

# JCIE AT 50

Pioneering US-Japan  
Political Exchange

*VOL. 1 HISTORY*

JCIE





# JCIE at 50: Pioneering US-Japan Political Exchange

Vol. 1 History

---

Japan Center for International Exchange

October 2020



# Table of Contents

Foreword.....	1
---------------	---

AKIO OKAWARA

50 Years of JCIE's US-Japan Political and Parliamentary Exchanges.....	3
--	---

HIDEKO KATSUMATA

1. Historical Background	6
(1) Launch of the Japan Council for International Understanding (JCIU)	
(2) Japanese-American Assembly—The Shimoda Conference	
(3) US-Japan Parliamentarian Exchange Program and the Establishment of the Japan Center for International Exchange (JCIE)	
(4) JCIE's Foundation	
2. Changing Times and the Path to Political and Parliamentary Exchange	11
(1) 1960s US and Japan	
(2) How American Society Shaped Tadashi Yamamoto, Our Founder	
(3) Happenstance and Support for JCIE in the Early Days	
3. Toward New Political and Parliamentary Exchange	14
(1) US-Japan Young Political Leaders Exchange Program	
(2) Full-fledged Program of Japanese Diet Delegation to US as Japan Becomes a Member of Advanced Nations	
(3) Cooperation in US Visit Missions by Political Parties	
4. New Actors in Policy Formulation	19
(1) US Congressional Staff Exchange	
(2) Political Exchange and Private Enterprise	
5. Major Shifts in US Politics	21
(1) 1994 US Midterm Elections	
(2) Japan Bashing, Passing, and Nothing	
(3) Strengthening the Ethics Code in US Congress	
(4) Shifts in Funds for Parliamentary Exchange Programs	
6. The Turning Point for Political and Parliamentary Exchange	26
(1) New Players	
(2) JCIE's New Approaches for Political and Parliamentary Exchange	
(3) Surveys and Policy Research to Support Political and Parliamentary Exchange	
7. Conclusion	32

An Insider Perspective on JCIE's Political Exchange Programs.....	35
---	----

“The US-Japan Parliamentary Exchange Program: A Personal Reminiscence”	37
---	----

GERALD L. CURTIS

“Reflections on the Japan-US Parliamentary Exchange Program”	43
--	----

CHARLES E. MORRISON



## *Foreword*

THE YEAR 2020 marks the 50th anniversary of the Japan Center for International Exchange (JCIE). Its predecessor was the Japan Council for International Understanding (JCIU), an organization engaged in projects concerned with US-Japan relations, such as the Japanese-American Assembly (Shimoda Conference) and US-Japan parliamentary exchange programs. In 1970, the decision was made to go independent and establish JCIE.

Given the historical backdrop, with no parent organization for financial support and as an independent, non-governmental body founded by an individual, sustaining international activities of this nature was an enormous challenge. Throughout our history, we have constantly assessed what needs to be done and the kinds of projects collaborators and funders seek, and it is thanks to the many staff who have identified with JCIE's cause and the many friends at home and abroad who have supported our work that JCIE has been able to drive towards its goals and celebrate its 50th anniversary.

When contemplating projects to mark this 50-year milestone in a meaningful way, it occurred to us that buried among our internal materials on US-Japan political and parliamentary exchange were countless documents that speak of JCIE's unique history. In 2018, we took our proposal to consolidate those extensive accomplishments as a 50th anniversary project to Junichi Chano, then Executive Director of the Japan Foundation Center for Global Partnership (CGP) and received a grant to pursue it. Over many years, the CGP has supported JCIE on the US-Japan Young Political Leaders Exchange Program and provided various types of assistance for US-Japan intellectual exchange, regional exchange, political and parliamentary exchange, and surveys on US-Japan exchange in general. The survey research and reports on political and parliamentary exchange conducted in 1994 and 2017 are especially comprehensive, and there is no question that they served to strengthen JCIE. I would like to express my gratitude to the CGP for giving us those opportunities.

This report is not an objective one; rather it is intended to serve as a record of US-Japan political and parliamentary exchange and offer JCIE's perspective on how that exchange has impacted US-Japan relations. It has been compiled by Hideko Katsumata, Executive Director and Chief Operating Officer who has engaged in a great many of JCIE's activities from the early days alongside founding president Tadashi Yamamoto, in collaboration with Dai Funaki, Program Officer for the US-Japan Young Political Leaders Exchange Program, and other JCIE staff members.

As an early advocate of the Shimoda Conference and US-Japan Congressional Exchange, Columbia University Professor Emeritus Gerald Curtis has been a great friend of JCIE, supporting countless projects since day one. He continues to contribute to both JCIE and JCIE/USA as a member of our board. Former East-West Center President Charles Morrison has

advised JCIE on congressional exchange since his days in the 1970s as a legislative aide for Senator William Roth before leading many intellectual and policy research projects in his role as a JCIE Research Fellow for several years in the 1980s. They have contributed personal reflections on the significance of JCIE's political and parliamentary exchange programs from their unique standpoints, and I wish to express my deepest gratitude to them both.

It is most unfortunate that through multiple office moves we have lost many materials produced before digital record-keeping began, necessitating a reckoning of several events from memory. Further, because of the lengthy nature of these materials, we have decided to produce two separate volumes: the first a "History Volume" and the second a "Reference Volume". The "Reference Volume" is currently in the editing phase with a planned publishing date in the near future.

It is my great hope that this report will be of assistance in future research on the history of US-Japan relations.

October 2020

Japan Center for International Exchange

President & Chief Executive Officer

Akio Okawara



# JCIE at 50: Pioneering US-Japan Political Exchange

---

HIDEKO KATSUMATA

Japan Center for International Exchange (JCIE)  
Executive Director & Chief Operating Officer

October 2020



## Introduction

THE JAPAN CENTER for International Exchange (JCIE) was officially established in 1970 and its first president, Tadashi Yamamoto, made it his primary mission to continue the political and parliamentary exchange activities with the United States that he had been engaged in since 1968. Now that half a century has passed since the official establishment of JCIE, I believe that taking this opportunity to look back on the various political and parliamentary exchanges and their impact on US-Japan relations and international relations in general, is to reflect on the very history of JCIE, which can then serve as a guide for the future. US-Japan political and parliamentary exchange has played a major role in shoring up and developing the bilateral relationship even as it has become more complex. In a post-COVID19 world with US-China antagonism and anticipated destabilization to international relations, I expect the US-Japan relationship to be of increasing significance. JCIE has indeed been charged with an important role in further activating US-Japan political and parliamentary exchange.

At regular intervals over the years, JCIE has conducted surveys and research into the current situation of US-Japan exchange and parliamentary exchange with a goal to implement ever more effective programs. Of those, the most comprehensive is a survey report entitled *A Survey and Study Report on Inter-Parliamentary and Political Leaders Exchanges between the United States and Japan* (March 1994), commissioned by the Japan Foundation Center for Global Partnership (CGP)'s New York Office. The 291-page, A4-size report provides a time analysis of not only JCIE's programs but all kinds of programs involving politicians run by the parliaments or governments of Japan and the US or by private organizations. The report goes beyond bilateral US-Japan activities to look at broader activities of politicians in multilateral settings as well, be they members of the US Congress, the National Diet of Japan or regional assemblies. This paper makes reference to that report while summarizing why JCIE embarked on these political and parliamentary exchange programs, how it all began, and through what circumstances the programs came about. It also talks about the person responsible for driving the programs—our first president, Tadashi Yamamoto. He very much stood out for his sentiments towards US-Japan parliamentary exchange. This report is not intended to be objective; rather it is a subjective account by this author, who participated in these programs from the very beginning alongside President Yamamoto.

For more detailed and analytical information on each program, please refer to the above-mentioned 1994 report and other reference documents listed at the end of this paper.

# 1. Historical Background

## **(1) Launch of the Japan Council for International Understanding (JCIU)**

The political and parliamentary exchange programs run by the Japan Center for International Exchange (JCIE) were kickstarted by its predecessor, the Japan Council for International Understanding (JCIU).

JCIU was established as a private organization in 1965 by the Joint Research Group (Kyodo Chosa-kai)<sup>1</sup>—a secret organization of key business leaders formed in 1955 with the principal objective of adopting anti-communist measures in the business world. The Joint Research Group (also known as the Institute for Industrial Research, or “Sanken” for short) implemented anti-communist measures aimed at domestic leftists and the Japan Teachers Union, as well as measures related to education, youth affairs and cultural policymaking, in an effort to prevent the spread of communism and strengthen US-Japan relations. In advance of the 1962 visit to Japan by US Attorney General Robert Kennedy and his wife, key members of the Joint Research Group formed a welcoming committee, and it was this so-called “RK Committee” that later launched the JCIU<sup>2</sup>.

In 1964, the Ford Foundation, in cooperation with Columbia University, launched a program called the “US-Japan Comparative Education Project” which would include the exchange of US and Japanese classroom teachers, and sought Japan’s cooperation through US Ambassador to Japan, Edwin Reischauer. Answering the call was Tokusaburo Kosaka, President of Shin’Etsu Chemical and member of the Joint Research Group, a young business leader carrying the great expectations of those around him. Kosaka sent Tadashi Yamamoto (who went on to establish JCIE in 1970) to the US to consult with Ford Foundation adviser and Columbia University Professor Herbert Passin on the contents of the project. Yamamoto returned from study abroad in the US in 1962 and had just taken on a secretary role to assist Shin’Etsu Chemical’s President Kosaka on business and international affairs. The Joint Research Group created the Association of International Education (Kokusai Kyoiku-kai) with Rikkyo University President Masatoshi Matsushita as its chair, who alongside Columbia University’s Teachers College Professor George Bereday launched an exchange program of US and Japanese classroom teachers. With support from the National Council of Superintendents of Education (Zenkoku Kyoikucho Kyougikai), 30 teachers including members of the Japan Teachers Union were sent to the US for three months, primarily to observe America’s experiment on open education in classrooms<sup>3</sup>. As executive secretary for the Association of International Education, Yamamoto was responsible for the administrative aspects of the program, which he ran until 1980.

In 1965, Deputy Special Assistant to the President Walt Rostow was sent to Japan by the US government to explain the Vietnam War and to try to rebuild US-Japan relations. Serving the welcome and conducting various policy dialogues and events was JCIU, which by this stage had been established under the RK Committee with Tokusaburo Kosaka as its chairman and included members from Japanese politics and business, as well as leaders from the press. Non-business members included House of Representatives members Yasuhiro Nakasone and Eiichi Nagasue, and Japan Times Chief Editor Kazushige Hirasawa. JCIU members went on to hold multiple dialogues with important US visitors including former Attorney General Robert Kennedy and his wife in 1965, and Senator Edward Kennedy and his wife in 1968. Responsible for staging each of these dialogues was once again Tadashi Yamamoto.

## **(2) Japanese-American Assembly – The Shimoda Conference**

After World War II, President Dwight D. Eisenhower established the American Assembly within Columbia University. In 1965, in commemoration of 20 years from the end of the war, the American Assembly initiated the US-Japan Research Project to consider the role of Japan in international society, led by Japan scholars including Edward Seidensticker, Herbert Passin and Robert Ward<sup>4</sup>. Prior to this, in 1963, the First Japan-American Roundtable was held in Dartmouth, New Hampshire, and the second roundtable focusing on economic affairs was held in Kurashiki, Okayama Prefecture, at the invitation of Soichiro Ohara (then President of Kurashiki Rayon Company, now Kuraray).

Separate to these two private roundtables held in Dartmouth and Kurashiki, the American Assembly approached Japan about holding a private roundtable with an agenda on US-Japan political and economic relations. They initially sought the cooperation of the International House of Japan for the roundtable, but as a venue dedicated to cultural exchange between intellectuals, it could not be used for meetings yielding political declarations thus the request for cooperation landed with JCIU. With JCIU's consent, preparations proceeded centered on designated director for the US side, Herbert Passin, and Tadashi Yamamoto on the Japan side. The first step was to find a venue. In search of a place suitable for a retreat, the two embarked on a drive to the Shonan area southwest of Tokyo and travelled all the way to the southern tip of the Izu Peninsula in Shizuoka Prefecture where they spent the night at the Shimoda Tokyu Hotel. Realizing the significance of Shimoda as the site where Japan first opened to the world and that they could likely count on the hotel for total cooperation because the owner was JCIU member President Noboru Goto of Tokyu Corporation, they settled on Shimoda as the site for the First Japanese-American Assembly. Thereafter it became known as the Shimoda Conference.

The First Shimoda Conference was held September 14–17, 1967, jointly organized by the American Assembly and JCIU, with cooperation from the Columbia University School of International Affairs, financial support from the Ford Foundation, and unofficial financial support from the Joint Research Group. Seventy-five leaders from the US and Japan participated.

The Shimoda Conference was intended to be held in times that called for dialogue and negotiation on issues related to US-Japan political relations and thus necessitated the participation of politicians from both sides. A total of eight US congressmen participated in the inaugural conference, including Democratic Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield and House of Representatives Member Donald Rumsfeld, joined by five Japanese Diet members including Naka Funada, Yasuhiro Nakasone, and Eiichi Nagasue. The main topics of discussion were Japan's standing in Asia, dealing with the postwar situation, and strengthening US-Japan relations, and in the keynote speech, Mansfield gave a lot of time to the issue of the return of Okinawa and the Ogasawara Islands<sup>5</sup>. After four days of discussions, a number of recommendations were made in a summary report including "the speedy return of the Bonin Islands to full Japanese sovereignty", that "Okinawa should be returned to Japan in the nearest possible future", and further that "steps should be taken to insure a continuous and informal exchange of information (including periodic inter-parliamentary conferences) between the two countries."<sup>6</sup> The discussions at the Shimoda Conference are credited as one reason for progress in substantive discussions between Japan and the US for the return of Okinawa. Prime Minister Eisaku Sato's private envoy on matters for the reversion of Okinawa was Kei Wakaizumi of Kyoto Sangyo University, who as a member of JCIU's organizing committee and through its activities was able to build personal connections with the US.

Opening the path to inter-parliamentary exchange between the US and Japan was then Senate Majority Leader Mansfield, who incidentally had visited Nagasaki in his early years in 1921 as a Marine Corps officer in the East Asia division. After retiring from military service, he taught at the University of Montana and was in charge of East Asian research until winning a House of Representatives seat in 1943. He was elected to the Senate in 1952, where he served for 24 years. Looking back on his years as a congressman, he recalls that, "For a number of years, it seemed that I was the only one in either House interested in Asia."<sup>7</sup> Without Mansfield's interest, the US-Japan parliamentary exchange program might never have been born.

### **(3) US-Japan Parliamentarian Exchange Program and the Establishment of the Japan Center for International Exchange (JCIE)**

Inspired by the recommendations of the Shimoda Conference, with the full backing of Senate Majority Leader Mansfield and cooperation from other participants, JCIU and Columbia

University jointly organized the inaugural US-Japan Parliamentary Exchange Program (later renamed from "Kondankai" to "Puroguramu") and the 1st US Congressional Delegation to Japan on April 16-20, 1968. Eight Republican and Democratic congressmen participated, including Donald Rumsfeld and Wendell Wyatt. Journalists from every newspaper flocked to Haneda Airport, forcing participants to convene in a special room for an impromptu press conference.<sup>8</sup> The 2nd US Congressional Visit to Japan was held February 8-15, 1969, but the third visit scheduled to start on January 7, 1970 had to be cancelled. In the December 1969 lower house elections, Tokusaburo Kosaka ran on a platform of "breathing new life into politics from the business world" and won his seat in Tokyo's 3rd district (Setagaya/Meguro), entering politics for the first time. As a parliamentarian, Kosaka hoped to succeed his older brother, former Minister for Foreign Affairs Zentarō Kosaka, as chair of the Diet Members Association for US-Japan Parliamentary Exchange. He had been a leader in the business world, but as a first-year parliamentarian, many felt it was inappropriate for him to immediately chair the program. In addition, having executed various international exchange programs while working for Kosaka, Yamamoto expressed a strong intention to continue such programs at the private level, and thus turned down Kosaka's offer to follow him in a parliamentary secretary role. As mentioned above, there were plans for a congressional visit early in the new year, but Kosaka did not approve of Yamamoto's plans and thus opposed the program's implementation. On December 31, Professor Passin and Columbia University's Associate Professor Gerald Curtis, the program director for the US side, met with Kosaka to bring the situation under control but talks broke down. Yamamoto was briefed on the situation alongside staff members and friends who had gathered at the Yamamoto family home. Bells sounded to ring in the new year as Curtis and Yamamoto headed to the Central Post Office to send a telegram to Senator Hugh Scott conveying cancellation of the Japan visit program, and post office staff handed them a beer to toast the new year, forming a memory the two said they would never forget.

On January 7, 1970, staff and associates gathered at the Yamamoto home once again, where it was announced that Yamamoto had handed his resignation to Kosaka so that he could continue working on international exchange independently. Several people felt the proposed name for the fledgling organization was a little presumptuous but possessing a big dream and after many twists and turns, the Japan Center for International Exchange (JCIE) was born.<sup>9</sup> Yamamoto was 33 years old at the time.

#### **(4) JCIE's Foundation**

Empty-handed, Yamamoto established JCIE in a single room of an Aoyama 1-chome apartment building with a handful of staff. To date, funding for activities had come from the Joint

Research Group and Yamamoto's own salary working in Kosaka's office. All these funding sources had now disappeared but Yamamoto was able to continue the programs thanks to support from US foundations. He had built a network with the Ford Foundation, Columbia University (education exchange, the Shimoda Conference, parliamentary exchange), and members of the US Congress. It was these trust relationships with US players that enabled Yamamoto to expand his network to include the Council on Foreign Relations and other universities. Throughout this time, Yamamoto had the consistent support of the Ford Foundation. Additional support for Japanese expenses related to the Shimoda Conference, parliamentary exchange and teachers exchange came via grants through Columbia University. After going independent, Yamamoto told his counterpart program officer at the Ford Foundation of his dream to incorporate JCIE to carry on its activities. It was imperative that JCIE obtain status as an incorporated foundation and establish an endowment.

In October 1971, McGeorge Bundy, a former aide to President Kennedy and President of the Ford Foundation, visited Japan to show his support for JCIE's programs. He invited business leaders to a lunch meeting where he spoke of the need in Japan for an independent nongovernmental organization like JCIE to facilitate foreign relations and requested backing from the Japanese business world. Participants included many distinguished business leaders including Keidanren (Japan Business Federation) Chairman Kogoro Uemura, Mitsubishi Corporation Chairman Chujiro Fujino, Sony Chairman Masaru Ibuka, Fuji Bank Chairman Yoshizane Iwasa, Nippon Steel Corporation Chairman Shigeo Nagano, Tokyo Electric Power's Chairman Kazutaka Kikawada, and Industrial Bank of Japan Counselor Sohei Nakayama.<sup>10</sup> In October 1973, through the support of these business leaders, JCIE qualified as an incorporated foundation with an endowment of ¥10.7 million and an annual subscription fee from corporations to cover operating expenses. At the time, the required endowment for certification as an incorporated foundation was typically more like ¥200–¥300 million, but it was granted to JCIE despite the small endowment because of two people: Takaaki Kagawa, director of the Cultural Activities Bureau at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; and Senkuro Saiki, who was installed as the Managing Director of The Japan Foundation, which had been established with contributions from Yamamoto who had coordinated with US and other actors. It was support such as this from so many individuals that allowed JCIE to officially launch itself as an incorporated foundation.



## 2. Changing Times and the Path to Political and Parliamentary Exchange

### (1) 1960s US and Japan

The promotion of exchange between politicians by JCIE and JCIU, its predecessor, was inevitable when viewed in the historical context. The 1960s was a period when Prime Minister Ikeda's cabinet achieved instant and rapid economic growth through its "income-doubling plan", and Japan aimed to transform from defeated nation to full member of international society. But with opposition at home to the Japan-US Security Treaty, the domestic situation was still unstable, and many in government and business grew fearful of communism's spread.

At the same time, while *détente* had been achieved in US-Soviet relations in the aftermath of the Cuban Missile Crisis, the Vietnam War was mired in a stalemate and the anti-war movement was spreading worldwide. It was amid this climate and with a need to prevent Japan from falling under the Soviet Union's influence that Deputy Special Assistant to the President Walt Rostow was dispatched to Japan.

It was in this period that business leaders established the Joint Research Group and a host of activities unfolded, as mentioned earlier. And JCIU, the Association of International Education, and the Music Association of Japan (Onkyo) were established to counter organizations such as the National Workers Music Association (Ro-On) and the Workers Association of Recreation. However, Tadashi Yamamoto's actions, implementing projects focused on US-Japan relations based on business world motives, were less convincing. Along the way there were, I believe, manifestations of his previous exposure to American liberalism, such as dispatching so-called Japan Teachers Union fighters in a teachers' delegation and including Japan Socialist Party (JSP) members Sanshichi Hanyu and Tamio Kawakami as participants in the Shimoda Conference.

### (2) How American Society Shaped Tadashi Yamamoto, Our Founder

Tadashi Yamamoto was raised in a Catholic family and planned to become a priest. He transferred from Kobe's Rokko Senior High School to Komaba High School in Tokyo, and after graduating entered the philosophy department at Sophia University. Two years later he left for study abroad in the US at St. Norbert College in Wisconsin, followed by graduate school at Marquette University. Yamamoto was deeply influenced by the social changes taking place at the time, a period in which the Second Vatican Council also began making

reforms in the Catholic Church. One episode from this time saw Yamamoto, who worked in the campus dining hall as a requirement of his study abroad scholarship, serve a glass of local milk to Senator John F. Kennedy who was visiting the university during his presidential campaign. This brief encounter with the future President Kennedy, his subsequent inaugural address, the founding of the Peace Corps, Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr.'s civil rights movement, and other key events from these times greatly influenced Yamamoto's decision to take the path of social action instead of becoming a priest, and fate saw him join Shin'etsu Chemical Company. As campaign manager for Tokusaburo Kosaka's election bid, Yamamoto led a Kennedy-style campaign with a series named "Blue Sky Citizens Lectures", inviting speakers such as Japanese folk singer Ryoko Moriyama to appeal to younger generations. Through his work with the Association of International Education and JCIU, Yamamoto saw how America's private foundations played a different role to government and business, and he always held a great adoration for the kind of society he saw in America. What he pursued was not simply US-Japan political relations; he wanted to realize in Japan the ideals that he had caught a glimpse of in American society.

That was the basis for beginning JCIE—a new organization distinct from the JCIU which he had been engaged with until 1969.

### **(3) Happenstance and Support for JCIE in the Early Days**

JCIE faced countless challenges in its bid to continue various programs, but we were always lucky to encounter people who lent us a helping hand along the way. Yamamoto himself often talked about how he was supported by so many people and blessed with very good luck. JCIE was able to implement some independent programs in addition to successfully holding the 3rd Congressional Delegation to Japan in 1971 and 3rd Shimoda Conference in 1972, but there was no shortage of drama in the interim.

In 1970, plans were afoot for an international conference on global transport systems to include profiles of advanced public transportation systems such as San Francisco's Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) and noted leaders and specialists as speakers, such as global thinker and urban designer, Buckminster Fuller, and industrial designer and architect of the Chicago Marina City complex, Bertrand Goldberg. Preparations were proceeding with the Tokyo Prince Hotel booked out and agreements with almost all the domestic and foreign speakers made. It was hoped that several hundred participants would attend, but a lack of interest forced its cancellation just one month prior to the event. Feeling a strong sense of responsibility, head of American co-sponsor Urban Research Corporation, John Naisbitt (later well-known as the author of the global bestseller *Megatrend*), made an urgent visit to Japan to join Yamamoto in the rounds to apologize to speakers, the hotel and others. Despite

being just one month to the event, the hotel waived the penalty for breach of contract. For many years after that, Naisbitt, whose work included a newspaper clipping service, supplied articles on US-Japan relations to JCIE free of charge, and we were able to package that as the *Japan Monitor*—a membership service targeting business and other actors.

It was also in 1970 that JCIE faced a dilemma regarding payments when a processing issue delayed the remittance of grant money from the Ford Foundation for the implementation of the US-Japan Teacher Exchange program. Learning of this, Sony Chairman Ibuka took Yamamoto to meet Fuji Bank Chairman Iwasa and requested a loan of ¥30 million with his personal guarantee, enabling JCIE to go ahead with the program. Ibuka says he was later warned by Sony President Morita never to do something like that again. But he remained Yamamoto's supporter to the end. In preparatory committee discussions on incorporation as a foundation, JCIE's fate was in danger when a group of business leaders said that at just 36 years old, Yamamoto was too young. Then and there Ibuka said, "This is Yamamoto's proposed enterprise and Yamamoto should be its leader", settling the debate and allowing JCIE to move to the next stage of incorporation. Ibuka continued to support JCIE, serving on the board until his later years, and Yamamoto always spoke of him as a lifetime benefactor. Their deep relationship began in May 1970 when as executive secretary of the Japan Association of Corporate Executives Ibuka contacted Yamamoto to ask if he could contact anyone about a proposed NASA observation mission. Of course, Yamamoto had nothing, but ever the optimist wanting to make something work, he contacted a friend at the US Embassy. What follows is just one example of Yamamoto's extremely good luck, because his friend responded saying, "NASA Administrator James Webb is staying at the Hotel Okura now so why don't you consult with him". Yamamoto rushed to meet with Webb who responded to his request on the spot giving his firm promise to "provide whatever support necessary". The mission went ahead and when Ibuka was invited to meet with President Johnson at his Texas ranch, Yamamoto accompanied him as an interpreter. It was during that trip that Yamamoto told Ibuka about his dreams.

Ford Foundation President Bundy's call to Japanese business leaders for support in 1971 was successful in enabling JCIE to become an incorporated foundation, but the organization faced extremely challenging cash flow issues. For three years from 1973, the Ford Foundation decided on a general support grant of \$70,000 per year to strengthen JCIE's operations.

In 1973, at the introduction of the Ford Foundation, Rockefeller Brothers Fund (RBF) executive secretary Russell Phillips visited Japan. Yamamoto expressed his thoughts on what Japan should be doing saying, "Japan must share its thinking with international society. The high-quality, English-language quarterly *Journal of Social and Political Ideas* (Chief Editor: Tsutomu Kano) previously sponsored by the Asia Foundation is in danger of discontinuation, but I really think it should be continued." Returning home via Hong Kong, Phillips penned a handwritten note on Peninsula Hotel paper: "I'd like to support you with \$30,000

each year over three years—will you accept that?” The offer came as such a surprise because Yamamoto had not made the request on behalf of his own organization. From that time forward, JCIE published a quarterly journal entitled *Japan Interpreter*. For more than 20 years, RBF supported JCIE in a number of ways, prompting a comment that in RBF’s history, it had never supported a single organization for so long. The relationships with the Ford Foundation and RBF spawned so many connections that JCIE was said to be the best known Japanese organization among American foundations. It is no exaggeration that JCIE’s base was built by American foundations.

One additional, highly unique activity that supported JCIE’s finances was our work in connecting Japan’s national broadcaster NHK with Sesame Street. Visiting at the Ford Foundation’s introduction, a representative of the Children’s Television Workshop (CTW) hoping to expand the program to Japan requested to be connected with relevant people. They had been negotiating with commercial broadcasters none of which were able to agree with CTW’s policies of no commercial breaks and no changes to content or fill-ins. That is when they arrived at JCIE for advice. JCIE was able to connect CTW with NHK Educational TV, and a consulting contract with CTW helped JCIE’s finances.

Support saw many forms and one non-financial boost came in 1975 through the goodwill of David MacEachron who along with JCIE devoted many years to promoting US-Japan relations in his role as Vice President of the Council on Foreign Relations and then President of the New York–based Japan Society. MacEachron provided desk space in the Japan Society office which led to the establishment of a US-based JCIE, enabling closer collaboration on US-Japan exchange programs and development of other activities. With Yamamoto installed as Chairman and well-known New York lawyer Jiro Murase as President, Hiroshi Peter Kamura moved to New York to take on the executive secretary role connecting JCIE’s Tokyo and New York offices.

### 3. Toward New Political and Parliamentary Exchange

#### **(1) US-Japan Young Political Leaders Exchange Program**

In August 1972, nine young Japanese political leaders were invited by the American Council for Young Political Leaders (ACYPL) to observe the Democratic National Convention in the lead-up to the US presidential election. They included Keizo Obuchi and Morihiro Hosokawa from the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), Komeito’s Hiroichi Sakai, and Takuji Kuribayashi from the Democratic Socialist Party (DSP). On their return in September, the group visited JCIE reporting on how important it is as parliamentarians to see American

politics first-hand and to engage in exchange with other parliamentarians, and seeking advice on implementing an ongoing plan for US visit programs. ACYPL, as an organization seen to be close to the Democratic Party network, had implemented exchange programs with European countries and Russia for regional politicians under the age of 40, and was expressing an interest in expanding those exchanges to young political leaders from a rapidly growing Japan.

Japan's political sphere at the time was dominated by 50- to 60-year-old politicians with even those under 50 referred to as chicks, and it certainly was not an era in which regional politicians were prepared to launch into international exchange. ACYPL chose to implement the program, agreeing for Japanese delegations to be comprised mainly of National Diet members. In January 1973, The Young Political Leaders International Exchange Committee was launched with JCIE as the secretariat and Keizo Obuchi, Takuji Kuribayashi, Hiroichi Sakai, Hideo Den, Morihiro Hosokawa and Kiyoshi Mizuno as its executive members. With funds gathered from each political party, Japan welcomed a US delegation of 16 members in July 1973, and in August 1974, a Japanese delegation visited the US. The mutual agreement was that all costs incurred at home were to be covered by one's home country, but from the moment of arrival the costs would be borne by the receiving country—a principle that is still adhered to today.

The 1st Japanese Delegation to the US occurred in the midst of President Nixon's impeachment hearings, and the members participated in informal talks with Vice President Ford just two days before Nixon's resignation. A fiasco occurred when an accompanying staff member took photos of each delegate shaking hands with Ford, only to find later that there was no film in the camera. Not a single of the prized photos came out leaving the delegation deeply disappointed.

The 2nd US Delegation to Japan program held in November 1974 overlapped with President Ford's visit. Meetings between the US and Japanese program participants were being held at the Hotel Okura, as were Ford's talks. Having bumped into each other in the corridor, they had the opportunity for a chat and some photos. Japanese delegation members also had the chance to talk with then Georgia State Governor Jimmy Carter and Arkansas State Governor Bill Clinton when the delegations visited their offices subsequently.

## **(2) Full-fledged Program of Japanese Diet Delegation to US as Japan Becomes a Member of Advanced Nations**

From 1971 onwards, JCIE welcomed a US congressional delegation almost every year. Its network expanded to other US foundations, and support on a Council on Foreign Relations conference held in Japan helped take things to the next level. By request from Council on

Foreign Relations Executive Director George Franklin, JCIE introduced an array of people to assist Columbia University Professor Zbigniew Brzezinski on a book he was writing about Japan, later published under the title *The Fragile Blossom: Crisis and Change in Japan*. When Brzezinski visited Japan in 1972 with George Franklin and Chase Manhattan Bank Chairman David Rockefeller, they asked for JCIE's cooperation in creating a committee to discuss international matters between North America, Europe and Japan, which by then had the second largest GNP in the world. The three main bodies on the international stage at the time were the Williamsburg Conference covering US-Asia relations and the gap between developed and developing nations, the Bilderberg Meeting established between North America and Europe to discuss east-west relations, and the Atlantic Council conference, which debates issues spanning the Atlantic (US and Europe). None of these political dialogues included Japan. Rockefeller tried to bring Japan into Atlantic Council meetings, but after facing opposition from that group he felt his only choice was to create a new organization. In June 1972, based on Rockefeller's strong desire to bring Japan into the league of advanced nations, associates gathered at the Rockefeller home in Pocantico Hills, in New York's suburbs, to consult on the creation of a Trilateral Commission bringing together members from Japan, Europe and North America. Japan was represented by Kiichi Miyazawa, Kinhide Mushakoji, Saburo Ookita and Tadashi Yamamoto. And in October 1973, with the participation of Prime Minister Kakuei Tanaka, the Trilateral Commission held its foundation meeting in Tokyo. Having been installed as the secretariat for the Japan Group, Yamamoto and JCIE were able to expand connections from a small group of US congressmen and experts to a broad network of leaders in American and European politics, bureaucracy, business and academia. At the time, Japan's position was that it would be unthinkable for nongovernmental bodies to engage in international issues or diplomacy and on many occasions, Yamamoto was cast aside and told to his face that civil society was not to interfere. It was Kiichi Miyazawa, having finished his term as Minister of International Trade and Industry, who recognized the crucial nature of the Trilateral Commission and participated in the Pocantico meeting. When he later became Minister of Foreign Affairs, the headwind Yamamoto faced gradually abated.

In 1979, Jimmy Carter and Masayoshi Ohira held a US-Japan summit meeting and launched a wisemen's groups called the Japan-U.S. Economic Relations Group (later renamed to the Japan-U.S. Advisory Commission), chaired by former Minister of State for External Economic Affairs Nobuhiko Ushiba and former US Ambassador to Japan Robert Ingersoll, with JCIE as its secretariat. Increasing trade friction between the US and a rapidly growing Japan over rice, beef, oranges, timber, and automobiles, among others, had become a significant issue, and the advisory panel was tasked with finding policies to improve the situation. By the late 1970s, Japan had become a threat to America's economy and trade friction between the two countries permeated every inch of every Japanese farm and factory. A

comic haiku heard on the streets at the time—Farm work, lunch box, Louis Vuitton—gave a very clear picture of the extent of internationalization in Japan’s rural areas and was an example often referred to by Keizo Obuchi, a Diet member at the time. For JCIE, which had previously only engaged with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, serving as secretariat in the multi-perspective examination of US-Japan economic relations represented the chance to engage with leaders in the prime minister’s Cabinet Office, as well as from the ministries of finance, agriculture, and international trade and industry. This work also provided further depth for debate on political issues during US-Japan Parliamentary Exchange programs.

Trade issues in the agricultural sector had a direct impact on regional society in both the US and Japan, and people all over Japan really had become familiar with brand names like Louis Vuitton. Recognizing that the international problems of the day were thoroughly impacting the lives of people in every corner of the country, ACYPL came to Japan requesting that the exchange switch to incorporate regional parliamentarians. In December 1981, the first delegation of the newly formed US-Japan Young Political Leaders Exchange Program saw ten regional parliamentarians, secretaries to parliament members, and party staff members visit the US. Around the same time, the 6th Japanese Diet Delegation to the US was the last to be run through the young political leader’s program, switching to a new framework known as the US-Japan Congressional/Diet Members Exchange Program from the seventh delegation.

### **(3) Cooperation in US Visit Missions by Political Parties**

From the end of World War II, intergovernmental discussions and US observation visits in fields of culture and education, science, media and labor had been taking place, but political exchange alone left many fields unexplored. Every year from the 1960s, the LDP sent a research group made up of party leaders, and since joining the Inter-Parliamentary Union in 1951 there had been limited opportunities to interact with US congressional members. But it was the 1967 Shimoda Conference and the launch of the US-Japan Parliamentary Exchange Program in 1968 that created opportunities for direct dialogue on US-Japan relations, marking a memorable turn of events for policy dialogue at the nongovernmental level.

As a neutral actor, it was imperative that JCIE’s political parliamentary exchange programs include multiple parties. In 1969, Japan Socialist Party (JSP) members Sanshichi Hanyu and Tamio Kawakami participated in the Second Shimoda Conference, and while leftist demonstrators called JCIE the “running dog of the American Imperialists”, Bin Akao of the Great Japan Patriotic Party entered the fray saying it was preposterous to include communists in US-Japan relations. Irrespective, members of JSP were included in all such programs thereafter.

In the summer of 1975, Diet member Tamio Kawakami visited JCIE with JSP Vice Chairman Saburo Eda. Kawakami and two other members of the party, namely Hideo Den and Takako Doi, had participated in the 1st Japanese Diet Delegation to US as part of the US-Japan Young Political Leaders Exchange Program, and having realized the crucial nature of exchange with the US, they hoped to send their own JSP mission. It would be 18 years from when Kawakami's father, Jotaro Kawakami had visited the US in 1957 as a special adviser for JSP. He received a very cold reception when requesting a meeting with Secretary of State Dulles, being told by State Department staff not to come back until his party had control of the administration. Because the JSP had no established relationship with the US, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was not interested in offering assistance for setting up appointments and the like.

JCIE sought US cooperation by introducing them to US Ambassador to Japan James Hodgson, who was connected with the Shimoda Conference and the US-Japan parliamentary exchange, and also by reaching out to several US congressmen. The feeling in the US at the time was that JSP, given its opposition to President Ford's visit and the Japan-US security treaty, was synonymous with the Communist Party. The first step was to go around explaining the difference between the two parties. With the cooperation of the US Embassy in Japan and the Inter-Parliamentary Union, a delegation made a ten-day trip to the US on September 16–26, 1975. It was led by Saburo Eda, with Tetsu Ueda as deputy lead, and included members from both houses of the Diet—Hideo Den, Susumu Kobayashi, and Tamio Kawakami—as well as deputy director of international affairs for the party, Shozo Sugiyama.<sup>11</sup>

Contrary to expectations, the delegation received a warm reception from all sides during their stay, and were delighted to have made the trip as they secured a path for continued dialogue. In particular, Republican Senator Hugh Scott took the delegation into Congress and stopped proceedings to welcome them. The official records show a “Visit to the Senate by Delegation of the Socialist Party of Japan” and the event was broadly covered by the media.<sup>12</sup> They also visited the White House for a meeting with Assistant to the President and Chief of Staff Donald Rumsfeld, causing quite a stir that socialists had visited the White House. JCIE's role was not very well known but *Asahi Shimbun* correspondent Yukio Matsuyama, in his column “Coordinate Axis: Anti-Americans Welcomed”, disclosed that the arrangement was made by JCIE. Thereafter, JCIE provided some assistance for JSP delegations to the US including the Asukata Mission (1979), Ishibashi Mission (1984), and Doi Mission (1987).

JCIE's support for these kinds of political party US visit programs is not limited to the JSP, also aiding in visits by individuals from the LDP and other political parties, making arrangements for dialogue with US congressmen and think tank leaders. Some key US visit programs were the Diet Members Association for US-Japan Parliamentary Exchange's Delegation to the US (1985), LDP General Affairs Chairman Miyazawa's Delegation (1985), DSP Saburo



Tsukamoto's Delegation (1985) and Komeito Secretary General Yano's Delegations (1982, 1985). Yamamoto was asked about the significance of these US visits by political party delegations at the time of the 1985 Nikaido Mission, and what follows is Yamamoto's memo to Mr. Nikaido before his departure to the US.

"There are of course exceptions, but essentially, parliamentary exchange should complement formal diplomacy, thus it should be about building a foundation for constructive policy coordination and policy development through the promotion of mutual understanding at the policy level and networks of trust relationships between people. When those exchanges intervene in actual diplomatic negotiations, not only can it cause confusion, it can even yield results that are contrary to the national interest. Particularly in the delicate stages of diplomatic negotiations, if talks go ahead without sufficient preparation in terms of interaction and coordination in diplomatic channels, you may be taken advantage of in negotiations. Barring really special circumstances, I believe parliamentarian exchange should be conducted in a long-term, ongoing manner. In general, such exchanges are not appropriate for achieving immediate gains; it is only the cumulative effect over the long-term that serves a purpose in crisis management."<sup>13</sup>

## 4. New Actors in Policy Formulation

### **(1) US Congressional Staff Exchange**

In the 1980s, as evidenced in the debate on the trade imbalance at the abovementioned US-Japan Wisemen's Group, Japan's rising economic strength and America's relatively stagnant economy dramatically changed the state of international relations management. Discussions at international conferences frequently included the fact that Japan and Germany were driving the global economy and the "locomotive theory" of economic development. During Reagan's Administration when the US suffered from twin deficits in trade and budget, congressmen sought ways to deal with the issues domestically and engaged in negotiations with Japan to resolve trade friction, making it difficult to hold objective policy discussions outside of formal diplomacy channels. When Yamamoto and a Ministry of Foreign Affairs friend got together, they agreed that the path to gaining understanding of Japan's position was through the congressional staff who play a major role in policymaking in the US, and legislative aides for congressmen.

Charles Morrison was one such individual, serving as a legislative aide to Senator William Ross at the time. During a visit to Japan on an American Center program, he was asked to participate in a number of meetings and joined discussions on the vital nature of congressional

staff programs. Morrison left his aide role for Ross in 1980 and joined JCIE as a resident fellow. He made great contributions to policy discussions and parliamentary exchange before leaving in 1995 to become a researcher and later president of Hawaii's East-West Center but remaining as a non-resident fellow after that.

Based on these discussions, in November 1982, JCIE was consigned a survey project by the consul-general in New York to implement the 1st US Congressional Staff Delegation to Japan—a group of six including Senator Max Baucus' aides for trade, diplomacy and defense, and experts from the House Ways and Means Committee. Their five-day visit presented opportunities to engage in policy discussions with government actors, parliamentarians and experts, as well as to visit one locality to observe the true situation in Japan's regions. Over 28 visits, 196 prominent congressional staff and committee staff members have participated in this program. Alumni speak very highly of this program with other congressional staff and even recommend suitable participants for future programs.

The US has long been viewed as a broad-minded nation that always finds balance again even if it tends to an extreme for a time. However, under the US-centric Trump Administration and in these times when it is referred to as a divided nation, Japan cannot be indifferent to the direction that various US policies take. From that perspective, it is increasingly important through congressional staff exchange to share information and opinions on global policy matters such as trade, energy, finance, climate change, international security. In addition, as part of the US-Japan Young Political Leaders Exchange, we designate US delegation members visiting Japan as speakers at public seminars. Japanese reports on the US typically focus on events in Washington and New York, but these opportunities have raised awareness of the importance of hearing frank opinions from local politicians on the kinds of changes taking place in their regions.

## **(2) Political Exchange and Private Enterprise**

JCIE has forged a deep relationship with the two major Japanese automobile companies through making arrangements for one steadfast component of the Japan visit programs by US delegations during US-Japan Parliamentary Exchange. That is the inspection of Toyota and Nissan factories and opportunities for dialogue with Toyota President Eiji Toyoda, Nissan CEO Katsuji Kawamata, and other directors. Experiencing the elegant minibus sent to collect them at Nagoya Station, congresspeople have felt surprise at the innovative touches while beginning to sense a kind of threat from developments in the Japanese automotive industry.

In the mid-1980s, Japanese automakers Toyota, Nissan and Honda built factories in Kentucky, Tennessee and Ohio, respectively, after receiving attractive offers from various

states. US industry was experiencing hollowing out and with the “Big Three” US automakers showing sluggish performance, the US blamed the trade imbalance on Japan’s closed markets. In response, the automakers imposed voluntary export restraints and commenced direct investment in the US, thereby contributing to job creation.

At the time, many American factories faced closure, and corporations began to see the regions that were home to their corporate sites as stakeholders. Through philanthropy and employee participation in volunteer activities, they established their position in society as corporate citizens. Many corporations also created “Government Relations” divisions, recognizing the need for close coordination with government.

Major Japanese corporations established representative offices in Washington, D.C., and lobbied the government through contract lobbyists, but they soon saw a need for more direct dialogue with the government. At one stage, Japan IBM President Takeo Shiina and House of Representatives Member Yoshiro Mori visited JCIE expressing a desire to form a combined team of politicians and business leaders to engage in exchange with the US. With the Brookings Institution, JCIE had been running a “Government-Business Relations Seminar” on Japanese business practices and to provide a touchpoint outside the trade ministry for foreign companies. Based on the above request from Mori and Shiina, discussions proceeded with Brookings President Bruce MacLaury, and in March 1988 the 1st US-Japan Partnership Forum was held in Washington, D.C., with the Brookings Institution as co-host for the US side and chaired by Mori. The forum was held a total of six times with Japan and the US alternating as host until August 1995.

## 5. Major Shifts in US Politics

### **(1) 1994 US Midterm Elections**

The 1992 US federal elections produced 110 new representatives. And in the 1994 midterm elections, The Democrats who had boasted an overwhelming advantage suffered historical defeat in an election that completely repainted the political map. Fifty-two Democratic seats were won by Republicans, and the Republican Party became the majority party for the first time in 40 years with 230 seats to the Democrats’ 204. Gallup Polls from May 1994 showed 71% of Americans did not support US Congress and were disgruntled with the Clinton Administration’s tax hikes, overgenerous welfare and corruption in Washington.<sup>14</sup> The national election campaign opened under the leadership of Republican Newt Gingrich with his “Contract with America” containing policies to resolve domestic issues.

These midterm elections are said to be the moment American politics became inward-looking. Of the 434 representatives, 87 or 20% were replaced. Several representatives had announced their retirements, but many veteran congresspeople took everyone by surprise losing their seats. They included incumbent representatives thought to have had the upper hand, like Thomas Foley, the House Speaker and a person well-versed in Japan, as well as Ways and Means Committee Chair Dan Rostenkowski, and Jack Brooks. Following the 110 new representatives elected in 1992, many of the newly-elected referred to themselves as “Civil Legislators” and “Political Outsiders” garnering votes on a platform of divergence from traditional Washington politics and policies to meet local needs that were not met through Clinton’s government. In his criticism of the insular nature of the Republican Party, House Majority Leader Dick Armey of Texas said, “a shockingly large number of American members of Congress don’t hold a passport.” However, the *New York Times* reported that a great many house members do in fact hold passports.<sup>15</sup> In any case, you would often hear many of them during the election campaign stating that they don’t even hold a passport, as a kind of strategy to prove that their number one priority was contributing to issues in their hometowns. In the absence of veterans and with the increase in new congresspeople whose priority was not on international issues, US-Japan relations and parliamentary exchange faced very hard times in the late 1990s.

## **(2) Japan Bashing, Passing, and Nothing**

While there were issues with the Japanese stance after the trade friction of the 1980s, propounded in ideas of having nothing to learn from the West, or Japan as the sole winner, Japan was the subject of attack and even bullying starting in the 1980s. Around the time Japan’s bubble economy collapsed in the 1990s, it came to be known as “Japan Bashing”. Then in the late 1990s, as China began to rise and “Asia’s four little dragons”—South Korea, Singapore, Hong Kong and Taiwan—experienced rapid economic development, America’s interest in Asia switched to countries other than Japan. When President Clinton failed to stop off in Japan during a visit to China in 1998, the expression was changed to “Japan Passing”. Despite the existence of issues such as US military bases in Okinawa and the sexual assault of a young girl by US servicemen, the general tone at the time was that because US-Japan relations were stable and no major unresolved issues existed, limited interactions were inevitable. So as the new millennium began, it was no longer a case of passing; it was more like nothing.

In the latter part of the 1990s, approximately 50 congresspeople and 70 congressional staff members visited Japan from the US. However, Japan’s international presence had weakened and funds for governmental exchange were reduced. In addition, focus in the US was on war

and other foreign crises and chaos in domestic politics. Scandals related to congresspeople's overseas travel only added to the difficulty of arranging congressional visits to Japan. US delegations of congresspeople to Japan fell by 70%, and visits by congressional staff had fallen 50% by the end of the first decade of the 2000s.

In stark contrast, US attention shifted fully to a rising China. Japan-related research at US universities and think tanks dropped off and China studies dominated research into the Asia region as a whole. There were no grants for projects on US-Japan relations; funds were only available if the proposed activity related to US-Japan-China relations. JCIE's *Survey on Japan-US Political Exchange* showed that in the ten years from 2000-2009, the number of US congresspeople visiting Japan was 170 (with an annual average of 17) compared to 341 visiting China (avg. 34.1), and congressional staff numbers to Japan were 507 (avg. 50.7) compared to 1585 visiting China (avg. 158.5). In the next seven years from 2010 to 2016, the figures were as follows: 221 US congresspeople visited both Japan and China (avg. 31.5), but just 494 congressional staff visited Japan (avg. 70.5) compared to 1014 visiting China (avg. 144.8).<sup>16</sup>

From 2010 onward, China's sudden rise became a source of concern in the US, and perhaps from a sense of the need to find balance there was renewed interest in Japan among US congresspeople. One area in particular was the Obama Administration's Clean Energy policy, and Jeff Bingaman, Chair of the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources and five other members visited Japan in October 2010. The group was to survey Japan's clean energy technologies and JCIE arranged for meetings with power companies and other experts. As a US Congress committee delegation visiting for policy dialogue on a specific issue with Japan, it provided some insight into the possible direction for future parliamentary exchange. The committee expressed a desire to conduct even deeper investigations the following year, but plans were abandoned in light of the March 11, 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake and Fukushima nuclear disaster.

### **(3) Strengthening the Ethics Code in US Congress**

Several scandals in the late 1990s shed light on issues related to foreign government or private funding for overseas trips by US congresspeople. The US Constitution forbids congresspeople and congressional staff from accepting money or gifts from foreign governments, but travel for programs run by a foreign government for the purpose of cultural exchange that has been sanctioned by the State Department are allowed in accordance with the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act (MECEA). However, there remained many hurdles to participation in regional programs and privately funded programs.

Congress regulations for travel on privately funded programs were tightened after several incidents of excessive wining and dining by the China Lobby, Korea Lobby and others

surfaced, inviting much criticism. Multiple new conditions now had to be met. The current regulations require participants to obtain approval from an ethics committee at least 30 days prior to travel, to prove the connection between the planned travel and their public duty, and to present a schedule for the duration of their travel that is equivalent to full-time work. Furthermore, upon return, participants must make their expenses public. Local media often exposed overseas travel thought to conflict with these rules, and many became the target of criticism, said to have been entertained by foreign organizations or businesses. In some cases, congresspeople reimbursed the total cost of their participation.

The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, on the World Trade Center and other sites led Congress to enact the USA Patriot Act just one month later. The law further tightened regulations on the transfer of capital within the US, especially when the funds relate to foreign individuals or organizations. In concrete terms, foreign individuals and organizations were now obliged to prove that they were not participating in terrorist activities. With a stronger ethical code and establishment of the Patriot Act, congresspeople and congressional staff were cautious about participating in programs initiated by private bodies if they were not official programs of congress or government, and thus it became extremely difficult to implement programs for informal and free debate, such as those proposed by Senate Majority Leader Mansfield in 1967.

#### **(4) Shifts in Funds for Parliamentary Exchange Programs**

The search for funds to run political and parliamentary exchange programs is a major issue. JCIE has worked repeatedly to secure sound funds that were compatible with the relevant laws. As already stated, JCIE's political and parliamentary exchange programs were operated first with support from the Ford Foundation and then domestic and foreign private foundations and quasi-governmental institutions, as well as through donations from businesses. JCIE's abovementioned 2017 report on the Survey on Japan-US Political Exchange showed that funds for US-Japan exchange came primarily from three foundations: The Japan Foundation Center for Global Partnership (CGP), US-based Japan-United States Friendship Commission, and the United States-Japan Foundation. Funding in the 20 years from 1995 to 2015, after conversion and adjustment for inflation, fell from approximately \$13 million in 1995 to \$2 million in 2019. In the first ten years alone (1995 to 2005), funding fell dramatically from \$13 million to \$3.5 million.<sup>17</sup> Exchange across the Pacific requires a great deal of money, and the decrease in funding contributed to a decline in exchange activities.

Given the basis for JCIE's activities is US-Japan exchange, our policy has always been to seek American co-hosts with whom we could split the relevant expenses. The Shimoda Conference, up until the third time, was implemented by the American Assembly with

grants from Columbia University and Ford Foundation, and by JCIU with support from the Japanese business sector. From the fourth conference in 1977, the US partner became the Japan Society, which conducted its own fundraising, while the Japan side was supported by the Ford Foundation's general support fund until the mid-1990s. In 1974, just once, a grant was secured from the Japan Foundation. Shimoda '94 was one part of a three-part conference which began in 1993 and was held in New York, Awashima Island in Shizuoka Prefecture, and Singapore, organized with the American Assembly. Fifteen years later in 2011, the New Shimoda Conference was run on independent funds and donations, driven by a need to search for improvements against a backdrop of weakened organizational footing for promoting US-Japan exchange.

Parliamentary exchange, too, had been co-hosted by Columbia University or the Japan Society ever since JCIE's establishment, and delegations from the US to Japan were primarily funded by grants from the Ford Foundation. Japanese delegations over 18 visits from 1976 to 1994 were supported through a public relations budget allotted from the Prime Minister's Office budget for dispatching leader delegations. However, under Prime Minister Hosokawa, major budget revisions saw the dispatch of National Diet members come under the legislature's budget, meaning consignment programs were suspended. In order to continue parliamentary exchange, it became necessary to design programs with a more specific thematic focus, thus we established the "US-Japan Parliamentarians Joint Study Project—US-Japan Security in the Asia Pacific", relying on funds from the American Freeman Foundation and Japanese corporate sponsors. Able to secure the required funds, this program was implemented from 1997 until 2004. Since 2011, individual projects for exchange conducted under our policy research programs have been made possible through funds from US and Japanese foundations such as MRA Foundation, the Shibusawa Eiichi Memorial Foundation, Henry Luce Foundation, and Mercy Corps.

Congressional staff exchange began in 1982 and was held on 14 occasions until 1997. As recorded in the launch details, the program was consigned by the Consulate-General in New York under the jurisdiction of the office of general affairs in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Economic Affairs Bureau. Support from the Starr Foundation in 1999 made it possible to continue the program from the 15th delegation to Japan through to the 18th delegation in 2004. After the Starr Foundation funding ceased, the Japan-United States Friendship Commission recognized the crucial nature of the program and started funding it, allowing the program to run from 2010 through to today.

As mentioned above, costs related to the US-Japan Young Political Leaders Exchange were to be borne by each side until the delegation arrived in the host country, from which point the host was responsible for expenses incurred. On the Japan side at the time, it was not possible to fund delegations with grants, thus participants were required to bear some of the cost personally. From 1992, the program was operated through funding from the CGP

and joint sponsors. However, a dramatic decline in CGP funds from 2017 led to a need for supplementary funds from the MRA Foundation to run the program.

As the above clearly shows, in the absence of independent funding and with term limits on any assistance provided, the work required is not just about implementing the programs, but a constant search for funds, including making proposals and applications and producing reports. When steady funds are available, it is possible to plan and implement programs with a long-term perspective, but the reality is that it is only because of support from a variety of organizations that we have managed to carry on, charged with constructing only programs which are persuasive as to the necessity and gravity of parliamentary exchange. Ample funding for present-day promotion of US-Japan parliamentary exchange is conducted by The Sasakawa Peace Foundation and Sasakawa USA for their own programs. In addition to conducting its own political exchange program, the SPF commissions visit programs by US congressional delegations through grants to the Former Members of Congress (FMC) and the Mansfield Foundation.

## 6. The Turning Point for Political and Parliamentary Exchange

### **(1) New Players**

From 2012 onwards, the number of delegations to Japan followed an upward trend, and numbers were restored to the late-1990s numbers mentioned above, sometimes even eclipsing them. A number of factors are thought to have contributed to this trend, the first being stability in US politics and the fact that congresspeople could plan more easily. The focus on war in Iraq and Afghanistan had faded meaning less need for observation visits to war regions, opening up the possibility for travel to other regions. A second factor relates to JCIE, which had played a central role organizing political and parliamentary exchange for the Japan side but had difficulty securing funding to maintain the Japan visit program because of the aforementioned changing circumstances, strengthening of the ethical code handed down by the Congressional Ethics Committee, and regulations on private involvement. That is when new actors emerged to fill the gap and advance US-Japan parliamentary exchange. The Sasakawa Peace Foundation (SPF) spearheaded programs for the empowerment of female parliamentarians, congressional staff exchange, and regional parliamentarians exchange, while also funding a visit program by the Congressional Study Group on Japan run by FMC. It was also funding from SPF in 2014 that enabled the Aspen Institute to send a delegation of more than 20 congresspeople to Japan for a major conference. Management of



the “US-Japan Legislative Exchange” previously run by George Washington University and the Japan Economic Foundation (JEF) shifted to the Mansfield Foundation with the support of SPF. Additionally, with support from the Japan-United States Friendship Commission, the Mansfield Foundation was able to create the Thomas S. Foley Congressional Exchange Program. It is examples such as these that show the great level of ongoing activity. The Japan Center for Economic Research (JCER) and Japan Institute of International Affairs (JIJA), with backing from Nihon Keizai Shimbun, commenced the Mt. Fuji Dialogue in 2014 with a new format but in the tradition of the Shimoda Conference by inviting congresspeople, congressional staff and other government officials, as well as think tank representatives, researchers, and people from the business world to conduct policy dialogue with Japanese Diet members.

## **(2) JCIE’s New Approaches for Political and Parliamentary Exchange**

The US Congressional Staff Exchange Program kicked off again after a three-year blank in the aftermath of the Great East Japan Earthquake, and the US-Japan Young Political Leader’s Exchange Program has also continued.

Five members from both chambers of congress who were invited to the New Shimoda Conference held February 20-23, 2011, also participated in the US-Japan Congressional/Diet Exchange Program. As recorded in one section of a survey report to be covered further below, these events presented a good opportunity to reconsider US-Japan relations, however, the earthquake, tsunami and Fukushima nuclear reactor disaster which occurred just two weeks later, made it clear that work would be required to maintain momentum for the renewed conference.

I have reflected here on the shifts in JCIE’s programs for US-Japan political and parliamentary exchange over the past 50 years. The last ten years of activities have shown that, increasingly, a more focused thematic approach is required, and further that there must be clear, tangible results.

JCIE’s President Yamamoto died in April 2012. Having driven JCIE with all his energy since the 1960s, we wanted to carry on Yamamoto’s legacy while also searching for a new model for JCIE. We needed to advance with fresh determination, depending on the cooperation of friends and associates at home and abroad even more than before.

In January 2012 we kicked off a research project on “Vacuum of Political Leadership in Japan”. In between the First Abe Cabinet of 2006 and the Second Abe Cabinet formed in 2012, Japan had six different prime ministers with leadership changing hands on a yearly basis. It was seen as a highly unusual development for an advanced country, with some foreign countries saying it was impossible to engage in policy consultation with the prime minister

changing every year. Through study groups of Diet members and young researchers, our project examined leadership, the Japanese political and electoral systems, and whether there are issues of individual disposition, among other themes. Based on their findings, two delegations visited the US to build on discussions on political leadership with their American associates: a group of researchers joined House of Representatives Member Takao Ochi in 2012, followed by a delegation of three Diet members including Representative Seiji Kihara and researchers in 2013. Sheila Smith, a friend of Yamamoto's and head of the Japan Program at the Council on Foreign Relations' Washington office, sent a proposal for a "Tadashi Yamamoto Memorial Seminar" involving the delegation of Japanese Diet members, and this seminar has been held during every Japanese delegation visit since.

In 2014, House of Representatives Member Yasuhisa Shiozaki and five other Diet members visited the US on a mission focused on "US-Japan Cooperation on Global Health" to explore possibilities for bilateral cooperation on global health issues – one of the pillars of JCIE's activities. Following on from that mission, every year since 2017 we have held the "US-Japan Global Health Dialogue" in Washington DC.

In a program jointly organized with US NGO Mercy Corps, a Japanese delegation visited the US on the issue of "US-Japan Cooperation on Humanitarian Assistance". Its members included House of Representatives Member Keisuke Suzuki and three other Diet members and 4 NGO leaders. After they returned to Japan, opportunities for dialogue between National Diet members and NGOs expanded, and in May 2015, US mission delegates and other Diet members formed a bipartisan group called "Study Group to Promote Strategic Partnerships with NPOs & NGOs". It came about from an urging to enable Japanese NGOs to work as equal partners with the government and was born from an awareness of the need for action as parliamentarians after discussions on relevant issues during their US visit. Diet members and NGO leaders have held several consultation meetings at the Diet Office Building Conference room since.

In 2017, House of Representatives Member Seiko Noda led a delegation of five female National Diet members and one journalist on an "empowerment of female politicians" mission to the US, in what was the first all-woman delegation in JCIE's extensive history. In addition to engaging in dialogue on shared issues with US congresswomen, the delegation had the chance to observe and discuss the various mechanisms that support female politicians, run by government, private bodies or universities. Further, a one-and-a-half day conference with female leaders in the New York suburbs presented an opportunity to consider the kinds of policy dialogue to engage in for advancing both women's issues and matters of international concern as well. In response to a clear need to reach beyond societal issues close to home and adopt a broad international perspective, a study group series was launched in 2019 covering the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), global economy, security, energy, refugees, and IT, among other themes.

Another outcome was the creation of a “nonpartisan moms and dads parliamentary group” including members from the 2017 delegation, with a view to solve problems faced by lawmakers who are also raising children, giving some momentum to that cause. A 2020 Japanese delegation planned to time with the US federal election will not be realized because of COVID-19.

Built around the theme “The Future of Democracy”, a 2019 delegation of five Diet members, including House of Representatives Member Tsuyoshi Yamaguchi, and democratic governance experts held lively discussions with leaders in the US congress and various other sectors. They emerged with a deeper awareness of the threats to world order and universal values as democracy regresses in countries around the world. Debate involved how Japan should deal with this situation and kicked off a project aimed at building links with Asian countries. Motivated to act, delegate members had planned an international symposium for February 2020, inviting politicians and NGO leaders from around Asia, but those plans were also shelved owing to COVID-19. The project is expected to run for three years and includes observation visits to US NGOs engaged in activities to advance democracy.

The common thread in these projects was expansion of the scope for debate through mixed delegations of National Diet members and experts. They succeeded in advancing dialogue and understanding between relevant actors in both the US and Japan, and conversations along the way have helped forge deeper dialogue with various Japanese sectors, thus opening paths for mutual understanding and cooperation.

### **(3) Surveys and Policy Research to Support Political and Parliamentary Exchange**

It is essential to advance parliamentary exchange programs with specific objectives as doing so allows for an understanding of the current environment and the kinds of projects already under implementation, while also helping members identify areas that are lacking, and precisely what should be done next.

Very early in our history, JCIE began surveys to grasp the present situation prior to carrying out programs. In a 1978 survey entitled *Private Consultation Mechanisms in Advanced Nations and Policy Research on US-Japan Relations in the US* [Senshin Shokokukan no Minkan Kyogi oyobi Beikoku ni okeru Nichibei-kankei Seisaku Kenkyu] (Japanese only), we looked in detail into the types of activities run by policy study-related bodies. A number of other surveys conducted around this time included *Research Institutions in Europe and the US* [Oubei no Kenkyuukikan] (Japanese only), *Research Institutions in Japan* [Nihon no Kenkyu Kikan], *Research Institutions in Asia* [Ajia no Kenkyu Kikan] (Japanese only), *US Foundations and Corporate Philanthropy* [Beikoku no Zaidan/Kigyo Kifu]. In 1981, JCIE in

collaboration with FMC undertook a comparative study in two stages of Japanese and US legislative systems, resulting in a 1982 publication entitled *The Japanese Diet and the US Congress* [Amerika no Gikai Nihon no Kokkai] printed in both Japanese and English. And in 1985, JCIE produced the *Survey on US-Japan Exchange*.

In 1991, JCIE compiled *A Report on US-Japan Intellectual Exchange* [Nichibei Chiteki Koryu no Genjo Chosa], by consignment from the National Institute for Research Advancement (NIRA). The survey report was used as the discussion paper for the commemorative symposium of the founding of the Japan Foundation's Center for Global Partnership (CGP) and was intended to serve as a guide for the CGP's future activities.

JCIE commenced *A Survey on Inter-Parliamentary and Political Leaders Exchanges between the United States and Japan* [Nichibei Gikai Seiji Shidousha Koryu ni kansuru Chosa] in 1993 through a grant from the CGP and published the findings in 1994. The approximately 290-page report provides a comprehensive picture of the situation up to 1993, with general remarks covering shifts to date and the current state of exchange between US and Japanese political leaders, exchange between political leaders at the state and regional level, and the future outlook with conclusions. It also includes a detailed discussion of 1) legislation of formal parliamentary exchange; 2) programs for parliamentary actors, political leaders at the regional level, and congressional staff, among others; 3) political party exchange; and 4) a list of grants made for political exchange by the CGP, The Japan-United States Friendship Commission, and the United States-Japan Foundation.

In 1996, JCIE engaged in a joint research project on "The Role of Politics in a New Era" and produced *Power Shuffles and Policy Process*, and survey research through the *Study on Political Campaign Finance in the United States* [Beikoku no Seiji Shikin ni kansuru Chosa]. The latter, on consignment in two stages from the Federation of Electric Power Companies, was motivated by a wish to understand how political funding is managed in the US, in light of Keidanren's decision to suspend political contributions. A US-Japan comparative research project on "How Electoral Reform Boomeranged: Continuity in Japanese Campaign Style" [Tenkan wo Semarareru Kokunai Seiji] and collaborative international research on "The Japan-US Alliance: New Challenges for the 21st Century" [Nichibei Kankei Sai-Teigi] were both conducted in 1998. A research group of young national parliamentarians from both the US and Japan was launched in 2000 to study "New Perspectives on U.S.-Japan Relations".

In 2003, the current state of US-Japan exchange was once again reviewed in a survey called *Nichibei Koryu no Genjo Chosa 2003* conducted as part of a call for projects commemorating 150 years of US-Japan exchange, this time also including grassroots exchange.

A survey report on *An Outline of US-China Intellectual Exchange and Dialogue* [Beichukan no Chiteki Koryu—Taiwa no Gaiyo] was conducted in 2007. In the late 1990s, many US intellectuals began to talk about US-China relations being the most important bilateral relationship in US foreign affairs going forward. China became the highest priority

in research themes at many think tanks and occupied top spot in the diplomacy agenda. With this US focus on China, implementing US-Japan exchange became a major issue in the new millennium. It was against this backdrop in 2007 that JCIE was consigned a research project on “The Current State of US-Japan Bilateral Exchange” [Nichibei Nikokukan Koryu no Genjo] by The United States-Japan Conference on Cultural and Educational Interchange (CULCON).

JCIE launched an independent research project in 2009 into “Reinvigorating US-Japan Policy Dialogue and Study” [Teitai suru Nichibei Seisaku Taiwa—Kenkyu to Sai-Kasseika no Sho-Hosaku] and the resulting report was the discussion paper for the New Shinoda Conference held in February 2011. This research project came about at a time when institutional support for maintaining US-Japan exchange programs was weakening and there was increased awareness of the need to find ways to improve the situation. The report is composed of 1) a chronology of the development of US-Japan policy dialogue and research; 2) the current state and trends in policy dialogue and research; 3) conclusions; and 4) references. The report rang alarm bells on the grave impact to bilateral relations of the deterioration of governmental, bureaucratic, and private channels for dialogue in the two countries, prompting passionate debate among the US and Japanese parliamentarians and other participants at the New Shimoda Conference.

The “Vacuum of Political Leadership (Looking for Leadership: The Dilemma of Political Leadership in Japan)” research project was launched in 2011. Trust of Japan from the international community was deteriorating with the constant turnover of prime ministers each serving less than one year, with some even saying that policy discussions would become impossible before long. A joint research team of young academics and national parliamentarians was formed to try and find the source of the problem in Japan’s legislative system after which they visited the US to present their findings and engage in discussions with US congresspeople and think tank representatives.

JCIE received a grant from the CGP in 2016 to conduct a survey on the present situation in *US-Japan Exchange* [Nichibei Koryu no Genjo Chosa], the findings of which served as a discussion paper for the June 2016 CULCON Conference. As a result, JCIE was charged with creating a task force to deal with 1) the construction of human networks to carry out US-Japan relations, and 2) cultivation of the leaders of the next generation. To provide a reference point for those measures, JCIE needed to identify necessary elements for strengthening US-Japan relations, and we were able to provide recommendations from various angles based on all our experiences to date.

## 7. Conclusion

The late Keizo Obuchi, former Prime Minister and an original member of the US-Japan Young Political Leaders Exchange in 1973, participated in more of JCIE's parliamentary exchange programs than any other individual. He never hesitated to say that "continuity is a strength... for me, JCIE's programs and Yamamoto-san are my diplomacy teachers". As an organizer, we feel very blessed to hear so many parliamentarians comment on how much they have learned from JCIE's programs. And yet, unfortunately, even now after 50 years of continuous political and parliamentary programs, the US-Japan relationship is far from rosy.

We have analyzed the lessons learned over many years to compile concrete proposals on improving US-Japan relations and exchange in many survey reports to date, but now they are outdated and we are faced with new issues. In terms of US-Japan relations, our leaders are said to have a friendly relationship, but with a divided America under the Trump Administration and a policy of "America First", even as Japan has promoted free and open international cooperation in the postwar period, friction has emerged in areas related to our respective specific foreign or domestic policies. For Japan, faced with an array of issues related to China, South Korea and North Korea, close US-Japan relations are essential for stability in the Asia. In that context, we have always believed those engaged in creating the necessary environment are politicians as policymakers, researchers who analyze and present the issues, and NGOs as the key implementers of various policies, and thus our activities have always involved multisector actors.

The objective of the activities has always been for US-Japan exchange to enable reconstruction and reinvigoration of bilateral relations through cooperative engagement with the US, resulting in a firm foundation for US-Japan relations. We believe it is about strengthening the private organizations that support US-Japan policy dialogue and research and constructing a base that is long-term and sustainable.

In that regard, I believe it is crucial that the following conditions be realized.

- Expand funding assistance
- Cultivate the next generation
- Prioritize advancements in staff expertise
- Focus on US-Japan relations through specific themes or broad perspectives
- Expand dialogue scope: search for innovative ways to attract experts outside the traditional sphere of US-Japan relations
- Approach US Congress to reconsider travel regulations on congresspeople

The key to these kinds of support measures is ensuring that, even where government funds are applied, for the exchange to be truly effective it must be independent and neutral.

Any side contributing government funding is expected to do so without politicization of the exchange.

While I am hopeful that the above recommendations will be realized, there is one more element that must be achieved. That is that all actors (including participants) give careful consideration to and make clear the purpose and specific objectives of the political or parliamentary exchange to be implemented, and further, that they work tirelessly to accomplish those objectives.

I believe without doubt that the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020 will change the state of policy discussions and exchange going forward. Exchange is about individuals coming together, building shared understanding by developing a rapport, and walking together towards shared goals. There may be some charm to exchange programs that advance mutual understanding through new digital platforms, but they can in no way substitute for exchange through personal connections. To that end, innovative efforts will be required even more than before.

## Endnotes

- 1 Yasuhara Kazuo, *Keidanren Kaicho no Sengoshi* [Post-War History: President of the Federation of Economic Organizations in Japan], p.158 (Bijinesu-Sha, 1985)
- 2 National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies (Grips) C.O.E. Oral/Policy Study Project ed. “Yamamoto Tadashi Oral History” (Grips, 2005) [This document was used as a general reference.]
- 3 Association of International Education, ed. *Genba Kyoshi no Mita Amerika no Kyoiku Vol.1* [American Education Observed by the Japanese Classroom Teachers], p.487 (AIE, 1965)
- 4 Herbert Passin, ed. *Nihon to Amerika* [The United States and Japan], (Nagumo-do, reprinted 1978)
- 5 Herbert Passin, Kinhide Mushakoji, eds. *Nichibei Kankei no Tenbo*, pp.169-178 (Simul Publishing, 1967)
- 6 Ibid, pp.202-206
- 7 Japan Center for International Exchange ed., *Nichibei Gikai Seiji Shidosha Koryu ni kansuru Chosa Kenkyu Hokokusho* [A Survey and Study Report on Inter-Parliamentary and Political Leaders Exchange between the United States and Japan] (1994)
- 8 Newspaper clippings on the First US-Japan Parliamentary Exchange Program, April 9-20, 1968
- 9 Yamamoto Tadashi & Sunohara Tsuyoshi as an Interviewer, “Shimin Gaiko no Dendoshi” [Missionary of Civil Diplomacy], *Japan Economic Journal*, May 14-18, 2007
- 10 Letter from McGeorge Bundy to Mr. Yoshizane Iwasa of the Fujibank on Oct. 23, 1971, and the Letter from Mr. Iwasa to Mr. Bundy on July 26, 1972; Katsumata, Hideko, *Watashi no ichiban nagai hi* (VOLO, 2015, December-January edition)
- 11 Newspaper clippings on the Japan Socialist Party’s Mission to US (September 1975)
- 12 *Congressional Record – Senate*, September 18, 1975
- 13 Yamamoto Tadashi, “Memo to Mr. Nikaido on the occasion of his Mission to US” , 1985
- 14 Mizuho Research Institute, *Mizuho Insight on U.S.* [Mizuho Beishu no Insaito], May 30, 2006, pp.2-3
- 15 Eric Schmitt and Elizabeth Becker, “Insular Congress Appears to be Myth”, *The New York Times*, November 4, 2000
- 16 Japan Center for International Exchange, *Survey on Japan-US Political Exchange* [Nichi-Bei Chosa Hokokusho], p. 5, (2017)
- 17 Ibid.



**An Insider Perspective on  
JCIE's Political Exchange Programs**

---



# The US-Japan Parliamentary Exchange Program: A Personal Reminiscence

GERALD CURTIS

Burgess Professor Emeritus of Political Science  
Columbia University

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF the US-Japan Parliamentary Exchange Program in 1968 was an important milestone in the postwar history of relations between the two nations. For more than 20 years after the war's end there was very little contact between Japanese and American legislators. For seven years after the war Japan was occupied by the United States. During this time Japanese government policies were mandated by, and American policy toward Japan monopolized by Occupation officials working for SCAP, the Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers. It was a position held by General Douglas MacArthur for all but the last year of the Occupation when he was replaced by General Matthew Ridgway.

Even after the Occupation ended in 1952 and Japan regained its sovereignty, a kind of Occupation mentality continued to characterize US dealings with Japan. The Pentagon exercised an outsized influence over Japan and over US Japan policy, and the State Department, especially its Japan Bureau, monopolized communication channels with Japan.

By the mid 1960s, however, Japan had experienced a decade of sustained, rapid economic growth, became host to the 1964 summer Olympics, and was admitted, also in 1964, to the OECD, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, its admission signifying its membership in the elite club of democratic and economically developed countries. As Japan's economic power increased and awareness of its role as America's most important ally in East Asia grew, American interest in Japan spread, including among members of Congress.

In 1967 some 35 American intellectual, business, and political leaders met with a similar number of Japanese at Shimoda, a small city at the southern tip of the Izu Peninsula south of Tokyo where in 1856 Townsend Harris opened the first American Consulate in Japan. This meeting became the first in a series of Shimoda conferences held periodically over the next two decades. Among the American participants were seven members of Congress that included Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield who was to become America's longest

serving Ambassador to Japan, Senator Edmund Muskie, who later served as Secretary of State under President Jimmy Carter, and Donald Rumsfeld, at the time a young Congressman who went on to serve as Secretary of Defense, first under President Jerry Ford and twenty years later under George W. Bush.

At the wrap-up session of the first Shimoda Conference Senator Mansfield proposed a resolution, adopted unanimously by the participants, to establish an unofficial exchange program between national legislators of the two countries. One of the organizers of the conference, Columbia University Sociology Professor Herbert Passin brought Mansfield's proposal to the Ford Foundation where he was serving as consultant on Japanese affairs. That led to a decision by the Ford Foundation to provide a grant to Columbia University's School of International Affairs to organize and manage the American side of this US-Japan Parliamentary Exchange Program.

In the spring of 1968, I was living in Urbana, Illinois where I had a one-semester teaching appointment at the University of Illinois. One day about halfway through the semester I received a phone call from Herb Passin that changed my life. He called to tell me that Columbia University was offering me a position as an assistant professor in the Department of Political Science and also as the administrative director of the US-Japan Parliamentary Exchange Program. I accepted the offer immediately and returned to New York as soon as the spring semester at Illinois ended. I began teaching at Columbia in September 1968—and remained on the Columbia faculty for 47 years—and took up my duties administering the US-Japan Parliamentary Exchange Program, a position I held for ten years until the Program migrated from Columbia to the New York Japan Society. The Japanese side of the Parliamentary Exchange Program was managed by the newly established Japan Center for International Exchange and its President Tadashi Yamamoto. Tadashi and I worked closely on this Program as well as on Shimoda Conferences and many other projects over the years. In the process we became lifelong friends.

Getting the parliamentary exchange program off the ground was not an easy matter. During a visit to Washington to recruit Congressional members for the Program's second conference in Tokyo in 1969 I paid a courtesy call on the crusty Director of the Japan Bureau of the State Department. He lost no time in making it clear that he was not happy to see members of Congress taking part in an unofficial exchange program with Japan. Nor did he see any value in having a "couple of amateurs," meaning Herb Passin and me, poking our fingers into a relationship that State was handling quite well, thank you.

Key to the Parliamentary Exchange Program's success was the enthusiasm of an initial core group of mostly young Congressmen who wanted to learn more about this rising power on the other side of the Pacific. Many of them later held important leadership positions in American politics, and throughout their careers maintained close personal relationships with Japanese politicians and government officials. Even now, some fifty years later, the

names of many of the participants in the early Parliamentary Exchange Program conferences are well known to people knowledgeable about American politics. Thomas Foley, who became Speaker of the House of Representatives and Ambassador to Japan, participated in the third Tokyo conference in 1971 and in several later ones. So did Howard Baker who was to succeed Foley as Ambassador to Japan. He joined the delegation in 1969 as a first term Senator, the first Republican elected to the Senate from Tennessee since Reconstruction. They and many other participants at early Parliamentary Exchange Program conferences retained a deep interest in Japan, were pivotal in recruiting other Senators and Congressmen to participate in the program, and hosted Japanese Diet members visiting Washington, and in several cases invited them to visit their districts.

The parliamentary exchange conferences afforded American Congressmen the opportunity to develop friendships with Japanese political leaders, to better understand Japanese foreign policy views, and to appreciate some of the complexities of Japanese politics. In Japan newspapers gave prominent coverage to these visits by American Senators and Congressmen, which in itself is an indicator of the absence of such exchanges before the program was created. Japanese political leaders from the prime minister on down pulled out all stops to welcome the visiting Americans. They were invited to dine at Shinkiraku, an exquisite ryotei or traditional and exclusive Japanese restaurant where geisha have been entertaining the nation's leaders, and their foreign guests, since the Meiji period. The American visitors soon discovered that no country in the world can match the Japanese in turning hospitality into a stunning art form.

Discussions at the parliamentary exchange program conferences covered a wide range of issues that were important for the US-Japan relationship. They no doubt helped American and Japanese participants better understand each other's views about trade, bilateral security relations, China, and other matters of mutual concern. But what I remember most about the discussions, both in the conference room, and even more so in informal settings over drinks and dinner, was how Japanese and American participants found common ground when they compared notes about election campaigning and constituency service.

Americans knew that Japan was a democracy, but especially in the early days of the parliamentary exchange program they had little idea how that democracy operated in practice. They were aware mostly of differences—the presence of well-organized factions in both the ruling and opposition parties in Japan and the seemingly permanent dominance of the Liberal Democratic Party, for example. It was eye opening for both Japanese and Americans to realize that they had much in common when it came to the kinds of services they provided constituents, the challenges they faced raising money for their campaigns, or the need to maintain a presence both in the capital and in their districts. The underlying strength of the US-Japan relationship is their common commitment to democracy and to choosing political leaders through open and fairly conducted elections. The notion of Japan and the United

States embracing common values can be overdone; core values that characterize Japanese society and those that are dominant in American society are in many cases starkly different. But the United States and Japan have very much in common when it comes to freedom of assembly and speech, open elections, and other core democratic values.

Looking back on my long involvement with the parliamentary exchange program I can't resist mentioning that although its conferences were serious business, they had their moments of comic relief. One of the American participants in one of the program's early conferences was a famous Senator who, had he opted for a Hollywood career instead of a career in Washington, D.C., would have been a prime candidate to play the role of the upper class handsome US Senator that he in fact became. So enamored was he of his own looks and deep stentorian voice that whenever he spoke it seemed as though he had magically transported himself back to the floor of the Senate. When called upon he would stand—everyone else who spoke remained seated—and proceed to make a statement that seemed from the portentous tone in which it was delivered to be weighted with profound significance. But it left everyone, including the interpreters, wondering what he was talking about. The Japanese listened intently, trying to figure out what was so important that the Senator had to stand. The Americans, used to his theatrics, sat there polite and expressionless, waiting for him to finish.

Except for one Senator. He was one of the older members of the delegation, a big bear of a man, warmhearted and jovial. Unfortunately, for the entire conference he managed to stay sober only through the morning hours. He began drinking at noon, picked up the pace before dinner, and didn't stop until he went to bed. He had a habit of dozing off as soon as this Senate colleague rose to speak. I have a distinct memory that invariably brings a smile to my face of his bolting upright in his chair whenever a Congressman sitting next to him or I kicked him under the table to stop his snoring.

These many years later, some of my fondest memories of trips to Tokyo for parliamentary exchange conferences are not about the meetings with our Japanese hosts as much as they are about the interactions among the Americans themselves. Late in the evening, after everything on the day's schedule had been concluded and we returned to the Hotel Okura, we'd meet up in one of our rooms, bottles of scotch would appear, and the storytelling would begin. Good politicians are almost always good raconteurs, something by the way that is as true for Japanese politicians as it is for American ones. Once started, the stories, and the scotch, would flow until late in the night.

There was an easy camaraderie among Republicans and Democrats who were on these trips. They were Congressional colleagues who enjoyed swapping stories about how they practiced the art of politics. Differences over policy might enter into the conversation, but there was none of the rancor and personal animosity that exist today. Democrats and Republicans alike assumed that compromise was desirable, and that a concerted effort was especially needed to achieve a bipartisan consensus on foreign policy.

I recall one particularly upbeat conversation at these late night sessions that captures this spirit of collegiality. The Americans had learned from their Japanese counterparts a Japanese word: *nemawashi*. The term, which originally referred to the practice of binding the roots of a tree before transplanting it, over time has come to be used to signify a process of informal consultation and consensus building, of getting things in order to provide a basis for eventual agreement. It was Tom Foley who remarked that *nemawashi* captures the essence of what politicians do to get things done in Washington, but that there is no comparable word in English. So the Congressmen that evening drank a toast to *nemawashi* and joked that when they got back to Washington they'd spread the word about the great term the Japanese had invented to describe something essential about the democratic political process. The idea of introducing *nemawashi* into the American political lexicon never took root of course but for a while you could hear one Congressman say to another in the know that what we need is a little more *nemawashi* on this issue or that.

American political culture has changed a lot since then, and for the worse. President Obama never mastered the art of *nemawashi* in dealing with Congress. Even if he had, it is questionable how effective it would have been given the Republicans' determination to oppose just about everything he sought to do. Since Donald Trump has been president, partisan differences have hardened and become bitter to a degree unimaginable to previous generations. Negative campaigning and a penchant to seek showdowns rather than compromise, to score political points rather than seek feasible if less than perfect policy solutions, have become all too prominent a feature of American political life. It is a far cry from the relaxed interchange and friendships among politicians on opposite sides of the aisle that I witnessed decades ago.

It should come as no surprise that as the bilateral US-Japan relationship deepened and matured and as channels of communication involving Japanese and American legislators multiplied, the importance of the parliamentary exchange program to the US-Japan relationship declined. There are now many opportunities for Congressmen to interact with their Japanese counterparts. The bilateral relationship has become so complex and multifaceted that interchange between members of Congress and the Diet tend to hone in on specific specialized areas of mutual concern rather than on a more general overview of the relationship as was true in the past. There is little reason for concern that Japan and the United States might drift apart and a tendency, not only in Congress but in the US generally, to take the stability of the relationship for granted. Japan is a strong ally, grass roots relations are extensive, and there is a robust trade relationship and Japanese investment in the United States economy. It is difficult to generate a lot of interest among politicians about a relationship that is as solid and where problems are as manageable as is the case with America's relations with Japan.

The Japan Center for International Exchange (JCIE), the organization that has managed the Japanese side of the parliamentary exchange program since its inception, and its American

partner JCIE/USA, a sister organization to Japan's JCIE founded by Tadashi Yamamoto in 1975, continue to support programs that bring American and Japanese legislators together. They are playing an especially important role in organizing visits by Japanese parliamentarians to Washington. In recent years the Mansfield Foundation, Sasakawa Peace Foundation USA, the Japanese Embassy in Washington, and other organizations have sponsored programs involving US-Japan legislative exchange. They involve far fewer participants than took part in the early decades of the parliamentary exchange program and unsurprisingly they do not draw the press attention that greeted those early meetings.

I look back on the fifty-year history of this exchange program and on Tadashi Yamamoto's, Herb Passin's, and my involvement in it with a sense of gratitude for having been given the opportunity to get to know so many important and admirable politicians in both countries, to have been able to work so closely and with so much pleasure with Tadashi and Herb Passin, to gain insights into the bilateral relationship, and to have been able to watch the US-Japan relationship grow and deepen and become one of the most important bilateral relationships in the world. I have nothing but admiration for Hideko Katsumata, the Executive Director of JCIE who has been with the organization since its beginnings, and the other staff members of JCIE who have worked with such extraordinary dedication to build strong programs and strengthen relationships between Japan and the United States. And I appreciate this opportunity to put down on paper a few of my memories of the US-Japan Parliamentary Exchange Program.



# Reflections on the Japan-US Parliamentary Exchange Program

CHARLES E. MORRISON

Former President

The East West Center, Honolulu

AS A LEGISLATIVE assistant to former Senator William V. Roth, Jr, early in 1974, I participated in a study trip to Japan sponsored by the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It was well-designed and educational, involving meetings with government officials and a travel week to Hiroshima, Nara, and Kyoto. I made some lasting friendships with other participants. But despite the value, there was something lacking. We did not hear non-government views nor was there much on the deeper historical and cultural context. Moreover, the program got the attention of a *Washington Post* journalist who implied it was a Japanese government propaganda trip. That led to revised Senate travel rules that remain in effect today.

I did not know at the time of the parliamentary exchanges then co-sponsored by Columbia University with the Japan Center for International Exchange that had begun some five years earlier and whose origins are described in the companion piece by Professor Gerald L. Curtis. But it wasn't long afterwards that I became acquainted with it. My boss was invited, and the program began with a Hill briefing in Washington that I attended. The briefing was done by two of America's foremost Japan experts, Professors Curtis and Herbert Passin. It provided something we staff members had missed with the earlier program—an outstanding contextual overview. It also gave an opportunity to the members of Congress to ask the questions they had without any official Japanese or US government presence. I used it extensively in preparing a memo for Senator Roth on what I thought he should be listening for and asking about during the trip.

There were other activities in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s that promoted parliamentary and other leadership exchanges between Japan and the United States, including one led by former Senator Bill Bradley of New Jersey and another at George Washington University. But JCIE provided the fullest and most regular suite of political leadership programs that played a critical and lasting role in maintaining and building the alliance relationship during a turbulent period.

It was, in fact, a pivotal time in the relationship. Japan had earlier been a defeated and occupied country whose recovery of independence and subsequent economic growth depended

on its US relationship. As remarkably successful as the Japan-US partnership was considering the very different cultures and histories as well as the viciousness and destruction of the war, the closeness the two countries enjoy today was not an inevitable outcome of history. Friction arose from many sources: lack of familiarity, trade conflicts that mirrored some of those in China-US relations today, and different expectations of each other and the alliance. The mutual value of the alliance was not as clear before the emergence of China as an Asian superpower. Japan was wary of being dragged into conflicts not in its own interests while the United States felt that Japan was not necessarily a reliable ally and it was at least partly free-riding on US defense. By the early 1990s following the USSR's collapse, a couple polls were even suggesting that the American public found Japan a foremost "security threat" to American well-being.<sup>1</sup>

## Tadashi Yamamoto as a Culture Broker

In my view, it was human agency – strategies, connections and the political will to overcome political challenges – as much as interests and values that steered the Japan-US alliance in the direction that it ultimately took. Among the many who played significant roles, special recognition should be given to Tadashi Yamamoto and the organization he founded. JCIE was, and remains today what some now call a "boundary organization;" it seeks to promote understanding across national, cultural, or disciplinary boundaries, and thus it has to operate on both sides of such boundaries. Like Curtis and Passin, Tadashi easily navigated across. With an American Mid-West education at St. Norbert College and Marquette University, he spoke and wrote fluently in English, but it was not just his language but the form of logic he used and his mannerisms that connected with whatever audience he was speaking with. As the former assistant to business leader Tokusaburo Kosaka, who led the Shimoda Conference and early stage of Parliamentary Exchange, and later became a member of the Japanese Diet, he had a wide circle of influential friends in business and politics in both countries, and his circles continued to expand throughout his life. I believe that he had met every American president from Lyndon Johnson to Barack Obama, and he had close relationships with leading Japanese politicians, including very close ones with several prime ministers.

Although Yamamoto had never been a Japanese public official or diplomat, in the context of parliamentary exchange this was more an asset than a drawback. Few parliamentarians in either Japan or the United States had been public servants, and many found civil servants narrowly focused, overly defensive of their countries, and hesitant to openly express their

---

1 Norman J. Ornstein, "Foreign Policy and the 1992 Election," *Foreign Affairs*, Summer 1992.

own opinions. Yamamoto, however, had many friends in the Japanese foreign and other ministries and made excellent use of the very best of them regardless of protocol. He was keenly aware of the limitations of government programs, and although he admired Japan's successful bureaucratically-led modernization, he deeply believed that the time had come for informed, non-governmental involvement in public affairs. In his view, the explicit purpose of the Japan-US Parliamentary Exchange program was to provide "legislators of both countries with insights into the political and economic life and issues of the other country, based not on official briefings but on face-to-face meetings with a broad spectrum of their counterparts and other leaders."<sup>2</sup>

Yamamoto knew that visiting American Congress members needed to return home reporting they had met the prime minister, foreign minister, or some internationally prominent business people like Sony's Akio Morita, and he delivered these. But he also made sure Congressional groups connected with wide array of public intellectuals in the academic, non-profit, media or business worlds. For example, Keidanren's Kazuo Nukuzawa would often provide the kind of no-nonsense, blunt but often humorous business perspective appreciated by American politicians, even if they disagreed. Asahi's star journalist Yoichi Funabashi could be counted upon to explain the webs of interactions between Japanese politics and the country's foreign policy. Yamamoto would make occasions, whether through drinks at the hotel or an invitation to his home to place these contacts in informal settings that helped move people outside the bounds of protocol and towards freer discussion and repartee.

Yamamoto told American friends that he regarded himself as a liberal. Certainly, Senator Robert F. Kennedy had been a personal hero of his. But he meant liberal less in the domestic US context of today and more in the context of his belief in the essentiality of a liberal international order. In those days, it was not hard to be a liberal and still have deep relationships with conservatives such as Donald Rumsfeld, Senator Bill Roth, or Congressman Jim Sensenbrenner. While Yamamoto was not shy in expressing his views, he was never dogmatic or dismissive of opposing opinions. His commitment to Japan-US relations was as unquestioned as his love of the Green Bay Packers. Rumsfeld once told him, "I know where you're coming from; you know where I'm coming from, but I really don't like are those people who don't let you know." One diplomat then serving in the US Embassy, he added disdainfully, "is a man for every president."

For all his talents, Yamamoto could not have conducted the parliamentary program alone. In addition to his partners in Columbia and later at Japan Society, he had outstanding backup from a highly globalized staff. When it came to US leadership programs, Peter (Hiroshi) Kamura was his right-hand man in New York, who often visited Washington and religiously

---

2 JCIE, Program Report 1982/83, p. ii.

cultivated staff level networks. In Tokyo, Deko (Hideko) Katsumata managed the very efficient JCIE program staff and was herself a valuable source of information and observations. Many JCIE staff had their own projects and they invariably spoke English fluently and had insights on Japanese society and foreign policy. In contrast to the government staff program I referred to at the outset of this essay, which had just one contracted escort throughout, JCIE had a rich, intergenerational staff supporting parliamentary and related programs.

## A Full Suite of Programs

One reason that JCIE was such an effective sponsor of Japan-US parliamentarian exchange programs was that they were embedded in and complemented by a much broader set of strategically designed and overlapping “related” JCIE programs. The most obvious was the Congressional staff exchange, begin in 1982 and continuing today. The staffs were not only connections with busy members, but resources in themselves, often with insightful observations on the local political pressures affecting the members. They were also a constantly moving target since staff turned over more quickly than members, meaning there were always fresh faces who had little or no knowledge of Japan.

Aside from the staff exchanges, a myriad of other JCIE activities reinforced the parliamentary exchanges in one way or another. The periodic larger-scale Shimoda conferences involved parliamentarians and people from other sectors in both countries. These were intended to focus on the most important issues at critical points in the relationship. Bilateral collaborative study projects also reinforced the parliamentary exchange. Young political leader exchanges, carried out in conjunction with the American Council for Young Political Leaders connected local, rising politicians in the two countries. Two binational Japan-US commissions, one for the Carter Administration, another for the Reagan Administration, involved figures in the political, business and intellectual worlds of both countries, and resulted in private sector policy recommendations on key issues. Frank R. Valeo, the former Secretary of the Senate, and I were prevailed upon to edit a book on the Congress and the Diet, looking comparatively at how each addressed important parliamentary functions. Some of the essays became background reading for parliamentarians of both countries. Over the years, JCIE has conducted many other relevant exchanges, with women leaders, African-American leaders, labor leaders, and various governors. One particularly ambitious major project looked at the relationship of every US state with Japan and every Japanese prefecture with the world. This local texture is key to understanding the positions and posturing of parliamentarians.

While these other activities added to the information available for parliamentary members, they also occasionally resulted in criticism from Congress. One US Democratic New

York Congressman wanted the Carter Administration binational commission members to meet with him when they were in Washington. The group dutifully trooped down to the House, only to find the meeting was set up as an informal hearing only so that the Congressman could berate Japan, which he proceeded to do in a 45-minute, rambling monologue. The Japanese chair, Ambassador Nobuhiko Ushiba, listened in studied silence and, to the frustration of the Congressman, declined to respond, but one of the American commission members couldn't bear it. This member, Columbia University economist Hugh Patrick, retorted to the Congressman that his argument that Japan was not a democracy because its electoral constituencies were of unequal size might be even more true for the United States, each of whose states have two senators regardless of population. It was a fact that the Congressman had conveniently overlooked.

Beyond its many bilateral Japan-US projects, JCIE also had a growing suite of regional and global programs with overlapping connections with the parliamentary exchanges. These also helped to inform the Congress-Diet dialogues. Several members of Congress, including House Speaker and later Ambassador to Japan, Thomas R. Foley, were members of the Trilateral Commission, an organization whose once Japanese, now Asian, secretariat was and still is housed at JCIE. This organization connected JCIE with Europe, while JCIE began exchanges with Southeast Asia and Korea in the late 1970s and with China after 1984. Such contacts, and the research and dialogue activities that went with them, greatly added to JCIE's breadth and enhanced the intellectual heft it brought for visiting Americans. It also gave JCIE other connections with Japanese Diet members who participated in many of these exchanges. They all fit Yamamoto's purpose—ensure not just that the Japanese bureaucracy but also its political leaders were globally knowledgeable and able to support informed, positive Japanese contributions to global governance.

## Changing and Enduring Agendas

Over the last three decades of the 20th century, the agenda of Japan-US parliamentary programs significantly changed. For the US Congressional delegations, the initial emphasis was on familiarization. This shifted toward addressing bilateral problems in the middle decade and later to exploring global partnerships. These were not distinct phases since the constant influx of new parliamentarians and staff required continuous familiarization efforts, but Japan had become so prominent in the American media by the mid-1970s that virtually all members of Congress had formed some kind of opinion of the country and its impact on the United States. What made parliamentary exchanges especially critical was that many of the American perceptions were partly or almost wholly wrong. And these were often mirrored

by the misperceptions of the Japanese politicians and publics whose news media tended to highlight the most extreme anti-Japanese statements and actions that were of little interest to the American media.

Some Members of Congress in the late 1960s and early 1970s had served in the military in Japan or other Asian countries, but most had little familiarity with it. Even those who did, like Senator Roth, had had no opportunity to return since his service. Japan's rapid economic development was creating tension with the United States, but also sparking American interest. There was a great thirst for information, inspired both by the hope that Japan would be a successful pro-Western pillar of development and democracy, and by a fear that its development was coming at the expense of vast portions of American industry and jobs.

Japan, as it rose, was also invited to join the rich man's club. It became a member of the GATT trade system in 1955, then the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in 1964. In 1967 Japan was a founding member and the leading partner in the creation of the Asian Development Bank (ADB). It seemed important to Yamamoto and his partners that the United States and West treat Japan as a truly developed, democratic country sharing similar values and problems in its development and not as an exotic culture with a distinctive set of rules. With the great interest in Japan, it was relatively easy to attract American participants in the earlier years of exchanges. By the early 1980s, some 120 Members of Congress had visited Japan as part of the JCIE parliamentary exchange program.<sup>3</sup>

By this time, tensions dominated bilateral relations and parliamentary exchanges. Japan's "hollowing" of American industries had shifted from textiles and cheap consumer goods to higher value-added manufactured goods, especially automobiles and electronics. Unlike the later US tensions with China, the vast majority of imports from Japan did not come from affiliates set up by American companies to take advantage of cheaper labor, but companies seen in the United States as powerful competitors. The increased purchasing power of the yen also gave the Japanese enormous buying power. While governors and mayors competed for investment funds, other investments became controversial including a substantial Mitsubishi investment in the Rockefeller Center in New York, Sony's purchase of Columbia Pictures, and the acquisition of nine of the ten beachside Waikiki hotel properties by Japanese interests.

There were questions as to whether the alliance relationship could even survive, but in the early 1990s, Japan entered a lost decade, and China's rapid rise, continuing into the 21st century, both altered the Japan-US dialogue, but also increasingly marginalized it. How to deal with a rising China and a complex Middle East became prominent topics, but Members of Congress were now more focused on visiting China than Japan. As wags in Tokyo put it half in relief and half ruefully, "Japan bashing" was replaced by "Japan passing."

---

<sup>3</sup> JCIE, Program Report 1983-84, p. 26. The Luce Foundation was a major financial sponsor of the Congressional exchange.

Whatever the controversies or the differences, as Professor Curtis notes, members of parliaments always found they had much to share. As politicians, they all had demanding constituents to assuage, elections to win, money to be raised, issues to address, media to manage, and bureaucrats to cajole or threaten. These were part and parcel of an enduring agenda that bound parliamentarians, like any other professional community, to each other. The differences in fund-raising, party organization, and relations with constituents fascinated the politicians from the other country. I saw quite a bit of this when I worked with JCIE in the 1980s and 1990s. In one meeting, a young, rising Tokyo politician, Koji Kakizawa, proudly displayed a campaign poster inspired by literature he had seen in the United States. With bright colors and a large image of his face, it featured a map showing the location of earthquake shelters in his urban constituency which he thought every household would save. The visiting Americans clustered around it admiringly, until one of them pointed out that he always made sure his name was displayed on any useful item. He showed the abashed Kakizawa how easy it would be to tear off the shelter map to post in the kitchen while discarding all mention and image of the politician.

## Informality and Unexpected Moments

I found it easier to meet visiting American Congress members in Tokyo than when I worked on the Hill. This was partly because I played a different role, but I think more importantly, the delegations traveled during Congressional recesses, and the members were essentially on break, away from the day-to-day pressures of their jobs and constituents. They were seeing each other most of the daytime and, despite Yamamoto's efforts to fill all their waking hours, socializing over breakfast or evening hours happened more easily than at home. I enjoyed the smaller one-on-one conversations with those who were naturally curious or had a deep interest in learning, and although I did not have deep Japan expertise, I often knew exactly the questions in their minds and what information would help them.

When Diet members could visit Washington, it was often more difficult to get the attention of members of Congress. Whether it was Peter Kamura for JCIE or the Japanese Embassy seeking to arrange appointments, Congressional members usually had little time to give to Japan during sessions or even to be hospitable. This was especially true of individual visits by Diet members who spoke little or no English. My boss was one of the few who seemed to almost always have time for visiting Japanese politicians. This was because he had developed a special love for the country and its people during his service in the Occupation forces. But some of his other staff members did not appreciate this use of scarce time. The press secretary, Jim Brady, later shot and terribly wounded while serving as President Reagan's press

secretary, would come by my desk after the visiting Diet member had left, sucking his lips and shaking his head since there was no press value in visiting Japanese politicians.

Occasionally though, Diet visits went differently from expected. One Diet group visiting Washington came primarily from agricultural districts, and we had managed to assemble an appropriate group to receive them, led by Senator Henry Bellmon of Oklahoma. Before the Diet delegation came into the room, Bellmon told everyone that he was fed up with Japanese trade barriers and was going to give the visitors a very hard time. Indeed, he began in this manner, but was interrupted by Koichi Kato, a Diet member from Yamagata Prefecture about 250 miles north of Tokyo. "It's about the family farm, Senator," Kato said.

The two words could not have had a more stunning effect. Senators were used to Japanese Embassy officials and trade negotiators citing statistics on how many more agricultural goods Japan imported from the United States than the other way around and how much imports had grown, but they rarely mentioned actual farmers. Bellmon was a farmer who had gone into politics. "You have family farms in Japan?" he asked quizzically as though it had never crossed his mind. Kato, a rare Harvard-educated politician who had been a diplomat, then explained that Japanese rice farmers in his district were typically older couples, often with one of them having another full-time job. The whole conversation took a totally different direction, focusing on how the two countries were trying to address the plight of family farmers.

Another moment that took an unusual turn occurred when a Congressional group was in Tokyo in the mid-1980s. One member had made it his theme through the whole trip to push Japan to spend more on defense. When they were meeting then chief cabinet secretary, later prime minister, Kiichi Miyazawa, who was fluent in English, he raised this question. Miyazawa, who had been foreign minister, at first tried to discuss the mutual benefits of the alliance. But the Congressman persisted, "I want to know can we force you to spend more on your own defense?" he asked almost rudely. "Probably the only way would be for you to end the alliance," Miyazawa said in the same matter-of-fact tone but with a smile, "Then I suppose we'd be forced to."

## The Future of Parliamentary Exchange

There are many more venues for Congressional and Diet members to interact than in the past and many of these are specialized around particular issues. Some would also argue that now that the alliance is so embedded in an awareness of common values and complementary strategic interests, the need for explicit, wide-ranging Congressional-Diet exchanges has declined. But I am not fully convinced.



Some of the venues, like international and regional parliamentary meetings tend to be very large and formal affairs. Since they have some of the quality of intergovernmental meetings, Japanese and other parliamentary delegations often include government ministry officials, who for linguistic, protocol or other reasons sometimes become the face of the delegations. The business focuses on drafting resolutions that become an exercise in finding the least common denominator. While this can illustrate the political interests and pressures in different countries, the time spent on such exercises inevitably comes out of quality discussions that involve more direct learning and experience sharing rather than negotiations over language.

For American members of Congress and even staff, many of the travel opportunities are official trips (Codels). These often go to multiple countries, and do not afford much time to learn deeply or broadly about any one of them. If the subject matter is too highly focused, it inhibits understanding of the political contexts, and makes cooperation more rather than less difficult. Since meetings also tend to be arranged by embassies, they focus on those the embassies know well—that is, those already friendly. Moreover, US delegations now are more likely to be partisan, consisting wholly or in large part of members from the same political party. This inhibits one of the most important functions of parliamentary travel, getting to know better politicians from other parties in your own country.

The coronavirus pandemic sweeping the globe during the JCIE anniversary year, like the global financial crisis twelve years earlier, illustrates how “small” globalization has made the world, and the importance of international cooperation among sovereign states. Recent political developments in many states also illustrate that international cooperation cannot be simply the responsibility of diplomats and international bureaucrats, but requires the understanding, support, and leadership of political figures. While it is more difficult in today’s political and fund-raising environments to get the time and attention of politicians in the same way as for the JCIE-related parliamentary programs of earlier years, much more effort is needed to find means to try to replicate some of the same functions so well pushed forward by Tadashi Yamamoto and his colleagues: broad understanding of the politics of other societies informed by articulate local voices, discussion not overly constrained by protocol or diplomacy, a focus on cooperation in addressing issues, and active efforts to continue relationships after a program concludes.



JCIE at 50: Pioneering US-Japan Political Exchange  
Vol. 1 History

October 20, 2020

Published by: Japan Center for International Exchange

Meisan Tameike Bldg. 7F

1-1-12, Minato-ku, Akasaka

Tokyo, Japan 107-0052

Tel: (813) 6277-7811 Fax: (813) 6277-6712

URL: [www.jcie.or.jp](http://www.jcie.or.jp)

Cover design and layout: Patrick Ishiyama

Translation: Lucy Takato

Copyright © 2020 Japan Center for International Exchange

Printed in Japan



COUNCIL on FOREIGN RELATIONS