

influenced by these relations. In your case, American influence has centred mainly, perhaps, on social and political institutions; while in our case, that influence was mostly economic and cultural.

Both our countries recognize today that on the whole this influence was beneficial; at the same time, I think we both realize that such influence -- or that of any other country for that matter -- must not be allowed to become too pervasive if we want to maintain the autonomy of our social and cultural development. Perhaps Canada must be more vigilant than Japan in this respect. We have not had the benefit of a long history to develop a strong, homogenous culture. Canada is a young country, built by several native groups and successive generations of immigrants from many lands, all of them attached to their cultural traditions. We have retained as official languages the idiom of the two larger groups of immigrants, French and English. Our country is so vast that once settled in a particular region or province, immigrants of very diverse origins have developed a common regional or provincial identity. I wonder whether the Japanese feel the need to identify themselves as "Shikokuans" or "Kyushuans" as much as Canadians tend to identify themselves as Québécois or Westerners, Nova Scotians or British Columbians. In short, our national culture -- or multicultural, as we call it -- is founded on diversity rather than similarity; and the political integration of Canada is not only recent, in historical terms, but it must accommodate itself to the several regional identities and provincial loyalties of Canadians. This largely explains the complexity of our federal system of government, which probably befuddles so many Japanese. To a certain extent, one could compare the socio-cultural make-up of contemporary Canada to that of Japan during the Heian period, almost a thousand years ago, when your ancestors began to emancipate themselves from Chinese influence, proceeded to assimilate cultural and technical imports from the mainland and, in so doing, developed the characteristics of Japanese civilization. Japan was then quite vulnerable to foreign influence, especially from the most advanced civilization of that period; Canada is similarly vulnerable today.

Consequently, the determination to preserve the social, cultural and economic autonomy of Canada is the basic political motivation behind the new foreign policies developed lately by our government and which we are now actively pursuing.