

Polish president's visit

Poland, Japan enjoy close ties

Cyryl Kozaczewski
AMBASSADOR OF POLAND

I am honored to address the readers of The Japan Times on the occasion of the visit of the President of the Republic of Poland, Bronislaw Komorowski, to Japan. This visit is expected to further intensify and expand bilateral ties between Poland and Japan.

As the ambassador of Poland to Japan I am pleased that the relations between Poland and Japan are as close as they have ever been. Both countries increasingly see each other as trusted partners in global affairs. Poland and Japan are naturally getting closer in many areas of international political and eco-

conomic relations. Our shared positions and common interests are even more visible in international decision-making forums. Today, dozens of Polish businessmen are meeting their Japanese partners and exploring new opportunities for cooperation. One of the most illustrious recent examples of Polish-Japanese cooperation is a multibillion-dollar joint venture of Polish and Japanese mining companies in Chile, who are building one of the largest and most technologically advanced copper mines in the world.

Poland and Japan also maintain a very vital cultural exchange, as interest and admiration of each other's culture remains strong. Last year marked the 20th anniversary of the "Manggha" Center of Japanese Art and Technology in Krakow. The museum, cofund-

ed by a winner of the Kyoto Prize, Polish film director, Andrzej Wajda, supports many cultural events related to Japan in Poland and Poland in Japan. The significance of this anniversary was underscored by the presence of Akie Abe, the wife of Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, at a ceremony in Krakow in November.

Poland is recognized today as one of the most successful European economies. Following two decades of unprecedented economic growth, it is the largest economy in Central Europe and the 6th largest in the EU. Our voice is being heard not only in Europe but, also around the world. Thanks to the strength stemming from historical experience in overcoming the communist past, today Poland is able to support other states in the process of their

transformation and struggle for peace and democracy.

Availing myself of this opportunity, on the occasion of the 4th anniversary of the Great East Japan Earthquake, I wish to express my sincere sympathies for all those who have been affected by this enormous tragedy. Poland is one of the countries that demonstrated solidarity with the victims in the Tohoku region during these difficult times for Japan. A few weeks after the disaster, a group of children from the areas hardest hit by the earthquake and tsunami took part in the "Kizuna-no kakehashi: Polish holidays for children from Japan" project. One year later Anna Komorowska, the wife of the president of Poland met those children, when she visited a kindergarten in Kesennuma, Miyagi Prefecture, that was rebuilt thanks to donations from Poland. We will continue initiatives that strengthen bounds between Polish and Japanese people.

In light of the recent dramatic events in the Middle East, I would like to stress that Polish authorities expressed their sympathy to the people of Japan and stand firmly alongside the Japanese government upholding the principle of not "giving in" to terrorism that threatens international peace and security. The fight against terrorism is today one of the issues that both leaders of Poland and Japan are discussing within the framework of the summit.

Let this year's Polish-Japanese summit be a milestone for the strategic partnership uniting both countries in our support of freedom, peace and growth.



President of the Republic of Poland Bronislaw Komorowski

President Komorowski's profile

Bronislaw Komorowski was born on June 4, 1952 in Oborniki Slaskie near Wroclaw. He graduated from the Faculty of History at the University of Warsaw. The president is a former anti-communist opposition activist, a member of parliament, minister of national defence and marshal of the Sejm of the Republic of Poland.

He worked as a printer, journalist, distributor and publisher of the underground press. In the years of opposition activities he was frequently arrested and victimized. In 1977 he worked in Zespól Prasy Pax, and in 1980 and 1981 at the Social Research Centre NS ZZ Solidarnosc (Independent and Self-governing Trade Union Solidarnosc) of the Mazovian Region. From September 1982 he worked as an editor of the independent, underground magazine "ABC" (Adriatic-Baltic-Black Sea).

During martial law and until 1989, he taught history at the secondary theological school in Niepokalanow.

From 1991 to 2010 he was a member of parliament in the Sejm, working on several commissions.

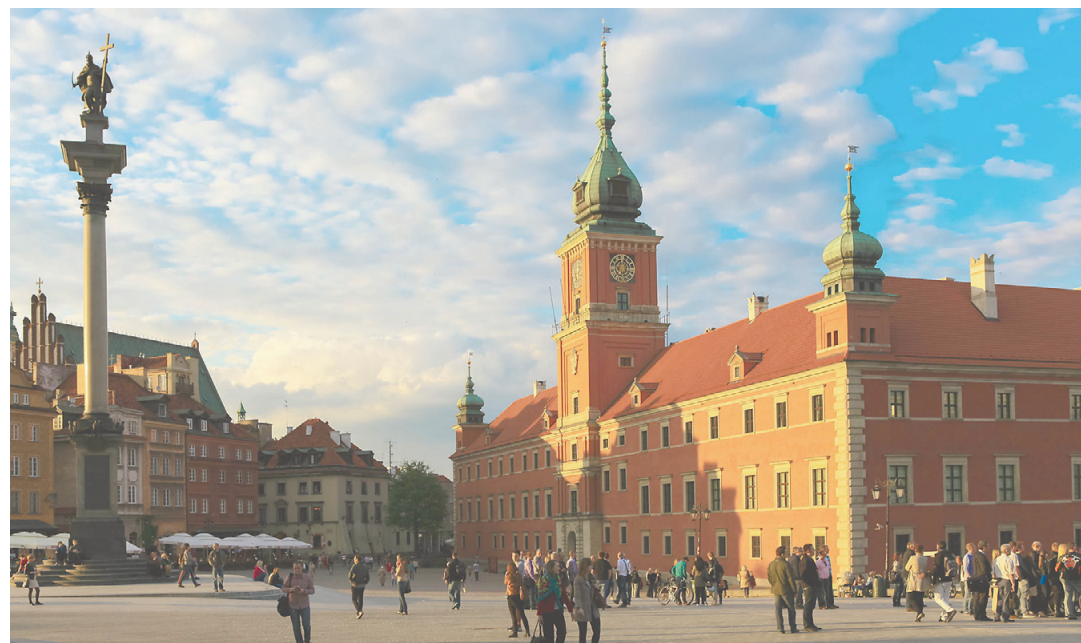
In October 2005 he was appointed deputy marshal of the fifth Sejm. In November 2007 he was appointed marshal of the sixth Sejm.

He was a member of the Freedom Union, in which he served as general secretary, before joining the Conservative People's Party.

In 2001 he became a member of Civic Platform, and in June 2006, he was appointed deputy chairman of the party.

As a result of the tragic death of President Lech Kaczynski in the Smolensk catastrophe on April 10, 2010, Komorowski, became acting president of the Republic of Poland. He won the presidential election on July 4, 2010.

He is married to Anna Dembowska and has have five grown children.



The historic center of Warsaw MARIUSZ CIESZEWSKI/POLAND MFA

Chopin Competition fosters piano talent

Kamila Stepień-Kutera
CHIEF OF THE RESEARCH AND
PUBLISHING DEPARTMENT, THE
FRYDERYK CHOPIN INSTITUTE

The Chopin Competition was born of a need to sustain knowledge of the music of Frederic Chopin and to perpetuate his characteristic piano playing. Today, when the competition — the oldest and one of the most important in the world — is organized on such a huge scale, attracting the greatest pianistic talents from countries all over the world, and Chopin's music is enjoying a level of popularity and recognition that virtually no other composer has received, it is hard to believe that around a hundred years ago Chopin's works were rarely played, and they were even disappearing from music school curriculums.

The man who brought the competition into being was the teacher and pianist Jerzy Zurawlew.

The first edition took place in the winter of 1927. The competition was then held twice more before World War II. After the war, the tradition was resumed in 1949, and since the fifth edition, in 1955, the competition

has been held every five years, gradually attaining a truly international level; its heyday came during the 1960s and 70s, as can be gauged from the names of its illustrious winners: Maurizio Pollini, Martha Argerich and Krystian Zimerman.

Since the early editions of the competition, a significant place in the world of Chopin interpretation has been held by Japanese: in 1955, Kiyoko Tanaka finished tenth in the competition; in 1965, Hiroko Nakamura finished fourth; and in 1970, the runner-up was Mitsuko Uchida. Over subsequent editions, Akiko Ebi, Michie Koyama, Yukio Yokoyama, Takako Takahashi, Rika Miyatani, Mika Sato, Takashi Yamamoto and Shohei Sekimoto achieved excellent results.

The competition's prestige and the interest it generates, which over time has seen it outstrip all other artistic events connected with Chopin, remains very strong. Suffice it to say that the number of applicants continues to grow, and last year as many as 452 pianists confirmed their wish to take part.

Since 2010, the sole organizer of the competition has been the Fryderyk Chopin Institute,



Shohei Sekimoto tied for fourth place at the 2005 Chopin International Piano Competition. THE FRYDERYK CHOPIN INSTITUTE

which is also preparing the forthcoming edition: in October, Warsaw will welcome pianists and listeners from all over the world. From the qualifying round onwards, music lovers will be able to follow the competition live, thanks to trans-

mission on the institute's website and a special mobile app. In the meantime, Warsaw — the city in which Fryderyk Chopin grew up and spent his entire youth and full of places associated with him — awaits lovers of Chopin's music today.

Hirofumi Nakasone
CHAIRMAN, JAPAN-POLAND
PARLIAMENTARY FRIENDSHIP
LEAGUE OF THE HOUSE OF
COUNCILORS

I would like to sincerely welcome His Excellency Bronislaw Komorowski, president of the Republic of Poland, and his wife to Japan.

Japan and the Republic of Poland enjoy a long history of friendship, which extends 96 years from the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1919 and 58 years from the resumption of diplomatic relations in 1957.

Poland, since the beginning

of its history, has sent outstanding figures that had enormous influence on the world in many areas such as science, culture, art and religion.

In Japan, there is no one who doesn't know the names of people like Nicolaus Copernicus, Frederic Chopin, Maria Skłodowska-Curie, Andrzej Wajda and Pope Saint John Paul II.

Poland, as a member country of the EU since 2004, has experienced significant economic development and has become an important base for about 300 Japanese companies for their business operations in Europe.

Additionally, Japan and Poland enjoy active exchanges of high level visits, such- as the visit of Their Majesties Emperor

Akihito and Empress Michiko to Poland in 2002, as well as the visit of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe to Poland in 2013.

At the time of the Great East Japan Earthquake in 2011, the Polish government and Polish nation promptly provided Japan with generous support and expressed kind words of encouragement, for which the Japanese people are deeply grateful.

I have often visited Poland as chairman of the Japan-Poland Parliamentary Friendship League of the House of Councilors. Whenever I visit Poland, I am striving for deepening sympathy and respect for Poland, being strongly impressed by its beautiful nature, rich culture rooted in a long history and the strength and warmth of the

hearts of the Polish people, who have undergone difficult times.

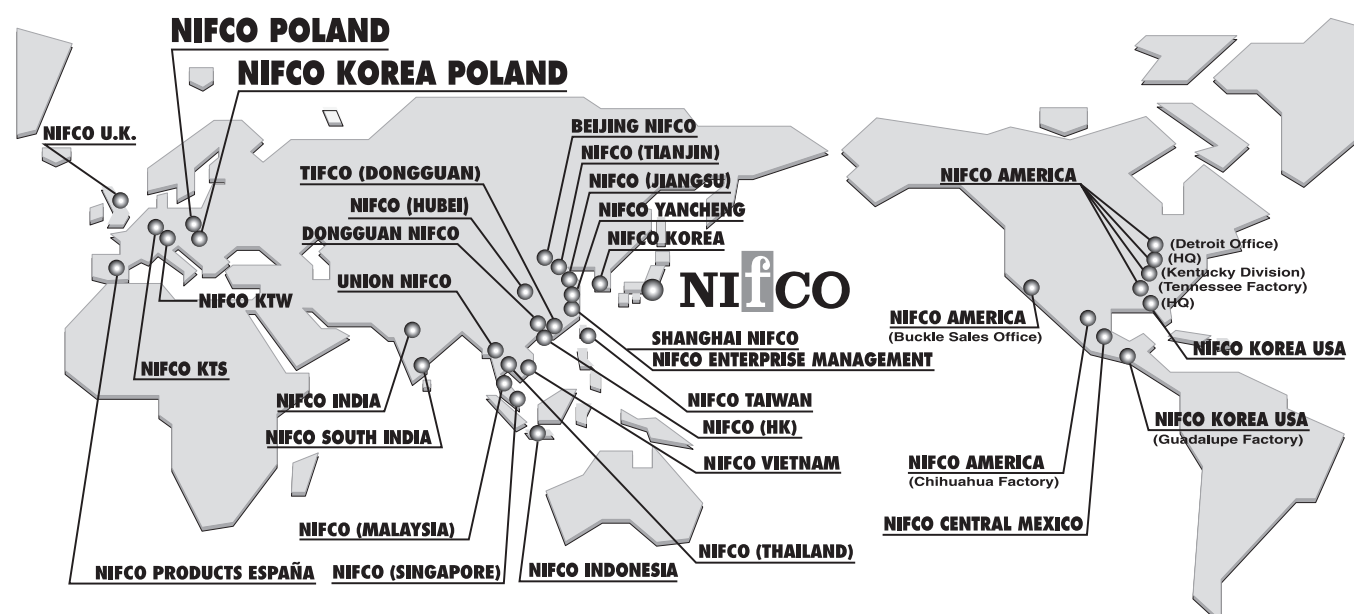
When I was Japan's minister of foreign affairs in 2008 and 2009, I did my best to build friendly relations with countries around the world and strengthening relations with Poland was a particularly important part of my agenda at that time.

As chairman of the Japan-Poland Parliamentary Friendship League of the House of Councilors, I would like to contribute to further deepening of friendly relations between Poland and Japan, including through parliamentary exchanges and cooperation with the Ambassador of the Republic of Poland to Japan Cyryl Kozaczewski.

Heartiest Welcome to His Excellency Bronislaw Komorowski, President of the Republic of Poland, on His Official Working Visit to Japan

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Heartiest Welcome to His Excellency

Bronislaw Komorowski,
President of the Republic of Poland,
on His Official Working Visit to Japan



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