

How has everyone been lately? It is that time of the year when the weather is nice and Japan-related cultural events abound. For everyone at the Consulate General, witnessing the growing local interest towards Japan's culture is always such a pleasure. August is also an important time to pause and unite in our wish for peace. The Consulate's participation in the different activities was varied in nature and enthusiastic.

L'International des feux Loto-Québec

From June 26 to July 31 was held in Montreal the prestigious L'International des feux Loto-Québec fireworks competition, with Great Sky Art representing Japan. Set to carefully selected music, their fireworks painted the sky bright again and again with infinite colors, and for nearly 30 minutes, the audience sat mesmerized by the masterful technical demonstration. While the team unfortunately did not win any award, I thought theirs was an exceptionally magnificent performance. I also have deep respect for all participants, who clearly gave this competition their all.



Festival Matsuri

Following last year's success, the 2025 edition of Festival Matsuri was held at the Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre of Montreal on July 5 and 6. In addition to the many booths offering every type of Japanese food, sweets, kimonos, arts, and craftworks, visitors could enjoy a *mikoshi* parade, *wadaiko* drum and traditional folk dance performances, and so much more, in a festive recreation of the atmosphere typical of summer festivals in Japan. The event seemed the perfect opportunity to come into contact and explore further various aspects of Japanese culture.





The Consulate General was also on site with a booth providing information about tourism in Japan, Japanese culture, the JET Programme, and the MEXT Scholarships.

To all the participants, organizers, and volunteers, thank you!

Meeting with UQAM Chancellor and former Quebec Premier Pauline Marois

On July 8, colleagues and I met with Ms. Pauline Marois, Chancellor of the Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM) and former Premier of Quebec. We engaged in a meaningful conversation covering a range of topics, including UQAM courses on Japanese language, politics, and economy, exchanges with universities in Japan, and Japanese culture promotion in Quebec. The Chancellor gave us a warm welcome, spoke of the university's priorities, and reminisced about her Japan travels.



Fantasia International Film Festival

From July 16 to August 3, Montreal was host to the annual Fantasia International Film Festival. With many Japanese film screenings and the attendance of various guests from Japan, from producers and directors to actors, the event proved once more a huge success.

Association d'amitié Québec-Japon's 5th Sakura Matsuri

On July 27, the Association d'amitié Québec-Japon hosted in Québec City its 5th Sakura Matsuri. Under clear skies, close to 1,800 visitors, more than three times last year's number, experienced the typical atmosphere of a Japanese summer festival. The event featured a variety of activities including lectures on sake, bonsai, and manga, a performance by drum ensemble Arashi Daiko, Awa Odori dancing in *yukata*, calligraphy, *sumi-e* painting, origami, and



a tea ceremony demonstration. From our Consulate General, Vice Consul Yo Ishikawa delivered a speech, and a member of our local staff gave a presentation and hosted a kiosk promoting the JET Programme and MEXT Scholarships. I would like to express my gratitude to the organizers and exhibitors who contributed to this wonderful introduction to Japanese culture.



JET Programme Farewell Cocktail

On August 1, we held at my official residence a farewell cocktail for this year's 16 new JET Programme participants from Quebec and the Atlantic Provinces. On the eve of their departure for Japan, their faces mirroring their hopes and enthusiasm were especially memorable.

These kind and friendly Canadian participants will, each at their respective postings, support their students' English education and international exchange, a most important contribution for Japan. We are confident that they will act as ambassadors to their country by sharing its culture and current context with students and contribute to the deepening of mutual understanding and friendly relations between Japanese and Canadians.



Dear new JETs, we look forward to hearing about your experiences and life in Japan!

Note: The JET (Japan Exchange and Teaching) Programme is an initiative inviting foreign youth to work with municipalities and other public entities to foster foreign language education and promote international exchanges regionally.



Hiroshima Peace Memorial Ceremony

On the evening of August 5, I attended alongside Montreal City Council Chair Martine Musau Muele the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Ceremony held at the Japanese Garden of the Montreal Botanical Garden. Together, we rang the Peace Bell at the exact moment when the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima 80 years ago and joined other attendees in a moment of silence. The Peace Bell was gifted to the City of Montreal by the City of Hiroshima 27 years ago. During the commemoration, a message from Hiroshima City Mayor Kazumi Matsui was read in Japanese, English, and French. The event drew over a hundred local residents, including Members of Parliament and a Hiroshima student currently residing in Montreal.



Within the current increasingly challenging international security environment, the Consulate General wishes to reaffirm its commitment towards a world without nuclear weapons and express once more its deepest condolences to the victims of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki atomic bombings. Additionally, we would like to reiterate our thanks to the City of Montreal for holding, as Hiroshima's sister city, this event for the past 27 years.

In conjunction with the above, the City of Montreal held from August 4 to 8 at the Conseil des arts de Montréal an exhibition of posters by hibakusha, Hiroshima and Nagasaki atomic bombing survivors. On the same theme, visitors of the Montreal Botanical Garden's Japanese Pavilion can appreciate until October 31 a painting exhibition created jointly by hibakusha and high school students with the cooperation of the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum. For more information, please consult the [official event page](#).

JCCCM's Peace Memorial Event

On August 9, the Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre of Montreal (JCCCM) also organized a gathering to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the atomic bombings under the name of "80 Years: In Memory of Hiroshima & Nagasaki". With over 50 people in attendance, a heartfelt memorial song and drum performance

by Shima no Taiko MTL's ten members was followed by the screening of the film "Okurimono", set in Nagasaki. Thank you to all participants and to the JCCCM for organizing this event.



Otakuthon

From August 8 to 10 was held at Montreal's Palais des Congrès the 20th edition of Otakuthon, the largest annual Japanese pop culture convention in the region. A message from Montreal's mayor and the presence of over 34,300 Japanese anime, manga, and video game enthusiasts highlighted this milestone. The event featured notable guests from Japan, including anime and manga creators, voice actors, and music artists.

Our Consulate General set up an information booth promoting the JET Programme, MEXT Scholarships, and more. We also introduced Japan's traditional culture through tea ceremony workshops by the Montreal Association of Chado Urasenke Tankokai and a judo demonstration by Shidokan, as well as its language through a lesson for beginners using manga as a learning tool. The latter activity, which attracted almost 300 participants, aimed to encourage people who became interested in Japan through manga and anime to take the next step and start learning Japanese.

In addition, our colleagues from the Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO) gave an informative lecture on tourism in Japan, including anime pilgrimage sites. Attendance for this activity too almost topped 300 people, a clear indication that interest in traveling in Japan remains high. The convention offered a large variety of workshops on Japan, anime, and manga, giving participants a golden opportunity to dive into the country's multiple facets.

Finally, I had the pleasure of presenting one of the traditional Masquerade cosplay competition's 52 participating teams with the Consul General's Award. As



Message by Consul General Uchikawa (2025.07 & 08)

was the case last year, all cosplays were of exceptional quality and illustrated the participants' passion for Japanese animation and video games. This, combined with the excitement of nearly 1,000 audience members, created an almost overwhelming energy.

To all who were involved in making this year's Otakuthon the success it was, thank you for your hard work!



**In addition to the above, I was able to exchange ideas and opinions with various Japanese and Canadian people and organizations, making yet again for a very meaningful few weeks.*