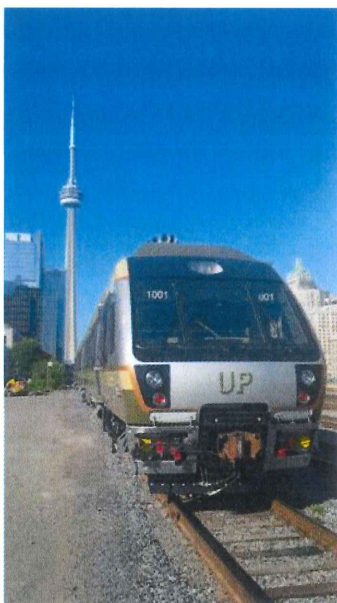


(Photo courtesy of Honda Canada)



(Photo courtesy of Hino Motors Canada)

It is a source of great pride for us that Japanese technologies are continuing to serve the people of Canada and bettering their lives. You may be aware that the Union Pearson Express which began operating in June utilizes dual use trains manufactured by a Japanese company. A lesser known, but no less significant example of technology exchange is the experimental installation in some homes in Oshawa of the Japanese-made hybrid solar inverter and battery system, which is outage resilient and powered by renewable energy. I sincerely hope this trial goes well, and that we will see this system being widely used in Ontario.



UP Express's
Nippon Sharyo trains
(Photo courtesy of Metrolinx and Nippon Sharyo)



At the launch of the experimental installation
of the hybrid solar inverter and battery system

This year, we were delighted to see two Japanese scientists win the Nobel Prize: biochemist and 2014 Gardiner Prize winner Dr. Satoshi Omura and physicist Dr. Takaaki Kajita who shared his prize with Queen's University Professor, Dr. Arthur McDonald. Japan and Canada also take part in joint research and exchange in the field of very advanced medicine and life science.



With my wife Chizuko and Film Director Masayuki Suo and Actress
Tamiyo Kusakari

I am convinced that Japan's strong presence in the Canadian cultural scene contributes greatly to the warm feeling of friendship Canadians feel toward our country. The best in Japanese cinema come regularly to Toronto, not just for the Toronto International Film Festival but also for the Toronto Japanese Film Festival organized by the Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre. As a lover of film, I was delighted to have opportunities to meet such celebrated film makers as Mr. Masato Harada, Mr. Masayuki Suo, Mr. Hirokazu Koreeda and Mr. Mamoru Hosoda, as well as iconic Japanese actresses Ms. Kiki Kirin and Ms. Tamiyo Kusakari.

At this year's Anime North convention in May, the Consulate-General of Japan was pleased to host a presentation on anime tourism in Japan. We are in the stages of planning something even bigger for next year's convention. More on the traditional side, The Royal Ontario Museum has recently confirmed the opening of its Japanese ukiyo-e print exhibition in 2016, and here also, we are currently planning to provide support by organizing events related to traditional Japanese culture.



Performance by Lin-Q

My staff and I were also pleased to take part in this year's Japanese Summer Festival at Yonge-Dundas Square in July, organizing a mikoshi portable shrine parade and presenting a performance by the Japanese idol group called Lin-Q. The day was particularly unforgettable because in the evening, I hosted in my home the members of the Japan National Rugby Team, who were in Toronto to take part in the Pacific Nations Cup.



With the Japan National Rugby Team

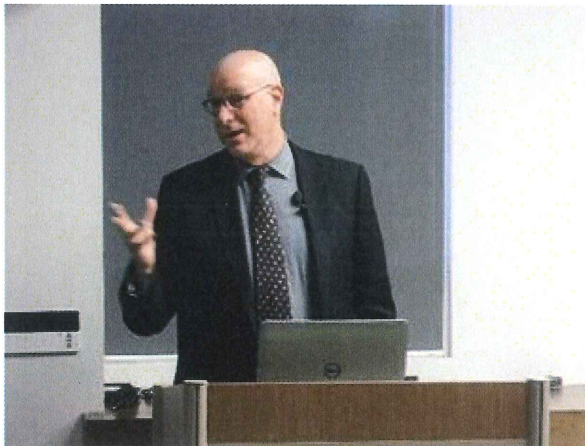


Sakura at Queen's Park



Marking the Sakura in in Birkdale Ravine
in Scarborough

Also this year, I was delighted to learn that many of the Sakura (Japanese cherry) trees blossoming in Toronto in springtime were planted by the Sakura Project, which was initiated by our Consulate-General from 2000 to 2012. The Project planted more than 3,000 trees in public places around Ontario. The tradition of symbolizing goodwill between Japan and Canada through Sakura continue as a total of 45 trees will be planted in Scarborough this year and next, celebrating the friendship between Toronto and the City of Sagamihara in Japan.



Dr. Richard Samuels



With Dr. Kiyoshi Kurokawa

With respect to exchanges in the academic field, the Consulate-General of Japan, along with the University of Toronto's Munk School of Global Affairs, launched the JAPAN NOW Lecture Series to provide an insightful look at contemporary Japan. So far, we have presented the renowned political scientist, Dr. Richard Samuels of MIT, and the global health expert, Dr. Kiyoshi Kurokawa. And this JAPAN NOW will continue into 2016.

Our staff members have also been visiting schools at all levels in the GTA through their "Wonders of Japan" program, which began in 2013 and have resulted in visits to as many as 120 schools so far. We have been very encouraged by the extremely positive responses from teachers and students, and will be continuing with the program next year. We are also very proud of the JET Programme, which has sent about 8,700 Canadians since 1988 to assist in English language education in Japan.

Further, we are delighted to see many Canadian students showing great enthusiasm in learning the Japanese language. I would like to thank the teachers and organizers of Japanese classes for their tireless work in promoting Japanese language studies in Ontario.

Japan and Canada, particularly Ontario, is certain to enjoy greater exchanges in various fields in years to come. The Consulate-General of Japan would like to do its part in further developing our fruitful relations, and I hope we can count on your support.

In closing, please accept my wishes for a safe and happy holiday season.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Yasunori Nakayama". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial 'Y'.

Yasunori Nakayama
Consul-General of Japan