



Patriarch Kirill meets with Japan's ambassador to Russia

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On November 1, 2011, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia met with Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Japan to the Russian Federation, Mr. Tikhito Harada, at the patriarchal residence in Chisty Pereulok.

Patriarch Kirill welcomed the guest and wished him success in his work at his important post, noting that it was not his first coming to Moscow as he had served in Moscow as diplomat before. Mentioning that Mr. Harada recently celebrated his 60th birthday, His Holiness recalled: 'Confucius used to say that by 60 years of age he had learned to distinguish between truth and lie. It is a very important ability for each, especially a diplomat. I believe, the success of a diplomat's work depends to a large extent on how good he is at distinguishing truth from lie so that he could sensibly and objectively analyse what happens in the country in which he represents the interests of his own state. May God give that your service in Moscow may be carried out precisely in this way for the benefit of our countries and peoples'.

Speaking about the disaster that Japan went through, His Holiness said that the tragedy deeply touched the hearts of Russians who took to heart the suffering of people in the neighbouring country.

'When we learnt that several Orthodox churches were affected in Japan (one was completely destroyed and several churches were seriously damaged), we declared a fund-raising campaign in our parishes. About a million and half dollars was collected. The money was sent to Japan for restoration of church buildings and for aid to victims', he said.

Mr. Harada noted with gratitude that Russia, the Russian people and the Russian Orthodox Church gave people in Japan valuable aid and moral support after the terrible natural cataclysms which befell the country. 'The Japanese people are now working in solidarity to overcome the consequences of the natural disaster', he said and expressed joy over the opportunity he received to meet His Holiness the Patriarch and pointed to the important contribution that the Russian Orthodox Church makes to the life of Russian society and her important role in relations between nations.

They also mentioned the 150th anniversary of the coming of St. Nicholas of Japan to Japan and the events to be held next year will mark the 100th anniversary of his blissful demise.

Patriarch Kirill expressed an intention to visit Japan, God willing, in 2012 for these anniversaries at the

invitation of Metropolitan Daniel of Tokyo and All Japan. Mr Harada said the Japanese Government was looking forward to the forthcoming visit of the Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church.

Taking part in the talk were also Archpriest Nikolay Balashov, a DECR vice-chairman, and Mr. D. I. Petrovsky of the DECR secretariat for inter-Orthodox relations, and. Sima Keyiti and Ogawa Natsuko of the Japanese embassy.

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