



JASC journal

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE
JAPAN-AMERICA STUDENT CONFERENCE



IN THIS EDITION

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THE 71st JASC JAPANESE & AMERICAN
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Dear Friends & Supporters of JASC,

As we enter the final months of planning for JASC 71, I would like to thank all of those who kindly supported us in our recruitment efforts this year. Whether it was an information session or word of mouth, every action taken to inform people about JASC proved to be an important contribution. Thanks to your efforts, the AEC team was able to select an American delegation filled with accomplished, driven, and intelligent individuals. Roundtable coordinators have begun their RT meetings: discussing key topics as an RT, working with delegates on their RT papers and getting them ready for JASC 71.

As you may know, this year's JASC will be held in Los Angeles, Kochi, Kyoto, Gifu and Tokyo. The AEC team would love to have as many alumni as possible meet with the JASC 71 delegation during this year's conference! A list of events open to our alumni and supporters will be distributed via email in the coming weeks. If you will be in Japan this August, we encourage you to come meet the next generation of JASCers and provide them

with guidance on how to make the most of their experience and the legacy of excellence which they are henceforth tasked with preserving. Please feel free to contact me by emailing jasc71.jmiura@gmail.com if you have any questions about events open to alumni during JASC 71.

The AEC team hopes to create a JASC experience that is as life changing for our delegates as it has been for previous generations of JASCers. This year's programming will serve to broaden delegates' perspectives, as they are exposed to various political, social, and economic issues throughout Japan. We hope that through our programming, they will feel as empowered and motivated as the JASC 71 AECs did at the conclusion of JASC 70.

Thank you again for the all of the support and for continuing to set such incredible examples as JASC alumni for generations of delegates to come.

Sincerely,

Jamie Miura

American Executive Committee Chair

The 71st Japan-America Student Conference

AMERICAN DELEGATION

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Northeastern University

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Mason Williams
University of St. Thomas

Shunji Fueki
Soka University of America

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Colleges*

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Eric Xue
Yale University



The 71st Japan-America Student Conference

JAPANESE DELEGATION

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明治大学

野村 紗里
九州大学

小俣 裕紀
防衛大学



71ST JAPAN-AMERICA STUDENT CONFERENCE

ROUNDTABLE

OVERVIEWS



RESPONSIBLE APPROACHES TO POPULATION ISSUES: EVOLVING TECHNOLOGY, LAW & ETHICS

RT Leader: Kaho Maeda

In our first two meetings, RT members discussed the direction of the RT and what they hoped to expand upon within the larger topic of law, technology, ethics, and population issues. The delegates' interests ranged from Japanese government initiatives such as Innovation 25 to addressing the aging population as well as ethical practices in highly competitive industries. Our third meeting focused on genome editing, using the CRISPR incident in China as an indication of the immediacy with which this issue must be addressed. It is evident in discussion that delegates are hoping to approach the technologies from a societal and ethical perspective, which should lead to intriguing discussion about the purpose of these technologies and as one of the delegates mentioned: why we should continue to strive to improve them. We have also implemented a buddy system which pairs Amedeles with Japadeles within our RT. Buddies will be responsible for updating each other on the progression of their respective side's discussions, while also getting to know each other; this will allow us to integrate topics from the Japanese side's discussion and vice versa. We are looking forward to a great few months of virtual meetings before we can finally meet in person!

U.S.-JAPAN RELATIONS IN THE CONTEXT OF EAST ASIA: CHANGE & CONTINUITY IN THE 21ST CENTURY

RT Leader: Makiko Miyazaki

Our first meeting focused on delineating the goal of the RT and determining the topics that the delegates hope to discuss until the main conference. While we discussed the various ways in which 'East Asia' as a region could be defined, with potential consequences on the paths of discussions taken, delegates have decided to focus on Northeast Asia for now. Delegates explored their interests including territorial issues, textbook controversies, the reinterpretation of Article 9 and its effect on the U.S. military relationship, historical grievances with China, South Korea, and Taiwan, and the prospect of trade agreements. Given the rich scholarly literature within this topic range, we look forward to stimulating discussions. As demonstrated by one delegate's RT outline, delegates seem to favor an outside-in approach whereby they assess the effect of East Asian affairs on U.S.-Japan relations rather than vice versa. While we will work to further diversify our frameworks for discussion, we are satisfied with the way in which the RT discussions are starting and look forward to engaging with them more in the coming months.

DIVERSITY: DISSECTING HUMAN RIGHTS CONCERNS WITHIN A DIVERSIFIED SOCIETY

RT Leader: Teresa Wrobel

After a slow start finding a time for all of its very busy members to meet, the Diversity RT was able to have its first meeting which focused on exploring the topic of diversity and its many facets and forms. The group accentuated that diversity does not only consist of racial and ethnic differences, it can also be rooted in various religions, cultures, sexual orientations, gender identities, political beliefs and more within a community. They also wish to discuss how diversity, especially physical and internal identity differences, play a role in how we treat one another. The roundtable has a broad range of interests they all wish to study during the conference. One member would like to use their current academic work in researching Japanese policies and history of immigration and apply that to conversations surrounding the current global refugee crisis. Another member would like to focus on LGBTQ protection policies and how American and Japanese citizens can come together to create safer environments. The roundtable is looking forward to examining their own experiences in the various communities they have lived in and consult academic articles as well as confer with their Japanese counterparts, to find bilateral solutions to human rights concerns. The group has already begun sharing various articles with one another throughout their own research.

HEALTH & EXERCISE: MODERN FITNESS TRENDS & THEIR EFFECT ON PHYSICAL & MENTAL HEALTH

RT Leader: Nathaniel Chute

Our first meeting was primarily focused on observing the connections between physical fitness and mental health. One of the main ideas that were extrapolated during the discussion was the concept of perception in the context of whether it is a healthy mind that leads to exercise or exercise that leads to the development of a healthy mind. Although we were unable to conclude with a definitive answer, future meetings will allow us to expand upon this topic. Furthermore, one of the RT members will be using this as their RT paper topic, which will hopefully allow them to develop an in-depth background on the subject that can help further propagate our discussions. Additionally, another topic that was brought up was one concerning the societal stigma surrounding beauty standards through the lens of cultural narrative. This topic is mainly focused on the US, however, an RT member wishes to expand upon the subject and include some comparisons with standards found in Japan in their RT paper. Both of these topics are incredibly broad, but they have allowed RT members to exercise intellectual and creative freedom with this topic; it should lead to some very interesting and enlightening further discussion.

NATIONALISM & GLOBALISM: SHIFTING PARADIGM IN THE MODERN ERA

RT Leader: Shunji Fueki

The "Nationalism RT" explores how the effects of globalization influence our understanding of nationalism. We have had three meetings so far, in which the delegates have shared their personal backgrounds, motivation for JASC, and their academic interests within the RT. So far, discussion topics have included what it means to be Japanese/American, the relationship between state-led foreign investment and the sense of nationalism, and the homogenization of culture through globalization as opposed to the preservation of culture through nationalism. We are planning to conduct a joint RT meeting between American and Japanese delegates in June, and both sides are very excited to see each other. As we move toward the main conference, we will organize meetings weekly to clarify and deepen our academic interests.



ENVIRONMENT & TECHNOLOGY: ECOLOGICAL & TECHNICAL SOLUTIONS FOR A SUSTAINABLE SOCIETY

RT Leader: Aimee Rodriguez

The Environment and Technology RT has been off to a great start so far. In our first meeting, delegates discussed their personal interests in the RT and potential discussion topics. For example, one delegate mentioned her interest in government responses to natural crises, while another explained her interest in technical applications to better the physical environment, such as smart city planning. With academic and personal backgrounds relating to the environment, such as the aforementioned, it was refreshing to see a willingness and enthusiasm on the delegates' part to collaborate with each other despite the differing points of interest. In our most recent meeting, the delegates were again attentive to each others' ideas. They all have an interest in the subject of applicable solutions to the continued climate crisis that all organisms face on this planet. RT paper topics were discussed in greater detail and the delegates all would like to streamline their work into a potential proposal for in-conference discussions and presentations. Specific ideas currently include agricultural resource management, zero waste planning, utility management, and international collaborative efforts to address climate issues between nations such as the US and Japan. Needless to say, I am quite proud of what my RT delegates have accomplished, and I feel that they will do very well with their Japanese counterparts and the general delegation! Their teamwork and collaborative efforts are outstanding!



CULTURE, MEDIA & SOFT POWER: EXAMINING U.S.- JAPAN RELATIONS THROUGH THE LENS OF CULTURAL EXCHANGE

RT Leader: Mason Williams

The Soft Power RT is doing incredibly well and its participants are having the kinds of discussions I had hoped they would be when my Japanese counterpart and I discussed our vision for this RT in September. In our first meeting, I heard from all the members about the topics of discussion they were most interested in. These ranged from Japanese cultural perception of half-Japanese people, to cultural tourism and the impact of media in cross cultural curiosity. I was excited by the prospects of these discussions alone but our next meeting was even more fascinating as we sought to define the terms "Culture, Media and Soft Power" to allow for more streamlined discussion going forward. Hearing the members and their differing ideas about a term as nebulous as "culture" was refreshing and I'm glad I was able to participate as facilitator. The Culture, Media and Soft Power RT experience belongs to the delegates and they continue to make it uniquely their own as our discussions continue. I am honored to be in a position to frame their conversation and expand my own knowledge on these topics; I hope to do so by listening as well as posing discussion questions to guide their correspondence.

Alumni Feature

KUMIKO MAKIHARA

JASC 30 & 31 ALUMNA & AUTHOR OF "DEAR DIARY BOY"

Kumiko Makihara (JASC 30 & 31) published a memoir last year about her son's experience in the Japanese education system. Written from the perspective of a mother eager to provide her son with the best, the story also reads as a love letter to her son, who readers get to know through excerpts from his diary. Author Amy Chua describes the book as "a beautiful and universal story of the hard choices so many women face and the depth of a mother's love." It is a must-read for all JASCers!

Interviewed by Kaho Maeda

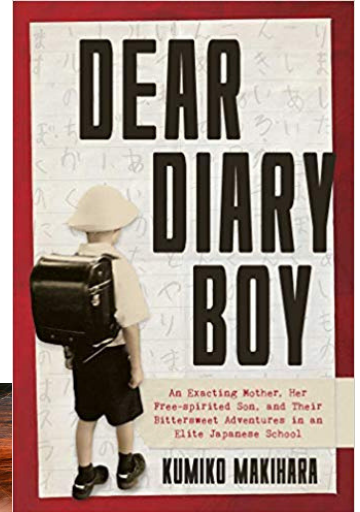
JASC 71 American Executive Committee Vice Chair

How do you think the attitude of the Japanese public towards single mothers has changed, and what kind of cultural change needs to occur for single mothers to be accepted?

I believe the main issue concerning single mothers in Japan is financial rather than about public perception. Single mothers have the odds stacked against them in a country where women earn less than men for equal work. Also, there is a shortage of day care while child support payments are not strictly enforced. The very broad issues of labor and lifestyle and laws surrounding custody and alimony need to be reexamined in order for the lives of single mothers to improve.

You briefly write about your upbringing as a girl within a Japanese household towards the end of your book. Do you think the Japanese culture continues to impose these limitations on girls, discouraging them from pursuing a career?

It was eye-opening for me to reflect on my own upbringing and realize how differently my parents had raised me and my brother. This is especially surprising, considering that my parents are very international, sophisticated and well-educated, and thus exposed to worlds well beyond traditional Japan. Theoretically men and women have equal rights and opportunities in Japan, but I believe conformism in the culture prevents social changes from being implemented very quickly. Of course women must also take initiatives to break ceilings. I feel like I obeyed my parents far more than I should have!





ABOVE: KUMIKO MAKIHARA JOINED BY FELLOW JASC ALUMNI & ISC STAFF AT AN EVENT CELEBRATING HER BOOK IN BETHESDA, MD.

What do you think the Japanese educational system can learn from the US system, and vice versa?

I saw strong points in both school systems. The Japanese elementary school offered my son a well-rounded education that taught him life skills like planning, packing, traveling, sewing and cooking, alongside academics. He was also encouraged to work well as part of a team. His junior high school in the U.S. encouraged effort and enjoyment as much as ability. There was far more positive reinforcement in the U.S. school, which I believe is almost always more effective than negative reinforcement.

"Theoretically men and women have equal rights and opportunities in Japan, but I believe conformism in the culture prevents social changes from being implemented very quickly."

Looking back on your experience that you write about in "Dear Diary Boy", is there anything that you would have changed?

I would have tried to keep a broader perspective. I felt that my son's academic standing in his school was paramount in our lives, when I should have been thinking about how his experiences were shaping his outlook on life. I should have also made it a priority that we enjoyed ourselves.

Based on your JASC experience as well as your years spent in both Japan and the US, what advice do you have for JASC 71 delegates?

Student life offers a great opportunity to test the waters in both academic fields and social circles. Experiment in areas of study and discussion that are unfamiliar but intriguing to you, and make friends with unusual people!

JASC Spotlight On STUDY JAPANESE IN ARLINGTON

CONNECTING VIRGINIA WITH JAPAN & ISC WITH JASC ALUMNI!

FEATURE BY: MIKI TERASAWA

JASC 44 & 45 ALUMNA

Last year, I, together with some Japanese and American friends in Arlington, VA, established a NPO, Study Japanese in Arlington (SJA). We supported a petition led by high school students to reverse the school board's decision to discontinue Japanese program at Arlington Public School. Our on-line petition was shared with ISC, Japan Commerce Association of Washington, DC (JCAW), and Japanese community at large in DC metropolitan area. With tremendous community support, the Japanese program is still being offered in Arlington! SJA is now hoping to increase enrollment and retention of high school students in Japanese program by promoting Japanese language and culture. We are providing free Japanese lessons delivered by native and near-native Japanese speakers in the community on voluntary basis.

Through our endeavor, I met Mr. Hiroyuki Takai at JCAW, 30th and 31st JASCer. He has been very supportive of SJA and helped us obtain a grant from JCAW Foundation! In March, SJA had a large Japan Day event to showcase Japanese language and culture to local community. We are honored to have ISC to promote JASC and Mr. Takai as a special guest. There were about 1,000 people at the event, including so many volunteers from Japanese community. I started SJA, because I was touched by the high school students who were so passionate about studying Japanese. I was so fortunate to connect with Linda and Mr. Takai as our NPO grows. One day I hope we have SJA students participate in JASC!



TOP: ISC Staff with JASC Alumna Miki Terasawa at SJA's Japan Day event in April 2019.

BOTTOM: ISC Staff with JASC Alumnus Hiroyuki Takai at SJA's Japan Day event in April 2019.



TO LEARN MORE, VISIT SJA ONLINE AT
WWW.SJASTUDY.ORG
(CLICK HERE TO BE REDIRECTED!)

JASCER*notes*

UPDATES BIG AND SMALL FROM JASC'S ALUMNI COMMUNITY



CHELLE JONES (JASC 56 & 57)

Chelle Jones completed a US Department of State Fulbright Dissertation Research Grant in South Korea. Chelle collected 86 interviews with lesbian, bisexual, queer and transgender migrants.



BEN SELIGMAN (JASC 57 & 58)

After 11 years in California, I'll be moving back to the East Coast for a medical fellowship in Boston. Hoping to meet up with Boston-area JASCers and catch up with friends on the colder coast!

DAVID SHIVER (JASC 31)

My son Roberto has just graduated from the children's Japanese program at Sokogakuen in San Francisco --maybe he will be a candidate for JASC in the future! We both enjoy our trips to Japan and are looking forward to the 2020 Tokyo Olympics!

ETHAN MATTOS (JASC 69 & 70)

After completing the 70th JASC as American Vice Chair, I interviewed with IEC and accepted an offer to be a full time English Teacher at their English School, Nichibei Kaiwa Gakuin. I moved to Tokyo in January of this year, and have been living in Kagurazaka, Shinjuku-ku since. I am so thankful for JASC for opening new doors for me, and allowing me to explore so many wonderful opportunities.





MARINA YOSHIMURA (JASC 70)

If you could paint the future, how would you use your paintbrush?

Diplomacy is art. There is no correct answer. It is a matter of style, pattern, and skill. Attending JASC helped me paint a part of the future of U.S.-Japan relations. The brushstrokes scared me at first, until I realized we could repaint. After all, we were in control of our paintbrush.

I first had to learn how to use my paintbrush before I brushed strokes on our painting that is diplomacy. JASC taught me much about the impact of national and cultural values on the individual. At first, I felt conflicted between two values. For example, *tatemae* (our official stance) and *honne* (our true feelings) resonates with many Japanese people. However, to many Americans, to be transparent and straightforward is more important than to be polite. While this dilemma tempted me to pick sides, a conference speaker asked me, “Couldn’t you just choose what’s right for you?” I thought about this. Perhaps what I thought were mutually exclusive were in fact, connected. He taught me to appreciate both values— not seeing them as a clash of cultures but as a matter of choice and personal integrity.

Once we learn how to use our paintbrush, we can— and should—create new art. Expression is an important pillar of my life. To share what I’ve learned at JASC, 70th JASC alum Koki Hori and I, together with Emu Yoshimura from Waseda University, launched an online student publication called *The Quill Times*. We believe this project would encourage students from around the world to discuss issues of our time, academically and personally. Students’ voices are important. We deserve to be heard.

At JASC, we had the paintbrush. And yes, learning to use it was hard at first. Once we learned how to use it, however, we can continue to create art. It was an immense honor to have been part of the 70th JASC, and to have been able to add to the art of our bilateral diplomacy, however small my individual contribution. The experiences, opportunities, and responsibilities that JASC gave me are humbling. The people, conversations, and site visits are the reasons why we need to pass the paintbrush to future generations. After all, art lives on.

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