

CG Matsunaga's remarks at the opening of the handover ceremony of Consul-General's Commendation to Mr. Sato Takeshi on 8 July 2024

It is my great honour to have this most auspicious opportunity, as we gather here today, to pay respect to Mr Sato Takeshi, who was bestowed on the Consul-General's Commendation.

The Heads of Diplomatic and Consular Missions' Commendations are the heads of overseas establishments to commend individuals and groups with significant contributions to the fulfillment of the duties of those overseas establishments, such as the promotion of mutual understanding and friendship with other countries and the promotion of public relations and cultural activities.

With his long experience as a high-end Japanese cuisine chef, his highly sophisticated skill and ingenuity, Mr. Sato Takeshi has deepened people's understanding on and their empathy for high-quality Japanese cuisine in Ontario, particularly in Toronto, the economic and financial center of Canada and a center of international attention in many fields including culture and tourism, and has made a significant contribution to the promotion of friendship between Japan and Canada.

After graduating from a culinary college in 2000, Mr. Sato Takeshi acquired high-level skills and knowledge of Japanese cuisine at highly renowned restaurants such as Nadaman in Tokyo and, since 2008, Tofu-ya Ukai Shiba. I understand that at Ukai, he was in charge of the grill, sashimi, and ultimately seasoning. He then came to Toronto in 2011 as the chef for the official residence of Consul General Yamamoto Eiji. At the end of his term as chef for the official residence, Mr Sato decided to work with Mr Kashiwabara, whom he had met in Toronto and who wanted to serve authentic Japanese cuisine, sushi kaiseki, and served as executive chef at Zen Japanese Restaurant since 2013. The restaurant moved from Scarborough to Markham in 2015 and was rejuvenated into a restaurant that mainly serves authentic sushi and kappo cuisine, focusing on Japanese ingredients. Due to the location, many of the regular customers are gourmets and connoisseurs of Japanese cuisine, and they often make challenging requests. However, together with Mr Kashiwabara, Mr Sato has studied and tried skillfully to meet their expectations, and realized the importance of a sense of balance between valuing the traditions and culture of Japanese cuisine and serving delicious food.

In 2022, Mr Sato opened his own restaurant, Kappo Sato, with the support of the Zen owner, Mr Kashiwabara. Last year, in 2023, Kappo Sato was awarded one Michelin star. In the same year, it was also ranked number one in Air Canada's Best New Restaurant in Canada. The reason why Mr. Sato quickly gained recognition both in Canada and abroad after going independent is due to his experience and

| knowledge as a high-end Japanese chef, accumulated over more than 20 years, his skills and ingenuity honed in a variety of challenging environments, and his deep knowledge of various fields that are directly and indirectly deeply connected to a wide range of Japanese food culture, such as tea ceremony, flower arrangement, sommelier, and international sake sommelier qualifications.

It is said that people in Toronto are becoming more and more interested in healthy meals from the perspective of maintaining their health every year. Healthy Japanese food also contributes to the soundness of public finances by saving on health and medical expenses. In recent years, the number of Canadians who frequently visit Japan for travel and work has been increasing, and I feel that these people are increasingly eating high-quality Japanese food. Based on these trends, I believe that in the future, people in Toronto will have even higher expectations for delicious, high-quality Japanese food that contributes to health and longevity. I hope that Mr Sato Takeshi will continue to be successful, meet the growing expectations for Japanese cuisine, and further contribute to increasing understanding of Japanese culture in Canada.

Thank you very much.