

Canada Day

Canada, Japan thrive as ideal partners across the Pacific

Mackenzie Clugston
AMBASSADOR OF CANADA

At home, Canada Day is an opportunity to gather in our communities, from coast to coast and to celebrate all we have in common.



On the world stage, Canada's reputation as a champion of peace, security and global development is manifested by our ongoing promotion of democracy, human rights and the rule of law, and of sustainable and balanced growth, at home and abroad.

Here in Japan, this 146th anniversary of Canadian Confederation provides an opportunity to reflect on our long-standing friendship. Canada-Japan relations have flourished over the years, building on people-to-people ties, and shared values and interests to encompass political, economic, commercial, defense, cultural and educational links.

Bilateral peace and security cooperation continues to grow. Our forces have worked together to encourage stability and reconstruction in some difficult places, and have even worked together to stop illegal, unreported and

uncontrolled fishing through aerial surveillance in the north Pacific. Further coordination of our efforts will help us counter some of the challenges seen in the world today.

Multilateral cooperation is also strong and we share common aims in developing effective multilateral institutions such as the ASEAN Regional Forum, which can play a preventive diplomacy role, and contribute to regional peace and prosperity.

We enjoy a vital and mutually beneficial trade and investment relationship, reaffirmed with the launch of free-trade negotiations — a historic step that will create jobs and growth for both countries.

This includes a thriving trade relationship with some 330 Japanese businesses in Canada and 90 Canadian enterprises in Japan — including Canada's financial institutions, which have prospered all over the world.

Indeed, Canadian banks are hailed as the world's soundest since 2008 (by the World Economic Forum). Bloomberg Markets reiterates this accolade as its 2012 ranking finds four Canadian banks among the world's top 10 strongest banks — more than any other country. As for life insurers, three Canadian life insurers are among the top 20 worldwide (in terms of market



Coming together: Communities across the country host Canada Day celebrations, with parades, festivals, barbecues, air and maritime shows, fireworks and free musical concerts bringing together many thousands of people. NATIONAL CAPITAL COMMISSION

capitalization).

Moreover, four Canadian cities rank within the top 20 most competitive financial hubs (in the 2013 Global Financial Center Index).

And, Canada continues to enjoy the lowest net debt-to-GDP ratio in the G-7 and remains on course to balanced budgets by 2015, thereby justifying its Triple A credit rating status.

Unsurprisingly then, Canada leads the G-20 as the best country in which to do business (in a Forbes 2012 ranking), scoring high on: infrastructure; a skilled workforce; market opportunities; tax laws; innovation policies and

more.

Our science and technology cooperation with Japan is excellent. We have a treaty on S&T that is more than 25 years old, and through it we are collaborating on some very exciting developments. For example, 2013 saw the first joint meeting on space cooperation between Japan and Canada, with a new agreement on disaster monitoring using our satellites.

Our bilateral relationship is bolstered by the friendships between our peoples as well. There are grass-roots programs such as the 75 sister-city relationships between Canada and

Japan, and the sister-province relationship between Alberta and Hokkaido. There are active regional Canada-Japan associations all over Japan. We also benefit from strong participation in the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Program, with about 500 Canadian participants in Japan and several thousand JET alumni.

And from Japan to Canada, every year we host over 5,000 Working Holiday Program participants from Japan and well over 20,000 Japanese youth who choose Canada as their preferred study destination.

Our people are also fascinated

by each other's cultures.

Canadian musicians, such as Justin Bieber, Avril Lavigne, Céline Dion, and Neil Young have an active following in Japan, and artists such as Glenn Gould and Oscar Peterson remain legendary.

In the performing arts, world-renowned Cirque du Soleil has delighted more than a million spectators of all ages in Japan since 1992. And our world-class feature, documentary, short and animation films have loyal audiences here.

Numerous Japanese translations of "Anne of Green Gables," a popular novel among Japanese young readers for many years, have been published since the first translation by Hanako Murao in 1952.

The long-standing people-to-people bond between our two nations was particularly evident following the tragedies Japan suffered as a result of the March 11, 2011, disasters. The Hope for Youth scholarship program and the Canada Japan Reconstruction program, which is kick-starting the building of community facilities, are but two examples of how Canada continues to stand alongside Japan in its renewal efforts.

In Canada we embrace the opportunity to come from various places and build our society together. We have the solid foundations of a free and democratic society, the rule of law and equality of opportunity. Through

our diversity we are adapting to modern challenges and opportunities, and both by demographics and by deliberate choice we are turning increasingly toward Asia for our partnerships for

the future. As Canada continues its pivot toward Asia, Japan remains the ideal partner and friend across the Pacific.

A happy Canada Day! "Joyeuse fête du Canada!"

***Congratulations
to the People of Canada
on the Occasion of
the 146th Anniversary
of Canada Day***



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