

With the warmer weather, it seems like more and more people are taking to walking the streets in search of sunshine. Meanwhile, Japan-related events are in full swing across the province of Quebec, and with many locals attending them, I am regularly made aware of the growing interest in Japanese culture.

In that sense, allow me to first broach the topic of the official visit to Japan by Quebec's Minister of International Relations and La Francophonie, Martine Biron.

#### Quebec Minister of International Relations and La Francophonie Martine Biron's mission to Japan

From June 21 to 25, Quebec Minister of International Relations and La Francophonie and Minister Responsible for the Status of Women Martine Biron was on mission in Japan. According to an official communiqué from the Minister's office, Japan is not only a notable partner but also a key anchor market in the Indo-Pacific region for Quebec, which actively fosters diversification of its export markets to ensure economic security and prosperity. During her visit, Ms.



Biron also visited the Expo Osaka, Kansai, where she showcased Quebec culture at the Canada Pavilion.

On June 23, she paid a courtesy call on Japanese Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs Arfiya Eri. During the meeting, Ms. Eri described Japan and Canada as important strategic partners in the Indo-Pacific region, with shared fundamental values, and emphasized her desire to further deepen Japan-Quebec relations, as the province strives to strengthen its economic ties with Japan and the rest of Asia. In response, Ms. Biron expressed a similar desire for the deepening of the cooperation between Quebec and Japan. They shared views and opinions on a wide range of topics, including people-to-people exchanges and economic relations, with the aim of consolidating Japan-Quebec cooperation, and underlined their intention to continue working together in the future.

Minister Biron also had the opportunity to meet Takatoshi Nishiwaki and Ryuzo Aramaki, respectively Governor and Assembly Speaker for Kyoto Prefecture, with which Quebec maintains a friendship and cooperation agreement, as well as Osaka Mayor Hideyuki Yokoyama, and the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry's Director-General for Trade Policy and Economic Cooperation, Yasuji Komiyama.

In addition, Ms. Biron, accompanied by Quebec entrepreneurs and representatives of Quebec companies operating in Japan, took part in economic activities aimed at stimulating trade with Japan, particularly in the creative industries, energy, and environment sectors.

### Quebec National Day celebrations

A few days earlier, along the same vein, I attended the annual Quebec National Day celebration, hosted by Premier François Legault and his spouse on June 18 in Québec City. Enjoying the relaxed setting, I had the opportunity to speak with our hosts, Minister of International Relations and La Francophonie Martine Biron, prior to her scheduled visit to Japan, as well as with Minister of Education Bernard Drainville.



The event brought together a large number of attendees, including provincial government ministers and senior officials, representatives from public corporations, as well as consuls general and honorary consuls from various countries. Following the Premier's speech, guests engaged in cordial conversations in the warm and friendly atmosphere, enjoying traditional Quebec music performed by a live ensemble. My thanks to the Quebec government and the Ministry of International Relations for their hospitality.

### Espace Japon

On June 18, I had the pleasure of meeting Loubna Ghaoui, Director of the Université Laval Library. Through that meeting, I wished to express our thanks to the Library for the many years of sharing Japanese culture, such as tea ceremony and calligraphy, with Quebecers in the Espace Japon, a Japanese-style room located in the library and named "Carrefour Japon" at the time of its creation in 1993. It was unfortunately forced to shut down last autumn as safety reasons dictated the need to renovate the library building. However, the activities organized there over the years undoubtedly helped to shine the spotlight on Japanese culture. I would therefore like to reiterate my deep gratitude to Ms. Ghaoui and the library staff for their invaluable contribution to this day.



### YATAI MTL

YATAI MTL was held from June 5 to 8, and Deputy Consul General Yoshiki Takaku attended its opening ceremony on the first day, then met with local business people, including representatives from Quebec companies doing business in Japan, to exchange views on Japan-Quebec relations. Brimming with a Japanese summer festival animation, the venue was every day crowded with visitors, with its countless stalls showcasing calligraphy, clothing and kimonos, stationery, accessories, tea, sake, seasonings, various Japanese dishes,

sweets, and more. Our Consulate General held an information booth on Japanese tourism and culture, the JET Programme, and the MEXT Scholarship Program.



### Diplomatic Bluebook

The Diplomatic Bluebook is a Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs compilation of Japanese diplomatic activities and developments in international affairs. It is published yearly, with its first edition in September 1957, and its latest in 2025. Currently, aside from the original Japanese version, only an English summary is available, but a full English translation and a French summary should also be uploaded in the near future. I hope the following link will prove useful in improving your understanding of the evolution of Japanese diplomacy: [Diplomatic 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.*