

The history of modern Canada begins in 1608, when the French explorer Samuel de Champlain founded the first permanent European settlement at Quebec; and the foundation of Quebec coincides with the beginning of the Edo period in Japanese history, during which the first sporadic contacts between Japanese and Western cultures occurred. Japan had almost a thousand years of history behind her when Tokogawa Ieyasu was appointed Shogun by the Emperor, in 1603; but it can be argued that the French and British settlers who came to Canada in the last three centuries brought with them the cultural heritage of Europe, which is also thousands of years old.

Perhaps a more important date in Japanese history is the Meiji restoration of imperial rule, in 1868, which is generally recognized as the start of the process of modernization and industrialization in Japan. By another strange coincidence, 1867, the previous year, is also a most important date in the history of Canada: it is the year of Confederation, when the four founding British colonies of North America joined to establish a new federal sovereignty from the Atlantic to the Pacific Coast. In spite of the substantial differences between our two societies at that time, it must be recognized that the historical tasks undertaken by the Federal Government of Canada were quite similar to those of the Meiji Government in Japan: the establishment of a centralized administration, the improvement of communications through the building of railways, the expansion of agricultural production, the development of manufacturing industries and modern financial institutions, and so on.

Another striking similarity between the recent history of Canada and Japan is that both of our countries have been exposed to substantial and sustained influence from the United States of America. When Commodore Matthew Perry entered Tokyo Bay, in 1853, to negotiate Japan's first treaty of friendship and trade with a western country, the Canadian provinces were pinning their hopes for economic development on the negotiation of a reciprocity treaty with the United States; and even if that treaty soon had to be forgotten, the prosperity of the Canadian economy has always been closely linked, since then, to that of the United States. Of course, the relationship of our two countries with the United States evolved quite differently in the first half of the twentieth century. But in the last thirty years; the foreign policy of both Japan and Canada has been based on close relations with the United States; and our two societies have been profoundly