

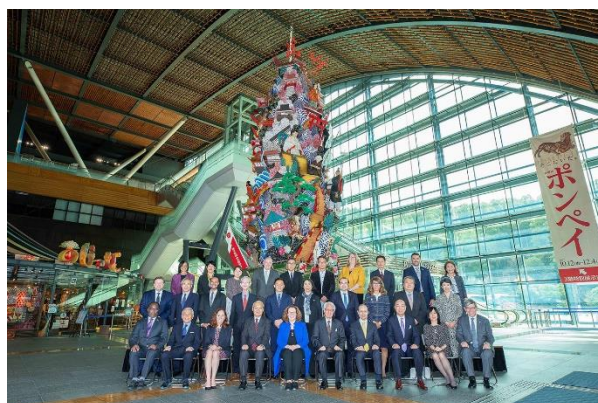
## CULCON Symposium 2022 (Report)

Dates: October 23-24, 2022

Locations: Fukuoka City (Hotel New Otani Hakata) and Dazaifu (Kyushu National Museum),  
Japan

### Overview

CULCON (U.S.-Japan Conference on Cultural & Educational Interchange) plenary sessions are held every two years, and symposia during the years in between. They are hosted alternately by the U.S. and Japan CULCON Panels. In October 2021, in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Japanese Panel hosted a hybrid plenary session, in which the U.S. panelists participated online. The Joint Statement from that meeting was submitted to Prime Minister Kishida the following month. Further information on CULCON plenary sessions and symposia are available



[here.](#)

The Japanese Panel hosted this year's CULCON symposium. Focusing on one of the themes mentioned in the Joint Statement, the symposium was called “For Further Mutual Understanding between the U.S. and Japan.” Because the U.S. panelists were now able to visit Japan again (visa exemption arrangements for U.S. citizens resumed on October 11), the symposium was held in person in Kyushu. It had been three years since the last time the U.S. and Japanese panelists met in person in 2019. Since several U.S. and Japanese panelists had changed during that period, this became a valuable opportunity for many individuals to meet each other for the first time.

### Schedule

(1) Sunday, October 23 (Fukuoka City)

-Final report by the Ad Hoc Committee

-Discussion at the residence of ASO Yukata, advisor to the Japan Panel

(2) Monday, October 24 (Dazaifu)

-CULCON Symposium: “For Further Mutual Understanding between the U.S. and Japan”

-Lunch session commemorating 150 years of baseball in Japan:

“The ‘Field of Dreams’ That Crossed the Pacific”

-Visit to the permanent collection of Kyushu National Museum

-Lecture by the Chief Priest of Dazaifu Tenmangu Shrine

(3) Wednesday, October 26 (Tokyo): Various follow-up events

## Details

### (1) Final Report by the Ad Hoc Committee

The Ad Hoc Committee, which was formed in October 2021 and comprises both Japanese and U.S. panelists, has held three meetings (the first was held online, the second was a hybrid meeting in Hawaii, and the third was a hybrid meeting in Okinawa). At the final report meeting in Fukuoka, they agreed upon the following two points:

(i) CULCON will establish working groups to discuss two topics: “advancing digitization and broadening of information exchange between the two countries” and “exploring local and regional interchanges and new platforms for subnational diplomacy.”

(ii) The two working groups will include CULCON panelists and outside experts. They will present their findings at the CULCON plenary session to be held in the U.S. next year.



### (2) Discussion at the residence of ASO Yukata, advisor to the Japan Panel

Mr. ASO Yutaka, who has greatly contributed to Japan CULCON as a panelist (since 2006) and advisor (since 2012), hosted a dinner and discussion for the participants of the CULCON Symposium 2022. The dinner was set up under a BBQ tent on the lawn of his residence in Iizuka, Fukuoka prefecture.

Dr. Sheila Smith (Chair, U.S. CULCON) thanked Mr. Aso during her opening remarks and presented him with a gift. Ambassador KATO Ryozo (Chair, Japan CULCON) then presented flowers of appreciation to Mr. and Mrs. Aso. Dinner guests included Mr. Chuka Asike (Principal Officer, U.S. Consulate Fukuoka) and Ambassador SASAE Kenichiro (President, Japan Institute of International Affairs).



(3) CULCON Symposium: “For Further Mutual Understanding between the U.S. and Japan”

Mr. KUSUDA Daizo (Mayor, Dazaifu City), and Mr. Chuka Asike (Principal Officer, U.S. Consulate Fukuoka) opened the symposium with their welcome remarks. Mayor Kusuda, who has visited the U.S. through a three-week International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP) hosted by the U.S. State Department, showed keen interest in CULCON’s activities.

Dr. Smith (U.S. Chair) moderated the symposium, while Dr. KUBO Fumiaki (Vice Chair, Japan CULCON) introduced the speakers and provided concluding remarks. The speakers—CULCON panelists Dr. William Tsutsui, Dr. Jolyon Thomas, and Dr. TAKAHASHI Yuko, as well as outside experts Professor MAESHIMA Kazuhiro of Sophia University and Professor TSUTSUI Kiyoteru of Stanford University—discussed the challenges that Japan Studies in the U.S. and American Studies in Japan currently face. This included funding at research institutions, changes in academic fields over time, changes in societal structures and political issues that influence academics, shifts in students’ and faculty members’ interests, and issues related to generational change. They also discussed what kind of support public institutions like CULCON can provide. Their remarks were followed by a Q&A session, where two students from Kyushu University (including an American student) asked questions. The speakers and CULCON panelists then enjoyed networking with audience members.





#### (4) Lunch Session Commemorating 150 Years of Baseball in Japan: “The ‘Field of Dreams’ That Crossed the Pacific”

This was a fireside chat welcoming Mr. OH Sadaharu, Chairman of the Fukuoka Softbank Hawks. With Professor SHIMIZU Sayuri of Rice University moderating the discussion, Ambassador KATO (Japan Chair) and CULCON panelist Mr. SHIMATANI Hiroyuki enjoyed a conversation with Mr. Oh.

They discussed the 150th anniversary of the introduction of baseball to Japan; why Mr. Oh garners respect as a baseball player and manager in the U.S. despite never having played for American teams; his relationship with American baseball players; and his activities with a youth baseball foundation established by the U.S. and Japan to foster the next generation. Mr. Oh took the time to respond to every question, and audience members later gave him a standing ovation.



#### (5) Visit to the Permanent Collection of the Kyushu National Museum

The CULCON panelists enjoyed curator-led tours in small groups. They also explored the collection on their own using NaviLens, a smartphone app that serves as a multilingual audio guide.

#### (6) Lecture by the Chief Priest of Dazaifu Tenmangu Shrine

CULCON panelists visited the shrine office, where they attended a lecture and Q&A session with



NISHITAKATSUJI Nobuyoshi (the previous (39<sup>th</sup>) Chief Priest who is now Senior Advisor) and NISHITAKATSUJI Nobuhiro (the current (40<sup>th</sup>) Chief Priest). They then offered their prayers for deeper ties between Japan and the United States, as well as for world peace. As one of the U.S. panelists is an expert on Japanese religion, this discussion was especially valuable.

During the Q&A, both the Japanese and U.S. panelists enjoyed the discussion on the generational

transition among priests. They were especially inspired by the idea that, in order to protect traditions of over 1,300 years, one must transform oneself in response to various changes in the community and the world.

## (7) Other Relevant Events in Tokyo

### (i) Breakfast Meeting with Ambassador Rahm Emanuel

On the morning of the 26th, the Secretariat of U.S. CULCON hosted a breakfast meeting with U.S. Ambassador to Japan Rahm Emanuel. Dr. Smith gave a brief report on the symposium in Fukuoka, after which the U.S. and Japanese panelists exchanged opinions.

(Photo: Ambassador Emanuel's tweet about the breakfast meeting)



### (ii) Courtesy Call on Foreign Minister HAYASHI Yoshimasa



In the afternoon of the 26th, the U.S. panelists, as well as the Japan Chair and Secretary-General of Japan CULCON, paid a courtesy call on Foreign Minister HAYASHI Yoshimasa. Dr. Smith reported on the symposium in Fukuoka and discussed the details of the two working groups that would be established soon.

(Press release by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan: [Courtesy Call on Foreign Minister HAYASHI Yoshimasa by Dr. Sheila Smith, the U.S. CULCON Chair, Ambassador KATO Ryoza, Japan CULCON Chair and the U.S. CULCON Panelists](#))

### (iii) Tour of the Oriental Library (Toyo Bunko) Museum

On the evening of the 26th, the U.S. panelists, as well as the Japan Chair and Secretary-General of Japan CULCON, toured the Oriental Library Museum. The tour was made possible by Mr. SUGIURA Yasuyuki, a Japan CULCON panelist who serves as the Managing Director of the library. Guided by researchers, the panelists viewed rare books related to Commodore Perry's visit to Japan about 170 years ago, as well as historical materials related to SUGAWARA Michizane (who is enshrined at Dazaifu Tenmangu).



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