

Opening Remarks
Presented by NAITO Yasushi, Consul-General of Japan in Perth
On the occasion of the Hinata Mochitsuki Festival
Sunday September 29, 2024

I wish to start by acknowledging the traditional custodians of the land on which we meet tonight, the Whadjuk people of the Noongar Nation, and pay my respects to their elders, past, present and emerging.

I am NAITO Yasushi, Consul-General of Japan and I am here with my wife Harumi.

Welcome to Mochi pounding festival hosted by Hinata Cafe supported by the Consulate-General of Japan.

I thank Tomoe-san of Hinata Cafe for initiating and planning the event. We are so fortunate to have Hinata Cafe in Fremantle, a popular place for experiencing Japanese family food and enjoying exchange, a home for many of us.

Mochi pounding or Mochitsuki is a traditional custom in the New Year or more precisely between the 28-30th December to prepare for the New Year. Through Mochitsuki, we pray for a good harvest and prosperity of family and community. Rice signifies a source of vitality.

I see Mochi Ice is popular in Australia, but how you make Mochi traditionally is pounding steamed glutinous rice in a mortar called “Usu” with mallets called “Kine”, with another person kneading mochi and adding some water.

In Japan, Mochitsuki is a community event. Grown-ups teach children on traditional culture, food and teamwork while having fun.

When you pound mochi, timing is important to avoid any accident. Children must be supported by an adult. One caution you must all be aware of is that Mochi can be hard to swallow. It can get stuck in your throat. So, do not have it all at once but chew it well and eat it slowly.

Thank you also to the performers who agreed to showcase Japanese culture.

With that let us all enjoy Mochitsuki.

End