

Marshall Islands national day

Mindful, thankful of our strong bilateral cooperation

Christopher J. Loeak
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE
MARSHALL ISLANDS

On this day, I extend the warmest greetings of "yokwe" from the people and the government of the Republic of the Marshall Islands to all our diplomatic allies and development partners, and friends throughout the world, most especially to Their Imperial Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko, Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda and to all our friends in Japan. This year's observation of the constitution of the Republic of the Marshall Islands marks the 33rd anniversary of the national day of our small country.

As the people of the Republic of the Marshall Islands celebrates its national day on May 1, I am mindful



and thankful of the very strong bilateral cooperation that has existed between our two countries since the establishment of diplomatic ties on Dec. 9, 1988. The current levels of socioeconomic development and growth of the Republic of the Marshall Islands is only possible because of the staunch and unrelenting support of our friends and partners in Japan. I am especially happy to note that the national philosophy of

the Republic of the Marshall Islands is similar in many ways to that of Japan, perhaps because Japan is an island nation as well as a very big part of the Pacific community.

When the disaster hit Japan on March 11, 2011, people of the Republic of the Marshall Islands joined other people from around the world to offer help and consolation to the people of Japan. Today, I wish to take this opportunity to renew, on behalf of the people and government of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, my sincere wish for the most speedy recovery as the people of Japan look to restore lost livelihoods and to rebuild Japan.

Happy 33rd Constitution Day to all and may God continue to bless and protect the Republic of the Marshall Islands and Japan.

Annette N. Note
CHARGE D' AFFAIRES A.I. OF THE
REPUBLIC OF THE MARSHALL ISLANDS

It is with utmost respect and honor that I wish to convey on the occasion of the 33rd anniversary of the founding of our young nation, a very warm greeting of "iakwe" from H.E. President Christopher J. Loeak and first lady Lieom Loeak, and the government and people of the Republic of the Marshall Islands to Their Imperial Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko, members of the Imperial household, and to the government and people of Japan. Today, as Marshallese around the world celebrate this special day in our history, we cannot help but be



proud of how far we've come as one nation united under our strong traditional values and national consciousness. May 1 is the one day out of the whole year that Marshallese people gather together to honor and reflect on the sacrifice and perseverance of our forefathers, who struggled to make what the RMI is today.

On this auspicious occasion, I join our president in renewing the solidarity of the Marshallese people with our Japanese brothers and sisters in this time of great challenge as they continue the recovery and healing process in the aftermath of the Great East Japan Earthquake and tsunami that devastated the nation last year. We join the international community in commending Japan's ability to emerge from this catastrophic disaster to restore itself within a year's time. Japan has been a great inspiration throughout the world. Even as it seeks to revitalize its own economic foundations and strive to reinvigorate its livelihood, Japan continues to maintain its vital role as an international development partner to the rest of the world. In the RMI, Japan con-

tinues to contribute to our economic and social development and has not been deterred from its aim to promote peace and human security throughout the world.

The RMI government and its people both in the public and private sectors were among the first in the Pacific to offer assistance to our Japanese friends during this difficult time, and as little as our contributions may have been, we regard it all as symbolic gestures of good will and friendship. In our Pacific way, friends must always help each other in times of critical need, so this much proves that Japan is in fact a dear ally of the RMI. The RMI has not wavered from its commitments to Japan throughout more than 20 years of our relationship, and it is on this fact that the people and government of Japan can rest assured that we do not intend for this to change anytime soon. Both the RMI and Japan have come a long way to where we are today and our bond of friendship has certainly matured over the years, given our shared history and diplomatic ties.

Japan continues to be a vital

development partner for the RMI and we certainly appreciate the ongoing technical assistance and the official development aid provided in the areas of education, health, fisheries, environment, solid waste management, infrastructure and other areas of development. It is our hope that Japan will continue to support the RMI in all of our development aspirations in the areas of fisheries and climate change, and other equally important sectors, both at the bilateral and multilateral level. The RMI continues to reciprocate to Japan's generosity and friendship by supporting Japan on various issues of mutual concern at the regional and international level.

We are cognizant of the fact that the future success of our young republic will depend not only on the achievements of the past and present contributions of our partners abroad but also more from our own hard work. In light of this, the RMI looks

forward to working more closely with Japan with more great efforts so as to bring our bilateral relationship to a new height and bring more benefits to our peoples. We are delighted that our president, on the occasion of his participation at the PALM 6 Summit (the sixth Pacific Islands Leaders Meeting) this year along with other leaders, will have an opportunity to interact with the Japanese government and people, and thereby further strengthening the bonds of friendship between our countries.

In closing, I wish to express my heartfelt gratitude to the sponsors of this year's special supplement, namely the Hon. Kazunori Tanaka, Hayashi Fumio, Japan Tuna Fisheries Cooperation, Kyowa Shipping Co. and the Green Hotels Co. Gratitude also goes to The Japan Times for giving us this special opportunity today. May God continue to bless and protect the Republic of the Marshall Islands and Japan!

Helping to preserve the pearl necklace of the South Pacific Ocean

Kazunori Tanaka
PRESIDENT, JAPAN-MARSHALL
ISLANDS PARLIAMENTARY
FRIENDSHIP LEAGUE

Located slightly to the north of equator in the Pacific Ocean, the Marshall Islands has 180 sq. km of land, with a population of 56,000, a good 40 percent of them being youths not yet 15 years of age.

My dream of visiting the nation became a reality in July 2008, upon the invitation from then President Litokwa Tome-



ing. The purpose of my trip concerned environmental problems, and the duties included visiting islands at risk of becoming submerged due to global warming. After a long, nine-hour journey from Guam, I arrived at the capital Majuro, where I met President Tomeing and key government officials including Jurelang Zedkaia, then speaker of the legislature and later president.

The relationship between the Marshall Islands and Japan is very strong since, after World War I, the League of Nations entrusted Japan to govern the Marshall Islands following Germany's defeat. Until Japan's defeat in 1945, Japan had governed the

nation for roughly 30 years, and during that time, many Japanese moved to the Marshall Islands and made it their second home.

Another point in common between the Marshall Islands and Japan is that both are countries that have experienced the effects of nuclear bombs. After dropping nuclear bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the U.S. conducted nuclear experiments at the Bikini and Enewetak atolls from 1946 to 1958.

However, the biggest and gravest concern is the crisis of becoming submerged. The Marshall Islands are, on average, just 2 meters above sea level, and even the areas that are highest from sea

level are a mere 6 meters above, causing floods at the airport even if the waves become slightly higher. In addition, shore erosion has become a grave issue, and there are now many areas that have become submerged. The IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) warned in its assessment report that if the sea level rises 1 meter above the current sea level, there is a risk that 80 percent of Majuro atoll will become submerged.

What can preserve the beauty of the islands of the Pacific are the responsible actions of those who live in developed countries. I believe this is an obligation we have as citizens of developed countries.

Congratulations

to the Government and People of
the Republic of the Marshall Islands
on the 33rd Anniversary of
Their Constitution

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and Best Wishes to the Government
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on the 33rd Anniversary of Their Constitution

Kazunori Tanaka

President, Japan-Marshall Islands Parliamentary Friendship League
Honorary Chairman, Japan-Marshall Islands
Member of the House of Representatives

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