

**Embassy of India**  
**Tokyo**  
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**Remarks by Ambassador Sibi George on the occasion of  
Swagatam India – Tourism Seminar on Buddhist Circuit  
January 18, 2023 at 15:00-15:10 hrs**

Mr. Prakhar Misra, Director (Tourism), Govt of Uttar Pradesh,  
Mr. Ashwani K. Pandey, Special Secretary (Tourism), Govt of Uttar Pradesh,  
Mr. Siddhartha Choudhury, Associate Director, KPMG;  
Mr. Marcus, President, Indian Tour Operator Committee, Japan;  
Distinguished guests, Friends, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good Afternoon and Konnichiwa!

- On behalf of the Embassy of India in Tokyo, I am delighted to welcome you to this tourism seminar promoting Buddhism circuit.
- Today, as we celebrate the 70 years of the establishment of the India-Japan diplomatic relationship, we also look back at the historic relation that connects our two countries. The friendship between India and Japan has a long history rooted in spiritual affinity and strong cultural and civilizational ties. India's earliest documented direct contact with Japan was with the Todaiji Temple in Nara, where the consecration or eye-opening of the towering statue of Lord Buddha was performed by an Indian monk, Bodhisena, in 752 AD.
- Friends, India is home to some of the most important Buddhist sites in the world, including the site of Buddha's enlightenment in Bodh Gaya, the place of his first sermon in Sarnath and Kushinagar, where he attained Moksha. These sacred sites, along with others such as Ajanta and Ellora caves, Sanchi and

the Mahabodhi Temple, attract millions of Buddhist pilgrims and tourists from around the world and Japan every year.

- The Buddhist circuit in India is not just about visiting religious sites, it is an invitation to embark on a journey of self-discovery. Visitors can immerse themselves in the local way of life, learn about the history and teachings of Buddhism, and even participate in meditation and yoga classes that will leave a lasting impact on your mind and soul. The circuit also offers opportunities for adventure and ecotourism, with beautiful natural landscapes and wildlife to explore.
- The Government of India is committed to promoting the Buddhist circuit and making it more accessible to visitors. We are working to improve infrastructure and facilities at the sites, and promoting sustainable tourism practices. We are also partnering with other countries and organizations, including Japan, to promote the circuit and attract more visitors.
- In conclusion, the Buddhist circuit in India is a unique and enriching experience for visitors, offering a chance to learn about the history and culture of Buddhism, and to explore some of the most beautiful and sacred sites in the world. I invite all of you to come and experience the wonders of the Buddhist circuit for yourself.
- Friends, in addition to the many attractions and experiences that India has to offer, we are also taking steps to ensure the safety and well-being of our visitors. In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, we have implemented stringent health and safety measures to protect both tourists and locals alike.
- Till date, India has administered around 2.2 billion doses of vaccination across the country. Therefore, as a traveller, you can feel safe when you travel to India. At present, due to an extensive vaccine drive, India's Covid cases remain under

control with less than 150 new cases. As India has returned back to normalcy, domestic and international tourism is booming again as travellers feel safe.

- We hope that this seminar will inspire you to visit India and experience all that our beautiful country has to offer. Thank you for joining us today, and we look forward to a lively and informative discussion.

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