

Speech by His Excellency Mr. KANO Takehiro
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
Permanent Delegate of Japan to UNESCO
at the Kura Master Tasting Event
(Friday, September 26, 2025)

Madam Véra Lacoëuilhe, Chairperson of the Executive Board of UNESCO,

H.E. Mr Vishal Sharma, Ambassador, Permanent Delegate of India to UNESCO, and Chair of the Intangible Cultural Heritage Committee,

Mr. Xavier Thuizat, President of the Kura Master Jury and Kura Master Team,

Excellencies,

Distinguished brewers and distillers from Japan,

Distinguished guests,

● First of all, I would like to thank you for being here tonight and say how happy I am to welcome you to my Residence.

● During this evening, you are invited to taste several varieties of sake and other traditional Japanese spirits such as *honkaku shochu*, *awamori*, and *umeshu*, all of which won awards at the ninth Kura Master Competition this year.

● The Kura Master Competition is a competition for traditional Japanese alcoholic beverages for French people, organized annually since 2017. The members of the Kura Master jury have

just given you more detail on this subject. For my part, I will briefly introduce the aspect of “intangible cultural heritage.”

● UNESCO works to protect intangible cultural heritage under the Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage, adopted in 2003 under the leadership of Mr. Matsuura Koichiro, Director-General of UNESCO at the time.

● Last December, the Intergovernmental Committee of the Convention, held in Asunción, Paraguay, decided to inscribe an element proposed by the Japanese Government, namely “traditional knowledge and skills of sake-making with koji mold in Japan,” on the Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage. Almost a year has passed since then, and I am delighted to see that opportunities to taste sake are increasing around the world.

● Furthermore, I find it very significant that every year, *Kuramoto*, Japanese sake brewers and distillers, travel from afar to France to exchange ideas directly with local actors in the sector. Their dedicated efforts are bearing fruits, and the reputation of sake continues to grow. I would like to express my deep respect for them. Thank you.

● Today, I would like to invite all of you to first taste sake and other traditional Japanese alcoholic beverages and discover their charm for yourself. And please feel free to talk directly with the *Kuramoto*, the Japanese brewers and distillers.

Excellencies, Distinguished guests,

● As you are probably aware, we will have several important meetings at UNESCO in the coming months, including the 222nd session of the Executive Board, the 43rd session of the General Conference in Samarkand, and the 20th session of the Intangible Cultural Heritage Committee in New Delhi.

● I hope that all of us will survive in good spirits and health, successfully concluding all those meetings in this year of the 80th anniversary of the adoption of the UNESCO Constitution.

● To that end, I look forward to working in close cooperation with all of you, assuming the responsibilities that you may choose to entrust to me.

【Toast 】

● I would now like to propose a toast. The sake chosen for today's toast is the “Gangi Junmai Daiginjo Sekirei” from the Yaoshinshuzo brewery in Yamaguchi Prefecture, which won the prestigious President's Award.

● Wishing each and every one of you good health and success, and in particular, for the future of UNESCO,

Kanpai!