

Japan will continue its efforts to further deepen its wide-ranging cooperative relationship with Myanmar

YANGON, 12 Nov.—Japanese Prime Minister Mr Shinzo Abe gave interview to the *Global New Light of Myanmar*. The following is the full text of the interview. —Ed

GNLM: How are relations between Myanmar and Japan?

Prime Minister Mr Shinzo Abe: This year Japan and Myanmar celebrate the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries. I am pleased to have this opportunity to visit Myanmar again in this memorable year after my official visit in May last year, which was the first visit for a Japanese Prime Minister for 36 years.

President U Thein Sein also visited Japan last December in order to attend the ASEAN-Japan Commemorative Summit Meeting which I co-chaired. Relations between our two countries have become closer through the mutual visits of me and President U Thein Sein.

I personally feel a deep connection with Myanmar. This is because three generations of my family: my grandfather, former Prime Minister Nobusuke Kishi; my father, former Foreign Minister Shintaro Abe; and myself have had the opportunities of visiting Myanmar and my wife, Akie, has been supporting child education in Myanmar as her research subject.

A large number of Japanese companies are now paying close attention to Myanmar. All-Japan initiatives,

involving public and private sectors, are starting to make achievements in a wide range of areas, including infrastructure development in the Thilawa Special Economic Zone (SEZ) and other locations, financial sector, communication sector and postal services.

Furthermore, the foundation of economic relations which enables our two countries to cooperate and grow together, has rapidly developed through the entry into force of the Japan-Myanmar Bilateral Investment Agreement, the granting of permission to the three Japanese banks to open branches in Myanmar by the Government of Myanmar, and the commencement of efforts aimed at the agreement of a tax convention.

Turning our attention to people-to-people exchanges, there are numerous admirers of Myanmar in Japan. Since last year, the Myanmar Festival has been held in Tokyo for the purpose of introducing Myanmar to Japanese people and expanding exchanges between the two countries. This year, approximately 59,000 people attended the festival.

Recently the TV dramas and animations (anime) from Japan started their broadcast in Myanmar. This



*Japanese Prime Minister
Mr Shinzo Abe.*

reminds me that in 1935, approximately 80 years ago, the late film director Nyi Pu, who is known as the father of cinema in Myanmar, shot the film "Japan Yin Thwe" in Japan, which enjoyed great popularity in Myanmar for several years.

Sharing our cultural values, Japan-Myanmar relations have developed and evolved day by day. This year is important not only because we celebrate the 60th anniversary of the establishment of our diplomatic relations but also because Myanmar assumes the Chair of ASEAN.

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Japan will continue its efforts to further deepen its wide-ranging cooperative relationship with Myanmar, and the public and the private sectors of Japan will support the progress of the various reforms in this country.

Q: What matters will Japan place importance on in future ASEAN-related summits?

A: Japan welcomes Myanmar being the Chair of ASEAN for the first time. The ASEAN-related summit meetings are an important opportunity for strengthening cooperation between Japan and ASEAN and we encourage collabo-

ration among Asia-Pacific countries for responding to the challenges they are facing.

At the summits, Japan will explain its views on further development of the regional order centered on ASEAN. Japan also wishes to work together with President U Thein Sein, the ASEAN Chair, and to contribute to the success of the summit.

2015 will be a landmark year in which the ASEAN Community will be established and the East Asia Summit (EAS) will celebrate its 10th anniversary. We will actively communicate Japan's initiatives and ideas for the realization

of peace and prosperity in this region through support for the building of the ASEAN Community and other measures, as well as give direction for strengthening the EAS.

At the ASEAN-Japan Summit, we hope to agree on the further enhancement of the Japan-ASEAN relationship and the promotion of cooperation in the fields of maritime security, infrastructure, connectivity and culture, building on the outcomes of the ASEAN-Japan Commemorative Summit Meeting in December last year.

We believe that the EAS is a framework which we should develop further as a premier forum led by heads of states for the dis-

cussions about not only economic and social issues but also political and security areas. In the upcoming EAS it is important for us to respond to the urgent challenges such as Ebola and ISIL. Moreover, we intend to discuss our initiatives so that our collaboration is deepened even further.

In addition, we would also like to confirm the progress and the direction of cooperation at the Mekong-Japan Summit Meeting and the ASEAN Plus Three (Japan, China and the Republic of Korea) Summit.

I am looking forward to holding wide-ranging and productive discussions with President U Thein Sein and the other leaders.—GNLM