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Ritsumeikan University Research Report

[ Special Feature ]

A Declining Birthrate and an Aging Population

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A Declining Birthrate and an Aging Population

Japan’s population is expected to decrease by about two-thirds within 50 years.

According to the Japanese National Institute of Population and Social Security Research, in 2048—just 32 years’ time—Japan’s population is projected to fall below 100 million people; while over the next 50 years, the nation will lose one third of its population. The productive age population (between 15 and 64 years old) will continue to decrease. In 2060, one out of every 2.5 people will be 65 years old or older.

In view of such drastic changes in Japan’s population structure in years to come, Ritsumeikan researchers are studying the issue from a variety of approaches and offering solutions and a bright future.
Interactive Art That Greatly Changes the Image of Nursing Care

**STORY #1**

**Wheelchair DJ**

The wheelchair DJ is a device that uses a low-cost computer and various sensors to play interactive music and illuminations. The device is designed to be used in welfare facilities, such as nursing homes, to entertain and engage the residents.

**Shigenori Mochizuki**

Mochizuki is a professor at Ritsumeikan University and specializes in interactive art that uses technology to improve the lives of elderly people. His work focuses on creating devices that can be used in everyday life to make the elderly feel happy and engaged.

**Interactive doll, Teletech**

This interactive doll is a tool that makes a sound when it is touched, held hands, or used in a circle. It encourages children to hold hands, form a circle, and dance together.

**Music Post**

Music Post is a device that simulates nostalgic music and houses a black rotary phone. It is designed to increase opportunities for residents to communicate and engage with family and friends.

**Interactive doll, Telechan**

Telechan is a doll that makes a sound when it is touched or used in a circle. It encourages children to hold hands, form a circle, and dance together. The interactive doll also induces actions that encourage social development.

**Interactive DJ**

Interactive DJ brings new value to welfare equipment. It is a device that uses interactive media to create interactive art, making use of computers and other technology.

**Interactive phone box**

The interactive phone box is a device that is built on a black desktop telephone which is not connected to the phone line. It is controlled by a built-in minicomputer and can stimulate incoming and outgoing calls. It is designed to increase opportunities for residents to communicate and engage with family and friends.

**Interactive media**

Interactive media is used to create interactive art, allowing for the creation of new values that were previously considered outside the scope of welfare equipment. These values include "pleasure" and "fun" for welfare equipment.

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Every Citizen Becomes a Caregiver
Who Takes the Main Responsibility Depends on Each Country

"Who will be responsible for nursing in an aged society in ten or twenty years’ time?" asks Yoko Otsuka. "Without even mentioning such a future, taking care of elderly people is a challenge that all generations—including those in their teens and twenties—need to be facing right now."

According to Otsuka, the generation of children whose parents are in their 90s are now as old as their 60s or 70s. In the current situation, the burden of long-term care for elderly people extends to grandchildren or even great-grandchildren. At the same time, as illustrated by the increase in double-income families and of single people due to later marriage, lifestyles and family structures have become more diverse. This all means that the overwhelming shortage in the labor force for long-term care is an urgent issue. But as of yet, no radical solutions have been found.

Otsuka tries to approach these challenges through comparisons with other countries. Above all, focusing on the Scandinavian countries, which are known as advanced welfare states—in particular, Denmark—she has conducted international comparative studies from the perspective of gender.

Otsuka explains the current situation by saying, "In Denmark, where the welfare system for elderly people has been greatly improved, women and their families are not burdened with the responsibility of caring for the elderly on an institutional level."

In Denmark, where care for the elderly is separated from the role of families under the country’s national welfare policy, the people who bear the responsibility are professional care workers with appropriate knowledge of nursing and health, who are employed as regular public servants. This is vastly different from Japan, where caring for elderly people is considered to be a role for the family and where it has been accepted that women would traditionally be expected to take care of elderly family members through unpaid work.

"Although they are regular public servants, most care workers are female, both in Denmark and Japan," says Otsuka, whose interest has turned toward clarifying the role of women in the welfare state as a result of issues that have arisen with female nursing assistants in Denmark.

In addition to Denmark, Otsuka has also developed a keen interest in China, a country with a large population. "Although China has something in common with Japan in the sense that the core of care for elderly people is considered to be family, we can also see a unique aspect to China in the form of the large economic gap between its cities and rural areas, whereby many care workers are (qualified and unqualified) women coming to cities from rural areas."

Scandinavian nations are widely recognized by the general public as advanced welfare states. In fact, Denmark spent many years improving its care and welfare policies in a manner that cannot be compared with Japan or China, and appears to be making presently an insufficient understanding of the actual state of affairs in Scandinavia. For this very reason, in addition to studying policy, Otsuka visited welfare facilities for elderly people in Denmark in an effort to comprehend through actual fieldwork a reality that cannot be understood from policies alone.

Denmark is no exception in terms of the global slowdown in economic growth, with a shrinking budget for welfare policy. Under such circumstances, the number of specialist care workers, who should essentially be a stable profession of public servants, is being reduced. Otsuka’s fieldwork has revealed that this tendency is causing a new issue in that it is becoming more difficult to promote a form of independence in care receivers. As a result of the reduced range of nursing services and time, care for elderly people whose level of independence does not go as planned is increasingly being pushed back onto families.

Providing detailed accounts of the reality as well as policy, Otsuka’s studies shed new light on an aspect that is hidden beneath the image of an advanced welfare state.

Furthermore, Otsuka continues by saying, "The issue of care for elderly people in Japan and in Denmark cannot now be understood from a one-dimensional viewpoint." One example of this is the issues arising from the feminization of the welfare society, whereby not only caregivers but also care receivers are overwhelmingly female. Therefore, we cannot overlook the fact that the role of caring for elderly people, which has traditionally been assumed by female family-members, is now falling upon men who are in the prime of their working lives.

Otsuka concludes that "while the viewpoint of gender was of great use in discussing the socialization of care in the early stages, I now want to understand the reality of care for elderly people from a range of perspectives."
Men, working people, parents, and teenagers: the shape of nursing has certainly diversified.

Supporting the 1.3 Million “Caremen”

Male caregivers are now recognized widely enough that the Japanese-English phrase, “Caremen” has been coined to describe them. There are now about 1.3 million male caregivers in total—in fact, one in three caregivers is now male. However, as recently as ten years ago, the presence of male caregivers attracted attention. A case in which a son nursing his mother who was suffering from a cognitive impairment went on to murder her in Kyoto in 2005 was widely covered in the media.

At that time, Mao Saito was already paying attention to male caregivers who were not socially or academically inclined and who attracted scant attention, and tried to elucidate issues they had through fact-finding surveys. “Conventional surveys at the time assumed that most caregivers were women, and as a result didn’t engage with the challenges faced by male caregivers.” Under such circumstances, Saito adjusted the questions in her survey, thus revealing the challenges faced by male caregivers—for example, difficulties in relation to chores such as “I can’t cook,” and “I don’t know how to use detergent,” as well as an overall lack of experience with nursing issues.

Further, Saito found that “Male caregivers generally don’t ask for help and tend to keep problems to themselves. It was also discovered that they have a strong sense of responsibility and perhaps do their very best—almost too much, in fact.” In addition to a sense of values that prevents them from expressing family issues or making complaints in the workplace, quite a few male caregivers suffer from trying to do things at home to the same level of perfection as they aim for in their salaried employment.

“As opposed to salaried work, nursing is not evaluated by someone else, and ultimately, it progresses toward ‘attending to a person on their deathbed.’ The important point is not to overdo things, but many male caregivers cannot do this. The murder case mentioned above is a tragedy caused by these challenges which are particular to males.” Although male caregivers face certain problems and challenges, they cannot open their hearts, and thus arrive at a dead end. Weak human relations aside from those with co-workers tend to promote this. As a measure to provide assistance to counter the challenges revealed through her surveys, Saito took on the challenge of establishing a “place to be,” where male caregivers can get together and support each other. This resulted in the establishment of the “National Network for Male Caregivers and Supporters,” which holds regular meetings at which male caregivers can exchange information and share problems. To date, almost 100 meetings have been held across Japan.

About ten years have passed since the issues of male nursing first became conspicuous, and with the ever-growing number of male caregivers, Saito’s interest in making salaried employment more compatible with nursing has increased. “The number of working caregivers is already as many as about 2.91 million people. According to a survey of companies in Kyoto that I conducted, I anticipate that in five or ten years’ time, one out of every two working people will be involved in nursing to some extent.” It is not easy to make nursing compatible with salaried employment. In fact, the number of people who leave their jobs to be involved in nursing care has reached about 100,000 people per year. Saito warns that when men decide to leave their salaried jobs, they are not only exposing themselves to economic difficulties, they are also losing a place to be or a refuge outside their families, with the result that they are pushed into a mentally tight spot. She emphasizes that “mechanisms to facilitate nursing while in salaried employment are essential.” In reality, though, neither systems nor policies to support caregivers have been established. The utilization of family-care leave systems has a huge difference from childbirth and child-rearing leave systems. Saito’s work is aimed at issues unique to nursing whereby, when confronted with challenges that are not child-rearing, it is difficult to see into the future.”

At the same time, looking at the rest of the world, there are many places (drop-in centers) that are permanently available as “places to be,” where caregivers can casually drop by any time, as opposed to the “meetings” on offer in Japan. Saito says, “While you cannot participate in meetings unless you have time, it is very important to establish places where caregivers from different backgrounds can casually drop in and receive support.”

Also on the increase is not only the number of male caregivers but also that of young caregivers in their teens and twenties, as the scale of families continues to shrink, due to declining birthrates in contrast with the aging of society. Furthermore, the form of nursing has become more diverse, as illustrated by the presence of double caregivers who nurse multiple persons alone or who provide care while also bringing up children. “As you can see from the Long-Term Care Insurance system, most of the support systems in Japan are focused on those who are in need of care. However, there is a real need for systems and services to independently support a wide range of caregivers from care to child-rearing and nursing,” Saito points out.

What issues do diverse caregivers have and what support do they need? With many things requiring clarification, Saito’s research is becoming more and more vital to the improvement of caregiver support.
C urrently, the average life expectancy in Japan is more than 80 years old for both men and women. However, there is a gap of about 10 years between this average life expectancy and one’s health span—the period a person can live their daily life without any health issues—which means that in reality many people will require care for a number of years.

Specializing in epidemiology and public health issues and with a background of studying diseases from the viewpoint of society, Takehito Hayakawa thinks that in order to prevent the elderly from requiring long-term care or becoming bed-ridden, we need to use an approach that takes into account both the environment and society surrounding the elderly, rather than simply having clinicians deal with them. “Statistically, the causes of elderly people requiring care include cerebrovascular disease, asthenia due to old age, and cognitive impairments, as well as falls, fractures, and joint impairments. In particular, the prevention of falls, fractures, and joint impairments can be initiated by anyone at any time,” Hayakawa says. In fact, 45% of people certified to receive Long-Term Care Insurance have comparatively mild requirements such as Requiring support or Requiring long-term Care 1, and reducing the numbers of such people can help reduce Long-Term Care Insurance costs.

For this reason, in 2016, Hayakawa launched the Social Studies of Health and Community Project—an interdisciplinary project involving professors of Ritsumeikan University’s College of Social Sciences and the College of Comprehensive Psychology—and initiated a study aimed at preventing people from becoming bed-ridden or requiring long-term care.

Hat Hayakawa particularly emphasizes is “Community Life Support.” With the goal of “Community health support,” he has spent three years spreading exercise programs aimed at improving the health of citizens in Fukushima Prefecture. It is commonly known that exercise is very effective for preventing lifestyle-related illnesses and promoting other health improvements. In the program, groups range from five to more than ten participants get together about once a week for at least three months and exercise at levels that are effective for improving motor functions. Hayakawa explains that “even if your body functions have deteriorated due to old age, you can still do physical exercise that is sufficient to improve your health such that you can avoid requiring long-term care.”

Initiatives where people get together and exercise for health purposes are quite common, but the key to this program is that the citizens play a central role. As Hayakawa explains, “What is important is that not the government or professional instructors assume the leadership, but that the actual citizens themselves assume health improvement as their own issue and tackle it themselves with an awareness of protecting their health.” So that citizens will want to do it, he suggests that rather than positioning exercise as the main goal, it should be done in conjunction with other events such as enjoying tea or coffee or for entertainment. Even if it is for health issues, when people participate out of a sense of obligation, they tend to give up. But if it’s fun like meeting friends or chatting, they will start to participate in such programs of their own volition. The initiative started in a neighborhood association in Fukushima City with about 20 participants. Now, it has spread to 16 neighborhood associations and more than 30 groups that operate voluntarily across the city. This truly demonstrates the fact that community life support conducted with an awareness that one should protect one’s health, in addition to promoting the idea that not only the government but also citizens should feel a sense of crisis that their health is their own matter, will lead to an overall health improvement for all citizens.

Hayakawa is now working on a data health plan which involves using medical and health data held by individual municipalities to help extend the health span in Japan. By identifying the health issues and characteristics of a community as evidenced by the data of individual municipalities, he is able to present a model for improving the health of many people through community life support. Hayakawa goes on to express his commitment by saying, “In this way, I aim to verify the very reason for the existence of community health sociology.”

In Fukushima City alone, the program has spread to 16 neighborhoods, more than 30 groups, and even 150 participants on a voluntary basis.

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Using “Community Life Support” to spread citizen-driven health promotion activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Diseases considered to be the cause of requiring support given by doctors (At-home care support)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Diseases</td>
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<tr>
<td>Osteoporosis</td>
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<td>Dementia</td>
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<td>Impairment</td>
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<td>Falls and Fractures</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cerebrovascular</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asthenia Due to Old Age</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parkinson’s Disease</td>
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Ratio of persons qualifying for Long-Term Care

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requiring support</th>
<th>Requiring long-term Care 1</th>
<th>Requiring long-term Care 2</th>
<th>Requiring long-term Care 3</th>
<th>Requiring long-term Care 4</th>
<th>Requiring long-term Care 5</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>140.4</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>95.2</td>
<td>72.4</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>60.9</td>
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The Voice of the Citizens Helping to Facilitate Medical Services in Japan

I

t has been several years since Japan has been known as the nation with the highest rate of population aging in the world. However, as Megumi Kojima, Associate Professor in Management, explains, “Japan’s medical services in its current state, may not be able to accommodate the entire country as the world’s number one aging society.” In 2025, about eight million people from the baby-boomer generation will be 75 years or older. With further increases in Japan’s elderly population anticipated, an integrated community care system has recently been emphasized as a mechanism to support the welfare of the elderly. Such a system would allow the elderly who require higher levels of Long-term Care to live within a familiar community through collaboration between community-based medical and welfare organizations and the community to provide housing, medical services, preventive and emergency cars, and living support in an integrated environment.

For multiple organizations to work together in an effective manner, a highly transparent management and collaboration of information are of utmost importance. “However, in Japan, neither the public sector nor nonprofit organizations sufficiently disclose their management details and structure, so transparency in terms of actual management is not very likely,” says Megumi. In order to provide us with an idea on the management of medical and welfare organizations necessary to promote an integrated community care moving forward, she cites the U.K. as a prime example.

In the midst of an economic slump in the 1980s, the U.K. adopted the concept of introducing the management methods employed in private companies into the public sector and local communities. This enabled such organizations to move away from a bureaucratic management system and implement a more flexible management approach while maintaining transparency. This method, called New Public Management (NPM), greatly helped to improve efficiency in the management of medical institutes and improved the quality and service of healthcare within limited budget constraints. In Japan, NPM began its implementation from the 1990s onwards, but the number of academic research projects clarifying the results in a visible manner has been severely limited. In Japan, NPM also brought improved patient satisfaction.

Similar to the U.K., promoting integrated community care and improving the quality of care and medicine necessitates a mechanism to receive feedback from residents as the recipients of such services. In reality though, in Japan, most of those involved in such organizations comprise members of medicine and care management agencies, and it is hard to say whether a mechanism to enable the local community to participate has been properly organized.

Under such circumstances, Megumi launched an advanced initiative to allow member of the community to participate in hospital management. Working with a local hospital, she has spearheaded a project in Japan for the first time to incorporate the opinions of residents into the hospital management based on a five-year plan that runs through to 2020. As a first step mainly involving students from Ritsumeikan University, a survey for residents was conducted at a shopping mall in the city of Sanda in July 2016 to collect information on the physical and mental health conditions of the residents and their needs pertaining to hospitals. Noting that a detailed report will depend on the analysis of its results, Megumi explained the achievement as follows:

“What we can infer from certain ideas from this survey is that in reality, while both patients and their families have a number of requests that they would like to make to hospitals and doctors, they actually hesitate to express them to the right channels where steps can be taken to accommodate them. At the same time, it turns out that there really exists a wider range of needs from hospitals than we had anticipated.”

Moving forward, Megumi analyzes the survey results and is considering mechanisms to reflect them in hospital management. She voices her expectations by saying that “many of those in hospitals still have a sense of resistance against outsiders such as us intervening in the management. There are many obstacles to clear, but this will probably become an interesting first attempt.”
### Considering the Cost-effectiveness in Health and Medicine

Do we have an adequate understanding of whether the medical costs incurred in the treatment of a disease or injury have enough benefits based on value for money? In Japan, the ‘cost-effectiveness’ in health and medicine had never been clearly discussed up until a few years ago, says Hideki Murasawa. “As if it were an established theory, it has been said that the aging population has led to an increase in medical budgets, casting a shadow over the national finances. But according to the results of an analysis of causes of the increase in medical budgets disclosed at a council, while the effect of the aging population is 1.2%, other causes account for 2.7%—about twice the contribution of population aging.” Murasawa adds that among these “other causes,” the most influential is considered to be “advances in health technology.”

“It is an unmistakable truth that medical budgets are increasing year on year, but looking at the causes, our countermeasures are off the mark. We cannot stop the aging of society, but by reviewing our allocation of limited medical resources, we may be able to slow the increase in medical budgets. To maintain the Japanese medical system while retaining fairness, incorporating advanced medical technology and maintaining a high-quality standard of medicine, all we can really do is to increase the ‘efficiency of medicine.’” Murasawa currently specializes in health economics, but he has had a unique career. Originally, he planned on a career as a molecular biologist conducting basic genetic and cellular research. He then worked for the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare for more than ten years and held various posts, including a stint in a division involved with the extension of health life expectancy. He also expanded his insights for epidemiology and public health in 2015, by participating in a large-scale epidemiological survey conducted by Hokkaido University aimed at understanding the health condition of citizens. These diverse experiences comprise a real strength that makes the uniqueness of his research conspicuous. Murasawa is very enthusiastic about his mission, saying he aims to “take advantage of my knowledge cultivated in diverse domains from molecular biology to public health, epidemiology and health economics.” And to achieve this goal, it is essential to ascertain the current status based on objective data. One of such study examines the “cost-effectiveness in health and medicine”—something that has not been studied in great depth in Japan.

Furthermore, Murasawa is also concerned with the relationship between the declining birthrate and female health. It is forecasted that while the percentage of the population aged 65 years or older will reach about 40% in 2060, the percentage of the population who are younger than 65 years old will drop from the current 74% to 60% in Japan. In particular, the health of women who give birth is considered to have a serious impact on the declining birth rate and interest in female health has been increasing nation-wide, as illustrated by establishment of Women’s Health promotion office, within the Health Service Bureau of the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare in 2015 to promote women’s health.

Murasawa pays particular attention to the relationship between labor and the health of women engaged in healthcare services such as health care facilities. “Overseas, a number of research results have been reported, showing that the labor environments of female medical practitioners tend to increase the risk of miscarriage or premature birth. There are lives that, although they are conceived in the womb, cannot be born. Before worrying about the declining birthrate, such unreasonable things should be solved first, right?” Murasawa is now preparing to conduct a survey of this issue, which has rarely been studied in Japan to date. “Compared to men, women see great changes in the weight of QOL at individual life stages. We need to know about these changes,” Murasawa says. He wants to contribute to countermeasures against the declining birthrate by evaluating health conditions in which giving birth to and raising children is easier from the viewpoint of QOL, while helping to extend health span as a result of the evaluation of the health-related QOL of women—whose average life expectancy is longer than that of men. With multiple perspectives learned from epidemiology and health economics, his viewpoint will play ever more important roles in the future.

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**ICER**

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\text{Incremental Cost-effectiveness Ratio (ICER)} = \frac{\text{Incremental costs}}{\text{Incremental effectiveness}} = \frac{\text{Cost}_B - \text{Cost}_A}{\text{QALY}_B - \text{QALY}_A} = \text{Cost per 1 QALY}
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**QALY**

Quality Adjusted Life Years

Quality Adjusted Life Years (QALY) is a method used in health economics to compare different medical treatments or interventions. It takes into account both the quantity and quality of life gained from a particular treatment.

- **Utility value**: For QOL, the time value is used. *Taking both life years and quality of life (QOL) into consideration.*
- **QALY**: the utility value with 1 as perfect health and 0 as death is used.
- **Cost per 1 QALY**: difference between the declining birthrate and female health.

A Smart Way of Working That Focuses on Flow

Swedish society has adopted an idea that originated in Japan to establish a smart way of working,” says Ryusuke Kosuge. “But now is the time for Japan to learn from this Swedish initiative.”

Japan is confronted with many challenges in the form of its declining birthrate and aging population, as well as a decrease in the number of working people to support the economy. While a variety of reforms have been proposed to get more women and the elderly into the workforce as well as to promote work-life balance, resources. In particular, Sweden has been a model. And more and more healthcare providers are adopting the “flow” concept to address it by improving the flow from admission to the receipt of a diagnosis was reduced from 42 days to two hours: the process of creating a better flow.

Creating a flow of value involves changing our basic way of working. In particular, emphasis needs to be put on ensuring quality. Through visualizing information regarding the current status of processes, problem solving as a team is facilitated. With the goal of perfecting

One reason for the penetration of the “lean” concept in Sweden has been the visual way to make it clear. Whether in a factory (top) or a TV station (bottom), information regarding the current status of processes is “visualized” on whiteboards to facilitate problem solving and improvement activities. Originating in Japan, the concept of “lean” has now become a Swedish standard.

Ryusuke Kosuge
Associate Professor, Graduate School of Management
Ritsumeikan University
Subject of Research: Development of a customer experience-based organization
Research Keywords: Service management, marketing, customer experience
Envisioning a Japanese Multicultural Society, the United States.

Embracing more than two million foreign residents, how does Japan portray its multiculturalism?

With a declining birthrate, an aging population, and rapid globalization, the acceptance of overseas workers as a means to solve Japan’s labor shortage are now commonly argued. While the Japanese government has unveiled a slogan, “Dynamic Engagement of All Citizens,” it is estimated that Japan will need to accept 200,000 immigrants per year to maintain its current labor force and social security system.

With such concerns, Fuminori Minamikawa asserts, “The urgent issue faced by Japan is no longer whether we should accept immigrants or not.” Japan is not an unconditionally attractive destination for immigrants now. He insists, “Before discussing new immigration, we should recognize that Japan is already a multicultural society where more than two million foreigners live. Respecting cultural diversity and incorporating the minorities as full members of society are required for the multicultural society.” And he adds, “This may appear to make a detour, but the vision of an inclusive society that consists of diverse people will be a fundamental condition for future Japan in the face of a declining birthrate with an aging population.”

Taking as his research subject the United States of America, which constitutes a nation of immigrants, Minamikawa has pondered changes in Japanese American society and the ways in which multiracial communities have been created. Considering the future of Japan, he says, “Going forward, faced with a declining birthrate and aging population, the Japanese vision will have to confront the question of how to create a multicultural society where diverse people of different nationalities and cultures live in harmony. Based on the historical experience of the United States, I want to propose what a multicultural and inclusive society in Japan should be like.”

Currently, Minamikawa is undertaking an analysis of multiculturalism in the United States. According to Minamikawa, the term “multiculturalism” spread to advanced countries after it was adopted as an official policy in Canada and Australia in the 1970s. In Japan, it was introduced in the 1990s as a new social vision, and its potential has regularly been discussed. However, in recent years, increasing pessimism to integration of immigrants and refugees in Western countries, frequent terrorist attacks involving non-European immigrants, and the growth of extreme right-wing groups have highlighted the “failures” and “decline” of multiculturalism.

The United States is no exception. The idea of multiculturalism has been criticized as something that is not compatible with the conventional wisdom of the United States respecting individualism. Minamikawa, on the other hand, paid attention to the fact that the concept of multiculturalism in the U.S. has one of its origins in grass-roots social movements in local communities that have long struggled with racism. Such an idea has been reflected in policies and movements aimed at eliminating racial discrimination.

One of these is the affirmative action (AA) policy. Minamikawa says, “AA—taking race, gender and other attributes into consideration at the time of university entrance and employment—was based on a vision of society to attack historically accumulated inequality and include all groups on an equal basis.”

History education is also an important domain in the multiculturalism. Multicultural education redefined the “American history” by learning about minority cultures as parts of American culture. According to Minamikawa, “Such initiatives emerged and spread through trials and errors to overcome the racism deeply rooted in American society.” As America continues to accept new immigrants now, multiculturalism should be re-evaluated as a means to describe a future America in which diversity is expanding, not just as a means to compensate for loss made by the past racism.

What do such studies of American multiculturalism suggest for contemporary Japan? While Minamikawa recognizes the differences between the Japanese and the American views of nation, he says that the American experience can share some substantial views with us. The American image of a multicultural society is built on its historical experience in which majority and minority groups involved. Minamikawa says, “What is important for envisioning multicultural Japan is that without reflective analysis of how Japan has defined its people and foreigners, it is impossible to devise the ways to re-define its multiculturalism to come.” To achieve this goal, it is essential to confront racism. In fact, Koreatowns across Japan that have fought against discrimination and xenophobia have been inventing the most advanced form of Japanese multiculturalism at present. Minamikawa also emphasizes, “A society which is inclusive of multiple cultures is a crucial condition to create a truly inclusive one for all members which fights against any kind of exclusion.” Minamikawa’s study takes into consideration the construction of a Japanese version of an inclusive multiculturalism that opens to people of different backgrounds, such as nationality, race, culture, gender, and age. The effort to tackle declining birthrate and aging population concurrently seeks such an inclusive Japanese society.

Mural art at the Wilshire/Western Station on the Los Angeles subway. This work by visual artist Richard Wyatt, and its title, People Coming/People Going, not only indicates the characteristics of a subway station as a place but also symbolizes the past and future of diversity in American society.

Fuminori Minamikawa
Professor, College of International Relations
Subject of Research: Historical Sociology of American Multiculturalism
Sociological Analysis of Nativism and Immigration Policies in the United States, Comparative Sociology of International Movement of Japanese
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RADIANT | Ritsumeikan University Research Report | November 2016 | Issue 4 | A Declining Birthrate and an Aging Population

Multicultural education redefined the “American history” by learning about minority cultures as parts of American culture. According to Minamikawa, “Such initiatives emerged and spread through trials and errors to overcome the racism deeply rooted in American society.” As America continues to accept new immigrants now, multiculturalism should be re-evaluated as a means to describe a future America in which diversity is expanding, not just as a means to compensate for loss made by the past racism.

What do such studies of American multiculturalism suggest for contemporary Japan? While Minamikawa recognizes the differences between the Japanese and the American views of nation, he says that the American experience can share some substantial views with us. The American image of a multicultural society is built on its historical experience in which majority and minority groups involved. Minamikawa says, “What is important for envisioning multicultural Japan is that without reflective analysis of how Japan has defined its people and foreigners, it is impossible to devise the ways to re-define its multiculturalism to come.” To achieve this goal, it is essential to confront racism. In fact, Koreatowns across Japan that have fought against discrimination and xenophobia are venues for inventing the most advanced form of Japanese multiculturalism at present. Minamikawa also emphasizes, “A society which is inclusive of multiple cultures is a crucial condition to create a truly inclusive one for all members which fights against any kind of exclusion.” Minamikawa’s study takes into consideration the construction of a Japanese version of an inclusive multiculturalism that opens to people of different backgrounds, such as nationality, race, culture, gender, and age. The effort to tackle declining birthrate and aging population concurrently seeks such an inclusive Japanese society.
What Do Thailand and Japan Have in Common, in Terms of Aging Populations?

**Thailand**
Korat Plateau in northeastern Thailand

**Japan**
Kohoku in Shiga Prefecture

A bus-ride of about 450 kilometers from Bangkok, Thailand. In August of 2016, Kyoto Kurokawa and some Ritsumeikan students visited the town of Korat in Thailand. In this, the third year of the project, Japanese and Thai students from the University and National Institute of Development Administration (NIDA) jointly visited individual villages and conducted surveys on issues pertaining to the community activities undertaken by groups of elderly citizens.

"An aging population is considered to be a challenge in Japan and other advanced countries, mainly in the West. It is not widely known that in developing countries, aging populations are also becoming a serious issue in rural areas." This cooperation with Thailand has a long history, and field surveys have been conducted with the assistance of NIDA since 1998 under the theme of revitalization of local economies. In recent years in Thai rural regions, population aging coupled with a population outflow has become a problem that cannot be overlooked. In northeastern Thailand, where Korukawa is involved, young people are leaving the area to go to Bangkok and other big cities looking for work, and the impact of this depopulation combined with the aging of the population has been rapid. Against this aging of the population, Korukawa is exploring methods to revitalize the local economies.

In particular, for three years, he has continued a unique study comparing northeastern Thailand with the North or Kohoku region (Takashima and Nagahama cities) in Shiga Prefecture, Japan. "As a result of the surveys, it turned out that both regions have many things in common," says Korukawa, explaining the reason for his selection of these subjects for the comparison. In addition to the fact that both are flatlands surrounded by mountains and rich in water, they also have things in common such as tourism, promotion, initiatives for community revitalization, and local specialties. Above all, the point that attracted Korukawa’s interest was that while both regions face similar serious issues in relation to their aging populations, they differ in their approaches to finding solutions. His hope is that “by comparing the two regions, we may be able to find hints or ideas to revitalize the local economies where society is aging in both Japan and Thailand.”

In Thailand, the investigation taking top priority for Korukawa is the “One Tambon One Product” (OTOP) movement—otherwise known as the one village one product movement. With government support, OTOP has long been conducted as a means of community revitalization. In recent times though, with the aging of the main participants in the activity, it has taken on an even more powerful meaning as a source of employment opportunities for the elderly. Because Thailand has no pension system like Japan, elderly citizens have to earn a living. They manufacture traditional crafts such as silk fabrics known as “Mudmee” and flower decorations, and jointly sell them to earn a profit. “There are many things to learn from this employment mechanism. For example, by placing a weaving machine in each home, the elderly can work at any time and for as long as they like.”

Thailand is also ahead of Japan in the use of vacant rooms available in farms in depopulating agricultural villages in an attempt to respond to the global trend for ecotourism catering to backpackers who want to experience agriculture. Korukawa points out that not only the government but also higher educational and research institutions such as universities and local laboratories are actively involved and are providing support.

"Above all, what really impresses me when I visit OTOP groups in various villages with the students is the fact that the elderly have great confidence in their work in a rewarding and lively manner,” Korukawa continues. Further, OTOP does not simply offer work; it also functions as a mechanism for enjoying recreational activities, contributing to society, and promoting health through mutual care. In Thailand, where there is no national pension system, the economic aspects of OTOP account. However, Japan has a national pension system that there are many hints and ideas for making a healthy life with a real reason for being.”

Continuing to work in a lively and rewarding way: a view of the ideal lives of elderly people in Thailand

A
t the same time, in Shiga Prefecture, Korukawa is interested in a successful case of revitalization. The traditional building of the Kurokabe Bank that once existed in Nagahama City, the previously struggling downtown area of the city was transformed into a tourist destination that now attracts two million visitors every year. This case of successful regional development mainly driven by the residents without depending on the government, attracted attention from Thailand, Korukawa notes, as well as across Japan.

“In modern Japan, where the labor force is shrinking and the failure of the national pension system is feared, the idea of living a comfortable retirement must inevitably change.” Korukawa points out. He finishes by expressing his determination:

“From now on, we need to explore a new form of elderly citizenship, in which even the elderly can work for a long time, through which they will contribute to society and have a reason for being. Through international studies, I want to present a new viewpoint on what an aging society should be.”
Thinking Beyond
Just Figures

A need for systems to provide support in sympathy with the feelings of people living in the present day

A declining birthrate is a grave problem for any society. To support the aging of society, we must increase the birthrate. With such statements, countermeasures to counteract the falling birthrate have been promoted on a nationwide scale. “But surely that equates to the reproduction control and management instituted by the government during World War II, when the slogan of ‘be fruitful and multiply’ was used to encourage childbirth?” Quite a number of researchers have posed this question. Hideki Yui and Kashimi Yoshida say that they also feel uncomfortable that reproduction and childbirth are being discussed in the context of countermeasures against the declining birthrate. They are trying to bring the challenges of the modern era to the fore through historical studies, while searching for solutions.

One of the themes Yui is currently tackling is a study on sterility. Looking back on historical perspectives, Yui has indicated that assisted reproductive technology such as artificial insemination and external fertilization have been influenced by the values and policies of individual societies. He says that “issues surrounding sterility treatments in the modern era are closely linked to policies aimed at countering the declining birthrate.”

It was 1989 when the total fertility rate dropped to 1.57 and the issue of a falling birthrate became conspicuous. Since then, a series of countermeasures to counteract the falling birthrate have been launched. In this context, the necessity of sterility treatment consultations and the provision of information were declared. “Only legally married couples are eligible to receive subsidies for sterility treatments conducted as a countermeasure against the falling birthrate. We cannot gloss over a situation where a helping hand is extended only to those subjects whom the government considers ideal,” Yui points out.

The aging of the ovum—currently regarded as a problem—has frequently been a topic of discussion with regard to countermeasures against the declining birthrate, because it is directly connected to sterility. In the 1970s, local municipalities led a campaign to prevent the birth of children with disabilities, called “The Campaign to prevent unhappy birth,” and some lawmakers attempted to enact an article to allow abortion of fetuses with disabilities under the Eugenic Protection Act. These movements faced harsh resistance from organizations of people with disabilities, and since that time, the government has ceased to openly discuss the prevention of births of disabled children. However, a close examination of policy-level discussions in relation to countermeasures against the falling birthrate shows that an increase in birth defects due to the aging of the ovum has secretly been regarded as an issue. “Such things illustrate the government’s ideal regarding the shape of parent-child relationships,” says Yui.

At the same time, Yoshida is interested in the problem of childcare after a birth. As part of this, she focuses on adoption arrangement systems and has presented an interesting study comparing the historical changes and current situation between the Japanese and American systems.

“In Japan, the number of special adoptions involving a child of less than six years old and a couple of 25 years or older remains about 500 to 600 every year, while some children are adopted by overseas adoptive parents, as they were never adopted in Japan. Most support 40,000 children in need of care are placed in institutions while very few are grown under foster family system,” says Yoshida to explain the current situation. The situation in the U.S. is in marked contrast to that in Japan. The focus is on an upbringing in a family rather than an institution, with the number of adoptions overwhelmingly larger than that of Japan. A diverse range of children are adopted, regardless of race, disability, or nationality. America aims for an adoption system that considers the well being of the birth parents, the children, and the adoptive parents, which also challenges related problems such as social oppression against women, exploitation, and discrimination.

Yoshida analyzes the reason for this as follows. “Historically speaking, Japan legalized abortion early on and restrained out-of-wedlock births. As a result, adoption arrangements to support expectant and nursing mothers and their infants were not institutionalized.” Yoshida considers that on the other hand, in the U.S., where resistance against abortion is strong from certain religious viewpoints, adoption and single parenthood have been established as options for women.

What Yoshida regards as a problem is that “Japanese social norms and legal systems exclude women marginalized in the society.” During the process leading to adoption, there is a mountain of problems such as biased sex education, abuse, violence, prostitution, and exploitation in the sex industry; and what we must address is how we can support girls and women. “In the process of abortion and use of the adoption system, it is difficult for women to make decisions independently and autonomously,” Yoshida says.

Yui notes, “Before thinking about the issue of numbers, we have to think about a society where children who have already been born can easily and comfortably lead a life and grow first of all.” Yui says, “We have to think about children in the framework of child warfare that includes women who can be in difficult situations due to pregnancy or childbirth.” As one, they say, “As researchers, our role is to focus on people living in the present day and look back on history to provide critical ideas.”
The Third-Phase R-GIRO Research Program

Formation of a Vital and Creative Response to Declining Birthrate

The founding philosophy of the Ritsumeikan Global Innovation Research Organization (R-GIRO) is the pursuit of an affluent and sustainable society. Ever since its foundation as a philosophy-driven organization in 2008, the organization has focused on the issues that need to be solved in order to form society in symbiosis with nature, and has conducted activities through education and research.

To date, based on its founding philosophy, R-GIRO has produced many research results. Recently though, Japan and many other advanced countries have been facing the harsh reality of declining birthrates and aging populations. It is a matter of great urgency for Japan to seriously confront the issues arising from this reality in terms of not only policy but also research.

Based on such a background, we started the third-phase R-GIRO research program consisting of five research centers (Research Centers I to V) in AY2016. Focusing on the concept of “formation of a vital and creative human society in response to declining birthrate and aging population,” the research themes developed around these centers will approach solutions to the two serious problems facing Japan and the world.

Research Centers

I

New technologies for climate-smart agriculture towards the 9 billion people era

Project Leader: Hikari Miura, Professor, College of Life Sciences

The goal of this project is to realize “sustainable agriculture” to provide food and nutrition in the time when the population hits nine billion people in 2050. With a core of research and development by plant scientists, microbiologists, and information scientists, integrated with researches in the liberal arts, social science, and global environmental science, this project aims to create a new academic basis to realize climate-smart agriculture.

II

Construction of trans-disciplinary human science for evidence-based human services

Project Leader: Yuki Yato, Professor, College of Comprehensive Psychology

We will conduct transdisciplinary research on issues faced by all the generations including infants, children, adolescents, adults, and elderly in the aging society with fewer children, from the perspective of behavioral development, neuroscience, normative psychology, and sociology of local community. In this new science essential for realizing evidence-based human services (intervention in children with developmental disorders and students with difficulties in learning; support for career selection and employment support for people with disabilities; health promotion for elderly people, etc.).

III

Robotic technology innovation based on advanced materials

Project Leader: Sadatsue Kasekuma, Professor, College of Science and Engineering

Robots have made developments alongside progress in mechanical engineering, electronics, computer engineering, and IT. Conventional robots are, however, based on metal materials and other rigid bodies, and because they are thus heavy, large, and hard, their applications have been limited to automobiles, electronic equipment manufacturing, etc. By expanding their fields of application into medicine, welfare, and maintenance of social infrastructure, it is expected that robots will solve the challenges of a declining birthrate and an aging population. However, to achieve this, it is necessary to develop human-friendly, light, small, and soft robots.

IV

Interdisciplinary science and technology for activation of living organisms

Project Leader: Kohsuke Wakabayashi, Professor, College of Life Sciences

Activators can be placed into the body by methods including oral and transdermal administration, in addition to hypodermic and intracutaneous administration via injections, etc. Drug delivery technology is expected as an effective method to improve targeting of the drug. At the same time, as activate the body cells are newly drawing attention as a regenerative medical science, we help to activate from cell death to cancer treatments and muscle paralysis, which will be a major challenge amid a declining birthrate and an aging population.

V

Systems vision sciences for regeneration of visual functions

Project Leader: Katsunori Kitano, Professor, College of Information Science and Engineering

In the field of science and technology regarding regenerative medicine, Japan is an internationally competitive player, but competition from overseas has become a lot fiercer. Through joint research systems of experiments and theories aimed at gathering information in the fields of biology, engineering, and psychology, this project aims to elucidate visual loss as the most challenging disability and to develop cures.

The purpose of our project is to build a society in which everyone can live with hope and face the future, connecting the individual and a person’s own human life seamlessly in order to form a “Life” in which everyone can make the most of their abilities beyond differences in gender, nationality, and the presence or absence of illness or disability.

The restorative justice toward the era of a declining birthrate and an aging population

Project Leader: Satoshi Kono, Associate Professor, College of Comprehensive Psychology

Forming the “center for Forensic Clinical Psychology” that was developed and promoted in the second-phase R-GIRO research program as its research center, this project targets the creation of a legal and social system that forms a part of society facing a declining birthrate and an aging population from the perspective of restorative justice.

We will focus research in the fields of law, psychology, sociology, information studies, and legal practice to develop a basic theory underlying the problems of (1)“Innocence Project for Japanese society” to eradicate erroneous judgments in criminal justice in general; (2)“Care and restoration in the civil law” domain involving clinical services for victims in civil cases; and (3)“Development of restorative justice theories.”

In this case, we will aim for technical development on the question of what justice should be with the purpose of restoring relations between people involved. By practically applying these achievements in a comprehensive and global manner, restoring connections between the law, society, and people, and building a supportive system for people who “starting all over again,” we also hope to create a friendly society for a declining birthrate and an aging population.

The Research Centers for the Third-Phase R-GIRO Research Program

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A Declining Birthrate and an Aging Population

Dr. T. V. Paul (Current President, ISA) & Ms. Juliet V. Garcia (Senior Adviser to UT Engagements, The University of Texas System)

Visit to Ritsumeikan by Current and Past Presidents of the International Studies Association

On September 16, a kick-off symposium for the Third-Phase R-GIRO research program was held at the Osaka Ikari Campus. The keynote address, concerning “Technological innovation, declining population, globalization, and Japanese society,” was delivered by Dr. Fumi Otaki, Professor of the Osaka University Institute of Science and Economic Research. After this, the six research teams of the Third-Phase R-GIRO research program were introduced, followed by a discussion in which internal and external experts examined the actual issues of a declining birthrate and an aging population.

On July 9, the 10th Symposium on Disaster Mitigation for Cultural Heritage and Historical Cities was held at the Khuangca Campus. In the symposium, 28 presentations were given, detailing the results of research on disaster mitigation for historical cities and cultural heritage. A total of 105 people from across the nation participated in the event and active discussions were held in six sessions covering disaster mitigation technology, fire and fire prevention, disaster prevention planning, history and disaster prevention, and also traffic and evacuation issues.

The Third-Phase R-GIRO Research Program Kick-off Symposium Held

SELECTED TOPICS

Selected for “Initiative for Realizing Diversity in the Research Environment (Distinctive Features Type)” Supported by Funds for the Development of Human Resources in Science and Technology

On July 29, Ritsumeikan University was selected for FY2016 “Initiative for Realizing Diversity in the Research Environment (Distinctive Features Type).” This project was implemented as part of the Funds for the Development of Human Resources in Science and Technology, which was aimed at improving research environments in consideration of life events and work-life balance for female researchers, efforts to improve their research capabilities, and initiatives to actively employ and promote female researchers to higher posts. To increase diversity in research environments and link it to the creation of excellent research results, it is necessary to establish and publish target and action plans as an organization, toward the promotion of enabling female researchers to play more active roles. (Distinctive Features Type) is a cross-departmental effort within a single organization at universities and research institutions.

Ranked Third Among Private Universities for the Amount of Grants-in-Aid for Scientific Research (KAKENHI) Accepted and Fourth for the Number of Projects Accepted for Four Consecutive Years

According to a press release by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology on October 13, Ritsumeikan University was ranked third in terms of the amount of funding received under the KAKENHI “KAKENHI Grants-in-Aid for Scientific Research (first among private universities in Western Japan), after Kakei and Waseda Universities. In terms of the number of projects accepted, Ritsumeikan was ranked fourth (first among private universities in Western Japan). The amount of funding received was 1,192,070,000 yen, while the number of projects accepted was 927—the largest number on record. Over the 11 years since 2005, the amount of funding received has increased by about 3.3 times, while the number of projects accepted increased by approximately 2.5. This year, 19.7% of the accepted projects were from female researchers, exceeding the national average.

Ritsumeikan is characterized by its high ranking in terms of the number of newly accepted projects on particular issues such as management, sociology, social welfare, city planning and architectural planning, intelligent robotics, environmental policies, and social systems.

Atsuki Higashiyama, Professor, College of Letters, Wins the Perception Prize at the Ig Nobels

Atsuki Higashiyama, Professor of the College of Letters, won the 26th Ig Nobel Prize in the Perception Category for his research on the “Perceived size and perceived distance of targets viewed from between the legs: Evidence for proprioceptive theory” (a joint research project with Professor Kohei Adachi, of the Graduate School of Human Sciences, Osaka University), which was announced on July 23. The Ig Nobel Prize is an award that honors achievements that first make people laugh, and then make them think.

Higashiyama has been researching human senses and perception under the research themes of “Tactual senses and pain” and “Space perception.” This award was given for his elucidation of a phenomenon whereby a view appears to be flat and objects look smaller when looking at them between one’s legs while bending over. As a representative case of this phenomenon, sandbanks at Amakusa-shima in Kyto Prefecture, Japan, appear as though they were an arc on the skyline like a bridge when viewed in such a manner. His experiments showed that this change to the visual world is caused not by the inversion of the retinal image, but due to the inversion of the upper body.

Lecture by Ms. Juliet V. Garcia, Senior Adviser to the Chancellor for Community, National and Global Engagements, The University of Texas System

On October 19 at Kinugasa Campus, Ms. Juliet V. Garcia, center advisor to the Chancellor for Community, National and Global Engagements delivered a lecture (co-sponsored by the Japan Foundation Center for Global Partnership JIGP), incorporated administrative agency).

Over many years, Ms. Garcia has worked on a string of innovative initiatives aimed at promoting the success of students. In 2009 she was named by Time magazine as one of “The 10 Best College Presidents” in the nation, and in 2014 Fortune magazine identified her as one of “The World’s 50 Greatest Leaders.” In her lecture, Ms. Garcia discussed her experiences as a chancellor at various universities in addition to her activities in transition teams and educational improvement initiatives for Hispanic Americans. In the second part of the gathering, a panel discussion was held to discuss the impact of a diverse environment upon education and organisations and to take a closer look at her beliefs and vision in support of reforms as well as her leadership qualities.

On October 28, Ritsumeikan University was selected for AY2016 “Initiative Realizing Diversity in the Research Environment (Distinctive Features Type)” is a cross-departmental effort within a single organization at universities for enabling female researchers to play more active roles. (“Distinctive Features Type” is a cross-departmental effort within a single organization at universities: Science and Technology on October 13, Ritsumeikan University was ranked first among private universities in Western Japan), after Keio and Waseda Universities. In terms of the amount of funding received, Ritsumeikan ranked third in terms of the amount of funding received under the KAKENHI “KAKENHI Grants-in-Aid for Scientific Research (first among private universities in Western Japan), after Kakei and Waseda Universities. In terms of the number of projects accepted, Ritsumeikan was ranked fourth (first among private universities in Western Japan). The amount of funding received was 1,192,070,000 yen, while the number of projects accepted was 927—the largest number on record. Over the 11 years since 2005, the amount of funding received has increased by about 3.3 times, while the number of projects accepted increased by approximately 2.5. This year, 19.7% of the accepted projects were from female researchers, exceeding the national average.

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During the visit, both professors gave lectures on a new world order in response to the rise of China and Indo-Pacifi c initiatives generated by India through their lectures, provided sound advice to Asian, European, American, and Japanese graduate school students. They also exchanged opinions in relation to the concept of Global IR and the roles that Japanese universities—in particular Ritsumeikan—can play in this context, while holding discussions on the outlook for international relations in Asia and the possibilities for joint research on security.
Hitoshi Tamiami, Professor, College of Life Sciences Wins the Japanese Photochemistry Association Lectureship Award at the Annual Meeting on Photochemistry 2016

The Japanese Photochemistry Association recognized Hitoshi Tamiami, Professor at the College of Life Sciences, with its Japanese Photochemistry Lectureship Award at the Annual Meeting on Photochemistry 2016. The Annual Meeting on Photochemistry is a symposium where researchers present and discuss their findings in the field of photochemistry, covering a wide range of subject groups from organic compounds, metal complexes, and other molecules to inorganic substances such as oxidized metals and metalloids. Tamiami’s active research activities in the field of photochemistry were recognized, and he gave a special lecture titled “Chiroptophy: Photochemistry, metabolism, and synthetic application” at the 2016 Annual Meeting on Photochemistry.

Sang Ho Hyon, Associate Professor, College of Science and Engineering, Develops the World’s First Ever Hydraulic Hybrid Robot

Cloverly combining the characteristics of two conventional hydraulic circuits, Sang Ho Hyon, Associate Professor at the College of Science and Engineering, invented a new driving hydraulic (hybrid serro-boosto) robot to develop the first ever hydraulic robot arm to feature a driving gear. Enabling operation in harsh environments, this robot excels in terms of its high speed, precision and flexibility and shock resistance. Its thin, lightweight body enables it to move quickly and crisply, while the minimal pressure and slow down speed of the fingers allow them to move with super high precision. Also, by adding pressure with a small pump (boosting act), it can lift heavy objects and exert great power. In addition, the robot’s soft joints enable it to easily control objects or absorb sudden impacts. Using this technology, the realization of an economical, high performance robot that can execute or support operations for human beings in harsh outdoor environments is anticipated.

This research was conducted with the assistance of the ImPACT program (a Japanese government initiative) and in cooperation with Fine Sinter Co., Ltd.

The Wireless Signal Processing Laboratory of the College of Science and Engineering at Ritsumeikan University Provides Lake Biwa Museum with Underwater Sound Broadcasting Equipment

The Wireless Signal Processing Laboratory (Professor Hiroshi Kubo, College of Science and Engineering) provided Shiga Prefectural Lake Biwa Museum, which was remodeled and reopened on July 14, with newly-developed ultrasonic underwater broadcasting equipment. This innovative equipment was developed in a joint project with the museum. By using a PC program to remove underwater noise, the equipment enables us to hear the underwater sounds that fish experience, from outside the glass tanks. The tunnel-shaped water tank in the museum can now be experienced not only visually, but also audibly. Through this joint research project, we hoped to realize an exhibition facility that features a high level of communication and is packed with surprise and emotion, learning and discovery—and which can be enjoyed by everyone, from children to adults.

Motoki Kudo, Professor, College of Life Sciences, and the Noer Group Analyzes the Relationship Between Soil Fertility and Yield and the Quality of Organic Plants

In a joint study conducted with the Noer Group on their organic JAS field at the Hikokudo Shokanbetsudake Pilot Farm, Motoki Kudo, Professor at the College of Life Sciences, elucidated that a cultivation method using the Soil Fertility Index (SFQ) would increase yields of organically cultivated medicinal plants and their content of specific active ingredients. This result will be applied to cosmetics development going forward. This research result was announced at Ritsumeikan University at the 68th Annual Meeting of the Society for Biotechnology, Japan, in Toyama from September 28 to 30. (Noer was a joint presenter.)


Ritsumeikan Seminar Series Held in London, U.K.

Through joint sponsorship with the JETRO London office (supported by JSPS London), in June last year, the Ritsumeikan UK Office held the Ritsumeikan Seminar Series for Japanese-affiliated companies and Japanese researchers based in the U.K. In this seminar, held in Japanese for the first time, Kaij Yano, Professor at the College of Letters, who is currently researching abroad, delivered a lecture on the current state of big data in the U.K. and Japan. This was accompanied by a comparison of accumulation and utilization methods on the theme of “UK geographic information seminar: What can be learned from postcodes?” After the lecture, a networking reception took place as a forum for exchange among all of the participants.

Starting soon, the Ritsumeikan UK Office plans to begin hosting the Ritsumeikan Seminar Series as a regular event.

EVENT GUIDE

Institute of International Relations and Area Studies

The Role of China in International Conflicts: The Reality of Non-interventionism

Saturday, December 10, 2016

10:00-12:00

Conference Room, Soshikan Hall, Kinugasa Campus, Ritsumeikan University

Application/Participation fee: Free

http://www.ritsumeikan.edu/events/conference/20161210/

Institute of International Relations and Area Studies

An International Conference of Leading Universities in Asian Studies The Challenges and Prospects for Urban and Regional Studies on Asia

March 24, 2017

Inviting researchers from the Australian National University (Australia), Cornell University (US), and Beijing Union University (China), an international conference on the theme of “Revisiting Asian cities and regions” will be held together with Ritsumeikan teaching staff. Attendees will be able to tackle the question of what is necessary in order to academically re-formulate cities and regions in Asia, a region which is characterized by drastic urbanization.

Contact: OIC Research Office; TEL: +81-72-665-2570

Ritsumeikan Asia-Japan Research Organization/Ritsumeikan Asia-Japan Research Institute /Open Innovation and Collaboration Research Organization

Meeting the World of Autism Again - Thoughts on “Support and Coexistence”

Mirena Shafiq

November 30, 2016

206/2928

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The Chinese Character for This Year, 2015, is 安

One of the many activities for embracing sports through local food is the Society of Foster Education of Food and Sports. In these study sessions, sports instructors from junior and senior high schools in Shiga and Kyoto Prefectures assemble every two months to voluntarily study and practice methods of instruction regarding eating habits with the goal of improving the performance of players and teams.

In the sessions, graduate and faculty students from both within and outside the Ebi Laboratory work in collaboration with the school sports instructors to extract food-related reasons for teams, based on which they create and implement support plans. In addition to the graduate school students—who are already certified as registered dietitians and are aiming for certification as certified sports dietitians—these sessions also provide precious experience and real-life interaction that supports managers and players involved in competition.

In one example, the manager of the Women’s Softball Team of Heian High School, Ms. Okumura, collaborated with second year Graduate School student and registered dietitian Yukako Murakami, who prepared an annual plan based on the current status of the team and provided nutritional support (see photograph). Ms. Okumura comments that, “We used to depend entirely on supplements, but through these sessions, we came to realize the importance of obtaining nutrition from food in an enjoyable and tasty manner.”

The program resulted in increased muscle mass and a reduction in injuries. And in addition, athletes’ awareness regarding food has changed— as seen for example in their voluntary reduction snack food intake.

Based on this experience, some players, having retired from club activities, are now working to gain qualifications as registered dietitians or enrolling at the College of Sport and Health Science. The program resulted in increased muscle mass and a reduction in injuries. And in addition, athletes’ awareness regarding food has changed— as seen for example in their voluntary reduction snack food intake. Through these truly valuable sessions, the students and I developed alongside the instructors in the field as we helped athletes develop their bodies through what they eat during their growth periods.

Winners of “Kanji of the Year® 2006”. 1. 立 (Kato); 2. 体 (Miyazaki); 3. 食 (Yamamoto) 2006 is a year of the 26th anniversary of the birth of the Kanji. Health-related many young students occurred such as child hood due to bullying, domestic violence, and accidents caused by drunk driving. This was a year when many students felt the weight of the importance of Ms. Toyota, Association Professor, College of Sports and Science, Ritsumeikan University.

Sponsor of the Grand Prize of Kanji. A combination of 体 and 立 (woman). Ben is the shape of a mind in a macauain in honor of the spirits of the ancestors, so 立 depicts a woman sitting in a macauain, indicating a bride who has married into the family, worshipping at the macauain. A newly wed wife, anyway the spirits of the ancestors of her husband’s family, accepts the spirit of the clan, and is conducting a ritual to become a member of the husband’s family. In doing so, the newly wed wife can finally be protected by the spirits of the ancestors of her husband’s family and lead a quiet and peaceful life.” Denying the theory of Soubun Kaiji, this description applies a unique shamanistic interpretation to thoroughly represent the credibility of the Shigaenokogai ideological sciences.

The late Dr. Hiroshi Suekawa, then the President of Ritsumeikan University, proposed that “study and science are for the sake of protecting the benefit and human rights of citizens and the general public. A university is a place to develop society through research and study, and it is important to walk, think and study along with the general public.” Therefore, the Ritsumeikan Saturday Lecture Series was established to open the lectures of the university to the general public and strengthen the ties between the university and the local community. Each time the first lecture was held is important to “About the Labor Union Act.” by Professor Hiroshi Suekawa on March 31, 2016 (the 5th) during the period of the annual series for more than a centu ry, this series of lectures has taken place.

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