

**Remarks**  
**Presented by NAITO Yasushi, Consul-General of Japan in Perth**  
**On the occasion of the 2023 Iaido National Championships**  
**and Seminar in Perth**  
**Saturday September 23, 2023**

Ishido Shizufumi Sensei,  
Morishita Kazuki Sensei,  
Dr. Marcus Lee-Steere, Chair of Australian Kendo Renmei Iaido Board,  
Members of the Australian Kendo Renmei, including Mr Ian Thomason,  
Members of the West Australian Kendo Renmei,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is great honour to be invited to 2023 Iaido National Championship and seminar, and I thank the Australian Kendo Renmei Iaido Board for kindly extending an invitation to me and my wife Harumi. I am NAITO Yasushi, Consul-General of Japan in Perth, representing the Government of Japan in Western Australia.

It is with extreme honour that I join you in welcoming the esteemed Ishido Sensei Hanshi 8 dan and Morishita Sensei Kyoshi 8 dan from Japan to Western Australia. This is the very first visit of globally acclaimed Ishido Sensei to Australia. It has finally materialized after many years of efforts, and he decided to visit here in Perth with Morishita Sensei.

Iaido is derived from methods of using the Nihonto 日本刀 that emerged in the Muromachi period in 14<sup>th</sup> century Japan. The object of Iaido is to learn to draw the sword instantly to overcome sudden attack by an aggressor. It is a 'way' in which practitioners seek to train the mind and body through developing a spiritual appreciation of the relationship between life and death, movement and stillness.

I am fortunate to have a close association with some of the colleagues from West Australian Kendo Association, who are active in sharing the skills of Iaido through demonstrations at Japanese festivals.

It is encouraging to learn that Iaido has a long history in Australia, having established in 1970s and continuing to gain popularity in the past 50 years through support from Japan

with seminars and training sessions, and through the passion of the art between Australian and Japanese practitioners.

People-to-people bonds between Australia and Japan is the most important asset of our bilateral relationship. It was during these 50 years that friendship between our two countries has grown remarkably. I read the results of an opinion poll by the Lowey Institute earlier this year showing trust in Japan marked 85% among Australians and it was higher than any other countries.

Prime Minister Kishida visited Perth one year ago, in realization of mounting importance of Japan-Australian relations including energy and resources, agricultural products such as udon noodle wheat, and security cooperation to uphold international order based on values including rule of law, democracy and human rights.

But the important thing is that this special partnership is always supported by broad interactions among the people of Australia and Japan. The opinion poll shows a high level of mutual trust has been forged among our two nations in different fields over the years, and laido is certainly one of them. It is wonderful to know that various concepts using Japanese language, including values and philosophy, are shared, such as “Ma-ai”, “Kihaku”, and even “Kaso-teki” in laido.

People-to-people bonds are the most important asset between Australia and Japan and I sincerely wish our friendship through laido will continue to grow and flourish in the years to come.

I hope you have fruitful seminar and national competition over the next three days.

Thank you for your attention.

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