

Message from Consul-General of Japan Takako Ito

August 2018



Japan-Canada 90 Years

On July 20, 1928, a Japanese legation was opened in Ottawa, and diplomatic relations were officially established between Japan and Canada. July 20 this year marked the 90th anniversary of this important occasion, and the Consulate-General of Japan commemorated it in three ways.

First, in the Toronto Star, the paper which has the largest circulation in Canada, we took out a full page ad highlighting the message that Japan and Canada are partners which share common values. In addition to the text, we featured photographs - courtesy of many of our friends - which illustrated this partnership, as well as how Japanese culture is being enjoyed by countless Canadians. We also introduced initiatives such as the JET Programme, the MEXT Japanese Government Scholarships and the Working Holiday Visa, which provide opportunities for Canadian youths - the future of Canada's partnership with Japan - to get to know our country.



Secondly, we held a ceremony to raise the Japanese flag in front of the Ontario Legislative Building at Queen's Park. Raising a foreign country's flag at Queen's Park requires special permission from the administrative office of the Ontario Legislature, but we were able to obtain this through appealing for the significance of the 90th anniversary of Japan-Canada diplomatic relations. We were blessed with good weather, including just the appropriate amount of wind, and we raised the flag which unfurled against the blue sky as the Japanese national anthem played. Some long-time Japanese Canadian residents in attendance were delighted and told me that this was the first time they saw the Japanese

flag raised at Queen' s Park.

On hand also were representatives of the Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario, the Ontario New Democratic Party and the Ontario Liberal Party. Ms. Robin Martin, representing the governing Progressive Conservative Party, conveyed a congratulatory message from Premier Doug Ford, and also told us that her daughter is a big fan of Japan who studies Japanese and listens to J-pop every day. Ms. Mitzie Hunter, who represented the Liberal Party, recounted the time she practiced judo, and also fondly described the Momiji Residence, a Japanese Canadian elderly care facility located in her riding, as being a truly wonderful place.



Our third commemorative initiative was the reception held at the Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre to celebrate the 90th anniversary of Japan-Canada diplomatic relations. In attendance were 400 guests, including such dignitaries as federal parliamentarians, heads of various regional governments as well as municipal councillors. In my [remarks](#), I described the history between Japan and Canada, and the fact that the two countries today are partners which share common values. I also thanked the many people who contributed toward this partnership, and added that, rather than be complacent about our successes, we must work together to meet the various challenges presently confronting these values.

A congratulatory message was conveyed from Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. As well, Mayor Bonnie Crombie of Mississauga, where its city council passed a motion recognizing the 90th anniversary and held a commemorative reception, also took time from her busy schedule to attend and give remarks. Along with the *kagamiwari*, ceremonial saké barrel opening, a toast was raised by Mayor Frank Scarpitti of Markham,



who visited Japan last year and whose city planted 80 Sakura flowering cherry trees within its city limits in June.



We also held an awards ceremony during the reception for the winners of the “Japan, Canada, and Me” photo contest, which we organized in celebration of the 90th anniversary. We received marvelous entries in both the General and Youth categories, including many which featured children and Sakura blossoms as subjects.

Events commemorating the 90th anniversary of Japan-Canada diplomatic relations are being held throughout this year. In addition to those organized by the Consulate-General of Japan, there are many wonderful events hosted by a wide variety of organizations. In July, such events as the



Ikenobo Ikebana floral exhibit, as well as the magic show held by the young Japanese illusionist Daiki during his visit to Canada, contributed greatly toward strengthening ties between the people of our two countries. I sincerely hope that, in the future, this circle of friendship will continue to widen here in Ontario.