



Consulate-General of Japan in Seattle

在シアトル日本国総領事館

Greeting from the Consul General of Japan April 12 – 14, 2024

As Honorary Co-Chair, I would like to extend a very warm welcome to the 49th annual Seattle Cherry Blossom and Japanese Cultural Festival! It has been over a century since Seattle had its first encounter with cherry blossoms, or *sakura*, when a large shipment of flowering cherry trees from Japan entered the U.S. through the Port of Seattle enroute to Washington, DC. This gesture of friendship between Japan and the United States would be repeated many times over the years, and has resulted in blossoming of *sakura* trees across America, but has also planted deep roots of friendship between Japan and the US. This beloved flower is now instantly recognized in America and around the world, as Japan's moniker of international friendship.

Seattle's own special cherry blossom connection began in 1960 when a commemorative cherry tree was planted in the Japanese Garden at the Arboretum by then Crown Prince Akihito. In 1975, this tree which is now known as the Emperor's Cherry Tree, was relocated to the Seattle Center. Today the legacy of the Emperor's Cherry Tree lives on through a successfully grafted scion planted near the heart of the festival next to the Fisher Pavilion.

This year the festival celebrates nearly a half-century of promoting Japan in the Pacific Northwest through a variety of enriching performances, educational programming, and engaging activities. 2024 is also designated as the "U.S. – Japan Tourism Year. The Consulate General of Japan in Seattle is proud to be one of the co-organizers of the Seattle Cherry Blossom & Japanese Cultural Festival and in the spirit of the U.S. – Japan Tourism Year, we invite you to visit our booth to explore a variety interesting destinations and attractions that await you in Japan!

In closing, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the Seattle Cherry Blossom and Japanese Cultural Festival Committee members, all of the participating organizations and the many volunteers whose dedication to excellence in their pursuit to strengthen the bond between Japan and the United States make the Seattle Cherry Blossom & Japanese Cultural Festival a great success.



Sincerely,

IYORI Makoto

Consul General of Japan in Seattle