

**Remarks by H.E. Takashi Murata,  
Ambassador of Japan to Finland,  
“Japan Day” on 8 September**

Hyvää päivää,

My name is Takashi Murata. I arrived to Finland in April as the new Ambassador of Japan. Today I am most delighted to celebrate the opening of Japan Day with you.

I would like to express my deep gratitude to the co-hosts of this event with our Embassy: the Finnish-Japanese Society, the Friends of Japanese Culture Association, the Finnish Iaido Federation, and the Annantalo Arts Center. The Annantalo Arts Center hosting the venue of Japan Day is well known educational facilities dedicated to art education for children and young people in Helsinki.

I heard this is the 17th Japan Day. Japan Day is one of the major events with about 1,000 visitors to introduce Japanese culture in Finland. Today’s Japan Day is a special and historical to celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the diplomatic relations between Japan and Finland.

Today, the Annantalo Arts Center has changes into a school to teach Japanese culture for the whole day. Not only children but also adults can enjoy to experience a wide variety of Japan that will surely stimulate your curiosity and promote your interest in Japan.

To name a few, Nihon Buyo, a classical Japanese dance will be performed by Mr. Ichinosuke Umekawa from Japan in this hall. At our Embassy's booth, you can try on a Japanese yukata for children, an informal cotton kimono. At the Finnish-Japanese Society's booth, there are many copies of mini-encyclopedia of Japan written in Finish for free-distribution. They are compiled by the group of Japanese volunteers and have been updated after an interval of 12 years to commemorate the centenary of diplomatic relations between Japan and Finland. They were donated to schools and libraries across Finland this spring. Please read them to feel what Japan is like.

Finnish people refer to Japan as a "naapurin naapuri" (neighbour's neighbour). This implies an affinity between the two

countries such as a shared respect for courtesy and nature. Japan Day will renew our recognition of this. It is the very significance of celebrating our centenary.

Thank you. Kiitos paljon.

(End)