

## Learning from Each Other:

### Japan, the United States, and the International Knowledge System

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The Japan-U.S. bilateral relationship is one of the most important in the world. Trade and security issues come to mind as central to this relationship, but education and culture are just as important, and are a necessary underpinning to commerce. Each country is very much on the mind of the other, not only in matters of trade policy but also in popular culture and imagination. Japan pays more attention to the United States than vice versa. For example, the number of books translated from English into Japanese (2,466, mostly from the United States) far outweighs translations from Japanese into English (32). Very few books from Japanese sources reach readers in the English-speaking world, while Japanese bookstores are well stocked with American books, many reaching the bestseller lists. A study done in the 1980s by the Research Institute of the Japan Press Society looked at what was reported about the United States in the *Asahi Shimbun* and about Japan in the *New York Times*. In a one-week period, 112 news items about the United States appeared in the *Asahi Shimbun* while only 24 stories about Japan were printed in the *New York Times*.

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There is also a lack of balance in people. Many more Japanese visit the United States than Americans visit Japan. Not only are there vastly more tourists from Japan going to the United States than there are Americans traveling in the other direction, but the numbers of students and researchers are dramatically unbalanced. In 1995, 1,782 American students are studying in Japanese universities, and only 442 of these are graduate students, while more than 43,000 Japanese students are at present studying in

the United States, the majority at the graduate level. In fact, Japanese students now comprise the largest single group of foreign students in the United States. While Japanese numbers continue to increase, American enrollments in Japan are declining. Moreover, more researchers and experts from Japan go to the United States than American scholars and scientists go to Japan.

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Learning languages is another way of learning about another culture—and of communicating with it. Here, again, there are obvious inequalities, with many more Japanese learning English than there are Americans learning Japanese. The Japanese public school system requires students to study English in junior high and high school. While there has been much criticism of the quality of English-language instruction in Japan, most college graduates have a reasonable reading knowledge of English, partly because the entrance examination system has emphasized reading over speaking. The number of Americans who study Japanese, despite dramatic growth in the past half-dozen years, is tiny in comparison. Approximately 50,000 American postsecondary students were enrolled in Japanese-language courses in 1990, with a handful of additional students studying Japanese in high schools.

Japanese learn about the United States mainly from Americans, from the books and articles they write, and the television programs they produce. Americans learn about Japan mainly from Americans, and not from Japanese. American experts and commentators filter news and information from Japan to the public as well as to opinion leaders in the United States. Americans have few opportunities to learn directly from Japanese sources about key issues in U.S.-Japan relations or about Japanese society and culture. Japanese books, articles, films, and other cultural products seldom reach the American market. There is a sizable community of experts on Japan in the United States, teaching in universities and working in “think tanks.” There are also major centers for Japanese studies in American colleges

and universities, and the field has been growing in popularity. In contrast, there are few places in Japan to study the United States, and few experts in Japanese academe specializing in the United States; the field of American studies is underdeveloped in Japan.

What is to be done? There is an urgent need to correct dramatic imbalances in educational and cultural relations. It is clear that some inequalities will remain. Large numbers of Americans are simply not going to learn Japanese—it is a language that requires a great deal of time and energy to master, and its usefulness is limited to Japan—although there ought to be further growth in the numbers of Americans studying Japanese. With only minor improvements in language instruction in Japan, large numbers of Japanese can be sufficiently fluent in English to communicate with Americans and other English-speakers.

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Better policies and performance in education and cultural exchange and learning do not require treaties or diplomatic ann-twisting. Modest initiatives can go a long way. Here are some suggestions:

- Improve and expand already existing programs to bring Americans to Japan for study. This can be done by better publicity and coordination, and a modest infusion of resources. At present, 90 percent of the foreign students in Japan are from Asia. More attention can be placed on attracting students from the United States.
- Stimulate the translation into English and publication of more Japanese books in the United States. This can be done through commercial publishers with subsidies for translation.
- Expand the study of the United States in Japan and provide resources for training experts on American culture, history, politics, and society.

The main challenge is to recognize that, while there might be a trade surplus in Japan's favor, there is a distinct knowledge deficit, and that education and culture are very much part of the pattern of international relations in the modern world.

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## Jesuit Higher Education in India Today Institutionalizing Our Charism in the Affiliating University

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The dialectic tension between the “institutional” and the “charismatic” is inherent in any social system. Indeed, charismatic inspiration and authority need institutionalization for continuity; yet at the same time, it is alienated by these very structures. While the dialectic between these two necessary polarities constitutes an inescapable dilemma, the tension between them could be a source of creative growth and innovative adaptation—rather than of confusion or ossification, as would happen if only one or the other horn of the dilemma were stressed. Religious organizations illustrate this very convincingly. Consider the beginnings of a church or religious congregation, where the early charism of the founder(s) is institutionalized in later structures, precisely to extend it over time and space. Educational institutions, too, particularly when they derive from a religious, or otherwise charismatic inspiration, are also subject to this dialectic tension, and Jesuit education certainly falls into this category.

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***For the seriously committed Jesuit, the inescapable tension between the inspiration of our charism and the constraints of the system is heightened to the point of exasperation.***

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Jesuit educational institutions are an important apostolic commitment of the Society of Jesus. Indeed, the education ministry was one of the earliest apostolates of the Society, and today one of its largest commitments as well. St. Paul's College in Goa, which the Jesuits took over in 1549, was one of the earliest colleges of the Society of Jesus, and one of the first Western institutions of higher education in India. Giving expression in this ministry to our Jesuit charism and the mission it calls us to has always been a challenge, and an increasingly difficult one today—especially in this country and most particularly with higher edu-