

*...verwachten waaraan de regering zo  
...maatschappij die voortdurend hebben meer.  
...en hunne ziele doorgeesteld.  
...gedaan te geden den 1<sup>en</sup> Augustus  
...duizend acht honderd in zes en zestig  
...den 21<sup>en</sup> dag der 6<sup>de</sup> maand van het  
...2<sup>de</sup> jaar van Kei. o'edd. v. Japan.  
...sche bediening.*

# 150

YEARS OF

Friendship  
between  
Japan &  
Belgium



菊池 伊勢守 五

# I50

YEARS OF

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# Let us make this anniversary a joyful celebration throughout the year 2016

When Japan and Belgium signed their first treaty of friendship, trade and navigation in 1866, Belgium was still a young country, busily developing its international relations, and Japan was newly opening itself to the world. They viewed each other as exotic and very far away, but considered that a closer relationship would create new opportunities to the benefit of both countries. Since then, over a period of 150 years, exchanges in the most varied fields have been intense and led to a strong and mature friendship.

Personal relations between the Imperial Family of Japan and my own Family have been a part of this close friendship between our countries ever since the Crown Prince, the future Showa Emperor, was received in Belgium by my great grandfather, King Albert I, in 1921. I personally have had the opportunity to visit Japan on many occasions, including as head of several economic and trade missions. These trips to Japan have allowed me to fully appreciate the depth of its culture and the strength of the bond between our two countries.

It is therefore with particular pleasure that I assume, together with His Majesty the Emperor of Japan, the honorary presidency of the celebrations of the 150th anniversary of the friendship between Belgium and Japan. Let us make this anniversary an occasion of joyful celebration throughout the year 2016, as well as a stepping stone for yet further intensification of our relations in the decades to come.

His Majesty King Philippe of Belgium



© Belgian Royal Palace - Photo Christian Lambotte



© Jean-Pol Lefevre

# Together with Prime Minister Michel, I continue to develop the relation between our countries to a new level

*Beloved people of Belgium,*

**O**n behalf of the Government and the people of Japan, I have the honor of conveying my heartiest congratulations on the occasion of “150 Years of Friendship between Japan and Belgium”. Since the conclusion of the treaty of Amity, Commerce and Navigation in 1866, Japan and Belgium have developed invaluable relations of friendship based upon the exceptional bond between the Japanese Imperial Household and the Belgian Royal Family.

Their Majesties the Emperor and the Empress of Japan made a visit to Belgium in 1993 as state guests, and His Imperial Highness the Crown Prince, together with Her Imperial Highness the Crown Princess, visited Belgium in 1999 on the occasion of the royal wedding ceremony of His Majesty King Philippe. Furthermore, the inauguration of His Majesty the

Emperor of Japan as the Honorary President on the Japanese side for “150 Years of Friendship between Japan and Belgium” is another testimony of how highly Japan regards Belgium.

I myself visited Belgium in 2014 and subsequently Belgian Prime Minister Michel visited Japan in 2015. The fact that mutual visits of the state leaders were set up in only a single year is heartening and together with Prime Minister Michel I would like to continue to develop the relation between our countries to a new level.

Brussels, home of both the EU and NATO headquarters, is the capital of Europe where many Japanese companies have expanded their market. Furthermore, the world-renowned cultures of both Japan and Belgium also deserve special mentioning.

Against the backdrop of Japan and Belgium’s bountiful culturally fertile soils, the turning point by the name of “150 Years of Friendship between Japan and Belgium” will be celebrated in a highly meaningful way through organizing a myriad of cultural events in order to further deepen the bilateral amity.

The floral festival “Ghent Floralties” will be held at a variety of locations throughout the city of Ghent and will feature an abundance of Japan-themed flower arrangements. The Brussels Flower Carpet on the other hand will completely cover the whole surface of the Brussels Grand Place, a UNESCO

World Heritage site, with a Japan-themed flower petal carpet. I invite you all to come and visit these gorgeously organized events.

With the participation of all of you to the 150 Years of Friendship events I have great expectations for our bilateral bond to be nurtured even more. I am deeply grateful to all those who have lent their unyielding effort and support and I profoundly wish our amicable cooperative relationship to develop more than ever throughout this commemorative year.

**Mr. Shinzo Abe**

Prime Minister of Japan







## We continue working together as partners and friends

An anniversary such as 150 years does not come by every day. It provides a wonderful opportunity to stop and take stock of a friendship that is so well established, and goes so much without saying, that we may sometimes lose the measure of everything that unites us.

During my visit to Japan in May 2015 – my first bilateral visit outside of Europe as Prime Minister – I had the occasion to appreciate directly how Belgium and Japan, in spite of obvious cultural differences and geographical distance, share the same values and the same outlook on our globalized world and its future. Our advanced societies face not only similar but common challenges: aging, how to generate new economic growth, climate change and environmental concerns. We share the same desire, and work together, for a peaceful, rules-based

international order, based on respect for all persons and their rights. We also enjoy close economic ties, particularly in those high-technology and innovative sectors that are the future of our mature economies, such as biotechnology and electronics. And the frequency of wonderful projects by artists and museums, as well as the number and level of contacts between our universities, testify to the richness of cultural and personal relations between Belgium and Japan.

I am looking forward to welcoming Prime Minister Abe to Brussels in 2016, to celebrate this strong relationship, and to continue working together on this solid basis as partners and friends.

**Mr. Charles Michel**  
Prime Minister of Belgium

## Belgium and Japan are allies and friends

**150** years ago saw the beginning of a new era in the long history of Japan and its relation with the rest of the world, especially with Europe and with my own country Belgium.

We both went through turbulent times but we have now since decades a strong structural relationship based on common interests and even more common values. We are strengthening this relationship via negotiations with the EU on a Free Trade Agreement and more broadly a Strategic Partnership Agreement. In a world of renewed instability, threats and terrorism our values are at stake. Those developments bring us even closer together.

The excellent cooperation between Japan and Belgium was illustrated by very successful royal state visits in the past, and also in 2016 by our common celebration of the 150th anniversary of our diplomatic relations. Belgium and Japan are allies and friends. I contributed in my former capacities as Prime Minister and President of the European Council and nowadays as Haiku Ambassador for the Japan-EU Friendship.

*HAPPY ANNIVERSARY!*

**Count Herman Van Rompuy**  
The Friendship Ambassador for the 150 Years of Friendship between Japan and Belgium



## I invite you all to celebrate our anniversary

**T**he year 2016 marks the 150th anniversary of Japanese-Belgian diplomatic relations which were established when our nations concluded the Treaty of Amity, Commerce and Navigation in 1866. Japan was at the dawn of transition from closed-door feudalism to an open embrace of Western civilization. Belgium was a young independent state buzzing with industrial revolution. 150 years later, our bond is strong and the celebration of "150 Years of Friendship between Japan and Belgium" will be the pinnacle of our relationship.

Our two countries have experienced an extraordinary turn of events over these years, which were marked by wars, reconstruction, transformation in domestic and international politics and economy. Throughout those turbulent years, we maintained friendly relations.

Today, Japan and Belgium are both democratic, free and peaceful, and making active international contributions so that peace and development can be shared by the whole world. Our ties of friendship are stronger and more promising than ever.

I invite you all to celebrate this wonderful anniversary together. Let us look back at our past, and think ahead for our future.

**Mr. Masafumi Ishii**

Ambassador of  
Japan to Belgium



© ANA, Peter Guelkens

## The strong relationship between Japan and Belgium rests on the work of all the Belgian and Japanese citizens

**T**o represent Belgium in Japan is a high honor for a diplomat at any moment. Coming at the time that we celebrate the 150th anniversary of friendship between our nations is a unique chance.

150 years ago, Japan and Belgium first established diplomatic relations. As Ambassador to Japan, I cannot but have a thought to appreciate how much I benefit from the work of my Japanese and Belgian predecessors in this century and a half. But diplomatic relations are only a small part of the story. The strong relationship between Japan and Belgium rests on the work of all the Belgian and Japanese citizens who have given substance to it through this long period, and make it more

lively today than ever. Every day I meet people, Japanese and Belgians, who contribute to building ties between our countries, and every day I am encouraged by the variety and dynamism of those links in every sector and walk of life.

The celebrations of the 150th anniversary will put these ties in the limelight. More importantly perhaps, they will also be a wonderful opportunity to consolidate them, foster new contacts, launch new exchanges. I invite you to participate fully in these exciting times for the friendship between Japan and Belgium.

**Mr. Gunther Sleenwagen**

Ambassador of Belgium to Japan



**150** years of diplomatic relations  
Belgium-Japan is an important  
milestone in a relationship.

It is a symbol of growth  
towards a common goal: fostering the economic  
and cultural ties between our two countries and  
the friendship between our people.



**Professor Gilbert Declercq**

BJA President  
(Belgium-Japan Association & Chamber of Commerce)

## This 150 years celebration brings us a further drive

We have become deeply indebted to  
our networks between Belgium and Japan – on so many levels too many  
to mention. From the bonds that were formed the pursuit for harmony is  
prevalent amongst Japanese and Belgians.

This 150 years celebration brings us, as the Belgium-Japan Association  
& Chamber of Commerce (BJA), a further drive: to work harder and strive  
higher for the benefit of our peoples. May business and cultural exchange  
in Japan and Belgium flourish and the friendship between the citizens of our  
countries prosper with it!

## Act as a stimulus for further synergy to face the challenges that lay ahead

**P**lease let me convey my sincere  
and warm congratulations for  
150 years of diplomatic relations  
and friendship between Japan  
and Belgium.

A glance over our shoulders at the  
history of this period reveals the tremen-  
dous tenacity, vision and foresight from countless people of both countries,  
facilitating huge strides forward in mutual understanding, growth and  
connectivity, in many areas, including social, cultural, business, technological,  
environmental, economic, political etc.

I hope this year of commemoration will  
celebrate all the past as well as the more recent  
achievements, and act as a stimulus for further  
synergy to face the challenges that lay ahead in  
the ever-changing world environment.



**Mr. Koji Waki**

President, Nihonjinkai in Belgium  
(Japanese Society of Belgium)

# The Japanese Tower of Laeken



## Unsung Treasury of Belgian-Japanese Relations

Adjacent to the royal  
domain in Laeken (Brussels),  
the Japanese Tower stands  
out as a tangible symbol of  
the relations between Belgium  
and Japan. Commissioned by  
King Leopold II and designed  
by Parisian architect Alexandre  
Marcel, its construction  
began in 1901.

Marcel reused the Japa-  
nese entrance porch of the *Tour  
du Monde*, which he built for  
the World exhibition in Paris  
in 1900. He also designed the  
gallery that covers a monu-  
mental staircase leading up  
to the pagoda. Decorated  
with stained glass windows, it  
depicts scenes from the genpei  
wars. Wooden panels and gilded  
metal plaques were ordered  
directly from Yokohama.

Long before construction  
was finished in 1904, king  
Leopold II saw the economic  
opportunities Japan could  
offer his small industrious  
country. However, it was his  
successor King Albert I who  
would open a commercial  
exhibition in 1911 entitled  
“Permanent Belgian-Japanese  
exhibition”, showcasing products  
of industry and crafts from  
both countries. The Japanese  
government sent samples  
and the Meiji emperor himself  
sent a personal gift to cele-  
brate the opening.

In 1921 the tower became  
part of the Royal Museums  
of Art and History (RMAH).  
Since its partial restoration for  
the Europalia Japan festival  
in 1989, it has housed several

exhibitions of Japanese art  
from the RMAH and abroad.  
Together with the Chinese  
Pavilion and the Museum of  
Japanese Art, it forms the  
Museums of the Far East, cur-  
rently undergoing restoration.

Extensive research  
revealed that the Japanese  
materials used for the deco-  
ration of the upper floors  
may be older than previously  
thought. Also, the archives  
from the period 1909-1921  
were only recently discovered,  
providing new research material  
even up to this very day.

**Ms. Nathalie Vandepierre**

Curator of the East Asian Collections





# The History of Belgian - Japanese Relations

During the first half of the nineteenth century there was little interest in Belgium for Japan and vice versa. That changed in 1854 when the US as the first Western power concluded a treaty with Japan. The first 'Belgian' to travel to Japan probably was the Count Charles Descantons de Montblanc (1833-1894), Frenchman, but also Baron of Ingelmunster. He had close contacts with the fief of Satsuma, and acted as representative of the fief at the International Exposition of Paris in 1867. In the meantime, after painstaking negotiations undertaken by the diplomat Auguste t' Kint de Roodenbeeke (1816-1878) Belgium had succeeded in 1866 to become the ninth Western state to sign a treaty with the Shogunate.

The Meiji Restoration (1868) marked the formal end of the period of Japan's isolation. The country now embarked upon a far-reaching

program of political, social, economic, institutional and cultural modernisation. For the execution of this program it sought inspiration in many Western countries, mostly the major powers, but also smaller countries including Belgium. Japan's reformers were interested in both the institutional organisation and technological know-how of Belgium. Testimonies to this interest are among others the various Japanese missions abroad which included Belgium in their itinerary. The highest profile mission was the Iwakura mission, which toured the United States and Europe between 1871 and 1873, but there were equally a number of individual students who came to Belgium to study at Belgian scientific institutions.



Treaty of Amity,  
Commerce and Navigation

1866

Visit Tokugawa Akitake  
to Belgium

1867

Meiji Restoration

1868

Tokugawa Akitake, younger brother of the last shogun (boy in the middle) visiting Belgium, 1867





Iwakura Tomomi

Students were particularly interested in technological know-how, but a few also studied juridical and monetary aspects. Best known is perhaps Matsukata Masayoshi's aide Kato Wataru, who was charged with the task of studying the history and

organisation of Belgium's central bank. After a three-year stay in Belgium, Kato returned to Japan, and played a seminal role in the preparations for the establishment of Japan's central bank, the Bank of Japan. Later, he was appointed head of the banking department of the newly founded bank.

In the area of technological know-how, Belgium was recognised as a leading power in the fields of gunpowder, steel and glass industry, as well as

the cultivation and processing of flax. Conversely, Belgian companies saw in Japan a promising market for their products and opened branches in Japan.

This notwithstanding, it was not until 1898 that both countries opened legations in each other's

capital. Japan posted its first minister plenipotentiary in Brussels. Motono Ichiro became the first in a row of Japanese diplomats, among who figured some prominent ones, such as Kato Tsunetada (posted in Brussels from 1902 to 1906), and above all Adachi Mineichiro (legate to

Belgium from 1917 to 1927). On the Belgian side the most remarkable diplomats were Albert d'Anethan (legate in Japan from 1893 to 1910) and above all Albert de Bassompierre (legate from 1920/21 to 1939).



Kato Tadatsune, minister extraordinary and plenipotentiary



Adachi Mineichiro, ambassador



Motono Ichiro, minister extraordinary and plenipotentiary

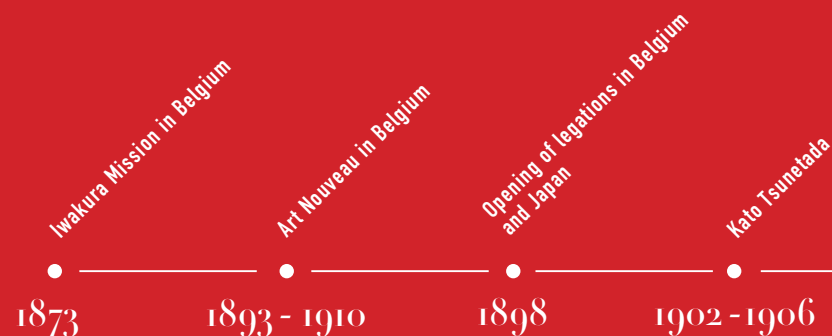
Signature page from the Treaty of Friendship, Commerce and Navigation, signed between Japan and Belgium on August 1, 1866  
©Archives Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs



Iwakura Tomomi and other main members of the Iwakura mission, London 1872

On the artistic level Japan served as an important source of inspiration in the form of Japonisme for Belgian artists playing an important role in the Art Nouveau movement,

while some Belgian writers, notably Maurice Maeterlinck, Emile Verhaeren and Georges Rodenbach, were avidly read and widely translated in Japan.



Although not counted as a major power, before 1914 Belgium enjoyed much esteem with the Japanese authorities as well as the public opinion. With the war, that image would even be strengthened on account of the staunch resistance Belgium put up against the German invasion. In particular the presence of the Belgian king among his troops at the war front, a fact the Japanese press did not fail to report on, struck a sensitive chord among the

Japanese public, who hailed him as heroic and chivalric.

The relations between Japan and Belgium generally continued amicably throughout the Meiji and Taisho eras, although there were some minor disagreements. With the exception of the first few years, the first two decades of the Showa era were marked by conflict and strife, increasingly isolating Japan



© Alonso Collection

from the rest of the world.

The Manchurian Incident, which broke out in September 1931, triggered a chain of events which dragged Japan into the quagmire of a desperate war. These events also affected the relations between Japan and Belgium. Due to the tension

between Japan and China, Crown Prince Leopold's visit to Japan, which had been scheduled for the spring of 1932, was cancelled.

The Prince did visit French Indochina, but returned to Belgium without visiting either Japan or China. This did not prevent Belgian diplomacy from taking a conciliatory stance when the League of Nations condemned Japan in the Lytton report for its role in Manchuria and the Manchu state.

The absolute low point in Belgian-Japanese relations was the Pacific War, a time when Japan and Belgium found themselves in opposite camps. The upshot was the rupture of diplomatic and, to all

intentions and purposes, very much all relations between the two countries, which were only gradually restored after the surrender of Japan in August 1945.

Japan's recovery in the post-war period evidently led to the full restoration of bilateral relations and their further development to an unprecedented level in most fields. In the background of this intensified relationship was Belgium's status as a host country for many international organisations, most notably the European institutions and NATO.

While Belgium enjoyed brisk economic growth and prosperity as a founding member of what was to become the European Union, Japan's spectacular growth catapulted the country to the status of economic world power, a development accompanied by commercial frictions with some major competitors in the international market. Belgium was one of the first European countries to benefit from direct Japanese investment. Notable in this respect

is Honda Motor Corporation's investment in a production plant in Aalst as early as 1962, the first Japanese investment in Europe by any of Japan's major production companies.

In the cultural field by far the most notable event was the organisation of Europalia Japan 1989. This was arguably the most comprehensive and highest profile cultural fiesta ever organised by Japan in Europe. It included events covering a panoply of Japan's high culture as well as a representative selection of popular culture.

The last quarter century has not witnessed another event of similar proportions, but in its wake the bilateral relations have steadily grown more robust, and involved an ever increasing number of Belgian and Japanese citizens.



Europalia Japan 1989  
©Europalia

Art-Nouveau flower vases under Japonisme influence  
design: Frères Muller, Val-Saint-Lambert 1905-08 (left)  
design: Romain Gevaert & Jeanne Tixhon, Val-Saint-Lambert ca. 1905 (right)



© Alonso Collection

Sword given to King Albert during WW1 by Sugimura Kotaro (Asahi)

Adachi Mineichiro Legate to Belgium

Albert de Bassompierre (legate 1920/21-1939)

Honda Motor Corporation Belgium, Aalst

Europalia Japan

150 years of Friendship between Japan and Belgium

1914

1917 - 1927

1920 - 1939

1962

1989

2016



Professor Willy Vande Walle

Chairman, Friends of Japan  
Professor, KU Leuven

# Event Calendar

## January

26 November 2015 to 8 January	"The Spirit of Budo" Exhibition- The History of Japan's Martial Arts (Japan Foundation's travelling exhibition)	JICC
January to December	Projet Senbazuru "Mille grues pour le Japon"	Mariemont, Morlanwelz
19 January	Official Opening Ceremony - 150 Years of Friendship between Japan and Belgium	Egmont Palace
23 January	Miyabi Gagaku Concert - by Kitanodai Gagakukai	BOZAR
25 January	"Eat Japan" food symposium	JICC and others
27 January to 27 March	Impressions Japonaises, photo exhibition	Contretype
28 January to 26 February	Haiku Paintings exhibition - by Ken Yagi & Hiro Saika	JICC
29 January	Rubens Lecture and Concert	JICC
30 January to 10 April	Exposition Un Esprit Japonais. Gisbert Combaz, la Céramique et la Création Belge	Mariemont, Morlanwelz

## February

4 to 8 February	Salon des Vacances - Japan in the spotlight	Brussels Expo
5 February to 30 April	Le Japon à Mariemont, hier et aujourd'hui	Espace Wallonie-Bruxelles
12 February to 4 March	Bonten Taiko Concert with Brussels Philharmonic Orchestra	Liège, Antwerp, Ghent, Bruges, Hasselt, Brussels, Charleroi
23 February	Sarugakukai Kyogen Performance	Palais des Beaux-Arts

Many more events are to be held throughout the year 2016. Please visit the 150th anniversary website for updates and contact organizers for further information.

<http://www.be.emb-japan.go.jp/150jb/en/index.html>

Attention: All details are subject to change.

## March

early March	Doll making lecture by Master Keiho Ando	JICC (tbc)
March-April	Quand La BD Belge Regarde Vers Le Soleil Levant	Belgian Comic Strip Museum
10 to 25 March	Invisible Needs of Life - Reconstruction 5 years after 311 tsunami (exhibition & symposium)	JICC
11 March	Fukko concert - commemorative charity concert	Flagey
11 to 13 March	East Japan Great Earthquake 5th Commemorative Event	Hasselt Japanese Garden
11 to 13 March	Made in Asia	Brussels Expo
18 March to 14 August	Game Changers - The Radical Silhouette From Balenciaga To Kawakubo	Momu Antwerp
18 March to 1 May	Festival - Japan Host Country, Japan Meets Belgium	Blankenberge
24 to 26 March	"Matsuri" Festival	BOZAR, KUL
26 March	Conference: Entre Bouddhisme et Shinto	Parc de Mariemont

## April

22 April to 1 May	FLORALIËN Gent - Japan as guest country	Bijloke Ghent
23 to 24 April	Meiji Shrine Gagaku Concert and Martial Arts Performance	Brussels, Ghent
25 April	Bi Japon fashion show	JICC

> May to December

JICC : Japan Information and Cultural Centre of the Embassy of Japan in Belgium



## May

May to August	Japanese mask exhibition by the Mask Museum	JICC
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## June

1 to 2 June	Urasenke tea ceremony lecture and demonstration	JICC
24 to 26 June	Brugge Japan Day	Bruges
30 June	Opera singer's concert by Yukiko Shimbo	JICC

## July

July	Tokyo Chuteiiki saxophone concert	JICC
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## August

12 to 15 August	Brussels Flower Carpet - Japan as a guest country	Grand Place
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## September

September	Comic Strip Festival - Japan as a guest of honor	Parc Royal & Place des Palais
2 to 10 September	Snake Dance - The Recital	Brussels, Mons, Ghent, Antwerp, Ostend
24 September	Symposium: How Bells Connect Belgium and Japan	Congress and Heritage Centre Lamot

## October

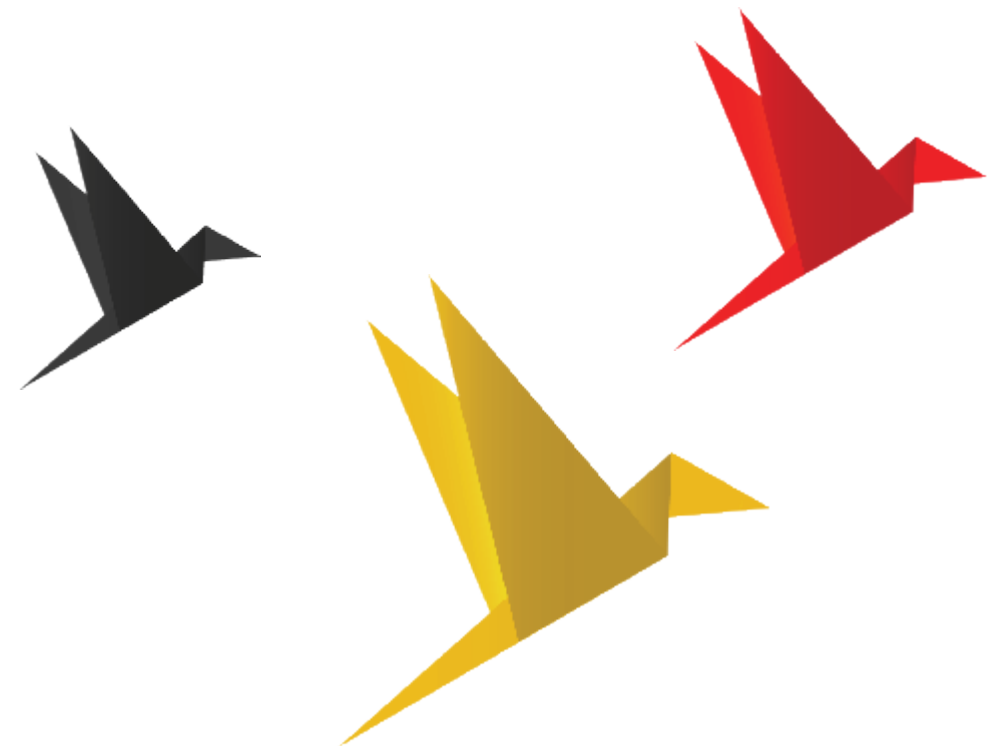
October	"The Feverish Era" contemporary art exhibition	BOZAR
1 October	Japon Nature	Mariemont, Morlanwelz
8 to 13 October	Japan Week - international cultural exchange program	BOZAR etc
22 to 23 October	The International Aikido Celebration-Brussels	Tour & Taxis

## November

November 2016 to June 2017	Japanese Mask Exhibition	Mask Museum
12 November	Noh Play by Kyutaro Hashioka	BOZAR
12 to 13 November	Japan Folk Festival 2016 in Brussels	Flagey
12 to 27 November	Ars Musica "The Country of the Rising Sound"	Brussels (BOZAR etc), Liège, Mons, Namur, Charleroi, Bruges
23 November	Zen Adages from A to Z, lecture by Prof. Andreas Thele	Royal Academy of Belgium

## December

December	Closing Ceremony	Brussels
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## S P O N S O R S

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**BINOMURA GROUP**



## 150 YEARS OF FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN JAPAN & BELGIUM

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Mr. Yoichiro Yamada, Minister, Deputy Chief of Mission  
Ms. Etsuko Kurihara, Director of the Japan Information and Cultural Centre (JICC)



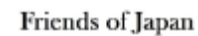
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帝國大皇帝大君と白平義國王と兩國の間に

懇親の用を結ひ且其各臣民に緊要なる和親

交易の條約をおよそん事を決し日本大君と

菊池伊豫守是能満申す大久保筑後守代守と

任し白平義國王よりコシニエルセ子ラル

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