

Happy New Year, everyone!

I wish you all a splendid year 2025 filled with much happiness. For our part at the Consulate General, we will continue to put forth every effort in order to further strengthen our ties with each of the provinces in our jurisdiction.

Japan and Canada are extremely important partners whose bilateral relations are based on shared fundamental values such as freedom, democracy, human rights, and the rule of law. There is currently much progress in their relations in terms of cooperation in the fields of diplomacy, security, politics, economics, and cultural exchanges. As Canada will be assuming the G7 presidency in 2025, one can hope that this opportunity will be used to deepen the various exchanges between the two countries.

The number of tourists travelling from Canada to Japan remains on an upward trend year after year. I am most happy to think that Canadians are through such visits deepening their understanding of Japan. It is within this context that the Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai will be held this year in Japan from April 13 to October 13. I hope that many will visit Japan and discover alongside the Expo the country's hidden charms.

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On December 6, I attended the Annual General Meeting of the Japanese Chamber of Commerce in Montreal, during which I gave a speech. Through discussions with various members of the Chamber, I was once more made keenly aware of the important contribution by each member company to the local economy, employment, and community over the years, as well as of the strong bonds of trust and friendship that have been forged bringing Japan and Canada closer. The Consulate General extends its best wishes of continued growth and success to the Japanese Chamber of Commerce in Montreal and reaffirms its commitment to support Japanese businesses in their endeavors.



On December 9th, I was once again invited to join the Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre of Montreal (JCCCM)'s annual seniors' Christmas party. Through the planning and participation of JCCCM President Minoru Inoue and numerous seniors and volunteers, the event with its heartfelt performances of folk dancing, taiko drumming, and piano-accompanied singing was a heartwarming one at a time when winter's cold was becoming increasingly felt. My sincere thanks to the Centre.



On January 19, Vice-Consul Yo Ishikawa attended the Quebec Association of Chado Urasenke Tankokai's annual *Hatsugama*. This special tea ceremony marking the start of the new year demonstrated the many attractive facets of this art in an authentic, easy-to-understand manner. Through his experience, the Vice-Consul felt that the way of tea has the peculiarity of allowing its participants to join together, in communion, within a single space. I would like to express my deepest respect to the members of the association, who have dedicated themselves over the years to activities aimed at connecting with people through the tea ceremony. The Consulate General will continue to support activities promoting the important aspect of traditional Japanese culture that is the tea ceremony.



Here, Japanese and Canadians alike are active in a wide range of fields, which include economics, culture, the arts, and academia, and I am fully aware that their activities contribute on a daily basis to the promotion of friendly relations between Japan and Canada. Accordingly, the Consulate General thanks you for your understanding and collaboration as it maintains its support of said activities.

Please accept my best wishes for the coming year.

*\*In addition to the above, I was able to exchange ideas and opinions with various Japanese and Canadian people and organizations, making for yet another meaningful month.*