

Speech by H.E. NAKASONE Yasutaka, State Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan

Distinguished guests, Kuzu Zangpo La! I am NAKASONE Yasutaka, State Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan.

Today, I am here to offer congratulatory remarks at the reception commemorating the 40th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Japan and Bhutan. I would like to take this opportunity to express my heartfelt gratitude to all those who have been working regularly to further strengthen Japan-Bhutan relations.

Beginning with the agricultural development assistance provided by “Dasho NISHIOKA”, Japan and Bhutan have steadily expanded cooperation based on mutual trust and friendship. The warm exchanges between the Imperial Family of Japan and the Royal Family of Bhutan symbolize the bonds between our two peoples. The visit of Their Majesties the King and Queen of Bhutan to Japan in 2011, especially the visit to the regions affected by the Great East Japan Earthquake remains deeply engraved in the hearts of the Japanese people to this day.

I am delighted to see that high-level exchanges between our two nations have become even more active during this 40th anniversary. Starting with the visit of His Excellency Dasho Tobgay, Prime Minister of Bhutan, to Japan, Her Imperial Highness Princess Akiko of Mikasa and my predecessor, former State-Minister KUNIMITSU Ayano have also visited Bhutan.

Japan has been promoting community-based cooperation in various fields, including healthcare, climate change, disaster prevention and human resource development in Bhutan. We remain determined to pass on the aspirations of our predecessors to the next generation. We will continue to collaborate with Bhutan to realize a “Free and Open Indo-Pacific”.

People-to-people exchanges are the driving force that will shape the future of our nations. I hope that the ongoing “Japan Week” in Bhutan will help strengthen exchanges and interactions among youths.

I conclude my remarks by sincerely wishing for the continued prosperity of Bhutan, as well as the health and happiness of the people of Bhutan. Kadrin Chey La.