

# Finland Independence Day Special

## Shared values see bonds thrive

**PEKKA ORPANA**  
AMBASSADOR OF FINLAND



On Dec. 6, 1917, the parliament of Finland approved the Declaration of Independence, which marked the start of the journey of our nation as an independent state.

This year, in addition to celebrating more than a centennial of independence, we have a very special reason to celebrate: 2019 also marks the 100th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Japan and Finland.

It is a significant and historical milestone for our official relations. Most importantly, however, it is a celebration for the friendly and booming relations between the Japanese and Finnish people. It is the individuals from many walks of life — such as artists, researchers, tourists, businessmen and women — who are tying up the knots in a vast network of connections that make up

our day-to-day relations.

As we celebrate the history of a century of Finnish-Japanese friendship, this is a good moment to observe what we have achieved together.

During the 100 years of official relations we have, from two fairly geographically and culturally distant countries, become strategic partners in international affairs, research and innovation. We have developed close relations in business and culture as well. Japan is one of our most important partners outside the European Union.

Today, at the beginning of the Reiwa Era, our relations are broader and closer than ever before.

Trade and investments between our countries are growing fast and breaking records. With the economic partnership agreement between Japan and the EU we believe that this positive trend will also continue.

As global leaders in innovation and research, Finnish and Japanese companies and research institutions have huge potential to further deepen their cooperation for future-orientated solutions. We have been particularly active in the health and energy

sectors of late.

Shared values are the cornerstone of our close political relations. Finland and Japan are likeminded when it comes to virtually all of the important international questions. We are strongly committed to rule-based international order and we both strive for peace and security in the world. This strong meeting of minds provides a firm basis to build our relations further in the years to come.

The growing interest of Finns and Japanese toward each other is also true in arts and culture. This centenary witnesses the largest cultural exchange activity ever between our two countries.

It is also remarkable to note how extensive and multifaceted our people-to-people relations are today. Take, as an example, the over 20 Japan-Finland friendship associations are working actively across Japan, extensive contacts between universities and research institutes, or the more than 40 weekly direct flights currently connecting our cities.

And the development does not stop there. Taking these direct flight connections as an example, our national airline Finnair will open new routes soon, flying



**Finland is a popular winter travel destination and home to the Moomins from Tove Jansson's classic series.** MIKI KASKELA / VISIT FINLAND

to Sapporo this month, and to Tokyo's Haneda Airport next March.

Overall, relations are booming and the future looks very bright. By combining our strengths we can together find sustainable solutions to national and global challenges of the future, like aging societies and climate change.

We are now getting close to the end of the 100th anniversary celebrations, but next year looks also very special. In and around the 2020 Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games we will have plenty of opportunities to be very active in promoting further relations with Japan.

*This content was compiled in collaboration with the embassy. The views expressed here do not necessarily reflect those of the newspaper.*

Congratulations

Republic of Finland on the  
102nd Anniversary of Independence



MEIJIRO(めいじろう)



Check out our state-of-the-art research

**Incredible Senseis** at Meiji University

[www.meiji.ac.jp/cip/english/incredible-senseis/](http://www.meiji.ac.jp/cip/english/incredible-senseis/)



1-1 Kanda-Surugadai, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 101-8301

[www.meiji.ac.jp/cip/english](http://www.meiji.ac.jp/cip/english)