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Japan Foreign Trade Council, Inc. Visits Japanese Chambers of Commerce in Four Asian Countries

Japan Foreign Trade Council, Inc. dispatched Toshio Sampei, the Council's Managing Director, together with a member of the Council's Secretariat, to visit Vietnam, Thailand, Cambodia, and Singapore, from September 9 to 15, 2007. They visited Japanese Chambers of Commerce and other organizations in each country in order to identify issues concerned with doing business in each country, and needs that might be fulfilled by the Council.

During each visit, they explained the Council's activities and inquired about the situation and problems in each country. The visits were useful in deepening the respective organization's understanding of the Council's activities. Although there were no immediate issues to address, it was confirmed that issues to be tackled by the Council might arise in the future as the East Asian economy developed further.

The organizations visited were as follows:

Hanoi	Japan Business Association in Vietnam; Japan External Trade Organization, Hanoi Representative Office; Thang Long Industrial Park Corporation.
Bangkok	Japanese Chamber of Commerce in Bangkok; Japan External Trade Organization Bangkok Representative Office.
Phnom Penh	Japanese Business Association of Cambodia; Embassy of Japan in Kingdom of Cambodia; Japan International Cooperation Agency, Cambodia Office; Eastern Steel Industry Corporation.
Singapore	Japanese Chamber of Commerce & Industry, Singapore; Japan External Trade Organization, Singapore Representative Office.



At Japanese Business Association of Cambodia



At Japanese Chamber of Commerce & Industry, Singapore

Joint University-High-School Program with Kwansei Gakuin University and Aoyama Gakuin University: "Gathering for the Japan-U.S. High School Student Exchange"

ABIC organized the "Gathering for the Japan-U.S. High School Student Exchange," a joint university-high-school program undertaken in cooperation with Kwansei Gakuin University (July 27 and 28) and Aoyama Gakuin University (July 30 and 31).

At a time when the importance of mutual understanding between Japan and the U.S. is growing, the program's main objectives were to enable Japanese and American high school students, on whom the future of our respective countries depends, to overcome cultural barriers through dialogue and living and working together, and thus promote mutual understanding between them.

The program was supported by the United States-Japan Foundation and the Japan Foreign Trade Council, Inc. In addition, the U.S. Embassy and American Consulate General, as well as AFS Japan, a private organization for international education and exchange, cooperated in the program.

Kansai Region: Under the guidance of Professor Kanzaki and Professor Ohtaka of the School of Economics of Kwansei Gakuin University, it was decided that the program's main theme would be "A Frank Discussion on the Merits and Demerits of Japan and the U.S. as Countries and Their National Traits," and the program's slogan would be "Let's Share a Common Understanding on Japan and the U.S. and Their National

Traits!"

A total of 32 high school students took part: 21 Japanese students from Hyogo Prefectural Takarazuka Nishi Senior High School, Osaka Prefectural Minoh Senior High School, Keimei Gakuin Senior High School, and Kwansei Gakuin Senior High School, and 11 American students from AFS. In addition, 11 university students of Kwansei Gakuin University and two AFS volunteers participated.

On the first day, the participants gathered on the Uegahara Campus of Kwansei Gakuin University. Following an address by Kwansei Gakuin University Chancellor, Ruth Grubel, Vice Consul Kiser of the American Consulate General spoke humorously on "A Comparison of the Cultures of Japan and the U.S." in a question-and-answer format with the students. The students were then grouped into four teams with each team given different topics to discuss. The topics under discussion were: "Comparison of Sports, Movies, and Animation in Japan and the U.S."; "Cramming for Exams, Bullying, Refusal to Attend School, and Other Educational Issues in Japan and the U.S."; "Waste Disposal, Global Warming, Energy Conservation, and Other Environmental Issues in Japan and the U.S."; and "War and Peace, Social Inequity, and Other Political and Economic Issues in Japan and the U.S." After dinner, the students, together with Chancellor Grubel and Vice Consul Kiser, played



Presentation by teams (at Kwansei Gakuin University)



Participants (at Aoyama Gakuin University)

games to promote friendship.

On the second day, the teams continued with their discussions and prepared for their presentations. The students also watched club activities on the campus and were treated to a first-hand experience of traditional Japanese culture. At the presentation, which was moderated by Professor Kanzaki, the winning team was awarded a prize, and all participating students were presented with certificates.

Kanto Region: This program was held in Marubeni Corporation's Tama Center on the first day and on the Aoyama Campus of Aoyama Gakuin University on the second day. The main theme of the program was "Be a Messenger!! A Letter to the President." A total of 30 high school students took part: 20 Japanese students from Tokyo Gakugei University Senior High School, Yokohama Commercial Senior High School, Aoyama Gakuin Senior High School, Kanagawa Prefectural Sagami High School, and Yokosuka Gakuin Senior High School, and 10 American students sent from AFS. A total of 10 university students, five from Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, Rikkyo University, Keio University, and Showa Women's University, who had experience of studying abroad on the AFS program, and five from Aoyama Gakuin University, played a central role in the planning and running of the program.

On the first day, Mr. Masayoshi Amano, Executive Managing Director of Japan Foreign Trade Council, Inc.,

gave an address, followed by a speech by ABIC member, Mr. Tsunehiko Kawamoto (former employee of Mitsubishi Corporation), entitled, "High School Life in the U.S." After the speech, the students played dodge ball. After dinner, they were grouped into five teams and discussed topics on Sports, Culture, Lifestyles, School Life, and Food.

On the second day, Mr. Thomas Huston of the Public Affairs Section of the U.S. Embassy gave a speech in English entitled, "An Impression of Japan." After the speech, the students again grouped together into teams to compose their "Letter to the President."

At the presentation, Mr. Toshio Sampei, Managing Director of the Japan Foreign Trade Council, Inc., gave an address. Each team then gave a presentation in English. After voting by the guests, the team that spoke on the topic of "School Life" was chosen as the winner. Mr. Keiji Meikyo, Managing Director and Secretary General of ABIC, presented the team with a testimonial and a prize. Lastly, Vice President Senba of Aoyama Gakuin University, who acted as the chairperson of the program's steering committee, made some remarks in English, saying that he hoped now that the students had shared so many experiences together, they would continue to further deepen their mutual understanding of each other's cultures. At its conclusion, a photograph of all of the participants was taken to commemorate the program.

[International Understanding Education Group]

What I expect to *Shosha*

Martyn Williams
President
The Foreign Correspondents' Club of Japan
Tokyo Bureau Chief, IDG News Service



When I was asked to write this column I began soliciting opinions from fellow journalists about how Japan's major companies and corporations could better do things in their view.

The answers were varied and ranged from the important to the mundane but a common theme ran through many of the answers. It's something that I can relate to as well: open up more and don't be so afraid of foreign reporters!

Perhaps it's a fear of the unknown but we're really not that bad!

Most of the correspondents in Tokyo are very interested in what companies are doing and we'd love to report more on some of the fascinating work being done here but – at least in the replies I got back from colleagues – we need your help!

One of the greatest frustrations is getting equal access to the same information that my colleagues in the domestic media receive.

Sometimes that means getting informed or invited to events. All too often I've heard "We didn't invite foreign media because we thought they wouldn't be interested." To that I say, why not invite them and let them decide if it makes the news or not.

There's nothing more annoying than reading about a press conference, factory tour, shop opening or other event that took place earlier in the day about which you knew nothing. It means a round of telephone calls to ask questions and get information that could all have been gathered at the event. It not only makes a reporter's job more difficult but it adds work to the company's public relations staff.

Other times that means getting prompt access to information disseminated to local media. Once information is released it should ideally be made available to all media at the same time. Put it up on the Web site immediately, don't wait hours, and certainly don't try to hold it back.

A big topic of discussion among journalists today is the changing industry in which we work. In today's world there is no such thing as local news. Everything

becomes international news the moment it hits the Internet.

This is being driven by bloggers, who are giving mainstream media a run for their money sometimes, and the economics of online media, who operate for a fraction of the cost that a major media outlet invests in covering a country.

The wave hasn't hit Japan's domestic media yet but international coverage of companies here is already being affected by it. There are many online journalists that check news from Japan each day and write stories without even being here. Some of them don't even speak Japanese and employ computer-assisted translation software to cut through the mass of kanji on a Web site.

The result on foreign correspondents is increasing pressure from our editors back home to find more interesting stories, more unique views on what's happening and to report more on the things that makes Japan tick – not just recycle company press releases and news conferences.

Japan's corporations can help us considerably in this endeavor by understanding the pressures of the global news business, by opening up to more interviews, by allowing more visits to offices and factories, and by keeping us informed about what's happening.

On a personal level I'm fortunate to say that a great many of the people I work with at Japanese corporations are helpful and often go the extra mile to help me get my job done. They know me well and they know my audience and it's a pleasure to work together with them.

At the end of the day the stories we are writing raise the profile of Japanese companies back in our home countries. Of course we're not always writing good news but myself and my colleagues strive to be fair. If you've done something wrong expect us to report it but also look to us to report on the many positive things that Japanese companies are doing. From the world-leading research and development to innovative products, high levels of customer service and increasingly transparent management.

JFTC MONTHLY BULLETIN ON-LINE — Titles

JFTC publishes monthly bulletin covering wide variety of topics for the members and subscribers.
The following contents are available from the website (<http://www.jftc.or.jp>) though written in Japanese.

From September Issue

1. Foreword: "Perspective of the United States Economy" ... Susumu Kato, Vice Chairman of JFTC, President & CEO, Sumitomo Corporation
2. Special Articles: "Activity of the Shosha's Young Employees"
 - "Effective Use of the Elder Shosha Men's Experience"
 - ... Masamichi Toyama, Chairman, Smiles Corporation (Mitsubishi Corporation)
 - ... Kenichi Kurimoto, Representative Director, Nagase Filter Corporation (Nagase & Co., Ltd.)
 - "Resident Report from Indonesia" ... Kenyu Okawara, Kanematsu Trading, Indonesia Private Ltd.
 - "Story of the Young Employees' Experience"
 - ... Masaki Okahata, Public Relations Dept., Sojitz Corporation
 - ... Kentaro Yoshizawa, Business Unit 1, Urethane Materials Dept., Chemical, Electronics Business, Chori Co., Ltd.
 - ... Yuta Tanaka, Log & Lumber Dept. Sec.2, Hanwa Co., Ltd.
 - "Messages to the Young Employees" ... Seiichi Tanaka, Chairman, Human Resources Committee, Managing Officer, General Manager, Human Resources & General Affairs Division, Mitsui & Co., Ltd.
 - "To Fill the Intellectual Gaps between the New Employees and the Managers"
 - ... Sachiko Yamato, Chief of Public Relations, Business Planning Department
 - "What are the Young Employees' Sense of Values, and What are Needed for the Boss as a Leader?"
 - ... Takao Maekawa, Editor in Chief, Media Produce Dept., New Graduate Company/Metropolitan
3. Expectations for the Shosha: "How Japan's Corporations Could Do Well with Foreign Correspondents?"
 - ... Martyn Williams, President, The Foreign Correspondents' Club of Japan, Tokyo Bureau Chief, IDG News Service
4. International Letter: "Shosha Man's Viewpoint from India" ... Naoki Tsuda, President, Marubeni India Private. Ltd.

From October Issue

1. Foreword: "Japanese Agriculture and Trade" ... Masaaki Furukawa, Vice Chairman of JFTC, Chairman, Toyota Tsusho Corporation
2. Special Articles: "Japan in Asia—Competition and Integration"
 - "Coexistence and Co-creation with Asia" ... Toru Nakakita, Chairman and Professor, Graduate School of Economics, Toyo University, Deputy President of the Strategic Council on Asian Gateway Initiative
 - "Promotion of Economic Integration to Utilize Asian Growth and Energy"
 - ... Shujiro Urata, Professor of International Economics, Graduate School of Asia-Pacific Studies, Waseda University
 - "Policy for Developing and Admitting Human Resources in East Asia" ... Kazuhiro Morimoto, Counselor, in charge of Human Resources Development Policy, Economic and Industrial Bureau Ministry of Economy, Trade, and Industry
 - "To Increase Foreign Direct Investment toward Japan"
 - ... Shuji Miyazaki, President, Manufactured Imports and Investment Promotion Organization
 - "Investment Strategy of Asian Corporations toward Japan and Japanese Effective Measure for Attracting Foreign Investment"
 - ... Zhu Yan, Senior Fellow, Economic Research Center, Fujitsu Research Institute
- Strengthening International Logistic Function – Idealized Vision for Japan as a Trading Nation
 - "To Enhance International Competitiveness – Adjustment for Global Standard" ... Yoshiaki Hirata, International Logistics Advisor
 - "Various Issues Related to International Trading Systems – In line with Asian Gateway Initiative 'Program for Reforming Trading Application Procedure'" ... Hiroyuki Sato, Director of Board and General Manager, Planning Group, Japan Foreign Trade Council, Inc
 - "Enhancement of International Competitiveness of based Airport and Harbor of Japan"
 - ... Hideaki Kondo, Director of Board and General Manager, Planning and Research Group, Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry
 - "Visiting International Logistics Site in Northeast Asia" ... Hirokazu Yokomizo, Manager, Planning Group, Japan Foreign Trade Council, Inc
3. The Angles: "Environmental Transformation of China's Processing Trade and Change in Industrial Structures of Chu Kiang Area"
 - ... Kazuko Inoue, Senior Economist, China Center for Economy, Mitsui Global Strategic Studies Institute
4. International Letter: "Latest Circumstances of Thailand" ... Yoichi Kimura, President, Sumikin Bussan Thailand Private. Ltd.
5. Zoom-up: "How to Become a Merchant" ... Mari Tanaka, Chief, Sales 1st Dept., Sojitz GMC Corporation

What is "SHOSHA"?

SHOSHA is consistently changing to meet the requirements of each era. Its function, activities and vision are explained in detail in English at <http://www.jftc.or.jp/shosha/english/index.html>

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