

Thailand national day

Close, enduring bonds: 125 years of bilateral ties

Thanatip Upatising
AMBASSADOR OF THAILAND

The National Day of the Kingdom of Thailand is traditionally the birthday of His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej. It is therefore my great pleasure to take this opportunity to address readers on this auspicious occasion.

This year marks the 125th anniversary of the diplomatic relations between Thailand and Japan, while contact between the two peoples dates back to the 15th century. The cordial relations between Thailand and Japan have been nurtured at various fronts and further strengthened as the years go by. This year the bond of friendship or "kizuna" between Thailand and Japan is stronger than ever.

In June we were especially grateful that His Imperial Highness Crown Prince Naruhito graciously paid an official visit to Thailand. The visit epitomizes the long and friendly ties be-

tween the Thai Royal Family and the Imperial family. The Thai Prime Minister H.E. Yingluck Shinawatra also visited Japan twice. She paid an official working visit to Japan in March and once again returned to Japan to attend the fourth Mekong-Japan Summit in April. These visits have enhanced the even closer ties between Thailand and Japan under the framework of the Strategic Partnership based on the Enduring Bonds of Friendship.

At the people-to-people level, after having suffered from the unprecedented natural disasters that severely affected both countries last year, the mutual assistance between our two peoples, spontaneously outpoured to the affected areas in Japan and Thailand during those difficult times, has brought closer ties and understanding. It is proved by the increasing trend and number of tourists traveling between the two countries. In the first half of 2012, the number of Japanese visitors traveling to Thailand was 630,000, increasing by 11.5 percent from the same period in 2011, while approximately 132,400 Thais visited Japan, in-

creasing by 118 percent. Thus, this October Thai Airways International launched direct flights between Bangkok and Sapporo.

On the economic front, Japan is our most important trade and investment partner. The economic partnership was strengthened when the Japan-Thailand Economic Partnership Agreement, or JTEPA, entered into force in November 2007. Last year's total trade between our two countries was \$642 billion. Despite the great flood last year, Thailand's trade and investment with Japan did not decline. On the contrary, the total trade during the first half of 2012 amounts to \$35 billion, which is a 12.38 percent increase from that of the first half of 2011. Japanese investment in Thailand also increased 144 percent to \$5.5 billion in the first half of this year compared with the same period of 2011. The economic presence of Japan in Thailand is solid and still growing. Thailand still remains the second largest home of the Japanese business community in Asia after Shanghai.

Beyond the bilateral perspective, there are still vast potentials



His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej of Thailand

for Thailand and Japan to carry out their economic partnership toward the emerging markets in the region as well as the forthcoming ASEAN Community in

2015. Taking into account Thailand's strategic location at the crossroads of the ASEAN main land, the Thai government has strongly committed to realizing



Majestic: The Grand Palace in Bangkok, formerly the official residence of the kings of Thailand, is now used for ceremonial purposes. Wat Phra Kaew, or the Temple of the Emerald Buddha, is a royal chapel situated within the walls of the palace. ROYAL THAI EMBASSY

the strategic plan to enhance its national transportation infrastructure system covering the East-West and North-South economic Corridor with the aim to promote logistic connectivity with neighboring countries. To take advantage of Japan's niche of long-term economic presence in Thailand, it is a timely oppor-

tunity for both sides to mutually enhance their business cooperation in both Thailand's neighbors and Southeast Asia. At this crucial juncture, it is certain that Thailand will serve as an excellent production base and hub for Japanese business in the heart of ASEAN.

As a wise man said, "A friend

in need is a friend indeed." For Thailand and Japan, we are not only old friends but also modern partners. I have no doubt that our two countries will further deepen our amicable relations through our future cooperation and become strategic economic partners in order to grow together in the "Century of Asia."

Leaders in the region, both countries retain ever-stronger relations

Eizo Kobayashi and Ichiro Itoh
CHAIRMAN AND COCHAIRMAN,
JAPAN-THAILAND TRADE AND
ECONOMIC COMMITTEE, KEIDANREN



Kobayashi



Itoh

On the auspicious occasion of the 85th birthday of His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej, we humbly offer our heartfelt congratulations and pray for the further prosperity of the Kingdom of Thailand. Marking the 125th anniversary of the establishment of Japan-Thailand diplomatic relations, it is our sincere desire to enhance the further development of the bilateral relationship.

Looking back on the past year, both Japan and Thailand were hit by unprecedented natural disasters, the earthquake and floods respectively. However, both countries are recovering faster than originally

expected, thanks to the assistance to each other. Through conquering the scourges, we realize that both countries have consolidated the relationship to be genuine friends who help each other in need.

Under such a friendship, both countries have deeply developed the bilateral economic relations. Even after the floods, Thailand remains our biggest investment destination among the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), and Japan is the biggest investment destination for Thailand. By further improving the business environment

through bilateral talks to review the Japan-Thailand Economic Partnership Agreement, which came into effect in November 2007, we expect that the bilateral economic relations will continue to expand.

Looking at the global economy, Asia continues to be the engine for global economic growth, while the economy of the advanced countries, beginning with Europe, continues to slow. Both Japan and Thailand are expected in tandem to support the sustained Asian growth. To that end, it is important to drive forward, step

by step, the economic integration and infrastructure building within Asia.

At the East Asia Summit meeting last month, the launch of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) negotiations was announced by the ASEAN countries, Japan, China, the South Korea, Australia, New Zealand and India in the ASEAN+6 format. It is indispensable for both Japan and Thailand, as economic powers in the region, to lead the negotiations toward vitalization of

investment and service trade and facilitation of the movement of persons. Also, regarding infrastructure building, the active involvement of the public and private sectors of Japan and Thailand is requested in the process of realizing the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity.

Just before the 40th anniversary next year of Japan-ASEAN Friendship and Cooperation, we pray for the further development of Japan-Thailand relations.



Festive: Bangkok is illuminated in celebration of the birthday of His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej. ROYAL THAI EMBASSY

We Send Our
Heartiest Congratulations to
His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej
of the Kingdom of Thailand
on the Auspicious Occasion
of His 85th Birthday



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Royal Greetings to His Majesty
King Bhumibol Adulyadej of Thailand
on the Occasion of His Birthday



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On the Auspicious Occasion
of the 85th Birthday of His Majesty
King Bhumibol Adulyadej
of the Kingdom of Thailand

The Japan Thailand Association

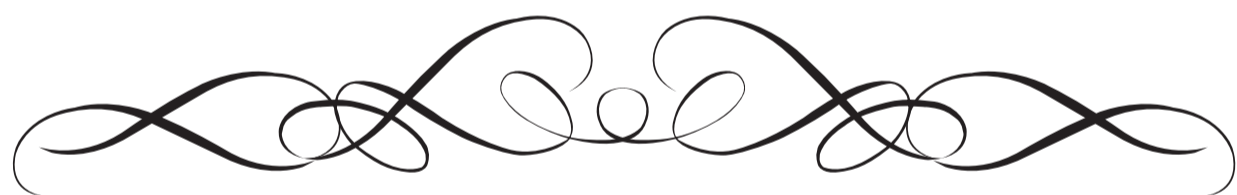
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King Bhumibol Adulyadej of Thailand
on the Occasion of His Birthday



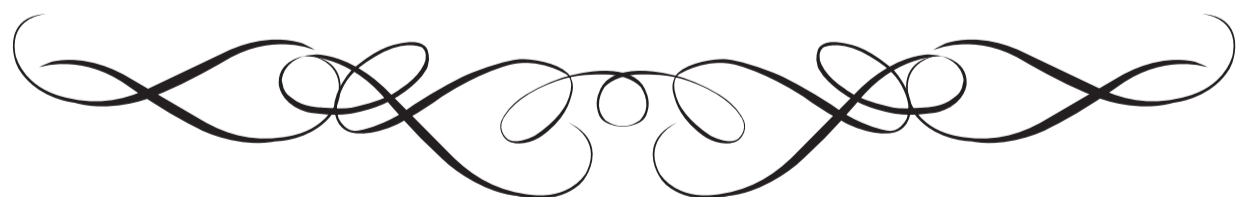
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On the auspicious occasion of
the Anniversary of His Majesty's Birthday,
we humbly offer our respectful felicitations
and abiding loyalty to

**HIS MAJESTY KING
BHUMIBOL ADULYADEJ.**



プミポン アドゥンヤデート国王陛下の
お誕生日に際して、
敬意を表し、
心からのお祝いを申し上げます。



Thai Airways International
Public Company Limited

Thailand national day



Countdown: New Year's Eve is actively celebrated in Bangkok, featuring various events accompanied by laser beam light shows and fireworks. ROYAL THAI EMBASSY

Indispensable partners continue to foster ties

Teisuke Kitayama
PRESIDENT, THE JAPAN-THAILAND
ASSOCIATION; CHAIRMAN, JAPAN-
THAILAND BUSINESS FORUM

On the auspicious occasion of the 85th birthday of His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej, I humbly offer my cordial and sincere



congratulations to His Majesty the King, and extend my best wishes for even better health, happiness and prosperity to His Majesty the King, the Royal Family and the Thai people.

Following last year's string of natural disasters, including unprecedented, devastating floods in Thailand as well as the Great East Japan Earthquake, this year, Japan was again beset by disaster, wrought by torrential rains in northern Kyushu. We are very grateful for the donations that we received from the Thai people in response. I believe that Thailand and Japan will continue to be indispensable partners who will keep on fostering a strong relationship that truly lives up to the maxim, "a friend in need is a friend indeed."

On the economic front, foreign direct investment (FDI) requests to our country from The Board of Investment of Thailand from January to September this year has increased by 244.2 percent compared to last year, at 276.1 billion baht, which is increasing to an extent that it now comprises 63.75 percent of the total (433 billion baht).

This year the global economy's growth has slowed and the impact on exports has been a source of worry, but the appeal of Thailand will continue to increase for being favorably situated and for being the economic epicenter of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations market. The regional economy is expected to grow, which already boasts a population of 60 million, and with plans underway to establish the ASEAN economic community by 2015.

While documents suggests that exchanges between Japan and Thailand date as far back as 600 years, this does not refer to official diplomatic relations. Official relations between the two countries began on Sept. 26, 1887, when the two countries signed the Declaration of Amity and Commerce. This was the first treaty that the Meiji govern-

ment had signed with a country of Southeast Asia. This year marks the memorable 125th anniversary of the declaration.

It goes without saying that Japan and Thailand have long enjoyed a close relationship in exchanges between the Imperial Family and the Royal Household, as well as exchanges seen in the government, economic and cultural spheres. I hope that exchanges between the two countries continue to display increasing momentum, not only in terms of being a business partner as evidenced in being the biggest provider of FDI, but also in terms of Japanese visiting Thailand to be exposed to Thailand's culture firsthand, as well as further exchanges in social and cultural spheres. The Japan Thailand Association and the Japan-Thailand Business Forum would also like to make humble contributions in this regard.

Finally, on the auspicious occasion of the 85th birthday of His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej, I would like to once again hope that the mutual trust fostered between Japan and Thailand becomes even more enduring in light of our two countries' many years of a close and amicable relationship.



Transportation: The Bangkok Mass Transit System, commonly known as the BTS Skytrain, is an elevated rapid transit system in the capital. ROYAL THAI EMBASSY

*Royal Greetings to His Majesty
King Bhumibol Adulyadej of Thailand
on the Occasion of His Birthday*



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