

Address by H.E. Mr. Kenji Hiramatsu, Ambassador of Japan to India,
at the Reception to commemorate the Imperial Succession in Japan,
on 1 May 2019

H.E. Mrs. Sushma Swaraj, Minister of External Affairs, India

H.E. Dr. Manmohan Singh, Former Prime Minister of India

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

(Opening)

Yesterday, on 30th April, His Majesty the Emperor Akihito abdicated from the Throne after his reign of 30 years, marking the end of the Heisei era. Today, His Majesty the Emperor Naruhito acceded to the Throne. A new era titled “Reiwa” began under the new Emperor.

This historic succession to the Imperial Throne from a living Emperor is the first such instance taking place in approximately 200 years. Japan is now overwhelmed with gratitude for Their Majesties the Emperor Emeritus Akihito and Empress Emerita Michiko, who have always wished for the happiness of the

Japanese people and peace in the world. At the same time, the Japanese people are brimming with the joy of stepping into a new era under Their Majesties the Emperor Naruhito and Empress Masako.

I am honoured to host this reception tonight to celebrate this momentous day for Japan with our friends who have been contributing enormously towards strengthening the Japan-India relationship in various areas. I am delighted that you are joining us this evening.

(Japan-India relationship in Heisei)

During the Heisei era, the Japan-India relationship has deepened and expanded to an unprecedented scale.

An enduring symbol of this strong bilateral relationship is Their Majesties' visit to India in 2013. Their Majesties hoped that, and I quote, Their “visit will help to further deepen the mutual understanding between the peoples of our two countries and

further strengthen our bond of trust and friendship.” End of quote.

I believe their wish has become true.

During the Heisei era, Japan did not experience the violence of wars. However, there were many natural disasters that took place in Japan. People of Japan will never forget the heartwarming support extended by Indian people when the Great East Japan Earthquake hit Japan in 2011. His Majesty the Emperor Akihito, at the Commemoration Ceremony of the thirtieth anniversary of his reign in February this year, expressed his deepest heartfelt gratitude “to the people of other countries who showed great concern when Japan was in the midst of suffering and sorrow.”

(The dawn of Reiwa)

Today, we enter the new era of “Reiwa”. The name of “Reiwa” was taken from a passage from the “Manyoshu”, the oldest compilation of Japanese poetry of more than 1200 years ago. The meaning of “culture coming into being and flourishing when people bring their hearts and minds together in a beautiful

manner” is reflected in “Reiwa”.

His Majesty the Emperor Naruhito has been earnestly promoting international goodwill. His Majesty has visited nearly 50 countries so far. He made an official visit to India in March, 1987 and was full of admiration for the long history of India and its rich culture.

His Majesty is strongly interested in international affairs, especially in water issues. His Majesty gave a keynote lecture at the 8th World Water Forum last year, with the title of “Water to bring about prosperity, peace and happiness”.

Today, at the occasion of the First Audience after the Accession to the Throne, His Majesty the Emperor stated; I quote “Reflecting deeply on the course followed by His Majesty the Emperor Emeritus, I swear that I will act according to the Constitution and fulfill my responsibility as the symbol of the State and of the unity of the people of Japan, while always turning my thoughts to the people and standing with them. I sincerely pray for

the happiness of the people and the further development of the nation as well as the peace of the world.” End of quote. I listened to the words of His Majesty with a solemn heart.

(Closing)

I am proud of the Heisei era because Japan blossomed. It contributed proactively to world peace and prosperity and became a more caring society. Its technological and cultural finesse has been inspiring the people around the world. And I have a high hope that Reiwa era, for the world, will be the era for peace and happiness where people bring their hearts and minds together, and care for each other. I am very pleased if India and Japan can work hand in hand to make this hope a reality. I am happy to share this feeling with all of you tonight.

There is a Signing Book placed outside this hall. I would be grateful if you could sign this book in celebration of this Succession.

Let me conclude my address by expressing my compliments on the occasion of His Majesty the Emperor's accession to the Throne, and by thanking all of you for continuously extending your cooperation and friendship to us so graciously.

Thank you very much.

[End]