

Philippine Nikkei Jin Kai, Inc. (PNJK) 45th Founding Anniversary Celebration:
Greetings from Ambassador Endo

(Read by Minister and Consul General HANADA)

Honorable Dr. Ines Yamanouchi P. Mallari, President of the Philippine Nikkei-jin Kai Rengokai

Honorable Ret. Judge Antonina B. Escovilla, President of Philippine Nikkei-jin Kai

Honorable Mr. Yoshihiro Tokumitsu, President of Japan-Philippine Industry Council

Honorable Rev. Masataka Ajiro, Honorary Chancellor of Mindanao Kokusai Daigaku

Honorable Mr. Norihiko Inomata, President of Philippine Nikkei-jin Legal Support Center

Distinguished guests,

Ladies and gentlemen

On the occasion of the 45th foundation anniversary of the Philippine Nikkei Jin Kai, Inc., I would like to express my heartfelt respect and congratulations to all the Nikkei-jin who, through their unwavering efforts and perseverance, have overcome the difficult time in the Philippines, contributed to the development of the Philippines and served as bridge for friendship between Japan and the Philippines.

Before the second World War, a vibrant Japanese community emerged in Davao with approximately 24,000 Japanese population engaged in abaca industry. Descendants of those Japanese immigrants have maintained a strong ties with Japan until today.

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.

I would like to express once again my respect and profound gratitude to the predecessors who overcame various difficulties to build the prosperity we have today and to the second, third and new generation Nikkei-jin who have continued the intention.

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. In recent years, the increasing number of visits of high-level government officials, including head of governments and state ministers, are evidence of the growing strength of the ties between the two countries. In the recent visit of Prime Minister Ishiba last month, President Marcos welcomed Prime Minister Ishiba's visit to the Philippines at a summit meeting and stated that the relations between the two countries, which see increasing cooperation, are now in a golden age. In response, Prime Minister Ishiba, sharing fundamental values such as the rule of law, expressed his desire to continue to work together to realize a Free and Open Indo-Pacific. The two leaders also agreed to further deepen bilateral relations in a wide range of areas, including security and the economy, and to continue to communicate closely with each other on international situations, such as the global economy, the situation in the East China Sea, and Japan-Philippines-U.S. Cooperation.

While these good bilateral relations are being built, we must never forget the issue of the Nikkei-jin, whose cases are still unresolved.

During the visit to Manila of Prime Minister Ishiba last month, he met with second generation Nikkei-jin. He expressed his deep respect for the 2nd generation Nikkei-jin who have endured many difficulties and hardships over the years and have worked hard to build bonds in their local communities in the Philippines. He directly stated that the Japanese government would work to ensure that nationality acquisition and temporary return to Japan are realized as soon as possible.

The Embassy of Japan in the Philippines will also continue to work closely with the Philippine Nikkei-jin Kai, other regional chapters of Nikkei-jin kai, Philippine Nikkei Jin Kai Rengokai, and the PNLSC to do our utmost to assist in the nationality acquisition and temporary return to Japan, as well as to resolve various issues faced by the Nikkei-jin community.

In addition, I would like to express my deepest respect and gratitude to the President Inomata and all the members of the PNLSC for working diligently since its establishment in 2003, working closely with the Philippine Nikkei Jin Kai Rengokai and regional chapters of Nikkei-jin Kai, to support the second generation Nikkei-jin in their identification and acquisition of Japanese nationality, while also visiting relatives not only throughout the Philippines but also throughout Japan.

Finally, I would like to offer my congratulations and wish you all a happy and healthy life, and hope that the Nikkei-jin community in the Philippines will continue to flourish.

May 18, 2025

Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of
Japan to the Philippines

ENDO Kazuya