

Remarks by H.E. Ambassador Takashi Murata
at the Reception on 24 May, 2019

Excellencies, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

First of all, let me thank you all to join this occasion to celebrate the Enthronement of His Majesty the Emperor of Japan.

My name is Takashi Murata. I had the pleasure to arrive in Finland on the 16th of April to assume a mission as Ambassador of Japan to Finland. On my arrival day, I had prepared for northern countries' freezing climate with a winter coat, but Finnish weather welcomed me with a sunny summer day. As well, I received warm welcomes by His Excellency President Niinistö, to whom I presented the Letter of Credence from His Majesty the Emperor on the 26th of April, and so many friends in Finland including all of you here.

This year is remarkable not only for me, but also a milestone for all Japanese nationals.

On May 1st, His Majesty the Emperor was enthroned in the Imperial Palace. The new era has commenced with a deserving new name of "Reiwa". Its spirit can be explained as follows: "Just as the plum blossoms announce the arrival of spring after the harsh cold of winter and bloom splendidly in all their glory, all Japanese will be able to make their own blossoms come into full bloom, together with their hopes for tomorrow."

Naturally, Japan cannot make flowers bloom alone. That can be achieved only upon the circles of human connections, which our predecessors have created, and which we, I mean all of you, put effort to strengthen further.

Excellencies, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Let us give you time to look back the history between Japan and Finland tonight, on the occasion of our commemorative day of establishment of the two countries' diplomatic relations a hundred years ago. This year, the circles of our connection bear an abundance of flowers. As you might have joined, we have plenty of anniversary events such as Omikoshi and Roihuvuori Hanami festival, traditional Japanese concerts and exhibitions.

The fact that Japan and Finland are celebrating a 100 years of diplomatic relationships is something that we can all be thankful and proud of. It is not countries but the people in both countries who have built these relationships together, contributing time, knowledge and efforts, as well as extending hospitality towards each other during all these years. Let us continue in the same manner for the next 100 years to come.

Thank you again for joining us today and let us toast to the Enthronement of His Majesty the Emperor of Japan, celebration between Japan and Finland, and our lingering friendship with all of you. Kampai!