

**Remarks by HE Ambassador Jota Yamamoto of Japan to Finland  
at the Closing Seminar of IPPO Project on 9 November, 2018**

I would first like to thank today's chair Ms. Mattila & Ms. Saari, the staff of the National Agency for Education and all the people who made this occasion possible. I would also like to thank Mr. Lehtikainen for his opening remarks.

My deep appreciation goes to you all for your kind attendance. It speaks volumes that so many Finnish friends are very serious, attentive, dedicated to the cause of Japan-Finland mutual understanding, particularly understanding among young generations. Thank you very much indeed.

Today we gather to applaud the successful closing of IPPO Project, appreciate the initiative of Principal Mr. Lihr, Coordinator Ms. Saari, their predecessors & colleagues and many people collaborating with Rajamäki Upper Secondary School, and after all we are here to identify approaches of how to build upon the achievement of the project.

I would like to refer to some initiatives taken by the Japanese community as response to IPPO Project, and possibly as the relevant tools to materialize its objectives.

First question is how to take care of students at upper secondary schools who actually take the Japanese language course as optional foreign language. Dictionary is an almost automatic answer, and the first comprehensive Japanese-Finnish dictionary was timely issued last year. This should be the basic weapon to sustain the effect of IPPO Project, and the flyer tells you details on how to make online purchase.

Second, how to attract attention of small children beforehand and to motivate them to take the Japanese language at upper secondary schools? Cartoons may be one answer, and we will soon have another tool. Early next year, the updated version of Encyclopedia of Japan will be arriving. This book tells you many things of Japan, designed for small Finnish children, written in the easy Finnish language. The flyer describes the image of the previous version, and that will be updated and reach us soon.

We now try to arrange its free distribution at EDUCA Fair on 25-26 January next year. I appreciate the continued cooperation to make it possible by the Ministry of Education & Culture.

Third, how to keep the continued attention of students after they complete the Japanese language at upper secondary schools? I see many universities and universities of applied sciences keep their Japanese language course: that is encouraging, and positively perceived by the Minister of Education in her official statement.

But sometimes, just like in Aalto University, the Japanese course was closed: that is regrettable as pointed out by the Minister of Education in her official statement. While missing the language course is of enormous implications, we may still struggle to draw the attention of university students.

Now we have witnessed the increasing Japanese companies active in Finland, and some of those try to expand direct contacts to Finnish students with internships, recruitment seminars and so on. That will be mutually benefitting.

I would now like to return to my main point today, my sincere appreciation on behalf of the Government of Japan to Rajamäki Upper Secondary School for its initiative of IPPO Project.

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With your permission, madam chairs and all the participants,

I would like to present the certificate of my commendation to Principal Mr. Jyrki Lihr representing Rajamäki Upper Secondary School:

“Ambassador of Japan extends his deepest regards to Rajamäki Upper Secondary School in recognition of their distinguished service in contributing to the deepening of mutual understanding and friendship between Japan and Finland.”