

Speech at the Birthday Celebration of His Majesty
The Emperor of Japan

6 December 2017

First of all, I would like to sincerely thank Mr. Matthew Cheung Kin-chung, Chief Secretary for Administration of the Government of the Hong Kong SAR, for being with us today as our guest of honour, representing the Hong Kong Government. I would also like to thank all of you for joining this gathering. His Majesty the Emperor of Japan is turning 84 years old on the coming 23rd of December. It is such an honour to celebrate His Majesty's birthday with all of you here.

His Majesty has again visited many locations both in Japan and overseas this year. He visited Vietnam and Thailand from 28th February to 6th March to further deepening mutual understanding and to meet the families of Japanese veterans, as well as to convey his condolences to the family of the former King of Thailand His Majesty Rama IX. In Japan, He visited Fukuoka Prefecture and Oita Prefecture in October to express his sympathy to the victims of the disaster areas affected by torrential rain in July. He then visited Kagoshima Prefecture in November to meet the residents of the Kuchinoerabu Island who were still suffering from a volcano eruption 2 years ago and expressed his wish for an early recovery of the area.

I would like to express my heartfelt blessing to Hong Kong for the 20th Anniversary of the Handover in 2017. This year, we again saw significant developments in the already close and cooperative relation between Japan and Hong Kong. For example, last year the number of Hong Kong travelers visiting Japan exceeded 1.84 million and the numbers is expected to exceed 2 million this year.

In addition, there were active visits by VIPs between Japan and Hong Kong. For example, from Japan to Hong Kong, Minister of Agricultural, Forestry and Fishery, Mr. Ken Saito made a visit in August. From Hong Kong to Japan, Financial Secretary Mr. Paul Chan Mo-po visited Japan in May. I hope that exchanges at high level will continue and the friendship

between Japan and Hong Kong will develop further in 2018.

Above all I would like to take this opportunity to specifically mention the “Japan Autumn Festival in Hong Kong”. The Japan Autumn Festival was held in October and November to show our appreciation to the Hong Kong society. We had the honour of having the company of Chief Executive, Mrs. Carrie Lam Cheng Yuet-ngor, at the grand opening of the Festival. Under the motto of “Work-out and Enjoy together by people of Hong Kong and Japan”, about 140 events of various categories were featured in the festival and we could not have succeeded without the co-operation of the supporting parties. Once again I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to everyone who offered their support in making this happen.

This year we have also seen the progress in the relation between Japan and China. At the G20 Hamburg Summit in July and APEC Vietnam Leader’s meeting in November, Prime Minister of Japan Mr. Shinzo ABE and President of China, Mr. XI Jinping had opportunities to hold discussions together respectively. PM also had a discussion with Premier of China Dr. Li Keqiang during the ASEAN-related Summit meetings in the Philippines in November, which helped to further consolidate the development of the relationship between Japan and China. This year is the 45th anniversary of the normalization of diplomatic relations between Japan and China, and 2018 will be the 40th anniversary of the conclusion of the Treaty of Peace and Friendship between Japan and China. It is very important for Japan and China to share the responsibility for the peace and stability of the region as well as the prosperity of the international community. Therefore it is extremely important to strengthen the ties between two countries. The Consulate-General of Japan in Hong Kong, too, will make utmost efforts in contributing towards further development of the bilateral relation.

Thank you very much for your attention. I think it is time for food and conversation and to enjoy the rest of the evening.

His Majesty always pays great attention to the development of the

primary industry throughout Japan. Following his kind thoughts, this year again, we have generous support from 16 local governments of Japan such as Fukushima Prefecture that is resiliently recovering from the Great East Japan Earthquake in 2011, and Kumamoto Prefecture that is on a rapid course of recovery from the earthquake last year, as well as other local governments from Iwate, Tochigi, Fukui, Hyogo, Tottori, Kagawa, Fukuoka, Saga, Miyazaki, Kagoshima, Okinawa, Wakayama, Aichi as well as Chiba City, and the Japan Chicken Association who are offering their special and famous delicacies and sake and introducing their local products.

And, I wish for the longevity of his Majesty the Emperor of Japan, for even further development in the friendship between Japan and Hong Kong, and for a bright future for Japan-China relations.

(In Cantonese)我[口地]祝大家身体健康，幸福快樂。

(In Japanese)皆様の御健康と御多幸をお祈りいたします。

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