



COMMON GROUND AND COMMON OBSTACLES

US-Japan Women Leaders Dialogue

JCIE

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*Tarrytown, New York
September 15–17, 2017*

CONTENTS

Acknowledgments	3
Key Points	4
Summary of Discussions	6
Strengthening the US-Japan Alliance	7
Empowering Working Women in Japan and the United States	11
Advancing Women's Political Leadership	14
Participants	17
Agenda	18
About JCIE	19

Acknowledgments

FOR NEARLY 50 years, the Japan Center for International Exchange (JCIE) has carried out parliamentary exchanges and dialogues that have engaged thousands of Japanese and American policymakers and experts in substantive meetings on critical issues in foreign affairs. While efforts were made to engage women in those events, we often fell short of our goals, constrained by the realities of our two countries' low ratios of women in the policy fields. In 1993, we did work with the Institute of International Education to carry out a groundbreaking exchange of US and Japanese women leaders of grassroots NGOs, but it took another two decades for us to attempt a similar exchange involving women in politics. With the issue of gender imbalance among policymakers far from resolved, JCIE succeeded in 2017 in inviting a delegation of Diet members to the United States comprised solely of female legislators, who held talks with a wide range of US Congressional members and policy specialists in Washington DC. They then moved to New York City, where they met senior executives with Citi, Estée Lauder, Eileen Fisher, MetLife, and other American companies to learn about their innovative efforts to support women in the workplace.

Their trip culminated in a weekend retreat and dialogue with American women leaders from various sectors to explore the challenges facing US-Japan relations and the shared obstacles women have overcome to achieve success. This report offers a summary of the discussions held at the dialogue, which was convened at the historic Pocantico Center of the Rockefeller Brothers Fund in Tarrytown, New York. JCIE is extremely grateful to the two dozen women who took time out of their busy schedules to join us for this unique event, and particularly to Internal Affairs Minister Seiko Noda for heading the delegation of Diet members and other leaders who traveled from Japan.

We would also like to express our sincere thanks to the funders who made this event possible. We are grateful to Helena Kolenda and Ling Li of the Henry Luce Foundation for their encouragement and support and to Paige Cottingham-Streater and Niharika Chibber Joe of the Japan-U.S. Friendship Commission for their recognition of the value of network-building and dialogue among policymakers. The Shibusawa Eiichi Memorial Foundation, MRA House, and All Nippon Airways also have our gratitude for supporting the travel of the Japanese delegates. Finally, we need to thank Judy Clark, Regina Creegan, and the wonderful staff at the Pocantico Center of the Rockefeller Brothers Fund for providing the ideal setting for the event and for their warmth and professionalism. As is the case with all materials resulting from meetings held at the Pocantico Center, the views expressed in this report are not those of the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, its trustees, or its staff, nor are they intended to reflect the stances of the Henry Luce Foundation, the Japan-U.S. Friendship Commission, or other funders.

In addition, we must thank our fantastic crew of simultaneous interpreters—Terumi Gale, Nobuko Sasae, and Kazuko Shimizu—who allowed our discussions to flow seamlessly. And last but not least, we are also grateful to Kim Gould Ashizawa and Marie Louise Keen for their leadership in organizing the meeting and for their tireless work to ensure the success of the meeting.

We hope that the networks built during this project will form the basis for ongoing dialogue and cooperation, and that the recommendations that emerged will have a positive impact on our respective countries and on US-Japan relations moving forward.

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Key Points

ON SEPTEMBER 15–17, 2017, two dozen American and Japanese women leaders gathered for a week-end dialogue to discuss shared challenges facing their countries and to exchange lessons on ways to advance women's leadership at home and in the US-Japan relationship. In a year when women's issues garnered headlines in both countries, the participants found a great deal of common ground—and common obstacles—when comparing their own situations, and they agreed on the importance of bringing women's voices and experiences more robustly into the domestic and foreign policymaking process, particularly at this critical time in the US-Japan alliance.

During their discussions, the participants made a wide range of recommendations, and while the highlights below do not reflect the consensus of all participants, they do represent key themes that surfaced repeatedly in the dialogue.

Strengthening the US-Japan Alliance

(1) The US-Japan alliance should be sustained as the cornerstone of stability in Asia.

The threat from North Korea and the challenges that accompany China's rise require deeper US-Japan alliance cooperation. Political instability in the United States and steps such as the US withdrawal from the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) trade deal have led some in Japan to worry about the reliability of the US government, so measures are needed to engage a broad range of leaders in both countries in the bilateral relationship, not just those currently in power.

(2) It is important to more proactively engage women in US-Japan dialogues.

Historically, women's voices have been missing from US-Japan policy dialogues. Much progress has been made in recent decades, but still more needs to be done to ensure that the views and wisdom of half of the population are adequately reflected in bilateral discussions. In particular, it is crucial to encourage more exchanges of women

leaders to promote networking and mutual learning, as well as to push for the more equal representation of women's voices in international conferences and other venues.

(3) More must be done to educate the public on the benefits of the US-Japan alliance.

Both countries should do more together to clarify the benefits of the alliance to ensure it remains resilient, especially since it may be tested by a confrontation with North Korea. In Japan, it is important to note that support for the alliance has a gender component, with women liable to be less committed to alliance cooperation, in part because of its association with military power and in part because of highly publicized crimes against women by a small number of the American soldiers based in Japan.

(4) The United States and Japan should provide more leadership in upholding democratic values in Asia.

At a time when the more autocratic Chinese model seems to be on the rise and the US

presence in East and Southeast Asia appears to be waning, it is increasingly critical for the United States and Japan to recommit themselves to supporting democratic values and institutions throughout the region. Special attention should be paid to the fact that, at the grassroots level, women are often at the vanguard in advocating for human rights and civil liberties, and they need more support.

Empowering Working Women in Japanese and American Society

(5) Lessons from US and Japanese models of caregiving should be shared.

Professional women continue to find that the responsibilities of caregiving—for both children and elderly family members—pose obstacles to their career advancement. There is a great potential for each society to learn from one another's best practices in terms of childcare and eldercare. For instance, even simple measures—like having the Japanese Diet follow the US Congress's example of providing on-site childcare facilities—can make it easier for Japanese women leaders to stay in politics. Similarly, emulating some Japanese eldercare measures would benefit American society.

(6) Employers in both countries would benefit from investigating and adopting best practices from overseas counterparts to expand flexibility in the workplace.

There is much that employers in both countries can learn from each other's successes and failures in encouraging women to remain on the career track, including such areas as maternity leave policy, providing career “on and off ramps” to allow for caregiving, and making effective use of telecommuting.

(7) Efforts are needed to strengthen philanthropy and the nonprofit sector in both countries.

In Japan, as well as in the United States, women make up a disproportionately large segment of the nonprofit sector's labor force, so expanding

funding for the nonprofit sector, strengthening its institutional base, and enhancing public perceptions of its import will help to improve the lot of professional women. In the United States in particular, experience gained in the nonprofit sector is often the pathway for women to enter politics at the local level and beyond.

Advancing Women's Political Leadership

(8) Japan and the United States should share best practices for supporting women in politics.

There are a number of innovative efforts underway, particularly in the United States, to help women win elections and stay in office, which can be usefully emulated. These include efforts to provide campaign financing and training programs for promising women candidates, as well as leadership training and confidence-building initiatives for young women who may eventually choose to run for office.

(9) The creation of a “women's caucus” in the Japanese Diet would be beneficial.

The bipartisan US Congressional Women's Caucus has done much to provide support for women in the Congress and help them align their policy positions on key issues. A similar undertaking in Japan might provide women in the Diet with a better support network. It might also provide a natural platform for networking with the Women's Caucus in the United States.

(10) Research centers in Japan on women in politics should be strengthened.

The existence of research centers in the United States that analyze the role of women in politics, and the production of gender-disaggregated data by governmental and nongovernmental institutes, has helped deepen the understanding of policies that affect women, women's participation in politics, and other relevant issues. In Japan, it would be useful if existing research centers were expanded and more resources dedicated to public- and nonprofit-sector efforts to analyze gender considerations in policy and politics.

Summary of Discussions

TWO DOZEN AMERICAN and Japanese leaders in the fields of politics, business, media, the nonprofit sector, think tanks, and academia convened on September 15–17, 2017, to discuss ways to deepen US-Japan ties and strengthen women’s leadership in the bilateral relationship. Hosted by the Japan Center for International Exchange (JCIE)—with generous support from the Henry Luce Foundation, the Japan-U.S. Friendship Commission, and others—the Dialogue was held at the historic Pocantico Center of the Rockefeller Brothers Fund in Tarrytown, New York.

The participants included a multiparty group of five female Diet members, led by Minister for Internal Affairs and Communications Seiko Noda, one of the most prominent women in Japanese politics. The discussions during the weekend retreat were informed and enhanced by a pre-dialogue roundtable that the Diet members held with Congressional members (see page 15), as well as other meetings with leaders and groups in Washington DC and New York City that are focusing on expanding women’s leadership roles in politics, business, and other fields.



Strengthening the US-Japan Alliance

Regional Security Threats and the Bilateral Relationship

The dialogue opened with discussions of security threats in Asia Pacific. There was general agreement that the US-Japan alliance remains the cornerstone of stability in the region, and that, despite concerns about the rhetoric of the new US administration, the shared core values and interests upon which the relationship is based are unchanged: the maintenance of regional stability, the preservation and promotion of political and economic freedoms, support for human rights and democratic institutions, and expanded prosperity for the United States, Japan, and the world.

However, Japanese leaders have clear concerns about the transactional “America First” approach of the current administration and the polarized political climate in the United States. These led some of the Japanese participants to express concern for the future of US-Japan relations and argue that it may be time for Japan to rethink and redefine its own vision for the US-Japan alliance, rather than be as deferential to US government views as it has been in the past.

One central focus of the alliance has been the heightened tensions with North Korea, and participants agreed that the United States and Japan must work together very closely to manage this perilous situation. However, there were debates over both tactics and the shape of any eventual resolution. In terms of tactics, the question was raised as to why North Korea, despite nine UN Security Council resolutions over the past decade, has not been deterred in its pursuit of nuclear weapons. Why did Iran come to the negotiating table, for example, but not the DPRK? Part of the answer, according to some participants, lies in the fact that Iran’s political system differs greatly from North Korea’s autocracy, while another factor was the ability to build on a dual-track approach in Iran’s case that does not exist with North Korea. Participants agreed that there is a need to continue sanctions, but

some pointed out that they are only truly effective if there are “carrots” to match the “stick,” and such incentives do not currently exist vis-à-vis North Korea. The issue is further exacerbated by the fact that military action is hard to envision as a viable option given the disastrous impact a war would have on South Korea and Japan. Moreover, the question was raised as to how the DPRK can be expected to give up its nuclear ambitions when its leaders see that the Iran deal is now in question.

There also seemed to be some divergence between US and Japanese views about the end-game for the current standoff. The participants felt North Korea’s nuclear and missile programs are motivated by Pyongyang’s belief that having a nuclear strike capability is the only way to ensure the regime’s survival and to gain legitimacy as a full member of the international community. The general consensus was that, in the short term, a return to the negotiating table is key in order to avoid misperceptions and an accidental war. However, some participants voiced doubts as to whether any negotiation with the DPRK that makes denuclearization a precondition will be possible. It may be that the most that can be hoped for is a freeze, but it is unclear whether any final resolution that permits North Korea to threaten its neighbors with nuclear-tipped missiles, even if it cannot reach the continental United States, would be an acceptable outcome for Japan and South Korea.

Some also suggested that the United States and Japan need a clearer understanding of what each would tolerate, both in terms of a failure to change North Korean behavior—i.e., could they live with containment rather than denuclearization?—and in terms of casualties if conflict erupts. Bilateral discussions (and a trilateral discussion that engages South Korea as well) of worst-case scenarios would be useful so that both sides are better prepared, covering issues such as intelligence sharing and alliance cooperation in the case of war.



Several Japanese participants noted that, in Japan, the sense of threat from North Korea remains relatively subdued despite the missiles flying overhead. This, they felt, was linked to broader trends in Japanese public opinion about the US-Japan alliance and the role of the military. One participant noted that while the majority of people in Japan are supportive of the alliance, there is a certain level of ambivalence about it as well. There appears to be a gender component to this, and Japanese women have demonstrated more negative views about the alliance, in part due to their disapproval of crimes and violence involving US military personnel based in Japan. Some also argued that Japanese women have a lower tolerance for potential casualties if war were to break out. This led several participants to suggest that greater efforts should be made to highlight the benefits of the alliance for the overall public in both countries, with special attention being paid to the gender disparity in views in Japan.

Finally, a clear theme that emerged was the need to consistently cultivate a vigorous web of networks connecting different societal groups in the two countries. The fact that many of the participants in the dialogue had studied or lived

abroad underscored the ways in which US-Japan relations are bolstered by people-to-people exchange. The participants were particularly concerned that the number of Japanese students studying in the United States has dropped significantly and felt that more needs to be done to promote US-Japan educational exchanges in order to strengthen the underpinnings of the alliance.

Economic Ties

Turning to another central aspect of US-Japan relations, some participants felt that the Trump administration's trade policy also raises concerns about the US commitment to its alliances in the region. The US decision to withdraw from the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) ruffled feathers in Japan, especially because it was not just an economic partnership but also a strategic initiative to shape the regional order.

This was viewed as particularly consequential in light of China's growing influence in the region as it champions the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and the "Belt and Road Initiative," which are promoting regional development projects at a time when the United

States is failing to put forward a positive vision. Participants felt that there is a positive aspect to China's efforts, since there is a strong need for infrastructure investment in the region, but they also raised questions that have important implications for the United States and Japan. For instance, are non-member countries going to be able to bid on some of these projects? Are bidding procedures transparent? Is China giving environmental considerations sufficient weight? Is funding through these mechanisms liable to be conditioned on countries adopting Chinese standards in telecommunications and in other fields? More generally, to what degree are the inroads that China is making through these initiatives starting to tip the strategic balance in the region in China's favor?

A broader concern that troubled participants involves growing economic disparities and the recent backlash against globalization, which have contributed to the swell of nationalism and populism around the world. There have been waves of trade conflicts in the past, but speakers felt that the current politicization of trade is cause for special concern. Economic anxiety has risen in the United States and people have a real sense that they are being hurt by "unfair" trade agreements and globalization. During the 2016 presidential election, the TPP and NAFTA were portrayed as one-sided agreements that needed to be discarded or amended so that the United States would come out as the winner. However, participants noted that the zero-sum rhetoric being used in the United States puts responsible Japanese and American policymakers in a bind—the reality is that all trade agreements have to be win-win propositions because both sides need to go home and sell the agreement to their constituents. Accordingly, several American participants were impressed by how Japan has taken the lead in pushing ahead with a smaller-scale version of the TPP, and hopes were expressed that the United States might eventually return to the agreement down the road.

Some participants noted that, despite the current backlash against trade, recent polls show a grow-



ing number of Americans—particularly young people—think trade is good for the economy, although they are worried about the impact on jobs. This led them to argue that the United States needs to do more to address income inequality and do a better job of ensuring that trade agreements are inclusive (i.e., that they benefit small companies, women, etc.) and explaining the benefits of trade to the public.

Japanese delegates commented that there are similar concerns in their country about inequality. Despite Japan's reputation as an egalitarian society, it has seen a rise in the number of poor citizens, and one in seven children are now estimated to be living in poverty. Speakers noted that both government and civil society can play an important role in finding creative ways to address this problem, including more targeted training programs for displaced workers and young people, and creative new initiatives such as tying efforts to curtail food waste in supermarkets and restaurants to schemes that assist those living on lower incomes.

US-Japan Cooperation in Supporting the Liberal International Order

The participants also discussed what the United States and Japan, as two of the world's leading democracies and economic powers, can do to ensure that the values that the two nations cherish—the rule of law, women's empowerment, human rights, free trade, etc.—are protected. There was a feeling that we are at a point in time when authoritarian regimes, including Russia and China, are challenging the existing international order and seeking to rewrite the rules in their favor, and there are elements within the West as well that are abandoning some key principles that have underpinned the global community for decades.

Both Japanese and American discussants were worried that democratic norms and institutions are under substantial stress in each country, although this is more pronounced in the United States. Several Diet members who had held meetings earlier that week in Washington DC expressed their surprise that they heard very little talk about values, democracy, or human rights as compared to the past. Meanwhile, recent surveys in both countries are showing low levels of trust in government, media, corporations, and civil society. This is particularly true with regard to young people, and one participant drew attention to the fact that today's youths have very different expectations of participation—the way they connect to each other, the way they form networks, the way they see leadership, and the way they build movements—than in the past, making it more crucial that as governments and societal leaders in both countries work to reestablish trust, they involve women and young people in that process.

Several people voiced concerns that a lack of US leadership in promoting democratic norms and practices in Southeast Asia—in Myanmar, the Philippines, etc.—can have a particularly negative impact, and the declining US presence further heightens the risk that Southeast Asian countries might be drawn deeper into China's orbit. They argued that Japan can play an important role in

encouraging the United States to remain engaged in the region, and that the two countries should work together to strengthen the region's middle class, support inclusive and equitable growth, and promote human security. It was emphasized, however, that both the United States and Japan need to simultaneously confront their own societal problems, some of which are shared (e.g., child poverty, homelessness, and care for the elderly) in order to demonstrate that their values are consistent both at home and abroad.

Participants noted that women have a special role to play in promoting liberal democratic values. Around the world, women have tended to take the lead at the grassroots level in advocating for human rights, civil rights, public safety, women's rights, disability rights, free speech, and free elections, driving discussion on these issues



even when many in government are resistant. For example, women in Argentina led the fight on the issue of the *desaparecidos* or “disappeared,” and women in India are leading the battle against domestic abuse. Women often take up these causes individually, but they eventually need to come together, create organizations, and develop funding sources to move forward. That is why foundations, think tanks, businesses, civil society, and the free media have important roles to play in Japan, the United States, and elsewhere in strengthening women's capacity to advocate for democratic values.

Empowering Working Women in Japan and the United States

The Shared Challenges of Work-Life Balance

A second major theme of the dialogue involved the struggle that women in both countries face in trying to achieve some degree of work-life balance that allows them to contribute more fully in the public sphere. An American participant noted that in the United States, women often place unrealistic expectations on themselves as they are torn between their children, spouse, elderly parents, and careers. Another participant insisted that it is important for women to realize that they will have times in their lives when they are busy caring for others, and so when an opportunity arises to focus on themselves, they should take that opportunity to study and develop their skills. Others argued that it is important not just to encourage young women to develop their professional capacities, but also to teach young men to respect women and share responsibilities at home and in the workplace and, over the longer term, for parents to raise daughters and sons with the same messages.

While these are shared concerns, participants agreed that women in Japan face a particularly

acute problem. With a deeply engrained expectation that women should prioritize their responsibility to care for the family, the opportunities for meaningful careers are still constrained both in the corporate and political sectors. The country's population is aging rapidly and more and more women find themselves tasked with providing “double care”—caring for both their children and their elderly parents—and both childcare and eldercare facilities are insufficient to meet the demand. In fact, female Diet members themselves often struggle to deal with childcare for their own children, and the idea of establishing a childcare center in the Diet was proposed, similar to those that are affiliated with the US Congress.

In terms of elder care, the Japanese government is encouraging seniors to “age in place” rather than relying on nursing homes, but this also increases their dependency on female family members to provide care. Several Japanese participants noted that their country needs more preventative care so that people can enjoy healthy aging and remain productive longer, which places less of a burden on families and particularly on women. The introduction of a sound



policy on immigration that treats immigrants fairly and responsibly will also be vital in this regard, both to provide caregivers for elderly citizens and to supplement Japan's labor force, which has been depleted due to the aging of the population.

Career Paths in the Private Sector

The discussions also examined how women in both countries face the question of timing and prioritization in their careers. Many women in Japan choose not to apply for career-track jobs, believing that they cannot have both a family and a career. In Japan, it was noted, there are even fewer "on and off ramps" for the career woman than in the United States, so it is particularly



difficult to return to the management track after taking a break to care for a child or other family member. A number of companies have begun giving generous maternity leaves, but they find that the longer people are out of the office, the less likely they will come back. Participants noted that there are a variety of methods that can be explored to ensure that parental leave does not negatively impact the business or the

new parent's career. For example, telecommuting offers an important means for employees to stay engaged, and it can help boost retention rates of female employees after childbirth, so some participants mentioned that Japanese employers and policymakers may be able to learn much from the US experience on this issue.

The dialogue repeatedly came back to the importance of networks among women as a means to encourage and support one another. Noting that studies have shown that even women who consider themselves to be feminists often have unconscious biases toward other women, several participants stressed how vital it is for women to avoid common pitfalls and support others in their fields, and particularly to encourage other women to step up and seize opportunities when they can. The importance of sponsorship or mentorship was highlighted, which can be done through formal training programs or more informal practices and relationships in the workplace. More broadly, however, building networks of women in similar fields but with different life experiences was deemed to be particularly useful. In that regard, participants pointed to the JCIE dialogue as a positive example of expanding networks among women from the United States and Japan, offering the opportunity to share both professional and personal insights from different perspectives.

Women and Civil Society

Another recurring theme involved the importance of civil society in terms of women's empowerment. In the United States, women have long played a prominent role in the nonprofit and philanthropic sectors. In Japan as well, these are sectors where women have been able to take more of the lead, making up a disproportionately large segment of the nonprofit sector's labor force. As such, strengthening the nonprofit sector tends to improve the lot of professional women.

The Diet members spoke during the meeting about their impressions after having visited a number of US nonprofit organizations during



the preceding week, which had given them a real sense of the sector's strength—whether it was the way in which they were supporting low-income single mothers and providing leadership training for young women, or the way in which the volunteers from the September 11th Families' Association carefully lay white flowers at the 9/11 memorial next to the names of victims on their birthday each year—and affirmed the importance of philanthropy. They expressed the sense that Japan needs to strengthen its nonprofit organizations and foundations, and that it could learn much from US philanthropic practices, such as the very large number of family and community foundations. It was stressed that the US and Japan need to identify effective civil society programs and experiments that can be shared both within and between the two societies to address common challenges.

More broadly, participants expressed the great importance of ensuring that women's voices are better represented in international exchanges and

conferences on policy issues. This is particularly true for issues where women are most affected, or have a unique perspective, and can thus be compelling advocates for solutions. For example, it was noted that after Japan's 2011 earthquake and tsunami, the logistical decisions for the evacuations were handled primarily by men, and there was little understanding of the need for feminine hygiene products, accommodations for pregnant or nursing mothers, and so on, making life for female evacuees exceedingly difficult. As a result, there have been calls in Japan for women's representation in policy discussions on disaster preparedness. Several participants spoke about how effectively ensuring that women's voices are adequately reflected in international dialogues requires a conscious effort to ensure that a sufficient number of women are included as speakers and panelists for high-level meetings, as well doing a better job of taking caregiving responsibilities and other issues into account in scheduling and organizing dialogues.

Advancing Women’s Political Leadership

Neither Japan nor the United States has been a global leader in terms of achieving gender balance among elected officials, but in both countries women have increasingly been stepping to the foreground. However, the Japanese participants—particularly the Diet members—had been watching the 2016 US elections closely and many were disappointed that Hillary Clinton, whom they viewed as an iconic female politician, had lost the election in an environment that seemed hostile to women and women’s issues. Other top female politicians in Asia (including Japan) have stumbled recently as well, and so there was a sense that the meeting was particularly empowering given that it was occurring during a rough patch for women politicians in both countries.

The Diet members pointed out the fact that only about 20 percent of US Congressional members are women, and that the ratio in the Diet is even worse, barely reaching 10 percent. Yet, several participants noted that in the United States, women tend to win elections at equal rates as men, and rather a core issue has been that women traditionally have been reluctant to run for office. To some degree, this is due to a relative lack of confidence among women in their own abilities, which makes them less likely to stand for election, even when they may be more qualified than a highly confident male counterpart. Another big hurdle is a lack of financial support, especially in the early stages of their political careers.



US-Japan Women Legislators Roundtable (Washington DC)

As a prelude to the larger dialogue, five members of the Japanese group, including four Diet members, visited Washington DC for discussions with women leaders in the US Congress, holding one meeting with three key legislators—Representatives Diana DeGette, Susan Davis, and Suzanne Bonamici—and sitting down separately with Representative Lois Frankel, the co-chair of the US Congressional Women’s Caucus.

In these discussions, they compared notes on the obstacles that women in electoral politics face in each country. The Congressional members explained that in the United States, the most formidable obstacle for women seeking office involves fundraising, especially since male candidates tend to have more established ties with large donors and the business community. In Japan as well, this has been a challenge for women who self-fund their campaigns, especially those in the opposition, although party support and the lower price tag of Japanese campaigns makes it a more manageable challenge.

In both systems, another obstacle for women candidates has been the challenge of learning the mechanics of campaigning. Incumbents are typically men, and female challengers who are not familiar with the intricacies of operating campaigns—for instance, staff selection, fundraising, and media relations—operate at a distinct disadvantage.

They also discussed how, in a way that is rarely an issue for male candidates, Japanese and American women running for office have to overcome biases and the fear that their candidacy will hurt their children. The struggle of juggling their family and their public responsibilities makes it particularly challenging for them to stay in office year after year, although these challenges are more intense on the Japanese side due to less forgiving societal expectations and a relative lack of infrastructure such as childcare facilities to lighten the burden on legislators who are parents. One Congressional member insisted that the key for women is that, despite the criticism that is inevitable, “You can never feel guilty!” and others underscored the fact that a strong personal support network—including a supportive spouse—is absolutely critical.

The legislators also exchanged views on which tactics they have found effective in their political careers. Several of the Congressional members noted that in the past several decades, a number of specialized support groups have been created, including Emily’s List to provide funding for women in primary elections; Emerge, a nonprofit that trains women candidates; and Running Start, which encourages young women’s political

engagement. The Diet members noted that, while there are a few very small organizations in Japan to support women in politics, the institutional infrastructure to support female politicians is much less developed than in the United States. There is, however, internal discussion within some parties in Japan, particularly in Komeito, about implementing quotas for the number of women on the parties’ slates of candidates. The Congressional members explained that such measures are almost impossible to conceive of in the American context.

One innovation that aroused particular interest among the Diet members was the US Congressional Women’s Caucus, which has been in existence for 40



years. The Congressional members explained how the caucus performs several functions, providing a support network for women legislators in their daily work while helping them align their views, often across party lines, on policies relevant to women.

American participants explained that several US initiatives have proven helpful in convincing more women to run for office, such as the work of Emily's List to fund women to run in primary elections. Participants voiced hopes that efforts like this could be replicated in the Japanese system, and they also were encouraged by the fact that the current US political situation has caused the number of women applying for the help of Emily's List in running for office to skyrocket from 920 people in the 2016 election cycle to more than 20,000 for the 2018 elections.

Participants observed that many women are repelled by the grueling work-life balance that accompanies elected office and other leadership posts. Often younger women hear about the negative aspects of leadership but not much about the satisfaction that comes from being in leadership positions. One Japanese participant remarked that the idea of a "power couple" does not exist in Japan, and so the media has an aspirational role to play in encouraging women to view positions of power as a rewarding life choice, as well as in encouraging men to welcome a successful woman as a life partner.

In addition, the participants felt that there was much to learn from efforts in the United States

to build support networks for women legislators, such as the US Congressional Women's Caucus, and that exchanges between such a grouping in Japan and the Congressional caucus could be particularly fruitful.

They also argued that Japan would benefit from having stronger research centers that produce data on women's roles in politics and provide training on campaign tactics and strategies in the way that some US academic institutions are now doing. The importance of data and statistics was discussed as a crucial tool to combat bias against women and improve policies on issues that affect women. Several participants suggested that the Japanese government should be more ambitious in compiling gender-disaggregated data and Japanese research centers should conduct academic analyses to better understand how government policies specifically affect women.

Finally, many of the participants applauded the convening of the all-female political exchange that brought the Japanese Diet members to the United States, voicing hopes that similar exchanges would be carried out in the future as a way to bring more women's voices into debates on critical issues and create a more representative balance within US-Japan networks.



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Kuniko Inoguchi, Member, House of Councillors of Japan; former Minister of State for Gender Equality

Takae Ito, Member, House of Councillors of Japan (Democratic Party)

Takae Ito, Member, House of Councillors of Japan (Komeito)

Merit Janow, Dean, Columbia University School of International and Public Affairs; former Deputy Assistant US Trade Representative for Japan and China

Claudia Juech, Executive Director, Cloudera Foundation; former Associate Vice President and Managing Director for Strategic Insights, Rockefeller Foundation

Hideko Katsumata, Executive Director & Chief Operating Officer, JCIE/Japan

Marie Louise Keen, Program Assistant, JCIE/USA

Helena Kolenda, Program Director for Asia, Henry Luce Foundation

Ling Li, Program Director for Luce Scholars and Program Officer for Asia, Henry Luce Foundation

Seiko Noda, Minister of Internal Affairs and Communications; Minister in Charge of Women's Empowerment; Minister of State for Gender Equality; Member, House of Representatives of Japan

Alicia Ogawa, Director, Program on Alternative Investments, Center on Japanese Economy and Business, Columbia Business School

Toshiko Takeya, Member, House of Councillors of Japan

Agenda

Friday, September 15

Opening Reception & Dinner

Welcoming remarks

Peggy Blumenthal, Chair, JCIE/USA; Senior Counselor to the President, Institute of International Education

Hideko Katsumata, Executive Director & COO, JCIE/Japan

Opening keynote

Seiko Noda, Minister of Internal Affairs and Communications; Minister in Charge of Women's Empowerment; Minister of State for Gender Equality; Member, House of Representatives of Japan

Saturday, September 16

Advancing Women's Leadership in Domestic Politics

Initial comments

Kuniko Inoguchi, Member, House of Councillors of Japan; former Minister of State for Gender Equality and Social Affairs

The US-Japan Alliance & Asia Pacific Stability

Initial comments

Rosemary DiCarlo, President, National Committee on American Foreign Policy; former US Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations

Takako Hikotani, Associate Professor, Columbia University

US-Japan Cooperation in Supporting the Liberal International Order

Initial comments

Aiko Doden, Senior Commentator on International Affairs, NHK Broadcasting; Special Affairs Commentator, NHK World

Susan Berresford, former President, Ford Foundation

Shared Challenges of Globalization and Economic Populism

Initial comments

Wendy Cutler, Vice President & Managing Director, Washington DC Office, Asia Society; former Acting Deputy US Trade Representative

Toshiko Takeya, Member, House of Councillors

Sunday, September 17

Women and Work: Meeting the Challenges of Work-Life Balance, Healthcare, and Aging

Initial comments

Claire Chino, Executive Vice President and Chief Administrative Officer, Itochu International

Wrap-up Session

Reflections

Seiko Noda

Peggy Blumenthal

Hideko Katsumata

About JCIE

FOUNDED IN 1970, the Japan Center for International Exchange (JCIE) is an independent, nonprofit, and nonpartisan organization that works to strengthen US-Japan relations and build international cooperation. Operating with offices in Tokyo and New York, JCIE sponsors a wide range of projects in collaboration with institutions around the world. These include policy research and dialogue on cutting-edge issues in international relations, leadership exchanges, and efforts to strengthen the contributions of civil society to domestic and international governance. Through these initiatives, JCIE aims to create opportunities for informed policy discussions that can contribute to a more peaceful and stable world.

Throughout its five-decade history, JCIE has occasionally tackled issues relevant to women's leadership in its studies and dialogues, and JCIE publications that touch on the topic include the following:

Looking for Leadership: The Dilemma of Political Leadership in Japan (2015)

A Gender Agenda: Asia-Europe Dialogue 3—Economic Empowerment for Gender Equality (2006)

A Gender Agenda: Asia-Europe Dialogue 2—Transformational Approaches to the Roles of Women and Men in Economic Life and Political Decision-Making (2003)

A Gender Agenda: Asia-Europe Dialogue—New Visions and Perspectives for Women and Men (2001)

Japan-US Women Leaders Dialogue: Community Development and the Role of Women (Co-published with the Institute of International Education, 1994)

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