

**Address by H.E. Ambassador FUJIMURA Kazuhiro
on the Occasion of the Opening of the 11th Nordic Association for Japanese
and Korean Studies
on 19 May 2022**

Vice Dean Minna Palander-Collin, Faculty of Arts, University of Helsinki,
His Excellency Ambassador Cheon JOONHO,
All presenters participating from all over the world,

Good morning. I am FUJIMURA Kazuhiro, Ambassador of Japan to Finland. I have assumed my duties as Ambassador since I arrived in Finland last month.

First, I would like to extend my sincere congratulations on the opening of the 11th Nordic Association for Japanese and Korean Studies, NAJAKS. I would also like to express my deep appreciation to University of Helsinki and all of those concerned for their efforts to make this conference happen.

I have learned that the NAJAKS is held in Helsinki for the first time in 12 years since 2010. It is my great pleasure to see the 11th NAJAKS is finally made possible today, after it was postponed in 2019 due to the COVID-19 situation.

With the first conference in Copenhagen in 1989, NAJAKS has been a widely recognized academic society where researchers present their achievements in a variety of Japanese and Korean studies covering history, philosophy, international relations, linguistics and others.

In this 11th NAJAKS, I am delighted researchers come from all over the world.

I highly evaluate such endeavors to promote a broad interest and understanding of Japan internationally. I would also like to express my profound respect to all the presenters who keep a keen interest in Japan and have been engaging in a wide range of Japanese studies.

When it comes to Japanese language, according to the statistics of Japanese Language Proficiency Test, JLPT, the number of examinees was only approximately 7,000 around the globe in 1984 when the first test began.

In 2021, however, the number rose significantly up to approximately 680,000 worldwide. This clearly illustrates a growing global interest toward not only Japanese language but also its culture, history, and entire society.

I conclude my remarks by wishing that this conference will encourage an active interaction among participants as well further promote their interest and understanding of Japan.

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