

France national day

Deep exchanges help further partnerships

Philippe Faure
AMBASSADOR OF FRANCE TO JAPAN

A long-awaited event for young people in France took place near Paris just a few days ago. The Japan Expo, which celebrates the latest trends in Japanese pop culture

— J-pop, manga, anime — attracted more than 180,000 visitors in two days. Manga is so popular in France that Japanese is the second most translated language, just after English. And this is only one example of the “Japan boom” that France is currently experi-

encing.

Yet, this should not come as a surprise. Our relations have been of intense exchanges for centuries.

In the cultural fields, the art exhibition 115 Masterpieces from the Musée d’Orsay (including world-renowned paintings by Paul Gauguin, Claude Monet, Edouard Vuillard, Vincent Van Gogh) currently organized at the National Art Center, Tokyo, until Aug. 16 (hundreds of thousands of people have already visited the exhibition) reminds us how deeply artists from one of the major art movements were influenced by Japanese culture. Monet’s painting “Impression: Sunrise” gave its name to the movement, and he had built an impressive collection of Japanese prints.

Moreover, La Folle Journée Music Festival — Days of Enthusiasm 2010, a concept originally from the French city of Nantes and now taking root in Tokyo, Niigata, Kanazawa and Lake Biwa, had a striking

success with more than 900,000 spectators over only one weekend.

In architecture, it is to the Japanese architects Kazuyo Sejima and Ryue Nishizawa (SANAA) and Shigeru Ban that the Louvre museum and the Pompidou Center — two of the most important art museums in France — have entrusted the construction of their extension sites in Lens and Metz.

Economically speaking, Japanese investments in France and French investments in Japan are responsible for approximately 70,000 jobs in each country. The French and Japanese have a lot in common, in particular strong industrial knowhow and a long-term vision when investing. Although Japan is not as open to foreign direct investment (FDI) as we would have wished, France is the second-largest investor in Japan and wishes to reinforce its presence. In terms of trade, there is room for improvement especially in sectors such as public procurement,

health care or transportation.

Politically, France and Japan share the same values and agree on many issues. We are delighted to see Japan’s recent developments toward ratification of the Hague Convention in order to solve the problems encountered by children from divorced international couples. We hope to cooperate in the future in areas such as the environment, global governance, the reform of the international financial system and financial regulations. There are so many spheres in which we can work together, particularly with Japan hosting the next COP10 meeting on biodiversity in Nagoya and France holding the next presidency of both the G-8 and G-20.

The regularity of diplomatic visits is a good indicator of our bilateral cooperation. After the minister of exterior commerce, the minister of employment and the minister



Visits: French Prime Minister François Fillon visits French insurer AXA’s headquarters in Japan in 2008, with the company’s president, Henri de Castries (right). Fillon will again be in Japan on July 15. AXA / EMBASSY OF FRANCE

for foreign affairs, among others, we will receive our Prime Minister François Fillon tomorrow, July 15, for a visit with a focus on economic ties

with the second-largest economy in the world. Indeed, before meeting with his counterpart, Naoto Kan, Fillon will give a lecture titled “France

and Europe: a reform agenda for raising growth” in which he will demonstrate the vitality of France and the European Union.



Conferral: Japanese architect Kazuyo Sejima is awarded the Order of Arts and Letters by French Ambassador Philippe Faure at his residence in Tokyo in April. EMBASSY OF FRANCE



Coming soon: Air France will fly the Airbus’ 21st century flagship A380 on its Narita-Paris route starting in September. AIR FRANCE

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