

# Guatemala national day

## For Guatemala and Japan, blood ties strengthen our friendship

Byron Escobedo  
AMBASSADOR OF GUATEMALA

On Sept. 15, the Republic of Guatemala celebrates the 193th anniversary of its independence. On this special occasion I am honored to extend, on the behalf of the government and people of Guatemala, sincere and respectful greetings to Their Imperial Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko, and to the government and 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 southwest, Belize to the northeast, Honduras and the Caribbean to the east and El Salvador to the southeast. Its

area is 108,890 square kilometers, more or less the size of Hokkaido and Shikoku islands put together.

Guatemala is a multicultural country due to the mixing of European, African and Amerindian (Mayan) populations. More recently, groups have come from Eastern Asia and the Middle East, and have contributed in shaping the current population of Guatemala, which numbers approximately 15 million people.

The Mayan civilization flourished in Guatemala located on very fertile lands that nowadays produce high-quality products such as coffee, sugar, gum, sesame seeds, ornamental plants and other products, which thanks to the work from traders of both countries, we now can find on the Japanese market.

Diplomatic relations between Guatemala and Japan initiated in 1935, when the Japanese government appointed Yoshiatsu Hori, then minister



**Tikal is a UNESCO World Heritage site that was the largest urban center of Maya civilization.** GUATEMALA TOURIST BOARD

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

tural 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 opportu-

nity of exchanging views with academics, politicians, businessmen, students and journalists to build bridges that allow us to deepen the relation between the countries.

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

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

Japanese have been living for many years in Guatemala, with the aim of increasing trade and cultural relations among our peoples, and this

has resulted in an increase in 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 our Japanese companions.

We look forward to working closely with the Japanese government, private sector, cooperation agencies, academic institutions, nongovernmental organizations and individuals to 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 Guatemalan residents in Japan and Japanese people interested in Guatemalan culture, who contribute through their efforts to an increase of interest and a better understanding in Japan of the culture of Guatemala.

### Congratulations to the People of the Republic of Guatemala on the 193rd Anniversary of Their Independence

We support the Guatemalan coffee industry through our coffee concern.

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

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