

**Remarks by HE Ambassador Jota Yamamoto for the Unveiling of the Watanabe Family Plaque at Dunckerinkatu 2, Helsinki, on 12 June 2018**

Ambassador Gustafsson, dear colleagues,

This is my great honor to join this occasion. Today is the Helsinki Day, we have Ms. Haavisto representing the City of Helsinki, time is right and the plaque is already a part of the landscape of Helsinki. I would like to thank Professor Vesterinen & Mr. Enestam for this beautiful arrangement.

As the plaque says, the Watanabe family has built many bridges between our two countries. The spirit has been consistently inherited by Dr. Eimi Watanabe and family members as well as Japani-Suomi Yhdistys. The kind attendance today of Mr. Säilä & Mr. Pitkänen and many precious friends speaks volumes to the value of such bridging.

Mr. Chujo Watanabe may be pleased to know that the Japanese journalists keep close eyes upon Finland. I actually received and talked to the big delegation of the Japanese press last night, and their attention to Finland is clearly expanding in the context and enhancing in the content. From Chujo's Kyodo News, we have today its correspondent from London (Ito-san), this is another story good to know.

Mr. Akeo Watanabe may be pleased to know that music remains a powerful engine to promote our friendship. Koto & kantele collaboration is a nice example, which we arranged to commemorate the 100 years anniversary of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland. In upcoming August, 60 members of NHK Tokyo Children's Chorus will come to join the music festival in Espoo. Akeo's Japan Philharmonic Orchestra is supposed to visit Finland next year, to mark Japani-Suomi 100.

Mr. Tadao-Daniel & Mrs. Siiri Watanabe may be pleased to witness the mutual appreciation between the two nations. Now we Japanese in Finland and you Finns in Japan have no doubt on the value of face-to-face partnership. The training squadron of Japan's Maritime Self-Defense Forces will come back again to Helsinki in August, and 580 young officers and crew will cherish & demonstrate such partnership.

We all will never forget the Watanabe family for their precious dedication, precious orientation. We again commemorate it today, and we will keep it very firmly in our heart forever.