

Speech at the Birthday Celebration of His Majesty  
The Emperor of Japan

**Honorable Leong Vai Tac, Distinguished guests,  
Ladies and gentlemen, good evening.**

First of all, I would like to sincerely thank The Hon. Leong Vai Tac, Secretary for Economy and Finance of the Macau SAR, for being with us today as our guest of honour, representing the Macau government. I would also like to thank all of you for joining this gathering.

My name is Mitsuhiro Wada, I arrived in Hong Kong to take up my post at the end of November. I visited Macau for the first time when I was studying Chinese language at the Chinese University of Hong Kong in the summer of 1984. At that time, I was impressed by the exotic charms of Macau, so I feel deeply touched to be returning to Macau now. We look forward to working closely with all of you in the years to come.

His Majesty the Emperor of Japan is turning 85 years old on the coming 23<sup>rd</sup> of December. Next January will mark the 30<sup>th</sup> year of his reign and His Majesty will abdicate on 30<sup>th</sup> April. It is

a great honour to celebrate His Majesty's birthday for the 30<sup>th</sup> time with all of you here before his abdication.

As you may be aware, there were many natural disasters in Japan this year and His Majesty has been energetically visiting the affected areas. We greatly appreciate the heart-warming support we have received from Macau. It is a great encouragement for us to see Macau visitors enjoying travelling and sight-seeing in various areas of Japan. In addition to the already popular tourist destinations, I would be delighted to see tourists from Macau also visiting the Tohoku region and Hokkaido, the northeastern area of Japan, since the number of Macau visitors to Tohoku, in particular, is still far smaller than those going to other areas.

## Japan -China Relations

During this year that marked the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the conclusion of the Treaty of Peace and Friendship between Japan and China, Chinese Premier Li Keqiang, paid an official visit to Japan in May, while Mr. Shinzo Abe, the Prime Minister of Japan officially visited China in October, which was the first official visit

for a Japanese prime minister in 7 years. With the background of Japan-China relations getting back on track and further proceeding to “a new stage” of the relations of the two countries, we believe that we can further strengthen the relationship between Japan and Macau.

### Japan-Macau Relations

As for the relationship between Japan and Macau, there was a 30% rise in the number of tourists from Macau who visited Japan compared to that of the previous year, which demonstrates an increase in individual exchanges between Japan and Macau. A further increase in business opportunities is expected, due to the passing of the Integrated Resort Bill in Japan as well as the inauguration of the “Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macau” Bridge.

In addition, I believe that Japan and Macau can enhance cooperation and exchanges in the field of food and beverage as well as art.

Last year, Macau was officially designated by UNESCO as a "Creative City of Gastronomy". There is a surge in the numbers

of tourists visiting Macau who are interested in international cuisines including Japanese food. Actually, there is a huge increase in the volume of exports to Macau from Japan, particularly in beef and alcoholic drinks. In future, the Japanese government will dispatch chefs of Japanese cuisine to Macau, and make exchanges between Japanese and Macau culinary schools, therefore I believe the relationship between Japan and Macau will be further strengthened in terms of food related industry.

Also, I have been informed that 'Art Macau2019' will be held in Macau for the first time next year. Japan would also like to actively participate in the event in order to strengthen the exchange in the fields of art and culture between Japan and Macau.

We intend to enhance our cooperation in a wide variety of areas between Japan and Macau.

## Summary

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

**Mr Leong Vai Tac, ladies and gentlemen, thank you again for joining us tonight and I wish you a prosperous year ahead.**

**“To His Majesty the Emperor Akihito, and the people of the People’s Republic of China and the people of the Macau Special Administrative Region”**

(end)