

Richard Robinson

A Memorial by Noritake Kobayashi

I realize that Professor Robinson was one of the founding members of the AIB. The beginning of my acquaintance with him goes back to the late 1960s. I visited him at MIT to consult my IB research and study as well as a course building in Japan. He received me very warmly and gave me many good advices. About this time, I attended a workshop to discuss the International Business-Government Affairs: Toward an Era of Accommodation. The workshop was organized by Professor John Fayerweather, and great pioneering leaders of IB study gathered together. The participants included Professors Robinson, Jack Behrman and Jean Boddewyn.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, there was a strong movement in Japan to develop IB teaching and research at home. The Japanese Government together with the Japanese business established the Institute for International Studies and Training (IIST) and launched one year MBA type program specializing in IB. In the meantime, the scholars led by late Professor Itaro Irie founded a private interdisciplinary Workshop for the Study of Multinational Enterprise Problems. In all these programs, Professor Robinson's book, International Business Management was used as the basic text and case book. Also Professor Robinson came to Japan to teach at IIST and enlightened the mind of the scholars and businessmen for the importance of IB training. All in all, Professor Robinson was one of the important fathers of the birth of the IB research and education in Japan.

Later in 1990, when the Workshop for the Study of Multinational Enterprise held an international conference in Tokyo in order to celebrate the workshop's 20th anniversary Professor Robinson came back to Japan, made an important speech and contributed an article, A New Approach to Corporate Decision Making, which was printed in a book, Management: A Global Perspective which was edited by me as the President of the Workshop.

When I retired from the Keio University Business School, my colleagues at Keio and academic friends outside the University organized and published a special issue of the Keio Business Forum (Vol. 14, No.1, 1997). I am very grateful to Professor Robinson who contributed to this issue an article: "Toward a General Theory of International Trade and Investment."

I don't remember exactly when and where I saw Professor Robinson last in the AIB and other international conferences. But in 2007, I received from him a package which enclosed two of his papers, one is on Why so Wrong- Headed? -- Epilogue to Reflections on U.S. Foreign Policy? and the other is on Reflections on U.S. Foreign Policy. (Both papers were written in the summer of 2006). When I read them, I have renewed my admiration to his liberal and critical thinking and writing analyzing the issues behind scene.

Again, I am so sad and sorry to hear of the death of Professor Robinson who had been so kind to me and to the Japanese academia to develop IB research and study in Japan.

He has made great contributions to which I and all IB related friends are appreciative.