

Ambassador Kurt Tong, a lifelong JASCer

Before departing for the APEC summit in Hawaii, Ambassador Kurt Tong, JASC 36, 37 (1984, 1985) sat down with recent alumna Leah Flake JASC 61, 62 (2009, 2010) and talked about his experience as a JASC delegate and Executive Committee member. In December, Kurt will become Deputy of the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo.



Kurt Tong is currently the Ambassador for the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), as well as the Economic Coordinator for the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs within the U. S. Department of State. Prior to these positions, he worked and studied in East Asia for 17 years, holding various Embassy positions in Korea, China, Japan, and the Philippines. In 2005, he received the Herbert Salzman Award for Excellence in International Economic Performance. He is married to fellow 36th and 37th JASCer Mika Marumoto.

Between high school and college, he spent a year at International Christian University auditing classes, and returned to college in the United States to study East Asian Studies and Japanese. Ambassador Tong became involved with JASC after his sophomore year of college at Princeton University.

During his time with JASC, Ambassador Tong found cross-cultural communication taken to a higher level than he had experienced in the past. "You're having a lot of fun conversations, but they also tend not to be purely social, because people are curious. It's this combination of substantive conversations and social fun that is kind of unique, and really made for some very lasting impressions about a lot of the people," he says about his time at JASC. "I found people to be very open and with a willingness to share, which you don't get in every conversation."

Ambassador Tong experienced his first international negotiations while serving as the American Chair for the 37th JASC, when AEC-JEC communications took place over letters and short phone calls rather than e-mail and Skype.

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Updates

Help Recruit for the 64th JASC

Applications will be accepted starting the middle December until March 1, 2012. If you know of any great applicants or would like to assist with recruitment, please let us know and refer them to our website!

Apply online from December 5th at:

www.iscdc.org

Update your Contact Information

Did you know JASC spends more than one hundred dollars each year on returned and resent mail?

Please help us make efficient use of your donations and update your contact information today!

Remember, the winter and summer editions of the JASC Journal are **only sent via e-mail** so please keep us updated on your e-mail address as well.

Share your updates throughout the year by e-mailing jasc@iscdc.org.

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Kurt Tong, then-Chair of the American Executive Committee with Japan Chair Nao Fukutani. Ambassador Tong says they are still in contact.

Even as the relationship between the U.S. and Japan evolves, the fundamental role of JASC remains constant. "The course of history doesn't really impact that basic need to have both the educational experience and the mutual understanding underpinning the relationship. "

As for the future of JASC, Ambassador Tong likes the direction in which it is headed. "What I've found interesting is that, in recent years, I get a real sense of the students wanting to share their findings beyond JASC... there's more desire to get out and either share information or participate in events that have an impact outside of the Conference itself."

Ambassador Tong has found that the spirit of lifelong education fostered by JASC has carried over into his work and life in general. "Education is a lifelong activity. I spend half my day just trying to get the information that I need and educate myself about what's going on." Ambassador Tong's commitment to the relationship between the U. S. and East Asia reflects the spirit of JASC and helps to reinforce the Conference's goal to promote mutual understanding between two nations. "It's a great program, it really is."

Leah Flake, who interviewed Ambassador Tong and wrote this article, attended JASC 61 and served as an American Executive Committee member for JASC 62. She is currently a graduate student at the University of Maryland studying Engineering and Public Policy.

"We had something we needed to sort out between the American Executive Committee and the Japanese Executive Committee relating to budget... so I flew over there and spent three or four days with the JEC. We sorted it out, and figured out what we wanted to do." This type of involved leadership by students, supported by a larger organization, is a unique attribute of JASC.

"The Conference is basically as good as the students make it. I found that if you really apply yourself and communicate and come up with good ideas, you make better events and a better conference."

A Season of Reunions

It seems Fall is the season for JASC reunions. JASCers from multiple years have gathered in New York, Chicago, Boston, Los Angeles, and Philadelphia all in the last month.

The photo at right was taken at a gathering in Philadelphia and includes Satoko Okutani JASC 62, 63, who traveled all the way from Tokyo to meet with fellow JASCers. Others in the photo came from Wisconsin, New York, Connecticut, Maryland, and Washington D.C., as well as several from Philadelphia. Despite the early snow storm, they had a great time together and have already begun planning their next meeting.

It is wonderful to hear about these reunions! If there is anything ISC can do to help you plan one in your area, don't hesitate to let us know!



JASCer Notes

who is an environmental consultant in CA. She can be reached at yuko.tomosue@roche.com.

Shu Sakurai JASC 45 (1993), has been elected a City Council member of Itami City, Hyogo, and coping with issues around fiscal discipline, environment, medicine, day-care, etc. www.sakuraishu.net/category1/policy/

Tazu Goto, JASC 45 (1993) is a staff writer for Asahi Shimbun. She is now at the Oita Bureau after a year in Seoul, South Korea.

Taro Isshiki JASC 45, 46 (1993, 1994) left Morrison & Foster and set up his own international law firm in Tokyo.

Greg Ruhnke JASC 45 (1993), and **Atsuko Daibo** JASC 46 (1994), are happily married and live in Chicago.

Ayumi Wakizaka JASC 45, 46 (1993, 1994) is a Business Planning and Control Manager for Guerlain Japan, a perfumes & cosmetics division of the LVMH group. Ayumi is also working on the translation of Ayn Rand's *We The Living*, and the paperback version of *Atlas Shrugged*, which was published in 2004.

Malik Rashid JASC 47, 48 (1995, 1996) Malik's daughter, Ariana Saoirse Rashid, just turned 1.

Mital Gondha Makadia JASC 52, 53 (2000, 2001) recently started working as an Associate at Grellas Shah LLP; a Silicon-Valley corporate law firm that specializes in early-stage tech startups.

Jay Jei Lin JASC 55 (2003) having worked in the U.S. for 5 years in higher education and boarding schools, was relocated to China with his wife and now is living in Beijing. Jay is working in the field of international education, bringing foreigners to China and preparing Chinese students to study abroad.

Michelle Lee Jones JASC 56, 57 (2005, 2006) has been hired as research assistant to Dr. Eun Ki-soo for an upcoming volume on gender roles in Asia. Michelle is a graduate student in Korean Studies at the Seoul National University Graduate School of International Studies through the Korean Government Scholarship Program.

Mia Monnier JASC 59 (2008) graduated from Middlebury College with a BA in Japanese Studies in 2010.

She now lives in Los Angeles where she works as freelance writer contributing to the *Rafu Shimpō*, *Discover Nikkei*, and *Densho*. She hopes everyone from the 59th JASC is doing well!

Sophia Yang JASC 59 (2007) has shared a wonderful job listing for a the position of Director of Global Program at the prestigious Japan Society based in New York, New York. For more information got to www.japansociety.org, or to apply, send a letter of interest and resume to Jane Fenton, Director of Human Resources, at jobs@japansociety.org.

Hidemi Michael Tanaka JASC 59, 60 (2007, 2008) After two years of sales experience at Nishimoto Trading in Los Angeles, Hidemi now works as a Purchasing manager at Zensho America Corporation in Carlsbad, CA. Hidemi will visit New York City during thanksgiving, and also plans to visit his favorite city New Orleans for Christmas weekend.

Justin Perkins JASC 62, 63 (2010, 2011) is in Yao, Osaka and having a lot of fun. He is only a 25 minute ride from the center of Osaka and Yao is a big city so there's always stuff to do. The children he teaches are not the best in terms of behavior, but they are really fun and they keep Justin on his toes. His fellow teachers are really fun and we are glad to hear they are always looking out for him. To the right is a picture of Justin and one of his friends at a festival one of his teachers was in (they are wearing team towels). If anyone is in Japan around the Osaka area give Justin a call. He says he is always excited to hang out with JASCers!



Alexander Evans JASC 63 (2011) has returned to his second year of studies at Villanova University, where he plans to major in economics and business analytics. The time spent in Japan has motivated him to not only study abroad in the spring semester of the next academic year, but also seek an international-related internship this upcoming summer.

T.J. Pempel (a member of JASC's National Advisory Committee) has just been awarded the Jack M. Forcey chair in Political Science at the University of California, Berkeley. In addition he is editing two forthcoming books on Northeast Asian security that were the outgrowth of research grants from the MacArthur Foundation's Asian Security Initiative.

The 64th JAPAN AMERICA STUDENT CONFERENCE

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Summary of the 64th JASC Roundtable Topics

Cultural Innovation and the Arts

Cultural innovation describes the process by which existing elements of culture are changed or developed. As a result of cultural innovation, there have been a number of changes throughout time, with a number of significant changes being made in the arts (visual arts, literary arts, and performing arts). One example of cultural innovation within the arts can be seen in street art, which has often reacted to social movements. While cultural innovation is not a new process, the Cultural Innovation and the Arts Roundtable will seek to understand how technological advancements and social reform in the 20th and 21st centuries have influenced cultural innovation with respect to the arts.

Cooperative Security in the 21st Century

In an era of increasing economic, social, and political tensions, joint efforts between nation states are more essential than ever to establishing world peace. One such example is the U.S.-Japan Security Alliance. While alliances can create bonds between countries, it can also worsen relations between other nations not involved in the alliance. In addition, agreements made for alliances on the international level can conflict with opinions and laws of national and local governments. This Roundtable will examine the roles of cooperative security, specifically between the U.S. and Japan, within international relations.

Business and Ethics in the Modern World

As the world becomes more connected, issues of business ethics become more important. For instance, given that ethical norms can vary depending on culture, is it possible for international society to develop a single set of ethical norms for the entire business community? And if so, who decides what those standards should be, and who enforces them? These problems are complicated by the fact that companies are subject to national rules and regulations but must compete in an international marketplace. This Roundtable will examine the problems, both domestic and global, facing today's companies and what those problems mean in the context of an increasingly interdependent world.

Personal and National Identity

Identity, both personal and national, is changing in today's increasingly globalizing world. How individuals define national identity plays an important role in how they relate to others—both at home and abroad. In a rapidly changing world, immigration, cultural exchange, and loss of tradition are affecting national identity. The focus of this Roundtable is to investigate

the ideas surrounding personal and national identity, and to determine how those viewpoints affect domestic and international relations, using American and Japanese identities as case studies. By sharing their different perspectives, students will gain new insight into their own identities and how they understand others.



Post-Crisis Reconstruction

Even in modern times, natural disasters and destruction from war still devastate communities. After an initial crisis, long-term reconstruction efforts are always filled with challenges. This Roundtable will examine these challenges of reconstruction and how communities rebuild their economies, politics, and livelihoods and ultimately overcome these challenges. The allocation of scarce resources in a

post-crisis situation provides insight into a community's politics and culture. Alliances are broken or forged in times of crisis, and reconstruction efforts offer opportunities for international political action to overcome the challenges of reconstruction. This Roundtable will examine the long-term psychological effects of crises and how education is influenced by reconstruction.

Environment and Technology

The current generation faces the challenge of finding creative solutions that will secure a sustainable environment for future generations. To secure a sustainable environment, we need to directly address issues such as the pollution of natural resources, climate change, and nuclear waste disposal, among others. We must ask who should be responsible—big companies, the general public, or the government—for environmental sustainability and critically examine current technologies that negatively impact the environment. This Roundtable will explore how current technologies impact the environment and what innovative technologies can be used to understand and solve modern environmental problems.

Human Rights and Responsibility

Some define human rights as the rights and freedoms that all people are entitled to regardless of nationality, sex, age, ethnicity, religion, language, etc. But as the world globalizes, how far does our responsibility to protect the human rights of others extend? This Roundtable will focus on addressing this question and discussing places and instances where rights have been violated. As we discuss specific places and violations we will try to understand how our systems have led to them and changes that could be implemented to protect people from all different perspectives.

JASCer Notes

Haruo Yamamoto JASC 16 (1964) would like to announce the 7th U.S.-Japan Youth Forum on Dec. 8th at FCCJ (Foreign correspondent club Japan). The Forum will discuss “future energy policy”. Six student panelists from six countries will attend.

Emi Yasukawa JASC 60, 61 (2008, 2009) will MC and the moderator will be **Ryutaro Kurihara** (JASC 63). **Ashley Hill** (JASC 63) will participate as a panelist representing the U.S.A. H.I.H **Princess Takamado** is expected to attend as usual. For more information e-mail youthforum.japan.2011@gmail.com with questions.

Larry Ingraham JASC 26 (1974) had lunch with **Mr. Shoi-chi Nakase** JASC 8, 9, Vice President of JASC Japan, **Mr. Tatsumi Ohtaka** JASC 16, Director of JASC Japan, and **Ms. Eri Otaka**, JASC 55 in Tokyo while there on business in early October. Larry also attended the Trine-Kalamazoo football game on November 5, at the invitation of Dr. Earl Brooks, President of Trine University. Trine will be the first



site for the 5th Korea-America Student Conference, JASC's sister program.

Here is Larry with the Trine mascot “Thunder.”

Yo Konno JASC 32 (1980) It has been 31 years since Yo took part in the 32nd JASC in 1980. Time really flies! After participating in JASC, Yo spent two years in Washington DC as a graduate student from 1980 to 1982. He finished a Master of Science in Foreign Service (MSFS) from the School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University and soon joined Citibank at their Tokyo office. Yo worked for Citibank for 12 years, Chemical Bank / Chase Manhattan Bank for 6 years, ABN Amro for 3 years, and Royal Bank of Scotland for 5 years prior to joining National Australia Bank a year ago in 2010.

Yo says it is a good time for him to look at the past while continuing to pursue a career as a banker. The experience he gained at JASC remains most vivid in his mind, and friends he met then are still his best friends.

David (aka Gross) Jacobson JASC 36, 37 (1984, 1985) is working and living in beautiful Seattle, Washington. Besides taking care of his two children,

he is working for Chin Music Press, one of the last remaining book publishers with a specialty in books about Japan. He is currently editing a manuscript about a prominent foreign family that has made its home in Japan since the beginning of the Meiji era, and contains eyewitness accounts of Westernization during the Meiji period, the Yokohama (and Tokyo) earthquake of 1923, and the Tokyo firebombing in WWII, etc

Marc Supcoff JASC 38 (1986) attended the Yale Symposium on Safe Buildings. Marc is interested in improving building code and enforcement mechanisms in developing (and developed) countries to prevent loss of life and limit property damage from earthquakes. Marc has been researching Japan's Building Law as one potential model for the developing world.

Kei Koizumi JASC 42, 43 (1990, 1991) has been in Washington, DC, just blocks away from the ISC DC office, for the past 18 years. He has been the Assistant Director for Federal R&D at the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy since the beginning of the Obama Administration. Rewarding as that is, unfortunately it's meant he has not been able to visit Japan in a while. This fall, Kei is also teaching a course in Introduction to Science and Technology Policy at the George Washington University. In April 2010, Kei married his partner of 13 years, Jeff Dutton, who works at the US Department of Commerce and who spent time in Japan as an exchange student. He invites all to come by to see him in the Nation's Capital!

Ms. Sara Jobin JASC 44 (1992) continues her career as an opera conductor, this year in Hungary, Alaska, and New York City. She is based in the Berkshires in western Massachusetts, where it keeps snowing!

Ms. Tomoko Ako JASC 44, 45 (1992, 1993) is Associate Professor of School of International Liberal Studies at Waseda University and teaches development issues with focus on China. www.waseda-giari.jp/eng/organization/member40.html

Mr. Hirofumi Miyake JASC 45 (1993), a diplomat for Ministry of Foreign Affairs, was just assigned to the Economic Section in Vietnam. **Kentaro Kaihara**, also from JASC 45, is stationed in Washington D.C. as a diplomat.

Yuko Tomosue JASC 45 (1993) is Product Manager for Global Marketing of Roche Molecular System Inc and lives in Pleasanton, CA with her husband, **Mr. Ken Ebihara**, JASC 46, 47 (1994, 1995),

Yoko K. and Heaven's Library

Yoko Kamitani JASC 57, 58 (2005, 2006), was a student at the George Washington University when she applied to the Japan-America Student Conference. Although a Japanese national, she participated as an American delegate and served on the American Executive Committee the following year. Yoko even interned at International Student Conferences afterwards!



It was during this time that Yoko found that she had a talent for expressing emotion through writing music. Using her classical training on the piano and a computer, she developed a unique style of music that she describes as “organic electronica.”

She released her debut album *012906* (Asahra Music, U.S.A. 2006) under the name Yoko K. and it was nominated for “Best Album in Electronica” by the 6th Annual Independent Music Awards.

Yoko has been awarded a Young Artist Grant (2006), and a New Media and Audio Grant (2007) from the Washington, D.C. Commission on the Arts and Humanities. She has performed at the Smithsonian Institution, Corcoran Gallery of Art, Irvine Contemporary Gallery and the Embassies of Denmark and Finland. She has given guest lectures at the *Communication, Culture and Technology* Graduate Program at Georgetown University and gave a presentation at TEDxPotomac in May 2010. And most recently Yoko has been participating in the Artist in Residence program at Strathmore just north of Washington, D.C.

Yoko K.'s latest album, *Heaven's Library*, was released August of this year and has already found great commercial and local success. Both Yoko K. albums are available from the iTunes music store and Amazon. Samples may be heard there as well as on <http://aphrodizia.bandcamp.com>.

The ISC website has an all new look!



In the Fall edition of the *JASC eJournal* we announced that International Student Conferences is launching a new website. We are very excited about how the site is turning out and can't wait for you to see it!

The site will go live December 5, 2011.

However, ISC still needs your help! Visit www.iscdc.org or join us on Facebook to learn how you can help!

