

Good evening, everyone.

I am Akira Yamada, Ambassador of Japan to Brazil and a director of the International Shogi Popularization Society (ISPS).

While working as a diplomat, I have been spreading Japanese “Shogi” to the world for more than 25 years.

I am sure you are familiar with International Chess. Other than Chess, around the world there are dozens of board games that are quite similar to chess and Shogi. I believe Shogi is the most interesting of them all. This is because, among dozens of chess-like games, only Japanese Shogi has a unique rule, i.e. "You can use the opponent's pieces you have taken as your own, and you can drop them in any space on the board. Thanks to this rule, Shogi has become much more complex and strategic than other chess games. In chess, the number of options for moves decreases towards the end game, but in Shogi, the number of options increases and there are more opportunities to play beautiful sacrifice moves.

I wish many people around the world to know about the charm and appeal of Japanese Shogi.

On the other hand, Shogi occupies a more important position in Japanese society and culture than chess in any other country in the world. The results of big title games are sometimes the top news, and the matches of professional players are reported in newspapers, on TV, and on the Internet, and Shogi fans are interested not only in the games but also even in the lunch menu of the top players.

Today, we can watch the game between Sato 9-dan and Moriuchi 9-dan, who are legendary top players in the Shogi world, with English commentary. I myself am so excited, and I think the viewers who are able to witness such a precious opportunity are really lucky.

I hope that today's event will be an opportunity for you to learn more about Shogi and Japanese culture.