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### **An Evaluation of the *Japanese Accounting Review (TJAR)***

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I congratulate the Research Institute for Economics and Business at Kobe University, and the editors of the *TJAR* for their initiative to introduce this new refereed journal in English to serve as an intellectual forum on accounting thought and research. In this note, I shall try to explain why it is difficult as well as important for progress of the practice, education, and research in accounting as well as business management.

My perspective on the challenge of building research cultures, especially in Asian universities, is spelled out in a paper published a few years ago (Sunder, Shyam. "Building Research Culture" [China Journal of Accounting Research](#) Vol. 1 Issue 1. (June 2008) [Text \(PDF\)](#); [Chinese Translation \(PDF\)](#)), and appended to this evaluation. Briefly, business schools in any country can serve the society (that pays their costs) if their faculty address the problems of that society. Inducing the faculty to publish their work in the so-called "international" journals may have some short benefits. In the longer run, such a strategy fails to develop a domestic research culture, which includes domestic journals and establishment of peer review processes and networks. As one of the most developed countries of the world, Japan has distinguished achievements in many research disciplines. I am told that in the field of business management, there only a few peer-reviewed journals in Japan. Establishment of *TJAR* is, a most welcome initiative to help build such a tradition in the field of accounting. The choice of English language enables the journal to bring Japanese and foreign scholars into close engagement with each other.

Development of a new journal is a slow and painstaking process that requires some bootstrapping: authors waiting for a new journal to become respectable before they submit their best research papers, and the journals trying to get and publish the best papers in order to gain status and respectability. This process can take a decade or more. I believe *TJAR* has made a good start by attracting a fine mix of Japanese as well as international authors of repute. It should achieve an important status in accounting scholarship by the end of its first decade.

I should add a note of caution to this optimistic assessment. Much of accounting (as well as other business) research, and the research journals in which it is published, have become increasingly preoccupied with research methodologies, instead of substantive problems of management, in the recent decades. One result of this trend is to convert the journals into instruments of credentialing for the purpose of faculty evaluation. I believe that when journals become predominantly credentialing devices instead of being forums for new ideas, debate and ferment, they lose their reason for existence. It is my hope that the editors of *TJAR* are acutely aware of this trap, and will not allow this disease to afflict the new journal.