

MESSAGE FROM CONSUL-GENERAL SASAYAMA TAKUYA

January 2023

Happy New Year!

It is now the fifth year of the Reiwa Era. I wish everyone a safe, healthy and prosperous 2023.

Japanese Prime Minister KISHIDA Fumio visited Ottawa on Jan. 12 and met with Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. Japan will host the G7 Summit Meeting in May in Hiroshima, and a number of ministerial meetings will take place in accordance. It was also announced that a business mission will be dispatched from Japan to Canada in March and from Canada to Japan in October. At the provincial level, Ontario's Minister of Infrastructure Kinga Surma and Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs Lisa M. Thompson will be visiting Japan this month. We have truly jumpstarted the year in a way worthy of the Year of the Rabbit.

On Jan. 22, the Japanese Canadian Cultural Center (JCCC) held its New Year's Festival (Oshogatsukai) in-person for the first time in three years. More than 1,000 tickets were sold in advance, and 150 volunteers participated, making it a very lively event. The JCCC will also celebrate its 60th anniversary this year.

The JCCC's New Year's Festival



Giving Remarks



I took it upon myself to do a kakizome (New Year's calligraphy) under the guidance of the 2022 Foreign Minister's Commendation Recipient MAEDA Noriko.



1. Visiting Foley Artist KOYAMA Goro

There are many Japanese doing amazing things in Ontario, and among them is acclaimed foley artist. KOYAMA Goro, Foley refers to one of the methods by which sound is added to movies to accompany the visuals. I must confess I did not know such a profession existed until I read about Mr. Koyama in a magazine. Cinema, of course, entails hearing the actors' dialogue. We hear explosions in action movies and spaceships flying in science fiction films. Foley involves an actual person (the foley artist!) recording and inserting everyday sounds such as the characters walking or sitting – all in accordance with what is happening on the screen.

Touring the foley studio with Mr. Koyama





Shortly into the New Year, I had the privilege of visiting the studio where Mr. Koyama works, and he kindly provided a look at an actual recording session taking place.

There were a wide variety of props at the studio. As there are always “footsteps” which permeate the visuals, Mr. Koyama’s apparently starts his work by recording the sound of footfalls. He uses a variety of shoes in order to create different kinds of footsteps. The sound of walking on sandy beaches, caves, rocky hills and elsewhere might be needed, and they are created sometimes by stepping on bags filled with pebbles and sand. Even rice can be used in certain situations! The foley artist removes the sound recorded live in the footage on which he is commissioned to work, then Mr. Koyama starts creating and recording sounds matching the movements of the actors. These sounds are recorded by mics stationed nearby, on the ceiling, as well as a distance away. Two technicians use a computer to match the timing of the recorded sound to the screen. After the footsteps, they start to work on the sound of other props and movements. The requirements of different scenes are endless, including: the sounds of cooking a meal; typing on a typewriter; making a phone call; and more. The black dial-up telephones and the typewriters stored in the studio are put to work. Knives and swords are used for period dramas. There are often multiple characters, of course, and sounds are produced and inserted with impeccable timing for each of them. The work in the studio is very efficient and also appears extremely fun. The finished footage makes you feel as though you are actually on location thanks to the foley work of Mr. Koyama, who is truly a wizard with sound.



Producing sound with staff from The Japan Foundation, Toronto, and Momo Films



Mr. Koyama even allowed our group to participate in foley work. We happened upon a scene in which a crowd of people are walking back and forth and were permitted to produce the accompanying sound. It was extremely fun to try. I was impressed by how a wide variety of sounds can be produced simply by walking.

Mr. Koyama, who has worked on several major Hollywood films and won an Emmy Award in 2012, is sought after by many filmmakers. Those who produce the visuals of a film often are not told how the sound effects are created, and, of the many sounds that are inserted, it is ultimately the director who decides which to keep. There may be scenes in which the sound of Mr. Koyama walking can be heard clearly, but in others all of the sound effects are erased and replaced by an orchestral soundtrack. Everyday sounds are

something to be taken for granted and should not seem “manufactured” to the audience of the film. You could say that Mr. Koyama’s work is as far behind the scenes as it can be. The realistic feel of the visuals, however, would not be possible without experts like Mr. Koyama.

The ways to consider production of film and visuals seem to differ according to geography, the producer’s outlook, historical development, cultural differences, and other factors. There are producers who place importance on orchestral music, and even those who intentionally insert sounds of poor quality. Foley artists must accommodate such varying demands. According to Mr. Koyama, for example, the sound of people getting cut by swords in Japanese samurai movies were intentionally created by sound specialists at the request of the famous KUROSAWA Akira. The historical background behind the footage can also differ, and adding modern, high-quality sound to old visuals may prove unsuitable at times. I was able to hear many such insightful accounts that day and was actually able to gain some first-hand experience. From this point forward, I wish to pay closer attention to sound every time I watch anything cinematic.

2. Follow-up Meeting to the Asia-Pacific Foundation of Canada’s (APF) Canadian Women-only Business Mission to Japan

This past December, the APF Canada sent about 40 female entrepreneurs on its Second Canadian Women-only Business Mission to Japan. As a follow-up, a hybrid meeting among the delegates was held at my official residence on Jan. 20, providing an opportunity to share their accomplishments and to discuss future possibilities.

In order to strengthen Japan’s international economic relations, our overseas diplomatic missions monitor pertinent developments abroad and actively support such specific initiatives.

The main focus of this mission was on “health care” and “clean technologies”, and the delegates visited Tokyo, Yokohama, Osaka, and Kyoto. Various accounts of the mission’s accomplishments were shared at the follow-up meeting. The delegates reported on completing a number of contracts as well as numerous on-going negotiations and establishing connections with Japanese companies. They expressed their determination to continue nurturing the connections resulting from this mission.



**Pamela Vitale, COO
DIAGNOSTICS BIOCHEM CANADA Inc.**



**Iris Redinger, CEO
MATERIAL FUTURES**

I would like to introduce two Canadian entrepreneurs who participated in the mission.

DIAGNOSTICS BIOCHEM CANADA Inc. (DBC)
Pamela Vitale, COO

As the population ages, immune testing has become an indispensable tool for detecting and preventing cancer, diabetes, and heart disease. DBC has been involved in the development and sales of immunoassay kits for close to 50 years. They already have a track record of delivering their products to hospitals in Europe and the US. Ms. Vitale says she participated in this mission in order to build relationships with the Japanese market, which is the largest in the Indo-Pacific region. She apparently had been in contact with relevant parties in Japan before her visit, but this was the first time she was able to conduct in-person negotiations. Her first contract was signed during the mission.

MATERIAL FUTURES
Iris Redinger, CEO

Dyes are indispensable in modern life, as can be seen by their use in such items as clothing. However, the industry is currently dominated by colourants derived from petrochemicals. This company deals with eco-friendly organic colourants, currently working on their development and sales. Many different kinds of vibrant colours exist in the natural world. Pigments are present in flowers, of course, but also in other plants and in animals. This company aims to establish and develop a new market by commercializing organic colouring agents produced with microorganisms. She says

many industry representatives she met in Japan expressed interest in organic colourants.



Innovative startups are essential for further development of the Japanese economy. In Canada, startup-related businesses already account for more than 10% of the GDP. I believe it would be extremely beneficial to connect such activities with Japan in order to stimulate and revive the Japanese economy. All of the delegates on this mission were female entrepreneurs highly motivated to solve various social issues through their business. So-called unicorn companies are still very few in Japan. I hope that exchanges such as these will serve to solve social issues and at the same time pave the way for economic development.