

# Anniversary of Birth of His Majesty the Emperor of Japan

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## The Imperial Family

### Status of the Emperor

The Emperor shall be the symbol of the State and of the unity of the people, deriving his position from the will of the people with whom resides sovereign power." (Article 4) The Emperor appoints the Prime Minister as designated by the Diet and the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court as designated by the Cabinet. (Article 6) "With the advice and approval of the Cabinet, he performs such acts in matters of state as the promulgation of laws and treaties, convocation of the Diet, proclamation of general elections, awarding of honors, etc." (Article 7)

### The Emperor and Empress

His Majesty Emperor Akihito, who acceded to the throne on January 7, 1989, upon the death of Emperor Hirohito (posthumously Emperor Showa), was born in Tokyo on December 23, 1933. He is the eldest son of the Emperor Showa and Empress Dowager Nagako. Following his graduation from Gakushuin Upper Secondary School in 1952, he studied at the Department of Politics in the Faculty of Letters and Economics of Gakushuin University until 1956. In addition, he received private lectures on a number of subjects by eminent professionals, including the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court.

In 1953 the Emperor (then Crown Prince Akihito) made a six-month tour of 14 countries in North America and Western Europe. The tour centered around his visit to London as Emperor Showa's representative at the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II.

In April 1959 the Emperor married Michiko Shoda, the eldest daughter of Hidesaburo Shoda, former president of a flour manufacturing company. She was born in Tokyo on October 20, 1934. The Shodas are a scholarly family that has produced two recipients of the Order of Cultural Merit, the highest academic honor conferred by the Emperor upon distinguished scholars. In 1953 she entered the University of the Sacred Heart, specializing in English literature in the Department of Foreign Languages and Literature. At her graduation ceremony, she was valedictorian of her class.

The Imperial Household Council, headed by the Prime Minister and composed of representatives of the imperial family, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the President of the House of Councillors, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, and others,

gave their unanimous consent to the marriage, which was warmly welcomed by the nation.

Since their marriage, Their Majesties have paid official visits to 37 countries at the invitation of their governments. They have enjoyed listening to talks and reports, or having discussions with scholars, artists, and other experts in various fields as well as young people, such as the Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers. Their Majesties also have attended various national and international ceremonies and meetings held in Tokyo and other parts of the country. In addition, they made it a rule to travel out of the capital several times a year to observe local affairs and to come into direct contact with all sorts of people in various parts of the country. They often visited social welfare institutions, industrial establishments, and academic institutes; they also attended various art exhibitions and charity concerts. In September 1987 the then Crown Prince took over the duties of the falling Emperor Showa, which included the opening of the Diet and with the future Empress Michiko, attending the autumn session of the National Sports Festival, National Arbor Day and other such functions.

Holding his first audience for representatives of the people two days after ascending the throne, the Emperor vowed to fulfill his responsibilities. "I pledge I will always be at one with the people and uphold the Constitution," he said. The Emperor indicated he will follow the footsteps of his father and keep in mind the late Emperor's wish to be with the people. Expressing his hopes for further progress in the nation's fortune, world peace, and the welfare of mankind, the Emperor indicated he will adhere to his status as the symbol of the people's unity, as provided by the Constitution.

### Emperor Showa and the Empress Dowager

Emperor Showa was born in Tokyo on April 29, 1901, and died on January 7, 1989. He reigned just over 62 years after ascending to the throne on December 25, 1926. His life of 87 years and eight months made him Japan's longest-living emperor. He was also the longest-reigning emperor in Japanese history.

Her Majesty the Empress Dowager Nagako, the eldest daughter of the late Prince Kuni, was born in Tokyo on March 6, 1903. She studied at Gakushuin Girls' School. She is very fond of music and Japanese-style painting and is considered an accomplished artist in both fields.

After her marriage in January 1924, she carried out her duties as empress until the last year of Emperor Showa's life. Since January 1987 she no

longer attends official occasions for reasons of health.

### The Crown Prince and Crown Princess

His Imperial Highness Crown Prince Naruhito (also known as Prince Hiro), the eldest son of Their Majesties, was born in Tokyo on February 23, 1960. He graduated from the Department of History in the Faculty of Letters of Gakushuin University in March 1982 and went on to take the first part of the doctoral course in history at the School of Humanities of Gakushuin University, specializing in the medieval history of Japan.

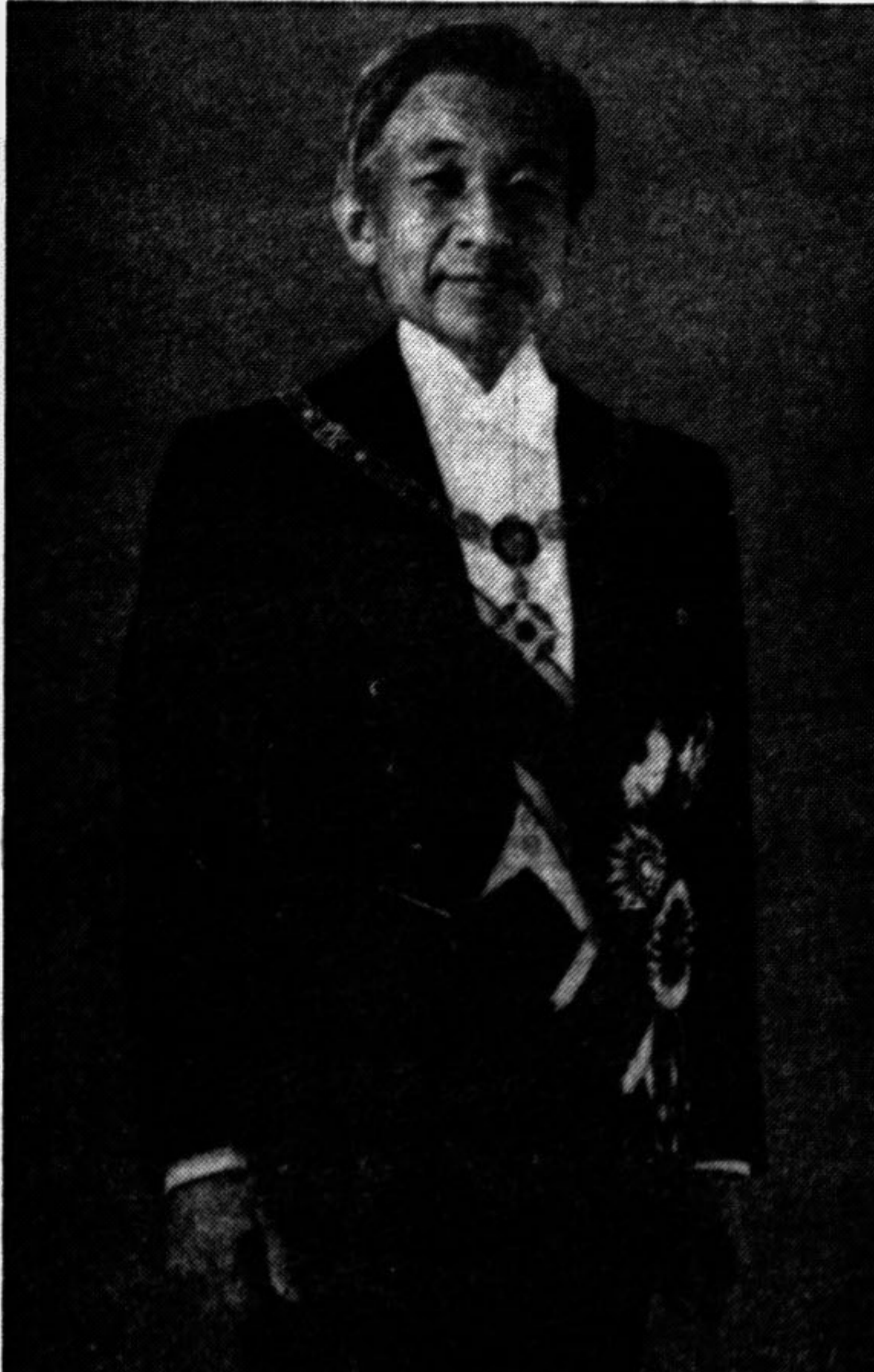
In July 1983 he went to England and entered the Graduate School of the Oxford University the following October. At Merton College he studied commodity transport on the Thames in the latter half of the eighteenth century. He took the opportunity of his vacation to travel throughout Europe, and he visited various places in North America on his way home to Japan in October 1985. After his return to Japan he resumed his studies at the Graduate School of Gakushuin University and in March 1988 he obtained his M.A. Since then he has attended the University as a researcher studying the medieval history of Japan.

The court rituals marking his coming-of-age were held at the Imperial Palace on February 23, 1980. Since then he has taken part in various imperial functions and officially attends many events. He has also made official visits to many countries. While his father was away on a state visit to the United States in October 1987, during the illness of Emperor Showa, he temporarily took over the Emperor's duties.

On June 9, 1993, Crown Prince Naruhito married Masako Owada, the eldest daughter of Hisashi Owada, a senior official in the ministry of Foreign Affairs. Crown Princess Masako was born in Tokyo on December 9, 1963, and, as the daughter of a diplomat, grew up in several countries, including the former Soviet Union and the United States.

Masako attended kindergarten in Moscow, elementary school in New York and Tokyo, and secondary school in Tokyo and Boston. In 1985 she graduated from Harvard University with a degree in economics, after which she did graduate work at the Faculty of Law of the University of Tokyo before entering the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in April 1987.

While with the foreign service, she attended classes at Balliol College, Oxford University, returning to Tokyo in 1990 to assume a post in the Second North America Division, North American Affairs Bureau of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, where she worked until shortly before her marriage.



His Majesty Emperor Akihito

## Japan's ODA Principle and Charter

ON October 6, 1954 after joining the Colombo Plan, Japan had launched its technical cooperation programme, a variety of ODA (Official Development Assistance). Incredible though it may sound, a few years prior to that, Japan itself was a recipient of aid from the United States and the World Bank aid that it had needed during its difficult years after the Second World War. Japan no longer is a recipient of aid. Rather it is the second largest economic power and the topmost donor country in today's world.

The philosophies and objectives of Japan's economic cooperation is guided by two factors: humanitarian and moral considerations and the recognition of interdependence among nations. Japan wants to ensure its security and prosperity in a peaceful world and it wants to contribute to that process through assistance to the developing countries. Japan further recognizes the importance of interdependence among the developing countries since it is able to secure national resources through trade with these countries. Therefore Japan considers it essential to maintain friendly relations with developing countries for Japan's own economic growth. Another norm of Japan's foreign aid is to support the self-help efforts of the recipient country.

For ensuring effective and efficient implementation of ODA projects, Japan government adopted the ODA principles as:

- 1) Tandem pursuance of environmental conservation and development.
- 2) Abstention from any use of ODA for military purposes or for aggravation of international conflicts.
- 3) Watching trends in recipient countries' military expenditures and ensuring appropriate priorities in the allocation of resources for their socio-economic development.
- 4) Promotion of democratization, basic human rights and freedoms and introduction of market economy.

These principles are followed in letter and spirit by all of Japan's aid-handling agencies including JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency). While utilizing Japan's ODA, emphasis is given on the following priority areas.

- (1) Basic human needs
  - (2) Human resources development
  - (3) Socio-infrastructure improvement
- For a balanced development

### Flow of Japan's Bilateral ODA to Bangladesh (1988-1992)

Year	Grant		Loan Aid		Total
	Grant	Technical Cooperation	Total	Gross Net	
1988	118.71	15.01	133.72	243.10	208.24
1989	135.59	16.72	152.31	258.70	218.29
1990	131.66	19.98	151.64	271.01	221.94
1991	122.41	22.11	144.51	43.10	-29.53
1992	163.59	28.47	192.06	59.45	-28.63
Total	671.96	102.29	774.25	875.36	590.31

### Net Disbursements to Bangladesh by DAC Countries and Multilateral Aid Institutions - 1990

Bilateral Total 1,103.02 Million \$				
Country	ODA	USA	Canada	UK
Japan	373.57 M\$ (33.9%)	169.00 M\$ (15.3%)	102.30 M\$ (9.3%)	97.30 M\$ (8.8%)
Germany	77.27 M\$ (7.0%)	283.57 M\$ (25.7%)		
Multilateral total 1,004.63 Million \$				
IDA	ADB	EDF	Others	
449.00 M\$ (44.7%)	303.86 M\$ (30.2%)	105.44 M\$ (10.5%)	146.33 M\$ (14.6%)	

of society. Japan has extended the ODA facility for a larger participation of women in development. In addition to this, the global issues such as environment, population and AIDS are being taken care of under the Japanese ODA system.

### Position as a Donor

Assistance rendered by Japan to the developing countries through JICA, constitutes a leading part of Japan's ODA (consisting of grant aid, technical cooperation, loan aid and multilateral aid). In terms of the aggregate assistance rendered through different windows, Japan ranked first among the 21 aid-giving member countries, known as DAC (Development Assistance Committee) in 1989, 1991, 1992 and 1993. ODA's shares stood at \$10.95 billion in 1991 and 11.15 billion in 1992, and 11.25 in 1993, which is the highest in the OECD.

### Asia as a Recipient

As one of the recipients of Japanese aid, Asian countries now rank the highest. For four consecutive years beginning from 1989, Asia has received the largest share of Japan's bilateral aid, the amount soaring to 59.3% during the first three years and still higher up to 65.1% in 1992 and 59.5% in 1993. This pattern is primarily a reflection of Japan's close historical, geographic, economic and political links with the region as well as of the fact that Japan has closer ties of interdependence with its Asian neighbours than with the developed countries of the world. Japan's emphasis on Asia in matters of aid allocation is also attributable to the development needs of this region holding several low income countries with large populations. Asia is not only home to about 60% of the world population, but also around 90% of the continent's population live in low income countries like China, India, Bangladesh and Pakistan, desperately trying to develop themselves.

### Bangladesh as a Recipient

As for Bangladesh, Japan's ODA has been a continuous flow since 1973. In 1992 alone, it disbursed a total amount of 192.06 million by way of grant aid and technical cooperation. In 1989 and 1990, Japan topped the list of bilateral donors and loan aids to Bangladesh.

## MESSAGE

On behalf of the Government of Japan, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the people of Bangladesh who join us in the celebration of His Majesty Emperor Akihito's sixty-fourth birthday.

The year was a memorable one in the history of Japan-Bangladesh relations. On the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries, Prime Minister Her Excellency Sheikh Hasina Wajed visited Japan in July this year at the invitation of Japanese Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto. During her six-day visit, H.E. Sheikh Hasina had an official meeting with the Japanese Minister to discuss our bilateral relations, as well as regional and international issues, in a cordial atmosphere.

Both leaders reaffirmed their intention to bolster the existing friendly relationship between Dhaka and Tokyo, intensifying cooperation in various fields. The honorable Prime Minister Hasina's visit contributed substantially to the deepening of bilateral and political dialogues.

In the field of development assistance, Japan, over the past few years, has emerged as one of the largest Official Development Assistance (ODA) providers in the world. Japan is currently the largest bilateral donor to Bangladesh, extending assistance to all areas of strategic importance, including basic infrastructure, agriculture, rural development, human resources development, disaster prevention, and basic human needs.

On June 27, the Exchange of Notes were signed for three loan assistance projects: the Jamuna Bridge Roads Project, the Paksey Bridge Construction Project (II) and the Narayanganj-Narsindil Flood Protection and Irrigation Project (Engineering Service).

As to grant assistance in our current fiscal year, we have signed a total of five Exchange of Notes which cover 5 projects and programmes: Eradication of Polioyelets, Supply of Equipment for BTY, Improvement of Weather Warning Services Related to National Disasters, Reconstruction of Small and Medium Bridges in Dhaka-Chittagong Highway and Debt Relief. I am delighted to note that the amount of assistance has greatly improved compared with last year.

Our assistance to NGOs in Bangladesh has also increased. In 1997, substantial funding was provided to six NGOs for their relief and rehabilitation projects in districts affected by cyclones in May and September. Furthermore, I would like to highlight a Japanese people's initiative at grassroots level. The citizens of my hometown Namerikawa held a fund-raising campaign with the slogan "Let's Build a School in Bangladesh" in order to assist the reconstruction of a school building which was damaged by the May 1996 tornado. The whole-hearted participation in this campaign of the people, including school children, at grassroots level helped build a bridge between the people of Japan and Bangladesh.

Regarding trade and investment, the visit of the Prime Minister of Bangladesh to Japan in July accompanied by a delegation of Bangladeshi businessmen had positive effects on the readiness of Japanese business circles to expand business transactions with Bangladesh.

Following the visit, the 9th meeting of the Bangladesh-Japan Joint Committee for Commercial and Economic Cooperation was held in October in Tokyo to seek ways to further promote economic relations in both private sectors. In addition, a number of Japanese business delegations recently visited Bangladesh to evaluate prospects of doing business here.

Trade and investment between our two countries have steadily increased over the past years, and are expanding to the extent that Japan has become one of the largest importers of Bangladeshi products in Asia. I would like to remind people in Bangladesh that the Japanese market is open and fully responsive to efforts by Bangladeshi manufacturers to improve the quality of their products and pertinent services.

Last, but not least, I should place importance on the growing interest in the cultural and educational exchanges between our two nations. The

government of Japan, the Japan Foundation, and other organizations offer a wide range of programmes to promote awareness and understanding in this particular area. In November this year, a Japanese music ensemble called "Tablatura" was dispatched to this country through one of the Japan Foundation's programmes to introduce their original music to Bangladeshi citizens. The five members of the group and a guest vocalist performed at the main auditorium in the Bangladesh National Museum. The event drew more than 800 local people and I still hear positive comments about the concert from many of my friends here. The Japan Foundation also participated in the 8th Bangladesh Biennale, which was inaugurated by H.E. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in November this year, by sending two promising artists and a commissioner from Japan.

I am delighted to mention that this year also marked the 25th anniversary of Japanese language education in Bangladesh. The number of Japanese learners has increased tremendously over the last quarter century and it is they who are not only contributing to a better bilateral relationship, but also playing important leading roles in various fields of the Bangladeshi community.

One of the contributing factors to our closer relationship is the growing number of young people taking an interest in studying in Japan. The Japanese government selected 111 Monbusho Scholarship students from Bangladesh for FY 1996/97. I was impressed that many of them were ambitious to help develop their own country with the knowledge and experiences they expect to gain from Japan.

As I believe that sharing each other's languages, customs, and ideas will in turn create smoother relations between countries, I will do my utmost to further enhance the capacity of cultural and educational exchanges in the future.

In closing, as the history of Japan-Bangladesh relations is entering a new phase in the wake of the 25th anniversary, it is more important than ever for both countries to cooperate in all the fields mentioned above in a fair and peaceful manner. Since no country can survive without help from others in today's world, I believe that a fruitful outcome of our cooperation will be beneficial not only to Bangladesh and Japan, but also to the rest of the world. Again, I would like to convey my heartfelt appreciation to all of you in this country who have been invaluable in fostering friendship and goodwill between the peoples of our two nations.



Yoshikazu Kaneko  
Ambassador of Japan to Bangladesh

Heartiest felicitations to His Royal Highness Akihito, the Emperor of Japan on the Occasion of his Birthday



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