

Good evening,

It is my great pleasure to say a few words in this evening's Closing Ceremony of the 45<sup>th</sup> Australian Kendo Championships. My wife Kaoru and I were really looking forward to coming here today as this is the first time we have watched the kendo championships.

First of all, I am very delighted to see so many people learning and practicing Kendo in Australia. I understand that here in Victoria, there are currently 12 Kendo dojos and clubs - it is wonderful that Japanese martial arts such as Kendo is so accessible here.

Now that the *taikai* (大会) is officially over, I would like to say to all the participants, お疲れ様でした！ Well done to everyone, and congratulations to the winners. I am sure that all of you have worked so hard for today, and it must have been difficult at times to keep going and not give up. I would like to congratulate all participants for their relentless efforts and hard work. Due to my schedules, I was only able to watch the Men's Dan Team Championships but I could not take my eyes off at all during the matches! I am sure everyone in this hall felt the same! I have no experience in any forms of Budo (武道), but my wife Kaoru does kyudo, so I know that in Budo such as Kendo and Kyudo it is extremely important to train the body as well as the mind with great care.

As you continue with Kendo in the future, I hope you will remember the true purpose of Kendo – self-discipline and the cultivation of one's mind and body. These mindsets will certainly help you in many situations in your life as you go along.

Last but not least, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the Australian Kendo Renmei (AKR) and the Victorian Kendo Renmei (VKR) for their continued support and promotion of Kendo in Australia and for organizing this weekend's competition as well as the upcoming Kendo seminar starting tomorrow. I would like to also thank MIZUTA sensei and URA sensei for coming all the way from Japan, and all the participants, supporters, shinpan and volunteers for making this event possible.

Thank you for listening.