

**Remarks by H.E. MURATA Takashi,
Ambassador of Japan to Finland,
Wadaiko Event on 11 January 2020**

Ladies and gentlemen,

Happy New Year. I am truly delighted to hold this event at the beginning of the New Year 2020.

I would like to express my deep appreciation to Mr. SATOU Kensaku, Wadaiko, Japanese drum player, and Mrs. NISHIMURA Yukino, MC, who came to Finland from Japan for this event. My appreciation also goes to the members of Finnish Wadaiko Association as co-organizer of this event and all the other people concerned for their efforts.

Praised as “The man chosen by the spirit of the Japanese drum” for the unique way of playing, high level of skills and excellent ability of expression, Mr. SATOU Kensaku has been very active domestically and internationally. In September 2018, Mr. SATOU held a Wadaiko workshop and concert in Helsinki. A lot of Finnish audience was deeply fascinated by his impressive Wadaiko performances.

Today not only Mr. SATOU but also the members of Finnish Wadaiko Association will perform and their collaboration will also be played. I am very pleased to see Wadaiko, a Japanese traditional culture, has been very popular and spreading here in Finland.

Last year marked the centenary of diplomatic relations between Japan and Finland. So many commemorative events were held in both countries. These events have renewed my recognition that our solid relationship of trust has not been developed by efforts at government-level only. In fact, activities at the grassroots-level represented by Finnish Wadaiko Association have been proving great supports.

This year marks the opening of new century of our diplomatic relations. On top of this, Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games will be held in summer for the first time in 56 years. This offers Finnish people a significant occasion to realize how Japan has been recovering from the Great East Japan Earthquake of 2011 as well as to enjoy various Japanese attractions.

I sincerely hope this meaningful year for Japan and Finland will be fruitful and prosperous for people of both countries. I also hope our amicable relationship cherished over the past 100 years will develop even strongly as the sound of Wadaiko and prosper everlastingly.