

## Canada-Japan Cultural Relations

Canada-Japan cultural relations are an important part of the bilateral relationship. No longer a relationship based solely on trade, investment and tourism, the cultural dimension renewed and revitalized the relationship.

With the emergence of Japan as one of the world's leading economic powers, the Canadian government is vitally interested in expanding knowledge and understanding of Canada in Japan, and in encouraging Canadians to become more aware of Japan so Canada can respond to a host of challenges and opportunities with that country.

For its part, the Japanese government views cultural diplomacy as a foreign policy priority. In May 1988, former prime minister Takeshita declared that culture would form the third pillar of Japanese foreign policy, along with political and economic dimensions.

With a view to eliminating cultural misunderstanding, Canada and Japan have developed a series of tools to promote cultural interaction and exchange. One is the Canada-Japan cultural consultations process, where representatives of the two countries meet every two years to discuss initiatives they plan to undertake.

Another key element is the Japan Exchange and Teaching Program. Each year, several hundred young Canadians go to Japan for a year or more to teach English or work as co-ordinators for international relations in different cities and towns. For the 1991-92 program, more than 1000 applications were received for 300 positions selected. The cost of the program is covered by the Japanese government.

Other components of the Canada-Japan cultural relationship include twinning of over 40 cities and, 10 years ago, the twinning of Alberta and Hokkaido; programs and awards to promote cultural and educational exchange in such fields as publishing and television programming; the sponsorship by both governments of tours by artistic groups and individuals, performers and lecturers. In November 1990, the Japan Foundation opened an office in Toronto.

The new Canadian chancery in Tokyo will further enhance cultural relations. The chancery's facilities – a gallery, theatre and library – will host a variety of cultural activities and showcase Canadian talent.

In Tokyo, "Great Canada 1991" will showcase Canadian visual and performing arts and film through a program of over 160 presentations at the Bunkamura cultural complex and the new chancery. This initiative is funded mainly by the private sector.