

# Embassy of Japan Tonga

## **PRESS RELEASE**

EOJ/2018/01

November 22, 2018

### **85<sup>th</sup> Birthday of His Majesty, Emperor Akihito of Japan celebrated in Nuku‘alofa**

His Royal Highness Prince Ata graced the reception to celebrate the 85<sup>th</sup> Birthday of His Majesty Emperor Akihito, the Emperor of Japan, hosted by His Excellency Mr. Tetsuya Ishii, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Japan at his residence in Nuku‘alofa on Thursday evening 22 November, 2018.

The reception was attended by Hon. Samuela ‘Akilisi Pohiva, Prime Minister of Tonga along with Lord Vaea and Lady Vaea, Lord Tevita Tupou and Lady Tupou, Lord Dalgety and Heads of Diplomatic Missions. Also present at the event were Rev. Dr. ‘Ahio, President of the Free Wesleyan Church and Church Leaders, Chief Justice Owen Paulsen, Hon. Losaline Maasi, Minister for Internal Affairs, Hon. Dr. Tevita Tu‘i Uata, Minister for Labour and Commerce, Peoples Representatives to the Legislative Assembly, Honorary Consuls, Government officials, representatives from public and private business organizations, as well as Japan related alumni associations.

His Excellency Mr. Ishii in addressing the occasion highlighted that “this year is truly significant because we are celebrating the Thirtieth Anniversary of His Majesty Emperor Akihito’s Accession to the Throne, and His Majesty will abdicate at the end of April next year.” Emperor Akihito is the 125<sup>th</sup> Emperor of Japan who succeeded to the throne in January 7, 1989. His eldest son, His Imperial Highness Crown Prince Naruhito, will succeed to the throne and his enthronement will be in May next year.

One of the significant events this year was the Eighth Pacific Islands Leaders Meeting, PALM8, in May, where the Leaders welcomed Japan’s active and constructive contributions to cooperation and development in the Pacific region, including through initiatives towards the Free and Open Indo-Pacific. H.E. Mr. Ishii also highlighted the multi-layered foundations of friendship between Japan and Tonga, fostered in key elements including “spiritual affinity” between peoples of the two countries, “safe, long lasting and of high quality” economic cooperation and the notable assistance through the grass-roots human security projects to local communities depicted by the Tongan old saying, “*si’i ‘a ‘uha*” - small but their usefulness is significant and widespread.

“Our Japan-Tonga relations are reciprocal but not unilateral, and it is such two way flow of mutual respect and understanding that reinforced our enduring ties.” stated H.E. Mr. Ishii.

The Government of Japan and the Government of the Kingdom of Tonga will celebrated the Golden Jubilee of their diplomatic relations in 2020 and H.E Mr. Ishii wishes to further enhance the Japan and Tonga’s relations towards a greater cooperation. He hopes that the year 2019 will bring new opportunities for both nations, with Japan ready to host the G20 Summit, the 2019 Rugby Union

World Cup, in anticipation of the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games. “We prepare to open the doorway for the beginning of our new half-century chapter in 2020,” he said.

While expressing gratitude for Japan’s various assistance to Tonga, Prime Minister ‘Akilisi Pohiva in his keynote address reassured that “Tonga continues to participate and support Japan in regional and international fora to address issues of global concern such as the environment, climate change, renewable energy and security.” The Prime Minister conveyed on behalf of His Majesty King Tupou VI, the Government and the people of the Kingdom of Tonga their heartfelt wishes to His Imperial Majesty, Emperor Akihito on His 85<sup>th</sup> Birthday.

The addresses were followed by the toasts, to honour His Majesty, Emperor Akihito, and for the prosperity of both the Kingdom of Tonga and Japan.

A selection of special and refined Japanese Sake served at the reception delighted over 230 guests, who also enjoyed the abundance of Japanese cuisine and sushi.

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Attached: Photos

Photos;



HE Mr. Tetsuya Ishii addressed the reception to commemorate the 85<sup>th</sup> Birthday of His Majesty the Emperor of Japan, at the Ambassador’s residences on Thursday, 22 November 2018.



His Royal Highness Prince Ata welcomed by HE Mr. Tetsuya Ishii and Mrs Ishii to the Ambassador's Residence on Thursday, 22 November 2018.



HE Tetsuya Ishii, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Japan to the Kingdom of Tonga.



His Royal Highness Prince Ata, HE Mr. Tetsuya Ishii and Mrs Ishii at the toast in honour of His Majesty, Emperor Akihito, and for the prosperity of both the Kingdom of Tonga and Japan.



The Chief Guest of Honour, His Royal Highness Prince Ata with HE Mr. Tetsuya Ishii and Mrs Ishii at the reception commemorating the 85<sup>th</sup> Birthday of His Majesty the Emperor of Japan.



HE Mr. Tetsuya Ishii with Prime Minister ‘Akilisi Pohiva, Lord Vaea, Veivosa Taka and Lopeti Senituli.



HE Mr. Tetsuya Ishii and Mrs Ishii appreciated the support and collaboration extended by Rev. Dr. ‘Ahio and wife Loukinikini ‘Ahio in attending the reception.