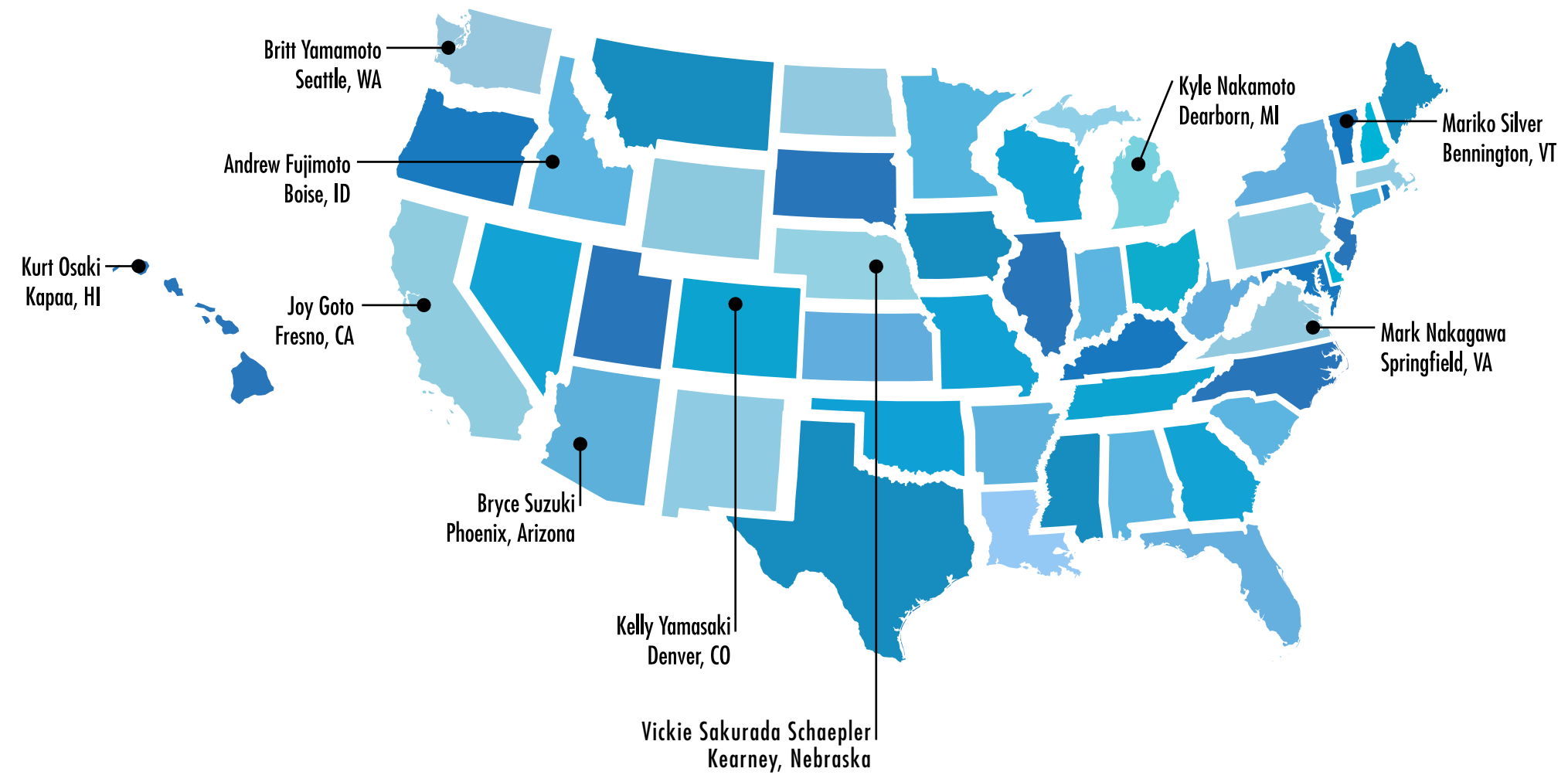
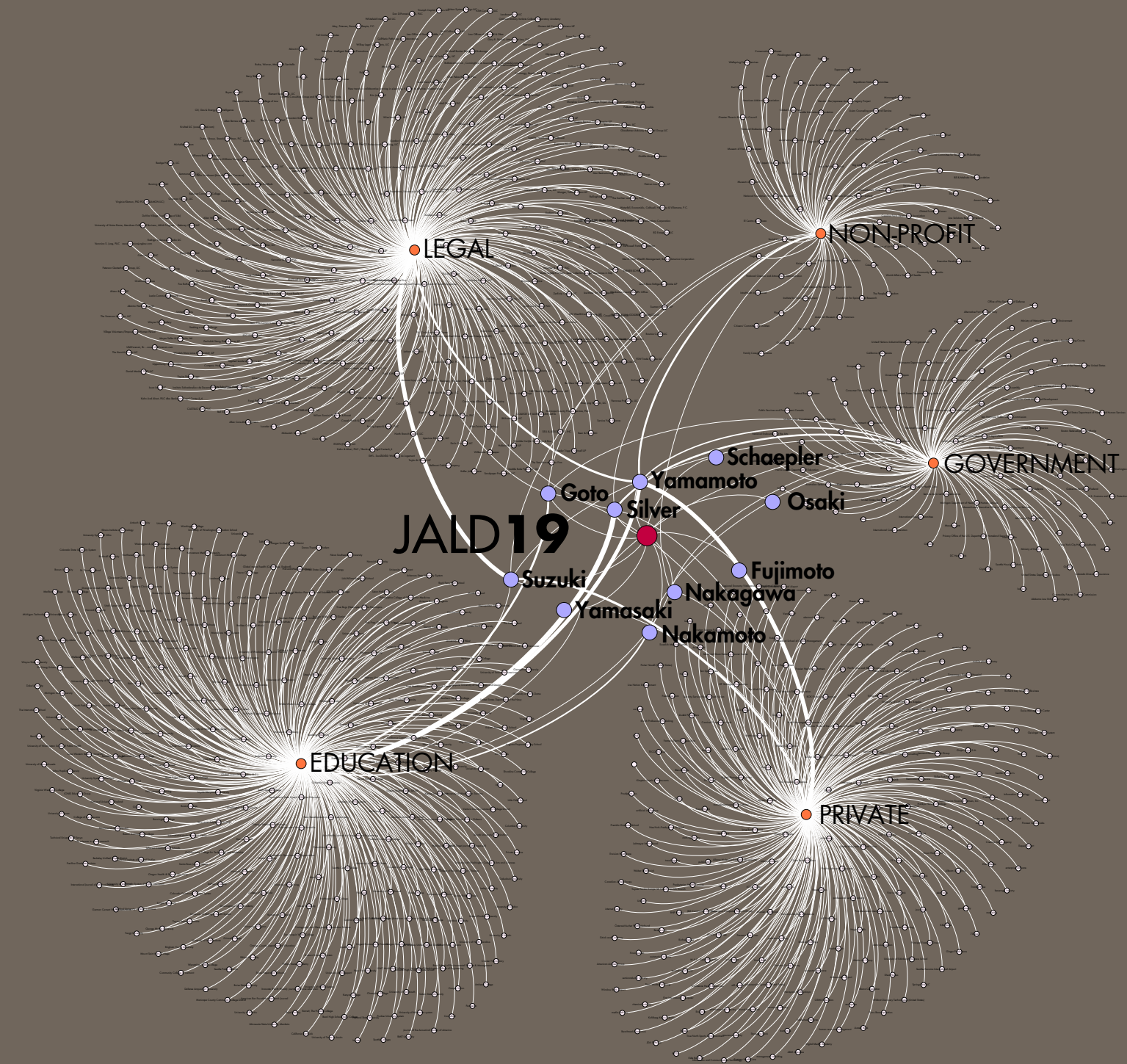


# JALD 19

We are **Japanese** Americans

Tokyo - Kumamoto March 4-10, 2019





**We are all immigrants.** Our grandparents and great grandparents came to America in search of a better life. The first immigrants from Japan began to arrive in the Hawaiian Islands between 1885 and 1895, following on the heels of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882. Plantation owners who were forbidden from hiring Chinese workers hired thousands of Japanese citizens to work in the sugar cane and pineapple fields. About half of these Japanese eventually migrated to California, Oregon, and Washington State. More than 100,000 Japanese people made the journey across the Pacific to Hawaii before 1900, making the Japanese the dominant immigrant group on the islands. The new Meiji emperor of Japan had opened up the country and finally allowed citizens to emigrate. The working conditions were not good in Hawaii, but Japanese laborers were lured to the islands by the prospects of earning ten times more than was possible in their home country.



# DAY 1

Monday, March 4

## Her Imperial Highness Princess Takamado

Tokyo Akasaka Palace

On March 4, 2019 the Japanese American Leadership Delegation's first day of official business, Her Imperial Highness, Princess Takamado graciously welcomed the group to her residence at the Tokyo Akasaka Palace. Mr. Kaz Maniwa, Senior Vice-President of the U.S.-Japan Council conveyed warm greetings on behalf of the group and Irene Hirano Inouye. Dr. Joy Goto led the discussion on behalf of the JALD.

Princess Takamado engaged the group in a lively conversation on a wide range of topics. The group discussed the variety of Japanese-American experiences and the importance of embracing both the Japanese and American identity. The Princess pointed out that, in Japan, anyone with Japanese heritage is seen as having a strong tie with contemporary Japan.

She said: "...for us you are Japanese with the richness of the other cultures you share." Princess Takamado shared how important the Nikkei community is to the Imperial Family and to the Emperor and Empress, in particular.

The JALD asked about the ongoing preparations for the Olympics in 2020. The Princess explained Japan's state of readiness for the Olympics, Paralympics, and Special Olympics, all of which will be hosted together at sites throughout Japan in the summer of 2020. The Princess shared with the group that Japan set a precedent in 1964, at the express wish of the Emperor, of hosting the Olympics and Paralympics together, a tradition that has been followed since then and will continue in 2020. The Special Olympics have since been added as well. The Princess emphasized the importance of environmental sustainability and the opportunity the Olympics provides to advance new approaches. Dr. Goto commented admiringly on Japan's plan to extract metal from reclaimed electronics to make the Olympic medals. The princess shared that the Imperial Household had donated several items for this purpose and that the effort is further motivating people to recycle electronics. The Olympics provide an opportunity, too, for corporations to emphasize the need to decrease the use of single use plastics.



*"...for us you are Japanese with the richness of the other cultures you share."*

— Princess Takamado





*“Think of Japan warmly. Know Japan as part of your heritage.”*

— Princess Takamado

Members of the delegation asked about the role of the Imperial Family in Japanese life and the upcoming transition to a new Imperial Era. Princess Takamado graciously discussed the role of the Imperial Family as a social and cultural, as well as spiritual, anchor for Japan and shared that this will be the first time when the ascension of a new Emperor will be a celebration, without mourning the death of the previous Emperor, as with previous ascensions.

Our meeting with the Princess closed with a wonderful tour of her Hinamatsuri displays, temari, and other precious artifacts at her residence.

The Princess discussed the joys and challenges of raising three children as a working mother, as well as the special obligations of children in the Imperial Family. Dr. Goto inquired about the children’s books that Princess Takamado has authored. The Princess shared that, as an only child, she developed her imagination and loves to tell stories.

Delegate Andy Fujimoto asked the Princess to share a message that we might all take back to our children and grandchildren. Princess Takamado asked us to convey to our children these words: “Think of Japan warmly. Know Japan as part of your heritage. It is important that you see Japan and we wish for you to visit.”







## Keizai Doyukai Kaikan "Botan" - Tokyo

Shigeru Yamazoe, Vice Chairman of the Marubeni Corporation and Chair of the Americas-Japan Relations Committee of Keizai Doyukai welcomed JALD with an overview of Keizai Doyukai and its unique role among corporate leadership organizations in Japan. Founded in 1946, Keizai Doyukai now includes 1,500 executives from 1,000 corporations, all of whom are encouraged to take an active role in engaging economic and social issues. Importantly, each member participates as an individual, rather than as a company representative, distinguishing Keizai Doyukai from other business associations, such as Keidanren and the Chamber of Commerce.

Vice Chairman Yamazoe noted that Japanese companies support over 2 million jobs in the United States, including over 900,000 direct hire positions. He emphasized the importance of people in the United States viewing Japanese companies both as trusted business partners, and as partners with shared values including democracy, a free economy, human rights, and the rule of law.

Keizai Doyukai was also represented by: Ms. Asako Hoshino, Senior Vice President of Nissan Motor Company and Vice Chair of the Americas-Japan Relations Committee of Keizai Doyukai; Mr. Hideo Matsue, Partner and Chief Strategy Officer Hideyuki Takahashi, Director and Chairman of the State Street Trust & Banking Company and Vice Chair of the Americas-Japan Relations Committee of Keizai Doyukai; and Mr. Yukio Tada, Senior Advisor at Sojitz Research Institute and Adviser of the Americas-Japan Relations Committee of Keizai Doyukai.





Following introductions by members of both delegations, the group proceeded to discuss in depth myriad issues related to economic policy, trade relations, and the future of technology and innovation. Vice Chairman Yamazoe began the discussion by asking the JALD group how to maximize success for Japanese companies in the United States. The group discussed the shifting environment for relocation packages following the pull back of Amazon from its commitment to HQ2 in Long Island City, NY and encouraged continued investment by Japanese companies in rural areas. Yukio Tada raised the question of how tier one suppliers (major Japanese companies) could improve their support of the supply chain of small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) and second and third tier companies with a particular focus on the 300 Japanese companies in Indiana. Dr. Kyle Nakamoto encouraged the corporations to refresh the thinking related to human resources investments and training, noting that at the top of the labor pyramid (for example, among data scientists) there is so much demand for their high-end, high-tech skills that annual turnover is close to 20% in the field. He also noted that the

approaches to HR development may need to be different in different sub-fields even within a single sector, particularly as artificial intelligence and internet-based business practices continue to disrupt multiple industries and sectors. Dr. Mariko Silver encouraged large companies to consider supporting a learning ecosystem and educational supply chain among their SMEs without the assumption that workers will necessarily stay at one company for a long time, but that they will support the supply chain overall, even while moving among the supplier companies and among tier one, two and three companies. Dr. Britt Yamamoto emphasized the changing interests and demands of millennials and the next generation (Gen Z) workforce, many of whom are looking for purpose-driven companies that give back and engage their communities well beyond traditional corporate social responsibility practices.

Hideyuki Takahashi asked how well the “average American” understands the value that Japanese companies bring to the United States, or whether the focus is so much on the balance of trade that most people are not aware of the overall benefits of the trade relationship. Andy Fujimoto and Vickie Sakurada Schaepler answered on behalf of JALD that most Americans are unaware of the benefits, particularly that tier two and three companies bring to the U.S. economy and job market.

All agreed on both sides that there are opportunities for the benefits of the Japan-U.S. trade relationship to be more visible. The group discussed the particular challenges of current U.S.-Japan trade negotiations related to agricultural and automobile sectors. The group also discussed the impacts of U.S. tax and regulatory policy on the financial and automotive industries, as well as developments related to economic policy shifts in China and Mexico.





# Center for Global Partnership Luncheon

## Meiji Kinenkan, Tokyo

Our luncheon was hosted by the Center for Global Partnership at the regal Tancho no Ma. The setting was beautiful as the rain added to the serenity of the garden surroundings. Our entrance started with the customary Japanese business card exchange and handshakes.

We were immediately led to our tables and had the pleasure of meeting various leaders, including Ms. Mieko Nakabayashi, professor at Waseda University. Dr. Nakabayashi was a member of Japan's House of Representatives from 2009 to 2012, representing the 1st District of Yokohama, Kanagawa Prefecture. She also served as the Director the Foreign Affairs Committee, Financial Affairs Committee, Committee on Anti-Piracy Measures, Prevention of International Terrorism, and Japan's Cooperation and Support. She further served as a member of the Budget Committee, Governmental Affairs Committee, and National Security Committee. She is the author of *President Trump and Congress*.

Other special guests included Dr. Hiroshi Yamakawa, President of the Japan Aerospace Exploration (JAXA) and Ms. Yumi Kawabata, an environment and automotive journalist.

Our luncheon was opened by Mr. Junichi Chano, Executive Director of the Center for Global Partnership (CGP) who welcomed the JALD. Mr. Chano then introduced Mr. Hiroyasu Ando, President of The Japan Foundation who also welcomed us. Mr. Hiroyasu informed the group of the importance of Japan-U.S. relations and how the Japan Foundation was involved and dedicated to building a long lasting relationship.

Our lunch was followed by an introduction of our special Japan guest speakers. Dr. Hiroshi Yamakawa informed our group that they were celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the JAXA and NASA. Mr. Yamakawa was born in Switzerland and has always been a national parks enthusiast. He openly shared his experience collaborating between JAXA and NASA. Mr. Yamakawa was followed by Ms. Yumi Kawabata who grew up in the embassy in Malaysia where she learned how to speak English. Ms. Kawabata is educated as an engineer and is a recognized automotive journalist and the environment. Her belief is that technology should have no borders, stressing the importance of the relationship between Japan and the United States.





Dr. Mieko Nakabayashi is currently a professor of Waseda University. Ms. Nakabayashi is a well accomplished leader in Japan who believes that Japan is at a crossroads of a changing society. She is amazed by the diversity in the U.S. and believes more in the person-to-person relationship than the world communicating through technology.

The speakers from Japan were followed by a summary of our discussion by delegates from the United States. Ms. Joy Goto started by sharing her discussion by stressing the importance of relationships between people. It's the one-on-one relationships which have the most importance and impact in society. We must continue building our U.S.-Japan relationship and learn from our history to make the future brighter.

Mr. Kurt Osaki followed by sharing their discussion with professor Nakabayashi and was inspired by her philosophy that we should not wait for opportunity. If you want something, work hard and go after it. Osaki also shared their discussion about U.S.-Japan politics and how informed the Japanese were of American politics. Kurt also shared his upbringing in Hawaii and how the aloha spirit can bring people together.

Mr. Osaki was followed by Mr. Bryce Suzuki who shared their discussion and his about his home state of Arizona and how they were leaders in the research and testing of heat. Suzuki also recognized the commonalities we all share between nations and the need to foster this relationship. His love of baseball was used as a metaphor in his discussion about democracy and a free merchant economy.

*Our luncheon ended with a customary group photo session with the rain continuing to fall, as a beautiful day was had by all.*





# National Diet

## House of Councilors Tour

The JALD had the privilege of touring the National Diet Building (Kokkai-gijido). We were fortunate to have an experienced guide who provided a detailed overview of Japan's constitutional system of government, the separation of powers, and the role of the National Diet (Kokkai), Japan's bicameral legislature. The Diet comprises a lower house called the House of Representatives, and an upper house, called the House of Councilors. Both houses of the Diet are directly elected under parallel voting systems.

The German-influenced National Diet Building on Kasumigaseki Hill is Japan's center of government. The 65.5 m tall reinforced concrete and granite structure was completed in 1936 after 17 years of construction work. All the building materials including the interior marble were locally-sourced. The Central Hall features extensive murals that depict the four seasons and elegant stained-glass windows.

The delegation was impressed with the grand scale of the National Diet Building, its architectural complexity, and the ornate spaces reserved for the Emperor of Japan. The tour again brought knowledge together with actual experience. Delegation members certainly won't forget the lessons learned about Japan's government during this impressive tour.





# Foreign Minister Taro Kono

Akasaka Hanten

A warm reception with Foreign Minister Taro Kono capped our first official day as the JALD. We arrived at the restaurant, and were followed shortly after by members of the National Diet. These high ranking elected officials of the Japanese government were very generous with their time and expressed warm feelings as they sought to learn more about our backgrounds.

During dinner Foreign Minister Kono recalled how his father had asked him to start the JALD. He emphasized the value both his father, and himself, saw in Japanese Americans and the need for our help in providing a link between our two countries.



Andy Fujimoto, the lead for the JALD, emphasized all the ties that Japanese companies had with Idaho; he recalled many instances where his organization navigated the American health system for Japanese companies. This was followed by introductions, which were filled with personal stories linking Japan and the United States. At dinner Foreign Minister Kono talked about his son's learning journey and desire to study in the U.S.; followed by a request for Japanese Americans to repatriate to Japan.







Dinner was followed by karaoke; lead by Diet member Dr. Makishima. As one group we sang songs from the Back Street Boys to Michael Jackson, ending with a rousing song of "YMCA." The impression we had of the day was of amazement of the degree to which high level Japanese officials valued the U.S., Japanese Americans, and welcomed us back to our Japanese family.

### **Joseph Heco (Hikoze Hamada)**

September 20, 1837 – December 12, 1897

He was the first Japanese person to be naturalized as a United States citizen and the first to publish a Japanese language newspaper.

We are grateful to our ancestors who came before us and sacrificed their lives for future generations.

# Kansha





# DAY 2

Tuesday, March 5

## Japanese American Leaders Residing in Japan

Royal Park Hotel, Tokyo

Overlooking Tokyo from the 20th floor of the Royal Park Hotel the JALD and representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) had a breakfast meeting featuring four Japanese Americans leaders who are highly successful in Japan. The presentations gave the 2019 delegates a vision about how Japanese Americans have become significant in the Japanese business landscape and thus creating even stronger ties between the U.S. and Japan.



**Kathy Matsui of Goldman Sachs Japan Co., Ltd**, is the Vice Chair Chief Japan Strategist and Co-head of Macro Research Asia. Kathy highlighted current issues facing the Japanese society. They include: labor shortage, women are not returning to the workplace after giving birth, “womenomics” (a phrase she coined and refers to increasing women in the workplace to raise the economy), and how to retain and develop women leaders (e.g., the Japanese workforce is more than 70% women versus only 66% in the U.S., yet there are fewer Japanese women in leadership positions).



**William J. Ireton of Sony Pictures Entertainment (Japan) Inc.** represents the entertainment industry for Japan, where he serves as Head of Production. He spoke about how he loves his business because it is all about “telling a good story.” For example, “Death Note Series” is about how power corrupts. “The Last Samurai” was very popular and made this quote very popular, “Let me tell you not of his death, but of his life.” He also talked about the mega-hit, “Harry Potter” that grossed ~\$202 million. Bill also gave personal insight into his family. He told about his son remembering his roots and his work in baseball with the Oklahoma City Dodgers where they have Japanese heritage night.







**Grant S. Tanabe of Sonderhoff Einsel**, a Foreign Law Partner Registered Foreign Lawyer, talked about his childhood in Hawaii. He talked about his time at Punahou High School where he befriended a Japanese exchange student and at 19 years old Grant visited Kobe. He described himself as a “stealth Gaijin” because he looked Japanese, but really was not. He described how it was difficult because the Japanese would not initiate conversation with him because he looked Japanese. If he were Caucasian, many more would want to talk with him. He started doing construction work in Japan. People would ask him, “What are you doing here?” Grant felt a yearning to be in Japan and a purpose he now more clearly understands. Initially he started at the bottom doing construction and working on golf courses. “Gaman” or in English “perseverance” is the most important quality to him. He feels this came from his Japanese ancestry. He fills a unique role to strengthen relationships between Japan and the U.S. because he understands both. He stated, “We need to attract more Japanese Americans to Japan and more Japanese to America. This will make for even better relationships between these two great countries.”



**Janelle Sasaki of Ernst and Young is a Director of Gender Brand**, Marketing and Communications, Women Athletes Business Network and Japan Area Leader. Although she was one of five minorities in high school, she then went to UC Berkeley and saw the power of diversity in classroom. She now sees its power in the boardroom. Her career started at Cisco in sales and Human Resources. She had a supervisor named Greg who saw something in her that she did not see in herself. She understood diversity to some degree, but after coming to Japan understands it even better. She stated, “Japan will change your life.” She strives to help Japan with diversity and inclusion, the power hierarchy, Japanese male supervision, eliminating bias, becoming more consensus driven, and reducing organizational politics so people can make decisions during, rather than prior or outside of meetings. A business client requested Ernst and Young assist in bridge building between Japan and the U.S., and that launched her specialty focus. She is also involved in the digital gap and participates as a thought leader to bring the world together.

It was inspiring to see the impact of these significant Japanese Americans are having on Japan and therefore, U.S.-Japan relations. The power of the “one” is significant and should not be minimized or doubted.



The luncheon with Keidanren was a unique opportunity for the JALD to meet and hear from leading business representatives in Japan. The Keidanren leadership that attended the luncheon included: Teruko Wada, Keidanren, Deputy Director; Katsunori Nemoto, Keidanren, Senior Managing Director; Chika Mashiko, Keidanren, Assistant Manager; Hondasan, Keidanren; Ippei Matsumura, Keidanren; Ichiro Hara, Director, International Affairs Bureau, Keidanren; Takashi Morimura, MUFG Bank, Advisor to the President; Kanaida Tomohisa, Tokio Marine, General Manager; Jumpei Kakinuma, Itochu, Deputy General Manager; Yamadasan, Tokio Marine.

## Keidanran Luncheon

### Keidaran Kaiken, Tokyo





The discussion included several important themes related to U.S.-Japan relations, including: how Japan can do a better job of sharing information and communicating with the general American public about the positive impacts that Japanese companies are making in the U.S.; how more Japanese young people can be placed in U.S. internships; how Japanese companies can better connect to the local communities in which they are working in the U.S.; how there can be more intentional connections between Japanese and U.S. higher education institutions to provide meaningful exchange opportunities.

The luncheon was an opportunity for the JALD to share their expertise in areas of business and higher education and especially in the fields of science and technology, and community engagement. We hoped the Keidanran members in attendance found the session to be enlightening and informative. This was an authentic exchange of ideas and opinions and both Keidanren members and the JALD actively participated in a productive discussion about their shared goals.



# Forum 21

## Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), Tokyo

On Wednesday, March 5, 2019, a 2.5 hour meeting in the MOFA (Ministry of Foreign Affairs) conference room in Tokyo convened with JALD representatives and Japanese leaders sharing insights with 40 “high potentials” (30 from business and 10 from government) who are receiving a development opportunity as future leaders. This meeting was significant and extremely memorable for all involved.

Forum 21 members greeted JALD members with an extended standing ovation. This gesture was unexpected and humbling for the JALD members, who immediately felt a warm welcome and a spirit of collaboration from Forum 21.

Mr. Shoichi Umezu, the founder of Forum 21, opened the meeting by sharing the vision, genesis, and evolution of Forum 21. Now in his mid-90s, Mr. Umezu has dedicated himself to the development of business leaders in Japan. His accomplishments are remarkable and provide a wonderful example for the corporate sector in the U.S. Mr. Umezu explained how the partnership with Daniel and Irene Inouye, and the U.S.-Japan Council, has affected more than 1,000 graduates. Indeed, their collaborative efforts have created a ripple that goes on and on.

JALD leader, Kaz Maniwa, and delegation representative, Mark Nakagawa, expressed gratitude for the warm welcome and opportunity to participate in an event discussing contemporary topics that influence U.S.-Japan relations and the world.

Mr. Takayami Sumita, Secretary General of Intellectual Property Strategy Headquarters Cabinet Office, opened the dialogue with perspectives about Japan’s economic challenges and its changing society. China is rapidly rising and challenging the existing world order. Panelists had the opportunity to discuss key measures to invigorate the Japanese economy as it strives to regain its strength. Mr. Sumita cited as significant topics for Japan’s future: the continued impact of Abe-nomics, the strength of cultural resources, the need to avoid complacency, a call for agility, focus on the mid to long-term, furthering technologies such as AI (artificial intelligence), the need for more nationals to stay in Japan, focus on Japan’s strengths, and enhanced diversity and harmony.

Dr. Mariko Silver of the JALD then shared her thoughts about the need to strengthen technology continually with user-friendly AI and IoT (internet of things). Other elements include developing a greater pipeline of technology education; producing more data scientists with worldwide contributions; embracing diversity in the workforce; the shrinking of Japanese population; using AI data sets in all sectors of business, government, and lifestyle; using strengths







of AI by better understanding how to use it; and integrating women fully into the upper levels of the workforce. Dr. Silver emphasized that all of the JALD delegates have immigration in their backgrounds and have become successful. New immigrants in Japan should also have similar opportunity to succeed.

Mark Nakagawa from the JALD described the U.S.-Japan alliance as being as strong as ever, despite the politics of the TPP. Given Mr. Nakagawa's background in the military and with the U.S. Department of Defense, he personally feels U.S. military installments logistically need to be in Japan for the safety of all. He also encouraged relationships with India be improved. Times are dynamic, and the shifting of power caused by China is a prime example.

Masumi Natusaka, Managing Executive Officer of Kao Corporation, observed that various issues facing Japan are the same as in other advanced economies. Some of the keys to economic success include de-regulation and freedom to conduct business with increased agility, diversity in the workforce, and education reform. Despite the increased emphasis on foreign workers, only 2% of the current workforce is from outside Japan. Japan's educational models will need to foster creative and critical thinking to move forward in the world order.

Daisuke Horiuchi, Executive Officer and General Manager for Ginza Branch of Mizuho Bank, observed that funding is available for first-generation companies, "startups," and joint ventures in Japan, and many capable students are interested in the joint venture space. Andy Fujimoto of the JALD shared his thoughts about leadership in a changing world. The "what" and "how" informs, but it is the "why" that transforms. The world faces such issues as greed, depression, bullying, and discrimination. As leaders, we must leave the world better than how we found it by understanding our "why."

Akira Haraguchi, Executive Officer and Senior General Manager of Legal Department of Suntory, spoke of the need for innovation in Japanese business. As a Suntory executive, Mr. Haraguchi observed that the purchase of Jim Beam in the U.S. has brought more diversity to his company. He cited diversity as the most salient difference between the work cultures in the U.S. and Japan.

Dr. Britt Yamamoto of the JALD posed the question, "Why you do what you do?" Within his leadership development programs in Seattle, Washington, he uses "POP" which stands for purpose, outcome, and process. It begins with knowing our purpose. Understanding our purpose starts with the educational system. Rather than "received learning" or relying on rote or memorized answers, students need the skills to make decisions about complex situations.

"Learning starts early in life," stated JALD representative and architect Kelly Yamasaki. These soft skills develop leaders and provide critical thinking. We need to change the way we think which will change how we express ourselves, and then ultimately what we do. It is a struggle in the U.S. to have children fully implement what they have learned.

During the open discussion Japanese panelist, Mari Sagiya, spoke to the issue of women's diversity, youth not interested in large companies, and their desire to be more independent. She saw all of these to be optimistic signs in a changing world.

Kazuyoshi Umemoto, chief negotiator for Japan for the TPP, shared how his 13 years of experience in Japan-U.S. relations convinces him that we need strong Japanese American leaders. This is one of the greatest successes and a highlight of Forum 21.

JALD representative Dr. Mariko Silver shared final thoughts. She declared, "Blood and the heart ties people together." Through our "people to people" U.S. and Japan relationships will become stronger.

Toshihiro Yoshihara, a Japanese panelist, summed up the meeting by recapping some of the contemporary topics covered: AI, IoT, declining population, the need for economic growth, further prosperity, diversity of employment, fluid employment with foreign workers, business infrastructure, collecting big data, taxes, rulemaking, digital management, developing hubs of innovation, changes in corporate behavior, promotion of innovation, the human network, and removing boundaries to improve the strength of our leadership.

Mr. Umezu powerfully closed the meeting by reminding us that we stand at the dawn of a new era in Japan, and it should be an era of national strength. In Forum 21 there are a variety of individuals from 30 private companies and 10 government officials, all representing one Japan. It is wonderful to be involved with global leaders, and we all hope this association continues. These are exciting times.



# Deputy Chief of Mission Joseph M. Young Reception and Dinner

DCM Residence, Tokyo



Following an engaging session with Forum 21 the JALD participants were hosted by the U.S. Deputy Chief of Mission (DCM), Joseph M. Young at his beautiful, historic residence (the former residence of the Bridgestone Corporation's family residence) in Azabu Nagasaka-cho. DCM Young began the evening by graciously welcoming us and stating that the bond of friendship between the U.S. and Japan remains stronger than ever. Several members of DCM Young's staff joined us for the evening including: Michael Cavanaugh, Director of Trade and Economic Policy Unit, Economic Affairs; Michael Turner, Culture and Sports Attache; Steve Knode, Trade Deputy Senior Commercial Officer; Carolyn Glassman, Minister Counselor of Public Affairs.



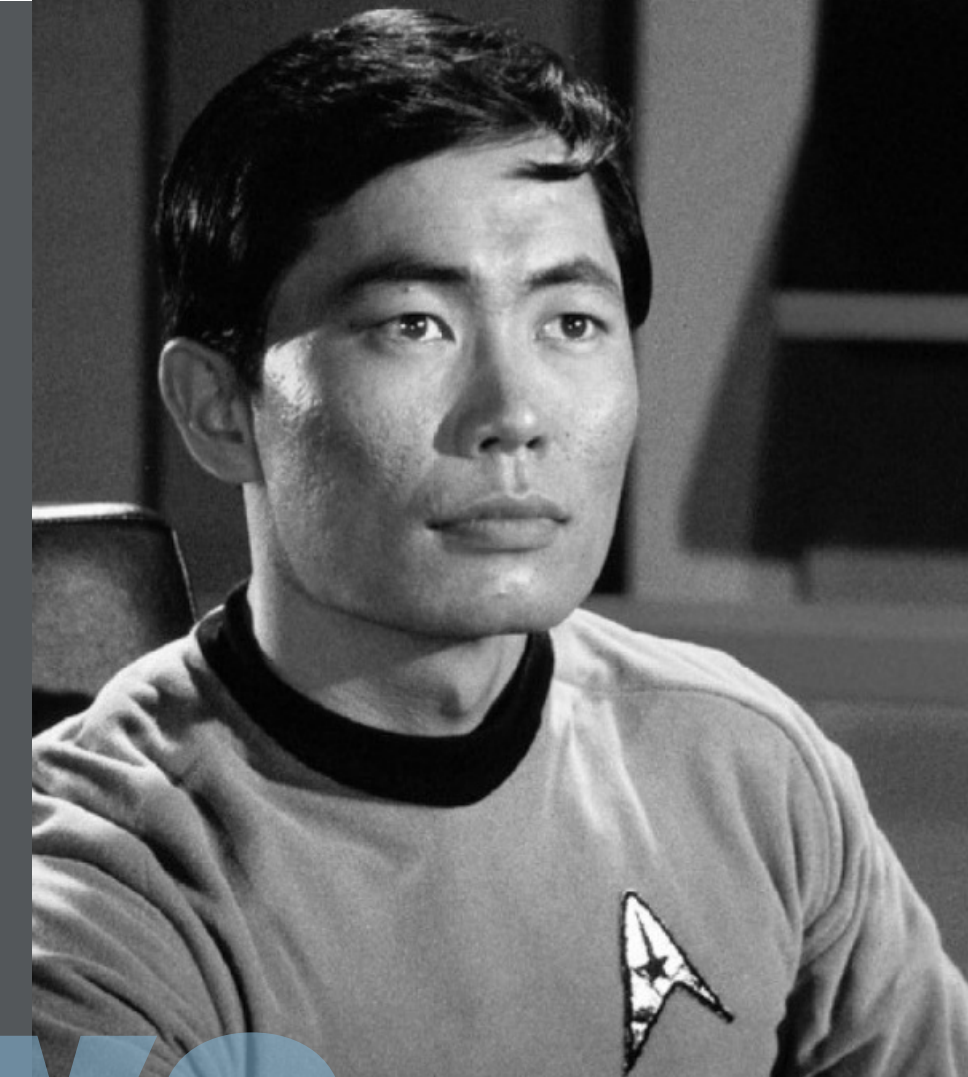




The delegation enjoyed beautifully prepared French cuisine and an equally lively dinner conversation. Some of the views of the U.S. Embassy staff differed slightly from those of our Japanese hosts, but the theme remained constant, the relationship and bond of friendship between the United States and Japan remains strong, and will endure due to the importance of personal relationships between the Japanese American community and the Japanese.

## George Takei

April 20, 1937 - An American actor, author, and activist. He is best known for his role as Hikaru Sulu, helmsman of the USS Enterprise in the television series Star Trek.



# Meiyo

To honor, attaining distinction, prestige, fame and dignity.



# DAY 3

Wednesday, March 6

## Minister Masahiko Shibayama

Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology

Tokyo

The JALD had a brief visit with Minister Masahiko Shibayama, MEXT (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology); he is Minister in Charge of Education Rebuilding. JALD delegate, Joy Goto, engaged Minister Shibayama on various topics that focused on his primary duty of education. The Minister discussed Japan's version of Society 5.0 proposed through Keidanren's white paper and the need to establish a budget to ensure the program continues in the future. He stated that revitalizing the relationship between U.S. and Japan universities is of concern as he mentioned the lack of Japanese researchers going abroad.



Minister Shibayama mentioned the emphasis on English education and more funding to undergraduates and postdoctorate researchers and further elaborated that Japan's education system must evolve where students are able to have creative discussions, performing and learning outside of the classroom, and engaging in promising areas, such as biotechnology. Delegate Kyle Nakamoto stated the reality at Ford Corporation where he is a data scientist. He indicated last year 700 data scientists were hired, many were Asian of Chinese, and Indian ancestry, but other than himself, there are no other Japanese data scientists. Minister Shibayama recognized the lack of data scientists in Japan and specified the need to have curriculum in high school and universities, and to improve the relationship with industry. JALD delegate Mariko Silver commented that interdisciplinary programs achieve many of the desired goals, the only issue is that the grant programs are only funded in five-year cycles which does not create a sustainable career path for students. Minister Shibayama concluded our short, but productive meeting by stating that Japan will need to build relationships with other sectors overseas, and the JALD visit is a good start.



# North American Affairs Bureau Lunch hosted by MOFA Akasaka Ninomae, Tokyo

Our luncheon with the North American Affairs Bureau, MOFA gave the delegates a rare opportunity to connect with our hosts. We were honored to have Kazuhiro Suzuki, Ambassador, Assistant Minister/Director-General, NAAB, MOFA; Kohei Akuyama, Director, First North American Division, NAAB, MOFA; Makoto Hayashi, Director, FNAD, NAAB, MOFA; and Kentaro Yamane, Assistant Director, MOFA, join us for lunch, also knowing they would join us for the latter half of our trip to Kumamoto.



Ambassador Suzuki expressed his views on the immigration issues and his experience from 2013 to 2016 when he was in Ethiopia. He feels the Japanese Foreign Service has done well in learning the local languages, though there are almost 80 different languages spoken in the region. In Japan they know immigration policy probably needs to change; they can be open to change. Japanese Americans are a core asset to Japan, and they are concerned they may lose their identity after several generations. Japan wants to encourage Japanese Americans to keep their identity and know the country of their ancestry.

The delegates discussed how grateful we were for this opportunity and the pride we have of Japan. Anime and manga have exposed more people in the U.S. to Japan and is spreading a renewed interest in Japanese culture. He asked how it is different for each one of us, where we share common ancestry, yet each of us come from very different backgrounds. We shared stories of learning from our parents, some who came directly from Japan to those who are Yonsei. The delegation shared that coming to Japan has given us a positive experience of Japan. The stories of why we came may be different but we find comfort with our Japanese American identity and feel highly connected to Japan.

The venue for this lunch gave the JALD an opportunity to experience some of the traditional kaiseki preparations in Japanese cuisine. The staff were dressed in traditional kimonos and the location tucked away from the busy streets of Tokyo. The dishes were presented in the most impressive ways, from unique serving dishes, to perfectly formed food with color so rich and delicate, words cannot do them justice; items of light purple infused in the vegetable and sashimi, rich, fresh and colorful. The cylinder that contained our main dishes was unique, displayed items and amazed each of us. Overall, the JALD enjoyed the company of our MOFA hosts and our understanding was enriched by the shared time.





# Meeting with Kotaro Sonoura

Special Advisor to Prime Minister Abe  
Kantei, Tokyo



The JALD visit with Prime Minister Abe was cancelled due to the ongoing Diet session, however, the delegation had the unique opportunity to visit with Mr. Kotaro Sonoura, Special Advisor to Prime Minister Abe. He engaged the delegation in a lengthy discussion and exchange on topics ranging from technology, women in the workforce, and the foreign worker population.

The JALD had a productive discussion with Mr. Sonoura, and the meeting also included Daisuke Tsubaki, Executive Secretary to the Special Advisor; Kazuhiro Suzuki, Ambassador, MOFA; Makoto Hayashi, Director, MOFA; and Kentaro Yamane, Assistant Director, MOFA. He described his role in leading initiatives connecting U.S. governors (US Governors Association) and working to strengthen relationships with each state in the U.S.; he has personally met with 19 U.S. governors. He hopes more U.S. governors can share the positive impact that Japanese companies are having in their states and how Japanese companies in the U.S. positively contribute to the U.S. economy and community life.

In terms of the economy and the workforce the JALD delegate Dr. Mariko Silver, emphasized the importance of women becoming fully integrated and respected members of the workforce. The topic of “womenomics” was discussed and Mr. Sonoura indicated there is currently a higher percentage of women in the workforce in Japan, than in the U.S., but many are in part-time positions and stated the need to change the perception of working women in Japan. Related to the workforce population was the topic of the growing foreign worker population in Japan and how the approach to immigration needs to be reconsidered, including more open policies and opportunities for immigrants to be full members of society and to avoid a stratified, two-tier social system. The government iterated that Japan is very tolerant and working to expand immigration and to do a better job of integrating these individuals.

The workforce topic moved to a lengthy discussion about the challenges in the workforce pipeline, especially where specialized technical areas are important including data science and the emphasis on the Internet of Things (IoT) and technology. There are fewer Japanese with Ph.D.s in key global technology areas.

Mr. Sonoura had questions about how the Big 3 auto companies have adapted to changes post-NAFTA and inquired about the delegation thoughts on how Japanese companies and workers can penetrate the realm of Silicon Valley since Japanese companies have struggled to influence key decision makers in the Silicon Valley. Two positive examples are the Toyota Research Institute and the Hitachi Innovation Center. Mr. Sonoura asked if Silicon Valley will continue to be the center of innovation in the U.S. The issue of the speed at which Japanese companies make decisions came up, and though they may be much slower than other Asian countries, when the Japanese make a deal they can be counted on for great follow-up and partnership. Mr. Sonoura indicated the U.S.-Japan relations are the most important relationship for Americans and the Japanese Americans, in particular are of key importance in sustaining these connections. The JALD was grateful for the opportunity to have a productive and meaningful discussion with Mr. Sonoura and hopes the contents of the discussion were relayed to Prime Minister Abe.







## U.S. Embassy Meeting Tokyo

The JALD met U.S. Ambassador Bill Hagerty and took a group photo, and then sat down with Joseph Young, Deputy Chief of Mission (DCM); Michael Cavanaugh, Director of Trade and Economic Policy; and Michael Turner, Culture and Sports Attache, for an in-depth discussion about the U.S. point of view on the relationship with Japan and the understanding of the key issues between the two countries.

Mr. Young stated that the U.S. and Japan have a very strong relationship not just as two countries but on personal levels starting with President Trump and Prime Minister Abe. The ease and frequency of communication between the two leaders is carried through at all levels, from Secretary of State Pompeo and Foreign Minister Kono to National Security Advisors John Bolton and Shotaro Yachi.





Mr. Young then moved on to trade relations, and emphasized that the U.S. and Japan need to work through a bilateral trade agreement and that he believes this will move forward soon, potentially next month. Mr. Young emphasized that the U.S. would not be going back to the TPP.

Delegate Mark Nakagawa then asked Mr. Young about the U.S. viewpoint about moving the U.S. base from the center of the city in Okinawa to Henoko. Mr. Young said that there are 3 “Cannots” that are driving the move to Henoko: 1. Okinawa Cannot relocate Futema to another location; 2. Japan Cannot find another location in Japan; 3. American Cannot move outside of Japan and maintain security in the region. With all of the constraints, the U.S. believes that Henoko is still the best location for a U.S. base and that it is imperative for the current base to be moved out of the congested city center to avoid potential accidents in the surrounding neighborhoods.

Michael Cavanaugh then spoke about the U.S. concern regarding Japan’s falling birth rate. While he acknowledged that Japan is accommodating foreign workers, he stated that the real issue is family formation and that more needs to be done to support working families such as increasing the number of daycare centers. He also expressed concern that the number of young Japanese going to study in the U.S. has dropped dramatically. While the U.S. is trying to market to current college students there is increased competition from Canada, the UK, Australia, and China and that the cost of studying in the U.S. is too expensive. Michael Turner then informed our group about the U.S. efforts to use the 2020 Olympics to market the U.S. to Japan, through Sports Diplomacy. Through a program called, “Go for Gold”, the U.S. is trying to help train English speaking teachers in over 300 schools. The USOC is also supporting these efforts by bringing U.S. athletes, such as swimmer Katie Ledecky, to Japan to speak at schools. By using Sports Diplomacy and youth exchange programs, the U.S. hopes to increase the interest of Japan’s next generation of leaders, to the United States.





# Giri

Doing good for someone is our responsibility.

## **Patsy Mink**

December 6, 1927 – September 8, 2002  
was an American lawyer and politician from the U.S. state of Hawaii. Mink was a third generation Japanese American and member of the Democratic Party.



# DAY 4

Wednesday, March 7

## Meeting with Kumamoto City Mayor Onishi

Kumamoto City Hall, Kumamoto



A brief but substantive engagement would be the words to describe the meeting with Kumamoto City Mayor Onishi. The greetings by Kaz Maniwa, Senior Vice-President of the USJC and delegate Andy Fujimoto were warm, describing our appreciation for the visit. The meeting turned to a substantive discussion on disaster response and recovery. Kumamoto experienced an earthquake in 2016 that took the lives of 50 people and incurred ~\$5.5-7.5 billion in damages; including immense damage to their historical Kumamoto Castle.



The Mayor asked the delegation for their thoughts on and lessons learned from similar disasters in the U.S. Delegate Dr. Mariko Silver described the pain and suffering caused by Hurricane Katrina and highlighted the need for strong decisive leadership under emergency natural disaster situations. The JALD and Mayor Onishi shared insights on ways to coordinate across national, regional and local entities. In particular, clearly outlined roles and responsibilities were highlighted as key to mitigate the effect of disasters and for planning recovery from such natural disasters.







# Meeting with Kumamoto Governor Kabashima

Kumamoto



*Meeting Governor Kabashima was extra special because of his connection with the state of Nebraska, which is the home state of our fellow delegate Vickie Sakurada Schaepler.*

As I recall leaving our hotel for one of our first meetings, Vickie moved from her original seat on the bus all the way to the back between Andy and Kurt. As our bus got closer to the meeting location, I sensed Vickie's apprehension and anxiety as she scribbled down notes. I eventually leaned over and told her to just be herself; that she would do well. She was carrying greetings from the President of the Nebraska University System and felt she was representing Nebraska,

Kaz Maniwa began by introducing our delegation and expressing our appreciation for Governor Kabashima's time with us. Vickie Sakurada Schaepler followed by introducing herself and her home state of Nebraska, which brought a big smile to the Governor's face. Vickie expressed her concern and hope for the recovery of Kumamoto after the earthquake; she then reflected upon her visit to Kumamoto Castle.





Governor Kabashima opened by thanking the delegation for visiting Kumamoto and the importance of spreading the word about his prefecture to our family and friends. He followed by telling his story of graduating from Kumamoto University and how he was inspired to become a rancher, which led him at age 24 to attend the University of Nebraska to study Animal Science. He would then go on to attend graduate school at Harvard. Despite not having any prior background in political science, he wrote his Harvard entry application around the similarities of politics and cattle ranching and got accepted. He eventually earned a Ph.D. in Political Economy.

After all he experienced in the U.S., he expressed that America is a special country that provides everyone the opportunity to succeed. He hopes that the U.S. will not change their beliefs and stay focused on helping people make their dreams come true. Our meeting concluded with a group photo, with the most significant photo capturing a proud and smiling Vickie Sakurada Schaepler with Governor Kabashima.





# Kumamoto Symposium

Kumamoto City Hall, Kumamoto

## Three Cities, Three Approaches: Cities that Attract Youth

The highlight of our visit to Kumamoto was the Kumamoto Symposium held on March 7th, at the Kumamoto City Hall with the topic of "Three Cities, Three Approaches: Cities that Attract Youth" and on the panel were Dr. Mariko Silver, Dr. Britt Yamamoto, and Ms. Kelly Yamasaki, representing their cities with the added bonus of having ancestral ties to Kumamoto. The symposium was organized by the Japan Foundation Center for Global Partnership (CGP), U.S. – Japan Council (USJC), Kumamoto City, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Kumamoto Prefecture. The purpose of the symposium was for JALD participants to share our ideas for creating a more attractive city for future generations. The event was well-publicized and the symposium was filled to its maximum capacity of close to 100.

Ms. Masako Yamamoto, Director for CGP opened the symposium with welcoming remarks followed by Mr. Tano Harimitsu, Vice Mayor of Kumamoto who welcomed the delegates as well as the guests of the participants. Mr. Kaz Maniwa, Senior Vice President, USJC followed and thanked the hosts, described to the group about the USJC, and introduced the JALD. A short video, "History of Japanese-Americans" introduced the audience about the Japanese-American experience. Dr. Kirk Masden, Associate Professor at Kumamoto Gakuen University, a thirty year resident of Kumamoto started the seminar by outlining the topics to be covered by the panelists.





Dr. Mariko Silver started the session describing how Vermont is similar to Kumamoto being relatively rural. From her perspective as the President of Bennington College, she proposed that education is a public good to be used to push culture. The iGen or Generation Z demographics of 4 to 22 years old represent approximately 26% of the population. The future of work is that the education system will not train the workforce, but rather train them how to learn new skills, thus the importance of human soft skills. Describing the Bennington Model of a fully inter-disciplinary education results in the college being listed as the 4th most entrepreneurial college in America that enables youth to remain or return to rural areas to revitalize. Bennington College and in her previous academic position at Arizona State University, are institutes that partnered with other colleges, businesses, local and state governments to revitalize a downtown block in Bennington, Vermont, and downtown Phoenix. Colleges can be the spark to public value to innovation and growth.



Dr. Britt Yamamoto followed and stated that Kumamoto changed his life. He shared his experience of working in Shinsuimachi under Dr. Yoshitaka Takekuma, learning about organic farming. Yamamoto brings the story back to a full circle because in the 1950s, Japan sent students to the U.S. West Coast to learn about farming and Britt's grandfather was a farm that hosted these students. When he was studying under Dr. Takekuma, he received an article. Yamamoto took the article to Dr. Takekuma who read it and made a few calls. They made their way to the former mayor who looked at the article and pulled out a scrapbook where the same article was pasted. He was the youth highlighted in the article. The former mayor was the official who supported Dr. Takekuma's organic farm that Yamamoto worked. The story highlights how global experiences shape local events. In his current role as Founder and Executive Director, Yamamoto serves to nurture the next generation of Japanese leaders, focusing on building connections and networks and incorporating global components through his international non-profit iLEAP in Seattle, Washington.



Ms. Kelly Yamasaki continued describing Denver's similarities with Kumamoto City, except it is growing as millennials continue to re-locate from elsewhere. In the 1990s, Denver was known as "Cowtown" and the transformation to a desired re-location site required a strategy for growth that entailed a coordinated effort with the region, innovation, workforce, infrastructure, and health and wellness. Denver built an environment where residents work and also have easy access to restaurants and recreational places. Buildings were re-purposed to mix the old and new, and as a result, many more are moving to the Denver Metro area. Yamasaki described an initiative she is working on to re-vitalize "Sakura Plaza," a dilapidated area where Japanese-Americans re-located following internment during World War II. She also described the "Mirai (hope) Generation Leadership Program" to teach the younger generation about Japanese heritage and culture.

The presentations were followed by questions from the audience. The first question was directed towards Yamamoto and his experience with organic farming. He responded by stating that it continues to influence his leadership training as it is similar to organic farming. In organic farming, you create the conditions for growth by nurturing the soil; in leadership training, you focus on conditions for growth by exposing Japanese youths to the right conditions. The power of the community is important to succeed.

Silver followed by stating that in America, employees change jobs every few years. The education system in Japan places expectations for students to graduate and search for jobs. She raised the possibility of creating a "gap year" for Japanese students to be able to explore other experiences like they do in Japan. Training the imagination to nurture a new future is necessary.

Silver was asked about the project of redeveloping Bennington for the youth and how it affects the elders living in the same community. She commented that both young and old desire similar amenities: the availability of public transportation to minimize the need to drive and creating hubs of vibrant communities. In Vermont, mixed housing of "empty nesters" housing of senior housing and students have been successful. Kumamoto is already a "walkable" and "bicycle-friendly" city. American universities are economic drivers and engines to creating new businesses in partnership with local businesses, as well as state and local government.

Dr. Kyle Nakamoto commented that building the right conditions and building infrastructures are important to recruit and retain the youth. He further commented that universities need to teach students the skill of how to learn. Yamamoto commented that the events in Tohoku during 2011 was a turning point for social innovation and entrepreneurial spirit. Those from the Tohoku region spurred innovation. He further used the analogy of fire building to spur innovation. Oxygen is needed to fuel a fire, adding too much fuel or wood and it is smothered. Much in the same manner, innovation and the millennial generation are smothered if burdened too much. Silver added that there is concern about millennials burning out and not being able to dis-connect from technology. Their ability to interact with others face-to-face is of concern as the ability to create and nurture networks is of importance in the future.







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## Kumamoto Symposium Reception



Following a stimulating Kumamoto Symposium, a reception was held at the nearby Kumamoto Castle Hotel where participants and attendees followed up with questions and discussions. Ms. Kelly Yamasaki welcomed and thanked the audience for their participation and presence. Ms. Joy Michiko Sakurai, Principal Officer from the U.S. Consulate in Fukuoka welcomed and thanked the group for their participation and reiterated the enduring U.S.-Japan relationship. A show from the Kumamoto Castle Samurai Show wowed the group with their energized performance in authentic costumes. Discussions and further exchanging of business cards followed and the JALD 2019’s official event concluded.





Kumamoto - Origin of the Bear



# Kumamoto Castle



Kumamoto Castle is considered one of the most significant castles in Japan and is a designated National Cultural Property. As our tour guide, Mr. Koga Takeharu led us around the grounds on a cold and wet day, he gave us both a history lesson and a description of the current work that is going on at the site to repair the castle and its walls from the devastating earthquakes in 2016.

Construction of the original castle began more than 400 years ago, and the complex had many more buildings than what remains today. In 1877, during the Satsuma Rebellion, the castle had been surrounded by enemies for 3 days when a fire broke out that destroyed the castle keep and other structures. No one knows how the fire broke out, although some believe that the fire was set by those in the castle to motivate their troops. There are thirteen buildings that escaped the fire, and their wooden structure is in contrast to the main keep which was reconstructed with a concrete frame in 1960.



No matter their age, all of the buildings suffered some damage during the April 2016 earthquakes. The current estimate is that there is 33.4 billion yen worth of damage to the complex and that it will take 20 years to complete the work. One of the main reasons for the extended construction schedule is the amount of care that is being taken to be historically accurate with the reconstruction and to respect its status as a National Cultural Property. As an example of the painstaking work that is being done, each stone that has fallen from the walls is being measured, photographed, compared to old pictures, and is then numbered so that it can be re-installed in the same location.

Another interesting detail that was pointed out by Koga-san was that many of the stones that fell during the earthquake were those that were replaced about 100 years ago from a previous earthquake. The stones that were originally laid 400 years ago did not collapse. Among those original stones were the large stones that were used for the corners of the building foundations. He showed us some incredible photos of buildings being held up primarily by these cornerstones, dozens of feet in the air.

While it was unfortunate that we were not able to view the inside of the castle, seeing the effort and care that was being taken with the reconstruction of this national landmark emphasized the respect that the Japanese people pay to their history. With the main tower scheduled to be re-opened this fall, the opportunity to see the inside of the castle is just one more reason for us to return to Kumamoto.



# Suizenji Jojuen Garden



From the moment we entered the Suizenji Jojuen Garden in Kumamoto, we felt calm and awe at the beauty before us. The rich color of the winter grass and the carefully pruned garden with the lake in front gave a peaceful and enjoyable feeling in the garden. Our walk began with a walk across bridges where koi were swimming. The ancient color of the bridges with rocks, moss and landscape remind us of an era past. There was a Noh theater, Izumi Shinto shrine, Inari shrine and tea house. The garden represents the fifty-three post stations on the Tokaido highway between Kyoto and Edo including a representation of Mount Fuji. This garden is a beautiful representation of Momoyama style gardens.



The small lake is spring-fed water from Mount Aso which was said to bring miraculous effects on one's longevity and the pure water made excellent tea. The thatched Kokindenju-Ma tea house was impressive. It was originally in Kyoto's Imperial Palace over 300 years ago but moved to the garden in 1912. We sat on warmed tatami covered floors, enjoyed the famous green tea of Kumamoto and ate Japanese Izayoi and Kaseita sweets, while looking out on the lake and landscape. The surrounding trees and bushes along with rock and stepping stones added to the ambience of the tea room.

The garden had beginnings as a tea retreat in 1636, and was named after a Buddhist temple that is no longer there. There is a shrine where members of the Hosokawa family are enshrined and two statues of Lord Fujitaka Hosokawa and Tadashi Hosokawa. Lord Fujitaka was a great cultural figure and initiated Prince Toshihito into the secret interpretation of Kokin Wakashu, a Japanese classical poetry in the Kokindenju-Ma tea house. There was a historic photo of a bronze statue dedicated to Moriharu Nagaoka, second son of Monhisa Hosokawa, last lord of the Kumamoto Domain, who was the first noble killed during the Russo-Japanese War in 1904. The statue was melted in 1943 to make weapons during WWII.

The Torii gates at the Inari Shrine, the oranges on the orange trees and plum grove added to the color of the garden. The large inviting arches and Meiji Emperor Memorial reminded us of the history and stories of times past. There were water fowl in the lake. Outside of the entrance were small shops selling Kumamon (Kumamoto mascot) souvenirs, almonds and freshly made ginger cookies that were warm and added to the wonderful atmosphere of the garden. This garden is known as a Kaiyu-Shiki-Teien garden or stroll garden and we would concur, easy to walk, beautiful and calming.



# Kumamoto Traditional Crafts Center



In between meeting the Mayor and the Governor of Kumamoto we stopped at a traditional craft center. We attempted to weave a basket out of bamboo and we quickly realized that it was not as easy as the 4th generation basket weaver made it look when he quickly weaved a basket within minutes; we took an hour, with plenty of help. Leadership does not translate into basket weaving; the craftsman spent more time reconstructing what we built, than the time teaching us. We learned, we laughed at ourselves, and we gained respect and humility for the beautiful traditional craftsmanship in Kumamoto.





# Yamamura Distillery



Yamamura Shozu Brewery was our second stop in the Mt. Aso region of Matsumoto. Located in the town of Takamori, the brewery was established in 1762. The current brewery facility was built in 1860. Mr. Yataro Yamamura, the senior managing director of the company, was our tour guide.

The town of Takamori is surrounded by the five peaks of Mt. Aso to the north, and the sweeping ring of Mr. Aso's caldera to the south. Mr. Yamamura explained that although the climate is extremely cold in the winter, the deep groundwater that bubbles up in the middle of the brewery is almost the same temperature year round. This clean, natural water of consistent temperature is perfect for making sake.

The Yamamura style of sake-making involves brewing widely varying sakes in small batches. "Reizan" is a special brand of sake uniquely brewed by Yamamura Shozu Brewery. Many consider Reizan to be the iconic sake brand in Kumamoto. After four weeks of fermentation, rice is pressed to produce an unpasteurized, young sake with a high 19% alcohol content. This "raw" Reizan sake is available only in the winter. The Yamamura Shozu Brewery makes further refined Reizan sake by filtering the raw sake into milder and more refreshing blends. Mr. Yamamura noted that his sake is intended to enhance the taste of food rather than overpower its flavors, as evidenced by the fact that the majority of Reizan sake is sold to restaurants and bars.

Mr. Yamamura was a magnificent host, who was proud and eager to share the history of his family's long standing sake business. The delegation received a guided tour of the entire brewery facility and developed a great appreciation for the art of sake-making and the special types of sake brewed at Yamamura Shozu Brewery. At the conclusion of the tour, delegates sampled various kinds of sake produced at Yamamura Shozu Brewery and purchased many bottles of sake as omiyage for family and friends in the U.S.



# Aso-Kusasenri



Between the shoyu and the sake factory, we had a relaxing walk in the caldera outlook point of the Aso-Kusasenri. A breather to reflect and spend time with our MOFA colleagues was greatly appreciated. We were on the lookout for the white turtles, which would be a sign of good luck for our trip. While we walked and drank tea we made connections.

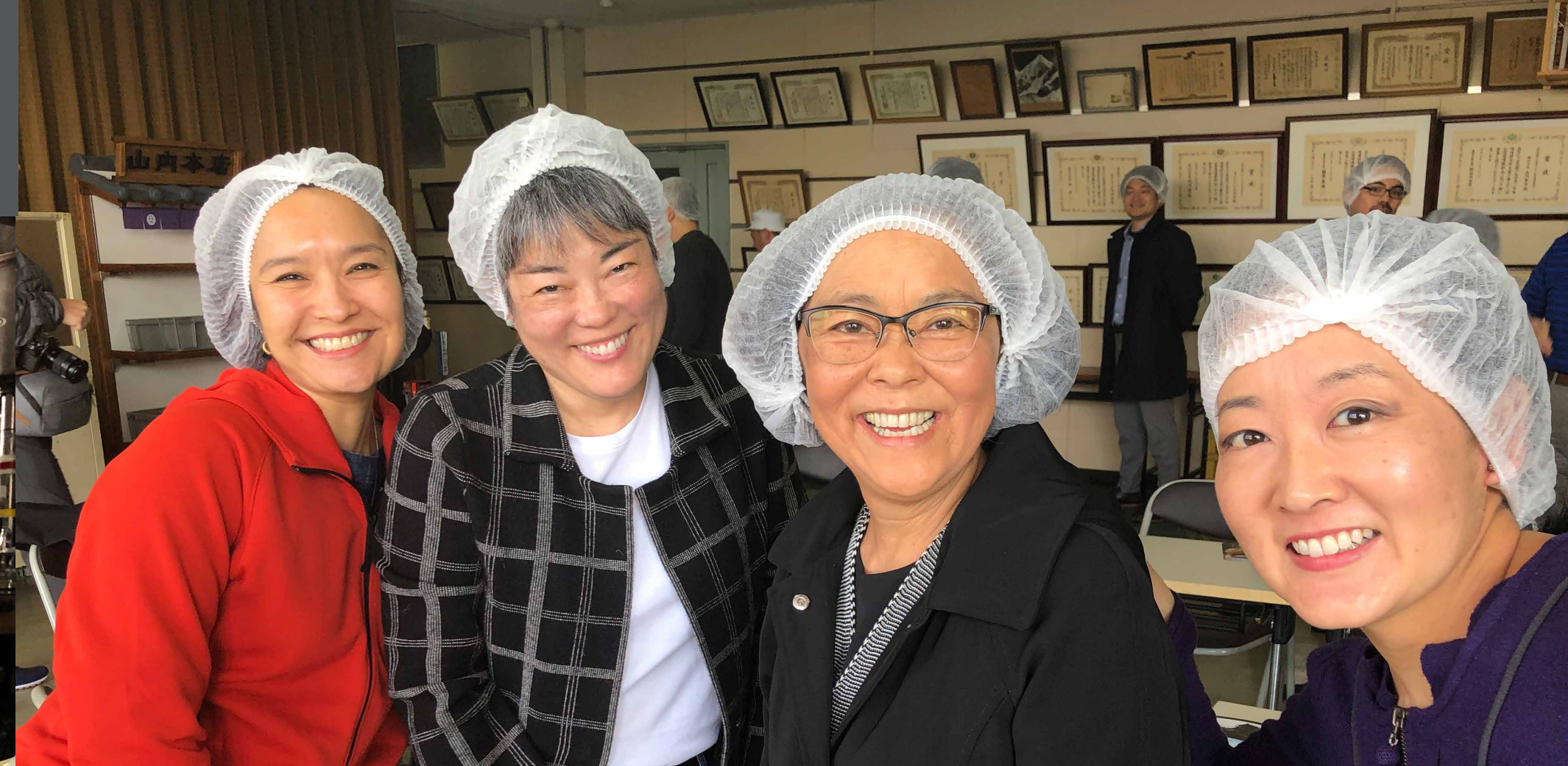


# Yamauchi-Honten Brewery



Yamauchi Honten Co, Ltd. was established in 1910, although the founding can be traced back as early as 1751. They are known for their excellent products. President Takashi Yamauchi of Yamauchi Honten, talked about the ten generations of his family involvement in the business. He discussed the master craftsman, Toshihiro Nagata, and his 50 years of experience in making miso and the numerous awards recognizing him as a contemporary master craftsman by the Ministry of Labor, Ministry of Agriculture and the Prime Minister. Mr. Nagata has been involved in the creation of numerous products with his great intuition, sharp eyes, and a discerning palate.

The delegation was taken through the various stages in making miso and shoyu by Mr. Hisatoshi Tajiri who used a pictorial guide to show us each step. We then went on a walking tour of the company taking careful steps to wear proper netting on our heads. We walked through the lab department and learned about the regulations and laws that must be followed to insure the highest quality of product and safety. They also discussed the various steps in the fermentation process.



The tour provided an opportunity to discuss the various types of miso that are produced from the very expensive to the more economically priced. Each step included how products are used and some of the byproducts that are used for feed. Soybeans are carefully selected for the right size and texture, especially for products known for their smoothness and texture.

It was interesting to hear about how the excellent water of Kumamoto helps insure delicious products. We learned how the wastewater treatment facility is utilized, and how the water is cleaned and returned to the river. The remaining product can then be sold and used as fertilizer. They have received several awards for their efforts related to the preservation and sustainability of a clean environment.

The delegation visited the company store which sold items including soy sauce, miso, soup stock, seasonings as well as other products. Several bottles featured the Kumamoto mascot Kumamon.

Learning about the process of making miso and shoyu from a company with such a deep tradition reminds us of the skills, traditions and innovations of companies in Japan.



# Kumamoto-Kabo Factory



The last official activity for our delegation was a tour of the Kumamoto Kabo factory. It was fitting that the dessert of our trip was a tour of a sweets factory! Kumamoto Kabo makes over 200 different types of sweets with annual sales of \$1.2 billion yen, which they accomplish with just 70 employees.

In contrast to our tours of the miso and sake facilities, the Kumamoto Kabo factory offered our group the chance to see a more modern food production facility that ships its products throughout Japan. Our tour guide showed us how the raw ingredients enter the building through an air lock that blew the dust and dirt from our clothing. Since we were not going to be touching the food we did not have to go through the full sanitizing process that the staff must do, but we can vouch for the cleansing process that everyone who enters the manufacturing part of the building must go through.

They let us peek at a couple of the different preparations, assembly and baking machines, and then showed us how some of the sweets are flash frozen and packaged so that they can maintain their freshness during shipping. We even got to see one of the packing processes in which each sweet is sent through a metal detector that can detect metal down to 2.5 mm. While Japan does not have any regulations regarding metal the US does not allow any metal particles larger than 6 mm, so Kumamoto Kabo's products meet US Food and Drug Administration regulations.

One of the specialties of Kumamoto Kabo is a baked sweet potato cake, and our tour guide was able to spend some time showing us how the sweet was made. We were shown how the diced sweet potatoes are placed on the cake dough, sprinkled with black sesame seeds, and then sent through a conveyor belt oven. Once the cakes are finished baking they are moved onto another conveyor belt which slowly brought the pastries to an inspection point. This conveyor belt is set at a slow speed so that the small cakes have a chance to cool. After each cake is inspected they are run through a metal detector and then packaged.

As a parting gift the factory gave each of us a small bag which contained samples of some of their pastries, including the sweet potato cake. As we headed to the airport from the factory we enjoyed a sweet snack as a delicious end to our stay in Kumamoto.







## **Daniel K. Inouye**

September 7, 1924 – December 17, 2012

He was an American politician who served as a United States Senator from Hawaii from 1963 until his death in 2012. Inouye fought in World War II as part of the 442nd Infantry Regiment. He lost his right arm to a grenade wound and received several military decorations, including the Medal of Honor.

# Ganbari

Persistence, steadfastness to a purpose or course of action.

## JALD 2019 Wrap-up Dinner













**Vermont**

**Idaho**

**Hawaii**

**Arizona**

**Virginia**

*Geography, gender, race and ideology should not  
have any borders or walls to separate us.*

**Washington**

**Michigan**

**Nebraska**

**California**





JALD 19

## Andy Fujimoto

### Boise, Idaho

Within all resides a vast world – some parts explored and others great frontiers of unknown, excitement, adventure, and even anxiety. The Japanese American Leadership Delegation was a “once in a lifetime” experience. In its entirety, try as I might, I could never replicate it. I had opportunity to explore the spatial elements of the world by going to places I’d never seen, tasting foods I’d never eaten, having experiences I’d never done, meeting people I’d never met, but more importantly I discovered meaning and identity I’d never recognized.

Although, I knew I was Japanese American, I did not have as strong of an affiliation with being Japanese as I do now. My birth and rearing in the U.S., a 2-year Japanese speaking church mission in Hokkaido, marriage to my wife from Miyazaki, professional career in the U.S., four children, two grandchildren, prospects for great-grandchildren and even further unseen posterity, and now my JALD experience have changed my perspective about my explored and unexplored world. The paradox of recognizing how we are different through such elements as our backgrounds and yet the same through the yearnings of our hearts is awesome.

*“This program truly does draw two nations together by the leveraging the power of “one-on-one” and “people-to-people” relations.”*

Four experiences have caused me to explore frontier where I have never placed foot. One occurred at the orientation meeting. In typical “Hawaiian Island” style, Kurt Osaki brought a gift for all of the delegates from one of his clients, Big Island Candies. As he distributed the gift he told of a conversation he had with that company’s CEO. Kurt asked the CEO about the secret to success. The CEO responded, “Giving is the secret to success.” I have seen many individuals and organizations “give” that I might have things I would never otherwise have. I too must pay that forward and “give” to others because I can see the by-product will be success. Princess Takamado told us the following, “Think of Japan warmly. Think of yourself as part of Japan. Bring your children to Japan. If you have Japanese blood in you, you are Japanese. We are always on the side of the person who is Japanese.” One of our delegates, Mariko Silver said at the closing of Forum 21, “Blood and the heart tie hearts together.” In the Kumamoto symposium delegate Britt Yamamoto, told of a principle he learned from a farmer while he lived in Japan. The farmer asked Britt, “What is the difference between conventional and organic farming?” The farmer answered his own question by teaching, “A conventional farmer grows plants. An organic farmer grows the soil.” My JALD experience prompts me not only enjoy the fruit of my life, but the soil from which it originates.

When talking to Minister Taro Kono, he invited us with the following, “I want all of you to come to Japan.” I responded by saying, “I’d love to bring my family for a visit.” He said, “No, not just for a visit, but to live here.” As I have thought about this, it tells me “high quality character” is “high quality character” and nationality nor language should define it. Goodness is the ticket to successfully explore all the world.

Lastly, in our meetings I met Kohei Akiyama. He is the Director of North America Exchange Division (First North America Division) of the North American Affairs Bureau. He travels with Prime Minister Abe and Foreign Minister Kono around the world and writes speeches for Minister Kono. He was very engaging. He told me he speaks Japanese, Arabic, and English. He was with us when we visited Princess Takamado, at the Japanese American Leaders breakfast, and then a luncheon with representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. I sat by him in the last two meetings. I was impressed with his accomplishments and even more so with his warm heart. I told him before we parted that if I were his father, I would be very proud of his accomplishments. After returning to the United States, I wrote him a thank you e-mail. He promptly responded and referenced the comment I made about his father. He wrote that his father had passed away 3 years ago and he was unable to talk with him anymore. I proposed that possibly his father is still able to talk with him and that possibly my words were his father’s. Meeting great people like Akiyama-san is one of the great fortunes of this program.

I’ve made a friendships and gained wisdom that will go far beyond our JALD meetings. I feel this about the 2019 delegation and with those I met in Japan. This program truly does draw two nations together by the leveraging the power of “one-on-one” and “people-to-people” relations. It is a gift received from the frontier of life that needs and is qualified for me to share with others.





*"It seemed odd that I was born and raised in Central California and yet I felt a strong obligation towards the people of Japan; I am still trying to understand how I could feel this way..."*

JALD19

**Joy Goto**

Fresno, California

I never thought I would be going to Japan in 2019, considering that my last trip was a family trip back in 1998. Well, 21 years later and with the encouragement of our newly minted honorary consul general, the Honorable Dale Ikeda, I applied for the JALD last fall 2018.

My goals prior to the trip were simple - learn as much about the current Japan, based on the itinerary that included government officials, Japanese royalty, and the people of Kumamoto. What I did not expect and was surprised about was the realization that the trip was just one part and start of the whole wonderful adventure with a mix of nine other individuals from all over the U.S. and from different, and unique professional backgrounds from the military, non-profit, academia, law, architecture, industry, and creative arts. I think it became apparent to me that this was a special and unique opportunity, all stemming from the orientation at the Japanese American National Museum during our 2-day orientation one month prior to our weeklong trip to Japan. Irene Hirano Inouye set the tone of what was expected of us, and MOFA and the U.S.-Japan Council representatives prepared us, and JALD alums kept saying this was a unique opportunity. Nothing could have prepared me for this trip emotionally and professionally.

I thought that this would be a professional business trip exchanging meishis and networking. Layered onto this impression was what unfolded as soon as we all met up as a delegation, in the Narita airport and hotel lobby. It was a swirl of exchanges between the lives of people from varied backgrounds, ambitions, dreams, and the heart of who we are as people. A five-day trip seemed like a month long family trip because of the truly unique one-on-one exchanges in the bus ride between business meetings, and the friendships that emerged from the nervous anticipation of our meetings and ~24 events of the trip. The discussions about the upcoming 2020 Olympics, the new Imperial Era, and the frank exchange about womenomics, stood out to me as the most memorable discussions. At the forefront were topics of the declining population, increasing aging elderly, the influx of foreign workers and their integration into Japan society, the plethora of talent but the dearth of opportunities to expand on data science, and the still existing gender disparities.

My realization during the trip was that I have a lot in-common with the Japanese people, as a 2.5 generation Japanese-American. It seemed odd that I was born and raised in Central California and yet I felt a strong obligation towards the people of Japan; I am still trying to understand how I could feel this way. However, this is what changed my outlook on what I could and really should do to help build the bridge between the U.S. and Japan. I hope to advance these academic exchanges at the California State University (CSU) level, where we have a collective student population of ~500,000 students over 23 CSU campuses. I am excited to see what my future journey holds.



JALD 19

## Mark Nakagawa

Virginia, Washington

When I was informed of my selection to the 2019 JALD, I was honored and woefully unaware of the adventure that I about to embark upon. Previous delegates informed me about the experience, but only now after a few weeks after returning, do I realize the enormity and impact of the experience.

The level of access to officials, dignitaries, industry leaders, and many others was simply amazing and mindboggling. Their willingness to share their experiences and insights were invaluable.

In one of our first meetings, we were informed that anybody with Japanese blood is considered Japanese. I believe that it is the "face" version, but reality is a bit different. Japan remains a homogeneous society and culture that realize and understand the underlying issues, but in true Japanese fashion, they ignore the problem until faced with reality.

Diversity enriches a society and unless Japan realizes the reality and become more inclusive, it will not continue to be a viable country, society, and culture beyond the 21st century.



*"The JALD experience has reaffirmed my Japanese heritage and culture and I am proud to be an American of Japanese heritage benefitting from the best of both worlds."*

A few trends quickly became apparent from our meetings that impact Japan. (1) America's actions or inactions affect Japan in ways not envisioned by us; and (2) Japanese leaders recognize issues affecting Japan, but are reluctant to take the necessary actions to resolve them. The aging and declining population and the rigid education system are a few of the issues that emerged from our meetings that need to be addressed.

In my opinion, the visit to Kumamoto highlights Japan's current situations. In April 2016, an earthquake devastated Kumamoto and its effects are evident in March 2019. Kumamoto-jo (castle) sustained damages that will take close to 20 years to repair. In true Japanese manner, every boulder that was displaced has been identified, numbered, and laid out and to be placed back in place, boulder by boulder. Rebuilding using modern building techniques can strengthen the wall, but why are they not rebuilding using modern, earthquake resistant techniques? Because it is not in the traditional, Japanese way. However, the part of Kumamoto-jo built 400 years ago were unaffected by the tremors, it was the portion that was re-built 100 years ago that crumbled. So maybe the traditional ways have merit. The Japanese reluctance to change their traditional manner is based on centuries of history and culture. There are temples, shrines, trees, and many other artifacts in Japan that predate the creation of the United States of America. The centuries of history and culture cannot simply be disregarded, but must be updated to meet the current issues. Leaders are aware of the solutions, but hesitate to making changes, lest upset the status quo.

The JALD experience has reaffirmed my Japanese heritage and culture and I am proud to be an American of Japanese heritage benefitting from the best of both worlds. One of our delegates remarked in a meeting that we are the children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren of Japanese immigrants to America. We represent various career paths and are successful blending the best characteristics of both countries. I am inspired to further the U.S. – Japan Alliance as we are best positioned to be able to be the bridge between the two countries.

I am eternally grateful to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the U.S. – Japan Council, The Japan Foundation's Center for Global Partnership, many others that I have omitted, but most of all, I am appreciative to my fellow JALD 2019 participants for a life changing experience. We met in Los Angeles as strangers for orientation, and at the end of the trip, I have nine new brothers and sisters, my new "ohana" with shared experiences that can never be replicated. Spending time with an incredibly talented and accomplished group of diverse Japanese – Americans was an absolutely incredibly humbling experience. The seeds to further cultivate the people-to-people relationship has been established. I look forward to the future as the seeds germinate and grow in the future, nurtured by the environment created by JALD.





**“This trip has deepened my connections to Japanese American society and strengthened my desire to contribute to Japan American relations.”**

JALD19

**Kyle Nakamoto**

Dearborn, Michigan

MI


I am still overwhelmed by the breadth and depth of the JALD program. I hope the connections with the other JALD delegates will last a lifetime; from the cabinet level meetings to karaoke with Diet member it was an intense bonding experience. The warm messages from Princess Takamado and from Foreign Minister Kono made me believe that my family would be welcome in Japan. This was experience that had an amazing span across Japanese society and surprising depth of discussion.

One of the goals of the Abe administration is society 5.0, in which artificial intelligence (AI) plays a central role. The transformation of society by AI is a constant motivation and concern in my life also. However in the variety of meetings we had, possibly due to translation or the participants, I did not sense urgency in the discussion of AI transformation. This was also highlighted by my personal experience, most of the people I hire are chinese, indian, or middle eastern. I have not seen an application of a japanese citizen for a data scientist position. I feel that the best way that I could repay the hospitality of MOFA and participate in Japanese-American relations, is to engage japanese institutions with the intent of training teams in AI.

This trip has deepened my connections to Japanese American society and strengthened by desire to contribute to Japan American relations. Spurred by this desire I have co-founded a social enterprise, Nichibeai AI services L3.C..The vision is to provide a channel for US experts in AI to train and consult with regional japanese universities and companies. With the goal of ramping-up deployment teams to transform traditional companies into companies that can be competitive in the era of AI. Lead by Japanese Americans, and a multi-cultural team, we seek to increase ties between Japan and America, as well as develop personal connections to our ancestral roots.

This trip seems to be an inflection point in my life, especially the personal connections that I have made. I believe that years from now I will be drinking sochu with my fellow delegates, and Kaz, laughing about this trip and reminiscing over the changes it made in our lives. This has highlighted our personal potential to improve Japan U.S. relations.





**“To honor the values of our Japanese heritage regardless of where we’re from, how we look, think, or speak. I believe the shared values between ourselves and Japan will keep leading us to a better world.”**

JALD19  
**Kurt Osaki**  
Kaua’i, Hawaii

I was honored to be part of the 2019 Japanese American Leadership Delegation; to be a representative for an American community that has a unique position to serve as a link between two countries that share similar aspirations of the global future but have very different societal and business rhythms and patterns that serve and support the development of the respective paths.

Being a resident of Hawaii, I have a unique perspective in comparison with my colleagues as Hawaii has served as a direct bridge between Japan and the US. I have been able to experience a more direct connection to my Japanese heritage because of my frequent interactions in Hawaii with Japanese people and culture. Due to my ancestors and growing up in Hawaii, the concepts of *sekinin*, *enryo*, *gaman*, *takumi* or *omotenashi* naturally permeate my daily life as a person and member of society – but my embracing of such concepts was modified through my lens of being American. However, my fellow delegates showed me how they lived their lives with a natural interconnection between their citizenship and their heritage.

One of the most genuine and rewarding aspects of my trip was meeting my fellow delegates. Each delegate had a unique story, and it was a great honor to work and experience with them how their Japanese heritage has impacted their lives. I had the opportunity to expand my own cultural identity and develop lasting relationships with persons who could understand my feeling of being Japanese and American at the same time.

Similar family stories of immigration and life in America shared by my fellow members of the delegation were each distinct and beautiful. From Vermont to Hawaii we all took different paths to be where we are today. We all shared different stories; an architect from Colorado who is a leader in educational institutions, a President of a college in Vermont changing the way we look at diversity to a woman in rural Nebraska renovating a piece of Japanese American history, an attorney in Arizona changing the way we approach corporate restructuring; an Army Ranger working for the US Department of Defense, a community visionary in Seattle opening the minds of our youth; a groundbreaking scientist in Fresno making a difference in the fight against Alzheimer’s, Parkinson’s and ALS; a self-proclaimed “cool nerd” doing innovative work in advanced analytics at Ford Motor Company in Michigan and an owner of a successful insurance company in Idaho who confirmed that good people can finish first. As the trip progressed, it became obvious that our diversity allowed us to develop in different directions and philosophies, but our understanding and awareness of our heritage brought us together.

Our meeting with Princess Takamado was one of the highlights of my trip. Her Highness exemplifies having a diverse cultural perspective and an open world view. I imagined the experiences Princess Takamado and her family had living in countries so different from Japan. Hearing her story reminded me of my grandparents’ journey to Hawaii, and how my grandparents’ devotion to create a better life for the next generation while passing on Japanese culture and traditions shaped my identity as a Japanese American.

During our meetings, our Japanese counterparts were curious and fascinated by our delegation of divergently successful citizens from different locations and circumstances. They wanted to understand how our American values shaped our lives, but I am hopeful we are able to share with them that our strength comes from the combination of our American and Japanese aspects and our willingness to be open about change and different views. Due to *kachikan*, I want to be mindful of this vision for diversity and openness, but I truly feel that the commonality in our values allow much more progress in the coming years that we must not forget. This is an ongoing evolution for ourselves as we were once again introduced to our Japanese culture during our many discussions during this trip which we can now share with our respective colleagues and communities.

I’d like to thank Consul General Ito, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the U.S. Japan Council for providing me the opportunity to foster relationships between the United States and Japan. I am also appreciative of my fellow delegates, who have already accomplished great social, economic and political accomplishments and I’m certain will be the next generation of Japanese American leaders. The experiences and relationships I made were only possible because of those who came before us. While there are many shared challenges for the future, I understand my responsibility - *sekinin* - as a Japanese American to an ever-changing community. To honor the values of our Japanese heritage regardless of where we’re from, how we look, think, or speak. I believe the shared values between ourselves and Japan will keep leading us to a better world.



JALD 19

## Vickie Sakurada Schaepler Kearney, Nebraska

Coming from rural Nebraska, we are proud of how Japan has partnered with the United States and built a strong reputation. I have learned of the strong partnership Japan has developed with Nebraska through the purchase of our products and investing in our state. The Japanese and Japanese Americans of our area instilled a sense of pride in Japan by teaching us values of family, respect, education and hard work. Yet they chose not to teach us Japanese and did not discuss what happened during the war. I believe it was to help us assimilate and not have any anger or prejudice.

For me there was a sense of loss at not knowing or understanding my Japanese background. Being able to participate in this delegation touched my heart, and I am grateful for having this lifechanging experience.

Traveling to the home of my ancestors with a group of other Japanese Americans taught me about the connections we share and how we can benefit from diverse experiences to strengthen the relationship between Japan and the United States.

**I noticed the way they cared for the towns and cities, no trash yet no trash receptacles.**

The program allowed us to travel to Los Angeles where we met with previous JALD members and members of the U.S Japan Council. This helped us to prepare and learn more of the history of Japan and the differences yet similarities of our countries. It was also an opportunity to meet the members of our delegation; they became my teachers since I knew so little of Japan and the foods and customs. Forum 21, the JALD Symposium, and each meeting provided opportunities to meet business executives, Japanese Americans working in Japan, Japanese leaders who had lived in America, government officials, members of the Diet and others who discussed challenges from the Japanese perspective and the American perspective. Issues of a limited work force, women working, changing needs with technology, trade and more. Hearing these first hand from leadership gave me a better understanding.

Princess Takamado was eloquent and well spoken. Foreign Minister, Taro Kano, was an impressive host who gave opportunity for exchanges of information and arranged for Karaoke, my first experience. House member and Special Assistance to Prime Minister Abe, Sonora Kentaro spent time discussing issues and questions. One of my favorite conversations was talking with Bill Ireton of Sony Pictures, whose previous experience lead us to discuss the reception by the Japanese people of movies including "The Last Samurai "and "Letters from Iwo Jima". It gave me the Japanese perspective for two of my favorite movies. Also, Hiroshi Yamakawa, President of Japan Exploration Agency (Japan's equivalent of NASA), who was a visiting scientist at NASA, showed the important partnerships our countries have shared. It was also inspiring to hear Kumamoto Governor Kabashima share his story about Nebraska. Most memorable were the people of Japan. Throughout our trip, the people were helpful and asked if we needed assistance. On the subway and on crowded streets they moved in ways that respected our space and it did not feel crowded. I noticed the way they cared for the towns and cities, no trash yet no trash receptacles.

As a person who loves history, to see the preservation efforts at Kumamoto and throughout Japan, is inspiring. There appears to be a strong desire to preserve the past, remember the accomplishments and tell the stories. Rebuilding the castle and the grounds at Kumamoto Castle is commendable, as well as the discussion of recovery from the earthquake in Kumamoto, the focus on the people and learning for the future. Buildings are preserved in Tokyo which in many cities would be gone. To experience and see the culture preserved in places we ate, and to eat in traditional ways reminded us of this history. For me, the people of Japan is their greatest asset. Thank you to Consul General Naoki Ito for coming to rural Nebraska to learn about the Japanese and Japanese Americans in our state. Thank you to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the U.S. - Japan Council and the Japan Foundation Center for Global Partnerships for sponsoring our trip which gave me the opportunity to make my first trip to Japan, traveling with an amazing group of Japanese Americans. I hope we will bring this pride, knowledge and experience to others when they visit our small museum of Japanese History in Nebraska and the High Plains when it is moved and completed.





JALD 19

**Mariko Silver**  
Bennington, Vermont

The 2019 JALD trip was an extraordinary experience with a wonderful group of Japanese-Americans and Japanese counterparts. As a half-Japanese Yonsei, the trip opened my eyes to the diversity of contemporary Japanese-American experiences, and provided a unique and privileged window into many of the cultural and policy matters of greatest importance to contemporary Japan and the Japan-U.S. relationship.

Though I have had the opportunity to work with many high-ranking Japanese government officials and leaders in education in my positions in the Obama administration and in my work building partnerships between U.S. and Japanese universities, the JALD trip provided perspectives that I could never otherwise access. The individual meetings with ministers, Diet members, and business leaders were deeply informative, particularly when the conversations were frank and engaged. Forum 21 was a highlight in this regard, as were the meetings with Keidanren and with Japanese-Americans living in Japan. We were especially appreciative of Rep. Kentaro Sonoura taking ample time to discuss in depth the demographic, technological, immigration and workforce issues, as well as gender issues, facing Japan.

The conversations I was able to have with Professor Meiko Nakabayashi and with Kathy Matsui about Womenomics, the hurdles and challenges facing women in family life as well as in the workforce (and the progress that can be made both the policy and at the cultural level), and how the coming wave of artificial intelligence developments will impact Japan were revelatory. I hope to keep in touch with both of these remarkable leaders.

I am grateful to our colleagues and friends from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for their ongoing insights and essential guidance. The connections I made on as a JALD delegate have already led to new engagements and ideas. I look forward to building new relationships and projects with many of the established and emerging leaders we met throughout the visit.

The visit to Kumamoto was an essential part of the trip, providing insight into the Japanese experience well beyond Tokyo. While the earthquake damage is significant still, the spirit of the city and of the countryside shone through. The conversations during and following the symposium were vital complements to the national and international policy conversations we had in Tokyo. I am already excited to return to beautiful Kumamoto and Mt. Aso with my family for a visit!

Our delegation's diversity contributed greatly to its strength. Hailing from rural areas with few Japanese-Americans, as well as emerging and large cities in the U.S., we brought a range of experiences and expertise to each conversation, enabling us to cover a wide variety of topics from multiple angles. I must say, too, that we enjoyed ourselves enormously, loved getting to know each other and our new Japanese friends.

In our official meetings and in our time over meals and in transit, the delegation talked extensively about the importance of people-to-people connections to creating a better future for everyone.

**“We are all committed to this work, and to JALD. We look forward to continuing to learn, work, and laugh together.”**





JALD 19

**Bryce Suzuki**

Phoenix, Arizona

**“I now understand why JALD alumni so often describe the experience as “life changing,” a “watershed moment,” and “once in a lifetime.”**

Participating in the 2019 Japanese American Leadership Delegation was an extraordinary experience, for which I am deeply grateful. Not only did I learn immeasurably from high-ranking business and government leaders in Japan, I was continually impressed with each of my fellow delegates and our delegation leader, Kaz Maniwa, of the U.S.-Japan Council. Their individual perspectives on U.S.-Japan relations and what it means to be Japanese American made a lasting impression on me. Within days of our return to the U.S., our delegation was already planning a reunion to further strengthen our relationships and continue the conversations we started in Japan. I look forward to engaging with my fellow delegates and other JALD alumni for years to come.

Prior to the JALD trip, I had visited Japan many times and maintained ties with family in Japan throughout my life. Despite my existing relationship with Japan, deep as I perceived it, I came away from this journey with a new perspective and richer appreciation for Japan and U.S.-Japan relations. I think differently about Japan and my own identity as a Japanese American based on the personal relationships and meaningful discussions with thought leaders, both Japanese and Japanese-American, I met during the delegation. I now understand why JALD alumni so often describe the experience as “life changing,” a “watershed moment,” and “once in a lifetime.”

The delegation was given remarkable access to top Japanese government and business leaders, including Her Imperial Highness Princess Takamado, members of Prime Minister Abe’s Office, top ministry officials, National Diet members, city and prefectural leaders in Kumamoto, and leaders of some of the world’s largest and most successful corporations. From my experience as a lawyer, I’m no stranger to the corporate boardroom nor the halls of government, but during the delegation, I often had to pinch myself to ensure I wasn’t dreaming as we sat with an imperial princess or sang karaoke with top elected and ministry officials.

I returned from the delegation with a renewed sense of identity as a Japanese American. Growing up in a rural community as part of the only Japanese American family in town, I had virtually no exposure to other Japanese Americans. Upon moving to Arizona after law school, I became deeply involved in the local Japanese American community for the first time. As the only living JALD alumnus from Arizona, I feel a tremendous responsibility to Arizona’s Japanese American community. JALD has plugged me into an amazing network of Japanese American leaders and allowed me to begin developing relationships with leaders in Japan. I am enthused about the opportunity to contribute to the Japanese American community, nationally and in Arizona, and to help strengthen U.S.-Japan relations.

I am grateful for the support of those who made my participation in JALD possible, including Honorary Consul of Japan for Arizona, Kelly Moeur, the Consul General of Japan in Los Angeles, and Consul Shigeru Kikuma, who accompanied the delegation to Japan and provided invaluable guidance throughout the trip. It was a tremendous honor to be part of such an impressive group of Japanese American leaders, whom I now count as lifetime friends.



JALD 19

## Britt Yamamoto Seattle, Washington

WA

When I reflect back on my JALD experience there are two things that stand out the most: the connections that I made with those in my delegation and the Kumamoto symposium.

I had known about the JALD program for many years, having had many friends who were alumni of the program. I have also traveled to Japan countless times and lived for two long stretches as a working professional. For these reasons, I didn't have many concerns going into the experience. At the same time, I was very aware that I would need to approach the week with a fresh perspective and that, while I was very familiar with Japan in some respects, this trip was a chance to see and experience it anew—and especially with a new group of people.

To be honest, because this was the first year that the program was consciously working to recruit from “rural and under-represented” areas of the US, I was a bit concerned about who was going to be in this delegation. I fully embrace the importance of contrast and diversity within groups, but at the same time if I am being fully honest, I was not so excited about sharing 7 intense days with a majority of people who's political and social views were wildly different than mine. But after the orientation in LA, my concerns were assuaged and over the subsequent weeks, our group truly became a family.

I cannot know what will materialize from our many meetings with Japanese leaders. But I feel confident saying that my relationships within my cohort will continue to grow and flourish. There is a genuine love and enjoyment that people have for each other and this extends beyond the superficiality of titles and the professional accomplishments of each person (and this group has many highly accomplished people!). The expression of ego and “look at me” individualism was absent in our group and, for this reason, it allowed and empowered each person to show up with confidence and their own voice. It was truly beautiful to be a part of and, as someone who works regularly in the facilitation of groups, I can say that this is not a common occurrence. So, perhaps, most of all, I am grateful and so deeply appreciative of the impact that each member had on me and my experience.

The second thing that stood out most for me during the trip was the Kumamoto symposium. Along with Mariko Silver and Kelly Yamasaki, I was honored to be one of the three panelists. This was extra special for me as I lived in Kumamoto from 1995-96 and my maternal roots are from the prefecture. This was very much a homecoming for me and a chance to share my story and gratitude for all that the people of Kumamoto have given my in my life. I feel that an excerpt from my speech at the Symposium can best capture what Kumamoto means to me:

Some of you may know that, after World War 2 in the 1950s, there was a program that sent young Japanese to the West Coast of United States to learn more about American farming methods. Many of the farmers that the groups from Japan visited were Japanese and Japanese American farmers. My issei grandfather was a farmer in the Los Angeles area at the time, and his farm was one of these places that groups from Japan would regularly visit.

While I was living in Kumamoto, my grandfather mailed me a copy of an article in Japanese. I was unable to read any of it, so I took it to Takekuma sensei to review. Immediately, he was very intrigued and made a phone call to a local friend. Within a few hours, Takekuma sensei and I were at this friend's home, sitting down for tea.

On the way there, Takekuma sensei shared with me that we were going to visit his friend who was once the Mayor of Kikuchi city. In fact, this man was the Mayor when Takekuma sensei came up with the idea for creating Kikuchi Youjouen. In many ways, this man was responsible for helping to make the creation of this innovative public health center a reality and Takekuma sensei expressed how much he admired and appreciated this man.

Unfortunately, the former Mayor had been suffering from declining health and dementia. He was living with his younger brother, who was helping to care for him.

When we entered the home, Takekuma sensei shared the article with the Mayor's brother, who then showed it to the Mayor. Immediately the former Mayor turned and walked to his room, where he emerged 10 minutes later with a scrapbook.

He sat down and turned the pages silently and when he got to one in the middle of the book, he pointed and smiled. It was the same article that my grandfather had sent to me—and in it was a photo of the Mayor as a young man, at my grandfather's farm in Los Angeles!

Yes, this Mayor had been a part of one of these farming delegations in the 1950s and visited my grandfather's farm. In fact, he was very inspired by what he saw there and, while he would eventually go into public service, the trip stuck with him. In fact, it could be said that his trip to the United States helped to shape his views of agriculture and community—so that, some years later, when Takekuma sensei proposed the creation of Kikuchi Youjouen, he could better understand the vision.

While we cannot say that my grandfather helped to influence the creation of Kikuchi Youjouen, where his grandson (ME!) would live many years later—it certainly illustrates the power of global connections to shape local experiences.

In closing, I want to express my deepest and heartfelt gratitude to the US-Japan Council, MOFA, and the Japan Foundation for making this experience possible for me. I leave with lifelong friendships, unforgettable memories, and a full heart even more committed to US-Japan relations.

**“So, perhaps, most of all, I am grateful and so deeply appreciative of the impact that each member had on me and my experience.”**

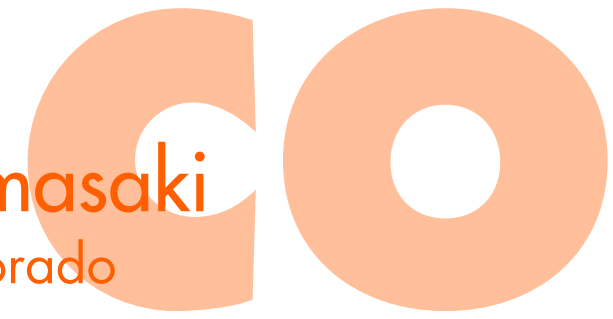




**“On a personal level, I leave this trip inspired. Inspired to do more for our local Japanese American community in Denver and inspired to look for other opportunities to make connections to Japan.”**

JALD 19

**Kelly Yamasaki**  
Denver, Colorado



I know quite a few people in Denver who are past JALD delegates, and while they told me who we would meet and what type of activities we would do they really didn't tell me what it was like to take part in this trip. I was told about days filled with meetings and late night Ramen runs, but not about the intensity of the discussions and the serious issues being debated. When I was asked to participate in the Symposium and then we were sent a reading assignment on Asian security before Orientation, I got my first clues about the true nature of our trip.

I'm not very political, and in my work and everyday life I have no reason to give much thought to the relationship between the United States and Japan. This program has been a crash course in understanding the relationship of our two countries from political, economic, business and cultural points of view. It has given me the opportunity to interact with Japanese people in a way that I have never been able to do on my own as a tourist, and I am immensely grateful to have been given this opportunity.

While the access we were given to political and business leaders was incredible, the special moments and most important experiences for me were with the other delegates. It is so rare to be given an opportunity to step out of our busy lives and to be able to bond with such a range of accomplished people. I also believe that the diversity of our group added to my enjoyment of the experience. While we continuously mentioned that our group was geographically diverse and came from the academic, business, and non-profit worlds I don't think that does justice to the true range of our diverse experiences. Because we came from such different backgrounds we had to quickly understand one another's strengths, agree to a division of responsibilities, and then we supported one another with a true desire to see each of us present ourselves and our group in the most positive light to our hosts.

I believe that the range of backgrounds of our group also helped present a true picture of the Japanese American community to our hosts. We repeatedly heard that connections are made People to People, and I believe that is true, but those connections can be made throughout the United States and Japan and not just between Washington DC or California and Tokyo. I think that there is as much to gain, if not more, in our smaller Japanese American communities by forging connections to Japan than by just focusing on those areas with the largest concentrations of Japanese Americans. I also think our group learned more about the diversity of the Japanese American experience from one another, and we were able to shed some of our own pre-conceptions about what it's like to be from Idaho or Nebraska or Michigan.



*We came together from different parts of the country,  
different communities, different beliefs and different  
backgrounds, what brought us together was our  
Japanese heritage.*









