

Prominent scholars,

Distinguished students, Ladies and gentlemen,

It's my greatest pleasure to congratulate the successful opening of the Japan Cultural Event 2019 at the Zayed University. Just now, when I came into this event venue, I was so fascinated by this beautifully harmonized atmosphere, completely Japanization setup. In addition, some of students said to me, konichiwa, arigato, hello and thank you in Japanese. Honestly speaking, I was a little bit confused, where am I? I felt as if I were in Tokyo at this very moment. So, I think I may make my speech in Japanese language.

Today is very very special for me to make a speech. Next week, Japan celebrates our new imperial era. On May 1, His Imperial Highness the Crown Prince will ascend to the Imperial throne, becoming the new emperor. The new era will be beginning from May 1 forward. So, today's speech commemorates the final opportunity for me to speak in public in this current era. Thank you very much for providing me such a memorable opportunity. I would extend my heartfelt gratitude to the Zayed University and its Japan Club.

In Japan, naming the era has been the long-standing tradition of the Imperial Household for more than 1,000 years. The new era is named as "Reiwa", translated into "beautiful harmony". It means peaceful culture is flourishing when people bring their hearts and minds harmoniously in a beautiful manner.

This is very Japanese sense. A word harmony inspires us a Japanese moral pillar. When Japan established its first constitution more than a thousand years ago, the first sentence of the first Article said “harmony is prime importance of virtues”. So, harmony is Japanese DNA.

Ladies and gentlemen, one of the most important Japanese aesthetic sense is to respect the beauty of nature, especially beautifully changing in four seasons. Today, I hope you can feel the essence of Japanese aesthetic sense through deeply experiencing both traditional and modern cultures, especially tea ceremony, flower arrangement, kendo marshal-arts and so on. For example, tea ceremony is an artistic form incorporating traditional Japanese customs, pure and beauty. An important element is a shared sense of elegant manners-and-etiquette simply exchanging between host’s hospitality and guest’s gratitude. Flower arrangement is embracing only the core element of beauties of flowers, based on simple but rigid elegant rules, harmonizing nature’s virtue. Kendo is often depicted that it begins with paying courtesy, and ends by paying courtesy, prioritizing manner of sincerity even though it is marshal arts.

So, commonality of Japanese aesthetics is elegant simplicity. Today’s harmonious atmosphere encourages the coordination of various elegant aesthetics. This can be called as “beautiful harmony,” which is eventually the name of new imperial era beginning next week in Japan. Today, just before opening the new era in Japan, I’m very happy to share the Japanese hearts and minds, “beautiful harmony,” with those who love Japanese culture in the Zayed University.

Thank you very much, and please enjoy the Japanese culture today.