

**Address by Ms. Snehal Ambekar, Hon'ble Mayor of Mumbai,
at the Yokohama City Council Assembly Hall
1st June 2015**

My heartiest greetings to all the respected dignitaries;

Respected Chairperson of Yokohama City Council, Mr. Hirofumi Sato,

Respected Deputy Chairperson of Yokohama City Council, Mr. Masatoshi Nitta,

Members of Yokohama City Council,

Respected Mayor of Yokohama, Ms. Fumiko Hayashi

And all distinguished guests.

We are here today to celebrate 50th anniversary of Sister City Relationship with Yokohama. Today, we are also celebrating Sister City Relationship with Manila (Republic of the Philippines), Odessa (Ukraine) & Vancouver (Canada). Heartiest congratulations for the Golden Jubilee Celebration to our brethren from Yokohama, Manila, Odessa and Vancouver. We had started way back on 11.11.1965 our relationship, and it is a long term, co-operative relationship between two cities in different countries through which cultural, educational, business and technical exchanges have taken place.

City of Mumbai is a “City of Dreams” in India. Similarly, Yokohama is known as “Ports City”. We are indeed in these 50 years, both cities and their respective countries have undergone a wide change. When we started our friendship 50 years back, Yokohama & Japan were an emerging power and India was then an emerging democracy. Today Japan is one of the developed nations and India has the most promising future.

In the last 50 years, we have collaborated on various issues like Solid Waste Management, Water Supply and other related subjects.

Also in the year 2009 Mr. Vikram Pawar, Deputy Municipal Commissioner had attended the Ceremonial Event for the 150th Anniversary of the opening of the Port of Yokohama. In September, 2009 Mr. Mangesh Laxman Tambe, Director (E.S. & P) had participated in CITYNET Yokohama Congress 2009, Mr. Vijay Pachpande, Executive Engineer from Hydraulic Engineer's Dept. was invited to participate CITYNET Yokohama Waterworks Training Programme 2009.

In the year 2010 (from 16th to 24th October 2010) on the invitation from the Ms. Fumiko Hayashi, Mayor of City of Yokohama, Mrs. Shraddha Jadhav, the then Mayor of Mumbai and Mr. Swadhin Kshatriaya, the then Municipal Commissioner had visited Yokohama to celebrate 45th Anniversary of the establishment of sister city ties between Yokohama and Mumbai.

In true sense, if we see the progress of Sister City Relationship, we can say that we have exchanged people's visits and hence exchange ideas among our countries.

The relationship between Yokohama and Mumbai is one of the most fruitful of all the Sister City Relationships, for which we get to learn, so many positive things from Japan such importance of;

- Strong Organization
- Shared decision making
- Discipline life
- Co-operative efforts

We, both have rich cultural heritage. In the next phase, I believe in our relationship, we need to further strengthen cultural ties, from which we can learn mutually.

The other major bond, the umbilical cord between India and Japan and consequently between Mumbai and Yokohama is that of Buddhism. Buddhism has incalculable influence on Japanese civilization.

In its long history, Buddhism has permeated Japanese life so thoroughly that it is difficult for us to recognize the depth of its influence. This we can see from our visit to Japan & innumerable Buddhist Temples situated in the centre of town or high in mountains.

Buddhism is a way of life in Japan. It is not a mythical or speculative experience which only qualified persons can acquire, but a spontaneous experience manifested in daily life and accessible to anyone regardless of sex, position, ideology or character. In daily life, thanking before every meal, expressing gratitude, strong feeling of obligations to others,

politeness and thoughtfulness in ordinary Japanese people is due to Buddhism. Thus there is profound influence of Buddhism on Japanese civilization.

When Buddhism vanished from India, it was cradled and nurtured in Japan. Today, Buddhism is growing leaps and bounds in India. The power of simplicity, humility and grace which Japanese people draw from Buddhism & Japanese culture needs to be also imbibed by Indian Citizen in day-to-day life.

Yokohama is a city of ports. Similarly, Mumbai is also a coastal city. It has two major ports. One is the Mumbai Port Trust and another is Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust that is JNPT.

Mumbai is one of the best natural resources in the world and with extensive wet and dry dock accommodation facilities. JNPT is one of the most spacious and most modern major ports in India. Mumbai and Yokohama can definitely coordinate in modernization of ports in India.

University of Mumbai is one of the premier universities in India. IIT Mumbai, VJTI, and University of Chemical Technology are India's premier engineering and technology colleges. Especially special women's university that is SNDT, several medical colleges, Sir J.J. School of Art, in all these institutions, student exchanges can be organized.

We welcome the establishment of International Affairs Bureau by Yokohama for forwarding Municipal Diplomacy. It would definitely strengthen our ties. In the next phase we may also start student exchange programmes, cultural shows & exchanges, exchanging of civic habits among both countries.

We at Mumbai open heartedly welcome citizens of Yokohama to our Mumbai so that we celebrate the immemorial moment of Golden Jubilee year of Sister-city Relations and also have lively and growing Sister-city Relationship for years to come.

In the last 50 years, we have seen many upheavals, wars, economic depressions in the world which though we do not realize are linked to human behavior on earth. In the coming years of our relationship, we need to grow as human and hence stabilize the earth disturbances through spiritual growth.

In the end, I would like to thank, Ms. Fumiko Hayashi, Mayor of Yokohama for organizing this Commemorative Programs in Yokohama and for the inviting me to celebrate the 50th Anniversary (Golden Jubilee) of Sister City Relations. I also thank Mr. Hirofumi Sato, Chairperson, Yokohama City Council for giving opportunity to speak in front of all the City Council Members. Mr. Oleg BRYNDAK, Secretary of Odessa City Council, Ms. Andrea Reimer, Deputy Mayor of Vancouver, Ms. Donna Gasgonia, Technical Adviser to the Mayor of Manila.

Thank you, Jai Hind, Jai Maharashtra.