

# France national day

## France-Japan: Fraternity to address future challenges

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AMBASSADOR OF FRANCE

July 14 commemorates one of the starting events of the French Revolution, and, by extension, the foundations of our Republic. It is a gathering where one can deeply seize the meaning of the word *Fraternité*, which was the primary purpose of this celebration.

More than 200 years after the Revolution, this word has never been more vivid. But our national fraternity now spreads well beyond the borders of



France. My country has always had a special relationship with Japan that is the fruit of the "instinctive sympathy" that links our two peoples, as one of my predecessors, Paul Claudel, would have defined it. I believe myself that this closeness of feelings is nothing less than a strong sentiment of fraternity.

One year ago, this fraternity was given a strong impetus with the state visit to Japan by the President of the French Republic, François Hollande. It was a new start for our countries' relationship, which was confirmed last May by the return visit to France of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. Much progress has been made since.

Our two countries, sharing

the common values of liberty and democracy, are facing similar challenges in many fields such as security, sustainable growth, demographics and cultural identity. We are working together to address those challenges.

In the field of security, we launched in January 2014 our first "two-plus-two" meeting of defense and foreign ministers with the aim of developing new avenues for cooperation on peace-keeping activities, defense equipment and better coordination of our actions in critical theaters.

Because the root of fraternity is built on people-to-people interactions, we decided to go forward and deepen human

exchanges. We agreed last May to create a framework on mutual recognition of qualifications and diplomas between French and Japanese universities, with a view to increasing the already significant flow of exchange students. This is the first diploma recognition system to be put into place by Japan with a foreign country.

France and Japan have always shared a common enthusiasm for culture. The roots of this exceptional complicity dates back to 1924, when Ambassador Claudel and the famous entrepreneur Eiichi Shibusawa founded the Maison Franco-Japonaise, giving birth to a cultural partnership that celebrates its 90th anni-

versary this year. This anniversary is punctuated by more than 250 cultural events throughout 2014.

To epitomize this cultural partnership, the Villa Kujoyama in Kyoto, one of the major instruments of our cultural diplomacy, will reopen upon completion of renovations this autumn, not only to French, but also to Japanese artists. It will provide a thriving environment to enhance French and Japanese creativity.

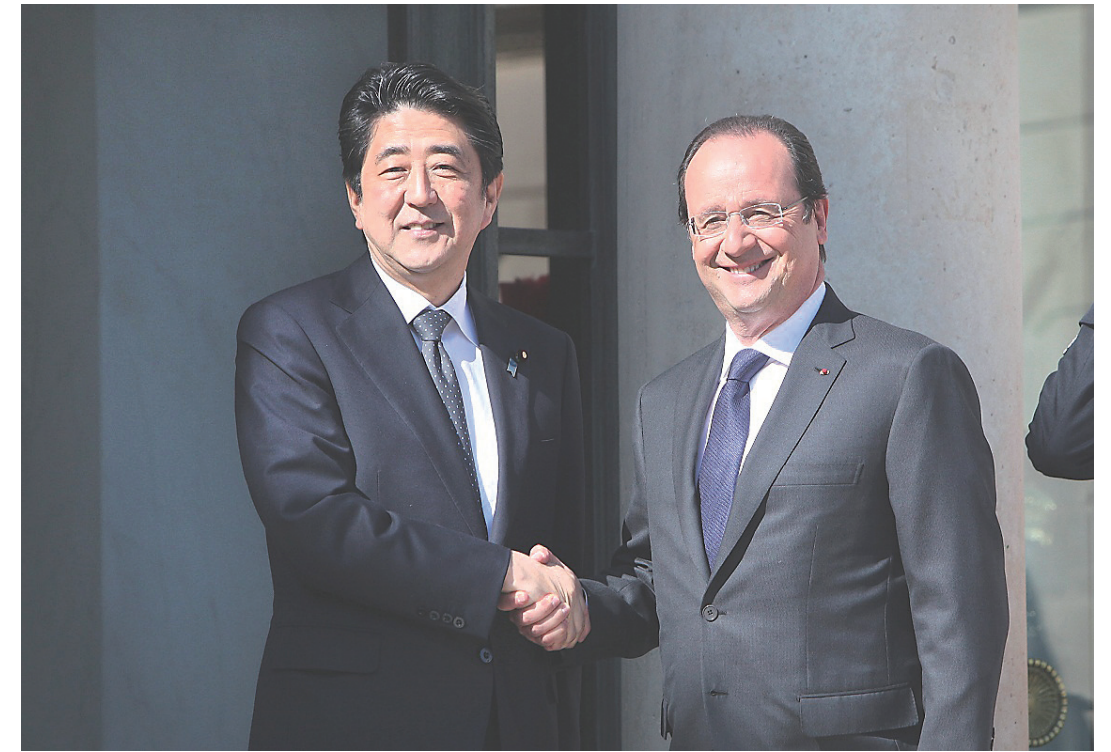
There is still much to be done. At the end of June, French and Japanese research fellows from a wide range of academic fields held an important cultural summit in Tokyo aimed at suggesting avenues for the future direction of France-Japan partnership in all aspects.

France has long been pledging for reform of the U.N. Security Council. We support Japan to become a permanent member of the UNSC, and we both support multilateralism.

On the economic level, France and Japan are working together within the frame of the G7 and the G20 to set up a growth agenda and foster innovative partnerships. We want to add our arrows to those of Japan. We both believe that globalization needs better regulation.

In this regard, the negotiation of an economic partnership agreement in which Japan and the European Union are involved needs an ambitious outcome based on reciprocity that will provide new opportunities for both French and Japanese companies.

Climate change constitutes another major challenge that our countries have to tackle. In addition to our very fruitful industrial partnership in the field of natural gas, nuclear and renewable energies, we urgently need to work out a new framework to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions. In 2015, Paris



French President François Hollande welcomes Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in Paris on May 5 during Abe's visit to France. EMBASSY OF FRANCE



Japanese archers are seen at the French Ambassador's residence in Tokyo on April 4 during a kick-off event for the Kyudo World Cup 2014, which will be held in Paris July 19 to 20. As part of the Institut Français, Villa Kujoyama (right) in Kyoto will reopen next October to welcome artists and researchers and further promote cultural exchanges between France and Japan.

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will host the 21st United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP21) with the ambitious goal of achieving a universal agreement on climate. Japan and France have a key role to play in attaining this objective.

At the end of July, I will leave my post as ambassador of France to Japan. I would like to seize this occasion to express my deepest gratitude to the Japanese people. On this day of fraternity, my thoughts go to the people of Tohoku who suf-

fered from the Great Eastern Japan Earthquake and tsunami. I have visited this beautiful region many times and I have always been deeply impressed by the resilience of its people. This is the message that I will take with me back to France.

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