

2018 New Year Reception
Tuesday January 16, 2018

Ms. Sachiko Okuda, President of the Ottawa Japanese Community Association,
Mr. Brian Yamashita, President of the Ottawa Japanese Cultural Centre,
Distinguished guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Akemashite Omedetougozaimasu. Happy New Year!

It is a great pleasure to be here with you tonight at our New Year Reception. My wife Kaoru and I very much appreciated the invitation to the Mochitsuki event at OJCA / OJCC last December as we were able to meet some of you here tonight then. I am delighted to be able to meet more people from the Japanese Community at tonight's Reception.

I arrived in Ottawa on November 3rd, 2017 and presented my Letter of Credence on November 20th to Her Excellency the Right Honourable Julie Payette, Governor General and Commander-in-Chief of Canada. 2017 was a special year, as it marked both the 140th anniversary of Japanese immigration to Canada as well as the 75th anniversary of the Internment of Japanese Canadians, which took place at halfway through Canada's 150-year long history. I heard from my predecessor Ambassador Monji that the National Association of Japanese Canadians (NAJC) organized a series of commemorative events in September last year which were a great success. This year 2018 is also special, in that we will celebrate the 90th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Japan and Canada. In this regard, I would like to show you now a video clip that our Embassy created to commemorate the anniversary. [YouTube clip to start]

My mission here in Canada is to strengthen relations between Japan and Canada not only at the government level, but also through people-to-people exchanges. All of the previous Ambassadors of Japan put in tremendous efforts to lay a solid foundation for a better friendship between our two countries. However, our

Embassy and the four Consulates-General of Japan in Canada alone cannot achieve this goal. In fact, it is the endless, tireless efforts of Japanese Canadians who, having overcome hardships throughout history and served as a firm bridge across the Pacific, have made the most significant contribution towards the amicable relations between Japan and Canada as well as the reputation that we as Japanese enjoy in Canada today. Indeed, Japanese Canadians have always been an important part of Canada's ethnic diversity and spirit of inclusiveness, and are therefore an asset that deserves much praise and respect.

I would also like to appreciate the contributions which Japanese citizens, who have come to Canada in recent years, have been making to people-to-people exchanges between Japan and Canada through various cultural activities. The Embassy will also continue to support the Japanese school, known as Hoshuko, in Ottawa.

Looking ahead, we will be celebrating the 30th Anniversary of the Redress and the 90th Anniversary of Japan-Canada diplomatic relations. According to Canada's national census that was conducted last year, there are about 121,500 Japanese living in Canada. Let us work closely together as an 'All Japan' team and take these historic opportunities for the betterment of Japan-Canada relationship in all fields.

In closing, I want to propose a toast to wish all of you the very best for the new year and for the continued prosperity of the Japanese Community.

Kanpai!