

How is everyone as the fiscal year is coming to a close? Strawberries are said to be in season in spring, from March to late April. As for Quebec, I heard that it is the leading strawberry producer in Canada, with its fields accounting for more than half of the country's total production area.

State funeral of former Canadian Prime Minister Brian Mulroney

On March 23, Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs Yasushi Hosoka attended as special envoy of Prime Minister Fumio Kishida the state funeral of former Canadian Prime Minister Brian Mulroney held in Montreal. He addressed, on behalf of the Government and people of Japan, his condolences to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance Chrystia Freeland, and Minister of Foreign Affairs Melanie Joly. During his term in office, Mulroney signed the Redress Agreement, offering official apologies and compensation for World War II human rights abuse against Japanese Canadians. Considering the former Prime Minister's efforts to restore the honour of Japanese Canadians, Special Envoy Hosoka seized the opportunity his visit to Canada offered him to exchange views with members of the local Japanese Canadian community.



National Day Reception on the Occasion of His Majesty the Emperor's Anniversary

On March 22, I hosted for the first time since beginning my mandate in Montreal the National Day Reception on the Occasion of His Majesty the Emperor's Anniversary. The event proved a great success, gathering many guests, including dignitaries from the Parliament of Canada, the Province of Quebec, and the City of Montreal. I would like to thank all participants and collaborating companies and organizations. This year, our efforts were geared towards introducing to Canadians various aspects of the relations between Japan and Quebec, and Japan and the Atlantic Provinces.





Japanese Language Speech Contests

On the 9 were held the Japanese language speech contests of Quebec and Atlantic Canada. Since the two events were held on the same day, I was unable to listen to all speeches, but I was nonetheless impressed by the way the participants shared in their own words their inner thoughts, their take on the significance of sports, poetic content, or life lessons learned. With some of the participants having apparently only been studying Japanese for 2-3 months, I found myself amazed at their fast learning pace and their willingness to take on challenges. I hope all will continue to enjoy learning Japanese!

For Japanese learners aiming to acquire Japanese communication skills for living in Japan, why not take advantage of "Irodori", a teaching manual available in English, and in French now as well.

<https://www.mcjp.fr/fr/irodori>



Official visit to Québec City

On the 13th, I made an official visit to Québec City at the invitation of the Ministry of International Relations and La Francophonie (MRIF). There I met with Quebec Lieutenant Governor Manon Jeannotte, National Assembly President Nathalie Roy, French Language Minister Jean-François Roberge, International Relations and La Francophonie Minister Martine Biron, and Minister Responsible for Seniors and Minister for Health Sonia Bélanger. Through frank in-person exchanges of ideas and opinions regarding future Japan-Quebec relations, I developed a better understanding of Quebec's policy issues and priorities. Part of the G7, Japan and Canada – and Quebec – share values such as democracy and the respect of human rights, and face similar challenges including the aging of their population and labor shortages. I believe there lies great potential for cooperation and have thus reiterated my desire to explore said potential to its fullest with the aim of strengthening bilateral relations.

I also had the opportunity, as I attended an important budget debate from the public gallery, to address and greet the members of the National Assembly, whose Parliament Building combines tradition and innovation. At the beginning of the session, National Assembly President Roy, Prime Minister François Legault, Minister Biron, and other attendees smiled broadly as they congratulated me on recently taking up office. I would like to thank here the MRIF and all National Assembly representatives.



Association d'amitié Québec-Japon's New Year's celebrations

On February 25, the Association d'amitié Québec-Japon held in Québec City its annual Shinnenkai in celebration of the new year. Deputy Consul General Masaki Morimoto represented the Consulate General and delivered a speech. Also present was the MRIF Japan Desk Chief, who has lived in Japan before and speaks the language fluently. Many local Japan enthusiasts attended these annual celebrations of the Association, which has long been active in the capital, bringing Japan and Quebec closer. The event was so popular that some registrations had to be refused due to space limitations. The demonstrations and workshops on traditional Japanese culture such as tea ceremony, calligraphy, and ink painting were much appreciated. At lunchtime, Japanese-style meal boxes were served and savored with chopsticks by the participants. The Consulate General would like to express its sincere gratitude to the Association for its efforts in fostering deeper friendship between Japan and Quebec and its desire to continue to support such activities in the future.



In addition to the above, I was able to exchange ideas and opinions with various people and organizations in Japan and Canada, making for a meaningful month.