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sustainable japan

Record donation by former Fulbright scholar will help future students

Glen S. Fukushima: Crossing divides, building bridges

Name: Glen S. Fukushima
Title: Vice Chair of the board, Securities Investor Protection Corporation
Birthplace: Tokyo
Years in Japan: 34

Leaders & Readers

TIMOTHY SCHULTZ
 CONTRIBUTING WRITER

When U.S. President Joe Biden visited Tokyo in May, his busy schedule was planned down to the minute. He would meet with the emperor, with Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and other government officials, with Japanese business executives, with Quad members of India and Australia, etc. In between such publicly known names, U.S. ambassador to Japan, Rahm Emanuel reserved a time for a more private individual: Glen S. Fukushima, former president of the American Chamber of Commerce in Japan and current vice

chair of the Securities Investor Protection Corp., a public financial institution in Washington, D.C. The reason he was on the president's agenda: a gift. Fukushima recently donated \$1 million to Fulbright Japan, the largest single donation by a U.S. citizen in the program's 70-year history.

The Fulbright program is one of the most prestigious academic programs in the world. Supported by the U.S. State Department, it provides grants that allow the most accomplished American graduate students and scholars to study, research or teach in more than 150 countries, and vice versa. In Japan, the Japan-United States Educational Commission supports Japanese to study, research or teach in the United States. As Fukushima explained: "From '52, Fulbright has sponsored Japanese people from many different disciplines and professions — academia, business, journalism, government, law, etc. — to spend from a year to three years in the United States. Especially noteworthy is that Fulbright has produced six Japanese Nobel Prize winners."

Now a vigorous man in his 70s, Fukushima smiled when he recalled his time as a Fulbright scholar. "It was in 1982, after I finished my graduate studies at Harvard. I came to the University of Tokyo as a Fulbright scholar. I spent one year there working on my Ph.D. dissertation, comparing Japanese and American antitrust policy." The Fulbright staff, whom he recalled by name (Caroline Matano Yang) helped him find housing and provided introductions that aided his research.

It isn't just fond memories that has driven Fukushima to create this legacy

for future students. He sees a disturbing trend. "Every year there are fewer Japanese students studying in America," he said. "In 1997, there were more than 47,000 studying in the United States at the university level for at least one year. By 2020, it had declined to fewer than 12,000. Japan has gone from No. 1 to No. 11 in the world." There are many reasons for such a drop-off, but money is one of the most important factors. College expenses in America have risen steadily, and tuition alone can now exceed \$60,000 a year at private institutions. Considering such high costs, study in America is simply not possible for many Japanese people. Fukushima hopes his gift will help keep that opportunity open for future generations.

Fukushima sees the chance to study abroad as critically important for both Japanese and American society. "Studying abroad can help students to be flexible, adaptable, innovative, value diversity and learn across national borders. Of all the G7 countries, Japan and the United States are at polar extremes in so many areas: gun control, health insurance, public transportation — the list goes on. So I think spending time in Japan can teach Americans so much."

He pointed out that the same is true for Japanese, saying, "Think of all the Japanese business and government leaders who have studied in the United States." He cited leaders from Kikkoman, Orix, Fuji-Xerox, SoftBank, Rakuten and many more. "There is now a global community that shares ideas and best practices. To be able to plug into those global communities is so important, for any professional



HIROMICHI MATONO

Growing up bilingual, bicultural

Glen S. Fukushima spent his childhood going back and forth between the United States and Japan, attending 12 schools by the time he was a senior applying for college.

He attended Deep Springs College, Stanford and Harvard in the United States and Keio and the University of Tokyo in Japan, at the latter as a Fulbright fellow doing research on American and Japanese antitrust law. He served as deputy assistant United States trade representative for Japan and China and was elected to two terms as president of the American Chamber of Commerce in Japan.

He is currently a senior fellow at the Center for American Progress in Washington, D.C. On Oct. 14, 2021, President Joe Biden nominated him to the board of the Securities Investor Protection Corp. On April 6, the Senate confirmed him, and on April 8 President Biden appointed him as vice chairman of the board.

than the Soviet military." Fukushima's smile faded at this point as he observed Japan's path since the mid-1990s: stagnation, competition from other Asian countries and a delayed response to globalization. "This comparative decline has weakened Japanese studies in America. It's my hope that along with helping Japanese study in America, my donation can also help support Japanese studies in the United States."

Fukushima's gift to the Fulbright Commission makes perfect sense. After a life spent crossing between two countries, he has decided to build a bridge. It will allow the brightest minds of both countries to cross over to the other, where they might discover just how different and just how alike the other is. No wonder President Biden offered his thanks. As Japan and America face numerous challenges, what better way to hold them together than a bridge?

person or leader in Japan."

Fukushima speaks from experience, although an experience that runs deeper than a semester abroad. The son of a Japanese American father and Japanese mother, he spent his childhood growing up on U.S. military bases in Japan and in the United States. After studying at Stanford and Harvard and in Japan as a Fulbrighter and working at the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative, Fukushima returned to Japan as an expat business

executive in 1990.

He arrived in Japan during what he called "the golden years" of Japan. "From '75 to '95, Japan was attracting world attention because of its booming economy and industrial competitiveness. This was when the field of Japanese studies really blossomed. Remember — back then, people feared Japan. In a 1969 Harris public opinion poll published in Business Week, 68% of Americans said that the Japanese economy posed a greater threat

Times Gallery



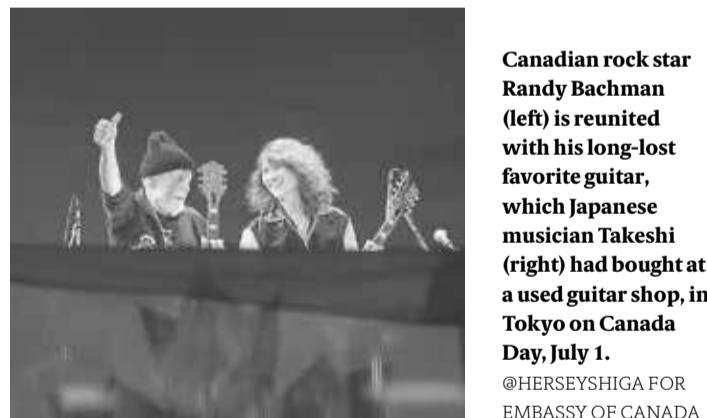
Employees from MacDermid Performance Solutions Japan K.K., under the guidance of the NPO Playground of Hope, repainted aging play structures used by neighborhood children at Shindo Otsukayama Park in Hiratsuka, Kanagawa Prefecture. JULIAN BASHORE



Ethiopian Ambassador Tefera Derbew Yimam (center) stands for the presentation of credentials with embassy diplomats — from left, Solomon Yimer, Marta Abera, Chala Lemi, Yohannes Woldegiorgis and FoZIA Tahir — in Tokyo on June 24. EMBASSY OF ETHIOPIA



After 12 years in Japan, three of them as ambassador of Colombia, Santiago Pardo holds a reception for friends of Colombia in Japan upon his departure. @HERSEYSHIGA FOR EMBASSY OF COLOMBIA



Canadian rock star Randy Bachman (left) is reunited with his long-lost favorite guitar, which Japanese musician Takeshi (right) had bought at a used guitar shop, in Tokyo on Canada Day, July 1. @HERSEYSHIGA FOR EMBASSY OF CANADA



The minister for World Expo 2025, Kenji Wakamiya, speaks at an event organized by the Embassy of the Czech Republic in Tokyo on July 1 on the occasion of the handover of the presidency of the Council of the European Union to the Czech Republic. EMBASSY OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC



At the publishing event for Erno Rubik's Japanese autobiography, which is recommended summer reading for high school students. From left: Yoko Kubo, translator of the book, Akira Ikegami, journalist and event emcee, and Hungarian Ambassador Norbert Palanovics. EMBASSY OF HUNGARY



Staffers at the Embassy of Mexico in Japan celebrate and show their support for LGBT+ Pride Day, June 28, with a group photo. Mexican Ambassador Melba Pria is third from right. EMBASSY OF MEXICO



Representatives of the Bolivian Embassy in Japan participate in a Spanish course for kids at the Cervantes Institute in Tokyo, where they shared the cultural and musical diversity of Bolivia. EMBASSY OF BOLIVIA

Kirirom forum examines how Japan can win abroad

ESG/SDGs

MAIKO MURAOKA
 CONTRIBUTING WRITER

It has always been a challenge for businesses and people in Japan, an island nation, to make achievements on the world stage, but the last few years of near-isolation due to the COVID-19 pandemic raised a wall to the world and forced many companies and individuals to turn inward. In the Kirirom Global Forum 2022, which took place online from April 29 to May 5, 140 speakers discussed ways for Japan to better compete in the global market.

One of the 40-plus sessions focused on the possibility of ASEAN countries encouraging more Japanese entrepreneurs and business owners to enter its markets. Three business leaders who have been successful in tapping into the markets discussed important points to consider for those taking on the challenge.

One is to analyze which country to enter first. Shinichiro Kawabata, CEO of Interspace Co. Ltd., launched the affiliate platform Accesstrade in 2001 and has expanded its service areas to five countries in Southeast Asia. "I looked at the population and GDP per capita and divided the countries in two segments: one that is smaller in scale and easier to succeed in, such as Singapore, and the other that offers bigger potential, such as Indonesia. Thailand seemed to sit in between, which is why we chose to start from there," Kawabata said.

Nobuaki Takahashi, CEO of Phals Inc., chose Cambodia as a starting point for providing microfinance services in the agricultural sector. He said: "It helps that in Cambodia we can do business in English and in U.S. dollars. Incorporation of 100%

foreign-owned firms is accepted too. Cambodia is also a pro-Japan country. Being a Buddhist country, we seem to share certain values." He plans to expand Phals' service to neighboring countries such as Myanmar and Laos as the next step.

Kosuke Sogo, CEO of AnyMind Group Inc., a platform provider offering one-stop support for branding, e-commerce, marketing and logistics, launched his business in Singapore, a country he knew well from his previous job. AnyMind Group now has 17 offices in 13 countries across the globe.

Another important factor is how to find good local managers. Sogo said there are two ways: "Either you acquire a local company itself that comes with a leader with entrepreneurial mindset, achievements and reliability, or you select and support a talented young member until he or she can take over as the manager."

In another session, three Japanese information technology engineers who work in the United States talked about differences between Japan and America in terms of the environment surrounding engineers and how more Japanese engineers can be successful on the global stage. Jun Sakai, a senior engineer at Splunk Inc. in Silicon Valley, who started his career as an engineer in Japan, said there is a big wage gap between engineers in America and Japan that derives from "the huge gap in sales and profits of companies." He said: "If you create something in the U.S., it can sell worldwide. Then the company can give more back to its employees."

Kosuke Kawaguchi, the creator of Jenkins, an open-source automation server, and co-CEO of Launchable, a global software startup, said, "It is not about the ability of engineers but about how the sales side can bring out the maximum value out of what's been created."

Ohan Oda, a senior software engineer at Google, said: "It is a chicken-and-egg issue.



IT engineers such as Kosuke Kawaguchi (top left), the creator of Jenkins, hold a session to encourage Japanese engineers. KIRIROM GLOBAL FORUM

Talented engineers flock to Silicon Valley from around the world because they think companies pay well here. Companies have no choice but to offer good salaries if they want to hire capable engineers."

There is also a difference in business cultures. Sakai pointed out that Japanese companies tend to outsource development but this is slower than in-house development, which is preferred by most technology companies in the U.S. Oda said that "software is a living creature" requiring continuous updates and fixes, which can be harder if the software is externally developed.

All three agreed that the environment surrounding engineers in Japan may begin to change if the number of Japanese engineers who work and become successful abroad increases. They also pointed out that Japanese engineers are not only technically capable but also good at working in teams and meeting deadlines. Although they said that time differences between countries may pose big problems in an industry where speed is vital, Sakai suggested that "Japanese engineers may still be able to live in Japan while working with an international team remotely by building components that support the core of software that is being built elsewhere."

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