

Vietnam national day

A belief in the future of Vietnam-Japan relations

Nguyen Quoc Cuong
AMBASSADOR OF VIETNAM

On Sept. 2 1945, then-President Ho Chi Minh, the great leader of the Vietnamese people, read out the immortal Declaration of Independence, giving birth to the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (now the Socialist Republic of Vietnam). Over the past 70 years, the Vietnamese people have consistently overcome countless difficulties and fought against foreign invaders to struggle for their independence and freedom. Ever since its national re-unification in 1975, Vietnam has entered a new era of national reconstruction and active integration into the international community, contributing to peace, friendship and cooperation in the region and the world.

In their economic development and national construction, the Vietnamese people have recorded significant achievements. From being an underdeveloped and devas-



tated nation, Vietnam has become a role model for development and an active, sincere and reliable partner of all nations. In the Human Development Report 2010, the U.N. ranked Vietnam as one of the best countries with impressive progress in gross national income. The World Bank has announced that Vietnam has successfully transformed itself from one of the poorest countries in the world, with per capita income below \$100, into a lower-middle-income nation through a quarter of a century of economic reforms (*Doi Moi*) with per capita income of over \$2,000 by the end of 2014. Indeed, since its comprehensive national reform launched in 1986, Vietnam has maintained an average GDP growth rate of 7.3 percent, which is relatively high in the region. In particular, GDP per capita increased twentyfold and the poverty rate decreased from 58 percent in 1993 to 1.9 percent in 2014.

Together with significant improvements in people's living standards, the role and position of Vietnam in the international arena have been

continuously consolidated. With regard to external economic relations and international trade, Vietnam has ranked in the top 30 of world exporters. By 2013, Vietnamese commodities have been exported to 220 countries and territories with total trade turnover increasing 170 times compared to 1986. Foreign direct investment (FDI) into Vietnam has also constantly increased in terms of total capital, numbers, scale of projects and other areas. All of the mentioned achievements showcase the successful reform and international economic integration policies of Vietnam.

In national development and construction, Vietnam is glad to see that the cooperative relationship with Japan, founded during the early days of the reform process, continue to blossom. The two countries are now enjoying a better-than-ever relationship, which can be described as being as beautiful as the *mankai no sakura* (blossoming Japanese cherry tree). Indeed, the two countries have become each other's impor-

tant partner in all fields, including politics, diplomacy, economics, trade, investment, development assistance, as well as security and defense. Both Vietnam and Japan have regularly exchanged high-level visits and meetings at the parliamentary, cabinet and local levels, facilitating dialogue mechanisms on potential cooperative links, which comprehensively tighten the relationship of the two partners. We have also worked closely and actively with each other at both international and regional forums such as the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) and the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP).

In 2009, Vietnam and Japan officially recognized each other as "strategic partners" and later lifted the bilateral relationship to an "extensive strategic partnership" in 2014. This development is the showpiece of the high level of political trust between our two countries. Over the past years, the president and the prime

minister of Vietnam have in turn paid official visits to Japan. Likewise, it was not random that Prime Minister Shinzo Abe chose Vietnam for his very first official visit overseas after taking office at the end of 2012. This is clear evidence of the consensus on both sides to further promote the bilateral relationship.

With respect to economic relations, Japan is the largest overseas development assistance (ODA) donor for Vietnam and a top FDI investor and trade partner of Vietnam. A large number of strategic infrastructure projects in Vietnam such as bridges, highways, airports, seaports, hospitals and more have been completed thanks to ODA and FDI from Japan, significantly contributing to the industrialization and modernization of the country. Bilateral trade turnover has grown 23 times from 1995 to 2014. Particularly, many Japanese businesses are making profits and continue to expand their investment in Vietnam. Also worthy of note is the fact that there are more than 30,000 Vietnamese students and nearly 40,000 Viet-

namese trainees in Japan. This will surely be one of the essential factors fostering the long-lasting cooperative relationship between the two countries.

The harmonious and strong relationship between Vietnam and Japan is based on favorable complimentary conditions from both sides. Vietnam has a hardworking, young labor force and is rich with natural resources while Japan has the advantage of large capital, management capabilities and technology innovations. I therefore strongly believe that the mutually beneficial relationship between our two nations will unceasingly prosper for many years to come.

In the joy of celebrating the 70th anniversary of the National Day of Vietnam, I would like to extend my sincerest gratitude to the government and people of Japan for their valuable support and cooperation over the years. I also hope that the Vietnam-Japan relationship continues to grow and contribute to the peace, stability and prosperity of the two countries, the region and the world.

Exchanges pave way for key accords, economic progress

Toshihiro Nikai
CHAIRMAN OF THE JAPAN-VIETNAM PARLIAMENTARY FRIENDSHIP ALLIANCE

On the occasion of the 70th National Day of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, as chairman of the Japan-Vietnam Parliamentary Friendship Alliance and on behalf of all members of the alliance, I would like to extend my warmest congratulations to the government and people of Vietnam. Over the past 70 years, Vietnam and its people have accomplished astonishing feats that have won the world's admiration. On its current course of economic reforms and national development, Vietnam continues to make remarkable achievements as its regional and international stature rises ever higher.

I am happy to see the vibrant friendship between Vietnam and Japan deepening and encompassing a wide range of areas. Following the establishment of our strategic partnership in 2009, during the state visit of President Truong Tan Sang and his wife to Japan, the leaders of our two countries have agreed to upgrade bilateral relations to an extensive strategic partnership. Two months ago, at the invitation of Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe to attend the seventh Mekong-



Japan Summit, Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung and a high-level Vietnamese delegation embarked on an official visit to Japan where the leaders engaged in substantive discussions and reaching many important agreements. These activities embody the remarkable developments in bilateral relations over the last few years. It also stands as a testament to the trust between both sides and their determination to further promote Japan-Vietnam relations.

Japan and Vietnam have long shared common social and cultural values. Today, our two countries share strategic viewpoints and interests. Faced with common economic and security challenges, we are working proactively and closely with each other for national development to contribute to peace, stability and development in the region. In that spirit, the Japan-Vietnam Parliamentary Friendship Alliance, a close friend of Vietnam, will make every effort to strengthen and promote this relationship between our two countries. We will also do our best to support Vietnam in its development endeavors.

Amid images of Vietnamese lotus flowers blooming in Wakayama Prefecture, and with thoughts of our Vietnamese friends admiring Oga lotuses in Vietnam, it is my firm belief that the our people will treasure and care for the Japan-Vietnam friendship and cooperation.

Bilateral activities contribute to strong bonds

Chihiro Kanagawa
CHAIRMAN, THE INTERNATIONAL FRIENDSHIP EXCHANGE COUNCIL (FEC)



On behalf of the International Friendship Exchange Council (FEC), I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to the government and people of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam on the occasion of the 70th Anniversary of their National Day.

The relationship between Vietnam and Japan has become even closer during the past decade. In this regard,

working through our members in a diversity of fields, the FEC has been carrying out international exchanges between Vietnam and Japan not only in the field of economics, but also in such fields as culture, health, education and the environment. I am delighted to note that the FEC for the fifth consecutive year will send a delegation to Vietnam this November, its 10th such delegation. With this upcoming visit, I am very certain that we will be able to further promote mutual understanding and cooperation in various fields. Through these many activities, I am convinced that the result has been the establishment of strong ties between our two countries.

I sincerely hope the strategic partnership between Vietnam and Japan in a wide range of areas will further strengthen the strong relationship and trust between the people of our two countries and will be an important key for the promotion of peace and stability in Asia and the Pacific region. As chairman of the FEC, I would like to reaffirm the FEC's resolve to continue to work hard, even harder than before, to strengthen our close relationship.

In closing, I would like to express my great expectations for the continued development and progress of Vietnam and its people as well as for the deepening of our mutual relationship.

Congratulations
to the State and the People
of the Socialist Republic
of Vietnam
on the 70th Anniversary of
Their National Day

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