

Bulgaria national day

Excellent political, cultural ties stimulate economic activities

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AMBASSADOR OF THE REPUBLIC
OF BULGARIA TO JAPAN

The National Day of Bulgaria marks our liberation from Ottoman rule as a result of the victory of Russia in the Russo-Turkish war, which ended with the San Stefano Peace Treaty on March 3, 1878. In Japan, we



celebrate our National Day this year in the framework of the 50-year jubilee of the re-establishment of diplomatic relations between Bulgaria and Japan after World War II. This remarkable jubilee started with the official visit to Japan of President H.E. Georgi Parvanov and his wife, Zorka.

In their joint statement, Prime Minister Taro Aso and President Parvanov confirmed that between the two countries there has been ac-

tive interaction in a wide range of fields such as political, economic and cultural exchanges, and exchanges of human resources based on mutual understanding and cooperation, and shared values such as democracy and a market economy. They noted with satisfaction that the traditional friendly bilateral relations gained new momentum through the mutual visits of the foreign ministers of both countries in 2007.

Soon after the re-establish-

ment of diplomatic relations in 1959, the two countries began economic exchanges. In 1965, Bulgaria bought its first modern computer from the Japanese company Fujitsu Ltd., and started broad cooperation with Japan in electronics and robotics. A milestone of the development of relations between the two countries was Osaka Expo '70 at which the Japanese public was attracted to the products on display at the Bulgarian pavilion. The interest of Meiji Dairies in Bulgarian yogurt also started from the exposition in 1970. In those days, Bulgaria and Japan had completely different political orientation and even though Bulgarian industry was controlled by the government, the two countries managed to establish very fruitful economic relations.

After the breakup of the socialist bloc, Bulgaria became a democratic country, and is a member of NATO and the European Union. Now Bulgaria and Japan have completely equal political orientation. Bulgarian industry and the business community are privatized. We had a pavilion at Expo 2005 Aichi. One would expect that now economic relations between Bulgaria and Japan are much wider and more fruitful. In fact they are not. I know that

the responsibility for such results rests with my country and we have to do our best to improve our opportunities.

We have to show our Japanese business partners that the new democratic Bulgaria is a reliable and attractive destination for foreign investment and tourism. In this respect, the research missions to Bulgaria of leading economic organizations such as the Japan Business Federation (Nippon Keidanren) and the FEC (Friendship Exchange Council) are of the utmost importance. We have to see the global economic stagnation also as an opportunity for further development and growth.

It is natural to mark the achievements when celebrating a jubilee. Let me mention the rich and long-standing cultural exchange between Bulgaria and Japan, and the variety of cultural activities organized during this year in both countries. The highlights of the "Year of Bulgaria in Japan" are the exhibition of ancient Thracian treasures, dating back to 3000 B.C. and inaugurated by President Parvanov, his wife, and Their Imperial Highnesses Prince and Princess Akishino, the "The Cyrillic Alphabet" poster exhibition of Bulgarian-born letters and the Bulgarian Film Days, which will be held for

the first time in Japan.

We are expecting in May to welcome in Bulgaria Prince and Princess Akishino during their visit to the four Danube countries to commemorate the "Japan-Danube Friendship Year," and the 50th anniversary of the re-establishment of diplomatic relations between Bulgaria and Japan. This visit will be an auspicious opportunity to attract the attention of the Japanese public to Bulgaria as well as deepen mutual understanding between our nations.



Ancient features: A solid-gold, 672-gram mask, dating from the late fifth century B.C., is believed to depict the face of a Thracian king. It is part of the Thracian Treasures in Bulgaria exhibition at the Hiroshima Prefectural Art Museum through March 31.



Cultural rhythms: Bulgarian children in traditional costumes take part in a folk dance.

Congratulations
to the People of the Republic of Bulgaria
on the Occasion of Their National Day

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