

A Toast by Ambassador Hayashi  
at Japan House London's  
Private Viewing of "KUMIHIMO: Japanese Silk Braiding by DOMYO"  
on Wednesday, 22 February 2023

Good evening,

My wife and I are delighted to be with you all here this evening for the privilege of taking part in this Private Viewing of "KUMIHIMO: Japanese Silk Braiding by DOMYO," in the presence of those who have come all the way from Japan for this exhibition, particularly Mr Domyo Kiichiro, the 10<sup>th</sup> generation of Domyo.

*Kumihimo* is one of Japan's proudest traditional art forms, combining practicality and beauty. Demonstrating both strength and flexibility, it is not only applied for making braids and cords but is also a source of delight for us with its intricate patterns and beautiful colours.

For many people, the word *kumihimo* probably conjures up images of *obijime*, cords which are tied on top of the sash, known as the *obi*, of a woman's kimono. My wife is wearing an *obijime* today. Of course, it is from Domyo!

*Kumihimo* was once used by aristocrats and samurai as a cord for carrying a sword around the waist. However, after the Japanese government banned the carrying of swords about 150 years ago, *kumihimo* was mainly used for *obijime*. Furthermore, today I am aware that there are many other possibilities for *kumihimo* besides kimono which surprisingly include the recent development of wearable sensors that make clever use of the flexible structure of *kumihimo*.

Through this exhibition, we will have the opportunity to "unravel" the history of *kumihimo*, which has developed new techniques and designs over the past 1,300 years, and has been used for a variety of purposes in line with the times. At the same time, we will be able to learn about the process of manufacturing *kumihimo* so that it incorporates both strength and elegance. No doubt we will all have our own ideas about how *kumihimo* may feature in our lives in the future.

Distinguished guests,

Now, let me ask you to join me in a toast. To the continued development of *kumihimo*, the success of this exhibition, the health and happiness of everyone taking part in this private viewing today, and the further strengthening of Japan-UK ties – as if our two countries were bound together by *kumihimo*! Cheers! Kampai!

Thank you very much. I hope you enjoy the rest of the evening.