

Speech by Ambassador Mr. Kenji Hiramatsu
at the Reception on 4th February in Thimphu, Bhutan

Excellencies,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to thank you for gracing this occasion with your attendance.

I presented the Credentials to His Majesty the King of Bhutan yesterday. I was deeply impressed by the warm and heartfelt welcome in a traditional manner inside the Palace.

It is my great pleasure to visit this beautiful country of rich culture and nature as Ambassador of Japan to Bhutan.

It is also a privilege to visit Bhutan in such an auspicious month. Bhutan will celebrate Losar, Bhutanese New Year, next week and the birthday of His Majesty the King on 21st. More than anything, the birth of Royal Child is expected.

This year marks the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Japan and Bhutan. I feel honoured to take up the assignment as Ambassador of Japan at this significant juncture.

Japan and Bhutan have maintained an excellent relationship through exchanges at various levels, including that between the Japanese Imperial Family and the Bhutanese Royal Family, and economic cooperation in agriculture and many other fields. The Japanese and the Bhutanese feel close affinities with each other.

The State Visit to Japan made by Their Majesties in 2011, on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between our two countries is still fresh in our memory. It was a historical visit that significantly strengthened the friendly relations between the two countries.

The visit was right after the Great East Japan Earthquake. His Majesty's thoughtful tribute to Japan and its people at the Japanese Diet and Their Majesties' visit to Soma City in Fukushima Prefecture to encourage affected school children were deeply engraved in the minds of the people of Japan.

Bhutan has been making efforts in developing its nation on the basis of the GNH (National Gross Happiness) concept for economic development taking into consideration the preservation and

promotion of traditional values and conservation of natural environment. I believe that it would be significant that Bhutan would maintain this beautiful country for the better future in our time of advancing globalization and information technology.

Japan will continue to cooperate with Bhutan and work together in the international community.

Japan and Bhutan are partners rooted not only in development cooperation, but also in various fronts such as politics, economy, environment and people-to-people exchange and enhanced cooperation on the international fora.

As Ambassador of Japan to Bhutan, I am fully committed to exert myself to further promote exchanges of people at various levels during the year of the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Japan and Bhutan. I will promise you that I will visit this beautiful country as frequently as possible.

Thank you very much.

(End)