

# Philippines National Day Special

## A partnership of growth and high hopes

**FERDINAND R. MARCOS JR.**  
PRESIDENT OF THE PHILIPPINES



I am deeply honored to share this moment of celebration of the 126th anniversary of the Proclamation of Philippine Independence with our Japanese friends and readers of The Japan Times. With heartfelt pride and gratitude, I reflect on the journey that has led us to this significant milestone, marking the dawn of "Bagong Pilipinas" ("New Philippines") and emphasizing the enduring friendship between the Philippines and Japan.

Last year bore witness to a series of high-level visits between the Philippines and Japan, aimed at advancing a shared vision of a robust and forward-looking strategic partnership. Inspired by the promising developments of 2023, I am confident our

bilateral relationship will only continue to grow stronger in the years to come.

The economic partnership between our countries has been instrumental in driving growth and development in the Philippines. During the visit of Prime Minister Fumio Kishida to Manila last November, I conveyed the Philippines' appreciation for Japan's consistent support in our quest to attain upper-middle-income country status in line with the Philippine Development Plan for 2023 to 2028. For decades, Japanese aid and investments have played a pivotal role in modernizing our infrastructure, stimulating economic activity and creating livelihood opportunities. Likewise, Filipino workers have made significant contributions to the labor force and economy of Japan.

Our partnership with Japan extends across various spheres, including defense and security, cultural exchange and education. It is a multifaceted partnership underpinned by our shared values and principles. It is characterized by a profound

respect for the rule of law and an unwavering commitment to diplomacy and dialogue.

Recent high-level meetings between our officials, as well as trilateral discussions among the Philippines, Japan and the United States, serve to remind us of the great potential inherent in our alliances and partnerships.

The future presents considerable opportunities for further collaboration between the Philippines and Japan. We can contribute bold and decisive actions to help address the climate crisis, strengthen environmental protection and safeguard the planet for future generations.

By harnessing the transformative power of digital innovation, artificial intelligence

and renewable energy, we can unlock new pathways for broadly shared and sustainable economic growth. We can cooperate to strengthen our countries' resilience and promote social progress.

We can facilitate greater interaction between our nationals, further deepening mutual trust, understanding and respect.

On this 126th anniversary of Philippine Independence Day, I extend my heartfelt appreciation to the people and government of Japan for their steadfast friendship and support. I also extend my gratitude to the more than 300,000 Filipinos in Japan for their contributions in strengthening our bilateral relations and in promoting goodwill between our nations.  
*Mabuhay (Long live)!*



President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. (left) makes a toast with Prime Minister Fumio Kishida at a state banquet at Malacanang Palace on Nov. 03, 2023. MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

## Robust partners in the pursuit of a better world

**MYLENE J. GARCIA-ALBANO**  
AMBASSADOR OF THE PHILIPPINES



On this auspicious 126th anniversary of Philippine Independence, the Filipino people celebrate the enduring strength of a nation that has overcome adversities to carve out a path of democratic self-determination. This day is not only a milestone for national pride, but also an affirmation of our commitment to the ideals of liberty, unity and prosperity — a charge that carries resonance far beyond our archipelago.

In commemorating our independence, we are reminded about our strategic partnership with Japan. The Philippines has long valued its friendship with Japan, a

nation with whom we share a common history, common values and common interests. Japan has been, for decades, much more than a neighbor — it has been a partner in advocating for a future that is progressive, peaceful and prosperous.

As global dynamics shift, our bilateral cooperation has taken on new vigor, including through high-level exchanges between our leaders and officials in comprehensive areas of cooperation, addressing contemporary challenges ranging from climate action to digital transformations, allowing us to navigate a rapidly changing world with confidence.

The economic strides we have made because of our cooperation have been monumental, yet we find that our true strength lies in the values we share: the industriousness of our people, our resilience in the face of adversity and our collaborative spirit. These values have sustained our countries' partnership through

the tides of global politics and economics.

I would like to express my profound appreciation for the way our Japanese counterparts approach our relationship — with respect for our sovereignty and enthusiasm for our shared prospects. Our mutual endeavors in fields such as maritime security, defense cooperation and economic resilience exemplify a commitment to creating a stable, prosperous, peaceful and rules-based international order.

The Philippines is resolute in enhancing our transformative and forward-looking strategic partnership with Japan, embracing collaborations that reflect our dynamic potential and shared aspirations.

The 300,000-strong Filipino community here in Japan is a vibrant testament to our enduring friendship. They serve as both ambassadors of our heritage and as *kakehashi* — bridges that continue to link our nations, adding to the rich tapestry of our

bilateral friendship. I call upon both Filipinos and Japanese to look at this day as a reaffirmation of our collective aspirations.

This Independence Day, we commemorate our past triumphs and anticipate the achievements yet to come. Together with Japan, we will continue our pursuit of a world that is more connected, more respectful of the sovereign rights of nations, and more cognizant of our shared humanity.

Today, we celebrate not only the heroes who have fought for our nation's independence, but also the partnerships that ensure the preservation of this liberty. Today, we honor the legacy of our ancestors by promoting a world where freedom, tempered with responsibility and cooperation, is the cornerstone of international society.

To a friendship that endures and a shared future that shines brightly, *Mabuhay!* (Long live!)



A pair of hikers take in the view from a peak in Badian, Cebu. BEAUTIFUL DESTINATIONS



## Congratulations

to the Republic of the Philippines  
on the Anniversary of its Independence

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of  
Their National Day



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# Philippines National Day Special

## Shared values drive joint vision

**ENRIQUE A. MANALO**  
SECRETARY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
OF THE PHILIPPINES



On the occasion of the 126th anniversary of the Proclamation of Philippine Independence, I extend my warmest greetings to our friends and fellow Filipinos in Japan. For the past

126 years, the Philippines has championed freedom and democracy, navigating through various challenges while weaving meaningful connections across the globe.

Under the banner of “Bagong Pilipinas” (“New Philippines”), our nation has embarked on a journey of transformation, marked by a renewed sense of identity and purpose. Together, the Philippine government and Filipino people are striving to propel our country to upper-middle-income status by 2025, with the overarching goal of ensuring a comfortable and secure life for all Filipinos.

Japan holds a special place in this ongoing journey of the Filipino people. The Land of the Rising Sun has been our close friend and valued partner in the Indo-Pacific region for more than six decades.

In the past 15 months, the Philippines and Japan have strengthened cooperation, building a truly strategic partnership — one that enters into erstwhile unexplored, but potentially transformative, areas of cooperation. Our joint efforts on issues such as climate change, infrastructure development, cybersecurity and space affairs have not only complemented long-standing areas of cooperation, but also opened new avenues for mutual progress and security.

Japan has consistently been a top source of official development assistance and foreign investment for the Philippines. In 2023, Japan’s support for Philippine economic development was worth nearly ¥800 billion, which exceeded the original amount

of ODA and private investments pledged at the beginning of last year. This substantial support from the Japanese government and Japan Inc. has been channeled into impactful projects aimed at improving our mass transport system, enhancing disaster resilience and promoting environmental sustainability, among others.

All of these help drive the Philippines along its trajectory of transformation into a green, digitized, connected, innovative, smart and inclusive economy.

Japan has also been a key partner in our pursuit for a just and lasting peace in Mindanao. Japan has stood by the Philippines in consolidating and building on the gains from the decade of peace since the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro was signed in April 2014. In commemorating the 10th anniversary of the signing of the CAB, President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr., stated: “Peace is totally achieved not when the sound of gunfire has ceased. It is when the clamor for better lives has been met.” With Japan’s generous assistance in community normalization and development initiatives, the Philippines is making great strides in uplifting the lives of its citizens in the Bangsamoro region.

On defense and security, our cooperation has never been stronger.

As archipelagic and maritime nations, the Philippines and Japan have been working closely together to keep vital sea lanes free, open and safe. The provision of radars, capacity-building and other assets by Japan, through its official security assistance program, has significantly bolstered our maritime domain awareness capabilities. These endeavors are founded on our shared dedication to building a rules-based international order, especially in the global commons, and our unwavering belief that disputes among nations must be resolved through peaceful means, in accordance with international law.

The Philippines remains resolute in upholding the principles of peace, equity and justice, both at home and on the international stage. In Japan, we have found a reliable and trusted partner whose record

in advancing international humanitarian law, human rights and nonproliferation has greatly contributed to international peace and stability. Our countries stand as advocates for responsible global citizenship that embraces humanity’s collective duty to foster cooperation, cultivate compassion and strive for the common good.

Extending our bilateral endeavors to trilateral and multilateral frameworks is the next logical step in the evolution of our partnership. The Philippines and Japan actively engage with other like-minded partners to amplify our efforts and achieve greater impact in addressing regional and global issues. The Joint Vision Statement resulting from the historic trilateral Philippines-Japan-U.S. summit reflects the partners’ determination to tackle economic, security, technological and other cross-cutting challenges through concerted actions.

At the heart of our ties are the Filipino and Japanese peoples.

The enduring friendship between Filipinos and Japanese is anchored on shared, powerful values. With a vibrant 300,000-strong Filipino community in Japan, thriving two-way tourism and robust educational exchange programs, our people-to-people ties continue to flourish. We thank Japan for providing a safe and welcoming home to our nationals. The Filipinos who are living, studying and working in Japan are our de facto ambassadors of goodwill. Their invaluable contributions to both our economies and societies form part of the solid foundation upon which our strategic partnership firmly stands.

Today, as we proudly commemorate the birth of Asia’s first republic, we reflect on the achievements of the past as we blaze a path toward a promising horizon. *Mabuhay ang kalayaan at ang bagong Pilipinas* (Long live our freedom and the New Philippines)!

*This content was compiled in collaboration with the embassy. The views expressed here do not necessarily reflect those of the newspaper.*



Prime Minister Fumio Kishida begins his two-day state visit to the Philippines by signing the guestbook at Malacanang Palace on Nov. 3, 2023, as Marcos (second from right), his wife Louise “Liza” Araneta-Marcos (right) and Yuko Kishida look on. MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

**Congratulations**  
**on the Anniversary of**  
**the Independence of**  
**the Republic of the Philippines**

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