

Thanks to Japan

The first official bulletin published in 1961 by the Organizing Committee of the Games of the XVIIIth Olympiad reproduced on its cover the facsimile of a letter from the Baron de Coubertin, in which these words were to be read :

“The mission taken up by Japan in organizing in Tokyo the celebration of the XIIIth Olympiad, is the greatest that has ever been entrusted to any nation. For it is not only to see the course of the olympic torch pursued across the universe and thereby to bring the whole of Asia in close association with the Olympic Movement, but also to link Ancient Greece — the most precious of ancient European civilizations — to Asia’s most refined cultural and artistic products. It will be a very great joy for me to have been able to contribute something to a meeting that benefits the world and brings together cultures separated by several thousand *years*.”

On 10th October 1964, twenty-eight years after this message was written, the voice of Pierre de Coubertin was heard in the National Stadium in Tokyo greeting the youth of the world gathered there. The miracle of recording allowed Japan to pay tribute to the man who had wished that the Olympic Games should be celebrated there.

Thank you, friends in Japan. Thank you for having believed in your mission and for having carried it out with so much enthusiasm, generosity and devotion. You did everything to overwhelm your guests. You raised temples to sport, built bold, new roads for communication, brought your treasures out of their museums, opened your theatres and displayed your traditions. You decorated your whole country from north to south, made the sky one huge olympic flag, composed musics symbolic of your soul. You have devoted your ingenuity, your technical knowledge, your precision to the Games and shown your hospitality, your tact and your legendary smile to your guests.

And now ? Now that the Games are over, now that everyone has returned home, now that the bands and the cheers are silent and the hour of reckoning has come, you must know that as the months pass and the years go by, the values of your achievement will attain yet greater dimensions in the mind of each of those for whom you accomplished it. Like works of art that show themselves more beautiful still with time. If we have not proved it enough already in the heat of action, we tell you now : the history of the Olympic Movement will keep the mark of your subtle and at the same time grandiose stamp. And when one thinks this movement is the only one capable of uniting all the nations of the earth in one common positive drive, the whole world can only *thank* you for having imprinted with your infinite goodwill these Games where seeds of peace were sown in the hearts of the world’s youth.