

Canada national day

Continuing to build economic, diplomatic relations

Mackenzie Clugston
AMBASSADOR OF CANADA

July 1st is Canada Day and Canadians will show their pride in our country's history, culture and achievements in festivities from coast to coast to coast.



Here in Japan, this 147th anniversary of Canadian Confederation provides an opportunity to reflect on our long-standing ties. Since the establishment of our diplomatic relations 85 years ago, the Canada-Japan friendship has grown into a strong and dynamic partnership based on shared values, significant two-way investment and flows of technology, knowledge and people.

Building on our complementary economic relationship, Canada and Japan are currently negotiating an economic partnership agreement (EPA) – a comprehensive, high-quality free trade agreement that will bring about significant mutual benefits. With more than 330 Japanese businesses in Canada and over 100 Canadian enterprises in Japan, the starting point for the EPA is already impressive. Negotiations are well on their way and we look forward to a comprehensive round six and

welcoming Japan to Ottawa in the coming months. At the same time, Canada and Japan are also working together on the TPP to enhance greater cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region.

Over the past year, Canada has concluded an agreement in principle with the European Union for a comprehensive economic trade agreement and concluded and tabled in the House of Commons a free trade agreement with South Korea, our very first in the Asia-Pacific region; we hope to build on this momentum to move forward in negotiations with Japan and bring our trade and investment partnership to the next level.

Canada is a global leader with respect to responsible resource development and is poised to become a key exporter of LNG and oil to Asia and Japan can look to Canada to secure safe and reliable energy resources. Canada is also Japan's third-most important source of food imports and Canadian agricultural products such as canola, pork, wheat and soybeans are an important part of everyday life in Japan.

Multilaterally, Canada and Japan are partners in numerous international organizations such as the G8, the G20, APEC and the ASEAN Regional Forum. Supported by joint defense-foreign policy talks, we work closely on issues related



A flag raising ceremony was held on July 1, 1929 at the Canadian Legation in Tokyo, Canada's first diplomatic mission in Asia. EMBASSY OF CANADA

to peace and security, including nuclear nonproliferation, promotion of peacekeeping,

disaster response and humanitarian relief.

Last year, Canada began its

two-year chairmanship of the Arctic Council. The Arctic is an important part of Canada's geography and we are working closely with other Arctic states to help the north realize its true potential as a healthy, prosperous and secure region. The acceptance of Japan as an accredited observer of the Arctic Council will provide us with further opportunities to work together.

Our political and economic partnerships are bolstered by our diverse and multifaceted people-to-people ties. With 76 sister city/sister province relationships and active regional Canada-Japan associations across Japan, the grass-roots dialogue between Canadian and Japanese people is vibrant. We also benefit from strong participation in the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Program with about 500 Canadian participants now in Japan and several thousand JET alumni. It is these types of linkages that form the foundation of our bilateral relations.

These bonds were particularly evident following the tragedies Japan suffered as a result of the March 11, 2011 disasters. Three years on, Canada continues to support the renewal of the affected regions, including through the Canada-Tohoku Reconstruction project, which is helping to rebuild public facilities using Canadian wood products and advanced wood

technologies.

Looking forward, both Canada and Japan are placing a renewed focus on – and investing heavily in – the internationalization of education: Japan through its Top Global University Project and Tobitate Ryuugaku Japan programs and Canada through our International Education Strategy, which aims to attract more foreign students and offer greater mobility opportunities to our students, researchers and teachers. This is an excellent motivation for both countries to further expand our academic connections.

Canada is already a popular destination for Japanese students at all levels. Every year, about 25,000 Japanese students enjoy a warm Canadian welcome and learn how easy it is to integrate into our multicultural society, an experience that can go a long way toward ensuring their well-being and academic success. In addition, approximately 6,000 Japanese youth visit Canada each year through the Working Holiday Program to experience Canada's vastness and diversity of regions, cultures and languages and to participate directly in and learn about Canadian culture.

Our two countries enjoy rich cultural ties at many levels. Canadian musicians, such as Celine Dion, Avril Lavigne and Neil Young have an active following in Japan and artists such as Glenn Gould and Oscar Peterson remain legendary. In the performing

arts, the world-renowned Cirque du Soleil has delighted more than a million spectators in Japan since 1992. Additionally, Japan's enduring affection for Anne of Green Gables can be seen in the popularity of the NHK morning drama "Hanako and Anne."

As we develop our bilateral

ties to their full potential in this 85th anniversary year, I'd like to thank all supporters of the Canada-Japan relationship for your continued contributions to the security, prosperity and friendship of our two countries.

Happy Canada Day! Bonne Fête du Canada!

**Congratulations
to the People of Canada
on the Occasion of
the 147th Anniversary
of Canada Day**



MITSUI & CO., LTD.