

**Remarks by Consul General Yasumasa Nagamine
2008 Reischauer Scholars Program Reception, Friday, August 22, 2008**

Good morning ladies and gentlemen:

First of all, I'd like to express my sincere thanks to Mr. Gary Mukai for inviting me to "Japan Day" at SPICE.

He, along with his team at SPICE, deserves a special thank-you for doing such an impressive job running the Reischauer Scholars Program. I am particularly glad that 28 students successfully completed this year's program.

Now, it gives me great pleasure to recognize the two 2008 Reischauer Scholars "Japan Day" honorees for the best essays, and the two students who received an honorable mention.

Congratulations!

I've read your essays, and I have to say, I was very impressed.

You should feel justifiably proud of what you've achieved.

I was amazed by the depth of your knowledge and the level of research you undertook into your subject matter.

"The Rise of Japan's Middle Class As Seen Through *Ukiyo-e*" by Alex Warofka

demonstrates a knowledge both of Japanese history, as well as Japanese art, and the biographical details of the artists really help to give it some color.

In "*Juku: Problematic or Necessary?*" Allison Fink shatters the usual stereotypes that are prevalent in the West by pointing out that pupils in Japan often enjoy their *juku* studies more than school, because the teaching is targeted at the right level of difficulty for each student.

In "Japan's Approach to Whaling," Samantha Keyser puts forward a very balanced case, drawing attention to the oft-forgotten plight of those Japanese communities who depend on whaling for their livelihood, much like the minority populations in Alaska and Greenland, who are permitted to whale for subsistence.

The essay on "The Kyoto Protocol" by Cheyenne McCarthy not only explains how global warming occurs, but also provides a context for the U.S.'s actions in terms of U.S.-Japan relations.

Each one of these is excellent.

I hope that learning about Japan as Reischauer Scholars was a rewarding experience for you.

But, more importantly, I want you to come away with a clearer vision of the world we live in, where being able to bridge cross-cultural divisions is essential for successful leaders today.

These days, the world is a smaller place thanks to the relentless progress of globalization, so that we all need skills in international relations at one level or another. Isolation is not an option; indeed, the training of people who have a deeper understanding of foreign cultures has become even more imperative.

This is why we rely on scholars, business people, government officials and other professionals who have the capacity to view the situation with insight and deep understanding about foreign countries and regions.

In this regard, programs like the Reischauer Scholars Program play a vital role in teaching students to think critically about a foreign country.

Reischauer himself said that he was satisfied that "a whole army of vigorous young scholars now stands trained and eager to carry the causes I believe in far beyond what my limited abilities and energy could ever achieve."

The Reischauer Scholars Program's main benefit is in creating young scholars specifically in the fields of Japanese Studies and Japanese-American relations.

The U.S. and Japan aren't just the world's top two economic giants; they're also important allies, sharing such basic principles as liberal democracy and freedom of speech, who together face a number of globally significant issues and challenges.

This alliance and partnership is based on a level of trust that comes from a deep understanding of each other's culture, history and people, so it's essential that we keep building this trust in order to grow the alliance further.

That requires effort on both sides, which is why the Reischauer Scholars Program is so invaluable.

Again, to quote Reischauer, “A great deal must still be done to educate people in the United States, Japan, and everywhere else for peaceful participation in a world community.”

I only wish that there was a similar program for high-school students in Japan to study about the U.S. at such an advanced level.

Nevertheless, as a member of the Reischauer Scholars Program advisory board, it has been my privilege to be of service where I could, and I look forward to contributing to the development of this illustrious program in the future. I share Reischauer’s commitment to scholarship, as well as his optimism for the future of the world and, hopefully, his dedication to the cause of U.S.-Japan relations.

I’d like to end by thanking you for inviting me to be part of this special occasion, and once again, congratulations to our Reischauer Scholars here today.