

【After completing “Okayama Marathon”】

Hello. This is Omori, Mayor of Okayama.

The commemorative first “Okayama Marathon” was taken place on November 8<sup>th</sup>. I took part in 4.5km marathon called fun run.

It took over a year to prepare it as the largest marathon competition in Chugoku and Shikoku region. While I was excited imagining over 14 thousand runners run through Okayama towns, I wondered if those about half of the whole participants from different prefectures could enjoy it. Also I couldn't have had enough practice due to a cold right before the competition, therefore I was anxious about running the whole 4.5km race. Having a mixed feeling of expectations and anxiety, the day finally came.

It was supposed to rain on the day according to the weather forecast and the weather was concerned, but “land of sunshine” had shown its potential and somehow it was managed to hang on to no rain. I went up to the starter stage to give a speech and saw a view with a large number of runners that I couldn't see the back. My body trembled with deep

emotion. Then fun run started. During 30 minutes running which was a short distance, people cheering us at the roadside waved their hands, I waved back, high fived. I ran through comfortably.

Right before the goal, one of my friends overtook me so I tried to pass him back but regrettably I couldn' t after all because of the crowd. It was a fabulous 4.5km race though.

After that, I moved to city light stadium which was the goal point and met full marathon runners. They gave me compliments about cheers at roadside and our hospitality. Moreover, I bumped into Yuko Arimori who served as the Special Ambassador of the competition at the stadium. She told me that it' s been 8 years since she took part in full marathon, so it crossed her head to have a little rest on her way to the goal, however, she was able to make it thanks to seamless cheers from people at the roadside.

I believe that we achieved a huge success as the first marathon competition.

This is because 14 thousands runners, 4,300 volunteers, 134 thousand people cheering at the roadsides, and everyone involved including companies, organizations and neighborhood associations gave great

support toward holding this event and the race was warmed up because of them. I'd like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank all of you.

According to an employee of RSK which broadcasted on live television, audience rate of marathon relay made a record of 20.6 percent and occupancy rate was, believe it or not, 50.3 percent. This means a half of people, who had been turning on TV in Okayama and Kagawa, were watching the marathon relay. I was so grateful. Please accept my sincerest thanks for cheering by people in front of TV.

I should've showed my appreciation to you much earlier, but I went on business trip to Taiwan, Hsinchu, where is one of Okayama's International friendship Cities, from 9<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> this month. So I couldn't write an email newsletter earlier. I apologize.

I would like to ask you a continuous strong support after next year so that "Okayama Marathon" will be established as a major representable sporting event not only in Okayama but also Chugoku Shikoku regions.