



● GREETINGS FROM THE INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS DESK ●

What comes to mind when you think of spring? There's no doubt that answers will differ according to where you're from, or your own personal affinity for or aversion to the season. Some will claim it the most magical time of year when mother nature sheds her dull winter cloak and blossoms, others will dub it hell as "kafunsho" or seasonal hay fever obstructs your every capacity to function without an itchy surgical mask guarding your respiratory system from pesky pollen. Regardless of your own take on spring, Japan and the Japanese embrace it.

Thanks in great part to *sakura* cherry blossoms being both seasonal and symbolic, the ubiquity of the flower seems less obtrusive than one might expect. Though seasonal limited-edition products offer up sakura cherry blossom flavored goods, it tends to be an acquired taste and rarely makes a hit amongst most westerners. Those of us who do enjoy *sakura*-themed goodies, including your dotting editor, are greatly in luck this time of year. Sakura lovers or not, from all of us here at the International Affairs Desk, we wish you all a wonderful spring!

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SIGN UP WITH US



Our office would like to make sure that the international resident community has access

to all of the necessary information and resources in town. Contact us and let us know you're interested in signing up for our mailing list to receive notifications about what's going on in our city as well as invitations to various events hosted by our office and others throughout the year!

CITY SERVICES DURING GOLDEN WEEK

■ CITY HALL	May 1	10:00-17:15
■ ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER	April 27	9:00-12:00
	May 2 & 3	9:00-15:00
■ CHILD CARE SERVICES		
- Child Development Center	April 27 - May 3 / 5 / 6	
- Tsudoi no Hiroba Nijiro Playroom	April 27 / 30 / May 1	
- Tsudoi no Hiroba Harmony Playroom	May 2 - 4	
- Municipal Preschools	April 27 / 30 / May 1 / 2	
- Afterschool Kids Club	April 27 / 30 / May 1	
■ FUJIYOSHIDA CITY HOSPITAL	ODD: Internal Medicine	
	EVEN: Surgery	
■ MUNICIPAL LIBRARY	April 27 / 28 / 30 - May 5	
■ COMMUNITY CENTERS	all open throughout	



L'amitié

Exploring the Friendship between
Fujiyoshida & France



Fujiyoshida City has shared a 40 year sister city relationship with Chamonix Mont-Blanc, a world class hub for alpine and ski tourism in the French Alps. The two cities began their relationship in an unlikely state of affairs. Chamonix at the time had been eyeing Sapporo, the then Winter Olympic host city, to be their sister city. Due to encouragement from several supporters of the agreement based on similarities in climate, industry and most importantly their respective relationships with the world famous peaks by which they're located, the sister city pact was finalized and signed into action by both respective city councils in 1978. In the years since, the two cities have built a lasting friendship through grassroots exchange and various formal and informal delegations and good will projects.



CHAMONIX-MONT-BLANC

FRANCE | Population: 8,902

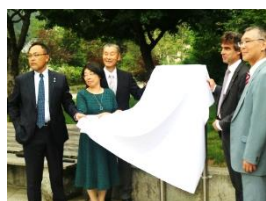
Sister City since October 9, 1978

Exchanges have included a broad range of activities from sister city anniversary celebration delegations every five years to arts and sports related exchanges. The first of such exchanges began in 1995 when the "Fujisan Kaen Taiko" drumming group traveled to Chamonix to participate in the Chamonix Folk Festival.

IN THE FACE DISASTER

In 1999, Chamonix experienced two back-to-back tragedies; a terrible avalanche, one of the worst in the French Alps, that took the lives of 12, and a horrific tunnel fire that killed 39. In the aftermath, Fujiyoshida organized several fundraising efforts to send donations for disaster relief to Chamonix. Following the Great East Japan Earthquake and tsunami disaster that rocked the Tohoku region in 2013, school children from Chamonix came together to send messages of hope and prayers to Fujiyoshida.

40TH SISTER CITY ANNIVERSARY



2018 was a significant year on a national level as Japan and France celebrated 160 years of diplomatic relations and on a city level with Fujiyoshida and Chamonix celebrating 40 years as sister cities. In celebration of both of these occasions, a delegation from Fujiyoshida visited Chamonix in May participating in the unveiling of a sister city plaque in the aptly named Fujiyoshida Garden. In November, Sonia Guiollot, an artist from Chamonix, resided in Fujiyoshida for one month creating three separate commemorative installations during her stay. Her work remains in Kanadorii Park by Fujisan Station and on the large wall bordering the inner parking lot at Fujiyoshida City Hall. In both pieces, Ms. Guiollot included imagery of friendship, depicting Mt. Fuji and Mont Blanc standing side by side. The sister city relationship continues to thrive at the hands of devoted citizens like Ms. Guiollot.

TEAM CAMP x HOST TOWN



2019 Rugby World Cup™

Fujiyoshida City combined forces with neighboring Fujikawaguchiko Town in the process of applying to become an “official team camp” for the Rugby World Cup™ – the third largest international sporting competition in the world – which will be held in Japan in 2019. The two cities were officially recognized in July 2018 and have been working hard on legacy building and related exchanges



2020 Tokyo Olympics

The bidding process for the Olympic Host Town designation began soon after Tokyo was selected as the host for the 2020 Olympic Games. Within Yamanashi Prefecture there was a large scale push to get as many cities to host athletic teams from France. This was part of a larger context as Yamanashi Prefecture has the largest number of sister cities in France than any other prefecture in Japan.

An “official team camp” is the designated location in which the participating national teams stay, train and condition in the days leading up to the tournament. The benefits for the “official team camp” itself are thought to be far reaching, with ample opportunity for positive press and tourism promotion for selected cities. The official team camps are spread out across Japan as are the tournament arenas.

The “Host Town Initiative” is part of a larger plan to encourage cultural exchanges so that the Olympic Games make a more lasting impact on the host country. In exchange for offering training facilities and a valuable opportunity to acclimatize prior to the games, the teams are expected to participate in various cultural and sports-related exchange programs with the local community.

JAPONISMES 2018 EXHIBITION



In celebration of 160 years of diplomatic relations between Japan and France, the two nations collaborated in launching "Japonismes 2018: les ames en resonance" a massive showcase of Japanese art and culture in Paris – an epicenter for the arts – with other numerous other pop-up sites throughout the year all over the country including one small satellite exhibition in Chamonix, our French sister city (see page 3 for more on Chamonix).

Japanese culture was first introduced in France through the arts by widely circulated works by artists like Katsushika Hokusai, whose woodblock print depiction of Mt. Fuji with a large wave

in the forefront has become a symbol of Japan largely celebrated in the west. Because the arts have always played a large role in the friendship forged and mutual fascination between the two countries, the creative nature of this initiative was especially meaningful and successful.

Fujiyoshida City as part of the larger Gunnai region, which has a rich history of textile production (featured in the last edition of the Reiho Fuji), was invited alongside Nishikatsura Town to collaborate with Agnes Letestu, former etoile of the Paris Opera turned costume designer, who agreed to use local textiles in the production of several costumes to be worn by dancers both Japanese and French in a performance scheduled later in the year in Japan.



The costumes were on display at the Center for Japanese Culture in Paris (Maison de la Culture du Japon a Paris) in February as part of the "Synergies entre tradition et modernite" (Synergies between tradition and modernity) exhibition. Members of the Fujiyoshida City government were invited to the opening night reception alongside prominent members of creative community in Paris and members of the Japanese consulate including the Japanese ambassador to France to celebrate the unveiling of the stunning costumes



It was a great success for the Fujiyoshida textile industry who is working hard to rebrand and expand their base not just within Japan but throughout the world. It was yet another example of the vibrant and innovative projects that have resulted from the long standing relationship we as a city share with France.



SAKURA SEASON

in FUJIGOKO

Sakura flowers bloom from the warmer southern regions gradually traveling north. The Fujigoko region is located on the northern base of Mt. Fuji which is centrally located but also at a relatively higher altitude, making the blooming season later than some of the surrounding areas. There are many local events for enjoying the various strains of sakura that thrive locally.



■ FUJIZAKURA FESTIVAL

April 14 ~ 29 // Nakanochaya

Fujizakura are the official city flower and thrive in the northern most area of the city and grow in abundance in Nakanochaya. There will be free tea and gifting of sakura seedlings at the event.



■ LAKE KAWAGUCHI (NORTH SHORE)

April 6 ~ 14 // Lake Kawaguchi

The northern base is already a popular site for pictures for many visitors to the area but is particularly beautiful while sakura are in bloom. Crafts will be sold for the duration of the festival.



■ SHIBASAKURA FESTIVAL

April 13 ~ May 26 // Lake Motosuko

Moss phlox flowers grow close to the ground and cover large swaths of land. The rolling pink fields of the Shibasakura festival remain perhaps the most popular attraction of the season.



M A R C H						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
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3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

A P R I L						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				



National Public Holidays

MARCH 21 (THU)

Vernal Equinox Day

春分の日 (しゅんぶんの日)

Known as "Shunbun no Hi" in Japanese – this national holiday marks the first day of spring for those of us in the northern hemisphere. The vernal equinox is one of two annual equinoxes (the other being the autumnal equinox on September 23). During an equinox, the sun passes the equator making the duration of day and night equal. From this day onward, the days become longer and nights shorter. This holiday is observed in correspondence with the tradition of "higan" in which the three days preceding the equinox and three days following the equinox are dedicated to paying respect to ancestors by visiting and cleaning graves.

APRIL 29 (MON)

Showa Day

昭和の日 (しょうわの日)

This is the birthday of Emperor Hirohito who was the governing emperor during the Showa Era (1926-1989). The Showa Era was an intense time in Japanese history marked by war, its first ever foreign occupation and an "economic miracle" in which Japan rapidly grew to become the second largest economy in the world. Showa Day is also the first in a string of national holidays that makes up "Golden Week" a period in which several national holidays fall consecutively from the end of April through the beginning of May. Due to its duration, many Japanese regard this holiday as a prime time for travel making domestic travel particularly chaotic.

+ IN CASE OF EMERGENCY



FIRE DEPT 消防 (shobo)



119

for fires and medical emergencies



POLICE DEPT 警察 (keisatsu)



110

for traffic accidents, crime and safety concerns

