

SPEECH BY MR. HANJI AOKI  
President of the Japanese  
Olympic Committee

J



Today, this Opening Ceremony of the 72nd I.O.C. Session is being honoured by the presence of Their Highnesses, the Crown Prince and the Princess. I feel most highly privileged to be given this opportunity of addressing you, on behalf of the Japanese Olympic Committee. I feel no higher distinction can be bestowed upon me. Please permit me to welcome the visit of one and all of you from the bottom of my heart.

Seven years have elapsed since the Olympic flame was set ablaze against the sky of Tokyo, in the autumn of 1964, to open the XVIIIth Games of the Olympiad. It was the first time this flame of international exultation was ever lit in Asia. Now once again, on the soil of Japan, most carefully selected young representatives of 35 countries,

from all over the globe, are being assembled to open the XIth Olympic Winter Games.

It must be recalled that although the Olympic summer flower blossomed resplendent in Tokyo, the seed of the winter flower had to stay dormant for 30 years under snow and ice of this northland. Now at last, it is given a chance to open the beautiful petals to send out fragrance of friendship and peace.

It must be remembered that in 1940, the city of Sapporo once had been given the honour of being an Olympic Host City. However, due to an unavoidable reason, it had to surrender this bestowed honour. Therefore, the decision of the I.O.C. Session at Rome, in April, 1967, to again select Sapporo as the Host City was received by us as a godsend. We cannot express in words how deeply moved we were. We were spellbound with joy. Thanks to the warm support given us by the I.O.C. Members, the flame of Olympic friendship which ruthlessly had been blown out has been reincarnated like a phoenix.

The Japanese Olympic Committee is deeply cognizant of the great responsibility which must accompany our inspired emotion. It has, therefore, unreservedly sought the guidance and assistance of the International Sport Federations concerned and the National Olympic Committees of various countries. Receiving at home the understanding and co-

operation of the Japanese Government, Hokkaido Government Office, Sapporo Municipality and the Japanese people in general, and with the Organising Committee as the nucleus of activities, we have proceeded, united as one, to make preparations for the Games about to open.

We, of the Japanese Olympic Committee, feel duty-bound to execute the XIth Olympic Winter Games successfully. It is our fond hope to become a truly Olympic country with a distinction of having hosted both the Summer and Winter Games. We are determined to leave behind this achievement as our lasting monument.

The fact that the Olympic Winter Games is about to be held in Sapporo is not only an honour for Japan alone, but for the entire Asia, which constitutes one of the Five Olympic Rings. To me, this is deeply significant. Availing ourselves of this opportunity of holding the Sapporo Games, we have invited young delegates from 20 countries affiliated with the Asian Games Federation to participate in the Sapporo Olympic Commemorative International Sports Youth Assemblage. These youthful representatives will be shouldering the leadership of the next generation in their respective countries.

Among the participants of this International Sports Youth Assemblage, I believe, will there be many who will be

touching snow and ice for the first time. However, I am confident that their opportunity of hearing and feeling the glorifying songs of the youth and the lofty Olympic concepts which will be unfolded in the snowy white world surrounding them will help them to vigorously grow up into pilots of peace in their ever-changing Asian home countries.

In conclusion, allow me to touch on the 72nd I.O.C. Session, which is being opened today. I note that President BRUNDAGE has consistently advocated for years the need of making the Olympic Games clean, pure and upright. Therefore, I sincerely hope this Session will be able to carry on constructive and useful discussions especially concerning the various problems confronted by the Olympic Winter Games. I hope the result of the discussions will pave the way to better Olympic Games in the future and further development of the Olympic Movement.

I assure you that the Japanese Olympic Committee will be ever ready to work hand in hand with all of you for the cause of guiding amateur sports in the right direction. Please accept this address of mine as a pledge that we are ever determined to overcome whatever difficulties in helping to steer the Olympic Games towards the promotion of international friendship and peace.

H.A.

