

Address by Ambassador Satoshi Suzuki
on the 2nd S. B. Verma Memorial Lecture (organized by
JNU)
(March 15, 2021)

[Opening]

Thank you for the introduction, Dr. Lakshmi. Good afternoon to you all, ladies and gentlemen. It is my pleasure to join the Second S. B. Verma Memorial Lecture with distinguished guests and professors of JNU. I am especially delighted to know that Professor K. V. Kesavan, one of the leading scholars of Japanese studies in India and a recipient of **the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold Rays with Neck Ribbon** in 2011, is here with us today.

[About the Memorial Lecture]

It is my understanding that the S. B. Verma Memorial Lecture is held in memory of late Professor Satya Bhushan Verma, who introduced the Japanese Language Department at JNU and laid out the foundation of what is now the Center for Japanese Studies at the university. Professor Verma not only contributed to promoting the Japanese language and culture in India but also devoted himself to deepening academic and cultural interactions between the two countries as a haiku researcher. In recognition of such contributions, the Government of Japan conferred **the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold Rays with Rosette** on Professor Verma in 1996.

The importance of Japan-India relations is increasing day by day, and reminiscing the achievements of Professor Verma provides a significant opportunity to reconfirm interest and improve understanding of Japan. I would like to thank JNU for organizing this special lecture.

[Japan-India Relations]

Japan-India relations have developed significantly in recent years. Although we are facing an unprecedented crisis of the COVID-19 pandemic, Japan and India have been moving forward and are continuously cooperating in various fields.

In the Japan-India summit telephone talk held on March 9th, both leaders agreed to continue making efforts to materialize the “Japan-India Special Strategic and Global Partnership.” Additionally, leaders of Japan, Australia, India, and the U.S. confirmed the importance of promoting the vision of a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific" in a summit video conference held on March 12th.

Next year, the year 2022, will be a special one for both countries as we celebrate the 70th anniversary of the establishment of Japan-India diplomatic relations. Looking ahead to the 70th year and the future beyond that, the two nations are aiming to further strengthen the bilateral cooperation and coordination in the Indo-Pacific region. To this end, greater expectations are shown towards highly proficient users of Japanese and young people with profound knowledge of the culture of both countries.

[Messages for Students]

Before I conclude my remarks, I would like to send my best wishes to the students who are striving to deepen their knowledge of Japan. I believe you will be pursuing your career in various sectors such as research, education, and business. With the Japanese language skills and the expertise in Japanese culture and society acquired at JNU, I sincerely hope that you will become the key players in the further development of Japan-India cooperative relations.

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought about a tremendous challenge for many of us, but it is my earnest wish for you to continue contributing to strengthening the bond between our countries.

[Closure]

Ladies and gentlemen,

Once again, I would like to express my gratitude for organizing this event. In closing, I am wishing the success of this lecture and the continued contribution of the Centre for Japanese Studies at JNU in the coming years.

Thank you very much.

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