

# Vietnam national day

## Vietnam, Japan begin to put pieces in place to become strategic partners

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AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND  
PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE SOCIALIST  
REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM TO JAPAN

On Sept. 2, 1945, in Ba Dinh Square, Hanoi, in a grand meeting with scores of thousands of participants, President Ho Chi Minh read the Declaration of Independence, proclaiming to the Vietnamese people and to the world that Vietnam had become a free, independent and sovereign country.



This year the Vietnamese people are jubilant to celebrate the 64th anniversary of the National Day of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, and in the festive days of this September, they are also happy to welcome the 36th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Vietnam and Japan.

In comparison with a history of thousands of years, 64 years is a very short time, but in that span of time, the Vietnamese people have achieved many a marvel: defeating foreign aggressors, recovering independence, freedom and sovereignty, reunifying the nation, rebuilding the country from the ruins of war, and now steadily advancing in national development and international integration.

Since 1986, Vietnam has adopted the "Doi Moi (renewal)" policy to transform the economy from a state-planned economy to a market economy, bolstering the economy to develop continually at an average rate of be-

tween 7 percent and 8.5 percent per year for more than 20 years. In the wake of the global economic recession and financial crisis, growth dropped to 6.5 percent in 2008 and was only 3.9 percent in the first half of this year. However, that is a happy outcome in comparison with the world's gloomy economy.

It is meaningful that Vietnam has escaped from the list of poor countries through its tireless endeavors and is determined to become an industrial country by 2020.

Regarding external relations, adopting the motto of diversification, multilateralism and international integration, Vietnam has participated in almost all regional and international organizations and cooperation institutions, most recently becoming a member of the World Trade Organization in 2006 and a nonpermanent member of the U.N. Security Council for the 2008-2009 term.

History proves that Vietnam-Japan relations date back as far as the 15th to 16th centuries, when Japanese commercial ships frequented Vietnam's harbors. Relics of the good friendship and bilateral commercial relations remain, and from time to time they are discovered and have been dearly preserved in the ancient city of Hoi An (Quang Nam province), a Cultural Heritage site recognized by UNESCO.

Some 100 years ago, the so-called "Eastward Travel Movement" mobilized Vietnamese youths to travel to Japan to study the Meiji Restoration. Reminders of their journey remain in the city of Fukuroi, Shizuoka, record-

ing the deeply moving relationship between Phan Boi Chau, the leader of the movement, and Dr. Sakitaro Asaba, its wholehearted supporter.

Over the years, Vietnam-Japan relations have grown steadily. This spring the Vietnamese people had the honor to welcome Crown Prince Naruhito's official visit to Vietnam. In April, General Secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam Nong Duc Manh paid an official visit to Japan and with Prime Minister Taro Aso unanimously made the "Joint Proclamation on Vietnam-Japan Strategic Partnerships" with the view to enhancing relations between the two nations. Premier Nguyen Tan Dung came to Japan in May on a working visit and attended the "Future of Asia" Conference.

The two nations signed the Vietnam-Japan Economic Partnership Agreement in December 2008 and it will come into force Oct. 1 this year. The "Vietnam-Japan Joint Initiative" aimed at improving the business environment and competitive capacity of Vietnam, which started in 2003, has entered its third stage with encouraging results.

Japan has become one of the top economic partners of Vietnam. Bilateral trade is increasing rapidly and reached \$17 billion in 2008, surpassing the 2010 goal of \$15 billion set by the two countries.

Japan possesses more than 1,000 direct investment projects in Vietnam, with registered capital of more than \$17 billion, and ranks third among more than 80 investing countries and territories. Vietnam welcomes Japanese investors participating in key domains, large-scale projects and in major economic areas, simultaneously providing favorable conditions for small and medium high-technology and subsidiary technology enterprises from various localities of Japan to invest in Vietnam.

Japan is the biggest ODA provider to Vietnam. A series of infrastructure projects, particularly in the transportation and energy domains, plays a very important role in the economic development and improvement of living standards of the population. The projects, which are being implemented in various areas, demonstrate vividly the intimate relations of cooperation and friendship that exist between the two countries.

There are now more than 3,000 Vietnamese students and 17,000 trainees in Japan. Vietnam highly appreciates Japanese cooperation in building excellent human resources for our national development.

Direct flights connecting Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City, and probably Da Nang in the near future, with Japanese destinations such as Narita, Osaka, Fukuoka and Nagoya every year transport over 400,000 Japanese tourists to Vietnam and scores of thousands of Vietnamese to Japan, thus making the two nations closer and closer.

On this occasion, I would like to extend my hearty congratulations over the eminent successes of this year's Japan Sakura Festival in Hanoi (April) and the Japanese Festival in Hoi An (August), and in return, I hope that Japanese people will have the chance to enjoy Vietnamese culture at the Vietnamese Festival in Yoyogi Park, Tokyo (Sept. 19-20), Vietnamese Foods Week at the Okura Hotel, Tokyo (Sept. 14-21), as well as Vietnam's Roadshows and Tourism Fairs in Sakai (Sept. 12), Osaka (Sept. 13-14), Nagoya (Sept. 15-16) and at the Tokyo Big Sight (Sept. 18-20).

On behalf of the Vietnamese government and people I would like to express my most sincere gratitude to Their Imperial Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko, Their Imperial Highnesses Crown Prince Naruhito and Crown Princess Masako, and the entire Imperial family, as well as to the government, Diet members, business circles, scholars of Japan and the Japa-



High-level talks: Nong Duc Manh, general secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam, meets Emperor Akihito during his official visit to Japan in April. During his visit, the two countries agreed to upgrade the bilateral relationship to a strategic partnership. EMBASSY OF VIETNAM

nese people, for their valuable cooperation and assistance to the Vietnamese people in our cause of national

construction and development. My best wishes to all of you.

## EPA implementation to contribute to strengthening trade, investment

Susumu Kato  
CHAIRMAN OF JAPAN-VIETNAM ECONOMIC  
COMMITTEE, NIPPON KEIDANREN

On behalf of Nippon Keidanren (the Japan Business Federation), I offer my heartfelt congratulations on Vietnam's 64th Independence Day.



Japan and Vietnam have long forged good and favorable relations as important partners. The "Japan-Vietnam Joint Statement toward a Strategic Partnership for Peace and Prosperity in Asia," issued by the top leaders of both countries in October 2006, expressed the determination to strengthen cooperation in every field. I am very happy to see efforts toward boosting cooperation making steady progress as seen in the confirmation made toward further collaboration when Vietnamese Communist Party General Secretary Nong Duc Manh visited Japan in April and

Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung visited Tokyo in May.

The bilateral economic relationship has been expanding rapidly, with total trade value growing to \$16.9 billion for 2008. Japanese investment in Vietnam had aggregated \$5.18 billion by December 2008. I believe the "Japan-Vietnam Joint Initiative" launched in December 2003 as well as the Japan-Vietnam investment agreement that went into effect in December 2004 greatly helped investment to expand.

Particularly, the joint initiative is a unique scheme of proposing and effecting measures for the improvement of investment conditions in Vietnam, and is highly regarded by both countries for producing results. In the third phase of the initiative, which started in November 2008, 37 items are on the action program. I am doing my very best as its chairman to achieve the desired effects.

Moreover, the Japan-Vietnam Economic Partnership Agreement, which Nippon

Keidanren had long wanted to be concluded, is to finally come into effect this autumn. I expect and hope that this EPA will contribute to the promotion of bilateral economic relations, particularly in trade and investment, through its abolition or reduction of customs and tariffs, and its liberalization of services trade.

The international financial and economic crisis has dealt a blow to all national economies. In view of the excellence and diligence of the Vietnamese people, I have no doubt that Vietnam, a major market within the ASEAN bloc, will be able to tide over this crisis and make further progress toward prosperity.

As a member of the Japanese business community, I am determined to commit myself to various activities not merely for business but also diverse areas with the hope of making the bilateral relationship closer and tighter. Congratulations once again on Vietnam's Independence Day. EMBASSY OF VIETNAM



Ancient capital: Turtle Tower peeks through the trees at Hoan Kiem Lake in Hanoi. The lake is one of city's major scenic spots and serves as a focal point for its public life. EMBASSY OF VIETNAM

### Congratulations

to the People of

the Socialist Republic of Vietnam

on the Occasion of

the 64th Anniversary of

Their National Day



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