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Japanese American Leadership Delegation Report • March 3-10 • Tokyo and Yamaguchi



Building Bridges: Celebrating 150 years
of the Meiji Restoration and
Japanese American History



Dinner with Taro Kono and Parliamentary Members



Our first day was spent sightseeing in Tokyo and included visits to Ueno Park and the Meiji Shrine, followed by a walk on the famous Takeshita Dori in Harajuku. The trip kicked off formally with a dinner hosted by Foreign Minister Taro Kono with a wide ranging group of members of the parliament. The dinner was a little different from past year's dinners as it was at a *shabu shabu* restaurant in the Akasaka neighborhood, but the communal aspect of the meal was a fitting start to our trip.

We each had the opportunity to meet with one or two members of the parliament at our tables and gained some initial insight into the issues we would be discussing further throughout the rest of the visit. The evening culminated in the traditional trip to *karaoke*, which after some initial hesitation, was fully embraced by our delegation. The graciousness of our hosts for the evening from Minister Kono for dinner and the parliamentary members for karaoke put us at ease before our first full day of formal meetings.



Name Surname
Editor

Meeting with Princess Takamado

Our delegation started our first full day of meetings at the Akasaka Estate, residence of Her Imperial Highness Princess Takamado. Our visit was just a few days after the celebration of Girls' Day, and we were fortunate to view her beautiful collection of dolls which were displayed from wall to wall. We all truly enjoyed our conversation with the Princess over tea and traditional girls day sweets. Princess Takamado took the time to get to know each and every delegate and their personal background. Having been educated in the U.K. and Canada and raised around the world, our conversation ranged from current world issues, to cultural and racial diversity, traditions, and sports. Her warmth and positive energy was felt by all of us. A memorable experience that we will never forget.





Luncheon with Keidanren

Japan Federation of Economic Organizations

Keidanren, the Japan Federation of Economic Organizations, hosted a lunch meeting for the delegation at its headquarters on March 5, 2018. The meeting began with opening remarks from Haruo Murase, (Chair for Keidanren's Committee on U.S. Affairs), Shigeru Hayakawa, (Vice Chair of Keidanren), Irene Hirano Inouye, (President of the U.S. Japan Council), and Sheri Bryant who served as the lead speaker on behalf of the delegates.

As the rest of the introductions were made, it was apparent that many of the attending Keidanren members had previously resided in the U.S. as employees for companies with a major presence in the U.S.

To start the discussion, an overview was provided regarding Japan's investments in the U.S. and the employment of Americans by Japanese companies. Some key points include:

- Japan is a leading investor to the U.S. with foreign direct investment at \$421 billion in stock and \$34 billion in annual cash flow.

- Japanese companies directly employ 856,100 Americans; this has an estimated total impact (including direct and indirect) of approximately 1.6 million jobs. These are high paying jobs with an average annual salary of \$84,373.

- U.S. exports of goods and services to Japan exceeded \$100 billion in 2016 with 30 states exporting more than \$1 billion to Japanese consumers.

The conversation around the table was rich with an exchange of viewpoints between Keidanren and the delegates. The common discussion themes centered around: initiatives by Japanese companies in the U.S. as good corporate citizens, the potential impact on trade relations from recent U.S. policies, the lack of investment in U.S. infrastructure, adapting to technological advancements and future workforce concerns.

There were many comments that because of governmental policy uncertainty, grass-root efforts, such as the JALD program, are important to develop and forge personal connections



for the continued strength of the U.S.-Japan relations.

The delegates pointed out that in the U.S., individual states take the initiative to pursue economic development with global companies and do not rely heavily on Federal assistance. Local control also applies to infrastructure funding with prioritization and funding provided at the State and local government levels, and smaller amounts of funding are distributed to the states by the Federal government. While Japanese companies are concerned about risk due to the lack of investment in U.S. infrastructure, U.S. companies are exposed to this risk as well.

U.S. talent has led to many recent technological research and development investments in the U.S. by Japanese companies. These efforts are targeted toward advancements in areas such as artificial intelligence, appliances and the “internet of things”, autonomous vehicles, and sustainable and renewable energy.

Other specific issues and concerns were discussed. These include competition caused by the increasing volume of internet sales and its impact on Japanese companies, Japan’s declining population and its impact on available workforce and recent initiatives to change Japan’s education aimed to broaden global studies and to gain a better understanding of external issues.



U.S. Parliamentary Friendship League

Opening remarks were made by Hirofumi Nakasone, President of the Japan-U.S. Friendship League. Nine members of the House of Councillors participated in the meeting. He stressed the bi-partisan nature of their organization and how people-to-people relationships and celebration of the 150th anniversary of Japanese migration to Hawaii and Guam in 1868 strengthen our relationship.

Further opening remarks from the JALD delegation highlighted the diversity of Japanese American experience, background, and geography that the delegation represented. This was affirmed by Natsuo Yamaguchi of the Komeito party who stated that he is proud of Japanese Americans' variety of backgrounds and that Japanese Americans have spread out across the U.S.

Discussion opened with an inquiry to the parliamentarian's view of the status of trade between the two countries in light of the changing policy directives

from the President. Councillor Nakasone noted that he has visited the U.S. many times and engages frequently with our members of Congress. He hopes the U.S. will reconsider joining the Trans Pacific Partnership. With regard to the trade deficit, particularly in the area of autos, he emphasized that U.S. car manufacturers do not market well in Japan and cars are not adapted to the Japanese market with regard to right side steering or size. He noted the success of German manufacturer BMW that specifically targets the Japanese market with their product and marketing.

Drawing parallels to the challenges faced in the U.S., the discussion turned to how Japan is addressing budget issues in light of an aging population. Former Minister of Health Shiozaki responded that there are several problems facing Japan: aging society, declining populations, and the declining labor force. To address those issues, they are looking for "dynamic engagement" by the people to encourage



women and older people to come back into the labor market. They are also trying new social welfare policies (50% supported by Japan tax payers). Councillor Inoguchi also suggested three solutions – free birth/pregnancy, free child care, free education and that these would fall under three categories:

- 1) mitigate the problems facing populace
- 2) adapting to find new ideas for a smaller population and
- 3) prevent the mis-design of social welfare programs.

The U.S. typically has two viewpoints for the cost containment for health care:

- 1) market strategies to contain costs
- 2) a more holistic approach involving greater transparency in health care costs.

Using a more holistic approach you can change behaviors to a healthier, lower cost lifestyle. Along these lines, it was noted that one of the things they are trying in Japan is "Hospital at Home" to contain costs.

In closing, Councillor Nakasone raised concerns regarding the establishment of 12 comfort women statues/monuments in the U.S. The government is concerned that Japanese students in the U.S. face harassment because of the statues. He emphasized that Japan has made apology and reparations and the issue should be settled. He asked that if we become aware of plans to erect new memorials or statues, to please inform our consul general offices.

The JALD delegation closed the meeting by inviting the Friendship League to learn more of the diversity of the U.S and explore areas outside the East and West coasts on their visits.



Meeting with Minister Yohei Kono and Ambassador Masaharu Kohno

The delegation was honored to meet with two long-time Japanese leaders. Yohei Kono is a prominent leader in Japan who has served numerous roles over many years in the government including Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Speaker of the House of Representatives. Ambassador Masaharu Kohno has held a long career with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs including several ambassadorships and currently as Special Envoy of the Government of Japan for the Middle East Peace.

The informative discussion was very candid and open, providing the delegates with a rare peek into Japan's current political environment. The three main conversation topics included the Olympic Games, Japan's national deficit, and foreign policy.

There was fresh excitement about the results of the 2018 Winter Olympics for Japan's athletes, particularly for the female

competitors. Japan is busy planning for the 2020 Summer Olympics in Tokyo and Ambassador Kohno serves as an Executive Board Member of the Organizing Committee of the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and the Paralympic Games.

Among the concerns the committee is working through is the Tokyo summer heat. When Tokyo last hosted the Olympics, it was 50 years ago and in the month of October. August temperatures will be much different and hotter. They are also faced with the challenge of scheduling to appeal to the U.S. television viewing audience, with American broadcasting rights providing significant sponsorship support to the events.

Concerns were expressed in particular over the ballooning budget expectations. The International Olympic Committee is now requiring budget reductions. The current cost estimate is 1.35 trillion yen, but it is expected that the actual amount

could grow to more than 2.00 trillion yen. Initial widespread excitement over hosting the Olympics is shifting to concern and criticism over the high costs. While other countries are withdrawing their bids to host, there are talks about Japan hosting a future Winter Olympics in Sapporo, as well as talks about hosting a World Expo in Osaka. These increasing costs and the potential for the cost of additional events were placed in the context of Japan's expanding deficit, now approximately one quadrillion yen or 10.5 trillion U.S. dollars. While Japan is currently able to sustain these budget deficits, there is concern about the financial burden being placed on future generations.

The conversation shifted to the increasing calls for Japan's militarization. As is well known, Japan's Constitution was constructed with very strict rules limiting military activity. Minister Kono emphasized that Japan has sworn alliance with the U.S. for mutual protection, and it is very important to continue that relationship. The U.S. has a duty to protect world order and has the ability to engage in war, unlike Japan.

Now that Japan has developed economically, the question has emerged: should Japan be doing more in support of the joint military relationship with the U.S.? Since the end of World War II, Japan has followed a strict interpretation of the Constitution with regard to its military. Japan is also aware of the anxiety that might be created for other Asian nations with increased militarization given Japan's history of aggression in spite of many years of self-restraint and peace.

This recent peaceful history and strict constitutional interpretation is creating a serious point for debate with those who believe Japan needs to be more actively engaged in both its own defense, and in the keeping of peace through military strength in the region. The debate in Japan is a very emotional one.

The military question is further complicated by the changing international picture. Historically, Japan had been in the position of helping China, but China has grown so rapidly that it has now surpassed Japan's economy. Compared to Japan, China's resources of both people and natural resources dwarf those of Japan. This rise to power for China is not unforeseen and is something Japan and the U.S. will have to adapt to.

North Korea's possession of nuclear weapons is complicated by the lack of state-to-state diplomatic relationships. Japan continues to seek resolution to Japanese abductees in North Korea, but has made minimal progress with little information coming from North Korean leadership.

The rise of nationalism is becoming more common around the world, which is a concern since it can become dangerous when the focus of a country is only on domestic concerns. Both men expressed concerns that military competition could escalate into a new arms race. Minister Kono is hoping that the U.S. will take leadership but is concerned by the President's unpredictability and the significant turnover in the cabinet. He is encouraged by the warm relationship between Prime Minister Abe and President Trump.

Minister Kono noted the changing world and that his generation came up in the wake of World War II when everything was a struggle due to scarcity of resources. Japan no longer remembers those conditions and what it was like to be a poor nation.

He closed emphasizing the importance of positive U.S.-Japan relations. He reminisced about his close relationship with the late Senator Daniel Inouye and how the Senator helped him as a political leader in Japan.



Meeting with Prime Minister Shinzo Abe

We arrived at the Shusho Kantei, a large open building, which is Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's principal workplace and residence where he often hosts cabinet members and greets world leaders. When we entered the Kantei, we were met with the clicks and lights of the Japan press who cover the world leader's every move. As we moved through the building you could not help but notice the vast interior architecture and all the Japanese artwork adorning the walls, including a welcoming bamboo garden atrium molded by granite and flowing water.

Our delegation was ushered upstairs along a catwalk into a sitting room where you could feel the presence of world leaders who shared the same space. Prime Minister Abe entered the room and formally welcomed

the delegation in front of the whirr of cameras and media who were summarily dismissed before our private meeting.

The Prime Minister was beaming with delight and thanked the delegation for including a visit to his home prefecture of Yamaguchi.

Prime Minister Abe spoke about this year marking the 150th anniversary of the arrival of Japanese migrants to Hawaii. He spoke about their dedication in overcoming difficulties and winning the trust, confidence, and respect of the American people, which has led to the robust alliance between our two countries today. Prime Minister Abe stated that many Japanese people, including his own relatives, moved from Yamaguchi to Hawaii.



David Ono was the first JALD representative to address the Prime Minister. He had interviewed a woman in Los Angeles who personally knew the Prime Minister many years ago before he became the Prime Minister when he lived in Los Angeles as a student at USC. She stated she was not surprised to see the level of success that the Prime Minister had reached as she fondly recalled him having the skills and a kindness for others. Sheri Bryant spoke about the emigration symposium to be hosted by the Center for Global Partnerships in Yamaguchi.



The meeting with Prime Minister Abe concluded with a photo opportunity for each participant. The meeting was covered in a press release from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.





Director-General of the North American Affairs Bureau, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

It's interesting how a conversation can quickly move from light hearted to deeply serious. The JALD dinner at Kyoto Hyoki restaurant in Tokyo was a beautiful affair hosted by Representative Suzuki.

From delicious and elegantly styled bento boxes to gorgeous sake pitchers that never ran dry. It all helped stimulate uplifting banter that was constant and enthusiastic. Conversation revealed that though we may come from opposite sides of the globe we all deal with the same challenges and joys. From the pressures of the workplace to raising a family, we are all the same.

Until suddenly a simple yet impossible question was put forth: "Why do Americans love guns?"

In a blink, we moved from what makes us so similar, to what makes us so different.

If you reside outside of the U.S., it is a question that begs to be asked. Answering it though, fully and fairly without bias, is a monumental if not impossible task.

What was most striking about that question and the setting in which it was asked, is that it exposes one of the most dynamic contrasts between the United States and Japan...violence... America has a frightening and tragic inability to contain it, while Japan has a remarkable ability to avoid it.

Japan has earned the proud title of the safest country in the world. As visitors, it is amazing to see the crowds of unaccompanied young children walking



and taking mass transit to and from school every day, while their parents have little worry they will return home safely. It's a peacefulness an American parent will never enjoy.

Last year, excluding suicide, 15,549 people lost their lives to a gun in the United States. It is a startling number for any country, much less a first world, civilized, global leader.

Even more startling is the contrast to Japan. With its population of 130 million, the number of gun deaths Japan deals with on an average year is 10.

So, when you sit on the other side of the globe and see a nation that calls itself the most powerful country in the world yet is wrought with such sadness, it does beg that question "why". As we in America know, there is no satisfaction in the answer. In fact, there is no answer, only a dizzying, maddening, tragic, stubborn, unending debate.

The sake was endless...but it still wasn't enough for such a sobering question.

Meeting with Yoshimasa Hayashi, Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology

We were grateful that Minister Hayashi was able to fit a meeting in with our delegation as the government was in the midst of budget hearings and he could be called to testify at any time. The meeting was especially helpful as Minister Hayashi represents Yamaguchi Prefecture, where we would be visiting the next day to complete our trip. He spoke fondly of his home prefecture and what he expected us to experience. Minister Hayashi moved on to speak about the Japanese education system, particularly the challenges of developing educational standards for the nation, in stark contrast to the U.S. which does not maintain a national curriculum.

Where Minister Hayashi clearly took pride was in Japan's recent success in the Winter Olympics, and of course was looking especially forward to the much anticipated hosting of the 2020 Olympics in Tokyo. He noted the challenges of both preparing for the olympics as a host, but also the importance of Japan's athletes to continue to excel on the international stage.





Center for Global Partnership Luncheon

The Japan Foundation Center for Global Partnership (CGP) hosted a luncheon at the historic and beautiful Meiji Kinenkan Memorial Hall in Tokyo. We were joined by members of the CGP staff and special guests Ms. Nanae Kurashige, political journalist with the Asahi Shinbun, and Ms. Eri Ishikawa, Chair of the Board for the Japan Association for Refugees.

We were first welcomed by host Junichi Chano, Executive Director of CGP, and then Ambassador Hiroyasu Ando, President of the Japan Foundation. Ambassador Ando stressed the importance of U.S.-Japan relations and expressed his enthusiasm for our upcoming trip to Yamaguchi, visit to the Museum of Japanese Emigration to Hawaii and the symposium on “The Japanese American Experience,” especially given the prefecture’s special role in the 150 year history between the U.S. and Japan.

Ms. Irene Hirano Inouye thanked the Japan Foundation CGP for their efforts in strengthening U.S.-Japan relations and for hosting the luncheon every year. Delegate David Inoue closed the pre-lunch remarks by introducing the delegates and sharing how our class reflects the changing demographics of Japanese Americans.

Ms. Kurashige, esteemed political journalist, talked about the current challenges facing Japan – slow pace of women’s advancement, the threat of North Korea and the importance of bilateral U.S.-Japan relations in response, and the complexity of rising China and the stresses it places on U.S.-Japan relations. Ms. Kurashige put some hard questions out there, challenging us to think about the role of the U.S. in these mounting issues.

Next, Ms. Ishikawa spoke on another challenging and complex



topic – refugees, Japanese immigration policies and the humanitarian and realistic need for immigrants in Japan. She shared the eye-opening statistic that Japan accepted only 28 immigrants in 2016 and 20 in 2017 despite receiving over 20,000 applications and talked about the hurdles created to make it hard for foreigners, even those living in Japan as workers, to become citizens. It was inspiring to hear about the

work that her organization does to assist with supporting and advocating for refugees in Japan.

On our way out, we visited the stunning Japanese gardens to admire their beauty and take a group photo.



Forum 21

The Forum 21 and JALD 2018 meeting, the 14th of its kind, was a powerful sharing of the minds of many of the top businessmen and companies in Japan, including many of the Forum's 1,031 alumni. Representing JALD's delegation on the podium were Denise Moriguchi, David Ono, and Laurie Van Pelt, along with Irene Hirano Inouye.

Founder and Forum President Shoichi Umezu opened the gathering by graciously thanking Irene and her late husband for the incredible work they have done, and are doing, to further U.S.-Japan relations. Today being his 94th birthday, he claimed it is never too late to learn something.

The overarching 2018 theme for Forum 21 was How to Re-invigorate Japan's economy. What is the key to success, and how to nurture leadership in an era of change.

Mr. Umezu's closing words were – We are leaders, you are leaders, and maintaining U.S.-Japan relations is the most important thing we can do.

Around the theme of strengthening Japan's economy, David Ono spoke about the United States and its long history with immigration. He implored the Forum to learn from our success of open borders and economic growth: be a country that accepts new ideas - it doesn't have to change who Japan is. Laurie Van Pelt spoke about the importance of innovation, and local governments providing micro-loans to entrepreneurs as an example of great success in the State of Michigan. Denise Moriguchi discussed diversity of thinking, diving deeply into the importance of flexibility, strong values, and diversity of gender, as key ingredients to long term economic success.



Throughout the speeches of the various Forum 21 delegates, the overriding sentiment was the importance of the U.S.-Japan relationship and what can be learned from each other. Among topics brought up and discussed were the following:

- The challenge of changing how Japan thinks
- The need to change from supply side thinking to a service economy
- How to nurture human skills amidst the explosion of artificial intelligence
- The importance of solving Japan's childcare issue for women

- How to get around the cultural stigma of being an entrepreneur
- How to accelerate cooperation and partnerships with U.S. companies through technology exchange and investment
- The need for “loud” leaders in Japan who can push past challenges and make the minority voice heard

The 2018 JALD class has great hope in the wisdom of Forum 21 and the ability for it to make change in Japan. We will be watching, and continuing the relationships made on this day, to support and nurture U.S.-Japan relations.

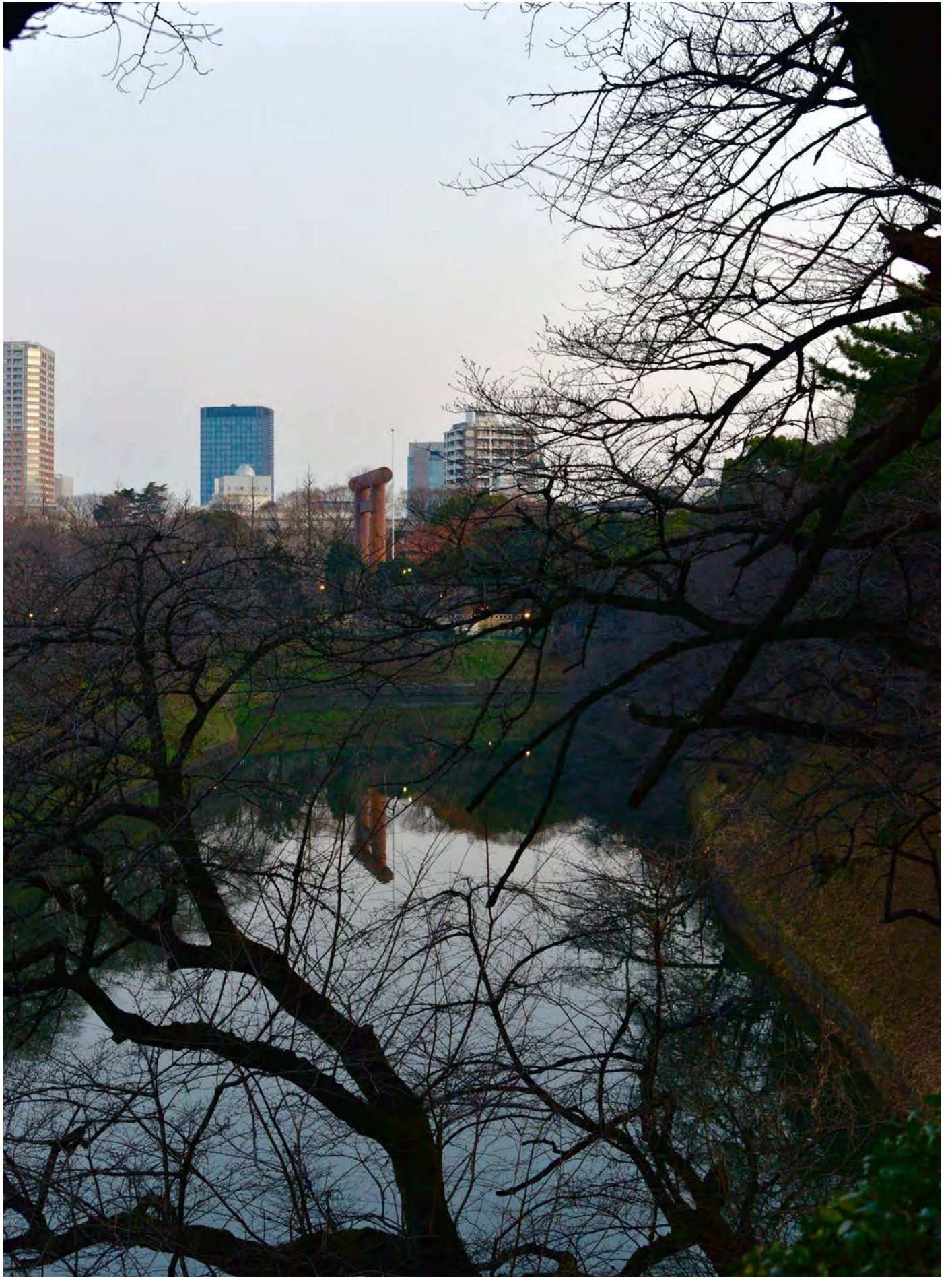




Dinner hosted by Deputy Chief of Mission Joseph M. Young

Deputy Chief of Mission, Joseph Young hosted a dinner for JALD delegates and members of the Japanese community that have established relations with the U.S. Embassy. Deputy Chief Young spoke of his experience in Japan, and particularly of his own family who lived there with him. He emphasized the warm relations between the two countries and the opportunity to host cross national events such as the dinner were a special part of building stronger ties between our countries.

This was reinforced by the wide ranging conversations at dinner between JALD participants and the invited Japanese guests. The invited Japanese guests represented a wide range of interests in U.S.-Japan relations including technology and social entrepreneurs, academicians, and other leaders in the community. The connecting thread was an interest in engaging with the United States and seeing how we might learn from one another.





Meeting with William H. Hagerty, IV, United States Ambassador to Japan

Although Ambassador Hagerty was still new to this post, having been appointed in July of 2017, he was very clear on his top two priorities, national security and improving our economic ties between the countries. He noted that currently Japan provides \$400 billion to the U.S. while the U.S. provides \$100 billion to Japan. With the recent passage of the Tax Reform Act, Ambassador Hagerty believed that it would make it more attractive to U.S. companies that had yet to invest, allowing for more flexibility under the new tax structure. He felt that the current business climate was very attractive to companies from both countries.

Ambassador Hagerty noted modification of the current immigration laws would be one way to address the declining workforce in Japan. Expanding immigration laws to allow for more higher skilled level workers to work in Japan, such as those who specialize in elderly care was one example. He felt U.S. companies should consider bringing more American workers to Japan, especially tech companies who specialize in innovation, as more people to people interaction between the countries would benefit both sides.

Also noted are the benefits of the JET program in Japan which provided young Americans the opportunities to live and work in Japan and have a better appreciation of the culture.

The Ambassador thought there were opportunities for Japanese companies to produce vehicles and parts in the United States, if they are sold in the United States. Ambassador Hagerty also acknowledged that tourism is an important industry for both countries.

The Ambassador was sensitive to the political, cultural, social, and economic issues surrounding the relocation of the Marine Corps Air Station from Futenma, Okinawa to Guam. His thoughts were important to us as our fellow delegate Monica Guzman from Guam was well aware of the implications of this planned military base relocation.

President Trump's decision to raise tariffs on metal imports was a topic of conversation as Japan was left with much uncertainty on its impact on whether an exemption or an exception would be given to their country.

Luncheon with Nikkei Leaders in Tokyo



The 2018 delegates appreciated the opportunity to have an informal and candid conversation about the unique perspectives of Japanese Americans living in Japan. Merle Aiko Okawara, Chairman of JC Comsa Corporation, amazed us with her ingenuity and entrepreneurialism. Like Ms. Okawara, leaders such as Daniel K. Fujii, President & CEO of Trust Capital and Kathy Matsui, Vice Chair at Goldman Sachs, conveyed the importance of understanding the business needs and bringing your talents to bear.

Our host leaders, including USJC Chair Russell Kawahara, partner at Atsumi & Sakai, discussed the role Japanese Americans play in light of the current Japanese economic strategy and focus. Japan's aging society and relatively homogeneous workforce demands the need for greater innovation, gender

diversity, and expanded accommodation of different working styles, as conveyed by Janelle Sasaki, Director of EY's People Advisory Services.

Over lunch we learned about each of the Japanese American leaders' careers and unique stories of their lives. Each Japanese American Leader shared insights about their lives in America and circumstances of how they arrived in Japan and what brought them to Japan. They spoke of their relationship with Japan and the lives they built since that time.

Without exception, each of these Japanese American Leaders were energizing, optimistic, and trailblazers, not only in their professional fields of expertise but also in their efforts to play a role in Japan's economic evolution.

Japanese American Leaders residing in Tokyo graciously hosted the 2018 JALD for a luncheon at the New Otani Hotel.



Meeting with Keizai Doyukai

The Keizai Doyukai, or the Japanese Association of Corporate Executives, welcomed the JALD group for a meeting at the impressive Kazan Kaikan Conference Center. The meeting space featured sweeping views of central Tokyo including the Imperial Palace and the Diet Building.

Representing the Keizai Doyukai were H. Takahashi, A. Kumagai, Y. Toda, S. Yamazoe, H. Mitsue and Y. Ishii with welcome remarks given by the Chair. Each member briefly introduced themselves, their roles in the organization as well as their corporate representation. The members represented large multi-national corporations such as John Hancock, General Electric, Deloitte, Suntory Holdings and Häagen-Dazs.

As earlier determined, the meeting format was one to be open for discussion through a question and answer format. Healthy exchange ensued on the challenges both Japan and the United States face in attracting investment, workforce development, aging workforce, childcare and parental care, industry diversification and gender. The gender equity topic garnered the most time and attention.

The distinct difference between Japanese and American corporate culture with regard to gender equity may be attributed to cultural norms. This is slowly changing but Japan has more work to do in changing the mindset of and towards women and identifying female role models. The increasing prominence of women is forcing changes to management styles and how gender roles are defined. It is expected that a growing number of men will become more

directly engaged in the child rearing process which will also have workforce implications.

Japan's need for skilled laborers and the realization of a declining workforce continued to be a common theme. The need to attract and engage millennials into the workforce is an increasing challenge given a different perspective on work life balance, and even work goals. One path that might engage younger generations is an increased emphasis on artificial intelligence/visual interpretation (AIVI).

The meeting ended with a summary of the discussion and Mr. Yamazue highlighting the importance that the our countries have as partners in trade, shared workforce, and the need for friendly relations and trade policies.

Following our meeting with Keizai Doyukai, we proceeded to Haneda airport to embark on the next phase of our trip. A quick flight brought us to the city of Iwakuni, in Yamaguchi Prefecture, where we would spend the rest of the trip. The first night in Yamaguchi was spent at a hotel overlooking the beautiful Kintai Bridge, originally constructed over 300 years ago.

(Right) The bridge provided a serene setting for many of us to walk across in the quiet of the evening and the morning and re-collect our thoughts as we had reached the mid-point of the trip.





Museum of Japanese Emigration to Hawaii

Our first cultural visit in Yamaguchi was to the Museum of Japanese Emigration to Hawaii. The museum, once home to early U.S. immigrant Choemon Fukumoto and his family, was small in size, by American standards, but filled with an enormous amount of history, knowledge, pride and aloha spirit.

Upon arrival, we were warmly welcomed by museum director, Mr. Makoto Kimoto, and several museum staff and volunteers. Mr. Kimoto talked about the early Japanese emigrant experience and the museum's history, highlighting the Friendship Agreement signed

in 2000 between the Museum of Japanese Emigration to Hawaii and five U.S. museums. Among the sister museums included in this agreement to facilitate cultural exchange and promote friendship between the countries is the Japanese American National Museum. Mr. Kimoto then produced a photo of Ms. Irene Hirano Inouye and two gentlemen signing the agreement in 2000, and then surprised us with the presence of those two gentlemen at the museum.

We then explored the museum's exhibits on the history of the pioneering Japanese emigrants



that left for Hawaii 150 years ago. These first emigrants were part of a government program with the sugar plantations and left in search of work and prosperity only to be faced with extremely harsh conditions and little opportunity to thrive. The photos, artifacts and stories together tell of the hopes, hardships, contributions, misfortunes and successes experienced by these brave Japanese emigrants.

While the exhibits are impressive, perhaps the most special part of the museum is its extensive collection of historical emigration data and

materials and the generous and knowledgeable staff that takes tremendous pride in sharing this information with those conducting searching on their ancestors. In our delegation, two members with roots in Yamaguchi worked with museum staff to locate the emigration paperwork and genealogy of their ancestors. The personal discovery of family history cannot be compared to any exhibit and was truly an amazing and memorable experience for our delegates.







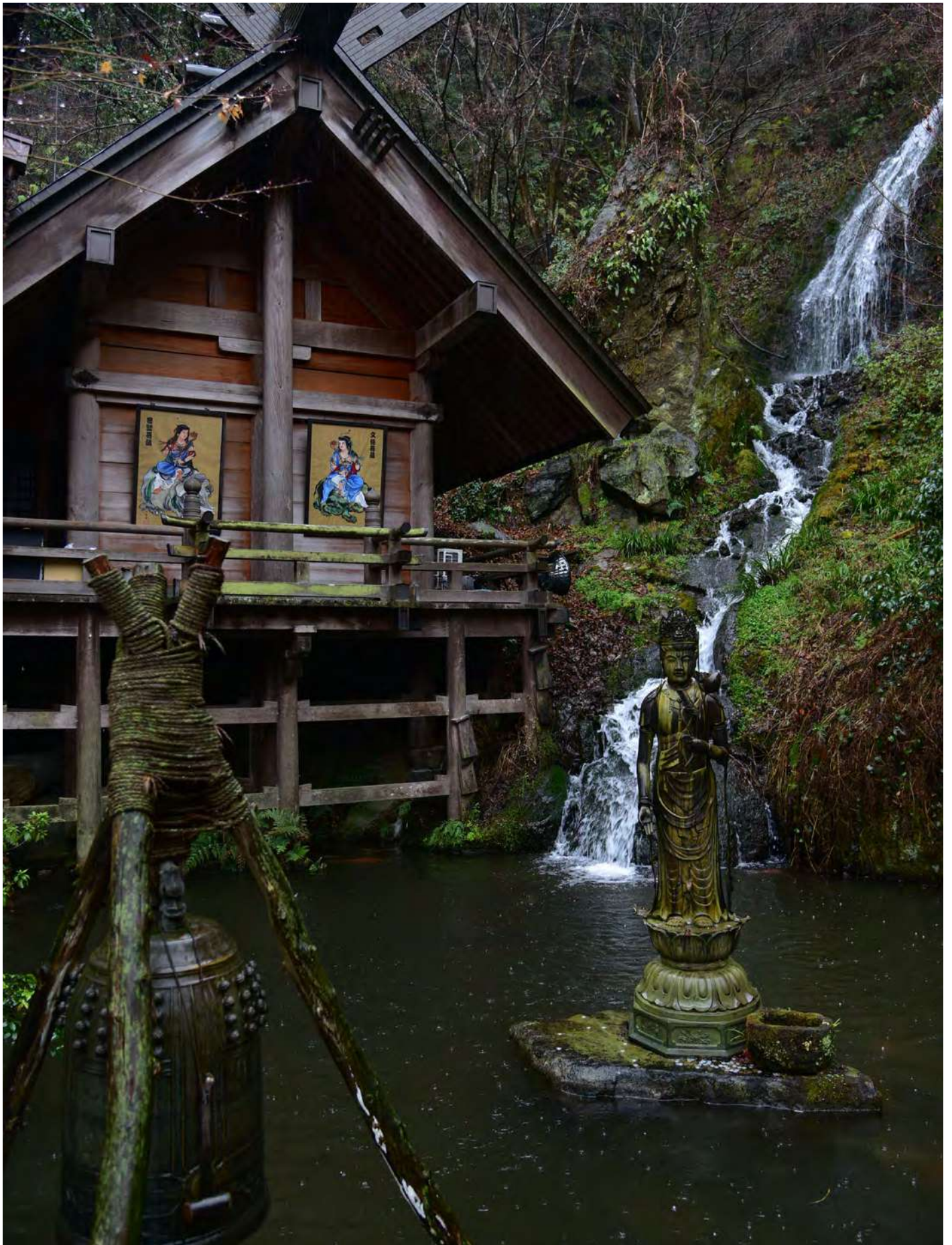
Sagawa Shoyu Factory

Sagawa Shoyu Factory in Yanai City was our second stop in Yamaguchi. The factory itself is located in a historical area called White Wall Street, which refers to a street of merchant houses. These merchant houses have a “*kurazukuri*” architectural style which features outer walls that are painted in white. This style includes thick earthen walls and large double doors. Sagawa Shoyu was founded in 1830 and continues to produce shoyu using traditional methods. Our tour guide who worked in Seattle, Washington before retiring and returning to Japan was clearly proud and very eager to share the history of *shoyu* making for this long standing business.

We walked down White Wall Street, a narrow cobblestone road, where the founders once lived. A festival is held every July at White Wall Street and goldfish lamps are hung from the eaves to celebrate the event.

Sagawa Shoyu takes great pride in the shoyu that they produce and the traditional methods used. They first start with a mixture of steamed soybeans and roasted wheat. A mold is then added to the mix and left for a few days. A brine solution is then added and creates a mixture called *moromi* and is fermented in large uncovered vats for 1-2 years in a dark cool warehouse. Sagawa Shoyu produces an even richer type of shoyu which takes an additional year to produce, called *kanro*, and is used specifically for *sushi* or *sashimi*.

The delegation clearly appreciated the time that is taken to produce the special types of *shoyu*. We purchased many bottles of *shoyu* for family and friends back home in the United States. Sagawa Shoyu also produces different types of *furikake* which was also a popular choice for *omiyage*.



Center for Global Partnership Symposium

The Japanese American Experience: Commemorating the 150th anniversary of the first emigration from Japan to Hawaii

Held in the Hotel New Tanaka in Yamaguchi City the title for this year's symposium was "The Japanese American Experience: Commemorating the 150th anniversary of the first emigration from Japan to Hawaii". The three JALD panelists all had ancestral ties to Yamaguchi. This was one of the few programs on the trip that had simultaneous translations.

Junichi Chano, Executive Director of the CGP, opened the forum by highlighting the mission of CGP to promote cultural and intellectual exchanges. This year's Symposium was held in Yamaguchi to honor the 150th anniversary of the emigration of Japanese to Hawaii. Currently in the U.S. there are approximately 1.41 million Japanese Americans – descendants of those first immigrants. Now there are Shin-Issei, Shin-Nisei and Japanese Americans are more multilayered than ever before. Ms. Chano reflected that it is important to look at history to learn from the past.

Irene Hirano Inouye introduced the USJC and its programs like the Tomodachi Initiative, JALD, ELP, Women In Leadership, AALD. Since the great earthquake in

2011 the Tomodachi program has sponsored more than 6,000 short-term exchanges between Japan and the U.S. The Watanabe scholarships provide Japanese students a year of study in the U.S. More recently, the Japan-Texas Economic Summit in May 2018 promoted prefecture/state partnerships.

Ms. Junko Nishida, Cultural Advisor at Museum of Japanese Emigration to Hawaii, summarized the history of the migration and the establishment of the museum in Suo-Oshima. Between 1885 and 1894 about 29,000 people emigrated from Japan with about 35 of them coming just from Yamaguchi, followed by Hiroshima, Kumamoto and Fukuoka. Yamaguchi provided a significant number of emigres for three reasons. 1) The Minister of Foreign Affairs at the time was from Yamaguchi and negotiated the treaties with Hawaii for sugar cane workers, 2) Yamaguchi had a lot of 2nd sons, who had little to stay for as inheritances went entirely to the firstborn son, and 3) the region had suffered a devastating flood and the war and Meiji Restoration had created significant social and economic distress to the region.

Aloha and Gaman, by Darcy Endo-Omoto

The concepts of *gaman* and aloha are the “essence and commonality of the Japanese experience” in Hawaii. Gaman refers to perseverance and Aloha, besides being the Hawaiian word for “Welcome”, also means kindness and compassion for one’s fellow beings. Due to the growth of the sugar cane and pineapple fields there was a constant need for labor, which included Japanese immigration among other ethnic groups. Under harsh working conditions, alliances between groups formed and blended which contributed to Hawaii’s vast multi-cultural heritage and the diversity we see in the state today.

For the Japanese who stayed in Hawaii, they opened businesses and churches and schools. Darcy’s maternal great grandfather immigrated from Yamaguchi. He started a furniture business and taxi service in Hawaii. When WWII broke out, Japanese made up about 37% of the Hawaiian population. Too large of a group and too integrated to send to concentration camps, they were put under martial law for three years. In 1942, Nisei men formed the 100th Infantry Battalion and two years later were merged with the 442 Regimental Combat Team made up of Nisei men from the continental U.S. The combined, but segregated Japanese American regiment became the most highly decorated combat unit in U.S. history.

From that experience came the first Japanese American politicians. Senator Daniel Inouye was the first Japanese American in the U.S. Senate. Since then, Hawaii has birthed many leaders – Supreme Court justices, astronauts and the founder of Hawaiian Host Candies - Mamoru Takitani who also originally immigrated from Yamaguchi. Japanese cultures and traditions have been embraced and blended into Hawaiian culture to form something uniquely Hawaiian. Jake Shimabukuro, the Hawaiian ukulele artist is an excellent example of the blended cultures.

Okagesamade is an important concept in Hawaii as we recognize and offer gratitude to those who came before us and shaped who we became as a state and as a people.

Japanese American Incarceration: Never Again, by David Ono

As a journalist, one of the topics that David Ono covers the most is the illegal detention of Japanese Americans and how the “never again” spirit drives American democracy today. In the rush to engage in World War II, fear replaced fairness and government propaganda not facts were used to control public opinion. The incarceration and a desire to prove their loyalty drove many Nisei men to serve in the army within the 100th Battalion, 442nd Infantry Regiment, and Military Intelligence Service. The 100th

and 442nd would become the most highly decorated combat unit in U.S. history.

However, after the war, when families were released from the camps and the soldiers came home, they continued to face racism and hate. There were few jobs and fewer places to live but they persevered. Years later, the Japanese American community began to organize and rally for redress. In 1980, the government created the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians, which began to hold hearings around the country where the World War II incarcerated could begin to tell their stories, often for the first time. In August 1988, President Reagan signed the Civil Liberties Act of 1988 to “right a great wrong”. It was important that the government acknowledge the wrong that they did so that it will never be repeated. Never again. Democracy is a courageous endeavor.

**Defining Japanese Americans:
The Diversity Within, by June
Taylor**

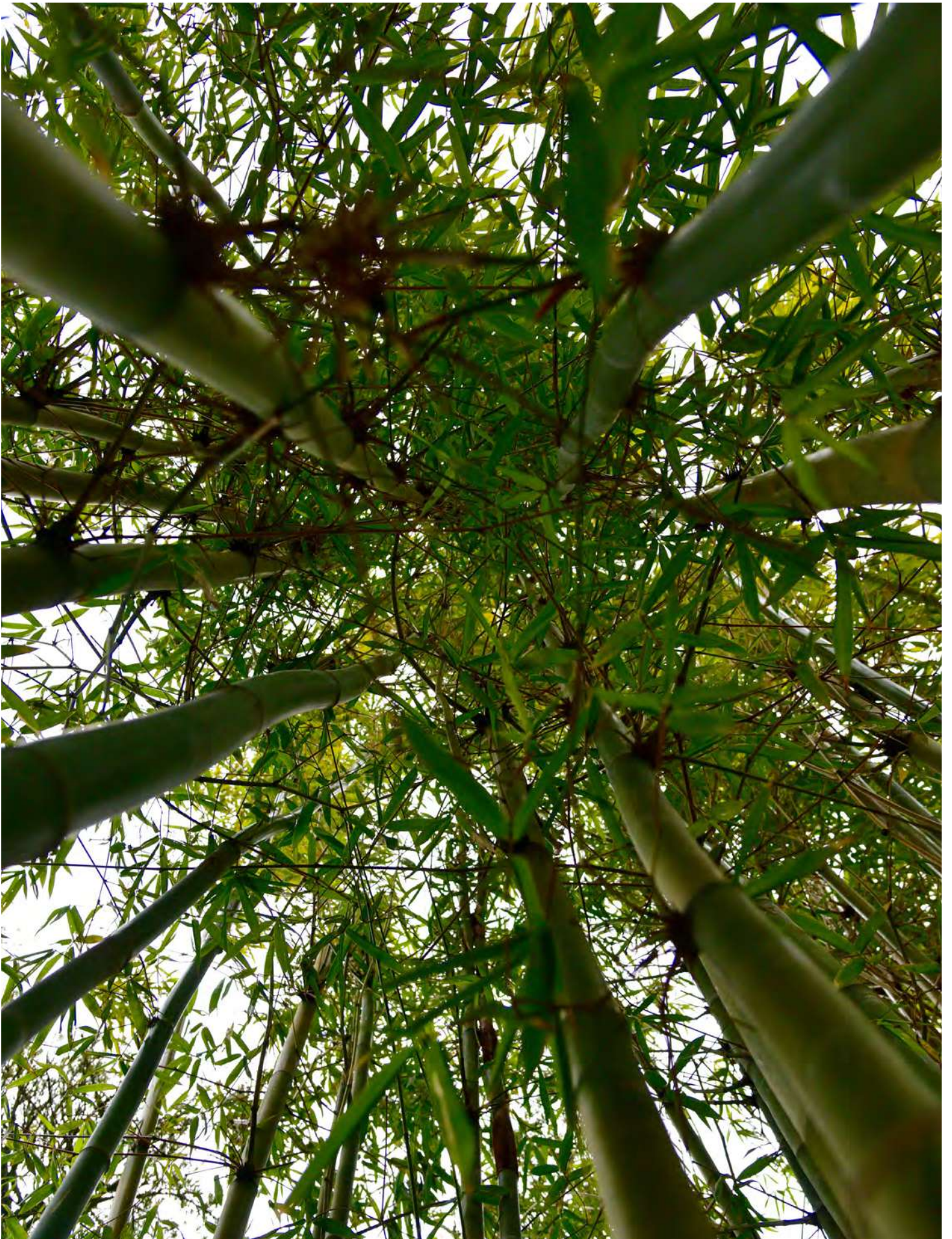
June Taylor’s maternal family is from the Yamaguchi prefecture, and her mother immigrated to the U.S. after marrying her father. As a Coloradan, she noted that the state of Colorado refused to follow Executive Order 9066. Colorado Governor Ralph Carr’s legacy resulted in a strong Japanese American presence in

the state of Colorado resulting in the ownership of several prominent farms owned by Japanese Americans.

June focused her presentation on the diversity of Japanese Americans hailing from around the country. Highlighted was the diversity of the 2018 JALD group which hailed from areas of Japanese American populations of as little as 0.33 to as much as 25 . As a result, it is difficult to claim a singular Japanese American experience as each participant has had a different experience as a Japanese American.

The World War II experience of incarceration had a tremendous impact on the Japanese American community. Before the war, 75 of Japanese Americans in Seattle owned a small business. After their return from incarceration, only a handful of those businesses remained.

Today, the Japanese American community is noted for its high levels of education, civic participation, high employment rate, and marriage to non-Japanese ethnicity spouses. Yet, despite this increasing diversity and success, the community remains grounded in the experience of the past. In the wake of the 9/11 attacks, Japanese Americans were quick to stand in solidarity with the Arab and Muslim community to ensure that the mistakes of Japanese American incarceration not be repeated.



Although we grow distant from the incarceration experience, younger Japanese Americans are increasingly curious about the experience. It is through the strength of community that we maintain this historic grounding. Sharing our culture and passing on our values, history and traditions is the key to future success for the Japanese American community.

Q&A and Discussion

Dr. Minohara asked what are the Japanese Americans doing to stand up to Trump's immigration policies? Delegates responded that some cities are actively creating sanctuary cities to protect immigrants. Japanese Americans in particular are responding from the context of our experience of discrimination. We are responding with counternarratives of how immigration has and continues to contribute to this country.

The contributions of immigrants is a lesson also for Japan as noted by Dr. Minohara and expanded upon by Ms. Nishida. Immigration might be a way to revitalize some of the intercultural relations that were a result of the initial emigration to Hawaii, and foster the development of person-to-person relations that were once more prevalent in Japanese culture.

Irene Hirano-Inouye closed the discussion by focusing on the transition that U.S. Japan relations have undergone over the years.

She noted that in fact, because of the wartime experience, many Japanese Americans drifted away from their Japanese ties. Programs such as JALD offer the opportunity to rebuild those relationships for newer generations of Japanese Americans.

Dr. Minohara concluded by noting the end of the Heisei period will soon be coming to a close. As Japan begins a new era, this might be the time to engage in a new Meiji style restoration just as the one that began 150 years ago from Yamaguchi prefecture to create a second opening of Japan.

Symposium Reception

After the incredible response to "The Japanese American Experience Commemorating the 150th Anniversary of the First Emigration from Japan to Hawaii", the JALD group joined attendees for a reception in the ballroom of the New Tanaka Hotel. Beautifully staged with extravagant food and drink, we mingled with the local people and made many new friends that night. To conclude the evening, Darcy Endo addressed the crowd, speaking to the importance of diversity in furthering U.S.-Japan relations, and thanking everyone for their interest and support.



Shōin Shrine

Under a steady falling rain, the delegation visited the Shōin Shrine site of the Shouka Sonjuku where Yoshida Shouin taught students who went on to lead the Meiji Restoration. We walked the same paths that Yoshida Shouin and his students had 150 years before and had the opportunity to sit inside one of the classrooms. It was a fitting conclusion to the week where we had experienced the modern incarnation of the Shouka Sonjuku in meeting with Forum 21 and had engaged in our own part in the CGP Symposium.



The Hagi Experience



One of the truly beautiful qualities Japan offers is its high regard for tradition. It embraces its past and holds on tight. It is a fascinating contrast to the U.S. with our constant need to evolve, change, and modernize.

As our delegation continued its tour of Yamaguchi, we visited the Miwa family, famous for their beautiful pottery called Hagi-yaki. To call them potters is almost an insult. They are artists and have been for hundreds of years as their family has created ceramics treasured by collectors around the world.

Every piece is unique, perfectly cloaked in imperfection, with bumps, cracks, rough edges, colors that meld and change with age. To hold a piece created by this family, is to touch Japan and all it stands for. That sense is brought home in a tea ceremony with the Miwas. During the ceremony, we get the privilege of holding a decades old tea bowl and drinking it's aromatic deep green elixir. We learned to concentrate less on the bowl and more about what it delivers and how it is delivered, conveying the spirit of omotenashi.



Mr. Taro Miwa is an astounding 13th generation descendant to carry on the family's craft. In fact his father and his uncle were named living national treasures. He tells us the bowl is far more than a utensil to drink tea. It is a carrier of energy. It delivers power to those who hold it and drink from it.

As we drank our tea, we could not help but be reminded of the ancient kiln the family uses, and the centuries old rice fields that provide the ashes for the clay. We can imagine elderly, knotted, gifted hands, crafting each piece with the wisdom of his father and grandfather and great grandfather...and over and over again.

The taste of the tea provides the flavor of some of Japan's finest traditions, all delivered in the simplest and most beautiful of moments. It's an experience that is a perfect metaphor for this exotic and wonderful country.

This was a day that delivered a clear lesson: beauty is abundant in this country and it is painstakingly preserved. To take the time and immerse ourselves



in this beauty, gives us a much deeper understanding of what this country values the most.

Personal Reflections



Chris Uehara **Portland, Oregon**

As a child growing up in Hawaii, I heard stories about the valor of the Japanese Americans who served in the 442nd RCT during World War II. Honor, sacrifice, selflessness were the words that my father used as he told me stories about my uncles, who became these true American Heroes.

When I arrived in Los Angeles for JALD orientation I saw the “Go For Broke” memorial tribute to the 442nd RCT. I knew immediately that this trip to Japan, my first as an adult, would be transformative for me.

JALD opened my eyes to the responsibility that I have as an American with Japanese blood to increase the U.S.-Japan relationships for future generations. Her Imperial Highness Princesses Takamado reaffirmed that responsibility in me when she spoke to our delegation. Regardless of the distance or cultural differences, Japanese leaders face similar challenges that we do in the U.S. My biggest takeaway was the affirmation and value that people to people

relationships play in our increasingly busy and complex world. We often get lost in the speed but we must always remember to slow down and build true sustainable friendships that will carry us forward.

The week in Japan marked just over 3 years since my father passed. I wish I could have shared the stories and photographs of Japan with him and all it offered me. The opportunity to see the country where my grandparents originated from is forever imprinted in me. Eventually, many of their sons became the brave soldiers of the 442nd RCT. Sometimes it's an act of bravery that changes the world. The Japanese are so dedicated in what they do in a way that Americans are not. We can learn so much from Japan.

To my teammates, the experiences, great food we ate and awful singing we shared are my forever memories. It was a privilege to go on this journey with you. Thank you to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Consul General Kojiro Uchiyama, the U.S.-Japan Council, Ms. Irene Hirano Inouye and Mr. Sho Dozono for providing me this opportunity.

I will share my experience with others and speak about the responsibility that we as Japanese Americans have to tell our story, so the dark days in our U.S. history are never repeated.



Darcy Endo-Omoto **Honolulu, Hawaii**

When I found out that I was selected to be a part of the 2018 JALD, I asked a few of my friends who had the honor of representing Hawaii in prior years to share with me their experiences.

There was a common response by all of them, “life changing!” That response did not give me any further inkling of what I would expect on my upcoming trip. They all said, you’ll totally understand what we mean after your trip.

The 2018 JALD met in February for an orientation in Los Angeles. It was our first opportunity to meet and get to know one another before our trip in March.

One thing that came up at the orientation as well as during our trip was how diverse we were as a group. We had representation from Guam to Washington D.C. and everywhere in between.

Although we all shared a commonality of Japan roots, a majority of our delegation were also rich in other ethnicities which added a broader perspective to discussions. We also had quite a few women in our 2018 delegation. Our diverse life and work experiences

really added to the meetings we had in Japan. Despite this diversity, we clearly bonded as a group and shared tons of laughs.

The 2018 JALD had the privilege of meeting with royal, political and business figures that only one can dream of. If I could analogize this, it would be comparable to the President of the United States, his cabinet members, U.S. Ambassador, Congress, the Royal Family, and Forbes Top 100 Companies. These thought provoking meetings has made me realize that as each country has their strengths and struggles, there are definite opportunities to learn from one another.

A big mahalo to Prime Minister Abe, who suggested to Irene Hirano Inouye about having the JALD visit Yamaguchi, his home prefecture. It was a thrilling experience for me as this was my very first visit to Yamaguchi, where my maternal great grandfather was born.

I had the privilege of being one of the presenters at our Symposium held in Yamaguchi, “The Japanese American Experience commemorating the 150th anniversary of the first emigration from Japan to Hawaii.” Putting together my presentation on the “Hawaii Experience” gave me a deeper appreciation of our ancestors, their perseverance, and the unique culture of Hawaii and Aloha which is the foundation for what we are today. The Symposium also provided me with a

better understanding of my fellow presenters' family experiences who lived in the continental U.S.

We also fit in some time to enjoy the arts, culture, and history of Japan, visiting a shoyu factory that was in existence for over 188 years, viewing beautiful hagi-yaki pottery and the Kintai Bridge in the Yamaguchi prefecture to name a few.

My JALD experience was indeed "life changing!" Thank you so much to Irene Hirano Inouye, U.S.-Japan Council, and Ministry of Foreign Affairs for this once in a lifetime opportunity. It has made me realize how important it is for us as ambassadors to do what we can to foster the relationship between the two countries. We can help to build a better future for the next generation.



David Ono
Los Angeles, California

As I sat on a bus while driving through Japan with my fellow JALD members, I found myself thinking about my grandfather, whom I've never met. For years my relatives in Kumamoto have told me how I looked so much like him. Then, upon visiting them, I saw the rather striking resemblance through pictures. In fact, you can see remarkable similarities in all of us through our, and I hope

they forgive me for saying this, rather baggy droopy eyes. DNA is a powerful thing. This glimpse helps me realize Japan has helped mold who I am, even from a half a world away. I'm sure the other nine delegates are likely realizing the same thing. Regardless of whether or not we've spent time in Japan, it is inside of us.

However, while we acknowledge a special connection, we also admit to being far more American than Japanese.

Japan, I've discovered, is wonderfully complex. Its people are respectful and deeply traditional. That, in my opinion, is its true beauty.

However, I've also discovered those same beautiful qualities can also be a burden when trying to evolving to the challenges of our modern world.

Interestingly, America is just the opposite. Our history and traditions don't receive nearly the same protections, but the positive byproduct of that is we are free to find new ways. We can solve problems without the pressure of holding on to a traditional identity.

I feel this "American" perspective was part of our value on this trip as we participated in discussions about the shrinking population, immigration, women in the workplace, and the search for the next great idea.

JALD gave us an opportunity to dive into and examine

Japan's deeper layers that not everyone is allowed to see, and in doing so, we came home with a greater understanding of who we are and what our value is to this great relationship. Yes, Japanese DNA is powerful, but so is our American entrepreneurial spirit.



David Inoue
Washington, D.C.

Being a *shin-nisei*, my participation in the JALD trip was even possible only because of the evolution of the program from when it was founded. Expanding the program to allow individuals such as me, who comes from a more recently immigrated lineage and who has some experience in Japan, to participate obviously benefited me, but as I found in interactions with my fellow participants, is also a direct outgrowth of the growing diversity of Japanese Americans as a community.

Geographically we represented nearly as far apart areas of the country as possible from my home of Washington, DC all the way to the Pacific territory of Guam. Notably, two places without full Congressional representation.

That geographic diversity also meant we had what were sometimes very

different experiences as Asian Americans, but also as Japanese Americans. We held varying degrees of connection to the Japanese American incarceration experience yet all shared in the affirmation that this was a central aspect of who we are as a Japanese American community.

Being of mixed ethnicity myself, it was fascinating to see the diversity of backgrounds we all came from, what our families look like now, and what they might look like in the future. And that is where the JALD trip is so important for myself, our group, and I suspect, other groups both before and to follow.

The one thing that bound us all together was our Japanese heritage. It has affected us in different ways, but it is undeniable that it has impacted who we all are and how we fit, or sometimes don't fit, in between cultures and countries. No one would ever mistake any of us to be a Japanese national, but the warmth with which we were welcomed and accepted, showed us there is a place for us in Japan and working with Japan.

Similarly, in our own country, we often face the challenge of how we are perceived. It is similarly impossible to separate ourselves from our Japanese, or more broadly, Asian heritage. The obvious, and polar reactions are either to reject our Japanese heritage, and seek to be as "American" as possible, or to embrace the role we can

in the United States. It is to my own benefit as a Japanese American that we maintain good relations between the United States and Japan.

I am grateful to the Japanese government, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the US-Japan Council for coordinating this invaluable experience and to all the agencies and organizations that made us feel welcome in Japan and helped to reinforce the importance of the strong ties between our two countries.



Shari Bryant
San Francisco, California

I love my heritage. I love Japan. I love this program. That's a lot of love. It's easy to feel that way after leaving Tokyo and the 18th year of the JALD program.

Inspiration is abound in Japan – from the art, to the architecture, to its people. But personal inspiration is often elusive - easily getting lost in the day to day of work and life. Where does it come from? As the feeling began to creep into me during my JALD journey to Japan, I realized it often comes from new knowledge.

The knowledge I gained on the 18th annual JALD trip was deeply insightful, and unexpected. From the warmth of Foreign Minister

Kono, to the wise grace of Princess Takamato, to the open honesty of former Speaker of the House Yohei Kono and Minister Yoshimasa Hayashi, I was often impressed and equally surprised. Japan knows it is facing a number of very tough issues in the future. The leaders of Japan seem to embrace this, and although the tools and methods might differ, the urgency is strong to make change.

New knowledge of my past was also a great gift on this journey. The kind people of the Museum of Japanese Immigration to Hawaii discovered the ship records of my great grandparents leaving Yamaguchi prefecture in 1907.

Digging deeper, they also provided documents of census data, return trips to Japan, and even a draft card from WWI. I was left overwhelmed with gratitude and a feeling of how little I know and how much more there is to discover about my family heritage.

Thank you to Peter Shimamoto, Kaz Sakai, Dan Okimoto, and Irene Inouye for the path that led me to this journey. Thank you to my wonderful and special group of colleagues in the 18th delegation. I think of you everyday in some small way.

I will go back. I will help foster strong ties between the U.S. and Japan. I will be inspired.



June Taylor
Denver, Colorado

It is apropos that as I draft this reflection, I am traveling via the Nozomi Shinkansen from Shin Yamaguchi to Tokyo for our return home. Like the Shinkansen, my thoughts are moving a million miles an hour. "One million miles per hour" is the equivalent of 300 kilometers per hour, correct? Fine, my thoughts and emotions are running at 300 km per hour.

When we started this trip just a few short days ago, I thought I had been to Japan. My passport stamps certainly demonstrate my travels to Japan. I've visited Kinkakuji in Kyoto, the Peace Memorial Museum in Hiroshima, and Todai-ji in Nara, but not until the JALD trip did I truly experience Japan.

Each day has been filled with unique, one in a lifetime experiences. When would I have ever imagined that I would meet a princess? A prime minister? A foreign minister? Or members of the Diet? The conversations about policy and economics were intellectually stimulating and highlighted that we have more in common. From these conversations, I have a new lens through which to view similar challenges, such as

diversity, education, infrastructure or economic growth, that we face at the state.

It was not until we met the master potter's family in Hagi did my impressions of the trip crystalize. As we experienced the tea ceremony, we learned of the very precise and generations-old process of creating these masterpieces. I was overwhelmed that I was but one person to drink from a tea cup created hundreds of years ago, preserved through generations of tradition.

Yet after multiple generations, the family still had joy of the craft, and still continued to create new pieces and introduce new techniques. I realized that what impressed me the most about the princess, the prime minister, the foreign minister (and his team), or the shoyu master was their very deliberate and thoughtful approach to each meeting and interaction. I learned that every moment, every action is an opportunity to make an impact or make a change.

At the Symposium, I had the privilege to present on Japanese Americans today, 150 years after Japanese from Yamaguchi boldly immigrated to Hawaii. At the Symposium reception, I was most often asked about Colorado's Governor Carr and his courage to stand up for Japanese Coloradans in the face of Executive Order 9066. Every moment, every action is an opportunity to create change.

I am humbled by the immense amount of investment Japanese and Americans have made in this relationship between the two countries. At one point in the Symposium, David Ono said that the 2016 US-Japan event at Pearl Harbor reflected a culmination of a relationship where the parties had chosen peace and prosperity. It was a 60-year effort to continue to choose peace, to continue to choose moving forward, to continue to choose a partnership. I could not help but think that relationships are dynamic and must be cultivated. And I am but one just small piece of this cultivation and investment. I am humbled and recognize that I must do what I can to invest and cultivate this precious relationship.



**Laurie Van Pelt,
Oakland County, Michigan**

The Japanese-American Leadership Delegation trip to Japan was most remarkable. I would like to convey my heart-felt appreciation to the U.S. Japan Council and Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs for making this once-in-a-lifetime experience possible. I would also like to thank local leaders, Oakland County Executive L. Brooks Patterson and

Japan's Consul General Mitsuhiro Wada, for their personal support and enthusiasm. I hope to build upon this experience and the friendships that I have made by continuing to assist with some exciting new Japanese projects that are underway in our local County community.

During our trip to Japan, we spent our first several days in Tokyo meeting with many accomplished and interesting people in government and business. Many of the conversations centered around commonly discussed issues, such as: challenges presented by an aging and declining population, Prime Minister Abe's economic policy package, leadership development and opportunities for women, immigration policies, trade policies, military conflicts, and how businesses can better prepare and adapt with changing demographics and rapid advancements in technology.

We then continued on to Yamaguchi prefecture where we visited museums, temples, and family businesses with roots that go back many generations. The current and many former Prime Ministers have come from Yamaguchi. Yamaguchi is where the Meiji Restoration initiated and its history is rich with progressive leaders.

The symposium hosted by the Japan Foundation Center for Global Partnership was held on our last evening in Yamaguchi. The theme

of the symposium was "The Japan Experience: Commemorating the 150th Anniversary of the First Emigration from Japan to Hawaii". Three of the delegates presented at the symposium, and they did a wonderful job of sharing the diverse experiences of Japanese Americans since the first migration 150 years ago.

Throughout our trip the Japanese spirit of omotenashi was demonstrated with enthusiasm as our many hosts served us ocha, wagashi, washoku - all very delicious. We even had a fun evening singing karaoke. I feel that I have made many new friends during this trip, including my travelling companions who are the best!



**Denise Moriguchi
Seattle, Washington**

I have travelled to Japan several times before but my visit as part of the Japanese American Leadership Delegate was an experience unlike any other. I am very grateful to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the US-Japan Council, especially Ms. Irene Hirano-Inouye, for providing me with this amazing once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

Before we left, I didn't know what to expect and was a

little nervous because one, my knowledge of US-Japan history and politics was subpar and cramming 150+ years of history into my little brain was challenging, and two the thought of traveling 24 hours a day for one week with 10 strangers felt like a bad reality show in the making.

Luckily, the trip far exceeded my expectations and provided me with a new perspective that has had a profound impact on who I am as a Japanese American. While I am still not an expert on US-Japan history or political relations, I came away with a much better understanding of the challenges modern Japan faces, just how critical strong US-Japan relations are to international stability, and my personal ability and obligation to strengthen people-to-people relations between the two countries through my work and community.

Furthermore, while I used to think Japan looked down on people with Japanese ancestry who had left Japan, such as the Japanese-Americans, I felt this sentiment has changed and that Japan now takes pride in the accomplishments and achievements of all those who share even a drop of Japanese blood. Everyone we met on the trip, from Prime Minister Abe to Princess Takamado to our guide Mich, showed us nothing but the upmost respect and kindest hospitality, further strengthening my pride in and connection to my

the delicious meals and the karaoke visits – the most special part of the trip was creating lifelong friendships with my fellow delegates. We may come from different cities with different pasts and experiences, but our trip together and our shared commitment to giving back to our community and serving as a bridge to strengthen US-Japan relations has bonded us forever.

I am very thankful for my JALD experience and am so honored to become part of such an illustrious network that is the US-Japan Council. Doumo arigatou gozaimasu.



Lisa Sakai
Chicago, Illinois

I had talked to past JALD delegates and thought I had a pretty good idea of what this trip would be like. However, I was unprepared for how much MORE it was. Japan is not a new country for me. I had lived in Kobe for a couple of years and been back many times for work. I thought I knew Japan. I did not.

The first thing that stands out is the incredible access the JALD group is given. Prime Minister Abe, Princess Takamado, Foreign Minister Kono and Ambassador Hagerty are impressive headliners - with

the Princess leading the field. She was grace and intelligence personified. Forum 21, CGP, Keidanren and Keizai Douyukai are highly respected groups that can influence business and help shape national policy. On the cultural side, visits to Shoin Shrine and Fuso-en Miwagama Pottery become more than just tours of a temple or ceramics shop. When you get to go behind the barriers into a World Heritage site and are served tea in the tea bowls created by a designated Living Treasure, you realize that this is not your standard Apple Vacation.

Another enjoyable aspect was the split between the political, business and cultural sections. If this trip had centered around just one of those, it would have been too narrow in focus. Our trip was a deep dive into the breadth and depth of Japan. By meeting politicians, business executives and 12th generation artisans, I got to see the weird and wonderful juxtaposition of modern and traditional that make up Japanese culture. As a Sansei, I am the product of that same type of blending.

There were a couple of repeating issues that came up in our meetings. For Japan's government, the comfort women statues in the U.S. are still very much in their thoughts. They know where every statue is, and they are afraid they will cause backlash for Japanese residing in the U.S. I got the feeling that they would

like JA's to do more to stop the statues and monuments from going up.

Another issue that came up was Japan's labor shortage. There was a lot of discussion about getting women back into the labor force and opening their borders to immigrants. Encouraging women to return to the workforce seemed to dominate the solutions with options like free child care, free education and free pregnancy leave for both parents. They also talked about changing the corporate cultures so that employees had a better work/life balance. However, we did not get a chance to really talk about HOW these types of changes were going to be implemented.

Finally, the Forum 21 group projects really impressed me. Each new class takes a year to study one specific societal issue and how businesses can address that issue. I think each JALD class could do something similar. I would like to suggest that the first one (done by our class) could be "The state of relations between Japanese Americans and Japanese Nationals living in the U.S." Such a multi-city project would allow JALD participants to continue to work together, it would foster stronger ties to MOFA and it would fulfill the mission statement of the USJC.



Monica Okada Guzman
Territory of Guam

It is just over three months since I attended the 2018 Japanese American Leadership Delegation trip to Japan and I am still overwhelmed. My sincere appreciation goes out to the U.S. Japan Council and Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs for this incredible experience and allowing me this extraordinary opportunity.

Unlike previous trips to Japan, this visit fanned the flames of my Japanese ancestry igniting personal pride in my mixed heritage...a heritage that began in the Jomon period of Ancient Japan from 10,000 – 300 BC. We have records of more than 50 issei who made Guam their home during the early 1900's and today as descendants we represent a wide cross-section of our island community. We have a thriving Japanese community and an active Nikkei Association celebrating its five-year anniversary this year.

As the second Nikkei delegate from Guam to attend the JALD, the importance of strengthening US and Japan relations truly resonated for me. Guam is only a 3-hour flight from Japan and the strength of our

tourism industry was built on Japanese visitors and that has been our main economic engine.

Topics of the JALD sessions were significant. They included discussion on relaxing Japanese immigration policy as a means to address the current labor shortage and encouraging women back into the workforce. Whether it is the integration of different ethnicities in Japan or acknowledging the contributions that women can make to a growing economy, it is important to continue the conversation among both our countries

to ensure collaboration and cooperation. Having first-hand discussions with government and private sector individuals on these topics was enlightening and eye-opening.

Participating at JALD has given me the incentive and drive to further our ties to Japan. Along with Guam Nikkei Association (GNA) Chairman Frank Shimizu, we attended the “59th Convention of Nikkei and Japanese Abroad in Hawaii”. This event commemorated the 150th Anniversary of the first Japanese immigrants to Honolulu and featured

keynote remarks by Mr. Shinichi Kitaoka, President of the Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA) entitled “Human Networking After Japan’s Modernization and Migration”. Guam also celebrates its own 150th Anniversary of the first Japanese immigrants to our island who arrived on June 8, 1868. In commemoration, we will be producing a short videos for an awareness campaign entitled “Japan, Guam and Me” that will highlight the Nikkei and its contributions to Guam. We are planning an exhibition to further celebrate the history of the issei, their

descendants and their participation in Guam’s economic, social and cultural growth.

I feel that a whole new world has opened up to me while all along I know it has been a part of my being. As a Japanese CHamoru American, I want to thank Irene Hirano Inouye, President of the USJC and Consul Shigeru Kikuma for their support during the 2018 JALD. A special Si Yu’os Ma’ase to Guam Consul General Seki Izumi and Deputy Consul Osamu Ogata for their continued support for the Guam Nikkei Association.





We would like to give a Special Thank You to the people on our trip who helped make it so special: President Irene Hirano Inouye, the ever patient Kikuma-san, our amazing tour guide, Michio Akutsu and Segiuchi-san, the translators and bus drivers and of course, all the people who took the time to meet with us.