

SPEECH OF THE AMBASSADOR OF JAPAN TO BE
DELIVERED AT THE EXCHANGE OF LETTERS CEREMONY
FOR JAPAN'S FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION TO THE
ASEAN CULTURAL FUND, 20TH DECEMBER 1978
JAKARTA

His Excellency Mr. Ali Abdullah, Secretary General
of ASEAN,

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure of mine to be given an opportunity of saying a few words on this memorable occasion. First of all, I would like to congratulate you for having successfully established the ASEAN Cultural Fund.

ASEAN has been endeavouring to strengthen cooperation among the member countries in the political economic, social and cultural fields ever since its establishment. It is expected that the establishment of this ASEAN Cultural Fund, would bring about closer cooperation in the field of culture.

Mr. Secretary General,

We all recall that it was only in August last year, that the then Prime Minister of Japan Mr. Fukuda proposed to the Heads of Government of ASEAN countries, when they met each other at the 2nd ASEAN Summit in Kuala Lumpur, to initiate a joint study to promote cultural cooperation within ASEAN. He announced that Japan was prepared to cooperate with ASEAN in their efforts, and Japan's cooperation could include an appropriate amount of financial contribution, taking into account the results of the study. To carry out the study, experts of the two sides met in January and March this year. At the March meeting, the Japanese side made known that the Government of Japan would make available up to five billion yen over a period of

several years starting in FY 1979 for the promotion of inter-ASEAN cultural cooperation. In view of the earnest request by the ASEAN side, however, the Government of Japan has tried very hard and finally succeeded in making the initial contribution even before the start of FY 1979, and I am very happy that we have been able to exchange letters for the initial contribution of the Government of Japan on the very same day when the Chairman of the ASEAN Standing Committee, Minister Mochtar deposited the ASEAN Cultural Fund Agreement with the ASEAN Secretariat.

The amount of initial contribution is two billion yen and it will be disbursed in Tokyo immediately following today's exchange of letters. We earnestly hope that this contribution from Japan will serve to strengthen inter-ASEAN cultural cooperation.

Taking this opportunity, I would like to assure you that this contribution is one of the signs which illustrate Japan's policy towards ASEAN. After the conclusion of the Treaty of Peace and Friendship between Japan and People's Republic of China and the appointment of new Prime Minister in Japan, there seems to be certain concern among some people of ASEAN that Japan may alter its attitude towards ASEAN. Such kind of concern is unfounded. I would like to emphasize that Japan continues to attach great importance to maintaining close and friendly relationship with ASEAN and this policy, which forms one of the basic pillars of Japan's diplomacy, will not be changed in any sense of the word.

In concluding my remarks, I would like to pay tribute to all the officials on both ASEAN and Japanese sides who have worked so hard to make today's exchange of letter