

# France National Day

## Friendship and innovation are hallmarks of a strong relationship

Thierry Dana  
AMBASSADOR OF FRANCE

France and Japan have never been closer. Our two countries share interests and fundamental values. But above all, we are united by a deep sense of friendship and trust.

Last November, Paris was struck by terrorism. Liberty, equality and fraternity — the fundamental principles of our Republic and the very ones our National Day celebrates — were targeted. Japanese people were among the first to express their sorrow and profess their love for the people of Paris. In April, when Kumamoto Prefecture was tragically hit by a series of earthquakes,



French people felt terribly hurt and raced to make contributions to help the victims.

These demonstrations of our friendship are a testimony not only to the achievements of our partnership, but to its ambition. As two major players on the international stage, and fellow members of the G-7 and G-20, France and Japan share a growing role in promoting peace, stability and development. The successes of the 21st Conference of the Parties to the U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change, also known as COP 21, last year in Paris and the Japanese presidency of the G-7 this year have been recognized and praised worldwide.

We share the same views and goals on a significant number of issues. Both our countries strive to protect peace and uphold interna-

tional law in Asia and Europe. We work side by side on the U.N. Security Council, which Japan currently presides over. France and Japan have also reinforced their ties to fight against terrorism. Japan is currently the only Asian country we hold “two-plus-two” (foreign affairs and defense) ministerial meetings with. This annual consultation allows us to address together global challenges in the fields of defense and security in areas as diverse as space, the cyber world and maritime and environmental security to provide direction and guidance to the bilateral Defense Equipment and Technology Cooperation.

Last October, our prime ministers adopted a Franco-Japanese plan for sustainable development, health and security in Africa. Together with our African partners, France

and Japan are committed to promoting development and peace on the continent. France will participate in the sixth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD VI) in Nairobi in August. At the European level, our country is engaged in a strong, comprehensive EU-Japan partnership that shows much promise.

This year, our relationship has continued to grow and develop in new areas. When Prime Minister Manuel Valls visited Japan, he launched with Prime Minister Shinzo Abe the French-Japanese Innovation Year. From October 2015 to December 2016, dozens of events, meetings, exhibitions and seminars have been, or will be, hosted throughout France and Japan in the fields of economy, science, sustainable development and culture. Innovation is a strength our two countries share.

In Japan, France may be known by many for its culture, heritage, landscapes, cuisine or fashion. However, France is also a leading country in the aerospace and nuclear industries. We hold 13 Fields Medals and 47 Nobel Prizes in physics, chemistry, medicine and the economy. This “savoir-faire,” the French know-how, has led to ever-increasing cooperation with Japanese companies and institutions in recent years. In that spirit, we have launched French Tech Tokyo, a program to encourage French tech companies, especially startups, to expand in Japan.

Many of our Japanese friends are fascinated by French culture. This is evidenced by more than 50 French movies being distributed each year in Japan, our first partner in Asia in terms of cinema. Additionally, the most famous French muse-

ums regularly exhibit in Japan; since last year, Le Louvre and Orsay museums visited to the National Art Center, the Pompidou Center is presently at the Metropolitan Museum in Ueno and Marie-Antoinette & Versailles are coming to the Mori Museum next fall. France is also fascinated with Japanese culture. We are the second-largest market for manga in the world after Japan and the number of French tourists visiting Japan is growing rapidly. Similarly, Japanese are among the foreigners those who know and appreciate France the most. I am always impressed with how knowledgeable our Japanese friends

are about France and the incredible vitality of various Franco-Japanese friendship associations and clubs in Japan.

Prime Minister Abe decided to organize “Japonisme,” a great international series of events on Japan that will be held in Paris in 2018 on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the beginning of the Meiji Era. It also marks the 160th anniversary of the establishment of our diplomatic ties, and goes to show how deep and alive our friendship is. This is another one of many reasons to celebrate on our National Day.

I wish you all a great 14th of July!



Paris Mayor Anne Hidalgo (second from right) and President of the Ile-de-France Region Valerie Pécresse (center), in Tokyo to promote tourism, pose with TV announcer Christel Takigawa (left), Shogo Kariyazaki (second from left) and French Ambassador Thierry Dana (right) at the ambassador's residence in February.

EMBASSY OF FRANCE



Prime Minister Manuel Valls inaugurated the French-Japanese Innovation Year with Softbank Corp.'s Pepper robot in October at the Miraikan in Tokyo. EMBASSY OF FRANCE



## Congratulations

on the Occasion of  
the National Day of France

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