

Exactly 135 years ago, King Milan I Obrenovic sent a letter to the Japanese Emperor and Great Reformer Meiji informing him that "the great European powers, meeting at the Congress of Berlin on 13 July 1878, officially recognized the independence of Serbia", and that he was subsequently crowned in March 1882. In his reply letter, Emperor Meiji recognized Serbia as an independent state, thus formally establishing diplomatic correspondence between the two monarchies.

On that occasion, the Embassy of the Republic of Serbia in Tokyo organized the celebration of the 135th anniversary of diplomatic correspondence between Serbia and Japan, in cooperation with the Serbia - Japan Friendship Association, and presented copies of the letters from King Milan I Obrenovic and from Emperor Meiji, as well as a large number of archival photographs.

More than 100 guests from political, economic, academic, cultural and media circles attended the presentation of Ambassador Nenad Glisic, who talked about the history of the relations between Serbia and Japan, with special emphasis on the earliest diplomatic contacts, visits of learned Serbs to Japan, visits of envoys of Emperor Meiji to Serbia, visits of J.B. Tito to Japan in 1968, as well as the visits of the Japanese Crown Prince and reigning Emperor Akihito to Yugoslavia in 1976.

Ambassador Glisic pointed out that Serbia was proud of the long tradition of good relations, and conveyed special thanks to the Government and the people of Japan for the support and assistance they provided to Serbia.

Mr. Tadashi Nagai, President of the Serbia - Japan Friendship Association, the former Ambassador of Japan to Serbia, presented his own experience from the many years of his diplomatic career in Belgrade, whose honorary citizen he became, describing his role as the emperor's interpreter during the visit of the Japanese Crown Prince and current Emperor Akihito to Yugoslavia in 1976.

A member of the Serbia-Japan Friendship Association and President of the Japanese Association for Vexillology, Yoshinori Koshikawa, spoke to the audience about the symbolism of the coats of arms and flags of Serbia through history, and the appearance of the Serbian flag after the adoption of the "Candlemas Constitution" (Sretenjski ustav).

Mr. Ghiaia Oyaizu, an Embassy representative, spoke about the importance and history of the cooperation between Serbia and Japan in the field of sports, and stressed that the athletes contributed to deepening of relations between the two nations. He mentioned Dragan Stojkovic Piksi who, as a former player and a coach, had a long-term contract in Japan, and in 2015 was decorated with Japanese Order of the Rising Sun, Gold Rays with Rosette for outstanding contribution to the establishment and improvement of the friendly relations between Serbia and Japan. Towards the Olympic Games in Tokyo in 2020, exchanges of visits between the two countries' national teams in different sporting events were planned.

At the end, the toast was proposed by Mr. Kenzo Joneda, a former member of the Japanese Parliament, the initiator of the establishment of the Japan – Serbia Parliamentary Friendship League and the holder of the Order of the Serbian Flag of third degree, who congratulated on

this important anniversary for the peoples of both countries, wishing that this successful friendly cooperation be continued and even more strengthened in the future.