



Dear friends,

I am happy to greet you on the occasion of the opening of the exhibition “Japan–Russia Relations. History in Photographs”! In autumn of 2018, the exhibition was successfully held in Moscow, and now this wonderful show is about to open its doors to Saint Petersburg citizens as well!

It was in Saint Petersburg that the first Japanese language school was established in the early 18th century; it was here that the meeting of Japanese merchant Daikokuya Kōdayū and Empress Catherine II took place later in the same century, and the first Japan’s Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador to the Russian Empire, Enomoto Takeaki, took office in 1874. So, it did not take Saint Petersburg long after its foundation to become the cradle of Japanese studies in Russia and a crucial location for the Japan–Russia diplomatic relations, forever etched in history. It gives me the right to hope that people of this city are in the best position to duly appreciate the originality and significance of this exhibition, which, I believe, will be remembered both by citizens of Saint Petersburg and guests of the city as one the most exciting events of the Year of Japan in Russia.

In conclusion, I would like to express my willingness to further contribute to the development and strengthening of the relations between our countries and wholeheartedly thank everyone who took part in making this exhibition possible.

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Yasumasa Iijima
Consul General of Japan in Saint Petersburg