

**OFFICIAL BANQUET IN HONOR OF PRIME MINISTER ISHIBA SHIGERU
AND MRS. YOSHIKO ISHIBA OF JAPAN**

Ceremonial Hall, Malacañan Palace

April 29, 2025

[00:00:00]

FERDINAND R. MARCOS JR.: Good evening, ladies and gentlemen, and with a very warm welcome to our guests, Prime Minister Ishiba and Mrs. Ishiba Yoshiko; the esteemed members and officials of both the Philippine and the Japanese delegations; ladies and gentlemen.

Welcome to Malacañang.

It is with great pleasure that I welcome Your Excellency Prime Minister Ishiba Shigeru, together with Mrs. Ishiba Yoshiko, and the Japanese delegation to the Philippines. Your first official visit to our country, in keeping with our tradition of high-level visits and exchanges between our nations, is of great value to the present as it is for the future.

In October last year, on the sidelines of ASEAN-related summit meetings in Laos, we had a brief opportunity to meet and discuss on strengthening bilateral relations, which reaffirmed our future-oriented strengthened strategic partnership.

On behalf of the Filipino people, I would like to thank Japan for its enduring commitment to support the development goals of this administration in economic and development cooperation, security and defense fields, health, peace and security in Mindanao, information and communications technology and various other sectors.

I assure Your Excellency of the sustained commitment of the Philippines to the positive trajectory of our relations as we approach the 70th year of the normalization of our diplomatic ties next year.

In this vein, I look forward to the future of our mutually beneficial cooperation, full of hope and confidence that our two peoples will continue to benefit from our diplomacy and that we realize our aspirations for regional peace, prosperity and stability as we stand together as strategic partners.

So, it is now my great pleasure to invite you all to rise and join me in a toast to the good health of Your Excellency and Mrs. Ishiba, to further successes in the strategic partnership between our maritime and Indo-Pacific democracies, and to the enduring friendship of our two peoples in harmony between the Philippines and Japan.

Mabuhay and kampai (cheers).

[00:03:36]

JAPAN PRIME MINISTER ISHIBA SHIGERU: *(translation)* President Marcos, Madam First Lady, and honorable distinguished members of the Filipino delegations, let me begin by expressing once again my appreciation for your wonderful and gracious hospitalities here.

(translation) This marks my fourth visit to the Philippines. The first time I visited the Philippines was soon after being elected by the House of Representatives and the second and third time were my visits as State Minister for Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, and this time as Prime Minister. So, I am deeply moved by this opportunity to visit the Philippines as Prime Minister on this occasion of the 80th anniversary of the end of World War II.

(translation) In the year of 1953, that was before the President and I were born, President Quirino granted generous pardon to all Japanese war criminals and at that time President Quirino stated after all destiny has made us, the Philippines and Japan neighbors.

(translation) More than seven decades have passed since the presidential clemency. Today, Japan and the Philippines are not simply neighbors, but we are also indispensable partners bonded by a sense of trust with each other. So, I have deep respect and profound appreciation for the efforts of our predecessors.

(translation) As the President just stated, Japan and the Philippines are blessed with wide ranging cooperation, including national security, economy, energy, agriculture, environment, as well as disaster reduction. So, these are the areas that we would like to cooperate with the Philippines going forward.

(translation) The latest poll shows that Japan is the most popular travel destination for Filipino people with about 47.6% of the respondents choosing our country and I am very much delighted to hear the news.

(translation) The Japanese valuable anime Haikyuu is enjoying popularity here, especially among the youth thanks to the passion that people across the Philippines have for the sport. I am also pleased to be informed about that.

(translation) Through today's meeting, as well as the banquet at this point, we would like to join hands further so that we can cooperate in responding to challenges for our two nations, for the regions and for the world.

(translation) Now, the Osaka Kansai Expo is getting underway, and I would very much like to receive President Marcos to the event, as well as many Filipino visitors.

(translation) Wishing for the health of Mr. President, Madam First Lady, as well as the Filipino distinguished members and for the prosperity of our two nations joining hands together to contribute to our two nations, the region and the world, I would like to propose a toast.

Kampai (cheers)!

[00:10:30]

BAGONG PILIPINAS