

A unique international complex is taking shape on the campus of the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, Canada. It was only an idea in 1970, but by the spring of 1977, the idea will have been transformed into a solid and permanent reality attesting to the good will and good sense which characterize relations between Canada and Asia. Now partially constructed, the ASIAN CENTRE will play an important role in deepening and broadening existing bonds.

An Unusual Gift

The founding spirit of the ASIAN CENTRE was Dr. Shotaro Iida, a faculty member at U. B. C. who, during a visit to the 1970 World Exposition at Osaka, Japan, persuaded the directors of the Sanyo Corporation to make an

unusual gift to Canada. The gift was the roof structure of the Sanyo pavilion which was dismantled at the conclusion of Expo '70, and shipped to Canada to be re-assembled as the roof of the ASIAN CENTRE which Dr. Iida had proposed.

The Sanyo gift was accompanied by pledges of support from the Keidanren (Japan's Federation of Economic Organizations) and the Commemorative Association for the Japan World Expo (1970), which have contributed \$ 550,000 and \$ 250,000 respectively. In response, the Government of Canada and the Government of British Columbia each granted \$ 400,000 toward the project. The Federal Government again through the Department of External Affairs has since granted an additional

\$ 50,000.

A committee of important Canadian businessmen chaired by Joseph Whitehead, President of Vancouver's *Journal of Commerce*, has been formed to raise the \$ 3.5 million which is required to finish the building.

Whitehead's committee, however, will not be restricting its fund-raising activities merely to Canada. In the fall of 1976 the Committee will be launching a \$ 1 million fund-raising drive in Asia. Questioned about the fund-raising effort, Whitehead recently stated that "the future success of the ASIAN CENTRE relies upon the commitment and involvement of governments and businesses on both sides of the Pacific Ocean. The building isn't just for Canadians. It will be a valuable and practical centre for Asians too."

Whitehead has already made one six-week tour of Asia in early 1975 to explain the nature of the ASIAN CENTRE project, and to lay the groundwork for the 1976 fund drive. He has reported strong interest in Korea, Singapore, the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and Hong Kong.

Beneath the Roof

The ASIAN CENTRE, although similar in outward appearance to the original Sanyo pavilion, differs markedly in interior design and function. Vancouver architect Donald Matsuba has created an entirely new building which, apart from symbolizing the positive nature of Asia-Canada relations, will house facilities and activities of a decidedly practical sort.

Perhaps the most important feature of the building is the Asian Studies Library which will be housed within. Consisting of over 180,000 volumes in various Asian languages, the library is the largest of its kind in Canada. UBC maintains the library as the result of special agreements which exist between the Canadian government's National Library and certain Asian countries. These agreements make U.B.C. a National Exchange Centre and Depository for important Asian library

