

MESSAGE OF AMBASSADOR KOSHIKAWA,
CELEBRATION OF THE 120th JAPANESE MIGRATION IN THE PHILIPPINES AND THE 20th
ANNIVERSARY OF PHILIPPINE NIKKEI-JIN LEGAL SUPPORT CENTER (PNLSC)
(Mr. Takahiro Hanada, Minister and Consul General, reading)

Now I would like to extend a message on behalf of Ambassador of Japan to the Philippines,
H.E. Kazuhiko Koshikawa.

Honorable Congressman, Vincent J. Garcia,
Honorable Dr. Ines P. Mallari, President of the Philippine Nikkei-jin Kai Rengokai,
Honorable Atty Hiroyuki Kawai, Chairman of the Philippine Nikkei-jin Legal Support Center,
Honorable Mr. Norihiro Inomata, Representative Director of the Philippine Nikkei-jin Legal
Support Center
Honorable Dr. Laura V. Cespon, Dean of College, Mindanao Kokusai Daigaku (MKD) ,
Distinguished guests,
Ladies and gentlemen,

As we celebrate the 120th anniversary of Japanese migration to the Philippines and the
20th anniversary of the establishment of the Philippine Nikkeijin Legal Support Center, I would
like to extend my sincerest congratulations to all Japanese immigrants, Nikkei-jin, members of
the PNLSC. I also would like to commend everyone for their unwavering efforts and
perseverance in serving as bridges of friendship between Japan and the Philippines even
during challenging times.

This year marks the 120th celebration of the settlement of Japanese immigrants here
in Davao, Mindanao. Together with Baguio in Northern Luzon, where the Kennon Road, known
as a complex prewar construction project, was completed thanks to the hardworking and highly
skilled Japanese immigrants, a vibrant Japanese community emerged in Davao with
approximately 24,000 Japanese population engaged in abaca industry. Descendants of those
Japanese immigrants stand as a symbolic testament to the enduring ties between Japan and
the Philippines.

On the rise of the Second World War, Japanese immigrants and their families,
Philippine Nikkei-jin were caught literally in the middle of both countries and forced to make
indescribable difficult choices. Despite those historical hardships, they bravely tackled
difficulties and adapted to new environments while maintaining connections with Japan.

Initially established in Baguio and Davao in the 1970s and 1980s, Nikkei-jin
associations have been continuously expanding across various regions in the Philippines since
the 1990s. The establishment of the 13th Nikkei-jin Kai in Palawan last year is a testament to
the concerted efforts of the Nikkei-jin community to address their challenges.

As the Japanese Ambassador to the Philippines, I would like to express my sincere respect and gratitude once again for the wide range of activities undertaken by each and every one of you in working together to resolve the issues of the Nikkei-jin society. At the same time, it is crucial to keep in mind the harsh reality of the advancing age of 2nd-generation Nikkei-jin. Facing this reality, there are numerous challenges that Japanese descendants in the Philippines continue to grapple with, including the issue of remaining Japanese.

Since its establishment in 2003, the Philippine Nikkei-jin Legal Support Center has been working diligently to support the identification and acquisition of Japanese nationality for the 2nd generation Nikkei-jin left in the Philippines due to the war. They diligently and persistently visited the Nikkei-jin and their relatives not only in many places in the Philippines but also in Japan. I would like to extend my deep admiration and gratitude to each and every member of the PNLSC, headed by Chairman Mr. Kawai and Representative Director Mr. Inomata, for their dedicated contributions and tireless efforts.

Rest assured that the Embassy of Japan intends to continue working closely with the Philippine Nikkei-jin Kai RengoKai and various Nikkei-jin Kai and the PNLSC in terms of the acquisition of Japanese nationality of remaining Nikkei-jin and addressing various challenges faced by the Nikkei-jin community.

Thanks to the efforts of our predecessors, Japan and the Philippines have now forged a deep cooperative relationship across various fields, including people-to-people exchange, economy, culture, and security, bound by an unprecedented level of strong trust.

Earlier this month, Prime Minister Kishida visited the Philippines and delivered a policy speech titled "Heart-to-Heart Ties for the Next Generation" in a joint session of the Philippine Senate and House of Representatives, marking the first Japanese prime minister to speak in the joint session. The relationship between Japan and the Philippines is now about to reach new heights from what is referred to as the "Golden Age."

I fervently expect that the new generations of Nikkei-jin in the Philippines, as the second and third generation of Nikkei-jin from South America are doing, will help further deepen and contribute to the prosperous Japan-Philippines relationship.

Finally, I would like to extend my sincere congratulations and best wishes to the descendants of Japanese immigrants, Nikkei-jin, and everyone at the PNLSC. May you all enjoy continued good health, success, and further development of the Nikkei-jin community in the Philippines.