

**Address by Mr. OHASHI Kenji,  
Head of Cultural and Public Relations Section,  
“Laxman Exhibition” on 28 April 2022**

Mr. Nikke Kaartinen, Director of Savonlinna Museum,  
Mr. Tervo Kaskinen, Chair of Savonlinna City Council,  
Distinguished guests,

I would like to extend my sincere congratulations on the opening of “Laxman Exhibition”. I would also like to express my deep appreciation to Savonlinna Museum and the other co-hosting organizations for their great effort to make this exhibition possible.

In 1792, due to tremendous work by Erik Laxman, a Savonlinna naturalist, Daikokuya Kodayu, a Japanese sailor whose ship was wrecked and drifted to Russia, successfully returned to Japan, accompanied by Erik’s son, Adam Laxman. This year, 2022, marks the 230th anniversary of Kodayu’s return home that he yearned for for many years.

With regard to Erik Laxman, Savonlinna City organized a seminar in November 2019. The Erik Laxman's memorial plaque was also inaugurated in April last year. Furthermore, Erik Laxman's concert which I also enjoyed was organized last October. Today, we have another great event, the opening of Laxman's Exhibition here.

Such endeavors by Savonlinna City well illustrate that the friendship, which originated from the warm act of kindness of our predecessors over 200 years ago, has been continuing steadily to the present time and remains alive vigorously.

We would like to extend my deep appreciation to the people of Savonlinna for contributing greatly to this vibrant bilateral friendship that we enjoy now.

In order to commemorate our warm friendship, the Embassy of Japan marks this year as "Finnish and Japanese Friendship

Year 2022” and we are preparing for various events to further enhance bilateral exchanges and mutual understanding.

I conclude my remarks by wishing that this exhibition would be an excellent opportunity for us to recall a unique twist of fate between a Japanese and a Finnish over 200 years ago, and the warm friendship and solid relationship of trust between Finnish and Japanese peoples which have been cherished by our predecessors, thereby further strengthening our bilateral bonds.

(End)