

Remarks by H.E. Mr HAYASHI Hajime,  
Ambassador of Japan to the UK,  
at a Private Viewing of *Looks Delicious!*  
*Exploring Japan's Food Replica Culture*  
on Tuesday 1 October 2024

Distinguished Guests,

Japan House London has been offering attractive and unique exhibitions almost since its inception. I am one of those visitors who is always keen to find out about the next exhibition and how unique it may be. This time, the theme is food replicas from Japan, with the highly appropriate title *Looks Delicious!*. My wife and I have just finished our private viewing and are convinced that this is yet another excellent example of what JHL has to offer.

Food replicas, called *shokuhin sanpuru* in Japanese, in restaurants and cafes may be part of the normal scene for people in Japan, but not many people know that they originated there, where they have been in common use for over 100 years since the Taisho period.

*Shokuhin sanpuru* are valuable in that they are very useful for visualising food. I suppose everyone has experienced the difficulty of choosing what to eat in a restaurant, but food replicas can make the choice a little easier with clever images that make us eager to try what is on offer. They also help foreign visitors to Japan, in particular those who do not understand the language, when they visit restaurants there.

As you can see from the exhibition, *shokuhin sanpuru* have great aesthetic appeal and their creation requires skilled craftsmanship. They generally look so enticing that it is hard to resist the tasty dishes they represent. Indeed, they have undoubtedly made a major contribution to the flourishing of the restaurant industry in Japan and, by the same token, have contributed to the growing popularity of Japanese cuisine throughout the world.

Another unique feature of this exhibition is that it showcases the food culture of the country's 47 prefectures. For example, you can see replicas of noodles such as ramen, udon, soba and natto (fermented soybeans), steak, rice crackers, desserts and wine. We hope that visitors to the exhibition will discover the richness of Japan's regional food and culture, and that this will inspire them to consider travelling to Japan.

In addition, I am delighted to have with us this evening Mr Tsuyoshi Iwasaki of Iwasaki B.I., the company that has created the food replicas especially for this exhibition.

I would like to conclude my remarks by expressing the hope that the appeal of Japanese cuisine and the important role of food replicas will provide visitors with a memorable experience and serve as a bridge to further strengthen the ties between the people of Japan and the UK.

Now, all the participants this evening, please join me in a toast. *Kampai!*