

**From Inter-Imperial Relations to Transnational Connections:  
A Case of Japan's Intellectual Interchange**

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It is true that the advent of global governance or the “emergence of international society,” to borrow historian Daniel Gorman’s phrase, occurred in the 1920s. In fact, the so-called “apostles of the Nitobe sect,” internationally minded Japanese intellectuals who consider Nitobe Inazo as their mentor, started to engage themselves actively in intellectual interchange in the era. Nitobe was scholar, educator, and undersecretary of the League of Nations, a representative internationalist in Japan. However, they, including Nitobe himself, still clung to the idea of empire as they defended Japan’s interest especially in the 1930s. In short, they embraced half-way internationalism. As historian Tomoko Akami characterizes, Japan’s intellectual interchange in the interwar period was still a part of ‘inter-imperial’ relations in Asia-Pacific.

After the Pacific War, Japan’s cultural exchange blossomed fully. The intellectual part of which was centered around the International House of Japan (IHJ), arguably the nod of intellectual interchange in Japan in the 1950s and 1960s. It opened owing to the unsparing effort of Matsumoto Shigeharu, an apostle of the Nitobe sect, with the support of John D. Rockefeller, 3rd. The Rockefeller Foundations helped Matsumoto establish the IHJ and continuously supported it until the late 1960s. Matsumoto first met with Rockefeller at the conference of the Institute of Pacific Relations (IPR), the harbinger of international non-governmental organization (INGO) in Asia-Pacific, held in Kyoto in 1929. Matsumoto was reunited with Rockefeller when the latter was on the Dulles peace mission. Thus Matsumoto symbolizes the evolution of Japan’s intellectual interchange from that of inter-imperial one to more international one. Still, the activities of the IHJ reflected U.S.-Japan relations in the Cold War. Matsumoto and other apostles of Nitobe sect who were affiliated with the IHJ tried to influence the bilateral relations and the Rockefeller Foundation often cooperated with the U.S. government.

In the 1970s, what Harvard historians call the “shock of the global” transformed the structure of intercultural relations with the upheaval of INGOs in response to the détente. In Japan, the Japan Foundation was established and a few other private philanthropic organizations sprang up. Also the IHJ embraced more transnational tendency, though it became only one of the nods of intellectual interchange in Japan.

Against this background, the paper examines various activities of the apostles of Nitobe sect in intellectual interchange. They include the birth of American studies in Japan in the early 1920s, the invitations of Charles A. Beard, U.S. political scientist and historian, to Japan sandwiching the Kanto earthquake of 1923, and the postwar rebirth of intellectual internationalism centering around the IHJ after the turbulent era of the 1930s and the Second World War. Finally, the paper tries to illustrate how the IHJ abandoned its statist tendency in the late 1960s during the Vietnam War that shook U.S. “empire” and became a truly transnational organization in the 1970s.