

Mexico independence day

400 years of friendship and prosperity

Mexico, Japan mark the historic anniversary of first contacts with commitment to build future-oriented partnership

Felipe Calderón Hinojosa
PRESIDENT OF MEXICO

This year, Mexico and Japan celebrate 400 years since the beginning of the friendship between their peoples. During these four centuries, the two countries systematically strengthened their economic, political and cultural ties while they have forged a solid friendship based on mutual understanding and cooperation. For this reason, on this occasion it is an honor to talk about the relevance of this anniversary in order to broaden and deepen the ties between our nations.

A promising encounter
This year's celebrations are inspired in a fascinating historical episode: the shipwreck on the shores of Onjuku, Chiba Prefecture, of the galleon, San Francisco, while attempting to make the trip back from Manila in the Philippines to Acapulco, then the main Pacific Ocean port of Mexico (New Spain). Three hundred and 17 survivors, among them Rodrigo de Vivero — the former



governor of the Philippines — were rescued by local people, who offered them shelter, hospitality and trust. The Japanese ruler of that time, the shogun, Tokugawa Ieyasu, provided the survivors with the San Buenaventura, in which they managed to get to their home in New Spain one year later, on Oct. 23, 1610.

The first encounter between Mexicans and Japanese constituted the seeds of our relationship that would bloom in the following years. Through the Treaty of Friendship, Trade and Navigation subscribed in 1888 the two countries consolidated their diplomatic relations, and initiated the design of great maritime communications projects and the expansion of bilateral trade. Later, the economic partnership agreement (EPA) between our countries in 2005 confirmed our will in building a mutually beneficial association based on common interests.

Festivities, commitment
This year, I am pleased to act as honorary president of the celebrations for the 400th anniversary of the friendship between Mexico and Japan, a distinction also granted to His Imperial Highness Crown Prince Naruhito. Together, we are encouraging a wide program of activities whose main objective is for each country to deepen its understanding of the other, in hopes



President Felipe Calderón Hinojosa, honorary president of the celebrations for the 400th anniversary of the first contacts between Mexico and Japan

of strengthening our links of friendship.

These activities have underlined the reciprocal respect and admiration between our nations, as well as their interest in encouraging enriched scientific, cultural and economic exchanges. Diverse events have put Mexico in the eyes of the Japanese during this year. The recent visit of the Mexican Navy's training ship, Cuauhtémoc, to Yokohama, Tokyo and Onjuku remembered the historical moment that gave rise to the first contacts between our peoples four centuries ago.

This summer, the exhibition "Camino a la Modernidad: Maestros de la Pintura Mexicana del Siglo XX," the most important event of this type in Japan in many years, allowed the Japanese to admire the works of the main exponents of modern Mexican painting, such as Frida Kahlo,

Diego Rivera and David Alfaro Siqueiros, among others, and in March, Tokyo was touched by the artistic creations of people with Down syndrome in our country, displayed in the successful exhibition "Colors of the Wind."

It is an honor for me to remember that in July, leading Mexican and Japanese experts in the archaeological sites of Mexico underlined the importance of the cultural legacy of the ancient civilizations of Mexico, and the current state of important sites such as Templo Mayor, Teotihuacán, Monte Albán, Palenque, La Quemada and Cholula.

Moreover, during this year several talented Mexicans — musicians, filmmakers, writers, plastic artists — visited Japan to promote a broader knowledge about our country, and to expand cooperation opportunities between two nations geographically separated

Chance encounter grows into centuries-old relationship

Hidenao Nakagawa
PRESIDENT, JAPAN-MEXICO PARLIAMENTARY FRIENDSHIP FEDERATION

It is a great pleasure for me, as president of the Japan-Mexico Parliamentary Friendship Federation, to express my wholehearted congratulations to the people of Mexico on the 199th anniversary of their independence, and my rejoicing for the 400th anniversary of the friendly relations between Japan and Mexico.



This is a very special year not only because of the historical facts, but also because we can confidently certify that Mexicans and Japanese have fortified their economic, political and cultural ties in a systematic and solid way while forging a friendship based on trust, understanding and cooperation.

During these 400 years, our relationship has experienced diverse moments. That first encounter, back in 1609, when the inhabitants of Onjuku (formerly known as Iwawada) rescued the crew of the galleon, the San Francisco, which shipwrecked on its way to New Spain (current Mexico), was the beginning of a genuine and prosperous friendship that has brought growing benefits and exchanges in all fields.

Today, our relationship is strong and prosperous. Dialogue between diverse politicians

of the two countries is evident, as well as cooperation and mutual understanding at the multilateral level in topics ranging from climate change, the global economic downturn and the United Nations' reform process, among others.

In the Diet we have always appreciated the relationship with Mexico. Japan and Mexico have similar distinctive elements. Some of them are the original values and cultural expressions of their peoples, as well as their incessant creative impulse, talent and disposition for arduous work, and desire to overcome the most adverse conditions. All these elements make us feel reciprocal sympathy and understanding.

The Japan-Mexico Parliamentary Friendship Federation is a fundamental pillar of bilateral relations. This year, the federation encouraged parliamentary contacts between the two countries and with no hesitation, contributed to the efforts of the Mexican government in tackling the new strain of influenza. We have also enthusiastically supported events related to the commemoration of the friendly bilateral ties this year in Japan. We will keep furthering mutually beneficial exchanges with our Mexicans friends.

In the context of 400 years of friendship, the two governments acknowledge the relevance of the bilateral relationship. Over these years, a wide variety of people in the two countries have made invaluable contributions to our relations. This relationship will always be solid, dynamic and motivated by shared interests. I am confident that we will see our ties growing in the years ahead.

ed but brought together in their hearts.

Complementary economies

This April marked the fifth anniversary of the entry into force of the Mexico-Japan EPA. In these years, bilateral trade has expanded, market access has improved, the supply of goods and services for consumers in the two countries has been diversified, and economies of scale have been strengthened.

In spite of the economic difficulties faced by the two countries in recent times, between 2004 and 2008, two-way trade increased 57 percent, from \$14 billion to nearly \$22 billion. In this period, the announced investments by Japanese companies surpassed \$4 billion, and an increasing number of Mexican companies

have opened representative offices in Japan.

Thanks to the EPA, Japan can accede on better terms to the market created by the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). Mexico, on the other side, has been able to increase its exchanges with an old and reliable partner such as Japan, and at the same time boost its presence in Asia.

Today, the interests of Mexico and Japan converge on several topics. Both countries support the success of the Dooha Round and reject economic protectionism that could lead to a serious economic depression. The governments of both countries have encouraged economic activity and have implemented ambitious infrastructure programs. In this

sense, Mexico's National Program of Infrastructure, which foresees the amount of \$253 billion for infrastructure projects for the period 2007-2012, has drawn Japanese companies to participate in construction projects related to electrical plants, suburban trains, multimodal stations and ports.

The continued visits to Japan by high-level government officials and entrepreneurial missions from Mexico this year confirm our interest in fostering businesses opportunities between the two countries, as well as in joining forces to find solutions to the serious challenges of the global economic context.

Long-term strategic ties

The relationship between

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Special envoy: The Mexican Navy's training ship, Cuauhtémoc, visited Japan in May and June this year as part of the celebrations for the 400th anniversary of the first contacts between the two nations.

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I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations on the 199th Anniversary of the Independence of Mexico.

Yoshikazu Morita
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Congratulations to the People of the United Mexican States on the 199th Anniversary of Their Independence Day



Congratulations to the People of Mexico on the Occasion of the 199th Anniversary of the Independence Day



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400 years of friendship

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Mexico and Japan is characterized by an intense political dialogue, a strong economic association and fluid cultural relations. We also have common objectives in the bilateral and multilateral agenda, such as the discussion of measures to address the international financial crisis, global warming and energy security. Besides, we have important coincidences within the framework of influential multilateral forums such as the G-20, the dialogue between the G-8 and the G-5, APEC and the U.N. Security Council, in which both countries actively participate as nonpermanent members.

The influenza A (H1N1) outbreak that appeared this year without a doubt was a challenge that tested the capacity of the government of Mexico to protect the health and the lives of its citizens, and of the inhabitants of our planet. Thanks to the understanding and support of friendly nations such as Japan, the government and people of Mexico were able to put the epidemic under control in a brief period. Now the two nations strongly encourage the development of a vaccine to prevent the spread of this new disease.

Facing the future

In 2010, Mexico will celebrate the bicentennial of its independence, presenting itself as a modern, solid democratic country of more than 110 million inhabitants with a vast cultural heritage. It is the world's 13th-largest economy, and a relevant and responsible actor in the international arena.

Japan has acknowledged the challenges and opportunities of the bilateral relationship throughout these 400 years of contacts. Mexicans are proud of our solid friendship with the Japanese people.



Historic marker: The commemorative obelisk stands on the spot of the first contacts between Mexico and Japan 400 years ago in Onjuku, Chiba Prefecture.

I can proudly affirm that this is an era of splendor and rejoicing in the relations between Mexico and Japan.

EPA success evidence of economic ties' potential

Itaru Koeda
CHAIRMAN, JAPAN-MEXICO ECONOMIC
COMMITTEE OF NIPPON KEIDANREN

On behalf of the Japan-Mexico Economic Committee of Nippon Keidanren (Japan Business Federation), I would like to express my best wishes for the health and prosperity of H.E. President Felipe Calderón Hinojosa, and the people of the United Mexican States on the occasion of the 199th anniversary of the independence of Mexico.



This year Japan and Mexico remember 400 years since their first friendly encounter, when the villagers of Onjuku town in Chiba Prefecture rescued the sailors of a Spanish ship that wrecked off the coast on their way to New Spain (current Mexico). Since then, the bilateral relationship has reached unprecedented levels, being characterized by frequent political dialogue, closer cultural relations, increasing cooperation in many technical and scientific fields, and bigger economic exchanges.

In the economic field, the two countries have enjoyed the benefits of the Japan-Mexico Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA). The EPA

has had a positive effect on both economies since our trade has substantially increased in real terms. A substantial number of Japanese exports are used to produce final products in Mexico that are then exported to third countries, which enhance the competitiveness of the Mexican economy. More than 350 Japanese companies are established in Mexico and since the EPA's inception in 2005, some of them have won public bidding for energy-generation plants and natural gas terminals.

Japanese investment in Mexico, which has reached levels of around \$1 billion per year, has contributed to gradually make Mexico a strategic hub for industrial production, trade and transportation between Asia and the Americas. This investment is focused in such areas as automotive and auto parts, electric and electronics, energy generation and the agricultural sector.

Mexico has become Japan's main supplier of agricultural products like avocados, melons, lemons (limes), mangoes and chickpeas, as well as blue fin tuna. In recent years, beef and pork, tequila, mescal and fresh mango exports have notably increased. It is significant that more Mexican companies have opened representative offices in Japan in recent times.

The EPA's results so far clearly show that the trends in our trade exchanges are in the right direction, and there are many opportunities to be exploited by the companies of the two countries in new sectors such as infrastructure, tourism, clean energies and aerospace. Although no country has been spared the effects of the international financial crisis, the fundamentals of our economic relations remain strong enough to face the current global scenario.

Congratulations to Japanese and Mexicans on this long-awaited anniversary. This is an opportunity to remember the fascinating history linking our countries and to continue an even more promising relationship for the benefit of our people.

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