

Merci beaucoup Monsieur Falt.
Excellences, Mesdames et Messieurs,

En ma qualité de Délégué permanent du Japon auprès de l'UNESCO et de Saké Samourai, je voudrais vous souhaiter à tous la bienvenue à cette dégustation de Saké que la Délégation permanente du Japon organise ce soir au Siège de l'UNESCO en collaboration avec le Restaurant ISSE et la Galerie K.

Je me réjouis tout particulièrement de l'organisation d'un tel évènement, et cela pour trois raisons.

Tout d'abord parce que l'UNESCO est la seule organisation agissant dans le domaine de la culture et que le Saké est un art véritable constituant une part importante de la culture japonaise.

Ensuite parce que le Washoku, traditions culinaires des Japonais, a été inscrit sur la Liste du Patrimoine culturel immatériel de l'UNESCO à la fin de l'année 2013, juste après mon arrivée, et que le Saké est la boisson qui accompagne le mieux le Washoku.

Enfin, parce que cette dégustation, qui a lieu juste avant que je ne quitte Paris à la fin de ce mois afin de prendre mes nouvelles fonctions d'Ambassadeur du Japon au Canada, sera à la fois la première et la dernière que j'organiserai à l'UNESCO.

Now, before talking about sake, I would like to express my gratitude to 20 sake manufacturers spreading from north to south of Japan who kindly cooperated to this event by presenting some of their best sake totalling up to almost 40 kinds. You can find the names of the brewers and their sake on the list you received at the entrance.

The representatives of four brewers from Japan are with us tonight. Let me introduce Mr. Okazora, President of Chiyomusubi Shuzo and Mrs. Okazora, Mr. Kato, President of Kato Kichibei Shoten known for its sake called Born, Mr. Sakurai, Vice-President of Asahi Shuzo, famous for its Dassai, and Ms. Nishitani, Director of Overseas

Sales Promotion of Daishichi Shuzo.

I also would like to thank Mr. Kuroda of ISSE and Mr. Miyagawa of Galerie K. You can get best sake in Paris at their shops. My appreciation also goes to the cheese shop Hisada who offered some aged sake.

And there is a special guest from Japan, Ms. Junko Kiritani. She is a famous ceramic artist who brought many wonderful sake cups she made for this event. You can try the cup to drink sake.

Now I shall limit myself to give you the very basic knowledge of sake in order to help you taste such a wide variety of sake tonight.

I begin with two important things you should know about sake.

1. Sake is not spirit. It is brewed alcohol whose alcoholic content is about 15 to 17 %. So, you can drink it just like wine, as it is slightly stronger than wine.

2. Sake is brewed from rice and water and often called rice wine. And just like wine, there is a wide range of sake. Rice, water, yeast, brewing method all contribute to create the wonderful diversity.

Then, I move directly to how to taste sake tonight in 4 points.

1. Try three categories of sake differentiated from the degree of polishing rice. In the list you read Junmai-Daiginjo or Daiginjo, Junmai-Ginjo or Ginjo, and Junmai.

The first category with the term Daiginjo is the most sophisticated sake made from rice grains polished more than 50 % in order to extract pure starch. And the second category with the term Ginjo uses rice grains polished more than 40 %. These two categories of sake are brewed under low temperature which helps produce

fragrant flavour. As it is brewed under low temperature, it is normally drunk chilled.

The third category is Junmai that uses rice grains polished more than 30 % . Junmai is good for drinking at room temperature or warmed.

2. Try two types of sakes quite different from the one you already know. They are Happoshu; sparkling sake and Koshu; aged or matured sake.

Sparkling sake is young sake whose fermentation is not yet completed. It is champagne sake,

Koshu or aged sake is the sake matured more than 3 years. Today there is sake aged more than 10 years. Aged sake gets darker in colour and milder in taste with particular flavour sometimes like chine rice wine or sherry. It goes well with meat dishes.

3. Try the difference in temperature. In general, higher quality sake is consumed chilled, as it is brewed under low temperature. Junmai is drunk normally at room temperature or warmed. The taste changes according to the temperature. Please try warm sake with the ceramic cup of Ms. Kiritani whom I introduced at the outset..

4. Now I would like to touch upon the taste of sake. The taste of sake can be described by using two axes; one axe is about its body; whether it is light, fresh, clear, or heavy, mature, complex. Another axe is about flavour; whether it is fragrant, aromatic, flowery or modest, simple, reserved. Using these two axes, the Association of Sake Breweries of Japan defined 4 different categories of sake. ① Light and fragrant (Daiginjo and Ginjo) ② Light and modest in flavour (some Ginjo, non-pasteurized sake, etc), ③ Heavy and fragrant (Koshu) and ④ Heavy and modest in flavour (Junmai).

There are truly a wide variety of sake. I did not specifically mentioned, but there is sake brewed in a traditional method called KIMOTO that uses natural lactic and requires much more time. It has a good sourly

taste. Some sake are fresh and not pasteurized.

I hope you will be able to discover the difference in taste.

Before concluding, I touch upon two practical points in sake tasting..

1. Please drink water from time to time. Use your glass or cup to drink water. It will prevent you from getting drunk at the same time your glass is rinsed before moving to the next sake. Water doesn't bother sake, because sake is made from rice and water.

2. My Japanese chef prepared some light Japanese food for sake. Please try some between tasting. The food sometimes makes you appreciate better the taste of sake. It also refreshes your tongue. There won't be much to eat, but, today, sake is the major player and food is only a supporting actor.

Thank you for your patience for listening to me for a long time in front of extraordinary sake and food. I hope you discover the world of sake and enjoy the evening.