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An Endeavor to Cultivate Future Japan Experts

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CEPEX's Translation of the Original Japanese CGP Article Below

http://www.jpf.go.jp/cgp/exchange/event/repo_cepex.html

CEPEX is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that supports the development of future Japan experts in the United States. Its function is to act as a kind of “*International Hello Work*” focusing on professional exchange and career development between the U.S. and Japan. <http://cepex.org/about.html>

The Center for Professional Exchange (CEPEX) was established in 2005 by intellectuals in the Washington DC area who collectively recognized the decrease in Japan-U.S. experts as a problem that needed to be addressed. Originally conceived in Japanese, the first idea for a name for the new organization was the US-Japan International Strategic Advanced Educational Exchange and Professional Promotion Support Institute (日米国際戦略高等教育交流専門家育成推進機関). However, after 6 months of discussion among experts from various fields, it was decided that such a long and complicated name should not be used. A new organization that supports the next generation of U.S.-Japan experts should be by definition “International,” “Strategic,” and “Advanced.” Those words also echo a cold war era mentality. For the 21st century, a new and more sophisticated approach should be taken. Several ideas using the currently en vogue “smart power” were debated but they, too, were dropped. In the end, simplicity, availability, and rhythm won

out. The domain name <http://cepex.org> was available and the name CEPEX had a good ring when said in English.

The approach taken to determine the name, as well as the actual founding of the organization, shows the open and collaborative nature of CEPEX. Both were the result of joint cooperation between American and Japanese professionals, developments that would not have come out of a solely Japanese contingent of experts. In addition, the open discussion among professionals from the US and Japan's private sector, public sector, and academia is a great example of the CEPEX way. The founding members have all been involved, in various ways, with the US-Japan relationship for years and their support was instrumental in the attainment of 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status from the IRS in June of 2006. CEPEX has been fortunate to have worked with many reputable organizations whose support has allowed for our continuous activities as a non-profit entity. The following is a brief history about the origin of the organization and its future direction.

The beginning dates back to the late 1980's and my personal experience behind the scenes of the Japan-US trade negotiations. When I started a series of Brown Bag Lunches (BBL) as a "Track Two," the gatherings soon became an important place for discussion. The BBL were sometimes co-sponsored by the Japan Foundation Center for Global Partnership with Abe Grant Fellows and other interested individuals. Based on that experience, upon coming to Washington DC, I was able to round up volunteers to help support Japanese Universities and research institutions doing internships and research in Washington. Within that scope of work, support from the Japan Foundation Center for Global Partnership has allowed the public school Japanese Language Immersion Program in Fairfax County, Virginia to successfully begin its 17th year.

Being located in Washington DC is of utmost importance. While there are numerous policy related universities and graduate schools in Japan, there aren't many institutions that have a structured relationship or intellectual exchange with Washington DC, the world's center for policy making. The high concentration of "soft infrastructure" (information, human resources etc.) in the Washington DC area is a major resource for Japanese institutions of higher education. Kyoichi Marukusu, the current president of CEPEX (and representative of Tokyo) was in Washington from 2003-2004 and two of us began talking with colleagues about how to best use Washington's soft infrastructure, as it was a resource too valuable to pass up. It was during those discussions that the idea of forming an NPO to support Japanese experts was born.

- One of the first forms of support CEPEX engaged in was helping Japanese universities and institutions with short term study or internship opportunities in Washington DC. Recently, support has expanded to include private businesses and independent organizations.
- The second major form of support is for Americans who have return to the United States after lengthy stays in Japan. JET Programs participants, for example, include several tens of thousands of people with Japan experience. This great pool of human talent is often not utilized because support for returning JET participants is not organized or readily available. It is important to quickly formulate recommendations for a post-JET support program that has wide institutional backing. CEPEX is also currently looking to expand collaboration with the JET Alumni Association as a way to bridge the gap between the JET program and subsequent employment and careers.
- Expanding the knowledge and understanding of Japan is a primary goal. In acting to achieve this, it is crucial to inform Americans with an interest in Japan that there are professional opportunities for them. With great support from the Japan Foundation Center for Global Partnership and the Nissho Iwai Foundation, CEPEX has put on several seminars at universities around the country. In September of 2006, a “500 Years of Professional Exchange between Japan and the West” seminar was held at Georgetown University. In February and October of 2007, seminars on “Japan’s Knowledge Economy” were held at Vanderbilt University in Tennessee and Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia. In Atlanta, CEPEX received support and collaboration from the Atlanta Japanese Consulate and Consul General Ogawa, as well as from members of the America-Japan Society and the Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry. For 2008, a seminar on “Advanced Technology Transfer” is planned for March at NC State University. Also at the end of February, a seminar on Medical Exchange between the US and Japan will be held in Tokyo. <http://www.cepex.org/event.html>

As CEPEX begins its 4th year, it is our sincere hope that what started as a small but solid network in Washington DC will continue to prosper and grow in the size and scope of its activities. The Japan Foundation Center for Global Partnership's solid support ever since CEPEX's founding has been irreplaceable and is deeply appreciated.