

**Address by H.E. Ambassador FUJIMURA Kazuhiro
at the Opening of “The Sense of Wonder VIII-A Straight Line” Exhibition
on 14 October 2022**

Intendentti Lotta Nylund, hyvät kutsuvieraat, hyvää iltaa. Olen Japanin Suomen-suurlähettiläs Fujimura Kazuhiro. On ilo tavata teidät kaikki.

Olen todella iloinen, että olemme voineet järjestää Tosen Iwasakin The Sense of Wonder – Suora viiva -näyttelyn. Haluan kiittää Villa Gyllenbergin museota ja kaikkia yhteistyökumppaneita, jotka ovat mahdollistaneet tämän näyttelyn.

Ms. Iwasaki is an active calligrapher home and abroad. Ms. Iwasaki has come to Helsinki following her recent exhibition in Lithuania. Due to the lingering COVID-19 situation, we, the Embassy of Japan, had not been able to organize such a face-to-face cultural event with a Japanese performer for almost 3 years.

A face-to-face cultural event is more appealing to the sensitivity of the participants as well as can arouse more sympathy than online one. Allow me to reiterate my deep appreciation to Ms. Iwasaki for visiting Finland.

This year 2022 is a special year for the friendship between Japan and Finland.

In 1792, thanks to support by Erik Laxman, a Finnish naturalist, Daikokuya Kodayu, a Japanese sailor whose ship had been wrecked and drifted to Siberia, successfully returned to Japan, which he had longed for for many years.

This year 2022 marks the 230th anniversary of Kodayu’s return home.

Historically, this is said to be the first Japanese-Finnish encounter.

The Embassy of Japan marks this year as “Finnish and Japanese Friendship Year 2022” and has been organizing various events in order for people to recollect our bilateral history of interaction as well as to further connect our strong bonds. This calligraphy exhibition is also one of such initiatives.

On the occasion of her visit to Japan in May, Prime Minister Marin held a summit meeting with our Prime Minister Kishida and referred to Japan as

“Trusted Partner”. Recently in New York, Prime Minister Kishida worked together with President Niinistö at the United Nations General Assembly last month.

Furthermore, lately, on behalf of Finland, Minister for Foreign Affairs Haavisto visited Japan to attend at the State Funeral for our former Prime Minister ABE Shinzo and had a meeting with Foreign Minister Hayashi.

These well illustrate that our bilateral amicable friendship that originated 230 years ago has been passed on to the present time steadily and vigorously.

I conclude my remarks by wishing that this exhibition would further deepen our robust friendship. The Embassy of Japan also will organize calligraphy workshops on 16 October at this museum. I hope that many people will come to experience and enjoy them. Kiitos.

(End)