

19th Session of the Intergovernmental Committee
For the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage
Speech by H.E. Mr KANO Takehiro (Japan)

Mme. Chair,

Distinguished Members of the Committee, Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Dear colleagues,

On behalf of the Government of Japan and all concerned sake-making communities, I am honoured to express my sincerest gratitude for the inscription of “Traditional knowledge and skills of sake-making with koji mold in Japan” on the Representative List.

I would like to take this opportunity to extend my sincere thanks to the Government of Paraguay and Ambassador of Paraguay for their warm hospitality as well as excellent chair. My gratitude also goes to the UNESCO Secretariat and Evaluation Body for their professionalism.

This element is the skills to make sake, which craftspersons such as *toji*, or chief *sake* makers, and *kura-bitō*, or *sake* brewery workers make using koji mold. These skills have been refined based on experience and are adapted to the climate and natural features of various parts of Japan. Sake is seen as a divine gift from deities, and it is essential to social and cultural events in Japan, such as festivals, weddings, and rites of passage.

I am confident that this inscription will be an opportunity to hand this element down to the next generation, lead to even more interest in Intangible Cultural Heritage , and promote the safeguarding and transmission of Intangible Cultural Heritage in general in Japan.

Japan will continue to contribute to safeguarding and transmitting cultural heritage.

Thank you very much.