

**Alexander Sanger Speech at 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday of Shidzue Kato,  
Tokyo, Japan, March 1997.**

I wish to thank FPFJ, JFPA and JOICFP for this invitation to give a congratulatory address to Madame Kato.

In 1922 Madame Kato was called by Japanese newspapers “the Margaret Sanger of Japan”. Therefore, today I bring birthday greetings as the grandson of the American Margaret Sanger to the Japanese Margaret Sanger. I am indeed fortunate to have so many grandmothers.

This celebration commemorates not only the 100th anniversary of the birth of Madame Kato but also the 75th anniversary of the first of my grandmother’s seven visits to Japan, in 1922 when she was accompanied by my father age 13.

Madame Kato, then the Baroness Ishimoto, had met my grandmother two years earlier in 1920 in New York. This

historic meeting was the beginning of a lifelong partnership and also the beginning of Japanese and American involvement in world population affairs. After their first meeting Madame Kato announced “I will carry the banner of birth control in Japan”.

During her 1922 visit, the Japanese Government tried, unsuccessfully, to prevent my grandmother from speaking about birth control, thereby doing more to popularize birth control than my grandmother ever could have.

Later in the 1920's and early 1930's Madame Kato lectured in America and helped popularize birth control in our country. After graduating as the first foreign student at my grandmother's clinic, Madame Kato returned to Tokyo and opened her own clinic. In 1937 my grandmother came to dedicate the clinic, which was shortly thereafter closed by the police. No sooner had the banner of birth control been raised than it was lowered.

At the dedication of the clinic, my grandmother said this of Madame Kato:

“Madame Kato has had a hard hill to climb... She needs our help because birth control is not only a national problem, but an international one, and we who belong to this civilization must all help each other. Her fight is our fight and she will need assistance ... to take to women the message of peace and hope, and to give them the possibility of spacing their children and having only the number of children that they can decently support and take care of. Madame Kato will be the great patriot of the future. She will be of benefit not only to her own nation but to the civilization of the world”.

Together Madame Kato and Margaret Sanger changed the world. Every woman in not only Japan and America but also in the entire world owes them a debt of thanks. Madame Kato has been and is honored in Japan. My grandmother was never honored in America. The only country ever to honor Margaret

Sanger was Japan. In 1959 she was presented with the key to the City of Tokyo and in 1965 she was awarded the Third Class Order of the Sacred Treasure, the highest honor that can be given to a foreign woman. For these honors the Sanger family is eternally grateful. As a token of her deep appreciation, at her death my grandmother asked that her heart be buried in Japan.

I salute Madame Kato today as a friend of the Sanger family. I salute her as a liberator of women. And I salute her as a patriot not only of Japan but also of this small and ever more crowded planet that we all share. Our work is not finished.

Finally, it is my honor today to present to Madame Kato a letter of good wishes from Washington, DC. It reads as follows:

“Dear Madame Kato:

Hillary and I are pleased to wish you a very happy  
100th birthday!

During the past century, you have had the  
opportunity to be a part of one of the most fascinating times  
the world has ever known. We hope you have a joyous  
celebration and a wonderful year.

Sincerely,

Bill Clinton

President of the United States