

*Speech by H.E. Dr. Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono,
President of the Republic of Indonesia,
at the State Banquet hosted by
His Majesty the Emperor of Japan
Tokyo, 27 November 2006*

*Their Majesties The Emperor and Empress of Japan,
Distinguished Guests
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

I thank God Almighty that my wife and I have been given the opportunity to be able to meet Their Majesties the Emperor and Empress of Japan. Our meeting this evening is really a joyous event as it is held in an atmosphere full of friendship, brotherhood and warmth.

Please allow me to extend our heartfelt gratitude to Your Majesties for the warm welcome and hospitality extended to my wife and I and the delegation from our country.

*Your Majesties, Emperor and Empress of Japan
Distinguished Guests,*

My visit today is my second to Japan, the first being held in June 2005. During this visit, I have again felt the warmth of friendship that exists between our two countries, and I am confident that during this visit the relations between Indonesia and Japan will be strengthened and become closer. Indonesia truly respects Japan, which is a country known for its hard work, dedication, and perseverance. For Indonesia, Japan has always been the most important partner and, as our main trading partner and source of investment, Japan has played an important role in the development of Indonesia's economy.

There are many Indonesian students studying here in Japan today, and this is a reflection of the close ties that exist between our two nations. Another reflection of this, and one that Indonesia will never forget, is the help and support provided by the people and the government of Japan when Indonesia suffered from natural calamities, and especially during the earthquake and tsunamis in Aceh, North Sumatra, Central Java and Yogyakarta. For all your generosity and kindness, Your Majesty, we, the people of Indonesia, extend our deepest appreciation and gratitude.

In the year 2008 Indonesia and Japan will commemorate 50 years of diplomatic relations. We hope we can learn important lessons from the past to guide us in trying to manage the future with optimism and based on equality and mutual respect.

Indonesia appreciates the role that Japan plays in the region, which is very important and strategic. Japan is a major economic power in Asia, with a dynamic people, and has always been active in promoting world peace and security.

The ongoing development of Indonesia and Japan are deeply interlinked within a strategic partnership, and as this partnership grows stronger, regional peace and stability will also be enhanced.

*Your Majesties,
Distinguished Guests
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

The cool breeze and beautiful colours of the fall season have made our visit to Japan very enjoyable. We were also pleased to note that Your Majesties have just welcomed a new member to the Imperial family, a first grandson. On this wonderful occasion, my wife and I, as well as the Indonesian people, wish to convey our sincere congratulations and felicitations on the birth of Your Majesties' grandson in September 2006. We pray for his health and happiness. We hope and trust many more years of succeeding to the Imperial throne and wish the people of Japan all prosperity in the future..

Again, I wish to convey our utmost gratitude and appreciation to Your Majesties and to all the people of Japan for the warm welcome and hospitality rendered to our delegation. We wish for Your Majesties' health and happiness and we also wish for peace and prosperity for the people of Japan.

Finally, allow me to invite Your Majesties and other distinguished delegates to raise your glasses and join in a toast for Your Majesties' health and happiness and for friendship and cooperation between our two countries.

Thank you.