In 1986, Dr. Takeshi Matsuda first came to the University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) as a Fulbright visiting professor to teach a course in the history of American-East Asian relations. His return visit to UTSA last week, almost three decades later as president of Kyoto University of Foreign Studies (KUFS), has helped further cement the UTSA-KUFS relationship on multiple levels.

Matsuda has been president of KUFS since 2010 and his visit was hosted by UTSA East Asia Institute. During his week-long visit, Matsuda met with UTSA executive administrators as well as faculty from various departments including the History Department, Department of Modern Languages and Literatures, Department of Management, and Department of Political Science and Geography. He proposed more teaching and research collaborations between the two universities as well as student exchange.

Matsuda’s visit to two Japanese language classes was also a great inspiration to the students as they were all trying their best to ask Dr. Matsuda some questions in Japanese! One of the many stops Matsuda made at UTSA was a visit to the Institute of Texan Cultures that has undergone a huge transformation, according to Matsuda’s observation.

UTSA and KUFS has had ongoing student exchange since 1995. In addition, KUFS has hosted UTSA’s students in their summer Japanese language and cultural immersion program three years in a row since 2013.

At the invitation of President Ricardo Romo, President Takeshi Matsuda spoke to UTSA Executive Leadership Council (ELC) as the keynote speaker at the monthly luncheon on September 30th. Matsuda mentioned Pax Mundi Per Linguas (World peace through Languages), KUFS’s school motto and gave several examples of their student-led projects that have helped improve the quality of life both domestically and internationally, which include “Picture Books for Cambodian Children”, “Table for Two”, and Kyoto Gaidai Habitat, to name a few.

Matsuda’s visit to UTSA culminated with a public lecture, “Drift or Mastery Revisited: A Path to Human Co-existence” on Oct. 1st. The event attracted 120 people in
the audience standing room only.

According to Matsuda, this year marks 70 years since the end of WWII and there has been pressure to reform Japanese government policies from a “post-war regime” mindset. Many believe the U.S. military on Japanese soil has contributed to the peace in Japan after WWII due to the bilateral U.S.-Japan treaty. In addition, those who consider themselves nationalists believe that the diplomacy held between the two countries via governmental leaders is what has led or assisted in the peace kept in Japan. They also want to see a continued collaboration between the U.S. and Japan.

On the other hand, those who are constitutionalists believe that article 9 of the Japanese constitution, pacifism, and humanitarianism of the people have contributed to keeping Japan from entering wars abroad.

Matsuda also mentioned due to the rising power of China and the threat of a nuclear attack from North Korea, the Abe Administration is attempting to sanction self-defense under the help of a new security legislation. Through this, Japan may end up supporting U.S. global war under the interests of a partnership.

Matsuda expressed his opinion that Proto-Conservatives in Japan may reflect their ideals of self-importance, resulting in the negative aspect of looking down on other Asian countries. “Foreign policy is expressed as diplomacy in order to keep good relations with D.C.,” said Matsuda, “but the Japanese also want to be paid for accommodating American troops. Meanwhile, the U.S. wants to keep their strategic foothold, which they believe is granting protection for Japan.”

Matsuda also expresses the political view in the imagery, "the biggest tree gives the most shelter," when referencing American political power. Matsuda proposes finding a way to build a non-military path for human co-existence and the new direction to proactive, nonmilitary, human security is to become a trusted, disarming member of the international community.
Matsuda’s lecture touch on a timely topic considered quite controversial even among the Japanese citizens. Following his lecture the public had the ability to ask questions regarding the current changes and updates on the Japanese government political policies.

Prior to the public lecture, Matsuda also had the chance to meet with students from Honors College, many of who are interested in joining UTSA’s summer program at KUFS and in Tokyo in May 2016.

“UTSA has transformed itself into a premier research institution,” said Matsuda, “I look forward to working more closely with the current administration to build stronger ties with UTSA in faculty exchange and collaborative research projects.”

President Matsuda was joined by his wife Mrs. Keiko Matsuda during his visit to UTSA, “It is so nice to be back to San Antonio, my second hometown next to Kyoto,” said Matsuda, “I have always been a big fan of the U.S. collegiate football. Seeing UTSA’s football game for the first time in person was certainly quite a treat as I was kept on the edge of the seat during the UTSA-Colorado State game the entire time.”

President Matsuda and Mrs. Matsuda also cheered the UTSA team on from the beginning to the end. Once a Rowdy professor, always a Rowdy without borders—we were glad you came home, President Matsuda!