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**Speech at Japan Matsuri 2015, at Trafalgar Square
by Ambassador Keiichi Hayashi
on Saturday 19 September 2015**

Mr Mori, Secretary Hunt, Lady Borwick, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is impossible to give a crisp, smart speech after the eloquent remarks from such an eminent array of guests. So let me simply thank them and the many others who have made this Matsuri a reality.

I am talking about the *Matsuri* Executive Committee led by Mr Keisaku Sano, the Greater London Authority and the many established and new sponsors. I would also like to thank the innumerable performers and demonstrators, especially those who have come all the way from Japan including those from *Satsuma*, in commemoration of their first ever students' arrival in the UK exactly 150 years ago.

As Mr Mori mentioned, today our national team will play in their first match of the 2015 Rugby World Cup against South Africa. It is going to be tough. They are the *Invictus* team and two-time world champions. We are obviously no "*overdogs*".

Now, when we propose a toast in Japan, we normally say "*Kampai*". Well, I may be a little too superstitious but I prefer to refrain from using this phrase today. This is because "*Kampai*" in Japanese also can mean "a total defeat"!

Besides, the South Africa House is right over there overlooking this square. Just in case they are monitoring us from there, we should not display any vulnerability by chanting the wrong word.

So instead, may I propose a toast by simply offering the traditional three cheers to Japan, thereby wishing the very best for Japan's national team in the Rugby World Cup 2015, including this afternoon, and invoking yet more success for the Japan Matsuri.

Now, after I say *Hip, Hip, Hip*, please shout out *Japan!* OK?
Hip, Hip, Hip, (Japan!)