**Why Did the Japanese Prime Minister Wear a Super Mario Costume?**

At the closing ceremony of the Rio Olympics, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe showed up wearing a Super Mario costume. Many people were surprised by his performance and felt a strong positive emotion towards Japanese popular culture and the world’s best game software technology.

Especially for the younger generation, Abe-Mario became a new nick name for the Japanese P M. I also like Abe-Mario wearing a red cap and holding a red ball, much more than the Prime Minister wearing a black suit. Furthermore, I was very glad to hear that the world media had broadcast the Abe-Mario news as a headline with great joy. Needless to say, the appearance of Abe-Mario led countless Nintendo fans around the world to envision what might happen at the Tokyo 2020 Olympics. And this powerful inspiration led me to deliver this speech to you today.

Then why did the Japanese Prime Minister wear a Super Mario costume? The Super Mario series are the best-selling video game series in the world. It is a symbol of Japan’s strong economic growth in the 1980s. Abe-Mario was promoting a friendly image of Japan to the world.

Before the introduction of Abenomics in New York he said, “I am Shinzo Abe. Not Mario. But like Mario I can keep on fighting to boost Japan’s economy.” He also said. “It is almost like Pokémon GO. Unless you look around, you cannot find it. Unless you go to the spot, you cannot get it. So, come to Japan and look around. Seeds of growth are there, waiting to be captured and waiting to bloom.” The approval rate for Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's Cabinet rose to 62 percent last summer and 59 percent of Japanese said that we should extend his term of office until 2020. Everything in Japan looks great and all right.

However, to tell you another point of view, a video game is just a video game. Kosen students are very good at playing video games but I think facing the real world is more important for our younger generation. Because one moment, one decision and one law can completely change our peaceful lives. So we have to think about the future more seriously.

So what is going on in the real world? Many countries are suffering from economic and political issues. Brazil is now suffering the worst recession in decades. Rio’s acting governor declared a state of financial disaster. Japan has also had protests. According to American newspapers, a hundred twenty thousand Japanese protested against recent constitutional changes. In China, strikes and protest numbers are increasing year by year. Some of them are related to anti-Japanese issues such as the Senkaku Islands dispute. In South Korea, thousands of residents protested against the placement of a Thaad missile defense system. North Korea threatens to attack Japan, the U.S. and South Korea with nuclear weapons.

How can we solve these serious problems? I actually found the key to solving these problems when I was in Finland as an exchange student at Turku University. I lived in the dormitory with over a hundred students from 32 countries. I sometimes talked about global issues with them. When we discussed the Holocaust and Auschwitz, we were able to find out the worst points and the better solutions. When we discussed the territory issues between Japan and China, my Chinese friends and I respected each other's opinions. Through open discussions and cross-cultural understanding, we could understand the different points of view of other countries and moreover deepened our friendships.

At that time, I realized that for world peace, we must study world history and society more deeply. And the important thing is to have more chances to discuss international problems with many foreign people face to face.

Now, education in Japan is attempting to foster global human resources through high-tech innovations. The heart of global education is enabling young people to participate in shaping a better future for the world. Global education must emphasize the unity and interdependence of human society. Global education must develop a sense of self, along with appreciation of cultural diversity, affirmation of social justice and human rights, as well as building peace and a better world for future generations.

So, now it is time to be a Super Mario together. I am Mayama Mario and all of you are also little Marios solving many social problems. To win the game, we have to realize exactly what happened in the past, what the current situation is in many countries and what comes next in the future.

I hope Japan’s educational innovation can lead to peace and no more war as well as building high tech solutions for the next generation all around the world. Thank you.