

# Oxford rules the world

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**N**EXT week an Oxford man will become president of the United States. Three members of Bill Clinton's cabinet, two Supreme Court judges and a host of congressmen are also old Oxonians. In Japan, Oxford University now boasts not only the future emperor, Crown Prince Naruhito, but also his future wife, Masako Owada (a Balliol woman), among its alumni. With the world's two most powerful economies sewn up, Oxford can afford to be smug.

For its tentacles in the new world, Oxford owes much to the system of Rhodes scholarships which, since 1903, have attracted some of the brightest of America's political climbers. "I don't think any American university can boast as many", says Henry Drucker, the director of the Campaign for Oxford. The campaign, set up in 1988 to replenish the university's coffers, has got over 10% of its funds from American donors.

Oxford's Japanese powerbase is proving even more potent. It has only 400 Japanese alumni compared with

America's 9,000, but Japanese donors have given almost half as much as Americans. Oxford is the only British university to have a permanent fund-raising office in Japan. The Campaign has recently initiated a diploma course in European studies for Japanese businessmen—"one of the ways", according to the course director, "in which the university says thank you to businesses."

Japanese firms take warmly to the role of Oxford philanthropists. Nissan, which has financed a centre for modern Japanese studies since 1981, recently gave an extra £3m (\$4.6m) for new buildings at St Antony's College. Mitsubishi Trust and Banking Corporation revived the finances of the Oxford Union, the traditional breeding-ground of British political upstarts, with a £1m endowment. In 1991 Kobe Steel helped St Catherine's College to launch an institute in Kobe. Japanese students are promised an Oxford education without the nuisance of having to travel to Oxford.

Oxford's Japanese diaspora extends beyond royalty and businessmen to top civil servants. The highest-flying Japanese civil servants are given the chance to study in Oxford for a year. The result back in Tokyo is a cabal of English-speaking old Oxonians in key positions in the bureaucracy.

Britain no longer rules the world. But, thanks to an old university with an excellent brand-name, it at least helps to fashion the world's rulers.



Educating Naruhito