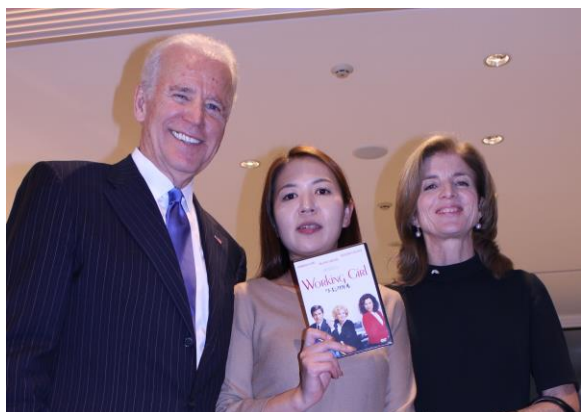


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THE OTSUKA WHATS & WHOS

Otsuka
people creating
new products
for better health
worldwide

Exec. Discusses Women's Issues With US V.P. & Ambassador Kennedy



US V.P. Joe Biden and Ambassador Caroline Kennedy snaps a photo with Chiaki Sakurai holding the "Working Girl" DVD



Panel discussion attended by three representative of the US government (US V.P. Joe Biden seated second from right)

Chiaki Sakurai, Senior Operating Officer (SOO), Head of Cosmedics Department Was Invited as a Panelist

On the day of the discussion, December 3, 2013, there were helicopters flying in the blue skies over the Hikarie building in front of Shibuya Station. When I arrived at DeNA headquarters, the site of the discussion, I was greeted by police dogs, and was ushered into the waiting room after passing through a rigorous security check. The other panelists were industrialists and entrepreneurs, including Tomoko Namba, the founder of DeNA, the company hosting the discussion, and Calbee CEO Akira Takahashi. My role at the discussion was not to present myself as a female entrepreneur, but to show how an ordinary female employee can transform her career inside a large organization. I particularly wanted to show how the company had given someone like me, by no means a stereotypically driven career woman, such an opportunity, and also that diversity is about understanding and accepting the uniqueness of all individuals in an organization – in other words, that embracing diversity does not mean providing women with preferential treatment.

I only learned about one week in advance of my invitation to attend a panel discussion on "Women and the Economy" (the third arrow of "Abenomics") that was to be held during US Vice-President Joseph Biden's visit to Japan. It was a great honor for Otsuka Pharmaceutical to be selected as one of only six Japanese companies invited to send a representative to the panel discussion and, although I was pleased to have Otsuka's long-standing support of diversity recognized, the news that I was being asked to personally attend came as a bit of a shock.

Understanding the Importance of Perseverance

I was starting to feel as if I were in over my head, and was getting cold feet, but there was nowhere to go, and the time for the panel discussion had arrived. Surrounded by tough-looking security police, Vice-President Biden, US Ambassador Caroline Kennedy, and Ambassador-at-Large for Global Women's Issues Catherine Russell arrived. I had no time to collect myself before the discussion started. Ambassador-at-Large Russell introduced the participants one at a time, and each shared various anecdotes or talked about their entrepreneurial experiences. I was the fifth person introduced, and when I finished as scheduled, I took a Pocari drink from my bag and took a sip, trying to look natural. I was conscious of the media, and had the presence of mind to hold the drink with the label showing.

At a discussion that is only an hour long, it is hard to make an impression, but I had a secret plan. What I can be seen holding in my hand in the two pictures of me with Ambassador Kennedy is a DVD copy of the 1988 movie "Working Girl," a romantic comedy that tells the story of a working-class woman with no connections or elite educational background who rises from secretary to company executive solely on the strength of her courage and ideas. It is a very American movie, and one of my favorites. Although my personality is quite unlike that of the protagonist, I, like her, had no connections or elite academic background, but I persevered and, in the end, that is what allowed me to succeed.

After the discussion was over, Ambassador Kennedy came directly over to me and said, "The person who wrote that movie is a good friend of mine. Can I take a picture? It would make him happy." Then she pulled out her own cell phone and held it out to take a picture of the two of us. As a present, I gave her an InnerSignal sample, which she showed great interest in, and slipped into her bag.

I am not used to acting as some sort of bridge between Japan and America, or to being presented as a trailblazer for the promotion of women in the workplace, but I was happy to have been able to use this opportunity to provide an example of Otsuka Pharmaceutical's commitment to diversity. More than anything, I wanted to convey the message that it is important to persevere.