

Ambassador's Remarks
Farewell Reception for H.E. Ambassador Yasuaki Tanizaki
06.09.2013

Thank you for joining us at my farewell reception this evening. I'm completing my tenure for three years as Japanese Ambassador to Vietnam, and leaving for the next assignment in Tokyo. I have fulfilled my responsibilities as Ambassador thanks to your cooperation and supports. I'd like to express my sincere gratitude to all of you.

Right after arriving in Hanoi, I started enjoying a stroll in the old quarter. People in Hanoi are graceful and they cherish their daily lives. Bird cages and house plants at house verandas, vibrant activities in town and various kinds of dishes at tables. I got drawn into this country in a moment. I have visited around 30 local provinces. Quan ho of Bac Ninh, Ca Tru of Ha Tinh, ethnic minorities in Dien Bien and Ban Me Thuot, and canals at Mekong Delta. I enjoyed pleasant surprises to find rich cultures in Vietnam. To have better understanding of Vietnam, I tried Truyen Kieu by Nguyen du and literatures by Thach Lam. I also enjoyed conversations with as many people as possible. At times, I felt I understood Vietnam to some extent. However, there were always new discoveries to me, which made me realize the depth of the culture of Vietnam. Understanding Vietnam is as if chasing a mirage, never reaching the goal. But, Vietnam is all the more attractive because it is misterious. I will continue my journey to come closer to the essence of Vietnamese culture even after leaving Hanoi.

Japan-Vietnam relations had considerably developed under the strategic partnership by the time I assumed my duties three years ago. The Ninh Thuan 2 Nuclear Power Plants project, which was agreed right after I was posted, is now a symbol of cooperation between the two countries. Besides, I thought that Japan's own experiences of its economic developments should be a guidance for the Vietnam's Industrialization Strategy, which is a main pillar of

the economic development plan. It also came to my mind that Japan and Vietnam should and can broaden cooperation in such areas as political and security affairs, cultural activities, and youth exchanges, thus making the relations more comprehensive. When I was contemplating those ideas, the Great East Japan Earthquake took place. I was deeply moved by hearty thoughts and considerate supports by Vietnamese people. An elderly person donated to us, saying "This is part of my pension." Yet another old man told me that his grandchild wanted to share his New Year's gift money. We received many condolence callers from throughout the country; mountainous regions, coastline areas from North to South, and even Mekong Delta.

Facing these heartfelt actions, I felt that mutual respects have taken root among people of Japan and Vietnam. I became convinced that the two countries are "natural" strategic partners based on this foundation.

This year is the Japan-Vietnam Friendship Year. A commemorative train of North-South Railway decorated with cherry blossoms and lotus flowers, symbols of the two countries, is running right at this moment. As Chairman of the Executive Committee, I regret that I'll have to step down before completing the mission, and I must apologize to those who have been working together with us. But I'm sure that the Friendship Year is an invaluable opportunity to further develop the Japan-Vietnam relationship.

Vietnam is a dynamic country with a large population and young and talented human resources. It will achieve a well balanced industry and agriculture development while maintaining political stability in the near future, and will be taking a leading role in ASEAN. In the meantime, Japan, which has made considerable contributions to the prosperity and stability in the East Asia, has restored political stability and its economy is gaining strength again. All-round cooperation between Japan and Vietnam as natural partners will play a prominent role for the prosperity and stability of not only

the two countries but also the entire region.

It is my greatest pleasure if my duties contributed to drawing such a promising future of the two countries. I sincerely thank you again for your understanding, cooperation and supports.

With my gratefulness in mind, may I now invite all of you to join me in a toast to the good health and happiness of everyone and to the development of Japan and Vietnam for the years to come.
Cheers!

Thank you.

(End)