

PRIME MINISTER TAKEO FUKUDA'S ADDRESS

AT THE DINNER IN HIS HONOR OFFERED

BY PRIME MINISTER LEE KUAN YEW

OF THE REPUBLIC OF SINGAPORE

Your Excellency Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew

and Mrs. Lee, Excellencies, Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is a source of great pleasure for my wife and me to realize our longstanding wish to visit Singapore, thanks to the kind invitation you have extended to us. I also wish to express our profound appreciation for the many courtesies and the warm hospitality offered to us and to the members of our party at this sumptuous dinner this evening.

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On the occasion of Prime Minister Lee's recent visit to Japan, I had the opportunity to extend him our welcome at a modest dinner. It has recently come to my knowledge that, at that time, he carefully watched what dishes I seemed to prefer, so that in the event we had a Japanese meal tonight, he could ensure that my favourite foods would be included. I am deeply impressed and moved by this thoughtfulness and consideration on the part of Prime Minister Lee.

Prime Minister Lee did indeed ask which I would prefer, a Japanese meal or a Chinese meal. I expressed my preference for Chinese cooking at this dinner because I am sure that I would long regret missing the opportunity to taste genuine Chinese cuisine here in Singapore. Thanks to the Prime Minister's kind hospitality, my wife and I really enjoyed the cuisine.

The multitude of high-rise dwellings, the clean streets ringed in greenery and, above all, the vigorous energy of the people of Singapore at work, all of which I have observed on my way to this Guest House, following my arrival, have left a deep and lasting impression on me.

Needless to say, these are the fruits of Prime Minister Lee's outstanding leadership, one feature of which is his remarkable capacity to grasp the future and to provide for it as I recounted earlier, as well as of the ability and industriousness of the Singapore people. I wish to avail myself of this occasion to express my heartfelt respect to Prime Minister Lee for having achieved the present prosperity for Singapore through his unceasing efforts, during the eighteen long years since he assumed his post in 1959, toward developing Singapore's industries and improving the livelihood of the people.

Prime Minister Lee has at times stated that there is much to learn from Japan's modern development and the assiduousness of the Japanese people. I believe that there are also many things we can learn from Singapore. To cite only a few examples, I wish to point to his policies that have brought about stable prices and well developed housing. Moreover, there is a point on which I am clearly surpassed by Prime Minister Lee. In the election held a few weeks ago, I managed, after vigorous and strenuous efforts, to retain a majority in the House of Councillors. If the achievement of the People's Action Party, led by Prime Minister Lee, are graded at 100 points, it follows that all I have been able to obtain was the pass mark of 50 points.

When I met with Prime Minister Lee in Tokyo some three months ago, I was again deeply struck by the breadth and loftiness of his vision and the firmness of his beliefs. Prime Minister Lee has already visited our country seven times, and I believe he is one of the ASEAN leaders who is most familiar with Japan. Ever since I assumed the post of Prime Minister, it has been my strong wish to visit the countries of Southeast Asia, whose relations with us constitute a main pillar of Japanese diplomacy. I have now been accorded the opportunity to confer with ASEAN leaders at Kuala Lumpur and, thereafter, to visit individually the ASEAN nations and Burma. It is with the greatest pleasure that I look forward, on this occasion, in continuation of our meeting in Tokyo, to a further

candid and open exchange of views with Prime Minister Lee on the numerous problems facing the world and Asia.

Our two countries share a common base in that they are both seafaring nations, blessed with few natural resources, who must depend on industrialization and trade for their economic development. A strong nationalistic trend has appeared of late in various problems related to the international economy. I am concerned that should we leave this state of affairs unattended it will have profound political and social consequences in the whole world. It is my conviction that, under such circumstances, our two countries should jointly exert their utmost efforts for the maintenance of free trade and the freedom of the seas. I feel greatly encouraged to find that Prime Minister Lee shares my concern in these regards.

I believe that the mutual dependence between Japan and ASEAN will continue to increase under existing world conditions. I also had the occasion to confer closely with ASEAN leaders in Kuala Lumpur, and I wish to state here again tonight that my country is determined to extend active support to ASEAN intra-regional cooperation for the sake of the peaceful development of Asia.

Moreover, I intend to exert efforts to develop close relations between Japan and the ASEAN nations, by achieving heart-to-heart communication, not merely in

the sphere of trade and economic cooperation, but also in the fields of learning and culture.

This has been for us a short but extremely pleasurable stay in Singapore. I wish to thank you again for the warm hospitality you have so kindly extended to myself, my wife and the members of my party.

In concluding my remarks, I wish to propose a toast to His Excellency the President of the Republic of Singapore and Your Excellency the Prime Minister of Singapore, wishing you continued good health and happiness, and to the greater prosperity and well-being of the people of Singapore.

“Kampai!”

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