

## Ireland pledges to promote democracy, peace

By Damien Cole  
Ambassador of Ireland

I would like to extend warm greetings to all of the readers of the Japan News on the occasion of St. Patrick's Day. Let me also convey my deep gratitude to the Government of Japan and members of the Diet, as well as our wide range of political, economic, cultural, research, academic and media partners for all of your work in fostering closer Ireland-Japan ties. We deeply appreciate your commitment and support.



Damien Cole

Ireland-Japan links have continued to grow from strength to strength recently, as witnessed by the Taoiseach's visit in July 2022, and most recently by the visit of a parliamentary delegation from Ireland led by the Speaker of our Lower House last month. We were also honoured to have Minister Jack Chambers represent the Government of Ireland in Japan for St. Patrick's Day.

I am delighted to see that St. Patrick's Day events around the country are back with a bang this year. From Yokohama to Matsue, and Sapporo to Kumamoto, many lively groups have come together to celebrate Ireland's national day. I was particularly delighted to see the return of the Tokyo parade on Omotesando on March 12 and the I Love Ireland Festival in Yoyogi Park on March 11-12. In 2019, the Tokyo parade and the I Love Ireland Festival together attracted over 180,000 people, making it the largest Irish event in Asia, and Japan one of the best places in the world to celebrate St. Patrick's Day!

This year, St. Patrick's Day marks '100 Years of Ireland in the World,' a century of Ireland's engagement as an active member of the international community in the promotion of democracy, peace and security, values which we share with Japan. As part of this, we are marking three major anniversaries: the 25th anni-

versary of the Good Friday Agreement; the centenary of Ireland's joining the League of Nations; and the 50th anniversary of our accession to the then EEC.

Alongside the great majority of the international community, including Japan, we also continue to denounce Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine, and stand in solidarity with its brave people. We uphold the Rule of Law as a cardinal principle of the global order as reflected in the Charter of the United Nations.

Ireland remains a committed member of the European Union. Recent polls have shown that 88 percent of Irish people view our membership of the EU as a positive thing. This is hardly a surprise, since EU membership has transformed Ireland's economy into an innovative, science and technology based digital, global hub, focused on services in the high-tech, life sciences, finance and agribusiness sectors. As an English language country with a highly educated and young workforce, Ireland's access to the EU single market of about 450 million people and the Eurozone, continues to attract businesses from all over the world, including Japan, who recognize Ireland's unique strengths.

St. Patrick's Day offers a wonderful opportunity to reconnect with our diaspora and to celebrate the uniqueness of Irish culture, so evident this year in the record number of Oscar nominations for Irish films. To promote this further, the Embassy will launch an Irish Film



Courtesy of the Irish Embassy

After a three-year gap, the Tokyo St. Patrick's Day Parade was held on Omotesando in Harajuku on Sunday, led by Ireland's Minister Jack Chambers, Ambassador Damien Cole and other honorary guests.

Festival later this year, which I hope you will support and enjoy.

So, on this St. Patrick's Day, I would like to invite you

to join us in wearing something green, supporting your local parade, and joining in the fun and spirit of the day. Lá fhéile Pádraig sona daoibh go léir!



Courtesy of the Irish Embassy

Jack Chambers T.D., Ireland's Minister of State at the Department of Transport and the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications, visited Japan from March 9 to 16.



Courtesy of the Irish Embassy

UNESCO World Heritage site Skellig Michael, off Ireland's West coast, was also the location for scenes in the film "Star Wars."

**Happy St. Patrick's Day from Team Ireland in Japan!**

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