

Switzerland national day

Celebrating 150 years of Japan-Swiss friendship

Urs Bucher
AMBASSADOR OF SWITZERLAND

The celebration of the Swiss National Day carries a special meaning this year as Japan and Switzerland celebrate 150 years of diplomatic relations. His Imperial Highness the Crown Prince Naruhito and President Didier Burkhalter of the Swiss Confederation are both honorary presidents of the anniversary year, underlining the importance the two countries attach to this jubilee.

This anniversary is an auspi-



cious occasion to highlight and further strengthen the close ties that have grown steadily in the fields of economics, politics, science and culture since the signing of the Treaty of Amity and Commerce on Feb. 6, 1864.

Economic relations remain an important pillar of our mutual exchange. It has been five years since Switzerland became the first western nation to sign a free trade agreement with Japan. The treaty has benefited many companies in both countries, consolidating Japan's place as Switzerland's fourth most important trading partner. Many exchanges and collaborations exist in the field of science and technology as both countries invest heavily in



President Didier Burkhalter of the Swiss Confederation (right) and His Imperial Highness Crown Prince Naruhito jointly launch the anniversary year in Tokyo in February. AKI GOTO

building highly innovative economies and research institutions. Japan is Switzerland's most important research part-

ner in Asia, and since 2007, a bilateral agreement on cooperation in science and technology between the Swiss federal

council and the government of Japan forms the base for strong scientific cooperation. There are more than sixty agreements between top research institutions and universities, not to mention the countless industrial partnerships. The bilateral cooperation in the political and international fields is also significant as Japan is one of Switzerland's most like-minded countries in the U.N. and other international organizations.

Culture is another area in which Switzerland and Japan are constantly engaged in lively interaction. To name just a few examples, some of the most prominent Swiss architects have left a mark in Japan (Le Corbusier, Herzog & de Meu-

ron, Mario Botta and others). This is also true for Japanese architects in Switzerland (SANAA, Shigeru Ban and Riken Yamamoto). In the field of music, one of Europe's most prestigious jazz events, the Montreux Jazz Festival, has found a second home in Kawasaki. The Lucerne Festival Ark Nova, which opened last autumn in Matsushima, Miyagi Prefecture, in a mobile concert hall uniquely designed by artist Anish Kapoor and architect Arata Isozaki, is another illustration.

In 2014, Japan and Switzerland will write a new chapter in their history of friendly relations. In many ways, Switzerland is bringing the best it can offer to Japan this year. More than 180 events and activities are scheduled to take place in Japan alone, all bearing the smiling 150 year anniversary logo.

So far, this momentous year has been marked by the high-level visits of H.I.H. Crown Prince Naruhito to Switzerland in June, the visit of the President Burkhalter of the Swiss Confederation to Japan in February and the Economic mission led by Federal Councilor and Minister of the Economy Johann Schneider-Ammann in July. It has also seen the launch of large-scale retrospective exhibitions of art masters Balthus and Félix Vallotton. In addition, the world-renowned Tonhalle Orchestra of Zürich with David Zinman and the Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, directed by Japanese Maestro

Kazuki Yamada, undertook widely acclaimed tours in April and June respectively. But there are still many more highlights to come.

This special year is an occasion to invite all those who play a key role in maintaining these close ties with my country, but

also those who want to learn more about it, to join us in the events and activities that are unfolding both in Japan and Switzerland.

I hope that you will seize this opportunity to discover a piece of Switzerland in Japan and celebrate this anniversary with us.

A variety of musical, cultural events to commemorate anniversary

Exhibitions:

- "A Retrospective: Balthus" from July 5 to Sept. 7 at the Kyoto Municipal Museum of Art
- "Felix Vallotton: Fire Beneath the Ice" from June 14 to Sept. 23 at the Mitsubishi Ichigokan Museum
- "Masterpieces from Kunsthau Zurich" from Sept. 25 to Dec. 15 at the National Art Center, Tokyo and from Jan. 31 to May 10, 2015, at the Kobe City Museum
- "Ferdinand Hodler: The Way to Rhythm" from Oct. 7 to Jan. 12, 2015, at the National Museum of Western Art, Tokyo and from Jan. 24

to April 5, 2015, at the Hyogo Prefectural Museum

- "Building in Context Contemporary Japanese Architecture in Switzerland" from Oct. 8 to Oct. 18 at Spiral in Tokyo
- Stephan Spicher "Blossom" (solo exhibition) from Sept. 27 to Oct. 30 at the Hakusasonso Hashimoto Kansetsu Garden & Museum in Kyoto
- "Beauty of Function and Craftsmanship — 150 Years of Swiss Design" from Jan. 17 to March 29, 2015 at the Tokyo Opera City Art Gallery

Shows/Concerts:

- 13th Tokyo Jazz Festival, Swiss Electro Jazz night on Sept. 5 at the Tokyo International Forum "the PLAZA"
- Zurich Chamber Orchestra with Sir Roger Norrington on Oct. 2 at the Izumi Hall in Osaka
- Lucerne Festival Ark Nova from Oct. 31 to Nov. 9 in Sendai city
- "The Ninth Symphony of Beethoven (Choreography: Maurice Béjart)" collaboration between the Béjart Ballet Lausanne, The Tokyo Ballet and the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra on Nov. 8 and 9 at NHK Hall



- Tour of Swiss musician Bastian Baker from Nov. 17 to 19 in Osaka, Nagoya and Tokyo
- "Montreux Jazz Festival in Kawasaki 2014" from Nov. 21 to 30

For the full program, visit
www.eda.admin.ch/tokyo-culturecalendar

Congratulations
to the People
of
Switzerland
on the Occasion
of
Their National Day



JAPAN TOBACCO INC.

JT Bldg., 2-1, Toranomon 2-Chome, Minato-ku, Tokyo 105-8422, JAPAN
Phone: (03) 3582-3111 Fax: (03) 5572-1463 URL: <http://www.jt.com>