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International Symposium

"Can Our Health Data Save Our Health and Society?"

Satoko Nishimura Sampo Japan Insurance Inc. (at the time of writing, a visiting fellow at GraSPP)

An international symposium entitled "Can Our Health Data Save Our Health and Society?" was held on September 18, 2013. The objective of the symposium was to consider how to integrate medical information and communication technology (ICT) into Japanese society through debate on the adoption of new technology.

Professor Isao Kamae of GraSPP made the point that, when considering healthcare-related evidence, it is important to strike a balance between individuals and their society as a decision makers, and to provide information in ways that suits the purpose.

Dr. Alexandre Barna of the Committee for Evaluation & Diffusion of Innovative Technologies (CEDIT), which is attached to the Assistance Publique-Hôpitaux de Paris, gave a presentation on organizational change and differences in technical evaluations carried out by national governments and leading medical institutions. He noted that information has a critical role in the prioritization of limited financial resources.

Mr. Kenichi Tanaka, Deputy Mayor of Kuwana City, Mie Prefecture spoke on the use of social and health insurance numbers in Germany and the coordination of healthcare, welfare, and nursing care in Kuwana City. He presented his views enthusiastically, describing the need not only for the establishment of physical resources, including a Japan-first project on the integration of public and private hospitals, but also "soft" factors such as information sharing and the building of face-to-face relationships between different professions.

Professor Jun Nakaya of the Tohoku University School of Medicine spoke about work on information sharing in Tohoku in relation to measures for preventing loss of medical information. In addition to the Tohoku medical information highway vision that is working toward nationwide deployment and the supply of standard medical packages developed in Japan, he also emphasized the importance of information sharing during routine (non-emergency) situations and presented ways of ensuring security and convenience.

Dr. Michiel Sprenger from the Dutch National ICT Institute for Healthcare (NICTIZ), which is working on a medical records database, spoke about the past, present, and future of healthcare databases in the Netherlands. For reasons of privacy, a voluntary system funded by beneficiaries is operated by a private provider. He described their aim of

beneficiaries is operated by a private provider. He described their aim of creating mechanisms with a high degree of added value, noting that while the system facilitates healthcare standardization and makes available records containing patient and disease-specific information, the issues that remain include information reuse, technical evaluation, and use for insurance reimbursements.

Professor Miwako Hosoda, Vice President of Seisa University, gave a presentation on the views expressed by people in an opinion survey, indicating that, while people recognize the importance of medical information, they find it difficult to manage it for themselves and would rather see it handled by the healthcare profession at government expense.

The discussion session included comments pointing out the advantages of these initiatives, which include the use of objective data to improve administration efficiency and harmonize opinions, while also acknowledging the bottlenecks posed by the need to protect personal information and cover costs, and on the importance of measures that visibly improve convenience to the public.



The symposium was the last of a series of events for the course sponsored by Sampo Japan Insurance Inc. that ran over two periods totaling six years. I would like to take this opportunity to express my thanks to the many people who have helped with this symposium and other past sponsored activities.

Toshiro Nishizawa Professor



Commitment of a "Geta-Wearing" Professor

It is three months since I took up my appointment at GraSPP this July. About 30 years ago when I was still wondering whether I should follow an academic career, I decided ultimately to work in the public sector. While there have been times when I worked with academic researchers or had opportunities to take up part-time teaching roles, the way that things have turned out to include my working as a professor is not an outcome I expected. GraSPP is a microcosm of international society, with students from 30 different countries and regions, and I feel blessed by this life among young people where, while there are times when I take the lead, I often find that I am the one doing the learning.

Working at a government financial institution, I have been responsible for aspects of public policy. During that time I have had opportunities to work at a number of different institutions, including an assignment at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and also staff positions at the International Monetary Fund and World Bank. While they were very fulfilling times, there was also no shortage of times that I regret or that made me cringe. Now that I have taken up a university post, I feel a desire to utilize this experience to give something back to society. As well as the knowledge and wisdom gained from professional experience, I also want to pass on the personal networks I have maintained with the various people I have worked alongside.

GraSPP is full of students who, regardless of nationality, are energetic, imaginative, and highly motivated. That is why, although it is a rather ambitious approach, I risk presenting my students with topics of considerable scope. The problems I have chosen for this term are Paradigm Change for Asia's Emerging Economies and Lessons from History and Future Implications of Sovereign Defaults. For the next term, I want to take another look at Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) for the provision of economic and social infrastructure.

I call myself the "geta-wearing" professor. I mean this in the sense that, although I have professional experience, I have been given this chance to walk in "jacked-up wooden clogs" or "geta" despite my lack of the academic background appropriate to a professor. On the other hand, you can turn this around and look at it in the sense that, even if I do say so myself, it is not until you put on those wooden clogs to leave the place that you can really understand, and that I therefore have a chance to do some important work. "It ain't over till the fat lady sings!" While 30 years have passed since I first joined the workforce, I want to take on this new portfolio of work and produce results that contribute to the public good. With a determination not to be shown up by the young people of GraSPP, I have secretly resolved to conduct myself with a youthful sense of commitment.

Fukushima and Honest "I"

Gaye Kim Campus Asia Program

Prior to coming here, I have once visited Japan around late February and early March of 2011. After my pleasant trip to Tokyo, Kyoto and Osaka, I left Japan on March 10th with the hope of returning back someday. It was the day before the devastating earthquake and tsunami stormed the country and left a permanent mark in Japan's history. Back in Korea, I watched in disbelief at the seven o'clock news as huge tidal waves engulfed the coastal areas of Fukushima prefecture, recklessly and relentlessly destroying homes, buildings, sweeping away cars and trucks, as debris were washed away on the shore of nothingness. I felt sympathy for the Japanese people, especially those affected by the earthquake, who were in agony and distraught by the aftermath of the disaster. Soon after, news reports on the power plant breakdown and radiation leakage bombarded headlines, and a feeling of terror lingered for the future of the people's wellbeing and safety in the region. Korea's media began to expose Japanese government's inadequate response to the nuclear emergency, its futile attempt to stop the leakage, and the detection of high level of nuclear activity in the surrounding waters.

I didn't think I'd be back in Japan two years after my first visit to Japan,

during which Korea - Japan relations was in predicament as tension heightened because of historical and territorial conflicts. Coming here, I was warned by many of the danger of being over exposed to nuclear radiation and was told to be careful when consuming possibly "contaminated" food produced in Fukushima. Much discussion was held on the decline of Japan and the crises Japan is now facing. Still, I find Japan to be a fascinating and admirable nation at the forefront of development in Asia. My determination to know Japan did not stop me from applying Campus Asia Program, hence my decision to attend the Fukushima trip during the Campus Asia Summer School, after much hesitation and consultation with the students and staff members who organized it.

Many people, including myself, thought Fukushima to be an inhabitable, a radioactive wasteland. This was not true as we saw children running around, people riding their bicycles and cars driving past like any ordinary town in Japan. Yet, the city was undergoing recuperation after the disaster as houses were being reconstructed. As we toured around the city in the bus, we witnessed much of the land along the coastline washed away by the tsunami. A 4km circumference was drawn from the inactive Daiichi power plant as a restricted area, the nearest distance we were able to reach was 4-5km away from the power plant. We also visited a farm where an environmental activist kept several contaminated cows in a fenced farm to oppose slaughtering of innocent animals. Later, we interviewed inhabitants of Minami-soma city who told us of their experience during the event, and how they managed to pick up from what was left and coped with the challenges ahead. I was moved by their stories and admired their courage for remaining in the city despite the risks and dangers.

The Fukushima trip triggered quite a few thoughts and emotions. As a Korean, I felt sorry for the people of Fukushima because of the



Author is on the left.



Yujiro Suzuki
MPP/IP, 2nd Year

Student Interview

No. 15

Shu Wada

2013 graduate of Public Management Division



— You two have returned to Japan after taking double degrees overseas, from the Institut d'Etudes Politiques de Paris (Sciences Po) in Suzuki-san's case, and from the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy (LKYSPP) in Singapore in Wada-san's case.

Suzuki(S): While studying European economic cooperation when I was at the Department of Economics at Keio University, I found that the more deeply I got into the subject the more I wanted to study it more broadly, including not only economics but also other fields such as politics and law. (This was one of my reasons for coming to GraSPP.) This was my fourth time studying overseas, and as my previous stints were in America and the UK, I chose this time a non-English speaking country.

Wada(W): I specialized in international law at Waseda University School of Law, and I was interested in security in the Asia-Pacific region that was inspired by attending a seminar by a professor from the Graduate School of Asia-Pacific Studies. Likewise, while taking courses on international law and a course on Japanese foreign policy in Southeast Asia at GraSPP, I felt a desire to discuss international political issues such as ensuring human rights and maritime security in South China Sea and East China Sea in the context of international law, with students from all over the world, including those of Southeast Asian countries.

S: During the course my capstone project was very memorable. The project was undertaken for the OECD and involved forming a team of one supervisor and around five students to conduct a survey of land use in OECD countries. It served as a pilot for a five-year OECD project. We chose to look at the Netherlands and the USA, two countries that are poles apart in terms of land use (the Netherlands being a leading nation while land use in the USA is less developed). We produced a detailed report of about 70 pages and submitted it to the OECD. Because the two countries have completely different approaches and governance systems, the report considered how the OECD should go about surveying the practices and characteristics of each nation and noted the importance of speaking to people as close to the coal face as possible. I worked on the US side of the project and found that simply making telephone or e-mail contact with the people I wanted to interview was a struggle in itself. Only about 10% of e-mails were answered and the response to telephone calls varied widely from agency to agency. I think GraSPP should expand its use of these capstone courses and projects. While they appear to cover the same sort of ground as case studies, familiarizing yourself with the know-how and processes and then applying them in practice is at the core of work in public policy. The more students get to be actively involved, the more they should gain from their courses.

W: We had a similar requirement at LKYSPP called a policy analysis exercise (PAE). This last April, we invited our clients to the presentation session on our policy recommendations derived from the one-year research. I was working with a double degree student from London School of Economics and Political Sciences, and the client was the India office of the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI), a human rights NGO of the Commonwealth. Although we sent e-mails to narrow down the topic of our research and request a field survey, there was no response for a month. Then, we asked our supervisor, Professor Kanti Bajpai to send them a reminder since he is from India and he knew the representative of CHRI in India. Subsequently, while conducting interviews about the relationships between Indian human rights NGOs and their government, CHRI's India office helped us a lot by introducing the contacts of people at international agencies, India's Ministry of

External Affairs, think tanks, and representatives of an alliance of human rights NGOs.

While the current human rights situation in India has been criticized by NGOs, India is proud of having contributed to the drafting of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenants on Human Rights. It also remains proud of being the nation in which Gandhi used nonviolent civil disobedience to win independence, and that expended considerable diplomatic effort on helping establish the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenants on Human Rights.

In the sense that it is effectively an authoritarian state, Singapore is not a nation that shouts "long live democracy!". Nevertheless, it has a sense of balance that combines quick decision-making with opportunities for dialogue with citizens. Although Singapore does not need nuclear power, there is a debate in progress on the subject. This is motivated by fears that neighbors who are proceeding with nuclear power developments, such as Malaysia, Indonesia, and Vietnam, will establish technological superiority. Another factor is that, as a nation that thrives on conference diplomacy, Singapore likes to feel it should take the initiative in holding conferences on nuclear power development.

— How did you feel about the food in France and Singapore?

W: Indian restaurants in Singapore are considered somewhat inauthentic by Indians who can't imagine such dishes as seafood pratha. When I was taken out to a meal of pratha in New Delhi with an Indian friend from LKYSPP, I was told, "this is the real thing".

S: In France, they have an idiosyncratic definition of what constitutes a low-tax basic food, with bread, cheese, and wine considered essentials that attract a low tax rate while meat and fish are luxuries that are taxed at a higher rate. I conducted an experiment with friends to see how much you need to spend to get good-quality wine. The conclusion was 8 euros. You can get some particularly good wine for 20 euros. Japanese sake is highly regarded in France. There was also a time when the shopkeeper at an upmarket liquor store in France spoke to me enthusiastically about the excellence of Japanese single malts. I also heard about a high-class French restaurant that offers jelly for cheese dip and use Japanese whiskey in the jelly.

— Have you both found employment?

W: I will work at the Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO). It is a perfect fit with my desire both to work in Japan and to work at an international environment. Although the person who interviewed me at JETRO was very tired, he listened attentively to what I had said. While I had been tired of five round trips between Singapore and Japan in 20 days, meeting with very attractive professionals cheered me up. I want to work for the society while understanding my role there, and I was looking for my future boss who has similar ambitions. JETRO was the place where I believe that would be the case.

S: I have a job at the Bank of Japan. The main reasons for my choice were the interest I have developed in policy making, the strong possibility that being at the Bank of Japan will help me fulfill my aim of working for an international agency if the opportunity arises, and because of the clear vision they expressed on internationalization. When I asked some prospective corporate employers what they meant by internationalization, all I got were formulaic or vague replies. People were also a factor for me in my choice of employer. My feeling was that, because you can't know which organization will suit you until you actually work there, the best thing is to choose based on their people.

(Interview and text by editor)

Continued from Page 2

exaggerated interpretation and biased attitude portrayed by Korean media. It is very unfortunate to see that that point of contention lies on the guesstimate of the radiation level as both sides pounce at each other based on each subjective interpretation. It may be the case that the Japanese have a low estimate and the Koreans have a high estimate of the nuclear radiation. Thus, the real issue here isn't which argument on the level of nuclear radiation is more compelling. It is more important to realize how policy makers introduce preventive measures to resolve the crisis, and how the international committee should work together to build trust. Instead of shunning the truth, Korean and Japanese people need to have a broader understanding of the problem, and to acknowledge both sides of the argument. On the other hand, I would also like to ask my Japanese friends. If it were the alternative scenario, in

which it was Korea, not Japan, that suffered the great disaster, would the situation have been any more different? Would Japan have warned its people of visiting certain locations in Korea and imposed trade sanctions on certain importing goods from Korea?

Suffice it to say, my concern for the future of Fukushima, Japan and the region remains, and truth be told, I am still not quite convinced by the Japanese government that everything is safe and under control. This is what I choose to believe for my own comfort, not based on nationality or representation. I continue to tell my family and friends in Korea that the situation is not bad and they should come to this wonderful country. It is my sincere hope that both Korea and Japan, along with China, continue to foster good relations for future peace and prosperity in the region. I am grateful to my lovely Japanese friends and staff members at GrasPP for planning an unforgettable trip to Fukushima.

Pre-Graduation Ceremony and Reception

@Kojima Hall and Capo PELLICANO Hongo, August 1, 2013



Topical News

- The Master of Public Policy, International Program (MPP/IP) now has its own web page. The page contains comprehensive information, including information about entrance examinations and scholarship programs as well as curriculum and other program details. It also includes a video summarizing the benefits of the MPP/IP. As news about entrance examinations and events is updated regularly, we urge you to visit the site.
- <http://www.pp.u-tokyo.ac.jp/en/mppip/>

Kotoko Ogawa Program Manager, International Affairs Office



Editor's Postscript

There is always a pleasant surprise in the student interviews and articles contributed by students. Of particular interest in the latest batch has been the different perspective in Japan and overseas on nuclear power (and accidents). While there was much that I was forced to leave out due to lack of space, the conversations I had with students and information in the articles help me acquire a layered and multifaceted perspective. (Editor)

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