

Message by Consul General Uchikawa (2026.04 & 05)

As the days grow longer, smiles seem to be appearing more often. I hope you are doing well and enjoying this beautiful season.

The year 2026 marks the 10th anniversary of the friendship agreement between Kyoto Prefecture and the Province of Quebec, while 2028 will mark both the 100th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Japan and Canada and the 30th anniversary of the sister-city relationship between Hiroshima and Montreal. As we celebrate these important milestones, our Consulate will remain committed to further strengthening ties between Japan and Canada, as well as between Japan and Quebec.

According to an announcement published by Investissement Québec on May 13, Quebec is home to approximately 3,900 companies headquartered outside the province (subsidiaries whose parent companies are based elsewhere). Although these firms represent only 1% of all businesses in Quebec, their economic impact is far greater, accounting for 11% of total employment, 21% of GDP, 37% of research and development expenditures, and 56% of goods exports, among other contributions. Japanese companies also contribute to Quebec's economy in a variety of ways.

McGill University and HEC Montréal Executive MBA Program

On April 19, Deputy Consul General Takaku delivered a lecture as part of the McGill and HEC Montréal Executive MBA program. He addressed approximately 50 participants (senior executives, business leaders, and top professionals) to present Japan's social and economic situation. Program participants were also planning a field study in Japan and expressed particular interest in promising business sectors there.



Spring Market at the Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre of Montreal

On April 25, I had the pleasure to visit the annual Spring Market. Various exhibitors offered kimonos, accessories, Japanese crafts, and second-hand books. In the basement, visitors could enjoy gyudon, Japanese curry, onigiri, and Japanese pastries. On the upper floors, a diverse program, including koto and shamisen performances, showcased traditional Japanese instruments.

The event nostalgically reminded me of everyday life in Japan. I would like to commend the efforts of Mr. Hirai, President of the Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre of Montreal, as well as all the volunteers who contributed to the success of this event.



McGill University

On April 27, we had the opportunity to visit McGill University's *Steinberg Centre for Simulation and Interactive Learning*. It was already fascinating to see behind the scenes of surgeons' work, but we were also impressed by the quality and scope of the facilities dedicated to student training and education.

We were told that, through the Japanese Society for Surgical Education, Japanese doctors regularly come to receive training there. Thanks to the courses and research offered by the Centre in the field of surgical education, they are able to acquire specialized knowledge as well as teaching skills, thereby contributing to the development of surgical education in Japan.

Furthermore, McGill University maintains numerous ties with Japan. Since 2018, McGill University and Kyoto University, recognized as one of the world's leading institutions in the field of genomic analysis, have offered a joint degree program. The Steinberg Centre also illustrates the breadth and diversity of the relationships that unite Japan and Quebec.

La Semaine Japon

On April 27, Deputy Consul General Takaku delivered remarks at the opening event of La Semaine Japon 2026, which brings together restaurants, shops, and businesses related to Japan in the Montreal region. Organized for the sixth consecutive year, La Semaine Japon continues to grow in success and has become a must-attend event, allowing Montrealers to discover Japanese culture in an accessible and friendly setting.



The opening event brought together many Japan enthusiasts, including young participants and influencers, creating a particularly lively atmosphere. Their enthusiasm reflected the strong interest in Japanese culture in Montreal.

Visit of the Port of Montreal

On April 30, we took part in a visit to the Port of Montreal organized for the consular corps by Quebec's Ministry of International Relations and La Francophonie (MRIF).

As the largest container port in Eastern Canada, the Port of Montreal is connected to ports in 140 countries, including Japan, and welcomes more than 2,000 ships each year. We were informed that, compared to ten years ago, the share of trade with Asia has increased significantly and now represents approximately 20% of its activity.

We also had the opportunity to view part of the port's infrastructure, which extends over approximately 30 kilometres. This visit offered us a new perspective on the Old Port area, which we usually experience from a very different angle.

I would like to thank the representatives of the MRIF as well as the officials of the Montreal Port Authority for their detailed explanations and warm welcome.



Ikebana International Annual Exhibition

On May 1, the Japanese Pavilion at the Montreal Botanical Garden hosted the 53rd opening ceremony of an exhibition organized by the Montreal Chapter of Ikebana International. Representatives from various Ikebana schools showcased remarkable works that highlighted natural landscapes and the atmosphere of the seasons through compositions of seasonal plants and flowers in vases, gracefully reflecting this year's exhibition theme, "Ode to Spring."

Ms. Cristina Iori, Honorary President of the Montreal Chapter, shared her personal experience with Ikebana and emphasized the beauty of the bonds of friendship created through this floral art. For my part, I expressed my gratitude to the Montreal Chapter for its commitment to promoting Ikebana, one of Japan's major cultural traditions, and reaffirmed the Consulate's commitment to supporting such initiatives.



ASIASIE

Once again this year, the ASIASIE event was held at the Time Out Market gastronomic complex, located near our Consulate General. In addition to Japanese booths featuring items such as Japanese tea, wagashi, kimonos, and accessories, around thirty exhibitors representing various Asian countries took part in the event. The opening ceremony also allowed the public to enjoy a variety of cultural performances, including Philippine dances and Vietnamese traditional instrument demonstrations.

Representatives of several Asian diplomatic and consular missions attended the opening, including the Embassy of Indonesia, the Honorary Consulate of Cambodia, and the Honorary Consulate of Mongolia, contributing to the event's warm and lively atmosphere.



Japan-Quebec Economic Relations

On May 11, we had the opportunity to meet with Mr. Bolduc, President of Investissement Québec International, to discuss the deepening of economic relations between Japan and Quebec. Then, on May 13, we met with Mr. Lambias Mounier, President of the Conseil du patronat du Québec (CPQ), who presented the main activities of his organization. This meeting also provided an opportunity to exchange views on the Quebec economy and economic relations between Quebec and Japan.



Hanami Picnic

On May 17, Vice-Consul Ishikawa took part in the traditional hanami picnic held annually at the Japanese Pavilion of the Montreal Botanical Garden.

Under ideal weather conditions, many participants enjoyed the beauty of the Botanical Garden and the Japanese Garden while sharing their meals. The performance by the Arashi Daiko Japanese drumming group,

held under a magnificent blue sky, particularly captivated the audience. In addition, a tea ceremony demonstration was offered by the Urasenke Tankokai Association, allowing visitors to enjoy a bowl of matcha while admiring the serene landscape of the Japanese Garden.

We would like to express our deep gratitude to the organizers and the many volunteers whose efforts contributed to the great success of this event, which saw remarkable participation.



Meeting with City Councillor Nazarian

On May 21, we met with Ms. Vana Nazarian, Councillor of the City of Montreal (responsible for attractiveness and economic development), in order to exchange views on ways to further strengthen relations between Japan and Montreal.

Japan Touring Film Festival in Canada

On May 22 and 23, the 42nd edition of the Japanese Film Festival was held at the Cinémathèque québécoise, co-organized by the Consulate General of Japan in Montreal and the Japan Foundation, Toronto. The three films presented were very well received.



We are delighted that audiences were able to deepen their understanding of Japan through films from different periods and thematic backgrounds. Our sincere thanks to all the viewers.

Diplomatic Bluebook

The Diplomatic Bluebook, published by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, presents developments in the international situation as well as Japan's main diplomatic activities. It has been published annually since the first edition in September 1957, and the current edition is the 2026 version.

The Japanese version is currently available on the Ministry's website, and a full English version as well as a French summary will be published shortly.

The document outlines the fundamental principles of Japan's diplomacy: Japan has consistently followed the path of a peace-loving nation since the end of World War II, contributing to the peace, stability, and prosperity of the international community including the Asia-Pacific region, and working to maintain and strengthen a free and open international order based on the rule of law.

We hope that this publication will serve as a useful reference for better understanding the evolution of Japanese diplomacy.

Link: <https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/gaiko/bluebook/>

**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.*