

I hope you are all keeping well despite the winter cold which seems to have come to us somewhat earlier than last year.

The 2025 Nobel Prize award ceremony was held in Stockholm on December 10, and the achievements of two Japanese scientists were recognized, those of Susumu Kitagawa, Executive Vice-President and Distinguished Professor at Kyoto University's Institute for Advanced Study, in the field of Chemistry, and of Shimon Sakaguchi, Specially Appointed Professor at Osaka University's Immunology Frontier Research Center, in the field of Physiology or Medicine. With this, the total number of Japanese recipients of natural science Nobel Prizes (Physiology or Medicine, Physics, and Chemistry) now stands at 27. The fact that so many Japanese researchers have been awarded such a high distinction that honors significant contributions to humankind highlights Japan's high research standards for the world to see and serves as a great motivation force.

As 2025 comes to a close, I look back and realize that I have once more been blessed with the opportunity to speak with countless individuals from various Japan-related fields, and many are those who gave their support to the various activities and events introducing Japan's many facets, for which I am deeply grateful.

As this will be my final message for the year, I wish you all a lovely, happy New Year.

Courtesy Call on Quebec Minister of International Relations and La Francophonie Christopher Skeete

On December 16, I paid a courtesy call on Quebec Minister of International Relations and La Francophonie Christopher Skeete, who assumed this new office in September. I requested his cooperation in ensuring the security of Japanese nationals and, as I explained the ties between Japan and Quebec, I also expressed my desire to further strengthen bilateral relations in various fields, including economics, culture, and interpersonal exchanges.



During the month of November...

International Tourism & Travel Show

On Friday, November 7, I once again this year had the opportunity to explore this Montreal travel fair. Although it was the event's first day, the venue was already bustling with visitors. Japan remained in 2025 a popular travel destination for Canadians, consequently encouraging the Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO) to increase the Japan booth's promotional space by 50% for this edition.

The booth, positioned almost at the center of the exhibition hall, was particularly imposing, and its many visitors showed deep interest in the country, some for instance asking specific questions while studying Tokyo's railway map.



Lecture by Rémi Quirion, Chief Scientist of Québec

On the 13, I attended a lecture by Chief Scientist of Québec Rémi Quirion, among others, for the Consular Corps. Mr. Quirion knows much about Japan and has visited the country multiple times to attend Science and Technology in Society (STS) forums. He broached the topic of research security as one of the province's recent areas of interest and highlighted the significance of the Kyoto University-McGill University genomic medicine agreement within the context of Japan-Quebec relations. I express my gratitude also to the Quebec Ministry of International Relations and La Francophonie (MRIF) for organizing this event.

Les Grands Ballets Canadiens

On November 18, I met with Artistic Director Ivan Cavallari and others from the Montreal-based ballet company Les Grands Ballets Canadiens. The presence in the company of three principal dancers – top performers taking on the lead roles – from Japan made realize once again that Japanese are locally active in this field as well.

Traveling Exhibition “Built Environment: An Alternative Guide to Japan”

On the 19 at UQAM's Centre de design was the vernissage for the Japan Foundation's traveling exhibition [“Built Environment: An Alternative Guide to Japan”](#), at which Deputy Consul General Yoshiki Takaku offered opening remarks.



Presented in collaboration with our Consulate General and the Centre de design, the exhibition highlights a side of Japan rarely introduced before through designs and architectures from all across the country. It explores how people in geographically diverse and natural disaster-prone Japan have interacted and grappled with the natural environment, and how regional identity has been passed down and molded.

Visitors on the opening day were many and included

UQAM students and members of the general public interested in Japanese architecture. The exhibition runs until January 25, 2026. We invite you to visit and discover Japan's built environments.



Kakehashi Project

On November 26, Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs Yohei Onishi received a courtesy call from a delegation of Canadian young leaders visiting Japan as part of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Kakehashi Project, an exchange program promoting understanding of Japan.

Quebec-Japan Business Forum (QJBF) President Anaïs Nguyen also took part in this program and was welcomed alongside the rest of the delegation by Parliamentary Vice-Minister Onishi. The latter stated that Japan and Canada are important strategic partners in the Indo-Pacific region, encouraged the delegation to cherish their friendship, and expressed his hope that they would continue contributing as a *Kakehashi*, or 'bridge', to connect the two countries. In response, delegation members expressed their gratitude for the invitation, shared their impressions of Japan, and asked their host questions on the economic relations and the future direction of cooperation between Japan and Canada.



Note: The purpose of the Kakehashi Project is to increase the interest in and understanding of Japan among outstanding young leaders in the North American region. By having them engage in activities that make the most of their visit experience, it aims to foster supporters and experts of Japan. The project promotes participants' understanding of Japanese politics, economy, society, culture, history, and foreign policy in accordance with their areas of expertise and interest, and enhances their Japan-related communications.

During the month of December...

G7 Industry, Digital and Technology Ministers' Meeting

The G7 Industry, Digital, and Technology Ministers' Meeting was held in Montreal on December 8 and 9. Representing Japan were State Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry Toshiro Ino, State Minister for Internal Affairs and Communications Noriko Horiuchi, and State Minister for Digital Transformation Soichiro Imaeda. Building on key outcomes from the G7 Summit, the meeting discussed governance, industrial applications, and competitiveness enhancement of cutting-edge technologies like AI and quantum technology, the importance of DFFT (Data Free Flow with Trust) as the foundation for these technologies, as well as the strengthening of supply chains for critical materials, and concluded with the endorsement of a ministerial declaration.



Quebec-Japan Webinar on Aging Society

On the 8, the Quebec Ministry of International Relations and La Francophonie (MRIF) and Quebec's General Delegation in Tokyo hosted a webinar on aging society issues, a social challenge common to both Japan and Quebec. Presenting their insights were experts from Japan's Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (MHLW) and National Center for Geriatrics and Gerontology (NCGG), as well as from Quebec's Ministry of Health and Social Services and the Quebec Network for Research on Aging (RQRV). With over 60 participants, the event fostered high-quality discussions.



In November 2024, I have had the opportunity to exchange views with then Quebec Minister Responsible for Seniors and Health Sonia Bélanger on such issues as declining birth rates and aging populations. It became clear then that the challenges surrounding aging are remarkably similar for both societies.

This webinar was organized by the Government of Quebec as a follow-up to that 2024 meeting and is a positive indication of the deepening relations between Japan and Quebec. I hope it will serve as a catalyst for further sharing of knowledge and experience, and for deepening cooperation between Japan and Quebec on issues related to aging.

Japanese Canadian Leaders Invitation Program

On December 11, Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs Yohei Onishi received a delegation of Japanese Canadians then visiting Japan thanks to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan's Japanese Canadian Leaders Invitation Program 2025.

Toby Kimura, Vice-President of the Quebec Chapter of the National Association of Japanese Canadians (NAJC-QC) and active participant in the activities of the Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre



of Montreal (JCCCM), was one of the program participants. At the beginning of the meeting, Parliamentary Vice-Minister Onishi welcomed him and the other members of the delegation, who all play leading roles in Japanese Canadian communities across Canada, and expressed his hope that their stay in Japan would deepen their understanding of and their ties with the country.

In response, the participants introduced their activities in their respective Japanese Canadian community and expressed their appreciation for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' invitation. Parliamentary Vice-Minister Onishi in return thanked them for their daily activities and, stating that Japan-Canada relations are strong in a variety of fields, he expressed his hope of further enhancing bilateral cooperation.

In a friendly atmosphere, all meeting participants exchanged their views on a variety of topics such as the Japanese Canadian community's current situation and Japan-Canada relations, including cultural exchanges.

Note: Japanese Canadian Leader Invitation Program – With the aim of strengthening relations with the Japanese Canadian community, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs invites Japanese Canadian leaders who are active in various fields to Japan for about one week each year. The program provides opportunities for mutual understanding through exchanges of views with government officials, experts, and business communities, and promotes understanding of Japan through visits to cultural facilities and more. The program started in 2008, and a total of 75 Japanese Canadian leaders have visited Japan to date.



Senior Christmas Party Hosted by the Japanese Cultural Centre of Montreal

On December 18, I was once again invited to join the Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre of Montreal (JCCCM)'s annual seniors' Christmas party. Through the planning of former JCCCM President Minoru Inoue and numerous seniors and volunteers, the event with its heartfelt performances of saxophone by the aforementioned Toby Kimura, contemporary and

folk dancing, piano and singing, and taiko drumming was a heartwarming one at a time when winter's cold was becoming increasingly felt. My sincere thanks to the Centre.

Japanese Chamber of Commerce in Montreal Annual General Meeting

On the 19 was held the Annual General Meeting of the Japanese Chamber of Commerce in Montreal. With the association's membership gradually increasing, it was a good opportunity to greet members, old and new. Our Consulate General wishes the Chamber of Commerce continued success and vows to maintain its support of Japanese enterprises.



**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.*