
Vice Chairman's Message



It is my sad duty to report that Setsuya Tabuchi, who had presided over the Sasakawa Peace Foundation as chairman since the foundation's establishment in 1986, passed away on June 26, 2008. We at the SPF are deeply grateful for all the kindness bestowed upon him during his lifetime.

SPF was founded at a time when the value of the yen was soaring as a result of the Plaza agreement and when Japan's so-called economic bubble was just beginning to grow, when an overly vigorous Japanese economy was viewed by other countries as requiring containment. Mr. Tabuchi felt that promoting international cooperation and understanding from the standpoint of a private-sector organization was very valuable work that augmented

Japan's international contributions. Along with then Honorary Chairman Ryoichi Sasakawa and Saburo Kawai, the foundation's first president, Mr. Tabuchi launched SPF on its mission with the highest of hopes.

Under Mr. Tabuchi's leadership, and with the generosity of our supporters, SPF promptly engaged in efforts designed to enable former socialist countries to benefit from the experience of Japan and the rest of East Asia, as well as efforts concerned with regional internationalization, preventive diplomacy, and other new issues. In addition, SPF established four special funds—the Sasakawa Pacific Island Nations Fund, the Sasakawa Japan-China Friendship Fund, the Sasakawa Central Europe Fund, and the Sasakawa Pan Asia Fund—specifically concerned with regions of major importance to Japan and made use of these funds to carry out activities of the sort that only private-sector organizations can undertake.

Nonprofit organizations are, however, apt to be drawn to the path of least resistance. Mr. Tabuchi was aware of this, and on the twentieth anniversary of the SPF's establishment, he felt it was essential to revise the organization's operational setup and reexamine its programs. He instructed me, in my capacity as vice chairman, to set up two expert committees to carry out this work, and I devoted my energies to doing so.

I reported on the proposed operational reforms to the Foundation's trustees and counselors and gained their approval; the result has been a steady stream of improvements. In the interest of revising the foundation's programs, we crafted a new mission statement based on the expert committee reports and established a program policy reflecting the new mission statement. Both changes were approved by the trustees and counselors. I am convinced that SPF will achieve greater progress under the new program policy, and I regret that Mr. Tabuchi will not be here to enjoy the fruits of such efforts.

Henceforth we intend to honor Mr. Tabuchi's wishes by improving our capacity as a private foundation, in accordance with the new operational system and program policy, to conduct policy research and make policy recommendations to help resolve increasingly complex international issues. We will also strive to improve our ability to disseminate information and promote more independent forms of international cooperation, thereby helping to expand and improve Japan's private-sector-led international contributions.

We ask for your continued support and cooperation in these endeavors.

Jiro Hanyu