

Serbia president's visit

Ties forged in 1882 continue to strengthen

Ivan Mrkic
AMBASSADOR OF THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

It is my profound privilege and great pleasure to express my deepest respect, warmest greetings and warmest wishes to Their Imperial Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko and the members of the Imperial Family, as well as to H.E. Prime Minister Naoto Kan, the government and friendly people of Japan.



This is also a special opportunity to greet the distinguished readers of The Japan Times on this unique and joyous occasion. The visit of H.E. Boris Tadic, the president of the Republic of Serbia, is, literally and symbolically speaking, a historic one: This is the very first time that a head of the Serbian state officially visits Japan.

President Tadic visits Japan at the beginning of the famous Japanese cherry blossom season, bringing messages of

friendship and gratitude from our nation for numerous donations and aid received from the people and the government of Japan.

President Tadic will meet with Prime Minister Kan and many other officials. He will be honored to meet and exchange thoughts with Emperor Akihito and feel the beat of Japanese culture and tradition in its heart, Kyoto, the ancient capital of Japan.

Diplomatic relations between the two countries commenced 129 years ago as shown in warmhearted correspondence between the two sovereigns, the King of Serbia Milan Obrenovic the First and Emperor Meiji.

More precisely, in 1882 King Milan I had informed Emperor Meiji about the outcomes of the Berlin Congress and accession of Serbia to the family of European states. The answer, which arrived shortly after, was expressing best wishes, emphasizing readiness to develop friendly relations and cooperation between the two states. Since that time, every succeeding King of Serbia was ex-



President Boris Tadic of the Republic of Serbia

changing notes with successors of Emperor Meiji. This correspondence between the two monarchs was enriched by numerous visits of Japanese high representatives of the Imperial family to Belgrade and Serbia in general.

Our two states and two peoples had their destinies intertwined through various historically important events while individuals and institutions continued, with great devotion, to further develop cooperation, strengthening ties between our nations.

Nowadays, Serbia and Japan have signed 26 bilateral agreements and cooperation-related documents. It had all started in 1923, with a trade and maritime treaty, leading, along with many other agreements,

to the signing of a memorandum of understanding in the area of police cooperation, which took place by the end of 2010.

Ties connecting our two countries are present in many fields including science, culture and sports, which witness intensifying cooperation between renowned Serbian and Japanese representatives. How close our nations are, no matter the geographic distance, reflects in the fact that Serbia nurtures not only haiku but also Japanese martial arts, while in Japan, the number of Serbian folklore clubs is rising.

In the sphere of cultural exchange, special attention should be given to the showing of Serbian national folk dance ensemble Kolo, which had more than 20 performances across Japan in 2010. Also, numerous manifestations were organized in Serbia, in order to present the uniqueness and richness of Japanese culture.

Knowing that the Serbian language is being studied at quite a few universities and institutes in Japan gives a feeling of great pleasure. Surely extraordinary is the interest in Serbian language studies that has been expressed at Okayama University, where Serbian lectures are attended by no less than 160 Japanese students.

As for the field of economic cooperation, representative offices in Belgrade of the most

prominent Japanese companies are gaining strength. In the meantime, a high-level delegation of the Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) visited Serbia, followed by the Japan Bank for International Cooperation and the visit this month of the Japan Machinery Federation.

Japanese tourists also show a growing interest in destinations of historical and cultural importance located in Serbia. At the same time, efforts will be made to increase the number of Serbian tourists visiting Japan.

It is well known that aid from the people of Japan permanently marked the relations between the two nations. This had inspired the city of Belgrade to build a monument — "a water fountain of gratitude" — to the Japanese people, which was unveiled last year in the very heart of Belgrade's origin, within the ancient fortress called Kalemegdan.

Nowadays, Serbia has much to offer to Japan. Its strategic and geographic position, natural resources, fine infrastructure, its own and extended market reach make it very attractive in many respects.

Foreign companies increase their investments across Serbia, realizing the benefits of a well-educated, qualified workforce and outstanding talents. At the same time Serbia is making great steps toward its mem-



History: Republic Square is in a central part of Belgrade, the capital of Serbia. SERBIA EMBASSY

bership in the European Union, which represents an extraordinary endeavor and accomplishment in world history.

President Tadic has brought in a new energy and enthusiasm in the further development of friendly relations among neighboring southeast European nations. Exerting great patience and tolerance, Serbia resolves issues from the past with its neighbors, providing an ever stronger base to deepen and improve existing relations, extend commonly accepted democratic values and define projects that build our future.

Implementing with dynamism and great consistency the instruments of diplomacy and peace with regard to Kosovo, President Tadic was the leading figure in creating the opportunity for the commencement of dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina, attempting to reach a solution and historical compromise.

In conclusion, I am glad to have been in a position to present some of the facts that testify how ties of our two nations are becoming closer and our state relations more firm. It is my deep conviction that the future will bring even more opportunities to enrich our relations at all levels.

I would like to express once again my gratitude to The Japan Times for giving me the opportunity to address its esteemed readers on this auspicious occasion. I would also like to thank all those Japanese friends and associations actively engaged in strengthening our mutual understanding and developing our bilateral relations, with my best wishes for the welfare and prosperity of the Japanese people, as well as for the further deepening of our friendly relations and overall cooperation in the years to come.

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Friendship is visibly growing

Takehiro Togo
CHAIRMAN, JAPAN-SERBIA ASSOCIATION

On behalf of the Japan-Serbia Association, I would like to express my heartfelt greetings on the occasion of the visit to Japan of H.E. Boris Tadic, the president of the Republic of Serbia.

In addition to the unbroken tradition of friendship between King Milan I of Serbia and Emperor Meiji of Japan of past centuries, President Tadic has visited Japan at the most critical juncture in the history of the Balkans, in an important stage for European Union membership, and when Serbian-Japanese friendship is visibly growing in all directions.

As chairman of the Japan-Serbia Association, I sincerely hope that friendship and cooperation will further strengthen in all directions, as we have been witnessing in recent days.



Honor: A bronze bust of Nikola Tesla is displayed in the TEPCO Electric Power Historical Museum in Yokohama.



Heritage: Studenica Monastery, built in the 12th century, is a UNESCO World Heritage site.

East-West crossroads becomes a place for investment, expatriate life

Serbia and Japan have a long tradition of economic relations reflected in machinery and industrial equipment present in Serbia since the 1950s. Top-notch Japanese technology played an important role in the development of the postwar Serbian economy and rightfully deserved the high appreciation of engineers, industrialists and everyday users.

This tradition was preserved even in times of hardship. Through the friendly relations of our two nations, equipment from Japan again found its way to Serbia through various forms of aid, donations and Of-

ficial Development Assistance projects.

During the last decade, Serbia made its way toward a modern democratic society and never lost its strong ties with Japan and its people.

Nowadays, the most prominent Japanese companies, such as Itochu, Mitsubishi and Mitsu, have their representative offices located in Belgrade, the capital of Serbia.

The watchful eye of the Japan International Cooperation Agency's (JICA) office in the Balkans, located in Belgrade, can witness the transformation of Serbia, with the rise of its

gross domestic product (GDP) and progress in European Union integration, from being a recipient of donations and yen loan applicant to incrementally growing into a future partner.

Some Serbian products have found their way to the demanding Japanese market already and one may be surprised by the excellent raspberries, blueberries, strawberries, sweaters, select dairy products and wines at our booth at the Foodex fair, where the Japanese had the opportunity to see, try and taste all these marvelous products.

Foreign investors from the

United States, Canada, the EU, Russia, China and many other countries have realized that Serbia has much to offer in the fields of agriculture, commodities, logistics, electronics, information technologies, automotive, metal processing and many other production-oriented areas.

The opportunities for investment are ever growing with an increasing number of free trade agreements, with the EU (Stabilization and Association Agreement), Russian Federation, Ukraine, Belarus, Turkey, the Central European Free Trade

Agreement (CEFTA) and many others. With its beautiful nature, hospitable people, well-educated workforce, traditional ties to Europe and the European corporate sector, Serbia is a destination worth considering for both business and leisure.

Serbia has been, for centuries, a crossroads between West and East. A gateway to the Middle East and a main corridor to Western Europe.

It has been the homeland to top intellectuals and scientists of our time like Nobel Prize laureate Ivo Andric, Stevan Mokranjac, Milutin Milankov-

ic, Nikola Tesla and sport players known around the world like Dragan Stojkovic Piksi, Novak Djokovic, Jelena Jankovic, Ana Ivanovic and many others.

Serbia and especially Belgrade, are often described and very frequently visited by citizens of neighboring countries as the best place for living, entertainment, and nightlife. Many expatriates of foreign companies enjoy living in Belgrade and some of them even decide to take another direction in their careers, staying faithful to their new home — Belgrade.

Heartiest Welcome to His Excellency
Mr. Boris Tadić, President of the Republic of Serbia,
on the Occasion of His Official Visit to Japan

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Welcome His Excellency Mr. Boris Tadić, President of the Republic of Serbia

From the home of pyrethrum to the birthplace of the mosquito coil.

KINCHO mosquito coil (the world's first mosquito coil)
Pyrethrum flowers are the source of "pyrethroid"—a key insecticide component. Serbia is home to such pyrethrum flowers and the insecticide manufacturer, 'KINCHO', has an additional bond with Serbia.
Mr. Naohide Ueyama, KINCHO president, serves as Honorary Consul General of the Republic of Serbia in Osaka.
The Pioneer of Household Insecticide in Japan

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