

Koichi Ai

*Minister of Chancery and Public Affairs at the Embassy of Japan*

Koichi Ai has been the Minister and Head of Chancery at the Embassy of Japan since his arrival in Washington in June 2021. His main responsibility in this capacity is the overall management and coordination of the Embassy's functions. Since September 1, 2022, he also heads the Public Affairs, covering both the press matters and the cultural affairs.

Mr. Ai joined the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1989. He has served in such overseas posts as Washington, D.C. (1992), Ottawa (2002), Jakarta (2005), New York (2013), and Paris (2018) before coming to Washington. In Paris, he was the Deputy Permanent Representative of Japan to the OECD for three years and served on the Executive Committee of the Organization as its Vice Chair.

At the Foreign Ministry in Tokyo, he has served as Counsel for Treaties Negotiation; Director, Law of the Sea Division; Director, Policy Planning Division; and Director, International Economy Division. His wide-ranging diplomatic experience covers trade negotiations with both the U.S. and the E.U. as well as long term strategic planning of Japan's foreign policy. Six-year assignment as an official English interpreter for Prime Ministers and Foreign Ministers earlier in his career gave him unique perspectives on high-level diplomacy.

Before his assignment in Paris, he served as the Director General (Acting) at the Japan Institute of International Affairs, the premier foreign policy think-tank in Tokyo, presiding over the intellectual direction of its activities.

Educated at the University of Tokyo (Law), Mr. Ai holds Master of Arts in Law and Diplomacy degree from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy (1992). More recently, he was an Associate of the Program on U.S.-Japan Relations at Harvard University for the 2021-2022 academic year.

Mr. Ai is a licensed private pilot, scuba diving instructor, and large format photography enthusiast. He has certificates to teach Japanese traditional arts of ikebana (Sogetsu) and tea ceremony (Omotesenke).