

Vietnam National Day Special

Collaborations mark growth potential

VU HONG NAM
AMBASSADOR OF VIETNAM



Seventy-four years ago, on Sept. 2, 1945, President Ho Chi Minh proclaimed a Declaration of Independence, announcing the birth of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (now the Socialist Republic of Vietnam). From this historic moment, a new chapter opened in our country's history. Over the past seven decades, Vietnam has grown even stronger and strived for national independence and prosperity, while actively contributing to peace, stability, cooperation, and development both in the region and the

world. From having been one of the most underdeveloped countries, Vietnam has exerted significant efforts to push forward industrialization and modernization and is now emerging as an economic power in its region.

In 2019, the world and the Asia-Pacific region witnessed rapid and profound changes. Since the end of the Cold War unpredictability and instability remain, but peace, cooperation and development are still the prevailing trends, aspirations and shared interests of all humankind. Against this backdrop, Vietnam has continued to deepen its international integration in an active and innovative manner.

International relations have not only been bolstered, but have also deepened and been rendered more substantive and effective. Political trust and concrete cooperation have

strengthened across various areas. Vietnam successfully organized the second summit between the U.S. and North Korea held this year in Hanoi, and for the fourth time was invited to the G20 summit, this year held in Osaka.

Most recently, it was elected as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council for 2020 to 2021, receiving 192 out of 193 votes, the highest in U.N. history. These encouraging developments have once again highlighted the soundness of Vietnam's foreign policy.

Regarding economics, Vietnam's gross domestic product growth accelerated to 7.08 percent in 2018, supported by a broad uptick in economic activity. Vietnam's income per capita also increased to \$2,600. In 2019, the country's economy continues to witness positive signals with strong growth momentum. GDP in the first half of 2019 was recorded at 6.76 percent, inflation is under control and major economic sectors continue to grow. Amid rising protectionism and escalating trade wars, Vietnam continues to assert its role as an important link in promoting regional economic integration. It has now concluded 12 Free Trade Agreements, including the recently signed EU-Vietnam Free Trade Agreement (EVFTA).

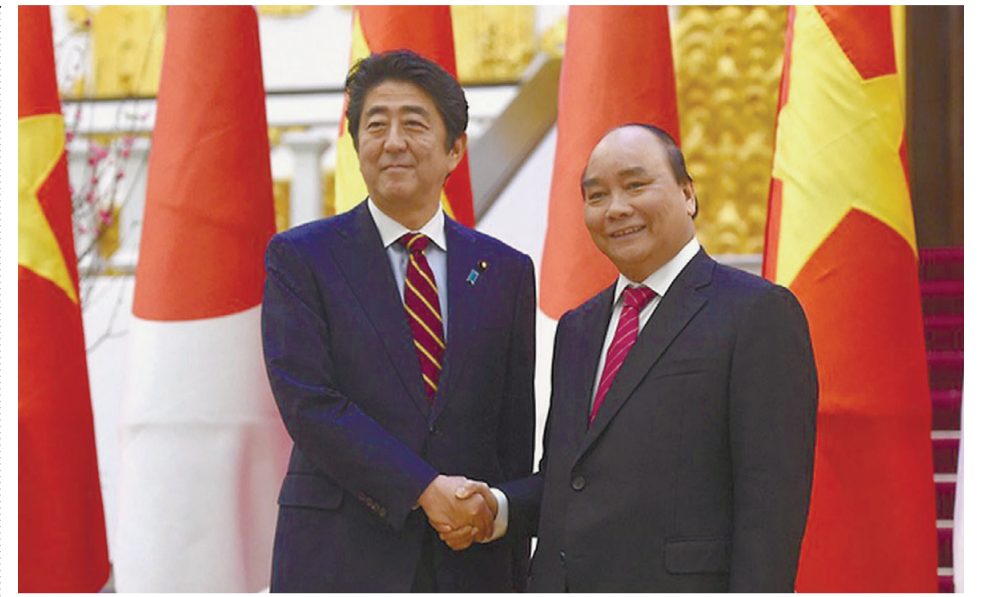
As Japan enters Reiwa, an era of "beautiful harmony," a new chapter is opened with Japan. Among those promising signals, the bilateral Extensive Strategic Partnership for Peace and Prosperity in Asia is in its finest stage with comprehensive and substantial growth across the board. In 2018, the two countries effectively collaborated in the successful organization of nearly 250 events celebrating the 45th anniversary of establishing diplomatic relations. Highlights of the year were a state visit to Japan by Former President Tran Dai Quang in May and a visit by Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc during his attendance in the 10th Mekong-Japan Summit Meeting. More recently, Vietnam attended the G20 summit in Osaka in June.

Vietnam-Japan economic ties are promoted in a balanced and harmonious manner with highly complementary commodities. Our bilateral trade volume in 2018 reached \$38 billion, recording an average growth of 12 to 15 percent per year. Japan's investment to Vietnam in 2018 reached \$8.5 billion, making Japan the number one investor in Vietnam for two consecutive years. The first six months of 2019 witnessed \$1.1 billion of Japanese investment in Vietnam, Japan being the third-largest foreign investor in our country. According to a survey conducted by the Japan External Trade Organization in 2019, 65.3 percent of 787 Japanese companies in Vietnam recorded high profits in 2018.

Since I assumed the role as ambassador of Vietnam to Japan in October, I have witnessed our cooperation growing from strength to strength. Regarding development cooperation, Japan continues to be Vietnam's top official development assistance donor. As for labor cooperation, the two countries have great potential to tap into.

In fact, Vietnam has been sending out a large number of trainees to Japan since 1992. As of June, out of 350,000 Vietnamese people living and working in Japan, our trainees account for 180,000. Among those 180,000, newly-arrived trainees amount to 35,000. Both countries will soon conclude a memorandum to implement the Agreement on Labor Cooperation, which creates favorable conditions for Vietnamese citizens to come and work in Japan.

Vietnam particularly welcomes the amended immigration law with Specified



Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc shake hands in Danang in November 2017. EMBASSY OF VIETNAM

Skilled Worker residence status — adopted by the government of Japan and in effect from April 1 — which provides a great opportunity for both countries to strengthen cooperation on human resources. On July 1, the two sides signed a memorandum to implement this revised law. Vietnam promises to be an important provider of skilled individuals for Japan in coming years. Concerning tourism, the year 2019 saw 826,674 Japanese tourists arrive in Vietnam, ranking third among foreign visitors to the country. Looking forward, both sides could embark on other measures to maximize bilateral potential, such as increasing people-to-people activity to promote our countries and residents, engaging in frequent information exchange and dialogue to enhance mutual understanding, and rendering support to our overseas citizens and businessmen. Such steps foster a solid foundation for people-

to-people exchanges and sociocultural cooperation.

On the international stage, Vietnam and Japan have worked closely together at multi-lateral forums, especially at the U.N., through extended collaborations with Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the Japan-Mekong partnership. Vietnam has an increasingly important role to play in the international arena as the coordinator of ASEAN-Japan relations for 2018 to 2021, is the upcoming Chair of ASEAN in 2020, and is a nonpermanent member of the U.N. Security Council in 2020 to 2021. I have every reason to believe that Vietnam-Japan cooperation is on the right trajectory to become monumental.

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

Fostering relations amid mutual cooperation, bettering business

HIDEO ICHIKAWA, MASAYOSHI FUJIMOTO AND MASAYUKI HYODO CHAIRS, THE JAPAN-VIETNAM ECONOMIC COMMITTEE OF KEIDANREN On behalf of Keidanren (the Japan Business Federation), we would like to express our heartfelt congratulations to the people of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam on the 74th anniversary of its independence.

Under the extended strategic partnership agreed upon by Japan and Vietnam, the two countries have had increasingly active exchanges in a wide range of fields such as politics, diplomacy, economy and culture.

Vietnam is a very attractive market for Japanese companies, especially because of its robust economic growth and increasing population that totals nearly

95 million. The country as a strategic base of a global supply chain is becoming more and more important today due to Vietnam's stable political and social situation, diligent populace, geographical advantage as the gateway to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and open-minded policies such as joining the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership. In fact, over 1,900 Japanese companies are actively operating in Vietnam at present.

We will continue to have deep discussions with the government and the businesses of Vietnam and contribute to the further development of Japan-Vietnam relations through fostering skilled individuals and cooperating on improving the country's business environment.

The Golden Bridges sits over 1,000 meters above sea level in central Vietnam with giant stone hands as part of the structure.
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