

Speech by Ambassador Hiramatsu,  
on the occasion of the 20th Convocation of New Delhi Institute of Management, February  
17th, 2018

Honorable Shri Pranab Mukherjee, Former President of India,  
Shri T.K.A. Nair, Former Advisor to the Prime Minister of India,  
Dr. V.M. Bansal, Chairman of NDIM,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

● It is an honour and pleasure for me to attend this year's convocation ceremony of the New Delhi Institute of Management. I would like to begin by extending my congratulations to all the passing graduates. I hope you would all achieve high positions in the world of business, based on the knowledge and experience you have attained at this institute.

- The relations between Japan and India have been deepening appreciably and stand at an unprecedented level at present. Economic and investment affairs are the main pillars that underpin this relationship, but I feel that the overall level of interest in Japan has also increased greatly in India.
- Many Indian people tell me that Japan is one of the leading technology powerhouses of the world, but at the same time it is also wonderful that Japan has managed to preserve and nurture its own traditions and culture. I am truly happy to hear this.
- Today, I would like to briefly talk about the path that Japan has followed to become the nation that it is today. First, I would like to talk about technology.

●In Japan there is a tradition of craftsmanship, or what we call “mono zukuri” which stands for manufacturing. This legacy has been passed on over the centuries from ancient times. Japanese pottery, textiles, paintings, including woodblock “ukiyo-e” prints, and other artistic handicrafts, have evolved in a unique, original manner. In addition, people developed and perfected the techniques and skills that led to Japan’s present-day manufacturing prowess. For example, in the Edo period, when Japan adopted the national isolation policy more than four hundred years ago, the manufacturing of mechanical dolls flourished. This was an ingenious, elaborate piece of workmanship that we believe laid down the basis for the robots of today.

● This tradition of manufacturing craftsmanship greatly contributed to the rapid industrialization that Japan went through after the Meiji Restoration, a 150 years ago, when the country finally opened itself to western civilization. And, this manufacturing tradition went on to become the backbone of automobiles, electronics, IT, and other world class manufacturing industries that Japan is justifiably proud of. In particular, there are many small and medium sized enterprises in Japan which possess internationally-recognized cutting-edge technologies and manufacturing skills unparalleled anywhere else in the world, and which support Japan's manufacturing industry. The government also strives to nurture and educate talented technicians and crafts persons, and places great importance in seriously recognizing their special abilities. For instance, in Japan, we have a system to designate "national living treasures" —these are crafts artists or technicians with uniquely high abilities, who receive a generous government stipend so they can dedicate themselves to perfecting their skills and passing them on to the younger generations. This is also an effective manner to preserve our traditional arts and crafts.

- Thanks to this tradition of “monozukuri” or manufacturing, Japan can continue to excel in producing goods of the highest world-class quality.
- Next, I would like to talk about Japan’s traditional culture. The origins of Japan as a country are uncertain, but Japan’s distinctive ancient religion, Shintoism, is deeply embedded in our everyday life. Shintoism has a great regard for nature and is based on a harmonious coexistence with Nature. We have been taught that Gods and Goddesses dwell in the mountains, trees, and rice fields. In a sense, doesn’t this resonate in some way with Hinduism?
- In addition, in the 6th century, the teachings of Buddhism came to Japan from India, through China. Since then, Buddhism has been at the center of issues related to thought and creed, and sometimes underpinned politics, government, and education.

- After the Meiji Restoration, Japan's manufacturing traditions provided a solid foundation for the country to incorporate western civilization and modernize rapidly. But we continued to value and preserve our ancient traditions, especially our habits of living in synchronization with nature.
- I would be very happy if Japan's experiences could serve as a point of reference to India in any way.
- Till now, Japanese companies, for example Suzuki, have contributed towards the development of India's manufacturing and, as a result, the parts supply industry, including the car component industry, has steadily grown.

● Last year, with the collaboration of Japanese companies, four Japan-India Institutes for Manufacturing (JIMs) were inaugurated. This attempt is directed towards handing down Japan's culture of manufacturing to Indian engineers, and to contribute to the 'Make in India' initiative of the Indian Government. Also, Japan is ready to support the Indian Institute of Skills, which the Indian Government is now working to establish. Moreover, soon we will start the Technical Intern Training Program for Indian technicians. Under this program, Indian technicians will be accepted at Japanese Companies to undergo them technical training and acquire skills from the Japanese Industry.

● India-Japan cooperation in the field of cutting-edge technology, such as Information Technology, is also progressing well. Several IITs are conducting collaborative research with Japan's reputed universities in the field of Information Technology, Biotechnology and Artificial Intelligence. Talented Indian youth are now actively working at Start-Up businesses, and there are plans to set up an India-Japan Start-Up Hub in Bengaluru. We would be more than happy to cooperate in this field, too.

●Japan and India are connected through religion, and I think we also share some similarities in our mentality. There is something incredibly strong in India's traditional culture, and I think that, while India moves forward in its development and modernization, its cultural foundations will remain unchanged. India, with its large pool of talented, bright young people, and Japan, with its technology and capital, are in a mutually complementary relationship. Our two countries, which possess long-standing and rich cultural traditions, can make the best out of this mutually complementary relationship and find boundless possibilities for cooperation.

●I am sure that, in the future, even more Japanese firms will come to India, and hope that all of you will take part in one way or another in the joint endeavors towards further strengthening Japan and India ties.

●Finally, I offer my sincere good wishes for your future success. Congratulations once again, and thank you.