

MESSAGE FROM CONSUL-GENERAL TAKAKO ITO

November 2019

The autumn sports season has been in full swing in Japan. The Rugby World Cup was just held there, and thanks to the Japanese national team, the Brave Blossoms,

having emerged victorious against Ireland and Scotland and making it into the quarter-finals for the first time, rugby fever was felt all over Japan. The success of the Japanese team was even reported by the media here in Canada. What made me even happier, however, was the news that the Canadian national rugby team, whose game in Kamaishi was cancelled due to Typhoon Hagibis, volunteered to clear the mud and dirt after the storm in order to assist the severely affected local community. Not only the local people but all of Japan were deeply moved by the kind actions of the Canadian team. The Canadian players reportedly were responding to the support and hospitality shown to them by the

Japanese people, so we can say that this is an example of goodwill reverberating forward. Although it was not as widely reported, members of the Canadian team also visited Kamaishi Memorial Park to dedicate flowers for the victims of the Great East Japan Earthquake of 2011, and toured the Tsunami Memorial Hall as well.

Speaking of the Canadian rugby team, this past July, children at the Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital, along with visiting Japanese children whose lives were severely affected by the Great East Japan Earthquake, produced a tairyobata, an auspicious fishing boat flag, to present to the Canadian rugby



team going to Japan. I was informed that this flag traveled across Japan with the Canadian team. The Canadian players must have been deeply moved by this gift of friendship and support from Japanese and Canadian children, and I feel this must also have played a part in inspiring their volunteer work after the typhoon.

On Oct. 20, the Toronto Waterfront Marathon was held in the crisp autumn air with 26,000 participants. There were three categories – 5k, the half marathon and the full marathon – and some of the top runners of the world had been invited to participate in the full marathon.

This year's Waterfront Marathon also served as the selection process for Canadian marathoners participating in the Olympics next summer – the first Canadian male and female runners in the Toronto Marathon who also achieved the Olympic entry standards would be chosen as Canada's representatives. When we asked that I be involved as the Consul-General representing the host country for the next year's Games, the organizers of the marathon were delighted. I was therefore able to take part in the media conference preceding the race, in signaling the start of the race with an air horn and in the awards ceremony afterwards.

At the media conference, I spoke on the symbolism behind the Olympic and Paralympic mascots, Miritowa and Someity. I also explained that the relay of the Olympic torch symbolizing “the flame of recovery” will begin in Fukushima, an area severely affected by the Great East Japan Earthquake. At the closing ceremony, I conveyed the message that Japan was ready to welcome everyone with its renowned hospitality, or “omotenashi”.

The results of the marathon were that runners from Africa, both men and women, took the highest places in the race. However, the male and female runners who took their respective first places among



Canadians both improved greatly upon their past personal records, passed the Olympic entry standards and qualified to participate in next year's Games. One of the three basic concepts of the Tokyo 2020 Games is "Achieving Personal Best". While commending the immense effort put forward by the two Canadian runners who won the Toronto marathon, I would also like to wish them the best of luck in achieving even greater personal bests next year in Japan.

Toronto is a sister-city of Sagamihara in Japan's Kanagawa Prefecture. In early October, Mayor Kentaro Motomura of Sagamihara who was just elected to office this past April, came to Toronto and met with the President of Rowing Canada. The Canadian junior rowing team has already been training this past summer on Lake Sagami in preparation for the World Rowing Junior Championships. Mayor Motomura asked that consideration be given to Lake Sagami also for the final preparations of the athletes prior to the Olympic and Paralympic Games next year. During the 1964 Tokyo Olympics, Lake Sagami was the venue for the canoeing competitions. I sincerely hope that Canadian athletes will have a chance to train in Sagamihara and meet the local people in Toronto's sister city.



Autumn is also the season for the arts. Commemorating the 90th anniversary of Canada-Japan diplomatic relations, and marking the arrival of the new Reiwa

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Yose Arts Performances

Traditional Japanese Vaudeville in Canada

“Fortune favours those who laugh!”

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November 7, 2019
Doors open | 6:30 pm
Performance | 7:00 pm

Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre
6 Garamond Court, Toronto

Daikagura
Kagami Michiyo

Kami Kiri
Hayashi Inemaru

Rakugo
Sanshotai Charaku

Admission is **FREE** but requires **pre-registration**.
Please register at event@to.mofa.go.jp

For more information:
https://www.toronto.ca.emb-japan.go.jp/tpr_en/b_000440.html



era, in early November we will be presenting yose performances featuring rakugo storytelling, kami kiri papercutting and daikagura which consists of juggling and other amazing feats. Later in the month, we will present performances of Shigeyama Kyogen of this comedic performing art's Okura School. With the theme "Fortune favours those who laugh," we are happy to present these traditional Japanese performing arts, the histories of which date back centuries. I am confident these programs will transcend time and national boundaries to bring happiness to all Canadians. Thanks to the special generosity of the performers, these performances will be presented with free of admission charge so I hope everyone will be able to attend.