

**Address by Mr. OHASHI Kenji,  
Head of Cultural Affairs and Public Relations Section,  
“Kimono no kisetsu” Exhibition on 14 August 2021**

Distinguished guests,

I would like to extend my sincere congratulations on the opening of “Kimono no kisetsu” exhibition. I would also like to express my deep appreciation to those concerned from Japanitalo, Tampere Kimono Kitsuke Group and Arts Promotion Center Finland for making this event possible.

Although this is my first time to visit Japanitalo, it gives me a sense of affinity as if I came back to my home in Japan and even feel like saying “I am home”.

Japanitalo was built in 1998 as a symbol of friendship between Ranua and Iwasaki Village, current Fukaura Town, of Aomori Prefecture. Since then, Japanitalo has hosted various cultural events to introduce a wide variety of Japanese cultures such as the exhibitions of a picture scroll of The Tale of Genji and the woodblock paintings of The Fifty three stations of the Tokaido,

the concerts of koto and sho, traditional Japanese instruments, and the lectures of ikebana, haiku and taiko.

Japanitalo is therefore not merely an architecture of a Japanese-style house. It is indeed the very house where Japanese live and that offers you the opportunities to experience the actual Japanese life, culture and customs.

Allow me to reiterate my profound respect to you for taking care of Japanitalo for more than two decades and disseminating Japanese traditional cultures and life styles from here in Ranua.

2019 marked the centenary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Japan and Finland. It is the untiring efforts and enthusiasm by everyone here that lays the foundation for our bilateral solid relations. Furthermore, being able to organize this exhibition in spite of the COVID-19 situation well illustrates how strong our bilateral relationship is. This is truly reassuring for us.

Embassy of Japan will also continue to do our part in

supporting these endeavors.

Kimono, the theme of the exhibition today, is one of Japanese traditional cultures that have been passed on from generation to generation in our long history. Recently, there have been few opportunity to wear kimono in our daily life. However, on the important occasions of our life such as “Shichi-Go-San”, a festival day for children at the age of three, five and seven and coming-of-age ceremony, Japanese people wear kimono. This is because kimono highlights the dignified inner strength unique to the Japanese.

This exhibition offers you an excellent opportunity to experience the Japanese life style in harmony with nature as well as the sensitivity and the sense of beauty peculiar to the Japanese that have been nurtured in that life.

I sincerely hope that as many Finnish people as possible will visit this great exhibition.