

21st Century Version of Fulbright Exchange Program (2/2)

happen in any case, but if conflict is based on total ignorance, it can be disastrous. If people know each other in depth, they may become very excited on the surface, but in the end the intense discussion can make for better understanding.

Q: The United States has accepted many Japanese scholars, but it hasn't sent as many abroad. The flow has been mainly one way. So even though you may understand Americans, perhaps they don't really understand where you're coming from.

A: That's true. I do some small things, like inviting a group of about 20 American students to come here every year for the Japan-U.S. JAMS Seminar. For the first week, Japanese and American students take part in joint seminars so that they can get to know each other. After that, we give the American students a two-week rail pass—which is very cheap, about \$300—let them see Japan and then send them home.

But I have a much bigger dream. I don't think I can do it myself, but maybe someone will do it someday. It's to create more person-to-person or small-group-to-small-group contacts using com-

munications technology. Now we have satellites, E-Mail, computers and many other forms of communications. Unfortunately, they are not enough for me.

One day, maybe in the 21st century, a student at Tokyo University will be able to use communications technology to attend lectures at Harvard and take the examination with American students. Then in the summer he can go there [for further study]. Kyoto University students may want to listen to a Harvard professor's lecture more than the lectures of their own professors (laughs). Or the other way around. By means of telecommunications, they can have a much richer experience.

Also, taking the same course and the same exam would make the [students] really excited. They would have to study hard—it would give them more incen-

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tive. And even if this kind of exchange didn't improve the level of teaching and learning, it would certainly create more person-to-person contacts.

So that might be the next way—the new Fulbright Program of the 21st century.

Q: Do you think there's still a need for the current Fulbright Program?

A: Yes, certainly. But it might be better to change the way it is run. Nowadays, Japan and the United States are both technologically advanced countries and comparatively very rich. In countries such as these, I think the Fulbright Program would work better with short-term visits and a continuation of person-to-person communications.

Young scholars today will weigh between staying in Japan or going to

States and chairing a department, I think my special character was a useful addition.

That was a much later stage, however. Today, young people, particularly talented students who have no problems at Japanese universities—such as Tokyo University students who are perfectly happy here and are expected to stay and perhaps get a position—don't think of going [to the United States]. And if they do, it is only for a few weeks or months, no more. In that time they can get exactly what they want, academically speaking.

You know how much information we get from the United States. If an American professor creates a new exciting theory, within a month a book about it will appear and in six months we

can read it in Japan in Japanese. Why do we have to go and spend three years in the United States? But in my case that was the only way to meet and learn the theories of the great mathematicians I'd heard about before going there.

Also, many foreign professors come here. They don't stay in Tokyo University for a long time, but if you must ask them questions, you can wait

until they come.

So I think the style of communications should change. I don't know if I'm stating this clearly—I haven't really thought it through—but the Fulbright Program may have to change. I'm not saying that what they have now is bad—don't get me wrong. The program provides good service to many people, but perhaps they ought to make some new additions to their current methods.

Despite the ease of communications today, we are losing something. People of my generation went to the United States and made many personal friends. That kind of person-to-person acquaintance is still very important.

Focusing on Japan-U.S. Relations


In 1992 the U.S.-Japan Fulbright Program celebrated its 40th anniversary with a variety of events, including a Fulbright alumni visit to Washington, D.C., a charity concert in Tokyo, and a charity golf tournament in Yokohama. The highlight of the 40th anniversary celebrations was the national conference of GARO/Fulbright alumni held on September 18, 1992 in Yokohama.

Titled "Focusing on Japan-U.S. Relations," the conference featured prominent Fulbright alumni as panel speakers, including University of Tokyo president Akito Arima and Sophia University professor Kaniko Inoguchi.

The conference was also the occasion for the first awarding of the Fulbright Prize. Created to recognize individuals whose professional and personal lives reflect the Fulbright spirit, the Fulbright Prize was presented to University of Oregon visiting scholar Atsushi Kageyama. Hajime Kumahira, company president of Kumahira Saksaku-jo in Hiroshima, former executive director of the Council for International Exchange of Scholars Cassandra A. Pyke, Nagoya Gakuin University professor Philip Eugene Williams, and Dr. Harumi Ono, a retired pediatric specialist formerly associated with Tokyo Metropolitan Police Hospital.

the United States or between getting their degree in Japan and then going there. They want to get what they want in the shortest time and keep their position in Japan. It's very different from my time.

When I went [to the United States] as a student, I wanted to stay there and become American. Not by nationality—I wanted to be like American students in my way of thinking, quickness in learning and boldness in facing challenges. I just wanted to be American. Later, when I reached a certain level of maturity, I started to see that I was really Japanese. For the first 26 years of my life I had been raised in Japan; that of course affected the formation of my character and my way of thinking. And in some sense I was pleased about that. Even when I was teaching in the United

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