**Halilhodžić and Osim contribute to a positive image of your country**

Kazuya Ogawa, Ambassador of Japan to BiH arrived to BiH in May 2015.

As Ambassador Ogawa told us, he is very proud of the fact that Japan has supported BIH during all those years, stressing that a main goal of his diplomatic mission is to continue in the same direction and that many projects were already realized sucessfully.

Beside that, Ambassador Ogawa talked about his family, free weekends that he usually uses to go to the nearby mountins, but also that he often accompany his wife for shoping, which is not a hard thing for him.

**How long have you been in B&H?**

**Did you expect a better situation in our country, before the arrival?**

-I have been here for a year. I am well known with the war history of your country and genocide which happened in this area, but I am also familiar with the bright side of B&H, such as the Olympic games of 1984.

Thanks to Bosnian football legends, Ivica Osim and Vahid Halilhodžić, Japanese people are quite familiar with Bosnia. They are a very positive example and people who are changing the image of your country. It was not hard for me to adjust to a life here, I find life Sarajevo very practical. Going to an appointment place shopping mall or restaurants does not take a lot of my time. I rarely need longer than 15 minutes for anything.

**What is your perception of our country?**

-B&H is a very beautiful country, I often go to Mostar, and enjoy the Neretva river, and I've also travelled throughout the rest of the country. I also like Bjelašnica mountain and Lukomir, and recently visited Blidinje lake. You rarely get a chance to see such a beauty in the world, but unfortunately they are not well known or utilized. Agriculture, mining, energy and tourism have lots of potential. It can all be used in a much better way, because in every corner of B&H you can find different potentials.

**What should be Bosnian priorities at this point and in which segment you find B&H the weakest?**

A lack of investment in infrastructure is a major omission, the roads are not connected with the highway networks of neighboring countries, Croatia and Serbia. More attention should be given to infrastructure in order to attract a greater number of foreign investors.

Talented young people often decide to leave B&H, the unemployment rate is over 60% in young generations and these are devastating facts which cause a great damage. The future of this country is highly depended on young people and they should be in focus.

**Japan and B&H have always had a good relation. How has Japan helped Bosnia so far?**

Although Japan has not significantly invested in the economy of this country. We assisted for its development since 20 years. We are proud of the fact that, right after EU, USA, Japan helped and is helping the most, but it is important to emphasize that our help goes directly to the peopke of B&H, there are recognizable yellow buses which we donated, red ones in Banja Luka, donations we provides to several hospitals, schools..

We try to be impartial and make the balance between the two entities, meaning that we also make sure that our help went to right hands.

**Cultural events**

**Are you satisfied with the help Japan provides so far?**

Embassy of Japan opened in 2008. and before that our embassy in Vienna covered your country. I am the third ambassador in B&H. I believe that we have achieved cooperation in several segments and that it all goes as we planned.

**B&H and Japan have diplomatic relations for 20 years. Does this anniversary means you will open a new page in order to improve our cooperation?**

I plan to enhance bilateral relations. In cultural sphere, embassy of Japan organized concerts of shamishen and another Japanese traditional music group, while the exhibition of contemporary Japanese architecture „Parallel Nippon“ was in the National Gallery.

We plan to organize two important cultural events in October, and when it comes to economic sphere, we plan to organize a seminar where the business men of Japan will be present so they can learn about the economy of our country. Additionally, we are also working on the establishment of cooperative relations between Sarajevo and Hiroshima.

**Considering the attitude Japanese businessmen have towards B&H, will this be difficult?**

To a certain extent, they are negatively oriented towards B&H, based on the image of the past war, but seeing is believing, they should know BiH is moving forward. I believe Halilhodžić and Osim will make have an impact on this. Japanese people are like that, they think a lot, before they make an action. But once decision is made, they behave diligently.

**Where did you live before coming to B&H?**

I lived in Rwanda as an Ambassador, and before this, I was in France and Switzerland for two times. and also India and Senegal. That is the life of a diplomat, moving all the time and changing places. It's a fantastic job, you get the opportunity to meet new states, culture, people, traditions. I recommend everyone to become a diplomat.

**Is your wife with you, in Sarajevo?**

She is with me, but currently she is Japan. We have two adult daughters, who came to visit B&H last summer. We went to Mostar and then to Dubrovnik that they liked very much.

**What do you miss from your own country?**

A little bit Japanese food, although they there are restaurants „Kimono“ and "Sushi-san" in Sarajevo where I often go and like very much. But, it seems that people here think that Japanese food is only about sushi, and we have other, different meals.

I have also tried traditional Bosnian food, such as čevapčići and burek, I am a regular guest of a restaurant on Baščaršija.

 **Great interest for Japanese language**

**Which projects of the embassy of Japan you emphasize as significant?**

A course of studying Japanese language has started three years ago at Sarajevo University and a new course will start in October once again. I was positively surprised how individuals managed to learn Japanese, with a great desire.

We also provide scholarships for those who want to study in Japan.

**I hope B&H will obtain placement next time**

**Do you follow European championship?**

Unfortunately, B&H has not succeeded in obtaining placement. Spain already lost two times, but small countries are very good at this competition, Croatia or Island. Hopefully, B&H will be more lucky next time.

**I go shopping with my wife**

How do you spend your spear time?

I enjoy trips and shopping, where I follow my wife, because its a great pleasure to her. I also like visiting museums, but I have time for this on weekends only, especially Sundays, when most of them is closed. That is very bad for tourism, considering the fact that tourists enjoy going to museums. I talked about this issue with Federal minister of tourism, Edita Đapo, ex scholarship student, and hopefully, we will find a solution to this problem. Big cities like Paris and London can serve as a great example, where museums are closed on work days, but never on weekends.

**Holiday at Adriatic coast**

**Where will you spend your summer holiday?**

I will go to Adriatic coast. In September I plan to visit island Vis to avoid crowd, and I will also delay my trip to Japan, due to unbearable heat. Summers in Japan are even hotter than here.