

**Remarks of Ambassador ENDO Kazuya at the 45th Philippines-
Japan Society Awards Night**

15 July 2026

Magandang gabi po sa inyong lahat. Ako po ay nagagalak na makasama kayo ngayong gabi.

(Good evening to all of you. I am happy to be with you all this evening.)

Lubos akong nagpapasalamat sa PJS para sa okasyong ito, at sa mainit na pagtanggap sa akin at sa aking kabiyak na si Akiko.

(My deepest gratitude to the PJS for this occasion and the warm welcome to me and my better half, Akiko.)

I am told by some friends that my Tagalog is getting better after two years in this country. But I don't think it's my accent that's getting better, it's just their hearing! Either way, I appreciate the warmth of Filipino friends all the same.

It is an honor to be here with you all at the PJS' 45th Celebrations Awards Night with some of our bilateral ties' foremost champions.

It is wonderful to be back at this beautiful hotel, with the same friendly faces, and I should add, with the same beautiful wife by my side.

This reliable familiarity extends even to our diplomatic ties. As we continue to work towards shared goals, stability remains a defining trait of our close relationship, particularly in this age of uncertainties.

It is thanks in no small part to partners, like the PJS, that our two countries continue to reach more unprecedented heights in our ties.

There is an old saying: “Alone, you may go fast, but together, you go far.” Remarkably, our close bond has allowed us to do both, and our ties to the PJS are a true testament to this wisdom.

I find this the ideal moment to extend my gratitude for the PJS and its members’ roles in strengthening our friendship.

Now on your 45th Award Ceremony, this evening speaks of the Society’s fruitful longevity and proof of how far our two countries have come.

Tying into a grander milestone, 2026 marks the 70th Anniversary of Philippines-Japan Friendship: a year that celebrates both the roots and renewal of our countries’ normalized ties.

From President Quirino’s pardon in 1953, steady efforts have brought both Japanese and Filipinos around a shared path. As benevolence built

bridges, people-to-people ties replaced distance with mutual understanding.

Seven decades on and our relations endure with unceasing momentum. Embodying the essence of this journey is this milestone year's theme: Weaving the Future Together: Peace, Prosperity, Possibilities.

This evening invites us also to celebrate the vibrant tapestry of our friendship. Recent exchanges have added new threads and expanded the fabric of our relations

In May, President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. and First Lady Louise Araneta-Marcos paid a historic State Visit to Japan. It was then I had the privilege of witnessing historic moments firsthand. One of the most touching moments came during the Welcome Ceremony hosted by Their Majesties Emperor Naruhito and Empress Masako, when some of my friends in the Philippine Cabinet were almost brought to tears. We were also deeply moved by His Majesty's words at the State Banquet underscoring the difficult past between our two countries and the importance of the efforts made by previous generations to build mutual trust.

It was also during the visit, Prime Minister Takaichi and President Marcos agreed to elevate our ties to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership. As

the Philippines' first partner with such a status, Japan welcomes such unprecedented levels of trust between our countries.

As the visit highlighted our enduring ties, we also saw promising strides across various sectors for partnerships.

On security ties, our two leaders decided to accelerate ongoing negotiations on the transfer of defense equipment, such as Abukuma-class destroyers and TC- 90 aircraft. This was following Defense Minister Koizumi's visit in May, when he and DND Secretary Teodoro agreed to establish a dedicated working group.

On the economic front, Japan remains committed to reinforcing critical supply chains through the Power Asia initiative. Both our leaders even agreed to promote further studies for establishing a national oil reserve system in the Philippines. Japan continues to be committed to some big ticket infrastructure projects such as metro Manila Subway and North South Commuter Railway.

Meanwhile, Japanese companies and their investments remain active contributors to the Philippine economy. Around 1,600 Japanese companies operate in the country today, making Japan among the Philippines' most important trade and investment partners.

Amid these gains, promising frontiers for cooperation remain, such as space and artificial intelligence. We are only truly limited by the horizons we set for our relations.

At such new heights in our friendship, it is fitting we honor a man whose life embodies the summit of our bond: Professor Kenjiro Ogata.

For over thirty years, he has dedicated his life to the development of Nihongo studies in the country. It is for his invaluable contributions that Professor Ogata was also honored by the Philippine Federation of Japan Alumni, or PHILFEJA. Many young Filipinos who pursued further study in Japan had also taken Professor Ogata's Japanese language classes and they, too, continue to pay tribute to his achievements. Present here today are former students who studied in Japan. Standing now as bridges between Japan and the Philippines, we bear witness to just how much Professor Ogata's contributions have been truly significant in our cultural exchanges and bilateral ties.

A true educator, he has shaped countless Filipino students and teachers of Nihongo alike. And it would seem his time here shaped him as well, as I hear Professor Ogata also speaks fluent Filipino.

To him I say: *Maraming salamat po at mabuhay ka*, Professor Ogata. お
めでとうございます！

Ladies and gentlemen, it is a privilege to be able to celebrate our
friendship at a platinum age for our ties.

In the presence of Professor Ogata and our past Medal Awardees, I am
deeply grateful we continue to have such exceptional individuals to
exemplify the seven decades of friendship we share.

I end by thanking you all once again for allowing me to be a part of this
celebration of friendship. I look forward to an incredible evening with you
all.

Maraming Salamat po at Mabuhay ang ating pagkakaibigan. ありがと
うございました！