

Women's Education and the World: Fujita Taki (1898–1993)

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Barred as Japanese women had been from most institutions of higher learning and government positions, they found it challenging, when the 1947 constitution suddenly guaranteed them equality before the law, to find a foothold in politics and the bureaucracy. One woman who thrived in this postwar environment was Fujita Taki (1898–1993), a faculty member at Tsuda College, who eventually became the fourth president of that institution. Fujita had the advantages of a Bryn Mawr College degree, additional graduate study in the United States, and participation in the prewar suffrage movement. Beyond the confines of the campus, she participated in several aspects of the new Japan. She ran twice for the national legislature, albeit unsuccessfully. For a time she headed the Japanese League of Women Voters. She was the second head of the Women's and Minors' Bureau (WMB) of the Labor Ministry and a delegate to the General Assembly of the United Nations.

I argue that ideals for women's education shared by institutions in the United States and Japan shaped Fujita's entire career. Knowledge of America imparted through formal education and lived experience informed Fujita's ideals for postwar Japan and the actions she took to implement them. Tsuda College provided her the skills she needed to be a student at an elite American women's college. Bryn Mawr College instilled in her an interest in international affairs and a commitment to the ideal of equality between men and women; personal friends shared with her notions of pacifism. As an educator, activist, and bureaucrat she remained constant to the goal of raising the status of women everywhere. My broader hypothesis is that Japanese women who spent four or five years in the United States and earned degrees had invaluable assets at the moment of Japan's defeat in war. At a time when the geo-political interests of the United States required that Japan be transformed quickly from enemy to ally, they possessed not only strong linguistic skills but also the academic and social skills to explain Japan to the United States.

Getting to America

The opportunity for Fujita Taki to study abroad came through Tsuda College.¹ When she graduated in 1920, she was chosen as the next recipient of the American Women's Scholarship for Japanese Women (AWSJW), set up in the 1890s by Tsuda Umeko (1864–1929), the founder of Tsuda College. To understand, then, how Fujita had the opportunity to study in America, we have to ask how she got to Tsuda College.

Fujita Taki was in multiple respects a child of imperial Japan. When she was born in 1898, Japan had already achieved an imperially bestowed constitution, sovereignty over Taiwan (a spoil of the Sino-Japanese War), a process for phasing out the “unequal treaties” with the West, and extraterritorial rights in China. At the time of her birth, her father Kikue was an official of this empire, a judge in the Nagoya Court of Appeals. A low ranking samurai who had studied on his own to pass the bar examination, her father exemplified how the Meiji Restoration opened up careers to men of talent.²⁾ Because of her father’s work, Taki spent portions of her childhood in Okinawa and Port Arthur, thus personally experiencing the geographical diversity of Japan’s new modern state as well as Japan’s new international privileges.

Allowing her every educational advantage, Taki’s parents enrolled her in Japanese schools wherever the family lived. When her father retired as a judge at the end of his service in Port Arthur, the family moved to Osaka, where Taki graduated in 1914 from a private girls’ higher school, Kinrankai. The school was established in 1904 by the alumnae association of the prefectural girls’ school, whose members wished to extend the availability of higher education for women beyond the limited seats available in publicly supported institutions. After her graduation, Taki’s parents indulged her wish to pursue more education, in part because they thought that surgical scars on her neck made it prudent to provide her with the means of financial independence rather than immediately placing her as a bride. Taki considered the state-run Ochanomizu Women’s Higher Normal School too bureaucratic and the privately operated Japan Women’s College too devoted to producing “good wives and wise mothers.” As one who shuddered at even a picture of an earthworm, she felt unequal to the dissection required of students at Tokyo Women’s Medical School. Her remaining choice, then, was to attend Tsuda College, famous for its instruction in English.³⁾

In contrast to some students at Tsuda College who had long exposure to English conversation through study at mission schools or other contacts with missionaries, Taki had to spend a year in preparation for the entrance examination to Tsuda. Her next older brother Shunyo, who was then a student at Third Higher School, tutored her through letters that they exchanged.⁴⁾ Although in her autobiography Fujita gives no indication that Christian connections drew her to Tsuda College, she was in fact from a Christian family, a fact that may have contributed to her selection as a scholarship student to Bryn Mawr.⁵⁾ Fujita’s enrollment at Tsuda College in 1916 did not mark a sharp break from her family. Her parents had moved to Tokyo; she commuted from their Yoyogi home to the Kojimachi campus of Tsuda.⁶⁾

Study in America

Fujita Taki’s study in America set the course of her life. It provided her with the necessary credential for her long career as a faculty member at Tsuda College. The language and social skills she acquired allowed her to participate in international conferences and facilitated her interactions with the American occupying force after the war. She made life-long friends and forged connections. Most important, however, she acquired intellectual knowledge and practical experience in the workings of international, national, and grass-roots organizations. Because her mother’s

health was fragile, Taki was hesitant to leave home, but her father gave his consent and her mother's support was unwavering. An older brother, who sometimes traveled abroad in connection with his work for the Kamaishi Mine, provided the money for her passage to the United States.⁷⁾ Indicative of the cosmopolitan orientation of this family, another brother had emigrated to the United States and met Taki on her arrival in San Francisco.⁸⁾

Fujita spent her first year in the United States at a private preparatory school in the village of Bryn Mawr. The primary purpose of the Misses Kirk's School was to prepare young women for admission to Bryn Mawr College. The elder Miss Kirk was a friend of Tsuda Umeko and Hoshino Ai, Fujita's teacher at Tsuda and a graduate of Bryn Mawr College (class of 1912), attended the same school. Fujita, who had learned Chinese from her father, was allowed to substitute an examination in that language for the usual requirement of Latin and Greek. After one year of preparation, Fujita passed the entrance examination for Bryn Mawr. Rebecca Hamilton Morton of Wilmington, Delaware, a classmate at the Misses Kirk's School and also a member of Fujita's class at Bryn Mawr, became a life-long friend.⁹⁾

At Bryn Mawr, Fujita majored in history, economics, and political science. In her autobiography, the only formal academic work that Fujita mentioned was a course on international law taught by Professor Charles Ghequiere Fenwick and she credited Fenwick with developing her interest in international problems. As a non-native speaker, Fujita found the heavy reading load for Bryn Mawr courses burdensome. The pressure to finish the readings was even greater in Fenwick's course, in which she was the only student. Fenwick gave her a barely passing grade on a test over readings she had not completed, and thereafter she kept up in that course.¹⁰⁾

Fenwick believed in collective security. He did not want to eradicate national units; rather, he wanted national units to relate to each other on the basis of their common needs: security, peace, food, clothing, housing, "intellectual culture, and moral progress."¹¹⁾ Fenwick conceded that in the United States, the League of Nations was a dead issue, but clearly he wished that it was not. The progress towards his goals of cooperative action and sympathy for others included "protecting women and children; the prevention of white slavery; the prevention of the opium trade."¹²⁾

Fujita learned from observing the practice of American college life as well as from assigned books. Her autobiography includes astute analyses of the committee that administered the American Women's Scholarship for Japanese Women, the selection of the "Sunny Jim" prize awarded at graduation, the swimming test required for graduation, fire drills, and other details of campus life.

As a dormitory resident, Fujita undoubtedly forged friendships with her fellow students, but her acquaintance with the Quaker faith came through a trans-Pacific network of friendships that extended beyond the confines of Bryn Mawr College. When Fujita arrived in the United States, she stayed at Cheltenham, the home of Mary Haines, once a teacher at a Tokyo Friends' school.¹³⁾ Fujita's friendship with Margaretta (1852–1928) and David Alsop (1853–1928) of Haverford provided her with a haven for Christmas and summer vacations as well as a vantage point for learning about the Society of Friends. Margaretta introduced herself to Fujita as someone who had been to Japan and loved the country. The Alsops had provided

hospitality for earlier Japanese students at Bryn Mawr; Sato Ryu, class of 1917, lived with the Alsops for several years.¹⁴⁾ Fujita retained fond memories of her first Christmas with the Alsops, and she stayed with them the summer that she worked in a factory in order to deepen her understanding of the United States. With them, she attended the Haverford Meeting.¹⁵⁾ Fujita had occasion to stay in other Quaker homes as well. When she stayed with Anna Hartshorne, friend of Tsuda Umeko and benefactor of the college, Fujita was surprised to find what simple fare Hartshorne served.¹⁶⁾

Civic Life in Japan

On her return to Japan after graduation from Bryn Mawr, Fujita assumed teaching responsibilities at Tsuda College, but her activities were not limited to the classroom. In 1928, she attended the first Pan Pacific Women's Conference in Honolulu as the representative of the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA).¹⁷⁾ Her education in the United States was a definite asset for a conference conducted in English. Her affiliation with the YWCA was a continuation of her college life, which had included a summer at a YWCA camp.¹⁸⁾ In Japan, Fujita had ties to the YWCA through Tsuda; from 1912 to 1926, Kawai Michi, formerly a teacher at Tsuda and one of Fujita's predecessors as a recipient of the AWSJW, was executive director of the YWCA. In 1926, Tsuji Matsu, Fujita's teacher at Tsuda, became head of the board of directors.¹⁹⁾ The sponsor of the Honolulu conference was the Pan-Pacific Union, an organization founded to promote peace, a theme in keeping with the interest in Quakerism Fujita had developed in the United States. Presided over by Jane Addams of Hull House, the conference met from August 11 to 18 with delegates from Australia, Canada, China, Japan, Korea, New Zealand, the Philippines, Samoa, and the United States. The agenda called for discussion of issues of particular importance for women. Fujita reported on her return that she felt that Japanese women had responsibility for society and world peace.²⁰⁾ Perhaps because the conference was so congruent with the values that she developed at Bryn Mawr, Fujita reported her attendance at the conference to her college classmates in the alumnae bulletin.²¹⁾

For Fujita, one important aspect of the conference was meeting Ichikawa Fusae, at whose invitation Fujita became involved in the women's suffrage movement. In her autobiography, Ichikawa recalls that Ichikawa and Fujita shared meals, discussions with Americans and Australians, and swimming.²²⁾ From 1929 until the dissolution of the organization in 1940, Fujita was a member of the central committee of the Women's Suffrage League (Fusen kakutoku dōmei). Fujita regarded her involvement in the suffrage movement as a natural outgrowth of her education. Women brought up at Tsuda College naturally were interested in raising women's status and at Bryn Mawr she had of course been influenced by the idea of equal rights for men and women. At the same time, she was not interested in being an activist. She did not, she asserts in her autobiography, pass out pamphlets on the streets or participate in demonstrations; her involvement was limited to speeches and articles for the league's publication. Her publications in Fusen, the journal of the Women's Suffrage League, included abridged translations of Sylvia Pankhurst's *Suffragette, Jailed for*

Freedom by an American suffragist Doris Stevens (1892–1963), and passages from a biography of Susan B. Anthony. In 1929 and 1930, she published a serial article on the London Naval Conference on arms limitation (*gunshuku*).²³⁾

The event from the suffrage movement that Fujita remembered best was the first National Women's Suffrage Conference, held at the Japan Youth Hall on April 27, 1930. The second national election to be held under universal manhood suffrage had taken place two months earlier, and the advocates of women's suffrage were well aware that whereas all men could vote, no women were qualified. Despite her status as a relative newcomer to the movement, Fujita was given the role of moderator. The assembled women sang a suffrage song composed by Yosano Akiko.²⁴⁾

Further Study in the United States

On August 20, 1935, Fujita arrived at the pier in Yokohama to set sail for a second period of study in the United States, a time that she characterizes as one of the most relaxed periods of her life. Arrangements were in place for her to spend the academic year at Smith College, which had offered her a scholarship. At the dock to see her off were her brother, her nieces, Hoshino Ai, Ichikawa Fusae, and tens of others. She sailed the next day on a cargo ship that took her through the Panama Canal to New York, where she settled into International House on September 18. When she opened the door to her room, she found an announcement in Chinese calling for resistance to Japan and rescue of the nation, reminding her in no uncertain terms that the fourth anniversary of the Manchurian Incident had arrived and that Japan's position in East Asia was by no means popular in the United States.²⁵⁾

At Smith College in Northampton, Massachusetts, Fujita lived in Martha Wilson House, a dormitory that had been set up for international graduate students. She found the spacious room, complete with fire place, carpet, sofa, and eight lamps, quite luxurious. She used the time at Smith as an opportunity to enrich her understanding of the United States. Twice a week she went to New York City to see plays, musicals, and films. When she was in New York, she often went to Riverside Church, where the sermons of Harry Emerson Fosdick made a deep impression upon her. For someone who had been baptized as an infant and grown up with a relatively weak faith, Fosdick's idea that one could not escape from God filled her with an immeasurable sense of grace.²⁶⁾ In the course of her year in the United States, she visited Bryn Mawr friends, notably Rebecca Morton in Wilmington, Delaware. Because American interest in Japan was high, she received many invitations to speak to church and women's groups and in the process came to understand more about the United States. She took an interest in the student movement, particularly the American Student Union, which was vigorously anti-war.²⁷⁾

She returned to Japan through Europe. Images that remained indelibly in her mind included Buckingham Palace, Notre Dame Cathedral, the Straits of Messina, the Egyptian Pyramids, and the Sphinx. In Geneva, she was glad to have an opportunity to meet Alice Paul, the advocate of women's rights. She found that her acquaintances at the International Labor Organization and the YWCA thought that Paul was an enemy of women; they were at odds with Paul's objections to protective legislation.²⁸⁾ On visiting the League of Nations, Fujita thought that she might some-

day like to work there.²⁹⁾

Except for her meeting with Alice Paul, Fujita's memories of her second American trip do not suggest a strong interest in women's equality, but an essay that Fujita published after her trip illustrates her desire to contribute to equality for Japanese women.³⁰⁾ Fujita cited as the greatest problem affecting higher education for women in Japan "the inequality that exists between men and women in Japan."³¹⁾ She identified two demands that Japanese women were making with respect to higher education. The first was for women to be admitted to the existing men's universities. The second was to allow the establishment of women's universities authorized to bestow the same degrees as did men's universities.³²⁾

Fujita provided leadership for YWCA activities related to women's position. One of the topics for the general convention of the World YWCA scheduled to be held in Canada in the fall of 1938 was "Women's Position and Contributions." In preparation for that conference, the Japan YWCA, which had been entrusted with providing the materials on this topic, set up a special committee with Fujita Taki as chair. As preparation for its work, the committee sponsored three panel discussions around this topic. Participants included guests from the first ranks of the women's movement: labor activist Akamatsu Tsuneko, educators Kiuchi Kyō and Takeda Kikuko, women's suffrage advocates Ichikawa Fusae and Yamataka Shigeri, and physician Takeuchi Shigeyo. Besides Fujita, the participants from the YWCA were Katō Taka, Tanino Setsu, Yamamoto Taka, Watanabe Matsuko, and Naitō Sachi.³³⁾

Women Enfranchised in the Aftermath of a Regime Change

Under pressure from the American occupying forces, on December 17, 1945, the Japanese national legislature passed a law that gave men and women the same voting rights. Three years later in 1948, occupation-supported educational reforms recognized some women's colleges, Tsuda College among them as universities. Thus, by means of military power, the goals that Fujita and her allies had struggled for were suddenly accomplished. Although Fujita credited Lulu Holmes of the occupying force with winning recognition as universities for the women's institutions, she felt some bitterness that women's suffrage had arrived at the hands of the foreign occupiers and that American women, ignorant of the prewar suffrage movement, told Japanese women that they had received the vote as if it were a gift on their pillow. She was also resentful that Ichikawa Fusae, the leader of the prewar suffrage movement, was purged from politics by the occupation.³⁴⁾

Despite her reservations about some American decisions, Fujita cooperated with the occupation forces in their efforts to educate Japanese women to use the vote properly. She had a natural conduit to Ethel Weed, the officer who emerged as the hub within the Supreme Command for Allied Powers (SCAP) for women's activities, for most of Weed's assistants were graduates of Tsuda.³⁵⁾ Weed visited Tsuda College, attending one of Fujita's classes.³⁶⁾ A 1948 photograph shows Fujita and Weed at the head of the table, presiding over several Japanese women.³⁷⁾ As early as 1946, Fujita was working closely with Lulu Holmes, the occupation official in charge of higher education.

Fujita and Holmes worked together to found the Japan Association of University

Women, an activity which was for Fujita a step in overcoming the rupture that had occurred between Japan and the United States. Fujita and other leaders of women's education in Japan, as graduates of American colleges, had been members of the American Association of University Women (AAUP). As citizens of a wartime enemy, their memberships were rescinded. With the thought of opening a window to the world, Fujita began working with others from Tsuda, Tokyo Woman's Christian College, and Japan Women's College to form a Japanese version of the AAUP. Given the paper shortages of the time, this was no mean feat. With the help of Lulu Holmes and the resources of the occupation, Fujita was able to draw into the project women associated with a number of other Japanese colleges, including Kobe College. In October 1946, the organization took formal shape, with the expressed purposes of promoting higher education for women, raising the status of women, and providing fellowship for graduates of foreign universities. Fujita became the first president of the organization.³⁸⁾

Fujita also credits Holmes for her opportunity to return to the United States in 1949 to survey higher education for women and study the American League of Women Voters. Fujita traveled with Jodai Tano of Japan Women's University; the two were supported by funds from the American Association of University Women. Holmes, who by then had returned to the United States, hosted the two women in her small apartment in the state of Washington. Fujita spent about a month visiting branches of the League of Women Voters, staying in the homes of members.³⁹⁾

In the years immediately following the end of the war, Fujita emerged as a leader of the women's movement. After Ichikawa Fusae's purge from politics, Fujita was the nominal leader of the League of Women Voters. She retained, however, her employment as a faculty member at Tsuda College. In that capacity, she was actively involved in the peace movement. In the summer of 1951, Fujita was one of the leaders of an international student conference "Problems of Asia and World Peace" held on the Tsuda College campus. The purpose of the seminar, sponsored by the American Friends' Service Committee, was to foster a sense of fellowship among students of different nationalities through study, discussion, and a shared community life.⁴⁰⁾

Fujita's grief at the death of a promising young diplomat, Yamane Toshiko (1921–1956), in a plane crash in 1956 allows us to see the pride Fujita took as a teacher when her students succeeded in fields previously closed to men, especially when they were able to do so in connection with international affairs. Yamane was born in Sapporo, where her father, Yamane Jinshin (1889–1972), a morphologist of domestic animals, was on the faculty of Hokkaido Imperial University. In 1931, when Jinshin was transferred to Taibei University, the whole family moved to Taiwan.⁴¹⁾ Toshiko, who was Fujita's student at Tsuda College, graduated from Tsuda in 1941 and from Taibei University in English in 1944. In 1948, she returned with her parents to her father's native place, Tottori. In January 1950, she was the first woman to qualify by examination to enter the diplomatic service. The same year, she was one of 281 students selected for study abroad in the United States from among 6,479 applicants. She earned a master's degree in political science from the University of Vermont. Yamane returned to Japan in 1951 to work for the Foreign Ministry. In September 1952, she went to the United States, first to Washington and then to New York to

work at the United Nations on Japan's becoming a member nation. At the time of her death, she was returning to Tokyo to work once again in the Foreign Ministry.⁴²⁾ On the night of August 29, the Tokyo-bound Canadian Pacific Airlines plane in which Yamane was traveling caught fire over the Pacific. The pilot tried to land at the Cold Bay airport in Alaska but fell short of the runway and crashed. Although there were seven survivors of the crash, the Kyodo news service announced that Yamane, a diplomatic assistant in Japan's Foreign Ministry, was among those killed.⁴³⁾ In 1956, Fujita celebrated Yamane's life in an editorial in *Fujinkai tenbō*, the monthly publication of the League of Women's Voters.⁴⁴⁾ In 1960, she and others set up a foundation to honor Yamane's memory by providing support each year for a woman, either graduate or undergraduate, who was pursuing an international career. The three trustees were Fujita; Kasuya Yoshi, president of Tsuda College; and Nishi Tokiko, wife of Nishi Haruhiko (1893–1986), ambassador to Great Britain from 1955 to 1957.⁴⁵⁾

Political Candidate and Bureaucrat

The occupation reforms enabled Japanese women not only to vote and run for office but also to enter into government bureaucratic service. During the decade after her 1949 study tour to the United States, Fujita Taki tried her hand at both. She stood twice for election to the national legislature, in 1950 and 1956, failing both times. In between the two elections, she served four years as the Director of the Women's and Children's Section of the Labor Ministry.

In her first run for office, Fujita was a candidate for the upper house in the national constituency, a category for which every voter in Japan had one vote and the fifty candidates with the highest vote counts won seats. She was endorsed as a candidate by the Green Breeze Party, a loose conglomeration of moderate independents. She ran because of her interest in issues relating to education, labor, and women. She was particularly concerned with the difficulties facing housewives and war widows. Perhaps most important, she wanted to be in a position to defend the "peace Constitution," which contained Article Nine with its prohibition of maintaining land, sea, or air forces or resorting to war as an instrument of national policy. In order to appeal to voters in every part of Japan, she traveled extensively, missing only a few prefectures. Taking advantage of her peripatetic youth as the child of a government official, she presented herself in Nagoya as someone born there, in Toyama as someone raised there, and in Osaka as a graduate of Kinrankai. Nevertheless, she lost.⁴⁶⁾

Six years later Fujita ran for the upper house at the urging of Ichikawa Fusae and with the support of the League of Women Voters. Ichikawa, who won an upper house seat in 1953 from the Tokyo district, argued that she should not be the only one to succeed in an "ideal" (low cost, honest) campaign; Fujita should try to do the same. Running on the basis of reputation rather than a campaign war chest was easier to do, of course, if one were the famous Ichikawa Fusae. Fujita found candidacy from Tokyo as challenging as her experience in the national constituency. Her short stature sometimes made her invisible to Tokyo crowds. The requisite microphone was always a problem. One automobile had to serve many purposes. Campaign days began early and ended late. Fujita appeared at some fifty-seven evening speech

meetings, in addition to daily speeches in the streets. Once when she was speaking in front of a soba shop, just as she came to the word “prostitution,” someone opened a second-story window and threw a bucket of water. In her campaign speeches, Fujita expressed her strong opposition to any revision of the Constitution that would re-establish the military or restore the traditional family system.⁴⁷⁾ Her supporters included stalwarts of the League of Women’s Voters such as Takeuchi Shigeyo and Kondō Magara and writers Hirabayashi Taiko and Muraoka Hanako as well as friends from Tsuda.⁴⁸⁾

Despite her best efforts and support from the League of Women Voters as well as from Tsuda colleagues and friends, Fujita lost once again. The way that election districts were drawn up in Japan favored rural areas; Fujita’s 198,323 votes would have won her a seat in Tokushima, but were insufficient in under-represented Tokyo. By 1956, it had become much more difficult for an independent candidate to break into politics. Four of the five women who won seats in this election were incumbents; the fifth was a veteran politician who shifted from the lower to the upper house. The only woman who garnered more votes than Fujita in her Tokyo district was a candidate of the “New Religion” Soka Gakkai, famed for its skill in lining up electoral support. Fujita did far better than Fukagawa Tamae, an incumbent.⁴⁹⁾

In between these two elections, Fujita spent four years as the head of the Women’s and Minors’ Bureau (WMB) of the Labor Ministry. In mid-1951, she was summoned to an interview by Ethel Weed, an officer of the occupying force, who wanted her to become the second head of the Women’s and Children’s Bureau, succeeding Yamakawa Kikue. Assuming the position on August 22, 1951 required that she resign from Tsuda College, where she had taught for twenty-six years. Fujita undertook this major life change because she believed that Japan was at a crucial moment with respect to the status of women. In the fall of 1951, the signing of the San Francisco Peace Treaty, which portended the end of the occupation, generated anxiety for activists in the women’s movement. They feared that the end of the occupation might result in the abolition of reforms favorable to women, and the continued existence of the Women’s and Minors’ Bureau seemed to be one of the matters at stake.⁵⁰⁾

As Director of the WMB at the time that Japan regained its independence, Fujita had to deal with a number of issues. The WMB was established because of the advocacy of women, both American and Japanese, and it was staffed by women at a time when the bureaucracy had just ceased to be a male preserve. Every call for retrenchment provided an opportunity for entrenched male bureaucrats to rid themselves of this unwelcome creation.⁵¹⁾ When she took office, she was immediately placed in the middle of the debate as to whether the bureau should continue to exist; on her third day in office, she was asked to prepare a document justifying the existence of the bureau.⁵²⁾

Once the occupation ended, she had difficulty getting her share of the budget; in the time that she was in office as director, the number of employees was reduced from 313 to 170. Proposals to abolish the bureau subsided after women Diet members and women’s organizations launched a vigorous campaign against abolition.⁵³⁾ Another issue Fujita had to contend with was whether the Labor Standards Law, which provided protections for women but no guarantee of equal treatment, should

be amended.⁵⁴⁾ Fujita's facility in English was an asset in projecting the Women's and Minors' Bureau to the international community as an emblem of the desire of the Japanese government to raise the status of women. Senator Margaret Chase Smith met with women at the bureau when she visited Japan in February 1955.⁵⁵⁾

Fujita's service to the women and minors of Japan did not preclude international travel and participation in international organizations. In 1952, 1953, and 1955, during her service as head of the Women's and Minors' Bureau, Fujita was tapped by the government to serve as an official observer at the annual session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women.⁵⁶⁾ The commission was established on June 21, 1946, by a resolution of the Economic and Social Council to prepare recommendations and reports on promoting women's rights in political, economic, civil, social and educational fields. Fujita's participation in the Commission on the Status of Women foreshadowed her activities after her resignation as head of the Women's and Minors' Bureau on July 2, 1955. One of her regrets in leaving office was that anti-prostitution legislation had not yet passed the Diet.⁵⁷⁾

Delegate to the United Nations

In terms of her interest in international relations, the height of Fujita's career was her service as a delegate to the United Nations. After her resignation as a bureaucrat, Fujita assumed the leadership of the League of Women Voters. In this position, she continued her participation in international meetings. In November 1955, she traveled to Paris as a delegate to a UNESCO sponsored Committee to Investigate Youth Work. Twelve representatives were from international youth organizations; twelve represented national organizations within UNESCO member countries.⁵⁸⁾

Once Japan became a member nation of the United Nations in 1956, representatives from five women's groups, including the league, visited Foreign Minister Shigemitsu Mamoru to demand that Japan's delegation include a woman. Shigemitsu agreed, but opposition from within his political party prevented immediate implementation. In 1957, Fujita's selection as an alternate, the only woman in the Japanese delegation, fulfilled that promise. She returned to the United Nations in 1958 and 1959 as a full delegate.⁵⁹⁾ During her time at the United Nations, the Secretary General was Dag Hammarskjold, a man she greatly admired as "a soldier for peace."⁶⁰⁾ Fujita's cohort of women delegates, which was larger than any previous group, included Golda Meir from Israel.⁶¹⁾ Three issues that particularly interested her in the 1957 fall session were the representation of China, children's rights, and Japan's successful candidacy for a seat on the Economic and Social Council.⁶²⁾ In 1958, Fujita was invited by Mrs. Eisenhower, along with other women delegates to the United Nations, to a reception at the White House.⁶³⁾ It no doubt pleased Fujita that the 1960 *New York Times* article on the awards bestowed on the occasion of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the founding of Bryn Mawr College identified her as a former delegate to the United Nations.⁶⁴⁾

The Pan-Pacific and South-East Asian Women's Association provided another arena for Fujita's international activities. The origins of the organization were in the Pan Pacific Conference that Fujita attended in 1928; the current name of the organization was adopted in 1955. In 1958, when the association met in Japan, Fujita Taki

was an officer of the support group that was formed. With Hoshino Ai and Ichikawa Fusae, Fujita raised money and made arrangements for the conference, which opened on August 20 on the campus of International Christian University. Some one hundred and sixty delegates from twenty-two countries lived and ate together in a dormitory for ten days. The theme of the conference was “the role of women in community development in Pacific and Southeast Asia countries.”⁶⁵⁾ The twenty-four members of the Japan delegation included at least two other members besides Fujita and Hoshino Ai with American college educations; Nomiya Fuji was a graduate of Vassar and Ōtsuki Teruko of Willamette.⁶⁶⁾ Fujita takes note of the presence at this meeting of radio announcer and activist Jessie Robertson from Australia and Persia Campbell, an economist and consumer activist from Australia. Although Fujita does not mention it, she and Campbell overlapped at Bryn Mawr; where Campbell, a graduate of the University of Sydney, studied social economics in 1922–1923. Fujita remembered most vividly from 1958, however, a delegate from the Fiji Islands, Lolohea Waqairawal. Fujita was the head of the Japanese delegation to the next conference, which was held in Canberra, Australia, from January 7 to January 18, 1961.⁶⁷⁾

President of Tsuda College

At first glance, it might seem that when Fujita took office as president of Tsuda College in April 1962 she was withdrawing from international affairs. On the contrary, in her last full-time job, Fujita continued to supported excellence in women’s education and increased knowledge of international matters. Under Fujita’s leadership, the college celebrated the one hundredth anniversary of the birth of Tsuda Umeko by inaugurating a master’s program and thus raising the level of the education it offered to women.⁶⁸⁾ At Fujita’s initiative, a program in American studies was launched in 1962 as an area studies program, one of the first in Japan. Among those who worked with her to set up the program were faculty members Takano Fumi and Kachi Teruko. Takano began teaching at Tsuda shortly after her graduation in 1936. In 1949 she had an opportunity to study at Tokyo University for a year; later she pursued a master’s degree at Radcliffe College in the United States. A Fulbright Fellowship enabled her to return to Radcliffe for an additional year of research. Kachi had studied at Girton College in England in the 1930s and later did graduate work at the University of Chicago, earning a degree in 1957. External funding for the American studies program came from the Fulbright Program and the Asia Foundation, and other funding sources. The nucleus of strength provided by Fujita, Takano, and Kachi was soon augmented by the addition of new faculty members such as the historian Nakaya Kenichi and the scholar of religion Ikado Fujio.⁶⁹⁾ In 1967 the college approved an international course of study.⁷⁰⁾ In building the graduate programs in international studies, Tsuda College was able to draw on its own graduates who had become faculty members for instance, Kondō Ineko, who graduated in 1918. After study at Tōhoku Imperial University, she attended Girton College at Cambridge University in England in the 1930s. She returned to Japan to teach and in 1952 became the first woman in Japan to earn a doctorate in literature.⁷¹⁾

The presidency of Tsuda did not preclude Fujita from continuing her participation

in international gatherings. She served as a delegate to the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women in 1966, 1967, and 1970. In 1969, she headed Japan's delegation to the eleventh meeting of the Pan Pacific Southeast Asia Women's Association in Honolulu.⁷²⁾ In 1970, she participated in a joint meeting of the JAUW with the American Association of University Women at Ōiso.⁷³⁾ Fujita's time as president of Tsuda came to a premature end in 1972 after she was badly injured in an automobile accident in 1971.

Fujita's service as head of the Japanese delegation to the first World Conference of the International Women's Year, held from June 19 to July 2, 1975 in Mexico City, stands as a celebratory finale to her distinguished career. Her participation in international meetings extended from the Pan Pacific Women's Conference of 1928 for over nearly a half century. Her life thus links the earlier conference to the three large-scale United Nations sponsored conferences that followed Mexico City: Copenhagen (1975), Nairobi (1980), and Beijing (1995). Her presence in Mexico City was all the more impressive because of the seriousness of her injuries in the 1971 automobile accident, which had left her, in her own words, a physically handicapped person (*shintai shōgaisha*). Without the help of a cane and her adopted daughter, she could not even leave the house.⁷⁴⁾ This conference, however, was intended to raise the status of women and promote equality between men and women, issues that were central to Fujita's entire career. Moreover, the very existence of a government delegation to the Mexico City conference was a victory for the kind of feminist coalition with which Fujita had worked all her life. The Ministry of Finance was strongly opposed to the expenditure, arguing that the conference was insignificant.⁷⁵⁾ With the encouragement of her adopted daughter, her niece, and Moriyama Mayumi, then head of the Women and Minors' Bureau, who happened to be a former pupil, she accepted the invitation and increased her physical therapy sessions to three times a week to improve her walking.⁷⁶⁾ The gathering of over a thousand delegates (three-quarters of them women) from 133 countries was not wasted on Fujita. In her memoirs, she provides vivid descriptions of Mexico City and astute commentary on the proceedings of the conference. Although she often measured Japan against the standard of the United States, she took an interest in all parts of the world.⁷⁷⁾ On her return from the conference, Fujita persuaded Prime Minister Miki Takeo to establish a new policy agency to incorporate into Japanese domestic policies the World Action Plan adopted in Mexico City.⁷⁸⁾

Conclusion

The link that I suggest in the title of this paper between women's education and internationalism is neatly congruent with Fujita's presentation of her life in her autobiography. She prides herself as an educator on introducing new international fields of study to Tsuda College. At the same time, she repeatedly credits Bryn Mawr College for her interest in international affairs.

In her struggles to raise the status of women and achieve equality with men, Fujita was not a revolutionary. She did not want to change the existing system; she wanted women to be able to use their talents within it. We can see this clearly in an article that she published in English in 1968.⁷⁹⁾ She assesses the success of Japanese women

in politics in terms of how many women have been elected, how many have achieved bureaucratic positions, and how many have served in the cabinet.⁸⁰⁾ She compares the voting rates of Japanese women to the slightly higher rates of Japanese men.⁸¹⁾ She presents Japanese women as housewives, concerned primarily about the home when she explains that Japanese women take a greater interest in local politics than in national contests, because “local elections are usually of closer concern to women who have the responsibilities of housekeeping and budgeting.”⁸²⁾ She defends Japanese women from the implicit assumption that women’s suffrage merely doubled the voting power of married men by telling an anecdote about a married male candidate who received only one vote, thus demonstrating that this wife, at least, voted independently. When she credits women’s untiring efforts for the passage of two laws, the Law for the Prevention of Prostitution and the Drunkards’ Law, she implies that women are the guardians of morality.⁸³⁾ Her admission that Japanese women’s membership in political parties is undoubtedly much lower than that of women in the United States accepts the United States as a standard of comparison.⁸⁴⁾

Her internationalism likewise stayed in many respects within conventional parameters. The new research programs that she initiated at Tsuda College added to the long-time preeminence of Tsuda as a place to learn the English language and gain expertise on America and European culture. She did not move to the stage of conceptualizing the developing world as the object of academic study. Fujita was quite aware of how standards change over time; we cannot say what she would have done if human life spans were not limited. Her internationalism was not, however, premised on the military superiority of the United States. She was critical of some aspects of the American occupation of Japan, and she always supported the peace constitution.

The achievements of Fujita’s career raise questions about talents and abilities, contingencies, and connections. Her strong educational background and facility in English opened the way for her to participate in international conferences and in the American-run occupation. From the number of times she was asked to take administrative positions, we can conclude that she had considerable administrative abilities. From her time at Bryn Mawr, she had connections with Quakers, ties that extended into the postwar world. Perhaps during her time as Director of the Women’s and Minors’ Bureau she forged ties within the political parties and the bureaucracy. It remains impressive that over a span of over twenty years, from 1953 to 1975, she was repeatedly made the Japanese government representative to international gatherings. What is certain, however, is that Tsuda, Bryn Mawr, and Smith colleges fostered Fujita’s innate abilities and enabled her to take advantage of the opportunities that opened to her.

Notes

- 1) When Fujita Taki entered it, the institution founded in 1900 by Tsuda Umeko was known as Women’s English Academy (Joshi Eigaku Juku) and the institution was not recognized as a college until after World War II. In the interests of simplicity, however, I use the term “Tsuda College” throughout this essay.
- 2) Fujita Taki, *Waga michi kokoro no deai* (Tokyo: Domesu, 1979), 12, 20. Her mother Kameki came

- from Fukuoka. Having lost her first husband when young, she married Fujita Kikue, who had five children, Fujita, *Waga michi*, 15.
- 3) Fujita, *Waga michi*, 12–22.
 - 4) Fujita, *Waga michi*, 22.
 - 5) In other sections of her autobiography (85, 215), Fujita mentions her infant baptism. She also records that her mother led a Chinese nursemaid to Christianity. Fujita, *Waga michi*, 18.
 - 6) Fujita, *Waga michi*, 23.
 - 7) Fujita, *Waga michi*, 27.
 - 8) Fujita, *Waga michi*, 28–29.
 - 9) Fujita, *Waga michi*, 33–34, 36–37.
 - 10) Fujita, *Waga michi*, 37–38.
 - 11) Charles G. Fenwick, “Security and Understanding Lead Toward World Peace,” *Annals of the American Academy of Social and Political Science* 114 (July 1924), 154 [Pages for article are 153–154].
 - 12) Fenwick, “Security and Understanding,” 154.
 - 13) Fujita, *Waga michi*, 30–31.
 - 14) *Bryn Mawr Alumnae Review* 10, no. 6 (June 1930), 27.
 - 15) Fujita, *Waga michi*, 44–45, 47–48.
 - 16) Fujita, *Waga michi*, 52.
 - 17) Fujita, *Waga michi*, 62–64.
 - 18) Fujita, *Waga michi*, 34.
 - 19) Nihon YWCA 80nenshi henshū iinkai, *Mizu o kaze o hikari o: Nihon YWCA 80nenshi* (Tokyo: Nihon YWCA, 1987), 57, 115.
 - 20) Nihon YWCA 80nenshi henshū iinkai, *Mizu o kaze o hikari o*, 140.
 - 21) *Bryn Mawr Alumnae Review* 9, no. 2 (March 1929), 31.
 - 22) Ichikawa Fusae, *Ichikawa Fusae jiden* (Tokyo: Shinjuku shobō, 1974), 196.
 - 23) Fujita, *Waga michi*, 69–71. The table of contents for *Fusen* shows that the biography of Anthony that Fujita translated was Rheta Childe Dorr, *Susan B. Anthony: The Woman Who Changed the Mind of a Nation* (New York: F.A. Stokes, 1928). The tables of contents for *Fusen* are included in vol. 12 of Kindai josei bunkashi kenkyū kai, *Kindai fujin zasshi mokuji sōkan* (Tokyo: Ozora-sha, 1986).
 - 24) Fujita, *Waga michi*, 76–77.
 - 25) Fujita, *Waga michi*, 80–83. It is clear that the trip was carefully planned in advance; Ellen Faulkner, Bryn Mawr 1913, who visited with Fujita in Tokyo in the summer of 1935 was well aware of the plan. *Bryn Mawr Alumnae Report* 15, no. 8 (November 1935), 47.
 - 26) Fujita, *Waga michi*, 84–85.
 - 27) Fujita, *Waga michi*, 85–86.
 - 28) Fujita, *Waga michi*, 87–89.
 - 29) Fujita, *Waga michi*, 130.
 - 30) The article, “The Higher Education of Women in Japan,” appeared in *Bryn Mawr Alumnae Review* 18, no. 6 (June 1938), 13–15; it was an excerpt from a paper that Fujita presented at the Seventh Biennial Conference of the World Federation of Educational Associations in Tokyo in August 1937.
 - 31) Fujita, “Higher Education,” 14.
 - 32) Fujita, “Higher Education,” 15.
 - 33) Nihon YWCA 80nenshi henshū iinkai, *Mizu o kaze o hikari o*, 168.
 - 34) Fujita, *Waga michi*, 98–100, 102–103.
 - 35) Susan J. Pharr, “The Politics of Women’s Rights,” in *Democratizing Japan: The Allied Occupation*, ed. Robert E. Ward and Yoshikazu Sakamoto (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1987), 240.
 - 36) Fujita, *Waga michi*, 108–109.
 - 37) Takemae Eiji, *Inside GHQ: The Allied Occupation of Japan and its Legacy* (New York: Continuum, 2002), 186.
 - 38) Fujita, *Waga michi*, 101–102.
 - 39) Fujita, *Waga michi*, 103–106. The timing of this trip is not clear, but Jodai Tano gave an interview in New York in July. “Better Teaching in Japan Urged by Tokyo Educator,” *New York Times*, July 24, 1949.

- 40) “Quaker Group to Hold Student Seminar Here,” *Nippon Times*, July 24, 1951, 3. Other leaders of the seminar were Gilbert Bowles (American Friends Service Committee), Neil Hartman, Laton Holmgren (Methodist minister serving as acting pastor of Tokyo Union Church), Kōmyo Teruko (Tokyo Women’s Christian College), Dr. Yoichi Maeda, Takahashi Tane (translator of Elizabeth Gray Vining), and Ueda Tatsunosuke (Quaker).
- 41) On Yamane Jinshin, see Shimonaka Kuihiko, *Nihon jinmei daijiten: Gendai* (Tokyo: Haibonsha, 1979), 813.
- 42) “Fujinkai Nyuusu,” *Fujinkai Tenbō* no. 26 (September 1956), 3; Haga Noboru, *Nihon josei jinmei jiten* (Tokyo: Nihon Tosho Senta, 1993), 1071. Exact figures on the applicants for study abroad are from Tsuda juku daigaku hyakunenshi hensan iinkai, *Tsuda juku daigaku hyakunenshi 1* (Tokyo: Tsuda Juku Daigaku, 2003), 232.
- 43) “Fifteen Killed or Missing, 7 Survive,” *New York Times*, August 31, 1956.
- 44) Fujita Taki, “Yamane Toshiko-san,” *Fujinkai tenbō* no. 26 (September 10, 1956), 1.
- 45) “Fujinkai Nyuusu,” *Fujinkai Tenbō*, October 1960, 2–3.
- 46) Fujita, *Waga michi*, 126–128.
- 47) Fujita, *Waga michi*, 126, 128–129.
- 48) “Suisenkaiin no kansō yori,” *Fujinkai tenbō* no. 24 (July 20, 1956), 6–7.
- 49) Election statistics are given in “Daiyonkai Sangiin senkyo to fujin,” *Fujinkai tenbō* no. 24 (July 20, 1956), 5.
- 50) Fujita, *Waga michi*, 108–117.
- 51) See for instance Takemae Eiji, *Inside GHQ: The Allied Occupation of Japan and its Legacy* (New York: Continuum, 2002), 328–330.
- 52) Fujita, *Waga michi*, 115.
- 53) Fujita, *Waga michi*, 115–118.
- 54) Fujita, *Waga michi*, 111–112.
- 55) “Fujin nyuusu,” *Fujinkai tenbō* no. 9 (March 1955), 1.
- 56) Fujita, *Waga michi*, 130–138; Maruoka Hideko and Yamaguchi Miyoko, *Kindai fujin mondai nenpyō*; vol. 10 of *Nihon fujin mondai shiryō shūsei* (Tokyo: Domesu, 1980), 266, 277 mentions 1953 and 1955. In 1955, she left from Haneda Airport on March 6 to attend the meetings scheduled for March 14 to April 1 in New York. “Fujin nyuusu,” *Fujinkai tenbō* no. 9 (March 1955), 1. In her autobiography, she says that she first participated as an observer in the commission in 1952. In a 1954 article, she says that she had attended the year before and the year before that. Fujita Taki, “Minpō Kaisaku to fujin,” *Fujinkai tenbō* no. 2 (August 1954), 1.
- 57) Fujita, *Waga michi*, 125.
- 58) Fujita Taki, “Yunesuko no Seishōnen jigyō shimon iinkai,” *Fujinkai tenbō* no. 18 (December 12, 1955), 7.
- 59) Fujita, *Waga michi*, 137, 139.
- 60) Fujita, *Waga michi*, 153.
- 61) Kathleen McLaughlin, “36 Women Aides Set U.N. Record,” *New York Times*, September 22, 1957.
- 62) Fujita, *Waga michi*, 139–142.
- 63) Fujita, *Waga michi*, 146.
- 64) “75 Alumnae Receive Bryn Mawr Awards,” *New York Times*, June 5, 1960.
- 65) “Fujin nyuusu,” *Fujinkai tenbō*, February 1958, 2; Fujita, *Waga michi*, 64–67.
- 66) The names of delegates are listed in Pan-Pacific and Southeast Asia Women’s Association, *Women of the Pacific: A Record of the Proceedings of the Eighth Conference* (Tokyo: Pan-Pacific and Southeast Asia Women’s Association, [1958]).
- 67) Fujita, *Waga michi*, 238. The month given, September, seems to be wrong.
- 68) Fujita, *Waga michi*, 167.
- 69) Fujita, *Waga michi*, 174; Tsuda juku daigaku hyakunenshi hensan iinkai, *Tsuda juku daigaku hyakunenshi 1*, 246. Information on Takano is from Tsuda juku kai, *Tsuda juku kai yonjunen no ayumi* (Tokyo: Tsuda juku kai, 1988), 124.
- 70) Fujita, *Waga michi*, 176.
- 71) Tsuda Juku Daigaku hyakunenshi hensan iinkai, *Tsuda juku daigaku hyakunenshi 1*, 104.

- 72) Fujita, *Waga michi*, 238.
- 73) Dorothy Robins-Mowry, *The Hidden Sun: Women of Modern Japan* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1983), 265.
- 74) Fujita, *Waga michi*, 217.
- 75) Yoshie Kobayashi, *A Path Toward Gender Equality: State Feminism in Japan* (New York: Routledge, 2004).
- 76) Fujita, *Waga michi*, 217–218.
- 77) Fujita, *Waga michi*, 218–223.
- 78) Kobayashi, *Path Toward Gender Equality*, 89.
- 79) Taki Fujita, “Women and Politics in Japan,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 375: Women around the World (January 1968), 91–95. In the body of this article, I use Japanese name order (family name first, followed by the given name) for Japanese names. Because Fujita wrote in English, her name is in American order in the citation. Because, however, she lived and worked in Japan, I have put her name in Japanese order in the body of the article.
- 80) Fujita, “Women and Politics,” 95.
- 81) Fujita, “Women and Politics,” 92.
- 82) Fujita, “Women and Politics,” 93.
- 83) Fujita, “Women and Politics,” 94.
- 84) Fujita, “Women and Politics,” 94.