

Visiting Su touts closer ties with Japan

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Democratic Progressive Party Chairman Su Tseng-chang, left, gestures while walking along a sidewalk yesterday outside the National Diet Building in Tokyo, Japan, where he is visiting to discuss bilateral relations and Asia-Pacific security and stability.

Photo: Lee Hsin-fang, Taipei Times

Taiwan-Japan relations could be strengthened to promote regional stability because both countries share the values of democracy, freedom and human rights, Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) Chairman Su Tseng-chang (蘇貞昌) said in Tokyo yesterday.

“The DPP hopes that Taiwan and Japan can strengthen their bilateral partnership as members of a democratic alliance, which would make the Asia-Pacific a region of security, stability and prosperity by promoting dialogue and closer engagement,” Su said on the second day of his five-day visit to Japan.

Taiwan, Japan, South Korea and the US all share those same values, said the DPP chairman, who is leading a 30-member delegation on his first overseas trip since assuming the party leadership in May last year.

Su made the comments during his visit to the Japan-Republic Of China Diet Members’ Consultative Council, a pro-Taiwan parliamentary group in the Japanese Diet, and met its president — Japanese Senator Takeo Hiranuma.

Su reiterated Taiwanese affinity with Japan, saying that this was not only because of the close proximity of the two countries, but also because of a long history of bilateral trade and cultural

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exchanges.

The assistance offered by the nations to each other after the Japanese earthquake in March 2011 and the 921 Earthquake in Taiwan in 1999 was solid evidence of a strong friendship, Su said.

Earlier yesterday afternoon, Su visited the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) headquarters and met LDP Secretary-General Shigeru Ishiba, a former defense minister, to exchange views on security in East Asia, the dispute over the Diaoyutai Islands (釣台), known as the Senkakus in Japan, and bilateral trade relations.

Speaking to Taiwanese media during a visit to the National Diet Building yesterday morning, Su dismissed reports concerning the cancelation of his meeting with Japan Restoration Party leader Shintaro Ishihara, a right-wing politician who initiated a spat over the disputed islands by proposing that Japan nationalize them.

Su said the main goals of his visit were to strengthen the Asia-Pacific democratic alliance and to promote regional stability and prosperity, rather than meeting certain politicians.

On the Diaoyutais dispute, Su said the most urgent task for Taiwan was the protection of fishing rights and that he was glad to see both sides are ready for a new round of negotiations.

In response to a media inquiry about domestic political affairs, the chairman said the appointments of Chang Chia-juch (蔣經國) and Kuan Chung-ming (關公明) as minister of economic affairs and Council for Economic Planning and Development minister "showed the Chinese Nationalist Party's [KMT] talent drought."

"The thing that this administration should carry out is probably not a change of personnel, but a change of policy, because [President] Ma [Ying-jeou's (馬英九)] policies are being questioned by the people," he said.

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The delegation arrived in Tokyo on Sunday and is scheduled to return to Taipei on Thursday.

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