

Rotary International, District 2650

Nara Oomiya Rotary Club

President 2025 – 2026 : Mr. Osamu Takano

Hyvä veli presidentti/Dear Mr. President,

I will write to you in Finnish to start with since you can please ask Asuka Kono to translate this.

Kiitos hienosta kirjeestänne, jonka Asuka Kono minulle toimitti hiukan alle vuosi sitten.

Ja erityinen kiitos siitä, että lähetitte Asuka Konon vaihto-oppilaaksi Lahteen rotary-vuodeksi 2025 - 2026. Hän on edustanut maatanne ja Japanin rotareita aivan erinomaisesti täällä Lahdessa, Suomessa ja Euroopassa.

Hyvin harva vaihto-oppilas oppii suomen kielen niin hyvin kuin Asuka on oppinut. Todella ihailtavaa lahjakkuutta ja sinnikkyyttä.

Olen myös vakuuttunut, että hän on päässyt sisälle antamiinne tehtäviin Suomen ja Pohjoismaiden toiminnan tarkastelussa, tosin onnellisuuden perusteiden selvittäminen lienee vaikeaa meille kaikille, koska osa siitä tulee kansan menneisyydestä ja luonteesta. Me Suomessa olemme kautta aikojen toimineet omassa maassamme toisten alaisuudessa joko Ruotsin tai Venäjän keisarikunnan osana. Se on rakentanut meille nöyrän ja omaan olemiseen tyytyväisen elämän asenteen. Tuo yhdessä pohjoismaisen hyvinvointivaltion sosiaalisen tuen kanssa antaa perusteet elämän pienillekin onnelle osalle.

Asuka vieraili aktiivisesti Lahti-Salpausselkä rotary-klubimme lounaskokouksissa ja ilahdutti meitä iloisella ja reippaalla olemuksellaan sekä erityisen kypsillä kokemuksilla vaihto-oppilasvuodesta. Hiljaisina ja ihailen seurasimme hänen esitelmäänsä ja kertomustaan vuodestaan. Kovin nopeasti tuo vuosi kului.

Kiitos, teillä on syytä olla ylpeitä tällaisista lahjakkaista ja rohkeista nuorista, jotka varmistavat tulevaisuutemme.

in English:

We are really grateful that you sent Ms. Asuka Kono to Finland and Lahti as an exchange student but also as a cultural representative of Japan and after a year here with us a cultural representative of both Japan and Finland. She has grown to that role during the year. Isn't this what rotary student exchange really is for ?

She has challenged herself in many ways in learning to live and communicate with us in Finland where almost everything has been new to her. And she has done great. I understand she has been respected by her friends as well.

She has taken seriously the assignment you have given her and I am positive you will hear from her about her findings that sound intelligent and mature.

I have been exposed to Japan both in 1980'ies and more so between 2002 -2005 when working in a Finnish company cooperating with Shimano in Europe. We sold Shimano's fish equipment in most of Europe. In that period I visited every year the Japanese Fishing tackle show in Tokio and also visited

Shimano's headquarters and factory in Osaka. The highlight of the factory visit was a dinner with Mr. Yoshi Shimano. Working with your countrymen gave me the feeling that it is natural for Finns to develop a relationship based on trust with you. I really enjoyed working with Shimano Europe and the Japanese management there.

I hope everything is fine with you and your rotary club in these times on great international turmoil.

Rotary connects us from different sides of the world and makes us understand that even though the physical distances are the same as they were 100 years ago rotary and modern communication take us closer to each other and increases understanding on ways to lead our lives in different parts of the globe. That is really the part of rotary that we appreciate a lot in our club.

Again thank you for letting us share a year in the life of Asuka Kono. She is a fine young lady and ready to accept challenges with courage and perseverance. Her logical thinking and mature deductive skills will take her to where ever she wants to go. We are blessed to have this kind of young people building the future for us.

If only there were a way of getting to see you and your club! Maybe we could fix a teams meeting between the clubs at some point now that Asuka can communicate in Finnish. Our club has weekly lunch meetings on Thursdays at 11 :45 – 13 :00. In summer time this would be 17 :45 – 19 :00 in your time and in winter 18 :45 – 20 :00. If only

I wish you all the best and a relaxing summer time plus an excellent rotary year 2026 -2027.

Parhain terveisin / Best regards



Pekka Kotiaho

President

Lahti - Salpausselkä rotary club 9876

District 1390