

MESSAGE FROM CONSUL-GENERAL SASAYAMA TAKUYA

October 2022



October in Ontario is a time to enjoy autumn to the fullest. The weather turns cold after Thanksgiving weekend, but the occasional warm days bring some relief. Daylight saving time will come to an end after Halloween as will the brief fall season.

Promoting Ontario sake and whiskey

On Oct. 1, the Kampai Toronto sake festival was held at the Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre (JCCC) for this first time in three years. This is an event that has been taking place for over 10 years, and it returned to in-person attendance after a period of only being online due to COVID. Prior to the doors opening to the public, an event directed at media and restaurant industry representatives was hosted by JETRO Toronto, and pairings of sake with Japanese dishes was also conducted as an initiative of JFOODO (The Japan Food Product Overseas Promotion Center), that has been established as a part of JETRO with the aim of boosting the export of Japanese agricultural, forestry, fishery and food products. Celebrated Sake Samurai Michael Tremblay spoke passionately to the enthusiastic Canadians who filled the venue. The public portion of the event was attended by a sold-out crowd of over 500 people. Many sake brewers visited from Japan, and they were able to witness the incredible popularity here of such Japanese alcoholic products as sake, shochu and liqueurs first-hand as they served their products at the event.



At around the same time, LCBO (Liquor Control Board of Ontario) President and CEO George Soleas was in Japan at the invitation of the Government of Japan. In fact, this visit had been planned since before the pandemic but had to be postponed for nearly two and a half years. Dr. Soleas enthusiastically completed his itinerary stretching over nearly 10 days, meeting with such Japanese government officials as the Commissioner of the National Tax Agency, as well as sake brewers and industry representatives. He also took part in the Tokyo Sake Festival 2022 being held at the time. He also left Tokyo to visit Kobe and Kyoto. In Kobe, he sampled some famous Kobe beef and visited a traditional Japanese brewery. He was thus able to experience not only Japanese sake and whiskey but also matcha tea and various other aspects of Japanese culture.

Japanese alcoholic beverages are already quite popular in Ontario. Hopefully sales will grow even further in the future.



Ohara-ryu Ikebana Headmaster's Toronto Visit

Ohara-Ryu, one of the major schools of ikebana flower arranging, saw its headmaster, Mr. OHARA Hiroki, visit Toronto at the beginning of October as a leading instructor at the North American Ohara Teacher Association's major conference. The conference is held in various places every year, and the headmaster himself participates every two years at a major conference. This year, the conference was held in Toronto, and I was given the rare opportunity to witness a demonstration by the headmaster himself. He was introduced to ikebana as a child and inherited the title of Iemoto (headmaster) at a very young age. He has gone on, however, to influence other schools of ikebana with his innovative methods. "*Onkochishin*" is a saying in Japanese that means "learn from the past", and I was once again impressed by the intensity and strength of Japanese traditional culture.

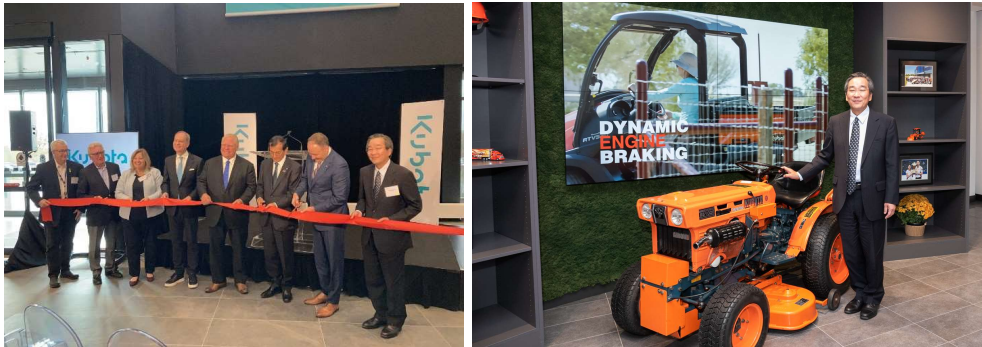


Opening of Kubota's New Headquarters in Pickering

Kubota, a major Japanese manufacturer of agricultural equipment, has established its new Canadian headquarters in Pickering as it expands its business in this country. The Oct. 12 opening ceremony was attended by its President, Mr. KATO Yuichi, and other executives from Kubota's head office in Osaka, as well as: the Hon. Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario; the Hon. Lisa Thompson, Ontario Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, and other local dignitaries. Premier Ford expressed his appreciation for this investment from Japan, and stated that the Ontario economy is supported by the daily hard work of every employee at such facilities. He added that

demand for agricultural equipment increased during the pandemic due to an increase in hobby farming. (The yards of Canadian residential homes are of considerable size.) Kubota has established a system by which it can deliver its products to anywhere across Canada from Pickering.

The opening ceremony was widely covered by local television stations, and the day attracted a lot of attention to investments from Japan.



WorldSkills Competition

One of the events of the WorldSkills Competition was held in Brampton, a suburb of Toronto. This international tournament was originally scheduled to be held in Shanghai, but its cancellation due to the pandemic was announced June this year. As an alternative, it was decided that this year's event will be held in 15 countries around the world. Canada was selected as the venue for the first event (industrial mechanics), and Denso employees participated as representatives of Japan.

I was able to go witness the three-day competition. In order to maintain fairness, I was not able to talk to the competitors themselves, but was able to hear from the competition organizers, as well as other representatives of DENSO. The age of the competitors went up to 22 years old, and I understand this competition is also effective in nurturing the younger generation. The industrial mechanics division drew competitors from Switzerland, Germany, Liechtenstein, Mongolia, Taiwan, South Korea, and Canada. The questions were very sophisticated and difficult, but each competitor worked hard to meet the challenge.

On the last day, we received happy news from the organizers – namely, that the Japanese competitors brilliantly won the gold medal. My heartfelt congratulations to them.

