

# Spain national day

## A friendly and prosperous relationship

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AMBASSADOR OF SPAIN

I have the pleasure to greet all the readers of The Japan Times once again on the happy occasion of Spain's National Day.

This year our celebrations follow the events we held

a few days ago to commemorate the 400th anniversary of an important episode for bilateral relations: the wreckage, in 1609, of a Spanish galleon on the coast off Onjuku, and the rescue of its crew and passage



thanks to the heroic and generous intervention of the villagers, notably its "ama (fishing ladies)." Spain has not forgotten that feat as H.M. King Juan Carlos I underlines in the congratulatory message he has addressed to the village.

After so many years, Spain and Japan contemplate their relationship as a friendly and prosperous one, and firmly believe that contacts within so-called civil society will enrich the existing bonds. Early in November, the XII edition of the Japan-Spain Forum will be held in Tokyo. It is a consolidated initiative that enables us to share points of view on issues of mutual interest. The

forum will include this year a special open session devoted to our youngest fellow countrymen.

I think that a reference to the political situation in Japan is inevitable. We are witnessing no doubt a very interesting period of changes under a new administration, which has set very ambitious goals. The government of Spain has been closely following the events and has high expectations for the performance of the coalition government. For the time being, the expressed intentions to strengthen social policies and contribute further to the solution of global challenges have been very much wel-

come.

As an EU country that will have the privilege and the responsibility to preside over the union in the first half of 2010, Spain counts on its good, frank relations with Japan to coordinate policies in very relevant issues of the international agenda, and keep the various instruments of dialogue and bilateral cooperation moving on.

My last words in this message are for all the Spanish residents in Japan, who contribute so much with their work to the knowledge and good image of Spain. I thank you all very sincerely and wish you a very pleasant National Day.