

**Remarks by Consul-General Matsunaga Takeshi at the opening of “East Asia Destination Collection”
at the Yonge and Sheppard LCBO**

March 15, 2024

Thank you.

Mr. George Soleas, colleagues and friends. Today, we congratulate the LCBO’s launch of yet another East Asia Destination Collection at its busy outlet here at Yonge and Sheppard.

This East Asia Destination Collection is the third one of this kind. I would like to commend the LCBO’s leadership in catering to Torontonians’ growing appreciation for alcoholic products from this part of the world.

As for Japanese alcoholic products including Sake, whisky and shochu, statistics clearly show an impressive rise in their international popularity over the past years. They are enjoying record increases in exports to Canada as a whole. Since 2019, exports are up almost 70%, with 2022, the latest year for available figures, being the best year on record for Japanese alcoholic products in Canada. Here in Ontario, this trend is visibly reflected in the fast widening range of Japanese products at LCBO outlets.

Production methods of the utmost sophistication create the finest tastes of Japanese alcoholic products. Let’s take the example of Sake. It has a history of 2,000 years of brewing. It was during the Edo period that Japan's incredibly sophisticated Sake brewing method known as "Parallel Multiple Fermentation", which is unique to sake brewing, was established. Rice malt, carefully propagated on steamed rice, produces a starter called "酒母 Syubo", literally "sake mother", in which yeast bacteria are cultivated, and fermentation is advanced by a method called "Dan-jikomi", and subsequently Sake is squeezed, pasteurized in low-temperature heat, and then stored and matured. The craftsmanship of Sake brewing masters, “杜氏 Toji”, and the group of brewing artisans under them, “蔵人 Kurabito”, has been passed down for hundreds of years, and is producing, in the present date, a variety of Sake which are nurtured by Japan's diverse climate and features, sought for and loved by people around the world.

Today’s launch by the LCBO of its third East Asia Destination collection in its outlet marks yet another milestone for greater availability of beautiful alcoholic products from the region. Congratulations to the LCBO. Congratulations to the people of Ontario.

Thank you.