

**Japan's Rapid Economic Growth Continues To Inspire Malaysia - Agong
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From Rosmah Mohamad Salam**

TOKYO, Oct 3 (Bernama) -- Yang di-Pertuan Agong Tuanku Abdul Halim Mu'adzam Shah said Japan's rapid economic growth and its outstanding position among the world community continued to be an inspiration to Malaysia.

The King said the beauty of the "Land of the Rising Sun", rich in culture and tradition amidst modernisation, had always made Japan an interesting country to visit.

Tuanku Abdul Halim said he was impressed with Japan's unique development, modernisation and technological advancement.

"Although the Japanese people have faced difficult challenges following the devastating earthquake in the country's north-east last year, I believe Japan will remain competitive, strong and outstanding."

The King was speaking at a state banquet hosted by Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko at the Imperial Palace Wednesday night.

Also gracing the function was Raja Permaisuri Agong, Tuanku Hajah Haminah. The Malaysian King and Queen are on a five-day state visit to Japan.

Tuanku Abdul Halim also noted the history of close Malaysia-Japan relations since diplomatic relations were established between the two countries 55 years ago.

The King said the relations had grown with positive developments and substantive cooperation in various fields including trade, investment, education, tourism, human resource development, intercultural exchange, and science and technology.

On the Look East Policy, the King said since the policy was launched by Malaysia 30 years ago, about 15,000 Malaysians had been sent for studies or training at the universities or companies in Japan.

Tuanku Abdul Halim said the policy had also resulted in many cultural and youth exchange programmes between the two countries like the 'jenesys' and 'kizuna' which fostered friendship, understanding and unity.

"I am confident that the friendship established between our youths will ensure continuous harmonious relations between the two countries in the future."

Tuanku Abdul Halim also fondly recalled his meeting with Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko in London during the Diamond Jubilee celebration of the reign of Queen Elizabeth II.

"I also still remember Your Majesties' visit to Malaysia three times, the first time as Crown and Crown Princess of Japan in 1970 and then as Emperor and Empress in 1991 and 2006.

"I am confident that my state visit to Japan will further strengthen the friendship and cooperation that have been established between our two countries," the King said.

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