

Prime Minister Abe's Article contributed to four Mongolian Newspapers
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I am pleased to have the opportunity from tomorrow to visit Mongolia and exchange views with President Tsakhiagiin Elbegdorj, Prime Minister Norovyn Altankhuyag, and Chairman of the State Great Khural Zandaakhuu Enkhbold. By visiting Mongolia where the cold weather still lingers, I hope to bring a breath of spring air to our bilateral relations, coming from Japan where the cherry blossoms are currently in bloom.

In 2010, Japan and Mongolia identified the establishment of a “Strategic Partnership” as our shared diplomatic objective. Since then, the two countries have promoted a “Strategic Partnership” by steadily building on our cooperation and exchanges. What supports such bilateral relations? I believe it is the “Three Spirits” of freedom and democracy, peace, and mutual support. With the hope of dramatically enhancing the bilateral relationship which is underpinned by these spirits, I have decided to make the visit on this occasion. I would like to share my thoughts below on the spirits that support the Japan-Mongolia relations and on the development of a “Strategic Partnership.”

“Three Spirits”

(1) Spirit of Freedom and Democracy

The “spirit of freedom and democracy” is the platform which our favorable relations, coupled with the sense of affinity between our peoples, rest upon. Since 1990, Mongolia has striven to fulfill the lofty ideals of achieving democratization in parallel with adopting a market economy, setting forth freedom and democracy as the fundamental principles of the nation. Japan transformed its political system and incorporated the values of freedom and democracy as a result of the Meiji Restoration in the end of the 19th century and has undertaken a series of trial and error efforts. As everyone is aware, Japan led the international community in supporting the democratization of Mongolia in light of its own experiences.

(2) Spirit of Peace

Japan and Mongolia are both supported by the “spirit of peace.” It is precisely peace that forms the basis of the development and prosperity of the world today. We believe that all issues facing the international community should be resolved not by “coercion or intimidation” but by peaceful means. Internationally, it is the wish of the two countries that the status quo will not be changed through the unilateral exercise of coercion or intimidation and that “rule of law” be respected.

(3) Spirit of Mutual Benefits

The “spirit of mutual benefits” runs through the relationship between Japan and Mongolia. Japan is one of the leading economic powers of the world and boasts world-class, cutting-edge technologies. Mongolia has a globally unparalleled young population and a wealth of resources, and has potential for unlimited growth. Japan-Mongolia cooperation is mutually supplementary and can be beneficial to both sides.

Furthermore, the people in the two countries have a “mutual benefits” relationship in which help is extended if the other finds itself in difficulty. As the largest ODA donor, Japan has consistently offered material and spiritual support for the democratization efforts of Mongolia. Meanwhile, Mongolia extended warm support to Japan in the wake of natural disasters, including the Great Hanshin Earthquake in 1995 and the Great East Japan Earthquake in 2011.

In the aftermath of the Great East Japan Earthquake, Mongolia’s emergency rescue team was dispatched overseas for the first time in its history. When transportation means were still in disarray immediately after the disaster, the rescue team actively engaged in emergency rescue activities in the affected areas, including Natori City and Iwanuma City of Miyagi Prefecture. Furthermore, people from all walks of life from both the private and public sectors offered kind donations, including the full-day salaries donated by all national public servants in Mongolia. I am told that the amount of donation from the Government of Mongolia was the largest ever provided for a disaster in a foreign country. On top of that, Mongolia donated emergency relief supplies, including blankets, sweaters and socks, for protection from the cold. Thanks to the invitation by the Mongolian Government and those in the private sector, many Japanese citizens affected by the disaster were given the opportunity to visit Mongolia over the course of four occasions between April and September 2011. On behalf of all the Japanese people, I would like to once again extend my appreciation as I took this occasion to introduce these episodes of assistance in particular with the firm belief that the “Three Spirits” of freedom and democracy, peace, and mutual benefits are embedded in them.

This will be the first visit to Mongolia by the Prime Minister of Japan in seven years. I hope to take this opportunity to advance cooperation in the three areas of politics and security, economic relations, and people-to-people and cultural exchanges, thereby further accelerating promotion of our “Strategic Partnership.”

(1) Cooperation in Politics and Security

Firstly, with our “Strategic Partner” Mongolia, I would like to move forward with cooperation in the area of politics and security. Last year marked the commemorative year of the 40th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between our two countries during which summit meetings between Japan and Mongolia were held on two occasions. In recent years, bilateral high-level dialogues have increased and I seek to continue to actively promote such high-level exchanges in various formats in the future. Furthermore, I will also advance strategic dialogues on various levels between our relevant authorities.

Mongolia is a partner with whom we share common values not only in terms of bilateral relations, but also with regard to regional and global issues. To date we have cooperated on a variety of issues, including the situation surrounding North Korea, United Nations reform, climate change, and multilateral cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region. It is my wish to engage in cooperation and exchanges of opinions in even more areas, and in so doing construct ever closer relations with Mongolia.

(2) Further Development of Economic Relations

Cooperation in economic area is also important with our strategic partner Mongolia.

Japan is currently dedicating its efforts to regaining our economic vitality. We are aiming to realize a vigorous Japan, a vital country where second chances are given. I understand that the Mongolian word for “vitality” is *erch* or *erch khuch*, and it is just such vitality in both the economy and society that will create a new future.

Expansion of trade and investment between Japan and Mongolia will bring vitality to the economies of both our countries. I would especially like to see further cooperation in the rich mineral resources of Mongolia, which is one of Mongolia’s strengths. Many Japanese corporations have a great interest in this area, and if investment from Japan increases, it would be likely to give a strong boost to Mongolia’s economic growth. Furthermore, Japan is supporting Mongolia’s development in a wide range of sectors, including infrastructure, energy, environment, agriculture, stock raising, disaster prevention and healthcare. In this way, we are helping Mongolia become a country that does not depend on natural resources alone, but one that also fosters and develops a diverse range of industries. Such growth will expand opportunities for Mongolia, draw in new investment and lead to its further development.

It is based on this concept that tomorrow, in my meeting with the Prime Minister of Mongolia, I intend to propose a new initiative for cooperation.

(3) Revitalizing People-to-people and Cultural Exchanges

The warm and affectionate links that are shared between Japan and Mongolia are supported through exchanges between the people of our two countries. Mongolia is the homeland of three Yokozuna Grand Champions in Japanese sumo wrestling to date, and is a country that we Japanese have a great affinity for. There is also a high level of interest in studying the Japanese language in Mongolia, and currently more than 1,000 Mongolian students are engaged in studies in various fields in Japan. I am delighted that exchanges are steadily being implemented in diverse areas, including among students, youth, private sector friendship organizations and parliamentarians. Good feeling between the people of our two countries is essential in order to further develop our bilateral relations and ensure their stability and soundness. I intend to use the opportunity provided by this visit to strongly advance exchanges between the peoples of Japan and Mongolia.

Currently in Japan, cherry blossoms are in full bloom. The good relations enjoyed between Japan and Mongolia and the “Three Spirits” that support these relations are not something that has been able to bloom overnight. I will make every endeavor to ensure that my visit to Mongolia provides a warm spring wind for the people of both countries, who are working hard to take bilateral relations to the next level, and helps our “Strategic Partnership” blossom splendidly.