

Speech by the Consul-General, Ambassador Kuninori MATSUDA
at the Birthday Celebration of His Majesty the Emperor of Japan
(Hong Kong, 2 December 2015)

大家好！

我係新上任嘅日本駐香港大使松田。

請多多指教。

First of all, I would sincerely like to thank and welcome the Honourable John TSANG Chun-wah, the Financial Secretary of the Government of the Hong Kong SAR for being with us today as our guest of honour, representing the Hong Kong Government.

I would also like to thank all of you for joining this gathering.

His Majesty the Emperor of Japan is turning 82 years old on the coming 23rd of December. It is such an honour and a pleasure to celebrate his Majesty's birthday with all of you here.

This year, we have again seen a noticeable development in the already close and cooperative relationship between Japan and Hong Kong. For example, this year the number of Hong Kong travelers visiting Japan exceeded the record of one million by September and the number is expected to reach one and a half million by the end of this year. This means more than one in five Hong Kong people will visit Japan this year alone. Since assuming the post of Consul-General in mid-October, I have paid courtesy calls to dozens of Hong Kong Government officials and to people in the political and business sectors, and I found that most of them have traveled to Japan this year, some with multiple trips. This is very impressive, and there are many more examples which display the close tie between Japan and Hong Kong. For further details, [please refer later to the material we have prepared](#).

Needless to say, the guests here have made a significant contribution towards such excellent progress in Japan-Hong Kong relations this year. Please allow me to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to all of you who have given your support and cooperation, which I believe will remain unchanged or even further increased next year.

For the smooth progress of Hong Kong's relationship with Japan under "One Country Two Systems," it is indispensable that the Japan-China ties deepen, because the two

countries share the responsibility for the peace and stability of the region as well as the prosperity of the international community. In this regard, I am pleased to mention that this year has been a year of progress for the relationship between Japan and China as well. The relations between Tokyo and Beijing have steadily improved with the second summit meeting between Prime Minister Abe and President Xi Jinping in April and the first meeting between PM Abe and Premier Li Keqiang in November. The Consulate-General of Japan in Hong Kong, will also make its utmost effort for the further development of the bilateral relationship.

Thank you very much for your patience and attention. I think it is time for food and conversation, please enjoy the rest of the evening.

This time again, we have the generous support of many local governments from Japan offering their special and famous delicacies and sake drinks: including Fukui Prefecture, my hometown; Fukushima Prefecture that is resiliently recovering from the Great Earth-quake in 2011; and others, such as Aomori, Tochigi, Hyogo, Kagawa, Fukuoka, Saga, Kumamoto, Miyazaki, Kagoshima, and Okinawa. Please enjoy the food and drink here, and I am sure you will wish to fly to Japan immediately.

Once again, I deeply appreciate the Honourable John TSANG, distinguished guests, and everyone, for participating in this reception. Let me wish you all a happy holiday season and a happy New Year of 2016.

And, I wish for a long life for his Majesty the Emperor of Japan, for even further development of the friendship between Japan and Hong Kong, and for a bright future for Japan-China relations.

我哋祝大家身体健康，幸福快樂。

皆様の御健康と御多幸をお祈りいたします。

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