

It was said that this winter was a harsh one, back to Montreal's normal, but it has also finally come to an end, the steps of people on the streets seemingly lighter. How have you been faring?

### Japanese Language Speech Contests of Quebec and Atlantic Canada

On March 8 were held the 35th Japanese Language Speech Contest of Quebec and the 27th Atlantic Canada Japanese Language Speech Contest. On both occasions, Deputy Consul General Yoshiki Takaku delivered an opening speech, and the participants deftly used Japanese expressions to share their experiences and reflections in a rich and personal manner. We hope that the study of the Japanese language will continue to foster deeper exchanges and understanding between Japan and Canadian provinces.



### G7 Foreign Ministers' and Canada-Japan Foreign Ministers' Meetings in Charlevoix

On March 13, Minister of Foreign Affairs Takeshi Iwaya, in Canada to attend the G7 Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Charlevoix, met with Canadian Foreign Minister Melanie Joly. He began by expressing his desire to continue to work closely with Canada, an important strategic partner for the Indo-Pacific region, in a wide range of areas including security, economy, and people to people exchanges. Then they reiterated their resolve to continue to promote bilateral cooperation, such as in the Indo-Pacific region and in the economic sphere.



Charlevoix had also been chosen as host for the 2018 G7 Summit, and being part of the Japanese delegation's support team last March, I could understand why as I occasionally glimpsed from Charlevoix or La Malbaie vast frozen rivers and lush forests. I remember being impressed by the security provided by the federal and provincial police and other related personnel, as well as by the heartwarming and friendly hospitality of La Malbaie people. I would like to thank everyone involved.

#### National Day Reception on the Occasion of His Majesty the Emperor of Japan's Birthday

On March 21, the Consulate General held its annual National Day reception celebrating the birthday of His Majesty the Emperor of Japan. The event began with a performance by Japanese drum ensemble Arashi Daiko, followed by renditions of the Japanese and Canadian national anthems performed by a violin and cello duet. Speeches were then delivered by the Minister Responsible for Seniors and for Health, Sonia Bélanger, and by the Chair of the Montreal city council, Martine Musau Muele, representing respectively the Government of Quebec and the City of Montreal. I gave the final speech, and the opening ceremony concluded with the traditional "kagami biraki".

Guests could fully experience Japan's culture and its many charms firsthand through a selection of sakes and typical Japanese dishes, ikebana arrangements, and information booths showcasing local Japanese enterprises and promoting Japanese tourism.





### Modifications to the Working Holiday Visa Program

Since 1986, Japan and Canada offer a Working Holiday Visa Program, whose main requirements are listed below for your reference.

From December 1, 2024, Canadian citizens may now stay in Japan on a Working Holiday status for up to 2 years in their lifetime (previously 1 year), either for two separate stays of up to 1 year each, or one stay of up to two consecutive years upon a granted extension request. Also, as of April 1, 2025, in addition to in-person applications, postal mail applications are now possible.

Please do not hesitate to share this information with friends and acquaintances who may wish to take advantage of this wonderful exchange opportunity.

### **Working Holiday Visa Program Requirements**

*For information relative to specific applications, please contact our Consular Section.*

- Must be a Canadian citizen currently residing in Canada at the time of application;
- Intend primarily to holiday in Japan for a specific period of time;
- Be between 18 and 30 years of age at the time of application;
- Possess a valid Canadian passport and a return travel ticket (or the funds necessary to buy one);
- Possess reasonable funds to support oneself during the initial period of stay in Japan;
- Be in good health and not have a criminal record.

### **Consulate General of Japan in Montreal's webpage on the Working Holiday Visa**

(French) <https://www.montreal.ca.emb-japan.go.jp/fr/consular/vacances-travail.html>

(English) <https://www.montreal.ca.emb-japan.go.jp/en/consular/workingholiday.html>

*\*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.*