

Greetings from the New Japanese Ambassador to Ethiopia

I am Daisuke Matsunaga, the new Japanese Ambassador to Ethiopia. I am excited to be posted in Ethiopia, and keen to promote Japan-Ethiopia relations further and to deepen the mutual understanding between our two countries. I am also looking forward to making a lot of new friends in Ethiopia.



In fact, I had a chance to visit this beautiful country about fifteen years ago. At that time, I visited one of the oldest churches in Addis Ababa and was impressed with the country's long history and its great traditions.

The most well-known Ethiopian in Japan is probably Abebe Bikila, the legendary marathon runner and the two-time consecutive gold medal winner in both the Rome Olympic Games in 1960 and the Tokyo Olympic Games in 1964. I recall that my mother and I went to cheer for the marathon runners at the roadside back then. Abebe looked so contemplative while running that he was nicknamed "the running philosopher". I am proud to tell you that my father-in-law interviewed Abebe in Tokyo in 1964.

Japan and Ethiopia have enjoyed friendly relations since the 1930s. As a matter of fact, HIM Emperor Haile Selassie was the very first state guest that Japan welcomed after World War II. In return, Their Majesties the Emperor and Empress (then Crown Prince and Princess) visited Ethiopia four years later in 1960. Even though we are proud of our friendly exchanges in the past, we would also like to take a vigorous step forward into the future. I hasten to add that Japan would like to expand its role as a partner for Ethiopia in its efforts to continue its robust economic growth.

I have always been under the impression that the Japanese and Ethiopian peoples have a lot in common. The custom of bowing to one another is only one of many similarities. Both peoples also tend to be reserved rather than aggressive. It seems to me that we are naturally able to understand each other very well.

On the basis of such similarities, I would like to elevate our bilateral relations to ever greater heights. If you could help me achieve this objective of mine, I would appreciate it very much.

Daisuke Matsunaga
Ambassador of Japan to the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

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