

MESSAGE FROM CONSUL-GENERAL SASAYAMA TAKUYA

November 2022

The change of seasons quickens in November, and our first major snowfall occurred in the Niagara Region around the middle of the month.

At the same time, this is the season in Canada when a wide variety of charity events are held. I myself participated in one held in Milton and Brampton by the foundation named after Tiger Jeet Singh, who was a recipient of this year's Japanese Foreign Minister's Commendation. Many families came out despite the cold, enjoying musical performances and shopping stalls, as well as toys gathered to be distributed among children. When Tiger began this event more than 10 years ago, people apparently said to him, "How can you be Santa Clause when you are Indian?" In contrast, today this is a local event eagerly awaited by everyone. There will be many similar events as we head into December.



Consul-General Sasayama with
Mssrs. Tiger Jeet Singh and Tiger
Jeet Singh Jr.



At the charity event

Foreign Minister's Commendation Conferred to Mr. NAKAJIMA Shoji, former Secretary General of the Toronto Japanese Association of Commerce and Industry (Shokokai)

On Nov. 7, we visited the home of Mr. NAKAJIMA Shoji, former Secretary General of the Toronto Japanese Association of Commerce and Industry (Shokokai), to confer upon him this year's Foreign Minister's Commendation. Mr. Nakajima held this position for 17 years from 1989 to 2006. He was also the Executive Secretary of the Japanese School of Toronto Shokokai for over 20 years. He is credited with laying the operational foundation of the Shokokai and of the Japanese School.

The conferment ceremony was attended by Mr. HIDAKA Tatsuji, the current President of the Shokokai, and Mr. ITO Yoshikazu, the Association's present Secretary General. In the presence of Mr. Nakajima's family, we asked him about his memories of his time as Secretary General. Mr. Nakajima was with at Fuji Bank at the time. After working as the Toronto branch manager, he continued to reside in Toronto. He witnessed how number of Japanese companies and Japanese students in Toronto would increase and decrease over time. There even was a period when the Japanese School of Toronto Shokokai was divided between two buildings. I was made poignantly aware that the Japanese community in Toronto today is founded on the efforts of our predecessors such as Mr. Nakajima. In my August message, I reported on three recipients of the Foreign Minister's Commendation, and with Mr. Nakajima, the number of this year's recipients became four. This year also marks the 65th anniversary of the Shokokai, making this a recognition that took place in a truly memorable year.



Consul-General Sasayama visits Mr. Nakajima's home to confer the Japanese Foreign Minister's Commendation.

Conferring the Consul-General's Commendations onto Michelin Chefs

The Toronto edition of the internationally celebrated Michelin Guide was published for the first time in September this year. Starred restaurants in the Toronto area totalled 13, of which five serve Japanese cuisine, or washoku. Washoku is listed as a UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage, and its promotion is one of the mandates of the Government of Japan.

Washoku has already made a big impact in Toronto, and this new development will be an opportunity to garner even more attention. As Consul-General of Japan, I decided to present commendations to the five chefs in November. All of them have had tremendously successful careers with washoku and are sure to be invaluable in its promotion in the future.

I sincerely hope that the popularity of washoku will continue to grow, and that people will better understand how to fully enjoy Japanese food. I also hope that these talented chefs will further spread the tradition of washoku for the sake of their successors and industry representatives.



From left to right: Chef NAKAGAWA Ryusuke; Chef SAITO Masaki; Consul-General Sasayama; Chef Jackie Lin; Chef IZUTSU Daisuke



The Consul-General with Chef HASHIMOTO Masaki and his family

Toronto Japanese Association of Commerce and Industry (Shokokai) Job Fair

On Nov. 27, the first Toronto Shokokai's Job Fair was held at City Hall in downtown Toronto by the Toronto Japanese Association of Commerce and Industry. There are many students from Japan studying at schools around Toronto, as well as Japanese language learners of various ages and backgrounds. However, students who wished to find jobs which utilized their Japanese language skills used to have to try on their own. The Shokokai reached out to Japanese companies and invited them to this job fair, which focused on Japanese-speaking students, as well as local Japanese residents looking for work, in order to create opportunities for job seekers and potential employers to meet. This was the first such event in Canada.

The day began in the morning with a discussion by representatives of the Japanese business community, who enthusiastically talked to the students and working holiday visa holders about the content and rewards of their work. Nearly 15 Japanese companies also set up booths and met with students and job seekers. I could feel the passion of businesspeople, job seekers, and students filling the venue. It was also striking to see jthems talking while wearing amicable yet serious expressions. About 300 students and local Japanese residents registered to participate. Boston is famous among cities in North America where similar job fairs take place. Although this was the first time such a event was held in Toronto, I hope it will continue in the future and provide beneficial opportunities for both businesses,students, and Japanese residents seeking employment.



From the Toronto Japanese Association of Commerce and Industry (Shokokai) Job Fair