

Speech by Ambassador Hiramatsu on the occasion of  
Opening for Japan Festival  
27 October 2017, India Habitat Centre

Good evening Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my pleasure and privilege to welcome you here tonight to celebrate the inauguration of the Japan Festival 2017. In early January, we declared 2017 to be “the Year of Japan-India Friendly Exchanges”. Keeping the theme in mind, we have organized a series of cultural events designed to bring the people of Japan and India together. Tonight is specially significant, as we begin the last lap and unveil the main chapter of this year-long endeavor: the Japan Festival.

Described as a nation “where heritage meets modernity”, Japan has a unique culture that cannot be compared to any other in the world.

The Japanese traditions and rituals derive their uniqueness from the way they relate to nature. The Japanese people have always lived in harmony with nature and embrace it in all its manifestations. This close proximity to the enormous nature fosters humility. It gives you a sense of proportions and allows you to be respectful towards others.

Attachment for nature is also seen in the way Japanese people cherish every moment spent with nature. One famous essay from 1000 years ago says that, beauty is to be seen in the falling cherry blossoms or the waning moon, not only in the blossoms at their best or in the full moon. It is this unique perspective that creates the essence of Japanese culture and makes it stand apart.

Drawing support from the traditions that we have nurtured for thousands of years, and the core values that remain ingrained, the Japanese people also open new doors for a more creative and sophisticated regime to strike root in their lives.

Sprawling metropolis like Tokyo and Osaka, with breathtaking skyscrapers and ultra-modern technologies are world famous, and these cities dynamically evolve and improve with every passing day, absorbing new trends from within as well as out of the country.

To remain open to change and incorporating new influences is another key characteristic of the Japanese culture.

This is why in Japan “heritage meets modernity.”

The Japan Festival events will introduce you to the various facets and characteristics of Japan, both traditional and modern. Through music, dance, films, cultural heritage, cutting-edge technology, food, sports and more, we would like you to step into the world of Japanese culture.

Tonight, we shall attempt to present an overview. If you would like to know more, please refer to the Festival booklet or the website, and explore anything that catches your attention.

I sincerely hope that the friendship between Japan and India grows from strength to strength, paving the way for many more people-to-people exchanges, fortified by new ideas, new sessions and new partners.

Have a great evening.

Thank you very much.