

The Emperor's Birthday Reception 2024

On February 23, 2024, a reception to celebrate the Birthday of His Majesty the Emperor of Japan was hosted by His Excellency MATSUBARA Yutaka, Ambassador of Japan and Mrs. MATSUBARA at their residence. Guests included Senator the Honourable Dr Amery Browne, Minister of Foreign & CARICOM Affairs, the Honourable Chief Justice Ivor Archie, Senator the Honourable Nigel De Freitas, President of the Senate, Senator the Honourable Reginald Armour, Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs, Senator the Honourable Donna Cox, Minister of Social Development and Family Services, The Honourable Faris Al-Rawi, Minister of Rural Development and Local Government, Senator the Honourable Renuka Sagramsingh-Sooklal, Minister in the Office of the Attorney General and Ministry of Legal Affairs, The Honourable Lisa Morris-Julian, Minister in the Ministry of Education, His Worship the Mayor of Port of Spain, Mr. Chinua Alleyne and other specially invited guests.

The Reception began with the National Anthem of Trinidad and Tobago, performed on the steelpan by students of the University of Trinidad and Tobago (UTT) followed by the Japanese National Anthem which was played on the Flute and Steelpan, by Japanese nationals Ms. Sayori Imai and Mr. Takahiro Hara, followed by speeches from Ambassador Matsubara and Senator the Honourable Dr. Amery Browne, Minister of Foreign & CARICOM Affairs.

In his speech, Ambassador Matsubara said that 2024 is significant for him as it marks the third year of his tenure in T&T. He thoroughly enjoyed the start of 2024 as he was able to fully participate in both the two-day carnival parade and his first J'ouvert. He went on to state that Japan-Trinidad & Tobago relations has enjoyed excellent cooperative ties based on our shared universal values like democracy, the rule of law and market economy. He noted that this year, will celebrate Japan and Trinidad and Tobago 60th anniversary of established diplomatic relations. He believes that the relations between Japan and Trinidad and Tobago would greatly benefit from the expansion of friendly ties in a wide range of areas, including economic relations, education, culture, and by enhancing engagement through the strengthening of people-to-people exchanges. He also shared some off the Embassy's plans for the 2024 celebrations, including a Japanese animation lecture in March, a Jitumai performance and workshop in May, Japan Culture Week, which will include traditional Japanese theatre, known as "Kabuki", and taiko drumming at Queen's Hall in September and an exhibition of contemporary artwork crafted from wood.

Minister Browne, confirmed that Trinidad and Tobago have continued to benefit from technical cooperation through training and expertise by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), people-to-people exchanges such as the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Programme, the Monbu-

kagaku-sho (MEXT) Scholarship Programme, and the Juntos!! Japan – Latin America and the Caribbean Exchange programme. He stated that the relationship with Japan and Trinidad and Tobago will continue to strengthen going forward. Minister Browne indicated that the Ministry of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs was illuminated that night in red and white, the colours of the National Flag of Japan, in honor of His Majesty the Emperor.

Following the speeches, Ambassador Matsubara and Senator the Honourable Dr. Amery Browne, Minister of Foreign & CARICOM Affairs, performed a ceremony for special occasions, which involves hammering open a wooden barrel containing sake. A tradition known as “Kagami Biraki,” which is usually observed at weddings, sporting events and other occasions worthy of celebration.

During the reception, guests were treated to activities showcasing Japanese culture, including sake tasting , Japanese Cuisine, and short videos presents various cultural aspects of Japan. The Embassy's Economic Cooperation Section managed a fish cuisine station to underscore the safety, efficiency and high quality of Japan's aquaculture production. The station offered two (2) types of grilled Japanese yellow tail and scallops to guests, which were thoroughly enjoyed. Bonsai displays were on show throughout the reception area courtesy of the Bonsai society of Trinidad and Tobago and a vehicle from Toyota Trinidad and Tobago Ltd, was also on display.

*** Please visit the Embassy of Japan Website for more information on our daily activities:
https://www.tt.emb-japan.go.jp/itprtop_en/index.html



Ambassador Matsubara gives remarks



Senator the Honourable Dr. Amery Browne,
Minister of Foreign & CARICOM Affairs gives
remarks



Ambassador Matsubara and Senator the Honourable Dr. Amery Browne, Minister of Foreign & CARICOM Affairs performs Kagami Biraki Ceremony (Sake Barrel Breaking)



Mrs. Matsubara, Ambassador Matsubara and Senator the Honourable Dr. Amery Browne, Minister of Foreign & CARICOM Affairs



Ambassador Matsubara welcomes guests at the Sake tasting table



H.E. Arif Keshani, High Commissioner of Canada, Mrs. Matsubara and Ambassador Matsubara



H.E. Harriet Cross, British High Commissioner, Mrs. Matsubara, Ambassador Matsubara and Mr. Philip Saltonstall



Rear Admiral (Ret'd) Hayden A. Pritchard, Major (Ret'd) Richard Lynch Deputy Director, Ministry of National Security, The Hon. Faris Al Rawi, Minister of Rural Development and Local Government and The Hon. Chief Justice Ivor Archie



Mr. Garfield George, General Manager Queen's Hall, Ambassador Matsubara and Dr. Helmer Hilwig, Chairman, Queen's Hall pose for a photo



Dr. Nicole Roberts, Director of the Center for Language Learning and Dr. Diego Mideros, Lecturer in Spanish and Coordinator pose with the bonsai and ikebana display



Ms. Sayori Imai with Team UTT, Mr. Jezreel Marshall, Dr. Gormandy-Benjamin, Ms. Nelia Rogers and Mr. Jaydun Mohammed