

Remarks by Ambassador H.E. Mr Sibi George
at “Celebrations Traditions: India-Japan Saree Festival”
at Embassy of India, Tokyo, 29 January 2024

H.E. Mr. Akira Yoshii, Hon’ble Member of House Councillors.

H.E. Mr. Taro Honda, Hon’ble Member of House of Representatives.

H.E. Mr. Yasushi Katsume, Hon’ble Member of House of Representatives.

Mr. Hideyuki Kanbayashi, Director General, Department of Commerce, Labor and Tourism, Kyoto Prefectural Government.

Mr. Susumu Takehana, Chairman, Japan Textile Dyeing Joint Association.

Ms. Yumi Katsura, President, International Co. Ltd.

Ladies and gentlemen, distinguished guests,

A very Good evening to you all!!

I am delighted to be part of this “Celebrating Traditions : India-Japan Saree Festival” being organized today at the Embassy, an event dedicated to promoting the exquisite artistry and cultural heritage encapsulated in the Kyoto Yuzen saree, and to deepen further cultural relations between India and Japan.

Friends,

For an Indian, Saree represents much more than a costume or a fashion statement. It indeed is an expression of feminine grace and elegance. It is also a manifestation of India’s proud civilization. The

origins of saree can be traced back to Indus Valley Civilization. Saree is a living example of India's continuous civilization spanning over thousands of years.

The saree has come a long way since then and has undergone many changes. The fabric, colours, and designs have all changed over time, and today, there are numerous variations of sarees available in India. In addition to its cultural significance, the saree is also a symbol of diversity. India is a land of diverse cultures and traditions, and each region has its unique style of saree. For example, the Banarasi saree from Uttar Pradesh, the Kanjeevaram saree from Tamil Nadu, and the Bandhani saree from Gujarat, Chanderi from Madhya Pradesh, Phulkari from Punjab, Bhagalpuri Saree from Bihar, Pohmpally from Telangana, Mangalagiri from Andhra Pradesh, Mysore Silk from Karnataka, Leheria from Rajasthan, Lal Par Saree from West Bengal, Kaasta Saree from Maharashtra, Sambalpur/Bomkai from Odisha, Meghela Chador from Assam, and traditional Kerala saree Mundum Neryathum are some of the popular types of sarees in India, to mention a few. Its an endless list of diversity. Its like our ODOP (One District One Product) that we are now working on. Each State and each region has its own products.

Saree weavers all across India exemplify the meticulous attention to detail, precision, and elegance that Kyoto is renowned for. It is more than a garment; it is a canvas where artisans pour their hearts and souls into every intricate design, every vivid color. Each thread, each brushstroke, is a testament to the dedication and passion of the artisans who have preserved and evolved this craft through generations.

The saree has also made its way into the fashion industry, both in India and abroad. The saree has also become a popular choice for

red carpet events, and many international celebrities have been seen wearing sarees on various occasions.

The saree is more than just a garment in India; It is a symbol of tradition, diversity, and femininity. It continues to hold a special place in the hearts of Indians and is likely to remain an important part of Indian culture for years to come.

Friends,

Kyoto, often regarded as the cultural heart of Japan, has a rich history of craftsmanship and artistic expression. The Kyoto Yuzen saree is becoming a connecting link between India and Japan. The Yuzen technique, originating from Kyoto, involves a complex and intricate process of dyeing silk fabrics, creating mesmerizing patterns and designs. The result is a Japanese saree that seamlessly combines the elegance of Indian drapery with the precision of Japanese artistry, offering a unique and enchanting aesthetic.

Friends,

This saree festival is not merely a display of garments; it is a celebration of the enduring friendship between our two nations. It is an opportunity to appreciate and learn from each other's artistic expressions, fostering a cultural exchange that goes beyond the threads of a saree. Through this festival, we hope to strengthen the bonds of friendship between our people, creating a foundation for continued collaboration and understanding.

I encourage each and every one of you to immerse yourselves in the allure of the Kyoto Yuzen Saree, to appreciate the craftsmanship that transcends geographical boundaries.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to Kyoto Prefectural government for their support in organizing this event, all the models, participants, and everyone involved in making this India-Japan Saree Festival a reality. May the threads of our shared culture and history, woven into the fabric of this event, continue to bind our nations in friendship and cooperation. May this festival serve as a bridge, connecting Kyoto's cultural heritage with India's rich and varied cultural heritage, and fostering a greater engagement at people to people level.

Thank you.