

# CONSULATE GENERAL OF JAPAN IN HONOLULU NEWSLETTER

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## Logo celebrating U.S. Japan friendship for 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary



2026 marks the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of U.S. Independence and the Japanese government has provided a gift of 250 Cherry Trees to celebrate (a part of planting ceremonies was held on April 10). Ever since around 3000 cherry trees were first given as a gift from Tokyo to Washington, D.C. in 1912, the trees have served as a sign of friendship between Japan and the U.S., and this recent gift reflects a future deepening of relations. Here in Hawai'i, cherry trees are also highly appreciated, with many regions and local communities holding flower viewing festivals etc. The Japanese Embassy in Washington and other regional consulates have been creating logos to commemorate the occasion, and our consulate decided our own logo, which features a Hula dancer, based on public feedback. We hope that the relationship between Japan and the U.S. will only continue to grow stronger!

## Staff introduction : Consul Mio Ando



Aloha! My name is Mio Ando, and in March I started working at the Consulate, where I handle issues related to maritime safety, transportation, tourism and economics. This is my first time transferring from the Japan Coast Guard to work in a diplomatic office, but I'm excited to broaden my perspectives through various areas of work. Although the global security environment is undergoing rapid changes, I'll do what I can to contribute to strengthening Japan-U.S. relations and international cooperation. This is my first time in Hawai'i and when I hiked at Makapu'u point the other day, I was blown away by the beauty and grandeur of nature, which more than matched my expectations. More than this, I was amazed by the kindness of the people here, who helped me with chores and living essentials, even though we were meeting for the first time. Thanks to their support I was able to feel at ease and smoothly begin my life here. In the month that I have lived here I've become aware of the deep relationship between Japan and Hawai'i and their people, and I'd like to find out more about it. In Japan, I often spent my days off relaxing by reading and visiting art galleries, but I also like to exercise, so I'd like to spend more time doing outdoors activities while I'm here in Hawai'i!

## Celebrating Honors : Ceremonies held to honor the recipients of 2025 Fall Imperial decorations

### Imperial Decoration Conferment Ceremony for Mr. Bertrand Kobayashi



On March 3, a ceremony was held at the CG's Official Residence to bestow the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold Rays with Rosette on Former Hawai'i State lawmaker Mr. Bertrand Kobayashi. In his many years as a lawmaker Mr. Kobayashi put great effort into strengthening Sister State and grassroots relations with Japan, and made great contributions to Japan-U.S. relations. Congratulations on the recognition!



### Imperial Decoration Conferment Ceremony for Major General Rowell



A ceremony was held at the CG's Official Residence on March 18 to award the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold Rays with Neck Ribbon to Major General George Rowell IV, a former U.S. Representative to the Japan-U.S. Joint Committee, and Deputy Commander of U.S. Forces Japan. Maj Gen Rowell greatly strengthened the Japan-U.S. Alliance and contributed to regional security through his promotion of defense cooperation and his work with related organizations. Congratulations on the recognition!



## March Event Digest

### 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Operation Tomodachi



A ceremony was held at the Pearl Harbor Aviation Museum on March 11 to commemorate the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Operation Tomodachi, a large scale humanitarian mission carried out by the U.S. Military to support those affected by the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake. The event was organized by USINDOPACOM and the Aviation Museum, and Deputy Consul General Haruta made an address on behalf of the Japanese Government. Participants mourned the victims of the earthquake, reflected on the significance of Operation Tomodachi and reaffirmed the bonds of friendship between Japan and the US.

#### ~COMMENT FROM ATTENDING CONSUL~

*At the time of Operation Tomodachi, I was in Tokyo and worked to ensure the smooth operation of the mission. It was a great honor for me to attend this ceremony, and reinforced my commitment to strengthening the U.S.- Japan alliance.*

### 30<sup>th</sup> Honolulu Festival



On March 14 and 15 the Honolulu Festival Foundation hosted the 30<sup>th</sup> Honolulu Festival. Due to inclement weather some parts of the program had to be changed or cancelled, but our consulate was still able to host a booth in the Hawai'i Convention Center, at which we discussed our work, and introduced some aspects of Japanese culture to attendees. We had a calligraphy experience and distributed a variety of pamphlets related to Japanese language programs and Japanese culture. In addition to this, we also cohosted a Japanese Film Festival with the festival organizers and Japan Foundation, which was praised by festival attendees.

#### ~COMMENT FROM ATTENDING CONSUL~

*We're really grateful to the Honolulu Festival Foundation for carrying out this year's event despite the difficulties caused by the weather. We'd like to thank everyone who visited the festival and stopped by our booth!*

### CG Chotoku visits the Big Island



CG Chotoku visited Hilo on Hawai'i Island between March 19 and 20. He paid a courtesy call on Mayor Kimo Alameda, Chief of Police Reed Mahuna and Hawai'i Civil Defense Administrator Talmadge Magno, with whom he discussed strengthening cooperation between Japan and Hawai'i County, safety measures for visitors, and expanding opportunities for local businesses. Furthermore, he visited the Subaru Telescope operated by the National Astronomical Observatory of Japan at the summit of Mauna Kea, and heard about the cutting-edge technology used in the project. CG Chotoku was also fortunate enough to have the opportunity to meet with leaders from the Japanese American community and speak with them about their work and various matters.

#### ~COMMENT FROM ATTENDING CONSUL~

*I'm grateful to the many people who welcomed us to the big island. I got to experience the diversity of Hawai'i Island's nature and climate, and was moved to learn of the wonderful scientific research happening there.*

### 2026 Cherry Blossom Festival



CG Chotoku was in attendance at the 74<sup>th</sup> Cherry Blossom Festival on March 21, giving a congratulatory address and crowning the 74<sup>th</sup> Cherry Blossom Queen. The event started in 1953 to ensure the continuation of traditional Japanese culture and practices among Japanese American women. In addition to a deep knowledge of Japan, participants also demonstrated strong speech and presentation skills. Over the next year the elected queen and court plan to carry out a variety of activities across the country to build friendship between Japan and Hawai'i. We look forward to hearing what they accomplish!

#### ~COMMENT FROM ATTENDING CONSUL~

*I'm grateful to have had the opportunity to attend this for the second year in a row and see how the participants have further strengthened their already deep knowledge of Japanese culture and strong communication skills, becoming a bridge between Hawai'i and Japan.*

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