

**Address by Amb FUJIMURA Kazuhiro
at the Opening of Finnish and Japanese Friendship
Photo Exhibition on 3 May**

Hyvää iltaa,

Arvoisat Mats Löfström, Jussi Nuorteva, Ando Eriko ja kaikki osallistujat.

Kiitos, että olette saapuneet suomalaisten ja japanilaisten ystävyys – valokuvanäyttelyyn avajaisiin. Arvoisat, Jukka Kosonen, Suomen Kameraseurojen Liitto, Finnfoto, Suomen valokuvataiteen museo, STT (Lehtikuva) ja sponsorit: Finnair, Canon, FUJIFILM ja JAL, kiitos, että järjestätte meidän kanssa tätä tapahtumaa.

Olen Fujimura Kazuhiro, Japanin Suomen-suurlähettiläs.

Hauska tavata teidät kaikki. Tulin Suomeen vasta kaksi viikkoa sitten.

Täällä ollessa haluaisin tutustua suomalaisiin ja suomalaisuuteen. Olen myös opetellut suomea viime aikoina. Haluaisin puhua suomea enemmän tänäänkin mutta tässä tilaisuudessa puhutaan englantia, joten now I speak English.

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

allow me to reiterate my sincere appreciation for your joining the opening of this photo exhibition. This event is the very first one that I host since I have assumed my duties as Ambassador of Japan to Finland. I have been looking forward to meeting everyone here in person.

122 applicants entered the photo contest for this exhibition. Among them, 97 applicants are Finnish while 25 are Japanese. Out of as many as 354 works submitted by them, 15 have been selected as excellent ones.

All of them are very fascinating and thought-provoking, expressing friendly relationship between Japan and Finland from various points of view. These works offer an excellent opportunity for us to ponder over our ties.

In 1792, thanks to tremendous support by Erik Laxman, a Finnish naturalist, Daikokuya Kodayu, a Japanese sailor whose ship was wrecked and drifted to Siberia, successfully returned to Japan. This year 2022 marks the 230th anniversary of Kodayu's return home.

In order to commemorate such warm friendship, our Embassy marks this year as "Finnish Japanese Friendship Year 2022". We are preparing this photo exhibition and various other events to add further momentum to the exchanges between our two countries.

I am just less than two weeks old in Helsinki, but I will devote myself to making a difference in the relationship that has been cherished by our predecessors over 200 years.

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

Kiitos vielä kerran, että saavuitte paikalle tänään.

Nauttikaa tästä illasta.

(End)