

Mongolia National Day Special

Geographically distant yet strategically close

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On the occasion of the 2,227th Anniversary of Mongolia's First Statehood, the 812th Anniversary of the Great Mongol Empire and the 97th Anniversary of the People's Revolution, all tied together in

the Naadam festival that celebrates the Mongolian National Day. I would like to extend my warmest greetings to the readers of The Japan Times.

Mongolia is a small country in terms of its population of over 3 million, but large in terms of territory and resources. Mongolia's gross domestic product has grown about 6.6 times and average monetary income of households has increased by about sixfold since 2005. At the same time, foreign trade grew by about fivefold and foreign direct investment grew eight times larger in a little over a decade. The

economy is expected to grow over 6.3 percent this year and 8 percent next year. Foreign reserve tripled within the last year and a half.

Mongolia and Japan are geographically distant, yet strategically close nations that enjoy each other's support on the international stage. Mongolia prioritizes the development of bilateral relations with Japan as a neighbor and close strategic partner that shares values of respecting democracy, human rights and freedom.

In recent years, Mongolia and Japan have been making an enormous effort to implement the Mid-term Strategic Partnership Program (2017–2021) and economic partnership agreement, as well as deepening Mongolia-Japan relations across a wide range of sectors such as politics, defense, economy, trade, culture, education and so on.

The Mongolian government and people have always been very thankful to the Japanese government and people for rendering generous support and assistance to the country through strengthening democracy and structuring a market economy sys-

tem. In the framework of the International Monetary Fund's program and Japan's official development assistance, the Japanese government has been providing several important forms of aid.

Mongolia-Japan ties have been strengthening not only bilaterally, but also on the regional and international levels. The mutual agreement regarding the importance of strengthening relations makes for the ideal strategic partnership. For instance, Mongolia has been firm in its belief that on any dispute or crisis, there is no solution other than talks and engagement.

Since the early 2000s we have been pursuing the policy of engaging and avoiding the isolation of North Korea. The continuation of this policy in the context of failed six-party talks and an absence of channels of communication in northeast Asia led to the Ulaanbaatar Dialogue in 2014.

The dialogue has enjoyed broad support among the countries in the region, including Japan. The number of participating countries has increased and their level has upgraded a half step from Track 2. As a country with two decades free of nuclear



weapons, Mongolia views the decision by North Korea to suspend its nuclear and missile tests and dismantlement of its Punggye-ri nuclear test site as an important step toward the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. The Ulaanbaatar Dialogue vividly demonstrates that dialogue is the only option.

May Mother Earth enjoy peace and prosperity. May the eternal blue sky bless us all!

This content was compiled in collaboration with the embassy. The views expressed here do not necessarily reflect those of the newspaper.

Night view of Ulaanbaatar. The capital is located in north-central Mongolia, at some 1,300 meters above sea level. EMBASSY OF MONGOLIA

Congratulations
to the People of Mongolia
on the Occasion of
the Mongolian National Day

 Mitsubishi Corporation