

MESSAGE FROM CONSUL-GENERAL TAKAKO ITO

December 2018

The official residence of the Consul-General has been a venue for dinners, lunches and receptions so that we can build a network of people and exchange ideas and information. In November, however, we organized a few things there that were a little different from usual.

First was the seminar and tasting to promote Japanese whiskey. As part of the Japanese Government's "Japan Brand Program", Mr. Hajime Kunai, Director of the internationally celebrated distiller Hombu Shuzo Co. Ltd., toured Toronto, Nashville and Washington DC. While he was in Toronto, we held a number of events promoting Japanese whiskey, including a seminar and tasting at my official residence. A slide show presentation was given on: the history of whiskey's production and consumption since the time of its arrival to Japan



until today; locations of whiskey distillers in Japan; and the reasons behind different tastes of whiskey. Afterwards, there was a Q&A session, a tasting and a buffet dinner in which we tried pairing whiskey with Japanese food. In attendance were over 30 guests comprised of representatives of local organizations of whiskey aficionados, executives of the Liquor Control Board of Ontario (LCBO), distributors, vendors and others. They listened to the presentation attentively, and later lauded the quality of the whiskey they tasted. Guests were informed of the brands they were already able to purchase in stores in Ontario. With regard to those still unavailable here, the LCBO executives who were present gave high praise to the samples we provided, and set up a subsequent meeting with the intent to import them in the future. After researching into what Japanese cuisine might go with whiskey, the official residence's chef served dishes with robust seasoning such as grilled salted squid and pork kakuni (braised pork belly). The guests happily ate the food, some saying this was the first time they had such Japanese cooking.

Then on Nov. 6, we held a lunch to promote food products from Ehime Prefecture. Among the invited guests were food importers, restaurateurs, food writers and others. Next to luxurious boat displays of food decorated with traditional Iyo



including its oranges, were devastatingly affected. Nevertheless, they aimed high to expand marketing overseas, and this resulted in their visit to Toronto. Attendants were very interested in such information as how oranges and chocolates were used for farming fish. Several days later, a food writer for the Globe and Mail commented that the soufflé made of Ehime yam and fish was the very best thing she had eaten this year. I was at once extremely delighted and proud to hear this.

Mizuhiki paper strings, Mr. Ryuji Tadokoro, the Director-General of Ehime Prefecture's Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Department, provided information on fish farmed in Ehime such as sea bream, amberjack and mackerel. He also gave explanations on the region's bounties from land such as yam and shiitake mushrooms, as well as Unshu oranges and other citrus fruits. Guests enjoyed the scrumptious cuisine prepared by the chef who traveled from Ehime to be in charge of the food preparations. Ehime suffered torrential rains this past summer, and agricultural products,



On the evening of Nov. 14, we co-hosted a panel discussion entitled "How can young Japanese professionals pave their ways to the next level in the Canadian society?" The other co-host was MUSUBU, a local organization made up of



Japanese and Japanese Canadian young professionals. Along with me on the panel was Mr. Gary Kawaguchi, a third-generation Japanese Canadian who founded and is president of his own insurance company. The content of the discussion is due to be published in TORJA, a local free Japanese language magazine, but I can tell you now that the hour-long talk and the subsequent Q&A

were full of youthful energy, resulting in a lot of questions and opinions being exchanged. The participants had time before and after the panel discussion to

network, and it was apparent that meaningful exchanges of information were taking place among young Japanese and Japanese Canadians working hard within the local community.

At the official residence, we are able to hold lectures and seminars with about 30 seats. For standing receptions, our capacity indoors is about 60 people, but we can welcome over a 100 during the summer months when we can open the patio and the backyard. We have held receptions for participants on the Kakehashi Program who've returned from Japan and offered us feedback, as well as simply for network building. We have held awards ceremonies for recipients of the Orders of the Rising Sun and Foreign Minister's Commendations. We've also held small seminars on Japanese diplomacy.



The official residence is the property of the government of Japan, so I plan to continue holding events there which promote diplomatic objectives through gatherings that promote understanding about Japan, initiate economic exchanges, promote exchange between Japanese and Canadians and more, while also taking into consideration people's suggestions.

We are now into December. The year when we held various events to celebrate the 90th anniversary of Japan-Canada diplomatic relations is about to come to a close. The start of this winter seems later and warmer than last year, but please pay attention to your health and have a happy holiday season!