

Austria National Day Special

Friendship linked by artistic interests

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Austria and Japan have been linked by a “cultural love affair” for the last 150 years. It was in 1869 that a delegation sent by Emperor Franz Josef arrived in Japan and brought with it musical greet-

ings from Vienna in the form of a Bosen-dorfer piano. Since then, there has been a profound fascination and affection for each other’s cultures, traditions and artistic movements. Japan’s first participation in a World Expo in the year 1873 in Vienna — under the motto of “Culture and Education” — fueled a “Japonisme craze” across Europe. This effect influenced fine arts, sculpture and architecture as well as performing and decorative arts throughout Western culture.

At the same time, Japanese have over the last 150 years discovered, enjoyed, studied and often even perfected artistic and cul-

tural endeavors coming from Austria — the many excellent Japanese students at music universities in Austria are a vivid sign of this fruitful exchange and interaction.

How deep the appreciation goes can be felt whenever cultural ambassadors from Austria visit Japan. The concert tour of the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra starting in two weeks’ time was sold out quickly and is awaited with enthusiasm. The enormous success of the current exhibition “The Habsburg Dynasty: 600 Years of Imperial Collections” from the Vienna Museum of Fine Arts at the National Museum of Western Art in Tokyo is another outstanding illustration.

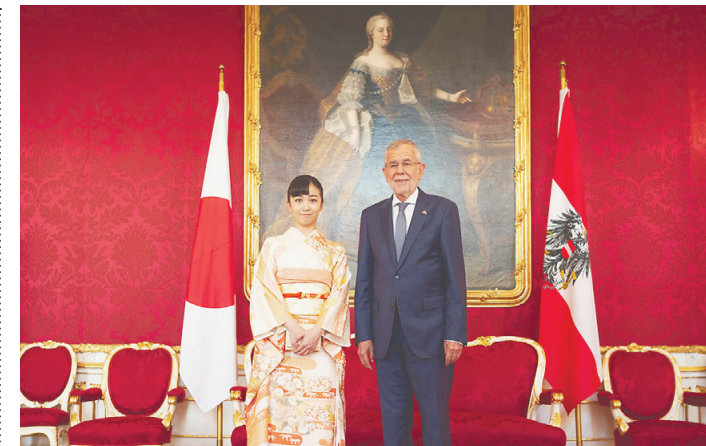
Today’s Austrian National Day is an opportunity to look back at the last one and a half centuries of mutual inspiration celebrated with a firework of high-quality cultural events. Oct. 26 is also an occasion to look at where we stand today and what the future will bring. In a similar vein, direct daily flights between Tokyo and Vienna with Austrian Airlines via Narita International Airport and All Nippon Airways via Haneda Airport will give more Austrians and Japanese the opportunity to visit and

explore each other’s cultural heritage and lively art scenes.

Contemporary initiatives and institutions from Austria such as Ars Electronica are regular guests in Japan, and the participation of young and innovative Austrian artists in Japanese festivals have become essential elements of these creative events. To mark 150 years of friendship, the Austrian composer Gabriele Proy was commissioned by the Austrian Cultural Forum Tokyo to write a piece for a piano quartet, which will be performed at several concerts all over Japan in November.

The 2020 Olympic Games and the Paralympics in Tokyo will provide a magnificent background for highlighting excellence — not only in the field of sports, but also in culture, science and technology. Austria is getting ready to contribute to this global celebration of peace and international encounters hosted by Japan.

Academic cooperation and mobility of students and researchers are further important aspects of the connection between Austria and Japan. They generate knowledge and foster exchange, thereby creating trust



and understanding. The establishment of a strategic partnership between the University of Vienna and Kyoto University in October is one very recent example.

Austria and Japan have developed a dense network of cultural and scientific interchange. Dialogue and partnerships by means of cultural expression and scientific expertise are two-way processes with mutual benefits. By allowing to meet, to understand and to learn from each other, it is creating respect for each other and building scientific strength while at the same time fostering sound bilateral relations. May this “cultural love affair” continue for at least another 150 years.

Princess Kako and President Alexander Van der Bellen in Vienna on Sept.16

CHANCERY OF THE FEDERAL PRESIDENT / KARLOVITS

This content was compiled in collaboration with the embassy. The views expressed here do not necessarily reflect those of the newspaper.

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Greetings on the Austrian National Day

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