

**Speech by Mr. Nobutaka Shionomiya,
Ambassador of Japan to Portugal
On the occasion of the “ Second Japan Fest ”
June 2nd 2012, Lisbon**

Mrs. Catarina Vaz Pinto, Vereadora of Culture of Lisbon City Hall,
Ambassador António Santana Carlos, Diplomatic Advisor to the Mayor,
Mrs. Luísa Lino, President of the Portugal-Japan Friendship Association,
Excellencies, dear colleagues of the Diplomatic Corps,
Distinguished guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Boa tarde!

Welcome to the “Second Japan Fest in Lisbon”!

I am very pleased to be here with you, at the opening ceremony of “the Japan Fest” held in the “Garden of Japan” in Lisbon.

First of all, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the Mayor and the City Council of Lisbon; the Portugal-Japan Friendship Association and the members of Japan NET; EGEAC (Empresa Gestao de Equipamentos Animacao Cultural, E.E.M.) as well as to all those who have contributed in making today’s event possible.

Today’s festival is the second “Japan Fest” to be held following that of last October. This time, it is organized as part of the “Festa da Cidade”, an event programmed by the Lisbon city. So we have worked even closer with Lisbon city than last year to realize today’s event for you. We are also particularly honoured that this “Japan Fest” is the first of the many upcoming events of the Lisbon Festival.

Have you heard of the “Natsu-matsuri” or the Japanese Summer Festival? Since Japan is blessed with a rich and varied unique four seasons, we have a tradition of celebrating the season by having a festival. So one of the goals of this “Japan Fest” was to bring the Japanese “Natsu-matsuri” to

Lisbon. In addition to “Natsu-matsuri”’s role as entertainment and bringing the community closer, it was also thought that one could meet with the spirit of the ancestors, who were believed to return to their family, during the festival.

About five centuries ago, Portuguese sailors left this very place of Belem to discover the new parts of the World and have accidentally reached Tanegashima, an island in the southern part of Japan. Our old and long friendly relationship all began from here, where the beautiful Tejo River still streams today.

I think it is very meaningful to be able to hold a “Natsu-matsuri” in such a historical place, and to be reminded of our ancestors’ achievements, and think of our further friendship between Japan and Portugal.

Lastly, I would like to inform you that the band of “Wadaiko”, the Japanese drums, is an essential ingredient of the “Natsu-Matsuri” are here with us today. There will be a programme of “Bon odori”, a traditional Japanese folk dance as well. So I hope you will get to take part in these events, and enjoy the Japanese “Matsuri”!

Muito obrigado!