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## Promoting the Study of the United States in Japan

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THE STORY OF AMERICAN philanthropic support for the academic study of the United States in postwar Japan revolves around just three foundations, albeit highly influential ones: the Asia Foundation, the Ford Foundation, and the Rockefeller Foundation. Cognizant that efforts to promote deeper understanding of one's own country overseas could easily be misconstrued, they nevertheless recognized that greater Japanese expertise on the United States was crucial for the long-term future of U.S.-Japan relations. At the same time, they were convinced that, as private institutions, they could be much more effective in this undertaking than the U.S. government agencies that were already active in this field. Therefore, over the course of the first three decades after World War II, they undertook a series of initiatives to help nurture expertise on the United States, build networks among scholars in the field, and promote the institutionalization of this field of study.<sup>1</sup> While their investment was modest and many of their grander aspirations were never fully achieved, in the end they played an indispensable and central role as catalysts for the development of the field.

The creation of the Tōkyō University Hepburn Chair in American Studies two decades before the war is widely regarded as the start of institutionalized American studies in Japan. It is altogether fitting that this venture was first and foremost the product of American philanthropy.

In 1917, American financier A. Barton Hepburn sought the advice of Shibusawa Ei'ichi, the noted industrialist and philanthropist, about funding a program at a Japanese university that might help stem the downward spiral in U.S.-Japan relations.<sup>2</sup> He set upon the idea of establishing a course on international law and was put in contact with Tōkyō University by Shibusawa, but it turned out that the university already offered two such courses and a third would be of limited value. Several faculty members suggested that Hepburn instead underwrite a course on the government, constitutional history, and diplomatic history of the United States. He agreed, making a sizeable donation of ¥120,000 to endow the Hepburn Chair, which has since been one of the most prestigious positions in American studies in Japan.

Despite this comparatively early start, the study of the United States in prewar Japan did not expand beyond a handful of university courses, and by the end of World War II there was little in the way of an institutional structure to support the field. In the wartime climate, study of the enemy—the United States—had been discouraged and there were only a few senior “Americanists” in the entire country when the U.S. Occupation began.<sup>3</sup> Conditions improved only slowly during the early postwar years as Occupation restrictions on foreign travel, currency exchange, and the reprinting of American publications had the unintended impact of raising additional hurdles to Japanese scholars hoping to undertake in-depth study of the United States. All in all, it was a daunting situation that faced American foundations and the small group of Japanese experts in the field when they set out to strengthen American studies in the early 1950s.

## THE NATURE OF U.S. FOUNDATION SUPPORT

To understand what ensued, it is important to recall that the definition of what constitutes “American studies” has long bedeviled the field. This proved no different in Japan and for the three foundations that sought to promote its study there. While the focus of American studies has evolved over time, in U.S. academia it has typically referred to efforts to describe the culture and subcultures of the United States. However, in the eyes of its American funders and Japanese proponents, American studies in Japan began as a much broader endeavor. For them, it was a means for the Japanese to better comprehend the various interrelated

aspects of the United States—its politics, economics, international relations, and law, as well as its history, literature, philosophy, and sociology—and to thus move toward a greater understanding of this new partner.

It should come as no surprise, therefore, that U.S. foundation activity in the field was consistently marked by a degree of tension over the scope of American studies. The goal of U.S. foundations was clearly not to create an academic field of “American studies,” although this could be useful, but to promote a broader understanding of the United States among a wide range of experts who would continue to define themselves primarily as political scientists, sociologists, or economists. During the initial year of the first major American studies project undertaken in postwar Japan—a five-week program of American Studies Seminars launched in 1950 by Tōkyō and Stanford universities—participating scholars took part in lectures on American history, economics, philosophy, and foreign policy. Remarkably, they were not offered a single course concentrating specifically on literature or the arts, subjects that traditionally have been at the core of American studies. While the focus of American studies programs at many Japanese universities shifted in the direction of literature and history in later years, U.S. funders remained intent on promoting something much broader. As a 1967 Ford Foundation memo on its support of American studies overseas makes clear, “grants were not intended to develop American studies as a discipline; they were designed to introduce American subject matter into the regular educational processes abroad, and to engender a better understanding of the realities of American life and institutions on the part of cultural, intellectual, political, and economic leaders” (Ford Foundation 1967a).

Another characteristic of U.S. foundation activity in Japan, particularly in the field of American studies, was the stress placed by foundations on working with Japanese grantees as equals. Even as U.S. Occupation forces were ruling the country, a conscious and concerted effort was made to ensure that projects were led by Japanese organizers, not American funders or partner organizations, reflecting foundation officials’ emphasis on the importance of self-determination and democratic practices. For example, Charles Burton Fahs, the key Rockefeller Foundation official dealing with Japan, made a point of beginning a 1950 letter to President Nambara Shigeru of Tōkyō University and President J. E. Wallace Sterling of Stanford University about future foundation funding by asking them

to first “agree that in the development of any long-term program for American studies in Japan it is highly desirable that initiative and leadership be in Japanese hands” (Fahs 1950). Another particularly telling incident arose when Fahs wrote to a Japanese beneficiary to request that he cease sending overly detailed activity reports because the foundation’s role was merely to make prudent grants and project decisions were solely the prerogative of the grant recipients (Fahs 1955).

## PATTERNS OF SUPPORT

Looking back over the period between World War II and the mid-1970s, it is striking how neatly U.S. foundation support for American studies in Japan falls into three distinct periods, each marked by the involvement of a different foundation. At the initiative of Fahs, a Japan expert, the Rockefeller Foundation was the first U.S. foundation to venture into the field, and—from the 1950 launch of the Tōkyō-Stanford University American Studies Seminar—it helped drive the establishment and expansion of American studies as a course of academic study in Japan’s leading universities. However, this period came to an abrupt end in the late 1950s, as the Rockefeller Foundation began to shift its grant making away from the social sciences and Japan. Institutionalization in the field, then, stagnated from the late 1950s through the mid-1960s as funding dried up and momentum dissipated. During this period, much of the private support for American studies activities came in the form of a series of small grants from the Asia Foundation, which served as a financial lifeline for academic programs and researchers. The lean years finally began to ease in 1965, the start of the third period, when Ford Foundation funding for a major program of American studies fellowships was extended to Japan.

### *LAYING THE FOUNDATION FOR AMERICAN STUDIES (1950–LATE 1950S)*

Beginning in the 1930s, the Rockefeller Foundation provided much of the initial support for the development of the field of American studies in the United States, and soon after World War II it started to encourage the spread of American studies in Europe as well. In 1947, while

the Allied Occupation was still young, Fahs, then assistant director for the foundation's Humanities Division, identified American studies as a priority area for a potential Japan program. By the following year, the foundation had extended its American studies grant making to Japan, starting by channeling \$600 through a U.S. organization to underwrite the purchase of books for Japan's newly established American Studies Association (*Amerika Gakkai*).

The foundation's involvement in American studies in Japan began in earnest in 1950 with a grant to underwrite the Tōkyō-Stanford University American Studies Seminars, which was followed by support for similar seminars in Kyōto and a series of small strategic grants designed to help institutionalize the field (see table 1). During the course of the ensuing decade, the Rockefeller Foundation provided a total of \$700,000 for American studies projects in Japan—nearly all of the private funding in the field and close to 15 percent of the foundation's overall Japan-related grant making during the period. The main goals of this undertaking were to lay the foundation for the spread of the study of the United States, help develop human resources, build networks of intellectuals, and provide seed money for the creation of key institutions.

The impetus for the famous "Tōkyō seminars" came when Professor Claude Buss of Stanford University approached Fahs in late 1949 to make the case for an American studies seminar in Japan similar to the Salzburg seminars that the foundation was supporting in Europe, particularly for one that would be operated with nongovernmental funds so that it would not be perceived as an Occupation propaganda activity. Buss had been hoping to have the seminars located at the nation's premier academic institution, Tōkyō University, and he had already gained the support of the university's president and General Douglas MacArthur, the Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers in Japan, whom he knew well from his service in the Occupation forces. The foundation quickly moved to approve support for a jointly operated program of seminars, authorizing \$21,000 in grants to Stanford and Tōkyō Universities to cover most of the expenses of the initial year. Not only did this mark the beginning of a decade-long involvement in the field by the Rockefeller Foundation, but the payment to Tōkyō University broke ground as the first grant by an American foundation directly to a Japanese entity in the postwar era.

This first seminar program was held from July 17 through August 18, 1950, and consisted of four weeks of lectures and roundtable

Table 1. Rockefeller Foundation grants for American studies, 1950–1956

Year	Recipient	Amount	Purpose
1950	Stanford University	\$20,000	1950 Tōkyō seminars
1950	Tōkyō University	\$1,000	1950 Tōkyō seminars
1950	Stanford University	\$20,000	1951 Tōkyō seminars
1950	Tōkyō University	\$3,000	1951 Tōkyō seminars
1950	American Studies Association	\$2,500	American history research
1950	Stanford University	\$3,000	Travel grant: author Wallace Stegner
1951	Tōkyō and Stanford universities	\$160,000	1952–1956 Tōkyō seminars
1952	Kyōto University, Dōshisha University, and University of Illinois	\$22,500	1952 Kyōto seminars
1953	Kyōto-Dōshisha University Committee	\$14,000	1954 Kyōto seminars
1953	University of Illinois	\$18,200	1954 Kyōto seminars
1953	Stanford University	\$6,000	American studies research
1954	Association for the Study of American Philosophy, Waseda University	\$2,150	Library materials
1954	Kyōto-Dōshisha University Committee	\$15,440	1955 Kyōto seminars
1954	University of Michigan	\$28,000	1955 Kyōto seminars
1955	Kyōto University	\$46,200	1956–1958 Kyōto seminars
1955	University of Michigan	\$84,000	1956–1958 Kyōto seminars
1955	Tōkyō University	\$2,500	Western political biographies for library
1956	Association for the Study of American Philosophy, Waseda University	\$1,000	Library materials
1956	Tōkyō University	\$7,000	Tōkyō seminars fellowships

Source: Compiled by author.

discussions in Tōkyō and one week in Hokkaidō. Five American and four Japanese professors withstood the intense summer heat to give lectures throughout the day to the nearly 125 participants, sometimes in a general assembly, but more regularly in smaller thematic seminars. Lecture topics were as diverse as “Nationalism and Sectionalism in U.S. History,” “Demand in Recent Economic Thought,” “Hegel and Marx,” and “Current Problems in American Foreign Policy.” The program was seen as a major development in U.S.-Japan relations, with newspaper reporters covering the arrival of the American professors and Tōkyō

University President Nambara declaring the launch of the seminars to be “an unprecedented, historic event for our country” (Rockefeller Foundation 1955, 2).

With the Tōkyō seminars being hailed as a smash success by participants and organizers, both universities and the foundation were enthusiastic about operating them on an annual basis and grants to Tōkyō and Stanford universities for a second year (\$23,000) and for the five-year period of 1952–1956 (\$160,000) were approved in quick succession. These funds were supplemented by minor support from each university and, from 1953 on, by Fulbright Program funds, which were provided at the direction of the U.S. embassy to pay the travel expenses of some of the lecturers.<sup>4</sup> Over the course of the seminars’ seven-year run, from 1950 to 1956, an elite list of the top scholars in American academia—including such luminaries as Henry Nash Smith and Perry Miller—served alongside leading Japanese scholars as lecturers for the nearly 600 professors, graduate students, and undergraduates who were accepted as participants. Meanwhile, from 1952 onward, the program was expanded to include two fellowships each year that offered emerging scholars an opportunity to spend a year conducting research at an American university.

In 1951, the seminar lecturers traveled to Kyōto so that they could present a one-week intensive overview of their Tōkyō lectures. The seminars met with such an enthusiastic reception that Kyōto University and neighboring Dōshisha University, a prestigious Christian university, joined with the University of Illinois to petition the Rockefeller Foundation to fund a separate summer seminar in Kyōto.<sup>5</sup> In response, the foundation broke with its regular practice of refusing to support similar, potentially competing ventures and announced that it would provide \$22,500 to the consortium for an additional four-week seminar program in August 1952, directly after the July Tōkyō seminars.<sup>6</sup>

After a break in 1953, the “Kyōto seminars” resumed in 1954 and, despite continual tensions between the three organizers, they were widely considered successful. As with the Tōkyō seminars, these were supported almost wholly by the Rockefeller Foundation and revolved primarily around lectures on four to six subject areas by visiting American professors as well as by Japanese and American professors teaching in Japan. Additionally, a portion of the grant was allocated to support two visiting American professors who spent seven months each in Kyōto teaching university courses to both Dōshisha and Kyōto university

students and who served as directors for the summer seminars. This marked the start of the Rockefeller Foundation's efforts to facilitate a deeper penetration of American studies into the regular operations of Japanese universities, and it foreshadowed the evolution of Rockefeller funding away from the seminar model and toward support for systematic teaching on the subject.<sup>7</sup>

According to Rockefeller Foundation documents, the Tōkyō seminars ended with the 1956 session because, while enthusiasm remained high, "a degree of fatigue with the heavy summer schedules has set in, and it is also clear that it is time for a real effort to make the work in American studies a more integral part of the regular University program in Tōkyō" (Rockefeller Foundation 1957). Similarly, in 1958, the foundation terminated its support for the Kyōto seminars. While they continued to be held, official relations ended between the two universities' American studies programs and the University of Michigan (which had replaced the University of Illinois). All totaled, by the end of this period, the Rockefeller Foundation had provided \$204,000 for the seven-year series of Tōkyō seminars (1950–1956) and approximately \$228,000 for six years of the Kyōto seminars (1952, 1954–1958).

*RETREAT AND RETHINKING OF APPROACHES*  
*(LATE 1950S–MID-1960S)*

While the initial stage in the postwar development of American studies in Japan was characterized by the strong support of the Rockefeller Foundation and considerable dynamism on behalf of its Japanese counterparts, the second period can be best described as one of retrenchment and the rethinking of approaches (see table 2). These lean years were marked by the absence of a driving force in the field. As a set of Rockefeller Foundation tie-off grants to Tōkyō University (1957–1959) and Kyōto and Dōshisha universities (1959–1961) wound down, American studies in Japan was left without substantial U.S. support, and potential funders and recipients were faced with the question of how best to encourage the development of the field. As a result, Japanese scholars began to seek out new, innovative ways to support American studies activities.

The period began with the Rockefeller Foundation's 1957 grant to Tōkyō University and its 1959 grants to Dōshisha and Kyōto Universities that aimed to more firmly anchor American studies in the regular operations

Table 2. Major grants for American studies, 1957–1963

Year	Donor	Recipient	Amount	Purpose
1957	Rockefeller Foundation	Tōkyō University	\$127,000	Establishment of the Center for American Studies
1957	Asia Foundation	Folklore Institute of Japan	—	Japanese version of the Journal of American Folklore
1958	Rockefeller Foundation	Dōshisha University	\$60,000	Institutionalization of American studies
1958	Rockefeller Foundation	Kyōto Univeristy	\$60,000	Institutionalization of American studies
1958	Rockefeller Foundation	Waseda University	\$5,000	American literature
1958	Asia Foundation	Research Group for the Study of the American Economy	—	Purchase of U.S. government publications
1958	Asia Foundation	Shunjukai (Tōkyō)	—	Japanese version of the List of Western Literature (1876–1955)
1960	Asia Foundation	Dōshisha University	—	Kyōto seminars
1960	Asia Foundation	Japanese Association for the Study of American Philosophy	—	“Essays in Philosophical Analysis”
1961	Asia Foundation	Dōshisha University	—	Kyōto seminars
1962	Asia Foundation	Hokkaidō University	—	Program of American legal studies
1962	Asia Foundation	Japan Women’s University	—	Undergraduate American studies courses
1963	Asia Foundation	Japan Women’s University	—	Undergraduate American studies courses
1963	Asia Foundation	Tsuda College	—	American studies courses

Source: Compiled by author.

Notes: These grants do not include the numerous instances of Asia Foundation support of study and travel in the United States for individual Japanese scholars, nor do they include the foundation’s regular donations of U.S. publications for Japanese libraries.

Amounts for Asia Foundation grants made prior to 1968 are not available.

of the universities. In the case of Tōkyō University, a grant of \$127,000 was provided for three years to support the operating expenses for a new Center for American Studies, as well as for expanded library resources and fellowships. Building on the example of the Kyōto and Dōshisha programs, more than half of the funds were allocated to support two visiting American professors per year for six-month terms to teach American

studies courses. Two years later, similar tie-off grants were made to Kyōto and Dōshisha Universities. The \$60,000 three-year grant to Kyōto University was used to support an American Studies Center, while equivalent funding was given to Dōshisha University to be split on a 60-40 basis between the improvement of library resources—an area in which Dōshisha lagged—and funds for professors to study in the United States.

However, these grants failed to have the desired effect of stimulating the institutionalization of American studies at either university. As was common throughout Japan, faculty and curriculum at the two universities remained firmly organized along rigid disciplinary lines and there were limited resources available for any new initiative—particularly for interdisciplinary endeavors outside of the regular power structure. Even though Tōkyō University was seen as the leader in the field of American studies, the planned Center for American Studies was not officially established until a decade later, in 1967, apparently because the support and approval of the Ministry of Education was not as forthcoming as expected. Meanwhile, the situation at Kyōto University was even more disappointing. Herbert Passin, a Columbia University professor who served as the Ford Foundation's main consultant on Japan, reported in 1962 that, "the American Studies Center has ended in complete failure. The dollar funds have been virtually expended and there is absolutely nothing to show for them in the way of the permanent incorporation of American studies in the university curriculum" (Passin 1962c).

In the case of the American studies seminar, however, Kyōto and Dōshisha universities remained determined to soldier on despite the termination of Rockefeller Foundation support. In 1959, they sought funding from the Ford Foundation, which initially seemed interested, but their grant request was eventually turned down. Government-related organizations like the United States Information Service (USIS) and the Asia Foundation came through with small contributions to fill a portion of their funding gap and, along with the continuing support of the Fulbright Commission, these allowed the seminars to be sustained in subsequent years. They were, however, forced to reduce the number of participants, and the length of the program was cut to two weeks from four. By 1962, even the Asia Foundation was no longer providing funding for the seminars, and USIS support for Kyōto and Dōshisha Universities was becoming increasingly difficult for political reasons, causing Passin to predict, albeit incorrectly, that it is "very likely the program will have to be dropped" (Passin 1962c).

Ironically, this financial hardship came as evidence of the long-term success of the Tōkyō and Kyōto seminars continued to mount. Hundreds of young scholars who had trained in these programs were now teaching throughout Japan, and they were helping American studies take root in universities in far-flung corners of the country. As a result, demand had begun growing for resources to support American studies teaching and research in places that would not normally be considered to be at the forefront of academic trends. In response, in the early 1960s, the Asia Foundation started making a series of small grants to support American studies curriculum development at places such as Hokkaidō University and Japan Women's University, universities that were more accessible to the average Japanese than, for example, Tōkyō University or Kyōto University.<sup>8</sup>

In 1962, distressed by the evaporation of financial support, a group of top scholars and business leaders led by Tōkyō University professor Kishimoto Hideo took matters into their own hands and launched a fundraising campaign among Japanese businesses to create a domestic foundation to support American studies in Japan. This was spurred in large part by a fortuitous U.S. Congressional appropriation of approximately \$240,000 to support American studies overseas, which Kishimoto and his colleagues discovered at the last minute that they were eligible to receive, provided they could establish a foundation in time and then raise matching funds. Under Kishimoto's determined leadership, the American Studies Foundation was launched with remarkable speed and, in short course, it began making modest grants totaling around ¥10 million (\$27,780) per year for a variety of American studies projects. These included, for example, ¥1,806,290 (\$5,017) in 1963 for the Kyōto seminars, an amount that was to climb in later years as the foundation became more deeply involved in its operations. While the foundation's capacity remained limited, as would be expected given the state of Japan's nonprofit sector at the time, it went on to play a key role in the development of the field.

*NURTURING SCHOLARS IN A MATURING FIELD*  
*(MID-1960S–MID-1970S)*

Just as the Rockefeller Foundation decision to fund the Tōkyō seminars heralded the start of the initial period of U.S. foundation involvement,

the Ford Foundation's entry into the field of American studies in Japan inaugurated the third period. Spanning from the mid-1960s through the mid-1970s, this was a period in which U.S. support for American studies focused heavily on the development of human resources in a manner that would, it was hoped, broaden and deepen the field (see table 3). Ford Foundation funding, although it was disbursed through just three grants, was so large (approximately \$1.5 million) that it dwarfed all other private funding for the field. This was, of course, a time when Japanese resources remained scarce and most other American support was coming in the form of the scattered, small-scale grants from the Asia Foundation or through programs that were explicitly financed by the U.S. government, such as the USIS visitors program and the Fulbright Program.

By the early 1960s, the Ford Foundation had begun to view support for American studies as a critical part of its Japan program. However, uncertain about the best way to encourage the development of the field, foundation staff bided their time, waiting for the right opportunity to arrive. This came in the form of the newly established American Studies Foundation. The Ford Foundation's first foray into the field took the shape of a strategic 1964 grant of \$53,500 to enable the American Studies Foundation to distribute a set of basic publications on American studies to 25 universities around the country. Beyond its explicit purposes, the grant was consciously designed to channel administrative funds to the organization and to imbue it with a certain degree of prestige and credibility, reflecting the fact that funders and organizers were still grappling with the issue of how to best promote the institutionalization of the field of American studies.<sup>9</sup>

It was the foundation's push to have a prestigious American studies fellowship program extended to Japan later in the year, however, that reverberated throughout the field, immediately making it the key source of private funding for American studies in Japan. The Ford Foundation had been supporting the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS) American Studies Program of fellowships and institutional grants in Western Europe since 1960, providing the ACLS with a multimillion-dollar, five-year block grant for it to administer on a relatively independent basis. This served the dual purpose of insulating American studies programs from charges of being too closely associated with the Ford Foundation and allowing the program to benefit from the expertise and prestige of the ACLS. When the program came up for renewal, the Ford Foundation's Joe Slater apparently persuaded the ACLS to add Japan

Table 3. Major grants for American studies, 1964–1975

Year	Donor	Recipient	Amount	Purpose
1964	Ford Foundation	American Studies Foundation (Japan)	\$53,500	American studies books for 25 libraries
1964	Asia Foundation	Dōshisha University	—	Kyōto seminars
1965	Asia Foundation	Dōshisha University	—	Development of American studies
1965	Asia Foundation	Japan Women's University	—	Development of American studies
1965	Ford Foundation	American Council of Learned Societies	\$650,000	Japan portion of \$3.1 million grant for American studies fellowship program
1967	Asia Foundation	University of the Ryūkyūs	—	Participation in Kyōto seminars
1968	Asia Foundation	University of the Ryūkyūs	\$1,925	American Studies Center activities
1970	Asia Foundation	University of the Ryūkyūs	≈\$4,000	Portion of \$16,000 for 4 institutes, including a U.S. studies institute
1970	Asia Foundation	University of the Ryūkyūs	\$1,105	American studies books
1970	Ford Foundation	American Council of Learned Societies	\$800,000	Japan portion of \$3.7 million grant for American studies fellowship program
1971	Asia Foundation	University of the Ryūkyūs	≈\$6,500	U.S. studies institute
1971	Asia Foundation	American Studies Foundation (Japan)	≈\$1,000	Kyōto seminars
1974	Asia Foundation	Rikkyō University	\$1,333	Travel to American Historical Association meeting

Source: Compiled by author.

Note: Amounts for Asia Foundation grants made prior to 1968 are not available.

and, with the official approval of a new five-year program at the cost of \$3.1 million, it was expanded to include four countries in the Western Pacific.<sup>10</sup>

Approximately \$650,000 of the grant went to Japan, with almost all of that being set aside for fellowships to bring junior scholars to the United States for one year of study. A disproportionate number of fellowships in the broader Western Pacific program were awarded to Japanese scholars—a total of 45 out of 59 for the five-year period—highlighting

the relative importance of Japan in the eyes of the organizers.<sup>11</sup> In addition to the roughly \$600,000 that went for fellowships, \$48,000 was earmarked as institutional support for Japanese organizations, and all of this was used in some way for the Kyōto seminars, which had survived the financial crisis after the withdrawal of the Rockefeller Foundation and were to continue until 1987. A total of \$26,500 was provided directly to the Kyōto seminar organizers at Dōshisha University for the 1967–1971 seminars, and additional funding was given to the American Studies Foundation to support the seminars, primarily to cover the expenses of foreign lecturers from countries other than the United States in years when the Fulbright Program might fail to provide appropriate American fellows.

It is noteworthy that elsewhere in the so-called Western Pacific, ACLS institutional support was mainly utilized to establish teaching posts, but this was consciously avoided in Japan due in part to concerns about student unrest and to worries about the “number and complexities of the universities” to be covered by the program’s limited funds.<sup>12</sup> Beginning in the mid-1950s, Japanese university officials and U.S. funders were forced to give consideration to the potential response of campus leftists who vehemently opposed the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty and mobilized against anything that they perceived as propagating a pro-American line. For example, in one famous case in 1970, Kyōto University officials were forced to return a major grant to the Ford Foundation that was intended to fund the university’s Center for Southeast Asian Studies after students blockaded campus buildings in protest of what they saw as an American plot to influence Japanese academia.<sup>13</sup>

In 1969, when the ACLS grant came up for renewal, Ford Foundation executives were initially inclined to end the fellowships as part of foundation-wide budget cuts, but they were eventually convinced that these were the “Cadillacs” of their fellowship fleet.<sup>14</sup> The grant was renewed in 1970, and out of the five-year total of \$3.6 million, approximately \$800,000–\$825,000 went to Japan. The bulk of this again went for fellowships, and the entire sum of \$47,000 in institutional support was given to the American Studies Foundation, which was poised to assume management of the Kyōto seminars. The ACLS grant was renewed in 1975, but in the face of even deeper budget cuts following the oil shock and the subsequent stagflation, it was dramatically scaled back, and the Japan portion was dropped, bringing an end to the period of Ford Foundation involvement in American studies in Japan.

## REASONS AND RATIONALES FOR FOUNDATION INITIATIVES

One question that inevitably comes to mind when considering U.S. philanthropic funding overseas for the study of the United States is why foundations decided to support this field when they had so many competing demands and when this sort of endeavor could very easily have been perceived as having political overtones. Of course, institutions in the field of international philanthropy operate in multiple contexts, influenced by the global climate and the state of foreign relations, domestic politics in their home countries and abroad, the actions of other institutions in the philanthropic sector, the current state of academic discourse, and their own internal processes and legacies. Explanations for the behavior of foundations are inherently complex, and the various factors that shape what and how they fund include their stated and unofficial motivations; their own institutional imperatives and constraints; and the actions, capabilities, and personalities of individuals, both in foundation decision-making positions and outside the foundations.

### *GRANT-MAKING MOTIVATIONS*

It is only natural that foundation decision-makers had multiple, inter-related motivations for their promotion of American studies in Japan. These were not only reflective of the times and of contemporary U.S.-Japan relations, but also of the foundations' own institutional personalities as well as the experiences and values of individual decision-makers. Even though each grant seems to have been propelled by a series of nuanced and often unstated motivations, it is possible to classify these into three overlapping categories, all of which, it was hoped, would ultimately strengthen U.S.-Japan relations: 1) democratizing Japan, 2) promoting understanding of the United States, and 3) building a basis for intellectual discourse.

#### *Democratizing Japan*

While the straightforward goal of helping Japan democratize through the promotion of American studies was short-lived, it was clearly one of the main goals of the early support of the Rockefeller Foundation, as well as for the Asia Foundation. In 1948, in the first of his reports on a potential

Japan program, Fahs argued that democratization should drive Rockefeller Foundation activities in Japan, proposing that “reorientation should be our principal justification and objective,” and explaining that private initiative was necessary because “the intellectual foundations of reorientation are too subtle for most military administrators” (Fahs 1948a, 6).<sup>35</sup>

It is worth noting that, in the context of 1950s America, anticommunism and the concept of democratization can be viewed as two sides of the same coin. Internal Rockefeller Foundation memos clearly indicate that anticommunism was an additional motivating factor underlying their support of American studies throughout the 1950s, and it was well known to be a motivation for the Asia Foundation’s overall activities.

Explicit references to democratization disappeared quickly from grant correspondence as the American studies seminars became regularized in the early 1950s and as the Occupation period drew to a close. Still, the implicit assumption that Japanese intellectuals would likely become more appreciative and understanding of democratic ways and methods through their study of American values and practices did not fade quickly. In this context, it is no surprise that democracy remained one of the most frequent discussion topics throughout the 1950s in the American studies seminars, although the lecture topics, of course, were chosen by the organizers with no involvement of foundation officials.

### *Promoting Understanding of the United States*

Another clear motivation for all three foundations was the promotion of a broad understanding of the United States, almost always with some underlying intention of nurturing a positive attitude toward it. In a few rare instances, this may have strayed in the direction of using funds to convince people to “like” the United States, but this was generally rooted in the rather American belief that, were fair-minded people to learn the objective realities of the United States—warts and all—they would come to respect and admire the American way of life. Therefore, it is common to see justifications such as “the need to convert the large amount of diffuse interest and knowledge of American culture into systematic study and more accurate knowledge” sprinkled throughout internal foundation documents spanning the period from the 1950s through the 1970s (Passin 1963; Hill 1963).

Further proof of foundation intentions to foster a broad understanding of the United States is evident in their consistent efforts to expand the scope of American studies, both in geographic terms within Japan and in

definitional terms beyond the confines of a narrow academic discipline. In the 1950s, the Rockefeller Foundation took the unusual step of funding a second American studies seminar in Kyōto in order to counterbalance Tōkyō University's dominance in the field, and grant correspondence indicates that Fahs remained particularly concerned with ensuring the geographic diversity of participants in both the Tōkyō and Kyōto seminars. Indeed, the foundation's 1955 program review argued that the most important result of the seminars was the spread of American studies to universities throughout Japan (Rockefeller Foundation 1955). Meanwhile, Rockefeller Foundation officials also made it clear that they considered the broad range of knowledge about the United States to be the proper subject of American studies, and this conviction was repeated by later funders, who regularly took issue with the "language and literature rut" in which they perceived Japanese scholarship to be stuck.

*Building a Basis for Intellectual Discourse between Japan and the United States*

The three major U.S. funders also sought to go beyond the one-sided promotion of understanding about the United States to using American studies to engage Japanese intellectuals in a two-way dialogue with their American counterparts. Their hope of building a basis for intellectual discourse was apparent from the start of the Rockefeller Foundation's support for the Tōkyō seminar, when the American studies program was linked to the University of Michigan's Japanese studies program. It is also reflected in the general tone of Asia Foundation brochures of the time.

Nevertheless, it was in Ford Foundation activities that this motivation seemed to take the greatest prominence. Ford staff clearly believed that the promotion of intellectual discourse was worthwhile in its own right, and it had the added benefit of being a useful tool in helping counter what they perceived as rising anti-Americanism around the world. For example, a key internal memo from 1962 that outlined a potential Japan program notes how Japanese intellectuals were overwhelmingly alienated from the United States, then builds to the conclusion that "the central problem for the West, to put it in its largest context, is to develop positive associations with the important emergent elements in the country and to keep them in some common universe of discourse. . . . A foundation can contribute in some areas even more effectively than the government, to the restoration of what Ambassador Edwin O. Reischauer has called the 'broken dialogue'" (Ford Foundation 1962a).

This concern persisted throughout the decade as a justification for American studies programs, appearing prominently in grant recommendations urging the inclusion of Japan in both of the major ACLS American studies fellowship grants.

*Relationship between Foundation Motivations and Official Government Policy*

While U.S. policymakers and foundation officials shared a common set of values and had similar long-term goals, official government policy had surprisingly minimal direct impact on the content and conduct of foundation grant making. This is particularly striking considering the fact that all of the key individuals in the Rockefeller and Ford Foundations responsible for overseeing American studies grants in Japan had served in the U.S. government, either in wartime or the direct aftermath.<sup>16</sup> Despite—or perhaps because of—their experiences, these foundation officials demonstrated a profound ambivalence regarding the relationship between their foundations and the U.S. government.

This relationship was naturally much closer during the Occupation period, when it was necessary for the Rockefeller Foundation to gain official approval from Occupation officials and the State Department for their activities in Japan. Even at that point, Fahs and the American studies seminar organizers made certain not to allow the government a substantive voice in their projects, being careful not to let their consultations with government officials go beyond informational briefings once they gained approval for their project and for participants' travel. It is worth noting that government officials seemed to respect this division of labor, seemingly recognizing the desirability of private initiatives that had limited or no government involvement.

From this point onward, it is clear that Rockefeller and Ford Foundation grants were not made with the intention of furthering U.S. government policy, even though the motivations of foundation and government decision makers may have at times coincided. Likewise, it seems certain that their grants were not made at the request of the government and that government officials had minimal, if any, influence over their implementation. Asia Foundation grant making, of course, must be considered separately in light of the foundation's links to the CIA prior to 1968, but even in that case, so many grants were distributed in such small amounts and in so widespread a fashion that the practical difficulties in implementing any sort of in-depth oversight by government officials

reinforce Asia Foundation explanations that government involvement was extremely limited at the operational level.

In general, Rockefeller and Ford Foundation staff saw a limited role for the government and were vehemently opposed to government intervention in their activities. Their notes indicate that they alternated between seeing themselves as doing what the government could not do and correcting its excesses or “picking up the ball” that had been dropped by government programs. For example, by the time the Ford Foundation entered the field in the mid-1960s, Passin was arguing that botched government involvement, particularly that of the USIS, was the main reason the foundation should invest resources in American studies. As he put it, “American studies programs in Japan have been so dominated by American government agencies that they have been brought under serious question. A real advance requires not only the increase of resources, but a special effort to remove the taint of cultural imperialism and make the field more respectable” (Passin 1964, 1). Rather than governmental influence, then, it was this type of governmental failing and the cuts in funding for effective government programs like the Fulbright scholarships that seemed to have had the greatest impact on foundation decision-making in the field of American studies.

#### *INSTITUTIONAL IMPERATIVES*

Of course, the grandest motives of foundations and their staff are of little consequence when they cannot be acted upon. The institutional structure and processes of foundations determine their parameters for action, as their behavior is shaped by their financial and human capacities, internal decision-making systems, and other bureaucratic processes. These types of factors constrained how U.S. foundations involved themselves in American studies in Japan and dictated how much they could accomplish.

It goes without saying that foundations’ programmatic imperatives played a large role in the funding of American studies. For example, Rockefeller Foundation support for American studies began to dry up in the late 1950s, around the time that the foundation began to shift its focus toward less-developed countries, and Ford Foundation support came only after funding priorities for its International Affairs Program had evolved to the point that they would permit the creation of a Japan program.

The institutional styles and personalities of the three foundations also helped determine which American studies projects they would support and in what fashion. At the time it was active in Japan, the Rockefeller Foundation prided itself on stimulating fields of study but not supporting them for the long term—in essence being the first foundation to move into a given field and then the first to leave when other sources of support had emerged. Thus, it was natural that the foundation would be the first to make a foray into American studies in Japan but that it would wrap up its support for the Tōkyō seminars after six years when it seemed that the field of study had started to become embedded in the regular curriculum of Tōkyō University and elsewhere. Meanwhile, the Asia Foundation's practice of making large numbers of relatively small grants limited the scope of American studies programs that they could fund, making it more reasonable for them to invest in "niche areas," such as American studies programs at women's universities.

At their most basic, foundations are vehicles for distributing money, so naturally their financial capacity plays an important role in determining what they fund. For example, it was the rapid rise in Ford Foundation assets in the late 1950s that, by 1960, allowed it to begin pouring large sums of money into the ACLS program that soon would be extended to Japan. Similarly, it was budget cuts following years of stock market declines that encouraged the foundation to slash its support for the program when the grant came up for renewal in 1975.<sup>17</sup> Financial practices and regulations also played a critical role, particularly prerequisites that local sources provide matching funds, which often could not be mobilized in the case of Japan.

### *The Critical Role of Individuals*

All things considered, strong individual leadership may have been the most influential force driving foundation support. The Rockefeller Foundation was highly dependent upon Fahs, whose expertise on Japan and position as the director of humanities gave him a great measure of influence and latitude in decision-making. His intimate knowledge of the Japanese political and educational systems and their key figures enabled him to make certain judgements—for example, to support two potentially competing American studies seminars—that might have been counter-intuitive for foundation officials with weaker Japan backgrounds.

The attention of a few devoted individuals may have been even more decisive at the Ford Foundation in promoting a focus on the somewhat

obscure field of American studies in Japan, particularly given the foundation's immense resources, wide geographic coverage, and the broad responsibilities of each individual program officer. Herbert Passin, the foundation's man in Japan, was consistently adamant that more attention be paid to the country, repeatedly pressing the point that it was underrepresented in foundation grant making and that, in the case of American studies, "Japan should be regarded in exactly the same light and envisaged with exactly the same degree of importance as any European ally, or perhaps more exactly as any combination of two or three European allies" (Passin 1964, 1). Although he was a consultant, not an official staff member, Passin's recommendations carried great weight. Indeed, it appears that many of the discussion papers on Japan from Ford Foundation officials in New York were merely lightly edited versions of Passin's own memos.

In the New York headquarters as well, the Ford Foundation's focus on Japan can be traced directly to the energy of two individuals: Shepard Stone, the director of the International Affairs Program who had long known Passin and placed great trust in his judgement on Japan-related matters, and Joe Slater, who served as associate director under Stone and later succeeded him. It was the growing influence of Slater, a "tremendous ball of fire" in the words of one former colleague, combined with Passin's dispatches from Japan, that became the impetus for the Ford Foundation's Japan initiative. In particular, it seems to have been his "agitation" that led to the extension of the ACLS American Studies Program to Japan.<sup>18</sup>

In addition to the leadership of individual foundation officials, the presence of articulate champions of American studies outside of the foundation world played a critical role. In the early years, Buss, with his strong network of influential contacts, was instrumental in garnering foundation support. At the same time, individuals on the Japan side like Takagi Yasaka and Kishimoto, who were able to leverage their prestige and in-depth knowledge of the United States to encourage U.S. foundation grant making, proved to be invaluable. Indeed, it seems that the absence of significant foundation activity during the early 1960s coincided with the passing of the generation of senior Japanese leaders in the field who were trained in the prewar era, and the restoration of funding in the mid-1960s came with the emergence of energetic new voices in the succeeding generation of Japanese scholars of American studies.

## ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF U.S. FOUNDATION INVOLVEMENT

The most obvious starting point from which to assess how much of a contribution U.S. foundations actually made to the study of the United States is to look at where they succeeded, and occasionally failed, in promoting the development of the field of American studies.

Their initiatives to strengthen human resources clearly had a sweeping impact on the field. The annual American studies seminars played a critical role in exposing scholars to a broad range of contemporary thinking about the United States and in the early postwar years gave them the rare opportunity to learn about various aspects of the United States directly from American experts. The testimony of participants suggests that the high level of discussions, which were led by some of the most renowned scholars from both countries, energized senior scholars and kept them abreast of new developments, promoted the intellectual development of junior scholars, and generally helped elevate the level of intellectual discourse throughout the field. Meanwhile, it is well documented that the fellowships for travel and study in the United States that were offered by the various foundations, as well as through governmental programs such as the Fulbright Program, were instrumental in encouraging a wide range of promising scholars of the United States to deepen their understanding of American issues.

The foundations also actively sought to build scholarly networks within the field, and in this regard as well, their initiatives proved particularly effective. The American studies seminars gave scholars from around the country, who otherwise would not have an excuse to gather, the chance to acquaint themselves with one another and gain a broader perspective on the field. They also gave important impetus to the scholarly associations that have formed the backbone of the field, particularly the Japanese Association of American Studies. Meanwhile, the foundation-supported seminars, overseas fellowships, and travel grants brought Japanese scholars together with foreign specialists on the United States, facilitating the creation of international networks and bringing the field of American studies in Japan into the broader realm of international dialogue about the United States.

Finally, one of the long-term goals of the Rockefeller and Ford Foundations was to help ensure the institutionalization of the field, which they sought to accomplish by encouraging the creation of research centers

and libraries, supporting professional organizations, and working to anchor American studies in the general curricula of universities around the country. The Rockefeller Foundation's experiences supporting the establishment of research centers at Tōkyō University and Kyōto University were tainted with disappointment, as were the foundation's somewhat naïve but commendable hopes to build up American studies libraries at leading universities that, in a break with established practice, would be easily accessible to scholars from around the country. Japanese universities, with their perpetual shortages of resources and their rigid vertical organization, proved to be particularly infertile ground for cross-disciplinary initiatives such as American studies research centers, and it was little surprise that the very modest funds that the Rockefeller Foundation put aside for this purpose did not yield rapid results.<sup>19</sup> Meanwhile, the university libraries continued to operate for the most part as they always had done. The foundations met with more success in their efforts to sustain professional organizations, although this was not a significant component of their activities until the Ford Foundation set out to strengthen the American Studies Foundation in the 1960s. Similarly, their work to embed the study of the United States in university curricula around the country seems to have been relatively fruitful.

In evaluating the broader impact, however, it is useful to step back and question whether the growth of the field of American studies in Japan really helped strengthen U.S.-Japan relations over the long term. The spread of Japanese studies in the United States, for example, has undoubtedly been much more impressive than that of American studies in Japan. As Kimberly Gould Ashizawa notes in her chapter, scores of American university centers are now involved in Japanese studies, the research of U.S.-based Japanese studies scholars has been influential around the world, and Asian studies has become an important component of the American university curriculum. The development of the field has undoubtedly had a major impact on U.S.-Japan relations, as prominent Japanese studies scholars and students have served in key governmental policy-making positions as well as in influential nongovernmental posts outside of the world of academia.

In contrast, the work of Japan's American studies scholars is not, by and large, widely known outside of Japan, and its influence on the field has certainly not been comparable to that of American scholars in the field of Japanese studies. Likewise, the academic field of American

studies does not seem to have had a major effect on Japanese society or policy, nor did it have a significant impact on the U.S.-Japan relationship. While there have been a few notable exceptions, Japanese “Americanists” have not played significant roles in the broader U.S.-Japan relationship, certainly not in the manner of their American counterparts such as Edwin Reischauer.

However, in trying to divine the relative effectiveness of foundation initiatives, comparisons of the development of Japanese studies in the United States and American studies in Japan can be deceptive. First of all, the amount of resources devoted by U.S. foundations to Japanese studies at home was many times that provided for American studies in Japan, and there were similarly dramatic disparities in government funding between the fields. Between 1945 and 1975, U.S. foundations are estimated to have provided \$17 million–\$18 million for Japanese studies in comparison with the approximately \$2.3 million–\$2.4 million that they invested in American studies in Japan—and more than 60 percent of the American studies total is accounted for by the two Ford Foundation grants for the ACLS fellowship program. The number of Japanese scholars of American studies also seems considerably lower than the number of American Japanologists, and the sheer number of world-class U.S. institutions active in Japanese studies dwarves the number of top-rate institutions in the field of American studies in Japan. However, in both instances, it is the United States that is the outlier. Membership in the Japan American Studies Association is actually rather robust in comparison with national American studies associations in Europe and elsewhere. Meanwhile, it is not particularly illuminating to use the U.S. university system as a yardstick given its ample resources relative to what is seen in many other countries around the world.

In this case, a meaningful assessment of the overall contribution of U.S. foundations also requires going beyond the promotion of the academic field of American studies to look at their effort to encourage, more broadly, the study of the United States. Indeed, this is what the foundations consistently insisted was their actual intention, and it is in this context that they had a critically important, if more subtle, impact.

The spread of university courses on the United States—and not just those explicitly categorized as American studies—is one area that helps give a sense of how successful the human resource development initiatives funded by U.S. foundations were in broadly promoting a more sophisticated understanding of the United States throughout the

country. By the 1974–1975 academic year, 208 Japanese universities and colleges were offering a total of 1,912 courses related to the study of the United States, and there were more than 122,000 students enrolled in these courses.<sup>20</sup> The high level of general knowledge about the United States—the average Japanese is remarkably more knowledgeable about U.S. issues than the average American is about Japan—can also be seen to some degree as a reflection of the spread of teaching and research about the United States.

Foundation-supported activities promoting the study of the United States also seem to have had some impact, albeit a largely indirect one, at the level of elite decision makers with the capacity to influence the U.S.-Japan relationship. While few of these people trained in American studies per se, a broad swath of them learned about the United States under professors who benefited from the foundations' network-building and human resource–development initiatives. A number of individuals who went on to play key roles in Japanese society and U.S.-Japan relations even benefited directly from foundation-funded activities. For example, Akashi Yasushi, former UN undersecretary-general for humanitarian affairs, participated in the Tōkyō seminars in 1952, while Katō Ichirō, later one of the country's top academic leaders as president of Tōkyō University, and Kaji Motoo, who became chairman of International House of Japan, received yearlong ACLS fellowships for research and study in the United States.

In the end, U.S. foundations had a limited, but not insignificant, impact on U.S.-Japan relations through their promotion of the study of the United States. Their financial commitment was understandably modest and intermittent, and their expectations were not always met, although it is worth remembering that they were exceeded more often than not. The environment they faced—including the rigid institutional structure of Japan's universities and the acute lack of alternative local funding—made it particularly difficult to have a more direct impact on the broader U.S.-Japan relationship and to effectively drive the institutionalization of the academic field of American studies. Still, the fact that the resources available to scholars and universities were so limited meant that the Asia, Ford, and Rockefeller foundations played an indispensable catalytic role in nurturing the study of the United States. It is clear that, absent their support, expert study and the general comprehension of the United States would have been considerably diminished.