

Remarks by H. E. Mr HAYASHI Hajime,
Ambassador of Japan to the UK,
for the IWC 2022 Award Winning Sake Tasting
on 8th July, 2022

Distinguished Guests,

It is a great pleasure to say a few words at the International Wine Challenge 2022 Award Winning Sake Tasting event this evening. I am also delighted that today we are joined in person by many representatives of various sectors in the UK after a two-year break due to the pandemic caused by COVID-19.

First of all, together with those present here today, I would like to celebrate the twelve Japanese sake producers who have won this year's Sake Awards against severe competition. I am certain that the expertise and technology employed in producing high quality sake are invaluable and irreplaceable not only from connoisseurs' point of view but also from the perspective of preserving tradition and culture in Japan.

Secondly, I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the outstanding role that the Sake Awards have played since they were introduced as a key component of the IWC competition in 2007. I am convinced that the IWC's prestigious status as an international competition has had a significant impact on Japanese sake promotion around the world. It is noteworthy that Japanese sake has been judged and ranked through rigorous assessment processes in the same manner as wine.

Thirdly, may I pay tribute to the Sake Samurai Association for their untiring efforts over many years to enhance international awareness of Japanese sake. I recognise that its sterling commitment has tremendously contributed to a broader understanding and appreciation of sake among people across the world who would not otherwise have had the opportunity to experience it.

Fourth, let me emphasise how important it is to promote Japanese sake in the UK. It is clear that developing the sake industry and expanding markets for sake are beneficial for the Japanese economy. Moreover, the promotion of sake can play a vital role in popularising Japanese culture itself among British people because there is something quintessentially Japanese in the refined flavour of sake, which is perfectly suitable with Japanese cuisine. I am, therefore, very confident that promoting Japanese sake together with Japanese cuisine will lead to deepening mutual understanding between the people of Japan and the UK through our delight of drinking and eating.

Last but not least, I would like to express my profound appreciation to everyone here involved in producing and promoting Japanese sake for your personal preference and commitment. I trust your continued endeavours in this regard will contribute to further reinforcing the already strong friendship between Japan and the UK.

Thank you indeed for your attention.