

Collaboration between the Philanthropic Sector and Government on Public Diplomacy between Japan and the United States in the 1930s–1960s: Its Implications for Current U.S.-Japan Public Diplomacy and Influence on Japanese Philanthropy

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Introduction

In my previous research, I examined the contributions of the Rockefeller Foundation (RF) to the development of the Japanese healthcare system during the post–World War II period. That work led me to the question of how the RF contributed to the development of Japan's cultural exchange with other countries during the same period. The role of philanthropy in areas of public policy, such as healthcare and international cultural exchange, has not been examined in great depth, although there has been research on the role of philanthropy in U.S. diplomacy.

My research at the Rockefeller Archive Center (RAC) examined several aspects of the RF's contribution to international cultural exchange policy in Japan. In particular, I focused on:

- 1) the role of Charles Burton Fahs as the director of humanities at the RF
- 2) the role of collaboration between the U.S. State Department and the RF and
- 3) the role and profound involvement of John D. Rockefeller 3rd (JDR 3rd) in the creation of the International House of Japan, which in 1955 became the first international cultural exchange center in Japan.

These three factors helped establish the foundation upon which international cultural exchange

was resumed once Japan returned to international society. Furthermore, this postwar foundation for international exchange continues to have implications for Japanese public diplomacy policy today, such as Japan's people-to-people diplomacy and international development policy.

An examination of RF documents revealed frequent correspondence among Fahs, JDR 3rd, and the U.S. State Department, which showed that the collaboration between the RF and the U.S. State Department had a profound impact on the development of Japanese international exchange programs. Moreover, the personal connection between JDR 3rd and U.S. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles played a significant role in facilitating the completion of the International House of Japan.

Charles B. Fahs: The Emergence of an Asia Expert

Charles B. Fahs received his Ph.D. from Northwestern University. During his university days, Fahs studied at the University of Berlin (1929–1930), and after completing his doctoral work, he went on to study for a year at Kyoto Imperial University and Tokyo Imperial University in Japan, and then another year at the College of Chinese Studies.¹ These experiences of studying in East Asia influenced his academic career as he joined the Department of Oriental Affairs at Pomona College.² While there, Fahs' department received a \$5,000 grant from the RF, which was used to purchase books on Oriental affairs for the next three years.³ This grant was a reflection of the RF's intention to deepen the understanding of East Asian affairs even prior to WW II, and it was connected to the RF's ability to influence the development of international cultural exchange in Japan years later.

Fahs was appointed as an assistant professor of Oriental studies at Pomona on May 9, 1939, for a duration of five years.⁴ When Fahs faced a lack of funding to continue his advanced research, he turned to the RF to support part of it. In a letter, David H. Stevens, of the RF's

humanities program, expressed his support for providing funds to Fahs,⁵ and in the end, Fahs received eight hundred dollars to cover his transportation between Claremont and West China, as well as instruction costs.⁶ From 1941 to 1946 Fahs took a leave of absence from Pomona College to join the war effort. He was appointed by the government as a senior social science analyst effective September 8, 1941, and continued working as chief of research and analysis for the Far East at the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) in Washington D.C. until 1945.⁷ From 1945 to 1946 Fahs served as the acting chief in the Division of Research for the Far East at the U.S. Department of State.⁸

During this period, Pomona College continued to develop its program in Oriental area and language studies because an increased number of students began majoring in Japanese and Chinese. Pomona College viewed Fahs as a significant piece of their future program and they were expecting him to return as a faculty member.⁹ There were a number of exchanges between Pomona College and Fahs while he was at the OSS, but eventually Fahs decided to submit his resignation to Pomona College in 1946. His work in Washington D.C. had made Fahs an increasingly influential player in foreign policy as a Far East specialist.

The RF awarded Fahs a post-war fellowship in the humanities on April 14, 1945.¹⁰ He stepped down from that position on August 23, 1946,¹¹ following which the RF appointed him as the assistant director for the humanities starting September 1, 1946. This marked the beginning of Fahs's fifteen-year career at the RF.¹² The documentation and correspondence shows that there was a long-standing and extremely strong relationship between the RF and Fahs that resulted in Fahs' appointment to what would be an influential position at the foundation.

The Fahs Years at the Rockefeller Foundation

After Fahs joined the staff of the RF, he remained in communication with the State Department. Philip Jessup at the Office of the Secretary of State asked Fahs for his views on the objectives of U.S. foreign policy in Asia in 1949.¹³ In his report, Fahs presented his personal perspective on America's Far East policy and suggested that funds be provided for educational exchange, including support for sending American teachers to Japan. Moreover, he noted that fellowships should be provided to support Japanese people who wanted to study in the United States. He also noted that necessary action for the U.S. government would be to rapidly curtail the personnel and functions of the Occupation Forces so that Japan could solve its own problems.¹⁴

Fahs emphasized the importance of cultural relations between the United States and the Far East, especially with Japan, as shown in his 1949 report, "Cultural Relations with Japan." In this report, he expressed his own view on increasing budget allocation for the development of cultural relations with Japan.

Basically, this means either increased total appropriations for Japan or increased allocations for cultural relations within the existing budgets. I personally prefer the latter solution and believe it practicable. In any case, however, I think that it is quite uneconomic to spend the large sum we are now spending for Occupation in Japan without increasing cultural relations appropriations to the level necessary to assure that there is some chance of achieving our major policy objectives.¹⁵

Additionally, he strongly argued for the provision of scholarships for Japanese students, scholars, journalists, and diplomats to study in the United States, although at the same time he recognized that operating such scholarships could be costly and troublesome, and would require changes in the existing regulations.¹⁶

The statements Fahs made in that report had a significant impact on future plans for establishing the International House of Japan. Indeed, an official at the U.S. State Department

mentioned to Fahs that his report was extremely useful as they developed U.S. foreign policy toward Japan.¹⁷

In 1948 Fahs was promoted to associate director for the humanities at the RF,¹⁸ and afterward to director for the humanities in January 1950. Later that year, on December 1, he was approached by A. S. Chase, acting chief of the Division of Research for the Far East, to serve as a consultant for the division on issues relating to the Far East, including China, Japan, and Korea. Among the various issues stated in the letter, the State Department was greatly concerned about the possibility of the influence of Communist China and the Soviet Union in Asia increasing as a whole, and also regarding Japan's ability to solve issues in Asia, because Japan returned to international society after the signing of the Peace Treaty.¹⁹ These meetings between Fahs and the State Department continued for a short period, but were terminated due to budgetary limitations in December 1950.²⁰

JDR 3rd and the International House of Japan Project

In 1951, at the invitation of his friend John Foster Dulles, JDR 3rd participated in the Peace Treaty Mission to Japan, serving as an advisor on cultural relations. In his post-mission report "Japanese-American Cultural Relations," JDR 3rd proposed the establishment of a cultural center and student international houses. The report conveyed his eagerness to establish strong cultural relations with Japan and to contribute to the development of Japan's international exchange with other countries. He also stressed in his proposal that Japan should regain confidence by deepening cultural relations not only with the United States, but with various other countries as well.²¹ According to his report, Dulles also held the belief that one of the important aspects of relations between countries was cultural interchange.²² JDR 3rd emphasized that the development of this kind of cultural relations program should be implemented on a

nongovernmental basis rather than through government, since private entities would provide a more flexible interchange that would contribute to the development of a healthy intercultural relationship between Japan and the United States.²³ The ultimate objective of this cultural relationship was to enhance the future participation of Japan in the international community.²⁴

JDR 3rd proposed two projects:

- 1) A Japanese-American Cultural Center in Japan, and
- 2) International Houses.

The primary function of the Japanese-American Cultural Center would be to provide the opportunity to enhance international cultural relations particularly with the United States by providing Japanese people with useful channels for interchange. Other functions were to include the establishment of libraries into which many Western books would be placed and English language teaching programs for professionals and businessmen would be available as well. Furthermore, this center was intended to sponsor lectures, meetings, and exhibitions of the cultures of both the United States and Japan. One special function was to provide assistance to the Fulbright Foundation, especially for the administration of the program itself.²⁵ Eventually, it was expected that the Japanese would take the lead for the functions of the center. JDR 3rd mentioned that this center should invite the participation of other foreign nations and national groups in Japan interested in international cultural exchange. The financing needed to establish this center was estimated to be \$250,000.²⁶

The proposed purpose of the International Houses was to provide opportunities for interaction between foreign and Japanese university students. Basically, these houses were to be established in Tokyo and Kyoto and were to be sites where students could meet and learn about the way of life in the United States and other nations of the free world. These organizations

would be equipped with a housing complex where one or more American professors teaching in Japan would be able to live with rent free. JDR 3rd had the idea that the governing board should be mainly Japanese, except the directorship should go to an American. The cost of this establishment would be \$150,000 for each house in Tokyo and Kyoto, to be used over a five-year period. The Japanese were also expected to contribute financially to these projects.²⁷

Fahs, however, was critical of these proposed projects. First, he was concerned about the cost of establishing these two centers. The objective was that the Japanese would not only take the lead with these centers, but they would also be maintained with Japanese resources in the future. However, Fahs told JDR 3rd that his proposal would not make this objective possible for several reasons. Fahs believed that the items outlined in the JDR 3rd proposal, such as a library and an English teaching program were not wise investments. Instead of building a new American library, he believed it would be wiser to expand the American and international collections in Japan's National Diet Library. The funds would be better spent, he stated, if used for a permanent building for the eventual international center. Fahs also believed that the director of the International Houses should be Japanese rather than American in order to ensure that the Japanese would have a positive attitude and take responsibility for making this project successful.²⁸

JDR 3rd made frequent trips to Japan to discuss his projects with Japanese leaders. He was resolved to provide several hundred thousand dollars for these projects. With input from various sources, including JDR 3rd and U.S. government officials, thirty Japanese individuals formed a so-called "Cultural Center Preparatory Committee." Through discussions with the committee and others, JDR 3rd decided that the idea of a separate cultural center and multiple international houses would be abandoned temporarily and that current efforts should focus on

one International House in Tokyo.²⁹ Based on that, a tentative proposal for the International House (I-House) was drawn up and the committee stated that it would try to raise \$200,000 to \$250,000 from Japanese sources.

During this entire process, JDR 3rd was in contact with the State Department to obtain information about Japanese contacts and the situation in Japan. In order to communicate with the General Headquarters (GHQ) of the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP) for this I-House project, JDR 3rd had contacted D. R. Nugent of the Civil Information and Education (CIE) Section and received a list of the Japanese contacts who might be considered for involvement in future international cooperation.³⁰ Moreover, he contacted W. Bradley Connors of the Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs, who provided a number of useful Japanese contacts, including the future first president of the International House of Japan, Aisuke Kabayama.³¹ Douglas Overton of the State Department also provided a list of candidates for the Preparatory Committee to JDR 3rd, and one name on his list was Shigeharu Matsumoto, an old acquaintance whom JDR 3rd had first met at a conference in 1929 and who later became the first managing director of I-House.³² JDR 3rd also contacted Edwin Reischauer (returned to his Harvard teaching post following the war) about possible Japanese contacts.³³ Clearly, JDR 3rd was especially engaged and strongly motivated to see his proposal through for the creation of an international cultural exchange center.

Fahs also provided a list of people for JDR 3rd to contact during his stay in Japan and strongly recommended a number of important individuals in academia and diplomatic relations, including Matsumoto, as well as the president of the YMCA and various university presidents. Fahs suggested that JDR 3rd consult with Dr. Oliver McCoy, the Japan representative of the RF's

Division of Medicine and Public Health for possible candidates for the preparatory committee, as well.³⁴ In addition, Fahs suggested that Matsumoto be in contact with Dr. McCoy.³⁵

A series of communications ensued between the RF and the preparatory committee members, especially Matsumoto and Kabayama. Fahs informed Kabayama (copied to JDR 3rd) that the RF Board had decided to approve a grant of \$2,880, which would be available for the Cultural Center Preparatory Committee to explore this project from February 18, 1952.³⁶ Kabayama expressed his gratitude to the RF for approving the grant.³⁷

Shortly thereafter, JDR 3rd received a preliminary report from the Preparatory Committee and he consulted with Fahs about the report, including the financial aspects.³⁸ JDR 3rd's associate, Donald H. McLean, Jr., wrote to Matsumoto and Yasaka Takagi (holder of the Hepburn Chair in American Studies at Tokyo University) stressing that they needed to construct an actual building rather than implementing cultural activities in some places.³⁹ On May 28, 1952, the budget proposal for the center was brought to the attention of the RF. The sum of the proposed budget was \$676,121.⁴⁰ In July, the Cultural Center Preparatory Committee was informed by the secretary of the RF that the amount of \$500,000 was to be appropriated for the development of the International Cultural Center (i.e., I-House).⁴¹ The final \$176,120 grant was dependent upon the Japanese committee raising matching funds of ¥100 million,⁴² and on December 2, 1952, the RF Board of Trustees approved those remaining funds.⁴³ Thanks to RF funding, construction proceeded on Japan's first intercultural organization, the International House of Japan, which held its opening ceremony on June 11, 1955.⁴⁴

I-House Activities in the 1950s–1960s and the Emergence of New International Exchange Organizations

The activities at I-House included intellectual pursuits, such as the exchange of persons,

discussion meetings on Japanese religion, and talks with British Labor Party members (1954). It also held conferences, inviting guests such as Dr. Paul H. Appleby, who specialized in Japanese public administration, and Dr. Harold H. Fisher, a noted historian who engaged in discussions with Japanese political science professors on various problems facing Japan.⁴⁵ During these periods, I-House began working in cooperation with various organizations, and also providing assistance to individuals and projects with similar aims. For example, they worked with the Fulbright Commission, the Japan National Commission for UNESCO, and the Science Council of Japan.⁴⁶ I-House also strengthened its ties to cultural organizations in Southeast Asia, the Middle East, Europe, and America. It promoted international cooperation for economic development in Asian countries and assisted in holding the International Conference on the Economic Development of Asian Countries as well.⁴⁷

During this period, I-House paved the way for the creation of a new phase in the establishment of international exchange organizations in Japan in the 1970s. Among the leading examples was the Japan Center for International Exchange (JCIE), established by Tadashi Yamamoto in 1970. The Rockefeller family also had an impact on this organization. Yamamoto had met with JDR 3rd's youngest brother, David Rockefeller, at a 1972 preparatory meeting for the Trilateral Commission, a forum to promote intellectual exchange between the United States, Europe, and Japan. Since that time, the younger Rockefeller has been a strong supporter of JCIE activities.⁴⁸ JCIE developed policy dialogues, political exchanges, and grassroots exchanges with various countries in order to promote Japan's relations with the United States and the world, and their work has expanded over the years to cover global health issues, the promotion of civil society, and other pressing issues.

Currently, I-House continues to play an important role in Japan's cultural relations with the United States and the world. For example, it is working with foundations to help deepen U.S.-Japan relations. Recently, in 2012, the Japan-U.S. Friendship Commission funded a creative artist exchange fellowship program with I-House.⁴⁹

The Rockefeller spirit of promoting policy dialogue and intercultural exchange can be seen in other recent initiatives in Japan as well. In March 2012, the Japan Foundation Center for Global Partnership and the Maureen and Mike Mansfield Foundation (MMMMF) collaborated to implement the Japan Moves Forward program, a policy dialogue between U.S. and Japanese scholars in response to the March 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake.⁵⁰ MMMF is a nonprofit organization that has been developing intellectual dialogue between the two countries since 1985 with funding from the U.S. government and some corporations.⁵¹

Conclusion: Implication and Legacy of RF Cultural Projects for Current U.S.-Japan Dialogue

My research at the RAC focused primarily on how various actors collaborated to create the basic foundation for building the first intercultural center in Japan, rather than on the correspondence over the financial issues between the RF and the Cultural Center Preparatory Committee. The first point that I discovered was the important role played by Charles B. Fahs in providing information on Japan to JDR 3rd in his capacity as director of the humanities and as a consultant. Secondly, I gained insight into the tremendous effort made by JDR 3rd to realize his vision for an international house in Japan, including close communication with his various contacts in the U.S. State Department and particularly his personal friend, Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles.

Although Dulles invited JDR 3rd to participate in a governmental mission, he asked him to interact with the Japanese people as a private citizen and as a private foundation representative. JDR 3rd was expected to study U.S.-Japanese relations to determine not only what the government policy should be, but what the RF could do to strengthen ties.⁵² Dulles held the idea that private foundations should take the lead in promoting intercultural relations.

A new phase of the collaborative relationship between U.S. and Japanese foundations has emerged since March 2011, and in many ways, we can see the legacy of the Rockefeller Foundation's efforts to create a model and a foundation for continuous international cultural exchange activities between Japan and the U.S. Most notably, those efforts to promote international cultural exchange were implemented through collaboration with the U.S. State Department. That collaboration serves as the foundation and model for public-private collaboration at the present time.

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The ideas and opinions expressed in this report are those of the author and are not intended to represent the Rockefeller Archive Center.

ENDNOTES:

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- ²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 3.
- ²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 5.
- ²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 7.
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