

Chinese Ambassador Lu's Speech to CCFS Ottawa, January 10

At our invitation Ambassador Lu Shumin addressed the Society on the topic "Canada-China Relations in the run-up to the Beijing Olympic Games" at Library and Archives Canada on January 10, 2008. Following is a summary of his presentation:

China's Ambassador to Canada Lu Shumin spoke about past and current relations and the way ahead for China and Canada, speaking before an audience of more than one hundred persons, including members of the press and government officials.

Ambassador Lu began his remarks by thanking CCFS President Lolan Merklinger for her kind introduction noting that the CCFS had worked over many decades to promote mutual understanding and friendship between the peoples of our two countries. He went on to say that (despite some minor contemporary problems which he alluded to later) there have been substantial achievements on so many fronts and our relations run deep. These include the builders from China of the Canadian Pacific Railway in the late nineteenth century, Norman Bethune in the 1930's, Canada's heroic defense of Hong Kong during World War II, Canada's wheat shipments to China in 1961, Canada's early recognition of the PRC in 1971, and most recently, the large number of immigrants coming from China to Canada. The extraordinary Chinese-language performances in China of Dashan (Canada's and Ottawa's own Mark Roswell) were also a source of admiration.

The Ambassador stated that while "much has been achieved in this relationship.. a lot more remains to be done." He noted that China is now "Canada's second largest trading partner just behind the U.S." This trade is currently worth about \$27 billion a year, and the leaders of our two countries envisioned in 2005 that it "could easily top 30 billion dollars by 2010." In the field of education, there are currently some 55,000 students from China studying in Canadian universities, and three Confucius Institutes have opened in Canada in the past two years. In the field of culture, Canadians have recently enjoyed the *Treasures from China* exhibition at the Museum of Civilization, the Chinese Lantern Festival in Toronto, and the Peking Opera in Edmonton. Chinese citizens have enjoyed performances by the Alberta Ballet company and participated in a Terry Fox run in Beijing. Soon Chinese and Canadian athletes will be competing together at the Beijing Olympics.

The Ambassador suggested that while there is thus much room for growth in both trade and culture, deeper political trust and stronger cooperation would be needed. He said that while "the fundamentals [of our relations] are solid" we still need to go further through "cooperation based on mutual respect and mutual benefit."

China, he remarked, is attempting to build a "harmonious society" in a "harmonious world." It aims to quadruple the per capita value of its GDP by 2020 while co-existing peacefully with all other countries through "tolerance, mutual respect, equality, expanding consensus, and seeking common development." He noted that our mutual interests are converging in such matters as "climate change, infectious diseases, illegal migration, and cross-border crimes" and that we should tap into our "economic complementarities" as a basis for expanding our trade. Given these complementarities, he observed that Canada could be among China's top ten trading partners. Although we do not see eye to eye on everything,

he suggested that we should treat our differences respectfully, especially when they touch on issues bearing on one another's "sovereignty [and] territorial integrity."

During the question period, the Ambassador remarked that the Dalai Lama is not just a religious person but also a political figure with a clear separatist agenda for the territory of Tibet. Because Tibet has long been a part of China, he intimated ever so politely that Canada, by giving an official governmental welcome to the Dalai Lama, was not fully respecting China's sovereignty and territorial integrity. When asked why China had not yet given Canada "Approved Destination Status" for many thousand of Chinese tourists who might wish to visit here (even though this status had been conferred on some 142 other countries), Ambassador Lu indicated that the two countries had not been able to work out satisfactory arrangements for the extradition of defectors, including those with a criminal record in China. There was some evidence, he suggested, that the Chinese public felt less warmly towards Canada than in the past.

Ambassador Lu was thanked by Ambassador Arthur Menzies, an honorary member of CCFS and Canada's Ambassador to China from 1976 to 1980.

Note: You may also refer to media coverage on Ambassador Lu's speech in the *Ottawa Citizen* (Jan. 16/08, page C5) and *Embassy* weekly (Jan. 16/08).