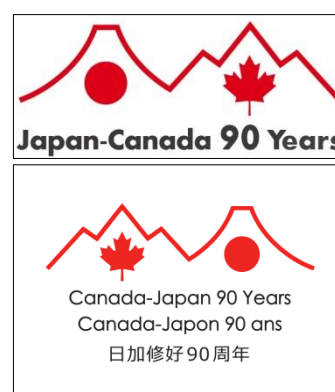


## MESSAGE FROM CONSUL-GENERAL TAKAKO ITO

September 2019

Because this year is exactly 90 years since Canada first established its diplomatic mission in Japan, we have been continuing to hold special events celebrating the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Canada-Japan diplomatic relations. Some of you might be asking: “Wait, wasn’t last year the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary?” Indeed, last year we celebrated the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Japan-Canada diplomatic relations, marking the time since 1928, when Japan established a diplomatic mission in Canada and diplomatic relations between the two countries were formally established. Hence, we celebrated the milestone with a wide variety of commemorative events in Canada. This year, the Embassy of Canada in Japan is holding various anniversary events in Japan, but we are also continuing with our efforts here to strengthen Japan-Canada relations by making full use of the momentum of the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary. (By the way, the official logo of the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary has also reversed its left and right sides from last year to this year.)



We can point to the annual Japan Festival CANADA as being this year’s representative celebratory event for the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary in Ontario. Her Imperial Highness Princess Takamado attended and gave remarks at the opening ceremonies on Aug. 24. Starting from the time when His Imperial Highness Prince Takamado attended Queen’s University in Ontario,



the family of His Imperial Highness Prince Takamado has maintained close ties with Canada. In fact, this was Her Imperial Highness's 10<sup>th</sup> visit to this country. This year's Japan Festival enjoyed ideal weather, and I am told attendance over two days totaled a record 90,000 people.

While in Toronto, Her Imperial Highness attended the Gala Dinner Celebrating the 90th Anniversary of Canada-Japan Relations co-hosted by the Japan Society and the Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada. She also enthusiastically fulfilled all of her commitments on her packed schedule, which included: a visit to the Prince Takamado Gallery in the Royal Ontario Museum; a reception hosted by the Mayor of Mississauga; a children's mini-recital at the Royal Conservatory of Music; a lunch hosted by the Lieutenant-Governor of Ontario; a visit to the Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre; and a dinner with the alumni of the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Programme and of the MEXT Japanese Government Scholarships. It would not be an exaggeration to say that all those who met Her Imperial Highness were charmed by "Japan's Princess" who speaks fluent English and French, and whose smile is always luminous and whose conversation is full of wit.



We also took the opportunity of the gala dinner to confer the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold Rays with Neck Ribbon, to Mr. Ben Ciprietti, who served as President of the Japan Society since its establishment 30 years ago. Mr. Ciprietti, whom



we affectionately call "Ben-san" in Japanese, is a true gentleman who always wears an elegant smile. I could not help noticing, however, how his eyes welled up on this occasion, overwhelmed by the immense privilege of being decorated in the presence of Her Imperial Highness, as well as: Her Honour The Honourable Elizabeth Dowdeswell, Lieutenant-Governor of Ontario; His Excellency Kimihiro Ishikane, Ambassador of

Japan to Canada; and 330 guests who included Cabinet Ministers from the Governments of Canada and Ontario.

Representatives from local governments and exchange organizations in Ontario who take part in sister-city and friendship relations with regional governments in Japan were present at the lunch hosted by Lieutenant-Governor Dowdeswell. They were given the rare opportunity to explain their activities to Her Imperial Highness and Her Honour. Of course, the territory of Ontario alone is 2.8 times larger than that of Japan, so it was impossible for everyone in the province involved in sister-city exchanges to be present. Still, representatives from Toronto, Mississauga, Windsor, Burlington, Oakville, Barrie, Perth, Lindsay and Dundas were assembled, and Her Imperial Highness seemed delightfully surprised that so much exchange was taking place just in Ontario. It was a chance for those present to take to heart the words of the Princess, who said that she would like more people to be aware of this kind of marvelous exchange so that it may be carried on far into the future.



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With respect to this year's Japan Festival CANADA in Mississauga, there was a special performance by the musical duo AGA-SHIO, comprised of Mr. Hiromitsu Agatsuma on Tsugaru Shamisen and Mr. Satoru Shionoya on piano. This performance and the one the day before at the Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre enthralled audiences as official events celebrating the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Canada-Japan diplomatic relations. Meanwhile, at the gala dinner, the Japanese jazz pianist, Mr. Makoto Ozone, performed together with the Canadian vocalist, Ms. Dione Taylor. It turns out both Mr. Shionoya and Mr. Ozone received tremendous influence from hearing the performance of the great Canadian jazz musician, Mr. Oscar Peterson. They say their appreciation of music changed completely afterwards, and that they learned to enjoy music wholeheartedly.

Mr. Oscar Peterson was someone who affected those who heard his music to such an incredible degree. A piano once played by this legendary musician, after what must have been a long and eventful journey, is now sitting in the living room of my official residence. On it rests a photo of Mr. Peterson with his back to



the camera, playing the very same piano. This piano is equipped with an autoplayer mechanism, and can actually recreate music performed by Mr. Peterson. On the night before the AGA-SHIO concert, I hosted the dinner that included Ms. Kelly Peterson, Mr. Peterson's widow, and the members of AGA-SHIO as guests. After dinner, we all enjoyed an Oscar Peterson performance on the autoplayer piano. Because of him, at least two Japanese pianists learned the joy of music and went on to develop international careers, eventually coming to Canada. Here too, one can directly observe the fruits of Japan-Canada relations. And I cannot help but hope that Japanese and Canadians will continue to meet not just through music but in a wide variety of fields, and that their exchange will enrich everyone's lives in the future.

