

Portugal national day

Portugal-Japan ties forged in history

Joao Pedro Zanatti
AMBASSADOR OF PORTUGAL TO JAPAN

Today, Portugal celebrates its National Day, marking the 430th anniversary of the death of the great Renaissance poet Camoes. On this very day, we also celebrate the Portuguese diaspora: Our unique history and characteristics have now spread around the planet. Today is a celebration of Portugal's openness toward the world — the result of several centuries of cultural and economic exchange across the globe. Japan in particular has a very special place in our hearts and history. The first ambassadors from the West to establish contact with Japan arrived from Portugal in 1543, leading to a long-lasting friendship and cultural exchanges.

It is with special delight that we eat *kasutera* (originally the Portuguese word "castela," meaning sponge cake) and drink *o-cha* ("cha" in Portuguese); reminders of more than 460 years of cultural exchange between our two countries and only two of many similarities that prevail in both languages and cultures. In Japan, several traditional events help sustain these ancient historical links, such as the Rifle Festival on Tanegashima Island, the Namban Festival of Sakai in Osaka, and the Nagasaki Kunchi Festival, which is this year dedicated to Portugal.

This National Day is even more meaningful because we are also celebrating the 150th anniversary of the Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Trade, signed by King D.

1543 - 1860 - 2010 PORTUGAL-JAPÃO



1543-1860-2010 年 日本・ポルトガル

Flag-waving: The official logo of the 150th anniversary of the Japan-Portugal Treaty

Pedro V and the Emperor of Japan, which re-established diplomatic relations between our two nations. Portugal and Japan have been organizing numerous events and exhibitions — not only in Lisbon and

Tokyo, but throughout both countries — the most symbolic being the arrival in Japan of the Portuguese school ship Sagres by the end of July.

Among many other initiatives, I would like to refer to "Art and Poetry," an exhibition that ran in the Eye of Gyre Gallery in Omotesando and featured many Japanese and Portuguese artists. This is one of the best examples to illustrate the cultural exchanges between Portugal and Japan, and represents the long friendship that has defined our relations over the past 467 years.

Though Portugal and Ja-

pan are separated by more than 10,000 kilometers, we remain just as interested and curious about each other as we were more than four centuries ago. In addition to the differences, there are also many surprising similarities between us, in addition to a strong willingness to learn from each other that survives and strengthens even in the modern age, where knowledge circulates at an unprecedented speed.

While honoring and preserving the legacy of our common history, our two countries share similar values and principles, which has helped us remain reliable partners in a fast-changing world. Our bonds also have allowed us to maintain regular and fruitful dialogue at all levels while looking toward continual expansion of our friendship, such as by exploring new areas of cooperation in such fields as renewable energies, "green" technologies, medicine and general science.

We are especially glad to note the growing number of Portuguese and Japanese students looking for educational institutions in each other's countries to further im-

prove their knowledge, as well as the increasing bidirectional flux of highly qualified professionals who move between both shores. These points underline the vitality and future possibilities inherent in our long and singular relationship.

EU member Portugal is a modern and dynamic country that has preserved the charms and heritage of its 870 years of independence. Furthermore, it is blessed with the mildest climate in Europe and attracts millions of tourists each year, including thousands of Japanese. We also take great pleasure in the increasing number of Portuguese tourists who visit Japan and the growing interest in Portugal on the Japanese side.

On the occasion of Portugal's National Day, I sincerely look forward to deepening and strengthening our friendship in the years ahead.



Plain sailing: The Portuguese Navy school ship Sagres will arrive in Japan at the end of July. EMBASSY OF PORTUGAL



Art history: Portuguese Ambassador Joao Pedro Zanatti stands by a folding Namban screen, representing the arrival of Portuguese dignitaries to Japan in the 16th century.

**Congratulations
on the 150th Anniversary of
the Japan-Portugal Treaty of Peace,
Amity and Commerce**



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