



# GIAPPONE E ITALIA 160 ANNI E OLTRE!

AMBASCIATA DEL GIAPPONE

*Honourable Ministers, Excellencies, Distinguished Guests,*

*Buonasera e benvenuti! E soprattutto “piacere di conoscervi”, dato che è la prima volta che ospito un evento a Roma come nuovo Ambasciatore del Giappone in Italia. Sono arrivata qui da Budapest un mese fa, quindi il mio italiano ha ancora bisogno di pratica. Il mio discorso sarà dunque in inglese, ma forse l'anno prossimo passerò all'italiano!*

*Allora, once again thank you very much for joining us in celebrating the 66<sup>th</sup> birthday of His Majesty the Emperor Naruhito. As you may recall, the President Sergio Mattarella and his daughter paid an official visit to Japan last March and their Majesties the Emperor and Empress hosted a Court Luncheon in their honor. When I presented my credentials to the President last Thursday, I had the honor of conveying His Majesty's warm messages and his sincere wish for the further enhancement of our bilateral relations. The President fondly recalled his visit to Japan and expressed his deep appreciation for the gracious hospitality extended by their Majesties.*

It is both a privilege and a pleasure for me to begin my tenure in this momentous year, marking the 160th anniversary of Japan-Italy diplomatic relations. This milestone year began with Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni's visit to Tokyo last month. As my first duty as Ambassador-designate, I had the honor of welcoming her and I witnessed firsthand the growing bond between the two female leaders. In fact, the first Italian song I learned to sing was “*Tanti Auguri a te*” for Prime Minister Meloni's birthday.

Indeed, “*Tanti Auguri*” is exactly what we wish for our bilateral relationship. Our partnership has reached new heights, notably with its elevation to a “special strategic partnership”. United by shared values, common interests and a firm commitment to protecting the international order based on the rule of law, Japan and Italy are working together to promote peace, stability, and prosperity. At a time when the Indo-Pacific and Euro-Atlantic regions are increasingly interconnected, our cooperation carries growing strategic importance- from reciprocal naval port calls, and collaboration in the Global Combat Air Programme (GCAP) , to joint training exercises across the land, maritime and air.

Our partnership thrives equally in the economic sphere. With about 400 Japanese business bases in Italy and over 35 years of collaboration through the framework of Japan-Italy Business Group (IJBG), our synergy is stronger than ever. This evening,

we have prepared materials highlighting around 30 concrete examples of the vibrant contribution of Japanese companies to the Italian economy through supporting employment, innovation, and local communities.

Furthermore, the bond between Japan and Italy is built on the heartfelt connections between our peoples, as vividly demonstrated during the Milano Cortina Olympics. I would like to take this opportunity to express my huge congratulations to Italy for successfully hosting such a magnificent event, and to both Team Italy and Japan for their outstanding achievements. As the Ambassador of Japan, what touched me most was the opening ceremony, when Team Japan marched carrying with both the Japanese AND Italian flags. It was a powerful gesture of friendship, respect and appreciation of the Japanese athletes towards the host country, Italy. Inspired by such moments, I am confident that cultural, sports and people-to-people exchanges between our two countries will continue to flourish in the years to come. We are also delighted by the launch of the mutual Working Holiday programme this year, which will further strengthen youth exchanges.

As the new Ambassador, I am fully committed to deepening our cooperation in all these areas and I humbly ask for your continued support.

At the same time, as I begin my duties as Ambassador, I look forward to discovering and experiencing the “real Italy”.

In 1984, His Majesty first visited Italy while studying at Oxford and returned twice more. Despite his limited time, he travelled extensively from Venice to Naples, visited many historic sites and museums, admired masterpieces such as the Last Supper and the Statue of David, and met with President Sandro Pertini.

Following in his footsteps, I too hope to explore Italy in all its richness- to meet its people, appreciate its history and art, and enjoy its wonderful regional food and wine, fully immersing myself in “*bella italia*”.

And tonight, I invite you to immerse yourselves in “*bello giappone*”, through sushi, sake, music and Japanese hospitality.

On this special occasion, let us celebrate His Majesty’s birthday, and together mark the start of the 160th anniversary. I hope you will enjoy the many events planned throughout the year.

*Grazie mille e godetevi il resto della serata.*