# Myanmar independence day

# Entering a new era, to a modern democratic nation

Khin MaungTin AMBASSADOR OF MYANMAR

On Jan. 4, on this auspicious occasion of the 64th anniversary of the Independence Day of the Republic

of the Union of Myanmar, I have the great honor to conest greetings of H.E. President U

the people of Myanmar to Their Imperial Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko, H.E. Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda and the government and the great people of Japan.

I would also like to take this opportunity, on behalf of the government and people of Myanmar, to once again express our deepest sympathy and condolences to the government and people of Japan, especially to the victims and members of the bereaved families on the tragic losses and great suffering brought about by the catastrophic earthquake and tsunami that severely affected the Tohoku area on March 11. I firmly believe that the hard work and determination of the great people of Japan will be able to overcome the

challenges Japan is facing now. The Republic of the Union of Myanmar is made up of 135 eth-

The main national groups are the Kachin, Kayah, Kayin, Chin, Bamar, Mon, Rakhine and Shan. About 85 percent of the people of Myanmar are Buddhist and religion plays a significant role in the daily lives of the Myanmar people. The total population is estimated at 58 million with a growth rate of 1.75 percent. Myanmar cover 676,577 sq. km, and has a coastline measuring 2,051 km. The terrain ranges from arid plains to cool, sprawling hills, ice-capped mountains, white-sand beaches, lush farmland, hidden valleys and thick virgin forests. Through Buddhist concepts the people learn to be gentle but proud, dignified yet friendly, reverent of elders, and to enjoy life fully with a spontaneous sense of humor.

Nay Pyi Taw, literally meaning "Royal Capital," was declared Myanmar's new capital on Jan. 1, 2006. It is situated 391 km from Yangon and enjoys a cool climate.

Having a glorious history, Myanmar stood tall with its own monarchs and enjoyed the sovereignty for thousands of years. But in the late Konbaung Period, our country fell under the subjugation of colonialists. However, our national brethren remained united in their struggles to liberate the nation from the colonial rule; as a result, Myanmar regained independence and its sovereignty on Jan. 4, 1948. Janic groups in the official count. pan played a significant role in

our struggle for independence from British colonial rule and the Myanmar Armed Forces was born out of military training provided by Japan. In the post-independence era, Japan extended remarkable economic assistance to Myanmar in its nation-building efforts.

In November 2010, multiparty democracy general elections were held in Myanmar. Thirtyseven political parties including 19 parties from different national ethnic groups contested the general elections. Today, elected representatives are exercising their democratic rights in Hluttaw, the legislative body, to discuss issues of their state affairs.

The president, in his inaugural speech to the first regular session of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw (the Union Parliament) on March 30, 2011, pledged to improve and promote the socioeconomic life and fundamental rights of the citizens. He also outlined the policies and objectives of the new government with a view to building a modern and democratic nation. The priorities of the new government are to achieve good governance, clean government, fundamental rights of the citizens, economic reform and conservation of the environment. Myanmar is determined to promote better standards and equitable development of its people. We believe that every change must be based on reality, stability and systematic process. tional Rural Development and The steps taken by the govern-Poverty Reduction Plan has been ment of Myanmar are concrete adopted and the central commitand visible, ensuring that the tee and work committees were formed to supplement the eight reform process is systematic and dynamic. Myanmar has strong tasks laid down in accordance determination to continue imwith the National Plan. The union government offered plementing the democratization

process amid all the challenges. an olive branch to all the armed The work programs will be transethnic groups by decreeing an announcement on Aug. 18 and parent, accountable and consistent with the provisions presome of those groups have acscribed in the constitution and cepted the government's offer. the existing laws. With a view to The president also granted ampromoting and safeguarding the nesty on two different occasions fundamental rights of the citiand more than 20,000 inmates zens as prescribed in the constiwere released through the end of tution, the Myanmar National July. The president invited people Human Rights Commission was to work together for the interests of the nation despite differences. formed on Sept. 5, 2011. Myanmar had adopted a five-Accordingly, he received Daw Aung San Suu Kyi on Aug. 19 and point rural development scheme along with two related programs had cordial and candid discusfrom 2001 to 2010 to be able to sions to find out potential comattain the U.N. Millennium Demon ground to work together for velopment Goals (MDGs). In the interests of the nation and the people, while putting aside differaddition, a 24-region develop-

ent views.

In regard to foreign relations, Myanmar continues to pursue an independent, active and nonaligned foreign policy. Based on the five principles of peaceful coexistence, Myanmar always maintains friendly relations with all members of the world, especially with its neighboring counhold living condition assessment tries and those in the region. Myanmar has taken an active part in the regional organizations such as ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations), AC-MECS (Ayeyawady- Chao Phraya-Mekong Economic Cooperation Strategy) and BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation) for the all-around development of the region. At the same time, Myanmar has been participating in the U.N. as well as in the international community actively to overcome the menace of terrorism, narcotic drugs, human trafficking and other transnational crimes. As an agro-based country, Myanmar is following with keen interest the

> climate change. Recently, the fourth GMS (Greater Mekong Subregion) Summit was successfully completed in Nay Pyi Taw on Dec. 20, 2011, and attended by the heads of the governments of the six Mekong countries: Cambodia, China, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam. We are also

issues surrounding the effects of



Friendly ties: Myanmar President Thein Sein and Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda meet on the sidelines of the ASEAN Summit in Bali, Indonesia, on Nov. 18. CABINET PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICE



Bilateral relations: Myanmar Foreign Minister Wunna Maung Lwin (second from left) holds talks with his Japanese counterpart, Koichiro Genba (second from right), in Tokyo on Oct. 21 during his visit to **Japan.** MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF JAPAN

preparing to host the 27th Southeast Asian (SEA) Games in 2013 at Nay Pyi Taw, the first time in 44 years. Moreover, Myanmar was accorded the chairmanship of ASEAN in 2014, which we assume as our rightful place to work together in the regional

**Congratulations** 

to the People of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar

on the 64th Anniversary of Their Independence Day

**Japan Myanmar Cross Link Association** 

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Since late 1988, the economic system of Myanmar has changed from a socialist economic system to a market-oriented one. Myanmar has vast amounts of resources, including arable land, natural gas, mineral deposits, fisheries, forestry and manpower. Wood products such as

are famous in the world timber market. Well-known premium quality jade and rubies are also in Myanmar. The Foreign Investment Law was enacted in November 1988 and foreign investments are permitted since 1989/90. As of May 31, 2011, 454 enterprises from 31 countries have already been permitted to invest in Myanmar with a total amount of \$36 billion. The promising sectors for foreign investments are power, oil and gas, mining, manufacturing, hotels and tourism, real estate, livestock and fisheries, transport and telecommunications, industrial estate, agriculture, construction and other services. The Myanmar Special Economic Zone Law was enacted in January 2011. With the emergence of the SEZ law, the government designated Dawei, Thilawa and Kyaukphyu as Special Economic Zones.

Myanmar teak and hardwood

There are tremendous investment opportunities in Myanmar. The ASEAN-Japan Centre (AJC) and Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (JCCI) are also promoting trade, investment and tourism in Myanmar. In the CONTINUED ON PAGE 7

### Cultural, economic advances help Japan develop ties with Myanmar

MEMBER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES: PRESIDENT, JAPAN-MYANMAR PARLIAMENTARY LEAGUE OF THE LIBERAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY

I would like to express my congratulations on the 64th Independence Day of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar. I am anticipating from my heart that the new

establishment of your beautiful country will progress more than ever. I will do my best for the advance of cultural

and economic communications between Japan and the Republic of the Union of Myanmar as

I hope for the further development of Myanmar in the future.



Union: The Pyidaungsu Hluttaw complex in Myanmar's new capital has emerged as the seat of the legislative body established by the 2008 constitution. MYANMAR EMBASSY

### **Congratulations**

to the People of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar on the 64th Anniversary of **Their Independence Day** 

**Association of Japan Myanmar** Mutual Cooperation (AJMMC)

Chairman: Susumu ISHII

# Congratulations!

**ARCHITECTS & ENGINEERS** 



ment project and border region

development works were imple-

mented with a view to narrowing

the development gaps among re-

gions and states. Thanks to such

works, the poverty rate of Myan-

mar dropped from 32 percent in

2005 to 26 percent in 2010 ac-

cording to the integrated house-

(IHLCA) jointly conducted by

the United Nations Development

Program (UNDP) and Myanmar.

livelihood of the people, the Na-

With a view to improve the

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# Congratulations

to the People of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar on the 64th Anniversary of Their Independence Day



THE JAPAN TIMES WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 4, 2012 7

# Myanmar independence day



City of kings: Bagan, once the capital of several ancient kingdoms, has some 2,000 pagodas and temples. MYANMAR EMBASSY

# Mutual visits strengthen bilateral cooperation

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

offshore area, six shallow water blocks are available for exploration and development and 11 new deep water blocks are opened for new investors. We have 11.379 million hectares of net area sown, production potential of 1.05 million tons per annum from marine resources alone. Inland water bodies cover an area of 8.2 million hectares. 50 percent of Myanmar's land area is covered with forests. To date, Myanmar possesses abundant hydropower potential up to about 43,650 megawatts. The estimated active labor force is about 30 million. Labor-intensive industries are being encouraged under the Foreign Investment

Among the many amazing sites to visit are the spectacular, shimmering spire of the Shwedagon Pagoda towering over the skyline of Yangon; the magnificent ancient temples of Bagan; the many teak monasteries in and around Mandalay featuring intricate carvings; old pagoda complexes hidden in the beautiful hills of the Shan Plateau; pristine white-sand beaches; Kyaik Htiyo, the magical Golden Rock Pagoda perched on the edge of a cliff; immense stone temples of 18th century at Marauk Oo; snowcapped Mount Hkakaborazi, Southeast Asia's highest at 5,881 meters and white-water rivers for professional and amateur rafters. Inlay Lake situated at an altitude of 889 meters above sea level in southern Shan State, ringed with mountain ranges that disappear into the far mists in hues of purple and blue, is a haven for waterfowl and other birds. It is also the home to the Intha national race where the Intha people's skills of rowing boats with their legs around the vegetation floating in the lake is unique and famous. The Myeik Archipelago, located in the Taninthayi Division in the southern part of Myanmar comprises of over 800 gorgeous islands.

Although Japan and Myanmar established diplomatic relations on Dec. 1, 1954, the relations between our two countries started from historic times, having strong relationships also in cultural and religious ties. Japanese war veterans, who had been to Myanmar during World War II, enhanced the friendship between our countries. Japan has extended humanitarian assistance to Myanmar especially in the sectors of health, education and human resource devel-

The visit of Parliamentary Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs Makiko Kikuta in June 2011 has turned a new page of further development in bilateral relations between Myanmar and Japan. In October, at the invitation of the Japanese government, Myanmar Minister for Foreign Affairs H.E. U Wunna Maung Lwin paid a two-day visit to Tokyo and the official meeting with Foreign Minister H.E. Koichiro Genba has contributed to better understanding, mutual trust and good will between our two countries and people. The two foreign ministers have successfully written a new chapter of bilateral relations and further cooperation

A reciprocal visit to Myanmar was paid by Foreign Minister Genba at the end of December. I am optimistic that the mutual visits between the two countries will certainly deepen the mutual friendship and strengthen bilateral cooperation.

Furthermore, the president of Myanmar had a meeting with the Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda on the sidelines of the ASEAN-related meetings last November. At the meeting, Japan commended Myanmar for the positive steps it has taken toward democratization and national reconciliation.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation to the government and the people of Japan for the good will that Japan has shown toward Myanmar. We hope Japan will also continue to help Myanmar, ASEAN and the Mekong region.

In closing, I would like to extend my sincere thanks once again to The Japan Times for giving me this excellent opportunity to address its esteemed

### Making further progress in assistance to help Myanmar attain many goals

MEMBER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES; CHAIRMAN, JAPAN-MYANMAR PARLIAMENTARIAN





congratulations on the 64th Independence Day of the Republic of the Union been fostering a good fellowship with Japan for more than half a century, gathering speed in

democratization and its role expected for its future development.

In addition, I expand my congratulations to the fact that the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has been accepted to accede to the post of the presidency of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations in 2014.

I preside as chairman of the Democratic Party of Japan's Japan-Myanmar Parliamentarians' Friendship League.

By uniting the party and the government of Japan, and backing up the democratization and the national reconciliation progress in the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, I would like to

encourage the furtherance of the fellowship between the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and Japan, including the technical assistance for the amplifications of grant assistance, improvements of infrastructures and communication linkages, and the maintenance of water and sewer systems in the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

Lastly, I hope the Republic of the Union of Myanmar will develop more and more in the future. At the same time, I promise that we will make progress in our continuous assistance to make it come

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