

2011–2013 in Retrospect



Senator Jim Webb, Foreign Minister Seiji Maehara, and Representative Nita Lowey at the New Shimoda Conference



Former ASEAN Secretary-General Surin Pitsuwan speaking as part of the ASEAN-Japan Strategic Partnership project



JCIE staff travelled to Tohoku to survey the damage

The two years covered by this report—from April 2011 to March 2013—have been the most challenging in JCIE’s history, but they have come with many blessings as well. Chief among them is the way in which adversity has highlighted the institution’s resilience and its unique capacity to contribute to national and world affairs, as well as how it has shown us just how many loyal friends JCIE has around the world.

Any review of JCIE’s last two years should probably begin with a hallmark event that took place a little earlier, on February 22, 2011. JCIE convened the New Shimoda Conference in Tokyo, a high-level gathering of US Congressional members, Japanese Diet members, senior officials, business leaders, and public intellectuals from both countries to discuss the issues that Japan and the United States should prioritize in order to revitalize their alliance to face 21st-century challenges. This meeting harkened back to the historic inaugural Shimoda Conference, which was organized by Tadashi Yamamoto and others in 1967 as the first bilateral dialogue to bring together Japanese and American leaders on truly equal footing. Given that the 1967 meeting provided the impetus for JCIE’s founding three years later, it was perhaps fitting that the New Shimoda Conference ended up being the last major forum Yamamoto would host.

A mere three weeks later, the importance of efforts such as the New Shimoda Conference was manifested in a visceral way when an unprecedented tragedy highlighted the power of people-to-people connections and demonstrated how we all can come together as a global community. On March 11, northeastern Japan was struck by a massive earthquake, devastating tsunami, and nuclear meltdown at the power plant in Fukushima—a triad of disasters that has come to be known simply as “3/11.” The aftermath of 3/11 showcased the resilience of the Japanese people, and the outpouring of sympathy and aid from around the world also demonstrated the value of international ties between people in Japan and overseas.

The disaster also demonstrated the capacity of JCIE to utilize its cross-sectoral networks of governmental, corporate, and NGO leaders around the world and its deep understanding of Japan’s nonprofit sector. Since the disaster, JCIE has been playing an important role in bridging the Japanese and overseas responses, providing introductions and guidance for groups that wish to help, disseminating information and analysis on the response, and working to nurture partnerships among Japanese and non-Japanese NGOs that have been advancing the recovery.

We have also been aiding the disaster survivors in more direct ways. Within three days of the disaster, JCIE launched the Japan NGO Earthquake Relief and Recovery Fund to collect donations overseas. The



German Chancellor Angela Merkel addressing the Japanese-German Forum

generosity of people around the world was both stunning and humbling. This fund and others set up by JCIE eventually raised several million dollars for groups working in the disaster zone, and JCIE also began facilitating giving for half a dozen other organizations. Including the donations distributed through its own disaster funds, JCIE has had a hand in channeling nearly US\$7 million to more than 40 Japanese nonprofit organizations that are leading the recovery.

While pivoting to respond to this emergency, JCIE was also able to continue its track record of contributing in more customary ways to East Asian regional cooperation. For instance, Korea-Japan relations have taken a turn for the worse in recent years, as territorial disputes and history issues have heightened bilateral tensions. Against this backdrop, the importance of Track 2 dialogues like the Korea-Japan Forum that JCIE has co-hosted since 1993 have become increasingly valuable vehicles for governmental and nongovernmental leaders from both countries to explore how to restore more amicable relations. While the 2012 Korea-Japan Forum was initially postponed due to a spike in tensions, when it was held in December 2012 it played a critical role in enabling the new, incoming governments in both countries to gain a better sense of what to expect from one another and it focused leaders on the need to mend the bilateral relationship.



UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon at a JCIE co-sponsored event on malaria and the development agenda

In a similar vein, JCIE has been requested to take on the role of co-organizer of a new “ASEAN-Japan Strategic Partnership” initiative that is bringing together top thinkers from Japan and the 10 ASEAN countries to chart out ways in which ASEAN-Japan ties can be deepened in a variety of areas in order to build a more stable and prosperous region. The aim of this is to provide the impetus for deeper, more productive relations, and the findings of the study will be reported to the heads of state of each of the countries as a basis for discussions at the 2013 and 2014 ASEAN-Japan Summits.

In addition to regional affairs, JCIE’s efforts to serve as a catalyst for greater cooperation on global issues also continue to bear fruit. In 2005, JCIE launched the Friends of the Global Fund, Japan (FGFJ) to promote international cooperation in the fight against the major communicable diseases and encourage different sectors of society in Japan to expand their support for this effort. At the time, the Japanese government was contributing little more than US\$80 million annually to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, but over the last three years, that amount has soared to an average of roughly US\$250 million, saving countless lives in Africa, Asia, and elsewhere around the world.

Meanwhile, JCIE’s work under the leadership of Senior Fellow Keizo Takemi to encourage greater Japanese engagement in global health initiatives through its Global Health and Human Security Program has been credited with encouraging the Japanese government’s embrace of health



President Kikwete of Tanzania with former Prime Minister Mori of Japan at an event on infectious diseases



Tadashi Yamamoto opens the March 2011 New Shimoda Conference

diplomacy and its growing commitment to helping countries around the world provide universal health coverage for their citizens. This has also blossomed into a new JCIE partnership with the World Bank to explore how to apply lessons from Japan's experiences with healthcare to developing nations.

Ultimately though, any reflections on JCIE's past two years are bound to be bittersweet. The sense of accomplishment that results from being able to contribute in such diverse ways to the international community is tinged by a deep feeling of sadness over the loss of JCIE's founder and president, Tadashi Yamamoto. He passed away on April 15, 2012, with his beloved family at his side, leaving behind a broad community of devoted colleagues, internationally minded leaders, and civil society proponents in Japan and around the world who have been inspired by his example and his spirit.

After Hideko Katsumata briefly served as acting president, Ken Shibusawa, who had been deeply involved in social entrepreneurship and in a number of JCIE activities, took the helm of JCIE/Japan as its new president in June 2012. He has been bringing a new energy to many of JCIE's programs. Meanwhile, Peggy Blumenthal, a longtime board member, took over as chair of JCIE/USA, where Jim Gannon and other staff have been working to strengthen the US arm's institutional base. As part of this effort, a Tadashi Yamamoto Memorial Fund has been launched to allow JCIE to engage promising, young leaders in international dialogue (see page 65).

The loss felt by JCIE staff in Tokyo and New York remains acute, but we enter JCIE's new era with the same sense of mission and the dedication to the spirit of internationalism that has infused the organization's work from its very beginning. Yamamoto used to say that we can only come together by sharing both suffering and triumphs. With two simultaneously wrenching and inspiring years behind us, we now find ourselves even more appreciative of and reliant on the support and advice of friends around the world. We are deeply grateful for this solidarity and encouragement, which further reinforces our commitment to carry on Yamamoto's legacy and build upon JCIE's many contributions as we move forward.

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