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Governor A. I. ...

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October 23, 1991

A. (CAP) SAHEKI  
PRESIDENT

Mr. Tadahiro Yoshida, President  
YKK Architectural Products Inc.  
1 Kanda Izumicho, Chiyodaku  
Tokyo 101, Japan

COPY

Dear Mr. Yoshida:

It was my pleasure and honor to have met you at the Toyama Business Seminar in Portland last week.

As I commented right after your luncheon speech, the contents of your address were 100% agreeable to me in order to avoid a trade friction, if any, between two countries and greatly impressed me.

The first policy you explained, out the five, set out when you invested in the State of Georgia, being corporate citizen is certainly the most essential factor for a successful operation by Japanese investors in the United States. The word of the corporate citizenship to deal with the delicate problem is not new since Mr. Akio Morita advocated in order to achieve a better business relations and political climate between two nations. This advocacy, however, appears to have generally been rhetorical without merit. The reason being, I believe, that most of the local offices of the Japanese investors are not authorized by it's Tokyo offices to do anything other than it's own day to day business or operation.

Contrary to this, YKK Headquarter has given much broader authority to the local office for the involvement of the community activities. As I understand, you even encourage them to be involved in the activities.

In July of 1990, last year, Keidanren sent 19 member delegation here under the name of CBCC (Council for Better Corporate Citizenship). I personally approached a few members of the delegation in order to obtain their suggestion of more involvement by Japanese business community here in a non-profit organization activity in which I am heavily involved. I was very much disappointed at their responses that Keidanren could not recommend anything for their members involvement in a local community activity.

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But, I was suggested at that time that it should be dealt by each member's headquarter in Tokyo through the individual local office in Portland or Portland area. Prior to that time, I had been working through the local offices of Japanese corporations here, including individual executives and their group organization as well. Unfortunately, I had received very limited number of positive reaction from them.

I was also impressed by your policy that the profit generated in your overseas operation is to remain in the region where you have the operation for the re-investment in the same place, whereby additional employment is to be created for the benefit of the local community.

I just returned from Sendai where the 21st Japan-American Conference of Mayors and Chamber of Commerce Presidents was held.

I was particularly interested in the Concurrent Session under the theme of "Overseas Business Operations and Their Contributions to Society" at the conference. Much disappointing, none of speakers from Japan side had a clear cut approach and experiences explained like you did here last week, but they were too general and defensive. The panel discussion coordinated by Mr. Tadashi Yamamoto under the theme of "U.S.-Japan Partnership in the New Global Age" was much more productive and educational to me. Yet, one of conclusions to improve the current U.S.-Japan relations and understanding, in order to achieve a better partnership, was English education in Japan at a elementary level and promotion and exchange of cultural activities by young people. I must agree with this conclusion, but the accomplishment of this goal will be a long way ahead after next 20-30 years. We need the improvement of our relations surrounding today, not tomorrow, if it is so bad as media reports.

Your last comments on the effectiveness of better understanding between two countries is coincided with the comments made by Prof. Ohtake, Tohoku University at the Sendai conference. Namely, the direct contact and communication, as well as exchange programs, between two countries on the regional basis rather than the central government basis should work better. In this sense, I believe the newly established sister state relations between the State of Oregon and Toyama Prefecture is indeed significant.

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Meantime, congratulations for your success in your venture in Georgia. I sincerely hope that other Japanese investors in this country will follow your wonderful and explicit policies for their own success as well as for the benefit of the local community here.

I thank you for your excellent lecture given to this local business group. I truly enjoyed in listening.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "A. Sakaki".

cc: Mr. Katsuhiko Sota, Vice Governor  
Governor Victor Atiyeh  
Consul General Moriyama  
Mr. Tadashi Yamamoto, President  
Japan Center for International Exchange