

## Martial Arts Cultural Exchange Programme Connecting Japan and New Zealand

Dear Budo-ka from both countries  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Consulate General of Japan in Auckland, I would like to extend my sincere congratulations on the occasion of the Martial Arts Cultural Exchange Programme Connecting Japan and New Zealand.

Diplomacy is a work of words. From prime minister's statements to joint declarations by heads of state, words are carefully crafted to implement the diplomatic agenda. But words alone, without action, do not inspire confidence. We need actions to back up our words.

Since the end of World War II, Japan has pursued diplomacy for peace, and earned the trust of the international community. The source of trust is not only diplomatic relations between countries, but also the bonds between people. Martial Arts are good example of this. In the process of widening and deepening through globalisation, Japanese Martial Arts have steadily contributed to deepening understanding and trust in Japan.

Daily practice with sensei (master) and dojo-colleagues creates a bond that needs no words to intervene. I would like to emphasise that this bond is the foundation of trust between Japan and New Zealand.

The Nippon Budo-kan is the institution that can host the gathering of all Budo-ka of different disciplines. I would like to express my sincere appreciation for this opportunity. I am very much looking forward to the demonstration with my best wishes for a success.

12 November 2023

Deputy Consul General of Japan in Auckland  
OTASHIRO Mio