

Guatemala independence day

Enormous interest in Guatemala intensifies bilateral relations

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AMBASSADOR OF GUATEMALA

On Sept. 15, the Republic of Guatemala celebrates the 192nd anniversary of its independence. On this special occasion I am honored to extend, on behalf of the government and the people of Guatemala, sincere and respectful greetings to Their Imperial Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko, and to the government and the people of Japan. I am also pleased to felicitate my fellow citizens living in Japan.

Guatemala is located in the center of the Americas, bordered by Mexico to the north and west, the Pacific Ocean to the south-west, Belize to the northeast, Honduras and the Caribbean to the east and El Salvador to the southeast. Its area is 108,890 sq. km, about the size of Hokkaido

and Shikoku put together.

The Maya civilization flourished in Guatemala, which explains why to this day the majority of the population of Guatemala is descendant of the Maya civilization. Guatemala is a multicultural country due to the mixing of European, African and Mayan. More recently, groups have come from Eastern Asia and the Middle East, who have contributed in shaping the current population of Guatemala, approximately 15 million people.

The hard work of archaeologists and other professionals has enabled continued discoveries about this ancient civilization. At present, in the north of the country, in the region called Petén, scientists are working in places such as the Mirador Basin, where several years ago La Danta temple was discovered, considered one of the largest pyramids in the world.

The Mayan civilization was located on very fertile lands that produce high-quality products, such as coffee, sugar, gum,



Historic: Antigua Guatemala is known for its well-preserved Spanish baroque-style architecture and ruins of colonial churches, and is designated a UNESCO World Heritage site.

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sesame seeds, rum, ornamental plants and other products, which thanks to the work from traders of both countries, now we have the possibility to find in the Japanese market.

The diplomatic relations between Guatemala and Japan were initiated in 1935, when the Japanese government appointed Yoshiatsu Hori, then minister of

the Japanese Embassy in Mexico, to represent Japan in Guatemala. Our countries have built a close relationship of friendship to promote peace, democracy, economic freedom and respect for cultural diversity.

During my tenure as ambassador I have had the opportunity to observe the enormous interest of the Japanese people to

intensify our bilateral relations. I have had the opportunity of exchanging views with academics, politicians, businessmen, students and journalists to build bridges that allow us to deepen the relations between the countries.

In that sense, our government during my tenure as ambassador, decided to open the Honorary Consulate in Sapporo and the Honorary Consulate in Kyoto, in addition to the one established several years ago in Yokohama, all led by prominent members of Japanese society who have been promoting the economic, cultural and social ties between the two countries.

Nowadays, there are approximately 400 Guatemalans resident in Japan, who have been welcomed by the Japanese people, to integrate into Japanese society, thus we cast our bonds of friendship and cooperation through blood ties.

Japanese people have been living for many years in Guatemala, with the aim of increas-

ing trade and cultural relations among our peoples, which has resulted in the increase of trade and the cultural exchanges.

After almost two centuries of becoming an independent republic, we hope for the growth of our ties of friendship and cooperation with the international community and especially with the brother people of Japan.

We are looking forward to working closely with the Japanese government, private sector, cooperation agencies, academic institutions, non-governmental organizations and individuals to the strengthen the friendly relations and cooperation that exist between both countries.

I would like to express my gratitude for this opportunity to greet all the readers of The Japan Times. Finally, I would like to thank the Guatemalan residents in Japan and the Japanese people interested in the culture of Guatemala, who contribute with their work to the increase of the understanding of the culture of Guatemala in Japan.

Congratulations to the People of the Republic of Guatemala on the 192nd Anniversary of Their Independence

We support the Guatemalan coffee industry through our coffee concern.

Takeshige Ogawa
Honorary Consul of
the Republic of Guatemala in Yokohama
and
Group Representative

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