

Allan E. Goodman Keynote Speech
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What if Lady Murasaki Studied Abroad?

A Reflection on Global Trends in Student Mobility

Imagine the gift to the world if Lady Murasaki had, in fact, studied abroad. We know she had a keen interest in learning foreign languages, but because Heian Court manners did not permit co-education, she did this by listening at a doorway while the princes had their Chinese lessons.



Hiroshige ukiyo-e (1852)

And in the very first Chapter of The Tale of Genji, there is already a reference to events in the “the Land Beyond the Sea.” Had Lady Murasaki indeed traveled to the China ruled by the Song Dynasty, she could have reported with her fine eye for detail on the dynamics of what was then the world’s strongest regime and system of government. Or, embarking on the Silk Road, she could have travelled to the Baghdad of the Abbasid Caliphate and observed its Golden Age of scientific discovery first hand, noting there how politics, religion, and progress could go hand-in-hand.

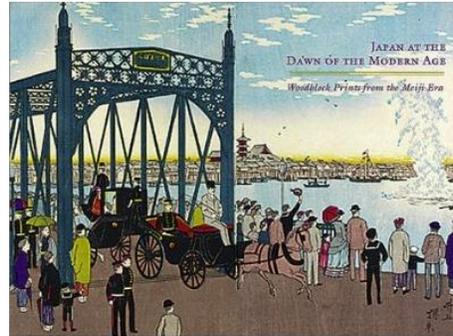
Thank you for inviting and indulging me.

By starting these reflections with a work of fiction – and arguably the world’s first novel – that is now more than a thousand years old and a speculation, I wanted to remind us that student mobility is hardly a new phenomenon. It was very much a part of the ancient world’s conception of education just as it is today’s. It was then and is now also still quite rare. The 3.4 million who now are studying abroad amount to just two percent of the total enrollment in higher education institutions globally and in only 20 countries does international student enrollment exceed 1 percent.¹ There are still many obstacles to studying abroad and not enough educators or institutions that seek to encourage it. So I am very honored to participate in this Inaugural Symposium at a University so dedicated to making international a part of what it means to become educated.

While Japan’s history is marked by periods of closure (sakoku) and isolation, individual Japanese have always had an interest in the world beyond these shores. Sometimes travelling or studying abroad

¹ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Institute for Statistics. (2011). *Global Education Digest 2011: Comparing Education Statistics Across the World*. Montreal, Quebec: UNESCO Institute for Statistics.

involved great risks; Manjiro Nakahama, the first Japanese to live and study in the U.S., for example, got there by being shipwrecked and faced death upon his return. But there are other periods, as was the case when this University was founded, when foreign study was actively encouraged. Your three founding fathers studied French jurisprudence and two actually went to France for further studies. And some of the most intriguing and rare ukiyo-e wood block prints I have seen are those illustrating how in Tokyo and other major cities, what was once thought to be foreign and odd became admired and more commonplace.



Woodblock print from the Meiji Era

Within a few years of the opening of Japan, princes and samurai were visiting the universities where their descendants would later study in Boston, Washington, and New York City. The very first visit inspired Walt Whitman to compose a poem, “A Broadway Pageant,” extolling “Commerce opening ... races reborn, refresh’d” and urging “Young Libertad! With the venerable Asia...Be considerate with her now.” We still mark the visit in New York City with a parade and festival. Shortly after the Institute of International Education was founded, we received a visit from then Foreign Minister Baron Goto and the President of Doshisha University on their Mission to Study American Education.

Today, over 21,000 Japanese are studying in the United States, making your country the 7th leading place of origin for our international student population.² Back in 1920, when IIE first started keeping a count of international students in the US, there were 565 Japanese students here, making it the second highest sender after China. Globally, more than 44,000 Japanese are undertaking some form of foreign studying overseas and the country now hosts over 138,075 international students.³ The 300,000 International Students Plan could position Japan among the top five destination countries for international students. As laudable as making this a matter of national policy is to persons in my field, the goal may be very difficult to reach without major changes in the way Japanese institutions seek and welcome international students. It will probably also take a major commitment to offer many more courses in English, the lingua franca of international exchange in today’s world, and to change its academic calendar to start in the fall, as Tokyo University just recently announced, in order to attract more international students to meet these ambitious goals. Unfortunately the numbers of international students in Japan is going down, not up. There were 138,075 international students in Japan in 2011, down 2.6% from the previous year, although numbers from America have reached an all-time high of over 6,000, according to IIE's *Open Doors* annual survey.²

² Chow, P. and Bhandari, R. (2011). *Open Doors 2011 Report on International Educational Exchange*. New York: Institute of International Education.

³ Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology Japan. <http://www.mext.go.jp>; and Japan Student Services Organization. *International Students in Japan 2011*. Retrieved from http://www.jasso.go.jp/statistics/intl_student/data11_e.html.

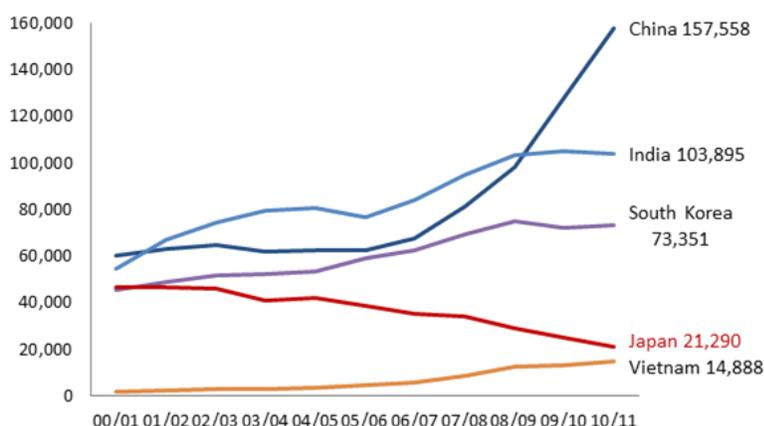
Over the past ten years, unfortunately, the number of Japanese students coming to the United States has declined by over 50 percent. This in some measure parallels the demographic decline in the number of college-age persons in the country as a whole over the past twenty years, but the rate of decline is more rapid than just that involved in population dynamics. Many in the Japanese media feel that these declining numbers of Japanese students abroad foreshadows a preference for isolationism among the emerging generation. With increasingly mobile students across the Pacific, including Americans and Chinese and Koreans and Southeast Asians, an inward-turning by young Japanese would be a tragedy. As your President notes, students at this university and elsewhere in Japan indeed need to be preparing for “a transnational world focused on relationships between individuals from all countries.” Lady Murasaki would have been keenly interested, of course, in observing how such relationships affected daily life and manners.

IIE collects its data directly from all U.S. higher education institutions which are all required to follow closely and document the flow of international students to their campuses. Many also do their own trends analyses in order to project international student flows and pinpoint countries from whom they can expect more students (like China) compared to other countries and regions which seem to be drying up, (e.g. Japan and Western Europe). This helps explain why less than 30 U.S. campuses sent representatives to the IIE-JUSEC higher education fair this year while over 100 U.S. campuses participated in our fairs in China and India. With shrinking budgets and state support, these U.S. campuses are unlikely to keep reaching out in declining markets, so it is urgent that MEXT and individual campuses in Japan take the lead in providing opportunities and financial incentives to stimulate and sustain Japan-US academic linkages and exchanges. Your corporations also can play a key role by requiring English competence in its new hires, as a handful of far-sighted companies have begun doing.

As part of our trends analyses we are also seeing that an increasing number of U.S. universities are developing their own foreign policies. This helps them anticipate and better guide the flow of international students, as well as prepare the home campus for the enrichment and diversity that their presence brings. Each institution operates independently, of course, as our system of higher education (and education generally) is not something directed at the Federal level. Japan must take proactive steps at all levels to ensure that it remains a visible and valued partner in the academic exchange field.

Given Japan’s importance in the world and to the United States, I have to report that we in America are troubled by the decline mentioned above and how the trend compares with U.S. enrollments from the other East Asian countries pictured below.

U.S. Enrollments from Leading Countries in Asia



Based on *Open Doors* data, we do not expect the flows of Chinese students to diminish anytime soon. U.S. academic leaders welcome these full-fee paying and well prepared PRC students but also would appreciate more diversity and are already starting to increase outreach to countries with growing numbers of students seeking education abroad such as Vietnam and Brazil and Saudi Arabia and South Africa. East Asia will for the foreseeable future be a key strategic region for most institutions and I know we would welcome many more students from Japan. So one thing I am looking for, as the Global 30 Project unfolds, is that an equally strong case be made for why Japanese ought to study abroad and especially in the United States.

The U.S. government and U.S. universities are deeply committed to helping Japanese students come to study in America. The U.S. Department of State is working actively to strengthen the EducationUSA program in Japan, which provides online resources and in-person expertise to assist Japanese students interested in pursuing study in the United States. The Institute, working in close partnership with the U.S. Department of State, the U.S. Embassy, JUSEC, International Education Blueprint and others, is honored to be a part of this effort. This commitment is clearly demonstrated in the posting to Japan of the Regional Educational Advising Coordinator, our moderator today, Rosie Edmond. The Institute also works closely with JUSEC in implementing the Fulbright Fellowships and in organizing an annual U.S. Higher Education Fair, bringing dozens of U.S. admissions officers to Japan to meet face to face with interested students and parents.

The Institute and the U.S. Government also work closely together to promote more U.S. student engagement with Japan through many Programs. The bilateral Fulbright program of course is the oldest and most well-known. The Gilman Scholarships allow undergraduates of limited financial means much greater access to study abroad and the students who have studied here are very likely to return on your JET Program after graduation. The Boren Fellowships enable some of our most advanced language students to come here as well and then serve in the Government working on problems of international security that affect this region. So with these foundational programs well established and flourishing, the Institute stands ready to help the Japanese Government and individual universities here to implement Programs that promote more exchanges or send more Japanese students to the U.S., as we do now for the governments of Brazil, Germany, Spain, and in this region Indonesia, Malaysia, China, and Vietnam.

We do worry that Japanese students rely too much on agents who are paid to recruit students just to a few schools, or that students apply only to those campuses they heard about from their family and friends, when there are literally thousands of fully accredited higher education institutions in the U.S. which will meet their needs as well or better. Today, one quarter of all Japanese students in the U.S. are studying in the State of California alone, and another quarter are studying in the three states of New York, Washington and Hawaii. What we would all benefit from is Japanese students' discovery of the rest of the U.S., so that the next generation of Japanese leaders could perhaps better understand our politics and so that more Americans who may never be able to travel here could get to know your people and especially the things that regardless of geography and language we have very much in common. Outside of the higher education space, the US-Japan Foundation sponsored an exemplary Leadership Program where every two years 20 outstanding younger Japanese and Americans are selected to meet for a week-long symposium, one year held in American and the next year in Japan. While this Program is achieving dramatic and life-long results, it cannot alone do the job of bonding the next generation without also other opportunities for longer-term, robust educational exchanges.

I am equally worried by the approach taken by so many Ministry and University officials here that students and relationships should be built among only a select and narrow base of U.S. colleges and universities – generally those who rank among the top 20-25 in the world of higher educations so-called

“league tables.” Confining relationships to such a small list can rule out so many exceedingly good institutions of higher education and in places that potentially could be of great interest and utility to future US-Japan commercial, scientific, and political relations. A better aim might be to assure that strong institutional partnerships exist between Japanese and American colleges and universities in each one of our 50 states. We are, thus, eager to learn more about the MEXT scholarships which are aimed to promote linkages and exchanges among a wide number of institutions and students.

Consequently, I am urging a substantial re-thinking and expansion of the educational ties between Japan and America because I favor not only a renewed commitment to deepening the relationship but because our living and working together in an increasingly flat world demands this. The challenges both societies are facing today – and even more likely tomorrow – require us to deal with complexity and diversity and this can only be appreciated by assuring that our educational relations reflect the world as it is and our countries as they are. While it is important for Japanese students to know what Harvard and Stanford faculty think and teach, it is equally important for them to know what Brazilian, Indian, Vietnamese, Turkish and Chinese students attending universities in Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio and Texas also think. And is that spirit of exploration not what Lady Murasaki would have encouraged?

Now no one, it seems, is happy with the way Genji ends. As it is said of the object of Kaoru’s affection, “The story that she had become a nun and shut herself off entirely from the world, he was not so sure as to believe.” Somehow, the notion that any person so gifted in observation and exploration would and could turn inward does seem hard to imagine. So I prefer to imagine that Lady Murasaki found a way to travel, instead, and somewhere along the Silk Road forged friendships with tellers of other tales that gave rise to a second book. This one, of course, would be about the world of the land beyond the seas and, tucked away perhaps in an ancient monastery, remains yet to be discovered.



By Suzuki Haranobu