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**The Post-War Issei:
A History of Japanese Chamber of
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INTRODUCTION

On September 5th, 1947, forty-eight members, mostly consisting of the *Issei*, the first generation Japanese immigrants, declared the establishment of a new organization of Japanese Americans in Southern California, at a Little Tokyo's restaurant 'Khonanro'.

The Greater Los Angeles with Little Tokyo, which has been our people's hub since the prewar times, will be prosperous soon as twenty-five thousand Japanese were coming back in two years after the war. Yet, at the moment, our people don't have the pillar since we lost the foundation of the community. As prevailing opinion, we need the authorized organization which could take responsibility for our community as a bedrock, in order to do our best to take over the community projects and to deal with the postwar situation. At present we have to manage tons of community issues, such as planning of building a nursery school, an old people's home, and a Japanese language school, redeveloping Little Tokyo, or creating inter-racial and ethnic cooperation.ⁱ

While they admitted, in a part of the declaration, that the Japanese American Citizens' League, an organization dominated by the second generation Japanese, could play a leading role as prospective community organization in the postwar community, Issei leaders still insisted on founding a "*more authorized, authentic and perpetuated*" organization for the local Japanese American community. It was realized as the Japanese Chamber of Commerce of Southern California (JCCSC), which was formally organized in 1949.ⁱⁱ

Focusing on this postwar Issei's organization, this paper examines how the prewar memory and experience continued, influenced and changed in the postwar Japanese American community. The argument of the prewar experience in the postwar Japanese American historical studies converges primarily on the redress movement.ⁱⁱⁱ To be sure, this shows how the experience functioned for the postwar identity-making, but it reflects only one-side of Japanese American history. As Eiichiro Azuma proposed the "inter-National" perspective,^{iv} the prewar Japanese immigrants, Issei in particular, were fluctuating between two nations; their bodies and minds, loyalty, racial identity and citizenship extended beyond the national boundaries and sometimes got torn down by a bi-national relations. The postwar Japanese American historical studies overlooks this: in other words, they unexamine the postwar Japanese American community from the point of view of relationship with Japan, not only postwar but prewar Imperial Japan. The Japanese Chamber of Commerce of Southern California succeeded to the Central Japanese Association, one of the most powerful and influential organization of the Japanese immigrants nationalism in the prewar Southern California. The analysis of this postwar Issei's organization could answer the questions. What became of the legacy of Imperial Japan in the postwar community? How did the Los Angeles Japanese American community relate to postwar Japan, holding the prewar memory?

In prior studies of the postwar Japanese American history, the scholars totally unexamined the Japanese Chamber of Commerce of Southern California, which misleads them into insufficient conclusions about how the postwar Japanese American community kept ties with Japan. Lon Kurashige simplified the the conflict between local community and Japanese corporations which aimed at investing Little Tokyo as one between community and internationalism^v. Miya S. Sichinohe criticized it and explored the cooperation between Nisei and Japanese businessmen in the Little Tokyo redevelopment project, but still unclarified about why and how local community connected Japan because of missing the historical perspective continued from the prewar times^{vi}. Many scholars do not consider Issei as an integral part of the postwar Japanese American history. Most rest on the premise that the Japanese American community consists of Nisei and Sansei just because the postwar Issei population was proportionately small. As a result, this fails to capture the internal diversity of community such as intergenerational tensions.

The analysis will be made from three aspects of the Japanese Chamber of Commerce of Southern California: 1) the organizational structure – its memberships and activities, 2) the community relationship – mostly focusing on rising tensions with young generations over the management of community affairs and 3) the Issei leader's ideas and visions – both changing and unchanging elements from the prewar era.

I. Reorganizing The First Generation Japanese Organization

From the Central Japanese Association to the Japanese Chamber of Commerce

The Japanese Chamber of Commerce of Southern California was not established for the first time in the postwar times. It was a kind of born-again organization which was reincarnated as the Central Japanese Association, one of the most powerful organizations arousing Japanese immigrant nationalism in the prewar United States. Closely connecting with Imperial Japan beyond the borders, the Central Japanese Association was working as main hub for the empire.

In the prewar times, there was also the Japanese Chamber of Commerce in Southern California, which was formally named the Japanese Chamber of Commerce of Los Angeles. It was established in 1916 by Japanese immigrant businessmen running small businesses in the eastern part of Downtown Los Angeles (later called '*Little Tokyo*'). The purpose was aimed practically (economically), politically and culturally. First, they attempted to help individual businessmen cooperate each other for economic expansion as a Japanese business community in Little Tokyo, and second, to make a protest for securing their political rights; thirdly, as a cultural program, to inspire the entrepreneurship, which was broadly thought to be lacked by Japanese nationals, into local Japanese immigrant businessmen.^{vii}

Despite their several attempts, neither the membership increased constantly, nor was it successful in well organizing each businessman, which, in 1931, resulted in integrating the Chamber into the Japanese Association of Los Angeles, a local branch of the Central Japanese Association. This was partly because some same members were leading both organizations, but, actually, the main reason was the Immigration Act of 1924; because of banning new entry of Japanese immigrants into the United States by this law, the Chamber could not estimate any more increase of memberships, in addition that the only small part of members had participated in ordinary activities of the Chamber. As a matter of fact, most of local Japanese businessmen had kept unconcerned about cooperation since the beginning of the organization.^{viii}

Back from the internment after the war, Issei leaders felt it difficult to restore the Central Japanese Association from their harsh wartime experience^{ix}. As the wartime situation was getting serious, the U.S. authorities, being vigilant against the nationalistic activities of the Association, began shrewdly monitoring some leading members of the Central Japanese Association. In the internment, the leaders of the Japanese organization including the Central Japanese Association were captured instantaneously and were kept in strict isolation from ordinary Japanese people. They bore the brunt of the bi-national conflict as symbolic harbingers of the expansionism of the empire.

Despite a recurring fear of humiliating experiences of prewar times, surviving Issei leaders were eager to have their own organization just as substitute for the Central Japanese Association. To sustain the community leadership in their hands, it was imperative for them to restore the organization in which Issei could play the major role in managing community affairs same as prewar Japanese immigrant community.

Analysis of JCCSC Leaders and Membership Structure

First, analyzing the generational background of each JCCSC leaders and the majority of memberships, it is obvious that the organization was controlled by Issei who were the smallest segment of the postwar Japanese Americans.

According to the historical membership data, there were twenty members who served as the head of the Japanese Chamber of Commerce of Southern California from 1949 to 1984. Among them, fifteen leaders

were Issei. The average birth year of fifteen Issei leaders was 1894 and the average entering year to the United States was 1911. Also there were two Shin-Issei leaders. Shin-Issei was the first generation who migrated after WWII. The rest of leaders were Nisei whose average birth year was 1913.^x

At the moment of the largest membership of the JCCSC in 1968, there were approximately 600 members in total; 221 members were born in Japan among 316 members whose birth places were clarified^{xi}. By 1945, half population of the adult Japanese Americans in Los Angeles was Nisei, the second generation.^{xii} The community had already experienced the generational shift at the midst of the century. It is obvious that the vast majority of the membership was the surviving first generation, quite a small segment of the postwar community. Furthermore, each head of the JCCSC belonged to an older group of the same generation since those who were born in pre-1900 was only 3 percent among the native-born Japanese in Los Angeles in 1940.^{xiii}

Table 1 illustrates the membership structure by member's types of industry in 1920, 1968 and 1983. The analysis of the changing structure shows that the Japanese Chamber of Commerce lost the foundation of the ordinary Japanese businessmen of the local area in postwar times although it used to be an organization for the local businessmen in 1920. It can be drawn from some facts, as follows:

Firstly, in 1920, more than half of members engaged in retail and wholesale trades of both agricultural and non-agricultural fields with which most of the Japanese immigrant self-employment and hired workers were concerned. In the postwar times, however, the members of these areas were obviously shrinking to about one-fourth (1968) and one-fifth (1983). As another proof, the members of manufacturing industry lost its share from 7.2% (1920) to 3.3% (1968) and 2.0% (1983), though the corporate members were increasing in both prewar years. FIRE industry and Japanese corporation members accounted to one-fourth of total in 1983.

Second, it reveals that member's business location moved from Little Tokyo to other areas. Members whose businesses were located in Little Tokyo were as much as seventy percent in 1920; The rate was decreasing to about forty percent in 1968 and finally less than thirty percent in 1983. The shift of the member's business location was caused partly by the economic stagnation of Little Tokyo where the absolute number of business was dropping off in postwar times. However, it can be said that the JCCSC failed to take ordinary Japanese small businessmne in just because the organization might not provide any useful and practical services to them.

It is concluded that the Japanese Chamber of Commerce of Southern California was not an association for businessmen as its name suggests. The JCCSC was such an entity as the founders intended to restore the association that Issei national leaders believed to be the bastion like the Central Japanese Association.

Table 1 Type of Industry of Members of the Japanese Chamber of Commerce of Southern California, 1920, 1968, 1983

	1920		1968		1983	
Non-agricultural Retail & Wholesale trade	91	44.0%	140	23.4%	75	18.8%
Agricultural Retail & Wholesale trade	25	12.1%	11	1.8%	3	0.8%
General Service	10	4.8%	64	10.7%	49	12.3%
Hotel & Apartment	8	3.9%	47	7.9%	11	2.8%
Eating & Drinking Place	3	1.4%	35	5.9%	13	3.3%
Professional Service	13	6.3%	35	5.9%	34	8.5%
FIRE	6	2.9%	49	8.2%	46	11.6%
Manufacturing	15	7.2%	20	3.3%	8	2.0%
Newspaper or Publishing	5	2.4%	8	1.3%	8	2.0%
Agriculture	0	0.0%	44	7.4%	15	3.8%
Nursery	6	2.9%	66	11.0%	34	8.5%
Japanese Corporations	0	0.0%	29	4.8%	59	14.8%
Individuals or Retired	25	12.1%	39	6.5%	28	7.0%
Religion, Education, or NPO	0	0.0%	4	0.7%	15	3.8%
Total	207	100.0%	598	100.0%	398	100.0%
Located in Little Tokyo	145	70.0%	233	39.0%	119	29.9%

Sources: Japanese Chamber of Commerce of Southern California, "Membership List," (1920), "Annual Report," (1968), "1983 J. C. C. Directory,"(1983).

Generational Conflict between Issei and Nisei

In the city of Los Angeles, the proportion of the native-born and the U.S.-born Japanese was almost even in the 1930s. The population of the second generation was remarkably growing before the war. Most of them had to make living dependent on the first generation because of the strict racial barriers in work places. An estimated 50 percent of the working second generation Japanese in 1940 worked within ethnic enclave as farm laborers or sales workers, even though they were the college graduates^{xiv}. In addition to racial barriers, the wartime hostility thoroughly thwarted the upward mobility of young Japanese. Eventually after the war, Nisei's socio-economic status ameliorated and their economic opportunities rose. Taking over family business was neither the major source to make living nor to climb successful economic ladders. Even though the racial discrimination did not completely disappear, it was common that Nisei looked for their jobs outside ethnic community. The second generation Japanese were increasingly taking the initiative of the postwar community, as they, with the Japanese American Citizen's League, a Nisei's civic organization, helped Issei naturalize and obtain the U.S. citizenship in the early 1950s. Yet, as the declaration of the JCCSC establishment suggested, Issei leaders did not have the slightest idea of giving way to young groups in community leadership. Rather, they took it for granted that the Nisei would be incorporated into the JCCSC.

Contrary to their expectations, it was unlikely that they could even work together for some reasons which were mostly caused by their difference of attitudes and values. First and foremost, the JCCSC's conventional administrative methods appeared to be odd, inefficient, and undemocratic to young Japanese American participants. Since its early phase of the organization, same executive members maintained a firm hold on the levers of control in management and their hegemony persisted as long as they were acting alive. As "recommenders," only privileged members could pick out a head and board of directors every year: the "recommender" was an unofficial status, but seized the real power in any decision-making.^{xv}

Some of them had been former presidents of the Central Japanese Association. Two bilingual lawyers, *Gongoro Nakamura* (as a Central Japanese Association president in 1938 and 1939 and as a JCC head in 1952) and *Katsuma Mukaeda* (as a Central Japanese Association president in 1933, 1934 and 1935 and a JCC head in 1950-51 and 1963-64)^{xvi}, were unofficial but actual community leaders approved by both governments. At the very beginning of the Pearl Harbor attack, the U.S. authority first captured them with other figures who were considered to have the strong connections with the Japanese government. Right back from the Santa Fe internment, they launched community reconstruction by establishing the JCCSC as a new bedrock of the Japanese immigrant community, replacing the Central Japanese Association. Until his death in the late 1990s, Mukaeda kept the leadership, sustaining strong ties to Japanese political and economic leaders.

Criticism From Within

As one of the disputants in community, Yaemitsu Sugimachi, a pioneer of Japanese language education in Southern California, severely criticized the JCCSC, "The way the JCCSC works seems like the undemocratic voting procedure of the prewar Japan which limited to the privileged class. The JCCSC should amend its constitution in order to be managed by any members who pay the membership fees."^{xvii} His another criticism was directed to the JCCSC's scholarship project for Japanese American students. He insisted that the scholarship should be given by the judgment of the executive members at the committee,

not by a few people's. As member of the JCCSC, Sugimachi denounced the executive committee as having secret, cliquish, and undemocratic ways of management controlled only by a small faction. However, his claims were not even argued at committee meetings^{xviii}. It was a few decades later that a JCCSC leader finally suggested that they need more opportunities of the communication between executives and general members: in early 1980s the JCCSC memberships declined to two-thirds of that of the 1960s^{xix}. The JCCSC's practices confused even other Issei like Sugimachi, much more Nisei. The discord between two generations, in the first place, resulted from lack of mutual understandings brought by the difference of their main languages as few were bilingual among both groups. At the JCCSC's annual conference of 1963, Mukaeda got an applause when he claimed that they should use English at every meeting in order for Nisei and Sansei to understand^{xx}. While Mukaeda was exceptionally one of few bi-lingual, the JCCSC's main language remained Japanese-only for a long time.

II. Intergenerational Tensions Over Community Welfare

The Increasing Need for Community Welfare Behind the Prosperity

Community's welfare activity was one of the works that the JCCSC had been trying to manage right after the war. Those who needed help concentrated in Little Tokyo and its surrounding areas, left poor and excluded from the postwar prosperity while many flew to the middle-class suburbs and got integrated into the mainstream American society. A cleavage between the poor and the middle-class inside the community, though very little has been written about this fact, emerged in the postwar Japanese American community. It must be noted that the poor group included the retired Issei, besides the unemployed young and single mothers, most of whom were living alone in Little Tokyo's shabby apartments. According to the survey of fifteen hotels and apartments of the area in 1969, more than 20 percent of Japanese residents were the retired and 36 percent were 60 years and older. As much as 70 percent were male and living alone^{xxi}. To sum up, Little Tokyo residential areas kept single male laborers or retired, which was not so much changed from the prewar environment.

Since the Christmas of 1947, the JCCSC and other Japanese American groups launched a community fund-raising campaign to aid those who had financial difficulty in everyday life. As the war disorder calmed down, social welfare works got diversified and also specified, which reflected the expanding difference between middle and lower class of Japanese Americans. The lower class including the Little Tokyo's elderly were estranged from society because of their inability of English use, which kept them from getting assistance from city's social welfare. ^{xxii}

In the JCCSC's social welfare section, one Buddhist social worker was responsible for management all by himself. The number of cases ranged from 2,000 to 8,000 per year in the 1960s – counseling, interpreting assistance, advice of social security service and so on.^{xxiii} The JCCSC's Japanese language dominance was helpful for their demands. Still, some cases needed both languages when dealing with the family discord between Japanese-speaking parents and English-speaking children. The incompatibility in languages often brought about the lack of communications in Japanese American families.

Issei's JCCSC vs. Nisei's JACS

The JCCSC also recognized the necessity of providing bilingual services to cope with emerging community issues as late as 1960s, but they didn't reach that area.^{xxiv} In place of the Issei's JCCSC, Japanese American Community Service (JACS), a Nisei's social organization, could help such problems. The JACS was organized in 1961 by a Nisei's leading group who were relatively involved with community affairs, while most of young generation were unconcerned about what was going on in Little Tokyo. The JCCSC leaders took a critical attitude to the Nisei's organization about planning and financing, for the JACS could not work out without JCCSC's financial assistance for several years of its early stage.^{xxv} In the late 1960s, however, the JACS begun playing a pivotal role in solution of increasing juvenile delinquency in which young Japanese Americans were partly involved. In 1971, as many as thirty Japanese Americans died of drug overdose^{xxvi}. This gave the whole community such a great blow that many Japanese Americans, split for a long time and losing the sense as being a part of community, finally became aware how serious the things were going on in local Japanese American society. To solve the juvenile delinquency issues which had actually mattered in Japanese immigrant community since the 1930s, the JCCSC had asked the

religious groups in the community to cooperate at every moment. They made more opportunities to discuss such problems holding community meetings at the Buddhist hall in the late 1950s, but this time, they were too old to launch anything new as effective solution.

The JACS, joined by Sansei, promptly reacted to the crisis. They launched the program “JACS=Asian Involvement” in tandem with other Asian American groups such as “Yellow Brotherhood.”^{xxvii} For the wide-spreading drug-use among Asian American youth was neither exposed to public nor recognized as anything serious, Asian American communities did not receive any services from social welfare programs of local government. The image that Asian Americans kept self-help functions inside communities still persisted in the U.S. society.^{xxviii} The local government rarely extended the assistances to the Asian American community. The unity of young Asian Americans achieved the success both in taking the first step for solving the actual problems and in appealing to the entire society. They also held some community health fairs in downtown Los Angeles, taking care of the elderly people. Chinese, Filipinos and other Asian Americans, with a certain amount of the aged, had senior care concerns. The poor seniors of many racial and ethnic groups concentrated in downtown areas, living alone to need the assistance economically, physically, and linguistically.

Emerging Nisei’s organization increasingly conflicted with the JCCSC’s leadership. In 1971, the JCCSC’s main social worker suddenly left the JCCSC and transferred to the JACS, taking all the records that he had kept for a long time working in the JCCSC’s social service. Besides this, the JACS members suggested the people receiving the JCCSC’s assistance to take alternative one of JACS. In an attempt to reconstruct community welfare, the second generation leaders did not hesitate to confront JCCSC Issei leaders, finally. Yet, the JCCSC leaders insisted that they had known the best way and the lack of knowledge and authority, as in JACS, would fail.^{xxix} The resignation of the community social worker consequently made the JCCSC depend on the local social security office. Bilingual social workers became a part of Japanese community social welfare since the 1970s.^{xxx}

The JCCSC’s social service depended on the community-wide donations. In the first year 1963, the “One-Dollar Donation” campaign was successful in raising more than four thousands dollar, exceeding the target by a thousand dollar.^{xxxi} In the 1970s, the structure was transformed. After the “One-Dollar Donation” campaign, they set the target higher – around ten thousand dollars – year by year, but it had hardly hit the target until the Japanese corporations joined as the primary donator. In the late 1970s, the Japan Trader’s Club, an assembling organization of Japanese corporations in Los Angeles, donated from three to five thousands dollar each year.^{xxxii} The average sum of donation per share rose from one dollar in 1963 to about sixty dollars in 1979 while the number of donation itself declined from 4,000 to 500.^{xxxiii} The sum per share was getting much higher and the total amount easily went beyond the target because of the active participation of the Japanese corporations. In the community welfare, the corporate donation replaced the individual one as Japanese corporations were emerging in the southern California economy.

III. Issei's Culturalism

The Japanese Cultural Center

In a petition for recruiting members of the Japanese Cultural Center in 1962, a section of the JCCSC, surviving Issei leader Mukaeda, a chairman of the center wrote as follows:

“There’s an old saying, ‘The culture never perishes even if the nation falls,’ which is a truth of all ages and civilizations. Historical facts proves this as modern Western civilization is based on ancient Jewish, Greek and Roman culture. Chinese culture thrives beyond life and death of hundreds of dynasties, and in recent times, the rehabilitation of the vanquished nations – Japan and Germany – derived from their own cultural activities.”^{xxxiv}

The Japanese Cultural Center was formed in the early 1960s. Mukaeda was playing a leading part in formation and management of the center. His interest and devotion to the cultural activities had been long since the prewar era. He belonged to the Japan America Society of Southern California and served as the president several times.^{xxxv} Established in the beginning of the twentieth century, the Society had memberships of both Japanese and Americans who shared interests in cultural activities which partly indicated the middle-class characteristics. Only high class – the government officials, businessmen, and other elites in Japanese immigrant community attended Society’s activities; they believed that such cultural-based communications would deepen the mutual understandings and eventually smooth bi-national relationships. Keeping the belief in unwavering fashion, Mukaeda was convinced that immigrant community leaders had a mission to introduce the Japanese culture and implant it into the United States. By the same token, to enlighten ordinary immigrants who lacked the middle-class manner and values was another mission so that they could be admitted as civilized subjects in the U.S. society.^{xxxvi} Culture was the key conception for thrusting nationalism. The Japanese Cultural Center succeeded the idea even though it was a small section of the JCCSC and the activities were tiny.

Whose Community Center?

In the late 1960s, the Japanese Cultural Center got the chance of expansion. The project was accompanied by the redevelopment plan of the civic center of Los Angeles which would be financed by federal budget. A community center project, as argued and long-awaited in whole community since the prewar times, attracted the attentions from whole generations. The planning committee was formed in 1969 under Little Tokyo Development Advisory Committee, constituted of Little Tokyo business and property owners.^{xxxvii} Mukaeda, as a committee chairman, put an emphasis on the basic idea of the cultural community center that Japanese immigrants were obliged to contribute to American culture by implanting Japanese culture. As he mentioned the examples of other Japanese immigrant community centers in Peru and Brazil, he was planning to depend on the Japanese government and business circles in finance.^{xxxviii}

In 1975, the name of the center, changed by Issei leaders and the Japanese Prime Minister, was announced without any notice to community. Mukaeda and another old leader George Doizaki had a confidential meeting with Prime Minister Miki to coordinate the plan of the center. Only among them, the new center name was decided as “Bicentennial Anniversary’ Japanese American Cultural Center.” They

rid a part of “Community” of the original name in place of adding ‘Bicentennial Anniversary.’ According to Prime Minister Miki, the Japanese government was planning the center as a present to the United States to celebrate her anniversary. Two leaders and the Japanese government also planned the national fund-raising campaign at that time.^{xxxix} Doizaki attributed the change of the name to facilitation of fund-raising in Japan. A group of local Japanese Americans denounced it as takeover by committee members, the Japanese government and corporations. In an open letter, a protest group of Nisei leaders asked Issei leaders whom they thought as a mastermind to have not a confidential but an entire community meeting, inviting Prime Minister. Moreover, a group showed the anxiety about the influence of the new name emphasizing “Japan”; Japanese corporations, growing unceasingly and spreading its influences over the U.S. market evoked a new antipathy against local Japanese Americans in the U.S. society in the 1970s.^{xl}

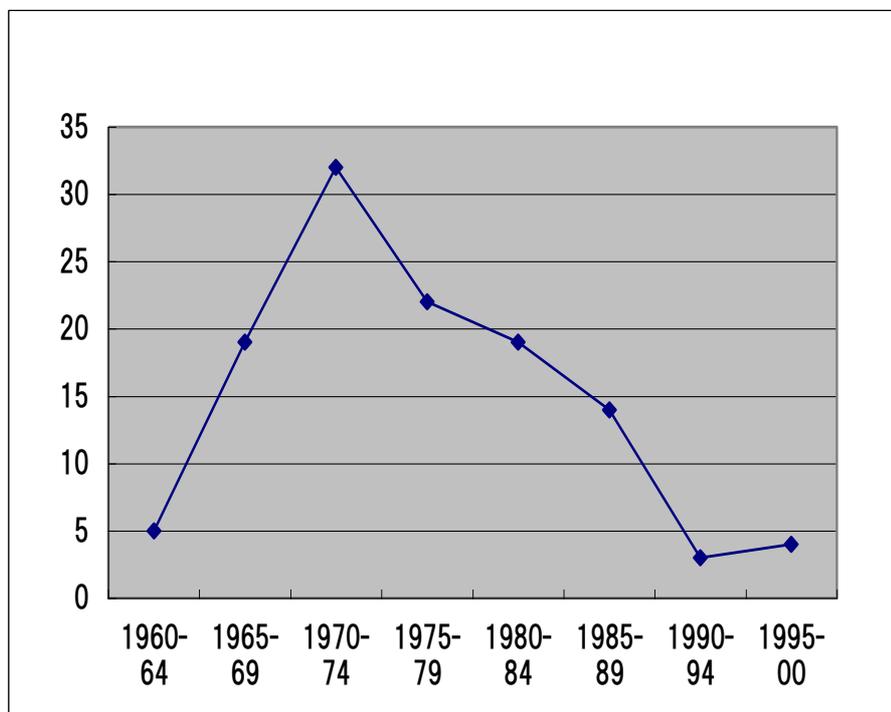
Community-wide protest, led by Nisei community organizers and intellectuals, succeeded in stopping Issei leaders from deleting “Community” from the center name. Examining total financial structures of the center project, however, it proved that the project owed much to the Japanese government and business circles in Japan as well as U.S.-affiliated Japanese corporations. Roughly five million dollar was collected from the Japan-related sources; 245 corporations, central and local governments in Japan,^{xli} and 43 Japanese corporations in southern California through Japan Business Association, formerly called Japan Traders Club.^{xlii} Two million was from Federal government through Community Redevelopment Agency, which would have been the original financial basis for the redevelopment project of Little Tokyo. Other three million dollars was financed by the U.S. corporations and foundations through a philanthropist Franklin D. Murphy. The rest of cost still depended for the most part on Japanese sources though the original financial plan was at a ratio of four in Japan to six in the United States.

Three key figures in Japan arranged the big fund-raising campaigns in Japan; Ushijima, a former ambassador in the U.S. of prewar times, Shintaro Fukushima, the president of “Japan Times,” and Zinhachiro Hanamura, an executive director of *Keidanren* [the Japanese Federation of Economic Organizations]. The former two voluntarily undertook the task because both had close relations with Japanese immigrant community in southern California, as Mukaeda and other Issei leaders personally identified with them.^{xliii} Since Fukushima was also Japanese Consul at prewar Los Angeles, they belonged to high class of Japanese immigrant society, which tied with Mukaeda, a leader through the century.

Analysis of the Conferment System

There was another factor which articulated Japan with Japanese immigrant society: the conferment system [*Jokun Award*]. The Japanese government has conferred the medals of honor stratified with several classes on Japanese immigrants all over the world as well as on domestic figures making an achievement in the political, economic and cultural realms. In Japanese immigrant society of southern California, an Issei woman, Sachiko Furusawa received a medal as the first person among the U.S. Japanese immigrants in 1958.^{xliv} She was organizing female patriotic activities sending the relief money and supplies to her home country on behalf of the Federated Japanese Women’s Association of Southern California during the war time.^{xlv}

Figure A The Number of *Jokun* Medals Given to Japanese Immigrants in Southern California from Japanese Government, 1960-2000



Sources: Nihon Jokunsha Kyokai, *Nihon Jokunsha Meikan: Showa 39nen 4gatsu - Showa 57nen 4gatsu* (Tokyo: Nihon Jokunsha Kyokai, 1978), *Nihon Jokunsha Meikan: Showa 57nen 4gatsu - Heisei 4nen 4gatsu* (Tokyo: Nihon Jokunsha Kyokai, 1992), et al.

After this, the Japanese government consecutively conferred *Jokun* Medals on surviving, old Japanese immigrants in the postwar southern California. **Figure A** illustrates the increasing number of the medals between 1965 and 1984, a time of Japan's economic recovery, as Japanese corporations were exerting their influences over the U.S. market. It was also the time when Japanese corporations and the Japanese government increasingly intervened in the Little Tokyo Redevelopment Project; the first modern, high-rise building in Little Tokyo was constructed by Kajima International in 1967 and a gorgeous hotel was also by them in 1975.

Conferees in southern California can be divided into two categories; 1) Those who have served as the leader or executive member of some organizations –JCCSC, Japan America Society, Cultural Center, Pioneer Center, Japanese American Women's Club, Kenjinkai, and so on; 2) those who have worked in the cultural fields – Japanese language, Japanese art, such as flower arrangement, dancing, calligraphy, and fencing.

The JCCSC members, having served as the head or executives, dominated as good as half the number among more than one hundred conferees of the first category. For all the small number – 10 of total 118 – in the second categories, adding the number of the conferees related with cultural organizations as Japanese American Cultural and Community Center to the group makes one-fourth of the total.^{xlvi} The conferees of the JCCSC members also dominated the higher stratum than other organization members. There were only three conferees of the highest rank in the immigrant society by 2000 – one was Mukaeda who received two Medals in 1960 and 1970,^{xlvii} another was Kenji Ito, a Nisei lawyer, who was considered as the

successor of Mukaeda since he has served as the head of the JCCSC five times, and the other was John Aiso, the first Japanese American colonel in the U.S. army and later becoming a judge of California State. The second highest rank conferees were constituted of those who served as the JCCSC head and the executive members of the Japanese American Cultural and Community Center.

It is noted that conferees were conventionally obliged to pay their recommenders some money in return.^{xlviii} Honor makes private interests, which also explain that the conferment system continued long time. Yet, at the second conferment in 1970, Mukaeda broke off the convention; he donated all the amount that he had to pay his recommender for the JCCSC's social welfare section. He explained himself that the returning convention made transfers only between the concerned and made no profit in entire society.^{xlix}

Conclusion

This paper shows that the Japanese Chamber of Commerce of Southern California connected the prewar and the postwar Japanese American experience and this facilitated the link between Japan and the Los Angeles Japanese American community in the postwar times through the ties that Issei leaders shared with leaders in Japan. Intergenerational tensions, increasing in the 1960s and 1970s in community, were caused not simply by the difficulty of mutual understandings because of difference of their languages, but by such a definitive difference in values and manners that a cleavage never united. The JCCSC's tasks and functions were eventually dispersed as other organizations were formed and succeeded to them. The Cultural Center was merged into the Japanese American Cultural and Community Center, its social welfare department was into the Pioneer Center, and its trade department was replaced by the Japan Business Association. The only task was holding a celebration for *Jokun* Medal conferees even though the number of conferees plummeted in the 1990s when the significance of southern California in the strategy of the Japanese politics and businesses relatively lowered.

Issei could finally obtain the naturalization right in the postwar society. In spite of this, the surviving first generation Japanese never abandoned the identifying tools as Japanese. As Mukaeda devoted himself to implanting the "Japanese culture" into America and their descendents, Issei leaders clung to identifying themselves to be inherited culturally and racially from Japan. They craved for being awarded *Jokun* Medals by the Japanese government; the conferment system was an essential part of the postwar Japanese American community in keeping the transnational ties continued from the prewar era. What tied between them shifted from something political to cultural one, embodied by the Cultural Center and the *Jokun* Medal.

ⁱ Japanese Chamber of Commerce of Southern California. *Japanese in Southern California 'A History of 70 Years'* (Los Angeles: JCCSC, 1960).

ⁱⁱ JCCSC, *Japanese Chamber of Commerce of Southern California 50th Anniversary* (Los Angeles: JCCSC, 1991), 43.

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