

<Association for Preservation of the History and Landscape of Kyu-Karuizawa>

## **“Statement from Karuizawa” at the Opening of G7 Foreign Ministers’ Meeting in Karuizawa, Nagano**

Following the G7 Transport Ministers’ Meeting in September 2016 and the G20 Ministerial Meeting on Energy Transitions and the Global Environment for Sustainable Growth in June 2019 in Karuizawa, we heartfully welcome back to Karuizawa the G7 Foreign Ministers’ Meeting this April.

At Association of Preservation of the History and Landscape of Kyu(Old)-Karuizawa, we are making constant efforts to maintain and preserve the excellent natural environment, scenery, history, and culture of Karuizawa, and to pass them on to future generations. It is a non-profit, voluntary organization that works closely with villa and town residents, related parties, and local governments to deepen the understanding of the importance of natural environments and landscapes, and to support activities for landscape agreements.

On this important occasion of the G7 Foreign Ministers’ Meeting in Karuizawa, we would like to announce our “Statement from Karuizawa” as below to share “the history and the spirit of Karuizawa” with the people participating in this meeting and with any who are concerned through the broader network.

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In 1888, Alexander Croft Shaw, a missionary of the Anglican Church, built his villa on the foot of Mt. Ozuka in old Karuizawa for the first time in the town’s history. Rev. Shaw was impressed by the nature and climate of Karuizawa and described it “a roofless hospital” (a natural sanatorium).

In 1890, the British Minister His Excellency Hugh Fraser built his villa near Netebashi, in old Karuizawa. Since then, Karuizawa has established a reputation as a summer resort in Japan for foreigners such as missionaries and diplomats.

Together with missionaries and diplomats, Japanese business elites and literary figures have developed a villa culture and the town became an extremely unique place for the international community in a cool climate in summer.

Entering the Showa era, the Japanese financial crisis and the Great Depression occurred, but cottages were continuously built even at that time. Some memorable buildings were designed by American missionary William Merrell Vories, and later by Antonin Raymond, who assisted Frank Lloyd Wright in the construction of the Imperial Hotel. In 1931, Mr. and Mrs. Lindbergh came to Japan and Karuizawa.

In 1933, Japan withdrew from the League of Nation, leading to the February 26 Incident in 1936. On the other hand, in the same year in Karuizawa, the “50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Event for

Karuizawa Development” was attended by political and business circles and diplomats. There Karuizawa was an important location for intelligent information-gathering activities for diplomats.

In 1941, when the war broke out between Japan and the United States, the British and Americans were forced to return to their home countries, and diplomatic missions from many countries, including Germany, Italy, Switzerland, Australia, and Sweden, were evacuated to Karuizawa.

In 1945, a telegram accepting the Potsdam Declaration is said to have been directed through the Swiss and Swedish legations in Karuizawa. This eventually led to the promulgation of the new Constitution of Japan in 1946.

In 1949, U.S. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles and the Japanese Finance Minister Hayato Ikeda held talks at the Mampei Hotel in town and in 1951, the San Francisco Peace Treaty was signed. At the 1964 Tokyo Olympic Games, the equestrian competition was held in Karuizawa.

With the rapid growth of new villas in Karuizawa after the war, the Joshinetsu Expressway and the Usui-Karuizawa Interchange opened in 1993. The Hokuriku Shinkansen was completed and Karuizawa Station opened in 1997. Access to Karuizawa improved dramatically.

Currently, Karuizawa, with a population of over 21,000, has more than 16,000 villas and more than 6-8 million tourists a year. The current number of villas is more than 10 times larger than the pre-war time.

Has the villa land development in Karuizawa already reached a marginal level? There are serious concerns that further development of condominiums and new villas will further damage the natural environment and landscape.

In 1972, the town of Karuizawa enacted the “Summary of Nature Conservation, building coverage ratio, floor area ratio, building shape, height, color, etc. It is positioned as the “Karuizawa Rule”.

In 2005, the town of Karuizawa and the Governor of Nagano Prefecture issued the “Declaration of Karuizawa Cityscape Method”, stating that “Karuizawa’s beautiful and rich nature and scenery are social common asset that must be passed on to future generations. We will fulfill our responsibility to properly preserve and nurture it”. Furthermore, in 2007, the “Karuizawa Town Development Basic Ordinance” was enacted, and the “Karuizawa Grand Design” has been discussed.

However, there is no end to the cases of Karuizawa’s “Original Sceneries” being abruptly destroyed by forest clear-cutting for the new condominiums and new villa constructions.

The preamble to the “Karuizawa Town Environmental Basic Ordinance”, which was enforced in 2022, states as follows:

“Karuizawa is our town, nestled at the foot of the majestic Mt. Asama, surrounded by deep greenery, cool breezes, beautiful water flows, and blessed with a diversity of living creatures.

We, the residents, have maintained a healthy and moderate lifestyle, and on the other hand, we have created a culture ahead of the times and accumulated history under the

guidance of our excellent predecessors, including foreigners.

If the natural environment, the people who live there, and the organized society come together to create a climate, then we have a responsibility to pass on this unique climate to future generations. The ecosystem that supports the formation of the natural world can be thrown off balance by the slightest carelessness, so careful consideration is required to protect it.

In order to reduce the burden on the environment while pursuing convenience and affluence in people's lives, a lifestyle that is effective in restraint is required. Furthermore, socioeconomic activities must always face the sustainability of the global environment.

Based on the recognition that preserving this culture will lead to environmental measures for the entire country and the world, and will become a driving force to prevent global environmental issues such as due to climate change, we have enacted this ordinance in order to contribute to the future of Karuizawa Town by having all people related to this town working together to build a sustainable society and promoting the conservation and creation of the environment.”

The Association for Preservation of the History and Landscape of Kyu-Karuizawa shares the same direction of the above purposes. We constantly observe what is happening now and seek the means for what we should do specifically. We believe that it is extremely important that the villa and local residents and the local governments work together to implement effective measures.

By taking this opportunity, we hope that we can send our message to entire Japan and the world beyond. It is critically important to continuously exercise the said effective measures to protect local natural environments and landscapes so that on a global basis we can eventually achieve net zero goals under climate changes and for the goals of the SDGs.

We hope that the participating ministers and related parties of the Nagano Prefecture Karuizawa Foreign Ministers' Meeting will kindly pay attention to such important initiatives of ours for the town of Karuizawa.

Thank you.

Hidehiko Tanimura  
Chairman

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