



PERDANA LIBRARY
PERDANA LEADERSHIP FOUNDATION
NEWSPAPER CLIPPING

Newspaper	New Straits Times
Date	26/4/2011

Look West to Malaysia, says outgoing envoy

2011/04/26-NST
By R. Sittamparam

With the challenges of globalisation, I am telling our people to look West to Malaysia, in widening their horizon and to become more open to the outside world. —
Masahiko Horie

KUALA LUMPUR: Outgoing Japanese Ambassador to Malaysia Masahiko Horie's love for Malaysia has transformed the 64-year-old diplomat into a promoter of all things Malaysian among his countrymen.

Horie said, on returning home as adviser to the Japanese foreign minister, he would continue his links with Malaysia by heaping praise about the country, especially the internationalised and open Malaysian public.

"I feel it is time for the Japanese people to change from being a homogenous people to an internationalised people like the multi-racial and English proficient Malaysians.

"With the challenges of globalisation, I am telling our people to look West to Malaysia, in widening their horizon and to become more open to the outside world."

Bidding farewell to reporters at his official residence here yesterday, Horie said it was his aspiration to help stimulate university students in Japan to be internationally oriented.

"During my three years and seven months tenure here, I never missed a chance to promote this aspect among our students whenever I returned to Japan. Incidentally, Malaysia is now a most preferred holiday destination among Japan's high school finishing students.

"Malaysia has also climbed to the top of the list of countries, that includes Hawaii, popular among Japanese corporate figures seeking to set up a retirement home since 2006."

Horie said his love for Malaysia's unique diversity of race, religion and culture was sparked in 1983 while visiting Asean countries including Malaysia as a desk officer with Japan's Official Development Assistance (ODA).

"I was truly overjoyed when 24 years later, I was appointed the ambassador to Malaysia.

"I was especially happy to see the fruits of my work with ODA in developing the energy and agricultural sectors in Sabah and Sarawak.

"I was, therefore, extremely touched by the overwhelming support of the Malaysian

public, private, sector and government in coming to the aid of victims of Japan's recent triple disaster."

Horie said despite the devastating effects of the triple disaster, Japan hoped to go beyond mere reconstruction to create an even better Japan for the future in light of the solidarity extended by the international community.

He called on Malaysians who had plans to visit Japan not to cancel their plans due to the radioactive scare caused by the tsunami-hit nuclear power plant.

"Except for the 30km radius of Fukushima prefecture, the rest of Japan is free of radioactivity with food at restaurants and shops carefully screened."

On Japan's support for Malaysia's march towards developed nation status by 2020, Horie said Japanese companies would continue investing especially in the green technology, energy and education sectors.

"Japan is currently involved in efforts to make Putrajaya and Cyberjaya more environment-friendly with discussions now underway.

"The Malaysia-Japan International Institute of Technology (MJIT), which is a culmination of Malaysia's Look East Policy, will open its doors this September with an initial intake of 225 students pursuing courses in machinery and electrical and electronics.

"With 250 teaching staff, including 18 professors from Japan, MJIT will become a regional centre of excellence for Japanese-style engineering education."