

PRESIDENTIAL COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE

PRESIDENTIAL NEWS DESK

REFERENCE: DIRECTOR CECILIA M. SUERTE FELIPE

**SPEECH BY
PRESIDENT FERDINAND R. MARCOS JR.
AT THE JONES BRIDGE LIGHTING CEREMONY
IN CELEBRATION OF THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE PHILIPPINE-
CHINA BILATERAL RELATIONS**

[Delivered at Phase 1C View Deck, Pasig River Esplanade, City of Manila | 07
June 2025]

Maraming, maraming salamat sa ating kaibigan, Pasig River Rehabilitation
Secretary Jerry Acuzar.

Of course, our valued guest and friend, the People's Republic of China's
Ambassador to the Philippines His **Excellency** Huang Xilian and the other
members of the Diplomatic Corps; the honorable members of the Cabinet
here present; the Federation of Filipino Chinese Chambers of Commerce and
Industry President Victor Lim; Manila City Mayor Maria Sheilah Lacuna-
Pangan; of course, one of the moving forces behind all of this is the First
Lady, First Lady Louise Araneta-Marcos; *[applause]* my fellow workers in
government; other distinguished guests; ladies and gentlemen.

A pleasant evening to you all.

As a young boy, my earliest memories about **Binondo** **[were]** about food.

Dumplings, lumpia, mami, hopia, siopao—familiar treats that are part of our Filipino palate. Lasang-lasa naman ang sarap. Hindi ko makalimutan.

So, always looking for new delicious dishes to try, I still always return to the comforting delicacies that the Binondo – from the Binondo shops that have stood the test of time.

Sa Ongpin at Yuchengco, may dumpling na sobrang lambot at malasa. Kung gusto mo ng sariwang prutas o lumpia, hindi ka mauubusan sa Carvajal. Sa Benavidez naman, nakakatuwang pagmasdan ang mga pansit na hinahanda at ang mga Peking duck na naka-display sa mga bintana.

Of course, more than the food, it is also about the feeling. When we are here, we can feel the sense of place that has shaped Manila and its people.

Now, essential to Binondo is the historic Jones Bridge – a landmark – it has endured wars, floods, and a long, long history.

We can imagine generations of workers crossing the bridge to reach Escolta. Students rushing [home] from class, taho vendors, jeepney drivers, lovers meeting halfway, all passing under the same lampposts.

So tonight, we proudly light up the iconic Jones Bridge in all its renewed glory and breathe new life into it.

This is what the Chinatown Revitalization Project is all about. It is about restoring Binondo [and] reaffirming its cultural and historical place and significance to our shared heritage.

We will transform Binondo into a place that we can always return to. From the old Manileños to the first-time visitors, lahat welcome dito.

Because how can we know our history and culture if we do not know and experience them ourselves?

So, I encourage everyone, especially the younger people, to visit Binondo. Come back to Ongpin, Escolta, Carvajal, and the streets that have yet to be discovered and celebrated.

I am also glad to share that tonight's event has a deeper meaning. This project commemorates 50 years of diplomatic relations between the Philippines and the People's Republic of China.

Half a century of friendship and shared history, all reflected here in the world's oldest Chinatown.

Of course, this project does not stand alone.

It is part of our bigger push to bring life back into our historic districts. As we speak, we are implementing projects to revitalize the Pasig River, including the Pasig River Urban Development Project so our people can breathe and move more easily.

They complement what we are doing here in Binondo because an iconic bridge deserves a city that rises along with it.

So, I thank the vibrant community of Binondo. From the families, the merchants, the students, the elders—all those who have kept this place alive and vibrant and an important part of our continuing cultural evolution.

You have done much more for our heritage, more than you can ever know. Maraming salamat po.

To the private partners such as the Federation of Filipino-Chinese Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Inc., maraming salamat din po.

And to the government agencies, let us see this project through with the same vigor and dedication that we have shown to bring it this far.

Let us finish Phase II, as we transform Ongpin and Escolta into cultural and economic hubs. We will bring back their golden years so that we can relive them.

Ladies and gentlemen, this initiative calls us to notice something that has always been with us. We just need to acknowledge and to elevate it.

Because when we do that, we take something ordinary and change how everyone feels about it. Only then do we realize that we must treat it with respect that it deserves.

This is the real revitalization that we must partake [in] to sustain our homes, our city, and in that way, our culture.

Kaya kaibiganin natin ang mga tindero't tindera.

Subukan ang viral na recipe ng hopia at lumpia. Suportahan ang mga lokal na negosyo. Linisin ang ating paligid. Tumawid sa Jones Bridge at gumala sa tabi ng Ilog Pasig.

In times like these, when everything can feel loud and fast and confusing, I believe what we need is right here.

A place as simple as a bridge or a street that tells us to pause and to reflect on who we are and what we share as a nation.

Maraming salamat po.

Mabuhay ang Binondo!

Mabuhay ang Bagong Pilipinas! *[applause]*

--- END ---