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WHEN THE DEEP CALLS UNTO THE DEEP.....

Evans Maka
2nd Year, MPP/IP



The advantages of studying in GraSPP are enormous: numerous scholarship offers, numerous learning resource centers dotted all over Hongo campus with affiliation to the department, loving administrative staff supporting international students to live in Japan with no qualms, and the ease with which students can approach professors being it academic or private matters, etc.

Besides, I see GraSPP as a graduate school poised to address the woes of the failing global economic architecture. Contrary to the era where public policies were confined to specific country settings, the advent of globalization had brought into force various intervening factors influencing public policies globally. Globalization was welcomed by the praise singers, mainly developed economies, with much optimism due to opportunities for integrated and expanded markets, and global production networks. The censured chicaneries, in mainly developing countries, were more circumspective due to the fragile nature of their economies. But the crux of the matter is that now the ramifications of globalization seem to be startling for both developed and developing countries alike. The new global economy is impacting tremendously on the economic policies of both developed and developing economies heading toward different forms of crisis, ranging from financial crisis, political crisis to sovereign crisis. In fact, the global economy has gone deeper and is calling unto the deeper, than the 18th century ideology. Thus when the deep calls unto the deep, there must be a deep somewhere to respond, and in fact GraSPP has positioned itself in responding to the deep. GraSPP provides an endemic training in public policies for students to become able to think by themselves, nurture risk-taking abilities and welcome diversity through courses offered across law, politics and economics. The veteran professionals in the policy forefront in economics, science and technology, energy and environment, development, etc., who constitute the teaching staff of GraSPP provide students with a specialized skill to enhance their sense of critical thinking, problem solving ability and capacity to properly investigate and interrogate policy issues around the globe by drawing on the lessons of Japan.

Catching the glimpse of Japan When my plane first landed in Narita International Airport and walking through the streets of Japan with my tutor, Akao san, I, at a point in time sighed heavily and prayed to ask God whether this nation is closer to the promised paradise. Well, this may sound funny but not for an "African child" who landed in Japan for the first time. I see Japan as a nation where economic growth had been fully decomposed to all layers of society and people enjoy their lifestyle with the aid of state-of-art technologies. Senior citizens are given the requisite medical support. This makes the citizens confident in reaching old age without qualms because they can still maintain their dignity and self-worth. The impressive transportation system cannot be overemphasized.

A trip organized and funded by GraSPP for international students in 2011 to Nikko, where we visited the Edo Wonderland, a historical place in Japan, unraveled an interesting sight that made me feel that Africa today follows Japan in the Edo era. Japan during that era was characterized by manually driven machines, animal power driven agricultural equipment, low standard classrooms, bloodsheds, etc. But through industrious attitude, imitation and creativity, the nation metamorphosed into its current state. The traditional culture of courtesy, non-use of outdoor shoes indoors and limited use of derogative words seem to portray the unique attribute of the Japanese. Notwithstanding, since there had been no modernization without a trade-off of country's values, Japan has gradually adopted the western style.

Japan's experience aptly demonstrates how science and technology, public policies and private sector initiatives could accentuate efficiency and bolster resource allocation, since Japan achieved growth and success without naturally endowed resources. But today, Japanese policy makers seem to be in bewilderment with the citizens doubting possible recovery and being more pessimistic about the future path of the economy. Prolonged stagnation, rising debt to GDP over 200%, declining birth rate coupled with aging population, deep-seated deflation and historical appreciation of the yen seem to bedevil the Japanese economy. If a nation which once experienced a "growth miracle" (coined by economists) is now calling for reconstruction, then I say that the Japanese economy had gone deep and is calling unto the deep. It is worth asking whether Japan's economic growth since the 1950s was really a miracle or the policies (I thank Professor Takatoshi Ito, Dean of GraSPP, for his exposition on the Japanese economy). Now that the same economy had gone deep, and calling unto the deep, there must be deep policies somewhere to respond.

Murmurs and Musings

No.6

Koichi Hasegawa Professor



Diversity

My office is on the 6th floor of the Administration Bldg. No. 2. As the closest office to the elevators, it faces a busy hallway where GraSPP students pass through everyday. Not that I am intentionally listening, but I hear many different languages spoken in the hallway. Of course I hear Japanese. I also hear broken English, fluent English, Chinese, Korean, German, Spanish and many other languages which I cannot identify. Every time I hear a foreign language, I am charmed by the cosmopolitan atmosphere of the GraSPP, and feel the happiness of teaching here. I heard that there are foreign students from more than 30 countries and regions, accounting for over 30% of the entire student population of the GraSPP.

I participated in several international negotiations as an official of the Ministry of Finance. In spite of that experience, I am surprised to find that the diversity of the students' nationality, culture, ethnicity, language, career background and gender difference often create an explosive dynamism during discussions in my class. This is something I was not aware of before.

I teach the subject of foreign development aid in English. Japan's foreign aid policy seems to be suffering from the Galapagos Syndrome of becoming isolated from world trends. Students from Asia do not appear to feel it strange. In contrast, students from Africa or South America seem to find it incongruous. They ask a lot of questions, about which arguments erupt immediately, and the class falls into chaos. My role changes from teacher to moderator. My lecture keeps digressing, and falling behind time.

In the beginning, I was worried about having such a chaotic class. Now I egg my students on to engage in discussion. It is really exciting to hear such divergent opinions. As the discussion heats up, I can feel the temperature in the classroom going up. It is the diversity that creates this powerful dynamism.

Given that, I want to urge as many of you, Japanese students, as possible to challenge this cosmopolitan world. By the time you reach a position of leadership in society, some twenty or thirty years from now, Japan will certainly be navigating itself through increasingly stormy waters in international society. You may be a civil servant, or a corporate warrior, or an entrepreneur. Whatever you are, it will be impossible for you to confine yourself in the framework of Japanese history and culture and just work. Right along the hallway you walk through everyday, there are many classes which embody this cosmopolitan society. They are engaging in heated discussion everyday. Go knock on their doors!

Trip to Saga



Bed Raj Phuyel 2nd Year, MPP/IP

Deepak Dhakal 1st Year, MPP/IP

Suman Dahal 2nd Year, MPP/IP

Saga prefecture, which is located on northwest part of Kyushu Island of Japan, is well-known for natural beauty, unique traditions and historical value. We were provided the opportunity to visit this place in December 2012.

The purpose of this trip was mainly to observe and understand how Saga government has been utilizing modern technological device like iPad in making the ambulance services more effective. In addition, another purpose was to observe how successfully a public hospital in Takeo has been privatized and operated.

The office of Saga prefecture operates around 50 ambulances which use iPads to access the hospital information database. Through utilizing the application, they have succeeded in shortening duration of ambulance drive. This is very praiseworthy indeed. The ambulance worker tries to find out the proper doctor

and hospital by accessing medical services as well as availability of beds in the hospital using an iPad. After that, the staff contacts the concerning hospital and takes the patient through shortest route. It is remarkably working and getting famous all over Japan. We also got chance to meet the planner of this operation. He is very young, gentle and very cooperative and also is being very popular through this innovative idea.

The visit to a private hospital in Takeo (Shin Takeo Hospital) was also very inspiring and memorable. The hospital is well equipped, clean, well-managed and looks like a star rated hotel. In 2009, the prefectural government decided to privatize the only public hospital of that area and now it has drastically changed its scope and structure. With its own helicopter ambulance and modern equipment with highly professional medical staff, this hospital is one of the best in this region.

Takeo is also famous for natural hot springs (Onsen). There are many public as well as private hot springs around this place. We experienced a hot spring at Takeo, which was delightful moment in our life.

During the trip, we visited some natural and historical places. We also got chance to observe the oldest tree which was around 400 years old. The visit to Saga Shrine and Saga Castle History Museum was also a notable event in this trip. Dinner, breakfast and accommodation at Japanese styled hotel was very refreshing and pleasing to us. In conclusion, this trip was very enjoyable and informative as well. We would like to thank the coordinator Ms. Satoko Nishimura (researcher at GraSPP) and all the fellow members of the trip for their efforts on making this trip unforgettable in our lives. We are also deeply grateful to Sompo Japan Insurance Inc. for their generous support on this field trip.

Student Interview

No. 13



Ayumi Ando

Public Management Division (2nd year)

— What was your reason for enrolling in the GraSPP?

Initially, I was aiming at becoming a government official, entering the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. That's why I enrolled in the GraSPP, thinking that I should do some study before that. Well, I've got a job offer from a newspaper now.

— Why a newspaper?

It all started with the Great East Japan Earthquake. I went to an affected area, and there I spent some time chatting and drinking sake with a local man I called Pops. Pops lost his wife and daughter in the tsunami. He lost his fishing job, too. His new job was to remove debris from the sea. But he had a really dignified face. I had never seen such a noble face in my life. Pops had to live through the unbearable tragedy, yet his face, hardened by great determination, was saying, "Ya can't give in, can ya?"

Having met Pops got me thinking what I'd been studying for the sake of the national interest or "for Japan" was all about. I had only a vague notion of the "Japanese people". I realized that I didn't have the perspective to see a "person" in the flesh. I started to want to get into work that lets me deal with a "person" with respect. I wanted to follow the everyday living of ordinary people having an ordinary life. So I thought of becoming a director of TV programs. I applied for a job at a TV station but didn't get it. I quickly switched my mind off TV, and got a job offer from the newspaper for which I'm going to start working in April. The interviewer at this company surprised me by listening to me intently. Even when I told him in a fairly blunt manner that I no longer understood what the national interest was, he said, "I understand."

I heard this newspaper allows its reporters a wider discretion than other papers. Its notable feature is that the local news section has interesting articles. It has a large group of devoted readers in the Kansai region. It still issues an evening edition although it stopped doing so in the Kanto region.

My parents objected to my taking a newspaper job. The "work is hard and fewer people read newspapers" was their reasoning. My parents have been running a newspaper dealership, selling all papers including sports dailies. It is obvious the shrinking readership in the paper-based media is affecting them. They used to work late into the night on New Year's Eve to get ready for delivery next morning. These days, they finish so early that I'd ask "Is that it?" Because of diminishing readership, as well as demanding 365-day working conditions, my parents decided to hand over their business to someone else and close the shop at the end of the current year.

— What do you think of your fellow students at the GraSPP?

They are all smart elites (laugh). I'm always reminded what a bumpkin I am. At the same time, there are a lot of oversensitive students who are too conscious of what other people think. It's such a waste of time to let a small failure weigh on you as if that's the end of the world! They should do what they want to do. I thought to myself, "If I couldn't get a job, I'd work at doing whatever I could, even delivering newspapers." That thought is still with me.

I am really grateful to my parents. I am a little bit of a contrarian who refuses to do as told by others. My parents never demanded that I study. They were quietly supportive when I failed my first university entrance exam and had to wait for another year.

The GraSPP is rather lacking in unity because of the diversity of its people (laugh). On the other hand, it is one of its attractive aspects. It's the place where "anything goes" and "you can do anything."

(Interview and text by editor)



GraSPP Year End Party

December 14,
2012



Topical News

GraSPP Home Coming Day

Atsuko Okamoto Legal Policy Division (2nd year)

On the Homecoming Day of October 20, 2012, I presented my report of the Tohoku Study Tour earlier in the year, on August 1-4. I felt so honored to have had the opportunity to give my report to the current students, the alumni and the faculty. At the social gathering that followed, many of the alumni came to me and gave me a chance to have a lot of talk based on their thoughts of my report. While the alumni are found working as leaders in surprisingly diverse fields, I was impressed that they generally maintained an active interest in matters of a highly public nature. I hope to keep cherishing such connections after graduation.



The book entitled *Green Innovations That Changes the Future of Japan* (『日本の将来を変えるグリーン・イノベーション』) (Shunsuke Managi and Ryozo Hayashi, eds.; Chuokeizai-Sha, Inc.; 2012) has been published. This book is a product of the GraSPP's study program "Business Development and Green Innovation" organized as part of the INPEX endowed course. The environment for energy has undergone a sea change. Using keywords such as "green" and "sustainability," this book presents a wide range of possibilities and prescriptions from the perspective of Japan which has a wealth of experience in tackling energy issues.

Editor's Postscript

The opening line of the essay written by Evans Maka from Ghana, quoting "When the deep calls unto the deep..." from Psalms 42:7 of the Old Testament made me realize that his life was built on the foundation of Christian teachings. As Prof. Koichi Hasegawa pointed out in his essay, students from more than 30 countries and regions are studying at the GraSPP. Naturally, their faiths, cultures and values are diverse. I always discover something new when I read an essay written by a student from a foreign country I have never visited. It is a pleasure to find that the editor's job comes with such a wonderful perk! (Editor)

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