

Remarks by H.E. Mr. HAYASHI Hajime,  
Ambassador of Japan to the UK  
at the Fukushima Reception  
hosted by Fukushima Prefecture  
8th July 2024

Governor Uchibori,  
Mayor Lane,  
Distinguished Guests,

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to Governor Uchibori for hosting this wonderful event in London and inviting many guests here to learn more about the progress being made in Fukushima today and what the Prefecture has to offer. I am also delighted to see many guests here who have supported Fukushima's recovery.

Since the Great East Japan Earthquake, tsunami and nuclear accident, Fukushima Prefecture has shown incredible resilience. The dedication and hard work of its people have transformed the region into a vibrant place once again. The Government of the UK lifted its import restrictions on Japanese food products based on scientific evidence almost two years ago, with the EU following suit a year later. This decision was testament to the safety and high quality of food produced in Fukushima and has allowed us to share even more of Japan and particularly Fukushima's culinary delights with the British people. Shortly afterwards, the Embassy, together with Fukushima Prefecture and Motomiya City, hosted a 'Thank You from Fukushima' reception to show our gratitude to the UK for lifting its restrictions, which was attended by over 200 people. Fukushima is now once again ready to show its superb delicacies and other charms to the world, starting with the UK.

Fukushima is not only a region undergoing recovery but is also an area rich in culture, natural beauty and distinctive cuisine. Last October for the first time in four years, the 13<sup>th</sup> Japan Matsuri was held in Trafalgar Square, drawing more than 40,000 people. Fruit and juice from Fukushima were served there with the cooperation of the Fukushima Prefectural Association and were incredibly well received by the attendees. Sake from Fukushima is also regularly served at receptions held at the Embassy and my residence is thus enjoyed by a wide variety of guests.

As you are aware, the recent State Visit of Their Majesties the Emperor and Empress of Japan to the UK has further strengthened the friendship between our two countries. With such a strong partnership evident between our two countries, I believe that it is possible to further strengthen the economic relationship between the UK and Japan by making people in the UK aware of the hidden attractions of individual prefectures, thereby helping to promote regional development – and, of course, that of Japan as a whole.

Last but not least, I would like to express my profound appreciation to everyone here involved in promoting Fukushima's charms. I trust your continued endeavours in this regard will contribute to further reinforcing the already strong friendship between Japan and the UK.

Thank you very much.