

**Speech for Ambassador Kawamura
2020 New Year Reception
January 14, 2020**

Ms. Melisa Kamibayashi-Staples, 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 my pleasure to welcome you here tonight for
our New Year Reception. This is the first New Year
Reception under the new era of Reiwa, the first
New Year Reception in the first year of the new

decade and the first New Year Reception for me wearing Kimono.

I would first like to take a moment to express my most sincere condolences to the families and loved ones of the victims of Flight 752. This tragedy shocked many people. We share Canada's sadness and extend our sympathies during this difficult time. Please join me in observing a moment of silence for the victims.

(Moment of silence)

Thank you.

I arrived in Ottawa on November 19th, 2019 and presented my Letter of Credence on December 18th to Her Excellency Julie Payette, Governor General. It

has been less than 2 months since my arrival, but the warm welcome I have received so far has been much appreciated.

Since I am a debutant to the community of Ottawa, Let me briefly introduce myself. I was born in Nagoya in 1957. I moved to Tokyo. And I joined the Foreign Ministry after graduation from university. I was most recently in New York, as Japanese Ambassador to the United Nations. Before that, I worked as Press Secretary for Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and for Foreign Minister Kishida and Kono, and completed postings in places across the globe such as Washington, DC, Geneva and New Delhi.

My relationship with Canada is deeper than simple business. About 30 years ago, I came to Canada with my wife for our honeymoon. We drove from Vancouver to Toronto. I have fond memories of this trip from West to East, during which I learned about Canada's diversity and experienced the warmth of Canadians. Since then, I have been back occasionally to Ottawa, Toronto and Vancouver several times for official meetings. I am thrilled to get to know more about Canada during my tenure here.

Last December my wife and I were most delighted to attend the Mochitsuki event organised by OJCA / OJCC. We were able to meet many people from the

Japanese community in Ottawa. I also had the chance to meet Contact Japan for an interview. As Ottawa's Japanese community television program, Contact Japan has a proud 40 years of history and is still going strong thanks to its dedicated team.

Another anniversary of note this year celebrates Oto-Wa Taiko. It has been bringing the beats of Taiko drumming to Ottawa for 30 years! I hope everyone gets the chance to witness their powerful and rousing sounds in 2020.

The Japanese-Canadian community in Ottawa has an impressive history and I hope that through active involvement and listening to the needs of the community, we can further develop the

cooperation between our Embassy and the Japanese community.

Over the past decade, high-level dialogue between our countries and the rest of the world has continued as we saw last year with the G20 in Osaka.

With the CPTPP agreement, Canada is paying more attention to the Pacific, so I believe we can expect more opportunities for business and diplomatic partnerships between our countries.

Now I am happy that 2020 will be another exciting one for Japan on the world stage, as we host the Olympic and Paralympic Games in Tokyo this summer. With two powerful ambassadors, ミラ

イトワ and ソメイテイ、I have no doubt that the people of Japan will be great hosts to athletes from all over the world, including the Canadian team.

In closing, I would like to propose a toast to wish you all the very best for the New Year and for the continued prosperity of the Japanese Community.

Kampai!