

With April's arrival, temperatures are gradually warming up, and Montreal is once more entering its liveliest event-packed season. With growing interest in Japan, in its culture – including manga and anime, video games, *washoku* and sake, martial arts (judo, kendo, karate, aikido, etc.), the tea ceremony, ikebana, cinema, music, design, language, and literature –, we anticipate that, as in previous years, Japan-related events will be filling the calendar until next winter. The Consulate General of Japan, too, will continue to put every effort into promoting Japanese culture.

#### Meeting between the Japanese and Canadian Prime Ministers

On March 6, Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi held a Japan-Canada summit meeting with Prime Minister Mark Carney, then visiting Japan, followed by the signing ceremony for a Japan-Canada Joint Statement. In the document, the two leaders noted that the countries' bilateral relations are based on shared values such as respect for democracy and the rule of law, strong political and economic ties, and rich people-to-people and cultural exchanges.



#### Japanese Language Speech Contests

On March 7 were held the 28<sup>th</sup> Atlantic Canada Japanese Language Speech Contest and the 36<sup>th</sup> Japanese Language Speech Contest of Quebec, during which Deputy Consul General Yoshiki Takaku and I respectively delivered an opening speech. On these occasions, the participants, including some who had just begun their study of the language, used various Japanese expressions to share their experiences and reflections in a rich and personal manner. In addition to hoping that the study of Japanese will continue to foster exchanges and understanding between Japan and Canadian provinces, our Consulate General remains committed to promoting the teaching of the language.



#### Event Promoting Japanese Food Products at the ITHQ

On March 12, an event introducing Japanese agricultural, marine, and food products to local restaurateurs, chefs, culinary instructors, food journalists, and social media content creators was held at the ITHQ (Institut de tourisme et d'hôtellerie du Québec) with the aim of creating market expansion opportunities.

The event was attended by ITHQ President Liza Frulla, also a former federal and provincial minister, and executive members. This gathering provided participants with an opportunity to exchange views and foster the further promotion of Japanese cooking ingredients and sake in the region.

In my previous message, I had written about the fruitful Japanese gastronomy event organized by the ITHQ and the Miyagi Culinary Arts School. For both events, for their continued cooperation in introducing Japanese food culture, I would like to express here my gratitude to the ITHQ. As the popularity of *washoku* continues to rise, our Consulate General will continue to strive to promote the export of Japanese agricultural, forestry, and fishery products and foods.



### Emperor's Birthday National Day Reception

On March 20, our Consulate General held its annual reception celebrating the Birthday of His Majesty the Emperor of Japan. The event began with a performance by the Japanese drum ensemble Arashi Daiko, followed by renditions of the Japanese and Canadian national anthems performed by a violin and cello duet.

Speeches were delivered by the Minister of Social Solidarity and Community Action, also responsible for the Metropolis and the Montreal Region, Chantal Rouleau, and by Montreal City Councilor Vana Nazarian (Acting Responsible for global outreach and attractiveness), representing respectively the Government of Quebec and the City of Montreal. I gave the final speech before the opening ceremony concluded with the traditional *kagami biraki*.

Guests enjoyed a selection of typical Japanese dishes and alcoholic beverages, along with Ikebana arrangements and information booths showcasing local Japanese companies and our Consulate General, allowing attendees to experience Japanese culture and allure firsthand. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all our collaborators.



### Nadeshicon

From April 10 to 12, the 12<sup>th</sup> edition of Japanese popular culture convention Nadeshicon was held in Québec City, attracting close to 3000 enthusiasts of Japanese anime, manga, and video games.

Two music groups from Japan were also invited to perform. Additionally, workshops on the tea ceremony,

calligraphy, folk dances, Japanese sweets, and tourism in Japan were held. This was my first visit to Nadeshicon, and I found it to be an excellent opportunity to introduce people to the many facets and charms of Japan. My thanks to the many volunteers who organized this event.



*\*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.*